

# River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1997



Number 15

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## Chairman's Comment

As I reach the mid-term of my period of office, I am confident that the General Committee, which meets regularly, can

fairly reflect the views of the membership and can act accordingly within the terms of our constitution. I have asked for comment by the membership at Public and Annual General Meetings and in writing within the Newsletter. Sufficient members have responded to confirm a view that our reactions to River Deben affairs have the right weight and style. Indeed this confidence is such that the Committee are prepared to be more widely proactive to preserve the estuary environment and to harmonise the interests of users.

The Deben clean-up campaign is an excellent Association initiative but there are other issues where our combined efforts can be applied to prevent difficulties or disorder. Providing a co-ordinating role for River Deben Millennium events, urging authorities to make specific provision for water-jet skiers and seeking funds to restore river bank walks are just three of the issues on which your Committee is currently acting. Members who attended the AGM and heard the discussion about water-jet skiers will be interested to know that my offer to commission and fund a polite advisory notice to water-jet skiers launching at Felixstowe was not taken up by Suffolk Coastal District Council or the Police, both of whom tend to want to do things in their own ways.

Quite simple and obvious issues now involve the exchange of elaborate letters; become a subject for Committee discussion; require consultation, adjudication, arbitration and appeals; have to be included in later budgets and in Short and Long Term Plans thus frequently dying a bureaucratic death as they are superseded by more pressing matters. Take the up-river wrecks for example: they have been on the Association agenda for six years. An initial budget to clear the wrecks failed to get to the tender stage because the problem was absorbed into a Long Term Management Plan. Meanwhile, a single man of action recovered one of the older vessels for

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salvage. If you see my dinghy moored to a wreck, you will understand that I have given up coercion. I have to add that there are more serious concerns for us all than these old hulks in the last reach before Wilford Bridge.

It was mid-July before I started to sail on the river by which time nearly every mooring was occupied. Sailing a little dinghy in the Handicap Class at Woodbridge without too much water and a strong up-river wind, I became increasingly conscious of how the space for manoeuvring has become restricted by moored craft. Opposite the DYC clubhouse, you can reach for barely the length of a cricket pitch before having to tack. I am sure that in the '60s there was just one trot for small cruisers along the far bank: now we have two trots on both sides with too little room between vessels to turn safely in a strong wind and tide. Below Kyson and at Waldringfield, the story is the same, moored boats everywhere. What are the limits of this congestion? Fairway Committees are constantly under pressure from the Crown Commissioners to pay more for leases, and from owners to restrict mooring fees - the inevitable result is a greater number of moorings. A fresh debate about alternative arrangements can be only just around the corner.

The Medina above Cowes is probably of comparable length to the Deben, though without our wide reaches. The river houses ten times our number of boats yet provides about the same width of negotiable water for much of its length. We may have to look elsewhere to determine the best way ahead for the River Deben. If you have any ideas about moorings or their alternatives, please write to the Editor who will be pleased to publish views. Alternatively, come along to the Public Meeting in October when I will endeavour to promote a discussion.

Congratulations to those who have worked together effectively to clear the

Waldringfield start-line of moorings and to enforce the rule for an uncluttered children's section of beach. This is a good example of successful local action. The state of the beach at Woodbridge, littered with old dinghies, is at the opposite end of the spectrum, despite regular Association correspondence.

A number of friends have said to me recently that they only go to the river on week-days because it is too crowded afloat at the week-ends. I suppose these comments reflect the situation over moorings already discussed. However the converse of the pressure at week-ends can be sublime. I worked on my boat at a mooring below Waldringfield from about five until nine one evening recently, admittedly the last four hours of an ebb tide; during that time, I saw one family on the beach, two sailing dinghies, one inflatable with an outboard and no walkers at all - amazing solitude on a July evening. So perhaps the week-end pressures are more than outweighed by the weekday quiet by those who have the choice. On balance we are probably very lucky to have access to the estuary that the Environment Agency describe as "the jewel in the crown".

A consultative document for the Agency's Ten Year Plan arrived recently. I was pleased to see that steps would be taken to control water extraction along the feeder streams into the River Deben so that the fresh water entry to the river could be restored to former levels. This is important to limit sedimentation in the upper reaches and to preserve the flora, fish stock and bird life. I cannot imagine a more thorough and balanced document than this new draft of the Environment Agency's views. Perhaps I was too harsh on bureaucratic bodies earlier.

You will notice that I have not taken up the Editor's challenge as to whether his offering or mine should have pride of place in the Newsletter. He is not normally subversive, does a splendid job and gets acclaim from

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all sides for his interesting productions. What more can we ask? However, thanks are always due to him and to every other member of the Committee who give up time and apply their talents on behalf of members. If my feelings about them were ever in doubt, let that be settled now. They all deserve our thanks. Happy end-of-summer and autumn days on the river.

Denzil Cowdry  
Chairman

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### Editorial

There have been many editorials I have read when the Editor points out to his readers that the success of the publication depends on the contributions from the members. I can have no such complaint. Contributions to this Newsletter have come in thick and fast, on a wide variety of subjects. It is a reflection on the fascination of the River Deben, its history and its present use. The article on the sea level rise was most interesting, and I was particularly pleased to receive the letter from Tony Ratcliffe, the Chairman of the Felixstowe Ferry Preservation Society. Too often we are beset by the problems of Woodbridge and inclined to forget the difficulties at the other end of the river.

My first task is to apologise profusely to Woodbridge Cruising Club. In the last Newsletter, I stated that we now had had articles from all the sailing clubs in the river. I was smartly and deservedly corrected in a letter from the Secretary of Woodbridge Cruising Club. I do (and did) offer them my sincere apologies, and have much pleasure in publishing a history of their development. I do hope that I will not make the same mistake with the Fairway Committees; we now have had two Fairway Committee reports which make interesting reading. I hope to be able to complete the picture of the other Fairway Committees in the next few editions.

I was much grieved to hear that the

compiler of the Newsletter, Tim Midwinter, was likely to be transferred to America in September. Tim, as a founder member of the Association, has been heavily involved in the Newsletter from the beginning. I remember that he was initially in charge of the litter clean-up, before becoming Editor of the Newsletter. His computing skills here were invaluable - I think that he may have been involved in the compilation of all the fourteen Newsletters that we have published to date, and he will be extremely difficult to replace. He further gave great help to the Association by becoming betrothed and subsequently married to Vivienne who was promptly recruited as Assistant Editor. I have tried to persuade Tim that he should leave Vivienne behind to continue with her good work here, but this suggestion did not find favour. In the meantime, we are now looking for an assistant Editor and someone who can compile the Newsletter for the printers on a computer. Please don't be backward in coming forward - the Newsletter is a vital part of the Association's work, and without it, we would be a much less significant body. It only remains for me to say a big Thank you to Tim and Vivienne, and to wish them all happiness in America. We will look forward to their return in the near future.

Michael Atkins  
Editor

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## Who's Who

### Officers

|               |  |                |
|---------------|--|----------------|
| Chairman      | Denzil Cowdry. St. Edmundsbury, 10 Ipswich Rd, Wdge.<br>IP12 4BU       | ☎ 01394 383625 |
| Vice Chairman | Michael Atkins. Rudd's Barn, Waldringfield Rd,<br>Martlesham. IP12 4PJ | ☎ 01473 736668 |
| Secretary     | Harry Norris. <sup>OK</sup> Doric Place, Wdge.                         | ☎ 01394 384442 |
| Treasurer     | John Lineker. Decoy House, Old Church Rd, Melton,<br>IP13 6DH          | ☎ 01394 460196 |
| Press Sec.    | Rosemary Schlee. Deben Lodge, Melton Rd, Wdge.<br>IP12 1NH             | ☎ 01394 382740 |

### Committee Members

|                      |   |                                  |
|----------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Felixstowe Ferry     | David White. 6 Coniston Close, Felixstowe. IP11 9SW                                   | ☎ 01394 283972                   |
| History              | Robert Simper. Sluice Cottage, Ramsholt.  | ☎ 01394 411273                   |
| Litter               | David Cavey. 10 Crown Place, Woodbridge<br>Jo Masters, 49 Riverview Rd, Melton, Wdge. | ☎ 01394 387099<br>☎ 01394 383825 |
| Wildfowlers          | Adrian Judge. 29 Bredfield St, Wdge. IP12 4NH   | ☎ 01394-383350                   |
| Watersports          | Tim Midwinter. 37 Coopers Rd, Martlesham Heath.<br>Ipswich. IP5 3SJ                   | ☎ 01473 623020                   |
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| General Liaison      | Ian Battye. Upson Cottage, 8 Crown Place Wdge IP12 1BN                                | ☎ 01394 382338                   |
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## Association Business

### Forthcoming Events

Friday, October 10th 1997

R.D.A. Open Meeting.  
Mr. A.P. Osmanski from Suffolk  
Coastal District Council will give a  
talk on "Leisure and Tourism  
Strategy"

Sunday, October 19th 1997

Litter Clearance Day

Saturday, February 21st, 1998

Copy Day for next Newsletter.

August 1998 (dates currently unknown)

Deben Week.

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## Reports

### AGM

Some time ago, Michael asked if I would write a brief report on the AGM as he would be unable to attend. In my naivety I agreed, and unfortunately the time has now come for me to put my thoughts down on paper. I thought that I'd at least be able to revisit old issues of the Newsletter and get an idea on the usual format. Alas, the only report I could find was the minutes in the Spring 1994 issue, and as the minutes are now issued separately, that doesn't appear to be required, so I'll just note down some odd points. Oh, well - here goes then.

In true Midwinter tradition, Tim and I were late, not an auspicious start! However, I have just received the minutes themselves, so can crib accordingly. The Chairman gave a comprehensive report of activities in the previous year, including such items of the prosecution of speeding boats on the river. In my notes I had written that in the event of seeing a speeding boat we should notify the coastguard if on the water, or the police if on land. I'd appended this by noting that I meant the observer on land, not the speeding boat, just in case I managed to misinterpret my comments!

It appears that the litter clearance is being effective, with the proportion of charcoal and barbecue debris increasing as opposed to general litter. Helpers for this are, however, always needed, so please contact David Cavey or Jo Masters if you can help.

Enough of the formal business - for any real info, see the minutes. After the tea interval there was a talk by Martin Rattle, a Suffolk Fisheries Officer. Although billed as a talk on the "Fish of the Deben", his talk was based more on the work of the Fisheries Office in ensuring that fishermen in the region, both local and international, did not infringe the fishing laws, in terms of quotas, net sizes, types and size of fish caught. Mr Rattle seemed somewhat relieved not to be given too much grief about the reduction in quotas, and non-UK fishermen taking up the quota allowances. I should imagine that that is a slightly less than wonderful aspect of their work.

Apparently while out on one of the Fisheries vessels, Pisces II, a semi-rigid inflatable with an outboard motor, they had engine failure a mile off-shore and had to paddle in on a flooding tide, finally being towed back to base by a fishing vessel. One of those stories that would be repeated amongst the fishing fraternity with a degree of amusement. We did get a bit about the marine life in the Deben with reference to oysters and shell fish which were once found in the Deben (in the 1920's and 30's) but which are not currently found. There are attempts to start up new beds, but not on a commercial basis. Incidentally, whilst trying to find an old AGM report, I came across an article in the Spring 1992 issue discussing earlier attempts in 1963 and

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1974 to start oyster beds commercially, which would also restrict sections of the river to other usage. It appears that the local residents are not in favour of commercial beds, and that there is a fighting fund, held by the RDA to protest against any future attempts to restrict access in this way.

Vivienne Midwinter

## River Deben Litter Clean-Up

*Probably the most important combined effort of the Association is the annual Litter Clean-Up. This year, it will take place on Sunday, October 19th, and it is customary to have a lovely bright sunny morning for the job. I have received the following notes from David Cavey about the organisation.*

*Editor*

In helping to organise the annual clean-up of the River Deben, it is clear that the Team Leader is of crucial importance. It is upon his or her shoulders that the success of the event will depend. We are very fortunate

that of the 18 original Team Leaders, 11 are still continuing to help, and that help is crucial. We are equally fortunate that others have stepped forward to fill the vacancies that inevitably occur.

This year, we are holding a meeting of all Team Leaders, partly to say "Thank you" for their loyalty, hard work and dedication, and partly to hear their views and suggestions for the whole operation. It is likely that we shall split two very large existing territories into three, so we are anxious as always for volunteers. Anyone who would like to help in this good work should contact Jo Masters, Tel: 01394 383825.

I make no apologies for re-emphasising what a very worthwhile project the Clean-Up day is, and how important it is to keep up the numbers - particularly of young people.

David Cavey

## Articles

### Waldringfield Fairway Committee

*After the article on the Kyson Fairway Committee in the last edition of the Newsletter, I asked for an article on the history and present work of the Waldringfield Fairway Committee. I was delighted to receive two articles, and reproduce them below. I hope to be able to publish similar articles on the other Fairway Committees in future Newsletters.*

*Editor*

#### W.F.C History

The Waldringfield Fairway Committee was formed on the 19th of March, 1938 at Broomstubs, Waldringfield, and my father, Donald Haig, was elected Chairman. Mr. W. Bateman and Ernie Nunn represented the Parish Council, George Turner of Deben House and Harry Nunn represented the commercial interests, and

Jimmy Quantrill and my father, the sailing interests.

Ernie Nunn produced a chart of the moorings showing:-

- 20 moorings commercially owned
- 41 moorings privately owned
- 2 moorings for houseboats privately owned.

It was agreed that commercial and privately owned moorings should pay two shillings and sixpence (12½p) a year, and houseboats ten shillings (50p) a year. It was further agreed to take over from the Sailing Club the payment of one guinea per annum to the pilot for placing the beacons.

The activities of Waldringfield Fairway Committee were suspended during World War II, but they co-operated with the Admiralty in removing all yachts and moorings from their area after the outbreak of war. In 1940, the Committee advised the Admiralty that it would be unwise to set

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mines in the river (as a deterrent to enemy seaplanes landing) but their advice was ignored, and for several weeks these mines exploded after hitting each other or being landed upon by an unfortunate seagull who would be blown up.

The early post war years saw a gradual clearance of war debris from the river, and the Fairway Committee resumed its peace time work. The Waldringfield Sailing Club felt that as the main 'customers' of the Fairway Committee, they should have greater representation, and after a public meeting, it was agreed that they should have four representatives instead of two, but as a balance four Trustees were appointed from the village. The Trustees became the Lessees, and whilst they have no voting powers, they can and do express their views on matters concerning them. Also in the sixties, the Rector of Waldringfield was appointed a Committee member to look after the property rights of the Church (glebe) land fronting the river. Later the administration of this land was transferred to the Diocese, and the Rector became their agent.

Considering the diverse interests the Committee members represent, harmony has prevailed over the years.

Andrew Haig

### The Last 18 Years

For many years the Chairman was Ernie Nunn, who eventually took over the organisation of the moorings, allocation of sites and removing any non-legitimate boat moorings and dinghies. He called meetings of the Committee as and when he felt like it. If the Committee members were not behaving themselves, he simply did not call a meeting!

However, time passed more or less without incident, and came the time when he retired from the chair. A procession of new chairpersons followed, some more knowledgeable about the ways of river folk than others, most complaining of the

attitude of those on the waiting list who had been there some time, and who were not enraptured by the happy comments of the very few from the waiting list who had been allocated a mooring. Eventually a retired gentleman became Secretary, and proceeded with some vigour to overhaul the system. One day a vessel arrived on the saltings, obviously for the winter. The owner was addressed by the Secretary in forceful terms, and told to go away. When this didn't happen, he was again informed that he was trespassing, etc. etc. He proved to be one of the police prosecuting solicitors, and wrote a stern letter saying that he was taking the matter to court. At the same time, I was invited to join the Committee, and at the first meeting I attended, I was cordially received and then after a couple of minutes, to my astonishment, I was voted in as Chairman! The police solicitor was pacified after our local member of the court had spoken to him on behalf of the Committee.

When the Secretary became ill, and sadly died shortly afterwards, a computerised system was evolved, a new map of the moorings was made and new rules for the use of moorings were agreed. A "use it or lose it" policy was introduced, and the waiting list was reduced from 68 to about 40 with vessels varying between 18 ft and 35 ft, and drafts from 2 ft to 6 ft. The buoyage is now all floating buoys instead of the original witheys, a new larger plastic buoy has been introduced, and they will gradually replace the old ones. A reflecting strip has been added to the buoys. We have a Harbourmaster who is able to move moorings and boats as required, and has had a difficult time lately when the river channel has changed a great deal, possibly because the shortage of rainfall has caused less water and more silt to be deposited.

Following our 14 year lease from the Crown Commissioners, we now have a 20 year lease with a review every 5 years. The leaseholders (Trustees) are four in number,

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and are village residents. The Committee has four members from Waldringfield Sailing Club (two of whom live in the village), two Parish Councillors, the Rector, and two who represent the village businesses. We are always happy to receive comments of whatever variety for the improvement of what we do. We have now 212 occupied moorings, and in the last 18 years have not extended our mooring area.

Ted Sudell  
Chairman  
Waldringfield Fairway Committee

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### Woodbridge Cruising Club

In 1965 a group of sailing enthusiasts met in order to form a new club, as one of their number, a much respected local restaurateur, had been refused membership of the other local club as he was considered to be 'trade'. The only qualification for membership was, and still is, a genuine interest in boats and the sea. As its name indicates, it is only a cruising club, and has no interest in racing. Early meetings took place in a variety of locations, in local pubs and clubs, in a building in Sluice Wood, Martlesham, and in a derelict cottage near to the site of the old Woodbridge gasworks. In 1976, a permanent Clubhouse was established in upper rooms on Ferry Quay which were formally opened by Frank Knights not by cutting a ribbon, but by cutting an anchor chain with bolt croppers. This eventually became too small for our needs, so a plot of land was bought from Eversons Boatyard, and the members started building a new Clubhouse themselves. This was completed and formally opened on September 24th (Assistant Editor's Note: Year not supplied) by Lord Lewin, since when it has served its members well both as a meeting place and as a training school.

The cruising activities of the club started in a modest way with trips to East Coast rivers, but in 1979 the first long distance cruise was organised to Friesland. This

was the first of many voyages to the Netherlands where we have established friendly relations with many Dutch people and clubs. One result of these voyages has been the close relationship between Woodbridge and Woubrugge. Members have sailed to the Channel Islands, the Brittany coast, the Baltic, and some sail in the Mediterranean. Most notably, one member, David Scott Cowper, has circumnavigated three times, and is now preparing to sail around the North Pole, having previously sailed through the North West Passage.

The club also looks after the safety of its members, and indeed, any other sailors. It is a Training School approved by the Royal Yachting Association, and in the winter holds classes leading to qualifications ranging from Competent Crew to Yachtmaster Open. We also have examiners for the International Certificate of Competence, which is required by many European countries.

The club welcomes both new members with a genuine interest in the sea and boats, and also those keen on improving their seamanship by participating in the evening classes.

Richard Sampson  
Secretary, Woodbridge Cruising Club

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### Deben Jottings

First, congratulations to the Deben Week Committee on their 50th anniversary week with much work going into planning such an event. It was most successful with fresh onshore winds at the start and at sea. The celebratory sail-past up the river was well attended, appreciated and enlivened by the attractive young ladies manning the forepeak of Richard Hopkin's aptly named Deben Lady.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is an interesting letter to the Editor from the Chairman of the Felixstowe Ferry Preservation Society, giving a fair picture of what is going on. The Ferry is a "one



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off" place with a fragile environment rather like a honeycomb dumped at the mouth of the river without the protection of the hive. It may well need all the support we can give to maintain its integrity.

\* \* \* \* \*

Waldringfield Sailing Club, after much hard work, must now be feeling very happy to own its own carpark. The security that this gives for the long term future of the Club will benefit many generations to come. The pub along the beach rates a mention because of the unwelcome publicity generated amongst the local and river community over planning and management issues. It looks as if the management issue will be solved by change, and the planning issue by time. I do not imagine that it will go away, but would like to think it will be handled with more imagination and sensitivity for the Maybush to emerge again as one of the core centres of a lovely village.

\* \* \* \* \*

The National Trust, now that their planning application and source of funds for the Sutton Hoo site are largely in place, have announced the go-ahead for action to be effectively in place by the Millennium. The site, exhibitions and footpath network down to the river frontage will, they hope, be enjoyed by over 50,000 visitors annually. Many visitors will wish to approach the site by the historic route across the river. It is a wonderful opportunity to see a properly managed and funded re-opening of the ferry to meet the demand. Let us hope that Woodbridge will rise to the occasion - it is very much in their interests to do so.

Ian Battye

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### Managing Sea Level Rise On The East Anglian Coast

Sea level rise is not a product of recent global warming as some press reports appear to indicate, but a result of the effects of the last Ice Age of 10,000 years ago. A great mass of ice, miles thick, once sat on the

northern half of the UK, that weight causing Scotland to 'sink' and Southern England to 'rise', with a pivotal mid-point between the Humber and the Wash across to Wales. As the world became warmer, not only did the ice melt and the oceans expand, but the see-saw of the UK reversed about its pivot and Scotland began to rise as Southern England sank. The River Thames that once flowed north through the Blackwater and Hamford water to join as a tributary to the Rhine, migrated south and became a river in its own right as the North Sea flooded over dry land. And so it continues, with the combined effect of land sink and sea level rise producing an average 300 mm increase in relative sea level every century; accelerating perhaps to 500 mm as global warming from man-made carbon gas begins to take effect. Civilisations have observed and attempted to reverse the inevitable since they first settled in the fertile coastal flooded plains. In 300 BC, Aristotle wrote "The same regions do not always remain sea or always land but all change their condition in the course of time". 900 years ago, Canute ordered the sea back. The only results were wet feet and a hasty retreat to the 'pub' for a rapid re-think. If Canute had realised that during the previous 250,000 years (short geological time) sea level has been 80 metres higher and lower than it is now, then he might not have bothered.

If left to their own devices, natural coastlines, whether cliffs, sand dunes, saltmarsh or estuary cope with sea level rise in their own natural way, rolling inland and creating those fragile inter-tidal areas that remove wave and tidal energy by a living system that constantly changes with the tides, a bit of erosion here, a bit of accretion there, death and life in a continuous process.

But man, with the best intentions, interfered. In the period between the 13th and 18th centuries a Mini Ice Age occurred, a micro second blip in geological terms. The world

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became colder, sea levels became static, and East Anglian man constructed sea walls to stop sheep from drowning. Happily munching oxen roasted on the frozen River Thames, medieval man looked to the coastal saltmarsh and had visions of cheap land for development. By the 20th century, give or take the odd sea wall failure, 800 km of sea wall had been constructed, 65,000 hectares of natural saltmarsh destroyed and the once vast saltwater flood plain converted to agricultural land, caravan sites and industrial and urban conurbations.

And then came the great flood of 1953 as a surge of tide swept down the North Sea and in Essex alone killed 119 people, 8928 farm animals, made homeless 21,000 families and flooded thousands of hectares of agricultural, industrial and urban areas. The public demanded action and a huge programme of sea wall raising and strengthening continues to this day at a cost of hundred of millions of pounds.

But sea levels continue to rise and erosion is the dominant process of the East Anglian coast. The Environment Agency is responsible for undertaking the flood protection to low level land and is attempting to understand the problem with a better understanding of natural processes of tides and waves, to try and find a way to work with nature rather than against it. The Agency in Essex alone has 440 km of sea wall to look after, of which 330 km rely on a fronting saltmarsh as a first line of defence against the sea. Of the original 45,000 hectares of salting, only 4,400 remain and they erode at 2% a year. Sea walls prevent them migrating inland and what remains of this vast Essex wilderness is now being 'squeezed' out of existence. To a lesser extent, the same applies to the Suffolk valleys and estuaries. By a combination of monitoring, research and experimental sites, the Agency is attempting to find new solutions to resolve the inevitable conflicts between all the pressures and expectations man has on the

coastal belt.

Detailed and repeated monitoring is revealing how the coast is changing; research explains why those changes take place and experimental works are demonstrating potential new solutions. Eroded foreshores are being recharged with pollutant free harbour dredgings supplied by Harwich Haven Authority to remove tidal energy before it reaches the sea wall; suitable material is limited and sites have to be carefully targeted for maximum benefit. In St Lawrence Bay on the south of the Blackwater Estuary, the Agency removed the sea wall to allow 40 hectares of agricultural land to re-establish the saltmarsh it once was and allow the natural flood plain to provide a self-sustaining system.

The mudflats and saltmarshes of Essex and Suffolk are the counties outstanding natural features, home to rare plants and insects and a vital link for hundreds of thousands of wildfowl and waders, part of our vital landscape that is too often taken for granted. The next generation may wonder what a saltmarsh looked like or they might wonder at our stupidity at living in flood plains. The choice is not simple; taking down a seawall affects someone's land and living or the Essex and Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserves. Balance, compromise and an educated public will be required for a manageable solution. Let us consider not Aristotle, who committed suicide (by drowning) because he could not understand sea level rise, but the English playwright William Shakespeare "There is nothing neither good or bad, but thinking makes it so".

Mark Dixon

Senior Engineer, Operation,  
Anglian Region, Environment Agency.

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## The Deben

The Deben winds her placid way  
From Debenham to the sea.  
By meadow, marsh and shingle bank  
The river talks to me.

Viking and Dane and Roman  
Sailed in on the flooding tide;  
The King's ships hid in the Kingsfleet  
Where the river was deep and wide.

Clay pipes were shipped from Belgium  
To sell in Woodbridge town  
And barges full of copralite  
From Waldringfield sailed down.

The smuggler plied his trade by night  
With muffled oars on drifting tide;  
Then Operation "Mulberry"  
Used muddy creeks in which to hide.

And still the tides surge in and out  
Over the shingle bar;  
We sail our pleasure craft about  
To learn the river's lore.

The Deben whispers on her way,  
Another night, another day.

Joy Savage

## English to German in easy Euro steps..

*Assistant Editors note. This article was sent to Tim by an Italian acquaintance - maybe we should consider it for subsequent newsletters.*

Having chosen English as a preferred language in the European Union (EU), the European Parliament has commissioned a feasibility study in ways of improving efficiency in communications among government departments. European officials have pointed out that English spelling is unnecessarily difficult. For example: cough, plough, here, hear, bow, bough, through and thorough. What is clearly

needed is a phased program of changes to iron out these anomalies. The program would be administered by a committee of top-level staff chosen by the participating nations.

In the first year, for example, the committee might suggest using "s" instead of soft "c". Certainly, sivil servants in all stities would resieve this news with joy. The hard "c" could be replaced by "k", sinse both letters are pronounsed alike. This would not only klear up konfursion in the minds of klerikal workers, but typewriters and keyboards could be made with one less letter, a significant savings.

In the sekond year, bekause of growing enthusiasm, it kould be announced that the troublesome "ph", would henseforth be written "f". This would make words like "fotograf" twenty persent shorter in print.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be ekspekted to reash the stage where more komplikated shanges are possible. Governments would encourage the removal of double letters which have always ben a deterrent to akurate speling. We would al agre that the horrible mes of silent "e"s in the languag is disgrasful. Therefore, we kould drop thes and kontinu to read and writ as though nothing had hapened.

By this time it would be four years sins the skem began and people would be reseptiv to steps sush as replasing "th" by "z". Perhaps zen ze funktion of "w" kould be taken on by the "v" vitsh is, after al, half the "w" anivay.

Finally, ze unesesary "o" kuld be dropd from vords kontaining "u". Similar arguments vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters. Kontinuung zis proses yer aftr yer, ve vud eventuli hav a reli sensibl riten stil.

Aftr tventi yers zer vud be no mor trubls or difikultis and evrion vud fin it ezi tu understan esh ozer. Ze dremes of ze EU vud finali kum tru.

Vud dis komplikat maters for yu?

## River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1997

### Deben Reminiscences

1944 and a posting to Suffolk was received with an overwhelming lack of enthusiasm for surely it was part of East Anglia where there were marshlands, drains, windmills and probably numerous natives with their diggers in the dykes.

One of the first of these natives was a Mr. Nunn, proprietor of The Boatyard at Waldringfield to whom I explained that the Army was grateful for the use of his petrol pump and would like to return it into his safe keeping. I couldn't entirely understand what he was saying but I formed the impression he did not like strangers in general and authority in particular and as for the pump I could make my own arrangements.

It was during this encounter that I had my first glimpse of the Deben and in spite of the dummy invasion barges, Nissen huts, scaffold poles and barbed wire, I thought it beautiful. Fifty-three years on and I still think it beautiful.

Ernie Nunn may not have been a thing of beauty but he was not what he seemed, for in the course of time I found he was a man of many talents and indeed a kindly soul.

By 1946 local sailing enthusiasts were returning from the wars with an overwhelming ambition to get afloat in whatever craft was available. Mostly we lived in Ipswich and transport was a problem. The solution lay with the bus company operating from Dogs Head Street. The early morning Sunday bus was quite something. It reeked of tar and paint and was well below the plimsoll line with oars, spars, canvas and the like. The object of my

own infatuation was The Marguerite, 16ft long with a rusting car engine and a terminal stern gland. She also leaked like a new born baby and I was advised to contact Mr. Knights at Woodbridge who might do a bit of caulking. I reckon Mr. Knights is still capable of doing a bit of caulking - keep going Frank.

If the Marguerite was an infatuation the "Dream" was my true love. I had met a few fairies but never a Cherub and she was beautiful and in a sense unique for she was The Original Cherub, built as an open boat and it was said 6" shorter than successive Cherubs. Ernie Nunn was in the process of building a cabin and installing a Stuart Turner.

She is still around and if you can't read her name look for her unique port holes.

Down the years there were happenings, Ernie stepping back to admire his handiwork and plunging from the quayside into the mud 20ft below, an amphibious Tiger Moth outside the Clubhouse, some idiot walking across the frozen river to the island, George Turner coming second, the starting gun blowing the window out of the Crows Nest, the floods of 1953 and the storm of 1986, a somewhat blue yachtsman dangling from a yellow helicopter and more recently a jet propelled Mini using the quay as a launch pad.

As I have now become suspicious of strangers, dislike authority and reckon them to be a rum old lot up beyond Methersgate it could be I'm beginning to settle down.

John Adams

## Clytie

Following on from a recent article on Clytie, the following sketch of the boat has been sent in



CLYTIE  
Built by EVERSONS 1922  
Drawing by Claudia Myatt

July 28th 1922

"Clifford and Daisy, Graham (15),  
Joan (13) and Roy (3) left home  
and arrived at Woodbridge at  
12 o'clock and took over Clytie  
from builders - Messrs. Eversons."

July 28th 1997

"Jo and Paul, Anna (3) and Joshua (2)  
celebrate 75 years of Clytie with a sail."

# River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1997

## Letters

20 May, 1997.

Dear Editor,

Would you please correct a factual error I made in the history of the Kyson Fairway Committee in your last edition.

The first Secretary, during the complex and contentious early phases of the Committee's inception, was the redoubtable Melanie Poole. Without Mel's grasp of detail and computing and office skills and her good humour in the face of some difficult scenes, the early days would have been much more difficult and less effective than they were.

Sheila Mayston took over from Melanie to carry this good work forward to make it the solid success it was to become.

Sorry Melanie, it all seems so long ago now the dust has settled.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Burn.

Grove Farm House, Little Bealings.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Editor,

It occurred to me that after a half-year with many issues facing Felixstowe Ferry or happily having been resolved, you might like an up-date on matters which continue to interest us and the River Deben Association.

Unfortunately the Jet-Ski problem is still with us and although local authorities throughout the country have successfully solved this problem, here on the Deben the S.C.D.C. have not yet put in place some permanent controls which outlaw unacceptable use of these craft in confined waters and very close to numerous properties. The issue is clear and so are the remedies!

Over-development and conflict with the Local Plan have, we hope, repaid enormous efforts by the Preservation Society which has resulted in the Victoria pub remaining in character with the Ferry.

There has been good co-operation with English Heritage to ensure that change of ownership of the Martello Tower "U" will result in a sensitive restoration of this important but badly damaged historic monument.

At last promises have been given by S.C.C. to have speed limits on the road inside The Ferry. With the enormous regular week-end influx of sailors, tourists, pub-goers, boats and trailers, it is about time that the present speed limit of 60 m.p.h. was reduced.

However, a continuing major problem of the hamlet is car parking, and the wide general feeling of legislators, residents and public alike is that to maintain the identity and character of The Ferry, a solution must be found to this acute and growing problem. The Ferry is unique in the coastal area of Suffolk and, of course, lies within the Heritage Coast, A.O.N.B., and adjacent to S.S.S.I. This fragile hamlet has withstood numerous moves to impair its real quality, and is, of course, always threatened by development which could literally destroy Felixstowe Ferry as generations have known it.

In the end The Ferry owes its existence to the sea, and it may well be that it is the sea which will take it back, if the predictions of global warming are correct.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Ratcliffe

Chairman - Felixstowe Ferry Preservation Society

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Tim and Vivienne,

Thanks for a good issue of the mag., just received. Therein I see your plea that no letters from Members means you can't print 'em. So perhaps I can offer a small contribution. I've been on the river for some years, but not nearly as long or extensively as people like Frank Knights.

Still, in my wanderings, often alone in a dinghy or a punt, and often in the winter, since 1943 I've seen one or two interesting things.

Once at Kyson I saw a small porpoise, and there was no doubt it was that; it had the horizontal tail flukes. I've no idea what it was doing so high up the river; I assume it had followed fish into the river. It rose quite close to the punt I was in and gave me quite a shock.

Seals have been seen in the river quite often, but I've seen one under Wilford Bridge, which again seems unusually high up the river for them to be. I own some of the bank above the bridge which is why I'm up that end quite a lot.

It might not be widely known that there are salmon in the Deben, though with what frequency I don't know. An uncle caught one some years ago in the pool just above the bridge. It is a tribute to the cleanness of the river that these fish venture into it.

For those Members who occasionally navigate above Wilford Bridge, and I know a number do, please bear in mind that when the bridge was built its arch was supported from below by foot square timbers resting on the river bed. When the arch was finished, the timbers were not dug up, they were sawn off, but not level with the river bed, they stick up about a foot like a row of substantial teeth. So, as you go under the bridge and are estimating your depth, you've got about a foot less than it looks, or your sounder tells you.

Moving back to the mouth of the Deben, Members might know that there are rather more toothed sharks in our local sea than gives one comfort. The photo of a 12 foot Thresher in Pinney's at Orford, caught off Shingle Street, I always thought was a one-off. But some years ago a horse transport on its way to Belgium sank in an Easterly gale, and some 300 horse carcasses were washed up along the Suffolk coast. My uncle and I walked along Shingle Street beach at this time where carcasses were

strewn along the tide line. Several sizeable sharks were cruising up and down, nosing in towards these dead horses. The shingle bank there being steep to, the sharks could get in close. They were near enough for us to throw stones at them, though this didn't seem to deter them. I often wonder if the fishermen at the Ferry who do their gutting there, and chuck the offal into the river on the ebb, are chumming the estuary nicely for our slippery friends. Having spent five years on Sydney Harbour, and seen how close inshore these charmers will come, I've become rather reluctant to capsizе down the Ferry end!

Lastly, may I add to that store of tales and rumours with which the river abounds. I've heard on a number of occasions that there lies buried in the mud of Martlesham Creek a complete Spitfire. This was supposedly trying to get back to the runway at Martlesham but didn't make it. If it is there I imagine it's condition would be fairly dire. I recall seeing during the late unpleasantness a P51 Mustang on fire, and in a shallow inverted descent, without its pilot (he had had the good sense to vacate his seat), but this one cleared the creek and hit the side of Martlesham Hill. So maybe there's something in the Spitfire story; I don't know. Has anyone else heard this tale?

Cordially  
Nick Green  
1 Tennyson Close  
Woodbridge  
IP12 4LB

# **RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION Open Meeting**

At 7:30pm on Friday, 10 October 1997 at the Woodbridge Community Hall.  
*Everyone Welcome*

## **ASSOCIATION BUSINESS**

The Chairman will report and invite comments on the work of the Association, including member's views on river congestion.

## **INTERVAL**

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available.

## **SPEAKER:**

Mr. A.P. Osmanski - Suffolk Coastal District Council will talk on:-  
"LEISURE AND TOURISM STRATEGY"

Secretary, H Norris