

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION

NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998



Number 17 Editor : Michael Atkins
Assistant Editor : Dennis Hawes

Contents

Chairman's Comments	1
Editorial	2
Call for a Volunteer	3
Letter: Litter Clearance Day	6
Who's Who	13
Association Business	
Forthcoming Event	12
Articles.	
The North Sea at your Door	4
Reflections on the River	7
The Upper Deben	7
Bentwaters- The Latest News.	9
AGM 1998	11
Open Meeting Notice	14

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

I have delayed writing these paragraphs in the hope that the weather would improve so that I could at least make a favourable comment in that direction. However, the heavier summer rainfall has removed temporarily concerns for water levels in the upper reaches of the river and our sailors have had plenty of wind. From the narrow viewpoint of the Association's mission to harmonise recreational use of the river one can only judge a season by the volume of complaint. Since this has been negligible I can only assume that those who have been on or by the river have enjoyed themselves without interference or difficulty. An interesting innovation at Waldringfield Sailing Club has been the introduction of a Report Book for recording collisions between Club boats and moored yachts. I hope to hear more about the worthwhileness of this venture.

Obviously the proposed developments at Bentwaters airfield have been of concern and I am grateful for the interest shown by most members. I will report on the outcomes of the questionnaire elsewhere in this Newsletter, as close to the copy date as possible. Although many members have opposing views I trust that all viewpoints can be expressed fairly so that the Association is not divided by this thorny problem.

An interesting new study has been financed by the Environment Agency to cover the flood defence plan for the Deben, Alde-Ore and Blyth estuaries. The aim is to develop a plan around a "sustainable vision which integrates physical processes, natural resources, land use and

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

human activity in a unified system framework". Your Association will endeavour to contribute with particular reference to current silting at Woodbridge, mooring of yachts, protection of the marshes, launching, landing and providing space for specialist water-sports. I don't think that the Suffolk Estuarine Strategies study will result in a miniature Scheldt barrier.

Planning applications for which no objections were raised included the modified restaurant extensions at The Maybush, Waldringfield and the rebuild of the workshops at Eversons Yard, Woodbridge. We have to move with the times. Pub catering seems to be booming everywhere and, judging by the number of craft on the river in summer, the new facilities at Woodbridge will not be short of work.

At Everson's Yard the rebuild includes provision for a store, club-house and starter box for the re-formed Woodbridge Rowing Club. Now in their fourth season it is pleasing to see the Club expanding into new premises. We hope to welcome them as a new group member and will invite them to provide a Rowing Adviser to the General Committee.

Newer members may not be aware that the Association is a shareholder, through a nominee, of the Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Trust whose members some years ago acquired the foreshore from the Ferry landing round to the houseboat moorings in the creek behind the boatyard. The aim of the Trust was to prevent unsympathetic development.

The wild natural beauty of Felixstowe Ferry is an undisputed fact. The welcome of the Martello Tower from seaward, the hurtling tide between steep-sided shingle banks and the vista of extensive marshes from the sea-wall should not be spoilt by inappropriate development along the inner shoreline. The quiet work of the FFFT deserves commendation and is in line

with our own aims. The views from the lower road behind Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club are another matter and Suffolk Coastal District Council have been urged to formulate a comprehensive plan for building and car-parking so that the historic appeal of the "Ferry" is not impaired. Whilst on this subject can anybody write a note for the Newsletter to explain the history of the glass top structure to the large shed at the northern extremity of the shingle? When I came up the river at sunset recently the scene was enhanced by flashes of reflected light from the glass.

Regrettably the new Byelaw to restrict the speed of vessels, particularly water-jet skis, off the beach from Landguard to the Deben Entrance, follows the pattern of existing Byelaws for the river in that it applies only in the summer months. SCDC were advised of the all-the-year round nature of modern water-sports but failed to amend their application. Why?

Finally, let me add a tribute to the Editor who continues loyally in his role. The Newsletter is the life-line of the Association and we need to keep it strong. Elsewhere in these pages you will find an appeal for a new Chairman. The Editor is well able to make his own appeal for help or for a relief and I hope he will. I think we all know that Michael Atkins has done a tremendous job, more than his share, and deserves to receive a regular well edited Newsletter in the future which he can enjoy without the effort of being Editor.

Good wishes for your recreational interests meanwhile.

Denzil Cowdry
Chairman

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

EDITORIAL

Old Father Thames keeps rolling along. The River Deben Association does also, punctuated by moments of excitement such as the development of Bentwaters and the problem of the Upper Deben. The latter excited enormous interest for some people, whilst those who restrict themselves to the waters below Wilford Bridge do not really get involved. I found the article by Don Johnson, who represents the anglers on the RDA Committee, moving by his understatement of the problem. I decided to publish the letter from the Environment Agency, although I realise that many members will find it too technical. What is a tcm.? Does it matter anyway? But it does spell out some of the problems that we are up against

Bentwaters continues to dominate many of our discussions, and it is because of this that our Chairman has changed the date of the Open Meeting (now October 23rd), so that we can concentrate on the issues involved. I personally regretted that we were not granted a Public Enquiry, as I felt that it would help clarify many of the facts. I now hope that the Forum on October 23rd will serve this purpose. Embodied with this Newsletter are some of the briefings from Suffolk Coastal District Council.

Both these issues do demonstrate the value of the Association, but the plea from the Chairman for a successor is sad. Not so important, but nevertheless relevant, I do feel that new blood is needed to enliven the Newsletter. There may well be a member who would be interested disseminating knowledge about the river in a better way.

On another theme, I sailed through the Ramsholt anchorage recently to find that what had been the top mooring was now superseded by another further up. I am not sure if the moorings have all been moved down, or, if the new mooring is an extension of the Ramsholt

anchorage. The only control over the moorings on the river is exercised by the relevant Fairway Committee, and we have relied on their good sense to restrict any extension. It may well be that this is another area where the RDA might have some influence.

CALL for a VOLUNTEER

Members have been fortunate to enjoy the leadership of four volunteers since the Association was formed. My predecessors as Chairman were Ian Battye, Anni Healey and Anthony Mason. The Constitution of the RDA requires that the Chairman should serve for not more than 3 years, thus promoting a healthy rejuvenation of ideas and enthusiasm. The General Committee have considered a change to the period of tenure but feel strongly that the present arrangements are sound. However, we do need a volunteer.

Before becoming Chairman I had been simply one of the quiet majority of members who permit the Association to roll along, enjoy the Newsletter and give assent by silence to the actions and involvements of the General Committee. My first concern was that a member of the Committee might aspire to Chairmanship. A few phone calls quickly dispelled this idea and the situation today is the same. The Committee comprises more than a dozen very willing members, each with a particular specialised interest. At the moment they are all happy in their work but they do need somebody to pull meetings together after April, 1999.

To this preamble, I can add that the task is interesting from the overall environmental aspect as well as contact it brings with members and others involved with the present and future enjoyment of the Deben Valley. The commitment in time amounts to no more than 2-3 hours a week averaged over the year.

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

Who will volunteer? I have already asked a number of members who have been active in local Clubs for as long as I have known them. Some feel that they have done their share of public work and others currently have other pressing engagements. To save me the task of hawking the job around further it would be absolutely marvellous if I could receive a telephone call from a member interested in learning more about current problems with a view to taking over from me when my three year duty ends next year. Call 01 394-383625.

Denzil Cowdry
Chairman

Articles and Letters

THE NORTH SEA AT YOUR DOOR.

by **ROBERT SIMPER**

As a child I was told the old Suffolk story about the church bells of the lost town of Dunwich ringing under the sea in a gale. Victorian Romantics standing on the crumbling cliffs at Dunwich wondered what it would have been like to have walked along the streets of this busy medieval town and down to its wide harbour full of ships. With its half timbered houses and fine churches Dunwich must have been a kind of Lavenham-by-the-Sea. What happened at Dunwich must never be allowed to happen again.

At Dunwich the sea moved inland about a mile and a half, swallowing the town and harbour. The towns people fought the sea every autumn by putting faggots at the cliff foot and this seems to have been reasonably effective, but once the wool trade declined and there was not enough cash to keep this up the sea moved inland. Most of the town went in about hundred and fifty years, a relatively short

period and it could move inland again at that speed.

What stopped the sea appears to have been a change of climate. The sea level was rising rapidly in the medieval period, causing massive erosion along the East Anglian coast. From around 1260 until the mid-Victorian period there was a mini ice age and sea levels fell. Since then the sea level, for what ever reason, has risen slightly and erosion has become a serious problem again.

Even in a period of low sea level, erosion has still taken place when storms have driven huge waves into the defenceless coast. Southwold would certainly have followed Dunwich into the sea if it had not been for the building of the first pier to protect the harbour mouth in about 1752. Since then there have always been piers at the harbour mouth and this has protected Southwold from the effect of the tide stream along the coast which tears away the foreshore. Even this has not been wholly effective because around 1900 storms began to eat away the fishermen's beach village at the foot of Southwold cliff. The houses here have all gone into the sea, but after groynes were put up in 1910 the main town was saved.

In the Victorian period the same happened at Lowestoft. The harbour piers were not built there until 1832, but once they were constructed the land began to grow on either side. An industrial estate is built on land saved from the sea. If these factories were not on the North Denes at Lowestoft they would have had to have been built on green field sites in the countryside. This was not England getting larger, but was the soil torn off the cliffs at Corton and Hepton being caught at Lowestoft. Even then Lowestoft has lost land. The old Lowestoft Ness, the most easterly point of the British Isles, was in 1885 some 500 ft further

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

out to sea. In the medieval period it must have been considerably further out.

Other more recent successes have been at

Pakefield

and Kessingland

and Pakefield still has streets which end abruptly at the cliff edge, reminders that until the late 1940s the whole suburb of Lowestoft was doomed. The building of sea defences stopped erosion because the shingle was held on the foreshore and the impacts of the waves during a storm does not reach the cliff foot. The same is true at Kessingland, but here the beach was built up with shingle so that the houses once threatened now stand well inland from the sea.

The great shingle wilderness of Orfordness has also moved. The Ness has moved further south than it was in Victorian times. The shingle keeps moving on south, building up the Knolls at the mouths of the Ore and Deben and extending Landguard Point. While between the defended harbour entrances and headlands the sea is gouging out bays which cut deeper and deeper into Suffolk.

People have fought the sea for centuries and in most cases won the battle. It would never be possible to stop every little piece of erosion or flooding, but in this century engineers have to be successful in preventing long term disasters. Another success story is at the Boathouse Point, East Lane, Bawdsey. Most of the village would probably have already gone, like Dunwich, if the Quilter Estate had not hired Dutch engineers to build a sea wall, I think, in about 1923. Backed up with some groynes built in about 1947 this sea defence worked well until a small coastal ship ran ashore and smashed up the groynes and damaged the wall. Once the defences were weakened the shingle washed off the beach and just piled up to form another shingle knoll at the entrance of the River Deben. The loss of shingle allowed the sea to almost break through and sudden large

scale repairs have cost a great deal more than a little regular maintenance would have done.

In recent decades local and central government have wanted to forget sea defences and were delighted when a university professor put forward the theory that if there were no sea defences the coast would find a natural line and stay there. The Halcrow Report, a desk survey done in the London area, was commissioned to try and make this idea acceptable. The report appears to put forward the idea that land, villages and property along the East Anglian coast are of so little value, that it is perfectly acceptable for them to slip into the sea. Even if you worked on present property values, sea defence is more than justified, but this is not the way to do it. We live in an over-crowded island where space is at a premium. The way to value land is how much it will be used in the next thousand years. The more that goes into the sea, the less space there is for people to live on.

It is a nightmare scenario to put forward the idea that the coastline should be allowed to move inland and find its own natural limit. Since the first natural rock is in the Midlands there is no magic line at which the sea would stop in Suffolk. If the sea gets behind Covehithe then it will, in time, wipe out the whole coast, towns and all. One has only to look at the remains of the village of Easton Bavents to see that high land alone does not stop the sea. This has also been shown at Dunwich. If the medieval town of Dunwich had been given the same low level of sea protection that modern Lowestoft and Southwold have received then that town would still be there. The medieval people did not have the ability to resist the sea, but we do.

The great danger with all these weak points is that if the sea breaks through into the Suffolk estuaries it would quickly eat away sizeable

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

area of the coast. At best, Felixstowe, Southwold or Lowestoft could hope to remain as heavily defended islands. One has only to look at the crumbling cliffs of Covehithe in a wild North Sea gale at high tide to know what would happen to the rest of Suffolk if the sea is let in to the estuaries. It is impossible to just protect Felixstowe Dock, and not worry about the bird reserves as if they could be moved inland of Saxmundham. It does not work that way, each piece of strong coast line protects the section either side. Give the sea an inch and it will slowly take a mile and then another mile.

There has not been enough annual maintenance done to the very limited sea defences along the Suffolk coast, and the other major problem is off shore dredging for ballast for the building trade. It may be coincidence that the major erosion problems are taking place at Felixstowe and Bawdsey, opposite where the channel into the Port of Felixstowe is being dredged deeper, and at Dunwich to Covehithe where millions of tons are being taken off the sea bed for ballast. By dredging away the off shore banks large waves can hit the coast and increase the erosion.

As the population of Suffolk grows and more people visit the coast the pressure on space is growing. In the long term, it does not make any sense to let the coastal area go into the sea. It is vital to the future of the sixteen villages and towns along the Suffolk coast that serious defence work is restarted and that off-shore dredging ends. Future generations will not thank us for today's woolly approach to saving all the Suffolk coastal villages.

Robert Simper

Letter from Geoffrey Osborne, re Litter Clearance October 20th 1997

Dear David, Jo and Denzil,

Yesterday my team consisted of four full-time adults. and a couple of small, but well-behaved children aged three and five. Between us we collected about seven full dustbin bags, and some oddments - just a bootfull !

For next year it might be worth me doing a recce with a view to using a couple of Land-Rover pick-up trucks to remove the largish pieces of boat wreckage - cabin-tops, hatches, etc.

As you know it was a day of amazing contrasts. It started with a mist so thick that it was impossible to see the noisy geese and the other birds that could be heard calling on the water. As we were driving down the last part of the track to Stonner Point, an adult rabbit broke cover from the hedge and ran across in front of the car and down the track, hotly pursued by a rather dark coloured stoat. After crossing and recrossing the track, the pair disappeared over the bank towards the river. Soon afterwards, we heard the squeals of the rabbit, so assumed that the stoat had caught its lunch.

Later on when the mist cleared, it was like a balmy summer's day. At the end of our labours, walking back from the Shottishar Sluice we saw another stoat, white underneath, coming along the track towards us, before it stopped, turned tail, and ran back from the way it had come. A little further on, we spotted a yellow-hammer in a bush quite near to us. When it flew away there were at least two other yellow-hammers with it and a very smart golden chestnut coloured bird, perhaps slightly bulkier than a yellow-hammer.

Best wishes,

Geoffrey Osborne.

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

THE UPPER DEBEN

REFLECTIONS ON THE RIVER

The first time I can recall seeing the River Deben at Woodbridge was in the summer of 1938. We, my mother and I, were at the seaside. The bus ride to Woodbridge was an event in itself, but knowing that the picnic basket contained sandwiches and lemonade, made it special. The walk down to the river was soon made, and the ferryman took us on what seemed to be a journey across the sea to a sandy beach. On arrival, after much effort by the ferryman, we landed on what is now known to be "the southern side" of the river. Soon sand castles were appearing everywhere. It was great fun, and was my first time at "the seaside".

One thing I can remember vividly and of great interest in those early days were the aircraft. Six Handley Page Heyfords took off from Martlesham Heath, coming across towards us, very slowly, the air-gunner sitting in the open nose of the aircraft with a big gun in front of him. Later I found out that they were on their way to Iraq, via many refuelling stops. Late in the afternoon, we saw the ferryman making his way over to pick us up. A walk up to the Cross Corner to the bus stop, and very soon Wickham Market Hill saw us walking home again after my first trip to "the seaside".

The early years of the war saw my first introduction to the non-tidal Deben, it being at the bottom of the road to King Edwards Avenue, where we lived. My mother had been interested in fishing since she was a young girl, and two cane rods with wooden centre pin reels were in the shed. With me now old enough to hopefully do what I was told, we ventured down to the river, the reels contained what looked like brown string, the floats were from swan's quills and big black hooks were then tied

on. A paste, made from flour, honey and cheese was moulded up, and away we went. The river, in those days, was on average four to six feet deep throughout, with up to nine feet at the many bends. Swimming was possible just about anywhere. The fish were also plentiful, splendid silver roach which we carefully returned, keep-nets being unknown to us. On later visits, fishing with worms saw perch and eels caught with ease, the eels finding themselves in the pot at home. My love of the Deben continued until I joined the Air Force in 1949, and in 1958 I renewed my love of the river by joining the Woodbridge and District Angling Club.

Now, I am sorry to say that the Deben is but a shadow, or should I say, puddle of its former self. The area that I used to fish as a boy is now only some ten or twelve inches deep, heavily weeded with little or no flow, fish are very hard to find and there is very little wild life. Perhaps in the future, the powers that be will realise that you cannot take out more water than the river has, and that it should flow from source to sea, not source to field. Still it is nice to remember the happy days on the Deben, both as "the seaside" and as the River.

Don Johnson

The following letter was received by our Chairman from the Environment Agency, and he suggested that it should be published in full.

14 May 1998

Dear Mr. Cowdry,

**EAST SUFFOLK LOCAL
ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PLAN (LEAP)**

Thank you for your letter of 21st April. I am very pleased that the River Deben Association found the East Suffolk Local Environment Plan

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

such a useful and informative document. A lot of research goes into producing these documents, not just by the Agency but by all the consultees who contribute to them, so it is very encouraging for us to learn that groups such as yourselves find them such a valuable source of information.

Unfortunately it is not possible to send you a copy of the ALF study as it is an internal document which contains some commercially sensitive data. However the general principles outlined in the document are that the River Deben was identified as being one of the 40 low flow rivers classified nationally as needing an action plan to alleviate the low flow problems. Actions on the Deben include carrying out river channel improvements, some of which have now been implemented, and operation of the Agency's river augmentation borehole at Earl Soham to supplement river flows.

The following information relates specifically to those licensing aspects raised in your letter.

1. The total annual flow for the tidal head of the River Deben measured at Naunton Hall Gauging Station for 1997 was 218232 tcm.

2. The Total Licensed Annual Abstraction (all uses) is 1925 tcm.

Actual Annual Abstraction for 1997

Spray irrigation surface	177 tcm
Spray irrigation ground	387 tcm
Other	31 tcm
TOTAL	595 tcm.

The above figures show that actual abstraction from the Deben, in 1997, was only 31% of the total annual licensed amount. This is partly as a result of restrictions imposed on surface water abstraction for spray irrigation because of the drought and the need to protect river flows and also a result of the exceptionally wet June which considerably reduced summer demands.

3. The Agency's Earl Soham river augmentation borehole has not yet been used, but the issue of the licence is imminent. It is proposed that groundwater will be discharged into the Earl Soham stream through the existing outfall at Earl Soham located next to the Sewage Treatment Works at TM 2324 6274 whenever the flow at Naunton Hall gauging station is less than 0.088 m³/s for a maximum of 100 days in any year. It is envisaged that the borehole will be used this summer.

4. The total number of Abstraction Licence Holders is

Spray Irrigation Surface	14
Spray Irrigation Ground	22
Other	52
TOTAL	88

5. Number of Enforcement Visits made in the Deben Catchment in 1997

Full Enforcement Visits	10
Other	20

Other visits include river walking and ensuring that abstraction did not take place during restrictions, and that the odd and even day abstraction restriction regimes were adhered to where appropriate.

6. The current trigger level for reducing abstraction on the Deben is the 95th percentile flow (that is the flow equalled or exceeded 95 percent of the time) measured at Naunton Hall gauging station. This is 0.084 m³/s (cumecs), and the savings are voluntary at this stage. When flow falls below this, restrictions are formalised and increased in severity as conditions deteriorate. As a last resort a total ban on spray irrigation can be enforced.

Yours sincerely,
Robert Runcie
Acting Area Manager (Eastern)

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

Bentwaters Airfield PROPOSALS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The latest News (2nd August 1998)

At this stage there will be no Public Enquiry. Suffolk Coastal District Council will resolve the application, probably in November, on the basis of the existing Suffolk Coastal Plan provisions, including some changes (which are not yet finalised) and other planning guidelines.

WHAT ARE THE TERMS OF THE RELEVANT PARTS OF THE CURRENT PLAN

10.19.14. The former Technical Base retains the aviation facilities including the main runway (2,700 metres long), taxiways, cross runways, control tower, hangars, aircraft shelters, administrative buildings etc. The Council's objectives for the development of the former base include the provision of employment. Continued aviation use would go some way towards meeting these objectives. In particular, such a use has the potential to create jobs (both directly and indirectly) and introduce spending into the local economy from an influx of people and activities.

10.19.16. It is significant that the whole of the former Technical Base is within the AONB and the visual impact of buildings and structures will be an important consideration. Continued use for civilian rather than military use will have an impact on the area, primarily through surface traffic (and that which would be generated by an airport would be assessed in the context of all proposals for the former Base and the volume of traffic that is to be generated) and light noise. The primary purpose of permitting an airport within an AONB would be the economic benefits (although the Council will seek environmental improvements in terms of the removal of

buildings and restoration of land). Therefore, business activity should have priority over recreational flying activity. Training, for example, or recreational flying creates significant disturbance without the same economic benefits as business flying.

10.19.17. The planning policy against which to consider future aviation proposals would contain the main issues to be assessed. However, there are matters of detail which it may not be possible to include in such a policy. Proposals for type of aircraft, type of flying activity, circuit heights and the number of movements will be significant factors in any planning consent. They will need to be set specifically in relation to this site and area. At this stage, it is considered appropriate to highlight the key planning issues by means of general criteria in a policy, and leave the detail for consideration of a planning application and inclusion in planning conditions and or a Legal Agreement.

10.19.18. For example, the hours of operation would be the subject of negotiation in dealing with any planning permission but, in general terms the following is envisaged:

There should be no overnight flying (probably between 2000 and 0600 hours);

Training flights should not occur on Sundays and cease early on Saturdays (perhaps 1300 hours);

Ground testing shall not occur on Sundays, any evening (starting around 1700 hours) and finish early on Saturdays.

10.19.20. POLICY LP141A (use of the former Base at Rendlesham/ Wantisden for Civilian Aviation)

In order to secure benefits to the local economy, proposals for the re-use of part of

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

the former Military Base at Rendlesham/Wantiden for civilian aviation purposes will be supported.

Activity at the airport must not result in:

1. An unreasonable disturbance to surrounding communities, particularly through noise;

2. Material adverse effect on air quality;

3. Volume and type of surface traffic which creates serious problems on the local road network.

In assessing the impact of various activities, particularly in terms of noise, as well as air and surface traffic generation, priority will be given to those activities which have the greatest benefit to the local economy.

Proposals for engine testing shall be agreed with the District Council and take place within designated areas unless the activity would not have a material impact on residential or rural amenity. Such areas and any buildings to be used for the maintenance of aircraft, testing of engines or other related activities shall make provision to reduce the emission of noise and fumes. No ground testing of aircraft engines shall take place in the evenings, on Saturday afternoons and at any time on Sunday and public holidays.

Controls on aircraft movements will be set in respect of:

(i) the type of activity, type and size of aircraft, and laden weights;

(ii) except for emergencies, no aircraft movements overnight and in the evenings on Sundays and public holidays;

(iii) no training flights on Sundays and public holidays, or on Sunday afternoons and evenings;

(iv) no helicopter training;

(v) a limited number of helicopter movements other than during the periods set by (ii) above;

(vi) no use of the airport by parachute planes, towed gliders (except by a ground winch), or microlights;

(vii) circuit patterns, circuit heights and flight paths.

RESULTS OF THE RDA SURVEY

530 questionnaires were sent out and 218 were returned, representing 262 named individuals and four groups. Of the 262 named individuals, opinions divided as follows: 19 supported the International Regional Airport proposal in full and the rest, apart from 2 who wanted more information, were against full development, i.e. 241 AGAINST: 19 IN FAVOUR. 123 of the 241 against a large regional airport were in support of a small airport and 120 agreed with a low-key maintenance and repair facility. Thus about half of the respondents were against commercial air traffic of all kinds. Only 26 respondents thought that the airport plans were of no concern to the RDA and felt that we should not be involved with a Public Enquiry etc. To have been absolutely correct two copies of the questionnaire should have been sent to those with family membership. I am sorry for this omission. Some who signed as individuals were probably signing for their partner as well but I have made no adjustment for this assumption.

COMMENTS BY MEMBERS

The questionnaire generated 53 known letters to authorities, three replies from John Gummer,

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

one threatening phone call, a cheque for £20, five complaints about a double negative, two accusations of bias, three changes of address, one gone away, most regrettably reports of two deaths and about 33 letters or notes of encouragement. Thank you all very much for responding. In my view the replies were interesting and instructive, enabling the General Committee to proceed with confidence to represent the views of the RDA as fairly as they possibly can.

Denzil
Chairman

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 1998

"I have been coming to the Community Centre for years, but have never seen the seating arranged like this." So said one of our older members as she arrived for the 1998 A.G.M. Change was in the air. No longer would the Chairman sit on high with a God like view of the meeting. Microphones were conspicuous by their absence. The result was a more relaxed, informal and intimate atmosphere - and there was no shortage of contributors. Possibly those at the back could see little more than the Chairman's coiffure, but no matter.

In his report, the Chairman dealt with the upper reaches of the Deben where the problem is becoming greater all the time. The difficulty is that there is very little water flowing down this part of the Deben - even on occasions flowing backwards - and any improvement involves 57 different committees all of whom have virtually no budget to alleviate the problem, and would prefer it to be someone else's affair. This kind of thing is meat and drink for our Chairman. On slightly firmer ground he embarked on the subject of wrecks, where he pointed out that

there were good wrecks and bad wrecks. The much published picture of a helicopter lifting two unsightly (but very light) dinghies from a mud bank at Melton possibly indicated that something was being done - but we were not to be fooled by that. Your correspondent recalls a visit to Camaret-sur Mer in Brittany where large fishing vessels were left to rot on the beach and, in fact, formed a picturesque scene entirely in keeping with the harbour.

Maybe I had dropped off for a moment but I was startled to hear that the reason for the excessive presence of helicopters on the river was for the defence of Woodbridge. I had visions of enemy forces from Grundisburgh or Aldeburgh making a surprise attack on the town, and capturing Market Hill and the Turban car park, and then being forced to retreat by a combined land and helicopter force from Witesham reclaiming the lost ground. I was so startled that I left any questioning until the coffee break when I was told that the helicopters were directed down the Fynn valley to avoid any rapid descents on the town of Woodbridge. I was still sorting this out when the word "pro-active" was being banded around. This was to do with R.D.A. guide lines which had been encapsulated and attached to all the rescue boats in the Deben explaining the very few occasions when they may exceed the speed limit; and also asking them to encourage visitors to avoid creating too much wash. What with people having power to extract £25 from dog owners who despoil the paths, and now boat owners who misbehave, I can see an enormous role opening up for the R.D.A.

We had a brief interlude when the Treasurer gave his report, and was spared any questions about the destination of the surplus. And the coffee ladies had received the nod to heat the urn when the bombshell was dropped - Bentwaters. Was it any concern of ours? In

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

any case, how could the Association Committee put forward the collective view of its members? And the poor pilots have got to train somewhere. In any case, no planning application had been received as yet. And were we a political group, etc, etc? There was a danger that the urns would have burnt dry by now. At last, it was suggested that every individual was entitled to write to the Planning Authority to express their own view. This gave us all an excuse to go and get our coffee - except for the poor Chairman who missed his in a lengthy discussion on the upper Deben. Maybe he will return to the higher platform next time.

After coffee we were entertained with three short talks - Adrian Judge who produced two fierce looking punt guns and explained how they worked; Nicholas Marshall who gave an interesting illustrated talk about the birds of the Deben; and Robert Simper who dealt with Coastal erosion from a historical view. A very pleasant way to end the evening, and our thanks go to them all.

Michael Atkins.

Association Business

Forthcoming Events

Sunday October 11th 1998 Litter Collection

Friday October 23rd 1998 R.D.A.Open Meeting

Friday April 23rd, 1999 R.D.A. A.G.M.

Sunday July 25th
to 31st July 1999 Deben Week

Sunday July 25th 1999 Yachtsman's Service
Waldringfield Beach

STOP PRESS

LITTER COLLECTION

This year's collection is on Sunday , 11th October, before we hold the Open Meeting- which means that recruitment is more difficult. It is being organised by Jo Masters (01394 383825) assisted by Geoffrey Osborne . Jo writes to say that it is suitable for all ages and a good way to meet other members of the Association in your area, and you often see the River from a different angle. It is one of the most significant ways in which the Association makes an impact. Volunteers are asked to contact their team leader or Jo Maasters at the above number.

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER AUTUMN 1998

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 1998

WHO'S WHO

OFFICERS

Chairman	Denzil Cowdry, St.Edmundsbury 10 Ipswich Rd, Woodbridge, 1P12 4BJ	Tel 01394 383625
Vice Chairman	Michael Atkins, Rudds Barn, Waldringfield Rd., Martlesharn, 1P12 4PJ	Tel 01473 736668
Treasurer	David Mace, Japonica Cottage, Waldringfield, IP 12 4QN	Tel 01473 736677
Secretary	John Lineker, Decoy House, Old Church Road, Melton, IP13 6DH	Tel 01394 460196
Press Secretary	Rosemary Schlee, Deben Lodge, Melton Rd., Woodbridge, 1P12 INH	Tel.01394 382740

COMMITTEE

Felixstowe Ferry	David White, 6 Coniston Close, Felixstowe, IP 11 9SW	Tel 01394 283972
History	Robert Simper, Sluice Cottage, Ramsholt	Tel 01394 411273
Sailing	David Cavey, 10 Crown Place, Woodbridge, 1P12 IBU	Tel 01394 387099
Litter	Jo Masters, 49 Riverview Rd., Melton.	Tel 01394 383825
Foreshore	Geoffrey Osborne, 4 Sunnyhill, Waldringfield, 1P12 4QS	Tel 01394 38709
Wildfowlers	Adrian Judge, 29 Bredfield St., Woodbridge.	Tel 01394 383350
General Liaison	Ian Batty, Upson Cottage, 8 Crown Place, Woodbridge 1P12 IBN	Tel 01394 382338
Water Ski Club	Steve James, 1 The Courts, Church Lane, Playford 1P6 9DR	Tel 01473 624683
SCDC Liaison	Anni Healey, Jesters, 7A Burkitt Rd., Woodbridge 1P12 4JJ	Tel 01394 382291
Angling	Don Johnson, Ivy Dene, Melton Hill, Woodbridge, IP 12 4NH	Tel 01394 383661
Footpaths	Anne Moore, 2 Grundisborough Rd., Woodbridge, 1P12 4HG	Tel 01394 383559
Assistant Editor	Dennis Hawes, 48 New Street, Woodbridge, IP12 1DX	Tel 01394 386325
Maritime Heritage	Anthony Mason, 29 Woodbridge Rd., Woodbridge 1P12 4BS	Tel 01394 386601

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION

OPEN MEETING

FRIDAY OCTOBER 23RD, 1998

Woodbridge Community Hall at 7 30 p. m

The main part of the evening takes the form of a Forum discussing the Bentwaters Development Plan.

The principal speaker is :

John Cousins

Aviation Adviser to Suffolk Business Airport, Ltd.

The following have also been invited

English Nature
Suffolk Preservation Society
Suffolk Coastal District Council
Suffolk Coasts and Heaths
The Alde and Ore Association
and others

As usual, there will be time for members and others to raise other matters which may concern the Association.

There will be an interval when coffee, tea and biscuits will be available

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY 22ND APRIL 1999 7.30 p.m.

AT

WOODBIDGE COMMUNITY HALL.

ALL ARE WELCOME

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Minutes of the 1998 AGM**
- 3. Matters arising :-
 Millenium Projects / Events**
- 4. Chairman's Report**
- 5. Treasurers Report**
- 6. Election of Officers and Committee**

The following have resigned :

D.Cavey. T. Midwinter. V.Midwinter

**The following Members were Co-opted during the year and
are offered for Election :**

D Hawes. D Mace. P Wain .

**The following Members Resign in Rotation and offer
themselves for Re-Election:**

**M Atkins
D Cowdry
A Healy
D Johnson
A Mason
R Schlee
D White**

**Following these changes the Committee will remain with
one vacancy**

- 7. Another Bussiness.**

Following a short interval for Refreshments

EAST ANGLIAN FILM ARCHIVES

will present early cinematograph of the Deben and its shores.