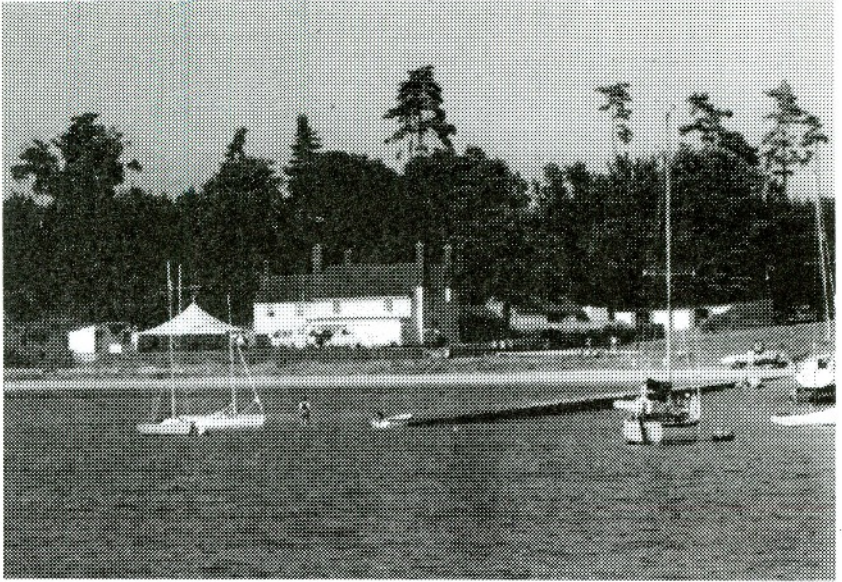


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NEWSLETTER

10th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

AUTUMN 2000

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# River Deben Association Newsletter

## Autumn 2000

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### Editorial

The shape and depth of the River Deben may be gradually changing, but those who live by it, and make use of it, either from the banks or from boats are all as fond as ever of it. The Deben is well used, and used in a responsible manner. The evidence of Jo Masters' litter collection shows that people who use the River care about the River and do not as a rule sully it with litter - or worse.

One of the highlights of the year for us river lovers was the BBC adaptation of Clare Francis novel Deceit. There were many images which were familiar; the Boathouse at Felixstowe Ferry and Methersgate Quay in particular. I am sure we all enjoyed criticising the idea of a five minute row from Methersgate to the Ferry. Coincidentally, I

also noticed that Laura Ashley used the same setting at the Ferry for a recent catalogue.

I have spent some time at the Felixstowe Ferry sailing Club this summer; Deben Week Regatta being the occasion. It seems to me that the erosion has not got worse. Betty Smith, the Commodore of FFSC tells me that the Environment Agency have accepted that 'something must be done'. There are four plans which will in due course be publicly debated, but there is of course a round of committees of the various Councils and organisations who have interests in or responsibility for the subject. Hopefully there will be some progress over the next 12 months.

Betty Smith also sends her thanks and those of her Committee to all those who wrote to the Council and the Environment Agency this year. Apparently both organisations were overwhelmed by the number of letters they received, and this has contributed to the prospect of action.

You will see from the front cover of this Newsletter that the Association is 10 years old. Anni Healey was one of the founders 10 years ago, and she has written an article on those first beginnings and the achievements of the first 10 years.

The name of John Passmore will be well known to readers of Yachting Monthly. John has come to live in Woodbridge, and has very kindly contributed an article for this Newsletter, with the succinct title 'Mud'.

**David Copp**  
Editor



## Chairman's Notes

So it is 10 years since our Association was formed initially to fight the erection of a fence over what had been considered common land at Kyson Point. I remember vividly Rosemary Schlee sitting at a table on the path outside the Waldringfield Sailing Club signing up members and woe betide anyone who passed without completing a membership form!

With a membership of nearly 800 we have come a long way since then and are now recognised as a body to consult when planning and other matters are being considered which affect our lovely river Deben.

Have we been effective or just a talk shop? There have been several issues where we know that our views were taken very seriously and we have initiated one or two projects to improve certain areas. I suppose that one of the answers to the question is to compare the river today to that of 10 years ago and I doubt if many people would notice any serious changes and we have surely played a part in that.

The next 10 years may be different. The pressure for leisure areas as the local population rises are intense and I believe that we will have to be even more vigilant and fight hard to maintain the relative peace and tranquillity that all the users of the river enjoy whether on the water or the adjoining footpaths.

Please come to our 10th anniversary meeting — there will be a free glass of wine for everybody — what value your subscription!

Anthony Mason

## HOW IT STARTED !

R.D.A. - 10 YEARS AGO

In the 80's anyone could apply for planning permission on anyone's land and many did. Developer's helicopters flew up and down the Deben eyeing their chances. There were plans for marinas, holiday complexes, large residential developments on the water-front and even at one point a Ferris wheel. For the first time by the river, a piece of land, traditionally enjoyed by bathers, picnickers and families was fenced off. The River which had served as a transport system, livelihood and a recreation area for centuries, was at risk of irrevocable change, without any regard for what local people wanted.

An initial exploratory meeting to establish any interest, was attended by 150 people from boatyards, wildlife societies, angling clubs and houseboat residents: river-users of all sorts. The result was a group that was given the task of getting together a constitution to present to a Public Meeting.

The steering committee was made up of people with diverse interests, many talents, strong opinions and above all-stamina. We enjoyed much discussion and endured hours of frustration over mind-numbing details, helped with the hospitality of the back room of The Kings Head. Many months, pints and drafts later a perfectly good constitution was thrashed out and has had only one minor alteration since.

The Inaugural Meeting was held on May 4th 1990 in a packed community hall. There was a centre spread in the East Anglian and a slot at Radio Suffolk. The new Committee went away to organise the innovative litter-clearance of the River Deben, the first of its kind and to bring out our Summer newsletter. There were campaigns to pursue: -

- A great debacle to keep houseboats here at Woodbridge and Melton, or there at

Felixstowe and Wilford Bridge, versus the clean-up brigade that wanted them nowhere.

- Committing £1000 to help launch the Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Trust in their struggle to obtain disputed land at Felixstowe Ferry. This would enable people to continue to launch their boats for evermore. An important issue then and now, as there are so few places of public access to the river.

- The insistence that there was some form of landscaping and disabled access to the river wall in Woodbridge during the construction of the new sea defences. [Some surreptitious seeding of wild flowers on the bank may have gone on as well!]

- Pollution in the river above the Mill at Wickham Market, causing the death of the fish population

- River trips with Suffolk Coastal District Council for both officers and members while they were writing their Local Plan. This was to help them understand the significance of the river that ran past their offices. Appreciation of the special qualities of the Deben are now enshrined in their planning policies and will hopefully prevent the destruction of the Deben valley similar to that seen on much of the South Coast.

- The final part of this is the Management Plan for the Deben just being completed and with which we continue to be involved, especially important with the threats of expansion to the communities on the Deben Peninsula.

These were the beginning of many activities, that were to promote our central aim: 'to represent and reconcile the interests of all concerned with the future of the River Deben and its environs.'

We have had successful campaigns and I

hope have not alienated many people. With the continuing support of those involved with and who love the river, I am sure the next 10 years will be just as productive.

I would like to thank everyone who put in those long hours, to get the Association up and running, in particular Ian Battye, Charlie Beardall, Mac Budge, Annette Burt, John Chapman, Lil Tudor-Craig, Annie Hart, Anne Moore, Brian Scott, Tom Zabell and Richard Hare, Frances Matheson, Tim Pryke, Valerie Richards, Rosemary Schlee to name but a few. I hope to see all or many of them at our special meeting in October.

Anni Healey

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

*I was surprised to read in your editorial as the new editor of the RDA news letter that you saw aviation at Bentwaters as an 'opportunity'. May I point out to you the damage to local jobs which could have resulted from aviation had it had been allowed.*

*High tech business is of course creating many new well paid jobs (for example, look at Cambridge, where the industry has now reached saturation in terms of living space). We have several new high tech businesses locally (including Melton), where the proprietors specifically cite the peace and tranquillity of the area as a means of attracting and holding high quality staff, which include local people. Aviation at Bentwaters, they say, would have put a stop to this important employment growth area and forced them to move away from the district.*

*Conversely, part of the community requires part-time work and unskilled*



*work. Many thousands of such jobs are created by the tourist industry. The East of England Tourist Board reported to the Local Plan Inspector that very many of these jobs would have been put at risk throughout the AONB by noise nuisance created by aviation at Bentwaters.*

*I believe the River Deben Association should support sustainable local employment by protecting the peace and tranquillity of the River Deben and its environs, a vital component of the economic health of the region.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Malcolm Hodd*

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Woodbridge, IP12 3JL*

*Tel 01394 384323*

*Fax 01394 386004*

*Email:*

*mhodd@methersgate.demon.co.uk*

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Dear Editor

I was a National 12 owner in the 1956-67 period during which some of us spent happy Easters at Waldringfield. Later I worked broad, returned to the UK with a 30 foot Albin Ballad, joined WSC and enjoyed wonderful times in 94-96 on the Deben and roundabout until I realised my retirement income was insufficient to pay the Ballad bills.

I joined the RDA in 1994 and continue to support you.

I write about your spring newsletter where Robin Whittle mentions on page 10 about the Marconi radar mast at the Great Baddow labs near Chelmsford. I worked for

the Marconi Company 1962-76 including a short spell at Baddow near the foot of that very mast. It was unused then in 1963 except maybe for test antennas mounted very low down. I never saw anybody or anything near the top. I suppose it was erected just pre-WW2 when Marconi were building a series of those radar systems invented and proven at Bawdsey.

I have one or two addresses of ex-Marconi staff who might be able to tell Robin more if he wants to know. We are down here for 10 days but normally reside near Ashford, Kent (24 Front Road, Woodchurch TN24 3QE or e-mail jon@frontrd.demon.co.uk.)

I hope the mag can continue to remind me of my happy days on the Deben.

Best Wishes - Jon Chaplin

Jon & Sally Chaplin

Le Bourg, Molières  
24480 Le Cadouin, France  
tel +33 553 63 2936

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Dear Editor

*Robert Simper's article on the wrecks of the River Deben reminded of two enquiries received in the last ten years, which might have resulted in the revelation of river history, but seem to have been forgotten by their initiators. Both were from academics seeking information.*

*The first was from a curator at the National Maritime Museum who proposed to investigate all the quays and docks on the river, and who sought local information. I both sailed the river and its creeks and walked its banks carefully looking for remains that I might have overlooked*

*when not really seeking them. I also referred him to the three old sages of the river whose knowledge of the river was vast, (alas, two of them now dead), and asked him to inform me when and where his paper would be published. The result - nothing, not even a letter of thanks.*

*More recently a researcher from Aberdeen University sought information about old vessels on the river, those being defined as being British built before 1950. Again, I walked the banks making notes and where possible interviewing the owners of likely vessels, and passing the results to him. The result was exactly the same as before.*

*Where are all our courteous academics?*

*Richard Sampson*

## Historical Notes on the Deben

The Deben from the 11th to the 17th Centuries

Part of the present charm of the Deben lies in its lack of commercial or military activity and this relates to its shallow and shifting entrance. Such has not always been so. One hypothesis is that the origin of the name is from the Anglo-Saxon *deop*, hence 'the deep one'. Although the present river is far from deep, the flow in the lower reaches must have been much greater before the extensive salt marshes were enclosed with sea walls. The greater flow would have been associated with deeper water at and near the entrance.

The great port of the Deben from late Anglo-Saxon days until the middle of the 15th century was Goseford. This comprised a chain

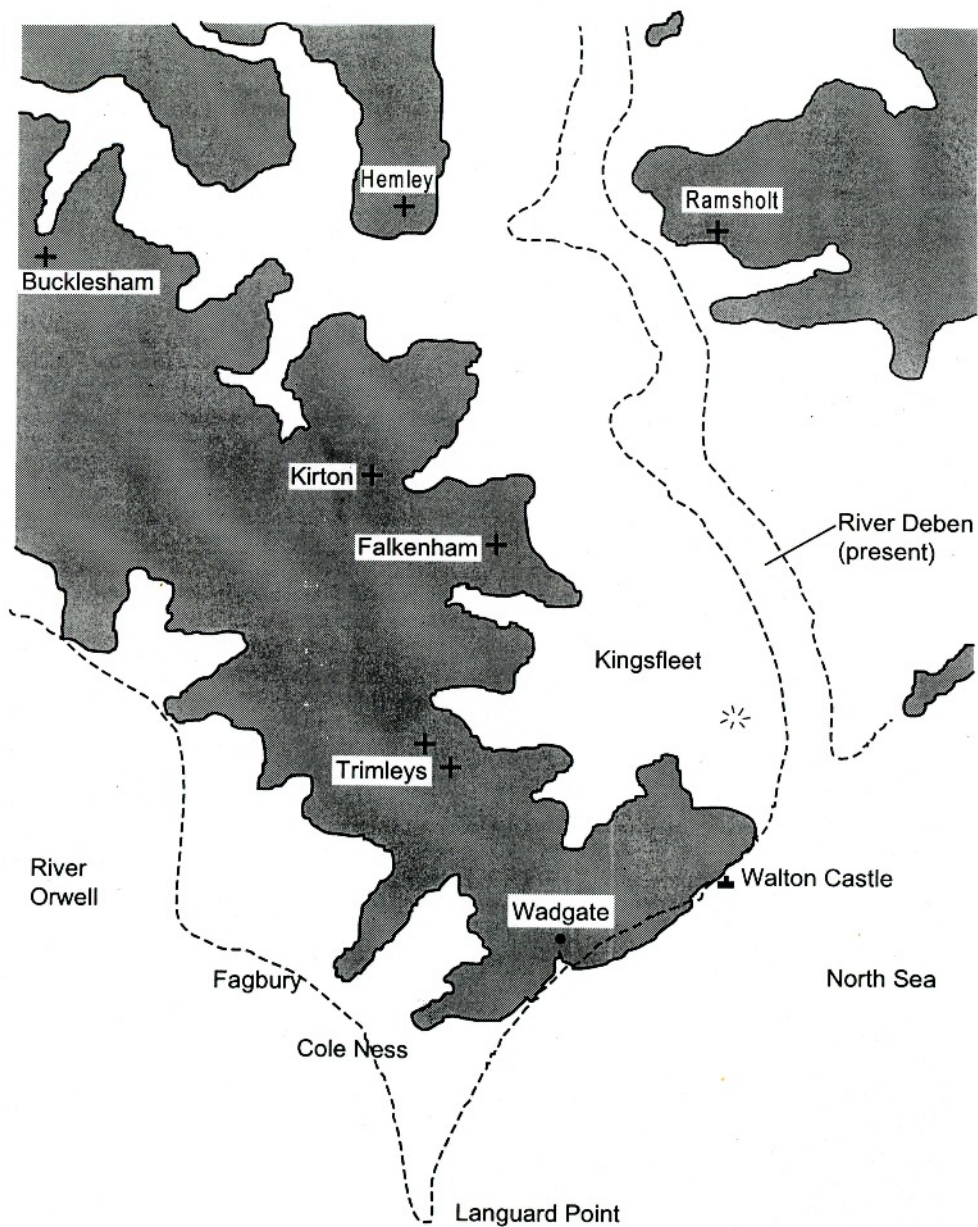
of villages with their creeks, hards or quays from Walton Castle, about 1 1/4 miles south south-west of Felixstowe Ferry and now submerged, along the then west bank of the river to the present Kirton creek. This extended port had its own sheltered anchorage, the Kingsfleet, to the north of Walton Castle and Felixstowe Ferry and to the west of the main channel of the river as can be seen in the map. From the Norman conquest, Goseford was a site of considerable commercial activity, later including trade in wool and woollen goods. Goseford was a favoured naval base for Edward III. In 133P the port contributed 15 ships for royal service as against 10 from Ipswich and 5 from Orford.

Gradually the importance of Goseford shifted to Woodbridge. It is likely that the increasing enclosure of the salt marshes with walls led to a more even depth of water in the Deben with shallower water than before at the mouth and deeper water than before at Woodbridge. The latter had better communications by land and in particular easier access to the inland oak woods. Ship building and trade increased at this town from the 15th century, reaching a peak in the 17th century. A variety of merchant ships and men-o'-war were built, including some 15 of the latter of 300 to 660 tons during the period of 1630 to 1690. The needs of shipwrights and seamen were catered for by three pubs in the Quayside area - the Anchor, still very active, and the Boat and the Ship, both now dwelling houses. During the height of shipping activity in the Deben and at Woodbridge, local seafarers played a disproportionate share in the opening up of North America. In the 19th century, local ship building and water-born trade declined.

The map shows parts of the Deben and Orwell estuaries before reclamation of the marshes with sea walls. Interrupted lines show present shores. This map is redrawn from Arnott, W.G. (1950) 'Suffolk Estuary. The Story of the River Deben'. Boydell Press: Ipswich



Map



## The Bawdsey Masts

One piece of local history familiar to many river users is set to disappear very shortly. In fact, by the time you read this article, the last remaining radio mast at Bawdsey will have been dismantled and removed. The date for this removal is set for September 18 2000.

I have always impressed visitors that I have introduced to the area by telling them that radar was invented at Bawdsey Manor, and that the masts are evidence of this. I have however now spoken to local historian Gordon Kinsey who has filled me in with a lot of detail.

The masts were erected in 1938. There were four steel masts arranged in a line on top of Bawdsey cliff. These were the transmitter masts and the transmission aerials were copper rods which were slung between the masts. Of course the system also required receivers to pick up the reflected radio waves. There were four wooden receiver masts (280 ft high as opposed to the transmitter masts which were 340 ft high), and these were positioned between the Manor and the transmitter masts.

The function of this system was of course to give advance warning of approaching enemy aircraft and shipping. Radio Location was the name given to the system, and the term Radar was a term coined later by the Americans when they were introduced to the system upon their entry into the war.

The team which developed the system was led by Robert Watson-Watt who is generally credited as being the inventor of Radar. Although he was the team leader, the other team members at Bawdsey were also an essential part of the invention. At first, in 1938 when the masts were erected, the

system was capable of seeing a few miles; at first as far as the water tower at Walton! Improvements followed rapidly and in 1939, a chain of 'Radio Location' stations were established around East Anglia, stretching from West Beckham near Norwich to the Isle of Wight. [no doubt the masts at Great Baddow mentioned by Jon Chaplin in his letter in this Newsletter were a part of the chain]

Historians accept that the existence of Radar played a very large part in the successful defence of England, especially during the Battle of Britain. Through Radar, it was possible to observe the preparations being made on the far side of the Channel and the North Sea and to prepare to repel the threat. Our fighters could be targeted to exactly where the enemy would appear.

Towards the end of the war, this original system was gradually being replaced by rotating aerials which could emit a directional beam and could achieve much greater ranges. Some of us will remember the rotating aerials at Bawdsey further inland from the masts. Even they have now been superseded and removed.

The wooden receiver masts were dismantled after the war, and the aerials and associated structure removed from the steel transmitter masts. Three out of the four steel masts were removed some years ago just leaving Mast No 2 as a monument to such an important invention. However time has taken its toll on the structure which is now unsafe, and it has been decided that the cost of making it safe is not justified.

Mariners and aviators all over the world will however continue to rely on modern, highly developed radar which has been directly derived from what was first conceived at Bawdsey.



## Mud

You can have too much mud.

OK so this is sacrilege. I shall be black-balled by the membership committee. I shall be stoned in the Thoroughfare.

To hear some East Coast yachtsmen talk, you would think that mud was invested with some sort of mystical quality: A couple of chapters of Maurice Griffiths and the visitor from the South Coast begins to wonder how he could have wasted so much of his life stepping ashore onto gleaming hardwood pontoons when he could have been sinking welly-deep into the very soul of the river.

When we first came to the Deben to live aboard our catamaran "Lottie Warren" in front of the Tidemill, we liked the idea of mud. We enthused about watching the tide going out with greedy sucking noises and the banks advancing at somewhat more than walking pace.

But now all that seems a long time ago - before we set out to cruise round Britain. In particular, before the Trouble at Tollesbury.

There was also the Awful Truth about Walton: There we were, snugly moored behind the Yacht Club, bows to a staging, stern to a buoy and sitting in the mud for 20 hours out of 24 - or progressively less until the retreating spring tides kept us afloat for hardly more than a heartbeat.

On the last day, the instructions for going ashore went like this: Lower yourself over the bow into the dinghy, slide it across the mud until you can go no further, put on the wellies waiting conveniently in last time's footprints, wade glutinously to the wall. Now climb the wall.

Things were not much better in Pyefleet Creek when we returned one evening to

find the boat high and dry. To get home we had thirty yards of mud to cross. I did a trial run. It was the kind of mud that you had to run through. Then we ran together, pulling the dinghy with the dog in it - which was absurd because the dog liked nothing better than running through mud. Come to think of it, we should have harnessed him to the painter, sat in the dinghy ourselves and let him tow us.

Anyway all of this had to be leading up to something and the whole sorry business culminated a few days later in Tollesbury when we came to an abrupt and gooey halt somewhere short of the advertised hard.

I remember there was some talk of incompetence and a door may have been slammed - which is pretty unimpressive given the construction of yacht doors. Anyway the upshot was that we decided we had had enough of the East Coast: "We won't call at St. Osyth or the Crouch or Swale," we announced through gritted teeth. "We'll go directly to the South Coast." In the end, of course, the tide crept in again and we took a long and therapeutic walk along the sea wall in the moonlight - and of course we did call in just about everywhere on the way south.

But we did come back to the East Coast. We even bought a house here. In fact if I look out of the window right now I can see the Deben and also a good deal of mud.

And do you know, I wouldn't be without it.

I just hope to become rather better at avoiding direct contact with the stuff.

John Passmore

## Woodbridge & District Angling Club

Woodbridge & District Angling Club has been in existence for forty years, and from a few original members now has a membership of 1800.

In the beginning the Club had no waters of its own. Now, in addition to a stretch of the River Deben, the Club has a gravel pit at Holton, near Halesworth, loam ponds at Sutton and Blaxhall Decoy at Snape.

The first meeting of the Club was on 22 October 1953 at the Kings Arms in Woodbridge Thoroughfare. It was agreed that the 20 members would each pay an annual subscription of 5/- and the first AGM would be held on 6 January 1954.

Prior to this, there were several small clubs in the area, mostly based at a pub or at one of the local firms. It was hoped that the new Club could get these anglers together to fish matches. For the first 10 years or so, coaches were organised to take the members to Sunday matches, but as the membership increased and cars became more common, members made their own way to the matches, usually leaving from the Oak Lane car park.

The Club has its headquarters at the Bull Hotel, Market Hill, Woodbridge. Meetings are held the first Friday of each month, at 8 pm. New members are always welcome.

*For further details, please telephone the General Secretary, G N Abbott 01394 383898.*

Don Johnson

## Early memories of Felixstowe Ferry and the River Deben

Dinghy racing at the Ferry since 1945.

This records a collection of memories that should not be considered much more than peripheral to the whole dinghy-racing scene on the Deben. Nevertheless it stems from my own memories which may add some new aspects for those who remember the events.

Sailing just after the war started with a line up of clinker built wooden boats, many of which were single balanced lugsail tenders. There were still several of the 14ft Felixstowe Ferry One Designs on the scene. I do not remember who owned and sailed these, but there is an interesting description of them in *The Hamlet of Felixstowe Ferry (Pictures of the past)*. My first recollections are of Billy Newson in quite a large boat, about the size of a National Eighteen. He seemed to win most races.

My father bought two rather odd boats about that time, and started to enter the racing scene with my elder brothers in the late 1940s. The first of these was Tessa, a Felix Fury (FF 4) designed by "Corky" Edmunds. It was a very odd shaped clinker built threr quarter deck dinghy with a heavy iron centreboard. It had a bow shaped like a shark making the overall length about 16 feet. On the water line it was barely 12 foot. It had high aspect ratio sails although the sail area was small.

My father's other dinghy was what we called a Semi-International (14ft international). I think it was a little shorter in length and had less sail area than the 14 of that time and was clinker built unlike the 14s that were carvel built with parallel planking.



These two boats were prominent in the racing by always coming last and second last! This did not bother my eldest brother, who was not particularly interested in racing but it greatly frustrated my other brother, Colin. Soon after, towards the end of the 1940s, the Fairey Marine Firefly dinghy started to make an appearance. My father was persuaded by the family to buy one second-hand ("Sea Nymph", F489) for Colin. The boat itself had already had an interesting history. It had been sailed by a Dutchman in the 1948 Olympics and had finished 3rd, for the bronze medal. In those Olympics the Firefly was sailed single-handed incorporating an interesting gadget to control the jib. This was mounted on the centreboard and the continuous sheet was threaded through a rotating jamming wheel (actually more the shape of a piece of cheese). A lever released the jamming wheel. Once released it was automatically set up for the opposite tack. It was made of solid brass and was surprisingly heavy. It was removed as soon as we took delivery.

Firefly sailing turned out to be a turning point in dinghy racing for our family. Colin was immediately very enthusiastic and soon became competitive in a growing fleet at the Ferry. The early fleet included a number of interesting names. Jack Knights was there, not a regular winner as I remember. Peter Tye (F 191) became one of Colin's main rivals with Robin Spear (F290), Richard Hopkins (Peril, F 100), Bob Garnham (F494) and Chris Smith (F340).

This period also included a series of school-boy championships in Fireflies that took place on the Orwell at Woolverstone organised by Phyllis Hopkins. The first that I remember was dominated by the Jardine twins, Adrian and Stuart. In one race they came over five minutes ahead of the next boat! I think Richard Hopkins finished 3rd and Colin 4th that year.

Many of the more familiar names became

involved with the Firefly scene at the Ferry. Locals such as Wilfred Barnard and Barrie White (F669), Brian White (F668), Geoff Revett (F887), Harry Searle (F484), Fi Atkins (F666), Ben Cooper (F670), Alan Mathieson (F870), Tony Catchpole (F751), Ted and Damian Riley.

A few National 12s had been sailing at the Ferry since before the war, one owned by Jack Sherren (N36), and their numbers started to grow in the early 50s. Jack Knights was one of the first to move into this class. Others included one of the Goodbody brothers and Bob Garnham (N494). Bob Garnham also owned a 12 Square Metre, a fascinating and very fast hard chine dinghy with gaff rig and small bowsprit. It has a lethal looking steel centreboard, the pointed trailing edge of which rises above the casing when fully retracted.

At first the National 12 and Fireflies were evenly matched and sailed together with the same handicap. They were both 12ft long and both had cotton sails and the same sail area. However this equality was not to last long. The National 12 was a restricted class whereas the Firefly was one-design. This allowed the National 12 to switch to Terylene sails as soon as they became available. This change in material made an immediate impact and was the start of a development of the National 12 that could not be matched by the Firefly. Each change to the Firefly required a change of rules. Terylene sails were introduced later but a handicap was placed on their use such that the great debate before a race was should one use the Cottons or Terylenes? Our Cottons were better in the strong winds and the Terylenes provided more power in the medium range.

Once the change to Terylene was established my brother Colin started to lose interest in the Firefly and joined the move to National 12s. I don't think he sailed much at the Ferry at that time since he became

involved with inland water sailing at Ely and on the Cam at Waterbeach.

During this time I was at Greshams school in Norfolk. A sailing group was formed in 1951 and my father supported this by donating a Cadet to the school. He had also provided me with a Fury (FY 11). This was an oddity (like a number of my father's purchases!) designed and built by Alan Eckford. He was better known for the design of the Fleetwind, of similar size and performance to the Graduate. The Fury was made of duraluminium and looked rather like a seaplane float. This was because the hull was made from only four sheets formed in a similar way to such a float. Eckford had been shrewd in his design such that each sheet was only bent about one axis. This avoided having to stretch the material. He had produced a hull that would plane at very low speeds, three and half to four knots! Another feature was the mast that was unsupported by stays, 25ft long it was supported on the floor of the boat, located by a pin and held in place by three rollers with a gate at deck level. The mast was fabricated into an elongated pear shape tapering section, over 8in at its maximum section near the boom level. The cross-section dimension was about 3in. It rotated such that the sail pull automatically aligned it so that its long section resisted the main forces. It needed a little nudge to switch over when going about.

It was quite a remarkable boat in light winds and I had a lot of fun sailing it on the Deben during the 50's. My father sailed another (FY7) and was so impressed with it that he persuaded fellow members of his club on the Cam to buy one, so creating a small fleet there.

During my time at school we arranged a number of team racing matches against other schools, of which one was Ipswich. I remember a poignant occasion when we had an away match in Waldringfield, sailing

Dragonflies, the local class. Jeremy Vines and I were the main contenders for Greshams and Dennis Mossman for Ipswich. The last race clinched a victory for us. The Mossman family has frequently reminded me of the event, when we meet at the inevitable annual Deben Week.

Another feature of the mid 1950s was the increase in popularity of the 14ft Enterprise on the Deben. Waldringfield was the main centre and Deben Week recorded between thirty and forty boats at that time. Dennis Mossman was the man to beat. Colin, my brother entered the fray and I was given a number of opportunities to share the racing.

My father had become interested in the British Moth. This and the Merlin-Rocket had become the most popular classes in his club on the Cam. He had in fact had a short flirtation separately with both a Merlin and a Rocket before the merge. His Merlin (called Hush) was the only cold-moulded carvel one ever built! (Another oddity - I don't think it ever measured to the class rules).

In 1956 he became interested in a new cold moulded dinghy. A marketing sailor visited the Ferry early that summer with one and claimed that it would be the racing dinghy of the future. No one appeared to take much notice. However soon after I discovered my father had bought a 505 (K7). A friend and I crewed for him in the Aldeburgh regatta that year. It was quite an experience! The boat wasn't fitted with either a spinnaker or trapeze and in one race returning from Snape on a broad reach we were hit by some force five gusts. I was sitting closest to the bow and as each gust hit us the bow appeared to dip. As one of these hit us I shifted my weight aft causing my friend to move back, so pushing my father closer to the transom. The next puff came along and again I got nervous and shifted my weight further back. This time it had the dramatic effect of projecting my father off the stern and the boat went into a slow roll dumping



my friend into the water. As this was happening I clambered over the edge and proceeded to start to bring the boat upright again. The race was completed in a rather strained atmosphere.

It was well into the sixties before people at the Ferry started to become interested in the 505.

Apart from appearing at Deben Week my involvement in dinghy racing on the Deben reduced during the sixties as my work took me abroad and then to Lincolnshire. When I returned to the racing scene, in the early seventies, with my first 505 (K2014) the Ferry fleet was thriving and probably the largest in the country.

Robin Whittle

## Litter Clearance

October is litter clearing month, and Sunday October 8 is litter clearing day.

The day we choose is usually mild and dry (but don't blame me if it isn't) I would love to see you all doing your bit to help the usual stalwarts. It is a lovely time of year on the river and if you volunteer you may see a part of it you don't normally visit. We pick up tons of rubbish, which is dumped in the skips S.C.D.C. provide and this is not including the 30/40 bags left for their collection and the numerous bags people dispose of privately.

Suffolk Coastal District Council supply us with several skips, over 100 bags and enough gloves for all our volunteers. Why not have a go this year?

If you have any questions please contact me on 01394 383825.

Jo Masters

## WOODBIDGE REGATTA MILLENNIUM SAIL PAST

The Deben seems to have a thing about processions. Being quite a narrow estuary it is ideally suited because people can stand on the banks and watch the boats go past. This advantage certainly was not lost on past generations. When Woodbridge wished to celebrate the Coronation of Queen Victoria in 1838 'some gentlemen of this town' organised rowing and sailing races. It was reported that 'A wall, adjoining the quays, a mile long having a view of the river extending nearly to the sea will afford an excellent opportunity to spectators.' Obviously the first regatta at Woodbridge was intended to be an event for the public to watch and has continued to be just that. Anyone standing by the river at Woodbridge nowadays might be surprised to hear that in 1838 one could nearly see the sea, but remember Wilford Peninsula in the Sandlings area of east Suffolk was then mostly open heath land. The planting of trees did not really start until the late nineteenth century. Basically the trees on Ramsholt Cliff beside the Rocks Reach had not been planted then so they could see much further down river.

The early organisers of the Woodbridge Regatta progressed on, in the middle of the nineteenth century, to start the Deben Yacht Club. While rowing races were an intrinsic part of the Regatta until World War 1, the next Deben water spectacle, the Procession at the start of Deben Week, began in 1947. All the clubs on the river (there were only three clubs on the river then compared to nine in 2000) joined forces to create Deben Week.

I remember taking part in the Procession in the early 1950s when it started at Felixstowe Ferry with the Bishop of Bury St Edmunds boarding the Rev Groom's schooner Lora which was flying a huge St George's flag of England. The Procession

proceeded up river to Waldringfield where there was a service on the beach. I don't know who had the idea for this event but the Rev. Trevor Waller of Waldringfield always seems to have been a key figure. The procession seems to have been scaled down a little because it now starts at Ramsholt, but everyone is welcome to join in.

In 1980 Woodbridge Regatta included a Sail Past of local Traditional Craft, I think about eight craft took part, but unfortunately this took place during a rain shower and was not repeated. In 1995 there was larger turn out for a VE Sail Past to celebrate fifty years after the end of World War II. This time it attracted about ninety-five boats and yachts.

This is the background to the idea of a Sail Past in August 2000 to mark the Millennium. The Leader of this event was Paul Strugnell, Commodore of the Woodbridge Cruising Club with Pat Morgan of the Deben Yacht Club. Nick Rose and myself of Bawdsey Haven Yacht Club promised support for the event. Other clubs also promised support. We met in the 'grown-ups' bar of the 'Angel' at Woodbridge. We put so much enthusiasm into these meetings that the landlord started to treat us like regulars. Paul tried inspiring us to get 200 craft together.

I wondered how it would all work out on the big day, knowing how individually minded boat owners are. In fact it all worked out very well and everyone behaved in a seaman-like way, however many of the carefully made plans just vanished. We gathered off Methersgate Quay where rescue craft should have told us when to start, but none appeared and we started up river. This began as a bit of a race but as we neared Woodbridge the boats settled down and steamed slowly in an orderly line.

It had been decided that in order to pass Lord Belstead, representing the monarch,

on the end of Everson's Jetty we should break the rules of the road and go up river starboard to starboard. This worked well for all the craft taking part in the Sail Past, but it clearly threw some large Dutch and two German yachts coming down from the Woodbridge marina into confusion. They responded by dogging down river at speed adding a sense of danger to the whole event. You could almost hear them thinking 'thank God this disorganised lot have not joined the Euro.'

I am not sure how many boats took part seem to have counted sixty-five yachts and about thirty dinghies. Certainly I enjoyed this Sail Past more than the over-hyped New Years Eve.

Lord Belstead, the Lord Lieutenant of the County, was invited to give the salute off Everson's Jetty and the crews responded by dipping their red ensigns. This was something we had never done before and it had taken me quite a while to rig-up a halliard on the mizzen. At the end of the Sail Past I removed my mizzen flag halliard, frankly there was no point in leaving it there because it will be a very long time until the next Millennium Sail Past.

May I be the first to wish all Deben boat owners a happy century of sailing on this beautiful river. After all the River Deben Association was started to keep it attractive for future generations.

*Robert Simper*



## **An Early Local Navigator, Bartholomew Gosnold**

### *European Discovery of America*

Following exploration in the Caribbean by Christopher Columbus and the succeeding Spanish conquests in this region and in Mexico by the Spaniards, other European nations with shores facing the North Atlantic, became interested in the New World. Motivations included the desire for gold, silver and precious stones, obtained either by plunder or the discovery of mines, the wish for trade of other goods and finally the need for settlement. No doubt, the excitement of adventure also stimulated most of those involved. The early navigators either sailed south to the Azores, Canaries or Madeira to pick up the north-east trades for a down wind voyage to the Caribbean or sailed north via the Faeroes, Iceland and Greenland to reach Labrador and Newfoundland, again utilising favourable winds and currents. Thus the east coast of the present U.S.A. was the last Atlantic coast-line of America to be explored. In 1524, Giovanni da Verrazano, a Florentine in the service of Francis I of France sailed from Dieppe to Madeira. From there he was able to cross the Atlantic directly to the east coast at about 34° N, probably hitting the present North Carolina. Over some three months, he sailed north-west along the coast to the present Nova Scotia or beyond. En route he probably entered Lower and Upper New York Bays, hence the name of Verrazano Narrows and certainly spent several days exploring and reprovisioning in Narragansett Bay, the site of present Providence and Newport, Rhode Island.

### *Attempts at Settlement in North America*

During the middle of the 16th century there were French settlements in Canada, and temporary French and Spanish settlements

on the east coast of Florida. The English were slow to join the game. Three attempts at settlement were made in 1584, 1585 and 1587. All were sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh and were on Roanoke Island in present North Carolina. None became permanent, the first being largely a reconnaissance and the third not being resupplied for three years, due to the threat from the Spanish Armada. All suffered from the fact that whilst the island was in sheltered water behind the Carolina Bank, the shallow and shifting entrances through this bank endangered the smaller ships and excluded the larger ones.

Suffolk seamen from locally were active in trading, in the royal service and in voyages of exploration or piracy or both. Thomas Cavendish of Trimley is rightly famous for his circumnavigation of 1586-1588. Suffolk men played a major role in the first two successful settlements on the east coast of the present U.S.A. - the colony at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607, sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh and the Pilgrims venture to New Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. Suffolk men featured both as leaders and as ordinary seamen and settlers. The little known Bartholomew Gosnold of Otley explored Cape Cod and the region around it, thus providing invaluable information for the Pilgrims. He was directly involved in the expedition to Virginia, as 'prime mover', as vice-admiral of the fleet, as captain of one of the three ships, the Godspeed, and as a member of the first governing council of the colony. The first governor of the colony, Sir Edward Maria Wingfield, came from the well known Suffolk family of the that name.

### *Voyage of Bartholomew Gosnold to Region of Cape Cod*

Bartholomew Gosnold was born in about 1571, the elder son of Anthony Gosnold of Otley or nearby, close to Woodbridge. The home of the main family was Nether Hall, now known, as Otley Hall and its structure is

much as it was then. The family was minor gentry. Little is known of his education and life as a young man, except that he studied law at New Inn, London. Since Otley is only 6 miles from Woodbridge and the latter was at its peak as a centre for ship-building and repair, it is not unlikely that he learnt to sail on the River Deben. He was probably inspired with news of the English seamen who were opposing the Spaniards in the New World and defeating their attempted invasion with the Armada. He may well have been personally involved and must have acquired a reputation on the sea, since in 1602 he led an expedition to the present New England. Our knowledge of this voyage is based solely on the accounts of two of his associates who took part, John Brereton and Gabriel Archer, and from his own short letter to his father. Brereton's account was published immediately after their voyage, in 1602. Archer's account did not appear in print until 1925.

Their small bark, the Concord with a crew of 32, left Falmouth on 25th March. Less favourable winds, than expected, led them to nearly miss the Azores, but they just sighted the most southerly island of the group. From here they set a direct course towards North America, probably heading for the excellent harbour of Narragansett, the latitude of which Verrazano had recorded as 41° 40' N. the Concord showed herself to be in bad shape and they were unable to set a full press of sails. Nevertheless, they made a landfall in mid May at 43° N, i.e. well north of the present Boston and Cape Ann. They sailed south for some 80 miles and found themselves in a large enclosed bay with apparent islands to the east. These proved to be a long headland connected to the mainland, as can be seen from the map. Because of the profusion of fish, particularly cod, they named the headland after the latter. This is the first record of this great nautical landmark, though other seamen, including Verrazano, must have sailed past it. They sailed north out of Cape

Cod Bay and then west and south, rounding the cape and Nantucket Island. Surprisingly, there is no mention of the dangerous shoals off both Cape Cod and Nantucket on which many later seamen came to grief. After going west, they sailed north crossing shallow banks to enter and explore Nantucket Sound. They landed on and named Martha's Vinyard. Here they found a profusion of birds, game, trees and plants, including strawberries red and white, raspberries, gooseberries and whortleberries. Every tree was covered with vines and they could not move without treading on more of them. We may note that Vikings from Greenland found a profusion of vines and grapes in the region which they temporarily settled and named Vinland in about 1,000 A.D. There are other reasons for supposing that Vinland was in New England. The Concord then passed down Vinyard Sound and rounded the outermost of the present Elizabeth Islands, Cuttyhunk, to anchor in 'one of the stateliest sounds that ever I was in' (Archer). This was the present Buzzard's Bay. They landed on Cuttyhunk, naming it Elizabeth Island, a name now applied to the whole chain of isles. They spent a month on Cuttyhunk, building a fort on an islet in a lake. Here it was intended to leave 20 of the crew to man a post for trading with the local American Indians who moved freely about the surrounding waters in dug-out canoes. Gosnold departed overnight in the Concord to cut cedar and sassafras from an adjacent island, as cargo to carry home for sale. The bark and roots of the sassafras tree, a variety of laurel, was much prized in those days as a source of flavourings and medicines. Meanwhile, he left 10 men at the fort. These became very distressed and hungry when Gosnold failed to return until some 5 days later, presumably being delayed by contrary winds. This unpleasant experience led to half the intended shore party refusing to stay. The idea of a trading post or temporary settlement had to be abandoned.



### *Contacts with American Indians and Return Voyage*

At both Martha's Vinyard and Cuttyhunk, the crew had excellent relations with the local natives. These were well built, healthy and handsome, and generally courteous and gentle. Verrazano had had very similar experiences with the Indians he met at Narragansett some 20 miles to the west. Knives and trinkets were traded for skins and furs, the knives being particularly sought after. Joint feasts were held with mutual enjoyment of local sea-foods and English beer. However, the American Indians did not appreciate English mustard, 'the mustard nipping them in their noses they could not endure: it was a sport to behold their faces being bitten therewith' (Archer). The women were 'clean and straight-bodied, with countenance sweet and pleasant', but 'would not admit of any immodest touch' (Archer).

On 18th June the Concord weighed anchor and in a bare 5 weeks reached Exmouth on the 23rd July. The voyage was invaluable in the information it provided about Cape Cod and the region of New England (as it was later called) around it. In 1620 the Pilgrims initially landed on the west of the tip of Cape Cod before establishing their colony at the present Plymouth on the mainland to the east of the wide entrance to Cape Cod Bay. Incidentally, Gosnold's voyage seems to have been the first direct English crossing from one of the south-easterly islands of the North Atlantic to the east coast of the present U.S.A.

### *Role of Gosnold in Jamestown Settlement*

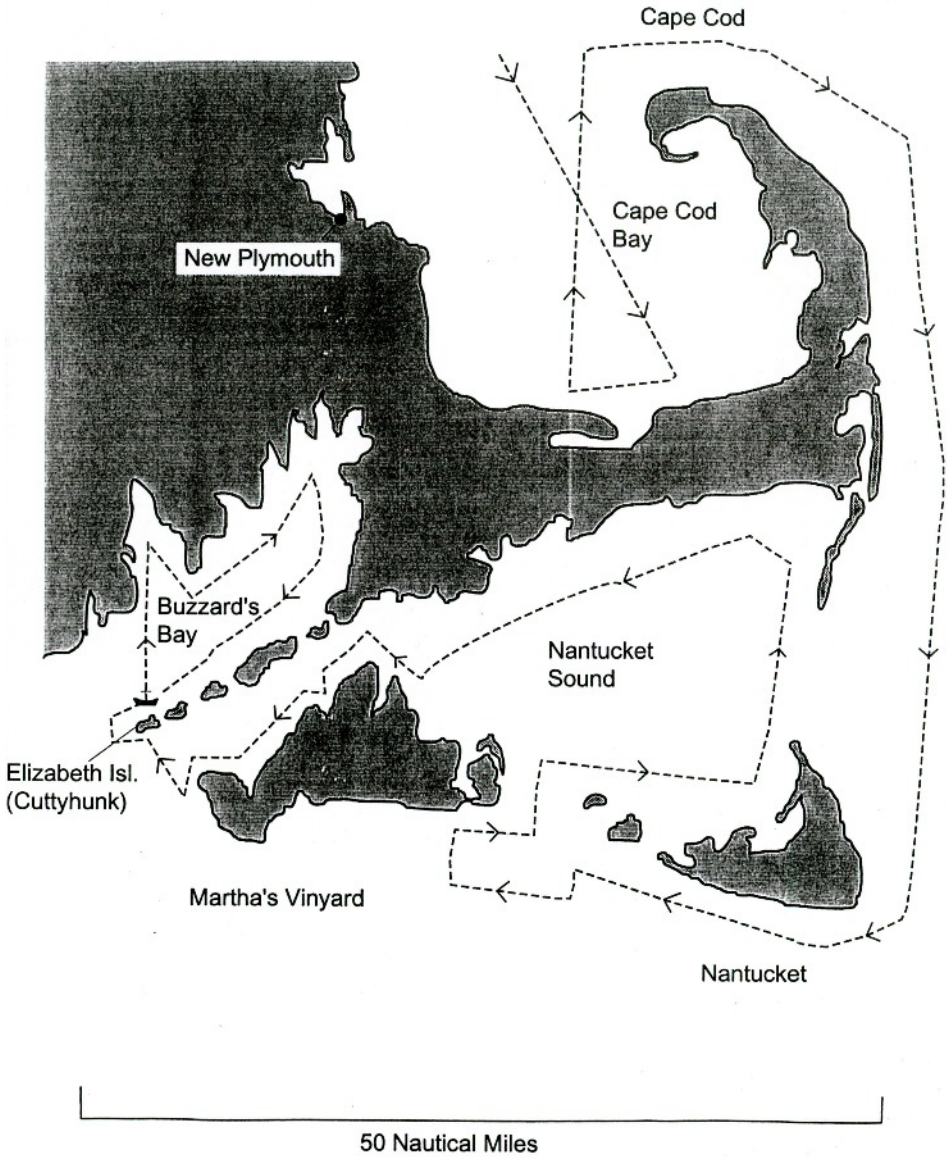
Bartholomew Gosnold's second recorded voyage was as memorable as his first. In December 1606, a fleet of three ships, sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Southampton left the Thames to

found the first permanent colony in North America, the site being in present Virginia. Bartholomew Gosnold was skipper of the Godspeed and Vice-Admiral to Christopher Newport, Admiral of the fleet. After various delays, the colony was established as Jamestown on a marshy peninsular in the James River in May, 1607. Gosnold disliked the site, but was overruled by Edward Wingfield, President of the Council. The James River flows into Chesapeake Bay, some 350 nautical miles to the south-west of Cape Cod. John Smith, who led the colony decisively through its very difficult early days and wrote of its history, regarded Gosnold as 'the prime mover' of the project. Certainly one of the great advocates of planting colonies in America, Richard Hakluyt, lived in Wetheringsett in Suffolk and may have discussed the project with Gosnold. During the first summer of 1607, the weather was very hot and humid. The colonists were hungry and tired out from guarding against frequent Indian attacks. Sickness was rife. In August Gosnold succumbed to apathy which became frank 'distemper'. He died on the 22nd August, possibly of a combination of starvation and typhoid. During his final illness he summoned to his tent Sir Edward Wingfield and the rough diamond John Smith of less distinguished birth in an attempt to heal a rift which was endangering the effective administration of the colony.

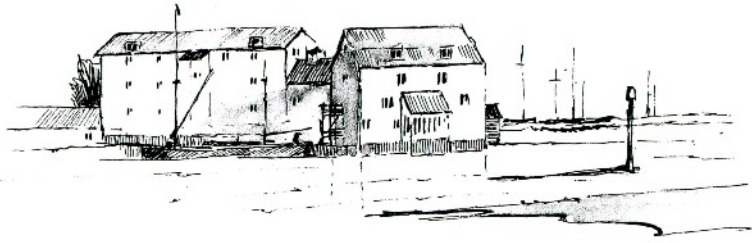
The map shows Cape Cod and related islands. The interrupted line is Gosnold's approximate course and the anchor his main anchorage off Cuttyhunk. The map is redrawn from Gookin, W.F. (1948) 'Bartholomew Gosnold. Discoverer and Planter. New England - 1602, Virginia - 1607'. Archon Books: Handen, Connecticut & London, UK.

**Mike Bradbury**

Map







## Deben Scenes



from  
Woodbridge Art Club



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