

River Deben Association News Letter - Spring 1992



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Chairmans Comment

We are now approaching our 2nd Birthday and the association is becoming recognised as an effective force with local authorities and other organisations.

The membership now stands at 725 plus 5 clubs, and we have a target of 1000 to reach.

Since the summer, we have been involved in various activities and have responded to the public's concern over a number of issues. We were warned by the River Orwell Sporting and Conservation Club over the possibility of a licence being granted to a boat to commence cockling in the Orwell, with possible advance into the Deben. This sounds innocuous, but the method used can vacuum up to 18 inches of mud including large numbers of invertebrates vital to the food chain sustaining wildlife on the river. With a draft of 3 feet, the boat can navigate many small creeks. The designation of SSSI should prevent a licence being granted for the river Deben, but keep your eyes open.

We responded to concern about the silting up of Woodbridge Ferry Hard and were greatly assisted by a member's sketches showing a change in the flow of the channel around that area. We are in contact with English Nature over encroachment of the river onto Ferry Cliff Beach, Sutton and the possible dangers of undermining this important site.

Another issue has been where and how houseboats are to be accommodated on the river. This is a continuing concern and negotiations with Suffolk Coastal look to run and run.

Events since last summer have included the Woodbridge Regatta where in spite of a badly placed stall, we signed up some new members and raised money through Rosemary Schlee's pony rides. The October meeting was well attended and

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Dr. Charles Beardall gave a fascinating talk about wildlife on the Deben. He reminded us of the beauty of our river and how fragile the environment is on which the wildlife depends. Our new project to support a bid to buy a piece of Felixstowe Ferry foreshore was discussed and the meeting agreed to a contribution with representation on the consortium. This is an important move for the association and will probably be the start of other actions of this kind.

ACCESS. Looking ahead into the next century in Britain, access to the countryside in general and the river Deben in particular will be a hotly debated issue. There are so many conflicting interests to be reconciled between the need for leisure, conservation and the legitimate concerns of land owners.

Decisions made in the 90's will be significant for many years to come .

Already we have four places along the Deben where access by the public is in question .

Kyson Point. The situation regarding the fence around Kyson Point has not been resolved. The fence is a constant reminder of the conflict between an age old permitted access by the public and the rights of land owners over their own land .

Bawdsey Manor has now lost it's buyer and the quay is still included in the sale with access not assured.

Woodbridge Town Hards. The ownership is being clarified and action is proceeding to have it managed with permanent access for the public preserved.

Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore. A consortium is hoping to buy this land so that public access will be available in perpetuity.

Elsewhere, in some 'set-aside' or ESA schemes, landowners are being compensated for allowing their land to be used for leisure pursuits such as walking by the public. It is to be hoped that this option will be extended and made more

attractive so that it will be taken up more often.

You may see some differences in this newsletter. It has been produced by members of the committee due to our excellent editor Richard Hare resigning from that position. I would like to thank him for producing our previous newsletters so professionally and am glad to say that he is going to take over litter clearance co-ordination. Are there any scribblers out there who would like to collect and edit articles. The production side is looked after by an efficient, hard-working team and my thanks to them.

With so many diverse interests hopefully represented within the association, our newsletter is an important forum for exchanging ideas. We want more letters. I am sure some of you feel strongly about some of the issues we discuss. Do put your views on paper, what ever they are! How's that for an invitation.

Concerning publicity some of our committee have produced an attractive leaflet which has been handed out to various businesses, organizations and interested individuals. If you would like a few to distribute, please contact our secretary Anne Moore ☎ 0394 383559.

I would like to thank Robert Wright and Tim Pryke, who have recently resigned from the committee, for all their hard work over the last two years. I would also like to welcome David White and Anthony Mason who have been co-opted onto the committee until the AGM. If you have any nominees for the committee please submit them to the secretary, Mrs Anne Moore on ☎ 0394 383559, before the AGM.

I greatly look forward to seeing you at the AGM on Thurs. 9th. April 1992 in the Community Hall Woodbridge.

Anni Healey
Chairman

Membership

Currently there are 149 Single members and 288 Couples making a total membership of 725 together with 5 clubs. It must be our aim to increase the membership to over 1000 people, so please urge your interested friends to join - if they have not already done so.

Stephen Ashworth
Membership Secretary

Funds

At the time of writing (15.1.92) the association's accounts await audit. Since the transfer to the association of £1,104.49 from the DOPC (Deben Oyster Protest Committee - See note elsewhere in the Newsletter) it has been decided to split our funds into three categories.

General Fund	£908.50
Felixstowe Ferry	
Foreshore Fund	£234.87
Projects Fund	<u>£1,604.49</u>
Total Net Assets	£2,747.86

It is hoped that from time to time it will be possible to transfer more money from the general fund to the projects fund. In this way the projects fund will be available for worthwhile projects in the future, perhaps in conjunction with other organisations.

Meanwhile, it will be necessary to raise money to bring the Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Fund up to the full £1,000 to which we are committed.

I thank all members for their subscriptions and would add a special extra thank-you to those who pay by bankers order as this is so much easier for me and more beneficial to the association.

Terence Kermod
Treasurer

Woodbridge potentially threatened by marina tipping

BOTH leisure and business interests as well as the direction of flow of the river Deben past Woodbridge are potentially threatened by Tidemill Yacht Harbour self-interest says the River Deben Association (RDA).

During the same week that the association was mounting the largest ever river rubbish clearance project last October, the Tidemill Yacht Harbour was tipping what the RDA suspects to be marina dredgings and excavations over its south eastern bank.

The association has called for a halt to what it describes as environmental vandalism until the question of whether the marina has permission to dump, and why, has been clarified.

During the space of a week the yacht harbour was estimated by local residents to have extended outwards into the river along more than half the length of the south wall from Wylies Pool to the marina entrance opposite the historic Sutton Cliffs, much of the sand of which now lies several hundred metres downstream. Locals claim that the impact of this can already be seen in an increase in the level of silt on the Woodbridge town hard since dumping started earlier this month. Others think that the current muddy state of the hard is temporary.

RDA chairman Anni Healey was quick to take the matter to the NRA and expressed the association's outrage that any soil dumping in the river was being tolerated at all. The NRA replied by saying that it could do little to help, its remit being confined to more pollution oriented interference. Water diversion, and its consequence, was a matter for local councils, it claimed. "At a time when there

is a positive effort to care for the river and increase awareness of its value, commercial dumping of this scale is disturbing, particularly as it coincides with Suffolk Coastal's pledge to the proposed Environmental Action Plan aimed at protecting our countryside and heritage. I am sure that it will give this matter the serious attention that it deserves" said Mrs Healey.

What the RDA wants to have answered is: does the Tidemill Yacht Harbour have permission to dump in the river and, if so, who authorised it? At the time of going to press it appears that the marina has dumped before it actually had permission from Suffolk Coastal to do so.

"I cannot believe that the law allows individuals to alter the course of a river without permission from some higher authority which would be bound to commission a thorough independent study of the downstream implications" said Mrs Healey. "It is lunacy that whilst long awaited laws have been introduced to curb littering by yachtsmen, a commercial interest can extend its land area by altering a river course through tipping without regard for its effect on others.

Unless it can be proved that this alteration is beneficial to the river flow, we are calling to have every bit of this most recent tipping recovered and properly disposed of. Local reclamation is one thing, but eroding a site of such national historical importance as Sutton Hoo is a very different matter" warned Mrs Healey. "Two of the RDA's fundamental aims are to protect not just amenity and leisure aspects of the Deben, but appropriate business interests as well. If silting is going to be made worse it could jeopardise any future potential river related business enterprise on the former Whisstock's site, as well as those further downstream."

Another important implication is the effect it could have on river moorings. The docks

around Woodbridge have been operational since way back in the middle ages. Already, their depth bears little relation to their former depths and if allowed to silt up much more they will become restricted as a berthing site. If this is allowed to happen it will increase the already desperately overcrowded mooring situation on the upper stretch of the river.

"Given that it is widely accepted that man-made alterations on that corner of the river are the main cause of the continual silting in front of Woodbridge, it should have been obvious that any further extensions would exacerbate an already worrying situation" said Mrs Healey.

The RDA is keen to see a proper study undertaken - it does not discount the possibility that further reclamation might possibly improve flow to the extent that the river successfully carries its silt away as it did prior to the original alterations.

Richard Hare

The Deben is your Oyster

But it might have been. In March 1963 a Frenchman, Monsieur Gouzer, applied to the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food for a Several Fishery Order to enable him to farm oysters in the river Deben under the name of the Deben Oyster Co.

'Several' means to make private and this would have involved several restrictions on anchoring, trawling and other activities in the designated areas which stretched from Early Creek at the up river end of the Rocks down to Green Point. It excluded the section occupied by the moorings at Ramsholt.

The first year was 'phoney', not much appeared to happen although we believe initial tests were being carried out to

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ensure that oysters would grow well and the water was of the right quality. In May 1964 confirmation that the company was proceeding was received by all interested parties and immediate action was started to oppose the application.

A public meeting was called for Friday 11th of September at the Crown Hotel Assembly Rooms. The meeting elected Lt General Sir Douglas Packard as Chairman and agreed to set up a standing committee which included the Chairman, W.G.Arnott, B.White, J.G.MacAndrew, G.Ingram Smith, N.E.A.Minifie and representatives from the Deben Yacht Club, Waldringfield and Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Clubs, Ramsholt Fairway Committee and representatives of local boatbuilders. The meeting minutes claim that approximately 500 people were present which rather conflicts with the figure given within the resolution that was passed strongly protesting against the oysters "at a meeting attended by some 400 people"! Mr Arnott mentioned that expenses of £10-5-0 had already been incurred and a collection held at the door raised the sum of £43-15-0. The balance went to form "a fighting fund".

It is not on record the number of protest letters written to the Ministry at the time but it certainly ran into hundreds and included some from the local authorities which were then the County of East Suffolk and Deben Rural District Council. The Rt Hon Viscount Blakenham, MP Keith Stainton and Harwood Harrison and people from both near and far who all loved the Deben and wished it to remain free of restrictions.

The local sailing clubs involved the Royal Yachting Association to represent them and to negotiate with the Deben Oyster Co. in the hope that an amicable

arrangement could be reached to ensure that the order would not affect the freedom of the hundreds of people who use the Deben for their leisure.

Two local doctors wrote an article (I wonder if they will remember) in which they outlined the dangers of eating oysters grown in rivers contaminated by sewage, citing two cases of a viral hepatitis in Sweden and America that had affected over 100 people and disclosed the fact that oysters had been found to concentrate the virus of poliomyelitis from such water and the virus resisted the normal methods of cleansing.

Eventually a public enquiry was arranged for Tuesday 5th of January 1965 at 10.30 a.m. in the Shire Hall, Woodbridge. A further protest ensued because the hall was obviously far too small for the numbers expected to attend and was finally rearranged for the 9th of February at the Crown Hotel Assembly Rooms.

On the 22nd of January, 1965, a notice was received from the Ministry giving notice that the Deben Oyster Co had withdrawn its application. No reason was given. Many people thought it was the intense public outcry against the scheme but it was also believed that the trials had been unsuccessful with the oysters not growing satisfactorily. Whatever the reason there was general relief and celebration. I wonder if it would have been different if the applicant had been an Englishman!

In 1974 it was Mr Brinkley from Felixstowe Ferry who made an application. The committee was reformed and again there was strong opposition but the application fizzled out and the balance of the fighting fund put on deposit for the next generation.

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The last treasurer of that fund, Mr Geoffrey Ingram Smith, has recently made over the balance of the fund, £1,104.49, to the River Deben Association which he considers an appropriate body to oversee

any further action required against intrusions of that sort. The money is specifically invested in a Projects Fund.

Anthony Mason



The Rocks

What price wasteland?

Ever thought of letting your RDA and other amenity society subscriptions relapse? Richard Hare looks at why you probably joined and, importantly, why you should stay.

THOSE involved in monitoring development will be sick to death of being told that development is good for us - an over-simplified insult to our intelligence if ever there was one. As in all things, there is good and bad development, and there are plenty of good examples around us. Robertsons latest marina plan for Woodbridge is widely acknowledged as a case in point. But we are not always so fortunate to be dealing with people who are prepared to take into consideration the long-term interest of locals who, to put it plainly, like where they live and want to keep it that way.

'Development' is not synonymous with 'progress', as so many would have us believe. 'Wasteland' is frequently targeted

for development, but what do we really mean by 'wasteland'? To some, saltmarsh is wasteland. Those with particularly small brains look at saltmarsh and deduce that it must be wasteland because they can't see anything there. Those same people will look at decaying urban sprawl, consider that wasteland as well, and write graffiti all over it. In this instance the only real wasteland is that which lies between the ears.

Scoff not. Truth is stranger than fiction. Many of us drive through it every day. Saltmarsh is not wasteland, as the valiant and tireless members of the Felixstowe Ferry consortium will tell you. Wasteland, I suspect they will tell you, is more likely to be found where developers have had their way, unchecked. They will probably add that developers would be better occupied using their talents by re-developing some of their earlier efforts than making a pigs ear out of saltmarsh.

Sensible humans don't really want more urban wasteland, nor do birds or other animals. It is high time more of us took

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our responsibilities towards them a bit more seriously. Contrast that against our attitude to saltmarsh. Wildlife - invertebrates, fowl and fish - love it. Indeed, they travel many thousands of miles - well, not the invertebrates - to be a part of it; and an increasing number of humans are growing to appreciate it and love it too.

It's just a pity that we humans always have to peer over the edge of the abyss before we believe it exists at all. This is where the more obtrusive environmental organisations - Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace - have a role to play. They have successfully wrenched our heads over the abyss and, like Dickens' ghoulish Ghost of Christmas Future, shown us our children's inheritance. It's an objectionable experience, frequently uncomfortable, but my goodness, it is starting to have an impact.

Each proposed development has to be looked at on its own merit. The trick is to identify the dross and snuff it out in its infancy before it becomes too strong to be controllable. The Woodbridge Society's intense monitoring of the regular proposals to develop the town beyond the confines of the A12 is an example of this. If such a development is allowed to succeed, just once, others will fall in behind. In no time at all the green belt between Woodbridge and Ipswich will be lost, as also will the characters of these two very different towns. Ipswich will become Woodbridge, and Woodbridge will become Ipswich. One thousand years of character-building down the drain at the squiggle of a pen. Brilliant. Call that progress?

So are these really just the ravings of a paranoid prophet of doom? Not at all. Take the area I grew up in: Leigh-on-Sea, Chalkwall, Westcliff, Rocford, Thorpe Bay and the village my father grew up in, Prittlewell. Do these names mean anything to you? They ought to. Today they are

collectively known as Southend. Next stop? GIC - Greater Ipswich Council.

Some comfort can be drawn from the fact that all around us small groups of concerned people are gathering together, many from widely differing political viewpoints. Concerned people nearly always have the same objective, it's just the means of reaching that objective that is different. By polarising and alienating ourselves into narrow minded (and of necessity very flexible) political party clones we waste an immense resource of useful energy.

Our town and county councils need to hear our voices if they are to act confidently on our behalf. They value our opinions and welcome our support. If you work to live, make living worth working for. Support those who are constantly monitoring the horrors that are planned for us. How does a major supermarket on the outskirts of Woodbridge grab you? OK, so you want something river related - what about a massive marina clogging the narrow jet-ski crazed mouth of the Deben estuary? Alright, you're not a sailor: What about concreting more migratory bird feeding grounds and then flogging it all to a foreign business consortium? If we're going to mutilate our habitat, why not be true British businessmen and kick the balance of payments deficit further into the red at the same time.

So, to answer the question 'what price wasteland?'. The price is high, but all it needs is a tiny proportion of your time and commitment. Collectively, it's a force to be reckoned with. Keep up the good work Felixstowe Ferry. We are all in your debt, whatever the outcome.

If these things worry you then continue to support the RDA, and while you're at it, your local town or village society as well.

Richard Hare

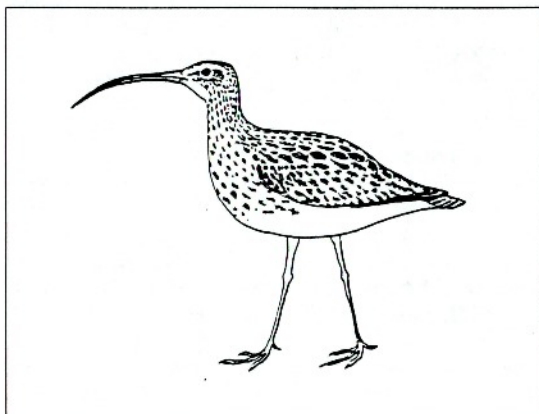
NEWS FLASH

Free tree planting

Suffolk County Council has asked members to identify lanes or roads in their areas that would benefit from tree planting. The county council could supply trees and help with enhancing verges. Lets take advantage of this welcome offer.

Your Favourite walk "Way-marked"

Suffolk County Council would be happy to way-mark some circular walks to and from the river, if we could design and produce a leaflet advertising them. Both our logo and the council logo would go on the leaflet and it would be a good joint project to get involved in. Any ideas? Contact Anne Moore ☐ 0394 383559.



Curlew

Planning Report

Robertsons Boat Yard

The planning application for a Marina next to Robertsons boat yard, Woodbridge, was finally passed by the Suffolk Coastal District Council Planning Committee conditional on the following amendments:-

- a) That the number of berths be reduced from 90 to 75
- b) That there is a reduction in size of the Marina basin leaving a larger area of mud

flats intact.

- c) That there be 5 small offices/shops at ground level and 6 non-permanent accommodation units on the first floor.
- d) That the car parking be rearranged to be less dominant.
- e) That the approval was subject to the controlling conditions relating to an SSSI and that the disturbance to wildlife was kept to a minimum.

There will be a section 106 agreement to see that the controlling conditions are part of the planning permission.

Melton Woods

This planning application covers the proposed erection of 99 dwellings on land adjacent to the Melton Grange Hotel, in Saxon Way and Pytches Rd and 15 dwellings behind Bredfield Lodge.

Although these applications are not directly on the river, the loss of the remainder of the Melton Woods will certainly effect the landscape as seen from the river.

The application will cause an undesirable coalescence of Melton and Woodbridge with severe degradation to the environment.

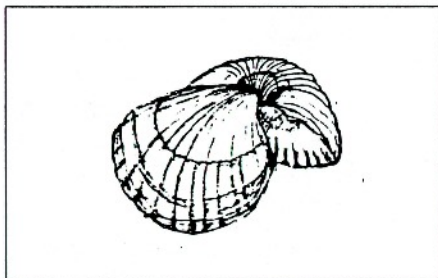
There is a strong campaign to try and save these woods and it is recognised that the developers may require compensation. If you feel you are not happy about this application and the need for these houses is not established, please write to:-
Jeremy Schofield, Director of Planning,
SCDC, Melton Offices, Melton Hill,
Woodbridge.

Local Structure Plan

This plan is moving forward to the next stage which is the public enquiry on September 8th 1992. At the moment objections to the plan are being discussed and debated by the SCDC planning committee. The following objections could affect the river and its environment.

- a) An objection has been lodged to the designation of countryside behind Spring Farm, Melton. A request is made for a change of policy to include light industrial use.
- b) An objection has been lodged to the policy restricting the development of new marinas and harbours at the Melton end of the river.
- c) A request has been lodged to tighten up the traffic restrictions around Bawdsey Manor if development takes place.

There have been no objections lodged to the Local Structure Plans regarding Felixstowe Ferry.



Cockle

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Who's Who - Update

OFFICERS

Chairman	Anni Healey. Jesters, 7A Burkitt Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 382291
Secretary	Anne Moore. 2 Grundisburgh Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 383559
Treasurer	Terence Kermode, 8 Carmelite Place, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 386613
Membership Secretary	Stephen Ashworth, Little Mead, Fayrefield Rd, Melton. IP12 1NCO	☎ 0394 386301
Minutes Sec.	Annette Burt. 21 Kingston Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 385535

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Felixstowe Ferry (Co Opted)	David White. 6 Coniston Close, Felixstowe.	☎ 0394 283972
History/Farming	Robert Simper. Sluice Cottage, Ramsholt.	☎ 0394 411273
Melton	Brian Scott. Rose Villa, Hackney Terrace, Melton. IP12 1NN	☎ 0394 383989
Houseboats Environment	Lil Tudor-Craig. ML2605, Wilford Bridge Rd, Melton.	☎ 0394 386011
Wildfowlers	Adrian Judge. 29 Bredfield St, Wdge. IP12 4NH	☎ 0394 383350
Planning	Rosemary Schlee. Deben Lodge, Melton Rd, Woodbridge. IP12 1NH	☎ 0394 382740
Water Sports	Tim Midwinter. 37 Coopers Rd, Martlesham Heath. IP5 7SJ	☎ 0473 623020 ☎ 0473 642712(w)
Waldringfield	Mike Atkins. Rudd's Barn, Waldringfield Rd, Martlesham. IP12 4PJ	☎ 0473 36668
SCDC Liason (Co Opted)	Russell Geen. 41 Hasketon Rd, Wdge. IP12 4LE	☎ 0394 383696
	Anthony Mason. 29 Ipswich Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 386601
	Ian Battye. Ferry House, Station Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 382338
	Richard Hare. The Boat Inn, Quayside, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 382270

Vacancies - Vice Chairman, Press and News Letter Editor

My First Committee Meeting

It can only have been a moment of complete mental aberration that made me sign that form stating that I was willing to stand for the committee of the River Deben Association at the AGM. Any idea that I could possibly replace Annie Hart was absurd, as no-one could claim that I could emulate her charm, grace nor sincere greenness. My friends are never quite certain if I am green with brown edges or brown with green edges - and neither am I. Never the less I had signed the document and after a very strange election process I was duly approved. The election process would only work if there were more places than candidates and I soon realised that others had resisted the temptation to sign the document.

So I was summoned to my first meeting which was held in "The small room" at the Kings Head in Woodbridge at 7:30pm. It was a delight to find that both Adnams and Tolly were being served - a good decision by your committee. The small room was a misnomer. It was quite capable of holding twenty comfortably, but only in two long straight lines on either side of the room. Those on one side had no difficulty in catching the Chairmans eye, but those sharing her side were reduced to peering forwards or backwards to be seen - reminiscent of those television shots where someone peers round the edge of the lens. I soon realised that 7.30 was meant only as a guiding figure.

We pursued a fairly circular course round the agenda, often returning to where we had been before. A fundamental problem was whether we wanted to encourage people to use the Deben, or whether our aim should be to keep them away. But it

was clearly apparent that we did want as many people as possible to join the River Deben Association. Since the aim of the Association is "to represent and reconcile the interests of all concerned with the future of the river Deben and its environs", the Association must be capable of responding to the concerns of its members.

At this point, the Treasurer knocked over his beer. We were in the midst of a discussion on how to remind certain members that their subscriptions had not been renewed, and he was carried away with his eloquence. I must say that the reaction of the committee (and myself) was disappointing. We all watched him dabble ineffectively with his handkerchief until it was a soggy mess, whilst we kept our own handkerchiefs firmly in our pockets, and it was quite a time before the secretary had the bright idea of getting a towel from the bar.

I was privileged to be sitting next to the past Chairman, and was surprised that when any dates were discussed, he produced a somewhat battered copy of the East Coast tide tables. Glancing over his shoulder, I saw that certain days were ringed, and that when future meetings were arranged, they were also ringed. He explained, somewhat cryptically, that this was in order to arrange his sailing days, but it looked to me as if every day was ringed, and I was left somewhat aghast at the thought that he would never know what each ring meant, and he might go sailing when the next committee meeting was called. Musing away, I was suddenly startled by someone who regretted that Anglian Water had not imposed a hosepipe ban in the region. I could not believe my ears. My love of the river Deben seemed to be in direct opposition to my gardening interests, and a cold sweat began to break

out. Fortunately no-one took the idea any further-otherwise it might also have been my last committee meeting.

Shortly afterwards, the meeting was closed (on time), and I left full of admiration for all those who are working so hard to look after your interests on and around the river Deben, and hoping that my small contribution might be of some help to the Association in its praiseworthy task.

Michael Atkins.

Adventures on the Deben Bar

The Deben Bar commands respect amongst yachtsmen who have experienced its tiderace, shoal waters and breaking waves. The bar must be overcome to enter or leave the scenic River Deben, but its channel often shifts and particularly after a stormy winter its course can change considerably.

Most local sailors have their own salty story about a mishap on the bar, and here is mine, but not in my words. My daughter Sarah, then eight years, kept her own logbook showing how a child's perspective of an eventful day on "TRYNGA" can be a little different from the Skipper's!

Needless to say, I stand by the official (my own) account, but here is Sarah's uncensored account...

26th May 1990

"Off to Walton Backwaters"

We set off from Woodbridge at about 2.15pm after a long wait while Mummy and Daddy were fiddling about. Me and Katie sat on the side of the boat and as it moved quite fast our feet got splashed. The water was freezing.

I looked through the binoculars and saw lots of seagulls, three swans and one brown bird. Just going past the Rocks the echo sounder broke when I switched it the wrong way. At Ramsholt we moored to

put the sails up, fix the echo sounder, have a cupper and change into warmer things because by now it was very windy and quite rough.

Daddy fixed the echo sounder but then the centre plate wouldn't work so they tried and tried to mend it but they failed. We set off again at 4.45 pm heading for THE SEA. As there had been lots of storms all the shingle had moved. It was very wavy. Daddy found out that the rudder had snapped and so it was very hectic. Also we ran aground on THE BAR. It was very scary. There were three boats that had also run aground. We bumped into another boat. That set us free.

We had to go back to Bawdsey otherwise we could be in great danger. Daddy took us ashore, we went for a walk, came back, had tea and went to bed.

27th May 1990

"WE TRY AGAIN"

When we were all dressed and ready Daddy started to fix the rudder. Looking out to sea there were now five or six boats that had run aground. When Daddy had fixed the rudder we set off to try again.

On the bar the tide was in. It was much calmer. This time we made it...

Brian Scott.

WWF

Are you a member of the World Wide Fund for Nature? Did you think that your money was being spent preserving endangered species and Rain Forests? You might be interested to know that in the latter part of 1991 the WWF contributed £40,000 of your money to a group of Anglers and landowners to stop Canoeists using rivers in England, Wales and Scotland. The story goes like this:-

In 1932 the Rights of Way Act was passed greatly increasing public access to areas of the English countryside. It was as a direct result of this act that many of the footpaths

currently enjoyed by members of this association were created. The Act stated that a footpath existed if continuous use could be shown for the last 20 years. In the fine print it also stated that "Land covered by water" was also covered. Ie. Canoeists had a right of way on a river if continuous useage could be proven. However, the landowners (and WWF) decided that this was a mis-interpretation of the act and took the matter before the courts. They maintained that if a right of way over water was envisaged in the original act, then it would call it a watercourse. The landowners won the initial court battle, but then lost when the case went to appeal. The matter should have stopped at this point, as the landowners were not given rights to appeal to the Lords. However, they appealed to the House of Lords anyway and almost won by default as the canoeists didn't have the £50,000 that was required to take the matter further. (The WWF was paying the landowners £40,000 towards their legal costs!) Just before the landowners won by default, the canoeists managed to scrape together enough money to continue. When the case came before the Law Lords, they sympathised with the poor landowners and awarded against the canoeists. Now we (the canoeists) are in the unfortunate situation that ramblers were in at the beginning of this century. - Ie. No legal right of access to most rivers in the UK.

When I confronted the WWF did not deny any of the facts but stated that they were fighting for a principle. Ie. They didn't believe that any river craft should be allowed on Britian's rivers as this might cause environmental damage.

Next time you see a group of canoeists on a quiet bit of fresh water you might like to reflect that thanks to the WWF they are probably paddling illegally.

Tim Midwinter

Can you HELP?

The "Who's Who" in this Newsletter shows that there are some vacancies among the officers and committee. In particular there is need of an editor for the newsletter, which is seen as an important means of information exchange. We currently have a production co-ordinator and distribution organiser but require the services of an editor or editress to follow on from Richard Hare's sterling work. There is no need to commit oneself for many issues: to edit one or two would be fine. Any volunteers? It would be good to have several.

When is Sewage not Sewage?

A pretty rum question, you might have thought. Your average man in the street, in possession of all his senses, or even more so women what with experience of nappies might think that the possibility of confusion in the matter was limited.

But, the question is much more complex, much less basic, than the local press on the subject of this dumping of what the french delicately refer to as "Used waters" into the Deben, the used waters under discussion having as their source the personnel of a local America Air Force base.

What appeared, at first glance, to be the statement "Sewage acceptable as long as it is drinkable," for example could lead a stranger to these parts to misunderstand East Suffolk's normal drinking water standards.

Or, yet again, would effluent be fit to wash your car in or the Land Rovers of certain local agricultural gents I could mention?

Clearly, therefore, the quality of used waters is a very complex and subjective

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matter. Not surprising really. After all, it depends on who has used them and what they have used them for. I can imagine that Mademoiselle Catherine Deneuve's bath water, attractively bottled, would find a ready market if sold on stalls set up outside the depot of the Parachute Regiment or the Royal Naval Dockyard at Devonport, to name but two likely sites, but here I digress...

Years ago, it used to be said "What Reading drinks today, London drinks tomorrow". It was a dictum that was much quoted by those of my acquaintances who steered well clear of water for any purposes other than bathing in and the floating of boats. But it was at least half way true and this gives one to think that if such a system operates successfully on the Thames, why can we not adapt it, whilst refining it even further, to the requirements of the Bentwaters Air Base by arranging things so that "What Bentwaters drinks today, Bentwaters drinks tomorrow".

American know-how has already done it. You cannot tell me that NASA space craft blast off with enough water on board to last the crew for the entire trip. Of course not. So why cannot we do it here? No reason at all. Picture it. The world's first closed circuit sewage system in general public use. What a stroke for Suffolk's reputation throughout the civilised world (From Cambridge to the sea, that is, and from the Norfolk border to a full mile into Essex).

There would be teething problems, obviously, but nothing that human ingenuity could not resolve. Evaporation in the hot weather springs to mind but a team of volunteer airmen liberally supplied with tins of Budweiser beer could readily compensate for that at quite a modest expenditure.

The more one thinks of it the more one warms to it. It lends a whole new meaning

to the expression "getting your own back" and as for whether it is "Green" or not, the only greener thing that I can imagine is the faces of week-end guests and new arrivals at the base when the full details of the scheme are described to them.

It's the ultimate in water privatisation. The system is not only private, it's positively bally intimate. Think about it, but leave it a good while after not only your dinner, but also your brandy and after eight mints have truly settled.

Tom Ellaway

Forthcoming Events

April 9th

River Deben Association AGM,
Woodbridge Community Hall.
7:30pm Start.
Speaker: John Le Mare

June 20th

Alde and Ore Association
Barbecue at the Orford Sailing
Club. (More details from Anni
Healey. ☎ 0394 382291)

June 27th to July 4th

Woodbridge Festival. The RDA is
organising an Exhibition of River
Deben in the Shire Hall
Woodbridge. Cheese and Wine
will be available on June 27th for
the launch of the festival.

July 25th to August 1st
Deben Week

August 30th
Woodbridge Regatta

Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Safeguard Action

The consortium set up to safeguard the saltings at Felixstowe Ferry reports that it is progressing towards its aim of safeguarding this undeveloped area from unwanted development in the future.

The consortium consists of a number of interested parties of which one is the River Deben Association. The land in question stretches from the North side of the jetty at Felixstowe Ferry round to the sea wall. It is the area that exists between mean high and mean low water.

Rob Ward told RDA Newsletter that those who support this action come from a wide cross section of the community and share the aim of preventing development and allowing access to the public in perpetuity.

In due course a public meeting may be called, a trust formed from representatives of the other groups, including the River Deben Association and Local Authorities. This will ensure that the Trusts operations will be open and accountable.

Note

Rob Ward is a local fisherman who lives at Felixstowe Ferry, is a good organiser and the mainspring behind the purchase of this land. Though he reports that this purchase is progressing there is a legal caution that has been attached to the land Registry which has still to be overcome.

The co-ordinator is Tony Radcliffe who lives at the Ferry and is Chairman of their Preservation Society. He commented "We all value the highly important support of the River Deben Association."

Nomination for election to the RDA Committee

Name: _____

Proposer: _____

Secunder: _____

I agree to be nominated and if elected to server on the committee.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please return to the secretary, Mrs Anne Moore, 2 Grundisburgh Rd, Woodbridge. before the AGM.

Letters

Dear Sir,

Having just read the winter newsletter and talked to the chairman, I have been constrained to write to you. It is clear that members of the association are aware of the increasing pressures both nationally and locally for more people to take to water sports, particularly to sailing. It seems to me therefore that positive moves need to be started for the overall control of the Deben for the beneficial needs of it's users, on the lines perhaps of the following:-

a) There should be one overall river committee formed and formally constituted, which would embrace the present unofficial joint fairway committee, responsible for planning and policy from Wilford Bridge to the Bar. It would be responsible for navigation marks, speed restrictions, noise abatement and dealing with the statutory bodies. The present fairways committees should continue to be responsible within their areas for the allocation of moorings and collection of dues, paying the joint committee only such monies as are necessary for it's expenses.

b) Mooring areas need to be defined so that no one can intrude into free space,

which is always at a premium for dinghy sailing. It would be useful if these areas were marked on all large scale maps printed of the river. (The joint committee would provide information to the compilers of nautical almanacs)

c) Thoughts and action are needed now for the provision of a major yacht harbour in the lower reaches of the river. Anyone acquainted with marina's in Holland knows that these need not be complexes of hideous buildings and residents have convenient access. The only essential shore side facilities would be bathrooms, toilets, car park space and proximity to a main road. Shops, restaurants and repair facilities existent within five miles would be good enough.

I have discussed the matter with others and we have concluded that the best area for such a harbour would be the Kings Fleet. Within the river wall there exists a moderate sized bay, presumably an old barge basin, which could be a starting place. It does of course need dredging. There is a rough road passing it on the landward side. We need to get planning permission and then a modest developer to provide the wherewithal.

Capt. D.C.R. Walters