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## Chairman's Comment

It is so easy to become complacent about a natural asset such as the Deben river, to believe that nobody would be so foolish as to spoil that asset for either this or future generations.

It is great to see so many people using and enjoying the new footpath on top of the raised river wall from Kyson Point to Woodbridge, the Tide Mill and further upstream. Even during the worst weekends this winter there have always been brave people fighting the elements whilst on many Sundays it becomes a busy thoroughfare. For those that have noticed, there has been an abundance of waders about particularly at low tide when their food source in the mud flats is exposed. Have you noticed the magnificent colours of those mud flats especially near sunrise or sunset - if you haven't take a closer look next time.

Harry Norris has kindly agreed to take over as Secretary from Anne Moore. Anne, like Anni Healey, has been involved with the Association from the start and we are all very grateful for the time she has given to it. Luckily Anne is staying on the committee with special responsibilities for footpaths and any liaison with the Ramblers Association. Harry will bring new ideas and enthusiasm and we look forward to working with him.

The Annual General Meeting this year on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April returns to the Woodbridge Community Centre. We have invited two speakers to discuss subjects related to the river, one from the National Rivers Authority and the one from the British Water Ski Federation. Do come and support us, air your views and listen to and question our speakers. Don't be complacent!

Anthony Mason  
Chairman

# River Deben Association News Letter - Spring 1994

## Association Business

### Treasurer's Report

The Audited Accounts show that at 31/12/93 our accumulated fund stands at £4196. This is made up as follows:-

General Fund	£750
Projects Fund	£3,446
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>£4,196</b>

£100 has been given from the Projects Fund to the Waldringfield Fairway Committee to help with the cost of removing anti-invasion metal stakes which have been resurfacing near Waldringfield.

Terence Kermode  
Treasurer

### Forthcoming Events

Sunday 17 April 1994

Litter Clearance and Walk.  
See Footpaths Article.

Friday 22 April 1994

River Deben Association Annual General Meeting at Woodbridge Community Hall, 7:30pm Start.  
Speakers from the British Water Ski Federation and the National Rivers Authority.

Sunday 15 May 1994

Litter Clearance and Walk.  
See Footpaths Article.

Sunday 26 June 1994

Woodbridge Regatta

Sunday, 9 October 1994

Annual Litter Clearance.  
HW Woodbridge at 16:00.  
Trevor Ambrose, who put in so much work last year co-ordinating the Litter Clearance, has kindly agreed to organise it again for another year.  
Please contact Trevor on 0394 386021

### Membership

Currently there are 153 single members and 298 couples, making a total membership of 749.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS.

Stephen Ashworth  
Membership Secretary

### Footpaths

Any of you who saw the Eastern Angles production of the "Sutton Hoo Mob" will know what I mean when I say Yes, "It's a long way up the path from the Ferry."

You will also know what I mean, but in a different sense, when I say it's a long way up those steps from the Ferry: That is, if you've tried to walk the Sutton Hoo circuit via Apricot Wood and Ferry Cliff recently.

The steep steps are not a right of way but remain, neglected and rickety now, from the period of Ferry regeneration in the Eighties.

The right of way continues past the foot of them, but became blocked last year by a small fallen tree and is now utterly impassable since the low, eastern end of the cliff succumbed to erosive tides this winter, taking the footpath, way mark posts and more small trees with it.

The County Council Warden is soon to try to effect some means of reinstatement, when the unsafe steps will also be removed.

The Rubbish however will remain unless we do something to shift it - hence my opening paragraph. I know that many members took part in our Annual cleanup but I plan an Ad-Hoc walk, armed with bin bags and string on 17 April to improve the safety as well as the scene, for summer walkers.

This is a superb walk, giving some of the



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finest views of the Deben from the tops of Sutton Hoo and Ferry Cliff, but it's long term future, under present statute, hardly exists with the obvious erosion there. The ideal, all along the river banks, would be some sort of retreating path arrangement with the Riparian Land Owners.

There is work of a slightly different kind to be done on the footpath through the wood on 'Nettle Hill' by the Tips. Unfortunately the river wall path from Methersgate Quay to the Hams no longer exists and where people had taken to walking behind the crumbled wall, there is now a newly cut capacious ditch! But we can approach via Sutton Hall and Keepers Cottage - not far - and I also hope to do this on 17 April as well as again on 15 May.

So please come, armed with Machete, saw

(Chain if Possible) and sickle, or even a humble pair of pliers, but do wear tough protective clothes because those brambles and nettles run amok.

Dates: 17 April

15 May

Time: 10 am

Place: Car parking areas if visiting Sutton Hoo burial ground, at the bifurcation of the B1033. GR:297491.

Bring: Tools, bin bags, string, packed lunch and drink and any extra helpers.

Contact Anne Moore on 0394 383559

## Minutes of the Last AGM.

Minutes of the River Deben Association AGM held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 1993 at the Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club.

The chairman, Anni Healey, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, especially the Commodore of the Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club. She thanked the sailing club for allowing the River Deben Association to use their club house for the AGM.

The following sent their apologies:- Mrs P C Hore, Tony Purnell, Penny and John Moorby, Eddie and Dorien Taylor.

It was agreed that the minutes of the last AGM, as sent out in the Newsletter, were a true record and were duly signed by the chairman.

### Matters Arising.

1) The planning application to change the use of the Sluice Farm Piggery into an industrial estate was rejected at the inquiry held in June 1992. It was reported that our efforts at the enquiry had helped and impressed the Inspector.

2) The Association has continued to press

Suffolk County Council over Kyson Point - so far to no avail. Encouragement can be taken from the reopening of a footpath at Iken Church after an inquiry.

3) The Knoll Fairway Committee would not be taking a lease until 1994 at the earliest due to a legal problem. The Association's possible take over of the Town Hard was therefore also in abeyance.

### Chairman's Report

The chairman reported that the Association was in good heart. Representations are to be made to the District Council over the state of the seats on the river wall at Woodbridge - currently they are unusable.

Anni suggested that the Association should make an approach to the new footpaths officer at Suffolk County Council with a view to creating a footpath from Wilford Bridge to Felixstowe Ferry. At present there are two discontinuities at breaches in the river wall either side of Waldringfield. Those present agreed it would be a good idea. It was suggested that Parish Council's along the route be contacted to lobby Suffolk County Council as well.

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John Tricker asked why the Association wanted to take over the Town Hard. The chairman explained that the Association wanted to ensure that the public had access to launch boats in perpetuity. All other access points were controlled by private organisations.

In view of the two different positions outlined in the Newsletter by the chairman of the Felixstowe Ferry Boatyard and the trustees of the Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Trust and as the Association was a shareholder in the trust, the Chairman asked Bob Ward, trustee and Secretary of the trust, to explain the current position. Bob Ward said that his letter detailed the situation as the Trust saw it. The purchase was made to ensure public access for the future and to restrict creeping development. The boatyard had registered a claim to the land but had so far produced no evidence. All his legal advice supported the Trusts ownership. The Trust comprised 30 shareholders none of whom could sell their share without the permission of all the others. He felt that this would preserve the Trusts aims.

The Chairman thanked Bob for his comments and noted with pleasure that over the last year the boatyard had made a real attempt to tidy up their land and keep it clean.

### **Treasurers Report**

Last year there was an excess of income over expenditure due to the transfer of £1100 from other funds, principally the Deben Oyster Protest Committee. The balance sheet as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 1992 stood as set out on the back of the AGM agenda. Membership was 800 last year. Over half the membership pay their subscriptions by Direct Debit - it would help enormously if everyone would adopt this system of payment.

### **Annual Reports**

Newsletter: Mike Atkins said that as

co-ordinator, his job was relatively simple. The principle people were Tim Midwinter as Editor and the team of people who delivered most of the newsletters by hand. He thanked them all for their efforts. He appealed for articles - the quality of the Newsletter depends on the articles.

Litter: Tim Midwinter thanked everyone who had helped. Virtually all the river bank was now cleared once a year. Richard Hare took the local press to see our efforts, but unfortunately it was not very photogenic so did not get the publicity it deserved. Recent high tides have brought more rubbish. More volunteers to help with the Autumn cleanup would be welcomed.

Water Skiing: Steve James who is Ski Captain of the East Suffolk Water Ski Club said that he was happy for people to contact him over problems. He was a River Deben Association Committee member and his telephone number was in the Newsletter. The Ski-Club was now in it's 16<sup>th</sup> year. In 1989 it formed an association with the Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club. They use the section of river between the Horse Buoy and the Ramsholt moorings. The site includes a ski jump ramp and a slalom course. It was a family club which operated mainly in the summer. They had one annual competition day when three or four clubs competed. They also held a New Years Day meeting at which a Lifeboat collection is taken.

The committee try to ensure that all members abide by the rules but non-members can also use the river - they have no control over such people. All members boats have bright orange stickers on the windscreen and a number by which they can be identified. They belong to the British Water Ski Federation who have used the East Suffolk Club as an example of how to run such an organisation.

They use the slipway at the ferry by agreement with the Trust. This continues



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the license granted by the previous owners.

### **Election of Officers and Committee**

The following were elected unopposed:-

Chairman:	Anthony Mason
Vice Chairman:	Mike Atkins
Secretary:	Vacancy
Treasurer:	Terence Kermode
Press Officer:	Rosemary Schlee
Committee:	Anni Healey Adrian Judge Anne Moore Robert Simper Lil Tudor-Craig Don Johnson

Anthony Mason on being elected chairman took over the meeting. He thanked Anni for her efforts over the years. He noted that she had been involved from the start of the Association and he hoped that she would be re-elected as a committee member so she could keep an eye on planning matters.

Mr Don Johnson was elected to the committee for the first time. Anthony welcomed him. He represents the Woodbridge and District Angling Club.

### **Constitution Amendments**

Mike Atkins explained that the amendments were intended to clarify and rationalise the procedures for the election of officers and committee. There were a few minor points including limiting the Chairman's term of office to 3 years. The amendments were unanimously approved.

### **Management Plan**

Moray McPhail gave a brief introduction to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Management Plan. Suffolk County Council have prepared a draft plan for the area with support from all relevant local authorities, local charities, wildlife groups and farmers/landowners. The idea is to provide a framework for conservation, tourism, publicity and recreation in the future. This plan will not be compulsory on planning authorities but they should abide by it's

aims: it will provide a positive influence on the management of the area.

The plan divides the area into nine zones in which the Deben Estuary and it's immediate surrounds form one. The committee decided that they could usefully contribute to the plan on the following points:

- 1) Moorings and boating access
- 2) Footpaths, carparks, picnic sites and signs.
- 3) Description of features and facilities such as SSSIs.
- 4) Public transport and ferries.
- 5) Wetland preservation.

The committee needs assistance in formulating their views on these topics and would welcome volunteers who have some time to commit to the project.

The plan will be implemented in some form and in order not to be marginalised the Association must contribute. Comments are required by Suffolk County Council by the early spring and the plan will be made public in the Autumn.

### **Any Other Business**

Mr N Green asked whether the tree that Frank Knights had found across the higher reaches of the Deben was still there, impeding access. The chairman did not know but he would find out.

In view of the fatal accidents on the river this year, could the Association provide help or advice. The committee would consider the problem.

The meeting closed at about 9pm. Mr Michael Beeton then gave an illustrated talk titled "Mills on the Deben".

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## Who's Who

### Officers

Chairman	Anthony Mason. 29 Ipswich Rd, Wdge. IP12 4BS	☎ 0394 386601
Vice Chairman	Michael Atkins. Rudd's Barn, Waldringfield Rd, Martlesham. IP12 4PJ	☎ 0473 736668
Secretary	Harry Norris. Deben Vane, Ipswich Rd, Wdge. IP12 4BS	☎ 0394 384442
Treasurer	Terence Kermode. 8 Carmelite Place, Wdge. IP12 1DR	☎ 0394 386613
Minutes Sec.	Annette Burt. 21 Kingston Rd, Wdge. IP12 4AY	☎ 0394 385535
Press Sec.	Rosemary Schlee. Deben Lodge, Melton Rd, Wdge. IP12 1NH	☎ 0394 382740

### Committee Members

Felixstowe Ferry	David White. 6 Coniston Close, Felixstowe. IP11 9SW	☎ 0394 283972
History	Robert Simper. Sluice Cottage, Ramsholt.	☎ 0394 411273
Business	Moray Macphail. Woodbridge Boat Store, Lime Kiln Quay Wdge. IP12 1BD	☎ 0394 380390
Environment	Lil Tudor-Craig. ML2605, Wilford Bridge Rd, Melton. IP12 1RB	☎ 0394 386011
Wildfowlers	Adrian Judge. 29 Bredfield St, Wdge. IP12 4NH	☎ 0394 383350
Watersports	Tim Midwinter. 37 Coopers Rd, Martlesham Heath. Ipswich. IP5 7SJ	☎ 0473 623020
SCDC Liaison	Russell Geen. 41 Hasketon Rd, Wdge. IP12 4LE	☎ 0394 383696
Water-Ski Club	Steve James. 28 Burnham Close, Ipswich. IP4 4ED	☎ 0473 274254
General Liaison	Ian Batty. Ferry House, Quayside, Wdge. IP12 1BN	☎ 0394 382338
Planning	Anni Healey. Jesters, 7A Burkitt Rd, Wdge. IP12 4JJ	☎ 0394 382291
Angling	Don Johnson. Ivy Dene, Melton Hill, Melton. IP12 1AX	☎ 0394 383661
Footpaths	Anne Moore. 2 Grundisburgh Rd, Wdge. IP12 4HG	☎ 0394 383559

## Reports

### Knoll Fairway Committee

After 3 years of negotiation the Crown Commissioners granted a licence to the Knoll Fairway Committee for 10 years from 1 January 1994. It extends from just upstream of Eversons to Sun Wharf, just above Robertson's yard.

In addition we understand the Crown Commissioners have given a licence to Suffolk Coastal District Council from Sun Wharf to Wilford Bridge. This means that the navigable River Deben from Felixstowe Ferry to Wilford Bridge is now under the effective control of five fairway committees and a local district council. Thus, the smallest and one of the most beautiful estuaries in England is also one of the most sub-divided!

I have one main wish - That between them the Fairway Committees ensure that NO further swinging moorings are authorised. The few short reaches of open water should have "Endangered" notices on them and be kept clear for all of us!

Ian Battye

#### *✍ Editors Note.*

*I whole heartedly agree with Ian regarding making sure that no more moorings are allowed to encroach on the few clear areas of water left. In fact, as an active Dinghy Sailor and Canoeist, I feel the river is currently too cluttered. Most boats on moorings hardly ever seem to move. There must be a better way of storing them than in the areas of water that we all wish to sail/paddle upon!*

### Granary Quay

This important area of Woodbridge may under-go some changes.

What would we, the Association, like?

The Tide mill is one of the main historic landmarks of Woodbridge used as an emblem and focal point for tourists.

This quay with mud berth and Granary is a magnificent setting for many sailors who prefer this to concrete, man-made marinas. This could be a natural to develop as a landing place for the visiting sailor, who would not go to the marina. For those who love Holland, there is usually the original town quay, which is crowded with small visiting boats, whose crews enjoy the colour and bustle around them.

It would be good to see the Quay alive again and give visiting Dutch, Belgian and German etc. craft a chance to moor in mud in such a setting. The Tide Mill Quay is for those who want a natural berth with a beautiful view.

It should look like a working Quay, be simple, functional with a minimum or no fussy flower beds or pots. It should start on a small scale and develop as demand and taste dictates.

I would be interested to hear your views.

Anni Healey



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## Jet Skiing

Suffolk Coastal District Council has proposed an initiative to try and resolve the present conflicts. It has often been suggested in these pages and with Jet Skiers that they should form a club and get their watercraft registered. This would enable responsible Jet Skiers to organise themselves and their sport and gain credibility for pursuing a leisure activity comparable with others. The water-ski club has achieved this and they are now quoted as an example of what can be done. However, it does appear unrealistic for Jet Skiers to come into the Deben due to the many other users all fighting over a narrow stretch of water.

It was proposed that a designated zone with launch strip, possibly from near Languard point to the Pier and stretching out to sea, but remaining inside the shipping lanes and deep water channel, be marked out with buoys. Some people may feel that Jet Skis

should be banned altogether. However, it must be faced that this is a popular sport which is growing, and hence is best controlled to ensure the safety of other water users.

Anni Healey

## Planning

The Association has supported an application by the East Suffolk Water Ski Association for permission to make their jetties at Falkenham Marsh permanent. At the moment the application has gone to appeal. The jetties have been there for 13 years and the District Council has had ample time to monitor their impact on the environment. Safeguards could be agreed in the event of the club changing it's emphasis or disbanding, to ensure that the jetties would only retain their present structure or be removed.

Anni Healey

## Articles

### Arctic Explorer

Having sailed round the world twice and then motored round twice, the last time via the North West passage in a converted lifeboat, David Cowper, who lives in Melton, has set himself a further challenge. Next year he plans to motor round the world via the North East passage, starting at Murmansk past the almost un-inhabited, totally desolate north east rim of Russia to the Bering Straits, some 3750 miles. He will probably only be able to move for 6-8 weeks in July/August, the remaining ten months being spent ice-bound, preferably in some sheltered bay. After the Bering Straits he will have the choice of returning either via the North West passage through the Canadian Arctic or turn South for warmer waters via Cape Horn.

During his many months in the Canadian

Arctic on previous expeditions, apart from the time consuming process of surviving, he spent much of his time working out his ideal requirement of a vessel for such Arctic expeditions. This vessel, the Arctic Explorer, is now being built for use on this latest expedition. Inevitably there were design compromises to be made, but his main requirements were:-

- 44 feet long.
- Easy solo handling.
- Shallow draft for inshore work.
- Easy beaching (strong capstan & anchor)
- 5000 mile range.
- Self righting
- Very tough skin (Must stop ice gripping or puncturing it)
- All weather capabilities, to allow living quarters to stay at +20°C when outside drops to -60°C.



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- Provisions, stores and spares for 3 years.  
- Safety and escape equipment to include kayak, floating sledge, tent etc. if forced to abandon ship.

An important decision was the material for construction, steel/iron, aluminium, wood or composite. He chose composite consisting of a basic wood and veneer structure glued together and covered with glass & epoxy inside and out. This is friendly in cold climates and is inherently strong. The hull for instance with 5 layers of glass & epoxy outside and three inside will be equivalent to 12mm of steel plate - the average merchant man has plating of 8mm. The Arctic Explorer weighs 15 tons unladen of which one ton is glass, and fully laden weighs 25 tons.

To complete the local story, David chose Robertsons of Lime Kiln Quay, Woodbridge to build this very special one off - a fitting tribute to his confidence in their ability to undertake and complete a demanding job. They have an experienced team of shipwrights who take great care and pride in the painstaking detailed work involved. All being well the Arctic Explorer should be launched later this year. This will be followed by a thorough fitting out and extensive sea trials.

Our best wishes go to Robertsons for a successful launch and to David and the Arctic Explorer for their special journey in 1995.

Ian Battye

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### Another Month Ends...

All targets met  
All systems working  
All customers satisfied  
All staff eager and enthusiastic  
All pigs fed and ready to fly!

A Ditty

### Safety Corner

I was reading the Minutes of last years AGM and I noticed that the Association had promised to give some river safety advice. Hence I was moved to write this article.

#### Please Note

I, in common with all other river users, was very upset to hear of the tragic accidents on the river in the last few years. The comments listed below do not directly relate to either of these incidents and are based on well established good practice.

The Safety of the river user is effected by a number of factors, including their fitness, their personal equipment, the craft they are using and the loading of that craft. All are discussed below:-

**Personal Fitness** - The length of time that a person can survive in the water is directly related to their all round fitness. In particular, their ability to survive immersion in cold water can be greatly increased if they have eaten recently and greatly decreased if they have consumed alcohol or drugs. (Both Alcohol and Drugs tend to override the bodies natural defence reactions to cold!)

**Personal Equipment** - Everyone knows that a Buoyancy aid is a good idea, so why don't they wear them. "I can swim" is one of the favourite answers, as is "I have done this for 40 years so I will be OK today!". The facts are as follows:-

The water around the coast of England varies from 5°C(Winter) to 15°C(Summer). Even in the summer people die of Hypothermia very quickly. You will survive much longer if you float with your arms and legs together to conserve heat, than if you tread water. Also, a Buoyancy Aid keeps you very warm. It is a very good insulator. Many people who don't wear buoyancy aids and die in rivers die of Hypothermia (Cold). If they had worn a Buoyancy Aid they would have survived much longer because they wouldn't have to

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struggle to stay on the surface, and the Buoyancy Aid would keep them warm. **Always Wear a Buoyancy Aid on the water, particularly when going to and from a Yacht!**

**Tenders etc.** - Most accidents happen when people are going to and from their Yachts. Considering how big and expensive most Yachts are, it always surprises me how little people pay for their tender. What is important in a Tender?

i) Buoyancy - A Tender which is lying on the bottom of the river is not a lot of use to anyone. It is common sense to ensure that the tender has enough buoyancy to support itself, the engine and the gallons of beer which have been loaded into it. After all, even the most careful water user can have a mishap! Inflatable tenders are particularly good from this point of view as they have positive buoyancy built in. However, a wooden or fibreglass dinghy with air bags can be just as good. However, neither type of boat is likely to survive long with an outboard on the back without some extra buoyancy.

ii) Painter - All tenders, however small should have a strong painter attached to the front to help landing, towing etc.

**Loading the Tender** - Many tenders have a gunwale strip around them. This is NOT a load line! They are not designed to be loaded so that they only have 1-2" of freeboard left. It is not reasonable to yell at all other river boats which pass by because they might make a wave. Load Safe! Leave enough freeboard that if a rogue speed boat passes you by, you will not end up on the bottom of the river. If you don't, you have only yourselves to blame. If you have an outboard on the tender be very careful to ensure that it isn't too stern heavy. Dunking the transom is not recommended. Also remember that when you slow down, the stern wave washes over the boat, swamping the stern if you are not careful. Finally, if

the engine does foul on a rope or other obstruction, be very careful when leaning out the back to ensure you don't sink the transom under water. If in doubt, paddle to the bank before sorting the mess out.

To recap on the major points:-

- a) Don't Drink and Row/Paddle.
- b) Always wear a Buoyancy Aid.
- c) Ensure your tender/dinghy will float, even when fully laden.
- d) Do not overload your tender/dinghy.

I would like to end by wishing everyone a happy, safe summer in/on/around the river.

Tim Midwinter  
BCU Lifeguard Examiner

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### All very pretty

I know I go on about it but this river has not always been a quiet backwater. Not that it invariably is now, for that matter. The reaction of some of it's present day denizens to letters from the various Fairways Committees shows that the blood of their forefather still runs in their veins and the fact that some of those forefathers were not transported for smuggling but, at an earlier date, actually hanged for piracy should give compulsive letter writers pause for thought. I shall not tell you whose ancestor it was who was hanged for piracy. It was in the fourteenth century, anyway, so even by Woodbridge standards, it is about time for bygones to be bygones but it might be cause for treading warily for all that. But, teasing apart, it is the amount of commercial activity that went on in what is now such a quite place that never ceases to amaze me. Did you know, for example, that in the late sixteenth century, no fewer than twenty two fully seagoing ships were owned by Woodbridge merchants and worked out of this river. Quite a few of those were actually built here two of them in the hollow below Chapel Street, which is why it is called "Ship Meadow". In those days that hollow was a tidal creek with



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enough water, on spring tides, to float out a small ship. They were of the type that we would call galleons. They just called them ships. But these twenty two were not the only ships carrying freights in and out of the town. Ships from most of the other ports in not only the Christian world, but from Essex and Norfolk as well would have crowded the quays or lain out in the river, awaiting their turn. By the seventeenth century the congestion had reached the point that there were said, at one time, to be four hundred wagon loads of freight awaiting loading. The quays were so cluttered that complaints were being lodged with the magistrates to the effect that "Respectable people could not get to and from the ferry hard". You will notice the distinction between waterfront people and respectable people. This was not unique to Woodbridge. It existed in every old seaport. Town and tide were very wary of one another. Sea folk derided the airs of those with pretensions to respectability and land folk regarded those with knowledge of foreign parts, who talked in a weird language all of their own, as decidedly louche. And all this is not so long dead either. Our next door neighbour who was only in her mid seventies when she died some six or seven years ago, once complained that her landlord never had her house properly re-painted but always got "A couple of rough chaps from off the water" to do it. She was merely voicing an age old prejudice. The fact that her landlord was Claude Whisstock and that the two men were actually yacht painters who can put such a paint finish on a piece of wood that it looks like coloured opaque glass meant nothing to her. They were off the water and, as such, necessarily rough. Mind you, three hundred years ago the prejudice was probably well founded on both sides of the argument. The brightly painted ships that plied the river were owned and crewed by characters who with their clumsy square rigged ships, might not be able to sail very

close to the wind in an actual sense but probably sailed pretty close to the wind in every other sense. In maritime circles "Paying with the tops'l" still means clearing off without paying your bills. It is a practise, even today, not totally unknown to some of the present day live aboard cruising fraternity and might account for the difficulty you find in getting credit if you form part of that community. I wonder if that is why the old time ships were covered in heraldic symbols, painted shields and the like, to give them an air of respectability. After all, ashore, the chap who hangs up three brass balls outside his establishment gets called a pawn broker and he who hangs up a shield with a Black Horse, a Double Headed Eagle, a Griffin or some other quasi heraldic emblem on it gets called a banker. Why should it not work with ships? Perhaps it was not all just for show, after all. Whatever, The river might be a quiet enough place now, for all the odd tide rip under its surface. Just imagine what it was like then!

Tom Ellaway

# RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION A G M

Woodbridge Community Hall

Friday April 22nd at 7.30pm

Everyone Welcome

Come and Put YOUR Views.

After the Annual General Meeting

The British Water Ski Federation

And

The National Rivers Authority

will give talks.