

# RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER SPRING 1999



Number 18 Editor : Micheal Atkins  
Assistant Editor : Dennis Hawes

## Contents

Editorial .....2  
Chairman's Comments..... 1

Report. Litter Clearance .....4

## Articles.

Mud - Deben Mud .....5  
Deben Reminiscences .....5  
Deben Rowing Club .....6  
Motor Gun Boat 60.....7  
Woodbridge Art Club.....8  
Woodbridge Regatta .....8  
Loos.....9  
Bentwaters Discussion.....10-13  
Forthcoming Events.....15  
Who's Who ..... 16

## EDITORIAL

Looking back through past editions of the River Deben Association Newsletters, I see that Richard Hare edited the first three, and that I

was brought in to do No. 4. This edition is No. 18 which means that I have been responsible for 15 Newsletters. The view has been expressed that the Newsletter is one of the most important products of the Association (along with the litter collection). The Alde and Ore Newsletter is a more glamorous product with coloured photos, and maybe we should go that way. Suffice to say that the work involved would need to be undertaken by a younger person; all I am really saying is that 15 editions is quite enough, and new ideas are needed for the millenium. A new Editor is required for the Newsletter, and I am sure that there is someone out there who would do the job better than me.

Bentwaters dominated the last edition, and inevitably was going to figure strongly in this one. So much has been written that I wondered if there was anything left to say in the Newsletter. It occurred to me that I might recruit four correspondents - two pro, two anti to briefly give their views. As I write, I have received copy from only three and I publish them herewith, with the hope that the fourth might achieve the extended Copy Day.

The coming A.G.M. will be the last under Denzil Cowdry. He has kept us in order in Committee meetings, but his main achievement has been to lead us in the tortuous negotiations over Bentwaters - I dread to think how many letters he has written (and Fay has typed) on our behalf. There is no doubt in my mind that he has been the right man for the right job at the right time, and has enabled the River Deben Association to have a significant input into the debate.

Michael Atkins

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

### CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT

These are the last notes I shall write as your Chairman. My three years of concern for the River Deben and its users through the Association have brought me into contact directly and, by correspondence, indirectly, with a very large number of people. All of these interactions have been useful and interesting. One of the happiest reflections is that we seem to have survived the difficult problem of Bentwaters, which prompts such diverse opinions, without losing the loyalty of members. Several people wrote to say that they would not contribute to the Bentwaters Fund but remained committed to the Association for the other good that was being done.

I was, of course, even more pleased to receive letters from members and others explaining their views about Bentwaters, copies of correspondence, and subscriptions to the fund. As I write in early February the total money collected amounts to about £4,000 from over 200 donors and I believe that more cheques are still in the pipeline. The Deben Yacht Club undertook a special mailing, Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club and Woodbridge Cruising Club incorporated my appeal in their Newsletters and some members of Waldringfield Sailing Club were approached individually. I am grateful for the wider support and pleased that the Association was able to provide a coordinating role. Thus financed and encouraged our liaisons with the Ore and Alde Association, Suffolk Preservation Society and the Bentwaters Campaign Group were given authority and could be translated into substantial help with funds, detailed elsewhere, to employ consultants and lawyers versus both the Structure Plan and the Anglia International Airpark planning application for Bentwaters.

The week long Inspector's review of the Structure Plan with regard to the site is now behind us and attention is concentrated on the exact terms of the likely refusal (now a fact Ed.) by the Environment Committee of the present airport application. Too many Councillors seem to be set on a low intensity airport without defining what they mean: what aircraft, how many, who controls growth? So the detailed in-fighting goes on and on. By the time you read these lines we shall have moved on again. The Editor says this is a boring subject so I will not elaborate here.

As an immediate diversion let me say what a joy it was to get back to river issues when Peter Wain, the recently co-opted member of the General Committee for rowing, examined some of the problems for rowers on the Deben. One significant item is the frequency of metal mooring buoys, particularly those with a top ring. I have asked him to quantify and map these buoys, as a first step to finding a solution. There is also some talk of a rowing regatta weekend which would involve a marked and segregated area of the river, probably below Methersgate towards the Tips. I agreed to seek the sympathy and cooperation of other water-borne river users.

Nice to think of summer pursuits. The mild winter has restricted the number of duck seen on our shores and, judging by wildfowlers' returns elsewhere, many fewer duck have been shot this year. On the other hand, from my own limited observation, walkers and even joggers have been out in abundance in the unseasonable warm and sometimes sunny spells. Quiet enjoyment of the river scene is certainly not restricted to the summer months; waiting for the duck to flight against a winter sunset must be one of the most solitary pursuits for man, with every sound magnified in the stillness.

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

I did write a critique of the Structure Plan proposals for Bentwaters for the Inspector. I was allowed to enter it in support of the formal submissions by the Ore and Alde Association. One specific request was that he should visit Waldringfield and Ramsholt to understand what we were all on about with regard to ambient noise on the Deben. I do hope that he could hear the Widgeon, a couple of Oystercatchers and a party of Curlew, representing our own distinctive level of noise.

The present General Committee is listed, as normal in the Newsletter. At this juncture I want to thank them publicly for their support and to express the hope that they will continue to act as conduits for information, to give up evenings to attend meetings, and to be so willing to do little "extra" jobs to ensure that the Association forges ahead.

Those who have done their bit and have left the Committee in my time deserve individual mention. David Cavey master-minded the Deben Clear-up for many years and handed his duties over most thoroughly to Jo Masters: he and his teams produced obvious results and earned the Association much recognition in practical terms. Tim and Vivienne Midwinter were welcome "young" Committee Members who gave comprehensive willing support in the preparation of the Newsletter as well as nicely independent judgements on every matter. They only went to America at the time of the first B1 merger and may yet go. I am grateful to them both and happy that any disappointment about America was quickly forgotten with the birth of Katherine. Terence Kermodé contributed many hours of honest endeavour as Treasurer before my time and kindly saw me through my first year of office: he was ably assisted by Steven Ashworth of Woodbridge School, maintaining the membership list, probably our most unsung hero because he was not a member of the General Committee.

Harry Norris, founder Secretary of the Association, was a constant source of support until last year, by which time he really had performed a full share of duty in a quiet and totally reliable way. His Minutes were an exemplar of concision and accuracy, not seen by the general membership but much appreciated by his fellow Committee Members.

Do come to the AGM. The running and direction of the Association are always open to question and there is no time for change better than when a Chairman stands down. Nominations for the General Committee should be sent to the Secretary: we have never in my time had one but I do assure you that new names would be welcome and the Constitution is flexible enough for a job to be found for all willing participants. I have allowed an hour for talk and coffee followed by some early cinematography of the Deben and principal towns. Some shots of seaplanes should not necessarily convey the idea that we are extending an invitation to yet another way of enjoying the river and its estuary. Au revoir to the mostly silent majority of members, who tend not to come to AGM'S. Thank you for putting up with me as Chairman and for reading my notes. All others I hope to see on Thursday, 22nd April.  
Denzil Cowdry.

P.S. Re Letters to The Editor  
(The Editor tells me that we were so awash with Bentwaters in the last issue that Andrew Nahun's letter of last Spring went without comment. I want to reassure Andrew that the Committee are fully aware of the scenic value of the upriver wrecks and acknowledge the need to maintain public dinghy launching at Woodbridge on the corner of Bass Dock. A proposal by Frank Knights to pump out the dock, using the spoil to enhance the area on the river side of the station, drew comment from us that the dinghy facilities should be retained.

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

Andrew contributed to a "fighting fund" - he was the first - before the appeal was launched. D.C.

### DEBEN CLEAN-UP DAY \* YET AGAIN

During the years in which I have been involved in this very worth while project, I have been constantly amazed by how much rubbish is collected each year. In 1997, I illadvisedly reduced the number of skips supplied by Suffolk Coastal. This year, we increased to 5 skips, all of which were full to overflowing, yielding an estimated total of 4.2 tons. Over and above that, I would guess there were 30 black plastic bags deposited elsewhere by some groups.

This year, we were joined by the Woodbridge Army Cadets collecting up river from Bawdsey. They filled their skip, used all their bags and only managed half of their allotted length of river bank. They have very generously offered to have another "go" in the spring, but there really is the need for an additional group to be formed in this area.

Volunteers please to Jo Masters (tel..01394 383825) who takes over from me in 1999. May I hand over by saying a very warm thankyou to all those who organize the groups and actually do the hard work. In 1998, they were

1. Woodbridge Sea Scouts .
2. Woodbridge School
3. Frank Ryan
4. Deben Yacht Club
5. Martlesham Creek Boatyard
6. The Wildfowlers
7. Waldringfield Sailing Club
8. Patrick Bowden-Smith
9. 1st Kirton Sea Scouts
10. East Anglian Water Ski Club
11. Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club
12. Frank Knights & Ian Battye
13. Kyson Fairway Committee
14. Frances Matheson

15. Geoffrey Osborne
  16. Woodbridge Cruising Club
  17. Nottcutts
  18. Woodbridge Army Cadets
- David Cavey

### MUD - DEBEN MUD .

For decades, it seemed relatively stationary in the upper reaches of the Deben. In recent years, it seems to have done quite a bit of shifting from Melton downwards, ably assisted by man who has shifted it from his patch by pumping it out on the ebb tide, this is understandable, particularly if it is essential for the viability of a Yard to bring client's vessels alongside for hauling out and for carrying out repairs etc. Sometimes the odd settling pond has been constructed, which has helped reduce the solid content spreading too far. Some projects are minor, one relatively large of the three to date, with two more to come this Spring/Summer.

Many must have noticed over the last ten years or so that larger vessels are now having considerable difficulty getting in and out of the Dock at Woodbridge, even with a decent tide. It is owned by the Dock Company and operated by Frank Knights Ltd. and they have decided to have a go and reduce the general level of mud by some three feet. Whilst they are about it, they are offering to extend their activity along the Whistock's frontage as far as the Granary Quay if a small contribution costs is offered.

Planning permission has been applied for, which is only the start. The Crown Commissioners are interested in mud; others - such as the Environmental Agency and Water Board - as to where it is deposited and whether it is polluted. The SCDC and the Town Council also became involved in various aspects of control and ownership.

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

Fortunately the Dock Company some years ago bought a strip of land behind the flood barrier, some 65 ft wide and 170 ft in length running from the river to the entrance to the Andy Seedhouse operation at the foot of the railway footbridge where boats are stored. For many years this strip has been leased to the Deben Yacht Club for dinghy storage. I understand that there should be no problem in making convenient arrangements for them in the area as this is where mud will be pumped.

Suitable arrangements will be agreed to contain mud so that it will, when settled, provide a pleasant grassed area behind the river wall two to three feet below its top and so provide somewhere for visitors to sit, picnic, and where children can play and everyone enjoy themselves.

Ian Battye

### DEBEN REMINISCENCES

My very first memory of Waldringfield is as a 5 or 6 year old. My first year at school was destined to be the year I had all the childish ailments - measles, chicken pox, whooping cough. My parents were fresh air fiends, and when temperatures were back to normal but school still not allowed, the motor bike and side car were on the road to visit places where I could play but no other children would be in evidence - therefore Waldringfield with its sand dunes (sic) and shallow water came into my life. I suppose the Sailing Club was running, but I don't remember it.

Bob and I were married in 1949, but before this Bob had introduced me to sailing. We had the use of a sailing dinghy and explored the Orwell and the Stour. The boat was kept on the Orwell, and we didn't venture to sea to visit the Deben, at least not when I was crew.

In 1952 I was expecting my second baby, and we decided on a holiday under canvas. This was when we first met Gwen and Janet Waller and George Everard. George arranged for us to put up a tent on the field owned by Gwen and Janet and farmed by him next door to "Swans Nest". I could lie in the sun whilst my eldest two could play (mainly in the mud) by the river's edge. Mrs. Frost was at the old Post Office, and what a delight that shop was with its hanging rails full of all sorts of things from woollen vests to hams and the shelves packed with wool, sewing equipment, post cards - everything and anything would be supplied in that Aladdin's cave - ask and it would be found. The summer of 1953 saw us back again this time for 3 months. With Gwen and Janet's approval, we pitched two tents, a ridge and a bell tent with a lean-to arrangement between them as the kitchen area. I can't remember it raining, but I suppose it did. However this was a summer to remember. We sailed a little, and had picnics at the Tips and the Rocks.

Christmas 1954 saw my family travelling to Nigeria where Bob had been offered a post as a Civil Engineer but two years on, we were back to Waldringfield for our five months leave, this time with a caravan which George Everard let us put behind the haystack - more or less where the new vicarage is now. Kevin and John were 6 and 4 respectively and had a wonderful time climbing the haystack, and feeding the chickens with George. Bob helping with the harvest and John Waller on holiday from school taking both boys for rides on his donkey - idyllic days.

1958 saw us back on leave again. Bob wanted a boat, but I was pregnant again and insisted on a house which we bought on Heath Road, where we had seven happy years. Between 1958 and 1964, we were back and forth to Nigeria, and then home for good. We bought a Kestrel and joined Waldringfield Sailing Club.

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

Our life changed almost overnight. The children were at school, Kevin had an O.K. and John a Cadet - the first "plastic" cadet at W.S.C. The Sailing Club lived up to its reputation and was very welcoming. I became a "Galley Slave" with great names like Hewitt, Mossman and Mason to mention but a few. Then Secretary to the Ladies Committee for a short period before Peter Fraser persuaded me to help Don Rose who was then Secretary. when Don resigned, I suppose it was inevitable that I succeeded him to have almost 20 years as Club Secretary. During that time, things changed very rapidly. The Clubhouse grew in stature and membership rose. We improved the administration by purchasing what was then some modern equipment - a duplicator, an electric typewriter and then a computer.

Waldringfield itself has not changed all that much. The Maybush has, of course, from being just two rooms under the watchful eye of Albert and Gracie Hill. The caravans have gone from the car park area, but the "Arab Quarter" is still alive and thriving. The dinghy park and the beach have been improved. I remember when Chris and Marion Thompson brought "The Barge" back from Holland in ballast. Sand was emptied on to the beach by the then Cadet Fleet in a very short time I wonder how much of it is left there now? Bob was involved in moving the metal pipes etc which were put up during the war to keep invaders out.

Now after 30 years of living in Waldringfield, a few new houses have sprung up in the village, and a few of the old ones have been renovated. Lots of the old faces have departed, and I am unable to keep pace with the new ones, and there seem to be many more babies about again. But even after this length of time, I expect that we are still "grockles" to those whose ancestors were born here. And I hope

that other people's memories of Waldringfield will be as pleasant as mine.

Maisie Runnacles

### DEBEN ROWING CLUB

The Deben Rowing Club appears to have been very popular in the late nineteenth century. Old photographs and winners certificates bear the names of Woodbridge boat building families still well known today. The club declined after the first world war, the last remaining boats stored at Robertsons were burnt in 1936.

DRC is now thriving again and winter and summer alike, rowers and scullers may be seen boating from Woodbridge.

The large and ever increasing population of Ipswich, Felixstowe and Woodbridge has been without local rowing for many years, with the only rowing at Sudbury on the Essex border and at Lowestoft on the Norfolk border.

The resurrection of DRC has met a need and hardly a week goes by without new members joining. The club encourages recreational rowing for people of all ages and ability. The costs are kept very low to allow rowing and the asset of the rivet Deben to be available to all, whatever their means or ability.

The amount of interest in rowing on the Deben is almost an embarrassment as ever increasing numbers gather at the boathouse with no washing, changing or toilet facilities. However, outline planning consent has been granted for a modern facility and only the problem of finance prevents DRC building a valuable facility that will establish the ancient sport for a new millenium.

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

The increasing number of competitive rowers and scullers has led to the Deben name becoming known at regattas from Norwich down to the Thames tideway, and this appears to be set to increase in the 1999 season.

Competitive rowing needs considerable commitment and only long hours of winter practice can lead to the winning of a tankard or pennant on those warm summer days.

During my winter sculling, often alone on the deserted river, I have noticed that very few boats remain moored out over this winter season. Never in my thirty years association with the Deben have I seen it so deserted. Only the multitude of mooring buoys prevent the Deben from appearing as it was in Saxon times.

From the oarsman's perspective, low in his boat, the mooring buoys are not always easy to see, especially when the tidal stream runs them under. Even harder to see are the iron shafts that some people prefer to fit instead of the more usual rope strop. The iron moorings cause much damage to our blades and on several occasions, they have caused scullers to be thrown into the icy water.

Most Deben users will not be familiar with the upper reaches above Wilford Bridge. Here, at half tide onwards, rowers are disturbed by no more than a pair of swans. This deserted and little known reach of the Deben is also its most tranquil, the place where smooth water can be found on blustery days. At the top of the reach above Wilford, the iron railway bridge is considered to be the rowing club's limit of navigation. Here in the quiet pool, kingfishers and even an otter have been seen.

Deben Rowing Club has an achievement award. Rowing from the iron bridge to the sea, or *vidua versa*, wins a silver badge. Rowing from the

bridge to the sea and back again wins a gold badge. The first claimants were Terry Davey and Peter Wain in 1997, and since then five others have achieved the feat. (Although competition in this endeavour is frowned upon, the trip is achieved in less than four hours. So there you are, the discovery of the Sutton Hoo ship proves that there has been rowing on the Deben for more than a thousand years. Now Deben Rowing Club means to keep it there for another thousand.

What changes will be seen at the end of the next millennium? What will be imposed upon us? Will we all speak German? Will enormous aircraft scream overhead? I like to think that it will be an age of enlightenment where the tranquil river still remains for the enjoyment of the quiet farmland and non-polluting pleasures of sail and oar.

Terry Davey  
DRC Rowing Captain.

### MOTOR GUN BOAT 60

Lying in the dock known as Sun Wharf, adjacent to the Meregrove furniture factory, is an ex-Coastal Forces World War 1 Motor Gun Boat, MGB60. This is a 72ft Scott Paine designed British Power Boat, built at Hythe, Southampton, and was first commissioned into the Royal Navy in the early 40s. She was powered by three Rolls Royce Packard engines of 1250 hp each. Her first base was at Fowey, but as the need to counter E-boats in the North Sea intensified, she operated out of Felixstowe (HMS Beehive) as part of the famous 6th MGB Flotilla. The S.O. was the legendary and much decorated Lt. Cdr. Robert Hitchens, RNVR. This Flotilla is credited with the first E-boat loss in August 1941.

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

After the war following decommission, she was sympathetically converted into a floating home by Mr. and Mrs. Squires, and berthed at Sun Wharf. Jill Squires, a local artist, is maintaining a constant interest in her former home, as the vessel has been purchased by the Coastal Forces Heritage Museum, which is being set up at Haslar, Gosport by Captain Trevor Rowbotham, RN, Retd. The idea is to provide a permanent under cover museum with as many different types of Coastal Forces craft as can be accommodated in the old Gun Wharf premises. To date, the museum has sought out MTBs, an HDML, a Fairmile B ML, and others, but MGB60 represents the BPC model.

Towing an old girl like MGB60 to Portsmouth presents many problems, but the present proposals are that she will be towed down the Deben by Frank Knights ; himself ex- Coastal Forces, a further tow round to the old dock at Felixstowe, where a decision will be made whether to tow her alone or put her on a barge, and tow that down Channel. If any reader is wondering why she should not go by road, she is far too wide, at 20 ft, to be allowed on any road . Anyway, fully furnished by volunteers, to her wartime condition (minus her engines, of course) this is a wonderful finish for a famous old lady who has spent at least forty years here on the Deben at Woodbridge and is still in very good condition, despite the two thin skins of mahogany with canvas sandwich construction.

Don Tucker, ex Coastal Forces.

### Woodbridge Art Club

Woodbridge Art Club on Tidemill Quay, was 30 years old last year, and is a thriving club of over 190 artists, potters and lacemakers (and a waiting list for membership). There is some activity going on every week day, and some week-end workshops, making full use of our new Studio extension. Classes,

demonstrations and talks are held for members, and classes for disabled artists, potters and children are open to the public.

Members exhibit their work in the Clubhouse at the Easter week-end (10-4pm); every weekend and Bank Holiday from May to September (10-6pm); and every weekend in November (10-4pm). Entry to the exhibitions is free, and items are for sale.

Beryl Tucker, Hon. Sec., Woodbridge Art Club.

### REGATTA

From the Greasy Pole on Ferry Quay to the Jazz Band in the Bandstand the River Wall will be packed with people on Sunday afternoon, August 1st 1999, Woodbridge Regatta Day. The River itself will be packed with dinghies racing from the Deben Yacht Club, with crews of four and eight rowing from the Deben Rowing Club, with canoe demonstrations by the Deben Watersports Centre, the 5th Woodbridge Sea Scouts showing their pulling skills in their heavier boats rowing and sculling races in ordinary boats and with the Great Pub Challenge Race as a Grand Finale. There will also be river trips from the Town Jetty organised by Frank Knights.

The Woodbridge Model Yacht Club will hold its Regatta on the Yacht Pond and will also display some of their special model yachts . There will be stalls of all sorts in the surrounding field as well as a variety of activities specially designed to entertain children. We also hope to have Archery again which was very popular last year.

Teas and other refreshments will be available in the Cafes and in the two Yacht Clubs and the East Coast Sail Trust Barge Thalatta will be open to the public.



## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

The Woodbridge Regatta Association has a number of cups notably the Hayward Challenge cup and the Sullivan Challenge cup, which have been presented for swimming. We hope to revive the swimming races this year and are anxious to encourage young swimmers to compete.

The Regatta Association with the help of the Woodbridge and District Lions, is pleased to work hard to ensure that this well-loved event will continue to provide pleasure for us all and help for some of our local charities. We hope that you will come, and bring your friends, to join in the fun on the River Wall on Sunday, August 1st 1999.

Sonia Pollock

### LOOS

Deben Loos - What have they got to do with the R.D.A? The yachtsman sailing up to Woodbridge has got facilities in the Yacht Harbour which he would expect. But they are not available for use by the public for security reasons. There are some sixteen thousand landlubbers who visit the Tide Mill each year, and more who walk along the river wall area down to Kyson. There are some lovely cameos of busy people in the dock area and many varieties of water users going about their business with Clubs for canoeists, serious rowers with their fours and now embarking on an eight, dinghies and every form of cruising vessel including retired wooden working craft, some up to 100 years old. In this short stretch there are plenty of saltings with a large variety of sea birds and mud on the one hand with a stretch of fresh weater meadow with cattle grazing in the summer on the land side.

SCDC has provided a good Tourist Information Office at the Railway Station which had over 50,000 enter their office last year. The routine questions "where to stay",

"what to see" and "how to get to?" are handled in a very friendly and helpful way. But inevitably a certain percentage will ask "where is the nearest public lavatory?" The threat of incontinence is no respecter of age or gender.

The nearest facilities for those in urgent need are either near the Turban Shopping Centre at the top of Hamblin Road or along the River Wall near the Bandstand, Both are some distance from the station. The latter are currently closed due to the heavy rainfall this winter which has caused flooding.. No doubt something will be done in this area because the SCDC will find it difficult to stall indefinitely especially if it should be a very wet summer.

The obvious answer is for something to be done at the Railway Station. The Victorians, in their wisdom got it right with ample separate facilities for men and women. A legacy of the Beeching cuts in the railway system converted Woodbridge Station to a "Halt" with the closure of the lavatories. The old drains must still be here and modern tunnel borers and plastic piping would make light work in renewing them in most cases - so I am told. Railtrack say that Woodbridge Station improvements were likely to start in mid 1999 and would include a toilet for disabled people. Research with Anglia Railtrack has established that it is dependent on some grant from EU funds. It is now March and in my view it is unlikely that a start will be made in time to cater for this year's busy months - June, July and August.

This has been going on for some years, so any extra pressure from members would be helpful, and I would ask you to phone the SCDC Tourist Department to request that they make available a Portaloo this summer as a temporary measure. Tony Osmanski (tel: 01394 444323) and or Valerie Donovan (01394 444451) would be interested to hear views of the necessity for action - or any other ideas you may have.

Ian Battye

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

### The Bentwaters Discussion

**Stop Press.** Less publicised than the refusal of 80,000 movements was the lobbying to prevent SCDC inviting a further application for 50,000 movements. The developer is left to evaluate objections before making his next move. Interest now centres on amendments to the County and District Structure plans which determine the future

#### 1. THE OPEN MEETING

This was one of the best attended meetings that the River Deben Association has held and reflected the concern of many of our members about the proposed development of Bentwaters Airfield. I cannot remember where I read that rural communities have the problem of resolving the different interests of the local historic community, and the interest of those who have retired there for a peaceful life. The latter formed the bulk of the audience at this meeting. Our Chairman had arranged for a formidable panel to sit on high, and later in the meeting to explain the thinking of their particular bodies. But the introduction was by John Cousins, Aviation Adviser to Suffolk Business Airport, Ltd. He faced his audience bravely, and deliberately overstated the possible development of the airport. Questions were fast and furious, and again reflected the concern of many people, occasionally punctuated by applause from those who felt that the intrusions were going to be painful.

Our Chairman had decided that it would be inappropriate to have an interval with coffee, so we went straight on to the concerns of the societies represented at the top table. The most eloquent speech came from Mr. Cook who was meant to represent business, but who took the more traditional line of wanting peace and quiet when he got home for the week-end. One of the points much under discussion was the amount of labour that a new airport could attract, and whether other industry could be deployed at Bentwaters. Mr. Cook was asked

what his company's attitude would be to redeployment, and providing a demand for labour at Bentwaters. Sadly, Mr. Cook did not have the microphone in his hand for his reply, and I could not hear his answer.

It was an interesting meeting, and the Chairman had brought a wide spectrum of opinion to his panel, and he conducted a difficult meeting fairly. No conclusions were made, but it was obvious that the meeting was not in favour of the Suffolk Business Airport plans for Bentwaters; and the final decision is in the hands of Suffolk Coastal District Council.

Michael Atkins

#### 2. Wings Over Bentwaters- from Robert Simper.

If you don't live directly under the flightpath there is no reason for anyone to object to small scale flying from the former USAF air base at Bentwaters. There seems to be a paranoia fed by the more extreme claims of the anti-airport lobby. That is understandable because some people believe that if so much as a glider was given permission to use Bentwaters then this would be used as a lever for the place to be expanded into London's Fourth Airport.

We don't know what the long term aims of the present owners of Bentwaters are, but can probably be certain it is their intention to make the maximum profit out of the place. Their plans do not matter. What is important is the views of people living in East Suffolk and how they affect our own local and national government. It is the conflicting views of these three bodies of opinion that will decide what happens at Bentwaters.

I have lived all my life in the Sandlings peninsula and heard the flying activities of the two former USAF bases and the former Ipswich airport, but it was just another background sound and we lived with it. The planes flying from Bentwaters and

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

Woodbridge did not ruin the area. Suffolk Coastal DC attempts to promote tourism to replace the loss of the bases were commendable, but tourism makes very little impact on the local employment scene. ( ? Assnt Ed.)

Aldeburgh Festival's concerns with noise of planes flying from Bentwaters are real, but only a small problem and certainly not enough to justify no flying for ever. There could be enforceable arrangements that, for the few times a year that concerts are held at Snape, there would be restrictions on flying. This worked well with low scale flying from Bentwaters in the past.

I believe that the majority of the people living in the Sandlings and Woodbridge area appear to be happy with Bentwaters becoming an airport. I would not go so far as suggesting a major airport, but that does seem to be the view of most working people living in the villages.

Although I don't fly or belong to a flying club, I do recognise that people who fly small planes for a hobby, or indeed work, are a kindred spirit with the sailing and boating people. They are people who want a little excitement in their lives and we have no right to try and stop them. The closure of Ipswich airport has hit them hard. Although some have moved to Parham and other small airfields, they are very heavily restricted. The opening up of Bentwaters for flying might actually take some of the pressure off our over crowded rivers by giving an outlet to adventurous people.

One of the great red herrings of the Bentwater debate is to say that the airport is not acceptable, but the industrial park is perfectly alright. In fact in the long run the industrial park will change the area more than a small airport. Several small businesses have moved, or are moving to the former air base buildings. This all sounds very harmless, but the law of

averages is that some of these small entrepreneur businesses will expand into larger enterprises that will need to expand into the surrounding countryside and will need better roads linking into the A12.

While a small airport could live with the existing road system, the industrial park will, within a decade need a new road through the countryside of the fresh water Deben.

We are told that Bentwaters has the longest runway in Europe. Seen from a national perspective it would seem a little strange if no planes were allowed to land on it. We need to make certain that the local and national government give planning permission for a small scale airport with a industrial park, fixed in size, alongside, which cannot be expanded in the future. There is no reason why this cannot be achieved..

Robert Simper.

### 3. Another View Of Bentwaters

We all accepted the USAAF at Bentwaters - they were protecting us all, after all - but then a big part of this area became an AONB (Area of Natural Beauty) - one of only three in East Anglia. This reinforced its reputation as a pleasant backwater with its crowning glory, the Deben. We think so, anyway, with the Orwell, Alde and Ore thrown in for good measure. Then along come Anglia Airparks, run from the Lebanon, owning airports world wide and wanting to make money. Nothing wrong with that, but do we want our way of life (one main flight path follows the Deben) to be wiped out while the money is made ? I have a son who worked in Cathay Pacific management for ten years in the Far East, and who is now an airport consultant in London, going all over the world advising on this sort of question. He said

" Don't fuss, its far too remote, it won't happen". A week later, he appeared sheepishly and said that he had researched it at the office - London Airport and Gatwick are full, Stansted

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

is growing fast, and this could be the fourth London airport. Received wisdom from the airline industry says that the present flights will have to double in twenty years, and that is conservative. Those guys from Lebanon know what they are about. Planning Officers have been verbally assaulted in meetings, but Council officials like a big rate and a bigger department, and they are afraid of developers forcing a Public Enquiry. I am credibly informed that if you grant permission for x flights daily, you cannot stop this becoming 10x over time. What will our grandchildren say of us if this goes through ?

Rosemary Schlee

### Bentwaters Again

Dear Sir,

You asked me for my personal views on the proposed re-development of flying at Bentwaters. I am delighted to oblige.

We all know that airports are noisy, smelly and generally unpleasant places to visit, let alone live close by. Their flight paths adversely affect many people over an extensive area. Millions of pounds of compensation were paid when Stansted was developed. They cause serious reduction in tourism and other jobs which depend on it. On the other hand, the domestic side of Bentwaters has excellent facilities which should not just be used for accommodation as is currently happening. The existing social facilities should be opened in order to develop a real community. This is not yet happening.

The site also offers an excellent opportunity to develop industrial and other jobs within it. This opportunity should be seized with vigour. The sort of company which Cambridge is currently rejecting for lack of space might well, with persuasion, be attracted to this lovely part of

Suffolk without serious disadvantage. I think of computer software, research, communication centres for credit cards, etc. All these areas are without widespread environmental sacrifice, but could cause some additional road traffic. Special bus services may have to be provided, at subsidised cost to help to alleviate this impact. They do have the enormous advantage however that they cause no job closures or growth reduction as flying does. They offer a wide variety of employment at all levels.

In short, I strongly favour a vigorous development of Bentwaters as a job creator; but utterly reject any flying at all which will, in my view, destroy not only our environment, but in doing so, destroy far more jobs than it creates.

John Lineker.

### **Fund Raising to oppose the Bentwaters airport proposal as at 21 February 1999**

A majority of the members of the River Deben Association is opposed to the proposal to develop a commercial airport at Bentwaters. Even if some limited airport were to be set up initially it is feared that future growth of unacceptable aircraft noise and increase in road traffic could not be controlled and would cause irrevocable harm to a very special area. The RDA therefore decided to initiate fund raising to help ensure that the legal issues and the fears of the thousands of worried residents in the area affected, are presented to the decision takers as clearly as possible. This aim is a common aim of the several independent fund raising initiatives.

At the time of writing the generous contributions to the RDA Bentwaters fund amount to £4,110 given by 280 donors, for which many thanks. This count of donors

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

comprises single individuals and institutions each of which is counted as a single donor. 204 of these 280 donors (73%) are members of the RDA.

David Mace

Treasurer, River Deben Association

### CRUISING FROM THE RIVER DEBEN NINETY EIGHT YEARS AGO

Extracts from the Log of the yawl yacht "FOAM", 5 tons, built by A.E. Everson of Woodbridge. Launched 8th May, 1901.

3rd August, 1901 Made sail at 3.55 pm, and slipped from moorings at Woodbridge. Beat down river against mod Southerly wind. 6.55pm, after shortening sail, anchored in West Channel, Bawdsey Ferry. Having set up the cockpit tent and had an excellent supper, we arranged our sea kit and slung hammocks for captain and mate under the tent. 2nd mate and midshipman sleeping under fo'c's'le. During the night the mate fell out of his hammock first on one side and then on the other, much to the glee of the midi.

4th August, Sunday. Soon after 6 am, after making all clean and taut, and the lifebuoy having been streamed in case the tide should prove too strong, the mates both had a plunge over the side. Then after a good breakfast, the mates went ashore to get water and arrange for a pilot to take us over the bar. As to water, they found that Bawdsey is a place where this commodity is very scarce, as the jar came off empty. The Captain of Sir Cuthbert Quilter's yacht, hearing of our need, kindly offered us a jar which was gladly accepted.

The Captain had intended to hold divine service before going to sea, but the mate reported that the pilot would be boarding us immediately. So, made sail, and up anchor as we received the pilot at 9.45 am. We proceeded, and at 10.05 discharged the pilot outside the bar, and set course for East Lane, NE by E½E, wind fresh WSW, making 6½ knots.

We soon left Sir Cuthbert's new pagoda mansion, and passed the Martello towers, round masses of ugliness, and immediately sighted the Coast Guard Station at Orford Haven. Hauled up NE by N and hoisted Jack for a pilot, and were boarded at 10.55 by a pleasant bearded man who left his mate in the boat which we towed astern. We quickly ran over the bar and past the Coast Guard Station, by Western entrance noting the beacon and leading marks for the Eastern entrance. Dished the pilot at 11.08 and ran up the Ore.

Anchored in ½ fathom just S. of Orford pier, but being told we would be on the mud at low water, we lifted anchor and nearly drifted onto pier. Two youths with their boats came to our timely assistance and towed us out about 40 yds where we again anchored in 2 fathoms, thinking we had got a good berth. However owing to an eddytide, another small yacht, lying at an apparently safe distance, danced round her mooring like a demon. She, first wind and then tide rode, came into collision with us. After consultation we decided to move over to the opposite bank. So with sweeps and then with jib set we got her across and anchored in 7½ fathoms nearly opposite the pier. The mates went ashore to survey the town, and brought back accounts of the quaint beauty of the place and the grand old castle.

5th August, Monday. After a rattling good breakfast a bumboat man came alongside and sold us 2 loaves of bread, and the cook ordered from him mutton chops, which were brought with despatch. All hands then dressed for shore, white hats and white jerseys being the order of the day.

We prudently closed all our lockers, not knowing as to the honesty of the various people collected for the regatta, though feeling perfect confidence in the integrity of the natives. Our friendly boatman who had an eye to the main chance, came alongside and took us off to the jetty. We made our way up to the

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

town, looking out all the time for the sisters of our officers who were expected to ride over from Woodbridge, but alas, we were disappointed, they did not appear.

On reaching the castle we mounted the steps and thundered at the door, calling loudly for the seneschal or warder. A pleasant dame in a cottage nearby, shouted to us to go on knocking as the caretaker was inside with a party. After much hammering and some patience (or impatience), we were admitted and taken up a winding stone staircase to the banqueting hall, the chapel and the bedchambers. From the upper embrasures there was a fine view out to sea over Orfordness, and up and down the river, and over the pleasant wooded country to westward where stands the mansion of Sudbourne Hall, belonging to Mr. Woods (whose family, our guide told us, were enriched during the past century by the manufacture and sale of borax), and who now is the patron of yachting generally in these parts, and of the White Wings Yacht Club in particular.

When we got back on board, we lifted our anchor and dropped up with the tide to a better position for seeing the regatta, and more out of the way of the racing yachts. The first race started punctually. The "Wanderer" a cutter of 35 tons taking the fancy of all hands. This was followed by a race for yachts under 5 tons and the White Wings race afterwards, and two of these pretty one-designed yachts being helmed by ladies ! They all passed close to us and the excitement of all hands was great. However inner-man had to be sustained, and at 2.30 pm with white table cloth laid in honour of the occasion, we had lunch. The meal called for the acclamation of the Lady at Home who had generously provided our stores

At 4 pm, we had a council, and decided to run down river so as to be near the mouth, and go over the bar in the early morning tomorrow. Before setting forth we gave out despatches (a

postcard for Home )to a friendly bumboatman, with 3d. to post it. We accompanied the second round of White Wings down the river, giving the lady captain the "go-by".

6th August, Tuesday 7.45 am, passed over the Orford bar, East channel, keeping beacons in line, and stood away on starboard tack. Dull cloudy weather with rain and lumpy increasing sea and wind. 10.15 crossed Deben bar, mate sounding with boat hook. Ran past ferry and on up to Woodbridge where we took our mooring at 12.10. Before going ashore half-masted our flag on learning of the death of the Empress Frederick. All delighted with our cruise but feeling there is no place like Home.

NOTES BY THE OWNER'S GRANDSON  
The Infernal Combustion Engine was not then in general use and must have been almost entirely unknown in small yachts. Buoyage of the rivers and havens was fairly primitive, and telephones, depth recorders and other modern navigational and communication aids were either unknown or in their infancy.

The Captain died in 1917. He had commanded tea clippers and grain ships before retiring. The 1st Mate died in 1951 after having commanded ocean liners and warships. The 2nd mate became a senior police officer in South Africa and died in 1960. The mid. died of wounds incurred whilst serving in France in 1917 with a Canadian Scottish Regiment.

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER-SPRING 1999

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, April 22nd A.G.M. in The  
Community Hall, Woodbridge at 7.30pm

May 29, 30, 31 Port of Felixstowe Regatta

Sunday, August 1st Woodbridge Regatta

Saturday, July 24th Waldringfield Sailing  
Sailing Club Shore Events

Sunday, July 25th Yachtsman's Service and  
procession of yachts at  
Waldringfield 6.30 p.m.

Sunday, July 25th to

Saturday, July 31st Deben Week at  
Woodbridge, Waldringfield  
and Felixstowe

Sunday, August 8th to Sunday, August 15th  
Aldeburgh Week.

Saturday, August 21st to Friday, August 27th  
Lark National Champion -  
ships at Felixstowe

Wednesday, August 25th to Sunday, August  
29th D.Y.C. week at  
Woodbridge.

## RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER SPRING 1999

### WHO'S WHO

#### OFFICERS

Chairman	Denzil Cowdry, St.Edmundsbury 10 Ipswich Rd, Woodbridge, IP12 4BU	Tel 01394 383625
Vice Chairman	Michael Atkins, Rudds Barn, Waldringfield Rd., Martlesham, IP12 4PJ	Tel 01473 736668
Treasurer	David Mace, Japonica Cottage, Waldringfield, IP 12 4QN	Tel 01473 736677
Secretary	John Lineker, Decoy House, Old Church Road, Melton, IP13 6DH	Tel 01394 460196
Press Secretary	Rosemary Schlee, Deben Lodge, Melton Rd., Woodbridge, IP12 INH	Tel.01394 382740

#### COMMITTEE

Felixstowe Ferry	David White, 6 Coniston Close, Felixstowe, IP 11 9SW	Tel 01394 283972
History	Robert Simper, Sluice Cottage, Ramsholt	Tel 01394 411273
Rowing	Peter Wain 1 Whitehouse Cottage, Gulpher Road Felixtowe,	Tel 01394 277669
Litter	Jo Masters , 49 Riverview Rd., Melton.	Tel 01394 383825
Wildfowlers General Liaison	Adrian Judge, 29 Bredfield St., Woodbridge. Ian Battye, Upson Cottage, 8 Crown Place, Woodbridge IP12 IBN	Tel 01394 383350 Tel 01394 382338
Water Ski Club	Steve James, 1 The Courts, Church Lane, Playford IP6 9DR	Tel 01473 624683
SCDC Liaison	Anni Healey, Jesters, 7A Burkitt Rd., Woodbridge IP12 4JJ	Tel 01394 382291
Angling	Don Johnson, Ivy Dene, Melton Hill, Woodbridge, IP 12 4NH	Tel 01394 383661
Footpaths	Anne Moore, 2 Grundisborough Rd., Woodbridge, IP12 4HG	Tel 01394 383559
Assistant Editor	Dennis Hawes, 48 New Street, Woodbridge, IP12 1DX	Tel 01394 386325
Maritime Heritage	Anthony Mason, 29 Woodbridge Rd.,	Tel 01394 386601



# **RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**THURSDAY 22ND APRIL 1999 7.30 p.m.**

**AT**

**WOODBIDGE COMMUNITY HALL.**

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

## **AGENDA**

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

**The following have resigned :**

**D.Cavey. T. Midwinter. V.Midwinter**

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

**D Hawes. D Mace. P Wain .**

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

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

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

**7. Another Bussiness.**

**Following a short interval for Refreshments  
EAST ANGLIAN FILM ARCHIVES  
will present early cinematograph of the Deben and its shores.**