



Newsletter

Winter 1990/91

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 Assistant editor: Clare Wade
 Printing: Tim Midwinter

Chairman's comment

BY the time this newsletter reaches you it will be nine months since the inaugural meeting last May and roughly three months before our first AGM in April.

During this time we have been on a learning curve. We have made mistakes, but we have done a lot and we now have a membership in excess of 650.

Meanwhile, we are doing our best to tidy up our affairs from the constitution downwards. At the same time we are carrying out projects - the facts of which we hope to give you at the AGM. Also at the AGM we hope to get your approval for a updated constitution which will serve as a foundation for the future.

We understand that the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) will declare the tidal waters of the Deben up to the high water tidal mark, with a few very small exceptions, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under section 28 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. Assuming this happens, there will be a four month consultation period.

Basically, the high tide mark is the foot of the river wall, where it exists. This means that any proposed development that lies below this level, saltings for example, is subject to special planning consultations and constraints. Marinas are a classic example of such development.

Once the consultation period is complete we plan to publish an

authoritative article by an NCC representative in our summer newsletter.

By far the most important event for Woodbridge in recent years is the now near completion of the river wall. In a nutshell, despite what will no doubt turn out to be teething problems, I think we should be thankful that future generations of Woodbridgeans will be safe from flooding. That's a big bonus if we think of the damage caused along the East Anglian coast in 1953, let alone the increased surges predicted in the future.

In the quay area, as far as aesthetics go, where there is a brick finish it is of a pleasing colour and texture, whilst the main concrete sections downstream are straight-sided concrete slabs.

To protect the integrity of the river bank the planting of trees is forbidden. An idea that we are putting forward that will help to 'soften' the landscape is the planting of wild roses and flowering shrubs. These would give pleasure right throughout the year with their displays of flowers in the summer and hips and haws in the winter.

Since the Woodbridge in Bloom team do a wonderful job on the urban centre of the town we have written to seek its advice to see if we can do something with it along the riverside area. We may well soon be asking for volunteers.

In this issue of our newsletter you will find a comprehensive forthcoming events section. It covers walks, river clean-ups and the AGM.

Sutton Hoo bids

On the former, Anne Moore is providing us with a choice for either more serious walkers, or amblers and we hope you will be able to support this.

The second is the river clean-up which will take place either over the weekend of February 16 or March 2. With the help and support of Suffolk Coastal's Susan Watkins the aim will be to collect as much litter and rubbish as possible from both banks of the river. It is an ambitious project and for this first year the object will be to get various teams operating so that they can be developed and built up during the coming years.

The third event will be the AGM on April 19. You will find the agenda is on a separate sheet within this newsletter. Please bring it along when the time comes. If there are any significant changes they will be reprinted nearer the time and put on the seats of those who attend. The meeting will give the committee an opportunity to say what it has done and what it plans for the future. More importantly, we hope that members will put forward their views and meet each other afterwards.

Another important issue is the renewal of your membership. Again, details are on a separate sheet. These sheets are sent to you in this way to save postage.

The forms cater for new members as well as those who pay by cheque or bankers order. If you want to change from cheque to banker's order - no problem - just fill in the appropriate section.

For those already paying with a banker's order we have a special request. We started with an inappropriate account and have since had to change over to a more suitable one. This means we have to cancel your original order and replace it with a fresh one. Enclosed is a letter to your bank manager asking him to cancel your original order and substitute a new one running from the same date.

Our apologies.

Ian Battye

THE SUTTON Hoo Society claims that it is now well advanced in its bid for the ground floor of the Granary which is currently being renovated next to Woodbridge's historic Tide Mill.

If plans go ahead it will have to pay a commercial rent for its exhibition floor space which, according to society chairman Robert Simper, means turning some of the ground floor into a revenue earning tea room.

The Anglo-Saxon archeological site on the opposite side of the river from the Granary is considered by many to rank close to Stone Henge in terms of national historical importance, but as most of the site is in private ownership a museum on the site is considered unlikely in the foreseeable future.

"A display centre away from the site is needed to tell the story why such fabulous treasure was buried there" said Mr Simper. "It cannot be a museum because nothing of the original 1939 find would be on display" he added.

This latest move by the society rekindles an idea originally suggested by Prof. Martin Carver who came to Suffolk in 1983 to start on another phase of the excavation. It was then that he looked at the Granary as a possible site for a museum. His plan included the building of a life size replica of the 89ft Sutton Hoo ship which was to be housed under an outside lean-to.

The project caused much excitement at the time offering as it did a particularly unusual challenge to the local boatbuilding community, and the opportunity of a rare insight into how the original boat actually handled on the water.

"The second obstacle was that we got bogged down with countless committee meetings that could never give us a clear answer to our request" said Mr Simper. The dream seemed doomed and was virtually abandoned.

An injection of new hope finally came in 1990 when Woodbridge Town Council finally

for Granary floor

▶ sold the by now neglected and dilapidated remains of the Granary to a private developer.

"Ian Battye, as a member of the Woodbridge Society, told me of this development so I approached the developers direct" said Simper.

If successful Mr Simper's bid will provide Woodbridge with a focal point next to the Tide Mill that will enhance the town's tourist attracting capability.

"To make this long standing team come true the society needs to raise funds to set up an exhibition" said Mr Simper. "What we need is grants of hard cash and volunteers to man the display centre. It could be a really interesting place for visitors and locals alike" he concluded.

New Assoc'

THE RDA has welcomed the launch of a new sister association. This time it's one to conserve the rivers Ore and Alde.

Called the Alde/Ore Association, the group held its inaugural meeting on February 1 at the Snape Maltings Tea Room. The meeting was chaired Richard Roberts who we understand is also chairman of the Orford Conservation Committee.

Association spokesperson Lavinia Sheridan said the new association will cover a stretch of the river that runs from Shingle Street up to, and including, Aldeburgh.

It is hoped that eventually all Suffolk and Essex rivers will be monitored and cared for by similar societies. The RDA itself was modelled on the highly successful Maldon Riverside Association on the Blackwater.

Those wishing to know more about the Alde/Ore Association should contact either Lady Bridges (0394 450235) or Lavinia Sheridan on Snape 439.

Opinion

WHATEVER it is that masterminds the universe, it/he/she - we live in a society of equal opportunities remember - gave Woodbridge a gentle nudge last December and pointed the finger firmly at Whisstocks.

I hasten to add that it was the ineffectiveness of the dropboard flood defence that I am talking about, not the company, or the near completed boat on the slipway.

Credit must be given where credit's due and the duty officer at the council who phoned round all endangered property was very thorough. Equally praiseworthy are the men from the council who worked all night to get the sandbags distributed on time.

So, contrary to what we all thought, there was no problem with the human factor when the flood came. It was the technology that was to let us down.

Up came the tide until it reached the new high-tech flood wall at Whisstocks. "Don't worry" we reassured each other nervously, "the new flood wall will put a stop to that. You'll see."

Like footsoldiers reassured by a dotty first world war General we watched with amazement as the sea sloped in straight through the wall and up the one-way flood drains. In no time at all it was as deep on the inside as it was outside. It slithered across the Whisstocks apron, through the workshop, and up to the edge of the railway line.

God, or whoever it is, then decided that enough was enough - the point had been made. He whistled the tide and like an obedient dog it scampered back through that same wall that millions of pounds have been spent on to keep it out. Open mouthed, we watched in amazement from beginning to end.

For years Frank Knights has been successful in keeping water out of his office. On a summer spring tide you can wade up to the open office door and see Sheila inside working away at her desk as though nothing was amiss, bone dry but surrounded by water.

It makes you think...

River defences need perfecting

When Woodbridge's new sea defence failed its first test in December the number of Woodbridgeans with misgivings grew.

The association feels sure that the NRA will leave no stone unturned to remedy areas of weakness and believes that the walls and banks will ultimately be a credit to the town.

Against this background Ian Battye reviews the overall state of the project.

THE WOODBRIDGE flood defences were tested by a high tide at the end of last year, and the results did not inspire confidence.

There is no doubt - the sea defences need perfecting. A freak surge in mid-December was enough to test the Whisstocks area which leaked. As it was a neap tide it didn't matter too much. A few days later, on the spring tide, it could have been a very different story. The water inside the sea defence was just as deep as it was outside. No-one needs to spell out the implications if that same surge had been on top of a high spring tide.

The control of the defences is still in the hands of the NRA and we understand that the responsibility for maintenance remains with it although operations will ultimately be handed over to Suffolk Coastal District Council.

We trust that the defences will ultimately be sufficiently watertight. The association hopes that there will be a simple chain for issuing warnings to ensure that gates and flood boards are properly shut. History tells us that floods commonly surge at the most inconvenient times, like early on a Sunday morning.

In the quay area, pedestrians must continue to be vigilant as there are one or two traps, some of which are being sorted out. Opposite the Art Club, by Whisstocks old chandlery, there are three or four sharply contoured steps tailor made to trip the unobservant. In the area

between Everson's jetty and the Deben Yacht Club there is a very low parapet with sufficient drop on the river side at low tide to cause serious damage to anyone who inadvertently falls over. If you have strong views on this or any other feature of the wall you are urged to write to the NRA. Remember, money is tight, and it is at times like this that things get through by default.

The second part of the flood defence contract covers the stretch from the Deben Yacht Club to the National Trust boundary at Kyson. Here, the main structural earthworks dyke has been completed. DYC dinghies have been moved to a handsome dinghy park beside Kingston Fields and the result is that walkers now enjoy an uninterrupted view over the water meadows.

A great deal of clay has been moved to widen and raise the river wall by about an extra metre. On top there will eventually be a 4ft wide footpath. Initially, the surface will be of hoggin, a mixture of sand and gravel with some clay. This will be left to settle for the best part of a year and will subsequently be topped with an asphalt surface with chippings rolled in. This winter it will be wet and sticky and wellies will be essential if there has been any rain.

The good news is that the banks will be sown with suitable grasses for the respective sea and fresh water sides. Four patches each of some 50m of wildflowers will be sown during the early part of the year.

The completed bank will require maintenance, mainly cutting, during the first two years by which time it will be settled down and the general consensus is that it will be a lovely walk again.

Contributors to this news section include Ian Battye, Robert Wright, Robert Simper, Annie Hart, Clare Wade and Richard Hare.

Old Vic at Ferry still stands

THE SAGA of the Victoria pub at Felixstowe Ferry rumbled on all through autumn and the current situation is that the plans to demolish "the Vic" to build a block of 12 flats has been finally laid to rest.

Although the original scheme was rejected locals were haunted by the knowledge that the plan, if amended, could still be acceptable to the Planning Department.

Confusion was rife when it is reported in the East Anglian Daily Times that the developers had the go-ahead for an amended plan for eight flats plus a car park, and that no objections from the local community had been registered at the council offices in Woodbridge.

The statement caused outrage among the local community which had, through the Felixstowe Ferry Preservation Society, sent letters of objections when the plan to alter the Vic was first muted.

The same morning that the report appeared the council offices received a deluge of phone calls and faxes from objectors who claimed that their views were being ignored.

Two days later, to the delight of Ferry residents, the following headline appeared in the EADT: "Plans to demolish historic hamlet pub is rejected".

Deben threats

A RECENT report in the Mercury claimed that warning signs are soon to be erected alongside the Deben due to its failure to meet EC water quality tests.

Bacteria, salmonella and human sewage has been found in waters that are used for recreational activities, it said.

But inland waterways are designated as bathing areas and Suffolk Coastal only took samples out of general concern, the report said. ▶

▶ The signs will advise water users of "the precautions needed to minimise the risk to health from bacteriological contamination."

Current sewage discharges are held to be the main contributor to the contamination.

Environmental health committee chairman John Geater is reported to have stressed that there is no reason for the public to be alarmed and that, at present, there is no risk to health.

This view was supported by an NRA environmental spokesman who pointed to the fact that the river was less polluted by sewage today than it was in what many people consider 'the good old days' when all of Woodbridge's untreated sewage went straight into the river.

RDA chairman Ian Battye reminded members "that the association must be vigilant but to bear in mind that EC water quality test pass levels are extremely high and, some may say, absurdly so."

"We must keep a sense of proportion here. We all want to see maximum wildlife on the river - and maximum wildlife means maximum untreated animal excrement. The opposite scenario of an estuary devoid of wildlife is horrific, but there wouldn't be a lot less 'you know what'" said Battye with amused grin.

Jet ski proposals launched

IN A BID to curb distress caused by the growing number of jet skiers at the mouth of the Deben Suffolk Coastal District Council is considering the imposition of a speed limit along the coast within 1,000m of the low water mark.

Objectors to the plan cite that if this were to be agreed the limit would apply to all vessels, not just jet-skiers.

The general consensus is that the wider implications of such a speed ban needs further study. Final implementation will be subject to approval of the Home Office

Peninsula councils throw out new town

The new town development plans for the Felixstowe peninsula have been squashed - for the time being at least. Waldringfield councillor Annie Hart reports on the need for vigilance.

Thanks goes to all members who wrote to object to the proposed new settlement of 2,000 houses on the Felixstowe peninsula, the immediate battle has been won with a vote of 8 : 5 against the inclusion of this proposed policy in the County Structure Plan alterations.

Local public opposition by individuals and organisations made this possible. Their efforts were focused by all the parish councils working together to fight effectively, supported by supreme efforts by district councillors backed by their councils. At the county council meeting, where the decision was to be made, an extra-ordinarily good speech by councillor Michael Hyde and hundreds of letters of opposition clinched the outcome.

The county council planners have now suggested that the shortfall in the quota of houses that the government expects them to provide could be made up as follows :

200	At St. Audrey's, Melton
500	From consents granted during the last 12 months which were not included in previous totals.
150	From completing Grange Farm slightly earlier.
450	Increasing the number possible at Ipswich airport.

These suggestions have now been accepted by the councillors at their last meeting and we are safe until the next Structure Plan review. This is unless the Secretary of State for the Environment overrules local views at the Examination in Public that

he will set up before finally amending or confirming the Structure Plan alterations.

Other potential hazards that relate to this scheme are :

*Talk of massive road improvements to the junction of the A45 and B1093 (Brightwell - Felixstowe road) which could only really be justified if the volume of traffic on that road increased substantially because of a new settlement or similar development.

"The developers - Lovell Homes - are continuing with their plans to develop Newbourne despite the county council decision and may well put in a planning application which would have to be looked at at the Examination in Public next spring.

*The county planning officer obviously very much favours the policy of settlements in this area in future.

The idea has most definitely not been dropped.

Watch this space - we'll keep you posted.

RDA calls for softer walls

ASSOCIATION chairman Ian Battye has contacted the Woodbridge in Bloom organisers to explore what contribution the RDA can make to the overall beautification of Woodbridge and its surrounding areas.

The association recognises the high achievements of the Woodbridge in Bloom team but would like to see an increased emphasis on taking the effort beyond just the summer months, and into the more outer regions of the town.

Areas cited include what Battye calls "the harsher areas like the new river bank, the railway line, the Community hall, and Kingston Fields."

"Some of these areas fall rather more within the scope of the Woodbridge Society" commented Col Battye, "but the RDA is also keen on the 'greening' of Woodbridge and is taking a close interest in the new river walls and banks" he said.

For integrity reasons the new wall cannot be planted with trees which would weaken the earth banks and impair visibility in the event of high tides. The contractors are already committed to the planting

f patches of indigenous wildflowers to provide a more immediate softening effect.

"The last thing we want to see are hideous rows of dwarf conifers" said Battye. "Wild roses and shrubs will give pleasure throughout the year with a consistent display of flowers, hips and haws.

"As an association we hope to contribute funds to such a project, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with the Woodbridge in Bloom team and provide physical help to achieve this" he said.

Fencing Kyson

Kyson Point memories needed

Suffolk Coastal District Council as asked the association for any information it can find on the history of the public use of Kyson Point.

So please search out any information you have. Old photographs, articles such as Maurice Griffiths in the September 1933 edition of Yachting Monthly: "There is a shingle hard, and the owner of the house Kyson Point is pleased to let visiting yachtsmen have fresh water and order milk for the next morning".

Please contact Clare Wade, Kyson Cottage, Broomheath, Woodbridge. Tel:03943.7151 with ANY information you have.

The involvement of all members in everything that happens around us is essential if we are to send the right messages to those who legislate says Anni Healey.

THE River Deben Association membership has already made an impact on factors that govern the future of our river, and the increased level of interest has helped to keep issues to the forefront of people's minds.

So, what are we doing to put in the sort of machinery that makes your voice heard?

To start with we have formed a structure of sub-committee members who function as regional co-ordinators. We hope to nominate more at the AGM but so far they are:

Felixstowe Ferry - Robert Wright (Kirton 761)
Alderton/Bawdsey - Bill Hurst (0394 411730)
Sutton - Valerie Richards (Sutton 385928)
Melton - Rosemary Schlee (03943 2740)
Woodbridge - Anni Healey (03943 2291)

The next question I am often asked is: what do we do as individuals if we are concerned about something. Well, the first rule is: DON'T DO NOTHING. Two simple guidelines apply:

1) Provide us with advance information on any plans, even if you think it might only be a rumour. Contact your area co-ordinator and check out plans at Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, Woodbridge.

2) Remember, the district council wants your views on draft plans. It takes on board the views of other associations and pressure groups, some of which may not be compatible with our own aims. Draft plans may just need to be tightened up, or loosened. Let them know. Let us know.

Plans can be made available at local libraries and they can be inspected at Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) at Melton Hill Woodbridge, or the Woodbridge Town Council in Shire Hall.

More things 'tween heaven and earth

Tom Ellaway recalls John Burgess and his boat *Osprey*, and the eerie circumstances of their deaths.

I EXPECT many of you knew John Burgess, if not by name almost certainly by sight. If ever there was a nautical character John was it, to the point that most of us on the river called him by his nickname 'Ship's biscuit'.

He lived half ashore and half on his old boat 'Osprey' that is to say half the time ashore and half the time on board - not feet on deck and head on the river wall - and made his living by writing and evaluating fishing equipment, a subject on which he was encyclopedic.

I spent many a long hour in the cabin of that old boat, yarnning with John, learning much and drinking even more, a pastime that goes all to well with the lamp lit, stove warmed atmosphere of a gently rocking old boat.

The subjects ranged far and wide and it must be confessed that the later it got, and the emptier the bottle became, the more the phrases became reinforced by repetition. But, for all that, much sense was talked, mainly by John, and it was noticeable down the years, that we often returned to the same subjects. One of these was 'What makes sailors talk of boats and ships as though they were living things and not just artifacts in wood or steel'. You will notice we did not ask ourselves whether they were or not living things, but simply what made sailors talk this way. No conclusions of course. Just examples.

One that I gave was of seeing my grandfather and his two hard bitten old cronies standing on the deck of their old fishing boat with their hats off as they watched the Royal Navy sink one of the old 'Wooden Walls' that had

ceased to be of use to them as a training ship. This was when I was a child and it must have been just after the war somewhere in the Channel. They were a picture of men watching a murder that they were helpless to prevent, and their hatred of the bureaucratic vandal who had ordered it was palpable enough to touch. They were men who had been formed while Victoria was still queen. No doubts with them.

But to return to our times: About three years ago John died, and after his death, his nephew, a priest who runs a sort of sail training trust for youngsters in Essex came to take *Osprey* down to use her as a tender for his operations. She was an ideal boat for that.

But as they were leaving the Deben, on their way out to sea *Osprey* sprang a massive leak and, in a very short time, sank. Fortunately Charlie Brinkley was near by and was able to pick up John's nephew and his crew, but the boat was unsalvageable.

In pretty short order, tongues began to wag. "She didn't want to go, boy" and the likes of that. Imagine how much more they would have wagged had their owners known that some ten or more years before this event, just after the cremation of John's wife Maureen, John, Frank Knights and I had scattered her ashes just at that very point. I still have a photo of the flowers on the water within a few hundred feet of the Haven buoy. Now, I do not know what you make of that, but I know what the men on the deck of the fishing boat in the Channel all those years ago would have made of it.

I laughed at them and got belted for it. I was already 20th century man in the making and, being young, knew everything.

Today, my certainties have been replaced by belief

Feature

in just a few strong probabilities and of these one is that those three old men long ago discovered whether or not ships and boats have souls and that three years ago so did John.

I still don't know but if you do maybe you have never

been in a boat when she has given every impression of doing her damdest to save both you and herself. If you have, and you still are sure that she was nothing but wood and steel then ask yourself which of the two of you it is that has no soul.

Who's who *UPDATE*

Chairman	Ian Battye. Ferry House, Station Road, Woodbridge.	03943.2338
Vice chairman	Anni Healey. Jesters, Burkitt Road, Woodbridge.	03943.2291
Secretary	Anne Moore. 2 Grundisburgh Road, Woodbridge.	03943.3559
Treasurer	Terence Kermode. 8 Carmelite Place, Woodbridge.	03943.6613
Press and newsletter	Richard Hare. The Boat Inn, Quayside, Woodbridge. Clare Wade. Kyson Cottage, Broomheath, Woodbridge.	03943.2270 03943.7151
Membership secretary	Stephen Ashworth. Little Mead, Fayrefield Road, Melton.	03943.6301

The Committee: made up of association members who co-ordinate specific areas of interest.

Anglers	Tim Pryke (solicitor) Old Wilford Barn, Station Road, Melton.	0394.385658
Recreation at Flxstwe Ferry	Robert Wright (member of FFSC) Fairview, 5 Rectory Lane, Kirton.	03948.761
Farming - Rocks	Robert Simper (writer) Sluice Cttge, Ramsholt.	0394.411273
Business	Adrian Overbury (Robertson's Btyrd) Mistletoe, Loudham Lane, Ufford.	0394.461236
Melton resident	Brian Scott. Rose Villa, Hackney Terrace, Melton.	03943.3989
Houseboats - Environment	Lil Tudor-Craig. M.L.2605, Wilford Bridge Road, Melton.	03943.6011
RSPB	Nick Marshall. 10 Drybridge Hill, Woodbridge.	03943.6740
Anglian Wild-fwlr's Assoc.	Adrian Judge. 29 Bredfield Street, Woodbridge.	03943.3350
Waldringfield -conservation	Annie Hart. Ryefield, Cliff Road, Waldringfield.	0473.36354
Planning	Rosemary Schlee. Deben Lodge, Melton Road, Woodbridge.	03943.2740
Woodbridge water sports	Tim Midwinter (Deben River Centre) 37 Coopers Road, Martlesham Heath.	Hm.0473.623020 Wk.0473.642712
*Minutes secretary	Annette Burt. 21 Kingston Farm Road, Woodbridge.	0394.6301

* denotes co-opted committee member

River boat survey

During last summer Robert Simper, Adrian Judge and Robert Wright performed what might well be the first boat count survey of the river.

These facts are essential if the growth of watersports on the river is to be monitored.

Robert Simper reports.

DURING the summer of 1990 we visited every landing place on the salt water Deben to gather facts for what we believe is the first survey of uses of our lovely river.

It was hardly an arduous task, but it was one which brought home just how much increasing activity there is along the river. Everywhere there was talk of waiting lists for swing moorings and more people wanting mud berths. This situation has arisen because of the increasing number of people who want to get afloat on the Deben as it is often cheaper than using marinas.

It's a situation that has been snowballing over the last three decades and there is now mounting pressure to allow further development along the shore. This same pressure has been largely instrumental in the creation of the River Deben Association.

It will be impossible, undesirable even, to try and prevent every new project, but we should try and weed out the real horrors. The situation is changing all the time so that the rough facts that I have compiled will probably be out of date soon. But at least they give some idea of what is going on.

The river, its channel and creeks, have been effected by development along the foreshore, particularly at Woodbridge. There has also been infilling to create more space for boatyards at Felixstowe Ferry, Martlesham Creek, Woodbridge and Melton.

The footpaths and saltings beside the Deben are regularly used by walkers, bird spotters and wildfowlers who have no connection with the boats, but it is difficult to come up with

a figure for the number of people involved

Boat count

Our boat count revealed a total of 1,571 boats actually kept on the river during the peak of the summer and a breakdown of this total is provided in the table.

In addition to the count given in the table there are about 251 sailing dinghies which are kept in dinghy parks beside the river. More sailing dinghies, speed boats (say 25), canoes and duck punts (4) are used on the river, but most are taken ashore and stored away from the river making it difficult to find the exact number.

The survey revealed that over 2,000 boat owners regard the Deben as their home river. On top of that we must add the wind surfers and the water bikers. There are also some 20 wrecks - boats which don't float on the tide - beside the river.

Employment

Boatyards, fishing vessels, marinas and other boat services give full time employment to 104 people.

Boatyards, harbourmasters, reed cutting, oysters, ferries, fishing and tripper boats give part time employment to 14 people.

The National Rivers Authority gives employment to several people who repair rivers walls and sluices etc.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the number of people and boats using the river is changing all the time, but this very general survey should give some idea of the situation.

BOATS KEPT ON THE RIVER

*Swing moorings	: 1,104
*Marinas, jetties	: 282
*Mud berths (9 are floating homes)	: 138
*Houseboats (boats without power but are lived on)	: 41
*Club rescue boats	: 6
TOTAL	1,571

Letters

Dear Sir

Having watched the creation of the new flood defence works from the Deben Yacht Club to the Tide Mill over the recent months, I feel that some comment would not go amiss as I am a member of the River Deben Association recently formed.

Firstly, visually much of the new defences are a disaster, although in the main the work has been carried out to a very high standard with, in some areas, no expense spared.

My observations of the work done for the yacht clubs is that it has cost a vast amount of money and much of this expenditure has little direct effect on the overall flood scheme.

In the area of the Ferry Quay, my own particular concern, I feel there are a number of weak points in the defences, ie. old buildings, so-called watertight doors which are not watertight.

I should say that NRA have been made aware of the above, and I have a promise that complaints such as mine will be looked into. However, it is probably a good thing to have a record at this time.

At this point I am not optimistic about the efficiency of the drop boards at Whisstocks boatyard, having seen water from a hose running beneath the boards.

Yours sincerely,
Frank Knights

Dear Sir,

I would like to comment on two safety issues about which I feel quite strongly.

Firstly, the pedestrian railway crossing near Kingston playing field, leading to the Deben Yacht Club. The gates on this crossing open outwards, with a return spring to close them. So far so good. However, youngsters, cyclists, OAP's etc find themselves stuck on the railway with no easy way off.

When I contacted BR they stated that they were legally obliged to provide gates with

latches. I am sure the Government department involved did not oblige BR to lock people ON the railway. Surely the gates should be fitted with latches which are easily operated from the dangerous railway side as well as the safe side?

Secondly, the new sea defences at Woodbridge. The old defences consisted of slanting concrete slabs which caused a falling person to roll resulting in minimal damage and allowing exit from the water for a drowning person, even if the exit was not easy. In contrast the new defences seem to have been designed to cause maximum damage to a falling person, and make exit almost impossible.

The new defences consist of a vertical 10-15ft concrete wall with rocks at the bottom. Needless to say, anyone falling from this wall at anything other than high tide would be lucky to avoid serious injury. If they do happen to fall in at high tide, and hence avoid serious injury, there is no need to despair as they will probably drown for lack of exit points - unless they are good at climbing vertical concrete walls.

From the above, I would contend that whilst the new sea defences are undoubtedly good for the defence of Woodbridge, they seem to be a major step backwards for the safety of river users. Surely it should have been possible to build sloping defences, reducing the damage to a falling person, and giving a drowning person a sporting chance of exit? Also, given the current state of the work, should some form of handholds be provided along the existing wall to allow a swimmer something to hold onto?

Yours sincerely, Tim Midwinter

Do you know and one who may be interested in joining the River Deben Association? If so, please cut out this box and ask them to fill it in and send it to the membership secretary (see 'Who's who').

Name.....
Address.....
.....
Tel.....

Woodbridge's river festival

Ken Spence, chairman of the Woodbridge Regatta Association traces the festival's history and describes some of the more entertaining events.

THE YEAR 1990 saw, for the first time, helicopter flights at the Woodbridge Regatta. While this may seem pretty tame stuff in this day and age it represents a big breakthrough in what is and always has been a traditional event.

For some years now the Regatta has included many off-shore activities in addition to the waterborne events which started at least as early as 1784. I say 'at least' because this is the first official record we have. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that racing in small boats, and other competitive activities between visiting sailors loading and off-loading at Woodbridge, as well as local residents started sooner than 1784 and eventually became the annual Woodbridge Regatta.

Unfortunately information on exactly how long the event was held regularly in the 19th century is scarce but it was certainly alive and well in the early 20th century.

Ken Wilding, our current president, together with his own family and the Revett family (local butchers) organised the Regatta after the 1939 - 45 war up till 1963.

We have an official programme for 1933 and most surprising the prizes then offered for such things as walking the 'greasy pole' was seven shillings and sixpence and a joint of meat. Perhaps someone could tell us what value we would need to offer today to match that? Would it be over £40?

These prizes give us some idea as to the very high standing of the Regatta in the year's local events. A lot of prize money was handed

out when you consider a farm worker earned around £1.25p a week in 1933 and even less probably by boatyard workers.

I have mentioned the Regatta died somewhat in 1963 in spite of all the efforts of the then committee. However, the Woodbridge Town Council, and others, decided to stage a Festival in 1975 and asked the Woodbridge Cruising Club (still in its formative years) to organise some events around the River Deben as part of this.

Cruising Club members then staged the first Regatta for twelve years, and it was a great success. Nancy Wise of the BBC programme 'You and Yours' came along and officially named Peter Darby's steam boat 'Miss Whispers' and all the usual items, rowing and sailing races, greasy pole, whacky boat and raft races, plus a visit from the Thames Sailing Barge 'Thalatta', which was open at the time to the public, and the old swimming races were included.

This year we were supported more than ever and were consequently able to give helicopter flights free to some older residents. It would be nice to repeat same...

As we are not allowed to charge for the boat trips on the Deben, which continue all day and are very popular, we had jumble sales to raise funds.

The Deben Yacht Club has always been tremendously helpful in organising the sailing races and we hope their help will continue.

The swimming races are an integral part of the Regatta. We still award the original cups, namely the 'Hayward Cup' presented by Mr. Hayward the miller at the Tide Mill in 1904, and the 'Sullivan Cup' from the 1930's presented by a Mr. Sullivan who was president of the Youth Association and second member of the Deben Yacht Club. The local family

names engraved on both cups are most interesting. Since my involvement in 1975 we have had our disasters, but equally our great moments. Humour is never far away. I well remember the year of 'leaping the Deben'on bikes....The object was for the brave souls involved to pedal as fast as possible along the jetty by Eversons, hit a ramp at the end and land somewhere near Sutton Hoo....

Obviously they hit the water about five feet from the end of the jetty and it was a great spectacle, not to say a very brave act. Very entertaining but, alas, not all humour is appreciated. I remember as I stood on my tower set up near the scene, a very intelligent gent saying to his wife "they'll never make it to the other side dear". In retrospect, it may not sound particularly funny, but it was at the time.

Perhaps equally amusing, we staged a Viking invasion of Woodbridge. Lots of volunteer Vikings to rape and pillage turned up, but alas no defenders of the beauties of Woodbridge, at least not until they were promised hot showers. The day arrived - for Vikings read Woodbridge 5th Sea Scouts - and the defenders, were ready with rafts.

Everything was ready, rafts on beach and tide making. The brave defenders retire to the local for snack lunch. Battle commenced 2pm with the appearance of Vikings mid-stream. The defenders board their raft and paddle for 20 maybe 30yds and sunk. Reason? The 5th Woodbridge had removed all the bungs from the drums of the defender's rafts.

The resulting battle was spectacular, and most realistic. Did the brave defenders enjoy their hot showers afterwards? Well no, because the shower unit had decided to go on strike for the day at WCC.

The Woodbridge Regatta Association has already planned it's 1991 Regatta. This will be sometime in August when we know the date of a suitable tide - very important this - we hope you will come along,

reasure

Getting a grip on jargon

SSSIs, AONBs, and terms like that are often taken on board lightly, and with little understanding. Planning representative Anni Healey explains it all, and outlines the potential impact of the new draft Local Plans.

LAST year was significant in terms of outside pressure by developers, both on the river and in the surrounding countryside.

It seems that as the South Coast has filled up with development, with corresponding reduction of available yacht berths and affordable holiday accommodation, people have turned to the East Coast estuaries as an attractive alternative.

It's against this background that the association has followed up several planning applications and many rumoured developments from marinas to holiday complexes to artificial lakes.

As it happens this activity has coincided with the publication of draft Local Plans. These have been produced by Suffolk Coastal District Council with the aim of putting in place controls which, if effective, will prevent the Heritage Coast becoming the congested nightmare that large tracts of the South Coast have become.

Three of these plans relate to our area. They are:

Felixstowe Peninsula - this covers Felixstowe, F. Ferry, Kirton, Newbourne and Waldringfield, Woodbridge Area and Deben Peninsula - which covers Woodbridge, Melton, Ufford, Sutton and Bawdsey, and Ipswich Eastern Fringe - which includes Martlesham Heath

These plans, for the first time, make positive policy statements on conservation, landscape quality, leisure provision and housing, and business growth up to the year 2001. Collectively they are a

major statement that recognises the value of the river Deben and the importance of the countryside that surrounds it.

The plans include the following four important designations: Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Heritage Sites, and sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Special Landscape Areas include the Mill river and its tributaries (policy FX67), and the Deben and the river Fynn (policy WDP68). On this category the plan says "Development which would be to the detriment of, or detract from the landscape quality of the areas will not be permitted." So, applications will be assessed on the loss or significant alteration to important wildlife habitats etc.

The category Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty includes both banks of the Deben. Similar restrictions to those outlined for Special Landscape Areas apply but additional restrictions on the size and visual impact of buildings etc apply.

Heritage Sites are selected by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and these are recognised by the district council. Sites that fall within this category in our region are given in the table.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are designated by the Nature Conservancy Council and currently include East Lane, Bawdsey and Newbourne Springs. Representations are currently being made to have large parts of the Deben designated SSSI because of the large amounts of salt marsh.

Tourism and recreation

There are also additional policies on recreation and tourism. These recognise the increasing need for recreation and tourism but they are not always consistent with the protection of natural landscapes and wildlife.

On tourist accommodation the relevant policy states: "Tourist accommodation is encouraged provided it is on a small scale and involves conversion of existing buildings."

The policies discuss land for leisure pursuits, even set-aside

land on a temporary basis. Again, buildings should be in scale and traffic must not interfere with wildlife.

In recreation policy FX81 of the Heritage Coast plan it states that new recreational projects will not be permitted in areas vulnerable to physical and visual damage caused by an increased number of visitors and associated development. Small scale recreation development like picnic sites, nature trails, signposted walks can be accommodated with no harm to the natural landscape.

Power boats are allowed in certain areas, but are excluded from AONBs and Special Landscape Areas.

So, it is these policies that will shape our rivers and landscape over the next 10 years.

SUFFOLK WILDLIFE HERITAGE SITES

- Felixstowe Ferry shingle
- Mill river
- Trimley marshes
- Foxburro Plantation - Newbourne Springs
- Kirton reservoir
- Kirton Brook meadows
- Newbourne meadows
- Kingsfleet
- Sutton Ferry Cliff
- Sutton Crag
- Bawdsey Cliff

ARE YOU INTERESTED?

We would like to know what area of our activities that you are particularly interested in - those which you are prepared to become ACTIVELY involved. Armed with this information we will be able to put you in contact with others of similar interest.

- Planning.....
- River walks.(maintenance).
- Chemical pollution.....
- Litter clearance.....
- Others

Please tick appropriately and supply your:

- Name.....
- Address.....
- Tel.....

Forthcoming events

THE following events are organised for the benefit and enjoyment of all. Your participation will not only help us to make an impact on the condition of the valley but it will also strengthen the association during these early months of its development.

RIVER WALKS

Dates: Feb 24 and March 10

Project co-ordinator: Anne Moore

1: Woodbridge 3359 3559

This is the first of what we hope will be a continuing programme of walks aimed at improving our awareness and understanding of the river valley. Scheduled for late this winter and early spring, this is a good time to see the river - not only is the yachting community dormant, but wildlife is at its most interesting.

Both walks are in the Newbourne, Bucklesham and Kirton area - the area of the proposed new town of some 2,000 dwellings, scotched but not yet completely killed. This covers the valley of the Mill river which is rich with wildlife in a beautiful setting.

The walk will be led by Anne Moore with two parties each day assembling at 10am and 2pm respectively. The morning party will be for more serious walkers and will cover some 6-7 miles at -3.5mph. The afternoon party will be more of a family amble for those happier with a 2.5 mile circuit, with halts, at 2-2.5mph.

Waterproof footwear is essential and the meeting point - yet to be decided - will be where it is possible to park and have a pub lunch for those who would like it.

Numbers must be controlled so will those who are interested please contact Anne Moore and give names of those in your party for acceptance and confirmation of the meeting point.

Remember, you have a choice of dates.

LITTER COLLECTION

Dates: February 16-17 or March 2-3

Project co-ordinator: Tim

Midwinter

Tel: 0473 623020

The association has organised a litter clearance project for the weekend of February 16-17, with an alternative date of the weekend of March 2-3. The objective is to clear the banks of the river from Ufford to Felixstowe. The river has been divided into sections, for which members have taken responsibility. These members are listed below

Suffolk Coastal District Council are supplying us with bags and will make arrangement to collect from our collection points.

Tim told us that he expects to find more litter and more difficulty recruiting helpers for the east side of the river, so offers of help are going to be particularly welcome on that side.

Wellington boots will be essential and gardening gloves are highly recommended.

BOTH SIDES OF RIVER

Section: Ufford to Wilford Bridge
Organiser: Vicky and Gareth Jones
Tel: 0394 460686

WEST SIDE OF RIVER

Section: Wilford Bridge to Sun Wharf
Organiser: Lil Tudor-Craig
Tel: 03943 6011
Section: Sun Wharf to Kyson Point
Organiser: Kate Luck
Tel: 03943 6717

Section: Martlesham Creek
Organiser: Roy Ingham
Tel: 0473 659308

Section: Martlesham Creek to Waldringfield
Organiser: Adrian Judge
Tel: 03943 3350

Section: Waldringfield to Kirton
Creek
Organiser: Annie Hart
Tel: 047336 354

Section: Kirton Creek to
Felixstowe
Organiser: Robert Wright
Tel: 03948 761

EAST SIDE OF RIVER

Section: Wilford Bridge to
opposite Woodbridge
Organiser: John Cooper
Tel: 03943 4314

Section: Opposite Woodbridge to
Haddon Hall
Organiser: Rosemary Schlee
Tel: 03943 2740

Section: Haddon Hall to Stonner
Point
Organiser: Francis Matheson
Tel: 047336 210

Section: Stonner Point to The
Rocks
Organiser: Trevor Ambrose and
Stephen Hoar
Tel: 03943 6021
03943 4437 respectively

Section: The Rocks to Ramsholt
Organiser: Brian Foster
Tel: Shottisham 411382

Section: Ramsholt to Bawdsey
Organiser: (Volunteer needed)

AGM

Date: April 19, 7.30pm

Venue: Community Hall, Woodbridge

For agenda and other details
please see separate sheet enclosed
with this newsletter. Those with
proposed alterations please phone
Hon. Sec Anne Moore soonest.

NRA unveiled



Quite what the responsibilities of
the recently formed National
Rivers Authority are is unclear to
many. NRA Environmental Officer
Bill Borley goes on record and
provides a basic quality profile
of the Deben.

THE National Rivers Authority came
into being on 1 September 1989. It
succeeded the various catchment
boards, river boards, river
authorities and water authorities.

The aims of the NRA are as
follows:

WATER RESOURCES

The NRA is responsible for
the management of water resources
to meet water demands of all
kinds, both for abstraction and
'in the river'. This involves
measuring factors like rainfall,
river flows, groundwater levels;
and the allocation of water
resources by means of a licencing
system. Where appropriate, it
plans and implements augmentation
works.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND POLLUTION CONTROL

Maintenance and improvement
of water quality in rivers,
estuaries and coastal waters and
the granting of consents for
discharges to the water
environment. This also includes
monitoring water quality and
controlling pollution.

FLOOD DEFENCES

General supervision of flood
defences and the carrying out of
land drainage and flood prevention
works on main rivers, estuaries
and parts of the coast.

FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION

The furthering of
conservation of the water

► ... NRA unveiled

environment and the protection of its amenities. Included is the maintenance and improvement of fisheries in inland waters as well as licenses, restocking and enforcement functions.

RECREATION

The provision and maintenance of recreational facilities on rivers.

The NRA has a small central management unit in London, most of which will shortly relocate to Bristol. It is responsible to a board of directors, appointed by the government (mostly by the

E), some by MAFF, and the Welsh fice.

Day to day operational works are carried out by regional groups, each one based on the area of a former regional water authority - in this area it replaces the former Anglian Water Authority with its headquarters at Kingfisher House, Peterborough.

The regional group is divided into areas and then into districts. Woodbridge is situated in the Suffolk district of the Eastern Area, with both the area and district offices operating from Cobham Rd, Ipswich, tel: Ipswich 727712. This phone is manned 24 hours a day, all day.

Monitoring fresh water

To monitor fresh waters all non-tidal rivers are divided into lengths dependent upon use and this can range from low amenity (an urban or industrial area drain) through medium and high amenity, to livestock watering, spray irrigation and fisheries; both coarse and salmonid; to abstraction for drinking water, either via storage reservoir or after treatment, directly to supply.

Each use has its own required chemical criteria - a minimum of 20. To obtain the standard for each length the most restrictive requirement of each parameter for the designated uses is taken, and these then become the Required Quality Objective for each length.

All rivers are sampled at least monthly at strategic points, ie. the downstream end of

nominated lengths, upstream or downstream of significant inputs or abstractions.

Effluent discharges are consented to discharge a maximum daily volume - large discharges on a an hourly volume basis - and other quality constraints are based upon the use, existing quality and low dry weather flow of the receiving watercourse. The aim of this is that the river water quality downstream remains within the water quality objective.

All effluents are sampled on a regular basis, up to twice a week, dependent upon flow and significance to the receiving watercourse.

Any deviations in either river or effluent quality from that which is required are investigated. Any remedial action is instigated with, if necessary, prosecution initially in a Magistrate's Court. This proceeds to a Crown Court if no improvement is achieved.

All rivers and ground waters are then measured again at strategic points for flow and levels, as the case may be, and this enables licences for abstraction to be granted where possible as well as basic data for effluent standard calculations. Ground waters are sampled regularly for quality.

THE DEBEN VALLEY

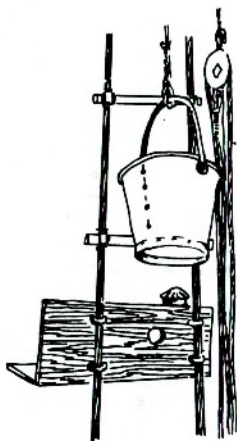
The non-tidal Deben

The fresh water, non-tidal river Deben is in fact a collection of small streams. An example is the Earl Soham watercourse which drains an area from Helmingham, Stonham, Aspal, Mendlesham airfield, Bedingfield and Bedfield converging on Ufford and Woodbridge.

Other streams are the Fynn and Lark which rise in Henley, Otley and Hasketon. These rivers join and, after receiving the flow from Butlers Brook (Kesgrave), enter the tidal estuary via a sluice into Martlesham Creek.

Other freshwater streams include the Shottisham stream, Mill river, and Kings Fleet.

... NRA unveiled



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First print photocopying
courtesy of John Bell of
Woodbridge, The Thoroughfare,
Woodbridge; tel: 03943 7644.

Overabstraction

The Deben suffers from overabstraction during the summer months and the NRA is currently powerless to revoke licences already in existence. This means that the summer situation is one of unknown effluent inputs regularly exceeding the measured discharge from the river to the estuary.

However, the water quality in the Deben remains very good due to first class operation of various sewage treatment plants in the catchment.

Alongside regular chemical quality surveys, the river is monitored for biological quality and fish stocks and these two examinations give an excellent indication of the river water quality as the fauna in the river are continuous monitors.

Any report of actual or perceived pollution is followed up as rapidly as possible so that remedial action can be initiated, if required.

The rivers Fynn and Lark

Apart from problems with ammonia leachate from a refuse tip at Tuddenham, these rivers are of good quality at present, having been adversely affected from farms in the past.

At present, work is in hand to prevent leachate from Sinks Pit, Kesgrave from entering Butlers Brook

Bucklesham Mill river

This is a high quality watercourse which is affected at source by urban run-off from parts of Ipswich. The effects of this are localised.

Work is in hand at Foxhall refuse tip to prevent leachate from entering the river.

Shottisham Mill river and Kings Flee

These small watercourses are of very high quality.

Planning report

Anni Healey outlines some of the planning applications that have been investigated by the RDA.

Victoria pub, Felixstowe Ferry

The first application was to demolish the pub to build 12 apartments and provide car parking. This was subsequently re-applied for on the basis of reducing the number of apartments to 8. This has been rejected. (See news section). The proposal

traversed C5 of the Suffolk Structure Plan and FX103 of the Felixstowe Ferry Plan. Its massive scale was deemed to be incompatible with an AONB and the character of the Heritage Coast.

Useful policies affecting this application are policy FX7.53 which calls for a description of the car parking in the area; and policy FX103 which says that Felixstowe Ferry is defined as 'countryside', and that existing land uses are to remain in most part. New development in areas like this is not normally permitted.

Marina, Felixstowe Ferry

So far this is just a rumour. No formal or informal representations have yet been made to Suffolk Coastal District Council.

Kirton/Newbourne area

This new settlement was proposed through the county council as Alternative 2 of its County Structure Plan. Its aim was to support Ipswich housing needs to the year 2006. Two sites were proposed - Bucklesham Hall area, and an area centred on the middle of Newbourne.

There was a huge outcry, and a large number of individual objectors were supported by most adjoining parish councils and SCDC's disapproval of the plan. In the end it was rejected by Suffolk County Council.

Unfortunately, the battle may not yet be won and Alteration 2 of the proposed plan will probably go to a public enquiry. New schemes for the area may be put forward.

Waldringfield

Representations have been made to SCDC for a 250 berth marina at Cross Farm. This may contravene policy FX101 on marinas which states that new marinas will normally be resisted.

Woodbridge

Robertsons Boatyard has applied to extend its existing marina to include up to 90 berths plus 16 single bedroom apartments.

The RDA felt that careful upgrading of this marina is acceptable although it suggested a reduction in the proposed size of building and the intrusion into the river. The Nature Conservancy Council and Suffolk Wildlife Trust are involved.

The plan was initially rejected but a re-application has been made.

Melton

There is a rumour of plans to build 90 houses on land between Melton Road and the river. Ownership of this riverside land between Woodbridge and Melton is numerous, and unclear. It is a vulnerable area.

Sutton

From Sutton there has been a flurry of informal representations, and some actual planning applications. Informal representations have included the development of a lake, holiday complexes and an associated marina.

So far these projects have not been taken further. In a nutshell, the application to convert stables to holiday cottages has been rejected, whilst the application to convert farm buildings to a permanent dwelling has been accepted.

Methersgate

An application to convert a boathouse into a permanent dwelling has been rejected.

Bawdsey Manor

There is a special policy in the Local Plan for the future of the Bawdsey Manor. It suggests the types of use which are acceptable at this important site.

