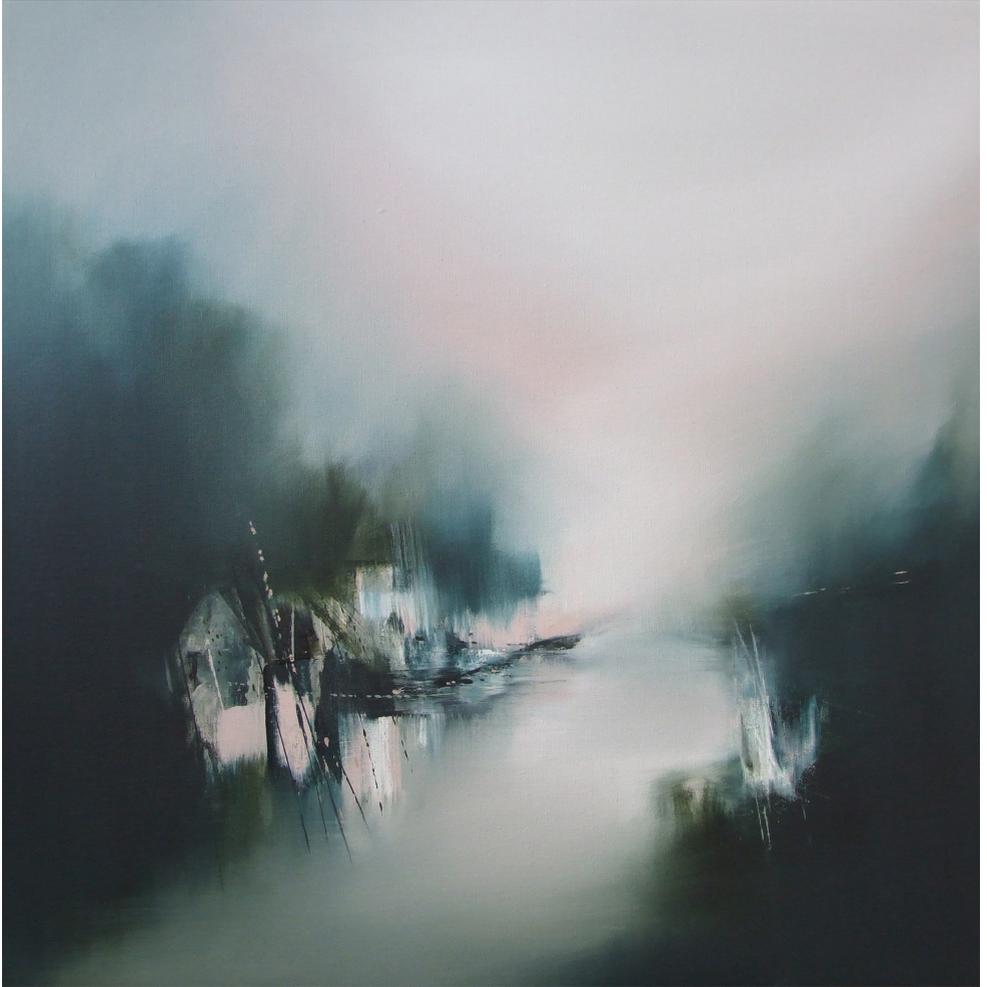


The Deben



57 Autumn 2018

The River Deben Association

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October 2018

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Cover: 'Hirronnelle' Emma Green



Editorial

The untimely deaths of Adrian Judge and John Krejsa – JK, remind us of the importance of not wasting a life and enjoying it while we can, and this should apply to our enjoyment of the Deben. JK, who epitomised so much of what the Deben is about, died in October.

John found his way into boat-building and to Woodbridge and Whisstocks. He lived on *Stadats* for five years. He was a consummate craftsman who worked painstakingly over many years to complete huge projects like *Stadats* and the restoration of *Mist*. He became well known at Whisstocks and Melton boatyard, that some of us still refer to as Mel Skeet's. Many people remember him coming in and out of his workshop, always ready with a quiet unassuming word. While his craft skills reflected the traditions and history of the Deben, JK was another character of the Deben, who was able to recount stories and past events in an entertaining and informative way. I made a number of recordings in his later years and I hope to make these available at some point. It is sad that JK had so little time to enjoy *Mist* but I think it gave him pleasure to see her sailing off Waldringfield in the Summer. I had planned to write about *Stadats* in this edition before I heard that John had died. So it is fitting that a piece is included now.

In this Edition we have our usual pieces such as 'News from the Hards', with a particular focus on the history and the development of Robertsons. Many of you will have seen *Vale* aka *Lord Nelson*; as it says on the notice now a 'familiar landmark of the Deben'. Robin Whittle and Robert Simper have provided an account of the ship's epic journey from Norwich. Richard Verrill has continued his series with an informative and well illustrated account of Eels and their significance on the Deben. Robin has also continued his series of articles on the river defences with a summary of the work. Peter Wain returns with a story of the 'wine ships' that sailed from the Deben; his research into Goseford is establishing him alongside local historians.

I very much enjoyed meeting Emma Green who shares her passion for water and the river and is an engaging communicator about her art. If you have come to visit Bawdsey in the last twenty years you will have seen the derelict remains of the missile site. Iain Dorman-Jackson provides a fascinating account of his time as the Commanding Officer, and illustrates how the professionalism of the base was allied to a good social life and some humorous incidents. Another *Reflection* is of a trip to Sutton Hoo. I was lucky enough to chance upon the groundsman before the site was developed and was privileged to be given a private tour round the site and the small shed that was then the museum; including the privilege to be shown round the 'sandmen' in their original 'graves'. Peter Clay continues his account of his Scandinavian Odyssey in *Nirvarna*.



River Deben Association

Chair's Report

What a remarkable summer it has been! I hope that you have been able to make the most of the wonderful sunshine to enjoy the river, whether on or beside it, and perhaps even in it, given the heat.

Committee

I am very sorry to report that Adrian Judge died in June this year. He was a founder member of the River Deben Association, Chairman of the Deben Estuary Partnership's Access Group and a much-valued friend of this Association until his death.

Anne Moore has recently resigned from the committee due to other commitments. Anne, like Adrian, was a founding member of our association and worked tirelessly as a committee member.

I am delighted that two new members have been co-opted onto the committee. Jane Haviland is an environmental scientist with expertise in regeneration, port and harbour development and the energy sector. She holds a Master's degree in environmental law and has recently qualified as a solicitor in the environment and litigation department of Barker Gotelee. Jane rows on the Deben and is particularly interested in its saltmarsh. Michael Holland is an accountant by profession and has recently retired to Woodbridge from Norfolk. He enjoys walking along the river banks and is learning about river birds. He has been quickly immersed in Deben planning matters, as he lives near the site of the proposed development at Melton Hill and has agreed to go yet further in this field by taking over the RDA's planning brief from 2020.

Membership

Our aspiration to increase the RDA's membership (our current 800 is a fine number but 1000 has more of a ring!) has seen us set up stalls at both the Woodbridge Regatta in June, and Maritime Woodbridge in September to spread the word about what the RDA does. We thank the organisers for two excellent events which showcased all the delights of Woodbridge and its waterfront and made the most of the fantastic new spaces at the Longshed and Whisstock's Place. We reviewed the Woodbridge waterfront at one of our committee meetings

this year.

At our AGM on 24th April 2018, we asked for a vote on whether a proposal should be made at the 2019 AGM for subscriptions to be increased from April 2020 to £6 for single members and £10 for couples (currently £4 and £6 respectively). A significant majority of the meeting was in favour of the increase. However, the April 2019 fees will remain unchanged.

Following the new rules on GDPR, we are only able to contact you by e-mail if you have consented to us communicating with you in this way. We are still missing e-mail addresses for many of you, so if you have not received an e-mail recently, please send your details to Jim Goldsworthy on riverdebenmembers@gmail.com, giving your consent to be contacted by e-mail.

Planning Applications

I reported in the Spring edition of the magazine that, notwithstanding objections from the RDA and more than 320 others, Suffolk Coastal District Council's planning committee approved an application on 13th October 2017 for the development of 100 residential units and other buildings on the site of the former council offices at Melton Hill. This application has been withdrawn and an almost exact replica submitted but asking additionally that the number of Affordable Housing units be reduced from 32 to 15 by claiming Vacant Building Credit for the development. We understand that it is likely that the planning committee will not grant Vacant Building Credit, but there is no official response as yet.

Deben Estuary Partnership and River Defences

The Deben Estuary Partnership (DEP), of which the RDA is a member, continues to focus on flood defences. At its most recent meeting on 10th September 2018, it was reported that the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board would provide their assessment and costings for the improvement works needed to the river walls at Bawdsey Marshes, (known as Flood Cell One) by the end of November. It is likely that the cost of the works will be funded by gifts to the DEP charity from the landowners of land on which it is hoped that planning permission will be given for enabling developments in Bawdsey, Shottisham and Alderton. The Environment Agency has had its business case for the repair of the river walls at Shottisham passed by its scrutineers, and finance is therefore now available for this project.

Saltmarshes

This Deben Estuary Partnership Saltmarsh group met in May 2018 to discuss the various projects being undertaken or proposed on the river.

The second meeting of the Suffolk Saltmarsh group was held in June. Partner updates were provided from the Blyth, Alde and Ore, Deben and Stour and Orwell. Various working groups had been set up to share best practice and

their reports covered logistics (comprising suppliers of materials, contractors and consultation, use of dredging spoil and monitoring) communication and engagement, funding and monitoring and analysis. Professor Graham Underwood presented work done by the University of Essex in developing an approach, using existing publicly-available national data, to determine the areas of salt marsh in the region of Kyson Point and Loder's Cut, their vegetation cover and current carbon stock in order to estimate the amount of carbon that could be stored if marsh restoration returned the vegetation cover to healthy levels. Unfortunately, though, without other sources of funding, the current prices paid for carbon sequestration will not cover the cost of such restoration.

Due to concerns raised with the Environment Agency, the saltmarsh project which was due to be undertaken at Kyson Point will now not proceed, but the RDA will take a close interest in the results from the similarly-scoped project which is expected to go ahead at Sudbourne on the river Alde. This will test the efficacy of saltmarsh in reducing the maintenance cost on estuary walls.

England Coastal Path

Natural England's proposals for the Bawdsey to Felixstowe Ferry part of the England Coastal Path have been somewhat delayed by the recent change of lead adviser. In view of the significant concern that many have expressed about the path, we have asked the new lead adviser, Giles Merritt, to come and talk to the RDA about Natural England's plans at our Autumn Meeting in November. Natural England is looking at all the options at present, although the Bawdsey/Felixstowe Ferry does not currently meet its criteria as it is not a year-round timetabled service. Many landowners are worried about the concept of "spreading room", whereby the public can access land between the river and the path. Natural England's rules are that land covered by buildings and the curtilage of such land (patios/ driveways or farmyards for example), and land used as a garden will not be accessible to the public, as it is excepted land. Arable land is another type of excepted land. It is also likely that Natural England will class all saltmarsh and mud flats on the Deben as unsuitable for public access, although this will not affect historic use such as bait digging, samphire gathering and wildfowling, for example.

In the meantime, the ferry service will run between Felixstowe Ferry and Bawdsey during the winter on a similar call-ahead basis to last winter.

Wildlife

Our committee was bolstered last year by Richard Verrill, who has been given the RDA's wildlife brief. A number of readers have told me how much they have enjoyed his articles on sea bass and seals in the magazine. We would love to hear from you if you can report any interesting wildlife – my husband and I counted 47 egrets roosting in the trees on the riverbank opposite Robertsons Boatyard for a

few days in August, which was a remarkable sight.

Magazine Articles

I hope that you will agree that our editor, David Bucknell, does an extraordinary job in ensuring that each issue of The Deben has new and fascinating articles, but he is always looking for fresh contributors, so if you have something to say, please do send your ideas to him.

Autumn Meeting

Our Autumn meeting will be held on 29th November, 2018 and our speaker will be Giles Merritt, the lead adviser for the Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey stretch of the England Coast Path. Details of the time and venue are on the back page of the magazine.

Sarah Zins



Photo Kate Fozard

Mist sailing for the first time in two decades at Waldringfield!

Anne Moore

A Tribute to Adrian Judge

For some time before I met Adrian Judge on the RDA Steering Committee back in 1990, he had, with his dark hair and beard, been a distinctive figure about the town and along the river-walks, where he would be accompanied by two labrador- retrievers: so it was no surprise that he joined as a representative of the Wild Fowlers.



A civil engineer by profession, it was he who alerted the Environment Agency to the piles of the flood-walling of the eighties going off the perpendicular, leading them (the EA) to carry out the recent rebuilding project from the Woodbridge Tide Mill, to beyond the Rowing Club.

Cruelly, at the age of only seventy-three, having never smoked and otherwise, still a fit and very active man, he was taken after two years of fighting lung cancer.

He had requested that those attending his July funeral, should bring just one flower from their garden to place on his wicker coffin. The effect was a most astonishing and beautiful sight, with the various colours quite naturally complimenting one another.

We shall miss Adrian. He was good to work with, with his clear thinking and decisive approach; I am glad to have known him, he will be missed by us all: those on the River Deben Committee and those of us that he worked with on the Deben Estuary Access Group, helping to formulate the Deben Estuary Plan.

Sarah Zins

'News from the Hards'

At Robertsons Boatyard the live-aboard *Paulina* has been given some new paintwork before being returned to her berth. Robertsons hired the biggest crane in their history to lift *Serena* from the water, and now know that they can deal with yachts of up to 50 feet and 20 plus tons.

They are continuing their series of practical workshops throughout the winter, from 3-5 p.m., with the next two on 7th November and 5th December" - their website has details.

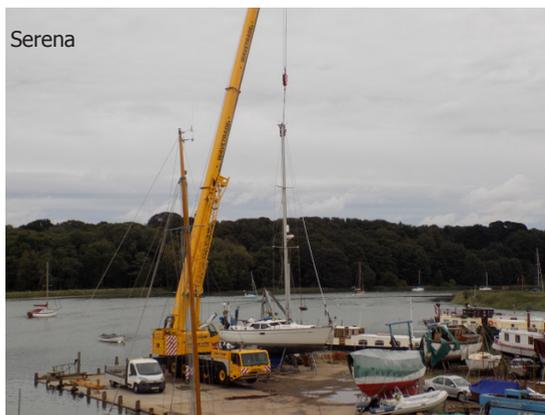
In the spring, Woodbridge Boatyard reported that they were overhauling *Rohaise*

II, one of only 17 Deben Cherubs built by Eversons in the 1920s and 1930s. The work has now been completed and she is in the water 'taking-up'. She now has new decks, cockpit and bulkheads. The boatyard is also putting in a new mast for *Ariel*, another Deben Cherub.



Felixstowe Ferry Boatyard has a busy season ahead, as they start to lay up 140 boats. They will also be servicing their own 54 swinging moorings and more than 400 other moorings, not only on the Deben at Waldringfield and Ramsholt but also at Orford and Wolverstone Marina.

At Waldringfield Boatyard, Mark and Emma Barton's son George has been skippering *Oyster Catcher* during his summer university vacation for daily river trips. *Curlew*, a Colvic Seaworker 22, has now been added to their fleet and is also available for hire.



Glad Tidings, a Fifie fishing boat built in the 1890s and rescued from the mud in Kent, is on the hard and being repaired by shipwright and owner John Archer. It is such an interesting project that a future edition of the magazine will hope to devote a full article to it.

Glad Tidings

Larkmans are getting ready for the October and November laying-up surge. They continue to repair some of the classic wooden, clinker fourteen foot Dragonflies.



Melton Boatyard's major new project is the opening of the Deben Café on *HMS Vale*, aka *Lord Nelson* a former Swedish navy fast missile attack craft, moored just next to the boatyard. For information on opening hours, details of the menu and future plans, see their facebook page at www.facebook.com/debencafe.

Robertsons Boatyard - history up to the present day

There is a centuries-long tradition and history of ship and boatbuilding along the River Deben. A large shipyard existed on the site of Robertsons from the 1500s all the way through to the early 1800s. To give you an idea of the size of the yard, the slip for launching ships reached all the way up to the Red Lion at the top of the Thoroughfare. During the 1600s admiralty ships were built for the Royal Navy here, which continued until the early 1800s when the Canadians started building in softwood - this was quicker to produce and much cheaper to build with. As a consequence it largely put paid to the British industry and even repairing boats proved a challenge for some.

Fast forward to the mid 1880s and shipbuilding is shifting away from commercial work towards the leisure industry. In 1884 Ebenezer Robertson was on a train travelling from Ipswich to Southwold when he spotted an empty shipyard in Woodbridge. He bought it for his son, A V Robertson, who became the first boatbuilder here, building wooden leisure craft. The yard passed through three generations of Robertsons. After the Second World War it passed into the hands of Wing Commander Smith who diversified and began building the first fibreglass boats here.

The business continued under a variety of owners until the late 70s early 80s when it suffered a decline. When, in 1985, Mike Illingworth and Adrian Overbury took over they had to work extremely hard to rebuild the business. Paul Heiney and Libby Purves provided the required break when they commissioned Robertsons to build them a Cornish Crabber *Grace O'Malley*, followed by an Ohlson 38' Yawl, a Plymouth Pilot Cutter and others. The creation of new leisure craft continued until around 2008; since then the emphasis has been on refits, refurbishment, maintenance and servicing of both traditional and modern craft. This type of work continues to the present day under the current ownership of Clive Eminson, who acquired the business in 2012. Robertsons employs five full-time and two part-time staff.

We have a skilled workforce whose expertise is traditionally wooden boatbuilding and associated techniques. However, it also encompasses high-tech carbon fibre work, epoxy work, rigging, painting, varnishing and so on.

In the last couple of years, to improve the efficiency and safety of the yard, we have invested in a new larger travel hoist - a merlo, new workshop doors and brand new machinery inside the workshop. This replaced the 1932 Wadkin machinery which was second hand when it arrived at Robertsons! The new travel hoist has the ability to lift out boats weighing up to 14 tons with a maximum four metre beam, which includes the likes of Beneteau, Jeanneau etc.

Alan Fuller, General Manager of the boatyard, has recently been running free, monthly boat clinics, on subjects ranging from electrics to fibreglass repairs. (See Page 10.)



On the rather less palatable subject of sewerage, until 2016 the yard and the four cottages behind utilised a cess pit which emptied into the river. We decided this could no longer continue and installed a new treatment plant which services the yard, the cottages and the new building which was completed in the same year. It is our intention that by the end of 2019 the same will apply to our residential barges; ergo the water in our vicinity of the Deben will be much cleaner. We hope that other organisations along the banks of our beautiful River Deben will follow suit.

Like the farming community, we have had to diversify in order to provide an element of financial stability for a traditional business during quieter months. This has been achieved with the building of two ground floor offices, currently let, and a three-bedroom holiday-let apartment above. This apartment, overlooking the boatyard and the River Deben, with views towards Sutton Hoo, is also within a five minute walk of the



Thoroughfare and provides our guests with the best of both worlds -rural and urban. It has a large open plan living, dining and fully fitted bespoke kitchen and ensuite bathrooms. We were keen to make it 'disabled friendly' and accordingly have recently installed a stairlift at the entrance. This has already proved to be a great success. Much of the feedback we have received suggests that people love sitting on the large rear south-east facing balcony watching the world go by - life in the boatyard, the ebb and flow of the river, many varieties of craft toiling or drifting up and down, birds on the wing and afloat and glorious sunsets.

More recently, land reclamation has been in progress to provide new hard standing at a higher level than the current area, which is subject to flooding during very high tides. The new hard- standing should alleviate this and allow boats to be stacked in a more orderly fashion, making much more efficient use of the area.

When one considers the long history of ship and boatbuilding associated with this site, we feel it is important to do our utmost to ensure the continuation of this business and all it represents.

Robertsons Boat Repair Clinic

I have attended most of these clinics and found them both informative and interesting. They are very informal and there are plenty of chances of airing and discussing one's own problems in a friendly atmosphere (tea and biscuits are provided). They are held at Robertsons Boatyard on the first Wednesday of each month, starting at 3 pm. (duration about 2 hours). The following is a list of the topics that have been discussed up to July 2018:

January: general discussion: This session was spent discussing frequent problems that yacht owners were having and to decide what subjects to cover in the future meetings.

February: standing rigging. This discussed the different materials that have been used (stainless and galvanized steel), the make-up of wires, the types of fittings giving examples of swaging etc. Common problems of 'Cheap' versus 'Good Quality' were considered.

March: painting and varnishing (My notes): common problems encountered were reviewed and detailed tips were given as to how to achieve a good outcome including: Wood: Rotary planers, circular saws and hand saws all leave permanent marks on the surface of the wood which cannot be removed by sanding. Hand planes or scrapers must be used to avoid permanent marks. Humidity: Painting Aluminium: Zinc chromate primer (toxic) is necessary to protect the metal from oxidising

April: boat toilets and plumbing: Alan covered a brief history of yacht toilets - from Baby Blake, Blakes to the New Par type and common problems.

May: fibreglass repairs.

June: simple woodworking techniques.

July: ASAP products: Jay, the training co-ordinator, explained that the company's aim was to be a one stop shop providing all that was needed to solve a marine problem, both in materials and expert advice.

August: 12 Volt electrical systems.

Editors Note: Robin Whittle has provided detailed notes of all the sessions and the advice given. These are available on the website and are very helpful for those maintaining yachts.

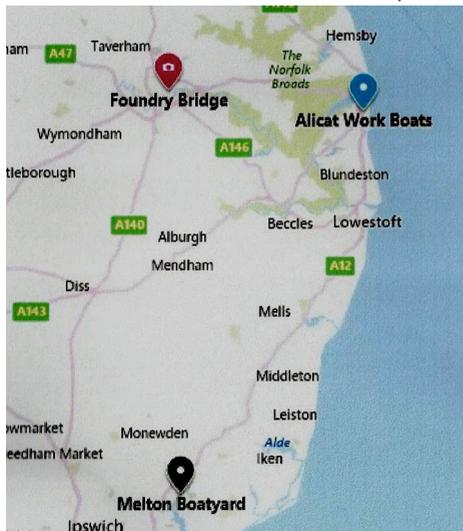
Robin Whittle and Robert Simper

After several months of negotiation, in April 2018 Simon Skeet of Melton Boatyard and Cate Meadows, purchased the 120ft, 150 gross tonne displacement Sea Cadet training ship *TS Lord Nelson*, at Foundry Bridge, Norwich. This former 1979 Swedish Navy Patrol Vessel, P155 *HMS Vale* was decommissioned in 1995 and, for the past seventeen years, had been used as a Sea Cadet Training Ship.



Lord Nelson Moves to Melton

The Melton marine contractor Tam Grundy agreed to move the *Lord Nelson* down the River Yare to Great Yarmouth, using *Ben Michael* and *Fury* manned by himself and Sam Doman aboard *Ben Michael* and Ben Grundy with Rick Grundy in the *Fury*. However, the most time consuming part of the operation was co-ordinating times and dates between the Broads Authority, Norfolk County Council, Norwich City Council, Network Rail and Peel Ports.



The tow started at dawn on 24th June as tug crews, ride crews for the *Lord Nelson*, Broads Authority staff and pilot; bridge engineers and escort vessels mustered and moved the vessel stern first through the four bridges of Norwich down to Frostbite Corner, where there was room to swing her so she could be towed bow first. The tow took seven hours once clear of Trowse Bridge, marking the edge

of Norwich city, to transit the river Yare to reach great Yarmouth; but here a problem cropped up as the Haven swing bridge had trouble opening. To prevent a massive traffic jam, the authorities demanded that the bridge must be made reliable before it was re-opened. This incident held up the *Lord Nelson's* tow for eight days, before she could be towed through the remaining two bridges at Great Yarmouth and on to Alicat boatyard. She remained in the yard for seven days, where the hull was epoxied and top sides painted.

The actual tow at sea was undertaken by the tug *Agama* owned by Nigel Cardy of Maldon. The *Ben Michael* and *Fury* had to return to the Deben to tow the *Lord Nelson* up to Melton. On the day chosen it was gusting Force 5 North Easterly. Sam Doman and Harry Simper steamed *Fury* back and reported the 'seas were as big as bungalows'. The *Fury* was so stable that he was still able to do some cooking on the way back! With the flood tide and wind the two Deben tugs took about six hours to reach the river Deben.



Photo Ben Grundy

There was no one aboard the *Lord Nelson* for the sea trip down the coast on 11th July, so that when the *Agama* met up with the *Ben Michael* and *Fury*, at Woodbridge Haven, someone had to go on board to fasten the tow lines. Harry Simper made the difficult transition and helped Simon Skeet aboard the *Lord Nelson* from the *Fury*, to let go and recover *Agama's* chain bridles and secure *Ben Michael* and *Fury*. After the lines were secured, the *Lord Nelson* was towed up to the Rocks Reach where Tam had laid a temporary mooring for the ship to wait until the top of the spring tide.

The last part of the trip took place on 18th July. It was mentioned on television and became a public event with many cameras clicking away as she was towed up river and through Woodbridge. The final berth for the *Lord Nelson*, with her 4.6ft draft, was along the river wall in Melton Boatyard and with some heaving and pushing by the tugs, she was gradually



Photo Ben Grundy

moved alongside the river wall. At this point the crowd cheered and there was the sound of foghorns from boats in the boatyard. After twenty-nine days the *Lord Nelson* had arrived at her new home to be converted to an education/community centre with a café. (Ed. The other members of the team who helped move *Lord Nelson* are listed on page 20.)

Richard Verrill

European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*)



I have fished the Deben for many years hoping for Bass but in the past would often catch eels instead. For me this was usually seen as an unwelcome catch, as getting them off the hook would entail having a writhing "snake" wrap around my arm covering me with slime. Folklore is not wrong when it says that there is nothing as slippery as an eel.

In the last few years I have noticed a dramatic decline in the numbers of eels and on further enquiry it is generally accepted that eel numbers have declined by at least 95%.



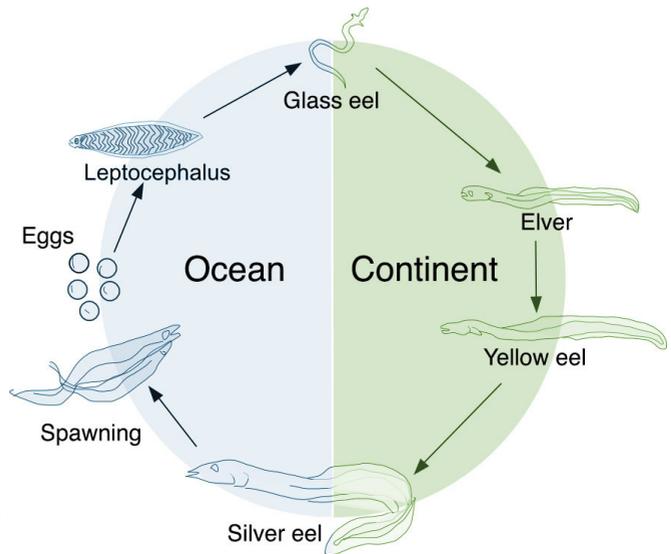
Life Cycle of the European Eel

For centuries very little was known about the life cycle of the eel. Aristotle surmised they were born "of nothing". Others swore eels "were bred of mud, of bodies decaying in the water". One learned bishop informed the Royal Society that eels "slithered from the thatched roofs of cottages"; Izaak Walton, in 'The Compleate Angler', reckoned they sprang from the "action of sunlight on dewdrops". It was not until 1922 that the Danish biologist Johannes Schmidt proposed that all eels were spawned in the Sargasso Sea, which is half way between Bermuda and the West Indies. He came to this conclusion having spent 15 years searching for eel larvae in the Atlantic. He found that the smallest larvae were found in the Sargasso sea and as he moved closer to Europe they increased in size. At that time no adult eels had ever been found in the Sargasso sea. In 2016 a team from CEFAS (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science) based in Lowestoft tagged adult eels which were then tracked from European shores to the Sargasso sea, so confirming Johannes Schmidt's hypothesis.

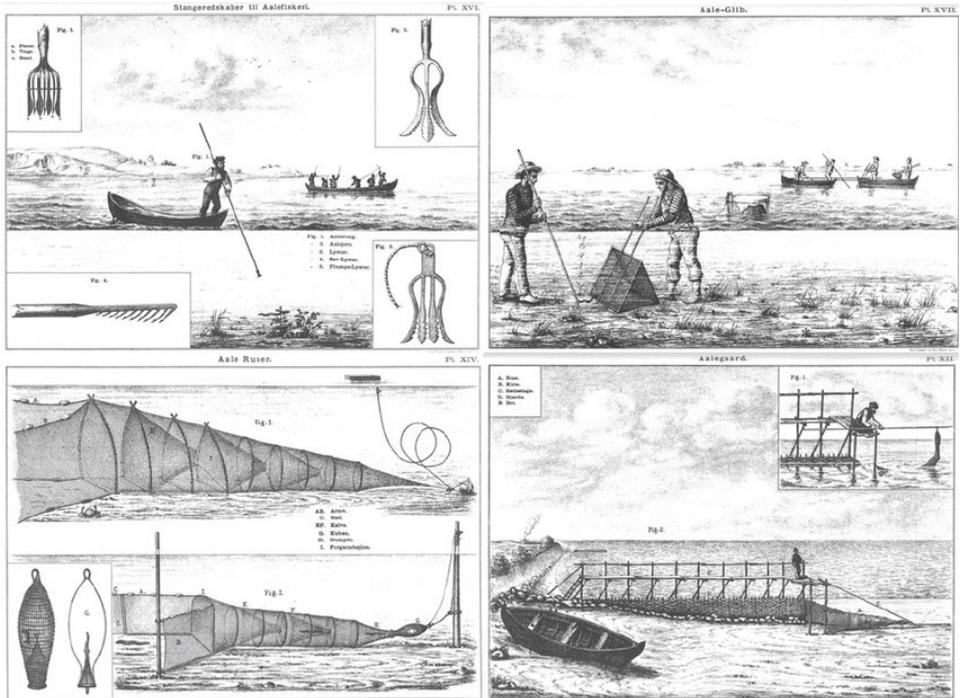
The eel is a catadromous species, breeding in the sea and migrating to freshwater in order to grow before returning to the sea to spawn. Once spawned, the eel larva resembles a transparent tiny willow leaf (leptocephalus). These larvae float in the Plankton and drift in the Gulf Stream current towards Europe.

As established by Johannes Schmidt they gradually increase in size and on reaching the Continental Shelf they undergo metamorphosis into young eels known as Glass Eels because of their transparent appearance. Glass Eels continue to grow in size and become darker in colour. They wash into estuaries and then swim into freshwater rivers and streams. As they enlarge and swim up rivers they become known as Elvers.

Elvers find their way to fresh water streams, lakes and pools where they remain to feed, eventually gaining sufficient weight and changing colour to become known as Yellow Eels. In damp and dark conditions Yellow Eels may move some distance out of water to find new areas to feed. Male eels take 6 to 12 years to reach maturity while female eels take 9 to 20 years. Eels have been reported to live as long as 80 years. Only once an eel becomes adult does it develop gonads and strangely at this stage they also start to resorb their digestive tract. Their colour changes again to a yellow/ brown



upper body with a silver underside. They are then known as Silver Eels. Fable suggests that Silver Eels begin their migration back to the sea on “dark, moonless, stormy nights” usually at the end of September. Science has since confirmed this. Silver Eels then migrate the 3,000 miles back to spawn in the Sargasso Sea. As they go their gut shrinks so they no longer feed. Once they have spawned they die.



Eel Fishing in the Deben

Historically eels were so plentiful that they were a very large part of the diet for people in Suffolk. Eels were caught in huge numbers in traps by the shore. There are well preserved remains of Saxon fishing traps at East Lane. A study undertaken by English Heritage and Suffolk County Council in 2005 surveying the Suffolk intertidal region has identified remains of fish traps off Stoner Point on the Deben. These fish traps consist of groups of posts arranged in lines to create roughly v-shaped structures which point out into the channel. It is thought that the posts were connected with either wicker fences or netting. Other traps were aligned with a large opening upstream leading to a narrow neck or basket downstream into which the Silver Eels migrating down the river would be corralled. As well as traps specially designed spears would be used to catch eels in the shallows.

Where have all the Eels Gone?

The European eel stock is severely depleted. According to estimates from the International Council for Exploration of the Seas (ICES), the recruitment level of

Glass Eels (the number of baby eel produced each year) in 2011 was only 1 % of what it was before the 1980s. Despite a statistically significant increase in Glass Eels recruitment since 2011, the abundance of eels at all the stages of their life cycle remains very low. The reason for this dramatic decline is not fully understood but possible causes may include:

Over fishing

Historically most fishing was directed towards adult Silver Eels but in the last 15 years there has been a rapid expansion in fishing for Glass Eels that are exported to Asia where they are farmed to provide Eels for the Asian market. Since 2007 the EU has put in place restrictions on eel fishing to try to increase stocks. More recently the international trade in eels into and out of the EU had been prohibited.

Parasites

Since the 1980s an invasive nematode worm, *Anguillicoloides crassus*, has been found to infect the swim bladder of the European Eel. Strangely eels affected by this parasite appear to be larger but the effect on the swim bladder is thought to produce problems with the Eel's ability to migrate to the Sargasso sea thus reducing the breeding stock.

Barriers to Migration.

Historically weirs and other obstructions to eels migrating our rivers were relatively easy for the eel to pass through but with the advent of less permeable obstructions the eels upstream migration has become more difficult. Hydroelectric turbines chop eels up as they attempt to pass.

Pollution

Pollution in our rivers is blamed for reduced numbers of eels but an article published in *The Independent* in June this year reported, "Eels are getting high on cocaine in Britain's drug-polluted rivers"; this has cast a new light on the problems our eels might encounter in our rivers. Apparently, cocaine passed by drug users in their urine passes through sewage treatment plants and then affects the eels:

"This study shows that even low environmental concentrations of cocaine cause severe damage to the morphology and physiology of the skeletal muscle of the Silver Eel, confirming the harmful impact of cocaine in the environment that potentially affects the survival of this species"

Plastics in our environment have had a high profile recently and much of the plastic waste in the Atlantic is concentrated around the North Atlantic Gyre which centres on the Sargasso sea; as yet, we do not know what effect this may have on eel spawning.

Eels were once plentiful in our rivers. The life cycle of the eel poses particular dangers to their ability to reproduce and the adverse effects that our world may have on them. It is only recently that man has come to fully understand the life cycle of the eel, hopefully this understanding will help to protect this remarkable species.

The Wine Ships from the Deben

In an earlier edition of *The Deben* I described how in 1347 Edward III granted the merchants and ship owners of the port of Goseford the right to supply the recently captured garrison of Calais with ale and other goods. This lucrative trade lasted until 1415 when, because Goseford lost its ships in the sea battles of the Hundred Years War, the right was transferred to certain ports in Kent.

What is perhaps not known is that not only did Goseford ships carry ale to Calais but that Goseford was, in its time, one of the East Coast's leading suppliers of boats engaged in the wine trade with France.

In 1154 Henry Plantagenet was crowned King Henry II of England. Two years earlier Henry had married Eleanor, Duchess of Aquitaine. Eleanor was a bride of immense wealth who controlled land equal to about a quarter of France from the Loire to the Spanish border. By virtue of his marriage Henry ruled an empire that stretched from Hadrian's Wall to the Pyrenees and included the port of Bordeaux.

England's demand for wine had been considerable in Saxon and Norman times, and that demand was met partly from home produced supplies, partly from Northern France, and partly from the Rhineland. With the marriage of Henry and Eleanor, Bordeaux and south west France became the principal supplier of English needs.

We know of the involvement of boats from the Deben in this trade from the surviving Registers of the Constable of Bordeaux.

The first references to Goseford ships importing wine were in 1253 and 1263. However, between 1302 and 1311 not less than 628 ships from the East Coast ports left Bordeaux carrying wine. Of those sailings 94 (15 per cent) were described as being in boats 'of Goseford'. This may not seem a great deal but of all the other ports on the East Coast from Newcastle to London, only Great Yarmouth (234 or 37 per cent) provided more.

The journey down the Channel, around Cape Finisterre and then across the Bay of Biscay and back was perilous, with danger from the tides, weather, pirates and French ships. Nonetheless, some of the boats made several journeys; for example, *le Scot* made 9 voyages, *la Malot*, 8, *la Rosa*, 5 and *la Christmas* 4. Some, such as the *Le Wodessol*, are recorded as making only one journey and one wonders if, having left Bordeaux, she failed to make the journey home.

In terms of the numbers of Goseford boats sailing from Bordeaux, it is possible to identify not less than 26 different ships.

The first quarter of the fourteenth century was probably the high point of Goseford's trade with Bordeaux, but even in 1330s there are records of 23

Goseford wine ships bringing wine into the ports of Hull, Boston, London, Sandwich, Winchelsea and even Bristol.

In the Medieval Period the commerce in wine was so important that the size of ships was measured in how many wine barrels or tuns they could carry. (A tun contained about 250 gallons). However, the boats that went to Bordeaux were by modern standards small. Between 1302 and 1311 the largest cargo was 193 tuns and was in *la Rosa*. The average cargo of Goseford boats was 106 tuns compared to boats from the East Coast's major port of Great Yarmouth which was 128 tuns.

After the commencement of The Hundred Years War in 1337 there was a significant fall in wine imports from Bordeaux and by the early part of the fifteenth century the Goseford ships had been largely destroyed and only *la Maria*, *la Margareta* and *la Trinite* are recorded as being local boats bringing wine from France.

When you next sail into the Deben from your trip to France and you raise a glass of red in celebration at having successfully dodged the latest configuration of the shingle banks, reflect that you are following a passage that is over eight hundred years old.

Robin Whittle

River Wall Defences on the Deben – Recent History

General: This article describes the recent history of the protection provided by mud/clay river walls along the tidal part of the River Deben. At present the walls protect many acres of arable land. In addition there are several places on the Deben where they protect the abstraction points for the inland freshwater reservoirs. Breaching of a river wall could have a catastrophic effect on fresh water dependant features. It is very much in the interest of landowners to maintain the river walls and resist the idea of 'managed realignment', which still appears to be the intention of Natural England (NE).

Measurements that the RDA Saltmarsh Research Group have taken since 2014 show that the saltmarshes in the Deben Estuary are rising, due to the depositing of natural sediment, at the same rate as sea level rise. This largely demonstrates that the concept of 'Coastal Squeeze' in the Deben Estuary is incorrect. Erosion of the saltmarsh is taking place but not because the saltmarshes are drowning.

At present the Environment Agency (EA) does not have the responsibility for repair work but has permissive powers to do so. The implementation of these powers has varied greatly over time, from little implementation in the 1930s to greater intervention in the 40s and 50s (due to food shortages!) and back to less intervention today. Typically its funding for maintenance work has reduced to mainly cover those areas where there are a significant number of dwellings (e.g. Woodbridge, Felixstowe Ferry). In around 2008 the Country Land and Business Association established that land owners should be permitted to protect their land. There remains the clash between the concept of preserving the habitat for wild life, which leads to 'managed realignment' and the need to maintain the river

walls to protect the arable lands and the abstraction points for the freshwater reservoirs.

These changes have been reflected through the publication of the Deben Estuary Plan (2015). This was led by the community based Deben Estuary Partnership (DEP) in partnership with representatives from the EA and Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. The Deben Estuary Plan makes it clear that the responsibility for maintaining most of the river walls on the Deben now lies chiefly with the landowners. Much of the coordination of this has now passed to the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB).

For the last ten years the local objective for protecting river walls, proposed by Andrew Hawes, is on making the walls survivable in a flood. The primary requirement for this is to ensure an adequate height. In order to achieve a sensible result at an acceptable cost it is important to prevent breaching, but to design them to survive limited overtopping. Overtopping of up to 300mm (equivalent to up to 2 hours flow) has been accepted as a reasonable limit. For a smooth flow of water this requires that the batter on the land side to be set at 1 in 2.5 or more. In many situations this can be achieved by increasing the base width. Other requirements are introduced to ensure ease of future maintenance and to allow footpaths along the top. An ideal section through the river wall is shown in Figure One.

An alternative to providing more clay to an existing wall is the laying of rockfall netting over the top of the wall. This provides one hour extra time for overtopping, equivalent to 200mm extra height of wall. For situations where the existing wall height is 0.5m below the design level (+4.0m AOD for the Deben) it can be used instead of adding more earth/clay to the wall. It can also be used in situations where the wall is not stable enough to take the extra weight of earth/clay (e.g. sandy wall) as it does not add significant weight. In addition it provides ecological mitigation i.e. if it is applied instead of adding earth/clay there should be no concern about the habitat of the wild life. One drawback of this type of solution is the difficulty of maintenance of the bank. Grass cutting equipment can be damaged by the rockfall netting.

Where possible it is important to build the river walls up to the same level. This ensures that overtopping occurs simultaneously over the full length of walls and creates a large temporary flood plain. It is essential for this concept to be coupled with the efficient performance of sluices to drain the flooded areas as soon as the flood waters subside.

The placing of Essex Blocks at the foot of the river side wall have been carried out where there has been no saltmarsh to absorb wave energy at times of flooding.

Reference to specific work carried out on:

River Wall near Sutton Hoo – 2008 (described in No 49 edition of The Deben)

Breach in the river wall just downstream from Martlesham Creek – 2014 (described in No. 51 edition of The Deben)

River Wall at Ramsholt - 2014 (described in No. 51 edition of The Deben)

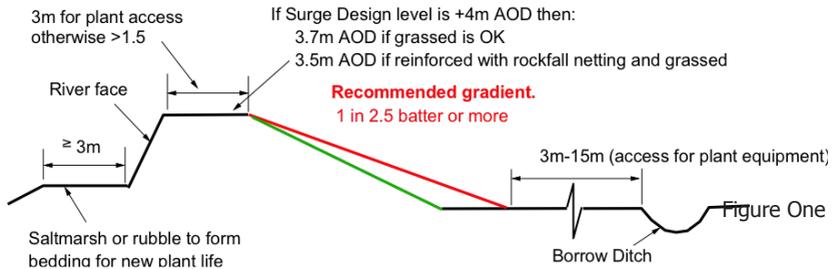
River Wall at Kirton Creek - Early 2015 (Autumn 2015 edition of The Deben)

River Wall on the north side of Martlesham Creek - Summer 2015 (described in No. 51 edition of The Deben)

River Wall upstream of Waldringfield - 2015 (described in No. 53 edition of The Deben)

Cross Wall at Felixstowe Ferry - Autumn 2016: The scheme to refurbish the flood defence to provide protection to Felixstowe Ferry hamlet from the Deben Estuary. The works took place along a 500 metre section of flood embankment to the north-west of Ferry Road/

Millennium Green and involved removing steel crest piles, raising and widening of 500 metres of bank using imported material. Other improvements works included a new access arrangement for the golf course sluice and a new cabinet to hold the flood boards for use across the road. The work was completed one month ahead of time, and significantly under budget. Final cost was £547,000 (£1,094/m). Future Work: two lengths of river wall still require maintenance to bring them to the agreed standard. The wall at Shottisham Creek (Flood Cell 4) and the wall between Bawdsey Ferry and Ramsholt (Flood Cell One). The Deben Estuary Partnership is co-ordinating the management of these. *Ed. Robin Whittle has provided details of all the schemes on the website.*



The *Lord Nelson* Delivery Team

Simon Skeet & Cate Meadows - *Vale's* owners

Tam Grundy - Tug company owner & Master

Ben Grundy - Tug Master & organised to tow from start to finish

Jim Howe - Tug Master, *Fury* (tow from Breydon Coaster Quay to Alicat)

Rick Grundy - Tug Crew, *Fury*

Sam Doman - Tug Crew, *Ben Michael*

Vales Ride Crew - Harry Simper, Matt Gladwell, Mick Dykes, Chris Lant.



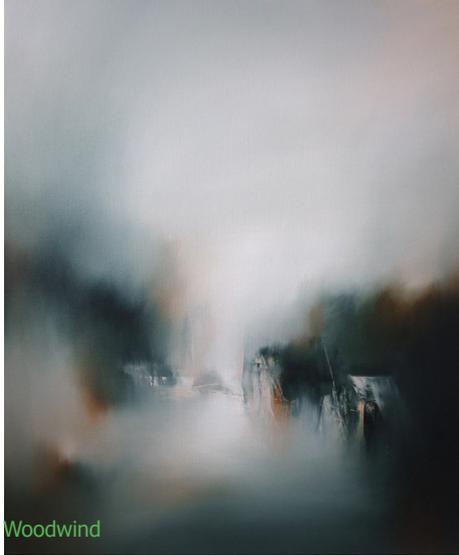
Artist of the Deben

Emma Green

Emma's parents were always taking her as a child to the rivers and beaches of Suffolk, Shingle Street, East Lane, the Deben. After finishing a degree in art at Hull University, Emma came to live by the river in a 24 foot. Dauntless yacht moored at Robertsons and later a Dutch barge moored at the Tide Mill.



She loves the water and her passion and energy for the river comes through in her work and in the way she talks about her work.



'I never made a conscious decision to become an artist. I have always done it and it was a natural thing to do an art foundation and an art degree and return to Suffolk to paint, however I could make it happen. That was one of the reasons I got my little boat. I have to be near water. I wondered how I was going to live here and and paint. So I bought my little boat and lived on her at Robertsons with my little cat for quite a few years before I got a Dutch barge which was moored at the Tide Mill. It was a very affordable way to live. Although I did get a job at The Gallery, painting every minute.

When I am painting a completely lose myself in that painting..although it is my income and my living I don't paint to sell..I paint because I want to create that image and whilst you are painting it takes on a life of its own. I am not a 'fixed' painter I am an instinctive painter. I let it go where it wants to and take

on its own life - if I sell it, it is a bonus. But I am going to paint it anyway. My motivation is not to make an income, it is to capture that beautiful old river in the way I see it.

Emma talked about her love of boatyards. 'I love the sounds of boatyards, the sound haliards make, the shrieking of the wind and the sounds of cranes and tractors moving boat around the yard. However, she acknowledges how difficult it is to record the sounds successfully; as she found in making a recording at Larkman's which accompanies her picture in the Dovecote exhibition at Snape Maltings.

'I think it is that little bit of a focal point which you need, I am not interested in every bit of detail of boats and their rigging, but I love that jumble of rigging and the line of a building. It just provides a little bit of structure into the composition but also a little bit of mankind in this wild elemental place. . there is something about boatyards. You have got the peacefulness of the river and then you have got this racket of cranes going, and moving about..When I first encountered it I found it quite noisy but as it became familiar having had boats I didn't mind the noise at all. I found it quite comforting.'



Astral is

'I love water, I have to be on the coast. I think there something about the tidal landscape that is very special. There is something constant about it coming in twice a day, every day. And yet it is always different and that is something about the same subject over and over again..that is always different. The light is always changing, there is always a different scent on the wind – there is something about that which constantly inspires me. And I prefer the darker days when I think 'Oh my goodness it has suddenly got very dark and I can see the wind getting up and the clouds building. . that I really love. Big blue skies don't really inspire me. I have been out walking but they don't move me to paint



Juniper

as a much as storm brewing or dusk or twilight or dawn..Since I have had Willow I have seen many more dawns! (Willow is Emma's three year old daughter.)

Emma's interest in boats is illustrated by her sketch book, which has a page listing all the boats Emma has been attracted to. Although Emma does not necessarily paint the boats, they often feature somewhere in her pictures and sometimes a picture is named after the boat.

Seeing Emma's paintings as a group doesn't do them justice. Emma's latest paintings have a unique depth and resonance. Her latest painting is a huge canvas and as you stand in front of it, its multi layered quality draws you in and immerses you in the subject.

Emma says she finds painting for a commission restricting, in that she is painting for 'somebody'. Recently, however, Emma won a commission to paint a picture for SCDC which now hangs in the reception area of the new SCDC offices. It was an inspired choice as the picture certainly enhances the reception area. SCDC

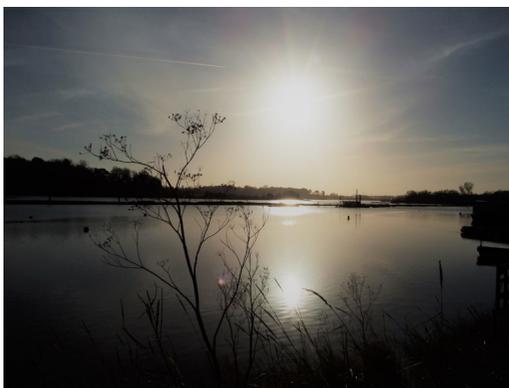


SCDC - Reception Area

also asked Emma to write a blog and this is full of interest with information about how the painting developed together with Emma's observations of the changing season, the light and the patterns of the river. She also manages to integrate her writing with the poetry of other writers, such as George Crabbe; and together with her photographs and her experiments with sounds, indicate how comfortable Emma is with different media. It will be interesting to see how her work develops in the future.

Whatever direction Emma's work takes it is likely that her love of painting and her passion for water and the river will sustain her and as she says:

'When I am not painting I am running up and down the beach with Willow'.



Light on the Deben

'Boats of the Deben'

'Stadats'

Stadats, originally known as the *Frederick and Emma*, was a Baltimore Class lifeboat built in 1921 by Saunders Row on the Isle of Wight, following a donation from a Mr and Mrs Bear of Birmingham. She served as the Wick lifeboat from 1921 – 1938. She was launched 19 times and saved 37 lives. She was refitted and served from January 1939 at the Amble lifeboat station which re-opened having been closed in 1852. She was retired in 1952.

She was built as an open sailing lifeboat, but during the build, marine engines were being developed and she was fitted with a petrol engine which used 37 gallons an hour. She was said to go 'through the waves rather than over them'.

Mr JW Snell, who lived in California Woodbridge, bought her and previous plans to use her as a 'banana' boat in the Carribean were then dropped. He named her after all the rivers he had been associated with, the Stour, the Tamar, the Arun and so on.

When John Kresja aka. JK, met Mr Snell in 1965 they 'shared a glass of wine'. Mr Snell said that JK could have the *Stadats* free of any payment if JK could name Mr Snell's previous occupation. JK thought the he was well spoken and noticed the stitching on his



well tailored clothes; he seemed to know about a range of subjects. JK guessed he had been a High Court Judge. Mr Snell said he had been George VI's tailor and so JK had to pay for *Stadats*.

The boat was towed round from Foxes and JK acquired all the rigging and the equipment and a considerable number of Honduras Mahogany and Oak planks. She was moored on the jetty by Whisstocks. Claude Whisstock allowed JK, who was working at

Whisstocks, to use the machinery of the yard. JK worked on *Stadats*, which was a completely open boat, every day after working hours and at weekends for five years completing her conversion as a yacht. He married and lived on *Stadats* for five years with his wife and daughter.



During this time, JK went to Wick to research the history of *Stadats*. A local journalist on the 'John of Groats Times' furnished JK with the cuttings that were published after he reported the 'call outs'. The journalist introduced him to a former coxwain who only spoke Gaelic and they needed an interpreter.

JK sailed *Stadats* for many years and took part in the 'Old Gaffers' races. Although she wasn't fast, she had a deep keel and would go to windward. She also had a Perkins 126 HP engine.

In July this year *Stadats* was put up for sale.

Stadats - Motor Sailing
Ketch
Beam:
12.00 feet (3.66 m)
Draft:
3.61 feet (1.10 m)
Length overall: 45
feet (13.72 m)



Deben Reflections

Reminiscences of Iain Dorman-Jackson Commanding Officer of RAF Bawdsey 1981 – 1984.

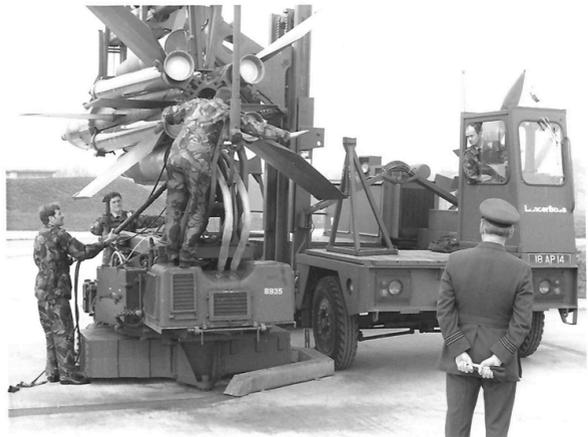
Part of the Bawdsey estate was used as the initial base for the UK's experiments that led to RADAR. Just prior to the 1939-45 War, WW2, it became RAF Bawdsey and a Commanding Officer (CO) was appointed. Over the years its importance varied and consequently the rank of the CO changed.

Its duties started out as a simple radar trials unit but eventually became a major Radar Detection and Control establishment, controlling a large portion of our fighter aircraft. By the mid 70s this task had been taken over by RAF Neatishead and RAF Bawdsey was put on a care and maintenance footing.

In parallel, in the late 40s the consequences of a Nuclear War were being reviewed and it was decided that the UK required some bomb-proof Command and Control shelters. These would host the personnel who would control the country after a nuclear strike. So an additional plot of land adjacent to RAF Bawdsey was purchased and a huge bombproof bunker was built. This bunker was used for regular exercises whilst I was at Bawdsey, playing host to senior civil servants, police and army officers.

In 1979 it was decided that a Bloodhound Mark Two missile flight would be based at the Bawdsey bunker site. Squadron Leader "Gerry" German organised the move of C Flight 85 Squadron to Bawdsey and continued as CO until October 81. I was then privileged to be CO for three years before handing over to Sqn. Ldr. Derek Rothery who closed the unit, at the end of his tour, when the Bloodhound Two missiles were withdrawn from service.

A Bloodhound Missile Flight had about 45 personnel, when based on a normal RAF unit. At Bawdsey we required the backing of support personnel and so our total establishment was approximately 120. This included a group of bomb dis-



A Bloodhound Missile being loaded onto a launching platform. vv Loading team sergeant at the missile directing the corporal loader driver with two other engineers holding the connecting leads.

posal personnel who were clearing the Orford Ness site, which had been used as a site for bomb trials during WW2.

I arrived at Bawdsey in early May 1982, a few months early for the start date of my appointment of Unit Commander of Royal Air Force Bawdsey. I was, of course, required to attend several training courses in preparation for my duties as a Bloodhound Missile Flight Commander and Independent Unit Commander. Nevertheless I had a pleasant few months to familiarise myself with the area and the local people. Out of courtesy I was required to keep clear of RAF Bawdsey itself but my predecessor gave me permission to use the facilities of the unit's sailing club.

At this time we had a Tri Collie and on our evening walks she seemed to know the way to all the local public houses! Having just returned from Germany, where the sister establishments had no official opening hours, I was unaware of British opening hours. I asked 'mine host' when he closed and having told me he said, "It's a bit relaxed as we're at the end of a peninsular", i.e. seldom visited by authority. So I had another pint and unfortunately left by the front door, which I had to unlock to get out. On my next visit said host pointed out that late departures were by the back door and on the night in question the front door had been left open all night!

I found that the local pubs were very useful for picking up and disseminating information. On one occasion I broadcasted my displeasure on finding snares set in the manor grounds. The next morning the guilty person had the good grace to leave a fine brace of pheasants on the bonnet of my car.

A good look at the Google map view of the bunker site reveals the concrete pads that once held Bloodhound Missiles. At Bawdsey 'C' Flight 85 Squadron had two sections of missiles. Each section had its own control cabin in which a team of two Missile Engineers and one Weapons Control Officer worked.

The 'computer' that controlled the missiles was probably second-generation computer technology but viewed in today's light it would look 'out of the Ark'. It was approximately 8 feet long, 5 feet high and 2.5 feet wide. Full of valves and large boards that pulled out, enabling the technicians to put connecting pins into slots to make up the circuits.



Air Vice Marshal Peter Harding inspecting the Guard of Honour 1982
Note the AOC was eventually the Chief of the Defence Staff in the rank of Marshal of the Royal Air Force.

All RAF units have annual inspections of their general upkeep and their operational efficiency. In our case the 'Spit and Polish' inspection was carried out by the Air Officer Commanding (AOC) No. 11 Group in late March each year. The Air Vice Marshal flew into RAF Woodbridge accompanied by his wife. I then escorted him to RAF Bawsdey whilst my wife took his wife on a separate more social tour.

The AOC's tour started with an inspection of a Guard of Honour on the quay. On these occasions some inspecting officers have been known to ask the Guard Commander to name his troops. So just in case the Guard Commander had a sudden loss of memory I briefed him and the Guard that he should make up a name and say it loud enough for the individual to hear and accept! After this parade we did a tour of the domestic site followed by lunch in the Manor. After lunch the inspection moved to the technical site usually including a missile loading exercise and a guard dog demonstration. I was a little apprehensive about the first of these AOC's inspections as hitherto I'd not been involved with this type of inspection. Luckily I had served under both inspecting officers in previous appointments. The operational inspections were called 'Tactical Evaluations' and these normally occurred later in the year. Having previously been a visiting member of the NATO team I was relaxed about these checks. These 'TacEvals' were supposed to be 'no notice' events often starting in the wee small hours. By the time of our first checks our peninsular spy network was such that we were fully prepared for the event. The main drawback for these inspections was that we were checked against a NATO requirement and the RAF didn't always provide us with the required logistics.

We did occasionally manage to overwhelm the inspection team with our slightly illegal resources. We had a great relationship with the Army's Eastern District Regiments and thus were able to borrow night vision goggles and acquire a fair amount of blank ammunition and flares from them. So when we were required to switch off our lights, to enable the attacking force to approach unseen, my guard force, using the night vision goggles, the blank ammunition and flares, were in a better position to defend the base.

Social Events

The Martlesham Heath Police College had a course designed for those officers who had just been, or were shortly going to be, promoted to Inspector. Their Chief Instructor asked, and they were made very welcome, to use the Manor for their end of course party. These regular events left us in the good books of the local Constabulary and on one occasion gave one of my junior officers a chance to edit a Police logbook. He added the car Number Plate details of two of our HQ's more senior masters. Consequently, when they were next trying to carry out a snap inspection they were much delayed and we were forewarned.

Bawdsey Open Days

Some of the junior lads approached me and asked if we could have a unit open day to enable the wives and girlfriends to see what they did at work. We arranged this to tie in with the Battle of Britain weekend and I managed to get

some of the local units to arrange to give us a fly past on their way to or from their official duties. This was extremely successful as the message was passed on to other units and we had quite a large selection of aircraft giving us mini flying displays. We also organised a Bouncy Castle for the children and several other minor amusements. So a good day was had by all. However, the following week the local papers were inundated by complaints, not of the noise, but because there had been no prior warning. So the subsequent two open days were announced in the local press and the public were allowed in. This of course required us to add further displays and attractions. A lot of these came free but some came at a cost so we had to charge a small entrance fee.

Sailing and the Deben

I initially sailed from Bawdsey Quay using an RAF sailing association Albacore, but finding another crew member was not always available I bought a second hand Laser dinghy. This enabled me to take full advantage of the Deben. The RAF had three Enterprises and three Albacores which we used to teach beginners and to race against other RAF units and local clubs.

Against other unit's our knowledge of the local tides was a significant advantage. Of course this local knowledge sometimes went against us when we raced in other units waters, notably on the Broads.

In the summer we would sail, sometimes race, up river to the Ramsholt Arms for a drink and then drift back. Once we'd acquired windsurfers we even used them. I would tuck a couple of coins into my hat and windsurf up river. Of course that was when it cost less than a pound for a pint of bitter!

When talking of beer and the river, one has to be aware of the dangers. On two occasions when near Ramsholt I have had to rescue yachties who were slightly the worse for wear. One elderly lady had fallen out of their dinghy and was clutching the bottom rung of the boarding ladder whilst their dinghy floated down the river. I went into the water whilst my 12-year-old son sailed our dinghy, and then in a most undignified fashion helped her to climb the ladder (I had to grab the ladder between her legs and hoist her up). Then when my son picked me up we chased and we recovered their dinghy. I'm sure that particular couple used their yacht as a weekend cottage. I had seen the yacht motor down river to the mouth and back up again, on several occasions, but never saw it go out to sea.

Talking of the Deben and sailing we must mention Charlie Brinkley. Charlie was a godsend to all on the river. He constantly watched and would be out to help if required. I was out on my Laser in blustery weather when a very strong burst broke my rudder and I went over. By the time I'd righted the dinghy and got back on board Charlie was close by saying "you all right lad, want a tow" I declined and managed to get back to the Quay. On another occasion, during a severe gale that had made several boats drag their moorings, I phoned Charlie and asked him for help to recover a yacht. Charlie said, "I don't know about you Lad but I'm going to have a nightcap and go to bed, yon ill be alright on the mud and we'll get it when the wind dies".

My children and I sailed regularly but my wife thought water should be in a hot bath and not too deep. One day my son and I were just about to set sail when my wife came down to the quay to catch the ferry. I persuaded her to get into the Albacore and we set sail across the river. Halfway across we had to tack and she demanded to get off. It was quicker to continue so we dropped her at the Fish shacks. Having bought her fish she refused to go back with us and used Charlie's ferry. For the next few months Charlie kept reminding me of this. RAF Bawdsey had four moorings on our side of the river. Two were in use one by a serving officer and another by a retired officer.

The shifting shingle bank is well known and the notice to mariners tells all to contact the harbour master when first approaching the river entrance. Whilst out in my dinghy one late afternoon, I came across a Dutch yacht that had run aground at the top of the tide. I had a quick chat and explained the best way to get afloat from their current position. Thanking me he then pointed at the Manor and asked who it belonged to. I explained that it was part of RAF Bawdsey, and they then asked was it possible to look round. I agreed and told them I would come back at low tide. Later that evening I walked out to their yacht, helped them to lay out a couple of anchors, and took them up to the Manor House. In appreciation they brought along a large box of cigars and left them on the bar counter for general consumption.

I Was the First Visitor at Sutton Hoo

It was the late summer of 1939. War with Nazi Germany was expected and not many people paid attention to rumours of an extraordinary discovery of an Anglo-Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo. However, my father did, and at breakfast on the day the news came out, he said he would drive over to have a look. I was not yet seventeen and I thought it would be fun to go with him.



My father had lost his left leg in the trenches in the First World War (or Great War as it was then known) but he could still drive a car. We drove up the drive to Mrs Pretty's house overlooking the Deben and rang the front door bell. The butler answered and my father asked if we could have a look at the excavations of the ship burial. Mrs Pretty was called and said: "I suppose there's going to be a lot of visitors". We were clearly the first. But she allowed us to walk through the house and out to the burial mounds at the back. People were still working in the dig and the outlines of what were the ship's timbers could be seen imprinted in the sandy soil. We weren't allowed to go down but we could see clearly from the

top. I did not see any of the treasures as they had already been taken away for safe-keeping.

At that time the burial mounds were overgrown and there was, of course, no access road. It was just rough ground with lots of rabbits and not many trees. Although Mrs Pretty gave the Sutton House treasure to the nation her house and land remained private for many years. After Sutton Hoo was opened to the public, I was a volunteer there for several years and remember the excavation of some of the other mounds in the 1980s.

Di Barnard - remembering with her son Stephen Barnard

Pete Clay

NIRVANA - Almost Home

You'll remember that Nirvana arrived from Norway, in Vejle, half-way down Denmark's mainland at the end of May this year. We had experienced nothing but contrary winds the whole way and used several tanks of diesel.

On the 12th June, with brother Jamie, sister-in-law Tessa and great friend Lou, I arrived back in Vejle with some foreboding. Jamie and Tessa's boat *Firefly* had been engine-less for over 20 years and it would be cruel indeed if the Nordic gods were to continue throwing southerly winds at us and deprive us of yet more sailing.

Under a bright sun and with a fresh following wind we bowled down the lovely Vejle Fjord at 6 or 7 knots with stays'l and two reefs in the main - pure sailing for the first time this year! Hardening up round the end of the fjord we continued this exhilarating progress under the lee of the mainland to Fredericia at the North end of the Little Belt albeit with a light current from the South.

Next day we pressed on, now under full sail, down this picturesque and sheltered waterway. We slowed down to admire the splendid Nyborg Viking replica- the original in Flensburg, interestingly predates our AD620 Anglo-Saxon ship from Sutton Hoo by 200 years. She lies majestically beside a jetty and in the background stands an equally majestic contemporary Viking shed in which she had been built.



The bridge at Sønderborg opened at 20:00 and we tied up at the town quay. Astern of us lay a fine varnished sloop dating from 1948. The new owners (no.2 in her life) had her full history. She is of composite construction, solid teak on galvanised frames and deck beams, made from "u-boat" steel. Quite how those materials were available in 1948 can only be imagined!

Next stop, before the locks at Holtenau, was the former British Kiel Yacht Club, a deserted and desolate image of its former self- buzzing with energetic soldiers and a fleet of training boats and wooden 50 foot class yachts nicked from the Germans after the war.

There were no boats on the pontoons and we chose an ideal berth with the light wind, fine on our starboard bow - sheltered cockpit, blown gently off the pontoon so the fenders wouldn't squeak, and surrounded by notices saying "KEIN ANLEGEN", "NO MOORING".

Our peace wasn't disturbed till 11:00 the next morning, by an unidentified "official" who wondered whether we'd seen the ubiquitous notices, and assured us that the "Haven Polizei" would be along soon!

We joined a number of boats of differing flags in the huge locks at the start of the Kaiser Wilhelm Kanal. Punching a SWly for several hours we came into Rendsburg - a delightful old town through which the Eider River used to flow as part of the C18 canalised waterway from the north sea to the Kiel Fjord.

After a vast amount of discussion we decided to turn right out of the Kiel canal down the Eider river thus avoiding the river Elbe completely. We should have to have carried the whole ebb out of the Elbe into the North Sea - inadvisable with the predicted West in the forecast. Wind over tide in the Elbe would compete with most theme park roller-coasters.

So here we were on the route *Dulcibella* took to the Baltic after nearly being wrecked in "the Riddle of the Sands"- a glorious winding river passing

through lakes and meres lined by pasture, reeds and woodland. Cows, sheep and fishermen largely ignored us and we met almost no other craft as we made our way at 4.5 knots against a slight contrary current and glad to be clear of the terrors of the ship canal.



Ed. Peter's return to the Deben continues in the Spring Edition



River Deben Association

Autumn Meeting

Woodbridge Community Hall
November 29th. 6.30 pm

The English Coastal Path

By Giles Merritt

Lead Advisor England Coastal Path Delivery
(Norfolk and Suffolk Team)
Natural England

Giles has been working on the England Coast path for a number of years, most recently in Essex. He will be talking about the genesis of the idea for an England Coast Path, the routes which are currently in place and the challenges that Natural England has faced in implementing the government's plans. He will also talk about the progress of the path in Suffolk, and in particular the options for a coast path between Bawdsey and Felixstowe Ferry.