

# The Deben



58 Spring 2019

# The River Deben Association

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April 2019

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\*Co-opted until AGM on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019

+ Retiring at AGM on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019

# **The Deben**

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Cover: Harry Simper's fishing boat 'Silver Harvest' Gillie Whittle

Back cover: River Code taken from River User's Code Leaflet



## Editorial

It is unfortunate that David has been unable to produce this edition of *The Deben* through ill health. It is very much his creation and it is through his care and dedication that it has become such a beacon in our community. The most recent of his initiations has been the section on 'Deben Reflections' and I do not have his knowledge to be able to take this forward, for which I apologise.

However we do have some interesting articles in this edition; Sarah Zins provides us with further News from the Hards; Robert Simper gives a brief history of Bawdsey Manor and provides the latest information on the PGL developments; we have some good news relating to the Sutton Hoo shipbuild project which has recently been promised an ample supply of green oak from the Crown Estate at Windsor; We are told that Copyu 'swamp beavers' may be breeding on the Deben!; Richard Verrill provides another fascinating article this time relating to the amazing variety of deer that can be found in this area; and Hazel Whittle provides an exciting account of her Channel crossing in a Cornish Shrimper - recently she was awarded the Shrimper Owners Association award for the best log for 2018!





River Deben Association

## **Chair's Report**

As I write this, the wind is gusting over 40 knots and reminds me of one of my grandfather's stories, which always began "It was a cold and stormy night, and the wind was howling in the rigging". I hope that by the time you receive this magazine, the wind is no longer whistling through your shrouds and the Spring looks set fair for river pleasures.

### **Committee**

Veronica Falconer is stepping down from the RDA Committee at the AGM in May 2019. She has brought considerable insight into local politics and planning to her role in the River Deben Association, as she was SCDC's ward councillor for the Nacton Ward which consisted of 10 villages including Waldringfield, Hemley and Newbourne before moving to Woodbridge, where she has served 4 years as a Town Councillor. She has a wide range of knowledge on planning issues and has spearheaded our attempts to stop inappropriate development on the River Deben. She has also been an active participant on behalf of the RDA in the activities of the Deben Estuary Partnership. Her rich knowledge of the local area, its inhabitants, and all things river-related will be much missed, as will her cheerful manner and willingness to help in all spheres of our activity.

I will be standing down in a year's time, and we are looking for a selection of candidates who might be interested in learning "on the job" to take my place at the 2020 AGM. The excellent committee members work hard on a number

of different areas of our activity but are not currently in a position to volunteer for a larger role. I can promise my successor fascinating insights into the river, flood defences, local politics, planning and a myriad of other issues. Some of the meetings which I attend on behalf of the RDA take place during the week, so it might require some juggling if you have a full-time job already. If you could have your arm twisted, please do get in touch with me and I would be delighted to tell you more.

## **Membership**

At our AGM on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018, we sounded out the members about putting a proposal to 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). As a significant majority of the meeting was in favour of the increase, it will be formally proposed at this year's AGM. However, the April 2019 fees will remain unchanged.

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](mailto:riverdebenmembers@gmail.com), giving your consent to be contacted by e-mail.

I am glad to report that our membership has now reached 899, so please keep recruiting friends and neighbours to join – the magic 1000 is in sight!

## **Planning Applications**

There is nothing further to report on the situation at **Melton Hill** for the time being.

At **Whisstocks Restaurant**, the RDA originally expressed concern about the developer's application to turn the upstairs space into a residence, whilst having no issue with their proposal to split the ground floor into a restaurant space on the waterside elevation and a more general-use A1/A2/A3/B1 space

behind. However having ascertained first-hand that the ground floor has river views from the deck or when seated at a normal-height table, we withdrew our objection to the change of use of the upstairs area provided, among other things, that the financial contribution offered by the developer is put back into making Whisstocks Place a vibrant open space for the town. While we appreciate that the square should carry reminders of its industrial heritage and not be over-gentrified, we feel that it needs to be softened and made attractive with some greenery in appropriate planters as well as seating and perhaps installations of interest to encourage visitors in to enjoy the area and provide activity and buzz.

We have made representations on several other private residential planning applications where we have taken the view that the river area would be spoilt by aspects of the proposed development.

## **Activities**

Aside from our two annual meetings, the RDA took a stall in 2018 at the Woodbridge Regatta & Riverside Fair on 17<sup>th</sup> June and at Maritime Woodbridge on September 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. These were both useful in spreading the word about our activities and in recruiting new members, as well as being part of demonstrating to residents and visitors the vibrancy of the river community. This year, we will take a stand at the Woodbridge Regatta and Riverside Fair to be held on Sunday 23rd June. In February 2019, the RDA hosted its now -biennial Forum, to which businesses and clubs with a close interest in the River Deben are invited and asked for their views on topics of common interest. The list of topics this year included flood defences, Marine Management Organisation licences, river speed restrictions (more on this below), raw sewage discharge, the Deben Bar, the falling numbers of boats on the river, a possible replacement of the Horse Sands buoy and what to do about dilapidated boats. The minutes of this meeting can be found on our website.

## **Speeding on the river**

You will not be surprised to hear that the dangers of speeding on the river were, as ever, a hot topic at the Forum discussed above. You may have seen the brochure which the RDA produces about speeding on the river, but just in case you haven't, the river code which forms part of it is included on the back cover of this magazine. We distribute this brochure regularly to boat clubs but have now agreed to add pubs to our list of drop-off places, as much of the speeding occurs as part of getting to and from the riverside drinking establishments. We do not have any maritime police on our river, but the harbour masters do a good job of talking to owners about the dangers to both people and saltmarshes of speeding. If you see the opportunity to play a part in educating river users about this, please do spread the word.

## **River Defences and the Deben Estuary Partnership**

The Deben Estuary Partnership (DEP), of which the RDA is a member, continues to focus on flood defences and saltmarsh. At its most recent meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019, it was reported that £120,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy has been awarded to the DEP for the preparation work necessary to undertake improvement works to the river walls at Bawdsey Marshes, (known as Flood Cell 1).

We understand from a meeting of the Suffolk Coastal Forum that a strategy review of how the Environment Agency attributes value to land to determine its need for flood protection is underway (it is currently based broadly on the number of properties at risk).

Jane Burch has recently retired as the Flood & Coastal Policy Manager of Suffolk County Council. She had a rare ability to cut through red tape and get things done and she will be sorely missed. We would like to thank her for her dedication to the Deben and to a greener future for us all.



## **Saltmarshes**

The RDA's own Saltmarsh Research Group has been awarded a grant from the Suffolk Coasts & Heaths ANOB from its Sustainable Development Fund of £1986 to be paid in 2 equal instalments, of which the first payment of £993 has been received. This money enables RDA volunteers to extend an existing Pilot Study at Waldringfield so that further tests can be made to measure the erosion effects of crabs on saltmarsh walls. Consent is being sought to allow similar measurements to be taken further down the river towards Hemley. The Deben Estuary Partnership Saltmarsh group met on 9th March 2019 to discuss the various projects being undertaken or proposed on the river.

The fourth meeting of the Suffolk Saltmarsh group was held on 11<sup>th</sup> March, with updates being provided from the Blyth, Alde and Ore, Deben and Stour and Orwell. The Environment Agency reported that consent from the Marine Management Organisation to their proposed project to look at using natural materials to assist in preserving flood defences had been delayed to such an extent that the project had to be aborted, wasting countless officer and volunteer hours.

## **England Coastal Path**

I would like to thank Giles Merritt of Natural England for talking to the River Deben Association's Autumn meeting about the proposals for the Bawdsey to Felixstowe Ferry part of the England Coastal Path and answering the many questions raised by members and invited interested parties. The meeting attracted a record attendance of over 160 members. At the time of writing, Natural England's plans for the Deben estuary are still awaited.

## **Taking Part**

I am keen to continue to expand the appeal of the RDA. It is not just for the sailing fraternity, but for all who love the river, whether they are walkers, bird-watchers, nature lovers, wild-swimmers or stand up paddle boarders,

and I am delighted that many of our new members have a diverse range of interests in the Deben. We have already broadened the scope of the magazine but do send in articles on a broad range of subjects. If you see a gap in our coverage, please step in to fill it! We would also like to make the website more dynamic, with links to other activities which could be of interest to our members, so if you belong to a club or association which has something going on (a talk on river birds, a litter-pick, for example) please contact Kate Laydon, our publicity committee member.

## **Annual General Meeting**

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2019 at 6.30 p.m at the Community Centre, Woodbridge. It will be followed by a talk from David Kemp, Coastal Team Leader for the East Anglia Area at the Environment Agency entitled “Surge Predicted – 24 hours in the EA’s Incident Room”. Tea and Coffee will be available from 6.15 p.m.



## News from the Hards

**Felixstowe Ferry Boatyard** has been building a new Sygnus 19 from scratch with a 28 hp, 3 cylinder Zetus engine. They have a busy season ahead, as they start to re-launch the 140 boats which have been laid up there. The ferry will be back in service from 19<sup>th</sup> April and the ferry boat has had a thorough overhaul and now boasts a new engine. They have around 15 free swinging moorings available for boats up to 40', and interested boat-owners can contact them on 01394 282173.

**Waldringfield Boatyard** are working all-the-hours to get more than 60 boats launched for the Spring, 40 large vessels and a number of smaller craft. Once they are in, there will be room for the ice cream van to return and for Mark and Emma to get back to skippering "Oyster Catcher" at weekends and in the school holidays. "Curlew", a Colvic Seaworker 22, has been added to their fleet and is available for hire. They are also producing a new boat, the "Waldy 9" to order. This little boat is being produced in fibre glass from a mould taken from a Nunn brothers design originally built at the Waldringfield Boatyard. It has wooden surrounds and seats and can be used as a rowing boat or fitted with a sailing rig.

At **Martlesham Creek Boatyard**, there are about 60 boats moored, of which 10 are houseboats. They have mud berths and pontoons, with toilets and a shower block and can provide launching and slipway facilities – most of their customers work on their boats themselves, but the boatyard can undertake some work.

**Woodbridge Boatyard** has been sold to a new owner, Eric Reynolds, with effect from 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019. While Eric's recent projects centre round major urban regeneration schemes, including setting up Camden Lock Market, he has a background in boatbuilding as the founder of Evolution Yachts based in Southampton and he still races these boats in the Blackwater now. He will continue running the boatyard and has appointed a new manager to take over from Geoff Sinton who will retire this year. He plans to turn the old boatshed into a museum and store his own collection of historic boats, cars and

motorcycles on the site. There should not be much visual change on the waterfront and Geoff says “the new owner will be good for the yard and good for the town”.

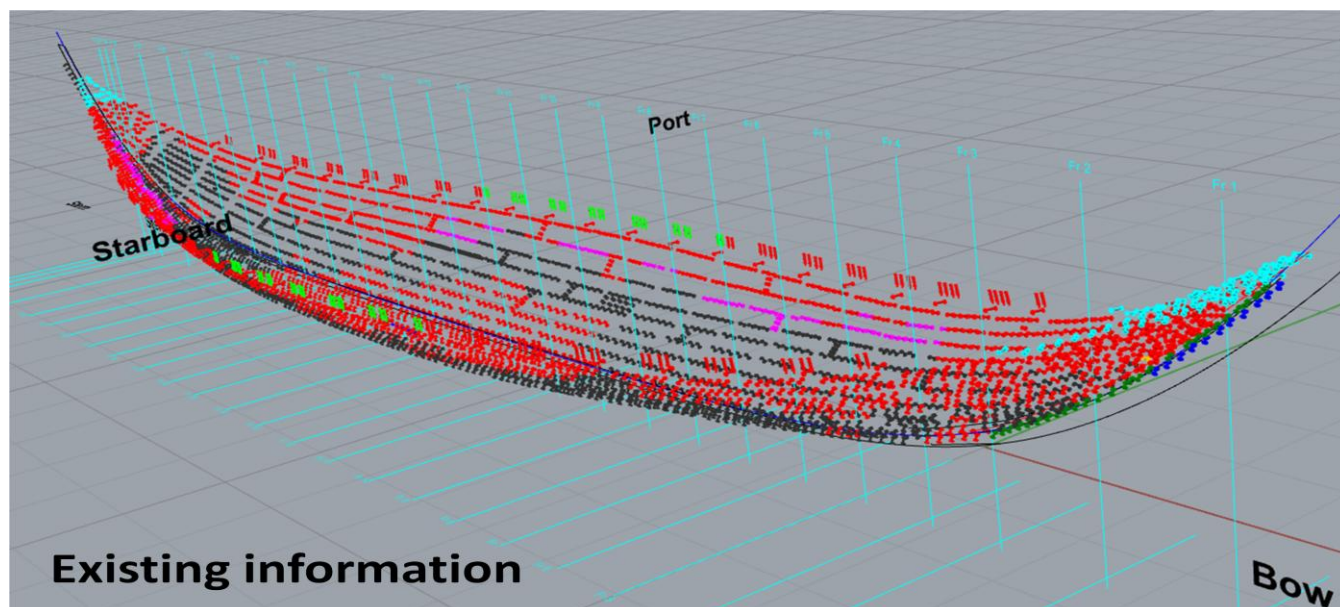
**Robertsons** are restoring “Blue Shoal” and making her blue again, with new varnish and paintwork. They are continuing their free boat advice clinics on the first Wednesday of every month from 3-5 p.m. with the next two on 5<sup>th</sup> June and 3<sup>rd</sup> July – their facebook page has details.

**Larkmans** have their hands full launching more than 150 boats for the summer season and the neighbouring **Melton Boatyard** is also busy re-launching. The Deben Café on HMS Vale, a former Swedish navy fast missile attack craft, moored just next to the Melton Boatyard, is now open at weekends. For information on opening hours and menus, see their facebook page.

## Philip Leech

### The Sutton Hoo Shipbuild Project

Keen readers of the Deben magazine might have been surprised to see so little mention previously of the project to rebuild the ghost ship found under Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo. If ever there was a scheme relevant to our river, it is the recreation of this grand vessel in all its majesty.



But the secret is now out – the secret that we *can* build this ship - because at last The Sutton Hoo Ship's Company now have the use of the magnificent Longshed at Whisstocks Place and also the kind support of the Crown Estate at Windsor who will be providing the oak for the ship.

For planking a clinker built boat we need young but mature oak, straight and true, with few knots or the likelihood of finding problems with “shake” or shiver in the grain when a tree is felled. For the keel we need something straight and substantial and for the “hood ends” – the stem and stern – we need pretty solid gently curved pieces that need the minimum of work doing on them and it is very pleasing to know that the timber has been grown so expertly in Windsor.

Not only do we have the prospect of the oak but through our activities we have made some brilliant friends and advisers with the very greatest expertise. We are working closely with the Viking Boat Museum at Roskilde in Denmark, where the team there have vast experience in building Viking ships of all shapes and sizes. They will help us to avoid many mistakes that are always possible with a new plan and a new team. Their Viking boats are some 200 years later than “our” ghost ship, but there are many features in common, such as the way the wood is prepared and how the fixings are used. And there are an incredible number of fixings – well over three thousand rivets and roves in this one vessel. To balance the Viking experience we are working just as closely with the team from the Nydam Ship, in Southern Denmark, 200 years older than ours. It is great to be plugging the 400 year gap with our Saxon Ship as this is part of history that has never been recreated.

So what else do you need to build a ship like this? I've mentioned oak and I've mentioned nails. I've talked about the expertise of others. But we must develop our own expertise too, with proper training in the use of traditional and modern tools – for although we are striving for authenticity, we have to respect time and human resources and modern methods are quicker. Just to illustrate that point, in Saxon times there must have been a whole village of



blacksmiths making nails out of bog iron. A local master blacksmith, John Ball of Framlingham, thought it might take him an hour to make the first four nails, although he might get a little quicker after that!



But above all we want the support of our community, we want local people to feel part of this build, to come to the Longshed and to touch the materials and to talk to our experts. We are working hand in glove with the Woodbridge Riverside Trust, who are behind the creation of the Longshed, and their great facilitation skills and the way that they are enabling all sorts of other activities in the Longshed – from fashion shows to the Beowulf festival and other boat building projects, like the St Ayles Skiff for the new Woodbridge Coastal Rowing Club and the Pirogue Canoe built by young people from Just 42. We have a true partnership with them. Their actions enable The Sutton Hoo Ship's Company to keep a tight focus on the core of what we need to progress.

We do have other partners though; as you would expect we are working with the National Trust locally, but we have a partnership with Southampton University Maritime Archaeology Research Group, which has produced archaeologically accurate digital plans from which construction can proceed, and we have a very important and symbiotic relationship with the Oxford Institute for Digital Archaeology (IDA) who have a fantastic track record of innovation in the field of recreating ancient, destroyed or missing artefacts (the biggest they have made to date is a two thirds size copy of the Palmyra

Arch which has recently gone to the home of the original in Syria). As well as finance there are so many other things that they are going to support, widening the scope of the project so that more people can marvel at it, through the creation of 3D printed versions of the whole or parts of the ship, developing Augmented and Virtual Reality – you will really feel you are walking around inside the ship and assisting with a programme of community engagement activities for all ages. As far as construction goes, the IDA will be a huge help in recording what we are doing, both visually and through laser scanning.

There is going to be a lot to see right from the start. We are building a sectional half beam part-length model to gain understanding and experience of working with green oak and to learn practical details about rowing positions. The first stage of the actual ship build will be construction of a 60-foot length of keel on the floor of the Longshed using some of the biggest timber that we can bring from Windsor.

So our final paragraph is an invitation to you to come and see what we are doing, to follow the project and sign up to the newsletter via the website [www.saxonship.org](http://www.saxonship.org), and if you have some spare time, to volunteer and get involved by either contacting us through the website or emailing [contact@saxonship.org](mailto:contact@saxonship.org)

## Robert Simper

### Bawdsey Manor - The Cliff Top Mansion

Sir Cuthbert Quilter, formerly simply William Quilter, was a Victorian dealer on the Stock Exchange who hit the jackpot. One of his main ventures was taking John Bell into partnership and starting the National Telephone Company; better known now, as BT. Quilter's family were farmers in



Falkenham, beside the River Deben. As a young man, when on a visit to Suffolk, he saw the bare heathland on Bawdsey Cliff and thought he would like to build a house there. In the 1880s he returned to Suffolk and had a large holiday home built on the cliff top. However the money was flowing in fast and he went on adding to the original house until it grew into the Bawdsey Manor mansion. He also bought most the land and houses in Bawdsey, Alderton, Ramsholt and a great deal of Shottisham and Sutton until he owned almost all of the eastern shore of the River Deben.

Quilter's son, also Sir Cuthbert, inherited The Manor and the huge estate, but all didn't go well with him

and in 1936 he had to sell the Manor to the Government who were looking for high ground overlooking the sea to develop radar. Pioneering work on radar was done here and RAF Bawdsey was the first operational radar station in the United Kingdom and became the model for the Chain Home radar defence stations that played a major part in the Battle of Britain's victory. In 2017 one of the buildings used in the radar station was restored at a cost of £1.4m and opened to the public as a display centre.



When the radar station closed the RAF withdrew from Bawdsey, but in the Cold War a missile site was constructed on the cliff top just to the north of the Manor grounds. This had a large underground headquarters in case of a nuclear attack. When the Cold War was over RAF Bawdsey was closed again.

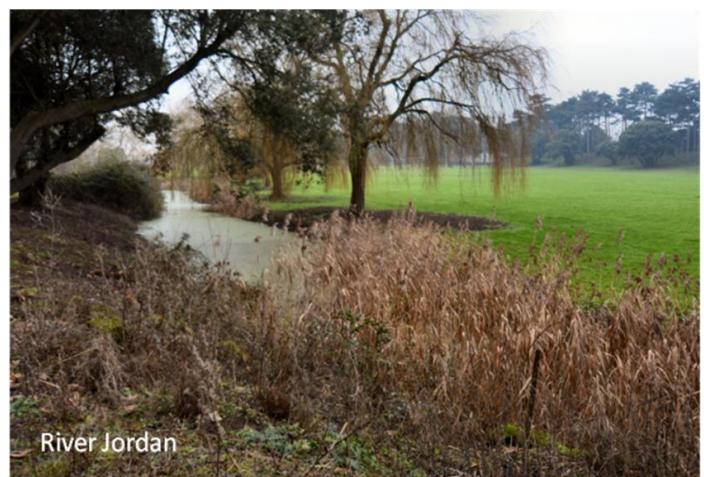
In 1994 Bawdsey Manor and grounds were sold to Niels and Ann Toettcher who ran English language schools in London for foreign students. The new school at Bawdsey Manor became popular with parents in foreign countries because it was well away from the temptations of the big cities, namely drugs. There must be many young people from all over the world with happy memories of their time at Bawdsey Manor.



One of the legacies of the Toettcher years is the Bawdsey Haven Yacht Club, started in 1995, which has the Boat Park on the riverfront and also rents the slipway. The club has about 120 members who have small sailing or motor boats, (not water skiing high-powered boats). Although the club does not undertake any racing or have a bar, it has a loyal membership.



In the summer of 2016 the Toettchers reluctantly put Bawdsey Manor, the surrounding buildings, and about 140 acres (57 hectares) up for sale. The district was awash with stories about property developers wanting to build houses on the site, some of these stories were true, but in April 2017 PGL purchased the whole Bawdsey Manor Estate, which was a good outcome for local people. PGL takes its name from its founder Peter Gordon Lawrence who died eleven years before. PGL does not stand for Parents Get Lost, a joke within the company. Lawrence had had happy times as a young man canoeing down European rivers and thought he would like give other young people the same feeling of adventure. From this one basic idea he started the company that now owns fourteen properties in the United Kingdom, seven in France and three in Australia, (two in Victoria and one in Queensland.) An Indian company now owns PGL. In the summer of 2017 PGL opened Bawdsey Manor for its first groups of young people. Most of these children are between the ages of seven and fourteen and there are no plans to use their Deben waterfront at the moment. The advice they were given was that tidal conditions were far too dangerous for young inexperienced people to go afloat. Instead they have reopened the River Jordan, a canal dug by Quilter so that he could be punted down to his private church. Raft races are held on the River Jordan. Also PGL have



put in for planning permission to dig a boating lake on the cattle grazing marshes of Dairy Farm, Bawdsey for children to use for canoeing rather on the lines of Thorpeness Meer.

An absailing tower and climbing wall have been built and enthusiastically used by young people. The parties of young people are led by a 'Groupee' and are under supervision all the time. In the summer young people are brought to the Manor by their parents, while in the spring and autumn parties come from schools. Also international parties come to Bawdsey Manor and at times there are about five hundred young people enjoying a break there and mainly sleeping in the former MOD accommodation.

The long term plan is to start repairing the sea defence in front of the Manor house and where there is erosion just inside the River Deben on the North East Point, pronounced 'no'th-ear point' locally.

The manager is Ashley Jones, who has come to live in the Beach Rangers Cottage at Bawdsey Ferry while the General Manager is Richard Sanders who is based in Cheltenham.

## Hazel Whittle

### Channel Crossing in a Cornish Shrimper

*Foreword: My fourteen year old Granddaughter, Hazel, has been a keen sailor since she was six. For some years now she has been asking me for a sail across the Channel. We eventually agreed a plan with her Dad, Jamie, for 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Ramsgate/Calais, weather permitting. It turned out to be almost perfect conditions with a reach both ways. The journey took about six hours each way and Hazel helmed almost the whole time. This is Hazel's account - Robin.*

At 11:00 we left Woodbridge and arrived at Ramsgate after a very easy car journey. We launched into the outer marina and found a berth for the night. We visited the sailors church on Ramsgate harbourside and went to the "Arch restaurant" for dinner, where we all ordered salmon and had a very enjoyable

meal looking over the marina, preparing ourselves for the scheduled 8:00 departure time the following morning. After dinner we wandered to the end of the harbour wall to the lighthouse and admired the beautiful sunset.



We woke up, with a delicious bacon and eggs breakfast and left Ramsgate promptly at 7:50. We left the harbour under motor as we headed out to our first waypoint 'Gull'. There was a gentle force 2, South South Westerly breeze and beautiful morning sunshine. Still under motor we raised the sails and after an hour of heading on an 88<sup>0</sup> course we caught sight of 'Gull'. We pointed up to a close-hauled course and began sailing adjacent to the Goodwin Sands. Basking and playing on the sands we saw a large herd of seals. As we approached the East Goodwin light ship the wind began to fill in to a force 4, enough wind to hold a decent speed just under sail. As the waves started to build, we put our waterproofs on before we got too wet and started the longest stretch, 13 nautical miles, across the shipping channels to waypoint number 4 "RCW". In comparison to the calm beginning, an exciting swell began to build, as we steered between waves with heights of 2 plus meters.



The first sign of ships was the distant sound of a fog horn, as we plunged into a descending fog. The visibility became increasingly poor and we only saw dark far off shadows of two passing ships. We heard some fog horns and so we





continuously kept our eyes peeled for any ships appearing from the mist. The wind continued to build and we reached a speed of 6.1 knots under sail. The waves were in a fairly regular rhythm with breakers rolling under our hull, with the few exceptions of waves that drenched us as they toppled over the bow into the cockpit. The first sight of anything but waves and liquorice all sorts, was a line of around 6 anchored oil ships from Panama, which seemed giant like compared to our small 19ft Shrimper. As we got closer to France the fog began to lift and we caught the first glimpses of what we hoped to be the French coast. We continued under sail and slowly lost sight of the slightly menacing oil ships. We checked the Almanac for the procedure required for when we arrived at Calais marina as we got increasingly closer to our destination. We didn't see our last waypoint "RCW", but we could thankfully see Calais port. We radioed in to the marina and heard the first French voice. After a slightly mismatched conversation we were told to wait for the incoming ferry before entering the harbour. We lowered our sails and started up the engine and we watched the P and O ferry sail past. We followed close behind and navigated beyond the ferry terminal and into the marina. To get into the marina you had to pass through a swing bridge and so all the traffic was stopped for our arrival. We



found the visiting berths and were greeted by an enthusiastic very friendly French woman.

We arrived just after lunch time and



enjoyed our sandwiches onboard before setting out to explore Calais. First, we saw the watch tower which was originally the old town's lighthouse. We then stopped off at the "Boulangerie" to buy some traditional French baguettes. The next stop of our tour of Calais was the iconic town hall, where there was a wedding taking place. We then walked back past the "Notre Dame church" which was closed and the light house and then had a quick run around to the fort which overlooked the port. We then went back to Bumble Chugger where we played a game of Scrabble before heading out for dinner. We had dinner at a Pizza restaurant, and then headed back for our night at Calais marina.

In the morning we went for a quick swim off Calais beach followed by a tour up the lighthouse where we learnt about its history. From the top



we had a beautiful view of the distant cliffs of Dover, the port and the town of Calais. The Notre Dame was still closed so we went to find the "fine arts museum", a famous attraction of Calais. We got slightly lost, so instead found a café to get some drinks to cool us down in the beautiful French sunshine. The fine arts museum was closed so Dad and I went to a World War 2 museum based at a former communications centre. We posted our postcards after eventually finding some stamps. We all returned to Bumble Chugger for cheese baguettes, while waiting for the tide to rise and the marina gates to open. The traffic was stopped once again as many yachts circled around the marina. The swing bridge opened, and we were the second boat to proceed out of the marina. The visibility was good as we retraced our route back to Ramsgate. We went back past the foreign oil ships and using the binoculars we saw many people on board them.

The wind had filled in from the calm. When we reached “Ruybgten” buoy we adjusted our course down on to a fetch and hoisted our sails and turned the engine off. We continued through the shipping channels, seeing many more huge ships than we had done on the way there when we had been in thick fog. To celebrate our hoist of the sails we had ginger beer and gin



and tonic with cheesy breadsticks. We kept alert for any close calls with any passing ships but most of them we cleared easily the closest we got to one was an orange cargo ship called ‘Blue Lake Star’. We had to bear down to avoid it. Another ship which we never got the name of was sailing perpendicular to us and we calculated we would pass in front, but as we got closer it bore off on to a course that was parallel to ours, sailing across all the shipping lanes. It seemed to us as if it was in its own little cloud of fog and

continued to sound its dismal moaning fog horn. It stayed in our sight for at least an hour on a similar course to ours towards the Goodwin Sands. The wind began to drop and a slight mist began to form around us. We started up the motor and the bizarre ship eventually disappeared into the thickening blanket of fog. We had passed the light ship and so should have been close to the east Goodwin cardinal mark. We finally spotted it a quarter of a mile away off our starboard side, which



meant we were a quarter of a mile closer to the Goodwin Sands. We continued towards ‘Gull’ keeping a cautious eye on our depth. Our predicted course on the chart ran close to the outer edges of the sands. The fog was now as thick as it had been on our way to Calais. We saw a choppy section ahead as we approached some shallows, and the depth dropped nearly 200ft



to just 7ft. We abruptly headed up to try and avoid any more close calls - we didn't like the idea of waiting for the next high tide. The fog was still thick, and we saw a dull shadow of a fishing boat appear on our port side and after following the GPS carefully we saw 'Gull' less than a quarter of a mile away, our last waypoint before arriving in Ramsgate. We followed the easiest but what seemed like the longest stretch back into harbour. Just past 'Gull' once we had changed our course we saw our first sign of land, just north of Ramsgate, and it felt like a long time ago since the distant French coast disappeared earlier that day. We followed the channel markers in to the harbour, feasting on our marmalade baguettes. The fog began to clear as we arrived back at Ramsgate at around 20:00, the tide was low, so we could not get the boat out until the following morning. Instead we found a berth in the outer marina and set up for the night. For dinner we went to a Greek restaurant, it was very enjoyable and very different to the pizza we had had the previous night.

In the morning we woke up to the sound of fog horns in the 4:45 early morning mist. We got the boat out of the water successfully and then we started our drive home. We arrived home at 10:30, what a successful 72-hour trip!



**Sara Zins**

## **Coypus on the River Deben?**

The coypu (*Myocastor coypus*) comes from South America and is a large semi-aquatic rodent also known as a swamp beaver. The coypu can grow up to a metre long including its tail and, weighing in at 7 kilogrammes or more, it is one of the largest rodents in the world. It has short rounded ears, and small eyes that are set high on the head (like those of a beaver) so that it can see

clearly whilst swimming. Its muzzle has a blunt square shape, with white hairs and whiskers and large, bright orange-yellow incisors. It has webbed feet and its tail is round and scaly.

Coypus are found most commonly in freshwater marshes, but also inhabit brackish marshes and sometimes salt marshes. They make burrows, often in ditches behind river walls, and these may extend for more than 5 metres. The burrow entrance is usually at river level and there may be more than one exit, the first leading onto the land and others leading back into the water.

The coypu was first introduced into the UK in 1929 for fur farming. Long, coarse guard hairs dark reddish or yellowish brown conceal and protect the soft slate-grey under-fur, which is known as nutria (Spanish for otter) in the fur trade. The coypu escaped from captivity as early as 1932 and established itself in the wild. Due to its breeding habits – it breeds continuously throughout the year with a gestation period of 4.5 months and has litters of between 2 and 9 young - it became widely distributed across most of East Anglia.

Coypus are an invasive species and considered destructive to the environment not only because their burrowing habits threaten river defences and damage drainage systems, but also because their plant-based food consumption depletes vegetation and disrupts the habitat for other animals. An individual consumes about 25% of its body weight daily, and feeds year-round, eating the base of the above-ground stems of plants, and often digging through the soil for roots.

Eradication measures commenced in the UK in the 1940s, and during the 1960s a grant was awarded to Rabbit Clearance Societies, who removed around 97,000 coypu in 1961 and 1962. From 1962 to 1965, 12 trappers were hired to eradicate as many coypu as possible near the Norfolk Broads and combined with cold winters in 1962 to 1963, almost 40,500 coypu were removed from the population. The MAFF as it then was (now superseded by DEFRA) began another eradication campaign in 1981 and succeeded in fully eradicating coypu in Great Britain by December 1989. Some members of the



RDA may remember their vans being positioned round Martlesham Creek at that time. There have been no confirmed reports of coypu in the wild since that time.

But read this report, written by Mike Emmett, who lives aboard the 'Black Rose' moored in Sun Wharf dock: "I was awoken by one of those unusual noises that strikes even the sub-conscious as being "not right". I listened. Initially my perception was that the noise was that of a young baby wailing, but on further ear-straining, it changed to the whine of a wounded puppy. Grasping a torch, I climbed the companionway stair to see if I could assist whatever was in distress. The beam made a direct hit and I came face-to-face with a now-quiet rodent, stunned into silence by the sudden light. The noise that replaced the original wails was that of the demented duck which I saw taking off like a blue streak rocket. Under the turn of the boat and in the narrow space between it and the steel wall of the dock, was a "High Noon" face-off between rodent and duck. The pair not being interested in each other as a midnight snack, what with them both being vegetarian, it became obvious that this was merely a dark alley fright situation which my arrival had interfered with. With my torch now off, the animals regained enough courage to move away. Excitement and cabaret now over, I went back to bed.

"The next morning, I talked to the ecologists who work in the neighbouring office, and with the help of computer images and sound recordings, a distinct and positive identification was made that this mystery night visitor was a coypu. These rodents were hunted to extinction in the 1980s, "they" claimed, but sightings were made by the writer, alongside scientific officers of the MAFF, after the claim had been made. Also, for one to be abroad now, it must have parents and grandparents. An old oysterman at West Mersea always said: "where there's one, there has to be one more" and as the little dears are prolific breeders, I expect that we will get to see more of them in time to come!"

## River Deben Deer



In my articles about the Deben I have focused on wildlife that lives on or in the river but of course the Deben is more than just the river. This was well illustrated to me when I walked along the North side of the river in February 2018. I came across 3 different species of deer; Roe, Fallow and Muntjac. In August 2018 while sailing I spotted a herd of Fallow deer on the bank downstream from Sutton Hoo, I lost count at over 30 head. My articles thus far have illustrated the decline in numbers of fish and seals in the river. On reading about deer in East Anglia, despite their shy and timid approach with humans that make their numbers difficult to quantify, it is generally accepted that there are more deer in the UK now than there have been for centuries.

### Deer in the UK

There are six species of deer found in the wild in the UK. Rather confusingly, the gender and offspring of the species have different names.

Species	Male	Female	Offspring
Red deer	Stag	Hind	Calf
Sika deer	Stag	Hind	Calf
Roe deer	Buck	Doe	Kid
Reeves' muntjac deer	Buck	Doe	Kid
Fallow deer	Buck	Doe	Fawn
Chinese water deer	Buck	Doe	Fawn



## Red Deer

Red deer are the largest wild land mammal in the UK with Stags standing 107-137cm at the shoulder and weighing 90-190kg. Hinds reach a height of 107-122cm at the shoulder and weigh 63-120kg. Of the UK's 6 species of deer only red and roe deer are indigenous. Red deer may be found throughout the UK but are concentrated in Scotland, East Anglia and the South West. They are rare along the Deben. A small herd centred around Nacton has been identified. There are large herds at Minsmere and in Thetford Forrest. The breeding season, or the rut, occurs from the end of September to November. Stags return to the hind's home range and compete for them by

engaging in elaborate displays of dominance including roaring, parallel walks, and fighting. Serious injury and death can result from fighting but this only occurs between stags of similar size that cannot assess dominance by any of the other means. The dominant stag then ensures exclusive mating with the hinds.

### Fallow Deer

Fallow deer adult Bucks are generally 84 – 94 cm at the shoulder and weigh 46 - 94kg. Does are 73 - 91cm at the shoulder and weigh 35 - 56kg. This places them in size between Roe and Red deer. They have very variable colours but are classically fawn with white spots on the flank. Bucks develop antlers each year. Fallow are the only British deer with palmate antlers. This is filling in and flattening between the tines like a human palm. Fallow Deer were initially introduced to Britain from the Western Mediterranean by the Romans who kept them in enclosures called “vivaria”. With the fall of the Roman Empire in Britain Fallow deer became extinct. In the 11th Century the Normans reintroduced Fallow this time from the Eastern Mediterranean. Fallow were initially kept for hunting in deer parks but in the 15th century the taste for deer declined and it is thought our current stock of Fallow are the result of 15th Century escapees. Fallow are well distributed throughout England. They may be seen anywhere around the Deben but are particularly common around Sutton and Hollesley.





## Roe Deer

Adult Roe deer grow to 60 - 75cm at the shoulder and weigh 10 - 25kg. Bucks are slightly larger than does. A sleek, medium-sized deer, the Roe deer has short antlers and no tail. It is mostly brown in colour, turning reddish in the summer and darker grey in the winter. It has a pale buff patch around its rump. Like Red deer they are indigenous to the UK and have a wide distribution. Roe rut in mid summer but the egg does not implant and grow until January. The kid is not usually born until May or June.



## Muntjac Deer

Muntjac deer bucks grow to 44 - 52cm at the shoulder and weigh 10 - 18kg. Does are 43 - 52cm at the shoulder and weigh 9 - 16kg. Muntjac deer are thought to have been imported from China to Woburn Park at the beginning of the 20th Century but some escaped and established wild herds. The Muntjac is now one of the most numerous of the British deer. Muntjack are small and stocky they are russet brown with a black V shaped mark on their head and visible upper canine (tusk). Bucks have short unbranched antlers. Their front leg is shorter than the back leg giving them a strange hunched appearance. Unlike other UK deer they do not have a rutting season and may breed all year round. They are usually solitary other than when a kid is found

with a doe. Muntjacs have a very distinctive “barking” call. Muntjac are seen all around the Deben.



#### Chinese Water Deer.

Chinese water deer are a small species. Adult bucks and does only reach a height of 50 – 55 cm at the shoulder and weigh 11 – 18 kg. Bucks have large protruding tusks, like a Muntjac, but no antlers. Like Muntjac, Chinese water deer were introduced from China to Woburn Park, Bedfordshire, in 1896 and Whipsnade Park in 1929-1930. Deliberate releases and escapes have resulted in a gradually increasing wild population in the South East of England. As their name implies Chinese water deer favour reed beds, river shores and woodland. The fens of Cambridgeshire and the Broads of Norfolk have been a favoured habitat for many years but in the last decade there have been increasing numbers of Chinese water deer spotted along the Deben particularly around the shores at Sutton, Ramsholt and Bawdsey.

#### Sika Deer

Sika deer look very much like Fallow deer they were introduced to Britain from the Far East in 1860 and now there are large populations in Scotland the lake District and in the New Forest. I have heard no reports of Sika deer in Suffolk.

While the success of the species is to be welcomed, the absence of large carnivores in the UK means adult deer have no natural predators. Consequently, deer density can reach extremely high levels, with total deer numbers in the UK thought to be at a 1,000-year high. This can have a significant negative impact on the environment, with overgrazing preventing the regeneration of woodland, thereby affecting woodland structure and tree species composition. This has knock-on effects for other species of woodland flora and fauna. Deer are also causing increasing amounts of crop damage. The number of collisions on our roads involving deer are on the increase. According to the government site gov.co.uk “across the UK it is estimated that there could be up to 74,000 deer-related motor vehicle accidents this year alone, resulting in 400 to 700 human injuries and 20 deaths”. For these reasons, some deer populations are culled to control their spread and numbers.

How and where to spot deer around the Deben.

With the increase in numbers and species seen around the Deben there has probably not been a better time to spot deer. As deer favour woodland they are more likely to be seen along the North bank of the river. Deer have cloven hooves, that is the hoof is divided into two parts and this leaves a distinctive footprint that may alert the observer to their presence. Deer move more around dawn and dusk so are more easily seen at these times. Despite this they may be seen anywhere along the river at any time. Good luck spotting them.

**Robin Whittle**

## **Memories of George Turner**

(From a chat with Roger Kaznica, nephew of George)

George is best known for his uncanny sailing abilities. He spent most of his life in Waldringfield. His father, Cecil, had been Landlord of the White Horse in Old Felixstowe and after his death, aged 38, the family moved to Stonner

where George's mother looked after the Magpie pub for a short period. In the 1930s the family moved to The Moorings in Waldringfield and then in 1952 George moved round the corner to Village Way where he spent the rest of his life. His brother, Jim, also lived in Waldringfield and became Landlord of the Maybush. George trained as a cabinet maker working for Jack Alderton, a local builder, and later he joined Ransome, Sims and Jefferies. He married Pam Harris when in his late twenties and had two boys Adrian and Christopher, both very tall.



His grandfather, a bargeman, introduced George to sailing before the war, when he was in his teens. He started sailing in Dragonflys and very soon was winning races. Ernie Nunn and Robertsons were the two boatyards that built Dragonflys in the area. Although they were slightly different shapes George would win races in which ever boat he was asked to sail. It wasn't till quite late on that he owned his own boat and for most of his life people were queuing up to get him to sail their boats. When asked how he did so well he would reply 'The first thing you've got to get right is this bit' as he waggled the tiller.

When Roger was crewing for him he would sometimes say 'Have a look back, boy and see if you can see the white of their eyes'. None in sight so he took out his 'bacci', rolled a cigarette and had a smoke.

One Deben Week George was racing with Roger's brother Pete, against Alan Matheson. In one of the races Alan was just in front coming up to the finish line against the current, creeping along close to the shingle beach at the Ferry. George was losing ground being further out in the current as they passed a fisherman. Suddenly George commented to his crew 'What's 'appening to Alan? He's slowing down!' Alan Matheson's centreboard had caught the fishing line and the boat slowed right down. George won by a foot! On shore he went up to Alan and remarked 'Fresh fish for supper then?'



On another occasion Alan Matheson was crewing for George in Deben Week. They had won every race up to the last one. George commented 'No need to sail the last race – we'll use it as our discard'. Alan turned round fiercely to George and replied 'What do you mean George. I took a week off work for this. I need the money! We're going to sail this one'.

Such was George's hold on the racing that some of his opponents went to great lengths to get an advantage. When it was blowing hard Bob Garnham would check who was crewing for George and then, if he thought it necessary, would shout to a little boy hidden on shore 'Come aboard then', and so he would go three up.



One day Bob Garnham appeared at the club with a bronze medal that he had won during Coronation Week. Alan Matheson noted that he had won a silver medal at that event. George added that he had the gold somewhere.

George became involved in Dragon sailing from the mid 70s to mid 80's. The Dragon is a Norwegian yacht designed by Johan Anker in 1929 – one of the most elegant yachts ever to be on the racing circuit. Early on George was invited to sail 'Arabis', owned by John Skolding, and was soon winning most races. During Deben Week there were as many as ten on the start line at Woodbridge - frightening!! Later he was invited to sail 'Javelin' a most beautiful boat built by Borresen, the top Dragon builder of the time. He was a regular competitor in Aldeburgh Week and when he walked into the club

house he was often greeted with ' Hello George, come to nick the silver again?'

Cyril Stollery was a regular opponent in Dragon racing at Waldringfield and they didn't get on that well. Roger, crewing for George, was often asked 'How's the old pisser in the red hat doing?'

After a morning race in Dragons which George won, Ted Sudell complained that he could not get his boat to go. George agreed to sail with him in the afternoon race and see what he could do. Ted asked 'What sails would you like' 'Same as this morning'. Ted then started fiddling with the rigging. 'Stop that and concentrate on the Genoa and sailing the boat'. They won comfortably 'What's wrong with the boat then?' was George's comment.

During his time racing in Dragons George became friendly with Carl Giles. Giles had a strong desire to sail down the whole of the Deben with the spinnaker up. So one day when the conditions were right George took him out and sailed up to the Tips, turned round and hoisted the spinnaker. They managed to hold it up, setting all the way down to the Woodbridge Haven.

In the early 90's George started to be badly affected by arthritis. He became unable to grip the tiller and sheet firmly. During one of the Squib races he was caught on a 'port and starboard' situation with Gem Goddard. The result was that he put a massive hole in Gem's boat. Sadly it affected George badly and he never sailed again after this.

George did a bit of wild fowling and on one occasion he was down at the Rocks in his punt and bagged a pheasant from one of the trees. He had it in the bottom of the boat when the Gamekeeper for Quilter suddenly appeared, with a dog sniffing around. The Gamekeeper asked him what he was doing trespassing there. 'Ain't got no pheasants - just two mallards' George replied. 'Well, you have no rights here, Sir Quilter owns the land half way across the river'; 'Well, you should've put up a boundary sign there so that we all know' replied George.

In later years George could be seen sitting outside the family hut at the bottom of the cliff steps, watching the world go by.

## To Woodbridge Town of Fair Renown

Being a delightful & deliciously daft ditty duly dedicated to a certain Mr Edward  
FitzGerald,  
world famous poet & tea drinker extraordinaire  
And The Empress of The Woodbridge Emporium Jules Button  
Oh...

Rosie Lee, how we love thee  
You charming, warming cheeky Persian tea  
Refreshing, renewing - mmm smell her brewing..!  
All the way down to Woodbridge Quay

So, a yo ho ho & a he he he  
A yummy little number we guarantee !  
A Rosy up your nosey - 'Perfume La Infinity'  
Poetry in a pot... ocean's primordial motion,  
more dazzling potion's of femininity !

Then, 'DRINK' ! as Father Jack does wink..  
Ahh ! Voila !! Mein Leben !!!  
And rolly ole row While the tide be so  
Out to sea by dear Old Deben...

So let Destiny flow... Old Mother Mill  
Grind as She will...  
Enrich this glorious nation  
Shire will power sail us soundly there  
Thorough fair b'our inspiration.

*"TastE is the Feminine of Genius"* E.F.G

©har-les Mugleston - total tea tippler of the green varietea in this our year Two Thousand and Nineteen

# River Code

Many people enjoy the river.  
Please observe the following:

- ◆ **Speed** - excessive speed through places where activities such as swimming, dinghy sailing, and fishing are taking place is dangerous and it can damage the saltmarshes. So please observe the relevant speed limits throughout the tidal length of the river.
- ◆ **Boat Wash** - excessive boat wash is damaging to saltmarshes and river banks, and disturbing to those in moored/anchored boats.
- ◆ **Noise** - noise can cause disturbance to wildlife, local inhabitants and to other visitors.
- ◆ **Look out** - other river users may not be expert or may be undertaking complicated manoeuvres; please be prepared to take avoiding action even if you think you have 'right of way'.
- ◆ **Litter** - please clean up after yourself and your dog.