

The Deben



59 Autumn 2019

The River Deben Association

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September 2019

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Cover: Kyson's Point Peter Burman



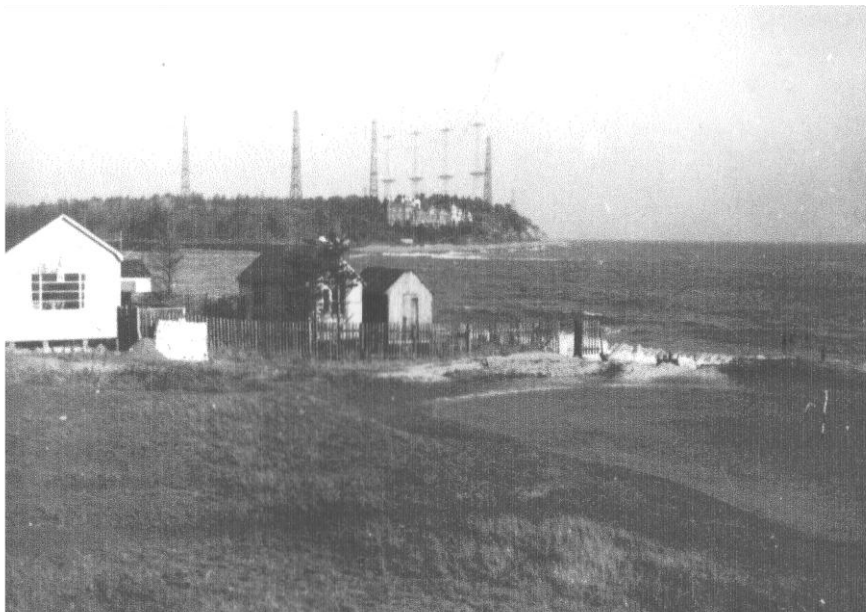
Editorial

It is with great sorrow that we have to record David Bucknell's death.

I am delighted to announce that Julia Jones has agreed to take on the task of Editor of *The Deben*. She will be taking over for the 2020 Spring Edition. I am standing in again for this autumn edition of the magazine.

In this edition we have memorials to David Bucknell, Graham Henderson and Tony Storer all of whom have played important roles in our community.

Sarah has updated 'News from the Hards'. Peter Wain has provided us with some historical information about our river walls which is supported by recent saltmarsh survey work by Richard Steward. Peter Burman is our 'Artist of the Deben' and Christine Redington has provided us with a description of his life and work. We celebrate the Waldringfield Dragonfly dinghy's 70th anniversary with an amusing sketch by Stephen Cooney. Matt Lis and Anne Moore have provided an interesting history of the Woodbridge Boatyard.



View of Bawdsey Manor and the Radar Masts 1950



River Deben Association

Chair's Report

It has been a fine sailing summer, with plenty of wind, but lots of sunshine too, so I hope that those of you with boats have enjoyed the season. Good for all manner of other things too - walking, running, kayaking, picnics, swimming and all the multitude of other river-related activities that our members undertake.

Events

There have been a number of interesting events going on since the last magazine was posted. We held our AGM on 1st May, 2019 (the minutes are on the website) and had a fascinating talk from David Kemp of the Environment Agency about what happens when a surge is predicted. As one member said, the audience were swept away by the drama unfolding in the Incident Room and were all expecting the waves to crash in from stage left!

The Deben Macmillan Challenge encouraged many people to raise money by doing some river-related activity, whether walking, cycling, rowing, sailing, swimming, canoeing or something more out-of-the ordinary such as paddleboarding, horse riding or in a coracle.



Coracle



Felixstowe Open Water Swimmers.

One 90 year old was pushed in a wheelbarrow! It has already met its target of raising £25,000 for the charity, and as I write, money is still coming in. All of the money will be spent on Macmillan's work in Suffolk, helping everyone with cancer to live life as fully as they can and providing physical, financial and emotional support. Attached are photos of one participant in his coracle and the Felixstowe Swimsapes Open Water Swimmers.

By the time that this magazine reaches you, the Woodbridge Riverside Trust will have held its ambitious programme of events called "Going with the Flow - Tides and the Deben Estuary" including a tide-related exhibition in the Longshed in Woodbridge and several lectures and events focussing on the Deben. Significant participation from local schools has been promised.

Aside from our two annual meetings, the RDA took a stall in 2019 at the Woodbridge Regatta & Riverside Fair on Sunday 23rd June. The Regatta was well-attended and we hope that we were able to remind visitors of our aims, as well as to encourage new members.

Committee

It is with great sadness that I have to report that David Bucknell, our fellow committee member and the editor of this magazine for many years, died on Sunday, 21st April 2019, after a short battle with mesothelioma, an asbestos related cancer. He will be hugely missed for his boundless energy and enthusiasm, his iconoclastic views which made us all re-think our espousal of the status quo, and above all, the extraordinary flair and verve that he brought to editing The Deben for so long. It was entirely because I so admired the magazine that I became involved with the RDA, and I know that many others have become members after seeing the quality of the publication. He will be much missed by us all.

My thanks go to Robin Whittle, who has done sterling work as acting editor of both the Spring and Autumn 2019 editions of the magazine. He stepped into the breach in the Spring with very little notice and worked enormously hard to pull together articles into another interesting publication. Robin has started a

section containing readers' letters, so if you would like to comment on anything river-related, please send your letters to the Chair.

I am delighted to report that Julia Jones has agreed to become editor with effect from the Spring 2020 magazine. She will have the full support of the committee and I encourage our readers to submit articles of interest to her via the Chair's email address.

You will see from the committee list that Alan Comber has retired from the committee. He has given us tremendous support in modernising our website and I hope that you agree that it is now a useful source of information. He has numerous other commitments but has kindly agreed to continue to assist with the website, for which we are very grateful (and relieved)!

I am happy to welcome Matt Lis to our committee. Matt is the new manager of The Woodbridge Boatyard and is a keen sailor. His background is in marine engineering, and then he has spent time working with low-emission commercial vehicles, so he will bring a range of skills to the committee, where his particular remit will be River Businesses.

Disappointingly, no-one has come forward to take over from me as Chair from April 2020, when my 3 year term will be up. If you have any interest, do please talk to me. As I mentioned in the last magazine, I can promise my successor fascinating insights into the river, flood defences, local politics, planning and a myriad of other issues.

Membership

At our 2019 AGM, an increase in subscriptions was unanimously agreed and therefore from April 2020 the new payments will be £6 for single members and £10 for couples (currently £4 and £6 respectively).

My thanks to Jim Goldsworthy, who has got our membership records into excellent shape, but if we do not have your email address, you are missing out on notices and other reminders, so please send your details to Jim at riverdebenmembers@gmail.com, giving your consent to be contacted by e-mail.

I am glad to report that our membership is now almost 900, so do please keep spreading the word. Even with slightly higher subs, membership is a great bargain!

Planning Applications

The RDA's objectives are to encourage proposals to safeguard the river and support appropriate future developments, and to resist proposals having a detrimental impact on the river and its environs. As such we make comments on various planning applications for developments, large and small, that will impact the river.

At **Melton Hill** an appeal against the refusal of the second application is being considered by a Planning Inspector and meanwhile a third application has been submitted. The next planning meeting will have taken place by the time that this magazine reaches you, and the committee will be monitoring the situation.

A new application has been made for the development of Frank Knights' workshop on **Ferry Quay** to create a restaurant with inside and outdoor seating. The RDA have commented on this application, and asked that steps be taken by the developer to mitigate the potential noise and light pollution. A copy of the letter is on the East Suffolk Council website.

A revised planning application for the restaurant in the Chandlery at **Whisstocks Place** has been submitted after East Suffolk Council's previous decision to permit a change of use was overturned by a judicial review. There are some local moves to try to secure the space for more community-based activity.

River Defences

The Environment Agency is planning to work on three sections of the river wall:

- a) Kirton Creek: A large crack in the river wall, caused by shrinkage of the clay, is to be filled;
- b) Waldringfield: The capping bricks of the wall protecting the riverside properties have deteriorated badly and are being replaced with coping stones;

c) Maintenance work on the north part of the river wall protecting the pastureland up to Shottisham (Flood Cell 4) will start in August 2020.

The river wall from Bawdsey Ferry to Ramsholt (Flood Cell 1), requires enhancement and the Deben Estuary Partnership is about to send out tenders for the work. Andrew Hawes will be the Project Manager

Saltmarshes

The RDA's Saltmarsh Research Group continues to do survey work at Loder's Cut Island and Waldringfield. The information from this is provided to a data bank held by the Environment Agency.

There have been no further meetings of either the DEP Saltmarsh Group or the Suffolk Saltmarsh Group.

England Coastal Path

Natural England have now finished the mapping stage for the trail around the Deben and are drafting their report and looking in detail at the protection of natural features (as part of a Habitats Regulations Assessment). If new evidence arises through this process, they will consider altering the current preferred route. They hope to publish their report by the end of February 2020, following which there will be an 8 week consultation period whereby affected or interested parties may comment or object. Depending on the objections received, (which can delay things by a few months as the Inspector makes a decision on these), it is possible that work on the route itself would begin in Autumn 2020, with an opening some time in 2021.

Autumn Meeting

Our Autumn Meeting will be held on 29th November 2019 at 6.30 p.m at the Community Centre, Woodbridge. In a break with tradition, wine and soft drinks will be available from 6 p.m. The topic is '**Is our river being polluted?**' There will be several speakers giving short talks followed by open discussion.

David Bucknell - some memories by Anne Moore and Robin Whittle



From Anne: It's hard to believe that David Bucknell has gone from this life - he was such a positive presence when I first sat opposite him at an RDA Committee meeting back in 2010.

As the editor of the RDA magazine David was keen to rework the Association's Newsletter and he threw himself into the job - sighting other organisations magazines; working with the committee to produce the reshaped and by then, renamed magazine: *The Deben*, and thereafter, pressing and encouraging everyone to 'write about it', and to comment on Deben related issues and experiences. I think it is fair to say his reworking of the 'Mag' as he called it, and introducing colour, helped to publicise the RDA and encouraged new members to join.

Self effacing and sometimes, I used to think, embarrassed about his own enormous knowledge of the history and development of various racing dinghies and how to make them go faster. At one time he had been England Southern Area Enterprise champion.

A social worker by profession he'd been involved in the social planning of Milton Keynes in the seventies, so it is no surprise that he was utterly generous and always seeming to have time to help in any way he could, especially with the computer, unless he was wanting to catch the tide for a swim.

It was a great shock to realise he was dying. What began as pain from an assumed pulled muscle after turning his dinghy over on the beach at Bawdsey in December, soon developed to indicate something more sinister: mesothelioma, and he died just four months later.

He is and will be much missed.

From Robin: I have known David since 2012 when I joined the RDA Committee. He had been editor of the *The Deben* since spring 2010. He had updated the constitution and objectives of the Association and was clearly very keen to preserve the aims and keep the river from any change that would harm its beauty and tranquillity. Although his main home was in Kent he owned one of the houses at Bawdsey Ferry and spent several weeks there each summer. He was a keen sailor and owned a cabin catamaran yacht, 'Sojourn', which he kept on a mooring at Felixstowe Ferry. He sailed with his wife, Dorte, and most summers they cruised to St Mawes in Cornwall where they spent several weeks. We had many pleasant chats, swapping sailing stories. He took a lot of trouble to understand local problems, about which he would almost always have his own view, not always agreeing with others about the right solution. He was keen to obtain articles for the magazine from people living in or near the Deben and started a catalogue of 'Deben Reflections'. I was impressed by his interest and knowledge of the history of sailing dinghies. This, of course, stemmed from his father, Barry Bucknell, who designed the Mirror Dinghy in 1962. This was a boat affordable to ordinary folks, which became the most widely-owned two-person sailing dinghy in the world.

There are many people, in many walks of life, who will miss David: his charm and his interest in so many subjects.

Colin Lister

A memorial to Graham Martin Henderson

7th October 1941 – 18th July 2019

Graham Henderson moved to live at The Ferry in 1968 having previously retained a houseboat as a weekend retreat and was a proactive member of Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club from when he joined in 1961, serving twice as Commodore.

Graham was involved in farming so had tremendous contacts and inside knowledge in respect of the effects of the rise in sea water levels, erosion of marshland and the urgent need to develop awareness with the public and government.

In 1989 Graham was one of the authors of the book 'The Hamlet of Felixstowe Ferry' (Pictures from the past) and just last year was co-author with Elizabeth Setchim of the long awaited sequel 'Felixstowe Ferry – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow'.

In 2005 following a meeting called by the then Suffolk Coastal MP and Environmental Minister, John Gummer, Graham was appointed inaugural Chair of Suffolk Coast Against Retreat (SCAR). Their mission was to share knowledge with all Community Groups on the Suffolk coastline for future generations, lobbying for funding and support from Government. He was also a founder member of the Deben Estuary Partnership (DEP) in 2007 and became a trustee of DEPL, the DEP's funding charity. Graham was also Vice Chair of Touching the Tide's board and instrumental in securing a £1 million grant to Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB for work on the Suffolk coastline and its environs.

Graham remained heavily involved to the end with all aspects of Ferry life as Chair of the Residents' Association and as a founding Trustee of the Millennium Green Trust.

A determined and sometimes blunt character, Graham never sought praise and was always sincere in his endeavours to represent the best interests of the majority. He will be greatly missed by all.

Tony Storer - Some memories by Jon Wilkins and Doug Chesterman

From Jon: Sadly Tony passed away in August. Tony was well known as a regular Deben sailor but his loss will be particularly felt at Felixstowe Ferry.

It is almost thirty years since Tony became one of the founding members of the Felixstowe Foreshore Trust. In the early years Trust matters were dominated by issues relating to formal acquisition of the Foreshore. Then, in more recent years, the primary focus of the Trust changed to that of management of the Foreshore in accordance with the Trust's founding principles aimed at maintaining the unique character of the Ferry's land to water link. It is at this stage that Tony evolved to become not only a Trustee but also Secretary and effective leader of the Trust.

In these latter roles Tony committed himself unselfishly to carefully documented control of the Trust's affairs. In doing so he was a key force in negotiating arrangements with the Sailing Cub, the Boatyard and houseboat owners whilst at the same time communicating clearly with Trust members. This unstinting commitment must have taken untold hours of personal input every year. Unquestionably the Trust will sorely miss his knowledge and careful guidance.

I think Tony would appreciate hearing that the remaining Trustees and Trust members will do everything possible to pick up the pieces left by his loss and then continue to fulfil the Trust's important role as guardians of the Ferry Foreshore.

From Doug: Tony will be sorely missed by everyone at Felixstowe Ferry Youth Sailing (a registered charity whose purpose is to introduce youngsters to dinghy sailing at a cost which anyone can afford). He has been generously volunteering his time for the last 10 years gaining Dinghy Instructor and Safety-Boat qualifications, allowing him to take a leading role in the project. He was a regular contributor, teaching beginners in Wayfarers or at the helm of one of our rescue boats.

He also made a huge contribution outside of the teaching sessions. If anything needed building, mending, or generally fettling, then as often as not it would be Tony who would come forward and say 'I'll sort that for you', and anything he did would invariably display his outstanding level of craftsmanship.

Tony was a very enthusiastic supporter of Youth Sailing, and was invariably pleasant, helpful and positive. His presence and contribution are already greatly missed.

Sarah Zins

News from the Hards

Felixstowe Ferry Boatyard will have its moment of glory on 6th October, when Michael Portillo and a film crew take a railway journey from Ipswich to Felixstowe, then cross over to Bawdsey using the ferry. The programme will be shown on television as part of the BBC's Series 3 of Great British Railway Journeys. Despite a busy season ahead with laying-up, there are still a few hard-standing vacancies. The ferry will not operate over the winter months but will be back in service from Easter.

Woodbridge Boatyard has been a hive of activity since the Spring issue of The Deben as the new owner and manager have quickly set to work repairing and restoring the historic, 107 year old 'Phoenix Shed', launching new pontoon moorings on the jetty and improving the workshop and brightwork services. The activity extends beyond infrastructure improvements; currently in the sheds are 'Ariel', an Everson's-built Deben Cherub for recaulking of her topsides, a beautiful Swedish sailing yacht of varnished carvel construction, an ex-Royal



Francesca

Navy Fairey Huntress, a 1930 Chriscraft and a rare British Power Boat Company launch all in various states of restoration. A particularly eye-catching boat to look out for is 'Francesca', a 27ft Venetian-crafted launch originally built for Italian industrialist Raul Gardini, probably as a tender to his America's Cup boats and now brought to Woodbridge to enjoy the Deben.

Robertsons have finished their work to extend their hardstanding and can now accommodate about 100 boats for the winter. They have also refurbished their "sprat shed", which has a smart new sign made by the local artist Claudia Myatt. The sprat shed is the venue for their monthly free boat- advice clinics on the first Wednesday of every month from 3-5 p.m. – their facebook page has details.

Spraying-work seems to be the order of the day – they have just completed "Anthem" and have given her new flexi-teak decks, and are now in the process of re-spraying a very sleek leisure speed boat, "Bewitched".

Larkmans are getting ready to take out their customer's boats onto their hardstanding for the winter.

Melton Boatyard has about 100 boats to take out for the winter and has already lifted several barges and houseboats for routine maintenance and repair. It is the only yard on the river to be able to lift out the heavier boats of up to 36 tonnes. The Deben Café on HMS Vale, moored just next to the Melton Boatyard, is now open from Fridays to Mondays and is hoping to extend its hours yet further shortly. For information on opening hours and menus, see their facebook page.

The Tide Mill Yacht Harbour is set to put about 120 boats onto their hardstanding at the end of the summer, leaving some 70 boats moored in the marina for the winter. They will be doing dredging work, with the mud that is sucked out put into their settlement pit.

The Deben River Walls

One of the significant features of the Deben is the walls that line the river from Felixstowe Ferry and Bawdsey to Woodbridge and beyond. What is their origin?

Arnott in his book 'Suffolk Estuary'¹ observes that it is extraordinary that no records of their construction have survived, that little has been written about them and no one knows how old they really are. What evidence there is, appears tantalisingly sparse.

It may be that if evidence about the antiquity of the walls is to be found one way is likely to be from unexpected sources that touch tangentially on the subject, such as records of court cases about land disputes and commissions of enquiry instituted by the Crown.

In 1585 William Pype took an action against John Glover and Rubyne Colley about the right to occupy Winstone's marsh, Whytinge marsh and Ten Acre marsh that lay in Bawdsey and Alderton². These marshes lay not alongside the river but slightly to the North of Bawdsey beside the shore. A piece of the evidence in the case illustrated when walling activity was taking place here.

The marshes had at one time been salt marshes that were "*overflowed with salte water at eny or most of the Tydes, eaten or gulled in with diverse Crickes (creeks) and fletttes and by that means of very little valewe*". Subsequently these marshes had been protected by a wall, a process known as "*ynningge*". The issue of when this "*ynningge*" took place was not central to the case but the subject occurred in the course of evidence.

William Sawler was a sixty four year old shoemaker from Ufford. He gave evidence at the hearing and remembered that when he first knew the area

¹ Arnott 1973, 35

² TNA E134/27&28Eliz/Mich15

there were no banks or divisions in the marshes and the marshes were *“often drowned with Sale Water and of little value before the Innynge”*. He went on to say *“and this he knoweth to be truth for he carried victual to hys father being a worke man thearre at the innynge of the saide mershe”*.

The implication of this evidence is that taking food to his father was a task he undertook as a boy, perhaps some fifty to fifty five years before – between say 1530 and 1535.

This assumption is borne out by Richard Revell of Orford who also gave evidence in the case. He was seventy one in 1585. He said that he dwelt in Bawdsey before the inning of the marshes when he was an apprentice for seven years. Again, the implication is that he was a young man, again possibly between about 1530 and 1535. He recalled that it was the Prior of Butley *“who did then take upon him to ende the dyvers mershes in that level”* and that *“the prior’s name was one Mannyng”*.

Thomas Manning was appointed as Prior of Butley in 1528 and remained in post until the Dissolution in 1538 and thus the evidence of William Sawler and Richard Revell enables us to fix the building of the sea walls here between these dates.

What evidence there is of when the river walls were built is less readily available and depends, in one instance, on the definition of the word *“lately”*.

In 1589 Queen Elizabeth I instituted an enquiry in to *“what fletes lieth in the manno of Bawdsey in Suff were latelie made freshe by enclosing them from the incursion of the sea”*.

The word *‘flete’* or fleet means a piece of water that has been enclosed from the sea. Thus, for example, what is today known as *‘Kings Fleet’* is a modern variation of the word *‘flete’* and has nothing to do with ships of the Crown.

This enquiry was one of many that was instituted by The Queen laying claim to areas of the foreshore, not just to the land between the high and low water marks but every piece of land that had been subject to the tide and was now

protected by walls. Two of the fletes mentioned in this enquiry that had been walled were Salthouse flete and Bawdsey flete

Bawdsey flete was the deep water channel that went from the river up to the low lying area between Bawdsey and Alderton and was almost certainly the piece of water that permitted ships to make their way up to Bawdsey.

Salthouse flete was a branch of that 'flete' nearer the river.

Unfortunately, although the document sets up the enquiry and identifies the questions to be asked, namely who commissioned the walling and what rent was paid for the recovered land, documents recording the findings are absent. However, what is important is that it does identify areas of land adjacent to the river that had clearly been protected from the river "*latelie*".

Could it be a reasonable assertion that these walls were built at some time in the Sixteenth century? Well, it might be but for an entry in a manuscript of 1438³ that refers to a piece of land in Bawdsey that had, to the West of it '*Salthouse fleet*' implying that this piece of water had been enclosed by a wall one hundred and fifty years before!

Of course, it would be wrong to assume that the walls were all built at one time and in their current location. There is good reason to believe that walling activity in Bawdsey had been taking place since Butley Priory was given land in the south of the village by Sir Robert de Ufford (1236-1298) in 1290 and that some walling was done by "creep" that is to say by the gradual advance of the walls towards their current location..

Arnott said of his own work "*this is [a] very inconclusive story of the walls*" but today there is more certainty thanks to an experimental method of measuring the date of embankment devised by Richard Steward, a retired engineer from Walberswick.

This method uses the fact that the elevation of tidal saltmarsh (i.e. on the river side of the walls) rises with Mean High Water Springs and follows relative sea level rise (SLR). Whereas the embanked former tidal saltmarsh on

³ BL Add MS 239948

the landward side of the walls (the embanked marsh) does not and its surface elevation reflects the sea level of the time.

The method is based on the following assumptions: 1) The embanked marshes are mainly clay, do not shrink or oxidize and are flat 2) Isostatic Adjustment is -1.5mm/yr (Defra Isostatic Report), 3) North Sea high water tidal range is increasing at 0.6mm/r (Belgian Tide Gauge Data) and 4) UK Mean SLR is currently 1.4mm/yr with no acceleration over 160 years (Prof Philip Woodworth POL). The accuracy of the method was established in the Blyth by elevation measurements of today's tidal saltmarsh level and the elevation of Southwold Town Marsh embanked in 1630. The 1630 SLR was found to match the current MHWS SLR of 3.5mm/yr indicating that SLR has not changed in 400 years. Support for this has been recently found in saltmarsh crest measurements on Laeso Island in the Kattegat that show SLR abruptly changing around 1300 AD from falling to rising.

Recently Richard Steward took measurements at a number of points either side of the embankment between Bawdsey Quay and Ramsholt. His calculations based on the results indicated that the river wall on this section was built in 1544 +/- 62 years.

This bears a remarkable correlation to when known "*innynning*" activity was taking place in Bawdsey and provides potentially exciting possibilities for further dating of the Deben walls.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Val Dudley for her work on transcribing and translating the documents from the National Archive and the British Library and to Richard Steward for permission to use his work.

This historic article combines a note by Anne Moore and information provided by Matt Lis of The Woodbridge Boatyard.

A Rich Heritage: The Woodbridge Boatyard Ltd. 1889 – 2019 (formerly Everson and Sons Ltd)

Anne writes ‘A chance encounter one dark winter’s night, on the level crossing en route to the Deben Yacht Club, led me to be able to tell you now, “straight from the horse’s mouth”, the story of how Everson’s Boatyard began and why the extraordinary building is known as the ‘Phoenix Works’. Here is the story as told to me by Tim Everson over a cup of coffee, in one of Woodbridge’s many coffee houses.

Tim’s great grandfather, Alfred, was a cabinet maker living in Diss with commissions in London. He married Alice Robertson from Ipswich, whose father, Ebenezer, had businesses there in boat building and shipping.

After Alfred’s marriage to Alice, Ebenezer Robertson bought Lime Kiln Quay and set up a boat building business to be run jointly by Alfred and his brother in law Arthur. It seems that Arthur was the business man and feared the business would go bust and this provided Alfred the incentive to set up his own yard separately.

He built this at the coaling jetty and started boat building in 1889 under the name of A. Everson. Soon after, his sons Cyril and Bert joined him and the name of the boatyard became Everson & Sons Ltd. This remained so until 2010 (when it became The Woodbridge Boatyard Ltd.).



As well as building boats and running the yard, Alfred Everson was also the official Starter and Timekeeper for the Deben Yacht Club from 1889 to 1933, starting many races from the end of the old jetty with a 12 bore shotgun and (usually) blank cartridges.

Prior to the First World War, in June 1912, the boatyard was burnt down and Alfred rebuilt it, calling it the 'Phoenix Works' as it rose from the ashes like the bird in Greek mythology. Indeed some of the charred timbers are visible in the supporting structure. The reconstruction involved materials from a number of sources including ships spars and telegraph poles. Although a "temporary" structure, it has somehow survived two world wars and the 1987 hurricane.

The older brickwork beneath the sea wall level probably was part of buildings associated with the use of the area as a coal yard in the mid nineteenth century.

The boatyard became well known for a number of "one-off" yachts and motor launches, just a few of which include "Clytie" in 1922, "Foy" in 1932 , "Black Cat" in 1938/39, "Glee" in 1960, "Maleni" in 1962 and "Golden Samphire" in 1963.

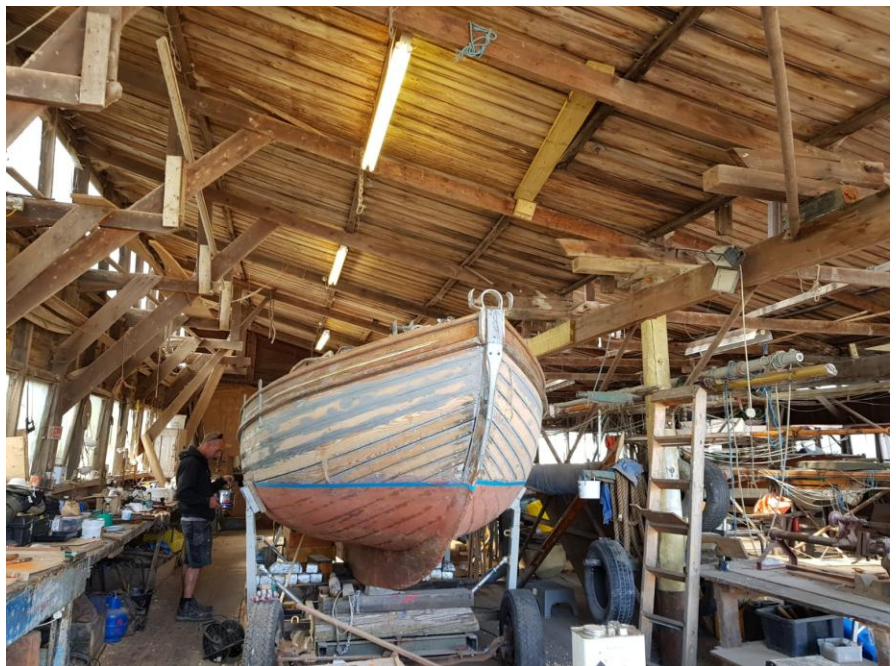
Everson's also produced one of the first series production yachts on the East Coast, the 21ft. "Cherub" Class, of which 18 were built between 1924 and 1937.



Alfred died in 1936 and his sons, Cyril and Bert, took over the business. The daughters Molly and Ethel, "The Sisters", lived in the chandlery shed alongside the yard, along with umpteen cats.

The 1939 war brought contracts for building rafts for the Royal Navy. These were to provide a platform to paint the naval ships. Enough extra material was “liberated” from this project to produce a prototype sailing dinghy, “Beaver 1” and then a second version “Red Beet” (with one less plank) which became the first of the 14ft. Kingfisher class. A total of 29 Kingfisher dinghies (+ one more in the ‘90s) were produced between 1943 and 1963, and several examples of both Cherub and Kingfisher classes may be seen on the Deben today, still looked after by the yard that built them. As well as these, there has been a regular flow of small rowing and sailing dinghies produced by the yard throughout its life.

In 1969 the yard passed from the Everson family to Peter Darby, who had a great interest in steam power with his yacht “Myra”. A number of yachts were fitted out here from mouldings and equipment on behalf of the Pegasus Yachts Company. In the ‘90s it then passed to Frank Knights Shipyard until 2001, and then to a small group of local yachtsmen who continued the tradition of individual care for many traditional and modern yachts, providing moorings, winter storage, maintenance and repair. Tim Everson has enjoyed sailing ‘Ariel’, a Deben Cherub built by his grandfather previously owned and restored by David Copp and the yard. The tender ‘Little Ariel’ is also an Everson dinghy previously owned by David Copp and before him by Ian Bowles.



From 2010 the name was changed to ‘The Woodbridge Boatyard Ltd.’ to make the business more readily found by search engines on the Internet. Many improvements were implemented, including replacement of tractors and cranes, installation of a new pontoon for dinghies and dayboats; and

refurbishment of the jetty, including a set of pontoons alongside the jetty creating marina-style finger berths for up to ten yachts.

In April 2019, The Woodbridge Boatyard was acquired by Eric Reynolds, Founder of 'Evolution Yachts', current Chairman of 'Save Britain's Heritage' and trustee of the National Maritime Museum, the Cutty Sark and the SS Robin Trust. In the brief time, since he has taken over, many have commented on the buzz of activity around the yard. Already well known for its high standard of traditional workmanship and friendly atmosphere, the new investment of time, energy and finance is allowing the yard to build upon these traits.

The existing 4 permanent full- and part-time staff are all continuing in their previous roles but have been joined by a new General Manager, Matt Lis, who takes over from Geoff Sinton as he moves to a consultancy position. Together they take care of all aspects of the mooring and storage, maintenance, repair and restoration of boats and yachts.

Works are already underway for the sensitive restoration of the 100+ year old 'Phoenix Works' shed, seen by many as a landmark of the Woodbridge waterfront.

Stephen Cooney

Dragonfly Celebrations - Now we are 70!

It's September 1948 – an august body of be-blazered chaps and elegantly-coiffured gals gather in an (almost certainly) smoke-filled committee room to politely argue their respective cases for a dozen or so names including *The Deben Jolly Boat*, *Sandpipers*, *Waldringfield Peewits*, *Chameleons*, *Rainbows* and *Deben Fusspots*.

But at the vote Mrs Parker's proposal, seconded by Dr Palmer, that the new class should be called **The Dragonfly** was carried unanimously.

No less than 20 members had pledged a sum roughly equivalent to one and a half times the current working man's wage to purchase one of the 14-foot

Bermudan-rigged dinghies. £152.10s.0d including sails, rowlocks, Royalties and measuring fee.



Dragonflys racing at Waldringfield

Later that winter the partly-built skeleton of a new Dragonfly was transported to Ipswich and hoisted up to the first floor of the Great White Horse Hotel to be star exhibit at the annual Dinner and Dance.

A bare four months later, with numbers carved into 18 new transoms at the yards of Nunn Bros and Robertsons - building ten apiece - a draw was held to allocate the new boats to their proud owners. They were Dennis Moore (No 1. *Moppett*), LE Ogden (No 2. *Fantee*), AA Gibbons (No 3. *Snap*), Paul King (No 4. *Temper*), G A Revett (No 5. *Wings*), Frank Mossman (No 6. *Ripple*), Jack Hoylans (No 9. *Oriel*), D.Thompson (No 10. *Windrush*), Brian Hawkes (No 11. *Francesca*), KEM Fish (No 12. *Goldfish*), JS Alderton (No 14. *Dinah*), Eric Wilde (No 15. *Moon*), GW Barnard (No 16. *Pixie*), Cyril Stollery (No 17. *Stinger*), Ken Nichols - Palmer (No 18.), Miss H Parker (No 19. *Windsong*), Mrs Digby (No 20. *Roseanna*) and Malcolm Poole (No 21. *Katurah*).

So, a bit more history... May 1949 was spent fitting out the new fleet. Master Roger Stollery was aboard for the launch of D17 - under the command of the owner of Robertson's yard – when it was promptly dismasted....Nothing changes!

On June 11, the Dragonflies came to the line for their first race. Four boats competed; D11 won followed by D18 and D6. The fourth boat, No 5 was recorded as having had a late start.....Nothing changes!

By the end of that 1949 season 16 Dragonflies had competed, Dr Palmer had taken the newly donated Regatta Shield and One-Design racing had come to Waldringfield. The foundations for a pursuit of excellence that has nurtured national and world class champions had been laid.

Build it and they will come..... In 1963 there were 43 boats numbering up to D45 (8 & 13 were never built) and 24 swung prettily on mooring trots. A fleet of 18 came to the line for the Deben Week of 1978 as the class approached its 30th Anniversary.

Great characters emerged from those early post-war river rivalries. A driving force in dinghy racing, Cyril Stollery -Commodore of the "*Democratic Sailing Club of Waldringfield*" for 21 years - is remembered today as 'someone who was always tinkering with his boat in pursuit of a bit more speed -to no great effect...'

Class rules were always there to be stretched by some (Nothing changes!....). Mr Garnham mooring his boat at the top of the tide line in an attempt to get round the 24 hours afloat before competing rule....Ted Sudell shaving a bit too much off the end of his stern planking... Young farmer, Peter Fraser admitting after his retirement to having taken his boat home just prior to Deben Week and attempted to reduce its weight in the grain dryer. It didn't work...



Downwind Leg

But the guaranteed way to get amongst the trophies was to put local boy, George Turner on the helm of your Dragonfly. Brought up on the Deben and generally acknowledged to 'know the river better than anyone afloat', George took the prestigious Regatta Shield a record 10 times in the first 20 years. A member of his family once told me that as a young mill apprentice George took more in prize money – helming his employer's boat in Deben Week – than he took home for a week's work at the mill (I hope it's true!)

Peter Fraser, trademark pipe clenched firmly in his teeth, did finally take home the Shield in 1973, sailing D32 *Linnett* - the only Dragonfly to have been

sailed every season at Waldringfield since its construction in 1952. D32 is now in the hands of infamous pot-hunting boat-building brothers, Fred and Steve Larkman...watch this space!

.....and lashings of ginger beer!

It has never of course been all about the racing. As a family club, members agreed from the outset that they wanted something that would double as a 'comfortable dayboat'. The enduring appeal of this 70-year-old design is that the Dragonfly is a very nice boat to just take for a sail. Whether it is picnics upriver of Wilford Bridge, riotous cricket on Felixstowe's Horse Sands or a ladder rack of instant barbecues in a field at Methergate Quay – the social side of the Dragonflies has always been a vital plank in the charm of the Class. Nobody remembers who was the first Dragonfly World Champion ('cept maybe the winner) – but everybody remembers the superb treasure hunt!

The class has had its darker days. Boats have disappeared from the area, decayed to a state beyond feasible repair and numbers on moorings dropped to a handful.

But as she hits 70 the Dragonfly is enjoying a heartening revival – largely due to the efforts of two members of a family which goes right back to the beginnings. James Palmer, grandson of founding member Ken Nicholls-Palmer (D18 & D42) has give the class the best possible 'defibrillation' with the production of *Phoenix* - a brand new traditionally-constructed Dragonfly, D46. Completed in 2016 James took the Regatta Shield with *Phoenix* in 2017 and continues to be a Wednesday evening regular when the class gathers for a little boating and obligatory beer.

Meanwhile John Palmer - Dad of James , son of Ken, has devoted countless hours in the last decade bringing two Dragonflies 'back from the dead', helping and advising on the restoration of others and is currently working on the full restoration of D34. Greatly aided by the enthusiastic captaincy of Richard Smithson (D10) these efforts mean the class is in the best shape it has been in for years. A raft of septuagenarian celebrations is planned for the coming season starting with a special annual dinner and culminating in a September weekend of socials and sailing. The Dragonflies will play host to our Irish 'twin class' the IDRYU 14 from Dublin Bay - who will no doubt sail us off the water and give us a masterclass in drinking....

Artist of the Deben

Peter Burman in conversation with Christine Redington

'I'm inspired by the atmosphere of the day. If you can imagine you are on the marshes, looking across the marshes at the river, the sun is shining, there is a storm brewing and you've got light on one part of the landscape, shadow on another part of the landscape, this gives you great contrasts of tone and colour. This is the kind of thing I am looking for. Big skies are also important to me.'



This is what Peter Burman searches for as a subject for a painting. He will go out with his watercolours and a sketch pad and also take two or three photographs. With these images, as well as 'carrying a scene' in his head, he begins to work on an oil painting or a watercolour, in his studio at home. Although he has painted in Venice, Provence and Elba, at the moment he is concentrating on East Anglia as a subject, places such as Southwold and Aldeburgh and the many rivers.

Born in Suffolk, he began his career as a screen printer but also painted in his own time. Although self-taught originally, he did some art training and started to teach painting and pottery in evening classes. The teaching provided him with an income allowing him to work seriously on his painting and around 1964 he began selling his paintings in the local area, allowing him to become a full-time painter, alongside teaching classes.



Dunwich, Suffolk

This concentration on his painting led him to having exhibitions at the John Martin Gallery in London, Oakham Contemporary Gallery and in the upstairs gallery at the Royal Academy. His paintings sold well and this was a very important part of his life.

‘When I was showing in London, I had to get sixty or

seventy works together. I was also selling in other places, so I was under constant pressure.’

Composition is hugely important to him, leading him to use artistic licence and to leave out unnecessary detail. He wishes to draw the viewer’s eyes into the picture and let their eyes move around from the foreground and up into the sky, where there is usually a group of interesting clouds. When he works in oils, he will have four or five paintings on the go at any one time, so that he can allow the oil layers to dry.



Morston, Norfolk

He may do a series of oils, giving himself a good run at them and then after about two or three months he will switch to watercolours. He describes the process:

‘... you need to become familiar with what you are doing...It needs to be a spontaneous treatment of either media and if I’ve been doing oils for two or three months and then I start watercolours, you would be surprised how tight you are to start with but then you gradually get the freedom you want and you need to get almost into a state of don’t care attitude, then things begin to work.’



River Blyth, Suffolk

What he does not choose to paint is too much detail, such as a building in the foreground, where every window has to appear. He likes to give an impression of things in his pictures with a few brush strokes. There is no real detail, as he says ‘I am not interested in copying a

landscape, that would be the job of a topographical artist.’

What he has achieved recently is a very successful exhibition for Macmillan Cancer Care, which raised £7,600 with all proceeds going to the charity. Although not ruling out another exhibition in London, he thinks that he would like to focus on producing work that could help raise money for the charities of his choice.

Anne Moore

Swimming with Swans

The not yet fully mature mute swans that move about in groups sometimes gather where we like to swim in the river, hoping to be thrown some bacon by children crabbing from the platform by the Bandstand.

The thought of getting into the water among them can be off-putting, but it is a mistake to try to shoo them away. They are not instinctively aggressive to humans but like most creatures, if threatened, become alarmed and they will vigorously defend themselves. One swipe of those powerful wings could kill a person for sure; but if one quietly slips into the water among them they soon glide apart and swim round you.

One day however I was unnerved when on a spring tide, a swan seemed to launch itself towards me - hissing and craning as it strode across the platform, but it was soon evident that it was launching itself at another **swan** and passed under the handrail that I was clutching. As it did so, I noticed that its beak was dark orange; so concluded that it had recently matured ready to seek a mate next season.



We haven't had the three visiting Black Swans - which would have been immature singles too - that were seen here last summer, but I have counted more Mute swans than ever.

Correspondence

July 2019 from Christopher Ford: Re - The Deben Autumn 2016

A possible historical correction regarding people of the Deben. Twice a reference is made to Fred Pearce as being the owner of the Felixstowe Ferry boat yard, before and during the war. That person was actually Phillip (Phil) Pearce, father of Fred who was also to work at the yard. Fred married a daughter of Charlie Brinkley. Phil Pearce was my maternal grandfather. Although a Londoner, I spent much time during the summer holidays in and around the ferry. Quite an idyllic experience for a townie lad.

Mention is made of Phil Pearce's demeanor suggesting it as being unfriendly. Yes I can remember Phil being a little tease about certain things, particularly of the throwing of stones into the river near the ferry boat landing, that was because he had been highly involved in building up the banks of the river to fend off the scouring effect on its banks. John White shared similar impressions of Phil Pearce to that of the writers.

Email from Rev Penny to Christopher Ford:

'Good Evening Christopher,

Thanks for your e-mail, just to clarify a few things. Eileen's name was Lloyd before she married Maurice Read. It was her sister Evelyn that Freddie married. They moved to Culford, near Bury St. Edmunds where Freddie had a petrol station/garage. The marriage lasted until Freddie's death. Maurice and Eileen lived in a corrugated iron bungalow called Ivan. Their other sister Rosalyn married Derek Walden, who died a few years ago although I believe Rosalyn is still alive.

My husband's Grandfather lived in one of the quay houses at Bawdsey Ferry. A fisherman called Jockey Hunt lived in the tarred boat at the Ferry.

I hope this is of some help to you and if you want any further information please feel free to contact me.

Yours

Rev Penny Brinkley'

BLACK LUGGERS AT WALDRINGFIELD

Berthed on Mark and Emma Barton's boatyard at Waldringfield are two luggers that belong to John Archer and his family. John, Liz and their two boys Boyd and Todd live aboard the 36ft **Fen Guide** and grow their own food in a garden at Newbourne. When funds allow John is slowly restoring the 45ft **Glad Tidings** and when finished they will live on her. John grew up in Newbourne while his great uncle was building boats at Nunn's at Waldringfield. He built the yard launch that John now owns. John



has always worked with wood, first building timber barns and also tree cutting. His first involvement with boats was in 2005 when he bought the **Fen Guide**, a former Wisbech pilot boat, in London and took her by road to North Devon. He spent three years getting her seaworthy and then made a trip around the Bristol Channel and down to the Isles of Scilly. Here she dragged ashore in a gale and then she was pulled ashore in Pergilis Bay, St Agnes.

After a long period of repair the motor ketch **Fen Guide** went to Plymouth and John worked as a shipwright building the new 3-masted lugger **Grayhound**, a replica of a smuggler's lugger. This inspired John to buy telegraph poles and convert the **Fen Guide** to a 2-masted lugger after which the family returned to Waldringfield.

News that another old lugger was about to be broken up at Conyer Quay, Kent led John to buy the 46ft 1897 fifie **Glad Tidings** for £1. This former Arbroath herring boat was in a very bad state, but in 2017 John and Mark Barton, with several pumps running got her to Waldringfield, after a difficult period in the Swin when some pumps didn't work.

Working mostly on his own, John has replaced most of the keel and keel bolts, fitted new garboards and renewed the frames. He still has the topside planking and deck to replace. A formidable undertaking that requires great skill and determination, but one day the **Glad Tidings** will sail again.



Trevor Cherrett

Passage to Aldeburgh

The East Coast with David Bucknell in his catamaran Sojourn. June 2011

Dave and I, we just got back from sailing
From Deben to Alde, up the East Coast
In *Sojourn*, a comfy Cat in hailing
Distance from his Bawdsey home, built to host
A crew for such a trip, never failing
To take them where they need to go the most.
So start the engines, slip the mooring lines,
Head for the Bar, with wind and tide and time.

Along the shore, low cliffs of trees and sand
With beachy huts and Cold War installations
Now in the front line, defending the land
From climate change and rising inundation;
A threat for all of us to make a stand
In some new way, needing explanation....
The south east wind picks up, let`s run before
So raise the Jib, and head up to the Ore.

We enter Orford Haven, deceptive
By name and nature, `turbulent near the Bar`,
It`s running hard between shoals receptive

Of ships which go aground, when it's too hard
To find and follow channels acceptive
Of safe passage for those from afar;
So concentrate, and watch out for those buoys
Red and green, tugging in the tide ahoy.

We bobble and swirl upstream on the Ore
To the Butley, slow and slightly stately
Bending inland, on the former coast floor,
On the flood tide, peaceful tributary
Empty of boats, except further up moored
Some Fishing Smacks, and Johnny-Come-Latelys.
The sun is up but the wind is steady
Time for a doze, to plan and get ready.

Back to the Ore, and up past Orford Quay
Struggling with ropes and recalcitrant buoys
To moor somewhere good and preferably free
To relax over lunch, and beer - what joy !
(On our return we might go for cream tea....)
Meantime lets sit back, relax and enjoy.
Boating is pleasure, boating is fun
Nothing quite like it, under the sun !

On up to Aldeburgh, where boats are posh
And views of the church block Sizewell's white globe,
We motor upriver, its time for nosh;
Windblown and weary, but must check the mobes,
Open the bottles and talk lots (my gosh)
And serious stuff too, all life to probe.
The evening ends in a fug of whisky
Naughty but nice, so pleasant (but risky).

The final stretch, on the upper Alde
The water is wide, but channels narrow
Between flagging posts, meandering broadly
A fine line to follow, fine to harrow
With care, and concentration, orderly
Heads up to Snape, and the tidal shallows.

Keep a close eye on the boat's depth meter,
Forward slow, on the mudbanks we teeter.

And all the while the avocets forage
Fast and striking in their black and white kit;
Nearby the oyster - catchers who manage
To stab the ooze for their luscious titbits
While the heron waits, to do his damage
To the straying fish in one sudden hit;
But the seals on the mudbank flop astride
And wait for their prey on the flooding tide.

We run aground, but the tide floats us off
And its time to return, back down the stream
Round the meanders, a strong wind aloft
Downwind we motor, to Orford we steam
And stop at the Quay, for tea with the toffs
And fill up with water on the port beam.
The weather is fine, but the wind is on-shore
Over tide running out, the Haven will roar...

It's the final run, to exit the Ore
Against the tide and relentless south wind;
Line up the buoys and we hope the sea floor
Has enough depth to avoid the dread sin
Of running aground like some ship of yore
And wrecked on the Bar, its crew all done in.
So hold on to nerves, the Skipper steady
The bottles may fly, but we're not unready.

And so it proves, for the water depth holds
We keep to the line and make the big buoy,
The knuckles are pale but the spirit bold
And southwards we head, the Deben ahoy
Though waves are high and the vessel may roll
We are on our way home, safe to enjoy.
So here's to *Sojourn*, its skipper and host
For this wonderful trip on Suffolk's East Coast.



River Deben Association

Autumn Meeting

Friday 29th November 2019

6.30 pm

(wine and soft drinks available from 6 pm)

Woodbridge Community Hall

Is our river being polluted?

Short talks from speakers followed by open discussion with the panel