



The Alde & Ore Association

Newsletter 46 - Autumn/Winter 2016

The wildlife all around us ~ A four ferries challenge ~ Brilliant annual barbecue
Summer walks ~ Progress on the river walls ~ The Estuary Partnership
Shingle Street surveys ~ At the summer shows

The Chairman's note

It has been a good summer for the Alde and Ore estuary, in terms of both the weather and flood defence.

First, the weather. After a slow start, indeed a cold and wet June, in August and September we saw the best weather we had had for years - sailors, swimmers, walkers alike all have had the most wonderful time whether enjoying the sun by day or the stars by night. Junior sailing courses even continued into October.

Second, flood defences. Progress has indeed been seen in planning, development and implementation. The Estuary

Plan drawn up by the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership (AOEP) was, after more than three years of development, refinement, meeting statutory obligations and full public consultations, endorsed by the three authorities, Suffolk County Council, the Regional Flood and Coast Committee and Suffolk Coastal District Council.

This now means that the plan is a material consideration in relevant planning decisions and in relation to flood defence. Thank you for your contributions to the consultations. The final Plan is to be found on line at www.aoep.uk. These endorsements mean that, from 7th June, work has been able to start properly on fund raising through enabling development which, it is hoped, may bring in a portion of what is needed.

There has been work on the ground too. You may remember some lengthy and not completely successful repairs to the wall surrounding the Aldeburgh Marshes a few years back. The AOEP and the Association have long campaigned that putting the work right was for the Environment Agency and not for the community to pay. The EA found the money this year to put the river walls into better shape. Given the emerging AOEP plan,

Going to the barbecue...
See page 6



Your Voice - Your Estuary

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the EA agreed to adapt its model to take in the thinking in the AOEP plan. This change avoids revisiting the wall for more earthworks at a later date.

So now the works to be done will take the walls to the standard needed to withstand overtopping the length by a 1:200 surge in the year 2050. The work will be spread over three years given the length of wall involved and that winter working is not an option. To complete the works the AOEP must come up with the share of community funding needed to bring the walls to the resilience structure to meet the aim of the AOEP. Once done, apart from maintenance, there should be no need for major works on this wall for many years to come. There is more on this in Mandy Bettinson's articles on pages 10 and 11.

The Slaughden sea wall was also giving us all much concern. When at last weather and winds permitted, in late spring this year, the Environment Agency installed 5000 tonnes of large granite rocks and many more tonnes of shingle. Hopefully the robust rocks will provide protection for the sea wall for many years to come.

There is more yet in the pipeline. Much planning is going into works to bring the river defences at Snape Maltings and for Snape village to a good state in the next 12 months or so. After that the AOEP plan, in partnership with EA and the Internal Drainage Board, is to deal with the Iken walls to complete works in the upper estuary. Then plans can begin for the middle estuary, the Orford flood cell for which David Andren's incredibly generous bequest of about £1/2 million provides a good start for the funding needed.

The necessary works for the entire estuary will cost more than £10 million, which must be found locally, on top of government funding. As the Association's object is to seek to protect the estuary for the benefit of all, we need to find ways to help the AOEP Funding Team raise the necessary money. We will be in touch in the New Year about what we can do but anyone who knows about fund raising or wants to help please get in touch when you have a moment.

But Association activities are wide ranging. John Grayburn is working hard to make the Association website more user friendly and interesting. You may have seen the fun photographs of the 'Dancing Diggers' moving the rocks up the beach on the Association website. Do take a look at the website as we plan to keep it up to date with news and research and current issues.

You will see from this *Newsletter* that there are many things in the Alde and Ore area that we treasure, ranging from the very interesting surveys at Shingle Street to wildlife along the water's edge. We are continuing to seek to protect our landscape. The most recent success is the turning down of the proposed development with 43 houses at Brick Dock: the Association, along with residents, the Suffolk Preservation Society and the Aldeburgh Town

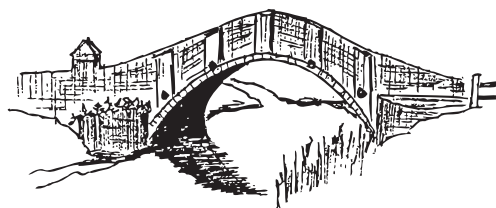
Council and our District Councillor T-J Haworth-Culf, has been striving hard to be listened to. Fortunately the Planning Committee were not minded to go back on a Site Allocation Plan they made a year ago and also found the proposals likely to be detrimental to the area both visually and in its environmental impacts.

We must keep a close watch on planning - this summer we managed to contribute to the refusal for permission for a three-day pop concert at Iken. This winter we also have to address renewed ideas for a Marine Conservation Zone in the estuary and the national talks on extending the coastal footpath across our area will begin.

As I said at the annual barbecue, a fabulous sparkling day, there is so much we love about the estuary and it falls to us all to keep it in good heart for the next generations. The Association has been going for 25 years: we want it to continue its good stewardship for several more quarter centuries and to be for all its members and everyone who lives and works in or visits the area, 'Your Voice - Your Estuary'. We will keep helping to ensure that the AOEP can develop and carry out a sound flood defence development programme; we can help enjoyment of the estuary whether through the splendid ferry service, our walks and barbecue or walks booklets and this *Newsletter*. There may be more we can do to enhance enjoyment of the estuary by all ages and all parts of the community but we can only do as much as the number of volunteers we have. So if you have a good idea and would like to try to take it forward please get in touch.

To do all this work we need more Trustees or helpers. We would really value someone with planning knowledge who knows the area well. We need new and fresh talent on river management, marketing and fund raising. Very importantly we need a new *Newsletter* editor. We have lost Monica Koch, who has done two excellent issues, but her own business demands have grown so she has regretfully had to resign. We are incredibly grateful to Derek Bingham for stepping in for this issue but we need a new editor.

We wish you all a very good winter with riverside walks in bright winter sunshine, whether at Shingle Street or higher up the river to the sources.



The four ferries of Suffolk

Muff Dudgeon and Vicki Bingham get on their bikes

The Four Foot Ferries enable walkers and bicyclists to travel the length of the coastal strip of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Beauty. Intrepid explorers Muff Dudgeon and Vicki Bingham set out early one morning to do the journey from south to north.

This is their account of what they did and tips on how it can be done. We hope it will encourage more people to use at least the Butley Ferry, which is open at weekends from spring to autumn and, if there are enough of you and a gallant volunteer ferry man free to come, at other times in the summer too.



Muff (left) and Vicki completed their journey in seven hours.

First, Muff tells the story:

When was the last time you were up at sunrise and on your bike by 5.30am?

The morning of 18th June was a perfect summer morning with mist hovering over the golden fields which we had dreamt of in lush green Devon. Vicki and I caught the train to Harwich International and found ourselves navigating between huge articulated lorries which couldn't possibly see that two young ladies in their prime were there!

With a long day in front of us we had decided to treat ourselves to a five-star breakfast at Milsom's The Pier hotel. This has stunning views over the harbour and is a perfect place to while away an hour or two, to say nothing of the breakfast and freshly squeezed orange juice.

At 9am our launch approached the quay and we wondered how we would get our bikes on board! Luckily chivalry is not dead and a strong man lifted them both on with his little finger. Despite so much to watch, we were suddenly at Felixstowe and pushing our bikes up the shingle for the first leg of the journey.

We wound our way from Felixstowe beach, past the old Felixstowe College (now converted to private housing but retaining the named buildings) and wondered why the houses were named after Tudor martyrs. Surely the College must have been founded much later? The sun continued to sparkle on the sea to our right and, tempting as it was to either stop and relax on the beach or sample another cup of coffee from one of the delightful seaside cafes, we pressed on.

Journey across the Butley, rowed by Tim Dudgeon...



From Felixstowe we made our way north, across the Bawdsey ferry. It was a great privilege to be doing this with Vicki, who was welcomed warmly by all the ferrymen we encountered. Our route north took us down sandy lanes through sleepy Suffolk villages, onwards to the Butley Ferry, where the Association's Ferry Chief rowed us across the Butley, and upwards to Walberswick and Southwold and a welcome glass of Aspoll cider.

Despite three different

measurement systems, none of which were accurate, on the map, we were surprised by how much ground we had covered: an estimated 46 miles or so. A great achievement, especially for Vicki, post surgery to both feet.

Vicki writes:

Muff has given above the colourful side of our day; now for the nuts and bolts! The 5.25 am through train from Lowestoft to Harwich International is worth taking (cost varies depending on where you embark). There are only two such services a day. It does all the stops along the East Suffolk Line (which takes bicycles on all its services) and waits a good 15 minutes in Ipswich, but you never need to move your bike until you get to Harwich.

The ferry from Harwich Town to Felixstowe, (cost £4 per adult and £1 per bike) states on its website that you need to book 24 hours in advance, which, because it can be crowded, is worth doing.

The second ferry from Felixstowe Ferry across to Bawdsey (cost £3.50 per cyclist and bike) runs daily but you will have to lift your own bike into the boat – a ferryman with a bad back can't be much fun! And Butley Ferry (cost £2 per adult £1.50 per bike) is only manned (entirely by volunteers!) at weekends and public holidays.

It is small, a maximum of two people and two bikes in one crossing, so you might have to wait.

It's a long hack from Orford to Walberswick and we had chosen to cycle on the hottest day this year, which was glorious in some ways, but you must keep up the liquid intake. As for the route, particularly from Orford to Walberswick, one must follow faithfully the Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route 41 signs right from the start.

Cyclists must be aware of some deep sand patches on the more rural side roads which can be tricky with a narrow-wheeled bike. And the final ferry, at Walberswick (cost £1 per adult £1 per bike), is the jewel in the crown with a large rowing boat rowed by the glamorous young ferrywoman! Numerous people and bikes seem to fit into its almost elastic sides for it is a short distance across to Southwold.

Certainly a day really worth doing, although you should not dally too much along the route in order to make the 5 pm closing time at Walberswick. Depending on your age, bike and level of fitness I think you should allow between six and ten hours, allowing for a break or two for pit stops! If you are feeling extra energetic you could cycle the ten miles back to Darsham on the East Suffolk Line to return to the station from which you started.



Across the Stour...

...and across the Blyth.





On our stand at the Orford Flower Show are, from the left, Simon Barrow, Alison Andrews and John Grayburn. We want people of all ages to know, understand and enjoy and help protect the estuary. We would like more members. We would like more volunteers to help with all the work now and in the future. Do persuade your families, friends and neighbours to join and help the Association. Useful web sites: www.aldeandore.org www.aoep.co.uk

Summer Alde & Ore shows

This summer the Association had a presence at both the Butley and Orford Flower Shows. We wanted to be there to give our members a chance to chat about what we have been doing and what is happening with the estuary and to seek new members.

We have a tremendous membership and it is our numbers which help ensure that the Association's voice is listened to. So we are seeking to broaden our membership to cover more of the estuary communities and a wider age range. We very much enjoyed meeting old and new friends. Both the shows were very special events with a lot going on,

including some fun dog activities, as well as splendid produce shows.

The Association's Trustees would love to be joined by a few more willing volunteers to help us do more and to share the very interesting tasks we need to keep going. In particular we would like a Trustee who can be our Planning Watch leader. We need a new *Newsletter* Editor. We would like to refresh or strengthen our skills whether on estuary management matters, marketing, website management and general organisation. Please do let us know if you feel you would like to help.



The Annual Barbecue

August 21st saw a stunning day for the annual barbecue to celebrate the 25th year of the Association.

A lively breeze and sparkling sun made for a magical scene as the water rose up through the summer fresh reed beds and created a large, seemingly secret, lake a very short stroll from the barbecue. Those arriving by land came through fields up over the hill and stopped at the top to see, spread out before them, a green and blue brilliant map of marshes and water.

Those intrepid sailors coming up the river had their skills tested and needed to take sails down before coming into land. The water activity did not stop there. After lunch some members of the party, mostly the younger ones, were diving in and out of the river with great enthusiasm.

The barbecue site, with many thanks to the Watson family, has the wonderful backdrop of the former sand quarry, a deep golden curved cliff with sand martins swooping into its holes near the upper edge.

The barbecue was yet again seamlessly organised by Paul Walkden and family. It takes a lot of planning and time to set up and dismantle, so very many thanks to them. Again, as last year, there was very tasty and tender meat barbecued by Stannards and many adults as well as children favoured the sausages as well as the chicken and lamb.

Elizabeth Boyd and her splendid team provided a memorable feast of an enormous range of new and exciting salads. (Would anyone like to put together a salad recipe book to raise funds for the estuary? Please let me know.)

All this, and the glorious summer day, was enjoyed by over 140 people ranging in age from four to 84 and maybe a little bit more. It was a great example of how the estuary we seek to preserve provides such enjoyment for all generations.

Alison Andrews



Havergate Island and the Ness

It is time to catch up with all that has been happening with flood defences on Havergate Island and the Ness.

After the 2013 surge the RSPB immediately set to and mended their flood defence walls in the south of Havergate, called Dovey's Island. The approach they chose was to make the walls slightly lower but to have a better sloped profile. The top was bound with mesh through which grass and local salt resistant plants are growing.

Three years later, all is going well. As planned, the lower wall allows for overtopping in high winter tides as well as keeping the river in good shape. This has several beneficial effects as the lower wall allows a spill over without leading to damaging the walls, the lagoon behind (which you can see if you are on the deck of higher sailing boat or the *Lady Florence*) fills quickly with overspill water and that takes the pressure off the walls too and also provides flood relief to the estuary by taking on more water before the surge goes up the river. The water is also refreshed, improving the habitat for the wild life.

The RSPB have similar plans for the north part of the island, where walls will be strengthened by broadening and able to act as a spill-way at times of unusually high water levels. In this way the shape of the river is retained, the sailing can continue, habitats are renewed and there is flood relief.

On Orfordness, the National Trust are in the process of completing some 560 metres of a completely rebuilt wall - not patched wall - alongside Stony Ditch, as the earlier wall breached in 12 places in 2013. Again there is a bonus: the clay for building the walls is being taken out of the land in the Kings Marsh in such a way that further lagoons are being created providing more habitats as well as another area of flood relief for the estuary.

In the last year the damaged sluice at Pig Pail has been completely reconstructed. It can now cope better with emptying out inundations which arise both from overwashing from the sea and the river. And just to the south of Pig Pail, where the wall timber revetments were deteriorating, they have now been replaced with sturdy embedded props, with ongoing work this autumn to add defending rocks in front of the timbers. The top section of the wall has also been replaced with new compacted clay.

Going farther north the American Wall, which breached in 2013, has been repaired. While the repair was funded by the National Trust on whose land the wall lies, the work was done under the guidance of the new owner of Cobra Mist employing Andrew Hawes to get the task designed and done. It now provides both a flood defence wall to hold back the tidal water from the adjacent Upper Lantern Marsh and a spill way should very high surges come up the river

The result of the 2013 tidal surge on the American Wall, which has now been repaired. Photograph by Andrew Hawes.



The new wall in the south of Havergate Island, with the river on the right and the inner lagoon on the left.



thus providing more flood relief space in the estuary.

The repair incorporates sluices that allow water to be rapidly drained from the Cobra Mist Site and can, if necessary, be adjusted to allow water into the site at other times of the year to refresh the habitat. This multiple usage is, as well as being more sustainable, very helpful to the Alde and Ore Estuary Plan where regard must be had to wildlife habitat. It also keeps the river walls in good shape to keep the estuary as we know it in its historical shape for the benefit of all the human activities and wildlife.

Finally, a word about the iconic and much loved Lighthouse. It has proved very popular with the media this year following the well supported appeal for funds to carry out emergency repairs, with the BBC's *Coast* and ITV's *Tales from the Coast* both filming on the site.

Regular visits by the public, stewarded by members of the Orfordness Lighthouse Trust, have been very popular too. It remains to be seen how the structure fairs through the winter and whether it will be open to the public in 2017. Meanwhile contingency plans and preparations continue for the future preservation of artefacts from

the Lighthouse before it is ultimately consumed by the relentless approach of the North Sea.

Alison Andrews with thanks to Aaron Howe, RSPB, Grant Lohoar, National Trust, and Mike Finney, Cobra Mist Company.

The new sluice at Pig Pail.





Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership

Headlines for 2016

January–April The Estuary Plan finalised post public consultation at the end of last year.

May The Environment Agency placed rocks at the toe of the sea wall as a temporary measure to protect the sea wall. Tim Beach takes on Chairmanship of Implementation Group.

June The Estuary Plan was agreed by all statutory bodies. Upper Estuary Work started immediately on the Aldeburgh Marsh wall – a three-year project costing £1.96 million. Further modelling work required before the Snape upgrade agreed.

August Richard Davey took over as Chairman of the Funding Group: more than £10 million needs to be raised.

September Elizabeth Stanton joins Guy Heald (Chairman of The Estuary Trust), Richard Pipe and Brian Johnson as a Trustee. Jane Maxim, Sophie Warner, Sir Ian Collett and Tim Dudgeon join the Funding Group. SCDC agreed outline planning permission could proceed on the first tranche of enabling development sites.

October The Estuary Trust clarifies structure and governance for funding and contracting work next year.

November Work on the Snape Maltings wall is expected to start in the autumn when final modelling and consents for the scheme are obtained, followed by Snape Village wall in Spring 2017

The Partnership also

Asked for a review of the Shoreline Management Plan following the adoption of the Estuary Plan.

Had discussions with Natural England and agreed a monitoring plan to assess coastal squeeze over the coming years

Commissioned modelling (funded by the Alde & Ore Association) of the upper estuary for the upgrading of Snape walls: Iken flood cell moved up to third priority. Discussed pathways and cycle paths with Rights of Way team.

Challenged MMO licence issue and, in further discussions with Therese Coffey MP, as is still not finally resolved to our satisfaction. A meeting will be arranged in Defra with the MMO.

Purchased 500 Smartlift Skylift helicopter lifting bags for emergency breach repairs.

Created stock piles of clay around the estuary in readiness for upgrade work.

Prepared to interview architects to organize outline planning permissions for enabling development sites.

Commissioned a short film to show why we need to raise over £10 million to upgrade the estuary, presented by Nick Robinson and directed by Angie Mason, to be used in the launch of the fundraising campaign next year.

Natural England provided a presentation on the reasons why the Alde and Ore is again being considered as a new Marine Conservation Zone – public consultation next year; everyone must comment.

Amanda Bettinson
Partnership Secretary
www.aoep.co.uk



Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership

Aldeburgh Marsh Wall project – Flood cell 10

The Estuary Plan was finally agreed in June 2016 by all the statutory agencies and is now a material consideration in planning terms. Almost immediately work started in the Upper Estuary on the Aldeburgh Marsh Wall, a three-year project costing £1.96 million. As clay has to be dug from the marsh to build up and level the walls, it gives an ideal opportunity to landscape and enhance the marsh area for wildlife and wintering birds for which this area is so well known. £1 million still needs to be raised for this project alone.

Snape Maltings Flood cell 6 and Snape Village Flood cell 7

The next project will be to start work at Snape Maltings this autumn once consents and funding are agreed, and the north wall protecting Snape village will have additional reinforcement in the spring of 2017. This scheme for both sides of the river will cost £750K.

Funding Group

The Partnership and Estuary Trust are extremely lucky that Richard Davey has agreed to chair the Funding Group and he is setting up his team at the moment. It will be in the New Year that the Funding Group aim to launch the fundraising campaign.

Every one of us, not just landowners but locals, visitors and businesses, need to support this financially in any way we can. Mandy Bettinson is in the process of producing a fundraising film to show donors the estuary, the issues we face and how the walls will be upgraded. The Partnership is all extremely grateful to Nick Robinson and Angie Mason, who have given their time to produce this film.

Before and after: The Environment Agency has placed 5000 tonnes of large granite rocks, and many tonnes of shingle, to provide protection from the sea for many years to come.



Dudley Sheppard, RSPB honorary warden, right, accompanied by warden Lyndsey Record, describes work being carried out on habitat improvement at The RSPB's Boyton marsh.



The Association's walks

The Association organised three walks over the summer of 2016 to show different aspects of our estuary.

In Friday, 13th May, we visited the Stanny Farm Field Centre to complete the walk which we had started in 2015, visiting this time the sandy soil of the farmland with a SSSI crag pit and areas of alder carr. Highlights included a particularly vociferous Cetti's Warbler, which was heard but not seen, and a fine crop of broomrape close to the crag pit.

The walk ended with the by now traditional ham and salad lunch with thanks to all those who provided the wonderfully varied salads. Thanks also to Rodney West and Mervyn Miller, who guided the walk and provided so much information, and to Paul and Louise Cooke for giving us permission to visit the Centre and their land.

On Friday, 15th July, we left cars at the RSPB Hollesley Marshes Reserve car park behind Hollesley Bay Prison and drove to Banter's Barn at the entrance to the Boyton Marsh Reserve. From there we walked back along the river wall of the Butley and Ore Rivers with fine views over the Boyton and Hollesley Marshes which are being developed as reserves by the RSPB. The walk was guided by the RSPB's David Fairhurst and the Warden Lyndsey

Record and included a talk on the work being carried out on the Reserves to improve the habitat. We then repaired to the café at the Suffolk Punch Trust for a sandwich lunch before collecting the cars.

The final walk, on Friday, 2nd September, was based at Aldeburgh Golf Club which kindly provided parking and the sandwich lunch and also gave us permission to digress from the footpath while walking over the golf course.

Starting at the Golf Club, we took the footpath down to the Hosking Hide on Hazlewood Marsh, following the new track installed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Although the Marsh may not have looked at its best at half-tide, the increase in bird life was evident, the highlight being a large colony of spoonbills. We then hopped over the fence to Little Japan and continued through Blackheath Estate, by kind permission of Sir Michael and Lady Hopkins, before returning by footpaths over the golf course to the Golf Club.

Further walks are being planned for 2017 and details will be posted on the Association's website. If you have any suggestions of areas that you would like to visit, do contact us at walks@aldeandore.org.



John Grayburn, who organises the Association's popular walks.



On Stanny Farm Field Centre



On Hazlewood Marsh.



The bank corner at Blackheath.

A wildfowler's view

Simon Trinder observes the workings of nature

When the wildfowling season ends on 20th February, I tend to go into hibernation: I work as a wildlife artist and, as my head will be full of memories, I tend to spend weeks painting the birds I have been in often fruitless pursuit of. The birds don't just go away at the end of the season; the top of the Alde estuary fills with teal, wigeon, waders and other marshland birds.

An early morning walk along the river wall from Snape Bridge often produces something interesting! Last year I stood and watched an otter diving for crabs in the outfall from a sluice, his progress closely watched by a little egret. The water bulged as he pushed along the bottom in only a few inches of water and his enjoyment of the crabs was obvious!

Head back he crunched his way through each one. The agitated egret, only a foot or two from the otter who took not the slightest notice of him, was almost beside himself. I was only 20 yards away myself and got a lovely photo on my phone of the otter crunching a crab while Mr Egret looked on in disgust.

As the spring moves on, first the wigeon and then the teal



leave the estuary and return to their breeding grounds. At this time new birds attract my attention. Black tailed godwits start to colour up ready for courtship. A small nondescript little bird turns up in the bushes on the north side of the estuary; I start to walk farther in the evenings, hoping to hear the first nightingale singing again!

On my mobile phone I have a short film of a bush. It's a bit wobbly, but what it lacks in film quality it more than makes up with the wonderful song of a male nightingale singing to me from the middle of the bush. I never saw him move, even though I stood there for half an hour or so. Now, any time I want to I can listen to that nightingale, and often do!

I wonder how many more years I shall be able to walk down to those bushes and listen to him singing late in the evening. Will there still be nightingales coming to our coast? Their numbers are dropping and my worry is that one year I shall go there and no longer hear that beautiful song!

Of course bird populations wax and wane. Gadwall numbers are currently enjoying a real surge, not just in East Anglia but all up the east coast and beyond. There are good broods in Northumberland this year, I understand. A rather beautiful duck with lovely subtle colours, the white speculum and high-pitched quack giving them away as they rise.

If you keep your eyes peeled in spring you may see a shoveler-sized duck with a teal's head, a summer teal in fact! The garganey is a secretive duck, rarely seen out on the estuary but often not far away in the dykes and pools behind the river wall. I saw one a few weeks back on the Aldeburgh town ponds; he was soon up and away but a real treat to see!

I had gone down there to watch the cuckoo trying to get past the willow and sedge warblers' defences and lay her single egg in one of their nests. The warblers were having none of it however, and the cuckoo was sitting being told off in one of the willows there. As I watched another cuckoo appeared, diving fast at the first one - or at least that was my first impression. However I heard a thump of the two birds colliding and realised the second bird was a hobby. He had got hold of the cuckoo and it looked like curtains for the poor bird but she broke loose and was last seen weaving away across the field with the hobby in hot pursuit. Unfortunately I didn't see the outcome but I imagine it didn't go well for the cuckoo.

It's a shame that I lost sight of them as the pluckings

from a cuckoo would have made an interesting addition to my fly tying box. I always try to use the feathers from ducks I get in the season; the flank feathers from teal go to make my favourite sea trout fly, the teal blue and silver. Not that it would work in the murky waters of the Alde at Snape however.

There are sea trout there. I've seen them! But it's one thing knowing they are there and a different kettle of fish catching them. Perhaps the otter has the knowing of that trick! Anyway life's too short to spend it fishing for dreams, so I'll stick with the odd bass and mullet. There are still a few eels in the estuary but they are protected now and good thing too! Numbers have fallen for years now and, whereas small ones used to go for my bait, I now fish with far less disturbance from them.

Sadly that includes disturbance from bass as numbers are way down these days and its only now in July that I can take one and only one to eat! These days sea bass fillet is rather popular and excessive netting of a slow growing fish has led to a bad drop in numbers. Taking too much of a harvest of any wild resource is foolish and this is of course where wildfowling wins. It is very hard to make a bag of duck out on the estuary. The wildness of the birds and their surroundings ensure that fowlers usually manage enough for their own consumption and rarely sell or give away such hard won and excellent food.



The seasons turn and, with the end of summer, the duck head back to their winter quarters. Nature willing and, with a fair (strong) wind, I will be out in the estuary creeks waiting at dawn for the flight to begin again. I haven't missed the start of the season for many years; it's the start of the winter months as far as I'm concerned, with all the pleasure that brings.

Shingle Street surveys

The richness of life there

Shingle Street lies to the south of the mouth of the Alde and the Ore, a hamlet comprised of some 20 houses which sit tenaciously on the ridge overlooking the North Sea, while to the landward side are ditches and meadows all below sea level, guarded by the river banks and the sea wall from inundation.

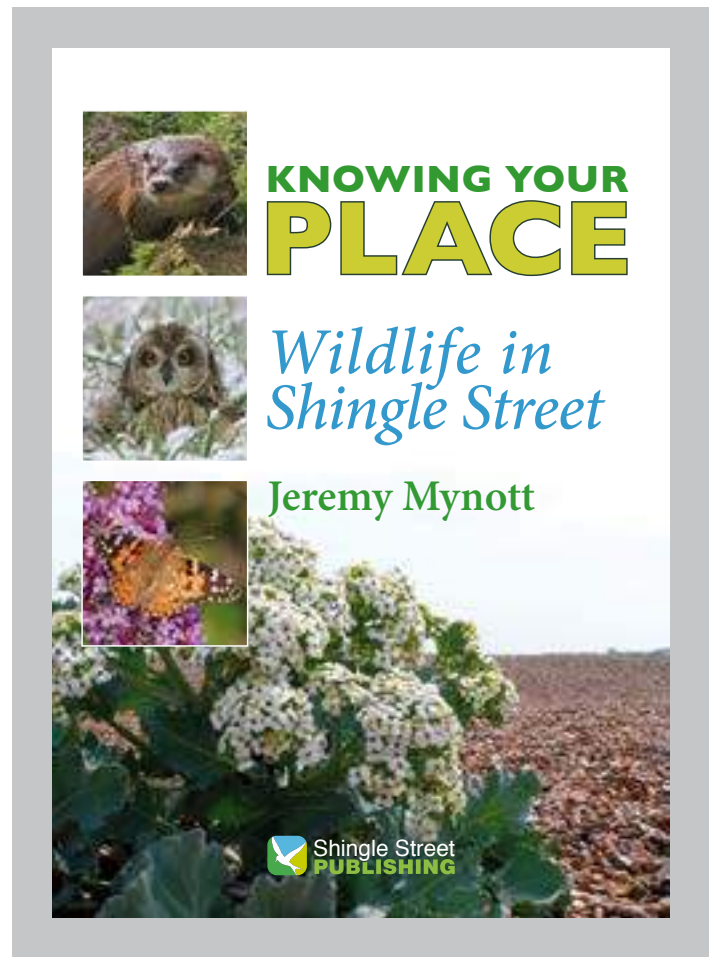
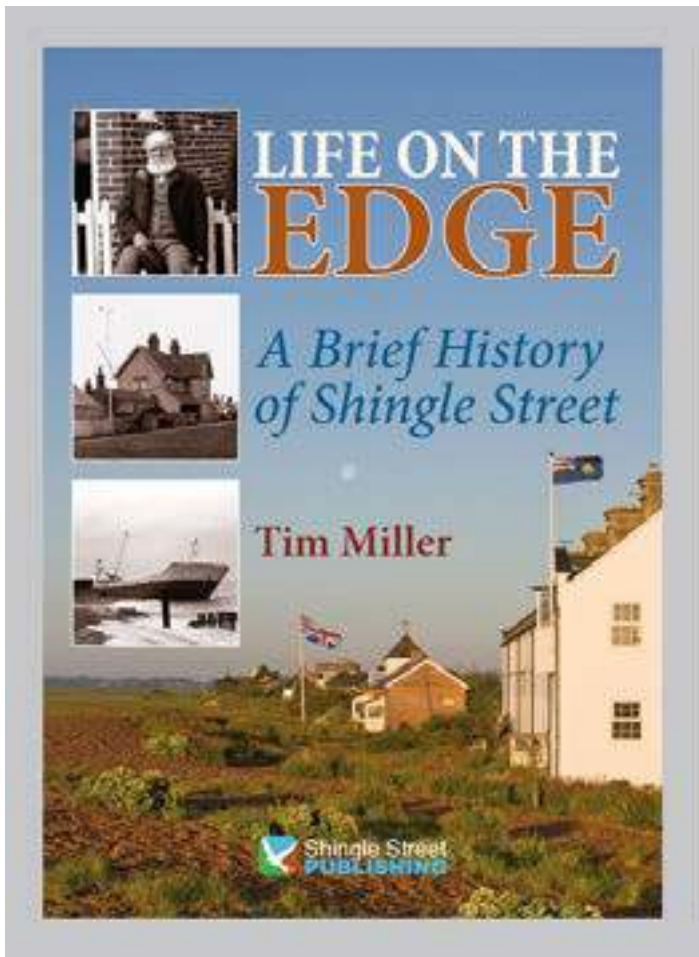
The fragility of the environment is never far from the thoughts of the residents. In 2013 and 2014 funding from Touching the Tide enabled some beach surveys to look closely at the structure of the flora on the beach. This prompted Jeremy Mynott with the idea of extending this survey into a biodiversity survey to examine in depth not only the flora but all the other inhabitants of Shingle Street (apart from the humans) from the small and furry to birds, bugs, butterflies and moths and anything else that could be found.

In *Knowing Your Place; Wildlife at Shingle Street*, Jeremy Mynott has produced a very clear, entertaining and well illustrated summary of this comprehensive survey

carried out in 2015 by facilitating experts, residents and volunteers. The findings of the survey endorsed what it is that is so special about Shingle Street and what would be lost not only locally but nationally if the environs of Shingle Street are not respected and cared for and are allowed to erode into the sea.

The survey, which can be read in full on the biodiversity website www.shinglestreetsurvey.org.uk, showed that we live among more than 1,300 species, which include 329 types of moths, 314 flowering plants, 222 different birds that are resident or pass through, 59 spiders, 58 molluscs, 48 beetles and the list continues.

Many people will be familiar with some of the more famous Shingle Street species including the avocets, little terns and short-eared owls; flowers like sea kale, sea pea, yellow horned poppy, thrift, campion and saxifrage; but the survey found that otters were visiting regularly, there are water voles, harvest mice, pigmy shrews, and excitingly it found that there are some unusual water



bugs and beetles that are so rare that they only have Latin names.

Jeremy Mynott reminds us that, with the loss of habitat, we lose our wildlife which is disappearing much faster than we realise. In recognising this in places like Shingle Street, we can help to conserve and regenerate our national heritage.

In addition to this booklet, Tim Miller has written *Life on the Edge: a brief history of Shingle Street*. This is a wonderful collection of information, anecdotes, pictures and photographs which have been accumulated and assimilated over decades by Tim Miller who has known Shingle Street all his life.

The book covers the period from the founding of Shingle Street in about 1800 through until the middle of the last century. His knowledge is generously shared with the reader, he has been assisted by the descendants of the pilots, fishermen and coastguards who had lived at

Shingle Street for over 150 years and will have known the hardships and privations of a remote place initially only accessible either from the sea or a two mile walk along the dykes from Bawdsey.

The Lifeboat Inn was the centre of the hamlet's life, which continued its traditional pattern until 1939 when the East Coast became part of a military zone. Then the inhabitants were given only one day to organise their evacuation, before the beach was mined. When some of the families returned after the war to their rebuilt houses, a new era had begun.

The booklets can be bought through the website or from the Aldeburgh Bookshop or from Browsers or the Woodbridge Bookshop in Woodbridge. All proceeds from the sales are for the conservation and preservation of Shingle Street and its environs.

Juliet Johnson

Contributions are always welcome!

Please send your observations, about the Association and its activities, suggestions for articles in the Newsletter and your photographs to the editorial team at info@aldeandore.org. Digital images should be submitted as jpg files and in a size of 1mb or more to guarantee print quality. The Newsletter is prepared and published twice a year by the Alde & Ore Association, registered charity number 1154583.

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