



# The Alde & Ore Association

Newsletter 51 - Spring 2019

## The Chairman's note

*It may have been winter but a lot has been going on!*

What a strange winter. There may yet be more surprises before we get to Easter. But, with the drier warm weather in February it has been possible to really enjoy the broad open walk on the recently refurbished part of the Aldeburgh wall, and indeed on all our estuary walls.

You will see from this Newsletter that there is always something happening in the estuary. It is rather like a swan, flowing serenely down its chosen path, excepting stormy times, while there are many of us working away to make sure it continues that way as far as possible. There is the welcome refurbishment of the northern walls of Havergate Island by the RSPB: these will make it more surge resistant and will also help the estuary as whole by providing a flood storage area and so flood relief low down in the estuary. Meanwhile as you will see from the pages of photographs of Shingle Street, it is an ever changing landscape

As you will see the AOEP has just held a well-attended open Drop-in and annual community meeting. It is good to report the plans are well on the way. It has taken a seemingly frustrating long time to get everything into place but it is worth it: there are so many steps, all interlocking which have to be moved forwards together, not least modelling of tides and surges to check that when work is done no other part of the estuary is at a greater risk of flooding even if only temporarily. But the plans are now falling into place allowing the extensive work to get flood permissions and grant to be completed and submitted.

It is encouraging, as Jane Maxim reports, that the fund raising towards getting our estuary defences into shape to be able to with stand overtopping in an extreme surge is now well under way. As every flood cell can impact on another the fund strategy is to get in the funds to cover the whole estuary and to do so over the 7-8 years of the programme of works. In this way while some parts have

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*Cake decoration by one multi-skilled ferryman! See page 13*

to be done first, the funds will be found for every part. And the plan to group flood cells for grant purposes, means that, the grant can be spread across interlinked cells and none left with no funding.

The news that the developer's Brick Dock appeal, for a development of 43 houses, many 2 ½ storey, looming at the back of the corner of the estuary, has been turned down is good news. We must all continue to watch out for any developments all around the estuary that might disfigure the rural look of the estuary and its banks and undermine its calm, tranquillity and unpolluted light which are among its great features.

Currently the energy and focus of all interested in our local area is inevitably concentrating on the proposals just to the north of the Estuary for Sizewell C and the Scottish Power Renewables. While not threatening the estuary directly yet, there are concerns. The installations at Sizewell will be there effectively in perpetuity so the forecast artificial promontory of the C building after several decades of the coast being worn away, as will happen anyway, may affect coastline sedimentary flows and so we have to put up a warning about the need for monitoring, to ensure our fragile shoreline is not affected or that mitigation can be undertaken. There is also the looming threat of excessive road traffic affecting the access to our area and enjoyment of it as two massive power projects thunder through with material for all the works for the next seven, maybe more, years so affecting everyone who lives and enjoys coming to our Alde and Ore area.

This coming summer we hope to see more progress on the review of the Shoreline Management Plan and move towards a public consultation. At the moment, essential statutorily required surveys on the environment and economics are underway.

Looking back, it is good to see that the Economic Survey of the Alde and Ore Area commissioned by the Association is being actively used to help make the case for more grant aid for our defences as well as by others to show other projects, such as the energy ones, as to what existing activity they should not undermine. The first such survey was in 2003/4. We repeated it 10 years later and looking to the future I hope the Association will have a further 20 year review in 2024. It is only by constantly updating the knowledge of the area and having established baselines from which damage or something positive can be measured that we can help safeguard our estuary.

In the same way the annual work of the River Defence



*And huge thanks to Derek Bingham, who has finally retired after many years of being the Newsletter editor.*

Team ensures that we know the state of the walls are constantly monitored and this enables us to point out problem areas to the Environment Agency and help them focus on where to put resources. And you will read of the rewarding monitoring of the Shingle Street habitats, their flora and fauna by the Shingle Street residents.

We are planning our usual walks this year but with no volunteers to help so far, we will be letting you all know the exact dates and details as soon as we can. We need a barbecue maestro too, if the annual barbecue is to take place. But, splendid volunteers answered the call to make hazel bundles to refurbish the saltings protection-20 January turned out to be a spring like day making it even more enjoyable. And 55 people entered Salter and King's marmalade competition raising funds for the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust. So the volunteers can be found. Simon Barrow's Marketing Group are thinking how our membership can be broadened and deepened.

The estuary is a place to enjoy and with maintained river walls securing the sailing channel, the walls allowing continued walks and the Butley Ferry providing a fun break for those walking along the estuary. There is so much to be done to steward our estuary so that it is there for the enjoyment of all. If anyone would like to help in however small a way please get in touch with us.

**I wish you all a wonderful summer and much enjoyment in, on and around our beautiful Alde, Ore and Butley rivers.**

**Alison Andrews**

# Shoreline south of Slaughden

As Environment Agency had undertaken early in 2018, the work to recycle the shingle from Sudbourne Beach back onto the Slaughden Ridge, south of the Martello tower, was completed last October. Then, unhelpful easterly winds almost immediately reduced some of the shingle ridge but, while much of the shingle ridge had been cut back the shingle is now on the shore forming a large platform still providing defence against battering seas.



*Monday 3 December 2018 14.28pm*



*Friday 11 January 2019 13.22pm*

The pair of photographs, taken by Christopher Johnson, here shows just how rapidly the shore line can change. In early December, on the left there was a steep shingle cliff from the ridge to the shoreline but with a broad swathe of grey shingle across the beach. A month later the sea had moved much of the shingle to the back of the beach raising it up to a higher level. Each visit there now shows movements depending on the dominant wind at the time. At the end of February the Environment Agency reported that the shore was filling but its engineers are keeping a very close eye on developments.

The report The Association commissioned from Professor Pie concluded that even if all the shingle bank was washed away to high tide level, and we are some way off that, it could take 20-40 years for a permanent passage by the sea to work its way through to the river. The coast has also been visited by the Shoreline Management Plan review team and engineers. We are awaiting the next stage of the Review when there will be a consultation probably in the summer.

**Alison Andrews**

## Wanted! Help the Association stand up for the estuary

**Newsletter Editor** - it is fun putting together news, past and present about the Alde and Ore and Butley rivers

**Website assistance** - we want to keep it lively and up to date but we need another volunteer or two to share the load

**Trustees** - If you care about the estuary, why not consider becoming a Trustee or helping with particular tasks

Please contact Alison Andrews 01728 452660 (aldeblackburn@aol.com)



# Havergate Island – Natural Flood Management

## **The new RSPB works completed just before Christmas 2018- Aaron Howe, Site Manager**

Along our coast we are witnessing an increased frequency of storm driven surge tides combined with higher tides. On Havergate Island we are finding that the sea walls around the island are eroding noticeably, paths are being washed away and the external walls are showing signs of damage. These are all creating weak points in the island's defences and the walls need to be continuously monitored and maintained. The aim of the now completed Natural Flood Management (NFM) project is to take some of the pressure off the outer defences during surge tides and storms by intentionally lowering a section of wall which allowing the site to fill at times of surges and so provide flood storage in a managed way.

After the tidal surge in December 2013, a 150m section of seawall breached into Dovey's lagoon (the lagoon farthest to the south). It was rapidly decided that instead of building the wall back to the previous standard we would instead intentionally lower, widen and reinforced it, creating a spillway (also known as a sill). After the construction of the Dovey's spillway and numerous overtopping events we proved the concept and decided to construct a larger spillway to protect the rest of the island.

Havergate is always going to flood as it has the lowest walls in the Alde-Ore, so the decision to build another, bigger spillway was taken to lessen the impact of future storm surges. The idea of these spillways is to control the overtopping by allowing the reinforced section to overtop first. This then fills the lagoons and helps prevent any major scouring or breaching occurring at higher, thinner parts of the seawall.

After mobilisation, the excavators quickly and efficiently lowered and re-profiled the wall to the rear of main lagoon. Once that was completed they moved onto the lagoons where they re-shaped the eroded old nesting islands, creating new larger features that should greatly improve and enhance Main lagoon. Whilst the excavators were on the lagoons our team started the tough job of laying out the wire netting on the lowered seawall. The netting stabilises the wall and once the grass has grown through it, it will be able to stand hours of overtopping. This was no easy task - the wire rolls were 2m in width

and 25m long. They were rolled out and pegged into the ground, then each roll was secured together using small stainless steel rings. Once we got going we were amazed at how (relatively) quick it was to achieve. With the RSPB team and our superb local volunteers (and some extra help from the Environment Agency) we completed it just before Christmas.

In total it took 3 months with 2 excavators, 2 tractors, 200 rolls of wire, 10 ferry trips and 2300 metal pins to complete the project. The project was part funded by the Environment Agency with a £50,000 grant awarded as part of Defra's £15m Natural Flood Management Programme, Landfill Tax Fund through a £46,990 grant awarded by Viridor Credits and finally by the Pamela Matthews Charitable Trust. Our vision for Havergate Island is to maintain the internationally important habitats and species secure and sustainable for as long as possible, whilst working with nature and climate change.

[havergate.island@rspb.org.uk](mailto:havergate.island@rspb.org.uk)



*Mobilising to Havergate Island*



*Mobilising to Havergate Island*



*Lowering the seawall*



*New breeding bird islands and finished spillway*





# Alde & Ore Estuary Partnership Report

## Encouraging Progress for Estuary Campaign

The Estuary Partnership held an afternoon drop-in at Snape Maltings on 27th February when the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB) presented their costs for the whole estuary upgrade scheme. The overall cost of £26.9 million includes a £5.1m contingency and covers some 44 kilometers of wall from Snape to Shingle Street, taking 7-8 years to complete. Costs are based on a design of an engineering and environmental standard which is required to attract Government funding (Flood Defence Grant in Aid).

The ESIDB, who are responsible for project managing the upgrade, have been advised that potentially £10.5million of Government funds could be applied for in view of the national assets in the Alde and Ore Estuary. These include Snape Maltings and a wealth of internationally recognised wildlife habitats and, in the lower part of the Estuary, extensive grazing marshes which provide fresh water to irrigate this nationally important vegetable growing area. However, there is no guarantee, even if the Environment Agency (EA) confirm eligibility for Government funding, that it will be allocated.

With a local economy of over £100million per annum, there is a huge economic and environmental benefit to managing the estuary defences for at least another 30 years, making allowances for both climate change and sea level rise in the future. Detailed modelling by HR Wallingford (an independent flood risk consultant) has provided a robust model for the estuary since the 2013 surge and confirms that the works can be delivered in line with the Estuary Plan. This is a pioneering adaptive approach providing over-toppable but resilient defences which will give some 300 homes around the estuary a reduced risk of flooding.

Two years ago the farmers and landowners raised a £3m loan to provide working capital for the project while other fundraising got under way. They have now resolved that in addition to being used as working capital this £3m will ultimately be donated in full to the fulfilment of the Estuary Plan. They have also donated another £1m in cash and pledges.

They also agreed, having discussed the issue with The Estuary Partnership and Trust, to withdraw their plans for



*Alison Andrews with Robin and D Alderson at the Drop-in enabling development as a mechanism for fund-raising for flood defences in the estuary.*

The Alde & Ore Estuary Trust, the charity responsible for local fund-raising, is confident that they have identified how to raise the funds (see their article on page 7) Provided Government funding is achieved, it is anticipated that £16 million needs to be raised locally over the next 7 years, of which over £4million has already been secured. This will include local levy funding, Community Infrastructure Levy, parish precept, local donors, landowners, charities and Heritage Lottery Fund.

**Amanda Bettinson**

Partnership Secretary

*[www.aoep.co.uk](http://www.aoep.co.uk): Visit the website for further information on costs and funding.*



*The Presentation Panel: David Kemp, Coastal Manager, Environment Agency, Professor Jane Maxim, Trustee and Funding Committee Chairman, Giles Bloomfield, Eastern Area Manager ESIDB, Sir Edward Greenwell, Chairman AOEP, Karen Thomas, Partnership and Strategy Manager, ESIDB*

# Alde & Ore Estuary Trust

## £1 million raised for the Save Our Suffolk Estuary campaign

Following a successful application to the Garfield Weston Foundation (GWF), a family-founded grant making trust, a donation of £400,000 has been received, taking our fundraising total since the launch of the Save Our Suffolk Estuary campaign in 2017 to over £1million. GWF has also pledged a further £100,000 as matched funding – a target for this year. The GWF grant will be used to fund the work of the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board, who are already working on the business case for the upper estuary (Aldeburgh, Snape and Iken flood cells) which will be submitted to the Environment Agency in Spring this year.

The Trust is only ONE source of funding for this project. The landowners and farmers of the estuary have provided £3 million, held by the IDB, given £300,000 in cash and have pledged a further £700,000 already. The pie chart below gives an indication of sources of money and what money is available now.

The Trust is also preparing other bids to charitable foundations which should be ready to go in later this year. In addition, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has finally launched their new funding programmes. The Trust is planning an application to the HLF, which is likely to take

at least 18 months to prepare.

**Fundraising events**, organised by people in the estuary community, over this winter, have raised almost £3500 and include sales of Orford honey. Christmas cards were produced by the team at Aldeburgh Bookshop, (artist Helen Napper, writer and illustrator Emma Chichester Clark, Orwell Press and Herring Bone Design,). Helen also donated half the proceeds from the sale of her wonderful painting, used on one Christmas card design, of swans flying over the Aldeburgh marsh. The Trust hosted the gala opening night of A Crag Path Christmas on 27th December at Aldeburgh Jubilee Hall, together with a surprise appearance from actor Tim McInnery (aka Captain Darling from Blackadder).

**Two big Trust events for 2019** are a FLOTILLA on July 28<sup>th</sup>, swimming, paddle boarding and kayaking with the tide from Aldeburgh to Orford (booking available soon at [www.aoetrust.org](http://www.aoetrust.org)) and the return of the hugely successful BIG SUFFOLK QUIZ on Friday November 22<sup>nd</sup> at a pub near you.

Finally, there is a Q&A with Karen Thomas, Partnership & Strategy Manager, East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB) in the Trust Spring newsletter at [www.aoetrust.org](http://www.aoetrust.org) where she discusses the role of the IDB and the plans for the works to the estuary defences.

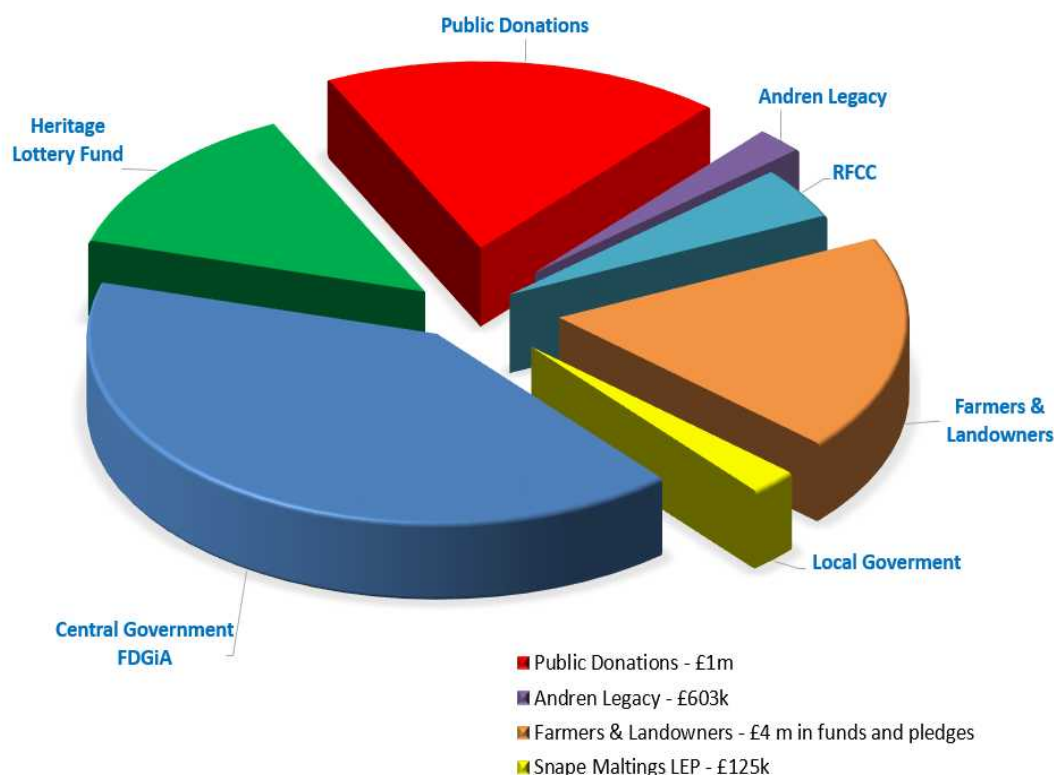
The Trust is hugely grateful for all the support and donations received from you.

If you would like to volunteer to organise an event or use your skills to help develop the Lottery bid, do make contact with us at

[info@aoetrust.org](mailto:info@aoetrust.org)

Jane Maxim

Trustee, The Alde & Ore Estuary Trust





# The Changing Shoreline at Shingle Street

The shingle formation as Shingle Street changes every year, if not from every storm to the next. These photographs show just part of the amazing variety thrown up by the sea.



October 2007

*Shingle Street (c)*

© Mike Page



*The Surge December 2013*

© Mike Page



July 2013

Alison Andrews



25 February 2019

Brian Johnson



*The Lighthouse in the distance*  
26 February 2019

Brian Johnson



February 2019

© Mike Page



January 2019  
*RNLI on exercise*

Brian Johnson



*View up the Estuary running into the sea at Shingle Street*  
17 February 2019

Christopher Johnson



# Charting the local flora and fauna

## Shingle Street update 2018

Anne Page, Shingle Street Settlement Company Ltd

Readers will know that our Site of Special Scientific Interest stretches along the coast from Bawdsey to Aldeburgh, inland to Snape. It includes Orfordness, Havergate Island, the Butley, Ore and Alde Rivers and of course Shingle Street.

The rare and delicate habitat contains mud-flats, salt marsh, reed beds, vegetated shingle and coastal lagoons of special botanical and ornithological value. The site also contains the second largest and best preserved area of vegetated shingle in Britain — at Orford Ness and, in recent decades, at Shingle Street.

Since 2012, volunteer residents of Shingle Street have been charting this vegetation and associated fauna in the immediate area, undertaking four professional surveys, guided by our resident expert, Jeremy Mynott, and under the professional direction of locally-based ecologist, Toby Abrehart.

The most recent study, published in 2018, shows a marked spread of sea pea and sea kale, with continued thriving colonies of sea beet, curly dock, yellow-horned poppy and yellow stonecrop.

The most striking finding is in the spread of various kinds of grass, across the middle of the beach and towards the houses. This indicates a general deposition of soil. Skylarks are now using the new habitat, and are singing and nesting over the shingle banks.

Human disturbance is a continuous threat to this fragile, harsh plant environment, and to nesting birds, which can also include little terns and ringed plovers. Fortunately the worst effects of trampling by visitors continue to be restricted to broad corridors from the car parks at either end of the hamlet, directly to the shoreline. These corridors are almost entirely bare of plant life, as are the narrow strips on either side of the famous shell line. Wind-surfers in the northern bays

at the mouth of the River Ore keep the shifting beaches there from vegetating, and will have to be monitored as their numbers increase.

So far, the transit habits of the many visitors to the beach remain quite predictable and there seems as yet to be no need for more elaborate signage, fencing or cordoning.

The collage photograph below gives a taste of the richness of wildlife- a bird, two beasts and flora- at Shingle Street.

*From top left, the linnet, sea lavender, lichen rich shingle, Orfordness Light House from Shingle Street, thrift, common blue caterpillar, sea anemone, small cord grass*



# The history of the river walls

## Over 800 years of building, rebuilding and maintenance

*This article owes thanks to the Aldeburgh and District History Society for allowing us to draw on the research of John Jamieson in 2004/05 on the history of the river walls around Aldeburgh. To this other knowledge has been added but you will see there is still some interesting research to be done on all the river walls to fill in the gaps and the uncertainties.*

Around 5000 BC the River Alde flowed directly into the sea at Slaughden. With longshore drift the spit gradually extended taking the river south with it, so that by 1601 the Orfordness spit was very much the shape it is today, reaching just over a mile south of the Butley River (John Norden's maps). But it went on growing as 200 years later in 1812 the spit reached its most southerly extension to Bawdsey Cliffs. Then, river flows, storms or sea movements changed the river's exit to the sea which moved north again to around Shingle Street and the end of the spit as we all know it, remains fairly mobile around there today.

## The first walls

Our estuary landscape with its distinctive river walls and marshes behind began its existence over 800 years ago.

The early river, like the Thames before it was contained, was shallower and wider. In 1169/70 and 1170/71 we have the first records, set out in the Pipe Rolls, of river walls being built to safeguard rich grazing pastures from what had been saltmarsh for sheep to feed the workers building Orford Castle "on closing off of the Marsh at Orford and on digging out earth of the same Marsh £4 11s 7d". The reclaimed land was named the King's Marsh and was on the other side of the river with the animals being ferried across. After that it seems the local Priors took on the role of building river walls, being among the chief land owners in the area. It is thought that the embankments on the Butley river may have been undertaken in the 1200s by the Butley Priory while in 1307 the Austin Friars began reclamation of Sudbourne Marshes "with permission", presumably, but we don't know, from the Crown.

## Early wall management- precursor to Environment Agency?

In the 15th century Prior William of Butley was appointed Commissioner for Walls and Fosses as he was the leading land owner of drained marshland in the area. In the 16th century surveyors were appointed to inspect the various dykes and sea defences by the Orford Commission of Sewers. In 1600 walls to protect the Lantern Marshes were built by Meuse Martin.

## Less flooding at Orford leading to more near Aldeburgh

Moving north up the estuary from Orford, it is thought that rising sea levels in the 13th and 14th centuries and the knock on effect of embanking the marshes lower down the river, meant that the Aldeburgh Marsh tended to flood. This was at a time when the wealth and population of Aldeburgh increased from the late 15th century. The river walls were therefore extended to around Aldeburgh.

The first record in relation to the Aldeburgh Marshes is the 1500 lease by John Stokes, Prior of Snape, of a "Mershe salt in the Southhithe containing 30 acres or thereabouts for 8 years at a

yearly rent of 3s 4d" to Robin Dobbys who had to wall and ditch it- Dobbys ditch is still very much there today running behind the Demon Boatyard land. This ditch shows up in a map of 1575-1600.



*Dobbys ditch 500 years on*

The Lantern marshes are mapped by John Norden with the owners or tenants' names also so were well established by 1601.

Moving inland from the Slaughden area, in 1603 Edward Green Skaville was paid £300 by the Corporation to complete walling round the North Marsh by building a North Wall.

## Moving up the estuary

It is thought that the walls beyond Brick Dock round to Hazlewood and beyond were from mediaeval or late mediaeval times, but also some references say 16th or 17th century. The enclosed freshwater pasture was very valuable as the sandy uplands above the estuary, now the golf course and near the abandoned Hazlewood Church, were not that productive.

On the opposite side of the river at Stanny Farm, the walls were either built or greatly strengthened around 1800 when there was a national drive to produce more food in England given the very real threat of a possible invasion from Napoleon Bonaparte. Indeed, the red brick barn near the river on Stanny Farm dates from about 1805, and along with Martello Tower built around 1815 are the evidence of the challenge he presented.

Moving to the head of the river at Snape where, like Aldeburgh, there was a growing population, some of the walls were built in the early 16th century. Around 1526, the "Dissolution survey of Snape Priory" records that at Snape about 37% of the Priory's land was liable to flooding. Of the 99 acres of marshland, 28 acres had been drained and turned from fen into pasture.

Thereafter from the 17th century onwards, the flood defence activity was not one of creating walls but of maintaining them.

Who looked after the walls- clearly in the early life of the walls it was the Crown, then the Priors that took the lead. Then it was a mix of landowners and the local corporation. From the 19th century walls were in the charge of the East Suffolk and Norfolk



River Board, financed by local authority and governmental grants. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it fell mainly to the Government bodies, now latterly in the form of the Environment Agency, although there is not a statutory responsibility to mend everything.

### Wall structure and maintenance

One piece of research suggests that the early river walls were built of a core of impervious Norwich, Red or Coralline Crag, dug out from Crag Pit, covered with soil from the drainage ditches and bound together with couch grass. Subsequent repairs to breaches in the walls, as in 1547 at Sudbourne and in 1625 at Aldeburgh, used timber broom and earth. However, the evidence found when walls are repaired that the walls were essentially built of clay won from ditches/dykes dug out in the land behind the walls. Another source comments that crag is seldom found near walls and apart from being a weak permeable material, moving heavy weights of rock in those days would have been a problem. Further, there is evidence all along the walls of a ditch being dug immediately behind them to provide the necessary clay to build them, although after 1953 in most places that was filled and a new delf dug further back. In some places a manmade ditch can also be seen along the front

Moles were a problem, again indicating the walls were largely of clay. There are records in 1647 of payment to Edward Newman of 16s per annum for killing moles. In 1875, 200 years later, James Plant was paid 30s for the same task in his first year and 25s in subsequent years.

Keeping ditches clear was also a continuing task. In 1707 a man was employed for £3 - 10s twice a year on each 'drift day' for "scouring and keeping clean the ditches and mowing thistles", while in 1875 Charles Ellingwood of Hazlewood was employed "to cut and drain the ditches at the sum of Threepence per Rod (16 ½ feet), and cut Growths and attend to the Eyes at the sum of Twopence per Rod, attend to run the sluices at the sum of One Pound per annum" - he signed the contract with an X, his mark.

In 1820 a consultant surveyor, reporting to the Burgesses of Aldeburgh, gave a picture of the Marshes after a period of neglect with 20 of the 195 acres having fallen to saltmarsh or being covered in water. "The marshes by not having the Ditches kept open and cleared of weeds and Mudd are so full as to impede the water draining down to the Sluice. There are about 1000 rods of the Ditches all wanted to be done." Things were improved. By 1842 the Town owned 198 Acres of Marshland let for £240 a year.

Meanwhile, looking after the walls was clearly a full time occupation. In around 1860 the population census lists the occupation of some men living in Orford as 'wall man' - presumably the same might be found in Aldeburgh records.

An Orford contact has said that around the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, farm workers would be employed in the winter to install or restore the wooden stakes on the river's shallow shores to protect the saltings or salt marshes, partly from erosion and partly as these were used for special pasture. All along the river Ore and up into the Alde there are now many stakes seen at low tide projecting into the muddy shore, witnessing once active pasture and salt marsh management. Now the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership has a number of projects seeking to keep or store the saltmarshes which are a valuable flood defence in themselves as well as providing for carbon sequestration and a multitude of

habitats for birds, animals, flowers and small fish.

Once land was walled and drained, the marsh shrinks, may be more than a metre, and indeed the land in the Aldeburgh Marshes is now well below sea-level. There were windmills to lift the water from the marsh drainage ditches to the tidal sluices- there is a picture in the Moot Hall museum of one on West Row Reach, which is also marked on an 1884 map beside the sluice. Were the walls to breach permanently there would only be mud flats.

### Loss of some walls

In the 1930s and 40s it seems that the walls just downstream from Snape, once forming a pathway into Snape, were gradually eroded as the breaches made in the South wall were left unrepaired, resources not being found to repair them, so pasture was lost, just as in the Blyth River in the 1950s.



*Upper Alde estuary-remnants of river walls © Mike Page*

The 1953 surge saw multiple breaches in the river walls. In 1953 a clay core was used to repair the West Row breach and again after the 2013 breaches clay was used at Iken, Ham Creek and Snape village. Clay remains the main building material for walls. The current estuary plan will as far as possible find clay in this way and combine it with enhancing the habitat behind.

The Hazlewood walls were breached in the 2013 storm surge and the main land owner the Suffolk Wildlife Trust has taken advantage of the breaches to encourage the development of intertidal habitats and hopefully salt marshes.

### Summary

The care of the estuary landscape, the building of clay walls, their renewal and maintenance is a long tradition going back over 800 years. It has given us the distinctive landscape, of walls and a winding tidal and navigable river, many varied habitats and consequently a myriad of wild life now recognised by the large number of national and international designations as an area requiring protection and conservation, many walks and a wonderful countryside to live in. It is a stewardship that each generation needs to carry forward.

*Any further research or additional facts on the history of river walls would be very welcome.*

**Alison Andrews (with particular thanks to John Jamieson).**

# The Butley Ferry in 2018

*by Ferry leader Roy Truman*

*New jetty, record passenger numbers and 25 years to celebrate!*

2018 was memorable for a major renovation of the Gedgrave jetty, a very hot summer and the 25th anniversary of the reinstatement of the ferry service.

Continuing the improvements to the infrastructure of the ferry, the major task for 2018 was to rebuild the Gedgrave jetty to create a mud-free approach to the boat. The actual work was completed by a handful of volunteers working for six days spread across the early part of the season. What they accomplished was a thing of beauty which has been so successful in use through the season that the same work will be undertaken on the Capel bank in 2019.

The good weather throughout the 2018 season meant that the ferry had its busiest year so far with about 1000 passengers, 400 of them being cyclists. Surprisingly (or maybe not!), July and August were less busy than the previous year. There were certainly fewer walkers, probably due to the heat. That said, the busiest day of the year was the middle Saturday of August when, after being greeted by waiting passengers as I arrived for my ferry duty, I didn't get out of the boat, other than to load and unload cycles, for the first two and a half hours.

Fortunately, my wife was with me for the day to meet and greet passengers, take the fares and deliver drinks to me on the boat. With around eighty walkers and cyclists using the service that day, the time and effort of the volunteers, and the improvements they made to the jetty, were never more appreciated.

At the annual ferryman's lunch, we celebrated the with a slice of cake and raised a glass to the vision of Bryan Rogers and Graham Hussey who reinstated the ferry 25 years ago, in 1993. Stephen Worrall was awarded the "Ferryman of the Year" prize for his organisation of the work parties to do the rebuilding and transporting the tons of material needed for the jobs. The "prize" for "Ferryman of the Year" is a framed sketch of the ferry on the river by Jamie Bruce-Lockhart and it is passed on each year. Each passenger on the ferry is also given a postcard, a watercolour sketch of the ferry by the same artist. Sadly Jamie Bruce Lockhart died in 2018 and so a glass of port was raised in his memory. His postcard will continue to be handed out to our customers. Our thoughts are with his family.



*The new Gedgrave jetty at high tide*





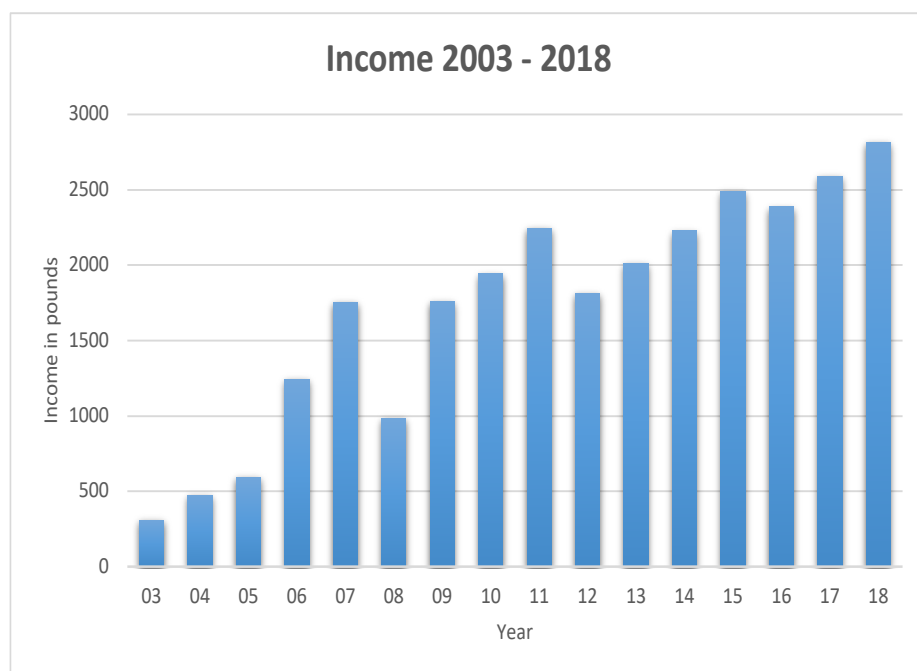
*Sunny days - too hot for most walkers but it is always refreshingly cooler by the river*



*The new Gedgrave jetty at low tide - the new walkway helping to avoid muddy feet and protect the saltings from trampling*



# The Butley Ferry- facts and figures



The current boat was acquired in 2006 enabling cycles to be carried more easily.

In 2003 there were 191 passengers and no cycles.

In 2018 there were 1000 passengers and 400 cycles.

It was quite fitting that the 25th anniversary of the reinstated ferry should be the best year yet. July and August, when we had the long, hot summer weather, were not as busy in 2018 as they were in 2017, perhaps it was just too hot for people to walk. All the other months were much busier than in previous years, so overall we still managed to have our best year yet.

The ferry is run entirely by volunteers who have numbered between 17 and 20 at any one time, and take their stints on a rota they agree. Potential ferrymen or women are all assessed as to their proficiency in all aspects of the ferry tasks, including rowing and boat handling, as operating on this interesting river is a skilled task. If anyone is interested please contact Lead Ferry Trustee Roy Truman, email [rsstruman@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rsstruman@yahoo.co.uk)

*The ferry is there for all of us - every weekend from Easter to mid-October and Bank Holiday between 11am and 4pm, weather permitting- do try it. There are circular walks and bicycle rides: for ideas see the Butley Ferry on [www.aldeandore.org](http://www.aldeandore.org).*



*Upper Alde - for more walks see page 15*



# AOA    AOEP    AOET - what is the difference?

These three organisations all work for the good of the estuary but have different functions:

**AOA:** Alde and Ore Association: a membership organisation concerned with All matters to do with preserving the Alde, Ore and Butley rivers for the benefit of the public. Following its motto "Your Voice Your Estuary" it works by making the voice of the river heard on many issues ranging from government policies to planning applications and ways to ensure people can enjoy the Alde and Ore landscape. It is represented on the AOEP.

**AOEP:** Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership: its purpose is to oversee the flood defence strategy for the estuary as a whole including the rolling programme of works to protect the estuary, its communities, houses, economy and environmental features, and ensuring that the estuary is treated as whole, maintaining the integrity of the estuary.

**AOET:** The Alde and Estuary Trust is the Treasury of the estuary. The Trust takes the lead in fund raising for the estuary plan. It is an incorporated charitable organisation responsible for handling all the money collected in for river defences works.

## Forthcoming events

**Saturday 6 April 2019** Alde and Ore Association Annual General Meeting at Thorpeness Country Club 10am for 10.30 start with guest speaker John Curtin Environment Agency Executive Director of Flood and Coastal Risk Management on 2019 – THE YEAR WE TOOK CLIMATE CHANGE SERIOUSLY?

**Walks:** this summer a walk around Havergate Island is being planned with RSPB.

We would be taken by boat to the Island and then be able to see the reserve and all its wildlife close too. Details will be put on the Association website as soon as possible.

A further walk near the west side of the Alde above Slaughden is being explored.

**More ideas:** please, is there any part of the estuary any one would like to explore, or revisit? Please let us know.

**Walk organisers:** is there an individual or group who would like to organise a walk? If there are two or three teams, each one organising a different walk, that way, one walk is not too onerous and could be fun. The Association can help with the administrative details but it would be great to have walk designers and leaders.

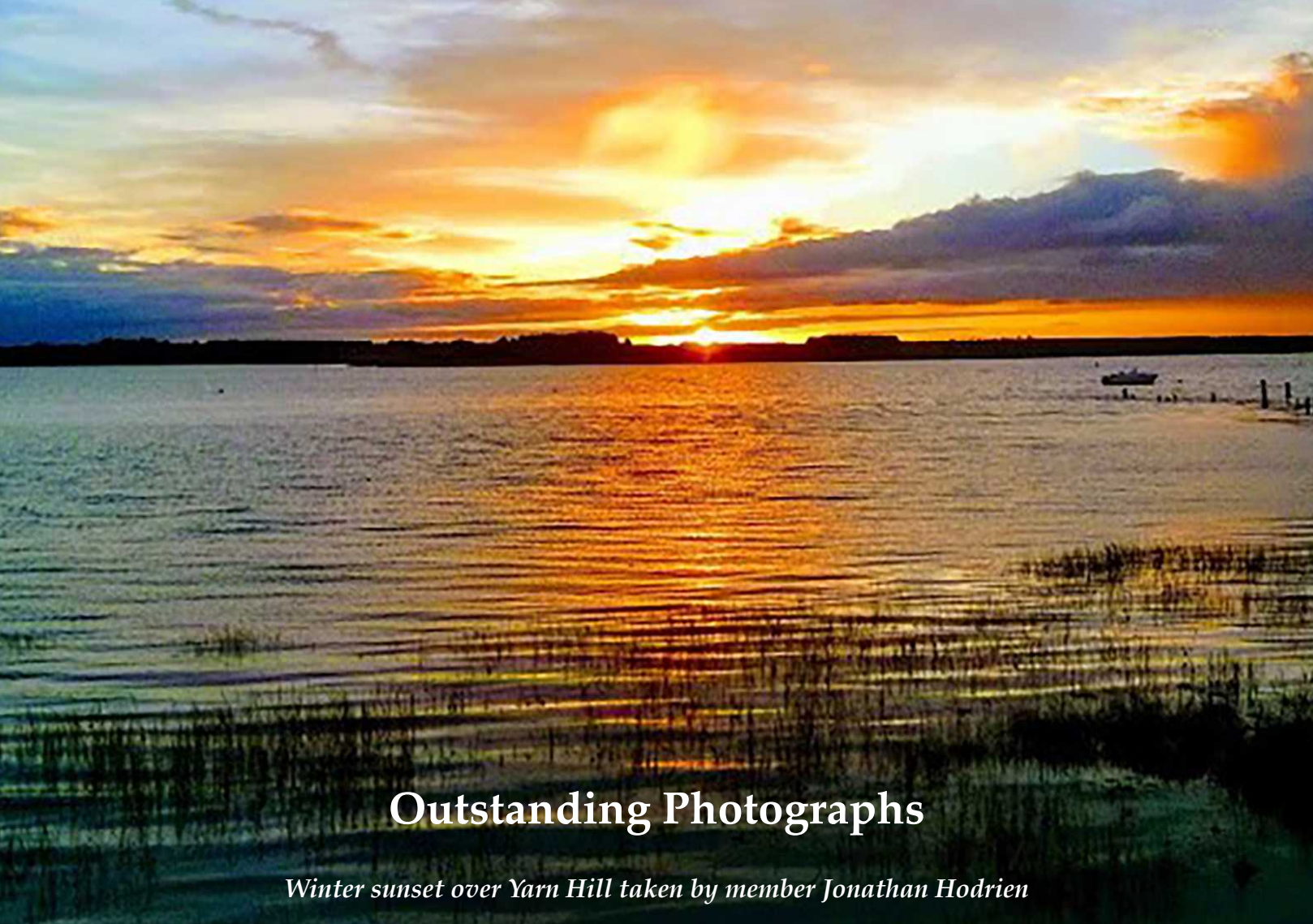
**Annual Barbecue:** We have a site in the field near Brick Dock and possible dates but no-one has yet volunteered to organise the event (including marque, barbecue, salads team, drinks, car-parking and signage). We could hire an event organiser but obviously the cost will be greater. If a solution can be found the details will be put on the web site.

Website: [www.aldeandoreassociation.org](http://www.aldeandoreassociation.org)

### Alde and Ore Estuary Trust:

- Fund raising **Flotilla** on Sunday 28 July starting at AYC down river to Orford
- **Pub quiz:** return of this very popular fund raising event on 22 November 2019.

For details of each of these and entry see [www.aoetrust.org](http://www.aoetrust.org)



## Outstanding Photographs

*Winter sunset over Yarn Hill taken by member Jonathan Hodrien*

In the last Newsletter we invited members to send in photographs of the estuary which they were very happy to have taken. We would really like more so that each month we can feature one on the website and, at the end of the year, a prize will be awarded to the most outstanding.

## 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](mailto:info@aldeandore.org). Digital images should be submitted as jpg files and in the size of 1mb or more to guarantee print quality.

The Newsletter is prepared and published twice a year by the Alde and Ore Association, registered charity number 1154583. Our thanks go to the authors and to Alison Andrews, Amanda Bettinson, Aaron Howes, Brian Johnson, Christopher Johnson, Shingle Street Settlement Company and Roy Truman for the use of their photographs. Also to Mike Page for allowing the Association to use his photographs which are copyright for this Newsletter.

Please note that signed contributions may not reflect the views of the Association as a whole.

## Note from the Chairman – Now is the time to donate!

Professor Jane Maxim, Trustee and Funding Group Chairman said “We are delighted that Garfield Weston Foundation has given us a grant of £500,000 of which £100,000 is for match funding. A further charity application will be made this Spring, and we are now beginning to explore a Heritage Lottery Grant application for the lower estuary. We are poised to raise considerable funds, but we will need further support, energy and commitment from the local community”.

I encourage all members if they haven't already done so, to consider donating to The Estuary Trust, which you can do online at [www.aotrust.org](http://www.aotrust.org). A monthly standing order for a number of years ensures vital funds are available to get work under way. Thank you. AA