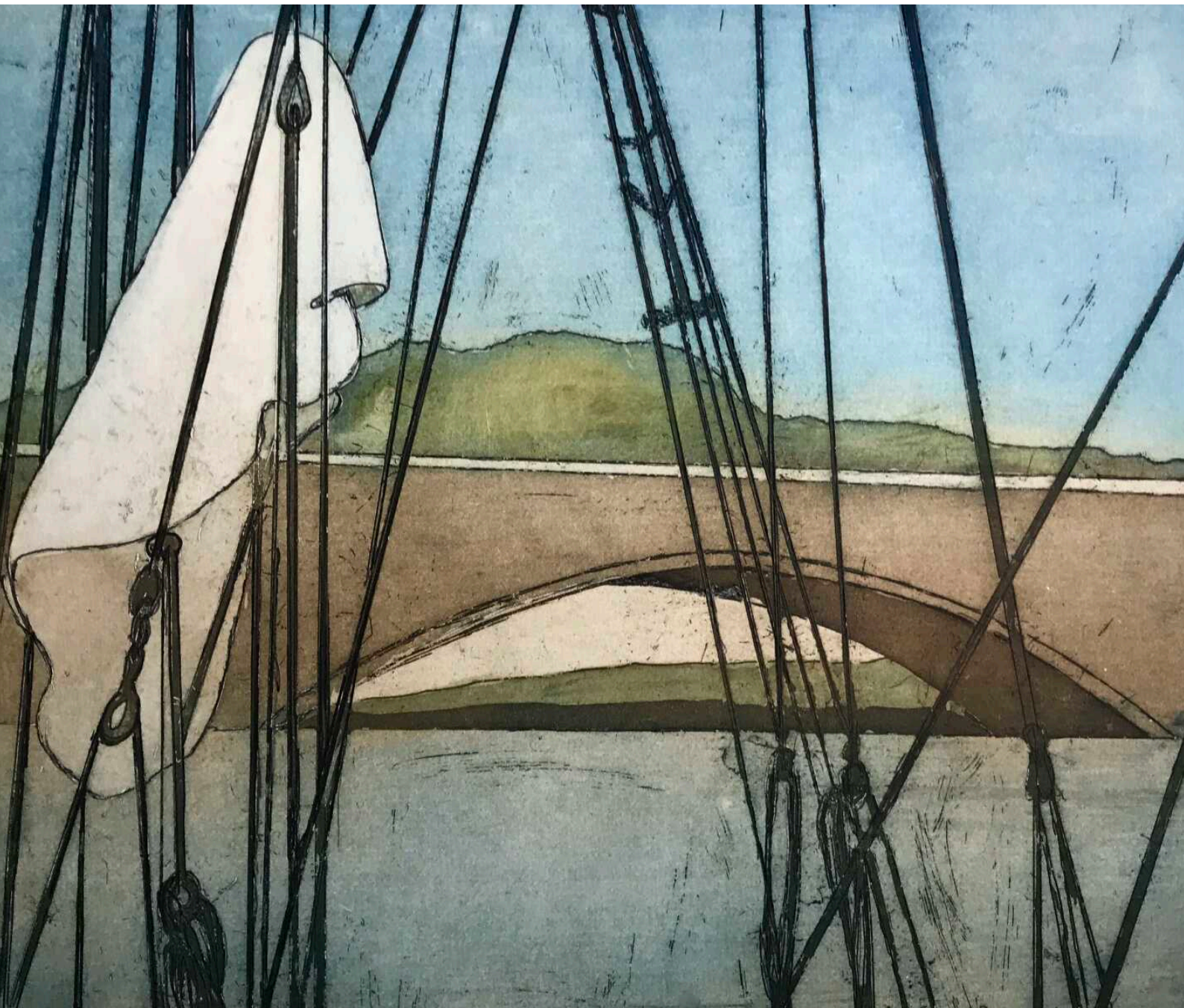




The Alde & Ore Association

Newsletter 56 - Autumn 2021



30th Anniversary Issue

'Plough and sail, forest and heathland, marsh and river all make up this special stretch of Suffolk, as do, most importantly, the places and people who live and work here.'

Chairman's message, Alde & Ore Association Newsletter, no. 1 August 1991

Your Voice - Your Estuary

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Editor's introduction

Welcome to this bumper 30th Anniversary newsletter.

This issue brings you the cheering results of the Photographic Competition, beautiful prints from Sudbourne Printmakers, the wonderful news about Butley Ferry's Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, interesting features on the demise of Orfordness Lighthouse and the Upson boatbuilding story, and several articles written especially for this celebratory issue on what the estuary means to different people. There are some sobering thoughts on the importance of looking after our natural surroundings from James Alexander, and some good news about spoonbills. Our Chairman has given an overview of some of the past frustrations and successes of the river wall defences, and we've included some historical pieces from Newsletters gone by, but we haven't dwelt in the past for too long.

Our special thanks go to everyone who made time to write something for this issue and to Sudbourne Park Printmakers for enhancing the pages with their wonderful prints.

Please let us know if there is a topic you would like to see in future newsletters – or why not write something yourself or send some photos for the Spring issue? Until then, I hope you enjoy reading this one.

Monica Allen

An estuary glossary

The **Alde and Ore Association (AOA)**, set up in 1991, is a membership-based organisation concerned with *all* matters to do with preserving the Alde, Ore and Butley rivers for the enjoyment of the public and benefit to all and works by making the voice of the river heard. (All matters include everything from seeking to influence government policies that may affect the estuary, from planning proposals to activities such as the ferry, walks, walk booklets and more.)

The **Alde and Ore Community Partnership (AOCP)** is the guardian of the estuary plan to keep the river walls, and therefore all the life of the river that depends on it, in good heart. It has a

key role in communicating to all the communities in the estuary, particularly through the parish councils, about what is going on. The AOCP is the successor to the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership (AOEP), set up by Suffolk Coastal District Council, Estuary Planning Partnership and the AOA in 2012, which had completed its initial task of developing a coherent flood defence plan.

The **Alde and Ore Estuary Trust (AOET)** is the Treasury for the estuary. It is an incorporated charitable organisation responsible for handling all money collected in for the river defence works and it also takes the lead on fundraising.

Cover: *The Bridge at Snape (detail) Michael Flint. Etching. Michael is a former Chairman of the Alde and Ore Association. The Association's logo incorporates Snape Bridge.*

Chairman's notes

Taking stock after 30 years

In its thirtieth anniversary year I have been casting back through the Association's life. It has always been living in stirring times with a seemingly endless flow of matters to be addressed, whether planning, government strategies, policies formation and coordination of groups and bodies concerned with the river to achieve a coherent approach and events to have fun and meet up with friends and others who love the river. And all the while so many members have undertaken local research and come up with fascinating accounts of how things came to be in the estuary.

On the fifth anniversary the first Chairman wrote that, while he was not sure whether the Association was a voluntary organisation or a conservation body (a classification in a rural White Paper), there was a realisation that groups like ours had come to be recognised as positive and valued channels of communication and opinion precisely because they were not political and should aim to represent a balance of interests, that they were becoming the conscience or at least the conscious expression of rural interests, to facilitate and to be a focus of opinion and consultation. It is a role the excellent founders of the Association laid down at the very start alongside the enjoyment of this wonderful estuary. The Association still seeks to do all this.

The past two years may seem to have been less stirring with the domination of Covid limiting activities. But a lot has been going on and Trustees have continued to meet regularly to progress Association work. There has been much engagement with very heavy planning matters, such as SZC (Sizewell C) and Scottish Power Renewables, potentially affecting the long-term well-being of the coast, in particular the shingle shore which forms the eastern bank of the estuary. We have not been able to run our usual popular events to see more of the estuary in walks and enjoy the glorious scenery stretching across the Alde and Ore at

the annual barbecue, but this year's photography competition has shown members are very much out and about and enjoying the life and sights of the estuary.

The Butley Ferry has been a beacon of brilliance in its achievements and in carrying on business as usual as closely as possible. This summer saw the Butley Ferry team win a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the equivalent of an MBE, a wonderful accolade and recognition of a unique voluntary service enabling many people to enjoy the estuary even more. On top of that, by carrying on ferrying this year, beginning on Easter Saturday with all necessary Covid-prevention precautions, there have been over 20 per cent more passengers this year than our previous best (1,252 this year, 1,025 in 2019) of whom 518 were cyclists (and their bicycles) – so huge congratulations to Roy Truman and the splendid ferry team.

But in these restrictive Covid times the estuary has offered a particularly special place to be and feel free. It does seem that we have all, when we could, been out and about and savoured the wonderful walks along and around the rivers, played more on the river, and generally enjoyed the tranquillity and space and amazing skies that lift the spirit. For some, as at Shingle Street, the influx of people looking for new places to visit during the pandemic has been overwhelming, indeed troubling, while in other parts there has been more activity on the river, some welcome and some noisier than others might like, but for many it has been our fortune to have this wonderful estuary on our doorstep. We need to continue to cherish it.

It is fascinating casting back through events during the last 30 years. We have included in this issue a timeline on how much has gone on at Snape Maltings, growing in keeping with landscape



Shingle Street.



Avocets at Havergate.

and ensuring it can be enjoyed alongside the many other activities there. 1991 also saw the start of Suffolk Wildlife Trust based on the purchase of Hazlewood Marshes. That changed dramatically with the 2013 surge but now the new intertidal mudflats are home to many birds and an important resting place for migrating ones such as the spoonbills: one member has seen 40 at one time in the autumn passage. And the good news this summer was that there were 21 avocet chicks within the islands created in the Marshes. 1993 saw Orfordness taken on by the National Trust with the Association welcoming the expected safe and sustainable stewardship. And over the years we have seen both Orfordness and Havergate Island retain their essential characters but their resources being enhanced and providing more points of interest to visit, greater as well as changing wildlife populations and also contributions to flood defence.

The late 1990s and 2000s saw a seemingly endless stream of government estuary management strategies, filling many newsletter pages and the time of many members seeking by the power of the pen to overturn ill-based ideas, to secure sound management of the estuary as whole. We now have an Estuary flood defence Plan, in whose creation the Association played no small part, designed to get all the walls up to a resilient standard to withstand overtopping in a large surge in the year 2050, even with sea-level rise. It is hoped it will not be long before the first part of the Estuary Project can be given the go-ahead and 2022 will see the start of getting the river defences into good order.

And all the while the Association has been constantly keeping up with planning applications and seeking always to protect the special landscape from invidious developments, some large, some small, but all needing closer examination before any permissions were given (or not).

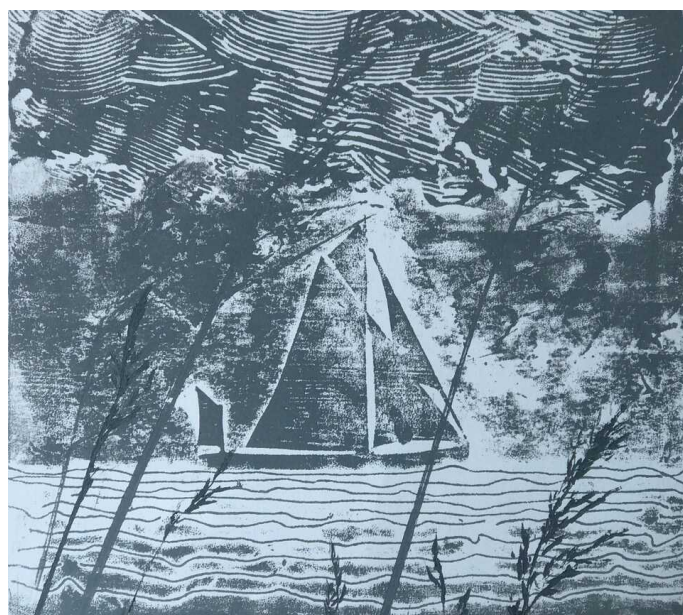
As early as 1993 a members' survey ascertained that members would like two social events a year –from archive films, to field trips and walks to talks – as well as the Newsletters, and all that has continued over the years, with only Covid restrictions halting the social events. Next year we really hope we can make up for that with a splendid barbecue and fascinating walks and a talk or two but if any members have ideas for other fun, exciting or

fascinating events or activities, we are always happy to have new suggestions.

I find that I am not alone, in that my many predecessors have all put out pleas for members to be the eyes and ears of the Association and for more volunteers to help spearhead new actions. At the moment we need someone to examine petitions the Association might support, someone to help in the creation of a river users' guide to meet the greatly increased types of activities now on and around the river, as well as fresh blood to challenge government policies or planning applications large and small: if we share the load the estuary will fare even better.

I do hope you enjoy this bumper edition of the Newsletter where we have sought to give a range of views of the river for all ages and all parts of the estuary: if you think something is missing or have special ideas or news from different parts of the estuary, please do help us with material for the Spring 2022 edition as the Association enters its fourth decade.

Alison Andrews
Chairman



Through the Reeds. John Garrett. Collagraph.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

SAVE OUR SUFFOLK ESTUARY

The Alde & Ore Estuary Trust has published its Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 2020 in late October.

The Trustees' report contains up-to-date information on the Upper Estuary Business Case, and is informative about the resilience of the flood defence upgrades and the benefits this will bring to our communities. It also details future fundraising plans.

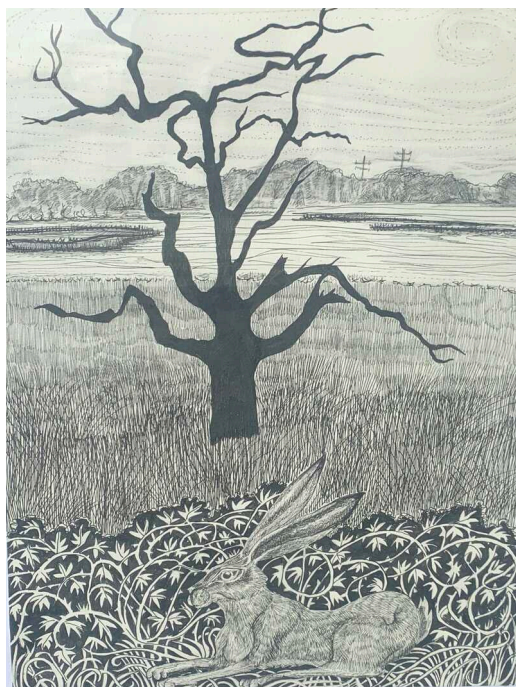
The detail can be found on the Charity Commission website at <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5041045> as well as on the Trust's website.

Local fundraising events have been curtailed because of pandemic restrictions. However a successful Golf Day took

place at Aldeburgh Golf Club which raised nearly £60,000 in early September.

On a more festive note, Christmas cards are now available from the Aldeburgh Bookshop, O&C Butcher and Snape Maltings. The designs were kindly donated by Suffolk based artists Devi Singh and Susie Hammond (see below). Susie has also donated a wonderful drawing of a hare for a silent auction which can be bid for online. Bids can be placed through the AOET website at www.aoetrust.org/new-events/susie-hammond-art-silent-auction by 5p.m. Monday, 13th December.

If you are not already a subscriber, please sign up to our newsletters via our website www.aoetrust.org. Your support would be hugely welcome.



Place your bids for Iken Hare at Iken Cliff, Susie Hammond. Ink pen and graphite.



Charity Christmas Cards

Each pack contains 3 of each design.

Left: *Christmas Star*. Devi Singh. Right: *Suffolk Sheep on the River Alde Marshes*. Susie Hammond.



Butley Ferry achieves Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Roy Truman

By the time you read this, you will probably have heard this news. However, some explanation is needed so that the magnitude of this achievement can be fully appreciated. Butley Ferry is not just the 'muddy little dinghy' which carries walkers and cyclists over the Butley River. Butley Ferry is an organisation within an even larger organisation (the Alde and Ore Association), which hums gently in the background, working to make sure the 'muddy little dinghy' can operate smoothly and without fuss. The dinghy didn't win the Queen's Award, the individuals who form the organisation won it, making them all part-recipients of an MBE, for that is the level that the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the country's highest for voluntary groups, is set at.

There are many people involved in the process and, therefore, many people to thank. A nomination for a Queen's Award, like any other 'gong', cannot come from the organisation itself, just as you could not nominate yourself for an OBE. The nomination for the ferry came from Derek Bingham, who was himself a ferryman a few years ago. He set about gathering the evidence and information to support it. The first hurdle to overcome is that the organisation must be considered suitable for nomination. And, unlike a nomination for an OBE or an MBE, the nominated group for a Queen's Award is notified and expected to produce the evidence and cooperate with the inquiry. Letters of support from outside the organisation had to be found and Cathy Smith, formerly of Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Ben Coulter, a local resident and regular river user, wrote letters of support which showed the place of the ferry in the community, as a part of local history and as a unique and important link in the footpath and cycle network. The completed nomination form, plus the letters, were sent to the office of the Lord Lieutenant, the Queen's representative in Suffolk, for consideration. Once duly considered and approved for the next step, we experienced intensive and interested interviewing when Judith Shallow and Lady Clare Howes, Deputy Lord Lieutenants of Suffolk, came down to the ferry to meet some of the volunteers and collect the evidence, and generally make sure we were doing what we said we did. To say they were supportive and encouraging would be an understatement, and they left us with a feeling of confidence. There were emails and phone conversations aplenty as Clare sought more details and angles to complete the application before it could be sent to the Palace for final consideration. From now on it was out of our hands, out of Suffolk's hands, and the long wait began. The process, which started in August 2020, would not end until the official announcement in May 2021.

In April 2021, an email from the Queen's Award office ended

up in the AOA Spam folder. This email required a response. As none was forthcoming, I received a phone call from the Award office requesting one. I was told that we had been successful, had been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, and, by the way, did we wish to accept it? Half a second of thinking time later I humbly accepted on behalf of us all. Unfortunately, as it was about four weeks before the official announcement, I was informed that I couldn't tell anyone outside of a select few within the organisation and all must be sworn to secrecy. The first person I had to tell was Kim, the keeper of the AOA website and Butley Ferry email account, just in case she stumbled across the email and blabbed! She didn't, and wouldn't, of course.

So now you know. But it doesn't end there. The award was announced in the local press and the congratulations came flooding in. The events and presentations connected to the award were yet to be organised. The first, a garden party at Bruisyard Vineyard, hosted by the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Clare, Countess of Euston, was cancelled due to Covid and rescheduled for September. The 'ferry' was invited to send two representatives and Brian and Juliet Johnson were asked to perform this duty on our behalf. Brian is our current longest-serving ferryman with over 15 years of service and Juliet accompanies him at the ferry and manages the finances and administration. They represent several husband-and-wife teams who work in this way at the ferry. They were blessed with lovely weather and were accompanied at their table by Judith Shallow. However, Brian is much too discrete to tell me the content of their conversation.



Brian and Juliet Johnson at the Bruisyard garden party.

Meanwhile, at Sutton Hoo, the Duke of Gloucester had been invited to open the new viewing platform and unveil a plaque. With our links to Sutton Hoo via the film *The Dig*, two of us were invited to represent the ferry and the Queen's Award. I was accompanied by Stephen Worrall, my right-hand man and

without whose support and advice we would not have achieved what we have. We were introduced to the duke and spent some time talking about the ferry.

As I write this, we are at the end of September with just a few weeks to go until the end of the ferry season. The boat will be taken out of the water (on its new trailer) and taken to its winter home. But that is not quite it for the ferrymen as we are to have our end-of-season get together, the Ferrymen's Lunch. Last year, due to the dreaded Covid, we were not able to get together and celebrate our excellent season, so this year's Lunch is due to be a 'biggie'. We will be joined by the Countess of Euston and her two Deputies, Judith Shallow and Lady Clare Howes, who will be making the official presentation of the Queen's Award to the ferry, in the form of the 'Crystal', and a certificate signed by Her Majesty the Queen. I have no idea what the Crystal is. I have been allowed to hold a box containing one, and it is very heavy! But I wasn't allowed to see it so it will remain a mystery until it is presented. We will also chew over the figures for the season (which looks like being the best we've had) and present our own various awards, making the most of the only occasion when we can all be together.

There remains only one small problem. The ferry has no base other than the hut on the Capel bank where we store our equipment. We are being awarded a valuable Crystal and a prestigious certificate. Where will they go? They will grace any sideboard and wall, but whose? I'm sure this will be discussed at length but, as Head Ferryman, perhaps...

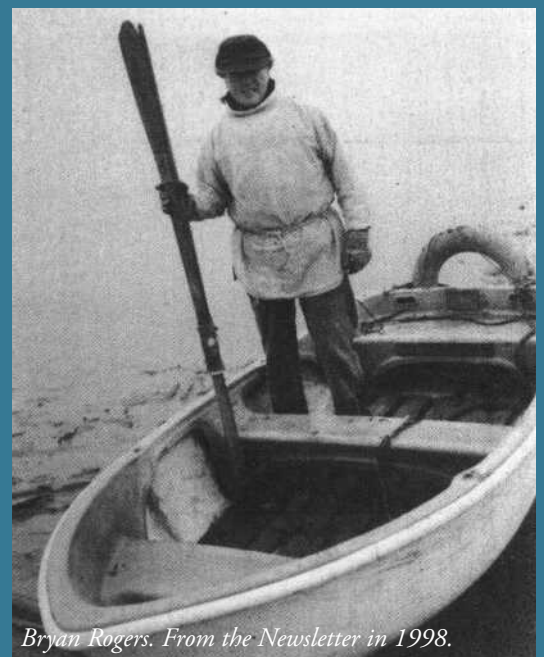
Roy Truman, Head Ferryman



Business as usual (almost)

How the Alde & Ore Association Newsletter reported the fall and rise of Butley Ferry

Butley Ferry has come a long way since its first brief mention in the Newsletter in 1993 (No. 5). That it reopened at all after decades of disuse was entirely due to Bryan Rogers although no indication was given of the backbreaking work Bryan had put into the endeavour. A full-page article in 1998 (No. 14) gave significantly more detail and Bryan, the sole ferryman, his due. After Bryan retired the ferry stopped running for a while, but in August 2003 (No. 25) we hear that thanks to Alde and Ore Association support and Butley resident Graham Hussey, the ferry is once more afloat, with a small rota of volunteer rowers and bicycles now permitted. Since then, under leading ferrymen Simon Barrow, Tim Dudgeon and now Roy Truman, the ferry has gone from strength to strength, with its activities receiving regular attention in the newsletters.



Bryan Rogers. From the Newsletter in 1998.

Sailing on the Ore

Chris Gill

Over the last 30 years I have owned a cruiser and raced a Laser and a Wayfarer, getting to know the river quite well in all its moods and variations. It is ever changing, but its character remains much the same.



Butley River

The River Ore may be regarded as starting at Blackstakes (halfway to Aldeburgh by the pumping station) and continuing to the sea at Shingle Street. The bed is owned by Orford under a charter granted by Elizabeth I and it is still legally allowed to charge those who enter the river (though not much in today's money).

It has two tributaries, Butley River and Stoney Ditch, both of which are worth exploring in a small boat on a high tide. It is a treat to sail and paddle a small dinghy past Gedgrave cliff, past the Crag pit and through the extensive saltmarshes until you eventually arrive in a narrow reed-lined steam just below Butley Mills. Stoney Ditch requires a smaller craft with no mast and shallow draft to pass under the bridge and cross most of the Ness to reach the pool at the top, close to the sea.

Halfway to the sea from Orford is Havergate Island, allowing the sailor to pass either side according to wind and tide, or simply to whim. Managed by the RSPB, it is renowned for its bird life, most of which can be seen from time to time on the shore, providing interest and sometimes excitement at an unusual species.

Tide is probably the most important aspect of the river, particularly for racing. It is not a constant stream; it is alive with

sinuous subtleties: you must learn where it runs hard, where it is weak or even has a counter eddy, and where to cross from one side to the other to avoid its worst affects. For a keel boat it's important to know which bits of the shoreline are shallower than the rest. Tides, or currents, even make waves, particularly when a strong breeze blows against the tide. Look from the shore and you will see rough patches and smooth patches, and even a constant swell in places, particularly noticeable in North East winds. And, of course, as the river changes its direction approximately every 6¼ hours it resembles a living thing in its movement.

At the river's mouth are the hamlet and shoals of Shingle Street. These shoals, which appear and disappear with the tide and may be shown up by steep crashing waves, are forever changing with each new storm. Sailors must beware and watch the echo sounder to ensure they are not swept out of the channel. These days the entrance is marked by buoys, but it wasn't always so. In the past the sailor had to rely on transits and angles from the shore. From year to year the channel changes, and over 30 years it can alter from directly in from the sea to a line along the shore, and North Weir point at the end of the Ness moves hundreds of yards either way.

Some may think the river bleak, but it is full of interest to those who look and listen. A night at anchor in Butley Creek watched over by Boyton Dock and Barrow Hill will allow the crew to retire and awake to the sound of oystercatchers and curlews, while the sun comes up over the Ness. A simple trip down the river will usually afford the sight of seals basking on the banks or at Butley mouth, and a favourite sight coming home is the sun going down over the forest and Orford Castle and the church growing on the horizon.

Chris Gill is a former Commodore of Orford Yacht Club.



Sailing at Orford. Photo: Frances Barnwell.

Sudbourne Park Printmakers

Inspired by the landscape

Gareth Jones, master printmaker and etcher was the inspirational founder of Sudbourne Park Printmakers. He had been a lecturer at prestigious art colleges, working alongside many of the country's big names in printmaking and from his Welsh studio. He returned to his Suffolk roots, founding the Ufford Printmaking group in 1991. In 2002 Gareth moved the group to Bothy Yard at Sudbourne Park where they continue to work and exhibit together as Sudbourne Park Printmakers. At the end of September we received the very sad news that Gareth had died.

A management committee of artists ensures the smooth running of the exhibitions and workshops. The main exhibitions are at Easter and the last weekend in November; members also hold solo and small group shows throughout the year both in Suffolk and wider afield. Workshops are held throughout the year, giving people the opportunity to learn hands-on printmaking skills. The studio is a special place of quiet industry, providing support and the opportunity to share ideas and gain new skills.

Many of the Sudbourne artists are inspired by the local countryside and coastal landscapes of the Alde and Ore Estuary and we are delighted to feature a small selection of works by Peter Beeson, Anita Cameron, Derek Chambers, Michael Flint, John Garrett, Jennifer Golding, Richard Kimmerling, Chrissy Norman, Julie Scarr and Susan Whatling here and throughout this Newsletter.

An illustrated book, *Gareth Jones: A Life in Printmaking and the Story of the Sudbourne Park Printmakers* (2020), is available from Sudbourne Park Printmakers. The website www.sudbourneprintmakers.com provides information on exhibitions, courses and individual artists.

With particular thanks to Jennifer Golding and Peter Beeson.



Gareth Jones in the studio .



Shingle Street. Gareth Jones. Etching.



The Road to the Pub, Blaxhall. Richard Kimmerling. Etching. Richard is a founder member of the group.

Don't miss Sudbourne Park Printmakers Winter Show

The Winter Show is scheduled for Friday 26 – Sunday 28 November at the studio, Bothy Yard, Sudbourne Park, Near Orford, IP12 2AJ. This is an opportunity to see beautiful prints in a stunning setting in the studio in which they were made. There will also be mulled wine, mince pies and on Saturday a small choir singing carols. A great way to start the festive season!

The Dismantlement of Orfordness Lighthouse

Mike Finney

When, on 31 October 2019, the children from Orford School visited the lighthouse, and linked arms around its base, little did we know that a storm just a week later would do such damage as to make that the final ever public visit to the iconic structure.

Trinity House had finally decided in 2012 that the lighthouse was doomed; the beach was eroding at such a rate that the structure was assessed to be likely to fall by 2017 or so. Thus, the lighthouse was decommissioned in June 2013, cleared of any contaminants and essentially left to its fate. Nicholas Gold then stepped in, purchased the building and set up the Orfordness Lighthouse Trust. Its aim was simple: to keep the lighthouse standing for as long as possible, encourage visitors and preserve artefacts (including the lantern room) before its ultimate demise.

Regular visits to the lighthouse were conducted over the intervening years, taking an enthusiast public across the river in *Regardless* and then shepherding them across the Ness to the lighthouse. After a guided tour and an explanation of the history and operation of the lighthouse the throng were shepherded back across the Ness for the return ferry trip to Orford. Since 2013 around 3,000 visitors enjoyed the opportunity to visit the structure and experience the unique atmosphere of Orford Ness.

To extend the life of the lighthouse for as long as possible, each year a group of enthusiastic volunteers would assemble before the storm season commenced to assess the condition of the 'soft defences'. These defences were



constructed of 3 tonne bags of shingle wrapped in a geotextile 'sausage skin' and were added to as necessary, until in Spring 2019 it became apparent that there simply was not enough beach left in front of the lighthouse to do any more defensive work. The writing was on the wall for

the 227-year-old building.

In early autumn 2019 the first storms of the season damaged and then took away completely the engineer's bungalow situated to the north of the lighthouse. It was then that the Lighthouse Trust decided that while the lighthouse was probably going to last the winter, access to it would become increasingly more difficult as the ground level around it dropped as the beach eroded. 2020 was the window of opportunity when the lighthouse was still accessible enough by heavy plant, such as a crane, to salvage the lantern room, Lord Braybrooke's coat of arms (the Coade stone) and other artefacts.

Over the years the Trust had investigated how best to remove the lantern room from 30 metres up on top of the lighthouse. The military investigated whether they could lift it with a Chinook helicopter as a PR and training exercise. But when we weighed the lantern room structure (an undertaking requiring huge hydraulic jacks and load cells and much sweat and a little skin and blood) it was found to be close on 14 tonnes. Too heavy for a Chinook.

A crane large enough to lift it would be too heavy for *Guinevere*, the ferry, and too heavy to take across the Stony Ditch Bailey bridge. The same was true for the machines that would dismantle the lighthouse. Whatever we were going to use would need to come down the shingle track





from Slaughden and make it along the beach for the final half a mile or so.

Anglian Demolition were approached, and they accepted the challenge. The crane work was sub-contracted to R. J. Crane Hire. The first task, in February 2020, was to repair the shingle track access from Aldeburgh to the Ness and then

bring a digger down to the lighthouse to demolish the by now precarious and dangerous former oil store. The brick remains were placed on the beach in front of the lighthouse to offer protection from the last of the winter storms.

Then came Covid lockdown. All work stopped and plans were put on hold. The lighthouse got a reprieve from the most unwelcome and unlikely of quarters, a pandemic. But all enjoyed her being there on the horizon in the surreal lockdown in spring and early summer.

The salvage and demolition exercise recommenced in July. Preceded by a digger levelling a track along the beach, the 56-tonne crawler crane made its 'royal progress' from Slaughden to the lighthouse, at a steady 0.7 MPH. Meanwhile, work was under way preparing the lantern room for its removal. The whole piece weighed just under 14 tonnes, too much for a single lift. So the cast-iron panels around its base were removed, and the roof structure cut so it could be lifted separately and replaced later.

The main section, containing the lattice astragals and the glazing, was carefully lifted off on a calm afternoon in late July. It weighed just under 8 tonnes, and was brought to ground level without damage, much to everyone's relief. The Coade stone was removed from its place over the entrance door and various ladders and cupboards were taken away to store.

Dismantling proper commenced on 28 July. It was hoped to salvage many of the bricks (the whole structure being built with Suffolk soft red brick) but it soon became obvious that the majority of the structure was in poor condition with the bricks crumbling on contact.

Nevertheless, a fair few bricks have been salvaged for future use.

With the lantern room safely on the ground it was decided that the safest way of transporting it to its interim storage place on the Ness was by carrying under the shortened jib of the crawler crane. This was safely achieved, and the crane was released to make its stately progress back to Slaughden. By the time it was back on its low loader the crane had covered just over 9 miles. Its operator told us that it would generally only move 500 yards or so on any 'normal' job!



By early August the lighthouse was down, and brick recovery was started and goes on today. The geotextile material used to make the 'sausage rolls' which defended the lighthouse from the encroaching sea was removed from the beach, and the site is now returning to nature, with the horned poppies and sea kale showing forth in abundance.

What next? Plans are being worked on for a reinstated 'memorial' building on the Ness incorporating the glazed lantern room and other artefacts such as the Coade stone and the rather fine curved 'spare lamp cupboard' from the service room, all of which are carefully stored and protected. Watch this space! (And if anyone has an idea for funding...?)

Mike Finney, Trustee, Orfordness Lighthouse Trust.
www.orfordnesslighthouse.co.uk



Susan Whatling. The Last Stand. Etching.

There have been 11 different lighthouses on Orford Ness. The last lighthouse was built in 1792 by Lord Braybrooke of Audley End. In 1836 the lighthouse was acquired by Trinity House. The light came from wood, coal and then sperm whale oil until 1959, when it was converted to electricity. The lighthouse was manned by resident lighthouse keepers until 1965, when it became automatic and controlled from Harwich.

Nature matters

Protecting and enhancing wildlife around the Alde and Ore will help every one of us. *James Alexander* explains why.

One interconnected fragile planet

‘Oddly enough the overriding sensation I got looking at the Earth was, my god that little thing is so fragile out there.’

(Michael Collins, Apollo 11 astronaut)

Our planet has never been smaller. We can call, WhatsApp or Zoom anyone anywhere instantly. With money, we can go on holiday and travel pretty much anywhere within 24 hours. Similarly, Covid19 has shown how a virus in Wuhan City China can, within a few months, travel to Orford. Whether we like it or not, we are inherently interconnected.

The same interconnection is true of the challenges our fragile planet faces. We are all familiar with the climate crisis and our need to reduce greenhouse gases: when the UK Government first declared a climate crisis in 2019 it actually declared a climate *and* biodiversity (nature) crisis.

‘Humanity is waging a war on nature. This is suicidal... Making peace with nature is the defining task of the 21st century.’ (UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Dec 2020)¹

Scientists tell us that we are currently living in and presiding over the Earth’s sixth mass extinction event, a period usually defined as a loss of 75 per cent of species. This mass extinction is caused by humans – the others have all been volcanoes and meteors. According to WWF’s *Living Planet Report*,² in the last 50 years, the abundance of nature on our planet has declined by a whopping 68 per cent. So far, most of this devastation has been caused by poor land use, e.g. cutting down forests, intensive agriculture, and over-exploitation such as taking too many fish.

Has this anything to do with the UK? Sadly yes. The UK is now one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. The UK



Barn Owl. Peter Beeson. Etching.

is the worst performing of the G7 nations, and the third worst in Europe³. In the UK, 60% of all monitored species – that’s across birds, bugs, bees, butterflies and frogs – are in decline and 10% are at risk of extinction. And these statistics exclude the footprint which we choose to export elsewhere by buying products that often require important habitat to be destroyed. When you eat a biscuit, it probably contains palm oil. Unwittingly you may have helped kill an orang-utan. And when you next have bacon (from pigs reared using imported soy) or another soybean-based product for breakfast, spare a thought for the Amazon, whose trees may have been chopped down to grow the soy.

These are not just national issues, they impact Suffolk and the Alde and Ore. When did you last hear a cuckoo? Or the thrilling song of a nightingale? Or a turtle dove purring? Or see a hedgehog in your garden? Shockingly, words like Acorn, Adder, Bluebell and Kingfisher have been removed from the *Children’s Oxford English Dictionary* and replaced with gems such as ‘chatroom’ and ‘selfie’. If we don’t know the name of something, if we have become disconnected from it, we are hardly likely to protect it.

Nature matters

‘Our economies, livelihoods and wellbeing all depend on our most precious asset: nature. We are part of nature, not separate from it.’ (Dasgupta Report, Feb. 2021)⁴

Nature matters, not only for its own sake but also for our own. Nature provides the air we breathe, the clean water we drink, the food we eat. As many of us have discovered during lock-down, it also provides an escape, something beautiful that can nourish our well-being, both physically and mentally. Nature helps us be more resilient, for example to floods or coastal sea-level rise. Nature also attracts visitors and supports our tourist economy. Put another way: a healthy planet underpins a healthy society; and a healthy society is a prerequisite for a healthy economy. More nature on the Alde and Ore and across Suffolk will help our health and wealth.

Nature positive Suffolk

‘By protecting and restoring nature now, we could slow climate change 37% by 2030’ (The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services – IPBES)

Restoring more nature requires us to become nature positive.

Fortunately this is now increasingly recognised. In 2020, the UK Government committed to protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030⁵. Similarly, in the same year, Suffolk County Council agreed a biodiversity motion, which states that 'This Council resolves to implement a biodiversity strategy setting out how to increase Suffolk's biodiversity, halt the loss of habitats and species, and reintroduce declining species in suitable locations.' So this autumn the County Council is developing policy to help accelerate the county's protection of 30% of our land and sea.

Doing so will not only help our health and well-being and nature, it will also help in our fight against climate change. By locking up carbon in trees, soils, saltmarsh, seaweed and seas, we can make a tangible and visible difference to reduce the impacts of global warming, so helping us towards net zero.

The Alde and Ore is already blessed with nature. Avocet at Havergate, incredible and rare plant-life on Orford Ness, bounteous fish nurseries on the river, aged oak in Captain's Wood, spoonbills and 3 ospreys on Hazlewood Marshes.

The next six months must be a turning point for the world. The UN 'Climate' COP26 in Glasgow and 'Nature' COP15 in

China need to deliver to put our planet on a safe and sustainable trajectory. The same must be true for Suffolk, both county-wide and locally.

We all have a part to play. And if we do, just imagine how much more special we can make the Alde and Ore in the next decade.

James Alexander is a Trustee for Suffolk Wildlife Trust.



¹ www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-12-02/address-columbia-university-the-state-of-the-planet.

² <https://livingplanet.panda.org>.

³ www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/about-us/48398rspb-biodiversity-intactness-index-summary-report-v4.pdf.

⁴ www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/feb/02/economics-of-biodiversity-review-what-are-the-recommendations.

⁵ www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-54320030.



The Alde & Ore Community Partnership (AOCP), the community organisation with representatives from all parishes, district and the county council, landowners, the business community and the Alde and Ore Association, provides representation and a voice for the local community and acts as guardian of the Estuary Plan.

This summer the estuary organisations, that is the AOCP and Alde and Ore Estuary Trust (AOET), as well as the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board, have been waiting to hear from the Environment Agency (EA) as to the outcome of the application for flood approval and grant for the first part of the Estuary project: this had been held pending an EA investigation into clay stored at Iken. The estuary plans are to refurbish the river walls so that they are renewed now before they are breached and will be resilient to a large surge in the year 2050 taking account of sea-level rise. It is now hoped that the investigation and the project can be disentangled to allow a decision on the application to be made and hopefully to see work starting in 2022.

Nevertheless, the AOCP has continued its regular quarterly

meetings progressing work on matters such as communications and environment monitoring as well as keeping up to date on the application process. The website is gradually being changed and features new elements such as tide times in different parts of the estuary and interesting news.

The AOCP is entirely run by volunteers and pre-Covid met at Orford Town Hall, which kindly provides the meeting space free of charge. The Partnership has now secured an administration grant of £2,500 with thanks to the Environment Agency for finding the means to do this for all Suffolk estuary partnerships. This money will help enable public meetings to be held and more publicity to inform everyone of progress on river matters.

AOCP meetings are held quarterly. The dates are on the AOCP website www.aocp.co.uk. Members of the public are welcome and are given opportunities to speak. The next meeting will be on Thursday, 9 December at 6.30p.m. Currently the meetings are on Zoom and the Hon Sec., if applied to, will provide the Zoom link and agenda.

A. Andrews, Hon. Sec. to AOCP

Alde and Ore Association 30th Anniversary Photography Competition Congratulations to the winners!

Both categories – Nature and Activities – attracted a range of entries shot on a wide variety of equipment, from the very sophisticated to the simplest mobile phone. While the standard of photography was naturally taken into consideration, the judges felt that the winning photographs stood out for saying something special about the river and its wildlife, or, in the Activities category, the fun and entertainment to be had. We are very grateful to Shelley Nott and Hugh de Las Casas for judging the entries and to all the people who took the time to enter the competition. To see winning entries in more detail visit www.aldeandore.org. A gallery of all the entries will be added to the Association's website over the coming months.



Freddie Carey, 1st Prize, Nature (12–17)



Tom Pilgrim, 1st Prize, Nature (Adult)



Tom Pilgrim, 2nd Prize, Activities (Adult)



Kate Barrow, 1st Prize, Activities (Adult)



Thomas Wilkinson, 1st Prize, Activities (12–17)



Anna Wilkinson, 2nd Prize, Nature (Adult)



Thomas Wilkinson, 2nd Prize, Nature (12–17)



Thomas Freer, 1st Prize, Nature (Under 12)



*Thomas
Freer,
1st Prize,
Activities
(Under-12)*

A relaxing chat with Bryan Upson of R.F. Upson and Sons, boatbuilder

Keith Martin

I spent a very pleasant hour in the evening sun chatting with Bryan Upson in his garden just off the Sailors' Path overlooking Hazlewood Marshes. What a wonderful spot; but that's an outlook that changed dramatically in 2013 when the river wall breached and flooded the marshes. It used to be grazing land and is now mud or water, depending on the tide, but Bryan does now have a beach on which he builds sandcastles with his grandchildren.

He first came to Aldeburgh in 1973 when he was about 15. His father, Russell, was foreman at Whisstocks' boatyard in Woodbridge and made the move to Slaughden to take over Fred Cane's business on Slaughden Quay. Bryan has since bought the freehold from the Council, but in those days it was leased and at least 50 per cent of the work was commercial, mostly for the Aldeburgh fishing community. There were about 30 of them fishing off the beach and Russell, and later on Bryan, built many wooden fishing boats. Today there are four local fishermen, none of them with a wooden boat but with GRP hulls, three of which

were built from a mould at Upsons, so the hulls are identical with different fit-outs.

The fishing industry today is completely different from the one he remembers as a boy. It is highly regulated with every catch recorded and monitored. I suppose farmers would probably say something similar. The same goes for fishing boats; the latest boat he built, just two or three years ago, had the most complex set of regulations and compliance standards he has ever come across. And this was quite a small boat that just day runs, not much more than a dinghy.

Bryan has had some interesting boats to build. He is most proud of a demonstrator boat he built for Cummins, the international diesel engine and generator builders. Cummins had his boat at the annual Workboat Show for two or three years running. He also built three fishing boats for the Welsh National Opera, which was touring a production of *Peter Grimes*. The director wanted an authentic fishing boat from Aldeburgh and ended up with

three built to about two-thirds scale as props for the performance. So Bryan Upson's boats have travelled to the Sydney Opera House, Japan and many places in between. They are still owned by the opera company, so if you go to see them performing *Peter Grimes* you will see one of Bryan Upson's boats. More locally he has built several replacement 12 ft rowing dinghies for the Meare at Thorpeness.

These days commercial work makes up only about 10 per cent of his workload. The remainder is leisure craft – dinghies and day boats mostly. He has built three brand new Loch Long craft in the last few years and two Lapwing dinghies. With two sailing clubs as neighbours, he has a regular supply of customers and he says that it's busier than ever.

He talks knowledgeably about the river; he should, he works on it every day and he obviously cares about it. But it's changed since he started. The biggest change came from the storm surge in 2013, which breached the marsh below his house. He is quite clear that there is more water flowing up and down the river, the tides are higher, only by an inch or two but, across the whole estuary, that delivers a large additional volume of water. And it flows faster. This last point is crucial. Faster flowing water does more damage to the river banks, and he cites examples of the National Trust



Bryan (right) and his son Robin.

having carried out repair work on the King's Marsh wall just two or three years ago and those same walls suffering erosion already because of the increased speed of water flowing past. He maintains most of the moorings on the river at Aldeburgh and is aware that a few years ago, moorings were held in place by weight and a good anchor embedded in the mud. Now, the mud has gone, all washed away, and the security of the mooring is relying on weight alone. He, and the other watermen, have also had to increase buoy sizes to increase buoyancy; otherwise, the faster flowing water drowns the mooring buoys at high water.

There is a popular and much cited theory that the new existence of the Hazelwood Marsh flooded area acts as a buffer zone in the river, giving safety cover and emergency storage during a storm surge (like 2013). That is obviously good news, particularly for places further upstream such as Snape, which suffered significant flooding in 2013. However, the evidence of Bryan's eyes and practice calls the good news into question. If the consequence of more water in the estuary leads to more damage of the walls, then it is a very mixed blessing.

He remembers a meeting with a professor from the University of East Anglia in the mid-1980s where forecasts of sea-level rise were discussed. He was told that Slaughden Quay would be under water at high tide by 2015. 'What happened to that?' he asks. He cannot see any discernible increase in water level since he started with his father over 40 years ago. And, he points out, the east coast is sinking because of isostatic rebalancing. He is not a climate change denier and expects sea level to rise some time. He just hasn't seen it yet.

I had to ask about the story that the *Pelican* was built at Slaughden. Her name was changed to the *Golden Hinde* and Sir Francis Drake sailed her around the world. He was non-committal about that, which is probably very sensible since Katherine in the Aldeburgh Museum has unearthed better



Aldeburgh Marshes Towards Iken. Derek Chambers. An early aquatint etching made under Gareth Jones's guidance
documentary evidence that she was built at Plymouth. The story seems to be an urban myth that, through frequent repetition, becomes the truth. I suspect Bryan never believed it anyway, but it's a shame as it makes a good story.

He's little more expansive about some of the old characters. Everybody knows Jumbo's Cottage in Iken. Jumbo Ward was one of the Slaughden watermen who worked with Fred Cane and lived at Iken. It's hard to draw out any real detail about Jumbo Ward, but it seems that he took a particularly unconventional approach to many activities. When challenged on this, Bryan laughs, but doesn't deny it. Jumbo Ward was obviously one of life's characters and Bryan provides a real connection with the past.



Kate Giles sketched Upsons Boatyard on location in 1998. Image taken from a publication

Upson's boatyard is in good hands. He himself is a very valuable asset to the estuary and his local knowledge makes him worth listening to when it comes to the twists and turns of the river. One can't help thinking that he has more than a point about sea-level rise and the faster flowing river – perhaps the Association should commission some proper research about it. He has been joined by his son Robin as the third-generation Upson at Slaughden. If, as he says, the work is busier than ever it looks as though the Upsons will be there for many years yet.

A love affair with the estuary

Lizzi Thistlethwayte

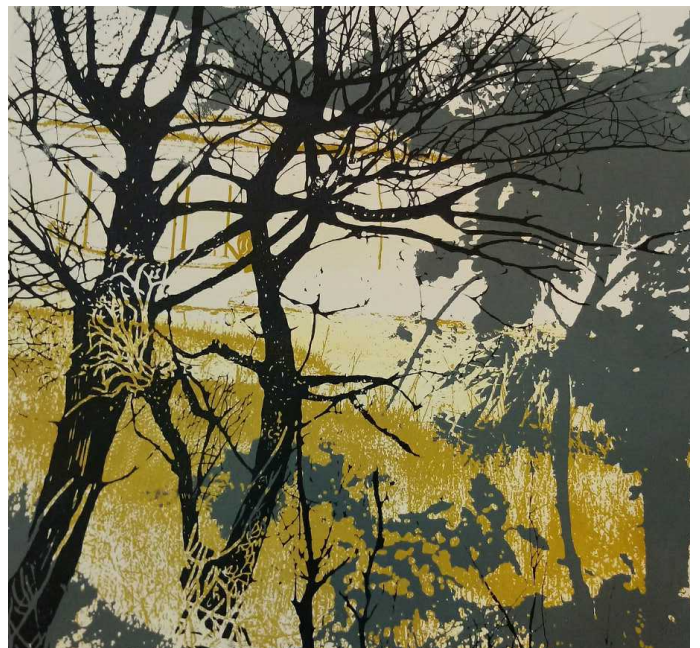
Inspired by Maurice Griffiths' *The Magic of The Swatchways*, we first sailed into the Ore in the summer of 1986 in our 40ft Dutch Lemsteraak, *Blinkert*, built in 1911. We had never sailed the east coast before, barely heard of Orford or Aldeburgh or Snape. Suddenly, after the intimidating shingle banks and the troubled waters of the Ore entrance, we were flying upriver on the flood under full sail on a broad reach. We fell instantly in love with this wild estuary, the wildfowl-covered mud banks at low tide, the huge skies, the tricky tides, the impossible-to-see withies that marked the channel upriver from Cob Island (especially in the rain!), the quiet anchorages... Once we had discovered this particular estuary we rarely spent much time exploring the other east coast estuaries. The Ore, Alde and Butley rivers drew us back summer after summer, despite going aground on a shingle bank leaving the Ore one morning with bad weather in the offing, or spending a memorable day firmly aground on the mud at Iken Cliff having missed a withy in the early morning mist.

Ten years later found us living in Suffolk only an hour away from Aldeburgh. We joined Aldeburgh Yacht Club (AYC), decided to forgo sailing heavy old Dutch barges and bought an Aldeburgh Lapwing dinghy. Having mastered the seemingly unfathomable skill of sailing a Lapwing round Elbow Mark at Slaughden Quay against a spring tide we embraced dinghy sailing and have raced and sailed our Lapwing on the estuary for the last 26 years. Picnics at Little Japan; rare and memorable late October days sailing the tide up to Iken Cliff with a sandwich in our pockets; slipping quietly through the creeks under sail at High Water; taking to the river in various sailing dinghies with Ladies Who Launch at AYC; teaching our young to sail; coming back from Orford Day in the Regatta under a storm jib in such rain and wind we couldn't even see the rest of the Lapwing fleet; sailing Lapwings in the dark after midsummer picnics upriver; they all make an endless store of wonderful and uplifting memories.

A few years ago I decided to return to sailing a cruising yacht and my 26ft wooden Stella (built in 1960) is on a swinging mooring upriver from Slaughden. Nothing beats hoisting the sails, slipping the mooring and heading off downriver and dropping anchor at the far end of Havergate Island at Abraham's Bosom for a quiet lunch, then home again on the tide; or hugging the shore sailing against the tide at low water when the mudbanks are full of feeding waders. Little has changed over the time I have had the joy and the privilege to sail on this estuary. Orford Ness is now under the stewardship of the National Trust rather than the MOD, and there are more powerboats than there used to be. But the big skies, the challenging tides and weather, the curlew crying out across the marshes, the mud... all that is still here.



Lizzi's Lapwing



Boat at Iken. Anita Cameron. Screen print.

New arrivals on Havergate Island

Aaron Howe

By way of introduction, Havergate Island sits within the River Ore just south of Orford. Havergate Island is one the RSPB's oldest nature reserves and was purchased in 1949. This was to protect and re-establish avocet as a breeding UK species after it had become extinct from our shores. Since then, Havergate has helped avocets spread across the UK and they are doing well thanks to positive management across a network of wetland sites. After just over 70 years since playing this important role, history is repeating itself.

Site wardens had noted that Eurasian Spoonbills had been using Havergate during the summer months over the last decade and that numbers were slowly increasing. After speaking to conservation colleagues in the Netherlands it became clear that the habitat on Havergate Island was very similar to the large nesting colonies in the Wadden Sea. After some careful habitat creation and use of decoy model birds we encouraged our first pair of spoonbills to nest on the island in 2019. This caused great excitement and triggered more pairs to nest together as they are a colonial species. In total six pairs nested and chicks were growing well. Sadly, excitement gave way to sadness after a mammal swam out to the island and predated all the small chicks. This event was not unexpected as the island sits close to the mainland and predators do occasionally swim out. The following winter

site staff erected fencing around the nesting area and used an experimental technique of locating the mesh fence in water. Any ground predator would have to be swimming to get to it, making it impossible to jump over.

After rapid works to protect the spoonbill colony, staff watched as the breeding pairs returned once again. The project proved very successful with 2020 and 2021 both seeing numbers of nesting adults increase and our first chicks fledging. This year surpassed all expectation with 13 pairs nesting and fledging a staggering 21 young! With these successful years we expect the colony to continue to grow and the Alde and Ore once again becoming pivotal in the establishment of this new species in the UK.

During the pandemic Havergate Island has been closed to visitors and during this period our visitor landing jetty has become unsafe. Repairs to the landing stage will be undertaken this winter. We hope to reopen to visitors in early spring 2022 and look forward to welcoming back visitors to Suffolk's only island.

Aaron Howe, Site Manager, South Suffolk Coast RSPB

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/havergateisland>



Spoonbills and avocets, Havergate Island. Photo: Steve Everett.

A new perspective

Harry Young reflects on life at Snape Maltings during Covid

In 2008, whilst planning our move to Suffolk for a role at what was then called Aldeburgh Music, I formed a view that it was best not to live 'above the shop'. I'd had a walking-stick waved in my face whilst eating ice cream in Aldeburgh with my young children ('but Darling, he needs to know!') and concluded that we should live at least two estuaries away from Snape Maltings. However, after the perceived successes of the Britten Centenary it felt safe to hop back over the Blyth and settle a little closer.

When Covid-19 was devastating northern Italy and pennies were starting to drop, in what was possibly an overreaction, I moved with my family into the slightly odd grandeur of Snape Bridge House to help keep an eye on the Maltings whilst it was empty. Of course, our shops weren't ram-raided – I'm not sure what I would have done if they had been – but my wife lost a family member to the virus and it all felt scary.

At that time there was a huge amount to worry about, but life did become simpler. There was less noise and there were fewer balls to juggle, just one large one. I was happy to be teased by my colleagues for the pretentious upsizing, but hoped they appreciated the servers being rebooted and post being opened. Donors were very generous, and I took the cheques to the bank.

In April the sun seemed to shine every day. Workdays, rigidly 9a.m. – 5.30p.m. for the first time ever, were filled with difficult decisions and number crunching, but during the evenings our family had 11 weeks of blissful mindfulness, which I think means living in the moment. There weren't really any household chores or DIY jobs to do, and with only two carloads of stuff we struggled to make our 6,000 sq. ft house untidy. We used the time to walk, run and cycle, and we talked to each other as the Wi-Fi at Snape Bridge House was poor. Ducks, muntjacs and rabbits were having a very happy time running the site, providing good content for weekly staff newsletters. If Britten Pears Arts is able to push ahead with our exciting plans to develop Snape Maltings' remaining derelict buildings, it will be a more sensitive scheme now that I have managed to spend time looking closely at the buildings without the distraction of cars and activity.

During that period, we discovered the Sailors' Path. Shamefully I had only walked it twice in 12 years. I trekked other estuaries regularly but not the one that I look at from my office window. We were quickly addicted and ran it at least three times a week,

13 miles to The Scallop and back. We had never felt fitter or sharper. I am not a fast or competitive runner, and I don't take performance at all seriously. My running shorts have paint all over them. But pounding that route for three months, as well as the glorious path to Iken, made me fall totally in love with this place again and to think a lot of things through. Those views across the Alde from Snape Warren do help provide perspective.

I forget the rules of the first lockdown, but I think you were only allowed out to shop for essential items, or to take exercise within a 5-mile radius. My wife and I had a rather neat system, which only slightly bent the rules. One of us would take a child and drive to Aldeburgh to buy groceries. The other parent would run there with a different child, swap, and drive back with the shopping, having exchanged keys, a toddler, and water bottles.

Passing walkers along the route was a fascinating insight into the public mood. Some were friendly, whilst others were clearly fearful. We tried to coach our children to stand aside early. My son, wearing his Lord Voldemort T-shirt, felt such pressure to dive for cover that he failed to notice Ralph Fiennes smiling at him.

I find running, and the physical jolt of heel on ground, helps dislodge things that have been stuck in the back of my mind. I use the time to rehearse things I am going to say in meetings. I always come back from a run with a new to-do list, and generally feel pretty optimistic. The paths on both sides of the River Alde, and the achingly beautiful views from Iken Cliff and Snape Warren, really helped me think deeply in 2020 and gave our family a glorious return to life before the iPhone.

*Harry Young
is Managing
Director of Snape
Maltings.*



Snape Maltings at the tidal head of the Estuary

The last 30 years

Snape Maltings brings many people to the area for music, art, entertainment, shopping and eating and all visitors can see how lovely the Alde and Ore Estuary is and how the iconic maltings buildings provide a dramatic head to the estuary. Snape Maltings is ever changing to meet new needs and inspire a love for the area and has always been a friend to the Association.

1991, January – Snape Maltings hosted the first meeting gathered to discuss the possibility of establishing the Alde and Ore Association.

1991, 17 May – Snape Maltings hosted the first meeting to form the Alde and Ore Association with 160 people present. Snape Bridge became the logo of the Association.

1997 – a new outer foyer is added to Snape Maltings Concert Hall.

1999 – a new restaurant floor is added to Snape Maltings Concert Hall, **with wonderful views over the River Alde**. Aldeburgh Music moves its administrative offices from Aldeburgh to Snape Maltings.

2006 – Aldeburgh Music purchases a 999-year lease from the Gooderham family for approx. 1/3 of the Snape Maltings site.

2006 – The first Aldeburgh Food and Drink Festival is held at Snape Maltings.

2009 – Aldeburgh Music opens a new facility, The Hoffmann Building, including The Britten Studio, a new 340-seat performance space. The Gooderham family opens a large new retail space called House & Garden and completes the first phase of 17 residential properties.

2010 – The Dovecote Studio opens.

2011 – The Gooderham family completes Iken View, a development of 11 residential units.

2012 – Aldeburgh Music forms the Aldeburgh World Orchestra, as part of the cultural Olympiad. 132 musicians from 31 countries performed at Snape, the Royal Albert Hall and in Holland and Germany.

2013 – Aldeburgh Music celebrates the centenary of Benjamin Britten's birth. A highlight of the year was *Grimes on the Beach*.

2013, 5 December – Tidal surge comes within 75mm of overtopping the defences. There are small breaches in the quay wall, which require emergency repair.

2015, 3 March – Aldeburgh Music purchases the site freehold and the retail business from the Gooderham family, and the charity later renames itself 'Snape Maltings'.

2016 – Snape Maltings carries out some work to improve flood defences on land to the west of the site.

2017 – A tidal surge event causes some flood water to penetrate the concert hall dressing-rooms.

2019 – Snape Maltings enabled the Association to hold a meeting to enable any one in the areas to learn more about the proposals for the England Coastal Path being planned around the estuary.

2020 – 'Snape Maltings', the charity, merges with the Britten-Pears Foundation to form Britten Pears Arts.

2012 – to date – Snape Maltings has hosted many meetings, workshops, working groups and exchanges for all the estuary organisations: the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership, now the Community Partnership, and the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust, often with the Environment Agency, Natural England, the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board attending, to help inform everyone about the estuary plans and background to them.



Reedbeds at Snape. Chrissy Norman. Etching.

Thirty years of river defence lobbying

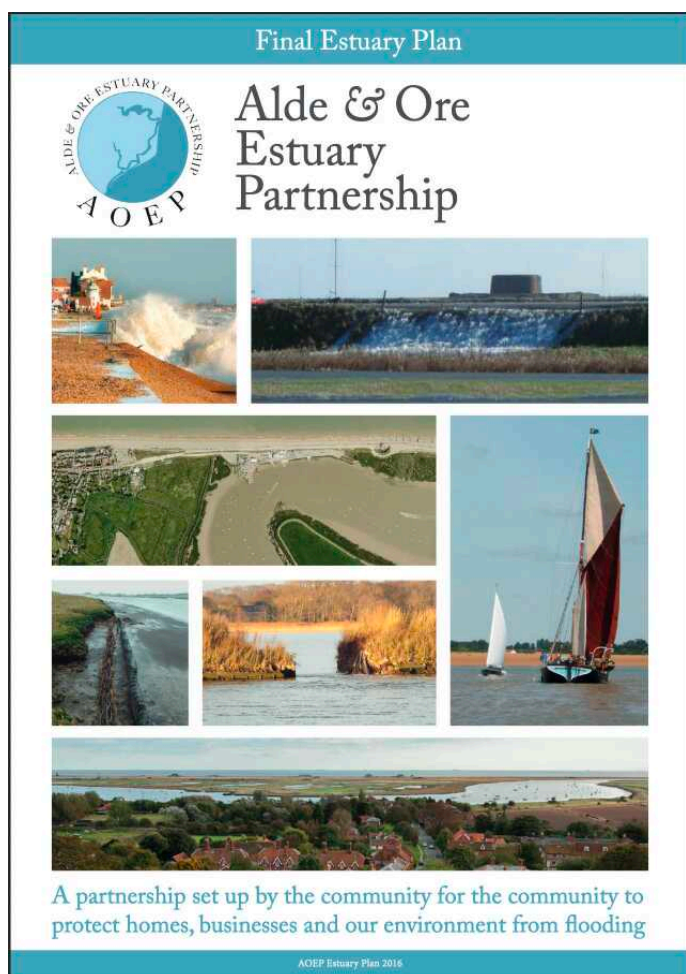
If unmaintained river defences are breached, the heart would be taken out of the life of the estuary and much could be flooded

Alison Andrews

Where we started in 1991

In 1991 the government carried responsibility for repairing the river walls. But things were changing. The latter half of the 1990s and the 2000s saw at least two consultants' reports on the shape of the Alde and Ore Estuary defences, an estuarine plan and coastal management plans. Flawed because they lacked full local knowledge, all of these required the Association leaders and members to challenge and comment on them.

At the same time the Association worked hard to ensure that the estuary had its fair share of flood defence grants. This was necessary as nationally, with the rise in numbers of houses built on level ground inland needing flood defence, the allocation of flood defence money swung away from the coast to an ever-greater proportion of the national flood budget going on inland flood defence.



The Estuary Plan.

Estuary Planning Partnership

In the early 2000s, seeking to bring all interested parties and a coherent plan together, David Andren, as a Trustee, led an international study team who recommended that an Estuary Planning Partnership be set up to bring all interested parties together. The EPP was indeed established. It proved very useful in getting all interested parties, public and private bodies, local and national authorities into one room, something that had been a missing link in getting sensible plans drawn up. Also, very early on, it produced a fascinating booklet on who did exactly what, in relation to the river defences and environment, which was an eye-opener to all. But by its nature, while it was in a position to ensure that any policy proposals were soundly examined using all the local knowledge, it could not be a decision-making body.

Framework for the Future

In 2008 the Association was outraged by the government proposal for the Blythe estuary that in essence said that, as that area would be under water in 100 years, there was no point in repairing the walls. The Association produced new thinking on estuary management called 'Framework for the Future'. This made it clear that the immediate threat was submergence of the area by breaches in unmaintained river walls and advocated that estuary management looked at 25-, 50- and 100-year time scales, taking action, as a start, for the first 25 years. **This approach is now reflected in government policies.** It also suggested greater cooperation between government and landowners as it was a time when either the government chose to mend the walls or little happened, and local initiatives found that environmental protection provisions, which were in their early days, seemed to be theoretically executed in black and white regardless of local facts.

Alde and Ore Futures consultation: members reject a piecemeal approach

In 2009–11 Suffolk Coastal District Council set up the 'Alde and Ore Futures' consultation and consulted on every aspect of what people living here wanted, from houses through to broadband, buses and flood defence and more. Under David Andren, Association members played a very active role in the working groups, with two members chairing their groups. When the Futures consultation document came out, the Association drew its members' attention to the piecemeal approach to the river

that the Environment Agency was constrained to outline because of the reduction in government funds. **Members responded in great numbers on the need to manage the estuary as a whole,** not simply defend the largest settlements and let the river walls go, along with the navigation and adjacent lands becoming flooded, losing both pastures, crops and water sources.

A ground-breaking initiative

Hence the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership (AOEP) was set up in 2012. It was recognised by the government in a ministerial message as a ground-breaking initiative. It was the first time a community body, consisting of individuals representing all the different parts of the community with government and local authority people on hand to advise and help if the plans were reasonable, had been set up to prepare a flood defence plan. After just over three years of planning and consultation, the **Alde and Ore Estuary Plan** was approved in 2016: and became a document of material importance in planning terms, providing an acknowledged foundation for any flood defence works put forward throughout the estuary. The Plan was based on the principle to ensure that the river walls were resilient to surges. This was forward thinking: resilience is now one of the key policy words in the government flood planning policies issued after consultation in 2019 and in full use today. During all this time members of the Association played an active part in the Partnership and working groups to progress the Estuary Plan.

After the Plan was in place

Once the Plan was approved the core work of the AOEP was completed.

- Over the next three years extensive modelling was conducted to determine the best order in which to refurbish the river walls to prevent any area being flooded in a surge during the construction time. Construction was estimated at seven years to do all 44km of the walls in between the seasons which restricted working.
- The East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board agreed to take the construction project forward.
- The Alde and Ore Community Partnership was also set up in place of the AOEP to ensure every parish was represented and the local authorities were on board.
- To handle the finances of the Estuary Plan, the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust (AOET), essentially the treasury of the estuary, had been set up as a charitable incorporated organisation to ensure transparency and confidence in fund-raising and spending, and fund-raising began.

There has been a lull in these last two years because Covid regulations prevented active personal fund-raising, and

the detailed plan was submitted to the Environment Agency to secure the necessary flood approvals for the works and to seek government funds. This last has been delayed because the EA is concerned about an investigation into clay stored at Iken. We hope the link between the clay and the business plan will soon be severed, and that 2022 will see the start of the first stage of bringing the estuary up to a resilient standard. An early sight of what that might look like is the middle section of the river wall at Aldeburgh, mostly done in 2014–15, for which EA found funds after the 2013 surge and AOEP provided a contribution by a donor.

Shoreline Management Plan and managed re-alignment

The years 2016–19 also saw a review of the Shoreline Management Plan, which covered the estuary coastline area, prompted by the AOEP Plan. As a result, the interim policy not to have any active intervention (NAI) after 2025 on the shingle coastline south of the Aldeburgh Martello, the Sudbourne beach, was changed to one of managed re-alignment, so now in the future, providing funds can be found, the shingle shore could be replenished to enable the shingle bank to keep the sea out.

The future

So, for the future, there is a sound estuary resilience plan and, once completed, even in the year 2050 and taking account of sea-level rise, the walls may be overtopped in places but, even in an exceptional high surge of the magnitude seen in the 1953 flood, will stand firm, flood water drained out quickly and hopefully no houses will be flooded, unlike in Aldeburgh in 1953 and in Snape in 2013, when the Maltings missed flooding by a whisker.

The Association, being a representative body on the AOCP, continues to contribute positively to the work of the AOCP, which remains the guardian of the overall estuary strategy and maintains the role of communication with all parts of the estuary.

Before the Storm. Jennifer Golding. Etching.



Adventures on the river

Noah di Paula

Having recently spent some of my time between the Scottish Highlands, French Rivera and Spanish coastline, there is always something that pulls me back to Aldeburgh, and particularly the River Alde.

Growing up in Aldeburgh, I learnt to sail on the river from a young age. The first trip I recall was one filled with excitement, fetching a friend's lobster pots from the lower reaches of the Alde, more commonly known as the Ore. Having never really experienced what boating was like (I was probably about four) the idea of venturing into what was a pretty sombre grey day was a bit unappealing. However, this was the trip that was the beginning of an attachment to the river that I now call home.

Realising the potential this river had to offer, and with some pressure from my parents (my father had learnt to sail on the river in the late 70s, taught by the well-known fisherman Jumbo), I dug out the Optimist, which was beginning to turn into more of a garden ornament, from the rose bushes, and after giving her a very good clean found her a space at Aldeburgh Yacht Club's dinghy park. This was the start of my sailing career. I sailed her for a good few years, coached by various instructors, family friends and occasionally my father, although this usually ended in an argument. The River Alde never failed to excite, from the creeks that can be found around Cob Island and Little Japan to the narrows around Havergate Island, and of course the oyster beds at Butley Creek. After spending the next two years learning in an Opi, I swiftly progressed into slightly larger boats, RS Fevas. Bigger boats meant wider opportunities, allowing me to explore far more of the river including bits I never knew existed.

Over these years I became much more confident with my sailing, as well as learning to adapt to the river's ever-changing conditions. It seemed fitting then to get a summer job at Aldeburgh Yacht Club. I held the position of summer boatman at AYC from May 2017 through till August 2021. The skills I gained over the four years were absolutely invaluable; they allowed me to pilot vessels in a wholly different way, with more ease and confidence. I became comfortable piloting motor and sailing vessels – coming alongside a pontoon was a breeze! I gained knowledge in the way different vessels were rigged, as well as how easy some were to repair.

The knowledge of boat repair became particularly useful when we suffered engine failure just before Home Reach in a force 7 soon after dusk. Thankfully, after a successful bodge with gaffer tape and some cable ties, we were able to pick our mooring up, although the Alde at night with no moon can be a scary place. Over the four years spent working at AYC, my days off would often still be spent by the river; whether that was fishing, water-skiing or picnicking, it was always time well spent.

After racing in the Cannes Royale Regatta, and spending some time in St Tropez, I return to Aldeburgh and the river to embark on a whole new challenge; the restoration of a 50ft gentleman's cruiser that has lived on the river Alde since 2016. Many of you will know her as renowned boatbuilder Peter Wilson's *Maudorces*. She is undergoing an extensive refit, in preparation for a trip that goes much further than just Dove Point; round the UK in fact!

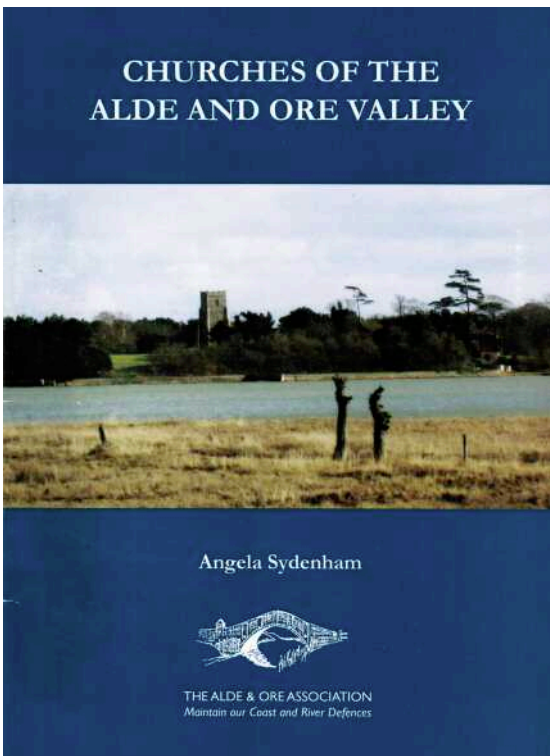
It is things like this that bring me back to the Alde; you are never far from a helping hand or a friendly face, nor are you ever out of an opportunity for more adventures on the river.

Noah di Paula, 2021.



Can you identify the church?

No prizes but a glow of satisfaction if you get them all.
Answers on p. 27.



These six churches are amongst the 24 included in Angela Sydenham's *Churches of the Alde and Ore Valley* (2012), which can be obtained from The Treasurer, Sand Downs, Leiston Road, Aldeburgh, IP15 5QD, price £5. Please make your cheque payable to the Alde and Ore Association and enclose an A5 stamped addressed envelope.

Angela Sydenham, with her characteristic energy and initiative, developed the Church Walks after she had produced a new walks booklet which sought to use local buses, although that proved very difficult. Angela served as a valued Trustee and was always very happy to provide advice on public rights of way on which she was a nationally respected expert; indeed, she completed the most recent revision to her detailed tome on the many ancient and new laws relating to such rights of way only a short time before she died this September. She also loved being on the river and her last sail was only a few days before she died. She was a good friend to the Association as well as to many of us and will be much missed.

Question: When is the Ore not the Ore?

Answer: When it's the Alde, of course

This was the heading for an item in 'Curiosity Corner' in Newsletter no. 16, January 1999.

The 1999 article continues (with idiosyncratic punctuation left intact):

“Nobody seems to know how it came about but the River Ore which flows merrily on its way around Dennington to Blaxhall with nary a dispute about its identity suddenly, just west of Langham Bridge, becomes an ex-river, it ceases to be – at least for a while.”

Meanwhile the Alde which has pulled itself together just outside Badingham not far from the source of the Ore, takes a route through Rendlesham and Stratford St Andrew, undisturbed until the Ore, which has been meandering through Marlesford and Little Glenham, suddenly joins it.

Thereafter, the waters of both are described in the maps as the River Alde until the Alde becomes the Ore once more as Orford looms.

Reappearance

This disappearance and reappearance puzzles the County Council Archaeological Service as much as it does more modest students of the rivers including the Alde & Ore Association committee.

The Council's Archaeological Officer Mr Edward Martin says, “It seems to be a long-standing circumstance and a bit of a mystery”.

‘Richard Blome in his *Britannica* of 1637 mentions the Ore as one of the chief rivers of Suffolk but not the Alde.

‘Joseph Hodskinson on his map of Suffolk of 1783 only marks the River Alde opposite Iken.

First Edition

‘The Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1837 marks ‘R Ore’ opposite Little Glemham, ‘R. Alde’ at and just past the confluence with the Ore (indicating that the Ore merges into the Ade), ‘R. Alde’ is again marked at Iken and around the neck of the river at Slaughden, ‘R. Ore’ is again marked from the south end of Sudbourne Marshes down to Orford’.

All of which indicates only that this rather confusing nomenclature has been around a long time. Does any reader have more information? ”

And, current reader, if you do, please let us know.

River bank. Julie Scarr. Woodcut.



Map of the Alde and Ore Estuary

This confusion of names is something some of the Committee had to come to grips with while trying to devise a fresh map of the area that the Association covers.

The Alde and Ore Association is very grateful to Holly Farrar for designing the map on page 28.

Meet the Committee



Alison Andrews,
Chairman, Trustee



Kim Puttock,
Honorary Secretary, Trustee



Birgitta Bostrom
Treasurer, Trustee



Keith Martin
Trustee



Mark Goyder
Trustee (Photo Elizabeth Handy)



Colin Chamberlain,
Trustee



Roy Truman,
Head Ferryman, Trustee



Roger Baxter
River Defences Committee



Monica Allen
Newsletter Editor

Please get in touch with us at info@aldeandore.org. We like to hear from members.

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. The newsletter is prepared and published twice a year by the Alde and Ore Association, registered charity number 1154583, and printed by Leiston Press. Our thanks go to all the authors and to all the photographers and artists for the use of their photographs and illustrations. Please note that signed contributions may not reflect the views of the Association as a whole.

Can you identify the church? Answers: (1) St John the Baptist, Snape. (2) St Peter, Chillesford.
(3) St Bartholomew, Orford. (4) St Botolph, Iken. (5) All Saints, Sudbourne. (6) St Peter and St Paul, Aldeburgh.

