



DEDHAM VALE SOCIETY

Founded 1938
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EDITORIAL

Sadly I missed what I understand was an excellent Summer Party at East Bergholt Place at the end of June but Paul Gallifant captured the Chairman in full flow at the event (see page 5).

I would particularly like to draw members attention to the notice of our first Winter Lecture below. Elsewhere in this edition you will find a most interesting article on the Landgirls of the Second World War in Boxted and a piece on the graveyards of the Dedham Vale.

Once again I repeat my call for people willing to deliver the magazine locally, particularly in Dedham which has by far the largest concentration of members. Last year we still spent over £500 on postage and the rates rose again this April. As the accounts included with this edition show this is an expense we can ill afford.

David Eking

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The AGM of the Society will be held at the **Constable Memorial Hall in East Bergholt on Monday 19th September 2011**. The Notice of the meeting and a copy of the Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2010 are enclosed in the magazine.

The Society's first **Winter Lecture** will be held at **Assembly Rooms, Dedham on Monday 28th November 2011 at 8 pm**. When **Catherine Pearson** will give a talk entitled "*A view from the Castle: The Colchester Diaries of E J Rudsdale, 1920 – 1951*" extracts of which appeared in the last edition of this magazine. Admission is **£2**. Payable at the door.

EDITION NO 70

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Elsewhere in this magazine you will read about the result of the campaign to stop the development plans at Horkesley Park and the ongoing saga of the National Grid (NG) proposals for more pylons in the AONB and Upper Stour Valley.

I should like to thank all members of DVS who took the trouble to write, e-mail or otherwise express their views and in particular Roger Drury who led on Bunting's matters for our committee as well as Adam Sedgwick and Charles Aldous who have made most of the running with representations to National Grid. In both cases DVS has worked closely with other bodies, some statutory and of long standing, but also with other groups of volunteers who have banded together on a single issue basis. The latter include the *Stour Valley Action Group*, headed by DVS member Will Pavry, which has been an immensely hard working and effective force, and *Stour Valley Underground*, headed by Cllr David Holland, which has succeeded in bringing together a range of organisations including DVS to oppose NG's damaging plans to inflict the blight of further high voltage power lines on our landscape.

Both issues show how important it is for all the organisations involved to work together and back each other up rather than making contradictory statements. At DVS we have long realised that working with a range of like-minded bodies is more and more vital to our task of looking after the Dedham Vale. However, we also need to establish good working relations with a whole range of other bodies and this has

been made possible by the advent of computer e-mails and websites which enable us to keep informed all those who "need to know".

In recent years we have gone to some lengths to work more closely with our neighbours the Colne Stour Countryside Association to the West and the Stour & Orwell Society to the East. We also work with CPRESsex and the Suffolk Preservation Society. We have a close liaison with The Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project Partnership (of which I am chairman) which undertakes so much good, practical work in the Vale.

We are in regular touch with all the local authorities in the area both at Councillor and Officer levels. These include Essex and Suffolk County Councils, Colchester Borough Council and Babergh, Tendring and Braintree District Councils. We have initiated a new approach to all the Parish Councils in the area we cover inviting them to become members of the Society at specially reduced rates. I hope to report on the take-up of this offer at a later date.

At the other end of the scale, the Minister at DEFRA responsible for protected landscapes, Richard Benyon MP, spent a day with me touring the Dedham Vale last December. I took him to East Bergholt, Flatford Mill, Dedham, Stoke by Nayland and Lamarsh. It is not realistic to expect Ministers to intervene in local issues unless they become of national

importance but at least this Minister now has a full briefing of matters concerning the Dedham Vale!

There are numerous other organisations with which we liaise, including the countryside's sponsoring body Natural England, the National Farmers Union (NFU), the Country Land & Business Association (CLA), Anglian Water, The Environment Agency, The National Trust, to name but a few, as well as local conservation and amenity societies. Knowing the key people in all these organisations does not, of course, guarantee that

our representations will be successful, but it helps. They all know the Dedham Vale Society and what it stands for.

The other key point about DVS is that we are all volunteers. We are truly fortunate to have so many members prepared to undertake valuable, often difficult work for nothing. I am in awe of the tremendous work done by members of the Committee and others. A heartfelt THANK YOU to all concerned.

Robert Erith

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This time of year, as the magazine goes to press, generally finds me on the Isle of Mull, off the west coast of Scotland, enjoying new aspects of this tranquil place. This year it was puffins and toads. We are usually too late to catch the puffins before they fly with their young but this year we were early and stood on the path being dive-bombed by puffins with sand eels in their beaks as we had, inadvertently, interposed ourselves between the sea and the cracks in the rock where they had nested. They didn't seem to mind a bit. Puffins are perfectly adapted to swimming and flying but landing is almost certainly what has given them the reputation of the clowns of the air. The sight of them dropping, orange feet first, flapping madly, onto rocks had us in stitches for hours.

The next evening, as we drove home from the pub in the dark, the road seemed to be prematurely covered with autumn leaves after an evening of rain. On closer examination these turned out to be toads. So the rest of the ten miles home was conducted at low speed swerving regularly and wondering just how many "autumn leaves" we had squashed before we knew what they were. Just how much carnage a single car on its way home late at night could cause didn't bear thinking about.

The fragility of nature even in one of the wildest parts of the United Kingdom set me thinking again how much more difficult and constant is the battle to keep those tranquil places that are left in a much more populous part of the country. We have this summer to thank the broad alliance of groups – including the Stour Valley Action Group, CPREssex, and the Suffolk Preservation Society - who with the Dedham Vale Society helped to get the proposed Horkesley Park development turned down by a large majority of councillors on the Colchester borough council planning committee. I should like to thank in particular Dr John Constable and Charles Aldous, who gave evidence for the society in support of the splendid campaign led by Will Pavry of SVAG. It was interesting to hear afterwards that one of the things that swayed the councillors was the tranquil setting of Great Horkesley church which would be overwhelmed by the development. Often the experience of a place can be more eloquent than hundreds of submissions. We hope the planning inspector is equally sensitive to places if this development goes to appeal.

The Society has had cause to be grateful for another piece of teamwork involving groups from all over the country, in the

ongoing battle against National Grid's plans for a second line of 400kv pylons between Bramford west of Ipswich and Twinstead south of Sudbury. This has turned into a test case for how the electricity from new wind farms off the coast should be brought ashore. As Adam Sedgwick explains on another page National Grid's choice of route, announced in July, is a problem for the Society as it goes through the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at Polstead and is widely visible from within the vale. There is still much to play for as the detailed route has yet to be set and with it the degree of undergrounding. Adam and his colleagues on the six groups opposed to new pylons have been chipping away at National Grid's costings and expect to prove that the cost of undergrounding has been overstated. We have already done better than the pessimists ever predicted and it is to Adam's credit that a national discussion has been started about the public's willingness to pay for less intrusive options. It just goes to show what you can do if you present convincing objections.

I regret to say that an even larger national campaign will be needed if we are going to see off the Government's dreadful proposed reforms of the planning system, published as this magazine went to press.

We may be under relentless pressure in the Dedham Vale but there is at least some comfort to be found in the calibre and determination of those who want to see it protected.

Charles Clover



The Chairman addresses the Society's Summer Party at East Bergholt Place

ESSEX PLANNING NOTES

New directions in Government Planning Policies - Horkesley Park - Tranquility

The Coalition Government have long maintained that the national system of planning policies is a serious obstacle to economic development in the country. Therefore, it plans to remove all the planning guidelines and policy statements we are familiar with and replace them with a single policy where there will be a presumption of approval where clear economic benefits are established. There are caveats to this policy to protect the countryside, green spaces etc and a clause on sustainability, I will return to the subject of sustainability later.

The Council's Planning Committee decision to refuse the application for Horkesley Park was based on the Colchester Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is a primarily planning document which has been developed over the last decade and seeks to define in great detail how Colchester Borough, both urban and rural areas, will be developed in the decades ahead. It consists of several documents – Core Strategy defining the broad outlines of projected development, Site Allocations giving details of exactly where development will take place, Development Policies setting out specific policies on many areas including protection of the AONB and finally a Green Infrastructure Strategy.

At each stage the policies are referred to the Planning Inspectorate for comment before being adopted as Council policy.

The refusal of the application to develop Horkesley Park, was based on the LDF, – Horkesley Park was not designated as a development site, its location would hinder the economic regeneration of the town centre and its location, partly in the AONB, was counter to approved development policies.

Several Councillors at the meeting commented that the Grade 1 listed All Saints Church should not be consumed in a theme park and that the views over the AONB were stunning and should be protected in their own right.

A very pleasing aspect of the campaign was that so many organisations came together in opposition. The Parish Councils, as statutory consultees, carry weight with the Planning Committee and Planning Officers and all those in the immediate area raised objections. However, the real power of the opposition was the Conservation Societies and Action Groups who came together with a single voice against the application.

Additionally it was regarded as being unsustainable as 80%+ of the visitors would arrive by car – the hearing was held in the week when the Government announced their target to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2025. Sustainability has many aspects but reduction of carbon emissions, be they arising from the design/construction of buildings or from transportation, is very high on the list.

The question now is will an appeal be made by Bunting & Sons - they have up to six months to do so, and the answer is probably yes, although it is difficult to see on what basis an appeal will be made.

I apologise for giving you perhaps too much detail on the initial Horkesley Park decision but I wanted to show that the planning world within which we seek to protect the Vale from unwanted development is changing rapidly and we must seek to keep up with that change.

Previously I have talked about a young Spanish friend, an environmentalist, and a great admirer of the planning protections incorporated in British Law. He has returned to Spain, already formed a Conservation Society along the lines of the British model, but faces an up hill battle to get the Spanish to value and protect their countryside. Are we going down the same route – economic development is to be prized above all else?

Horkesley Park has not been our only activity – aviation looms large in our list of problems. This is not the well documented flight paths into Stansted and Luton but local flying activity. This ranges from grass airstrips in the Vale, helicopters owned locally, an increasing problem, and, more recently, aerobatic flying over Dedham. The AONB should be an area of peace and tranquillity but the hobbies of a few can severely damage the pleasure of the many.

In the past year there has been much comment on the harvesting of willows along the river and action taken by the Environment Agency in the name of flood prevention. These actions may not be pretty when they occur but are a vital part of maintaining the Vale as a living and working environment.

The role of the Dedham Vale Society is to protect the Vale from unwanted development be that commercial or an individual inappropriately changing their own property and we seek to work with all in the Vale, particularly the parish councils, to ensure that inevitable change supports rather than damages the beauty and tranquillity we experience.

*Roger Drury
Essex Planning Officer*



Wellingtonia in Great Horkesley Churchyard

LAND GIRLS AT GULSON'S FARM

Gladys Benton began working for the Women's Land Army in 1942 at the age of nineteen. She was assigned to Hill Farm, Boxted, and was billeted at Gulsons Farmhouse nearby together with thirty-nine other young women. Miss Wallace, a Mancunian, was the hostel supervisor and the cook was a young woman from London whose skills were somewhat wanting but whose Christian name was Hope, which after a hard day's toil on the land, described precisely her colleague's desire for a good square meal, a hope which was never fulfilled!

In April this year (2011) Gladys was making a family visit to Dedham with her nephew, Tony Benton, who had promised that they would drive to Boxted to relive some wartime memories. On the off-chance, they called at Gulsons to be made very welcome by Sarah and Julian Carr who were fascinated by Gladys's reminiscences and intrigued by the article describing her experiences which she had written some years ago.

Much of Boxted at that time was devoted to fruit production and market-gardening, Hill Farm being no exception, an enterprise begun in about 1923 by Denis Carter and Lt. Col. Guy Blewitt, the latter a "sleeping partner". It was run most efficiently, its principal crop being apples and especially the Cox variety under the trade-mark, "Red Man Brand" but vegetables were also grown and three Suffolk Punches provided the horse-power, common practice on many farms at the time.

The Women's Land Army had been formed originally in 1915 by the Board of Agriculture and by 1917 20,000 had joined although this was but a small proportion of the 250,000 women working on farms at the time. Many traditional farmers were opposed to the scheme but the government was determined to have women more involved in the production of food. By June 1939, with war looking increasingly imminent, the Land Army was mobilised once more. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries asked initially for volunteers but this was later supplemented by conscription so

that by 1944 there were 80,000 members. They were known as "Land Girls", or if they were members of the Women's Timber Corps, "Land Jills". Similar movements were established in Australia and the United States. The WLA was officially disbanded in October 1950.

But let Gladys take up the story:

Do I Remember the Land Army?

In 1942, when 19, I was called up and given the choice of going to Sheffield to a munitions factory or joining the A.T.S. or the Land Army. Although knowing nothing about farming or the country, I decided on the Land Army. Both my parents thought I was mad and that I would never last but that just made me more determined to make a go of it.

My first day in the country will always stay in my memory. I arrived at Colchester station in a uniform that was two sizes too large and took a taxi to Gulsons Farm at Boxted, about seven miles away. It was springtime and the drive was through acres of fruit trees, all in beautiful blossom. I was put to work straight away and my task for the first morning was cutting cabbages and placing them into sacks. It was raining by then and I don't know which made me wetter - the rain or my tears. I really felt I would have been better in the munitions factory or the A.T.S.. However after a few weeks out in the fields, hoeing lettuces, radishes, etc., or hedging and ditching, I began to adjust and to enjoy the farming and the open air even though the work was hard and very demanding. This was a mixed farm, with animals as well as fruit and vegetables, and there were forty Land Girls who, like me, had come from the London area. Only two of the girls worked with the animals while the remainder worked on the crops.

We lived in a hostel, which was a lovely old cottage, and made friends with local girls although at first they were distant because they had heard such terrible things about London girls! It was a large farm so most of us had old, battered bicycles to get from field to field. After a hard day's work we would ride back to the hostel and scramble for the bathrooms since there were only two between the forty of us! We would then have dinner but, unfortunately, the food was not very good though we survived.

Fruit-picking time was really wonderful. First it was cherries then the plums and apples and pears. There was a large barn with a machine which sized and graded the apples, quite a new technique for those days. At the end of the harvest, the farmer would give all the staff a harvest supper in the village hall when goose was always on the menu. This was quite something for a rationed Britain in wartime. Afterwards we would all sing and dance and have a most enjoyable evening.

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The autumn and winter months were spent pruning and spraying the trees. We were fortunate to be one of the first farms in Britain to have its own pumping station for spraying which meant that all the orchards were fed by underground pipes leading to stand-pipes at regular intervals. Because we did not need tankers the spraying was much easier. I remember one incident when we were spraying at the edge of the orchard. A unit of soldiers was on a route-march along the lane when the wind blew the spray over the hedge, covering them with this yellow substance, (I cannot remember exactly what we were spraying). It may not have been funny for them but the sight of all these yellow soldiers in disarray was something we laughed about for sometime afterwards.

We worked outside in all weathers. For instance, one winter morning, when the overnight snow had fallen, we ventured out but the snow was knee-high. Because our hostel was a ten-minute walk up a rough drive to the lane, we thought, "Lovely, we won't have to work out in the freezing cold". Not so! The farmer quickly sent a tractor with trailer and we were taken to the orchard. We worked in a blizzard all day and it was dark both when we started and when we finished.

The evenings were spent either in the village pub, which was a short walk away, or else in the lounge of the hostel where we would sit around an old piano singing.

Although the work was hard and the hours long, my four and a half years in the Land Army were possibly one of the happiest times of my life and, in the end, I certainly had no regrets about choosing the Land Army.

Wages were 45 shillings per week, half of which was taken for board and lodging. She remembers D-Day and the bombers flying over as they hoed parsnips; they were still hoeing when the aircraft returned, many with substantial damage. Eating parsnips today always reminds her of the scene. Gladys mentions the village pub, only a short walk away. In fact there were three to choose from, the Cross Inn being the nearest, the Wig and Fidget in Straight Road and the Queen's Head which was almost two miles away and was frequented particularly by the girls with musical interests. Douglas Carter, former village archivist and a schoolboy at the time, lived at the Queen's Head which his parents had owned since 1925. The building itself had been constructed as a farmhouse in 1851 but became a pub in 1865.

By the 1930s the substantial horticultural undertakings in Boxted required an army of pickers who would descend on the village during the summer season picking fruit and vegetables until the early autumn. A "Tin Town" of corrugated-iron huts was erected half-way along Straight Road occupied at the height of the season by up to three-hundred residents, men, women and children, mostly from London. They would go to dances at the Priory Hall, which had previously been the Salvation Army Citadel, and on one occasion three of them called in at the Queen's Head afterwards but commented to the landlord, Douglas's father Harvey, that it had no piano. Harvey realised that in order to attract the pickers he would need to buy one, nothing special, but an instrument which he could employ someone to play in the saloon bar. Having hitched-up his horse and cart he set-off for Manns Music shop

in Colchester High Street where he looked at a selection of pianos before being offered one which had been returned after the customer had defaulted on the payments. It was a top-of-the-range Broadwood which had cost £125 originally but was being offered to Mr Carter for £25. Of superb quality and probably costing more than he'd wanted to pay but it was a bargain and it was duly loaded onto the cart and transported to the Queen's Head.

After supper the pickers would gather in the pub to sing and dance to the piano played by one of the women, an excellent pianist in the "Mrs Mills" idiom who would be accompanied by two very able banjo players. Two hundred and more turned up each evening and the Broadwood had to be carried out to the field, the saloon bar having been overwhelmed! Beer consumption increased dramatically to such an extent a full motor-lorry was required each week to prevent the pub from running dry! Pints were sold at the saloon bar window as, on one occasion, a pane was accidentally pushed out by sheer pressure of the heaving mass in the room.

But once the pickers returned to London, piano-playing ceased and customer numbers slumped. Harvey discovered that music was being played at the Shepherd and Dog at Langham and that his trade was going there. He needed a pianist! Douglas was given piano lessons but in the meantime, a piano-player was employed who was paid ten shillings for a Saturday evening but who could only play twelve tunes before repeating. After only a few weeks his father decided that it would make better business-sense to employ his son rather than pay the "professional". But Douglas protested that he knew only his scales, having played for such a short time. Harvey was not pleased and expressed his disgust that after spending good money on lessons his son still couldn't play a tune. So he employed another pianist, an accomplished musician from Colchester with a good repertoire who could also "follow" the singing but he charged £1 per evening. Eventually, at the tender age of thirteen, Douglas improved sufficiently to become the resident pianist. Thus it was that the more musical of the girls at Gulsons found their way to the Queen's Head. One of them, Jessie from Oxford, was a good player and three were accomplished singers who could harmonise very effectively in the style of the Andrews Sisters. They were Joyce Johnson, known as "Toots", Audrey Lewis and Margot Heyhoe.

At Christmas, a group of the girls would go carol-singing, finishing at the pub and with the money collected they bought wool which would be knitted into gloves and socks by ladies in the village before being sent in parcels to the troops. Gladys recalls Douglas at a young age playing the piano but she remarks that she thought his father would not have made much money from the odd glass of shandy or cider that they bought and which lasted all evening.

Both Douglas and Jessie could read music and would play duets although he ruefully admits that he played "Secondo" whilst she played the "twiddly-bits"! They were sufficiently proficient to play in the Priory Hall, the village hall at that time, and also at venues in Colchester. He also recalls practising on one occasion in the lounge at Gulsons but the piano had seen better days and after an hour or so accompanying the girls it was decided that it was time for

supper. Rationing was in full force and food would be brought "from work". This particular evening is remembered because "Toots" recited the following Grace:

*Heavenly Father bless us, And keep us all alive,
There are ten of us for dinner, But food for only five!*

Christmas 1944 saw a famous party at the Queens Head sharing a pig which was especially fattened for the event.

Douglas recalls that girls were prohibited from taking boyfriends back to the hostel although this problem could be overcome by plying Miss Wallace with copious amounts of farmhouse stout!

Gladys continued working at Hill Farm until 1946, but latterly as a private individual and not as a WLA member. Denis Carter's death in his mid-sixties coincided with Britain's early involvement with the Common Market which had disastrous effects upon particular sections of both agriculture and horticulture, one of them being fruit-farming which became uneconomical.

The Queens Head finally closed its doors in 1970 when regulations became too restrictive to make it economically viable; Douglas had been landlord since 1958, taking over from his father.

Of the girls and their husbands with whom Gladys kept in touch only she and Margot's husband are still alive. But they had been great times; the Land Girls were immensely proud of their contribution to the war effort and proud also of their uniform which they would wear even to a London show when, oft-times, they would be called to the front of queues because they were held in such high esteem.

Paul Gallifant.

My thanks to the following for their help in preparing this piece:

Gladys Benton, Tony Benton, Douglas Carter, Jeremy Carter, Sarah Carr, Joan Gallifant, Peter Gant and Ann Newman.



Top right: Gladys Benson at Gulson's farm Spring 2011

Above left: Priory Hall today

Above right: The Queen's Head 60 years ago

Opposite: Land Girls at Gulson's - Gladys is third from the left in the back row.



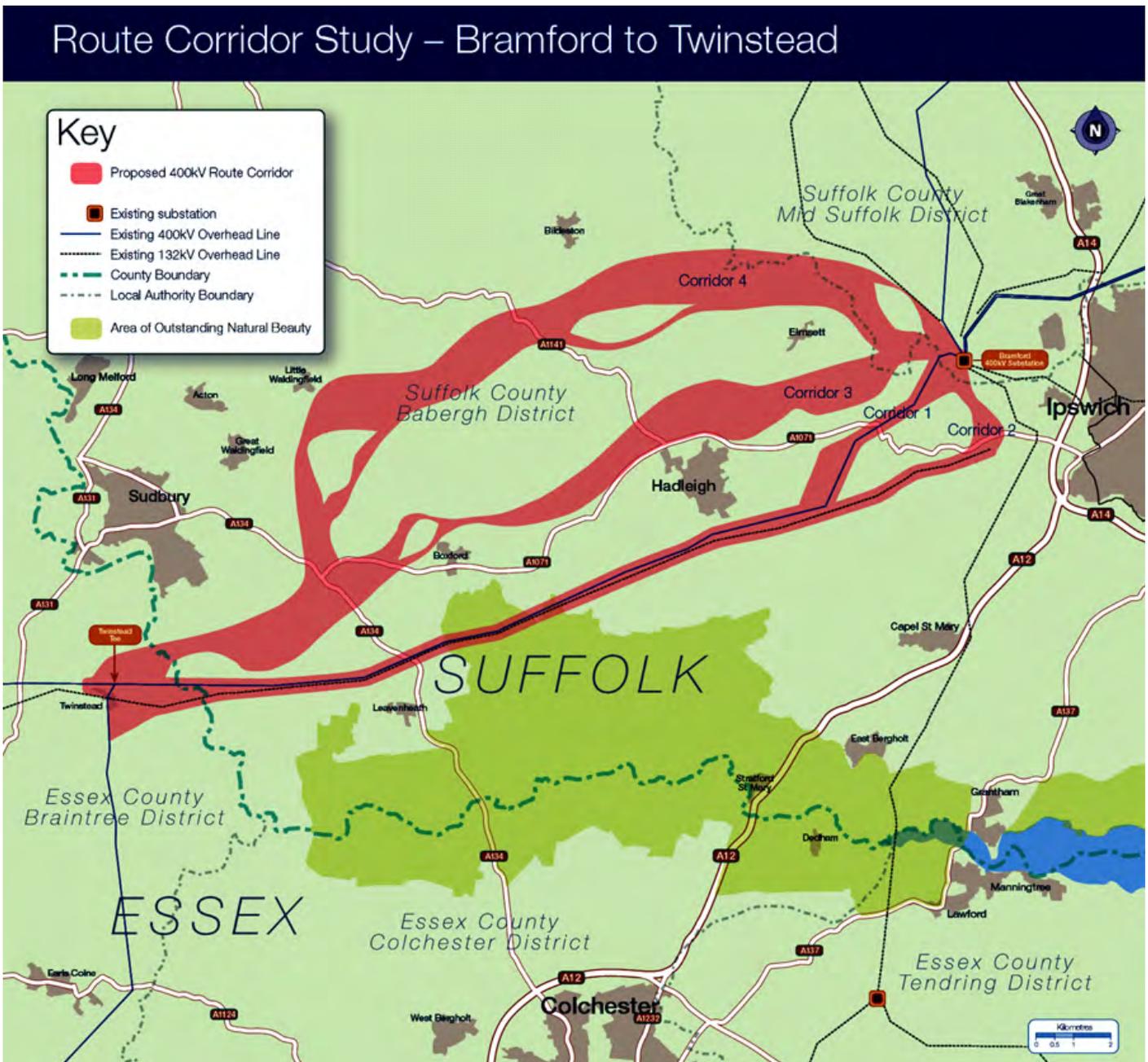
THE PYLON'S PROGRESS

In September 2009, National Grid opened consultation on four options for the general alignment – “route corridors” – for a second line of 400kv pylons between Bramford west of Ipswich and Twinstead south of Sudbury. [See map.] By the July 2010 DVS Newsletter, National Grid’s choice of route corridor had been delayed until September. By the January 2011 DVS Newsletter, it was expected in February 2011 – twelve months later than originally envisaged. In the event, it was announced in July.

It is for Corridor 2 (combined with the original Corridor 1). This is bad news for the Dedham Vale AONB, since Corridor 2 goes through the AONB in Polstead, and is visible from much more widely in the AONB. But the DVS position has always been that none of the route corridors was acceptable. All of them go through the Stour valley between Sudbury and Bures and hence affect the area DVS has long argued should be part of the AONB. And DVS is not indifferent to damage to the countryside of Corridors 3 and 4 outside the AONB.

NG justify their choice largely on the ground that Corridors 3 & 4 have no pylons. This was always obvious, and is a valid point. But against that is the fact that Corridor 2 goes through the AONB, with its statutory protection. NG – and others – have always suggested that since there is already one 400kv line through Corridor 2, another is no big deal environmentally. We in DVS – and all those concerned to protect AONBs anywhere - must resist any argument that existing detriment to an AONB means that more of the same is not material. Everyone agrees Constable Country is very special. We have to insist they act accordingly. NG also justify their choice by reference to removing the existing 128kv line which runs through Corridor 2. But that could be done whichever corridor was chosen, or if the new link was underground, so is irrelevant to the choice between corridors.

Given the gross delays that have occurred already, NG have chosen an odd moment to announce their decision. NG acknowledge that three major factors in the decision are



uncertain: the cost of undergrounding; the public's willingness to pay to preserve beautiful landscape from pylons; and the best way in which to connect offshore wind farms to the grid.

NG set up, in December last year, on instruction from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), an independent inquiry into the costs of undergrounding. It was to report in February. The consultants doing the work have now withdrawn, saying they were not given the necessary data. Talk is it might be done by the end of 2011. NG have been told by OFGEM, the regulator, to do willingness-to-pay studies of the public's aversion to pylons. (Some of the credit for this development goes to DVS, since it was the DVS representative who was an early advocate of this.) No results have yet emerged, and it is most unlikely that the initial results will be fit for purpose.

Connecting offshore wind farms to the grid has been piecemeal, so far: each one taken in isolation. Given the vast plans for offshore wind power, there is an alternative: the "integrated solution". This would cost many billions of pounds less than the piecemeal approach, and would require hundreds of miles less of new pylon lines. These facts are not disputed, but how to bring it about remains under debate.

Even so, NG are pressing on with their plans for the second Bramford – Twinstead link. The next stage is consultation about the detailed route within Corridor 2. There will be four area groups and some "thematic groups". NG hold out hope of some undergrounding: their "Selection of Preferred Corridor" document recognises the strength of the case for undergrounding in the AONB and the Stour valley. NG envisage this next stage of consultation ending mid-2012, submission to the Infrastructure Planning Commission or its successor in mid-2013 and decision mid-2014.

Much will happen in that time. Energy policy is subject to challenge. Already we see challenges from the consequences of the Japanese tsunami, from cheap natural gas, from increasing electricity prices. When the Bramford – Twinstead consultation started, NG's website listed just two major transmission projects, ours and that of our close colleagues in Somerset. Now it lists ten, with more to come.

DVS, with the five other groups in the Essex/Suffolk coalition, will continue to press on the proper valuation of our precious landscape, on innovation to reduce the cost of undergrounding, and on connecting offshore wind power cost-effectively and within minimum landscape impact.

Adam Sedgewick

SUFFOLK PLANNING NOTE

Sometimes I am more than a little glad that I live and work on the Suffolk side of the AONB. All too often my colleague, Roger Drury, in Essex seems to find all the big problems on his side of the river. It is so once again this time. The long running battle over the application to develop Horkesley Park, however, has not left us unmoved. Nayland Parish Council and residents have been strong, vociferous supporters of the campaign to prevent this potentially disastrous development and Babergh District Council lent their weight to the opposition. But all the hard work, reading and formulating the response to the immensely elaborate application, fell to Roger. We do not yet have the Local Development Framework (LDF) which is in place in Colchester Borough and continue to judge applications against a five year old Local Plan but, perhaps fortunately, to the best of my knowledge, there are no "Horkesley Parks" looming on our

horizon. Members may recall an application to replace an undistinguished bungalow on Scotland Street, Stoke by Nayland, to which I referred last summer. The original application was withdrawn and a new one has now been submitted which has a much better chance of acceptance. I attach a photograph of this "undistinguished" property which is not infrequently described with some justification as an "eyesore" and I am sure everyone would agree that its replacement was eminently desirable.

*David Eking
Planning Secretary, Suffolk*



Knutmill, Scotland Street – Ripe for replacement

AT HELPSTON **Meetings with John Clare** **RONALD BLYTHE**

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AT HELPSTON is a 168 page hardback, Price £20, with 24 colour plates by the Suffolk artist Mary Newcomb.
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THE CHURCH YARDS OF THE DEDHAM VALE

“Far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife....”

There are 15 churchyards in the Dedham Vale AONB, all places of memory, peace and contemplation where Thomas Gray could so easily have written his famous elegy - although it was in fact written at Stoke Poges in Buckinghamshire, now sadly all but a suburb of Slough! Even Lawford, all too near the main line station of Manningtree, manages to retain a serenity despite the trains. The photographs on these pages were all taken in the churchyards of the Vale. All of them can be reached along public footpaths, paths originally set out because many of the churches are some distance from their village, often in the grounds of the local Manor house. The “rugged elms” are, of course, no more but they have often been replaced by magnificent cedars, copper beeches and even in one case by a towering Wellingtonia. The Yew trees remain, one a most unusual shape. Very seldom is it still possible to read the inscriptions on tombs dating from the 18th century when Gray penned his elegy but studying those that can still be read reveal a few notable and successful people but for most “Th’ applause of list’ning senates to command.../And read their hist’ry in nation’s eyes /Their lot forbad...” Lord Justice Darling, a distinguished early 20th century judge, is buried at Langham, Hugh Otter-Barry, Bishop of Mauritius for 28 years, at Little Horkesley and Percy Edwards who imitated the songs of birds on the radio at Polstead. His gravestone is inscribed with the couplet “Birds sing softly, Birds sing low, He is dead who loved you so” Generations of the same family are buried together, the same surname occurs in several different churchyards – there is a Munson in almost all the churchyards on the Essex side of the River Stour. The sister of the man who founded the Commonwealth of Virginia, the first successful settlement in North America, is buried in one of the humblest of all the churches.

Derex



“Can storied urn or animated bust back to its mansion call the fleeting breath” – Wormingford



“Their name, their years spelt by th’ unletter’d muse” – Langham



Monster Topiary – Stratford St Mary



“But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page did ne’er unroll” - Langham



“Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree’s shade” – Stoke by Nayland



Naval Memorial – Dedham



“Here rests his head upon the lap of earth, a youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown” - Great Horkesley



Evening at Flatford Mill, June 2011