

Dedham Vale Society



No. 72

Summer 2012

THE DEDHAM VALE SOCIETY

Founded 1938
Registered Charity No 246007
www.dedhamvalesociety.org

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EDITORIAL

I am delighted to report that my comment last time that it was becoming questionable whether the Society could continue to afford two full colour A4 editions of the Magazine annually produced a most generous reaction from a member who enclosed a cheque for £500 accompanied by a plea to keep it as it is. We will do our best!

This edition focuses particularly on National Grid's proposed route for the new line of pylons from Bramford to Twinstead, some small sections of which they have conceded should be underground. Adam Sedgwick explains why they have not gone far enough, so far. There is also a most interesting article by Paul Gallifant on Iris Westwood and the Chairman's splendid piece on fish in the River Stour. Inserted in the Magazine you will find the Notice of this year's AGM and the Accounts to 31 December 2011.

David Eking

THE SOCIETY'S WINTER LECTURE

This year's illustrated lecture will be held at the Assembly Rooms Dedham on Wednesday 28th November 2012 at 8pm. Admission £3. It will be given by Ashley Cooper and is entitled

"Gestingthorpe Roman Villa – a glimpse at the Suffolk and Essex border in Roman times"

*Front Cover
Scotland Place in the Spring*

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Elsewhere in the magazine you will read about the progress in persuading National Grid to underground cables between Bramford and Twinstead through the Dedham Vale AONB and the Stour valley above Bures. You will also be updated on the Society's reaction to the latest proposals for Horkesley Park. I should like to thank all those members who have written on either or both of these issues. All our letters and e-mails matter and will have an influence on the outcome in both cases. I should particularly like to thank Adam Sedgwick for his thorough and detailed campaigning in dealing with National Grid and Roger Drury for his assiduous work in laying out the reasons for our opposition to the latest Buntings proposals.

In both cases the DVS has worked closely with other amenity societies, local authorities and in particular with the *Dedham Vale AONB & Stour Valley Project*. E-mail makes this liaison much easier and it will be of vital importance in these and other campaigns.

Since I last wrote we have lost two members who have made significant contributions to the Society and its objectives.

The first is Charles Brocklebank, whose family has lived at the beautiful Gifford's Hall estate at Stoke by Nayland for many years and have been members of the Dedham Vale Society since its earliest days. Charles and his wife Marcia have been very generous and enthusiastic supporters and the family allowed us to hold our garden party at Gifford's Hall which was very much enjoyed. Charles had a distinguished career in the City and will be remembered by all who knew him for his kindness, generosity and unfailing courtesy. He was also someone on whose shrewd judgement and wise advice we could always rely.

Our second loss is the recent sad death of Tom Holme, until very recently Chairman of CPRESsex. Tom took on this post some three years ago and by his energy, enthusiasm and commitment revitalized the organisation and greatly increased its effectiveness. He was a firm believer that all the Essex based amenity societies should work closely together and encouraged Charles Clover and me to write the article for this magazine last year urging our members to join CPRESsex, to which DVS is affiliated. He in turn joined the Dedham Vale Society and attended our functions whenever he could. Tom had so much to offer and he will be greatly missed.

We extend our most sincere condolences to both families.

Robert Erith



The President with Quinlan Terry at the Summer Party at The Priory Stoke by Nayland

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Indulge me for a moment with a rather technical thought from the realms of science. There is a concept coined by Daniel Pauly, one of the world's most distinguished fisheries scientists, called shifting baseline syndrome. What Pauly means by this is that people calibrate their expectations of whether an environment is healthy or not by when they first encounter it, usually when they are young. Yet the environment they are looking at may have once have included many more species, at a greater fecundity, than it does now even a few generations ago – but people regard the situation as normal because their baseline is more recent and so the impression of what represents a healthy environment goes on shifting with each new generation. He gives the example of the sea off the east coast of Canada which has been calculated to have only ten per cent of the exploitable fish and shellfish that were present 200 years ago.

I was prompted recently to apply this thought to our own Vale and to the River Stour, its centrepiece. I am indebted to one of our members, Arabella Douglas-Menzies, for reminding me of a book that was on my own shelves, *The Suffolk Stour*, by Ambrose Walker, published in 1957, a

year before I was born. She opened it at the two and a half pages about fish in the river. I was surprised by what I read. Walker records that the coarse fishing in the river was much sought after by anglers, which I take to be the same as now. A pike of 28lbs was found dead in a pollution incident in 1952. What interested me were his observations about migratory fish. I remember my father, who was born in 1903, saying that he caught sea trout at Judas Gap below Flatford. Walker not only confirms this but says that, despite the many obstructions at Flatford, salmon had on two or three occasions in the preceding twenty years penetrated as far as Langham, in one case being caught in the eel-weir at Boxted Mill, in another being found in the river intake grill at Langham Waterworks pump. Sea trout, he records, came regularly in the autumn below Flatford in small numbers and were sometimes caught there on rod and line. One of 4lbs was caught in 1953. He says that brown trout were also found in the half-salt reaches of the river.

No mention is made of the European zander, which I am told is now to be found in the river above Stratford St Mary, but he records that a 4ft 3in Wells catfish weighing 30lbs was caught at Flatford Mill in 1894 and was thought to have

escaped from one of Sir Joshua Rowley's lakes at Tendring Hall.

The most striking change, of course, is in the dwindling profusion of the common eel, which Walker records were to be seen as elvers, climbing the flood gates in countless numbers in early spring and spreading to every stream, ditch and pond. On their journey down river to the sea to spawn, several years later, many of thousands were caught in eel weirs or traps installed by millers. I remember the opening of the eel traps at Dedham by a local farmer and the bag of eels being reckoned in stones. The eel is still present in the river but enormously fewer than at that time for reasons nobody seems to understand. At that time Seals too were occasionally recorded in the estuary. I doubt if they are now.

I thought it worth reminding the society's members of what the river was like nearly 60 years ago, because if there are custodians of the river, apart from the statutory authorities who cannot always be relied upon and bodies that are more concerned with navigation, that is us. The river is cleaner than it was in the 1950s but it is also emptier. I leave it to you whether we should be concerned by that but I think we should. We think of the river being impounded and used for navigation and power as long ago as the 18th century but what Ambrose Walker's book shows is that migratory fish managed to co-exist with this regime until comparatively recently. When one raises with the Environment Agency the question of the impediment to migratory fish that the

tidal flood barrage at Cattawade, built in 1971, represents, one does not detect much inclination for modifying an obstruction installed in another era. Nor does anyone seem to consider the passage of migratory fish, including coarse fish which we are beginning to understand migrate too, when new obstructions are created in the river, or old ones, such as locks, are repaired with new materials. We should.

An examination of whether the latest design of automated flood gates represent more or less of a barrier to migratory fish, such as eels, as the previous wooden and cast iron structures would be a good idea. Whether a cash-strapped government agency is likely to consider these things at a time like this, I would doubt, so in due course my personal opinion is that it is something that the Society should look into. This we will endeavour to do.

On an entirely different note, I would just like to thank members of the society for their good will when faced with the voluntary ticket price we imposed at our summer drinks party this year. Sarah Carr, our honorary

secretary, reports a healthy injection of funds as a result. The society cannot afford to erode its fighting fund so this is much appreciated. In future we will be formalizing the ticket price, while hoping to keep it equally modest. We believe it represents extremely good value for what is regularly one of the most enjoyable events of the summer season. Heartfelt thanks to all those concerned in making it such a success.

Charles Clover



The Chairman addresses members at the Summer Party

A PROSPECT OF PYLONS

National Grid have published their Connections Options Report, giving the main features for the proposed second 400kV connection between Bramford, just north-west of Ipswich, and Twinstead, three miles south of Sudbury. These main features are

- Undergrounding through the Dedham Vale AONB – just over 2½ miles
- Undergrounding through the Stour Valley – just under 2½ miles
- Routeing the pylon line north of Hintlesham rather than south.

See Figure 1 [opposite]: the underground sections are in pink, with green stars marking the “sealing end compounds” where the line changes from underground to overground.

This gives about 5 miles of underground cable out of a total of about 20 miles. The cost of the part-underground proposal is given as £266 million over its lifetime, as against £134 million for a wholly overground design. It is noteworthy that

the revenue costs of underground cables are much less than those of pylons, because the power losses are much less. So the ratio of underground to overground capital costs, for these proposals, is about 4:1 (£208 million vs. £51 million) but the ratio of lifetime costs, as above, is about 2:1.

By the time this Newsletter reaches you, the period for commenting on the COR will have expired and the DVS response submitted. The general lines are set out below.

We welcome the undergrounding proposed, in itself and because it acknowledges the strength of the case for protecting, not only the AONB itself, but also the extension to the Stour Valley south of Sudbury for which DVS has campaigned so long. Particularly pleasing is that the COR acknowledges the importance of the cultural significance of the Stour Valley. Dedham Vale has been “Constable Country” since the time of the artist himself: we have now established the Stour Valley as “Gainsborough Country”. Here tribute needs to be paid to David Holland and Richard Barnes of Stour Valley Underground. They have worked

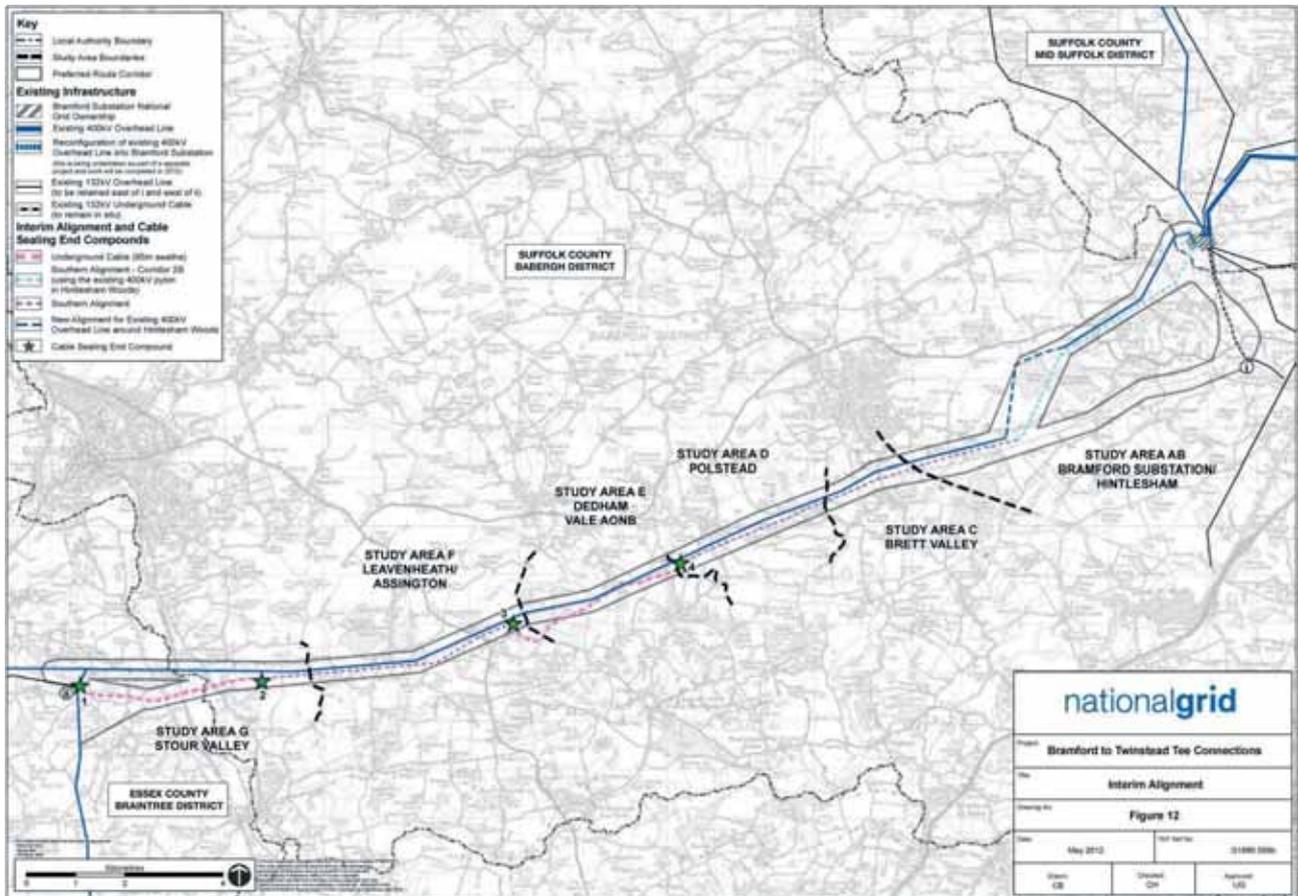


Fig 1: Proposed Interim alignment of new pylon route

tirelessly since the Bramford – Twinstead link was first mooted, contributing across the whole range of issues, in particular much to the realisation that many of Gainsborough’s landscapes were of real places, still visible today.

Our ultimate goal remains complete undergrounding. The lifetime cost of this would be £400 million (these are all NG’s figures). This represents 40p per year – NB, per year – on the average household electricity bill nationally.

But at this stage we are content to play according to NG’s rules. We believe their own logic and evidence provide an overwhelming case for substantially increasing the length of undergrounding associated with the AONB and the Stour Valley, and a powerful and analogous case for undergrounding in the Brett Valley and around Hintlesham. The argument runs as follows. The case for protecting the AONB, and the quasi-AONB of the Stour Valley, is conceded. But protecting an AONB entails protecting its landscape, and “landscape” in this sense means what the onlooker sees when in the AONB. So avoiding pylons in the AONB does not succeed in protecting the AONB if the pylons visible from the AONB are located outside the AONB.

This is the case here. The most conspicuous pylons are not those in the river valleys, but those on the high ground on either side. It is the river valleys which are within the AONB or its mooted extension. So undergrounding confined to the AONB and the Stour Valley still leaves conspicuous views of pylons on the high ground.

This is illustrated by Figure 2 [overleaf], showing the pylons

visible from particular viewpoints. Note that the one section of line which is shown as being not visible from any of the selected viewpoints is the section through the AONB itself.

The COR is dismissive of these views, noting they are “distant”. Indeed, they are as much as three miles distant in some cases. Those behind Polstead Church in the photograph [overleaf] are about one-and-a-half miles away. But what an absurdity: “a view” means a field of vision which is both wide and long. The question is not “How distant are they?” but “How conspicuous are they?” Since the pylons in question are 165 feet high, on the skyline and silhouetted against the sky, they are very conspicuous.

So all this makes the case for extending the undergrounding, first, east from the AONB over Polstead Heath to an ideal site for a sealing end compound in the worked-out section of the Layham sand and gravel pit; second, west of the A134 through Leavenheath & Assington, and third, east from the Stour Valley past Dorking Tye. And once the latter two are accepted, it follows they should be linked, to give undergrounding continuously from Twinstead to the Layham sand and gravel pit.

That would protect DVS’s core concerns, the AONB and its extension. But we support those working to protect other landscapes in the neighbourhood.

The case for the Brett Valley is only now starting to be made with full force. At Stage 1 of the consultation a number of local authorities identified it, with the AONB and the Stour Valley, as a section to be placed underground¹. But the

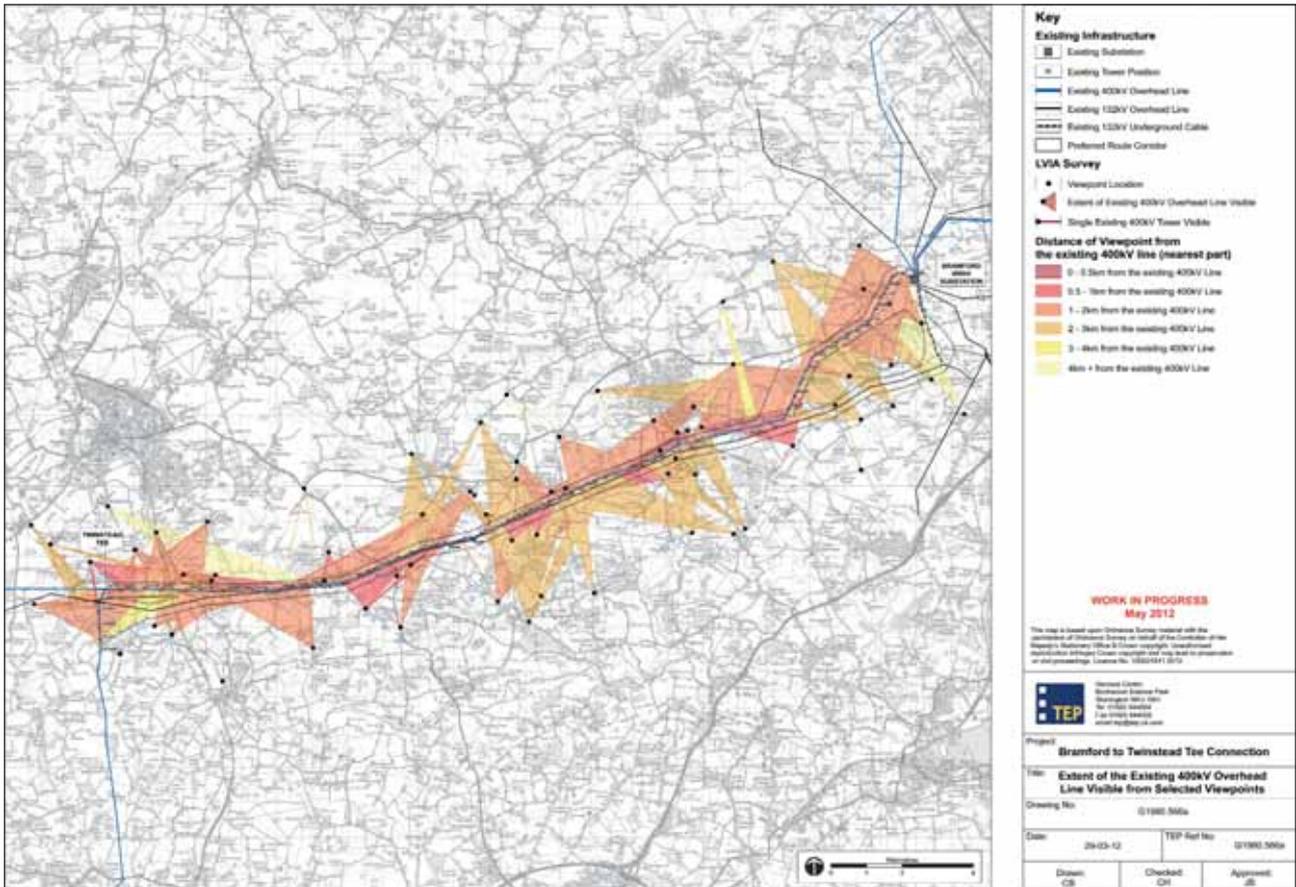
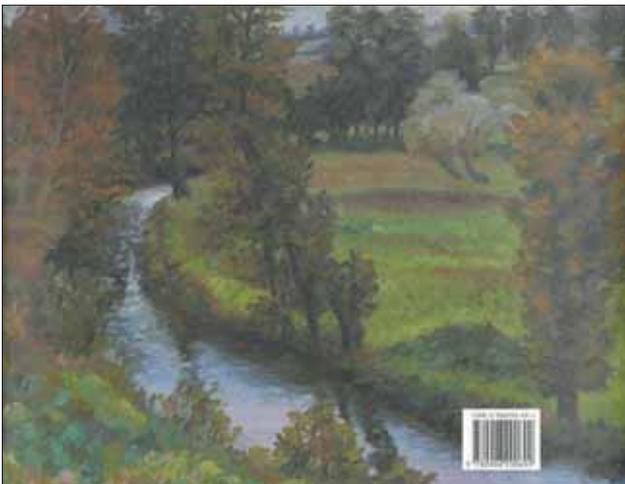


Fig 2: Visibility of existing pylons from selected viewpoints



Pylons in the distance above Polstead Hall and Church
The River Brett by Cedric Morris



The River Brett by Cedric Morris

Brett lacked a group able to focus on the issue until the publication of the COR. This, with its dismissive references to “unremarkable landscape” and to Cedric Morris as a “lesser known artist”, has galvanised local opinion. DVS has encouraged those involved to be aware of the strength of their case, and its analogies with the cases for the Box Valley in the AONB and the Stour Valley: a river valley similar to those in the AONB (and in its lower reaches, itself part of the AONB); Hadleigh, a mediaeval market town close by; and the cultural significance argument represented by the East Anglian School of Art at Benton End. This latter has now been made with compelling vigour by Maggi Hambling - front page EADT, 20 July, and the Telegraph 21 July. And the picture² reproduced [left] reinforces all these points.

Finally, at the eastern end of the route, lie Hintlesham Hall and the SSSIs of Hintlesham Great Wood and Ramsey Wood.

At national level, Ofgem have set aside £100 million for transmission operators – NG being much the biggest – to compete for, to deliver mitigation for the environmental detriment of existing pylons in National Parks and AONBs.

We have told them that £100 million will buy a lot of trees to screen sub-stations but not a huge amount of undergrounding. (It would more than pay for undergrounding the existing pylons through the AONB, but not the sections on either side, which as explained above, are crucial.) But Ofgem have made clear that if NG can come up with schemes that deliver a lot of environmental benefit for the £100 million, more will be forthcoming. We shall be happy to work with NG on that.

Adam Sedgwick

ESSEX PLANNING NOTE

Twelve months ago when I sat down to write a piece for the 2011 Summer Newsletter, we were quietly congratulating ourselves on the collective effort by many groups which had resulted in the planning application for Horkesley Park being turned down by an 11-1 majority – job done!

So here we are one year later and facing a new application - not for the Horkesley Park Heritage and Conservation Centre but the Stour Valley Visitor Centre at Horkesley Park – a Visitor Centre conjures up a whole different image, small and cosy, but in reality it is still a large development seeking to attract over 300,000 visitors.

Hopefully many of you will have received information on what is planned and have been encouraged to raise objections, should you so wish, so I have no intention of repeating the arguments.

However, I have been in opposition to the many applications on Horkesley Park, only one of which reached a determination by the Colchester Planning Committee, for over ten years and we are all becoming exhausted by this war of attrition.

Responses to the Public Consultation on 10/11 May from the Suffolk Preservation Society, Colne & Stour Countryside Association, CPRESsex and many others, were not contained in the documents lodged with the Council on 30 May. This was extremely unfortunate.

The debate will rage on over the coming months but the Council seem determined to reach a conclusion in a sensible time frame and at the moment they are thinking in terms of an October decision.

Although my prime preoccupation has been to protect the Vale from such a major development in, or near to, the Vale, there are other issues of concern.

I reported last year that light pollution, particularly from



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restaurants, hotels, pubs etc, was an issue. We have had a measure of success in that some owners have agreed to moderate the lighting of premises and this should help us reduce the overall problem.

There are always a number of planning applications which are of concern to neighbours and local communities. Many of these are reported to us and we attempt to represent local opinion where there is an issue affecting the Vale as a whole in the planning process. These are not always major problems of great import but our role is to listen and where possible offer assistance.

Under the Localism Act more powers have been delegated to Parish Councils and DVS is seeking to build co-operative relationships with Councils across the Vale. Many have become members of DVS and we seek to involve them in the protection of what has been described as Colchester's most precious and vulnerable asset, the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Boxted have recently been granted funding to carry out a Neighbourhood Plan under the Localism Act. This is an enormous community effort but, if successful, would allow them to control development in Boxted in the years ahead. We wish them well.

Roger Drury
Essex Planning Secretary



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IRIS WESTWOOD

Mrs Westwood recently left a legacy of £10,000 to the Society

Iris died aged eighty-nine in May 2010 having lived at Stour House, Dedham for forty years. Her late husband, Bert, predeceased her. They had previously lived at Moot Hall, Clacton, the only "Tudor" building on the sea-front erected there in 1920 after being dismantled and moved from Bury St Edmunds, a relatively common practice in Suffolk towns and villages in the early years of the twentieth century. She had been brought-up near Cambridge, the middle one of three sisters, her father owning a garage business in which young Iris took a keen interest, serving petrol and learning to handle both cars and motorcycles. At the onset of the war, unbeknown to her parents, and one year under-age, Iris enlisted in the RAF where her driving abilities were immediately recognised. She was one of only two applicants in that particular intake who had this skill, the other being a farmer's daughter who could drive tractors. Duties included chauffeuring "Top Brass" and driving lorries including "Queen Mary" aircraft-recovery units.

After the cessation of hostilities Iris met her future husband, Bert, and began working at his family garage business of Westwood and Clark in Clacton on Sea, running the office and selling motor cars with great success. Her family, however, decided to move to Australia and Iris sailed with them but before long she followed her heart, returning to England to continue her life with Bert and eventually they married. He had been a serious competitor in motor-racing in the Thirties, driving for Singer and the Fiat Black Diamond team and together they made a formidable duo competing during the fifties and sixties in road-events,

driving-tests and latterly trials. Iris was a serious competitor in her own right winning many events for which she received numerous trophies to add to the vast number won by Bert, all of which occupied the whole of the Library at Stour House, the books relegated elsewhere! The Coach House provided accommodation for their eclectic collection of vehicles which included a 1910 Crossley that had once belonged to Marie Lloyd. The back seat was occupied permanently by a vampish manikin complete with a long cigarette holder, easily mistaken for a person if the rear door was opened in the dark of the garage! Bert's Fiat Balilla which had brought him so much success was garaged in the same building together with a Brough Superior motorcycle and many other cars which had caught his eye over the years.

Before they bought the house in 1970 it had been a home for "old gentlemen" and had a forbidding appearance surrounded as it was by seemingly impenetrable undergrowth. Even the peeling signboard could have been used as a prop in a horror film! To keep them occupied, the men were assigned tasks such as painting various parts of the house, the white marble fireplaces, for example, having several coats of brown which Iris painstakingly removed. She gradually reclaimed the exquisite oak linen-fold panelling which lined much of the interior and continued with restoration throughout the house until it eventually came to life again.

Following Bert's death, Iris continued living there

completely on her own but with part-time help both in the house and the garden. She experienced occasional burglaries. In one particular attempted robbery a brick was thrown at the window of the room she was sitting in one winter's evening, smashing the glass. But as she had previously closed the wooden shutters inside the brick bounced back causing the miscreant to run away. The police were called next day to investigate but the would-be burglar was never apprehended. Iris, as is the modern way, was offered counselling but refused it with typical disdain!

Always immaculately turned out and a natural beauty, Iris would make certain her make-up was in place and that she was wearing heels before the arrival of any visitors. On rare occasions she would be caught out and would make an excuse to tidy herself but never letting-on that that was what she was doing! Following a series of small strokes she spent a year in a care home during which time she would have regular trips home for an hour or two, "just to keep an eye on things". Eventually she "escaped", as she put it, and on one particular visit just didn't return but had to accept that she would require regular help if she were to stay living independently which she did for another year until she fell and broke her hip.

Ever cheerful, Iris was a private person, modest, loyal, fiercely independent and with a great sense of determination and courage. Stour House and Dedham Vale in which it stands meant a great deal to her; the legacy will help the

Society to continue its work of protecting the Vale on a very firm footing.

Stour House

Stour House was built in 1868 for the seed-merchant, W.H. Dunnett on high ground overlooking Dedham at the eastern end of the heath on the site previously occupied by Pit House. It was built in the Gothic style but the architect is unknown.

On Saturday June 20th 1920 the estate, totalling 746 acres, and the house were sold at auction by F.S. Daniell in Colchester. The property was described in the catalogue as "one of the finest small and compact agricultural, residential and sporting Estates in the district" situated as it was, "in the centre of the Essex and Suffolk Hunt and also affording very fine shooting, heavy bags of partridges and pheasants being obtained and the Marshes offering excellent snipe shooting".

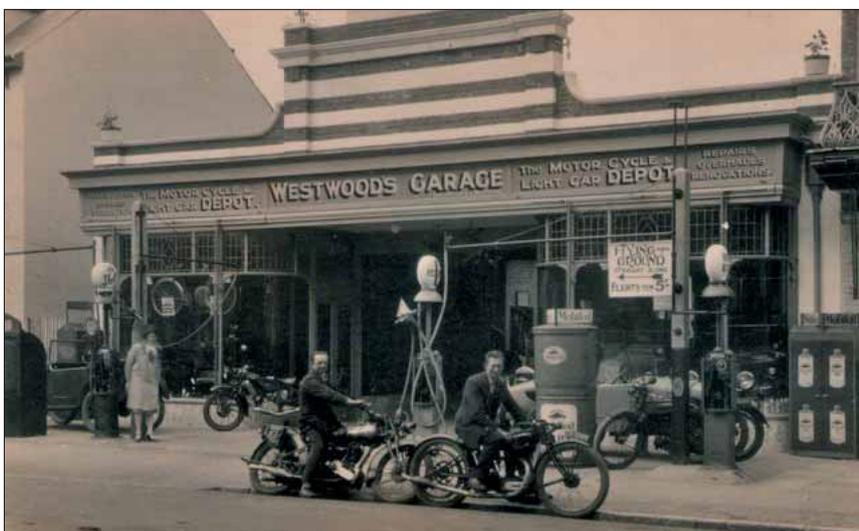
After Mrs Westwood's death the house inevitably came up for sale and it was extraordinary to discover that the details in the catalogue of the interior of the house in 1920 almost



Bert and Iris competing in their XK120 Jaguar



Stour House



The Westwood Garage



Iris in the WRAF

exactly described the appearance in 2010. The only real alterations had been the removal of the polished mahogany bathroom, “WC fitted Underhay’s patent flush pedestal pan in mahogany case”, to be replaced by the ubiquitous 1970s “Avocado” suite! The Italianate ceilings were still in place as was the kitchen dresser, the Butler’s Pantry, including all the fittings and the bells to call the servants. The building was not listed and an approach was made, supported by the DVS

Committee, to English Heritage but after a lengthy consideration it was decided that listing would not be appropriate as it was of no special architectural merit. The house was subsequently bought by a developer who has retained many of the original features.

I am indebted to Jessica Duncan for help with this article.
Paul Gallifant

SUFFOLK PLANNING NOTE

Since I contributed my note to the winter edition of the magazine there has been some progress on the production of a Local Development Framework for the Babergh District, in that after some 6 months the Council has issued a set of proposed amendments to their Core Strategy Submission Draft, taking into account the comments made on the draft and the advent of the National Planning Policy Framework in the Spring. As far as the AsONB are concerned these changes make little difference – although we do at least now get one specific reference in perhaps the most important of all the proposed Core Strategies (CS10) but there is a worrying change of tone/emphasis at the start of the document. A new policy, CS0, is inserted which states inter alia;

“When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.....Planning Applications that are supported by appropriate/proportionate evidence and accord with the policies in the new Babergh Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole or
- Specific policies in that framework indicate that development should be restricted”.

It is anybody’s guess what planners and Development Committee members will make of such convoluted language but it remains clear that the District needs an approved Local Development Framework/new Local Plan in the shortest possible timeframe.

The applicant appealed, in February, against Babergh’s refusal to grant permission for a change of colour to the walls and woodwork of St Hughs in School Street, **Stoke by Nayland** to which I referred last time. At the time of writing (August) no decision has been announced by the Planning Inspectorate.

A further application was submitted to build on the site of the former bus garage in Mill Street, **Nayland**. It remained seriously flawed and of no material improvement on its predecessor, a badly designed attempt to cram too much into the available space which is unacceptable in the conservation area of this beautiful village. It was duly rejected by the Council.

A revised proposal for a house to replace the undistinguished bungalow, Knutmill, **Scotland Street**, to which I referred last Summer has now been approved.

My opposite number in Essex, Roger Drury, refers to problems of light pollution on his side of the river. This product of 21st century security needs has also reared its head here. However, I am pleased to report that the owner of the property in question has agreed to mitigate the effects by reducing and toning down his security lights.

David Eking
Planning Secretary, Suffolk



Hudson's Cottage in winter



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**“THE STOUR VALLEY
VISITOR CENTRE”**

Many of you across the Vale will have been horrified that Buntings and Sons have lodged yet another application at Horkesley Park – I have lost count of the number of applications over the last 12 years although I note with some amusement that the visitor numbers have reduced from 780,000 to 485,000 to 316,000 and I look forward to them reaching zero!

After the refusal of May 2011, this new application was submitted within a year, thereby qualifying as a resubmission which attracts no fee. The full cost of processing the application therefore falls on the Council Tax payer.

What has changed in the last year – the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with its presumption in favour of economic development but also strong protection for “National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” has arrived. Colchester’s Local Development Framework (LDF) has gone through the final stages of approval under the Localism Act and offers a degree of protection from the more extreme elements of the NPPF.

A worrying feature of the “resubmission” is that the financial information on the viability of the revised scheme is being regarded as commercially sensitive and, therefore, the public are denied the information. Colchester Borough Council is the sole arbitrator of this viability and one could question whether they have the full range of skills necessary to do this.

However, I remain the perpetual optimist and believe that the work done by Colchester over the last 10 years in developing an excellent and all embracing LDF will offer protection from yet another attempt to exploit commercially the most precious and vulnerable asset of Colchester, the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Roger Drury

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Swan nesting near the River Box, Spring 2012