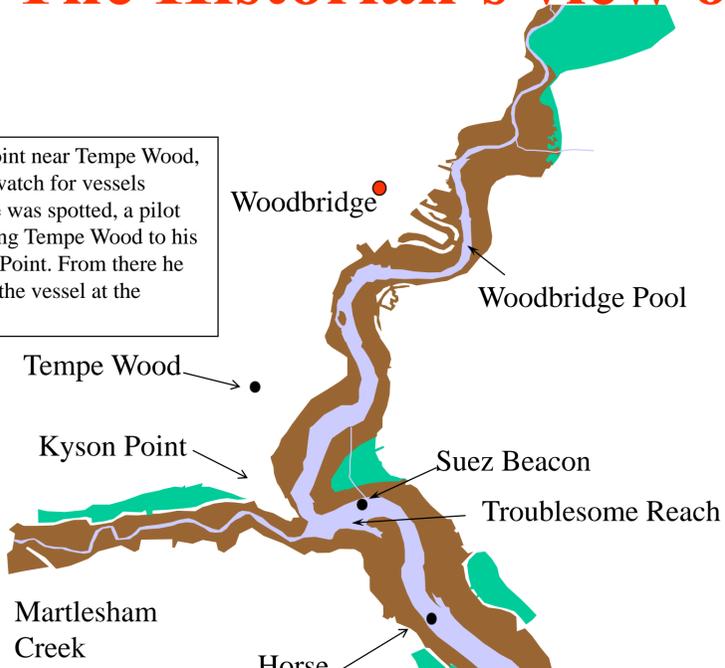


## The Historian's view of the Deben Estuary

**Tempe Wood** from vantage point near Tempe Wood, the Woodbridge Pilots would watch for vessels coming up the river. When one was spotted, a pilot would walk along a path skirting Tempe Wood to his lug sail boat moored at Kyson Point. From there he would sail down river to meet the vessel at the Bowship Beacon.



● Sutton Hoo Tumuli

**Suez Beacon & Lower Troublesome Beacon** mark the twist in the channel opposite Martlesham Creek and the entrance to that section of the river known as Troublesome Reach. It has been so called for untold years owing to the fluky winds that come down from the creek making it a particularly troublesome reach to beat up. Suez Beacon stands at the entrance to a channel called Loder's Cut which was dug through the mud in 1879; a few years after the great Egyptian waterway was opened.

**Horse Beacon**, marks the place where a ship's voyage from Woodbridge was deemed to begin. Thus arose the custom of "wetting" the horse by breaking a bottle to wish good luck to the voyage. It also marked the end of the voyage. Fires were lit when the beacon was passed and food put on the stove to cook. If the ship were becalmed hereabouts, the crew were allowed to go home.

**The Hams & The Tips** These sandy tips were built out into the river during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by Robert Cobbald, a Sutton farmer, in an endeavour to reclaim 150 acres of land. He was eventually stopped by Trinity House who feared that The Tips would alter the course of the river and hence interfere with navigation.

**Waldringfield** – in 1876 a factory was established here to make Portland Cement from common chalk and river mud (ooze). When the factory was in full swing it had 7 kilns and a fleet of 7 sailing barges trading between the Waldringfield Cement Works and The Thames. At times as much as 400 tons a day was loaded. The factory was supplied with mud by the barge Kingfisher. Two men used to take her down river to just below Waldringfield and, in one tide, load her by hand with 25 tons of mud from the saltings. The cement works was owned by "Masons Portland Cement" who also had a much larger complex at St Peter's Timber Yard in Ipswich.

**Bowship Beacon**, just below Waldringfield, marks the point where the river pilots took over from the sea pilots.

**Kirton Creek** - There was a ferry from Kirton Creek to the other side of the river. The field above where it used to land was known as Ferry Hempland. Most Suffolk villages had their hemplands. They originated from the time of Queen Elizabeth when anyone who farmed more than 50 acres was obliged by law to grow a crop of flax or hemp.

**The Rocks** – this reach of the river takes its name from the hard rocky bottom made up of Septaria. These limestone nodules are a form fossilised jellyfish and there are also large deposits at the foot of Felixstowe Cliffs. This limestone, called "Rockstone", has been used for building. Orford Castel was made from it and Cardinal Wolsey used it for his College at Ipswich. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century demand for the stone much increased because it was used in the manufacture of cement.

### High Water Mark Plan

- Saltings
- Mud
- Sand / Shingle
- Low Water Mark

**Kingsfleet** is now a large drainage ditch but in Norman times it provided sheltered water behind the high ground of Walton and Walton Castle. In Suffolk fleet mean shallow, so Kingsfleet was simply the shallow creek used by kings.

**Bawdsey Manor** overlooks the entrance to the Deben. It was finished in about 1886 having taken some 18 years to build. It was the hub of Sir Cuthbert Quilter's 8,000 acre estate which extended almost to Woodbridge. He was a stockbroker, financier and politician. In 1936 the Manor was used as a top secret research establishment and it was here that the radar system, which played a pivotal role in the Battle of Britain, was developed. The Manor remained an RAF station until 1991.

**The Bar** – if old charts are to be relied upon, the depth over the shingle bar across the entrance to the Deben has hardly changed over the last 400 years. The shape and orientation of the shingle spit have, however, changed almost every year.