



NEWSLETTER

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

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A registered charity founded in 1973 to aid in the establishment and maintenance of a nature reserve within the Rye Harbour site of special scientific interest, (known as an SSSI).

Chairman: Ian Rumley-Dawson. Secretary: Clifford Percival. Treasurer: Mr. Pat Bonham.
Committee: Miss Evelyn Stewart, Aubrey Sinden, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Greenhalf.
Warden: Richard Knight. Assistant Warden: Miss Pam Haddon.

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NUMBER 10 .

WARDEN'S REPORT.

R.K.

After a busy and successful summer season, we found time to look closely at some late summer and autumn treats. During August and September, there were 23 different species of migrating wader recorded on the Reserve, including *Black-tailed Godwit*, *Bar-tailed Godwit*, *Common Sandpiper*, *Green Sandpiper*, *Wood Sandpiper*, *Whimbrel*, *Curlew Sandpiper*, *Little Stint*, *Redshank*, *Greenshank*, and *Spotted Redshank*. Some high spots of the autumn passage involved at least one *Wryneck* in August, and the arrival of two *Grey Phalaropes* at the Ternery Pool following stormy weather on 26th September. These two birds remained in the area until 11th October, giving some watchers in the hides interesting views of this rather elusive Arctic breeder. Sightings of *Hen Harrier* and *Marsh Harrier*, as well as other birds of prey such as *Hobby*, *Merlin*, *Kestrel*, *Barn Owl*, *Little Owl*, *Long-eared Owl* and *Short-eared Owl* were some of the spectacular species on the Reserve this autumn. Some of the interesting smaller species included *Kingfishers*, *Pied Flycatchers*, *Black Redstart*, *Common Redstart*, *Ring Ouzel*, *Twite*, *Lapland Bunting* and *Snow Bunting*. The latter is also an Arctic breeder, but becomes a coastal bird in winter spending its time often on the shingle beaches, searching the strand line for tiny seeds which have wind-blown from the summer plants. The *Snow Buntings* can often be seen during these winter months in such places as Rye Harbour, Winchelsea Beach, Hastings and Bexhill beaches. Remember of course that they will be in their more brownish/white winter plumage.

No doubt some local members noticed a spectacle of natural dispersal on 14th October! when some thousands of young spiders drifted westwards on gossamer threads as light as air. This is a most effective way of attaining a wide distribution, the young spiders may be carried thousands of feet into the air and may be blown many miles before they eventually come down to land again.

Management work carried out by the Southern Water Authority during October and November, has created another large island at the eastern end of Ternery Pool. This was the final part of an extensive excavation project which was started earlier in the year and was financed by grants from the Nature Conservancy Council and the World Wildlife Fund, to whom the Friends as well as the Management Committee of the Reserve give their grateful thanks. Only a year ago this project seemed an impossibly expensive venture, however, apart from tidying up after the mechanical dinosaurs, the job is done. By next summer, a few plants will have probably colonised the altered areas, which will certainly provide a larger safe zone for breeding and roosting species of birds. Support from these organisations, as well as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Sussex Trust for Nature Conservation, the Sussex Ornithological Society and others, all shows that the value of the Reserve to wildlife as well as to education is truly recognised.

WORKING PARTIES.

P.H.

Please come along and do your bit to help in the important upkeep of the Reserve. There are all sorts of smaller jobs to be done, so that the place will be of greater attraction to incoming species next spring and summer. We suggest that you bring lunch, thick working gloves, rubber boots, suitable outdoor clothing and if possible a shovel, spade, garden fork or rake, as well as binoculars in case there are a few interesting species about. Working parties will be held on Sunday 14th March 1982, and at Easter on 9th and 10th April 1982. Please meet at 10.00 am. in the Martello carpark by the Information Centre, or later at the Ternery Pool where some of the work will be in progress.

COFFEE MORNING.

I.R-D.

Our grateful thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Petty at Vine Farm in Udimore, for a most successful coffee morning held on behalf of the Friends, which raised £118 for the Reserve. Everyone was greeted by a welcoming roaring log fire as well as refreshments which were especially appreciated on such a cold morning. If there is anyone else who would be willing to hold one of these type of fund raising events in their large home in the future, then please contact our Secretary. Thank you.

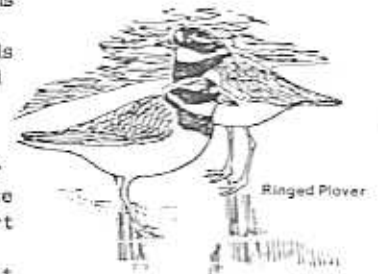
PUBLICATIONS.

I.R-D.

As announced in our last Newsletter, the Friends have issued two new items of interest to those who visit the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. We have found that the new GUIDED WALK leaflet has become quite popular and has been selling well, in spite of the fact that the weather has not been exactly encouraging for walks. However, maybe everyone is keeping the leaflets for use next spring and summer, although of course there is always plenty to see along the Walk at any time of the year. This leaflet works in conjunction with the newly painted guide dots numbered along the road from Rye Harbour to the River Mouth, and is well worth following if you have not already done so. We have been wondering about producing another GUIDED WALK leaflet to cover a route from the River Mouth along to the Southwest End of the Reserve, thus building up a good set of guides for visitors to the area.

Our first picture postcard of the Reserve, drawn by Bob Greenhalf, also seems to be quite popular and helps to illustrate the wide range of animals and plants that can be seen around the area. We hope that Members of the Friends will use these cards as much as possible in order to publicise the place and thus raise valuably needed funds for its upkeep.

These and other Reserve publications are available from the Wardens at the address shown in the heading of this Newsletter. Please be sure to remember to enclose a stamped addressed envelope with your requests. Please also note that the postage rate may have been increased by the G.P.O. in the early part of 1982, therefore if you have not placed an order with us as soon as this Newsletter is distributed in December 1981, then please check the latest post rates which may in time differ from those quoted below.



	<u>Price:</u>	<u>Postage:</u>	<u>Envelope Size:</u>	
Postcard "The River Mouth" 10p each (or 12 for £1)		11½p (or 19p)	7 ins x 5 ins.	} (or one copy of each item ordered at same time, total post = 36p)
Guided Walk leaflet No. 1	15p	11½p	12 ins x 9 ins.	
Annual Report (of previous year)	50p	19 p	12 ins x 9 ins.	
Annual Bird List (annotated)	25p	15½p	12 ins x 9 ins.	
Botany List	25p	11½p	12 ins x 9 ins.	
Report of "Little Terns in England & Wales 1977-79" by R. Knight & P. Haddon	£1	19 p	12 ins x 9 ins.	

Some back copies of the Annual Report for past years are still available on request.

CONDUCTED WALKS.

P.H.

These events have been specially arranged for the benefit of Members of the Friends. The object is to encourage people to be aware of what is happening on the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, both from the point of view of wildlife and the various management plans that are in operation. Each walk will be led by one of the Wardens and/or their Assistants, who will describe the species which may be seen as well as answer any questions. Each participant is strongly recommended to bring binoculars and suitable outdoor clothing. Each Walk will start from the Information Centre in the Martello carpark at Rye Harbour, at 2.30 pm. and will finish back there again at about 4 pm. Dates = Sunday 10th January 1982, and Sunday 9th May 1982.

We will also be arranging a special CONDUCTED BOTANICAL WALK next summer, date in next Newsletter.

GREY PHALAROPE

I.R-D.

As Richard has mentioned in his report in this Newsletter, two of these birds were lingering about on the Reserve this autumn. In fact they do pass through the area every year, although they may not always call in at the Reserve. In the autumn they are usually seen in their winter plumage, as illustrated by Bob Greenhalf's drawing on the right.

In summer their plumage is quite different, it is a sort of brownish red colour which is the exact tint of the Arctic vegetation on the tundra where they breed. The male has some brown mottling on the head, while the female has extensive black markings over the head and has a far richer colouring than the male. This is contrary to normal practice in the bird world as it is usually males which have the gaudiest plumage, as it is they who fight off predators while the female sits quietly camouflaged brooding the eggs or young. However, in the Phalarope species the colourings are reversed as it is the males which do all the brooding. In fact once the female has laid the eggs, she leaves the nesting area and has nothing more to do with raising the family. Observers have suggested that this may be a survival feature which ensures that if all the females leave the breeding grounds, then there will be more food left for the growing chicks. This feature also happens with other Arctic breeders such as the King Eider Duck and Common Eider Duck, as well as a few other waders, although it is the males that vacate the breeding grounds in these cases. By now the Phalaropes will probably be in their winter quarters off the West coasts of Africa.

