



NEWSLETTER

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

c/o. 1 Coastguard Cottages, Rye Harbour, Rye, East Sussex,
TN31 7TS.

Telephone: Rye 3862

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 Bunley-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.

SPRING 1982 .

NUMBER 11 .

WARDEN'S REPORT.

R.K.

The whole of Britain, except for Rye Harbour, was gripped tightly and squeezed by two bitterly cold winter spells. Rumours received via radio, television and friends living in the far north, that's north of Tenterden, spoke of crippled public services and loss of farm stock.

Meanwhile, life on the Reserve went on much as usual with only the occasional sighting of snow, until the day of the Member's Conducted Walk on Sunday 10th January. On cue, as it were, for an interesting though bitterly cold walk to the shore, along the beach and back via the hides. The enthusiasm of the 6 brave souls had clearly taken possession. Jokes were made about it being "almost cold enough for a pullover" or did he say "plover", I'm not sure, chattering teeth made it difficult to speak! Much praise was made for thermal underwear. Nevertheless a good time was had and sightings of *Short-eared Gulls*, a *Water Rail*, *Snow Buntings*, *Bramblings* and an *Eider Duck*, flocks of *Wigson* and a *Red-breasted Merganser* at the river mouth made it all very worthwhile and to say the least exhilarating. Tea by the fire on return has never been better.

Reports were received in early January of over 100 *Red-throated Divers*, up to 50 *Great-crested Grebes* and over 1000 *Guillemots* in the Rye Bay. Then came reports of oiled birds, mostly *Guillemots* and the worst oiling of the beach seen during the Reserve's history. More than 80 birds were picked up dead between Cliff End at Fairlight and Jury's Gap beyond Camber. Others were seen oiled but still alive at sea. The 80 corpses found are of course only a fraction of the total toll. A *Guillemot*, one *Razorbill* and a *Velvet Scoter* were caught and sent to John Goodman at the RSPCA Centre at Fairlight for cleaning. This is specialised work requiring purpose built equipment to be really effective. Luckily all three survived the cleaning process well and were later released thanks to the painstaking dedication of John's work.

At the time of writing (March), Spring seems just around the corner. A *Peacock Butterfly* flew weakly out of the woodshed to take in some warming sun. Up to 6 pairs of *Laughings* are busy prospecting the Flat Beach area near Lime Kiln Cottage on the Reserve and *Ringed Plovers* have returned to begin territorial flights around their nesting areas. Soon the Winter will be forgotten and the perennial pleasures of Spring and Summer will be enjoyed once again.

TERN WATCH.

P.H.

Once again we are appealing for volunteers to help in the protection of nesting birds on the Reserve during the Summer. In order to combat the ever present threat of illegal egg collectors and trespass into the birds nesting areas. A constant watch over the Reserve will again be maintained from mid May through to mid August. If you, or any of your friends can spare any time during this period. Your help would be much appreciated. A car, although not essential, is an advantage but you need not be a bird expert or particularly energetic. If you would like to join our "Tern Watch", or just find out a few more details about it, then please contact Pam Haddon (Assistant Warden), at the address shown in the heading of this Newsletter.

WORKING PARTIES.

P.H.

These will be held on 9th and 10th April 1982, 5th September 1982, and 9th October 1982. Please meet in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour, at 10.00 am., or later at Ternery Pool. Bring lunch, working gloves, rubber boots, suitable rugged outdoor clothing and if possible a shovel, spade, rake or garden fork. Just in case there are any interesting species about on the Reserve, better also bring binoculars as well. There are all sorts of tasks to be done, large and small, which help in the important upkeep of the Reserve, so do please come along if you can. Thank you.

The enclosed leaflet gives details of our public fund-raising event WILDLIFE ON THE FARM at Corkwood Farm near Iden on Sunday 6th June 1982. Please tell your friends and neighbours and display these leaflets as widely as possible, in libraries, shops and noticeboards. Thank you.

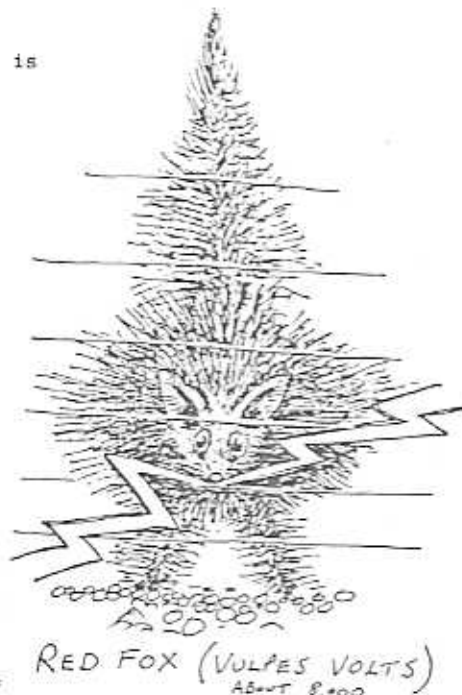
PART WORK AUCTION.

R.K.

With the aim of raising funds for the Reserve, Mr. Terry Wyatt, who is a member of the Friends, has very kindly donated a copy of the "ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BIRDS" (Orbis Publications). This series of colourful well printed magazines covers mostly European birds, but also describes some of the more exotic worldwide species towards the end. The magazines have been neatly bound into 7 hardback volumes, all in pristine condition, which together would make a valuable addition to any birdwatchers library. In order to give all our members a fair chance of bidding for these lovely books, and, at the same time, raising as much as possible for the funds, we are holding an auction by written offer.

The Encyclopedia consists of 91 magazines, each of which cost about 40 pence new. Therefore tenders over £20 are invited. The books are available for inspection at the address shown in the heading of this Newsletter, and will also be on view at the Friends Annual General Meeting on 8th May 1982.

All tenders must be in writing and delivered to Richard Knight (Warden) at this address or at the A.G.M., by 7.30 pm. on 8th May 1982. The value of all offers will remain secret until after 7.30 pm. at the A.G.M., when the result of the Auction will be announced.



CONDUCTED WALKS, (Led by the Warden and/or Assistants).

All these events have been arranged to encourage Members of the Friends to see what is happening on the Reserve, regarding wildlife and management tasks. Each event will start from the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour. Binoculars are essential.

Sunday 9th May 1982 = 14.30 - 16.00;

Saturday 21st August 1982 = 10.30 - 13.00 for plants led by Mrs. Breda Burt, (bring packed lunch and spend the afternoon on the Reserve);

Sunday 19th September 1982 = 14.30 - 16.00;

Sunday 9th January 1983 = 14.30 - 16.00

HELP! HELP! HELP! HELP! EQUIPMENT FOR THE RESERVE.

I.R-D.

During a recent survey by the Friends Committee and the Reserve Management Committee, it was immediately obvious that certain items of equipment etc. were needed either to replace existing items which are worn out, or to accommodate the increase in Reserve paperwork, files, artwork and sales goods which are all stored in the Warden's house which belongs to the Reserve. If you can help us by donating any of the following items to the Reserve, then we would be most grateful. Secondhand items should please be in good serviceable condition.

1. For the Office:- Filing Cabinet; Work Table/Desk; Map Chest/Cupboard/Chest of Drawers; Bookcase and/or Shelves.
2. For the Kitchen:- One Sink unit - preferably double drainer or a single left hand drainer; Any other Kitchen floor and wall units; Aga or Rayburn type solid fuel Stove.
3. For the Living Room:- One Sofa - two seater or small 3 seater "cottage style" (ie. not modern).
4. Other Items:- 2 fold-away spare Single Beds or Convertible Chairs; Electric Wall Heater; Electric Convector Heater; Vacuum Cleaner + attachment cleaning tools.

GREAT BUSTARD.

I.R-D.

Some keen birdwatchers were lucky enough in January to see one of the largest wild birds that can be seen in Europe. It was a *Great Bustard* on the Romney Marsh. This species is a large land bird which used to breed in Britain up to the 1830s. The last breeding records were in Norfolk 1830, and Suffolk 1832. Their decline in this country was probably due to persecution by people for their feathers and alteration of the habitat. These days the nearest breeding areas are in Spain and East Germany, so maybe this bird had come from one of those places. They do move to the west coast of mainland Europe in severe winters, so perhaps this was an East German bird? Alternatively, of course it could be an escapee from a wildlife park, like the *Flamíngos* and other exotic foreign waterfowl that have dotted our countryside in recent years. However, there are not many wildlife parks that have specimens of this magnificent bird. It is basically brown and white and the male which is much larger than the female, has a sort of moustache of bristles. A captive colony of *Bustards* was set-up on Salisbury Plain a few years ago, however, no reports have been issued that any of those birds are missing at the moment. Strong indications point to the fact that this bird could indeed be a natural winter visitor.