



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 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.

SUMMER - AUTUMN 1982 .

NUMBER 12 .

WARDEN'S REPORT

A very mixed bag to report this season - exciting, disappointing, encouraging, disconcerting - and all during a summer of remarkably good weather, satisfying perhaps most peoples' expectations.

Exciting and rewarding were further increases in the numbers of most breeding birds such as Lapwing, Redshank and Oystercatcher pairs which as good as doubled on last year's figures, with 69 pairs, 23 pairs and 22 pairs respectively. Ringed Plovers and Wheatears remained the same at 35 pairs and 12 pairs. Sand Martins really took a liking to our artificial nesting bank in front of the Parkes hide at Ternery Pool, where 13-16 pairs reared at least 50 young, 11 pairs staying on to rear second broods. Little Tern numbers were down on last year's figure by 10 pairs at 49 pairs, perhaps not surprising since at least 20 adults were taken by a pair of Little Owls during 1981, breeding success was however excellent and 50 juveniles took to the air.



Exciting also were visits to the Ternery Pool by two Spoonbills and new to the Reserve a Broad-billed Sandpiper (as illustrated above right). A Cockatoo calling over the Old Lifeboat House in July was a fantastic sight and jogged memories of its Australian home.

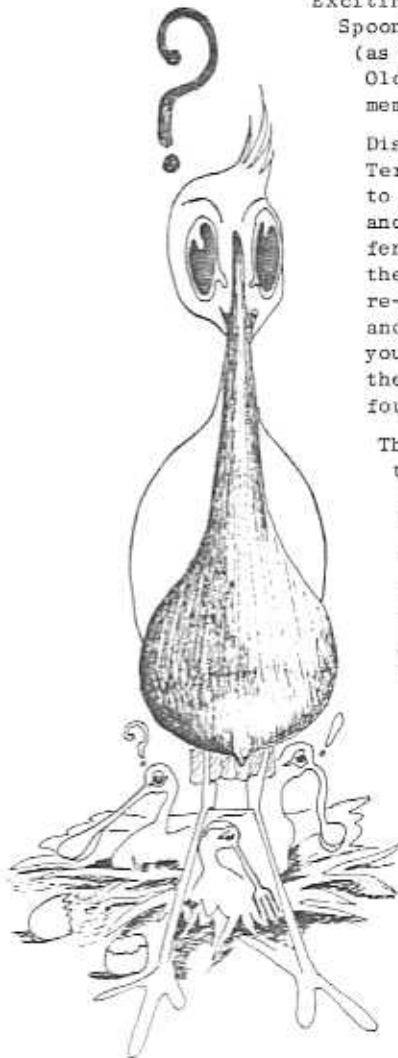
Disappointing was the final success of the Common Terns on the islands at Ternery Pool. There were 85 pairs well ensconced by mid June when, perhaps due to exceptional low water levels, a Badger was seen to swim out to the islands and severely predate the colony in just a few nights. Hurriedly, an electric fence was erected around the Pool in the hope of discouraging the Badger and the risk of Foxes crossing as water levels fell dangerously lower. Many pairs re-nested and all was well until mid July, when in just two nights, the young and eggs of virtually the whole colony of Common Terns were predated. The only young to escape, 12-15 of them, were those that reached the flying stage between the two bouts of predation. Fortunately, the Common Terns have previously had four successive good years for breeding.

The dry sunny summer was excellent for insects. Butterflies were plentiful though comprising only the usual species and dragonflies, whilst plentiful, appeared to be of few species. 2 Black-tailed Skimmers (*Orthetrum cancellatum*) occurring once again at the Ternery Pool and the Hairy Dragonfly (*Brachytron pratense*), an early species not seen every year, occurred during May.

It has been a most encouraging year for the start of a detailed survey of the moth species on the Reserve. A few of the day-flying Hummingbird Hawk Moth was seen taking nectar from the Vipers Bugloss flowers near the Old Lifeboat House, which was a new treat for me. Operating a light-trap has been very rewarding with over 190 species of moths having been identified so far, some quite unusual, some strictly coastal. A full report on this survey is to be published in the 1982 Annual Report, which will be on sale next year.

Further survey work is required to help identify other invertebrate species, especially spiders, snails and flies. Knowledgeable people in these fields are sought - please contact the Reserve at the above address.

Very little would be possible without the help you all give so generously, for which many thanks.



PLANNING APPLICATIONS.

P.H.

Those members of the Friends who attended the Annual General Meeting earlier this year, may remember mention was made of a planning application for 70 wet moorings for boats on the saltmarsh at Rye Harbour. It was resolved to send a letter of objection on behalf of the Friends to the Rother District Council.

The subsequent decision by Rother District Council to approve the application was yet another disappointment to the conservationists and many of the inhabitants of Rye Harbour Village. This was the fourth potentially damaging planning application within or adjacent to the Rye Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest in as many years, and was the third to be approved.

The continual erosion of this area and it's unique habitats, whether by commercial development of gravel pits and saltings, or by modern agricultural practises, poses a very serious threat to the future existence of it's rich diversity of wildlife.

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

These events for members of the Friends have proved to be very successful in recent years. Plant life of the Reserve was the topic for the last Conducted Walk in August, which was led by Mrs. Breda Burt. A group of about 15 people enjoyed fine weather and a leisurely walk down to the river mouth and back via the hides, looking at plants of the saltmarsh and shingle along the way. Members were rewarded by seeing the flowers of the Reserve's two rarest plant species - the Least Lettuce (*Lactuca saligna*) and Slender Hare's Ear (*Eupatorium tenuissimum*). Some, not to be confused by those long Latin names so difficult to commit to memory, were seen to be wisely taking notes.

The next Conducted Walk will be held on Sunday 9th January 1983, starting from the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at 2.30 pm.

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WORK PARTIES.

These will be held on Saturday 9th October 1982; Sunday 13th March 1983; and Friday/Saturday 1st/2nd April 1983.

Please meet in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour, at 10.00 am., or later at the Ternery Pool. Bring lunch, working gloves, rubber boots, suitable tough outdoor clothing and if possible a shovel, spade, rake or garden fork. Just in case there are any interesting species of birds about - also bring binoculars, (members of the 1982 Easter work party saw an Alpine Swift and a Glaucous Gull). There are all sorts of tasks to be done, large and small, which all help in the important upkeep of the Reserve. So do please come along if you can.

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EQUIPMENT FOR THE RESERVE.

P.H. & R.K.

Many thanks to all those who have generously donated various items of furniture and equipment for the Reserve's cottage. One major item is still required however - a desk or work table for the office. Any offers please phone the Wardens on Rye 3862.

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THE NATURAL HISTORY OF HEDGEROWS.

I.R-D.

Each year, the Friends hold a major fund-raising public event in the Autumn, which not only brings in much needed cash to help run the Reserve, but also creates valuable publicity as well. The purpose of publicity is to create a wider interest in the activities of the Reserve, so that as many people as possible get to know about the great attractions of the place from the point of view of wildlife. This in turn helps to encourage a wider spread of people who are willing to give much needed donations to the Friends for the running of the Reserve. Not the least of these are the various wildlife charities, who if they can see that the place is being well used, particularly by young people on school visits to learn about nature, will be more sympathetic to our cause.

This year our main public event will be run in collaboration with the RSPB Battle Group, although all the profits will be for the benefit of the Friends and the Reserve. We hope that by holding the event in the Langton Memorial Hall at Battle (just opposite the main gates to Battle Abbey, with adjacent free carpark), we will tap a new source of interested people.

There will be a brief introduction about the recent activities on the Reserve, followed by the main lecture by David Streeter. The large hall will enable us to run refreshments during the interval, as well as a small wildlife art display by Bob Greenhalf. There will also be various sales goods on offer including the various Reserve publications.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a leaflet giving details of this event, please display this in some suitable public place now, such as a library, shop window, or noticeboard. Wide advertisement for this event is essential - please help us in this by telling all your friends to come along on the evening - they are sure to enjoy it - and we will look forward to seeing them - we hope to make this a happy social gathering as well. Thank you.

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