



NEWSLETTER

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

c/o. 1 Coastguard Cottages, Rye Harbour, Rye, East Sussex,
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Telephone: Rye (0797) 223862

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 1983.

NUMBER 15.

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Richard Knight.

Dear Friends, what a superb summer, at times in July almost too hot and rain almost non-existent. Plant and animal life responded dramatically. The early spring rain pushed up the plants to great heights, then dry warm weather aided profuse albeit short-lived flowering. High temperatures caused the emergence of masses of invertebrates especially the Reserve's infamous *chironomid* midges (non-biting midges incidently) and tiny black *thrip* flies that crawl into everything, even ones binoculars!

Records of new species for the Reserve's lists are of *willow tit*, *broad-bodied libellula dragonfly*, *quail* and *oak bush cricket*. While usually unusual species have included many *clouded yellow butterflies*, a few *hummingbird hawk moths*, some *nightingales* and an *alpine swift*.

Constant wardening by an invaluable team of volunteers kept in check the hazards posed by people such as trespass, stray dogs and egg stealing. The electric fences continued effective protection of the nesting birds from night-time marauding *fawns*. Troubles were relatively few although a *little owl* (or owls) was responsible for the nesting failures of 25 pairs of *little tern*. Some headless tern bodies of both young and adults were found cached by the owls at the edge of the tern colonies.

All bird species were present either in similar numbers to last year or in improved numbers. Except that is the *common terns* which were in slightly fewer numbers - rather surprising after a few years of good breeding success now behind them (last year being the exception of course when a *badger* caused considerable losses of eggs and young).

Breeding success for all bird species was good as shown in the following table:-

TABLE OF BREEDING SEASON RESULTS FOR THE PRINCIPAL BREEDING BIRDS (SSSI)

Species:	Number of Pairs:	Number of Young reared to Flying:
Little Tern	67	69
Common Tern	70	over 70
Black-headed Gull	70	45 +
Ringed Plover	38	50 +
Oystercatcher	25	18 - 20
Redshank	28	25 +
Lapwing	78	c. 30
Little Grebe	12 - 15	c. 25
Wheatear	12	c. 25

Clearly warm weather is good for everyone. The beaches have been dotted with sunbathing beings, mainly bipedal mammals sprawled rather like one sometimes sees birds on sunny days. The sea too has been well frequented by waders and wallowers, rather like egrets and hippos at a water hole. Everywhere plumage has been sparse, in some cases as sparse as it could possibly be.....!

CONDUCTED WALKS FOR MEMBERS ONLY.

Pam Haddon.

Starting at 2.30pm from the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour, on Sunday 30th October 1983, and Sunday 8th January 1984.

Led by the Warden and/or Assistants, these walks offer an introduction to the Reserve and an opportunity to learn more about the wildlife to be seen there.

WORK PARTY.

Pam Haddon.

Saturday 8th October 1983, tasks include island weeding and island building. Please bring lunch, wellington boots and work gloves and any useful tools, eg. shovels and, for island weeding, small hand-forks.

BRITISH BIRDS.

Pam Haddon.

"The independent monthly journal for every birdwatcher".

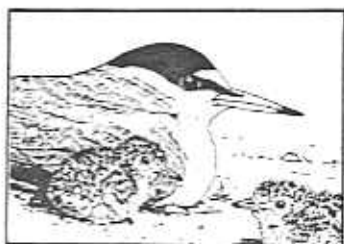
In return for our advertising this excellently produced journal, all members of the Friends are offered a reduced subscription rate of £15 per year, instead of £20.

Each issue is well illustrated with line drawings and photographs and includes papers on all aspects of ornithology; observations and letters from readers, latest bird news, competitions, book reviews, profiles of famous British ornithologists, etc.

For further details and a subscription form, send a S.A.E. to the Friends address.

LITTLE TERN POSTCARD.

Ian R-D.



As a further aid to fund-raising, the Friends have produced another postcard which is for sale, at 10p each (or 12 for £1). This card will be a good reminder for all those willing helpers who have spent so much time watching over the Little Terns, it shows an adult bird with downy chicks sitting on the Reserve. The original drawing is by Pam Haddon, our Assistant Warden, who has spent a great deal of time looking after many of the chicks when they have become soaked with rain, then returning them to the adult next morning, because young chicks are always far better left to be fed by their natural parents. However, this helping hand has probably enabled several to survive that would have otherwise died. Part of this black and white postcard is shown on the left, and it is available from the address of the Friends, please remember to send a stamped addressed envelope with your orders for any of our leaflets and postcards etc.

PLANNING APPLICATION.

Pam Haddon.

In April 1983, planning permission was sought to develop Long and Narrow Pits, Nook Beach, Rye Harbour "for the purposes of recreational fishing, boating, wildfowling, walking, swimming, biological and botanical studies".

The site in question adjoins the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve and is within the Rye Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The planning application posed a very serious threat to this important wetland habitat and its rich variety of wildlife.

Conservationists and local inhabitants were spurred into action and by the time Rother District Council's Planning Committee met on 26th May, to decide the future of Long and Narrow Pits, they had received 198 letters of objection, many of them from members of the Friends.

To our great relief the application was refused. Alas, that is not the end of the story - on every Sunday since 26th June, organised parties of fishermen have been fishing the waters of Long and Narrow Pits, causing inevitable disturbance to the wildlife. The Committee of the Friends have consequently written again to Rother District Planning Officer to express our concern over these activities and to enquire whether there is any way of preventing further such damage and disturbance to the area.

BIRDS OF THE SUSSEX COAST.

Ian R-D.

Attached to this Newsletter is a leaflet to publicise the Friends autumn public fund-raising event. We hope that you and your neighbours will come along and support this interesting venture. As usual, Reserve literature will be on sale at this event, and Richard Knight will also be giving a brief account of wildlife activities on the Reserve during the year, as well as a report on the breeding successes and migration.

Please display the BIRDS OF THE SUSSEX COAST leaflet in your local library, or in a shop window, or perhaps on some other noticeboard which will be seen widely by the public. We need as much support for our fund-raising events as possible. Thank you.

STRAWBERRY TEAS - DELICIOUS!

Ian R-D.

A very successful open day was held at Float Farmhouse, on behalf of the Friends and the Reserve, at the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Steve Denny. The main attractions of the afternoon of 10th July, were the picturesque old farmhouse, a Punch and Judy show, sale of paintings by local artists, and probably the most popular item - the excellent strawberry tea with homemade cakes etc. It has been estimated that over 200 people visited the event through the afternoon, which raised over £300 for our funds. Grateful thanks to Steve Denny and family for their hard work and the use of their house, as well as to all those other helpers who made the afternoon so enjoyable.