



NEWSLETTER

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

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

CHAIRMAN: Ian Rumley-Dawson. SECRETARY: Clifford Percival. TREASURER: Pat Bonham.
COMMITTEE: Miss Evelyn Stewart, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Greenhalf, Miss Liz Blackwell,
Dr. Barry Yates (Warden), Mrs. Anne Yates.
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Mrs. Jean Greenhalf.

SPRING 1985.

NUMBER 20.

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Dr. Barry Yates.

As soon as I had written in the last Newsletter of how mild the winter had been, there was a rapid change, and all of us were exposed to snow and freezing conditions for days on end. At Rye Harbour in January and February we had 43 days when the temperature dropped below freezing and 16 days when it never got above freezing, with the lowest temperature of -15°C on 8th January 1985.

Some of the birds, notably Lapwing and Golden Plover, escaped these difficult conditions by flying south and west. Other species, such as Mallard and Teal, just tried to endure them by sitting on the frozen gravel pits waiting for warmer weather. For birdwatchers, this was a fascinating time, and gave good opportunities to see many gatherings of unusual species. Most notable of these in the area were 400 Red-throated Divers on the sea, 55 White-fronted Geese, 56 Barnacle Geese, 13 Greylag Geese, 200 Shelduck, 2,000 Wigeon, 15 Scaup, 29 Smew, 1 pair of Red-breasted Merganser, 3 Goosander and 5 Hen Harriers. The bad weather did, however, claim many lives, with Little Grebes probably fairing worst of all. Even now (three weeks after the thaw) there are only 6 Little Grebes on Ternery Pool instead of 14 at this time last year.



Barnacle Goose

The water level at Ternery Pool has dropped dramatically since the last Newsletter because the weather has been exceptionally dry. The islands have reappeared and are once again regularly used by roosting birds, most numerous being 700 Oystercatchers and 200 Turnstone.

Throughout the winter months various maintenance tasks have been carried out on the Reserve, ready for the coming breeding season. Perhaps the most time consuming of these has been the extension of the electric fence around Ternery Pool, so that the wires are now no longer visible from the hides, which hopefully makes for a much more natural view. It also of course means that we have enclosed slightly more shingle breeding areas.

Already by mid-March many species are defending territories and any day now there will be a thin trickle of summer migrants, which by the time you may be reading this report, will make it one of the most interesting times of the year for birdwatching.

(Ed. All three bird illustrations in this edition are by Barry Yates)



White-fronted Goose

FRIENDS GUIDED WALKS.

These will start from the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour, at 10am. and will visit Ternery Pool and possibly other places of interest nearby if there is something special to see. Bring lunch, binoculars and extra warm clothing, and let us hope that the weather is better than on the last walk, which had to be cancelled because of thick snow and ice!

Dates:- 21st April, 22nd June, 18th August, 19th October, 1st December.

There will be a special Botanical Walk led by Mrs. Breda Burt and the Warden, to look more closely at the plants of the Reserve, especially the shingle areas, on Sunday 5th May 1985, (arrangements as above).

WORK PARTIES.

Barry Yates.

Meet at 10am at the Information Centre, and bring lunch, rubber boots, work gloves plus any useful garden tools such as rakes or spades, etc.. If you care to come later in the afternoon, then meet out at Ternery Pool where some of the work will be going on.

Dates:- 5th and 6th April (Easter), 29th September.

SUBSCRIPTIONS PLEASE, ETC.

Ian R-D.

Please note that members' subscriptions become due on 1st May, and can either be posted to our Treasurer at address shown in this Newsletter heading, or may be handed to him at the Annual General Meeting, on 4th May 1985. Cheques should be made payable to the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. The minimum subscription is still £1.00; family membership £1.50. Special forms for Bankers' Orders and Deeds of Covenant will be available at the A.G.M. or can be obtained by post from the Treasurer. Thank you.



A separate page is enclosed with this Newsletter giving details of the Annual General Meeting and Annual Accounts. Also enclosed is our first paid advertisement to appear as part of the Newsletter. Whereas in the past we have not carried any advertisements, this is not to say that we have not been prepared to accept them, the Committee's view is that if they help towards the costs of preparing and circulating the Newsletter and if they are generally in accord with the aims and interests of the Reserve, then we should accept them.

TERN WATCH & CARAVAN.

Peter Philpot.

Once again my wife Joan and I will be co-ordinating the voluntary helpers who wish to watch over the Little Terns this season. A regular watch and/or wardening system will be maintained every day from mid-May right through to mid-August, to ensure that all birds on the Reserve are kept free from disturbance and the ever present threat of illegal egg collectors.

If you would like to help and join our Tern Watch team or find out more about this very effective protection scheme, then please contact us:-

Peter & Joan Philpot, Broadwater, The Ridge, Winchelsea Beach, Rye, East Sussex. Telephone = Rye 225998

Throughout the summer Tern Watch, certain items will be on sale at the Tern Caravan on the Reserve, which will be situated near the Old Lifeboat Station on the Reserve. These items will include Reserve Leaflets, Annual Reports, Reserve Postcards, Key Rings and Wooden Spoons (bearing the Reserve Logo). All profits from these sales contribute towards the Reserve funds, so on your way look inside the caravan and see if there is anything that catches your eye or perhaps buy something for a friend who does not know about the Reserve and its attractions. Also in the caravan and at the Information Centre will be up-to-date news of birds seen in the area, plants in flower at the time and future events connected with the Reserve and/or connected with wildlife in the area.

NATURE RESERVE JUMPERS.

Anne Yates.

These are now available, made to measure, to your size and colour specification and bearing the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Logo.

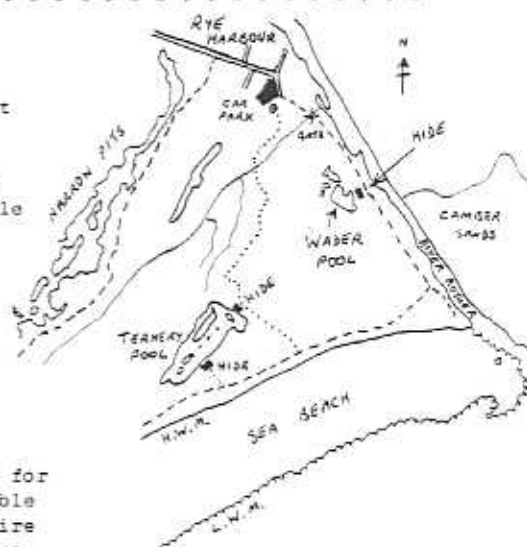
These rather exclusive jumpers are knitted in wool or acrylic yarn by "Corkwood Knitwear" and cost from £15. Each jumper earns a commission for the Reserve. For further details please contact:-

Maggie Regandanz, Corkwood Farm, Iden, Rye, East Sussex. Telephone = Iden 289

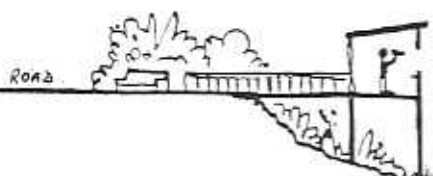
WADER POOL PROJECT.

Ian R-D.

As reported in our last Newsletter, the new Wader Pool (Scrape) project is now well under way, thanks mainly to the substantial financial support that we have just been promised by the Rotary Club of Rye & Winchelsea. The rough sketch map on the right indicates the location of the pool that will be constructed, and in due course, the approximate position of a new hide to overlook the pool area. Obviously it will take considerable time to construct all this, as well as for aquatic plants and micro organisms to colonise the pool to provide suitable feeding conditions for birds and other animals. After much research and consultation by Rotary members, it has been decided to abandon the idea of a wind-pump and instead lay mains electricity to the site - to run a more efficient pump as well as the electric fences, for less initial cost and less annual cost of maintaining batteries for the fences. It is proposed to construct the new hide to accommodate wheelchairs and other benefits for disabled wildlife watchers.



Tractors have already moved the heavy concrete pipes onto the site ready for the actual sump from which the pump will extract water from the water table just below the shingle surface. Arrangements have also been made to acquire many tons of fine mud from the Southern Water Authority who have been most helpful with agreements and advice. Several other items and equipment have also been obtained as a result of the excellent responses to the Special Wader Pool Raffle. Our grateful thanks to all those members who have already sold tickets, please remember, if you have not sold all your tickets yet, then we would be pleased if you could try and do so before the Raffle draw at the A.G.M. on 4th May 1985. Please also remember to send in all counterfoils of the tickets sold, showing the name and address/telephone number of the purchaser, as soon as possible, every penny counts so that we can achieve all the ancillary work that so helps to improve the surroundings and appearance of such a major project, which in due course will greatly benefit birds as well as birdwatchers, especially at migration times of the year. Further details and an up-date on developments of the project will be given at the A.G.M., we hope to see you there.



END
