



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 the Nature Reserve within the Rye Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest, (known as the SSSI).

CHAIRMAN: Ian Rumley-Dawson. VICE CHAIRMAN: Clifford Percival. TREASURER: David Marshall.
SECRETARY: Miss Liz Blackwell. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Peter Philpot.
COMMITTEE: Steve Denny, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Greenhalf, Frank Palmer, Mrs. Anne Yates,
Dr. Barry Yates.

SUMMER - AUTUMN 1987.

NUMBER 27.

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Dr. Barry Yates.

Ternery Pool has certainly lived up to its name this year, with 2 species of tern breeding on the islands and another 5 species recorded. Sandwich Terns nested in force this year, with about 150 pairs settling amongst Black-headed Gulls at the eastern end of the Pool and 60+ pairs of Common Tern (illustrated below) mainly at the western end. Both species had considerable breeding success and created a wonderful atmosphere over the whole Reserve with their evocative rasping calls, spectacular display flights and skillful fishing. Throughout June, Roseate and Arctic Terns were unusually regular, preferring to roost on one of the recently created small islands in front of the old Crittall Hide giving excellent views and ample time to compare them with the Common Terns. Black Terns are regular visitors in spring, but in addition this year on 14th June the Pool was kindly graced with the presence of its close relative the White-winged Black Tern, (see later article in this Newsletter).

However, the tern that we are all concerned with perhaps the most is the Little Tern, and although the breeding numbers appeared to be slightly down this year, I am very pleased to report that their breeding success has been very good. At least 55 pairs attempted nesting along the whole length of the Reserve, but the only nests that successfully raised young were within the two new electric fences. Those inside the two old fences and on the open beach areas failed - so the message is clear, the old fences must be brought up to the standard of the new ones. As I write, there are 30 flying young with at least another 30 waiting to get airborne, so it could be one of our best years, despite such setbacks as a Hobby repeatedly chasing the adults and catching at least one!

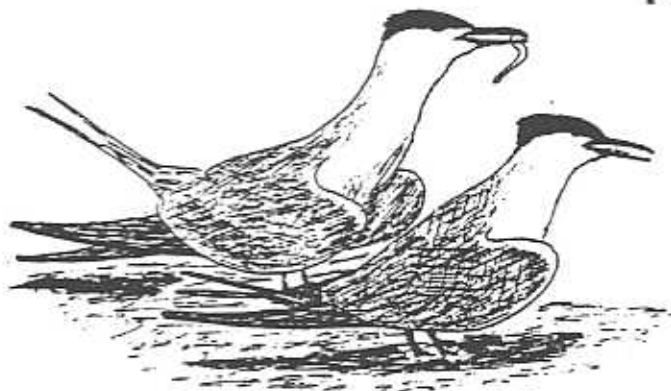
Yet again the summer weather was disappointingly wet and cold, but some species coped well, particularly the terns, the 46+ pairs of Yellow Wagtails (an exceptional number) and the 9 pairs of Wheatear (several of which brought off second broods). The species that suffered most were those where the young are active soon after hatching; Lapwing, Ringed Plover and Redshank, but the latter two were able to re-nest with some success in the fine weather of early July.

The Wader Pool is maturing quickly - perhaps too quickly. The plants have grown up rapidly, obscuring much of the water, but providing shelter and food for the birds, especially for passing migrants such as Avocet, Godwits, Temminck's Stints, Common Sandpipers and Whimbrel. It has proved to be a valuable refueling site, and for Redshanks it has been a safe place to raise a family. Soon, when the new hide overlooking the Pool is completed, it will provide a good vantage point to observe the different behaviour of the many wader species that visit it.

Several unusual species have passed this way since the report in our last Newsletter - Black Kite on 3rd May, Quail 1-3 calling between 2nd and 23rd May, Red-rumped Swallow on 26th May, Dotterel 1 female on 26th April, Marsh Warbler on 16th and 17th June, and in the garden of Watch Cottages an Icterine Warbler on 4th June and a Wood Warbler on 28th July!

ANNUAL REPORT.

At last this publication is now available from the Warden at Watch Cottages, price = £1 plus A5 size envelope with your full address and 24p stamp. The report contains many varied details about the Reserve including its birds and other animals, plus specific articles on spiders, pondlife and a complete up-to-date list of plants that have been recorded. If you are only an occasional visitor or a regular supporter of the Reserve, this annual publication aims to increase everyone's interests in the area and it will certainly help to show the tremendous variety of species that can be seen at different times of the year, whenever you care to visit.



A CLOSER LOOK AT MARSH TERNS.

Barry Yates.

There are just three species of "marsh terns", all of which have been recorded at Rye Harbour in recent years. They are all in the Genus *Chlidonias*, have a more buoyant flight and are slightly larger than our more familiar Little Tern. Our regular marsh tern is the Black Tern (the lower bird illustrated on the right) and is usually seen on spring and autumn passage over larger pools, elegantly searching the surface for insects. The nearest regular breeding sites are just over on the Continent, so perhaps one day they may stay with us. In three of the last ten years, the White-winged Black Tern (the upper bird illustrated on the right) has made a brief visit during the summer from its main breeding area in eastern Europe. The last species, the Whiskered Tern, has only been recorded once, in 1979, when 2 spent several days in May at Ternery Pool. This species breeds in Spain and eastern Europe.



The three species are easily identified in adult summer plumage, with the names being suitably descriptive, but young birds and winter birds can be very difficult to distinguish unless views are clear and close.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

- Monday, 31st August 1987. COFFEE MORNING at Winchelsea Beach Village Hall. Starts at 10.00am. Please publicise this event as much as possible in your area, so that we can attain maximum profits to help support the Reserve funds. This event will take the form of a bring and buy as well as the sale of cakes and other goodies. Donated items would be welcome - to Barry Yates or Liz Blackwell (Friends Secretary) Hastings 753016, or bring the items along early on the day. Thank you.
- Saturday, 5th September 1987. TERN WATCHERS' EVENING at 7.30pm in Winchelsea Beach Village Hall. This is the annual get together just for those involved with the "Tern Watch", when the Reserve says thank you for doing your bit of baby sitting for the Little Terns.
- Sunday, 20th September 1987. WORK PARTY. Meet at 10.00am at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour or later out on the Reserve. Bring suitable garden tools, rubber boots, binoculars and lunch.
- Sunday, 27th September 1987. GUIDED WALK TO TERNERY POOL & MAYBE BEYOND. Meet at the Information Centre at Rye Harbour at 2.00pm. It will be essential to bring binoculars and/or telescope. Ends at 5.00pm approximately.
- Saturday, 10th October 1987. WILDLIFE IN SUSSEX. A public fund raising event for the Reserve by the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve in collaboration with the Rye Camera Club. Slide illustrated lectures by Colin Page = WILDLIFE OF THE SEASHORE, and Melvin Smith = MARSHLIFE. Both Colin and Melvin are leading members of the Rye Camera Club (as well as being members of the Friends). They will be showing some of their excellent slides with commentaries of some of the animals, plants and scenery of the East Sussex areas. Other attractions will include a small art and photographic print exhibition, displays, sale of RHNR guides/leaflets/goods. Event starts at 7.30pm in the Thomas Peacocke Upper School, The Grove, Rye. Free carparking at the School. Tickets at the door, adults = £1 children = 50p. Please bring along some new faces who would maybe like to think of joining the Friends and/or the Rye Camera Club.
- Saturday, 7th November 1987. GUIDED WALK TO TERNERY POOL & MAYBE AROUND. Meet at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour at 10.00am. It will be essential to bring binoculars and/or telescope. Ends at 1.00pm approximately, (or later in the pub!)

COLIN GREEN AND THE START OF THE FRIENDS.

Evelyn Stewart.

Members will have been saddened to hear of the sudden death on 16th April this year of Colin Green. As a founder member of the Friends, he had contributed greatly to both the setting up of the organisation in 1973 and it's running in the early years. As head of the Rural Studies Unit of the Thomas Peacocke School at Leasam House, Colin was already engaged in inculcating a love of wildlife in the younger generation. He had a small reserve in the grounds, which included the heronry, and collected anything which would interest his students in conservation.

In 1972 the Management Committee saw the potential of the Rye Harbour area but realised that it could not be developed without more support in the form of working parties, in fund-raising, and indeed in educating the general public to its value. Dame Ruth Buckley asked Guy Crittall to see if he could organise something on the lines of the Hospital Friends. He, together with Colin, arranged a film show using films hired from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in the Thomas Peacocke School in November 1972. Included in the programme was a short talk outlining the proposal and inviting anyone interested to leave their name and address. A total of 93 people responded and from these a small steering committee was formed. 180 letters were sent out and by the time of the first Annual General Meeting in May 1973, there were 107 members and £70 in the bank. A great deal of this was due to Colin's hard work and although a somewhat reluctant Treasurer, he continued to provide clerical assistance all through the early years. In addition he organised working parties from among his students who, together with working parties from the Sussex Ornithological Society, created manually the islands in the gravel pit known as Ternery Pool and which give so much pleasure to so many birdwatchers in the hides. Much of the necessary equipment such as shovels and wheelbarrows came from the School and there are memories of Colin balanced on the very unstable raft ferrying tons of gravel

and the heavy concrete slabs needed to form the first islands.

Again for the first few years the Reserve had only a summer Warden and for the rest of the year the care and maintenance was carried out by volunteers among whom Colin was one of the keenest. More recently, when he has been busy with his farm, he had maintained his interest in the Reserve by sitting on the Management Sub-Committee.

The Friends will miss him and his hard work in laying the strong foundations (in both senses) for our Reserve, and our sincere sympathy go to his wife and family.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE YELLOW HORNED-POPPY.

Barry Yates.

The large 4 petaled flowers of this poppy are a deep waxy yellow and form a cup around the stamens and long ovary. As the petals soon drop, the ovary lengthens rapidly, often exceeding 8 inches in length, giving the plant a "horned" appearance. The poet Robert Bridges described the plant and the places in which it grows:-

A poppy grows upon the shore,
Bursts her twin cup in summer late:
Her leaves are glaucous green and hoar,
Her petals yellow, delicate.

Oft to her cousins turns her thought
In wonder if they care that she
Is fed with spray for dew, and caught
By every gale that sweeps the sea.

She has no lovers like the red,
That dances with the noble corn:
Her blossoms on the waves are shed,
Where she stands shivering and forlorn.

← (the Red Poppy)



NATURE RESERVE ON TELEVISION.

Two television programmes that highlighted the work and wildlife of the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve have appeared recently. The first was made last summer for the Royal Society for Nature Conservation/BBC/Woolwich Building Society - Conservation Awards (see the last Newsletter), and it was shown on 1st June 1987. This outlined some of the wildlife in a brief film and later in the programme we discovered that we did not win the £5,000 top prize (although we deserved to!).

The second programme was a superb 25 minute film about the birds to be seen at Rye Harbour, in the TVS series "A Taste of the South", entitled SHORES OF SHINGLE. This was screened on 20th July 1987, at the peak viewing time of 7.00pm. Catastrophe of catastrophes, at 7.05pm most of the residents of Rye Harbour and Winchelsea Beach area had a major power failure, so that a lot of the very people who would have perhaps liked to watch the film were unable to see it on the night!!! The film was narrated by John Gooders and showed some of the spring birds in great close-up, the best shots being a Hobby catching insects in mid air, Bar-tailed Godwits and male Ruff in spectacular breeding plumage, Spotted Redshank catching fish, 4 species of tern and many more.

If you missed these programmes, then you may have an opportunity to see them at one of our private viewings which we will be arranging in the future, or of course you may find that TVS has a repeat showing.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL.

Peter Philpot.

There are still a few of you who have not yet paid your annual subscription. If you should be one of these, then the envelope containing this Newsletter edition will be stamped with the words SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL ENCLOSED. Please renew using the small renewal slip enclosed and help us to continue the maintenance and development work on the Reserve.

MORE MEMBERSHIP.

Peter Philpot.

We were very fortunate this year to win £1,000 through the efforts of Barry Yates in the television programme "Conservation 87". This enabled us to replace nearly half of the electric fencing and to enlarge the West Beach enclosure, thus ensuring the future of our breeding Little Terns. Next year we would like to enlarge the old Crittall hide at Ternery Pool and replace the rest of the electric fencing. The money for this can only be found if the income from membership subscriptions increases. So please try to enrol your friends and please forgive us if we chat you up for the 3rd or 4th time in the hides - it only goes to show that we are doing our part to increase the funds. Thank you.

THE END *****