



NEWSLETTER

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

2 Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex, TN36 4LU.

Telephone: Rye (0797) 223802

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 Runley-Dawson.

SECRETARY: Miss Liz Blackwell.

COMMITTEE: Steve Denny, Bob Greenhalf,

Dr. Barry Yates.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Peter Philpot.

TREASURER: David Marshall.

Frank Palmer, Mrs. Anne Yates,

SPRING 1989.

NUMBER 32

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Dr. Barry Yates.

At the Reserve winter did not really arrive, it was neither wet nor cold. It has, therefore, been an unusual year for those of us that take a keen interest in the wildlife around us.

For birdwatchers it has been a rather ordinary winter because the more unusual species have not been forced from their northerly wintering areas by bad weather - but we should not be selfish, because this should mean a lower mortality of many species than in recent years. The variety of duck species is normally great, but after this last Christmas it was only Mallard, Tufted, Pochard and Teal that were regular, so anything else was a bonus. The highlight was 3 superb adult Snew for several days in mid-February. This was very unusual since most sightings of this species are of the "redheaded" type. On the Long Pit there have been 2 long staying Slavonian Grebes and several Red-throated Divers. Hen Harriers and Short-eared Owls have been unusually scarce, but Sparrowhawk, Merlin and Peregrine were regular for most of the winter months.

Local resident birds should have survived well and I look forward to an increase in numbers of breeding birds such as Little Grebe, Redshank, Lapwing, Reed and Corn Buntings. Most of the local Little Grebes have apparently wintered nearby at Northpoint Pit, where a flock of up to 17 was noted regularly. The mild winter has also encouraged Water Rail, Kingfisher and Stonechat to be more frequent although the latter species departed in late February - the other 2 species are still regular.

The effect of the weather on plants has been even more dramatic and some such as Sticky Groundsel, Ragwort and of course Gorse have not stopped flowering since last year. Some species, such as Common

Whitlow Grass will already have finished their flowering by the time you read this. I am sure most plants will be earlier into flowering this year, so that there will be nectar available to those early insects that venture out - especially important to Bumblebees and Butterflies.

Just after Christmas there was a rather bad oiling incident along the South Coast and although we did not suffer as much as some places, many birds were affected. It was not only the usual casualties of Guillemots, Divers, Gulls and Scoters, but also Oystercatchers, Sanderlings, Grey Plovers and other waders.

The attention of birdwatchers is now turning towards the arrival of migrants - already Chiffchaffe (first migrant = 10th March), Wheatear (first = 11th March) and Sand Martin (first = 17th March), are regular and very soon the harsh call of Sandwich Terns will add to the activity of the Black-headed Gulls that are fighting for mates and nesting space at Ternery Pool. The Beach Reserve on warm days is full of displaying birds, Oystercatchers piping, Redshanks yodelling and Ringed Plovers in their "butterfly" display flights - and above it all Skylarks singing and Meadow Pipits parachuting to the ground.

Looking farther afield, the wintering grounds of many of our breeding birds which is in the Sahel region, just to the south of the Sahara, has had rain this year so that the numbers of Yellow Wagtails, Sedge Warblers, Sand Martins, Whitethroats and others should be higher. So, all in all, the coming breeding season could be very interesting and should be very productive.

The very low winter rainfall this year at Rye Harbour has resulted in very low water levels at all the pits. This is not very important now, but if we don't get much rain in the next few months, the nesting birds on



The new Wader Pool hide, opened in April 1988 and specially designed to accommodate wheelchairs.

the islands of Ternery Pool may not be so safe from predators such as Foxes, Badgers and Stoats.

The next few weeks are some of the most exciting to be out and about on the Reserve. Watching the first arrivals of the breeding birds and perhaps an unusual vagrant, looking for plants and watching any of the thousands of smaller animals that all go to make Rye Harbour Nature Reserve such an important and interesting place. So if you can only visit the Reserve occasionally, then now is the time to plan your next trip.



Redwing

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

29 April, Saturday, LONG WALK 6 miles in search of early migrant birds and flowers. Meet at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour, at 2.00pm.

6 May, Saturday, ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, at 7.30pm in the Winchelsea Beach Village Hall, Sea Road, Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex. See further details enclosed with Agenda and Balance Sheet.

27 May, Saturday AN EVENING WALK IN SEARCH OF BATS. Meet at the Information Centre at Rye Harbour, at 7.00pm for a 3 mile walk with the "Sussex Bat Group" to Ternery Pool and the Narrow Pits. (The weather this time cannot be as bad as last years attempt!!!)

28 May, Sunday, RSPB CENTENARY BIRDWATCH, from 10.00am to 5.00pm in collaboration with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, as part of their Centenary Year, this countrywide event linked to many other reserves and places of interest, is intended to encourage more people to be aware of the tremendous wealth of wildlife that can be seen in spring around Britain and which needs support and protection wherever it is to be found. Information and leaflets will be available in the Information Centre and in each of the 3 hides, as well as guidance on the species to be seen on the day, provided by members of the RSPB Battle Group and the Friends, some of whom will be at each of these locations on the Reserve to give assistance.

9 July, Sunday, A WALK TO TERNERY POOL, towards the end of the breeding season for most birds. Meet at the Information Centre at Rye Harbour, at 3.00pm.

28 August, Monday, FRIENDS FUND-RAISING EVENT, at Winchelsea Beach Village Hall. Although the exact format of this event has not yet been decided, there will be a cake stall and a plant stall, therefore all contributions will be most welcome.

GIVE-AS-YOU-EARN.

Liz Blackwell.

An enquiry was received recently by the Committee of the Friends asking if we, as a Charity, wish to participate in the Give-As-You-Earn scheme.

The idea is that a person who is working and is paid by an employer through PAYE, can opt to pay a minimum £10 per month to charities of his/her choice. The deduction is made from pay by the employer before tax and sent to the Payroll Giving Services, who then pay the money to the respective charities. The amount will show on the charity's bank statement.

A donor expressed a wish to participate in this scheme by writing to the Payroll Giving Services, who in turn contacted the Friends to see if we would take up the offer. It was decided that this was too good to refuse!

Details of donors remain confidential to PGS. If members wish to donate in this way, neither the Treasurer or the Membership Secretary of the Friends will know the identity of the donor unless they tell us. Members will still be asked to pay the minimum annual subscription of £2.00 unless Peter Philpot (Membership Sec.) is told that monthly donations are being made and the member wishes the subscription to be a part of that. Of course, if the member still wishes to pay the £2.00 subscription additionally each year, then it will obviously not be refused.

If the idea proves to be popular in a year or two, then the Friends Committee may pay PGS a fee of £8 for a list of donors, but obviously it is not worth obtaining such a list just yet if there are too few people on it.

Any further details, requests, application forms, etc. should be addressed to:-

Charities Aid Foundation, Payroll Giving Services, Sterling House, 150-152 High Street, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1BB.

Telephone: (0732) 770233

Registration Number: 011038

A CLOSER LOOK AT BUMBLEBEES.

Barry Yates.

These familiar insects are among the most popular features of the countryside. They are easy to recognise because of their large rounded shape, furriness and deep buzzing as they fly

The queens appear early in spring as they try to establish a colony. She lays the eggs in the nest that give rise to the workers and when these mature they look after the nest, defend it and collect food for it. Usually many workers are produced before eggs are laid which develop into the males and queens of the next generation.

There are 19 British species of true bumblebees of the genus *Bombus* (meaning "booming") and so far 12 species have been recorded at Rye Harbour:-

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Bombus hortorum</i> , | <i>B. humilis</i> , | <i>B. lapidarius</i> , | <i>B. lucorum</i> , | <i>B. muscorum</i> , |
| <i>B. pascuorum</i> , | <i>B. pratorum</i> , | <i>B. ruderatus</i> , | <i>B. ruderatus</i> , | <i>B. subterraneus</i> , |
| | <i>B. sylvarum</i> , | | <i>B. terrestris</i> . | |

There are similar looking bees, known as Cuckoo Bumblebees, of the genus *Psithyrus* (meaning "murmuring"). As their common name suggests, these live in the home of another species and use its food. The species that are host to the Cuckoo Bumblebees are the true bumblebees which they closely resemble. There are 6 British species of Cuckoo Bumblebees, but so far only 1 has been identified at Rye Harbour:-

Psithyrus rufescens.

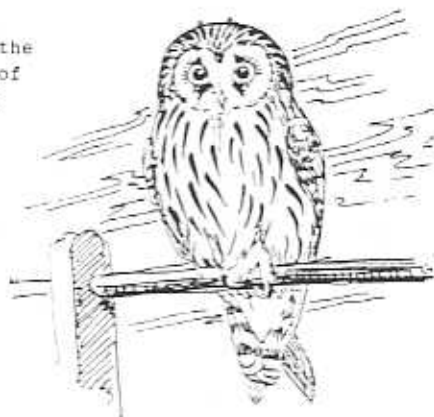
This group of insects is ideal for study and there is an excellent introduction to bumblebee identification and ecology:-

Prys-Jones, O E, and Corbet, S A. 1987. BUMBLEBEES - Naturalist's Handbook 6. Cambridge University Press.

NATURE RESERVE SALES ITEMS.

A few carefully selected items are offered for sale to increase awareness of the Reserve and also to help raise extra funds for the upkeep of the place. All of these items are available from the Warden at the address shown in the heading of this Newsletter by post (please remember to add sufficient to cover post and packing). They will also be available at the events listed on page 2 under DATES FOR YOUR DIARY. So please help us to spread the word and also gain support for the Reserve.

Descriptive Leaflet & Map	20p	Car Sticker	50p
Annual Report	£1	Small Illustrated Tray	£5.50
Guided Walk Leaflet	20p	Large Illustrated Tray	£6.50
Plant List (350+ species)	50p	Illustrated Chopping Board	£3.50
Postcards - Little Tern	10p	Illustrated Tea-towel	£2.20
Hare	10p	Illustrated Mug	£2.20
Pintail	10p		
River Mouth	10p		



Short-eared Owl

All the illustrations depict species or views which can be seen on and around the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, so that they also make good souvenirs of your visit.

TERN WATCH.

Peter Philpot.

Once again we will be arranging for the Reserve to be wardened by volunteers from mid-May right through to mid-August. I will soon be contacting all those who took part last year, but it appears that I shall have quite a few gaps to fill. Consequently, if you did not take part last year and would like to know more about this valuable work, then please contact me at the Annual General Meeting on 6th May or contact Barry Yates our full-time Warden.

We hope that this breeding season will be more successful than last year, with further improvements to the electric fencing and, hopefully, better weather. Thank you.

DO PLEASE RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

LITTLE AND LARGE!

Ian Rumley-Dawson.

Have you ever looked closely at a Little Grebe? Although its body size is quite small, its feet are huge! It is a bird that is highly specialised for the environment in which it lives. A comparatively small body is easier for swimming underwater where it gets its food. Huge powerful feet with large lobes on the sides of each toe are excellent for thrusting the bird along through the water. In fact it is not often that you will see this species out on dry land, with such large feet it must be quite tiring for them to actually walk any distance, so they prefer to swim.

At this time of year they are showing their rich brown colour on the head, which at close quarters looks really superb. If you want to get a good line of sight onto them with telescope or telephoto lens, then you have to be quick. No sooner do you just get them into focus, than they seem to immediately dive out of view, only to bob up again out of the water about 50 yards away! As you sit in one of the hides at Ternery Pool, you will hear their loud tittering call which perhaps can be described as high-pitched hysterical laughter. This is often uttered when they are out of sight among the reeds fringing the Pool, so at least you can tell that they are about.



Little Grebe

For several years now pairs have conveniently built their floating nests in small clumps of reeds or grasses within easy view of the two hides at Ternery Pool. As the vegetation grows through the spring and summer and the pair adds more material to the little floating raft, so the construction gets heavier and is eventually supported by the grasses or reeds underneath. By that time, the chicks are hatched which perhaps adds more weight. However, as they are born at a very advanced state, they are able to leave the nest at a very early age, even only after a few hours! Although at this stage the adults usually carry them about on their backs for safer transportation. Some of them may have a second brood or even a third if conditions are right and there is plenty of food available.

At Rye Harbour we usually have a good number of these birds throughout the year, although as Barry has explained in his report, this last winter some of them moved off to the more sheltered conditions at Northpoint Pit, or it could mean that there was more food for them over there. Anyway they are back on the Reserve now and you can get some really close views of them. In fact Ternery Pool is probably the best place in Southeast England in which to see them close-to, especially if a pair builds a nest near one of the hides again. Last year the eggs could clearly be seen in one of the nests from the Colin Green hide as the adults changed over during their incubation period.

Their food consists of small fish, such as Sticklebacks, as well as molluscs, crustaceans, aquatic insects and some vegetation, which are mostly caught underwater and so have given rise to such local names as *Weg Diver*, *Divy Duck*, *Duaker*, *Mole-diver* and the more common name *Dabchick*.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION NOW.

Peter Philpot.

I am very concerned that some past members have had to be "struck off" our mailing list because of their failure to renew their membership subscription, when perhaps in fact they probably intended to carry on! So do please renew your subscription now, while it is fresh in your mind. If everyone could do this, then it would save an enormous amount of extra effort and some extra costs in following-up the "laggards" (this can't be you can it???)

Membership (minimum £2) is due on 1st May each year if your envelope is stamped "MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL ENCLOSED". So please pay now by using the tear off form below. If you intend to pay your subscription at the Annual General Meeting on 6th May 1989, then please make sure that you do so by using the form below which will save time and confusion at the meeting. There is just no other way on that evening as there are usually so many people to deal with. Those who pay by Bankers Order need not do anything, but if your Bankers Order is not Covenanted (and you pay tax), then please consider this means of increasing our funds at no extra cost to yourself. Please contact me for further details if required. Thank you.

----- CUT ALONG HERE -----

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL for the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve for period 1st May 1989 to 30th April 1990.

Name: Address:
(BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE)

Sum enclosed £ cash/cheque:

Tick box if Bankers Order & Covenant form required.

Post Code:
Please return this form to:
Membership Secretary F.R.H.N.R.,
Broadwater, The Ridge,
Winchelsea Beach,
East Sussex, TN36 4LU.

F R I E N D S O F R Y E H A R B O U R N A T U R E R E S E R V E

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1989

Please note that the 17th Annual General Meeting will be held at 7.30pm, on Saturday, 6th May 1989, in the Winchelsea Beach Village Hall, Sea Road, Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex.

AGENDA:

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 7th May 1988, will be displayed on the walls of the hall for members to read prior to the start of the meeting, for approval during the meeting.
3. Matters arising from those minutes.
4. To receive and approve the accounts for the year ending 31st December 1988.
5. Chairman's chat - Wader Pool hide; electric fencing; covenanting; future.
6. Any further nominations for 1989/90 Committee?
7. Election of Committee for the 1989/90 year.

All members of the current Committee offer themselves for re-election in the same posts as currently held, which are:-

CHAIRMAN	= Ian Rumley-Dawson.	COMMITTEE	= Steve Denny.
SECRETARY	= Liz Blackwell.	..	= Bob Greenhalf.
TREASURER	= David Marshall.	..	= Peter Greenhalf.
MEMBERSHIP	= Peter Philpot,	..	= Frank Palmer.
SECRETARY	(ex officio).	..	= Anne Yates.
		..	= Barry Yates (Warden).

Any other nominations for the Committee should be sent in writing to the Secretary at:- 2 Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex, TN36 4LU.

8. Appointment of Honorary Auditor for the coming year.
9. Warden's report.
10. Any other business.

The Annual General Meeting will be followed by an interval for refreshments and an opportunity to buy some of our Friends sales goods, as well as Reserve leaflets or reports. There will be a raffle to help pay for the hire of the hall. After this interval there will be a short illustrated lecture:-

W O O D L A N D L I F E

Showing the wide variety of species to be found in some of the woodlands around East Sussex by Melvin Smith, who has been a member of the Friends for many years. He is also a keen member of the Rye Camera Club and specialises in photographing animals and plants.

If you have any items to exhibit in connection with the Reserve, such as photo prints or reports, etc., then please bring them along to the AGM for everyone to see and to help make this an interesting evening.

FRIENDS OF RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE - INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AS AT 31.12.88.

<u>GENERAL FUND</u>	<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>
Subscriptions and Donations	5684.69	6018.62	Reserve cottage repairs	57.66
Sales of Publications and Goods	726.30	629.36	Addressograph and Accessories	62.70
Deeds of Covenant - Tax Refund	500.06	725.17	Printing etc.	370.64
Events	663.95	462.65	Postage (Newsletters)	186.00
Sale of Table	109.74	-	Stationery and sundry postage	70.85
Insurance Claims	57.86	-	Books etc.	16.95
Grants	110.00	770.00	Sale goods	243.40
Interest on Deposit Account	.47	.38	Equipment	401.19
Interest on Savings Account	46.58	304.80	Sundry Expenses	27.51
			Cottage loan repayment	-
			Hides and signs	-
			Reserve fencing	-
			Transfer to Land Fund	400.00
<u>LAND FUND</u>	400.00	-	Cottage Loan Repayment	4375.00
Donations	1000.00	-		
Legacy	751.85	-		
Interest	2477.16	2446.71		
<u>WADER POOL FUND</u>	74.76	63.16		
<u>COLIN GREEN FUND</u>	646.73	300.00		
	<u>13252.15</u>	<u>11720.85</u>		
			<u>WADER POOL FUND</u>	-
			<u>COLIN GREEN FUND</u>	603.38
			Overall Excess	6436.87
			INCOME/EXPENDITURE	3882.13
			<u>13252.15</u>	<u>11720.85</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 . 12. 88

<u>ACCUMULATED FUND</u>	33938.28	37820.41	Current Account	1172.57	1501.12
			Deposit Account	9.27	9.65
			General Fund Savings Account	5046.58	5976.38
			Land Fund	26184.21	28630.92
			Wader Pool Fund	1197.33	1260.49
			Colin Green Fund	45.35	345.35
			Cash in Hand	282.97	96.50
	<u>£ 33938.28</u>	<u>£ 37820.41</u>		<u>£ 33938.28</u>	<u>£ 37820.41</u>

TREASURERS NOTE: Assets to be shown at 31.12.88 were stock valued at £602.40 and the Warden's Cottage valued at £48,000 at cost, with liabilities of £8,750 by way of outstanding loan.

I have examined the books and vouchers of The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve for the year ended 31 December 1988 and certify that their accounts are in accordance therewith.

FRANK CLARKE (H.Auditor)