



NEWSLETTER

The Friends of
Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

2, Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex, TN36 4LU.
Telephone: Rye (0797) 223862.

A registered charity (number 269535) founded in 1973 to aid in the establishment and management of the Nature Reserve within the Rye Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (known as the SSSI).

CHAIRMAN: Ian Rumley-Dawson

SECRETARY: Liz Blackwell

TREASURER: David Marshall

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Peter Philpot

COMMITTEE: Jill Barry, Steve Denny, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Greenhalf, Frank Palmer, Mike Saville, Anne Yates,

WARDEN: Dr. Barry Yates.

SUMMER 1990

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 36.

WARDEN'S REPORT - for the period mid-March to mid-July 1990.

The last newsletter reported the extensive flooding of the area by the sea and this influence extended into the spring, with higher than usual water levels and a change in the vegetation of some parts of the Nature Reserve. The submerged islands of TERNERY POOL gradually emerged and were suitably free of vegetation to deter nesting of GULLS and yet encourage the COMMON TERNS. Just in case the level remained too high we had floated several rafts, but only one of these was used, with 7 pairs of BLACK-HEADED GULLS taking up residence. Much of the vegetation of low lying areas was killed by the sea water, an effect probably made worse by the dry spring. In one study plot in a shingle hollow there was a dramatic change from 1989, for example, the number of HERB ROBERT plants went from 1410 to just 1, STICKY GROUNDSEL from 554 to 14, RED HEMPNETTLE from 105 to 0 and the area of SEA PEA from 4 square metres to 3. Large grassy areas remained brown until the rains of June.

Interesting and unusual visitors to TERNERY POOL have included, BLACK-NECKED GREBE (in summer plumage in mid-May), LITTLE EGRET (for a month from mid-June) and occasional MEDITERANEAN GULLS, ROSEATE TERNS and BLACK TERNS. In other parts of the Reserve there has been EIDER (regular until mid-June), PEREGRINE (on several dates, but once seen chasing a COCKATIEL), NIGHT HERON (1-2 in late April).

Once again the success of the ground nesting birds was severely affected by the the large number of local FOXES. Even the islands of TERNERY POOL did not escape; the 90 pairs of COMMON TERNS were disturbed on at least 4 nights and despite re-nesting only managed to raise 2 young and the 25 pairs of SANDWICH TERNS all failed. Out on the open shingle the OYSTERCATCHERS did not raise any young and the important colony of 40 pairs of LITTLE TERNS raised only about 10 young. RINGED PLOVERS fared better with their greater ability to re-nest and greater tolerance of people; 35-40 pairs raised 20-30 young. As more seasons go by with little success for our shingle nesting birds it becomes more important that we improve the fencing to further limit the movements of FOXES. At the moment our thoughts for fence improvement involve netting the lower part of the fence, where most FOXES have been seen to rush through the electric wires (but just two enclosures will cost over £800). There is only a little comfort in the knowledge that the FOX problem is present on most Nature Reserves with ground-nesting birds and that most of the shingle nesting birds are long-lived and do not, therefore, have to produce a large number of offspring to maintain populations.

The one bird that has been successful during this difficult year was the WHEATEAR, with most of the dozen or so pairs raising a good number of young.

The WADER POOL has, for its size, been the most successful area for breeding birds, with about 4 broods of REDSHANK, 3 of LAPWING and 2 of RINGED PLOVER. In late July it



was the best site for CURLEW SANDPIPER, RUFF and WHINCHAT. The GUIDED WALKS have been successful in seeing the unusual; in late May we found a LITTLE STINT, drake SHOVELER and two CURLEW at TERNERY POOL and at SEA four DOLPHINS and thirty COMMON SCOTER (but we missed four summer plumaged SPOTTED REDSHANKS). In late June on the BAT WALK we missed the LITTLE EGRET at TERNERY POOL, but found the three LITTLE GULLS, before moving to the LONG PIT to watch more than a thousand SWIFTS feeding and going to roost, an adult NIGHT HERON and a BARN OWL flying at dusk. Then the BATS appeared, first of all the large NOCTULES, flying among the SWIFTS, then many of the tiny PIPISTRELLES and later a possible DAUBENTON'S flying low over the water.

LEAST TERN

For the 8th consecutive summer "squeaker" returned to our Little Tern colony on 31st May. Although not officially accepted as being an American Least Tern, *Sterna antillarum*, it now looks likely that this will be the first European record of this species that is so similar to Little Tern, *Sterna albifrons*. This year news of this bird was released to birdwatchers and around 500 visited the Reserve to see it and as a result we raised an additional £250 for our funds.

TREE SPARROW NESTBOXES UPDATE

The new nest boxes for TREE SPARROWS have proved very successful with at least 6 pairs successfully raising young at a site within the Nature Reserve that was not previously used by them. Thank-you for all who supplied boxes. If you would like to supply a nestbox they are of the classic Blue Tit design, but with a slightly larger hole of 28mm.

ANNUAL REPORT 1989

The latest report of the Nature Reserve and its wildlife is now available. In addition to the usual contents there are accounts of the Water Beetles of the area and of the Blue Boulders.

PLANT LIST

An up to date list of the flowering plants of the area is now available. This new 8 page list is of the same A5 format as the Annual Report and can be stored neatly inside it.

CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF RYE HARBOUR

A complete list of the birds recorded on the Nature Reserve. This list is also A5. There are 8 columns for you to record species seen, either by visit, or by year.

The items above are all available from the Warden;

Annual Report	£1 (£1.50p inc. ptp)
Plant List	50p (75p inc. ptp)
Checklist of birds	20p (40p inc. ptp)
All three items	£1.70p (£2.20p inc ptp)

WHAT, WHEN AND WHERE ?

If you have been able to visit the Reserve this year and have seen a plant or animal that is unusual for the area please could you let me have a note of it, particularly "what, when and where" it was seen. Please let me have your records BEFORE the end of the year. Thank-you.

Now, what is unusual? I hear you ask. That is a very difficult question, but for birds the answer may be found in the Annual Report. For other groups I am always glad to receive records.

Some birds are generally very common, but I consider them scarce on the Nature Reserve. For example, COAL TIT, JAY, NUTHATCH, REDPOLL, SISKIN, and YELLOWHAMMER. Other birds are unusual at certain times of the year, for example, RINGED PLOVERS in January, GREY PLOVERS in July and August and SNIPE in the Summer. Other worthwhile records are of early or late dates of migrants or flowering of plants.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - 1990

GUIDED WALKS

Friday, 31st August. 7pm - BAT WALK with the SUSSEX BAT GROUP, meet at Information Centre for an opportunity to see and hear these elusive mammals.

Sunday, 2nd December. 10am - GUIDED WALK to TERNERY POOL will start at 10.30, but the warden will be at the Information Centre from 10am with the FRIEND'S sales goods for those wishing to purchase items for CHRISTMAS !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!.

WORK PARTY

Sunday, 23rd September. 10am - 4ish - Meet at the Information Centre with lunch, binoculars, waterproofs, boots and enthusiasm to carry out essential management at TERNERY POOL. This is your chance to get a bird's-eye view of the islands while weeding them (PS. we usually see some good birds during the day).

SPECIAL EVENTS

Bank Holiday Monday, 27th August. 10am-12. - PLANT AND PRODUCE SALE at Winchelsea Beach Village Hall. See below for details

Saturday, 6th October. 7.30pm - BIRDWATCHING IN PARADISE, an illustrated talk by John Gooders. See below for details.

PLANT AND PRODUCE SALE

27th August

The FRIEND'S August Bank Holiday event has proven to be so popular and successful that we are once again holding it at the Winchelsea Beach Village Hall. To make it worthwhile we will need to have as much support as possible. We apologise for the short notice, but we will be glad to receive items of produce from 9am at the hall on the day. If you can supply suitable items (plants, flowers, fruit, vegetables, cakes, biscuits and craftwork) please call Anne Yates on (0797) 223862.

BIRDWATCHING IN PARADISE

6th October

Once again the FRIENDS will be running an Autumn fund-raising and publicity event. As with such previous events the reason for holding it in a different location is to try to attract new members and hopefully more support from that area. Therefore please give this event as much publicity to as many people as possible and, of course, we look forward to seeing our regulars there as well.

BIRDWATCHING IN PARADISE

AMONG THE ISLANDS OF THE SEYCHELLES

A slide illustrated lecture by JOHN GOODERS

Saturday, 6th October 1990, 7.30pm.

In LANGTON MEMORIAL HALL, BATTLE, EAST SUSSEX.
(opposite the Main Gate to Battle Abbey)

Admission = £2, children £1
(including refreshments)

The Seychelle Islands are situated one thousand miles from the coast of East Africa and have developed 13 species of birds found nowhere else in the World. The islands are also home to a host of seabirds, including a colony of over one million pairs of Sooty Terns. John Gooders will describe and illustrate birdwatching in this unique paradise. He is a well-known author of many books about birds around the World. There will be a full range of the Friends sales goods at this event and John Gooders will also be autographing some of his books which will be on sale.

COVENANTS AND BANKERS ORDERS - by Ian Rumley-Dawson.

When the FRIENDS were formed in 1973, the annual subscription was set at a minimum of 50p. Since then it has been increased to £1 and then to the current figure of £2 minimum, which we consider to still be one of the cheapest subscriptions around! It is also encouraging to note that our membership has grown to 1,204 people. However, the various administrative costs and complexities of dealing with such a membership has grown alarmingly. Over the years, most members have kindly increased their BANKERS ORDER amounts to keep in-step with inflation, but we still have quite a number of low figures, including one for the original 50p!!!! which of course does not cover the costs of dealing with it.

Therefore it is with some reluctance that the Committee has decided that effective from 1st September 1990, new COVENANTS AND BANKERS' ORDERS will only be accepted for annual subscription amounts of £5 and over.

If your current Bankers Order and/or Covenant is for less than £5 we have taken the liberty of enclosing a new forms with this Newsletter, in the hope that you will increase your annual amount to us. In which case please complete the forms and return to our Membership Secretary - Peter Philpot, Broadwater, The Ridge, Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex. TN36 4LU.

Thank-you for your kind understanding on this point

TAX RELIEF ON DONATIONS - UPDATE by Liz Blackwell.

Since my previous article in Newsletter number 32 on the subject of payroll giving and tax relief on donations to charities, there have been some changes which may be of interest to you.

In the Budget of March 1990 the Chancellor said that from 6th April 1990 the annual limit on payroll giving would increase from £480 to £600. The minimum remains at £120 per annum (£10 per month).

The idea is that a person who is working and whose income tax is deducted by the employer through PAYE, can opt to make monthly donations to charities of his/her choice. The deduction is made by the employer from pay before tax and the donation is sent to the Payroll Giving Services (PGS) which then pays the money to the charities. The amount will show on the charity's bank statement, but the identity of the donor is not revealed. For further details contact Charities Aid Foundation, Payroll Giving Services, Sterling House, 150-152 High Street, Tonbridge, Kent. TN9 1BB. or telephone (0732) 770233. Our Registration Number is 011038.

Members donating in this way are reminded that their details remain confidential to PGS, so neither our Treasurer or Membership Secretary knows the identity of the donors. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT MEMBERS DONATING THROUGH PGS either pay an additional subscription or tell Peter Philpot that they are donating in this way - otherwise there is a danger that their names will be removed from his records and no further Newsletters sent.

In the Budget the Chancellor also announced a new scheme called "Gift Aid" which allows income tax relief on one-off gifts of over £600 in any tax year. The scheme will enable gifts to charities to be made net of the basic rate tax and the charity receiving the gift will be able to claim the tax back from the Inland Revenue. Tax relief at the higher rate can be claimed where appropriate. The scheme will work broadly on the same terms as covenant payments, with the donor giving their chosen charity a tax deduction certificate. Tax relief will only be paid on monetary donations. Anyone wishing to make such donations should contact their Tax Office.

APOLOGIES FOR NO ILLUSTRATIONS,
BUT NOT ENOUGH SPACE !!!!!

