



NEWSLETTER

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

2 Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex, TN36 4L

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: Miss Liz Blackwell.

TREASURER: David Marshall.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Peter Philpot.

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

WARDEN: Dr. Barry Yates.

ASSISTANT WARDEN: Dominic Funnell.

WINTER 1990/91.

NUMBER 37.

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Barry Yates.

For period from August 1990 to mid-December 1990.

During August LITTLE EGRETS continued their steady increase with single birds on two dates, but this is the month for waders and there was a good variety of the common species, with just one rarity, a juvenile RED-NECKED PHALAROPE present for several days, bringing back happy memories of my study of this species in Shetland. September saw the last terns of the year departing, ending an unsatisfactory breeding season for them. Further indications of the end of summer were the last SWIFT on 24th and the first BRENT GEESE on the 13th. A WRYNECK on the 9th was unusual.

October started with the appearance of JACK SNIPE at the Wader Pool, the numbers increased steadily to 14, although most visitors would not have seen any. The time to watch them was at dusk, when they crept out from their hiding places to feed along the muddy margins of the pool. Other northern species were a juvenile WHOOPER SWAN at Ternery Pool on the 27th and the first GOLDENEYE on the 22nd.

A few summer visitors were still noted in November with HOUSE MARTIN on the 2nd and SWALLOW until the 15th. For several days there was a LONG-EARED OWL at the regular island site at the Narrow Pits, but it did not remain for long and dashed our hopes for a repeat of the roost of 6 there earlier in the year. A WHITE STORK was noted flying over but it was probably one of four that escaped from Whipsnade Zoo and had travelled widely over Southern England. Two very rare visitors were a STONE CURLEW on the 3rd and a DARTFORD WARBLER which stayed for a month from the 2nd.

The cold northerly winds that brought blizzards to most of Britain in December only gave us a few flakes of snow, but probably resulted in the appearance of a few WHITE-FRONTED and PINK-FOOTED GEESE and many SHELDUCK, TEAL, POCHARD, SHOVELER, SCAUP and a LITTLE AUK.



STONE CURLEW

Towards the end of the year we still had not experienced any hard frosts, so it was possible to find some of the shingle flowers still in bloom, such as GORSE, HERB ROBERT, SCARLET PIMPERNEL, RED VALERIAN and VIPER'S BUGLOSS. Also during December, among the large flock of COLLARED DOVES around the barns, there were unseasonal visitors, 2 TURTLE DOVES - this is true and entirely unconnected to the Christmas song that ends with a Partridge in a PEAR TREE!!!

Best wishes to you all for the New Year.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 1991.

AFTERNOON WALK: Sunday, 3rd February, 2.30pm for a walk to Ternery Pool and then on to the Wader Pool, hopefully to see the Jack Snipe at Dusk.

WORK PARTY: Saturday & Sunday, 16th & 17th March, 9.45am until noon. Litter clearance of the beach with the ROTHER ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP. Please try and bring work gloves.

WORK PARTY: Saturday, 23rd March, from 10.00am onwards with the SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

ALL DAY WALK: Sunday 14th April, 10.00am until 4.00pm to find signs of spring. (Approximate distance 5 miles).

Above events all start from the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour.

WILDLIFE OF RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE: Saturday, 20th April, 7.30pm. A lecture illustrated by slides and twin dissolving projectors by Ian Rumley-Dawson, forming a fund-raising event in collaboration with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Heathfield Members' Group, in aid of the Friends and the RSPB, at the Heathfield Community Centre, Sheepsetting Lane, Heathfield, East Sussex.

FRIENDS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Saturday, 11th May 1991, 7.30pm, in the Winchelsea Beach Village Hall, Sea Road, Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex. The AGM will be followed by an illustrated lecture, details of which will be announced in the next Newsletter.

EXHIBITION AT RYE ART GALLERY: From 18th May to 11th June, entitled STRANDED SHORE - an appreciation of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, (see further details below).

SUSSEX BIRD REPORT.

If you want to know more about the bird life of Sussex or find out just how important Rye Harbour's birds are to the County, the latest SUSSEX BIRD REPORT for 1989, is available at £4 including post and packing from RH Trowell, Lorimar, Main Road, Icklesham, East Sussex, TN36 4BS.

ROTHAR ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP.

A new group has recently been set-up to tackle a wide range of issues affecting the local environment. In the Rother area there are various local problems which affect the quality of life, such as air pollution, dirty rivers and beaches, excessive noise, litter and many others. As a totally independent non-political group, they aim to address these issues by gathering the relevant information and then applying pressure to the people responsible.

Subscription rates: Adult = £2 Family = £3 Child under 16 = £1

For further details write to:

Rother Environmental Group, PO Box 100, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 7DP.

SPONSORED RUN.

A supporter of the Friends, Joan Taffs, is to run the Hastings Half Marathon to raise funds for the Nature Reserve.

You can encourage her to reach the end of the 13 mile run by sponsoring her, either per mile, or for completion of the course. Please send your pledges to:

Joan Taffs Run, c/o 2 Watch Cottages, Nook Beach,
Winchelsea, East Sussex, TN36 4LU.

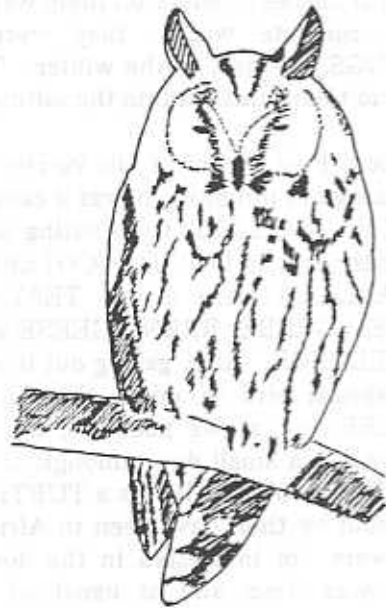
The run will be on 10th March 1991 and she will be wearing a special Nature Reserve T-shirt!!!!!!!

NEW COLOUR POSTCARDS.

For many years we have produced black and white postcards of various species which can be seen on the Reserve. However, many people have requested coloured cards. Therefore in response to this request, we have now reproduced some colour photographs in the form of postcards depicting animals and plants of the area at 25p each (+ sae).

- Sea Kale (by Peter J. Greenhalf).
- Biting Stonecrop (by Peter J. Greenhalf).
- Long-eared Owl (by George Delemare).
- Low Tide, Rye Harbour (by Jill Barry).
- Rye at dusk (by Peter J. Greenhalf).

The tracing on the right by Dominic Funnell is taken from the Long-eared Owl card.



STRANDED SHORE EXHIBITION.

Casual visitors may see Rye Harbour as a desolate area with little scenic beauty. However, most of us who know the area realise that there are many aspects which are very attractive. The exhibition at Rye Art Gallery from 18th May until 11th June 1991, will be an appreciation of the area, showing a variety of images captured by local artists and photographers. Most of the work will be for sale, so if you want a piece of Rye Harbour for your home, then here is a good opportunity.

FOR SALE.

This new section to the Newsletter is for Friends who have items of wildlife interest to sell. 10% of the selling price will go to the funds of the Friends. If you have any such items for sale to publicise, then please contact Barry Yates (see address in Newsletter heading).

BINOCULARS 10 x 50mm Swift Belmont [contact B. Yates].

TELESCOPE 30 x 75mm Swarovski draw tube (similar to Optolyth) £130
[contact Peter Philpot 0797 225998].

A RECENT GUIDED WALK.

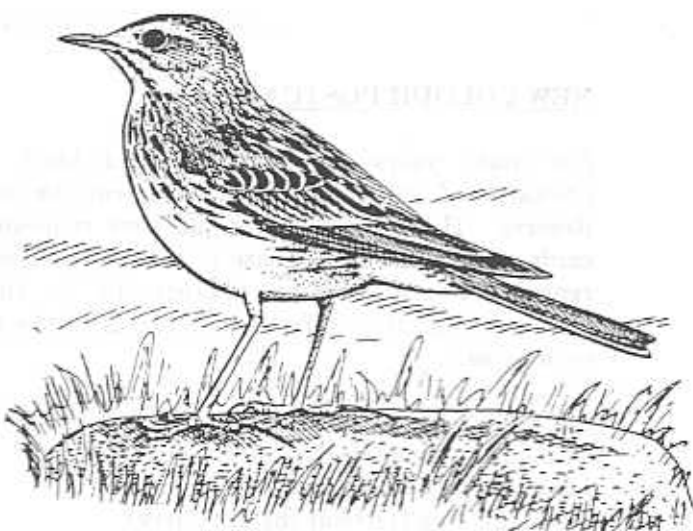
Barry Yates.

December may not be the best time of year for visiting the Reserve, but I am always hopeful of a surprise or two when setting out with a group, especially if it is the regular Friends Guided Walk. About twenty of us set-out from the Information Centre at 10.30am. It was high tide and many in the group were surprised to see a large ship sailing down the river and then to see the river flooding right over the saltmarsh. This is always a good time to see the birds as they are flushed out of the SEA PURSLANE. We had an opportunity to compare ROCK PIPIT, MEADOW PIPIT and SKYLARK (illustrated below). The Wader Pool was very quiet except for a distant SPARROWHAWK upsetting a flock of pigeons. Nobody saw any of the JACK SNIPE that were sitting in the grass, but everyone was told to come back at dusk to watch them appear!

As we reached the river mouth, we searched the shore across at Camber for the regular SANDERLINGS running in and out with the waves, and, as we watched them, two small birds with flashes of white on them were feeding on the concrete wall - they were SNOW BUNTINGS, my first of the winter. They flew closer and then vanished into the saltmarsh.

At Ternery Pool we saw a fair variety of ducks, but nothing too unusual. It was a calm day and most of the MALLARD were sitting out at sea, doing their best to look like SCOTER. Among the MALLARD were a few TEAL, GREAT CRESTED GREBE, BRENT GEESE and about 100 SHELDUCK. After gazing out to sea we all had a special bird in mind, the DARTFORD WARBLER, but as we neared it my attention was drawn to a small dove amongst the flock of COLLARED DOVES. It was a TURTLE DOVE that should by then have been in Africa! Most people were not interested in the dove as the warbler was close, and as usual we found it feeding with a pair of STONECHATS, a ROBIN and several WRENS in a clump of flowering GORSE. This warbler is usually very skulking, but today it behaved very well and gave good views to most of us. It looked like a cross between a WREN and a LONG-TAILED TIT. On the walk back to the carpark we saw only a few new birds - LINNET, GOLDFINCH and REED BUNTING. Most people were looking forward to lunch, although I suspect some stayed for the JACK SNIPE.

***** END *****



MEADOW PIPIT



SKYLARK