



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: Miss Liz Blackwell.

TREASURER: Stefan Wiener.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Peter Philpot

COMMITTEE: Jill Barry, Steve Denny, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Greenhalf, Frank Palmer,
Mike Saville, Mrs. Anne Yates (Tern Watch Organiser).

WARDEN: Dr. Barry Yates.

ASSISTANT WARDEN: Dominic Funnell.

SPRING 1992.

NUMBER 41.

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Barry Yates.

DECEMBER 1991.

A quiet dry month. The best bird of the month was a Bittern seen on Christmas Day at Ternery Pool. Geese were not common, with up to 14 White-fronts, 22 Greylags, 200+ Canada, 12 Barnacles and 17 Brents. At Ternery Pool there was the usual good variety of ducks, plus up to 46 Gadwall, 20 Scaup, 6 Eider, 3 Long-tailed Duck, single Smew and Red-breasted Merganser and a pair of Goosander. Little and Barn Owls were regular, but Short-eared Owls were scarce. Among the passerines there were few surprises, a single Black Redstart on 1st and 1-3 pairs of Stonechats all month, a Chiffchaff on 15th and up to 31 Corn Buntings.

JANUARY 1992.

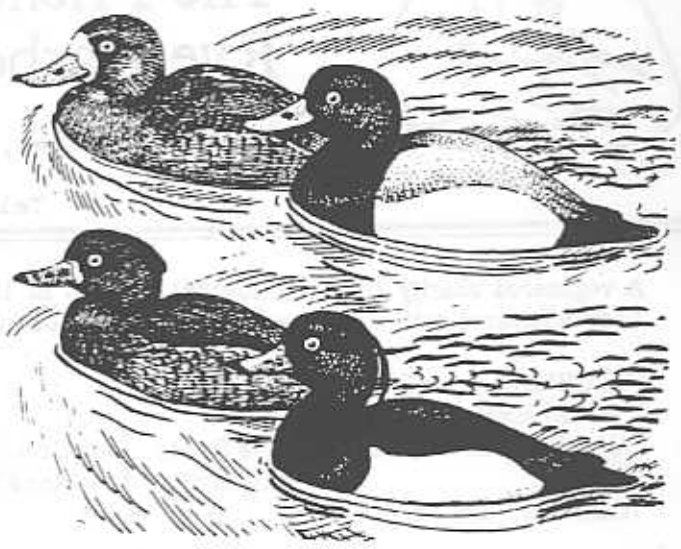
This was a cold, dry month, dominated by easterly winds, but this brought only few unusual visitors to the area. Offshore there were up to 305 Great Crested Grebes and 80 Common Scoter, with small numbers of Red-throated Divers and single Eiders, Long-tailed Ducks and Guillemots. The variety and number of duck was good, especially at Ternery Pool, with up to 66 Shelduck, 7 Wigeon, 51 Gadwall, 340 Teal, 355 Mallard, 96 Shoveler, 65 Pochard, 76 Tufted Duck, 11 Scaup, a single Common Scoter, 4 Goldeneye, and a single Smew. Water Rails were commonly seen around the margins of the pits. In the fields nearby 12 Barnacle Geese were present until 25th, then 4-5 White-fronted Geese preceded a flock of 30 from 29th. Among the waders there were up to 161 Oystercatchers, 12 Ringed Plovers, 69 Golden Plover, 32 Grey Plover, 1500 Lapwing, 55 Sanderling, 90 Dunlin, a single Ruff on 23rd, only single Jack Snipe, 15 Snipe, 498 Curlew, 30 Redshank, a single Green Sandpiper and 11 Turnstone, but the star bird of the month was a Dotterel staying in a field near the carpark from 27th. Green Woodpeckers were seen regularly out on the Beach where Skylarks, Finches, Pipits and Buntings were surprisingly scarce despite attempts to feed them during the freezing weather. 2-3 pairs of Stonechats remained all month and up to 5 Chiffchaffs were present at the Sewage Works.



LONG-EARED OWL

FEBRUARY 1992.

The highlights of the month were: the Dotterel on 1st, 2nd and 22nd, a Goshawk on 26th, a Bittern on 18th, 80 Bewick's Swans roosting in the first week, 30 White-fronted Geese on 1st, 90+ Greylag Geese flying east on 24th and 25th, 12 Barnacle Geese on 1st and 2nd, an Avocet on 25th and a Black Redstart on 23rd. Also of note were up to 44 Gadwall, 30 Teal, 13 Pintail, 152 Shoveler, 16 Scaup, 3 Goldeneye, an Eider and a Smew - and on the sunny days the first 4 species could be seen and heard displaying. Birds of prey were well represented with regular Hen Harriers, Merlin, Kestrel and occasional Sparrowhawk, Peregrine and the Goshawk mentioned above. The Owls were well represented with records of Short and Long-eared, Little and Barn, the latter being most common. Other natural history interests included Small Tortoiseshell butterflies on 21st and 29th, the first flower of Common Whitlow Grass on 20th and a Common Seal was present in the river all month.



♀ ♂ SCAUP

♀ ♂ TUFTED

MARCH 1992.

At Ternery Pool up to 11 Gadwall, 18 Teal, 13 Pintail and 220 Shoveler remained, keeping hopes high that some may stay to nest. On the 14th an adult Mediterranean Gull came to roost at dusk with thousands of more common gulls. At the Long Pit 13 superb drake Scaup and 6 females could be compared with the more common Pochard and Tufted Ducks. On 5th there was also a Smew. At the River Mouth the Eider and Seal were regular and the Goshawk was seen again, near the Castle on 26th, the same day as an Avocet at Watch Cottage. Early migrants were Sandwich Terns from 18th, a migrant Chiffchaff on 18th, Wheatears from 14th and Sand Martins from 22nd, but as last year, persistent and strong northerly winds hindered further migration. Perhaps the best bird of the month was a Kentish Plover on the shore at dusk on 31st. Coltsfoot was first noted in flower on 4th and Scurvy Grass on 21st.

WORK PARTIES.

Many thanks to those of you who were able to support the work parties during March. We were able to carry out all of the planned work, despite the poor weather; at the Wader Pool we repaired some major leaks and did some landscaping; at Ternery Pool we laid plastic sheeting beneath a large island (to inhibit plant growth) and weeded the area in front of the Parkes Hide to give a good view of close birds; along the Beach we collected about 150 sacks of rubbish. This work will be greatly appreciated by the wildlife, as well as the many human visitors to the Reserve.

RYE HARBOUR WATCH GROUP.

Barry Yates.

WATCH is a National club for young people who care about wildlife and the environment as a whole. It is the junior wing of the RSNC Wildlife Trusts Partnership.

As reported in the last Newsletter, I am planning to start a local group. These plans are progressing and the group should start its monthly meetings in May 1992. Details will be advertised locally, but if you would like to help or know more, then please send me an s.a.e. at the address in the heading of this Newsletter.

TERN WATCH.

Anne Yates.

From May until August the TERN WATCH will be in operation again, to safeguard the nesting Little Terns on the Reserve. The voluntary wardening will be organised this year by Anne Yates. Most of the regular times have already been filled. However, if you would like to help or perhaps know more about this important work, then please contact Anne at the address or telephone number shown in the heading of this Newsletter.

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SHELDUCK SURVEY.

Barry Yates.

For the past two years the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve has participated in a Pilot Study for a full National Survey of breeding Shelduck that starts this year. This will be the first time that the breeding population of Shelduck in Britain has ever been accurately determined. We often emphasise the decline in wildlife populations, so it is good to be able to highlight an increasing population.

I shall be the organiser for East Sussex, so if you know of areas where Shelducks occur between April and August -

PLEASE CONTACT ME SOON FOR DETAILS OF THE SURVEY.

Shelduck first nested in Sussex in 1904 at Chichester Harbour, but it was not until 1919 that a pair was reported during May in Rye Bay. Then a pair nested at Dungeness in 1920. When Pett Level was flooded in 1942 a breeding population was established near Rye. In 1945 5 broods were reported at Rye Harbour and 5-12 pairs have bred regularly since. The Pilot Survey at Rye Harbour found:-

1990 = 20 pairs, 12 non-breeders = 52 adult birds.
1991 = 13 pairs, 47 non-breeders = 73 adult birds.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 1992.

Saturday, 9th May, 7.30pm. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, in the Community Centre, Conduit Hill, Rye. See separate agenda and balance sheet sent to members with this edition of the Newsletter.

Saturday, 16th May, 9am - 2pm. SPRING GUIDED WALK to see the wildlife at its best. Meet at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour.

Tuesday, 30th June, 9.30am - 1pm. GUIDED CYCLE TOUR around the SSSI. Meet at the Information Centre in the Martello Tower carpark at Rye Harbour with a bicycle.

Friday, 31st July, 8pm - after dark. BAT WALK with the Sussex Bat Group. Meet at map reference TQ 916 174, the entrance to Castle Farm, off Sea Road, Winchelsea Beach.

Monday, 31st August, 10am - 12 noon. PLANT & PRODUCE SALE in aid of the Friends, to be held in the Winchelsea Beach Village Hall. Cakes, plants and bring-and-buy items will be most welcome, preferably on the day, or beforehand to the Warden at the address in this Newsletter heading. Last year this event raised £352 for the funds of the Friends. Many thanks to all our regular supporters and helpers on this August Bank Holiday annual event. Anyone with any new ideas for different or additional stalls please contact Liz Blackwell (Secretary of the Friends) at the Friends' Annual General Meeting, or by telephone = (0424) 753016. Liz will be discussing the arrangements with her helpers at the A.G.M. or in the days following.

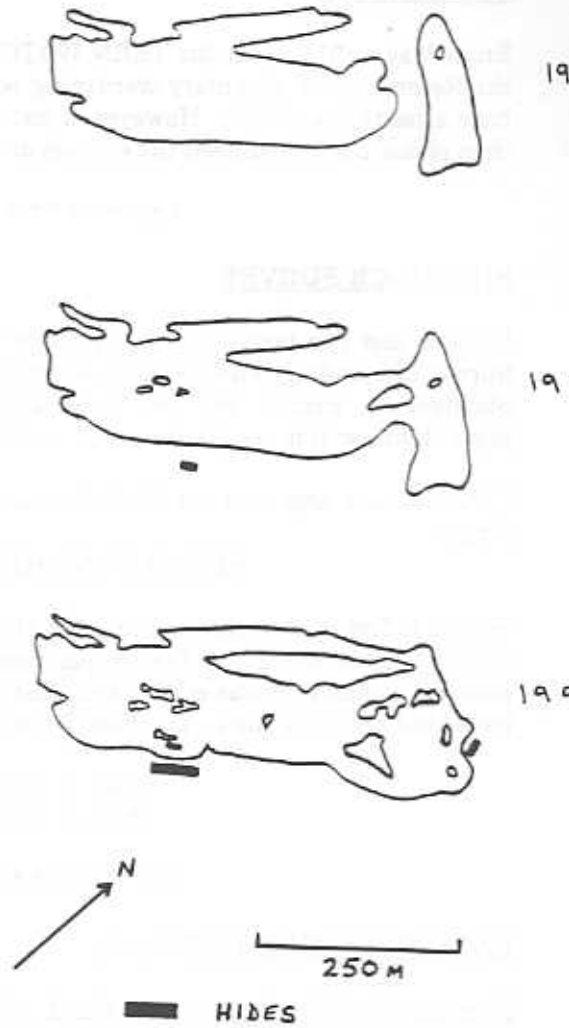
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THE HISTORY OF MANAGEMENT AT TERNERY POOL.

Barry Yates.

This shallow gravel pit is the focus of birdwatching at the Nature Reserve. It is an important site for birds throughout the year, including a variety of breeding birds, but it was not always like this. The success has only been achieved by many years of management by the Nature Reserve, helped especially by work parties of the Sussex Ornithological Society and the Friends.

- 1930's - Early excavations left two small pools with few permanent islands.
- 1970 - Nature Reserve established and shingle added to the low west islands in sacks using a boat.
- 1971 - Pools enlarged and joined by Kent River Board, creating some islands at the eastern end of the pool.
- 1977 - Wildlife Sanctuary Area fenced and signposted around the Pool. In March the south west corner of the Pool was deepened by the Southern Water Authority with a dragline. In April shingle was added to the west islands and at the end of the year the west islands were much enlarged with concrete and shingle.
- 1978 - Further work in front of the Crittall Hide to improve the view. In March, September and October further island enlargement and creation of a new island in the centre of the Pool.
- 1979 - Further enlargement of west islands in March, April and September. Some work by dragline at east end to further isolate islands from spits. Footpath 68b at east end of Pool was officially diverted to reduce disturbance to the Pool.
- 1980 - Further enlargement of west islands in March, April and September.
- 1981 - In January a long island was created by isolating a large spit, and in October a triangular island was created in a similar way. The work was carried out by the Southern Water Authority using a dragline and lorries at a cost of £4,900. The small west islands and centre island were enlarged by adding concrete blocks and filling with shingle.
- 1982 - The electric fence was extended around the Pool after predation by a Badger and Foxes.
- 1983 - Centre island enlarged with shingle.
- 1984 - Centre island enlarged in April.



This management of Ternery Pool has created valuable wetland habitat, which has partly replaced the once extensive wetlands that were lost to improved land drainage and it has provided a relatively safe site for roosting and nesting birds.

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ANNUAL REPORT.

The 1991 Annual Report is nearly completed and should be printed during May. It will contain a detailed account of the birds recorded during the year, a summary of other animals and an account of the Grasshoppers of the area. There will also be further details of the History of Management of the Nature Reserve. A copy of the Report can be obtained by sending a large s.a.e. together with £1.50 to the Warden at the address shown in this Newsletter heading.

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GIFT AID - BUDGET 1992.

Liz Blackwell.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his Budget on 10th March 1992, the following changes which may affect the Friends. Any further information required should be sought from H. M. Inspector of Taxes:-

1. The minimum limit for qualifying for tax relief on donations to charities is now £400.
 2. Deeds of Covenant can run beyond the 4 year limit.
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REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Peter Philpot.

In view of the ever increasing costs of administration, postage and printing etc., the Friends Committee have reluctantly decided that the annual Membership Subscription needs to be increased, effective from 1st May 1992, so that the amounts will be as follows:-

Adults = £5 (Minimum). Children under 16 years old = £2

It would be appreciated if all members would pay their subscriptions by the end of May 1992. Each year Peter Philpot (Membership Secretary) has to send out over 200 reminders to Friends who have not paid by the time the next Newsletter is sent out. This entails a considerable amount of extra work and postal expense, so please help us by sending your annual subscription now, by way of the tear-off Subscription Renewal Form at the end of this Newsletter.

PAYING SUBSCRIPTIONS AT THE A.G.M.

If you would like to pay your annual subscription at the Friends Annual General Meeting on 9th May 1992, at the Community Centre in Rye, then please also complete the Subscription Renewal Form before the meeting and attach your subscription to it by pin or paper clip, so that it is easy for me to check that everything is in order. Please **DO NOT** put it in an envelope, because in the past I have opened envelopes the next day only to find that cheques have not been signed and forms have not been filled in.

COVENANTS.

Your subscription could be covenanted, which increases the value of it to us by one third, at NO extra cost to you. If you wish to help us to increase our income in this easy way, then please tick the appropriate box on the Subscription Renewal Form at the end of this Newsletter. We prefer these covenants to be backed by a Bankers Order, but this is not essential. We will have the necessary forms available at the Friends Annual General Meeting, or they can be posted to you, in which case please send a stamped addressed envelope (size 9" x 4" preferably). Thank you.

***** Cut along here *****

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL FORM

Subscription renewal for the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve for the period from 1st May 1992 to 30th April 1993.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone No:

PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS

Cash/cheque enclosed for: £

Tick this small box if Bankers Order & Covenant forms are required.

Please return this form to:

Membership Secretary,
Friends of RHNR,
Broadwater, The Ridge,
Winchelsea Beach,
East Sussex, TN36 4LU.