



NEWSLETTER

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

A registered charity (No.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: Michael Saville
TREASURER: Frank Clarke
COMMITTEE: Steve Denny, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Greenhalf, Frank Palmer, Stefan Wiener,
Anne Yates (Tern Watch Organiser)

SECRETARY: Miss Liz Blackwell
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Peter Philpot

WARDEN: Dr. Barry Yates
ASSISTANT WARDEN: Dominic Funnell.

NATURE RESERVE ADDRESS

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WARDEN'S REPORT

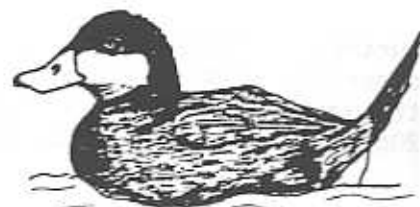
The ninety one days of April, May and June are the busiest and most exciting of the Nature Reserve's year. There is so much going on, plants coming into flower, migrants passing through, insects emerging and birds breeding. Much is overlooked and before we realise it the days are shortening, waders returning from the north, flowers setting seed, birds moulting and tern chicks flying..... The weather has, in general, been kind, warmer than average with long, dry periods.

APRIL 1993. At Castle Water there was a pair of BLACK-NECKED GREBES in summer plumage for a week and an OSPREY fished for an afternoon (resting on top of a pipe with young BLUE TITS inside). On the Beach Reserve there were GARGANEY on 3 dates, a TEMMINCK'S STINT on 14th and a LITTLE EGRET was widely reported for 4 days. The last MERLIN was on 10th.

MAY 1993. On the day of the AGM, the 8th, we counted all the birds seen in the recording area and reached a total of 93 species. This did not include any rare birds, but did include RUFF, GREENSHANK and HOBBY. As always the next day proved better with SPOTTED REDSHANK, GARGANEY, GREEN SANDPIPER, COMMON SANDPIPER. At the Beach Reserve there was a BLACK-NECKED GREBE for two weeks, an EIDER, single LITTLE STINTS on 11th and 15th, two AVOCETS, single CURLEW SANDPIPERS 10th-16th, a ROSEATE TERN 23rd and up to 100 BLACK TERNS mid month. The last BRENT GOOSE was noted on 10th. The annual passage of WHIMBREL reached a peak count at Ternery Pool of 205 on 2nd.

In the fields in front of WATCH COTTAGE there was a report of a male RED-FOOTED FALCON on the 11th and a QUAIL was calling from 31st. At Castle Water there was a female MONTAGU'S HARRIER on the 11th and the last SHORT-EARED OWL was noted on the 19th. In the Wood there was a BLACK REDSTART and a singing FIRECREST and NIGHTINGALE on 15th.

JUNE 1993. On the Beach Reserve there was a LITTLE STINT 9th, up to 15 BLACK-TAILED GODWITS, a ROSEATE TERN 27th and a regular LITTLE GULL. A very tatty adult BLACK TERN on the 26th heralded the start of autumn. At Watch Cottage Pool there was a WOOD SANDPIPER on 6th. At Ternery Pool there were two new breeding species; two pairs of RUDDY DUCK, one of which produced 8 ducklings, and one pair of GREYLAG GEESE raised 5 young (but deserted them when half grown). At Castle Water three pairs of GREAT CRESTED GREBES nested, with two young raised (the first nesting since 1981) and a pair of HERON built a nest, but did not breed.



TERN NEWS

The breeding terns have had mixed fortunes, fewer LITTLE TERNS nested this year with just 35 pairs raising 15 young to flying with more still waiting to hatch, the COMMON TERNS nested on three islands at Ternery Pool, with 60 pairs raising 90 young and best of all 90 pairs of SANDWICH TERNS raised 130 young.

It is, with regret, that I have to report the disappearance of a much loved FRIEND, known in his early years with us as SQUEAKER. Since 1983 this energetic American has been attempting to find a mate at our Little Tern Colony, but without success. In the last few years his appearance has made the National press and many watchers have travelled great distances to see him. Despite lengthy discussions and analysis of his voice his true identity has not yet been confirmed by the highest authority (but he did get a mention in the 'British Birds' report of rare breeding birds). There are some watchers who were waiting for official confirmation before coming to see him, but I fear they will have lost their chance forever of getting the Least Tern on their list of British Birds.

It is not often that a new bird species is added to the Reserve list, but on the evening of 16th May I had a telephone call reporting a SOOTY TERN at Ternery Pool. The call was just in time to stop me stepping into my bath, so I cycled over to the CRITTALL HIDE where a couple of birdwatchers showed me the bird flying up and down the pool.

Yes, it did look like a SOOTY TERN in the poor evening light, but it was too small. When the SOOTY TERN occurred here in July 1984, I remember that it was the size of a SANDWICH TERN. The bird I was now looking at was smaller, more the size of a COMMON TERN, it must be a BRIDLED TERN, the first record for Rye Harbour, and for Sussex, and only about the 16th for Britain! I telephoned some local birdwatchers and Birdline, then looked closer at the bird. By now it was 8.20pm and the light was poor.

The crown, legs and bill were black. The upper wings, back and central tail feathers were a brownish black. In contrast to this was a white forehead, which extended back over the eye, and white underparts and outer tail feathers. There was also a pale collar. A few birdwatchers arrived before complete darkness finally arrived and the bird roosted with the other terns.

At 4am the next day there were 40 eager birdwatchers at Ternery Pool who saw the bird before it flew out to sea at 5am. Some of those who arrived later stayed all day, but were disappointed as the bird was not seen again!

This new species brings the total number of tern species seen at Ternery Pool to 14 and I suspect there is nowhere else in Britain that can beat this.



ANNUAL REPORT

Printing of the Nature Reserve's 1992 Annual Report has been delayed, so apologies to those of you who have been waiting since the last Newsletter for your copy. By the time you read this it should have been printed. Copies are available for £1.50p plus A5 sae from the Nature Reserve address.

CASTLE WATER CIRCULAR WALK

Further progress has been made towards creating this 4km walk which was briefly described in the last Newsletter. There is now a leaflet available describing some of the interest along the route as well as better directions. Copies are available for 20p plus sae from the Nature Reserve address.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - 1993

GUIDED WALKS

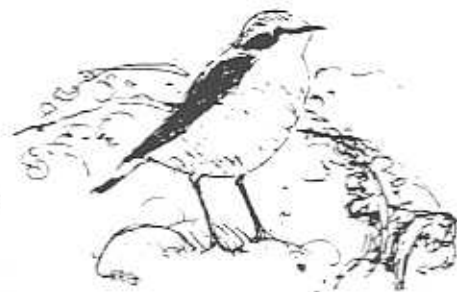
- Saturday, 14th AUGUST. 2pm-5pm. Insects of Castle Farm. 3 mile circular walk - meet at car park near Brede Lock at top of Harbour Road (TQ 919 198).
- Tuesday, 14th SEPTEMBER. Mid-week Birdwatch. Meet at Pett Pools (TQ 903 145) 9am or Dog's Hill Road Toilet Block (TQ 917 160) 10am for circular walk ending about 2pm.
- Sunday, 17th OCTOBER. 10am-1pm. High Tide. The year's highest predicted tide (4.3m) may coincide with strong winds to create spectacular scenes along the shore. There should be much wildlife washed up along the tideline. Meet at Information Centre.
- Sunday, 14th NOVEMBER. 2pm-4.30pm. Low Tide. Another high tide will also be a very low tide which we will follow out to look for animals that live between the tides. Meet at Information Centre bring wellingtons and warm, windproof clothing.
- Saturday, 18th DECEMBER. 2pm-4.30pm. Gulls Galore. Meet at Information Centre bring wellingtons and warm, windproof clothing.

TUESDAY WORKPARTIES

There will again be regular workparties on the first and third Tuesdays of every month, starting in August and lasting until April. The work will be varied, weeding islands at Tenery Pool, building islands at Castle Water, cutting bramble, coppicing willow, fencing, planting trees and bushes. It is not possible to predict what or where the tasks will be, so please meet at our Information Centre at 10am. Bring wellingtons, work gloves and any useful tools (bow saws, secateurs, garden forks, spades) and your lunch if you want to stay all day. If there are no tasks to be done there will be the option of a guided walk.

PLANT AND PRODUCE SALE

This is being held on Bank Holiday Monday, 30th August at Winchelsea Beach Village Hall from 10am to 12 noon. Cakes, plants, bring-and-buy goods are welcome and should be brought, preferably on the day to the hall, or in advance to the Warden's cottage. Three people are required to help with refreshments; please phone Liz Blackwell on 0424 753016 if you are willing to help. Funds are needed, so lets make this a bumper one.



LEGACIES - A PLEA BY THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve owes its existence to the work and support of the Friends over the years. Without the Friends 'LAND FUND' the addition of Castle Water would not have come about.

So many enjoy visiting the Reserve and its special wildlife, here and now. Please help to secure its future by leaving a legacy to the Friends.

We are advised that one or the other of the following wordings can be used in a Will, or in a Codicil to your existing Will.

'I give to the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve (registered charity No.269535) at, Fynmores Solicitors, 10-12 Parkhurst Road, Bexhill-On-Sea, East Sussex.

either, 'a (state the fraction chosen) of the residue of my estate'
or, 'the sum of £.xxx.'

If you require further assistance, please write to
Frank Clarke, Hon. Treasurer at the Nature Reserve address.

CHAIRMAN

At the Annual General Meeting of the Friends on 8th May 1993, David Hill was elected Chairman in place of Ian Rumley-Dawson who had served as Chairman for 14 years and to whom the Friends owe a big debt of gratitude. However, within a few weeks of the AGM, David Hill found it necessary to resign because of work commitments.

Clause 6 of our Constitution states that 'any casual vacancy on the Committee shall be filled up by the Committee, and any member so chosen shall retire at the following AGM, but shall be eligible as a candidate for election on the Committee at such AGM.'

The Committee has asked Michael Saville to take over the Chairmanship.

Mike can be contacted on (0797) 224663, or by post at the Nature Reserve address.

IAN RUMLEY-DAWSON

As some members may recall, Ian was elected Chairman of the Friends in 1979, following the death of our first Chairman, Guy Crittall. During those 14 years he was involved in many negotiations on behalf of the Friends, from challenging planning applications for recreation at Castle Water in 1979 through to its purchase in 1992 and of course the purchase of Watch Cottage. Ian has done much to promote the Reserve to a wider audience - many members have enrolled as a result of Ian's frequent wildlife lectures, he ran evening classes and courses for many years with guided walks around the Reserve, and when Group Leader of Battle RSPB, forged close links between the two. While he was Chairman the number of subscriptions to the Friends rose from 200 to 1,200. Ian also edited the Newsletter and organised its printing in London, until the increasing membership made it too heavy to carry !!. There were many fund-raising events and public lectures which Ian presented and organised.

At this year's AGM Ian retired as our Chairman, due to pressure of work and his full programme of lectures, and, as a token of our thanks for his considerable contribution to the Friends, he was presented with one of Pam Knight's superb life size models of a Little Tern and chick.

AUDIT OF THE FRIENDS' ACCOUNTS

Frank Clarke has audited our accounts for some years, he is now our Treasurer and, therefore, we must find a new auditor.

Under the Charities Act 1992 our accounts need not be audited by a professional auditor, but may be examined by an independent examiner - defined as a person who has ability and experience in accountancy matters and who is independent of the Committee.

Our constitution provides that 'two members shall be appointed auditors'. Are there two Friends who satisfy the definition of 'independent examiner' and who would be willing to examine the accounts?

Please write to Frank Clarke, Hon. Treasurer at the Nature Reserve address.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

If the top left hand corner of your envelope is stamped "Membership renewal enclosed" then, unless we have made a mistake, you have not yet paid this year's subscription and there is a separate letter enclosed. There are more than 200 memberships outstanding and many of these will lapse, so it is difficult to say what the membership will be by the end of the year.

At the moment we have 1174 FRIENDS, 80 of which have joined since January, and we have lost 27 members who have resigned through one reason or another. It is important for the Reserve to have a healthy membership, so please do not lose any opportunity to introduce new people to the Reserve and recruit new FRIENDS.

Membership details & forms are available from the Warden at the Nature Reserve address.