



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 (SSSI)

Chairman Nicola Frith
Secretary Liz Blackwell
Membership Secretary Peter Philpot
Committee Steve Denny, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Lloyd, Anita Gibbs

Vice Chair Frank Palmer
Treasurer Frank Clarke

Warden Dr. Barry Yates

Assistant Warden Dominic Funnell

Nature Reserve Address

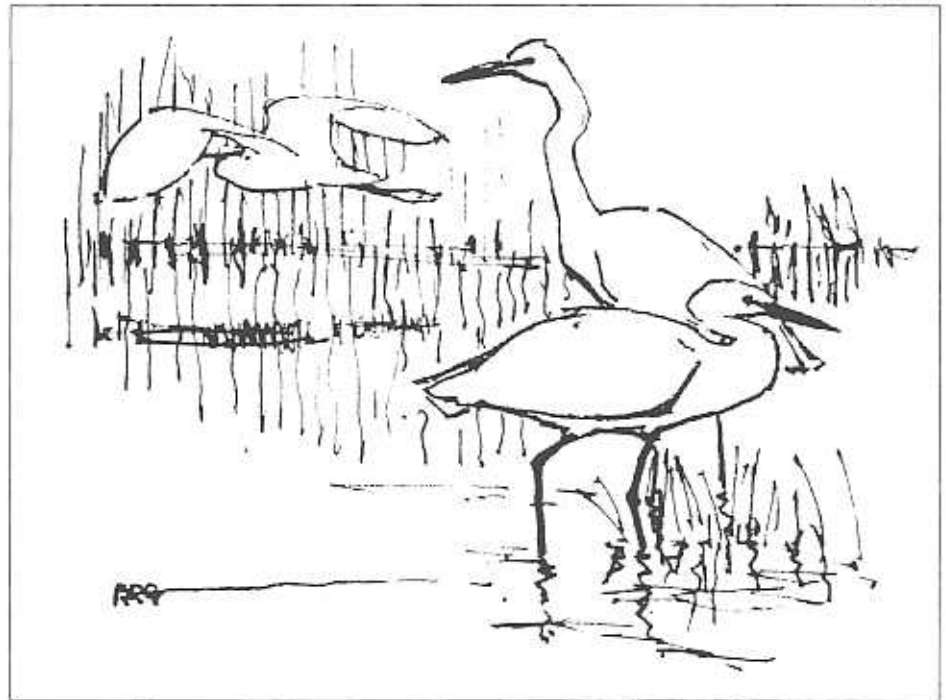
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Autumn 1995 Newsletter

No. 51

Reserve management

The last few months have been important for some of the habitat management that is vital to maintain species diversity on the Nature Reserve (we have just recorded our 2,500th species). In September we carried out more re-profiling at Castle Water to improve the margin for wetland wildlife. The workparties have been busy cutting back Grey Willow around Castle Water to encourage more reed and flowering plant growth. We have also cut back much Bramble to maintain some orchid rich grassland. More recently we have replaced the foundations and floor of the Parkes Hide and added some more seating.



Little Egrets by Bob Greenhalf

Warden's Report

July

The long hot and dry summer continued, bringing the flowering season to a premature end for many species. There were two serious setbacks for the Reserve; the poor success of the breeding Little Terns (due to Kestrels) and the destruction of the new Castle Water Hide by fire! Birding highlights were a Pectoral Sandpiper (from 23rd), a White-winged Black Tern (13th), 1-2 Roseate Terns, a juvenile (?) Black-necked Grebe (17th-27th) and 5 Little Egrets (from 27th). There was a good variety of wildfowl and waders with maxima of 1 Snow Goose, 4 Gadwall, 25 Teal, 5 Pintail, 5 Garganey, 7 Shoveler, 86 Pochard, 60 Tufted Duck, 1 Scaup, 6 Ruddy Duck, 250 Common Scoter

offshore, 3 Avocets, 2 Little Ringed Plovers, adult Golden Plover, a Grey Plover, 5 summer plumage Knot, a summer plumage Sanderling, 87 Dunlin (but only 2 juveniles), 3 Ruff, a Snipe, 68 Whimbrel, a summer plumage Spotted Redshank, 3 Greenshank, 10+ Green Sandpipers and a Wood Sandpiper. In July the moth trap was out for 26 nights, catching a total of 236 species, of which 22 were new for the Reserve. The most interesting were the notable species: *Eupoecilia ambiguella*, *Calamotropha paludella*, *Pempelia genistella*, Pale Grass Eggar, Least Carpet and Waved Carpet; and the Red Data Book species *Melissoblyptus zelleri* and *Platytus alpinella* and both sub-species of Pygmy Footman. A Scarce Black Arches on the

12th was only the second for the Reserve and only the county's fourth. The entomological highlight of the year came on the night of 31st when an unidentified moth was pulled out of the trap. Eventually it was sent to the Natural History Museum and identified as *Trichoplusia vittata*, the Streaked Plusia, the first record for the UK and probably the first for Europe. Its natural range is south of the Sahara with small populations in the Canary Islands and Libya.

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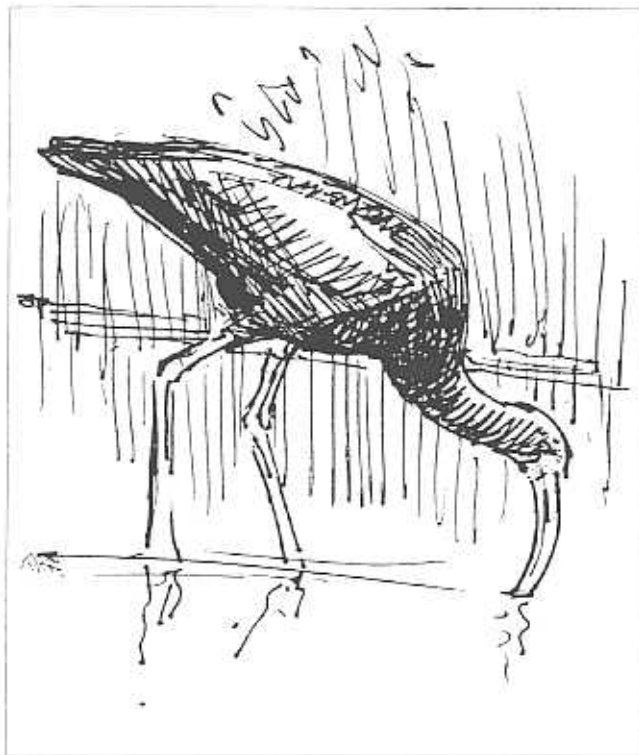
August

With only 1mm of rain the grassland became brown and the water levels of ditches and pits kept dropping ever lower. It was a very good month for birds, the highlights being the roost of 8 Little Egrets at Ternery Pool and the Pectoral Sandpiper from last month that stayed until 6th. Wader passage was superb throughout the month, with up to 50 Knot, 5 Ruff, a Spotted Redshank, regular Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper, Little Ringed Plover, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Black-tailed Godwit and Avocet. There were also large numbers of ducks present all month, up to 7 Wigeon, 30 Gadwall, 350 Teal, 2-3 Pintail, 1-2 Garganey on several dates, 107 Shoveler, a single female Scaup and an eclipse male Red-crested Pochard. The only brood of Ruddy Duck seen this year was 8 at Ternery Pool from the end of the month, however there were no Tufted Duck broods seen! Raptors were also well represented with Hobby, Peregrine and immature Marsh Harrier on several days. Other birds of note included up to 12 Whinchats, single juvenile Arctic Tern, single adult Roseate Tern, Black Terns on 14 days and a Wryneck on 24th.

The moth trap was out on 24 nights catching a total of 136 species, of which 5 were new for the Reserve. The highlights included the migrants *Plutella xylostella* *Udea ferrugalis*, *Nomophila noctuella*, Dark Sword-grass, Pearly Underwing, White Point and Bordered Straw. The last species of note is a Hummingbird Hawk-moth, seen close to the Parkes Hide on 23rd.

September

At last, some real rain, 142mm brought life back to the dry ground, which turned from a brown to bright green almost overnight. At the start of the month there were many waders left over from August, but many summer visitors departed; the last dates were Little Tern on 8th, Swift on 13th and Hobby on 28th, Garganey on 17th. At the same time some winter visitors started to appear with single Merlin from 7th and Brent Goose on 21st. Migration continued to be interesting with good numbers of common species moving through, including a Marsh Harrier, several Wryneck, Tree Pipit, Redstart, Grey Wagtail, an Arctic Skua and the best bird of the month, an Aquatic Warbler on 7th. The moth trap was on for just 12 nights, catching 65 species of which one was new for the Reserve, The Delicate.



Glossy Ibis

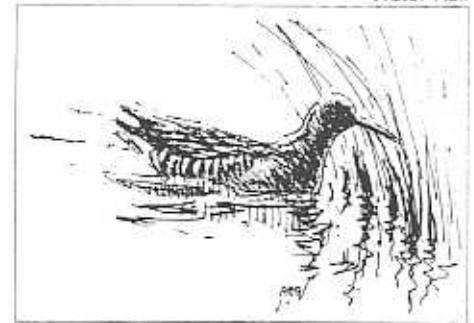
October

The long awaited rains were short lived and a very dry, warm and calm month enabled several species of butterfly, including Painted Lady and Red Admiral to be seen all month and unseasonal flowers like Blackthorn to appear. Among the common birds there were good numbers of Little Grebe (38+), Cormorant (119 - please look for and report colour rings), Gadwall (49+), Teal (175), Shoveler (150), Tufted Duck (85), Coot (311) and Lapwing (2000+). The unusual birds this month included Bewick's Swan, Garganey, Marsh Harrier, Goshawk, Merlin, Peregrine, Jack Snipe, Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Black Tern, Turtle Dove (until 18th), Whinchat (19th), Firecrest and Twite. However, the best bird of the month, a Glossy Ibis was to be found for four days in our newly created ditch at Castle Water.

November

Offshore there were regular Red-throated divers (max 35), a single Black-throated (8th), Great Crested Grebe (max 10), single Gannets, a Whooper Swan (18th), regular Eider (max 9), great rafts of Common Scoter (max 2,000) with an occasional Velvet Scoter, a few Guillemots and Razorbills and a single Little Auk (21st). At the gravel pits there were exceptional numbers of Little Grebes (max 46) and Gadwall (max 128) with more typical numbers of other water birds including regular Long-tailed Ducks, Scaup, Goldeneye and Water Rail, and a single drake Goosander (20th). On the grassland there were very high numbers of Lapwing (max 5,550) and Golden Plover (max 900)

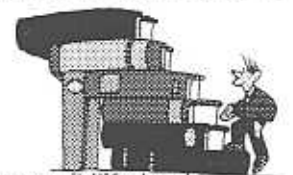
Water Rail



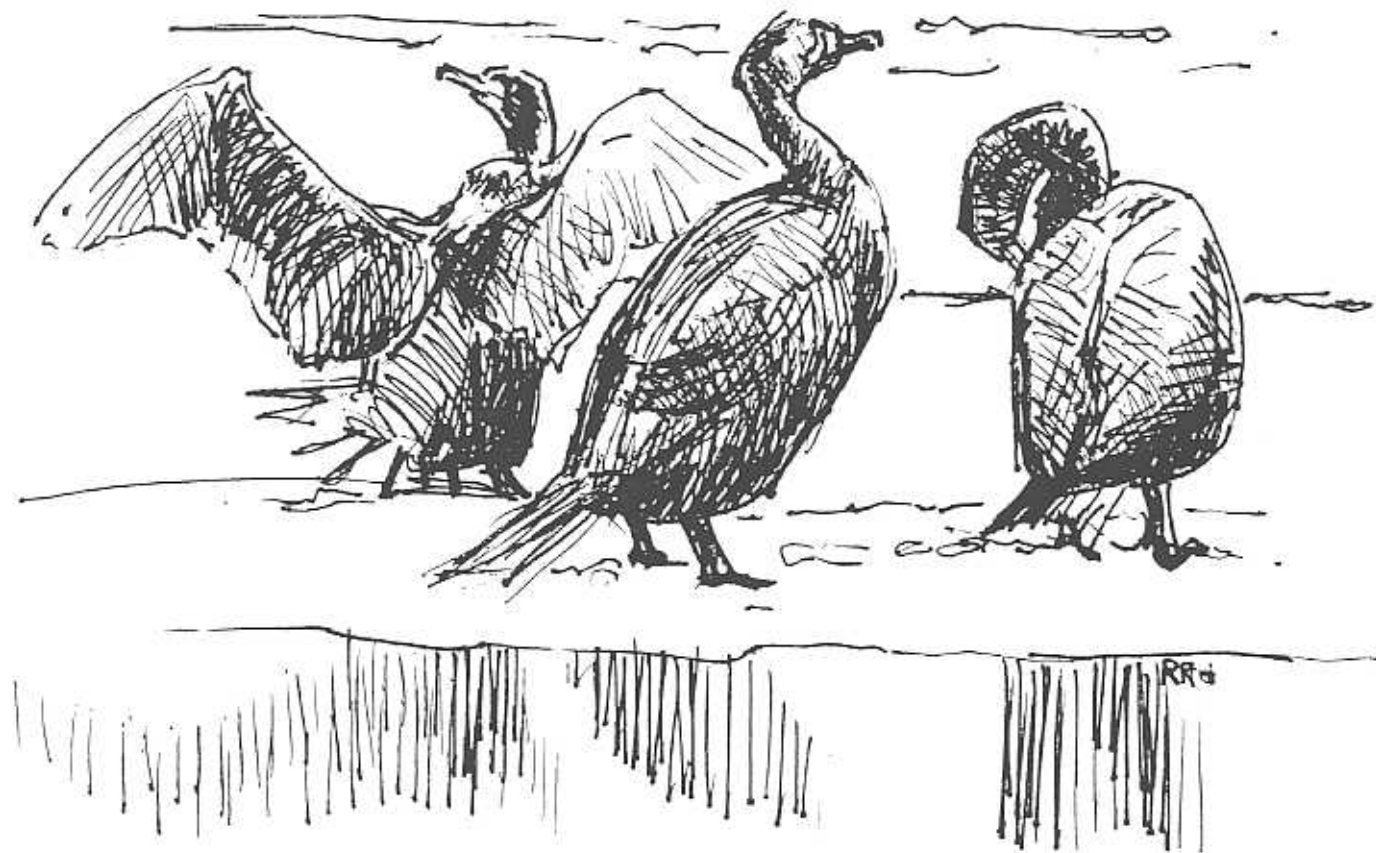
but poor numbers of Jack Snipe (max 1). Late summer visitors include Swallow (5th), House Martin (17th), Whinchat (12th) and Wheatear (13th).

Now for some bad news. On the 30th some oil was washed ashore. Up to five per cent of the birds on the shore were affected, particularly all gulls, Sanderling, Oystercatcher, Dunlin, Grey Plover and Common Scoter. It appears that most of the Scoter left the area before the oil arrived. Other wildlife included a Grey Seal in the river and a few late butterflies: a Painted Lady (5th), Peacock (3rd and 18th) and a Red Admiral (19th).

SECONDHAND WILDLIFE BOOKS



If you have some wildlife books that you no longer use, why not donate them to the Reserve? We can recycle them to other members and raise a little money as well. Bring any books to the Members' Evening on 20th April, or contact Barry.



I'm not sure about the Cormorant

I always think the Cormorant looks
 Not at all like in bird books.
 As when I see one flying by
 Across a wild and stormy sky,
 It's not a bird I'm looking at
 But a witch on a broom, I'm sure of that.
 I know an island where they go
 To sit in circle or in row,
 Beaks pointed up as wings they raise.
 Is it to dry, or is it to praise
 Some dark deity who does govern
 These black cloaked witches at their coven.

Cliff Barwood

Wildlife course and weekend breaks

A one week wildlife course and weekend breaks to see Red Kites, other animals, plants and spectacular scenery in the Elan Valley, mid-Wales. Course leaders Richard Knight and Ian Rumley-Dawson.

For details please contact Pam Knight, The Cwm, Llanwrthwl, Llandrinod Wells, Powys LD1 6NU. Tel: 01597 811169

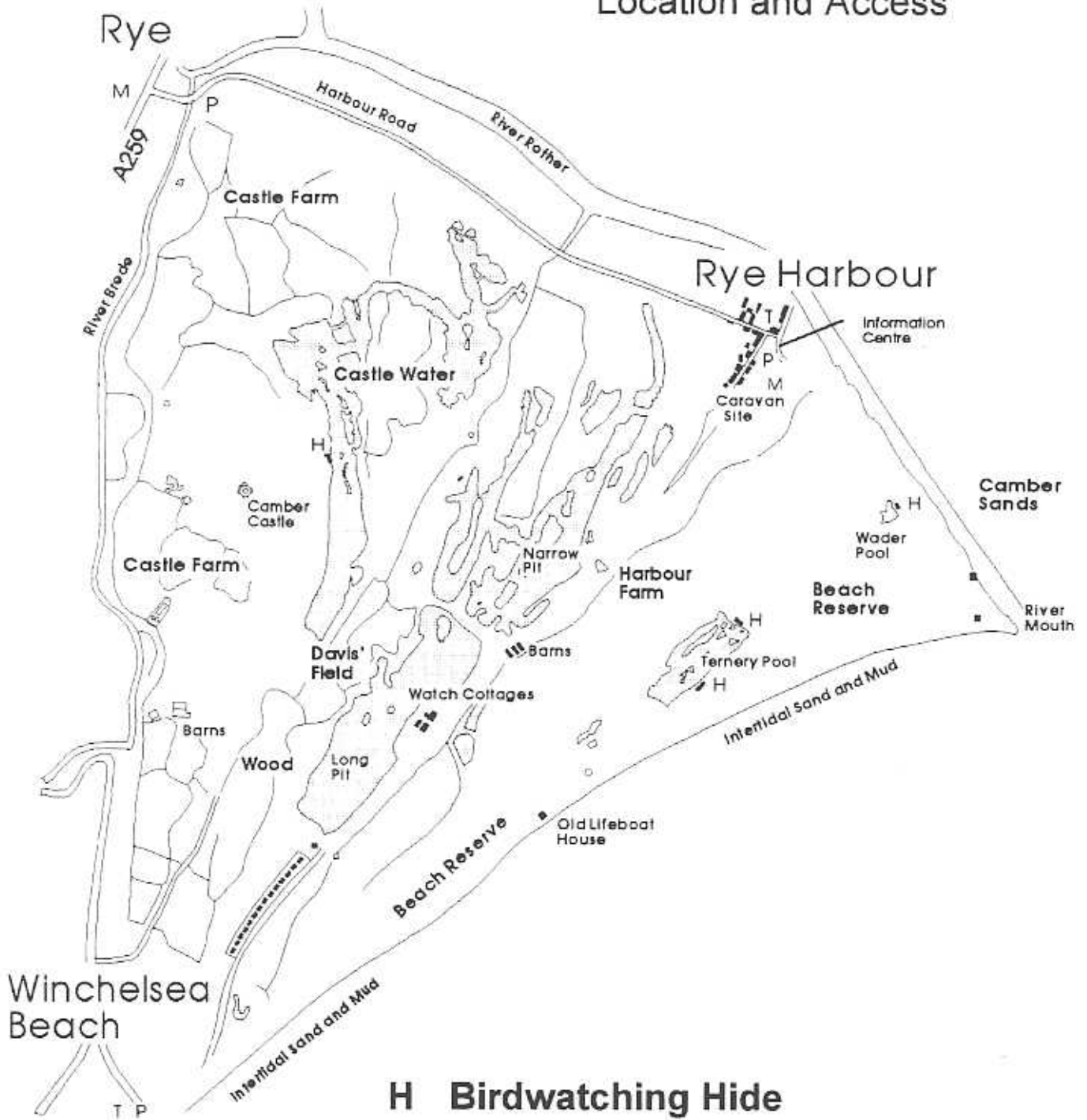
Rye Harbour Lifeboat

During the last few months the Rye Harbour Lifeboat House in the village has been replaced by a larger building that will house a new, larger, faster, more comfortable and safer rescue boat. The volunteers that man the boat will probably save many lives.

The original lifeboat was housed in the large building that still stands on the shore. It was last used by the lifeboat for the ill fated launch of the *Mary Stanford* lifeboat on 15th November 1928. In appalling weather the lifeboat, propelled by oar and sail, was launched to rescue the crew of the Latvian steamer, the *Alice*. Just after the launch news came that the crew of the *Alice* was safe. Despite efforts to recall the boat, the lifeboatmen carried on searching for several hours before returning, only to capsize close to shore. All seventeen men were drowned.

The funeral at Rye Harbour was attended by huge crowds, a fund of £30,000 was raised for the dependents, a statue of a lifeboatman was placed over the grave and a stained-glass window commemorates the men in Winchelsea Church. During last summer the Rye Bay Countryside Project designed and installed an interpretation board on the old lifeboat house which tells visitors of the sad story.

RYE HARBOUR LNR and SSSI Location and Access



H Birdwatching Hide

T Public Telephone and Toilets

M Martello Tower

P Car Parking

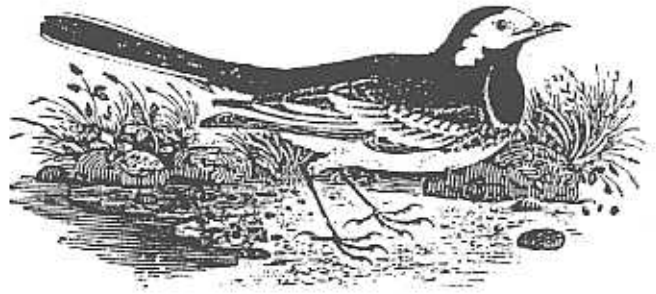


1,000 Metres

QUIZ by Frank Palmer

Can you identify these birds from their Sussex dialect names?

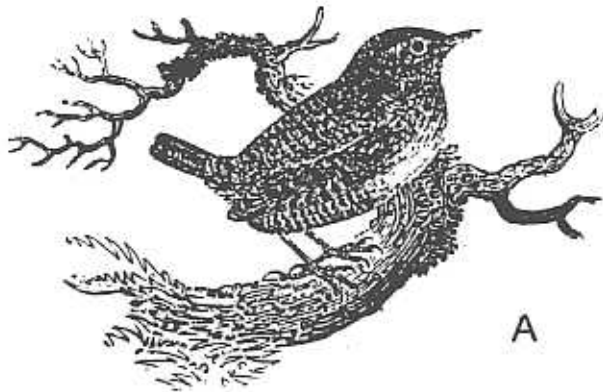
1. Nettle Creeper
2. Post Bird
3. Galleybird
4. Barleyear
5. Churn Owl
6. Clodbird
7. Cutty
8. Dishwasher
9. Fulfers
10. Jack-Hearn



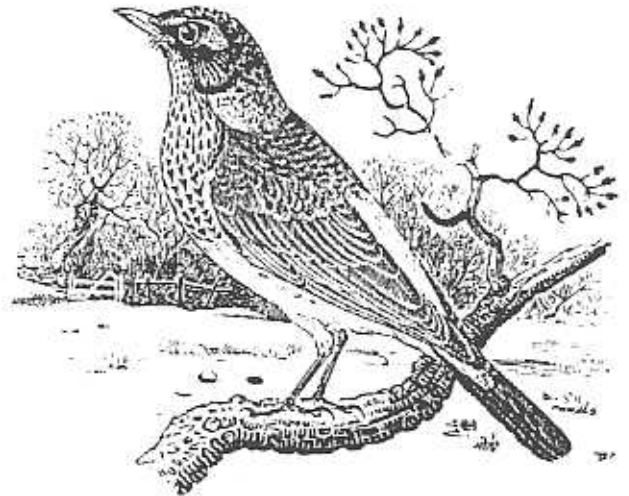
B

Sussex names taken from *A Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect* 1875 by Rev. W.D. Parish
Illustrations from *History of British Birds Vol. 1* 1797 by Thomas Bewick

ANSWERS
1. Whitethroat 2. Spotted Flycatcher 3. Green Woodpecker (also called Yaffle or Barge Boat) 4. Whinchat 5. Nighthawk 6. Corn Bunting 7. Wren (Pic A) 8. Pied Wagtail (Pic B) 9. Fieldfare (Pic C) 10. Heron



A



C

Sales items

Limited edition prints

To mark the opening of the first Castle Water Hide the Friends commissioned a limited edition, hand coloured, print by Bob Greenhalf of a view at Castle Water which includes: the Castle, the Hide, islands, water, reeds, swans, grebes and a reed bunting. There will be only 40 prints and they cost £45 with card mount or £58 framed. Contact Barry to view.

Greetings cards

For many years Friends have been requesting a Greetings Card and now, to celebrate the Nature Reserve's 25th year, we have one. Bob Greenhalf has painted a watercolour looking over the Wader Pool towards the cliffs at Fairlight with small flocks of waders in the foreground. These high quality cards (no message) are available at a cost of 40p each or £2.00 for 6.

Reserve leaflets

All leaflets are now free!

Descriptive Leaflet - a short introduction to the Reserve and its wildlife, including map.

Breeding Birds of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve - notes on 14 species that regularly breed.

Wintering of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve - notes on 14 species most likely to be seen.

Shingle Flowers of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve - notes on 14 species of the Beach Reserve

Castle Water Circular Walk - with map. A 2.5 mile walk taking in Camber Castle and part of the Nature Reserve.

Guided Walk Leaflet - a self-guided interest trail starting from the Information Centre.

Three Circular Walks - 1, 2 and 3 hour walks around the Nature Reserve.

Send a large sae to the Reserve address for any sales items.

Dates for Your Diary - 1996

Please remember that the first and third Tuesday of every month is **Workparty day**. Meet at Information Centre at 10am, return about 3pm. You can help with the practical management of the Reserve, seeing places and wildlife that you may never see otherwise!! Please bring old, warm clothing, work gloves, lunch and a hot drink.

In Focus, the binocular and telescope specialists will be visiting the Reserve on 3rd March, 21st April, 16th June and 14th July. There will be a wide range of equipment available for trial at the Wader Pool hide from 10 am to 4 pm and you may be able to trade in your old equipment.

- Sunday 4th February** **A short birdwatching walk around the beach reserve**
Meet at Information Centre at 10am, return about 1pm
- Saturday & Sunday
23rd & 24th March** **Beach Clean**
A chance to clear the beach of the winter's rubbish and perhaps see your first Wheatear or Sandwich Tern. Meet at Information Centre at 10am with work gloves. Working until about 1pm
- Saturday 20th April** **Members' Evening**
There will be an illustrated talk by the Warden on *The Reserve's First 25 years*, plus the usual sales table, refreshments and secondhand wildlife book stall. If the weather is fine there will be some moth trapping in the car park afterwards. At Winchelsea Beach Community Centre (next to the garage), starting at 7.30pm
- Sunday 28th April** **Annual Whimbrel Walk**
An early start to see one of the largest roosts of Whimbrel in Britain - peaked at 416 in 1994. Meet at Information Centre at 4.30am, returning about 11am
- Monday 6th May** **Spring Fair**
Please bring or buy your plants, produce, cakes or bric a brac to raise funds for the Nature Reserve. At Winchelsea Beach Community Centre (next to the garage) 9am to 12 noon
- Saturday 11th May** **Maritime Heritage Trail walk**
Will we see 50, 60 or 70 species? With good weather and luck this long circular walk will find a very long list of birds for you. Lunch and Little Owl (?) at the Castle. Meet at Information Centre at 8am, return about 2pm
- Friday 14th June** **Moth Watch**
A short birdwatching walk, followed (weather permitting) by moth trapping near the Wader Pool after dark. Meet at Information Centre at 8pm, returning after dark
- Saturday 22nd June** **The Annual Cycling Tour of the Nature Reserve**
Please bring your own bicycle, lunch and energy. We will look at flowers, birds and insects. Lunch at the Castle. Meet at Information Centre at 10am, returning about 2pm
- Sunday 21st July** **The Flowers of the Castle Water Circular Walk**
With a chance to go inside Camber Castle. Meet at the Brede lock car park (TQ920198) at 9 am, returning about midday
- Wednesday 28th August** **Waders and other Migrants at Pett Pools & Rye Harbour**
Meet at 9am at Pett Pools (TQ9014) or at 10 am at Dog's Hill Road toilet block (TQ917160) for a circular walk around the Reserve, returning about 1 pm
- Saturday 21st September** **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 7.30pm**
At Winchelsea Beach Community Centre (next to the garage)
- Saturday 5th October** **Autumn Birdwatching**
There should still be a mixture of summer and winter visitors to see on this walk to the Beach and Castle Water. Meet at Information Centre at 9 am, returning about 2 pm
- Sunday 17th November** **Winter Ducks at Ternery Pool**
All the drakes will be in good plumage, so now is the time to learn your ducks. We should see 10 - 15 species. Meet at Information Centre at 2pm, returning about 4.30pm.