



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

2, Watch Cottages, Nook Beach, Winchelsea, East Sussex, TN36 4LU
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Spring 1996 Newsletter

No. 53

Warden's Report

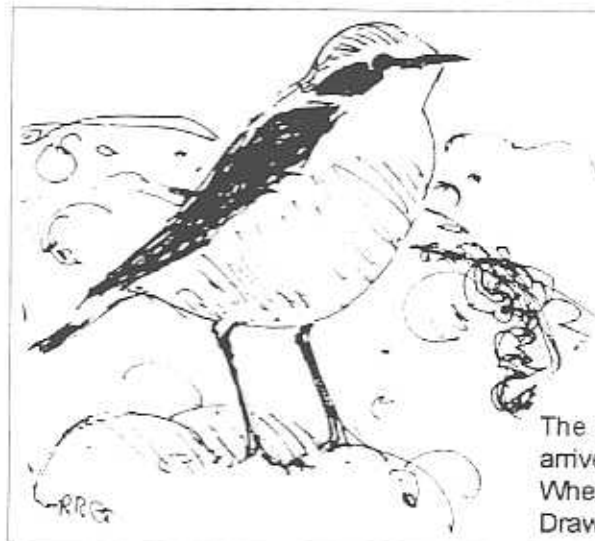
December

An interesting month with cold weather mid-month providing many good records. Wildfowl numbers were high throughout the period with up to 180 Wigeon; 133 Gadwall; 550 Teal; 7 Pintail; 142 Shoveler; 150 Pochard; 7 Scaup; 8 Eider; a Long-tailed Duck (2 by month's end); 1700 Common Scoter offshore and 2 Goldeneye present all month. Other wildfowl of note included Bewick's Swan (4th-6th), a Pale-bellied Brent Goose (5th), a Slavonian Grebe (6th), a Pink-footed Goose (6th and 11th), a Red-necked Grebe (12th) and a White-fronted Goose (18th). Raptors were also very well represented with a regular ring-tailed Hen Harrier (joined by a male on 11th), Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and single Merlin all month and a single Goshawk chasing Lapwings (7th) and Peregrine on two days!!!

Other birds of note included Bittern on three dates during the month; Little Egret (9th and 19th); Avocets on three days including 9 together (4th); Green Sandpipers on four days; Black Redstart (3rd); Firecrest (12th) and Lapland Bunting (30th). On a negative note there was only a single record of Jack Snipe this month and only two records of Short-eared Owl in the whole winter.

January

Duck numbers were high all month. There were up to 400 Wigeon by the end of the month at Castle Water; 150 Pochard at Long Pit; 8 Scaup on Narrow Pits at the start of the month, dropping to 2 by the end of the month; small numbers of Eider



The summer migrants began to arrive in March, including a Wheatear on the 22nd.
Drawing by Bob Greenhalf

offshore peaking at 30 (21st); up to 3 Long-tailed Ducks on the pits with 5 offshore (1st); up to 4 Goldeneye on the pits throughout the month; a redhead Smew on Narrow Pit (from 14th).

There was a single ringtail Hen Harrier in the area for the whole month as well as single Merlin, but there were still no Short-eared Owls! Waders were also well represented with a Nature Reserve peak of 899 Curlew roosting (15th); Sanderling reached 200 by late January; first returning and displaying Ringed Plovers were on the Beach Reserve mid-month; other waders of note included Spotted Redshank (1st); up to 2 Woodcock (28th and 30th); but only one record of Jack Snipe!

Gulls were well represented with the first Mediterranean Gull on 30th and at least 2 Little Gulls in the area (between 12th and 16th). Oiled Guillemots were seen on 3 dates.

Other highlights included 22 Goosander on Long Pit (2nd); 12 Waxwings in the Wood (10th); 7 White-fronted Geese over the Reserve (12th); Chiffchaff on 3 days; Little Egret on four days at Castle Water; Great Spotted Woodpecker on four days; Lapland Bunting (20th) and a White Pelican of unknown origin on (29th)!!

February

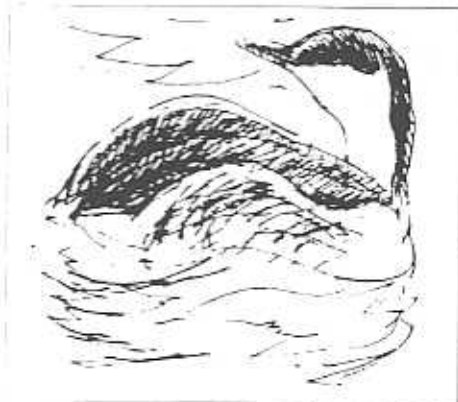
A superb month for wildfowl. At Castle Water Wigeon peaked at 600 (8th) with 50 still around at the end of the month; an unusual flock of 64 Greylag Geese at Castle Water (7th), a single Red-necked Grebe (from 27th), 2 Whitefronts at Castle Water (22nd). At Ternery Pool 3 female

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Long tailed Duck all month, up to 6 Goldeneye (all month). Elsewhere there was a Slavonian Grebe (from 20th), small



Slavonian Grebe

numbers of Pintail were present all month, but the largest single flock was of 37 offshore (4th), up to 7 Scaup (until 6th), but 62 offshore (7th) and singles present until the end of the month; up to 20 Eider offshore. good numbers of Smew on the Long and Narrow Pits all month, maximum of 14 redheads and 3 males; 1-3 Red-breasted Merganser (from 17th); Goosander, usually a very rare visitor here! maximum of 14 females and 3 males (3rd). both Bittern and Little Egret were present all month, but they were usually elusive

There were large numbers of winter Thrushes in the SSSI all month, but raptors were poorly represented with a ringtail Hen Harrier all month and only two records of Merlin.

Other records of note included 85 Knot at Ternery Pool (19th) during strong gales; Woodcock in the Wood (1st); Mediterranean Gull on the shore (17th); Little Gull at River Mouth (10th); up to 4 Razorbills (2nd and 23rd); and a Tawny Owl, a very rare visitor to the Reserve (2nd).

On 16th a Blue-white Dolphin (*Stenella caeruleoalba*) was found dead on the shore on a falling tide. It is very rare in British waters, occasionally found in the south-west. It was collected by the Natural History Museum who are interested in any strandings of dolphins, whales or porpoises.

March

A varied month with winter visitors still well represented and the first summer migrants arriving.

At Castle Water single Red-necked Grebe (until 2nd); at least 2 Bitterns (all month) and 1 Little Egret (all month). Elsewhere there were female Hen Harrier, three Long-tailed Ducks, 3-6 Goldeneye and two Slavonian Grebes (all month); up to 9 (including 2 male) Smew (until 15th);

small numbers of Brent Geese offshore (from 21st); one White-fronted Goose and one Spotted Redshank (2nd); one Black-necked Grebe (23rd); a male Velvet Scoter (5th); female Red-breasted Merganser and one Green Sandpiper (22nd and 23rd); three Black-tailed Godwits (30th).

Summer migrants arrived during the month, with a Sandwich Tern (10th) reaching 220 (31st); a male Black Redstart (10th) with up to 4 on 7 dates until end of month; Mediterranean Gulls at Ternery

Pool (from 15th); Yellow Wagtail (24th) with a male Blue Headed Wagtail (29th and 31st); White Wagtail (24th); Wheatear (22nd) with max of 40 (23rd); Firecrest and Sand Martin (24th); Swallow (28th). It has been a very cold and dry winter (the opposite extreme of last year). The water level in the pits is very low and some of the grassland on the shingle ridges is already drying up. The spring flowering is late with only the winter flowers of Daisy and Gorse to be seen until Common Whitlowgrass (5th) and Colt'sfoot (10th).

ANNUAL REPORT and 25 YEAR REVIEW

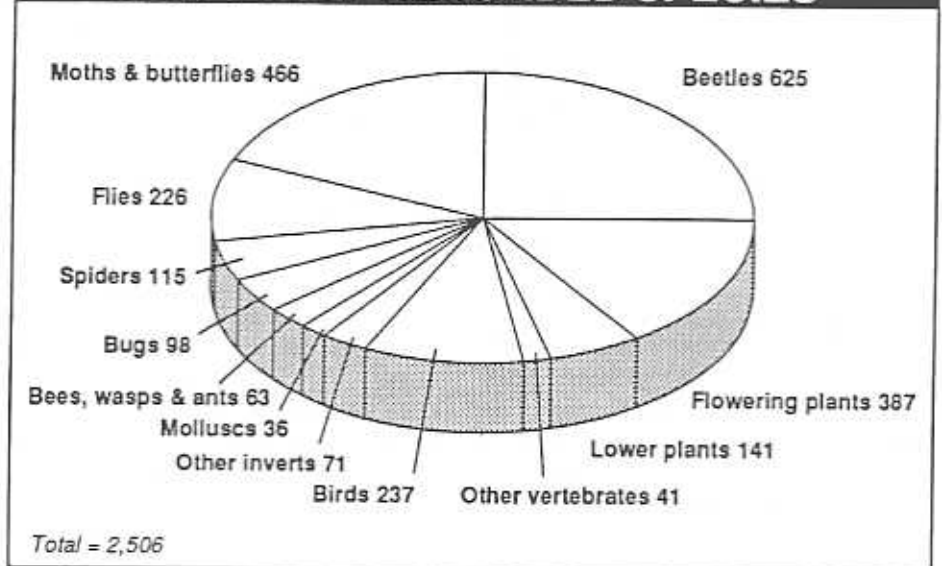
1995 was an eventful one for the wildlife of the Nature Reserve. The Annual Report describes the Nature Reserve and gives a summary of the wildlife records for the year. It will be available in June from the Nature Reserve address for £2 plus an A5 sae.

The Nature Reserve has now completed its 25th year and to mark this Barry is writing a review. This will be in two parts; Part 1 - a History and Description. This is still being written and will be available during the summer. Part 2 - a Wildlife Inventory. A full annotated list of species recorded. This has been completed and is available from the Nature Reserve address for £2 plus an A5 sae.

It is not just the number of species recorded which is important, but also the large number which are considered to be, local, notable, rare or endangered. The following table shows the number of species on each of the areas within the Nature Reserve and also the whole SSSI.

SITES	COMMON	LOCAL	NOTABLE	ENDANGERED	TOTAL
Beach Reserve	1200	220	95	32	1547
Castle Water	862	179	97	15	1153
Castle Farm	461	88	45	4	598
Davis' Field	21	0	0	0	21
All LNR	1860	410	195	43	2506
All SSSI	2019	462	221	64	2766

NUMBER OF RECORDED SPECIES



Tern Watch



Once again volunteers will be manning the caravan on the Beach Reserve. This will provide extra protection for the Beach Reserve and provide another way of informing visitors of the interesting wildlife here - the caravan has all our sales goods. Anne Yates is organising it and can be contacted at the Nature Reserve telephone number. If you have not tried this yet and want to know more please visit the caravan and talk to the volunteers or speak to Barry, Dominic or Anne.

In FOCUS

The binocular and telescope specialists In Focus will be at the Nature Reserve, near the Wader Pool on the following dates from 10am until 4pm. This is an ideal opportunity to compare equipment and decide which model is for you and get a trade in on your old equipment.
 Sunday 2nd June
 Tuesday, Wednesday 18-19th June
 Sunday 14th July
 Sunday 4th August
 Tuesday, Wednesday 20-21st August

Accommodation

Instant access to the Nature Reserve, with views. Special rates for Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. Very early breakfasts, or packed if required. Central heating throughout, open log fires and antique furniture. ETB commended/listed. Tel: 01797 222088

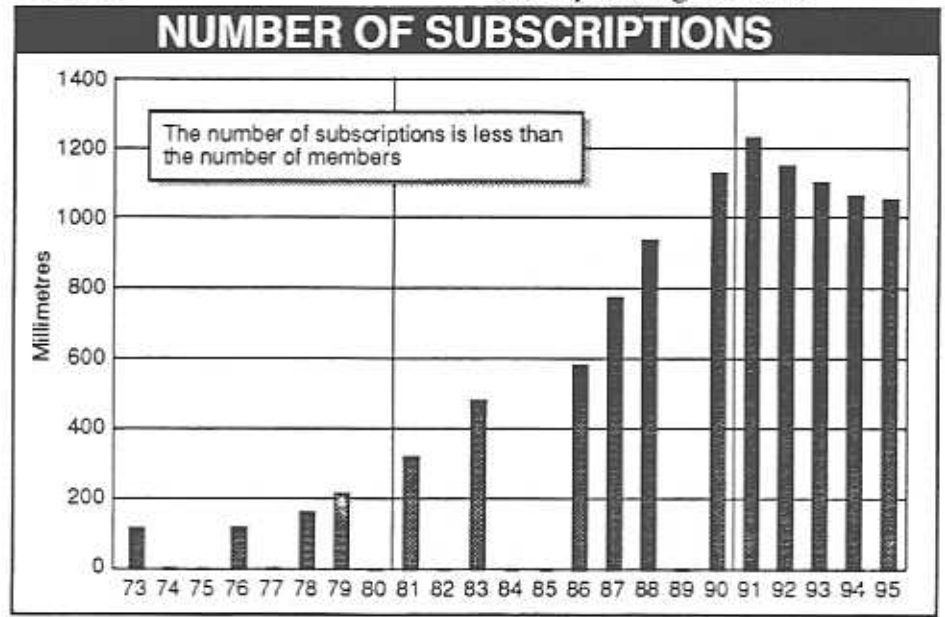
No.1 Watch Cottage is available for holiday lets from Easter until the end of October. A few weeks are still available. Sleeps 6. For details telephone Mrs June Underwood on 01797 230340, or write to Mill House, Mill Lane, Peasmarsh, Rye East Sussex. TN31 6XA.

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Apart from the wildlife, the Nature Reserve is very special because of the tremendous support given by the Friends. The graph shows how numbers rapidly increased through the 1980s, but have slowly started to decline through the 1990s. The support given to the Nature Reserve has been vital in protecting the wildlife interest and providing facilities for the staff and visitors. The latest project has been the acquisition of a 4 wheel drive motorbike, or ATV (All Terrain Vehicle) to give the wardens more flexibility when going about their work. The ATV purchase by the Nature Reserve Management Committee was only possible with grant aid from English Nature and the Friends. Subscriptions have been slowly declining during the last few years

(see graph). Please make sure you continue to support the Friends so we can continue to support the management of the Nature Reserve.

Renewals are due on 1st May (£5 minimum). Please renew by using the form at the bottom of the page - if you have paid or pay by Bankers Order please ignore this.



SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL FORM

Subscription renewal for the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve for the period 1st May 1996 until 30th April 1997

Name:

Address:

**PLEASE USE
BLOCK CAPITALS**

Telephone No:

Cash/Cheque enclosed for: £

Please return this form to:

Membership Secretary, Broadwater, The Ridge, Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex, TN36 4LU

Dates for Your Diary - 1996

Please remember that the **first and third Tuesday** of every month is a **workparty** day. Meet at the 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.

Monday 6th May



Plant and Produce Sale

Please bring or buy your plants, produce, cakes, books or bric'a'brac here to raise funds for the Nature Reserve.

At Winchelsea Beach Community Centre (next to the garage) 9-12 am

Saturday 11th May

Will we see 50, 60, 70 or 80 bird species along the maritime heritage trail? 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 county-wide event, organised by the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Sussex Moth Group.

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

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

Flowers of the Castle Water Circular Walk

With a chance to go inside Camber Castle

Meet at the Brede Lock car park (TQ920198) at 9am, returning about midday.

Wednesday 28th August

Waders and other migrants at Pett Pools and Rye Harbour

Meet at 9am at Pett Pools (TQ9014) or at 10am at Dog's Hill Road toilet block (TQ917160) for a circular walk around the Reserve, returning about 1pm.

Saturday 21st September

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At Winchelsea Beach Community Centre (next to the garage) 7.30pm.

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 9am, returning about 2pm.

Sunday 17th November

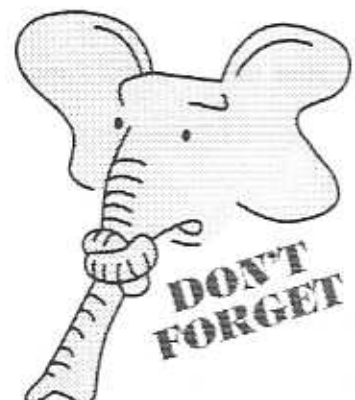


Winter Ducks at Ternery Pool

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

**SUBSCRIPTIONS
ARE NOW DUE!**

See reverse





FRIENDS OF RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE

QUESTIONNAIRE

The Committee of the Friends would appreciate the views of the members for use when planning for the future.

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire.

1 VISITING THE RESERVE.

1a How many days did you visit the Nature Reserve last year?

1b In which months did you visit?

2 TRAVEL

2a How many miles do you travel to get to the Nature Reserve?

2b What means of transport do you use to get there?

3 ACCOMMODATION

3a Did you stay overnight in the Rye area last year?

3b If so, what type of accommodation did you use?

3c Which town/village was it in or near?

3d How long did you stay?

4 REFRESHMENTS

How do you currently obtain refreshments when visiting the Nature Reserve?
Please tick all that apply to you.

Buy from local shops ... Public House ...

Bring your own ... Cafe ...

Other, please state

5 INFORMATION

5a Do you visit the Information Centre at Rye Harbour car park

5b If so, what information do you find most useful there?.....

.....
.....

5c If a larger Visitor Centre were to be built at Rye Harbour what information and features would you like it to contain? Please tick.

Display boards ... Toilets ...

Display models ... Shop ...

Computer displays ... Simple food/drink ...

Displays to touch ... Cafe ...

Introductory film ... Other, please state

5d Would you agree to some of the Friend's funds used to build and furnish a new Visitor Centre?

5e Would you agree if it were to be a joint venture with other organisations in Rye Harbour?

5f Would you be prepared to give some voluntary time to selling goods and giving information in a Visitor Centre?

5g If so, how much would you be able to give?

6 ACTIVITIES

What activities do you undertake on your visits to the Nature Reserve?
Please tick.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|--------------|-----|
| Birdwatching | ... | Exercise Dog | ... |
| Other Nature Study | ... | Picnic | ... |
| Walking | ... | Swimming | ... |
| Cycling | ... | | |
| Other, please state | | | |

7 NEWSLETTER

7a What would you like to see in the Newsletter?.....

.....

.....

.....

8 SALES GOODS

8a Have you bought any of the Nature Reserve sales goods? ...
8b If you have any comments on the sales goods, please state;

.....

.....

9 DIARY DATES

9a Do you attend any of the following? Please tick.

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-------------|-----|
| Work parties | ... | Friends AGM | ... |
| Guided walks | ... | Tern Watch | ... |
| Other Friends Events | ... | | |

9b If you have any comments on these activities, please state;

.....

.....

.....

10 FUNDS

Please rank the following in your order of priority for spending the Friend's funds (1 = highest priority).

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|------------------------------|-----|
| Land Purchase | ... | Improving Newsletter | ... |
| Wildlife Projects | ... | Improving Annual Report | ... |
| Promoting the Reserve | ... | Improving Visitor Facilities | ... |
| Other, please state | | | |

11 COMMENTS

Do you have any other comments?

11a About the Nature Reserve

.....

.....

11b About the Friends

.....

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Please send your replies to: Secretary of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, Oakhurst, Whatlington Road, BATTLE, East Sussex, TN33 0JN by 30th June 1996.