

FRIENDS OF RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE

NEWSLETTER SPRING 1980

Since our last newsletter, many of you will have attended the public slide illustrated lectures which we held on 24th November 1979, under the title WILDLIFE OF RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE. Mrs. Breda Burt showed the wide variety of plants that can be seen at different times of the year on the Reserve, and briefly explained how they are able to survive in such a seemingly harsh environment. Richard Knight went on to illustrate some of the warden's tasks and management techniques which have to be carried out during the year. He also described how some of the methods used to protect the breeding Terns on the Reserve are the most advanced and most successful in Britain, and numbers are now beginning to build up. In fact several other reserves have expressed their interest in this pioneering work, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Other aspects of the Reserve were shown by your Chairman, including close views of some of the many migrants that pass through the area, as well as a few of the resident animals. Some aerial sequences also helped to illustrate the pattern of shingle ridges and full extent of the Ternery Pool, features which are not so easily appreciated from ground level. Over 240 people attended this event, which created a profit for the Reserve as well as good publicity to the audience and local press. The Committee take this opportunity to thank all those members and friends who helped to make this event a success, especially Mr. J.A. Judge of the Apothecary's Shop in High Street, Rye, who sponsored the hire of the hall, and the Rye Women's Institute who arranged the refreshments. We are hoping to repeat this programme again in the future, possibly at Bexhill or in Kent, to raise more funds and publicity and especially support from local councillors.

Another date for your diary will be Saturday 30th August 1980, when the "Friends" will be presenting a programme of RSPB films in the Main Hall of the Thomas Peacocke UPPER School. Once again, the objects being publicity and funds for the Reserve. Further details will be announced later.

Please note that the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Saturday 10th May 1980, in the Main Hall of the Thomas Peacocke LOWER School, Ferry Road, Rye (behind the Queen Adelaide public house). After the main business of the evening, election of a Committee for 1980/1 and Richard Knight's up-to-date report of recent happenings on the Reserve, there will be an illustrated lecture by Tony Marr entitled SUSSEX BIRDS. Tony is a very keen experienced birdwatcher and raconteur; he is also well known in ornithological circles, having been President of the Sussex Ornithological Society; on the Committee of the RSPB; is currently on the Management Committee and Chairman of the Management Sub-Committee of the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve; and has recently returned from a birdwatching trip to Thailand of which he says "there were so many species new to me that I didn't know where to look next". We hope to see as many members at this meeting as possible and do please bring a few friends as well, who might like to join and so support the Reserve, because we do need as much help as we can get for the future.

Ian Rumley-Dawson
Chairman.

Dear Friends,

The exceptionally mild weather encouraged many birds to sing much earlier than last year and in the hedgerows buds were noted bursting in January.

On the Reserve ringed plovers were marking out territories in early February and by the month's end several pairs of oystercatchers had broken away from their winter flocks. The mild conditions resulted in the absence of any twite on the river saltings and a scarcity of other winter visitors, such as snow buntings, short eared owls and hen harriers, which during colder winters can be seen quite regularly.


At the time of writing the first Summer migrant birds have yet to arrive, but the earliest wheatears, swallows and sand martins are expected any day. Following a mild winter and the early dispersal of wintering birds, one expects an earlier return of our summer birds.

Plans and improvements are being made in readiness for the coming summer. Work parties will again be held at Easter and also at the other end of the Summer on Saturday 20th September and Sunday 5th October. Do come along, just give me a ring beforehand for details (Rye 3862). From mid-May voluntary wardens will be sought as usual to help in the important work of watching the nests and chicks of the Reserve's vulnerable ground nesting birds in order to protect them from egg collectors and any unwitting damage that may be caused by holiday-makers. This simple and rewarding task requires approximately 100 volunteers, so if you can spare 3-4 hours or more between mid-May and late July, please 'phone Rye 3862 for details.

The work that has progressed steadily in recent years to study, protect and encourage the Reserve's ground nesting shore birds has attracted the attention of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. In Britain the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve is heading the field in this type of work. All has been made possible through your support, both financially and physically.

With your continued support the coming season promises to bring further success for us all to enjoy.

Yours sincerely,


Warden,

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

March 1980