



NEWSLETTER

The Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

c/o. 1 Coastguard Cottages, Rye Harbour, Rye, East Sussex,
TN31 7TS.
Telephone: Rye 3862

A registered charity founded in 1973 to aid in the establishment and maintenance of a nature reserve within the Rye Harbour site of special scientific interest, (known as an SSSI).

Chairman: Ian Rumley-Dawson. Secretary: Clifford Percival. Treasurer: Mr. Pat Bonham.
Committee: Miss Evelyn Stewart, Aubrey Sinden, Bob Greenhalf, Peter Greenhalf.
Warden: Richard Knight. Assistant Warden: Miss Pam Haddon.

WINTER - SPRING 1981

WARDEN'S REPORT.

Another fairly mild winter resulted in winter visiting birds being rather few and far between, with Twite and Snow Bunting being rare and Hen Harriers completely absent. Short-eared Owls however, increased to 5 in February and a most unusual bonus in the form of a rather disorientated Sandwich Tern in January and February. Previous winter records of this species in Sussex can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Sandwich Terns normally winter along the coast of West Africa, then return to Britain to breed, arriving here from mid March onwards and usually departing again in September.

In March and April this year, the first of the Spring migrants had already arrived, with both Wheatears and Black Redstarts from 14th March, and in other parts of Sussex, Chiffchaffs had also been seen and heard. It has now been established that some of this latter species will over-winter in Southern Britain.

More improvements have been made to the Reserve during the winter months, including some major works at the Ternary Pool by dragline and bulldozer, to cut off a large shingle spit to form a huge new island, thus creating another safe site for breeding and roosting birds. Also a further 48 acres of the shingle beach have been enclosed with electric fencing to exclude predation by foxes from some of the valuable shorebird nesting habitat. This fencing has proved to be a very successful technique, especially as far as the Little Terns are concerned. A completely new experimental project has been started on the Reserve, towards the end of 1980, with the establishment of two shallow muddy pools in a part of the Beach Reserve near the river. This scheme involves the use of a windwheel and water pump which will raise water from the water table and maintain a precise water level in these muddy pools. These types of shallow water feeding areas which are suitable for many wading birds are scarce locally, and it is hoped that this project will encourage species such as Avocets and Godwits to linger longer on the Reserve.

Some members may have noticed in the spring edition of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds magazine BIRDS, the mention of a special symposium on the subject of Little Terns, which was organised by the RSPB last November. This event followed our previous discussions with representatives of the RSPB about the need for greater national liaison on the protection of this vulnerable species. Naturally Pam Haddon and I participated at this symposium which was a great success. Wardens attended from a number of other reserves throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Specialised techniques such as the ones that we have adopted on the Rye Harbour Reserve have become essential in order to help the survival of birds like the Little Tern, and we have proved that these birds certainly will take advantage of this help, which is why the successful number of breeding pairs has been steadily building up in recent years on the Reserve. Much of this success has of course also been attributable to the valuable assistance given by members of the Friends and other helpers, for which many thanks.

R.K.

WORKING PARTIES.

These will be held on Sunday 6th September 1981, and Saturday 10th October 1981. Please meet in the Martello carpark at Rye Harbour at 10 am. or later on the Reserve at the Ternary Pool. Finish at about 4 pm.. Bring lunch, gloves, rubber boots or tough shoes, suitable outdoor clothing, and just in case there are any interesting species about, also bring binoculars as well. There will be all sorts of tasks to be done, large and small, so please do not feel that they may be beyond your capabilities - for every extra pair of hands makes the jobs so much easier and of course also helps in the important upkeep of the Reserve.

R.K.

REPORTS & INFORMATION.

Please remember that we are always interested to hear about your observations and/or suggestions for possible inclusion into this Newsletter. These should be sent to the address shown in the heading above. If you require a reply, then please enclose a foolscap sized envelope and appropriate stamp and your address.

GUIDED WALKS.

In order to show members of the Friends some of the features of the Reserve, including a few of the latest developments, as well as to point out some of the species of animals and plants, we have arranged four special guided walks which will be led by the Warden and/or his assistants. These will be held on Sunday 10th May 1981, Sunday 5th July 1981, Sunday 13th September 1981, and Sunday 10th January 1982. Each of these walks will start at 2.30 pm. from the Information Centre in the Martello carpark at Eye Harbour. The pace of the walks will be deliberately slow in order to observe species on the way. The walks will finish back at the Information Centre at about 4 pm.. Please note that no dogs will be allowed to accompany these walks. Also please note that the walks will be restricted to current members of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve only. It is recommended that each participant brings a pair of binoculars.

I.R-D.

TERN WATCH.

Once again we are calling for voluntary assistance to help protect the nesting birds on the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve from mid May to late July. Unfortunately illegal egg collectors and trespass into the nesting areas is an ever present problem. A constant watch is therefore necessary and has proved in recent years to be one of the most important requirements for some of the vulnerable species. If you can spare just three hours during this period, then your help would be much appreciated. A car although not essential is an advantage. You need not be a bird expert or particularly energetic. If you would like to help and if you know of any other responsible people who could also assist, then please contact the Assistant Warden at the address shown in the heading of this Newsletter.

P.H.

PUBLICATIONS.

The Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Management Committee issue the following publications which are available from the Warden at the address shown in the heading of this Newsletter. Please enclose an appropriately stamped self addressed envelope with your request. Cheques/postal orders in respect of these items should be made payable to "Rye Harbour Nature Reserve".

Item:	Price:	Postage:	Envelope Size:	
Annual Report (of previous year)	50p	19p	12in x 9in.	
Annual Bird List (annotated)	25p	11p	12in x 9in.	(or one copy of each ordered at same time = total postage 24p)
Botany List	20p	11p	12in x 9in.	

Some back copies of the Annual Report for past years are still available on request.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE FRIENDS.

As you all know, we have been making a special drive to try and increase the membership of the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve in recent years, and it may be of interest to note that in June 1979 the total number of paid-up members was 219. This figure now stands at 320 as at April 1981, which is a very encouraging increase and really does indicate the tremendous amount of interest that is generated by the Reserve for pleasure, education and scientific study. Suffice it to say that we now probably have the largest membership of any local society in the whole of the Rye area. This also proves to be an important indication of the increasing number of people who are sufficiently interested in wildlife to want to give it their full support and protection. In fact in a recently published survey covering the rest of the Country, it was reported that there are now many more people in Britain who are interested in wildlife than there are interested in football! So maybe this is just as well with the increasing number of threats against the survival of animals and plants in the countryside, and the gradual erosion of their natural habitats. Perhaps the National and local press as well as television and radio should be devoting more time and space to the reporting of these problems facing wildlife (relegation, transfers and destruction of habitats), rather than the one minute wonders of the sports pages. After all, what man does to the countryside today may affect wildlife for the next one hundred years, whereas by that time who will recall the so called champions of today's matches? Now is the time to play your part in trying to recruit even more members to support the Friends. As you will have read elsewhere in this Newsletter, we still have many more projects and new ideas to improve the Reserve, and we can only do this with the full co-operation of members. Therefore if you can spend some time in trying to recruit one or two more new members on the form below, then the Reserve and especially the wildlife will be most grateful.

I.R-D.

Please complete this form and return it together with your subscription to the Friends of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, 1 Coastguard Cottages, Rye Harbour, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 7TS.

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE Title: Initials: Surname:

Address:

I enclose Cheque/Postal Order/Cash value Signature: