

Folkestone & Hythe birding and moths

Minor sites

Church Hougham

The churchyard (Grid ref: TR 279399) and surrounding fields are worth checking in spring and autumn.

Often birds which arrive on the coast at Abbotscliffe filter inland and are held here by the more substantial habitat, so late morning or afternoon can be productive.

The area is crossed by a number of footpaths and minor roads, and any field, hedge or patch of bushes can hold birds.

The site has produced two firsts for Kent - Blue-cheeked Bee-eater and Isabelline Wheatear (which was first found at Abbotscliffe in the morning and then settled here for the rest of the day) - and other rarities have included a Pied or Black-eared Wheatear, Woodchat Shrike, Rough-legged Buzzard, Dotterel, Richard's Pipits, Golden Oriole, Yellow-browed Warbler, and Serin.

More regular species include Ring Ouzel and Firecrest, and Wheatears, Whinchats and Yellow Wagtails are often present in number. The fields can hold large numbers (200+) of roosting Mediterranean Gulls, and breeding birds have included Little Owl and Black Redstart (the latter within the complex around the tall mast).



Isabelline Wheatear - Church Hougham - October 1996



Looking east along the Hougham Valley

Capel-le-Ferne park and fields

The village park (Grid ref: TR 251388) and adjacent 'Green Lane' can hold migrants - e.g. Pallas's Warbler, Wood Warbler, Pied Flycatcher and common migrants. Again this is often a site worth checking in the late morning or afternoon, once migrants have filtered in from the coast.

The fields inland are crossed by a number of footpaths are worth checking for migrants (e.g. Wheatear, Whinchat), wintering and passage finches (e.g. Brambling), and wintering plovers (Lapwing and Golden Plover). Corn Bunting and Yellow Wagtail breed. The area has yet to produce a rarity but it must surely only be a matter of time.

Horn Street valley

The small lake in the Horn Street valley (Grid ref: TR 188355) has produced Garganey, and Water Rail and Kingfisher are regular, though it may become too silted up in time. Nightingales can sometimes be heard in the valley in spring/summer.

The woods in the valley (e.g. Paraker and Casebourne Woods) hold the usual woodland species (e.g. Tawny Owl, Siskin, Marsh Tit, Treecreeper), plus Hobby in summer, and Woodcock and Jack Snipe are possible in winter.