

**Rex
HANCY**

IN THE COUNTRYSIDE



Taverham, December 28

**Book is a
fascinating
guide to
our coast**

My recent meanderings through North Norfolk have been enormously pleasurable and I have discovered innumerable aspects of our richly varied coast I have never seen before.

All this has been from my armchair – by courtesy of David North and Martin Hayward Smith. Their book, *Elements of the North Norfolk Coast*, has it all encapsulated in a package small enough for convenience yet large enough for Martin's photographs to do themselves justice.

Add David's mini-essays accompanying the pictures to the mix and you have an irresistible record which can be studied as a means to understanding this part of Norfolk or dipped into for pure enjoyment.

David has an individual approach to his subject matter. His *Natural and Unnatural History of Birds* sits near to hand on my 'books for pleasure' shelf. Amidst the plethora of guides and handbooks on birds here and abroad I deemed it a refreshingly different newcomer in 1993.

I met David soon after he came to Pensthorpe Waterfowl Trust where he worked to promote the study of the indigenous wildlife as well as the wildfowl on the lakes. I have always been astonished at his ability to name a tiny bird quite out of sight by a snatch of its vocal efforts. Thousands of visitors there and on National Trust properties and RSPB reserves have enjoyed the walks he has led, usually early morning.

My path has never crossed that of Martin but I have followed his photographic career with great interest. I first saw his work when he produced some fine studies, again at Pensthorpe. Not so long afterwards he was out and about with a film camera and his name began to appear on the credits for renowned TV natural history series.

Fortunately for us, Martin has an exceptional head for heights. Many of the photographs in this book were taken from way above familiar landscapes, giving us an entirely different and unexpected viewpoint. His view of Hunstanton shows the coloured cliffs, a vehicle-packed prom, neat lawns and tall regimental buildings standing like platoons of guards. The groynes on the beach reflect the severe geometrical look. The sea has withdrawn and laps gently on the beach yet I feel there is a latent menace waiting to lash itself into a fury to smash itself into the cliffs and hard defences.

Mud flats and stretches of sandy shore elsewhere show the sculptural effect and patterns created by advancing and retreating tides. Birds and flowers, fields and lanes are pictured in plenty. This book is a splendid reminder of what is special about our coast.

WHERE TO JOIN

- Norfolk Wildlife Trust: 01603 625540
- Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society: 01953 604791
- RSPB (East Anglia): 01603 661662
- British Trust For Ornithology: 01842 750050

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