

April

Friday 5th April

Moths home and away - Andy & Melissa Banthorpe

Andy & Melissa are the moth recorders for Bedfordshire. Their talk covers some of the moths in our area and how to find them, as well as some special species to be found in North Wales.

Sunday 14 April

Coach trip to **RSPB Pagham Harbour**
(Joint trip with RSPB Stevenage LG).

This exceptional Sussex coastal reserve is a residence or re-fuelling stop for many species of returning summer visitors that arrive during April. Letchworth: 7.30am. Hitchin: 7.45am. Stevenage: 7.55am. **Leader: Helen Lumley**

May

Friday 3rd May

The Search for the Bengal Tiger - Martin Johnson

Martin will be describing how he fulfilled a life-long ambition to visit 'Jungle Book' country and see big, stripy cats (and much more) in the wild.

Sunday 19 May

Coach Trip to **Frensham Common and Ponds**

The beautiful heathland, lakes & woodland of this area of Surrey host some special birds, including woodlark, redstart, tree pipit and Dartford warbler. Letchworth: 7.30am. Hitchin: 7.45am. Stevenage: 7.55am. **Leader: Martin Johnson**

June

Sunday 16 June

Coach Trip to **RSPB Minsmere**

(Joint trip with RSPB Stevenage LG).

Around 100 species of bird nest in Minsmere's amazing variety of habitats and we'll be looking for these and all the other wonderful wildlife that the RSPB's flagship reserve hosts. Stevenage: 7.05am. Hitchin: 7.15am. Letchworth: 7.30am. Royston: 7.50am **Leader: Martin Johnson**

**Come and meet friendly,
likeminded people at Hitchin and
Letchworth RSPB Local Group,
while learning more about wildlife.**

Annual Subscription £14 (£7 juniors) covers all indoor meetings, **Visitors** £3 per indoor meeting.

Indoor Meetings held at 'The Settlement' Nevells Road, Letchworth SG6 4UB, at 7.30pm.

Outdoor Meetings by coach £15 per adult (£7.50 for juniors). This fee could change should hire charges increase. **All Bookings & Payments to:** Malcom Ingram, 5 Redhill Road, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 2NQ. **Tel:** 01462 451320

Coach Pick-up Points

Hitchin – St Mary's Square; **Letchworth** – Bus stop by Library Broadway Garden; **Baldock** -by prior arrangement; ***Royston** – Newmarket Road; ***Stevenage** – Waitrose's car park, Primett Road. (* only where specified in the programme)

Summer Meetings: evening own transport trips, details available by end April on web site

Leader & Outdoor Meetings Secretary: Martin Johnson Tel. 01763 249459

Treasurer: Malcolm Ingram Tel. 01462 451320

Indoor Meetings Secretary: Kathy Blackmore Tel. 01426 646371

Other Committee Members: Colin Hawkins (01462 676457), Helen Lumley (01438 315683), Janet Southwood (01462 491617), Sue Rogers (01462 483168)

For more information, please visit:

rspb.org.uk/groups/hitchinandletchworth

Cover image: Yellowhammer by Tom Marshall (RSPB images)
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giving
nature
a home



Hitchin & Letchworth Local Group

Programme of events 2018/19

August 2018

Sunday 26 August

Own transport trip to **Rutland Water**.

We start the season by visiting an excellent reserve with numerous hides, birds (including ospreys), butterflies and dragonflies. Permits £5.70/£4.50. Meet at Egleton car park (O/S 141, SK 880 072) at 9.30am. **Leader: Martin Johnson**

September

Friday 7th September

Colorado: the Chicken Run - Stuart Elsom

Stu takes us across the state of Colorado from knee-deep snow to barren dust-bowls, on his quest to see all the species of grouse or prairie chicken at their rather entertaining communal courtship 'leks'.

Sunday 16 September

Coach trip to **Cley** (Norfolk Wildlife Trust).

Norfolk WT's flagship reserve offers fantastic opportunities to see reed bed birds, such as bittern and bearded tit, as well as passage and departing migrants. Permits £4.50 (£5.00 with Gift Aid). Hitchin: 7.30am. Letchworth: 7.45am. Royston: 8.05am. **Leader: Helen Lumley**

October

Friday 5th October

Prickly but sweet and Ratty too! - Paul Wyer

Paul works for the Wildlife Trust BCN and has a passion for hogs! His talk includes basic hedgehog and water vole ecology, with information on how we can help these endearing but declining small mammals.

Sunday 21 October

Coach trip to **RSPB Dungeness and Dungeness Village** (Joint trip with RSPB Stevenage LG).

The unique shingle landscape of the RSPB's oldest reserve should provide some exciting bird watching during a period of migrant passage. Letchworth: 7.30am. Hitchin: 7.45am. Stevenage: 7.55am. **Leader: Martin Johnson**

November

Friday 2nd November

Cuckoo, cheating by nature – Prof Nick Davies

The sight of a little warbler or pipit feeding an enormous cuckoo chick has astonished human observers for centuries. Field observations and experiments reveal a continuing evolutionary arms race between host defences and cuckoo trickery.

Sunday 18 November

Coach trip to **RSPB Old Moor**

(Joint trip with RSPB Stevenage LG).

We make a return visit to this attractive South Yorkshire reserve, located just off the A1, with its wide range of habitats, hides and (of course) birds. Stevenage: 7.05am. Hitchin: 7.15am. Letchworth: 7.30am. **Leader: Malcolm Ingram**

December

Friday 7th December

Gulls: what a Load of Rubbish - Paul Roper

Gulls are prolific migrants and face fascinating conservation challenges. Paul is an experienced bird ringer both in the UK and abroad and his talk covers the work of the North Thames Gull Group.

Sunday 9 December

Own transport visit to the **Lee Valley**, including **RSPB Rye Meads**.

We will work our way up the Lee Valley (*via* RSPB Rye Meads, finishing at Amwell), looking in particular for wintering reed bed and wetland birds such as bittern and smew. Meet at Fishers Green car park (O/S 166, TL 375 025) at 9.30am.

Leader: Martin Johnson

January 2019

Friday 4th January

Hen Harriers, the Inglorious 12th - Dr Mark Avery

Mark will update us on his campaign to ban driven grouse shooting and the ecological and economic effects it brings to the countryside.

Sunday 20 January

Coach trip to **Lackford Lakes SWT** (am: £2.00 Donation) and **Lynford Arboretum**.

We visit two Breckland reserves, with Lackford providing a good variety of water birds and Lynford hosting woodland birds including hawfinch. Hitchin: 7.45am. Letchworth: 8.00am. Royston: 8.20am. **Leader: Martin Johnson**

February

Friday 1st February

Birds: their hidden world - Peter Holden MBE

This talk looks at British birds and their amazing lives, the sort of information that most 'bird books' leave out! Peter worked for the RSPB for over 40 years and we are delighted to welcome him back to Letchworth.

Sunday 17 February

Coach trip to **Abberton Reservoir EWT** (am: £2.00 Donation) and **Tollesbury**.

Spending the morning at Abberton (jack snipe seen on our last visit) we continue to Tollesbury on the Blackwater estuary, looking for raptors, waders and water birds.

Letchworth: 7.45am. Hitchin: 8.00am.

Stevenage: 8.10am. **Leader: Malcolm Ingram**

March

Friday 1st March

RSPB Saving Nature in a Changing World - Martin Harper

Martin Harper is the RSPB Conservation Director and leads the charity's strategy on conservation research, land management, advice and advocacy.

Sunday 17 March

Coach trip to **RSPB Frampton Marsh** (Joint trip with RSPB Stevenage LG).

Frampton has developed into an excellent all-round reserve with a wide variety of birds, including raptors such as merlin and hen harrier. Stevenage: 7.50am. Hitchin: 8.00am. Letchworth: 8.15am. **Leader: Malcolm Ingram**