

August 2023

■ Saturday 26 August

Own transport trip to **Paxton Pits NR**. We visit the flooded gravel pits & river at Little Paxton looking for Otter, wildfowl & woodland birds – Kingfisher, early migrants including Osprey, rarer terns and gulls possible. Meet by Visitor Centre (PE19 6ET) at 10am, free. **Leader: Jane Havercroft**

September

■ Friday 1 September

Local Group 50th Birthday Celebration

We will celebrate our 50th birthday with cakes, reminiscences & a fun 'Bird Brain of Letchworth' team quiz. Bring your own images (on USB) of wildlife seen recently &/or on one of our trips.

■ Sunday 17 September

Coach trip to **Cley & Salthouse Marshes NWT**. Fantastic opportunity to see waders & reedbed birds such as Bittern, Bearded Tit, & Marsh Harrier, & passage and departing migrants. £5, NWT members free. Hitchin: 7.30am. Letchworth: 7.45am. Royston: 8.05am. **Leader: Tony Gammage**

October

■ Friday 6 October

Wild Britain – Tom Mason

Tom is one of our best young professional wildlife photographers. In this talk he focuses on his work in the UK, from sea birds to Foxes.

■ Sunday 22 October

Coach trip to **RSPB Dungeness then Dungeness Beach** (with Stevenage LG). The reserve & beach by the Bird Observatory provide exciting birdwatching as hirundines, waders & passerines stop to feed before migration. Redstart, Whinchat, & Wheatear possible, some sea watching. Hitchin: 7.30am. Letchworth: 7.45am. Stevenage: 8.00am. **Leader: Martin Johnson**

November

■ Friday 3 November

The Falklands, South Georgia & Antarctica – Richard Bashford

Richard dons his 'Naturetrek' leader's hat to relate the incredible wildlife experience of a cruise to the Antarctic peninsula via the Falklands Islands & South Georgia – the latter one of the most beautiful places on earth.

■ Sunday 19 November

Coach trip to **RSPB Frampton March** (with Stevenage LG). By the Lincolnshire Wash, we will look for waders, Brent Geese & rare wintering raptors including Short-eared Owl, Merlin & Hen Harrier. Stevenage: 7.45am. Hitchin: 8.00am. Letchworth: 8.15am. **Leader: Michael Hooper**

December

■ Friday 1 December

In the Steps of the Vikings – Peter Holden

MBE. The Faroes, Iceland, Greenland & Canada – some of the places reached by the Vikings. Peter follows them seeking Viking settlements & the special birds of the N Atlantic.

■ Sunday 10 December

Own transport trip to **Marston Vale CP (am), & Stewartby Lake (pm)**. We will look for wetland & woodland birds, including rarer ducks and gulls. MVCP £2.50 / £1.75 concessions, parking £3. Meet at 10am or 2pm by Visitor Centre (MK43 0PR). **Leader: Martin Johnson**

January 2024

■ Friday 5 January

Gardening for Insects & Other Wildlife – Nick Bowles

Nick will enlighten us on how we can turn our gardens into a haven for wildlife with particular emphasis on insects such as butterflies.

■ Saturday 20 January

Own transport trip to **Kingfishers Bridge (am) & Wicken (NT) / Burwell Fen (pm)**.

Kingfishers Bridge attracts a wide range of wildfowl, waders & farmland birds – meet at Visitor Centre 9.30am CB7 5XL, parking £5. Wicken / Burwell Fens are good for owls. Meet 1.15pm Wicken Visitor Centre, parking £3.20, NT members free, Option to stay for harrier roost at dusk (£8.50 non NT members). **Leader: Jane Havercroft**

February

■ Friday 2 February

Farming for Nature, Climate & for the Future – Georgina Bray

Georgie is Farm Manager at Hope Farm, owned by the RSPB. She will tell us how the farm has developed since its purchase in 2000 & its role in showing the difference that nature-friendly farming can make for wildlife & the environment.

■ Sunday 18 February

Coach trip to **Brandon Marsh (Warwicks WT)**. (with Stevenage LG). This Midlands reserve has a mix of lakes, reedbeds, woodland & grassland. Water Vole & Otter possible. £3.50 / £2.50 concessions, ANY Wildlife Trust member free, bring proof. Stevenage: 7.30am. Hitchin: 7.45am. Letchworth: 8.00am. **Leader: Malcolm Ingram**

March

■ Friday 1 March

Godwits, Cranes & Turtle Doves: the RSPB's work in the Fens Priority Landscape – Bethany Kiamil & Daniel Pullan

Bethany & Daniel, from our Cambridgeshire area team, talk about the RSPB's work to bring more nature back to the Fens.

■ Sunday 17 March

Coach trip to **Sculthorpe Moor NR (am)** (£7 donation for non-members of H&O Trust) & **(pm) Sandringham CP** A morning in a mix of habitats, Otter & Beaver on site, then mixed woodland around Sandringham House (free). Good chance of Crossbill, Siskin & Redpoll. Hitchin: 7:30am. Letchworth: 7.45am Royston: 8.05am. **Leader: Malcolm Ingram**

April

■ Friday 5 April

Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa – Richard Pople
Richard takes us from the Rift Valley to the Bale Mountains in this remarkable country in search of endemic & other birds, and the endangered Ethiopian Wolf

■ Sunday 28 April

Coach trip to **Fingringhoe Wick EWT** (with Stevenage LG). This Essex reserve has scrub, woodland, heathland & estuary. Basking Adder possible, Nightingale likely. £3 donation, EWT members free. Hitchin: 7.30am. Letchworth: 7.45am. Stevenage: 8.00am. **Leader: Martin Johnson**

May

■ Friday 3 May

Winter in Japan – Martin Johnson

Join Martin as he freezes in icy Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, looking for its special wildlife including Red-crowned Cranes & Steller's Eagles. Preceded by short AGM.

■ Sunday 19 May

Coach Trip to **RSPB Minsmere** (with Stevenage LG). We hope to see 100 species at this flagship Suffolk coast reserve: Avocet, Marsh Harrier, Bearded Tit, & Bittern possible. Stevenage: 7.15am. Hitchin: 7.30am. Letchworth: 7.45am. Royston: 8.05am. **Leader: Tony Gammage**

June

■ Sunday 9 June

Coach Trip to **Hicking Broad NWT** (with Stevenage LG). This stunning Norfolk reserve has Common Crane, Bittern, Hobby & Bearded Tit. June is best for Swallowtail Butterfly & Norfolk Hawker. £4.50, NWT members free, optional boat trip (extra cost) Stevenage: 7.15am Hitchin: 7.30am. Letchworth: 7.45am, Royston 8.05am. **Leader: Jane Havercroft**

Come & meet friendly, like-minded people at our Local Group, & learn more about wildlife.

Local Group Annual Subscription: £17 Adults, £8.50 juniors, covers all indoor meetings. **Visitors** £4 per meeting.

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

Outdoor Meetings: By coach £30 per adult. **All Bookings & Payments to:** Malcolm 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** – Car park, Primett Road. (*only where specified in the programme)

Spring Walks: own transport trips, often local, details available in March on our website, Facebook and by email.

Officers & Committee:

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

Treasurer: Malcolm Ingram Tel. 01462 451320

Membership Secretary: Penny Chatfield

Outdoor Meetings Secretaries: Jane Havercroft & Tony Gammage

Committee Members: Kathy Blackmore, John Dingemans, Helen Lumley

Follow us on Facebook:

[RSPB-Hitchin-and-Letchworth-Local-Group](https://www.facebook.com/RSPB-Hitchin-and-Letchworth-Local-Group)

See our website for more information:

<https://group.rspb.org.uk/hitchinandletchworth>

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The RSPB is a registered charity in England & Wales 207076, in Scotland SC037654.

Hitchin & Letchworth RSPB Local Group Programme 2023—2024

