

We hope you enjoy your copy of the *Hertfordshire Bird Report 2016* that comes with this newsletter. Warm thanks and congratulations go to **Clifford Smout**, the new editor, and his team of contributors – not least for maintaining the recent tradition that sees the journal published within 12 months of the year it is reporting on. Thanks also to **Jack Fearnside** for another beautifully designed publication.

2017 Autumn Meeting

More than 75 members attended the Autumn Meeting and AGM on Saturday 4 November in Hatfield. Themes that emerged from the presentations included the value of using grazing animals to restore and maintain sensitive habitats in nature reserves.

Roger Beecroft, Herd Manager of the Legacy Grazing Project, which supplies Red Poll cattle and Old English goats to reserves in Hertfordshire, described how their feeding habits help clear unwanted scrub vegetation while enabling orchids and rare plants to prosper.

Jenny Sherwen from HMWT also talked about the part grazing animals have played in reviving the ecological health of Thorley Wash reserve in east Hertfordshire. Restoration of the wetland meadow progressed so well that it was chosen as the relocation habitat in 2015 for 180 water voles displaced from marshland being flooded by seawater in Essex.

Sarah Scott, from the Environment Agency, summarised her research on the importance of rivers and canals to bats. Her studies found that Common and Soprano Pipistrelle Bats made particular use of these 'corridors', where their presence was an indicator of ecological health. Associated wet woodland was preferred by Daubenton's Bat and other *myotis* species.

This year's prestigious 1875 Award for an outstanding Hertfordshire naturalist went to county butterfly recorder **Andrew Wood**, author of our acclaimed book *Butterflies of Hertfordshire and Middlesex*. The award for an outstanding contribution to natural history in Hertfordshire was made posthumously to **Ted Fletcher**, long-time Secretary to the Herts Bird Club and Editor of the *Hertfordshire Bird Report*, who sadly died last year. We are, again, grateful to Alister Leggatt and Affinity Water for hosting the meeting.

Help create our new, digital archive

The Autumn Meeting also heard from HNHS management committee member **Ian Carle** about the

Society's plans to convert our 142-year old archive of *Transactions* into a searchable, online resource. The scanning and character recognition technology we will use for this is impressively accurate, but throws-up occasional misreadings that need to be checked by human eyes. Ian has designed bespoke PC (Windows) software that should make this a straightforward task. We would welcome more volunteers to offer a few hours of their time to complete a job that would otherwise, cost us thousands of pounds to complete. If interested in helping email **David Utting**: secretary@hnhs.org.



Bird Club conference 2018

Next year's Bird Club conference, jointly organised with the British Trust for Ornithology, is expected to take place in March. The date will be notified (electronically for members on email) as soon as we have confirmation. Watch out for full programme details on the Bird Club website: hnhs.org/herts-bird-club/home.

2018 membership renewals

From January it will be time to renew your membership of the Society and the Herts Bird Club. Subscription rates are unchanged for 2018

£18: individual membership plus *Hertfordshire Naturalist* and *Herts Bird Report*

£12: individual membership plus *Herts Bird Report*

£22: family membership plus *Hertfordshire Naturalist* and *Herts Bird Report*

You can pay by:

- Standing order or bank transfer: our Lloyds Bank account number is 02994402, sort code 30-94-08
- Credit/debit card using the Virgin Money Giving link our website www.hnhs.org
- Cheque - payable to 'Hertfordshire Natural History Society' and mailed to **Virginia Kennard**, HNHS Membership Secretary, 72 The Ryde, Hatfield, Herts. AL9 5DL

Gift aid will increase the value of your subscription to the Society by 25%, if you are a UK taxpayer. For more information you can email Virginia at membership@hnhs.org.

For more news about HNHS and the Bird Club, including recent wildlife records, events and recording opportunities be sure to visit, www.hnhs.org and www.hnhs.org/herts-bird-club/home