

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Malvern Group 2nd February 2017

Talk by Hannah Thomas – Engagement Officer of The Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

In 1912, when the concept of conservation was embryonic, Charles Rothschild set up the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves. The idea grew and over the country there are now 47 local Wildlife Trusts. In 1967 the Worcestershire Nature Conservation Trust was formed, which was later renamed the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. Nowadays the Trust owns or manages more than 75 nature reserves around the County; there are 24 staff at Lower Smite Farm (the Headquarters near Worcester) and over 350 volunteers, who do everything from clearing scrub to organising indoor meetings. There are 20,000 members including 2,000 children, many of whom enjoy the walks, talks and other activities organised by the Trust.

The nature reserves in Worcestershire include a variety of different habitats. There are grasslands where one can find orchids and other flowers, butterflies, birds and mammals. Hollybed Farm Meadows near Malvern are a good example; they are a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) purchased in 2012 containing the Coronation Meadow called Far Starling Bank. There are wetlands like Upton Warren, unusual because there is both saltwater and freshwater there, attracting species like avocet, bittern, kingfisher and otter. There are woodlands where a wide range of wildlife lives, including 11 species of bat at the Knapp and Papermill Reserve near Alfrick. Finally there are heathlands, for example The Devil's Spittleful where one might find reptiles like common lizards. The Trust is constantly working to maintain and improve the reserves, and also fund-raises to purchase new ones.

The next meeting of the Malvern Group is on Thursday March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7.30 pm, at the Lyttelton Rooms in Church Street. Nicholas Watts will talk about "Farming and Wildlife".

Alison Uren