

EDITORIAL

The late 1980s saw a growing awareness of the value of Thorne and Hatfield Moors as lowland raised mires of national and international significance, stimulated by publications such as *Thorne Moors : Birds and Men* (1986) and *The Insects of Thorne Moors* (1987). This was also reflected in a number of seminars and symposia. The first of these was a joint meeting of the Royal Entomological Society of London, the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union and the Doncaster Naturalists' Society, which was held at Doncaster Museum on 16th-17th May, 1987; its theme, *The Lowland Peatlands of England*. This covered the full range of peat-based habitats, including the Somerset Levels and the East Anglian Fens, as well as lowland raised mires, among which Thorne and Hatfield are pre-eminent. An account of the meeting was published by the Royal Entomological Society in its bulletin, *Antenna*.

Later in 1987, several long-term studies of the Moors' geology, landscape and botany were concluded, and were published as *Thorne Moors Papers* (1987). This was intended at the time as a single volume. However, the continued high level of interest in the two Moors has necessitated the production of a second volume, now entitled *Thorne and Hatfield Moors Papers*, volume II.

In 1988, the Nature Conservancy council published the proceedings of a two-day meeting in Doncaster, on *The ecology and conservation of cut-over raised mires* (Meade and Fojt, 1988). This conference took a national perspective, but Thorne and Hatfield Moors were central to it.

February, 1989 saw the launch of the Thorne & Hatfield Moors Conservation Forum, and in December, 1989 it held a one-day seminar and discussion meeting to review the wildlife and history of the two Moors, and to discuss ways of safeguarding them in the future. Several of the presentations at this meeting contained new and unpublished information about the Moors, or provided a succinct overview of crucial but complex issues. These papers form the body of this volume.

The history of human activity on the two Moors is well known, and has been thoroughly described in previous papers. However, the short review provided here highlights the important phases in the Moors' history, and for the first time relates this knowledge to the wildlife value of the sites. The paper on changes in the invertebrate fauna examines one aspect of this in detail. Rather than a mere catalogue of extinctions, it evaluates past impacts, and draws lessons for future management. Roger Key's paper on the invertebrates places the Moors in their national context, emphasising their vulnerability and the uncertainty of 'regeneration experiments'. The vertebrate fauna of the two Moors has been documented in detail over the past decade. Martin Limbert's paper summarises this wealth of historical and modern information, focusing particularly on the unique bird communities.

Earlier speculation over the effects of large scale peat milling introduced in the 1980s has now become a major concern of national conservation bodies as well as local naturalists. This led to extensive invertebrate and bird survey work in 1990, reviewed at a seminar in May 1991. This will provide the material for *Thorne and Hatfield Moors Papers* volume III.

REFERENCES

Limbert, M (ed) (1986) *Thorne Moors Papers*. Doncaster : Doncaster Naturalists' Society.

Limbert, M, Mitchell, R D and Rhodes, R j (1986) *Thorne Moors birds and men*. Doncaster : Doncaster & District Ornithological Society.

Meade, Rand Fojt, W (1988) *The ecology and conservation of cut-over raised mires*. Peterborough : Nature Conservancy Council.

Clifton Bain
Brian Eversham

May 1991