



Earley - Old English 'Earnley' = eagle wood

This year is the UN International Year of Forests, which seemed ironic timing when the future of English state-owned forests and woodlands looked precarious with their potential sell-off, p.6. Thankfully, people power triumphed and the outlook is now brighter, although it would be wise to be vigilant of any future plans. All public green spaces are priceless in our small, crowded island.

We aim to make Earley one of the tidiest in the Wokingham Borough area, so do your bit and sign up for the HELP! annual litter pick, p. 3. This is your chance to do something for the environment.

Most of us can't wait for spring, and the cheering sound of birdsong. Ray Reedman has again shared his bird knowledge with us, this time on warblers, p. 2, in advance of a dawn chorus walk later in the spring, p. 8. Another walk will throw light (or should it be sound?) on our local wildlife, when on May 25th bat expert Claire Andrews will lead a bat walk in the Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve, p.8. And a talk by Kit Brownlees on April 6th will reveal the fascinating story of Amber, p.8. Look forward to seeing you sometime in the spring.

Sheila Crowson Editor

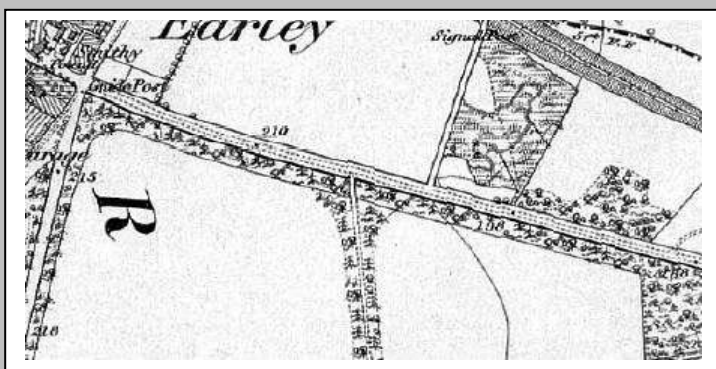
Items of special interest:

Get to know your Earley	Page 1		
Ray's Birds, The Warblers	2	Life on the Edge, Wild Orchids, Thank You, Barbara	5
Quizzes	3	On the subject of woods and trees...	6
Green Buses	3	Book Review, News from Beyond Earley,	
HELP! Litter pick	3	Earley News and Wildlife Sightings	7
Year of the Rabbit, the Bat,		Events and Bits and Pieces	8
Forests	4		

Get to know your Earley: A SHORT JOURNEY ALONG WOKINGHAM ROAD, EARLEY

Memories of May Staley

May Staley, born 1891, came to live in Earley in 1904. She remembers going to Earley St. Peter's School. *'The headmaster was H. J. Wooldridge and during the winter months we were let out of school early in the afternoons because Wokingham Road was wooded on both sides and was a lonely road to go home.'* Wokingham Road was a gravel road, used mostly for horse traffic and it wasn't tarred until sometime between 1912 and 1914. Travelling up the north side of the road from the 3 Tuns traffic lights there were allotments reaching back to the churchyard. Adjoining these was the Common which later became Sol Joel Playing Fields. *'At the corner of the common was a pond by Mays Lane which was a great attraction to us children in the winter'*. Mays Lane was named after the May family who lived in the only two cottages in the lane. Further along there were more allotments until Hungerford Lodge, which was occupied by Major Wheble, who looked after the Bulmershe Estate. The Lodge was knocked down before the war and Stanton Close built in its grounds. Further up Wokingham Road there was a small paddock and then five cottages by Station Road, where the South Berks Hounds met. *'After Station Road there were two more cottages and then half a mile of copse and bogs until you reached a stile which led to a path to Woodley, now called Henley Wood Road. After the stile there were eight semi-detached bungalows, and each had four rooms and a scullery.'* (Source: Reading Chronicle, provided by Roy Shannon)



1883 OS Map showing Wokingham Road with 3 Tuns crossroads top left.

RAY'S BIRDS

THE WARBLERS

In birder-speak, warblers in general are LBJs (little brown jobs), and for much of the time they are not that easy to see. Yet the soundscape of any outing in spring and early summer is transformed by their song. That is also when they are best seen, like the Whitethroat (right). And did you realise that it is sometimes possible to find up to ten different species of warbler at Dinton Pastures?

Almost all of our warblers migrate here in spring from further south, yet there are notable exceptions. Locally, the scarce Cetti's Warbler is resident all year round, in the vicinity of lakes and gravel pits. Local heathlands host another resident, the Dartford Warbler. To add further confusion, Blackcaps may well visit the garden in winter and you may also see the odd Chiffchaff too. But these are the exceptions: non-migratory Cetti's and Dartford cling on at the northernmost edge of their range and are very vulnerable to bad winters. Wintering Blackcap and Chiffchaff are now known to be mainly birds from further east and north respectively, which have only in recent decades decided that our littoral climate is worth the winter risk.

The real wonder for me is the sheer tenacity and courage of these small birds, but the alternative is to do as their cousins do, and to undertake a truly perilous migration. For our summer-breeding Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs, this may be only from Iberia or North Africa, but some will have travelled up from sub-Saharan Africa, as many of the other species do: Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Willow Warbler, Garden Warbler, Sedge Warbler, Reed Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Wood Warbler... The list is a long one, but, sitting on our doorstep is the near-perfect mix of insect-rich habitat of tree, scrub, reed and water which is Dinton Pastures. Of the above catalogue, only Dartford and Wood Warblers

have not been noted there. In fact, all the others showed up last year.

So what is it which makes them come? The simple fact is that they all need plentiful insect food and that is best



found in summer: by migrating they get two summers a year and thus survive better. The hazards of migration are great, but the rewards of breeding success are even greater. Our winters are, of course, poor for insect production, but those which risk our winter are gambling on getting back early for first pick of the breeding grounds when spring arrives.

I love warblers for what they represent: the sheer resilience and adaptability of tiny creatures which have evolved truly wondrous strategies for survival. An 8-gramme Willow Warbler travels about 8,000 km a year, and one was known to have survived for 15 years. Epics like that make headlines for humans, but are routine for these little fellows.

So what chances do you have of finding those amazing little birds? How would you know them if you did hear or see them? Well, that is where I can be of help. Firstly EEG has arranged an evening session on 4th May in which I will present an identification workshop called "Which Warbler?" This will be followed on 8th May by an early-morning visit to Dinton Pastures, during which I hope to find as many as possible of these wonderful little birds – and hopefully with a Nightingale thrown in for good measure!

See you there! **Ray Reedman**

GREEN HEROES

All those members of EEG, other environmental groups and the public who actively petitioned to stop our state-owned forests and woodlands being sold off to those with the deepest pockets.

??ALICE'S QUIZ??

Guess how many species of flea beetles there are in Britain alone

Are there 57/58/59 butterflies native to Britain?

How many in Europe?

Roughly how many butterfly species are there in the world?

Roughly how many species of midges are there?

Which 5 British butterflies overwinter here as adults?

Answers Page 8

??Can you identify this flower??



See page 8

Reading Buses go *Green*

Buses on the yellow 26 route from Central Reading to Calcot are now powered by a low carbon electric-hybrid technology. The new buses are designed and built in the UK and came into operation in December. Their power sources are a normal diesel engine plus a sophisticated battery system. The leaflet on the website explains how it works, - 'In a conventional bus, when the driver uses the brake there is friction between the pad and disc, which slows the bus, but generates significant levels of energy, which is lost as heat.

'In an electric-hybrid vehicle this energy is harnessed using the motor, acting as a generator and converted to electricity. It is then stored in the batteries for use later.

'It is this capture of regenerative brake energy and the way that the vehicle handles this 'free' energy which makes the hybrid particularly efficient.'

They use at least 30% less fuel and emit nearly a third less carbon than a conventional bus.



HELP!! Huge Earley Litter Pick

Join the Annual Earley Litter Pick. Be proud of Earley. Just two and a half hours of your time.

Sunday March 27th

Two sessions:

10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or 14:00 p.m. to 16:30 p.m.

Meet at the Interpretation Centre at Instow Road for either session. Contact Grahame Hawker: 0118 986 8995

All equipment and refreshments provided

Photo on left: Thursday, 2nd December in the Old School House, Wokingham. Jean Hackett accepting certificates from the Mayor, Cllr. Dianne King, on behalf of EEG and Wellington Grange Residents' Association, for participation in Wokingham Borough Council's litter-pick, 2010. Peter Moore and John Parish of Thames Valley Park Rowing Club were there to collect their certificate (they had joined in with EEG for the third year running).

Grass Verge Survey, Earley: Do we have any keen **flower artists** in EEG who are looking for a project? The **Friday Group** hope to do a survey of roadside grass verges in the spring/summer, and it would be a real plus to be able to put a few sketches of the wildflowers growing there on the website. If you have some expertise in plant identification, you might be able to help on the survey, and would be very welcome. Contact newsletter editor (p.8).

2011 is the Year of ...

*The RABBIT (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)*

2011 is the **Chinese Year of the Rabbit**, an endearing animal which is much loved by children (witness the popularity of Peter Rabbit). Seen

perhaps only once in Maiden Erlegh Reserve, but often sighted in Mays Lane Cemetery, it has a list of 29 common names including bunny, coney, cony, rabbert, sharpnails, jack-sharp and parson (black rabbit), but no Anglo-Saxon name and no mention in *Domesday Book*. It is generally accepted that the Normans introduced it for fur and food.

Warrens were originally artificially constructed, often in old hunting parks, using pipes and artificial burrows to encourage them to breed. These would be sited on islands or surrounded by a moat, since rabbits do not like to swim. Inevitably, the rabbit escaped and eventually became a serious agricultural pest. By 1950 its population in the UK was estimated to be perhaps 100 million animals, with around 40 million being killed annually for their fur and meat. The writer can remember staying on a farm in the very distant past, and being terrified of the ferrets the farmer kept to go 'ferreting' after rabbits. It was quite common to have rabbit stew once a week until the advent of the deadly viral disease myxomatosis. Introduced into a French estate to rid it of rabbits, it arrived in England by 1953 and killed around 99% of the rabbit population. It was a horrible disease, with the animal dying a painful death. Spike Milligan wrote, "A baby rabbit/With eyes full of pus/ Is the work of scientific us". It has gradually recovered and there are estimated now to be 37 million in Britain.

Residents in **Coneygree Close** will be interested to know that an Earley field called **Coney Gree** is shown on a 1756 map, near to the site of their road, and not far from this field is another called **Moat Coppice** with two small areas of water - perhaps an early rabbit warren? A rabbit's foot is thought to bring luck, and many of us still say 'White Rabbits' three times on the first day of the month. Don't forget to keep an eye open for that Easter Bunny!



We announced this in our Dec newsletter. As a result of their nocturnal activity and the difficulty in observing them, they are amongst the most misunderstood and persecuted of mammals on the planet. Their numbers have declined alarmingly. *Year of the Bat* hopes to redress this. They mop up vast numbers of night-flying insects, cutting down on the use of pesticides, and some maintain the plant life in the rain forests by seed dispersal and pollination. Anyone who has seen a pipistrelle close up is surprised to find it so beguiling a creature. We need to learn to love or at least respect bats for their good points. Latest news – we have received a grant from the Earley Charity to buy a bat detector. Join us on our bat walk on May 25th (p.8).

www.yearofthebat.org/about-year-of-the-bat/contact-us/



UN International Year of Forests 2011

Following on last year's UN International Year of Biodiversity, this year's target is to raise awareness and strengthen sustainable forest management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

On 24th January the Forestry Commission wrote on their website under the heading of IYF 2011: *'The Forestry Commission is pleased to play its part and will make a full contribution to the UK's response. Our programme of educational, community and recreational events throughout the year will be used to highlight the Year of Forests and we are planning many more projects and events throughout 2011.'*

The Commission will be able to do this with more confidence in view of recent developments.

LIFE ON THE EDGE 2

The December newsletter featured an interesting plant, **Gallant Soldiers (*Galinsoga parviflora*)**, growing in the crack of an Earley kerbside. Kathryn, one of our members, wrote to say it is detested by the holders of allotments in Milford Road, Shinfield, where it grows with a vengeance; it may just have been an experiment by the University into



The running Native Indians: The **Tarahumara** of the Sierra Madre Occidental continue to utilize amaranth, especially *Amaranthus retroflexus*, along with other leafy annuals. They live in a very hostile terrain but running is a way of life and they are renowned for their endurance. Some run barefoot, and they consider a 26-marathon a stroll. It has been known for them to run 435 miles (700 km) in one session, over a period of two days through their homeland of rough canyon country, for inter-village communication and transportation. Apart from their unique diet, their success in running is to run lightly on the front of the foot instead of the heel, something adopted by famous British runner, Gordon Pirie. The Tarahumara enter races of 100 miles, and in 1993 came in 1st, 2nd and 5th in an ultramarathon, the winner being 55 years old! They lived a life

unchanged by modern intrusions for hundreds of year, until recently. livestock feed in the past. A neighbour of Gallant soldiers, in the same kerbside crack, was the **Common Amaranth, *Amaranthus retroflexus***, (photo left) which is rather rare. Renee, our flower expert, sent a sample of it to an expert who identified it. It's related to **Loves Lies Bleeding** in your garden.

An interesting history: It's another 'weed' with an interesting history. The seeds were eaten by the **Aztec** and it's one of the few plants chemically equivalent to meat. The plant was also used by the **Native Americans** throughout most of North and Middle America. The leaves are a source of calcium, iron and folic acid. The seeds contain a suite of amino acids. About 3.5 oz of amaranth seeds provided 15% of the recommended daily allowance of calcium, 76% of the iron, and over 25% of the folic acid recommended in diets today. Some groups, including the **Yuma**, the **Mojave**, and the **Cocopa**, cooked the greens, rolled them into a ball, dried them, and stored them for the winter.

unchanged by modern intrusions for hundreds of year, until recently.

Big problems: They are a very non-aggressive people, but life is treating them badly and in the last few years the Tarahumara have come into the public spotlight. They have recently been entering ultramarathons to call attention to the problems that their people are having in Mexico. Logging funded by the World Bank has led to thinning of the forests. Where they live is very conducive to growing crops of drugs. They provide cheap labour and may lose their life if they refuse the demands of the drug traffickers. To combat this the Mexican government is spraying fields with the herbicide paraquat, which is polluting their drinking water. It's not just the Earley plants living on the edge.

WBC, spare that orchid!

After contact with WBC we hope to prevent wild orchids, identified on two roadside verge sites, being cut down by the Council's mowers. The EEG Friday Group is embarking on a survey of Earley's roadside verges in the spring and summer. If you know of a particular verge you think may be of special interest regarding flowers or insects, please let us know. E-mail or phone newsletter editor see p.8.



Thank you, Barbara.

Barbara Stagles, who, upon retirement, set up virtually single-handedly the Wokingham District Veteran Tree Assn. in 2007 and drove it forward to its present healthy state, is giving up the Chair. Under her guidance over four thousand trees have been surveyed and plotted in the area on a database, including 278 at present in Earley. Thank you, Barbara, for your dedication to and enthusiasm for trees.

See EEG Newsletter Sept 2009 p.2 'Local Green Hero'

On the subject of woods and trees.....

The UK may be one of the least wooded places in Western Europe, but all the more reason not to sell any of our publicly owned forests. The British in their outcry against this sell-off proved their love of woods and trees, and woe betide anyone who tries to destroy them. We need them for all sorts of reasons – beauty, shade, oxygen, wildlife habitat, mental good health, a bulwark against soil erosion and climate change, even food. You can probably think of dozens more.

The recent aborted proposal to sell off the Forestry Commission forests and woods was a wake-up call. The FC once had a bad reputation for creating large plantations of sombre, coniferous forests, but not any more. Their

conservation reputation is improving all the time. For example, the Forestry Commission is erecting up to three more artificial osprey nesting platforms in Kielder Water & Forest Park; witness not far from us, Bramshill and Crowthorne Forests, restored by the Forestry Commission into wildlife havens and now Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

We can ill afford to lose the expertise built up over decades by FC staff, both in conservation and commercial management. The commercial forests bring in financial income to offset the costs of the Forestry Commission, and at a cost to us of 34p a head per year it seems like a very good bargain. *Read comments by two conservation bodies issued before the sale was abandoned but still relevant.*

BBOWT issued a warning that, *“some of the so-called Small Commercial Woodlands identified by Defra are in fact superb areas for ground-nesting birds such as the nightjar which is a European protected species. It’s madness to dispose of these woodlands for timber felling when the Government has an obligation to improve biodiversity and protect the habitats for endangered species. Several woodlands across the Chiltern Hills have been classified as Small Commercial but many have considerable wildlife interest and are popular with local walkers, horse riders and cyclists.*

Also included in the commercial woodlands category, and therefore likely to be offered for timber, is Gorrick Wood in Berks where nightjars breed and local people from the Wokingham area enjoy walking, cycling and watching wildlife.”

Dr. Martin Warren, Chief Executive of Butterfly Conservation wrote, *“We have invested a great deal of time and resources into building conservation programmes with the Forestry Commission, and now have a joint strategy to reverse the decline of butterflies on 140 top sites. If this land was fragmented into multiple ownerships, many of these biodiversity gains could be lost and an effective landscape scale approach would be far more difficult to pursue. We know that the Commission has had a mixed record on conserving biodiversity in the past, but many positive policies are now in place and their local teams are enthusiastic about involving local groups.”*

Cherry picking to keep just Heritage forests is not the way forward. FC commercial forests have their place, too. We will watch with vigilant interest the independent panel to be established to reach consensus on reforms, to improve access and biodiversity in forests. The panel will report in the autumn, advising on the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England, on the role of the Forestry Commission and on the role of the Public Forest Estate. This will require close scrutiny.

THE VALUE OF ANCIENT TREES



We have the greatest number of veteran trees in Western Europe. Oliver Rackham wrote, *‘one can go from Boulogne to Athens without seeing a tree more than 200 years old.’*

To many eyes this old oak in the Hillside area looks finished, like an old war horse ready for the knackers’ yard, but far from it. It still sprouts new shoots. It seems to have been part of a hedgerow on the boundary of a stream. Can anyone suggest a name for it?

Ancient trees, if they don’t constitute a danger, are of great value to wildlife. They can provide habitat for bats and birds, which make use of the nooks and crannies to nest and roost. They support specialist species of fungi, invertebrates and lichens which rely on dead wood. Within a rapidly changing world, they are historical reminders of our past. Earley possesses many vets. We need to learn to value them. www.wdvta.org.uk/WDVTS

READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?



Brian Hackett has. Read his review below of **The Butterfly Isles** by Patrick Barkham, published by Granta (2010), a present from Santa. A well written book, the plot concerns an amateur butterfly enthusiast's attempts to see all 60 of the British native species of butterfly in one calendar year. It rattles along at a good pace, and doesn't get bogged down in detail. It is also broken up into manageable chunks, so you can dip in and out.

During his hunt for butterflies the author includes anecdotes and historical information, discusses the problems of survival and conservation. You also hear of the successes and failures of conservation; how well-meaning conservationists actually accelerated the demise of the Large Blue, and how Network Rail has become an unlikely champion of butterfly conservation.

What this book does is to put a human face onto that detail. It describes the practical considerations of having a species that can only be seen for a few weeks, in remote parts of the country; for example, how people involved in the education industry struggle to see species that fly in the peak exam season. It also describes the desperate measures necessary to see some species; I would advise NOT reading the section on the food preferences of the Purple Emperor just before or just after a meal, and not at all if you have a queasy stomach. The author advocates adopting the Purple Emperor as the official English butterfly; I can only assume this is sly comment on our awful eating habits.

Like all good books, this one leaves you asking questions. Given the fussiness of some species, and their dependence on human intervention like coppicing and animal grazing, how have they managed to survive this long? And given the natural reluctance of some species to move even short distances to re-colonise suitable habitats, how did they manage to get here in the first place? Although not a field guide, the book contains excellent life-size full-colour identification plates, borrowed from a field guide, of all species (except one, not identified when the pictures were compiled), and some of the author's own photographs taken during the hunt. Also included is a map showing where he saw the various species, and a comprehensive list of places in the UK to go butterfly spotting – much better than the normal field guides, "South-east England".

And does the author manage to see all 60 species? Well, at the time of writing, I still have a couple of chapters to read. So you'll have to get hold of a copy and read it for yourself.

NEWS FROM BEYOND EARLEY

Hone your writing skills: Commit your thoughts on paper, or rather to e-mail, of between 1500 and 2000 words and enter 'The Future of England's Forests', and win £1000 in *The Independent* newspaper's Forest Challenge. Judges include renowned expert Oliver Rackham. E-mail to forestscompetition@independent.co.uk by midnight March 25. Or just write your thoughts on woodlands and send to the newsletter, and we will put them on the EEG website.

Earth Hour 8.30 p.m. on 26 March 2011: If you see lots of lights go out at 8.30 p.m. on March 26th it's because people have signed up to switch off their lights for an hour for WWF Earth Hour. This is to make the point that we need to save energy to avoid global warming.

Another special date: Earth Day, 22 April 2011: A Billion Acts of Green® <http://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2011>

Drought Problems: Prestigious publication *Science* has highlighted a second drought in the Amazonian rain forest, the first being in 2005 which was thought to be a once-in-a-lifetime event. As a large number of trees are dying through drought, scientists predict it will not be able to absorb as much carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as usual. Worse still, rotting trees may release as much as five billion tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere.

What's in a Name? Look what's hiding in Sherwood Forest! ... The Will Scarlet of the beetle world has been discovered hiding in Sherwood Forest. A colony of the **hazel pot beetle** was discovered in 2008, the first time recorded there in 70 years, although 100 years ago it was a common sight in the south of England. Dr Roger Key informed me that the Berkshire population survived as recently as the late 1990s or early 2000s, on a private site up near the Chilterns. Unfortunately its ecology was misunderstood due to its name, as its preference was birch, not hazel, and the site was managed encouraging the wrong food plant. Keep a look out for it. Photo courtesy of Roger Key. See photos and videos on



<http://www.arkive.org/hazel-pot-beetle/cryptocoryli/videos.html>

No to 'Super dairy' in Lincolnshire. Plans for the biggest dairy farm in Western Europe housing nearly 4000 cows, kept inside most of the year, have been shelved due to objections of the Environment Agency.

EARLEY NEWS and WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

Apologies to all those who sent in news and sightings for inclusion this time, but unfortunately they didn't transfer from an old computer to a new one, and are lost in space somewhere. Some members reported recently seeing goldcrests in ME Reserve, and in February a sparrowhawk was seen in Hartsbourne Road, eating a pigeon, moving to a fence near a bird table in Reeds Avenue. Waxwings were reported in January in Reeds Avenue, but unable to see. However, several people have reported seeing them in various nearby locations.

Our regular contributors Margaret (M) and Gillian (G) kept their usual eye on things. Notable visits -

November: both had visits from coal tits, (M) 14 and (G) 2 as well as jays and dunnock. (G) also had gt. spotted woodpecker on fat ball. Glad to see (M) had 20 starlings though G none.

December: gt. spotted woodpecker(M), crows (M) 7, gt. spotted woodpecker on fat ball (M), greenfinch (G)

January: Again both had visits from coal tits. (*Have seen a coal tit emerge from nearby coniferous area, snatch probably one seed from feeder, and immediately retreat several times over Ed.*) (M) heard but didn't see song thrush, (G) had 6 redwings in garden, and (M) saw flock of redwings and fieldfares around over garden and locally for some days; green woodpecker (G) and gt.sp.woodpecker (M), sparrowhawk (M) just resting, missed small birds, blackcap (M) 2 and (G) had visit from a female pheasant in front garden. (G) had collared doves in garden in Nov and Jan, but (M) had none.

LOCAL FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2011

March: **HELP! Litter Clean-up: Sunday, March 27th.** Join the annual Earley Litter Pick. Two sessions, 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 14.00 p.m. to 16.30 p.m. Everything provided. **Contact Grahame Hawker on 0118 986 8995.** Meet at Interpretation Centre, Instow Road.

April : **Wednesday 6th April** 7.30 start **Amber, Mysterious Time Capsule**, a talk by Kit Brownlee looking at amber: What is it? Where is it found? When is amber not amber? Come along and find out some of the answers. Function Room, Maiden Place Community Centre, off Kilnsea Drive.

May: **Wednesday, 4th May** 7.30 p.m. identification workshop Function Room, Maiden Place Community Centre, **'Which Warbler'** by Ray Reedman in preparation for an early morning walk round Dinton Pastures/Lavells Lake on **Sunday 8th May.** Meet at 6.00 a.m. in Lavells Lake Car Park, Sandford Lane, Woodley.

Wednesday, 25th May. Bat walk with expert Claire Andrews in Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve, meet at the Interpretation Centre, Instow Road. In case of inclement weather and it has to be re-arranged, please indicate you might be coming to Ricki at r.m.b@ntlworld.com or ring 07962 971 572 .

Bits and Pieces

Quiz answers: 130 ; 59 ; more than 500 ; 18,000 ; 5,000 ; Small Tortoiseshell, Comma, Peacock, Red Admiral, Brimstone.

Flower identification: yarrow

Keen on gardening? Why not join the Free 50+ gardening sessions, held at the Ridgeline Garden, junction of Whiteknights Road and Hamilton Road. Starting March 8th, and on Tuesdays 10.30 to 12.30 p.m. Refreshments provided. Ring Holly Baker on 07733 360454.

EASI (Earley Adopt-a-Street Initiative) now has 105 volunteers but would like more. Help keep your street clear of litter. Everything provided. Phone Brian Hackett on 0118 986 1115 or email ask.mera@btinternet.com.

We need some new blood! Can you offer active help to the Group? If so, phone 0118 962 0004 or go to the website. We would welcome more member involvement. If you have no expertise and would like to get involved, you may be able to give practical help. Perhaps help with distributing the newsletter hard copies, or maybe you have graphic design skills (for occasional posters, leaflets), computer skills, any other skills to offer. Do your bit for the environment.

Join the **EEG Yahoo Group and post your sightings and messages.** You'll find a link to Yahoo on our website.

EEG Committee Members can be found on www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk under Contacts, or phone 0118 962 0004

For Wildlife Survey Forms, go to the website or phone Earley Town Council 0118 986 8995

Comments or contributions to the newsletter to: sheila.crowson@ntlworld.com or 2 Reeds Avenue, Earley, RG6 5SR. We would welcome short contributions from members to the newsletter.

If you know anyone who would like to **join EEG, membership** forms are available from Earley Town Council, 0118 986 8995, on the [website](#) under Downloads, or send an e-mail to Liz Wild at liz@helva.plus.com. **Please inform Liz if you intend to change e-mail or address** at 50 Kenton Rd, Earley RG6 7LG, or send an e-mail.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHOPS

The True Food Co-op, Silverdale Centre : There is now a True Food Co-op operating in Earley, their most successful market. Their mission is to take low-cost organic food out to the people, bypassing the supermarkets which charge a lot for organics. They hold markets at the Silverdale Centre on Fridays, 5 to 8.15 p.m. They have a website giving dates www.truefood.coop .

Pet Fayre 9 Maiden Lane Centre Lower Earley : A small independent shop, with bird feeders of all kinds, a variety of bird feed, large bags of which the shop is willing to deliver locally, or pick it up in your car from the back of the shop, tel 0118 926 6512, e-mail sales@petfayre-reading.co.uk or go on the comprehensive website www.petfayre-reading.co.uk

Thanks to ORACLE Corporation for reproducing our newsletter on recycled paper. Oracle is the world's second-largest software company, situated at Thames Valley Business Park in Earley. Oracle UK adheres to the ISO14001 Environment Standard which confirms Oracle has considered and acted upon its environmental impact. As part of Oracle's corporate social responsibility, it supports a number of local groups, including us. It has given us valuable support in reproducing the hard copies of our newsletter in colour, as well as printing off posters and membership leaflets for us to distribute to libraries, schools etc.