

A is for Autumn, a time of fruitfulness, and also for Apple. 'An apple a day' is understood to be good for us, but which one? There are said to be 2000 varieties of apple in Britain, but we now have a very limited choice. Much of our traditional landscape has disappeared through change, including orchards, and in the last thirty years we have lost half our pear orchards and over 60% of our apple orchards. Various factors have largely influenced what varieties we may buy. One is that supermarkets demand of their suppliers cosmetically-perfect, similar-sized fruit, which often travels hundreds of miles; the pleasure of buying locally-grown, admittedly irregular sized, fruit in a brown paper bag from a corner green-grocer shop has all but gone. European agricultural regulations have been less than friendly to our orchards. For hundreds of years our traditional orchards have been biodiversity sanctuaries not only for wildlife but also for varieties of fruit, and we should mourn their passing. The group called Common Ground, worried at the loss of orchards and apple varieties, first held an Apple Day on October 21 in 1990. Check out and join in Berkshire apple 'happenings' on page 8.



<http://www.commonground.org.uk/appleday/a-appleday.html>.

Items of special interest:

Disappearing traditional orchards p.2 and 3

Anne's long-term bird survey, p.3

Cubs invade Maiden Erlegh Reserve, not badgers or foxes but the cub group based at Our Lady of Peace, Wokingham Road, Earley, p.4

'The Past Is A Foreign Country' - read part 2 of Alan Broodbank's evocative look at his Earley childhood in the 1940s/50s, p.5

Plus Regular Items:

Green Jargon, p.4

A Look at Old Earley, p.6

News From Beyond Earley and Earley Sightings, p.7

Forthcoming Events, p.8

Get to know your Earley
A stroll through something old and something new

A new wildlife site has been created, not strictly in Earley, but on the outer fringe. This came about when the large traffic intersection was built at the Shinfield Road/Lower Earley Way. It's known locally as 'Wood Henge' after the large number of old oaks, felled for the development and now just skeletal reminders, which have been 'planted' there. These make good habitats for those birds, insects etc, which make use of dead trees.

Start at Pearman's Copse (entrance at the end of Ryhill Way). Note the ancient banks and old Pearman's Lane on your left. Follow the footpath south towards Lower Earley Way (you'll hear the traffic!), turn right on path running parallel to Lower Earley Way, and keep going till you come to 'Wood Henge'. It opens out to a wide expanse of wild flowers, with a footpath running through it, but beware the boggy pond full of reedmace. This site supports a varied amount of wild flowers and insects, and would be of particular interest to anyone into photography.

Mark, one of our members, visited the site regularly this summer and found it was particularly good for butterflies.

TRADITIONAL ORCHARDS BLOSSOM ONCE MORE

The most famous apple in the world, **Cox's Orange Pippin**, originated in Berkshire and was bred by Richard Cox of Colnbrook. You're surprised by this? Alright, so Colnbrook used to be variously in Bucks, Middx and Surrey, but it's now in Berkshire, and if Oxfordshire can claim the White Horse of Uffington, we can claim the Cox's Orange Pippin. Richard Cox was not the only famous apple grower in Berkshire. To name just a few, there were Charles Ross at Welford Park, nr Newbury, John Standish of Ascot, James Miller of Newbury, John Waterer of Twyford, Charles Turner of Slough, and William Pope of Wokingham. Besides apples, Berkshire also produced large cherry crops, too.



Many traditional fruit orchards dotted our local countryside, in large gardens, small nurseries and farms. All those ruddy-faced farm workers had to have their daily ration of cider, and the farmer found it cheap to make his own. How did they stay sober and work? With our much smaller gardens it's all most of us can do to grow one fruit tree, but what a wonderful dream to have a large garden, with an orchard at the bottom, with gnarled old trees, perhaps a couple of

sheep grazing it, or maybe a Berkshire pig or two rooting around, maybe carpeted with bluebells or underplanted with daffodils. Think of the benefits: beautiful spring blossom, summer shade to sit under reading a book (minus pigs rooting), bees buzzing, butterflies flitting, birds singing, lovely fruit to enjoy. Ah well, it's only a dream (note: must fill in the Lottery form).

But some people are living the dream. In 1990 Common Ground initiated Apple Day on October 21 and this is now celebrated annually throughout the country. This has led to a resurgent interest in revitalising old orchards. Nowadays the value of

traditional orchards for both wildlife and people has been recognised, and some enthusiasts are trying to reverse the trend, and create community orchards, such as Tewin Orchard, which is run by the Herts and Middx. Wildlife Trust. They even have visiting badgers. (<http://prosolutions.co.uk/tewinorchard>)

The bird we associate with orchards is the BULLFINCH. In the 16th century it was considered vermin: 'every Bulfynche and other byrde that devoureth the blowth of the fruit' had a penny (old money) on its head. Today it is less common and regarded more benignly. Its decrease may be due in part to loss of hedgerows and other favoured habitats. So, if your Earley fruit tree is visited by bullfinches, be generous with your fruitbuds and feel honoured.

Old orchards are also a stronghold for the NOBLE CHAFER beetle, which is classed as vulnerable and would benefit from the resoration of old orchards.

Fruity Facts

Apples are an important source of vitamin C and contain traces of Vitamin E.

Long-lasting apple varieties were taken from Whitby by whalers to the southern ocean.

Millions of Cox's Orange Pippin are produced throughout the world. Also known as: **Koksa Pomoranczowa**, **Renet Cox Portocaliu**. It contains 11mg of vitamin C per 100 grams, compared to Golden Delicious at 6-8/100 grams

Serious dieters know the value of filling up with an apple, weighing in at only 40 calories.

Orange-coloured betacarotene, present in peaches, apricots and carrots, converts to vitamin A within the body.

The Victoria plum was discovered by chance in the 19th century in a Sussex wood.

Hazelnuts contain the key ingredient in the anti-cancer drug Taxol.

Fruit can replenish stores of sodium and particularly potassium in our bodies, vital for nerve and muscle function.

ANCIENT ORCHARD MISCELLANY

A very superior habitat.

Bluebells and bluetits
Green grass and greenfinch
Nuthatch and cobnuts
Redwings and foxes
Mistletoe and mistle thrush
Cherry and hawfinch
Pear trees and speckled wood
Ripe plums and butterflies
Havens for little owls
Tree holes and woodpeckers
Orchard blossom and bullfinch!
Old trees and young trees.
Biodiversity guaranteed.

Photo by kind permission and
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his superb photos on
http://www.thelewiss.co.uk/gallery2/main.php?g2_itemId=8



The **little owl** (*Athene noctua*) was introduced into this country from Holland in the 1880s. As the Latin names implies, it was the owl associated with the Greek goddess of wisdom, Athene. It's not much bigger than a blackbird; it feeds on small mammals and birds, beetles and worms. It likes lowland farmland with hedges and copses, parkland and orchards and is most common in central, southern and south-eastern England, and the Welsh borders. Hunting is carried out at dusk and dawn but it can be seen in daytime, too, often perching on a fence post. Assessing numbers of little owls is difficult because of their hunting times, but there are varying calculations of 7,000 to 9,000 UK breeding pairs. It's present in Berkshire, and with luck it can be seen locally, or heard calling. The little owl is included in a listing of birds at Dinton Pastures. In 2007 it is recorded as being regularly heard calling around Woodley airfield estate, towards the ader Way area.

Garden Birdwatch

Be like Anne and do a **Garden Birdwatch**

Garden Birdwatch is a year-round survey that gathers information from thousands of people to show how different species of birds use gardens and how this use changes over time. Gardens provide a refuge for wildlife affected by changes in the management of our countryside.

I have been submitting records of the birds in my garden in Instow Road to the project for 7 years. One of the interesting things about noting down the numbers and species of birds is that you really do notice the changes from year to year, season to season, which you might otherwise miss. In 2006 **Bramblings** were in my garden for a few weeks – I had never seen them before and might have missed them without the regular checks on the garden.

If you have access to the Internet you can view your own sightings and compare different weeks to see similarities and differences between them. Comparing the week June 3rd 2001 with the same week this year shows that the number of species and also the numbers of each species were almost the same but **Starling** numbers in 2007 are less than half those for the same



week in 2001. The **Red Kite** appears this year but not in 2001.

(Photo by Kev Lewis)

Important national trends can be seen clearly using information from the survey. The decline in numbers of species like the **House Sparrow** and **Song Thrush** is shown in graphs of 1995 – present day.

There are about 16,500 participants currently taking part by sending in simple weekly records of the bird species using their gardens. This information is either submitted on paper count forms or by using Garden BirdWatch Online. Each participant also supports the project financially through an annual contribution of £12. In return, they receive the quarterly colour magazine *Bird Table* and access to advice on feeding and attracting garden birds.

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) is the UK's leading bird research organisation. The BTO maintains a staff of 80 at its HQ in Norfolk, who analyse and publicise the results of project work.

Thanks to Anne Booth for this article

For information; www.bto.org/gbw or write to BTO, The Nunnery, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2PU, UK

Youngsters looking for veterans



In connection with the Veteran Tree Survey being carried out throughout Wokingham District, on Monday 16th July the Earley Environmental Group had a visit from the 99th Reading 2nd Earley cub group based at Our Lady of Peace on the Wokingham Road to give us a hand.

In all there were 19 cubs, boys and girls, accompanied by their Cub Master David Roper and assistant Cub Master Richard Squires. Their assignment was to go into Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve and measure some of its big veteran trees. They were split into groups, each group being assigned a veteran oak tree. But first they paid a visit to the Gemini Oak, which looks to be two trees joined at the base and again higher up, and is probably about 300 years old, to have their photo taken. Then it was down to real business, measuring the girth of the trees at a height of 1.5 metres, good maths practice. The largest tree they measured was over 4 metres in girth and probably 250 years old. Their surveying added valuable data to our veteran tree survey. They were an enthusiastic bunch and displayed caring, thoughtful behaviour in the fragile environment of the Reserve, and through this visit will now have a much better understanding of how valuable these old trees are to them and Earley.

This project will go towards their Cubs Environment Badge. We hope to welcome them back again, particularly when we do our big litter pick up in Earley next March.

Whiteknight's Swans - A Sorry Tale

Peter Gipson has been studying them for 20 years, and on www.berkbirds.co.uk states that in that time a high number of adult swans have died, and that the mortality is well above average. Several have died from botulism, and at least two cygnets have been killed by dogs (there are notices requesting dogs be on a lead). In the last two years all the young have died, which seems a sorry state of affairs. The lake was last dredged on a major scale in the 1960s, an operation which could cost £200,000. The plight of Whiteknight's swans is not an easy one to solve.



EARLEY WILDFLOWERS
Cornfield wildflowers in the Reserve, Instow Road planted by Grahame and his band of helpers.
(left, Corncockle.)

GREEN JARGON

Carbon Capture and Storage: Like many environmental issues, this is a complex one. We know we are pumping too much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and that this is having a disastrous effect on the planet. Governments are waking up to the severity of the climate change problem and looking for solutions. The Commons Science and Technology Committee has been looking at the use of CCS. One strategy being investigated is to store CO₂ out of harms way. The theory is that CO₂ produced by coal power stations can be transported in some way and stored, for instance, in redundant oil fields. It's not only proposed to use CCS after coal burn, but that's the main target at present because, without it, coal produces a lot of CO₂ per kWh electricity. Storing carbon dioxide in rock has already been shown to be safe and effective by the Norwegian company Statoil, which has been piping the gas down into a reservoir under the sea floor for almost a decade.

The Government has committed funding of £25 million to establish demonstration projects, and is also involved in a partnership designed to develop the technology in China which, like the other giant developing economies of Asia, is heavily reliant on coal.

Whilst it is a way of mitigating the effects of producing yet more CO₂ pollution, we also need the drive to continue to provide energy from renewable sources, like wind or solar power.

THE PAST IS A FOREIGN COUNTRY

A trip down Memory Lane by Alan Broodbank, our Chairman (part 2)

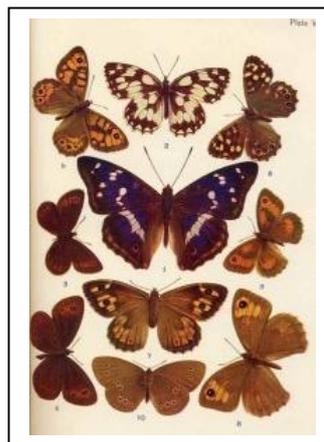
If one walked through the long grass of "our" field early in the morning while the dew was still on it, one would disturb great clouds of tiny moths that we used to call Grass moths, in reality a number of different species known to entomologists as Crambids, i.e. of the family *Crambidae*. Another very common day-flying Lepidopteran was the Burnet moth, a truly beautiful insect with very dark green iridescent forewings with either five or six red spots, depending on the exact species, and scarlet hind wings. The caterpillars would have fed on the Bird's foot Trefoil that was a common plant in the field. The peculiar cocoons, attached to stems of grass and well above the ground, were very common and easily found, and we used to enjoy taking them home and watching them hatch out. Later I started to record the various species of larger moth in the area, and over the years recorded no less than 213 different species. This will certainly be an under-estimate, and does not include the innumerable very small "micro-moths", as I did not have a microscope or the books to identify them correctly at the time.

Butterflies of many species were abundant, a particularly good spot being the mauve flowers on the clumps of wild mint that grew in the stream. These were particularly pungent and could be smelt in the field whilst still some distance from the stream. Very common species included the Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Red Admiral, Comma, Small, Large and Green-veined whites, Orange-tip, Meadow Brown, Wall, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Small Copper, and Small and Large Skipper. Less frequent was the Speckled Wood, which tends to shun the sunlight and remain in the adjacent woods, and which I am sure has become much commoner in recent years. Another species that seems to be more abundant nowadays is the Holly Blue, one of the first butterflies to appear in the spring. In all, I have recorded 29 species of butterfly occurring in Earley, including occasional migrants.

Around the edges of the woods we would occasionally spot a Purple Hairstreak flitting from one oak sapling to the next, feeding on the honeydew from the aphids, usually too high up to be caught in our primitive nets. In the woods, butterflies were less frequently seen. If one was very lucky in late June or July one might spot a beautiful White Admiral gliding along, maybe settling on a fern leaf in a sunny spot, or on honeysuckle to lay an egg. These were rare occurrences, however, but all the more exciting as a result. The last one I saw here was around 1970.

Maiden Erlegh Stream
"At the very bottom of the field ran the stream....."

By far the rarest and most splendid butterfly I ever saw was caught by a young girl who lived opposite us. I was summoned to their house as they had never seen anything like it before and wanted me to see it. It turned out to be that most regal of butterflies, a male Purple Emperor, the only specimen I ever saw from "our" woods. Probably they were more common than we realised as I now know that they tend to fly high up around the tree canopy, especially the oaks, and feed on the chestnut flowers. Only rarely do they come down low, either to lay eggs on the willow or to feed on some juicy morsel or other, often a rotting animal carcass.



(left, Purple Emperor, large butterfly in centre, in a 1916 book, which describes the hunting and netting of this beautiful creature. Collectors would bait the woods with "viands that alone can entice his highness from his lofty seat; and many a splendid specimen has been easily captured while enjoying the luxurious juice of a dead cat, stoat, or rabbit, or of a seething mass of pigs's dung")

At the very bottom of the field ran the stream, on the far side of which was a chain-link fence bordering a field in Lady Betty's stud farm. This stretched away gently uphill as far as the horizon, with a single large oak in the middle that must have been dangerous if the horses decided to shelter under it during a thunderstorm. The most obvious wildlife in this field were the hares, and one could normally see one or two cavorting around at any one time. I don't ever recall seeing a rabbit in this field, yet they were common enough elsewhere in the area, a particularly good spot being the Southern platform of Earley Station! Only once did I ever see a deer, hurtling alongside the fence, although I didn't know enough about them at the time to tell what species it was. Skylarks sang constantly overhead and were much more easily heard than seen.

("The stream itself was, of course, like a magnet to boys and girls alike, and it was rare indeed to return home without at least one soaking wet foot...." read Part 3 in our next newsletter)



A Look at Old Earley

After leasing the Maiden Erlegh estate for 14 years, John Hargreaves, master of the South Berkshire Hunt, purchased it in 1878. The sale advertisement in *The Times* of May 16 1896 indicates that this was the era of the huntin' and shootin' lifestyle. He died in 1895.

By order of the executors of the late John Hargreaves, Esq, The Maiden Erlegh Estate, South Berks, Chinnock, Galsworthy and Chinnock will sell by auction in June next the above important and highly valuable FREEHOLD MANORIAL ESTATE comprising 471 acres in a ring fence which will be offered first in one lot, and if not sold in five lots. Lot 1. The unique and charming residential freehold known as Maiden Erlegh, situate in a delightful part of the county, half a mile from the favourite town of Reading, whence the metropolis is reached in about three-quarters of an hour by a splendid service of the trains on the main line of the Great Western Railway, whilst Earley Station adjoins the property.

It comprises an imposing mansion in the centre of a beautifully timbered park of 150 acres, adorned by a large ornamental lake, with boathouses, and screened on all sides by belts of trees and plantations. It is approached by two carriage drives with ornamental lodge entrance, and is substantially built of red brick, embellished with carved stone enrichments and festoons of flowers in the Jacobean style, with cupola tower and loggia and entered from under a porte-cochere. It contains a lofty entrance hall with marble mosaic floor leading through a spacious ante-chamber with beautiful carved oak inglenook fireplace and panelled walls into a noble inner hall 53ft 6in by 14ft communicating with a handsome suite of reception rooms, comprising hall or music room 37ft by 34ft having richly carved Spanish mahogany fittings, lofty billiard and smoking room

MAIDEN ERLEGH ORCHARDS

Large country houses had their orchards, and the sale of the Maiden Erlegh Estate in 1896 included 'two fine kitchen walled-in gardens, well stocked with choice fruit trees, as well as outer fruit and vegetable gardens'

32ft by 30ft, dining room 32ft by 26ft, drawing room 32ft by 23ft with elliptic ceiling 16ft high, morning room 32ft by 15ft, library 24ft by 22ft 6in, schoolroom, 13 principal bed and dressing rooms, seven secondary bedrooms, five bathrooms, boudoir, day and night nurseries, work room, box rooms, seven servants bedrooms and ample and complete domestic offices.

The stabling accommodates 47 horses, including 43 loose-boxes for hunters with spacious coach-houses and ample accommodation for coachmen and grooms over. The gardens and pleasure grounds are tastefully laid out and ornamented with specimen trees of mature growth, magnificent clumps of

rhododendrons and other flowering shrubs. There are expensively formed cricket and polo-grounds in the park. Two fine walled-in kitchen gardens well

stocked with choice fruit trees; outer fruit and vegetable gardens, ranges of vineries, peach-houses, melon house, cucumber house, orchid-house, greenhouses etc; picturesque gardener's residence and outbuildings, keeper's lodge, ten newly-erected model cottages, blacksmith's house with forge. The picturesque woods and plantations are intersected by sequestered gravel walks, extending entirely round the park, the whole comprising 281 acres. There is good hunting with the South Berks and Mr. Garth's foxhounds, also her Majesty's staghounds, and the plantations afford excellent cover for the rearing and preservation of a large number of pheasants.

Did you know?

If your saved padded envelopes are too damaged to reuse, some may be eligible for composting? However, on inspecting 25 I'd saved to use again, only 3 were eligible for composting; the other 23 had plastic bubble lining, as opposed to shredded newsprint. (Probably lighter?) 'Jiffy'-type bags seem to come in the two varieties, and the dedicated recycler could remove the plastic lining. But full marks to The Royal Opera House Shop. They used a Mail Lite padded bag by Sealed Air, which was minimum 75% recycled material, reusable and could be composted.

NEWS FROM BEYOND EARLEY

Is Asda leading the way?: Palm oil has become one of the world's biggest traded commodities, and is probably the 'vegetable oil' in one in ten products sold in Britain, e.g. chocolate, cosmetics or animal feed. The world-wide demand has led to huge tracts of rainforest being cut down for plantations, causing the destruction of eco-systems, affecting humans and animals alike, including the orang-utan. The felling of trees means an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Bad news all round. But some good news, perhaps, is that Asda has told suppliers it will not accept products unless they guarantee their palm oil comes from sustainably-run plantations. Asda has banned palm oil sourced from Borneo and Sumatra. It's a start, and it's hoped other retailers and manufacturers will also implement these measures. Therein lies the crunch, implementation, and identifying what is a sustainable plantation. As they say, the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Nature fights back: Some of you may have seen the recent programme on leatherback turtles, and the dire consequences of humans carelessly discarding their plastic bags, or releasing huge numbers of balloons, which ultimately end up in the world's oceans. The turtles apparently mistake these for their favourite snack, the jelly fish, causing their death. Holidaymakers in the Med are now under attack from the stings of millions of jellyfish. One contributory factor to a jellyfish population explosion is the near-extinction of natural predators, the bluefin tuna and the leatherback turtle. Spanish authorities are taking the desperate measure of planting turtle eggs along the coast and releasing live turtles to eat the jellyfish.

Sharks under threat again from soup addicts: Although it remains illegal, fishermen in Ecuador are now able to sell fins from sharks caught "accidentally", at £50 each. Most of the fins end up in Asian soup bowls. This represents a lot of money for impoverished fishermen. Politics figure in the laissez-faire attitude to the slaughter, as there is an imminent election.

Good news for our Wokingham District Owls: Wok. Borough Council, in partnership with various other bodies, erected 13 barn owl boxes in Nov 2002 and 6 boxes in late 2005 in Hurst (5), Barkham (2), Swallowfield (6), Finchampstead (3), Arborfield (1), Wok. Town (1) and Lower Earley (1). 30 chicks were produced this year (2007). Altogether, over the five years, 58 barn owls, 1 little owl and 13 kestrel chicks have been produced. The boxes have also been used by non-breeding birds.

Early fruit: Have you noticed an early ripening of wild fruit this year? The Woodland Trust comments, "Blackberries have always been a late-summer/early autumn fruit but now, like many wild fruits such as rowan berries, hawthorn berries, elderberries, sloe berries and even hazelnuts, they are ripening earlier and earlier. In fact, for the last two years, there have been ripe blackberries in time for the Wimbledon finals and this year is no different despite the disappointing weather."

NEWS FROM EARLEY and WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

Some good news: Earley Town Council has won an environmental award from the Wokingham Biodiversity Forum. Out of a total of seventeen Parish/Town Councils, ETC scored full marks on a questionnaire sent out by the Forum for the year 2006, the only one to do so.

Garden Wildlife Recording Forms

Some of our members have been filling in forms giving details of their garden wildlife. The following notes are from some of the entries in 2005 and 2006, referring in particular to **foxes** and **butterflies**.

There were five **fox** sightings. In December one was seen 'looking around for food, in good condition and fur beautiful'. In January two were seen fighting in Redhatch Copse (during the mating season, see EEG website, Mammals page for fox calendar). One was spotted in early morning, two foxes together seen in June and another two individual sightings in park and garden. We printed in our Sept 06 issue a letter from "Earley Fox", delivered by Royal Mail, complaining bitterly that he carried one of his cache of duck eggs "with great care to another garden to hide for the time being. But it was found and put on the rubbish heap. It must be those humans. And they don't even want to eat them. I could have enjoyed them otherwise." Wonder how he's getting on?

The following **butterflies** were listed. March: brimstone. April: holly blue, orange tip, green-veined white, speckled wood. May: large white, holly blue, orange tip, speckled wood. July: gatekeeper, tortoiseshell, orange tip female, holly blue, comma, meadow brown, large white, red admiral,

brimstone, small white, speckled wood. August: large white, small white, meadow brown, small skipper(?), painted lady.

July 2007 How many can you tick off? This is Gillian's garden wildlife recording form for July 07. **Birds:** blue tit, wood pigeon, magpie, collared dove, dunnock, blackbird, great tit, swifts (over garden), greenfinch, green woodpecker (next door's oak). **Butterflies:** holly blue, red admiral, small white, large white, peacock, gatekeeper. **Misc.:** bat (unknown), frog (in borders), young hedgehog (back garden, injured foot).

Duncan: 29 July 07 I have been very pleased with the result of providing bird seed in various feeders throughout the summer. The RSPB and BTO now encourage us to provide food during the year as it is now known that parent birds use this for their own nutrition, whilst still foraging for insects for their young. This means the adult birds can maintain their strength! I have gone for a squirrel proof peanut feeder: one feeder holding black niger seed and one feeder holding canary seed. Black niger is excellent for goldfinches and I now have a pair visiting everyday. The canary seed is preferred by chaffinches and greenfinches. Blue tits, great tits and long-tailed tits prefer the peanuts. I had a flock of 9 long-tailed tits on the peanut feeder today.

Grahame: 30 July 07 Slow worm and fox on the Reserve today.

Sheila: 4 Aug 07 Opened my front door at 9 a.m. to find a hummingbird hawkmoth hovering over a tub of flowers. This is the second year I've seen one in my garden. The woodpeckers, male and female, are coming regularly to the peanuts.

LOCAL FORTHCOMING EVENTS

September: Climate Change in Your Garden, with Dr. Michael Keith-Lucas **Monday 10 September**, 7.30 for 7.45 start at the **Trinity Church Room, Chalfont Close** (Asda entry from Chalfont Way. Church Room as you turn right into Asda site) (£1 entrance to cover expenses)

October: Farming and Wildlife, with Des Sussex **Tuesday 9 October**, note date change, 7.15 for 7.30 start at the **Trinity Church Room, Chalfont Close** as above (£1 entrance to cover expenses)

November: Talk on Birds by Ray Reedman on **Wednesday 14 November**, Function Room, Maiden Place Community Centre RG6 3HE (£1 entrance to cover expenses.)

December: Christmas Social Members slides, quiz and Christmas refreshment. Please come along. Everyone welcome. **Tuesday 18 December 7.30 to 9 pm** at Interpretation Centre

Apple Day in Berkshire: Cross Lanes Fruit Farm, Mapledurham. Apple Day 2007 will be held on **Sunday 7th October**. Exhibitions, guided walks around the orchard, apple tasting of over 30 varieties, local produce for sale, apples, pears, juices, cakes, pies plus local plants, wood-turned bowls etc. Children's games and a quiz to make it a day out for all the family. Entrance and car parking are free.

Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, Redlands Road, Reading RG1 5EX Sunday 21 October 2:00 to 4:00 pm. APPLE DAY - To take place in the museum's garden (weather permitting). Celebrate England's favourite orchard fruit. Test your taste buds with an Ashmead's Kernel, a Bramley, or a Cox. Learn about English orchards and their history including a chance to see film footage on apple growing from the MERL archives, and illustrated texts on apple varieties including an original edition of the Herefordshire Pomona. Take home apple recipes from MERL's archive. Children can join in apple-related activities. A selection of seasonal apple varieties will be available to taste and to buy. Other locally-sourced products available for purchase including preserves, vinegars and juices. It is hoped to engage a speaker on an apple-related theme. Refreshments available for purchase. All are welcome. Admission free. *(Parking is not usually extensive at the Museum and one might have to use side roads.Ed.)*

Bits and Pieces

Congratulations to the following schools in or near Earley who have enrolled as Eco Schools - Maiden Erlegh School, Hillside Primary, Whiteknights Primary, the Bulmershe School and Reading Blue Coat. We'll be pleased to hear of the awards they achieve. www.eco-schools.org.uk

Green Fair: The Fair, held on Saturday 4 August, was the usual big success. There was a good variety of stalls, which included the True Food Co-op. Once again, the weather was in our favour, and we were able to recruit new members for the EEG.

Veteran Tree Survey: We now have approximately 100 veteran trees recorded in Earley, and still counting. If you would like to become a recorder, phone 0118 9620004.

Two new books worth reading: *Crow Country* by Mark Cocker, elegant writing and absorbing. *Eco-House Manual* pub. Haynes, on how to carry out environmentally friendly improvements to your home. Both available at 5% discount from No Page Unturned.

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 e.a.wild@reading.ac.uk. **Please inform Liz if you intend to change e-mail or address** at 50 Kenton Rd, Earley RG6 7LG, or send her an e-mail.

Can you offer active help to the Group? Phone 0118 9620004 if you can. **If you have no expertise and would like to get involved, you may be able to give practical help. We also need people with some expertise to undertake surveys of small habitats in Earley or, for instance, do a hedge survey,**

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHOPS

The True Food Co-op, Silverdale Centre :There is now a True Food Co-op operating in Earley. 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 the second & fourth Fridays in the month, 5pm to 8. 15pm. They have a website giving dates www.truefood.coop/truefood.html

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 9266512, or e mail enquiries@petfayre-reading.co.uk.

No Page Unturned: A new bookshop in Earley, 3 Maiden Lane Centre. Emily will get any book you need in 24/48 hrs, 5% off for EEG members Phone her on 0118 966 9351 or e-mail emily@nopageunturned.org.uk. Visit her pleasant premises and browse. New and second-hand books, wrapping paper, audio books, etc.

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