

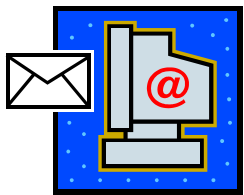
**WANTED - BAT RECORDS!**

If you have had a busy summer and autumn with plenty of bat passes then please let George Burton, Warks Bat Group's Records Officer, have the details. Included with this newsletter is a copy of a recording form. Send your records to:

Roost Records, Melrose, North Street, Marton, Rugby, Warks, CV23 9RJ  
[records@warksbats.co.uk](mailto:records@warksbats.co.uk)

If you have access to the internet then you can enter the details of your records online at the Warwickshire Batgroup's website <http://www.warksbats.co.uk> Click on the 'record entry form' link in the menu on the left hand side of the page.

**THE 'E' - CHO**



If you would like to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter via email then let me know. The advantage of receiving it this way is that it will be in colour, it will contain clickable hyperlinks to websites and it will save the bat group some money on photocopying and postage. If you would like to receive it this way or you have any questions then email me (Julia Waller) at:

[newsletter@warksbats.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@warksbats.co.uk)

You would be sent it as an email attachment in Acrobat Reader format, otherwise known as a pdf file. This is a well-known standard format for downloading a file over the internet and the software you need is free. You may already have it on your computer but if not then go to the Adobe webpages and download a copy:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

**BATTY STAMP**

The Woodland Animals stamps are the fourth in Royal Mail's series of Animals stamps and feature ten creatures in all: Natterer's bat, wildcat, badger, mole, Yellow-necked mouse, fox, stoat and Roe deer.

They are available as Mint Stamps, First Day Covers, Presentation Packs or Stamp Cards and can be ordered by calling 0845 072 2000 or online at their website [www.royalmail.com/woodland](http://www.royalmail.com/woodland)

**THE BAT-E-GROUP**



As many of you already know, as well as receiving newsletters electronically, you can also take part in an email discussion group. This is a very useful way for bat group members to receive up to the minute news, discuss any batty topics or find out what each other are up to. It's completely free and only open to bat group members so if you have access to email and aren't already on the "egroup", the why not drop an email to me at:

[newsletter@warksbats.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@warksbats.co.uk)

and we'll sign you up!

**BAT "TWITCHERS"  
(JOHN WALLER)**

Abbey Fields in Kenilworth is an extensive area of public open space in the centre of Kenilworth. Although much of the area is simply mown grassland, it also contains two streams, a lake, a number of hedgerows containing mature trees, the remains of a ruined abbey, a church and a graveyard. In the summer it is a great place to watch bats with Daubenton's and pipistrelles over the lake and then more pipistrelles and whiskered / Brandt's over the abbey and graveyard.

Bats! – We spend half our time trying to dispel the myths and overcome the clichés and what do they do? They fly around the graveyard. They never read the books, you know.

Back in 2003, the Friends of Abbey Fields asked us to supply a number bat boxes to be put up in the Fields. Pete Maule duly made 45 boxes and these were put up by the local Council's tree gang.

Paul Elliott had advised on where the boxes should be placed and (quite correctly) said they should be installed as high up as possible. The Council took him at his word and when we came to check the boxes over a year later on the morning

of September 11<sup>th</sup>, we realised that this might not have been such a good idea.

The tree gang were obviously pretty good at climbing trees and at first it looked as if all the boxes might be too high for us to reach. Paul first had a go at checking the boxes with binoculars, but although he could see if the box entrances were covered with spiders' webs, he certainly couldn't see inside the boxes.



Using the more conventional technique for checking bat boxes of climbing up a ladder, we found that we could actually reach virtually all of the boxes, although some of them were a bit of a stretch. When I say "we", I'll admit that being somewhat afraid of heights I chickened out of actually checking the boxes. This was probably a good thing since most of the boxes were populated by colonies of earwigs or rather large spiders and I'm a bit of an arachnophobe as well. I was happy to just help manhandle the ladder and take the pictures.

After we had checked and numbered over half the boxes, we were beginning to think we should be renaming ourselves "Warwickshire earwig group", but then we found a box with bat droppings in it and they were possibly not Pipistrelle droppings. Success! At least one bat had decided to use at least one of the boxes. Since it often takes bats some years to move into new roost spaces, we had not been too surprised to have not found much.

A few boxes later we found another box with droppings in and this time, they were fresh. So fresh, in fact, that one would think they had just been, err... dropped. This discovery was quickly followed by finding a Common Pipistrelle in residence.

So, if you know of any bats looking for deceptively spacious residences in a highly desirable area, then point them in the direction of Abbey Fields.

**LONGLEAT'S BATS**



A colony of free-flying Egyptian fruit bats is the star attraction of 'Old Joe's Mine' a subterranean adventure which allows the public an opportunity to walk in amongst the bats.

At the moment Longleat Safari Park and all other attractions have gone into hibernation for the winter and will not re-emerge until 12<sup>th</sup> February 2005 but will then be open until 6<sup>th</sup> November 2005. You can purchase tickets for next year on their website at: [www.longleat.co.uk](http://www.longleat.co.uk). (Note: Old Joe's Mine is fully accessible to both pushchair and wheelchair users).

Visitors enter a disused gold mine and try to find a series of clues in order to discover what happened to Old Joe and his missing gold. Low-level lighting, sound effects and fun features - including a skeleton, feely boxes and a variety of creepy-crawlies - all add to the experience.



Keeper Darren Beasley said he has been very pleased with initial reactions to the attraction: "A member of staff is in the area at all times explaining the bats' behaviour and giving them some background on where they come from and what they eat. Some people go in expecting to be terrified but come out the other side as real bat enthusiasts. The combination of adventure trail and live animal exhibits seems to really appeal to people - particularly those with young families - and we're delighted with the visitors' response to the this attraction," he added.

Egyptian fruit bats get their name from the fact that in 1810, the species was originally discovered roosting in the passages of the pyramids at Giza. As well as Egyptian burial chambers other roost sites chosen by this species include caves, dark ruins, deep cellars, rock

crevices, trees, date plantations and even Roman Aqueducts. They are found throughout most of Africa and can also be found in Turkey, Cyprus, Pakistan and the Arabian Peninsula. As their name suggest the bats live almost exclusively on a diet of fruit plus some flower nectar. In the course of obtaining nectar from different flowers, these bats carry pollen from one place to another. They help pollinate many tropical rainforest trees. Adults have a wingspan of 60cm, weigh just 150g and can live for 22 years or more in captivity.

They belong to the genus *Rousettus*, and there are 10 species of bats in this genera. They can be found in a variety of habitats, from lowlands to mountains. While flying in the darkness they utter a high-pitched buzzing call, or echolocation. *Rousettus* bats are the only genus of megachiroptera which echolocates.

Egyptian fruit bats can be found roosting in groups as small as 2 or 3 bats to as many as 2,000. Both male and female bats roost together in a colony. The bats crowd close together, always making body contact, especially with their young ones.



These bats usually have only one baby each year, however sometimes they have twins. The mother bats carry their young at first, then leave them at the roosts while they hunt for fruit. Babies are about 3 months old before they learn to fly on their own. Young ones stay in the same colony as their moms and dads for most, if not all, of their lives.

**DIARY**

If you know of any batty events then please send us the details and then we can include them in the next issue as well as on Warks Bat Group's website ([www.warksbats.co.uk](http://www.warksbats.co.uk))

**"Bats"**

**Brandon Marsh Nature Centre  
Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2005 16:00 - 22:00**

Led by the Chair of Warks Bat Group, Paul Elliott, this dayschool is an introduction to bats. It will explain how they live their lives and how to recognise the different species. There are a limited number of places and will be filled on a first-come basis, so please book early. To find out more or check availability, please telephone Warks Wildlife Trust on 024 7630 2912 (office hours).

**Bat Walk**

**Charlecote Park (National Trust)  
Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2005 21:30 - 23:00**



Join us to find out more about these fantastic creatures. Led by John Waller of Warwickshire bat group. Organised by The National Trust, Charlecote Park. Advanced booking essential, contact 0778 865 8495. £3 per person (to be confirmed)

**Bat Walk**

**Charlecote Park (National Trust)  
Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2005 21:30 - 23:00**

Join us to find out more about these fantastic creatures. Led by John Waller of Warwickshire bat group. Organised by The National Trust, Charlecote Park. Advanced booking essential, contact 0778 865 8495. £3 per person (to be confirmed)

**National Bat Conference 2005**

**York University  
Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> - Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> Sept 2005**

**Bat Walk**

**Charlecote Park (National Trust)  
Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> Sept 2005 19:30 - 21:00**

Join us to find out more about these fantastic creatures. Led by John Waller of Warwickshire bat group. Organised by The National Trust, Charlecote Park. Advanced booking essential, contact 0778 865 8495. £3 per person (to be confirmed)

**Bat Walk**

**Charlecote Park (National Trust)  
Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> Sept 2005 19:30 - 21:00**

Join us to find out more about these fantastic creatures. Led by John Waller of Warwickshire bat group. Organised by The National Trust, Charlecote Park. Advanced booking essential, contact 0778 865 8495. £3 per person (to be confirmed)

The next issue of the Echo is out on 1<sup>st</sup> March. Deadline for entries is 21<sup>st</sup> Feb.

If you have any batty stories, anecdotes, interesting articles, research news then please send us the details so we can include them in the next newsletter. Contact details are shown below.