

THE WAKING WORLD.

January 2004.

Every one has their own conception of how their world wakes in the morning. Some love the town or city life with the sound of kettles whistling, children yelling, people calling, lights flashing, car doors banging, engines racing and radios blaring into life as the owners reluctantly and miserably head off to their places of work or whatever. Having once had to live somewhere like that for a while (the centre of Wimbledon), I personally can think of nothing more awful. To me there can only ever be one beginning to a day, and that is to listen to all the birds around me slowly wake up and greet the world with their wonderful array of songs, (just like here in Puddington). It starts just before dawn with the owls calling to each other to settle who is roosting where and just to check that all are on their own patch once more. The robins and blackbirds are the first to wake with their wonderful distinctive shrill songs. These are closely followed by all the other song birds in the area adding to the beautiful start of a new day, from the humble sparrow to the glorious song of the thrush, one of whom sings to me each day from the garden of the Old Parsonage. The song of a thrush is the next best thing to a nightingale in my mind. At this time of year we still only have our own native birds around us, but what wonderful collection they are, and now they are beginning to sing louder each day proclaiming to other birds that this little part of the world is theirs for the new season. Blackbirds now are particularly noisy because as soon as they wake up at the break of day, they start arguing with one another over territory, and then the last part of the day just as the light is going, off they go again, making an awful fuss, and you can see quite a few of them at a time as well. There are so many robins around this year, that you can hear one singing in nearly every tree.

We also have the bigger birds such as jack-doves, collared doves, pigeons, crows, magpies, rooks, buzzards and woodpeckers etc. Some are more welcome than others I know, but they all have their place in the make up of things, and without them all the balance of nature would be totally upset.

The smaller songbirds pick off any aphids and caterpillars etc. that fill our flower beds latter on in the year, (nature's little natural insecticides you could say). And then the larger birds such as rooks, jack-doves, magpies and buzzards are the clear up artists. Any carrion around that would otherwise fester and breed germs and disease, are soon cleared up by many of these. They are nature's mobile dustbins and mortuary workers I suppose you could say! Not very nice, but it's just part of life, and without them we would really be in trouble.

Walking along the lanes I have noticed that each part of the hedgerow has been taken over by a particular pair of birds already. Each morning I now know just where I will hear a blue tit or chaffinch, wren or great tit warning me not to come any closer because that is where they are setting up home. There is also a woodpecker on his favourite hollow branch down at The Lodge, you can hear it all around the village once he starts. Where else would you get all this for free? And the year has only just started!

I find it very hard to understand just why people are so keen to get to Mars and beyond. Hasn't man done enough to spoil this planet without starting on another. I reckon they should be spending all that money on putting our own planet back to how it should be first. They have already started to mess up the moon and now Mars by leaving landing crafts etc. on them, not to mention all that rubbish floating around in space. I have my own theory of what has happened to their space crafts that have stopped sending signals back to earth from Mars, perhaps there really are little space men up there after all, and they have put a spanner in the works, so to speak. I would love to see their faces back at 'NASSA', if a picture was sent back to earth from their cameras of a little Martian face looking down the lens at them, that would really give them something to think about wouldn't it!