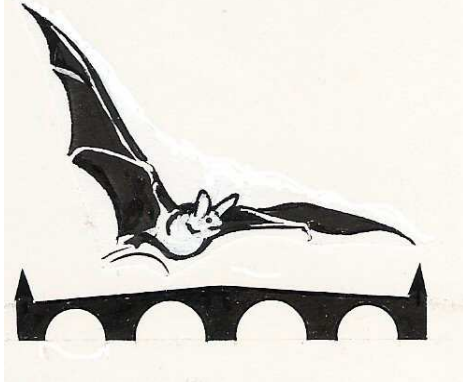


# THE NORTHERN NATTERER

CENTRAL SCOTLAND BAT GROUP NEWSLETTER

Issue 45 Autumn 2005



## CSBG JOINS THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY.

Thanks to the good offices of new member Mark Quinn and his brother –in-law, the group now has a website under development. If you want to see how it is going, the site is [www.csbg.co.uk](http://www.csbg.co.uk).

Several people have suggested that this newsletter should be sent out electronically to those of you who are on email. This would save SNH time and money, at the moment NN is photocopied in the Stirling Office by your secretary and/or editor and sent out by the office staff. An electronic newsletter would save paper, postage etc and thus be much more environmentally friendly and less time consuming. You would also get any illustrations in colour. Investigations are under way – and who knows, this may be the first email edition. (*it is! it is!*)

And another note about Mark, and wife Sue - they produced new recruit, Poppy, about three weeks after joining CSBG at the AGM, Congratulations!

## THE MOST IMPORTANT DATE IN YOUR BAT CALENDAR

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November, the Scottish Bat Conference at Battleby

If you haven't booked for this opportunity to get to know all the latest in bat work and developments as well as the chance to hear what other groups are up to and pinch their ideas, do it now!

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## OTHER DIARY DATES

### Thursday December 1<sup>st</sup>

Come along to the Allan Park hotel, Allan park, Stirling, at 8:00 pm for a social chat and get together, take time off from sorting out bat problems and get to know the other group members. New members especially welcome, but we'd like to see the old ones as well!

### Saturday February 18<sup>th</sup>

Hibernaculum visits to Doune and Aberfoyle. Meet at the outer carpark of the David Marshall Lodge, Aberfoyle. Time TBA

### Sunday February 26<sup>th</sup>

Hibernaculum visit to Doune castle, and exploring bridges on the disused railway line at Callander to look for new sites. Time and venue TBA

### Thursday January 6<sup>th</sup>

Bats of Myanmar and Australia. Talk by John Haddow at 7:30 pm at the Mayfield Centre, Stirling. As you may know John is over there now, taking an extended holiday after his recent – but early! – retirement.

### Thursday April 27<sup>th</sup>

AGM and plans for the 2006 batting season, Ballalan House, Stirling at 7:30 pm

## POSSIBILITIES FOR TRAINING

These will run if there is sufficient interest.

1. March 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Training John Haddow in the **use of heterodyne bat detectors**.

This will **not** feature computer analysis of bat sound.

2. Training for the **roost visitor licence** – this involves a mixture of practical and theoretical bat knowledge

3. Basic training in **identification, habits and habitats** of the most common bat species in the area. Fay and Ian Pascoe are willing to repeat this course at Killearn for any one interested.

4. Training for **potential batcarers**. We have one volunteer – any more?

If you are interested in any of these training sessions please get in touch with Ian Pascoe as soon as possible.

## CSBG DISPLAY

Don't forget this portable freestanding display is available for any events and functions. It is a great way to publicise the group, BCT and of course bats. We are looking for new places to set it up, particularly in the Falkirk area

## THE TAIL OF THE MYSTERY BAT



Does anyone fancy being a bit of a bat detective? Then join me next summer on a mission to identify a mystery bat species!!!

In September this year I stayed at Oatfield Guest House near Campbeltown on the Kintyre peninsula. This is a mere 15 miles from the Irish mainland as the bat flies and Ireland often has more than its fair share of species that are rare elsewhere. It's a well known fact that if you can't go out at night in Ireland without getting at least 5 Leisler's bats tangled in your hair/ beard, that is something that just never happens in Scotland.

Oatfield is a lovely place to stay: the house is beautiful, the hosts and their family are delightful and to cap it all, the house is a bat roost.

At the time of my visit (mid September) there were one or two bats flitting about in the garden but none were spotted leaving the roost. However the family did show me a dead bat they had found in the sitting room. This bat looked like an "odd" pipistrelle. It seemed much bigger, much darker and perhaps a bit shaggier than any pipistrelle I'd ever seen before.

I got very excited, got my callipers and bat ID key out and started making measurements and observations. (A bit of a challenge measuring the fifth finger as rigor mortis had set in.) A post calcarial lobe and forearm of 31mm confirmed pipistrelle. Measurements of the fifth finger and the forearm, the thumb and the wrist ratios all suggested it was a Nathusius' pipistrelle. For a brief time I thought perhaps, just perhaps, I

had discovered the first known Nathusius' breeding roost. But I could not see hairs on the ventral side of the tail, finding a Nathusius' maternity roost seemed too good to be true. Then I compared the bat to ALL the dead pipistrelles I have. Now I think it might be a rather dark 55 pipistrelle. Have a look at the photos and see what you think.

If you are heading westwards next summer you might like to book yourself a couple of nights at Oatfield (see [www.oatfield.org](http://www.oatfield.org)) do not forget to take a bat detector with you. And do let me know what species you think the bats are.

Pip pip

**Anne Youngman**

## BATS IN THE NEWS

### Police!

Sometime in the summer we heard that a bat had been involved in a police incident. Wildlife Liaison Officer PC Darren McVittie, was inspecting a broken headlamp on his official vehicle in Callander. Taking off the front grille to get at the fixings, he noticed something strange underneath the air cleaner – you guessed it, a live and angry bat! Fortunately, Darren knows about such things, (though he didn't wear gloves...) he removed the bat gently, put it in a box and took it back home to Lochearnhead. How long had it been travelling between the two places, we wonder?

### Vandalism in Dorset

Quote from a reliable newspaper, date unrecorded.

'A colony of more than 100 endangered bats has been killed in a vandal attack in woodland at Wareham Heath, Dorset.

Eighteen bat boxes, each containing about six bats were ripped down from conifer trees and left destroyed on the ground.

The colony was mostly of rare and vulnerable natterer (*sic*) bats. *There are only six known roost sites left in Britain. (Ed's italics!!!!)*

### And more from Anne Duncombe from one of her magazines

(Incidentally we would like to congratulate Anne on beating the contestants in the Radio programme 'Brain of Britain' with her question on moths – no-one knew what the names she gave referred to – they thought

'Argent and Gules' were heraldic terms, even when grouped with other moth type names!)

A reader asked why the million bats flying out of a cave in Sarawak always formed a circle before flying off in a 'sinusoidal wave' or spiral. Answers suggested that this confuses possible predators, or that as bat sonar is oriented directly ahead it would be blocked if the bats flew in a straight line. Another query wondered if different species always spiralled clockwise or anticlockwise. Anyone know the answer?

And in answer to another question about why no bats have evolved into preying on other bats, we are told that some indeed have done just that. New World species such as *Vampyrum spectrum*, and *Chrotopterus auritus* and New World species such as *Megaderma lyra* are said to be examples, also taking frogs, lizards and mice. *V.spectrum*, the false vampire, which is the largest bat in the new world has extremely long ears, and large fleshy protuberances on its nose.



#### And from the Galloway Gazette July 15th, 2005

Banner headlines declaiming "Bats could delay 'right of way' new developments". As so often occurs this was a complete misstatement of fact! It seems that during some property development, an old mill lade, beneath buildings that were to be demolished was being filled in, when a Daubentons' roost was found in a culvert. The developer thought this was nonsense –he had never seen any bats (*well he wouldn't have, would he?*). The reference to the right of way in the headlines has nothing to do with the bat colony, the fact being that because of the demolition work, a fence had been erected

across the right of way, effectively blocking the path. Why do bats always get the blame?

#### CLOSER TO HOME: JUNE ROOST COUNTS 2005

Once again different roosts showed both increases and decreases in numbers. Overall, pipistrelle numbers were down for the second year running, while the small numbers of brown longeared and Natterers' roosts showed small increases.

The total count for the 10 pipistrelle roosts was 3459 compared with 4009 in 2004, a decrease of 13.7% which is of some concern. Three roosts accounted for most of this, the numbers declining by 250 each case.

One of our long term roosts at Culcreuch castle in Fintry showed the number of 55 pips to be similar to last year, but small number of 45s emerged from a different part of the roof, according to counter Beccy Osborn. We wonder if this is a new phenomenon, or something that had been previously overlooked?

A new 55 pipistrelle roost was found while a brown long eared count was being made.

#### NATIONAL BAT CONFERENCE, YORK SEPTEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> 2005



Several CSBG members travelled down by minibus to this conference, picking up Stuart Smith from Lothian Bat Group on the way.

Those of us who had not been to a National Conference for some years were most impressed by the fact that over 240 delegates attended and that many of them were professionally involved with bat conservation.

The sessions focussed on International Bat Work and Research, Biodiversity,

Surveying and Monitoring and the Work of Bat Groups and Bat Work generally. If anyone is interested in obtaining copies of abstracts from the conference – please contact Ian Pascoe. The titles available are: A Standard for Bat Surveys; Bat Conservation across Europe – the agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European bats and latest developments; Conserving the Critically Endangered Seychelles Sheath tailed Bat; (*why not go there for your next holiday – bats are as good an excuse as any! ED*). Managing Landscapes to Enable Species to Survive and Adapt to Climate Change; Have I got Barbastelles or Bechstein's in my Garden?; Natterer's bats and Commercial Forest Plantations; Bat Roost Restoration and Breeding Population Trends at Vincent Wildlife Trust Reserves; Agricultural Management and Biodiversity: bats and their Prey as Bioindicators; Passive Surveillance for Bat Lyssaviruses and its Importance in Bat Conservation; Agri –Environment Schemes in England and Opportunities for Bat Conservation and last but not least; The Religion and Politics of Bat Work in Ireland – (*It seems that brown longeared bats prefer Catholic churches and Natterer's favour the buildings of the Church of Ireland – though it was admitted that the choice was probably influenced more by architecture than sectarianism!!*)

practice is viewed as controversial in some circles, please let Ian Pascoe know if you would like a copy sent to you.

*YOUR COMMITTEE*

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*CSBG is supported by SNH and given much help by Anne Youngman, Scottish Bat Officer with BCT*

**Please note**

**The dual membership between the Bat Conservation Trust and bat groups is now only available for the first year of membership. In second and subsequent years members must join both organisations separately. I only found this out when trying to sort out the subscription of one of our members. The cost of the dual for your first year scheme is now £27.50, of which £22.50 goes to BCT and £5.00 to the group. Please amend the way you pay your subscriptions accordingly.**

BCT has produced a new document discussing the rationale for the wearing of gloves when handling bats, as apparently this