



Nocturnal News

Merseyside and West Lancs Bat Group

VOLUME 49

OCTOBER 2008

GROUP CONTACT DETAILS:

Charlie Liggett:
Email:
asfn64@dsl.pipex.com
Phone:
01772 617906

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Events and Surveys	2
Book review	3
Bat Conference	4
BTC Waterways Survey	5
Returning Ringo	6
Sefton and Calderstones	8
Rainforest Ramblings	9
Website and Forum Kids	10
Bats for Kids	11
Events	12

Hello to all members!

Firstly we must give a big apology to all the Bat Group members because there hasn't been a Newsletter since summer 2007. Becky Gorman, who was the editor, has been fortunate enough to get a research post with the Max Planck Institute working on primates in Sulawesi. Pressure of other bat work during the summer has prevented other people from filling this gap. Helen Greaves from Merseyside BioBank has very kindly agreed to act as editor and any articles for future editions should be sent to her at Helen.Greaves@MerseysideBiobank.org.uk

Review of the Year Charlie Liggett

Membership I think it can be said that this year has been successful for the Group. We now have about 60 members and 30 people are carrying out bat surveys on a regular basis. We also have quite a few new members.

There were 23 members at the AGM in February where an excellent talk was given by Steve Parker of the South Lancashire Bat Group on the millponds in their area, which they surveyed from 2004-2006, with a colossal number of man-hours devoted to the project. The project is available on a CD, if any member is interested and these can be obtained from Charlie Liggett.

The membership has been fairly fecund during the year and 3 new junior bat-workers have been added to our numbers. Fiona Whitfield (nee Robertson), Julie Kirk and Jane Sansbury have all given birth during the summer and David and Jane have already taken Ian, aged 4 ½ months, out on their bat surveys!

We have also lost (at least temporarily) two stalwarts – as previously mentioned, Becky Gorman is in Sulawesi for a year, from

where we get glimpses of her interesting life by email, and Vicky Powell is with her other half working in Sumatra for 3 years. We hope to hear about amazing bats from both of these in the future. Beats doing a bat survey in pouring rain in deepest Merseyside!

Caroline Maghenga (nee Roper) is now back from Kenya with her husband Felix and raring to go with bat work! Pam Liggett, after 7 years of fulfilling this role, will shortly pass on her duties as book-keeper to Stella Shackel. Helen Greaves has also been co-opted to the Committee.

Richard Burkmar, the Biodiversity Officer for North Merseyside has moved to a similar post at a national level at Lancaster and he will be badly missed. Richard has been a major catalyst for the regeneration of the Bat Group, not least in obtaining the massive Awards for All grant, which resulted in the North Merseyside surveys and all the equipment for them, including bat detectors. However, the good news is that Richard has agreed to stay on the Committee and will still be able to help the group.

Review of the Year *con't*

Events

We had a good number of bat walks and other events during the year and, considering the dire weather for most of the so-called summer, nearly all of them took place in decent dry weather. Some of them have produced new members for the group.

Furthermore, a very successful workshop on the use of a computer programme called Bat Sound was organised at Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve, Rufford, on 30 May and 1 June and a follow-up practical training event was held at Inner Marsh Farm RSPB reserve and Burton Manor on 13 June. These events were funded mostly from the residue of a large grant of £8153 from Awards for All and from a

grant of £500 from the Green Machine. Speaking of the Green Machine Grant, Nic Harding (who did all the spade work to get the grant and also used his thespian abilities to make a video about it), and Charlie Liggett went to a high profile "do" on the 3rd June at the new Liverpool Arena where the Bat Group won the Green Machine Award for the Best Environmental Project for 2008. All the Great and Good of Merseyside were at the bash, including such glitterati as Ricky Tomlinson, Phil Redmond and Cherie Booth.

Four members of the bat group attended the Annual Bat Conference at the University of Reading on 12-14 September. It was a good conference with some interesting papers and some deep discussions in the bar! A summary of the conference is presented in this newsletter.

Sefton Park

Unfortunately, not so positive news for bats emanated from Sefton Park, where the £20 million or so "restoration" of the park included draining the main lake and chopping down trees and bushes. The work was mostly done in the spring and summer, at a time which was potentially most harmful to the bats (and other wildlife). Various meetings with the bosses of the restoration resulted in some alteration to the plans for draining the lake. The awful timing of this work took place after at least two surveys by environmental consultants and a plethora of recommendations. Who was it said that the pen is mightier than the JCB? Our group, especially Lawrence Armstrong, is monitoring the situation vis-à-vis the bats, especially Daubenton's, which feed over the lake in good numbers.

Surveys and Bats

The bat surveys are still continuing in North Merseyside and on the Wirral and a total of 30 surveyors have been beavering away over the summer, despite the appallingly wet weather. The results are being collected and analysed by Charlie Liggett and if you have not sent off your survey results for 2008 yet, please send them to him soon. Excel spreadsheets to collate your results on have been emailed out to all those people we have contacts out. If you have not yet received your spreadsheet and want one, please email Helen Greaves at Helen.Greaves@MerseysideBioBank.org.uk

Rachael Rhodes with her bat detector at the ready at the Ince Blundell survey



Below, members at the Bat Sound Workshop in May



"The "restoration" of Sefton park included draining the main lake and chopping down trees and bushes"

Review of the Year con't

In terms of the animals themselves- the bats- there have been some highlights and some lowlights.

Lowlights mostly resulted from the poor weather during the summer. Pipistrelles seemed to be about 2 weeks later than average in giving birth in 2008 and quite a few grounded bats were found in July and August, possibly because the juveniles were unable to feed successfully.

One highlight, however, was the discovery of a Nathusius' Pipistrelle in a pile of wood in Lincolnshire. What has this

“One highlight, however, was the discovery of a Nathusius' Pipistrelle in a pile of wood in Lincolnshire.”

to with Merseyside, I hear you ask! Well, the wood was brought from Kirkby, after being plastic wrapped, and the bat was thought to have hidden away in the timber in Kirkby. After a number of emails and phone calls, it was brought over to Liverpool by Caroline Tero from Lincoln and was released into a bat box in a wood, near to the timber yard. This is the third record for Merseyside or SW Lancashire, following one south of Preston and

one at Ainsdale, near Southport. It is probable that sometime we will find a roost of this species in our area. **A full**

report on this story is provided by Louise Mills on page 6.

Other highlights were 12 Noctules roosting in bat boxes at Mere Sands Wood last winter and a Brandt's bat roost in a house at Croston, between Ormskirk and Preston. Incidentally, in 3 adjoining houses in this village there are roosts of Brandt's, Common Pipistrelles and Brown Long-eared bats respectively. It was also wonderful to watch and hear the high numbers of Common and Soprano Pipistrelles plus Noctules swooping low over the water at Taylor Park, St Helens, during a bat walk.



Above: Noctules at Mere Sands Wood

Book review by Charlie Liggett - The Mammals of Cheshire. Liverpool University Press. 2008.

In 2008 the Cheshire Mammal Group brought out an excellent book on the Mammals of Cheshire. Since the area that Merseyside and West Lancs Bat Group covers extends from Chester in the south as far north as Preston, the Bat Group was able to contribute some data about bat species and distribution for the Wirral to the records accumulated towards the publication of this book. The book is well worth the £20 that I think that I paid for it. The quality of the photographs and line drawings is of a consistently high level, whilst the text is very readable. It has been almost a century since the last book on the mammals of this area and a great deal of knowledge has been gained in that time. Sadly, however, the abundance of many species has declined in inverse proportion to the number of naturalists who are studying them.

In Cheshire there are eight species of bats known to be breeding, whilst two more are recorded as being present in the county. Within the book, maps are provided with the sites where each species has been recorded both pre-2000 and post-2000. The text gives a brief summary of the status and history; the UK and worldwide distribution; a description (which covers its ecology and behaviour), and key identification features. The species which are known to breed in the county are: Whiskered, Brandt's, Natterer's, Daubenton's, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown long-eared and Noctule. Nathusius's Pipistrelle has been recorded only from Budworth Mere and Leisler's bat has been recorded since 2000 only, on farmland near Chester Zoo.

If any of our members are interested in acquiring a copy of this book they can contact the Cheshire Mammal Group via their web site at www.rECord-LRC.co.uk or telephone 01244 383749.

National Bat Conference, 2008

Four members of the Bat Group attended a very interesting Bat Conference in Reading in September, 2008.

David Hill and Frank Greenaway from Sussex have been investigating the bat populations in woodlands in their part of the world for a number of years. They use sophisticated electronic sounds, which simulate the bat calls from various species and lure them into traps, principally harp traps. They were originally focusing on Bechstein's bats and their work has been widely reported in previous conferences and elsewhere. In the course of this study they inevitably captured other species and they presented their findings at the Reading Conference. They caught more species and more bats in oak woodlands, and those woodlands with a better understory were more species rich.

Henry Schofield, who is well known to the long-term members of our group, reported on the work that the Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT) has been doing to create roosts for Lesser Horseshoe bats. VWT now has 36 reserves for this species, which range from small cottages to disused churches in Wales, England and Ireland, and a significant proportion of the population of the species roosts in these buildings. Many of the buildings have been adapted to cater for the bats and to create the conditions that the bats like.

Jon Flanders of Bristol University talked about his work on four underground sites in Dorset, where he caught a total of 838 bats of 8 species during the course of 3 years! The bats were caught in the autumn when they engage in an activity known as swarming, when large

numbers fly outside suitable cave entrances. This is the time of the year when mating takes place and swarming behaviour is associated with this. Jon spoke about the factors that make a cave attractive to bats.

Eleni Papadatou then spoke about the situation regarding bats and bat workers in Greece, which, in common of many other countries in Eastern Europe, has many bats and bat species (34 known to date) but has hardly any bat workers. She says there are perhaps 2 or 3 bat workers in the whole country!

Hugo Rebello gave an interesting insight into predicting the distribution of Barbastelle bats in Portugal using computer modelling techniques. Using these techniques the researches were able to find 15 new populations of the species in Portugal and extend its known distribution 100 miles further south.

Mark Holdereid, again from Bristol University, (what a hotbed of bat research Gareth Jones has created there!) gave a very interesting summary of work on bat-pollination and its sensory ecology. There are a very specialised group of bats in the neo-tropics that feed on nectar. It seems that many plants, at least 1000 in all, have developed chiropterophily – that is to say that the plants attract the bats to pollinate them by using a range of stratagems. They use dull colours, strong scents and flowers that physically stand out. They also, remarkably, attract the bats by standing out from the background echo-acoustically. It seems that the flowers pollinated by bats have developed special features which enable the bats to distinguish them from other vegetation by using echo-location. I always wondered why bats that feed on nectar etc need echo-location. Why do they not

simply use smell and sight, as do the flying-foxes? It also seems that these bats have also minimised errors caused by Doppler shift. If you want to know what Doppler shift is have a look in a physics textbook or a good book on bats such as "Bats, Biology and Behaviour" by John Altringham.

Stephanie Murphy from Sussex University gave an

interesting paper on the social calls of Brown Long-eared bats. It has been known for a long time that bats use low-frequency calls, so-called social calls, which they do not use for catching prey but are used for attracting mates and other information to other bats of the same species. These calls are often within human hearing range.

Gail Armstrong gave an amusing and honest talk, discussing the pros and cons of her work caring for bats and their rehabilitation. She is going to come to our bat group's AGM on 6th February, 2009 to tell us about her experiences and I can highly recommend this talk.

Emma Stone, again from Bristol, discussed the effect of light on commuting Lesser Horseshoe bats. Colin Blair, a new member of our group, is a member of the Institute of Lighting Engineers, and will write an article in the next newsletter about Bats and Lighting.

Certainly the most depressing aspect of the conference was the talk by



Brown Long-eared bats



"Charlie's
Christmas list
from [www.
speleobooks.com](http://www.speleobooks.com) !!!
He has been very
good this year."



Emily Davis. Emily runs a brilliant company which sells lovely bat clothing, jewellery, books etc and lives in upstate New York State in the western USA (www.speleobooks.com).

She is a dedicated bat worker and close to her home there are many caves that are used as hibernacula by thousands of bats. She reported on the deaths of thousands of bats in this area of America caused by an agent that has been named White Nose Syndrome. It is not known what is the causal agent of the syndrome but a white fungal growth appears on the nose, ears, wings and tail membrane of affected bats. The bats often shift to colder regions of the hibernation

caves and often emerge from

hibernation in the depths of winter, when there is no food available, and therefore they die, apparently from starvation. More and more bats are dying and the disease is spreading. See the following web site for more information about this distressing and alarming news - <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/mammals/inba/Batallment.html> As usual most of the really important work at the conference was conducted in the bar but I also went on a very good bat walk around the campus of Reading University when we had 2 species of Pipistrelle, Natterer's, Daubenton's, Noctule and Brown long-eared. I also found out a lot more about using the

*A cluster of little
brown bats exhibiting
the symptoms of
white-nose syndrome.*



**Photo Credit: Al
Hicks, New York
Department of
Environmental
Conservation**

BCT Waterways Bat Survey

by Rachael Rhodes

This summer Helen Greaves and I took part in the BCT Waterways survey. This survey focuses on Daubentons Bats and feeds into national monitoring of this species. We had already talked about surveying the canal in Burscough, where we both lived at the time and thought it would be useful to undertake the survey as part of the Waterways survey as then the results would feed into a national scheme. However, BCT had other ideas and sent us survey transects in Halsall - not too far away at least!

The survey is easy to undertake as it involves just two site visits during the month of August. The survey is carried out along a 1km transect which is split into 10 survey points. At each survey point you stand for 4 minutes and count the number of Daubenton passes. Our first task was to work out our stopping points. One of the transects sent to us was one which Stan Irwin had carried out a few years ago and so we had to try and find Stan's stopping points. We undertook our first survey with great expectations, and saw a couple of Daubentons bats and a few Pipistrelles, not a bad start but we had hoped to see more. Helen decided to try a transect along the next section of canal and had great success seeing a total of 9 Daubentons during her first survey visit. We decided to adopt this transect also. The difference between these

transects was that this second transect passed through a cutting which was sheltered and tree lined and we saw many Daubentons in this section of transect. The survey results recorded a total of 2 Daubenton passes during the first visit and 8 Daubenton passes during the second visit on transect one, and on the second transect 9 Daubenton passes during the first visit and 14 Daubenton passes during our second visit.

Both Helen and I thought that the BCT waterways survey would be a good survey for the bat group to adopt in a similar co-ordinated way as to the LiverBats project. The Waterways survey would not only help to feed into national monitoring but also to help gain a picture of the distribution of Daubentons across Merseyside and West Lancs. Our area has numerous waterways, the Leeds - Liverpool Canal, St Helens Canal, River Alt and numerous lakes and brooks and we currently know relatively little about the distribution of Daubentons along these watercourses. Due to the simple methodology of this survey and the fact that it only focuses on one species makes this an excellent survey for beginners! If anyone is interested in taking part in the survey, we'll get a number of sites from BCT together in the summer next year. *Watch this space!*

Returning Ringo

By Louise Mills

Charlie Liggett received an interesting email on the 10th March of this year. Caroline Tero from the Lincolnshire Bat Group was enquiring as to whether there was anyone in our bat group who would look after a male Nathusius' Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) that she had been looking after since 4th February this year.

He had been discovered in a shipment of wood to Chris Sharp Cabinets in Scampton, Lincolnshire on the 4th February when they employees opened the shrink-wrap on the timber three days after delivery. Caroline collected Ringo, as he was later named, the same day that he was discovered, but couldn't release him as it wasn't clear where he had come from.

Caroline contacted Erika Dahlberg of the BTC, who spoke to all the companies involved and on further investigation it was found that the timber had been imported in a container by boat from the US and stored for 4-6 weeks in an open storage area at Denholme Specialist Handling, in Simonswood, Kirkby. From here the wood was re-sorted, bound with a metal band and shrink wrapped before shipping it to the furnisher makers on 1st February. As a result, Erika came to the conclusion that it was most likely that Ringo had roosted in the wood at the timber import company in Kirkby, but permission to release him had to be sought from the animal health department at Defra.

When permission was granted, that's when Caroline contacted Charlie as it was decided to release Ringo somewhere near to the timber storage company, but she had no joy when she asked BCT for details of bat carers here, which is where I came in. Before I go into that though, I just want to explain a bit of background about me so that you know why I was so keen to get involved.



When I was about 9 years old, I had my first encounter with a bat. My family were standing outside our house in Banbury, Oxfordshire, saying goodbye to some friends that had visited us, when to our surprise the bat that was often seen flying around outside suddenly landed on the pavement over the other side of the road from us. My Dad and I went to have a look at it and thought it most odd that it didn't seem to fly away and just sat there. My Dad decided to pick it up with a carrier bag that he just happened to have to hand and took it into our back garden and placed it on the straw in the empty rabbit hutch of mine, so that we could inspect it (not that he'd ever had experience of bats or anything at that time). It still didn't do much, so we went looking for moths to feed it. It refused to eat and it didn't look injured so we were a bit perplexed as to what to do for it. My Dad decided the best thing was to leave it outside so that if it wanted to fly away it could, so he hung it up on the huge Leylandii tree we had growing out the front of our house and left it for the night.

The next day we checked to see whether it had gone or not and found that it was still exactly where we had left it and unfortunately there had been a frost that night, so it had a fine coating of frost over its fur too, the poor thing. We decided to take it indoors as it obviously wasn't right. Don't ask me why, but it was then hung upside down on our curtains in the living room initially, but it was then later decided that it was so weakened that it wasn't able to hang that well, so it was transferred onto a rag of some sort on our coffee table, which delighted me as I could observe it in amazement really close up.

My parents left the room and I noticed that as the bat moved slightly the rag looked like it was gradually slipping off

the table, thus I went to push the rag away from the edge of the table but to my astonishment it turned around and bit me, locking its jaws onto my finger. Now as you can imagine I was horrified, especially as my parents had been making jokes about making sure that I didn't get bitten, as I'd turn into a vampire otherwise. In my shock and panic I immediately jumped up, pulling the bat up with me dangling from the end of my finger and I vigorously shook my hand to get it to let go which it promptly did but not before being flung by the perpetual force of my shaking hand away from me towards the floor. Unfortunately this resulted in its untimely death, which was not at all my intention and I have been greatly ashamed this ever since. This sad encounter however has prompted some good still in the respect of prompting my fascination of bats. It wasn't until I started my Wildlife Conservation degree at Liverpool John Moores University that I have done any more about it though. It was at the open day for the University that I first met Louise Wisnewski. I was so impressed and inspired by her warm bubbly personality and on seeing the passion and enthusiasm that she had about wildlife and ecology that I decided to take my degree there rather than Liverpool Uni (thankfully). I say thankfully because without meeting her, I may not have then been told about and got involved with our bat group.

As soon as I found out that it is possible to look after sick, injured or abandoned bats that I knew that's exactly what I wanted to do. I think bats are adorable, cute creatures and often refer to them as flying mice to those that think otherwise. I promptly got my rabies injections and attended all the training sessions and meetings I could to learn as much as I could about them and I'd been dying to look after a bat ever since. So, as soon as the email came around from Charlie asking if anyone would like to look after Ringo, I replied immediately and offered my services. When Charlie said that I could have him, I was ecstatic. I couldn't help but shout out loud with joy when I read the reply at Uni. I was so excited that I even had dreams about looking after him (I know I'm sad but it's true). It seemed to take ages until Caroline was able to bring him back up here, but sure on the 17th April he finally arrived.

Caroline just kept him in a cardboard shoebox which contained a bit of cardboard packaging material from an electrical device or something which just had a couple of holes cut out of the edges that acted as refugia for him to hide away in and hang from. Some kitchen towel lined the inside of the box too so that any urine or faeces left could be easily removed by replacing it with clean kitchen towel. There was a lid from a 35mm camera film that acted as a water bowl and a small pottery bowl kept his daily supply of mealworms and wax worms in and that was it. So simple but effective. For a change, toilets rolls twisted in the middle could also be used instead of the packing material. His food was dusted with some calcium powder typically used for supplementing the diet of reptiles but apart from that, that was it.

Caroline helped me bat proof the room I would let him fly in, something I hadn't even thought of before but a necessity as Pipistrelles are so small that they can easily escape into any small hole and be lost forever. She showed me how to handle him how much to feed him and that was it. It was all up to me to care for him then.

The first time I let him out to fly was amazing. He flew for a good couple of hours bless him. He particularly liked hiding under a picture on my wall. Each time he came out he got more cunning about evading his recapture, but apart from that he was well behaved and a delight to look after. He never bit me once.

A week later the weather was good enough to release him and he was fit and strong enough to go. Charlie had arranged with the ranger at Kirkby Wood to install a bat box in one of the trees there, and on 25th April we put him in the box to let him go. It was only a few minutes until we saw him fly away. Obviously I was sad to see him go, but happy that his release back into the wild was deemed a success. I wish that there were a way we could have tracked him to monitor his progress, but lets all hope that he's fine and flying around Kirby Wood happily now.



Sefton and Calderstones Bats

Lawrence Armstrong took his work for the Bat Group as inspiration for his honours project at LJMU. In this article he explains the reasoning, methods and potential outcomes of the study, and the benefits it could have for bats in the study area.

While doing the surveys for the MWLBG at Sefton Park, I noticed that the bats fed almost exclusively around the vegetated side of the lake. I thought that there must have been a higher abundance of insects due to the vegetation, quite obvious really, and the first thing that came to the enquiring mind of a passer-by who said "you'll find more insects and bats near the trees alright".

These observations spurred me to do my final year honours project at John Moores University on bats at Sefton & Calderstones Park in Liverpool. What I am aiming to illustrate is that bats that feed on or near water prefer areas with bank vegetation. What will also be interesting is that at the time of the study, one park (Sefton) has no water (the Boating lake was drained to allow repairs to the banks of the lake) and the other (Calderstones) does, so this should be reflected in the insect and bat abundance.

It is hoped that correlations may be found between the presence or absence of water, vegetated and non-vegetated areas and the number of bats and insects recorded. Insect abundance and type both spatially and temporally may also show interesting results. The primary aim is to conduct a study that may inform conservation efforts with regards to habitat creation/restoration to support the species under investigation. At the very least the project will capture a snapshot of these areas and their inhabitants at a particular point in time. I should add that this is not a unique study but was an original idea of mine. The answer could be assumed by any non-academic as shown above, but there was a burning desire to see the figures on paper and to compare the differences between these areas.

I have been catching insects at both sites (since July) and sampling two small transects 24 metres in length (their small size was due to access restrictions at Calderstones so Sefton had to match this to allow for data to fit for analysis which will be run on Minitab or SPSS). Samples are collected 1.5hrs before, during and after sunset. Light levels are taken along with ambient air temperature at the start of each sample. Insects are counted, measured for wingspan above or below 5mm

(a favoured prey size for this specie according to one source) and these will be identified down to taxonomic family. Samples are taken along the transects from the air and over the lakes, where reaching with a sweep net will allow.

Along both transects at each site, two-minute bat surveys are performed three times on each night between sampling insects. My original idea was to do this for the Common and Soprano Pipistrelles due to their detectability, but Daubentons have worked their way into my study so I may allow them to stay in. I also count feed buzzes within two-minute periods to illustrate a relationship between prey/bat distribution and vegetation. Hopefully, I will be able to show that the work at Sefton Park, (while the Boating lake was drained to allow repair work to the banks) has affected the bats by comparing this area with Calderstones.

I would like to repeat this project next year and compare results from that year to this to see if Sefton Park is recovering regarding insect and bat abundance, this could still be compared to Calderstones only then, I would like to add more sites to the study for other comparisons.

Regarding the results for the MWLBG 2008: Although the lake at Sefton had been drained throughout most of my surveying for the group this year, there were some but only marginal in bat numbers compared with 2007. I did find bats swarming on one of my points where I usually record no bats, this was a little unusual and I think this may be due to an insect emergence or some other swarming behaviour. People have commented that insects such as butterflies and bees have suffered this year due to the damp weather. I only got 15 days of favourable conditions in the weather needed to do the sampling. Four of which I had to surrender to the group survey, two at both of the above sites as I was doing two in the absence another member at Calderstones. It is possible that particular families of insects have been affected more than others and this may have a delayed effect on bat numbers. There's loads more to do on this kind of study and I aim to do just that.

Lawrence Armstrong

Ramblings from a rainforest

Vicky Powell of the Bat Group writes...

Hi guys,

Hope you're all okay and everything's going well with the bat group.

Time is flying here in Sumatra – I can't believe I've already been here two and a half months. Everything's going very well so far. We're just in the process of bringing our first lot of camera traps in to see what beasties we've managed to catch on film. So far we have some very comical pictures of long and pig-tailed macaques (caught in the act of trying to break/steal our cameras!), a Pangolin, a Leopard Cat, a couple of Malayan Porcupines, a few Lesser Mouse Deer, a Malay Civet and lots of Bearded Pigs. The next lot of cameras are going to be put deeper into the forest reserve and we're really hoping to get some Tapir and Tigers on film.

I'm afraid I don't really have much to report on the bat front. My first encounter with bats here was unfortunately in a market in Java, where some large Malayan Flying Foxes (*Pteropus vampyrus*) were being sold as a form of medicine. There's an old wives tales here that eating the flesh of bats can cure asthma and sadly it is believed by everyone, young and old. I don't know who started that rumour but they should be shot!!! Luckily there didn't appear to be many for sale compared to the hundreds of birds. At the time, I only spoke a little Indonesian but I gathered that flying foxes are quite difficult for them to catch, hence there only being a few for sale... which I guess is one positive.

I've seen many micro bats flying around camp here in Sumatra and many larger bats up in the forest canopy but without some netting it's very difficult to know what species they are. I've recently been in touch with Matt Struebig of the Kalimantan bat project and we're hoping to set up some systematic surveys of the site early next year, which will be very interesting. I will keep you posted on that.

All the best,

Vicki.

The Pig-tailed Macaque
caught on camera



NEW! Bat Group Website and Forum

You will be pleased to know that our group has a brand new website where you will be able to check times and dates for events and keep updated on local bat news. The website is hosted by Merseyside BioBank and the new address is as follows:

www.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/bats

Five members of the group have been to training on how to edit the website and they will be able to change the content from the comfort of their own homes by using a special login. We are currently looking for some good digital bat related photos to spruce up the site so if you have any or any content that you would like to put

on the site please contact any of the following people.

Charlie Liggett asfn64@dsl.pipex.com

Anna Scott avscott@yahoo.co.uk

Tony Parker

Tony.Parker@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

Karen Nolan

karenanolan@hotmail.co.uk

Thom Dallimore

thomdallimore@yahoo.co.uk

www.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/bats

NEW! Bat Group Website and Forum

Cont'd

As well as the new website, we also have a new online forum for the bat group. The point of a forum is to make bringing people together to discuss ideas, observations and suggestions easier.

Forums may be used for novices to contact experts - "I think I saw a green bat, is this possible?"; or for more complicated discussions: "Would anyone like to meet in the pub to discuss the subtle difference between the 45 & 55 pip?"

What you discuss on your forum is up to you but it is where you can share your own knowledge and seek advice from others.

Simple steps to view the Bat Group Forum

We have made the Bat Group Forum private so therefore to access the Forum you need to contact Karen Nolan by emailing her on karenanolan@hotmail.co.uk to gain the password.

Please do not pass this on to others as we wish to keep the information posted on the forum as secure as possible.

- 1) The first thing you need to do to get involved with the bat group forum is sign up to the BioBank website which is the top right-hand corner of the BioBank website www.merseysidebiobank.org.uk. Remember your user name and password... unlike Charlie who came to training and had forgotten it! This may seem like a bit of a hassle now but trust us it will all be worth it in the long run!
- 2) To access the Forum please go to www.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/forum. This is the homepage for the forum and here in the boxes on the screen you will see that the bat group is listed under hosted groups.
- 3) If you just wish to view the topics that have been posted, all you need to do is click on the Bat Group link and then enter the password received from Karen into password box and click login.
- 4) You are now able to click on the different posts, which are listed in blue and look at the conversations that are already on there.

To post on the forum

- 1) To post replies or start a new discussion you need to sign up and log in to the forum. The button for this is in the top right-hand corner of the forum homepage (www.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/forum) or can be gained by clicking on the POST REPLY or POST NEW TOPIC buttons. Here is where you need to have remembered your username and password, which you now enter and then click log in.
- 2) When you login, after a few seconds (*please be patient!*) you will be redirected back to the Forum Homepage.
- 3) Now click on the Bat Group title, enter the password on the password page and you will be allowed access to the Bat Group Forum again.
- 4) You can now post a reply to a topic that is already being discussed or start a new topic. This is fairly easy to do by typing in the text and adding attachments and even smilies if you wish - and then making sure you click the submit button at the bottom of the text area.



Website trainees with trainer Aaron Matthews



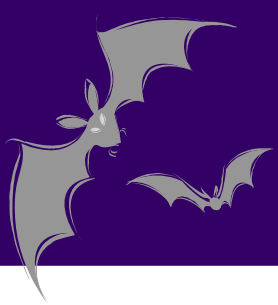
SCREENSHOT OF THE NEW BAT GROUP WEBSITE

You can even choose to be contacted each time a reply is posted by email. This is very useful as it saves you from having to keep checking the forum if you don't want to. You can also do this for the whole forum or for a whole topic by clicking the link on the bar in the bottom left hand corner of the page – 'SUBSCRIBE FORUM'.

AND FINALLY - If you get stuck at any point, please feel free to use the FAQ link on all the forum pages or email

aaron.matthews@merseysidebiobank.org.uk

Bats For Kids



*What do you get if you cross an ice cube with a vampire?
Frost bite!*

Mother vampire to son.....Hurry up and eat your diner before it clots!!

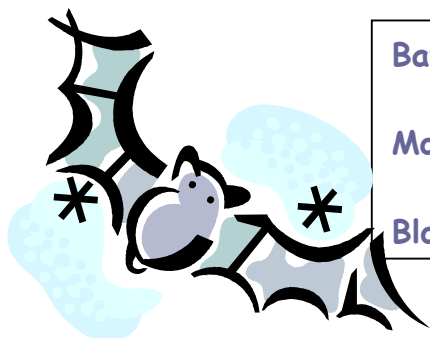
Across

1. You can make a _____ for bats to live in! (2 words)
2. A winged insect bats love to eat!
3. How do bats sleep? (2 words)
7. What would you use to listen to bats? (2 words)
8. What season do bats hibernate?

Down

1. Vampire Bats drink _____
4. Bats use their _____ to hear their prey
5. Bats fly at _____ time
6. What type of creature a bat is (and human too!)
8. What do bats use to fly?

Bat box	Wings	Mammal
Moth	Bat Detector	Upside down
Blood	Night	Winter
		Ears



*What do bats do vampires like most?
Blood vessels!*



Bat Group Events for Winter 2008/09

Saturday 22nd November

World Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool. See Museum web site at <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml/> for directions and information on parking. In Clore Natural History Centre- talk by Charlie Liggett "Introduction to Bats" at 10am approximately followed by a chance to meet some live bats, plus some batty activities. All are welcome but this will primarily be aimed at children. If you have children or know children interested in bats then bring them along. All ages welcome. Finish at about 12.30.

Sunday 23rd November.

Trip to Gail Armstrong's at Silverdale, N Lancashire to see her bat hospital. There is room for 2 or 3 people to go on this trip with the people training for a licence. First come first served. Apply to Charlie Liggett on asfn64@dsl.pipex.com or 01772 617906 for details.

Tuesday 8th December.

Bat Group Christmas Meal. Maharajah Restaurant London Road, Liverpool. 7pm. Meet at this very good Goan restaurant. Not your average burn-your-mouth-out style. Notify Charlie Liggett by end of November by latest if you want to go.

Wednesday 14th January.

Talk by Charlie Liggett "Bats" at Ainsdale Discovery Centre. 7pm. This is an event booked through Fiona Sunners, Sefton Coast Ranger. Contact on 0151 934 2967 or Fiona.Sunners@leisure.sefton.gov.uk

Saturday 17th January.

Group Visit to Twilight Zone at Chester Zoo. Meet at Zoo at 9.45am latest. The usual admission prices apply but if we have more than 15 we can book as a group, which is much cheaper and we also get other reductions so it will probably cost £7 for each adult instead of £14.95. Hence notify Charlie Liggett ASAP if you intend to go on this outing. We will get a talk by one of the presenters and then you can spend as long as you like going around this wonderful Zoological Gardens. See the link at <http://www.chesterzoo.org/Visit/MainAttractions/Twilight%20Zone.aspx> for more details.

Tuesday 10 February.

Bat Group AGM at Calderstones Park at 7pm-9pm. Venue is The Barn. Calderstones Road, Liverpool - near southern end of Cromptons Lane at SJ405878.

The AGM will be followed by a talk by Gail Armstrong of North Lancashire Bat Group about her experience of running a bat hospital. Gail is a great speaker with a wonderful self-deprecating wit.

Saturday 7th March

Another family day at Liverpool Museum at 10am. See details above for 22nd November.