



Pete Guest Award 2023 Nominations

Background

The Pete Guest Award is given in memory of Pete Guest who was an inspirational figure in the bat conservation movement for more than 20 years. Each year, the bat world is invited to nominate people who have made an outstanding practical contribution to bat conservation. The criteria for the award includes: dedication, innovation, enthusiasm and inspiration in making a difference, both to bats and to people, helping make BCT's vision become a reality.

Previous winners of the award are:

2022. Morgan Hughes
2021. Tony Atkinson
2020. Michelle Young
2019. Gail Armstrong
2018. Steve and Fiona Parker
2017. Donna & Graham Street
2016. James Shipman
2015. Arthur Rivett
2014. Colin Morris
2013. Maggie Brown
2012. Daniel Hargreaves
2011. Peter & Maggie Andrews
2010. Roger Ransome
2009. Sue Swift
2008. Tom McOwat
2007. Phil Burkinshaw
2006. John Haddow
2005. Phil Richardson
2004. Tony Hutson
2003. Jenny Clark*
2002. Shirley Thompson*



* BCT set up an award for "Outstanding voluntary contribution to bat conservation" in 2002, winners received a framed picture. Following Pete's death, the Trustees proposed a new award in Pete's name as a way of honouring his contribution to bat conservation. They also proposed that a formal trophy be sculptured, first awarded in 2004. This then replaced the award set-up in 2002.

This Year's Nominations

A total of **3** bat workers have been nominated for the Pete Guest Award in 2023:

Name
Maggie Brown
Martyn Phillis
Steve Roe

Supporting statements submitted with nominations are enclosed in **appendices 1-3**.

How to Vote

- Please use the online voting form to register your vote:
<https://forms.office.com/e/UNTJs8cG3m>.
- Votes are limited to one per person. You are only allowed to vote once for one nominee. Your name and email address will be stored by BCT solely for the purpose of regulating voting and will be deleted after presentation of the award.
- Postal votes will not be accepted as due to remote working we can not guarantee these votes would be counted.

The Decision Process

The nominee with the greatest number of votes will be announced at the National Bat Conference, 15th – 17th September 2023. Should the winner be unable to attend the conference to receive the award in person, alternative arrangements will be made to deliver the award to the recipient. As well as being announced at the event, the winner will be invited to give their acceptance speech at the online Bat Workers Forum, on Tuesday 3rd October. News of the award will also be posted on the BCT website, BCT social media, in the member magazine Bat News and via email communication to bat groups.

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Appendix 1. Supporting statement for Maggie Brown

Miranda Collett

Jersey Bat Group

I have just completed a bat care course with Maggie Brown and was so impressed with her dedication to bat care and her great teaching skills. She has inspired me to get more involved in bat care in our local area and teach some of what I learnt to others. She gave a very honest view of what is required in caring for bats, which is not for everyone, but I believe most of the people on the course will at least be able to make an informed decision.

Her wealth of knowledge through years of dedication to bats is invaluable to both new and experienced bat carers and I would not hesitate to approach her should I need advice.

Maggie gives talks, educates the general public as well as looking after sick, injured or orphaned bats at her home in West Yorkshire. She does so much to promote the image of bats generally, and no one could fail to at least like them after one of her talks.

When Maggie started looking after bats, there were not many experts to call for advice, as this was new pioneering work. She learnt to become an expert herself by listening to the bats and working out the best ways to treat them over many years of experience.

No doubt I will be contacting Maggie in the future for advice and I know she will be there to listen and give her opinion on the best way forward. I respect Maggie and feel that she has played a major role in promoting bats over her many years of service to them.

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Appendix 2. Supporting statement for Martyn Phillis

Committee

Sussex Bat Group

The committee of the Sussex Bat Group would like to nominate Martyn Phillis, member of Sussex, Surrey and Hants. Bat Groups as a very deserving candidate for the Pete Guest Award.

Martyn was instrumental in identifying the greater horseshoe bat (GHS) roost in Sussex. He lends very significant support to the Sussex Bat Appeal/Sussex Greater Horseshoe Project with numerous site visits, expert photography, etc - including pictures of a good number of ring recoveries that have really helped us to gain a better understanding of the Sussex GHS colony and movements between summer and winter sites. His photograph of our first GHS pup is legendary! Scotty Dodd adds that from 2019 until he received his licence in 2021, all the monitoring work at the GHS site was facilitated by Martyn and they spent a huge of time at the roost, carrying out vital work, such as changing batteries in cameras, detectors and dataloggers. Many of the talks and walks carried out by Martyn have been carried out to raise money for the Sussex Bat Appeal – a project that has been outstandingly successful in raising the money to purchase the roost building and to carry out extensive repairs, so that it now offers a wonderful opportunity for this iconic species to return to the south-east, with a bat reserve now owned by the Vincent Wildlife Trust.

His bat conservation efforts for bats are second to none and we mention some of achievements here. I'm sure others are aware of more.

Martyn gives great support to the NBMP - inc. hibernation checks of several sites in Surrey and Sussex, aside from the major surveys of the important West Sussex sites. He was also a Volunteer Bat Roost Visitor for a number of years.

Martyn gives and runs many bat walks and talks, in support of Surrey, Hants and Sussex Bat Groups, so is the ultimate cross-group worker. He also works quietly behind the scenes giving walks, talks and advice to local conservation societies (e.g. Midhurst Common), small re-wilding projects (e.g. Myrtle Farm in Rake, Sussex), and to private individuals, such as a recent re-visit to an old Serotine roost that is showing signs of re-colonisation after several years of abandonment.

Martyn also undertakes many bat rescues, related bat care, relays bats to and from the Sussex Bat hospital and was also the 'go to' person for rearing orphaned bat pups. He has mentored several bat carers, over the years, but has recently had to step back from this, to care for his wife, Ann.

He is very involved with the Haslemere Natural History Soc. and regularly writes bat focused articles and updates for their newsletter.

Crispin Scott, the S E Nature Conservation Advisor for the National Trust, mentions that Martyn has also advised on bats at a number of SE properties, especially enabling Uppark to open all year round with visitors and bats living in close proximity, and people gaining an increased understanding of bats in their hibernaculum and their summer roosts.

Martyn designed the pump house hibernaculum at Blackdown and supervised volunteers undertaking works. He has monitored a number of other National Trust hibernacula for more than 20 years, led walks, talks and run very many educational events, showing bats to members of the public. Additionally, he has worked closely to support rangers and other NT staff with their bat work and surveys.

Martyn carries all this out with modesty and generosity and is a great inspiration to others. We believe that he is the perfect candidate for the Peter Guest Award.

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Appendix 3. Supporting statement for Steve Roe

Helen Ball

Staffordshire Bat Group

When I first met Steve, he was an active member of Derbyshire Bat Group (now known as Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group), involved with bat walks, bat box checks and roost counts, including running his own at Foremark Church. He was 14 years old. Two decades on and Steve continues to invest his time and energy focusing on helping to conserve and protect bats.

When I put pen to paper to write this I quickly ground to halt. Not because there wasn't much to write, but because there was so much. I met up with Steve's mum and dad, Karen and Alan, for coffee and cake and they helped me piece together a timeline of Steve's involvement with bats especially when he was younger. They have been by his side throughout, driving him to and from bat group events and often attending the events with him as a teenager, and supporting his interest during family holidays, including visits to Paston Barn in Norfolk to see barbastelles and Chudleigh Caves in Devon for greater horseshoes.

Steve joined Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group committee in 2004, aged 16 years old, and has remained a key member of the group ever since, including holding the roles of Chair, Vice Chair and Events Secretary. As well as bat group activities including walks, illustrated talks, surveys of roosts, hibernation and NBMP counts, Steve has continually looked for new opportunities to promote bat conservation and engage new audiences, often pioneering the use of new technologies.

He has run multiple workshops and given talks on the use of QGIS, bat sound analysis software and, more recently, radio tracking at BCT's national and regional conferences. For his MSc dissertation in 2011, Steve compared different methods of counting bats emerging from maternity roosts, including the use of night-vision technology. In 2016, 'Bat Walks in Derbyshire' was published. Steve came up with the idea, invited contributions and tested out various walks, drawing this together in a well-researched publication complete with ISBN number.

In 2017, Steve co-organised a national BCT conference on Autumn Swarming, building on his knowledge of bat swarming from his long-term study, Derbyshire Underground Sites Project, looking at swarming behaviour at mines and caves in the Peak District. This was a three-day conference and culminated in an evening event involving the organisation of multiple groups to simultaneously survey a series of swarming sites in the Via Gellia close to Matlock.

Steve has become an expert at photographing bats in flight, building his own equipment set up and using the photographs taken to promote bat conservation.

More recently in 2018, Steve was elected to the BCT Board of Trustees enabling Steve to support and drive bat conservation at a national level. He currently acts as Vice Chair. The same year, he launched the new Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group website and Twitter account, which now has thousands of followers.

For some time, Steve had been developing the idea of a podcast dedicated to bats and the people who study and help to protect them. He put together a proposal and obtained funding to purchase

sound recording equipment. The first episode of the BatChat podcast launched in November 2019, and goes from strength to strength, currently numbering 45 episodes. Each has been thoroughly researched by Steve and has involved him spending countless hours visiting people and recording and editing each podcast episode. I can't emphasise enough the importance of the podcast in terms of promoting bats, not just to a national but an international audience. So far, it has been listened to by people in 112 different countries and has been downloaded 59,000 times.

In Steve I know of no one else who has done so much for bat conservation and yet has the potential to do so much more. Steve dedicates much of his time and energy to bats, giving a voice to those who help to protect them. He is brilliant, caring and modest, and an asset to the bat world. I have the great privilege of seeing him grow into the person he is today and being able to call him my friend. I hope you will join me in supporting his nomination for the Pete Guest Award and shining a spotlight on someone that so often promotes others but who is more than deserving of it himself.

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