

Bat Conservation Trust



Pete Guest Award: 2019 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:

- 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 5 bat workers have been nominated for the Pete Guest Award in 2019:

Name	Voting reference (see How to Vote)
Gail Armstrong	PGA-Armstrong
Dr Mike Worsfold	PGA-Worsfold
Morgan Hughes	PGA-Hughes
Les Hatton	PGA-Hatton
Roger and Sylvia Jiggins	PGA-Jiggins

Supporting statements submitted with nominations are enclosed in Appendices 1-5

How to Vote

To register your vote by **email**:

- Please copy and paste the relevant voting reference (see table above) into the **subject** of a new email
- Write your name and bat group (if you are a member of one) only in the main body of text
- Email to: cmorris@bats.org.uk by **5.30 pm on Wednesday 21st August**.

Please be aware that if the voting reference has not been entered correctly, your vote may not be registered. Therefore please double check before sending.

To register your vote by post:

- Print out and complete the postal voting form available from the BCT website: Return the form to: Pete Guest Award, FAO Colin Morris, Bat Conservation Trust, Quadrant House, 250 Kennington Lane, London. SE11 5RD by **Wednesday 21st August**.

Votes received after 5.30pm on 21st August will not be valid, therefore please ensure you allow sufficient time for delivery.

Please note that you are only allowed one vote. Your name will be stored by BCT solely for the purpose of imposing this rule. Names will not be published or announced publically.

The Decision Process

The nominee(s) with the greatest number of votes will be announced at the Bat Workers Forum on Friday 6th September and the award presented at the National Bat Conference on the same weekend. Details will also be posted on the BCT website, BCT social media and via email communication to bat groups week commencing 9th September.

Appendices

[Appendix 1 Supporting statement for Gail Armstrong](#) p. 4

Appendix 2 Supporting statement for Mike Worsfold	p. 6
Appendix 3 Supporting statement for Morgan Hughes	p. 10
Appendix 4 Supporting statement for Les Hatton	p. 12
Appendix 5 Supporting statement for Roger and Sylvia Jiggins	p. 13

Appendix 1

Supporting statement for Gail Armstrong

William Walton
North Lancs Bat Group

Rich Flight
South Cumbria Bat Group

Whenever people find out that I work with bats, they inevitably ask “Oh, do you know the Bat Lady?” There is no doubting who they are referring to. Gail Armstrong is “The Bat Lady”. She has tirelessly dedicated 25 years of her free time both, during her working life and more recently in retirement, to bats. Hundreds, if not thousands of people have benefited from her vast knowledge of Chiroptera, from members of the public (or MOP’s, as she affectionately calls them) to professional ecologists, vets and large organisations, such as the RSPB, the Forestry Commission, Natural England and local AONB’s.

Based in Silverdale, in North Lancashire, Gail is the Chairman of the North Lancashire Bat Group, which she runs almost single-handedly, organising and leading virtually all of the projects, talks and surveys, the majority of which form part of the vital National Bat Monitoring Programme.

It is Gail’s involvement with the public that sets her apart from many other bat workers. Gail has charisma; she is disarmingly likeable. Through her talks and walks within the local and wider community and her activity as a VBRV (something she is a vocal supporter of), she has reached many individuals to whom thought of bats are often repulsive. However, these MOP’s almost always leave Gail’s company thinking far more positively about bats and with a bit more knowledge to boot. Children, in particular, find her fascinating, especially when she has her long term care bats with her! How many kids will have been inspired by wildlife and ecology, in part because of interactions with Gail?

Gail is at the forefront of bat care. Her commitment to bat welfare has meant that she has not only cared for and successfully released countless bats, but she has also managed to study bats behaviour whilst they were in her care, allowing her to learn new techniques of rehabilitation, as well as information about bat habits. The latter has included observing the habits of creching behaviour in roosting bats, something that has been assumed but has rarely been observed. This intimate knowledge of bats has led to a very high success rate of returning bats to their natural environment. Through her training courses, advice on the bat rehabilitation Facebook page, as well as regular workshops at bat conferences, she has then passed on this wealth of knowledge to most of us at some point.

Gail’s utter commitment to bat conservation, her tireless duty to bat care, and her skill as a trainer and wildlife communicator make her a perfect candidate for the Pete Guest Award. She encompasses many of the positives about the UK Bat Conservation Trust and its community; enthusiasm, commitment, willingness to engage with the public, a scientific

eye, without being too stuffy, and constant desire to know more about the amazing world of bats.

[Back to contents list](#)

Appendix 2

Supporting statements for Dr Mike Worsfold

Melody Stokes

Warwickshire and Shropshire Bat Groups

Bats and people have benefitted from Mike's infectious enthusiasm for more than 25 years. Mike, with his partner, Eileen, has both passion and curiosity that have led him to the tops of mountains and deep underground in pursuit of understanding bat behavior.

When I first met him on joining the Shropshire Bat Group, he was busy tracking the range and flight paths of Lesser Horseshoe bats around his home town of Llanymynech. Mike swept us up to the high point of the nearby hills and aimed his tracking device, detecting both male and female bats just before they went to roost one cold Easter night. Thanks to many similar expeditions over several years, Mike has developed an amazing understanding of these rare and fascinating bats. He continues to study his local bats and has recently worked with the local Natural England ecologists to create a project investigating the way Greater and Lesser horseshoe bats use the habitat and landscape around the Stiperstones area of Shropshire.

From the tops of the Shropshire Hills, Mike's fascination with bats has also led him into the depths of the county's old mine complex. In the early 1990s, when Mike was invited to join a group exploring one of the mines beneath Snailbeach, which was shortly to become inundated with water, a new passion was kindled. Despite it being an early encounter with caving, he was sent down steep ladders and abseiled across vertical shafts, finding significant numbers of bats, mainly lesser horseshoes. This led to the mineshafts being kept open and better protected.

Since then, Mike and Eileen have scouted out a large number of mines, many of which are barely visible in the scrub and long grass and every year, despite freezing weather, they organize for a small band of volunteers to check hibernation numbers and to ensure the roost entrances are accessible and maintained. Not only does the local bat population, especially the Lesser horseshoes with their fragile existence on their northernmost boundary, benefit from Mike's care and attention but so do the volunteers, many of whom have gained experience and knowledge under Mike's patient guidance and enthusiastic mentoring. On the coldest days, when sitting by the fire seems especially attractive, it is sometimes just Mike and Eileen crawling down the long dark tunnels to ensure the population data can be maintained. The Lesser horseshoe population is doing well (and now being joined by the odd Greater horseshoe bat) but without Mike, we would never know the situation.

He will hopefully not mind it being said that he has seen the sun rise and set a fair few times. Despite his many years of fascination with bats, he is still incredibly agile and active, dedicating his time, effort and energy to improving our understanding. He is technically adept, using the latest equipment and sometimes his ingenuity to build novel systems and set-ups, for monitoring and tracking bats.

Mike spreads enthusiasm for bats wherever he goes, whether to members of the public on his many bat walks, far and wide, or to experienced bat workers as a regular presenter at BCT conferences. For those in the Shropshire Bat Group, which he chairs, he entertains and encourages members during his often very amusing yet fascinating talks as part of VBRV training.

It is hard to completely express in words Mike's dedication to the welfare of bats and our understanding of them. You would have to meet him to fully appreciate his passion. He is generous with his time and sharing of knowledge and expects nothing in return, which makes him all the more deserving of this award.

Sue Worsfold
Shropshire Bat Group

Mike made his first bat detector in the early 80's, being fond of electricrickery and wildlife and therefore fascinated by bats. I was fascinated too when, as a child, the strange noises in my head (I could hear bats better at that age) became audible noises from the box of wires and my dad tried to explain how. I was too entranced by the night critters and their chatter to pay attention.

Mike has been explaining how ever since, to members of the public and members of bat and wildlife groups, whether in conversation, presentations or training, for no profit. He has been a voluntary bat roost visitor (VBRV) (formerly known as bat warden) for many years and chairman of the Shropshire Bat Group (SBG) on and off for a long time too. He has provided many hours of free training over the years for SBG members and potential VBRV recruits. He has been a major driving force behind several projects although he always acknowledges the contributions of others and doesn't try to take more credit than is due. For example (edited from Mike's own recent summary of events for the benefit of the bat group):

Bat hibernation site monitoring (1993 ongoing).

The Bat Group were checking mines even before 1993, but Mike joined Shropshire Caving and Mining Club (SCMC) in 1992 and, together with Eileen Bowen, John Morgan, Simon Cope and Nicola Wheeler were able to count the bats more thoroughly and get into more mines. SBG now have good records for more than 20 years, especially of lesser horseshoe bat populations, and more recently of greater horseshoes.

Snailbeach Trapping Project (2010 ongoing).

This was our first project licence, for which we had specific training in the use of the harp trap by Richard Crompton. Mike Worsfold was the original licensee but John Morgan took it over later. The project was and is aimed at studying the species (and sex and other characteristics) compositions of bats using this mine. This project has been prosecuted vigorously by John and has generated a lot of invaluable data about bat activity, including swarming, at this important site.

Swan Hill Trapping Project (2012 - 2016).

This was licenced to Mike Worsfold to study bats using Swan Hill mine specifically. It was allowed to lapse because all the elements of it were covered in the Tanat Valley Project licence, see below.

Tanat Valley Project (2015 ongoing).

This was our first venture into ringing and radio-tracking of lesser and greater horseshoe bats. The licensee is Simon Cope, and it is a joint project with Montgomeryshire Bat Group. Mike, Simon, Nicola and Eileen travelled to Wiltshire for a residential course in advanced techniques to gain experience for this. This project has generated some striking data about horseshoe bat movements and roosts around and along the Tanat Valley, between Llanymynech Hill and Llangynog. The ringing and tracking are mostly in abeyance at present, but the rings they attached continue to yield valuable information during the winter roost counts.

Llyncllys Quarry Project (2017 Ongoing).

This project is to study the relationships and movements among soprano pipistrelle bats in woodland a little to the north of Llanymynech. Mike, Eileen, Simon and Nicola have been checking bat boxes here since 2012, as they wanted to answer all sorts of questions about the relationships of the bats. They did this by ringing the bats and also attaching radio tags to a few, under a licence to Mike. Most of the initial questions have been answered, but as is often the case, several more have raised their heads so there is much more to do.

Bats in The Landscape project.

This project is facilitated by a grant from Natural England to the local NE Stiperstones Reserve management team to study bat movements as part of their wider "Stepping Stones" project. It has enabled the purchase of a lot of equipment, and some training, and the plan is to attach coloured rings to bats at a variety of sites, this had already started by Mike, Eileen and John at Snailbeach Mine. Radio tags will also be attached to some bats and they will be tracked, hopefully to find maternity roosts and also to study their movements.

As well as being involved with all these projects Mike and Eileen are also VBRV trainers. Although retired, Mike is always busy with some bat-related caper and his pragmatic and

analytical approach is enlivened by a genuine passion and love for these animals.

[Back to contents list](#)

Appendix 3

Supporting statement for Morgan Hughes

Andy Thompson

Birmingham and the Black Country Bat Group (BrumBats)

I would like to nominate Morgan Hughes for the Pete Guest award this year.

I feel that she is a well worthy recipient of this award due to her professionalism, voluntary roles within bat care, conservation and education.

Morgan has been involved in bat conservation for many years, she has not only been involved in conservation but has also helped shape its future for people like me to come and join the cause to learn and understand these beautiful animals, which I did 2 years ago. Morgan is a great ambassador when it comes to bats as she is very passionate about what she does, this is evident in everything that she undertakes and is involved in. She is never happier unless she is involved in either classroom or her favourite field teaching. Morgan will take every opportunity to educate people about bats and their conservation. She is very knowledgeable and will share this knowledge with not only trainee bat workers but with professional bodies as well, either with meetings or giving talks and seminars. She will very soon be giving a talk at an International Bat conference. Morgan is not the type of person to brag about herself at being an expert in her field instead she is very down to earth, friendly, approachable and professional in all that she does.

Sponsors

Morgan has been involved in numerous activities and below is not an exhaustive list:

- Talks with local communities and business's
- Monitoring surveys and roost counts
- Monitoring for councils on council schemes
- Running training courses for bat handling within Birmingham & the Black Country, harp and mist net setting up, bat identification, endoscope use
- Daubenton timing survey
- MultiPAS – multi passage activity survey
- Batlas – an atlas of bat roosts etc.

Fieldwork

Morgan is the chair of the Birmingham and the Black Country bat group (BrumBats) which covers a very large area within the West Midlands. This area covers large amounts of woodland large and small, conservation areas, disused mines, canals and waterways,

railway tracks, as well as rural and urban areas. She has set up a website on Facebook where all information gained is shared, events and activities as well that will take place. She has also set up other avenues of communication using Whatsapp, Twitter and Instagram.

Morgan has another group that she manages and this one springs from within BrumBats this is the Urban Bat Project (UBP). This is a PhD study being undertaken by Morgan investigating the assemblages and movements of non-ubiquitous bats in the urban fringe. The study hopes to shed light on how species which are not adapted to urban environments are surviving in green belt areas and what features of the suburban landscape are important to them, as you can see this is a very important study for the benefit of bat conservation.

This group has been created for the more advanced trainees and this is where we undertake surveys such as MultiPAS, Trapping and endoscopy. Morgan always ensures that all of the bat group members have access to and receive the correct training to suit their individual needs as she is well aware of work, family and time commitments. She is always available should anyone need help or guidance, any time day or night.

Her enthusiasm and inspiration for Bat conservation is very evident and infectious to all that meet her. She has inspired so many people over the years and with her dedication to these beautiful animals I feel she is a very deserving recipient of this award.

[Back to contents list](#)

Appendix 4

Supporting statement for Les Hatton

Emilie Wadsworth

Fife and Kinross Bat Group

Les has been a stalwart of Fife & Kinross Bat Group for over 20 years, dedicating large amount of time to surveys, research, training, public engagement and supporting group members alongside working full time and being a committed bird ringer. Many members of the group are convinced he has an identical twin, as that is the only way he can possibly achieve everything that he does!

Les has a wealth of knowledge and experience gained from many years working in conservation, from his early days as a countryside ranger, through to working in consultancy and being a bat worker for Scottish Natural Heritage, and of course, all the voluntary work he does on behalf of FKBG and BCT. He is endlessly patient, taking time and care to ensure that he shares his knowledge, almost unconsciously so, with group members during surveys and research work; with members of the public during bat walks, talks, helping out at public and community events; and, with householders or landowners when doing roost visits or surveys.

He is a great advocate for bats, able to naturally communicate with people in a way which endears bats to people, and in a way which encourages and enthuses people just starting on their bat worker journeys. He is humble, patient, dedicated and brings a welcome splash of humour to all bat group activities – just ask any FKBG member about the “Dukes of Hazzard” route through Tentsmuir Forest!

Trying to stop Les from “checking one more box” or talking to one more member of the public, helping one more new member get enthused by bats is the ultimate challenge, but one we relish. Nominating him for the Pete Guest Award is the best way FKBG can think of to show Les just how much of a positive influence he has been on so many group members, past and present, and how much we value him. We almost feel sorry for other bat groups not having him!

[Back to contents list](#)

Appendix 5

Supporting statements for Roger and Sylvia Jiggins

Ella Barnett

Essex Bat Group

The Essex Bat Group Committee Members and I would like to nominate Roger and Sylvia Jiggins for the Pete Guest award. Roger and Sylvia have been joint secretaries of Essex Bat Group for over 15 years and involved with both the bat group and bat conservation in general for even longer. During this time they have played a significant role in the bat group – training new VBRVs, highlighting the importance of Essex churches as bat roosts and inspiring both new members and the general public with their passion for bats and their extensive knowledge.

As licensed Voluntary Bat Roost Visitors, Roger and Sylvia undertake countless surveys (probably more than any other Essex VBRV), the majority of which are to churches. Through these surveys Roger and Sylvia have developed an incredible amount of knowledge about bats in churches. They are considered to be two of the leading experts on bats and churches in the UK and are always happy to share their knowledge with other bat workers. In addition, they dedicate a significant amount of their time to supporting the Chelmsford Diocese by reading through the quinquennial reports and flagging up which churches in Essex need a VBRV survey. Roger and Sylvia also liaise with architects and contractors to increase awareness of how bats use buildings and the importance of bats and their protection.

Every year Roger and Sylvia run a church training day for new Bat Conservation Trust helpline staff so that these new staff members who will be giving advice to church wardens etc. have first-hand experience and a greater understanding of how bats use churches. They are also involved in the BCT churches project and have previously run training courses for church surveying.

Roger and Sylvia are also VBRV trainers and have trained several new VBRVs in the county since becoming licensed. They have organised annual VBRV training days, where the county's licence holders come together to share experiences from the past year, and they are always happy to provide advice and support to newly trained VBRVs.

On top of this Roger and Sylvia also undertake bat walks and talks in their local area for members of the public and church congregations, sharing their knowledge and love of bats, increasing the public's understanding of bats and improving their perception of bats.

In addition, Sylvia is also the Voluntary Warden of Essex Wildlife Trust's Phyllis Currie Nature Reserve in Great Leighs where she organises work parties to maintain the habitats for various species, including of course our beloved bats.

In summary, Roger and Sylvia have dedicated many years to working hard to help bats in Essex and across the country. They don't just undertake their own surveys but help to train others, spreading knowledge and confidence so that more people can be involved in bat conservation work. Their work with the public aims to inspire them to get involved in bat work, to appreciate the bats around them and to encourage bats in their area.

[Back to contents list](#)