



WEST SURREY BADGER GROUP

*"Look! The Badger
Day Walk is on
4th October."*

NEWSLETTER 72 AUGUST 2015

Anti-foxhunting demo Award for Warwick Reynolds
A true badger tale by Washington Irving News and reports

WEST SURREY BADGER GROUP

www.wsbg.co.uk

Registered Charity No 1100142

Patron David Shepherd OBE



MEMBER OF THE BADGER TRUST



THE MAMMAL SOCIETY



AND SURREY WILDLIFE TRUST

.....

COVER PICTURE

*"Look! The Badger
Day Walk is on
4th October."*

by Pat Williams

.....

Welcome to our
new member

Tiffany Francis

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Martin D'Arcy

My first year as Chairman has gone by in a blur. I took on the role after the sad loss of our much missed previous Chairman, Nick Nickells. In the ensuing 12 months quite a lot has happened. As well as the usual planning issues, badger-related incidents and calls from concerned citizens, we have had the cruel and pointless cull to deal with...

Protest action

Marches were organised over the summer throughout England to protest. An admirable number of our members took part. Foremost were Vanessa and David who carried their banner across the land and along many a high street. I would like to thank them and indeed everyone who joined these marches. Badgers depend on organisations like ours for a voice. They need our help and many of you have proved willing to offer it.

Despite our best efforts the cull was renewed in September and proceeded for six weeks. Once again the targets were missed, though sadly many badgers were not. This time the government, embarrassed by the independent panel's findings the previous year, chose not to have any oversight of the cull. Although even the reduced targets were not achieved, they pronounced it a success. Bearing that in mind, the recent election result does not bode well for badgers. We may well need to get our marching boots ready for another campaign.

Cub releases

On a more positive and uplifting note, we had a successful release of four cubs at a secret location late last year. Latest reports suggest at least one is still in the vicinity. A lot of help was needed for this so I'd like to thank Steven Haines, Warwick Reynolds, Dave Smith and Nigel Mee, as well as the usual suspects, our Field Officers. The badgers released in 2013 in Hindhead appear to still be living in the

area. We even have recent evidence of a cub at one of the setts they frequented. We hope to show a few clips of this a bit later.

Event attendance

We had a stall at a trio of events last summer – Wildlife Aid Open Day, Wildlife Rocks, and Rustic Sunday in Tilford. These are opportunities to meet the general public and try to get the message across



At the 2014 Wildlife Aid Open Day

that badgers are fascinating, engaging and often maligned creatures that share this countryside with us and sometimes need our help. The more people we can get to take a positive view of badgers, the better their future is likely to be. It's also good to meet other wildlife charities and enthusiasts, as I'm sure those of you who kindly helped on the stalls would agree.

Field work

As you know we have a badger help-line for people to call if they have a concern, query or request for help. Some of these calls require one of the Field Officers to visit to assess the situation. Our Field Officers

are equipped to rescue injured badgers as well as to offer assistance and advice to people who have a badger-related issue. These often involve damage to the garden or property from the badgers' overenthusiastic digging. It can be tricky trying to explain to an irate gardener that the lawn damage is not malicious, but simply the natural exploitation of a good food source. Badgers don't understand our boundaries, nor our aesthetics, and view a lawn as a foraging opportunity. It's our task to try to find a solution which allows both parties to live together – something which many a UN diplomat has struggled with.

With that in mind I would like to thank Peter, Rodger, Jacqui and Alan, and of course Dave, for their time and

effort in resolving such problems.

Sometimes, where Natural England issue a licence (which they seem to do all too readily) we are obliged to assist in sett closures. It's better that we, who put the badger's welfare first, are involved, rather than some contractor who is just in it for the money. We would all prefer not to have to do it, but where it's required, we are fortunate to have people willing to dig in.

We're always looking for volunteers to help with the work and would welcome interest in getting involved in the frontline from any of our members.



The Winchester march 2014

Planning

In such a highly populated county as Surrey, planning issues are a constant call on our expertise. Our leaders in this are Dave, Rodger and Peter who put a great deal of time and energy into surveying, meeting, inspecting, discussing, reading reports, writing responses and trying to ensure the badgers are not forgotten.

Although developers are required to have ecological assessments done, some of the outfits that provide this service are not perhaps as diligent as they ought to be. This means that every survey has to be checked and evidence gathered to refute some of the more unrealistic conclusions. This is time-consuming and stressful so I'm sure you will all agree that we should offer a vote of thanks to Dave, Rodger and Peter for their work in this area.

Ruxley

Another thankless task is dealing with the Ruxley affair. This is almost as long-running

as *The Mousetrap*, and undoubtedly a lot less exciting. I would like to offer a word of special praise for John Whitaker who has persevered through seemingly endless setbacks to try to resolve the situation. It must sometimes feel like one step forward / two steps back, but he battles on cheerfully. We are now investigating a new approach.

Finally, I want to say how fortunate we are as a group to have such a high quality newsletter, beautifully illustrated by Pat, and professionally compiled and edited by Clare Windsor. It's such a polished production that it makes me feel proud to be associated with it.

Thanks to you all for your continued support.

This year we're reviving our popular **Sponsored Walk for Badgers**. Details are on the form enclosed. Do participate in this enjoyable day out.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Nigel Mee

Since the last newsletter there have been a few financial activities to report.

The annual gift aid declaration for year ending 5th April 2015 was sent off and the charity **received £527 from HMRC Charities**. This included a new allowance paid for money collected in charity boxes and came to £37 on the £148 collected – and which all helps of course!

In April a tree with some dangerous overhanging branches on the charity's land at Ruxley required some immediate attention and a contractor was organised accordingly. **This work cost £1,740** but we were able to share half the cost with the resident affected, who kindly gift-aided the donation. The £870 donation will be included in the 2015-16 gift aid declaration.

WSBG attended the **Wildlife Aid Open Day** in June with a sales stall. Takings were down, with £125 of stock sold. Last year receipts were £248, so disappointing in that way but a good day was had by all anyway. On that day we made our annual donation of £1,250 to this Leatherhead hospital whose services we often need on a 24-hour basis.

By far the busiest work in the financial area has been the end of another financial year on 31st March 2015. Once everything was completed in the bookkeeping, the files and figures were passed to accountant and auditor Sue Havell, who finalised and published the **year-end accounts** in time for their presentation to members at the AGM in May. There were a few questions and comments raised about the figures at the AGM.

One question brought about quite a bit of discussion regarding the payment by users for **our data search service** and I promised to take this feedback to the next committee meeting and report further in this newsletter.

The data search service provides a report on known badger activity and setts in a specific area, usually where a planning development application is being prepared. The cost for this service is usually £75 to £85 but can be more depending on the amount of work involved. The charity sends an invoice to the client, very often an environmental or ecology consultant, and payment follows. Discussion at the AGM concerned some of the payments taking a long time, sometimes several months, before being received by WSBG. Several members were keen on the suggestion made that payment should be received before the report was sent out. The committee discussed data search fees and their payment at the meeting held in June 2015, and it was agreed that whilst not perfect the payment-after-invoice system would continue in line with other providers of a similar service.

Another question at the AGM concerned **gift aid payments** from HMRC Charities and their comparison with previous years. I would like to clarify the gift aid declaration system as I don't feel I gave a good enough answer on the night. Basically in my time as Treasurer the declaration forms have been sent off in a rather random manner, where more than one declaration has been sent off in any one tax year and usually stretching across two different tax years. In other words the amounts coming in for gift aid historically cover varying periods and can't really be compared. However, this has been changed now so that just one declaration will be made for one full tax year; so the £527 reported above is for 2014-15 and the next declaration will be for 2015-16. In that way the amounts will become directly comparable. HMRC Charities have also tightened up the rules where more information about each gift aid donor is required and the forms more complicated. I do hope all this makes sense!

I wish all our members an agreeable rest of the summer.

FIELD OFFICER'S REPORT

Peter Eggleton for Dave Williams

A successful rescue

Back in April I was called out to pick up an injured badger. Didn't have to catch it myself, it had been caught already, and was left in a cage at the gate of a horse livery stable. As I arrived I found a horse and rider outside with the horse refusing to go in through the gate. I had to hide the badger the other side of the wall before the horse would continue with his journey. Transferring the badger to my cage and driving him to Wildlife Aid was straightforward. He spent three weeks recovering and feeding up and was then released back to his home area by Jacqui, Alan and Nigel, who on the same evening released a "homeless" badger into an unoccupied outlier sett nearby. The badger was homeless because Wildlife Aid were unable to establish where it had come from.

No dentures available

Another unfortunate badger in a poor state was cage-trapped in a Farnham garden by the residents. I took it to Wildlife Aid where it was found to be old and with almost no teeth left. A badger with no teeth cannot eat and we must accept it has reached the end of its life.

Long-distance collection

My most recent task was to collect a badger from a vet on the other side of Croydon. X-rays at Wildlife Aid showed that the front leg was broken, but the break was "mid shaft" (between joints), which meant a repair was possible.

Release sites, anyone?

This year Wildlife Aid has 14 orphaned cubs in their care. Together with the East Surrey Badger Group we're hoping to find three good sites for them. If anyone can offer a suitable area please give us a call.

PLANNING REPORT

Dave Williams

There are a few applications in our area that have badgers on site.

Wisley and Windlesham

Wisley Airfield is a proposed site for a large housing development, and land at Windlesham is subject to outline planning for over 100 houses. Both are in their early stages but we're involved in the consultations, so we'll be doing all we can to protect the badgers on these sites.

Camberley

Rodger is working closely with the consultants for a site in Camberley that contains a sett. Rodger is using trail cameras to see exactly what is on site.

We had a problem at another site in Camberley where building had already started. A new single badger hole had been dug on part of the site due to be developed at a later date. We pointed this out to the ecologist on site. Some time later a neighbour reported that the hole had been blocked. We asked the police to investigate, but were told that there was no-one available for ten days – this is not acceptable so we'll be seeking a meeting with the chief constable. When the police finally investigated, they said they had made enquiries, but had insufficient evidence to proceed with a prosecution.

Pyrford

A site in Pyrford is about to be put up as part of the allocation for housing by Woking Council. There's a sett on the edge of the site so we'll be watching this closely.

Deepcut

Deepcut Barracks is due to be developed and there are several badger setts. We're in contact with the developer and in discussions about mitigation plans to safeguard the badgers on site.



Warwick Reynolds, from Surrey, receives Badger Trust's LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Report by Dave Williams

We are delighted to announce that Warwick Reynolds, of the East Surrey Badger Protection Group, has been presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by Badger Trust, for his long service to badgers and badger welfare. When the West Surrey Badger Group was formed, one of the first names that I heard was Warwick, who gave us a lot of information about dealing with problems and rescues. That was in 1984 and Warwick had already had many years of experience. He has worked tirelessly for over 40 years.

Here is a short summary of some of his achievements:

BADGER RELEASE PROGRAMMES

Over 120 orphan cubs have been released into artificial setts, in Surrey, Kent and Northants.

EMERGENCY RESCUE SERVICE

Warwick has provided a 24-hour emergency rescue service to respond to calls concerning injured badgers, and returning them to the wild. These include a badger inside a 4 foot high wheelie bin, a badger entangled in a football net, badgers in swimming pools – the list goes on. In some cases Warwick has looked after a badger at home before eventual return to the wild.

BADGER/HUMAN CONFLICT

Warwick has produced practical and creative solutions where badgers impact on human activities, using remarkable techniques for overcoming these problems.

Where badger tunnelling is undermining buildings etc, he has successfully developed a range of practical solutions, including subterranean barriers.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Warwick has spent a considerable amount of time giving expert advice to local authorities, developers and contractors about the effect on badgers of planning applications.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Projects have included surveys and advice on the Croydon Tramlink, and road reflectors on a major trunk road.

PERSECUTION

Warwick has investigated many suspected cases of persecution and works regularly with the police. He has also been involved in rescuing other species of wildlife including foxes, and oiled seabirds. He received a special certificate of commendation from the RSPCA for rescuing a dog from within a badger sett.

I was very pleased to propose this award which was accepted by the board, and presented to Warwick at his group's 30th Anniversary AGM. He is still working hard for badgers and wildlife.

WSBG PROTESTS AGAINST FOXHUNTING

Alan Johnson



WILDLIFE AID OPEN DAY

Nigel Mee

Lovely sunny and warm weather in June brought out the crowds for another interesting and entertaining Open Day at Wildlife Aid in Leatherhead. WSBG as usual were present with a sales stall. Takings were down on previous years – it didn't seem so crowded and certainly finished earlier than we were used to. Perhaps it being Fathers' Day or the longest day made a difference this year.

The entertainments included a

tea party band called The Badger Sett who mellowed us out in the afternoon sunshine, and a Morris Dancing session that included a song and dance for wildlife incorporating the life-size fox and badger that had been delighting children all day. The plants stall was particularly impressive this year and all the tours, talks and presentations were filled with enthusiastic and happy visitors. It was yet again a great day family day out.



With just a week's notice, the Government planned a vote on 15 July on an amendment to the Hunting Act 2004 which would have rendered the already weak ban on foxhunting completely unenforceable. Two protests were organised in London on 14 & 15 July, the first by a coalition led by Dr Brian May, and the second by the Badger Trust and the Hunt Saboteurs' Association. Both events were attended by Vanessa, David, Jacqui and Alan from West Surrey Badger Group, with Vanessa and David sporting a brilliant banner made at short notice for the protests.

The 14 July protest opposite Parliament was well attended (maybe 1,000 or so) by a wide cross-section of people of all political persuasions. The press were out in force too – admittedly probably more to do with Brian May's presence than the WSBG – but we nonetheless found ourselves in the background shots on Sky News and featured on the Guardian online news, where the shot above comes from.

Whilst the first protest was actually in progress, news was received that the Government had pulled the intended vote

as a result of the SNP's decision to take part. This meant that the Opposition parties, together with the "Blue Fox" group (Conservatives Against Fox Hunting), would undoubtedly have defeated the Government. During the demonstration, Alan and Jacqui spoke to one of the SNP MPs, Martin Docherty, and he later re-tweeted their message to him thanking him for their support for the foxes of England and Wales.

Despite the Government climb-down, the protest the next day went ahead in Whitehall and featured speeches from Dominic Dyer and Peter Martin (respectively CEO and Chairman of the Badger Trust), with Peter expressing concerns about the future for protection of badgers. After the speeches, the demonstration crossed over Whitehall to the gates of Downing Street – as Dominic Dyer said: "Shouting for the foxes at the entrance to Downing Street".

Wildlife has had a reprieve. We await the Government's next move, expected in the autumn. On this one, as Bill Oddie put it: "Don't follow your leader. Follow your heart. Animal welfare is a moral issue."

MEMBERS' PAGE(S)

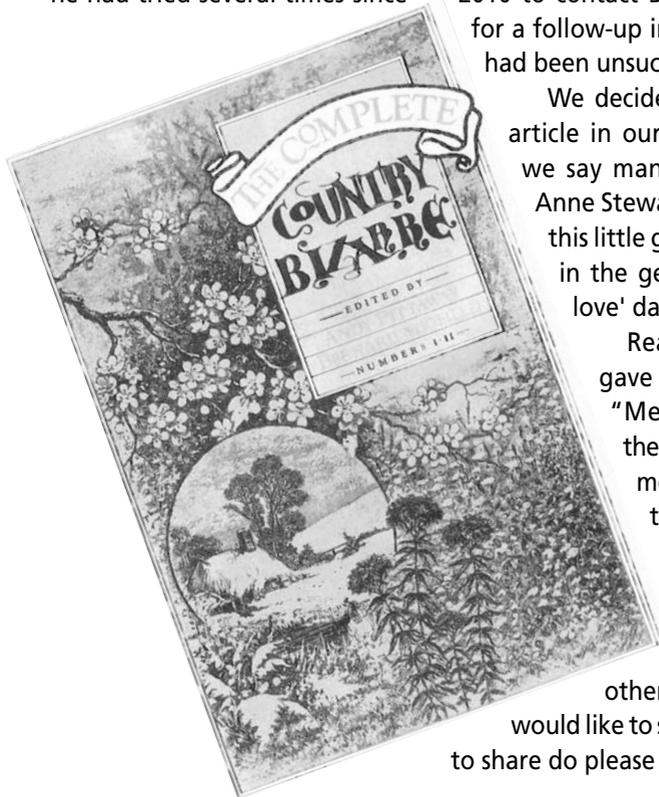
Along with one of our membership renewals this year I received an article called "The Funeral of a Badger". The article was one written by Washington Irving (the 19th century writer of *Tales from the Alhambra*) and it resurfaced in a magazine called *The Country Bizarre* published in the 1970s. That magazine was very much of its time with an eclectic mix of articles, comments, pictures and reviews. There were 11 issues in total and these were subsequently brought together in a book called *The Complete Country Bizarre* which is still available to purchase today (I bought a copy from Amazon).

Of the original publisher, Astragal Books, I could find no trace, and of the two original editors (Andy Pittaway and Bernard Schofield) Andy Pittaway has sadly passed away. I did find an interview with Bernard Schofield from 2010 and I contacted the interviewer, who advised me that he had tried several times since 2010 to contact Bernard Schofield for a follow-up interview but alas had been unsuccessful.

We decided to reprint the article in our newsletter, and we say many thanks to Mrs Anne Stewart for sending us this little gem, re-published in the gentle, 'peace and love' days of the 70s.

Reading the article gave us an idea for a "Members Page" in the newsletter, where members can share their experiences, picture and articles. If you have anything that you think other WSBG members would like to see and are happy to share do please let us know.

Susan Clee



The Funeral of a Badger

by Washington Irving

About nine o'clock I came to the badger's sett, and settled down to watch. I loved the little silver-grey cubs, and I knew that the old mother would bring them out as the evening drew in. The breeze – a very light and gentle breeze from the north-east – blew from over the entrance into my face. A few birds were singing their good-night songs. A large brown owl swept low round the bluff of the down – and close by my concealing gorse-bush.

After twenty minutes, the sow poked her head out and sniffed the breeze. This was of interest, for invariably, on the other occasions on which I had watched, it had been the male that had first scouted and sniffed the breeze in search of danger. Satisfied, she came into the open. For a moment or so she faced me directly, and I knew she was excited. The hair of her back was running up and down, forming tiny wavelets, and the hair of a badger's back is the barometer of the animal's emotions. I thought she had seen me – she could not have scented me, for the breeze was in the wrong direction – because almost at once she turned and disappeared into her home. This was disappointing, but as the night was yet young I remained concealed by my gorse-bush and waited for her to bring out her cubs. A missel thrush alighted on my bush, saw me, and flew off with an angry chatter. At 10.40 the badger poked her head out again, sniffing the breeze. She remained there a full minute, and then, satisfied that the coast was clear, came into the open.

This time she faced up-wind, standing with head lowered, her back rippling in

a most agitated manner, uttering a very tiny subdued snuffle, her short stumpy tail jerking from side to side and looking very ridiculous. All this was strange, and most curious of all was the fact that not one sign had I seen of the cubs or the father. Possibly he had already departed on his evening foray.

And then, suddenly, she raised her head to the heavens and uttered a cry – the first real sound I have ever heard from a badger. It was a weird cry, half whimper, half howl, shrill for so square a beast, and in the still night so sudden, so eerie, that the hairs on the nape of my neck stiffened involuntarily.

There was no time for analysing my feelings, because the badger immediately moved briskly to my right, where on the very edge of the downs a disused rabbit-warren showed white in the dim light. This was about twenty yards from me and rather difficult to see – impossible to see clearly – and I did not wish to move for fear of disturbing her. However, it soon became apparent that she was scratching in the warren, for I could hear clearly the sounds of earth being moved, punctuated by an occasional grunt. Eventually – the time was 11.51 by my watch – she came into the open again, moving across to her own sett, down which she vanished, to reappear almost immediately, sniffing the air and moving about in the most agitated manner, once coming within a yard or so of my hiding-place, yet taking not the slightest notice of me.

I sat still, entranced and mystified. This was behaviour beyond my

knowledge, and I was by now convinced that I was to witness something unusual. The badger had gone over again to the warren, and it seemed to me that there must be something there she wanted and could not get out, so anxious did she seem.

At 12.15 a dog fox came into sight downwind, but instantly sheered away. He must, I think, have scented me. It was becoming slightly lighter now, and there seemed to be more movement generally – I could hear, for example, a cuckoo down the valley suddenly shatter night with its monotonous call. It was cooler too, and I was taking cramp in one leg. My badger appeared determined to pass the night in an odd manner. Evidently she had no thought in her head for her cubs, and it seemed probable that the father had taken them out – though this was against all rules – thus giving her a holiday, which she did not know how to spend or which had gone to her head. She kept at the warren, returning every ten minutes or so to her sett, down which she would disappear, to return again to the warren after first sniffing the breeze in an anxious manner. I discovered, however, to my great relief that movement on my part did not seem to disturb her. Watching now became an easier matter, as the morning became appreciably lighter. So it went on, with periodic journeyings from sett to warren by the badger and periodic shifting of position by myself, until at 2.5 approximately, another badger suddenly came into view round the bluff.

At first, as he skirted the bushes, I thought he was the husband, the owner of the sett, returning from his nocturnal prowling. But as he came closer I saw that he was not, for this was a smallish badger,

whereas the one I had watched so many times before was a large beast, weighing anything up to forty-five pounds, I judged. I expected the newcomer therefore to be warned off; but the female stood stock still, her back ruffling agitatedly and her nose touching the ground. The male advanced to within a few yards and then halted, his nose also lowered.

Now commenced an extraordinary scene. First the female, with a jerky, upward toss of the head and a swift downward movement until the nose touched the ground, uttered a thin, musical, whistling sound, rather as though the wind had been sharply expelled through the nostrils. The sound lasted – perhaps it was more of a squeak than a sound – just as long as it took the head to complete the motion described; but there was no notable change, or if there was I was unable to distinguish it, in the sound during the upward and downward movement of the head. The squeak was without cadence. At the same time she moved forward with two tiny jerky steps, the hairs of her back ruffling very quickly. The moment she stopped and was standing still with nose almost touching the ground, the male, stationed exactly opposite her, went through the same performance. I was unable to distinguish any difference between the sounds emitted by male and female, while the movements performed were exactly the same in both cases.

As each animal came to the end of the act the other commenced afresh, until, finally, their noses appeared to be touching. When this point was reached the two badgers performed at the same time, presenting rather a ridiculous appearance in the half light, and then abruptly

stopped. The whole affair reminded me strongly of W.H. Hudson's tale of the two hedgehogs in 'A Shepherd's Life'. How long the performance lasted I cannot say, for I had by now become too interested to look at my watch – an admission I hate to make, since a naturalist should always be methodical and exact.

The performance over – to my great regret – both animals repaired to the sett and disappeared, the female leading and the male following nose to tail. They were gone for some time, and I was left staring at the entrance and the trees behind and wondering greatly. After some time – though how long I cannot say, time always seems longer when one is awaiting something – I looked again at my watch, and found that it was 3.15.

I was beginning to wonder, in the nasty manner of human beings, whether the domestic life of the badger was quite blameless, and when this Don Juan of badgers would go, or if he would be caught by an irate husband, and what would happen if he was – in fact my mind was behaving in a thoroughly civilised way – when the visitor reappeared, or at least his tail. Gradually the whole of him came into view. And then I saw that he was dragging something. It was the body of a badger. Had he added murder to his other sins? But no sooner was the body clear of the entrance than the female appeared. At this point I sneezed loudly twice, but neither animal took the slightest notice. Together they dragged the body of the old male across my line of vision to the rabbit warren. The male had hold of the corpse by a hind leg: I could not see how the female was assisting him, but assisting him she was.

In a very short time they had reached

the warren. Here, even in the improved light, I was unable to see clearly what was happening. Indeed, though at various moments I made out both badgers, I could not really see what they were doing. It was not hard to guess, however, and soon the indistinct sounds of scratching confirmed my guesses. Father was being buried.

Shortly, they had finished. The service was over. There was no further performance of any kind. No sounds, no noise at all. No more touching, nothing. The male vanished, moving very quickly, the way that he had come. The female came back to her home, stood for a moment at the entrance, looking straight at me as though saying, "Now, what do you think of that?" and then disappeared below the ground.

It was 4.10. Unnoticed, the dawn had broken. Unnoticed, the birds had commenced their daily round. Though by no means light, it was much lighter, but I had not observed the passing of time. I waited another half-hour, conscious now of chill air and great hunger. But there was no movement from the sett, and at last, lighting my pipe, I went over to examine the warren. Earth had been shovelled into the mouth, and packed by the bodies pressed against it. It would have been easy to loosen the earth and exhume the body inside, but I did not. That would, to me at least, have been sacrilege. I turned away, and, after examining the track, clearly defined, from sett to warren, tramped off home, thrilled and hungry.

I have watched a badger's funeral. But many points remained unanswered in my mind. How did the young male know? Badgers are by no means uncommon – certainly not rare, as some townsmen

imagine – and are on the increase so far as can be judged, in this district. All the same I know of no other sett nearer than five miles off. Had the male been summoned by that first great cry of the female? That seems impossible. The human ear, at least, could not catch the sound at any such distance. How, then had he learned? Why was the female expecting him, for expecting him she certainly was? How did she know that he would come? Had she journeyed to his home – wherever it was – to tell him? That seems unlikely, for but two nights before she had taken her cubs – already turning from silver-grey to brown-grey – for a walk, and the old male had been alive and, to the human eye, fit and well. Perhaps she had spent the previous night telling her friends of her loss, but somehow I do not think so – she would scarcely leave her cubs for

two nights in succession. How had her helper learned? Was it sound, or scent, or instinct, that indefinable quality? And was he mated, and if so what did his wife think of it all? And – but I could go on asking questions for ever.

The following night saw two heavy showers – our first rain for more than three weeks – and early the next morning I was at the sett. The ground was covered with badger tracks, large and small. Evidently the mother had had her family out; or perhaps she had had further visitors? Steeling my heart, I shovelled away the earth from the burrow mouth. There was the badger, his body cramped up awkwardly. He was old, for his muzzle was white like the muzzle of an old dog. Crawling over his body were thousands of ants. And the smell was unpleasant. I pushed back the earth.

From Dave Williams, former Badger Trust Chairman

At the recent AGM of the Badger Trust, after ten challenging but fulfilling years, I retired as Chairman. I can't say it's been easy, sometimes it's been very difficult, but throughout those years I've always remembered what we're here for – the care and welfare of badgers.

I've seen quite a few changes, and the role has changed markedly. I met a great variety of people, some of whom I would never have imagined I would meet, including ministers, Defra officials, MPs, lots of badger supporters and a few celebrities.

Just to give you a few statistics:

Since I've been in the post I've worked with three CEOs, seen the name change from NFBG (National Federation of Badger Groups) to Badger Trust, worked out of five different head offices, and met nine ministers

or Secretaries of State who were in charge of the bTB programme, the most recent being Liz Truss, probably the least knowledgeable. The only one I never met was Owen Paterson (probably just as well!). And of course there were ten AGMs and ten conferences.

I had hoped to be leaving this post in a position where there was no threat of government killing badgers. Alas we're not there yet, especially with the recent election results, but we'll keep fighting. We'll never give up.

I have handed over to the new chairman Peter Martin. Peter has all the qualities to face the challenges and to guide us through the difficult times ahead. I shall continue as a Trustee/Director of Badger Trust, assisting Peter during his settling-in period.

FOR EMERGENCIES CALL:

Your local Police Station / 999

Surrey Police (Wildlife Crime) call 101 to report an incident and ask for the Wildlife Crime Officer to be made aware

Wildlife Aid, Leatherhead 0906 1800132
(website www.wildlifeaid.org.uk)

RSPCA 0300 1234 999

Member of WSBG Committee

NEIGHBOURING BADGER GROUPS

East Surrey 0208 660 9827

East Hants 01420 87366

West Sussex 01243 825804

Mid Sussex 01342 870320

Binfield, Berks 0709 2234377

Herts & Middx 01992 589152

BADGER TRUST

0845 828 7878 Website www.badgertrust.org.uk

WEST SURREY BADGER GROUP

P.O. BOX 67, GUILDFORD, SURREY GU3 1YR

Website www.wsbg.co.uk Tel/Fax 01483 811989 E-mail wsbg@wsbg.co.uk

Chairman Martin D'Arcy 07941 496187 mwfda@yahoo.com

Treasurer Nigel Mee 01428 605398 nigel.mee@btconnect.com

Secretary Dave Williams 01483 811989 dave@wsbg.co.uk

Membership Secretary Susan Clee 01483 763983 susan.clee171@gmail.com

Field Officer Dave Williams 01483 811989 dave@wsbg.co.uk

Other Committee members

Peter Eggleton 01428 607731 peter@plustrue.freereserve.co.uk

Rodger Munt 01276 29456 r.m.munt@btinternet.com

John Whitaker 01306 730733 jandhwhitaker@waitrose.com

Pat Williams 01483 811989 patwilliamsartist@gmail.com

Sue Carden 07940 594267 cardensusan@gmail.com

Alex Learmount 07903 804600 lexilearmount@msn.com

Newsletter Editor Clare Windsor 01483 418048 clare.windsor@waitrose.com

WEST SURREY BADGER GROUP – EVENING MEETINGS

Tuesday September 29 Danial Winchester, SARG

Danial is Amphibians Officer with **Surrey Amphibian & Reptile Group** and has been with SARG for 15 years in various committee roles including chairman. Danial will give an introduction to SARG and what it does, before talking about the native amphibians and reptiles of Surrey.

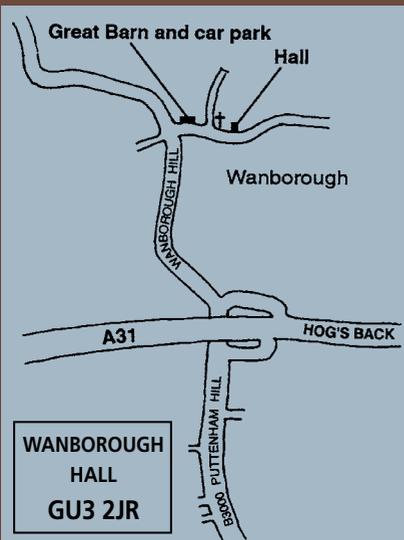
Sunday October 4 Badger Day Walk (see enclosure)

Tuesday October 20 Becky Harris-Jones, beekeeper

No, not honeybees! Becky has created a bumblebee sanctuary within her garden, and she studies, photographs and films them. Her talk is **The Incredible Life of the Bumblebee**, taking a look at how their amazing bodies are equipped for collecting pollen and nectar, their importance to our food production, their plight in the countryside and how we can help.

Tuesday November 17 Mervyn Mewis, Green Wood Works

Out of Our Woods – The Music of Trees is an insight into our local woodlands, their historic use and conservation ideals. Using traditional woodworking principles, Mervyn creates a wide range of distinctive furniture and musical instruments. His presentation is enhanced with examples of current work, relevant slides and live acoustic music: a special evening.



All evening meetings start at 8pm and are held in Wanborough Hall unless otherwise stated.

This is just off the A31 Hogs Back.

Take the B3000 exit (from Guildford it's the first exit) and follow signs to Wanborough. At the bottom of the hill turn right (signposted Great Barn and Church). The car park is on the left next to the Barn.

Walk up to the hall, just beyond the church.



The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of West Surrey Badger Group.

Permission must be sought from WSBG before reproducing any material from this newsletter.

Printed on recycled paper by Imprint Colour – www.imprintcolour.co.uk

© WSBG, 2015