

# Bat Conservation Trust



## Pete Guest Award 2022 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:

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 2022:

| Name          |
|---------------|
| Morgan Hughes |
| Nik Knight    |
| 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://bit.ly/3QMZI3A>.
- 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(s) with the greatest number of votes will be announced at the Bat Workers Forum on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Due to the Bat Worker's Forum being an online event we are unable to present the award in person and alternative arrangements will be made to deliver the award to the recipient. As well as being announced at the event, the winner of the award will be posted on the BCT website, BCT social media and via email communication to bat groups.

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## Appendices

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[Appendix 2 Supporting statement for Nik Knight](#) [p. 6](#)

[Appendix 3 Supporting statements for Steve Roe](#) [p. 8](#)

## Appendix 1. Supporting statement for Morgan Hughes

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**Scott Brown**

*Birmingham & Black Country Bat Group*

I'd like to nominate my mentor Morgan Hughes for the Pete Guest award. Morgan is a tour de force and one-woman army when it comes to bat conservation.

For nearly 8 years Morgan has personally trained me and devoted endless hours to enable me to become the ecologist I am today and I am only one of her volunteers, I can hand on heart say Morgan has devoted every second of her free time to training individuals like myself. You would be hard-pressed to find someone who has trained as many people without asking for anything in return other than their time and effort to help in her conservation work. I know of few people as knowledgeable on bats as Morgan and I know of no one as willing to share said knowledge.

Morgan has worked in all aspects of ecology, from conservation roles for RSPB, for local councils as a ranger, as a professional consultant, internal ecologist at Network Rail and as an academic. In her final roles, Morgan has gone to publish in peer-reviewed journals with work that in my opinion should have an impact on national survey guidelines.

Morgan's work with the Birmingham and Black Country Bat Group is extensive and the vast majority of their projects have been conceptualised, planned and delivered due to her. Having chaired the group for many years and then being records officer Morgan has devoted an incomprehensible amount of time to the group, forging new relationships with other groups, councils, rangers and conservationists that have led the group to go from strength to strength. Morgan has at times, pretty much been the Birmingham and Black Country Bat Group, going above and beyond her duties to answer emails others had missed, write the newsletter when the editor was away, minute meetings people could not make and ferry new volunteers to committee meetings once they showed the slightest interest.

In her recent work published in *British Island Bats* she demonstrates the impact of her work has completely changed our understanding of the species present, and the distribution of these species within our county. Morgan's impact, however, reaches beyond our county border and even beyond the UK's with work in Ecuador collecting baseline bat species assemblage data in cloud forests, to work with Operation Wallacea in Croatia on long term monitoring projects where she has helped develop new methods for mist-netting bats over water bodies, work that was published in the *Journal of Bat Research and Conservation*.

Morgan has been my mentor, sound board, biggest cheerleader, my right hand, best influence and best friend from teaching me how to remove glue from bats caught in sticky traps, how to care for 30+ bat pups in my garage, checking the nearly 200 pipistrelles in the flight cage, how to use a bat detector, sound analysis, advanced bat survey techniques, academic writing to how to get a beer ice cold in the shortest period of time, I can think of no one who has had such an impact on as many people in the world of bats. Morgan lives and breathes bats, she laughs and cries with her volunteers who all of which would refer to Morgan as one of their closest friends. Morgan has gone above and beyond the requirements for the Pete Guest Award as can be seen by this being the third time she has been nominated. There is not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that there is no-one more deserving of this award.

**Rebecca Perry**

*Birmingham & Black Country Bat Group*

Morgan has been a part of the Birmingham and Black Country bat group since 2003 and served as chairperson for many of those years. During her time within the bat group, she has contributed a considerable amount of her time, skills and passion inspiring many of the volunteers. She has grown the training within the group massively, in collaboration with her research/academic work from bat boxes to advanced surveys such as harp trapping and mist netting, to new methods of surveys for bats and in recent years moved her bat work abroad internationally to bats in Ecuador and Croatia. Morgan has trained over 100 volunteers within the group, inspiring many to get involved in ecology work and bat work in differing areas of the environmental sector. She has encouraged and inspired all she works with.

Morgan currently serves as the county bat recorder for our area and has superb data handling skills which has benefited the Birmingham & the Black Country Bat Group a lot, as the Batlas Project and other large data set projects have been managed by her ensuring the data accuracy is high. In addition, Morgan has excellent IT skills recreating our website more recently and easing the group's communications.

Morgan applies beyond best practice where bat welfare and human welfare is concerned when conducting surveys and ensures that all volunteers adhere to the safety of themselves, others and the bats.

It was a pleasure to have Morgan as my trainer when first starting my bat work journey. A comment I'm sure many of her volunteers would say. I personally could not have asked for a better trainer to learn from. In fact, I continue to learn from Morgan whilst following her research into bats in urban habitats and I also continue to be in awe of her passion for bats.

**Chris Sherlock**

*Birmingham & Black Country Bat Group*

Morgan joined the bat group around 2003 when she was working on the 'Windows on Wildlife' (WOW) project for the B&BC Wildlife Trust. Since then her enthusiastic contribution to BrumBats, other regional bat groups, and now internationally to bat work has grown and grown. While her own academic and working life growth have also developed, concentrating on bats in urban settings. Finding new places and species in the Birmingham and Black Country area and beyond.

Morgan has served as chair of the bat group, leading the group's dedication on bat rescue and care, including driving the building of a bat flight cage. Her skills and learning have built through her great capacity for work, study and practical hands on bat work. She has innovated many times and her work is always backed up by carefully considered documentation, plans and knowledge she has sought out. She willingly shares her skills and knowledge and has a natural flair as a trainer. She has shown and shared great innovation as a photographer, website builder and social media user inspiring others about bats and the bat group. Morgan has strong IT skills and data handling skills which she has used to benefit bats and the bat group alongside her professional and academic work.

She has careful attention to detail for the safety of people and bats, putting these things at the fore with the right equipment, skills and protocols. Where others are sometimes prone to over familiarity

with situations and process and work can become less rigorous, Morgan is always aware of and applies best practice.

Morgan is a skilled writer both professionally and in a more casual and engaging way for less stringent but equally important publications, for example the recent interim Batlas for our area.

Morgan has supported and developed many aspiring bat workers through the projects she has developed and led. She is now supervising Masters' students as well as coming toward the end of her own PhD associated with her focus on urban bat populations, developing new study and analysis techniques that are both innovative but also replicable in other settings.

Morgan has moved through many roles in life, work and study but she remains completely committed to bats and bat work of many types, and will continue to do so, supporting others to learn and innovate as well. When bats in urban habitats were extremely overlooked and unfashionable, neglecting these important populations, Morgan has never given up making sure that these bats and their homes are discovered and made to really count and be counted.

### **Andy Thompson**

*Birmingham & Black Country Bat Group*

My nominee for this year's Pete Guest award is someone who is solely dedicated to the wellbeing, preservation and conservation of bats. Her name is Morgan Hughes and I am very proud to say that I have known Morgan for just over five years. Morgan's dedication is beyond anything I have experienced before, she literally eats, sleeps and drinks bats. Her knowledge of bats is virtually unlimited, she has studied them for many years, and it is her knowledge that she bases her thesis for her Doctorate.

She is, and has been for many years, a member of the Black Country Bat group which is affectionately known as Brumbats. She understands bats and their habits and passes on her knowledge to old and new people alike. She loves teaching and imparting the knowledge she has to further expand people's awareness and understanding of these beautiful mammals.

Morgan has developed new methods of tracking bats and ways of timing Daubenton bats to help other groups to obtain information in a less costly way thereby making it easier for bats groups to undertake a different method without breaking the bank. We recently undertook under the guidance of Morgan a massive upgrade to a Batlas project that was in desperate need of being correct on the number of bats in the Black Country area. During covid, a very trying time for all, she along with another fellow member carried out live bat walks which were opened to the whole country and viewed by many, giving people the chance to be outdoors and see bats from the comfort of home due to restrictions.

Morgan is a fantastic ambassador for bats so she thoroughly deserves this award due to her dedication to these wonderful mammals.

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## Appendix 2. Supporting statement for Nik Knight

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### **Natalie Boote**

*Hampshire Bat Group*

I met Nik 7 years ago when I moved to Hampshire and he made me feel very welcome to the bat group and introduced me to many activities and people within the bat group. Nik gives up much of his time (between his music concerts and practice!) for bat conservation and has carried out hundreds of bat walks and talks giving presentations to a wide range of audiences including schools and community groups. As the chair of Hampshire Bat Group for many years he has kept the whole of Hampshire batty by organising us as a committee, carrying out all the admin needed for a charity to continue, carrying out bat data searches for the whole of Hampshire, a large county, carrying out many Volunteer Bat Roost Visits over the years and training new VBRVs with his experience and knowledge of bats. Nik continues to organise and attend events to raise awareness of bats (with a highly organised spreadsheet!) as well as answering queries from members of the public and organisations. He has also designed and updated the HBG website, a man of many talents!

We still find Nik out and about until 4am in the morning helping with bat research as he did with the Small Myotis Project pre-Covid and the many transects and waterway surveys he carries out for the NBMP. I think the majority of the bat group will feel he does deserve to be recognised for all of the years he has given to raising bat awareness and bat conservation and also as a way of thanking Nik for keeping the bat group going for us all to be able to look forward to attending events and talks and meeting up with batty people!

### **Graeme Sheppard and Nicola Pyle**

*Hampshire Bat Group*

I would like to nominate Nik Knight, the chair of Hampshire Bat Group, for the Pete Guest award.

It's hard to know where to start in describing his contribution to the Group and bat conservation over the last three decades or more: treasurer, county recorder (increasing our database records from 3,000 to in excess of 42,000!), website editor, bat-rescuer, bat-carer, event-organiser, fundraiser, surveyor, trainer, not to mention the countless bat-walks, school visits, and presentations delivered to all ages. Indeed, you name it, Nik has done it, and many times over. And always with a smile, a kind word, and unfailing patience and modesty.

His knowledge - about bats, about their habits, about their comings and goings, about the county and its topography - is altogether profound. This extends also to bat legislation, bat rules, NGOs, people and contacts, both local and national. Nik is the go-to man for any bat matter.

And then there is his energy and enthusiasm. Leading by example, there is no meeting he will not attend, no IT problem he will not address, no Zoom skill he will not master, no list of incoming emails and queries he will not answer, no new member he will not find time for (with tea in his excellent

wildlife garden), and no rough ground he cannot traverse; I've seen him negotiate ditches and fallen trees that would trouble someone fifty years his junior.

Nik is an unsung credit to bat conservation and, I think everyone will agree, very much deserving of the recognition the Pete Guest award brings to its recipient.

**Natalie Harvey**

*Hampshire Bat Group*

I joined Hampshire Bat Group and attended my first member's meeting four years ago, shortly after moving to the county to begin my post-graduate studies. Nik was so welcoming and I was immediately struck by his warmth and passion for bats. As my studies progressed, I knew I wanted to incorporate my interest in bats into as many projects as I could, including my dissertation. Nik has such a wealth of knowledge and experience and was always so kind in taking the time to answer my batty questions with so much detail.

I have learnt so much about bats and their conservation through Nik and continue to be inspired by his bat work. He has introduced me to other members of the group and lots of exciting volunteer and survey opportunities. I never could have imagined all of the wonderful things that would come out of joining the group when I attended my first meeting, and Nik has had an enormous role in that, for which I am so grateful.

Nik is always so supportive in encouraging members of the group to develop their skills and get involved with different activities, such as joining him on his NBMP survey transects. He also dedicates so much time spreading the word about how amazing bats are to members of the public through organising numerous walks and talks. All alongside his work as Chair of Hampshire Bat Group, carrying out VBRV visits and mentoring new trainees, county recording, running the group website and writing articles for the newsletter. I would like to nominate Nik for the Pete Guest award in recognition of his unwavering enthusiasm and dedication, as a thank you for all the amazing work he does for bats, and for being such a positive influence within Hampshire Bat Group!

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## Appendix 3. Supporting statements for Steve Roe

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**Tom Bennett**

*Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group*

I have known Steve since 2013 when I started working as an Arboricultural Consultant at the same company. I was promptly introduced to the world of bats through tree climbing and had the excitement of finding a pipistrelle in the top of an oak tree whilst under Steve's watch full eye. Steve suggested that I joined Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group to find out more about these fascinating animals. Steve has been part of the bat group since 2000. Over the years Steve has been involved in many projects and milestones, all in the name of bat conservation. His passion to educate people of all ages is inspirational and he is always prepared to share his knowledge and experience. He provides training to all that come along whether it be bat box checks, bat walks or trapping surveys.

Following a number of years working on a project to study swarming bats within Derbyshire, Steve hosted the first ever Swarming Conference in partnership with BCT. An event which saw some of the best UK and international bat workers come together for a weekend of talks and field work.

In recent years Steve has taken up the role of Vice Chair for the bat group and also become involved with BCT as a trustee. Both of which highlight his passion and continuing dedication in the world of bats, something which never seems to wane.

Steve also brings a modern twist to bat conservation and is always looking at ways to promote bats through the ever-changing world of social media. In 2018 Steve worked behind the scenes to launch the new bat group website which is supported by the Twitter account. Derbyshire Bat Group's twitter account is the most followed bat group in the country and with 3000 followers, it helps to promote bats alongside other organisations.

The dedication of his spare time for bat conservation comes on top of his day job as a consultant for yep you guessed it, bats. The time given and commitment shown by Steve would be enough for this nomination however in 2019, Steve embarked on yet another journey in promoting bats through social media and launched BatChat, a podcast with BCT.

Travelling across the UK to interview numerous experts, volunteers and batty people, Steve has opened up the world that we all know and love to those who never knew it existed. In 2020 and 2021 when the pandemic cast a shadow over the world of conservation, these interviews continued online and provided factual information at a time when bats were under scrutiny. With 3 seasons, 34 episodes featuring 53 guests the podcast has clocked up an impressive 37,530 listens.

This venture is in my opinion one of Steve's greatest achievements to date and its role in bat conservation is just as important as those first bat walks he did 22 years ago.

**David Nixon***Staffordshire Bat Group*

Steve and I first met in 2013 while checking bat boxes at Elvaston Castle in Derbyshire. Soon after meeting Steve it became very quickly apparent that the vast majority of his spare time is dedicated to bat conservation. Inspired by his calm training approach, I remained in contact with Steve and went on to attend evening trapping sessions as part of the Derbyshire Autumn Swarming Project. During this period, not only was I fortunate enough to learn advanced trapping skills that many other bat ecologists are not privileged with, but more importantly, I was naturally adopting transferable and very important *key* training skills to subsequently pass on to others who at the time were keen to become involved with bat conservation. Since I have known Steve, he has always demonstrated the importance of training and public awareness, highlighting how critically important it is to maintain our interest in bat conservation with a view to ensure the survival of bat populations for many years to come. In addition to night work, Steve devotes a considerable amount of time undertaking hibernation checks during winter months, many of which are combined in a joint venture with Staffordshire Bat Group, involving days of steep hikes in the Peak District National Park to explore a network of mine adits which serve as important hibernation roosts.

There are no boundaries with regard to Steve's generosity in terms of time and training. In addition to trapping, charring meetings, nocturnal surveys of various important Derbyshire sites and walked transects, Steve continues to find time to support other bat groups in many ways. For example, he has provided bat call analysis workshops for Staffordshire Bat Group, helped with bat box checks across the county, supported the group with call analysis, spoken at the group's AGM in 2018 and also contributed significantly by spending long nights radio tracking Brandt's in conjunction with a major study the group are partway through in Staffordshire's Churnet Valley region. On a larger scale, Steve has provided QGIS training to bat groups and BCT conferences.

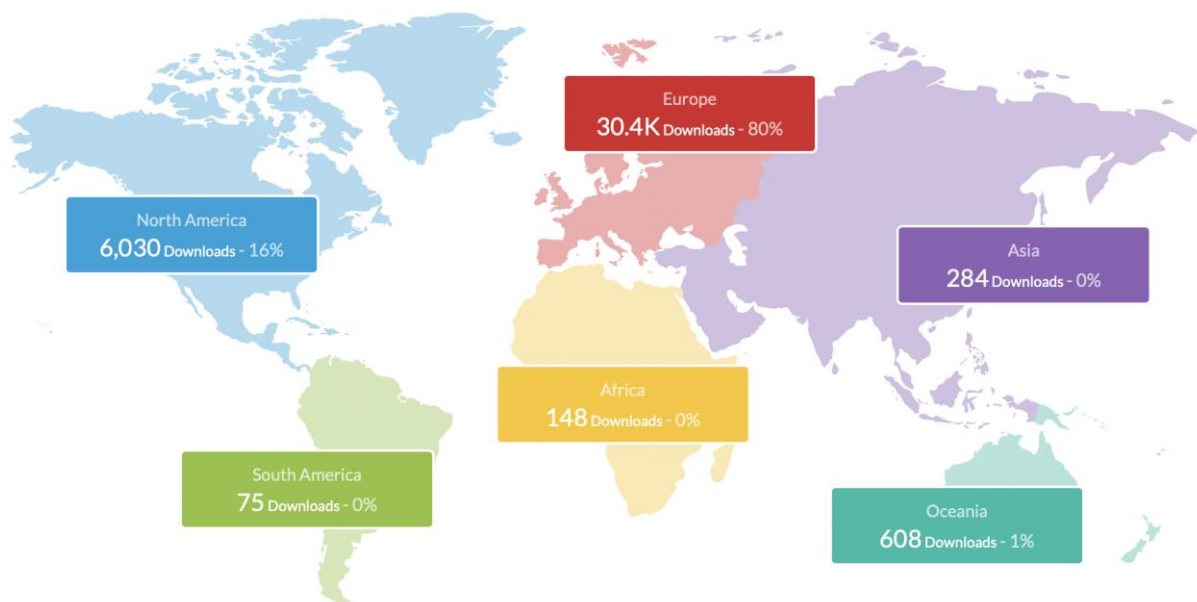
Not only is Steve vice chair of Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group, but he also currently sits on the board of trustees as vice chair of BCT, having been elected from his previous role as a BCT board member in 2021.

Above all the support Steve invests to Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group, other bat groups and BCT, his very popular BatChat podcast is what currently makes him stand out fundamentally, as an example of an important modern-day bat conservationist at a global scale. Both Tom and I could write essays about the level of time and effort Steve has invested in this podcast, but no amount of writing could actually do it justice. In short, for a very long time Steve wanted to embark on a bat conservation journey that would reach the heart and soul of not only bat conservationists, but to all listeners who have some level of interest in the natural world. In doing so, he was hopeful that by use of modern-day technology (i.e., podcasting), he could reach out and inspire as many naturalists as possible, in all corners of the world, in hope they might play their part in bat conservation sometime soon. Being responsible for a popular podcast is no easy task; it takes a lot of time and effort and in Steve's case, it involves prep work, seeking speakers who will inspire listeners and generally make the podcast interesting. It also involves a lot of time driving across the UK so that speakers can be recorded in person, with a view to set the scene, such as in woodlands at night or in old mansion houses for example. The stats below speak for themselves. They are from the host and

are compliant with 'IAB Podcast Measurement Technical Guidelines'. In short, they do not include bot downloads and are genuine listens by humans (all stats are until 16 May 2022):

Podcast launched on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019. 3 series, 34 episodes, 2 trailers

- All time listens: 37,530 since published
- Top 3 episodes are
  - Shirley Thompson: The Past, Present & Future of Bat Conservation
  - Bats and Coronavirus
  - Woodchester Mansion
- 85% of downloads are by mobile device
- Listened to in 98 countries as shown in the map below



- 53 guests
- In January 2022 the show was ranked 18 in the top 35 conservation podcasts worldwide by FeedSpot: [https://blog.feedspot.com/conservation\\_podcasts/](https://blog.feedspot.com/conservation_podcasts/)
- Featured in BBC Wildlife Magazine (April 2022 edition)
- Hosted on one of the largest commercial podcast hosting sites and that company publishes monthly statistics about all of the podcasts they host. BatChat has consistently been in the top 10% of all their podcasts based on its episode download rates in the first 7 days. The episode featuring the Bat Conservation Trust President, Chris Packham, made it into the top 5% of podcasts during November 2020.
- Several guests have commented on how they value appearing on the show to promote their work and projects. Chester Zoo said "These are difficult times for conservation work so it was such an honour to be able to chat about the work we do here at Chester Zoo for bats". Author Emma Reynolds said "BatChat is the best!". Reviews of the show on podcast apps left by listeners include "It is understandable to a wide range of people. You learn something with every episode", "These podcasts are always a highlight of my week", "This is a truly exceptional wildlife focused podcast but it's as much about the people as about the bats" and "Very informative with lots of heart and character. Education on bats is very important

in today's climate and BatChat do a stand-up job at providing it!". More reviews available from [Apple podcasts](#) and [podcast addict](#).

- In 2021 and 2022 BatChat was nominated for the CIEEM NGO Impact Award and was [Highly Commended](#). Both year's receiving a Highly Commended recognition.

The above is merely a short synopsis to summarise a small percentage of effort Steve has contributed to bat conservation over many years. At a time of environmental change when bats are under threat by the perils of mankind, conservation efforts at a global scale, such as those driven by Steve's relentless enthusiasm, are critical for the future success of bat populations around the world, and for that reason, I am proud to nominate Steve for the Pete Guest Award 2022.

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