

# FRIENDS OF UPTON HEATH NEWS

## APRIL 2004

### UPTON HEATH SURVEYS

Would you like to help with some wildlife surveying on the heath? We have two dates coming up (See below). If there is something else you would like to survey please give us a ring and we will provide you with maps etc.

#### **IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

**Next meeting ...7.30pm Thurs 26<sup>th</sup> August, Upton Country Park, Classroom.**

**Nightjar survey...9pm Mon 5<sup>th</sup> July, Meet: Upton Country Park, Carpark**

**Silver Studded Blue survey...11am Thurs 29<sup>th</sup> July, Meet: Recycling bins Longmeadow Lane**

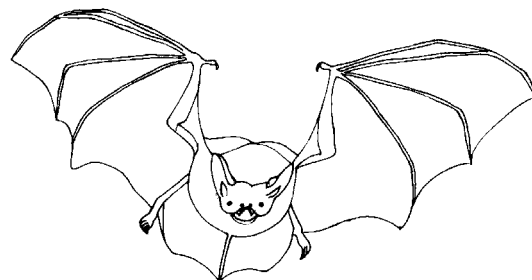
**Bat Evening...7.30pm Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> May, Upton Country Park, Classroom**

#### **IN THIS ISSUE:**

- **Upton Heath Surveys**
- **Bat Facts**
- **LIFE 2004 – Two new faces on the heath**
- **Useful telephone numbers and web sites**
- **Upton Heath Fact file (for Friends of Upton Heath only)**

### BAT FACTS

Bats in Britain and worldwide are threatened, largely because of the changes caused by human activity to the places where they find their food, the food available to them and to the places where they roost in summer and in winter. Bats are also very misunderstood creatures and even in a modern enlightened world, many people regard bats with alarm and suspicion. In fact, bats are useful creatures and an important part of the world in which humans live. In this country, bats eat many thousands of biting insects on summer nights which would otherwise be a nuisance to humans and other insects which are pests on farmers' crops. In other parts of the world there are species of bats which pollinate fruit crops and help to sustain the regeneration of tropical forests by spreading the seeds of trees in much the same way as seeds are spread in the droppings of birds.



There are 16 species of bat in this country, some of which live in and around areas like Upton. The smallest British bat, the Pipistrelle, lives in trees and woodland but is also the bat most frequently seen flying in urban areas and found roosting in modern houses. Unfortunately, modernisation and renovations, particularly with UPV fascias and guttering may mean that the holes by which bats gain entry to roofs are blocked, often unintentionally, by householders who sometimes do not realise that bats are using their roofs to roost.

Bats can be seen flying over Upton Heath on summer evenings and some may roost in the larger trees on the edges of the heath but many probably roost in the houses near by and fly out over the heath at night to feed. A good area to see bats on Upton Heath is along the Roman Road and at the entrance to the grazing unit where there is a large roost of Pipistrelles in a nearby house. Bats will also feed on swarms of insects attracted to street lights.

If you want to help bats in the Upton area, you could consider planting your garden with plants that attract insects, particularly moths, or putting a bat box up on your house or on a large tree in your garden.

## **Death Notice**

We are sorry to hear about the death of Etain Peacock. Etain was a very supportive and active member of the group and will be sadly missed.

## **BAT EVENING – “Building Batty a better home”**

**Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm**

The evening will include: a talk from a member of the Dorset Bat Group, building bat boxes to put around Upton Heath and a walk with bat detectors to see what we can find.



### **LIFE 2004 – TWO NEW FACES ON UPTON HEATH**

The persons in blue are back on the urban heaths!! This year's team of LIFE wardens began work on 15 March 2004 and spent their first two weeks on induction learning about their new jobs and heaths the important role they will play in protecting the remaining urban heaths of the area. The comprehensive training they receive ranges from learning how to deal with fires to ensuring their own personal safety – and they go through all this to help to ensure that the remaining urban heaths will there for us all to enjoy in the future.

So what does it take to be a Urban Heaths LIFE Project warden? Perhaps the best qualified to answer this question are the two new wardens who will be working on Upton Heath, Tracey and Jon (see above photo). This what they said.

#### **Tracey says:**

*“After having worked in a busy country park in Lincoln, I felt this would give me a good understanding of the similar problems faced by the Urban Heaths LIFE Project sites which also under heavy pressure from access by the public. I was also keen to work in the South West as my degree is in Marine Biology and I liked the idea of being near the sea again and of course I can see the sea from Upton Heath and also one of my other sites is at Ham Common which is on the shores of Poole Harbour. Although I have only been in post for a few weeks, I have seen a few reptiles and met a lot of nice people and needless to say, had a few interesting encounters as we all know that no everyone who visits Upton Heath behaves in a responsible way”.*

#### **Jon says:**

*“I spent a year in Dartmoor (oops sorry working on Dartmoor) as part of my student year at Seale Hayne where I did a Degree in Agriculture and Countryside Management. During this time I worked as a ranger doing a variety of tasks including working with volunteers, a variety of school groups, local farmers and local people, Ministry of Defence and local landowners including the Duchy of Cornwall. I was also involved in practical management including public access. I felt this experience would be a good grounding for my work as a LIFE warden and also an opportunity to work close to home. I have always been interested in heathland as I grew up in the area and spent many happy hours as a child out and about on local heaths looking for the wildlife”.*

### **NEW ID CARDS FOR PATROLLERS**

These numbered cards will be issued with this newsletter to members of our friends group. They have useful contact numbers on the back and although they are not photo Id's we hope they will be of use to our patrollers whilst out on the heath.

#### **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND WEBSITES**

<b>Urban Heaths LIFE Project</b>	<b>☎ 01202 581973</b>	<b><a href="http://www.dorsetheaths.org.uk">www.dorsetheaths.org.uk</a></b>
<b>Dorset Wildlife Trust</b>	<b>☎ 01305 264620</b>	<b><a href="http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset">www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset</a></b>
<b>English Nature (Dorset Team)</b>	<b>☎ 01929 557450</b>	<b><a href="http://www.english-nature.org.uk">www.english-nature.org.uk</a></b>
<b>Bat Conservation Trust</b>	<b>☎ 020 7627 2629</b>	<b><a href="http://www.bats.org.uk">www.bats.org.uk</a></b>
<b>Herpetological Conservation Trust</b>	<b>☎ 01202 391319</b>	<b><a href="http://www.herpconstrust.org.uk">www.herpconstrust.org.uk</a></b>