

Calderdale Badger Protection Group

2019 Report

Working to protect badgers from all forms of persecution

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Shining a light in the deadly dark

The first thing I learnt about Cheshire Wounded Badger Patrol is that its main purpose is not actually to look for injured badgers, *writes Emily Rawlins*. Rather, by ostentatiously donning hi-viz vests and shining torches in the cull zone at night, the marksmen's bloodthirsty task is made as difficult as possible.

The second thing I learnt was that my headtorch, perfectly adequate for winter dog walks, paled into insignificance – literally – in pitch dark countryside. Fellow group member Phil kindly lent me his OviLeaf LED torch for my second trip, and I was so impressed that I subsequently bought my own.

Calderdale's badger defenders also included Lisa, Steve, Elaine and Cath, and throughout the Autumn cull we made the four-hour round trip to Nantwich at



Two members of Cheshire Wounded Badger Patrol search for signs of culling.

least once most weeks. Our guide, Andy, drove a similar distance from north Wales several nights a week, despite also having a full-time job and a young child. Badgers certainly inspire dedication.

I found the patrols surprisingly enjoyable. Andy knew the Cheshire footpaths well and made full use of modern technology, and we kept to public rights of way in order not to fall foul of the law. There was no sign or sound of any shooters – although

there was no way of knowing whether this meant we were patrolling the wrong area at the wrong time, or if we had successfully forced them to change their plans. It was good to chat with likeminded volunteers who shared my revulsion at the cull; Andy likened it to the camaraderie of an army patrol.

On my third outing, however, we were reminded of the seriousness of what we were doing. Another group met a man dressed in camouflage

who demanded to know what they were doing on farmland at night, yet refused to explain his own presence there. When they returned to their car, they found all its tyres flat and the valves snapped off.

If we are at war, then it is one in which, sadly, those who wish to destroy badgers have the support of those in power. Yet at least we can make it clear to them that they cannot take our wildlife without a fight.

Cancel the cruel cull, Tories told

On 28th September some of our members headed into the 'big smoke' of Manchester, where the Conservative party conference was being held, *writes Cath Baker*.

We wanted to have a presence there to show opposition to the badger cull happening at that very time in other parts of the country.

The 2019 target was for 65,000 badgers to be killed, although at the time of writing the actual figures have not been released. While we are not an overtly political group, all the other main parties had made it their policy not to continue with the wilful destruction of our iconic badgers, with only the Conservatives pursuing killing badgers as part of bTB control, despite the scientific evidence against this

approach. The forecast for the day was for heavy downpours, and the weather did not disappoint! Our badger facepaint ran down our faces, but our banners were waterproof!

We received lots of interest and plenty of people took photos. Everyone we spoke to agreed that the cull needs to be stopped, and alternative approaches to bTB control pursued. The problem lies within the herd, and therein lies the solution.

Meanwhile we will continue our mission to vaccinate any Calderdale badgers who may have been exposed to bTB infected cattle.

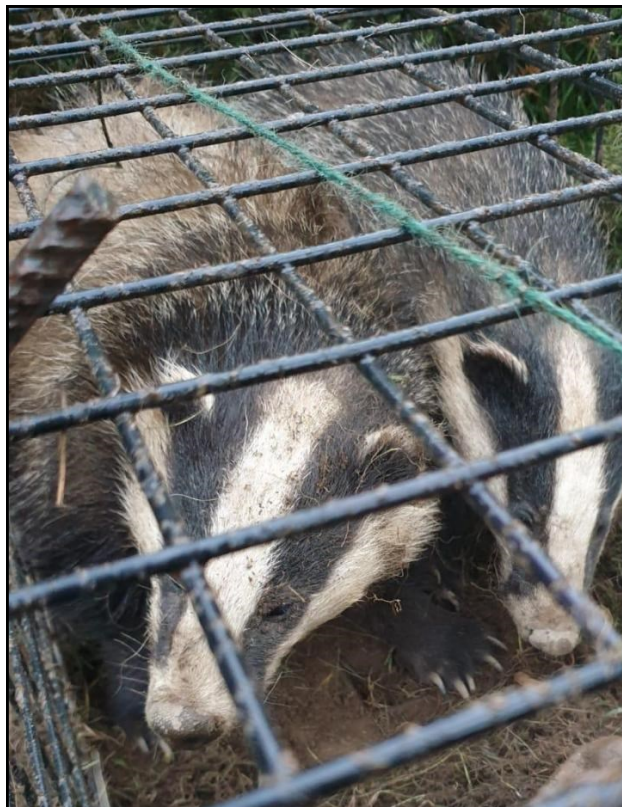
Front page lower photo shows, from left, Elaine, Emily, Myra, John and Cath at the Manchester march.

Bit of badger bother

Being a badger protector does have its downside, *writes Lee Roberts*.

One poor boar was the victim of an RTA in Elland. I picked him up at 6.30am on a rainy morning in September and put him in the back of my car. I had to leave him there for three hours until a local nature reserve opened and gave me permission to lay him to rest.

I was later given a scolding from my wife as we had only picked up the car (brand new) the day before!



Badgers caught and vaccinated by Cath and Ange in Derbyshire included this erythristic sow (a rare genetic variant), a cub and two inseparable clan members. Above, Cath shows off her qualification.

Two of our volunteers qualified as lay vaccinators in 2019, having successfully completed the Cage Trapping and Vaccination of Badgers course run by the Animal and Plant Health Agency.

There are only around 400 people qualified to give the bTB vaccination in the country, and we are proud to have two of them!

Cath and Ange travelled to Derbyshire for the three-day course, which involved a gruelling day of classroom training, before going out to set cages in the late afternoon. They were then back out in the dead of night, as the licence to vaccinate only allows work to take place in the first three hours of daylight.

Cath explained: "We approached each sett where we had baited the cages the night before, hearts thumping, hoping we had been successful. To our delight, we had two

badgers sleeping peacefully in our first set of cages. Unfortunately you have to wake them to do a welfare check before vaccinating, but they seemed unperturbed! We then made up the vaccine, and went back to the animals to give the jab. That first jab was nerve-racking for both of us. By both of us I mean me and Ange, not the badgers, who didn't notice the actual vaccination!

"After the jab, each badger has a small patch of fur snipped and stock-sprayed, to make sure that vaccine isn't wasted injecting the same badger twice. They were not so keen on their 'cut and colour', but once the cage door was released it was fan-

tastic to see them run back off to their setts.

"We went to four setts in total, and managed to vaccinate four badgers each, including a very young cub! Jason, our mentor from

APHA, was very patient and tolerated our chatter.

"At our last sett we were

thrilled to find that we had caught a rare erythristic badger! These badgers have a pale reddish tinge to their darker fur. Even Jason got his camera out, so we knew we had seen something very special! She was a very calm badger, not even bothered by the stock spray. Apparently this is a common trait of these unusual badgers."

On the second night the

weather closed in. The vaccination team decided to cancel and leave the cages open so no badgers were trapped overnight in the storm. It was the night the dam burst at Whaley Bridge, not far from the vaccination zone.

Although disappointed not to get their second vaccination session, Cath and Ange made the most of a full night's sleep before their written exam.

Cath said: "I'm delighted (and relieved) to say we both passed. We will go back to Derbyshire in spring for a refresher, and then we're good to go!"

"Massive thanks to Jason from APHA, and to Debbie, Gail and the Derbyshire vaccination scheme for their brilliant encouragement and mentoring!"

Certified to trap and jab

'There are only around 400 people qualified to give the bTB vaccination in the country, and we are proud to have two of them!'

Digging deep for badgers

The last year was a very productive one financially, with an income of almost £9,800 which is incredible to say we didn't receive any large grant funding: it was all from stalls, sales and individual donations (see below), writes Tracey Morris.

Outgoings were £5,000, with most of this being spent on training two vaccinators ready for the year ahead, and £1,500 spent on buying merchandise for selling. At the close of year we had a very healthy balance of £6,311.13 - well done to all concerned.

Cath Baker has had a very busy year, not only with training to be a vaccinator, coordinating west group, sett surveying and checking out any

reports of road casualties, she has also been incredible at fundraising. In brief, she has raised funds on Just Giving (£1,120), produced Christmas cards for sale, and the cherry on top are her fabulous badger tree decorations (below): laser-cut wooden badgers hand-painted by Cath herself. Travelling as far afield as Alaska and New Zealand, these raised £400 in the weeks leading up to Christmas. Fantastic.

Thanks also to Andrew Tilsley and Jen-

nies Smith for the donation of artwork for the Christmas cards. West group member Shelley Wright spent a lot of 2019 in the kitchen making jam. Using fruit donated from other members and gleaned from Incredible Edible, she has made and sold over 200 jars of jam, giving us an additional and very welcome income of £500 for the year.

Over £600 was raised via eBay in 2019. We have sold many and varied items, including a beautiful Robert Fuller print of Badgers (pictured below) donated by a very generous badger lover from Mytholmroyd, a collection of Playmobil

toys, a honey extractor, and a number of Pitkin Pictorial books documenting the Royal Family through the 1950s and 60s! It's amazing what you can sell

online.

In August we were very fortunate to be chosen by Mr Lumpy and Friends to

receive a very generous and on-going donation of £10 a week, this money so far is sufficient to vaccinate three of our Calderdale badgers. Big thanks to Mr

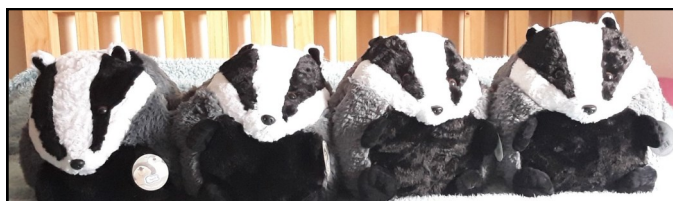


Calderdale Mayor Dot Foster loved our Christmas cards!

Lumpy, Friends and Christine. And last but certainly not least, a huge thank you to Sally Hayes of Tod Almighty and Harworth Wholefoods.

Sally has very kindly allowed us to sell jam and Christmas cards in her two shops, which increased our reach, and sales, immensely. Three cheers for Sally!

'At the close of year we had a very healthy balance — well done to all concerned'



Tree decorations in production, the Robert Fuller print, and some lovely badger hand-warmers found in a motorway service station!

Financial Statement for the period 1 January to 31 December 2019			
	2019	2018	
	£	£	
Balance b/f	1899.78	875.62	
Income			
Subscriptions	638.00	534.00	
Donations			
Members	1965.99	158.22	
Events	214.54	1024.06*	
Collection box	56.50	170.00	
Just giving	1120.00	0.00	
Website	0.00	0.00	
Other	119.57	0.00	
	3476.60	1352.28	
Sales			
Stalls	1377.55	121.00	
Car boots	902.50	0.00	
Jam	500.00	0.00	
Cards	1050.00	0.00	
Badgers	402.00	0.00	
eBay	621.32	0.00	
Other	405.50	0.00	
	5258.87	121.00	
Grants	390.00	978.00	
Other	25.37**	13.00***	
	9788.84	2998.28	

*Pauline Kidner / Secret World event
 ** repayments from members for advance monies in 2018 £25.37,
 ***sett talk



Emily, Rachael and Jonny attended Todmorden Show in May. The police on the neighbouring stall were great sports and we helped them practice using their riot equipment!



We're car bootylicious

Undaunted by 3.30am starts, and spurred on by the promise of money for nothing, we took to the car boot sales of

Halifax during 2019 to raise funds for our vaccination scheme, writes Cath Baker.

After gathering people's unwanted items, we then hawked them off to the good folk of Calderdale and beyond, who travel far and wide for a bargain. Car booting is not for the faint-hearted, or cold-toed. Thanks to all those who donated items, as we not only raised around £800, managed to spread the badger word, and raise our profile, but also had a laugh trying to sell some of our more bizarre items!

	2019 £	2018 £
Expenditure		
Running Costs		
Badger Trust Levy	140.00	84.00
Insurance	314.70	314.70
Website	0.00	0.00
Paypal	20.14	0.00
Postage / Stationery	14.88	80.00
	489.72	478.70
Vaccination / Rescue		
Equipment	598.66	236.67
Training	2670.00*	570.00**
Members' Expenses	0.00	80.00
	3268.66	886.67
Fundraising costs		
Stalls	305.00	243.00
Carboots	50.00	0.00
Merchandise	362.08	40.00
Cards	735.65	0.00
	1452.73	283.00
Event Costs	149.04	180.00
Other	17.34***	200.00****
	5377.49	1974.12
2019		2018
Brought forward	1899.78	875.62
Income	9788.84	2998.28
Expenditure	(5377.49)	(1974.12)
Balance	6311.13	1899.78

*vaccination training for Angela Eyre / Cath Baker
 ** Pauline Kidner training day
 *** unallocated expense at beginning of year
 **** donation to Badger Trust

Restricted funds	
Vaccination Project	4313.44
Running costs	
Badger Trust Levy	200.00
Insurance	350.00
Stalls costs	200.00
Cards	813.35
	1563.35
Unrestricted funds	434.34
	6311.13
Where is the money?	
Lloyds Bank Account	4452.63
Paypal Account	360.86
Just Giving Fund (Cath Baker)	1120.00
Cash Tin	127.64
Johnny Morrison re Gazabo	250.00
	6311.13

A not-so-lucky rescue attempt

North East Subgroup rescued our first badger on 13 May, writes Elaine Hey.

Members of the public had reported a disoriented badger out in daylight in a residential area of Halifax where we had had no previous reports of badgers or setts. Three group members attended and found the badger under a car off a busy main road. Local residents had helpfully formed a makeshift barrier with blankets to prevent the badger from escaping into the traffic. After a struggle, we managed to manoeuvre the badger out from under the car and into our cage.

The badger had a wound to her rear which looked like a bite. Our vet examined her and found her to be a small female weighing only 5.9kg. The prognosis appeared promising and antibiotics were prescribed. We named her Lucky. A place was found at Whicher Wildlife Rescue in Barnsley and, after eating well, she was transferred the next day.

We began an urgent search for her sett. Although this was unsuccessful, we did find a release site in a garden frequented by badgers – presumably Lucky's clan.

Very sadly, Lucky did not thrive as hoped. Although she was eating, a vet at the rescue deemed her to be very elderly, with few teeth and unable to survive in the wild. Her wound was probably badger inflicted as a result of being expelled from her sett. The decision was taken that the kindest option was to put her to sleep.

This was obviously not the outcome we had hoped for, and we still await our first happy rescue in North East subgroup.

Ben's bounce back

Early one May morning, the hotline rang to report that a badger had fallen about 20 feet into a yard, writes Marguerite Penny.

He had dug down and found his way out blocked by stone. His bloody paw marks were on the window and sill. Escape was impossible except through the house, so he had gone to sleep in a flowerbed.

He started trotting around the yard as I was waiting for Cath and Andrew and I noticed a large wound on his rump, probably inflicted by another badger. He eventually disappeared under a raised kennel against a wall.

It wasn't easy to get him out. He managed to get out of the grasper a couple of times so we tipped the kennel on its side and eventually man-



aged to guide him into the cage.

I called him Ben, and took him to the vets who gave him antibiotics for his wound. He spent the night in my porch enjoying slices of juicy pears and bashing about in his cage.

On the journey to Jean Thorpe's, the renowned wildlife rescuer and rehabilitator in North Yorkshire, I became worried that there was a problem with my car, as it was making an unfamiliar noise. I wondered if a breakdown van would give a lift to a badger, but then realised what it was: Ben was snoring. Deep, contented snores that resonated from the boot. On one occasion I drove too fast over speed bumps. The snoring stopped abruptly, there was a shuf-

fling sound, a disapproving sigh, silence, and then the snoring resumed!

We arrived at 7am and Ben was put in his pen. He immediately hid in the pipe.

When I returned to bring him home a week later, he was a very healthy boy and his wound had healed.

Without a peep from him, we arrived back in Calderdale to find Cath, Andrew and the couple who had found and reported him waiting to take him back near to where he had been found. We set his cage down and stepped back. Andrew opened the cage door, and after a moment Ben emerged and sniffed. He knew where he was, ran off down the path and was gone.

Road victim is our first emergency call

The hotline rang at 2.30am one April morning, writes Marguerite Penny.

A badger, apparently an RTA, had run limping up a drive near Ripponden, with no visible wounds. I set off with our new rescue gear to find an RSPCA officer already there talking to the man who had reported the casualty. The young female managed to escape from the grasper four or five times and also endearingly pretended, in between her escapes, that she simply wasn't there by crossing her front paws in front of her, burying her nose into them and closing her eyes.

She was eventually placed into the cage and

I noticed some blood had come out of her nose. Around 4am, this brave and wild soul, vulnerable and beautiful, was placed on the vet's table in an alien and sterile world of bright lights and strong, unknown smells.

She was given painkillers and we covered the cage and put her by the radiator in a quiet, dark room until the vet could examine her properly.

She died before that could happen.

I fail to understand why people do not stop after hitting a fellow being to see if they can be helped. Such lack of respect for the life of other species is deeply disturbing and ultimately catastrophic.

Crime-fighters on the side of wildlife

In October 2019 we were delighted to welcome Inspector Kevin Kelly in his role as National Chair with the Badger Persecution Priority Delivery Group and his colleague and group member, Geoff Edmond, RSPCA National Wildlife Officer, *writes Lisa Wilkinson*.

Kevin is an Inspector with North Yorkshire Police and is the operational lead for wildlife crime, of which he is clearly passionate about. Geoff, equally passionate, has a lifetime's experience of protecting wildlife and tackling wildlife crime.

We were also delighted to have our local Wildlife Crime Officers present: PC Matt Hamilton of Calderdale, and PC Caroline Newsome of Kirklees. Members of Leeds, Kirklees, Craven and Lancashire Badger Groups were also in attendance.

Kevin described how wildlife crime now has a clear agenda within the police force which was not the case as recently as 10 years ago. A rural task force was set up in 2016 in North Yorkshire which clearly demonstrated the correlation between criminal activity and wildlife crime and was also based on an understanding of the direct links between domestic abuse and animal abuse. The rural task force made 101 arrests in its first year and has had five convictions for badger baiting. It intervened with illegal cock fighting and had its first court case about raptor persecution.



From left, Calderdale Wildlife Crime Officer Matt Hamilton, RSPCA National Wildlife Officer Geoff Edmond, Inspector Kevin Kelly of North Yorkshire Police and Caroline Newsome, Kirklees WCO.

Geoff listed the priorities of the RSPCA Wildlife Crime Strategy - badgers, poaching, birds of prey, bats and fresh water mussels - and its Rural Strategy: poaching, fly-tipping and rubbish.

Kevin explained that The Badger Persecution Priority Delivery Group is a multi-agency group and part of the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit. Membership comprises of police officers, RSPCA, the Badger Trust, the League against Cruel Sports, Naturewatch, the Crown Prosecution Service and the National Wildlife Crime Unit. It meets four times a year.

It defines badger persecution as: digging and baiting, sett blocking, snaring (also linked to moorland management) and habitat destruction (linked to planning applications).

The priorities of the group are: increase recording of incidents, intelligence profiling (linked to volunteer watch), improving investigation processes working to a national standard, increasing awareness, organised crime and sport (both cultural and generational), lobbying Police Complaints Commissioners to highlight work not being done, links with rural crime, newsletters four times a year and a schools programme.

We looked at how we could move forward as badger groups with the police and specifically our WCOs: sharing intelligence and informing police, keeping records and sharing information on any sett disturbances.

Kevin and Geoff kindly offered to provide specific training on crime scene work for in March / April 2020.



Andrew is a force for nature

The barbaric and depraved subject of crimes against badgers and their setts is, tragically, something that all badger groups have to deal with, *writes Marguerite Penny*.

We therefore thought we should find out more about it, so on 28 February Andrew Swinburne from Naturewatch came to talk to us about badger crime.

Naturewatch is a charity that aims to end animal cruelty and advance animal welfare standards around the world. Andrew gave us lots of information about the laws that pertain to badgers and also gave us some ideas about the criminals and how they work.

Our group also has the Naturewatch schools materials, which educate pupils aged 13+ about badger crime.

Two days of talking badgers

The badger cull and its possible extension were at the forefront of all attendees' minds at the Badger Trust Symposium, *writes Stephen Francis.*

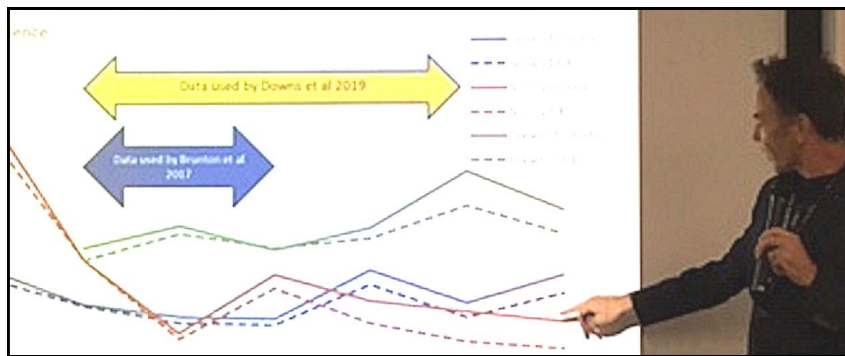
The event took place in November 2019 at Leamington Spa, and several presentations dealt with the cull and the lack of scientific evidence surrounding it. After the introduction and welcome by Badger Trust CEO Dominic Dyer, supported by chair Jo Bates Keegan, the opening presentation was by Professor Rosie Woodroffe who discussed why vaccination is a viable alternative to culling.

The professor made a strong statement to the effect that there is not a reservoir of bovine tuberculosis in the badger population, and any comments to that effect should be resisted vehemently. She went on to show evidence that culling can never eradicate bovine TB, as perturbation will cause outbreaks in other areas. Vaccination, on the other hand, will eradicate TB in badgers after four to five years, Woodroffe postulates, as it protects cubs as well as vaccinated animals, and has the added advantage of being considerably more cost effective per square kilometre per year.

The next presentation by Tanesha Allen was about The Wytham Woods Badger Research Project at Oxford University, in which more than 200 badgers and their ecology were studied. More information about the study is on YouTube.

Michael Clark gave an amusing presentation on The Badgers of Trewin Orchard, followed by Ian Redmond MBE on his life as a global conservationist.

The final presentation was by Dr Iain



Dr Ian McGill examines bTB rates in the cull zones, at the Badger Trust Symposium

McGill, a veterinary surgeon and director of the Prion Interest Group, who argued that neither culling nor vaccination will eradicate bovine TB as it is a disease of cattle. He contended that the badger cull is a scientific fraud and the only way TB in cattle can ever be eradicated is to fast-track licensing so cattle can be vaccinated. Also, accurate DIVA tests should be brought in as a priority to differentiate between vaccinated and TB infected cattle, and cattle movement controls should be enforced properly with a DIVA test pre-movement.

In between the presentations, a panel of eminent wildlife supporters held a question and answer session regarding wildlife crime, chaired by Charlie Moores of Lush Radio.

The day ended with a series of workshops: Bringing Evidence to Court to Convict Wildlife Criminals, Rescue and Rehabilitation of Wildlife, and Planning and Development.

On the 27th April I attended the first ever symposium about badger vaccination, which was held at Derby University, *writes Marguerite Penny.*

It was extremely well attended by vets, researchers, representatives from the Wildlife Trusts, the National Trust, Born Free, dairy farmers and vaccinators themselves, as well as of course the Badger Trust and badger groups. The topics covered were well researched, evidence based and eye-opening.

I was especially interested a groundbreaking lecture by Dr Andrew Robertson of Exeter University on Science to Prove the Effectiveness of Badger Vaccination, and Dr Malcolm Bennett's important research Tracking the Spread of TB in Badgers through Road

Kill Study Data. Among other participants, the vet and Chair of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Sue Mayer, spoke on Supporting Badger Vaccination in Derbyshire from a vet's perspective.

It was very disturbing to hear other speakers describe the badger cull companies and the vested interest of a high number of vets, which results in their entrenched stance against badgers and badger vaccination.

A standout talk was by Robert Thornhill, a livestock farmer from Derbyshire, who gave a wonderful talk on Badger Vaccination: A farmer's Perspective, in which he explained his support for badger vaccination, why it is needed, how essential it is to get farmers on board and how he works to achieve that aim with his peers as a "farmer champion".

He also admitted to “loving soil” which was a memorably light-hearted moment! Robert was given a standing ovation. After lunch, Debbie Bailey continued the theme of working with farmers and there were talks from those delivering the Nottinghamshire programme and vaccination projects in Cheshire.

The question and answer panel was interesting too, with Mark Jones, a vet from the Born Free Foundation, and Guda Van Der Burgt, a veterinary pathologist, being especially informative.

There were workshops later in the afternoon. I opted to do the one with Debbie Bailey and Gail Weatherhead on Best Practice in Badger Vaccination as I thought it would be most immediately useful to our group.

It was an uplifting, inspiring and positive event. I drove home feeling that there was perhaps some hope for our beautiful and much sinned against, scapegoated badgers.