

EAST SURREY BADGER PROTECTION SOCIETY

Patron: Virginia McKenna OBE

Newsletter Spring 2013 No.97



**Please come to our
AGM & Film:
'Bear Man of Kamchatka' !
see page 4**



Affiliated to the **BADGER TRUST**

East Surrey Badger Protection Society
Registered charity No. 800270



EAST SURREY BADGER PROTECTION SOCIETY (ESBPS)

Please use these addresses to write to any committee member

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e-mail address: esbps.badgers@gmail.com

Website: www.esbps.org.uk

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the ESBPS. No responsibility can be accepted for errors, although every effort is made to ensure accuracy.

Committee Members:

Chairman. Ray Ings 01883 380321

**Secretary. Vacant – We urgently need a new secretary.
Please contact Ray if you can help us.**

Treasurer. Diana Andrews 01883 625585

**Senior Field Officer, Warwick Reynolds 020-8688 9905
Croydon contact & Sett recorder.**

Membership Sec'y. Sue Machin 020-8657 3227

**Outside Events & Talks
to Outside Organisations.** Maureen Pembridge 020-8686 5866

Publicity Officer. Steve Monahan 020-8657 3227

Police Liason Officer. Alan Carmalt 01883 743113

Minutes Secretary. Jennie Dolling

Newsletter & Website Editor. David Malins 020-8657 2174

Mole Valley, Reigate, Banstead, Epsom & Ewell area contact.
Ian Tilbury 01372 721289

Contacts for Neighbouring Badger Protection Groups:

West Surrey: Dave Williams 01483 811989

Badger Trust Sussex (Mid Sussex) Jan Spooner 01403 822735

West Kent: Barbara Wilkinson 01474 703948

ESBPS Newsletter by e-mail: If you would prefer to receive this newsletter by e-mail, please e-mail esbps.badgers@gmail.com with your name, postal address & e-mail address.



IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
or if you have important information



ESBPS 24 Hour Rescue Service:

Warwick Reynolds 020-8688 9905 mobile: 07973 327017
Ray Ings 01883 380321 mobile: 07736 520332
Steve Monahan 020-8657 3227



RSPCA – 24 Hour Emergencies & Enquiries: 0300 1234 999



Police – Crime in progress or danger to life, but also Badgers in road accidents, or interference to Badgers or their setts: **999**
or ring your local Police Station in office hours – see local directory.

IF THE PROBLEM IS NOT URGENT ring 101 or phone below.



Kingston Wildlife Crime Officer PC Hayley Parkes - 020-8721 5855



Metropolitan Police Wildlife Crime Unit - 020-7230 8888
e-mail: wildlife@met.police.uk

Surrey Wildlife Crime & Rural Affairs Officers:



Mole Valley PC Mark Trezise - 01483 630370
e-mail: molevalley@surrey.police.uk



Reigate & Banstead PC Sue Roe - 01483 631393
e-mail: reigateandbanstead@surrey.police.uk



Epsom & Ewell PC Simon Young - 01483 571212
e-mail: epsom@surrey.police.uk



Tandridge PC Barry Reece - 01483 633167
e-mail: tandridge@surrey.police.uk



Neighbourhood Support Team North Tandridge
PCs Stephen Cresswell & Lloyd Auloni - 0845 1252222



Crimestoppers – Call anonymously if you have information
on anyone involved in criminal activity: 0800 555111



League Against Cruel Sports – Relies on the public to report wildlife
crime. If you believe you may have important information,
call their Wildlife Crimewatch Line on 01483 361108.



Reporting Dead Badgers - Please phone Warwick Reynolds.
We need to know about them but we do not collect dead
badgers, your Council should be able to help.



**Annual General Meeting 8pm
Tuesday
19th March.**

Doors open 7.30pm.

Organiser: Ray Ings

Tel: 01883 380321

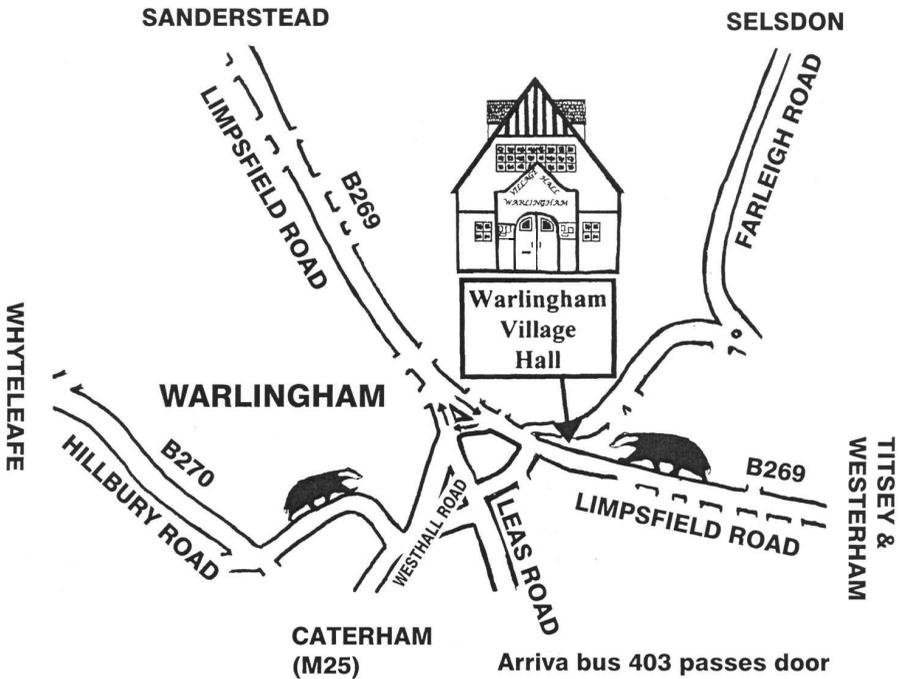
Members and Non-members are warmly invited to attend the 2013 AGM of the East Surrey Badger Protection Society at Warlingham Village Hall.

Notices of motions will be at the discretion of the General Committee and must be received by the Secretary not less than 7 days before the AGM. Nominations

to the General Committee must also be received by the Secretary not less than 7 days before the AGM and must be supported by a Proposer and a Seconder who are ESBPS members. If you would like copies of the minutes of last year's AGM, please notify the Secretary as soon as possible.

I hope that we can have as many members as possible attending, We always try and deal with our business formalities promptly possible. If you know of anyone who would like to come along, they will be more than welcome.

The AGM will be followed by a film: 'Bear Man of Kamchatka'





Chairman's Comments

by Ray Ings.

Government determined to press on with badger cull

The Government has announced that it is determined to press on with the plan to kill badgers in two pilot zones this year despite the shambles which led to the programme being postponed last year. The trial cull is not to see if killing badgers reduced levels of TB in cattle but to see if it is possible to kill at least 70% of the badger population in a specific area and also to assess how humane the free shooting of a badger is. The answer to the latter question is likely to be 'not very'. As a badger group we are occasionally called to attend badgers that have been hit by cars. So we have direct experience of the degree of trauma a badger can sustain and still survive. On that basis the likelihood of a badger being hit by a bullet and crawling off to suffer a lingering death is high.

The Government has refused to listen to the many scientific experts that have argued against the cull, not on emotive, but scientific grounds. Instead they cite the views of DEFRA vets. The same people who have been wrong time and time again when it has come to the issue of badgers and TB. Another example is the President of the British Cattle Veterinary Association a vet called Andrew

Priall. He stated in the Telegraph that badgers are rife with TB. We wrote to Mr Priall to inform him that his claim was completely misleading. Even in so called badger TB hot spots only some 15% of badgers have TB (data from the 10 year randomised badger trial) and in most of the country badgers do not have TB at all. Mr Priall claimed that he had been quoted out of context and promised to contact the Telegraph to correct the story.

Meanwhile in Wales remarkable progress is being made with the badger vaccination programme. As of the 1st February 1,424 badgers had been vaccinated against TB.

Foxes in the news

The RSPCA is to be congratulated for securing the first prosecution of a registered fox hunt for illegally hunting foxes. There have been many prosecutions taken under the Hunting Act 2004 but these have involved individuals not the whole hunt. To say the hunting fraternity are not happy with the RSPCA is an understatement. They used the full weight of the pro-hunting press to launch a sustained attack on the charity. For example in a period of two weeks the Telegraph contained seven anti RSPCA stories which contained numerous factual inaccuracies and misleading statements. In fact so much so that the RSPCA has taken the unusual step of making a formal complaint to the Press Complaints Commission even though this is a

rather discredited body following the Leveson Report into the media. The Telegraph was even at it with badger groups. One headline read 'Labour party gets funds from badger group.' It was totally untrue which became apparent for those that bothered to carefully read the full article. No badger group has given funds to any political party. The Badger Trust has written to the Telegraph to complain but the response (if any) is unknown at this time.

Tabloid hysteria met the incident of the fox that apparently bit a baby in south London. A number of inconsistencies and contradictions have subsequently evolved from the original story but this may be due to poor reporting rather than the story being a fabrication. There have been other occasions when the original claim of a fox attack turned out to be the family pet dog. It does not help the credibility of the story when the parent sells an exclusive to a tabloid newspaper. Taking it at face value it is extremely rare for a fox to behave in the way described. In fact there have been no more than five reported incidents (and if they happened they would certainly be reported) since 2002. The way that some of the newspapers responded you'd think gangs of foxes were sneaking into houses and stealing away babes was an everyday occurrence. It is not often that a badger group will agree with the pest control industry but on this occasion they very sensibly went on record to dismiss calls for a fox

cull. A cull of the urban fox population would be both ineffective and a disproportionate response considering the tiny number of events of this nature. For some culling is the solution to all perceived problems involving wild animals regardless of the science and ethical considerations.

We repeat our warning about the need for vigilance required to highlight planning applications that could affect badgers or their setts:

With the Coalition Government's changes to the Planning System, many local Councils, like Croydon, have decided not to contact local people when planning applications are made.

This could mean more problems for badgers - so can you do anything about this? The answer is Yes, and it's quite easy.

Go online and search for your local councils planning page - enter your own post code in the search box. Now you can view any planning applications that have been made recently or in the past.

If you are unsure whether an application could affect badgers or their setts, please forward the Council planning application number and relevant details to us - we can then check it - just in case.

Please support
Wildlife Aid wildlife hospital.
Randalls Farmhouse, Randalls Road,
Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 0AL
24 hour Emergency Phone
01372 377332
Dedicated to the care, treatment & rehabilitation
of sick, injured and orphaned wildlife.



Treasurer

Diana Andrews
Tel: 01883 625585

I hope you renewed your subscription for 2013. We are so reliant on your subscriptions, donations and legacies to carry out the many activities we undertake in support of badgers in Surrey and the UK.

Outside Events & Talks to Local Organisations.

Maureen Pembroke
Tel: 020-8686 5866
mob: 07758 715422

I still have a few spaces in my calendar to give talks to local organisations. I can tell you about the work of the ESBPS – our rescues, our release programme for orphaned cubs and much more besides.



Newsletter & Website Editor

David Malins

Tel: 020-8657 2174

We must acknowledge the use of drawings from Michael Clark's excellent book 'Badgers'. This is published by Whittet Books, ISBN 0-905483-65-0.

We have it on our sales stall.

Our logo is based on Simon Turvey's painting 'Badger'.

Our newsletter & website would benefit if you could contribute, articles, drawings, photographs or anything you think might interest members or visitors to our website.

ESBPS Website

Our updated website www.esbps.org.uk is back online. We hope you find it interesting.

News from Warwick Reynolds Senior Field Officer:

2012 RELEASE SITES

Another 13 orphaned young badgers that might otherwise have died have been looked after by Wildlife Aid near Leatherhead until released by us in 2 family groups. Thus making it 90 badgers released by us in 8 years.

Badgers held in release pens before returning to the wild tend to give the carefully designed artificial setts I build them a thorough makeover as soon as they move in. One of the chambers at the Fetcham sett was filled with earth up to the ceiling by the young and inexperienced badgers - you would think they were hardwired to avoid such excavating disasters... They have now left the artificial sett and possibly moved 200 yards away to live with the wild badgers. The Bookham site was one of the driest release setts we have ever had: the small grove of conifers sucked all the water out of the ground, so it is no surprise that the badgers or at least some of the group have stayed in the artificial sett. A dry sett must be a major factor in whether they stay or go. Obviously, we look for dry sites but, unfortunately, some become wet.

Perhaps we should experiment with roofs on the 2013 release sites. Very soon now we expect this year's orphans to start arriving - will it be the usual 14 or 15 new recruits?

THE START OF THE BOOKHAM
RELEASE PEN. ALL THE LABOUR &
MACHINES SUPPLIED BY THE
LANDOWNWER GRAHAM – far right



2012 was another busy year dealing with Natural England Badger Disturbance Licences. Some of the work in brief:

- Badger-proofed a Wimbledon school play area with 40m of 2m deep subterranean barriers.
- Worked with the Downland Trust installing stock fencing near badger setts.
- Badger-proofed two gardens: one in Ham the other in New Maiden.
- Built an artificial sett in Hove.

Most assignments these days, rather disappointingly, seem to have their origins 15 or 20 years ago. My word, how time flies when you're having fun! This was also true of the construction of Tramlink and the building of tunnels to allow badgers to pass under the tracks. Last year trams stopped running whilst the tracks were replaced and I was able to lift the lids on the badger tunnels by the Park Hill tram tunnel. Last time I inspected the tunnels several could not be used due to the amount of bedding material stuffed into the pipes, not to mention two tunnels blocked with sleeping badgers - they just have no consideration! Last year's results were a pleasant surprise: all tunnels being used as designed to provide safe crossing for badgers. The odd thing was that badgers had taken in fairly substantial logs and left them in the inspection chambers. What was their purpose? To use them as seats or tables, or maybe a door to prevent other badgers stepping on them when they were trying to get some sleep?

- We have two ongoing wildlife crime police investigations in progress at present. Can't say much about them at this point except to say one case involves the pouring of oil down a sett whilst the other involves the demolition of a house close to an active badger sett.

The Council Planning Department neither requested nor received any Wildlife Assessment Surveys. I am afraid with staff and money shortages this is the way it's going. Not long ago councils demanded Habitat & Species Surveys as part of most planning applications. Now, unless something is flagged up, surveys are not bothered with. Another worrying trend is survey results being checked and passed by other consultants and not Council Ecologists.

(Ed See our warning on p6)

CLEM CLEMENTS 1923 - 2012

by Ian Tilbury

Sadly, Clem Clements passed away on 23rd October 2012, aged 89.

He was a member of our neighbouring, West Surrey Badger Group, but his influence on the study of badgers ranged far more widely.

Clem, a qualified geologist, had a passion for mapping and recording, and this he applied to his study of badgers.

He worked with the legendary Ernest Neal, and supplied him with habitat tables and distribution maps for his iconic books. Clem was the National Settle Recorder for the Mammal Society for many years, and his skill and enthusiasm for recording setts has been appreciated by badger groups who received his records for their area. The importance of creating and maintaining accurate sett records is obvious, but Clem was in on this at a very early stage, and his keenness for sharing data and encouraging others to learn the techniques for recording in their own areas is his lasting legacy.

He had a huge collection of OS maps and kept meticulous records. He was involved in recording about 24,000 setts nationally, and visited at least 6,000 of them himself. Dave Williams, from West Surrey Badger Group and Chairman of Badger Trust took Clem out in 2000 for him to visit his 6,000th sett. Before he had reached that landmark Clem reckoned his best day was to record 35 setts comprising 680 holes on his first days search around Crewkerne.

When I first met him we naturally talked about sett records in Surrey. Within a few days he had sent me copies of his records for East Surrey, carefully written out in longhand and so clear and detailed, and was keen to exchange information so as to keep his records up to date.

In early December I went to an event in Guildford arranged to celebrate Clem's life. There was an impressive turnout of his friends and colleagues, and the tributes reflected his various interests. We were shown some of his own slides taken on various walking and cycling trips in the UK and Europe. He created tables and records of the height of hills and mountains, and the routes to ascend them.

Clem had worked at the Royal Greenwich Observatory for 26 years, where his skill and passion for recording and his great powers of concentration were much respected by his colleagues.

Amongst the photographs on display were of some complicated working Meccano models Clem had made as a youngster, and for which he had won prizes in competitions; a sign that his attention to detail and those powers of concentration were already developed.

Chris Cheeseman, the noted badger expert, confirmed that he had picked up valuable field tips from Clem that had helped him throughout his career. He added "Clem was a perfect example of a dedicated amateur naturalist who has made a huge contribution to our understanding of wildlife. He was a quiet, modest man with an awesome intellect. Heaven for him would be surveying for badger setts."



Badger Trust

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East Sussex,
RH19 2WN.
Tel: 08458 287878
Fax: 02380 233896

e-mail: enquiries@nfbg.org.uk
website: www.badgertrust.org.uk
Chairman - Dave Williams.
Sec'y - Dr Pam Mynott

Badger Trust is the working name of the National Federation of Badger Groups (NFBG). The NFBG is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no.5460677; Registered charity no.1111440.

Badger Trust promotes the conservation, welfare and protection of badgers, their setts and their habitats. It represents and supports 60 local voluntary badger groups throughout Britain, provides expert advice on all badger issues and works closely with the RSPCA, the police and others.

Badger Trust maintains a database on incidents of badger persecution in Britain.

Badger Trust is an active member of PAW – The Partnership for Action against Wildlife Crime. This involves the police, other government agencies and non-governmental organisations that are working to fight wildlife crime. Badger Trust is a member of WCL – Wildlife & Countryside Link.

Check the website for the origination of articles marked **

Badger Cull Postponed but we Must Fight On

Dave Williams, Chairman, Badger Trust

In October we were all anticipating the badger cull to be under way shortly.

Then to our delight on Tuesday 22nd

the Environment Secretary, Owen

Paterson, told the House of Commons

that the two pilot culls in parts of

Gloucestershire and Somerset had

been postponed until next year.

Reasons given included: the Olympics,

policing, bad weather, and legal

challenges - a reference, of course, to

our own Judicial Review and the subsequent appeal.

I can confirm that also on that day we were poised to issue a challenge to Natural England on aspects of the licensing arrangements. We believe news of that action was a factor in the National Farmers' Union decision to notify the Secretary of State that they would be unable to complete the cull this year.

Brian May had posted an e-petition on the government site on 7th September, and within a matter of weeks the number of signatures had reached over



100,000. This enabled the coalition of organisations formed by him, under the name Team Badger, to persuade a group of backbench MPs to request a debate in Parliament. The request was granted, and we are indebted to Brian for the action he has taken and the surge of media interest it has generated. On the day before the debate many members of Team Badger attended the Commons to lobby MPs. Several hundred badger supporters were there, including me. My MP was sympathetic, but being Conservative was hesitant about voting against her own government.

The debate took place on 25th October and the motion against the cull was tabled by Caroline Lucas, ably supported by Mary Creagh and others. The result was that 147 cross-party MPs voted against the proposed cull, with only 28 in favour. However, this is not binding on the government, and both the NFU and the Secretary of State say they remain determined to kill badgers next year and to roll the cull out in further areas from 2014 onwards. The Hansard report is at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm20t213/cmhansrd/chan56.pdf> The debate included a great deal of discussion about vaccination of both badgers and cattle. Effective vaccines are critical to the future of farming, so we hope the government will objectively review all aspects of its bovine TB strategy and develop a control policy which abandons culling. Its current proposals are bad for the farming industry, bad for cattle and bad for badgers. The proposed cull will not solve bovine TB. Badger Trust would be willing to take part in detailed and substantive discussions with the farming industry to try to reach agreement on the way forward.

The introduction on 1st January 2013 of long overdue new cattle controls will help, but ultimately, of course, cattle vaccination offers the best long-term solution. Defra ignores the fact that there has been a reduction in bTB since 2008 and it continues to cherry-pick pieces of the science that fit its case. Somehow its attitude has to change.

Together with our conservation partners in Team Badger, and working closely with eminent scientists, we will continue our campaign to save badgers. In doing so we believe we will also be helping farmers, who for years have been misled by the farming unions about the true causes of bTB. We will press the government to discuss urgently with the EU how the vaccination of cattle in the UK can become a reality. Contrary to what the pro-cull factions claim, we are informed that the cattle vaccine and the DIVA test could both be available in a very short time.

Until then, you can be assured that Badger Trust will also continue to explore the possibility of further legal challenges against the unwarranted, unscientific and counterproductive slaughter of badgers.

Very many thanks to all of who have helped to get us to this stage. The message is: we fight on until there is a change in government policy.

TB test shock: “Defra must provide answers” say the Badger Trust **

HOW could it happen? That’s the question Defra must answer, says the Badger Trust, following revelations that a cow which had tested TB negative for five years was found to be riddled with the disease when it was sent for slaughter at the end of its useful life.. “The gamma interferon skin test is one of the cornerstones of the Government’s strategy to control bovine TB,” said Badger Trust chairman David Williams. “We have always said that the test is unreliable - typically only 80% effective - but this horrendous result raises new and critical questions. Is this, somehow, a one-off or is it indicative of a much wider and more sinister problem that could explain many more herd failures?” He was commenting on the news, revealed in Farmer’s Weekly and the Carmarthenshire Journal, that a fifth-lactation animal, part of Gelli Aur College’s dairy herd, had been culled at the end of its productive life and that it was only after it was slaughtered that, in the words of farm manager John Owen, it was found to be “riddled with TB”.

Gelli Aur College Farm has been under restrictions since 2007 and has lost 300 cattle to the disease. Mr Owen told Farmer’s Weekly that the level of infection in that cow suggested she had been infected for years and he expressed concern that the cow, homebred, might have been at the root of successive test failures. “There was nothing to suggest she was infected. It is a concern that she may have been spreading the disease to other animals within the herd.” Mr Owen told Farmers’ Weekly in 2009 that he had been reluctant to take up the suggestion that the gamma interferon test should be used to pinpoint all infected cattle on the farm. “We do not want to lose a large number of animals in one go as we want to maintain cash flow, have cows for teaching students and hang on to our quality staff.”

“Bovine TB has clearly had a massive impact on the farm in question,” commented David Williams, “and the apparent failure of the tests raises major issues that for the sake of the farming industry must be answered. If it is being repeated elsewhere it undermines the unseemly rush to cull badgers and reinforces the conclusions of the Independent Scientific Group’s peer-reviewed report on bTB which effectively ruled out badger culling as an effective disease control mechanism. Instead it recommended a range of cattle-based measures - better and more frequent testing, greater use of gamma interferon testing, tighter controls over cattle movement, and improved on-farm biosecurity”.

TB-free’ herds hiding infection **

The latest bovine TB (bTB) figures from Defra reveal evidence of persistent bovine tuberculosis (bTB) in officially TB-free herds. An increase in cattle slaughtered as reactors or direct contacts during January to October 2012 (3,358) over the previous year coincided with a threefold increase (9,264) in the

number of tests on officially TB free herds (OTF). The Badger Trust says these herds were clearly not TB free but were part of the continuing deep reservoir of infection in the cattle population. The Trust calls for the rigorous application of recently-imposed cattle controls and nationwide annual testing of cattle. It says “officially TB-free” is clearly a suspect designation.

This news follows evidence of wholesale lawbreaking by Welsh farmers as well as serious recent challenges to British farming from international and industry authorities. The Trust says these revelations show the industry has much to do to set its farmyards in order instead of rushing to slaughter thousands of badgers for barely marginal advantage in the long term.

The detail:

1. One in seven Welsh *cattle* farmers has admitted to shooting badgers illegally, which is one in ten for all farmers, according to a recently published study by scientists from three universities. The Badger Trust says this is further proof of how farming industry organisations are unable to ensure their members obey the law, although they continue to demand massive privileges.

2. The first-ever report of the newly-established Cattle Health and Welfare Group (CHAWG) on the state of British farming published last autumn assessed conditions in both dairy and beef sectors in Great Britain. Among “a number of urgent issues” are mortality in young stock and lameness in dairy cattle. It also complains of “large gaps in availability and consistency of current and geographical data across GB”. Mortality and lameness continue to be a scandal and about 240,000 cattle die on farms each year from unknown causes. This is almost ten times the number killed because of bovine tuberculosis. The report quotes the Kite Consulting monitor of farmers’ records which showed 18,000 cattle out of a sample of 20,000 suffered from mastitis in 2009; there were 1.8 million dairy cows in June, suggesting that mastitis could be accounting for as many as 300,000 premature deaths.

The chairman of the Badger Trust, David Williams, said: “Surprisingly the report omits discussion of bTB, so missing a valuable opportunity to set the disease in a wider context. Furthermore it is astounding that the industry should still be struggling, in the words of the report, ‘to confidently quantify both levels of challenge and improvements in performance’ when vital areas such as data about cattle tracing, fallen stock and meat hygiene remain the ‘most obvious’ for future improvement. All it says about bTB is that it is “slowly spreading”. If so, after this historic lack of controls, that would hardly be surprising”.

3. An EU report four months ago concluded that the bovine TB situation overall in GB was at best static and might be deteriorating in England. It echoed CHAWG’s strictures about coordination of data: “There is a fragmented system of controls . . . combined with a lack of co-ordination [that] makes it difficult to

ensure that basic practices to prevent infection. . . are carried out in a satisfactory way”. It also highlighted the scandal of overdue tests and the need for prompt removal of infected cattle and inconclusive reactors from farms. Mr Williams added: “These keynote reports amount to authoritative and independent support for the Badger Trust’s conviction that the UK agricultural industry is ill-equipped to monitor its own affairs and to observe tuberculosis restrictions imposed in its own interests”.

Ed: These 2 articles highlight the urgent need for reliable and regular bTB testing, robust movement control and the realisation that there is an urgent need to improve bio-security and concern for the welfare of cattle.

Bovine TB: Wales leads the way**

The first year of the Welsh Government’s badger vaccination programme is a significant, science-led step forward in the complex long-term battle to combat bovine TB, says the Badger Trust. “In England the Coalition had a choice: cull or cure. In the face of overwhelming public and independent scientific opposition, it chose cull and confrontation and appears determined to go ahead with a mass, uneconomic slaughter which promises at best a meagre 12-16% return over nine years.

“In stark contrast” comments Trust chairman David Williams, “the Welsh Government accepted scientific advice and opted for vaccination. Encouragingly it is also introducing additional cattle control measures from April 1 as part of its wide-ranging measures to combat bovine TB”.

Carried out over an area of 242 sq. km, mostly in north Pembrokeshire, but also in small parts of Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, in one of the wettest summers on record, the first-year project cage trapped and vaccinated 1,424 badgers “without incident or injury” and the Welsh Government’s summary report confirms that it plans to expand the project where possible to increase coverage in future years.

The decision to vaccinate rather than slaughter badgers was taken following a report by the Welsh Government’s Bovine TB Science and Review Group which reported: “It is logical to assume, based on experimental evidence, that a significant percentage of badgers that are vaccinated will become resistant to infection and/or disease...and in the medium to long term repeated vaccination is likely to reduce the level of bovine infection and disease in the local badger population, thus reducing the risk to local cattle from badger-to-cattle transmission.”

David Williams added: “Everyone agrees that there is no quick fix to bovine TB. The Coalition’s projected bTB reductions achieved by slaughtering tens of thousands of badgers, most of them healthy, are meagre and speculative and will take the best part of a decade. The preferred culling method - shooting at

night - is unproven, potentially hazardous, will spread bTB through perturbation, and seems certain to provoke confrontation, and is widely seen as a politically motivated decision.

"Secretary of State Owen Paterson should think again. Much needed but long overdue extra controls over cattle movement are now belatedly being introduced. They should be given time to work and much more should be done to encourage badger vaccination. Cure not cull is a message that will receive widespread approval - and it will work."

Vaccination Benefit is passed on to cubs**

A newly-published study has shown a direct beneficial effect of vaccination against bovine TB in individual badgers and an indirect protective effect in unvaccinated cubs. The Badger Trust, the country's sole badger conservation charity is undertaking badger vaccination programmes along with many other organisations, as well as supporting efforts to bring about cattle vaccination. The paper says vaccination with Bacillus Calmette-GueTIn (BCG) has already been shown to reduce the severity and progression of experimentally- induced TB in captive badgers and a four-year clinical field study among badger social group levels suggested a similar, direct protective effect. Injections reduced by 76% the risk of free-living vaccinated badgers testing positive for progressive infection. Furthermore, the risk of unvaccinated cubs giving positive tests went down significantly as more badgers in each social group were vaccinated. There was an even greater reduction in risk to such cubs - 79% - when more than a third of their social group had been vaccinated.

David Williams, chairman of the Badger Trust, said: 'This is yet another valuable piece of evidence to add to the many others leading to a better understanding of how vaccination can help to control this insidious disease. This ever-growing body of knowledge is a clear signpost to the future when vaccination will be far more effective than killing badgers, and banishes all fear of spreading the disease'. He listed the new knowledge as:

- In recent months reputable sources have condemned Britain's sporadic control efforts and revealed the effects of liver fluke in cattle.
- The Law Commission is to review the chaotic mass of wildlife law which is clearly not fit for its purpose of defending wildlife although this could be an opportunity for manipulation by vested interests.
- Two leading scientists have spelt out likely consequences of uncertainties in accounting for the proportion of badger populations culled.
- This was published just as the Coalition revealed gross underestimation of badger populations in the proposed 'pilot' culling areas of Somerset and Gloucestershire.

Mr Williams added: "For many years now there has been nothing like the same level of up to date proof to support the idea that killing badgers at huge cost could yield more than highly marginal benefits.

STOP PRESS! from the East Kent Badger Group.

Ed: Although how they scooped this report amazes me!

Millions of badger refugees flood across Welsh border

Sections of the M5 and the Severn Bridge were shut last night as thousands of badger refugees fled in convoy from villages in Gloucestershire and Somerset over the border to Wales.

Badgers from both counties began to flee following the news that armed Government agents were advancing deep into their territory to perform a 70% cull.

Whole badger families took to the roads as the threat of persecution and genocide escalated. Mothers and fathers comforted their young through driving rain as the procession advanced towards the Welsh border. Carrying white flags they ignored demands from angry toll booth operators for their crossing fees. Some badgers spoke of older and infirm badgers succumbing to the wheels of impatient juggernauts or simply lying down exhausted on the hard shoulder.

Michaelwood Service Station was reported to be besieged as angry badgers queued and clawed for provisions in a desperate bid to fuel their journey towards the Welsh border. Starbucks denied that they were cashing in on the crisis by adding 25% to a standard cappucino.

In a response to the situation David Heath, the Agriculture Minister, refuted suggestions that the Government was creating a politically sensitive cross-border situation. 'I would like to reassure the little black-and-white creatures which everybody loves, that they are not all under threat,' he said. 'Nobody wants to see a single badger killed, however we do promise to perform a clean kill for hundreds more and, on this basis we urge the nation's favourite wild creatures to return to their homes.'

A spokesman for the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) said, 'We are extremely worried. If badgers want to flee the county because they feel persecuted, they should have the right to do that. The Security Council is taking a very close interest in the welfare of British badgers and will be holding an ineffective and unresolvable emergency session about the British Government's crimes against badgers.'

A Spokesbadger from Dark Wood in Somerset described the precarious and violent situation inside the county. This is a very worrying time for badgers but one which we shall overcome. We are an enduring lot, and we may move out for a time, but we wait, and are patient, and back we will come.



East Surrey Badger Protection Society Membership

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Please go to our website or phone 01883 625585 to obtain an Application.