nearly always compound, ie. the bone ends penetrate the skin. Subsequent infection can lead to failure to heal or death from septicaemia. Although I do not think antibiotics should given be routinely, in some cases it may be indicated after culture and antibiotic sensitivity tests.

Unfortunately many wing fractures are beyond repair and the only alternatives to constant pain and inconvenience are amputation or euthanasia. Amputation can give good results but problems arise due to the extreme thiness of the skin leading to poor healing at the amputation site or re-penetration of the bone through the skin, sometimes months later.

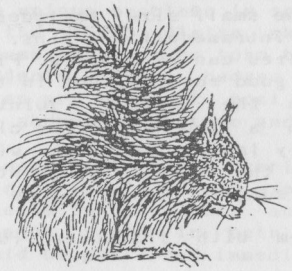
Outcome

As many bats as possible are released as soon as they are judged fully recovered. They are taken near to where they were found in the hope they will return to their original colony. However many will never be fit for release. Provided these animals are free from pain, can feed and groom themselves, and preferably associate with their own kind, I think it is justifiable to keep them in captivity and use them for demonstration purposes. Knowledge gained of their behaviour and requirements may help in the future to maintain them in the wild.

The captive bats are provided with water at all times and food each night. Although some bats will take a variety of foods, such as liver, cheese and cat food, the majority will only take mealworms (larvae of *Tenebrio molitor*) in any quantity. The mealworm diet is supplemented with Vit C and a multivitamin mineral mixture. To date I have kept pipistrelles for more than 2 years, and noctules and Brandt's for more than a year and most of these are still going strong. Pipistrelles have borne and raised young, but not conceived in captivity, and many have hibernated successfully.

Although the treatment and care of injured bats is time-consuming and often frustrating, I think the knowledge gained and their use in improving their public image makes it worthwhile and justifiable.

Lesley Helliwell



Red Squirrel

Fourth European Bat Research Symposium

held at Prague, Czechoslovakia August 18-25, 1987

This symposium, according to the organisers, was the largest assembly of bat-people to date. With nearly 300 participants representing twenty-eight different countries, our Czech hosts had quite an organisational task on their hands. However, all seemed on the surface to go smoothly, although, no doubt, there were plenty of problems to cope with, with such large numbers present. There were over 168 scientific contributions listed in the programme, either given as scientific papers or as posters. Some contributions failed to turn up, notably from India, which meant that the programme had to be altered occasionally. The sixteen British delegates contributed in many ways, both with papers and posters. Professor Paul Racey, Dr Robert Stebbings and Professor Jeremy Raynor all made contributions to the proceedings. Among those present were many I had met at previous conferences, and part of the attraction of such a gathering was renewing old friendships, as well as learning about the latest bat research. I was pleased to meet again Dr Sandie Sowler, who at one time was a member of the YMG.

The programme started on the Monday evening with informal slides at one of the Prague University's halls of residence 'Kajetanka'. It was here that not only had we to register for the Symposium, but also the majority of the delegates resided. On the following day the first Plenary Session was held in the main lecture theatre in the 'Karolinum' building of Charles University. After the first lecture, which was given in Russian by Professor Michail Kovtun of Kiev, we had contributions from Dr Ulla Norberg of Sweden on bat wing shape and Professor Rayner of Bristol University on weight carrying in flying bats. This was followed after coffee by one of our Czech hosts Professor Jiri Gaisler of Brno University on 'r' and 'k' selection models in life history strategies in bats. The morning ended with two papers from the Aberdeen team of Professor Racey and, Dr John Speakman on energetics of pregnancy and lactation in heterothermic bats, followed by one on energy expenditure and water balance in hibernating pipistrelles *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*.

Plenary Sessions were held on all mornings and on some afternoons, otherwise most afternoons were split into two Parallel Sessions. Unlike the first Plenary Session which contained a variety of subjects, subsequent Sessions had a theme, such as the sensoric world of bats or bat reproduction. Not all contributions were of equal value, and if one had a universal criticism it was that most of the slides, except those coming from the Aberdeen team, had too much information on them and were of poor quality. As would be expected from such a Symposium, most contributions were from professional or academic chiropterists, but there were a few from those there in an amateur status, such as Dr Roger Ransome, Mr Phil Richardson and myself. Roger Ransome