which is actively covered by birdwatchers on most days of the year.

In 1989, two peple standing on Cascade Bridge at Bretton Park, Wakefield were watching a small bat which may have been a Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). The bat was out early in good light, flying below the height of the bridge, its 'ginger-brown fur clearly visible'. Suddenly, a sparrowhawk dashed past, snatched the unfortunate bat and carried it away. Clearly the bat was taken entirely off guard and stood no chance of evading the bird.

In August 1988 a juvenile Hobby *Falco subbuteo* had been regularly roosting at Wintersett Resevoir. As it flew to its usual roost site, it made a half-hearted attempt at catching a bat flying past along the woodland edge. From the description given, the bird was clearly not intent upon catching the bat, as such an agile species would, in my opinion, have had little trouble in doing so. Further instances of raptor predation include a tawny owl, *Strix aluco,* which flew from behind a bank at dusk and came upon a group of feeding bats. The owl attempted to catch the bats but was unsuccessful and continued on its way while the bats carried on feeding unconcerned. A Sparrowhawk was seen flying in to roost very late one evening in almost complete darkness. Just before it reached some bushes it jinked and swerved at something in mid-air and appeared to make a catch. This was presumed by the observer to be a bat.

My own most interesting experience in this regard occured on 15th July, 1989, while I was watching a group of three noctules feeding over a rape field at Wintersett. A long-eared owl, *Asio flammeus,* flew slowly past and, although it made no attempt to catch the bats, they swooped down past the owl at very close quarters. Were they mobbing a potential predator or were they simply feeding on insects disturbed by the owl? The bats swooped past the owl twice in this way before continuing feeding over the field and the bird continued on its way.

In these instances, as with the Staffordshire noctules, the bats showed no fear of the predator even when it was in their midst. Clearly bats do fall prey to raptors if they emerge early but, in my opinion, the threat of predation is not the sole reason in why bats do not fly during the day.

John Gardner
Wakefield Bat Group



## NOTES ON MEASUREMENTS OF A POPULATION OF BROWN LONG-EARED BATS (*Plecotus auritus*) AT ROSSINGTON HALL, DONCASTER

On 15th September 1984, during building alteration work, a cluster of 15 brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*) was located in the wall cavity of an interior brick wall in the stable block at Rossington Hall, Doncaster (SK/6396).

Although they were in a torpid state when initially discovered, by the time I arrived (about 30 minutes later) to remove them to safety, the bats had become active and one specimen had flown off. The remaining 14 bats (8 males and 6 females) were weighed, measured and released into the extensive attic, where the presence of large numbers of droppings and discarded moth wings indicated that the colony had been using these premises as a roost site and 'feeding perch'.

Examination of the bats produced the following measurements:

TABLE 1

| MALES | | FEMALES | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Forearm (mm) | Weight (g) | Forearm (mm) | Weight (g) | |
| 37.5 | 7.5 | 39.2 | 8.5 | * |
| 38.6 | 7.5 | 40.5 | 7.0 | * |
| 38.7 | 7.0 | 40.8 | 8.0 | |
| 38.7 | 8.0 | 40.8 | 7.5 | |
| 38.8 | 7.5 | 41.4 | 7.5 | |
| 39.5 | 7.5 | 41.8 | 8.5 | |
| 39.6 | 7.5 | | | |
| | | (* = obious signs of lactation) | | |
| 39.7 | 7.5 | | | |
| Max 39.7 | 8.0 | 41.8 | 8.5 | |
| Min 37.5 | 7.5 | 39.2 | 7.0 | |
| Mean 38.88 | 7.5 | 40.75 | 7.83 | *P.auritus* |
| †Mean 40.12 | (n = 6) | 41.00 | (n=14) | *P. austriacus* |

† = after Stebbings (1967)