



Regular readers will now that we have build up a terrific working relationship with the Bedford Mind Group. Taking them on a bat work seemed a good way of saying thank youuntil the heaven's opened

Bat Walk Priory Country Park June 8 2010

“Thank goodness the rain has stopped” was a commented uttered by a few of us as we climbed in the minibus to go on a Bat Walk. Just over 3 hours later we were arriving back in damp soggy clothes but still smiling! Despite the pouring rain a great evening was had by all. Bedfordshire Bat Group’s Jude and Bob provided the opportunity us to join them on a Bat Walk at Priory Country Park. This is not something any of the group had done previously but 12 of us turned up eager to go. Having tea, coffee and Bat biscuits was an added treat as well as seeing the amazing exhibits of local wildlife in the visitors centre.

After a briefing on the types of Bats that we would hopefully see and armed with (expensive) gadgets that enabled us to listen to the bats we were ready for the off.....and then the rain came but so did the jokes, fun and laughter.

Everybody remained in good spirits and eager to learn about the bats, peering into bat boxes, watching a bat roost, having a close look at 2 bats netted by Bob (and his licence to do so) and all as rain dripped off our noses...through our clothes, into our shoes...pockets.... Seeing the bats was great, yes, but much more than that was seeing and feeling the sense of companionship, trust and enjoyment amongst the group. Two members of the group have been with us for less than a month and this was their first trip. They were welcomed and included and repeatedly said how much they had enjoyed themselves. One lady suffers daily with great anxiety. I saw her relaxed for the first time last night and laughing. She said she was overwhelmed by how kind people were to her. When asked about her evening as she stood sodden and dripping, she smiled and said she had had a wonderful time.

As we waited to go home, a gentleman spoke quietly of the panic attack he had experienced during the day and



Photo Jude Hirstwood

how the incentive to join the bat walk and the sense of belonging he got last night had helped to cope with his feelings.

There were so many similar moments last night that are difficult to explain but those present will understand. People changed last night. They were accepted, included and absolutely equal.

Myself and Kate (club deputy) are so grateful to Jude and Bob, Mark and Michelle for supporting and involving us and providing such a wonderful evening. Thank you on behalf of the whole group. Now back to making boxes..!

Hayley Seymour
Group coordinator

Mark Best Michele Read , Bob and I had such fun on this walk. I don’t think it has ever rained so hard on a walk but this group is made of the strongest stuff and the sight of some of them performing “ Singing in the Rain” is a torrential downpour willremain with us for all time. This is the kind of group you dream of – absolutely fascinated by the bats, especially the fact that you could hear them chattering in the roost with without bat detectors, and they all fell hook line and sinker for the bats once they saw them up close.

The priory bats thought them wonderful and as we sheltered in the trees to avoid the worst of the rain we found that one of the Kent boxes had a bat in, which many of them were able to see. Proof, if it were needed, that these boxes work.

They were such good sports that they jumped at a chance to do another wakk, this time at Harrold Odell.,