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**Russell IPM Ltd,**  
Unit 45 First Avenue,  
Deeside,  
Flintshire,  
CH5 2NU  
UK

+44 (0) 1244 281 333  
[www.russellipm.com](http://www.russellipm.com)  
[info@russellipm.com](mailto:info@russellipm.com)

## Gull staring – new means of pest management?

Research at universities often isn't very widely picked-up by the media, but a release issued on 7 August by the University of Exeter certainly was! Upon examination the release said: "University of Exeter researchers put a bag of chips on the ground and tested how long it took herring gulls to approach when a human was watching them, compared to when the human looked away. On average, gulls took 21 seconds longer to approach the food with a human staring at them."

It is likely most professional pest controllers will agree that the presence of a human might deter a gull, but only for a very short time, if at all. However, the press picked it up and before you could say 'herring gull', staring at gulls became the means of fending them off your bag of chips. Films and photographs of gulls pinching food on seafronts were across every type of media, making a mockery of the research.



## Gulls carrying superbugs

Elsewhere another piece of far more significant seagull research was revealed but not latched onto by the media. Researchers at Perth's Murdoch University in Australia, were looking at antimicrobial resistance in humans and animals and found that one in five silver gulls in Australia harboured antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Some 562 samples were taken from the birds from different places around Australia and tested. The silver gull was selected for the study as it is the most common gull in Australia. The researchers were shocked to find high levels of antibiotic-resistant *E. coli* in the seagull samples. Researcher Mark O'Dea said: "Seagulls could be acquiring this pathogen through their opportunistic feeding habits where they scavenge from left-over human waste and may then be subsequently spreading these resistant bacteria over vast distances."

Moreover, many of these bacteria were actually clones of those found in humans in health care facilities. This confirmed that they had not been transferred from seagull to seagull, but through contact with human waste.

## General Licence debate set to run

Things may appear to have settled down following the publication of GL34, GL35 and GL36 on 14 June but this is unlikely to be the end of this story. These new General Licences are only set to run until 29 February 2020.

Readers will remember that this whole saga started when WildJustice, mounted a legal challenge. The latest WildJustice newsletter explains that that first challenge has been parked but goes on to say: "We haven't given up, we haven't gone away and we are optimistic of securing significant changes to the General Licences that have allowed the casual killing of millions of birds." So more to come....

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## Home is where the heart is

Big hearted Cobra Pest Control boss, Paul Gowland, has lent his support to a homeless charity in his home town of Sunderland. Paul explained: "In the twilight and early morning hours, we see a lot of people huddled in doorways bundled in their rags and cardboard. It's easy to judge them, but they all have different stories and circumstances leading to their current plight. When we heard about Sunderland Community Soup Kitchen we were eager to help in any way we could.



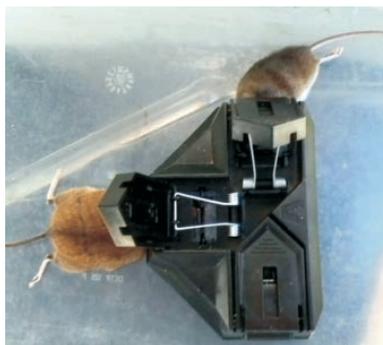
Paul Gowland with Andrea Bell

Founder Andrea Bell says: "Paul and his team's help has been colossal. Not just financially but, more importantly, by making resources available to help us get set up. Time is often the hardest thing to give, but the boys at Cobra have been there every time. We have achieved a five star food rating at the first attempt with Paul's help and just having someone who I can call any time to bounce ideas or problems off is an immeasurable help to us."

Paul added: "Andrea is a remarkable lady and her dedication to helping the less fortunate people in our city is amazing. We are looking forward to supporting this charity. There are other initiatives we are working on with Andrea to help raise funds and awareness. If we all put a little back, then some of the social issues facing many communities will benefit immensely and apart from that it makes you feel good about yourself!"

## Two in at once....

Colin Lee-Dade, pest control officer for Dacorum Borough Council in Hertfordshire, thought he would give the Tri Kill mouse trap from the Victor range, sold by RatPak a try. He had been having persistent problems with mice getting in under the floor into the kitchen units in a domestic property. The traps and bait were down for three weeks. The first week two mice were in the traps, the second week two in one trap and after that none! Job done!



## Abate to the rescue

The spell of very hot weather at the end of July threatened to wreck a ground-breaking art installation, called Flight for Youth, put on by a local Norfolk and Suffolk charity, the Benjamin Foundation.

The heat was destroying the display which consisted of thousands of glazed pottery butterflies put in place at the Assembly House in Norwich to mark the charity's 25th anniversary. Every butterfly was attached to the structure with a glue backing, but with the extraordinary hot weather a few butterflies decided to try and escape when the glue melted causing the fixings to come away from their ceramic backs. This is where Morley St Botolph-based Abate leapt to the rescue.

Colin Lang from the Benjamin Foundation said: "We needed to act very quickly to secure the butterflies and I thought netting would be an ideal solution. I contacted Jon Blake the MD of Abate Pest Management who dropped everything to assist.

"Within hours, Abate carried out a survey, they then sourced specific netting from one supplier and ties from an electrical contractor and were ready to implement a solution."



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## Another twist in the Rentokil-Mitie saga

Readers will be aware that Rentokil announced the intended acquisition of Mitie's pest control business on 1 October 2018 and that on 12 April 2019 the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) decided this might result in a substantial lessening of competition, particularly to national customers in the UK market.

However, an interim announcement on 11 July on the CMA website took the industry, and the companies involved, by surprise. ServiceMaster Global Holdings Inc was named as the upfront buyer of the business Rentokil was offering to divest to satisfy the CMA's competition concerns.

ServiceMaster, based in Tennessee, USA, is an international company with turnover of nearly £2 billion in 2018. It is very well known in the US via the Terminix brand. Those with long memories will recall that Terminix used to have a presence in the UK, but that business was sold to Ecolab in 2012.

What most did not realise (and was divulged on the CMA website), is that ServiceMaster already has a presence in the UK and Irish markets as the company has recently purchased Pest Pulse, a technology-based pest control company based in Dublin, whose UK director happens to be Peter Trotman, ex MD of Mitie Pest Control.



## ICUP Call for papers

If you are involved in urban pest management research, or, perhaps, have a more practical case study that has lessons to share, now's the time to speak up. The organisers of the International Conference on Urban Pests (ICUP) 2020 are looking for topics to be presented at their next event to be held in Barcelona, Spain. But hurry you only have until 16 September 2019 to submit your abstract via the ICUP website.

[www.icup2020.com](http://www.icup2020.com)



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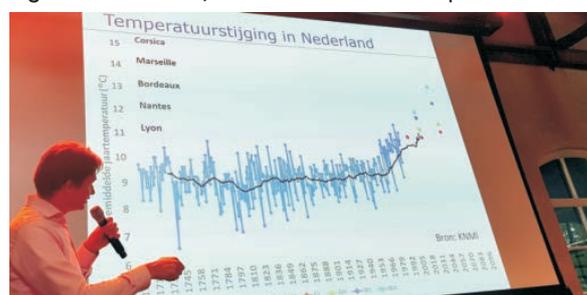
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## World Pest Day

World Pest Day was initiated in 2017 by the Chinese Pest Control Association. It is co-sponsored by the Federation of Asian and Oceania Pest Managers' Association (FAOPMA), the USA's National Pest Management Association (NPMA), and the Confederation of European Pest Management Associations (CEPA). The aim is to create a multinational event to raise awareness among the public, government and media about the work that pest control professionals do on a daily basis to ensure public health and safety. With this lofty aim and these organisations behind it, it's a shame more has not been made of it, so far.

Originally it did receive a higher profile but in Europe this year it seems to have rather slipped under the radar, with a few exceptions. In the UK, the British Pest Control Association (BPCA) launched a campaign targeting local authorities and urging them to put pest management firmly on their agenda. BPCA highlighted the threat to society, and particularly public health caused by infestations and sent them a pest management toolkit.

On a rather grander scale, on 6 June the Dutch pest control association, NVPB, with PLA..N together with KAD (Dutch Pest & Wildlife Expertise Centre) and Dutch *Pest Control News* organised a free symposium at the Dutch open air museum in Arnhem. Over 100 pest professionals attended.



The theme was 'Pests: a world in movement' and presentations were given covering globalisation, climate change and the variation in urban pest problems.



## Farewell John Kaye

Although he retired from his role in the Killgerm technical department in 2007, many in the industry will remember John Kaye and be sad to hear that he has passed away.



Prior to joining the pest control industry, John served in the Royal Navy for seven years, before joining Rentokil as a service manager followed by a spell as a senior technical officer at Wakefield Council. In 1990 he joined the technical department at Killgerm where he stayed until his retirement.

During his long service at Killgerm, John advised and trained many pest controllers who greatly appreciated his counsel. He was a fellow of the Royal Society of Health and in 1997/8 was President of the British Pest Control Association.

Matthew Davies of Killgerm Chemicals commented: "I was lucky enough to spend my formative years at Killgerm alongside John and it was a real pleasure to work with him. As well as being a font of knowledge he was a true gentleman. He will be dearly missed. We offer our condolences to John's family, friends and industry colleagues."

Away from work he is remembered as a loving husband, a caring and proud father (son and daughter) and grandfather.

## Funds secured by NBC Environment

Another company with bold expansion plans is Norfolk-based NBC Environment which has obtained £1.2m funding from Santander to boost the company's growth.

The press release explains that as a result of a successful extensive review of NBC's business model, the company has secured a funding package with Santander. With over 26 years' experience, NBC has grown to become a leading pest control and wildlife management company in the UK. The financial support and accelerated growth strategy will enable NBC to continue to explore further opportunities in the industry.

## A bevy of beauties join PelGar International

At the PelGar HQ, Lauren Hypson has joined the regulatory team as a regulatory officer to support registrations work. Previously Lauren worked at HSE in the Chemical Regulation Division focussing on human exposure risk assessments before working in the project management team.

Rhian Strothers has joined as regional sales coordinator for Europe to work alongside the business development manager, Vincent

Russo, assisting in managing the ever expanding portfolio of customers as well as dealing with internal processes and administration duties. Previously Rhian worked in a variety of sales and marketing roles in industries such as fire and security, health and safety and gas detection.

At PelGar's Church Farm Training Centre, Maddie Lindsay has joined as the new unit supervisor responsible for preparing and carrying out insecticide tests and supervising

the animal technicians. She previously worked in insect husbandry at Southampton and Oxford Brookes Universities.

Having worked professionally with horses and then gained a Level 3 Animal Management Extended Diploma and with a passion for behavioural enrichment, Chloe Mould has joined to work with somewhat smaller animals as an animal technician caring for Church Farm's rodents and insects.



Lauren Hypson



Rhian Strothers



Maddie Lindsay



Chloe Mould