

FEEDBACK 1995

Issue Number 13



Barn Owl Trust Waterleat Ashburton Devon TQ13 7HU Registered Charity No 299 835

Planners enlisted to help Barn Owls

Barn Owl Trust

Barn Owls on Site

A Guide for Developers and Planners




ENGLISH
NATURE



Following the successful conclusion of the Barn Conversion Research project Planning Officers throughout Britain have received copies of the Trust's new booklet *Barn Owl On Site - A Guide for Developers and Planners*. Country Agencies and County Wildlife Trusts were also sent copies for their information. The increasing number of enquiries received by wildlife organisations and government agencies has highlighted the need for a publication to outline the implications of Barn Owl protection laws, for development control and the effects of site loss on Barn Owls.

The booklet provides planners and developers with background information on Barn Owls and the problems the birds face. The reader will be able to carry out an initial site survey (to assess whether or not Barn Owls are actually using a site) and to take appropriate steps to minimise the effect of the redevelopment on any birds which may be resident. The emphasis is on working with and around Barn Owls rather than against them. The measures described are all relatively inexpensive and are most easily incorporated during conversion rather than added on afterwards.

Continued on page two.



Planners enlisted

Continued from page one.

Barn conversion is one way of ensuring that part of our architectural heritage is preserved however, wildlife is not usually taken into account. The Barn Owl Trust would like to see provision for Barn Owls incorporated into all rural barn conversions as a matter of course, whether or not birds are present at the time of development. The simultaneous conservation of old barns and their resident Barn Owls may be achieved with the help of this booklet which has been produced to facilitate the recommendations contained within the Barn Conversion Research Project Report (see page 7). The production and distribution of the 48 page booklet received funding from English Nature, Local Authorities and Charitable Trusts. With a foreword by the Earl of Cranbrook, Chairman of English Nature, the booklet with its twelve pages of colour photographs and charming illustrations by Glyn Jones is designed to be "user friendly" and will be a useful asset, not just for developers, but for anyone carrying out a Barn Owl survey or wanting to identify, or age Barn Owl pellets. Copies of the booklet are available for £5.00 inc. p&p from the Trust.



Welcome to Feedback

Firstly apologies, as this issue of Feedback is slightly later than planned. We have had a very eventful and busy winter here and have recently been beset with a variety of deadlines, printing crises and illness. The flu struck us with a vengeance this year.

The good news is that after five years of hard work the Barn Conversion Research Project is complete, the Report written and the booklet produced and distributed nationally, phew ! We have already started to receive responses from Local Authorities and Country Agencies saying how useful the information will be. Several of the Trust's leaflets are now being amended to incorporate new information and updated versions should be available in early June.

The fieldwork for the Cornwall Barn Owl Survey is now complete and the data analysis under way, we plan to publish the results later this year. A burst of publicity in the autumn led to a deluge of enquires from all over Britain and abroad which we were hard pressed to keep pace with but were delighted to receive as it showed the widespread interest in the plight of the Barn Owl and the work of the Trust.

Sadly, Peter Morris one of our Trustees died suddenly in January. He is sorely missed by all of us. Fellow Trustee Simon Roper remembers Peter on page four.

Two more hugely successful nestbox workshops were held during the winter and we have already started receiving bookings for next winter, details on page eleven.

Winners of the Royal Mail Wordsearch Competition have received their prizes and are listed on page fifteen. There is another opportunity for you to participate in our Bird Quiz, with a £25 first prize, which closes on the 1st August 1995.

This issue of *Feedback* also carries an article on the disappearance of old barns (further results from the Barn Conversion Research Project), the recommendations from the Report, Trust news and contributions from volunteers and Friends. News about an increase in the minimum rate of the Friends scheme is included on page three.

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue of Feedback and that it keeps you in touch with the work of the Trust. Those of you that have been supporters of the Trust for some time will no doubt have noticed the growth and changes that have taken place over the years. These have been necessary due to an ever increasing workload. The Trustees, staff and volunteers have worked hard to ensure that these developments are all beneficial to the Trust and in line with its aims, whilst, at the same time providing an approachable, professional and friendly organisation. We would like to thank you for your support and for helping to make it all possible.

Together we can make a world of difference



Friends subscription changes

At a recent Trustee's meeting we calculated that the average cost of looking after a Friend of the Trust for a year is now £6.66. The minimum annual donation to the Friends scheme has remained at £10 since its inception despite increasing postage, printing and servicing costs. This means that for a donation of £10 we have been able to forward approximately £3.34 to the funds that allow the Trust to operate. Obviously, we would like to see a higher percentage of each subscription going towards the vital day to day front line work.

Earlier this year the Trustees decided that the Barn Owl Trust Friends scheme should go through a small transition and the cost should increase. From April 1995 the minimum cost of the scheme was increased from £10 to £15 a year for new Friends (just 30p per week).

Old Friends - fear not, if you are currently donating less than £15 a year you will continue to receive all of the benefits, just as you do at the moment, until April 1996. If your donation is covenanted to the Trust and is less than £15 there will be no change in your status as a Friend until the expiry date of your covenant or, alternatively, for four years from the start date. Many of you will not be affected by this increase as you already generously donate £15 or more per annum to the Trust, for which, we thank you. The vital support provided by the Friends scheme helps to keep the Trust running, it allows us to provide free information and carry out the conservation work, research, education,

rescue and the other one hundred and one things we do. The donations from the Friends scheme are the Trusts only regular and reliable source of income - without our Friends many of the things we do would not be possible.

If you have any questions about your contribution to the Trust, would like to consider monthly rather than annual payments, or you would like to increase your donation and need to complete a new form, please do contact us. Overseas Friends are advised that their annual subscription is now £20. The number of Friends

is slowly increasing, thanks to your help, and the more people we can bring on board the better. We need help to secure the future of the Trust and the continuation of its work. If you know someone who is interested in Barn Owls, why not mention our Friends scheme and encourage them to sign up as well. Every little helps and by supporting the Friends scheme you are part of an ever increasing network of people demonstrating that - together we can make a difference. Thank you for your support.

Simon Roper

**As a Friend of the Barn Owl Trust
you help us to carry out our work of
conserving the Barn Owl
and its Environment. You support our
conservation, education and research work
and help us to provide our free national
information and advice service dealing with
between 100 - 200 enquiries a week.
Your regular donations enable us to
respond to emergency calls and to
look after our resident birds.**

**You can do all of these things
for as little as £15.00 a year.**

**What else do you do that costs
just 30p a week ?**



Thank you for your support

Peter Morris - Barn Owl Trust Trustee

It was with great sadness that we received the news, in January 1995, that Peter Morris had suddenly died. Peter, Friend of the Trust, Trustee and Covenants Treasurer for the last four years is missed by all of us. Peter was one of those remarkable people that no one could fail to like as everyone that knew him would agree. We have planted a willow tree here at Waterleat in remembrance of his light and life. Simon Roper fellow Trustee writes:

I had arrived literally just in time (as usual) for a CVS seminar for Trustees. It was a lunch time meeting and in my haste to arrive on time I had forgotten to bring any lunch. I sat down, somewhat out of breath, in the chair next to Peter and as we settled to listen to the speaker Peter opened his lunch box and offered me one of his egg sandwiches. Accepting very gratefully I bit into a sandwich the like of which I have never experienced - I cannot think of any way to describe it other than completely wonderful! Very different from those egg sandwiches of my youth. Peter's delight at my enjoyment was apparent.

This memory of Peter which will always live with me, describes a little of the essence of his character. Everyone I spoke to after the news of Peter's death had memories of a "gentle - man" in all senses of the term: kind, caring, thoughtful, wise, modest..... I could go on.

It was standing room only at the Church where we gathered to celebrate his life and say our



farewells. So many people knew him through his interest in, and love of, farming, nature and literature.

I first met Peter many years ago when I was working at the Devon Wildlife Trust and he was part of their vital support system - the local volunteer group. After I left DWT, in more recent times, we shared the responsibility of being Trustees of the Barn Owl Trust. His unfailing humour and wisdom has helped to guide us through many difficult decisions.

The natural world was very much a part of Peter's life. A while ago I was told about the following poem - it comes from the wall of a peaceful enclosed garden. When I read it, it touched my heart, as Peter did during his time with us. I share it with you now in memory of this special man.

Peter Morris
1924 -1995.

*When blossom breaks on bush
and spray
God speaks to all who grieve.
There is no death He seems to
say
Look up, have faith, believe.
Our loved ones pass beyond our
sight
We say that they are gone,
But they are somewhere in the
light
Where love and life go on.
So when you see a flowering
hedge
And green leaves on the tree,
Remember that it is God's pledge
Of immortality.*

In Memorial

In December 1994 the Trust received a donation collected in memory of Kevin Freestone from his friends and colleagues at the *Leicestershire County Councils Museums, Arts and Records Service*. Our sincere condolences go to Kevin's family.

Pseudo Bumblefoot Update (what?)

You may recall from the last issue of Feedback that in the summer of 1994 we had an outbreak of this disease amongst the resident birds at the B O T. To explain exactly what it is would require more space than we have, suffice to say that it is caused by a virus, it is very contagious, it is very hard to prevent, very difficult to treat and thankfully quite rare.

We now think it was brought in by a young orphaned Tawny Owl (that came in from another rescue centre) and then spread like wildfire through our fifty or so resident birds. Being a virus as opposed to a bacteria it may have been spread by air, water or contact.

Affected birds required surgery and regular redressing of the feet which meant keeping them individually boxed for at least six weeks. This caused unacceptable levels of stress to some of the birds concerned and we made the decision to have these put to sleep.

Altogether we had six confirmed and two suspected cases, three of which recovered, one died and four were put to sleep. The whole experience was very traumatic both for the Owls and the staff who dealt with them.

During the fourteen years that Owls have been kept here this was the only infectious disease we have had to deal with. Thankfully since November 94 we have had no new cases. We would like to thank everyone at the Veterinary Hospital at Estover in Plymouth (Messrs. Hunt, Bower and Young) for all their assistance during this difficult time.

BOT NEWS

If you look after captive / injured Owls here's a tip.

When you receive a new bird and when you check your resident birds have a very close look at the undersides of their feet. If there are any unusual areas which look like a callous, a scab or dirt which does not come off easily, no matter how small, keep the bird in isolation. Follow strict quarantine procedures and consult your vet as soon as possible.

Bumblefoot is well known and is not thought to be contagious, Pseudo Bumblefoot looks the same but is highly contagious.

The Telephone Raven

In the Spring issue of Feedback in 1993 we mentioned that Rave, (a disabled Raven) had been passed on to the Trust from another rehab. centre. Unfortunately Rave has never recovered his powers of flight (although he does manage a good leap and flap) and he is unable to be released. He lives in an aviary here adjacent to the office, with Winking, Blinking and Nod, the Tawny Owls and Spirit and Kirk two male Barn Owls. We have lots of telephones in the office and one day shortly after Sharon started working for the Trust we found her rushing around the office picking up phones and putting them down. She kept hearing them ring but when she picked them up there was no one there and the ringing continued. Then we all started hearing it! Eventually we tracked down the source and discovered it was coming from the aviary, Rave had learnt to impersonate a telephone!

Short listed for Awards

Margaret and Derrick Crocker were short listed in the Whitbread Volunteer Action Awards 1994. Nominated by other Trust volunteers, Margaret and Derrick do a tremendous amount of voluntary work for the BOT and will turn their hand to anything that needs doing. They may not have won the award but in our opinion they certainly deserved to. Well done both of you.

1995 Sponsored Walk

This years walk will once again take place on the beautiful unspoilt *Flete Estate* in the South Hams of Devon on Bank Holiday Monday 29th May. Last years walk raised a staggering £1,742 for the Trust and we hope to do as well, if not better, this year. This will be our fourth annual walk and picnic and an ideal family day out with routes of 6 or 8 miles. Dogs on leads and accompanied children are welcome. A cup of tea, coffee or a soft drink is provided at the finish. Bring your own picnic. All sponsored walkers will receive a commemorative badge and the adult and child raising the most funds through sponsorship will be awarded a Barn Owl Trust T.Shirt.

The registration fee is £2.00 per adult (50p per child / OAP) in advance or you can just turn up and pay £3.00 and £1.00 respectively on the day. We hope that once again we will have good weather and that lots of you will come along and help us to raise funds - we are sure you will have an enjoyable day. To receive a sponsorship form and further details please send an SAE to the Trust.

Hello Friends

I have now been working for the BOT for eight months and have enjoyed every minute of it. I thought you might be interested to know what goes on behind the scenes !

I started work here in September 1994. In the first week I discovered that three of the staff were not only Librarians (lovely people) but that our birthdays fell within two days of each other, Frances on the 28th and Rachel and I on the 29th September. I couldn't believe my eyes when David walked into the office with a beautifully decorated fresh cream cake for us all. I can tell you that we made very light work of that ! I went home in a dream that day. I'd discovered that not only was I working with a smashing group of people in the most idyllic spot in Devon, but also that the work was probably the most interesting I'd ever done. During the weeks that followed, I quickly learned the ropes thanks to some good teachers i.e. Sue and Fran who were very encouraging and supportive. Graham (who started working for the Trust at about the same time as me), was very busy doing his promotional work for the Trust. Because of Graham's work and the Barn Conversion Research Project Report, we quickly became busier and busier in the office. There were several interviews on TV and radio and articles about the Trust published in several national magazines and papers, these included, Country Life, Organic Gardening and the Young Telegraph. As a result of all this publicity we had over a thousand new enquiries from adults and children all over the country. The one thing they all had in common was their

desire to help the Barn Owl. Some of the letters we receive are wonderful. I particularly like reading the children's letters as they have the ability to write so passionately and obviously care very much. Children also like to draw and many of them send us pictures, it's as if the pictures enhance what they are trying to say "A picture paints a thousand words" - who said that ? Every single enquiry that comes into this office is dealt with in a personal way and thankfully during this very busy time we had several keen volunteers who were a great asset.

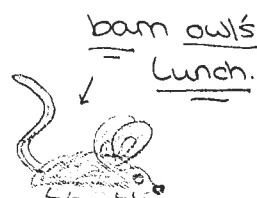
This issue of Feedback will give you some idea of how much work the Trust does, however what it doesn't tell you about is the very long hours, including weekends and evenings, that make it all possible.

You, as Friends of the Trust, are one of the biggest contributors to the Trust's funds and without your support the important work of the Trust could not continue. So from me, a very big thank you to you all, no doubt you will hear from me again at sometime in the future.

Best wishes
Sharon Clayborough.

Grand Draw

This year's Grand Draw will once again take place at the Ship Inn, Axmouth on Friday 27th



October accompanied by the usual Bangers and Beans Night. Last year's draw was a great success, raising £1,286.

As usual we have enclosed two pounds worth of tickets with this issue of Feedback and would be very grateful if you could sell them on our behalf. You may notice that there are two books this year instead of four, this is because the tickets are priced at 20p each to save on administrative costs and the time it takes to fill the stubs in !

Last year Mr and Mrs Woodman of North Devon sold a marvellous £101's worth of tickets and David and Angie Vandervlist of East Devon sold an incredible £130's worth. Thank you to all of you who bought and sold tickets for us last year, we hope that this year's Draw will be an even greater success.

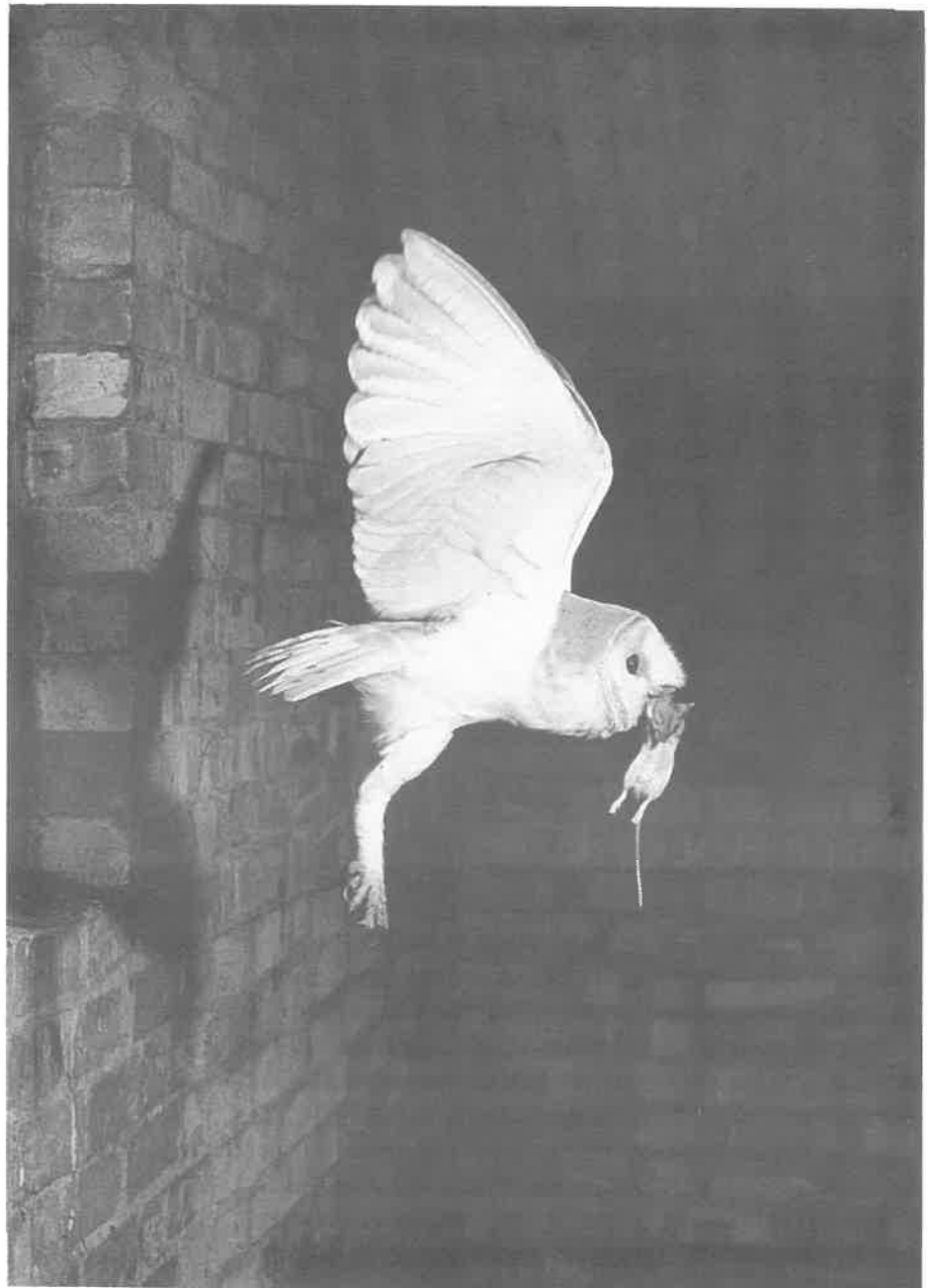
The 1994 first prize of a gallon of brandy went to Mrs Slade of Paignton in Devon. The second prize, a gallon of whisky went to Mr Ellison of Chelmsford in Essex and the third prize of 1.5 litres of Bacardi went to Mr Barlow of Exmouth in Devon. The other 29 prizes were well distributed throughout the south west.

We would be delighted to hear from you if you feel able to sell more than the two books and will send further supplies upon request.



Recommendations from the Barn Conversion Research Project Report.

1. The protection afforded to Barn Owls under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 should be extended to include sites which Barn Owls use in the same way that bat roosts and breeding sites are protected.
2. All Local Authority Planning Officers should, as a matter of course, receive sufficient training to enable them to recognise signs of occupation by Barn Owls (droppings, pellets and feathers) and should check for these during site visits.
Note: This is not a difficult or time consuming task.
3. In the processing of planning applications, Local Authority Planning Officers should inform the relevant Country Agency (English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales or Scottish Natural Heritage) in cases where there is any evidence of possible occupation by Barn Owls.
4. Local Authorities should, without exception, stipulate that provision for Barn Owls is incorporated (into the conversion) at every site where there is any evidence of the current or historic use of the site by Barn Owls.
Note: The cost of making such provision during a conversion is minimal. Also, experience shows that there are no significant health or nuisance implications.
5. Local Authorities should, as a general policy, stipulate



that provision for Barn Owls is incorporated into all barn conversions, irrespective of whether or not Barn Owls are present, unless the site is within an urban area or more than 300 metres above sea level.

6. In cases where planning permission is required for a new agricultural building over three metres high, Local Authorities should

stipulate that provision for Barn Owls is incorporated.
Note: This is inexpensive and can be done in such a way as to prevent the birds having access to the whole interior of the building thereby avoiding possible conflict with salmonella control.

Photograph by Mike Read
Taken from *Barn Owls On Site - A Guide for Developers and Planners.*

Old Barns Disappearing Fast

More Findings from the Barn Conversion Research Project

"Within twenty years it is entirely possible that the current stock of old farm buildings may disappear entirely". David Ramsden, our Conservation Officer, explains, in this, the second article presenting results from the Barn Conversion Research Project.

Traditional farm buildings are very much a part of the landscape and show great variation in design and construction. Old barns seem to "fit" into the landscape without difficulty as they were fashioned from whatever materials were available locally - local stone, local timber and even local mud and manure from the farm for cob. Roofed in local slate, thatching straw, or reeds,

these old buildings provided shelter for cattle and dry storage for both animal and human feed. Barn Owls have probably occupied these sites since farming began over 4,000 years ago. Certainly there is evidence of this from Iron Age and Roman times.

Most of the Barn Owl breeding sites in Britain are farm buildings (hence the birds name) and most of these are traditional buildings as opposed to modern structures of concrete or metal. As farming methods have changed, so the type of buildings required has changed. Old farm buildings are very often too small or too expensive to maintain. The result ? Disuse. Section two of the Trust's

Barn Conversion Research Project involved a survey of 857 farm buildings in randomly selected areas in south west England. All farm buildings whether old or modern, derelict or converted, were assessed for their suitability as Barn Owl roosting or breeding sites. In addition an intensive search for alternative types of sites (such as hollow trees) was carried out.

The result showed that alternative types of potential Barn Owl sites are rarely found in the area. Specifically, hollow trees and derelict cottages combined accounted for only 1% of all the potential breeding places available. Also, most farm buildings in the area were

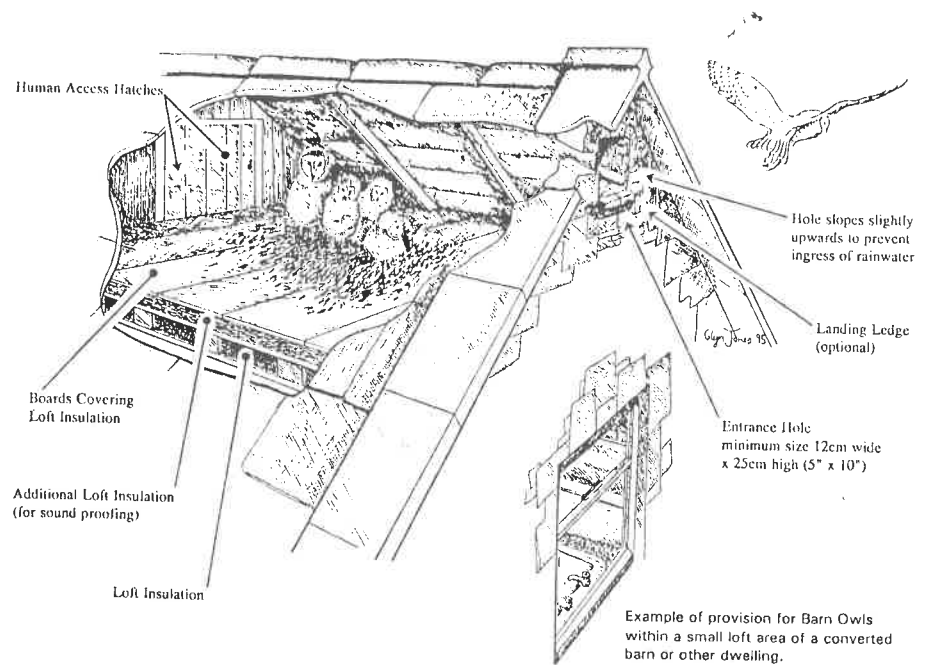


modern barns of which less than 4% were suitable as breeding sites. Overall, the vast majority of potential breeding sites for Barn Owls (83%) were old farm buildings. These results, combined with information on the kinds of sites which Barn Owls actually use showed that to a large extent the birds are dependant on the availability of old barns.

UNFORTUNATELY old barns are disappearing. Out of 350 old barns surveyed nearly 12% had already been converted and a further 4% were being converted at the time of the survey. Nearly all conversions were for human housing or holiday homes and none of them included provision for Barn Owls. In addition to Barn Conversions the losses through decay were found to be considerable. Almost one in five old barns 20% were in decay and of these nearly half (50%) were in terminal decay or had already collapsed.

If the time taken for a typical barn conversion is estimated at one year and the time taken for a barn in terminal decay to collapse is estimated at ten years the stock of old barns in the study area would be zero in under 20 years. Of course absolute zero is unlikely to occur as one or two old barns are likely to be maintained by preservation organisations such as the National Trust. However these few will not do.

To ensure that roosting and breeding places are available to Barn Owls generally it is important that provision for Barn Owls is incorporated into rural barn conversions and that nestboxes are erected in modern barns.



What YOU can do:-

1. If you know of anyone involved in barn conversions please tell them about our new booklet "Barn Owls On Site - A Guide for Developers and Planners".
2. If you or a friend are willing to erect a nestbox in a modern farm building send for our Leaflet No.3 "Indoor Nestbox Design".

Provision for Owls really works

Dear BOT
 We haven't really finished building our new house yet but provision for Owls in a nestbox in the loft was made and I am happy to report that a pair of Barn owls seem to like it very much ! We are only 100 yards from the site of an old cottage that used to be a nesting place for Owls before it was demolished and

we hoped that they would return to this area. They have been here to our knowledge for about three weeks and are a great joy. We observe them flying at dusk and returning to the "hole". We are aware of them hissing at each other and returning home at intervals throughout the night and are so pleased to hear them there. It is only because of the Trust that we put an Owl box into our plan - so easy, and so necessary with all the decrease in favourable sites.

Cathy and Roger Pole.



Like an Eagle



If, like me, you are a ground-dwelling human with a dream to fly like a bird, all I can say is **GO FOR IT!** All the ups and downs of life between four walls seem to melt into insignificance at three thousand feet.

Through a pilot friend (thanks Steve), I was able to take a free passenger seat in a light aircraft. We flew over Devon for about 2 hours and I took the opportunity to photograph some of my barn owl study areas. Habitat mapping is a doddle up there. Not only can you see all the fields and hedges easily, you can see for miles and miles!

Ordnance survey maps come to life before your very eyes and your perception of the world around you is changed - perhaps for ever. It's a great way to shift your perspective.

The down side to this experience is that you get a much closer understanding of what we humans have done to the landscape. Faint lines across fields indicate where hedgerows used to be. Industrial sprawl appears as some kind of earth-skin disease. Woodlands (which used to cover the whole country) are generally few and far between.

In my younger days when my knowledge of wildlife was mostly gleaned from books, I used to presume that somewhere over the hills and far away were valleys of unspoiled land. Where natural vegetation reigned supreme and clouds of butterflies danced over flowery rough grasslands. Where native flowering shrubs each contained a bird's nest and no straight lines could be seen,

only the shapes of trees and natural clearings. Seeing the land in the way of an eagle makes you realise that such heavenly areas are confined to dreams. Those hidden valleys just don't exist. We have populated them and cleared the land to make way for roads, houses and intensive agriculture. Remaining fragments of "unimproved" wilderness are very very few. Rough grasslands (favoured by Barn Owls) are almost non-existent. Most wildlife is now confined to hedgerows which are still disappearing. You don't need to fly, just look around as you travel. I think you'll agree, it really is time to *Restore the Balance*.

David Ramsden
Conservation Officer

Nestbox Workshops



Two very successful nestbox workshops were held during the winter in South and East Devon. People came from all over the south west to attend the workshops held in Kingswear and Musbury which were run in conjunction with South Hams Heritage Coast Service and East Devon District Council. Comments like, " very informative," and "extremely interesting" abounded, but one gentleman made our day when he told us "its the best Saturday I've spent in years !" The lunches went down very well and the weather was kind to us for both events despite them being held during a very wet and windy winter.

The Musbury workshop was the largest we'd ever attempted with over 60 people making nestboxes simultaneously - (amazing to witness and to

listen to !) The aim of the workshops is not only to get more boxes erected, but to enable this to be achieved safely and maximise the chances of them being used by Barn Owls. Participants also learn about the birds ecology and after attending the one day workshop many are enthusiastic and often do more than just put up one nestbox.

If you're interested in receiving details about future workshops we will be happy to send you further details. There are two planned for winter 95/96, at Membury in East Devon (almost on the Somerset / Dorset border and at Cothele in East Cornwall.

Did you Know ?

A survey carried out by the Department of the Environment revealed that between 1990

and 1993, 10,800 km of hedgerow disappeared and 67,500 km was classified as derelict. This is equivalent to a length of hedgerow stretching almost twice around the globe. Hedges provide shelter and wildlife corridors, homes and food, for many species of flora and fauna - they also help to stop soil erosion and of course are favoured hunting areas for Barn Owls. Hedgerow loss is not a thing of the past !

And also that in 1960 there were 9,000,000 cars on the road, today there are 24,000,000. Road Transport is responsible for the discharge of over 100,000,000 tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere annually. The Department of Transport estimates an increase in traffic of up to 142% by 2025 ! 60% of all known Barn Owl mortality is caused by road deaths.

A Word or Two from Our Promotions Officer

Where did the last six months go ?

I started working for the Barn Owl Trust at the beginning October and am pleased to report that I am still here and shall be until at least the end of June.

There are approximately 190,000 registered charities in the UK. so fund-raising is an extremely competitive business. It is of course an important part of my work to generate the funds to keep the Trust operating and the ever increasing bills paid. I must admit to some surprise when I realised how many enquiries the Trust deals with a week and the subsequent effect on the post, telephone and photocopying costs. Another part of my job is to try and save the Trust money by researching the most cost effective ways of obtaining necessary equipment, for instance a new photocopier which has become an urgent requirement - the current one is fourteen years old, extremely overworked and failing fast. Not only do I need to investigate all the alternatives - I also have to try and raise the funds to buy one. My current projects also include finding funds for a vehicle to replace the Trust's estate car which is in use continually and showing signs of wear and tear.

I also deal with publicity and promotion of the Trust, very necessary if we are to increase the general public's awareness of the plight of the Barn Owl and of how they can help.

Although I am not personally involved in any practical conservation work I have the

satisfaction of knowing that my presence here means that the staff and volunteers with the expertise have more time to devote to it. With the summer fast approaching I will be going out with display material to shows and other events where the Trust has a stand and provides information and advice.

In the time that I have been here I have seen the completion of (and raised the funds for) the Barn Conversion Research Project Report and the writing, production and distribution of the Barn Owls on Site booklet.

I have also been able to find grant aid, thanks to the West Country Television Trust, Jean Sainsbury Charitable Trust and Garfield Weston, to fund a new telephone system for the Trust and the installation of another phone line which enables enquiries to be dealt with more efficiently.

We are now gearing up for our biggest fund-raising event of the year our Sponsored Walk on the 29th May in south Devon. We would be delighted to see you if you can come along, details on page 5, if that's not possible you might like to consider sponsoring either Jacob age 10 or Jasmin age 6 who will be walking to raise funds for the Trust.

I can honestly say that I thoroughly enjoy working for the Barn Owl Trust, being part of a team that works so well and really does make a difference. Every day here is unique, and presents both challenges and opportunities. I very much hope that I will

still be here to bring you an update in six months time.

Graham Deykin.

Can you help or do you know someone who can ?

Following our well established tradition of recycling we would be pleased to hear from you if you have any of the following items that are surplus to your requirements which you might like to donate to the Trust. Alternatively you might like to consider sponsoring something on the list. We are always very grateful for donations of items which save the Trust money. Thank you for your consideration.

Nails and nail carrying box with compartments.
Galvanised iron roofing sheets and telegraph poles (for constructing Barn Owl roosting / breeding site).
Waterproofs for volunteer aviary cleaners and fieldworkers.
Plastic curver boxes.
Rechargeable torches.
Crow bar and post driver.
Laser printer.
Creosote.
Digital scales - up to 1 kg for weighing post in the office (ours have stopped working).
Pedigree chum puppy food for feeding orphaned hedgehogs.
Office furniture, desks, chairs etc.
Wooden shed for freezers (owl food storage) 8' x 12'.
14' touring caravan for events.
Kodak Carousel projector.
Extension leads, interior and exterior quality.

Thank you to:

Everyone who has provided tea-chests (for making into nestboxes) and empty ice cream boxes for storage (no more please !) Special thanks to John Roper for his gift of a Hoover for the office, to Mike and Caroline Nix for the office chair and filing cabinet and to Seager Wedo for the donation of digital scales for weighing birds. We thank you all and anyone else who has supported the Trust by providing things listed in our wants section.

Unusual fund-raising ideas are always appreciated, last year we had the Bouncing Brownies from Llandaff ! This year our vote for the most unusual effort so far must go to the Officer Cadets of the Initial Sea Training Department on HMS Brilliant at the Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth in Devon. They sent the Trust a cheque for £87.80 some of which was raised by a Cadburys Creme Egg Eating Competition - we hope they didn't feel too ill afterwards !

The 1993/94 8-4 tutor group of Harwarden High School in Clwyd raised £30 for Trust funds.

Graham Lawes from Dawlish for donating a mobile phone for (emergency use only) by our fieldworkers and conservation staff in remote locations.

Classified Section

Several people have asked us about the possibility of putting ads in Feedback. We thought we would try a small section in the next issue. If you are interested please contact the office.



Plant Sale

The Barn Owl Trust Spring Fayre (Plant Sale) is an annual event and we have just celebrated its fifth birthday. The tables in the hall at Kingsbridge were groaning under the weight of the plants, cakes and jams provided by volunteers. This event is organised and run every year by Margaret and Derrick Crocker who spend a large part of their free time every year (when they're not doing other things for the Trust) preparing for the Fayre. Margaret's marvellous marmalade and flapjacks have a reputation far beyond Kingsbridge and she can be relied upon to give advice about the wide variety of plants available and their care. It is lovely to see people coming back to the Fayre year after year to stock up with bargains and support the Trust. Thank you to all of the people who donated plants and cakes to and to everyone who came along to sell them. This years Fayre raised a wonderful £464 for the BOT.

Environment News

The World Meteorological Office's *Bulletin* reported that 52 countries suffered serious flooding in 1993. In December 93 the worst floods for 60 years swept Northern Europe and leading scientists say that the weather will get stormier, particularly in the northern hemisphere, as the climate heats up due to global warming. Cutting down trees on hills and mountains throughout the world magnifies the effect of increased rains. Some trees can hold up to 4000 gallons of water in their roots allowing it to percolate slowly down through the soil. In Britain the Barn Owl is at the northern edge of its world distribution. Although a very efficient hunter it is unable to hunt during rain and can starve in prolonged periods of wet weather. In order to conserve the Barn Owl we need to think not only about its immediate habitat but also about the effect that human beings have on the environment as a whole.

More bits of BOT News



New BOT Book Keeper

We were very sad when Beryl Perry retired as our book keeper after four years in the post. Thank you for all your hard work Beryl, we hope everything is going well down on the small-holding. Luckily Beryl offered to stay on until we could find a replacement and we were delighted when the Newton Abbot Volunteer Service told us they had just the person for us, Peter Howard, a retired bank manager, joined us in December and is doing a grand job of keeping track of the Trusts incomings and outgoings. Its great to have you on the team Peter.

Window on wildlife

We are extremely lucky with location of the Trust's office and particularly so with the view from the windows. We have a bird table right outside and are regularly visited by Tits, Nuthatches and Chaffinches. This week we have watched a Great Spotted Woodpecker and a Treecreeper and seen the Heron fly in to fish in the stream. The fifty or so nestboxes we have erected provide homes for a variety of nesting birds including six pairs of Pied Flycatchers which come all the way from Africa to rear their young here and a pair of Tawny Owls.

Barn Owl Stamp

We have increased our range of sales goods with a good quality (pocket money price)

Barn Owl rubber stamp, ideal, for personalising your note paper or envelopes and great fun for adults and children alike. Can be used with paint or ink. Just send 60p + 20p p&p. Mini black ink pads are also available at 70p each if required.

Hedgehogs at home

Last year we released six Hedgehogs from the Trust, the first one in the early part of the year having overwintered it and the other five, passed onto us from the RSPCA in the late summer. The lone hedgehog disappeared quite quickly after release so when four of the five released together stayed around, (returning to their specially designed box to eat and sleep) we were delighted. About seven weeks after their release one was run over and the others all disappeared quite quickly which was very disappointing, but, during the winter one returned to hibernate in the box and is still resident. One evening recently we had a lovely surprise when we went to investigate some very peculiar noises coming from the other side of the hedge and discovered "our" hedgehog in the field with another one - we are now keeping our fingers crossed for the patter of tiny feet !

If you live in an area that is "hedgehog friendly" you might like to try encouraging them with dog or cat food, or even provide a box for hibernation.

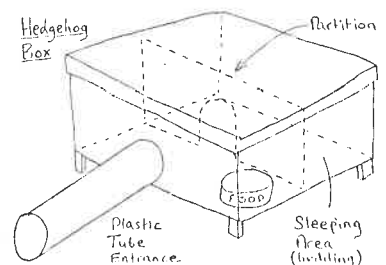
New Sweat Shirts



**New Colours
New Sizes**



We have recently found a supplier of high quality sweat shirts who can provide us with small quantities of goods in a variety of colours and sizes in 70% cotton and 30% polyester. We can now offer you black, bottle green, Navy or red sweat shirts in small, medium large or extra large. These colours and sizes are available in 2 styles at £18 + £1 p&p. We also have 100% unbleached cotton sweats available in medium, large and extra large with our unique (full size) BOT design at the same price. All of our T-shirts and sweat shirts wash and wear well. If you would like a sales goods leaflet giving full details of the range available, please let us know.



Hedgehog box - the drainpipe prevents cats or dogs getting the food.

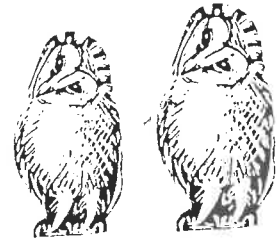
Puzzles and prizes

Bird Quiz £25 first prize

Scarlet Beginning -----
Will you cook yours at
Christmas -----
Castle on board ----
Magician of old -----
Machine for lifting heavy
weights -----

The answers are all names of birds. These are a selection from the full set of 60 questions that make up the Bird Quiz. The quiz and its first prize of £25 have been donated to the Trust by Friend of the Trust Marie-Anne Martin.

If you like a challenge and would like to help raise funds for our Barn Owl conservation work please send £1.00 and an SAE for an entry form and a full set of questions. Have fun and good luck.
Closing date 1st August 1995.



Capt. J R and Sally Innis -
Beaworthy, Marge Boucher -
Gloucester, Marie-Anne Martin -
Evesham, Christine Wise -
Surbiton, Domonic Kennedy -
Ashburton, Ida Ramsden -
Teignmouth, Robert Hamar -
Sparkwell, Sharon Baker
Ashburton and Sophie Mayor-
Brighton.

Wordsearch Winners

Winners of the Royal Mail
Wordsearch competition in
Feedback Issue 12 were:

They each received a pack of six aerogrammes as their prize.
Well done to all of you.

Wordsearch Competition

There are three copies of the book *Care for the Wild* by Bill Jordan waiting for the winners of this Issue's *Wordsearch*.

When you have crossed out all the words the remaining letters (read top to bottom, left to right) will spell out a message.

Discover the message and send it with your name and address to the Trust.

BARN	OWL
BEAK	PELLET
CLAW	PREY
CLUTCH	RING
EGG	RELEASE
ENVIRONMENT	
FEATHER	SHREW
MOON	SURVEY
NESTBOX	TALLET
NIGHT	VOLE



The Barn Owl

It was lying by the roadside,
every feather in its place, We
stood exchanging glances, in
despair,
The traffic whined and rattled
just a yard or two away
As though tossing its
contempt upon the air.

We brought it back, in silence,
and we laid it on the bench,
Like mourners with a friend
we'd known for years,
And there we gazed, three
working men who scorn the
false and fey,
Each finding ways of fighting
back the tears.

We'd never been more
helpless nor as angry at the
world
Though anger has no reason
to its name
But every car and juggernaut
that ever turned a wheel
Was cursed on and
confounded just the same.

And with our rage came
thoughts, perhaps, that
somehow we had failed
This feathered kin of honey-
gold and white
As members of a human race
competing with the clock
Which leaves its victims dying
in the night.

One final chance was all we
had to set the record straight,
One last salute of tenderness
and love,
So, gently then, we laid him in
a grave beneath the trees
with breeze-blown pines as
sentinels, above.

Perhaps a futile gesture on
behalf of human-kind,
Too late to make a difference,
you could say,
I only know that simple act of
honour and respect

Allowed us each the pride to
face the day.

And, on a winter's evening, in
the dusky velvet haze
As twilight drapes its veil
across the land,
Whenever swooping, silent
wings cast shadows on the
moon,
Three heads will nod and
smile and understand.

David Price,
Penzance, December 1994.

Tail Piece



Have you ever noticed that
most people are only
concerned about things that
they perceive as directly
affecting them? For instance
most of the population are
fairly indifferent to the route
of a new road or the site of a
development unless it happens
to be close to their home or
spoils their view. Many
people raise money and help
out with schools and clubs
when their children are
involved, but, when the
children leave, in most cases
so does the commitment to
the institution. With so many
good causes these days and
so many demands on our time
(and our money) I guess this
attitude is not surprising, but
personally I find it rather sad
that *self interest* is so
prevalent in our society.
We are in a very fortunate
position here at the Trust
because we are continually
coming into contact with
people who are interested in
Barn Owls and often in wider
issues. However, even after
so many years of being
actively involved in the "green
movement" I must admit to
still being surprised at the
number of people who feel
that conservation and

environmental issues are
"nothing to do with them".
Maybe this is because it is
uncomfortable to consider
their own impact on the
environment and therefore
"better not to think about it"
or maybe it's because it's
quite easy to feel impotent
when faced with global
matters. However, my theory
is that a lot of people just
believe it is something totally
unconnected with them or
they never give it a thought at
all! In fact we **all** depend on
Mother Nature to provide the
air we breath, the food we eat
and the water we drink (even
though its the local Water
Company we have to pay for
it). I suppose for many people
who travel everywhere by car
and fulfil *all their needs* by
shopping, the natural world
does seem very far removed
from their reality.
Fortunately, if our postbag is
anything to go by, the children
of today appear to be more
aware of wildlife and the
environment. Hopefully, they
will have the motivation and
the opportunity to get out and
experience the beauty of the
natural world and live their
lives with awareness of, and
in harmony with, their planet.
All of us whether young or
old, rich or poor can help to
conserve our environment, for
ourselves and for future
generations. Being aware of
our own effect, through the
things we do and the things
we buy, can make a difference
and a lot of little differences
can add up to a change which
will benefit humans and
wildlife alike.
We hope you have enjoyed
reading this issue of Feedback
and will do your bit to *restore
the balance*.
Good luck with all your
conservation efforts.