

Issue Number 19



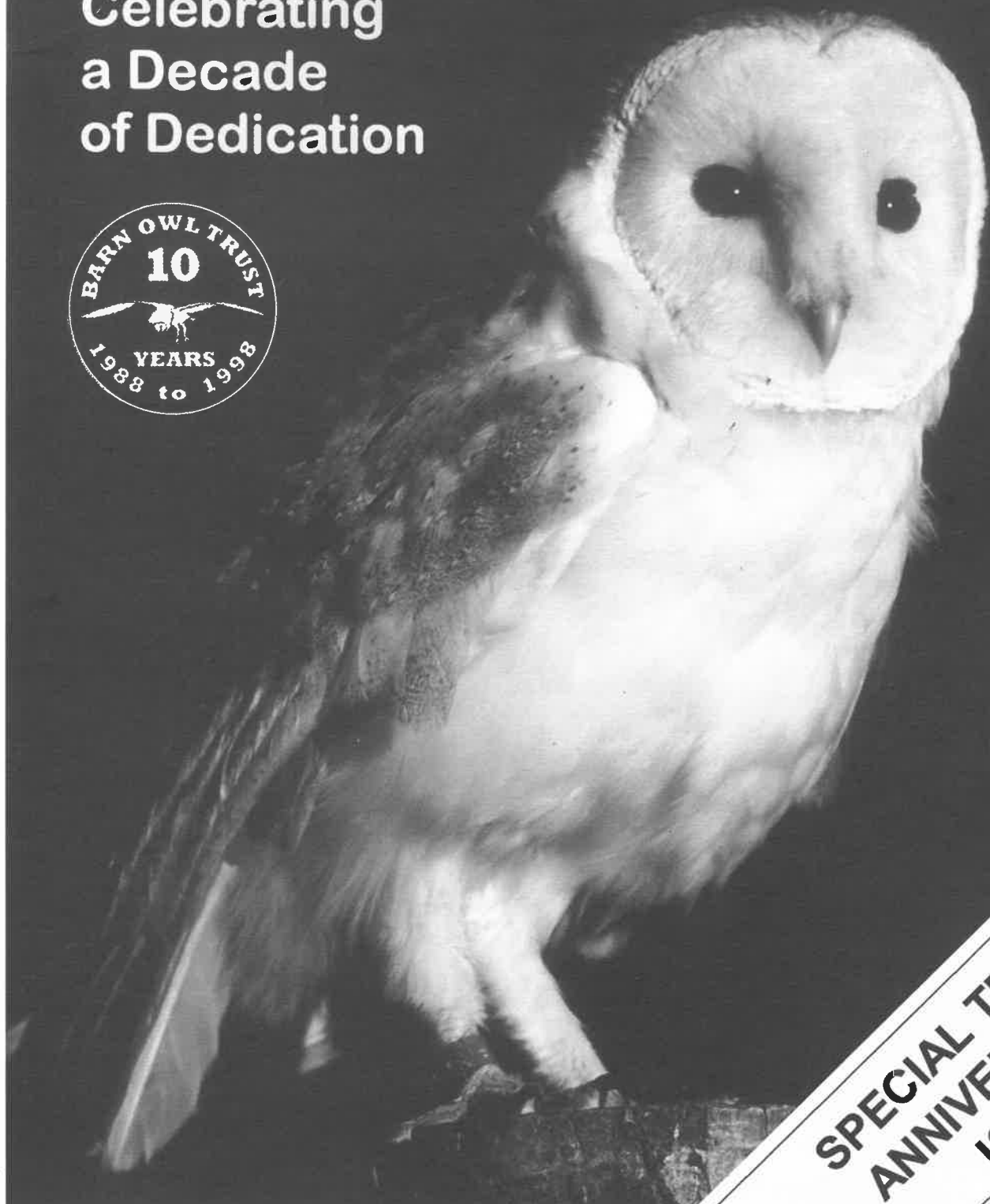
FEEDBACK

1988



The Barn Owl Trust, Waterleat, Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7HU (01364) 653026 Registered Charity: No: 299 835

Celebrating
a Decade
of Dedication



**SPECIAL TENTH
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE**

Printed on recycled paper

The Barn Owl Trust: Conserving the Barn Owl and its Environment

Barn Owl Trust News



Steve Panks (BOT) and Melissa Clarkson (EA) with New Moon
Photo: Apex Photo Agency Limited

Nestboxes in Big Demand!

Two separate grants from the Environment Agency have paid for 22 new Barn Owl nestboxes - but the response from landowners has been so great that demand has far out-stripped supply.

When the Trust called for farmers and landowners across Devon who wanted boxes put up on their land to come forward, well over 100 people contacted the Trust for details! As a result, Assistant Conservation Officer Steve Panks was snowed under with requests.

Some of the boxes have already been put up by Trust staff and arrangements are underway for the rest to be erected during the summer months.

The Environment Agency's Conservation & Recreation Officer, Melissa Clarkson, pictured above, hopes to accompany Trust staff on visits to some of the selected sites. She said: "We are delighted to support this excellent initiative to boost Devon's Barn Owl population."

Another anniversary... the best-kept secret in Devon!

Conservation Officer and Trust co-founder David Ramsden got the surprise of his life on April 4th when over 100 people gathered in Landscope village hall to celebrate his 40th Birthday with a ceilidh.

Family and friends joined staff and volunteers from the Trust and everyone kept the event a

complete secret for months beforehand. There was plenty of eating, drinking, talking and dancing, with Mrs. Crotty's Ceilidh Band providing excellent music.

David, who is well known for his talks about Barn Owls was unusually speechless and well and truly stunned!

Mike flies in

Mike Toms recently spent six weeks with the Trust helping to set up computerised databases.

Mike, who graduated from Southampton University and has done his Ph.D. at Cambridge, has spent the last 3 years running Project Barn Owl, the new national Barn Owl survey, on behalf of the BTO and HOT.

His work here has revolutionised the Trust's information storage systems, with Barn Owl data being transferred to computer and a mapping package introduced. The result - once people learn how to operate the new systems - will be faster, easier and generally more efficient office administration.

Sadly, Mike has done his stuff and taken flight again. We wish him well, and hope to see him again very soon. He's sure to have a high-flying career in wildlife conservation - look out for him!

Scientific paper published

Conservation Officer David Ramsden has had his first scientific paper published.

When a scientific journal accepts a paper it means that the work has been reviewed by the editor and a panel of referees in order to ensure that it is scientifically sound.

In March the Barn Owl Trust achieved an important breakthrough. Bird Study (the journal of the British Trust for Ornithology) published a paper by David entitled "The effect of barn conversions on local populations of Barn Owl *Tyto alba*". Our special thanks go to Dr. Paul Chanin and Prof. Graham Martin (and others) for their assistance.

South Hams Barn Owl Scheme

The South Hams Barn Owl Scheme has been operating for nearly six months now. The Barn Owl Trust, The Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society and South Hams District Council have joined forces with South Hams landowners to conserve the local Barn Owl population. The scheme is an ambitious and pro-active conservation project that gets out into the field to secure existing Barn Owl sites for the future.

The South Devon Barn Owl population declined by an estimated 70% between 1932 and 1985. This situation arose mainly through changes in land-use as farmers and landowners responded to changing agricultural policy. The South Hams has also seen many traditional sites lost through the conversion and decay of old buildings.

Mortality

The remaining Barn Owl population is made up of scattered and often isolated pairs which are affected by a range of mortality causes. Quite

simply Barn Owls are dying faster than they are breeding. Therefore it's vital to safeguard the birds that are left. A nationally agreed target has been set to "maintain present range and numbers and seek a substantial increase of at least one half by the year 2015".

The South Hams Barn Owl Scheme began in October 1997. The aim is to secure a future for the district's remaining Barn Owl population by enhancing the suitability of occupied Barn Owl sites. A three stage package of measures will be applied to sites in the area over a three year period.

It was found that some 50% of South Hams Barn Owl sites recorded during the Trust's 1993 Devon Barn Owl Survey had fallen out of regular use.

Visits

Site visits help to cure potential problems before they affect the Barn Owls there. Nesting sites are secured and alternatives provided

when necessary. Water-troughs are made safe with floating frames of mesh so that birds don't drown. Landowners are advised on land management, the use of rodenticides and so on.

Most farmers and landowners are keen to be involved and are happy to let BOT staff on site to do the work. Birds are not disturbed and landowners are inconvenienced as little as possible. With roosting and breeding sites still disappearing and habitat at a premium, this scheme has come none too soon.

As a prototype project the South Hams Barn Owl Scheme is an important test-bed for techniques and procedures. We're hoping that similar schemes will be set up in other parts of Devon and, in the longer term, further afield. The South Hams scheme could be setting the standard for Barn Owl conservation work nationally in the years ahead.

Steve Panks

Ten Out of Ten!

The Barn Owl Trust sponsored walk is set to be bigger and better than ever this year. To mark the tenth anniversary we've made the longest route ten miles, so enthusiastic walkers can do a mile for every year of the Trust's life.

The walk takes place on Spring Bank Holiday Monday 25 May 1998 on the beautiful Flete Estate in South Devon.

You'll get to spend time on this very beautiful estate with its unspoilt estuary and see some amazing views, including an absolutely stunning prospect of the castle from one point along the route. Your walk takes you through a range of habitats with a huge variety of wild flowers and birds. You will also walk through an area where traditional

methods of timber extraction using heavy horses are still preferred.

It's hoped that walkers will collect even more sponsors this year so that we can top last year's total of £1,789 and raise even more funds for vital conservation work.

All sponsored participants will receive a commemorative badge and any adult raising £100 or more and child raising £50 plus will receive a Barn Owl Trust T-shirt.

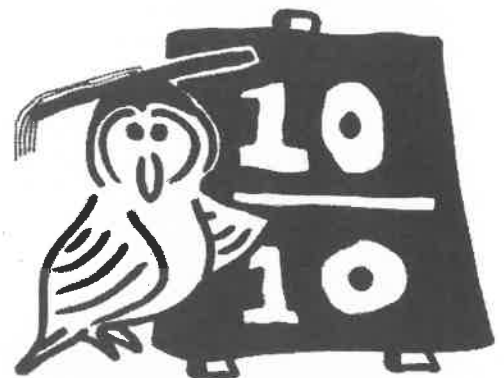
The 1998 walk will start at the Mothecombe Beach car park OS map reference SX 612 479 between 11.00am - 12.00 noon and routes of between 6.5 and 10 miles will be well signposted.

A map of the route highlighting

points of interest will be provided for walkers at the starting point where Barn Owl Trust sales goods and information will also be available.

Send a SAE to the Trust for more details and your sponsorship form. See you there!

Sandra Reardon



The Happy Volunteer

I'm a Friend of the Barn Owl Trust and live in Devon, and wanted to get more involved. Reading through Feedback and seeing the valuable work being carried out by a small team of dedicated staff, I decided to approach the Trust and see if I could help. I work in Exeter as a postman and so have time to spare in the afternoons; an ideal opportunity for a few hours' voluntary work.

Tawny

You can imagine my delight as an owl lover to be handed a Tawny Owl on my first day. The Tawny Owl had been rescued from a chimney where it was discovered by a workman and brought in to the Trust. Later named Sooty, the owl went on to make a full recovery and was released back into the wild, but not before making an appearance on the local news - it was just before Christmas, a good story for local television and an ideal chance for some precious Barn Owl Trust publicity. This first 'hands-on' moment captivated me.

There are always plenty of jobs that need doing, so I'm kept pretty busy. We provide sanctuary at Waterleat for a number of sick and injured owls, so these have to be fed and watered daily. A recent arrival was a Little Owl which had been found on a country lane with an injured wing having been attacked by a cat. I collected the owl from the local vet

and brought it back to Waterleat where we kept an eye on it in the hospital aviary. It's a real treat to study this little gem at close range. Unfortunately it has so far failed to make a full recovery and is unable to be released back into the wild.

Other jobs include building nestboxes and water trough guards, doing pellet analysis and cleaning the aviaries, as well as general maintenance work. There are always things to do in the office, too: mailing out information, assembling adoption packs, photocopying, faxing out news releases to the media - not forgetting making tea and coffee!

Favourite

One of my favourite tasks is making visits to known breeding and roosting sites with Steve Panks, the Assistant Conservation Officer. It's great to get out into the countryside and meet the landowners and farmers to discuss any Barn Owl activity in the area before erecting new nestboxes and checking on existing ones.

It's good to see our nestboxes up in the barns and even better if you discover pellets on the floor beneath. A climb up the ladder can be both hazardous and exciting as



Photo: Steve Panks

you clamber into the darkness to look for evidence of breeding or roosting. Your heart misses a beat if the ghostly white form of a Barn Owl swoops overhead.

It's fantastic to see these wonderful birds in the wild, and even better to know that the work you're doing on behalf of the Trust is helping to conserve the Barn Owl and its environment.

It's great to have this experience - I'm looking forward to future days volunteering with such a friendly organisation. So, if you fancy some voluntary work, get in touch. You'll be made welcome and could, like me, become part of the team.

Simon Bishop

Say 'Ahhhh.....'

(Continued from page 6) seemed quite content to hang on to the glove whilst being examined and everything went without a hitch.

I think the only real casualty of the day was probably David's coat. Almost without exception each bird in turn managed to score a direct hit at some stage during the proceedings and one was even accurate enough to shoot directly

into his wellies! Frances and I were edging further and further away from him as the day went on...

I certainly did get to know the birds a little better and it was really great to get some 'hands-on' experience. From now on, whenever anyone asks after the health of a bird, I'll be able to reply with first-hand knowledge.

Sandra Reardon

In Memoriam

Donations have been made to the Trust in memory of Andrew Lawes who died in August 1997 (aged 26 years) and Mrs Gillian Watson who died in February 1998.

Our sincere condolences go to the families and friends of both Andrew and Gillian along with our thanks for considering the Trust at this difficult time.

The Early Years

The Trust was born from a marriage of interests; a fascination with flight, birds and British wildlife, coupled with a concern for green issues such as human population growth, habitat destruction and pollution.

Origins

Back in the early 80s our main activity was the captive breeding and release scheme. In the first four years we released over 160 Barn Owls from 40 carefully selected and surveyed release sites. It quickly became apparent that our 'release volunteers' (many of whom were landowners) were receptive to advice; through explaining the reasons for Barn Owl decline we could raise their awareness of other conservation/environmental issues. Thus the 'educational' side of our work had already started. This was developed further with the first school visit and the first talk for an adult group in 1988.

In 1989 the Trust began to embark on new ways of helping Barn Owls.

We were overwhelmed by the numbers of farmers who used to have resident Barn Owls and wanted to re-establish them. The number of inquiries we received increased rapidly - not just about release work but also about encouraging existing wild Barn Owls through habitat creation and nestboxes.

During those early years, in addition to running the release scheme, we were recording sightings of wild Barn Owls and starting to compile a list of roosting and breeding sites. The volume of conservation work increased dramatically.

Many of the sites reported were old barns under threat of conversion and we soon realised that this, coupled with decay and demolition, was a major threat to the birds. However, information on old barns and the effects of their loss was non-existent - and so the idea of the Barn Conversion Research Project was born. Through support for this project the Trust was able to appoint me as its first conservation officer in 1990.

Hardships

Back in 1985 our first leaflets were hand-written and photocopied a few at a time at the local accountant's office. Events were held locally to raise the money to pay for postage and materials - the Trust jumble sale became quite a feature in the Ashburton area social calendar!

At this time we had no 'phone and the office consisted of a few files in a cardboard box! It was a hand-to-mouth existence and people did all sorts of things to help out. By the middle of 1986 our first hand written copy of Feedback was in circulation.

By 1987 requests for help were coming in at such a rate that we just couldn't cope! There was no shortage of volunteers - the problem was a lack of funds for materials, equipment and transport. In order to raise money and get things on a firmer footing we decided to create a new registered charity. The Barn Owl Trust received its registered charity number in July 1988 with assets of just £25.

It was sheer luxury when, in 1989, we were able to move from the cardboard box into a caravan equipped as an office with some antiquated computers donated by BT. Volunteers helped with the mailing of leaflets and keeping of records.

Pretty soon we were bursting out of the caravan; luckily we were able to move into a newly renovated wooden chalet. We're still in it today.

New

The Barn Owl Trust, like the natural world, evolves. We respond to new opportunities and new demands, find new answers and apply new remedies to man-made problems. Today we have a new practical conservation work scheme, new research ideas, new educational material, and new staff and volunteers to make it all happen.

Looking back through history is really the only way of understanding where we are today - a bigger, busier, and hopefully more successful conservation and environmental charity. Our Barn Owl data contains over 1,000 records. We are involved in five research projects and deal with up to 200 enquiries a week. Over 10 years we've done 274 school visits (with around 16,500 children) and given 232 talks to adult groups.

Let's hope the next ten years are as successful as the first!

David Ramsden



Helpers at a BOT jumble sale in the late 80s. Photo: David Ramsden

On This Day...

On this day ...

The official birthday of the Trust is July 28th. It's a date that we share with Peru - when they mark their independence from Spain. In Britain the post code was introduced, together with new sorting machines, on this day in 1959. Hence, it's considered highly auspicious to receive letters about Barn Owls in Peru on this day!

Potatoes first came to Britain on July 28th, and fingerprints were first used as a means of identification. Neither of these things are particularly relevant, since Barn Owls don't eat potatoes or have finger-prints, but it's always good to broaden your mind.

Other birthdays celebrated on this day include those of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Gerard Manley

Hopkins, Beatrix Potter and Sir Gary Sobers. Sadly, none of these are or ever were Friends of the Barn Owl Trust. Thomas Cromwell, Cyrano de Bergerac and Robespierre all died on this day, too. So did Vivaldi and Bach - although not, as you might suppose, in a fight to the death over musical differences.



Finally, and most tragically, on July 28th 1937 show-ground artiste Harold Davidson, formerly a rector, was mauled by a lion in Skegness. He died two days later. The point being, of course, that if he had been working with Barn Owls he might have survived.

In this year...

The Barn Owl Trust was hatched in 1988. What can you remember about 1988? Well, it was the year that Kylie Minogue and Prozac both hit the scene (coincidentally). One of the big films of the year was 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit?' Stephen Hawking's 'A Brief History of Time' and Salman Rushdie's 'Satanic Verses' were both published - and some people are still trying to finish them.

New phrases coined in 1988 include "desk-top publishing" and "global warming". It was also the year of the Lockerbie disaster. So, 1988, like most years, was one of mixed fortunes for the world. But we hope that the launch of the Barn Owl Trust made a not insignificant contribution to the positive side of things.

Feedback ... the first issue

The first ever issue of Feedback makes fascinating reading. It was actually produced - four single-sided, hand-written and photocopied pages - in 1986, when the first group of hopeful volunteers were concentrating on helping to breed and release Barn Owls in Devon. It shows that the organisation had a commitment to the sharing of information from the very start.

It also shows the holistic roots of the Barn Owl Trust. In the very first paragraph David Ramsden, now BOT's Conservation Officer says that "anything we can do (both as a species and as individuals) to improve our relationship with the Earth must be worthwhile." This is still a central element of the Trust's ethos today.

Breeding and release was, from the very beginning, carried out with painstaking survey work both before and afterwards, to ensure

that the site was suitable, habitat plentiful and that the released birds thrived. Even though the Trust has moved on from breeding and release to tackle the Barn Owl's problems from other directions and in other ways, the early work shows a commendable dedication to correct methodology and scientific procedure.



Releases were carried out all over Devon; from Drewsteignton to Yelverton, Ottery St. Mary to Modbury. Hand-in-hand with the releases went work to make barns and roof-spaces owl-friendly, which will have untold long-term benefits. Now here's a curious fact; David's first ever Barn Owl release took place on July 28th 1985. Three years later to the very day - on July 28th 1988 - the Barn Owl Trust became a registered charity.

The first Feedback ends with talk of "the restoration of a balance between the needs of all living things on Earth and the welfare of the Earth itself". This is as much the Trust's philosophy today as it was then, and gave rise to the phrase which became the title of BOT talks and which you see on so much of our literature - 'restoring the balance'.

Philip Knowling

Poo and Pellets

It's Saturday, it's the weekend and I'm lucky enough to have an office job that is generally weekdays only. Which means a lie in... I wish!

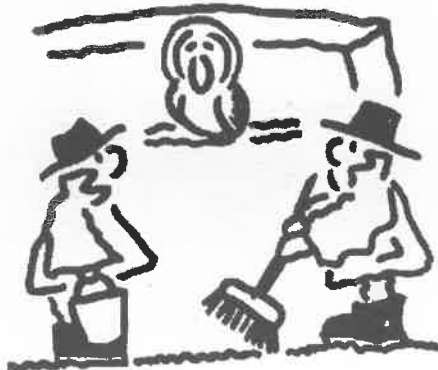
Have you noticed how the smallest, most innocuous bits of paper have the ability to change your life? Light blue in colour as I remember it; A5 in size as I recall; and how often I think about that bit of paper.

'Volunteers always welcome to join the friendly crew at the Barn Owl Trust', or words to that effect. I could do that. So I did. Not for me though any cosy office work with chats to colleagues and cheery people on the end of the telephone (what do you mean that's not like any office you know?). Oh no, it was the phrase 'aviary cleaning' that caught my eye. What better way to rid myself of all those frustrations built up over the week indoors?

On the 30th November 1996 I heaved myself out of bed at an unnatural time (for a Saturday) and my second career began. It's not the best time of year to start something like this but by the time I arrived at the BOT David was already up and about, cheerful even, to show me the ropes or rather the pellets. For the first year I was the only member of the crack Aviary Cleaning Corps, but since November 1997 I have been joined by Fiona and she has made a great deal of difference to the whole process. Let me describe a typical session.

On arrival we find all the equipment we will need from the various storage sheds at the Trust. This is usually straightforward enough although other volunteers (or dare I say David himself!) sometimes try and catch us out by leaving one or more items in a different place, cupboard, shed or county. The list includes buckets, plastic bags, extension lead, scraper, rake and the wonderful pressure washer. Kitted out in waterproofs, we snap on the rubber gloves, unlock the first

aviary and slide into action. The first stage is to pick up any pellets, feathers, leftover food etc. which the owls have been kind enough to leave about the place. This can be a hands and knees job and the pellets blend in very well with the parts of the aviaries that are gravelled, but it's surprising how soon you develop 'pellet-eye' - the ability to spot one on the other side of the aviary, carefully hidden amongst the stones. All these bits and pieces are thrown in the plastic bag (which is in the bucket). When the first aviary has been cleared one of us will continue on to the other aviaries for more of the same whilst the other begins the next stage. Who does what is sometimes decided by who has the worst hangover - bending over or scrabbling around close to the floor is not the best cure if it's a really bad one!



So for the cleaner left behind it's time to pressure wash the aviary. This is the most satisfying part of the morning. Having a particularly bad time with someone or something at work? Then stand back and let your imagination run riot as you blast bits of stuck-on-poo from here to the middle of next month. Of course things used to be different in the Aviary Cleaning Corps and some of the old timers tell of the times when all they had was a nailbrush and an old rag AND they used to complete the aviaries in half the time. Fiona and I are very grateful for the pressure washer. The floor, the aviary structure, the feeding tables and

perches are cleaned on each visit and, occasionally, the roosting boxes themselves will receive the treatment. This is when the owls give you their blackest looks. I mean it's not enough that two weirdos have invaded their space, ferreted around on the floor and then soaked away all the mess, but to be ejected from a cosy box? Well!

The cleaning process moves into the third stage when the cleaner who's been on 'picking up' duty, having finished all the aviaries, starts back at the first to undertake any tough scraping that needs to be done. The birds' baths will also be emptied, scrubbed and refilled with fresh water. At some point Fiona and I will usually swap duties so that we share the fun of the pressure washer.

After the last aviary is finished we put the equipment away (in its right place) and are normally treated to a cup of tea which is always very, very welcome.

In the year that I was on my own it used to take about five hours before I could pack up. Working with Fiona the total time has dropped to about three hours which means the aviaries are benefiting from an extra hour each session and also allows us to occasionally 'blitz' a built up area or to clean other aviaries.

The owls have never actually said thank you but I am sure that there is an extra special gleam in their eyes as they eject a pellet or go to the loo onto the freshly cleaned floor of an aviary. And do I really miss sleeping-in? It would be true to say that there are mornings when it's an effort to be enthusiastic, especially when the temperature is down around 0, or the rain is falling horizontally, but the mood soon passes and I realise that maybe, just maybe, small blue bits of paper are good bits of paper and that to be so close to these beautiful birds is far, far better than an extra hour in bed.

Paul Bray

Thanks and Things

Grateful thanks and congratulations are due to all of you who have helped out with donations of items on our "wants list". We were lucky enough to be given almost everything we asked for in the last issue - well done:

Mr & Mrs Allen of Ivybridge, Mr & Mrs Shaw of Bovey Tracey and Mrs Reid of Brixham all donated chest freezers for the storage of owl food. Teignmouth Social Services and Lawrence Brown provided filing drawers. Debbie Hicks gave us a portable colour television set.

Peter and Linda Chapman and David and Barbara Webb gave us video players, Peter also organised the donation of a garden shed. Mike Stansbury provided a metalwork vice. Margaret Curtis gave us five

boxes of computer labels. Rob Hamar provided a brush cutter and rake. Karen Barnard gave us a Work-Mate. John Parkes donated chairs and doors for the office and Mrs Ford of Exeter collected together a selection of new tools for practical work and Roger Stephens gave us a video camera. Thank you all ever so much.

Thank you too to the Totnes Furniture Recycling Centre and Caroline from SPARC for helping us to locate some second hand office furniture at extremely reasonable prices.

We are also grateful to those of you still collecting used C4 and C5 envelopes for us, keep them coming - thank you all for your support.

In true Barn Owl Trust tradition and in an effort to recycle and reuse unwanted items (and save us money) we are hoping that some of you might find the following items lying around in your garage or attic - be assured we can put them to good use:

Woodworking vice
Electric bench grinder
Band saw, hand plane
Tripod, cassette and tapes for a Sharp VL C73EA video camera
Office chairs (that meet current H & S standard)
Gloves - heavy duty rubber and tough gardening type
Crow bar, post driver
35mm camera and lenses
Extra rakes, rechargeable torches and measuring tapes are always useful too. **Thank you.**

Carowl Singing !

You've all heard of carol singing, well how about this then:

Friend of the Trust Mrs Ewing of Rickmansworth and her neighbours are known locally as the "Batchworth Glee Club". They gather together each Christmas Eve to go carol singing. The charity that benefits from the carol singing is chosen by whoever provides the mulled wine and food afterwards. Last Christmas it was Mrs Ewings' turn to do the honours and the BOT received a wonderful donation of £100 from the club. Thank you all.

Newspaper Clippers Needed

If you regularly read newspapers or magazines, please take the time to cut out any bits of Barn Owl news.

Please write the date and the name of the paper on each item you clip. To save postage, save them up until you've got a few and then send them to us.

Sad News

Sadly, Friend of the Trust Harry Blake died on 20th April. He had been suffering with ill health for some time. We first met Harry, a keen ornithologist, in 1989 when he gave the Trust its first projector. In 1990 Harry, with his wife Joyce, began an annual tradition of holding a BOT Coffee Morning in Galmpton, the latest held in March '98. Over the years, with a little help from their friends, they have raised hundreds of pounds to support the work of the Trust. Harry was a lovely man and will be sadly missed. Our best wishes and thoughts are with Joyce.

Scotch Owl (Strix Scotchi ?)



We were most impressed when one of our younger readers recently sent in a word-search he had created. This impressive puzzle contained letters within which were secreted the names of bird species.

Amongst these was a hitherto unrecorded species - the Scotch

Owl. This is clearly an extremely rare owl, no doubt in urgent need of conservation and protection.

Experts say that the Scotch Owl is an unusual bird. It thrives in close proximity to Man; its preferred habitat is suburban sitting-rooms, pubs and clubs, where it usually makes its appearance after dusk. Its familiar call is reminiscent of the cry 'Same again!'

This malt-coloured bird is originally a highland species and is thought to be a close relation of the (famous) grouse. Known as a spirited creature, it is often to be found flying unsteadily in the Scotch mist.

Does the name ring any bells? If any readers can shed more light on this most interesting bird, we would be glad to hear from you. Cheers!

10th Anniversary Conservation Fund Appeal

As you are by now aware this is the Barn Owl Trust's 10th anniversary year. We want to make 1998 a really great year for Barn Owls - which is why we've done something we've never done before.

We've launched a 10th Anniversary Conservation Fund.

The Barn Owl Trust is Britain's only dedicated national Barn Owl conservation charity and we need support. There are lots of things that we can do, but they all take money.

As you know, because you already help the Trust, your donations contribute directly to conservation, research and education work locally and nationally. You support the care of sick and injured wild birds. You help to maintain our free national information service - but there's so much that could be done.

Good Barn Owl habitat is good for bats, small mammals and wild flowers, too - so helping Barn Owls helps the whole environment.

The Trust needs more conservation staff. We've been lucky enough to have been given a grant for three years by the John Ellerman Foundation towards the creation of a third conservation post; but we need to find the rest of the money. With someone else in post we can do more fieldwork and more research. We need the resources to make sure that existing Barn Owl sites are conserved and new ones created.

To help us celebrate our 10th Anniversary please make a one-off donation to our 10th Anniversary Conservation Fund. Send your donations to The Barn Owl Trust and help us achieve even more to conserve this beautiful bird.

What are you doing to celebrate our 10th anniversary ?

Could you celebrate the Trust's 10th birthday by holding a fund-raising event, or recruiting new Friends ?

Organise a coffee morning, collection, jumble sale or cream tea. We can help by providing posters, leaflets, information and advice.

Write to us, or telephone on a Tuesday or Thursday (office hours). We'd be delighted to hear from you.

Tail Piece



Putting together this issue of Feedback has been a fairly nostalgic process. There is a tendency in today's busy world to look ahead, plan for tomorrow, think of the future; that's all very well, but reflection is very valuable and can actually ensure that you are still heading in the right direction.

The Barn Owl Trust, despite being an organisation, is an organic entity with its own spirit. Over the years of its development it has had much help and sustenance from many people - some have now moved on and some have passed on. But the Trust is more than the sum total of those involved at any time. It is a reflection of the caring side of human nature, the desire to live in harmony with the natural world, to appreciate and protect other living things.

The Trust's work has to be able to stand alone and its track record over the past decade shows the commitment to accuracy and

scientific validity expected by its founders. However, what makes the Barn Owl Trust so special are its philosophies that all things are connected and that we can all make a difference.

No matter how insignificant we feel in the great scheme of things, we all have the potential to do our bit to create a better world. Whether by smiling at our neighbours, recycling our rubbish or making donations to charity, we are all making a positive contribution.

The Barn Owl Trust's focus is on one species and its environment, but the Barn Owl, like every other living creature, shares its environment with all of us. We are all aware, at least to some extent, of the devastation being visited on the natural environment in the pursuit of profit and gain. We know that this rate of destruction is not sustainable and ultimately, if it continues the result will be as Chief Seathl said in 1855: "Continue to

contaminate your bed and you will one night suffocate in your own waste".

Looking back over the years we can see that the Barn Owl Trust has made a significant difference. There is a greater awareness of the Barn Owl and its needs, there have been changes in policy and legislation both locally and nationally. There are sites that exist and birds that breed as a direct result of our work.

All of this work has been made possible by the people, past and present, who support the Trust, the wonderful volunteers who give freely of their time and the staff who put in extra effort to get things done.

In our first decade together we have achieved a great deal, we have built a firm foundation to take us forward to tackle the next ten years.

Together we can make a world of difference.
Thank You Frances Ramsden