

Issue Number 21

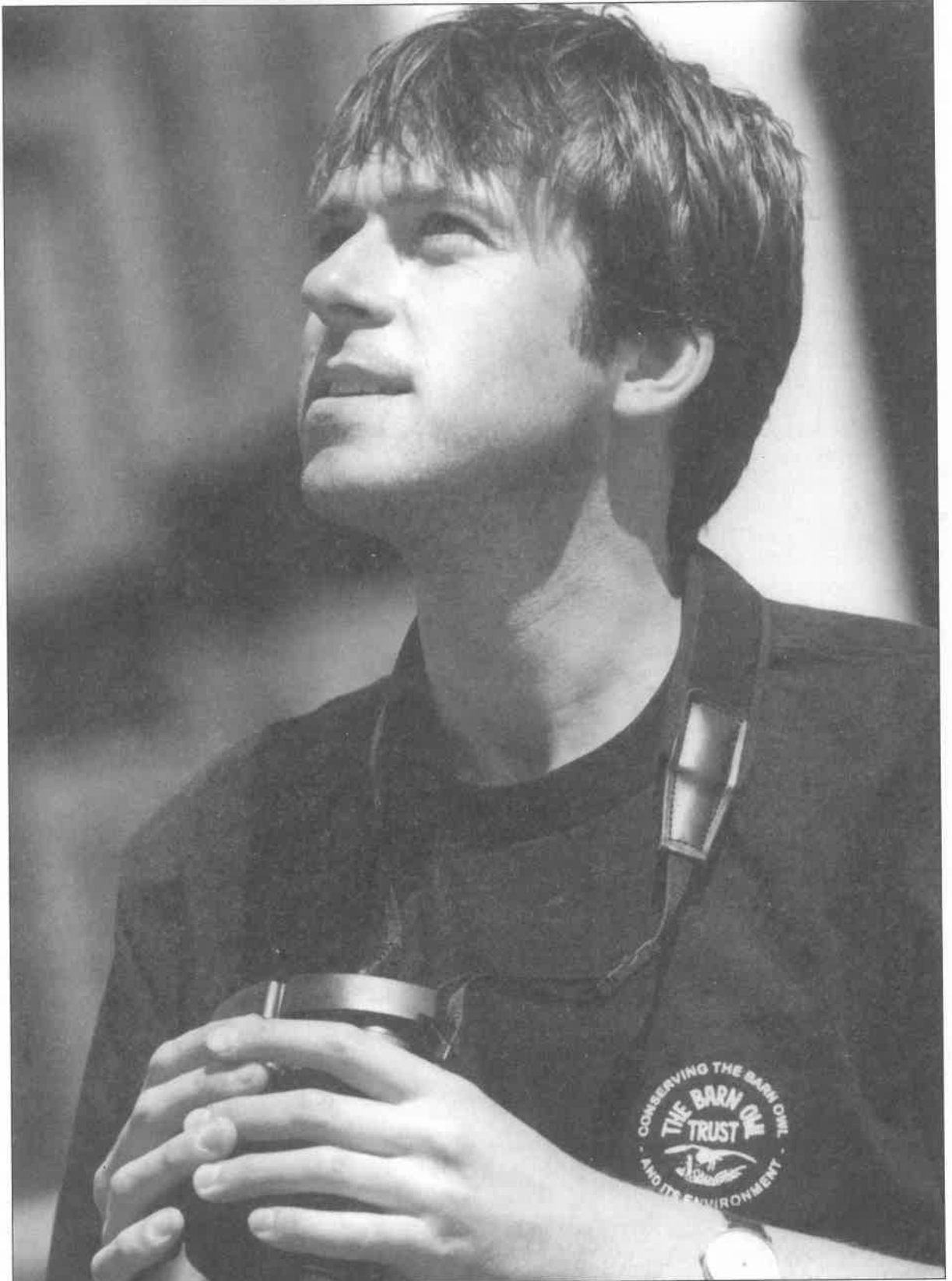


FEEDBACK 1999



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

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Cover photograph courtesy of the Exeter Express & Echo

Printed on recycled paper

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

Barn Owl Trust News

Boxing in the Path of Totality

David Ramsden and Spike Rycroft have been frantically constructing the biggest nestboxes ever seen at the Trust in preparation for a forthcoming visit to the very end of Cornwall.

An area near the village of St. Buryan, not very far from Land's End, has become the centre of much interest among local people, conservationists and national ornithological bodies. The site, which the Cornwall Birdwatching and Preservation Society reports has been used by Barn Owls since the 1950s, is under threat from a road development project.

Senior Conservation Officer David and Assistant Conservation Officer Peter Dommert visited the site at the request of Cornwall County Council to make an assessment of the area. The Barn Owls are said to breed somewhere in a wall supporting the road from Penzance; this partially

collapsed during the Boxing Day floods last year.

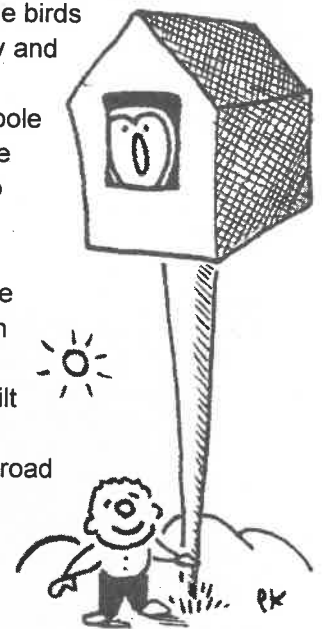
The BOT recommended that the work undertaken should protect the 100 year old wall and any resident Barn Owls. We also urged the council to provide alternative nesting places in the form of pole-boxes. Given the lack of suitable trees and buildings, pole-boxes (to be erected on top of telegraph poles provided by the council) are perhaps the best way of securing the long-term future of the owls. Re-routing the road would cost a lot of money, and there are other considerations that complicate the story.

David and Peter have been liaising closely with Cornwall County Council who are stuck between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand they are obliged to maintain the highway, an important route for local people, the main road to the popular Minack Theatre and a road

situated in the "Path of Totality" and likely to be very busy during the August eclipse. On the other hand Cornwall County Council are also obliged to consider wildlife (particularly protected species such as the Barn Owl).

If some alternative provision can be made for the birds very quickly and if these enormous pole boxes prove attractive to them, they could be watching the eclipse from their deluxe purpose-built new homes despite the road works.

We'll keep you posted.



Site Enhancement Scheme Updates

Site Enhancement Schemes are currently underway in two areas of Devon. They are important and innovative conservation projects which could have implications for Barn Owl work nationally.

October 1997 saw the start of the South Hams Barn Owl Scheme, a three way partnership between South Hams District Council, the Devon Bird Watching & Preservation Society and the Barn Owl Trust. The scheme set out to enhance 32 Barn Owl breeding sites within the district by applying an agreed prescription of measures to all recent breeding sites.

As part of the scheme the current status of all sites was checked.

We found that an alarming number of Barn Owls had either failed to breed or were absent.

Now well into its second year, the conservation staff working on the scheme have located 29 breeding sites and completed stage one of the enhancement package at 23 of them with 3 more underway. 21 sites have had stage two visits and stage three visits are scheduled for these during the summer of 1999.

In October 1998 the Teignbridge Barn Owl Scheme, in partnership with Teignbridge District Council, was launched to enhance 9 breeding sites around the district. This was a disturbingly low total for

an area the size of Teignbridge but reflected the number of breeding sites recorded since 1993. Fewer than half of the sites checked showed signs of breeding in the current year. However, extensive liaison with landowners and site visits in the district have located and enabled completion of stage one at 8 separate sites.

The South Hams and the Teignbridge partners and the participating landowners are being kept in touch with the progress of the scheme with bi-annual newsletters.

We are hoping to move north in the autumn with the launch of an exciting new enhancement partnership in north Devon.

BOT Bird News

Comings and Goings of a Feathered Nature

Towards the end of October we received several phone calls about Barn Owl sightings close to a country road near Totnes. A Barn Owl was picked up from the road and brought in to us, but it sadly died. David examined it and discovered that it was a youngster and very thin. He realised that there must be a nest site and armed with some food (for the owls!) he went to investigate. He found a nest hollow in an old beech tree and left food for the young owls. Since then there have been other sightings, but no further casualties reported. The site is now part of the South Hams Barn Owl Scheme and a nestbox has been erected in a nearby tree as David felt that the beech tree was unlikely to remain standing for much longer.

Also in October we had a new arrival - Pop - a female captive-bred Barn Owl found flying around near Exeter, obviously in need of some food and a good home. She was put in the Hospital Aviary for a short period in order to check that she was OK and then re-homed in the Pond Aviary - which is quite near the office - so that we could keep an eye on her.

At this point her companions were three captive-bred male Barn Owls, a captive-bred female Barn Owl and Rave the raven. After a short time it became apparent that everybody was becoming a bit unsettled, including the breeding pair (Gloss and Dart) in the next-door aviary, so we had to move Pop to another aviary where there would be no males to compete for her affection!

November saw the annual health checks of our resident birds. It was an extremely cold, wet and muddy day but, apart from some rather soggy notes and numb fingers,

everything went well and all residents were found to be in good condition. Mrs Cornish, one of our oldest residents, had lost a bit of weight so we kept a careful eye on her over the next few weeks, but she is now quite perky again.



Photo: Jeremy Van Riemsdyke

Sadly, one morning in early January David found Gloss, our breeding female, dead on the floor of her aviary. She had shown no previous signs of being unwell and indeed had eaten quite happily the night before. She was nine years old, so only in late middle age, really. She will be greatly missed.

If we were to continue to have a breeding pair to produce young

Barn Owls for release under licence, we now needed to find another female who would be compatible with Dart. We tried to introduce both Troon and Valentine, but he was having none of it, and it was obvious that he was not going to accept another partner on 'his patch'. We decided to move him out of the Hide Aviary and try another male. We actually ended up re-homing him in an aviary with Pop and they seem quite happy together.

In February Gulliver was introduced to the Hide Aviary with Troon and he seems to have settled instantly. In fact he's so at home in there that I've not seen him since. Troon on the other hand spends much time outside; whether she will eventually settle and lay eggs only time will tell. I would never have believed that this could become such a complicated exercise.

As always we have had many calls from people with unwanted captive bred Barn Owls. Unfortunately we cannot house most of these birds as there would be no room for injured wild birds, some of which we will be able to nurse back to health and release into the wild. This problem will not go away whilst so many birds are allowed to breed in captivity.

Sandra Reardon

New Birdroom - Preparing for Action

The new birdroom is almost ready for use and we hope that it will be finished in time for the forthcoming breeding season.

It was purchased with grants from the Panton Trust, the Animal Defence Trust, the Barry Green Memorial Trust and the Marchig Trust. Our grateful thanks to them and to volunteer David Webb for clearing the old birdroom. Thanks

also to David, Pete and Frog for the groundwork, to John and Margaret Rhodes our volunteer painting team and to Spike our new handyman who managed the fitting and wiring.

Although we hope the birdroom doesn't get too much use, it's good to know that it will enable us to provide ideal facilities for the care and recuperation of the creatures that need our help.

Out in the Field

We're always talking about putting up nestboxes - it sounds simple enough, but what does it actually entail? Phil Knowling ventured out into the cold and the wet to watch ACO Su Meekins at work.

Putting up a nestbox is simple - anyone can do it. But most people do it once or twice, in their own time and on their own land. When you do it as part of your job, travelling all over the countryside to unknown sites, you have to be prepared for every eventuality.

That's why the Trust's little 4WD is loaded up like a mobile workshop; you can't afford to forget anything. So there are tools, hard hats, notes, maps, a mobile 'phone (essential for staff out on their own) and of course a nestbox. There's a knack to just getting a big box into the back of a small vehicle. With a ladder and lengths of wood strapped to the roof-rack, we set off.

Winter

Putting up nestboxes is mainly a winter job - avoiding the breeding season and causing minimal disturbance. But it means working in draughty barns and muddy yards on cold, wet days. We drive down narrow lanes to isolated barns, the

baton bouncing on the roof. The Devon countryside is pretty, but the occasional hail shower takes the edge off the day.

Today Su's putting up a Teignbridge Barn Owl Scheme nestbox in a traditional stone barn. It's a beautiful old building, ivy-clad with granite steps and a sagging roof-line, made of rough stone and even rougher wood. In fact there's not a straight line in the whole place - which makes fixing up a neat, cuboid nestbox rather tricky. Modern agricultural buildings are regular and square, but it's harder to attach boxes to the steel frames. This barn has holes in the gable ends and good habitat close by, so it's an ideal location. There's a nestbox here already, but it's old and in poor condition - a replacement is called for. It's particularly important as there's evidence of Barn Owls - pellets on the floor and white streaks on the beams.

You have to take care. Before she starts, Su needs to remove her rings for Health & Safety purposes. Other perils range from drill batteries running down mid-job to inquisitive livestock; staff need to be ready for anything. She quickly identifies the best place for the box

- on crossing beams made of oak as hard as iron. It's the best place for the box, but not necessarily for Su.

The heavy ladder goes up, placed carefully amid the clutter of the barn, wedged against the uneven floor and tied off securely. Su sets about measuring; it's mathematics at 20 feet. Then the box has to be hauled up; at 5 feet in her steel-toed workboots, Su is barely bigger than the box, but somehow she gets it into place. In the cold and the gloom of the roof, with numb fingers and clouding breath, she hammers home the nails.

As Su's poised at the top of the ladder a Barn Owl comes flapping out of the old box, passes by her head and exits through the gable end. Seeing a wild Barn Owl is a welcome and thrilling sight - but she has to make sure she doesn't take a step back...

By the time everything's done it's mid-afternoon and the cold November sun is setting. The sense of satisfaction at a job well done is tempered only by the knowledge that there are many, many more boxes to be erected before the end of the winter.

Phil Knowling

Operation Little Owl - Can You Help?

Operation Little Owl is a 5-year research project gathering data on the factors influencing the population of Britain's smallest owl. Roy Leigh has been studying the diet, habitat and breeding ecology of this little bird for the Hawk & Owl Trust.

The 1968-72 breeding atlas indicated a population of 7,000-14,000 pairs, while the 1988-91 breeding atlas suggested 6,000-12,000. The aim of the project is to develop conservation guidelines for the species

and to encourage farmers and landowners to implement sympathetic land management techniques.

You can help Operation Little Owl by:

- recording nests
- monitoring populations in your area

For further information contact Roy Leigh at 10 Mere Road, Higher Marston, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 6DR. Telephone (01606) 892032.



Photo: Roy Leigh

New People, New Roles

Peter Dommert joined the Trust in January. Here he introduces himself; on page 12 he explains what it's like to do a BOT school visit.

I was hatched and fledged in Somerset and finally dispersed from that nest to train as a primary school teacher in Exmouth. I spent four years at a middle school in Exeter, helping to mould the minds of the new millennium. After failing to brainwash my young charges into supporting Exeter City over

Manchester United, I came to work at the Barn Owl Trust.

The post of Assistant Conservation Officer is extremely varied. In my short time with the Trust I've put up nestboxes, wormed owls, given school talks and driven a road-roller. It has been sometimes challenging, always interesting and certainly a lot of fun. The highlight so far must surely be the afternoon that David and I erected a tree box

for an elderly gent in the South Hams of Devon.

The late winter sun was setting as the final nail was hammered into place and then, with poetic timing, a hunting Barn Owl cruised silently past, silhouetted against an orange sky. What an advert for the work of the Trust! And what an image to witness. At that moment, I wouldn't have wanted to be anywhere else.

Peter Dommert

Phil Knowling has recently given up self-employment to join the Trust.

I was a freelance writer for some 9 years, working for advertising agencies and magazines. I was involved with the Trust for about 2 of those years, handling media matters. Now I'm a full-time member of staff, the only non-conservationist, responsible for press, promotions and fund-raising. I'm nearly 37 and it's my first real job; going to work at the same place every day took some getting used to, I can tell you.

The Trust has only 4 full-time staff - the rest are part-time or voluntary. Even with this small number, wages are a large and growing element of our expenditure. People are the

best possible investment for a charity like ours, but they have to be paid - hence the urgent need for fundraising. My job is simple; to make sure we have the funds to keep our conservation staff at work.

Those funds can come from many sources - businesses, charitable trusts, local authorities, statutory agencies, other conservation bodies. But perhaps the most important funders of the Trust are you, the Friends.

The individuals who support us through the Friends scheme, by adopting an owl, by selling draw tickets, buying sales goods and making donations are the people who really keep the Trust going.

Nowadays the Trust is trying to plan ahead, to develop strategies and identify opportunities. If that sounds a touch businesslike, then it's all to the good. It's vital to run a charity efficiently - in fact, we have to be more efficient and make money go further than any company. After all, it's your money we're spending. But businesslike will never mean cold or impersonal.

This is a great place to work - it may be hectic and pressured, but it's also friendly, happy and informal. Like you, the Friends and supporters of the Trust, the staff know that in working for the Barn Owl Trust they're part of something special and important.

Phil Knowling

Silence is Amazing

There was a very unusual occurrence at a primary school in Devon during October 1998 - the whole school became silent!

Teacher Chris Robinson (the Trust's own education advisor) initiated the idea of a sponsored silence in aid of the Barn Owl Trust.

She said: "We wanted to do something special to mark the Barn Owl Trust's 10th anniversary. We thought that a sponsored silence was appropriate because Barn Owls make no noise when they fly." Teachers and parents alike were impressed by the length of time

children remained quiet. All 300 children in the school took part, with targets of 10 silent minutes for nursery classes and 30 minutes for 11 year olds. Some of the older children went on to be speechless for up to an hour!

During a special presentation at a school assembly a cheque for £710.22 was handed over to Phil Knowling from the Trust.



Unauthorised Handouts!

Alan and Chris who live near Honiton in East Devon are very lucky. Not only do they provide a "foster home" for two of the Trust's sanctuary owls, they also have the pleasure of wild Barn Owls nesting in the loft of the workshop next to their house.

The two captive owls, both female, live in an aviary in their garden and are fed on dead poultry chicks

(a normal diet for captive birds of prey) - nothing unusual about that.

Strangely last year Alan got the idea that the captive owls were feeding the wild owls. We laughed, made some crack about Alan losing his marbles and thought little of it. Then recently Alan started up again. We checked it out and the evidence is really strong - sorry for doubting you Alan.

The wild Barn Owls have a perch outside their entrance to the loft and directly below this Alan has been finding bits of poultry chick. In addition, some of the wild owl pellets contain remnants of chick. The chances of the birds finding a supply of these elsewhere is so slim that we now believe that they are receiving unauthorised handouts from the captive birds in the aviary - amazing!

David Ramsden

Whose Food?

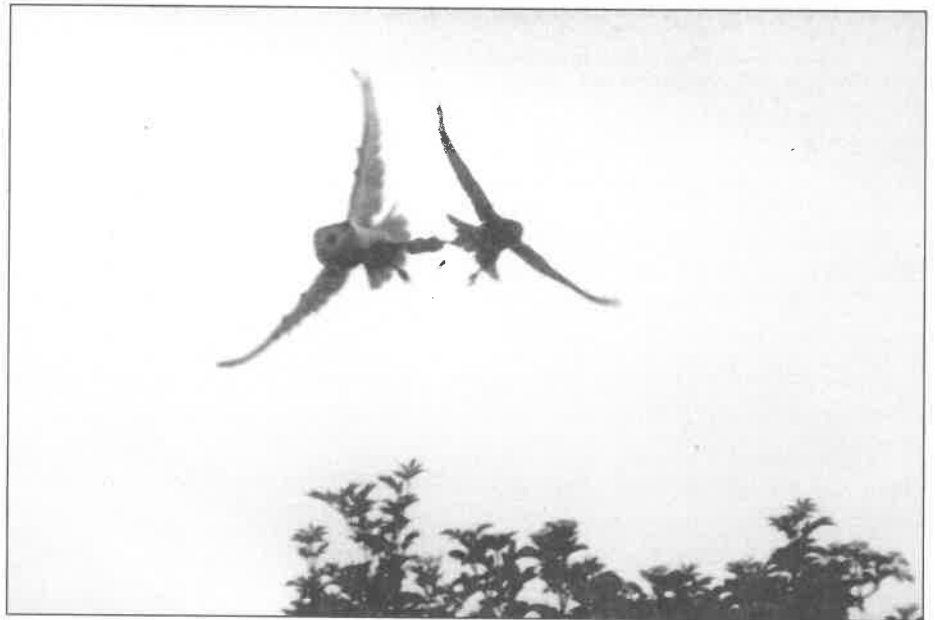
This remarkable photograph shows the tussle between a Barn Owl and a kestrel. Friend of the Trust Maranda Coleman-Cooke tells the story.

I sheltered from the rain in a ruined cottage and saw Barn Owls fly around inside, moving from beam to beam. Surrounded by overgrown fruit trees, the cottage was in rich meadow grassland with a network of drains overhanging with willows.

Sometime later when I returned I found that the roof had totally collapsed. At dusk three young Barn Owls peered out of the chimney top. There were large numbers of prey close to the nest and as I watched a Barn Owl leaving the chimney to hunt I noticed a kestrel nearby. As the Barn Owl returned to the nest carrying food I was amazed to see it attacked by the kestrel in what appeared to be a premeditated act. Luckily I managed to catch the event with my camera. I am happy to say that after a brief struggle the Barn Owl continued on to the chimney, prey intact.

The two species do have a similar diet, favouring mice and voles, but the kestrel also feeds on worms, birds and insects. After observing this experience I found the following references:

Dunn (1979) recalled a fierce flight with a kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) over food. Baudvin (1975) wrote that the owl occasionally nests close to



the kestrel; once 2.5 metres away. Durban recorded that on September 22nd 1871 a female kestrel and a young Barn Owl were taken on board a vessel a few miles off the south

coast as it was coming up the English Channel. The kestrel was seen chasing the owl for several miles and both alighted on the vessel for rest!

Maranda Coleman-Cooke

World Wide Wol!

You can now reach the Barn Owl Trust by e-mail and find our very own web-site on the Internet.

The number of people using the Internet is increasing all the time and many organisations are already "on-line".

E-mail is helping us to communicate more efficiently and respond more quickly. In particular it helps us to minimise the cost and maximise the

efficiency of liaising with colleagues overseas.

Cyber-nauts can try...
E-mail - barnowl@eclipse.co.uk

Web-site - www.eclipse.co.uk/barnowl

Don't worry - those who favour the old-fashioned forms of communication - letter, telephone and fax - can still reach us and we're delighted to hear from you!

Moving On After Six Years

I'm going through some major changes in my life at present. Not only am I due to have a baby soon, but I've officially finished working for the Barn Owl Trust after 6 years. I say officially because I'm still doing some voluntary work. I need to adjust slowly!

The strange thing is that I never really intended to work for the Trust. I just planned to do a bit of voluntary work when I first moved to the area and while I was waiting to start my college course. Instead, the Trust

has been a part of my life through my Access and Degree courses, through moving home, through happy times and sad and through most of my pregnancy. However, I'm not sure that there's room in my home for the Trust to be there through the birth!

Conversely, I've seen the Trust go through many changes of its own over the past 6 years. People have come and gone - as have computers, files, 'phones, record cards...! The offices are busier and

the Trust is doing even more conservation work.

I hope I can be around for the next 6 years to see what other changes are in store, although it'll be from a distance rather than hands-on.

I don't want to say good bye, because it's not the end - in fact, it's a new beginning. So, to everyone - Trustees, employees, volunteers, and Friends - see you soon!

Sue Williams



Congratulations

Welcome to baby Fern Elizabeth Rachel Norris. Born at home on Thursday 25th March at 8.50pm. Almost two weeks earlier than expected, young Fern weighed in at 7lbs 2ozs.

Congratulations to proud parents Sue and Lee who brought their beautiful little daughter to visit us here at the Trust when she was just a few days old. Motherhood certainly seems to suit Sue who looks positively blooming.

Photo: David Ramsden

Property to Let Section...

In January the Trust received a call from a Mr Worsfold who lives near Kingsbridge in South Devon. He was keen to encourage Barn Owls but, at 86 years of age, was unable to erect a box himself.

He explained he had very good habitat and a suitable tree, so as part of Pete's training process he and David visited the site to assess its potential as a nestbox location.

They returned to the Trust extremely excited. As they were up the tree erecting a box they saw a Barn Owl fly right past them and later as they were leaving the site they saw it again.

Shortly after the event Mr Worsfold (who is delighted with the box) sent us some photos and told us that he has had the pleasure of seeing the Barn Owl on numerous occasions and thinks it is using its new home.

We'll keep you informed - but in the meantime, here's an advert as provided by the landlord himself.

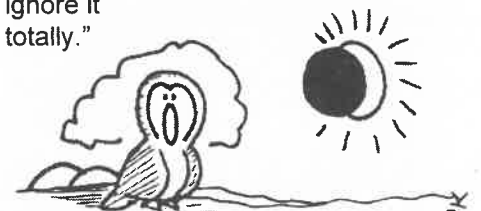
To Let:

Very desirable residence in a quiet location facing East in mainly pasture and grazing land. Would suit a Barn Owl with young family.

Eclipse Fever

Parts of the South West of England will see a total eclipse of the sun on August 11th, 1999. Just how will birds such as the Barn Owl be affected when day turns to night for up to 2 minutes in some places.

"The eclipse will plunge parts of the world into darkness," said expert B. Arnowl. "I confidently predict that one of two things will happen. Either Barn Owls will be so confused by the apparent sudden sunset and sunrise that they will all faint - or else they will all sleep through the event and ignore it totally."



Bits and Pieces

Help Needed

Aviary cleaners

We can offer you an interesting alternative to that Saturday morning lie-in or your weekly household chores. How do you feel about doing a bit of practical work for charity?

If you live near (or fairly near) Ashburton, if you can spare two or three hours a week and cope with being outside in all weathers then you could well be the person we're looking for. If you'd be happy to put on rubber gloves for a good cause and clean up after our resident birds, we'd like to meet you.

Join our aviary cleaning team on a

Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday morning, help with a vital task, get closer (but not too close) to our resident owls and enjoy a real sense of satisfaction.

Ring the office on a Tuesday or Thursday and ask Pete for more information.

Leaflet dispensers

Can YOU help us spread the word? Join us in helping to distribute our cardboard leaflet dispensers. We'll provide them flat-packed (with full instructions for making them up) and with a supply of BOT leaflets. All you need to do is to find somewhere to put them. There are

loads of places you can try - pet shops, vets, chip shops, takeaways, hair-dressers, estate agents - anywhere they have a little room to stand.

Call the office to tell us how many you can take and where you can distribute them. We keep track of dispensers, so please make a note of the code number (on the back) and send us a list of which dispenser is where.

It's really important to spread the word about the Barn Owl Trust so that more people can have the opportunity to contact us for help and advice - and support us as Friends.

Give this family a home...



...and help the Barn Owl Trust

'Family Values' is one of a range of 15 wildlife studies issued as limited and open edition prints by Essex artist Kenneth Smith. The range includes 6 owl studies, 4 of them featuring Barn Owls.

The publishers, Strix Editions, will make a generous donation to the Trust for every print (of whatever subject) sold through this issue of Feedback.

Print prices range from £8.50 to £35 inclusive of VAT and carriage.

Colour leaflets are available for most prints, which also include studies of foxes, badgers, otters, deer, birds of prey and garden birds.

For more information contact John Gray at Strix Editions on (01206) 853388, quoting reference BOT 1. You can view and order prints via the Internet at: www.strixeditions.co.uk.

In order for the BOT to benefit please remember to mention the Trust when ordering.

Duplicating Effort

Office manager Judy Cummings (see page 4) is extremely grateful to the Robert Kiln Charitable Trust, the Fox Memorial Trust, the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust and the Really Useful Group for their grants which enabled the Trust to purchase a Risograph machine.

The Risograph, which is a cross between a photocopier and a duplicator, complements our existing photocopier, enabling us to produce our leaflets faster, cheaper and with less stress to our staff and volunteers - 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, keep them until you've got a few and then send them to us.

Thanks!

Thanks and Things

Thank you to the people all over the country who have helped the Trust in so many different ways.

Maureen and Alec Johnson have continued to send us their marvellous hand-made greetings cards which we will sell at talks and events, so look out for them.

Mr. Fanshawe of Kingsteignton, Devon, donated a small computer, Rob and Paula sent us stamps and Jiffy Bags, Mrs. Patterson gave us stamps, Peter Chapman a car roof-rack, Alan and Ann Boon gave us measuring tapes and Graham Wilson a camera with lenses. Thank you to all of you.

A combined thank you and apology must go to the people who provided another camera and those who gave us a second roof rack - both extremely useful items. The pieces

of paper with your details on disappeared, so we are unable to thank you by name. Do give us a call.

Instigated in 1991 by Harry and Joyce Blake, the Galmpton coffee mornings have become something of a BOT tradition. Following Harry's death in April 1998 Joyce and friends went on to hold the 9th annual coffee morning this year and to raise £183 for the Trust - thank you all.

Mrs. Ford of Exeter is mentioned in our new item "Focus on Friends" on page 14, but thank you again for the tools, overalls, envelopes, biscuits and the Easter chocolates.

Thank you to all of you collecting used C4 and C5 envelopes for us, we still use them and are really pleased to receive more.

Our wants list has proved a very popular way of supporting the Trust and we are very grateful to all of you, past and present, who have searched through your homes to recycle your unwanted items or even provided new ones. The following things would all be put to good use by the Trust:

A6 filing drawers

Band saw

Gloves - heavy duty gardening

Electric kettle

Video camera - the one we had donated unfortunately stopped working!

Post driver

Roofing felt - for outdoor nestboxes

Galvanised nails - 2", 3", 4" or 5"

Hardpoint panel saw

We can always use stamps, envelopes and A4 paper (if possible recycled), extra rakes and measuring tapes.

Thank you

Tail Piece

Spring has arrived at Waterleat with a profusion of yellow flowers. Gorse, primroses, daffodils and celandines all reach out to the sun and, as the blackthorn blossom blooms, the hazel buds are ready to burst out in celebration of the season.

The dawn chorus has been exuberant for several weeks and indications are that the birds might breed early this year. After the appalling weather during the last breeding season we hope that Barn Owls will have a better time in 1999.

Not only is this the last year of the 20th century, it also heralds the arrival of a total eclipse of the sun in the south-western part of the UK. With the exception of the total eclipse of 30th June 1954, which was only visible in the northern part of the Shetland Islands, the last total eclipse visible in the British Isles was seventy years ago when totality lasted a little less than 25 seconds on the 29th June 1927. Therefore for most of us the 11th August will be a once in a life time experience.

Life is a variety of experiences; evolutionary changes that shape and form us as individuals. The Barn Owl Trust, seen by many of us as an organic entity too, is subject to this evolutionary process.

Moving towards the 21st century has resulted in our connection to the world wide web, to a forward planning process and enough policy documents to make your hair stand on end. New staff and volunteers bring new ideas and develop directions which need to be given consideration and the evolutionary process rolls on.

Resisting change is as pointless as trying to hold back the tide - nothing ever stays the same. However, change for its own sake may not always be a step in the right direction. What matters is maintaining a balance and keeping focused on what is really important. Adapting to change is something we humans are far more equipped to deal with than the Barn Owls we are here to conserve.

Development doesn't have to be a dirty word; considerate development of an idea, of change, or even of a building site, can take account of all the implications. We shouldn't be afraid to consider making changes and developing new ideas if they are for the right reasons.

As individuals we all have an impact on the planet and its other resident species. In order to pass on to future generations a world that they will thank us for, we could all make changes to our lifestyles. Here at the end of the 20th century most of us in the "developed world" have more chances and more choices than ever before - how wisely do we use these opportunities?

As Friends of the Barn Owl Trust you are helping us to restore the balance and we are very grateful for your support

Together we can make a world of difference.

**Thank You
Frances Ramsden**