



Issue Number 26 - Autumn 2001



FEEDBACK

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



- A legacy for conservation
- Barn Owl release news - a major new report

Barn Owl Trust News

The Lennon Legacy Project

Early in May this year the Trust received a significant residual legacy from the estate of Vivien Lennon. The cheque that arrived was for a staggering £80,000 - the largest amount of money received by the Trust to date. The Trustees determined that this should not be spent on core (running) costs but used to do something that was both tangible and memorable, something exciting and inspirational, something that only a legacy of this magnitude would make possible – but what? It was decided to wait and see what came up - in the meantime the money was earning interest to support our work.



Photo: David Ramsden 1994

During the summer David, our Senior Conservation Officer, met our neighbouring farmer in the lane and stopped to chat about Foot & Mouth disease. During the conversation our neighbour mentioned he was winding down his farming and planning to sell the land adjoining the Trust. David then talked to the Trustees and at their instruction went back to the farmer and asked whether he might consider selling to the Trust. The upshot is, following a valuation and extensive negotiations, the Trust has purchased approximately 25 acres of land (originally 8 fields) with the intention of managing it for Barn Owl conservation and maximising its biodiversity.

The Trustees feel that this, the Lennon Legacy Project, would meet with the approval of Vivien Lennon. At the same time it fulfils the aims set out in our Deed.

The next stage of the project is to undertake flora and fauna surveys of the land. It is currently fairly intensively grazed upland, with mostly semi-improved grassland, a little woodland and a Dartmoor stream running through one corner. In consultation with other bodies, we need to draw up a long-term management plan which takes account of the aims and objectives of the project whilst taking on board suggestions from interested parties.

Ideas so far include replanting hedges, creating a large pond, building a barn, haymaking, planting an orchard, conducting regular habitat surveys, nestboxing, educational activities, owl walks and project days - the opportunities are many and various.

It is a very exciting project for the Trust and we will report on its progress in future issues of Feedback. In the meantime we'd like to hear from anyone with ideas, energy or expertise who would like to get involved - please contact the Trustees, we'd love to hear from you. ✍

Barn Owl TV

The Trust was featured recently on the hit Channel 4 series *Pet Rescue*. Viewers saw staff caring for injured birds, visiting a school and checking on breeding sites.

The pieces, filmed during June and July, were broadcast over three evenings in September. About 3 million people watch the programme. ✍



Photo: Sonia Seldon

Enter our Draw

The 2001 Grand Prize Draw takes place this year in December – so you still have time to buy your tickets. There's a great range of prizes this year, including a weekend break in a Devon country pub, signed Pollyanna Pickering prints and free entry to Kew Gardens, London Zoo, the National Marine Aquarium, Longleat, Paignton Zoo, the Lost Gardens of Heligan and the Eden Project.

It would be great if we could make this draw a really special one. Ask for more tickets to support the Trust – and you could win a superb prize. ✍

Release News

Release Review

DEFRA, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (the new name for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions) is currently reviewing the release of captive-bred Barn Owls in Britain. As many readers will know, the Trust has been closely involved in release work since the mid 1980s.

Since 1993 the release of captive-bred Barn Owls in Britain has been controlled by a licensing scheme, which the Barn Owl Trust - along with other bodies - helped to design. However, the number of licence applications received has shown a steady decline and DEFRA are now inclined to end the scheme -

effectively banning release.

BOT was recently consulted and we have produced a new report recommending that licensing should continue with some amendments (see below). We await developments and would be interested to receive your comments. ✍

2001 Reintroduction Report

In September the Trust produced its second Reintroduction Report. The report reviews Barn Owl Trust releases that took place between 1986 and 1992 and examines the subsequent nesting success and long-term survival of released birds.

We released a total of 223 captive-bred Barn Owls on 56 occasions from 41 sites, mostly in Devon. Two different release methods were used. The Long Term release involves confining a pair of adult Barn Owls in a suitably adapted building for a period of months and allowing them to breed. When the owlets are four weeks old the adult pair is released and supplementary feeding is continued for a period of months. The Young Clutch method involves the placement of a brood of owlets in a nestbox within the building at approximately five weeks old. These are fed for a period of months, no adult birds are present, and the brood is not confined. Young Barn Owls start to fledge at approximately eight weeks of age.

All released birds were marked with British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) identification rings and during the following nine years some extremely long duration ring recoveries were recorded. The recoveries of released birds (and those within subsequent broods at release sites) were compared with the recoveries arising from 173 wild Barn Owls ringed during the same period in the same area.

The proportion of BTO ring-recoveries from captive-bred birds released as owlets was very similar to that of wild owlets. Likewise, the recovery distances, durations and finding circumstances were similar. Road casualties accounted for the highest proportion of owl recoveries amongst both wild and released birds.

The recovery pattern of birds released as adults was very different from the other groups. A higher proportion was found dead close to the release site soon after release. Thus, compared to owlets, released adults had a higher initial recovery rate, a much lower average duration, and a much lower average recovery distance. Starvation accounted for a higher proportion of released adult recoveries but fewer adults were recovered as a result of road accidents (probably because most of them didn't travel far enough to discover fast roads).

Some of the birds from release sites survived for many years. Controls (ringed birds found alive) during routine fieldwork included one at eight years old and one at ten years - the current British (published) record for the longest lived Barn Owl found alive and well.

At most release sites the amount of food taken was almost nil by 100 days after release but a quarter of all releases resulted in release site occupation by Barn Owls in the following year. Young clutch releases did not normally result in the

establishment of a nesting pair at the release site. However, one-in-four long term releases produced subsequent broods.

The use of release as an incentive for habitat improvement is discussed in the report. Some potential release sites were not used because wild birds moved in after habitat improvements were made, making release unnecessary.

Due to the relatively low number of release sites that became established wild sites, the report suggests that the greatest benefit is in the number of birds that disperse away from release sites to establish themselves elsewhere and integrate with the remaining wild population. Examples are given of released birds that dispersed away from release sites, survived for many years, and bred with birds of wild origin. The provision of supplementary feeding has been shown to greatly increase post-release productivity.

Although the release period (1986-1992) preceded the release licensing system, the releases followed the two methods that were later outlined in the government's release guidelines. Thus, this report is unique in its ability to gauge the long-term results of the licensed releases that commenced in 1993.

The report includes a number of recommendations for the continued administration of the release scheme. Copies are available from the Trust, price £5.00.

Mark Green

Owl Update

Wednesday 25th September - health check day. This year my pleas were answered and it was decided that the annual health checks could take place three months earlier to avoid the inclement weather. Needless to say it rained all day - it was quite warm rain though!

A team of four: Paula and Mark, Sonia and myself, strode purposefully out at about ten o'clock to face the day ahead. We decided that Mark should be the catcher. Due to his quick reactions and martial arts training Mark manages to catch up the birds extremely efficiently. Perhaps I should mention here that no birds are harmed during this process - unfortunately the same cannot be said for Mark who becomes more and more bedraggled and mucky as the day progresses.

Paula seems to have perfected the other arts of worming, spraying and clipping beaks and talons, whilst Sonia and I share out the rest of the jobs - holding birds, notetaking and generally assisting.

At around four o'clock and about fifty birds later, the job was complete and all birds were found to be OK with the exception of one sore foot, belonging to a captive bred Barn Owl called Winterbourne. She is now in the hospital aviary for treatment and closer monitoring.

At the moment many of our birds are in temporary accommodation whilst maintenance work is being carried out on a couple of the aviaries. Much of the wood is being replaced and Spike can often be seen wielding a brush and hammer. The faint smell of creosote wafting into the office is as much from Spike as from the aviaries themselves. Fortunately everyone will be back in their usual homes before very long.

Over the last six months we have had our normal intake of wild and captive bred birds; some we have been able to return to health and release and others have become permanent residents in our

sanctuary. We received three young Tawny Owlets in early summer which had become separated from the parent birds and these we continued to raise with as little human contact as possible until such time as they were old enough to be able to fend for themselves. In August, after being ringed, the youngsters were re-introduced to the big wild world to take their chances with our best wishes.

like myself, who scuttled into dark corners and hoped they wouldn't be noticed, and others, like David and Paula, who seemed to have a natural affinity with the camera and appeared perfectly at ease with all the paraphernalia that makes up a film crew. The owls were also quite relaxed about the whole process.

If you don't live too far away and want to get more involved we are still



Photo: Sonia Seldon

We could not miss this photo opportunity - one of the Tawny Owlets used to take a rest during the afternoon and could be seen lying down on top of the nestbox. I was quite worried when I first saw it doing this, but it's apparently not unusual although they are normally tucked away out of sight.

In July Jenny Ford, one of our very committed volunteers, went out with David and Frances on a ringing expedition and was rewarded with the opportunity of actually holding a wild owlet whilst it was being ringed. Jenny brought extra cakes and biscuits in to work the next week and is still talking about the experience.

I think one of the other memorable periods during the last six months was the filming done by *Pet Rescue* which was broadcast in September. It was a fairly strange experience for all of us - I think the staff divided fairly equally into two camps: those,

looking for volunteer aviary cleaners to alternate with Divina and Kathy. If you can manage to give us half a day a month we will provide training, waterproofs and coffee.

Sandra Reardon



*Jenny meets a Barn Owlet
Photo: Frances Ramsden*

From Boxes to Barn Owls

Carol and Geoff Heal first contacted the Trust in September 1993 and later that year attended a nestbox workshop held in Hartland. By the summer of '94 they'd put up their box and made a second one.



Geoff and Carol at Hartland Nestbox Workshop 1993. Photo: Frances Ramsden

Since then they've had occasional sightings near their home and in June this year Carol rang to say they had Barn Owls nesting in their box and they'd like a visit. Unfortunately due to FMD restrictions we had to say we couldn't go. Then on a Saturday in early July when we had already ventured into the restricted

area to deal with a live bird emergency (not on a farm), we received a call from Geoff to say they had found an owlet out of the nest and could we come. Because we were carrying our disinfectant spray and because visiting the site didn't involve crossing any farmland we agreed.

We arrived and checked the owlet over. It was slightly thin but otherwise quite healthy so we fed it, BTO ringed it and put it back in the box. Geoff had reported that there were other owlets in the box and this wasn't the first time one had fallen out. He also didn't think this was the one that had come out before and thought there might be three or four.

When we inspected the box we found not three, not even four, but five more owlets making a brood of six in total - the largest brood we found in 2001. We think they were falling out because the adults were having a problem finding enough food for such a large family. They'd need to catch about 32 small mammals a night to feed a family of that size.

We suggested they make some modifications to the nestbox in the autumn and left food for Geoff to supplement what the adults were providing. Carol has recently written to say "All six chicks have been reared successfully and have finally

flown the nest after a very noisy few weeks. Thank you very much for helping us out".

Although it took almost eight years from attending the nestbox workshop to having breeding Barn Owls in their box we're sure that Geoff and Carol will agree that it was a really worthwhile thing to do.

If you would like to attend a one day workshop we have two coming up. One in Gloucester on 10th November with the county Wildlife Trust and the Hawk and Owl Trust and another in Dorchester on 9th February 2002 with Dorset County Council.

Do contact us for details and a booking form. We look forward to meeting you. ✍

CRow

This year did bring some good news for conservationists - legislation increased the protection afforded to Barn Owls and other Schedule 1 birds. Up until now, the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) has made it an offence to intentionally disturb any wild bird listed in Schedule 1 whilst it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young.

Now a new piece of legislation has come into action - the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRow) Act (2000). This strengthens the existing legislation by adding a new offence of recklessly disturbing these birds. This helps close a loop hole where someone could claim the disturbance was accidental. This Act means that they should have checked first.

Also, Barn Owls may benefit from the new powers provided for conservation agencies to protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and where Barn Owls are a notified special interest feature. As well as increased penalties for deliberate damage to SSSI's, there is a new general offence to apply to damage by any person. ✍



Geoff and son William with SCO David Ramsden and the brood of six owlets Photo: Frances Ramsden

Misconceptions and Musings

Popular Misconceptions

A regular Feedback feature where we explode the myths that surround this beautiful bird.

No. 4

"There's plenty of food for Barn Owls here – we've got rabbits in every field" – wrong!

Since rabbits were introduced to Roman Britain, our native predators have gobbled up millions of them. Buzzards and foxes are both big and strong enough to take bunnies of all sizes and to some extent the number of rabbits available determines the numbers of these predators. An average wild rabbit weighs in at 1,400 to 2,000 grams whereas a typical Barn Owl is a mere 350 grams! Even a three to six week-old rabbit weighs almost as much as a Barn Owl.

There is little doubt that rabbits are available to Barn Owls and it's

possible that an inexperienced juvenile might try to take one only to be given a rough ride and probably shaken off. If a Barn Owl did manage to kill an animal that was too heavy to fly off with, it would have to stay on the ground for a long time dealing with it and would then be vulnerable to predation itself.

A recent pellet analysis study of 17,352 Barn Owl prey items found only one rabbit!

Barn Owls' preferred habitat is long rough grass and they specialise in the capture of small mammals (averaging 20 grams). Where rabbits graze, the grass becomes very short indeed and field voles (the Barn Owl's main prey) are few and far between. No, the presence of rabbits is not going to encourage Barn Owls — in fact, the reverse may be true. To some extent the presence of rabbits is probably a bad thing for Barn Owls. ✍

No, after you

Barn Owls have the politest children. Instead of badgering their parents and fighting over the next meal, chicks negotiate with each other so the hungriest can eat first.

Most scientists have assumed that nestlings cry out purely to attract the attention of their parents. But in many bird species, chicks call all night, even when parents aren't around. Zoologist Alexandre Roulin wondered whether these nestlings are actually communicating with each other.

So Roulin, of the University of Bern, Switzerland, and his colleagues chose two siblings at random from broods of Barn Owls and gave one of the chicks dead mice to eat during the day. They found that the hungry nestling cried far more often during the following night than the chick that had eaten. But once the hungry chick had been fed, its sibling started to beg more.

In another experiment, he found that the more siblings there were in a nest, the less the chicks called out. It's not what you'd expect if the chicks were all trying to shout each other down.

The team think the chicks don't beg when they only have a small chance of getting the food. 'If one nestling is more hungry than the other, the value of the food for it is higher,' explains Roulin. 'A hungry nestling will fight physically for the prey.'

In this scenario, he says, it's not worthwhile for the less hungry nestling to compete for the food it is unlikely to win. So instead, the chicks monitor each other's hunger levels by the intensity of each other's cries. The upshot of these negotiations is that the less hungry birds back down, electing to save energy and await their turn.

Boxes by Mail

People often ask us where they can buy Barn Owl nestboxes. Here are the details of three different companies that make nestboxes and sell by mail order.

Bird Box Company

E-mail: enquiries@thebirdbox.com
Supply a range of boxes for birds and bats. Their boxes come with tiny cameras built in, so you can bird-watch live on your TV or computer.

Birdscape

2 Fore Street, Kenton, Devon EX6 8LD
(01626) 891213

Produce boxes for various birds and many different species of animals, too.

Kingslake Resources Ltd.

Bolton Farm, Lynton, Kington,
Herefordshire HR5 3JY (01544) 340657
The instructions are very good, full of encouragement and good advice.

When you buy via mail order there's no sawing, no dust, no hammering, no blood — it's a great way to get hold of a nestbox. These companies cannot, of course, come and put boxes up. But we do have a leaflet — number 45 — that offers useful advice on erecting your box. ✍



Photo: Kevin Keatley

Becky Kilner, a zoologist at Cambridge University, says the work is an interesting new approach. 'Nobody has really looked before at the situation of nestlings communicating in the absence of the parents,' she says. She wonders whether the chicks of other species behave in the same way.

Joanna Marchant

Taken from *New Scientist* - 3/2000

Around and About

Around and about is a regular Feedback feature taking a look at Barn Owl conservation carried out by individuals around the UK. This time we cross the water and hear from Gary Wilkinson, Honorary Treasurer of the Northern Ireland Ornithological Club.



Brief History of the Barn Owl in Ulster

Thompson's *Birds of Ireland* at the beginning of the 20th century listed the Barn Owl as widespread throughout Ireland including Ulster. Douglas Deane our late vice chairman and former curator of the Ulster Museum wrote in 1954 that *Tyto alba alba* is a resident in every county of Ulster even inland cliffs of the Mourne Mountains in Co. Down. It was the commonest owl then, now replaced by our only other resident owl, the Long Eared. A national survey between 1982 and 1985 conducted by Shawyer et al., estimated that the total Irish population was between 600-900 pairs but already absent from three counties in the Republic. In 1994 and up to 1998 we co-ordinated the HOT/BTO survey for Northern Ireland and of the thirty tetrads allocated there were no records in any year. However it is not all doom and gloom. I record all Barn Owl sightings for Ulster and estimate that probably the Barn Owl is absent from two of the six counties. It still holds on in small localised areas especially in Co. Down - the population is under fifty pairs.

NIOC Barn Owl nestbox scheme

In 1993 Tom McClelland, a club member, invited me to survey his farm near Lough Neagh in Co Antrim. He was particularly interested

in any raptors both diurnal and nocturnal. We surveyed the farm on Sunday and recorded Kestrel, Sparrowhawk and Buzzard during the day and after tea on the farm recorded Long Eared Owls along with the resident bat species, Pipistrelle, Leisler's and Dubenton's. As we were about to leave the screech of a Barn Owl could be heard close by and five minutes later two of our party had a brief glimpse of a Barn Owl flying over the river. Tom was thus enthused to erect a nestbox and he phoned me two weeks later to discuss his idea. He asked me to get in touch with Tennant Textile Colours of Belfast to see if they had any old dye barrels, ideal for weatherproof nestboxes and used in South West Scotland by the Forest Enterprise there. I arranged a meeting and during talks was offered 24 barrels free of charge. As I was leaving the manager asked me for a delivery address and they would deliver for us as well. I asked Tom and he agreed to store at his farm, little realising what was to befall him. Four days later a truck pulled up at the farm and delivered 200 barrels in Tom's backyard. We then approached D.O.E.NI. for a grant to purchase tools and strapping with strapping tensioner for nestbox erection and were granted nearly £400.

Since then NIOC volunteers have erected nearly 70 nestboxes using the criteria of: a) a history of Barn Owls in the area, b) lack of suitable nest sites in the area, c) recent sightings of Barn Owls, d) suitable habitat and adequate food supplies in the area, e) where possible could the site link up other sites and with existing wild pairs to create viable populations.

Our success rate is hard to gauge although we estimate an increase in population from under 30 pairs pre-1992 to nearly 50 pairs present day.

We combine this scheme with an education

programme. We purchased BOT 'Wings of Change' school pack and with an injured wild owl called Barney from Co. Londonderry we visited primary schools throughout Northern Ireland. We gave lectures in the evenings to interested adult groups stressing a general farmland environmental approach, as 80% of Ulster is farmland.

The Northern Ireland Ornithologists' Club operates a number of surveys in the province as well as partaking in other national surveys. We presently survey Yellowhammers in Co. Down and have two winter feeding sites sponsored by CJ Wildbird Foods. We also survey the Wood Warbler in Ulster, a rare breeder in two counties. We hope to take part in the Long Eared Owl survey in the UK and together with the NI Raptor Study Group keep an eye on our recent colonist the Short Eared Owl and other diurnal raptors including Hen Harriers and Merlins.

Other interesting facts about our Barn Owls are their prey items. We have no voles in Ulster and have only house and wood mice. Our only shrew is the pygmy. Our Barn Owls seem duller in coloration compared to Scottish birds that occasionally cross the 16 mile sea barrier. There are no release or captive bred schemes allowed in Ulster while a wild population still exists.

Charles Gary Wilkinson
Co. Down



NIOC volunteers Sandy McWilliams, Des Price and George Sheridan with site owner Laine Turner

Focus on Friends

Barbara Webb is both a friend and a Friend of the Trust. In fact, she's the Friend who looks after all the other Friends.

A long-standing volunteer, she lives in a converted barn on the edge of Dartmoor with her husband David.



Photo: Sonia Seldon

She first came across the Trust at a fundraising jumble sale. Then later she attended a talk and put their property forward as a potential release site. Barn Owls were released at Lakemoor in 1988. Barbara said "We sat in the field and watched them fly around the house – it was amazing".

Originally from Kent, Barbara worked for Lloyds Bank and the Inland Revenue before taking early retirement. David, a motor racing fanatic, used to drive for the Williams Formula One team - trucks, not racing cars.

After retiring in 1997, Barbara looked around for voluntary work and offered her services to the Trust. She took on responsibility for the

distribution of legacy leaflets to solicitors across the UK. Later she became involved with the Friends scheme and has been running it for a couple of years. She deals with the administration and the Gift Aid and sends out the reminders and the thank yous. Whenever she has time she also helps out at shows and events.

Barbara looks forward to coming to Waterleat and misses it when she's away: "This is a job I want to do rather than a job I have to do." David has also helped out and done everything from dismantling old caravans to transporting casualty birds.

Barbara's other hobbies include the local twinning association and helping to run her village hall. Confirmed Francophiles, the pair regularly spend time at their house in central France. ✍

The Grizzly

Sarah has been the BOT's Honorary Treasurer since 1996 and this year has taken on a serious challenge to raise funds for the Trust.

Last year I entered for a race called The Grizzly, which I was going to do as a sponsored event for the Barn Owl Trust & another charity. Unfortunately a broken foot got in the way.

However I am pleased (?) to say that I entered this year to raise money for the Barn Owl Trust and St Loye's Foundation where I work. The Grizzly is a 'multi terrain' race between 17 & 20 miles long and it will take place on 21st October 2001. The organisers don't announce the length of the course until the day of the event. It starts in Seaton on the sea front and the first stretch is usually along the pebble beach. The course goes up and down the cliffs past Branscombe Mouth. It takes in further lengths of the pebble beach, it goes through mud, streams and up hill and down dale, and is generally considered to be at least as tough as a marathon.

It has achieved something of a cult status, and you have to enter within a couple of weeks of entry forms becoming available to get a place, so I was quite lucky to get in!

I have done the race once before about 8 years ago. That year it was 15 miles long. Another feature of the race has been that it gets longer each year. That time I won a prize.... as the last finisher.

This time as well as looking for sponsorship I'm asking for a little extra as an incentive for not coming in last. So if you'd like to encourage me and support the Barn Owl Trust and St Loye's Foundation, please make your donation payable to the Trust and mark Grizzly on the envelope – thank you.

Sarah Tadd



Thanks and Things

Thank you to everyone who has supported us since the last issue of Feedback. Our Friends, donors, volunteers and staff all play an important role in the Trust, so please accept a heartfelt thank you.

For items on our wants list we are very grateful to Alistair Mclay and Emmeline Emmett for computer components, Christine Mercer and Don Woodman for video cameras, B&Q for wood and Trudy Turrell for letter trays. The conservation team would like to thank BACO for the aluminium tube they supplied and Spike is particularly grateful to Diana Young and Pat and Jenny Ford for the G clamps. Pat and Jenny have also donated a saw, numerous

packets of biscuits, cakes and various other goodies. Thank you too to our anonymous donor who has sent us two more donations since the last newsletter, £75 and £40.

We would be really pleased to receive any of the following items, either new or recycled. If they're lying around unused at home we could certainly put them to good use. If you feel you can help or if you have any queries please phone the office.

We are looking for:

- New postage stamps
- Lightweight (tough plastic) wheelbarrow
- Fence post driver *more*

important than ever now with the new project

- Small over-sink electric water heater
- Big rechargeable torches
- Cardboard pet carriers
- D size batteries
- Towels – not frayed - *for casualties*
- Office sundries – ink cartridges etc. *please talk to Judy to find out just what we need*
- Office shredder *so we can turn our waste paper into animal bedding*
- Used Nokia mobile phone (*without sim card*) with good rechargeable battery

Tail Piece



The images of destruction when the World Trade Centre was destroyed in September reached around the globe and into our homes.

Reminiscent of a high budget movie, we saw the events of the 11th unfold in a totally unprecedented way - the world was shaken just as the terrorists intended.

The repercussions of the attacks will be felt for the rest of our lifetimes - the loss of life, of family, friends and colleagues, the trauma of survivors and rescue workers, the effect on businesses, insurance, air travel and of course the fear terrorists could strike anywhere and that anyone could be affected. There is as well the very real concern about what will happen next, will the quest for justice bring about war, will it, as seems likely, escalate and what will the consequences be?

In this age of instant communication, fast travel and global surplus, we humans have the potential to minimise suffering and starvation as never before. It appears however that too many people with power are more interested in control than compassion. Instead of working out a way to appreciate each other's differences and live and work

together harmoniously they seem to feel that their perspective is the only right one. When people use violence to impose those views, as on September 11th, innocent people suffer and die. If you look back through history there is a trail of bloodshed, of people destroying others to impose their views. With our technology we now have the potential to create greater destruction than ever before.

It seems completely logical that (whatever our beliefs) we should want to protect ourselves, our families and our homes. In order to do this we all need to consider that planet Earth is our home and supports all life. Whatever our religion (or not as the case may be) it cannot be right to wreak destruction on our life support system or the other people and creatures that share it. As a species human beings should be working together to solve problems rather than create or exacerbate them. Rather than constantly striving for more we would be happier if we learnt to appreciate what we have and to make the most of every day.

A greater understanding of the importance of diversity, both of views

and living things, alongside more tolerance and compassion would help our planet to be a healthier and happier place. A collective awareness of how we connect with each other and the natural world would go a long way towards ensuring that we leave a healthy legacy for future generations.

Here at the BOT we are working to conserve the Barn Owl and its environment. The recent outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease has highlighted for us, and for everyone in rural communities, how unexpectedly we can all be affected by events and how suddenly things can change. We can never predict what's coming next so it is really important to appreciate the here and now. As someone famously once said, "We should live every day as if it's our last but treat the earth as if we'll live forever".

Thank you for supporting the Trust. We hope you enjoyed reading this issue of Feedback and that it will encourage you to do your bit for our planet

– Together we can make a world of difference ✍