



Feedback 1989.

REGISTERED CHARITY No. 299 835.

Issue number 4.



This is recycled paper.

The Barn Owl Trust, Waterleat, Ashburton, Devon. TQ13 7HU.

Telephone Ashburton (0364) 53026.

WELCOME to the fourth annual "feedback". In July 1988 The Devon Barn Owl Breeding and Release Scheme became The Barn Owl Trust .

The Trust became a Registered Charity to ensure the continuation and expansion of the work of the DBOBRS. Since becoming established as a Charity the Trust has had a steady trickle of donations and some fund-raising events and has, for the first time, become self financing. The Trust now needs to find funding / sponsorship to employ an officer. At present all the Trusts work is done by volunteers. If anyone can help with this please contact us. 1989 is make or break year for the Trust which has two voluntary full-time workers until April 1990.



VOLUNTEERS.

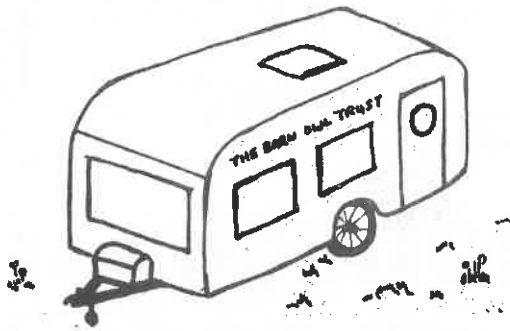
Volunteers are needed to help at Barn Owl Trust flag days, to assist with mailings and paperwork, to raise funds for the Trust, to construct and erect nest boxes. If you feel you would like to help with any of these or the 101 other things that need to be done please give us a ring. We would love to hear from you.



TELEPHONE.

The Barn Owl Trust can now be found through directory enquiries, in March 1989 the Trust had its own telephone line installed with an answering machine, terrible things to talk to but extremely useful in this line of work.

WANTED. A CARAVAN.



The Trust is looking for a caravan, (between 9 and 16 feet) for use both at released and wild Barn Owl sites when monitoring, and as an information base at conservation events where the Trust is present. If anyone can help out with the donation of a second hand caravan in good condition or knows of one for sale very cheaply we should be pleased to hear from them as soon as possible.

THANKS.

It is usual for us to include in our annual newsletter a list of people we specifically wish to thank for their support, there are now so many special people worthy of thanks that to list each individual would not be practical, we therefore send heartfelt thanks to everyone who has helped us with the work of the Trust and given us support, emotional, physical or financial over the past year...THANK YOU...THANKYOU...THANK YOU..... We couldn't have done it without you.

Simon Laity. J2W.
Buckfastleigh C.P. School.



The owl comes out at night when we are in bed sleeping. When owls are flying they don't make a sound because when they are hunting they can hear the prey coming.

BARN OWL TRUST AGM.

On Friday 8th September 1989, the first Barn Owl Trust AGM will be held in The St Johns Ambulance hall, Ashburton, Devon at 8.p.m. We are planning to make this event a social and fund raising event too, with a grand draw and the auction of an original, framed pencil drawing of a Barn Owl by local wildlife artist Andrew Miller. After the business of the evening has been attended to, refreshments will be available and David will give a slide show and talk about the work of the Trust. If you would like to receive details of this meeting or to attend, please send a SAE marked AGM to The Barn Owl Trust.

OUT AND ABOUT.

The Barn Owl Trust is often asked to attend (and provide information on Barn Owls) at fairs, shows and conservation events. When these can be fitted in amongst other activities, we go along with our Barn Owl Trust display board and our information and talk to the public about Barn Owls and Conservation. We have recently attended two events and will be at the Devon Wildlife Trust "Garden Party" in Exeter on Saturday June 17th and at the National Trust Rural Craft Fair at Killerton House from 21st-23rd July.

REMEMBERING.

On 23rd December 1988 our friend Eric Worsley who bought our landrover for us died. We are sure that Eric would have been pleased to see how the Trust is developing and how useful his gift has been to our work. Rest in Peace Eric.

THE WORK OF THE TRUST.

The Barn Owl Trust is a registered Charity. The aims of the Trust are, "to conserve the Barn Owl and its Environment". In order to achieve these aims the Trust undertakes the following:-

INFORMATION.

To provide a free information service nationally, by both post and telephone we answer queries and advise on Barn Owl related topics. (The Barn Owl Trust is the only national organisation providing a comprehensive range of information leaflets on all aspects of Barn Owl conservation, these include barn conversions - provisions for owls, nest boxes, habitat, re-introduction techniques and pitfalls.)

RE-INTRODUCTION.

To execute a carefully planned and monitored re-introduction programme locally where appropriate, and nationally to provide advice and information for groups and individuals already releasing captive Barn Owls. To encourage the adoption of release methods which take account of habitat requirements, safeguard WILD Barn Owls and give RELEASED Barn Owls the best chance of survival.

LIAISON.

To liaise with other conservation organisations, groups and bodies in the pursuit of the Trust aims, and to provide these organisations etc. with specific Barn Owl information and advice when required.

RECORDING.

To collect and record reports of Barn Owl sightings and nest sites, past and present in Devon and surrounding area. This is in order to build up a comprehensive picture of Barn Owl population fluctuations in the survey area and to identify the remaining Barn Owl sites in order to protect and preserve them.



EDUCATION.

To create "tailored" information on Barn Owl conservation for different groups e.g. schools, educational bodies etc.

CAMPAIGNING.

The Trust campaigns for and advises on, the conservation and creation of good Barn Owl habitat and provision of nest boxes. To achieve this the Trust visits on request, farmers and landowners to increase awareness of the effects of intensive farming on both the Barn Owl and other forms of wildlife.

TALKING.

The Trust talks to groups and societies and illustrates the close links between the Barn Owl and Man and the environmental consequences of everyday human activities. The Trust also visits schools to educate on the changes in the countryside and the effects on Barn Owls.

RECYCLING.

The Trust operates its own local newspaper recycling scheme and encourages the use of bottle banks, stamp and silver paper collections, organic produce and other "environmentally friendly" schemes and ideas.

NO MEMBERSHIP.

The Trust does not operate a membership, preferring to direct its resources into practical conservation work, it does however produce an annual mailing, "Feedback" which keeps interested groups and individuals in touch with events. This is it !

CONSULTANCY

We have been called out several times to give advice on Wild Barn Owl sites which are either falling down or due to be converted. Neighbours, developers, owners and planning committees have all requested help. It is heartening to know that some people are concerned enough to seek advice in these cases. We have conducted site visits where appropriate and sent out our leaflet number 22, Barn Conversions - Provisions for Owls.

RELEASES.

The past year has been a very busy one for the Trust. We released 54 Barn Owls from 10 sites in 1988. This brings the total number of Owls bred and released by the Trust since 1985 to 164. Release sites planned for 1989 include Cullumpton, Ashburton, Ipplepen, Honiton, Woodbury Salterton, Trusham, Sidmouth, Coombinteignhead and Yealmpton. Although we are visiting more potential release sites than ever before we still have a waiting list in excess of 60 sites. If you are one of these people, we haven't forgotten you, please put up your nest box, conduct your "local Barn Owl survey", where possible make habitat improvements and we will get to you as soon as we can. In the mean time it is possible a wild Barn Owl passing through may decide to stay, this has happened at some sites.



BARN OWL TRUST CARDS.

This design by Andrew Miller printed on blue card is left blank inside for your own message. Each card costs 50p inclusive of postage. 5 for £2 inclusive of postage and greater savings on larger orders.

RELEASE SITE ROUNDUP.

At our 1986 release site near Modbury the Owls are on eggs again, having bred successfully here six times in three years they have had 21 owlets fledged.

Disaster struck at our Yelverton release site in February 1989 when the female Barn Owl, released there in 1986, was shot.... She was found just a mile from her barn, operated on at the Veterinary Hospital in Plymouth and an air gun pellet removed from her right wing. She has convalesced with Joanna Vinson but is never going to fly well enough to be re-released, this is particularly disappointing as she and her mate (a wild male Barn Owl) had bred each year since her release in 1986.

The pair of Barn Owls released at Dunsford in 1987 are breeding in the release site for the third consecutive year, we rung two owlets there in early May.

At South Brent we released a pair of Owls in 1987 with three owlets in their nest. Barn Owls are still being seen in the area. Unfortunately the original release site is being converted, the Trust is advising on the adaption of another building nearby for use by Barn Owls.

We used the young-clutch release method for three Owlets at Buckfast in 1987. One Owl is still in the area and is regularly seen hunting, this Owl has been 100% self sufficient since 1987.

In 1987 we released a pair of Owls from Woodland with one owlet in the nest, later that year the Owls bred again and produced a further five young.

In 1988 breeding occurred at a barn about a mile from the release site and we strongly suspect that these Owls are the released birds. One Barn Owl is still being seen occasionally at the release site.

At Throleigh in 1987 we released a pair of Barn Owls with two Owlets, all the Owls dispersed quite quickly but are still being seen at a site a mile away and visited the release site in 1988.

A young clutch release at Rattery in 1987 fledged four Owlets successfully, Barn Owls are still seen occasionally in the area, one was seen at the release site in November 88. Bicton 1988, a pair were released here with two Owlets in the nest. The female Barn Owl was hit by a car and injured shortly after release but latest news is that there are still Barn Owls using the release building.

At Holsworthy a pair of Owls were released with one Owlet, they both remained at the release site and reared another four Owlets. Barn Owls were last seen at this site during March 1989.

The pair of Barn Owls we released at Stoke Gabriel in 1988 reared four Owlets, Owls seen at site as recently as early March 1989.

The five sites where we undertook young clutch releases in 1988 all went pretty much as expected, with the Owls leaving the nest box as they learnt to fly and returning for food until they became proficient hunters. There have been Barn Owls seen within short distances of two of these sites, Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, this year. Two of the long-term release sites failed to breed last year, we put another pair of Owls into one and are waiting for them to breed and be released this year. At the other site we released several adult Owls using a release method we had heard about but not previously tried.

The practice of releasing captive-bred Barn Owls has become quite controversial during the past year. Some criticism has been voiced (in many cases, quite justified criticism) which is only to be expected in view of the fact that many Barn Owls are simply "let go". Very short

term release methods are also unsatisfactory and show an unacceptably high mortality rate. Of the 164 Barn Owls we have released with BTO rings on, we have received ring returns and reports of recoveries on 23 to date, 19 dead and four injured, two of which were subsequently re-released. This shows that 11.6% of Barn Owls released by the Trust since 1985 have been recovered dead. Most of the dead birds had been hit by cars, one by a train and one died after flying down a chimney into an empty house, another one died of suspected secondary poisoning and one escaped prior to release, two were found dead in an emaciated condition having not returned to the release site for food after release. To put these figures in perspective we can compare them to a totally wild Barn Owl site in West Sussex where 31 Owlets have been rung over a 13 year period. There have been 6 ring returns from this site (all dead) this is 19% of the total number of Owls rung. Although it is not possible to draw a direct comparison because of differences in habitat and human population numbers, these figures show that Barn Owls released by the Trust can survive as well as truly WILD Barn Owls. The Barn Owl Trust intends to publish a paper showing a complete breakdown of our release results later in 1989.



NETWORKING.

In November 1988 we attended the 1st Barn Owl Conservation Network meeting for the south west of the country. Colin Shawyer author of the book "The Barn Owl in the British Isles its past, present and future", and co-ordinator of the 1983-86 National Barn Owl survey is the director of the BOCN. Colin has said that "he has enormous respect for the work of The Barn Owl Trust" and on the subject of re-introduction that "the Trusts success rate "is far higher than most". Inspired by this and horrified by tales of people "releasing" Barn Owls by letting them out of a basket in the middle of a field in daylight and "freeing" them from cars along the edges of motorways (all of which give the practice of breeding and release a bad name), the Trust has produced a range of 24 information leaflets covering all aspects of Barn Owl Conservation. These leaflets were "launched" on 1st March 1989 with the encouragement and support of Colin Shawyer and the invaluable assistance of Keith Grant, our BTO ringer and his word processor. These leaflets are now going out all over Britain, every County Wildlife Trust and Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group has a list of the leaflets and they have been advertised nationally. These leaflets are available free from The Barn Owl Trust. Please send an SAE and list numbers required.

1. Habitat for Barn Owls.
2. Rough Grassland Management.
3. Indoor Nest box Design.
4. Outdoor Nest box Design.
5. The "WANTED" Poster.
6. Why Release Barn Owls?
7. Captive Owl - Wild Owl; Acknowledge the difference.
8. A Local Barn Owl Survey.
9. Release Site Selection.
10. Release Site Preparation.
11. The Long Term Release.
12. The Barn Aviary.

13. Feeding Barn Owls.
14. Breeding in Captivity.
15. Ringing Barn Owls.
16. Release Night Procedure.
17. The Young Clutch Release.
18. Post release Care.
19. Post Release Record Form.
20. Pellet Analysis.
21. Rat Poisons and Other Hazards.
22. Barn Conversions - Provisions for Owls.
23. Sexing Barn Owls.
24. Further reading.

There is now also a leaflet number 25, this is called The Barn Owl Trust and Children and is specifically for teachers and youth group leaders in Devon, this leaflet describes the Trust activities which are geared for children.



TALKS.

March 1988 saw the Trust branching out in a new direction with the first of many talks and slideshows given by David. The Rocombe Valley Action Group arranged the first talk entitled "Barn Owls - Restoring The Balance". The 80 slides show briefly how and why the Trust developed, the appearance and history of the Barn Owl, the main reasons for the decline of the species and possible conservation measures. Most talks have been given in Devon although in early May we visited Somerset to talk at the AGM of Somerset FWAG. The Trust charges a fee to cover expenses and asks for a minimum donation to the Trust of £10. Any one interested in either attending or arranging a talk should contact the Trust for more details.



OWLS. Luke Daly-Welsh aged 8.

Flying silently through the night
With powerful claws, catching mice
In the churchyard and as white as snow
Against the night sky.

COMPUTERS.

This year the Trust has been very lucky as two volunteers have helped us with their computers. Leslie Bill waded through a four year collection of Barn Owl sightings and has recently completed the mammoth task of transferring all of the data onto floppy disk. Keith Grant, our BTO ringer undertook the typesetting of our new leaflets, 25 of them, he proof read, corrected and typed them all. ***** The latest news on the computer front is amazing, the Trust has been given a computer system, on long-term loan, from British Telecom. This will enable us to use our Barn Owl sightings to build up an accurate picture of Devon's Barn Owl population and its fluctuations.***** Thanks to Leslie, Keith and BT's Michael Dunn, Roger Smith and Graham Atwell for all their help and to Gary in Totnes.

CERTIFICATE
of
ADOPTION

This is to Certify that



.....
has adopted a Barn Owl

Named..... King No.....
from
THE BARN OWL TRUST

from.....

for.....

Signed..... Dated.....



ADOPTION.

The Barn Owl Trust does not operate a membership as we prefer to direct our limited resources into practical conservation work. We have however started an adoption scheme for individual Barn Owls, further details of this are available on request. The Trust also has Barn Owl Trust badges for sale.

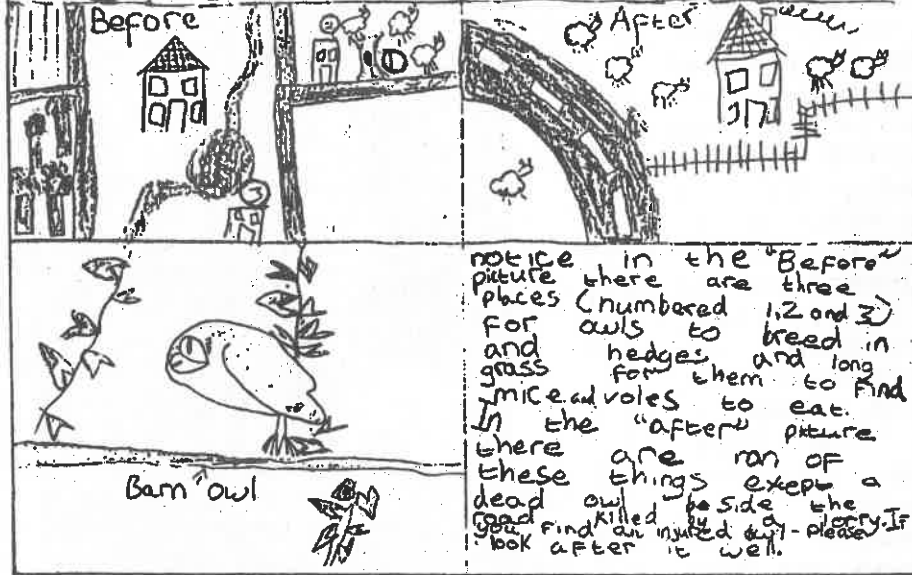


FUND RAISING.

The Trust held its first Flag days in 1988 with £162.10 being raised at Trago Mills in September, and in December £155.20. An amazing £243.46 was raised in Newton Abbot also in December, many thanks to the hardy collectors. Flag days for 1989 are:- May. Sunday 28th Trago Mills. June. Wednesday 7th Newton Abbot. July. Saturday 29th Ashburton. August. Friday 11th Teignmouth. October. Sunday 22nd Trago Mills (again). November. Wednesday 22nd Newton Abbot (again). These are major fund-raising events for the Trust so we would appreciate hearing from anyone who could spare an hour or two to help at any of these events.

The fourth annual Barn Owl Jumble Sale held in Ashburton on April 8th raised a staggering £245.71. Badge sales have now raised £33.50. We have some lovely photographs of Barn Owls which we would at some time like to have reproduced as colour posters to use for display and to raise funds for the Trust, at present the Trust does not have the funds to invest in this kind of enterprise but maybe someone out there knows a printer who is "into" Barn Owls?

STOP THIS

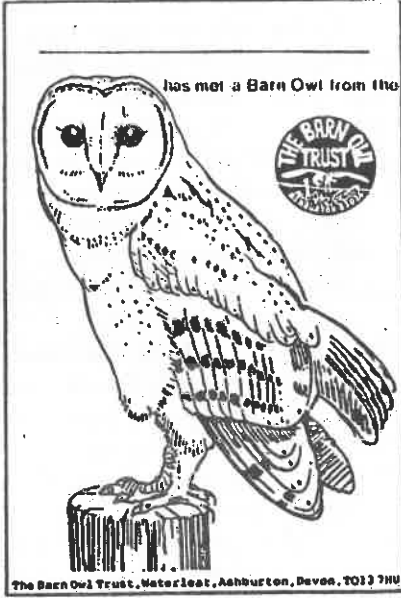


**THINK GLOBALLY
ACT LOCALLY.**



notice in the "Before" picture there are three places (numbered 1, 2 and 3) for owls to breed in and grass hedges and long grass for them to find mice and voles to eat. In the "after" picture there are none of these things except a dead owl beside the road. You find a dead owl killed by a car - please look after it well.

Lucy Maddox. J2W.
Buckfastleigh C.P. School.



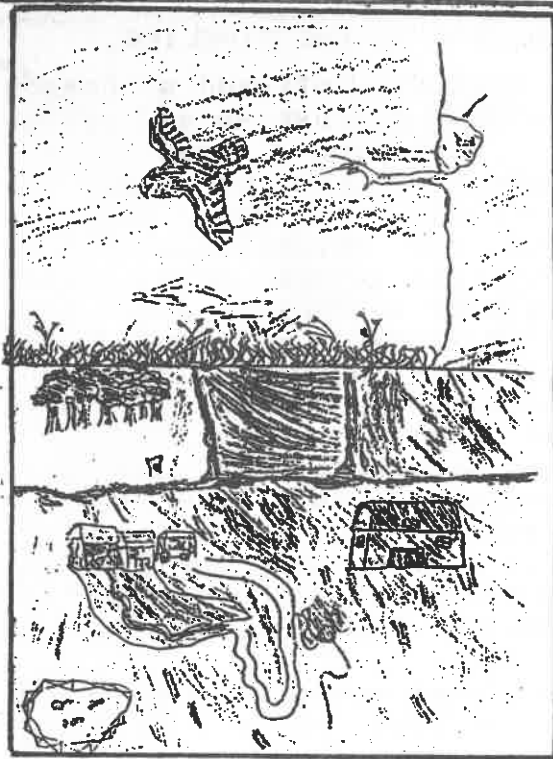
these include a picture competition, for which each participating child receives a certificate. The Trust also provides Barn Owl pellets and information on pellet analysis for children undertaking Barn Owl projects. Barn Owl Trust leaflet number 25 deals specifically with these activities.

SCHOOLS.

The Trust is often asked to visit schools and to talk to children about Barn Owls. We have developed a story telling technique in order to explain to children the effects of changes in the countryside on Barn Owls and other wildlife. We have a tame Owl "Moon", bred in 1988, she is licensed by the Department of the Environment and comes along with us to meet the children. We have "follow up" projects which the children can undertake after our visit,



Naomi Wheatley. Age 10.
Bude Junior School.



Phillip Barret. Class 8.
Bude Junior School.

Barn owls



Softly, softly through the air.

Living life without a care.

Long sharp talons on your feet.

Deadly to the mice you meet.

Sling along with the moon.

Catching something very soon.

This is an extract from a letter written to the President of the United States in 1855 by a Red Indian Chief.

How can you buy or sell the sky - the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. We do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water. How can you buy them from us? We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of the

land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on. He kidnaps the earth from his children. He does not care. His appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only desert.



Q: The barn owl is 34 cm tall.
A: large and white looking animal.
The owl is a nocturnal animal that means it comes out at night and sleeps all day.
After the owl has had its dinner it gets rid of a pellet and it makes a of bones.



Nicola K Heard. J2W.
Buckfastleigh C.P. School.



WATCH.



WATCH is a national club for young people who care about wildlife and the environment. In July WATCH in Devon will be joining with The Barn Owl Trust to launch a Barn Owl Poster competition for WATCH members. There will be details of the competition in the Devon WATCH magazine so if you are between 8 and 18 years old and a member of WATCH join in, if you are not a WATCH member and would like to find out more contact Tom Hills at The Devon Wildlife Trust. 35, New Bridge Street, Exeter or phone him on Exeter (0392) 79244.

COMMENT.

During the past year conservation and environmental problems have become "hot" political issues. Hardly a day passes without some mention in the media of an environmental threat or disaster. The last few months have seen the seal virus, oil spillages and a sinking nuclear submarine to name but a few.... It would seem that "Man" is at last becoming concerned about what is happening to his Earth! When faced with the environmental problems of the 20th century there is a tendency for one to feel overwhelmed and impotent, after all what can an individual, caring human being do about the ozone layer or the destruction of the tropical rain forests? It is however worth remembering that we are not powerless. Anything an individual can do whether planting a tree or cutting down your household waste will help to reduce the pressure on our eco-system. Almost all of our environmental problems are created by industry / big business, we the consumers buy the products of these companies, if we refuse to purchase products that contribute to environmental damage then things will change. YOU have a lot of power with the pound in your pocket, so try to spend wisely. The tropical rainforests are disappearing partly because we in the West buy the tropical hard woods and beefburgers they produce. Newspapers, stamps, silver foil, tin and aluminium cans can all be recycled. The Barn Owl Trust accepts securely tied bundles of newspaper for recycling. Using organically produced and biodegradable products is not only better for the environment, its good for your health too. Cutting down the amount of polystyrene, plastic and other inorganic products you buy will help your planet.

PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE.

We have been offered a nearby building for use as an office / reception area and "bird-room", (to be used for breeding Barn Owls and the care and rehabilitation of sick and injured Owls) With the ever increasing work load of the Trust a centre of this sort has become a necessity, funds are needed to refurbish and equip the building, we also need to find a builder / decorator to give us a favourable quote for the work. This centre would include the construction of a new aviary complex for use by injured birds.

The Trust would like to employ an officer on a full-time basis in 1990 to further advance the aims of the Trust and to co-ordinate volunteers.

BARN OWL TRUST BADGES.



50p each. Please send an SAE. to The Barn Owl Trust, Waterleat, Ashburton, Devon. TQ13 7HU.

One of the nicest thing about doing what we do, is meeting lots of lovely people. We feel very privileged to spend so much time with people who so obviously want to help to **RESTORE THE BALANCE**. Thank you all for all of your help.

David Ramsden

Frances Ramsden

David and Frances Ramsden
For The Barn Owl Trust.