



ISSUE NUMBER 5

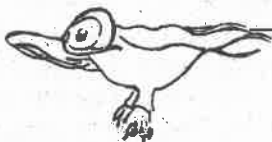
FEEDBACK 90/91

REGISTERED CHARITY No 299 835

THE BARN OWL TRUST, WATERLEAT, ASHBURTON, DEVON, TQ13 7HU TELEPHONE ASHBURTON (0364) 53026

Welcome to the fifth annual FEEDBACK and to the 1990's. The new decade brings great challenges and opportunities to the Barn Owl Trust and indeed to everyone involved in nature conservation. The 1980's saw increasing concern for environmental issues with the threats of ozone depletion, global warming, marine pollution and the destruction of the tropical rain forests making headlines. The decline of the Barn Owl, one of Britain's most popular birds, epitomizes a wide spectrum of conservation concerns. The Barn Owl Trust is actively involved in all aspects of Barn Owl conservation and uses the plight of the Barn Owl to draw attention to other conservation issues. We are a small national charity with a rapidly expanding work load and we need your help to continue our vital work. Further on in this newsletter are details of the Trust achievements during the past year, present activities and future goals - these can only be achieved with the help of people who care enough to give either time or money to support the Barn Owl Trust. Please help us to make the last decade of the 20th century a good one for Barn Owl conservation.

Frances Ramsden.



Sophie Whitley Biddell.
Blackpool Primary School.

Projects for the 90's

Projects for the 90's include the Trusts three year Barn Conversion Research Project, a Devon Barn Owl Survey in liaison with other conservation bodies and individuals. The completion of the Trusts new aviary and the replacement of our tawny owl release aviary are also important projects, as are funding an administrative assistant and obtaining a photocopier. The Trust is also looking for 2 garden sheds, minimum size 6' x 4' for storing newspapers and aluminium cans for recycling. A touring caravan is also wanted for use as information base at conservation events and for monitoring Barn Owls at both wild and release sites. We'd love to hear from anyone with any ideas.



The Trusts largest single donation to date, came from the sale of a beautiful Barn Owl oil painting. The painting, by well known artist Ian Nathan was auctioned by Triton Gallery of Torquay and raised £1,700. The picture was bought by a lady from the midlands.

Re-introduction Report 1986-88.

The Barn Owl Trust is the only organisation in the Country to provide detailed information on Barn Owl re-introduction and its hazards and pitfalls. Many of the large conservation bodies remain cynical about the value of Barn Owl re-introduction, given that there are 400+ groups and individuals in Britain engaged in this practice and an extremely high percentage of the Barn Owls released die shortly afterwards we don't find this attitude surprising. However the BOT believes that carefully controlled re-introduction in specially selected areas using a gradual method of release can work and be of benefit to the wild population. The Barn Owl Trust received national publicity in 1989 when it published the first ever Barn Owl re-introduction report. The report contained details of all the Barn Owls released by the Barn Owl Trust between 1986-88, with ring recovery statistics including distances and durations. The 140 Barn Owls in the report were directly compared with ringed wild Barn Owls in the county. Our thanks go to Heather Woodland and Jerry Tallwin for wild Barn Owl statistics. Copies of the report are available from the B.O.T. for £2.50 inc. p & p. THE BARN OWL TRUST DOES NOT ENCOURAGE THE WIDESPREAD OR INDISCRIMINATE USE OF RE-INTRODUCTION. WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT ANYONE INTENT ON TAKING THIS COURSE SHOULD SEEK ADVICE BEFORE OBTAINING LIVE BIRDS.

The Owl

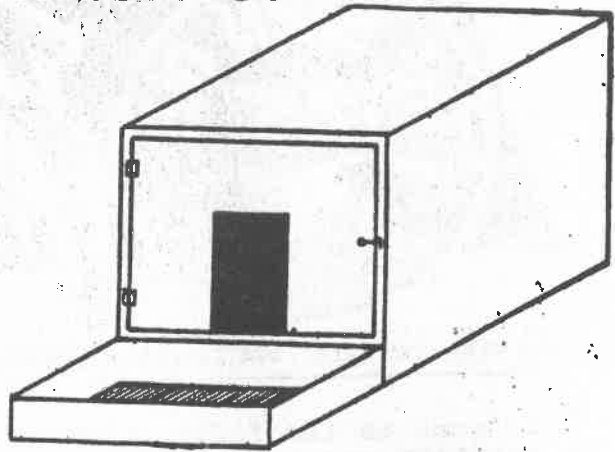
An owl in flight,
At the dead of night
Is the most magical thing to see:
With staring eyes,
He looks so wise
Now perching on a tree.

Whilst sitting there,
He begins to stare
Softly, noiseless in flight,
On a small mouse
He does pounce
and guides away into the night

By Sophie Whately Biddell
(Class 7)

Blackpool Primary School.

Nestboxes.



Almost anyone can construct a Barn Owl nestbox from a tea-chest. The Trust's leaflet number 3, "indoor nestbox design", describes the construction, siting and erection of this simple project which can provide an ideal breeding site for wild Barn Owls. In Devon the Trust holds a supply of tea-chests (more always welcome) for this purpose. Local volunteers are encouraged to make blanket provision of nestboxes in areas of good habitat, particularly in areas rife with barn conversions and / or modern barns, for example in Rattery Parish retired farmer Harry Jonas is visiting neighbours and erecting boxes for them with the support of the Trust.

ZOO Link.

In February 1988 The Barn Owl Trust delivered a breeding pair of Barn Owls to Paignton Zoo as part of a captive breeding programme. The pair have bred very successfully at the zoo with 5 young Owls being collected by the Barn Owl Trust in May 1988, 5 more in July 1988, another 5 in June 1989 and in September 1989 we collected another 4 Owlets from the zoo making a total of 19. 17 of these 19 Owlets have been released into the wild by the Barn Owl Trust in Devon using a gradual release method. All the release sites were carefully selected to ensure the local habitat was capable of supporting Barn Owls and that there were no wild Barn Owls already present. All of the Barn Owls were fitted with BTO (British Trust for Ornithology)

rings before release and were monitored by release volunteers.

The Paignton Zoo Barn Owls were released in the areas around Ashburton, Branscombe, Buckfastleigh, Colyton, Coombinteignhead, Woodbury and Yealmpton.

Of the 17 ringed Barn Owls bred at Paignton Zoo there has been one ring recovery. This Owl was a Road Traffic Accident victim found at Woodbury Common, approximately 5km. from the release site 258 days after ringing. It had survived as a free flying bird for eight and a half months before being hit by a car and killed.

Paignton Zoo is to host an exhibition of childrens pictures, from schools visited by the Barn Owl Trust, during September, October and November 1990. Please telephone the Zoo for further details on 0803-557479.



Charity of the Year.

Last year the Higher Teignmouth Womens Institute chose The Barn Owl Trust as its charity of the year and donated £82.50 to the Trust. This year The Wheel Craft Workshops at Chudleigh have asked the Trust to be their charity of the year. They are holding a display of Barn Owl Trust information until the end of 1990 which includes a Barn Owl nestbox (to show how useful old tea-chests can be), and a selection of children's pictures from schools visited by the Trust. David Ramsden from the Trust will be at the Wheel during the day on Sunday 12th August, come along if you have any Owly questions you would like to put to him. There will also be a talk entitled "Barn Owls - restoring the balance" held at the Wheel Craft Workshops on the evening of Sunday 21st October. Further details are available by telephoning 0626-853712.



AGM.

The first Barn Owl Trust AGM was held in Ashburton in September 1989 and attended by 50+ friends and supporters of the Trust. The meeting was chaired by Trustee Malcolm Goldby. The Treasurers report of the Trusts audited first year accounts showed an income to the Trust of £4873, the majority came from donations, and expenditure of £4065 leaving the Trust with a cash balance of £808 at the end of its first year. The annual report covered details of the Trusts free information service, re-introduction work and other Trust activities during the year, condensed versions of the report are available from the Trust (please send an SAE if you would like one). Refreshments were served, a draw held and a pencil Barn Owl sketch by wildlife artist Andrew Miller was auctioned raising £40 for Trust funds. The evening was finished off with an illustrated talk by David Ramsden on the Trusts work since conception. The second Barn Owl Trust AGM will be held in Ashburton on Friday 7th September further details available for anyone wishing to attend. ALL WELCOME.



Trenayne Wesley.
Dartington Primary School.

Barn Conversion Research Project.

In April 1990 the Barn Owl Trust started a three year BARN CONVERSION RESEARCH PROJECT in liaison with - the Devon Wildlife Trust, Dr. Paul Chanin of the University of Exeter, the Royal Institute of British Architects (South Western) and the Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society.

It has not yet been established exactly what part Barn Conversions have played in the disappearance of this beautiful bird from the British countryside. However there are many instances where Barn Owls have disappeared from sites where conversion work has been undertaken. Obviously the loss of so many traditional nesting and roosting sites will restrict the species ability to re-colonise if the population should begin to recover.

Nationally it is estimated that 65% of Barn Owl nest's are in buildings (Shawyer 87), however in Devon the percentage is much greater with 95% of Barn Owl nest's in buildings. The demand for planning consent for Barn Conversions has shown little sign of slowing even in the present depressed housing market. The Devon Wildlife Trust, for instance, which monitors all planning applications county wide, recorded a total of 625 conversion applications in nine months of 1989. Barn conversions in the South Hams area of Devon were being approved at an average rate of 15 per month in the period July 88 - July 89.

The purpose of the Trusts three year research project is to :-

1a). Assess the extent of the conversion of Traditional Agricultural buildings.

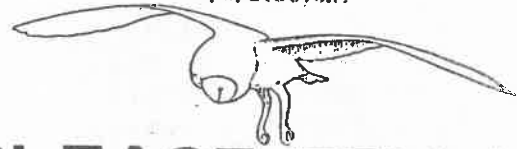
1b). Establish the extent of Barn Owl decline and the effect of the loss of Agricultural buildings on Barn Owls.

2). Research the effectiveness of measures taken to minimise the displacement of Barn Owls prior to and during

BARN OWL TRUST
BARN CONVERSION RESEARCH PROJECT
1990 - 1993



In liaison with THE DEVON WILDLIFE TRUST, THE DEVON BIRD WATCHING AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY, and the South Western area of THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS, THE BARN OWL TRUST is researching the effects of barn conversions on Devons Barn Owl population.



PLEASE TELL US

IF YOU KNOW OF ANY BARN OWL SITES WHICH ARE GOING TO BE CONVERTED BEFORE 1993

THE BARN OWL TRUST NEEDS TO IDENTIFY 40 ROOSTING OR BREEDING SITES WHICH WILL BE CONVERTED TO MONITOR AS PART OF THIS PROJECT.

 Ashburton (0364) 53026.

NOW

For information about the Barn Owl Trust and/or this project please send an SAK to

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

conversion.

3). Formulate a series of recommendations for Planners, Developers etc. with the aim of protecting, conserving and encouraging the wild Barn Owl population.

The information collected and recommendations made in this research project will be published and will be available nationally to all Planning Authorities, Developers, Conservation Groups, interested bodies and individuals. Devon is ideally suited as the study area for this project because of the diversity of habitats, the high numbers of Barn Conversions and the almost total dependence of Devon's Barn Owls on agricultural buildings for nest and roost sites.

ANYONE KNOWING OF A BARN OWL SITE IN DEVON INTENDED FOR CONVERSION IS ASKED TO CONTACT THE TRUST.

The Barn Owl Trust is seeking funding to conduct this research project. Sponsorship

is currently being sought and Devon Bird Watching Holidays and the Blingrant Trust have provided funding to enable the project to begin. The Trust is hoping to find enough funds for the employment of a part-time student to help with data collation.

For further information about the project please contact The Barn Owl Trust.



Competition Winners



During the summer holidays in 1989 The Barn Owl Trust ran a "Help the Barn Owl" poster competition with Devon WATCH. There were three age groups and the winner from each group spent an afternoon visiting the Trust. Frances John, 15, of Yelverton,

Elsbeth Jarvis, 11, of Plymouth and Lucy Barry, 10, of Crediton came along to Waterleat in October 1989 with two other children who have a special interest in Barn Owls. Six year old Demelza Jarvis, Elsbeth's younger sister had earlier in the year, on her own initiative written to 30 Devon farmers asking them if they had owls on their land, she sent copies of all their completed survey forms and letters to the Trust, (she has also carried out a sponsored bird watch to raise money for the Trust). The final member of the group was John Howells, 11, from Exeter, John won the national title of Electricity Council Young Environmentalist of the Year with a project entitled "A day in the night of a Barn Owl" in addition to all the prizes heaped on him by the electricity board John, who sent us a copy of his project came to visit The Barn Owl Trust. The five children constructed nestboxes for the Trusts resident Barn Owls and the local television station came along and filmed them for the evening news. They heard about the work of the Trust and had a go at pellet analysis and small mammal bone identification. Tea was provided and after this came the most popular part of the day when they all met Moon (the Trusts only tame Barn Owl) and had their photographs taken with her.

NO VISITOR CENTRE.

The Barn Owl Trust does NOT operate a visitor centre. There are many people and places up and down the country exhibiting live birds where Barn Owls can be seen. In Devon we recommend that people wishing to see Barn Owls visit the National Shire Horse Centre near Plymouth where Mr. Geoff Pearson will be happy to show you his Barn Owls. Visitors to the Trust are by appointment only. Anyone wishing to discover more about the Trust is welcome to attend the AGM, please write or phone for details.

Breeding and Release MANIA !

The captive breeding and release of Barn Owls was started in Britain well over 20 years ago. In northern England Jane Ratcliffe and Tony Warberton were some of the first release operators. The number of such schemes increased gradually through the 60's and 70's. In 1986 Colin Sawyer (who conducted a national Barn Owl survey), estimated that there were 400 groups/individuals releasing about 2,000 Barn Owls annually.

Since 1987 the decline of the Barn Owl has received a great deal of publicity, so too have people who breed and release. There can hardly be a national or local newspaper which has not at some time publicised a local release scheme. Increased publicity plus the legal trade in captive-bred Barn Owls has resulted in a phenomenal increase in the number of barn owl keepers and release operators over the past three years.

Barn Owls breed very easily in captivity - like rabbits in fact. Any one can breed them - hundreds of people have, so much so that the captive population well exceeds the remaining wild population of approx 5,000 pairs in Britain. The Barn Owl is also the cheapest bird of prey to buy. With so few wild Barn Owls left and so many in captivity, the idea of releasing captive stock to boost the wild population has a delightfully simple logic, easily understood, popular, pro-active, instant conservation. Why then are so many conservationists against it?

One problem is that simply boosting the wild population does not address the causes of the Barn Owls decline (the main one being reduced food supply), and unless the causes are tackled the future remains bleak. Another problem is that the vast majority of released Barn Owls are bound to die

quickly. In captivity the survival rate is very high and individuals live for fifteen or twenty years. In the wild however 80% of Barn Owls die in their first year - released Barn Owls fair no better. Yet another problem is the fact that many released Barn Owls just cannot cope in the wild and starve to death within days. In 1988 the Barn Owl Trust published the first ever report of Barn Owl Re-introduction results based on the survivorship of 164 birds released in 1986, 87 and 88, by two specific methods developed by the Trust. These results showed that breeding and releasing can work extremely well given sufficient field work, preparation, and a sound release method. 1990 will see the publication of results from other release schemes (most notably those in East Devon and in Oxfordshire) showing similar results.

What future then for breeding and release? Every week sees more and more people starting to keep and breed Barn Owls for release. The Barn Owl Trust has been inundated with enquiries from such people and with offers of birds for release. The breeding is the easy bit. Unfortunately the time required to properly research, operate, and monitor a good release is such that it is simply not possible to release very large numbers of birds each year. We are currently trying to encourage people not to breed too many Barn Owls and to adopt sound research and release methods.

It is highly likely that the 1990s will see new legislation brought in allowing Barn Owl release ONLY under license. This is likely to be administered by either the D.O.E. or N.C.C. and license conditions could include such things as the compulsory fitting of a BTO ring to every released bird. We await the results with interest to put it mildly!

David J. Ramsden
B.O.T. Conservation Officer.

Sales goods.

The Barn Owl Trust has a small selection of sales goods available by post. All prices include post and packing.



Notelets and
Christmas cards
(packs of 5)
£1.50



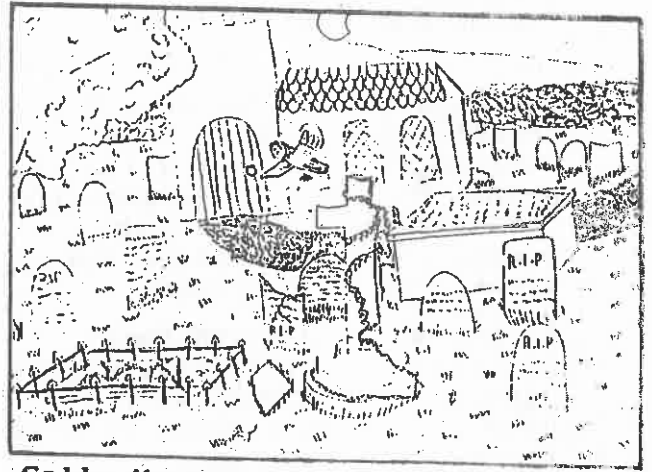
Christmas cards (packs of 5) £1.20



Car stickers 50p each 4" x 4"



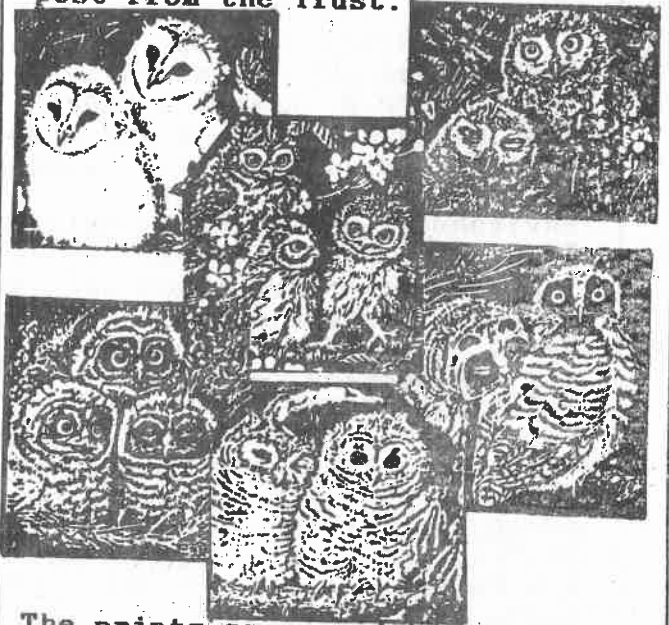
Badges (2 designs) 50p each



Sally Megee.
Berry Pomeroy Primary School.

Wildlife artist Dick Twinney has donated a selection of autographed "baby owl" prints to the Barn Owl Trust, these are being sold to raise funds.

There are six different prints, Barn Owl, Snowy Owl, Little Owl, Short-eared Owl, Long-eared Owl and Tawny Owl. These delightful 8" x 10" full colour prints are available framed or unframed by post from the Trust.



The prints are available for viewing at the Outpost, North Street, Ashburton, where John will be happy to help you choose your frame. All profits from these prints go to the Barn Owl Trust.

Price:- MOUNTED + FRAMED £25 per print. £130 per set of six prints.

UNMOUNTED + UNFRAMED £14 per print. £70 per set of six prints.

Funding the Trust.

The majority of The Barn Owl Trusts income comes from individual donations given by people who wish to support the Trusts work, the remainder comes from fund-raising and since 1989 from grants.

In August 1989 South Hams District Councils Environment Services department gave the Barn Owl Trust a grant of £500 to support the Trusts educational and practical work in their area, this was the Trust's first grant aid. SHDC's planning department are currently considering a small grant to aid the Trusts barn conversion research project. British Gas donated £200 to help with refurbishment of a building currently used by the Trust. South West Water have just covenanted a donation of £300 to help with vehicle running costs.

In early 1990 we launched an appeal to other charities seeking sponsorship of the Trusts educational work to fund a part-time education officer and produce a "teachers pack". The "pack" is underway and when completed will be an aid to help classes learn about the environment and natural history. It will be given to schools visited by the Trust and sent on request to schools outside Devon. Support for this appeal was forthcoming from TSW - Television South West, The Mitchell Trust, J & E Measures Charitable Trust and The Robinson Charitable Trust. South Hams District Council's Environment Service supported the Trusts educational work in their area of Devon in the last financial year and are keen supporters of the "teachers pack". We will of course continue to seek financial support for our educational work as it is seen to be a vital part of the Trusts work. Ideas are welcomed.

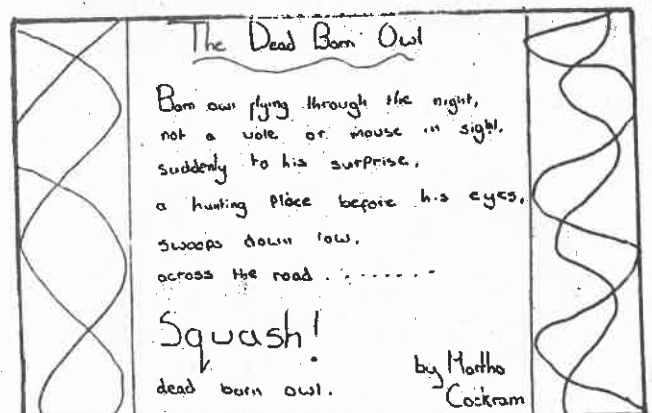
GIGANTIC JUMBLE SALE.

The Barn Owl Trust Jumble Sale has become a major local event.

The fifth annual Barn Owl Trust Jumble sale was held in Ashburton on Saturday the 28th April 1990. Local people had been donating items for the event for some months and the result was an even larger collection of clothes, bric a brac, books and toys. The keenest bargain hunters started queuing two hours before the sale started and the 23 helpers had their work cut out to deal with the rush. The sale raised £306.18 for Trust funds.

Flag Days.

Last year the Trust held 6 flag days in Devon and raised a total of £884.32. The flag days as well as being an important source of fund-raising raise public awareness of the Trust. Most events result in a number of enquiries from people who want information on Barn Owl conservation. The amount of money raised from flag days is directly proportional to the amount of helpers out on the streets collecting so if anyone feels they could volunteer for a stint with a tin we would be extremely pleased to hear from you, even an hour is helpful so please ring. The first of this years flag days at Trago Mills raised £155.50. Dates for the remainder of the year are:-
Newton Abbot. Wednesday 11th July.
Teignmouth. Friday 10th August.
Ashburton. Saturday 29th September.
Totnes. Friday 12th October.
Exeter (Sainsburys). Saturday 13th October.
Trago Mills Newton Abbot. Sunday 18th November.



Martha Cockram.
Dartington Primary School.

FUN FUND-RAISING.

On the 8th July 1989 Harry and Vi Jonas held a cream tea in their delightful garden which raised £132.89. In April they raised a further £104.18 by holding a coffee morning in the village hall at Rattery in aid of the Trust. In another part of Devon at Stoke Gabriel, a coffee morning organised by Harry and Joyce Blake in March raised £178 for the Trust. On the edge of Dartmouth a group of enterprising children who call themselves the "Owl Club" held a mini fete and barbecue and raised £9. Organised by Frances and Anton (both 10) this small group have raised £41.81 for the Trust since August 88, £3 of this was by ironing! Demelza Jarvis (aged 7) from Plymouth has just completed a sponsored birdwatch in aid of the Barn Owl Trust and raised £10 to add to the £6.10 she had already donated from her pocket money. Danielle and Stephanie Godfrey and Helen Gould from Chudleigh Knighton Primary School held a sale in their garden and made £3.79. Well done folks.

Adoption Scheme.

CERTIFICATE
of
ADOPTION

This is to Certify that

.....
has adopted a Barn Owl


Named..... Ring No.....

from
THE BARN OWL TRUST

from.....

for..... (Pence)

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



The Barn owl Trust adoption scheme has now run its first full year. The first of the end of year reports have just been sent out to those people who

adopted Barn Owls in 1989, and we have already heard from a couple who are keen to take part again. The Trust does not operate a membership and the adoption scheme was devised to provide an opportunity for people to support the Trust in a personal and individual way, and of course to raise funds for the Trust. The adoption of an individual Barn Owl costs £30 per year. An introduction to the adopted owl is sent out with a certificate of adoption and is followed up at the end of the year with a report of the individual owls progress. Please ask for more details.

BUSINESS ADOPTION SCHEME.

The Trust is currently launching a corporate adoption scheme, aimed at businesses in an effort to encourage support of the Barn Owl Trust. The annual cost of this scheme is £250 and businesses will adopt the Trust rather than an individual bird. Certificates of adoption and a framed Barn Owl portrait are on offer as an incentive to this project. Further details are available from the Trust.

FEEDING CAPTIVE BARN OWLS.

Many people ask us "What do you feed your owls on?" In the wild Barn Owls eat voles, shrews, mice and the occasional rat, frog or small bird. Estimates indicate that an adult Barn Owl will eat between four and eight vole size animals a day. Captive Barn Owls tend to eat less than wild ones as Barn Owls are by nature fairly lazy birds and do not expend energy unnecessarily. Most captive Barn Owls are fed on dead poultry chicks as this is the most easily obtained and cheapest "whole" food available. An adult Barn Owl will eat an average of two chicks a night. Those kept by the Barn Owl Trust are fed on chicks with an occasional mouse, vole, shrew or rat brought in by our neighbours 10+ cats! Lloyd Maunder Agriculture have kindly supplied owl food to the Trust free of charge since 1986.

Release Site Round-up.

The Trust's national role on the topic of Re-introduction is to provide detailed information on release methods for those already involved in the practice, (we do not encourage people to begin breeding or releasing Barn Owls). The release methods we recommend are based on the experience gained since our first release in 1985. We press hard for the adoption of the best methods by schemes up and down the country. In Devon we operate our own release sites with the help of volunteers. Releases were conducted at eleven sites by the Trust in 1989.

1989 Barn Owl Trust Release Sites.

Clayhidon. At this long-term site a pair of owls were installed in July 88 and released in Aug. 89. with three owlets in their nest. Owls are still present within a 2 mile radius where there were none previously.

Honiton. Resident Wild Owls disappeared from this site in 83/84. A "young - clutch" release resulted in successful re-establishment - this year two owls are present.

Branscombe A. At this long-term site we installed a pair in Jan. 89 they failed to rear any young successfully. In Aug. we released the adult pair which dispersed gradually.

Branscombe B. At this site we installed a trio but because of squabbling had to remove one of the females later. The pair were released with 3 owlets in the nest and bred again in '89. This year they are breeding again!

Combeinteignhead. There were wild owls here until 82 which failed to return despite of habitat improvements. The "young clutch" release of 4 owlets went well although no owls stayed at the site. One Owl was recovered shortly after release dead on the road.

Holbeton. Five owlets were placed here in July and were catching wild food by

the end of August. In March this year there were still two Owls present.

Ipplepen. Three owlets placed here in June, catching wild food by August, last one seen at the site in Nov.

Trushan. Shortly after the 4 owlets at this site fledged two were electrocuted when they apparently perched on an electricity board transformer mounted on poles 20 meters from the barn. SWEB have now insulated it, another owl from this site was found dead, killed on the road, 91 days after ringing 62km from the release site. This year we have placed another 4 owlets at the site. Woodbury Salterton. An adult pair were installed, they were released in August with 3 owlets in the nest and were catching wild food within two weeks. Two owls are still present.

Rattery. Four owlets were installed in Sept. and two are still present. One of the four spent 2 months at a 1987 release site a mile away - pellets showed a mix of chick (provided food) and wild food.

Ashburton. A late brood of four were installed in Oct. and one is still being seen although no food has been taken since Feb.

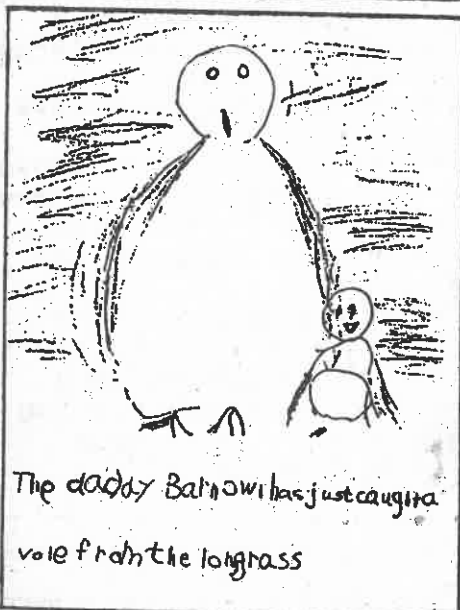
At the 1986 Yelverton release site where the female was found shot in February 1989 her mate, the wild Barn Owl, found another female and together they reared two owlets in 1989. When the release volunteers visited the site in January 1990 to collect pellets they found both adult Owls dead and their remains severely decomposed. Rat poison was suspected but both bodies were too decomposed for analysis. Since the release in 1986 of the original pair, two owlets a year had been fledged from this site with no supplementary feeding, there are currently no Barn Owls at the site.

At the Modbury 1986 release site the owls are on eggs, they have bred twice every year since release and 30 Owlets have fledged at the site.

At the Dunsford 1987 release

site the owls are breeding again and have stockpiled so much food that supplementary feeding has stopped.

1990 release sites include - Southleigh A, Southleigh B, Hennock, Doddiscombsleigh, Bridford, and Trushan. The next Barn Owl Trust Re-introduction Report (1989-91) will be published in 1992. This work could not have been achieved without the help of all release volunteers to whom we are most grateful. WELL DONE !!! If you live in Devon and have contacted the Trust and expressed an interest in release, receiving this newsletter should go some way to reassuring you that you have not been forgotten. Due to pressure of other activities the Trust is tending to visit sites in order of enthusiasm shown by volunteers, if we haven't heard from you about how your local survey, nestbox erections and habitat assessment is progressing then you may have been passed over in favour of more "active" volunteers. We will get to visit you eventually, hopefully in the meantime any habitat improvements you can make will encourage wild Barn Owls and avoid the need for re-introduction - do work on it, free information leaflets on habitat and nestboxes are available and you could ring us with your latest news.....



The daddy Barn owl has just caught a vole from the long grass

Ulick Burke.
Parke School. Dartington.

VOLUNTEERS.

The Trust needs help with fund-raising, if anyone is prepared to give a hand at any of the locations listed under flag days we would like to here from you. Anyone local wanting to help with carpentry and joinery skills, we need leaflet dispensers, donation boxes, display boards and nestboxes made, all materials can be provided if required. Help with aviary construction, fixing up wire and creosoting and aviary maintenance is needed. The collection of owl food from the Cullumpton area and delivery to Ashburton monthly could be undertaken by a volunteer. In the office we are desperate for someone with keyboard skills to type a virtually endless supply of data into the computer, someone familiar with maps to cross reference hundreds of sightings records and someone to help with accounts. A person with general all round office skills and a good telephone manner would be wonderful. A handy man or woman, or two, to renovate a wooden chalet for use by the Trust as a "bird-room" would also be useful. Volunteers holding events to raise funds for the Trust are often in need of an extra pair of hands, a cake for the produce stall or a prize for the draw. Each day working for the Barn Owl Trust brings exciting new challenges, you never quite know what's going to happen next. This evening before coming into the office to work on this newsletter I was cleaning a Little Owl that had been rescued from a slurry pit! The work we do means that we tend to meet and hear from people who care, either about wildlife or about their environment, it is a very rewarding way of life. If you have any skills you would like to share with the Trust whatever they may be, please let us know. All positions are voluntary but can be extremely fulfilling. If you have helped the Trust with anything in the past give yourselves a good pat on the back - Thank you - we couldn't do it without YOU.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH GROUPS.

The Trust has visited over 30 schools and youth groups in the past year (most within Devon) to talk to children about changes in the countryside and the decline of the Barn Owl. These visits finish with an opportunity to see Moon, the Barn Owl Trusts only tame Barn Owl. She is licensed by the Department of the Environment for display and accompanies David on his visits to schools where she is a firm favourite with the children, she now receives her own mail !!! Visits are followed up with pellet analysis and a picture / poster competition. The Trust now has an vast collection of children's work, a tiny proportion of which can be seen in this newsletter, we hope to put on an exhibition of children's work later in the year. All of the children submitting work to the Barn Owl Trust receive a certificate in return. The suggestion of a exhibition of this work to circuit Devon's libraries has had to be held over until the Trust can fund suitable display boards, at between £300 and £500 a set. Any potential sponsors of display boards or any good quality, redundant, mobile boards would be welcomed.

n.b. The Barn Owl Trust only takes Moon to visit schools and youth groups e.g. Brownies, Cubs, WATCH groups etc. where she rounds off a fairly intensive educational session. She does NOT visit adult groups.

March 2nd

Jenny

Barn owl

Barn Owls sleep all through the day
Till the start of the night
When we are all in bed
They go out in the dark to get some food
With the light of the moon on them
They have big eyes that see in the dark
They live in a barn
When the windy night comes
The wind blows through the window
They have sharp claws that are used to
catch food
when there is no food
food the babies hiss
The Owls are very beautiful

Jenny.

Blackpool Primary School.

Recycle

Aluminium

COLLECT ALUMINIUM
DRINKS CANS

Raise
Money to support
The Barn Owl Trust

Reduce
Waste
Don't trash it

Cash it!

Save Resources



ALUMINIUM CAN RECYCLING.

Many children up and down the country have become aware of the value of recycling aluminium cans as a result of the Blue Peter collection / appeal which ended early in 1990. The Barn Owl Trust has always actively promoted recycling as a conservation measure and in Devon runs its own local newspaper recycling scheme. In April 1990 the Trust launched its latest recycling initiative with an aluminium can recycling project aimed at Schools and Youth Groups. A certificate scheme has been devised for groups reaching targets of 25, 50, 75, and 100 kilos, (different colour certificates for different quantities,) special awards for very large quantities are under consideration. Approximately 50 aluminium cans make a kilo. For further details of this project, which can be operated any where in the British Isles, please send an SAE to the Barn Owl Trust.

Chudleigh Knighton Primary School in Devon has started this project by collecting 10kg (about 500) cans and raising £5 for the Trust. Well done Chudleigh Knighton.

A visit from Mr Ramsden and Moon the Barn Owl.
Yesterday Mr Ramsden came with a Barn Owl called Moon they came from the Barn Owl Trust. Mr Ramsden talked to us about what the farmers do to the Barn Owls by

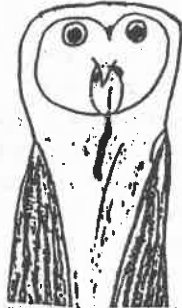
cutting down the hedges to make bigger fields so that they could get more crops to grow. So that the people could have some more food to eat. There were two barns and a tree on the farm but when the farmer cut down the hedges, he cut down the tree as well and there was a pair of Barn Owls in the tree so they flew away in fright. Then there were only two pairs. Then he cut down another hedge and brought some sheep and they ate all the long grass. So that the Barn Owl could not hunt there. Then the farmer had a letter from the Council to say that there was going to be a dual carriage way through his field.

When they had built it one of the Barn Owls went out looking for food near the edge of the dual carriage way. Along came the traffic, lots of cars and lorries, and knocked down the Owl, and it died. By this time the mother owl was worried so she flew out to look and she got knocked over too.

Then Mr Ramsden let out Moon the Barn Owl, and she flew around the room and landed on Mr Ramsden's head. When he was ready to go because it was time to leave us; Moon would not come down from the top of the cupboard. When Moon did come down Mr Ramsden put her back into the basket. Mr Ramsden said that we can take part in a Barn Owl competition. So we are going to draw some pictures and write about Moon's visit to our classroom.

By Katy Blake.

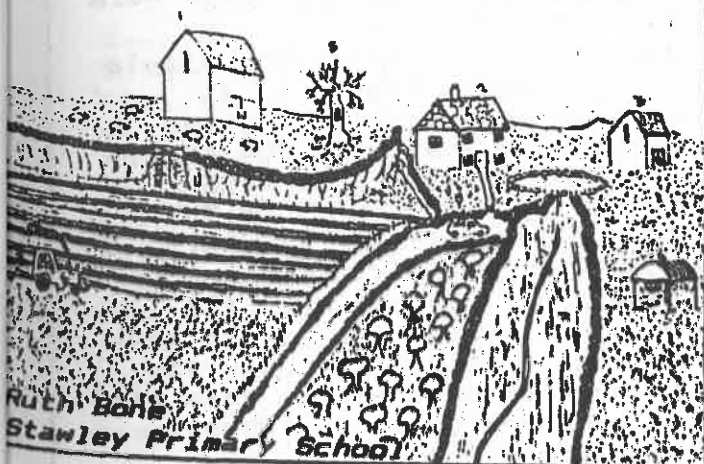
Totnes Grove Primary School.



Scott.
Dartington Primary School.

Most barn owls are getting killed because Blding houses and roads. Some barn owls are being forced out of their homes with JCBs and more machines and farmers are cutting down old trees. You can help by leaving some rice straw by the side of your field.

An ideal modern farm for barn owls.



Ruth Bohn
Stawley Primary School

Shawton of School
A Apple
Willingham
Annual

Amanda Vrona.

Dear Mr O Ramsden
Thank you for bringing Moon in.
She was lovely. Every body loved dissecting the owl pellets and we found lots of Jaws bones.
After talking things lots pictures for

16-2-90
Berry Pomeoy
Etnes
Dun
TQ9 6LH

Sally Megge

Berry Pomeoy
School,
Berry Pomeoy,
Totnes.

16.1.90

Dear Mr Ramsden,
Thank you for bringing Moon to our school and talking to us about Barn owls. The picture that you drew was very good and I also liked the way that Moon could turn her head right round to its back. I thought that the story that you told us about how the owls got a race was very interesting. Thank you for the owl pellets and telling us about the competition.

From,
Laura Parkes Age 11
Laura Parkes.

Talks

Illustrated talks to adult groups by the Trust have increased in the past year with an average of five per month. We have recently had to restrict bookings to evenings and weekends in order to protect time for practical conservation work. Many people have a interest in the Barn Owl and the Trust has been invited to talk to many different kinds of groups and organisations ranging from Womens Institutes to Fishing Associations and Friends of the Earth. The Barn Owl Trust unashandedly uses the opportunity given by these talks to promote a wide conservation message. After all all things are connected and Barn Owl conservation and Environmental consciousness raising must go hand in hand. The Trust has copies of a letter written in 1855 by a North American Indian Chief which expresses these sentiments admirably, copies are available free of charge from the Trust please send an SAE.

RECYCLING



The Barn Owl Trust has always had a commitment to recycling as an active conservation measure. We encourage the collection of silver foil and stamps and we operate a local newspaper recycling scheme. 1989 saw the peak and the crash of the countries newspaper recycling programme with prices peaking at £15 per tonne and then falling back to £10. The glut of newspaper being imported into Britain and of that being collected, resulting in the fall in price, meant that many organisations using newspaper recycling to raise funds stopped their collections. The Barn Owl Trust has continued to collect newspaper believing that whether or not it is a financially viable practice recycling IS an environmental necessity. The Trust has raised £71.62 since August 1988 by collecting over 5 tonnes of newspaper, that is approximately 35,840 newspapers which would have otherwise been burnt or ended up in landfill sites. April 1990 saw the launch of The Barn Owl Trust ALICAN recycling project for schools and youth groups.



Rhiannan Holmes.
Lanherne Primary School. Dawlish.

Fridge / CFC.



Currently all fridges sold in the U.K. contain CFC's (ozone "unfriendly" gases). Everyone

in Britain must now be aware of the terrible tales about the destruction of the ozone layer, increased risks of skin cancer and the greenhouse effect. These CFC's escape from fridges when they are broken up, research is currently being undertaken to discover a green alternative to the use of CFC's. If you do need to replace your fridge before a "green solution" is found, contact your local council. Some district and county councils, and these include Devon, have initiated a CFC recycling project. The councils have invested in a machine which can remove a large percentage of the CFC's which can then be reused by industry. Contact your local council for details of your nearest CFC recycling point if you have a fridge that needs the service, and whilst you've got them on the line ask them about their other recycling initiatives ! !

CAPTIVE BARN OWL SURVEY.

In March 1990 The Barn Owl Trust was invited to attend a NCC Barn Owl Liaison Committee meeting in Peterborough along with representatives of NCC, Edinburgh University, RSPB, BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) and Hawk Trust, the Barn Owl has a lot of friends. At this meeting it became very clear that the number of Barn Owls in captivity and of those released each year can currently only be guessed at. The British Bird Council sold over 5,200 rings for captive-bred Barn Owls in 1989 but many captive-bred Barn Owls are not ringed.

The Trust has devised a simple survey questionnaire in an attempt to estimate captive Barn Owl numbers. IF YOU KEEP, BREED OR RELEASE BARN OWLS PLEASE ASK FOR A COPY OF THE SURVEY FORM, if you know of anyone else who does please tell them about the survey. All contact information can be kept totally confidential however results of statistical data will be made available to those interested.

Free Information.

The Barn Owl Trust has a range of 24 information leaflets available (free of charge) on all aspects of Barn Owl conservation. Please send a SAE to the Trust if you wish to receive any of the following:-

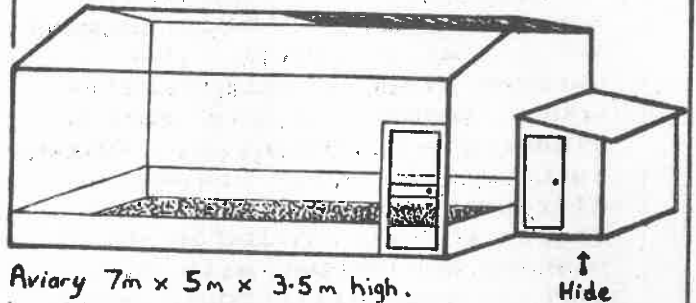
1. Habitat for Barn Owls.
2. Rough Grassland Management.
3. Indoor Nestbox Design.
4. Outdoor Nestbox Design.
5. The "WANTED" Poster.
6. Why Release Barn Owls?
7. Captive Owl - Wild Owl; Acknowledge the difference.
8. A Local Barn Owl Survey.
9. * Release Site Selection.
- 10.* Release Site Preparation.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

* These leaflets cover specific aspects of Barn Owl Re-introduction. They are not relevant to people making general enquiries. Should you require information on the subject of breeding and release of Barn Owls please include your telephone number with your enquiry.

Copying.

Most of the Trust range of information leaflets are photocopied, many thanks must go to ACT at Dartington and Cartridges of Exeter for their support with this. Also to King Edward VI Comprehensive of Totnes for bulk copying at an affordable price, Todd Kemp-Gee for their help and a special thank you must go to Ashburton Comprehensive for their help with the production of this newsletter.

NEW AVIARY.



On May 5th 1990 ten volunteers from the East Devon Conservation Volunteers came along to Waterleat to begin construction of the Trusts new aviary. The aviary, being built outside the Trusts caravan office is 7 meters long, 4.8 meters wide and 3.2 meters high at the apex. All of the wood for the construction of the aviary framework is reclaimed timber donated to the Trust by Trago Mills S.Devon. The Trust is hoping to find a sponsor for the wire for the aviary. Volunteers will be returning at future dates throughout the year to finish the aviary, anyone with a practical streak who wants to lend a hand should get in touch. The East Devon Conservation Volunteers have said they'll be back and have shown an interest in getting involved in future Barn Owl Trust projects.

Please sir, don't convert your barn,
The lovely owl is becoming extinct
Planners and developers are selling his home,
Very soon he'll have nowhere to go,
To live and breed with his family,
Leave him alone

No-one would change your address,
Give him a chance to impress,
He's a beautiful creature,
One of Gods own like me and you,
Please sir don't convert your barn.

No don't convert your property,
Let the Barn Owl live by me,
In order that he may live,
Every chance to him please give.

Beverley Martin age 10.
Chudleigh Knighton Primary School.

TRUST OFFICE.

In September 1989 the Trust spent £180 on a 22 foot caravan for use as an office. The caravan although structurally sound, required a good deal of cleaning and repainting. Thanks to Councillor Pete Stevens, Elizabeth, Tony, Matthew and Barney who all rolled up their sleeves and helped with this work. Trago Mills South Devon provided the office carpet and Cornerstone Estate Agents donated a desk and chairs to help furnish the office which is based at Waterleat. Since we've had the office, volunteers Nel and Elizabeth have been coming in every week to assist with mailing and other mundane tasks that need to be done, the Trusts national information and advice service has grown out of all recognition in the past twelve months. Graphic designer Gary Henderson from York volunteered to help the Trust and has designed a car sticker and the new look FEEDBACK 90. British Telecom donated a computer to the Trust in May 1989, Graham Atwell and Pete Sparkes from B.T. have both given up their free time to help us operate and attempt to understand the "machine", and Trustee Keith Grant has spent many hours feeding data into it. Gilda Mills a student from Polytechnic South West is currently designing a Barn Owl sightings programme specifically for the Trusts Barn Owl records. We are still in need of volunteers to help out in the office on a part time basis, someone with keyboard or typing skills would be a great asset to the Trust. Volunteers are also needed to help with other tasks - look in the volunteer section of Feedback for more details.

HOW YOU CAN HELP.

What can you do? Obviously if you live in Devon it is far easier for you to get involved in the practical work of the Trust. However many of you reading this newsletter will be far away so here are some ideas for you. Hunza Wholefoods of

Brentford had a small display of Barn Owl Trust information and a collection box for four weeks and raised £85 for the Trust. If you can support the Barn Owl Trust financially then that would be great, most of the Trusts income comes from small donations, if you can't afford to then don't worry there are still lots of things you can do. If you live in the country near a modern barn ask the farmer to let you put up a nestbox. If you know of a local Barn Owl site in danger of collapse or conversion tell your local wildlife Trust, can you support them? Get involved! If you have children tell them how important their environment is, encourage them to get involved in nature conservation, does their school have a wildlife garden? maybe you could help make one. Even if you live in a town there will be things you can do to help your local environment, what about litter picking in the local park, rubbish is dangerous (in some cases, deadly,) to wildlife. We humans need to change the way we treat our natural environment, for years we have taken it for granted and exploited and abused it. The Earth is precious and it is not ours to own, we share this world with millions of other species and we are destroying them at a terrifying rate. The global situation is so bad it is almost overwhelming, however, don't despair. ANYTHING an individual can do will help. Whether it is planting a tree, cutting down your household waste, recycling or refusing to buy products produced in an environmentally unfriendly way it is all positive action. How you spend your money will affect how the goods you buy are produced, using biodegradable, organically produced and recycled products will help your environment. GOOD LUCK with all of your conservation efforts - the Earth is worth protecting. THINK GLOBALLY AND ACT LOCALLY.

Frances Ramsden

Frances Ramsden
For The Barn Owl Trust.

