

Issue Number 54 - Autumn 2015

FEEDBACK

& the

Barn  Owl Trust Annual Report 2014 - 2015

WATERLEAT, ASHBURTON, DEVON TQ13 7HU - (01364) 653026 - www.barnowltrust.org.uk Reg Charity No: 299 835



- **2015 Breeding Season**
- **Where did that aviary go?**
- **Barn Owl habitat is great for wild flowers**

Conserving the Barn Owl and its Environment

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Cover Photo: - Christopher Castling

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by staff and volunteers.

Many thanks to everyone who provided
words and pictures for this issue.

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and information to:

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Diary Dates 2015 - 2016

October - Thursday 29th - 5:00pm - 7:00pm
Family Halloween Event

November - Tuesday 3rd - 2:30pm
Christmas Decoration Workshop
Thursday 12th, 2:30pm - Autumn Colours Walk

December - Wednesday 16th - 2:30pm or 7:00pm
Festive Wreath Making Workshop

January 2016 - Tues 19th, **February** - Tues 16th &
March - Tuesday 15th - 10am - 4.00pm

join us for Practical work with the Conservation Team
April - Friday 29th - 5:00am - Dawn Chorus Walk
May - Thursday 12th - 2.30pm - Wildflower Walk

Contact the office for more details or to book a place
at an event - booking is essential as places are strictly
limited. There may be a charge for some of the events.
Check out our 'Events Diary' on our website for more
details & dates of other LLP events.

Welcome to the 54th issue of Feedback containing our 2014 - 2015 Annual Report. We've produced these two publications together to reduce our printing and postage costs.

It's great to be able to start this issue by telling you that 58% of our annual monitoring sites have nesting this year. This compares well to 2014 which was a good year for Barn Owls when only 44% of the sites we check every year had nesting. However, mean brood size is way down, from 4.1 last year to 2.6 this year. See all the results and the summary on page 9.

Those of you who receive Feedback by email will be able to see photographs of the wildflowers in the Lennon Legacy Project in full-colour on pages 18-19 (and all of the other photographs). Anyone receiving the postal copy printed in black and white can contact the office for an email version if you would like to. There is also a gallery of 'Wildflowers of the Lennon Legacy Project' available on our website for those with internet access.

In this issue we've changed the format of our 'Bird News' - pages 8-9 and after this item had been written we had a whole bunch of 'New Arrivals' that we introduce to you on page 5.

As you'll see from our 'Team Talk' on pages 20-21 there have been a few changes here and we're expecting another one when Stuart leaves us in October after more than six years as part of the team. He has been writing the 'Bird News' for the last few years. We hope to recruit a replacement for his post in the New Year but it does depend somewhat on finances.

Our first quarter figures for the current financial year show a worrying 14% drop in income compared to the same period in 2014. This, combined with a predicted increase in expenditure due to changes to the minimum wage and employers' pension contributions, makes it hard to see how we can fund our current staffing level long-term. The Trustees are monitoring the situation carefully and will do everything they can to maintain our wonderful core team. We'd be delighted to hear from anyone with any ideas for generating regular income or who would like to organise a fund-raising event.

We are often asked by people "How soon will I get a Barn Owl if I put a nestbox up?". There is no simple answer to this question as it varies tremendously and depends on so many factors: habitat, whether there are birds in the area, nest site availability, placement of the box etc. The sedum roofed Wildlife Tower featured in Feedback 51-52 had breeding within two years but on page 4 we have a story of a box that waited 25 years! There are two things worth remembering, one - if you don't provide a box they'll never nest in it and two - Barn Owls aren't looking for a box, they're looking for a hole so make sure the hole is visible. There is loads of information (and pictures) about nestboxes on our website. Find out 'Where's the best place for your Barn Owl nestbox?', what sort of box you need, how to make or buy one and how to put it up. Those of you that don't use the internet will be very happy to know that we still have paper leaflets to send out and we're happy to talk to you on the phone!

As usual at this time of the year we are including a leaflet of our Sales Goods with Feedback. It features four new Christmas Card designs and a 2016 Calendar with some wonderful photographs including the amazing picture from Christopher Castling featured on the front cover of this issue. There are also our traditional plum puddings and our new mug, both of which would make great Xmas gifts and support our work.

We'd like to invite you all to join us for a Barn Owl Trust event, see our Diary Dates (left). There is something for all ages and abilities and we provide refreshments in our lovely Meeting Room. This summer we had a 91-year old lady join us for a walk around the LLP and a cream tea with her family. We can also run bespoke events for groups and host team building days. Just give us a call. Practical work volunteering opportunities are available most months with seasonal tasks so if you live in Devon or are just visiting give us a call, come and meet the team and join in.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of Feedback. Maybe when you've finished with it you can pass it on and spread the word about our work. Thank you for supporting the Barn Owl Trust, we really do appreciate all of you, after all we couldn't do it without you.

Frances Ramsden & Aaron Kitts ★

BOT News

News Bites



Towering Success

When comedian Bill Bailey and the team from Channel 4 approached us in 2006 we had no idea what it would lead to. They wanted us to come up with a 'Barn Owls under threat' scenario that could be 'fixed' by their team of experts lead by Bill – and the whole thing filmed for a TV series that bore the somewhat cheesy title 'Wild Thing I Love You'.



During the filming, we were delighted to discover that Bill Bailey is not only a naturally funny guy but also a thoroughly nice chap with a genuine interest in wildlife. The 'scenario' we came up with was a traditional Barn Owl nest site that was falling down and in danger of development, and the 'fix' we designed was our first ever Wildlife Tower. But why stop at Barn Owls? Other birds use farm buildings too, and what about bats?

We set ourselves the task of seeing just how much wildlife provision could be made in a building only 2 by 2 metres and 5 metres high. In the end we made separate accommodation for Barn and Little Owls, Kestrels and Stock Doves, small hole-nesting birds, invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, two bat hibernation chambers and a bat nursery chamber.

It worked! A pair of Barn Owls moved in the following year, and they've bred and/or roosted in the tower ever since - except 2013 which was the worst-ever year for Barn Owls. In the meantime the site has been developed and the Wildlife Tower has provided the perfect mitigation. Visitors to our nature reserve (the LLP) will have seen our Mark II tower which has been used by five species of bat as well as a Barn Owl.

As you'll have seen from previous issues of Feedback several folk have created a lasting home for wildlife using our plans and a variety of materials to suit their budget.

Fancy building your own? No need to employ an architect – save money by getting the plans from us: www.barnowltrust.org.uk/barn-owl-nestbox/wildlife-tower ★

Warwickshire Wildlife Tower

Further to our recent articles about the sedum-roofed Warwickshire Wildlife Tower in Feedback 51 and 52, we're delighted to report successful Barn Owl nesting, evidenced by the landowner's observation of two young Barn Owls leaving the tower in mid-June.

Poetry Competition

This autumn we are holding our 4th Wildlife/Conservation Poetry Competition. Entries are welcomed between 16th September 2015 and mid-day on 13th January 2016. The winner will be announced in Spring 2016 Feedback. Please see page 23 for more details.

National Bird Vote

The Barn Owl came 2nd in the vote for Britain's national bird back in May from an original list of 60 birds in a preliminary vote. Over 225,000 votes were cast for the ten finalists and the Barn Owl received 12% of them with an impressive 24,870. The clear winner was the Robin with 34% of the final vote.

Pop-up Radio 2

Our very own David Ramsden MBE, Head of Conservation took part in the BBC Radio 2 Jeremy Vine Show on 10th April speaking about the controversial 'Annie the Owl' pop-up event taking place in London.

Our biggest brood!

Bucking the trend of small brood sizes found during this year's annual monitoring visits was a brood of six owlets! (See picture on page 9). This was one of the largest broods we have found in a long time. We assumed that not all of the owlets would survive to fledging age but we are pleased to say that a later nest inspection revealed that all six owlets were still alive and healthy!

It's an owl Mug!

After repeated requests this year the Barn Owl Trust has added a ceramic mug to its range of sales goods. Designed here at the Trust, see page 23 for more information and a photo.

From Seymour to Audrey

Seymour the Barn Owl became Audrey in July! Seymour came to us as an owlet, (page 9) and as she matured we realised she was female, hence the name change. Thank you to Gill Shepston and Alice Kate for both suggesting the name via our Facebook page. ★

More BOT News

Patience is a virtue



If you've had a nestbox up for a few years and it's still not occupied, please be patient. We've just found out that a nestbox we made out of an old tea chest and erected 25 years ago has had Barn Owls nesting in it for the first time this year.

Derek Pretious, who owns the site, has had some great views of the adults hunting over the two fields of rough grass he created and sent us this photo of one of the young which spent the day in a nearby tree. Replacing the old box with a new, deep safe one is on our list of things to do this winter. Well done Derek! ★

Super Scarecrow



Over 100 trade stands took part in the Royal Cornwall Show Scarecrow Trail 2015 and the standard was fantastic. The public who took part in the trail decided on which one they thought was the best ...and the winner, by a country mile, was: the Barn Owl Trust. Well done to Jo and Aaron who made the winning scarecrow for us. ★

Richard Barker - 1946-2015

We were also very sorry to hear of the death of Richard Barker. Richard had been a supporter of Barn Owls and the Barn Owl Trust since he and his wife Barbara purchased the Fowlescombe Estate in 1998, when he invited the Trust to advise on conserving the resident Barn Owls. Originally bought to be managed for wildlife the estate became a successful working farm whose wildlife was always a top priority.



In 2002 Richard and Barbara allowed us to hold an 'Education Day' on the farm for 100+ children and in 2007 Richard gave a presentation at our AGM. As well as inviting us to ring their Barn Owls annually as part of our annual monitoring site visits, they also made us extremely welcome over the years when Fowlescombe hosted our Barn Owl Ecology, Surveys and Signs (BOESS) training courses 6 times a year.

Richard will be sorely missed by all of us who knew him and we will continue to do our very best to help conserve his Barn Owls, as he would want us to do. ★

We've been managing areas of Blackthorn here on our land at the Barn Owl Trust since Brown Hairstreak eggs were discovered on young Blackthorn in December 2012. On 16th July this year we had our first ever sighting of a Purple Hairstreak butterfly. ★



Photo: Stuart Baker

Ida Ramsden - 1921-2015

It's with the greatest sadness we announce the passing of Ida Ramsden (the mother of David, our Head of Conservation). Throughout David's childhood, Ida supported everything he ever wanted to do including his early involvement in nature conservation.

As soon as the Barn Owl Trust was founded in 1988 Ida helped out with regular fundraising, childminding, and other essentials. She was a very competitive flag-day collector, often out for far longer than anyone else so that she could collect the most money!



Born in 1921 in Alberta, Canada, Ida moved to England aged six and became a qualified teacher during World War Two when she cared for infant evacuees. She met and married Peter just after the war and once their children were settled in school Ida took up teaching once again eventually retiring in her 60's. ★

New Arrivals

Things can change very quickly around here. As recently as the beginning of June, we only had a single owl waiting for release. This was a Tawny we named Ewok, which you can read about in bird news on page 8. With one phone call, all that changed!

We were asked by Vale Wildlife Rescue in Tewkesbury, if we could help with releasing some owls. While they do sterling work rescuing and rehabilitating all manner of wild animals, they are not owl-focussed and do not have the same range of release aviaries that we do. Of course, we agreed to help.

A few days later, four Barn Owls and two Little Owls were dropped off here by one of their dedicated volunteers. These were fitted with BTO rings, as are all the birds we release, as well as colour rings, so we can tell them apart. They are all now awaiting release.



Each owl is fitted with a BTO ring with a unique number to allow for individual identification



All of the birds were checked over on arrival, this included weighing and measuring. Here Stuart and Matt are weighing one of the Barn Owls
Photos: Aaron Kitts

Within a few days of these owls arriving, we had calls from two different vets who had juvenile Tawny Owls that had been treated and were in need of feeding up, prior to being released. In less than a week, we had gone from a single owl awaiting release to having nine owls of three different species!

The three Tawnies (including Ewok), will be released from our static release aviary here.

Look out for updates on all nine of these birds in the next issue of Feedback. ★



Different species of bird have different sizes of rings. This Little Owl has just had its colour ring fitted.



It's been quite a while since we had Little Owls in so it's great to see these wonderful little birds again

Where did that aviary go?



*Main aviary in 2006
Photo: Chris Richards*

After extremely long-standing service, 22 years in fact, it was time for our Main Aviary to be replaced. Enter our hand-picked Demolition Team; two London Investors – Aram and Phil, our regular volunteer Kim and new volunteer Tony. With our 'student-placement-to-be' Mark Ellison and Jasmin, our builder of top class BOT nestboxes these guys moved out the resident owls and cleared the site ready for the rebuild.



*The last piece comes down
Photo: Jo Plant*



*Left to right - Tony, Phil and Aram
Photo: Jo Plant*



*Everybody keep back and pull
Photo: Jo Plant*



*New foundations
Photo: Jo Plant*

The first job was to carefully remove the plastic roofing sheets and the weld-mesh for re-use. Whilst detaching these, it soon became clear that not much else was holding the structure up(!) and the job became increasingly precarious until finally (and there they are in the photo...) our crack Demo Team lowered the last section to Earth. Thanks guys!



*Ready for the woodwork
Photo: Aaron Kitts*

Work has now started on re-building the aviary which is home to permanently resident, un-releasable owls. The foundations have been completed and the woodwork is next. ★

LLP Update



Female Mandarin
Photo: David Ramsden

Mid-February saw the continuation of the hedge-laying along the driveway hedge, with our regular hedge-layer Diana Smurthwaite training members of the Conservation Team and a small group of Plymouth University students. This was continued in early March, with another group of Plymouth students clearing up and burning the resulting brush. The apple trees in the orchard got their annual formative pruning in February, finally resembling 'proper' standard fruit trees. Some scrub was also cut out of the hedgerows in Kiln Close and North Park and around the scrub patch towards Corner Wood at the same time.

In early March, Forde Orchard was brush-mowed and more encroaching bramble was cut back with the help of a visiting group of four Hungarian and two Portuguese conservation trainees, who also helped build nestboxes in the barn during their three-day stay. Some fence repairs were necessary along Riverbank Walk where 2 straining posts had to be replaced. A leak around the outflow of the lower pond was finally tackled with cement in mid-April which seemed to do the trick.

A group of 28 people attended our Wildflower Walk on a sunny, if somewhat breezy, late April afternoon. Germander Speedwell, Thyme-leaved Speedwell, Ivy-leaved Speedwell, Early Purple Orchid, Greater Stitchwort, Lesser Celandine, Primroses, Crosswort, Hedge Bedstraw, Restharrow, Wintercress, Maidenhair Spleenwort, Lady's Smock, Red Campion, Wild Rocket, Garlic Mustard, Forget-me-Not, Ground Ivy, Bluebell, Bulbous Buttercup, Mouse-ear, Dandelion, Foxglove, Hawkbit, Hemlock Water Dropwort, Wood Sorrel, Saxifrage, Common Sorrel, Ribwort Plantain, Spear Thistle, Common Nettle, Dog Violet, Yarrow, Sweet Vernal Grass, Field Wood Rush and Bush Vetch were all recorded.

The Dawn Chorus Walk in mid-May was attended by 9 conservation professionals from Hungary who enjoyed an LLP tour and breakfast, the day spoilt only by the weather, which rather reduced the birdsong. In late June, 29 people from the Chard and Ilminster U3A attended an LLP Talk and Walk in lovely, warm, sunny weather. Lots of Marbled White, Meadow Brown and Small Skipper were seen along with Swifts, House Martins and Swallows, a Dipper on the river and most surprisingly a bat, which was seen to leave the wildlife tower and fly off towards the river.

The newly re-erected Tawny Owl nestbox had attracted an admirer within a couple of weeks by early March but sadly didn't appear to result in breeding. The first Red Admiral was seen in mid-March, with the first Brimstone in early April along with the first Blackthorn flowers. This was quickly followed by the first Orange-tip, and 13 Peacock, 3 Small Tortoiseshell and 1 Comma recorded during one of the butterfly transects. The first Blackcap was in song in the roadside hedge in Kiln Close.

The Dippers were back in the nestbox under the top bridge by early-April and eventually went on to rear a brood of 3. On the rocks in Kiln Close 2 lizards, 5 slow worms (including 2 very small young), and a toad were recorded. The first Chiffchaff was heard in song and a screeching Barn Owl advertised its presence over several nights. Sadly however, the remains of a Barn Owl were found in mid-April estimated to be about 2 weeks dead, though by late April fresh evidence of Barn Owl occupation in the form of pellets and faeces was evident in and around the Wildlife Tower.



Wildlife Tower
Photo: David Ramsden

By the month's end songsters included a Pied Flycatcher in neighbouring Waterleat Wood and a Redpoll along Pennsland Lane. In May the Mandarins appeared and subsequently disappeared from the ponds, a Small Heath (constituting only the 3rd record for the LLP) was seen and a Cuckoo heard.

The first June record of Kingfisher was from the ponds and probably involved a dispersing juvenile from nearby, and soon after the orchard also hosted a Green Woodpecker and Dark Green Fritillary. By mid-Summer a Barn Owl had started making regular appearances over the field as dusk was falling, the first Marbled Whites were on the wing, a Red Fox was scouting for morsels and a hind Roe Deer was watched happily grazing the waving grasses.

Matthew Twiggs
Senior Conservation Officer

In Memoriam

The Trust has received a legacy
from the estate of
Brian Mitford Campbell
and
donations in memory of
Mr Collins, Toni Bunce,
Mavis Heath, Florence Coogan,
Yvonne Bennett, Muriel Bellingham,
Ida Ramsden, Barry Davies,
Elsie Evans, Terry Hunt, Denise Holder,
and Pamela Bellingham

Our grateful thanks and sincere sympathies
go to their families and friends

They all now have a leaf on our Memory Tree

Bird News

This issue sees a whole new look to Bird News, and it's all down to Facebook! Over the last year, we have made a real effort to use Facebook and Twitter to show people what we do on a day-to-day basis. Part of this effort has involved posting photographs and regular updates on the wild owl casualties we receive. To help people keep track of which bird is which (and with the encouragement of Jo, our former zookeeper), we have started naming them as soon as they arrive. Previously only birds that became permanent residents in our sanctuary were given names.

Steve

The first bird to be given the 'Facebook treatment' was Steve the Tawny Owl who you may have read about in the previous issue of Feedback. Steve was originally named Eve, after arriving with us on Christmas Eve and underwent a swift name change when we realised that 'she' was actually a he! Originally taken to the Veterinary Hospital at Estover in Plymouth on December the 20th, Steve had a badly broken wing, which required several trips to the vet and three operations over the course of his stay with us.



While he was here, Steve had to be force-fed for an extraordinarily long time. Most of the injured owls we receive are very stressed, and it is typical for them to need force-feeding for a few days, until they settle in. Steve had to be force-fed every day from the 20th of December until the 5th of February! I must admit that most of us thought that he was doomed. On February the 6th, Steve ate for himself, and rarely refused a meal after that. Once he was eating, he made better progress, and I am pleased to say that Steve was returned to the wild at the end of March.

Porridge

Porridge was found between the inner and outer walls of Dartmoor Prison, on the 25th of February, at around six weeks of age. This means she hatched in the middle of January. Tawnies typically hatch around the middle of April and, unlike Barn Owls, do not tend to vary this very much. This makes Porridge one of the earliest Tawnies ever recorded in Britain.

Our advice for anyone finding a young Tawny Owl is to leave it alone - if it is healthy. Porridge had a completely empty stomach and was underweight meaning she had not been fed for at least 24 hours. Her finding location at the prison meant it was not possible for her to remain where she was. There are no trees allowed to grow around the prison for security reasons so the nest location was also unclear. As you can see from the photograph, she changed a great deal while she was with us and in May, when she was old enough, was released back into the wild.



Ug

David, our Head of Conservation, found Ug lying in the road near the village of Ugborough, at the beginning of March. He had a badly broken wing. Following treatment here at the Trust, we unfortunately found that the bones had not set properly. Although he could just about get off the ground, Ug's flying was very poor and it was clear that he would never be able to look after himself in the wild. At the end of March he was placed in our Tawny Aviary and he will see out his days as one of the residents of our sanctuary.

Dela

Dela, our first Barn Owl of the year was collected by the RSPCA in East Cornwall at the beginning of April, and taken to the Veterinary Hospital at Estover. There she underwent an operation on a badly broken wing and arrived with us two days later looking very sorry for herself.



Unfortunately the pin in her wing became detached and the bone did not set perfectly. She cannot fly very well and whether or not she should be released was the subject of some debate. Eventually it was decided that she would struggle to hunt successfully, as her flight is just too noisy. She has now joined the residents in our sanctuary. *Continued on page 9.*

Ewok



2015 Breeding Season

| Year | Nesting (%) | Mean brood size | Regular roosting (%) | Occasional roosting (%) | Absent (%) |
|----------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Ave. 1990-2006 | 51 | 2.9 | 16 | 4 | 29 |
| 2007 | 53 | 3.4 | 15 | 8 | 24 |
| 2008 | 52 | 2.1 | 19 | 3 | 25 |
| 2009 | 53 | 2.0 | 16 | 4 | 27 |
| 2010 | 50 | 2.3 | 15 | 10 | 25 |
| 2011 | 39 | 2.6 | 15 | 3 | 42 |
| 2012 | 58 | 3.2 | 11 | 0 | 31 |
| 2013 | 15 | 2.1 | 27 | 15 | 43 |
| 2014 | 44 | 4.1 | 19 | 1 | 36 |
| 2015 | 58 | 2.6 | 14 | 0 | 28 |

After the fantastic breeding season of 2014 hopes were high for good nesting occupancy rates and we have not been disappointed. Moreover, the low number of sites with regular and occasional roosting tends to suggest that, where birds were present, they were able to find a mate and make a nesting attempt, which is obviously great news.

However, such an increase in nesting can only be explained by an increase in the numbers of second calendar year birds breeding, ie. those that fledged last year. This level of inexperience may well be the cause for such dramatic losses seen at some sites such as the venue for our Nestcam in south east Cornwall, where four of the six owlets perished in less than 48 hours and where we think both adults were first-time breeders.

There were some notable successes however, with a brood of six ringed in a box on the 1st July way above average. On our return some three weeks later we were very pleasantly surprised to find all six still alive and in tip top condition, with a food cache of a Field Vole and a Wood Mouse on the lid of a nearby nestbox as well! Neither of the parents could be aged due to the lack of any primary feather moult, so we can't say for sure whether they were more experienced birds, but the nest site was a stone's throw from over 20 acres of rough grassland, which must have helped.

Bird News Continued

On 4th May (jokingly referred to as Star Wars Day; May the Fourth be with you!), we received a four week old Tawny owlet. In reference to the date and its fluffy appearance, we named it Ewok, after the fluffy creatures in the Star Wars universe. He had blood around his beak and both eyes were inflamed. Ewok has responded very well to treatment and, as you can see from the photographs, has made a full recovery. He's currently living in our release aviary and will be returned to the wild in the late summer when he's fully grown.

Seymour / Audrey

Back in June a fallen owlet with a broken wing came to us from Seymour Vets in Totnes. The owlet was given the name Seymour but this was quickly changed to Audrey when it became apparent the owlet was female. The results of her most recent X-ray were not promising, although, we haven't completely given up hope yet. She has been tried in a flight aviary but unfortunately, the results were not overly encouraging.

If you would like to read about our casualty birds as they come in, along with photographs and regular updates, you can follow us on Twitter (@BarnOwlTrust) or on Facebook (facebook.com/BarnOwlTrust).



Matthew and Jo with a brood of six
Photo: David Ramsden

Despite some losses, this year's average brood size was only marginally below normal. So, with a good number of birds breeding and reasonable brood sizes, if we have a kind autumn and winter things are looking very positive for the future. ★



Seymour / Audrey
Photo: BOT Staff

Once again we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at the Veterinary Hospital Group at Estover in Plymouth for all their help and support. I hope you have enjoyed our



Charity Information

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Registered Charity number 299 835 BOT Environmental Enrolment Number 203 178
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Simon Wilson (2000) Kevin Keatley (2010) Hon Treasurer: Mark Pountney (2002)
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The stated objective of the Trust *'is to advance the conservation of wildlife, especially the Barn Owl and other endangered species, to provide them with a safe breeding environment, with the object of encouraging the re-creation and preservation of appropriate ecological conditions that they may be provided with the means to continue and flourish in as natural an environment as possible'*.

The main areas of the Trust's work are practical conservation, education, provision of information and research. The Trust also provides a live owl emergency service, a sanctuary and rehabilitation facility for injured owls. The Trust became a registered charity in 1988.

Practical conservation and rehabilitation work takes place in South West England (mainly Devon and Cornwall), but all other areas of work have national (and sometimes international) significance: e.g. the free information and advice service is available by post, email, telephone and via the worldwide web. Our research work is relevant throughout the UK and beyond.

The Trust also owns 26 acres of land known as the Lennon Legacy Project which is managed entirely for wildlife. What was once intensively grazed pasture has become a haven for birds, butterflies, flowers and insects under BOT management. Monitoring and recording the ever increasing biodiversity and promoting habitat creation by others is a significant part of the Trust's work.

TRUST STAFF

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TRUST VOLUNTEERS

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& OWL TRANSPORTATION : Cathy Pitt
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Aram Compton
Sally McCarter
Jim & Marion Perriss
Margaret Crocker
Sandra Reardon
Hungarian Volunteers
Margaret Rhodes
Jayne Hartley
University of Plymouth
Volunteers

Barn Owl Trust staff and volunteers often have several roles, only their main areas of work are listed here.

Conservation task helpers are not included but not forgotten. * Indicates those leaving during the period of this report. ▶Maternity leave

BOT Environmental

BOT Environmental is an Enrolled Body under the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. It was set up in 1998 to allow the Trust to apply for grants from landfill operators who can give money to community or environmental projects rather than pay tax to central government. There was no BOT Environmental activity in the year and both the opening and the closing balance of the fund at the year end was £0.

Annual Report 2014 - 2015



Welcome to our Annual Review of the financial year 2014-2015, a chance both to reflect and to look at future plans.

As you'll see from the Conservation Report the 2014 breeding season was much better than 2013 and we began the financial year by publishing in April the first ever 'State of the UK Barn Owl Population - 2013' report which pulled together the annual monitoring results from 21 independent groups around the UK. A 2014 edition was published in February 2015.

In addition we continued to record UK sightings and sites of Barn Owls on our survey website, www.barnowlsurvey.org.uk. We have now included BTO Atlas data on the website to allow users to view their own records against a backdrop of the latest BTO distribution map and we are continuing to develop the site.

Pressure of other work meant that the production of the Devon Barn Owl Survey 2013 report was delayed yet again. Work on our Rodenticide Campaign continued throughout the year with comments on drafts of various Stewardship proposals submitted to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Public benefit was provided nationally (and internationally) by the Trust as we continued to supply information and advice by email, post, telephone and our website. Dealing with enquiries is a huge part of the work of our conservation team. Our major project during the year was the revision and reorganisation of content for our primary website www.barnowltrust.org.uk launched at the end of March. The project took hundreds of staff hours but the result is a site that is much easier to navigate and manage with 'bite-size' information for the site users. We are continually updating the site to include latest information.

Our involvement with Social Media to promote Barn Owl conservation during the year has given us over 7,000 facebook 'likes' and 20,000+ Twitter followers.

We have continued to carry out practical conservation and educational work in South West England including the erection and the grant-funded replacement of nestboxes. On the international front, we continued to liaise with Barn Owl workers.

The Lennon Legacy Project (LLP) continues to be an inspiration, providing a habitat not only for Barn Owls but for a myriad of other wildlife too. Many bird species, mammals, insects and flora have benefited from the management regime. Recording and monitoring the increasing bio-diversity is ongoing with monthly monitoring photographs, a butterfly transect and a monthly on-line

Management Information

The Barn Owl Trust was constituted in December 1987 and became a national registered charity in July 1988, it is governed by a Trust Deed. The objectives of the Trust, as stated in our Deed, are 'the conservation of wildlife, especially the Barn Owl and the preservation and re-creation of appropriate ecological conditions to provide a natural environment for wildlife to flourish'.

The Trust has five Trustees. The year of their appointment is listed next to their names in the Charity Information. New Trustees are chosen by the existing Trustees, when required, on the basis of their relevant expertise.

The number of Trustees is required to be between three and five, and in the event of the number falling below three the remaining Trustees may only act for the purpose of appointing additional Trustees and for no other purpose.

The Trustees have full and unrestricted powers of investing monies as decided by a majority. The Trustees have adopted a formal policy on general financial reserves (see page 16).

Day-to-day running of the Trust is the responsibility of the Management Team (Senior Staff) who are line-managed by and liaise regularly with individual Trustees and report at quarterly Trustees meetings.

LLP diary to share the information we gather. We ran a series of events open to the public including themed walks and talks during the year and continue to work on public engagement using the site and our Norman Alderson Meeting Room. Our Memory Tree is a stunning feature in the room which provides a wonderful warm and dry space in which to talk to our visitors and provide them with a cup of tea and information about our work. In addition, several groups booked visits to the LLP site for guided walks following adult talks. Each month we produced and sent out 'Owl e-news' a monthly email to people in Devon informing them of forthcoming events and news. The mailing list for this continues to grow as people in and outside Devon ask to be added. Issues 52 & 53 of Feedback, the Trust's bi-annual magazine were produced and mailed out to our supporters during the year. Back issues are available on the new website.

At the start of the year we had a smaller admin team; one of our full-time staff semi-retired and to save money we didn't replace them. This put the whole team under pressure and later in the year when we realised we were going to need to recruit maternity cover we interviewed and appointed staff to enable a 3+ month overlap in the run-up to Christmas. We then had to advertise and interview again early in the New Year to recruit maternity cover for our maternity cover!

Our conservation team was one post less than 2013-2014 when we had a fixed-term post to help with the fieldwork for the Devon County Survey. In June we recruited Jo Plant a new PA to the Head of Conservation when Hannah Bosence left to go and work in South Africa. We also reduced our two part-time handyman posts to one and at the end of the year Karen Smerdon retired. She had worked one day a week for 5 years, we are now looking to fill her post. Other than that there have been no changes to existing staff who have been with us for between 6+ and 25 years. Volunteers have received training and work experience on both long and short-term placements with the Trust. At the year-end we had 11 staff in post: seven full-time, one of these on maternity leave and four part-time.

Staff training is planned in the use of GIS (Geographical Information Systems) for our staff in the next year, to facilitate fulfilling Barn Owl data requests such as the impact of large infrastructure projects like new railway lines on Barn Owls. We also have on-going Health and Safety training; this summer it's a review of ladder safety training.

Environmental and ethical consideration has been given to all our activities during the year and to the purchase of resources.

In addition to our general work of dealing with enquiries, practical conservation such as annual monitoring, site visits and nestboxing, school visits, adult talks, training courses and caring for resident and casualty birds, plans for this year include the completion of the Devon Barn Owl Survey Report and on-going development of our two websites; www.barnowltrust.org.uk and www.barnowlsurvey.org.uk to ensure they continue to benefit wild Barn Owls both nationally and internationally. We will also maintain our social media presence to raise awareness of the species and our work.

On a practical note we plan to do significant repairs to several of our aviaries during the year and to fix the seriously leaking office porch before the winter. We will maintain our Rodenticide Campaign and monitor the HSE's position on the future of second-generation rodenticides (SGAR's). We will also continue to lobby for the implementation of recommendations from research projects, and to develop educational / training activities and resources, to target practical conservation projects (e.g. nestbox provision) whilst trying to ensure that any development is sustainable, thereby reducing the Trust's dependency on legacy income to support core costs.

On behalf of the Trustees I would like to thank everyone who has supported us during the year. I would also like to thank our wonderful team of staff, volunteers and all of our Friends for continuing to believe that, *together we can make a world of difference* - thank you all.

Keith Grant
Chair of Trustees, July 2015



Conservation Report

2014 was a good year for Barn Owls!

On 9th February we published the 'State of the UK Barn Owl population – 2014' based on data kindly provided by 25 independent groups from Scotland to the Isle of Wight and from Suffolk to West Cornwall. When compared to 2013 the results were startlingly different. The change in mean nesting occupancy had gone from minus 72% to plus 16% and mean brood size from minus 12% to plus 35%. In other words, the number of nesting pairs was slightly above the all-years average and the number of young in those nests was well above. The most extreme example was a brood of eight (yes 8!) in a nest in Suffolk. Steve Piotrowski (Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project) reported "eight chicks fledged from one nest is a record for the county. Four nests that fledged seven chicks is also exceptional for Suffolk".

Nesting occupancy from our own monitoring sites (in Devon and East Cornwall) remained below the all-years average but mean brood size was 56% above and our largest brood was six.

Photo: Nicholas Watts



Relaxed planning controls - bad news for Barn Owls

Having carried out the 'Barn Conversion Research Project' back in the 1990s we have been the main source of information on Barn Owls and development for many years. The requirement for a wildlife survey to be carried out as part of the planning application process has been a cornerstone of the system. As a result, even disinterested site owners have made alternative provision for the birds, avoided the nesting season, and incorporated a permanent nesting place inside the development.

Despite claiming his would be "the greenest government ever", David Cameron relaxed a range of planning controls as part of a drive to stimulate the economy. As of 6th April 2014, barn conversions outside National Parks and AONBs can be carried out under Permitted Development Rights. The new policies and paperwork do not even mention biodiversity interests and there is no requirement for a wildlife survey to be carried out. This is another nail in the coffin for old farm buildings and is bound to damage Barn Owl interests. During the year we produced an article on this topic that was kindly published by the RSPB in the Spring 2015 edition of 'Conservation Planner'.

Although many Barn Owl sites are now slipping through the net, there are (thankfully) a few developers that care enough about wildlife to use their own initiative. During the year we were consulted by a long-term BOT supporter who is planning a small housing estate around a Barn Owl nest site. Following our advice he now intends to build a BOT-approved 'wildlife tower' on the edge of the site.

Given the damaging policy changes by government, it's essential that we keep telling people about 'good practice'. To this end we have completely revamped and re-published our guidance for planners and developments. For more information please see 'Barn Owls and Rural Planning Applications – a guide 2015' on our website.

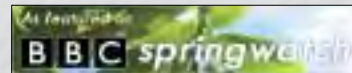
We completely replaced our main website!

The pages of our main website created in 2006 were rather like the pages of a book with lots of words, few headings, and few images. In its day it was great(!), particularly for dedicated readers with large computer screens. These days, however, most people scan webpages for quick answers rather than reading, often on a small device like an iPad or smart phone. The Content Management System of our previous site was also extremely over-burdened and had become very slow to use. Clearly, we needed a new website.

The process kicked off in April 2014 with a 'Writing for the web' training session provided by our friends at Calm IT (calmit.org). We soon adapted to a completely new way of creating page content. Within 10 months we had created 196 pages and 44 picture galleries, most of them with instructional captions, along with video/audio and downloadable PDF files. We made very extensive use of images and by the time we'd finished the site contained almost 2,000!

The new www.barnowltrust.org.uk went live on 26th March 2015 and in its first 100 days had 175,000 views.

UK Barn Owl Survey – the Springwatch effect.



The number of Barn Owl sightings and roost/nest sites that are reported to us from all over the UK received a tremendous boost in June '14 when BBC Springwatch gave our survey website two mentions during their live programmes. This resulted in an additional 2,600 records and enabled the production of a special 'Springwatch viewers Barn Owl distribution map' that was shown on the programme. Thank you BBC!

Practical conservation work

During the year, we erected a further 38 deep nestboxes. Some were at new potential Barn Owl sites but most were at occupied sites where nestlings had fallen, or were at risk of falling, from the nest (which is often fatal). Much of this life-saving work was funded by the Hatcher Animal Welfare Trust and the Belsize Trust to whom we are very grateful indeed. Practical land management work is reported separately under the 'Lennon Legacy Project'.



The new 'deep' box is placed alongside the old 'flat' box. The old box will be removed when the owls have started using the new one. Photo: Matthew Twigg

Awareness raising

With 1,750 views per day(!), the complete modernisation of our website probably did more for raising the awareness of Barn Owls than anything else we did during the year. However, there will never be a substitute for face-to face communication. Our efforts to raise awareness of how wonderful rough grassland is certainly payed off in the case of a certain Mrs Clark.



Unusual cases included a juvenile Barn Owl that, in an altercation with a broken window, had the end of one wing chopped off – thankfully only the feathers. These were repaired through a process called ‘imping’ and the bird was successfully released. Another unusual case was of a very young Tawny Owl found inside the perimeter of Dartmoor Prison in February. We worked out that the adults must have laid eggs in mid-December – nesting this early is an extremely rare occurrence. Not only was the weather cold but the site was 420 metres above sea level! ‘Porridge’ was later released here at Waterleat.



Another 50 acres of ‘Barn Owl Heaven’ inspired by the LLP
Photo: David Ramsden

During one of our guided walks she was so inspired by what we’ve done with the ‘Lennon Legacy Project’, and the wildlife she saw here, that she went home and created her own ‘26 acres of Barn Owl Heaven’. Months later, in October 2014, she invited us along to see what she’d done. Not 26 but 50 acres of rough grassland! Wow, it was amazing!

We were fortunate to be invited to give presentations to some prestigious groups during the year such as the RSPB in Somerset and the Wildlife Trusts in Devon and Dorset.

An ‘appearance’ on BBC Radio 2’s Jeremy Vine Show enabled us to raise awareness of the plight of captive Barn Owls that are displayed to the public in inappropriate ways. In this case, birds were being paraded around by a ‘Pop-up Owl Café’ in London. We also were filmed for BBC ‘Escape to the Country’ and ‘Inside Out’.

Our foundation course for Ecological Consultants ran six times (in July, Nov, & Feb) attracting 72 trainees and our advanced course ran twice (July and Nov) attracting 23. We attended a ‘Farmwise’ event to raise awareness of our school visits of which 22 were carried out during the year plus 11 talks to adult groups.

Rodenticide campaign

Following on from presenting a 126,000-signature petition to the Minister in March 2014, we kept the pressure on the Rodenticide Industry and regulators (HSE) during the year. This included huge amounts of correspondence, a lot of time spent studying various versions of the industry’s proposals, the formulation of detailed responses, and publicity. The latter included an appearance on ITV’s Tonight programme.

The three main things we campaigned for were:

- i) A ban on permanent/preventative baiting – very likely to be achieved, though not an outright ban.
- ii) Last resort use - very likely to be achieved.
- iii) Improved product labelling – at the year’s end this was still to be determined by HSE.

Given the government’s current policy of de-regulation, the changes were to be delivered largely through vastly improved guidelines and compulsory training for purchasers of non-amateur products. This meant that farmers and gamekeepers would no longer be able to buy buckets of highly toxic rat poison unless they had been on a training course. This would include information on the need to reduce wildlife contamination and instruction on the use of safer rodent control methods first (e.g. removal of access to food and harbourage). The proposed ‘Stewardship Scheme’ was due to be launched at the year’s end.

Hands-on with the birds

Inevitably, several of our very old sanctuary birds passed away during the year but we did receive 11 Barn Owls, 23 Tawny Owls, and one Little Owl from the wild. Thankfully 25 recovered well enough to be released but 10 died and the remainder became residents in our sanctuary.



Six releases were carried out using our mobile aviaries
Photo: Stuart Baker

Our very own Nature Reserve – the Lennon Legacy Project

The Lennon Legacy Project ‘26 acres of Barn Owl Heaven’ is a huge asset and continues to be an inspiration. Indeed, as you will have read earlier, some of the people who have seen it first-hand have gone away and created their own version. However, rough grassland does not look after itself and given enough time it would become overgrown, turn to scrub, and eventually woodland. Over and above the efforts of our late-summer management team (15 head of cattle) we must manage the site.

Work during the year included path mowing, and bracken topping by tractor, bramble cutting by brushcutter and ‘the beast’ – a self-powered machine used on steep slopes that one walks behind (and wrestles with!) and bracken bashing and Himalayan Balsam pulling by hand. For a limited period during the year we also trialled the spot-spraying of Creeping Thistles on a test area to see if it was more or less damaging than the topping done in previous years.

Visiting Hungarian trainees worked hard in Corner Wood keeping our Bluebell patch clear by hand. Through the year, three different cohorts of Hungarians helped in the LLP as part of an EU-funded project run by Ambios and The Hungarian Barn Owl Foundation.



Photo: David Ramsden

Regular visits by Plymouth University conservation volunteers were also a great help.

The LLP was admired by various groups throughout the year including groups from the National Trust and U3A who also enjoyed a Barn Owl Trust cream tea. Our spring Dawn Chorus Walk was particularly successful with great views of a Barn Owl and Roe Deer last year. This year Dippers nested under our top bridge for the third year in a row and our only orchid flowered again. For more information about ‘Barn Owl Heaven’ please visit the Wildlife Diary on our website.

Many thanks for all your support!

David Ramsden MBE



Financial Report

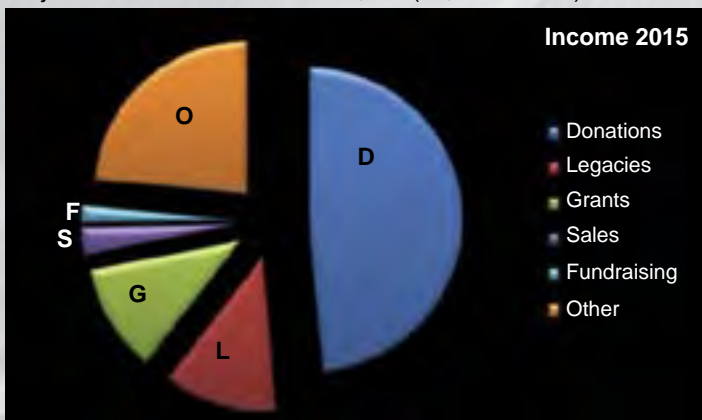
The total incoming resources for the year were £222,838. This is a £146,697 drop from 2014 - £369,535. Despite this we saw a net increase of +£99 in reserves, not nearly as impressive as last year's increase of £124,810 which was due mainly to legacy income but certainly better than the net deficits of the previous two years (-£99,674 - 2013, - £33,281 - 2012).

Legacy income and gifts in memoriam accounted for £26,759, 12% of total income in the year (£176,320 48% - 2014). We are always extremely grateful for the legacies and the Gifts in Memoriam we have received. It is previous years' legacies that enable us to bridge the difference between our income and expenditure and have the reserves to survive the years we have a deficit. Legacies not only enable the Trust to continue to achieve so much of our general conservation work they also allow us to invest in special projects, currently the building of our new website. Previous projects have included the purchase of the Lennon Legacy Project land, the creation of the two ponds in the LLP, the Meeting Room and the Solar Project.

Overall income from grants and donations was up 9% on the previous year at £133,593 (£122,151 - 2014) accounting for 60% of total income (33% in 2014). Restricted grants from Charitable Trusts to support specific areas of our work increased by 21% to £25,400 (£21,000 - 2014). The majority of these restricted funds were for a project to support the replacement of unsuitable nestboxes. However we also received funds to support our educational and survey work, to develop our two websites, welfare work and finally to repair our aviaries and replace our telephone system both of which we hope to do in the next financial year.

We are very grateful for all of the grants we have received and particularly for the non-designated donations from Charitable Trusts which account for 17% of income £37,350 (£31,953 - 2014). During the year we have also been thankful to see a 7% increase in general donations.

Sales of promotional goods account for 3% of our income £6,139 and increased by 3% (£5,988 - 2014). However stock levels are higher and nett profit dropped by 3% from 49% in 2014 to 46%. Fundraising income decreased significantly, -41% and accounts for just 2% of our total income £3,939 (£6,692 - 2014).



| THE BARN OWL TRUST | | 31st March 2015 | 31st March 2014 |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|
| BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH 2015 | | | |
| | Notes | £ | £ |
| Fixed Assets | 2 | 151,663 | 170,452 |
| Current Assets | | | |
| Stock | | 15,133 | 13,785 |
| Prepayments & debtors | | 3,256 | 3,669 |
| Bank deposit account | | 270,143 | 248,144 |
| Bank current account | | 39,011 | 39,989 |
| Other bank accounts | | 1,211 | 1,687 |
| Petty cash | | 250 | 300 |
| | | <u>329,004</u> | <u>307,574</u> |
| Current Liabilities | | | |
| Trade creditors | | 11,274 | 13,072 |
| Deferred Income | | 4,340 | - |
| | | <u>15,614</u> | <u>13,072</u> |
| Net Current Assets | | 313,390 | 294,502 |
| Total Net Assets | | <u>465,053</u> | <u>464,954</u> |
| The funds of the charity: | | | |
| General Fund | | 143,872 | 126,133 |
| Restricted reserves | 8 | 12,223 | 16,978 |
| Allocated reserves | 9 | 308,958 | 321,843 |
| Total charity funds | 3 | <u>465,053</u> | <u>464,954</u> |

Fundraising income came almost entirely from our Annual Draw, our sponsored dog walk (£745) and volunteer fundraising. Our amazing volunteers raised a wonderful £1,500 (£636 -2014) during the year in all sorts of ingenious ways – thank you all. The weather at shows significantly affected our lucky dip and we raised just £257, a drop of £197 (£454 -2014) despite investment in a range of new prizes.

Our solar panels generated £4,218 during the year up 20% (£3,501 2014), fortunately we didn't have a repeat of the problems we experienced last year when we lost approximately £1,247 worth of generation due to a loose connection. Income £12,311 from our BOESS (Barn Owl Ecology, Surveys and Signs) and ABOSM (Advanced Barn Owl Surveying and Mitigation) courses was 43% down (£21,479 - 2014). This was due to advance payments for courses in the year being received in the previous financial year inflating those figures and reducing this year's. The income from sale of nestboxes continued to increase, up 37% to £16,837 (£12,308 - 2014).

We've seen a 9% increase in our Gift Aid claims, with a 3% increase in donations due to more people completing Gift Aid certificates when they make their donations. We've also seen a jump in recycling income, £567 (£43 - 2014). Thank you to everyone who has sent us items to recycle, reuse or sell.

Continued on page 16

S.O.F.A. Statement of financial activity



| | Notes | Restricted Funds | | Total Funds | Total Funds |
|---|-------|--------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| | | Unrestricted Funds | BOT Env. | 2015 | 2014 |
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Incoming Resources: | | | | | |
| Voluntary income: | | | | | |
| Grants & donations | | 108,193 | | 133,593 | 122,151 |
| Legacies | | 26,759 | | 26,759 | 176,320 |
| Activities for generating funds: | | | | | |
| Sale of promotional goods | 4 | 6,139 | | 6,139 | 5,988 |
| Fundraising events | | 3,939 | | 3,939 | 6,692 |
| Other Incoming resources | 7 | 52,408 | | 52,408 | 58,384 |
| Total Incoming resources | | 197,438 | - | 222,838 | 369,535 |
| Resources expended | | | | | |
| Direct charitable expenditure: | | | | | |
| Practical work | | | | | |
| Salaries, NI, pension | | 73,913 | | 87,966 | 107,172 |
| Overheads | | 5,900 | | 5,900 | 6,982 |
| Depreciation | 2 | 19,064 | | 19,064 | 18,945 |
| Lennon Legacy Project | | 799 | | 799 | 925 |
| Motoring | | 5,097 | | 6,322 | 8,688 |
| Mobile phones | | 522 | | 522 | 504 |
| Training | | 183 | | 183 | 1,526 |
| Costs of practical work | | 1,207 | | 4,173 | 5,191 |
| | | 106,685 | - | 124,929 | 149,933 |
| Information & advice service | | | | | |
| Salaries & NI | | 52,155 | | 52,155 | 53,738 |
| Overheads | | 4,961 | | 4,961 | 3,865 |
| Telephone | | 929 | | 929 | 940 |
| Postage | | 2,100 | | 2,100 | 4,462 |
| Training | | 93 | | 93 | 148 |
| Printing & Reproduction | | 2,217 | | 2,217 | 2,213 |
| Shows & Events | | 1,380 | | 1,380 | 1,118 |
| Internet, website & IT Support | | 13,299 | | 18,499 | 9,741 |
| Misc I & A costs | | 689 | | 689 | 854 |
| | | 77,823 | - | 83,023 | 77,079 |
| Direct charitable expenditure: | | 184,508 | - | 207,952 | 227,012 |
| Other resources expended: | | | | | |
| Fundraising & publicity | | | | | |
| Salaries & NI | | 6,330 | | 6,330 | 7,885 |
| Overheads | | 268 | | 268 | 249 |
| Cost of projects & events | | 246 | | 246 | 242 |
| Other FR expenditure | | 858 | | 858 | 1,723 |
| | | 7,702 | - | 7,702 | 10,099 |
| Governance costs | | | | | |
| Bookkeeping / financial management | | 5,969 | | 5,969 | 6,494 |
| Misc expenditure | | 180 | | 180 | 202 |
| Independent Examination | | 936 | | 936 | 918 |
| | | 7,085 | - | 7,085 | 7,614 |
| | | 14,787 | - | 14,787 | 17,713 |
| Total resources expended | | 199,295 | - | 222,739 | 244,725 |
| Net incoming resources | | (1,857) | - | 99 | 124,810 |
| Transfers between funds | | 6,711 | | (6,711) | |
| Net incoming resources after transfers | | 4854 | - | 99 | 124,810 |
| Fund balances brought forward | | 447,976 | - | 464,954 | 340,144 |
| Fund balances carried forward | | 452,830 | - | 465,053 | 464,954 |



Thank You

We are very grateful to the following charities, businesses and other organisations that have supported our work with grants, sponsorship or donations in kind during this financial year. Thank you!

Ashburton Post Office
Barbara & Richard Barker
Belsize Trust
Blair Foundation
Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust
Church's Hardware Store
Cobalt Trust
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust
David Scott
Dumbreck Charity
Eucalyptus Charitable Foundation
H. B. Allen Charitable Trust
Hamamelis Trust
Hatcher Animal Welfare Trust
M. J. Tottle Trust No 2
Macdonald-Buchanan Charitable Trust
Martin Wills Wildlife Maintenance Trust
Mackintosh Foundation
Marjorie & Geoffrey Jones Charitable Trust
Marsh Christian Trust
Mitchell Trust

N Smith Charitable Trust
Oakdale Trust
Ofenheim Trust
P F Charitable Trust
Panton Trust
Pennycress Trust
Ratcliff Foundation
Really Useful Group
Robert Clutterbuck Charitable Trust
Save Me Trust
Seven Pillars of Wisdom Trust
Sir John & Lady Amory's Charitable Trust
Stella Symons Charitable Trust
Sylvia Aitken Charitable Trust
Three Owls Sanctuary
Verdon Smith Family Charitable Trust
Veterinary Hospital Group
Waterloo Foundation
Wildlife Watching Supplies
William Armstrong Charitable Trust
Yorkshire Building Society Charitable Foundation

During this period we also received legacies from:

Alison Margaret Fox and Kathleen Goodchild

Gifts in Memory of:

David Esther, Margaret Hillam, Judie Reynolds, Maud Elizabeth James, John Britton, Ida Elmes, Sylvia Robins, Roy Michael Cartwright, Mrs Edna Mary Percival, Mr William Alan White, Marjorie Wedderburn, Karen Davis, John Parker, Jan Coppack, Margaret Quick, Phyllis Winifred Short, Neil Chapman, Mr Leslie Sutton, Mrs Mabel Ranford, Edna Beryl Arnold, Leslie Atkinson, Julie Jeffrey, Marian Irene Raven, Roger Rowberry, Maureen Anne Short, Leonard Howell and Gwendolene Dorothea Ann Ganter.

and donations from sponsored events and other fund-raising from:

Axe Valley Runners, Margaret & Derrick Crocker, Welcome Stranger Spoof Club, Shelley Wright & Tracey Morris, Leonna Walters, Rosie Fulton, Barley Sheaf - Gorran, St Winifreds Art Group, Leeds Steampunk, Waitrose Torquay.

Thank you all so much for your support

Financial Report continued

Our overall expenditure decreased by 9% to £222,739 (£244,725 – 2014). Practical work accounted for 56% of total spend at £125,095 (61% £149,933 - 2014) a 17% decrease on the previous year mainly due to staff savings with the completion of a fixed-term project post and lower mileage costs.

Provision of our Information and Advice service cost £83,023, 37% of total spend. This was an 8% increase on 2014 (£77,079) largely accounted for by a 90% increase in 'Internet, website & IT Support' due to the cost of our new website for which we received £5,200 of grant funding. We made savings in this area on staff and overheads and managed to cover more of our postage costs. Our overheads remained at 5% of total expenditure this year (£11,129 (£11,096)). We saw a 35% increase in electricity charges on 2014 but received a rebate when we changed electricity supplier which was allocated to miscellaneous income. Solar panel generation reduced the amount of electricity we had buy in.

Expenditure on fund-raising dropped from 4% to 3% of total spend £7,702- a 24% decrease in real terms from £10,099 in 2014. Our overall spend on training dropped by 84% to £276 (£1,674 in 2014) due to mainly in-house training for the continued development of core staff. Expenditure on Governance has dropped by 7% to £7,085 (£7,614 – 2014), it remains just 3% of total spend. We are able to keep this figure down because of our volunteers who have continued to be an invaluable asset to the Trust, assisting in every aspect of the work including practical tasks, administration, clerical work and fundraising, as well as the provision of professional services.

The LLP fund increased by £115 during the year. Income was £914 (£703 – 2014) and expenditure of £799 (£925 – 2014).

The Trustees have ring-fenced a fund of £59,733 for future projects and long-term maintenance of the Lennon Legacy Project. We have a formal policy on general financial reserves; in light of the losses recorded since 2003, when legacy income did not play a significant role in the Trust's income, it is deemed prudent to retain reserves on unrestricted funds of up to two years' expenditure, as shown in the previous year's accounts. This policy is reviewed on an annual basis. This year it was agreed that we allocate one year's expenditure as a reserve.

Of the general funds available to the Trust the Trustees have allocated £244,725 as a reserve for the next financial year, £59,733 for the Lennon Legacy Project and £4,500 for other projects leaving a general fund of £147,828. However our fixed assets and stock still account for significantly more than this and in light of the regular shortfall in income vs. expenditure (excluding legacies) the Trustees continue to look carefully at all outgoings. It is a difficult balance - holding reserves to ensure you can continue through the lean times often makes your appeals to Charitable Trusts less attractive than those from charities with smaller reserves particularly in difficult economic times.

In summary, during the year we managed to reduce our expenditure by £22,000 with the greatest savings on staff. Our income just covered this reduced expenditure. We expect that general expenditure will continue to increase and therefore we need to continue to increase our regular income to match our outgoings without becoming too distracted from our important work - conserving Barn Owls and the Environment.

To finish, I would like to say a big Thank You to everyone who has helped by supporting the Trust during this financial year.

Mark Pountney MAAT
Honorary Treasurer

Racing Nestboxes

Over the years we've been asked to comment on a number of original ideas, none more so than the 'Formula One Owl House' which is literally a Formula One racing car tyre converted into a Barn Owl nestbox!

Victoria Ewart a volunteer with Hampshire-based Hart Wildlife Rescue came up with the idea which she developed with nestbox builder Phil Lavender. On the face of it, it's brilliant. F1 car-racing teams get through a lot of tyres, disposing of them isn't easy, and rubber lasts a lot longer than wood. Whereas a wooden Barn Owl box in a tree will last about 12 years, a rubber tyre could potentially last twice as long. Perhaps even longer!

Victoria and Phil's prototype looked amazing! With the owls' needs in mind we set about building our own prototype and tweaked the design a little. The finished product was launched last year. Admittedly, a tyre in a tree does look a bit weird (!) so Phil developed a neat way of camouflaging them with green paint (owlandkestrel.co.uk).

Some people thought tyres might give off toxic fumes (called offgas) so we checked – it's not a problem. Tawny Owls have already nested successfully in a nest-tyre at the bottom of Victoria's garden. So, all we need now is a pair of wild Barn Owls to move in and raise a brood in our prototype.

Ordinary car tyres are completely the wrong shape for Barn Owls to nest in and we can't see that Formula 1 are ever going to replace wooden nestboxes. However, if waste can be of some benefit to wildlife then so much the better. Increasing numbers of nestbox manufacturers are now using sheet materials made from recycled plastic. If any readers have experience of these we'd be pleased to receive your comments. ★



Nestbox builder Phil Lavender with his prototype Barn Owl nest-tyre
Photos: David Ramsden



The 'owl test' for the Barn Owl Trust's prototype nest-tyre



Photo: Frances Ramsden

The sun came out for our Wildflower Walk on 29th April and we had such a good turn out we split our visitors into two groups. Each group had a guided tour of the 26 acre site followed by tea and cake in our lovely Meeting Room. You can see some of the flowers we spotted in our feature article 'Barn Owl habitat is great for wildflowers' on pages 18 and 19.

Our next Wildflower Walk is on Thursday 12th May 2016 at 2.30pm. Contact the office to book a place and check out the Events Diary on our website for information about all our seasonal walks and event.

We can also organise bespoke events for groups, contact the office for more information. ★

Barn Owl habitat

In our first-ever leaflet *Habitat for Barn Owls*, way back in 1988, we said "if you create the habitat for Barn Owls you will at the same time be providing habitat for lots of other wildlife including flowers and butterflies". Well, as the old adage says "the proof of the pudding is in the eating". In this, the first of our feature articles on the additional benefits of Barn Owl habitat, our Head of Conservation David Ramsden MBE explores:
The Flowers of Rough Grassland

Everyone loves that fairytale image of a flowery hay meadow, ablaze with colour and covered in butterflies. Indeed, almost all grassland managed for wildlife involves the re-creation of the traditional hay meadow; annually mown and all the cuttings removed to reduce nutrient levels so the wild flowers can compete with the grasses. Permanent rough grassland, on the other hand, is not known for its wild flowers and words like 'rank' and 'unmanaged' convey a mental image of something far less desirable than a flowery hay meadow. In truth, rough grassland can be a fantastic habitat for flowering plants as well as voles, shrews, mice, Barn Owls/Kestrels etc., reptiles, amphibians, and a vast array of invertebrates including butterflies.

In our own nature reserve, the Lennon Legacy Project (LLP), not only do we see lots of wild flowers but also observe how they vary through the year and from one year to the next. Some species appeared and disappeared whilst others continue to increase – particularly those that are able to co-exist with the grasses – and almost every year a new species is recorded.

Disturbed ground

It's amazing how long seeds can lie in the soil just waiting for a chance to germinate! Wherever we disturbed the ground we were able to record new species. The most amazing example was where turf was removed when we re-created one of the hedges lost in 1970. Field Pansy appeared along with Musk Thistle and a very tall plant with yellow flowers we identified as Twiggy Mullein. None of these species had been recorded before. There were also hundreds of the normally-scarce White Champion. Although we didn't disturb the ground again, the following year we had loads of Twiggy Mullein and Dark Mullein too – hundreds in all – both regarded as 'scarce' species in some wildflower books and certainly not recorded here before. We still get the odd one but probably won't see many unless we disturb the ground again. Ah well, at least the 'seedbank' has been restocked.



LLP Buttercups from the air

A blaze of colour

When we acquired the site in 2001 it was one very big field of pasture; mostly ryegrass and white clover, artificially fertilized, and intensively grazed every year. Needless to say, there were very few wild flowers whereas now we have flowers across most of the site at some time in the year. Following the cessation of sheep grazing in 2002, buttercups increased tremendously eventually peaking in 2005 when we had carpets of yellow and blue, a mixture of Buttercups and Germander Speedwell.



Speedwell and Buttercups - June

The colours were so intense that they were clearly visible when I photographed them from 2,000 feet overhead.

Some woodland and hedgerow flowers do extremely well in permanent rough grassland and the year begins with a fantastic show of Lesser Celandines flowering before the grass has really got going.

By mid-April celandines in the rough grass have been joined by



Celandines - April

Primroses. This year one clump of Primroses in the grassland grew bigger than a football and had over 300 flowers!



Primroses - April

Dotted around the 25 acres, Bluebells also appear in the rough grassland and in one spot we have the white variety too. In some places, the Bluebells flower within great big clumps of vivid yellow-green Crosswort; another woodland edge species that does well in rough grassland. Elsewhere, Sorrel provides big splashes of red.

is great for wild flowers



Greater Stichwort - May



Hedge Bedstraw - July

Everything will be all white

In May the grass is growing pretty fast along with a wide variety of wild flower plants that have yet to 'do their stuff'. Pure white clumps of Greater Stitchwort appear – last year one clump was so big we could see it from the road three quarters of a mile away!



Lesser Stichwort - June

Its little relative the Lesser Stichwort, which appears in June, is even more numerous providing carpets of little white stars that cover huge tracts of rough grass.

These flower well into the summer by which time many other species are in full bloom. Carpets of blue Germander Speedwell mixed with those little white stars are a joy to behold. Then come carpets of Greater Birdsfoot Trefoil a favourite food plant for butterflies which are also, on occasion, mixed with the little white stars of Lesser Stichwort.



Birdsfoot Trefoil - June

Continuing the theme in July, great big beds of white-flowering Hedge Bedstraw fill the air with super-sweet scent and white trumpets of Field Bindweed appear below the big white flower heads of Yarrow, some of which decide to come out pink.

In the pink

Here and there, Common Vetch (which despite its name is not the most common vetch) adds a dark pink as does Southern Marsh Orchid. Historically only one, we now have two carpets of Rest Harrow with its pink pea-like flowers and before that's over, big Musk Mallow plants grow randomly here and there showing off their huge pink blooms within the rough grass.



Musk Mallow - July

And the rest...

Meadow Vetchling, Mouse Ear, Spear Thistle, Knapweed, Marsh Thistle, Meadowsweet, Red Clover, Hogweed, Hemp Agrimony, and so it goes on. Yes, Rough Grassland certainly can be a very flowery habitat indeed.



Bluebells, Crosswort, Sorrel & Greater Stichwort - May

Find out more about the Lennon Legacy Project and read our monthly Wildlife Diary on our website: Go to www.barnowltrust.org.uk, select About Us, click on What We Do, then Barn Owl Trust Projects, then The Lennon Legacy Project.

NOTE: A full colour version of this article is available on line. If you have a computer, why not ask to receive FEEDBACK by email? Simply phone 01364-653026 and give us your email address or email info@barnowltrust.org.uk

Team Talk

This is where we bring you the latest news from the BOT team.

After more than four years here, at the end of March Karen Smerdon (right) retired from her one-day-a-week post with the Trust. Her role was advertised in August.

Aaron Kitts became part of our admin team in March to work with Emma who left us at the beginning of May. We expect Marianne Bryan to return to work at the end of September following her maternity leave.

In October we will lose Stuart, he is moving to the other side of the country to work with his favourite species. We'll be really sorry to say goodbye and wish him good luck with his new direction. As long as the financial situation allows we hope to advertise for a new assistant conservation officer in early 2016.



*Karen Smerdon
Photo: Matthew Twiggs*

Hi my name is Mark, I started volunteering for the Barn Owl Trust in August 2014 helping Jasmin build nestboxes a day a week. Recently we've been working on replacing an old aviary and rebuilding the office's porch as well as keeping on top of nestbox orders. I've recently attended the Barn Owl Trust training course for ecologists and this summer helped out at shows.



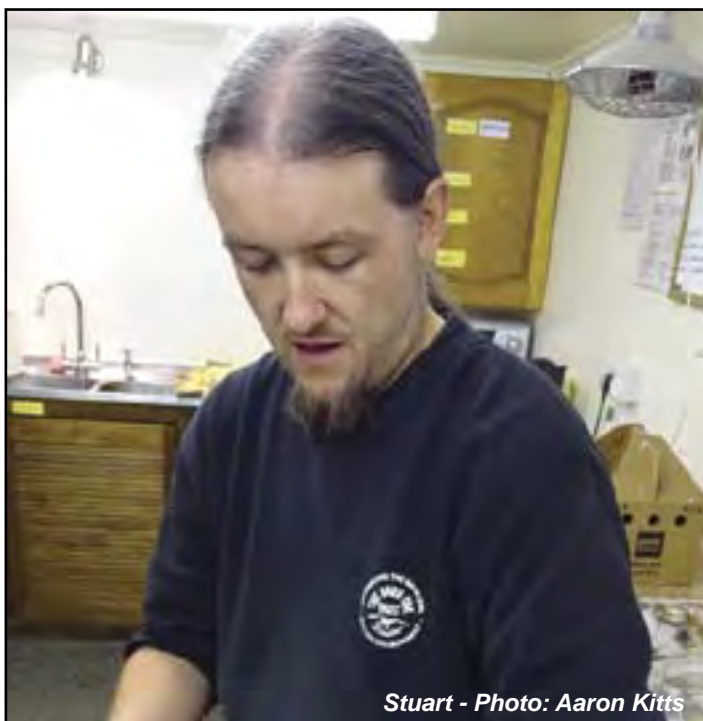
*Mark on the Trust stand at Honiton Show in August
Photo: Matthew Twiggs*

I've just finished my second year at Plymouth University studying Conservation Biology and applied to take a placement year at the Barn Owl Trust between the second and final year of my degree. I start on the 1st of September for around ten months to a year.

Whilst on my placement I will be assisting the conservation team with conservation work, projects and enquiries, conducting a piece of research into juvenile Barn Owl dispersal and also helping Jasmin a day a week with nestbox building and general maintenance. I will continue to help lead university volunteer groups that come to help with practical conservation on the Lennon Legacy Project.

From my placement I hope to gain a wide range of knowledge in Barn Owl conservation and habitat management techniques. This will not only help me with my final year at university but will give me the experience and knowledge I need to have a chance of getting a job in bird of prey conservation in the future.

Mark Ellison
Student placement 2015



Stuart - Photo: Aaron Kitts

After almost six-and-a-half years at the Barn Owl Trust, it is time for me to say goodbye. I am moving to the other side of the country and swapping owls for all things venomous. I will be working with such fascinating creatures as black widow spiders, deathstalker scorpions, jellyfish, leaches and many, many others. There will also be opportunities to get 'hands on' with vipers, cobras, mambas and other venomous snakes. I know it's not everyone's cup of tea, but I am very excited as I have always had a love of all things creepy-crawly.

As much as I am looking forward to my new role, I will not be leaving the Barn Owl Trust without a sense of sadness. I am lucky enough to be able to say that I will be leaving behind not just colleagues, but friends. I have learned a great deal in my time here, and not just about owls. I will most definitely be leaving a more well-rounded individual than when I arrived back in March 2009.

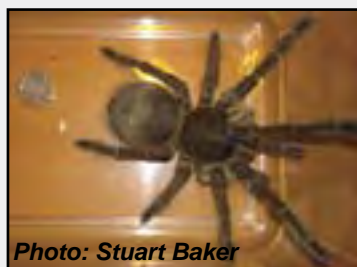


Photo: Stuart Baker

I'd just like to say a big thank-you to everyone at the Trust who has helped make my time here so memorable. On that note, here's something to remember me by, but don't worry, she's coming with me!

Stuart Baker
Assistant Conservation Officer

More News from the Team

You may remember in our last edition, our maternity cover admin assistant, Emma, was in need of a maternity cover herself! We are pleased to announce Robyn Eleanor Moxham was born on 24th May weighing 7lb 13oz.



*Emma and Robyn
Photo: Provided*

She arrived just over 2 weeks early in a bit of a hurry, in fact almost in the car! Emma, husband Paul and the new arrival are getting on well and settling into life as a new family. We can't wait to meet Robyn in the office and wish them all the best for the future. ★



*Aaron Kitts
Photo: Provided*

Hi everyone, I'm Aaron. I joined the Barn Owl Trust in March 2015 and am thrilled to be part of the team. I would like to thank everyone at the Trust for making me feel so welcome.

I work as part of the administration team (having taken over from Emma when she left) dealing with telephone calls and emails and helping to maintain our Friends and Adoption schemes. I also help with all our other admin processes and publications.

I originate from Cornwall and moved to Torquay, in Devon, nine years ago. I feel very much at home living by the sea and take every opportunity to enjoy the glorious Devon coast and countryside. ★

Aaron Kitts
Admin Team



*Tony Hulatt
Photo: Matthew Twiggs*

Having recently retired following the sale of my business, I thought I would utilise my time and hence my contact with the Trust. Having a lifetime interest in birds, especially owls, I enquired about volunteering.

Since April I have been here at the BOT one day a week cleaning aviaries, going on nest-boxing trips and generally helping out with all manner of other tasks. With a Zoology degree in my background I feel like I am now getting back to my roots. I also volunteer at Slapton Ley and play in a rock band. ★

Tony Hulatt
Volunteer



Aaron and Jo performing in Legally Blonde at the Princess Theatre in June Photos: Brian Tilley

Aaron is also a keen performer who, alongside Jo from the Conservation Team, recently appeared in TOADS' production of Legally Blonde the Musical at the Princess Theatre in Torquay.

The show tells the story of a ditz blonde girl from California, Elle, who tries to get a place at Harvard Law School in an attempt to win back the love of her life. Aaron played Emmett Forest, a Harvard Law graduate and love interest to Elle, and Jo played Brooke Wyndham, an American fitness guru accused of murder. The feedback from the audience and local press was fantastic, both Jo and Aaron are very much looking forward to TOADS' upcoming production, Grease, in 2016. ★

Get Involved

To be able to continue to "Conserve the Barn Owl and its Environment" the Barn Owl Trust relies upon the generosity of our supporters and the general public.

Many of you reading this may already support the Trust through our adoption and friend schemes or made donations or volunteered and for this we are truly grateful. But have you ever fancied doing something a little different? Do you know someone who is up for a challenge? Is there something you want to cross off your bucket list? Why not take up a daring or exciting sponsored challenge in aid of the Barn Owl Trust.

In the past staff and supporters have conquered various challenges including trekking Nepal's famous 200 mile Annapurna Circuit, completing the Two Moors Way Walk and even jumping from planes.

If you feel you're up to the challenge here are a few ideas for inspiration:

- Walk / Run / Marathon
- Abseil
- Swim (www.outdoorswimmingsociety.com)+
- Skydive (www.skydiveforfree.co.uk)
- Mountain / Desert Trek
- Bunjee Jump
- Cycle

If you are planning a fundraising event please get in touch! ★



From Left: Lesley, Rosie & Judy prepare for Annapurna in 2002
Photo: Provided

Do Something Different at Work

If you're feeling slightly less adventurous, but still want to show your support, why not have a fundraising event at work? You could have a cake sale, coffee morning, a sponsored dress-down day or fancy dress day. Or you could host a quiz, raffle or even set up a charity car wash.

If you are thinking about holding a sponsored event please contact us. We can provide you with relevant literature and sponsorship forms.



Leonna Walters' cake sale
Photo: Nicola Halsam

This may sound obvious but it is important to stay within the law and respect health and safety when participating in fundraising events. ★

Schools and Youth Community Groups

Many school classes adopt owls from The Barn Owl Trust. We can offer adoptions tailored to the class or school. The feedback from teachers has been great, with children excited to learn about Barn Owls and the environment.

We also offer specially-designed sessions for primary school and community youth groups within the Devon and Cornwall area. The session is called *Wings of Change* and uses storytelling to engage the children. It covers Barn Owl habitat, adaptations, decline and conservation and includes a visit from Baley, our volunteer education Barn Owl! To book a talk for your school or group or for more information, please get in touch.



Jo delivers the *Wings of Change* talk
Photo: Stuart Baker

Adult Community Groups and Organisations

We can provide 2 different talks for adult groups. Each lasts around 60 minutes with time for questions but can be flexible to meet your group's requirements. We use visual slideshows to illustrate the talks.

Restoring the Balance takes a look at Barn Owl ecology and the causes behind the decline of this iconic farmland bird.

The Lennon Legacy Project (LLP) talk tells the story of the transformation of 26 acres of intensively grazed sheep pasture into 26 acres of 'Barn Owl Heaven'.

We can also arrange bespoke events tailored to your group, business or organisation in a 26 acre nature reserve with meeting room facilities for up to 30 people. Activities such as team building, walks and talks can all be arranged and designed to run for a few hours, or a few days depending on your timescale and the season. Refreshments including lunches, cakes and cream teas can be provided. For more information please visit our website or give us a call. ★



Chard & Ilminster U3A enjoy the LLP
Photo: Aaron Kitts

Be Inspired...



Poetry competition

Our previous poetry competitions were a great success. We had sufficient entries on each occasion to publish a 'Wildlife Words' Anthology which is available via our website.

We are now holding our fourth Open Poetry Competition and you are invited to write a poem on 'Wildlife/Conservation'. All profits from the competition will help provide care for casualty birds.

There will be a First, Second and Third prize, along with six runners-up who will receive a certificate of commendation.

The winner of our 2014 competition, Hilary Jupp, has kindly agreed to be the judge of this year's competition. The closing date is mid-day Wednesday 13th January 2016.

The Competition is open to all writers and there is no entry form required or limit to the number of entries. Please see below for the terms and conditions. We hope to produce our fourth "Wildlife Words" Anthology in the spring of 2016.

- The poem must not exceed forty lines of any style.
- Entries should be in English, typed or neatly hand written on one side only of A4, if emailed - in the body of an email rather than as an attachment.
- Poems must be the writer's own original work, previously unpublished and not currently entered for any other competition.
- If sending by post entrants should include their name and address on a separate sheet with the title of their poem, there should not be any identifying marks on the poem. If emailed the name and address should be included in the body of the email to allow it to be separated from the poem(s).
- BOT cannot make corrections or alterations once poems are submitted.
- The closing date is mid-day Wednesday 13th January 2016 and the Judge's decision is final. Winners will be announced in the Spring 2016 issue of Feedback where the winning poem will be printed.
- Each poem is to be accompanied by £3 (minimum) fee. Writers can submit multiple poems provided the fee of £3 per poem is paid. Cheques should be made payable to Barn Owl Trust.
- Postal entries should be sent to "Poetry Competition" Barn Owl Trust, Waterleat, Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7HU and enclose an SAE if you wish to receive a printed copy of the results.
- Send email entries to info@barnowltrust.org.uk with the entry fee of £3 per poem being made via our website (barnowltrust.org.uk/support-us) stating "Poem" as reason for donation.

Good luck! ★

Gift Ideas

If you're looking for some inspiration this Christmas, we have some wonderful new gifts and cards available to buy from mid-September.

Christmas Cards

Beautiful winter themed A6 cards. The cards contain the words "Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year". Printed on recycled card and supplied with recycled envelopes.



Available to buy individually for 80p per card or save money by buying our ready made packs of 12 for only £6.60 (55p per card).

Our ready made pack includes 3 each of the 4 designs:

1. "The First Noel" – Image provided by Russell Savory
2. "Flying Through the Snow" – Image provided by Craig Jones
3. "Ding Dong Merrily" – Image provided by Villager Jim
4. "Silent Night" - Image provided by Mark Fullerton

All New Barn Owl Trust Mug

A robust and chunky ceramic mug with wrap-around design featuring stunning images of Barn Owls in the wild and the BOT logo. Only £6.50.



Mug images left to right: Paul Smith and Mark Fullerton

2016 Calendar

A full colour, month to a page calendar featuring beautiful images donated by photographers and the general public.

Printed on recycled card. Designed and made at the Barn Owl Trust.

All these items and more available to purchase from the Barn Owl Trust online shop. ★



Thanks and Things

As always we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our supporters who are either Friends of the Trust, Barn Owl adopters or those who donate much needed funds and materials. As well as those who give us financial support, we also owe a huge thanks to everyone that gives up either their time or expertise to support us. And of course there are all the supporters who send us items to use, recycle or sell. So a massive thank you to:

Heather Buswell, Steve High, Elaine Underhill, Ann & Peter Stansell, Melanie White, Miss Adcock, Iris Roberts, Caroline Doswell, Janet Rutter, Will Wareham, Jayne & Tim Hartley, Jennifer Porter, Honey Ingram, Peter Mason, Ashburton PO, Mr & Mrs Larard, Emily Cunningham, Kim McNeil, Ruth Westall, Jackie Bufton, Linda Gerrard, Gillian Blackmore, Tracey Morris & Shelley Wright of Tools for Self Reliance, David Vickery, Glendinning Ltd, Nina & Vince Fenner, James Gwilliam, Richard & Leigh Anne Boucher, Mr R Badcock, Garry Hewitt and John Hatt.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers: Kim Baker, Tony Hulatt, Bill MacDonald, Alan Sloman, Diane Hawkings, Margaret Rhodes, Mark Ellison and Karen Smerdon.

Finally we would like to thank Christine Robinson for her help transporting birds and Adrian Langdon for helping with fallen owlets in Cornwall. Also Veterinary Hospital Group at Estover in Plymouth and to all Annual Monitoring Site owners, tenants and guardians.

Can you help with:

- ⊗ Postcards and pre1970 envelopes with stamps on - they are worth much more to us intact
- ⊗ Any used stamps, including any foreign stamps
- ⊗ Wild Barn Owl pellets (we can never have too many)
- ⊗ Wild bird food - mainly sacks of black sunflower seeds, also peanuts & plain canary seed
- ⊗ Wood for making outdoor nestboxes - sheets of 9 or 12mm tanalised softwood ply and lengths of 25x 50mm tanalised batten
- ⊗ A4 and A3 recycled paper and card both coloured and white
- ⊗ Anabat detector
- ⊗ Hand held hetrodyne bat detector
- ⊗ Carpet suitable for the office
- ⊗ Metal detector
- ⊗ Pliers
- ⊗ Drill-driver bits (for screwing)
- ⊗ Set of sharp circular hole cutters (large sizes for cutting neat holes in plywood)
- ⊗ Small plate compactor
- ⊗ Emulsion paint (pale colour) sufficient to paint an office
- ⊗ Bubble wrap
- ⊗ Brown packaging/parcel tape 50mm x 66mm
- ⊗ A3 rotary trimmer for paper and card
- ⊗ OS Explorers maps of Devon, particularly Bideford, Ilfracombe, Barnstaple and Dartmoor

Thank you for your help ★

Tail piece ...



How lucky are we to live at a time and in a place where we have enough to eat, when there is no war and where leisure time is an expectation. We have education, healthcare and the opportunity to make choices. It was less than one hundred years ago that only 60% of men over 21 had the right to vote. In 1918 things changed and all men over 21 could vote in their local constituency and even some women over 30 could vote for the first time if they 'qualified'. It was 1928 before this was extended to all women over the age of 21.

The First World War provided the first opportunity for women to take on traditional male jobs so it isn't surprising that some women were given the same political rights as men. But this change was not just a result of war - women had been campaigning for decades to be given the right to vote.

It's hard to believe how much things have changed in just three or four generations, a miniscule amount of time when you consider evolution. It was 1906 when the first music was heard on radio and 1928 when the first television was sold. Nowadays tv's are in virtually every home, family cars are the norm and almost everyone has a mobile phone. Foreign holidays and air travel were just a dream for most of our grandparents who, as children, often had to walk long distances to school and were then expected to start work at 14.

Despite all of the labour saving devices and luxuries we have these days as a society we don't seem to be any happier or fulfilled than previous generations. The Western World is geared for growth, we are constantly bombarded with advertising for things we 'need' to improve our quality of life. But wouldn't our lives be better if we spent more time being grateful for the things we have instead of lusting after things we don't really need? If we considered how lucky we are compared to the generations that came before us and those that even now, in the 21st century, are suffering from persecution and starvation.

Human beings are incredible creatures with the power to manipulate and change their environment. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all of this amazing energy was geared towards helping each other, looking after the planet that supports us all and caring for the other species that share it. As John Lennon sang in his song 'Imagine' - "No need for greed or hunger, A brotherhood of man, Imagine all the people, Sharing all the world..."

Make time to get inspiration from the natural world and enjoy the plants and animals that share our planet. Everything from the greatest tree to the smallest flower is a miracle of life and you can use it to refresh your soul. Use your energy to care for those less fortunate whatever their nationality or religion and to look after your neighbours and your neighbourhood. There are undoubtedly bad people in the world and lots of folk that don't think about the consequences of their actions but, fortunately there are far more good ones and people that care.

Of course it's because of the suffragette movement that women now have the right to vote. The latest fashions, gadgets and possessions are just transient, they may make life more comfortable in the short-term, but they never last. Conserving the earth and its diversity for future generations is the most important thing that any of us can do and if enough of us work for change then, like the suffragette movement, we will make a difference.

For those more interested in profit than caring for our planet please understand that - "Only when the last tree has died, the last river been poisoned and the last fish caught will we realise that we cannot eat money".

To those of us who care we must believe that: *Together we really can make a world of difference.* ★

Frances Ramsden