

feedback

Issue 60 / Autumn 2018



Reg Charity No: 299 835
www.barnowltrust.org.uk

Waterleat, Ashburton
Devon TQ13 7HU

In this issue ...

Welcome to Feedback	2
Diary Dates	2
BOT News	3
More BOT News	4
The Hazel Dormouse	5
In Memoriam	5
2018 Breeding Season	6
Males go Missing	6
LLP Update	7
LLP Wild Bird Crop	8-9
Annual Report 2017 - 2018	10-16
Bird News	17
Caught on Camera	17
More Bird News	18
Barn Owl Boxes Abroad	19
Ringing Trips	20
Fundraising News	21
Team Talk	22
Thanks & Things	23
Tail Piece...	23

Cover Illustration: Wild Flower Strip photo by David Ramsden
Barn Owl Photos by: (bottom left - top right) Nick Sampford, Amir Ezer, Christopher Castling, Paul Smith, Rob Haynes, Ed MacKerrow, Nick Sampford, Jamie Skipper and Gavin Law.

Feedback is produced for Friends of the Barn Owl Trust by staff and volunteers.

A big thank you to everyone who provided words and pictures for this issue.

Editorial team: Marianne Bryan, Aaron Kitts & Frances Ramsden

Proofing: Sandra Reardon and the BOT Team

Copy date for issue No 61. 22nd February 2019.
Send your contributions - news, letters, pictures and information to:

Feedback, Barn Owl Trust, Waterleat, Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7HU

Email: feedback@barnowltrust.org.uk
Website: www.barnowltrust.org.uk
Telephone: 01364 653026



Diary Dates 2018-2019

November - Tues 13th & Weds 14th - BOESS Training Course
- Thurs 15th & Fri 16th - ABOSM Training Course
- Thurs 22nd - 10am - Winter Bird Walk

January - Thurs 17th - 10am - Winter Bird Walk

Join us for practical work in the LLP with the
Conservation Team 10am - 4pm :

October - Weds 10th, **November** - Tues 6th, **December** - Weds 5th
January - Weds 9th, **February** - Tues 5th, **March** - Weds 6th

Contact the office for more details or to book a place at an event - booking is essential as places are strictly limited.

Please visit www.barnowltrust.org.uk for details.

Welcome to Issue 60 of Feedback including our Annual Report 2017-2018. This issue is marking the Barn Owl Trust's 30th Anniversary as a registered charity. Those of you receiving Feedback by post will notice that in honour of this special occasion we decided to print our cover in colour! This was last done for Issue 30, celebrating our 25th Anniversary, back in 2013.

You may remember from the last issue of Feedback we had an exciting new project in the pipeline, the creation of 2.5 acre of combined winter bird food crop mixed with wild flower seeds in the LLP. The work for this started in April and the results have already been very interesting indeed. The wild flower strip bordering two sides of the crop has not only looked stunning and been a joy to behold but also attracted many bees and butterflies. Flocks of Linnets have been spotted amongst the crop and you can read all about this fantastic new adventure on pages 8&9. Why not join us on one of our Winter Bird Walks and see the results for yourself - check out 'Diary Dates' below left and contact the office to book your place.

For those not able to come and see our new project first hand we wanted to take this opportunity to show you the wild flower strip in all it's glorious colour so we chose that as our centre piece for the front cover. Dotted around this beautiful image is a selection of Barn Owl photographs featured on past front covers of Feedback dating as far back as issue 34 produced in 2005.

We are also very excited about our Dormouse project which has come into full swing this year with help from our volunteer, Tony Hulatt, who conveniently holds the appropriate licence to carry out the Dormouse work. He has written us a great article about the Dormouse and the results of the nestbox inspections which took place at the end of May - see page 5.

The Conservation Team here at the Trust have been rushed off their feet the past few months organising and holding our Barn Owl training courses, dealing with lots of fallen owl enquiries, going out on ringing trips, keeping on top of all the management tasks required in the LLP and much, much more! Thanks must go to those volunteers who help us with the practical work in the LLP, help us with owl transport to and from vets and help with all those other little jobs which all add to the daily workload of the Conservation Team. For an update on our owl rehab and release see 'Bird News' on page 17 and licensed bird ringer, Judith Read, gives us the low-down on her ringing trips with Conservation Officer Rick Lockwood on page 20.

We were delighted to meet some of you at our Coffee and Cake events held throughout the summer to celebrate this special year, and a huge thank you to our supporters who have given special donations or taken up the challenge of raising £30 for our 30th year - you can read some of their inspiring stories in Fundraising News page 21. We know some of these fundraising events are still in progress and it is not too late to organise your own event and raise £30 too! Send us your details and we will publicise your fundraising event on Facebook and Twitter to help get the ball rolling. Our marvellous Midge, and her human Judith, are now over half way through their challenge of walking 1,500 miles and you can read about their progress in 'Team Talk' on page 22.

You will find our latest sales leaflet enclosed featuring a new range of Christmas cards and greetings cards (also displayed in full colour on the back cover) as well as other gift ideas for Christmas including the Barn Owl design cotton bags and t-shirts which were new for last year and have been flying out!

We hope you enjoy reading our 60th issue of Feedback. 30 years truly is a milestone worth celebrating and it is thanks to all our fantastic supporters, Friends, Barn Owl Adopters and Volunteers, that we have achieved all we have in this time. Your support and enthusiasm for Barn Owl Conservation is inspiring and we cannot thank you enough!

Marianne Bryan & Aaron Kitts ★



BOT News



Frances & David Ramsden

Photo: Muzz Murray

60th Issue of Feedback

You cannot have failed to notice that the Barn Owl Trust is celebrating its 30th Birthday this year. I'm sure all of you will recognise the names of David and Frances Ramsden, pictured above with the original 'education owl' Moon – this photo was taken in 1989; the year after the Trust became a registered charity. However their work with Barn Owls had started 5 years previously, in 1984, when they and a small group of volunteers started the Devon Barn Owl Breeding and Release Scheme.

Some of you may be new supporters and others may remember us from these early days when our newsletters were composed on a type-writer and articles were cut and pasted before being photocopied for distribution, or even before that when they were written by hand! Feedback issue 1 was hand written by David in April 1986, it was 4 pages long and gave an overview of how the scheme was progressing along with encouragement for the supporters to care for the wonderful planet we share – to recycle, to shop with a conscience and buy organic, bio-degradable and more ethically sound products; reminding us all that no matter how small the step that together we can make a world of difference. David and Frances have always been passionate about caring for the environment and strongly believe that this goes hand in hand with Barn Owl Conservation.



The Feedback newsletter was originally produced only once a year and it was not until Issue 4 in 1989 that pictures were included and in 1991 we made the move from type-writer to computer but we continued to cut and paste each issue! In 1992 it was decided to send Feedback out twice a year which has continued to this present day and in 1994 we increased the page numbers from 12 to 16 which is our standard number to date (24 pages when including the Annual Report). The format and style has changed a lot over the years but there are some core elements which have remained such as the Tail Piece written by Frances, first seen in Issue 10 in 1994 under the different guise of 'Last Words'. In keeping with the Trust's focus on protecting the environment, the publication has always been produced on recycled paper and in 2012 we made Feedback available by email for those who wished to read it from their computer, mobile phone or tablet... how times have changed!

Here we are at issue 60, and the Barn Owl Trust's 30th Anniversary! Thank you for supporting us through this incredible journey and with your support we will continue to Conserve the Barn Owl and its Environment and give you 'Feedback' for many years to come. ★

News Bites

Laura Kinsella Foundation

A big thank you to the Laura Kinsella Foundation for their generous donation of £1000 towards some roller shutters for our nestbox workshop. A set of shutters will allow us to securely store our stock, tools and equipment as well as creating a more sheltered working environment during colder months. We still have funds to raise but hope to be able to complete this project soon.

New Trailer vs the Elements!

Our new display trailer has been busy attending local agricultural events such as the Royal Cornwall Show, Devon County Show and Totnes Show. Although this summer has seen a record breaking heatwave we were not blessed with good weather at these events. Thankfully the great British public braved the elements to come and see our new trailer which withstood the wind and rain enabling us to dispense advice on habitat management, nestbox installation and much, much more. We also won the 3rd prize rosette for our stand at the Chagford show!

New Greetings & Xmas Cards

We are delighted to present 8 new greetings cards just in time for Christmas! You can find all the details for ordering these in the enclosed sales leaflet or take a look at the back page of Feedback to see them in full colour!

Music Event in Ashburton

A local supporter popped into one of our Coffee & Cake events during the summer and offered to help organise a gig at the Ashburton Arts Centre with proceeds going to the Trust. The event will hopefully be held early next year, featuring our own Owly Dave and other local musicians - date and more details to follow in the next Feedback.

New Event in LLP

Join us in November for our new Winter Bird Walk. You'll get to see our wild bird crop first hand (see pages 8 & 9) as well as large flocks of finches, buntings and other seed eating birds. As with all BOT events we'll finish with refreshments in our cosy meeting room. Thursday 22nd November, 10am. Contact the office on 01364 653026 or email info@barnowltrust.org.uk to book. See website for details. For those of you who cant make the November date we will be holding the same event again on January 17th 2019.

Nestbox Sales Doubled

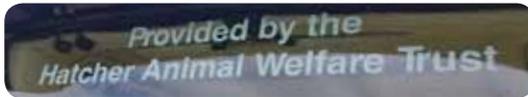
In the financial year 2017-2018 we saw our nestbox sales double from the previous year thus bringing about the necessity for an additional part-time nestbox worker. An advert for this position is now up on our website. We are also looking for a volunteer wood worker, so if you live locally and are good with wood, get in touch!

More BOT News

New Tractor

The management of our nature reserve (The Lennon Legacy Project) received a significant boost this year with a £30,000 grant to replace our somewhat knackered old red tractor with a smaller and much younger green one. As the chap who actually drives it, I just want to say a special thank you to the Hatcher Animal Welfare Trust for funding it.

What a difference it makes, having a tractor that actually starts when you want it to(!) and everything actually works! Our John Deere 5075e, only 4 years old, has already proved its worth helping volunteers manage scrub invasion and Bracken control. I'm delighted to report that it felt reassuringly stable on steep ground even with our topper on the back.



Bracken and scrub control are important for maintaining the site as rough grassland which is a fantastic habitat, not only for small mammals and their predators (owls, foxes etc.) but also for wildflowers, invertebrates, and all the creatures that feed on them (crickets, dragonflies, Swallows, House Martins, Swifts, Meadow Pipit, Skylarks etc.).



Even with our mower attachment on the back, weighing a hefty 1.7 tons, the John Deere performed very well maintaining the paths that are enjoyed by visitors on our Guided Walks and by the local Green Woodpeckers for feeding. ★

All Photos by David Ramsden

David Ramsden
Head of Conservation

A Towering Success



Photo Provided

Anglesey-based company 'WM Design and Architecture' recently posted this on their Facebook page: "An extremely successful Wildlife Tower for one of our clients, since 2014 it's housed 19 Barn Owls, 8 Kestrels, numerous House Sparrows and Honey Bees are even resident inside. Not all our clients are humans!"

Great to hear this success story of another Wildlife Tower based on our design. Well done guys! Eds. ★

An Amazing Nest



Photo: Mateo Ruiz

This remarkable nest belonged to a family of Long-tailed Tits. They make their nests with moss, hair and cobwebs using lichen on the outside for camouflage. Inside it is lined with lots of soft feathers. Details of its finding can be read about in the LLP update on page 7. Isn't it fantastic?! ★

The Hazel Dormouse



The native British dormouse has gone from being an occasional household pet during Victorian times, to an elusive creature now rarely seen in the wild. Its stronghold is in the South and West of the UK but because it is almost exclusively nocturnal and arboreal, and hibernates for almost 6 months of the year, its true distribution and exact UK population size are very difficult to estimate.

However, it was discovered that dormice will utilise bird nest boxes which prompted the design of a specific box for dormice, which is generally smaller than a tit box, has the entrance hole facing inwards towards the tree trunk with spacing bars either side of the hole to create the entry space required. This also serves to restrict access by inquisitive tits although their nests are always likely to be found in any sample of dormouse boxes examined. Dormice take readily to boxes even where previously, only natural sites were available and therefore this has proved vital in enabling zoologists to better understand dormouse biology and ecology through population studies centred around the regular inspection of boxes.

Generally, the best dormouse habitat is any woodland, species-rich hedge or area of woody scrub especially mature coppiced hazel stands with a rich understorey of plants such as bramble and importantly, honeysuckle, which is preferred by dormice when constructing their woven, grapefruit-sized nest ball, which is then topped with fresh leaves. These 'green' leaves are distinctive and help distinguish nests from those of the Wood Mouse, the only other rodent found regularly in nest boxes, and which uses dead brown leaves taken from the ground.

In Devon, there are around 600 sites where the dormouse has been recorded. Core areas are east Devon, along the west Dorset and west Somerset border, and the Teign Valley edge with Dartmoor, which in particular have high concentrations of dormouse records. Records seem more scattered but are still numerous across mid and north Devon. Other areas with frequent records include the South Hams and much of Dartmoor.

At the Barn Owl Trust, there had previously been evidence of dormouse presence some years ago but this had not been confirmed recently. However, the discovery of an adult dormouse



last winter that had probably been brought in by a cat prompted the siting of 25 boxes in early 2018 along suitable hedge boundaries surrounding the 26 acres of the Lennon Legacy Project. Dormice exit hibernation around April so the initial inspection of the boxes took place towards the end of May. Incredibly, 3 boxes had both nests and 1 adult dormouse in each. Although no dormice were seen during the next two inspections in June and early August, a further 3 boxes had dormouse nests present.

This is a wonderful start and bodes well for future years when the Trust will be able to concentrate additional boxes in population 'hot-spots' to increase the potential usage by dormice. Although unlikely this year, the hope is that breeding dormice will be discovered in these boxes, so helping this wonderful animal increase its population across the reserve. ★

Tony Hulatt
BOT Volunteer

All Photos by Tony Hulatt

In Memoriam

The Trust has received legacies from the estates of

**Barbara Donna Boucher, Rose Elizabeth Cook,
Jean Cowburn, Janet Furse
and Wendy Pauline Long**

and donations in memory of

**Gertrude May Barrow, Trudie Barrow, Dorothy Bramall,
George Bramall, Marlene Browning, Michael Bush,
Terence James Codner, John Hawke Collins,
Mary-Ann Hammond, John McDowell, Mike Powell-Jones,
George David Wiseman, Hamish Wood,
Jean Wordsworth and Stephen Andrew Wright**

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

They all now have a leaf on our Memory Tree

2018 Breeding Season

For many years the Trust has undertaken a programme of Barn Owl nestbox monitoring in the late spring and early summer. This provides useful data on nestbox occupancy and absence rates and, where Barn Owls are nesting, productivity data on brood size and egg-lay date. Young are ringed at around 4-8 weeks of age and recoveries of birds gives information on longevity, dispersal distance and cause of death.

Hopes for a productive breeding season in 2018 had rather been tempered early on by the wet late winter period. Devon was the wettest County in the UK in March, experiencing its 4th wettest March since 1910, and with rainfall totals more than double the average for that month. In addition, the whole of the UK experienced two significant bouts of snow and freezing conditions within 2 weeks of each other. The first – the ‘Beast from the East’ - met Atlantic Storm Emma on the 1st, dumping significant amounts of snow on the County courtesy of a gale force easterly airstream straight out of Siberia. Cold and wet weather in the late winter period has more influence on Barn Owl productivity than any other variable according to the British Trust for Ornithology. Prolonged snow cover and freezing conditions at this time can often lead to increased winter mortality.

With this in mind, we started our Annual Monitoring Site (AMSITE) visits in early June rather than late May, as we suspected that First Egg-lay Dates would be delayed at best. What followed came as something of a surprise, as many traditional Barn Owl sites were occupied by pairs of birds, with many nesting attempts underway. We were right however in that these attempts appeared to be generally 2-4 weeks later than the long-term average of mid-April. Despite this late start provisional figures for nesting occupancy in 2018 (59%) was higher than the 1990-2015 average.

Year	Nesting (%)	Mean brood size	Regular roosting (%)	Occasional roosting (%)	Absent (%)
Ave. 1990-2015	52%	2.9	14%	5%	29%
2007	58%	3.7	12%	4%	27%
2008	62%	2.6	11%	2%	25%
2009	61%	2.5	7%	3%	30%
2010	60%	2.35	12%	1%	27%
2011	42%	2.63	17%	5%	36%
2012	68%	3.23	6%	2%	25%
2013	17%	2.13	27%	14%	42%
2014	46%	4.15	12%	7%	35%
2015	59%	2.67	10%	1%	29%
2016	39%	2.42	17%	3%	42%
2017	48%	3.24	7%	11%	34%
2018	59%	3.0	0%	3%	38%

Results of annual monitoring site visits in 2018 at time of writing, showing both site status as a proportion of the total number of sites checked compared with the average, and brood size.

Brood sizes appeared to be about average during June, but final analysis of the ringing results show brood size also slightly above average.

In summary then, with slightly higher than average nesting rates and brood size the impact of the bad weather on the population as a whole appears to have been much less damaging than we had been feared at the outset; all in all a reasonable year. ★

Matthew Twiggs
Senior Conservation Officer

Males Go Missing

This breeding season we learned of several sites where one of the adult birds died, and afterwards some extraordinary events occurred.

At one of our annual monitoring sites here in Devon, the nest is closely monitored via a camera in the box. Alarm bells first started ringing in mid-June when, despite having five young to feed, the male bird stopped visiting the nest.

As the wait for food continued, the female became more agitated as the young started dying from starvation; it soon became evident that something had happened to the male. In consultation with the BOT conservation team, it was decided that the two remaining owlets should receive supplementary food.

This was going well with the female eating the supplementary food and also feeding them to the owlets. However, after about a week of this something unexpected happened; a new male began to visit the nestbox and, despite being harassed by the resident female, it attacked both owlets and killed one of them. The decision was then taken to remove the last remaining owlet and look after it until it could be released.

A similar sequence of events happened at another site in Cumbria, again with a camera in the box. The original male of the pair disappeared, and the female began to leave the nest more often to try and feed herself and the four remaining young. Again supplementary feeding was provided, and again a new male

appeared at the box after about a week and attacked all four remaining chicks, eventually killing them all over two days of sustained attacks. This new male then began roosting in the nestbox and was eventually accepted up on to a perch in the box by the female, despite the floor of the box being littered with her dead offspring.



Photo captured from inside the nestbox in Cumbria

With more people getting cameras installed in their Barn Owl boxes we are likely to see further interesting events reported in future. It is clear that there is no room for sentiment in nature, and it is also interesting to note that these new birds must have already been in the area, which shows that Barn Owl home ranges overlap and that there were unattached males in these areas that quickly exploited the unfortunate demise of other birds. ★

Rick Lockwood
Conservation Officer

LLP Update

Practical work since February has included the felling of some Sycamore in the scrub patch behind the barn. The apple trees in the orchard received their late winter cut in February and March during a period of cold, dry weather, and more hedge-laying took place resulting in the hedge behind the barn being finished and about 20m of the North Park double-comb being progressed. Volunteer groups from Plymouth University and Ambios burnt up the brash that came out of North Park. Early July saw members of the Conservation Team bashing bracken in all of the more out-of-the-way places, whilst the tractor tackled the bracken in



Plymouth University Students burning brash

Kiln Close. Our contractor finally started the fencing repairs in mid-June and had finished by the end of the month. Our grazer brought in 10 heifers at the end of July for a month. In early August some Blackthorn removal was carefully undertaken for the benefit of Brown Hairstreak butterflies with the help of another group of Ambios trainees and volunteers. Only one bird's nest was found, a beautiful Long-tailed Tit nest, but the young had already fledged and gone so there was no problem (photo on page 4).

The abstraction system and through-flow between the ponds continued to cause problems. The ingress was easily fixed by brushing off the pipes in the river. However, the stream between the ponds looks like it will need further remedial works, hopefully this autumn. A new project to create a winter bird crop area and nectar strip started in April with the area being flailed. More details of this exciting project can be found on pages 8 & 9.

Nine people visited for the mid-summer walk in beautiful, warm, sunny weather. The walk hadn't even started when a Red Fox was spotted in broad daylight at the bottom of Kiln Close.



Night time walk in the LLP using bat detectors

Towards the end of the walk a Roe Deer appeared out of the very long grass up near the cut-off pole by Pennsland Lane and disappeared quickly without any commotion. In Early July 8 people visited for the Butterfly Walk event. Again, the weather was perfect and most of the usual suspects were recorded, including large numbers of Skippers and Marbled Whites. The Bat Walk took place in early August in almost perfect conditions with local expert Louise Woolley and 12 visitors. Common and Soprano Pipistrelle and a Myotis species were all recorded during the walk.

Notable wildlife in the period included a Dipper heard on the Ashburn, with a pair of Stonechats in the field in February. A Green Woodpecker was seen on one of the cut paths in early March, whilst the now-annual Skylarks were in song. Three birds were seen chasing each other around in April and breeding was suspected again. The first Chiffchaff was heard singing in April, about the time that the Roe Deer became more visible. Unfortunately, a dead deer was found in the Ashburn mid-month, cause unknown. A pair of Mallards turned up on the ponds in April but didn't stay to breed. Rather unusually, no Mandarins were reported this year.

The first male Pied Flycatcher was in song in adjacent woodland by mid-April, and this number had increased to a maximum of 4 by the end of May, the most we've heard here in recent years. Tragically, there were no confirmed sightings of any females and no nesting attempts were noted.



Grey Wagtail nest in the Kingfisher wall

The Dormouse monitoring started in June and the results of the first nestbox check were astonishing. More details can be found in a dedicated article on page 6. A Red Kite went south down the valley in mid-June. Towards the end of that month there was a flock of Swifts and a lone Sand Martin over the field. After building a nest in the Kingfisher Wall in May, both the adult Grey Wagtails were seen with two juveniles on the Oakley Pond at the end of June. Another nesting attempt proved unsuccessful. Not so the Meadow Pipits which were seen food carrying and display-flying into early July. Worryingly, the first and only Goldcrest since the bad weather in March was in song in Corner Wood in late June.

By late July, frustratingly brief views of a small Fritillary were being had on the Marsh Thistles around the ponds. Although thought originally to be Pearl-bordered, the late 'on-the-wing' date seemed more likely to indicate that these were Small Pearl-bordered. ★

All Photos BOT Staff

Matthew Twiggs
Senior Conservation Officer

LLP Wild Bird Crop

As reported in the last Feedback, here's Part 1 of an article outlining this exciting project, mostly covering the background to the concept and focussing largely on the nectar strip. Part 2 will appear in Spring of next year and detail the results of the winter bird crop experiment, what we recorded and what we've learnt from the whole experience.



Aerial view of the 2.5 acres selected for the bird crop

With the UK leaving the European Union in March of next year, there's been much uncertainty over the future of the environment in general and the various countryside stewardship grant schemes in particular. After finishing our last agreement, the Uplands Entry Level Scheme, in the summer of 2017, the Trust started seriously considering the possibility of entering into what might become the last of the Countryside Stewardship agreements as we know it. Applications had to be in by the end of July 2018 with the agreement due to commence in January 2019.



Contractor arrives and begins ploughing the site

After a lot of perusing of the Countryside Stewardship Handbook and investigating the various options that might benefit Barn Owls and other wildlife, it became clear that this was no small undertaking. As well as having time-consuming evidence and reporting requirements it was also clear that the financial remuneration for such a lot of work was rather modest. After much investigation, and having sought quotes from a local contractor, the Trust decided we were in the enviable position of being able to cherry pick our most preferred options without having the obligations of the scheme. So, after many years of creating and maintaining much of the LLP as rough grassland, the decision was made to try something a little bit different.

In March, 2.5 acres (10% of the site) was selected for a winter bird crop and nectar strip. The area was chosen because it was relatively flat in comparison with other parts of the site, nicely discrete as it was bordered by hedgerows and paths, easily protected from grazing livestock with the use of an electric fence and had hedgerow cover for farmland birds to fly into if they felt threatened by the local Sparrowhawks. A stipulation from our Trustees was that, as well as having a good selection of seed-bearing arable plants it also needed a nectar component for pollinators. Typical arable flowers seemed ideal, so Common Poppy (100g), Cornflower (400g), Corn Marigold (200g) and Corn Cockle (300g) were selected from a reputable supplier sourcing British seed.



Rick broadcasting the seed by hand

Two slightly different mixes of winter bird crop were selected to provide as much variety as possible and included Triticale, Barley, Wheat, Mustard, Linseed, Forage Rape, Dwarf Sorghum, White Millet, Japanese Reed Millet, Red Millet and Gold of Pleasure. The mixes are designed to provide seed throughout the autumn and winter, with some seed still available on the plant for a range of farmland bird species well into the so-called 'hungry gap' of the late winter period. The fallen seed would also no doubt be attractive to small mammals, such as Wood Mouse, thereby increasing the chances of attracting Barn Owls.

A total of 40kg of seed was purchased for £64.40. The wild flower seed cost £95.50 for 1kg, and the ploughing and harrowing came in at £168.00. So, for a total outlay of less than £330.00 we had 1Ha of new habitat that would, we hoped, prove extremely attractive to pollinators, farmland birds, small mammals and, hopefully, Barn Owls.



The Wild Flower strip mid-July

LLP Wild Bird Crop



A flock of Linnets above the winter bird crop

We considered sowing the wild flower seed in with the crop but were concerned that it might be crowded out. Instead we decided to sow in a strip about a metre wide along two sides of the area. This approach had three advantages: firstly the seed would have no competition from the crop, secondly it would be clearly visible to visitors on guided walks or for monitoring pollinators and thirdly it would make harvesting the seed for any future projects much, much easier.

Fast forward several weeks and the crop started flowering on June 10th with the Mustard, followed closely by the Gold of Pleasure and Linseed. The first Corn Marigolds came into bloom on the Solstice, with Corn Flower and Poppy close behind. The Corn Cockle finally flowered some 3 weeks later. Nevertheless, by the end of August some plants were still flowering (just) and still attracting pollinators. Species recorded in the strip have so far included Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Brimstone, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Marbled White, Ringlet, Small Skipper,



(Photos L-R Small Tortoiseshell, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and Marbled White butterflies enjoying the Wild Flowers)

After a couple of delays due to wet ground, and having previously flailed the grass in preparation, our chosen contractor arrived on April 18th to start ploughing. A couple of days later, after the ground had dried out even more he returned and harrowed the area twice to break up the biggest clods of earth. The original plan had been to drill the seed but this proved impossible because the contractor's drill was too wide not only for the field gates but even the road up to BOT HQ! Plan B was to sow the seed by hand, and then have the site harrowed a final time to cover it. This was duly completed on April 20th and the bare earth immediately proved attractive to a number of bird species, including a small flock of Linnet, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Chaffinch, Stock Dove, Mistle Thrush and Carrion Crow.

Small White, Large White, Clouded Yellow, various honeybees, bumblebees, hoverflies and ladybirds, and even a Great Green Bush Cricket!

As we go to press in early August the majority of the crop still obviously has to mature. However, by the end of July a flock of up to 200 Linnets were already feeding on the ripening seed, along with a couple of Goldfinches and the odd House Sparrow. We await the autumn with anticipation and will report back in the next edition of Feedback in the spring. In the meantime, monitoring the area is a high priority as we plan to provide educational material on our experiences in due course. Watch this space! ★

Matthew Twigg

Senior Conservation Officer

All Photos BOT Staff



Charity Information

Barn Owl Trust

Waterleat Ashburton Devon TQ13 7HU
01364 653026 info@barnowltrust.org.uk
www.barnowltrust.org.uk

Registered Charity number 299 835 BOT Environmental Enrolment Number 203 178

Trustees: Keith Grant (1990) Frances Ramsden (1988) Chris Robinson (2007)
 Simon Wilson (2000) Kevin Keatley (2010) Hon Treasurer: Mark Pountney (2002)

Secretary: Jackie Atkinson Minutes: Aaron Kitts, Marianne Bryan

Management Team:

David Ramsden - Head of Conservation Jackie Atkinson - Office Manager

Independent Examiners:

Francis Clark LLP
Chartered Accountants
Sigma House, Oak View Close
Edginswell Park
Torquay, Devon TQ2 7FF

Solicitors:

Wollen Mitchelmore LLP
Carlton House
30 The Terrace
Torquay, Devon TQ1 1BS

Bankers:

CAF Bank Ltd Lloyds TSB
Kings Hill 31 Fore Street
West Malling Totnes
Kent ME19 4TA Devon TQ9 5HH

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 responds to live owl emergencies and provides 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 purchased with a legacy and known as the Lennon Legacy Project, this 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

OFFICE MANAGER : Jackie Atkinson
HEAD OF CONSERVATION : David Ramsden MBE
CONSERVATION OFFICER : Matthew Twiggs
ASSISTANT CONS OFFICER : Rick Lockwood

PA to HoC : Lexie New*
Mateo Ruiz

ADMIN ASSISTANTS : Pete Webb
Marianne Bryan
Aaron Kitts
Vanessa Lewis

LEGACY PROJECT : Judith Read
PRACTICAL SUPPORT : Jasmin Ramsden
Michael Park*
Joel Turnbull

SCHOOL VISITS/TALKS : David Ramsden
Lexie New*
Rick Lockwood

ACCOUNTS : Frances Ramsden
COMPUTER/IT SUPPORT : Alan Lewis

TRUST VOLUNTEERS

HONORARY SOLICITORS : Wollen Mitchelmore LLP
VETS : Veterinary Hospital (Estover)

BTO RINGING COORDINATOR : Keith Grant

EDUCATION VOLUNTEER : Baley the Barn Owl

LIVE OWL EMERGENCY HELP
& OWL TRANSPORTATION : Di Hawkings
Margaret Rhodes
Celia Westrip

WORK EXPERIENCE : Tom Crowle
PRACTICAL SUPPORT : Kim Baker
Tony Hulatt
Alan Sloman

FEEDBACK : Frances Ramsden

GENERAL ASSISTANCE :
Diane Baker Jayne Hartley
Aram Compton Michael Park
Karrie Dashwood Sandra Reardon
Nick Deykin Margaret Rhodes
Di Hawkings University of Plymouth
Harry Hingston 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

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 2017 - 2018



Welcome to our Annual Review of the last financial year 2017-2018, this is where we look back over the last year and plan for the future.

During the year covered by this report public benefit was provided nationally (and internationally) by the Trust as we supplied information and advice by email, post, telephone and via our website. Dealing with enquiries is a huge part of the work of our Conservation Team. We continued to develop our website, this takes a significant amount of time to keep current, but it does provide a huge amount of information to a large number of people. During the year we received 1,071,791 page views by 444,023 individual users.

You will see from our Conservation Report that filming for our Video Project was completed and the videos were launched during the year. These are available on-line via our website and have already been viewed over 50,000 times. They provide advice and guidance to people all over the world interested and engaged in Barn Owl conservation.

Once again we ran a series of events open to the public including themed walks and talks during the year. We continue to work on public engagement using the Lennon Legacy Project site and our Norman Alderson meeting room. This provides a comfortable warm and dry space in which to talk to our visitors and provide them with a cup of tea and information about our work. We also run our ABOSM training courses there and used the space to host volunteers. This year we were delighted to have volunteers from Plymouth University, a large IT company and several European countries via Ambios Ltd working with us.

We continued to send out 'Owl e-news' an email to people in Devon informing them of forthcoming events and news. Issues 58 & 59 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 website. We continued to use social media to raise awareness of Barn Owls and the Trust and during the year our Facebook 'likes' topped 13,600+ (12,500 last year) and Twitter followers increased from 32,000 to over 33,800.

Like many other organisations we've spent a huge amount of staff time this year dealing with the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We have been collecting and recording data since the early 1980's and hold over 60,000+

individual contact records, 2,230 Barn Owl location records and 23,147 observations. This process will be ongoing in the new financial year and will involve major changes to our database and the way we process data.

We've had two staff change during the year. Michael Park who helped with the production of our nestboxes left us in May 2017, he continues to accompany the Conservation Team on fieldwork trips as a volunteer. Joel Turnbull joined the team in July to build boxes, he started at one day a week but very quickly moved to two. Lexie New left us in January and after 2 days of interviews we appointed Dr Mateo Ruiz as P.A. to Head of Conservation & Conservation Assistant. Other than this our staff have been with us for between 2+ and 28 years. At the year-end we had 12 staff in post: four full-time and eight part-time. Volunteers have received training and work experience on both long and short-term placements with the Trust.

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 on-going development of our two websites www.barnowltrust.org.uk and www.barnowlsurvey.org.uk. We will also maintain our Barn Owl Directory to enable people to find local contacts for Barn Owl conservation, Barn Owl casualties and local Barn Owl surveys. We will use social media presence to raise awareness both of the species and our work. We will continue to pull UK figures together and publish the 'State of the UK Barn Owl Population' results annually.

Wherever possible we will continue to work with other groups both in the UK and abroad to promote Barn Owl conservation and in July we will be running both our training courses for ecological consultants from here: the Barn Owl Ecology, Surveys and Signs (BOESS) courses we have been running since 2005 and the Advanced Barn Owl Surveying and Mitigation (ABOSM) course we started in 2011.

We will continue to monitor the mitigation suggestions for HS2 and the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) 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. Environmental and ethical consideration has been given to all our activities during the year and to the purchase of resources.

The next financial year is the 30th anniversary of the Trust and the Trustees who have all been in post for between 8 and 30 years, have been looking ahead. We have a great team here of both staff and volunteers, together we have achieved a tremendous amount over the last 3 decades. In order to ensure that the team can continue its work of Conserving the Barn Owl and its Environment we need to find younger folk with the skills, passion and enthusiasm to guide the organisation through the next decades. Being a Trustee is a voluntary (unpaid) position with the legal and moral responsibility for overseeing the direction of the organisation. The day-to-day responsibility for running the Trust is delegated to the senior staff who are recruited, managed by and report regularly to the Trustees. We'd like to hear from anyone interested in becoming a Trustee in the future.

On behalf of the Trustees I would like to thank everyone who has supported us during the last year and indeed over the last 30! 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 2018

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. ★



Conservation Report

State of the UK Barn Owl Population 2017

The most up-to-date figures on the UK Barn Owl population were published in our report: State of the UK Barn Owl population 2017 based on results provided by 38 independent monitoring groups who between them checked 6,955 potential nest sites.

2017 was a good year for Barn Owls but with some notable exceptions. Across most of England and into mid Wales Barn Owls had a generally good to very good year. However, Barn Owls had a relatively poor year in West Galloway, West Cornwall, and the Isle of Wight. Those on Jersey experienced a very poor year and in Northern Ireland Barn Owls are still very scarce. Overall, the proportion of sites where birds nested was 17% above the average of all previous years and the number of young in those nests was 6.6% above average.

World Owl Conference

Following on from the last World Owl Conference in 2007, the Barn Owl Trust was once again represented and presented two papers to the c. 80 attendees who had come from almost every continent. The first paper entitled 'The role of small NGOs in owl conservation' used the Trust as a case study to demonstrate that small organisations can have significant impact provided that enough people are engaged. The global issues such as the current 'Sixth Mass Extinction Event' and the predictions surrounding Climate Change were highlighted prompting some very positive responses both from delegates and the Chairs of subsequent sessions.

A second paper, again thankfully well received, presented results from our radio tracking of dispersing juvenile Barn Owls carried out with our partners Biotrack and Ambios.



David Ramsden with Inês Roque principal organiser of the World Owl Conference in Évora Photo: Frances Ramsden

Video Project

The year started with the last day of filming for our ten short films and in late July our producer Robbie Hill (Hill Tribe Productions) showed us the first rough edits. During the editing process it became apparent that our planned film 'Flight of the Barn Owl' was no longer a practical proposition due to the limitations of the cameras we had used and the time/cost of getting over the inherent technical difficulties.

We also decided to make the 'How to erect a Barn Owl nestbox in a tree' into two films by splitting off 'How to choose the best tree for a Barn Owl nestbox'. After a few more voice-overs were recorded and after many hours of digital editing, the ten films were finally launched on 10th October – nineteen months after the filming had started. At the time of writing (27/04/18), the films had been viewed over 50,000 times. The viewing figures (so far) for each film were as follows:

- How to build a Barn Owl nestbox to go inside an outbuilding – 4,589
- How to build a Barn Owl nestbox to go on a tree – 15,710
- How to choose the best Barn Owl nestbox (design criteria) - 20,750
- How to choose the best tree for a Barn Owl nestbox - 3,990
- How to erect a Barn Owl nestbox in a building – 2,799
- How to erect a Barn Owl nestbox in a tree - 4,050
- How to create Barn Owl foraging habitat (UK) – 1,730
- How to prevent owls drowning - 501
- How to pick up and examine a starving or injured owl – 1,367
- How to re-hydrate and feed a starving or injured owl – 1,562

Due in part to our disappointment in losing one of the original ten titles, Robbie kindly agreed to produce another short film for us free of charge in 2018. Before the year's end this new film had been fully scripted and filmed and awaited final production.

We are keen to acknowledge significant Video Project funding received from the Ernst Kleinwort Charitable Trust along with contributions from the Tanner Trust, PF Charitable Trust, Chapman Charitable Trust, The Ratcliff Foundation, Alice Noakes Charitable Trust, the Cobalt Trust, and the William Dean Trust.

Lennon Legacy Project (LLP)

During the year, eight groups received a guided walk around our 26-acre nature reserve named after Ms Vivien Lennon whose money enabled us to purchase the 26-acre site. In particular, the two Butterfly Walks in early July were blessed with fine weather and saw plenty. In fact, on the 27th June our weekly Butterfly Transect had recorded the highest ever number of Marbled White (c. 2,800 on the whole site) with over 2,000 Ringlet and good numbers of other species including Small Skippers. On 7th July, we had our second record of White Admiral butterfly and in August our Bat Walk event recorded a rare Barbastelle bat for the second year in a row.

The site is managed by our small conservation team with help from volunteers including groups from Plymouth University, Ambios, and a very very large IT/phone company who does not want to be named. Thanks also to The Management Team: a small herd of Belted Galloways kindly supplied by local farmer Brian Vallance.

The dramatic increases in biodiversity and bioabundance cannot be understated and by the year's end plans were afoot to boost diversity even further by planting a Winter Bird Food Crop on 10% of the site.



One of the many Marbled White butterflies in the LLP Photo: Lexie New

HS2 - Not good news for Barn Owls

Following an invitation, our first attendance at an HS2 Barn Owl Group meeting (to consider the impact of the planned new High Speed railway from London to Birmingham) coincided with the

first circulation of the draft HS2 Barn Owl Mitigation Plan. We were shocked and dismayed at the inadequacy of the plan and spent many hours producing highly detailed comments. Towards the end of the year a second round of comments was produced after the production of another draft plan which was even weaker than the first. We will continue to monitor the situation but currently have little faith in the mitigation process.

Health and Safety Review

Our conservation staff and selected volunteers attended a Working at Height training course in May following which we formulated a 'Working at Height Rescue Plan' and further refined our safe working practices for all work at height but particularly the erection and subsequent inspection of owl nestboxes. These were then written-up on two illustrated documents, a 'Working at Height Method Statement' and 'Working at Height Training Manual'. Our 'Control of Substances Hazardous to Health' (COSHH) Assessment had been fully reviewed and brought up to date.

Core activities

Incoming wild owls

During the year 3 Barn Owls, 6 Tawny Owls, and a Kestrel were received, of which 4 died, 3 were released back into the wild, and 2 became permanent residents in our sanctuary. The low number of Barn Owls is an indication of the birds' scarcity in the wild. Once again, our thanks go to the Veterinary Hospitals Group practice at Estover, Plymouth who kindly treat many of the birds we receive free of charge.

Fieldwork

17 fieldwork trips were conducted during the year to more than 46 sites during which a further 17 nestboxes were erected. Core work included 29 site visits covering things like removing unsafe nestboxes and the provision of on-site habitat management advice. Our annual monitoring of potential nest sites accounted for another 13 fieldwork trips to 65 sites during which 113 Barn Owls were BTO ringed.

Talks

A further 12 presentations were given to Schools and Youth Groups and 12 to adult groups including a paper presented at the Field Studies Council Research Seminar and two at the World Owl Conference in Portugal.

Shows

During the year we attended five Agricultural Shows such as the Royal Cornwall which attracts people from all over the country. Our attendance was boosted by our brand new Display Trailer which arrived on 3rd May just in time for the 2017 show season complete with Solar Panels and a large screen to enable us to show video footage. It was towed by our brand new 4x4 Dacia Duster Van kindly funded by the Hatcher Animal Welfare Trust.



Our new Display Trailer in action at the Devon County Show
Photo: Kevin Keatley

Training Courses

Our one-day foundation course for ecologists and planners entitled 'Barn Owl Ecology Surveys and Signs' (BOESS) was run



The 'ABOSM' training courses take place in our Meeting Room
Photo: David Ramsden

seven times and our course 'Advanced Barn Owl Surveying and Mitigation' (ABOSM) a further four times. All days were either fully booked or almost full and once again the comments received from attendees were extremely gratifying. Rather unusually, one of our advanced course days had to be cancelled at 9am due to a Red Weather Warning issued by the Met Office for heavy snowfall on 2nd March. This has been rescheduled for July.

Since the courses began, back in 2005, the BOESS course has been held at Fowlescombe in the South Hams. With the property now on the market we used the venue for the last time in February. We'd like to thank Barbara Barker and her team for all their support and of course the late Richard.

Research

Our research into the dispersal of juvenile Barn Owls based on radio tracking data continued. An early draft of the report produced by student Mark Ellis was reworked by our Head of Conservation just in time for Christmas. In consultation with our partners Ambios(.net) and Biotrack(.co.uk) we then came up with the idea of delaying publication of the full report and instead prepare a scientific paper for submission to the journal Bird Study. Despite our best intentions, at the year's end this had been barely started. We remain, however, determined to complete it.

Annual reports such as these cannot possibly convey just how busy we are most of the time! Communications noted on our office database show that in 2017 alone the Trust was contacted and responded over 26,000 times in total.

How much time we can spend on all the above activities is limited only by our resources, money (obviously) but also our wonderful staff and volunteers.

We would all like to express our sincere gratitude to all our supporters without whom none of this work could have been carried out. Thank you very much indeed. ★

David Ramsden MBE
Head of Conservation



ACO Rick with Ambios trainees nestbox building Photo: Lexie New



Financial Report

The operating results, together with the Balance Sheet and notes are shown on these pages. The total incoming resources for the year to 31 March 2018 were £286,766 an increase of £2,416 on 2017 (£284,350) but less than 1%. We saw a net surplus of £810 for the year, not as good as last year's surplus of £10,399.

Income from grants, legacies and donations was 12% down on the previous year at £165,436 accounting for 58% of total income (2017 – 66%). Within this, restricted grants from Charitable Trusts to support specific areas of our work decreased by 46% to £17,825. The majority of these restricted funds were for the continued development of our website and to complete our video project; however we also received funds towards salaries, equipment, welfare, and display materials. During the year we have seen a 12% drop in general donations to £92,919 (£105,757) which includes a 57% drop in non-designated donations from charitable trusts and a 19% decrease in donations from individuals. Our Gift Aid claims have decreased accordingly from £9,464 to £9,040. Volunteer fund-raising increased by 95% to £2,825, they kindly raised funds for us in a variety of ways including marathons and plant sales.

Legacy income and gifts in memoriam increased by 9% accounting for 19% of total income for the year, at £54,691 (2017 - £50,062). We are always extremely grateful for the legacies and the gifts in memoriam we receive. It is previous years' legacies that enable us to bridge the difference between our income and our expenditure and to 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 the latest being the Kingfisher wall. Previous projects have included the building of our new website, the purchase of the Lennon Legacy Project land, the creation of the two ponds in the LLP, the Meeting Room and the Solar Project.

We have worked hard during the year to increase our income from our charitable activities in order to be less dependent on grant and legacy income. Our profit on Nestbox sales dropped 4% to 60% but our sales increased by 54%. We sold 442 (328) owl boxes during the year and 22 (30) small bird boxes. We also ran additional training courses and increased our income in this area by 8%.

Our fundraising income dropped by 16% to £2,519 (£3,015) and came almost entirely from our Annual Draw and our 'Lucky Dip' at shows. Income from sales goods was up 16%, purchases decreased by 15% and our net profit was 18% up on the previous year £7,020 (£5,969). Our solar panels generated £4,095 (2017 -£3,776) an increase of 8%.

Our overall expenditure increased by 4% to £285,956 (2017 -£273,951). The cost of raising funds dropped by 3%, (this was made up of a 15% decrease in our spend on promotional goods and 7% increase in fundraising costs). Fundraising accounts for 3% of our total expenditure, the same as in the previous year and includes time spent applying for grants.

Expenditure on Charitable Activities increased by 5%; from £258,324 to £270,764. The cost of practical work dropped by 6% to £134,109 (2017- £142,105). The information and advice service costs increased by 116%. Salaries costs have increased by 12% due to pension contributions and wage increases.

Support costs include telephone, repairs, overheads such as

Continued on page 15

THE BARN OWL TRUST

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH 2018

	Notes	2018 £	2017 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	5	133,525	153,160
Current assets			
Stock	6	15,486	15,477
Debtors	7	2,725	2,799
Cash at bank and in hand		350,767	345,810
		368,978	364,086
Liabilities			
Creditors - Amounts falling due within one year	8	20,970	36,523
Net current assets		348,008	327,563
Net assets		481,533	480,723
The funds of the charity:			
Unrestricted funds	9	464,451	453,579
Restricted funds	10	17,082	27,144
Total charity funds		481,533	480,723

SOFA Note 2.

	2018 £	2017 £
Income		
(a) Donations and legacies:		
Grants and donations	110,744	138,982
Legacies	54,692	50,062
	165,436	189,044
(b) Charitable activities:		
Nestboxes	45,202	29,303
Training courses	34,435	31,783
Other	15,133	11,714
	94,770	72,800
(c) Other trading activities:		
Fundraising	2,519	3,015
Promotional goods	15,816	13,681
	18,335	16,696
(d) Other income:		
Solar generation	4,095	3,776
Bank interest	353	1,169
Other	214	260
Sale of fixed assets	3,563	605
	8,225	5,810

	Notes	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2018 £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2017 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	147,611	17,825	165,436	155,819	33,225	189,044
Charitable activities	2	94,770	-	94,770	72,800	-	72,800
Other trading activities	2	18,335	-	18,335	16,696	-	16,696
Other Income	2	8,225	-	8,225	5,810	-	5,810
Total		268,941	17,825	286,766	251,125	33,225	284,350
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	3	15,192	-	15,192	15,627	-	15,627
Charitable activities	3	252,746	18,018	270,764	236,134	22,190	258,324
Total		267,938	18,018	285,956	251,761	22,190	273,951
Net (expenditure)/income		1,003	(193)	810	(636)	11,035	10,399
Transfers between funds		9,869	(9,869)	-	2,237	(2,237)	-
Net movement in funds		10,872	(10,062)	810	1,601	8,798	10,399
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		453,579	27,144	480,723	451,978	18,346	470,324
Total funds carried forward		464,451	17,082	481,533	453,579	27,144	480,723

Financial Report continued

insurance, water, electricity, stationery, management, payroll and office cleaning. These necessary costs have increased by £8 over the year to £21,041 and account for 7% of expenditure.

Because of volunteers we are able to keep our management costs at just 3% of total spend. They continue to be an invaluable asset, assisting in every aspect of the work including practical tasks, admin, clerical work and fundraising, as well as the provision of professional services.

Of the unrestricted funds available to the Trust, the Trustees have allocated £341,317 as a reserve for the next financial year, £55,861 for the Lennon Legacy Project and £3,000 for other projects, leaving a general fund of £123,134. However our fixed assets and stock account for 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

SOFA Note 3

Expenditure

	Activities	Governance	Total 2018 £	Total 2017 £
	Undertaken Directly £	and Support Costs £		
Raising funds:				
Fundraising	9,204	-	9,204	8,613
Promotional goods	5,988	-	5,988	7,014
	15,192	-	15,192	15,627
Charitable activities:				
Nestboxes	16,019	-	16,019	11,954
Training course	6,388	-	6,388	5,493
Practical work	134,109	-	134,109	142,105
Information and advice service	88,717	-	88,717	76,789
Grants and donations	3,500	-	3,500	-
Support costs	-	21,041	21,041	21,033
Independent examination	-	990	990	950
	248,733	22,031	270,764	258,324

charities with smaller reserves, particularly in difficult economic times.

Mark Pountney MAAT - Honorary Treasurer



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!

29th May 1961 Trust
 Animal Friends Pet Insurance
 Ashburton Post Office
 Barry Green Foundation
 Birds & Bees
 Blair Foundation
 Cecil Pilkington Charitable Trust
 Church's Hardware Store
 Cobalt Trust
 Dumbreck Charity
 Ecclesiastical Insurance Office
 Eucalyptus Charitable Foundation
 Fowlescombe
 Keith Ewart Charitable Trust
 Lord Farrington Charitable Trust
 Marjorie Coote Animal Charitable Trust
 Marsh Christain Trust
 Martin Wills Fund

Mitchell Trust
 Pennycress Trust
 Ratcliff Foundation
 Roger & Sarah Bancroft Clark Charitable Trust
 Save Me Trust
 Sir John Swire Charitable Trust
 St Mary's Charity
 Stella Symons Charitable Trust
 Tanner Trust
 Tax Advisors Charitable Trust
 Verdon Smith Family Charitable Trust
 Veterinary Hospital Group
 Walker Animal Trust
 Walter Guinness Charitable Trust
 Wildlife Watching Supplies
 William Armstrong Charitable Trust
 Yeo Valley Farms Ltd

During this period we received legacies from:

Margaret Patricia Taylor, Michael Jennings, Florence Verney,
 Maureen Patricia Heaton, Dulcie Margaret Hunter,
 Jane Margaret Bateman and Rose E Cook

and Gifts in Memory of:

Di Paterson, Russell Cartmell, Hilda Yeoman, Marjorie Ashley Dunn, Denis Waterman,
 Celia Busbridge, Arthur Birkenhead, Hugh Brewster, Sheelagh Grace Batley, Christopher Mayhew,
 John William Hayes, Barbara Bousfield, Sylvia Irene Cox, Fred Towers,
 Peter & Phyl Monks, Hamish Wood and Trudie Barrow

Rest in peace



Photo: Richard Tadman

During the year we received donations from sponsored events and other fund-raising from:

Seb Dimmock - Great North Run, Judith Read & Midge - Walking for Wildlife, Mr & Mrs Bradley - collections on dog walks,
 World Indoor Rally Championships, Shelley Wright & Tracey Morris - sale of jams and 'hootlets', J L Davies - sale of jams,
 The 10th Redhill Brownies - sale of owl cakes, Pete Webb - Salcombe Coastal Marathon,
 Axe Valley Runners -The Grizzly Run
 South Molton Apple Fair and Margaret & Derrick Crocker - sale of plants and jams

Thank you all so much for your support

Bird News



Five Tawny Owlets in our static release aviary awaiting release Photo: Mateo Ruiz

Owl Rehab & Release - A Parliament of Owls

It's been a busy time here for the Conservation Team since our last Bird News; we've had lots of fallen owlet enquiries to deal with, most of these enquiries were about Tawny owlets found on the ground. Our general advice with Tawny owlets is, as long as they are safe, to leave them where they are found, as the adult Tawny Owls will feed their young wherever they are, even on the ground. If they are found in a perilous situation then we suggest trying to get them off the ground and up into a nearby tree unless it is not safe to do so or the owlet is clearly unwell. During late spring and early summer six Tawny owlets arrived here at BOT from different sources, some of them rescued from near certain deaths on busy roads, others were passed on to us from vets' surgeries.

Our job in this situation is to feed and care for the bird until it attains its full adult plumage and can fly well. Initially the birds were kept separately in boxes but as they got older they were all moved into our static release aviary with space to fly and gain muscle strength. As of the end of July the birds were almost ready for release. Once released we will continue to leave food in the aviary (just don't tell the crows!) so that if a bird wanted to return for food it can. This type of 'supported release' gives them time to learn to feed and fend for themselves in the wild before they naturally disperse and find their own territories.

A little later in the summer we began to receive fallen young Barn Owls. One bird came from a public house in East Cornwall where it had fallen from a specially provided nest space. He was picked up and put back in the nest, only to be discovered again later on the ground. He was obviously weak and underweight, and so we decided to take him into care. With some TLC he has now regained strength and is almost ready for release back into the wild from a mobile release aviary positioned in the LLP nature reserve here at the Trust. We were pleased to hear his two siblings back in East Cornwall have also fledged successfully.

Another Barn Owl nestling was collected from an annual monitoring site on 29th June after it and its sibling, which sadly died, were attacked by a rogue male Barn Owl in the nestbox. This owlet was brought to the Trust and reared in a nestbox in one of our hospital aviaries. He too will be released from a mobile release aviary situated in the LLP. We'll give you an update on their release in the next issue of Feedback.

BOT Sanctuary

We are sad to report that the beautiful Doreen, one of our resident female Barn Owls, died after being with us for thirteen years. She had been admitted to the sanctuary in 2005 with a

fractured radius / ulna after being found by the side of the road, a suspected road casualty, sadly not an uncommon occurrence. We also lost a resident Tawny Owl in June from old age; he arrived at the Trust in 2010 along with 46 other Tawnies when a sanctuary in Rochdale was forced to close. There are now currently 17 Barn Owls and 27 Tawny Owls in the Sanctuary. ★

Rick Lockwood
Conservation Officer

Caught On Camera!

This fantastic photo of a House Sparrow perched on a branch in the LLP was taken by Conservation Officer, Matthew Twiggs, in May this year.

There has been a decline in these lovely birds in the UK over the last 100 years. Since the '70s numbers in rural England have nearly halved while numbers in towns and cities have declined by 60%. Due to this decline they are now red-listed as a species of high conservation concern.

Before 2013 there was no evidence of House Sparrows breeding in the LLP. We put up our first House Sparrow bird box back in 2004 and a few were spotted singing in the intervening years but it was not until 2013 that we had our first recorded nesting in our barn. In 2014 we were pleased to see them nesting in our Wildlife Tower in North Park and we have had nesting every year since.

Facts from <https://www.rspb.org.uk>

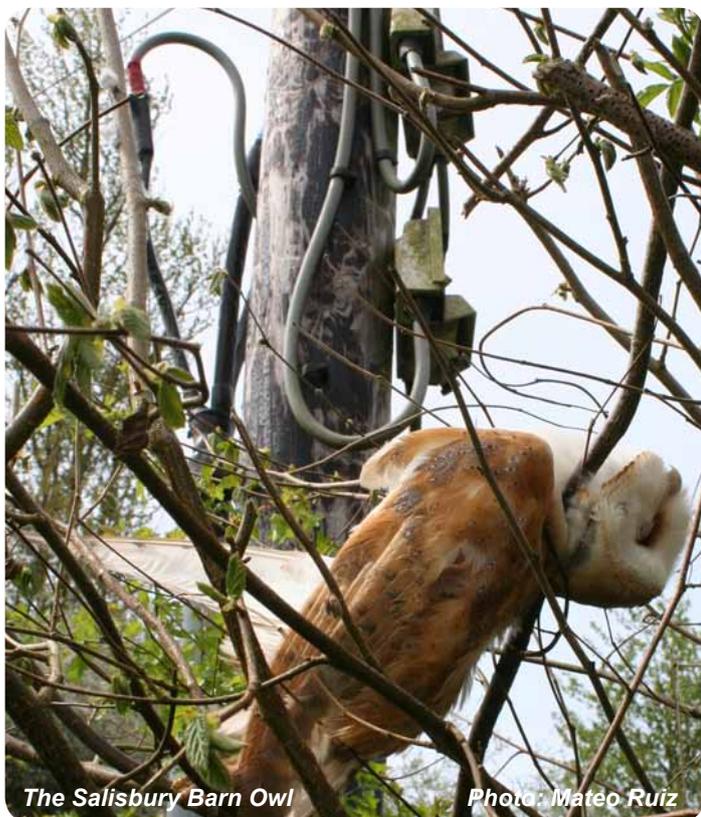
See all the latest LLP news by heading to our Wildlife Diary at <http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/wildlife-diary/> ★



More Bird News

A Shocking Tale

The fate of a Barn Owl is usually uncertain, but on this particular occasion it seemed especially unfortunate. On July the 2nd of 2017, a female fledgling Barn Owl was ringed on Salisbury Plain by Major Nigel Lewis, who is a true champion of Barn Owl conservation. Nine months later and 150 km away, the same owl was found dead underneath a step-down transformer connected to the High Voltage overhead line network. The ill-fated bird was almost certainly electrocuted, as its body condition showed no signs of starvation or injury. For the British Isles, almost 5% of young Barn Owls are recovered at distances of over 100 km from where they were ringed as owlets. None-the-less, the average distance is only 12 km and it is curious to think how or why this particular owl travelled so far.



The Salisbury Barn Owl

Photo: Mateo Ruiz

The local residents who found the dead bird were understandably distressed and contacted Western Power Distribution to ask them what they could do to prevent further accidents. After a preliminary visit to the site, Western Power issued a notice to the relevant people announcing that the electricity supply would be temporarily interrupted in July as part of a maintenance plan that ensured the system operated safely. Interestingly, there was no mention of Barn Owls or wildlife in the letter. Although “safely” could equally refer to Barn Owls or people, one can’t help wondering if it was easier to justify the work on the basis of risk to humans.

Meanwhile, members of the Barn Owl Trust Conservation Team investigated a roost site very nearby and found plenty of fresh pellets, but no Barn Owl. It seemed likely that this had been the refuge of the electrocuted bird. In June a brood of three owlets was ringed at another site just over 1 km away, so the un-insulated electricity cables posed an on-going threat to Barn Owls foraging on the adjacent meadow. As time passed, a Rook and Pheasant were also killed by the cables.

Although Western Power personnel were unavoidably detained on the appointed day in July, they did visit the accident site in August. The transformer cables were duly insulated and the Western Power team gave their assurance that casualties would be reduced.

Thus, the death of the Salisbury Barn Owl has led to a mitigating action that removes a potential hazard from the flight path of future birds. We appreciate the actions of Western Power Distribution, which show their commitment to a safer system. We are also heartened by the involvement and endeavours of the local residents who reported the owl and brought the case to the attention of the relevant organisations. ★

Mateo Ruiz

P.A. to Head of Conservation & Conservation Assistant



Photo: Western Power Distribution

Unexpected Nesting

In early July we received a phone call from Valerie Jenkinson, from Wakefield in West Yorkshire, who had purchased a tree nestbox from us 18 months previously. It is always fantastic to hear feedback from past customers of Barn Owls taking up residence in our boxes however she had called to inform us that it was now occupied...by a family of Kestrels!

Although surprised, they were still delighted and managed to take this snap of the adult and chicks using the box. Valerie asked whether it would be advisable to clean out the box after the chicks had fledged. We would suggest that the debris would only need to be cleared if it had built up so much that the drop from the entrance hole to the top of the debris was now less than 50cm. Kestrels have been known to use the same nest site for successive years, and there have even been records of Barn Owls and Kestrels nesting in the same box, so this site may be home to Kestrels for many years to come. Valerie may want to consider erecting a Kestrel box nearby in the hope that the adults will favour this over the Barn Owl box next year. A typical Kestrel box is the same length as a Barn Owl box however; only 31cm tall with a larger entrance hole as the female Kestrel likes to easily see the male returning. We currently make and sell boxes for Barn Owls, Tawny Owls, Little Owls and small birds via our website but maybe we need to branch out to Kestrel boxes too!



Photo provided

Thank you so much Valerie for getting in touch and sharing your story and photos with us. We would love to hear who ends up nesting in your box next year! ★

Barn Owl Boxes Abroad

American Barn Owls

Back in June we received a rather lovely email from Dan Fenske of Oregon, USA. Along with friend, Charlie Stock, he has been making nestboxes for the River Refuge Seed Company. This organisation grows over 70 types of seed for use on wetland restoration projects. They have made and installed 18 wood duck boxes, 45 bluebird size boxes and have donated them in thanks for the seed company's years of restoring wetlands habitat. He also made a Barn Owl nestbox! Here's what he had to say...

To all at the Barn Owl Trust. Thank you for all the useful information I found on your website. I was searching for nest box plans and saw many different designs online. However, after visiting your site and watching your videos, I realised some of the plans I had seen were of a poor design. I have instead built a box to your design and have hoisted it into place.

I found a pair of Barn Owls nesting in the smallest space imaginable in a shed at the River Refuge Seed Company. They have somehow managed to wedge themselves between a metal roof and the insulation attached to the underside of that metal. I don't know how the adults have managed to squeeze into this space which is no more than six inches at best. So I built them a nest box. I work below that area almost daily so will have a chance to see if the adults accept the box and feed the young. Here's a picture of me making the box...



Photo provided

I have raised many raptors in my lifetime starting when I was 13 years old. I am 75 years old now. I am a falconer that loves and appreciates all types of wildlife and wants to help these owls. Your website shares an amazing amount of information and thank you for sharing it. It has helped me a great deal to prepare a proper and safe box. Thank you.

You're more than welcome Dan! He used the nestbox plans available on our website and our page all about American Barn Owls to complete the project. North American Barn Owls (*Tyto furcata*) are very different from their European cousins. Although they look similar, Barn Owls in North America are around 50% larger. We therefore recommend increasing the dimensions of the nestbox by about 50%. There are other differences too. North American Barn Owls are significantly heavier and have proportionally shorter wings and longer legs. Despite their weight, wing length is only 12% more than European birds, while leg length is 25% greater. Due to their larger size they are also able to take larger prey. While various species of vole are commonly taken, they can also prey on Cotton Rats, Wood Rats, Ground Squirrels and Pocket Gophers. You can read more about American Barn Owls on our website! ★

Proxecto Rebinxe

Proxecto Rebinxe is a wonderful project based in Spain, working mainly in the municipalities of Mondoñedo, Abadín and Lourenzá. They work to recover bio-diversity in the agricultural habitat, combat prejudices, myths and false beliefs that fall on certain animals and hinder their preservation and encourage natural pest control in turn reducing the use of biocidal products. They also collect data on distribution and behaviour of certain species of interest in the region.

This fantastic group shared a series of photos on the Barn Owl Trust facebook page back in March, a few are featured below along with this lovely message which has been translated from Galician:

The following images show the process of building the boxes for owls with the intention of being installed inside buildings with direct exit to the field.



All Photos provided

The models have been carefully designed by The Barn Owl Trust, a British organization that this year turns 30 years of experience working with these nocturnal predators. The height from the bottom to the entrance hole prevents the owls from leaving and falling before they are sufficiently developed, and they have an exercise platform.



We appreciate the great work of this group from which we have learned so much and we send our congratulations to them on their anniversary. For many more years enjoying these fantastic birds!

We recommend visiting your web page. ★



Ringings Trips

I have been very fortunate this year in having some time out with Rick visiting Barn Owl boxes. We are fortunate in this country in that the BTO expects a high standard from all its ringers. Hence when a trainee, such as Rick, is ready to progress to a C permit (which enables him/her to ring on their own) the trainee has to be assessed by a second trainer. That meant that I was able to go out with Rick visiting the boxes that are monitored annually.

In June we spent two days in South Devon and then a further one in North Devon checking boxes to see whether there were going to be young to ring and how long before they were ready. On those visits we only found one brood that were ready to ring.



Following on from that we went out again in July to visit the boxes where the young were ready to ring. As it has been a reasonable year this meant going to most of the boxes again. It sounds easy! However, I can tell you that the conservation team work very hard at this time of year. Often the days are long with a lot of travelling between sites. The sites themselves are not easy to find. Some of the boxes are in fairly derelict barns in the middle of a field – somewhere! Others are at farms but down some very narrow country lanes. My map reading improved over the days but there were times when the GPS was taking us down lanes and we had absolutely no idea where we were! Sometimes we took the vehicle to some very unusual places!



Fitting a ring

There were some boxes that were just not going to be checked and others that were very difficult to check. Not to mention that most sites involve carrying a three section ladder in order to reach the box.

The ringing process involves four main elements. Firstly a ring is fitted to the owlet. Each ring has an individual number so that the



Checking a pole box



Nestbox over a pig pen

bird can be identified in the future. The wing is then measured and a weight is taken. Even at an early age it is also often possible to sex the bird.



This is what it is all about. To my mind Barn Owls go from being soft looking balls of fluff to a stage when they are really quite ugly before turning into a beautiful adult bird. It should also be added that they are pretty smelly. The box smells strongly of ammonia and the young bird is more than prone to making sure that the ringer ends up with a unique perfume as well!



Nest provision in a barn with 3 owlets

Finally, my thanks to the Barn Owl Trust for this very special opportunity and my congratulations to Rick who has applied for his C permit for Barn and Tawny Owls and certainly deserves to get it. ★

All Photos by Judith Read

Judith Read
Legacy Support

Fundraising News

Beach Cleaners!



When we read in Feedback that the Trust was asking supporters to raise '£30 for 30 years' of the BOT my 8 year old daughter Lucy suggested a sponsored beach clean as she had a litter campaign at school and this tied in with her love of caring for wildlife, especially BOT resident Baley the Barn Owl whom Lucy has adopted for the past 2 years on her birthday.

Her big brother Jack tweeted their fund-raising page and helped beach clean too, as did some of Lucy's lovely school friends and families - a massive 'thank you' to them without whom the beach clean would not have been possible. Also, a huge 'thank you' to the very lovely Louise Harrington from Durham Heritage Coast Partnership who supplied refreshments and equipment and is always supportive.



Photos provided

Lucy and Jack aimed to raise £300 for 30 years of the Trust and were really pleased that with gift aid, they raised £486.25. A fantastic team effort! ★

Samantha Farrell
BOT Supporter

Cream Tea

Inclement weather didn't deter home-made cream tea and cake hunters, at The Old Barn fund-raising afternoon for the Barn Owl Trust.

This fantastic event was organised by long term supporters, Tim and Jayne Hartley, raising money for the Trust's 30th Anniversary. Over 60 plain, fruit & cheese scones plus home-made cakes were consumed with delicious local cream from Scorrington Down Farm.



Photo by Sam Edwards

Tim and Jayne had a fun, convivial afternoon with the added bonus of raising a fantastic £215 on behalf of the Barn Owl Trust. Well done guys! ★

Owl Cakes

We were delighted to receive a surprise letter in the post from 10th Redhill Brownies in Surrey. As part of the 'Wise as an Owl challenge' they held a fund-raising evening where each of the 30 Brownies decorated 4 fairy cakes with a different owl design. The cakes were then sold to parents and friends raising a grand total of £70 which they kindly donated to the Trust. We think the cakes look amazing! A huge thank you to Elaine Crooks, their Brownie Unit Leader and all the 10th Redhill Brownies for their fantastic baking! Well done, What a fun way to raise funds. ★



Photo provided

Give As You Shop!

Do you shop with amazon.co.uk? Did you know you can support our work every time you shop with them?



AmazonSmile donates 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT, returns and shipping fees) of eligible purchases to the Barn Owl Trust or charity of your choice.

Simply shop using the web address smile.amazon.co.uk.

It's exactly the same as the regular Amazon site. Same products, same prices, same service but you'll be supporting the work of the Barn Owl Trust! It really couldn't be any easier.

You can also raise funds for us by shopping online via giveasyoulive.com.

Shop with over 4100 online stores including eBay, M&S, Sainsburys, Booking.com and John Lewis. Give As You Live will then make a donation to us or your chosen charity. Donation varies depending on items purchased. ★

Team Talk

Marvellous Midge



This year has certainly set some challenges for walking. Between snow, mud and blazing sunshine some days our walks have had to be quite carefully planned. Recently, most of our walks have been taken in the early morning. I have to say that it is preferable to ploughing through mud!

Nothing has stopped us though and we have had some fantastic



walks. These have included a ramble from Tarr Steps on Exmoor: a two day walk with an overnight camp on Dartmoor and a slightly unplanned mingling with the Ten Tors teams! As one of our regular walks we go to Stover Park on the way to the Barn Owl Trust and do a five mile walk before work. All in all, so long as a walk involves water Midge thinks it is pretty good and nine times out of ten she

manages to collect a ball on the way, sometimes swapping it for a better one further on! She has even taken up map reading!



So, as at the 14th August 2018 we (I) have completed 801 miles of the planned 1,500. Over half way now, still a bit behind schedule but nothing to panic about – yet! It is certainly proving to be quite a challenge but great fun and we have lots of exciting walks planned over the next few months. ★

All Photos by Judith Read

Judith Read
Legacy Support

Well done Judith and Midge! You can give them your support by sending a cheque made payable to The Barn Owl Trust or making a donation by credit/debit card via the donation page on our website. Thank you for your support. Eds.

Award Winner!



Photo: Angus Davidson

Congratulations to Rick from the Conservation Team for winning the Friend of UPSU (The University of Plymouth Students' Union) Award! This is awarded to a person who has gone above and beyond in their support and engagement of student volunteers.

The Trust has been working with the UPSU for over 10 years. It all began when the Trust was invited to attend a volunteer open evening for new students back in October 2007. Since then we have regularly received groups of student volunteers who have undertaken various practical management tasks in the LLP.

Rick attended the UPSU Volunteering Celebration Evening on 9th May at the Plymouth Albion RFC and was honoured to take home this award. Well done Rick! ★

Thanks and Things

We are so grateful to all of you who have sent us bits for recycling, prizes for our annual draw, donated goods to sell on ebay or items from our Wants List. Thank you for all your support:

Miss L Anquetil, Jackie Atkinson, Rich & Leigh-anne Boucher, Colin Curtis, Miss Hilary J Davies, J. Dilnot Smith & Son, Nigel Fowler (Three Owls Sanctuary), Mark Fullerton, Tracey Geary, Keith Grant, Jayne Hartley, Honey Ingram, Gavin Law, Kim & Ed McNeil, Jennifer Muir, Audrey Norman, Hamish Paterson, Mike Read, Sandra Reardon, Annie Rhodes, Janet Rutter, Russell Savory, Jamie Skipper, Ann Stansell, Alex Thompson, Elaine Underhill, Simon Wantling, Mr & Mrs Wallis, Michelle Wheal, Melanie White and Brian Woodford.

Thank you to all our volunteers who kindly give up their time to help out at the Trust:

Diana Baker, Kim Baker, Diane Hawkings, Harry Hingston, Tony Hulatt, Bill MacDonald, Ollie Hornbeam, Michael Parks, Margaret Rhodes, Jaz Rivers, Alan Sloman, Ambios Volunteers, the Orchard Volunteers and Plymouth University Students.

It has been a delight to hear your inspiring fundraising stories (see page 21) You are all stars...Thank you:

10th Redhill Brownies, Derek & Margaret Crocker, Lucy & Jack Farrell, Pink & Greene, Tim & Jayne Hartley, the Axe Valley Runners and Sir Jeremy & Lady Sullivan.

A big thank you to Sarah Powlesland and David Rickman who donated their unwanted vehicles using the Giveacar scheme.

Can you help with:

- Postcards and pre1970 envelopes with stamps on
- Used stamps, including any foreign stamps & currency
- Mobile phones for recycling/sale
- 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 / 12mm tanalised ply and lengths of 25x 50mm tanalised batten
- Green Oak rough-sawn planks for making bat boxes
- Anabat detector
- A4/A3 recycled paper/card both coloured and white
- Padded envelopes (new or used)
- Socket set (48 pc 1/2 inch drive)
- Extra long drill bits (3,4 & 5mm)
- Empty 35mm Film Cannisters
- Wire cutters
- Drill-driver bits (for screwing)
- Quick grip clamps
- Fiskars/Felco loppers & shears
- Garden forks & spades
- Caravan levelling ramps (for our new trailer)
- Box Trailer (minimum 2.4m x 1.5m x 1.8m high)
- Small plate compactor
- Wintery Barn Owl images for Christmas cards
- Prizes for our Grand Draw (postable i.e. not heavy or bulky)

Thank you for your help. ★

Tail Piece ...



In April 1986 in our very first handwritten issue of 'Feedback' we talked about awareness of the natural world and the human impact on the planet. We've continued to raise environmental issues and connect how we live to the wildlife that shares our planet. We've talked about consumerism, recycling and reducing our waste but we've never looked at what happens to the rubbish we put in our black bins. Statistics say that each household produces a ton of rubbish each year and it's very much a case of out of sight, out of mind.

In August this year BBC 4 aired a 90minute programme called 'The secret life of landfill, a rubbish history'. This gave a fascinating insight into how over the last century we have evolved into a disposable society and the horrendous legacy we have created for future generations. "How did we reach this point where we throw away so much and value so little".

The 1950's were the end of austerity after the Second World War and rise of consumerism. With the introduction of synthetic materials the volume and type of waste we've generated has increased and become more complex. In 1956 the Clean Air Act meant that instead of burning waste we buried it underground, on a massive scale. Hundreds of thousands of tons of mixed waste (both domestic and commercial) have been buried all over the UK. In London they disposed of waste by shipping it down the Thames on barges and dumping it on marshland and covering it up. Now seventy years later due to coastal erosion some of that rubbish is re-emerging and levels of toxins are being recorded far, far higher than recommended environmental guidelines. These toxins, including heavy metals, are being washed into the Thames along with broken-down micro plastics, asbestos fibres and other nasties that were buried and forgotten about many years ago. There are almost 20,000 historic landfill sites around the country which predate current regulations. Some of these landscaped sites are now playgrounds, football pitches or even

housing estates. Legislation has meant that more recent landfill sites have to comply to environmental standards and have linings to stop leaching into watercourses, however what we throw away today will need to be managed for generations to prevent it from becoming a toxic time bomb.

So much of what we throw away could have been recycled and reused if our society operated differently. Landfill sites are not only a potential threat to the environment they are also, according to the programme a potential mining site for limited natural resources. Apparently landfill sites contain millions of old mobile phones, many of the micro components are precious metals, including gold used for connectors. People risk their lives mining these materials which like oil will run out one day. Surely rather than throwing things out and replacing them with a new one every year we should be repairing or at the very least recycling our possessions.

There is more environmental awareness now than there was thirty years ago but the legacy that we have inherited from our parents and compounded with our consumerist society is a huge weight to pass on to the children of today. Whilst we still can, we need to work together to try and live more sustainably and in harmony with the natural world. The best weapon in our personal arsenal is how we spend our money and if we only buy products with sound environmental credentials then businesses will change; after all they want our custom. And of course just remember that whatever you put in your black bin will either go into landfill, and potentially be there for hundreds of years, or these days could be incinerated and beyond reclamation so please recycle everything you can. Individually we may feel impotent to do anything to change the world and preserve it for future generations but *Together we can make a World of difference.*

Frances Ramsden ★

Get Set for Christmas!

New Xmas Cards

A big thank you goes to Mike Read, Mark Fullerton and Hamish Paterson for providing us with the beautiful photos for our new 2018 Christmas cards.

Each A6 card and envelope is produced from recycled materials, keeping our environmental footprint as small as possible.

Message inside reads...

'Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year'

Available to buy individually or as packs of 12 from our online shop today.



The Perfect Gift!



Are you looking for that extra-special present for the owl enthusiast in your life? We now sell grey short sleeved, V neck T-shirts screen printed with a beautiful illustration of a Barn Owl kindly provided by wildlife artist and BOT supporter Jan Taylor.

Available in two styles from our online shop:

Mens / Loose fit in S,M,L and XL & Ladies / Fitted in S,M and L

Printed locally to order. Please allow 3 weeks for delivery. Last orders for Xmas delivery is 16/11/18.

A Card For Any Occasion



We are also delighted to announce the release of four new A6 greetings cards. It's been a while since we last produced new cards so we're very excited.

We have produced four new designs, professionally printed on high quality recycled card. The cards come with an envelope and are left blank for your own message.

We'd like to thank Gavin Law, Russell Savory, Jamie Skipper and Mike Hughes for their stunning Barn Owl images.

From left to right: Living Landscape, Gate Guardian, Patience & Watching You.

Head over to www.barnowltrust.org.uk for these beautiful cards and other Barn Owl goodies.