

Feedback

Issue 69 / Spring 2023



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

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www.charlotterhodesphotography.co.uk

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Diary Dates 2023

Guided Walks

April

Spring Walk - Wednesday 12th - 2:30pm

Dawn Chorus Bird Walk - Monday 24th - 5:30am

May

Wild Flower Walk - Wednesday 24th - 2:30pm

June

Mid Summer's Eve Walk - Wednesday 21st - 7:30pm

July

Butterfly Walk - Wednesday 5th - 2:30pm

Practical Tasks

June

Thistle Pulling in the LLP - Thursday 1st, Tuesday 13th, Thursday 15th & Tuesday 20th - 10-4pm

July

Bracken Bashing/Thistle Pulling in the LLP - Tuesday 4th, Thursday 6th, Tuesday 11th & Thursday 13th - 10-4pm

For more information, visit the Events Diary on our website. Contact us on info@barnowltrust.org.uk or call the office to book a place - booking is essential as places are strictly limited.

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Hello, and a very warm welcome to the 69th edition of 'Feedback'. Spring is trying to emerge, and there are beautiful flowers appearing in the Devon lanes, and birds arriving, having migrated over thousands of miles over land and sea to get here. They may be in for a shock though, as snow is predicted for mid-March across the country. Maybe winter will be with us for a bit longer?

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Barn Owl Trust, which is pretty amazing! The Trust has gone from strength to strength since its inception in 1988, always with the core mission of conserving the Barn Owl and its environment. Read more about our 35 years, and the changes to the Trust over the years, on Page 3.

Also on page 3, you can read about our office re-build project. Thanks to legacies, we have plans to build new offices later this year. This will mean a period of disruption for our staff over the summer, but it will be worth the chaos (organised!) just to have a warm, dry environment to work in. We are all very excited!

The Trust has seen some significant staff changes of late. Our colleague and friend, Matthew Twiggs, has moved on after 16 years with the Trust, and we have gained three new colleagues in the Conservation and Admin teams – see pages 13 & 15. Welcome to the new folk and good luck to Matt in his new role.

There have been some changes to our resident birds that you can read about on page 4, where tales of rescue, rehab and release also feature. On the following page (5), there is a great article about the wildlife on the LLP and the various goings-on across the site. The LLP has had much welcome attention this year since we took on our Intern, Harry, whose role it is to stay on top of the maintenance of the site. The article describes the incredible diversity of wildlife prospering on the 26-acre site. Staff and volunteers alike have been entranced by the arrival of the Linnets onto the wild bird seed crop. Thanks must go to all the wonderful volunteers who give their time to work on the LLP with Harry. Do check out the Diary Dates (below-left) and come along to one of our guided walks around the reserve or, if you fancy something a bit more hands-on, join Harry in June or July for a day of practical tasks in the LLP.

Thanks go also to everyone who volunteers their time to help the Barn Owl Trust in other ways, from assisting with admin, cleaning aviaries, stuffing envelopes, helping out at County Shows and much more. We are so grateful that people so freely give of their time to help us in our mission. Some even go that extra 'mile', like Josh (see page 6) who is taking on the challenge of running the London Marathon this year and has picked The Barn Owl Trust as his chosen charity.

You can read an update on the Trust's application to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on page 7 and how that will affect the day to day running of the charity and yourselves as supporters.

You may have heard of the excellent work of the Ulster Wildlife Trust – in September we were invited to send two of our Conservation Officers to Northern Ireland to visit them. Matt tells all about this amazing trip on pages 8 and 9.

Lincolnshire is known to be a good place to see Barn Owls and BOT supporter, Garry, has written a splendid article with beautiful photos of some of the Lincolnshire Owls. Thanks Garry and carry on the great work! (See pages 10 and 11).

The work of the Trust couldn't continue without the support of people who volunteer, adopt, befriend and donate, either through our various schemes, or by leaving us a gift in their wills. You can read about people who have generously helped us, on pages 12 and 16. We are truly grateful for all the support we receive. Thank you everyone.

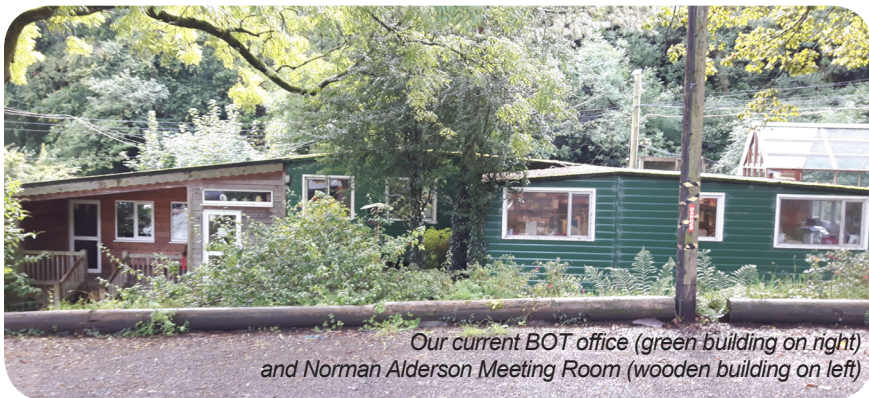
Gill Gant
Office Manager

BOT News

When the Barn Owl Trust first started, way back in 1988, our office was a caravan! We then moved into a spacious two-roomed wooden chalet which sprouted extensions in 1992, and again in 1998. It was built entirely by volunteers on a shoestring. Then, in 2011, an amazing legacy from Norman Alderson enabled us to build an energy-efficient Meeting Room which (until Covid) was used for talks, meetings, training courses, workshops, and for groups visiting the LLP (our nature reserve) to have refreshments. It is also home to our Memory Tree.

Since Covid, the Conservation Team have used the Meeting Room as their office, allowing more social distancing and an altogether more comfortable working environment. The rest of the building is very cold in the winter and hot in the summer. It also suffers from damp and is extremely expensive to heat. Earlier in this financial year we received a significant legacy from Peter Blood. Thank you, Peter. With this, and other legacy income, our Trustees have decided to rebuild the office to the same standard as the Meeting Room, thereby future proofing the Trust by improving staff working conditions, enabling disabled access and by vastly reducing energy costs with the added advantage of saving carbon emissions.

A planning application is currently in process and we hope to start work in the late Spring and be completed by the Autumn. Our work will continue as usual despite the disruption and we are currently in the process of preparing for the demolition of the old building by sorting and rehoming the contents, a truly daunting task. We would like to say a huge thank you to Daren Thomas from A-Tec Design for giving his time, expertise and advice to help us with so many aspects of this new project. More news on this to follow in Feedback 70.



Our current BOT office (green building on right) and Norman Alderson Meeting Room (wooden building on left)

Celebrating 35 Years of BOT

In December 1987, a group of 5 volunteers applied to register a charity, The Barn Owl Trust. Confirmation of registration and our charity number was received in August '88, 35 years ago. None of us could have imagined how the Trust would grow to become the main source of Barn Owl information in the UK. Although very small compared with other charities, we have developed an impressive track record and an excellent reputation. In the early days, we concentrated on habitat creation and boosting the number of wild Barn Owls by releasing birds from captivity. We then instigated highly detailed countywide Barn Owl surveys that highlighted the ongoing loss of occupied nest and roost sites. This prompted a major research project looking at the effects of barn conversions on local Barn Owl populations which in turn led to positive changes in Local Authority planning policies. Another landmark was the publication of 'Barn Owls and Major Roads – results and recommendations from a 15-year research project'.

In 2012 we achieved a major milestone in producing the definitive guide to Barn Owl conservation: the Barn Owl Conservation Handbook. In 2013 we launched the UK's first on-line Barn Owl Survey where anyone can report a sighting, roost, or nest site and view an up-to-date Barn Owl distribution map. In 2014, we produced; State Of The UK Barn Owl Population 2013, this has been produced every year since then. We now have 19 staff, 7 full-time and 12 part-time, working to conserve 'Barn Owls and the Environment'. Our focus for the next few years is to 'future proof' the Trust and continue to build on our practical conservation, education, and research work and to continue the provision of high-quality information and advice. Here's to the next 35 years!



News Bites

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

In December, we had electric vehicle chargers installed in our car park. The company we used were very helpful and made sure we got the best government grants. We have been incredibly lucky with donations to support this project. Our ultimate wish, of course, is to only run electric vehicles. We now own two all-electric vehicles – an ATV, for getting around the reserve, and an MG5 car, which is used for talks, events and some nestboxing. We do still have a diesel 4x4 which we will upgrade to an electric 4x4 as soon as we are able.

Matt Moves On

Many of you will have read Senior Conservation Officer, Matthew Twigg's articles in Feedback, spoken with him by phone, email or in person at one of the county shows or been lucky enough to have attended one of his guided walks around the LLP. We were all sad to say goodbye to him back in December. You can read more about his work here at BOT and his new role at Natural England on page 13.

Homes for Wildlife

The first of our three 'Wildlife Conservation Field Shelters' is now ready for use. With the groundworks done, the wildlife provision in place and the facilities for the goats installed, we look forward to the wildlife using their new home. This shelter in the Main Field was started by Western Power apprentices (the company paid for the materials) and was finished by BOT staff and volunteers. We have received some funding towards the second one, which will be built in Kiln Close later this year.

Intern Update

Having a Reserve Officer Intern has made a huge difference to the LLP over the last six months. We've been able to welcome more volunteers and have achieved lots of work, much of which has been waiting for years. Wildlife monitoring of the site has also increased and the use of trail cameras has given us some exciting insights into what happens when no-one is around (do check out our [Wildlife Diary](#)). Since the last issue of Feedback, Harry has received training in chainsaw use, hedge laying, first aid, fire safety and working at height.

UN Climate Warning

"We need a renewables revolution, not a self-destructive fossil fuel resurgence", said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on 6th February 2023. Outlining his priorities for the year, he called for game-changing climate action, including adequate financing, to urgently cut greenhouse gas emissions and achieve climate justice. "No more excuses. No more greenwashing. No more bottomless greed of the fossil fuel industry and its enablers," he said in his remarks to the United Nations General Assembly, adding that "climate action is the 21st century's greatest opportunity to drive forward all the Sustainable Development Goals."

Bird News

Bird Hospital

When the previous Feedback issue was circulated, two Tawny Owls were awaiting release from our static aviary, and we are really pleased to report that Foxy and Ash were successfully freed on September 14th! A young male Barn Owl was brought in on July 4th, after having been found in a field, damp and unable to fly properly. Duke's breathing was wheezy, and following consultation, Estover Veterinary Hospital prescribed antibiotics. He thankfully improved and he was released from a mobile aviary on the LLP reserve on September 23rd. He took food for several months and we experienced some magical encounters as he flew over the rough grassland and visited the Field Shelter.

On August 8th, a juvenile Tawny Owl found in South Devon was brought to the Trust from Estover Veterinary Hospital by volunteer Sylvia Marshall. Chestnut had received intensive nutritional care and pain relief. Although the left wing was drooping, an X-ray revealed no bone damage and release was happily possible on October 10th, from a mobile aviary on the LLP. Amazingly, a wild Tawny Owl was observed on the aviary roof just before it was opened!

On August 18th, a beautiful Tawny Owl was brought to us after it was found dazed on a dual-carriageway slip-road near the Trust's offices. Luckily, Woody soon began to behave normally, and was eating well after just two nights. Two days later Woody was flying strongly and was released in woodland near the finding location, but away from the road. First he flew onto a low branch, and then up into the canopy, out of sight into the fading light.

During early September, three young wild Barn Owls were simultaneously receiving plenty of care at the Trust's bird hospital. Of these, Beechy (female) and Ollie (male) were successfully liberated from the static aviary on November 9th. Less fortunate was the fledgling female that was found badly underweight in North Devon. We painstakingly administered fluids and a nutritious diet for five days, but the young bird repeatedly regurgitated undigested food and sadly died after five days. On November 14th, another Barn Owl arrived, very thin and with a damaged wing. An X-ray from Estover Veterinary Hospital revealed a complete dislocation of the elbow joint. The vets informed us that neither surgery, rest or time would heal its injury, and the decision was made to put the bird to sleep.



We are sad to have lost four Tawny Owls recently, and hope that our remaining twelve will be with us well into the future.

On November 11th, a Tawny Owl was brought in after being hit by a van. The right leg was obviously badly injured and, to our dismay, the owl died almost immediately. On December 12th, another Tawny Owl arrived, this time very emaciated and with advanced oral trichomoniasis. The prognosis from City Vets was dismal and the kindest thing to do was to end the bird's suffering quickly and painlessly.

On Christmas Day, an adult female Tawny Owl was found by a B-road near Ashburton, dazed and with a bloodshot eye. However, this strong bird quickly began taking food and was released on December 29th, after just five days. Finally, on Valentine's Day, a volunteer kindly brought in a struggling Tawny Owl. We were saddened to find some awful lesions inside the mouth, either due to oral trichomoniasis or gape worm, and it quickly died.

Sanctuary

Avian Influenza meant various biosecurity measures were implemented across the sanctuary, but fortunately we have had no cases. Nonetheless, natural causes reduced our resident Tawny Owls numbers from 16 to 12. Sadly, Rick and Dewitt both died in October, and Tony and Kim died in December. Unfortunately, Barney the Barn Owl also became weak on August 17th and died on November 25th. All of these owls were elderly.

On January 10th, we visited Alan Lever, who kindly provides a foster home for 'Spotty Girl' the Barn Owl. The routine check confirmed her good health, which is impressive as she is at least 17 years old! We are incredibly grateful to our long-term foster carers, and to volunteers who transport wild owls.

Dr Mateo Ruiz
Conservation and Science Officer

Digging for Conservation



Following the listing in our ['Wants' section](#) of the last issue of Feedback, the latest addition to our toolkit is a second-hand mini digger. This was very kindly provided by two very generous supporters who wish to remain anonymous. Almost as soon as he arrived, 'Digger' was hard at work helping to install charge points for electric vehicles in our carpark.

He then had several sessions re-profiling the ground around the first of our Wildlife Field Shelters - which should be finished by the time you read this - providing a much-needed feeding station for Barn Owls, Swallow nest sites, homes for bats, and an animal shelter for conservation grazing.

Digger's next job will be installing a new pole in preparation for our office rebuild and then he'll be back up the field preparing the ground for two more Wildlife Field Shelters. If you'd like to come and see his achievements, why not book onto one of our Guided Walks - see Diary Dates, Page [2](#).

LLP Update

The 1st of September was overcast, but it brought great views of a Kingfisher making its way up the river between the bridges on the Apprentice Path, whilst a group of volunteers from Ambios helped with the final thistle count and began clearing the vegetation growing out of the lower wall in Forde Orchard. By the 12th, a large number of Parasol Mushrooms had appeared in the Main Field along with common Puffballs and several Field Mushrooms. We also discovered that Hornets had occupied the Barn Owl provision in the Wildlife Tower.

The wild bird food crop had been dominated by ripening Fodder Radish and gone-over Corn Marigold, neither of which was planted last year. However, on a walk between the North Park hedge and the edge of the crop, we saw flowering Chicory, Flax and ripe Millet and Triticale. We were delighted to spot a Clouded Yellow butterfly on the 24th. On the 25th, a Doe and a Stag were seen at the top of the Orchard and that evening a 12" Brown Trout was spied in the Flo Pond!



Linnet-spotting on a Winter Bird Walk around the LLP

In early October, some beautiful, but highly toxic, Fly Agaric mushrooms appeared alongside the stream by the Apprentice Path. On the 15th, a Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) was seen making a dash out from the crop and back again...a first for the LLP! On the 19th, students from Plymouth Uni helped remove Blackthorn, and cleared Brambles from the top stone wall in the orchard. In late October, several Southern Hawker and Common Darter dragonflies were still patrolling the Flo Pond and on the 30th, owl droppings were found for the first time in the new Field Shelter.

November was a very wet month; we recorded 347.1mm of rain, the highest rainfall recorded in a month here in 17 years! Almost all the bare patches on the paths caused by the drought had now recovered and were lush and green again. On the 4th, 2 Redpoll, a Skylark and around 50 Linnet were seen, and we were excited to discover that the Black Mulberry planted in the orchard in March 2021, which we thought had died after being grazed off by deer, was alive! On the 11th, hedge laying started up for the year in North Park. On the 18th, we held our first Winter Bird Walk of the season and later that day 12 Belted Galloway arrived for the winter grazing. On the 29th, we were privileged to see a Barn Owl at dusk flying over the main field towards Kiln Close.

After November's almost continuous rain, the first half of December was almost dry, but temperatures dropped dramatically. On the 11th, a Roe Deer was spotted in the middle of the crop. They normally run off when they see people passing but this one stayed put as we walked past, peeping up above the vegetation. Fifty or so Chaffinch were seen in the hedge by the crop, with 1 Stonechat and 2 Redwing in the crop itself. On the 12th, the temperature remained below freezing all day, having dropped to this winter's low of -5.6°C at 5:30am. Volunteers cleared a large section of Blackthorn on the roadside edge on the 13th in preparation for the felling of the roadside trees affected

by Ash dieback, then overnight about 3cm of snow fell on the reserve. Our 2nd Winter Bird Walk of the season was on the 14th, it was bitterly cold with snow on the ground, but dry and bright. The visitors were treated to a great view of a Woodcock that was flushed from a hedgerow boundary on the edge of the woodland.

The first Frogspawn of the year appeared on the 7th of January in the Oakley Pond, with more found among the Watercress in the Flo Pond a day later. A Badger was recorded on our trail camera in Corner Wood using the path through the hedge up to Pennsland Lane. After several years of intermittent hedge laying, the final section of the long North Park hedge bank was completed on 13th, this was started in January 2017. The Belted Galloways had finished grazing and left on the 16th. On the 17th, five trees with Ash dieback were felled into the Main Field by contractors. Clarabel, one of our two grazing goats, sadly passed away on the 18th, leaving Annie alone. On the 20th, a Winter Bird Walk with 15 people observed Wood Pigeon, Stock Dove, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Robin, Blackbird, Mistle Thrush, Chaffinch, Linnet, Meadow Pipit, Buzzard, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Goldcrest, Wren, Dunnock and House Sparrow. They also saw Roe Deer and a Stoat! On the 27th, two new 2-year-old Golden Guernsey neutered billy goats arrived (Archie and Alfred), to keep Annie company. She is the dominant member of the trio, and they are following her like shadows.

February saw the first Snowdrops in flower around the Apple trees in Forde Orchard. Very few of the 100's we planted years ago have survived but we are hoping that those that have will eventually spread. Lots more Frog spawn could be seen in the ponds, and signs too that the Heron had been catching and eating spawning Frogs. On the 7th, about 150 Linnet were seen flying in the winter sunshine and sparkling as they flew in and out of the crop. On the same day, Harry and 3 volunteers cleared scrub in the orchard and collected stones along the path around the rewilding area, creating piles to be collected to put on the floor in the first field shelter where the groundworks have been completed. Four volunteers joined Harry on the 9th to plant an Apple tree on the edge of the rewilding area and burn up some Blackthorn scrub.



Alfred & Archie (L-R) our new grazers

After no sightings since September 2021, a Dipper was seen flying up the Ashburn along the Apprentice Path on the 13th. Droppings on the rocks indicated it had been around for a while. The first Brimstone butterfly of the year was seen in North Park on the 14th and our last Winter Bird Walk of the season was held on the 15th, where 90+ Linnet performed, soaring over the field for 15 visitors. A Sparrowhawk landed in the crop in front of them and a beautiful Peacock butterfly was also spotted. On the 19th, bright yellow Celandines began appearing in the rough grassland in the Main Field...a sure sign that spring cannot be far away! Please do check out our [LLP Wildlife Diary](#) for the latest wildlife sightings and video clips from our trail cams.

BirdsEyeView Exhibition



The San Mei Gallery in Brixton, London

Early this Spring, Feral Partnerships (an architectural collective founded on issues around biodiversity loss in the built environment) invited the Barn Owl Trust to contribute to their exhibition 'BirdsEyeView'.

BirdsEyeView focused on "the architecture of multispecies cohabitation" where it explored how architecture may be designed to help mitigate biodiversity loss. The exhibition was held between April and May 2022 at the San Mei Gallery in Brixton (London) and showcased objects and stories that centred on evolving bird-human relations, with the aim of inspiring new possibilities for contemporary urban and rural cohabitation architecture.

Barn Owl in Pastel



We receive many emails here at the Barn Owl Trust and in January a rather lovely one landed in our inbox from a lady called Paula Shipley from Lincolnshire. She wanted to share with us her first pastel portrait of a Barn Owl and we thought it was so beautiful we wanted to share it with all of you too. We just love how Paula has captured

the fantastic colouring of the Barn Owl and how the glint in the eyes really brings her to life.

"I had a passion for art throughout my school years. Geoff Trinder, who was my art teacher and who is now president for the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, was a huge inspiration to me. I'm now 51 and recently found the time to get back into my art, of which I have found a massive help towards mental health."

Paula Shipley

If you would like to see more of Paula's artwork she can be found on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) under Paula Shipley 1971 or on Facebook by searching [Forget-me-not doodles](#).

Thank you to Paula for sending this through to us and we do hope that the Barn Owl continues to be a muse for many more portraits to come!

The Barn Owl Trust provided a nestbox to show how these simple structures can be incorporated within outbuildings in rural settings to provide much needed Barn Owl nest and roost sites. The loss of Barn Owl roost and nest sites is of particular concern given that recent decades have seen many traditional agricultural buildings demolished or converted into habitable dwellings. To help mitigate the loss of these sites, we advocate siting nestboxes within suitable buildings and trees, alongside incorporating permanent nesting spaces within new building projects.



BOT Indoor Nestbox as part of the exhibition (landing tray not attached)
Photos supplied by Feral Partnerships

You can find out more about Barn Owl nest boxes and information on providing permanent nest spaces within buildings on our website- www.barnowltrust.org.uk/barn-owl-nestbox.

Josh Runs for Barn Owls

Josh McDowall is a wildlife artist and passionate naturalist based in Essex. Nature is something he treasures dearly and birds in particular; he's been fascinated by them since he was a boy and it's a fascination that continues to this day and beyond. Over the years Josh has built countless bird boxes which have helped to boost species numbers in his local area, but there is one particular bird species that is very close to his heart and that is the majestic Barn Owl.



On Sunday 23rd April this year, Josh will be running the London Marathon in aid of The Barn Owl Trust. He has set up a Give As You Live fundraising page where you can donate and help him to reach his target of £1000 for the Trust :

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/josh-gives-a-hoot>

Josh says *"The Barn Owl Trust are a small team of professional staff and volunteers, a grass-roots, non-profit organisation, based on the edge of Dartmoor in Devon and their dedication and devotion to this beautiful bird is exemplary. Running the London Marathon for Barn Owls and The Barn Owl Trust is a great honour and I hope you'll take the time to support me and the many others who are going the extra mile for nature."*

Thank you so much for supporting us Josh, it really is greatly appreciated. We will be cheering for you on the 23rd!

Brandelle Barn Owls

Barn Owl Update 2022

Back in [Feedback issue no 67](#), BOT supporter Helen Broughton told us of how she and her family had been nurturing their 5 acres of land for the benefit of Barn Owls. We heard of their successful brood of 4 in 2021 and the joy of seeing a family of 5 owls all flying together. She now brings us an update on the 'Brandelle Barn Owls' and the 2022 breeding season. Thank you Helen.



Helen with the brood of 4 Barn Owlets from 2021

After such a fantastic year for our 4 owl chicks in 2021 we didn't dare hope for the same success this year. However we had plenty of activity in the Owl box around Feb/March time and we hadn't changed anything in the field apart from planting 118 trees in various places. So we were a bit optimistic that we might have at least one chick this year. We spent hours watching the owl cam and we captured the parents bringing in food up to 8 times a night. We had some really clear shots of the voles they were catching so we were full of anticipation of possibly more than one. We didn't see any sign of the chicks until David, our local Barn Owl man, came to check the boxes. Fortunately he had his colleague with him who is licensed to ring the chicks. So after a quick phone call to our friends who had been waiting a long time to have the chance of being close to an owl chick, we set off down the field to the nesting box.



Owlets waiting for dinner

Well, we certainly were not expecting to experience what we did, first one chick, then another and another and finally a fourth one. Wow! Two years on the run was just brilliant. It was very close as three of the chicks were quite a bit more mature than the last one and ready to fledge any time. Once again we were able to hold the chicks and I don't think any of us stopped smiling for the rest of the evening.



Feeding time!

Unfortunately our delight was short lived as a few days later the weather changed, we had a very wet spell and we lost one of our chicks. We were absolutely gutted and are not sure what happened but were told it was probably due to the lack of food as it was so wet. We were advised to buy some mice to feed the survivors and fortunately they all survived. We didn't see much of them fledging in the daylight like we did last year but did pick up a few good shots of them after dusk. They finally all left the box a couple of months ago now and we haven't seen any sign since although we did hear Tawny Owls calling after they had fledged.

We have everything crossed that one of them might come back to the box again in the New Year and make a home there for her chicks. Who knows 3rd time lucky? That would be awesome!!

Helen Broughton
BOT Supporter

Photos provided by Helen Broughton

Converting to a CIO

In the 2018-2019 Annual Report, our chairman Keith Grant mentioned that we were planning to convert the Trust to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) in order to limit the liability of future Trustees and hopefully make it easier to find new ones going forward. As part of this process, we established the CIO entitled 'Barn Owl Legacy Trust' (BOLT) – charity no. 1190997 to take ownership of the Trust's nature reserve, the LLP, which is still managed by the Barn Owl Trust. In 2022, we made a successful application to the Charity Commission (CC) to register 'Barn Owl Trust' a CIO and on the 21st of December we were notified of our new charity no. 1201419; we now also have a Companies House no. CE031023.

The next stage is to transfer everything from the old charity and then to ensure that our history at the CC is retained and that any legacies left to 'The Barn Owl Trust' will come to the new charity. In the next financial year, we begin the process of transferring our contracts of employment and those with suppliers from the old charity to the new one. We also have to open new bank accounts and tick lots of other boxes before we can close the older charity, so for some time to come the two will run alongside each other.

For our supporters there will be little outward change; our aims and objectives are identical, and our work will continue as always. None of our contact details will change and our websites will remain the same. Our logo will change from The Barn Owl Trust to Barn Owl Trust and, once the new bank accounts are operational, we will kindly ask that our regular supporters change their standing orders where possible.



Matt & Mateo Visit



*Katy Bell showing Mateo & Matt around the National Trust property.
Photo by Katy Bell*

Mateo and I finally visited [Ulster Wildlife Trust \(UWT\)](#) in the Autumn of 2022. The possibility of a visit had initially been discussed as far back as Autumn 2019, but the trip was postponed due to the first Covid lockdown in March 2020. A rearranged trip for October 2020 was postponed, again due to Covid concerns, and after a hiatus in the hope things would finally settle down, a trip was organised for September 2022.

As a bit of background, Barn Owls are rare in Northern Ireland. UWT have recorded only 7 nests in total, not all in the same breeding season, and they estimate there are probably no more than 15 nests across the whole of the province.

They erect about 20 nestboxes a year and monitor around 50, although this is increasing. Much of their monitoring is through contacting landowners, rather than physically checking boxes, although when this happens, the use of a thermal imager often comes in handy.



An active roost site in Northern Ireland, where Barn Owls are rarely observed using buildings and favour tree-mounted nestboxes instead.



Using a thermal imager before approaching a nestbox can alert workers to the presence of a Barn Owl inside, thereby reducing the risk of inadvertent disturbance.

The small mammal assemblage is quite different in Northern Ireland (NI); there are no Field Voles or Common Shrews, which are so important to Barn Owls in Great Britain. Consequently, Wood Mouse takes on much greater importance, with Brown Rat coming in second in more urban habitats and Pygmy Shrew in more rural ones. Unlike Eire, the introduced species that support an ever-increasing population of Barn Owls in the far south are still largely absent; White-toothed Shrew hasn't yet reached NI, though it won't be long, and Bank Vole is currently found only in a small river valley in the east. What was most surprising was the

Ulster Wildlife Trust

revelation that of all the Barn Owl nests UWT have found, none have been in buildings, despite them being available! We're still at a loss to explain this, although it is a very small sample to work from.

We set off by train at lunchtime on Monday 19th and eventually arrived in Birkenhead early evening, ready for the overnight sailing to Belfast. After a quick breakfast in Belfast at a local café on the 20th, Katy Bell, Senior Conservation Officer at Ulster Wildlife Trust, picked us up and whisked us off to the plush UWT offices. Here we met Ross McIlwrath, Priority Species Officer, and other members of the team, to discuss a timetable for the trip.



Irish Moiled cattle maintain species rich grassland in the Slievenacloy Reserve in the Belfast Hills

By late morning Tuesday, we were surveying UWT's new land at their Slievenacloy Reserve in the Belfast Hills. This reserve is UWT's largest at 125Ha and is predominantly species-rich grassland with some rare and notable species. The views were breath-taking as we looked out across 5 of the 6 counties of Northern Ireland. Management involves extensive grazing by traditional cattle breeds, such as Irish Moiled cattle, from mid-summer to mid-winter, and other essential habitat work includes cutting of rush and scrub. From a Barn Owl point of view, it looked excellent. In the afternoon, we visited a wildlife-friendly farm on the banks of Strangford Lough. This farm had lovely areas of rough grassland and it came as no surprise to learn this was a reliable Barn Owl nest site. In the evening, Ross took us for a lovely walk around the Lough to look at the shorebirds, and several thousand Pale-bellied Brent Geese that had recently arrived from the Arctic Tundra of Canada and Greenland for the winter.



High quality Barn Owl habitat on land farmed by the Chair of the Nature Friendly Farming Network in Northern Ireland.

Wednesday 21st was the date for the Barn Owl Working Group Meeting at Castle Espie, a Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) reserve at Strangford Lough. Speakers included Katy from UWT with a background to Barn Owls in NI, John Lusby (Birdwatch Ireland) who talked about Barn Owls in Eire, Mark McCormick (RSPB) who provided an overview of the NI agri-environment scheme prescriptions for Barn Owls and of course BOT, with a history of the organisation and our work. Various representatives from the Northern Irish Raptor Study Group (IRSG), Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), the Nature Friendly Farming Network (NFFN), NI British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and WWT were also present. After the presentations, focus groups discussed how habitat could be enhanced through specific Environmental Farming Scheme options.

After a quick bite to eat at an excellent Thai restaurant, Katy and Ross took us out to a nearby woodland in the evening to look for Long-eared Owls with thermal imagers. We found a few pellets but other than a brief view of a bird in flight, they proved elusive. We did, however, get prolonged views of another Priority Species, the Irish subspecies of Mountain Hare!

On Thursday 22nd, we were taken to a Barn Owl nest site owned by the National Trust. One of the tree boxes there had been used for nesting in 2022, but unfortunately had attracted the attention of a Pine Marten. Of the brood of 4, one had died of natural causes, two were killed, with only one being taken away by the marten, and one had survived.



Mateo taking a photo of Pine Martin scatt

A trail camera recorded a different Pine Marten coming to investigate sometime later, but on this occasion one of the adult Barn Owls managed to chase it away. Pine Martens are fairly common in NI, despite being a protected species, and this is a concerning development in light of the relative rarity of Barn Owls there. On Thursday evening, Katy dropped us near the harbour, and after a spot of dinner, we boarded the overnight ferry back to Birkenhead, and onwards on Friday back to BOT HQ.

All in all, it was an absolutely fascinating trip, very different from the typical situation at home, and we are indebted to Katy, Ross and all at UWT for their kindness, generosity and hospitality. We very much hope to reciprocate in due course!

Matthew Twiggs

Former **Senior Conservation Officer**

Photos provided by BOT

Lincolnshire

Over the last three and half years I have had the pleasure of being closely involved at a site in North East Lincolnshire supporting a resident pair of breeding Barn Owls. The site consists of a beautifully restored 18th Century farmhouse and its associated outbuildings and grounds located immediately adjacent to a duneland and coastal grazing marshes National Nature Reserve, offering ideal Barn Owl hunting habitat.

As a BTO ringing permit holder and through my role as a local contact for the BOT, in summer 2020 I was contacted by the site owners to enquire if I would be interested in ringing a brood of young Barn Owls in a nest box they had installed on a large tree standing next to their property.

Unfortunately, upon my arrival this didn't prove possible after discovering the brood had just fledged and were no longer occupying the box.

My visit was far from entirely wasted however, as during discussions I suggested the largest of the barns would make an ideal candidate for a second Barn Owl 'des res', offering the resident adult pair with both a secure additional roosting place on site and potentially an optional second breeding spot.



The Barn Owl box on a tree

After providing advice on how to create a Barn Owl 'loft', aided by my own experience as a former ecological consultant plus information from the BOT website, the owners shortly afterwards engaged a local builder to carry out the work.

To enhance roosting and breeding opportunities for other birds of prey, I also supplied and helped install Tawny Owl and Kestrel nest boxes to trees elsewhere in the grounds, as both species were known to regularly frequent the site.

In 2021 I was invited back, the visit successfully timed to ring a brood of 4 Barn Owl owlets at an optimum size of growth in the tree box. We knew that they would be of suitable size because of a 'box cam' installed by the owners during the preceding winter period.



The Barn Owl 'loft' box

A further camera in the Barn Owl 'loft' box revealed the adults had begun using this for roosting.

Additional box cams revealed a lone Kestrel had used the box aimed at this species for winter roosting, following which it was commandeered by nesting Jackdaws. The Tawny Owl box also briefly attracted a single member of the target species as a roosting site, before also being taken over for breeding by Jackdaws, and later by Stock Doves.

The box cams have also provided some spectacular footage of 'battle royales' between Barn Owls and both Kestrels and Jackdaws, as the two latter species have periodically tried, unsuccessfully to date, to gain supremacy of the Barn Owl boxes in the tree and the barn.

Other cameras in the grounds have captured the presence of Roe Deers, Badgers and even a freshly fledged brood of 3 young Kingfishers from a nearby nesting site.

Last year, 2022, the resident pair of Barn Owls chose to switch to the box in the barn for breeding, raising no less than 6 young, the last of which fledged from the box on 10 July 2022. Unfortunately for various reasons I was unable to make it to the site at the right time to undertake any ringing prior to fledging.

It was after this that things took what can only be described as a quite remarkable series of events!

Here in Lincolnshire secondary breeding by Barn Owls is not that uncommon, particularly in years of good hunting with a strong



A still from footage from the treebox cam when the 'interloper' arrived

Barn Owls

vole population on the go. The resident Barn Owl pair in question therefore deciding to make another breeding attempt, this time returning to the tree box.

Generally speaking, secondary clutches of Barn Owl eggs begin to be laid from the end of July onwards, but what was quite exceptional in this case was egg laying didn't commence until 12 September 2022, when the first egg was seen on the box cam. Eventually the clutch consisted of 5 eggs, just three of which hatched, the first not until 12 October 2022.



Feeding time in the 'loft' box

By kind courtesy of the owners, we have a private link to all the various box cams on site, such that my wife and I had the privilege earlier last summer to tune in and watch the day-to-day happenings and ultimately breeding success of the first brood. By early autumn however, we had tended to discontinue checking out the box cams for the season, imagining by then that all was over breeding-wise for the remainder of 2022.

It was therefore quite a shock when the owners rang me in LATE NOVEMBER to say they had this further brood and estimated they were of a size ready for ringing, not fully realising just how unusually late this second breeding attempt was.

The drama didn't end there however, for on the evening of 24 November 2022, the day before I had arranged to visit to ring the youngsters, an adult Barn Owl, NOT one of the parents - who by this stage were just posting prey items through the box entrance and occupying the barn, decided to enter and utilise the tree box for roosting.

The pristine plumage and dark scapulars of this bird were suggestive of a relatively young adult - possibly even a member of the earlier brood on site, but in the absence of me having ringed them the jury remains out as to whether this was the case or not.

Unfortunately, this 'interloper' rapidly took exception to the presence of the three Barn Owl chicks - in all probability because they believed it was one of their parents and were constantly bothering it for food, with the upshot being it began attacking them! Sadly, the middle-sized member of the brood succumbed to these attacks overnight and was dead by morning.

By the time I arrived in the afternoon, the box cam revealed it was the turn of the largest of the brood to come under constant and viscous attack by the 'interloper', such that I quickly accessed the box and removed it, temporarily securing it in one of my muslin ringing bags.

A check of the two surviving youngsters revealed the one which had just been under attack had a bleeding toe following its efforts to try and ward off its attacker with its upturned talons, but otherwise seemed OK.

After ringing both chicks plus the 'interloper' and consulting over the 'phone with a highly experienced birds of prey conservationist and ringing colleague, it was agreed that the best course of action would be to take the 'interloper' a good way off site and release it at dusk, to best ensure its non-return and prevent the killing spree from continuing. The climatic conditions at the time of its release were good, with the location used well away from roads and close to an area where there are several Barn Owl nest boxes, previously installed by me and forming part of my mid-Lincolnshire Barn Owl nest box project.

The story of the survival of this exceptionally late brood was not quite over however, as a few days after the removal of the 'interloper' they were subjected to, but nevertheless managed to come through, the longest prolonged cold snap recorded in Lincolnshire for the past 12 years, with the overnight temperature plunging to minus 7 degrees C for three consecutive nights. This was despite being only half-grown and still a fair way off being fully feathered, plus no longer receiving any warmth by way of being brooded by parent birds which, when not out hunting, were roosting in both the barn and now the Kestrel box as well.

During this spell of freezing weather, the owners decided to try and help a little with the young's chances of survival by putting out supplementary food items in the form of pre-purchased dead mice, placed on a raised wooden platform directly below the box - with the cameras revealing the adults firstly encountered and then transported some of these mice up to the youngsters.



Four youngsters peering out of the 'loft' box entrance

On the evening of 17 December 2022, the larger of the two Barn Owl owlets made its first, tentative emergence out of the box and on to the landing ledge.

As I write this on 21 January 2023, despite a current secondary cold snap here in Lincolnshire - with overnight temperatures dropping down to minus 5 degrees C, both youngsters are emerging from the box on a nightly basis and making localised flying sorties before returning to roost during the daytime period.

As to whether they steadily develop their own hunting skills sufficiently well to survive for the remainder of the winter period and become fully independent adults will I guess very much depend on what the weather has in store coupled, as always, with a decent slice of luck.

All Photos by Sarah Parker

Garry Steele
BOT Supporter

A Gift that Leaves a Legacy



Remembering the Barn Owl Trust in your Will is a very special way to support the future of the Barn Owl in the UK. It's never too early to think about the world we leave behind and many of you have chosen to leave gifts in your wills to charities of all types. Gifts in wills help us to save, support and protect Barn Owls and other wildlife, and their habitats for future generations. In the past we have been left legacies, both small and substantial.

We recognise what a wonderful commitment it is when you decide to leave a gift in your will to the Barn Owl Trust and we are truly grateful to every person who decides to support our work in this way. We always ensure that a legacy is put to very good use. Our 26-acre conservation site was purchased with such a gift and named after the generous benefactor. Our wonderful meeting room was also built using a legacy. In the meeting room is a wooden tree and on that tree are wooden leaves engraved with the names of people who remembered us in this way, or whose relatives and friends made donations in lieu of flowers at the funeral services of their loved ones.

In Memoriam

The Trust has received legacies from the estates of:

Barbara Joan Barber, Maureen Theresa Bird,
Pamela Veronica Bower, Anthony John Hallam,
Arthur Cooper Stafford, James Roy Ward
& Paula Jennifer Barrington West

and donations in memory of:

Josephine Bailey, Janet Beard, Mr Peter Bond,
Timothy Andrew Boraston, Pamela Brown,
Mr & Mrs Cody, Irene Mary Harrison,
Mabel Hunt, Pauline Huxter, Alma Noakes,
Dorothy Reed, Val Russell
& Richard Yonge

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

Leaving a charitable legacy is usually the most substantial gift you will ever make, and we advise you to take the appropriate legal and financial advice before doing so. We understand that your priority will be providing for those you care for. However, if after you have done this you feel able to consider leaving a gift to the Barn Owl Trust, there are several ways you can do this, and your solicitor will be able to guide you on what's best for you and your estate. If you have already written your will and now decide you wish to leave a gift to the Trust, this can be simply done by writing a Codicil to your will - again your legal representative will be able to advise you.



If you would like to know more about leaving a legacy, please contact Sam Tully on sam@barnowltrust.org.uk. We cannot provide legal advice but we are happy to chat with you to discuss what leaving a legacy entails. We recommend you discuss your wishes with a solicitor when making, or amending, a will.

Shredder Needed!



We are shortly to begin digitising all our records and will have a lot of paperwork to get rid of, with some confidential information that will need to be destroyed. Our tiny shredder will not be up to the sheer volume of shredding we'll need to do. So we were wondering if someone, somewhere, might be able to donate a large office style shredder to the Barn Owl Trust. We try to re-use our shredded paper in the Bird Hospital as bedding for injured owls so the shredder must not be cross cut and preferably produce strips up to 1cm wide. If you think you can help us, please contact the office via info@barnowltrust.org.uk. Thank you.

Barn Owl Trust

Conserving the Barn Owl and its Environment

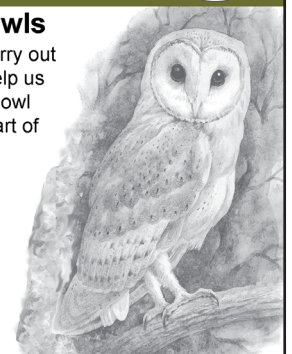


Leave a Legacy for Barn Owls

Legacies provide us with essential funds to carry out our conservation and education work. They help us provide information and advice and to run our owl sanctuary. They are an extremely important part of our income. They also help us to undertake special projects, like our Wildlife Tower.

Each legacy or donation in memory is marked with a leaf on our beautiful Memory Tree.

If you would like more information about leaving a legacy or donating in memory please contact our Legacy Officer, Sam Tully sam@barnowltrust.org.uk or see our website



www.barnowltrust.org.uk • 01364 255256

Matt Takes Off



*Matt and the last Nestbox he erected for BOT
2nd December 2022*

After almost 16 years with us, Matt Twiggs has left the Trust and taken a job with Natural England as a Specialist Marine Ornithologist in the Birds Team. Matt started with us way back in 2007 as an Assistant Conservation Officer, was promoted to Conservation Officer in 2009 and Senior Conservation Officer in 2015. Matt saw some significant changes during his time here and he completed an Msc., became a BTO ringer, erected numerous nestboxes, made hundreds of site visits and dealt with many thousands of enquiries.

From 2009, Matt helped to deliver our BOESS (Barn Owl Ecology, Surveys and Signs), courses which had started four years earlier, and was instrumental in the development and delivery of our ABOSM (Advanced Barn Owl Surveying and Mitigation) courses from 2011. He was a co-author of the Barn Owl Conservation Handbook published in 2012 and was heavily involved in the creation of our online BOESS course during and after Covid.

Matt was involved in every aspect of the Trust's conservation work including management of the Trust's nature reserve, the LLP (Lennon Legacy Project). He planted Forde Orchard in 2010 and has lovingly nurtured the fruit trees ever since. When the reserve was transferred to the Barn Owl Legacy Trust (BOLT) in 2019, he became a Trustee of the new charity and is continuing in that role.



In Forde Orchard August 2010

Shows and events were not Matt's favourite pastime! He always said he wasn't confident talking to people, but he was brilliant at it and his knowledge and enthusiasm for wildlife, particularly birds, shone through. Leading walks on the LLP and managing volunteer tasks highlighted his people skills.

Dealing with planning and development enquiries, and managing data from our Barn Owl Survey website (barnowlsurvey.org.uk) was also in his job description, as was turning his hand when needed to dealing with casualties, feeding the resident owls, doing their health checks and cleaning aviaries when there weren't other staff or volunteers to do it.

Matt was a much-valued member of the Team, and without exception, everyone was sad to see him leave. We feel very grateful that he spent so many years here and contributed so much to the Trust. We all wish him well and hope that he will be happy in his new role. We will of course be keeping in touch as he remains a Trustee of BOLT and will continue to keep an eye on the land that became so important to him. Thank you Matt, we miss you.



On a ringing trip July 2008

Matt Says Goodbye...for now!



After nearly 16 years at the Trust, I've taken the difficult decision to move on. My time here has been rich and varied, and I have learnt so very much. I've met some wonderful people, visited some lovely places and, I hope, made a positive contribution to Barn Owl conservation in general, and the work of the Trust in particular. I will miss everyone very much but hope to be able to return to help the Team with the annual monitoring sites from time to time. I wish the Trust the best of luck for the future in their valuable work.

Matthew Twiggs
Former BOT Senior Conservation Officer

Pellet Dissection with Jess



Jess on the stand at Celebrate Start Bay

In 2022, I was lucky enough to get out of the office and attend two events to carry out pellet dissection with local groups and individuals.

In August, volunteer Kat and I attended Celebrate Start Bay at Slapton Ley Field Studies Centre. The event, hosted by the Field Studies Council (FSC), celebrated the environment, local community and businesses. It was attended by families, individuals and FSC students keen to find out more about wildlife and nature and enjoy good food and music. Although the day began wet, the weather cleared and a steady stream of people visited the stand throughout the day to dissect pellets and identify the skeletons of Barn Owl prey. Kat, having recently spent her university dissertation analysing pellets, was the perfect volunteer for the day and her knowledge of small mammal skulls was invaluable!



Getting stuck in with some pellet dissection

Farmwise was held again in 2022 after a break of two years due to Covid. The event, held at Westpoint Arena, Exeter on 11th October, is designed to help primary aged children understand more about farming and food production in Devon through interactive demonstrations and displays.

The day dawned cold but bright. I arrived early to set up, lured by the offer of coffee and a breakfast roll to those who arrived early to set up. Many thanks to Di Hawkins who came to volunteer for the day and help to ensure the event ran smoothly.



Volunteer Di Hawkins with the display at Farmwise

The Barn Owl Trust stand was placed in the 'Wildlife Area' and was joined by a range of other environmental organisations including Dartmoor National Park and Stover Country Park. Each organisation ran a short activity for the visiting children to participate in and learn more about an environmental or countryside topic or issue. The Barn Owl Trust activity was pellet analysis. After a short introduction about how a pellet is made, the children had the opportunity to dissect a pellet and look at the animal remains inside. Over the day, small groups from different schools visited the stand to carry out the activity. Most were very keen and interested to get involved with pellet dissection. The entire event was attended by over 1,000 children in total. We hope the children visiting our stand left with a better understanding of Barn Owls and their prey, and have been inspired to learn more about Barn Owls.

Jessica Munday

Admin & Education Assistant

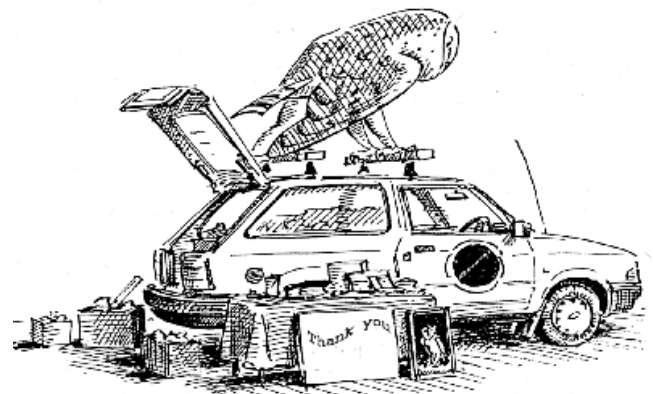
All Photos by BOT

Car Recycling Scheme



Did you know that you can donate your old vehicle to charity? The Barn Owl Trust is signed up with 'Giveacar' which offers a hassle-free way of getting rid of your unwanted vehicle. If you have decided to scrap your car, then you can use this easy and ethical way to dispose of it whilst also helping support the Barn Owl Trust. 'Giveacar' do all the hard work for you. They will arrange free collection across the UK, and whether your car has suffered an MOT failure, been in an accident or you just no longer need it, 'Giveacar' can help you. It is quick, easy and free.

Take a look at www.giveacar.co.uk; the process is very simple and allows you to nominate a charity to support – we hope you will choose the Barn Owl Trust, of course! When it's all done, you will get notified of how much your car raised for the Trust. The organisation can deal with Motorbikes, Vans and Caravans too. All in all, a very good solution for you, and for us.



Team Talk

New Team Additions

Tim Wilkins Assistant Conservation Officer

Tim started part-time work at the Trust in February 2023. His role is varied within the Conservation Team including nestbox erection, camera installation, habitat advice and conservation enquiries.

He also currently works part-time as a Consultant Conservation Officer with South Devon Nature Trust and is South Devon & Dartmoor Volunteer Reserves Warden with Devon Wildlife Trust.

Tim is a tree surgeon, timber building specialist, musician, birder, bee keeper and owner of 2 hairy hounds.



Holly Stewart Assistant Conservation Officer

Holly joined us as a full-time Assistant Conservation Officer on 27th February. Until now, Holly's been holding down no less than three part-time jobs in conservation, horticulture, and farm work; Project Officer at ParkLife SW, a Therapeutic Community Gardener at the Horticultural Therapy Trust, and Support Worker for United Response, helping adults with learning disabilities look after farm animals.

Holly says "I'm excited and enthused by British flora and fauna and want to focus my skills, attributes and passion on just one

Helen Nathanson Admin Assistant

Helen started working for the Trust in March 2023. She has had a varied career as a Logistics Officer in the Royal Navy, as a secondary English teacher and, most recently, has spent many years in the Town and Parish sector of local government in Devon, where she enjoyed working with local community groups and developed a particular interest in the impact of planning and infrastructure on biodiversity and the environment. Following her time as a Trustee of Devon Wildlife Trust, she decided to grow her knowledge of wildlife and conservation and is studying an MSc in Sustainability and Ecology at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales.

Helen is delighted to be joining the Trust and is looking forward to learning more about Barn Owl conservation.



Thank You Kim!

After more than 11 years as a volunteer with the Trust, Kim said 'au revoir' to us in February. He was presented with a 'long service award' for his work here including cleaning the aviaries, general ground maintenance, cleaning the Trust's vehicles and doing odd jobs for both the Conservation Team and our Admin Team. Kim also accompanied members of our Conservation Team on field-work trips whenever an extra pair of hands was needed. His sense of humour, his 'dulcet tones' (he was a Sergeant Major in a previous life) and his willingness to pitch in to every task will be missed by everyone here at the Trust, especially his side kick Tony, the two of them made a great team.

Kim has promised to keep in touch and to come back from time to time to check up on Tony and the rest of the team. Good luck Kim and a heartfelt thank you for your years of service. We miss you!



Donation Boxes

When you are out and about this Summer, you may well come across one of our Barn Owl Trust donation boxes on your travels. These small wooden boxes are placed at various locations locally and throughout the country (we even have one in Scotland!) and are a vital way of raising funds for the work we do here at the Trust.

Each box is numbered so that we can track it and they are normally found at counters or receptions of shops or attractions. We welcome any donations, however large or small, and our donation boxes can even be used for foreign coins. In these changed days of paying with cards or phones, our donation boxes have been somewhat forgotten, however we have tracked them all down post-Covid and refreshed them, so that any small change that you may have, can be donated.

Will you manage to find a donation box on your travels this year? We have boxes at some of the South West's major attractions such as The Lost Gardens of Heligan, Otterton Mill, Pennywell Farm, the Rugglestone Inn at Widecombe in the Moor and Woodlands Family Theme Park. If you see one and have any small change you can spare, please think of us. One of our boxes is actually a milk churn and we challenge you to find where that is!

All contributions go towards helping the Barn Owls and Tawny Owls we have here at the Trust and also allows us to continue our vital conservation work throughout the year.

If you feel that you would like a donation box to put out for visitors at your attraction or business, please [contact us](#) at the Trust and we can arrange one to be sent to you.

Sam Tully
Admin & Legacy Officer
Spring 2023 - Feedback 69 - 15



Thanks & Things

We would like to say a big thank you to all our supporters who have sent in items for recycling, donated goods for our prize draw or gifted us items from our Wants List. Thank you:

Kim Baker, Betty Blease, Heather Buswell, Cheryl Crichton, Myfanwy Ford, Liz Hague, George Hincks, Sheila Imrie, Mr & Mrs Lyddy, Kim & Ed McNeil, Tracey Morris & Shelley Wright, Olive Mulley, Nick Peters, Nigel Reid, Janet Rutter, C Sewell, Angela Sharpe, Elizabeth & Brian Stone, Anne Strong & Melanie White.

We are so thankful to have so many wonderful volunteers who give up their time to help the Trust. Our sincere thanks goes to:

Saleh Alfulaij, Diane Baker, Kim Baker, Rick Barton, Tim Dowling, Caroline Fawell, Lisa Fordham, Hazel Gruber, Di Hawkings, Tony Hullat, Chris Marshall, Sylvia Marshall, Steve Martin, Michael Park, Melanie Reeves, Josh Parker, Margaret Rhodes, Jeanne Silvestri, Esther van Delft, and the groups of Plymouth University volunteers.

We would also like to say a special thank you to Estover Veterinary Hospital and City Vets for all their help with treating injured owls.

To our Fantastic Fundraisers...you are all stars!:

We received £145 from Greg Snook, aged 12, raised in sponsorship for cycling the John Muir Way, what an achievement! Moor Soup Club collected £82 at one of their events, Bill Opticians gave £88 donated from small spectacle repairs & adjustments, Brian & Janet Woodford donated £70 from the sales of art books, Bickington Community Lunch Club raised £160 at their fundraising event and Hilary Audus donated a generous £250 from the sales of her animal sculptures. Thank you all! ★

Can you help us with:

- Office shredder - strip cut up to 1cm wide
- Angle poise lamps
- Tool belts
- [NatureSpy trail cam](#)
- Bow saws/pruning saws
- Pressure washer (mains powered)
- [Wire mesh galvanised 90cm high x 15m roll \(1.6mm wire 19mm hole\)](#)
- Folding saw horses/trestles
- Postcards and pre-1970 envelopes with stamps on
- 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 25 x 50mm tanalised batten
- Waders - any over size 6
- 2 covers for 50mm tow-balls
- Brightly coloured ripstock material for banner printing
- Outdoor PIR sensor LED lights (small)
- Socket set (48 pc 1/2 inch drive)
- Extra long drill bits (3,4 & 5mm)
- Wire cutters
- Quick grip clamps
- Box Trailer (minimum 2.4m x 1.5m x 1.8m high)
- Small plate compactor
- Prizes for our Grand Draw (postable i.e. not heavy or bulky)

Thank you for your help.



Tail Piece

The sound of the Linnets as they perched in the trees singing their hearts out at the beginning of March, was amazing. Echoing around the valley, it even drowned out the sound of the river, which was fairly low after an incredibly dry February. We had just 9mm of rain in the month, the lowest in the 17 years we have records for. In January, we had 281.5mm, way above our 149.5mm average for the month. This is just another example of how climate change is affecting the natural cycles, but so far, we've been really lucky here in the UK. Around the world, extreme weather events are killing people and wildlife every day, but it rarely makes our news. "Time is running out as the world inches closer to meltdown and countries must change course before it is too late," UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned in February, presenting his priorities for the year. Harmful carbon emissions from 2010-2019 have never been higher in human history, this is proof that the world is on a "fast track to disaster", he warned, with scientists arguing that it's 'now or never' to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

With the 'cost of living crisis', the 'downturn in the economy', the horrendous war in Ukraine and devastating natural disasters like the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria dominating the news, it's not surprising that most people, including world leaders, don't give the climate and ecological emergency much thought, but unless it is addressed, everything else will pale in insignificance. The current refugee crisis is nothing compared to what is predicted as sea levels rise, global food supply is threatened and rising temperatures make it impossible to live and work in some areas of the planet. The number of people that are prepared to take unspeakable risks to try and survive will increase exponentially.

Our leaders need to listen to the United Nations' warnings now. We need a global system based on sustainability rather than continuous economic growth, which just isn't practical on a planet

with finite resources. In order to limit the number of refugees trying to reach Europe for a better standard of living or simply to survive, our species needs leaders that help those folk to have what they need in their own countries so they don't need to leave. Unfortunately, human history is littered with tyrants and despots, power and greed, 'the best way to conquer is divide and rule', set people against each other because of race or religion and it's easier to assume the mantle of authority. Education is one answer; if people really understood that their survival, and that of their children, depends on the human race working together to create fairer and more sustainable societies, hopefully enough people would choose that route and carry others along with them. We need to remember that the media and big business has as much responsibility as governments for the mess we are in. When profits and vested interests control the news that bombards us 24-hours a day, it's hardly surprising, in our consumer society, that most people have little idea of the danger we face.

In order to handle the desperate situation facing us, we need to learn as much as we can about what is happening in the world and to share that information with our friends and neighbours. We need to do everything we can to support each other, to conserve natural resources, to feed our spirits, and, to put everything in perspective, we need to spend time in the natural world. This isn't just about the human race, there are millions of other species that share this wonderful, fragile environment. A beautiful tree, a stunning sunset, a murmuration of Starlings, the sight of a Barn Owl or a Badger, a Sparrow building its nest, the Catkins and Primroses in the hedgerows, the smell of flowers in the sunshine, these are all things that can help us cope and by appreciating the beauty of our planet we can work towards sustaining them.

Together we can make a world of difference.

Frances Ramsden