



## WELCOME TO FEEDBACK

This issue of the Trusts bi-annual newsletter Feedback will give you the reader an insight not only into the work of the Barn Owl Trust but also into the motivation and philosophies of some of our volunteers who make this work possible.

Here we are faced day after day with the reality of mans effect on the environment whether, by receiving yet another wildlife victim of a road traffic accident or by the results of continuous rural development and human activities (see item on page 3).

The balance for us is the wildlife and the people that care. Those that stop to pick up an injured creature and take it miles for help. Those that take the time to raise funds to support our work or come in and help us to do it. It is also good to hear from those people who write and tell us about their personal efforts to make a contribution to their local environment. Everyone can do something to make a difference. On page 5 of Feedback Margaret mentions that even a simple smile can create a positive response. There are many things that we can all do to help protect the planet and to conserve it for our children and for the wildlife that share it with us. We hope this newsletter will encourage you to "do your bit" for the environment and to support the Barn Owl Trust. Good luck whatever you do.



Barn Owl Trust visit to St David's First School Exeter.

Photograph: Kirsty Iles

The recycled teachest (top right) is now a potential Barn Owl site

Photograph: Simon Raper



## NESTBOX WORKSHOPS

The Nestbox Workshops held by the Trust in November 1992 and January 1993 were a great success. With 40 people attending the first and 25 the second. They resulted in some 60 boxes being made and taken away for erection in different parts of the South West.

Thank you to all of you that attended and special thanks to those who have since written to us with the locations of their boxes. We hope to meet you all again in the autumn.

Further workshops are planned for this winter. Provisional dates are 20th November 1993 and 22nd January 1994 - contact the Trust office for further details.

THINK GLOBALLY -  
ACT LOCALLY

## IN MEMORIAL

### JOHN HILHOUSE.

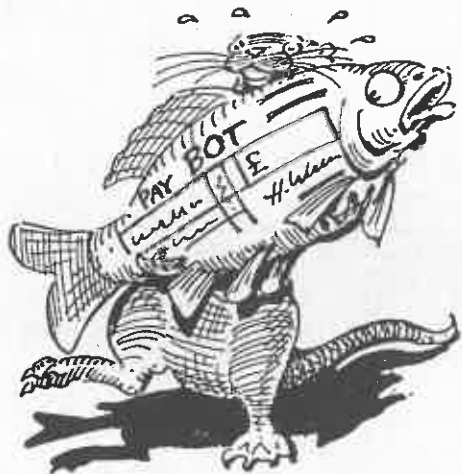
The Trust has received a donation to support its work in Memory of John Hilhouse late of Buckland in the Moor. Many thanks to his family who chose to remember John in this way. A small brass plaque supplied by the family will be fixed to one of our aviaries to commemorate this gift.

### TERRY SWAIN.

Many families now ask that donations to charity are made in Lieu of flowers when a loved one dies. The Trust received such a donation following the sudden death in April of Terry Swain late of Plymouth. Terry had links with the Trust and visited us last year to see the tree planted in our nature reserve in memory of his Mother Gertie Hawker who died in November 1991, he also attended our last AGM. During the Autumn a tree will be planted here to commemorate Terrys life.

### PAT MURPHY MEMORIAL FUND

Friends and members of the Henry Williamson Society have been asked to make donations to the Barn Owl Trust in Memory of Pat Murphy, late of Redhill, Surrey and long time Membership Secretary of the Society. Our thanks go to Mrs Margaret Murphy for this suggestion and to those who have supported the Trust through this Fund.



### GRAND DRAW 1993 and OWL NIGHT AT THE SHIP INN

Thank you to everyone who bought tickets for last years Grand Draw which raised £409.20 for the Trust. The 1st prize, a gallon of brandy, was won by Mr Halden from Uplyme near Lyme Regis and the 2nd prize winner of the gallon of whisky was Mr Bryan Barlow. Thirty other prizes of alcoholic drink were also distributed. Tickets for this years Grand Draw are now available from the Trust at 50p per book of five tickets. The draw for the thirty two prizes of alcohol will take place on Owl Night at the Ship Inn Axmouth on Friday 29th October 1993. We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible - fancy dress optional. Many thanks to Jane and Christopher Chapman and their family for organising this highly enjoyable way of supporting the Trust.

## WILD BARN OWL CASUALTIES

The recent addition of the Barn Owl to Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act means that it is illegal to release any Barn Owl into the wild without a licence from the Department of the Environment. This includes rehabilitated wild Barn Owl casualties. Throughout the country there are Licensed Rehabilitation Keepers (LRK's) licensed by the Department of the Environment to take in casualty diurnal (daytime) birds of prey and these LRK's have had their licences extended to cover the release of rehabilitated wild Barn Owls. LRK's are asked (but not required) by the Department of the Environment to keep records of any Barn Owls recovered and released and to have the birds fitted with British Trust of Ornithology (BTO) rings before release to enable identification should the bird be recovered at some future date. Any captive bred Barn Owls (identifiable by their rings) handed to LRK's should be released by the holder of a current DOE licence to release captive bred Barn Owls.

Those of us involved with Owls (including bird hospitals and individuals) that are not LRK's now need to apply to DOE for an individual licence for each wild rehabilitated Barn Owl casualty we release and to ensure that the bird is fitted with a BTO ring. Although this could be seen by some as unnecessary and bureaucratic we welcome this as a way to monitor and evaluate the success of wild Barn Owl rehabilitation. Here at the Barn Owl Trust detailed records of all casualties and their treatment are kept and BTO rings fitted to all released Owls as a matter of course. For us the licensing requirement means very little extra work and we would encourage all of those involved in any kind of wildlife rehabilitation to keep detailed records of their work and wherever possible to identify individuals so that information about release methods and survival after release can be accumulated.

Anyone finding a sick or injured Owl should wherever possible seek advice before taking any action unless the bird is in imminent danger or severely damaged. On no account should Owlets (young Owls) be picked up and taken home or elsewhere without advice being sought first. Young Owlets in danger (for instance found sitting in the road) should of course be moved - but not far, just to a place of safety as their parents may well be nearby.

If an Owl obviously needs help and must be moved this can be achieved most easily by placing a towel, coat or similar item over the bird carefully and avoiding its feet (which could prove painful if they get a grip). The Owl should be put into a well ventilated cardboard box or similar container which should be placed somewhere slightly warm. Seek advice as soon as possible.

The Barn Owl Trust can give you the number of your nearest LRK. We operate a 24 hour emergency answerphone service, please leave your name, phone number, address, time of call and details of casualty. Alternatively your local RSPCA should be able to help.

**OWLS DIE IN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

On our over populated Island the demand for houses means new housing developments on farm land and redevelopment of farm buildings.

Yesterday I was called out to a building site where new houses had just been completed on a green field site by a large well-known building corporation. A tree "needed" to be felled but the day before an adult Tawny Owl had been flushed from the tree by the disturbance of adjacent trees being felled. The chainsaw man told the corporation that owls may have a nest up the tree - the response? "Fell it anyway". Instead he contacted us and we all met at the site. I inspected the tree and found the nest which contained half a mouse plus two freshly dead part-eaten owlets. The adults had almost certainly killed their young and deserted the nest due to the disturbance. I showed the dead owlets to the two men and we speculated for a while as to how and why they had died. The chainsaw man was glad he'd called me. The developer was feeling relieved that he could get on with the new landscaping without delay. I felt sad. On the way home I thought to myself - maybe I should have told the two men "it's obvious what killed them - we did - whether we like it or not, housing developments for humans destroy wildlife".

Returning to my small office to deal with more enquiries I came across a shocking letter. A young lad in Cornwall had been "keeping an eye" on a Barn Owl site for several years and each year since 1988 the pair had bred successfully. In June 1992 he visited the site and found all but one of the owls dead. The bodies of one adult and two owlets freshly killed, had been hung up in the barn with binder cord around their legs. One lone owlet remained in the nest still alive. What kind of cruel sadistic creature could have done this? Answer? A human. Homo Sapiens are the only species on earth who kill just for pleasure. I looked up and saw fresh new leaves unfolding on the oak tree, I heard the sound of the river mingled with a Blackbirds song and wished that humans could live in harmony with nature.

**BARN CONVERSIONS - NO END IN SIGHT**

Someone said the fad of converting barns was over, someone else said there was a slump in the housing market. If you are starting to think that Barn Conversions are no longer a problem, you are wrong! They are happening now as I write. In most cases little or no thought is given to wildlife. Blue tits in the walls, sparrows in the eaves, swallows on the rafters, bats in the roof, jackdaws on the wall, barn owls, kestrels, wrens, robins..... Through my work on the Trusts "Barn Conversion Research Project" I have come across all of these species (and more) in old barns and have witnessed the loss of these sites throughout the South West. By the time

the roof has been replaced, the walls re-pointed and the windows glazed, the converted barn has lost all it's wildlife value.

The way in which barns are usually converted is very much like the way we farm, or mine, or fish - we just take what we want.

The reality however is that we share this small planet with lots of life forms. We replace the living creatures with ornaments or stained glass windows. HOWEVER, it is possible to live in a barn alongside the wildlife which was there before us. The people I know who share their homes with Barn owls are delighted. They became proud of the birds. The small effort involved in making provision for the birds is rewarded every time one flies past the window. It's better than television! By learning to live with wildlife at home they may start to take a greater interest in wildlife generally. The field work for the Barn Conversion Research Project should be completed this Autumn (1993). We have a tremendous amount of data from the project which started back in April 1990 and hope to produce results in 1994. Although I cannot speculate about the results at this stage I can say that making provision for Barn Owls in Barn Conversions is worth while. Leaflet No 22 *Barn Conversions - Provisions for Owls* is available from the Trust free of charge.



**WHAT IS MAN  
WITHOUT THE BEASTS?  
IF ALL THE BEASTS  
WERE GONE MEN WOULD  
DIE FROM GREAT  
LONELINESS OF SPIRIT**

Chief Seattle 1855

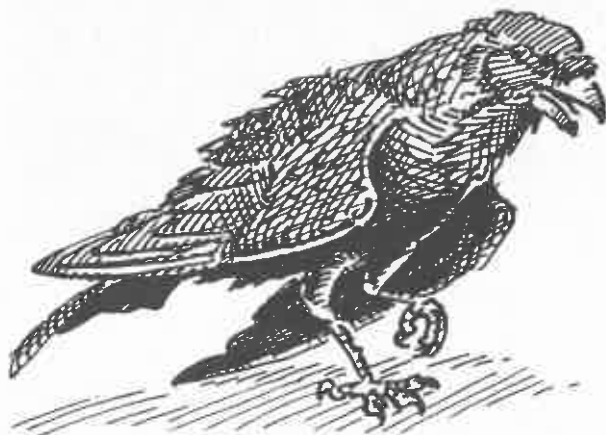
## THE BIRDROOM

You may recall from a previous edition of Feedback that, thanks to a donation from the Jean Sainsbury Charitable Trust and willing help from volunteers, the old office caravan has been converted into a Birdroom and equipped for housing and treating the casualties we receive here at the Trust. This has proved extremely beneficial to both us and the birds as we can now keep all our medicines and equipment on hand in a space that is a quiet sanctuary reserved especially for birds to recuperate in. It is of course impossible to predict the number of incoming casualties at any one time, and we can go for days without receiving any, then all of a sudden receive three at once! Currently there are three Tawny Owls (RTA victims) using the facilities and a Raven!

The degree of injuries we encounter vary, but the majority of the injured birds we receive are road casualties, many with badly broken wings and facial injuries. The badly injured casualties are rushed straight to the Vet for treatment and/or surgery, and we are extremely fortunate in being able to call on the assistance of Messrs Bower Hunt and Youngs, the Veterinary Hospital Group in Plymouth, who have a tremendous amount of experience in dealing with birds of prey, and we would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to all the staff there, who always greet us cheerfully, even at 9.30pm on Christmas Eve!

When birds arrive here they are initially accommodated in hospital boxes in the bird room, where we have heat lamps and pads available if needed. Once a bird has recuperated sufficiently it is transferred to an aviary where it can move about and strengthen its muscles. Naturally where possible we are keen that birds are returned to the wild, but some injuries result in permanent disability in which case the owl concerned is transferred to a suitable aviary where it can be given the best possible quality of life in captivity.

Rehabilitating any creature is a time consuming business and it does mean that whoever is taking incoming emergency calls has to be prepared to drop what they are doing if necessary to ferry the bird about and then to tend to it and administer drugs and food as many times a day (or night) as necessary - yes, even at Christmas!



RAVE

## RAVE

No, not an all night party - but an injured Raven that is currently recuperating here! Rave came to us recently from Roger Perkins in Newton Abbot, who passed him on to us to be flight tested in one of our long recuperation aviaries. Unfortunately he is unable to fly properly and it seems unlikely that he will recover well enough to be released.

## WANTED

We do have some very willing volunteers who are prepared to deliver to and collect birds from the Vet and our grateful thanks go out to them too! More volunteers throughout Devon are needed to pick up and transport casualty owls at short notice. We are building up a network of people willing to be called on to help with this scheme. If you are interested in getting involved and have both a car and telephone please let us know.

## NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please note that all Ashburton telephone numbers have been prefixed with a 6 and the Trust's number is now 653026.

## SOME WORDS FROM OUR VOLUNTEERS

"Owls and ravens will take over the land, there will be no King to rule over the country and the leaders will all be gone. Thorns and thistles will grow up in all the palaces and walled towns and jackals and owls will live in them".

What is this? The beginning of some kind of fantasy, or sci fi?

It is in fact a quotation from the Good News Bible (Isiah 34.9 11 and 12).

One day I thought it would be interesting to see what, if anything, the Bible had to say about owls, so I did and was surprised to see how often they crop up - Screech Owls, Great Owls, Snowy Owls and the Little Owl - they are all there.

NOT, I hasten to add, that they receive a very good press! In the laws given by God to Moses, they are listed among the "unclean" creatures, which must not be eaten.

The psalmist, crying to God in distress, describes himself as "like an owl of the waste places" and a "lonely bird on the house top" (Psalm 102) and the much-tried Job says that he is "a companion of owls".

Interestingly, though, it is when destruction is prophesied for offending Nations, that the owls seem to come into their own! My opening quote is foretelling the destruction of Babylon and in the older versions of the Bible continues rather beautifully, that it shall be "a court for owls" and "the screech owl shall rest there, and find herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, lay and hatch". The prophet Zephaniah, foretelling the destruction of Assyria and Nineveh says "the bittern (on later versions, the

hedgehog!) shall lodge in her capitals, the owl shall hoot (or sing) in the windows".

So, at the end of time, when man has finished messing things up, will the owls, hedgehogs and all the other much maligned and persecuted species take over and live in peace?

Heather Buswell

Having read Heather's article I got to thinking how interesting it is that man has made these kind of associations with various creatures and has come to use such birds as owls as symbols of doom, evil and the like. As you may remember from previous issues of Feedback the Trust has links with a conservation organisation in Spain, and one of the major problems they have to overcome in their conservation efforts is peoples attitudes - superstition is rife and owls are often considered to be omens of death and bad luck and are persecuted and killed because of this. It is not so very long ago that these kind of attitudes prevailed in Britain - in fact sometimes it seems to me that despite our superior intellect the human race has made no progress at all and still reacts to its archaic fears and prejudices by killing things. Attitudes of this sort are incredibly hard to change and I feel it is up to all of us to question our preconceptions and symbols and learn to see the difference between the creature concerned and the fears and interpretations that we are imposing on it. After all, a Barn Owl is just a Barn Owl - beautifully designed for the life it leads and living in perfect harmony with nature.

Rosie Waine

The objectives of the Barn Owl Trust are to Conserve the Barn Owl and it's Environment. But what of the environment generally? We all know about recycling our newspapers, bottles and cans and composting our kitchen and garden waste; but what about going a small step further. When you go for a walk, take a couple of plastic bags with you, one (for safety reasons) to pick up any litter and the other to carry it to the nearest bin. Encourage youngsters to do the same and not drop litter, although I think many of our young friends could teach us older one's a thing or two!

Join a local conservation or volunteer group, they all do so much good and always need helpers.

Its not just what we do though, its what we feel inside. It's a good feeling to help someone or something without expecting anything in return and to be environmentally aware.

When it's time to buy Christmas or birthday presents, go to an Oxfam or RSPCA shop, or any other charity organisation. Buy some of the hand made products from third world countries and help them to help themselves.

When you see homeless youngsters and adults on the streets, don't cross over the road and pretend they're not there - they are. If you cannot afford to help financially, pack an extra sandwich or an

apple in your lunch box, it might not be much, but they will be grateful and they will know you care and that not all people are heartless. That thick old sweater you were going to throw away - just offer it to someone or pop it into the Salvation Army or a charity shop. Have you noticed how few people smile in the street these days? Try smiling at a few people, you will be surprised how many smile back! And give your friends big hugs next time you see them - show them you care. Take that elderly neighbour you rarely see a piece of cake and pop in for a cup of tea and a chat. They will be grateful and you will feel good.

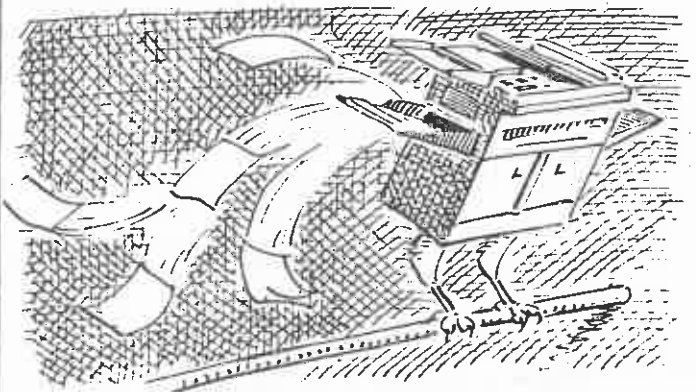
I know this is diverting from wildlife slightly, but it is the Environment, however small our personal contribution it has a knock-on effect. If people care, however small the task they carry out, it helps the world to be a better place.

Whatever you do, don't give up helping, when you see the awful things going on around us, just use it as an incentive to try harder to help each other and therefore Our Environment.

Margaret Crocker

I've been working at the Barn Owl Trust since September 1992. I help out in the office for a couple of hours once a week, though a lot of that time is taken up wrestling with a temperamental photocopier!! Although the atmosphere is quite relaxed, during the time I've been working here I can't recall a day when it has been quiet, there are usually people coming and going from the office, it's never boring and there's always something that needs doing. Just before Christmas, I went out on a school visit with David to a primary school in Exeter. It was quite interesting and I learnt several things about both Barn Owls and the Environment. I think it is essential for young children to realise how important it is to conserve nature and to save animals like the Barn Owl.

Sarah Smith (15), BOT Volunteer



TEMPERAMENTAL RESIDENT PHOTOCOPIER

GOODBYE TO MALCOLM

In February 1993 we sadly said goodbye to Trustee Malcolm Goldby, who had been involved with the Trust from its conception. Thank you, Malcolm, for all of your time and energy.



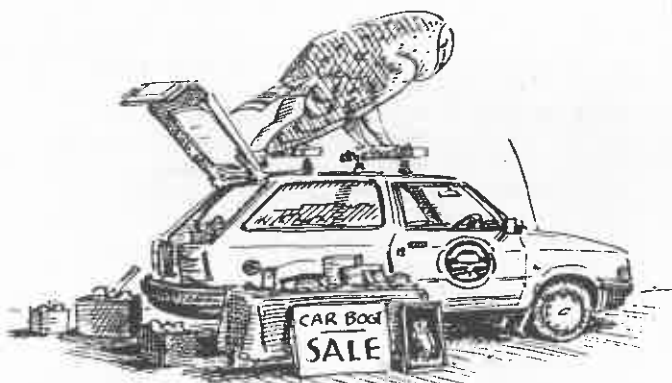
# BARN OWL TRUST A-Z OF FUND RAISING

The Barn Owl Trust aims to conserve the Barn Owl and its Environment. We do this through conservation, education, information and research. Our work is funded mainly by donations from Friends of the Trust and members of the public with grant aid for specific projects. As our workload is continuously growing we have less and less time available for fundraising and we rely increasingly on our Friends to fund our free information service. (It costs the Trust an average of 50p for the materials and postage to respond to each general enquiry.) Perhaps you could help by organising a fund raising event in your area? Look through our A-Z of fund raising and see if you are inspired to take on one of our ideas - or even plan your own! We can supply advice, advertising posters, sponsor forms and Barn Owl Trust information for your event. Write to us with your ideas, plans and dates. We'll be really pleased to hear from you.

**A** Auction, Absailing, Apple Bobbing, Archery

**B** Bike Ride, Barn Dance, Barbecue, Bus push, Book sale, Bob-a-job, Bazaar, Bring & Buy, Balloon release, Busking, Bungee Jumping, Beetle drive

**C** Corporate Sponsor, Cake Stall, Crafts, Celidh, Covenants, Coffee Morning, Creche, Cream Teas, Carol Singing, Car Boot Sale



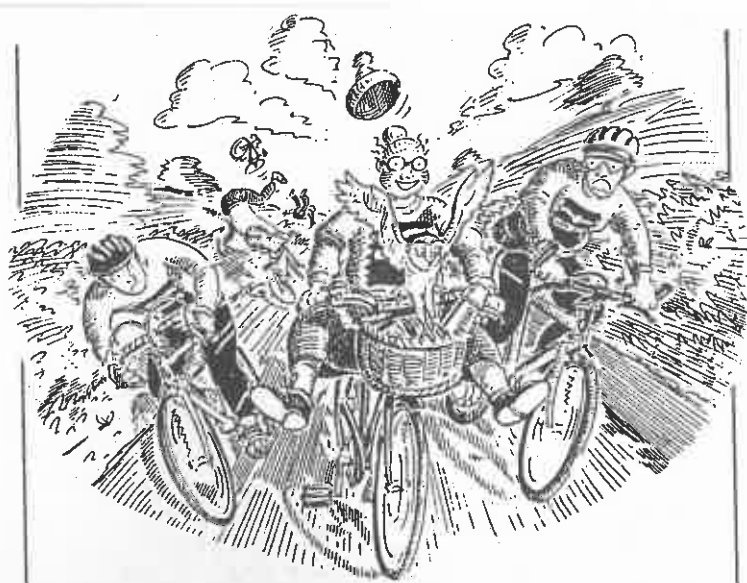
**D** Darts Marathon, Draws, Donations, Disco

**E** Egg & Spoon Race, Environmental Event, Excursions

**F** Find Five New Friends for the Trust, Flag Day, Firework Display, Fun Day, Fete, Face Painting

**G** Garden Party, Grand Draw, Garage Sale, Giving, Gymkhana, Guess the Number/Weight, Golf Games

*Give As You  
earn*



**H** Hired Hands, Hopping Race, Holiday Job, Hiking

**I** Icecream Party, Ideas, I-Spy Competition, Ice-skating

**J** Jamboree, Jumble Sale, Jailbreak, Jam Sale, Jam Doughnut Eating Competition, Juggling Competition

**K** Knitting Sale, Kebab Party, Kissagram

**L** Letterbox Walks, Limerick Competitions, Litter Pick, Legacy

Snowy Owl



Hume's Owl



Saw Whet Owl



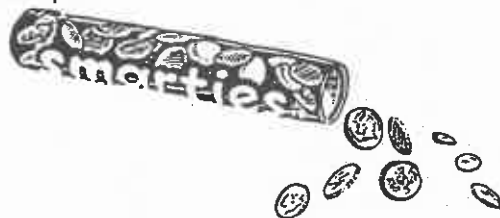
African Marsh Owl



Pygmy Owl



**M** Money Boxes, Magic Shows, Murder Mystery Weekend, Medieval Banquet



**N** Noughts & Crosses, Never Give Up, Nature Watch, Nobbly Knee Competition, Needlepoint Sale, Nestbox Workshop

**O** Outdoor Activities, Orienteering, Obstacle Race, Owl Adoption, Obedience Competition (for dogs!), Open Day

**P** Picnic, Pie & Pate Supper, Plant Sale, Poetry Competition, Parachute Jump, Pudding Party, Pantomime

**Q** Quiz, Quilt Raffle, Quiche Party



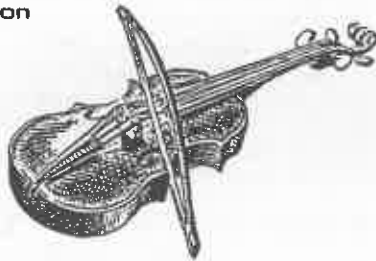
**R** Recycling, Running, Raft Race, Rag Week

**S** Sponsored Walk, Stamp Collecting, School Play, Spot the Difference

**T** Tombola, Table Top Sale, Telethon, Target Shooting, Theatre, Treasure Hunt, Theme Event, Team Event, Tug of War

**U** Umbrella Count, Unbelievable Bargains, Unicycling

**V** Vegetable Sale, Vegetarian Feast, Vehicle Wash, Violin Concerto, Vegetable Growing Competition, Vintage Car Rally, Valuation Competition



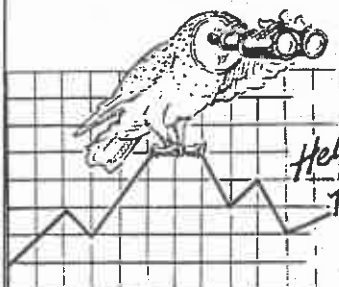
**W** Will, Welly Throwing, Wheelbarrow Race, Windscreen Wash, Wine Tasting, Word Puzzles

**X** Xmas sale, xerox surcharge, x-word puzzles

**Y** Yacht Race, Youth Project

**Z** Zodiac Reading, Zebra Crossing Competition, Zoo Trip.

If you are organising an event in aid of the Barn Owl Trust please note that the Trust does not display live birds to the public at fund raising events.



*Help us plan... for the future*



**BECOME A FRIEND OF THE BARN OWL TRUST**



**CAKE STALL**  
Thomas Walker from Lincoln has raised a total of £40.00 for the Barn Owl Trust with his school cake stall.



David Ramsden was appointed as the Barn Owl Trust Conservation/Education Officer in April 1990. He is currently working on the Trusts Barn Conversion Research Project. He also carries out site visits, erects nestboxes for the Trust and monitors and BTO rings at wild Barn Owl sites. One day of his week is spent in the office dealing with telephone and postal enquiries. He is also responsible for the Trusts resident birds. His educational role includes school visits and talks to adult groups, planning authorities etc.

## CAPTION COMPETITION WINNER



"I told you not to leave that bag of Growmore where the mice could get at it!"

The winner of the Caption Competition from Feedback No 8 is Godfrey Nall from Solihull, West Midlands, who wins a Barn Owl Trust T-shirt shirt.

Runners up are Robert Hamar and Dave Gooding, who both receive a pair of colour Barn Owl Trust posters. Well done to all of you that entered!

### COMPETITION TIME !

Are you a poet  
Who doesn't know it ?!  
Then why not write a limerick for the owls!

Have a bit of FUN - see what you can do!  
Send your limerick with £1 entry fee to Heather at the Barn Owl Trust. The best of the bunch will be printed in the next issue of Feedback.  
Closing date for entries 1st August 1993.

One day at the Barn Owl Trust  
Fran exclaimed "Just look at that dust!"  
This place needs a good spring cleaning  
And scrubbing and weeding  
Lets ask our volunteers to help, for  
clean it up we must!"

One day at the Barn Owl Trust  
The birds all got covered in rust  
David said "I blame the weather"  
And polished each feather  
"We can't have them dirty" he fussed!

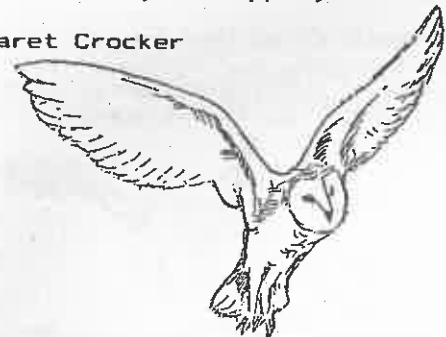
CAN YOU HELP ? OR DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE  
WHO CAN ?

Following our request in Feedback 8 for assistance with useful items we are pleased to report that we have been given both a fridge and a Hoover.  
We still need the following items, and if anybody has any of these and no longer wants them or would like to make a donation towards one of them we would be extremely pleased to hear from you.

Digital Scales - to weigh up to 2kg (for weighing birds)  
Plain paper fax machine  
Laser printer or good quality DDT matrix  
Filing cabinet  
Desk top publisher  
DIY power tools  
SLR camera and lenses

Glory be to him on high  
and to the earth below,  
for whoever brings the summer sun,  
and provides the winter snow.  
Never content with the weather,  
complaining it's too hot, cold windy or  
wet,  
Blaming the meteorologist's,  
as if it's the weather they set.  
To say there is nothing we can do about  
it  
is simply not the truth,  
The sky is full of metal,  
the rivers full of waste  
chemicals fill the ocean,  
the land fills full to the brim,  
What we are doing to the atmosphere,  
It really is a sin.  
So cut down on your buying,  
and recycle all you may,  
from loo rolls, cans and cardboard,  
to wellies, clothes and hay.  
For when it's done it's journey  
and passed through the other end,  
it's returned back to the earth once  
more,  
To start all over again.  
So don't complain of the weather,  
put your life in order instead.  
Just go and buy the basics,  
Chemical free, unwrapped, free of lead!

Margaret Crocker



### DEVON BARN OWL SURVEY 1993

The Barn Owl Trust is working with the Devon Birdwatching and Preservation Society to conduct a county-wide Barn Owl survey in an attempt to establish whether the population has continued to decline in the 10 years since the last survey. This joint survey, a unique project for both bodies, aims to record as many Barn Owl roosting and breeding sites as possible throughout Devon during 1993. If you have any information on current roosting or breeding sites to contribute to the survey please contact the Trust on 0364-653026 (24 hour answerphone) giving wherever possible a six figure map reference, the name of the site, nearest village or town, date of record and your name, address and telephone number. All information received will be treated as sensitive, however for the purposes of this survey we will need to share data with the Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society. Please indicate should you wish your records to remain completely confidential. Anyone interested in taking an active part in the survey should contact the Trust's Conservation Officer David Ramsden on 0364-653026 between 10.00am and 3.00pm on Thursdays when he is in the Trust's office.

Details of the National Barn Owl Survey being undertaken jointly by the Hawk and Owl Trust and the British Trust for Ornithology have yet to be finalised.



## RINGING

Bird ringing has long been used to investigate bird migration, but it is also an invaluable tool for research into life expectancies, territorial behaviour, disposal of young birds, causes of death and population fluctuations.

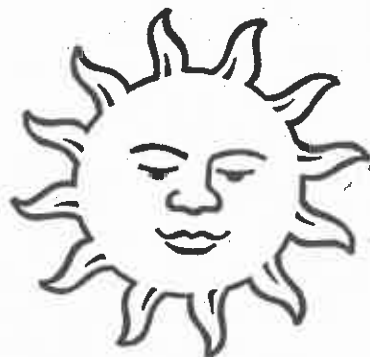
It is an unfortunate fact that any ringed bird which is recovered is usually either dead or injured; the exception to this is when a bird has been caught again by another ringer, its ring details noted and the bird released again. For this reason analysis of ringed birds, Barn Owls in particular can seem very negative. Those we don't hear about need not necessarily be still alive, they might have succumbed but not been found. From the recovery table below, we can see that less than a third of our Barn Owls ever get reported again, even after six years.

	Total Ringed	Total Recovered	% Recovered
1987	17	5	29.4%
1988	54	11	20.4%
1989	74	12	16.2%
1990	117	19	16.2%
1991	84	11	13.1%
1992	112	6	5.4%

Looking at our recovery slips (an example of an Icelandic Merlin was shown on page 5 of Feedback 7), we find that over 50% refer explicitly to road casualties. Of the others, 27% are of unknown causes (simply reported as "found dead"). Other causes of death include being found on a railway, drowned in a water trough, electrocuted by electricity transformer, trapped in building and hitting overhead wires.

The average duration from ringing to recovery is surprisingly short - less than a year - but these birds can be regarded as the failures. Our oldest recovery is a long term release, one year old male from May 1989 at Branscombe, found on the site at just under 4 years of age in February 1992. The distance moved is usually up to 30km and we have movements from Devon into Cornwall, Dorset and Somerset and one to Gwent (only 100km in a straight line, but did it cross the Bristol Channel via Lundy, or fly the long way round?). Our furthest movement is one of a young clutch release in August 1989 found in West Yorkshire only two months later. More detailed comparisons between newly released birds, their subsequent broods once they become established in the wild, and truly wild birds can be very illuminating. This was dealt with in the interim report of a captive release project and will be further explored in our next report towards the end of this year.

Keith Grant.



WHOLE EARTH FAIR 1993

7th & 8th August 1993  
Maiden Newton, Dorset  
(Between Yeovil and Dorchester)  
Adults £4 per day Children, OAP & disabled £2  
Family ticket £10

Organic Farming & Gardening  
Alternative Power  
Recycling and Permaculture  
Caring for the Earth  
Barn Owl Trust Stand  
Crafts, Market and much more ...

Enquiries contact Kevin Oliver,  
Staggs Folly Management, Manor Farm,  
Maiden Newton, Dorset, DT2 0AA Tel: 0300  
20587

### BARN OWL TRUST AND THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Following the visit to the Barn Owl Trust from three members of the DOE Wildlife Section, the Trust's Conservation Officer David Ramsden, was invited to give a presentation on the practical aspects of releasing Barn Owls into the wild at the annual training seminar for the Department's wildlife inspectors. The presentation covered all aspects of release from site selection and surveys to various release methods, monitoring and record keeping. The DOE Barn Owl Working Group has met twice since the addition of the Barn Owl to Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and feedback indicates that the legislation has been well received by those concerned with the conservation of the species and the welfare of individual birds.



A VISIT FROM THE WILDLIFE INSPECTORATE !

All applicants for licences to release captive-bred Barn Owls into the wild are inspected by Department of the Environment Wildlife Inspectors. We are pleased to announce it really is painless ! and the BOT has received a licence for 1993.

## BARN OWL SALES

Those of you that are regular readers of Feedback may remember an item in the 1971/72 issue no 6 called "Captive Barn Owls, The Situation" which drew attention to the large number of Barn Owls in captivity in Britain. Barn Owl Trust Leaflet No 25 has the same title as this item and has been recently updated to give latest estimates on the captive population and an outline of the Barn Owls protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Here at the Trust we receive many enquiries from people concerned at seeing Barn Owls advertised for sale or even "free to good homes" most are worried about the legality and the morality of this.

As long as the bird has been bred in captivity and is fitted with a closed ring issued by either the International Ornithological Association (IOA) or the British Bird Council (BBC) it can legally be sold or exchanged.

It must be said that some of these birds find very good homes. Unfortunately many don't. We receive a large number of enquiries from people who have purchased Barn Owls on impulse and have little or no idea of the birds life-span or feeding and housing requirements. We also are frequently asked to take and to find homes for unwanted captive bred owls either because of a change in the owners circumstances or because the novelty value of their "pet" has worn off. For these and many other reasons we advise that in order to minimise the chances of impulse buying, Barn Owls should only be advertised for sale and bought through avicultural publications and not through the pet column of the local paper or a pet shop.

In 1970 as a result of communication with the Barn Owl Trust the Western Morning News newspaper altered its advertising policy and will no longer carry advertisements offering Barn Owls or any other creature usually associated with the wild for sale.

Because all creatures have the right to a decent standard of living we recommend that anyone selling a Barn Owl should give advice on feeding, food supply, housing and keeping, or ensure that the purchaser is told where sound advice is available, e.g. Barn Owl Trust. Wherever possible the seller should inspect and advise on the facilities provided for the bird at its new home and keep a record of the closed ring number and name and address of the purchaser.

If you see advertisements offering Barn Owls for sale in your local paper and you object - do write and tell them why. If you send us a copy of your letter enclosing the advertisement and the name and date of the publication we too will write and explain that these advertisements are bad news for Barn Owls.

## INFORMATION

The range of Barn Owl Trust information leaflets has recently been updated to include the latest information from research and recent legislation. If you require any of these updated

leaflets please send a large stamped addressed envelope to the Barn Owl Trust, Waterleat, Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7HU stating clearly the numbers of the leaflets you require. There is no charge for the Information Leaflets or the Trust's advisory service, however, we are totally dependant on voluntary contributions to finance our work and donations towards running costs are very welcome.

1. Habitat for Barn Owls.
2. Rough Grassland Management.
3. Indoor Nestbox Design.
4. Outdoor Nestbox Design.
5. The "WANTED" Poster.
6. Why Release Barn Owls?
7. Captive Owl - Wild Owl; Acknowledge the difference.
8. A Local Barn Owl Survey.
- 9.\* Release Site Selection.
- 10.\* Release Site Preparation.
- 11.\* The Long Term Release.
12. Accommodation for Permanently Captive Barn Owls.
13. Feeding Barn Owls.
14. Breeding in Captivity.
15. Rings for Barn Owls.
- 16.\* Release Night Procedure.
- 17.\* The Young Clutch Release.
- 18.\* Post Release Care.
- 19.\* Post Release Record Form.
20. Pellet Analysis.
21. Rat Poisons and Other Hazards.
22. Barn Conversions - Provisions for Owls.
23. Sexing Barn Owls.
24. Further Reading.
25. Captive Barn Owls in Britain - the Situation.
26. Search Procedure for Buildings.
27. Tawny Owl Nestboxes.
28. Guidelines for Guardians of Wild Barn Owl Sites.
29. Breeding Control for Captive Barn Owls.

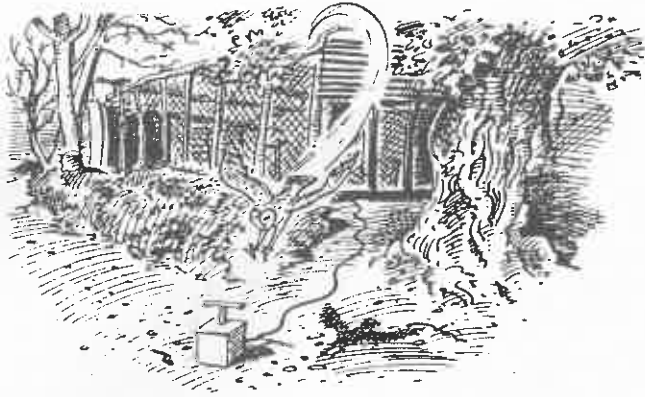
\* These leaflets are intended to assist people involved with the release of captive bred Barn Owls, for which a licence is required from the Department of the Environment. They are not relevant for people making general enquiries.

## BARN OWLS AND THE WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

The Barn Owl in Britain is now listed on three Schedules of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

- Schedule 1: Species which are protected by special penalties. If kept in captivity it is the keepers responsibility to show that the bird was not taken illegally from the wild.
- Schedule 3: Species which may be sold alive (or exchanged) at all times if bred in captivity and close-ringed.
- Schedule 9: Species which it is illegal to release into the wild in Britain without a licence from the Department of the Environment.

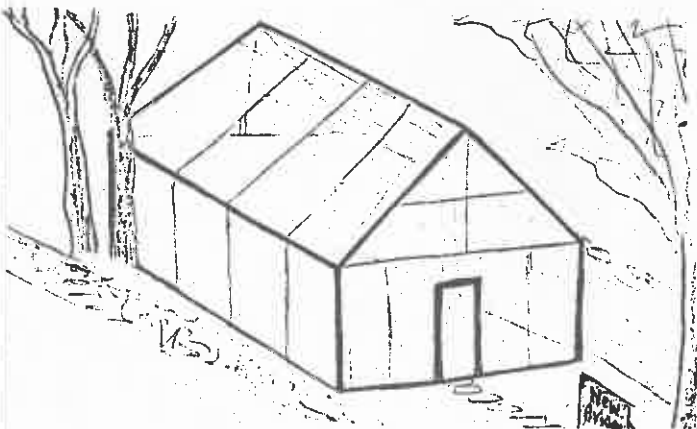
## REPLACEMENT AVIARIES



Seventeen of our resident Barn Owls are currently housed in what we call the Main Aviary Block. This was originally built in 1985 from slab wood and wire netting and consists of six small and one large flights. It was, at the time of construction, an extremely useful resource and an efficient use of space. Unfortunately the aviary now needs replacing. We intend to demolish the whole structure and rebuild it using tanalised timber and weldmesh creating a block of three aviaries in order to provide more versatile, non-breeding, accommodation for the birds which should last for many years.

In order to accomplish this project most efficiently and cheaply and with the minimum disturbance to the birds we have arranged for two British Trust for Conservation Volunteer Groups, South Devon and West Devon, to work with us in October 1993. The birds will be temporarily housed in the aviaries usually kept free for rehabilitation work. With the help of Conservation Volunteers and Friends of the Trust we plan to complete the whole project in six weeks.

As the construction is being undertaken by Volunteers there will be no labour costs involved. We have already received a grant of £500 towards this project from the Jean Sainsbury Charitable Trust following a visit from their representative and their support for our Bird Room in 1972 and are currently seeking the remainder of the funds needed.



**THE BARN OWL TRUST  
DOES NOT OPERATE  
A VISITOR CENTRE.**

## THE BODY SHOP AND THE BARN OWL TRUST TOGETHER IN 1993



"Hello Friends of the Barn Owl Trust, this is The Exeter Body Shop here. As part of our continual and enthusiastic commitment to the environment and green issues, we have joined forces with you in 1993. As we focus on conservation in the South West we hope to actively contribute to your work in the rebuilding and maintaining of this marvellous bird and its habitat.

We look forward to meeting you at some of the PR and fundraising events this year.

*All at Exeter  
BodyShop*



We live in a busy, busy world, where success and achievement are measured by material worth. Where the quality of our lives is assessed by the quantity of our goods and chattels and where pressure, whether social, emotional or financial is something we accept as inevitable.

Sometimes due to changes in our circumstances, maybe because of illness or unemployment, we catch a glimpse of insight. We see that our perceptions of importance are guided not by wisdom or clarity, but by man made values that have no long term worth when related to the universe. I am not suggesting that there is anything wrong with wanting the best that there is for ourselves and our families, but this should be achieved in harmony with the natural balance - not at the expense of it.

Our human habits of greed and exploitation are damaging our world not only for the creatures that share it but ultimately for ourselves. We are poisoning our environment and the legacy we leave the planet may well be destruction. We each owe it to ourselves and our children to make the time and find the space to touch base with the natural world. For the sake of our spirits we need to look at and experience the countryside and to attempt to attain a balance in our lives with the environment. We fill our lives with constant doing and distractions and rarely give ourselves a chance to simply be. Maybe it's because we are afraid of what we'll see.

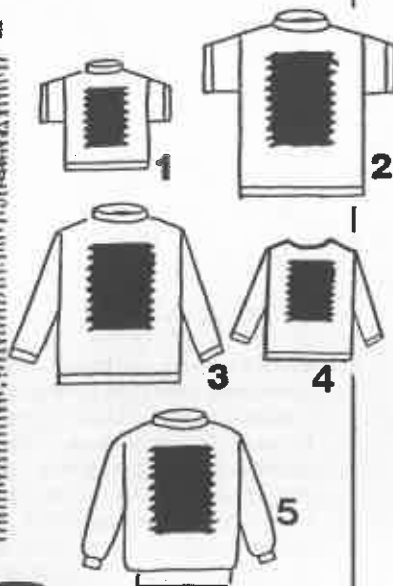
I am writing this whilst sitting in a woodland strewn with bluebells. Beyond the wind in the trees and sounds of the birds I can hear the hum of traffic on a not too distant main road. The scent of the bluebells fills the sun warmed air and as I look around at trees far older than me I can feel and almost touch the wisdom of standing back from constant doing to get a clear perspective of what really matters.

Thank you for reading this newsletter. We hope you enjoyed hearing about the work of the Trust and feel that you can make your own peace with the natural world. Please continue to support the Barn Owl Trust as it is individual donations and the efforts of volunteers that make our work possible. We wish you all peace and harmony in your lives.

# SALES GOODS

**BARN OWL TRUST T-SHIRTS  
AND SWEAT SHIRTS  
100% UNBLEACHED COTTON**

T-SHIRT / SWEAT SHIRT DESIGN



1. CHILDS T-SHIRT	A B C D	£6	A	23" - 24"
2. ADULT T-SHIRT	XL only	£9	B	27" - 28"
3. "LONG SLEEVED	XL only	£11	C	31" - 32"
4. CHILDS " "	A B C D	£9	D	32" - 34"
5. SWEAT SHIRT	M L XL	£16		

Also available

- 6. BLACK SWEATS (50% polyester) XL £15
- 7. BLACK T-SHIRTS 100% cotton XL £7

Postage and packing please add £1 for each item.

**THIS YEAR WEAR A  
BARN OWL TRUST T-SHIRT  
FEEL GOOD - LOOK GREAT  
AND SUPPORT WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION**

**CARDS** £2 per pack of 6  
(Blank for your own message) 50p each

15 different A6 one colour cards  
Recycled card and envelope  
Designs available on request  
Suitable for birthdays, thanks and messages

**CAR STICKERS** 50p



## FULL COLOUR POSTERS

- Barn Owl Portrait £2 + £1 p+p
- Four Owlets in a row £2 + £1 p+p **NEW**
- Set of two posters £3 + £1 p+p

## COLOUR PRINTS

Selection of signed "Baby Owl" full colour prints 8" x 10" by wildlife artist Dick Twinney  
Individual prints (unframed) £14 each  
Set of Six (unframed) £60 per set  
Framed Prints £25 each  
Set of six (framed) £130 per set  
Designs available are Barn, Tawny, Little, Long Eared, Short Eared and Snowy Owlets

## BADGES 50p

Logo or Barn Owl On Post



## Pencils 30p

## Pocket Mirrors £1

Barn Owl Trust Logo or Barn Owl On Post 75aa

Please note with the exception of posters and clothing there is no additional charge for postage and packing. However a SAE or a donation towards the cost would be very much appreciated.

If you are a Friend of the Barn Owl Trust you will automatically receive a copy of the next newsletter. If you are not yet a Friend and would like to receive a copy to learn more about our work, please write and let us know.

**WHERE THERE IS A WILL  
THERE IS A WAY**

Please consider helping the  
Barn Owl Trust to conserve the  
Barn Owl and its Environment.

Make a donation now and leave a  
legacy to help us in the future.

For advice and information  
please contact us.

Together  
we can make a difference.

**TOGETHER WE CAN  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**