



ISSUE NUMBER 8

FEEDBACK 92-93

REGISTERED CHARITY No 299 835

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

WELCOME TO FEEDBACK

This Newsletter is designed to "Feedback" to you, our Friends and supporters, information about the work of the Barn Owl Trust during the last few months. The Trust's aims are to conserve the Barn Owl and its Environment, however, it is not possible to conserve any one species in isolation and the Barn Owl Trust attempts to increase environmental awareness through its work. There will have to be major changes in the ways that we "modern" humans relate to and use our environment if we are to prevent any further irreparable damage to our planet.

We can all make a difference by supporting local, national and international conservation initiatives with our time, our energy or our money, by recycling our waste, reducing our energy consumption and by consuming wisely and considering the environmental impact of the goods we buy. We all have a responsibility to protect and conserve the World for our children and all the creatures we share it with so, do "your bit" for the planet please.

We hope you will enjoy reading this Newsletter and that it will encourage you to support the Barn Owl Trust and to Think Globally and ACT Locally. Good luck with all your conservation work and environmental projects - let us know if we can help.

TOGETHER



INTERNATIONAL NEWS
See Page 5

TREE OF LIFE NEWS. Page 9.



David Ramsden, Barn Owl Trust Conservation Officer, has now given 105 talks to adult groups and together with Moon (the Barn Owl) has made 132 school visits. Moon is pictured here with Father Aidon at St Mary's R C Primary School in Buckfast on her 100th School Visit. Picture: Mid Devon Advertiser

ARE YOU A FRIEND OF THE BARN OWL TRUST ?

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a Friends leaflet. By becoming a Friend of the Barn Owl Trust you can help us to Conserve the Barn Owl and its Environment. We need your support to ensure that we can continue to develop our work through conservation, education, information, liaison and research. Friends of the Trust receive copies of our annual report, our biannual newsletter "Feedback", a badge and a car sticker. If you are already a Friend, Thank You. Your gift to the Trust paid by standing order helps us to predict our income and plan accordingly. It would help if you could pass the leaflet on to someone you feel might be interested to receive it.

CHANGE TO TELEPHONE NUMBER

The Trust's telephone number will change during the Spring of 1993. The existing 5 figure number will be prefixed with a 6. Our new number will then be (0364) 653026.

BOXES FOR BARN OWLS

In September South Devon Conservation Volunteers (SDCV) built 20 roosting boxes for the Trust's aviaries using our new design (Leaflet No.29). We were delighted when many of the group came along to the Trust's Sponsored Walk in May and the Ceilidh in October and very pleased when Sue Harwood from SDCV won a bottle of wine, one of the 34 prizes in the Owl Night Grand Draw held at the Ship Inn, Axmouth.



CAPTION COMPETITION

In this picture David Attenborough meets Tallet, the giant Barn Owl, with designer Paul Adams and Frances Ramsden. What do you think is being said? If you can come up with a witty caption we'd like to hear from you. A small prize will be awarded for the best one.

Picture: Devon Wildlife Trust.

FORTHCOMING NATIONAL BARN OWL SURVEY

This is still very much at the planning stage. Various survey methods have been discussed at "Barn Owl Liaison Group" meetings and at a meeting at the National Centre for Ornithology. The Barn Owl is not an easy bird to survey; intensive searches are extremely time consuming and almost all the field work must be carried out by local study groups (such as county ornithological societies) on a purely voluntary basis.

The survey methods must achieve a good compromise between what is desirable and what is practical. The next survey will probably be coordinated by the British Trust for Ornithology and the Hawk and Owl Trust and carried out during 1994-96.

Volunteers will be asked to carry out intensive Barn Owl surveys in selected 5km x 5km squares across Britain. Groups and organisations will also contribute data from existing study areas.

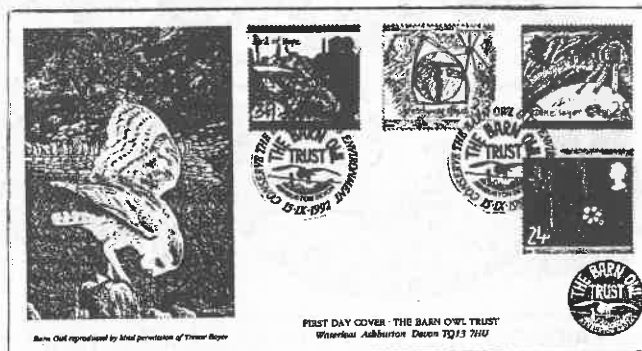
The Barn Owl Trust holds numerous records of sites used by Barn Owls. Whilst we feel it is desirable for data to be pooled we will respect site confidentiality.

More news in next issue.

THE BARN OWL TRUST

EXCLUSIVE FIRST DAY COVER

'THE GREEN ISSUE'



FIRST DAY COVER

In September 1992 Covercraft of Kent issued a First Day Cover featuring stamps from a Blue Peter Environment Design Competition and a painting by wildlife artist Trevor Boyer. The cover has a special Barn Owl Trust post mark applied by the Royal Mail for the first day of issue 15th September 1992. The Trust receives a percentage of each sale. We have a limited number of these covers left. A set of 4 stamps and postmark costs £5.50, and one stamp the "Bird of Hope" is £3.00. Prices include postage and packing in the UK - please add £1.25 overseas.

THE BIRDS AND OUR FOSTER SCHEME

The Trust currently has 46 owls in residence, including 4 Little Owls, 1 Long Eared Owl, 6 Tawny Owls and 35 Barn Owls. None of our resident birds are suitable for release into the wild and because of the increasing number of Barn Owls in captivity (see Feedback 6 91/92) we are increasingly being asked to take unwanted birds. In order to keep some aviary space free for injured and convalescing birds, the Trust has worked with several volunteers in South Devon to provide long term homes for some of these permanently captive birds. The volunteers provide an aviary of a high standard built to the Trust's specifications, undertake the feeding and care of the birds, and make regular reports to the Trust on the owls progress. All the birds involved remain the responsibility of the Trust. This scheme is seen as an effective way to deal responsibly with at least a proportion of the increasing number of healthy birds in need of a good home and is currently being expanded (slowly, due to the limited resources available for work of this kind). If you are interested in providing a long term home for non-breeding Barn Owls, please write to the Trust stating why and giving details of the area you would want to construct your aviary in. In the interests of the birds we are unlikely to consider any area where disturbance is likely to occur due to humans, machinery, animals etc, or where regular monitoring by the Trust is not possible.

The Trust is advising that Barn Owl keepers should actively prevent their birds from breeding, unless good homes or places on licensed release schemes are available.

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

NEW LEGISLATION CONTROLLING RELEASE OF CAPTIVE BRED BARN OWLS WILL INCREASE THEIR CHANCES OF SURVIVAL

IT IS NOW ILLEGAL TO RELEASE BARN OWLS INTO THE WILD IN
BRITAIN WITHOUT A LICENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE
ENVIRONMENT (DOE)

On 4th November 1992 Lord Strathclyde, Under Secretary for the Environment, announced the addition of the Barn Owl to Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, making it illegal to release birds into the wild without a licence from the DOE. This legislation was not introduced to stop the release of captive bred Barn Owls, but rather to ensure that release schemes were well considered, planned and monitored. The large numbers of Barn Owls in captivity, and the ease with which they breed coupled with the decline of the wild population has led (over the past 5 years or so) to a dramatic increase in the numbers of captive bred Barn Owls released into the wild. Many of these birds were simply "let go", placed into buildings and expected to stay there, or released into areas unable to support them. Most of these birds starved to death very quickly.

Back in November 1991 the DOE convened the first meeting of what was to become the "Barn Owl Working Group" (BOWWG). This group brought together representatives from the Barn Owl Trust, British Bird Council, British Owl Breeding and Release Scheme (BOBARS), DOE, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), Hawk and Owl Trust, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). The Working Group have met frequently during the past year to produce a "Code of Practice" and advise on a licensing system, to give released Barn Owls the best possible chance of survival and allow the monitoring of reintroduction as a conservation tool for the species. The addition of the Barn Owl to Schedule 9 has received almost unanimous support.

A fundamental problem with many of the release schemes that have given cause for concern is their assumption that a captive bred Barn Owl and a wild Barn Owl are the same, they may be the same species but there the similarity ends. Barn Owl Trust Leaflet No. 7 "Captive Owl, Wild Owl - Acknowledge the Difference", and Rosie Waine's article below address this.

PUTTING SURVIVAL IN HUMAN TERMS, by Rosie Waine

In the light of the recent addition of the Barn Owl to Schedule 9, I felt it might be useful to explore the issue of survival in the wild in more human terms to enable a better understanding of some of the reasons why natural mortality rates amongst birds of prey in the wild are so high.

A wild owl has a fledging period in which to become "street-wise" and fit, and to strengthen it's muscles for flight while it's parents go about the business of providing it's meals. Before gaining total independence it has ventured outside and learned a bit about it's

surroundings and the vagaries of the weather. This may only add up to a matter of a few short weeks in human terms, but the experience gained at this stage of it's development is vital to it's survival.

An adult Barn Owl in an established territory spends the majority of each 24 hours sleeping. It may never fly for "pleasure". With young to support it's excursions for food will be much more frequent, but outside the breeding season it will spend many lazy hours in repose. This is not laziness in any slothful human sense of the word, but more a matter of energy conservation - the more food it needs the more energy it expends to get it and the more energy it expends the more food it needs. This rapidly becomes a downward spiral when a series of hunting forays are unsuccessful.

Now do you begin to appreciate the vicious circle that awaits the captive bred Barn Owl that has just been released from it's aviary? One moment it sits in security, ready-killed food at its feet - the next it's on its own.

To make some attempt to appreciate it's problem in human terms, imagine feeling hungry and having to jog to the shops in an area unfamiliar to you. To your advantage you have a huge range of potentially nourishing food stuffs to choose from and they are sitting on a shelf waiting for you. You know which food will be most nourishing according to your circumstances.

Furthermore, you understand the weather and know you must keep warm and dry. The captive bred Barn Owl, on the other hand, does not necessarily have any experience of bad weather. It has a limited range of suitable prey items to choose from and they are all trying to run away. It is not inclined to scavenge and is unable to make an informed choice about what to bother chasing. Every time it makes a mistake it wastes precious strength and energy.

As say a 300 kilogram human being you may take a month or so to waste away, and you therefore have a longer time span in which to make mistakes and learn by experience. Scaled down to a 300 gram Barn Owl you would have a few scant days in which to get it right. Some 75% of wild Barn Owls perish in their first year against the odds that Nature puts up. Add to these the handicaps that I have mentioned and you will see that a captive bred Barn Owl simply "let go" is facing a very slim chance indeed of surviving.

Release into the wild can work - but it is vital to provide the individual bird with the time in which to gain strength and experience and also not to put extra pressure on wild Barn Owls already living in an area. This can only be assured where careful preparation and planning takes place.



REINTRODUCTION REPORT

In 1989 the Trust published the first ever report of reintroduction results for Barn Owls in Britain, covering the period 1986-88 inclusive. Since 1988 the Trust has continued to operate its release scheme in order to further research its effectiveness. We now have the results from a 6 year period covering 1986-91 and will shortly publish these in a new report.

NEW LEAFLETS

The Trust's range of information leaflets is currently being updated to include references to latest research and recent legislation. During this updating process we are also revising the headings and design. Several new leaflets have been produced during the year following repeated requests for information on specific topics. The leaflets now include a new No.12 "Accommodation for Permanently Captive Barn Owls", an area we now feel obliged to cover because of the huge numbers of captive Barn Owls, the varying standard of accommodation and the resulting welfare problems. We also now have leaflets No.27 "Tawny Owl Nestboxes" and No.28 "Guidelines for Guardians of Wild Barn Owl Sites". The latest addition, No.29 "Breeding Control for Captive Bred Barn Owls", has been produced in response to the increase in numbers of captive bred Barn Owls in Britain.

The revised leaflets will be available from the Trust from January 1993. Please enclose a large SAE.

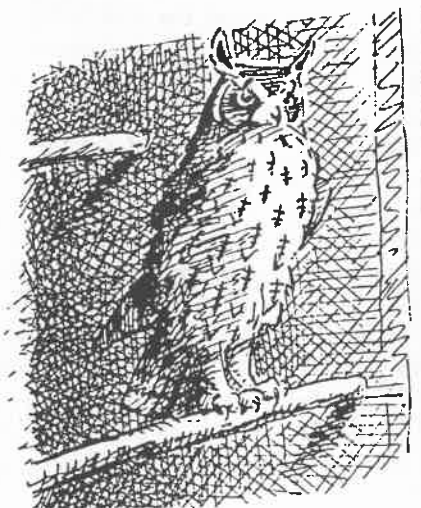
1. Habitat for Barn Owls.
2. Rough Grassland Management.
3. Indoor Nestbox Design.
4. Outdoor Nestbox Design.
5. The "WANTED" Poster.
6. Why Release Barn Owls?
7. Captive Owl - Wild Owl; Acknowledge the difference.
8. A Local Barn Owl Survey.
9. † Release Site Selection.
10. † Release Site Preparation.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

There is no charge for the information leaflets or the Trust's advisory service. However, the Barn Owl Trust is totally dependant on voluntary contributions to finance it's work and donations towards running costs are very welcome.

LEO

In July 1992 we received our first Long Eared Owl casualty, found in the Dunsford area. The bird had a compound fracture of the right humerus, which was operated on and pinned at the Plymouth Veterinary Hospital. Unfortunately the break did not mend successfully and the wing had to be removed. Leo, as he is now known, is resident in the "kitchen aviary" which he shares with 2 Tawny Owls, 3 Barn Owls and a Little Owl and has adapted well to his disability.



VISIT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

In November 1992 three members of staff from the Department of the Environment Wildlife Section visited the Barn Owl Trust for two days to see at first hand a successful Barn Owl release site and talk about the release of captive bred Barn Owls into the wild. David Ashwood and Nancy Jones come from the Wildlife Licensing Department at DOE and will be responsible for assessing applications and issuing licences to would-be releasers. The third visitor, Nick Williams, is Head of DOE Wildlife Inspectorate. His Inspectors will be visiting Barn Owl release licence holders.

Their first day in Devon was spent with our Conservation Officer visiting a Barn Owl Trust release site. Release volunteers David and Angie Vandervlist gave up a great deal of time to answer questions from the DOE staff, discuss the release, and to go through the release site records.

During the evening the DOE attended a talk and slide show given for the Kingskerswell Natural History Society by David Ramsden (Conservation Officer) where they heard about the decline of the species, conservation measures, the relationship between the bird and its environment and an outline of the work of the Trust.

The following day coincided with the announcement in London of the addition of the Barn Owl to Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and resulted in an appearance on BBC Spotlight for David Ashwood and Frances Ramsden. The cameraman also managed some very nice shots inside an aviary of some of the Trust's resident Barn Owls and Tawny Owls and even Ghandi the pet cat! The remainder of the day was spent working through the necessary documents which accompany the licensing procedure to try and ensure that the scheme runs efficiently and effectively and to the benefit of all the birds concerned.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

During the year we have been communicating with Barn Owl workers in other parts of the world to increase our knowledge and to share information.

Brinzal, Spain



BRINZAL

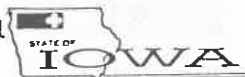
These communications have resulted in the return to England of Inigo Fajardo from Brinzal, Madrid, Spain's only specialist owl hospital. Inigo first visited the Barn Owl Trust in September 1990 and spent 10 days living and working with us. In 1991 money from Brinzal and Collserolla 10 (Barcelona) made it possible for Trust representatives to visit Spain. In September 1992 Inigo returned to England, this time for a stay of two and a half months. During this visit he has entered into all aspects of the Trust's work, accompanied us to JNCC Barn Owl Liaison Group meetings, DOE Barn Owl Working Group Meetings and the British Wildlife Rehabilitation Council Symposium. He gave a presentation on the work of Brinzal at the Trust's AGM in October 1992. He has also visited the RSPCA Wildlife Rehabilitation Units in Norfolk and Somerset, the Hawk Conservancy at Andover and the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge. Brinzal's main work is owl rehabilitation but they are increasingly concerned with conservation and education. Inigo has travelled widely to create international links and cooperation. His efforts help us to maintain a global as well as a local perspective. On a far more down-to-earth level we have of course introduced Inigo to Devon Cream Teas and fish and chips! Inigo writes about the work of Brinzal on page 8.



CONCERT, Spain

Coordinador a Nacional de Centros de Recuperacion, or CONCERT as it is more commonly known, operates in Spain to coordinate and support the work of the 65 groups involved in wildlife rehabilitation in the country. Carlota Viada, secretary, is the force behind CONCERT and her efforts have resulted in quarterly newsletters and regular meetings to exchange ideas and information. In September 1992 Carlota approached the Barn Owl Trust for advice on the analysis of data for the first ever Spanish Barn Owl Reintroduction Report. Inigo Fajardo of Brinzal, a CONCERT group member, is currently staying with the Barn Owl Trust and assisting the Trust in its communication with CONCERT.

Department of Natural Resources, Iowa



Correspondence with Bruce Ehresman of the Department of Natural Resources, State of Iowa (USA), describes the Barn Owl in Iowa as "endangered and rarely seen" with only one nesting pair recorded between 1987 and 1991 by Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Iowa Ornithological Union. Bruce does go on to say "The fact wild Barn Owls have shown up where I live (which incidentally is very "poor" Barn Owl habitat) may indicate more Barn Owls exist in Iowa than we are able to find". Between 1983 and 87 with State support they

released 423 captive bred Barn Owls statewide in Iowa with no apparent positive effect on the population. Radio telemetry indicated a high mortality with the primary cause of death being predation by Great Horned Owls followed by road deaths.

They felt road deaths could be reduced by providing more areas of grassland for foraging away from roadsides but that there was no good method for preventing the predation problem, as Great Horned Owls are found virtually everywhere in Iowa and are most likely to be found in the same habitat as Barn Owls.

They also put out about 200 boxes which proved unsuccessful, with most boxes being taken over by pigeons. Unfortunately since 1987 State efforts to help Barn Owl conservation have been minimal in Iowa. Bruce Ehresman has, however, continued his work from his home and has a free flying wild male Barn Owl visiting a resident disabled female in his barn, they are currently paired and the female is sitting on eggs.

To sum up the situation in Iowa he says "Presently, at the DNR level, we are keeping records where Barn Owl sightings occur and encouraging people to put up secure predator-proof nestboxes where Barn Owls are seen. This method is working well in other states and would probably work in Iowa if we could dedicate more time to studying sites where Barn Owls are seen and spend time with landowners in these areas promoting better management practices for Barn Owls and other species which rely heavily on grassland habitat". He goes on to say "I am glad to see you emphasizing education and habitat management as two key elements for bringing back Barn Owls and benefiting other species as well. I still feel our best tool for increasing Barn Owl numbers is educating the public and especially landowners so they care enough about raptors to try to help them".

HISSES-AT-TOES

The Barn Conversion Research Project involves visiting 904 farm buildings every 4 months and in June 1992 David Ramsden found a weak feral kitten abandoned in an isolated barn. He brought her home to hand rear and "Hisses at Toes" or Hissy as she is commonly known, is a firm favourite with everyone at the Trust.



The Trust's stand in the conservation area at the Devon County Show. The Barn Owl Trust banner was made and donated by Mary DeLemos.

BARN OWLS by David Webb

Father telephoned to say that a jumble sale is advertised in Ashburton to raise funds to "Save the Barn Owl". I thought "We'll have some of that". For once we were organised and arrive on time, sort through the jumble and snap up the dozen demijohns on sale. Hand in our name and address and leave contented in the notion that we will no more get some Barn Owls than start flying ourselves. However, true to his word David Ramsden of the Barn Owl Trust telephoned to arrange a site visit.

We have an old stone built barn - one small problem - we live in it. It seemed fair, therefore, that we should give at least part of our loft back to the Owls. David awarded nine out of ten as an "Owl House" - the minus point being the overall height of only four feet in the loft. This made it most suitable for a young clutch release. He said that we would hear from him in due course. In the meantime we should organise breakfast for owls or is it tea? We'll believe it when we see them.

I eventually got round to phoning the hatchery to book one day's cull of day old chicks - no problem, turned up on the appropriate day and collected a fertiliser bag tied up at the neck - not at all gruesome - yet! All we have to do now is pack the chicks into bags of ten ready for the freezer. Barbara joins in after saying "I can't". We run out of freezer bags but manage to invent some.

Now we're ready - sit back and wait for our white fluffy friends. OWLS? I see no owls. Eventually, one night the phone rings, it's David Ramsden, to say that our owls are ready and will arrive at the end of the week - is everything ready? I said, "Yeah Yeah No problem" (liar).

Now what? Well, we've got the grub, but no house - nestboxes, we haven't even sectioned off the loft yet. In fact we have quite successfully done nothing yet, as usual. After all eight months isn't very long First things first - we have two weeks holiday planned for June, better check that our neighbours about 200 metres away are prepared to owl sit as well as dog sit. "You know you're quite happy to give Mutley muesli for dogs whilst we're on holiday". "Yes, of course". "How do you feel about feeding the owls on eight chicks each day - it only involves a spot of mountaineering to get into the loft". "O.K." That's a good start.

Now then - break into a sweat:-

- Tea chest with 7" x 4" hole and opening door
- 20' of loft sectioned off and rat proof
- Tea chest fixed as high as possible
- Cut hole in end wall at least 7" x 4"
- Tea chests to be fixed in neighbouring barns (in case owls decide to move house)
- Chicks to be defrosted
- Tea chests haunt my dreams

Friday arrives - no problem - everything's ready. I knew two days was long enough. It's time to get my feathers ready and learn to fly - 'cause here they are. Four comical looking white birds that hiss at you. After a comprehensive lesson in owl care it's time to place them in their new home for which I get ten out of ten. We give them a while to settle in and then serve breakfast - at 8pm? Routine soon established eight chicks to owl residence to get hissed at.

They are intriguing, all standing at the back of the tea chest performing various comical antics. Body still and head moving up and down and from side to side and occasionally round and round (really makes your neck ache watching them).

Another manoeuvre is to lean forward with the beak an inch from the floor peering at you or snapping their beaks together whilst still hissing, which in owlish is probably "why don't you lot shove off and leave us to breakfast".

As owls are hatched (born) a couple of days apart - one by one they start losing their Bud Flanagan look-alike look, ie a clown in a fur coat and start growing proper feathers. Soon they look like proper Barn Owls. Then - all too soon - they fly at approximately two day intervals - from the boxes in the loft. Whilst we're on holiday, of course.

Our neighbour panics "How do I explain that there are no owls left?" "Tough!" That is the idea, to release them into the wild.

On our return from France, you guessed it bird watching - including a neighbourhood Barn Owl, we are only too happy to see them flying.

They are still flying about here trying out different roosts - they return to the original box for breakfast which is still part of the service. A worthwhile exercise in conservation.

It is because of us that these birds become endangered in the first place, so it is down to us to help them survive.

"Barn Owls" was written as a light hearted reflection of a young clutch release of Barn Owls by David and Barbara Webb in May 1988 and was originally published in Devon Life magazine. The last owl left their loft in August 1988, however they have had sightings of Barn Owls around their home since then and evidence of a Barn Owl roosting in their neighbouring barn. None of the owlets released at this site have been recovered.



Colin Milburn of Lincolnshire has been in touch with the Trust since May 1989. He is seen here erecting a Tawny Owl nestbox after receiving Barn Owl Trust Leaflet Number 27. We look forward to hearing when the first tenants move in.

EAGLE WATCHING TRIP TO SOUTHERN SPAIN

For Spring migration 1993. Anyone interested please contact David Webb (0364) 42299

BARN CONVERSION RESEARCH PROJECT

A Tale of Two Owls, Two Years and Two Conversions by David Ramsden

The Barn Owl Trust's stand at Devon County Show in May 1991 attracted a lot of attention and we met many interesting people of whom I remember one person in particular, not because of her heavy Dutch accent, but because of her intention to demolish a Barn Owl breeding site! Six months previously someone else had phoned the Trust to say that she intended to convert a barn with resident Barn Owls and it turned out that the two locations were only 500 metres apart.

A local survey revealed that a pair of Barn Owls had been resident in the area for over 20 years. The breeding site (A) consisted of a nestbox in a Dutch barn (due for demolition) standing next to old barns used for roosting which were due for conversion to holiday accommodation. The roosting site (B) 500 metres away consisted of a single old stone barn of admirable proportions complete with Barn Owl pellets and droppings.

The two sites became part of a local study area - one of twenty being monitored as part of the Barn Conversion Research Project. To cut a long story short both sites were developed this year and provision for Barn Owls was incorporated into both conversions. At site A the Dutch barn was demolished but fortunately the owls stayed and roosted in the provision made in the adjacent barn. In spite of all the disturbance involved in the conversion of Site A the pair remained! In April 1992 we received reports of the adults flying and screeching around the site but were they breeding? ... YES young owlets were heard in May but then ... disaster. In June we checked the new nesting box in the loft of the conversion to find four dead owlets. A prolonged period of wet weather was blamed (Barn Owls cannot hunt effectively in the rain). We removed the bodies.

Fortunately soon after this the owls laid another clutch and have now reared four young which we ringed on 14th August and observed fledging on 4th October. The conversion at roosting site B is now complete and one of the pair is using the provision made. Whilst all the conversion work was going on the owls remained faithful to the area and the provision for owls recommended by the Trust has worked perfectly. Fingers are crossed for next year. Details of the provision made can be found in leaflet No. 3 "Indoor Nestbox Design" and No. 22 "Barn Conversions - Provision for Owls".



CHEMRING PLC

Chearing PLC, a corporate supporter of the Barn Owl Trust, recently requested advice to encourage Barn Owls onto one of their company sites in Wiltshire. David Ramsden, Conservation Officer, visited the site near Salisbury and discovered that they already had a visiting Barn Owl. He has made recommendations that nesting boxes be provided around the site along with improved hunting areas for the bird(s).

CAN YOU HELP ? OR DO YOU KNOW A MAN WHO CAN ?

There are a number of items that the Barn Owl Trust could desperately do with, but are beyond our present financial resources.

Digital Scales - to weigh up to 2kg (for weighing birds)
Fridge - to fit under work surface in Bird Room
Upright Hoover
Plain paper fax machine
Laser Printer or good quality DOT Matrix
Filing Cabinet
Desk Top Publisher
D.I.Y. Power Tools.
S.L.R. Camera and lenses.

If anybody has any of these items or would like to make a donation towards any one of them we would be extremely pleased to hear from you.

VISITS TO THE RSPCA

The Trust visited the RSPCA's new Seal and Wildlife Rescue Centre in Norfolk in October, and revisited the Taunton Wildlife Unit in Somerset with Inigo Fajardo in November. Both Centres are currently undergoing major building work to provide impressive new facilities for their wildlife rehabilitation work.



Tallet, the Giant Barn Owl, seen here with designer Paul Adams, has accompanied the Trust to several events during the year and certainly attracts attention. His arrival on the top of a car through mist and rain the Whole Earth Show in Dorset caused quite a stir! Built with recycled newspaper on a welded steel and wire frame, Tallet stands 4.5 feet high and has been speed tested to 60mph. Paul also produces smaller paper sculptures of birds and animals (such as the Barn Owl seen here) and accepts commissions. He worked with the Trust from December 1991 to June 1992 and in addition to producing Tallet he provided a great deal of art work including our T shirt design and two of the latest card designs. Paul still helps out from time to time, and has made a unique and much appreciated contribution to the Trust.

Picture: Plymouth News Pictures.

BRINZAL, MADRID, SPAIN by Inigo Fajardo

It's likely for some of you to have heard about Brinzal before, the only Spanish centre dedicated exclusively for owls. Nowadays no other group or centre is working on owls in Spain at the same level as Brinzal does, and this is the reason why perhaps, not every step in our way is done correctly. Actually, we should say that we're learning more from our mistakes than from any other source.

Unlike most of British conservation bodies, Brinzal is involved in a very different task, rehabilitation. Hundreds of injured owls are treated annually in Spanish centres, demanding cares and attentions that we sometimes can't offer properly. This is the immediate need that we keep fighting for.

Brinzal was born as the result of the poorly situation that owls in general were suffering in most of Spanish rehabilitation centres, in a country where the amounts of money given to conservation are small. Most of the efforts that so well meaning people were carrying out at centres were desperately dedicated to save the very and severely endangered species of large eagles and mammals.

It was easy, and sadly still is, to see Barn, Little, Scops etc owls kept in unsuitable facilities, without the minimum requirements as a simple roosting box can be. Generally speaking, owls are a forgotten species for bird keepers and what is more, even for the general public, what a difference when comparing the picture in England!

Brinzal decided then to change and stop this, building up a centre only for owls, a place in which a Little Owl could receive the same care as if it was an Imperial Eagle or a Wolf itself.

It was not an easy job at all. We were criticized and discouraged by lots and lots of people, both scientists and conservationists. New conceptions are not always welcome and in this particular case looking after owls didn't seem to be accepted. Some said that this group of species was not in decline for what our work was purposed to be a waste of time. Others argued that a centre only deals with individuals, never with populations so that once again our work was not worth while and of course time wasting. However, we'd made our minds and time showed we were right. Six years later, nearly 200 Barn Owls, most of them wild birds, have passed through our hands, in a region where the wild Barn Owl population is no more than 200 pairs. Aren't we then talking in terms of populations? Since then Brinzal has always tried to keep in its guidelines and aims and to improve the situation of captive owls in Spanish centres and little by little we're getting it. Nevertheless, our most important aim and objective is to change people's minds respecting owls and very specially Barn Owls and to show them the dramatic situation that some species are suffering at the moment. Conservation is by all means our only motivation. In order to carry this out, our work is developed with a solid scientific base and credibility. However, we thought that we needed to improve our experience and knowledge outside our country because inside of it we were the only ones engaged in such matters and it was necessary to share experiences and information with someone else, more experienced beyond

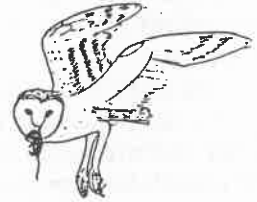
our frontiers.

After a hard time trying to find out about other similar organisations all over Europe, it was very easy to realize that the Barn Owl Trust was the right one. The one that could contribute in the best way to our cause. An organisation that might understand how difficult working without money is because Brinzal hasn't got any regular income but at the same time a world wide known organisation with the perfect knowledge about our subject and proved and recognized results.

Barn Owls gods were hopefully with us and we had the opportunity to visit the Trust and know about methods, ideas, etc.

For Brinzal, it meant a change in our guidelines, and improvements making possible in a great extent part of our never reached objectives.

To finish with, we would like to say that no matter the country you work for, Barn Owls will never understand about frontiers, languages or politics. The fact is that as long as a Barn Owl dies in a road no matter if it is Spanish, English or Chilean, we will have to be there to fight for it. The magic in a Barn Owl flying in nighttime with no light other than moonlight will ever shake our hearts!



MOONLIT ENCOUNTER by Heather Buswell

Whilst walking my dogs in one of the more remote corners of Waterleat on a recent moonlit evening I was lucky enough to see a Barn Owl. There he was, perched in classic pose, on the gatepost, apparently watching for his supper.

The dogs being otherwise occupied hadn't noticed him, so I was able to creep along the side of the lincay until I was within a few feet of him. The beam from my torch even picked out the red glow of his eyes, and there we both remained, motionless, for a few seconds, the owl and I.

Then, without sound or warning he dropped down over the bank into the undergrowth and disappeared - supper no doubt! The spell was broken. How many supposed hauntings, I wondered, were due to nothing more sinister than a silent white owl?

This unexpected sighting was especially interesting, however because over a period of years, several Barn Owls have been released from Waterleat. On each occasion they have returned for food for a fairly short period (one was discovered perched in a goat house!) and then apparently disappeared from the local scene. There is certainly no evidence of them nesting here.

So was the owl I saw one of those released, perhaps having taken up residence a little further away, and returned to hunt, or a wild one? (I couldn't see if he was wearing a ring).

I've only seen him on that one occasion so now I'm wondering if his visit was a "one-off" or whether I just happened to be in the right place at the right time that night, if he hunts there unseen on a more regular basis. An interesting post script to this incident is that, a few nights later, a Barn Owl was heard, but not seen, in the meadow below the Trust - perhaps he had come on a "flying visit" to the resident Barn Owls.

TREE OF LIFE

Thank you to those who participated in the Tree of Life project and provided pledges for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The Barn Owl Trust was one of more than 325 organisations nationwide that promoted the project, and 200,000 pledges were raised in the UK. Internationally 112 countries became involved and an estimated 1,150,000 pledges were raised in total. The Tree of Life attracted considerable attention throughout the summit and was the centrepiece of the Global Forum visited by more than half a million people over the two weeks, and 10 heads of state. The Tree was a great source of inspiration and encouragement to many thousands of people. Unfortunately there was little progress made by World leaders at the Summit towards solving the World's massive environmental problems. The combination of personal pledging and political lobbying is powerful and seen as a positive way of raising the profile of environmental concerns. To preserve this planet for our children it is up to each of us, as individuals, to apply pressure and give support to environmental and conservation issues and "do our bit" to change the world.

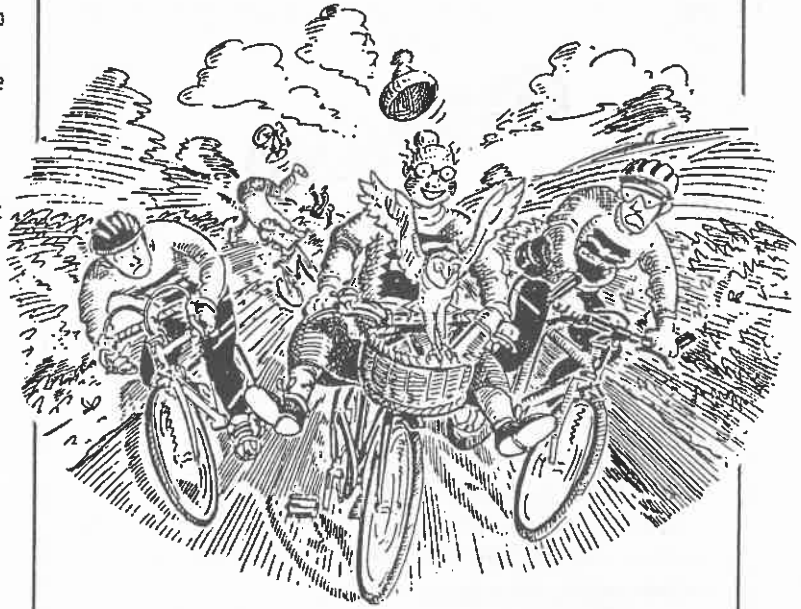
One such initiative in the UK is the newly formed Global Action Plan (GAP) - "Empowering individuals to take effective environmental action in the household, workplace and community".

If you have any thoughts on this or any other ways of following up this initiative, please send an SAE to GAP-UK, PO Box 893, London E5 9RU.



Picture: Mark Edwards/Still Pictures

BARN OWLS AND BICYCLES



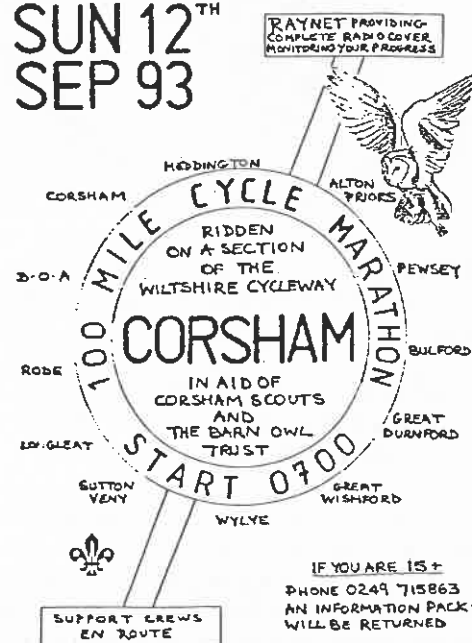
Richard Chislett from Wiltshire works for the National Grid Company and has erected two Barn Owl nestboxes on poles on their property. Little Owls took up residence in one box within days and successfully reared a brood of four owlets in 1992. The other box is currently being used as a roost by a Little Owl. Richard was involved in the release of Barn Owls during 1992 and has taken advice from the Barn Owl Trust.

On 12th September 1993 Richard and friends will be organising the 3rd Annual 100 mile Cycle Marathon ridden on a section of the Wiltshire Cycleway.

The Barn Owl Trust and Corsham Scouts will benefit from this event and although September seems a long way off, Richard would like to hear from anyone interested either in taking part or promoting this event.

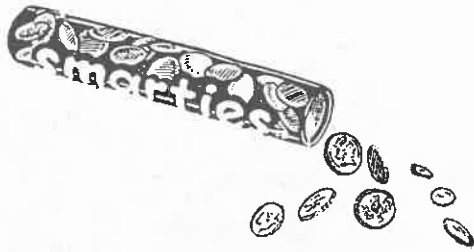
NOTE: It is NOT advisable to erect any sort of box within close range of overhead cables or to attach any box to a pole carrying overhead wires.

SUN 12TH
SEP 93



FUND RAISING

How many 5 pence pieces can you get in a Smartie tube?
Nine year old Alex Leeson of Balsham collected 63 in his and sent the Barn Owl Trust £3.15.



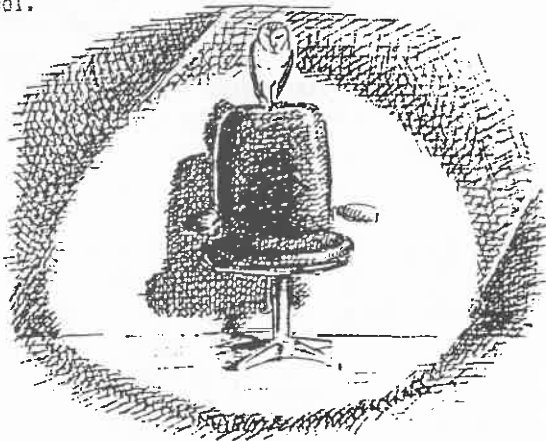
Louise Baudoy and Alice Oliver (both aged 10) raised £57 for the Trust from their fund raising stall in Lustleigh this summer. This is the second year that they have raised funds for the Trust in this way.

The 9th Paignton Brownies raised £202.56 when they completed our Sponsored Walk in May 1992, and have recently adopted their Barn Owl Trust Barn Owl for another year.

The 8th Annual Barn Owl Trust Jumble Sale held this year in Teignmouth raised £180. A great way to recycle unwanted items!

A Pie and Pate Supper (with delicious food and wonderful hospitality) raised £202-10. Thank you to Judy and Frank Booth for all their time and effort in organising such a pleasurable event.

A general knowledge Quiz Night organised by students at South Dartmoor School raised £183-60 and was great fun. We hope it will become an annual event. The winning team was awarded a lovely Marble Trophy made by the School.



Flag days organised by volunteers in Teignmouth and at J Sainsbury PLC Exeter raised £214-75 and £198-94 respectively.

A very enjoyable event was a Ceilidh with a light supper held at Marldon and organised by Lynne Clarke and friends which made £275-34. Well done Lynne!

Owl Night at the Ship Inn, Axmouth, raised £409-20. Thank you to all those who bought tickets for the grand draw at this event, lucky winners from all over the South West won the thirty four (all alcohol) prizes. We hope we can encourage more of you along to Owl Night 1993 - in fancy dress!

The Sponsored Walk in May 1992 has now raised a total of £967-26. Thank you to the Ash family and to Sharpam Estate for making this very successful event possible by inviting us to walk on the Estate.

On Bank Holiday Monday, 31st May 1993, the Flete Estate bordering the River Erme in the South Hams is the location for the Trusts 2nd Sponsored Walk. Write this date in your diaries now. Our thanks go to Anthony Mildmay White for allowing us to hold the walk at this beautiful location.

The 2nd Annual Letterbox Walk, organised by Mike Wallsh, raised £222-00. This once again proved very popular with all the participants. Thank you Mike for making it such a great success.

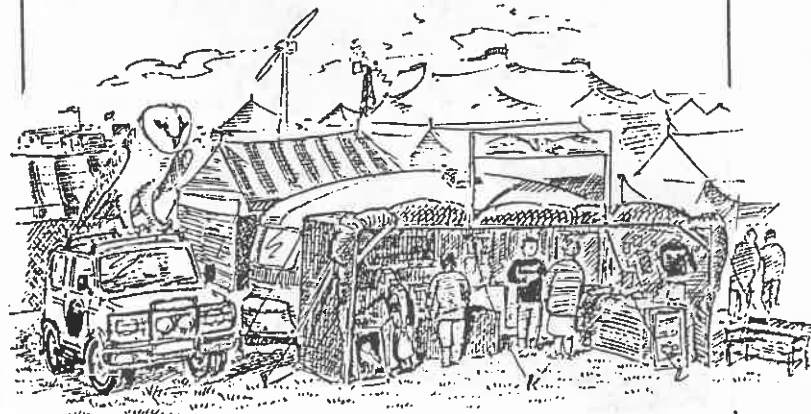
Thank you very much to all the volunteer fund-raisers, whose energy and initiative in organising these events for the Trust is very much appreciated. The Trust is funded entirely by donations and grants for specific projects and your efforts make an enormous difference to our financial resources. Well done all of you.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 4th Barn Owl Trust AGM on 2nd October was attended by approximately 50 people. Following the business of the meeting, Inigo Fajardo of Brinzal, Madrid, gave a presentation on the work of his group and David Ramsden, Barn Owl Trust Conservation Officer, gave a presentation entitled the End of an Era. He talked about the Reintroduction work of the Trust, it's involvement in the addition of the Barn Owl to Schedule 9 and the new licensing system.

NESTBOX WORKSHOP

A large number of people applied to attend the Barn Owl Trust Nestbox Workshop held at the Dart Valley Country Park in November 1992 and there were many more applicants than places. A second workshop is being held in conjunction with Tavistock Conservation Project on 23rd January 1993 and places will be offered initially to those for whom we did not have space in November. Participants learned about the value of nestboxes for Barn Owls and where to site them and then built their own boxes to take away.



The Trust attended several events during the year including the Whole Earth Show in Dorset.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

In June 1992 Simon Roper became a Barn Owl Trust Trustee having been closely involved with the Trust since the beginning of 1990. Mike Wallish and Paul Adams both finished their placements in June but have continued to do voluntary work for the Trust.

Dean Saunders worked with the Trust cleaning aviaries from July to October.

Since September Sarah Smith has been helping out in the Trust office for one morning a week.

Rachel Humphrey from Bixton College of Agriculture has been working full time on a three month placement from September to November, cleaning aviaries, feeding the birds and getting involved in other aspects of the Trust's work.

We lost Karen Taylor in September 1992 when she moved out of the area after two years of helping out in the office. She is now involved in voluntary conservation work in Dorset.

In October Rosie Waine volunteered to extend her time in the office to two full days a week, in addition to the evening that she and her husband Alec put in.

ADOPTIONS

18 Barn Owl Trust Barn Owls have been adopted this year, raising a total of £540 to support our resident birds and the Trust's work. The adoption scheme is devised to allow people to support the Trust in a very personal way and has been running for well over four years. The adoption of a Barn Owl costs £30 per year. An introduction to the adopted owl is sent out with a certificate of adoption and a colour poster, and is followed at the end of the year with a further report about the adopted bird. Anyone participating in the scheme also receives Feedback and a Barn Owl Trust car sticker. Several people have adopted owls on behalf of others as unusual gifts for Birthday, Christmas or Thank You presents and in these cases we include a Barn Owl Trust greeting card.



The Trust's Sponsored Walk in May 1992 was a great success - keep Bank Holiday Monday 31st May 1993 free for the next one on the Flete Estate in the South Hams, Devon.

Picture: Andrew Parker

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 or information please contact us.

Together we can make a difference.



OWLS THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

This photograph (of Barney and Yelverton) was taken by Tim Williams through the one way viewing glass (kindly provided by Andrewartha) in our hide aviary. We were delighted to find that wheelchair access built into the hide worked well when we were visited by Friend of the Barn Owl Trust David Crew earlier this year.



This Newsletter was produced by Rosie Waine and Frances Ramsden. Illustrations by Paul Adams. Many thanks to everyone else who contributed to its production and distribution. Many thanks also to all our hard working volunteers who make the work of the Trust possible and to the Friends that support it financially.

We hope you have enjoyed reading this Newsletter and that you feel inspired and able to make a personal contribution to conservation and the environment. Please continue to support the Barn Owl Trust as it is the individual donations along with the efforts of volunteers that make our work possible.

Good luck and best wishes.

Frances Ramsden *Rosie Waine*

THINK GLOBALLY - ACT LOCALLY

SALES GOODS

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

- 1. CHILDS T-SHIRT A B C D £5
- 2. ADULT T-SHIRT XL only £7
- 3. " LONG SLEEVED XL only £10
- 4. SWEAT SHIRT L XL £14

A	23" - 24"
B	27" - 28"
C	31" - 32"
D	32" - 34"

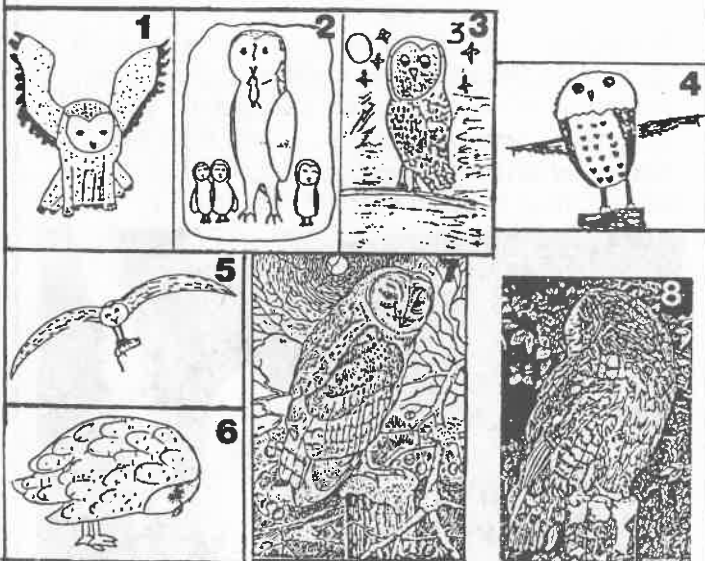
Also available

- 5. BLACK SWEATS (50% polyester) XL £14
- 6. BLACK T-SHIRTS. 100% cotton XL £7

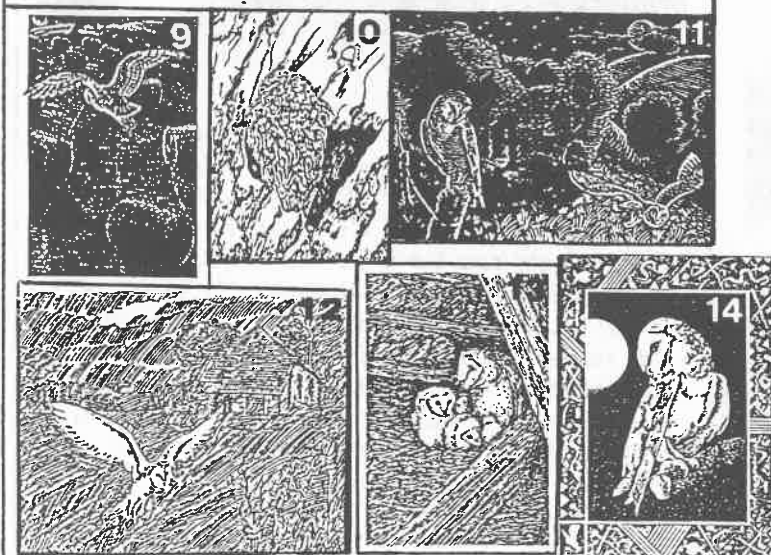
Postage and packing please add £1 for each item.

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

Design A6 one colour
Recycled card and envelope
Please state designs required when ordering



NEW DESIGNS



CHRISTMAS CARDS

Design No's 1 - 8 available with Xmas message.



T-SHIRT / SWEAT SHIRT DESIGN



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 75mm

CAR STICKERS 50p



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 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.