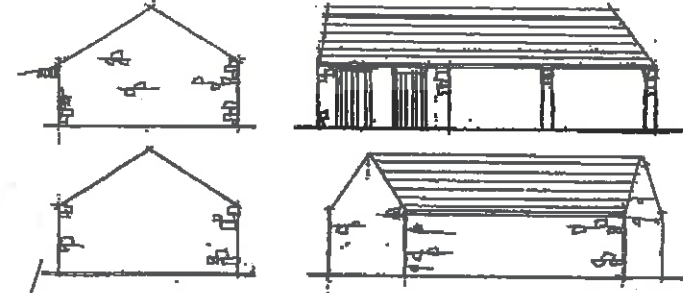


PLAN 2



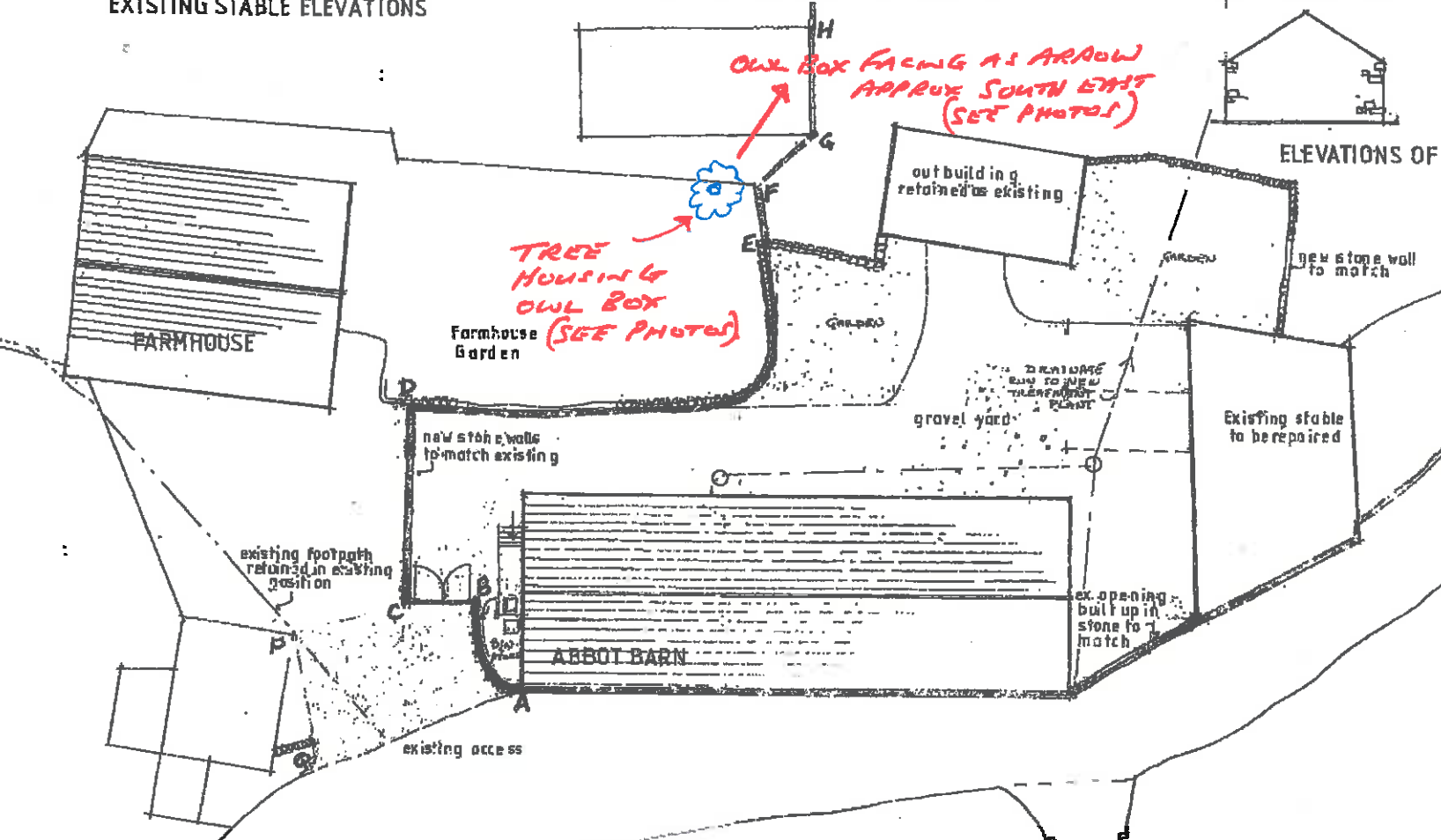
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# Tawny Owl Nestboxes



LEAFLET No 27

Reg. Charity No 289 835

**This leaflet describes how to make and position a Tawny Owl nesting box suitable for a tree.**

## Background

The Tawny Owl is the most common British owl. It is the species that most people will have heard making the familiar "twit-two" call. Unlike the Barn Owl, the Tawny Owl is a woodland bird which has adapted to live almost anywhere (including towns and inner city areas) with a good food supply and trees. Tawny Owls may nest in a hollow tree, the fork of a trunk, an old crow's nest, occasionally in a building and have even been recorded using a rabbit burrow. They will use nestboxes, particularly in areas where there is a shortage of natural nest sites.

There are two basic types of box for Tawny Owls. The **upright type** as shown in fig 1 is normally strapped or nailed to the side of a vertical tree trunk or major branch. The **sloping type** as shown in fig 2 is designed to be strapped or tied to the underside of a sloping side branch at an angle of approximately 45°.

Keep the construction method simple. Exact dimensions are not too critical providing that the box is big enough with an entrance hole not less than 255mm (10") square. The **upright type** box must be fitted with a thick roofing felt top. Both types must have several large drainage holes in the bottom not less than 12mm (½") diameter.

## Construction materials

Use CAA treated (tanalised) 18mm planks, or 18mm softwood ply (known in the building trade as CDX). Please avoid using hardwood ply unless it is stamped 'FSC Approved'. If tanalised timber is not available use a brush-on preservative and ensure that all the edges are treated before assembly. Whichever timber treatment you use be sure to follow the manufacturers' instructions and make sure that the box is **completely dry before erection**. Assemble the box using galvanised 50mm (2") nails and/or brass or plated screws. We recommend the use of ratchet straps or polypropylene rope to fix the box to the tree as these cause minimal damage. Nails cause greater damage, but are often the most practical option.

## Nestbox position

The most common nest site is usually a mature tree in a copse or larger stand of trees. Moist deciduous woodland seems to be the preferred choice in Northern Europe though nesting sites in coniferous forests are

not uncommon. Nest boxes need to be sited in one of the most mature trees in the woodland, preferably within the woodland itself rather than on the fringes. Fix your nestbox securely to a large tree as shown in fig 3. In a remote undisturbed area the box can be placed as low as 3 metres (10') above the ground. In more populated areas or places where vandalism may occur, the box should be secured not less than 3.7 metres (12') up or higher if possible. Always face the box entrance away from the prevailing wind (generally this means avoiding the west or south-west).

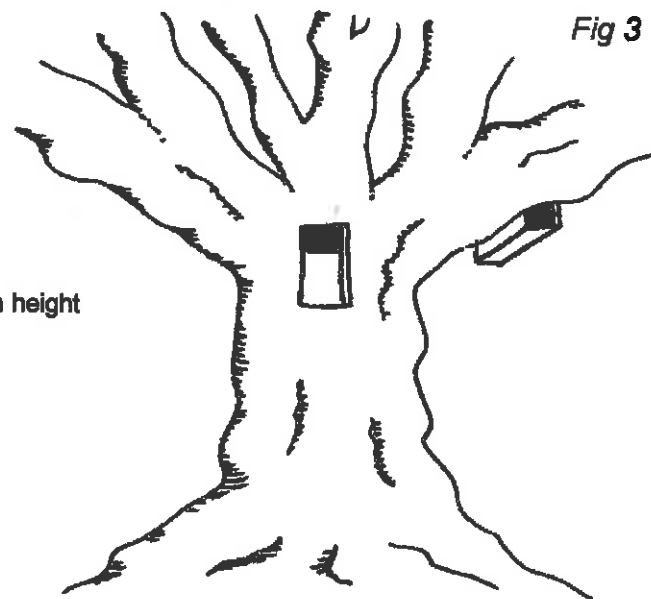
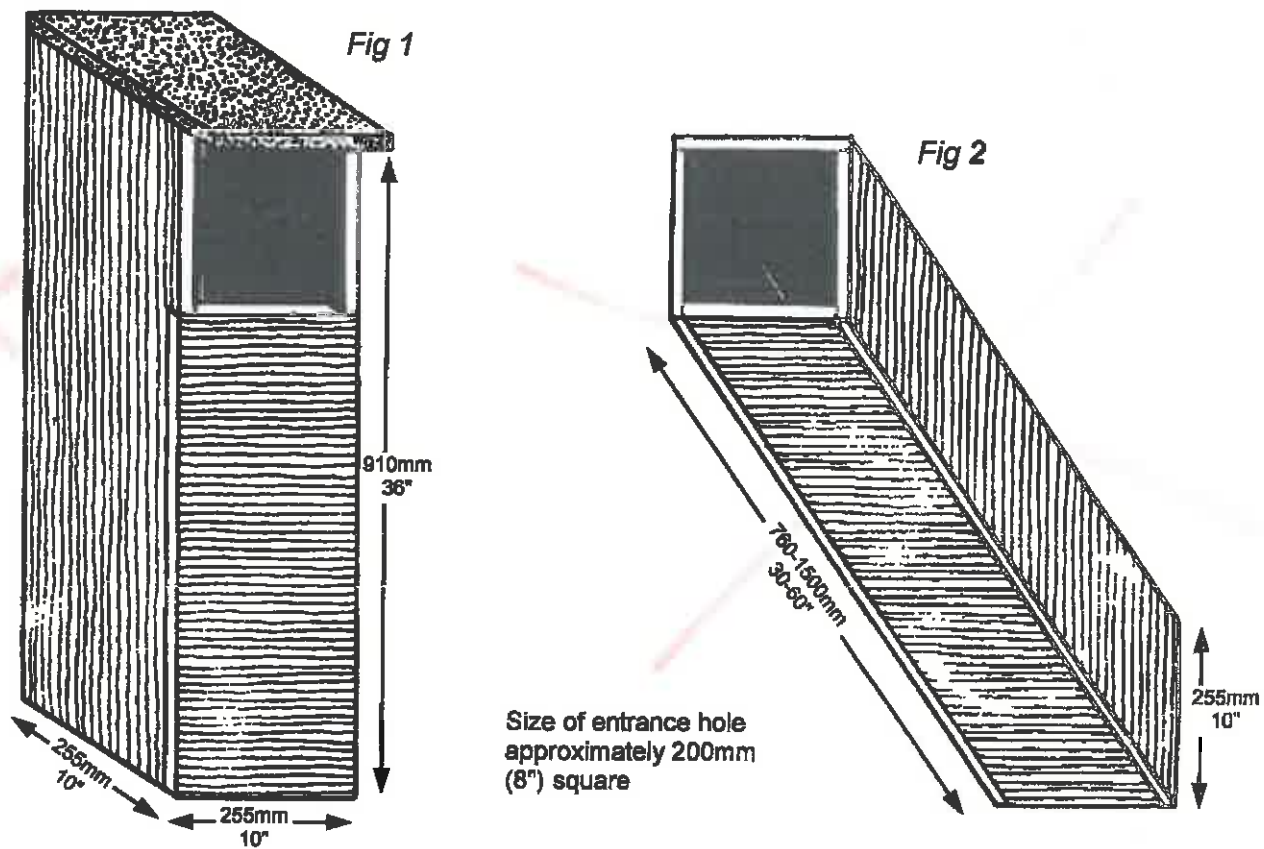
## Safety

Before you erect your nestbox take time to consider the hazards you might face and what steps you could take to minimise the risks. Hazards might include an injury at a remote location; falling from a ladder; injury from heavy lifting; dropping a nestbox onto another person; and poor positioning of a box resulting in additional hazards for anyone monitoring the box at a later date. The following are examples of precautions you should take to reduce the risks.

- 1 It is difficult and potentially dangerous to hold a nestbox in position and fix it at the same time. We strongly recommend that you use two ladders and two people.
- 2 If erecting your nestbox at an isolated site on your own, let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back before you set off. Carry a mobile phone if you have one.
- 3 Time spent in reconnaissance and preparation is seldom wasted. Never carry a box up into position until all preparatory work is complete. Double-check your measuring to confirm that the box will fit.
- 4 Ensure that your ladder is secure before climbing it. If possible tie it off at the bottom and top before ascending with your nestbox. Wear a hard hat and consider the need for a safety harness.
- 5 Avoid over-reaching - never attempt to carry out any task up a ladder if you cannot reach comfortably.
- 6 When carrying a nestbox up a ladder, ensure that it is kept low relative to your body (ideally not above waist height). This will keep your centre of gravity down. Try to keep the box in front of both you and the ladder so that it pulls you towards the ladder - never hold a nestbox behind or above you.
- 7 You are responsible for your own safety - assess the risks and be careful.

Good luck!

# Tawny Owl Nestboxes



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The Barn Owl Trust is a registered charity dedicated to the conservation of the Barn Owl and its environment. You can become a Friend of the Barn Owl Trust and support our work by making a regular donation. Friends receive our bi-annual magazine Feedback, our Annual Report and an enamel pin badge. The Trust provides a wide range of free leaflets on Barn Owl related matters.

For these details and further information about the Trust and its work, please write including a large SAE to:

Barn Owl Trust  
Waterleat  
Ashburton  
Devon  
TQ13 7HU

Tel: 01384 653026  
Email: [info@barnowltrust.org.uk](mailto:info@barnowltrust.org.uk)  
Web: [www.barnowltrust.org.uk](http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk)

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### Restoring the Balance

We've lived side-by-side with Barn Owls for centuries. But in modern times wild Barn Owls have become increasingly rare, and the reasons are all man-made. The Barn Owl is a symbol of our relationship with the countryside: the decline of this beautiful bird reflects our attitude towards the environment. No species can prosper in isolation - not even human beings. All things are connected and if we lived in balance with nature then Barn Owls, and so much other wildlife, could thrive.

#### How you can help

You can help to conserve the Barn Owl by Becoming a Friend of the Trust and making an annual or monthly donation to support our work. Fill in and sign the form below along with the Gift Aid and/or Standing Order form and send it to us at the address shown. Paying by Standing Order will reduce our administration time and costs.

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UK Friends: individual £25; Family (same address) £30

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Owlets: UK £25; Overseas £30. Owlets are Junior Friends. (Up to 4 children under 16 at one address) Each child receives a personal ID card, pin badge and other goodies. Please state names and ages on separate sheet.

Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone no \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to become a Friend/Owlet of the Trust and receive my pack, I enclose £ \_\_\_\_\_ (see above)

I am pleased to enclose a donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_

\*UK taxpayers please complete the Gift Aid declaration below to enable us to claim tax paid on your donation. The contact details you submit will be held by the Barn Owl Trust on a secure computer system and may be used by the Trust in pursuit of its aims. Please let us know if you object to this.

### GIFT AID DECLARATION

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April - 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or CASCs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

I want the Barn Owl Trust to treat all donations I make on or after the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations until I notify them otherwise.

Full name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Note. Please remember to tell us if you no longer pay an amount of income or capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim on your donations. Please contact our office if you have any queries.

### STANDING ORDER FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay £ \_\_\_\_\_ On the first day of each month\*/\*year\* (\*delete one) starting in the month of \_\_\_\_\_ and a like sum on the same date each month\*/\*year\* until further notice to the account of the Barn Owl Trust (account No 01027812) at Lloyds TSB Bank (sort code 30-98-69) 31 Fore Street, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5HH

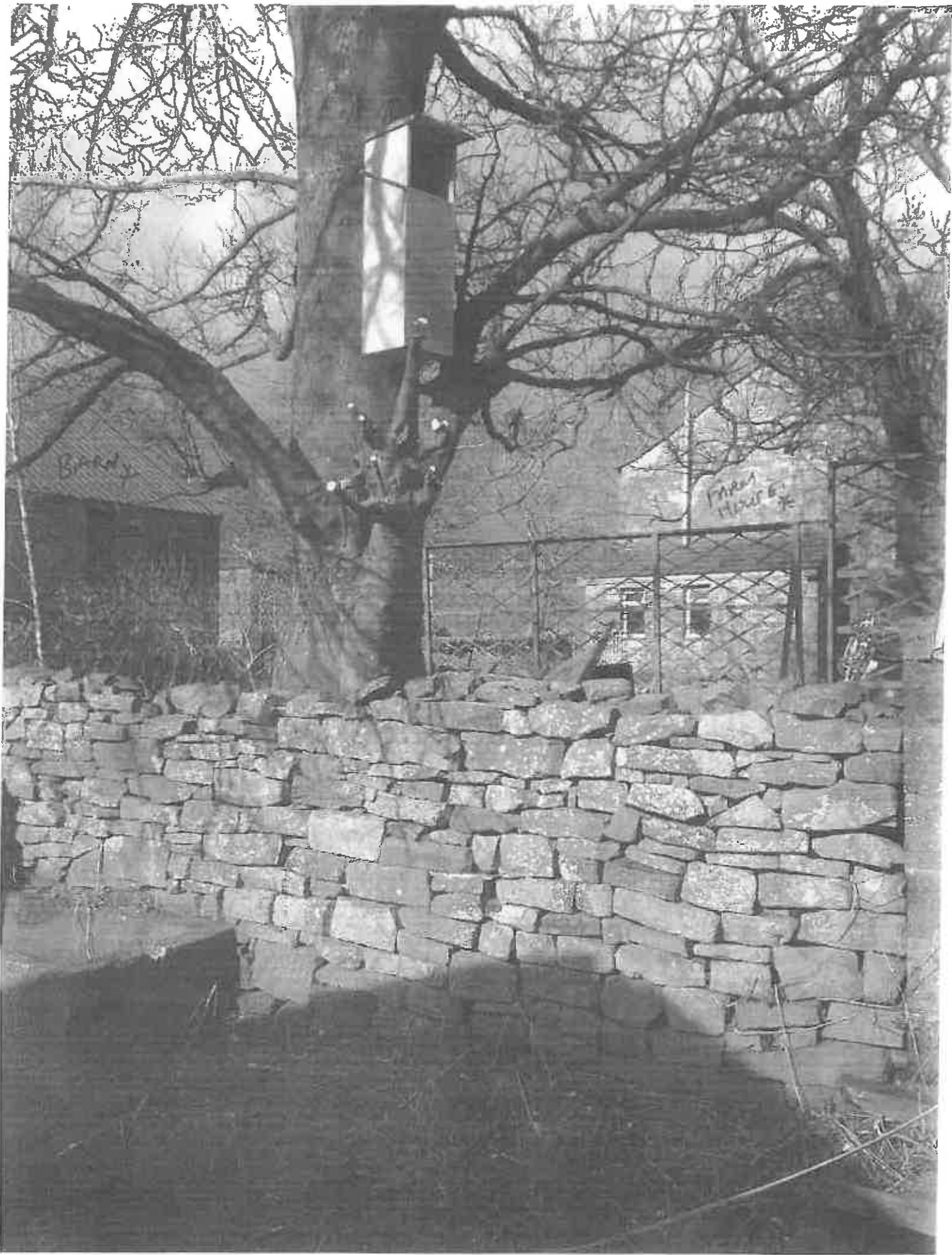
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To the Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Bank \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Address \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

THIS STANDING ORDER REPLACES ANY EXISTING STANDING ORDERS FROM THIS ACCOUNT TO THE BARN OWL TRUST

Send to **BARN OWL TRUST**, Waterleat, Ashburton, Devon TQ13 7HU [www.barnowltrust.org.uk](http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk)



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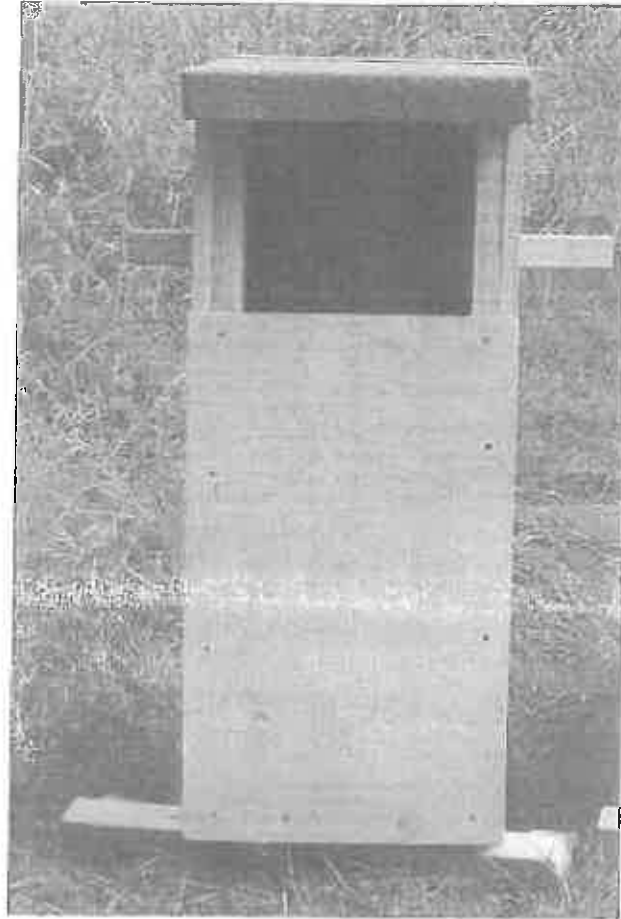
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5. Barn Owl Postcard - £1.20
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