

The UK's leading specialist Bird of Prey & Owl rehabilitation organisation



**RAPTOR
RESCUE**

Registered Charity No. 283733

An organisation dedicated to ensuring all sick or injured birds of prey and owls are cared for by qualified people and that whenever possible released back into the wild.

NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 2011



Raptor Rescue
is sponsored by:

EXOTICDIRECT

In this issue:

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- ✿ Rehabilitation
- ✿ Wildlife Crime
- ✿ Barn Owl on 'flight trials'
- ✿ And lots more!

Plus a 'How to Report a Wildlife Crime Card' & the 2011 AGM Trustee Nomination Form

National Help & Advice Line: **0870 241 0609**

Online: www.raptorrescue.org.uk

PLEASE NOTE; THE HELPLINE IS NOT A 24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICE, IF YOUR CALL IS NOT ANSWERED AN ANSWER PHONE IS AVAILABLE; PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE AND SOMEONE WILL GET BACK TO YOU.

Chairman's Chat

With the Government's austerity measures biting hard, 2011 to-date has been a bit of a challenging year for the Charity. Due to lack of resources, mainly people on the ground, we were not able to attend the Falconry Fair this year and will not be able to attend Chatsworth House. The Falconry Fair, while a good publicity event for the Charity, has failed to raise any funds over the past two to three years and has actually cost us to attend. Likewise, Chatsworth Hall last year also failed to raise anything like it did the first year we attended and we only just broke even. As well as raising the awareness of the Charity, it is hoped that by attending these events we raise much needed funds, get new rehabilitators on board and gain new members. We now have to review the events we do attend to ensure that there is little or no outlay to the Charity but maximising what we gain from attending.



We do get asked to attend a number of smaller events throughout the year such as school fairs, fun days etc, who ask us to attend with a selection of birds. Unfortunately, we have to decline most of these as we don't have people with birds (it is illegal to use wild injured birds in this way) who can attend and if we offer to come along without any birds, they are usually not interested as it is the birds that draw people to their events.

If any member would like to get more involved with attending events, either the larger ones or smaller ones, please do not hesitate to contact me. We can only do so much with a limited number of people. However, on a positive note, membership has so far this year has risen so we must be doing something right.

This will be my last Chairman's Chat as I am stepping down as Chairman at the AGM in October; I will be staying on as a Trustee and will concentrate on the Newsletter and Updates. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the other Trustees for their support during my term of office as Chairman.

Steve Davidson

Remember, remember, the 5th of November

As a member of Joe public I love a good organised firework display, but as an animal keeper, I loathe the private use of fireworks and dread the weeks leading up to and after the 5th of November and New Years Eve. Why, because I hate to see how my birds and my Golden Lab, Max suffer as a result. Campaigners seeking a ban on the private use of fireworks have started a petition, which they hope will get them a debate in parliament. If you feel the same way and would like to support the petition it can be found at: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/2900>

The petition is open until 15th August 2012.

Charity News

The Board of Trustees would like to welcome to the following new members:

Talita Arantes
Carole Cooper
John and Kath Lunness
Colin and Desi Lunness
Michael Maybury
Cathryn, Adrian and Alice Poynter
Pat & Thornton Young
Michael Willis

Chris and Pete Bond
Chris Hall
Mick Lunness
Gerald and Tricia Lunness
Marie and Michael Newson
Jeff and Debbie Robbins
Mr D Yeomans

The Board of Trustees would like to thank the following for their kind Donations:

Newport Pagnell & Olney Lions
Wirral Bird Club
Buxton University of the Third Age
Cornish Bird of Prey Centre

Sefton Motorcycle Group
Flight of the Falcons
H&P Atkinson



We would also like to thank the following members who give a little bit extra when renewing their membership:

R Roberts
G Peck
J Broderick

J Young
G Wilcox
A Tees

M Robbins
G Windsor

D Linnell
L Barnes

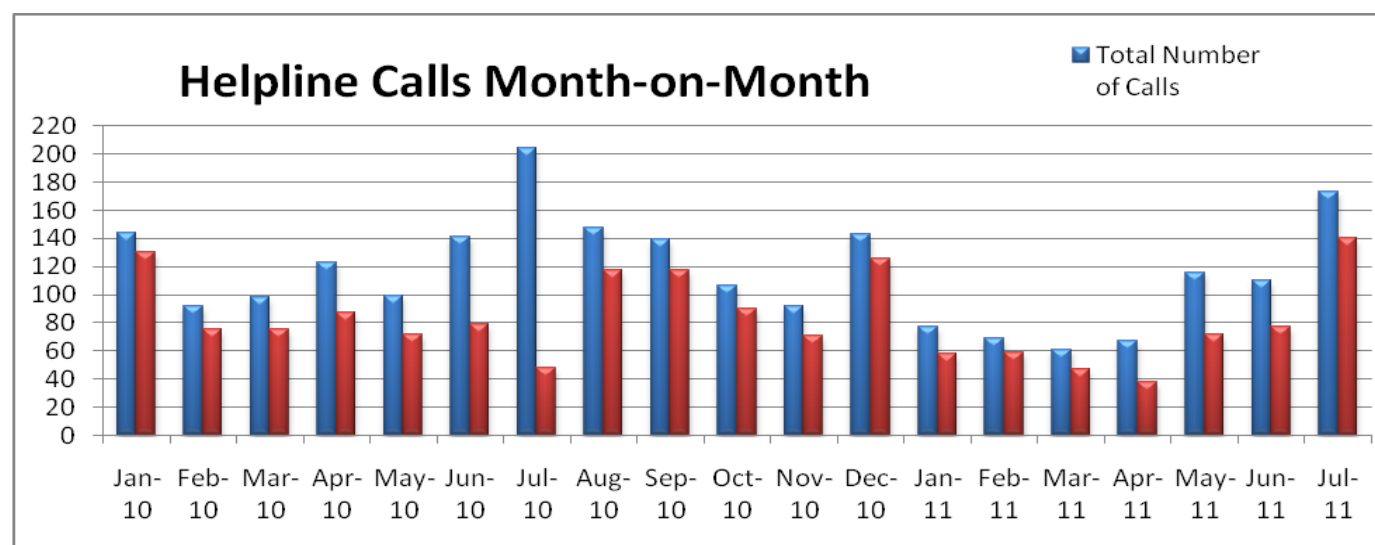
J Lowe
D Richard

Gift Aid

The present government has recently lowered the limits on income that is exempt of the higher rate of taxation at 40%. There is however the ability to defray some of the additional tax burden by charitable donations to registered charities. We can offer you an acknowledgement of the amount subscribed over the year by direct debits or other casual donations at the end of the tax year, therefore enabling you to include these detailed charity outgoings in your tax returns.



Helpline Update



As can be seen from the above graph, calls to the Helpline are a little down on last year. This could mean that either fewer people are calling us or there are not as many casualties being found. However, we still continue to get some strange calls, here are some of the recent funnies from the helpline!

“Please could Raptor Rescue tell me where to get some water from to fill our duck pond?”

Caller, “I have a buzzard trapped in the bike rack on my car”

Helpline, “which county are you in?”

Caller, “just passing from Wiltshire to Hampshire”

Helpline, “are you travelling at present?”

Caller, “yes, I can see the buzzard in the rack, it doesn’t look very happy”

Helpline, “please pull over!!”

Caller, “hello, I would like to pay my Sky bill please”

Caller, “I have an injured Sparrow hawk and Goldfish”

Helpline, “what seems to be the problem?”

Caller, “the Sparrowhawk has an injured foot and the Goldfish has been eaten”

Rehoming Update

Rehoming was for a long time a very small part of the Raptor Rescue activities but is now increasing as the figures below indicate.

Year	Birds Rehomed	Species
2007	1	Bengal Eagle Owl
2008	1	Eurasian Eagle Owl
2009	4	Harris Hawk x 2 Common Buzzard Eurasian Eagle Owl
2010	13	Eurasian Eagle Owl x 5 Kestrel x 2 Harris Hawk Red Tail Snowy Owl African Spotted Owl Barn Owl
2011	3	Bengal Eagle Owl x 2 Eurasian Eagle Owl



In addition to the bird already re-homed for 2011 there are the following birds in the system for eventual rehoming:

Kestrel x 2, Eurasian Eagle Owl x 3, Barn Owl, Turkmenian Eagle Owl, Red Tail x 2, Tawny Owl x2, Buzzard, Snowy Owl.

There are several other birds that current keepers would like to have rehomed but the birds will have to remain with their owners until Raptor Rescue aviary space becomes available – we are about to install four additional holding aviaries - **thanks to the Pets at Home donation.**

Raptor Rescue assists Animal Health and Wildlife Crime Officers

Raptor Rescue has developed an increasing involvement with Animal Health and Wildlife Crime Officers and Raptor Rescue is often requested to provide assessments as to whether wild Birds Of Prey and Owls are suitable for rehabilitation and eventual release. On occasions we have taken a bird in, assessed it for rehabilitation and a plan prepared to get the bird fit for successful release. If a bird is not regarded as fit for future release – maybe it is totally imprinted and humanised – then we would seek to re-home it with a suitably experienced keeper with adequate facilities and knowledge. The priority always is to ensure the bird is healthy and has the realistic prospect of significant quality of life.

Animal Health has instigated a new procedure for wild disabled birds and no birds will be issued with Article 10 certificates and only exceptionally for conservation and education. The aim is to reduce the number of wild birds being fed into the captive bred market and also to reduce the motivation for people to do anything other than to take every opportunity to return a bird to the wild. Raptor Rescue will be contacted when a bird is seized and requires rehabilitation before being released to the wild.

More about these activities in the next newsletter...

Malcolm Robbins

Wildlife Crime and How to Report it!

If you witness a suspected wildlife crime in action, call 999 immediately. In all other instances call your local Police control room. Wildlife Crime reduces the numbers of rare animals and plants, pushing them closer to extinction. It causes animals pain and suffering. It can be linked to other serious crimes, like drugs, money laundering and firearms offences.

What is wildlife crime?

People buying, selling, harming or disturbing wild animals or plants that are protected by law.

Examples include:

- Smuggling protected species and their parts (such as tortoises, ramin, ivory and caviar)
- Illegally trading in endangered species
- Poisoning of animals, such as birds of prey
- Disturbing or killing wild birds; or taking their eggs
- Poaching of game, venison and fish
- Disturbing, injuring or killing bats, and damaging or obstructing their roosts
- Taking protected plants from the countryside



People being cruel to animals

Examples include:

- The illegal use of poisons, snares or explosives to kill or injure animals
- Violence towards badgers, which includes being buried alive or being ripped apart by dogs

In some special cases, killing or taking protected animals and plants is allowed, for example when someone has received a licence.

How you can help

If you witness a suspected wildlife crime in action call 999 immediately and ask for the police. For all other enquires call your local Police control room. For your own safety, do not approach suspects yourself or touch anything at the scene. If possible give information on:

- What is happening?
- The exact location (a map reference or local landmark can be useful)
- The date and time of the incident
- Who is involved (e.g. number of people, clothing worn, tools being carried or any dogs)
- The make, colour and registration number of any vehicle
- If it is safe to do so take photos which may be used as evidence and remember to ask the police for an incident reference number



Contact numbers for reporting wildlife crime

Many police forces have special wildlife crime officers. Their details may be shown on the force website or you can ring your local police station using their usual non-emergency number and ask to speak to the wildlife crime officer.

To remain anonymous – call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

To report smuggling - call the Customs hotline on 0800 59 5000

The Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW) brings together the Police, the UK Border Agency, representatives of Government Departments and voluntary bodies, with an interest in combating wildlife crime.

Raptor Rescue are partners of PAW

For more information about PAW and its partners go to:
www.defra.gov.uk/paw



Don't forget to keep your How to Report a Wild Life Crime card with you at all times!

Gentleshaw's New Hospital Unit

In the last Update we reported that following a donation to Raptor Rescue from Pets at Home under their adoption/re-homing scheme, the Board of Trustees gave Gentleshaw a donation to purchase a new Hospital Unit.

Their old hospital unit (right), as you can see here, was looking a little tired, but what this picture does not show is the extent to which the floor had rotted away, it was only the lino that kept you from falling through.

The new hospital unit is a refurbished portacabin from Midland Portable Buildings, who have laid it out to Jenny's specification.

New bird of prey Hospital was officially opened on Sunday 26th June. I was asked cut a ribbon to the new unit, while Chairman of Gentleshaw, Mr. Steve Booker, unveiled a plaque and Gentleshaw's vice chairman, Mr Colin Heaps, poured (a small amount) of fizz over the steps. The new hospital has more hospital units, 2 sick bays and a separate treatment / recovery area. Jenny from Gentleshaw said, "Thanks to all those who attended on the day or who were involved with the fundraising and construction of the new hospital unit".



Me cutting the ribbon and Gentleshaw Chairman, Mr. Steve Booker, unveiling the plaque

The new hospital is a far cry from the old one and is now in use (see Rehabilitation) and Jenny is one happy lady.



Rehabilitation

Gentleshaw

April 2011

Grubby Toes' the Tawny

Gentleshaw had their first baby tawny owl of the year in. He was found in a truck depot and his feet were black with oil and grime. He was aged around 6 weeks and is very feisty. He is feeding himself fine and accepts that a tube provides his dinner!

May 2011

Now out in a secluded aviary, Grubby toes (right) is growing well. His feet were cleaner when he moved out so he may have to have a name change!



All Gentleshaw's Tawny casualties are now in secluded aviaries.

The youngsters are developing well and should be out in the wild in another couple of weeks (August 2011)

August 2011

Fluffy Bum' the Barn Owl

Gentleshaw's first casualty to be treated in our new hospital unit was Fluffy Bum, who had been hit by a car. The young male Barn Owl, still has some baby fluff on his bum. Apart from concussion, he had no major injuries so hopefully their first casualty to be treated in the new hospital should be a success.



August 2011

Lumpy

Another young Tawny owl, unfortunately this one's rescuer decided to keep him for a few weeks before bringing him to Gentleshaw. He had had a broken wing which had not been treated and as a result has healed with a callous on the break. He is now gaining height but time will tell if he is ever going to be able to fly properly.



Rehabbing Tips

Playing a CD of Tawny owl calls to young wild tawny's can help limit stress and avoid imprinting.

Bits & Bobs *from Cage & Aviary Birds*

The Lady is A Champ

26 year old Osprey, lady, has returned again this year to the Loch of Lowes nature reserve in Scotland. She has been breeding at the reserve for the past 21 years and in that time has laid an incredible 61 eggs.



Sock it to me!

A falconer who thought there was something afoot with his 13 week-old male Indian Eagle Owl after it started behaving strangley, took him to the vets only to discover he had swallowed an old sock. The sock was a toy the owl had played with since he was an owlet, it was successfully removed by vet Neil Forbes.



Peregrine Success



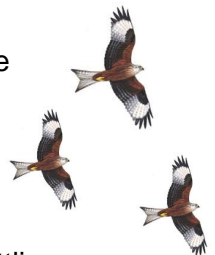
After thieves stole two chicks from a Peregrine Falcon nest in Kent last year, Kent Police, working with Natural England, this year monitored the site with CCTV cameras while policing the surrounding area. All the effort paid off as four chicks have fledged this year.

Afghanistan jail bird smugglers

Afghanistan Authorities have jailed 12 bird traffickers in an attempt to stop illegal smuggling of birds. Saker Falcons have been specifically targetted by the Afghan bird smugglers.

Cumbrian kites set for release

The Forestry Commission is set to release another 30 Red Kites in the Grizedale Forest in the Lake District as part of a three year introduction programme. Last year it released 20 birds and next year a further 30 birds will be released to complete the programme.



And finally, Raptor Rescue were contacted when a Tawny Eagle, Snowy Owl and Harris Hawk were stolen from the Salford based 'Wild Wings' on the night of 21st August, We are happy to report that they have all been recovered and although a bit traumatised, they are settling back in to their routine at the centre.

Ramblings of an Old Rehabilitator



Recently I read a letter in the “Countryman’s Weekly” complaining about the undue protection given to Birds of Prey and the damage they caused and were continuing to cause to the indigenous bird population. The writer mentioned the almost complete demise of songbirds to the area in which he lives, and put the blame squarely on Birds of Prey.

I was more disappointed than surprised to read the letter as his experience is so very different from my own but I have heard other people complain about over protection of Bird of Prey. I live close to the main A1 and to assist drown the almost constant traffic noise we have planted a whole host of native trees and shrubs to the boundary and have encouraged the growth of hedges and wild garden areas. Not likely to win a gardening competition!

Our house is surrounded by open arable fields so I guess we must act as a little oasis for birds with a ready source of water from the pond, not quite a lake, and natural food, not to mention some free range chickens who share their corn rations quite happily (or so it seems when I go off to the feed merchants!)

At the very edge of one of our sheep paddocks (something has to keep the grass down and you cannot eat a lawnmower) we have located a Raptor Rescue mobile hacking aviary which has been used to successfully release owls and birds of prey once rehabilitated.



Not all the birds leave the area once returned to the wild and so we now have regular visits from a released pair of sparrowhawks, a kestrel, a barn owl and a tawny owl – the tawny comes to visit one of my resident tawny females most evenings – even though he has a mate of his own.

In addition we recently have had a pair of buzzards move into the area and rear two young this year. In addition to these wild native raptors and owls, there can be up to twenty other Birds of Prey and owls in the aviary area; some in for rehoming, others in for “rescue, rehabilitation and release”.

Against this back ground of Birds of Prey and Owls, we have our resident bird population with breeding pairs (in some cases more than one pair) that include blackbirds, robins, grey and yellow wagtails, wrens, bullfinches, mistle thrush, chaffinches, green finches, long tailed tits, jackdaws, blue tits, collared doves, wood pigeons, starlings, moorhens and swallows.

Our visiting birds include great spotted woodpecker, redwings, mallard ducks, partridges, pheasants, heron, magpies, one jay, a kingfisher (sadly no more since the big freeze last year killed all the fish in the pond) and carrion crows. I am sure the list is longer and each year I make the resolution to make a proper record, and each year I fail.

There is no shortage of songbirds it seems despite all the available natural predators around our place; not to mention our two dogs and, for a long while, two cats, although to be fair them all seem to be more interested in rats and rabbits. We also have the occasional visit from the local fox and our more friendly hedgehogs; with even more rare visits from the stoat who has been known to make off with young chickens from time to time.



Well that concludes the ramblings, no more gazing out of the window, back to work.....

Malcolm Robbins

Happy the Barn Owl on 'flight trials'

The secret of efficient bird flight – DLR, Germany's national research center for aeronautics and space is measuring the shape of a barn owl wing in flight



The flight of birds is still largely unexplored;. The German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt; DLR), in collaboration with RWTH Aachen University (Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule Aachen) and the German Armed Forces University in Munich (Universität der Bundeswehr München) are currently looking at the flight of birds, in particular, the movements performed during the beat of a wing and the airflow around the wing remain a puzzle to scientists.

DLR scientists will be photographing the wings of an owl while in flight inside a closed room at RTWH Aachen University to obtain information about the how the shape of the bird's wing changes during flight. The results obtained will not only help to determine the airflow around the wing, enabling the flight of birds to be better understood, but will also be incorporated into modern aviation. "It's not as though we are going to apply these results to an A380 – its flight characteristics bear no resemblance to those of an owl. But the research results can be applied to smaller, unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs," explains Andreas Dillmann, Head of the DLR Institute of Aerodynamics and Flow Technology.

It is not easy to study the shape of a bird's wing during flight. In contrast to a mechanical device, whose location is known, it is not possible to forecast where a living creature will be next. "In some of the tests, the owl may fly slightly higher, or slightly lower; it all depends. Although this may cause difficulties, the owls should not be influenced in any way, since we want to ensure that the flight is as authentic as possible," explains Thomas Wolf from the DLR Institute of Aerodynamics and Flow Technology.

To determine the position of the owl in the room and the shape of its wing surface area, Wolf projects a pattern onto the upper and lower sides of the owl's wings and records it using state-of-the-art video technology. Afterwards, he and his colleagues can assign various image points to this pattern on the computer, from which they can calculate the shape of the wing surface. This enables researchers to track the sequences of movements. The optical measuring system has an accuracy of approximately 0.5 millimeters. The entire wing has been analysed during gliding flight, with the exception of the leading edge. Currently, the curvature of the wing prevents this part from being measured accurately; software to accomplish this is under development.



These trials will use eight cameras, four taking photographs from above and the other four from below. The dot pattern will be projected onto the wings of the owl from above and below as well. This projector-based measuring system can also be useful for the aviation sector; some mechanical components, such as a turbine, cannot be 'painted' with patterns or templates for accurate measurement purposes – the paint would burn off when the turbine started. However, if an optical measurement check for quality control purposes is required, it is possible to apply such a pattern through the use of projectors.

The flight path for the two owls, Happy and Tesla is approximately seven meters long. The owls always fly one at a time. To give them an incentive to fly, bird food is placed at the far end of their flight path. This does not always work: "Sometimes, the owls just don't want to fly. Whenever that happens, we simply go and get something to eat and come back at about two in the morning, when our owl felt like flying," explains DLR scientist Thomas Wolf. The welfare of the animals was taken into consideration during the flight tests. The research project is scheduled to run until June 2012. For future tests, DLR is developing a camera system to accompany an owl on its flight, which will be used on a 30-metre flight path

Annual and General Meeting - Sunday 23rd October 2011

**St Joseph's Community Centre, Lichfield Street, Rugeley,
Staffordshire, WS15 2EH**

Itinerary

12:00 noon – Doors Open – Time to meet old friends and make new ones.

12:30pm – Buffet Lunch*

13:30pm – Meeting Commences

It is anticipated that the business part of the meeting will take approximately one hour with tea and coffee to follow.

14:30pm – Quiz, a bit of fun testing your general and wildlife knowledge.

15:30 - Depart

*A cold buffet lunch will be served at a cost of £5.00 per person to those who order and pay in advance using the form on the bottom of the enclosed Trustee Nomination Form.

We regret that anyone who does not order and pay in advance cannot be served any food on the day.

How to get there:

The motorways and major routes to Rugeley are:

M1, M5, M6 and A38

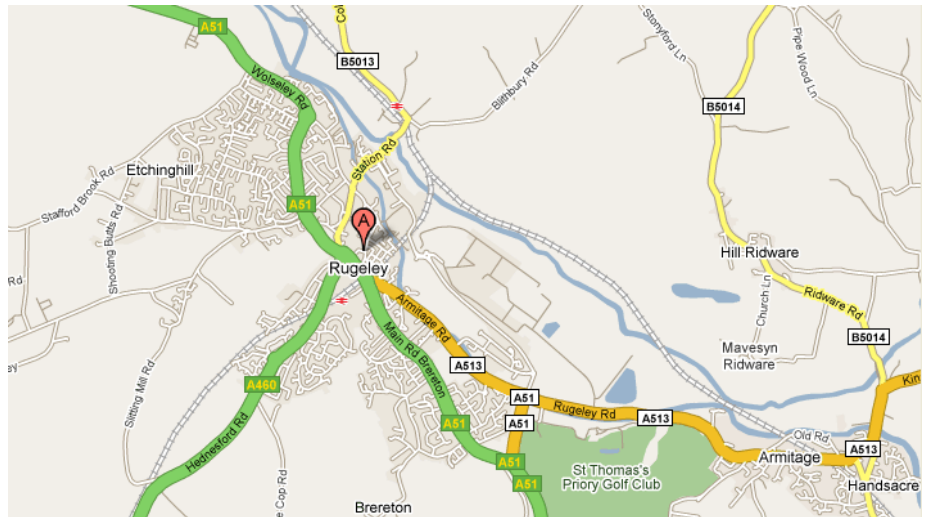
There are four roads converging on Rugeley, these are: **A513, A51, A460 and B5013**

Approaching from the North (A51)

Arrive in Rugeley at the main roundabout with the Travel Lodge and petrol station on the left, go straight ahead on the A51. At next set of traffic lights turn left into Lichfield Street. St Joseph's Church is approx 100 yards on the right.

Approaching from the South (A51)

Arrive in Rugeley at the railway arches and traffic lights, go straight ahead on the A51. Go through the next set of traffic lights, at the roundabout go back on yourself the opposite way on the A51 and at the next lights turn left into Lichfield Street.



Park in the free car park next to the church, the community centre is next to the church

(Trustee Nomination Form and Buffet Request Enclosed)

PATRONS:

Steve Lingham - Chris Packham - Pollyanna Pickering

Honorary President: Mr Bryan Paterson

Honorary Vice President: Mr Robert Haddon

TRUSTEES

Steve Davidson – Chairman/Newsletter Editor - Tel: 01925 726704 – contact for any issues relating to Raptor Rescue and the Newsletter and Updates.

Malcolm Robbins - Vice Chairman/Rehoming Coordinator - Tel: 07734 845288 - contact for any issues relating to Raptor Rescue in the Chairman's absence, any issues relating to external magazine articles, press releases or TV related activities, re-homing birds of prey.

Carol Davidson - Treasurer - Tel: 01925 726704 – contact for any financial issues, donations, membership payments, and first aid equipment.

Lesley Smith, Jenny Morgan – National Helpline & Secretaries - Tel: 01785 850379 – contact for any issues relating to the National Help Line, to order publications, to request attendance at events.

Steve Dewsnap - Stock Control - Tel: 01244 813127 – contact for any issues relating to sales goods.

Andy Craven – IT Communication Coordinator - Tel: 07879 007007 – any issues relating to the website or for links to the website.

Ian Taylor – Trustee – Tel: 01298 70959 - any issues relating to the Rehabbers Handbook and Code of Practice.

Daniel Goldsmith – Rehabilitator Coordinator – Tel: 07881 826811 –, contact for applications to become a rehabilitator.

Sharon Mathews - Survey Coordinator – Junior Members Newsletter/Web Pages – Tel: 01603 485006 - contact for annual survey and junior newsletter/web pages.

Geoff Windsor – Sponsorship Coordinator – Tel: 01625 584586 - contact for details of sponsorship for Raptor Rescue.

Membership Secretary: Barbara Turner, 31 Touches Meadow, Chard, Somerset, TA20 1PA, Tel: 01460 64664 – contact for membership and membership renewals.

Benefits of Membership

Membership of Raptor Rescue is open to anyone with an interest in birds of prey and who wish to support the Charity.

Annual membership fees are divided into three categories:

Junior Members (Under 16) £7.50

Household Membership (One address) £15.00

Wildlife Centre Membership (Raising own funds) £25.00

Application forms are available from our web site.

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New Hospital Unit - Gentleshaw

Happy the Barn Owl on 'flight trials' - DLR, Germany

Rehabbing - Gentleshaw

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