

## Chirbury Barn Owl Rescue

What started out as a day logging in a nearby field quickly turned into a rescue operation. A large oak tree had been damaged in recent winds and a branch had split from the main trunk leaving the inside of the hollow trunk exposed. My son peered down inside and spotted something moving. After closer inspection we could see it was three owl chicks. They were very deep down inside the tree trunk and had no protection from the elements so we knew we couldn't leave them as they were. The tree was also in danger of splitting right down the middle.

Even though we consider ourselves birdwatchers at this stage we weren't sure if they were Tawny or Barn Owl chicks. Anyway, the most important thing was to try and make them safe. This had turned very much into a family affair. The logging long forgotten my husband cut a large round from the fallen branch and we tried to fashion some shelter with the branches. We were not at all happy with the situation, but at a loss to know what else to do.



Back at home I checked on the net and phoned the Barn Owl Trust in Devon who confirmed that they were Barn Owls chicks. The very helpful gentleman asked if we could go back to the nest site and try to place a box or something like a cat carrying cage inside the trunk to offer the chicks some protection. We went back for another look, but there wasn't enough room inside for a box and as the chicks were so deep inside it was impossible for us to reach them. I again rang the Barn Owl Trust and said that we were worried about the chicks.



It was at this point that we were told about the Shropshire Barn Owl Group and that they would ask John Lightfoot of the group to phone us. We were so impressed with the advice and help that we received. Within half an hour of that conversation John was on the phone to us and we arranged to meet the next day. John and his wife arrived and we spent a delightful few hours with them installing a nestbox and weighing the chicks. It was wonderful!!!

That night we went back to make sure the parent birds had accepted their new first class residence. We didn't have to wait for long and after a slight hesitation they were in and out of the nest box. I am happy to report that all three chicks were saved and well on the point of leaving the nest.

So a very happy ending thanks to the Barn Owl Trust and the Shropshire Barn Owl Group.

**Heather Cummins**  
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