

## Raising Barn Owls – Our Story, by Samantha Webb

During September 2009 a sick barn owl was retrieved by one of the dogs on the farm. We contacted John Lightfoot who assessed the bird, which was female and underweight. We informed John that there was a chance she may have owlets as a nesting pair we had definitely had a clutch. He agreed to come and check and tag them the next day. We brought the owl home via a local vet who suggested giving her glucose water via syringe during the night and see what happened. She was still alive, but very subdued the next morning so we took her to Cuan House Wildlife Rescue. She had a sore in her mouth and Megan suspected an infection, so arranged to visit their vet. Unfortunately the owl died shortly after I left her. The vet examined her anyway to rule out any infection and found a large oesophageal tumour.



John discovered that we had 3 live females (pictured left) aged between 43 and 48 days. One had a discharging eye, was checked out at Cuan House and was given the all clear the same day. As the owlets were taking whole prey, John advised supplementing their diet. Under Johns guidance, I delivered nightly food parcels of day old chicks and set up a feeding station within "dad's" flight path. After several days he had grasped the concept and was clearing everything up. John checked on the owlets' progress the following week and was satisfied that things were progressing well. The oldest owlet fledged by Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, whilst her sisters took until mid October. I have heard them in the vicinity over the winter months.



Being privileged enough to have assisted in the survival of such magnificent birds has inspired me to learn more about them and has extinguished my fear of all things feathered! I would like to express my most sincere thanks to John for his invaluable advice and support and to Megan, Fran and all at Cuan House for their help in ensuring their survival.

Sisters at Fledging

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