

Chapter 6

Butterfly Conservation: The Development of a Pioneering Charity

Martin Warren

6.1 Introduction

Butterfly Conservation is a registered charity in the UK whose aim is to conserve butterflies, moths and their habitats. It currently (September 2010) has 15,000 members, over 55 staff, and 31 volunteer Branches throughout the UK. Although much of its work is based in the UK, it helped establish Butterfly Conservation Europe in 2004, to stimulate and co-ordinate action across the continent. The following is a personal account of its development, taken from articles and observations that were gathered for the charity's 40th anniversary in 2008.

6.2 The Early Years

On a September evening in 1967, a small group of amateur naturalists met in London at the flat of Thomas Frankland in Montagu Square. They were concerned about the plight of butterflies and decided to take action to save them by forming a society where they could gather like-minded people to help them. The British Butterfly Conservation Society, as it was then called, was registered as a charity on 7th March 1968 and inaugurated on 5th April by an announcement in the Observer newspaper. Its principle objective was 'the study, protection and preservation from extinction of natural fauna and flora, and particularly all species of British butterflies and moths'.

The founding members and initial driving forces were Thomas Frankland and fellow naturalist, Julian Gibbs. They had both been interested in breeding butterflies since their childhood and were particularly interested in the possibility of restoring species to places where they had become extinct. They quickly enrolled Robert

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Fig. 6.1 Sir Peter Scott (centre) with Robert Goodden (left), Lady Scott (right) and Rosemary Goodden (aright) at an early meeting of the British Butterfly Conservation Society at Compton House in Dorset, c. 1970

Goodden and his wife Rosemary, who soon took on the day-to-day running of the Society from their offices at Worldwide Butterflies in Dorset. Robert Goodden (Fig. 6.1) had learnt about rearing butterflies during his time as an apprentice to the famous butterfly enthusiast, L. Hugh Newman, who had pioneered butterfly gardening at the home of Winston Churchill at Chartwell in Kent.

Robert regularly discussed butterflies with television naturalist Peter Scott, son of the famous explorer Scott of the Antarctic, and persuaded him to become the Society's first President. This was a substantial coup for the Society because Peter Scott was then the face of natural history on television and his appointment as President gave the new Society real credibility.

During its early years, the Society was very much an information-sharing organisation, but the members were galvanised by reports of the possible extinction of the Large Blue in 1970. In 1972, they started the Habitat Survey Scheme, which began the Society's long history of using volunteers to gather vital information on the status of butterflies and their habitats. However, by 1974 they were still a very small Society and just 20 people attended the AGM in London, to hear that they were still struggling to balance the books, with an income of £501 and expenditure of £643.

6.3 Making a Stand for Butterflies

During the 1970s, the Society began fighting to save key habitats and successfully stopped an old railway cutting in Warwickshire being used as a refuse tipping site, and blocked a proposed glue factory in Leicestershire. In 1973, the Society listed six species as endangered: Large Blue *Phengaris arion*, Large Tortoiseshell *Nymphalis polychloros*, Black Hairstreak *Satyrrium pruni*, Chequered Skipper *Carterocephalus palaemon*, Silver-spotted Skipper *Hesperia comma* and Large Heath *Coenonympha tullia* (southern race). Membership grew steadily and by the Society's tenth anniversary in 1978 had reached around 1,000 members. In the following year, 1979, the Large Blue became extinct despite the efforts of a young scientist, Dr Jeremy Thomas, then based at the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology at Monks Wood, Cambridgeshire. Thomas reported to the Society that although a lot of work had been done to save the species, much of it had been irrelevant and harmful. He and others influenced the Society to ensure a sound scientific basis in future conservation efforts.

In 1979, the Society established its first local Branch in the West Midlands. This network grew quickly and there are now 31 Branches throughout the UK, each co-ordinating efforts in its area, publishing local newsletters and running websites. These Branches have been the grassroots powerhouse of the Society and brought together amateur enthusiasts who often had immense and detailed knowledge of their local areas, and who had the passion to take local action.

Wider interest in butterflies increased over the years and 1981 was declared Year of the Butterfly. The aim was to raise awareness of butterflies and the threats they faced. A major television programme on butterflies was broadcast by the BBC and the cover story of the mass circulation Radio Times was all about butterfly conservation. A further television programme later that year covered the publication of a series of postage stamps, based on paintings of four species by Gordon Beningfield. In 1982, the importance of butterflies was recognised in legislation with the Wildlife and Countryside Act, which gave full protection to the Large Blue, Swallowtail *Papilio machaon*, Heath Fritillary *Melitaea athalia* and Chequered Skipper.

My own involvement with the Society began during the early 1980s when I started working on the Heath Fritillary, which was the next candidate at great risk of following the Large Blue to extinction. In 1983 I was appointed as Butterfly Ecologist for the government's Nature Conservancy Council and joined the Society's Conservation Committee to co-ordinate action. Much of our time was then spent developing a position on the vexed question of re-introductions and in opposing major developments such as the planned M40 motorway which was set to destroy part of Bernwood Forest, a top butterfly site near Oxford. As a result of our efforts, the route was moved so that it only clipped the wood and a compensation area of farmland was bought between the wood and the new road. This was then restored to good butterfly habitat under plans devised by Dr Jeremy Thomas who was then working at the Institute for Terrestrial Ecology in Dorset. The results have been spectacular and decades later the site has been colonised by both the Black and Brown Hairstreak (*S. pruni* and *Thecla betulae*).

6.4 The First Reserves for Butterflies

The establishment of nature reserves for butterflies has had a long tradition in Britain. One of the first ever nature reserves was established at Wicken Fen by the National Trust in 1899, having been purchased by Lord Charles Rothschild partly to protect an important population of the Swallowtail. In 1910, Lord Rothschild also bequeathed Woodwalton Fen to the newly formed Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves to protect the habitat of the Large Copper *Lycaena dispar* and in 1920 he bequeathed Meathop Moss to protect important colonies of the Large Heath and Silver-studded Blue *Plebejus argus*.

The British Butterfly Conservation Society acquired its first reserve in 1985, a small site at Little Breach in the Blackdown Hills. The following year, it acquired a more substantial reserve at Monkwood with the Worcestershire Trust for Nature Conservation. The site was famous for the Wood White *Leptidea sinapis* and other local woodland species. This started a process of steady acquisition to protect important sites and demonstrate best management practice (see below).

6.5 The Professional Era of Paid Staff

By the time the Society celebrated its 20th anniversary in 1988, it had an annual turnover of just £14,700, no staff and around 2,500 members. However, the previous year the Chairman, John Tatham, had warned the main organising committee that the need for at least one member of staff may arise in the not too distant future to cope with the growing number of Branches and increasing workload. His foresight heralded a period of rapid growth and in the next 20 years turnover increased 170 times to over £2.6 million, membership increased to 13,000 and the number of staff grew from zero to over 55.

The transformation began when Dr Harold Hughes took over as Chairman in 1990 and, with Vice-chairman Dr Ian Small, drafted the charity's first development plan which aimed for one thing: to triple membership. They realised that paid staff would be essential to implement this plan and secured some funding from the Nature Conservancy Council to employ a Director. In 1991, they appointed Andrew Phillips as the first staff member, a management consultant who had a passion for butterflies and tremendous energy to drive the plan forward.

Later in 1991, the plan was crystallised as Operation Butterfly, which was launched with the help of PR staff at Janssen Pharmaceuticals. To make our message easier to sell, the Society's name was abbreviated simply to 'Butterfly Conservation' and a marketing company, Young and Rubicam, redesigned the logo to give the charity a new look. The body of the symbolic butterfly was meant to look like a tree, to reflect a dominant public perception at the time that conservation meant trees. Although not everyone liked the new look, it has served the organisation well for over 20 years.

The next significant event occurred in 1992, when the Vincent Wildlife Trust gave an endowment of £1 million to provide a regular income for Butterfly Conservation in perpetuity. The sum would have to be invested to maintain its value, but the interest

could be used to implement the charity's plans. This extremely generous and far-sighted move was the idea of the Rt Hon Vincent Weir, an ardent conservationist who saw that most small wildlife charities struggled to develop through a lack of core funding. It was the spring-board that revolutionised Butterfly Conservation and enabled the transformation to become a reality. His largesse also extended to other small charities including Plantlife, the Bat Conservation Trust and the Herpetological Conservation Trust, who remain strong allies today in our fight to save wildlife.

6.6 Membership Soars

The charity's transformation was given another major boost during 1992 when BP provided £50,000 for an advertising campaign. Numerous adverts were placed in newspapers and magazines, which led to a phenomenal increase in membership from 3,000 to 10,000 in the space of just 3 years. This growth required taking on more staff, both to service the membership and build a financial system that could cope with the growing budget. A Head Office was established near to Andrew's home in the Essex village of Dedham, and new staff were appointed to manage the growing membership and finances.

6.7 Building the Scientific Base

With the new income from the endowment, Butterfly Conservation was able to expand its conservation activities. The first step was to employ a Conservation Officer and, in May 1993, I was privileged to be appointed as the first conservation member of staff. However, funds were still tight and I worked from the living room of my home in North Dorset. I even had to buy my own computer, an old Amstrad which printed on an extremely noisy 'daisy-wheel' printer. This took several minutes to chug through a single page but saved the expense of a typist!

Soon after I joined, Andrew Phillips resigned to resume his business career and leaving me to pick up much of his work. I was quickly inundated and requests for advice poured in. In the first few months alone, I had over 50 requests to give talks and could easily have done nothing else. However, I was committed to achieve conservation on the ground and quickly realised it was a bigger job than one person could handle. Thanks to some extra funding, we managed to employ a part-time assistant, Jan Higgins, and within a year I was thankfully joined by Paul Kirkland as Conservation Assistant. There were now three people working in my living room and my wife's patience was running thin, so we decided to move out and establish a Conservation Office. We were extremely lucky to find ideal premises in the village of East Lulworth, within a field station of Bournemouth University. Not only did the office have good facilities, it was close to wonderful butterfly habitats along the Dorset coast including Lulworth Cove, where the Lulworth Skipper *Thymelicus acteon* was first discovered.

The scientific base of the Society leapt forward in 1993 with the start of the 'Butterflies for the New Millennium' recording project, the brainchild of Jim Asher who had served for years on the Conservation Committee. Jim designed his own software, known as *Levana* (the Latin name for the European Map Butterfly), to allow anyone to enter records in a standard way, and submit them for easy collation. The computer age had truly begun and allowed us to start assembling the biggest dataset on butterflies anywhere in the world, currently with nearly 8 million records. By 1998 the project had really taken off and a dedicated Project Officer was employed in the person of Richard Fox, who has since gained an international reputation from his research findings based on this and the subsequent Moths Count project (see below).

The next big scientific project was to amalgamate the data from the numerous butterfly transects run by Branches. The Butterfly Monitoring Scheme had been run by the Institute for Terrestrial Ecology since 1976 but was limited by finance and logistics to around 120 sites. However, the methodology proved so popular that by the mid 1990s several hundred more transects were being walked by volunteers around the UK, often co-ordinated by Butterfly Conservation Branches. We realised that if the results were combined they would build a unique and powerful database to detect trends to inform conservation and assess the newly recognised phenomenon of climate change. This complex task was achieved by Dr Tom Brereton who was employed as Monitoring Ecologist in 1999 with funding from the Ministry for Agriculture's R&D programme. The Ministry took some convincing that volunteers could gather scientifically robust data but we eventually convinced them that volunteers were good naturalists and this was not only an extremely cost-effective way of gathering data from hundreds of sites but it was probably the only way to obtain such data.

Thanks to Tom's efforts we were able to combine forces with Dr David Roy at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and establish the combined UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. This now covers well over 1,000 sites and in 2007 achieved our goal of generating an annual butterfly index that has been adopted as a key government environmental indicator. Data from the scheme has been used to publish hundreds of scientific papers on topics ranging from species ecology and habitat fragmentation to climate change. The data and analyses have also been used to understand and improve habitat management for biodiversity as well as assess the effectiveness of nature designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and agri-environment schemes. Transect walkers have already travelled the equivalent distance of walking to the moon, and now we are asking them to walk back again to help us understand changes in this key group of insects.

6.8 Taking Action for Butterflies and Moths

In 1992, Governments from around the world met in Rio de Janeiro to discuss the crisis in global biodiversity loss. They signed the landmark Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which aimed to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the world's biodiversity. In order to press the UK government to take action and ensure

that the convention did not just gather dust on the shelf, a few leading voluntary conservation groups came together to form Biodiversity Challenge. This included large and well known groups such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), the Wildlife Trusts, Friends of the Earth and the World Wildlife Fund, but also two smaller groups, Plantlife and Butterfly Conservation, to ensure good taxonomic coverage. The group's challenge to Government came in the form of a detailed programme of action that we felt was needed to ensure the conservation of threatened habitats and species. Specifically, we drew up a series of action plans, which had clearly defined targets, objectives and actions, with identified lead organisations.

Butterfly Conservation's contribution to the drafting of the plans also involved Alan Stubbs, who was then acting as a volunteer on our Conservation Committee. As the former chief entomologist with the Nature Conservancy Council, he was able to contribute plans on a wide range of insects, ensuring that this important group was given major recognition. The bulk of our proposals were quickly adopted by Government and published as the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) and a subsequent series of Species and Habitat Action Plan documents. Thanks to our input, butterflies and moths also featured heavily in the plan and over 64 Lepidoptera (12% of all listed species) were listed as Priority Species.

The UKBAP acted as a springboard for conservation as it established clearly recognised national and regional priorities for action. It was also a pivotal plan because it recognised the need for concerted action for threatened species as well as habitats, and intrinsically recognised that species cannot be conserved by a purely habitat based approach. This was a major development because through the 1970s and 1980s, the predominant thinking was that if one looked after the habitats the species would follow. However, information on butterflies clearly showed that this approach was not working and many famous nature reserves (such as Monks Wood in Cambridgeshire) and designated sites continued to lose species at an alarming rate. The reality is that we need both approaches for an effective strategy to conserve biodiversity.

To ensure that the Government's Species Action Plans were implemented effectively, various groups were appointed by them as Lead Partner. Butterfly Conservation was proud to be appointed as Lead Partner for all but one of the 64 Lepidoptera species. We devised a major umbrella project known as 'Action for Butterflies', which aimed to draw up and implement action plans for our 25 most threatened butterflies (Fig. 6.2), as well as Regional Action Plans to guide the work of the Branches. Thanks to a grant from the Nature Conservancy Council in 1995, we were able to employ Dr Linda Barnett as the first Species Action Co-ordinator, to be followed in 1996 by Dr Nigel Bourn when Linda moved overseas. Nigel has since become Director of Conservation, building and leading a team of over 20 conservation staff.

Our reputation was given a major boost in 1997 when ICI became the first Corporate Species Champions, through sponsoring over £115,000 to implement plans for the Large Blue and Pearl-bordered Fritillary *Boloria euphrosyne*. The initiative was felt to be so important by government that the launch was attended by the then Minister for the Environment, John Gummer MP.



Fig. 6.2 BC's Regional Action Plans were launched in 2000 at the House of Commons with (from left to right) Tony McWalter MP, the Environment Minister Michael Meacher, Sir David Attenborough, Stephen Jeffcoate and Martin Warren

6.9 Woodland Campaign

One of the most pressing issues facing butterflies was the rapid decline of woodland species, many of which had become highly threatened. To raise awareness of this problem, we started a Woodland Campaign in 1995 which was generously funded by the car manufacturers Land Rover. We produced a colour information pack and fact-sheets and embarked on a series of visits to key woodland sites. Here we met woodland owners to give advice and impress on them the importance of active woodland management. We publicised the visits through press releases to the media and achieved widespread coverage including several TV and radio interviews and hundreds of press articles. Although the Campaign achieved its main objective of raising awareness, the neglect of woodlands remains a serious problem due to the economic constraints and lack of suitable markets. It continues to be an important theme in our current work.

6.10 Moths Move Up the Agenda

Up until the 1990s, the focus of Butterfly Conservation had been clearly on the conservation of butterflies and comparatively little attention was paid to moths, even though they were a major part of our charter. However, this changed rapidly in the early 1990s through the efforts of Dr Paul Waring and Dr Linda Barnett who evangelised the wonders of moths to our Branches and began appointing Branch Moth

Officers. The recognition of over 50 moths within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan gave a clear focus to our work and enabled us to approach the Nature Conservancy Council for a grant to start a major new 'Action for Moths' project. In 1999, two Moth Officers were appointed: Mark Parsons (now our Head of Moth Conservation) and Dave Green. The enthusiasm and high reputation of Mark and Dave galvanised our moth work and gave us the expertise to get to grips with the complexities of moth conservation and develop other moth projects such as Moths Count and the National Moth Recording Scheme. We have since developed major projects on moths and they are now integral to every aspect of our work.

6.11 Branches and Reserves Grow

Although over 15 Branches existed by 1988, new ones continued to be formed to become a full UK wide network of 31 Branches over the next decade. The depth of Branch work and activities continued to grow apace, with major new reserves being purchased at Prestbury Hill (Gloucestershire), Catfield Fen (Norfolk), Grafton Wood (Worcestershire), and Caeau Ffos Fach (Carmarthenshire). In Hampshire, the reserve at Magdalen Hill Down was greatly extended by converting 30 ha of adjacent arable fields back to flower-rich grassland.

Then, in 2007, we had the opportunity for our biggest ever reserve project. After a 10 year campaign by West Midlands Branch, we were finally able to purchase a large part of Prees Heath, thereby safeguarding the last remaining colony of the Silver-studded Blue in the Midlands. Thanks to the efforts of Head of Reserves, John Davis, we were able to secure £573,000, our largest ever grant for reserves, to buy the site and begin restoring large areas of heathland from surrounding arable land.

Further reserves were added over the years so that by 2010, we manage 34 reserves covering over 700 ha of prime butterfly and moth habitat. These include top Lepidoptera sites such as Catfield Fen (a designated National Nature Reserve that supports an important population of the Swallowtail) and Loch Arkaig in Scotland, habitat for the Chequered Skipper and Pearl-bordered Fritillary as well as the Argent and Sable moth *Rheumaptera hastata*.

The expertise and time of Butterfly Conservation volunteers had been the bedrock of the charity, but the new recording schemes and Regional Action Plans lifted this onto a new level. The number of Branch field trips and events grew to their current level of over 700 per year. An audit of volunteers in 2010 showed that they contribute over £9 million pounds of effort every year, equivalent to 655 full-time staff.

6.12 The Challenge of Devolution in the UK

By the late 1990s, devolution was presenting new challenges to Butterfly Conservation. In 1991, the Nature Conservancy Council had been split (ostensibly to reduce its power and influence) into separate bodies in England, Scotland, Wales

and Northern Ireland. By 1998, new government administrations were established in these four countries and conservation was fully devolved to new executives. It became increasingly clear that it was no longer credible to organise conservation in all four UK countries from our existing offices in southern England.

So the decision was taken to start an office in Scotland in 1996, and appoint Paul Kirkland first as Conservation Officer (north) and later as Director for Scotland. This was soon followed by the establishment of offices in Wales and Northern Ireland, each funded with help from the respective conservation agencies. Later, in 2002, the first of several Regional Officers was appointed in England to work with Branches within the new English government regions on the implementation of our Regional Action Plans. These national and regional offices were able to tap into new funding streams within the devolved countries and enabled us to expand our activities substantially throughout the UK, turning a major challenge into an opportunity.

6.13 Head Office on the Move

After the sad and untimely death of our President, Gordon Beningfield, in 1998, we were fortunate when Sir David Attenborough agreed to succeed him in 1999. By then the operation of Butterfly Conservation had become so large (with 22 staff and a substantial turnover) that the appointment of a Chief Executive had become essential. Under a new Chairman, Stephen Jeffcoate, the National Executive Committee was to become a more strategic body and was renamed as Council. It was also becoming clear that having split offices in Dedham (with 4 staff) and a Conservation Office in Lulworth (with over 15 staff) was inefficient and would inhibit the next stage of growth.

Late in 1999, David Bridges was appointed as the charity's first Chief Executive. He set about the unenviable task of combining the two offices and taking the tough decision to close the Dedham Office and open a new Head Office in East Lulworth. We were very fortunate because the Lulworth Estate happened to be converting their old builder's yard into offices close to our existing Conservation Office. The new offices proved popular with staff and visitors alike and were opened on a marvellous sunny day in 2001 by Alan Titchmarsh, a TV gardening celebrity, who had recently agreed to become a Vice President (Fig. 6.3). The event was also attended by local MP Jim Knight, who became a useful contact when he later became Biodiversity Minister.

6.14 Landscape Scale Conservation and the Need to Think Big

Through the 1990s, there was mounting evidence that the crisis of habitat loss during the twentieth century had presented a serious new problem to butterflies, that of habitat fragmentation. Most habitats where butterflies and moths survived in the UK



Fig. 6.3 Alan Titchmarsh (right), a new Vice President, opens the new Head Office in Lulworth in 2001 with Stephen Jeffcoate looking on

were small remnants of formerly widespread habitats. Through the work of Ilkka Hanski, Chris Thomas and others, we became increasingly aware that chances of population extinction was far greater on small patches of land and that networks of interconnected habitat were essential to ensure their long term survival. Moreover, climate change was predicted to exacerbate this problem as species may have to move to survive. In short, we had to ‘think big’ if we were to succeed in saving butterflies and moths from extinction.

To address the problem of conserving species in a fragmented landscape, several pioneering projects were developed by Dr Nigel Bourn and his species team, and aimed at conserving networks of habitat within extensive landscapes. This clearly requires far more effort and resources than small scale conservation, but was vital if we were to be successful. We therefore began raising funds for major projects in key landscapes for Lepidoptera. This approach is now a fundamental aspect of our conservation strategy and we are currently involved in over 70 landscape scale projects around the UK (Fig. 6.4). Each project involves a large partnership of volunteers, landowners and organisations working together to a common aim. In some of the landscapes, Butterfly Conservation is a major player with a full-time officer, while in others we have a more advisory role and partner organisations take the lead.

The first landscape scale projects with full-time officers were started in 2004, simultaneously the Re-connecting the Culm and the Two Moors project, both in south-west England. The former focussed on a highly fragmented grassland

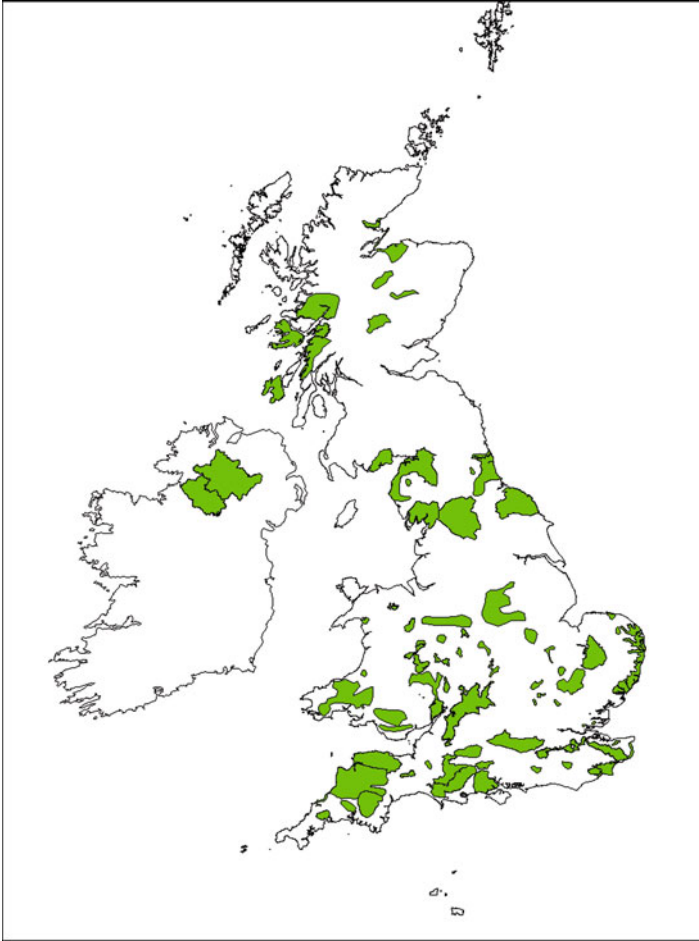


Fig. 6.4 Map showing the 76 landscapes targeted by Butterfly Conservation to conserve threatened species

landscape which was a stronghold of the Marsh Fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia* and several rare moths, while the latter focussed on this species as well as the High Brown Fritillary *Argynnis adippe* and Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. The biggest scheme, the South-east woodlands project, has three people working full time giving advice to owners and raising awareness amongst the forestry community of the need for active management. It has raised over £0.5 million for direct woodland management such as widening rides and re-instating coppicing. It also aims to develop markets for wood-fuel to ensure sustainable management in the long term.

The results are beginning to pay off and several threatened species are beginning to recover after decades of decline.

6.15 Funding Major Projects

In order to develop and sustain these and other major projects, we needed to raise substantial funds every year. We are fortunate to have a wide range of possible funding sources in the UK, ranging from Government grants and the Lottery to grant making trusts and foundations. However, successfully applying for such grants is a complex task as each fund has their own priorities and often labyrinthine rules that have to be satisfied. If we were to expand, it was vital that we employed a skilled fundraiser who could tackle this minefield of paperwork and be successful.

Luckily a piece of serendipity helped us make this important step. Our Chief Executive, David Bridges decided to move back to his home in 2004 for personal reasons but offered to continue to work as Head of Fundraising, a task that could be done from a home office. I was fortunate to apply successfully for the vacant post and thus had the benefit not only of having David as a mentor in my early years as Chief Executive, but also of retaining his immense skills as a fundraiser. As the years have passed, we have expanded the fundraising team and it now includes two other fundraisers, one concentrating on appeals and individual donations, the other on Trusts. Thanks to their work, and Sam Ellis as Head of Regions, we have been able to expand our landscape scale projects and retain experienced regional and national teams. They are achieving a step-change in practical conservation and beginning to reverse the fortunes of numerous threatened species.

Over the years, we have also raised significant funds from various Corporate partners, as well as from the generosity of individuals. The first major partner was BP who funded a series of adverts for the Society in 1992 worth £50,000. They were followed by Land Rover in 1993–1995 and in 1997 these were eclipsed when we secured £115,000 from the chemical giant ICI. Their price was a high profile launch with the then Environment Minister John Gummer. We have subsequently worked with the insurance firm NFU Mutual and a series of book publishers who kindly donated royalties. In 2010 we embarked on our biggest partnership with the high street retailer Marks and Spencer, as part of their Plan A programme that aims to make them the greenest retailer in the world by 2015. The partnership involves receiving royalties from the sale of a number of butterfly-related products as well as giving advice on butterfly (and moth) friendly farming to their 10,000 producers and launching the big butterfly count to raise awareness amongst their customers. The partnership was launched by Sir David Attenborough at the Bath and West showground and the interview with him can be viewed on www.plana.marksandspencer/about/partnerships

6.16 Making Moths Count

There have been several attempts to start and run a national recording scheme for larger (macro) moths in the UK, but for one reason or another they had all failed. The task had simply been too large and complex, and funding had never been secure for long enough for any organisation to succeed. However, with the advent of new



Fig. 6.5 Dudley Cheesman, Sir David Attenborough and Maurice Avent (left to right) at the Royal Entomological Society, at the launch of the State of Britain's larger Moths Report, 2006. The Report showed for the first time the depth of the crisis facing moths, with two-thirds of common species declining. The report provided a spring board for the Society's largest ever project, Moths Count

identification guides, moth recording was becoming increasingly popular and it was becoming increasingly important that we had better information on a wider range of species, many of which we knew were changing their distributions rapidly.

We therefore embarked on our biggest ever project, to develop a National Moth Recording Scheme (Fig. 6.5) and collate the millions of records we knew were out there in the computers and notebooks of local recorders. After years of preparation, we applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a major grant to employ a team of people who could perform the task. The total cost of the project, which we called Moths Count, was over £1 million to which the Lottery contributed £806,000. The remainder came from contributions from Butterfly Conservation, the statutory conservation agencies and individual donors and companies.

The Moths Count project has been enormously successful and by 2010 had gathered over 11 million records from over 3,000 recorders, giving complete UK coverage of over 900 macro-moth species. These are available online via the Moths Count website. It has also run over 200 events, attended by over 3,500 people, and produced a range of colourful leaflets. The success of the project has been partly down to the dedicated staff on the project, led by Richard Fox, but also because of the enormous voluntary work by the 120 vice county recorders who co-ordinate and validate records from their areas. Without their help, it would be impossible to run such a large scheme with such a small central team. The dataset now assembled provides a unique resource for research and to identify conservation priorities. It will also be used to update a State of Britain's Moths report in 2012 to further raise awareness of the importance of moths and the need for their conservation.



Fig. 6.6 Maurice Avent, Sir David Attenborough and Martin Warren (left to right) outside the Natural History Museum, London, at the launch of Save Our Butterflies Week, July 2008

6.17 Publicising Butterflies and Moths

Raising awareness of butterflies and moths has been a crucial part of Butterfly Conservation's strategy for several decades (Fig. 6.6), both to influence the general public as well as land owners and policy makers. In the 1970s, coverage was sporadic, although major stories covered the Society and its work, often orchestrated by the Chairman, John Tatham, who operated from his home in Quorn in Leicestershire. Coverage was pushed to a higher level during the early 1990s, when the Society employed Gary Roberts as a part-time consultant to issue press releases and organise high profile events. When I started working for Butterfly Conservation in 1993, Gary and I embarked on a PR tour of Britain in a brand new Range Rover, courtesy of our sponsors, Land Rover. 'Butterfly Check' aimed to highlight the plight of 25 of our most threatened species. We followed this with the Woodlands Campaign over the following 3 years.

We employed our first full time Publicity Officer, Carmel Mallinson, in 2002 to begin issuing regular press releases and to handle the increasing number of media inquiries. In another piece of serendipity, when Carmel went on maternity leave in 2005 we were very fortunate to lure Lester Cowling out of retirement to fill the post. With a lifetime's experience in press and radio, Lester pushed our publicity onto an even higher level with his superbly crafted press releases, which turned even the

dullest stories into blockbusters. Lester continued with us when Carmel decided not to return from maternity leave and led a growing Publicity team which now consists of 2.5 staff.

In 2009, we finally let Lester reduce his hours to become editor of 'Butterfly', our in house magazine for members. He was replaced as senior Publicity Officer by Louise Keeling who has continued to manage an enormous workload and myriad press inquiries. The massive change that these colleagues have achieved is admirably demonstrated by our archive of press clippings. When I started it took 2 years to fill a book, now we need 3–4 books per year!

6.18 International Symposia

Butterfly Conservation's first International Symposium was organised by Andrew Pullin and held at Keele University in 1993. They have since been held at 3 yearly intervals and have become significant events on the Lepidoptera researcher's calendar. The Symposia have been a great meeting place for exchanging ideas and forging collaborations. The last Symposium was held in Reading in March 2010 on the topical theme of 2010 and beyond for Lepidoptera. Over 300 people attended, from over 20 countries. The Symposium was opened by Sir David Attenborough who gave a rousing speech in which he said that halting biodiversity loss was the coming decade's great challenge, on a par with getting a man on the moon in the 1960s. The Symposia have led to two books based on the proceedings, the first published by Chapman and Hall entitled 'The Ecology and Conservation of Butterflies' (Pullin 1995), the second from our most recent Symposium published by Springer entitled 'Lepidoptera Conservation a Changing World' (Dover et al. 2011).

6.19 Butterfly Conservation Europe

During the 1990s, we had become aware that the situation for butterflies and moths was just as dire in mainland Europe as it was in Britain and that many conservationists were looking to Butterfly Conservation to take a lead. The International Symposia had underlined this fact and many delegates urged BC to take more of a lead in Europe. So, in 2004, after some detailed discussions with Dutch Butterfly Conservation and other European colleagues, it was decided to form a separate umbrella organisation, Butterfly Conservation Europe. We decided to constitute this as a non-profit making organisation (Stichting) in the Netherlands as this required the minimum bureaucracy (and a lot less than running a UK charity!).

The founding Board members were myself, Theo Verstrael (De Vlinderstichting, Netherlands), Josef Settele (UFZ research station, Germany) and Dirk Maes (Institute for Nature Conservation, Belgium). We were joined by advisors Chris van Swaay and Irma Wynhof. We signed the documents in Wageningen on 16th



Fig. 6.7 The formal signing of BC Europe: Martin Warren and Josef Settele (*left to right*)

November 2004 (Fig. 6.7) and celebrated in the De Wereld Hotel where the peace treaty was signed at the end of the Second World War. A few years later the Board was completed with Martina Sasic (Croatia), Rudi Verovnik (Slovenia) and Miguel Munguira (Spain). Although the new organisation was run initially on a voluntary basis, we were immediately fortunate to have an offer of help from Sue Collins who had until recently been Policy Director with English Nature. She had been one of the architects of the EU Biodiversity Action Plan and offered to work with us on a voluntary basis, promoting Lepidoptera and biodiversity in the corridors of the EU in Brussels.

BC Europe aimed to operate with the minimum of bureaucracy and established a set of Operating Principles for any Network Partners who wished to collaborate. The response was extremely positive and we held an Inaugural Meeting in 2007 in Laufen, Germany. Subsequently 34 organisations from 32 countries have joined the network, ranging from well organised Lepidoptera Societies to Research Institutes and small research groups based at Universities or Museums. We have successfully raised funds from the Dutch Government to conduct Prime Butterfly Area projects in eastern European countries such as Bulgaria and Serbia as well as a major development project in Turkey. We have also published and promoted a European Grassland Butterfly Indicator and Climate Change Indicator, based on the growing network of European butterfly transects that now covers 15 countries. In 2010 we secured our first EU grant to run the organisation, which enabled us to employ three part-time officers to develop and build the network. Future conferences are planned as well as an expansion of the BC Europe website and increased lobbying for better European policies to conserve Lepidoptera and biodiversity.

6.20 The Future

Butterfly Conservation has come a long way in the 42 years since its founders met in a small London flat. The chronology of its development is summarised in Appendix. It now has a turnover of over 3 million pounds, 82% of which is spent on conservation, as well as 58 staff and thousands of active volunteers. This success has been the result of a unique combination of amazing volunteer effort, expert staff, a lot of hard graft, a little serendipity, and a great deal of good will and enthusiasm from a wide range of partners and supporters. During its lifetime, the organisation has made many advances and established butterflies and moths as being worthy of conservation in their own right, but also as being valuable indicators of the health of the environment. Moreover, thanks to its efforts, several species are now beginning to recover after decades of decline and the requirements of many other species are well enough known to design targeted conservation programmes.

However, we are painfully aware that many species continue to decline and we need to redouble our efforts in coming years. In simplistic terms, we just need to scale up our efforts to apply them at a sufficiently large scale and sustain them for long enough to be effective. To this end we are developing a new 10 year strategy; a 2020 vision that aims for another period of major growth to secure the extra resources that are needed to expand and sustain our effort in the long term. Against a backdrop of economic recession and budget deficit, this is an enormous challenge, but we are determined to do all we can to achieve our aim of saving butterflies and moths, as a vital contribution to conserving biodiversity.

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Appendix: Butterfly Conservation Timeline

1968	7th March – British Butterfly Conservation Society (BBCS) registered as a charity, membership £1. Thomas Frankland was appointed as first Chairman 5th April – Society inaugurated and announced in Observer newspaper Sir Peter Scott becomes first President First newsheet published 1st October – (2 sides of foolscap paper)
1969	Robert and Rosemary Goodden help run society from their offices at Worldwide Butterflies
1970	Possible extinction of Large Blue in Britain is reported
1971	John Tatham takes over as Chairman
1972	BBCS News goes from A4 to A5 format Habitat Survey Scheme started and 25 forms returned

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- 1973 Six species listed as endangered: Large Tortoiseshell, Black Hairstreak, Chequered Skipper, Silver Spotted Skipper, Large Heath (Southern Race) and Heath Fritillary
- 1974 AGM in London attended by 20 people
Balance Sheet shows income of £501 and expenditure of £643
- 1977 BBCS News includes first article on climate change and its effects on butterflies
Membership reaches 940
- 1978 Tenth Anniversary Celebration at Worldwide Butterflies
- 1979 First local group formed in July in West Midlands
Membership reaches 1,100
Large Blue becomes extinct in Britain
- 1980 News contains first black & white photos
London Branch formed and other Branches planned
- 1981 Post Office butterfly stamps painted by Gordon Beningfield issued 13th May
First reserve agreements with Forestry Commission on two small areas in Somerset
- 1982 Wildlife & Countryside Act protects Large Blue, Chequered Skipper, Heath Fritillary and Swallowtail
- 1984 WWF announces over 20 Butterfly Projects to be funded by Associated Tyre Service
- 1985 Sir Peter Scott attends AGM
- 1986 First nature reserve purchased at Monkwood, jointly with Worcestershire Nature Trust
First coloured front cover on News
- 1987 First two booklets produced “Gardening for Butterflies” & “Butterflies of the Southern Chalk Downlands”
- 1990 Gordon Beningfield becomes President on the death of Sir Peter Scott
Andrew Phillips appointed as Director to become first paid member of staff
First funding partnership with Inoven (pharmaceutical company)
Butterfly Line – phone line of sightings started by Nick Bowles
- 1991 Harold Hughes takes over as chairman
New logo introduced
Membership reaches 4,000
- 1992 Society receives £1 million endowment from Vincent Wildlife Trust
BP sponsors Education Pack and series of adverts
First colour photos in magazine
Membership reaches 6,000
- 1993 Head Office established in Shakespeare House, Dedham, Essex
Staff are Debra Scullion, Karen Corley, Ken Ulrich, Liz Bywater
Andrew Phillips resigns as Director
Dr Martin Warren appointed as first Conservation Officer
First International Symposium held at Keele
Membership reaches 9,000
- 1994 New Life for Old Woods campaign sponsored by Land Rover
First A4 issue of News
- 1995 First year of Butterflies for the New Millennium recording project, run by Jim Asher
Action for Butterflies started, funded by Nature Conservancy Council, Dr Nigel Bourn appointed
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- 1996 Coppice for Butterflies Challenge grant scheme announced by Forestry Commission
- 1997 BC Scotland Office opened in Edinburgh
Biodiversity partnership with ICI to save Large Blue and Pearl-bordered Fritillary
Second International Symposium at Warwick
- 1998 Butterfly Conservation garden at Chelsea Flower Show wins gold award
- 1999 Sir David Attenborough becomes President after death of Gordon Beningfield
Stephen Jeffcoate takes over as Chairman and David Bridges appointed first Chief Executive
Regional Action Plans launched at House of Commons with Michael Meacher MP
Action for Moths project started with two Moth Conservation Officers
- 2000 Third International Symposium held at Oxford
First annual National Moth Night
Head Office moved to Manor Yard, Wareham, Dorset. Julie Williams, Georgie Laing and others appointed to Finance Team
- 2001 Head Office opened by Alan Titchmarsh on 27th September
Millennium Atlas of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland published
First Regional Officer, Dr Sam Ellis, appointed in England
- 2003 Dudley Cheesman takes over as Chairman and Dr Martin Warren as Chief Executive
Fourth International Symposium held in Lancaster
- 2004 First landscape scale projects started in south-west England
Butterfly Conservation Europe formed as an umbrella body to co-ordinate action across the continent
Prime Butterfly Areas of Europe published
- 2005 Fifth International Symposium held in Southampton, attended by over 300 people
£573K grant awarded to acquire Prees Heath, Shropshire
- 2006 State of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland published
Re-introduced Large Blues reach 10,000 adults on 20 sites
Inaugural meeting of BC Europe held in Laufen, attended by 50 delegates from over 30 countries
- 2007 Moths Count launched with £820,000 grant from Lottery
Butterflies adopted as Biodiversity Indicators by UK government
- 2008 40th anniversary celebrations held, led by Sir David Attenborough
40th appeal raises over £110,000
Maurice Avent takes over as Chairman
- 2009 Distribution maps for macro-moths available for the first time on Moths Count website
Match Pot appeal raises c. £100,000 to develop landscape scale projects
- 2010 Fifth International Symposium held at Reading University attended by over 300 delegates
Membership reaches c. 15,000
Major partnership launched with high street retailer Marks and Spencer
10,000 people participate in the big butterfly count in last week of July
First atlas published of over 900 UK macro-moths
New Red List of European butterflies published by IUCN and BC Europe
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