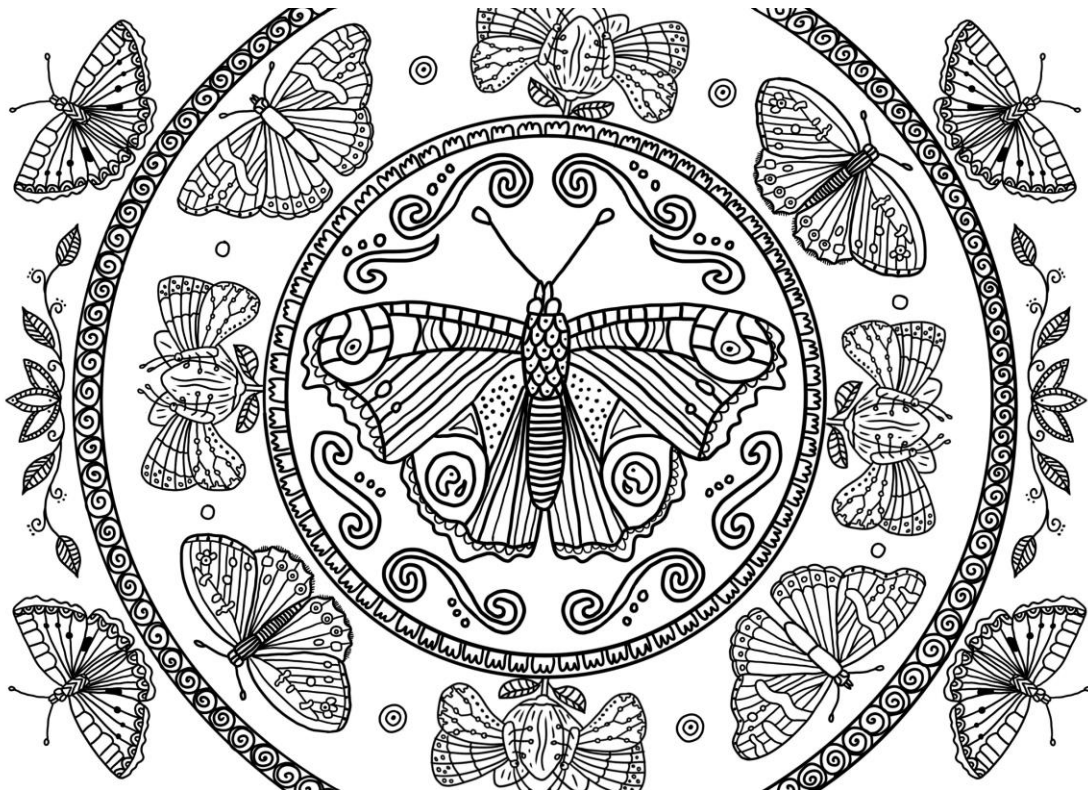


Progress report 4 (Dec 2020)

Rising to new challenges

Lessons in lockdown

By March 2020 the project had delivered 29 primary school or pre-school lessons, giving 630 children two points of contact with us and, with a full school's diary, we looked set to build on these successes. The pandemic has, however, curtailed our ability to deliver education face to face. However, with every problem comes an opportunity. As news broke that schools were closing we launched our "Butterflies for Hope" colouring competition via Butterfly Conservation's social media. A downloadable template of native butterflies - with the dual objectives of a) mindfulness and b) educating children as to butterfly appearances. The competition attracted a high volume of entries in three age categories with the winners decided by Chris Packham and Megan McCubbin on their 9 a.m. lockdown social media show "The Self-Isolating Bird Club". Project officer Matt Brierley subsequently recorded and edited a five-minute piece on Spring butterfly identification which broadcast to an audience of 30k+ via the Self-isolating Bird Club.



As the nation rose to the challenge of staying at home, new online engagement opportunities began to appear. In Bristol a Facebook group named “Assembly!” was created whose raison d’être was grounded in mental health, bringing a diverse community of people together - including parents and children - giving them an uplifting and motivating start to another day in lockdown. Matt’s assembly focused on Spring butterflies and encouraged people to get outside and count butterflies using Butterfly Conservation’s app, iRecord Butterflies.

With face-to-face lessons impossible, making our taught resources digitally accessible to a wide audience became our next priority. Matt’s kitchen turned into an impromptu studio as Matt recorded *An Introduction to Butterflies, Moths and their Caterpillars* (complete with lockdown haircut!). Polly Phillpot - Education Officer in Scotland - did similarly for our second lesson, *Survival Tricks of Butterflies and Moths*. Today our digital lessons have been emailed to our partner schools in Gloucestershire, Bristol and Scotland; we’ve signposted new audiences to our education work by sharing them through our national social media channels; they’ve been circulated to all Butterfly Conservation branches; and they exist online as a permanent resource. Not only are they useful tools for teaching kids, they double as a training tool for education volunteers who can deliver the same lesson in a classroom environment as normality resumes.

You can watch our online lessons on youtube here:

[\(26\) An introduction to Butterflies, Moths and their Caterpillars - YouTube](#)

[\(26\) Survival Tricks of Butterflies and Moths - YouTube](#)



PROJECT OFFICER MATT BRIERLEY IN FULL FLOW DELIVERING MUNCHING CATERPILLARS LESSON 1

Since our face-to-face education work also includes live moth trap emptying, our Engagement Team also created ‘Top Traps’, an online show and tell comparing the best moths caught in our traps.

Thanks in no small part to Restore's support, Curlew Action had progressed a consultation into a GCSE in Natural History. Matt Brierley organised Butterfly Conservation's focus group, inputting into the consultation, and we excitingly await the evolution of the qualification.

As zoom calls became the new normal, Mencap invited Matt to deliver two live online sessions teaching children and adults with learning disabilities all about Lepidoptera. These proved to be an absolute highlight generating the most complex questions Matt has ever been asked in a 'classroom' environment. The lessons gave the students a fantastic focal point and they prepared for them in unique and unexpected ways, including photographing butterflies and rearing Painted Ladies. After lesson one they sent Matt butterfly poetry and an incredibly heartwarming thank you letter. It was inspirational to meet and help inspire such positive people who overcome challenges each day at a time when life had conspired to deliver us all a unique set of challenges.

Dear Matt,

Thank you for coming to talk to us. We have been looking for butterflies and moths. We found some gypsy moths. I wrote a haiku.

Anna



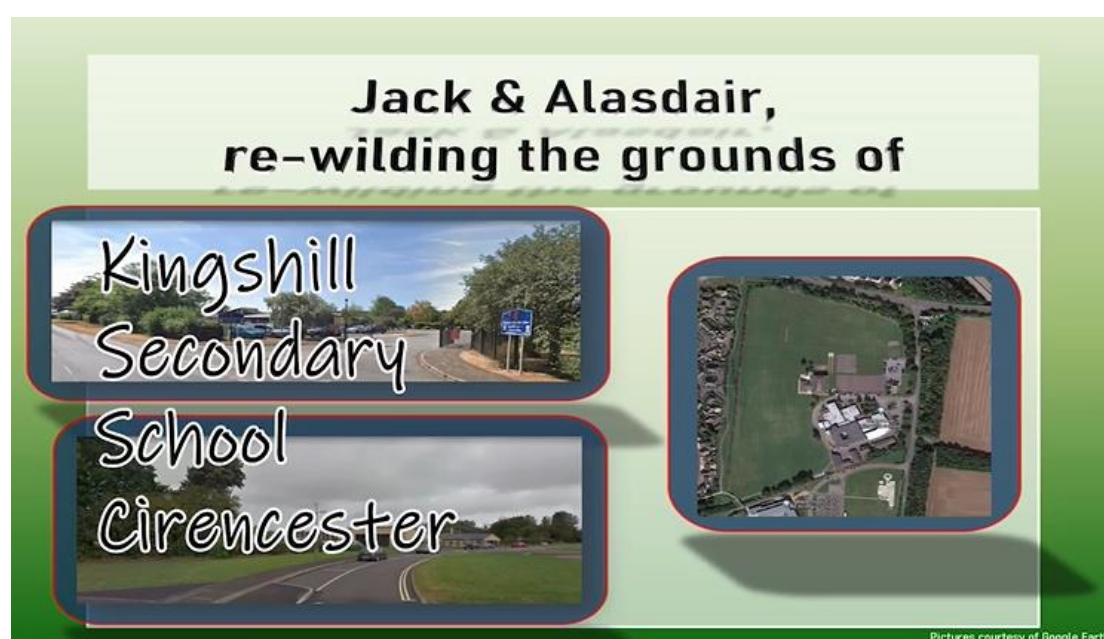
Butterflies and
moths,
Hiding, but there if
you look,
Hello - Gypsy moths!

Delivering events in the era of social distancing

Telling the story of one amazing secondary school

Education wasn't the only thing to transition online. With a nudge from two teenage students at Kingshill School, Cirencester - Jack Blamey and Alasdair Hills (with Matt Brierley and Back from the Brink Officer Jen Gilbert as technological backup), the Gloucestershire branch of Butterfly Conservation hosted their first ever online meeting. The best act? Jack and Alasdair themselves! They delivered the most fantastic reappraisal of the rewilding of their secondary school grounds which the Butterfly Effect had supported in Year 1. They also answered questions regarding the presupposition adults have that teenagers are disinterested in nature and how they really feel.

You can catch the presentation here: [\(1\) Watch | Facebook](#)



JACK AND ALASDAIR'S INSPIRATIONAL ZOOM REAPPRAISING THE REWILDING OF THEIR SCHOOL GROUNDS

Kingshill's rewilding has kindled an important flame for a group of students who will grow up to be the future custodians of nature. By involving the Cotswold AONB a significant area of the school grounds has been transitioned to meadow in 2020. Alasdair has also made the incredible rediscovery of the Rock-rose Pot Beetle on a site where it was considered extinct, a target 'Back from the Brink' species!

Butterfly Conservation's first ever Duke of Edinburgh Award students

Also on the meeting's bill were David and Karen Nicholls who, with branch and Butterfly Effect support, had delivered their first pilot year of a Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Butterfly Conservation have never before worked with Duke of Edinburgh volunteers. A resounding success, the scheme saw two students - Zander and Amelia - complete their Silver Award service section by joining winter work parties and creating, respectively, a podcast and branch magazine article about the

experience. This was a fantastic opportunity to inspire teenagers to a love of Lepidoptera, giving them practical conservation skills, whilst boosting the pairs of hands on work parties. With news out we were facilitating Duke of Edinburgh, branch volunteer Tricia Atkinson also enabled a Bronze student to complete her service by mapping cowslips on one of flagship Cotswold Reserves.

A huge thank you to everyone who facilitated this amazing scheme which we hope to grow in 2021.



SILVER SERVICE DUKE OF EDINBURGH VOLUNTEERS ZANDER AND AMELIA GET STUCK INTO HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Managing Urban Spaces for Butterflies

The final act was Matt delivering a workshop on “Managing Urban Spaces for Butterflies”. This was to be the catalyst for a very exciting wave of online workshops on the same topic for myriad local interest groups.

The workshop contains simple but vitally important messaging on the economics and ecological sense of cut-and-collect versus cutting without clearing clippings on amenity grassland, including road verges. It also promotes leaving standing crop for overwintering Lepidoptera and challenges the status quo of managing grassland to create hay, which only represents best practice in agricultural settings. Finally, the workshop has broken new ground by calculating that just ten foodplants can be planted for the caterpillars of the 28 species of UK butterfly we consider urban. Most recently the workshop was delivered twice across a single day as zoom webinars to

a national audience some 150-person strong, 85% of whom were industry professionals responsible for managing amenity grassland.

MANAGING URBAN SPACES FOR BUTTERFLIES

Matt Brierley



To further disseminate this best practice Matt took to Twitter, creating a thread which - present day - has had 372 Retweets, 77530 impressions, 5348 engagements and signposts people to a zoom recording of the webinar giving the messaging an important legacy.

Check out the Twitter thread here: <https://bit.ly/3gTdcDV>

Best of all, several third parties from across the UK have contacted Matt to let him know of direct shifts in habitat management as a consequence of engaging with this messaging.

In December Matt delivers “The 12 moths of Christmas” online, his final zoom outing for Butterfly Conservation, encouraging people to garden for moths and look after all their life cycle stages.

Bats and moths

Not all public events transitioned to online: in October we successfully ran four covid-safe bat and moth nights meeting real people in groups of six at Tortworth Arboretum. Treacle trees, moth traps and bat detectors unlocked the arboretum’s after-dark secrets.

Landscape-scale habitat change for butterflies

Traditional wildflower meadows are a Cotswold habitat of terrific Lepidopteran importance that have suffered a 97% loss in area nationally since 1930. Last year's turf cutting and seeding of 215m² at Prinknash Abbey (the combined effort of 97 hours of work by 11 volunteers) was rewarded by a fantastic riot of colour, pollen and nectar in 2020.

With the pandemic curtailing opportunities to plant small plots for pollinators in school grounds, it was a great result that the Butterfly Effect could facilitate a partnership between Butterfly Conservation, the Cotswold AONB's *Glorious Cotswold Grasslands Project* and the Prinknash Estate to grow our net area of meadow by a further 2075 m² from 215m² to 2290 m² this year.

This good work will continue since Buglife's latest UK wildlife corridor project 'Biodiversity Lines' has a 'line' that passes the created habitat. This is exactly what nature needs to recover - stepping stones across an otherwise hostile landscape.



**PHASE 1: 2019 TURF IS STRIPPED FROM GRASSED AREA
AT PRINKNASH**



PHASE 2: 2019 PREPARING THE NEW PRINKNASH MEADOWLAND FOR SOWING: PLOTS WERE DIVIDED TO MAKE SURE CORRECT QUANTITIES OF WILDFLOWER MIX WERE SOWN



PHASE 3: 2020 AND THE NEW MEADOW IS A RIOT OF COLOUR AND INSECT LIFE, ONE THIRD REMAINS STANDING THROUGHOUT WINTER BUCKING TRADITIONAL HAY MAKING ADVICE.



PHASE 4: VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH THE AONB AND PRINKNASH ESTATE 2020 TO BRING OUR TOTAL HABITAT AREA CREATED AT PRINKNASH TO 2290 m². NEW AREA CIRCLED IN RED.

Films to inspire a new wave of volunteers

A huge project win in 2020 has been the creation of four project films we anticipate will bring a new wave of volunteers to Butterfly Conservation. These films focus on three types of volunteering:

1. Practical volunteering on reserves
2. Surveying for butterflies [Fixed-route-transects; Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey, Garden Butterfly Survey]
3. Stand-alone film specific to the Garden Butterfly Survey
4. Volunteering at events

These films - which will be used as a volunteer recruitment tool by all local Butterfly Conservation branches - will also be officially released at strategic points throughout 2021 by Butterfly Conservation's media team. Key dates of release will include National Volunteers Week, National Mental Health Awareness Day and just after the Big Butterfly Count.

The films can be found here: 1. [\(25\) Save habitat. Save butterflies. Volunteer today. - YouTube](#) 2. [\(25\) Count butterflies. Save Butterflies. - YouTube](#) 3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_yWkUsgTC8 4. [\(25\) Talk about butterflies. Save butterflies. Volunteer today. - YouTube](#)

A new National events guide for when normality restores



Across Butterfly Conservation, the organisation's local branches are always keen to bolster attendance at events and volunteer "work parties" and needed a tool to reach new non-traditional audiences. Thanks to Restore, we've had a new slick 6-monthly events guide template designed. We've also recruited a number of volunteers who are happy to input branch events into the template to enable us to roll this idea out nationally. When 2021 brings normality, this events guide will be a key tool in engaging with new audiences and ultimately growing Butterfly Conservation's membership.

Final thoughts

2020 has been a year like no other. By embracing technology we have risen to a new, unprecedented challenges to make tangible differences for species and people's wellbeing. 2020 was the year nature offered us salvation. We are incredibly grateful to Restore for enabling a project that returns that favour, making an enormous difference locally and nationally, with a legacy that will last well into the future.

Matt Brierley, December 2020