

CBC AGM April 2019

Chairman's Report

I am happy to report another hugely successful year for CBC, aided by a glorious summer in 2018 which brought a fantastic season for our Lepidoptera, and indeed for much of our wildlife.

Our volunteers, once again are at the forefront of my report. To achieve the plethora of projects that CBC are currently engaged in, requires huge resources – namely those who cheerfully turn out time after time to propel our manifold projects to fruition. We must all be proud of the tremendous work in which they have been involved, over the whole County. I cannot thank and praise them adequately – well done all of you.

To give you an unbiased flavour of how successful these projects have been, I will now read to you a letter I received from Megan Lowe – one of the two officers employed by BC HO to manage the “All the Moor Butterflies” project, specifically focussing on the volunteer workers in this, the final year of the 3 year project.

“The All the Moor Butterflies project on Bodmin Moor has gone from strength to strength since it began in 2017. The team have been working with landowners to restore and increase priority habitat for fritillary butterflies, whilst making new discoveries, and raising awareness within the local community. The project has been a great success so far, but this success would not have been possible without all of the hard-working, dedicated volunteers, and especially not without our brilliant volunteer coordinator, Jo Poland.

Jo's passion for Lepidoptera and enthusiasm for involving people with the work of Butterfly Conservation has encouraged 84 volunteers to get involved with the ATMB project so far, giving the equivalent of 1,500 hours of their time (or 188 days) to the butterflies and moths of Bodmin Moor. Even on her days off Jo invites volunteers to volunteer with her, always looking for ways to involve people and to increase both her own and others knowledge and experience. She has helped enthuse the local community of St Brevard, who are fortunate enough to find three threatened fritillary species within their parish. And thanks to a handful of key volunteers in the community, the village now have their very own wildlife and conservation group who will continue to work alongside CBC and will be a great help in securing the future for the special wildlife found here.

The biggest achievement to date?! Through their thorough searches across often tough terrain, Jo and the volunteers have helped double the number of known Marsh Fritillary colonies on the Moor in just two years; highlighting to Butterfly Conservation and others the significant importance of this landscape. Furthermore, they have restored suitable habitat for both Marsh Fritillary and Pearl-bordered Fritillary to further increase their chances of survival.” Megan Lowe.

Our decision some 4 years back to engage a self-employed part-time contractor to act as Volunteer Co-ordinator was a first for us, and a first for any branch of Butterfly Conservation UK. Without doubt, this decision has provided the most beneficial outcome for Cornwall's Lepidoptera since the inception of the Branch. Such has been our success with this project that Head Office is now promoting our idea to other Branches – suggesting they contact CBC for help and advice to get them started.

This ongoing success reminds me of the time that I joined Butterfly Conservation, some ten or eleven years ago, and my experiences of the Committee meetings which I attended, before being elected as Chairman in 2011. At that time, there were just 2 committee meetings per year, and these meetings often went on until close to midnight. The committee was very knowledgeable and committed to Lepidoptera, but little was actually achieved in the field – it was mostly a talking shop.

Now, just a few years later we have a minimum of four meetings per annum, and numerous other sub-committee meetings to deal with the huge amount of work generated by our close involvement with BC HO and other conservation organisations. Our committee is comprised of mostly business people, academics and wildlife enthusiasts, bringing a huge diversity of knowledge and experience to the table.

I am extremely proud of their contributions to CBC, given freely and willingly. Thank you ,fellow committee members.

We are continuing to progress with a new and revised Cornwall Butterfly Atlas, it will be some time yet before publication, we will keep you informed of progress.

I am sorry to tell you that our wonderful secretary Alison Norris, has reluctantly decided to stand down from our Committee, due to ill health. Many thanks to Alison for her dedication, enthusiasm and hard work.

Very special thanks to Sue Allen who has stepped into the breach *pro tem*.

If anyone would be interested in helping us as secretary, please contact me following the AGM. We also have a vacancy for a Committee member if anyone is interested. Grateful thanks to Jerry Dennis who stood down earlier in the year.

Philip Hambly
Chairman CBC
April 2019