

Sir Peter Luff opens Grafton Wood in 1997 with then Trust Chairman Ron Stanton Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

On Sunday HLF Chair Sir Peter Luff will return to a Worcestershire nature reserve that he opened 20 years ago as an MP.

The purchase of Grafton Wood was made possible by two National Lottery grants of £61,350 awarded to Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation by HLF in 1997.

Since the joint purchase of the site, the reserve has reintroduced traditional coppice management, which creates wide glades suitable for flowers and insects, majorly boosting the population of a nationally threatened butterfly.

Flourishing flora and fauna

Just 10 miles from Worcester, the 56.3 hectare reserve is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, including over 40 species of birds, the rare Bechstein's bat and endangered brown hairstreak butterfly.

[quote=John Tilt, Volunteer Manager]"When we took over the management of the wood there were no brown hairstreaks in the wood itself; last year there were hundreds."[/quote]

John Tilt, volunteer manager for Grafton Wood since its purchase in 1997, said: "When we took over the management of the wood there were no brown hairstreaks in the wood itself; last year there were hundreds.

“Now 31 species of butterfly have been seen in the woodland and, as we are managing it for insects, it’s not surprising that we have good bat and bird populations.”

Ancient woodland

Historical records of Grafton Wood date back to 1086 and it originally formed an important part of the ancient royal Forest of Feckenham. Its boundaries survive almost intact and match those on a map from 1700.

[quote=Sir Peter Luff, HLF]"It just goes to show the incredible and lasting impact that National Lottery players’ money can make."[/quote]

In 2014 Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and and Butterfly Conservation bought an adjacent piece of woodland to complete their management of this ancient woodland and further protect wildlife in the area.

Thanks to National Lottery players

Over the last 20 years, HLF has invested nearly £200million in Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation reserves like this up and down the country.

Sir Peter Luff, Chair of HLF, said: “It just goes to show the incredible and lasting impact that National Lottery players’ money can make, not only in helping our wildlife to survive and thrive but also in reconnecting and engaging local people with their natural heritage.”