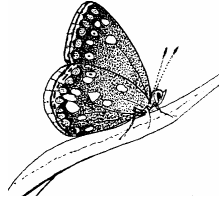
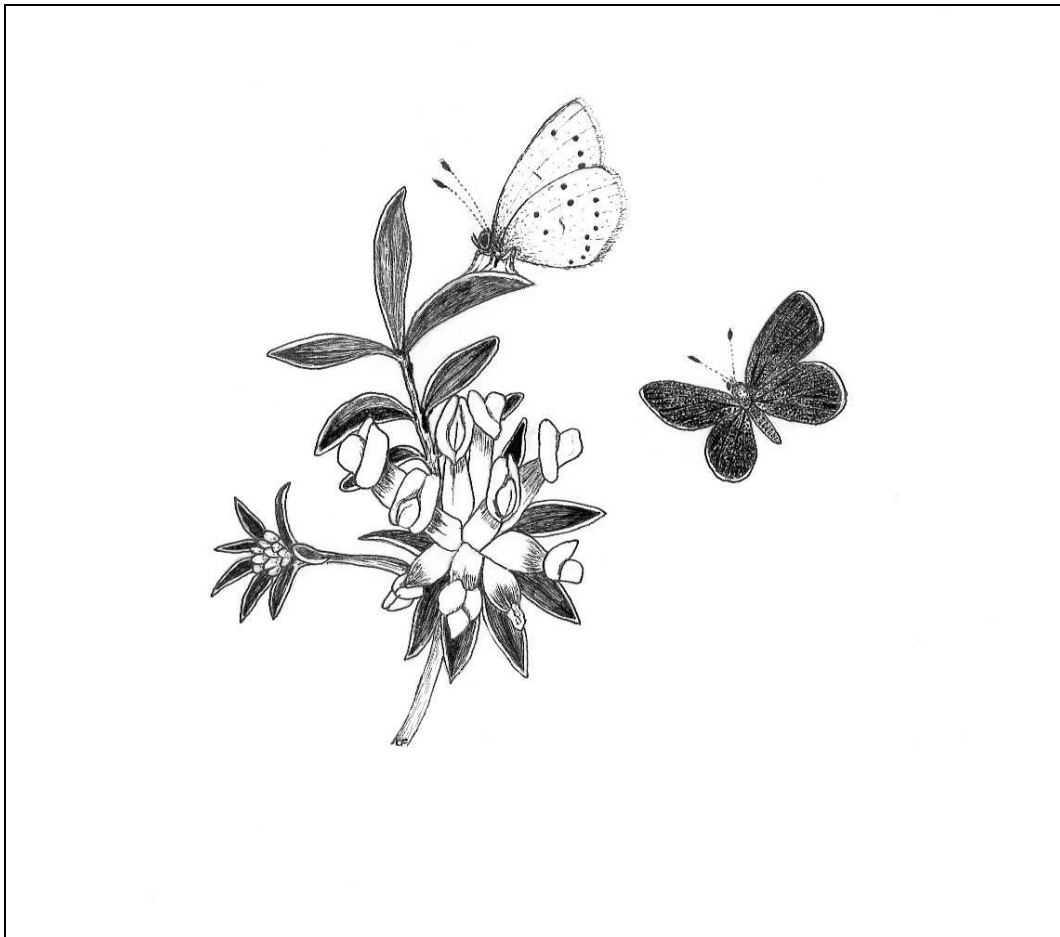


# On the spot

The newsletter of  
the Glasgow and  
South-West  
Scotland Branch  
of the British Butterfly  
Conservation Society



## November 2006



**Dedicated to saving wild butterflies, moths and their habitats**

THE BRITISH BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SOCIETY LTD.  
REGISTERED OFFICE: BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION, MANOR YARD, EAST LULWORTH, WAREHAM, BH20 5QP  
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND No. 2206468, REGISTERED CHARITY No. 254937

**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**GLASGOW AND SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND BRANCH  
OF  
BUTTERLY CONSERVATION**

**TO BE HELD IN THE HOPKIRK BUILDING OF THE GLASGOW BOTANIC GARDENS**

**SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2006  
1.30PM**

**TO BE FOLLOWED BY A PRESENTATION OF THE BRANCH ATLAS  
BUTTERFLIES OF SOUTH WEST SCOTLAND**

### **Chairman's report**

The publication of the Atlas was the big event for the year. The Branch area has 32 of the 33 species of Butterfly that occur in Scotland, or at least it did have when the Atlas was published. Within 3 months of the publication we had news that Small Skipper had been recorded in the Borders and a week later they were seen near to Dumfries. The prediction of the arrival of the Small Skipper in our branch area was postulated in the Atlas p103 in the chapter on Trends, it is gratifying that this prediction was proved correct but could the Small Skipper not have made it's journey a little sooner, in time to get here before the Atlas was published instead of being the first species to make our Atlas out of date!

Also, we have had good news of the other 'new' species to the region, Holly Blue. Good numbers of eggs and larvae have been seen both at Rockcliffe and Kipford. There was also a record of Holy Blue in east region in Edinburgh this year, so perhaps they are spreading. There have been more records of Comma in the region including one at Gatehouse of Fleet at the end of September, which I saw along with over 100 Red Admirals and even more Silver Y moths. Good numbers of migrants have been recorded this year, including Silver Y, Diamond Back, Humming-bird hawkmoth over a wide area and Scarce bordered straw moths, which were seen in two locations Stirlingshire and Dumbartonshire, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Clouded Yellow and Camberwell Beauty butterflies. Shortly before the Scarce bordered straw moths were seen in our branch area Anne and I had been at the South coast, near Kimmeridge bay in Dorset and we were privileged to witness the arrival of large numbers of migrants, Painted Lady, Red Admirals, Silver Y and Scarce bordered straw moths. The good weather that continued on into October brought us many other delightful views of Red Admirals, especially at Kipford on a warm sunny afternoon we encountered a large number nectaring on an Ivy hedge. Also shortly after a friend told us of an encounter with approximately 60 Clouded Yellows on the Devon coast in October there was a sighting of a single Clouded Yellow off the Ayrshire coast.

I have had many sightings of Peacock butterflies this year but a disappointingly low number of Small Tortoiseshells. One of the few sightings of the later species was an individual newly caught in a spider's web outside our home. Anne rescued it from the web and we spent some few minutes disentangling it from the silk of the web. To our delight it flew away vigorously upon release.

The branch now has a web site which contains lots of useful information on future events, sightings for both butterflies and moths. It also allows you to e-mail records to the recorders, or to contact members of the committee with requests for information. It also has links to other useful websites.

The address of the web site is [www.southwestscotland-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.southwestscotland-butterflies.org.uk)

As the branch continues to move into the electronic age if anyone wishes to have the newsletter in electronic format inform me.

**David Welham**

### **National Moth Night 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2006**

This year's event was held in Pru Williams's garden in Skelmorlie, North Ayrshire. The night started warm, but quickly got quite cool and by morning it was raining heavily. Despite these set backs we managed to trap a number of moth species:

Angle Shades  
Common Marbled Carpet  
Green-brindled Crescent

Lunar Underwing  
Oak Nycteoline  
Silver Y  
Yellow-line Quaker

It was a good Saturday evening and Sunday morning with a good chance to chat about mothing. 10 people attended ranging from 4 years old upwards.

A few other people had their traps out on this night too in Ayrshire and Inverclyde and between us we managed 25 species including a **Large Wainscot** in Kilmacalm, which is a new VC76 record. There were quite a number of migrants about too with **Vestal, Silver Y, Scarce Bordered Straw** and **Turnip Moth** all being recorded. One patch of Michaelmas Daisies at Hunterston produced over 200 Silver Ys, which was quite an amazing sight to see.

Although not a huge species list for our locality, it will add up to a good larger snapshot across the UK .

Many thanks for Pru's hospitality and those who submitted records to me.

Neil Gregory – Moth recorder VC75/76

Glasgow Mothing - 2006

We have run 2 public events in Glasgow this year to encourage people's interest in moths and have some fun too. One event was in the Botanical Gardens and the other in Pollok Park .

Over 20 people, including numerous children, came to the Botanics and saw the wide variety of moths caught at the light traps. 23 species were identified including **July Highflyer, Brimstone Moth** and newly resident **Svensson's Copper Underwing**.

10 people came to Pollok where we found 16 species including **Ear moth** and **Flame Carpet**. The cloud cover cleared so it went cold, but gave us a good show of shooting stars as a bonus.

If you would like to encourage moths into your garden then having a colourful display of flowers is ideal. Plants such as Verbena, Buddleia and Michaelmas Daisy are good nectar sources.

Other events will be held in 2007 so please do come along. See [www.southwestscotland-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.southwestscotland-butterflies.org.uk) for details.

Neil Gregory – moth recorder

## **Standing Room Only!**

Keith Futter and Richard Sutcliffe delivered a joint presentation of Glasgow and South West Scotland Branch Atlas to an enthralled audience at Wigton International Book Fair. The book "Butterflies of South West Scotland" was published at the end of May 2006 as a celebration of the local butterflies and to mark the first 20 years of the Branch. It was a good omen that when Keith, Richard and other committee members arrived to make preparations, an hour before the allocated time, to find that a few enthusiasts had already claimed their seat for the event.

The venue, The old Bank Book shop, had the capacity to seat 30 people, but it rapidly became apparent that the interest generated by the topic was going to exceed the capacity. Richard had prepared a continuous rolling slide show of pictures from the atlas to provide a focus of interest for the public while preparations were made for the main event. People entering were absorbed watching the full colour immaculate images of these sumptuous insects. Meanwhile the proprietors of Book Vault were busily securing other forms of seating, from stools to their office chairs to accommodate the ever growing audience.

The presentation was due to commence at 11 am but more people were continuing to arrive and soon there was standing room only. At 11:10am with the room literally packed out and 5 people standing at each of the two entrances to the room, the proprietors called "Full House!" and the main event began.

Keith gave an overview of the book, highlighting the different sections. Firstly the introduction which includes a short history of the Branch. Followed by a summary of the survey results of butterflies in the Branch area for the period 1995 to 2004, which are presented as an account of the 32 species, recorded during the period, their life cycle, identification and status, accompanied by abundance and distribution maps and beautifully illustrated with over 150 full colour photographs. Finally, there is a site guide for the best butterfly watching sites in the various regions of the Branch area, illustrated with photographs of various habitats.

Richard then gave a flavour of the survey results by highlighting the changing fortunes of some of the butterflies ranging from the common to the rare, and from resident to migrant species. The presentation was accompanied throughout by illustrations from the book of various habitats, distribution maps and more delightful butterflies.

Time passed rapidly and the presentation was concluded by a lively discussion and question and answer session hosted by Keith. This covered such topics as overwintering strategies, food plants, habitat loss, effects of climate change, current research, and moth identification and recording, during which the audience revealed themselves to be knowledgeable as well as enthusiastic.

The audience dispersed conversing happily about the information gained, the lovely photographs and how much they had enjoyed the presentation. This was more than could be said for David and myself who only got an occasional glimpse of the proceedings by peering round a doorpost. We do however hope to get a much better view at the presentation to be given after the AGM. I suggest you do not miss this opportunity either!

**Anne Welham**

### **Migrant Moths 2006**

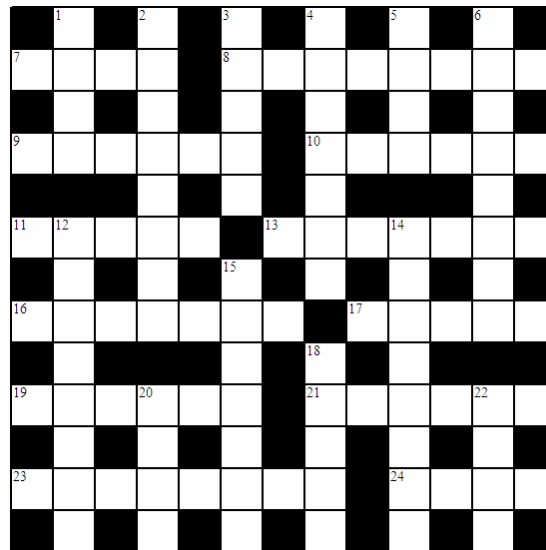
2006 has been a great year for migrant butterflies and moths. 12 species of migrant moth have been seen up to the end of September. A summary of the number of moth records is given below:

Moth	Number
Bordered Straw	1
Dark Sword-grass	2
Diamond-back Moth	49
Humming-bird Hawk-moth	13
Pearly Underwing	3
Convolvulus Hawk Moth	1
Rush Veneer	8
Rusty-dot Pearl	2
Scarce Bordered Straw	1
Silver Y	676
Small Mottled Willow	1
Turnip Moth	1
Vestal	4

The good warm weather has given rise to this large number of migrants enabling greater travel and more productive breeding further south where these moths have come from. There are still quite a number of species yet to be seen this year, such as Death's Heath Hawkmoth. Every record, even of Silver Y adds value to the overall picture.

Neil Gregory

Try your knowledge with this short crossword, answers at end of newsletter.



**Across**

- 7 – This Holly is sad
- 8 – Rare stem is mixed up at party
- 9 – Winter's wingless gender
- 10 – The Barred Minor is not at the edge
- 11 – Blair's order is a chocolate coffee
- 13 – Lob moss at flower
- 16 – My niche is on the roof
- 17 – Papillons de nuit
- 19 – A strange festival with no if, or butts
- 21 – Pearly parent
- 23 – In a mutual reshuffle after the summer
- 24 – Dee's backward glance at unusually located miner

**Down**

- 1 – Not quick to drink gin
- 2 – Cherubic moth
- 3 – Skipper sets sail for Harwich
- 4 – Peach Blossom has his lunch
- 5 – Dart to the beach
- 6 – Food time for the night insect
- 12 – We chose our assortment of reddish-browns
- 14 – Butterflies strangely cost this up north
- 15 – Quaker embarrassed about his stripe
- 18 – White or Blue or even Pearl-bordered
- 20 – The lover's knot is never false
- 22 – I saw this Hawkmoth

## **The Moths of Stirlingshire and West Perthshire 2001-2006**

The effects of climatic warming appears to have reached the moth populations of Stirlingshire and southern West Perthshire (vice counties 86 and 87) as multiple predominately southern species, apparently not previously recorded, are now caught in the area. The Red-necked Footman was first recorded in 2001 in the Loch Ardinning SWT reserve as caterpillars feeding on lichen covered fence posts. Now it is known to be widespread in the area and especially abundant at the edges of Sitka Spruce plantations. Like the Red-necked Footman, the Slender Brindle is a newcomer which according to available field guides occurs no further north than Dumfries and Galloway. However, it has now been recorded up to the highland fault at Marshall Lodge, Aberfoyle and is so abundant in Mugdock Country Park that 16 were recorded in one trap on one night. The spread of the Copper Underwing had already been noted as far north as Glasgow and in 2006 it was recorded for the first time in Stirlingshire. Among the micros, Firethorn Leafminer has probably been imported on Pyracantha. The beautiful micro, *Ypsolopha sequella*, may also have been imported on Field Maple which is not a common plant in the west of Scotland but has been planted in small numbers in the area where the moth is caught. Alternatively it may have moved north without help and it is interesting to speculate whether this results from an increased acceptance of Sycamore as an alternative food plant.

It is possible that the increased range of southern moths moving northwards will be matched by a change in the southern boundaries of the range of northern species. So far there is no evidence for this. For instance, the Saxon and Pretty Pinion are both still regularly caught as far south in the region as Mugdock Country Park.

Two special species occurring on Flanders Moss are the Argent and Sable and the Rannoch Brindled Beauty. Drainage has left the areas of raised bog of the moss highly fragmented. However, annual surveys of multiple fragments in both vice counties have demonstrated that both species occur wherever the habitat is suitable. This year the dark morph of the Great Brocade and the Scarce Silver Y were recorded on the moss so perhaps they both breed there

During 1996-98, Keith Bland discovered exit holes and pupal cases for the red data book species, the Welsh Clearwing, in a number of mature birches in the Trossachs. Attempts by the author to use a pheromone lure to confirm the presence of adults failed in 2005 but were successful at three sites in 2006.

2006 has also been a good year for migrants. Silver Y were abundant, Diamond-back Moth common and Hummingbird Hawk moth reported from multiple sites. Other records have included Pearly Underwing, Dark Swordgrass, Great Brocade of the pale migrant morph and Rush Veneer but the prize must go to Bob Dawson. He recorded at least two Bordered Straw that were feeding on valerian in his east Stirlingshire garden. He also regularly records Heart and Club another species which as far as I know has not been previously recorded in the county.

John Knowler

### **Excursion to Carman Muir, Renton, West Dunbartonshire**

On Sunday 15th May a joint field trip between our branch of Butterfly Conservation and the Glasgow Natural History Society was lead by Keith Futter at Carman Muir to look for Green Hairstreak butterflies.

Although the sun came out the wind was chilly at times. The cooling effect of the wind was reduced in a sheltered stream gully which is where most of the Green Hairstreaks were found. Several males were seen defending territories along the gully and frequent spiral flights between combatant males occurred.

Neil Gregory had brought a butterfly net along which enabled us to catch a Green Hairstreak and look at it in very fine detail. Without harming the insect we were also able

to see the dark brown inner wing surfaces, something which you do not see in the wild as the butterfly always rests with its wings shut. The butterfly was then released unharmed.

The habitat at Carman Muir is open heathland with occasional bog pools. The heathland is well grazed by sheep and fires on the moor are common. The resulting vegetation, including Blaeberry, the Green Hairstreak caterpillar food plant, is often stunted. Despite the Blaeberry being typically under 10cm tall it seems sufficient for the needs of the Green Hairstreak. In total we observed twenty or so Hairstreaks, many of which were in good condition without showing signs of wing damage due to ageing.

Other butterflies and moths seen during our walk included the Peacock, Orange Tip, Green-veined White, Common Heath Moth, Brown Silver Line, Emperor Moth and the caterpillars of the Drinker Moth and Garden Tiger.

Throughout the walk two Cuckoos were frequently seen and heard and a large Brown Hare was another welcome sight. Other interesting natural history observations included a Water Scorpion, Large Red Damselfly, Round-leaved Sundew, Common Butterwort and Marsh Lousewort.

Overall the trip was successful and the ten people that attended were rewarded with fine views of Green Hairstreaks at close range in their natural habitat.

### **Visit to Tainish National Nature Reserve, Argyll 30/05/05**

The bank holiday weather was unusually sunny so I took a trip to the Tainish National Nature Reserve (NR725834) to see the Marsh Fritillaries. I had not been to the reserve since June 1992. The car park has improved since then but the track leading to the reserve is still full of potholes.

From the Car Park I then followed the main woodland trail (W1 and W2 on the excellent leaflet provided at the Car Park) to the coastal paths where most of the Marsh Fritillaries can be found. The walk along the woodland trail is very pleasant with constant bird song in the background. Birds seen included Redstart, Grasshopper Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Buzzard, Hooded Crow, Lesser Redpoll, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Cuckoo and the ubiquitous Chaffinch. I am not surprised the birds do well at Tainish as there is plenty of food for them. Along the woodland trail I encountered many Geometrid Moth caterpillars hanging from tree branches on silk threads. On closer inspection there were actually thousands of caterpillars. Caterpillars on virtually every leaf. Take a closer look and suddenly you see that some of the Oak trees have been completely defoliated by the caterpillars. The Hazel, Alder and Birch are also getting a hammering from the caterpillars.

Along the woodland trail there was also an abundance of Large Red Damselflies, several Four Spotted Chaser Dragonflies and the occasional Specked Wood and Green-veined White.

Further along the woodland trail, by the SNH National Nature Reserve buildings you go through a gate, walk across a small field and continue along the coastal path. The best place to see the Marsh Fritillaries is beyond the C1 marker but before the C2 marker on the trail. The pockets of marshy grassland and scrub on the right (north-west) side of the main path support the Fritillaries. The habitat is quite sensitive to trampling so it is best to return to the main path once the butterflies have been seen. During my visit 15+ Fritillaries were seen in a relatively small area. An unexpected surprise was the sight of a single mature Marsh Fritillary caterpillar feeding on the leaf of the Devilsbit Scabious. The 30th May is quite late to see a mature caterpillar so it may have been parasitized or if not it could mean that the flight season will be extended this year. I also found 7 Green Hairstreaks in a small colony at the same location as the Marsh Fritillaries. The scrub surrounding pockets of marshy grassland provides wind shelter and local hot spots which the butterflies seem to favour.

It is worth continuing along the main coastal path to marker C3 to see the marine life in the clear water. I found the Black Brittle Stars particularly interesting to watch. Along the north-west coastal edge there are many sea shells to be seen including fine specimens of



the Golden Carpet Shell, Chequered Carpet Shell, Large Sunset Shell and Common Saddle Oyster.

Although the visit took place on a bank holiday there were very few visitors and along the coast it was blissfully quiet, in a magnificent location, which provided a total escape from the humdrum of city life.

**Keith Futter**

## **Ringlets, Chimney Sweeper Moths and thunderstorms - field trip to Balloch Castle Country Park, 2nd July 2006**

Despite a thunderstorm and heavy rain an hour before the field trip to Balloch Castle Country Park one brave person joined myself & Susan to look for Ringlets and Chimney Sweeper moths. Fortunately, as we set off at 2pm to examine an area of tall grassland near the Castle the weather improved a little and stopped raining. After a few minutes we found several Peacock caterpillars on a patch of Stinging Nettles, which provided a good photographic opportunity. Although it was overcast and fairly cool we found several Ringlet butterflies, the occasional Meadow Brown and a good number of Chimney Sweeper Moths. The species rich grassland at Balloch contains an unusually high density of Pignut, the caterpillar food plant of the Chimney Sweeper Moth. On a sunny day in July several hundred of the moths can be seen at this site as they congregate around patches of White Clover to nectar. We also found many Greater Butterfly Orchids and Common Spotted Orchids so even during a dull day it is still possible to enjoy a field trip at this site and see butterflies and other wildlife. This site is one of the recommended locations described in our Atlas to see butterflies in Dunbartonshire.

Keith Futter

### **Branch Atlas for South West Scotland**

**This years big event was the publication of the branch atlas do not miss out on getting your copy! Copies will be available at the AGM ( it will soon be Christmas and it will make an excellent present!)**

**Butterflies of South West Scotland** - an Atlas of their Distribution  
by the Glasgow & SW Scotland branch of Butterfly Conservation

ISBN 1 902831 95 0 Price £12.99 hardback, 160 pages, colour throughout

also available from Argyll Publishing [www.argyllpublishing.com](http://www.argyllpublishing.com) and good bookshops.

Fully illustrated with over 150 colour photographs this new book summarises the results of a survey of butterflies undertaken in the Glasgow branch area during the ten year period, 1995-2004. The area of coverage is Dumfries & Galloway, Ayrshire, Greater Glasgow, Dunbartonshire, Stirlingshire and Argyll & the Isles.

Each of the 32 species recorded during the survey is described in detail with an accompanying distribution and abundance map. There is an informative site guide providing locations where all the species can be seen. Other sections of the book include a commentary on the importance of wild flowers and garden flowers as nectar sources to Scottish butterflies and a section on trends, including the impact

of climate change.

The book was produced to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Glasgow & South West Scotland branch of Butterfly Conservation and as a thank you to all the recorders that contributed records during the ten year survey. Proceeds of the sale of the book will help Butterfly Conservation.

**Keith Futter**

### **Help our Butterflies to Survive**

Gardens are playing an increasingly important role in helping the survival of our butterflies. As more and more natural habitat is lost to roads, housing, industrial developments and intensive methods of agriculture and forestry the flower rich meadows, woods and hedgerows where once butterflies flew in peace and tranquillity are being devoured at an alarming rate. There are still some wildlife havens in nature reserves and small areas of land that provide nectar rich flowers, grasses and trees to sustain butterflies but they are dwindling in size and the habitat is very fragmented. Good wildlife friendly gardens can form vital links between these areas of natural habitat.

The garden must be thought about and planned to be of value to butterflies. There are many parks, estates and beautiful gardens that can still be a dessert to a butterfly. Vast areas of closely mown lawn, conifers, assiduously weeded flower beds planted with sterile hybrids, double blossoms without a wildflower in sight all carefully tended, disease free with the use of pesticides and herbicides is a barren wasteland to a butterfly!

This does not mean that a garden has to be a wilderness, full of long grass, nettles, thistles, weeds and garden pests. Nor that it can not contain plants such as conifers, rhododendrons, camellias, roses, lilies and gladioli, if it is to be butterfly friendly. However it is vital to provide nectar rich sources in sunny, sheltered positions from spring through to the end of autumn, that are well watered and cared for organically. The whole of the garden does not need to be dedicated to caring for wildlife; a good sized border in full sun, lavishly planted with appropriate plants will provide a nectar bar that will act as re-fuelling station to sustain butterflies on their journey. Also if you do not have a garden there are some great nectar plants such as wallflowers, marigolds, nasturtiums and sedums that do well in containers or even a window box.

If on the other hand you wish to make your garden into a butterfly paradise you will also be benefiting lots of other wildlife, such as moths, bumblebees and hoverflies, lacewings and ladybirds, to name just a few. So whatever you are able to do to help our butterflies to survive, do it now! For as Alan Titchmarsh pointed out "There is something deeply satisfying knowing that you've made a difference to butterfly's life."

So here are 4 steps to creating a butterfly haven of your own.

1. Provide nectar rich planting.
2. Provide caterpillar food plants.
3. Go wild.

#### 4. Be environmentally friendly.

Let us now look a little closer at these steps;-

The provision of nectar rich planting is vital to the survival of adult butterflies. So here are some tips on providing the best supply of nectar.

- Butterflies need nectar supplies in sunny sheltered positions as they need a certain amount of warmth before they can become active and fly. (Find out where the sunny spots are in your garden in spring, summer and autumn and plant accordingly).
- Butterflies need nectar from spring through to the end of autumn. It is of particular importance to provide nectar in spring for those butterflies just out of hibernation and in autumn some species need to build up reserves in order to hibernate to survive the winter. (See the list below for suggestions of plants for each season, sow annuals at 2 week intervals during April and May to prolong the flowering period, deadhead plants to extend flower production, prune some buddleia hard in March to produce strong new growth and later flowering.
- 'Old fashioned' varieties of flowers often have more nectar than new hybrids.
- Keep plants well watered in dry weather, plants suffering drought produce very little nectar. (If there is a hose pipe ban collect rain water in a water butt and use 'grey' water that has been used in the kitchen or bathroom.)
- Plants need to be strong and healthy to provide good nectar supplies, plant them in the correct soil type and feed with a light dressing of organic fertiliser, but not too much or they will not flower well, they will concentrate on producing leaves instead.
- Make the 'invitation' to the butterflies obvious! Just like any other guest you invite to dine, the table has to look inviting. Cottage garden type planting, with nectar plants in big groups close together gives butterflies a clear signal.
- If using tubs or containers put them close together, in a warm sunny spot and cram in as many nectar producing flowers as possible. Keep well watered! Change from spring to summer plants as season changes.
- Don't use pesticides - you will kill the butterflies. (Dilute common household detergent, used as a spray is effective against green and black fly ) (If you garden organically, natural predators such as ladybirds and hoverflies will eventually achieve a balance. As Bob Flowerdew advises "Most plants can loose maybe a quarter of their leaf area without sustaining serious damage if they are well established and growing happily"). Help keep pests away from your vegetables by using netting, or plant nasturtiums amongst cabbages and marigolds with beans.

#### Nectar Plants for each Season

Spring	Aubretia
Spring	Primrose
Spring	Wallflowers
Spring	Sweet Rocket
Spring	Honesty
Spring	Forget-me-not
Spring	Buddleia globosa
Summer	Dahlia Coltness Hybrids
Summer	Candytuft

Summer	Hyssop
Summer	Lavender
Summer	Phlox
Summer	Marigold single flowered (French and African)
Summer	Lavender
Summer	Buddleia davididi
Summer	Hebe
Summer	Phlomis
Summer	Marjoram
Autumn	Buddleia weyeriana
Autumn	Ivy
Autumn	Sedum spectabile (ice plant)
Autumn	Michaelmas daisy
Autumn	Verbena Bonariensis
Autumn	Hebe
Autumn	Cimicifuga
Autumn	Eupatorium (Hemp agrimony)

This is not an exhaustive list, there are many more flowers that provide nectar, most single open blossoms are good. If you wish to attract 'Moths' to your garden, plants that are night scented include;

Buddleia, Honeysuckle, Nicotiana (tobacco plant), Night scented stock, Evening primrose, Sallow.

If butterflies can not find suitable caterpillar food plants they will not lay eggs and no caterpillars means there will not be any butterflies. Therefore if you can, try to provide some caterpillar food plants. Each species of butterfly has to lay its eggs on or near a specific larval food plant. The plants that caterpillars eat are usually not the plants from which the adults collect nectar. So here are some tips on supplying some caterpillar food plants;-

- Common Bird's-foot trefoil is the larval food plant of the Common blue.
- Plant Nasturtium for Large and Small Whites (a tastier alternative to your cabbages).
- Cuckooflower and Garlic Mustard are larval food plants for the Green-veined White and the Orange -Tip.
- Holly and Ivy are larval food plants for the Holly Blue (These are rare in Scotland and so far have only been found in the Dumfries and Galloway area recently, but who knows they may spread.)
- Sheep's Sorrel is the food plant for the Small Copper.
- Thistle is the food plant for the Painted Lady.
- Stinging nettles are the food plant for Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Red Admiral and Comma butterflies. (Nettles need to be grown in the sun and some should be cut back in June/July to provide new growth on which Tortoiseshell butterflies lay their eggs, others use spring nettles.) You can limit the spread of Stinging Nettles by growing them in a large container sunk into the ground.
- Try to buy genuine UK wildflower plants or seed. Suppliers are listed by Flora Locale at [www.floralocale.org](http://www.floralocale.org)

Letting an area of your garden go wild may encourage other butterflies to breed in your garden. If common grasses are left to grow tall, they are the food plants of butterflies such as Meadow Brown, Wall, Ringlet and Speckled wood. So here are some tips to help if you decide to go wild:-

- If you can devote an area to go wild, you can leave it to do just that on its own. Simply allow the grasses and wild flowers already present to grow.
- If you wish, supplement them with extra seeds or plug plants
- Cut the 'hay' in Late Sept/early Oct and rake off the cuttings but leave in a corner nearby to allow any butterfly eggs, hibernating caterpillars or chrysalis a chance of survival.

Being environmentally friendly involves things you do or do not do in your garden that also have a wider impact. So here are a few tips on being an environmentally friendly gardener;-

- Avoid the use of harmful chemicals. (They kill not only butterflies and moths and other pollinating insects, but also ladybirds and ground beetles and spiders - the natural enemies of your garden pests. Use alternative methods - see above under providing nectar rich planting).
- Use peat free products (peat extraction destroys the habitat of several butterflies and moths as well as a wealth of other specialised plant and animal life.) many alternative products are available; also avoid using water worn limestone or other materials that form vital natural habitats.
- Use organic fertilisers from natural sources.
- Recycle your garden/kitchen waste into compost.

However much you are able to do to help our butterflies to survive you will feel great satisfaction every time you see a butterfly visit your garden.

**Anne Welham**



## **Committee 2005/2006**

### **Chairman**

David Welham  
3 Lamberton Road  
Stewarton, Ayrshire  
KA3 3HU  
01560 484760  
david.welham@btinternet.com

### **Butterfly Recorder**

Richard Sutcliffe  
68, Rowan Drive  
Bearsden, Glasgow  
0141 942 1563  
family@sutcliffe1989.freemove.co.uk

### **Moth Officer/Butterfly recorder for Dumfries and Galloway and Argyll**

Jessie McKay  
Carsfad, Dalry, Castle Douglas  
Dumfries and Galloway  
DG7 3ST  
01644 432048  
meikle@mackay97.freemove.co.uk

### **Moth Officer/Webmaster**

Neil Gregory  
32 Oldhall Drive  
Kilmacollm, Inverclyde  
PA13 4RF  
01505 874275  
droitwich@btinternet.com

### **Committee Member**

Mrs Pru Williams  
Seacroft  
Eglington terrace  
Skelmorlie  
PA17 5ER

### **Other Contacts**

#### **Moth Recorder –VC45/76**

Neil Gregory

#### **Moth Recorder – VC86/87/99**

John Knowler  
3 Balfours Street  
Milngavie, Glasgow  
G62 8HW  
john.knowler@ntlworld.com

### **Secretary**

Mrs Anne Welham  
3 Lamberton Road  
Stewarton, Ayrshire  
KA3 3HU  
01560 484760  
Anne.welham1@btinternet.com

### **Treasurer**

Dr. John Rostron  
14 Durham Road South  
Portobello, Edinburgh  
EH15 3PD  
0131 669 5664

### **Conservation Officer (Dumfries & Galloway)**

Jim McCleary  
Beechmont  
Cunninghame Terrace  
Newton Stewart, Dumfries and Galloway  
DG8 6DY  
01671 402412

### **RAP Officer**

Dr Keith Futter  
81 Oxhill Place  
Dumbarton  
G82 4EX  
01389 767998

### **Committee Member**

Jo Davis  
5A Killermont View  
Glasgow  
G20 0TZ

### **Moth Recorder –VC77**

Nick Holding  
Blawbare, Closeburn  
Thornhill  
DG3 5HL  
claybuch@aol.com

### **Moth Recorder-VC72-74/98/100-103**

Jessie McKay

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