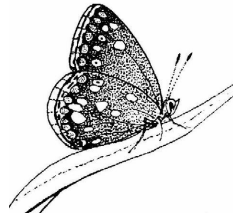


# On the spot

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



## Spring 2006

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



Red Admiral and Merveille du Jour © Neil Gregory 2005, Kilmacolm

# BRANCH ATLAS

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION.  
COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE.  
REGISTERED OFFICE: BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION, MANOR YARD, EAST LULWORTH, WAREHAM, BH20 5QP  
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND No. 2206468, REGISTERED CHARITY No. 254937

## Editor's Note

Welcome to this spring edition of On-The-Spot. It has been some while since the previous newsletter due to various illnesses on the committee. Hopefully this is the start of a new phase for the branch and a chance to engage in more butterfly and moth activities. The highlight of this edition is the news about the impending butterfly atlas – a landmark publication for the branch of excellent quality and value, as well as an important recording reflection and tool.

There have been various changes in the region, such as the appointment of new Vice County Moth Recorders for VC75, 76, 77 and 99. The website too has proved a valuable tool and will be developed as contributions come in. Your ideas are very welcome.

Finally as I write this I've seen my first Small Tortoiseshell and have recorded at least 10 species of adult moth as well as a few larva. Roll on spring! – NMG

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## Butterflies of South West Scotland an Atlas of their Distribution

by Keith Futter, Richard Sutcliffe, David Welham, Anne Welham, A. John Rostron, Jessie MacKay, Neil Gregory, Jim McCleary, T. Norman Tait, Jim Black and Paul Kirkland

At the AGM held in 2004 the Committee of the branch announced that it was going to produce an Atlas of the Butterflies found in South West Scotland.

Keith has co-ordinated the project and the good news is that the Atlas has been completed and is due for publication at the end of May/early June. With a discounted offer to branch members we are sure you will want to buy a copy and some of the proceeds from the sale will go to our branch.

The book summarises the results of the survey of butterflies in our branch area undertaken during 1995-2004. Many of you will have contributed records and every person that has provided records is acknowledged in the book by name.

There are colour maps for each of the 32 species showing distribution and abundance. Both Richard and Neil have put in a tremendous amount of effort in producing the maps.

The book is however more than a series of maps. It is beautifully illustrated with over 150 colour photographs showing all the butterflies recorded in our branch area. Some of the images are of butterflies in flight thanks to the photographic skill of Norman Tait. The book is worth getting just to see these, especially the images of the Dark Green Fritillary and Grayling in flight.

The introduction includes a comprehensive history of our branch which will appeal to

members who have just joined our branch and to members who have been with us for several years. The branch is now over 20 years old and one of the main reasons for producing the atlas was to celebrate the first 20 years and highlight what we have accomplished.

There is also a site guide in the book which describes many of the best places to see butterflies in our branch area. It is separated into the regions - Dumfries & Galloway, Ayrshire, Greater Glasgow, Dunbartonshire, Stirlingshire and Argyll & the Isles.

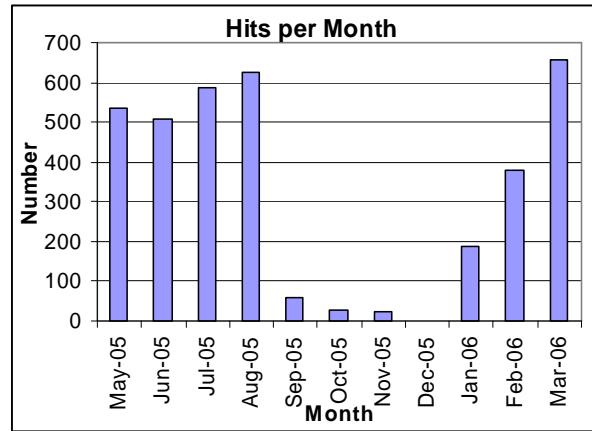
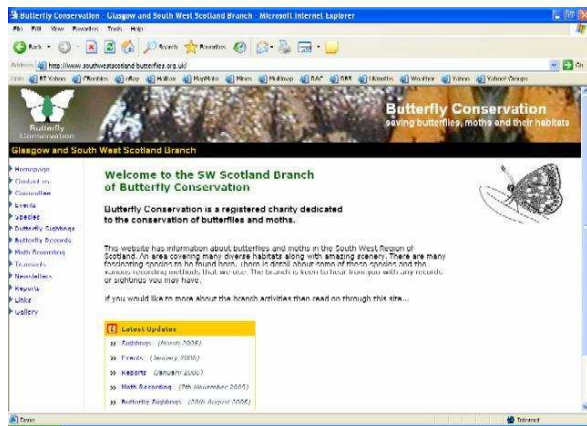
The book will be published by Argyll Publishing, a local publisher based in Glendaruel. Funding for the project has been very successful. We have been awarded grants from the Lottery Awards for All, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Blodwen Lloyd Binns Bequest (administered by the Glasgow Naturalists Trust) and the Royal Bank of Scotland to assist with the publication.

We hope you will enjoy the book which will be hardback and 160 pages.

Publication price will be £12.99. Members of the Glasgow Branch can order direct from the publisher at a discounted price of £8.00 + £1.99 P&P. Total price of £9.99.

Cheques should be made payable to Argyll Publishing and sent to Argyll Publishing, Glendaruel, Argyll PA22 3AE.

## Branch Website



Our branch website has been up and running for a while now. It has up-to-date information about branch events, first and last sightings for butterflies, committee contacts and other useful information. The website is for the branch and its members so please do contact the Webmaster with your suggestions and contributions.

[www.SouthWestScotland-Butterflies.org.uk](http://www.SouthWestScotland-Butterflies.org.uk)

Up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 we had 3587 hits to the website. This includes various search engines cataloguing the site too. Monthly detail is shown in the chart to the right.

## Butterfly Records and Highlights from 2005

Despite the fact I have still not entered all of the 2005 records onto our database, I am able to give a general overview of the most interesting of last year's records.

**Large Skipper:** A new 10km square record for in NX17 (Jim Black)

**Dingy Skipper:** We had very few records – mainly from around Dalbeattie area, but it was good to get a record from Luce Bay, NX2650, (Jim Black) as it not recorded from there for many years

**Clouded Yellows:** We received just 3 records – what may have been two sightings of the same individual at Rascarrel Bay NX8048 on 25 July (Anna White and George & Val Wallace); and one from Ardmore Point NS3178 on 4 September (Tommy Daniels)

**Small White:** New 10km square records for in NM82, NN40 and NX99

**Orange-tip:** They are continuing to spread. They have now reached the far west of Mull at NM34 (Lynne Farrell). Also found in NN22 for the first time (Georgina Dalton)

**Green Hairstreaks:** It was a really good year and we received many more records than usual for this species, with several new sites, including 3 new 10km square records from Islay, NR37 (Richard & Barbara Mearns); Argyll, NM80 (John Halliday) and Dumfries & Galloway, NT00 (Andy Riches). It was also good to get confirmation that the species is still present in some of the southern Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway sites where it hadn't been seen for a few years

**Small Copper:** A new 10km square record in NS59 (Richard Sutcliffe)

**Holly Blue:** Seen again in the Rockcliffe area. John Maxwell, who had 4 in his garden in Rockcliffe, NX8553 in 2004 had another there on 24 April 2005. Just a short distance away in Kippford, singles were also recorded on 14 May, NX8354 (David Welham) and 10 June NX8356, (Anna White)

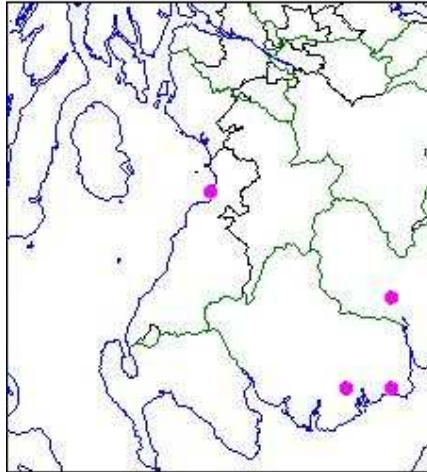
**Small Tortoiseshell:** New 10km square for NM81 (Georgina Dalton)

**Red Admiral:** There were a reasonable numbers of this regular migrant. At least one was still flying in Glasgow on 9 November!

**Painted Lady:** A scattering of records

**Peacock:** Another good year, and continued to spread north – especially in Highland Branch's area

**Comma:** This species is finally starting to turn up on a regular basis in our area. We had 8 records in 2005: Baron's Haugh RSPB Reserve, Motherwell NS7555, 1 August (Alastair W Reid); Barburgh Mill, Auldgirth NX9088, 9 August (Jack Swan); Prestwick NS3424, 2 September (Stan Fisher); Lockerbie NY1381, 3 September (R.G. Stevens) and just outside Lockerbie NY1581, 6 September (Keir Mottram). The prize must go to Anna White, who saw one at Newbiebarns, Annan NY1864; one at Powfoot NY1465; and two at Mersehead NX9256 all on 14 October!



Comma records 2005

Digital Map Data © Bartholomew



© R G Stevens, Lockerbie 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2005

**Speckled Wood:** There have been new 10km square records for NM95 (Jean Hagley) and NN22 (Georgina Dalton)

**Wall Brown:** First record for NX15 since 1983 (Jim Black)

**Meadow Brown:** New 10km square record for NX49 (Jim Black)

**Ringlet:** Lots of new sites around Glasgow and new 10km square for NS55 (Keith Watson). First record for NX49 since 1994 (Jim Black)

**Large Heath:** A survey organised by Roy Sexton added some useful records for the Stirling area, including new 10km square records for NN80, NS59 and NS79

You will see from the above that there are quite a few new 10km records. What can you do this year? Thanks to all of those who sent in records.

Richard Sutcliffe

### This year's Challenge

A couple of years ago I walked from Milngavie along the River Allander to Dobbies Garden Centre. It was a walk I had always meant to do, but had never got round to. I didn't see anything particularly unusual in the butterfly line – some Green-veined Whites, Peacocks, a Small Tortoiseshell and a Small Copper, but I did manage to add some records for four 1km squares right on my doorstep. I had enjoyed the walk and I also got a superb view of a kingfisher! I hadn't realised that there were kingfishers so close to my home!

This year's recording challenge: How about going to a new place sometime this year and recording what butterflies (and moths) you

see? It could be somewhere miles away in a different part of Scotland, or it could be 10 minutes walk away – along that footpath you've always meant to explore... Get out your maps and start planning now. Then on the first sunny free day you have, give it a go!

Any records you get as a result could be the ones that help fill those 'empty squares' on the maps.

Please keep on recording in your usual spots as well. Although we are about to publish our branch atlas, it doesn't mean that we will stop recording. Many species have changed their distributions and status a lot over the last few

years and we need to continue monitoring them all.

Recording forms are available from me, or can be downloaded straight off the Branch's website.

Richard Sutcliffe

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### **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.

Keith Futter

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### **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.

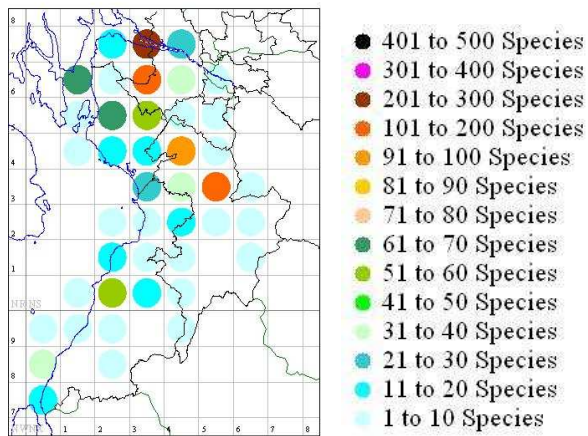
Keith Futter

### Ayrshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire County Moth Recorder's Report, VC75/76

I have recently taken over as the county moth recorder for VC75 and VC76. This is an exciting prospect for me as I have been very interested in moths for quite a number of years. This past year a number of moth events have taken place and I've made quite a number of useful contacts too. Events have been run at the following places with the number of species seen indicated:

Place	Date	Species
Lochwinnoch	03/04	4
Clyde Muirshiel Country Park	04/06	9
Finlaystone Country Park	11/06	8
Lochwinnoch	01/07	42
Kelbourne Country Park	17/07	47
Glen Moss SSSI	23/07	41
Kelbourne Country Park	30/07	36

Overall 248 species were recorded in 2005, which included 3 migrants (Silver Y, Humming-bird Hawk and Diamond-back) and one National Notable (The Saxon). This compares to the 203 species I identified in my garden during 2005. These species represent 40% of the total species so far recorded in the area: 612. The major issue with these 612 species is that half the species come from literature without the backup of substantial records. On this basis I am very keen to acquire any historical records from any recorder. This includes for example an odd Chimney Sweeper or two that may be in people's notebooks from a butterfly recording walk. Unfortunately any records sent to the previous recorder cannot be traced!



To the left is a picture produced from MapMate® software indicating the species density over the area at 10km square resolution. The darker the grey, the more dense the species.

Please send your records to me (see contacts) via paper, phone, Excel, email or Mapmate (1vk).

Neil Gregory

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### **Moth recording in Lanarkshire, VC77**

Having only just taken over as county recorder for Lanarkshire, I can't give much of a report on 2005. One thing which is immediately apparent however is just how little recording has ever been done, especially in the south of the county although the north doesn't have a superabundance of records either. Even looking back at the distribution maps published in the early 1980s, there is hardly a record of a single Lanarkshire moth south of Carstairs. I do not however believe that Clydesdale is really a moth-free zone: indeed it is possibly one of the corridors used by those species which are extending their range northwards. By contrast, so far as species with a northerly distribution are concerned, some of them are at or near the southern limit of

their range in the Southern Uplands and it would again be interesting to know what is happening to them.

Glasgow too is in Lanarkshire for recording purposes. The database records that Large Yellow Underwing has been seen on Platform 13 of Central station, and Angle Shades in George Square, so there's no excuse for not keeping your eyes open as you saunter round the city. If anyone would like help with any aspect of moth recording in any part of Lanarkshire, then please do get in touch with me - either by email at [claybuch@aol.com](mailto:claybuch@aol.com), or you can write to me at Blawbare, Closeburn, Thornhill, DG3 5HL.

Nick Holding

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### **Committee Members**



There are currently various vacancies on the committee. We would welcome anybody would like to be a part of this active group. There are positions such as the newsletter editor who are very much in need. Please contact any member of the current committee if you wish to discuss this in some detail.

### **National Moth Night (and day) 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2006**

[www.nationalmothnight.info](http://www.nationalmothnight.info)

National Moth Night is an opportunity to participate in a UK-wide snap shot of the state of the moths on this date. It is organised to encourage and stimulate interest in moth recording and to target some nationally important species. These target species this year are Convolvulus Hawkmoth, Sword-

grass, Black-banded, Dusky-lemon and Pale-lemon Sallow.

Records are gratefully received for any moth seen on this date. Please submit all records via the county recorders for verification. These will then be submitted to the National Moth Night Records set for publication within the *Atropos* magazine.

## Events

Please bring appropriate footwear and clothing for these events and also a torch for night time. See our website ([www.SouthWestScotland-Butterflies.org.uk](http://www.SouthWestScotland-Butterflies.org.uk)) for more up-to-date information.

**Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 20:00 – Newshot Island, NS480703, Moth Trapping**  
**Contact:** Neil Gregory

**Saturday, 20th May - Oban, New Branch in Argyll?**

A meeting is being held to judge the interest and discuss the possibility of forming a local Argyll Butterfly Conservation Scotland branch. The day will also include an afternoon field trip to look for Chequered Skipper and Pearl-bordered Fritillary and short talks on Argyll's special butterflies and moths.  
**Contact:** Tom Prescott

**Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 11:00 – Torrs Warren, Dumfries & Galloway. Target – Dinky Skipper**  
**Contact:** Jim McCleary for details, 01671 402412

**Saturday, 27th May, 21:00 - Cornalees Bridge, Inverclyde - NS247722, Moth Trapping**  
Meet at visitors Centre for moth recording  
**Contact:** Neil Gregory

**Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 21:30 - Rouken Glen - NS547585, Moth Trapping**  
Meet at Garden Centre car park for moth recording  
**Contact:** Neil Gregory

**Saturday, 17th June - Isle of Mull, Butterfly Conservation Scotland**

**Introduction to Butterflies Workshops 2006**  
The following workshop is being hosted as part of the "Butterflies and Burnet Moths; A Recovery Programme for the Argyll Islands" project, part-funded by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund through Nadair 2. Focusing on Marsh Fritillary, Transparent and Slender Scotch Burnets. The workshop is free and everyone is welcome - no previous experience necessary. The workshop aims to provide information on recording and identification of all local butterflies whilst also focusing on key species. The workshops will be informative, informal and fun!  
For further details and to book a place please contact 0870 7706160, email: [tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org)

**Fri/Sat 30 June/1 July, 20:30-late on Friday and 10am on Saturday, Moth Night, Lochwinnoch RSPB visitors centre**

A great chance to learn more about moths and see what species are to be found in Lochwinnoch. We will begin with a slide show and then set up various moth traps and see what they attract. Come back in

the morning to see what has appeared overnight. In association with Butterfly Conservation.  
**Please book in advance. Cost £2/£1 adult/child non-members, half price for RSPB members**  
**Contact:** 01505 842663 or email [paula.baker@rspb.org.uk](mailto:paula.baker@rspb.org.uk) for more information

**Sunday, 2nd July, 14:00 - Balloch Castle Country Park, Dunbartonshire - NS390830**  
Target Species: Ringlet and Chimney Sweeper Moth in flower-rich meadow  
Meet in front of the Castle Visitor Centre at 14:00  
**Contact:** Keith Futter

**Saturday, 8th July, 21:30 - Clyde Muirshiel Country Park, Renfrewshire - NS312632**  
Meet at visitors centre for moth recording  
**Contact:** Neil Gregory

**Saturday, 29th July, 22:00 - Kelburn Country Centre, Ayrshire - NS216566**  
Meet at visitors centre for moth recording (entry fee)  
**Contact:** Kelburn Country Centre (01475 568 685)

**Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> August, 21:30 – Pollok Country Park, Glasgow – NS549619**  
Moth trapping with the countryside rangers. Meet at Pollok House.  
**Contact:** Neil Gregory

**Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> August, Finlaystone Country Park, Renfrewshire, Moths and Bats**  
For more details see: [www.finlaystone.co.uk](http://www.finlaystone.co.uk)  
**Contact:** Finlaystone Country Park, 01475-540505

**Friday, 25th August, 20:00 - Moths, Bats and Owls - Glasgow Botanic Gardens - NS569675**  
Meet at main gate. This highly popular event, now in its eighth year, offers participants an opportunity to join in the search for night time creatures that inhabit the Botanic Gardens led by local experts.

**Saturday, 23rd September, National Moth Night, 19:00 to 22:00 and Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September at 10:00**

Meet next to the Conference Centre in **Skelmorlie, Ayrshire**, NS195674 and you'll be directed to Pru William's house for an open garden evening. Discover more about moths and see the traps running. Traps to be opened the following morning. Please contact Pru Williams for more details and booking on 01475 520916

## Accounts

1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005

Income		Expenditure	
<b>Brought Forward from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005</b>		Fuel for branch generator	£13.14
Bank of Scotland	£239.45	“Touchdown-on-Line”, Horncastle annual payment	£50.00
Halifax	£2821.55	Branch Insurance	£16.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3061.00</b>	T. Norman Tait for digital image processing: 161x£10	£1610.00
<b>Subscriptions</b>	<b>£781.00</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£1689.26</b>
<b>Interest</b>			
Bank of Scotland	£12.19		
<b>Ordinary Donations</b>	<b>£20.00</b>		
<b>Grants towards Atlas Publication</b>			
Community Award from Royal Bank of Scotland	£250.00		
Glasgow Natural History Society	£750.00		
“Awards for All”	£5000.00		
T. Norman Tait	£1610.00	<b>Carried forward</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7610.00</b>	Bank of Scotland	£408.50
		Halifax	£9386.43
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£8423.19</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£9794.93</b>
<b>Total Income + Bank Balances</b>	<b>£11484.19</b>	<b>Total of Expenses and Bank Balances</b>	<b>£11484.19</b>

John Rostron – Treasurer



Diamond-backed Moth and December Moth – Neil Gregory ©2005

## Committee 2005/2006

### Chairman

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### Other Contacts

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

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