

## 30th December 2005

Lynn Fomison reports "On Wednesday 21st December a film crew from meridian TV came to Magdalen Hill Down to interview Lynn Fomison and Harold Makant from Defra about the wonderful access schemes under countryside stewardship.

Defra had decided it was just the right time to promote the range of opportunities that certain farmland affords for walking. Time to walk away the effects of over indulgence at Christmas and all that!

The directory of access to farmland can be seen at libraries, and is available to view in printed form.

The item was shown on Meridian from Southampton on Thursday 29th December. Unfortunately foggy conditions at the time of filming prevented the piece from illustrating the wonderful views from MHD!".

## 6th September 2005

Lynn Fomison reports "Many of you will know Nigel Spring from his years at The Kingcombe Centre. Nigel is just starting running work parties at Butterfly Conservation's new Alner's Gorse reserve which is near Lydlinch Common in Dorset. Any help Hampshire Members can give will be most appreciated". [Click here](#) to view a PDF File (89 KB) containing details of the work party.



If you do not have a PDF file reader, then click this image for a free download:

## 9th September 2005

130th Email Newsletter 09/09/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- Five Marsh Mallow Moth (*Hydraecia osseola*) were seen during a torchlight survey of a known site in East Kent on 28th August, with 20 seen there at MV light on 30th.
- A survey of Netted Carpet (*Eustroma reticulatum*) larvae in Cumbria last week produced mixed results, with improved counts at some sites but poor numbers at others.
- A Dingy Mocha (*Cyclophora pendularia*) larva was seen at a known site in Dorset on 7th September.
- Waved Carpet (*Hydrelia sylvata*) larvae have recently been found on sycamore and hazel.
- Common Fan-foot (*Pechipogo strigilata*) larvae have been seen recently at a known site in the West Midlands.
- Six Straw Belle (*Aspitates gilvaria*) were seen at a known site in East Kent on 31st August.
- Single Chalk Carpet (*Scotopteryx bipunctaria*) were seen at known sites in East Kent on 31st August and Dorset on 1st September.
- Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) larvae have been seen on birch at a known site in East Inverness-shire on 26th August and on Bog Myrtle at a new site in East Ross on 20th.
- Single Cousin German (*Protolampra sobrina*) were trapped at a known site in East Inverness-shire on 26th and 27th August.
- Ten Toadflax Brocade (*Calophasia lunula*) larvae were seen at a known site in East Suffolk on 27th August. Thirteen were counted at a known site in West Sussex recently, with 7 at another site.
- A single Square-spotted Clay (*Xestia rhomboidea*) was recorded at a known site in Surrey on 28th August.
- Finally we would like to welcome Kelly Thomas to the Moth Team. Kelly joins us from the Butterfly Conservation Wales office where she was Threatened Species Co-ordinator.

With best wishes

Tony Davis, Mark Parsons and Kelly Thomas

## 26th August 2005

129th Email Newsletter 26/08/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

First reports of the year have been received for several species, although some will have been on the wing for a while.

- Twenty eight Black-banded (*Polymixis xanthomista*) were seen at a known site in North Devon on 16th August.
- Also on 16th August, a single Scarce Blackneck (*Lygephila cracca*) was recorded at a known site in North Devon.
- A Dark Crimson Underwing (*Catocala sponsa*) was seen at a known site in South Hampshire on 17th August.
- A small Dingy Mocha (*Cyclophora pendularia*) larva, probably in its second or third instar, was seen at a known site in Dorset on 16th August.
- A single Cousin German (*Protolampra sobrina*) was trapped at MV light at a new site in Aberdeenshire on 13th August, with five at actinic light at a known site in the same county on the previous night.
- One White-spotted Pinion (*Cosmia diffinis*) was trapped at a site in Cambridgeshire on 16th August.
- Three Straw Belle (*Aspitates gilvaria*) were seen at a known site in Surrey on 16th August, including one in an area that was cleared of dense scrub by Moth Group volunteers last winter. Three more were seen at this site on 18th. At the other Surrey site, 20 were counted on 18th August. Two were seen at a known site in East Kent on 16th.
- Chalk Carpet (*Scotopteryx bipunctaria*) has been reported from two known sites in Surrey; a single on 6th August and two on 18th, and a known site in East Kent where two were seen on 18th.
- A single Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) in good condition was seen on the Northamptonshire transect on 17th August.
- An Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) larva was found on Bog Myrtle at a new site in East Sutherland on 19th August.
- Many Striped Lychnis (*Shargacucullia lychnitis*) larvae were found at a new site in South Hampshire on 9th August.
- Two Square-spotted Clay (*Xestia rhomboidea*) were seen at a new site in Cambridgeshire on 18th August. This species has also been recorded from a couple of new sites, but within the known range, in Buckinghamshire recently. Three were seen at a known site in North Yorkshire on 19th August, 5 were at a known site in East Suffolk on 12th and 4 at another known site in East Suffolk on 17th.
- Two second instar Toadflax Brocade (*Calophasia lunula*) larvae were found at a known site in East Suffolk on 16th August.
- Two White-line Snout (*Schrankia taenialis*) were seen at a known site in Monmouthshire on 20th August.
- A Buttoned Snout (*Hypena rostralis*) larva was found at a new site in South Hampshire on 8th August.

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 16th August 2005

128th Email Newsletter 16/08/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- Cousin German (*Protolampra sobrina*) is now flying. One was seen at a new site in Inverness-shire on 11th August, with another at a known site in Inverness-shire on the same night and another at the known site on the following night.

- Work as part of a Butterfly Conservation contract on Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) has produced some surprising results. Larvae have been found on *Salix* at two sites in the West Midlands. At one site it is estimated that 20% of all larvae are on *Salix*, more than on *Betula pubescens*. Larvae have also been found in dense shade and at heights of up to 5 metres on a 14 metre high birch. Elsewhere, 6 larvae were found on Bog Myrtle at a site in Sutherland on 30th July, 3 half grown larvae were found on the same foodplant in East Inverness on 1st August and 2 larvae were found at another site in Sutherland on 14th August.
- On 4th August, 3 White-spotted Pinion (*Cosmia diffinis*) were seen at a site in Bedfordshire near to a garden where single adults were caught in 2002 and 2003. This is the first evidence of a breeding population in the county since 1985.
- Chalk Carpet (*Scotopteryx bipunctaria*) has been reported from 5 sites in Dorset between 29th July and 7th August, from two sites in East Kent on 5th August and from a known site in Surrey on 14th August.
- Eight Straw Belle (*Aspitates gilvaria*) were seen at a site in East Kent on 5th August (split equally between two 10km squares) and one was seen at a known site in Surrey on 14th August.
- A final instar Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (*Hemaris tityus*) larva was seen at a known site in Inverness-shire on 11th August.
- A Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) was seen on the Northamptonshire transect on 4th August and two were seen at a known site in Dorset on 14th.
- Nineteen Striped Lychnis (*Shargacucullia lychnitis*) larvae were seen in Buckinghamshire on 14th August.
- Approximately 30 Square-spotted Clay (*Xestia rhomboidea*) were seen at a known site in Northants on 5th August, many feeding on thistles and Burdock. Three were seen at a known site in Scotland on 6th August, including one feeding on Ragwort and another on Burdock. On the same night, 4 were seen at a known site in West Sussex, including 3 feeding on Hemp Agrimony. Three were seen at a new site in Argyll on 12th August and one was seen in Suffolk on 5th August. In Cambridgeshire singles were seen at a known site on 31st July and 4th & 5th August, 17 were seen at another known site on 5th August with another 10 there on 7th, and one was at another site in the county on 6th.
- Five Waved Carpet (*Hydrelia sylvata*) were seen at a known site in West Sussex on 6th August.

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 5th August 2005

127th Email Newsletter 05/08/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- Several species have emerged since the last newsletter. Two Straw Belle (*Aspitates gilvaria*) were seen at a known site in East Kent on 22nd July. The Surrey populations usually emerge a little later and 2 at a known site on 2nd August, with one at the other known site on the same day, were probably the first to emerge. This is backed up by a count of 8 at the second Surrey site on 4th.
- A single White-spotted Pinion (*Cosmia diffinis*) was trapped at a known site in Huntingdonshire on 2nd August.
- A total of 24 Square-spotted Clay (*Xestia rhomboidea*) were trapped at a new site in North Yorkshire on 28th July. Two were seen at a new site in Huntingdonshire on 2nd August and one was at a known site in East Suffolk on 1st.
- Two Barberry Carpet (*Pareulype berberata*) were seen at a known site in Wiltshire on 2nd August.
- A single second brood Drab Looper (*Minoa murinata*) was seen at a known site in North Hampshire on 1st August.
- A thorough survey of Striped Lychnis (*Shargacucullia lychnitis*) in Buckinghamshire produced excellent results. Nearly 5,000 larvae were found on about 35,000 Dark Mullein plants during the last 10 days of July. Elsewhere, one was found at a new site in Berkshire on 29th July and one at another site in the county on 31st. In Hampshire two new sites were discovered on 22nd July, one had 5 second instar larvae and the other had 13 first and second instar larvae. The larvae in the Chilterns appear to be more advanced than those in Hampshire / Sussex.

- Three adult Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) were found at a new site in Galloway on the remarkably late date of 25th July. Single larvae were found at two new sites in Sutherland on 17th and 31st July.
- Six Chalk Carpet (*Scotopteryx bipunctaria*) were seen at a known site in East Kent on 22nd July. One was found in Bedfordshire on 31st July and was the first county record since 1987. This species was also seen at two known sites in Surrey and one in East Kent on 2nd August.
- A Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) was seen at a new site in Dorset on 25th July and one was seen at a known site in Lincolnshire on 29th.
- Lunar Yellow Underwing (*Noctua orbona*) were seen at known sites in East Suffolk on 27th July (one), 28th July (two) and 4th August (one).
- Single Toadflax Brocade (*Calophasia lunula*) were trapped at light at known sites in East Kent on 1st August and East Suffolk on 29th July.
- Eight Double Line (*Mythimna turca*) were trapped at a new site in Glamorgan on 21st July.
- A Waved Carpet (*Hydrelia sylvata*) was seen at a known site in Carmarthenshire on 22nd July and 3 were at a known site in West Sussex on 3rd August.
- A White-line Snout (*Schrankia taenialis*) was reported from Dorset on 28th July.
- A Buttoned Snout (*Hypena rostralis*) larva was found in a brief search of a known site in Surrey on 3rd August.

With best wishes  
Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 21st July 2005

126th Email Newsletter 21/07/2005  
Dear Moth Recorders

- At least 6 Clay Fanfoot (*Paracolax tristalis*) were seen at a known site in East Sussex on 15th July.
- Three Olive Crescent (*Trisatales emortualis*) were trapped at a known site in East Sussex on 15th July, with one there and another in a nearby garden on the following night. Two were trapped at a new site in Essex on 14th.
- Four Speckled Footman (*Coscinia cribraria*) were seen at a known site in Dorset on 15th July. This is the best ever total for the site and is hopefully a reflection of the management works that have been carried out here in recent years.
- Three Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) were seen at a new site in East Inverness on the late date of 9th July.
- At least four Scarce Merveille du Jour (*Moma alpium*) were seen at a known site in East Sussex on 15th July.
- A Striped Lychnis (*Shargacucullia lychnitis*) was trapped at a new site in West Sussex on 10th July. Larvae were found at a new site in Oxfordshire on 15th; most were small but one was nearly full grown.
- Two small Buttoned Snout (*Hypena rostralis*) larvae were found at a new site in Herefordshire on 14th July.
- A Waved Carpet (*Hydrelia sylvata*) was seen at a new site in East Sussex on 16th July. Four were seen at a known site in East Sussex on the previous night.
- Two Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) in pristine condition were seen on the Northamptonshire transect. These are thought to be from a partial second generation.
- A total of 101 Silky Wave (*Idaea dilutaria*) were counted at a known site in Glamorgan on 9th July.
- Chalk Carpet (*Scotopteryx bipunctaria*) was seen at three sites in Glamorgan on 9th July. Singles were seen at two sites and a count of 25 was made at the third site.
- Double Line (*Mythimna turca*) was reported from at least three sites in Glamorgan on 9th July, with a count of 27 at a further site in the county on 10th. One was reported from a known site in Devon on 12th.
- A White-line Snout (*Schrankia taenialis*) was seen at a known site in East Ssussex on 15th July and

another was at a known site in Somerset the following night.

- Two White Spot (*Hadena albimacula*) were trapped at a known site in East Kent on 14th July.

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 15th July 2005

125th Email Newsletter 15/07/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- The first White-line Snout (*Schrankia taenialis*) have been reported. One was trapped at a new site in North Devon on 9th July and 12 were caught by lamping at a known site in Monmouthshire on 13th.
- Five Striped Lychhis (*Shargacucullia lychnitis*) larvae were found during a brief search of a known site in Hampshire on 14th July. Three were 1st instar and two were 2nd instar.
- Double Line (*Mythimna turca*) was found at two new sites on National Moth Night. One was caught at a site in London (with a further singleton in a different part of the site on 11th ) and five were trapped at a new site in North Devon. Further records from new sites have come from North Devon (45 on 2nd July and one at a different site on 6th July) and Monmouthshire (1 on 28th June). Records from known sites on National Moth Night were from Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire (both of singles).
- Chalk Carpet (*Scotopteryx bipunctaria*) was recorded at 5 known sites in Dorset on National Moth Night. One in North Somerset on 1st July was an unusual local record. Four were seen at a known site in Dorset on 6th July, 1 was seen in Surrey on 10th, and on 14th four were seen in Cambridgeshire and six in a known area of East Sussex.
- An incredible total of 82 Dark Bordered Beauty (*Epione vespertaria*) were seen during a Butterfly Conservation workshop at a known site in Yorkshire. Records included three new areas of the site.
- Six Olive Crescent (*Trisatales emortualis*) were trapped at a known site in North Essex on 11th July and 2 were seen at a coastal site in East Sussex on 13th.
- Six Ashworth's Rustic (*Xestia ashworthii*) were seen at a known site in North Wales on 10th July.
- Large numbers of Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) larvae have been found in the West Midlands. Records include 19 at one site on 14th, with 5 at another site on the same day and 2 at another site on 11th. One larva was found at a known site in Wiltshire on 7th July.
- Single Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (*Hemaris tityus*) larvae have been seen at two new sites in Wiltshire, on 7th and 12th July.
- A Scarce Merveille du Jour (*Moma alpium*) was reported from a new site in East Kent on 2nd July.
- A Heart Moth (*Dicycla oo*) was seen in a new area of a known site in Berkshire on 14th July.
- Four very worn Pale Shining Brown (*Polia bombycina*) were trapped at a known site in Wiltshire on 10th July.
- Waved Carpet (*Hydrelia sylvata*) has been seen at new sites in Monmouthshire (1 on 8th), Somerset (1 on 9th) and Pembrokeshire (1 on 11th). Records from known sites have been from Pembrokeshire (1 on 5th), Carmarthenshire (6 on 6th, 12 at a second site on 9th and 2 at a third site on 9th) and West Sussex (singles on 12th and 14th).
- A Lunar Yellow Underwing (*Noctua orbona*) was trapped at a known site in East Suffolk on 3rd July.
- A single Toadflax Brocade (*Calophasia lunula*) larva was found in a known area of East Suffolk on 29th June but searches elsewhere in the vicinity were all negative. If the number of records of this species received this year are indicative of its current status, there appears to have been a very significant decline this year.

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 4th July 2005

124th Email Newsletter 04/07/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- Chalk Carpet (*Scotopteryx bipunctaria*) has emerged in time for National Moth Night. One was seen at a known site in Dorset on 3rd July.
- Two male Dark Bordered Beauty (*Epione vespertaria*) were seen at a known site in Scotland on 29th June.
- Twelve Silky Wave (*Idaea dilutaria*) were counted in a standardised survey of the known site in North Wales. This count is significantly lower than in recent years.
- A single Ashworth's Rustic (*Xestia ashworthii*) was trapped at a known site in Merioneth on 29th June. Recorders visiting north Wales for this species are encouraged to investigate new sites as most recent records have been from a small number of sites, despite the perception that it is widespread in suitable habitat.
- Following the record of an adult Barberry Carpet (*Pareulype berberata*) in a garden MV trap in Oxfordshire last August, 12 larvae were found nearby on 24th June. Larvae have also been reported from 6 sites in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire on 29th.
- A presumed immigrant Olive Crescent (*Trisatales emortualis*) was trapped at a coastal site in East Kent on 24th June.
- A Pale Shining Brown (*Polia bombycina*) was trapped in a garden in Norfolk on 29th June. Combined with the record from Norfolk in 2004 and the absence of records from traditional migrant hotspots, this suggests that there may be an overlooked extant population in that county. On the same night 22 were seen at a known site in Wiltshire, with another 10 nearby. Mark / recapture studies at the Wiltshire site indicate that the population there is quite small.
- Six Heart Moth (*Dicycla oo*) were trapped at a known site in Surrey on 30th June and 12 were seen at a known site in Northants on 1st July.
- Up to six Double Line (*Mythimna turca*) have been caught per night at a garden trap in Ceredigion. One was trapped on the Isles of Scilly on 28th June – a new species for the islands. One was seen at a new site in Carmarthen on 30th June.
- Ten adults and 20 larvae (1st – 3rd instar) of the Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (*Hemaris tityus*) were seen at a known site in Devon on 29th June. On the same day, approximately 30 larvae were seen in a known area in Wiltshire. One adult was seen at a known site in Wiltshire on 26th June and two eggs and two larvae were found at the same site.
- Four Toadflax Brocade (*Calophasia lunula*) larvae were found at a site in London (Vice County Middlesex) on 22nd June but none could be found at the London site (VC West Kent) where they were found last year. Two larvae were found at another site in London (VC Middlesex) on 29th June.
- Eleven Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) were seen on the Northamptonshire transect on 27th June.
- One worn Common Fan-foot (*Pechipogo strigilata*) was seen at a known site in Surrey on 2nd July.
- One White Spot (*Hadena albimacula*) was seen in Dorset on 25th June.
- \*\*\*\*\* **National Moth Night**\*\*\*\*\* A reminder that the UK BAP Priority Species which are targets for National Moth Night are Chalk Carpet, Double Line and Northern Dart. Please send details of any remaining public events that are not on the NMN web site to [events@nationalmothnight.info](mailto:events@nationalmothnight.info)

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 29th June 2005

123rd Email Newsletter 29/06/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

Apologies for the absence of a newsletter last week, this was due to fieldwork pressures.

- Various species have emerged since the last newsletter. Waved Carpet (*Hydrelia sylvata*) has been seen at sites in Somerset (one at a known site on 16th June), Pembrokeshire (singles on 18th June at a new site and 25th June at a known site), Carmarthenshire (2 at a known site on 18th June)

and Devon (3 at a new site between 23rd and 25th June and 'loads' at another site on 21st).

- Five Heart Moth (*Dicycla oo*) were recorded in a new tetrad in Berkshire on 26th June. The trap was not in the classic open woodland/parkland situation but set amongst a cluster of ten mature oaks on a forestry track which had other mature oaks dotted along here and there. The area was investigated in 2003 without success.
- Bright Wave (*Idaea ochrata*) has been seen at several sites within its East Kent range. The first was seen on 18th June, with four at the same site on 22nd. This appears to be rather poor numbers for this site. Elsewhere numbers were better, with 12 at one site on 22nd and 29 there on 23rd. A total of 32 were seen in another area on 26th.
- Single Olive Crescent (*Trisatales emortualis*) were seen in Suffolk 'last week' and in Dorset on 24th. It is assumed that these were both immigrants.
- One Pale Shining Brown (*Polia bombycina*) was seen at a known site in Wiltshire on 21st June, with 9 there on 27th.
- Ten Slender Scotch Burnet (*Zygaena loti*) were seen at a known site on 22nd June.
- Two Dark Bordered Beauty (*Epione vespertaria*) larvae were seen at a known site in Scotland on 22nd (a very low count for this site) and 30 were seen at another site the next day.
- A most exciting find was that of a Dingy Mocha (*Cyclophora pendularia*) at a site in Devon on 17th. The habitat at the site is similar to the north Dorset sites and it seems quite possible that the moth is resident there.
- A Lunar Yellow Underwing (*Noctua orbona*) was seen at a new site in Wiltshire on 27th June.
- Toadflax Brocade (*Calophasia lunula*) larval numbers appear to be very low in East Kent this year. Seven were seen at one site where over 200 were seen last year and none could be found at another site where it was relatively common last year. There is no shortage of foodplant at either site. Three adults were seen at a known site in East Kent on 18th June.
- An Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) was netted at a new site in East Sutherland on 19th June. Three larvae were found on Bog Myrtle at a known site in Somerset on 22nd. Two were first instar and the other was second instar.
- Two Scarce Merveille du Jour (*Moma alpium*) were trapped at a site in Hampshire on 17th June, 5 were trapped at a site in Devon on 21st, 4 were seen at a known site in East Sussex on 22nd and 23rd and one was trapped at a new site in Kent on 25th.
- Two small Buttoned Snout (*Hypena rostralis*) larvae were found at a known site in Monmouthshire on 17th June, with one at a new site nearby on the same date. Adults were seen in South Hampshire on 18th June and Surrey on 24th.
- Six Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) were seen at the newly discovered Leicestershire site on 17th, with 12 adults and 5 larvae there on 27th. In Dorset, 2 were trapped at one site on 23rd, with 9 there on 24th and 4 on 25th. At another site in Dorset, one was trapped on 22nd. Five were seen at one site in North Essex on 27th and one at another site nearby on the same day. There have been vague reports of very large numbers being seen in North Essex prior to 9.30am on very hot days recently but no details are available at the moment.
- Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (*Hemaris tityus*) has been reported from a new site in Moray. Two larvae (first and second instars) were seen at a known site in Dorset on 23rd, with an adult there on 26th. Five adults and 2 first instar larvae were seen at a known site in North Devon on 22nd.
- One worn Common Fan-foot (*Pechipogo strigilata*) was seen at a known site in East Kent on 20th June.
- Double Line (*Mythimna turca*) has been reported from Somerset (1 on 16th June), Dorset (3 at a known site on 23rd), Carmarthenshire (1 at a known site on 26th) and Devon (2 at one site on 21st and over 20 a night at a new site between 23rd and 25th).
- One worn Drab Looper (*Minoa murinata*) was seen at a known site in Monmouthshire on 16th June and 2 worn adults and a cast penultimate instar skin were seen at a second site in the county the next day. Three adults were at a known Dorset site on 23rd.

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

17th June 2005

122nd Email Newsletter 17/06/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- Double Line (*Mythimna turca*) is now flying. Ten were recorded at a known site in North Devon on 9th June.
- Lunar Yellow Underwing (*Noctua orbona*) has also emerged, with one being trapped at a new site in East Suffolk on 12th June.
- A Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) was found at a new site in Suffolk on 16th June and 5 were found at a new site in Cambridgeshire on 8th June, with another there on 16th. Two were seen at a known site in Suffolk on 8th June. On the regular transect in Northamptonshire, 16 were counted on 14th June. All were in good condition, suggesting that there has been a fresh emergence in the last week.
- An Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) was found resting on a house wall at a new site in Wester Ross on 8th June. Also in Scotland, 6 were seen at a known site in Stirlingshire on 8th. In Staffordshire, at least 8 were seen at a known site on 5th June, with 3 at another site in the county on the same day.
- At least 6 Drab Looper (*Minoa murinata*) were seen at a new site in Gloucestershire on 8th June. Two were seen at a known site in Dorset on 13th.
- Single Toadflax Brocade (*Calophasia lunula*) have been trapped at two sites in North London recently.
- Twelve Dark Bordered Beauty (*Epione vespertaria*) larvae were found at a known site in Yorkshire on 6th June.
- Nine Common Fan-foot (*Pechipogo strigilata*) were trapped in the Wyre Forest on 5th June and 11 were trapped at a known site in Surrey on 9th.
- Single Scarce Merveille du Jour (*Moma alpium*) were trapped at known sites in Devon and East Kent on 9th June.
- Six White-spot (*Hadena albimacula*) were seen at a known site in Devon on 10th June.
- A Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (*Hemaris tityus*) was seen at a known site in Moray on 6th June. In Kintyre, 5 were seen at one site on 11th June and one at another site on the same day.
- A Buttoned Snout (*Hypena rostralis*) was trapped in Berkshire on 9th June.
- News of UK BAP Priority species on Schedule 5 (Please note that a licence is required in order to disturb these species).
- Eleven Black-veined Moth (*Siona lineata*) were recorded at an introduction site where it has not been seen in recent years. Even more surprisingly, one was seen at a site where an unofficial introduction site where it was released in 1993 and has not been seen since. At its other sites, numbers have been fairly good at one site, poor at another and none have been seen at the third site.
- Fiery Clearwing (*Pyropteron chrysidiformis*) appears to be having an extremely poor season so far, with very few adults having been seen and no eggs found. It is to be hoped that a late emergence will take place when the weather improves.
- \*\*\*\*\***IMPORTANT**\*\*\*\*\*
- We greatly appreciate all records for this newsletter but please supply full details (including grid reference) with all records so that they can be entered on our database. This will save us the time and embarrassment of hassling you for these details. Many thanks.

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 8th June 2005

121st Email Newsletter 08/06/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- Scarce Merveille du Jour (*Moma alpium*) is now on the wing. One was recorded at a known site in West Sussex on 4th June.

- There is some evidence that Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) may be having a slightly better year this year and that populations have risen sufficiently to become detectable at sites with no recent records. There is an unconfirmed record from a new site in Cardiganshire, 9 were seen at a known site in West Ross and one was seen at a known site (but in a different area) in Stirlingshire.
- On 3rd June, two were seen at a known site in Yorkshire. They were observed in habitat which differs from that where they are normally found at other sites. One was flushed from bramble under mature conifers and the other flew out of a roadside hawthorn which had mature conifers behind it (and no birch). Searching around the areas of birch scrub produced no sightings. It is reported that this pattern of occurrence on the site is normal. What this means for our understanding of the larval ecology is far from clear but it suggests that the search for adults should be widened to include atypical habitat on occupied or former sites. Elsewhere in England there were reports from a known site in Staffordshire on 31st May and 2nd June and from a known site in Shropshire on 5th June.
- Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (*Hemaris tityus*) has been reported from two sites with no recent records. One was observed at a site in Merioneth on 5th June and one at a site in North Hampshire on 2nd June. At the latter site it was the first record since 1990 and, apart from one site in East Anglia, this is the most easterly known site in Britain at the moment.
- Common Fan-foot (*Pechipogo strigilata*) was recorded at a known site in Buckinghamshire on 28th May.
- Three White-spotted Pinion (*Cosmia diffinis*) larvae were recorded at a known site in Huntingdonshire in late May.
- A Toadflax Brocade (*Calophasia lunula*) was disturbed on 31st May during the day at a known site in West Sussex whilst the observer was mowing his lawn!
- Drab Looper (*Minoa murinata*) has been seen at two sites in Monmouthshire, 2 were seen at a known site on 25th May and 4 were at another known site the following day. Two were in the Wyre Forest on 31st May and 30 were counted in 10 minutes at a known site in North Hampshire on 2nd June.
- Ten Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) were seen at a known site in Northamptonshire on 5th June and 11 were seen on the regular transect at this site on 7th.
- Single Buttoned Snout (*Hypena rostralis*) have been trapped at sites in Hertfordshire and in Huntingdonshire on 28th May. One was seen in a known camp site toilet block in Monmouthshire on 27th May!
- \*\*\*\*\* **National Moth Night** \*\*\*\*\* A reminder that if anyone has arranged public events on July 9th, please send the details to [events@nationalmothnight.info](mailto:events@nationalmothnight.info)

With best wishes  
Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 1st June 2005

120th Email Newsletter 01/06/2005  
Dear Moth Recorders

- A bumper crop this week with several new species on the wing! A total of 17 Common Fan-foot (*Pechipogo strigilata*) were recorded in the Wyre Forest on 27th May. This is the first May record from this site. Interestingly, none were recorded at a known site in Surrey, where it is usually common, on 29th.
- White-spot (*Hadena albimacula*) was first recorded at a known site in East Kent on 21st or 22nd May and 6 were trapped there on 26th.
- Toadflax Brocade (*Calophasia lunula*) was recorded at known site in East Kent on 20th May and again on 26th, at a separate site in East Kent on 25th when one was found nectaring on Red Valerian in the middle of the day, and at a known site in West Sussex on 29th May.
- Marsh Moth (*Athetis pallustris*) was recorded in both known areas of its sole remaining site in Lincolnshire on 26th May.
- A White-spotted Pinion (*Cosmia diffinis*) larva was seen at a site in Cambridgeshire on 24th May.
- Drab Looper (*Minoa murinata*) has been found at new sites in North Hampshire (2 on 29th May and 5 on 31st) and Gloucestershire (2 on 25th). Records from known sites come from North Hampshire

(13 on 25th and 6 at another site on 26th ) Wiltshire (2 on 25th) and Gloucestershire (1 on 15th and 13 there on 27th, 2 at another site on 28th, 7 at a further site on 31st and 1 at another site, also on 31st).

- Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) has been reported from sites in Staffordshire and Cheshire prior to 26th May. Singles were seen at a known site in West Inverness on 30th and 31st May, and one was seen at a site in Wiltshire on 25th. In Somerset, what appears to be the strongest colony in England is having a very good year. Twelve were seen there on 29th May with 15 on 31st.
- Several Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) were seen at a known site in Lincolnshire on 23rd and we have also heard of reports from Essex and Leicestershire. On the Northamptonshire transect, 9 were recorded on 26th.
- Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (*Hemaris tityus*) has been seen again at the recently (re-) discovered site in Carmarthenshire. Two were noted on 27th May but unfortunately a further individual was seen dead in a malaise trap. It is hoped that this trap will be relocated as soon as possible. Elsewhere, one was seen at a new site in Moray on 14th May and 4 were at a known site in Glamorgan on 29th.
- Buttoned Snout (*Hypena rostralis*) has been reported from a string of new sites in the last week: in North Hampshire (25th), Norfolk (26th at a site some 20km north of the most northerly recent record), Berkshire (26th) and Surrey (27th). One was also found indoors at a known site in London (South Essex) on 28th.
- Belated reports have been received of Netted Mountain Moth (*Macaria carbonaria*) at known sites in West Inverness (8 on 13th May and 5 there on 15th) and East Inverness (1 on 15th May).

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 24th May 2005

119th Email Newsletter 24/05/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- Excellent news this week comes from Leicestershire where a new population of Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) has been discovered. Four individuals were seen on 15th May at a private site with extensive suitable habitat. The only previous record of Four-spotted in the county was of a singleton in 1990. This shows the value of searching suitable habitat, even in areas without previous records and we would be grateful for any information about searches that take place for this species, even if you are unsuccessful. There was also an unconfirmed report of this species in Somerset.
- Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (*Hemaris tityus*) has been recorded in Carmarthenshire for the first time in many years. Singles were seen on 13th and 20th May with 6 sightings on 22nd. Most observations were of individuals nectaring on Bird's-foot Trefoil. Elsewhere, two were nectaring on Milkwort at a known Dorset locality on 17th and singles were seen at two known sites in Glamorgan the following day.
- Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) is now on the wing, with singles being reported from known sites in Shropshire and West Inverness-shire on 22nd May.
- Two fresh Barred Tooth-striped (*Trichopteryx polyommata*) were trapped at a known site in Scotland on 20th May.
- Drab Looper (*Minoa murinata*) has been reported from known sites in Dorset (2 on 12th, 5 on 18th and 12 on 17th), Herefordshire (12 on 19th), Worcestershire (3 on 23rd) and Shropshire (one on 17th).
- Anyone wishing to search for Common Fan-foot (*Pechipogo strigilata*) larvae in the autumn should be considering snapping twigs now. It may be difficult with the late spring to find suitable twigs where the leaves have opened sufficiently but it is important to find leaves that are fully opened so that they curl up in the correct way!

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 17th May 2005

118th Email Newsletter 17/05/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (*Hemaris tityus*) is now flying. At least one was seen at a known site in Glamorgan on 12th May and one was seen at a known site in Wiltshire on 15th.
- Drab Looper (*Minoa murinata*) is also on the wing. Singles were seen at known sites in Dorset on 5th May, North Hampshire on 12th and Berkshire on 15th.
- The first Four-spotted (*Tyta luctuosa*) was seen at a known site in Northants on 12th May.
- We have received an excellent series of records of Netted Mountain Moth (*Macaria carbonaria*). Five were seen at a new site in Moray on 30th April, a new site was discovered in East Inverness on 8th May and three new sites were found in Moray on 14th May. Reports were also received from known sites on 7th and 8th May.
- Two Buttoned Snout (*Hypena rostralis*) were caught in a garden light trap in Cambridgeshire on 1st May.
- The first Argent & Sable (*Rheumaptera hastata*) in 2004 was reported on 15th May so it would be worth looking out for this species from now on.

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 6th May 2005

117th Email Newsletter 06/05/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- The first Buttoned Snout (*Hypena rostralis*) of the year were reported on 1st May. One was seen at a lighted window at a new site in North Hampshire and another was seen at a known site in West Kent.
- A Dingy Mocha (*Cyclophora pendularia*) was trapped at a new site in the New Forest on 2nd May. Although the moth was in unsuitable habitat, there was potential foodplant nearby which will be searched for larvae later in the year.
- A Sword-grass (*Xylena exsoleta*) was noted at a new site in North Aberdeenshire on 23rd April.
- There is an unconfirmed report of about 40 Netted Mountain Moth (*Macaria carbonaria*) at a known site on 29th April.
- A Barred Tooth-striped (*Trichopteryx polycommata*) was recorded at MV light at a new site in Cumbria on 21st April. This record extends the known range in this area.
- Seventeen female Belted Beauty (*Lycia zonaria britannica*) were seen during a partial survey at the Lancashire site on 26th April.
- Two Double Line (*Mythimna turca*) larvae were found at a known site in Cornwall in late April. One was feeding on Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), the other on Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*). Both were on the woodland edge.
- The first record of Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (*Hemaris tityus*) in 2004 was on 2nd May so it may be worth looking for this species in the south of its range over the coming weekend.

With best wishes

Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 25th April 2005

116th Email Newsletter 25/04/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- The first Dingy Mocha (*Cyclophora pendularia*) of the year was recorded at a known site in Dorset on 23rd April.
- The first Netted Mountain Moth (*Macaria carbonaria*) have also emerged, 4 being seen on 23rd April

at a site in Moray with no recent records. This was at an altitude of just under 300 metres and searches at higher altitude were unsuccessful.

- A Sword-grass (*Xylena exsoleta*) was noted at light at a new site in East Perthshire on 2nd April and one was seen at a known site in the same county on 11th.
- Two Barred Tooth-striped (*Trichopteryx polycommata*) were seen at a known site in Mid-west Yorkshire on 16th April and one was at a known site in West Lancashire on 10th.
- Four Double Line (*Mythimna turca*) larvae were found at a known site in North Devon in early April. Their location was marked and three were found nearby the following morning. They were lying up on dead leaves or moss under a loose thatch of vegetation. A total of 11 larvae were found in Devon on 23rd April, they were feeding on *Carex panicea*, *C. flacca*, *Molinia*, *Agrostis* sp and *Festuca* sp.
- Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, Graham Jones has been unable to take up the position of Moth Conservation Officer. The post will be readvertised on the Butterfly Conservation web site shortly.

With best wishes  
Tony Davis and Mark Parsons

## 16th April 2005

Delegates from 20 countries attended Butterfly Conservation's 5th International Symposium which was held from 8th -10th April at the University of Southampton. On the Sunday afternoon a series of walks in the New Forest were organised in conjunction with Forest Enterprise. For many the high spot was Matthew Oates of the National Trust showing us how to detect the larva of Pearl-bordered Fritillary. The photo (click on it for a larger image) below shows Matthew describing their ecology which he summarises as.. :

"The essential requirements of PBF larvae are leaf litter + some violets and not too much green grass. High violet densities are not essential, the critical thing is the micro-climate which is determined by the amount of litter (for heat) and green vegetation (much cooler). From mid March to mid April larvae bask on dead leaves as the day is warming up, 11-14°C air temp is best. They go into feed-and-retreat mode when it gets hotter. Larvae eat flowers and fresh young leaves, especially of Common Dog Violet. Look for eaten flowerheads, bare leaf stalks and the basal lobes of eaten leaves. My record is 26 in 1 1/2 hours, but 1 per 45 mins is more the norm."



## 13th April 2005

Mark Litjens copied me a note concerning a "migration" of Painted Lady butterflies in the USA this year that he had found on another web site: ""This year is shaping up to be an irruptive year for PAINTED LADIES (*Vanessa cardui*). I spent the sunny parts of last weekend counting ladies go by selected here in Clatsop County. There are a lot of Painted Ladies around, but not nearly as many as are being reported in California where traffic stopping clouds of butterflies are being seen." Then read this

[http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2002237739\\_butterfly11.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2002237739_butterfly11.html)

Mark asks "Can we have some over here please!"

## 11th April 2005

In Nature Highlights this week one item refers to a paper in the Proceedings of the Royal Society, Part B: "Radar reveals purpose in butterfly flights" as follows:

## Miniature transponders show pattern among the erratic fluttering.

Tiny radar devices have revealed patterns in the meandering flights of butterflies: the looping dives are thought to help them to search for food or a home. What's more, the radar technology could help conservationists to find safe havens for the insects amid fragmented agricultural landscapes.

Researchers attached radio transponders, each weighing just 12 milligrams, to butterflies and used them to track around 30 of the insects. "You have to carefully remove the hairs from their back first," explains Lizzie Cant of Rothamsted Research in Hertfordshire, UK. "I give them a wax with Sellotape."

After checking that the transponders did not affect the butterflies' behaviour, Cant and her colleagues released them into a field that was being scanned by radar. When a transponder receives a radar pulse, it sends out a characteristic reply signal that the researchers use to track the butterfly. Similar technology drives collision-warning systems on aircraft.

## Loopy behaviour

The small tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) and peacock varieties (*Inachis io*) that Cant studied showed two distinct flight patterns: straight movement, in which they zipped over the ground at more than 3 metres per second, and longer, slower passages in which they flew in loops. The butterflies also appeared to react to features as far as 200 metres away, for example, by altering their course to investigate a group of flowers.

Such patterns have been spotted before, although they have never been documented in the detail provided by the radar technique. Visual observations become difficult at distances of greater than 50 metres, but the Rothamsted team was able to follow the butterflies for more than a kilometre. They report their results in Proceedings of the Royal Society of London<sup>1</sup>.

"The looping flight is thought to be a searching behaviour," says Cant. She carried out the experiments in late summer, so the insects were probably looking for nectar from flowers, or a dry place, such as a crack in a tree, in which to hibernate. Straighter flights probably occur when the butterfly wants to leave an area or escape a predator, Cant adds.

She now wants to repeat the experiment on rarer species such as the high brown fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*) and marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*). Both are endangered and conservationists are unsure how easily the insects will be able to move between neighbouring habitats that can support them. "If we know how mobile they are, we can tell if the fragmentation is all right," she says.

## References

Cant E. T., Smith A. D., Reynolds D. R. & Osborne J. L. et al. Proc. Roy. Soc. B., doi:10.1098/rspb.2004.3002 (2004).

## 4th April 2005

115th Email Newsletter 04/04/2005  
Dear Moth Recorders

- Barred Tooth-striped (*Trichopteryx polycommata*) is now flying. Four were seen resting near the top of privet bushes at a known site in West Sussex on 1st April. All were in pristine condition. On the same night, one came to light at a known site in West Lancashire. This was the equal earliest record at that site and suggests that it may be emerging at a similar time throughout England this year. On 2nd April one was caught in a garden light trap on the Isle of Wight. Surprisingly, this is thought to be only the second record for the island but it would seem likely that breeding is occurring somewhere on the extensive chalk.
- There have been good numbers of reports of Sword-grass (*Xylena exsoleta*) this spring. One was seen at a coastal site in Durham on 25th March and may be an immigrant. In Scotland, there have

been records from known sites in East Perthshire on 23rd March (first site record since 1990) and Banffshire (5 at sugar on 17th March with 1-3 before and since). One was seen at a new site (and new 10km square) in Moray on 25th March.

- The highest ever count of Belted Beauty (*Lycia zonaria britannica*) at the Lancashire site was made on 25th March, when 83 males and 100 females were seen. Whilst not in the same league as the Lancashire counts, the 8 females and 4 males seen at the Cheshire site on 29th March were pleasing as the female count equals the highest count made last year at this site. It is hoped that higher counts will be made as the season progresses. At the North Wales site, 13 females were seen on 29th March but no males.
- A single Double Line (*Mythimna turca*) larva was found at a known site in North Devon on 19th March, feeding on Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*).

With best wishes

Tony Davis, Mark Parsons and Sarah Brook.

## 29th March 2005

The following abstract was taken from the latest issue of the journal Nature, "Transgenic crops take another knock by Jim Giles":

### Shift in weed species hits bees and butterflies.

Commercial use of some genetically modified crops could alter the balance of weed species that thrive on British farmland. Such a shift could harm bees and butterflies, warn researchers.

Butterfly numbers were cut by up to two-thirds and bee populations by half in fields of transgenic winter oilseed rape (canola), according to the final results of a three-year study commissioned by the UK government.

Researchers behind the £6-million (US\$11-million) study say that the project's weed-control system is to blame. The crops are engineered to resist a particular herbicide, which hits broad-leafed weeds harder than grassy varieties. Bees and butterflies suffer because they prefer the former type of weed.

The scientists add that this would have a knock-on effect on animals higher up the food chain. "If this crop were commercialized we'd be concerned about the implications for birds such as sparrows and bullfinches," says David Gibbons, a conservationist from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and a member of the committee that oversaw the experiment.

### Crop fans

Supporters of transgenic crops stress that most insect species were not affected by the rape's herbicide and say the overall impact on biodiversity is minimal. "As with all weed-management systems, some weed and insect species will be positively affected while others may be negatively affected, but the vast majority are unaffected," says Tony Combes, deputy chairman of the Agricultural Biotechnology Council, a London-based lobbying group.

Bayer CropScience, headquartered in Monheim, Germany, already markets the winter oilseed rape used in the trial in the United States and Canada. Although the crop is grown widely in the two countries, Bayer says it has no intention of applying for a licence to sell it in Europe.

But Bayer officials point out that the biggest difference in butterfly and bee numbers is seen in July, when the crop is just about to be harvested and there is little green material. "There's nothing in the field at that point for bees and butterflies," says spokesman Julian Little. "You wouldn't get very many there anyway."

The results will, however, be felt as a further blow to advocates of transgenic crops. In 2003, two of the three other transgenic varieties covered by the study, spring oilseed rape and beet, were shown to harm biodiversity by reducing overall levels of weeds.

### Impact factor

Release of the results marks the end of what has been the largest ever study into the ecological impact of transgenic crops. More than 150 people worked on the experiment, which involved counting a million weeds and 2 million insects at sites across Britain. The report is published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B1.

Although none of the crops tested is likely to be licensed in Europe, researchers behind the study say that the data will inform agricultural policy for years to come. They point out that the ecological impacts of previous changes in farming practice, such as increasing herbicide use, were not properly investigated at the start.

"Now we have a rational and scientific basis for managing change," says Chris Pollock, director of research at the Institute for Grassland and Environmental Research in Aberystwyth, UK, and chairman of the study committee. "We've demonstrated in enormous detail just how tight the association is between agriculture and the environment."

## References

Bohan D. A., et al. Proc. Roy. Soc. B, 272. 463 - 474 (2005)

## 22nd March 2005

114th Email Newsletter 22/03/2005

Dear Moth Recorders

- At last the season has started! The first Belted Beauty (*Lycia zonaria britannica*) was recorded at the Lancashire site on 19th March when 1 male was noted. One male and one female were seen in the same area the next day, with 3 males and 12 females at the other end of the site. None were seen at the Cheshire site on 15th March.
- Sword-grass (*Xylena exsoleta*) was recorded at sugar at two new sites in Moray on 17th March. One of the sites was in a new 10km square.
- There have been no records of Barred Tooth-striped (*Trichopteryx polycommata*) yet despite searches at several sites, including one on 17th March in Sussex where good numbers were seen last year.
- \*\*\*\*\*Moth Team Changes\*\*\*\*\*
- We are pleased to announce that Graham Jones has been appointed as Moth Conservation Officer and will be taking up his post on 1st April. Also from the beginning of April, Tony Davis will be working primarily from the South-east Regional Office. His e-mail address will remain the same but the phone number will be 01483 486555.
- \*\*\*\*\*Forthcoming Field Meetings\*\*\*\*\*
- Fri 1st April, evening - Thetford Forest: Barred Tooth-striped light trapping. For more info contact Sharon Hearle, [shearle@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:shearle@butterfly-conservation.org) or telephone 01638-731648 during office hours.
- Fri 20th May, evening - Glasdrum NNR: Barred Tooth-striped dusk search and light trapping contact John Halliday for more info 01546 603611, [john.halliday@snh.gov.uk](mailto:john.halliday@snh.gov.uk).
- Sat 11th June, morning - Taynish NNR: Argent & Sable, Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth, Marsh Fritillary contact John Halliday for more info 01546 603611, mobile 07771 848640 [john.halliday@snh.gov.uk](mailto:john.halliday@snh.gov.uk).
- Fri 24th - Sun 26th June Residential weekend at Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory, Kent for Bright Wave & Toadflax Brocade. Cost £65 residential, £35 non-residential. Contact Tony Davis, [tdavis@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:tdavis@butterfly-conservation.org) for more info.
- Sat 6th August, evening - Taynish NNR: Square-spotted Clay light trapping, contact John Halliday for more info work 01546 603611, mobile 07771 848640 [john.halliday@snh.gov.uk](mailto:john.halliday@snh.gov.uk).
- If you want to carry out fieldwork for any UKBAP priority moths in Scotland, Butterfly Conservation Scotland can provide local records and give advice on survey techniques. For more information contact Tom Prescott, [tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org).

With best wishes

Tony Davis, Mark Parsons and Sarah Brook.

## 8th March 2005

Butterfly Conservation has sent me the programme for the 5th International Symposium at Southampton University to be held in April next. If any member would like a copy by e-mail please contact me.

## 5th March 2005

Last evening many branch members attended the photographic and social evening held at the St Barnabas Church Hall, Weeke, Winchester when they were treated to a feast of butterfly and moth pictures presented by individual members. Refreshments and wine were provided by several helpers to complete a convivial evening. However, many attended specifically for the presentation to John Taverner, who has been the Hampshire Butterfly Recorder and Annual Report Editor for the past 12 years, and was now stepping down from those posts - hastened by poor health. Alan Hold, the branch's Health & Safety Officer, who was a long time friend and colleague, gave the presentation speech taking us through John's career of voluntary work that is summarized in the news report on this page for 13th February last. Alan presented John with a painting by Rosie Powell, nee Watts, a well known Hampshire natural history artist, of Dark Green Fritillaries nectaring on knapweed; it was known that paintings of natural history subjects were close to John's heart as he is considered to be one of that increasingly rare breed of old-time naturalists. In the photo below, John is shown with Rosie and the painting.



## 17th February 2005

In the 17th February issue of the journal Nature there is an article on the natural use of an anti-aphrodisiac by the male Large White butterfly to discourage the attention of a parasitic wasp. The abstract is as follows: "To locate their hosts, parasitic wasps can 'eavesdrop' on the intraspecific chemical communications of their insect hosts. Here we describe an example in which the information exploited by the parasitic wasp *Trichogramma brassicae* is a butterfly anti-aphrodisiac that is passed from male to female *Pieris brassicae* butterflies during mating, to render them less attractive to conspecific males. When the tiny wasp detects the odour of a mated female butterfly, it rides on her to her egg-laying sites and then parasitizes the freshly laid eggs. If this fascinating strategy is widespread in nature, it could severely constrain the evolution of sexual communication between hosts."

## 13th February 2005

Members of the Branch will already know, via the newsletter, that John Taverner is relinquishing the post of Butterfly Recorder and the editing of the Butterfly and Moth Report. They are jobs he has performed with perfection over the past 12 years and although both are very time consuming it is clear they have given him much enjoyment but, at the same time, they have provided an invaluable contribution to the Branch; his contributions will be greatly missed. With his advancing years and not being blessed with the best of health in recent times he has found it necessary to resign from these tasks. As many of you will also know, John is an avid writer of articles on natural history in the region and regularly subscribes to the Hampshire Magazine and for many years he has taken adult education classes on a similar theme and given talks to various societies. He has edited and coordinated the contributions to the book "The Butterflies of Hampshire" and also the recent book on the dragonflies of Hampshire. Earlier in his

voluntary career he was the Bird Recorder for Hampshire and edited the Hampshire Bird Report.

In recognition of his services to the Branch it has been decided to make a presentation to him at the forthcoming Photographic & Social Evening on Friday, 4th March next to be held in St Barnabas Church Hall, Fromond Road, Weeke, Winchester; the meeting starts at 7.30pm but doors open at 7pm. So please show your appreciation of John's efforts by attending at his presentation.