

Hatfullofsky

by Hatfullofsky, 06-Sep-10 02:01 AM GMT

Unexpected events this weekend have prompted me to start a diary. As Neil and possibly a few others down my way are aware, the last two weeks or so I've been visiting Steyning Rifle Range obsessing about Brown Hairstreaks. Not today - today I settled down to a day's work in my garden. Nevermind that it was a lovely sunny day. I've been neglecting my gardening all year in favour of butterflies, it was well past time I paid a little attention to my gardening hobby. Mid-afternoon I took a well-deserved break and while passing my bedroom window I spotted a beautiful Comma fluttering about my Buddleia. There are compensations to actually avoiding going on a butterfly walk and this is one of them - watching butterflies in your garden from your upper story windows. Nice. But it got better. I looked out the window again five minutes later and saw another butterfly landing on my golden hop. A Brown Hairstreak. No, couldn't be, check again...still a Brown Hairstreak. Panic! Where is the camera, quick check of window to make sure it hasn't flown...back to getting camera out. Take a couple of shots, check settings, blasted settings are all wrong, more panic, change camera settings and take a few more shots. What to do? Because of where the BH is sitting, if I go downstairs I probably won't be able to see it from the ground...have to try...race downstairs...can I see it?...no...another viewpoint, then another, still can't see it, has it gone...wait, there...a small brown/orange butterfly flying right over my shoulder...gone! So there it is, my story of what happened to make this a red-letter day for me. I have a theory to explain it all. Day after day I've been visiting the Rifle Range to see them and admire them. Today, a lovely BH kind of day, I wasn't there. Obviously the Brown Hairstreaks had been waiting around all morning to see if I'd turn up to admire them as usual and finally, a bit miffed about the inconstancy of my adulation, decided to pay me a visit instead. Probably they wanted to see if they could still get me all excited about seeing them and receive a bit more adoration. No worries, just a few minutes here and I was running around in a mad panic trying to get a better view. This explains why, job done on their part, they immediately departed on other pressing business. No waiting around for an hour to sit on my shoulder (as happened to another lucky Sussex BC member), no posing for better piccies, not even a shifty down to ground level where my newly planted BLACKTHORN bushes were eagerly awaiting their first instalment of BH eggs (I checked them afterwards believe me). No, adulation was what was required and once that was achieved the butterfly was gone. Maybe, in years to come, my new blackthorn shrubs will actually pay dividends after all - it just goes to show, you never know what to expect with wildlife and wildlife gardening.

Re: Hatfullofsky

by Hatfullofsky, 06-Sep-10 02:31 AM GMT

Here is a pic of the little beauty but I'm afraid the photo doesn't do it justice at all.

Just to make this weekend even better, I had a close encounter with a Sparrowhawk today as well. Intent on looking at the contents of my moth trap this morning, I suddenly heard movement off to one side and looked over to find a very large female Sparrowhawk diving down and landing awkwardly on my gardening bucket, not 6 feet away from me. I kept still and watched, torn between calling for my partner to come see and reaching for my camera and it just sat there, apparently not at all bothered about being so close to me. I then called for my partner to come and see but the Sparrowhawk flew off before he arrived so now we have a running argument going about whether I have started hallucinating big birdies in the garden and therefore need more vitamins in my diet.



Re: Hatfullofsky

by Hatfullofsky, 10-Sep-10 04:11 AM GMT

A Hummingbird Hawkmoth flying around my garden Buddleia this evening. Surprised to find it flying so late in the day (7.25pm). Must keep a lookout for it this weekend, hope it stays around. I've taken out the Purple Loosestrife from my pond - it grows too strongly for my little puddle and it's roots are so tough that taking bits out each year to manage it's growth is proving impractical (my back isn't great). I have some Snakes-head Fritillary bulbs and a small number of Devils-bit Scabious, Cuckoo Flower and Ragged Robin plants to replace the Loosestrife with. I hope the Cuckoo Flower will encourage Orange Tips to visit more regularly and maybe even lay eggs. I'm still on a high about the Brown Hairstreak 😊

Re: Hatfullofsky

by Hatfullofsky, 05-Oct-10 03:41 AM GMT

I have been keeping half an eye on two caterpillars pupating on my back door over the last few weeks: a Small White and a Vapourer. Half an eye is, apparently, not enough. I looked this evening to find they had gone. Blue Tits have been keenly investigating every nook and cranny of the garden recently so I suspect those poor pupae have been forcibly recycled into Blue Tit. It's all part of nature of course but when you've been watching an individual you cannot help wanting it to survive and flourish.