

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 18-Feb-11 04:05 PM GMT

Cairo Hill

Nearby Heydon Hill but perhaps Cairo or Tahrir would be a more appropriate name after the confrontation there on Thursday. A digger was in action and a pile of cut-down trees and shrubs from an ancient hedge – which had some substantial mature trees – had been produced. I joined a group of other locals who were incensed. Another ancient hedge was apparently next in line as were some mediaeval *strip lynchets* (ancient farm workings). We actually felt sorry for the young digger operator who was only doing what he had been told. He was forced to stop.

Phone calls were made, the land owner couldn't be contacted but finally the farm manager turned up. He came into the field blazing on about "Health and Safety" being near the digger. When it was pointed out that the digger was turned off, he then told us we were trespassing. Now some of the group had standing permission from the land owner to wander over his land. I left them arguing the case. I didn't have permission so was indeed trespassing. I wasn't actually TOLD to leave but did so to minimise further conflict. The remaining group were still arguing and still attempting to contact the local council.

Apparently the farmer's reason for grubbing up the trees and hedge was rabbit infestation.

I'm not sure about the law on this but will be following the confrontation with interest.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Piers, 18-Feb-11 07:28 PM GMT

Bit of a Catch-22 potentially for the land owner Jack,

If rabbits are present the land owner is **legally obliged** under the Agriculture Act 1947 to control or eradicate them and can be served notice under the Pests Act 1954 to force him or her to action. If he or she fails to act then **they could face prosecution**.

[color=#0000BF:2jt8dghv]**Pests Act 1954**

Control of rabbits: Information for occupiers of land

1. Responsibilities of occupiers to control rabbits

Under Section 1 of the Pests Act 1954, the whole of England, apart from the City of London and Isles of Scilly, has been declared a rabbit clearance area. Under Section 1(2) of the 1954 Act, all occupiers of land in a rabbit clearance area have a continuing obligation to kill or take any wild rabbits living on, or resorting to, their land, unless they can establish that it is not reasonably practicable to do so. If it is not practicable to destroy the rabbits, occupiers have an obligation to prevent the rabbits from causing damage elsewhere by, for example, fencing them in with rabbit-proof fencing. The obligation to control rabbits is irrespective of the use being made of the occupier's land or that of their neighbours.

2. Enforcement of the obligation to control rabbits

The Secretary of State has powers, under Section 98 of the Agriculture Act 1947, to serve a notice on an occupier requiring them to take specified action against the rabbits. **If an occupier fails to take the specified action they would be liable for prosecution**. In addition, the Secretary of State can also arrange for a third party to carry out the necessary control work on the occupier's land and then recover the cost of this work from the occupier. [/color:2jt8dghv]

This actually happened to a land owner locally to me, where his was indeed served notice to take action to control or eradicate the rabbit population on his land following several complaints from adjoining land owners and house holders.

So on the one hand, your land owner (who may perhaps have been served notice already) is **legally obliged to act**, which would explain his attempts to destroy a possible known warren, but also has to contend with other elements of the local population who object to his actions.

Additionally it is an **offence to prevent or obstruct the land owner** from taking the required action, under the Damage by Pests Act 1949, so your local protestors could be skating on thin ice if the land owner has indeed already been served notice under the Pests Act of 1954.

The only level of protection likely to be afforded to the land (or *unlikely* in this instance) is if the area is a SSSI (although even in this situation it could, ironically, be a requirement of the SSSI that the rabbit population is controlled), or if the strip lynchets are Scheduled Ancient Monuments, which is also quite improbable.

In the matter of 'health and safety', this is a total myth perpetuated by the likes of The Sun and The Daily Mail. The reality for the land owner is that were anyone to harm themselves on, or be harmed by the excavator, irrespective of whether or not it is working, the land owner would in all likelihood be liable and could face significant injury compensation claims.

The oft heard mantra '*elf & safety gone mad*' actually refers to a legal system where any vexatious litigant is awarded massive personal injury compensation by the courts at the drop of a hat! 😡

Felix.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 18-Feb-11 11:44 PM GMT

I don't yet know the legalities of notices being served, etc. in this case.

But bl**dy hell. My google search suggest that rabbits cause circa £100 million damage annual to crops. That's less than £2 per head of population; in other words, peanuts. I for one would much rather have a hedge **and** rabbits. An outdated law (1954) that was enacted long before we became so conservation minded. Perhaps time for a re-think in the light of modern attitudes.

Sorry, just can't get away from politics.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Piers, 19-Feb-11 12:14 AM GMT

Rabbits are a massive problem for farmers and land owners, they can also be a huge problem on SSSI's as well, not to mention ancient monuments etc etc. Rabbits are a significant and serious pest species, they are not 'cute Easter bunnies'.

I hardly think the laws are out dated, after all the rabbit population across the South of England in 2009 was approaching the pre myxoma days of the 1930's. The law is just as relevant as ever, hence it's continued enforcement.

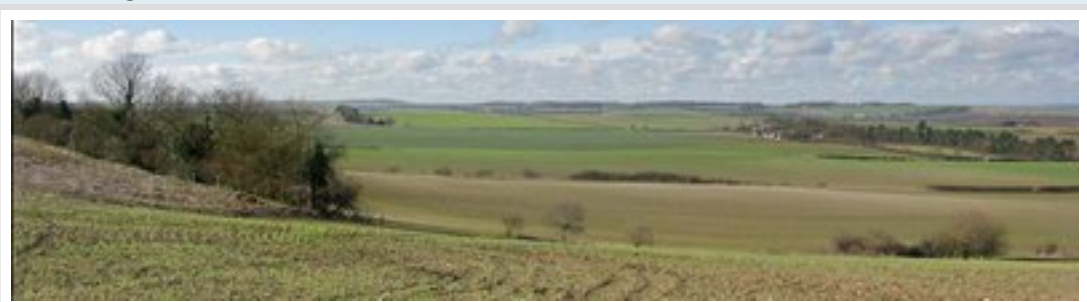
You'll be suggesting conservation of the Brown Rat and the Grey Squirrel next..! 🤪

Felix.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 19-Feb-11 12:37 AM GMT

The hedges in question.



I haven't been to look today as I've been doing a tour of the M25.

The hedge on the left had been almost entirely destroyed. The ones middle distance just over the brow were to be next in line.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 19-Feb-11 07:49 AM GMT

"Felix" wrote:

..... and the Grey Squirrel next..! 🤪

Felix.

Ugh! Tree-rats! 😡

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 19-Feb-11 08:13 AM GMT

Scheduled Monuments and SSSI's are really tricky...

Serious example- Scheduled Ancient Monument and SSSI overgrown with trees and bushes which support a healthy (sic) population of rabbits and a good variety of butterfly species, including a few chalkland specialists, with residual chalkland fauna.

Cut down the bushes and reduce the rabbits and you have preserved the monument, for now; the SSSI (chalk grassland indicator species...) does not really regenerate, it simply gets covered in clematis, bramble and privet, unless it is grazed - difficult as it lies on a public footpath - or intensively managed (3 or 4 work-parties a year). The bird numbers have declined (no habitat) as have the variety and numbers of butterflies, which thrived in the micro-climates the bushes and varied habitat provided. There is no "seed-bank" waiting to spring to life, so a few species of flowers dominate and do well, but nothing like a "real" chalk downland. And on a windy day where I used to count butterflies by the dozen, I am lucky to find more than one or two, so open to the wind are the places that have been cleared. I do find a few more chalk-land species, in areas which are still grazed by rabbits, but that is certainly at some cost to the other species and animals that used to live there.

On balance, I am not sure that it does warrant so much effort when the real result is so far from the predicated results which drove the clearance project forwards in the first place..... 😞

N Did I mention there is a badger-set there too...?



Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 19-Feb-11 03:41 PM GMT

*"Run Rabbit, Run Rabbit, Run Run Run,
Here comes that Felix with his Gun, Gun, Gun"*

Not my suggestion but I am delighted to pass it on.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Piers, 19-Feb-11 05:06 PM GMT

"Jack Harrison" wrote:

*"Run Rabbit, Run Rabbit, Run Run Run,
Here comes that Felix with his Gun, Gun, Gun"*

Absolutely, rabbit is delicious. Beats buying some crappy meat from the supermarket, produced through some intensive method whereby the animal lived most of it's miserable life in agony.

Enjoy your meal, Jack.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Susie, 19-Feb-11 07:39 PM GMT

I wonder if rabbits is the real reason though. I have heard of farmers digging up ancient hedges because they can get a government grant for planting new hedgerows.

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 19-Feb-11 07:57 PM GMT

I do get worried by the over-sentimental reaction to hunting. One of the best local reserves, and consequently, one of the best places for birds, insects and some flowers and butterflies, is a privately managed area of preserved fen and carr next to a remnant of council-run chalk pasture which runs down to it. The owner cuts the reed-beds on a 5 year rotation and it is home to marsh harriers and occasional hobby, herons and water voles, deer and a variety of marshland warblers and tits as well as numerous waders and ducks that inhabit the scrapes the owner has created. On one or two occasions a year, he and a couple of friends take their dogs and guns, and walk-through the reeds, where snipe and woodcock, as well as duck can be found. It is a sustainable harvest from an area that has been improved to support those sorts of birds, but benefits a huge range of wildlife. I have met the owner – he has a deep attachment to the countryside. Not as something that is preserved in aspic, but as a dynamic working environment that can be sustainable and is to be enjoyed by all.

If we had more landowners who are as sympathetic and empathetic to the places they manage, our countryside would be a better place.

N (I wonder what badger, rabbit *and* squirrel stew might taste like, eh Felix? 😊)

Re: Jack Harrison

by Piers, 19-Feb-11 08:06 PM GMT

Nick,

I hesitate to say this because I don't want to ruin the moment 😊 , but I think that we have found something upon which we agree, dare I say 100%...!

'The countryside' is (in this country at least) pretty much one hundred percent man made. It is a working, living, breathing organism fashioned by the hand of man, not the illustration on the front of a chocolate box; and for many people it is their livelihood and their larder.

What upsets me is situations such as in the New Forest, where the Rangers have to do their squirrel and magpie culls at dawn in the summer, so as not to let the visiting public see because of the outrage that would ensue upon the sighting of a trailer being driven around piled high with corpses. 😞

Felix.

Ps: It was only a generation or so ago that in some areas (Gloucestershire certainly) that 'Badger Hams' were a popular food stuff, and the rendered badger fat was used for preserving. I have never been convinced (because of the animal's diet mainly) that badger would produce a particularly palatable meat; and an old brock would surely be as tough as old leather..!

Re: Jack Harrison

by Piers, 19-Feb-11 08:10 PM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

I wonder if rabbits is the real reason though. I have heard of farmers digging up ancient hedges because they can get a government grant for planting new hedgerows.

That's an interesting thought Susie.

Would the grant, I wonder, cover the entire cost of grubbing out, replanting, and the associated heavy-plant and labour costs, while still leaving a 'profit'? If not, then surely it would not be worth the land owners while. If it did leave a profit after all costs have been considered then there is something desperately wrong with the grant system..!

This may be just an urban myth...

Felix.

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 19-Feb-11 08:11 PM GMT

Felix "I hesitate to say this because I don't want to ruin the moment 😊 , but I think that we have found something upon which we agree, dare I say 100%...!"



Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 19-Feb-11 09:51 PM GMT

I've just been to look. The digger is no longer there, the bottom hedge hasn't been touched (yet). The nearest hedge where the rabbits are believed to have their warren has been thinned but not completely cut down as it seems have been the original plan. Some mature trees have been left. If this is the final outcome, then this isn't too bad at all.

I cannot say whether people-power forced the change in plan. I would like to think so but maybe the landowner/farm manager didn't explain their intentions adequately in the first instance. I haven't subsequently met any of the fellow protestors. Anyway, at the moment, there cannot be too many reasons to complain. Fingers crossed.

Temperature +5C, ie about 2 degs below long temp average. The battle between the cold air to the east and the mild air to the west should be over in a couple of days with the mild air eventually winning. But very dull today as the photo shows.



Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Susie, 19-Feb-11 10:12 PM GMT

"Felix" wrote:

"Susie" wrote:

I wonder if rabbits is the real reason though. I have heard of farmers digging up ancient hedges because they can get a government grant for planting new hedgerows.

That's an interesting thought Susie.

Would the grant, I wonder, cover the entire cost of grubbing out, replanting, and the associated heavy-plant and labour costs, while still leaving a 'profit'? If not, then surely it would not be worth the land owners while. If it did leave a profit after all costs have been considered then there is something desperately wrong with the grant system..!

This may be just an urban myth...

Felix.

It could well be an urban (rural?) myth, as I have heard of it but never seen the evidence first hand. That the grant system can be a bit bizarre at times goes without saying though!

You can add me to the list of people who do not subscribe to the "fluffy bunny" mentality.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 04-Mar-11 04:00 AM GMT

Aimed at the "non-experts" in our village:

[http://www.greatchishill.org.uk/subpage ... flies.html](http://www.greatchishill.org.uk/subpage...flies.html)

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 12-Mar-11 07:45 PM GMT

First garden butterfly of 2011, initially spotted by wife Suzie. 12th March, temperature 12°C

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As usual, first sighting was on a big patch of ivy.

Jack (South Cambridgeshire)

Re: Jack Harrison

by Zonda, 12-Mar-11 11:04 PM GMT

Nice one Jack. Talking about urban myths, is it true that we get New York's weather a month later? I think i know what the answer will be, but i have heard this from several sources and on a few occasions over the years. 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 15-Mar-11 01:35 AM GMT

14th March – single Comma Great Chishill in usual hollow. Temperature 12°C and 10 knots wind. Grid Ref TL 426 395

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It almost looks like the summer form *hutchinsonii* but that is no doubt the effect of the light.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 15-Mar-11 01:55 AM GMT

Zonda asked:

Talking about urban myths, is it true that we get New York's weather a month later?

Not total nonsense.

For example, in autumn, the tail-end of a hurricane might then cross the Atlantic and reach the western shores of the British Isles three or four days later bringing strong winds. It is thought that scenario is responsible for many of our Monarch sightings.

The atmosphere is often a series of waves that sometimes travel west to east. It can well happen that New York is in the cold part of the oscillation and we in Britain get the cold a few days later. That isn't strictly "New York's weather" but who cares – the effect is the same.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 24-Mar-11 12:51 AM GMT

Zonda had a picture in his diary of an immaculate Small Tortoiseshell. I have yet to see a Tortie this year, but this Comma today was in superb

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condition.

It was in its favourite little hollow – a totally reliable spot every March.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Zonda, 24-Mar-11 01:57 AM GMT

Well,, what can i say? Nice work Jack. 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 25-Mar-11 02:53 AM GMT

24th March

Violets now in full flower. As I mentioned in another thread, many are white (but note the colour of the unopened bud)

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Now I see them both on screen, I have to wonder: are they in fact the same species?

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 31-Mar-11 11:24 PM GMT

First Small Tortoiseshell for me this year in the favoured sheltered hollow keeping out of the "gale". Temperature 16°C. Only other sighting today one Brimstone in garden.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 01-Apr-11 05:25 PM GMT

Great Chishill (South Cambs) village website

I have been asked to try to encourage interest in our butterflies.

<http://www.greatchishill.org.uk/subpage...flies.html>

(I am not responsible for the editing!)

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Zonda, 01-Apr-11 10:37 PM GMT

Cracking village website, and really informative butterfly info and pics. Every village should have one. 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 02-Apr-11 01:25 AM GMT

Thanks Zonda. I hope the village website notes might inspire greater interest.

I actually got some direct face-to-face interest today when I met a dog walker (dog carrier might be a better word – it was a tiny nervous dog). I showed him Tortoiseshell and Comma and he seemed genuinely interested. He in return told me about his early morning badgers, the huge herd of Fallow Deer.



female Tortie and friend.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 02-Apr-11 01:29 AM GMT

Just got this. It appeals to an old aviator.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKfGeLoJ...r_embedded

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 03-Apr-11 08:38 PM GMT

3rd April 2011

Local 75 minute walk late morning. One particular Brimstone was interesting. When cloud covered the sun, within a few moments it stopped patrolling – no surprise there. But it chose to rest on the ground between tussocks of grass. I had not before seen them take temporary rest other than in shrubs.

No new species for year until I got back into the garden. A newly emerged Small White flopped onto a plant and could hardly fly. But after a few minutes it warmed up and then chose a delightfully scenic place to land.



Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Susie, 03-Apr-11 10:40 PM GMT

"Jack Harrison" wrote:

3rd April 2011

Local 75 minute walk late morning. One particular Brimstone was interesting. When cloud covered the sun, within a few moments it stopped patrolling - no surprise there. But it chose to rest on the ground between tussocks of grass. I had not before seen them take temporary rest other than in shrubs.

It's interesting you should mention that, Jack. I was going to mention something yesterday in my diary and forgot. I watched a brimstone flying and then, as the weather had turned particularly cold, cloudy and threatened rain it settled low down in an area of dog wood scrub. I saw it go down so made my way over to the particular area of plants to get a photo but it was nowhere to be found. I searched the whole area and it was certain it hadn't flown away but no sign so I eventually gave up. The whole area is pocked with rabbit or possibly fox holes and only afterwards did I wonder if the brimstone had entered one of these to sit out the threatening rain storm.

Beautiful photo of the white too. 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Zonda, 05-Apr-11 12:31 AM GMT

Chasing butterflies in spring, is like chasing young women, when 50 plus. Tiring, and not too fruitful. 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 05-Apr-11 12:43 AM GMT

Zonda bemoaned getting old:

Chasing butterflies in spring, is like chasing young women, when 50 plus. Tiring, and not too fruitful. 😊

Well I wasn't quite 50 when I met my present (and final) wife. I was a sprightly 45 year old, she a mere youngster of 29. Our fourth child was born when I was 53.

So sometimes it does work out.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 05-Apr-11 02:06 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

The whole area is pocked with rabbit or possibly fox holes and only afterwards did I wonder if the brimstone had entered one of these to sit out the threatening rain storm.

Beautiful photo of the white too. 😊

Yes - nice white Jack; blossom makes a much more acceptable backdrop....

I too Susie am thinking of rabbit warrens and badger sets as places for our hibernators. Out on the Fleam Dyke it is riddled with rabbits and 2 or 3 large badger sets; the entrance to one set was 2 feet tall and lined with blocks of stone and chalk, a perfect place to hide-away. Another feature of the badger sets was a lot of nettles around the holes where they dumped their old bedding - perfect for the nettle eaters too.....

Yes, where DO brimstones go when the sun isn't shining, they just melt away!

N

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 05-Apr-11 02:11 AM GMT

"Zonda" wrote:

Chasing butterflies in spring, is like chasing young women, when 50 plus. Tiring, and not too fruitful. 😊

Yes, Zonda - but only to a point; you never can stop chasing them.... 😊

Spring is when young men have that certain look in their eye; older men have that look too, only slightly more wistful.... 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Zonda, 05-Apr-11 02:14 AM GMT

By the Lord Harry,,, you cut that fine, i was a dad at 21, and if i'm honest i was ill prepared. However,,, my 39 year old son still loves me dearly, and his kids are a joy. Your grandchildren are going to kick in when you are on yer deathbed, or after, and that's the reason i would advocate hitching up at a young age. Also,,, i think its about having the energy to be a great DAD, and if you are over 50, that is less likely... Summing up,,,,, baby making is for young people, and having sex for pleasure may be extended into our twilight years, but this pointless occupation soon becomes obvious, and the love of nature takes over. In short, we stop procreating, and start to enjoy the world around us.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 05-Apr-11 02:52 AM GMT

Ooh 'eck Zonda...whatever happens, don't mix your words mate, will you? 😊

I'm hoping (in time!) to disagree with your last couple of remarks. 'Course that's still decades away... 😊

Gibster.

PS- First Orange-tip today, cue a sharp intake as it flew past my face. That's how it happens for me, even after all this time.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Vince Massimo, 05-Apr-11 09:25 PM GMT

"Jack Harrison" wrote:

3rd April 2011. Local 75 minute walk late morning. One particular Brimstone was interesting. When cloud covered the sun, within a few moments it stopped patrolling - no surprise there. But it chose to rest on the ground between tussocks of grass. I had not before seen them take temporary rest other than in shrubs.

"Susie" wrote:

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"NickB" wrote:

Yes, where DO brimstones go when the sun isn't shining, they just melt away!

Hi Jack, Susie and Nick,

I have observed Brimstones roosting under bramble leaves when the sun goes in or the temperature drops. There is a lot of detailed information on this behaviour here:

[http://www.learnaboutbutterflies.com/Br ... rhamni.htm](http://www.learnaboutbutterflies.com/Br...rhamni.htm).

Vince

Re: Jack Harrison

by Susie, 06-Apr-11 03:05 AM GMT

"Zonda" wrote:

this pointless occupation soon becomes obvious, and the love of nature takes over. In short, we stop procreating, and start to enjoy the world around us.

The wiser you are, the sooner the truth of this is realised!

Thanks for the link, Vince.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 06-Apr-11 11:45 PM GMT

At last, an Orange Tip.

Also at Wood Walton Marsh (to north of Huntingdon), first GV White of year. I had to chase it the length of the marsh to wait for it to settle to confirm the i/d. Those of you familiar with Wood Walton Marsh will no doubt be impressed with my energy in managing this athletic feat.



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An amazing 23°C in the Cambridge area.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 08-Apr-11 11:47 PM GMT

Local patch is always late due to height above sea level of about 130 metres **(426 ft 6 1/8th inches)**

But today, two firsts for season, 3 x Holly Blue, 1 x Speckled Wood. And first Orange Tips at this locality.

[color=#804000:10x9abab]*Now doesn't that look absurd? But the BBC and many others do exactly that, convert a round number to an impossibly precise number. My 130 metres was to two significant figures, ie give-or-take five metres.

Today for example, BBC has an article about a WW2 German Bomber found off the Kent Coast that: "sank some 50 ft (15.24m) to the bottom". So the "some 50 ft" mysteriously becomes accurate to the centimetre. I know a lot of school kids throw up their hands in horror at maths lessons and claim they don't need to understand if they are to become journalists, writers, etc. I'm sorry, but that some of nonsense on the BBC and elsewhere is just plain ignorant.*[/color:10x9abab]

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 10-Apr-11 12:57 AM GMT

Saturday 9th April.

Arranged a Green Hairstreak hunt with Nick Ballard (NickB) at Devils Dyke Cambridgeshire where the old railway cutting crosses the Dyke near Burwell TL575652. Just to the southeast of the five-barred gate in the bottom of the dyke was fantastic for Green Hairstreaks. In a 100 metre stretch, we reckoned there were some 15 individuals. Initially, while still coolish at 0930 hours, they stayed low and liked perching on small nettles. But as it warmed, the butterflies became move active and then preferred bushes, eg hawthorn. But they remained very approachable.



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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Zonda, 10-Apr-11 01:38 AM GMT

Gawd!!! i know its gonna be the same as 2010, when i tried my hardest. Running all over the Cerne Giant to no avail. Maybe the GH is not for me..... It maybe my NEMESIS BUTTERFLY, common ,but unattainable, like the damned Jay.

My Waxwing year was the same... NONE EVENTFUL. 😞 Sorry to burden you Jack.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 19-Apr-11 02:45 AM GMT

Susie in action.

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and some good camouflage. It was very easy to lose sight of it even when you knew where it was resting when the sun had gone in.

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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Trev Sawyer, 19-Apr-11 06:53 AM GMT

Apologies for dropping into your diary Jack, but when you went to Mepal for Wall butterfly last year, which drain did you walk along? I *think* you told me the west bank of the Hundred Foot, or was it the Old Bedford or Counterwash which all head North East from roughly the same point? I am hoping to go for a "look-see" sometime in May. I am familiar with the area from my winter pike fishing days, but have never visited in "butterfly mode".

Trev

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 19-Apr-11 10:03 AM GMT

TL442823

It's called Engine Bank. That's the western (actually northwestern) river at the bottom of the bank adjacent to the river itself. But I have seen on top of the bank but I think that they prefer the more sheltered lower parts.

But I have seen near the other river quite close to Mepal but in tiny numbers. I guess they *might* be found anywhere along the banks of the Ouse Washes.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Trev Sawyer, 19-Apr-11 05:13 PM GMT

Thanks Jack,

I thought that was where you meant. The names of the drains there are *extremely* confusing... When I used to fish there a bit, I managed to get my head around the names after some considerable time and believe they are as follows:

The Hundred Foot is actually the large drain which is a short distance to the East of that point (it kinks and moves away from the other two drains before running parallel again). That drain is also called the New Bedford and is *tidal*. The two drains which run very close to each other where the little car park is (ie where you set off I think) are the Old Bedford, and to the left, the Counterwash Drain. Oddly, the name of the Old Bedford changes to the Delph a bit further North at Welches Dam (and the Counterwash becomes the Old Bedford!!!). Ye Gods, Cornelius Vermyuden has a lot to answer for 😊 So, I think you must have walked along the bank between the Old Bedford and the Counterwash.

Cheers,

Trev

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 20-Apr-11 10:10 PM GMT

20th April

I spent the morning gardening but with the camera at the ready. Three Buzzards circling overhead brought back memories of soaring with Buzzards in my glider - that was always a truly magical experience.

This little lady lingered for some time.



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The spring brood is supposed to be a purer blue than the summer brood which tends to be slightly mauvish. This picture seems to bear that out.

It's hard to recognise this Chocolate Tip as an adult moth. It was on the house wall (head is at top).



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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Zonda, 21-Apr-11 02:32 AM GMT

https://lh4.googleusercontent.com/_wGSR...%20001.jpg I saw a couple today, very blue, i thought they looked like 'commons'.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 22-Apr-11 01:05 AM GMT

21st April.

Orange Tips by the score today on high ground in South Cambridgeshire. In the unbroken hot sunshine, males rarely settled. But one male that seemed perfectly healthy and could fly strongly, regularly settled on flower buds and then closed its wings in the typical pose as if it had become cloudy. It did not stir until hassled by another passing butterfly when it would fly strongly for some 30 seconds before landing again.



Also firsts for year: Red Admirals (2) and Large Whites (3)

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 24-Apr-11 12:49 AM GMT

Sunday 23rd April

Tried Mepal Engine bank for Wall Browns but no luck. But I was pointed to a very convenient small public car park that I had not known about at TL443824 – this is close to prime territory for the Walls.

From the A142 take the track at extreme northwest of the northwestern of the two rivers. Pass the pumping station and then there is a small bridge to the left to the car park by a lake, distance just under a mile from the main road. There is then a wooden footbridge to enable access to the main bank at the bottom of which Walls have been seen in the past.

Orange Tips by the scores if not hundreds – what a fantastic year for them. This geriatric Tortosieshell could still fly perfectly well.



Challenge for you PhotoShop experts – mend this one!

I then moved on to Woodwalton Marsh TL213810 for Grizzled Skippers where I saw just one – the second sighting later was probably the same individual.

Just a few kilometres further north at TL201841 are some abandoned railway sidings that from the map and the satellite images looks extremely promising. Unfortunately, this is probably private and inaccessible. However, at TL207824 (near the ruined St. Andrew's Church) there seems to be another promising habitat that must be worth exploring.

I'm now getting excited about re-visiting Haugh Wood (east of Hereford and north of Ross-on-Wye) this week. I last enjoyed the PB Frits and Wood Whites there the best part of 40 years ago and I understand from ukb reports that the PBFs are very good this year and certainly some WWs.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Rosalyn, 24-Apr-11 04:43 AM GMT

Ruined St Andrews Church?? Is that near me at Sawtry?

Re: Jack Harrison

by PhilIB, 24-Apr-11 05:19 AM GMT

Jack

We saw 6 Grizzled Skippers just outside Monks Wood today. I'll have a look at that area you mention tomorrow, on **SUNDAY**

Phil

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 24-Apr-11 06:09 AM GMT

"Jack Harrison" wrote:

But I was pointed to a very convenient small pubic car park that I had not known about at TL443824

Gosh, you have short-and-curly cars up there??? 🤔🤔🤔

Re: Jack Harrison

by Padfield, 24-Apr-11 06:13 AM GMT

"Gibster" wrote:

"Jack Harrison" wrote:

But I was pointed to a very convenient small pubic car park that I had not known about at TL443824

Gosh, you have short-and-curly cars up there??? 🤔🤔🤔

Well spotted, Gibster! 😊😊😊

Guy

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 24-Apr-11 06:27 AM GMT

"padfield" wrote:

Well spotted, Gibster!

What is? Not the pubic car park? Oh gawd...someone book it into a clinic before we're all infected 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 24-Apr-11 10:13 AM GMT

Oh gawd! What a typo can do.

And Rosalyn – I notice that you didn't stoop as low as these coarse men!

St.Andrew's ruined church is indeed quite near (4 kms) Sawtry at approx TL206820 but being to the east of the railway, without a long walk on footpaths, you would need to access via Woodwalton village.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 24-Apr-11 10:27 AM GMT

Sunday 23rd April

EDIT. When I was working, Bank Holidays were no different from any other days of the week so I usually never knew that they existed. I presume that Good Friday had felt like Saturday because there had, for example, been no rubbish collection, or milk delivery. The next day felt like a Sunday. QED.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 24-Apr-11 02:28 PM GMT

EDIT EDIT

My immense confusion as to the day of the week has left me with a huge problem – I don't know which day I am supposed go to church 😡

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 24-Apr-11 09:52 PM GMT

Presumably the Tortoiseshell found fluttering inside our barn had just woken from hibernation. Seems rather late in the season but what other explanation is there?

There was a "Tom and Gerry" scenario in the house this lunchtime when Evie (aka "Tom") showed significant interest in something under the Welsh Dresser. After much effort, the dresser was moved away from the wall (lots of rattling china) and Gerry was finally caught (and then released near someone else's barn!). It was an ordinary House Mouse and I sincerely hope this wasn't/isn't his permanent home. Much more likely was that "Tom" had brought his friend in from our barn.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by PhilB, 24-Apr-11 10:17 PM GMT

Jack

Rosalyn and I went to 'TL207824' this morning. It is **well** worth a visit!!!! More accurately go to TL206823 & TL207822. I think that this may be part of The Wildlife Trust's Five Arches Pit reserve, I will check that out.

Phil

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 24-Apr-11 11:10 PM GMT

Access look difficult. What route did you take?

Presumably some Grizzlies.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by PhilB, 24-Apr-11 11:29 PM GMT

20+ 😊

Park at TL20758269, at the point where the road becomes a track, then walk along the path across the field into the 'reserve'.

No fences or stiles to cross, very easy going.

Don't let initial impressions put you off, make your way to the fields adjacent to the railway.

Happy to meet you there if you're thinking of coming over to God's own country.

Phil

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 25-Apr-11 12:41 AM GMT

Excellent Phil. Fascinating what a little bit of internet research can throw up. You can bet that the railway sidings are as good if not better. I'm sure all along the railway will have suitable places here and there. Prime Grizzlie sites in Cambs I would have thought.

I will aim to get to the accessible site at around 0900 - 0915 on Monday. It's the only day I can make for a while as on Tuesday I go off to Herefordshire (Haugh Wood for PB.Frits and Wood Whites). Then on Friday I believe there's some do in London that will be on telly and I want to see what I am getting for my tax-payers money. I suppose they'd still be around the following week but I like to see them at their best. Don't worry if you or Rosalyn can't make it on Monday but it would be nice to have one or both expert guides.

Dingies at the site a little later perhaps?

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by PhilB, 25-Apr-11 01:14 AM GMT

I'll / we'll be there in the morning, look forward to seeing you.

Not sure about the Dingy at this location, it does look promising for Green Hairstreak but none seen today.

Phil

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 25-Apr-11 01:54 AM GMT

See you at TL206823 & TL207822. A bit more cloud tomorrow and not quite as warm – but that might be a bonus.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 25-Apr-11 08:17 PM GMT

Monday 25th April

Phil Bromley had followed up my hunch based on satellite images and turned up trumps on Sunday. I met Rosalyn Payne and Phil today and we were all again impressed with the numbers of Grizzlies.

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Phil kindly took this picture of an elderly retired Grizzled Skipper (rather craftily not showing my fat bits).

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I returned the compliment.

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Another gorgeous sunny day.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 28-Apr-11 12:08 AM GMT

27 April

Haugh Wood south. Location as indicated earlier by David M. Many thanks, it saved a lot of searching for the hotspot although I was seeing PB Frits elsewhere. Numbers hard to estimate but 40+. The hotspot is about 300 metres to the west of Point 6 on the green butterfly trail.

6 - 8 Wood Whites were seen enjoying remarkably open habitats compared with say the Chiddingfold WWs (with which I am much more familiar). But I thought the numbers were disappointing and not a patch of the superb colonies in Chiddingfold.



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What incredible eyes seen close-up



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Wood White, friend and Orange Tip egg

Also numerous GV Whites, two Large Whites, usual Speckled Woods, single Peacock and single Small Copper. Overhead several Buzzards. But today I didn't hear the (presumed) Ravens that yesterday had been croaking to each other. Kate Wollen, Conservation Ranger for the Forestry Commission in the West Midlands confirmed that several pairs of Ravens are present/breeding and added that they suspect but cannot confirm that Red Kites area also breeding. Kate and another forester I met were most enthusiastic about looking after the butterflies.

Haugh Wood is a superb example of how a wood should be managed for butterflies yet at the same time being a commercial forest.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 29-Apr-11 01:20 AM GMT

28 April

I returned from Herefordshire to Cambs via Prestbury Hill and the Bill Smyllie reserve (Cotswolds). Weather was sunny, windy and cold at just 10°C. More in hope than expectation, I worked my way down the lee slope and this caught my eye. There seemed to be a well sheltered spot at the bottom of the path.



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As I ventured further down the path, hopes rose as I approached the sheltered spot.

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And there were two **Dukes**. One posed beautifully and I got some adequate pictures – but we all know now what a Duke of Burgundy looks like. St.Mark's Flies were everywhere in countless numbers.

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EDIT I've just noticed another beastie in the picture (at the bottom) I have no idea what it is.

I reckoned that as a minimum, there were 10 per square metre. With one hectare = 10,000 square metres, that made the St.Mark's Fly density of 100,000 per hectare or 10 million per square kilometre. So there were a handful St.Mark's Flies on Prestbury Hill today 😊😊 Luckily they show no interest in humans.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 29-Apr-11 05:03 AM GMT

Hi Jack,

your mystery beastie is one of the *Phyllobius* weevils. There are ten or so species in Britain, often abundant where they occur. The silvery green pubescence wears off as they age, leaving a rather bashed looking insect with bare patches.

I accidentally pootered one into my mouth once, and nearly died choking on it. Other than that they're considered harmless! 😊

Gibster.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Charles Nicol, 30-Apr-11 11:57 PM GMT

"PhiliB" wrote:

it does look promising for Green Hairstreak but none seen today.

Phil

i went there this morning... plenty of Grizzled Skippers & 1 Green Hairstreak (+ loads of ants !!)

Charles

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 03-May-11 12:52 AM GMT

Monday 2nd May

Used the pubic car park near Mepal on Engine Bank. This is my "short and curly car". (ref earlier part of this thread)

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No Wall Browns there so I crossed the rivers but again no luck with any Walls. However the most productive area was the meadow at TL439811 just to the southwest of the Mepal pub, "The Three Pickerels".

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Here found first Common Blue of year (1, perhaps 2), first Brown Argus (1/2) Holly Blue (1), Small Copper (2) plus the usual whites.

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Brown Argus

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 03-May-11 08:08 PM GMT

Tuesday 3rd May

Nice garden tick this morning here in South Cambridgeshire – Brown Argus.

This isn't a huge surprise as there is a reasonable colony about 500 metres away in an unimproved meadow. But that is cut-off from my garden by some quite tall trees. I would suspect however that some of my neighbours – many have large gardens – have some rough meadow-like grass instead of manicured lawns, and that is a more likely source for my BA.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 07-May-11 11:16 PM GMT

5th May

Went via Seven Barrows near Lambourn Berkshire on way to Somerset. I don't know if I was too early for the Marsh Fritillaries but I worry as this is fragile colony – last year I saw just one individual there. No luck with Marsh Frits this visit.

Two year ticks at Seven Barrows, Dingy Skipper (there were plenty) and a couple of Small Heaths.

I then went to Sand Point Weston super Mare with a nearby hotel booked for the night. The weather was windy and overcast although not cold. Just two Brown Argus.

6th May

I returned to Sand Point and had just changed into walking boots when as arranged Zonda and his mate Chris arrived. This report repeats that on the

Sand Point thread.

Sand Point was excellent – until I saw Zonda’s photographs when it really came home to me the difference between results from a DSLR and bridge camera. I will be further commenting on camera in the ““DSLRs v Bridge (compacts) – again” thread later but lots of other things to get on with today.

Sand Point is perfect for those of us carrying a little extra body weight; lots of exercise in a good cause. I weighed myself when I got back last evening as I was more than 2 kilograms lighter. Not a real loss of course – mainly de-hydration – but it made me feel good.

We (more correctly) Chris found the hot spot. To get there, opposite the car park, climb the steps and then the rough but easy enough (although steep) track to get to the top of the hill. Pass the seat (very usefully positioned!) and then continue along the crest of the hill. There is a likely looking open slope to the left but we didn’t explore that. Carry on past the concrete trig point and after about 150 metres you come to another open hillside with an obvious track going down towards a stile. (*And yes that is the correct spelling, not style, but I admit to having to look that up*). Stay on the track and in the general area of the stile and fence seems to be a hotspot.

Picture show Chris pointing from the crest of the hill down the slope.



Getting back up the hill is challenging as Zonda demonstrates.



There is possibly a short cut from the car park area which reduces the amount of climbing and descending.

Apart from the 6 to 10 Glanvilles seen (all pristine on 6th so doubtless many more yet to emerge over the coming days) Sand Point positively teemed with Common Blues and Brown Argus. We MIGHT have seen a Small Blue in flight – it didn’t settle before we lost it – but they are difficult to distinguish from small Brown Argus when flying, so only a possibility. Also several Small Coppers and a Wall Brown around the old earthworks at the top.

I had stayed overnight in the Commodore Hotel at Kewstoke, just a couple of miles away. Very reasonable price. I thoroughly recommend it. Excellent beer, marvellous carvery in the evening and superb breakfast. The bedroom was comfortable although I do have to say that this sign could result in some unfortunate consequences if taken too literally.



Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 08-May-11 08:22 PM GMT

8th May

Had a splendid 1.30 hours this in my local meadows in South Cambridgeshire. The trivial amount of overnight rain had clearly triggered a mass emergence. At one point I was almost tripping over Small Heaths (but this is always a good locality). Brown Argus in excellent number for the species. Two Common Blues seen (clearly a little later emerging here than elsewhere) and two sparring Small Coppers – normally quite a scarce butterfly in the

meadows and orchards and not seen every year.



Note the nice in-focus distracting background in the Copper shot, typical of Box Brownies 😊 . But also note that both antennae are sharp.



As a background chorus, Blackcaps out-competing each other, Chiffchaff, mewing Buzzard, Turtle Dove plus some vintage aircraft from nearby Duxford. High flying Boeings and Airbus kept up the professional interest.

This part of the meadow wasn't productive for butterflies as was only to be expected. But it was picturesque and the aroma of the Cow Parsley was quite heady.



Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Neil Freeman, 08-May-11 11:32 PM GMT

I love the shot of the Small Heath Jack.

I have seen a few around so far this year but for me they always seem to settle against a background where they blend in.

I know this is what they are supposed to do, natural camouflage and all that, but just wish that one would show me a bit of consideration occasionally



Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 09-May-11 11:48 PM GMT

9th May – Sad and happy

I was having a coffee outside in the garden when a male Orange Tip landed. Millie the cat was lurking unseen in the bushes and pounced. Bye bye Orange Tip.

Then on checking my captive stock, I found that a male Orange Tip had just emerged. So he was let go high in a shrub; the cat didn't find him.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 11-May-11 01:07 AM GMT

10th May

Bowles Mauve wallflower works its magic again.



Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 13-May-11 02:08 AM GMT

12th May

Swallowtail hunt today. First visit was to How Hill where just one fly-by seen. These Egyptian Geese with four goslings were incredibly tame.



When I chatted to the ranger about the extraordinary habit that Egyptian Geese have of perching in trees, he replied in his best Norfolk accent that they sometimes:

"land on the boathouse roof". Now in Norfolk, "roof" rhymes with "woof" or "poof" and not as per more standard English with "hoof".

Then to Strumpshaw for the guaranteed Swallowtail "fix". A small meadow with Red Champion just off the track towards Dr.George's Swallowtail garden was best with perhaps as many as eight seen. Four or five others seen elsewhere in/near the reserve. No photos. Spent an hour or so with Gibster and Sam who called in on their way to Cley for a bird twitch.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 13-May-11 10:39 AM GMT

Hi again Jack, must say it was a real pleasure bumping into you today. I think Sami may be quite smitten with your cheeky but gentlemanly ways! 😊

We utterly failed with the Great Snipe, bloody thing. But a surprise Lesser Yellowlegs across the marsh was a decent bonus. Check the time of this post...we arrived back home all of 5 minutes ago...

Take care,

Seth and Sami.

EDIT – The time on this site is an hour out, it's currently 2:40am!

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 13-May-11 01:59 PM GMT

I think Sami may be quite smitten with your cheeky but gentlemanly ways! 😊

Ah, another member of my growing female fan base. But when I told my wife about your comments, she wanted it to be known that after she has heard one of my anecdotes for the 200th time, there is a tendency to yawn! I have no idea what she means by that.....

Some years ago I was at Thornton (I think it was) and saw this Redshank with strange coloured legs. I didn't know there was a Lesser Yellowlegs in the area and was a little surprised to have its identity pointed out to me.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Pete Eeles, 13-May-11 03:58 PM GMT

"Gibster" wrote:

EDIT – The time on this site is an hour out, it's currently 2:40am!

You have to change that in your user settings -> board preferences (set BST); it doesn't do this automatically, unfortunately.

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 13-May-11 07:45 PM GMT

13th May – Red Admiral experiment

I tried this experiment yesterday at Strumpshaw but got sidetracked. The experiment was concluded more successfully today.

The aim was to determine the origin of our Red Admirals. So I have been humming some National Anthems to see which ones produce a response from the butterfly.

"God Save the Queen" produced no excitement whatsoever (but it doesn't to me either)

"Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" was ignored.

However "La Marseillaise" did the trick. It opened its wings and thought of France.

So there we are. Origin of our Red Admirals solved.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 14-May-11 10:17 PM GMT

14th May

My elder son has just started training as a pilot.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZgo2puA7RY>

He clearly has a bit to learn from his old dad. (*Don't fly under the influence*).

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Padfield, 14-May-11 11:41 PM GMT

After your previous post, Jack, about patriotic butterflies, I guess I'm supposed to respond to the William Tell Overture in the background of that movie!

Guy from CH

Re: Jack Harrison

by Zonda, 15-May-11 03:03 AM GMT

Sorry, but whenever i hear this piece of music, i thnk of 'The Lone Ranger'.

Re: Jack Harrison

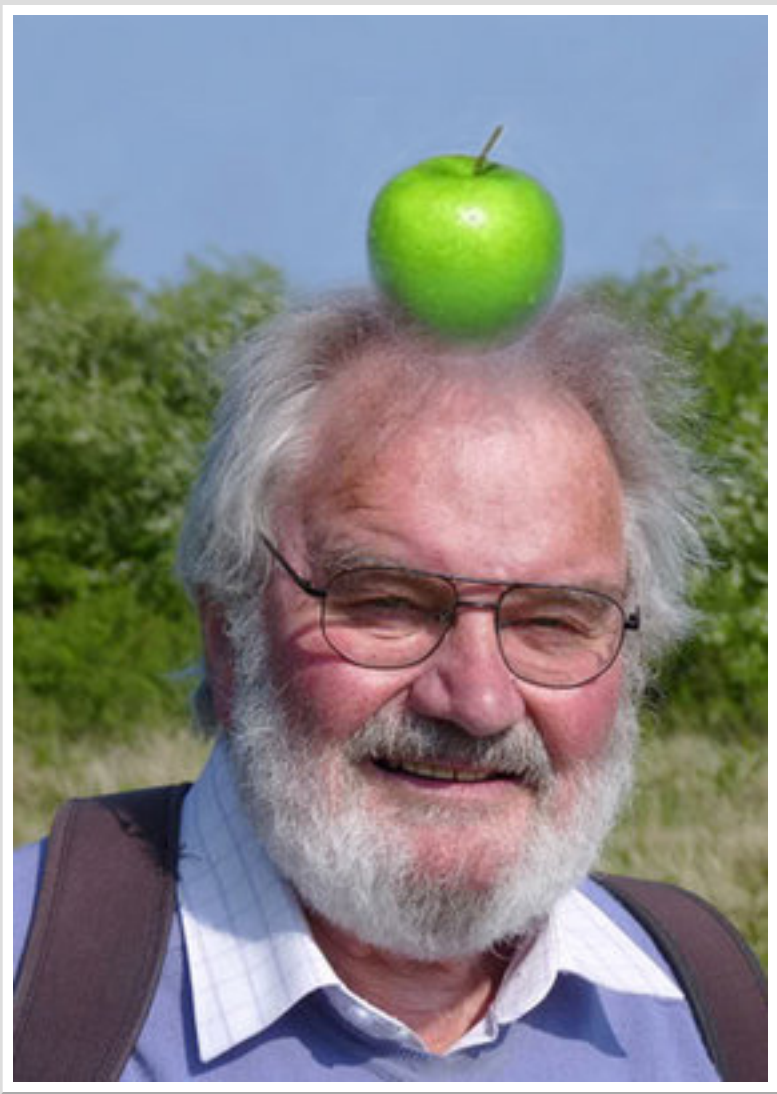
by NickB, 15-May-11 05:25 AM GMT

"padfield" wrote:

After your previous post, Jack, about patriotic butterflies, I guess I'm supposed to respond to the William Tell Overture in the background of that movie!

Guy from CH

How about this, Guy?



Re: Jack Harrison

by Padfield, 15-May-11 05:41 AM GMT



Cap'n Jack finally earns his pips...

Guy

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 15-May-11 06:10 AM GMT

A thoroughly nice chap right through to the core (groan....) 😄

Re: Jack Harrison

by Trev Sawyer, 15-May-11 06:39 AM GMT

Stop these puns at once boys – they are making my eyes sting.... They're getting cornea and cornea 😄

Trev

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 15-May-11 03:39 PM GMT

When I met Zonda recently, I was surprised to hear that he had never flown.

“I wouldn’t be happy that I had no control over the situation being in other people’s hands.”

“Come on Frank, you would be flying with people like me.”

But I suppose Zonda does have a point. If you boarded your aircraft and saw that the pilot had an apple on his head.....

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 15-May-11 05:34 PM GMT

..I try to comfort people who dislike flying by telling them that it isn't flying at all!
...it's actually a controlled fall....!

Somehow, that doesn't seem to help... 😊
N

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 15-May-11 06:50 PM GMT



Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 15-May-11 07:11 PM GMT

As Guy said once: "This is MY diary".

So – to quote Sir Mick (*including the appalling grammar*)

"Hey! You! Get off of my cloud"

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 15-May-11 08:31 PM GMT

15th May – Local meadows

Rather cloudy with only occasional sun. 12°C.

Observed how two species, Small Heath and Brown Argus went to ground immediately the sun became hidden behind cloud.



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But just a little sun and they were active again. This Small Heath obligingly landed on Cow Parsley but within a few seconds (as normal) retracted its forewings. But giving the merest of shakes on the plant this was the result.

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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 22-May-11 05:38 PM GMT

22nd May

I have stayed locally the past few days. The meadows are rapidly dying out although last night's magnificent 0.5 mm of rain will have helped 😊😊

Yesterday was typical. In an hour's amble, Small Heaths seen about once every 20 metres with Brown Argus (a very good year for this species) at about half that density. Just one Orange Tip, half a dozen each of Small Whites and Brimstones. GV Whites seem to be over for this brood. One possible Large Skipper in flight but not confirmed. Several fresh Speckled Woods.

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The crunch will come in the next few weeks when the Browns and Skippers emerge. I would anticipate lower numbers in particular Ringlets which enjoy damper conditions. Marbled Whites should do well enough though. However, unless it rains substantially and there is some new growth, I fear very much for next year.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 05-Jun-11 12:56 AM GMT

4th June

I visited Monk's Wood to the north of Huntingdon and came across two people acting very strangely.

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Apparently these two grown men WERE PHOTOGRAPHING BUTTERFLIES!!! And after speaking to them, I learn that Nigel (on the right) won't be chasing butterflies on Sunday but instead is planning to whack a little white ball around hoping it will disappear down a hole in the ground. What strange interests some people have!

It is Black Hairstreak silly season. Nigel was holding down a branch so that Bill could take a photo. I was persuaded to join in this daft game.

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Perhaps 40+ sightings although how many were repeats is hard to say. Speckled Woods were numerous.

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and Large Skipper numbers are building up but so far only males seen.

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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 15-Jun-11 02:50 AM GMT

14th June Local.

Indeed, very local. First Ringlet of year seen in garden before my walk. Didn't see another.

Meadow Browns now in good numbers but nearly all males expect this pair.



Small Heaths still in extraordinary numbers; the brood timings are difficult to fathom as they have been around for many weeks now.

First Small Skippers, again in good numbers.



Fewer Large Skippers.



Three aged Brown Argus.

The meadow doesn't quite compare with the Alpine ones that make us so jealous but not a bad showing of Pyramidal Orchids for Cambridgeshire.



Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 17-Jun-11 12:57 AM GMT

16th June

Another useful 5 mms of rain today making a total so far this month of 27 mms. I had hoped that the rain might have resulted in a mass emergence. Well, local meadows were full of new individuals but not in truth in spectacular numbers.

First Marbled White of year, but newly emerged and weak and was blown hither and thither by the wind.

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Ringlets in small numbers

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Meadow Brown building but still mainly males.

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Small Heaths as always in this locality in very good numbers.

Large Skippers less active than usual but temperature was a mere 16° with cloud.

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Very fresh male Common Blue, presumably 2nd brood.

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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 20-Jun-11 02:04 AM GMT

19th June Bedford Purlieus

An excellent morning with Nick, Phil and Rosalyn. S.W.Fritillaries were amazingly co-operative. Nick was in heaven when one landed on him.

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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 20-Jun-11 04:38 AM GMT

More 19th June Bedford Purlieus

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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Rosalyn, 20-Jun-11 05:34 AM GMT

Nice pics Jack 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 21-Jun-11 01:21 AM GMT

20th June

This might be a new garden tick – not sure if I've seen Large Skipper here before. Resting on *Choisya ternata*. They could be breeding in the garden as the grass in the background is left long and rough "in hope".

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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by ChrisC, 21-Jun-11 03:31 AM GMT

i hope its a regular Jack, they are great fun to watch. i had one make its territory slap bang in the middle of the garden last year it chased everything. fantastic creatures.

Chris

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 26-Jun-11 12:58 PM GMT

25th June Sharpshoe Clappers (near Barton-le-Clay, Beds)

Very disappointing 40 minutes. Instead of the usual clouds of Marbled Whites, I saw just five. Meadow Browns were even worse with three. Three Small Whites. One Red Admiral but not a single Dark Green Fritillary. The hillside is now lush but clearly the earlier drought had a devastating effect.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 30-Jun-11 09:52 PM GMT

30th June Bailieborough co Cavan, Ireland

Not been out searching properly yet but plenty of Ringlets on waste ground. The habitat is much more open than would be typical in England.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 02-Jul-11 07:26 PM GMT

1st July Bailieborough co Cavan, Ireland

Masses of Ringlets. Small numbers of Meadow Browns and Speckled Woods. One white seen in flight but probably too fat to be a Reals – probably GVW.

Meadow Browns quite colourful here.



And note that I have already started "training" my new "friend".



Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 02-Jul-11 10:50 PM GMT

Glad to see it, Jack!

What happens, tho', when she shows she is better than the teacher... 😊 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 04-Jul-11 06:57 PM GMT

4th July Bailieborough co Cavan, Ireland

Ringlets are by far the most numerous butterfly occurring in the usual woodland but also in quite open rough meadows.

Meadow Browns and Speckled Woods are quite scarce being only at about 2% of the density of Ringlets. The "woodland" whites have turned out – as expected – to be quite small GV Whites. They seem to fly fast here. Two Small Tortoiseshells.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 09-Jul-11 07:02 PM GMT

1st week July central Ireland

Nothing exciting. Common Blue, GV White, Speckled Wood, Tortoiseshell all looked pretty "standard". Meadow Browns seem slightly brighter than their English cousins and I cannot recall seeing one settled on stones in this manner.

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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 10-Jul-11 03:30 AM GMT

Hiya Jack, I'm jealous of your trip!

Irish races you should be aware of (although I'm sure you are...) and features to observe are:

Wood White *ssp hibernica* – only on The Burren it seems. Hindwing undersides are distinctly greenish–yellow and it's a stronger flier than the UK race.
Brimstone *ssp gravesi* – the males are less vivid yellow than in UK and the females more yellow. Both somewhat midway between typical British male and female colouration.

Green–veined White *ssp britannica* – very heavily marked hindwing underside and higher incidence of creamy coloured specimens than in UK

Small Copper *ssp hibernica* – orange band on upperside of hindwing very broad. Undersides very greyish all over.

Common Blue *ssp mariscolore* – male forewing rather pointed. Female is large with extensive blue scaling on uppers and large orange lunules.

Dark Green Fritillary *ssp scotica* – female forewing very rounded, under–forewing tinged pinkish, hindwing green is darker and tinged brown. Male under–hindwing has silver spots conspicuously black edged

Grayling *ssp clarensis* – endemic to Burren. Very pale and chalky looking (so probably only lands on stonewashed jeans! 😊)

Grayling *ssp hibernica* – warm browns and deeper orange forewing underside than in UK

Meadow Brown ssp *iernes* – large size. Male upper forewing has larger orange band and eyespot is usually double-pupilled. Under forewing orange area distinctly paler to outer edge with a dividing brown line. Female upper forewing has orange band extensive but always broken by a brown line. Under hindwing as male but stronger contrast.

In case anyone thinks I'm REALLY good at Irish butterflies, I'm not. All that came out of the wonderful Riley book! 😊

Hope you see lots more, Jack. And hope you manage to show us some of the relevant features you see too!

All the very best,

Gibster.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 15-Jul-11 06:58 PM GMT

I'm still in Ireland but have very limited internet and can't add any pictures due local rules, eg of the very heavily marked race of GV.White. New addition to my Irish list: Peacock.

Next week I move back to England and will be living in northwest Norfolk in North Wootton just to the north of Kings Lynn but there will still be some shuttling between there are Co.Cavan Ireland. Complicated scenario – my life has taken a surprising turn as you will have realised.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 16-Jul-11 02:09 AM GMT

"Jack Harrison" wrote:

Complicated scenario – my life has taken a surprising turn as you will have realised.

You think *THAT'S* complicated, Jack? It seems that Real's Wood Whites are actually another species altogether – dubbed "Cryptic Wood White" for the moment. Real's probably doesn't occur closer than Northern Spain, it seems. Time to rewrite the books...or should they give it another few months to let the full tale unfurl?

Take care mate,

Gibster.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Susie, 16-Jul-11 02:11 AM GMT

It'll work itself out x

Re: Jack Harrison

by EricY, 16-Jul-11 03:46 AM GMT

welcome to North West Norfolk Jack. might see you around again & look forward to your experienced eye finding us some local rarities. Eric

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 16-Jul-11 04:03 AM GMT

Be good to have you back in the East Anglian chapter of LOTSW..... 🍷

N

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 16-Jul-11 06:59 PM GMT

Susie: It'll work

Yes it's working fine and am even getting on top of the financial sorting out.

And a great thanks to you Susie and Nick B who were my "confidants" during the initial stages of the break up of my marriage and my subsequent relationship.

Life is great but the 2011 butterfly season has taken a bit of a back seat. Stella and I look forward to meeting some of the ukb members next season once we have sorted out houses etc.

PS. Anyone want to buy a house in Ireland? 😊

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Susie, 16-Jul-11 08:17 PM GMT

I think I told you at the start it would all end in tears! 😊 I am so pleased to be proven wrong and glad it has worked out well. As for butterflies, you aren't missing anything today; rain's torrential.

You've taken a very brave course of action. It's nice to know that there is always time to seek happiness.<3

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 16-Jul-11 09:01 PM GMT

And I did point to different outcomes too; though, of course, any chance of happiness in this life – go for it – life is too short to wonder...
N

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 16-Jul-11 11:09 PM GMT

Central Ireland mid July

Quite the most abundant butterfly is Ringlet. Plenty of heavily marked GV Whites,



Also Meadow Brown (colourful), Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Common Blue and a possible Holly Blue.

Here is me outside my Irish residence 😊😊 .



(In fact where Stella's mother was born in 1918)

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 17-Jul-11 03:43 AM GMT

Have you been partaking in the local brew, Jack??? Or is it the house that's on a slippery slope, lol 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 22-Jul-11 08:57 PM GMT

Northwest Norfolk 22nd July

We're slowly getting organised in our new house but many things still need to be sorted; we don't yet have a washing machine for example. Pity the Purple emperor season is past its best; my unwashed clothes would no doubt be a prime attraction! (In reality, I have been using someone else's washing machine until we get our own next week).

Seriously, things are gradually falling into place. I have even got a TV licence; however, that was almost impossible to buy without being online. And then I got the wonderful message: "Congratulations, your application for a TV licence was successful" as if I had won the lottery 😊. If my application had been unsuccessful, no doubt I would have incurred a criminal record. Funny old world.

I'm begging and borrowing internet for the time being but I should be online at home by middle of next week.

The potential garden list is impressive. My new property adjoins the western edge of Ling Common to the north of Kings Lynn. In the limited time I have had available, I have already seen Peacock, Comma and Red Admiral, Speckled Wood, large and Green-veined White with the most abundant species of being Large Skipper. I haven't yet seen Purple Hairstreak but with mature Oak and Ash just over the garden hedge, they must be present.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 22-Jul-11 09:35 PM GMT

...and well placed for a day-trip by the sea-side to Hunstanton and SSB in Norfolk..... 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 22-Jul-11 10:34 PM GMT

...and well placed for a day-trip by the sea-side to Hunstanton and SSB in Norfolk..... 😊

And just round the corner from Hunstanton is the splendid Holme reserve and further along the coast Holkham and Kelling. Being both "senior citizens" (no work constraints) we were quite flexible where we chose to live. Far be it for me to dare suggest that the appeal of our house had anything to do with its convenient location as far as wildlife is concerned 😊 No, it's ideal for the shopping centre Kings Lynn with its large Tesco, PC World, Argos and all those delightful retail establishments that are so few and far between 🤔😞

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 25-Jul-11 09:12 PM GMT

24th July North Wootton (northwest Norfolk)

Two more for the garden list in my new home: Purple Hairstreak (confirmed – several seen at 1900 hours) and a single Holly Blue. Surprisingly, no Gatekeepers so far.

So I'm very satisfied that this is a good location. I had never thought that I might live somewhere and be able to watch Purple Hairstreaks from *inside* the house. The habitat is superb and it would not surprise me to see SW Fritillary or White Admiral one day.

Here's the view from the back garden. Commas are numerous with up to four being seen at once. (one ringed and then close up).



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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Paul Wetton, 25-Jul-11 09:19 PM GMT

Excellent stuff Jack. Lovely looking garden.

Good luck to you

Re: Jack Harrison

by selbypaul, 26-Jul-11 04:41 AM GMT

Very jealous Jack, although I do have 4 Gatekeeper!

Re: Jack Harrison

by Willow, 26-Jul-11 04:48 AM GMT

Looks like you've found a lovely location. First garden **Comma** of the year for me too today Jack...no **Purple Hairstreak** though!!!

Bill 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 02-Aug-11 06:15 PM GMT

2nd August - middle of Irish Sea

I can still only send limited reports to ukb as I haven't yet got internet at home (why it takes so long beats me). It is supposed to be up and running today, but I won't be able to confirm until next week. Meanwhile, I'm sending this from the ferry on way to Ireland. Both of us return to Norfolk next week.

No butterflies out here of course, but Gannets, Guillemots, (Manx?) Shearwaters and (Storm?) Petrels.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by dave brown, 02-Aug-11 09:20 PM GMT

2nd August - middle of Irish Sea

Hello Jack,

Sorry to jump in on your personal forum but I would say that your assumption that the birds you are seeing are Manx Shearwaters and Storm Petrels is almost certainly correct (if you are asking for confirmation by the question mark). You may already be aware but it is known that both species are moving off the West Coast at the moment and if your Shearwater looks black on top and white on the underneath of the wings then you have Manx. This black and white effect can be quite distinctive as they bank and glide low across the water. Sooty Shearwater looks all dark / black as it banks and is larger. Its a little early for Leaches Petrel so I think its safe to say the Petrels are Storm. Late August/ September is prime time for Leaches, so any crossings you make then could be interesting (and possibly a little rougher).

Enjoy your time in Ireland.

Dave

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 03-Aug-11 11:31 PM GMT

Thanks for the "confirmed" (well, the suggested i/ds). Later in the crossing (Holyhead to Dublin Port), several (Arctic?) Skuas. On the south side of Dublin Port, there is a huge colony of Terns (I would presume Common Terns) perhaps numbering one thousand plus. Just as the ferry entered its berth, I had a good view looking down at a Black Guillemot, the white wing patches much more easily seen from above than in a normal surface-to-sea view.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 08-Aug-11 08:42 PM GMT

Co.Cavan Ireland 7th August

Another addition to my Irish list: Painted Lady. One was seen "hill-topping" on the highest hill in the county, all of 340 metres above sea level (but only involved a 50 metres of so climb from the car park) The hill - locally known as "The Mountain" - is between Bailieborough and the delightfully named village of Muff. This was the first time I had experienced genuine hill-topping; the butterfly hung around for a few minutes on the cairn, allegedly the burial place of an earlier chieftain (presumably called Paddy).

Heavily marked Green-veined Whites are abundant at the moment. A few lingering and tatty Meadow Browns and Ringlets were seen on the lower wooded areas. One fresh Speckled Wood.

My Irish list to date:

*GV White,
Large White,
Small Tortoiseshell,
Peacock,
Red Admiral,
Painted Lady,
Meadow Brown,
Ringlet,
Speckled Wood,
Common Blue,
Holly Blue (possible - not confirmed)*

We return to the King's Lynn area on Wednesday but certainly plan future visits to Ireland. The Burren is a "must" at some point.

Jack

Northwest Norfolk

by Jack Harrison, 07-Sep-11 01:46 AM GMT

I have been looking up what I might expect in this area to where I have just moved.

I see from a distribution map: [http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/distribu ... ecies=iris](http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/distribu...pecies=iris) that there is a dot for Purple Emperor very close to where I live at TF648242 (to the north of King's Lynn). Indeed, the dot might well cover Ling Common which adjoins my garden.

Does anyone have any knowledge of the presence or otherwise of PE in NW Norfolk?

There is also a dot in the same area for White Admiral. I would confidently expect to find WA in this area but have less confidence about PE.

Another possibility (though not in the woods) is Marbled White in the more open areas.

Eric. Can you throw any light on these matters? You live quite close I believe.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 19-Sep-11 03:05 AM GMT

A couple of amusing places I have come across recently. The *Original Butterfly Man* near Llangollen North Wales makes wall ceramics.



Website: <http://www.theoriginalbutterflyman.co.uk/>

But this is a greater puzzle. The *Cabbage White* in Midhurst Sussex has no connection with butterflies whatsoever. The shop owner took over the business last year and has no idea how the name originated. She agreed that it would have been difficult to have invented a less charismatic butterfly name. She would appreciate (via me) any ideas as to the origin of the name.

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Website: <http://www.cabbage-white.com/>

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by millerd, 19-Sep-11 03:22 AM GMT

The Butterfly Man has done up the outside of the place beautifully since last I drove past! He is to be applauded for painting his creations as real British species, rather than some of the commercial junk one sees offered for sale. It's fun to try and spot the ones he's sold as you drive around the UK. There are a couple just round the corner from here in fact.

Dave

Orange Tip pupae

by Jack Harrison, 19-Sep-11 11:36 PM GMT

I have six, apparently healthy pupae (one is the green form) that date from May 2010. Now I have several times deliberately kept OT pupae in the fridge and successful emergence occurred almost two years after they were formed. But the ones I am referring to now have always been in reasonably natural conditions, ie in the garage. Next April will be interesting.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Zonda, 20-Sep-11 12:34 AM GMT

And here's me,,, with only sausages in the fridge. The only product of this will be a foul wind..... I hope your fridge will yield more Jack... 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 20-Sep-11 12:38 AM GMT

..more protein in your sausages, I suspect, than in Jack's fridge of pupae..... 😊

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 20-Sep-11 01:07 AM GMT

No pupae in fridge at the moment.

I digress to discuss birds:

"If we are going to teach 'creation science' as an alternative to evolution, then we should also teach the stork theory as an alternative to biological reproduction."

Judith Hayes, In God We Trust: But Which One?

I love it.

Jack

Dawn Patrol

by Jack Harrison, 15-Oct-11 09:17 PM GMT

Snettisham (nr Hunstanton) from 30 minutes before sunrise. Not the biggest of high tides for the *Wader Spectacular* but impressive nonetheless.

One or two Knot in this picture 🙄 Camera: my old trusty ancient Canon A650.

Info for the purists - contrast enhanced 😊

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And this link (not my video though): [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BY3nC7R2 ... re=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BY3nC7R2...re=related) gives an even better idea.

Oh, and one Red Admiral seen at 0905 hrs not going anywhere in particular unlike recent sightings when they were flying south in determined fashion.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 16-Oct-11 03:45 AM GMT

The other end of the day at nearby Heacham.

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This birding can become addictive (outside the butterfly season of course).

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Padfield, 16-Oct-11 04:05 AM GMT

Really beautiful colours in those wader and gull pictures, Jack. That is something I miss out here.

Guy

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 17-Oct-11 02:52 AM GMT

Sunday 16th October

I have in the past found that some birding groups are somewhat elitist and “talk down” to those who can’t identify a particular bird from a millisecond glimpse. Surely there must be a birding equivalent to this friendly butterfly group?

Anyway, for the moment until I find the right group, a few highlights from today, Titchwell and nearby Choseley Barns:

Titchwell

Bittern flew over an assembled crown giving first rate views (but it did distract from the *Bearded Tits* that we were trying to follow)

Siskin flock of circa 50 (pointed out by an expert)

Stonechat

Gannets off shore

Chris Packham on a promotional visit (I needed no help with the i/d)

Golden Plover – Splendid flock of many hundreds

Small Whites x 2

Choseley Barns

Tree Sparrow

Corn Bunting

Merlin

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by MikeOxon, 17-Oct-11 04:24 AM GMT

"Jack Harrison" wrote:
some birding groups are somewhat elitist

Yes, I have found that too but, perhaps, it is because birds are a lot more difficult to I.D. in the field than (most) butterflies. I find that with birds, it is just a case of constant practice and no short cuts are available. I amaze myself with what I can identify now, which would have been impossible for me, a few years ago, but I wouldn't know how to teach someone else. I have an awfully long way to go, compared with many people I know.

I also agree, as many others have said, that this forum is one of the friendliest sites on the web.

Mike

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 23-Oct-11 04:03 PM GMT

I wrote yesterday morning, 22nd October, before going out for the day on the north Norfolk coast:

Target for the day: "Seagull" 🙄

Ah yes, I did see a couple of "seagulls" – very exciting.

I also saw a few mundane birds:

Golden Pheasant (Wolferton Triangle)

Immigrant *Short eared Owl* off the sea at Salthouse.

Also at Salthouse:

Dozen *Guillemots* some very close

Similar number *Red-throated Divers* also close

Pair of *Eider*

(Probable) pair of *Long-tailed Ducks*

Single *Slavonian Grebe*

Flocks of *Common Scoter*

And at Burnham Overy Mill hunting *Barn Owl* at dusk.

Oh, and I almost forgot (but hardly worth mentioning) was a mad "**October**" *Hare* at Salthouse. He was seen running across the saltmarsh, straight up over the high shingle bank, down the other side and then carried on into the sea. He *swum* out about 40 or 50 metres and then realised that Scandinavia was rather a long way so thought better of it and dog-paddled back to the beach. Fortunately, four other people witnessed this (one got some reasonable photos) otherwise I might have thought I was hallucinating. None of us had never seen, or indeed, heard of this behaviour.

On our return, *The Old Coach House* at Thornham offered good beer and decent pub grub.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by EricY, 24-Oct-11 01:30 AM GMT

Good day to go down the Norfolk coast yesterday Jack. I had planned to do that myself but a bad nights sleep meant up late & too nq'd to go far. Just went local to KH wood, nothing much, few fungi & 2 RA's, wish I had been down the coast! Eric

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 24-Oct-11 02:25 AM GMT

I am now posting on a more appropriate group:

<http://www.birdforum.net/>

with some good sightings from today

<http://www.birdforum.net/showthread.php... 8&page=547>

Eric. Send me a PM so that we can meet up at some point. We must live quite near each other.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by NickB, 24-Oct-11 03:13 AM GMT

"Jack Harrison" wrote:

I am now posting on a more appropriate group:

with some good sightings from today <http://www.birdforum.net/showthread.php... 8&page=547> Jack

After reading the rather petty squabbling about *who-saw-what-when* on that thread you posted, I am glad that Aurelians seem a rather more dignified bunch (well, most of the time 🍷)at least if UKB is anything to go by!
N

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 24-Oct-11 03:49 AM GMT

Nick:

After reading the rather petty squabbling about *who-saw-what-when* on that thread you posted, I am glad that Aurelians seem a rather more dignified bunch (well, most of the time 🍷)at least if UKB is anything to go by!

Yet in the field, I am finding (unlike 10 years ago when there was a dreadfully elitist culture) almost all the birders I have met recently are only too willing to help or to admit that they just don't know. I came across two blokes today who clearly are pretty competent (certainly had superb eyesight). Yet they were prepared to admit that a Little Brown Job some distance away had them puzzled. I - very bravely - suggested "female Stonechat" to which they then agreed. So all three of us were now happy and there had been no rancour.

It has to be said that birds can be very much more difficult than butterflies. Our only really difficult species-pair are Small and Essex Skippers. They are a piece of cake to separate compared with say Manx and Balearic Shearwaters; I saw some shearwaters today but I'm damned if I know which species they were. Mind you, they were probably nearer the Lincolnshire coast than the Norfolk beach where I was, so I did have some excuse!

Oh, and the inevitable Red Admiral.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 17-Nov-11 04:11 AM GMT

16th November. Surprise Brimstone Roydon Common near King's Lynn

Jack



Re: Jack Harrison

by Trev Sawyer, 17-Nov-11 05:18 AM GMT

... and the Short-Eared Owls have made it over to your *old* neck of the woods too Jack...

Here's one of a considerable number which are swanning (owling) around the Cambridgeshire Fens at the moment, which I snapped on Sunday:



Trev

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 17-Nov-11 06:44 AM GMT

"Jack Harrison" wrote:

Yet in the field, I am finding (unlike 10 years ago when there was a dreadfully elitist culture) almost all the birders I have met recently are only too willing to help or to admit that they just don't know.

It has to be said that birds can be very much more difficult than butterflies.

Hello Jack, long time no see! 😊

The birding community is not what it was, that's for damn sure. It used to be lots of middling/hopefully improving folks with an underlying population of keen and knowledgeable chaps (yep, almost 100% exclusively chaps) who very often found or correctly identified (and twitched) a goodly proportion of the rarer species.

Nowadays there are still lots of middling/hopefully improving folks, and the underlying population of (often amazingly talented) birders/twitchers...plus hordes of idiots merrily claiming to be "ticking" somebody else's Blyth's Reed Warbler – when they'd never even heard of one before until the pager told them about it this morning, haven't a clue which features are diagnostic, won't be able to find it unless there's a sizeable crowd already onto the bird, and wouldn't recognise another one if it perched up in front of them the following day. Then they go home happy after ticking off a Chiffchaff, coz none of the other muppets at the twitch knew what to look for either 😡 It's very easy to kit yourself up with an amazing scope, top end binoculars, giant lens DSLR, etc etc. It's another thing entirely to have a working knowledge of the subject matter.

The "dreadfully elitist culture" you mention is still very much alive and kicking, Jack. Its just they are harder to spot amongst the gaggles of idiots that roam the reserves nowadays. That's why they all talk to each other – in the hope that somebody can firm-up at dodgy sighting for them. I say talk, I mean holler, obviously. Often into a mobile phone. Fieldcraft? Habitat preservation? Hide etiquette? Wuts dat den? 😡😡

(Soapbox...off) Sorry to rant, but certain things just p1\$\$ me off nowadays. Must be getting old, lol

All the very best,

Gibster.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 17-Nov-11 03:47 PM GMT

You are so right Gibster. I briefly joined a Norfolk group but after seeing many posts along these lines:

With the greatest respect: it's only a Black-throated Diver! You either saw it or you didn't: no-one else is really bothered either way!

They were condescending in the extreme and only ever seemed to talk about Olivaceous Siberian Twits (*or something like that*). There was no way you were allowed to get any pleasure from seeing a Robin on your bird feeder; that was beneath contempt.

I no longer bother with that group.

Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by Gibster, 17-Nov-11 05:51 PM GMT

Morning Jack,

I think it's all too easy to become condescending/magnanimous/elitist from the safety of a computer keyboard in a dim understairs cupboard. What if that Black-throated Diver was a Pacific Diver? So often newbies are scoffed at, but it was a newbie that found our only record of Long-billed Murrelet. Another newbie had Brown-headed Cowbird, the list goes on.

Proper birders have earned their pips, they understand the mistakes that can be made because they've made them already, and learned from them. They don't scoff. The rank amateurs who THINK they know everything are the scoffers. It's a very very annoying facet of internet forums.

You coming to the Wiltshire bash Jack? 26th Nov. Be good to see you again!! 😊

Gibster.

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 20-Nov-11 01:11 AM GMT

19th November. No butterflies but marvellous lighting at RSPB Titchwell. I watched this Black-headed Gull diving for small prey for perhaps 30 minutes. It would gradually work its way southwards along a channel and then return to the northern end and start all over again.

I'm glad we no longer use film; it would have cost a fortune as of course most photos today were failures. I all but filled the memory card.

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Jack

Re: Jack Harrison

by millerd, 20-Nov-11 01:20 AM GMT

Lovely photos. That dive deserves a "10" from the judges: not a splash!

Dave

Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 20-Nov-11 01:55 AM GMT

Unlike Gannets which must surely only get 2 points – their splash can be seen from half a mile away.

Jack

Why didn't I get one?

by Jack Harrison, 31-Dec-11 09:44 PM GMT

BBC headline:

Obesity pioneer given knighthood

I'm older than the Professor so I must have qualified before he did.

Jack