

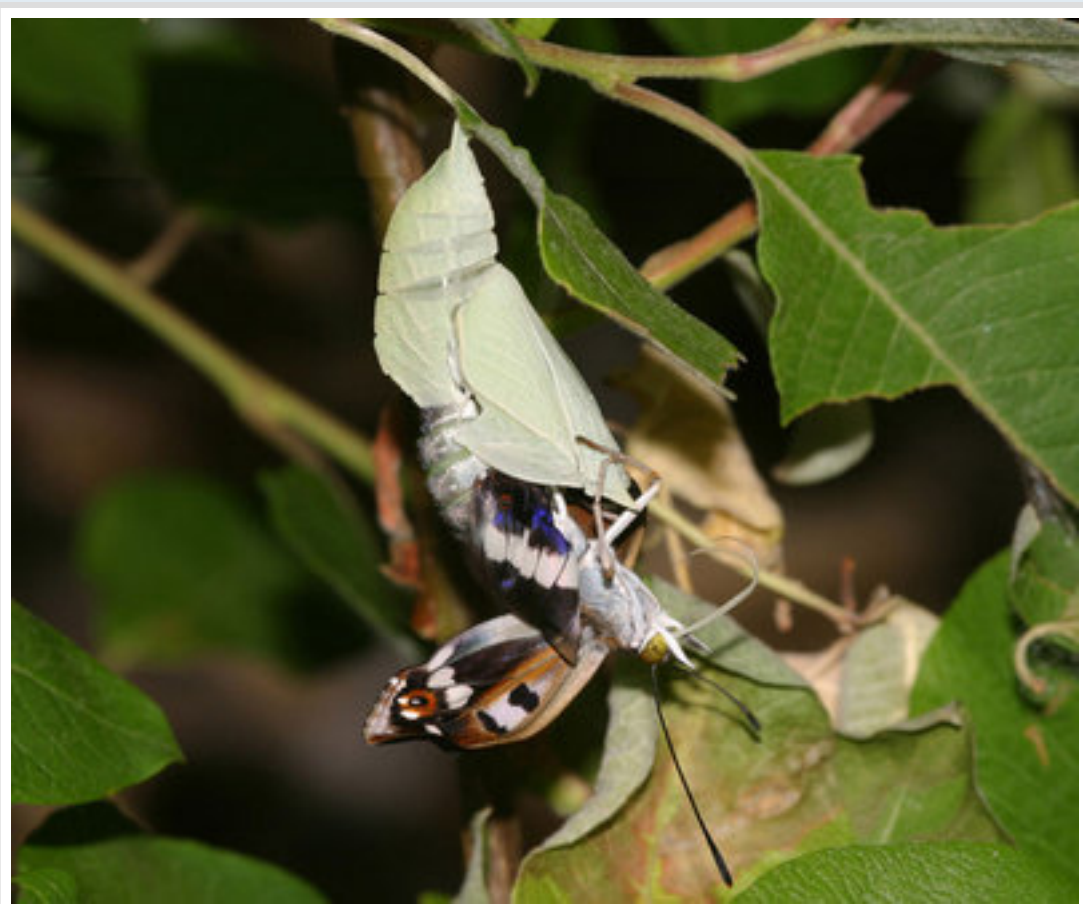
**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 11-Jan-11 04:55 PM GMT

Looking through some old images, I came across this series of a little-seen spectacle of a male Purple Emperor emerging from the pupa. Enjoy!

Cheers,

- Pete











**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Neil Hulme, 11-Jan-11 05:14 PM GMT

Hi Pete,  
Just what we wanted on a dull January day. Lovely sequence culminating in an iconic image.  
Neil

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Jack Harrison, 11-Jan-11 06:02 PM GMT

Absolutely brilliant Pete.

But the cynic in me has to ask: was it in the wild or bred by you? It doesn't matter which as I doubt that has ever before been photographed so beautifully.

Jack

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 11-Jan-11 06:15 PM GMT

Thanks chaps. Yes, this was bred in captivity and I really need to transcribe the various notes I made regarding the larval and pupal development (albeit in captive-bred conditions). I had another emerge the day before at exactly 0830. This critter emerged at 0832 and, this time, I was prepared! Seeing the first glimpses of purple on the wings was a real "wow" moment for me.

Cheers,

- Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Paul Wetton, 11-Jan-11 06:18 PM GMT

Great photos Pete.

I'd love to have a go at time lapse with something like this using my XL2 video camera. I'll need to read up again how it works.

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Vince Massimo, 11-Jan-11 07:44 PM GMT

Blimey! That woke me up. Beautiful images Pete. I imagine you have lots of photos tucked away like that. Always a joy when you re-discover them. Thanks for sharing 🍷.

How long ago were they taken?

Vince

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 11-Jan-11 07:48 PM GMT

**"Vince Massimo" wrote:**  
How long ago were they taken?

Thanks Vince – taken in 2004.

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 12-Jan-11 04:45 AM GMT

### "Sussex Kipper" wrote:

Hi Pete,

Just what we wanted on a dull January day. Lovely sequence culminating in an iconic image.

Neil

Absolutely. That last image in particular is to die for. Roll on summer.

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 12-Jan-11 05:06 AM GMT

Fantastic sequence, Pete.

You will remember I tried to photograph the same thing last summer, in the wild, and it all failed because the pupa had been parasitised. On 5th January this year I was wandering in the same woods and saw a willow leaf attached to a tree by a silken thread. On closer examination, it turned out that the end of a purple emperor pupa (Diocletian) was still attached to the leaf, 6 months after dying, and despite storms, rain and snow since the failed emergence in July.



I don't mean to hijack your thread, Pete, but I thought this was an interesting follow-up to your sequence, showing the incredible precautions the pupating caterpillar takes to ensure its pupal case remains attached to the plant.

Guy

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 12-Jan-11 05:13 AM GMT

### "padfield" wrote:

Fantastic sequence, Pete.

You will remember I tried to photograph the same thing last summer, in the wild, and it all failed because the pupa had been parasitised. On 5th January this year I was wandering in the same woods and saw a willow leaf attached to a tree by a silken thread. On closer examination, it turned out that the end of a purple emperor pupa (Diocletian) was still attached to the leaf, 6 months after dying, and despite storms, rain and snow since the failed emergence in July.



I don't mean to hijack your thread, Pete, but I thought this was an interesting follow-up to your sequence, showing the incredible precautions the pupating caterpillar takes to ensure its pupal case remains attached to the plant.

Guy

No problem at all Guy – we all know how much dedication you put into following this, and other, immature stages – and we were all enthralled, despite the ultimate outcome. In fact, I'm rather astounded that the leaf is still attached to the stem and this could well be a new observation for this species, given that a normal emergence would have been in midsummer with no expectation (from me at least) that any leaf fall would occur. Perhaps a humble caterpillar knows better. Certainly an observation to validate this coming year if possible.

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 12-Jan-11 05:26 AM GMT

I'll get a close-up shot of the attaching thread, then, just in case it is a new observation. 😊 I was looking for hibernating larvae and attached leaves are apparently a guide to where summer larvae have secured their resting leaf. It was quite a surprise to find Diocletian still hanging in there.

Guy

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 12-Jan-11 05:51 AM GMT

### "padfield" wrote:

I was looking for hibernating larvae and attached leaves are apparently a guide to where summer larvae have secured their resting leaf.

Indeed – it's certainly known that overwintering larvae occasionally secure the leaf to the stem, but not *pupating* larvae! Nice find!

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Bill S, 13-Jan-11 03:43 AM GMT

Stunning set of images Pete, thanks for sharing.

Bill

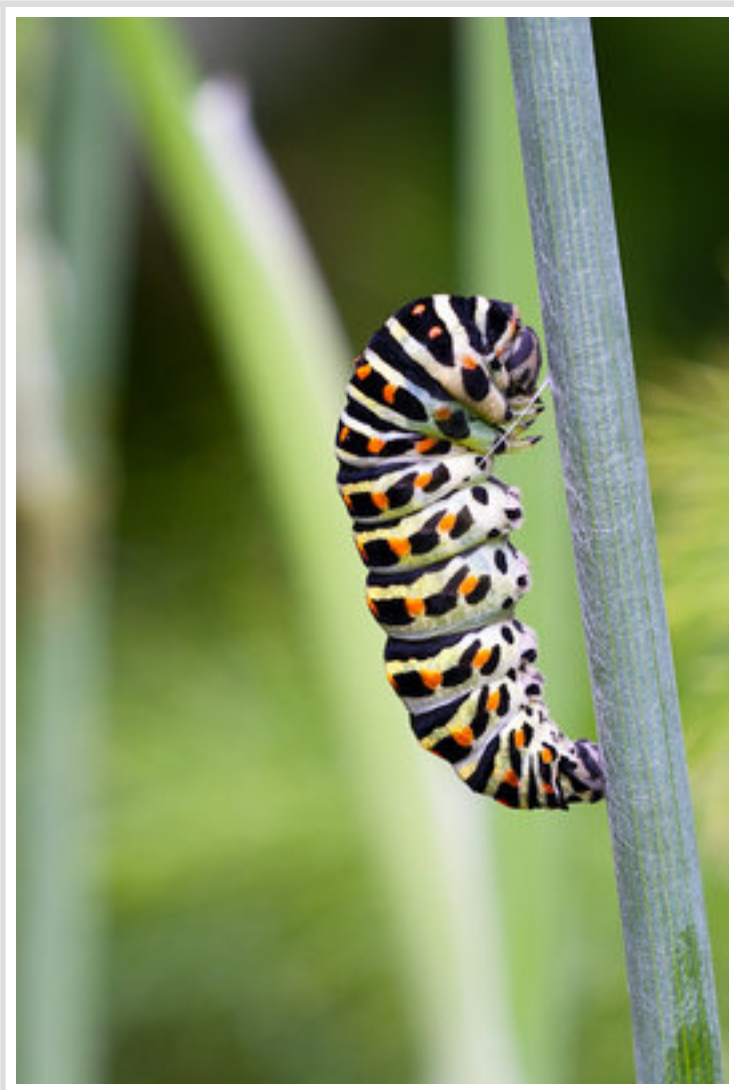
## Re: Pete Eeles

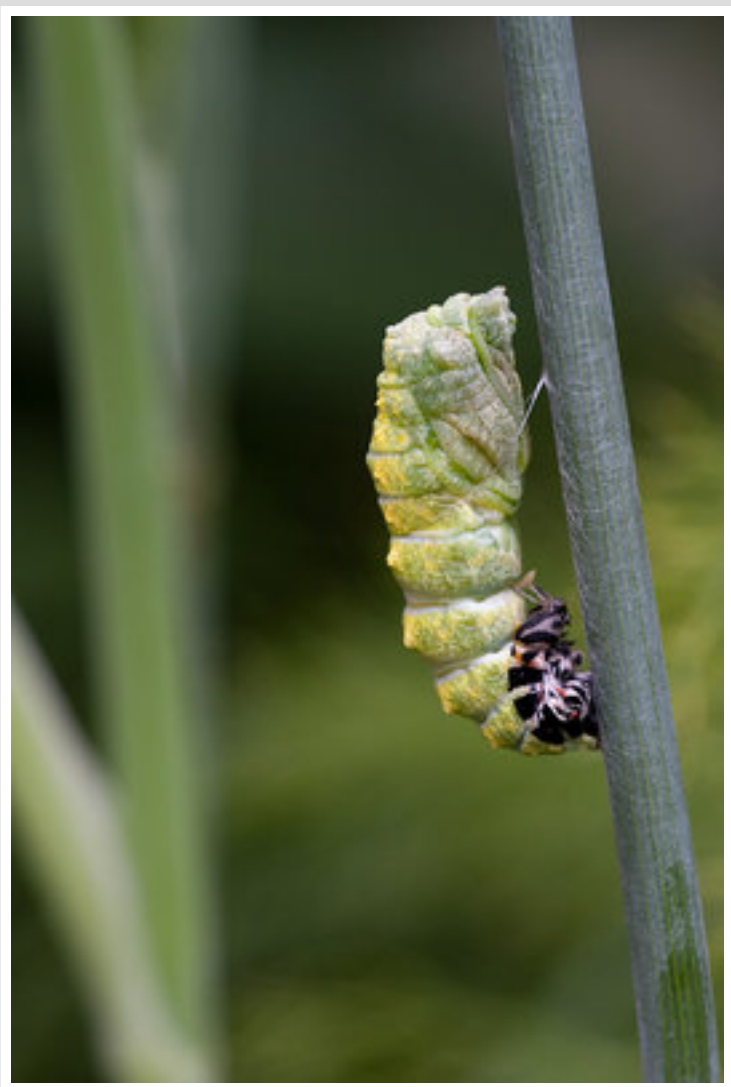
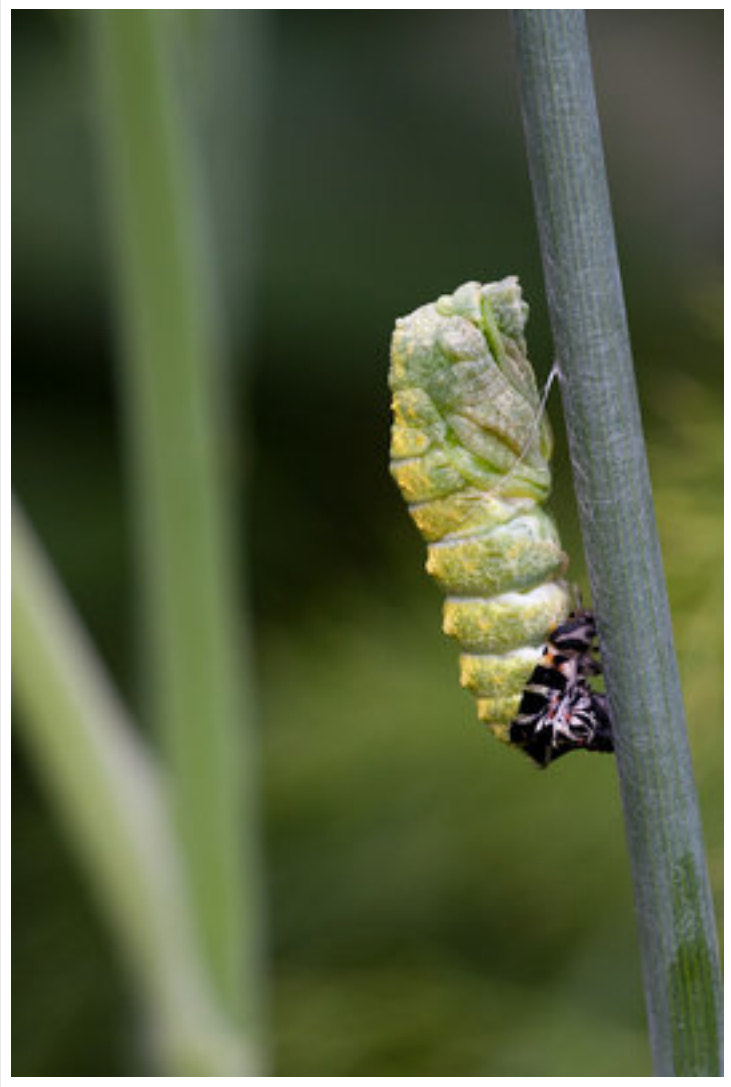
by Pete Eeles, 15-Jan-11 04:02 AM GMT

Another set of images recovered from the archives! This time I was fascinated with the transition from larva to pupa and, in particular, how a newly-formed pupa manages to attach its cremaster to the silk pad spun by the larva, given that it needs to remove itself from the larval skin first (demonstrated with a Swallowtail larva). An even more impressive feat when the larva hangs vertically head down! It seems that the pupa remains somewhat-attached to the larval skin while the cremastal hooks connect with the silk pad, and before the pupa then wriggles (sometimes vigorously) to remove the old larval skin. Quite a sight!

Cheers,

– Pete











## Re: Pete Eeles

by Denise, 15-Jan-11 04:33 AM GMT

Wow Pete.  
Very interesting with stunning photos too.

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 16-Jan-11 07:53 PM GMT

Thanks Denise

### Hampshire and Isle of Wight BC Moth Conference

I spent yesterday at my first Hants & IOW moth conference, which was informative from start to finish – some really excellent and in-depth talks covering all manner of subject, ably chaired by BC Regional Officer, **Dan Hoare**. Things kicked off with a review of the year by **Tim Norriss**, the branch moth recorder. As well as an update on rare and threatened species, Tim covered some of the recently-found species in the two counties, including coverage of some of the micros, which seemed to be a theme for the conference.

Speaking of which, Tim's presentation was followed by "Micros for Everyone" by **Mike Wall** (webmaster of the excellent Hantsmoths website (<http://www.hantsmoths.org.uk/>)) who gave a fascinating account of micro morphology by aligning the taxonomic ordering with evolutionary characteristics. For example, the most primitive moths still have functional mandibles, rather than a proboscis. I've just bought *Evolution of the Insects* by Grimaldi and Engel as a result.

**Tony Davis** then gave us some insights into "A Year in the Life of a BC Moth Conservation Officer" in conserving some of our rarer moths, being treated to a tour through the year discussing various species along the way, some of which we still know very little about (such as larval foodplant, or overwintering stage).

The last presentation of the day was given by the ever-entertaining **Dave Green**. Dave gave us insights and facts and figures of 5 locations in which he's lived over the years, and the different techniques and records he's managed to obtain along the way. As ever, the anecdotes brought Dave's presentation to life, including a discussion of the problems of having birds, badgers and even foxes at his moth traps!

A selection of members' photos rounded off the day. All in all, a really superb event that I'll definitely be attending next year.

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Jan-11 05:15 PM GMT

Hi Pete,

The last shot of the beautiful freshly emerged male Purple Emperor on page 5.....is it the same shot as the one in the banner of the website?

Cheers

'Eagle Eyes' Hurrell

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 18-Jan-11 06:33 PM GMT

Sure is! Well spotted.

Cheers,

- Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 20-Jan-11 02:13 AM GMT

More from the archives. This time a Red Admiral experiment! I removed a Red Admiral larva from its protective rolled-up leaf, and placed it on a suitable opened leaf to see what it would do. Not surprisingly, it proceeded to curl the leaf up. Starting at the stem end, it progressively joined each side of the leaf with silk, essentially "zipping up" the length of the leaf until, hey presto, one rolled up leaf with the larva safe inside! Took the chap around 30 minutes in total - a process that is, I believe, normally achieved in darkness when the larva moves from leaf to leaf.

Cheers,

- Pete





### Re: Pete Eeles

by millerd, 20-Jan-11 03:29 AM GMT

Lovely bit of observation, Pete!

99% of the nettle leaves folded up like that that I investigate seem to contain either a) a spider or b) a caterpillar of quite a different type which thrashes around before throwing itself to the ground. I must learn the subtle differences in construction technique...

Dave

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Susie, 20-Jan-11 03:42 AM GMT

I'm really enjoying these sequences of photographs, Pete. Thank you 😊

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Gibster, 20-Jan-11 05:14 AM GMT

#### "millerd" wrote:

99% of the nettle leaves folded up like that that I investigate seem to contain either a) a spider or b) a caterpillar of quite a different type which thrashes around before throwing itself to the ground. I must learn the subtle differences in construction technique...

Hi there,

I'm guessing that your mystery caterpillar would be *Pleuroptya ruralis*, the Mother of Pearl moth. The leaf is rolled into a tube, and always reminds me of a cigar in shape but is completely hollow. Usually there's a fair amount of frass within and often this remains after the larva has departed. A stand of nettles may have tens of rolls, although usually just a few per clump. The roll is always along the length of the leaf and doesn't seem to be webbed together by silk, as I recall. Hmm...I'm gonna have to check again in a few months time! If you're square-bashing for records, *ruralis* is a really easy one to spot!

All the very best,

Gibster.

## Re: Pete Eeles

by millerd, 20-Jan-11 06:03 AM GMT

### "Gibster" wrote:

I'm guessing that your mystery caterpillar would be *Pleuroptya ruralis*, the Mother of Pearl moth.

Thank you for that... I've always wondered. Every one a disappointment when you've been hoping for a Red Admiral, of course! Not quite as difficult as looking for Comma caterpillars, which are always *under* the nettle leaves.

Cheers,

Dave

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 20-Jan-11 06:04 AM GMT

Thanks all. Personally, I seem to be able to find Red Admiral larvae from 20 paces and certainly one of the easiest larvae to find! Here's how:

1. First off, the edges of the leaves never overlap one another (i.e. the leaf isn't rolled up like a cigar). You'll notice that the larva neatly threads the two edges of the leaf together perfectly. This only changes when either a) the larva is very large and several leaves are woven together, forming a tent or b) the tent actually contains a pupa.

2. There won't be just one rolled up leaf (unless the larva is very young) but a series of leaves. Many of these will have been abandoned, contain frass (droppings) and have open ends (presumably the last meal on this leaf before the larva moved on). If you find one of these abandoned leaves just keep looking because there will be others nearby. You'll eventually find a huge rolled up leaf whose end is intact. This will contain the larva – and it may be BIG! The different sizes of leaf will give an indication of the path that the larva has taken since it was an egg!

More photos below.

Cheers,

– Pete



*Opening a large leaf will reveal a large larva!*



*A tell-tale tent that contains a Red Admiral pupa*



*Opening a tent, revealing a pupa*

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by millerd, 20-Jan-11 06:26 AM GMT

I can't wait to try these tips out. At least I've never found nettle stings bothersome, particularly in the call of duty!

Thanks, Pete.

Dave

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Jack Harrison, 20-Jan-11 02:39 PM GMT

Years ago, I used to collect Red Admiral larvae in Malta and bring them back here (wasn't illegal in those days). The favoured foodplant surprisingly was Mallow. Larvae were very easy to find in Malta but I have had much less success in Britain – obviously faulty technique on my part. So thanks Pete for you tips.

I used to find a very high percentage of Maltese larvae were parasitised. Presumably it is a very similar situation here. Can anyone throw light on this?

Jack

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 20-Jan-11 03:04 PM GMT

**"Jack Harrison" wrote:**

I used to find a very high percentage of Maltese larvae were parasitised. Presumably it is a very similar situation here. Can anyone throw light on this?

My experience is that when Red Admirals are here in good numbers, only a very small percentage are parasitised. However, when they're not here in good numbers, it seems a much larger percentage are parasitised. May be just a numbers game, assuming the number of parasitic flies remains constant.

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by NickMorgan, 12-Feb-11 06:14 AM GMT

Fantastic pictures Pete. You have got me quite excited about the coming year!

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 27-Feb-11 05:50 AM GMT

**25th February**

Managed to spend a good chunk of time looking for Purple Hairstreak ova on oaks close to my house. I managed to find 7 in total in about 45 minutes. I also found a well-disguised shield bug that possibly explains the holes found in 2 of these ova. I also found a couple of egg-remnants from last year. I'll be conducting another search sometime this coming week and will take some photos (and post them!).

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 27-Feb-11 05:54 AM GMT

**Hampshire and Isle of Wight Social**

A great turnout from the first social event of the year, and really pleasing to see several new members present (and presenting!). Many wonderful photos were shown and some really interesting stories of what members have been up to. I don't think that an interest in butterflies and moths has ever been so great. Roll on the 2011 season proper! Certainly a nice diversion from the winter months until spring really kicks into action, and nice to see several UKB members present too!

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Clive, 27-Feb-11 06:31 AM GMT

**"Pete Eeles" wrote:**

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Social

Shirley and I really enjoyed the afternoon ... a great start to the 2011 Butterfly year ...

Clive

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 23-Mar-11 07:12 AM GMT

**Marsh Fritillary larvae**

With the sudden burst of Spring activity, and having seen my first butterfly of the year a few days ago (a Small Tortoiseshell, as it happens), I decided to pay a visit to a Marsh Fritillary site to see if I could find any post-hibernation larvae. Well, only a thousand or so! Following a tip off of an explosion in numbers this year, I found myself almost stumbling over the things as they wandered aimlessly over the footpath! I also managed to find abandoned larval webs, singletons and many dark clusters of larvae that were collectively warming up on any dark surface (such as a leaf or cow dung!) to help them digest their most-recent meal. All in all – a most wonderful couple of hours! Some photos below.

Cheers,

– Pete



*A lonely singleton :)*



*An abandoned larval web*



*Another abandoned larval web*





*A happy couple – who were joined by another couple within 10 minutes!*



*Warmth in numbers*



*Another group experience*

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Jack Harrison, 23-Mar-11 03:23 PM GMT

Following a tip off of an explosion in numbers this year...

Pete. I realise that it is inappropriate to ask you to divulge your source, but why does your contact think that? Was it the bitterly cold early winter? Or early spring warmth? Or was it a good season in 2010? Or favourable phase in a parasitic cycle?

Can you offer any insights?

Good piccies. Reminds me of a visit to Hod Hill some 40 years ago.

Jack

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 23-Mar-11 03:36 PM GMT

**"Jack Harrison" wrote:**

Following a tip off of an explosion in numbers this year...

Pete. I realise that it is inappropriate to ask you to divulge your source, but why does your contact think that? Was it the bitterly cold early winter? Or early spring warmth? Or was it a good season in 2010? Or favourable phase in a parasitic cycle? Can you offer any insights?

Actually, it was Matthew Oates (who posted on the Purple Empire on Feb 21st – <http://apaturairis.blogspot.com/>). Although I spoke with him a couple of days ago I didn't ask him why he thought there was an increase in numbers and can only assume it's part of the lengthy cycle of "ups" and "downs" associated with Marsh Frits, the combination of a cold winter and good weather in early summer, together with first class habitat management. I'll ask him next time we talk.

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Piers, 23-Mar-11 07:26 PM GMT

**"Pete Eeles" wrote:**

Following a tip off of an explosion in numbers this year

I predicted this on UKB in my post of Feb 25th... [viewtopic.php?f=8&t=4912&start=20](http://viewtopic.php?f=8&t=4912&start=20)

**"felix" wrote:**

The signs are that this Spring could be amazing for certain species. Just wait until the Marsh Frits emerge, if the weather is favourable for swift larval development in the preceding months they are going to reach pest levels on some sites..!

You heard it here first chaps!



**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 27-Mar-11 03:37 AM GMT

Not much happening around here, so I decided to get some photos to fill a gap in the UKB species pages – specifically, a couple of Chalkhill Blue ova that I'll be rearing through. It also gave me an excuse to get my head around my new camera 😊

Canon 7D  
With flash  
3 extension tubes  
150mm macro  
1/50s at f/10  
ISO 400  
Tweaking in Lightroom (especially noise reduction, which is just superb!)

Cheers,

– Pete



**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Jack Harrison, 27-Mar-11 03:43 AM GMT

Tweaking in Lightroom (especially noise reduction, which is just superb!)

I don't know about Lightroom, but Noiseware: <http://www.imagenomic.com/> is very good for dealing with noise. It can apparently be used with Lightroom but I use it as a stand-alone.

Brilliant close-ups Pete.

Jack

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Piers, 27-Mar-11 05:36 AM GMT

**"Pete Eeles" wrote:**

Not much happening around here, so I decided to get some photos to fill a gap in the UKB species pages – specifically, a couple of Chalkhill Blue ova that I'll be rearing through.

Have yours not hatched yet Pete? 😊

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 27-Mar-11 06:35 AM GMT

**"Felix" wrote:****"Pete Eeles" wrote:**

Not much happening around here, so I decided to get some photos to fill a gap in the UKB species pages – specifically, a couple of Chalkhill Blue ova that I'll be rearing through.

Have yours not hatched yet Pete? 😊

Nope. Although I'm sure they're imminent, which is why I scrambled to get the photos I did!

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

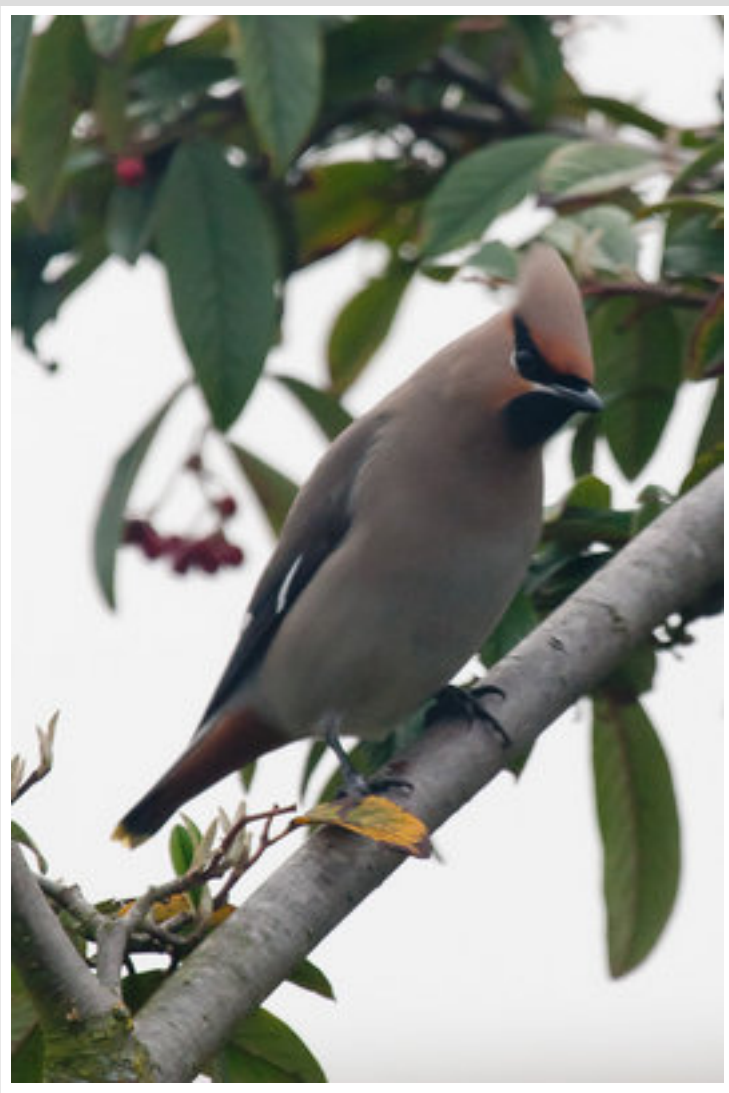
by Pete Eeles, 29-Mar-11 07:13 PM GMT

**In the Garden**

I was hoping to get out to see some Orange-tips today, but the cooler temperature and occasional drizzle means that's unlikely. However, I had a new visitor to the garden this morning. Not the best piccy in the world, but evidence nonetheless! And THAT has definitely made my day!

Cheers,

– Pete



### Re: Pete Eeles

by Rogerdodge, 29-Mar-11 08:34 PM GMT

Pete

I am not an expert on birds (or anything else if the truth be told) but I am seeing many reports of Waxwings "hanging about" till the spring. I seem to recall that they are a strict winter visitor, and rarely stayed beyond February. Certainly not as far south as you are!! Is something odd happening here?

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Piers, 29-Mar-11 11:51 PM GMT

Waxwings are still knocking about the Salisbury area too Mr H....

Felix.

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Susie, 29-Mar-11 11:59 PM GMT

Cracking pic, Pete, you must be chuffed to bits with seeing one of those. They are lovely. 😊

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 30-Mar-11 03:05 AM GMT

#### "Susie" wrote:

Cracking pic, Pete, you must be chuffed to bits with seeing one of those. They are lovely. 😊

Very pleased 😊 Just wished I wasn't on a conference call at the time, otherwise I'd have gotten a decent pic 😞 Although a local "bully boy" Blackbird chased it off.

But certainly something I won't forget for a while!

Cheers,

- Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 01-Apr-11 03:47 AM GMT

#### Iris on the Move

Today saw a mass movement of *iris* larvae from their overwintering sites to nearby buds, with a large amount of variance in terms of hardly-opened buds to those well on the way to putting forth foliage any day. Anyway - a comparison of various sites is shown below. T'will be interesting watching these critters develop.

Cheers,  
- Pete



*Baby Bud*



*Mummy Bud*



*Daddy Bud*

### Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 01-Apr-11 04:20 AM GMT

You lucky fellow. Waxwings are one of the most attractive birds seen in the UK.

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Gibster, 01-Apr-11 06:18 AM GMT

#### "Rogerdodge" wrote:

I am not an expert on birds (or anything else if the truth be told) but I am seeing many reports of Waxwings "hanging about" till the spring.

I seem to recall that they are a strict winter visitor, and rarely stayed beyond February.

Certainly not as far south as you are!!

Is something odd happening here?

Firstly, what BRILLIANT pics of the Purple Emperor larvae, are they captive or tagged wild ones?

Regards the Waxwings, they arrived in Scotland late last year in very large numbers, certainly the biggest invasion for many years. The reason for these invasions is both weather related and due to the cyclical berry crop failure. Basically, the crop was very poor in Scandinavia and it was bloody cold too! So they were forced across the North Sea in search of food, found Shetland, Orkneys and northern Scotland and began gobbling their way southwards. I watched the bird info services with much interest as the hordes edged ever closer to me in Surrey!

What's occurring now is the same birds are returning to their breeding grounds, but will move through much more directly, driven as they are to get back onto their breeding territory. And if the weather is warm, many can be watched flycatching – something not very often seen in Britain. Guess the spring really is arriving early this year?

Gibster.

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 01-Apr-11 07:06 AM GMT

#### "Gibster" wrote:

#### "Rogerdodge" wrote:

I am not an expert on birds (or anything else if the truth be told) but I am seeing many reports of Waxwings "hanging about" till the spring.

I seem to recall that they are a strict winter visitor, and rarely stayed beyond February.

Certainly not as far south as you are!!

Is something odd happening here?

Firstly, what BRILLIANT pics of the Purple Emperor larvae, are they captive or tagged wild ones?

Thx – yes, currently in captivity. All of them will get to adulthood and be released 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Jack Harrison, 01-Apr-11 05:18 PM GMT

Pete tells us that his PE larvae are:

.....currently in captivity. All of them will get to adulthood and be released 😊

Let me say that I have no problem with that so am not suggesting there is anything wrong; indeed, I bred them myself many years ago from stock collected in the wild.

But can you Pete – or someone else – point us to the guidelines (regulations) about what can legally be taken in the wild in Britain for breeding and what can't? I don't feel that I break any rules taking a few Orange Tip eggs every year but clearly High Browns Fritillaries would be a very different story. There is a list somewhere of protected species but I can find it.

Jack

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 01-Apr-11 10:55 PM GMT

Hi Jack – my iris were captive bred.

The situation regarding the law is summarised here:

[http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports\\_law.php](http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports_law.php)

and various BC policies here:

[http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports\\_policies.php](http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports_policies.php)

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Zonda, 01-Apr-11 11:07 PM GMT

But can you Pete – or someone else – point us to the guidelines (regulations) about what can legally be taken in the wild in Britain for breeding and what can't?

If it were my decision, party pooper me would say 'NONE', with the key phrase being 'taken from the wild'. Habitat reconstruction, and maintenance is the way forward for all species, with limited and BC controlled release programs of some butterflies, recently lost. IT'S ONLY AN OPINION. 😊

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 09-Apr-11 04:14 AM GMT

#### Midgham lakes / Woolhampton Gravel Pits

I managed to escape for an hour this morning, arriving at the local "Orange-tip hotspot" around 0915 and leaving at around 1030; knowing that Orange-tip males never stop once they get going, I was determined to get there early! I saw 23 Orange-tips in total (21 male, 2 female), 3 Holly Blue, 2 Peacock, 3 Comma, 2 Small Tortoiseshell, 2 Green-veined White, 8 Speckled Wood. A great start to the butterfly year proper! Some photos below. The area is a birding hotspot, and seeing the shimmering blue sheen of a local Kingfisher was another highlight!

Cheers,

– Pete



**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Padfield, 09-Apr-11 05:28 AM GMT

"Pete Eeles" wrote:



... 23 Orange-tips in total (21 male, 2 female), 3 Holly Blue, 2 Peacock, 3 Comma, 2 Small Tortoiseshell, 2 Green-veined White, 8 Speckled Wood.

I'm interested to know how you count, Pete. Given that orange tips patrol territories, sometimes making round trips and sometimes simply going back and forth along a flowery path, how do you get a figure for how many there were? Or does the 23 represent the number of sightings rather than individuals?

Guy

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 09-Apr-11 05:55 AM GMT

"padfield" wrote:

"Pete Eeles" wrote:

... 23 Orange-tips in total (21 male, 2 female), 3 Holly Blue, 2 Peacock, 3 Comma, 2 Small Tortoiseshell, 2 Green-veined White, 8 Speckled Wood.

I'm interested to know how you count, Pete. Given that orange tips patrol territories, sometimes making round trips and sometimes simply going back and forth along a flowery path, how do you get a figure for how many there were? Or does the 23 represent the number of sightings rather than individuals?

Guy

Very valid question, Guy! This particular site is a "loop". So, yes, I may come across the same individual on occasion, but don't retrace my steps.

I used to carry a digital voice recorder with me (and still do on foreign trips), but now do it all by memory – so numbers will inevitably be out by a margin now and again. When numbers are large, I also count a given species in terms of 10s, 50s and 100s. Not particularly scientific, I know!

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 11-Apr-11 03:31 AM GMT

### Midgham lakes / Woolhampton Gravel Pits – part 2

A very quick jaunt this morning before some family friends arrived – spending just over an hour at this wonderful site! All of the usual suspects, although not as many Orange-tips seen when compared with my visit on Friday. Still, following a couple of female Orange-tip led me to some new areas where Cuckooflower was abundant – areas I'd not visited before! This site seems to contain a good mix of both of the primary larval foodplants – Garlic Mustard and Cuckooflower. Holly Blue were seen every few minutes or so and I had 3 sightings of Comma ovipositing. No Green-veined White but several Speckled Wood. With the season now at full speed, the thought of work tomorrow doesn't fill me with glee 😞

Cheers,

– Pete



Mr. Orange-tip



*Mrs. Orange-tip on Cuckooflower*

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 13-Apr-11 04:36 AM GMT

### Midgham lakes / Woolhampton Gravel Pits - part 3

I thought I'd make the most of fine weather, despite the massive drop in temperature, and headed off to my local hotspot - seeing a selection of Orange-tip, Speckled Wood, Holly Blue, Green-veined White, Comma and Peacock. Numbers are well down, however. I was particularly interested in understanding how the Orange-tip were coping with the lack of suitable Garlic Mustard, their favoured larval foodplant at this site. After 10 minutes of finding no eggs whatsoever, I took a look at some isolated Cuckooflower plants and every single one was absolutely covered in eggs! The shot below is a typical plant:



And in the shot below, I've marked up those eggs visible in the shot (12 in total). This plant had 21 eggs on it in total!



A close up of a recently-laid (white) egg and one that has been there for a couple of days (orange) is shown below:



And another shot showing 3 eggs:



#### **Magdalen Hill Down**

I also popped into Magdalen Hill Down to see how things were unfolding, given the recent sightings. Despite the cool breeze there were still quite a few butterflies around – especially Brimstone!



I also saw a single Small Copper, a single Green Hairstreak (although I didn't look too hard for them!) and 5 Grizzled Skipper. All in all, not a bad morning!



Cheers,

- Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 16-Apr-11 02:12 AM GMT

### Midgham lakes / Woolhampton Gravel Pits - part 4

I just can't get enough of my favourite local site and, today, heard my first Cuckoo of the year, amid the song of Blackcap and Cetti's Warbler. Marvellous! Intermittent sun brought all of the local species out and, in particular, the ever-present Orange-tip. At one point I was sat next to a patch of Garlic Mustard just waiting for the next visitor to come along and nectar! Eventually, the sun disappeared and I managed to find 6 Orange-tip roosting - quite easy to spot once you get your eye in! Some photos below.

Cheers,

- Pete



*Roosting male*



*Roosting female*

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Piers, 16-Apr-11 03:09 AM GMT

### "Pete Eeles" wrote:

Hi Jack - my iris were captive bred.

The situation regarding the law is summarised here:

[http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports\\_law.php](http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports_law.php)

Pete,

Should the site not be revised to show the down grading of the Large Blue's status under schedule 5 in the last quinquennial review?

(Please delete this from your diary should you wish).

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 16-Apr-11 06:29 AM GMT

Thanks – do you have a reference for this? I can't seem to find any downgrading in the downloadable Wildlife and Countryside Act spreadsheet!

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Piers, 18-Apr-11 12:47 AM GMT

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended 2007). Species other than birds specially protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981(as amended): Schedule 5 (Animals). *Maculinea arion* amended in 2007, currently 9(4)(b)and (c) and (5) only.

According to [url=http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/phpBB/viewtopic.php?f=9&t=3812&p=29579&hilit=+act#p29579:15wuik8i]THIS THREAD[/url:15wuik8i] you amended the page on the webiste when this topic was discussed back in 2009... 😊

Felix.

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 19-Apr-11 03:17 AM GMT

### Marsh Fritillary in Gloucestershire

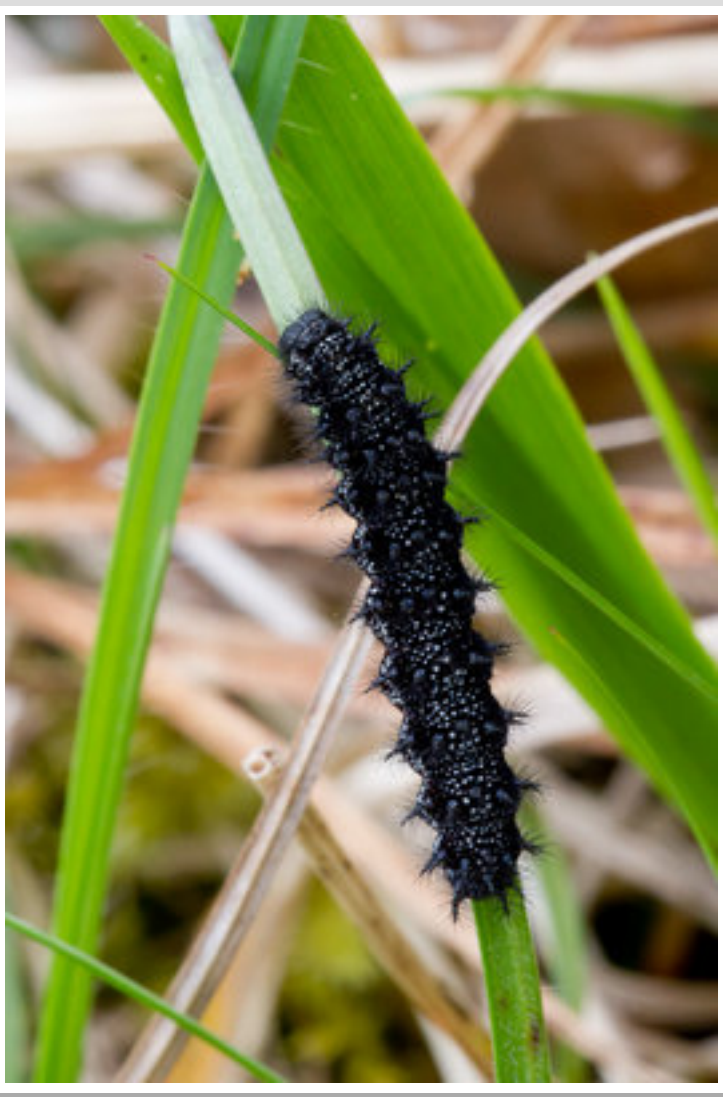
I revisited a site seen earlier in the year when hundreds (if not thousands) of Marsh Fritillary larvae were present, and it was great to chat with the Gloucestershire BC butterfly recorder, Chris Wiltshire. Top bloke! There are still plenty of larvae around – but all are now in their final instar. Given another tip-off, I was hoping to find fully-grown larvae, pupating larvae and pupae! Unfortunately, I only found two pupating larvae and a single pupa whose patterning and colour is just so cryptic! The Devil's-bit Scabious has been absolutely decimated, with larvae wandering some distance to find food and this dispersal doesn't help the inquiring entomologist! On the subject of foodplants, this would appear to include Honeysuckle, with several leaves some distance away from the primary "larval hotspots" showing evidence of being eaten. Whether this is down to Marsh Fritillary or not I don't know (there were no larvae on the plants) but might suggest that they are using this as a secondary larval foodplant when times get tough, and as literature suggests. Some photos below, including my first video 😊

Cheers,

– Pete



*Final instar larva*



*Final instar larva*



*Pupating larva*



*Pupating larva*



*Pupa*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wop-8hJ3WMA>

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Jack Harrison, 19-Apr-11 04:01 AM GMT

Two points Pete.

I used to live in Gloucestershire so knew some of the "old" localities for Marsh Frit. I am not fishing to know the whereabouts of your recent sightings (but I can more-or-less guess). But were your observations at the main site or the recently discovered nearby satellite colony?

The video is remarkably steady. Tripod I presume?

Jack

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 19-Apr-11 04:05 AM GMT

#### "Jack Harrison" wrote:

Two points Pete.

I used to live in Gloucestershire so knew some of the "old" localities for Marsh Frit. I am not fishing to know the whereabouts of your recent sightings (but I can more-or-less guess). But were your observations at the main site or the recently discovered nearby satellite colony?

The video is remarkably steady. Tripod I presume?

Jack

1. See PM 😊

2. Absolutely!

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 21-Apr-11 06:08 AM GMT

#### All Manner of Doings!

I'm not quite sure how to characterise my day – so "all manner of doings" it is. The only sensible sequence in which to describe my hectic day is in chronological order. So here goes: ... !

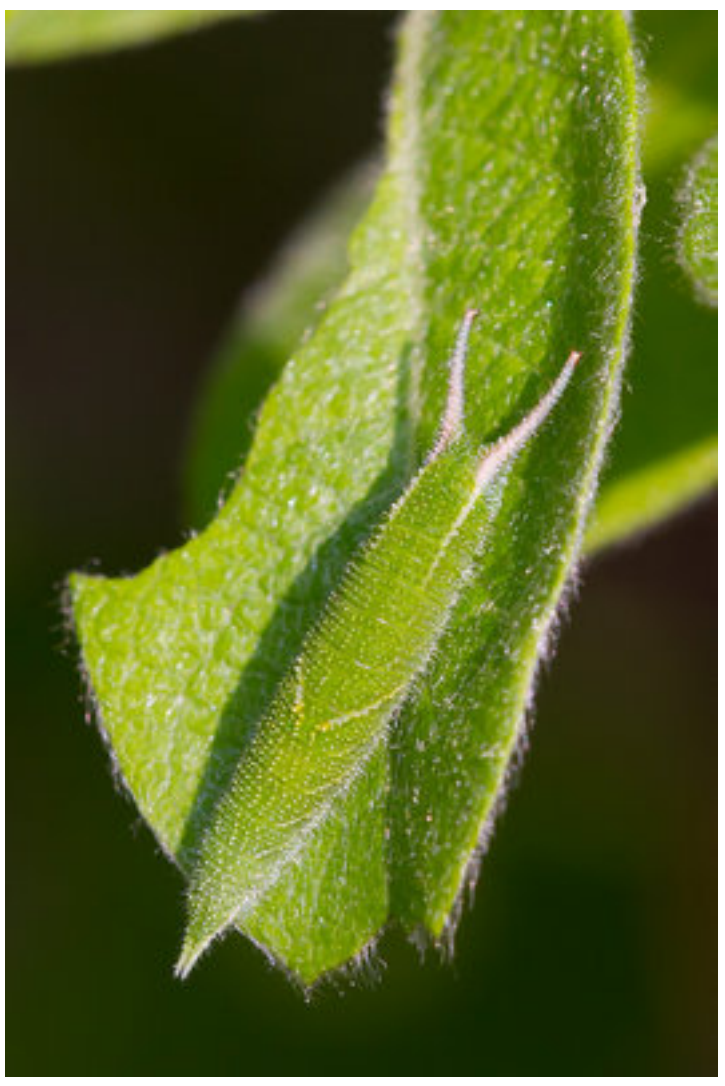
First off, I decide to take photos of some species I'm rearing in captivity, early in the morning. As Matthew suggest on the Purple Empire (<http://apaturairis.blogspot.com/>), we have a mix of 3rd and 4th instar Purple Emperor around at the mo. So, some photos ...





*3rd instar larva settled on a silk pad, preparing to change skin*

And, of course, a 4th instar larva ...



*4th instar larva*

And a video because my new camera lets me do this. No other reason 😊

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

And then the postman turns up, delivering me a copy of the Sussex Butterfly Report, which is just superb. Neil (Sussex Kipper) tells me he'll be bringing along copies to the photo workshop on 30th. A wonderful read from start to finish.

So I then head over to Hartslock, a local nature reserve in Berkshire, with my youngest son, Chris. Having parked the car, we find 2 Small Heath – massively early for this time of year! We arrive at the reserve and bump into Derek and Cathy Brown, who I've known for years and are leaving the reserve as we enter, telling us that they've seen superb numbers of Dingy and Grizzled Skipper (good job too, since we turned up to see the former!). We have a good old chat and lament the fact that none of us has seen a Red Admiral this year. We go on our separate ways and, within seconds, hear a cry of "Red Admiral"! Lucky day, I guess!

Heading onto the reserve, the number of Dingy Skipper was just stupid, seeing an individual every 20 feet or so, and a Grizzled Skipper now and again! Clearly, this site is really working for these species – although I didn't see any Green Hairstreak, which is really unusual for this site. There were also plenty of *Pyrausta* species around too.



*Dingy Skipper*



*Dingy Skipper underside (kind of!)*



*Grizzled Skipper*

We then returned home and so I thought I'd better take the dogs out for a walk! The first stop was a nearby site where I've marked up twigs containing Purple Hairstreak ova. I knew they wouldn't be worth looking at for a while, given that newly-emerged larvae simply bury themselves in the developing buds, but was pleasantly surprised to find this chap/chapess (and glad I took my camera!):



*Purple Hairstreak larva*

I also realised that a couple of White-letter Hairstreak larvae I've been rearing in cut foodplant (in water) need a "refresh":



*White-letter Hairstreak larvae*

So I head off down the road (200 yards) to get some fresh elm (where I released last years' progeny), get home, and see this on the elm I've just brought back:



Now I can't repeat the expletives that came from my mouth, but it's a good job nobody was within hearing range. Either the last batch reproduced, or we have a local colony of White-letter Hairstreak! Either way, this "new colony" will be left in peace! It always amazes me what we sometimes find on our own doorstep!

All in all – the best of days. And as I took an evening walk, I was transported back to my childhood, with Orange-tips, Speckled Wood and Green-veined Whites all around me. Superb.

Cheers,

– Pete

## **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 22-Apr-11 03:11 AM GMT

### **Noar Hill**

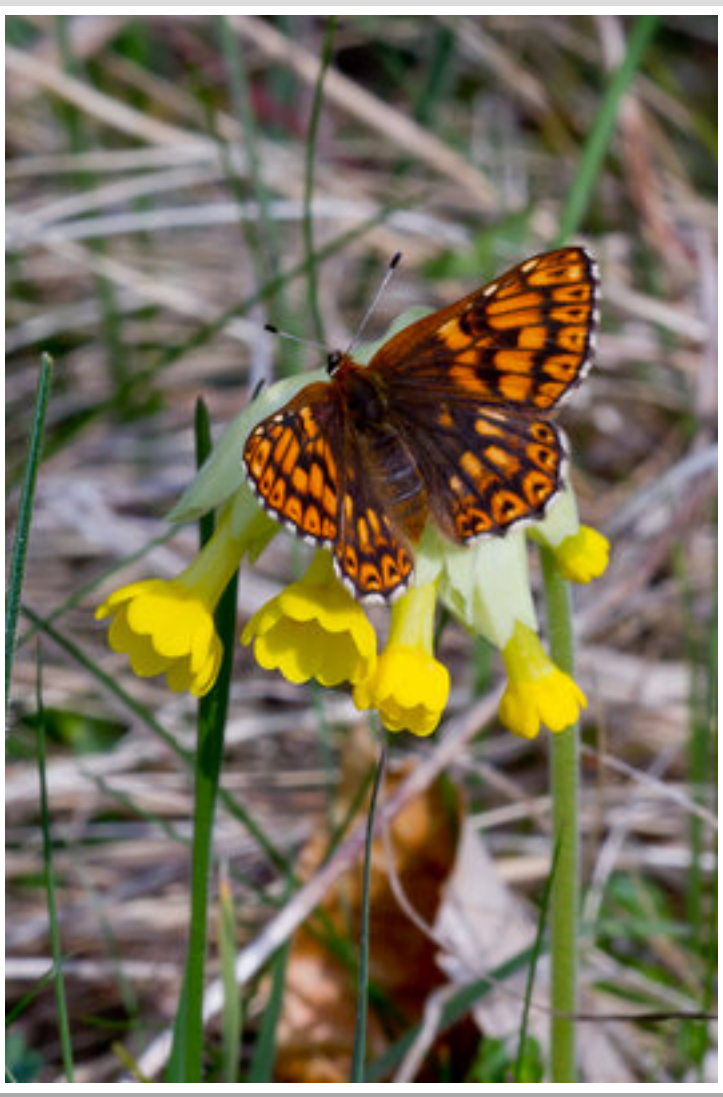
A morning spent in the good company of Roger Buchanan, Robin Turner and Maurice Pugh. It was also good to bump into John Hemmings and other UKB members on site! An absolutely tremendous showing of Dukes, with over 30 seen by the group (rough estimate). 4 or 5 individuals could be found in every chalk pit, across the site. Also several Dingy Skipper which are just starting to emerge, along with the first Green Hairstreak seen at the site, and a good showing of Holly Blue too. As well, of course, as the usual suspects! Some photos below.

[What follows is my personal view – and not that of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight branch of Butterfly Conservation (that I chair).]

Unfortunately, the blackthorn required by Brown Hairstreak appears to be completely mismanaged – not only have entire rows of bushes been removed, but the growth favoured by Brown Hairstreak seems to have been largely removed too along, no doubt, with all of the overwintering eggs that were on them. Seeing such devastation really spoiled my day and I will be writing to the relevant authority.

Cheers,

– Pete



*Female*



*Male on Cowslip*



*Male underside*

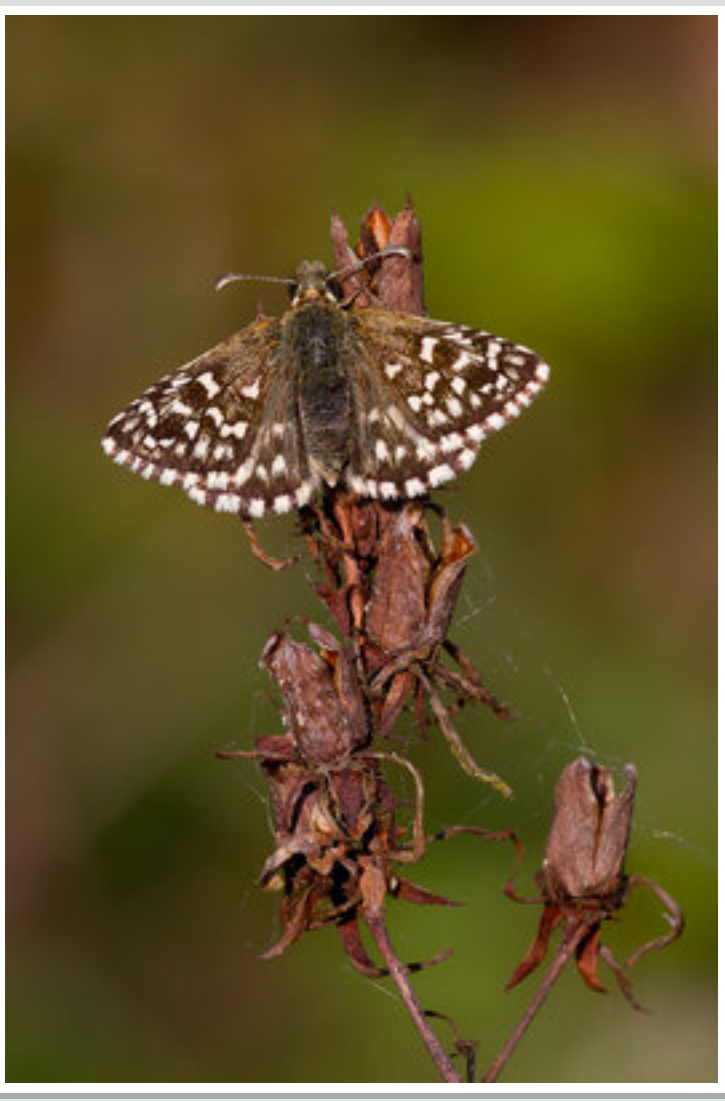
## **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 26-Apr-11 05:35 AM GMT

### **Greenham Common**

I've spent the entire Easter weekend doing "family stuff" with no butterfly in sight – so decided to get my "fix" for an hour late this afternoon (around 4pm) before I return to work in the morning. I really wasn't expecting to see much, but managed to find all 3 targets in good numbers – Grizzled Skipper, Dingy Skipper and Green Hairstreak.

I think I found a Grizzled Skipper hotspot near the control tower with masses of Wild Strawberry in flower. I then spent a chunk of time trying to get a shot of the butterfly on its larval foodplant and failed! The closest is shown below.



*Grizzled Skipper (female)*



*Wild Strawberry*



*Wild Strawberry*



*Grizzled Skipper and Wild Strawberry*

The Green Hairstreaks were also flitting about when not catching the rays. I managed to find a female ovipositing (photo below) on Bird's-foot Trefoil – she pushed her abdomen quite deep into a developing floret. I also managed to get a half-decent shot of the resulting egg. Finally, a video of the wing-rubbing typical of this species. All in all, not bad for an hour at a local site!



*Ovipositing female Green Hairstreak*



*Green Hairstreak egg on Bird's-foot Trefoil*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ts4bibAUXr0>

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by ChrisC, 26-Apr-11 05:53 AM GMT

are the wings deformed pete? as it turns face on it looks like the back is flattened.

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 26-Apr-11 06:03 AM GMT

Hi Chris – not quite sure what you mean. The critter looked OK to me!

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by ChrisC, 26-Apr-11 06:47 AM GMT

sorry Pete.maybe not. just goes to show how many GH's i have seen, looks like it's a normal feature on them that i have never noticed.

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 29-Apr-11 01:43 AM GMT

### Botany Bay

Monitoring the weather closely, I spent yesterday in the south east (where the good weather would start given the north easterly winds) and finished up in the south west! Inspired by Susie's images of Wood White at Botany Bay (part of the Oaken Wood complex in Surrey), I decided to head along there myself, arriving at 10am and it was absolutely freezing! However, within 30 minutes, the first Wood Whites showed themselves as the temperature increased significantly. I thought that being there early, and based on previous trips, I'd have a good 30 minutes of well-behaved Wood White (i.e. those that would sit still long enough to be photographed!). However, the good behaviour lasted no more than 10 minutes as the temperature increased. Anyway, undeterred, I stayed around for an hour or so to observe various behaviours and I'm glad I did! I only saw one courting couple, but did manage to capture it on video (not the best quality, but better than nowt) and also saw 3 ovipositing females. One laid 3 eggs in rapid succession on the same leaf! All in all, a very worthwhile trip.



*Wood White (female)*



*Wood White (ovipositing female)*



*Wood White egg*

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

### Bentley Wood

The afternoon was spent working, but I then managed to get to the eastern clearing at Bentley Wood at around 4:30pm and there was still a lot of

activity with Pearl-bordered Fritillaries everywhere (and several Fox moths flying about!). Although the light wasn't brilliant, at least the butterflies were settling in preparation, no doubt, for their overnight roost. The few females I saw were also laying profusely, and not a single egg on the foodplant; all eggs were laid on nearby bracken. Given the recent heatwave, I wonder if this strategy minimises the risk of an egg being laid on a plant that is unsuitable once the larva eventually emerges. Photos below.



*Pearl-bordered Fritillary (male)*



*Pearl-bordered Fritillary (male)*

Cheers,

- Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Susie, 29-Apr-11 02:20 AM GMT

Great stuff, Pete, I love that video in particular. I so wanted to get that on film! 📺

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 29-Apr-11 03:18 AM GMT

#### "Susie" wrote:

Great stuff, Pete, I love that video in particular. I so wanted to get that on film! 📺

Thanks Susie - I think your photos are better than mine though! A team win 😊 And I forgot to add a photo of an egg - now there!

Cheers,

- Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 29-Apr-11 03:43 AM GMT

#### Greenham Common

I managed to escape for an hour at Greenham Common (a local patch) late morning. It was nice to bump into the Greenham and Crookham Common ranger, Adrian Wallington, who showed me a Woodlark's nest (the young have fledged, before being ringed) - right next to a path! Amazing! We then had a good old natter (like you do) about the management of the common and future plans (a Silver-studded Blue reintroduction has been on the cards for several years). I have to say, I've never seen the common looking better and the amount of wildlife is just phenomenal at the moment, especially

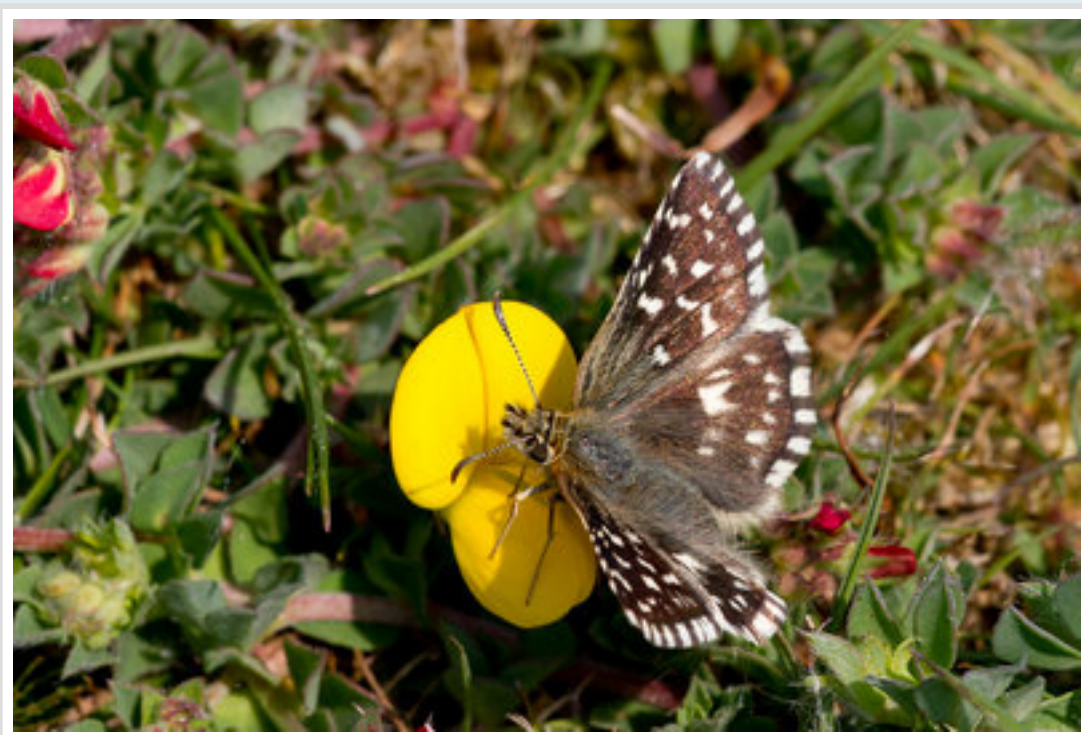


ground nesting birds. The only downside is that we need some rain! Walking over the common I could hear my feet crunching some of the undergrowth which is starting to get seriously dessicated in places – and this includes important Lepidoptera food sources such as Bird's-foot Trefoil.

The 3 most abundant species are Green Hairstreak, Dingy Skipper and Grizzled Skipper and the "hotspot" I've found was ridiculously busy. At one point I could see 5 ovipositing Green Hairstreaks, all laying on Bird's-foot Trefoil. I did see one female "oviposturing" (thanks Guy!) on Gorse, but no eggs were laid. I also found an individual (shown below) that was the size of a Small Blue – absolutely tiny! I also found a mating pair of Dingy Skipper and spent some time observing them, especially the abdominal movements that I captured on (X-rated) video! Seeing my first Brown Argus of the year capped things off nicely.

Cheers,

– Pete



*Grizzled Skipper*



*The tiniest tiny Green Hairstreak in tiny land*



*Mating Dingy Skipper (male on left, female on right)*

If you're over 18, feel free to watch the video below 😊

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vcwcle9-owE>



*Brown Argus (male)*

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 03-May-11 01:32 AM GMT

### UKB Photography Workshop - 30th April

A superb day all round from my perspective. Thanks to all the presenters, to everyone for bringing good weather with them, and the butterflies of Magdalen Hill Down for really putting on a show. It really was quite spectacular! Some photos below. A special thanks to Gary for helping with much of the organising. We've received some good feedback and will be incorporating this into next year's event - not least the fact that we had to drag people away from MHD!

Cheers,

- Pete



*Roger Buchanan*



*Gary Richardson*



*Brian Fletcher*



*Chris Manley*



*John Bogle*

## **Re: Pete Eeles**

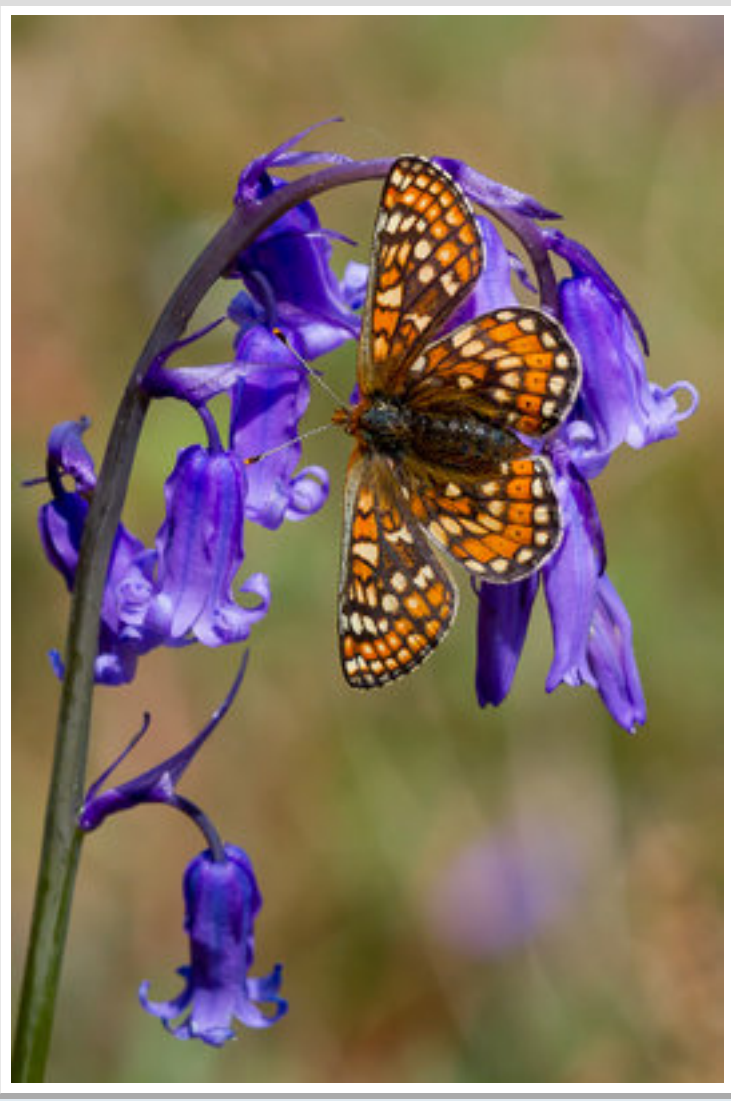
by Pete Eeles, 05-May-11 01:24 AM GMT

### **Wiltshire Wood**

A couple of hours spent in a Wiltshire wood allowed me to see my first Marsh Fritillary of the year – along with numerous Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moths (no photos since they never seem to sit still!), several Argent and Sable, and plenty of Pearl-bordered Fritillary (which are having an absolutely spectacular year) together with a number of Dingy and Grizzled Skipper. But the Marsh Fritillary were what I went for, and they put on a really good show! I got there early enough to take some artistic shots on bluebell before they all warmed up! The colour variation between individuals is just incredible – one of my favourite butterflies for sure!

Cheers,

– Pete



*This is my foodplant. There are many like it, but this one is mine.*



### Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 05-May-11 04:05 AM GMT

Some ace shots Pete, the first one has a great contrast of colour. I managed to hook up with Marsh Fritillary over the weekend at Hod Hill so thanks for the advice about trying some of the "hotter spots". I did come away quite sad though as I think Hod Hill as replaced Martin Down as my favourite chalk grassland habitat...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 05-May-11 08:22 PM GMT

#### "Pete Eeles" wrote:

A couple of hours spent in a Wiltshire wood allowed me to see my first Marsh Fritillary of the year

Correction – I saw my first at the UKB Photography Workshop, as spotted by Lee Hurrell! Doh!

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 11-May-11 02:26 AM GMT

#### Back in Wiltshire!

A quick dash this morning to get my weekly "fix" 😊 First stop to see some Adonis Blue. This hilltop site was breezy and cold, but I did manage to see 7 males and 3 females, along with several Grizzled Skipper. A couple of photos below, although getting a true representation of an Adonis Blue on a computer is really difficult (unless you're Guy!).



*Adonis Blue*



*Adonis Blue*

I then visited a Wiltshire Wood to see if I could get some snaps of my two nemeses (if that's the plural of nemesis!). Although I failed on the Argent and Sable front (Kipper will have to let me know his secret!), I did manage to get a record shot of a Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth, which was behaving itself for a change!

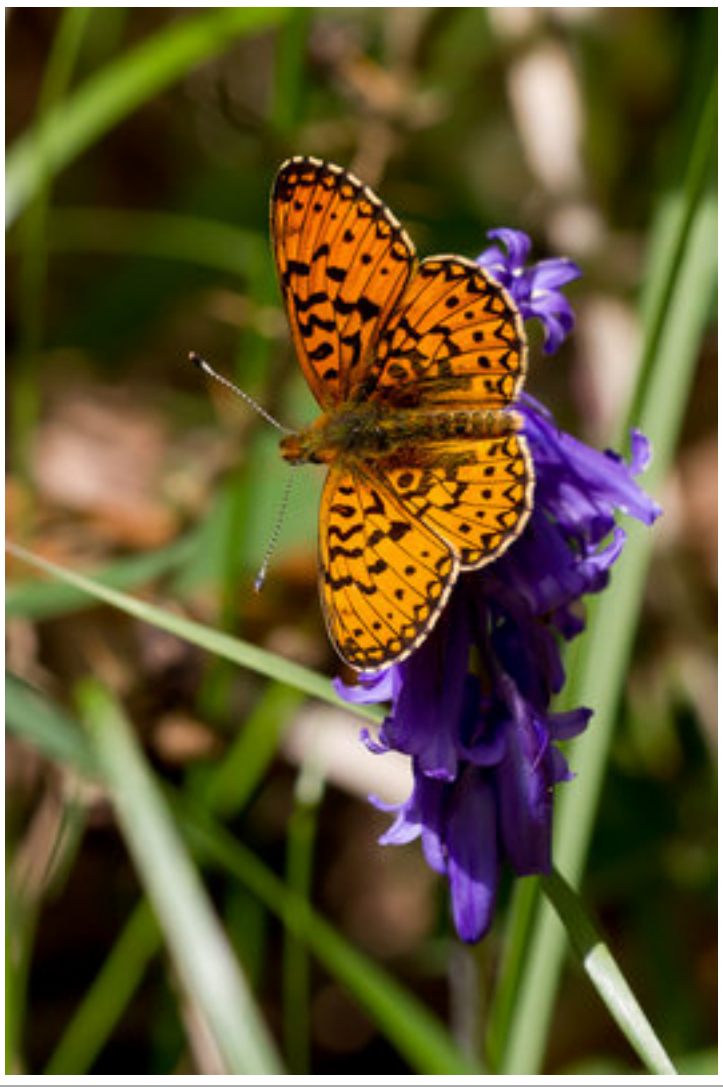


*Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth*

And finally – the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary have finally emerged! Lovely little critters which are not only much brighter orange than their larger cousins, but have a much more delicate flight. A delight to behold! Also a few Dukes, Grizzled and Dingy Skipper, lots of Marsh Frits and (still) Brimstone!



*Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary*



*Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary*

Cheers,

- Pete

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Susie, 12-May-11 03:06 AM GMT

By god that's an exceptionally good photo of an exceptionally hairy adonis blue! It looks like a yeti.

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 14-May-11 03:48 AM GMT

#### ***Denbies Hillside***

Given the recent reports by Susie, Vince and others, of the seemingly large number of aberrant Adonis Blue adults emerging, I decided to venture to pastures new - Denbies Hillside. I have to say, this is an incredible site, with literally carpets of Horseshoe Vetch, the Adonis Blue (and Chalkhill Blue) larval foodplant. It was great to bump into fellow UKB member Philzoid! The number of aberrants initially filled me with joy - but I left with a feeling of deep concern. I'll explain why. First some photos:



*Adonis Blue mating pair – aberrant male, normal female*



*Adonis Blue aberrant female*



*Adonis Blue aberrant female – same individual as above showing normal upperside*





*Yet another Adonis Blue aberrant female*



*Adonis Blue aberrant male*



*Adonis Blue aberrant male – same individual as above showing deformities*



*Another Adonis Blue aberrant female*



*And yet another Adonis Blue aberrant female*



*Adonis Blue aberrant female – same individual as above showing deformities*

I'd say that 95% of all aberrants were deformed, to the point that you could easily pinpoint a deformed adult and – lo and behold – it was an aberration! Only 5% of aberrants seemed to have no deformity (some of the photos above are deliberately taken at a "favourable" angle, giving a potentially-misleading impression of the stats!). And while 100% of deformed adults were aberrations, NONE of the "normal" individuals were deformed at all. And this is why I'm concerned. While the environment (i.e. a stupidly-hot April) could account for either aberrations, or deformities, why the combination? Could it be that the gene pool is actually very weak, resulting in deformed and aberrant individuals? Will their progeny be able to survive? I've contacted a few luminaries to get their thoughts, and will report back.

The characteristics of the individual below may also be the result of a deformity, but it did have primarily female colouring, with a "hint of male"! If it weren't also deformed to a small extent, I'd be more comfortable with labelling this individual as a gynandromorph.



*Adonis Blue gynandromorph – female with some male colouring*

On a more positive note, I saw my first Large Skippers of the year (3 in total), lots of Small Heath, several Dingy Skipper and Green Hairstreak, and this rather nice female Common Blue (showing an extensive amount of blue) as I got back to the car:



*Common Blue female*

Cheers,

– Pete

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Padfield, 14-May-11 04:02 AM GMT

Here's a theory to shoot down:

The aberrations are individuals that for some reason have been incited to emerge too early – before the colours have been laid down properly. The same early emergence has led to one or more of the wings being not fully ready for pumping up and flying.

Adonis blues pupate at or under the surface of the ground (are some buried by ants?). If they detect the ground hardening around them, through desiccation, might this provide stimulus for escaping before they are sealed in a clay tomb? I had initially wondered about physical disturbance causing it, but it sounds as though climatic effects are more significant here.

It is possible there were many more casualties, who didn't make it as far as being able to fly at all, and so were not seen.

Shoot away!

Guy

PS – if the effect were genetic, due to a weak gene pool, wouldn't you expect it to have been evident in previous generations too? The gene pool won't change overnight without some catastrophe occurring to select against a large number of individuals.

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Michaeljf, 14-May-11 04:05 AM GMT

Pete,

I've only just caught up with your recent pages – sorry it's late, but – I think the photographs of the Marsh Fritillaries are absolutely beautiful! 🤩 I love the first one from May 04th on the Bluebell – such excellent colours and composition. The fact that the Marsh Frits are in perfect condition means that nothing is less than exemplary. Also I love the Grizzled Skippers mating from April 18th. There's no point me saying 'keep up the good work' because all the images are great. But...erm...keep up the good work! 🍷

Michael

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 14-May-11 04:10 AM GMT

**"padfield" wrote:**

Here's a theory to shoot down:

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Adonis blues pupate at or under the surface of the ground (are some buried by ants?). If they detect the ground hardening around them, through desiccation, might this provide stimulus for escaping before they are sealed in a clay tomb? I had initially wondered about physical disturbance causing it, but it sounds as though climatic effects are more significant here.

It is possible there were many more casualties, who didn't make it as far as being able to fly at all, and so were not seen.

Shoot away!

Guy

Thanks Guy! So, in the variation article at [http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports\\_variation.php](http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports_variation.php), it says that "It has also been shown that a significant variation can occur as a result of "extreme shocks of either heat or cold during the last 24 hours of the larval stage and the first 48 hours of the pupal stage" [Vigus]" (where Vigus == Felix). And so the colours are laid down when the individual pupates. So why the deformities too? This is why I suggested a genetic link, rather than environmental link.

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 14-May-11 04:14 AM GMT

**"Michaeljf" wrote:**

Pete,

I've only just caught up with your recent pages – sorry it's late, but – I think the photographs of the Marsh Fritillaries are absolutely beautiful! 😍 I love the first one from May 04th on the Bluebell – such excellent colours and composition. The fact that the Marsh Frits are in perfect condition means that nothing is less than exemplary. Also I love the Grizzled Skippers mating from April 18th. There's no point me saying 'keep up the good work' because all the images are great. But...erm...keep up the good work! 🍷

Michael

Thanks Michael – we all do our best! Many of the images I see posted on UKB leave me in awe, I have to say. And if it weren't for those posts, and the advice I've received as a result, my photos wouldn't be anywhere near the (average) standard they are!

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 14-May-11 04:28 AM GMT

**"padfield" wrote:**

PS – if the effect were genetic, due to a weak gene pool, wouldn't you expect it to have been evident in previous generations too? The gene pool won't change overnight without some catastrophe occurring to select against a large number of individuals.

Good point. I need to re-research just when the colours are laid down. Deep dive in tyrosine and melanin in progress 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Susie, 14-May-11 07:27 AM GMT

Bugger, (if you'll pardon my french), I wish I'd known you were going as there are some areas where there seem to be more aberrants among the population than others and I could have pointed you in the right direction.

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 14-May-11 07:28 AM GMT

From Felix:

"It is perfectly plausible\* that the accelerated development of the imago within the pupal skin, caused by the locally elevated temperatures, truncated the pigmentation processes. In effect, the development was accelerated to the degree that the pigmentation process did not complete fully before the imago was at the point of emergence. Similarly there are an awful lot of small specimens of certain species around at present (brown argus for example) simply because the larvae developed at a hugely accelerated rate due to the unseasonable warmth. They have achieved full development but so quickly that the larvae didn't have the opportunity to consume enough food to achieve full size!

\*In fact, rather than say "it is perfectly plausible" I would rephrase that as "highly likely"

The deformities do not surprise me – many extreme aberrations are accompanied by asymmetry to some degree or another. Captive breeding/rearing has demonstrated that many extreme aberrations are so weak or malformed that they fail to emerge at all."

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 14-May-11 07:30 AM GMT

### "Susie" wrote:

Bugger, (if you'll pardon my french), I wish I'd known you were going as there are some areas where there seem to be more aberrants among the population than others and I could have pointed you in the right direction.

It was a last-minute change of plan, Sooz, otherwise I would definitely have contacted you beforehand! The individuals I wanted to see, however, are everywhere. One in five individuals was "different"!

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Susie, 14-May-11 07:37 AM GMT

On certain areas of the site I would say it was one in two, in other areas a lot less, but as an average you are probably right. I've pm'ed you.

I'm going to go back to the site as soon as possible and do a proper count of all the adonis I can find and an exact tally of how many appear to be normal or otherwise. It's about time I started being a bit more thorough about these things.

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 19-May-11 05:01 AM GMT

### Greenham Common Blues

Given the overcast weather, I thought I'd spend my lunch break searching out Dingy Skipper ova on the plentiful Bird's-foot Trefoil. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack and I came up with a grand total of zero! However, I did manage to find 3 Common Blue ova which stuck out like a sore thumb being completely white against a green background. I also found another 4 where the larva had already departed.

Cheers,

– Pete





## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 20-May-11 07:00 AM GMT

### Wrecclesham

I couldn't resist could I? 😊 A couple of hours spent at the Glanville Fritillary introduction near Farnham, where I saw around 50 Glanville Fritillary which were very easy to find. But certainly not the thousands reported elsewhere! Some photos from today below, and great to chat with 5 or 6 other enthusiasts, including our very own Vince Massimo 😊 And who should I meet when leaving the site, but the very chap responsible for the introduction – we had a good old natter!

Cheers,

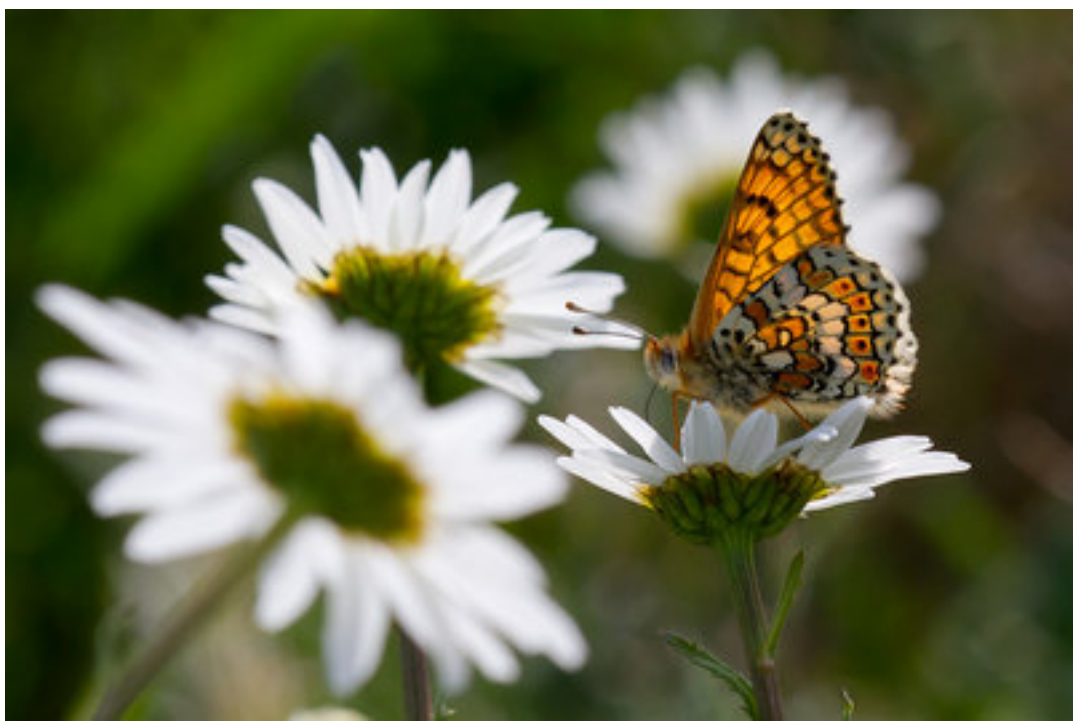
– Pete



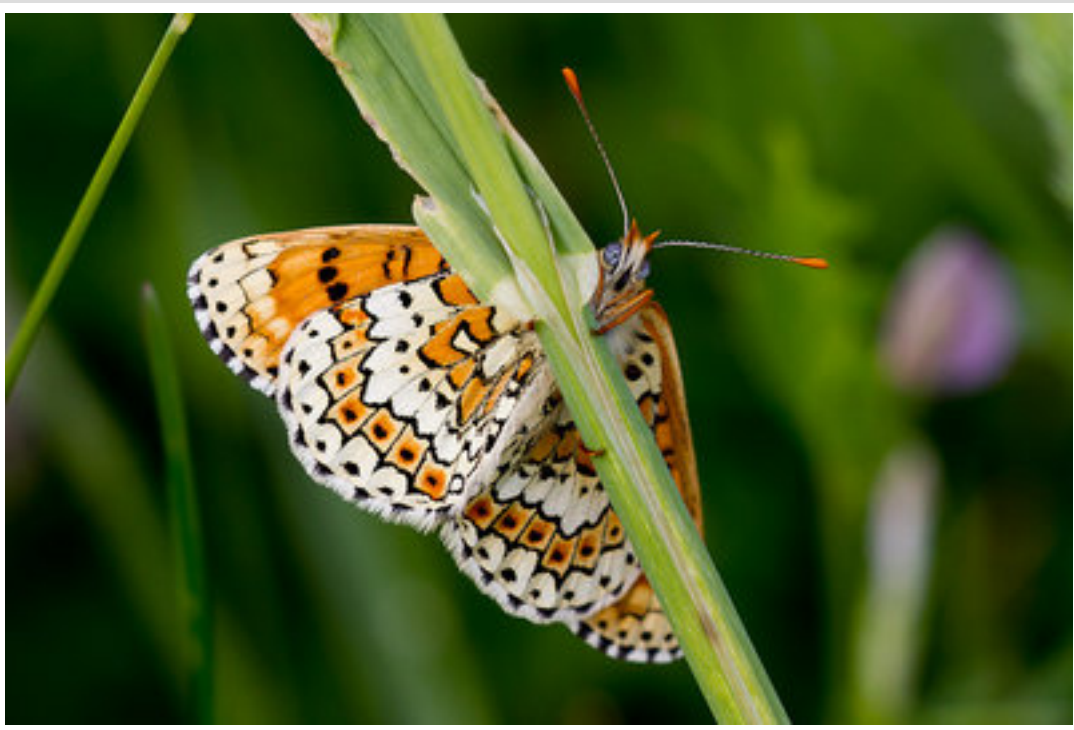
*Glanville Fritillary male*



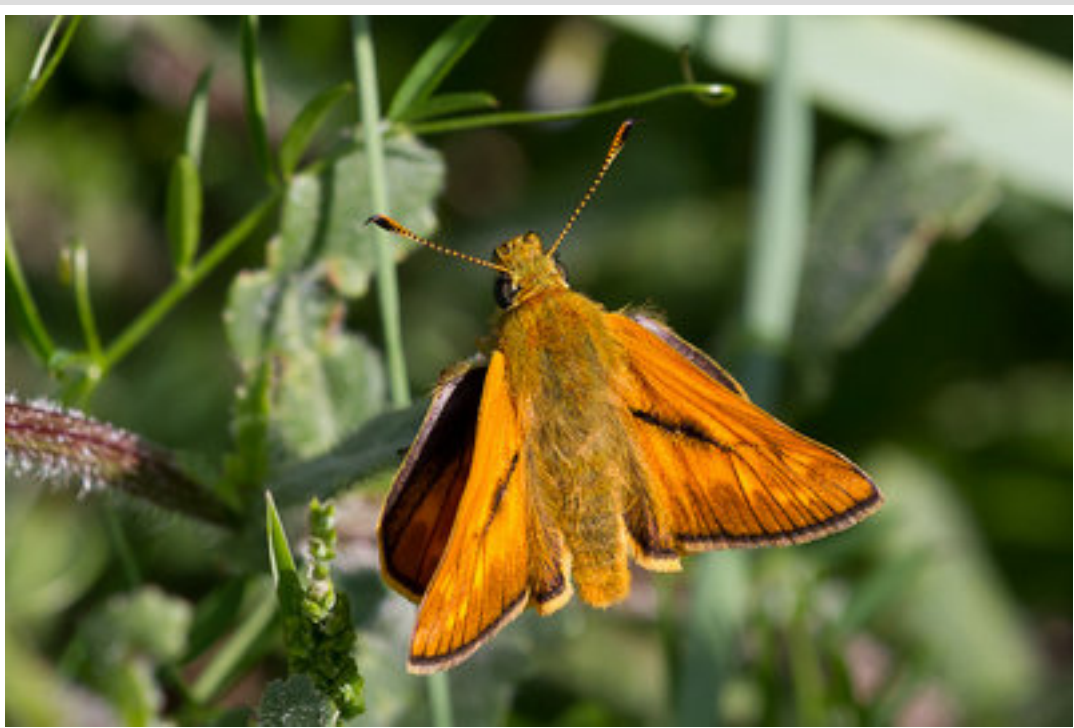
*Glanville Fritillary female*



*Glanville Fritillary male*



*Glanville Fritillary female being silly*



*Not a Glanville Fritillary - a Large Skipper male*

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Susie, 20-May-11 07:06 AM GMT

I'm soooooo jealous! 🙄

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Vince Massimo, 20-May-11 07:59 AM GMT

It was a nice surprise to bump into you today Pete 😊. I stayed until 3.30 but still did not find any mating pairs. I am posting a few photos on the Wrecclsham Glanville thread.

Cheers,

Vince

### Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 20-May-11 08:04 AM GMT

#### "Pete Eeles" wrote:

who should I meet when leaving the site, but the very chap responsible for the introduction – we had a good old natter!

Anything to share with the rest of us, Pete?

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Jack Harrison, 20-May-11 11:46 AM GMT

Pete:

And who should I meet when leaving the site, but the very chap responsible for the introduction – we had a good old natter!

It is obvious from the enthusiasm shown on ukb for this and other introductions that only a few people have objections to introductions. I don't.

Anyone have any captive-bred Mountain Ringlets that I can release in my local meadow in this hilly part of Cambridgeshire? 😊

Jack

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Rogerdodge, 20-May-11 01:54 PM GMT

.....and some Chequered Skippers would save me that horrible long drive!

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Jack Harrison, 20-May-11 02:39 PM GMT

What's with all the insomniacs? (Note the times of some of the postings).

I have found since the age of about 60 I never sleep through the night. My wife is not quite at that age yet, but she is starting to have long spells awake during the night.

Jack

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Rogerdodge, 20-May-11 03:02 PM GMT

What's with all the insomniacs? (Note the times of some of the postings).

Jack  
I can't sleep on after the sky starts to "blue" up.  
Especially today – as I am off butterflying!!!

In 10 minutes I shall be off – soft top down, Van Morrison on the CD player, and my camera on the seat beside me.

Three sites to visit, and an excellent pub for lunch.

Life doesn't get much better.

Bye



**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Gruditch, 20-May-11 03:17 PM GMT

**"Jack Harrison" wrote:**

It is obvious from the enthusiasm shown on ukb for this and other introductions that only a few people have objections to introductions. I don't.

Sorry Jack, but that sounds a bit like UK Butterflies supports any unauthorised introduction.

We adopted the BC policy below. 😊

[http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/u ... 202010.pdf](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/u...202010.pdf)

Regards Gruditch

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 20-May-11 03:28 PM GMT

**"Jack Harrison" wrote:**

It is obvious from the enthusiasm shown on ukb for this and other introductions that only a few people have objections to introductions. I don't.

Context is everything. I would endorse well thought-out introductions where a detailed habitat study has been performed, there is sustainable habitat (managed if required) and the ecology of the species in question understood. And, of course, where there is no detrimental impact to the donor population. And where the law isn't being broken. All in all – I think the BC policy, as Gary says, sums it up and is common sense.

I object to others – such as the Marbled Fritillary "introduction" in Finemere Wood.

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 20-May-11 03:29 PM GMT

**"David M" wrote:****"Pete Eeles" wrote:**

who should I meet when leaving the site, but the very chap responsible for the introduction – we had a good old natter!

Anything to share with the rest of us, Pete?

With regards to the Glanville Frits – nothing that wasn't posted on the other thread. We talked mainly about the crazy year we're having and the likely impact on some species.

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Michaeljf, 20-May-11 03:50 PM GMT

Hi Pete,

thanks for the Glanville report and the photos – I especially like the third shot on the (Ox-eye?) daisies. A lovely shot that sums up summer weather (though as always all your photos are great). If I wasn't busy going hither and thither (plus I've already seen plenty of Glanvilles in France two weeks ago) I'd be tempted to go myself 😊.

Michael

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Jack Harrison, 20-May-11 05:08 PM GMT

Pete.

*You might want to transfer/start a new thread. I'm sure this has come up many times before.*

The Butterfly Conservation Policy about introductions is balanced and I don't find it particularly controversial.

What however I do see as being controversial is that BC seems to be acting as a self-appointed policeman. I'm sure somewhere in the membership forms there is a let-out that implies that members accept BC policy. But not every butterfly enthusiast is a member of BC so they have no obligation to adhere to any BC code of practice. They should of course conform to the Law of the Land.

I draw a parallel with religion. I am not a member of any religion so I see no requirement to follow the rules laid down by religious bodies. That doesn't mean that there aren't some sensible rules but I feel no compulsion to obey; I think for myself and make rational decisions about what is good for me and for the rest of the world. I most certainly don't automatically "respect" a religious leader just because he/she has a title such as "The Reverend" or "Rabbi". (*Unlike a man I knew many years ago in a remote part of Ireland. He was utterly contemptuous of religion, yet bizarrely would "doff" his hat when he passed a priest in the street*). I might well respect a person who happens to be a religious leader because that person is worthy of respect in his/her own right.

Sorry to have digressed. That BC policy commands my respect because it IS sensible but not simply because it has been produced by Butterfly Conservation.

Jack

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 20-May-11 10:57 PM GMT

### Purple Doings at Home

With a day spent working at home, I decided to sort out the Purple Emperor larvae that I'm rearing through. One will pupate tomorrow - this is based on my observations from previous years when a larva will move to the underside of a leaf facing toward the stem. It spends 2 days in that position building a silk pad before turning around 180 degrees, facing away from the stem (i.e. toward the leaf tip) and spending another 2 days in that position. It then pupates. Some photos below.



I know some people are also interested in the setup I use for rearing immature stages. This really depends on the species (and the stage to some extent) and I may well write something up on this at some point. But the Emperors are "sleeved" on willow (if you look closely you can just make one out near the middle!):



And just for comparison, other species can be reared on foodplant in a plant pot (in this case, 2 Silver-washed Fritillary larvae):



In all cases, common sense is to use growing foodplant and natural (outdoor) conditions.

Cheers,

- Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Jack Harrison, 20-May-11 11:18 PM GMT

Looking forward Pete to some tips about your techniques. For example, do you make your own sleeves or buy them? Lots more questions that can wait.

Jack

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 20-May-11 11:27 PM GMT

#### "Jack Harrison" wrote:

Looking forward Pete to some tips about your techniques. For example, do you make your own sleeves or buy them? Lots more

questions that can wait.

Jack

A bit of both. All purchases are from Insectopia (formerly Arnold Johnson insect cages): [http://www.insectcage.net/shop/buy-flow ... leeve.html](http://www.insectcage.net/shop/buy-flow...leeve.html)

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by John W, 21-May-11 01:39 AM GMT

**"Pete Eeles" wrote:**

And who should I meet when leaving the site, but the very chap responsible for the introduction – we had a good old natter!

Hi Pete. Do you know whether the colony founder was surprised or unsurprised / pleased or displeased with the little flurry of visitors this week?

Cheers

John

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 21-May-11 02:21 AM GMT

**"John W" wrote:**

**"Pete Eeles" wrote:**

And who should I meet when leaving the site, but the very chap responsible for the introduction – we had a good old natter!

Hi Pete. Do you know whether the colony founder was surprised or unsurprised / pleased or displeased with the little flurry of visitors this week?

Cheers

John

I think "pleased" would sum it up, and I suspect for several reasons. Not least of which is that others are able to enjoy the sight!

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 22-May-11 04:43 AM GMT

#### Hampshire and Isle of Wight BC – New Members' Day

A fantastic day welcoming 42 new members to the branch, in a now-regular fixture in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight BC events calendar! The morning was spent in presentations – myself providing an overview of the butterflies found in the 2 counties, followed by Robin Turner discussing the website, Dave Green discussing the importance of recording, Tim Norris discussing the moths found in the 2 counties, and wrapping up with Lynn Fomison discussing the importance of gardens for butterflies and moths, as well as our 3 reserves.

Dave's presentation highlighted the incredible number of records provided for the 2 counties: 1,950,156 records of butterflies and moths (507,694 butterfly records) (1,442,462 moth records). Just amazing! Of course, Dave also explained how these records are used to positive effect. We all then headed off to Magdalen Hill Down for lunch and a tour of the reserve. Despite the wind, we managed to notch up a good tally of species, including:

Brimstone (+ larva), Orange-tip (larva), Green Hairstreak, Brown Argus, Small Blue (+ egg), Common Blue, Holly Blue, Speckled Wood, Red Admiral, Peacock, Painted Lady, Small Heath, Large Skipper, Large White, Grizzled Skipper (+ egg). We also saw a Drinker moth larva, a Coleophora case, Adela croesella, Burnet Companion, a Small Elephant Hawkmoth, Six-spot Burnet (+ larvae and pupae), Cinnabar and Celypha lacunana. Some photos below.

Cheers,

– Pete



*Small Blue*



*Orange-tip Larva following a skin change - with the old skin still intact*



*Grizzled Skipper egg*



*Small Elephant Hawk-moth*



*Drinker moth larva*

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 28-May-11 12:48 AM GMT

### Pamber Forest

Took the dogs for a walk earlier this week before heading to Johannesburg for a couple of days. Not much flying, apart from Speckled Woods and the occasional Green-veined White. But Brimstone larvae were all over the place, feeding on the plentiful Alder Buckthorn. A couple of shots below. Also a wasp (Id required) munching on a small beetle.

Cheers,

- Pete



*Fully-grown Brimstone larva*



*Immature Brimstone larva, backlit and showing droplets on the end of each hair*



*Unidentified wasp*

## **Re: Pete Eeles**

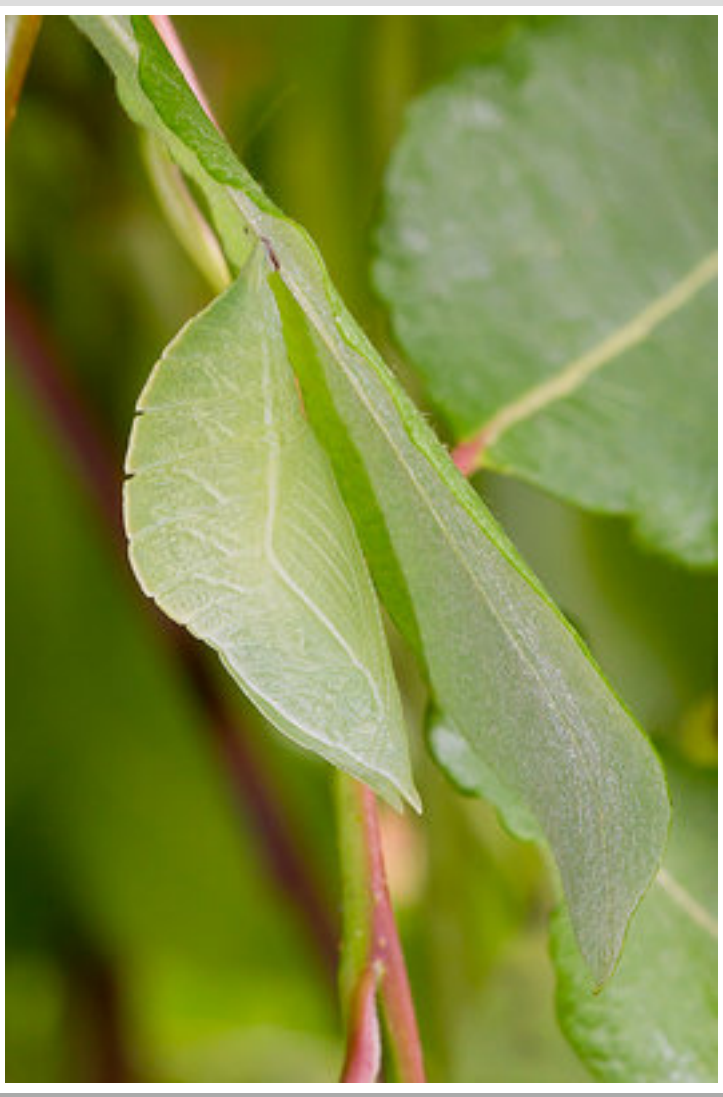
by Pete Eeles, 28-May-11 12:52 AM GMT

### **Purple Doings**

Back home, and all of the Purple Emperor larvae have either pupated, or are in the process of pupating. Most larvae that remain are in the "head down" position, meaning that pupation is imminent.



There are also several pupae.



And a side-by-side shot, since they're on the undersides of neighbouring Sallow leaves.



Cheers,  
- Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by ChrisC, 28-May-11 05:10 AM GMT

your wasp looks like a sawfly, possible tenthredo species.

Chris

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 28-May-11 05:29 AM GMT

#### "ChrisC" wrote:

your wasp looks like a sawfly, possible tenthredo species.

Chris

Thx Chris - I've only really taken notice of sawfly larvae in the past!

Cheers,  
- Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by John W, 28-May-11 05:33 AM GMT



"Pete Eeles" wrote:

And a side-by-side shot, since they're on the undersides of neighbouring Sallow leaves.

Amazing camouflage!

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 02-Jun-11 05:20 AM GMT

### Silchester Common

A great hour spent at Silchester Common, my local Silver-studded Blue site. The SSBs have been out for a few days now, and I managed to see around 40 in total, but only a single female. I guess this bodes well for a good showing, given that the males typically outnumber females by a factor of 2:1, so many more are likely to emerge over the next week. I only found one emerging, and it wasn't attended by ants, unfortunately! Some photos of this delightful little creature below.



*Male Silver-studded Blue*



*Female Silver-studded Blue*



*Male Silver-studded Blue*

On leaving the site, I looked on some of the Alder Buckthorn that I'd been monitoring, and where I managed to find quite a few larvae a week or so ago. I was very surprised to find a pupa under a Buckthorn leaf – the first I've ever found in the wild!



*Brimstone pupa*

Finally, back at home, I noticed that one of the Purple Emperor larvae has pupated on the upper surface of a Sallow leaf – something I've never seen before, but this was known to Frohawk as stated in his classic "A Natural History of British Butterflies"!



*Purple Emperor pupa*

Cheers,  
– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by millerd, 02-Jun-11 06:20 AM GMT

That lustrous sheen on the female SSB is amazing – it must have been very fresh... And I love the colours in the first photo.

Dave

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Padfield, 02-Jun-11 06:23 AM GMT

Wonderful! You can smell the heather!

Guy

**Re: Pete Eeles**

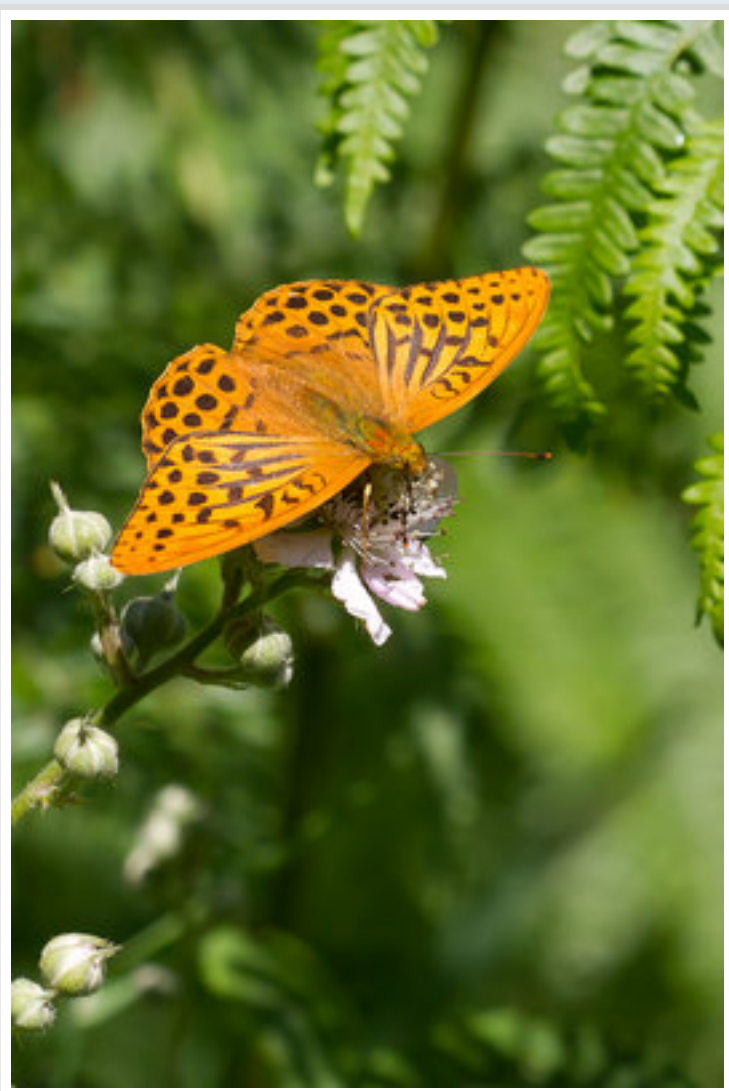
by Pete Eeles, 12-Jun-11 07:50 PM GMT

**Pamber Forest**

I popped into Pamber Forest yesterday for the briefest of visits, to look for oak woodland species. I managed to notch up a single White Admiral and 6 Silver-washed Fritillary (all male) in the space of 30 minutes.



*Male Silver-washed Fritillary*



*Male Silver-washed Fritillary*

Back home, I took a look at some Marbled White larvae that I'm rearing through. They're all final instar, with a couple preparing to pupate. The photos were taken late evening, given that the larvae hunker down deep in the grass tussocks during the day.



*Marbled White larva - brown form*



*Marbled White larva - brown form*



*Marbled White larva - green form*

And finally, I rescued a Grizzled Skipper egg a while back that was in serious danger of being squished since the plant it was laid on was growing in the middle of a footpath! The resulting larva is feeding on Wild Strawberry, and has spun a web at the leaf base, and from which it emerges to feed. I've yet to see the thing in action and suspect it's currently undergoing a skin change. Hopefully, more photos to follow on this one!



*Grizzled Skipper web*

Cheers,  
– Pete

## Sawfly

by Mark Colvin, 12-Jun-11 09:30 PM GMT

Hi Peter.

ChrisC is correct regarding your 'unidentified wasp' as it appears to be a specimen of the Green-legged Sawfly (*Tenthredo mesomelas*). I'm a first time user of the Forum so hope i've posted correctly.

Kind regards. Mark

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 12-Jun-11 09:33 PM GMT

Thanks Mark (and Chris!) and welcome – I really appreciate the ID!

Cheers,  
– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 17-Jun-11 03:58 AM GMT

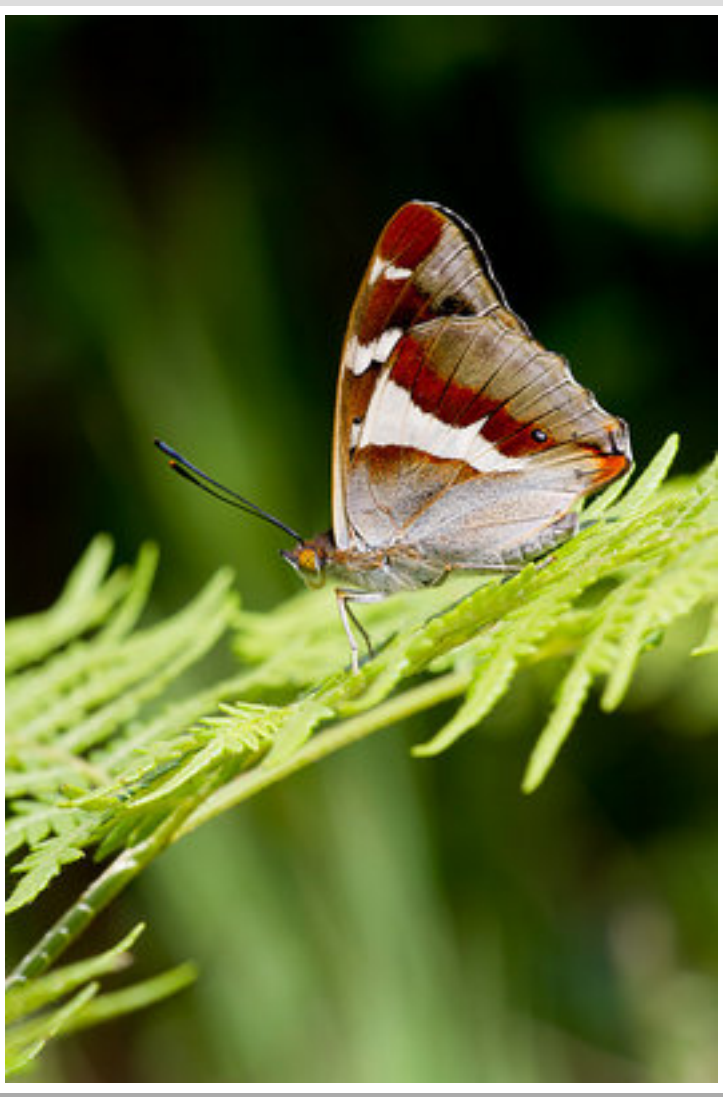
### Pamber Forest

Another brief visit to Pamber Forest a couple of days ago was surprisingly good, topped off with a good old natter with Graham Dennis, the forest warden, while watching a White Admiral running (I kid you not) across a patch of moist ground in between bouts of feeding on minerals – something neither of us had ever seen before, and very strange! A few more sightings of fresh male White Admiral and male Silver-washed Fritillary were complemented with sightings of a couple of very fresh *hutchinsoni* Comma, looking spectacularly bright (unfortunately no photos of these), a good number of Meadow Brown, an unusually-large number of Large Skipper, good numbers of second brood Speckled Wood, several newly-emerged Brimstone and a single Marbled White. A few Speckled Wood were ovipositing.



*Speckled Wood ovum*

Meanwhile, back home, the first Purple Emperor has emerged, and this male was released into suitable habitat:



*Male Purple Emperor*

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 20-Jun-11 04:50 AM GMT

### Home ... then Leckhampton Hill, Cheltenham

I've given up predicting anything this year and this morning was no exception. Before we set off to see family in our home town of Cheltenham, I took the dogs out to a nearby field – the field where I've found Purple Hairstreak ova for the last few years thanks to a fallen oak that is still putting out spectacular buds year after year. I was hoping to get some shots of Large Skipper (and hopefully see my first Small Skipper of the year) but failed on both counts. What I did find absolutely blew me away – I've yet to see any Purple Hairstreak at all this year when a solitary Purple Hairstreak flitted past my head and landed on the very oak just mentioned. Unfortunately, one of the dogs managed to cause it to fly up and I thought it was gone forever. Just a few minutes later I saw it flitting about again (I assume it was the same individual), and it landed on a nearby Bramble and sat there for a few minutes with wings closed. I was about to get an underside shot when I could see it starting to gently open its wings a millimeter at a time. I quickly change position and, as the wind dipped, it did what I was hoping – which was to fully-open its wings and, wow! Thankfully, I was in the right position to catch the glorious purple iridescence of the forewings of a very fresh female Purple Hairstreak! I've really wanted to get such a shot for several years and now, at last, it is "in the bag"! Made my day.



*Female Purple Hairstreak*

We then set off for Leckhampton, Cheltenham, where I grew up. I sneaked out for an hour to visit the very place that got me interested in butterflies when I was 8 or 9 years old – Leckhampton Hill. I remember seeing so many species here – Green Hairstreak, Duke of Burgundy, Dark Green Fritillary, Marbled White, Chalkhill Blue and even Marsh Fritillary (on one occasion). The Marsh Frits and Dukes are long gone, but the others are still hanging on. On the way back to the car I saw a couple of pristine Ringlet, my first for the year.



*Leckhampton Hill*



*Ringlet*

Cheers,

– Pete

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Susie, 20-Jun-11 04:55 AM GMT

That purple hairstreak really is a stunner. It's serendipitous events such as this that make life worth living.

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Trev Sawyer, 20-Jun-11 05:06 AM GMT

Ooh Pete!

I lie awake at night dreaming of getting a shot like that – you lucky Bu\*\*er 🍀

Trev

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 20-Jun-11 05:12 AM GMT

Susie called it "serendipity". But "lucky Bu\*\*er" is right on the money 😄 Only took 5 years to get anything remotely like this in the wild. And I'm still aching from missing a similar shot of a male in 2002! That's ... er ... 9 years ago! Yikes!

I'm still astounded that the only PH I've seen is a female, and can only assume that there are several males in the vicinity, given the significant extra time it takes for the larva to feed up, and for the eggs to develop within the pupa, when female. I'll be returning to the site at every spare moment!

Cheers,

– Pete

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by David M, 20-Jun-11 05:20 AM GMT

It may be a fairly common species, but its behaviour and its secrecy make that shot worth more than any Large Blue open wing image.

Well done.

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Neil Hulme, 20-Jun-11 11:59 PM GMT

Hi Pete,  
That Purple Hairstreak image is fantastic. I suspect your fave shot of the year so far? I too have been waiting a while for one like that – me next please 😊  
Neil

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 21-Jun-11 12:14 AM GMT

Thx David / Neil,

Yes – there are some specific shots I suspect we all want to get and sometimes it just takes time. Took me 5 years to get my first open-winged shot of a Large Blue, so on a par with the Purple Hairstreak!

Something else rather strange struck me too as I sat there watching this female open her wings – getting shots in the wild is just so much more enjoyable than any "staged" shot I've taken in captivity!

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 21-Jun-11 12:21 AM GMT

### "Pete Eeles" wrote:

Thx David / Neil,

Yes – there are some specific shots I suspect we all want to get and sometimes it just takes time. Took me 5 years to get my first open-winged shot of a Large Blue, so on a par with the Purple Hairstreak!

Tell me about it. I'm still trying to get a Holly Blue open wing shot!

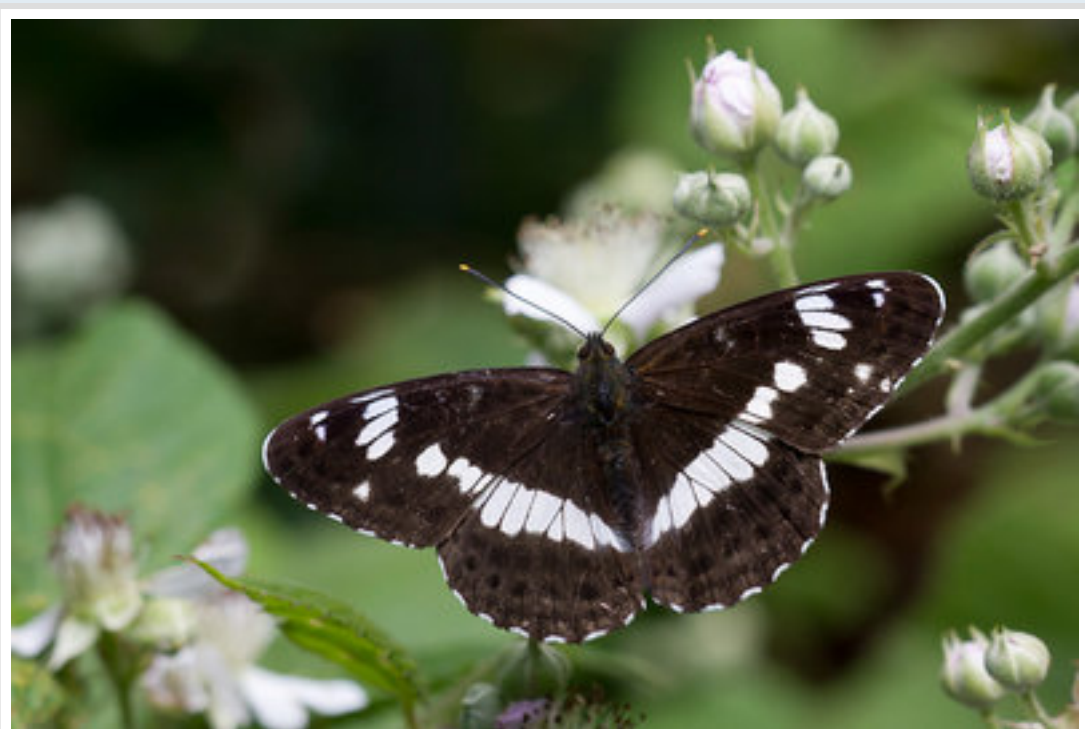
## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 22-Jun-11 03:08 AM GMT

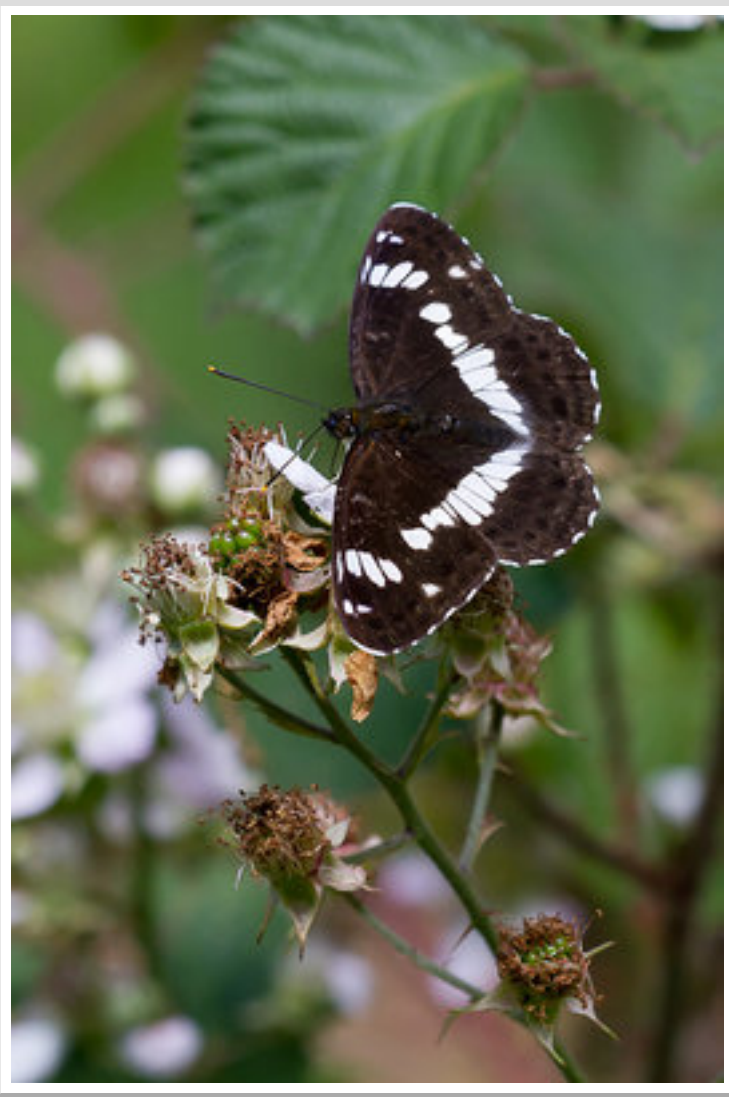
### Pamber Forest

Yet another trip to Pamber Forest – one of my absolutely favourite sites, and one that I've gotten to know really well over the last 10 years. It's a big place, but I think I've walked every single path now, and certainly know the hotspots 😊

Having watched the clouds pass by, and the rain do its stuff, I knew that White Admiral would be nectaring as soon as the sun showed itself given that their normal breakfast had been delayed by a few hours! This was about 1300 and, right on cue, I saw 6 White Admiral nectaring on the same Bramble bush. Unfortunately, thanks to the dogs, this number was quickly reduced! But it does, indeed, seem that White Admiral are having a superb season this year by all accounts.







Several Silver-washed Fritillary were also flying about, and I saw my first female SWF of the year – although it looked a little strange from a distance. As I crept closer, I could see it was aberrant (I think my first aberration of the year!) and freshly emerged (a dab of meconium was visible at the tip of the abdomen, and the wings somewhat "floppy"). Once the cloud moved out of the way, she "did her stuff" and opened her wings fully.



*Female Silver-washed Fritillary aberration*

And her underside seemed to show curtailed silver washes.



*Female Silver-washed Fritillary aberration*

Aside from a good number of Meadow Brown, a few Ringlet, a next-generation Green-veined White and a few Brimstone, are Large Skipper having a superb year or what? I've never seen so many. Every flowering Bramble bush had 2 or 3 sunning themselves!

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 22-Jun-11 04:33 AM GMT

She is wonderful, Pete! Such bold upperside markings and such subtle underside colours.

Guy

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Susie, 22-Jun-11 04:40 AM GMT

I'm jealous of your ab swf!

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 22-Jun-11 04:47 AM GMT

Thanks Guy /Sooz,

Not a bilateral gynandromorph though, is it? Not that I'm complaining! 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Shirley, 22-Jun-11 04:59 AM GMT

Such great photos Pete 😊 . Clive and I have spent the last couple of weekends exploring the Forest as we only visited for the first time last year (on several occasions) and are no where near as familiar with it as you but already know it will be one of our ' hot spots' . We felt lucky seeing our first White Admirals and S. W. Fritillaries along with the Large Skippers and are in awe of your knowledge and expertise. 😊 .

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 22-Jun-11 05:15 AM GMT

#### "Shirley" wrote:

Such great photos Pete 😊 . Clive and I have spent the last couple of weekends exploring the Forest as we only visited for the first time last year (on several occasions) and are no where near as familiar with it as you but already know it will be one of our ' hot spots' . We felt lucky seeing our first White Admirals and S. W. Fritillaries along with the Large Skippers and are in awe of your knowledge and expertise. 😊 .

Flattery will get you everywhere 😊 Seriously, drop me a line if you fancy a guided tour 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 24-Jun-11 01:29 AM GMT

#### Pamber Forest

Another of my captive-bred Purple Emperors emerged late yesterday afternoon – a very large and very beautiful female. This morning, I released her into suitable habitat (the same location as the male released a few days ago), although it was a good 30 minutes before she decided to fly up into an oak! The first photo also shows a fly (deliberately) to give some sense of proportion!



*Female Purple Emperor*

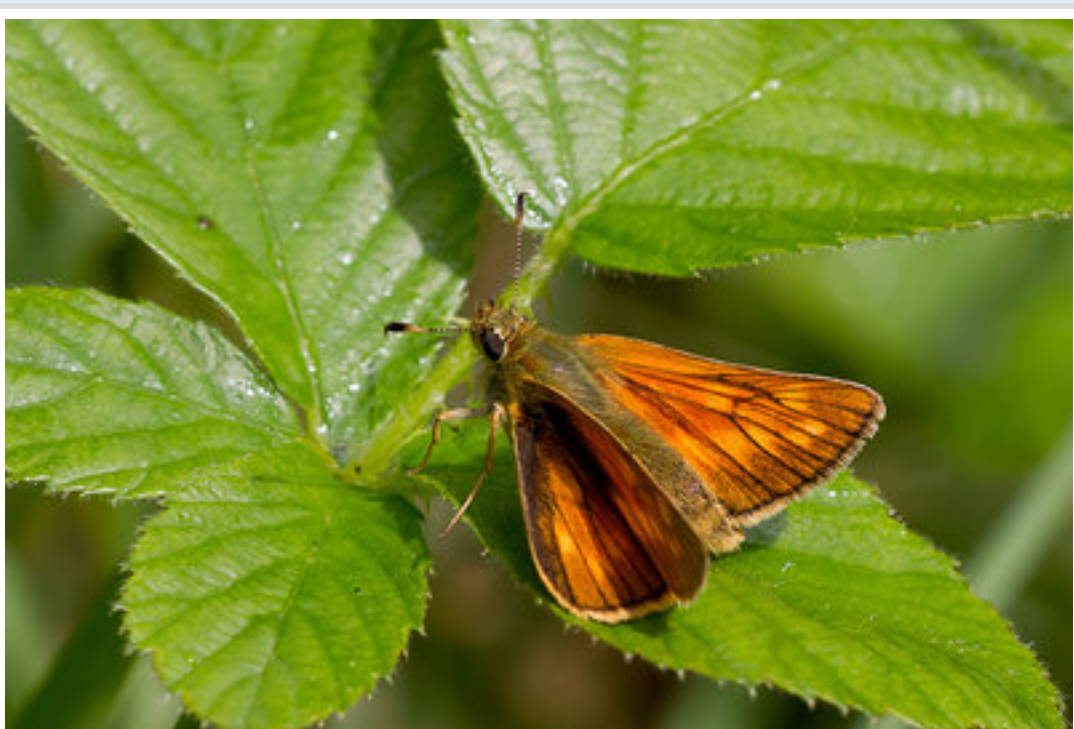


*Female Purple Emperor*

I then headed off, again, to Pamber Forest. The place is just alive at the moment! I was particularly keen to spend a chunk of time observing Large Skipper and checking out the antennae! Pauline's excellent observation of using the colouring of the antennae to determine sex does, indeed, seem to hold true, although it's very subtle on occasion. The mating pair below is followed by a photo of the mother of the egg that is also shown. With most species, I find that locating eggs is most-easily achieved by finding a female that is acting rather strange, and then following her. Watching her bend her abdomen around a grass blade and depositing an egg on almost every occasion was just wonderful to watch!



*Large Skipper mating pair*





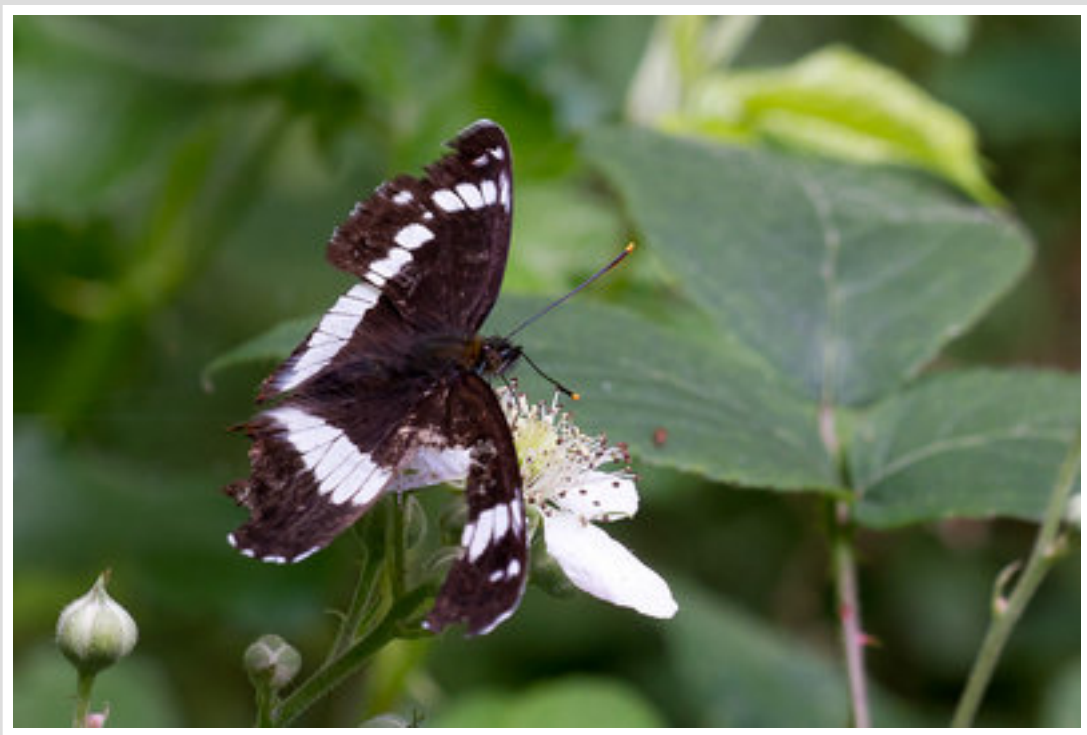
*Large Skipper ovum*

The new generation of Red Admiral are also starting to emerge – I saw 4 in total, all absolutely pristine.



*Red Admiral*

But this poor chap has seen better days. I was amazed he could still fly, but was still hunting out females when not nectaring!



*Ancient White Admiral*

And finally, I'm rearing a single Speckled Wood (from egg). I managed to catch it just as it had moulted into the 2nd instar larva. The massive black head is just so distinctive!



*Speckled Wood 2nd instar larva*

Cheers,

– Pete

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Bill S, 26-Jun-11 04:40 PM GMT

Marvellous story and pic on the Purple Hairstreak Pete, thanks for sharing.

Bill

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 30-Jun-11 07:16 AM GMT

**Sunday, Monday, Happy Days, Tuesday, Wednesday, Happy Days**

I guess I'm just in a good mood with a sappy title like that. Anyhow – some doings from the past few days.

I met up with Clive and Shirley Sandel, and Mike and Tom Alexander, to show them around Pamber Forest – one of my favourite locations. The butterflies put on a really good show, with White Admiral out in really good numbers (including, at last, a few females), along with many Silver-washed Fritillary (including a mating pair), a single Purple Hairstreak and the usual "others". The White Admiral has to have one of the loveliest undersides of any butterfly!



*Silver-washed Fritillary mating pair*



*White Admiral*

Back home, Gerald (the Grizzled Skipper larva) is acting like the rest of his kind, and VERY difficult to photograph. He pops out of his protective shelter early morning and in the evening to graze the leaf cuticle but, at any hint of disturbance, disappears back under the silk shelter he's woven. It then takes another 20 minutes for him to even poke his head out again!



*Is it safe to come out?*



*Supper!*

This morning I released my final captive-reared Purple Emperor – another spectacular female and, again, very large!



*Purple Emperor female*



*Purple Emperor female*

I then moved on to Stockbridge Down and was pleased to see really good numbers of Marbled White, alongside a dozen Dark Green Fritillary and a single (and very fresh) Small Tortoiseshell. Also good numbers of Small Skipper. I found a just-emerged female Marbled White climbing up a grass stem and watched her slowly pump up her wings. Within a few minutes, a male flew by, landed next to her, and mated (without any discernible courtship). They stayed "in cop" while her wings dried.

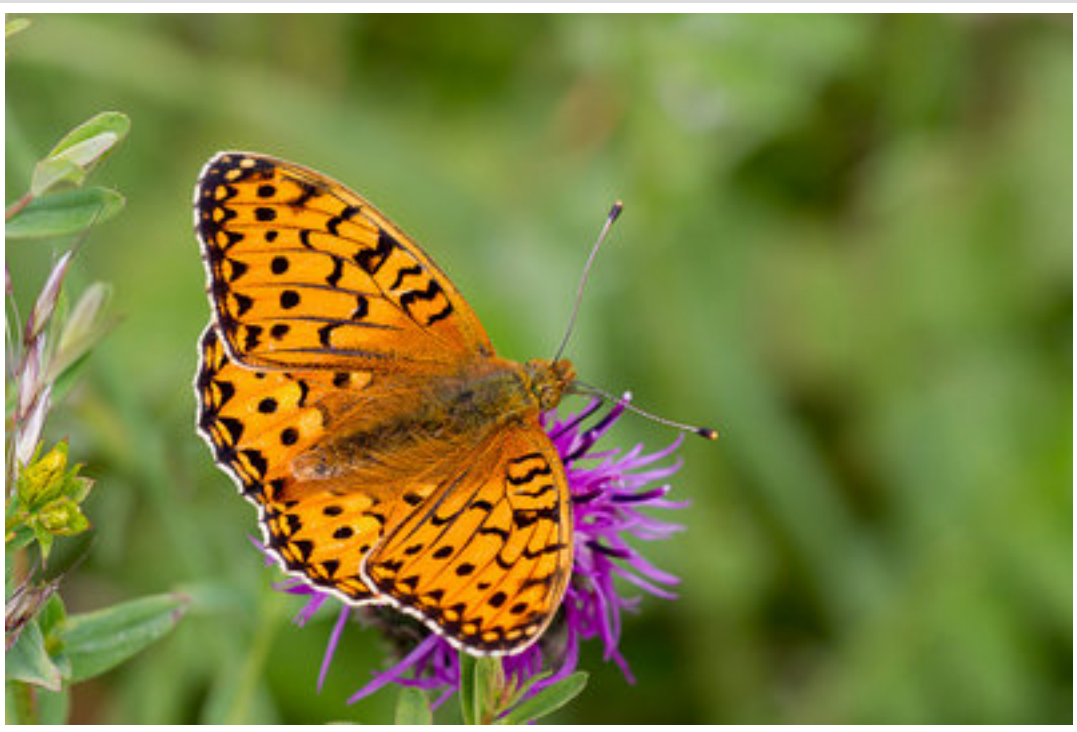


*Marbled White mating pair*



*Small Tortoiseshell*

I then drove over to Pitt Down, part of the Farley Mount Country Park complex, and saw around 15 Dark Green Fritillary (including 2 females) among the many Marbled Whites and a very fresh Peacock, which had clearly recently emerged given its pristine condition.



*Dark Green Fritillary*

All in all, having a good time of late 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Clive, 30-Jun-11 07:40 AM GMT

Now you sound like the Fonz ...

Thanks Pete for the excellent tour around Pamber Forest ... stunning ...

Clive

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 13-Jul-11 08:32 PM GMT

**Immature Stages**



Since it's currently chucking it down here in Switzerland, I thought I'd catch up on my photos from back home over the last week or so. All of these are of immature stages, something I'm absolutely fascinated with!

I'm currently looking after a couple of Large Skippers, after a female decided to pay a visit to the local park and deposit the eggs in an area that will get trimmed before the end of the year. The head of the larva is clearly visible in the egg just before it hatches (see below). The larva then wanders along the leaf before eventually finding a spot where it can form a tube by threading the two edges of the leaf together with silk, and from which it emerges to feed just above the tube. Fascinating stuff!



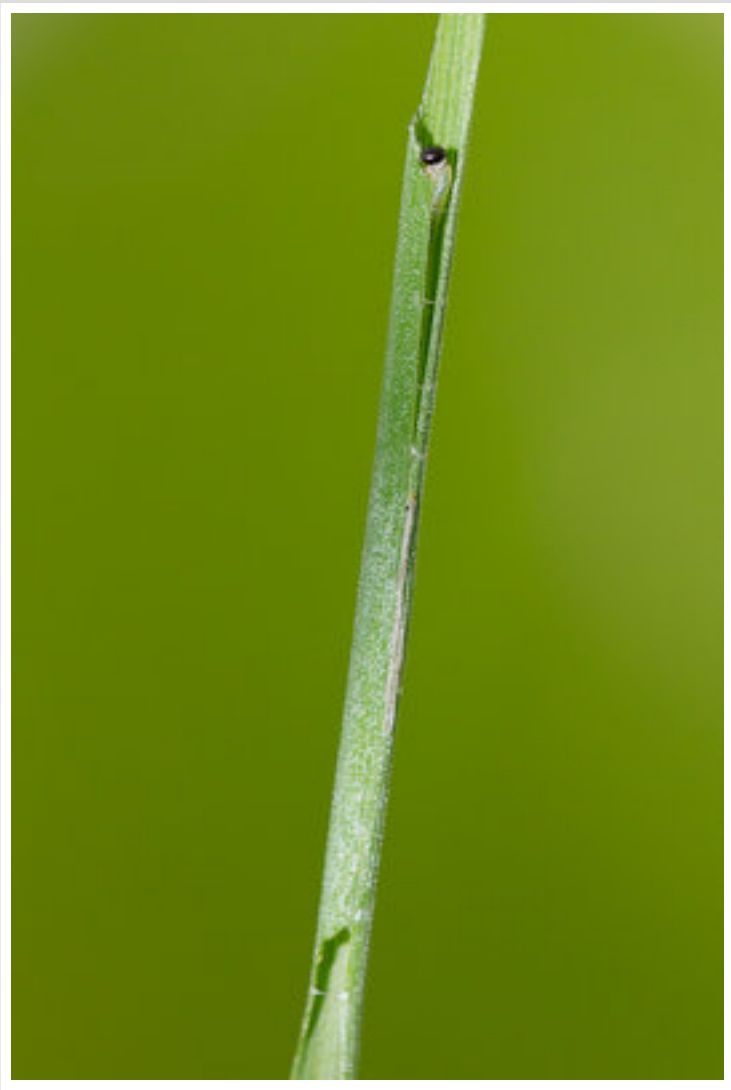
*Large Skipper ovum, about to emerge*



*Large Skipper larva on the move*



*Large Skipper larva in its first tubular home*

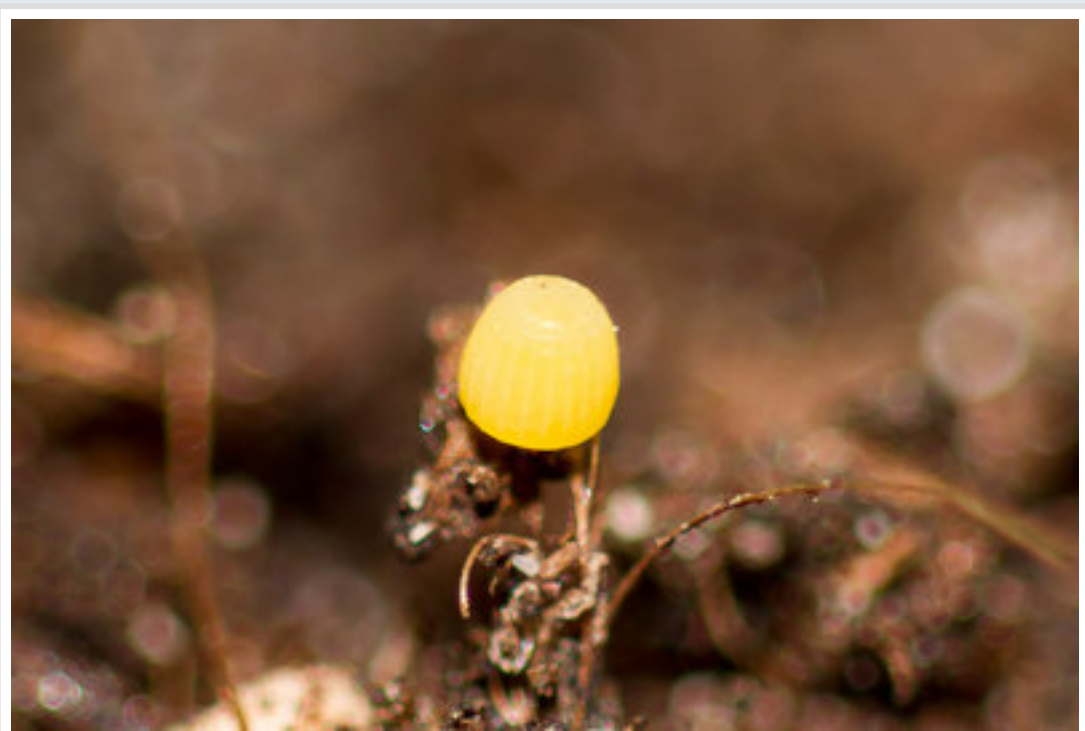


*Large Skipper in grass tube*



*Large Skipper in grass tube - closeup*

I've also been fascinated by those species that either always, or occasionally, lay their eggs while in flight (or when settled) but simply drop them onto the ground. I've had Meadow Brown and Ringlet in the garden, and also found a colony of Marbled White close to where I live. In all cases, I popped a female in a cage with extremely fine netting for 10 minutes. In all cases the females laid one or two eggs which were then photographed before being released. I did keep one Meadow Brown egg back in order to observe the "colouring up" that occurs before it, too, was released.



*Meadow Brown ovum - newly laid*



*Meadow Brown ovum*



*Ringlet ovum*



*Marbled White ovum*

Keeping with the theme of Marbled White, almost all of those I've been rearing at home are either close to pupating, pupae or emerged (and released).



*Marbled White pupa just prior to emergence*



*Marbled White larva, pupa, pupa*

And finally, a final trip to Pamber Forest, where the White Admiral are doing superbly well. I noticed at least half a dozen females ovipositing on honeysuckle that was always in shade or dappled sunlight; but never on honeysuckle in full sun. It took me absolutely ages to get the shot below (and took over 50 shots of this one egg in total) but finally captured the absolutely exquisite nature of what must be the most amazing egg of any British butterfly.



*White Admiral ovum*

Cheers,  
- Pete

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Vince Massimo, 13-Jul-11 08:57 PM GMT

Great stuff Pete 🍷. An absolutely fascinating set of images. I am starting to get hooked on early stages as well, particularly watching how the pupal stage develops in the different species. It is very time consuming, but rewarding when you get the killer shot (after discarding 99% of the rest). Today my last two Brown Hairstreaks hatched within minutes of each other, which is a bit of luck because that means only one trip to the release site in Crawley.....I really must get out more 😊

Cheers,  
Vince

### Re: Pete Eeles

by MikeOxon, 14-Jul-11 02:11 AM GMT

#### "Pete Eeles" wrote:

**Pamber Forest** The new generation of Red Admiral are also starting to emerge – I saw 4 in total, all absolutely pristine.

I noticed that your Red Admiral photo has white dots inside the red band, like one I saw at Fermyn a couple of days ago. At the time, I thought it was an aberration but I have read since that this variation occurs mainly in females. I don't know how frequently this form occurs, but it is rarely mentioned in field guides.

Mike

### Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 14-Jul-11 02:22 AM GMT

"MikeOxon" wrote:

"Pete Eeles" wrote:

**Pamber Forest** The new generation of Red Admiral are also starting to emerge – I saw 4 in total, all absolutely pristine.

I noticed that your Red Admiral photo has white dots inside the red band, like one I saw at Fermyn a couple of days ago. At the time, I thought it was an aberration but I have read since that this variation occurs mainly in females. I don't know how frequently this form occurs, but it is rarely mentioned in field guides.

Mike

Hi Mike – I think this is a perfectly normal occurrence found in both sexes.

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by MikeOxon, 14-Jul-11 02:27 AM GMT

Thanks Pete – it's something I have just missed noticing before! I've revised my posting to describe it as a variation rather than an aberrant.

Mike

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Piers, 19-Jul-11 08:14 PM GMT

"MikeOxon" wrote:

"Pete Eeles" wrote:

**Pamber Forest** The new generation of Red Admiral are also starting to emerge – I saw 4 in total, all absolutely pristine.

I noticed that your Red Admiral photo has white dots inside the red band, like one I saw at Fermyn a couple of days ago. At the time, I thought it was an aberration but I have read since that this variation occurs mainly in females. I don't know how frequently this form occurs, but it is rarely mentioned in field guides.

Mike

Mike is quite correct; *bialbata* is usually expressed in the female of the species, more rarely in the male.

Piers.

(with apologies to Pete for the post in his diary.)

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 23-Jul-11 05:14 AM GMT

Thanks Mike / Piers – I stand enlightened!

### Stockbridge Down

An unexpected and brief visit to one of my favourite Chalkhill Blue sites, mid morning for an hour or so. The Chalkhill numbers are building nicely and the numbers I saw (200+) bodes for a strong emergence this year. Most individuals were really fresh – a couple of which (see photos below) were quite "interesting"! A few Dark Green Fritillary were still clinging on, and several next-generation Brimstone were in attendance. I also saw a Small Skipper egg laying, but didn't manage to get a photo, unfortunately. Other species included Small Copper, Small White, Green-veined White, Marbled White and Small Heath.

Cheers,

– Pete



*Chalkhill Blue male*



*Chalkhill Blue mating pair*



*Chalkhill Blue male with very wide dark borders*



*Chalkhill Blue female, with some blue scaling*



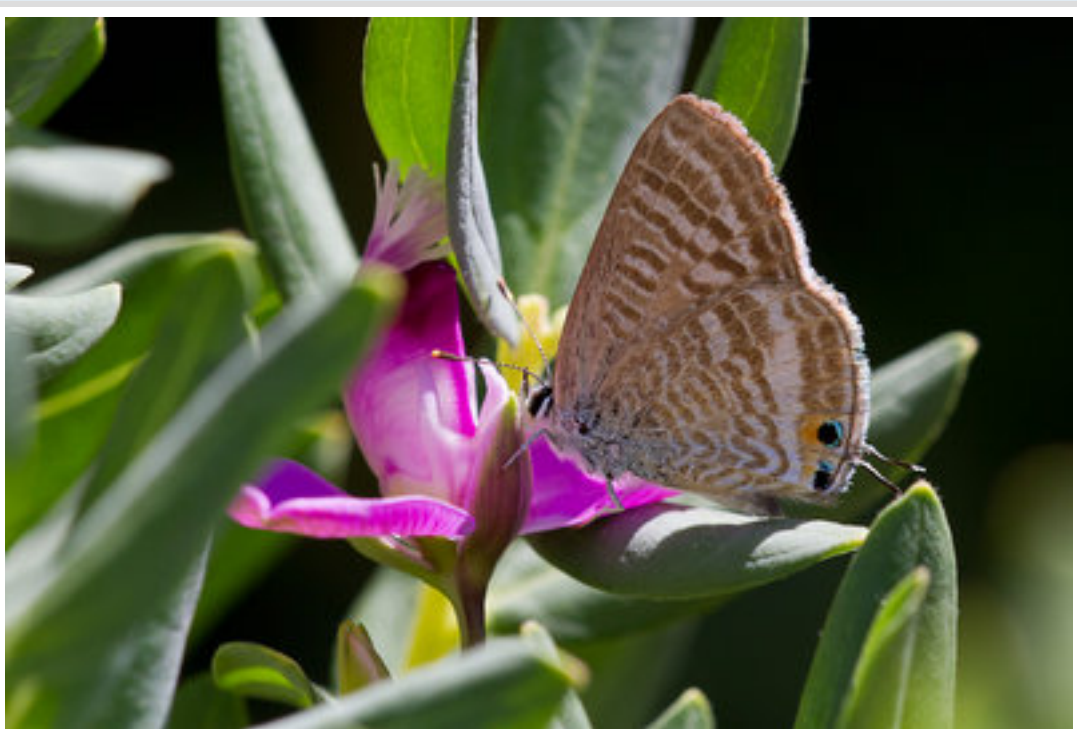
*Brimstone*

## **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 15-Aug-11 06:48 AM GMT

### **Portugal**

I've just returned from 2 sunny weeks in Vilamoura, in the Algarve region of southern Portugal – our family holiday. Although butterflies were very much secondary for a change (!), it wasn't long before I disappeared on excursions close to the villa we stayed at, which was surrounded by orchards, woodland and more open areas. Unfortunately, most ground was bone dry with very little green vegetation. However, I did manage to notch up Southern Gatekeeper, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Holly Blue, Lang's Short-tailed Blue, Long-tailed Blue, Swallowtail, Scarce Swallowtail, Meadow Brown, Monarch, Small White, Large White and Speckled Wood. But the highlight was actually in the villa garden, where I managed to find Long-tailed Blues ovipositing profusely on a particular species of shrub that had been planted – ID would be appreciated! I can only assume that the larvae burrowed straight into the flower buds since I never found one! And I would never have gotten a photo of the very jittery adult females either, if they hadn't settled to lay.



*Female Long-tailed Blue*



*Long-tailed Blue ova*



*Long-tailed Blue ovum*

Fennel grows commonly across the Mediterranean as a common weed, and I did find a relatively-lush patch fairly close to the villa. Or, I should say, a female Swallowtail found the patch and I followed her flight as she laid egg upon egg. Closer inspection led me to find larvae in all instars.



*Spot the Swallowtail egg!*



*Swallowtail ovum*





*Swallowtail 1st instar larva - recently emerged from the egg*



*Swallowtail larva following a skin change*



*Swallowtail larva*

Still - it's nice to be back 😊

Cheers,

- Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Paul Wetton, 15-Aug-11 05:00 PM GMT

Some more great photos Pete.

Glad you enjoyed your holiday and managed to get a bit of butterfly watching in.

Are you going to post a trip report from Switzerland. I'd love to have a look at your photos from that.

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 15-Aug-11 05:15 PM GMT

Thanks Paul.

**"Paul Wetton" wrote:**

Are you going to post a trip report from Switzerland. I'd love to have a look at your photos from that.

Oh yes – definitely. Hopefully this side of Christmas, since it always takes a lot of effort to get photos ID'd, input gathered from 7 photographers, etc. etc.!

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Paul Wetton, 15-Aug-11 05:53 PM GMT

Hi Pete

Glad to hear everyones photos will be located together in one trip report. Looking forward to it.

Don't know if your saw my trip report on my personal diary. Linked to my website due to large numbers of photos. Maybe I should have posted it separately may add it again in overseas section.

I have some great Marmot photos if you ever change your avatar picture.

All the best.

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 15-Aug-11 07:46 PM GMT

**"Paul Wetton" wrote:**

Don't know if your saw my trip report on my personal diary.

Nope but just found it, and tweeted it! Excellent report!

**"Paul Wetton" wrote:**

I have some great Marmot photos if you ever change your avatar picture.

The "nickname" came about because I saw our one-and-only marmot at one of the sites. Then, 2 days later, and since I was the only one that didn't take any waterproofs to Switzerland, ended up buying a lime green waterproof top. The make? Marmot, of course!

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Paul Wetton, 15-Aug-11 07:53 PM GMT

Thanks for tweeting the report. First time I've had anything to do with Twitter. I know get with the times Mr. Wetton.

You could get many worse nicknames than Pete "The Marmot" Eeles.

All the best.

**Re: Pete Eeles**

by Pete Eeles, 22-Aug-11 12:17 AM GMT

## Doings at Home

After a walk around Pamber Forest this morning, and a thorough soaking that neither I nor the dogs were expecting (well, they looked surprised 😊), I decided to take a look at the only critter being reared at home at the mo. I rescued "Gerald" the Grizzled Skipper quite a while ago now since he (as an egg) was in serious danger of being squished. I'm pleased to say that he's developed nicely into a final-instar larva. Since he spends pretty much all of his time in a larval tent, I gently prised it apart to take a look and the chap is doing just great!



*Grizzled Skipper larval tent*



*Grizzled Skipper final-instar larva (i.e. Gerald)*

The only other item I have at home is a parasitised Marsh Fritillary larva that I found ages ago, complete with "maggots". So I took it home, where the maggots (larvae of the wasp *Cotesia* (= *Apanteles*) *bignelli*) duly pupated within cocoons formed in a dense web of silk on the unfortunate Marsh Fritillary larva. Once they'd done that, I stuck them in the fridge (like you do!) assuming that they were also single-brooded and I wanted to make sure I didn't miss them emerging. Anyway, I took a look earlier today, and left the box on the desk in my study for an hour or so while I was occupied with other things. When I got back, I found a wasp emerging! I must admit, I feel somewhat gutted that I think I've inadvertently caused the critter to overwinter unnaturally, and the box is now back in the fridge. Even the wasps deserve a decent chance at procreation – and the remaining batch will be given just that. Anyway – some interesting photos nonetheless (although not the best of photos because the wasp is absolutely tiny, and never stops moving!). If someone could confirm the species I'd appreciate it – can't seem to find much information on these wasps on the Net.



*Marsh Fritillary larva with silk web (and adult) of *Cotesia bignelli**



*Cotesia bignelli* wasp



*Cotesia bignelli* wasp

Cheers,

- Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 21-Sep-11 06:26 AM GMT

### Woolhampton Gravel Pits

It's been quite a while since I last posted in my diary - for reasons that will come clear in the fullness of time, not least the fact that I'm having a thorough clearout of all my images, re-processing them all with the latest advances in Lightroom, and deleting around half of them in the process! Last week I managed to get out (on 14th) and headed straight to a site that has more than its fair share of ivy - an essential nectar source at this time of year. Plenty of Red Admiral and Comma, a few Green-veined White (including an ovipositing female) and a few Holly Blue (also including an ovipositing female). Looking under a sheet of corrugated iron revealed 8 very beautiful Grass Snakes! Back home, a quick search of the ivy outside my study revealed 8 larvae - all still quite small - but will try and grab some photos during the week and will post them here. Unlike last year, no ants are (currently) in attendance! All in all, still quite a lot going on in my neck of the woods, although things are definitely winding down.



*Comma*



*Red Admiral*



*Green-veined White ovum*

Cheers,

- Pete

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 27-Sep-11 03:42 AM GMT

### Photo Rationalisation

I've finally completed a long overdue sortout of all of my photos taken in the UK - reducing 2712 photos down to 1631 in the process! I've also used a template to help me better-understand targets for the remainder of this year - and next year. Amazing how some of the commoner species have slipped through the net! For example, no Small Tortoiseshell undersides worth keeping! A few screenshots below, omitting 2nd brood photos, common forms, very rare migrants, introductions and extinctions. I must admit, I found it a very interesting exercise for all sorts of reasons! Below the sequence is male upperside, male underside, female upperside, female underside, ovum, larva, pupa.

A few nice surprises also emerged - for example, a file I had labelled as a 3-star (out of 5) is now looking pretty good thanks to advances in image processing! And definitely the most colourful photo of a Large Heath I have! Taken at Meathop Moss in 2006.



*Large Heath female*

Cheers,

- Pete





Ovum



Larva



Pupa

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 09-Oct-11 06:08 AM GMT

### Immature Stages

Been a while since the last post – been stupidly busy with work, which shows no signs of abating for some time. I suppose it's good to be busy 😊

Anyway – quite a few things have been keeping me occupied over the last few weeks. First off, Gerald (Mr. Grizzled Skipper) has pupated – in a shelter that didn't seem that dissimilar to his larval tents. Carefully prizing back the leaves allowed me to get some shots. He (unless this is actually Geraldine) is now safely tucked away in a cool place until spring, when he'll be released from whence he came. Photos below. The colour of the pupa seems quite different to those of other species I've observed; the wing cases are particularly pale in relation to the abdomen.



Grizzled Skipper pupal chamber



*Grizzled Skipper pupa*



*Grizzled Skipper pupa*

A weekend walk near the Hants and Isle of Wight BC branch reserve at Bentley Station Meadow resulted in a few Red Admiral larvae and two pupae. One of these is shown below. No matter how much I try to get the effect of the "gold" spangles to portray themselves on the computer, they just don't look anything like real life!



*Red Admiral pupa*





*Red Admiral pupa*

Back home, inspired by Vince's images of rearing Green-veined White, I've been rearing a few through myself. Given a lack of time I "cheated" and went to a garden centre and bought a few cabbage plants to rear them on. While there, I noticed that some of the plants had been eaten. On closer inspection, I found a few Small White larvae – good for them, I thought! And so these were the plants I then took to the till. When I pointed the larvae out to the checkout assistant, she apologised and was about to remove the larvae, when I told her this was the only reason I was buying the plants. Talk about being "stunned"! A short discussion did, I hope, leave her with a better appreciation of our butterfly fauna!

I was particularly fascinated with the subtle differences between Green-veined White and Small White larvae; the Small White having "double yellow" markings around the spiracle and a yellow line along the back, whereas the Green-veined White has a single yellow marking around each spiracle. Just take a look at the latest "Thomas and Lewington" and you'll see what I mean!



*Small White larva*

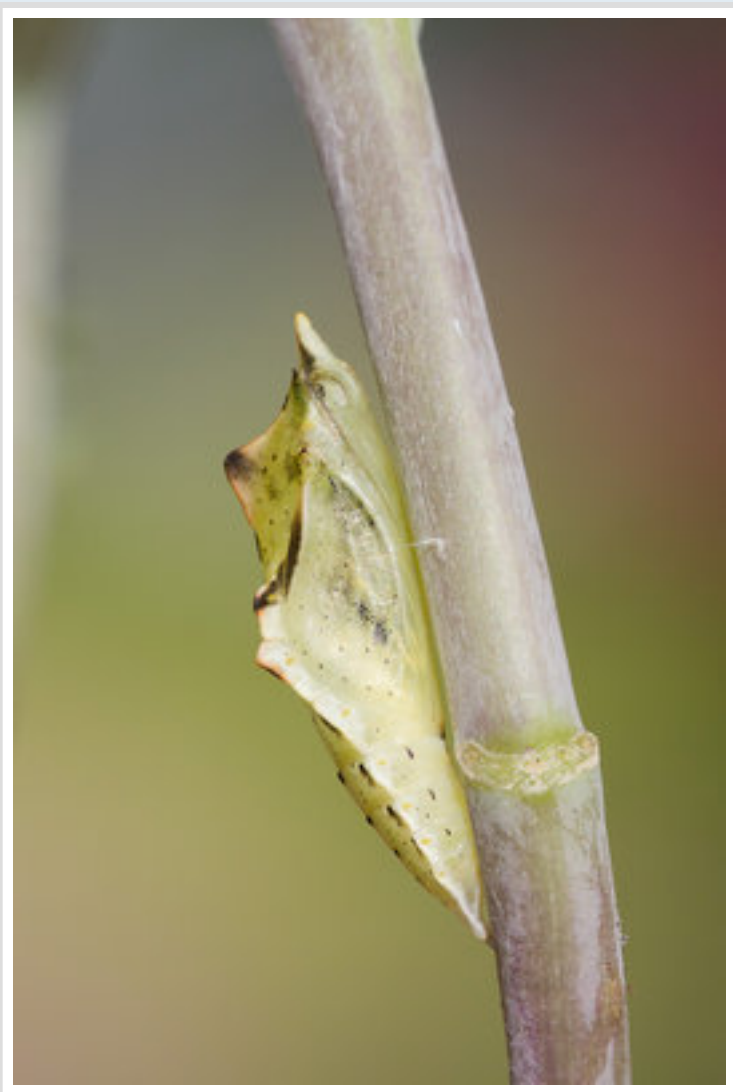


### *Green-veined White larva*

Over the next few days, all of the larvae pupated. I have to say, I've reared numerous Green-veined White larvae over the years (especially when I was a kid), but the pupae really are quite beautiful, and their shape just incredible. I'm definitely guilty of missing what's under my nose and really admire those that take the time (such as Vince) to really appreciate some of our commoner species! My eyes have been opened!



*Green-veined White larva*



*Green-veined White pupa*

Finally – today I attended the Butterfly Conservation branch liaison meeting in London. It was really great to hear about BC's plans from Martin Warren and Nigel Bourne, with a focus on its 2020 vision (despite massive cuts from Natural England), but the highlight was meeting friends and colleagues – including UKB's very own NickB and Crispin Holloway!

Cheers,

– Pete

### **Re: Pete Eeles**

by Vince Massimo, 09-Oct-11 08:18 AM GMT

Great images as usual Pete, and it's always interesting to see how other people go about getting their "early stages" photos. I agree that it's very difficult to do justice to a Red Admiral pupa. I must have taken over 100 images in my last project, to end up with just a few that were acceptable. In my experience I found that using flash accentuated the gold spangles to an almost realistic level. At least this worked with my camera which has an in-built flash on the left side. Oddly, I believe that using a ring-flash may not work quite as well, but I have not been able to test this theory.

I hope that, on this site, we are able to generate a greater interest in "early stages" during the coming season. For those considering such projects, the key is to have the larval foodplants already established, either in pots or in the correct part of the garden. Today I potted-up some nettles which will establish themselves over the winter and then come up strongly when they are needed in the Spring.

Better stop before I completely take over your diary 🍷 .

Cheers,  
Vince

## Re: Pete Eeles

by MikeOxon, 09-Oct-11 09:26 PM GMT

### "Vince Massimo" wrote:

I found that using flash accentuated the gold spangles to an almost realistic level

A flash tip – hold or tape a single ply of tissue over the flash window – it does a great job on macro photos. With a separate flashgun, a simple diffuser such as : [http://www.amazon.co.uk/OMNI-UNIVERSAL- ... 415&sr=1-9](http://www.amazon.co.uk/OMNI-UNIVERSAL-...415&sr=1-9) is excellent for close-up work – I use one all the time.

Mike

## Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 21-Nov-11 06:42 AM GMT

### BC AGM and Members' Day

A superb day spent at Cheltenham Racecourse at the Butterfly Conservation AGM and Members' Day, hosted ably by the Gloucestershire branch. It was particularly enjoyable seeing the hills where I grew up as a boy in the distance, and where my love of butterflies first started. The area is now a BC reserve (see [http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/text/168/prestbury\\_hill\\_gloucestershire.html](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/text/168/prestbury_hill_gloucestershire.html)).

Gary and Lisa manned the UKB stand and raised a good amount for BC, sales of the UKB calendar going particularly well.



The AGM business was followed by the Butterfly Conservation Volunteer Awards, with many worthy winners. After the welcome from Sue Smith (chair of Gloucestershire Branch), we heard from Mike Barry, Head of Sustainable Business, M&S who provided some insight into why "big business" is interested in conservation and why M&S and other organizations are becoming increasingly green. This was followed by a superb presentation from Jim Asher on "The state of butterflies in the UK: the results of the BNM survey 2005-9". This has resulted in the latest publication which will be available in the next 2 weeks or so – "The State of the UK's Butterflies 2011". As you might suspect, the picture is a mix of both losers and winners.



*Dr. Jim Asher*

Orlando Bloom's mother, Sonia Copeland Bloom, then told her story of how she became engaged in butterflies, resulting in her latest book, "Crystal the Small Miracle".

The afternoon was packed with excellent presentations, starting with Matthew Oates discussing "Studies of Fritillaries in Gloucestershire", in particular, the plight of the Marsh Fritillary and Pearl-bordered Fritillary. I know Matthew is one of our most well-known Lepidoptera experts, but he demonstrated just how important careful observations and recording are, especially those conducted over long periods of time.



*Matthew Oates*

Matthew was followed by Dan Hoare, the South East BC Regional Officer, who gave a great talk on "Conserving butterflies and moths in the south-east woods", based on work performed across the south east in the previous 3 or 4 years. Dan was followed by the Marsh Awards, with some very worthy winners. But the highlight for me was seeing David Simcox pick up the well-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award. I've been lucky enough to spend a good amount of time with David over the years, on and off, (David is best known for his work, with Jeremy Thomas, on the Large Blue) and I can't think of a more worthy winner. An interview with David can be found here: [http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports\\_dauidsimcox.php](http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/reports_dauidsimcox.php)



*David Simcox*

The day concluded with Mike Dilger, BC Vice President and presenter on the One Show, giving us an entertaining talk covering his background, his promotion of Lepidoptera on the telly, and the challenges of getting more exposure for Lepidoptera on TV. The perfect combination of humour and information. "Infotainment", as he put it 😊



*Mike Dilger*

As ever, great to see so many UKBers at the event, which will be held in Nottingham next year.

Cheers,

– Pete