

## Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 16-Mar-11 01:46 AM GMT

Trying to improve my photography skills prior to butterfly season really starting so tried with these two moths, a hebrew character and a Grey Shoulder-Knot. Both taken with Canon 500D and Sigma 105mm Macro. Don't like the Grey Shoulder-Knot so much as its a bit centred and was trying to have the moth more on the left of the image but wind was blowing the tree the moth was on. I think I could have also used f/11 instead of f/10. Hebrew Character was easier to photograph due to being on a more mature cherry that didn't blow about so much in wind like the young goat willow I was using to photograph the Grey Shoulder-Knot.

### Hebrew Character



*Hebrew Character*

Tripod: Yes

Flash: No

Timer: Yes

Mode: A-DEP Mode

F-Stop: f11

Exposure Bias: 0 Step

Speed: 1/50sec

ISO: ISO-1600

Metering: Pattern

White Balance: Shade

### Grey Shoulder-Knot



*Grey Shoulder-Knot*

Tripod: Yes

Flash: No

Timer: Yes

Mode: A-DEP Mode

F-Stop: f10

Exposure Bias: 0 Step

Speed: 1/125sec

ISO: ISO-1600

Metering: Pattern

White Balance: Shade

## Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 24-Mar-11 05:01 AM GMT

I had today free so went to my woodland that used to be elms but they got diseased and had to be cut down, then oaks and birches were planted instead with a number of grey sallows showing signs of some catkins. I was near a blackthorn hedgerow and mature beech trees with lots of mature

oaks nearby. There is a small area of spruce trees but one area leads to alder, ash and aspens and a lot of beech trees. There area is close to a saltmarsh and even though is a hilly area, is quite close to sea level (40ft at the hill bottom and around 150ft at hill top)

17C, clear sky and full sun, felt really like summer rather than spring today. Saw some buff tailed bumblebees on the catkins and saw a small tortoiseshell flying around my garden. Saw my first tree creeper of the year on a mature beech tree in the oak wood and 10+ buzzards. I forgot to charge my camera battery so had no camera, wish I had it there. Also found a twin-spotted quaker on a old beech tree near some mature oak trees. Here are some images of the area I took a few days ago when I was here. One of the best places I have been to for wildlife. Have a list of over 200 macro moths and 100 micros so far and butterflies here include: Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Speckled Wood, Orange-Tip, Large White, Small White, Green-Veined White, Small Copper, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Red Admiral, Holly Blue, Painted Lady and even a marsh fritillay (one) was seen here a number of years ago but no others which was strange as the area is surrounded by woodland and I was told Marsh fritillaries don't like crossing woodland, hedgerows or around walls and the only population is 4 miles away south of the largest wooded area here.



*Mature pine tree*



*Mature Oak trees*



*Young oaks with birch higher up*

## **Re: Dave McCormick**

by Dave McCormick, 26-Apr-11 09:11 AM GMT

Went to Sait Coeey's Wells today, Celtic holy wells in Portaferry, Co Down, Northern Ireland. It is beside Strangford Lough and has a grassy, flowery hillside with Scot's Pine, Willows and a few Ash trees. There is hawthorn hedge around the area and further down, an extent of bogland with reedbed beside coastal salt-marsh with salt-marsh grasses.

Video I took of area and some of the butterflies there:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eiRosL\\_dHEw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eiRosL_dHEw)

In the video if you see the part near the start with the 3 butterflies fluttering on the left of the image, this is where most butterflies landed due to the sun hitting it. Orange-Tip males were patrolling this area, fighting each other as one passed another. Speckled woods and Red Admiral kept fighting away when they passed close by each other as they sat near each other on bramble. There was a single small copper flying around the whole grassy

area and green-veined whites were flying around the edge, near scot's pine trees, some landed high up on the pine trees to rest.

I only got a photo of Small Copper (and not a great one due to grass blade disrupting my view) but I got dirt in my camera when switching lenses and couldn't take any more due to dirt would show up on image. I have not seen an Orange-Tip before today and would have loved a photo of one but wasn't to be.



*Looking over Strangford Lough*

Total list I saw:

- 7 Green-Veined White – 5 Males, 2 females
- 2 Speckled Wood
- 5 Orange-Tip (All males)
- 2 Red Admiral
- 1 Small Copper – first I have seen this year
- 1 Ancyliis badiana



*Small Copper*

## **Re: Dave McCormick**

by Dave McCormick, 28-Apr-11 06:08 AM GMT

Just been to the local Glen Burn river near an Alder swamp and was watching local Buzzards. I heard a whoosh as one flew over my head (I have observed them for about 14 years and know each generation of families quite well) and while there I saw 10 orange-tip (all males), 11 Green-Veined White and one male trying to have its way with a female. Then I saw a dark shadow and looked up and a pair of small tortoiseshell came flying past, male chasing the female (possibly in courtship). Total list:

- 11 Green-Veined White
- 1 Red Admiral
- 10 Orange-Tip (All Male)
- 5 Small Tortoiseshell (one courting pair)
- 1 Peacock
- 1 Small White

There was also a number of medium sized micro moths flying about but wasn't able to catch one to ID it. Did have a kestrel past close over my head. There was a number of tadpoles in river, but water was quite low due to lack of rain. Usually floods here but not today. My photos didn't turn out well as OTs wouldn't sit long enough for me to get a decent photo and small tortoiseshells were constantly moving too as were GV whites. Not a bad day though

## **Re: Dave McCormick**

by Dave McCormick, 29-Apr-11 06:29 AM GMT

Went to my relatives bog today since it was very sunny and warm. When got there first thing that flew past was a single Small Tortoiseshell. There is two main open bog areas that are separated by birch/willow woodland. Each area is about an acre in size and total area is about 10 acres. There is a path that runs along the side of the bogs that separates them from a grassy field and a willow woodland that has badgers living in it. There is scots pine

planted along the roadside.

First area I went to has heather, violets, mature grey sallows, meadow sweet, knapweed, dandelion, Thistles, reed grasses, tussock grasses, gorse, brambles among other plants. Saw:

1 Female large red damsel  
2 Orange-Tip Males  
3 Small Tortoiseshell  
4 Common Heath (3 males, 1 female)  
9 Speckled Wood (just inside the birch woodland, one courting pair)  
2 Large White  
8 Orange-Tip eggs on 4 cuckooflowers (each had 2 eggs)  
1 Green-Veined White  
4 Small Whites

The went through the birch woodland to the second area of bog (fell a few times climbing through the open bog as there was so many lumps of grass and bumps created by heather and thick bog ground) so followed badger trails. In this area much of the heather was dying due to lack of water and there was lots of cotton grass around. Birch trees were encroaching on open bog, so I removed quite a number of young trees and took them home to grow. Saw 3 Small White, 1 Speckled Wood and 2 Common Heath here. I didn't have a drink with me so by this time, carrying a number of young birch trees, camera bag, tripod and notepad and pen, it felt like I had miles to walk even though I wasn't more than a few hundred yards from the gate to the exit.

## Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 09-May-11 06:55 AM GMT

I had planned my day today. I was going to go out and do two things. First, see if I could find the Small Heath at the riverbank I had seen a few weeks ago, since they are disappearing from some sites, it was great to have them confirmed here in a new site. I had also planned to visit a mature English Oak (*Quercus Robor*) and see if I could see the white furry cotton like galls I saw on it and ID them. Day didn't start out this way.

I got up late (11am) didn't sleep well overnight and overslept. I had breakfast and looked out at the sunny day, which seemed good. I check my camera, had battery charged. Took a few sample images...dust and dirt showed up on images! I couldn't bring my camera as I got dust in my Canon 500D and now it needs cleaned, I tried blowing out dust with an air blower and using nylon brush to remove dust, but it wasn't happening, made it worse slightly. Ok, that was fine. I have my 400D as a backup. Have not used it in a while, so it was charged and tested it. It has dust inside it too! It also needs cleaned. SO have to send both to get cleaned tomorrow. So no cameras. I have my video camera, but it can't take photos...minor annoyance.

So I decided to take my 1 year old Australian shepherd dog Jack out with me. He usually barks and jumps, but when out in the fields here, it is calm and very well behaved. My neighbour had just went out for a short walk the direction I had planned. So I had to wait until he came back due to Jack jumping on him and he doesn't like that. He came back 15mins later, so I grabbed my hat, GPS device to get grid references and pen, paper and video camera. Got Jacks leash and took him out.

I passed an area of Dame's Violet that I find Narrow-Bordered Bee Hawk moth feeding on before (well out if its usual habitats) and nothing there but some flies. So I get into the field nearby and let Jack of leash. He runs into long grass and I go on searching for leps. I had a look for Holly Blues at a holly bush at the hedgerow here, none at the moment. Have not seen any here in a week but this is a good place for finding them.

Got into the next 4 acre grassy field with hawthorn hedgerow beside an ancient bluebell wood with Sycamore, Oak, Ash, Beech and Elm in it (most got disease and had to be cut down about 15 years ago). There is a hill in the middle of the field that has 3 mature oak, 3 mature ash and 3 mature scots pine on it. This is where I found the oak that has the galls. I had a look and they happen to be the appropriately named, **Cotton Wool Galls** of the species **andricus quercusramuli** a gall that I have not seen before the first time I saw it here. There was about 20 I could see, but the tree was tall so more could be higher. There was other galls here of various species. Also saw a small white glide past here, blown in the wind.

Went through a gate that was into a path between two forested areas, one having many mature wild cherry trees and scots pine among other trees. While passing near here, I saw hundreds of blackflies, had to keep my mouth shut to avoid eating any. Also saw a number of Anthophora plumipes bees, a fast flying bee, mostly females which are jet black and have the orange pollen brushes. Was a few males (which are mostly rusty brown). Nests are made in the mortar of old walls, and probably used the piggery walls as there is an old, abandoned piggery here and it has two stone walls which have fallen into ruin.

Next walking along a ploughed field, Jack decided to pick up a large rock and kept trying to bury it. He did this for a mile and carried it a mile and a half back home before he dropped it and gave up trying to bury it as he kept failing. When we got to the end of the ploughed field, I wanted to go along the river bank to see if the small heath were there. There was people in putting potato's in nearby field and with my dog with me, decided not a good idea to go there. So I took a detour into an ancient woodland where the river runs through. While there, counted 20+ elm trees. This was important as it was assumed for many years none were left after the disease took out all the known ones. So I reported these to the NI forestry service who own the forest and it would be an important to conserve these trees due to there being very little left in NI.

While here I saw a single Green-Veined white and met up with someone who lives a mile from here. He had is two dogs out and had to restrain my dog. Passed them and didn't see much else, so turned around and headed back, this time went on the other side of the fence to the field getting potato's put in, Jack would be fine here as its on the other side of a fence. No small heath here but I did find another Wych elm on the river bank. Saw a Silver-Y fly up from grass but nothing more here. Turned around and headed back. When I got to the field with the hill of mature trees in the middle. I saw a small white, then caught a glimpse of a large white feeding on bluebells in the wood with cherry trees. While looking there, found a great site, a small copper! Worn but good sight because I have never found many here, most ever I saw here was 3 in one day. There are anything but common around this area.

Then saw a dark object fly up from grass. Looked and it was a very worn Speckled Wood. Nothing else around so came home. Good besides no camera to take photos.

Going on a trip in two weeks to Rostrevor Oak wood at Carlingford Lough where many well known and important entomologists in Ireland went to in the past such as Thomas Greer. Should be a good trip for Lepidoptera and other wildlife. Hope to have my cameras fixed by then.

## Re: Dave McCormick

by Dave McCormick, 30-May-11 01:07 AM GMT

Started a butterfly transect today. Doing the transect at a 5 acre fully intact raised bog/fen which is full of wild flowers and trees. There was thousands of water horsetails covering the whole bog except for a patch along the edge. There was also other plants and trees including the very common (around here) Yellow Iris, Meadowsweet, Marsh Cinqfoil, Ragged Robin, Sorrel, Buttercup, Devils-Bit Scabious, Hemlock Water Drop-Wort, Nettles, Docks, Thistles, Alder, Ash, Oak, Grey Sallow, Elder, Scots-Pine (few mature ones) and Birch. There was a little devils-bit scabious at one end and this is not too far from a marsh fritillary colony, so wondering if they could be breeding here or at least found here, but didn't see any.

I arrived at 1:30pm and there was a good SE wind blowing, it was 15C in shade and 17C by time I left, cloudy at times but sunny mostly so I only saw a single silver-ground carpet, cocks-foot moth, small tortoiseshell (very worn) and a Green-Veined White. I also saw 2 unhatched six-spot burnet cocoons and a 6 Orange-Tip eggs which I thought they would all be hatched by now. Also saw a single small tortoiseshell caterpillar on nettle which seemed odd to see only one and not more.

Here are some images of the area and a marsh cinquefoil plant. It was too windy to get many good images. Rare to see an intact bog like this these days.



*Marsh Cinqufoil*



*Raised Bog 2*



*Raised Bog*