

Re: Susie

by millerd, 02-Jan-12 02:03 AM GMT

Good idea – if you time it right, you can find Green Hairstreak, Dingy and Grizzled Skippers and spring generation blues as a minimum.

Happy New Year, Susie!

Dave

Re: Susie

by Jack Harrison, 02-Jan-12 02:22 AM GMT

I was at Denbies last April and I tell you, Susie has eyes like a hawk — she was spotting Grizzled Skippers at distances of five light years 😊 And she know the exact spot for guaranteed Green Hairstreaks.

Doubt I'll be able to make it; it's rather a long way from northwest Norfolk. But I certainly have my own Green Hairstreaks nearby and have the two skippers within an hour's drive. And there are Graylings and Walls which I don't think are found at Denbies. But of course, no Adonis Blues.

Even so, if the opportunity arises, I would want to make at least one visit to Denbies this year. It's a great place.

Go for it Susie. Difficult to plan the best time but I would say that when the easy-to-see Orange Tips are first on the wing, that would be a good indicator to visit Denbies.

Jack

Re: Susie

by Susie, 03-Jan-12 01:13 AM GMT



First daffs of the year 😊

Re: Susie

by David M, 03-Jan-12 01:51 AM GMT

Daffodils already? That's crazy.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 03-Jan-12 02:35 AM GMT

The crazy thing is that there were roses and penstemons blooming nearby, and not just the odd one either!

Re: Susie

by David M, 03-Jan-12 03:01 AM GMT

Amazing! The way things are going, not only will there be huge numbers of Red Admirals from March onwards but maybe a few British-raised Clouded Yellows too!

Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 03-Jan-12 06:15 AM GMT

Don't get too excited,David!

I hate to dampen any enthusiasm but it's only the beginning of January-winter aint over yet!

It's the length of our winters which are thought to kill off the admirals etc,not the necessarily the average temperature.

And the fact that if they do wake up there is nothing for them to eat. Red ads are still being reported on the south coast, but as the winter progresses,and they go longer without food,reports are likely to become fewer,sadly.

But i hope i'm wrong!

Re: Susie

by Susie, 03-Jan-12 06:20 AM GMT

Well if it is any consolation the red admirals won't go hungry at the site where I photographed the daffs. There is daphne bholua flowering in profusion as well as many other flowers out and there won't be a cessation in flowering now right around to next winter. Even when we have a cold snap here with snow it never lasts more than a few days. The greatest danger I can foresee is weeks of warmish drizzle when the butterflies aren't hibernating but nor can they get out to feed either.

Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 03-Jan-12 06:39 AM GMT

Yes,i agree,Susie-it's the length of winter that seems to be the killer-long cloudy damp spells when adults are unable to fly, may not do them any favours. It will be interesting to see if any Red Admirals have survived when the real spring arrives in April.

I do hope so! 😊

Re: Susie

by Hugh Middleton, 05-Jan-12 11:41 PM GMT

Hope you enjoy the camera club.Look forward to hearing how you get on.

I joined my local one this week and was very impressed.

Hugh

Re: Susie

by Susie, 15-Jan-12 12:09 AM GMT

Hi Hugh,

The first meet of the camera club was last Wednesday but I wasn't able to make it. I've taken up a few new hobbies lately and they are taking up a lot of my time, I do hope to join the camera club shortly though. Are you still enjoying yours?

I went to Marlpost woods in Southwater today and I am pleased to say there are brown hairstreak eggs there again this year. 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 16-Jan-12 02:26 AM GMT

I went to see the starling murmuration at Brighton today. It wasn't a patch on last year but still nice to see. The sunset was gorgeous though 😊

Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 16-Jan-12 03:05 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

I myself took the long drive from East Anglia to the see the much talked about Starling flock at Brighton pier,and i have to say i was disappointed. It was cloudy and windy,which may have been the reason,but the birds arrived in small groups and went straight under the pier,instead of gathering and flying in their masses,like you see on TV. Maybe this was your experience too.

Regards, Mark.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 16-Jan-12 04:11 AM GMT

Hello Mark,

Yes, it was very much like that with far fewer large groups than last year and th majority of the birds going straight under the pier.

Re: Susie

by Pawpawsaurus, 17-Jan-12 10:22 PM GMT

Susie,

Pardon my diary intrusion, but I thought you might be interested in this morning's *Nature* on Radio 4. It was entitled *The Ghost Roost*, and told the story of sound recordist Chris Watson (of Springwatch fame) doing his thing in Brighton's West Pier ten years ago, before it was burnt down.

The programme will be repeated on Thursday at 9 p.m., but is also online: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b019f9hf>

Paul

Re: Susie

by Vince Massimo, 17-Jan-12 11:42 PM GMT

Happy Birthday Susie 😊

Bet you thought we had all forgotten.....

Vince

Re: Susie

by Mark Colvin, 17-Jan-12 11:47 PM GMT

Likewise ...

Have a great birthday Susie. 😊

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Susie

by Jack Harrison, 17-Jan-12 11:51 PM GMT

Happy birthday.

Jack

Re: Susie

by Neil Hulme, 18-Jan-12 12:03 AM GMT

Happy 21st Susie! 😊

Best Wishes, Neil

Re: Susie

by Susie, 18-Jan-12 12:16 AM GMT

Thank you, Paul. Yes I would be really interesting in listening to that so thank you for putting up the link.

Awwww, thanks guys! That's really lovely of you Vince, Mark, Jack and Neil. 😊

All you sci fi fans (and I'm sure there is more than just me on this forum) will know that the answer to Life, the Universe and Everything is 42 and I'm planning on making this my best year yet.

I'm off to a great start; there was a beautiful sunrise this morning, presents from the kids and husband, I went for a run around Southwater lake and saw bullfinches, reed buntings, gold finches, two types of wood pecker, various thrushes and titmice and later on a buzzard on the ground with its kill, then I went belly dancing and after that I was taken out to lunch. There's a bit of a family gathering this evening and in 10 days I'm having a celebratory birthday ball! (get me, aren't I posh! 😊) 😊 All I need now is a butterfly to get the season off to a flying start (but at least Sherlock is coming back for another season so I am soooo pleased!).

Re: Susie

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Jan-12 12:35 AM GMT

Sounds like you have had a quite a day of it Susie!

Happy Birthday – hope you enjoy the rest of it.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Susie

by Rogerdodge, 18-Jan-12 01:06 AM GMT

Susie

I shall raise a small glass and toast your health this evening.

42 – Ah I wish I could remember it.

I was older then than I am now.

I think I probably enjoyed it.

I tend to enjoy most years!

Re: Susie

by Susie, 18-Jan-12 01:46 AM GMT

Thanks Lee. 😊 Cheers, Roger, I think I'll have a cheeky vimto too 😊

Re: Susie

by David M, 18-Jan-12 06:47 AM GMT

Happy Birthday, Suzette!

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Jan-12 02:10 AM GMT

Thanks, David.

It was a bit grim today so I had a quick look through my short video clips from last year and came up with these to cheer me up. Spring's only around the corner and it's nice to be reminded from time to time so I offer no apology for re-hashing these.

<http://www.facebook.com/v/10150228031751972>

<http://www.facebook.com/v/10150250749936972>

Re: Susie

by David M, 19-Jan-12 02:13 AM GMT

That's the time of year I love most – when the Horse Chestnut candles are out and the Cow Parsley's in full swing.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Jan-12 02:20 AM GMT

Every season has it's own scent and spring's fresh growth and flowers are lovely and perfume the air sweetly. Everything's full of promise and hope for the future. 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Jan-12 04:26 AM GMT

<http://www.facebook.com/v/10150604192101972>

Re: Susie

by Susie, 25-Jan-12 06:25 AM GMT

A few photos from last week; the sunset at Brighton when I went to see the murmuration last Sunday week and from last Monday one of the mounds of soil from Wembley Stadium that makes up Northala Fields (you can see the layer of pollution along the horizon) and the view from the top of London (zoomed in, hence poor quality). If you drive along the A40 into London you can't fail to see four large mounds which is part of a new park. It's a really nice place for a walk around and I was impressed with what they have done with it and how well it was kept. There are some large ponds which looked like they would be home to all sorts of critters.





Re: Susie

by Susie, 30-Jan-12 12:13 AM GMT

Yesterday was my long awaited birthday party and it was rather good. It was at the former home of the botanist, John Evelyn. There was a butterfly theme and I was really pleased with the birthday cupcakes that were made.





Re: Susie

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jan-12 01:22 AM GMT

Nice cupcakes, Susie! Hope you enjoyed the party 😊

The mounds on the A40 remind me of driving home to Greenford, when it was home...

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 30-Jan-12 02:37 AM GMT

Happy belated Birthday Susie! I know that it's not the done thing to ask a lady her age, but was it your 18th or 21st? 😊

Those cupcakes look almost too good to eat, and due to the amount of white on the wings I'd go for male Small White or a very pale Brimstone.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by Susie, 07-Feb-12 01:04 AM GMT

The butterflies today at Wisley were on fine form, I am pleased to say, and due to the bad weather recently the glass house wasn't too crowded either. It was ideal just to sit and watch them fly around. I was fortunate to bump into Mark Colvin and he gave me the very useful tip of warming my camera under the hand dryers in the toilets to prevent condensation forming on the lense; it worked a treat. Thanks, Mark! 😊



Re: Susie

by Mark Colvin, 07-Feb-12 06:29 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

It was good to bump into you also. You certainly lifted my spirits and I was glad to see you'd brought your Lumix! 😊

I'm pleased my tip worked ...

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Susie

by Susie, 07-Feb-12 09:49 PM GMT

Thanks for the heads up on the golden birdwing too



Re: Susie

by Mark Colvin, 08-Feb-12 02:03 AM GMT

I'm glad you got him Susie.

I told you he was a good looker ... 😊

Re: Susie

by David M, 08-Feb-12 05:56 AM GMT

He's a stunner – though surely poisonous given the colour?

Re: Susie

by Nick Broomer, 08-Feb-12 06:24 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

Lovely photos of both the Malachite, and the Golden Birdwing,

All the best,

Nick.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 09-Feb-12 01:54 AM GMT

Thank you 😊

The thread on brown hairstreaks has reminded me. The nearby hedge that Kipper worked so hard to ensure was only cut in part each year has been cut back entirely apart for a small section where there are trees. The Highways Agency has a very short memory. 😞

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Feb-12 12:34 AM GMT

Froggies seen in the pond today. Hurrah! 😊

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 19-Feb-12 01:24 AM GMT

Were they here for the rugby?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Feb-12 02:47 AM GMT

Well they were in a scrum ..

Re: Susie

by Susie, 04-Mar-12 11:36 PM GMT

Frogspawn in the pond at last, a week later than last year.

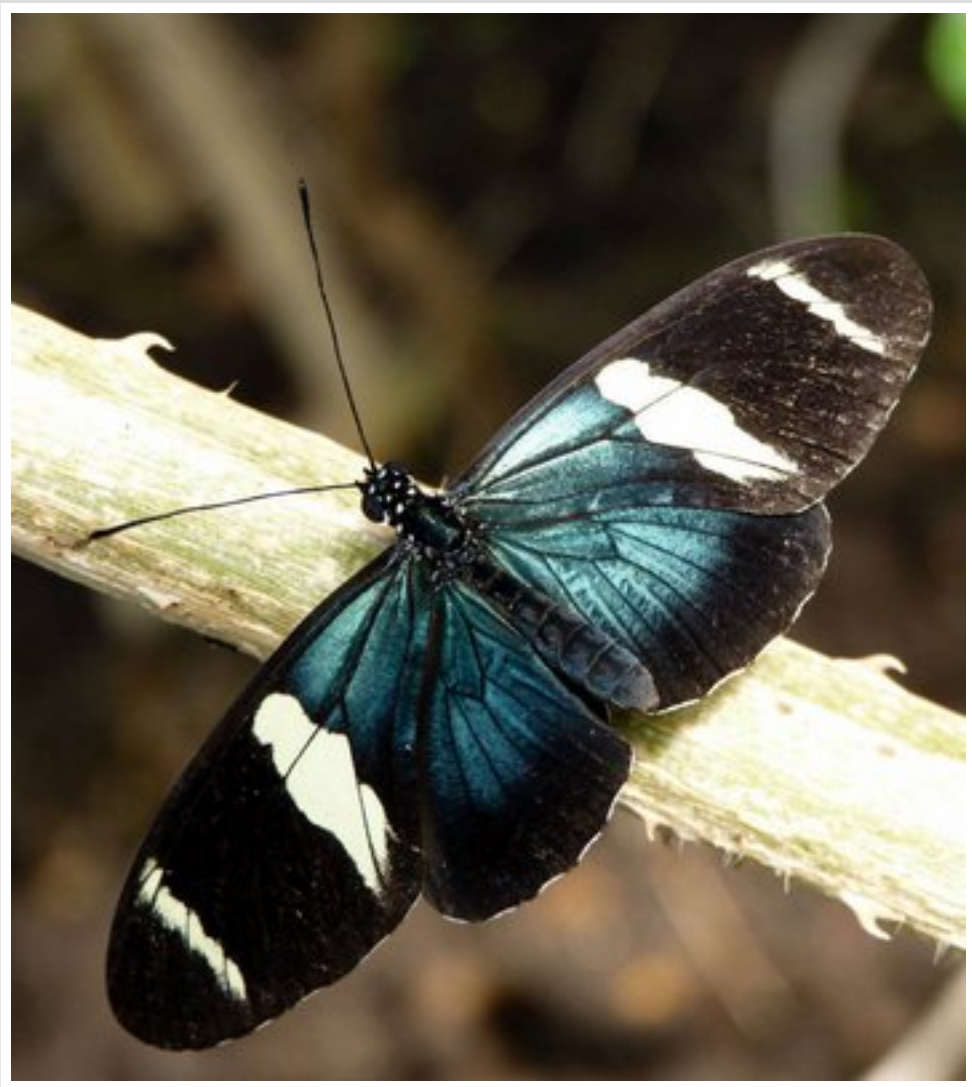
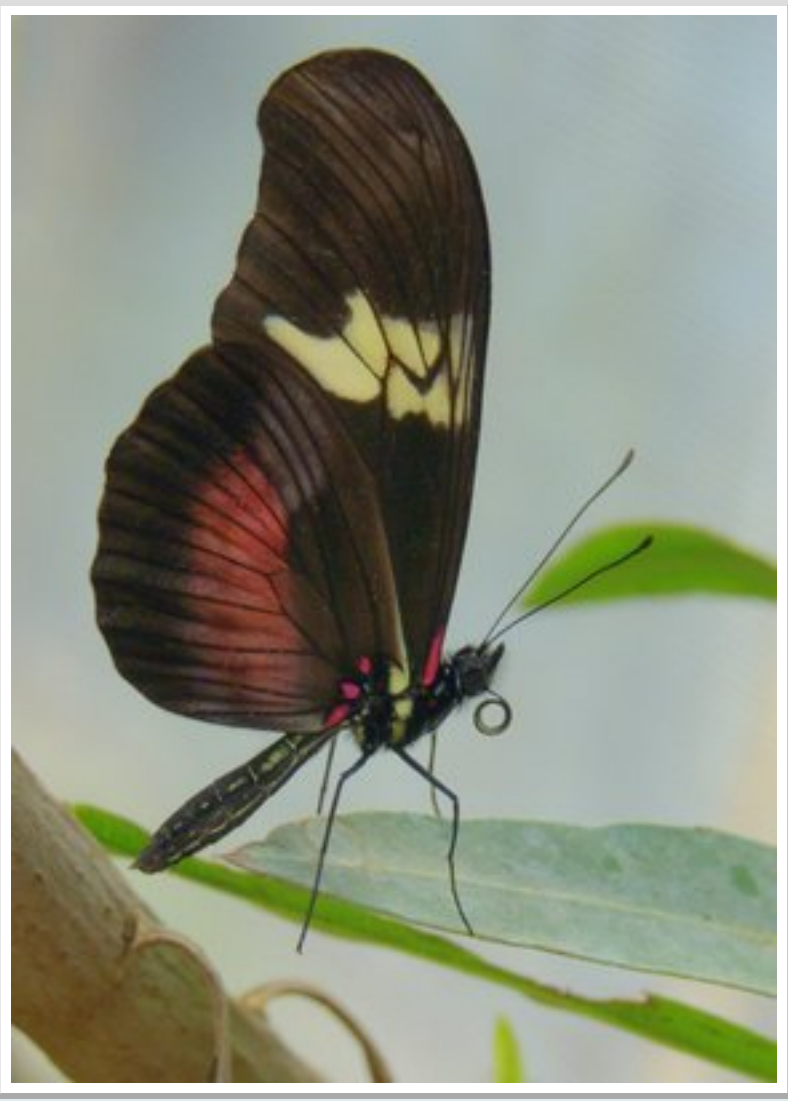
Re: Susie

by Susie, 20-Mar-12 06:31 AM GMT

Countdown 3 - 2 - 1 and the season begins ... (that's three commas, two brimstone and one small white).

Mark Colvin and Colin Knight kindly let me tag along with them today when they went to Earnley Butterfly House. A big thank you to both of them. You can read about that in more depth on Mark's blog, suffice to say I really enjoyed it there (the last time I went it was pretty rubbish so I wasn't expecting much and was pleasantly surprised).







Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 20-Mar-12 06:42 AM GMT

That last one wasn't in the butterfly house,was it? 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 20-Mar-12 06:52 AM GMT

😊 Nope.

This little chap was though.



Re: Susie

by MikeOxon, 20-Mar-12 06:54 AM GMT

Your second photo from Earnley is a wonderful composition – such perfect poise!

Mike

Re: Susie

by Mark Colvin, 20-Mar-12 07:06 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

I'm really glad you managed to join us today and get some great shots at the same time. 😊

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Susie

by Lee Hurrell, 20-Mar-12 05:28 PM GMT

Lovely photos, Susie. I really like the first one, with the combination of yellow and blue.

Good to hear your season is off to a good start!

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Susie

by Susie, 21-Mar-12 01:50 AM GMT

Many thanks, Mike, Mark and Lee. The first one is my favourite too.

I was in the Dorking area today so thought I would call in at Box Hill. I saw one male brimstone at the top when the sun came out but it was too quick for a photo.

I wandered past Box Hill Fort today, which surprised me because I have been to Box Hill many times before but didn't know it existed. It's quite a forbidding building.





One of the wardens on the site told me a little of the history and also that there is a restored fort at Reigate Hill.

This yew tree was interesting too. It's split right down the middle. I don't remember it being quite so hollow last year so the winter couldn't have done it much good. It reminded me of something out of Greek mythology; two petrified lovers, so close but never quite touching.



Leaning in for a kiss



I blame it on spring. Happy Ostara everyone!

Re: Susie

by millerd, 21-Mar-12 02:51 AM GMT

I almost always call in at Box Hill before or after visits to Denbies – mainly for the National Trust cups of tea and homemade cakes! And there can be butterflies about at the right time and in the right spot.

Dave

Re: Susie

by Susie, 21-Mar-12 06:16 AM GMT

I had a drink up there today, Dave. I resisted the cakes though, although they did look mighty fine and after a walk to the top of the hill I felt like I deserved one! 😊

I heard a chiff chaff calling up there today.

Re: Susie

by Lee Hurrell, 21-Mar-12 10:18 PM GMT

I saw my first ever Brown Hairstreak at Box Hill a few years ago although I didn't know about the fort!

Lee

Re: Susie

by Jack Harrison, 22-Mar-12 06:21 PM GMT

I will be in the Box Hill/Denbies area 11th/12th April so possibly give that fort a look.

Denbies might by then have Green Hairstreaks and Grizzled Skippers – who knows?

Jack (currently in Ireland)

Re: Susie

by Gibster, 23-Mar-12 01:13 AM GMT

Jack, you should also visit Colley Hill at the top of Reigate Hill (the carpark is about 150metres from the M25 turn off for the A217) The terrain is level since you are already on top of the ridge and the fort has been fully restored. They play re-enactment war games every so often which must be quite something to watch! There's also a beautiful watchpoint and a bench which commemorates the crash-landing of a Flying Fortress in WW2. We met a lady who was there at the scene, she was a mere child at the time but clearly recalled the carnage. Even now trees do not grow across the crash site. Cafe and facilities all present and correct too! 😊

Cheers (and sorry for the digression...)

Gibster.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 23-Mar-12 03:47 AM GMT

"Gibster" wrote:

There's also a beautiful watchpoint and a bench which commemorates the crash-landing of a Flying Fortress in WW2. We met a lady who was there at the scene, she was a mere child at the time but clearly recalled the carnage. Even now trees do not grow across the crash site.

Gibster.

My mum was a child in London during the start of the blitz (she had been evacuated and then brought back home again when nothing had happened as many children were). During one raid she watched a German aircraft come down and ran to see if the pilot was okay. She stood near the wreckage by a smouldering tree trunk but couldn't find the pilot ... until she realised the tree trunk was actually his torso.

Re: Susie

by Gibster, 23-Mar-12 07:48 AM GMT

So...(confused)...your mom must've been **VERY** old indeed when she had you, Susy? 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 23-Mar-12 08:38 PM GMT

"Gibster" wrote:

So...(confused)...your mom must've been **VERY** old indeed when she had you, Susy? 😊

Lol. What are you after, Gibster? 😊

There is a 20 year age gap between me and my oldest brother who has just passed away though. I was the baby of the family.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 26-Mar-12 06:53 AM GMT

Something completely different.

I didn't get to see any butterflies today even though it should have been a cracking day for them as I had to spend it indoors. 😞

We were raising money for Sports Relief. 😊

<http://youtu.be/ng2MUnPWiag>

Re: Susie

by Susie, 13-Apr-12 06:38 AM GMT

I popped along to Denbies this morning. I was hoping for dingy or grizzled skippers and possibly a green hairstreak but didn't see a single butterfly the whole time I was there.

A huge amount of scrub has been taken out at Denbies and these were in the places I was pretty certain of finding green hairstreaks. I am sure they will still be there this year along the hedgeline but I think they'll be much harder to find than previously.

There are hardly any flowers out on the chalk hillside; only the odd dandelion, violet or eyebright. There were very few insects around generally. I did come across a couple of dor beetles. In the woods the bluebells and anemones are flowering and there are some early purple orchids too.



Re: Susie

by jenks, 13-Apr-12 07:12 AM GMT

I was in the Brecon Beacons today, walking up Craig Cerrig Gleisiad, hoping to see Ring Ouzels. Heard birds calling twice but couldn't get a sighting. BUT I did see Green veined White, at least 2 male Orange Tips (on Cuckoo flower) and at least 5 sightings (possibly the same individual) of a large butterfly flying past very fast and purposefully. Tried chasing it to get a better view but running flat out up a hill is now beyond me. By a process of elimination, size, shape, colour, I can only think it/they were Painted Ladies. Has anyone else seen these this year ? All 3 species first time sightings this year for me.

Just to grip you southern englanders off, there is still snow on the top of the Beacons and 2 of the 3 reservoirs are full. And my back lawn after the deluge on Easter Monday is now Pontypridd`s harbour. Who mentioned drought ? !

Re: Susie

by Debbie, 13-Apr-12 08:40 PM GMT

Love the purple orchid 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 15-Apr-12 10:55 PM GMT

Thanks, DMS. 😊

Wow, painted ladies, Jenks? I am so envious!

I went out for a walk over my local patch but yet again failed to see a single butterfly. It is just too blooming cold for them even in the sheltered spots.

Re: Susie

by Cotswold Cockney, 16-Apr-12 01:20 AM GMT

"jenks" wrote:

I was in the Brecon Beacons today, walking up Craig Cerrig Gleisiad, hoping to see Ring Ouzels. Heard birds calling twice but couldn't get a sighting. BUT I did see Green veined White, at least 2 male Orange Tips (on Cuckoo flower) and at least 5 sightings (possibly the same individual) of a large butterfly flying past very fast and purposefully. Tried chasing it to get a better view but running flat out up a hill is now beyond me. By a process of elimination, size, shape, colour, I can only think it/they were Painted Ladies. Has anyone else seen these this year ? All 3 species first time sightings this year for me.

Just to grip you southern englanders off, there is still snow on the top of the Beacons and 2 of the 3 reservoirs are full. And my back lawn after the deluge on Easter Monday is now Pontypridd's harbour. Who mentioned drought ? !

Male day flying **Emperor Moths** this time of year look remarkably like **Painted Ladies** in flight too. They are very swift in flight responding to a distant calling female.... 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 16-Apr-12 04:16 AM GMT

I checked my emperor moth cocoons the other day but no sign of emergence yet.

Re: Susie

by jenks, 16-Apr-12 04:33 AM GMT

Cotswold Cockney wrote

"Male day flying Emperor Moths this time of year look remarkably like Painted Ladies in flight too. They are very swift in flight responding to a distant calling female" .

Ahh, Emperor Moth. I have to admit I'm not good on moths. I'll do some research and maybe revise my sighting. Thanks for the info !

Jenks.

Re: Susie

by David M, 16-Apr-12 04:56 AM GMT

I'm a bit sceptical about this as Emperor moths are absolutely huge and are quite clearly not Painted Ladies either in flight or at rest.

Re: Susie

by Gibster, 16-Apr-12 07:47 AM GMT

I always think that flying Emperor Moth males – and Oak Eggars for that matter – resemble tiny, low-level, out of control fighter jets. I always find myself waiting for the explosion!!! 😊

Jersey Tigers look a lot like Painted Ladies in flight, but more yellow. Caught me out a few times...

Cheers,

Gibster.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 16-Apr-12 09:18 PM GMT

One of my facebook contacts has painted ladies pupating at the moment so it is quite possible Jenks did see painted ladies that someone had released.

Re: Susie

by David M, 17-Apr-12 12:31 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

One of my facebook contacts has painted ladies pupating at the moment so it is quite possible Jenks did see painted ladies that someone had released.

I saw a Painted Lady myself in south Wales this time last year so I'm sure there'll be one or two about.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 17-Apr-12 01:34 AM GMT

So today was another of those days that looked like it should be a good day for butterflies as it was so sunny but it was again just so cold that nothing was flying.

I was sitting out in the garden enjoying a cuppa trying not to get hypothermia when I saw a flash of orange on the bowles mauve and became terribly excited. I dashed indoors for a camera and when I came back the butterfly was still there! How often does that happen? Then I saw why....





Re: Susie

by Gibster, 17-Apr-12 03:41 AM GMT

Aaah...that'll be a female *Misumena vatia*. Apparently they are able to change their colour to match the flowerhead, although the process takes a few days. Not sure it will end up the same colour as your flowers, mind! White, pale green and yellow are favourites.

Nice sequence! 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 17-Apr-12 03:59 AM GMT

Have you seen a bright yellow one that I photographed a couple of years back? It perfectly matched the kingcup flowers.

Re: Susie

by Jack Harrison, 17-Apr-12 04:09 AM GMT

Bowles Mauve again showing how good it is.

One GV White in my garden today. It was far too cold for me to venture outside to attempt to photograph it.

Jack

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 17-Apr-12 06:03 AM GMT

Cracking shots and the spider is really chowing down 😊 I've had a spider like that that was almost luminous green 😎

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by Nick Broomer, 17-Apr-12 06:34 AM GMT

Lovely photos Susie, the Crab Spider in your photos as far as i know can only be one of three colours, green, [which i have never seen] yellow and white which i have photos of, a yellow one killing a female O.T. and a white one feasting on a S.W. It normally takes four days to change from one colour to another.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 18-Apr-12 03:18 AM GMT

Thanks, chaps. Crab spiders are amazing. 😊

I went for a brief walk this afternoon around a little local spot which is better than Five Oaks for orange tips. I ain't telling where it is though. 😊 The wind meant the butterflies weren't settling so I just took some photos of the bluebells which are coming out.



Re: Susie

by Debbie, 18-Apr-12 08:46 PM GMT

Really lovely Susie. 😊

Re: Susie

by Neil Freeman, 19-Apr-12 02:05 AM GMT

Beautiful photos Susie,

I especially like the second one, I can imagine all kinds of faerie folk living there 😊

Neil F.

Re: Susie

by Jack Harrison, 19-Apr-12 03:04 AM GMT

I can imagine all kinds of faerie folk living there 😊

There *must* be some fairies on this group who could superimpose portraits 😊

Jack

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Apr-12 04:13 AM GMT

I don't know how to do that unfortunately.

There may be some fairies living in the log pile .. but it's probably just frogs and inverts and the odd snake 😊



I know, how sad am I to actually photograph a log pile, but there is a kind of beauty in it, don't you think?

More of the same



My little bit of England 😊 This is the view towards the north downs. The oaks are just starting to get leaf.



"This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,—
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England."

Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 19-Apr-12 04:23 AM GMT

great words from the the great bard himself 😊 like it

Re: Susie

by Susie, 01-May-12 09:34 PM GMT

A welcome interlude ...

As you may have already read in their diaries I joined Sussex Kipper and Mark Colvin yesterday at sites in the Arundel area. The sun shone, the sky was blue, the birds sang, and – wonder of wonders – the butterflies were on the wing! It was a lovely day in good company. 😊

Pearl bordered fritillary was my main hope of the day and we saw plenty of them as well as many other butterflies as listed in Neil and Mark's diaries.

This Duke of Burgundy who has survived the dreadful weather of the weekend had to be my highlight of the day though.



Edit: Mark, it's official, I have Old Timers and am losing the plot! The photo I had no recollection of is mine and I took it at Rewell last year! 😂

Re: Susie

by Susie, 02-May-12 06:09 AM GMT

I was stuck indoors for one reason or another for most of today but managed to escape for an hour at 5.30pm to my local bluebell wood and saw one green veined white. Better than nowt. 😊

Re: Susie

by Mark Colvin, 02-May-12 06:14 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

He was rather special and made even more so by your company.

"Susie" wrote:

This Duke of Burgundy who has survived the dreadful weather of the weekend had to be my highlight of the day though.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Susie

by Susie, 02-May-12 06:38 AM GMT

Same here. I am looking forward to butterfly spotting and/or putting the world to rights again with you soon.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 05-May-12 05:22 AM GMT



Re: Susie

by marmari, 05-May-12 05:25 AM GMT

That's a great photo of bluebells.
Always difficult to get their rich colour. Well done.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 05-May-12 06:06 AM GMT

Thank you. 😊

I don't know if anyone else has noticed but the bluebells seem very sparse this year with few flowers. Perhaps this is a result of a couple of dry springs as bluebells like it damp I believe, in which case next spring will be amazing. 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 06-May-12 07:46 AM GMT

Sussex Kipper once again led an extremely successful walk around parts of Rewell Wood this afternoon to a group of approximately 20 people. The weather was definitely unpromising but in the best Blue Peter tradition of "here's one I made earlier" Kipper had staked out a number of PBF the previous evening and they were still in the same position 24 hours later. Everyone had really good opportunities to look at these beautiful little creatures and take photographs to their heart's content.





It was lovely to again meet up with some UK B members.

Thanks to Neil on behalf of Sussex BC for leading such an enjoyable walk on a grotty afternoon. Half an hour sitting in front of a log fire when I got home finally thawed me out! 😊

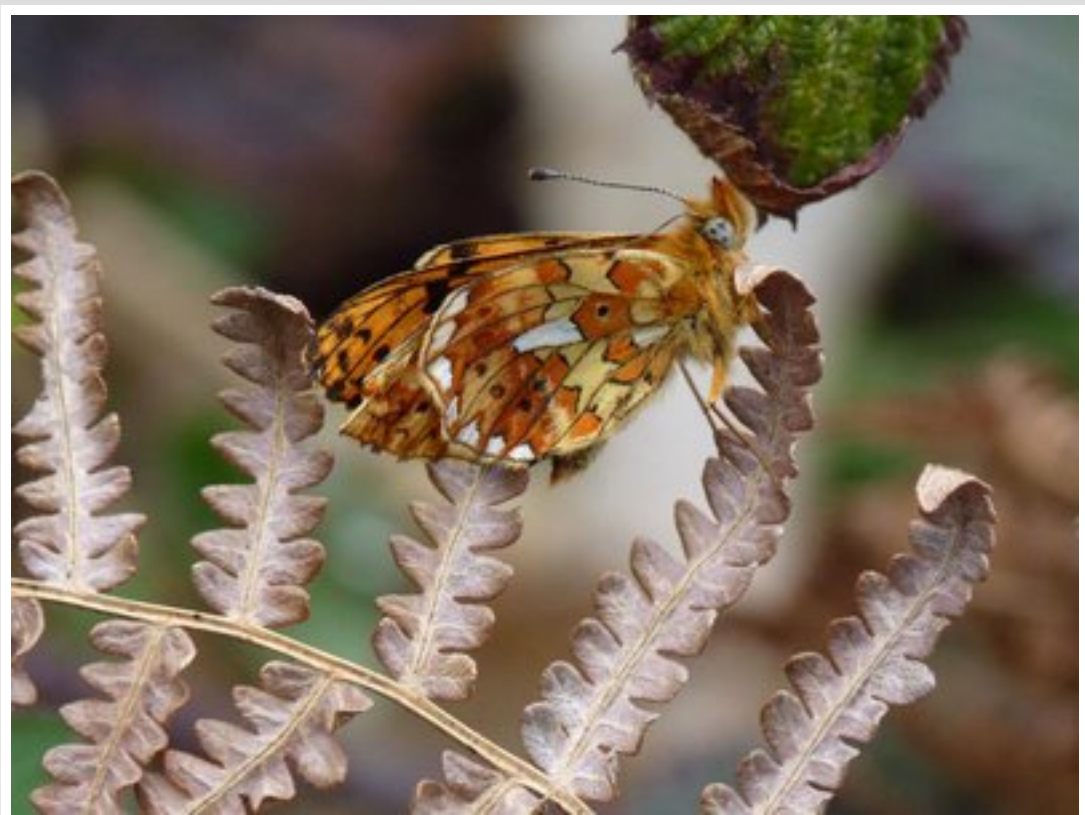


Great work is being done at Rewell and my thanks goes out to everyone involved.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 06-May-12 07:30 PM GMT

Neil spotted a butterfly down in the leaf litter at the end of the walk. This poor chap was in the undergrowth and looks like he has failed to fully inflate his wings properly. Perhaps this was because it was too cold yesterday but on other occasions I have seen it happen to butterflies and moths when it has been too hot/too dry or because their wings have been restricted by an object in the way. I did see this one open it's wings fully and although one side is a bit crumpled the other side is okay so I am hopeful he will be able to fly.



Unfortunately in my haste to see that one I managed to knock another one off of the coppiced hazel with my bag – I am so clumsy! There was a brief hurried search to locate it so it could be returned to a safe perch, which fortunately Neil managed, as on the ground it ran the obvious risk of being squashed by a big boot but also of being predated by wood ants and other creatures.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 07-May-12 06:46 AM GMT

Great minds think alike

It was so cold and wet and just plain horrid today I really didn't think I was going to get out at all but by late afternoon the rain had stopped so I wrapped up and ventured out over my local patch which is part of the river Arun flood plain. Unfortunately they are building a new housing estate on some of it and have cut big chunks out of an ancient hedgerow and I am quite curious to see how the provisions they will put in place to stop flooding will work. Walking along the footpath the water was up to the top of my wellies in places and the mud was quite treacherous at times but passable with care. I imagine that last week when the weather was particularly wet it would have been impassable.

It was too cold for all but the most hardy of insects to be active but my hope was to see the ramsoms in flower and they are about half out now. To get to them I had to walk through some fields and over a couple of stiles. There is a lot of coppiced hazel in the area and so many dormice live here (although I have yet to see one)



The area is cut through with ghylls which are deep channels cut in the clay down to the bedrock which feed into the Arun.



The wet heavy clay soil is perfect for the wild garlic which grows here in profusion.



In some areas the wood is very overgrown and in one place the blackthorn is very leggy and creates a dark and dismal area I call "Murk Wood". The bushes don't have leaf yet so it's not as bad in the photo as it will become later in the spring when the canopy cuts out nearly all the light.



Being so damp the area is very good for mosses, lichens and insects that feed on rotting wood. There are some really impressive specimens of lichen



When I reached the ramsoms it was trying to rain again so the light was very poor but I managed a few snaps near the edge where a few of the bluebells were also growing and also yellow archangel, stitchwort and ground ivy and a solitary vetch.







The highlight of the trip for me though had to be a group of martins and swallows which appeared out of no where and their airbourne acrobatics were a joy to behold. The swallows in particular were flying mere inches above the grass and so close to me at times that I could see their eyes and the sheen on their feathers. It was one of those moment which I won't forget in a hurry and strangely incongruous to have such a summery event on a day which felt like February rather than May.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 08-May-12 03:35 AM GMT

The rain finally stopped here at about 4pm and by 4.30 the sun came out for the first time for days. Hurrah! 😊

To make the most of it I went to Botany Bay to try my luck for wood white. I saw three in total, two briefly doing the pre-mating ritual before going their separate ways. I bumped into Mark Colvin and Hideandseek while there which was a pleasant surprise. I'm looking forward to seeing some more excellent shots from both of them.





Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 08-May-12 06:09 AM GMT

Lovely shots of a butterfly I've yet to see, 🇬🇧 I'll have to save the pennies for petrol to make a visit!

Have a goodun
Wurzel

Re: Susie

by Susie, 08-May-12 11:41 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel. Give it a few weeks and I expect there will be loads of them. It's well worth a visit. 😊

I popped up to Denbies at lunchtime today but it was cold and drizzly and nothing was around so I cut my walk short and headed for home.

As I got closer to home the weather improved. As I arrived home I glanced through the window into the back garden and something was flying. A closer look made me stop short; yellow underwing on steroids was my first thought! Then the penny dropped it was an EMPEROR MOTH! 🇬🇧



There were three of them, all males, blundering about in the undergrowth (and falling in the pond) and making short flights. After rescuing one from the pond, running inside for my camera and taking one shot, they all took off in unison and flew away strongly. I assume (hope) they had sniffed out a female. 😊

Some of you may remember that I collected some Emperor Moth caterpillars last spring. At the time I didn't know what they were. Now the site has been flattened to make way for the new estate so I don't feel bad about taken them from the wild.

Two of the cocoons remain from the five I had. I put all the cocoons in a bush in the garden about six weeks back so that they could emerge freely and I have put the two small ones back into the aquarium I had the caterpillars in. It has a mesh lid and I am hoping that if these ones emerge as females the males will be tempted back.

Also in the garden today a female orange tip laying eggs, a large white and two large red damselflies.



Re: Susie

by dave brown, 09-May-12 12:25 AM GMT

Susie,

Sorry to intrude on your diary but the photo of the Emperor Moth is worthy of comment. It is a beautiful moth, well captured by your photo. Despite many years in the field we have yet to catch up with this species, so to have three in the garden and then seeing them fly off to some unseen female must have been truly exciting and a good reward for rescuing them before the builders moved in. Lets hope they find another nearby suitable area and breed.

dave

Re: Susie

by Susie, 09-May-12 02:45 AM GMT

Thank you, Dave. 😊

I have not seen them flying before today and they are chunky ol' critters and quite impressive in flight even if not the most dainty 😊

Last year I reared some in captivity and put some on the hawthorn in the hedge in the front garden. I didn't track their progress but I am hoping some of them will have grown to adulthood too and could breed to produce more. I wasn't optimistic that these ones had survived the winter outdoors as it has been so cold so I am particularly chuffed.

I also noticed today that a chaffinch is building a nest above the french doors on the back of the house. Unfortunately this is a really bad place if the weather sets fair as the family will spend a lot of times outdoors which will probably put her off but also because it is south facing and if we have a hot spell her chicks will cook. Obviously I can't move her on so I will just have to see what happens 😞

Re: Susie

by Neil Freeman, 09-May-12 03:24 AM GMT

Beautiful shot of the Emperor Moth Susie, I like the way the light is showing through the wings 😊

This is a very impressive species that I have not seen yet, I believe they are in Sutton Park just north of Birmingham, I must go and have look sometime soon.

Cheers,

Neil F.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 09-May-12 06:44 AM GMT

If you get the chance go and see them. It's well worth it. 😊

Re: Susie

by David M, 09-May-12 06:56 AM GMT

I always associate this moth with one spring spent working for Eurocamp in southern France just prior to university.

One night, one of the girls ran back screaming from the shower block complaining that there was a bat swooping round her. This didn't sound right so I went to investigate and found an Emperor moth fluttering around the lights surrounding the sink units. I caught it and brought it back to camp and after a few minutes everyone could see it was harmless and a few of them started to look at it more closely and were gobsmacked by its beauty.

Every morning we saw wings scattered near the camp which were obviously leftovers from a bat meal the previous night. There must have been dozens of them around but I only got to see that particular one alive and kicking.

Stunning creatures.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 09-May-12 10:10 PM GMT

Great story 😊

My plan worked! One female Emperor moth emerged at lunchtime. 😊 The weather here is poor at the moment so I don't expect any incoming males yet.

No photos as yet as I spent lunchtime in the pub! 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 10-May-12 05:10 AM GMT

Empress pumping up her wings.



Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 10-May-12 06:04 AM GMT

Those emperor moths are great, Susie! Although I've seen them on the Cornish coast, I have never managed to photograph one, and I would love to. Maybe breeding them would increase my chances, but I haven't seen them locally, so I don't know if releasing them is the right thing to do here. Great photo.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 14-May-12 06:44 AM GMT

She's been sitting in the tank with the lid off for the last two days now and still hasn't flown away even though she is alive and looks healthy 😊

I went to Denbies this afternoon and it has put itself back in my good books again. I got very excited by what I found 😊

I was looking for green hairstreak but the first butterflies I came across were dingy skippers; an awful lot of them! 😊 They seemed prepared to weather the blustery conditions and down in the shelter of the hedgeline it was more sheltered and warm in the sunshine. A few burnet moths were buzzing around as well and the horseshoe vetch has just started to flower and the eyebright, cowslips, speedwell and other flowers are around but not in great numbers yet.

Occasionally I would see a grizzled skipper too, I think I encountered 4 or 5 in total but I uttered an audible wow when something settled and I immediately recognised it as a brown argos. I took a record shot from a distance but it wouldn't let me get anywhere near before it shot off again. Then something

blue whizzed into view, and then a second one. One stopped for a second which gave me long enough to see what it was. They were two adonis blue! The wind took them off eastwards along the slope and I didn't see them again but the elation didn't leave me all afternoon. Next surprise was a small copper with beautiful blue spots. Another first for the year were small heath, again there were quite a few of these about. A large white and a male brimstone flew along the hedgeline. Then the sun went in and they all disappeared.

I walked up the slope and bumped into some people who were on last weekend's outing to Rewell Wood, a very pleasant couple, Alan and Katie, and a colleague of Philzoid called (I think) Clive. I told them of what I had seen and they went to check out the area while I went looking further up for green hairstreak. Unfortunately I didn't find any and I joined them again at the bottom of the slope. There still wasn't much flying until the sun came out and we spotted the small copper again.

I left them and bimbled back up the slope as time was cracking on (about 5.30) and near the top I found a roosting small copper and also two roosting common blues.

All in all it was a great afternoon. 😊



Brown argus in the undergrowth



Roosting common blue



Roosting small copper



Blue on hawthorn blossom



Re: Susie

by Susie, 15-May-12 01:27 AM GMT

Butterflying is always a pleasure and even better when you can share it with friends. Today I was joined by old friend and forum member ChrisC as he was looking to find his first pearl bordered fritillaries. We were successful in locating four or five on a site near Arundel, a single speckled wood, a single peacock and a single orange tip, before the weather got the better of us. A first for me were the crossbills he heard and then pointed out to me. It was a great morning. 😊





Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 16-May-12 03:28 AM GMT

it certainly was a pleasure both meeting up and seeing the pearls Susie, as with your walk at Denbies last year for silver spotted skippers the target species got and in fine company. bit of a contrast to the butterflies of the old Hayes days eh.

Thanks again for the tour catch up again soon.
Chris

Re: Susie

by Susie, 16-May-12 04:35 AM GMT

It was my pleasure. Took me right back to Minet Country Park and the old days. It was good to catch up after so long and you bolting off early at the social last autumn.

Shame about the weather though. Here's hoping for some proper summer sunshine over the next few months.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 20-May-12 12:20 AM GMT

Today I went on a walk at Heyshott lead by Neil Hulme for Sussex BC in conjunction with the Murray Downland Trust.

Fantastic things have been done on this site and a load of hard work put in by volunteers, include UK Butterfly members as you will know from their diaries.

There was a really good turnout and the orange tips and green veined whites I had seen flying on the way to Heyshott put me in great spirits and I had high hopes for the day, which was mild and partially sunny.

It was nice to see quite a few familiar faces on the walk.

Not only had Neil organised the weather but as he was addressing the crowd by the Murray Downland Trust tent we had the benefit of a magnificent fly past of what I was told were euro fighters. I must say that Mr Hulme really spoils us BC members. 🇪🇺 I understand that later on the planes were going to display for the Queen ... but we saw 'em first! 😄 Later on we saw more planes and helicopters. With the butterflies, birds and planes sometimes it was difficult to know where to look first. 😳

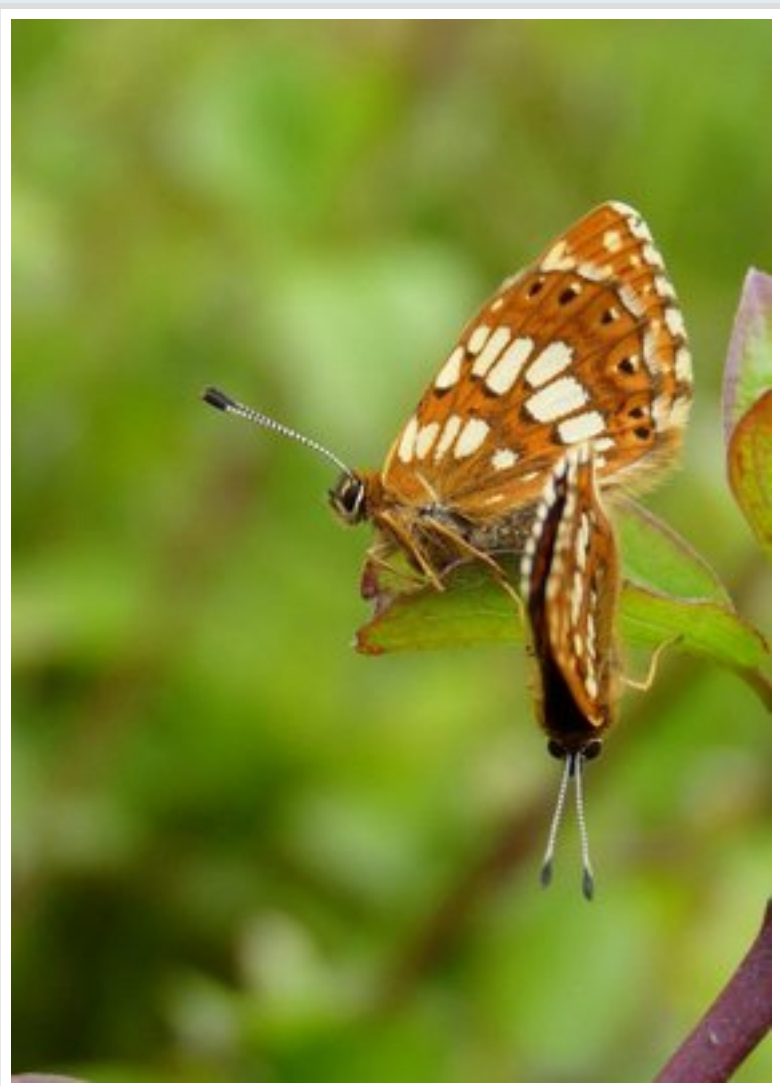




When we reached the cratered chalk hillside the butterflies weren't shy in appearing. Two duke of burgundy were spotted immediately, and then a shout went up that there was a pristine virgin female sitting on a cowslip not far away. The overcast conditions meant that when butterflies were spotted that sat nicely enabling us to have a good look and plenty of photographic opportunities. I also saw grizzled and dingy skipper and small heath.

I am not sure of the total number of dukes seen today but there were quite good numbers. They seem to be quite behind at the moment so I hope that numbers will continue to build on this fabulous site over the next few weeks. I'll certainly be going back soon!

I really didn't want to leave at the end of the walk but domestic duties called. I hope those I left behind continued to have a cracking afternoon.



Re: Susie

by Susie, 22-May-12 04:45 AM GMT

Today started off cool, cloudy and windy but by lunchtime the sun was out and orange tip males were racing around my garden. I was surprised that they appeared in mint condition. Small white and holly blue flew backwards and forwards over the garden fence, the small whites stopping to nectar on white sweet rocket.

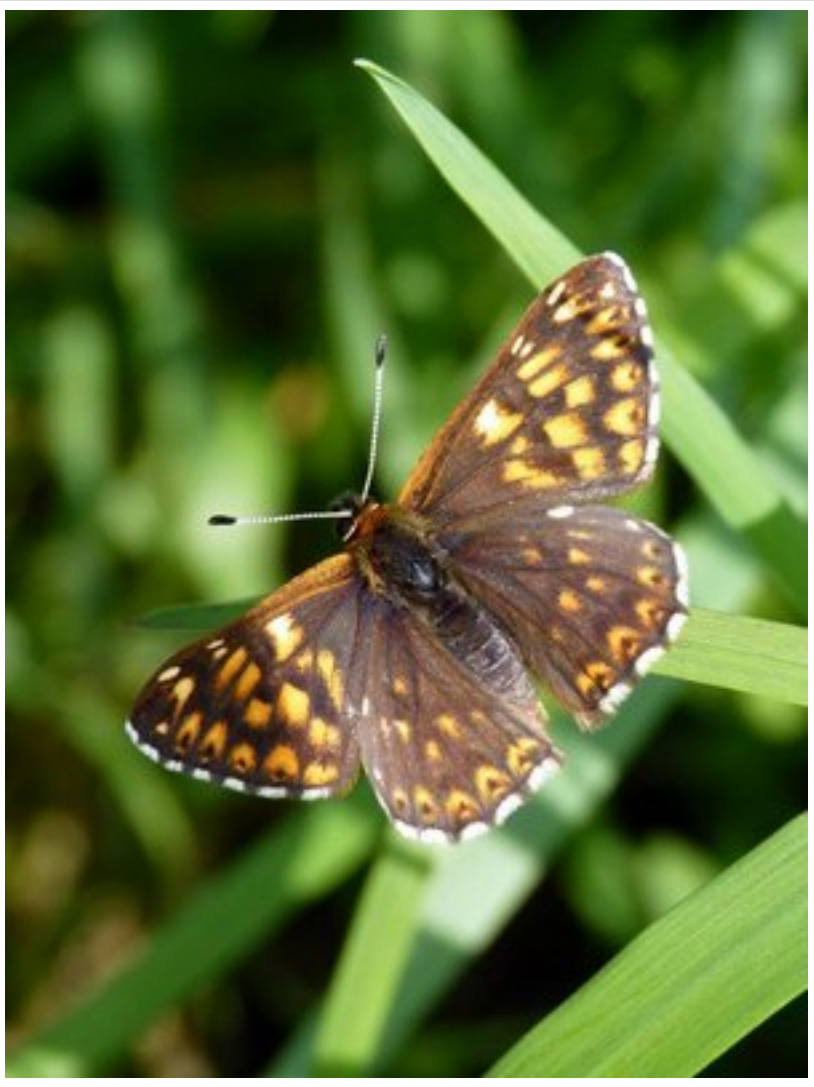
After dropping my eldest at college for an exam I drove on to Kithurst Hill to see if small blues were around. There is one place I was hopeful of seeing them if they were out but my first sighting was of what I thought was a small copper. It sat in the undergrowth and to my amazement it was a duke of burgundy. I was convinced it was a male at the time but I was wrong, she was a female. Then a small blue caught my eye, and then another 😊. I thought I'd check in the meadow for more small blues when I was hailed by a familiar voice, our Sussex Kipper with first instar lepidopterist Sussex Nipper in tow (she is growing into the most gorgeous girl and was an absolute treasure! 😊).

Neil identified the duke of burgundy as a female. He also found a female small blue too. He staked out the female DoB while I looked elsewhere. She was resting in between bouts of egg laying and she had a perfect area to do so thanks again to Neil's efforts at scrub clearance during previous years. Hopefully there will be plenty more DoB here next year.

I found around 8 dingy skippers and a few male brimstone before locating two more duke of burgundy, this time they were male and one was very battered.

More searching for small blues turned up three more, including two which briefly courted and then coupled.

A few small heath, small white, orange tip and a holly blue and speckled wood rounded off today's none too shabby total.





Re: Susie

by Susie, 23-May-12 06:26 AM GMT

Today I managed to squeeze in two short walks. They were glorious; this is one of my favourite times of year and with the hot sunshine, spring flowers and birds singing I was in paradise.

My first short walk was at Denbies Hillside. I arrived at about 9.45 and the only butterflies I saw were some small heath, dingy skippers, a couple of common blue, female brimstone, small and green veined white, orange tip and a very fleet small copper. I wish I could have stayed longer but had to tear myself away for my dance class. I hope to return at the weekend by which time after the heatwave I expect a large number of blues to have emerged. 😊 There were masses of St Mark's flies at the site, including this mating pair. It gave me a good chance to look at the difference in head size that Wurzel had mentioned in his diary.





My second walk was a quick march up to my local patch to look for dragons. I didn't see any scarce chasers but there were hundreds of large red damselflies (clouds of them! 😊) and a small number of banded demoiselles. I got a couple of snaps before having to dash home. More common blue and white around and a speckled wood. The meadow is a mass of buttercups and is really beautiful. It is nearly as pretty as it was five years ago when I first saw it when it was a sea of yellow. The following year the buttercups seemed to be attacked by a virus which made them all curly (sorry, can't think of a better way to put it!) and then they died away so it is good to see them bouncing back.



Finally in the garden were holly blue, green veined and small white and orange tip. I spent a very pleasant time just sitting and watching the bees before Chelsea chopping some of my flowers to extend the nectar season.

Back to work tomorrow so no more butterflies until the weekend. 😞

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 23-May-12 06:33 AM GMT

The wild flowers really do seem to be doing well this year, it's nice to see golden patches in the fields on my way to work that aren't Oil Seed Rape!

The St Marks flies dimorphism is odd to look at isn't it?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by Susie, 23-May-12 06:34 AM GMT

Sure is! I have not noticed it in past years and it was fascinating to see close to, so I owe you thanks, Wurzel! 😊

Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 23-May-12 06:48 AM GMT

Did you have a chance to look at the Horseshoe vetch at Denbies,Susie? How is it looking this year? At Mill Hill last week it was much better than last year,more flowers.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 24-May-12 05:47 AM GMT

The horseshoe vetch is still in the process of opening so it is hard to tell at the moment but it has to be better than last year when it was frazzled.

Today I shelved my plans for this morning as it was so glorious and again went for a walk over my local patch. When I entered the meadow I was quickly greeted by a small copper sitting on a buttercup. Whoohoo! Then I realised that, like a numpty, I had left my memory card in the computer at home. 😡 I managed one pic on the camera's built in memory and, considering everything, I am pleased with how it turned out.



The meadow was alive with damselflies and demoiselles again and without the camera I just had to watch and enjoy them. I took a pic on my phone though of the meadow, I am a camera junkie. 😲

There were a few other white butterflies around; green veined, small, female brimstone and orange tip before it was back to work this afternoon.



Edit: I plan to prove there are purple emperor in them yonder trees this year! I'm on a mission. 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 27-May-12 01:15 AM GMT

Too hot and too windy to go out butterflying today so an afternoon down a couple of pubs followed by sunbathing in the garden was in order. I let the butterflies come to me and saw small and green veined white, oragne tip, female brimstone, holly blue, speckled wood and a very fresh peacock.

Re: Susie

by Pauline, 27-May-12 02:18 AM GMT

Couldn't agree more Susie – put a similar plan into action here in Hants but didn't see nearly as many butterflies as you 😞

Re: Susie

by MikeOxon, 27-May-12 02:41 AM GMT

Funny how one only sees oragne (*sic*) tips after a trip to a couple of pubs 😊

Mike

Re: Susie

by Susie, 27-May-12 03:21 AM GMT

"MikeOxon" wrote:

Funny how one only sees oragne (*sic*) tips after a trip to a couple of pubs 😊

Mike

😊 I think that has more to do with typing on my phone than drinking down the pub! 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 28-May-12 05:46 AM GMT

Another day spent at or close to home and the usual suspects butterflywise passed through the garden.

The chaffinch babies have hatched in the nest on the back of the house and mum is working very hard to keep them fed and happy (as mum's do everywhere).

It's going to be a lovely day tomorrow but I don't have a clue where to go!

Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 28-May-12 07:25 AM GMT

Denbies or Botany Bay of course! But down south you have too many choices! 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 29-May-12 02:57 AM GMT

Those are both good choices!

I chose to go to Denbies and Heyshott today.

This morning it was cloudy at home but the forecast was better further south so I started at Heyshott. Once past Petworth the sun came out and it was a glorious morning.

Orange tip, small white, green veined white, brimstone, red admiral, speckled wood, common blue, holly blue, small heath, dingy skipper, grizzled skipper and duke of burgundy were flying. I still didn't find a green hairstreak but the day was too gorgeous to feel sad about that.

A common blue female had a lot of blue on her and I managed a quick snap before she was off being chased by two males.



After a quick lunch and hanging out some washing at home (got to make the most of the weather!) I was off to Denbies. It was far too hot for me to get any decent shots but small heath, dingy skipper, common and adonis blues were around in good numbers and there was also the odd dingy, grizzled skipper, brown argus, brimstone and whites around.

This little blue was sitting around and didn't seem keen on flying although it was happy to feed. The wings were pure blue and looked like an adonis male but the abdomen was very swollen. I wondered if it may be parasitised or something?



Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 29-May-12 06:08 AM GMT

Good to see you managed to get out and about! 😊 I reckon that the blue has a swollen belly as it's been gorging itself on nectar- could also explain why it didn't want to move, far too stuffed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 29-May-12 06:36 AM GMT

That Adonis does look peculiar though-i've never seen a male as fat as that!

I'm glad you thought one of my choices was worthwhile!

I would like to go to Denbies,too,and i'm off work on wed or thursday. But i would also like to visit some orchid sites in the Chilterns,as well as look for some of my scarce Essex species. But if i fail to see,say,an Essex Green Hairstreak,then i've wasted my day! Oh what will i do-and what will the weather do? 😞

Re: Susie

by Susie, 30-May-12 05:40 AM GMT

I have some video of the butterfly and it's abdomen seems to be moving so I do have a feeling there is something in there other than just food ALIENS!!! 😱

I had wanted to go back to Denbies early to catch the butterflies while still roosting but I just could not wake myself up this morning so didn't get there until gone 9am by which time it was very hot and the butterflies were extremely active. It seemed more like the mediterranean than England being so hot so early. Many adonis and common blues were busy egg laying and the horseshoe vetch is better than it was this time last year but I certainly wouldn't call it lush. There were loads of small heath around, I think this is the best year I have known for them. A group of male adonis were feasting on a big, and particularly stinky, dog poo (I'll spare you the photograph!).

I spotted a couple of chaps with nets on the slopes and decided to have a "chat" with them. I was quite polite with my enquiry as to what they were doing. The last time I questioned someone about their use of a net, which was quite a few years back now, it turned out that he was putting butterflies *into* a site and had a licence to do so! 😊 Anyway, these chaps seemed quite defensive and said that they weren't taking butterflies and that they were after lace border moths, as if that made it alright. Grrrrr. Anyway, there was nothing I could do so I left them to it, but I left a message on the site ranger's phone just so he knew they were there. For all I know they could be telling the truth and be harmless, they just didn't seem like your normal friendly butterfly enthusiasts to me.



Female adonis blue – when I took this I thought the spots were unusually large but now I think they aren't out of the ordinary.



I checked every blue I came across yesterday and today for signs of deformity or aberration but apart from one crumpled one yesterday and the one with the odd abdomen so far I haven't found anything so last years large number of aberrations must have been down to the weather.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 30-May-12 05:52 AM GMT

A couple more pics from yesterday. Common twayblade and white helleborine





by essexbuzzard, 30-May-12 08:08 AM GMT

I can understand your concern, though Susie. Not everyone with a net is up to no good, of course, but the defensive, unfriendly behavior of these two—wonder why this was. 😊

Re: Susie

by Jack Harrison, 30-May-12 01:59 PM GMT

Susie:

For all I know they could be telling the truth and be harmless, they just didn't seem like your normal friendly butterfly enthusiasts to me.

They look like a couple of dodgy anti-conservation MPs if you ask me.

I took parallel, perhaps incriminating photos on 27th May, of a chap taking large quantities of wood at Killiechonate Forest Spean Bridge and loading into a trailer. It might be legal but dead wood on the forest floor is surely an important habitat? Another photo (not published here) shows his number plate. Incidentally, with the angled screen of my FZ150, I was able to take the photos discreetly while apparently looking in an entirely different direction.

Jack



Re: Susie

by Susie, 05-Jun-12 04:32 AM GMT

So how is everyone enjoying the Jubilee weekend?

I've not had a chance to do any butterflying but did see my first painted lady of the year on Saturday.

The chaffinches are growing nicely. They are easy to see in the trellis at the back of the house and don't seem to be bothered by people walking past. I think there are four of them and this photo was taken a few days back.



Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 05-Jun-12 04:35 AM GMT

thats fantastic Susie 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 05-Jun-12 04:45 AM GMT

This pic of my garden from a week or so ago shows some ivy and in there are a dunnocks nest and a wrens nest too. 😊



Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 05-Jun-12 04:55 AM GMT

that's a lovely full border Susie, is that fennel in the back?

Chris

Re: Susie

by Susie, 05-Jun-12 05:19 AM GMT

Oh you should see the garden since we've had some rain, it's grown incredibly!

Yes, it is fennel. It's great for hoverflies when flowering. I've chopped half of it back hard to prolong the flowering season.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 05-Jun-12 10:38 PM GMT

The babies are growing. The eldest is about 10 days now.



[
Daddy bringing home food for his babies



Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 05-Jun-12 10:43 PM GMT

they have certainly come on. little cuties.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 09-Jun-12 02:16 AM GMT

This time last year I was watching silver washed frits, today I am dodging trees on the way to work. Meh. Poxxy weather!

Re: Susie

by Susie, 10-Jun-12 05:15 AM GMT

Today's weather wasn't great but it was better than it has been lately or is going to be so after spending some time in the garden cutting back the plants which got trashed by the wind yesterday I popped to Denbies this evening to see if I could find anything roosting. I thought that there may be the odd blue still hanging around but I was very surprised not to see a single butterfly other than a dozen or so small heath. I ended up photographing other things again.

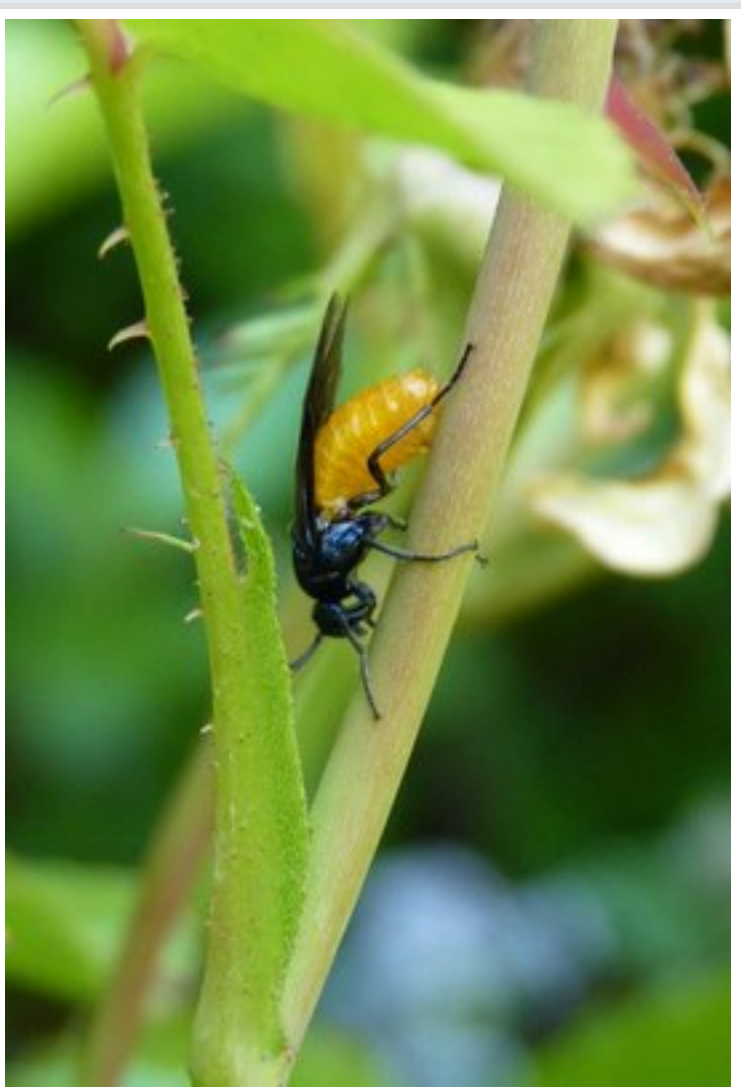
Pyramid orchid (I think?)



Ox eye daisy and friend



and a few photos from the garden today; rose sawfly laying eggs, orange tip caterpillar on garlic mustard and unidentified caterpillar eating dogwood (Chris, any ideas what it is? It's a mighty fine critter and I was rather chuffed to find it)





And just an update on the chaffinch family, the babies fledged the day after I posted the photo of them above. 😊

Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 10-Jun-12 05:55 AM GMT

one of the copper underwings i'd say susie. if you send me the pics of the sawfly larvae when they appear i'll try to do those too. 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 10-Jun-12 06:00 AM GMT

Many thanks 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 12-Jun-12 04:42 AM GMT

I had planned to go to Wrecclesham today but the torrential downpours put a stop to that.

On the plus side the frogs in the pond thought it was April and were going bonkers!

Re: Susie

by MikeOxon, 12-Jun-12 05:09 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

thought it was April and were going bonkers!

I sometimes wonder how these species that spawn just once a year keep themselves amused for the rest of the time!

Seriously, though, this extraordinary spell of poor weather in June must be disrupting the lives of many species.

Mike

Re: Susie

by Pete Eeles, 13-Jun-12 10:55 PM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

A couple more pics from yesterday. Common twayblade and white helleborine

Excellent reports, Sooz. Just wondering what the Holly Blue is laying on (and great shot, BTW!)?

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Susie

by Susie, 14-Jun-12 12:17 AM GMT

Hi Pete,

Thanks. The holly blue is laying on dogwood. Dogwood is the only thing I commonly see them laying on. Dogwood blue doesn't have quite the same ring to it... 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 14-Jun-12 02:38 AM GMT

I noticed feeding damage on my aquilegia (columbine) seed pods today, some plants had lost all of their seed pods. Some pods were partly eaten and another had tiny holes in it. When I opened it up all the seeds had been eaten and only scat was left. I couldn't find the culprit responsible, all I could find was a tiny little critter (about 7 mm top to bottom) which I think was dead.

I've had aquilegia sawfly in the garden at my previous house but they didn't look anything like this. I know how different instars can look from each other though so I haven't dismissed the possibility.

There is feeding damage on the leaves too but that could be snails. 😊

Critter



Feeding damage



Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Jun-12 04:25 AM GMT

The weather looked promising so I went to Iping today to get that ultimate shot of a freshly emerged male silver studded blue being attended by ants ... fat chance! 😊

There were some blues around but very few in comparison to the numbers I have seen in recent years. I don't know if they just haven't emerged yet or if the ones that have emerged have been destroyed by the atrocious weather we've had lately.



I was quite chuffed to find a patch of emperor moth eggs which had been laid on some heather.



Once I got home I still had itchy feet so decided to have a look around Southwater Woods late this afternoon. Upon arrival I was greeted by a red admiral, and then three more! 😊



In the meadow there were quite a few meadow brown around but that was it – no marbled white so far as I could see. I saw a couple of speckled woods and three broad bodied chasers sitting quite closely together.



A close encounter with a roe deer rounded off a very pleasant walk.



From looking at the vegetation I reckon the bulk of the silver washed fritillaries and white admirals and still a good few weeks away, everything is very behind what I would expect it to be.



Re: Susie

by Mark Colvin, 19-Jun-12 06:05 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

Glad you've managed to get out.

"Susie" wrote:

A close encounter with a roe deer rounded off a very pleasant walk.

In all fairness though, that's not the best picture of a roe deer I've ever seen. 😊

Just to the right of the tree and to the left of the tallest grass stem???

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Susie

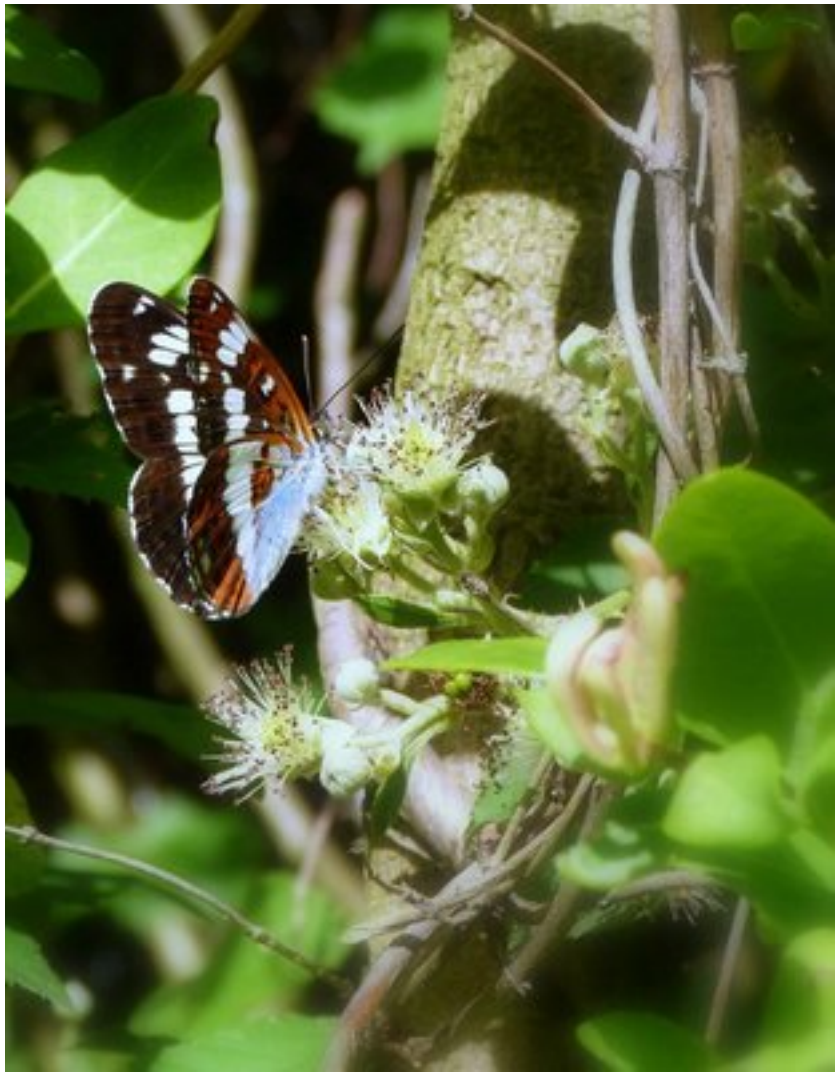
by Susie, 19-Jun-12 03:27 PM GMT

Lol. Sorry, that pic was just of the corner of the meadow, there is no deer in it. 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 25-Jun-12 03:28 AM GMT

A bimble around Southwater woods mid afternoon today turned up one silver washed fritillary, one white admiral, one comma, four red admirals and number of meadow browns.





I got a brief glimpse of a painted lady at lunchtime.

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 25-Jun-12 04:32 AM GMT

Cracking shots I've yet to see Silver Washed this year and I'm really jealous of the closed wing shot of the White Admiral 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by Susie, 25-Jun-12 05:01 AM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel.

I've been feeling a bit self conscious about my pics lately because they're really not up to scratch but I do like that white admiral and your words have cheered me up. I think the underside of the white admiral is more attractive than the upper side tbh.

Re: Susie

by Neil Freeman, 25-Jun-12 05:08 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

You take some lovely photos. I much prefer to see a photo of a butterfly in the context of its surroundings such as yours usually are.

Keep at it,

Neil F.

Re: Susie

by Gothic_dreams, 25-Jun-12 05:11 AM GMT

Lovely photos Susie, i love the shots of the silver washed fritillary and white admiral 😊

Chris

Re: Susie

by jenks, 25-Jun-12 05:18 AM GMT

Lovely photos Susie, especially the White Admiral. I still haven't seen Red Admiral yet this year!. I love that word too; " bimble " ! I took a bimble today around Haugh Wood, Hereford. Glad to be able to get out after all the rain of the last few days. Good numbers of Wood White (16-17) along the southern butterfly trail. Only other butterflies seen were Large Skipper (2) and Large White (1). Still, target species seen.

Anyone know if Heath Fritillary have been seen yet at Haddon Hill ?

Jenks

Re: Susie

by MikeOxon, 25-Jun-12 06:49 AM GMT

I know this is UKButs but the Speckled Yellow moth deserves a mention too! Nice photos.

Mike

Re: Susie

by John W, 25-Jun-12 07:07 AM GMT

Hi Susie, I'm glad to see you got a picture of that White Admiral! Where did you see the Silver-washed, was it in the same area?

Cheers

John

Re: Susie

by CJB, 25-Jun-12 07:13 PM GMT

Hi Susie,

I am a new member and have followed your posts for sometime.

The picture of the White Admiral is particularly good! You don't need to be self conscious about your photos, they are great. I am on a mission to capture all the UK species on my mobile phone (don't ask!?) and am up to 39, but the quality isn't a patch on your handywork!

Flutter on!

CJB

Re: Susie

by Susie, 26-Jun-12 04:38 AM GMT

Hi everyone,

Sorry for coming across as so needy yesterday. 😞 Thank you to everyone, whether old forum members or new, who gave such kind comments. Much appreciated.

John W: Hi John, it was nice to see you yesterday and thank you for being so helpful with the white admirals 😊 The SWF was at the opposite end of the ride where the bramble is.

I was back at Southwater again this afternoon where I was pleased to meet up with Mark Colvin and also bump into Sussex Kipper. Despite there being plenty of bramble out the butterfly numbers are still low and the butterflies weren't sitting well (I know I need to refine my stalking technique! 😞).

I spent the first part of the morning at Iping as a chore had taken me to that part of the world. There were more SSB around than last week but still no where near the numbers I would expect. Anything sitting around tended to be tatty, the fresh ones where zooming around without stopping.

Again photo opportunities were few and far between.



Re: Susie

by Susie, 02-Jul-12 05:41 AM GMT

This weekend I went up to Nottingham and had a chance to pop into a place on the way home that I have wanted to visit for a very long time. It's called Naturescape and I bought the majority of the wildflower plugs and seeds that are in my garden from here. It is a wild flower farm and garden centre. The conditions weren't ideal for most of the time I was there, it was windy and a bit drizzly, but I was still surprised by the lack of insects at a place I thought would be full of them. I saw a couple of bees, some cricket nymphs and a solitary meadow brown huddled down in the grass the whole time I was there. I hope to go back one day when it is hot and sunny and see if it lives up to my expectations then.





Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 02-Jul-12 07:11 AM GMT

That looks like a fascinating place to visit. Is it a nursery or a reserve as it looks more like the later?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by Susie, 02-Jul-12 08:20 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel. Yes, it's an interesting place. Here is a link to it's website which will tell you much more about it. <http://www.naturescape.co.uk/>

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-12 03:38 AM GMT

Cheers for the link Susie, looks like a cracking place just a pity it's so far away.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 03-Jul-12 04:35 AM GMT

i hope susie doesn't mind me adding a couple of my own to her diary. this was naturescape june 2004.





Re: Susie

by Susie, 03-Jul-12 05:40 AM GMT

Lovely photos, Chris

Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 03-Jul-12 06:36 AM GMT

Looks like a great place,Susie—and we can bring some goodies home from ther as well!

Don't worry about your photo's Susie—they are a pleasure to see! My photo's arn't perfect,but they give me a great deal of pleasure,what more can you ask?

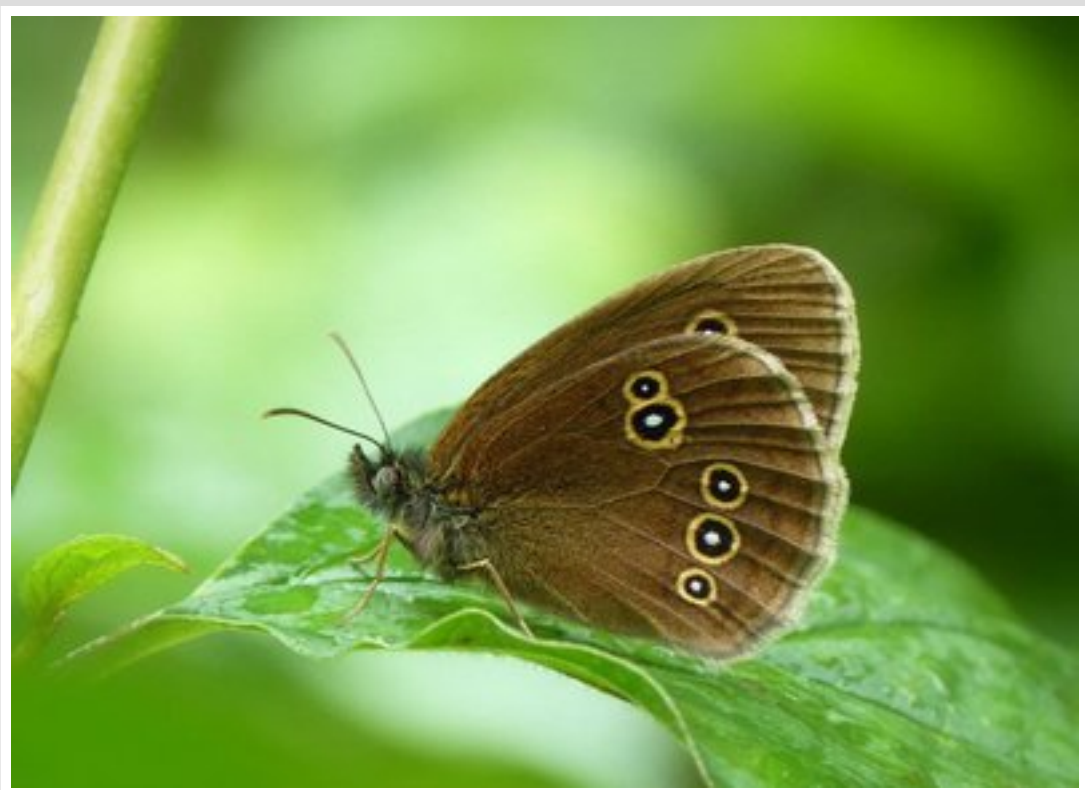
Cheers.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 04-Jul-12 12:58 AM GMT

Very true, I guess you can't ask for more than that 😊

Decided to seize the day this afternoon even though it was raining and headed to southwater. As my welies slurped through the mud I was pleased to see some meadow browns along the path. Unfortunately then the rain got heavier but I found a sheltering ringlet, my first of the year, and risked my camera in the wet to get a shot.



Deciding that I must be totally insane to butterfly in these conditions and with my camera inside my jacket to keep it dry I looked in on the meadow. The rain eased off a bit again and there were plenty of meadow browns around as well as a silver y and loads of crickets. Finally I found what I had really hoped to see, two marbled whites in the grass.



A sweep of the pylon ride only produced one white admiral which was laying flat out on top of some hazel in the rain. I was very surprised at this as I thought it would have closed its wings and sought shelter. Perhaps it was dead!

As the rain got heavier and a mozzie bit me on the wrist I decided to head for home.

The weather's cr@p, that's for sure!

Re: Susie

by Neil Freeman, 04-Jul-12 05:03 AM GMT

A couple of nice photos Susie,

I always seem to struggle with Ringlets or rather finding them in good spots for a photo.

I also like the Marbled White, a lot of people may have cropped that one too close and lost the colours of the flowers which to me are as important in that photo as the butterfly 😊

Cheers,

Neil f.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 09-Jul-12 12:40 AM GMT

Many thanks. 😊

I took a trip to Southwater Woods this afternoon. I saw a few silver washed fritillary including a courting pair (a great spectacle to watch), a couple of white admiral, a few skippers and quite a few marbled white, meadow brown and ringlets, a couple of red admiral and a single speckled wood. All nice to see but I can't help feeling disappointed, like I've been invited to a party and turned up on the wrong day!

The only good thing I have to say about this atrocious summer is that I am getting fond of meadow browns and ringlets!





The best thing about this afternoon was chatting to other butterfly enthusiasts and bumping into our very own Sussex Kipper (who had taken some more cracking photos today 😊). There was no sign of His Imperial Majesty at Southwater so Sussex Kipper was heading off to Botany Bay to see what he could find. I was going to join him until I passed close to home on the journey there and the rain started to pour down. I suddenly realised how tired I was (wading through mud in my wellies is good exercise!) so I decided to go home instead. I am sure I will read Sussex Kipper's report later and be pig sick that I didn't make the extra effort! 😂

Re: Susie

by Susie, 11-Jul-12 02:09 AM GMT

Well on Sunday afternoon when I got home after lots of rain the sun came out and so did a red admiral on the buddliea. 😊 This is the first butterfly I've seen in the garden for ages (and it was back this afternoon too when the sun came out briefly – it's pouring with rain again now!). The one good thing about all this rain is the hemp agrimony is huge. Some of it is over eight feet tall now and it's still growing. 😲



Yesterday I popped up to Cissbury Ring to hunt for dark green fritillary. I've looked up here years ago for them and didn't find anything so with the cloudy conditions I wasn't hopeful but they were surprisingly easy to find but the blustery conditions made photography difficult. 😊



I was going to snap a lovely picture of a dgf on clover when some stranger decided to talk to me which was most off putting and then the dgf flew away. 😡 I need a 'do not disturb' sign! 😂

Also there were good numbers of marbled white, small heath, skippers, red admiral and meadow brown.

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 11-Jul-12 02:35 AM GMT

The DGF shot has a nice lay out 🍷 I know what you mean about coming to appreciate Ringlets etc I seem to have hundreds of shots of them, Meadow Brown and Marbled Whites!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by Susie, 11-Jul-12 05:26 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel!

A couple of more shots from the garden.

I don't get many butterflies here, I have a few theories why, but I do get lots of bees, hoverflies and other insects because of the nectar rich flowers. There is something in bloom all year round.



This campion moth caterpillar is making the most of it's home in the seed pod of red campion.



The tallest of the hemp agrimony is now well over eight feet tall and still growing (it's pm the right hand side of the photo). Hopefully it will pull in any passing brown hairstreaks in a few weeks.



Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 11-Jul-12 05:29 AM GMT

stunning garden Susie

Re: Susie

by Susie, 11-Jul-12 05:33 AM GMT

Thank you. 😊 why put one plant in a space when you can cram in three? 😄

Re: Susie

by Gothic_dreams, 13-Jul-12 07:30 AM GMT

Some cracking photos Susie, and your garden looks lovely 😊

Chris

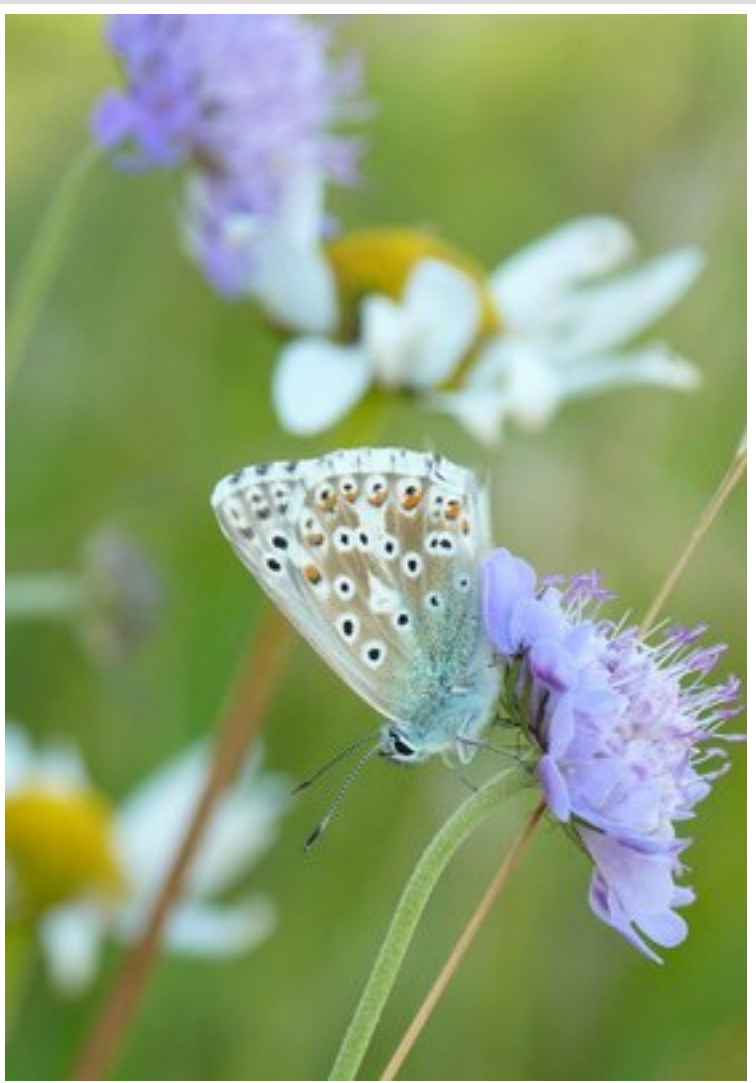
Re: Susie

by Susie, 23-Jul-12 06:01 AM GMT

Thanks, Chris.

It's been really lovely this weekend to see butterflies on the wing while I have been out and about. There were good numbers of Red Admirals flying in over the sea at Goring at lunchtime.

This evening was the first chance I have had to actively go out to see them though. I went to Denbies Hillside and met up with our very own Lee Hurrell. A very enjoyable couple of hours were spent watching chalkhill blues, marbled whites, small skippers (and possibly essex), meadow browns, the odd white and having a good old chat. Lee also saw a small tortoiseshell. Some of the chalkhill roosts really were spectacular.





Re: Susie

by Lee Hurrell, 23-Jul-12 05:27 PM GMT

It was lovely seeing you, Susie.

Your photos are stunning 😊

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Susie

by Susie, 24-Jul-12 08:24 AM GMT

Thanks, Lee.

I couldn't resist another trip back to Denbies this evening. The chalkhill numbers continue to grow – to the point where I have not seen so many in all the years I have been visiting the site and I am sure there are plenty more to emerge yet. 😊

I was pleased to see a couple of dark green fritillaries too, as well as a gatekeeper, meadow browns, lots of skippers, small heath and the odd white.



Re: Susie

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Jul-12 05:39 PM GMT

I went up again to my local downs yesterday evening and also found a few Chalkhills roosting 😊

I'll be going back a few evenings this week.

Lee

Re: Susie

by Susie, 26-Jul-12 01:44 AM GMT

Phew what a scorcher!

I've spent more time in the garden than I would normally do as I am off work with the kids at the moment. As a result I saw quite a few very fresh gatekeepers, some meadow browns, large and small whites, a comma and a reed admiral flying in and around.

A walk up to the playing field didn't turn up much. No sign of brown hairstreak yet.

I popped into southwater mid afternoon. Loads of browns but that was mainly it. I did see a few speckled wood, skippers, a few silver washed frits, a single white admiral and high up in the canopy two butterflies were hassling a third. A purple emperor flew between two oaks but I cannot say for sure the earlier butterflies were PEs too. It was great to see Him though, even if for only a short while and at a distance.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 06-Aug-12 06:30 AM GMT

Yesterday some of the UK Butterflies members joined me on a walk about Denbies Hillside. I won't go over it again but it was a jolly splendid day spent in great company despite the weather.



Late this afternoon I managed to escape and went back to Denbies again. It was a lovely warm sunny evening and a real pleasure to watch the butterflies settle down for the night.

Whilst photographing for quite a long time I became aware of something coming towards me; it was a male roe deer. He was obviously curious as to what I was and was creeping up for a look. After sussing each other out for a minute he bounded off through the grass and with every leap set off a flurry of blue butterflies. Anyone who was there yesterday will be able to imagine just how many roosting butterflies went up. It was an incredible sight and I just wish I had been able to film it.

Another perk of this evening was to find this silver spotted skipper roosting on this scabious flower. I didn't even have to "assist" it onto such an attractive perch as it was already there!



In fact there were so many butterflies at Denbies and so much lush vegetation and flowers that I was spoilt for choice when it came to photographic subjects roosting in great places.





Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 06-Aug-12 06:43 AM GMT

Great stuff, Susie, I wish I could have gone yesterday. But I couldn't get time off work. May be able to go Tuesday or Thursday. Cheers!

Re: Susie

by Susie, 06-Aug-12 07:03 AM GMT

Good luck on Tuesday or Thursday, the adonis may be out by then! 😊

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-12 07:07 AM GMT

The final shot is just brilliant, it looks like they're completing synchronised swimming! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by Susie, 06-Aug-12 07:09 AM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel, I only managed a quick snap from a distance before the one with the wings open closed them – spoil sport! 😊 It was great to see a cluster of them settling down to roost like that though. 😊

Re: Susie

by Mark Colvin, 06-Aug-12 07:13 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

I'm really pleased to see that Denbies has come alive for you, particularly as it's a location, along with Southwater, that seems to be strongly associated with you. The stories I am hearing of the CHB eruption in Sussex and Surrey sound absolutely fabulous.

"Susie" wrote:

After sussing each other out for a minute he bounded off through the grass and with every leap set off a flurry of blue butterflies. Anyone who was there yesterday will be able to imagine just how many roosting butterflies went up. It was an incredible sight and I just wish I had been able to film it.

Although you didn't film the event your description fills my head with wonderful imagery.

Great picture of the SSS on scabious 😊

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Susie

by Susie, 06-Aug-12 07:16 AM GMT

Thanks, Mark. 😊 I hope you manage to get out and witness the chalkhill blue explosion yourself as it is quite quite amazing.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 06-Aug-12 07:22 AM GMT





Re: Susie

by Susie, 08-Aug-12 06:52 AM GMT

Initially I thought these butterflies were homing in on dog poo as there were so many little groups at the bottom of the hill at Denbies on Saturday, then I realised what they were actually up to. <http://www.facebook.com/v/10151158015031972>

Re: Susie

by Nick Broomer, 08-Aug-12 07:40 AM GMT

Hi Susie,
It was lovely seeing you again on Sat., a great conclusion to my day, especially photographing the SSS.
Lovely photos, my favourite being the male Chalkhill with the proboscis showing [on this page]. So what were all those male Chalkhill Blues up to? There was `nt a poor female underneath that lot was there?
All the best, Nick.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 08-Aug-12 05:45 PM GMT

Thanks Nick, it was great seeing you too, a really pleasant surprise.

You are right, Nick, there was a female being mated under that lot with the other males trying to break in. There were so many groups of chalkhills like this at the bottom of the hill on Saturday it was quite amazing and something I have never seen before in such numbers. The grass was littered with them and I had to be careful where I put my feet.

Re: Susie

by MikeOxon, 08-Aug-12 07:48 PM GMT

Reminds me of a school essay which, describing a primitive hut, said: "there was rough mating all over the floor"

Mike

Re: Susie

by Susie, 12-Aug-12 05:07 AM GMT

A family bbq/picnic today at Box Hill meant I didn't think I would be able to do any butterflying but I managed to sneak away for a while and there were good numbers of butterflies at the bottom of the slope (not on a par with Denbies though). Also in the garden this evening peacock, red admiral and gatekeeper.





Re: Susie

by Nick Broomer, 12-Aug-12 07:05 AM GMT

Hi Susie,
So you sneaked off for a few moments, tut,tut, 😊
Did you stick it out with the Silver-Spotted Skippers?, because the male below in your photo is trying to mate with the female above. The male always lands very close, then bends his abdomen towards the females, he will do this over and over again until he successfully connects. If so, did you get any pics?
All the best, Nick.

Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 12-Aug-12 08:04 AM GMT

Yes,quite a bit of this behavior going on with the Skippers at Aston Rowant on Thursday,and i love to see it,this is a fascinating little species.

Re: Susie

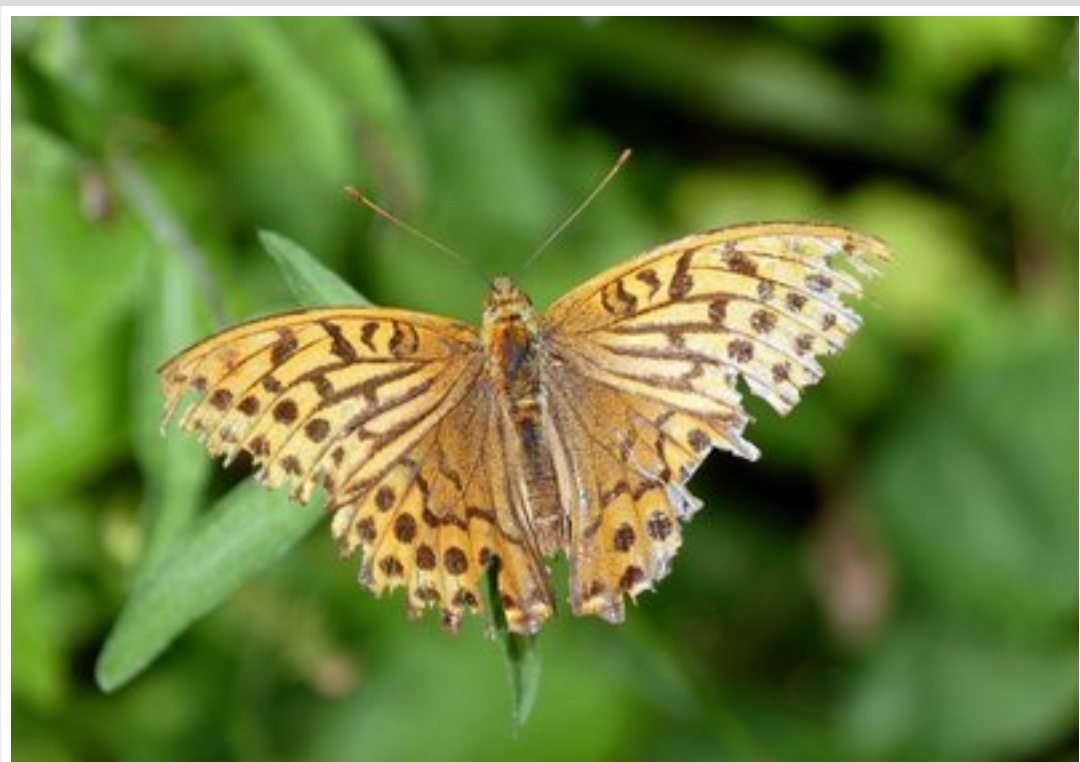
by Susie, 13-Aug-12 08:12 AM GMT

Hi Nick,
The male SS skipper was certainly trying but I didn't see them couple, the wind caught them in the end and I lost of track of where they went unfortunately.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Aug-12 12:45 AM GMT

Over the past week I've been up to the playing field to see if there were any brown hairstreaks about but haven't found any. Today was no different and I am now pretty certain that this site is so overgrown it cannot support the colony as it did previously. I'll be having a word with the council to see if they will trim back the hedges so that next year any passing brown hairstreaks, which must still be close by, will come back.
Tempting my 12 year old with a promise of picking some blackberries we went to Southwater Woods this afternoon. I've never been here at this time of year and was really surprised to find so many silver washed fritillary on the wing. We saw at least 8 or 9 while walking around, which is far more than I saw earlier in the year. My target species today was brown hairstreak but I didn't find any. We saw plenty of meadow brown and gatekeeper, whites, a red admiral and a holly blue too while walking around.





Back in the garden the small tortoiseshell that has been hanging around is still here, small whites, gatekeeper, and a peacock.

Edit: in addition there were more butterflies along later including a painted lady, holly blue and more peacocks.

The buddleia held a grizzly tug of war when I watched a wasp and a crab spider battling over a honey bee. Eventually the wasp flew off with the abdomen and the spider had the head and thorax. 🤪

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Aug-12 12:56 AM GMT

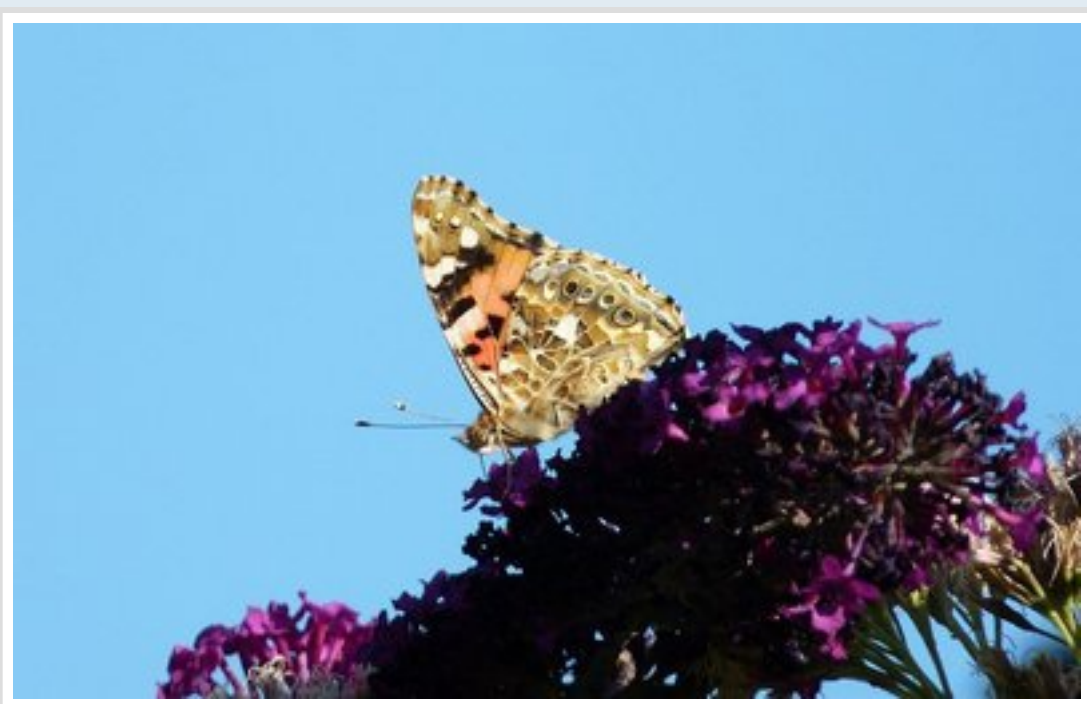
www.facebook.com/v/10151182047766972

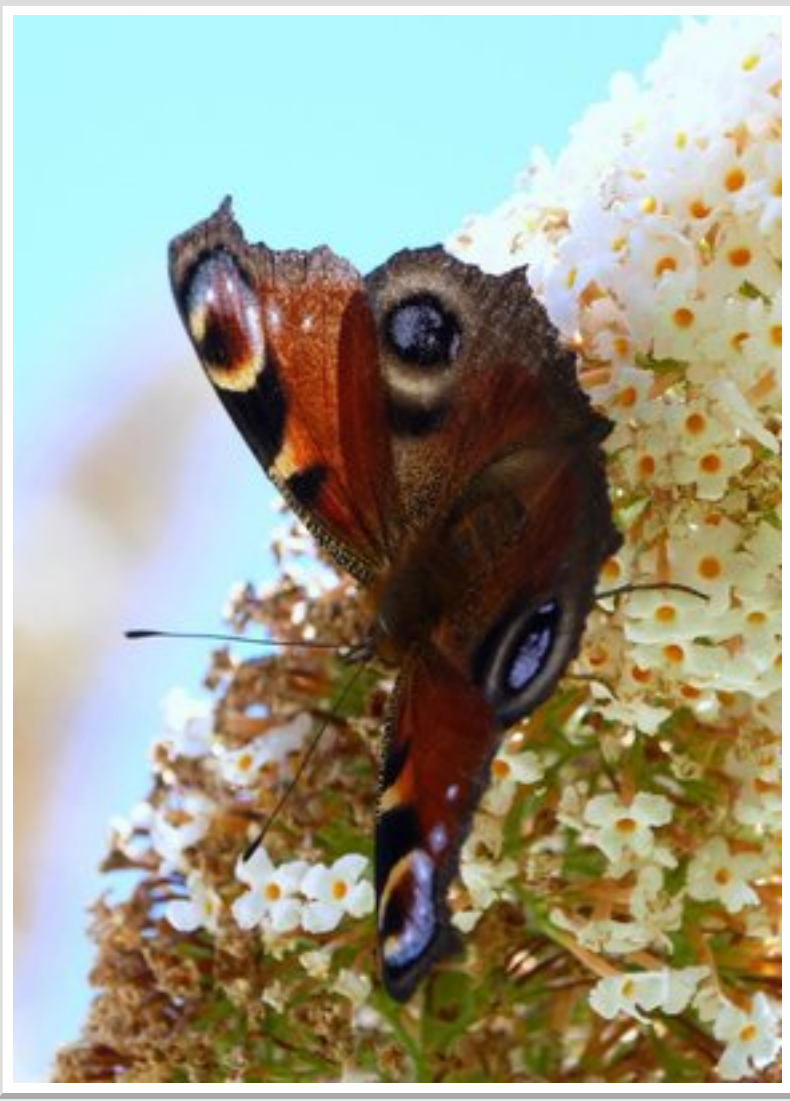
This umbellifer at Southwater was like Piccadilly Circus with insects.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 20-Aug-12 06:27 AM GMT

I wasn't able to get out butterflying today due to family commitments so had to rely on the butterflies coming to me. There was a pristine red admiral sitting on the washing on the line this morning and was compliant enough to take a short ride on my finger but wasn't willing to pose for photos. Also visiting the garden were more small tortoiseshells, a battered comma, peacocks and various whites. I may have seen a glimpse of a brown hairstreak but can't be sure. (the painted lady is from yesterday)





Everyone thought that today was going to be hotter than yesterday and none of the weather forecasts we saw this morning said that we would have cloud and certainly didn't mention the thunderstorm that turned up at lunchtime. I love a good thunderstorm but this one was quite weird without a drop of rain (later we were told that there was a short sharp torrential downpour quite close by).

The cloud formations were quite fascinating. Firstly it looked like cotton wool peats and then later broke up into what looked like the start of an alien invasion in a film with big holes in the clouds. Awesome stuff.



Re: Susie

by Nick Broomer, 20-Aug-12 07:47 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

Lovely photos of the cloud formations 😊, but i hope you`re still here in the morning as the earth seems to have opened up, and the houses are sliding into a giant crevice 😬

All the best, Nick.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 27-Aug-12 02:59 AM GMT



You may not be able to tell from the photo what this is but it is the egg of the tiniest common blue butterfly I have ever seen which flew into my garden at lunchtime today and laid it on the birds foot trefoil I planted three or four years ago. I am so pleased. 🍀

Also in the garden today were small tortoiseshell, peacock, comma, meadow brown and large and small whites.

Re: Susie

by Pete Eeles, 27-Aug-12 03:08 AM GMT

Nice one Sooz – a reward for being so caring, I'm sure 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Susie

by Vince Massimo, 27-Aug-12 04:27 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

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Excellent 😊

It should hatch in about 10 days time. You should then hopefully be able to keep track of the larva for a bit until it goes into hibernation. See viewtopic.php?f=37&t=5625

Looking forward to updates 😊

Vince

Re: Susie

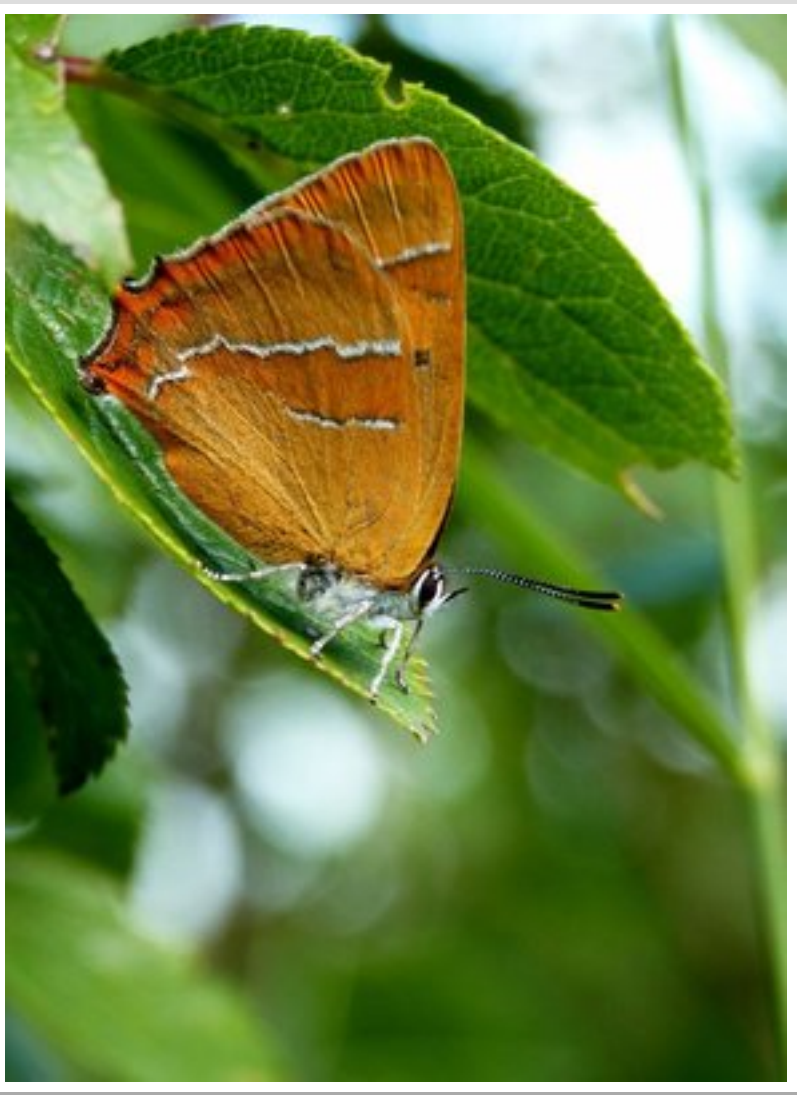
by Susie, 29-Aug-12 01:54 AM GMT

Thanks, chaps. 😊

Your thread on the life fo the common blue was fantastic Vince. 😊



As some of you on this site with children will know, getting out and about during the school holidays can be difficult. I have failed to see my favourite butterfly locally and I having a window of two hours going spare this afternoon I grabbed the opportunity and zipped down to Steyning as fast as my little wheels would trundle. With travelling time I had less than an hour on site but actually didn't need all of it. I had wondered if I would be a bit late to see some brown hairstreaks but some of the kind souls on site soon found one and pointed me in the right direction. Thanks chaps.



I was really chuffed to see this little 'flame' streak (I think it's a far more fitting name!).

Re: Susie

by NickMorgan, 29-Aug-12 03:33 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

[attachment=0:9hwwgr3s]Egg.jpg[/attachment:9hwwgr3s]

You may not be able to tell from the photo what this is but it is the egg of the tiniest common blue butterfly I have ever seen which flew into my garden at lunchtime today and laid it on the birds foot trefoil I planted three or four years ago. I am so pleased. 🍷

Also in the garden today were small tortoiseshell, peacock, comma, meadow brown and large and small whites.

Fantastic. It's great when butterflies choose a plant you have planted to lay on. That should give you something to keep you occupied over the winter!

Re: Susie

by Susie, 29-Aug-12 04:43 AM GMT

Thanks, Nick, I am pleased. To be really greedy I just need some brown hairstreak eggs on the blackthorn now ... once the leaves start dropping I will be able to check.

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 29-Aug-12 06:17 AM GMT

Cracking shot Susie and I agree Flame Steak is much more appropriate and also way cooler 😎

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by NickMorgan, 30-Aug-12 07:37 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

Cracking shot Susie and I agree Flame Steak is much more appropriate and also way cooler 😎

Have a goodun

Wurzel

I prefer char grilled myself!! 😂

Re: Susie

by Susie, 04-Sep-12 07:02 AM GMT

Tasty little butterfly! 😊

Red admirals, small tortoiseshell, comma, meadow brown and large and small whites in the garden today.

We popped down to Goring and saw quite a few butterflies flying in strongly over the sea to land. I think they were red admirals but they weren't stopping for anyone.

Re: Susie

by Nick Broomer, 04-Sep-12 07:18 AM GMT

Well done Susie on getting a photo of a Flamed Hairstreak, lovely.
All the best, Nick.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 05-Sep-12 12:05 AM GMT

Thanks, Nick 😊

Brown hairstreak in the garden! Whoo and yay! 😊

I had been out for the morning and as I came into the kitchen I saw something flying in the garden which caught my eye. Brown hairstreaks are pretty unmistakable in flight. It settled on some ivy with its wings closed. Unfortunately I had one of those dilemmas where I could either watch it or get a camera – I chose the latter. By the time I got back it had gone but it was still great to see and was in good nick from what I could see of it. Can't wait to check for eggs when the leaves drop off the blackthorn.

After waiting in the garden for a while in the hope it might come back I decided to scout around the local area. The other side of the hedge by the bypass looks like hairstreak heaven at the moment as there is a strip of young bullace alongside the hedge which is about ten feet wide and hundreds of yards long. No sign of any hairstreaks there today but I did find a tiny small copper. It is a shame that this bullace will be mowed later in the year so I will try to get out there and rescue any eggs I can find in a month or so.



Also in the garden small tortoiseshells, red admirals, comma and large and small whites.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 06-Sep-12 04:07 AM GMT

I saw another brown hairstreak today at Slinfold Golf and Country Club. 😊

Re: Susie

by EricY, 06-Sep-12 04:31 AM GMT

Send some Brown hairstreaks up here please Susie, too far to travel all the way down there. Tried Chambers farm wood Lincs today but none seen by anyone, maybe a couple of fast flyby's but that was all. Eric

Re: Susie

by Susie, 13-Sep-12 04:05 AM GMT

A trip to Steyning on Saturday gave me a last taste of summer and probably my last flaming hairstreak of the year. It wasn't a quarter pounder, more of a three quarter butterfly, but still great to see. 😊

I found it quite amusing as I turned up at Steyning and made my way to the group of enthusiasts at the bottom of the hill near the master tree to be hailed by our Sussex Kipper. I knew Kipper must have found something (doesn't he always!) and people were hopping over the fence to look at what he was looking at. 'You're over the wrong side of the fence' someone called, 'I'll have to make it come over here then' I replied - at which point the butterfly took off and flew over to MY side 😊 - 'Whose on the wrong side of the fence?' 😊 .



She might have only been three quarters of a hairstreak but she kept herself very busy walking around the blackthorn laying eggs so hopefully will be the mother of many more hairstreaks next year.



I didn't see a huge number of butterflies on Saturday, although there were loads of Silver Y around, but the lovely company of other butterfly enthusiasts including John W of this forum made it a lovely way to spend a couple of hours.

On Tuesday morning I popped to Denbies for 45 minutes for a walk. There are still some really good condition common blues around but my favourite butterfly was this incredibly worn chalkhill blue.



Also tatty brown argus, a pristine small heath and lots of meadow brown.

Re: Susie

by David M, 13-Sep-12 06:01 AM GMT

How is that butterfly still active? It looks practically dead! 😊

Re: Susie

by NickMorgan, 13-Sep-12 06:26 AM GMT

That's well worn! I love the colours of the picture, though.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 16-Sep-12 04:03 AM GMT

A few hours sitting in a sunny garden in Thatcham today (drinking Pimms, how very marvellous) was a good opportunity to see all the nymphalids that were flying over. I don't know where they were going or where they had been but they weren't stopping. Possibly migrating back whence they came?

Re: Susie

by Susie, 18-Sep-12 11:25 PM GMT

Today was another day filled with family commitments and no chance to spot butterflies, or so I thought. I was just sitting outside my daughter's college in the car waiting to collect her when I saw the unmistakable flight of a brown hairstreak nearby. The BH was in among some ornamental dogwood and was looking to egg lay. She crawled up and down the stems and I thought that I was going to witness her laying on these (!) but then she found some blackthorn twigs in between the dogwood and oviposited on this instead. I watched her for a good five to ten minutes. Frustratingly I had no camera other than my phone which first refused to focus and then froze completely. Frustrating minutes were lost while I shut it down and restarted it but I eventually got a couple of snaps. Marvellous serendipity!

Yesterday I was walking past the school to Horsham and saw one flying around nearby too until it eventually settled at the top of a maple tree. I've had a few chance sightings over the last couple of weeks like this.

It's good to know BH are around in good numbers after all.

Re: Susie

by MikeOxon, 18-Sep-12 11:35 PM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

I've had a few chance sightings

I don't know what it is about BH. I have had quite a few 'chance sightings' over the years but never find them when I go on a planned search 😊

Mike

Re: Susie

by Susie, 18-Sep-12 11:55 PM GMT

Same here this year with BH, with the exception of my trips to Steyning. I kept spotting them as I drive!

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Sep-12 01:13 AM GMT



Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 19-Sep-12 02:42 AM GMT

those pics are great susie. wish my phone(or is it me 😊) could take pictures like that

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Sep-12 04:00 AM GMT

I'm sure you'd recognise which plant its on though 😊

Re: Susie

by Pauline, 19-Sep-12 03:02 PM GMT

Lovely photos Susie and so late in the season too!

Re: Susie

by Susie, 19-Sep-12 04:10 PM GMT

Thank you, Pauline. Yes, the season definitely seems to be running quite late here, at this rate they will be flying into October. 😊

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 20-Sep-12 05:08 AM GMT

Great shots of the Flame StReak good to see them lasting into the autumn and hopefully the weather will keep comfortable for them although it does seem to be quieting down now 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

PS – hopefully this will start a new page so my iPod typo 😊 will be removed from the front page 😊

Re: Susie

by Wurzel, 20-Sep-12 05:10 AM GMT

Damn it's still there 😡

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Susie

by Susie, 23-Sep-12 05:34 AM GMT

The autumn sunshine meant I had to postpone chores today and head for Steyning in the hope of seeing one last glimpse of flaming hairstreaks 😊

Sussex Kipper had been showing another enthusiast, John (nice to meet you 😊), his first BHs and I was pleased to see it briefly before it flew. Over the next couple of hours we saw a few more BHs, together with commas, loads of fabulous red admirals, a small copper, speckled woods, meadow browns, and small whites.

Walking down the path by the allotments (the stink of dog poo and amount of the stuff was awful 😞 the owners of the dogs should be ashamed) I saw a male brimstone fly into a garden spider's web. Normally I wouldn't have interfered but for some reason, maybe because seeing brimstones in the spring give me such pleasure, but I put my hand into the web just as the spider dashed out. I broke the web enough for the brimstone to fly free and avoid the lethal injection coming his way. I hope it hibernates safely and flies again next year. 😊

Re: Susie

by David M, 23-Sep-12 06:31 AM GMT

Well done for rescuing that Brimstone, Susie. I'd have done exactly the same.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 23-Sep-12 06:38 AM GMT

Seemed a bit unfair depriving it of it's lunch which it had won fair and square but I do love to see brimstones after a long dark winter .

Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 23-Sep-12 06:51 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

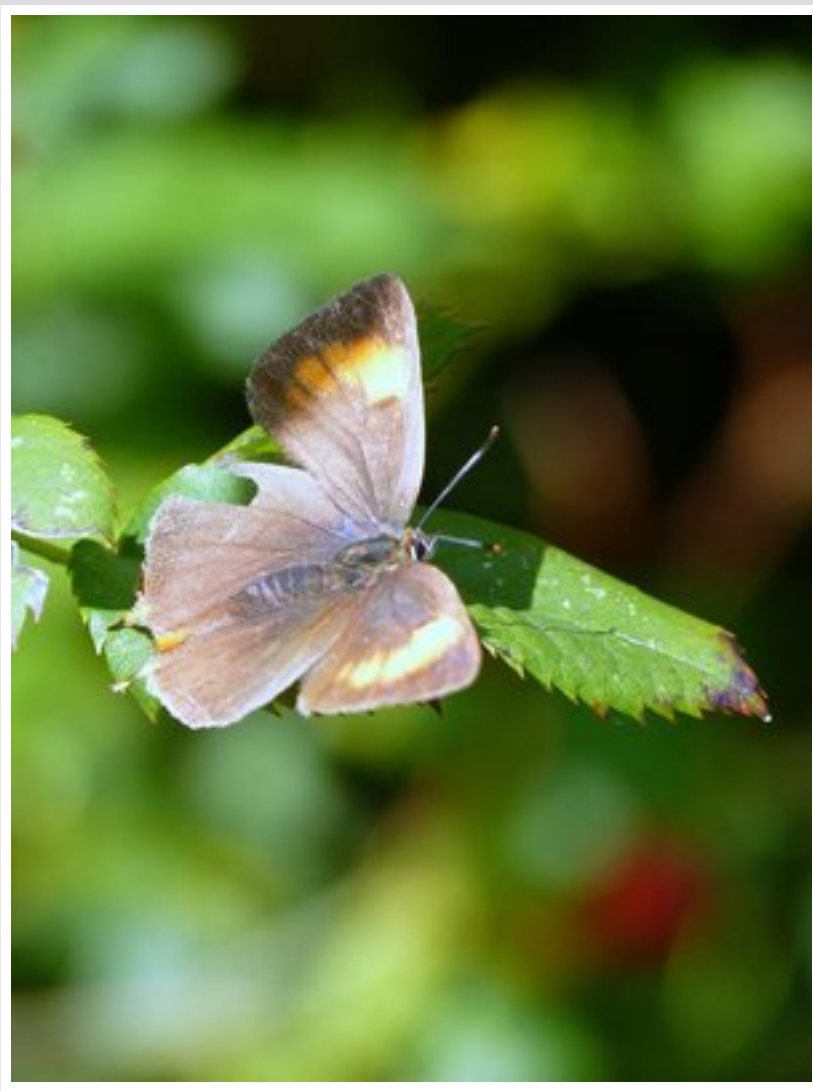
I do love to see brimstones after a long dark winter .

not half as much as that Brimstone loved seeing you i'll bet.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 23-Sep-12 07:14 AM GMT

Probably my last brownies of the year



and a comma



Re: Susie

by essexbuzzard, 23-Sep-12 07:52 AM GMT

i'm jealous Susie,i haven't had much luck with BH. I didn't think it would be warm enough today--clearly it was!

Re: Susie

by Susie, 28-Sep-12 04:42 AM GMT

Since Sunday there has been a very different feeling in the air, it's felt like autumn and my body clock is telling me it's time to fatten up for winter and hibernation 🤪

Despite that i'm still seeing the odd small white flying about. 😊

Re: Susie

by Susie, 08-Oct-12 12:17 AM GMT

It's well into October and I am still seeing butterflies daily if weather permits. Numbers are dropping though, I only saw one comma and one red admiral on the buddleia today.

At Goring (on the south coast) there were a few butterflies flying southwards. Perhaps taking the opportunity of the still mild conditions to pop back to the continent.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 22-Oct-12 11:58 PM GMT

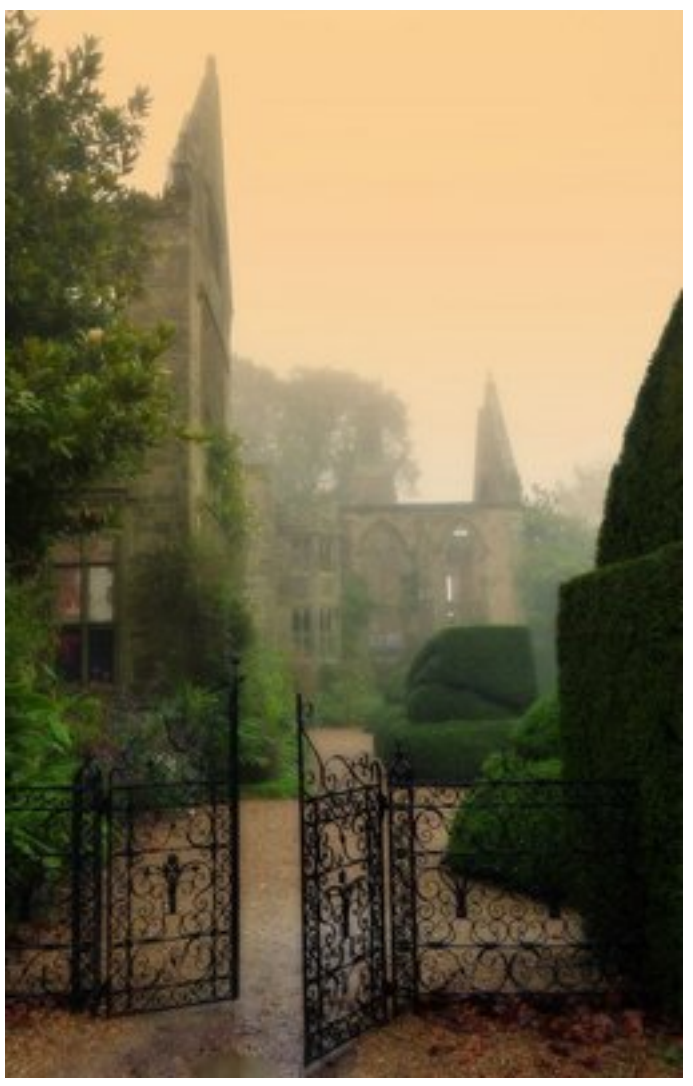
It's been pretty rubbish weather wise here lately and today was another dull day and quite foggy. I needed to get out for a walk so headed for Nyman's Gardens which is a National Trust property. There is a mock gothic house here which half burned down many years ago which is very atmospheric and beautiful gardens which are great for photos.

Autumn's definitely here as the trees can attest





I was looking at the sun dial and the beautiful wildflowers which had been planted around it which haven't yet died but are looking pretty sorry for themselves which I was circled by a red admiral! I really hadn't expected to see a butterfly today but it flew around strongly for a good few minutes before disappearing into the fog.



Re: Susie

by Susie, 25-Nov-12 02:09 AM GMT

This afternoon the Sussex BC AGM took place and there were three excellent speakers, Dr Dan Hoare, Dr Dan Danahar and Michael Blencowe. I was feeling very sorry for myself as I was very bunged up with a cold but it was an entertaining afternoon. I am sure that Mark Colvin will give a thorough break down of events in his diary so I will leave that to him as he does it so much better than me. 😊 I only mention it because I found Dr Dan (Danahar's) talk about 50 butterflies in 50 years, where he attempted to see 50 butterfly species in one year to celebrate his 50th birthday, quite inspirational and have decided to attempt something similar next year. Wish me luck! 🍀

Re: Susie

by Padfield, 25-Nov-12 02:23 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

I found Dr Dan (Danahar's) talk about 50 butterflies in 50 years, where he attempted to see 50 butterfly species in one year to celebrate his 50th birthday, quite inspirational and have decided to attempt something similar next year. Wish me luck! 🍀

You shouldn't have much difficulty finding 30 butterflies in a year, Susise ... 😊

Guy

Re: Susie

by Gibster, 25-Nov-12 03:59 AM GMT

Well if you click on <http://www.butterflyblitz2010.webs.com/> you can see how Sami and I managed during our Big Year attempt (a shameless plug, I know!)

Actually part of the purpose of our "Honeymoon Land's End to John O'Groats Walk" (raising money for Butterfly Conservation – see the tag underneath this post. Yet ANOTHER shameless plug, and the donations page is still live if you haven't donated yet, tut tut you! 😊) was pretty much an attempt to offset our carbon emissions from the 2010 blitz.

Given a decent bit of weather throughout the flight season (and a bit more time off of work) I'd positively love to give it another try, in 2010 we targeted ALL of the subspecies too which was much more educational than just ticking off the species. And it takes you to some seriously wild places! Our 2011 follow-up attempt fell to pieces pretty quickly for one reason or another, we never did get across to Ireland for Cryptic White and all of the endemic races. So maybe next year, but probably not until 2014.

And possibly sponsored...? Hmmm, let me chat to my wife! 😊

Cheers,

Gibster.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 25-Nov-12 04:15 AM GMT

"padfield" wrote:

"Susie" wrote:

I found Dr Dan (Danahar's) talk about 50 butterflies in 50 years, where he attempted to see 50 butterfly species in one year to celebrate his 50th birthday, quite inspirational and have decided to attempt something similar next year. Wish me luck!



You shouldn't have much difficulty finding 30 butterflies in a year, Susise ... 😊

Guy

Bless you, Guy, you're my favourite forum member 😊

Most years I can pretty easily see 35 species without a huge amount of effort, next year i'll be aiming for 43. It's not a huge ask but should still be interesting to me to see if I can achieve it given other commitments 😊 .

You do like your little projects, Gibster. Good luck with the next one.

Re: Susie

by Susie, 01-Dec-12 06:53 PM GMT



Re: Susie

by Susie, 12-Dec-12 06:50 AM GMT

Not butterfly related but still interesting to some of us. My husband gave me a shout at lunchtime as he had heard the buzzing of this bluebottle as it got caught in the web of a spider on our kitchen door. From the moment the false widow got hold of it it had no chance although it took a while to die. I've not seen a false widow active in daylight before. This is the latter part of the video.

[\[video\]www.facebook.com/v/10151364241661972\[/video\]](https://www.facebook.com/v/10151364241661972)

Re: Susie

by ChrisC, 13-Dec-12 02:54 AM GMT

great video 😊 your false widow looks like a zygiella x-notata. one of the few orb weavers active in these temperatures.

Chris

Re: Susie

by Susie, 13-Dec-12 04:30 AM GMT

Also known as the winter spider, which is appropriate.

Thank you for the ID, Chris, I didnt think it looked the same as the previous false widow we had. 😊