

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Jan-12 09:24 PM GMT

It was lovely to see some sunshine yesterday and we enjoyed an afternoon walk, although it was crisp and a little chilly.

I was scouting for places to explore around the village and found some likely looking lanes which I will explore further later in the spring.

No sightings as such but we did see a cherry blossom tree in flower 🤔

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Nick Broomer, 04-Jan-12 05:03 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

There is a winter flowering Cherry tree called, Prunus x Subhirtella Autumnalis Rosea. It flowers from November through to March.

Nick.

P.S. hope you have settled in ok.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-Jan-12 08:47 PM GMT

Hi Nick,

Ah, that's the one. It has quite narrow petals and looks exactly like the one I saw. Thanks for that, I didn't know you could get winter flowering varieties!

Settled in, yes, unpacked everything, no 😊

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Jan-12 02:08 AM GMT

Small White seen in London!

Remarkably, a white butterfly was reported to me, seen in Westbourne Grove, London W2 today.

From the phone photo I think it is a Small White.



I have no way of knowing but given the recent dip in temperatures I can only assume it had pupated inside somewhere and the warmth has sped up emergence.

I suppose it could have emerged in the recent double digit warm spell and have survived until today, with London being a few degrees warmer and maybe the chrysalis was in full sun. Or as a long shot, seeing as it was found near an organic food supermarket chain, maybe the chrysalis was brought in from the field and hatched indoors. Who knows!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Jan-12 02:36 AM GMT

Pilgrims Way

Spurred on by the Small White sighting earlier today and seeing as I was at home waiting for the gas man, with boiler duly serviced I went for my first

longer walk around my new home.

I walked 2 miles west and back along the Pilgrims Way towards Kemsing. By the time I had set off it had clouded over a bit although it did brighten up a little.



Looking south west towards Sevenoaks



Looking east towards Wrotham

There was buddleia, brambles, nettles, mature hedges, trees and shrubs, woodland, farmland, rough pasture and excitingly what appears from a distance to be chalk grassland with and without scrub, all within walking distance. Most of those habitats will have to wait for another walk though as today I stayed on the track apart from venturing into a field every now and then. At the edge of one field there was 50m of young 1m blackthorn trees in a set aside area, so I tried my luck for eggs but with no success.

I did add several bird species to those seen in and around Wrotham since I've been here though with a flock of 50+ Lapwing, Common Gull, Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Mistle Thrush and Long Tailed Tit.

I disturbed the Woodpecker from a fallen tree and it seems he had been busy taking full advantage – all of these holes must have been made by him.



Re: Lee Hurrell

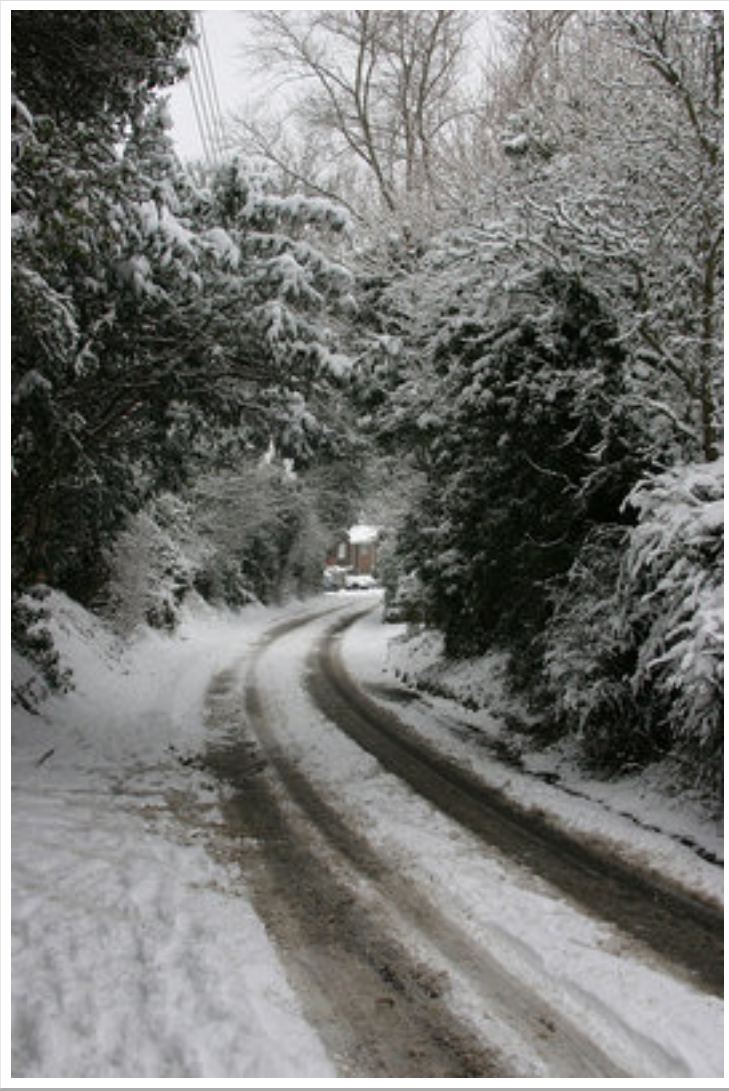
by Lee Hurrell, 17-Feb-12 04:21 AM GMT

Sunday 5th February

The snow came thick and fast on Saturday evening and driving home was, ahem, eventful. 😬

But we did see the ghostly white of a Barn Owl on Seal Chart near Sevenoaks 😊

This was the end of my road on Sunday morning.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Feb-12 04:39 AM GMT

Kitchen Entomology – Monday 13th February

I learnt something yesterday.

I was somewhat surprised when a small Noctuid flew in the open kitchen window on Monday evening while I was cooking, (Thai green curry – it was hot!). Wondering why it would be flying at this time of year I consulted Waring and Townsend and in searching through the possibilities, I opted for The Chestnut, *Conistra vaccinii* as the most likely given size and pattern and crucially, *flight times*.

While searching though the species notes, it seems The Chestnut, and several of its' relatives overwinter as adults! I had no idea some moths did this as well, but given that certain butterflies have evolved to do so, it is perhaps not that surprising. Anyway, a welcome early sighting 😊





Re: Lee Hurrell

by David M, 17-Feb-12 05:45 AM GMT

Nice encounter, Lee.

I've often wondered how moths seem to cope with cold better than butterflies. I know many of them are night fliers but when it's down to -5 I'd expect both to be equally vulnerable.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Feb-12 05:26 PM GMT

So would I, David, particularly with November, December, Winter and Early moths, they must have to endure some extreme temperatures at times!

The book did say that these species will come to light on mild winter nights and we haven't had a frost since the weekend now and it's probably a good 15+ degrees warmer than the overnight lows last week so that may well be why it was active.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by MikeOxon, 17-Feb-12 07:54 PM GMT

In response to a previous thread about the TV programme "FrozenPlanet" (viewtopic.php?f=1&t=5848&start=20#p53368), I did a little reading and learned the following:

"MikeOxon" wrote:

My wife showed me a textbook on insect entomology (*Gullan & Cranston*), which describes the amazing array of mechanisms that enable insects to survive Arctic conditions. Apparently, there is a Himalayan glacier midge which remains active at an air temperature of -16°C !

There are ice-nucleating agents, which allow 'safe' freezing of the blood, gut, and some other areas. Other agents gradually dehydrate cell contents, so that these cannot freeze. Antifreeze proteins may also be produced, to provide protection throughout the freezing and thawing processes.

Mike

Moths seem to have more adaptations to cold climates than do butterflies.

Mike

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Feb-12 08:35 PM GMT

Thanks Mike.

If I had to guess I would have said it had something to do with built in anti-freeze, as you say.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Mar-12 06:15 AM GMT

25th February

Pilgrim's Way, Wrotham



St George's churchyard, Wrotham



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Mar-12 06:03 PM GMT

Thursday 8th March

I had to wait while my car had an MOT today in Strood so I took a camera. I had a lovely walk along the river Medway and took loads of photos of

insects and birds, none of which were usable as I had the camera stuck on the wrong setting 😞

This was about the only good one.



I did add Mute Swan, Mallard, Coot, Cormorant, Linnet (I think) and surprisingly, Oystercatcher and (again, I think) Bar Tailed Godwit to the list of birds seen in Kent since I've been back.

MOT duly passed I had the afternoon free and so set off near home. I wanted to explore some downland above the Pilgrim's Way I'd seen on the map. I found it ok but boy was it steep! It reminded me of Heyshott but was sadly being very encroached by scrub. Where it was clear the habitat looked ideal and I will be back to see what may be found here.

No butterflies seen today but no matter, there was plenty of other wildlife on offer.

I got the closest I've been to a wild fox (the ones I saw regularly in Greenford were urban foxes, really). I must have been downwind as soon as she saw me she was off. The male had already scarpered.



I hadn't come across coltsfoot before.



Or this amazing fungus.



In this photo, Wrotham is in the distance and Pilgrim's Way is the hedge on the right. I also explored the area above the scrub above top left and as well as being much more accessible it also looked ideal for later in the year – there was loads of wild strawberry for instance.... 😊



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Mar-12 06:13 PM GMT

Saturday 10th March – Spring Awakens

With sunshine and mild temperatures forecast I had a feeling this weekend would bring my first butterfly of the year.

Each week the plants are moving on with nettles and others coming back and the ground becoming more green. Things are looking a little more spring like although it does generally still look like end of winter with last year's dead growth still hanging there. It won't be long though.

In the end I'd only been gone about 10 minutes when this Peacock flew from my path 😊



I watched it for a while and then let it be.

First sightings:

2010 - Red Admiral (15th March)

2011 - Red Admiral (12th March)

2012 - Peacock (10th March)

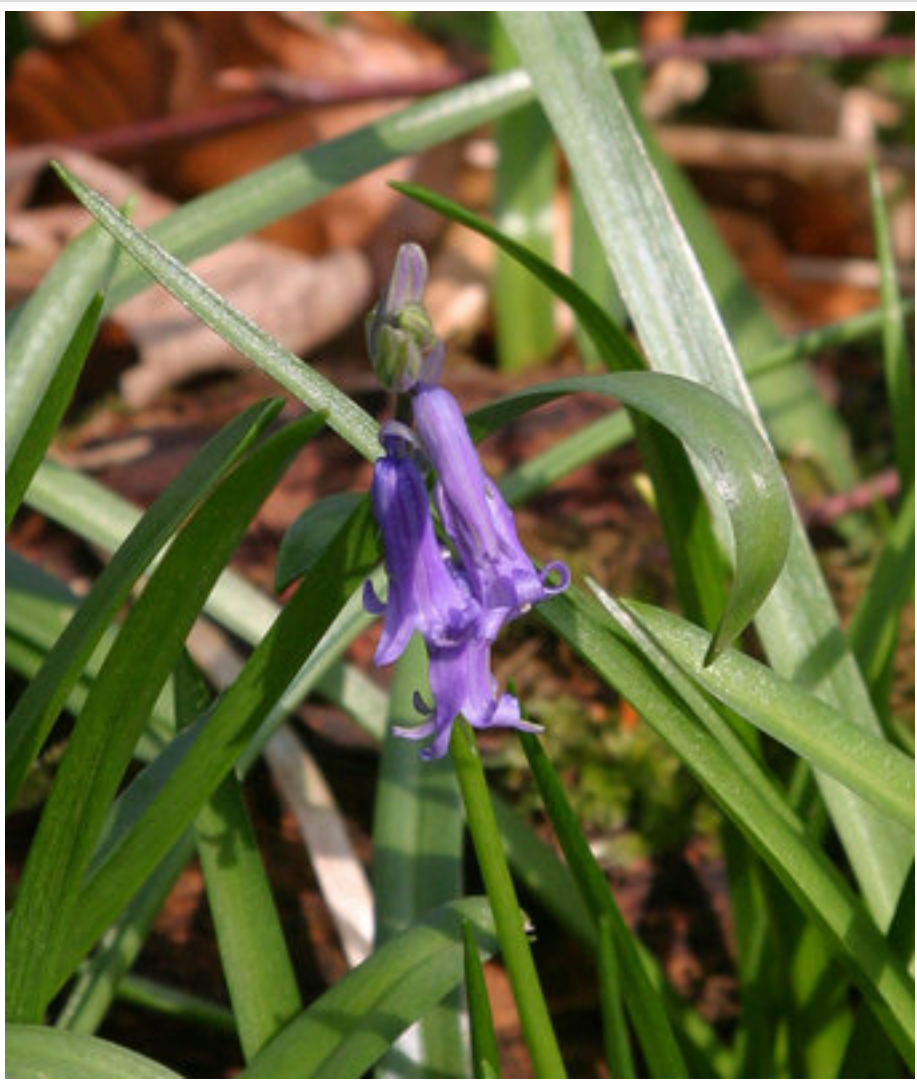
Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Mar-12 01:29 AM GMT

Sunday 11th March

The sun and warmth was still evident today and I had an exploratory walk on the downs directly above Wrotham, primarily in and around Butts Hill Wood. It was a bit disappointing, in that all the footpaths were either fenced off, completely enclosed, very steep, or all 3.

However, the views reaching to the Weald would be stunning on a clear day, and it would be worth coming back to see the bluebells when they are in full bloom. The first few were just showing.



Above the wood it opened up into farmland although there were a few promising looking areas.



Lesser Celandine.



I also saw no butterflies today, which was a surprise, but they are all still to come 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by David M, 19-Mar-12 04:34 AM GMT

Amazing that there should be flowering bluebells on March 18th.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Mar-12 05:47 AM GMT

This was last Sunday – March 11th!

I've had computer problems all week at home with crash after crash and haven't been able to post 🙄

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Nick Broomer, 19-Mar-12 05:49 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

I`ve just caught up with your diary [i`m busy decorating, but i`m still not going fast enough for the wife`s liking, even though i`m working every weekend 😞]

I see you have been busy checking out the area around your new home for future summer days butterflying, sounds very promising.

Thats a lovely picture of the Peacock, and that Fox is even better. 😊

All the best,

Nick.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Mar-12 05:29 PM GMT

Thanks, Nick, for your kind comments. Much appreciated 😊

I have indeed been exploring and have a lot more to do. I am very excited about the upcoming season.

Good luck with your decorating – best to get it out of the way now before the season really kicks off I reckon.

Best wishes

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-Mar-12 03:30 AM GMT

I had a lovely 3 hour walk along Pilgrims Way and back along the downs this afternoon. Crazy weather again, shorts and T-shirts. Are we in for another early spring season again I wonder?

Things have moved on quite a bit since my first butterfly of the year, a Peacock 2 weeks ago, perhaps not so surprising with the recent warm spell.

In total, I saw 14 Peacocks, 3 Commas, 1 male Brimstone and surprisingly, 11 Small Whites.

There were violets everywhere we went – I have never seen so many. There were different colours too, ranging from deep violet to lilac, right through to white. This looks good for Dark Green Fritillaries later in the year. I know they are found in profusion nearby and there is another site a couple of miles away where they can be seen by the hundred.



Lilac Violet



White Violet

4 buzzards wheeling in the thermals above the hills and several chiff chaffs calling rounded off a lovely walk.



Some of the downs above Pilgrim's Way

Later I did a bit of exploring in the car locally and after lunch in the George and Dragon in Ightham, where Guy Fawkes is rumoured to have hatched his gun powder plot and was also arrested after it failed, I found the charming village of Basted and some good looking footpaths to explore another day.

In driving along the lanes around Ightham, I inadvertently found the site my uncle took me to some 20 odd years ago where I saw my first ever Green Hairstreak. I didn't see another one until 3 years ago.

I really wanted to find this place again, if only for my memories. It's only a thin strip of meadow surrounded by trees and I have no idea if they are still there. But I will be checking 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Wurzel, 25-Mar-12 06:27 AM GMT

Good luck with getting your pc sorted as I'd love to see the photos that would have accompanied the post 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-Mar-12 09:13 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel.

The butterflies weren't stopping for photos today but I do have some of the violets.

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Mar-12 09:44 PM GMT

Sunday 25th March

The sun took until 1pm to burn through the low cloud today and when it did I tried somewhere else new; Trosley Country Park, just along the north downs from home.

A Comma settled on the front window of the house as we set off.

Trosley is a 170 acre site of woodland and chalk downland, part of which is a SSSI. It used to be part of Trosley Towers estate but is now managed by Kent County Council.

It holds Dark Green Fritillary, Chalkhill Blue, and Skippers both Grizzled and Dingy, so will be well worth a repeat visit or two.



One of the walks from the car park

In the end, today didn't reach the warmth of yesterday and there was a chilly wind blowing on the slopes and we had no sightings.



View along the downs looking east, perhaps showing the cloud that had kept the east of Kent even colder

In a warm sheltered spot though I saw 2 Commas, the only butterflies of the trip.

Like yesterday, violets were everywhere and the views were stunning.



The view from the top of the slopes



A fallen tree in the woods that had kept growing

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Mar-12 09:46 PM GMT

Monday 26th March

My first 2 Holly Blues of the year in Twyford Crescent Gardens, Acton, at lunchtime.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Apr-12 09:25 PM GMT

Sunday 1st April

A visit to another new site first today – Dene Park, a fairly large Forestry Commission wood about 10 minutes south from me, through Ightham on the A227. It's quite a young wood, having been regenerated after the big storm of 1987. This is somewhere I'll be coming back to later in the year going by the reports. I noticed a lot of willow and honeysuckle...



One of the rides

Despite it being warm enough for a T-shirt, I didn't see a single butterfly. 4 Orange Underwings and several Chiff Chaffs calling being the only sightings (or hearings) of note.



One of the Orange Underwings

I also got lost, despite following a map (I usually always carry a map, particularly for a new site). Not badly, but I ended up back at the car park when I thought I was still over the other side of the wood! Having not seen anything, I decided to try somewhere else and noticed my first cuckoo flower as I drove out of the car park, a good omen for what was to come.

Back near home, I walked through the small field above the Pilgrim's Way before the expanse of downland. This field has so far produced my first sightings of Peacock, Comma, Brimstone and Small White this year.

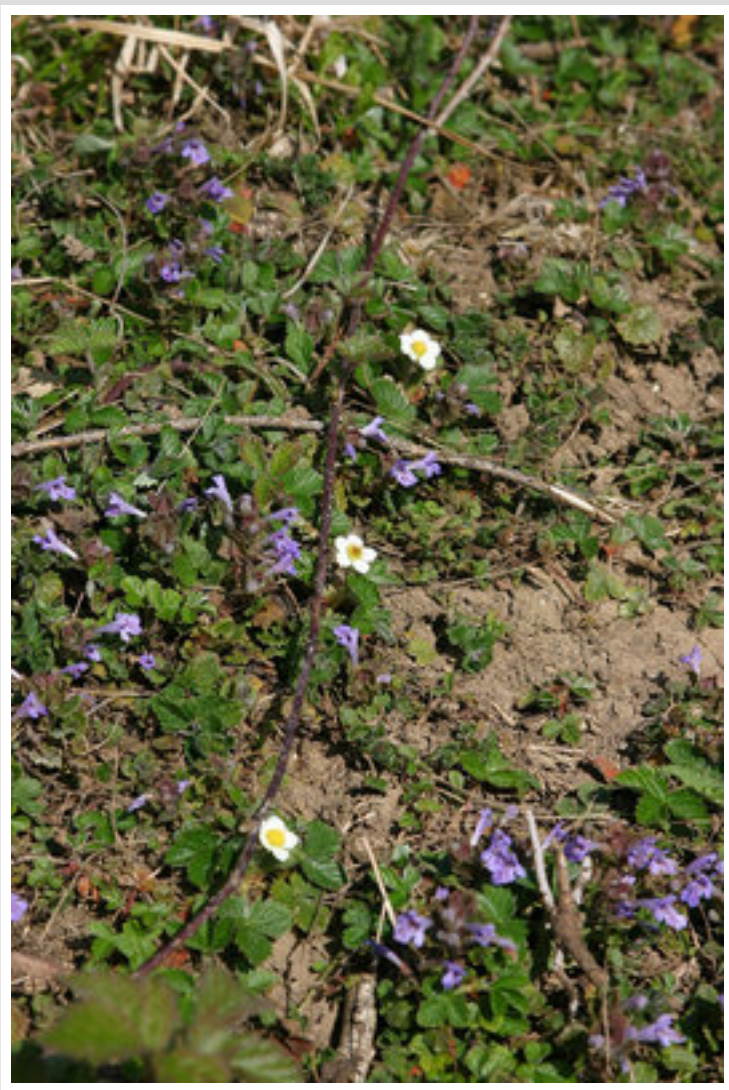
Almost immediately my first male Orange Tip of the year flew past me and lifted my spirits. I saw 2 other males, 8 Small Whites and 2 Peacocks here.

Another Small White seen on Pilgrim's Way and then up onto the hills.

I wanted to check where I hope Grizzled Skipper may be found but I didn't see any. I had a good look though and found several expanses of a purple flower I didn't know and some big patches of wild strawberry. I'll keep checking.



Unknown purple flower



Wild Strawberry

The habitat looks good but of course they may not be there.



Grizzled habitat?

4 Small Whites, a pair of Jays and a pair of Mistle Thrushes being the only sightings.



Closer than you usually get to a Mistle Thrush

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Apr-12 01:48 AM GMT

Photos added above

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-12 06:31 AM GMT

Alright Lee – I too haven't had any luck yet with Grizzlies 😞 But there should be plenty of time...if we can get the weather 😞
The shot of the Mistle Thrush is great as you can really see the grey splotches that can be used to differentiate from Song.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 07-Apr-12 05:04 PM GMT

purple plant from its habit reminds me of ground ivy Lee.
chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Apr-12 05:45 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel and Chris.

It's surprising how much bigger of the two the Mistle Thrush is. I saw this one from a distance first and carefully got closer and it wasn't until I checked the photos I was confident what it was, it seemed so large. Also longer and sleeker in appearance.

Chris, I've looked ground ivy up, that's it I think! There were massive patches of it, all close to the ground. Does anything feed on it?

Thanks

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Apr-12 08:15 PM GMT

Friday 6th April – Part 1

I decided to try a known site for Grizzled Skipper close to home today. I've visited Kemsing Downs many times over the years and know the site well. Growing up not far away in Sevenoaks, I would visit with my uncle when I was younger and saw my first ever Chalk Hill Blues, Brown Argus, Grizzled and Dingy Skippers here, many years ago. Green Hairstreak is also present. In more recent years if I was passing I would stop by for a quick visit.

Part of the North Downs Way runs through the site and The Pilgrim's Way runs below it. It's one of those places with 180 degree views south and so tranquil I sometimes just sit at the top and watch the world go by below me, busy with whatever it is doing while I bask in peace and solitude.

Shore Hill, one of the slopes, is where you can normally see Grizzled Skippers so I walked up to here first. The field directly below had masses of Cowslips just beginning to show.



Shore Hill is the open area top right. The larger field below was full of cowslips. This is taken from Green Hill

Green Hill, just along the downs, is covered with Cowslips to an even greater extent and a couple of years ago I even found red Cowslips. Chalk Hill Blues also fly here.



Green Hill is in the middle distance. This is taken from Shore Hill

Part of the downland is a Nature Reserve. In recent years however, much of the downland has been taken over by scrub and some of the woodland rides had become overgrown, dark and oppressive.



So I was delighted when I found the site much transformed from my last visit, with lots of scrub gone, areas cleared of trees and the woodland paths open, light and sunny. Fences had been installed and some earth moving had gone on.



Then I found out why.



This can only be a good thing and should help the site to prosper and protect the downland butterflies from declining. I will be writing to Kent Wildlife Trust with my approval and support.

The downs and woods were full of bluebells, wood anemones, celandines, cuckoo flower, primroses and violets.



On Shore Hill itself, there were a few large ant hills at the bottom.



Along with some multi-coloured violets showing both lilac and white.



Not many butterflies were about and I didn't find any Grizzled Skippers, despite a good search. First sighting last year for this site was 11th April and that was an early year, so I will try again in a week or two.

However, I was delighted to see my first 3 Speckled Woods of the year along with 3 male Orange Tips and a buzzard mewing over the hills.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 08-Apr-12 11:01 PM GMT

Friday 6th April - Part 2

I had intended to visit Trosley Country Park to try for Grizzled Skipper but wanted to get there trying a different route along the Pilgrim's Way. I found a NT place just out of my village called Wrotham Water, which had NT signs but I can't find any reference to it on the NT website. It was picturesque though. A couple of male Orange Tips were nectaring on violets along the lanes.

I parked on a bend and headed towards Trosley, I thought, along the North Downs Way. I was bit short though - after climbing the slopes through Hognore Wood I ended up on the A227 before Trosley and as time was getting on I decided to come back, leaving Griz Skips for another day. Another 4 male Orange Tips were flying about as I drove off and I stopped and got out to watch.

I couldn't resist a quick detour into the small field in the village on the way home. Here were 3 Peacock, 1 Comma and 3 Small White. This field has loads of this flower in it, which is really pretty - any ideas? You can see how dry the ground is...



Unknown Flower

And I was beginning to think I would only be posting landscapes this season.....



Peacock, Wrotham, 06-04-12

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Apr-12 04:39 AM GMT

Sunday 15th April – Nothing Ventured...

I wasn't free until about 3pm today and the sun had been in and out. 8 degrees when in but touching 10 or 11 degrees when out. The strong and chilly breeze nearly made me stay at home but I could see clouds coming over in big bands and I just had to get out for a little while. Plus I knew the south facing slopes of the downs would offer some protection from the NE wind...

I drove to Kemsing and walked up to Shore Hill, where the Cowslips were showing magnificently. No sign of any Grizzled Skippers on the slopes or in the sheltered spots though so I made my way up through the wood just as a light shower started. I sat on a bench surrounded by bluebells and wood anemones for a while as it passed and set off in search of roosting Orange Tips. I found more Cuckoo Flower than last week but no Orange Tips.

The sun then returned for a longer spell and I returned to the slopes and thoroughly searched but again to no avail.

At nearly 5pm I walked back to the car with no sightings at all. So I took some photos of leaf buds and blossom and set off for home.

With the skies darkening I then saw my first Swallow of the year, heading north 😊

That alone was enough to make it worthwhile. I then returned home to a massive hailstorm.

A few photos to follow.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Apr-12 04:40 AM GMT

Sunday 15th April – Nothing Ventured...

I wasn't free until about 3pm today and the sun had been in and out. 8 degrees when in but touching 10 or 11 degrees when out. The strong and chilly breeze nearly made me stay at home but I could see clouds coming over in big bands and I just had to get out for a little while. Plus I knew the south facing slopes of the downs would offer some protection from the NE wind...

I drove to Kemsing and walked up to Shore Hill, where the Cowslips were showing magnificently.



Cowslips beneath Shore Hill. Note incoming rain clouds...



A pink primrose

No sign of any Grizzled Skippers on the slopes or in the sheltered spots though so I made my way up through the wood just as a light shower started. I sat on a bench surrounded by bluebells and wood anemones for a while as it passed and set off in search of roosting Orange Tips. I found more Cuckoo Flower than last week but no Orange Tips.



Bluebells not quite at thier best yet

The sun then returned for a longer spell and I returned to the slopes and thoroughly searched but again to no avail.

At nearly 5pm I walked back to the car with no sightings at all. So I took some photos of leaf buds and blossom and set off for home.





With the skies darkening I then saw my first Swallow of the year, heading north 😊
That alone was enough to make it worthwhile. I then returned home to a massive hailstorm.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 16-Apr-12 05:37 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

so the hail found you too did it?

I'm not sure of the species, but your mystery flower is one of the fumitories. I'm on clay here, so don't get to see too many fumitories hence I'm pretty useless on telling one from the other unless I've a wildflower guide in one hand and I'm laying on my belly with the flower at my nose! 😂

Sure things will pick up again for you soon!

All the very best,

Seth.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-12 05:56 AM GMT

It's been one of those weekends for me too with no butterflies. Still put the leg work in now and eventually it'll pay off, at least that's what I've always been led to believe 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Apr-12 09:59 PM GMT

Thanks for the ID Seth.

Yes the hail was a good one, hadn't seen a storm like that for a while. Next door's cat wasn't too sure though 🤔

Maybe next weekend, Wurzel...

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Apr-12 09:59 PM GMT

I found a freshly emerged Angles Shades this morning, on the steps up from the platform at Acton Town tube station.

This is a species I normally associate with summer but there are actually 2 broods a year and can be seen during any month, although mainly between May and October.

I rescued it from harm's way and placed it on a tree stump in a green space over the road.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-Apr-12 07:15 PM GMT

Photos from last Sunday added above.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Apr-12 07:33 PM GMT

Saturday 21st April – Super Skippers

Watching the clouds come and go in the morning while I did some chores, by early afternoon I was itching to get out and during a sunny spell I nipped over to Shore Hill in Kemsing to see if any Skippers were out.

Just inside the gate at the bottom of the slope, one, then two, then three Dingy Skippers appeared 😊



There were at least 6, and I watched several dogfights as the males spiralled up into the the air and then disappeared. The sun came and went and I scoured the hillside for any more, or any Grizzled Skippers, but with no luck. All the Dingies were to be found at the base of the slope.

I did find this bee – one for Wurzel, perhaps?

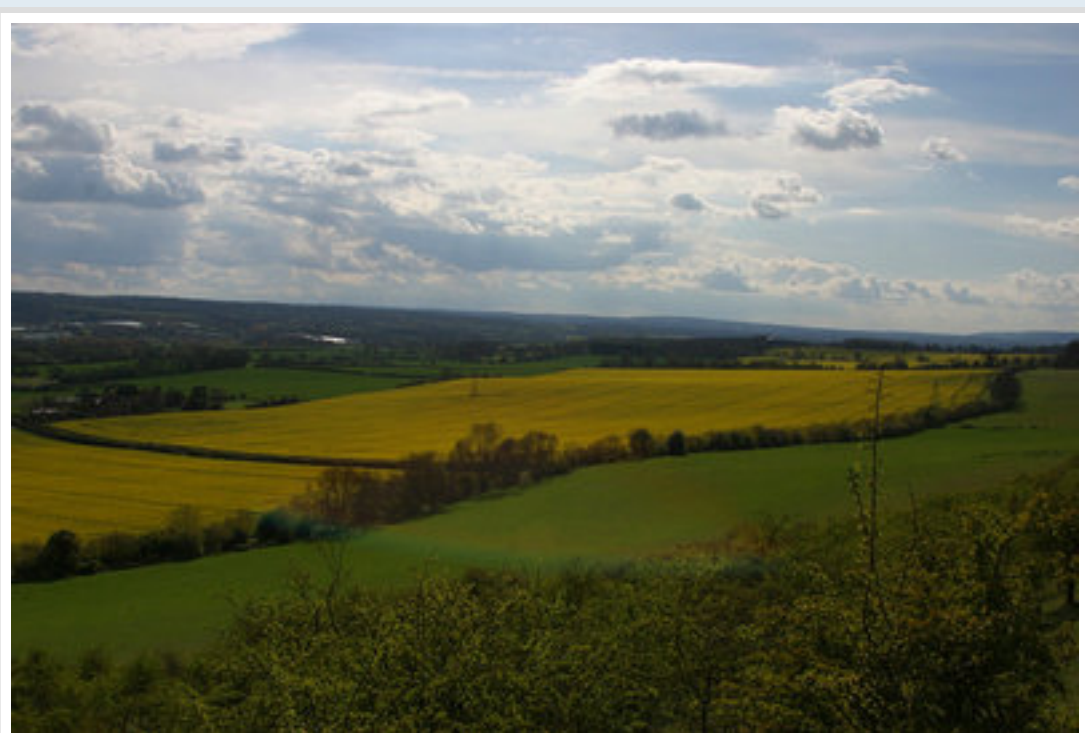


And this bee fly resting – I don't think I've ever seen one staying still before.



After about an hour, a few spits of rain and with the sky darkening I decided to go home. However – something remarkable then happened. The clouds blew over, the sun came out and stayed out! I was in the car by this point and back in Wrotham I headed for my local downs to the site where I had hoped Grizzled Skippers may be present.

I added a Small White in the field of plenty on the way along Pilgrim's Way and then up onto the slopes and into the scrub. It was lovely to see such a lengthy sunny spell and the downs looked beautiful as ever.



In a wooded area a Speckled Wood enjoyed the sheltered sunny spots.

I reached the site and had a look round. It still looked like many places I've seen Grizzled Skippers in past and there was even more wild strawberry than last time, and all in flower.

Nothing at first, and then a grey blur caught my eye – could it be...? It was! There were 3 in this one area, all basking in the sun 😊



I counted at least 5 over the site, maybe a couple more. I also saw my first Green Veined White of the year, a male, one other and a Small White.





Grizzled habitat – confirmed!

So I'd done it, I'd found my own Grizzled Skipper colony, not half a mile from my house. *This* is why I moved back to Kent...

I checked the Kent BC website and none had been reported from Wrotham over the last 10 years.

I can't overstate how happy I was to find them. I've had a truly awful past few weeks and today had put a smile back on my face. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Vince Massimo, 22-Apr-12 09:20 PM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

So I'd done it, I'd found my own Grizzled Skipper colony, not half a mile from my house. *This* is why I moved back to Kent...

I checked the Kent BC website and none had been reported from Wrotham over the last 10 years.

Excellent 😊
Well done Lee.

Vince

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Apr-12 09:41 PM GMT

Thanks Vince 😊

It's things like this that make it all worthwhile.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Neil Freeman, 23-Apr-12 12:42 AM GMT

Nice report and excellent find Lee, really happy for you,

Cheers,

Neil F.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by David M, 23-Apr-12 12:44 AM GMT

It must be particularly satisfying when you visit an area that you think might harbour a certain species not hitherto publicly recorded and lo and behold it DOES turn up.

Your instinct served you well, Lee. All those years of dedicated studying have elicited a nice reward. You have every right to enjoy it.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 23-Apr-12 08:57 PM GMT

Thanks Neil and David.

It was indeed very satisfying and I will be keeping a check on them now I know they're there.

I also look forward to exploring many more new areas nearby – who knows what might turn up 😊

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Wurzel, 24-Apr-12 05:05 AM GMT

A fantastic find Lee, looks like the leg work paid off 😊 Cracking shots too, the underside one is great 😊 I bet you're itching to get back there, I know I would be!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Ps I'll look into the bee...

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Wurzel, 24-Apr-12 05:11 AM GMT

The bee could be a Colletes probably daviesanus

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Neil Hulme, 24-Apr-12 05:19 AM GMT

Well done Lee. A self-found colony is worth three well-known.
Best Wishes, Neil

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-Apr-12 04:21 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel (and for the bee ID) and Neil. I have to agree with you there, Neil.

Yes, I can't wait to go back and see them now!

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 08-May-12 06:33 PM GMT

Free bus pass today then ... 😊

Have a great day.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Neil Freeman, 09-May-12 03:16 AM GMT

Happy Birthday Lee, hope you had a good one.

Neil F.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 09-May-12 06:19 AM GMT

Indeed. Happy burfday, Mr Hurrell 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by David M, 09-May-12 06:35 AM GMT

Joyeux anniversaire, Lee.

You can't be that old, surely?

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Nick Broomer, 09-May-12 06:42 AM GMT

Many happy returns of the day Lee, hope you have [or had] a good one.

All the best,

Nick.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Wurzel, 09-May-12 08:21 AM GMT

Happy belated B Day

Hope you had a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-May-12 05:35 PM GMT

Thanks all 😊

I've had a cracking birthday, well, last few days really. It started on Friday night and was still going last night 😊

No, not that old, David. By my calculations, I have 21 years to my bus pass...

Best wishes everyone,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-May-12 09:55 PM GMT

Things have been quiet of late, with personal reasons and the weather playing a part.

I think I've only seen one white butterfly in the last two weeks. I do have a little to report though:

Late one wet afternoon when the sun finally came out, I went back to check on the Grizzled Skippers but didn't see any at that time.

I've also been back to Green Hill and Shore Hill in Kemsing on a dreary day. No butterflies but I did discover Yellow Archangel in the woods, a very pretty flower I didn't know.

My first Swifts in London (last week) and in Wrotham (Mon 7th).

I was delighted to have a pair of Bullfinches and a Greenfinch in the garden weekend before last. The male Bullfinch was picking seeds from a dandelion head while the female watched on from a nearby perch. Two more new birds to the garden. I also watched a Greater Spotted Woodpecker from my back door this weekend. He was drumming away but made little sound – I think the wood was so wet.

On bank holiday Monday two of my neighbours and I went on a 5 mile circular walk on and above the downs near Otford. Once again the weather was rubbish but it had promised to cheer up a bit and it did brighten up eventually.

The route took us past some lovely habitat I'll be returning to later in the year; White Hill (Kent BC's flagship reserve) and Fackendown Downs. The main reason for the route though is to take in the breathtaking Darenth Valley. And it was stunning. On reaching the valley, as we sat on the slopes admiring the view the sun came out, almost as if it knew.

A magical place – I'll post a couple of photos later.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 20-May-12 10:50 PM GMT

Unfortunately, due to computer problems, I won't be posting any photos for a while.

On the plus side though, last weekend I confirmed the presence of Dingy Skippers at my local Grizzled site 😊

And even more on the plus side my Dad kindly bought me flights out to Spain for my birthday and I'm off this afternoon for some much needed sun, rest and hopefully a butterfly or two.

Back in a week 😊

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-Jun-12 02:59 AM GMT

Wrotham, June 2012



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 09-Jul-12 10:37 PM GMT

I have been quiet of late and there are many reasons, most of them personal. I have been through some major changes recently and continue to deal with the resultant fallout.

Suffice to say I have not been out in search of butterflies as much as normal. The weather of course has also not helped, with such a paucity of dry walking opportunities.

However, on Saturday, in intermittent torrential rain, I searched for His Imperial Majesty at Dene Park Wood near Tonbridge in Kent. I didn't see Him of course, although He does reside there. The all too brief sunshine did bring a pristine White Admiral down to see me, which made my day.

I also saw 3 Comma, 5 Large Skipper, 15 Meadow Brown and 2 Ringlet, the latter two species the only insects flying in the dullness. At one point I was seeking shelter under dense tree cover with an umbrella, trying to keep dry. The chap that walked past with 3 dogs gave me a strange look, unsurprisingly.

In recent weeks I have confirmed Common Blue, Brown Argus, Small Copper, Small Heath and Meadow Brown in the fields below my local downs. An old Peacock was still flying on the 17th June too.

My week in Spain at the end of May was great and it was nice to go at a different time of year than before. I clocked up the following species:

Swallowtail
Scarce Swallowtail
Bath White
Small White
Large White
Clouded Yellow
Berger's Clouded Yellow
Brown Argus
Small Copper
Geranium Bronze
Red Admiral
Painted Lady
Wall
Lulworth Skipper (surprisingly common)
Mallow skipper
Mediterranean Skipper

As before, photos will have to follow later.

This weekend I was surprised to see a pair of Ravens fly over the garden, their diamond shaped tail and distinctive call giving them away. Not a bird I've seen in west Kent before.

So I'm back, UKB friends. Be nice, I need you.

Lee

PS - I would like to thank Mark Colvin. He knows why.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Wurzel, 10-Jul-12 02:13 AM GMT

Good to see you back Lee 😊 Looking forward to the Spanish photos too 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Lee Hurrell

by David M, 10-Jul-12 03:02 AM GMT

Good to see you back on here, Lee.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 10-Jul-12 03:27 AM GMT

Great to have you back Lee.

Make sure you ask permission if you want to leave again ... 😊

Take care.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 10-Jul-12 03:42 AM GMT

It's great to see you back, Lee. Looking forward to catching up with you very soon. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Neil Freeman, 10-Jul-12 03:45 AM GMT

Welcome back Lee, looking forward to seeing you post your great photos again 😊

Cheers,

Neil F.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 10-Jul-12 04:16 AM GMT

Nice to have you back, Lee - thought about you only the other day when entering a deluge just by the Wrotham turning off the M26. Unfortunately the lovely countryside you've described was temporarily obscured...

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-Jul-12 06:06 AM GMT

Thanks everyone 😊

It's good to be back.

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gothic_dreams, 13-Jul-12 08:03 AM GMT

Hey Lee, your report was an interesting read and i look forward to looking at your photos from spain, always interesting to see whats about in other parts of the world 😊

Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Jul-12 04:21 AM GMT

Thanks Chris.

I need to get a new hard drive first but you will see them at some point...

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Jul-12 04:27 AM GMT

Sunday 15th July 2012

With today being a much nicer day weather wise, I once again went in search of His Imperial Majesty at Dene Park this morning. I didn't know, but there was a Kent BC branch outing there too, and it wasn't long before I bumped into several more *iris* hunters and then the rest of the crowd, all gazing skyward. We didn't see any though while I was there, although I did leave before the rest. I did learn where the hotspots are though and where He had been seen in previous years.

A single Silver Washed Fritillary as I arrived, 3 White Admiral, 4 Comma, 5 Large Skipper and 15+ Meadow Brown being my tally.

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Nick Broomer, 16-Jul-12 06:19 AM GMT

Nice to see you posting again Lee.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by essexbuzzard, 16-Jul-12 07:41 AM GMT

Yes all the best Lee, from your neighbours in Essex. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Jul-12 09:33 PM GMT

Thanks chaps.

It IS good to be back 😊

Best wishes

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Neil Hulme, 17-Jul-12 12:36 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Welcome back from me too. Let's hope your attendance record improves this term.

Best Wishes, Neil

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Jul-12 12:50 AM GMT

Thanks Neil.

I'll put in some extra work to catch up, don't worry.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 23-Jul-12 05:36 PM GMT

Sunday 22nd July

I had a lovely day today. I spent most of it in the sun, had 3 trips out, saw 5 firsts for the year, found another new colony near home of one of my favourite species and rounded it off by meeting up with Susie.

First up was Dene Park, once more in search of Him. I was unsuccessful but He had been seen earlier in the morning, hearing accounts from others I met. I did see: 2 male Silver Washed Fritillary, 2 White Admiral, 2 Red Admiral, 5 Comma, 3 Speckled Wood, 15+ Meadow Brown, 10 Gatekeeper (my first of the year), 1 Ringlet, 1 Large Skipper, 3 Large White and 4 Small White.

Later I walked along my local downs and was thrilled to see, along the entire length of the bits I walked, for about half a mile, at least 50 male Chalkhill Blues and 7 females. Everywhere I went they were there. It's perhaps not surprising they are present, given the perfect habitat, but it is another welcome species on my doorstep and made my day. I'd imagine this is also an unknown colony as I never see anyone up here, I know of no other reports and if you didn't know the village you wouldn't know the downs. Or how to get there really.

Also seen were 1 Red Admiral, 3 Comma, 25+ Meadow Brown, 3 Ringlet (another new species for home), 10 Gatekeeper and 2 Small White.

In the field I walk through to get to the downs I saw my first Small Skipper of the year (another new species for home), 5 Meadow Brown, 5 Gatekeeper and a Comma.

A Sparrowhawk and a Kestrel, both hunting, rounded off a lovely afternoon.

Later still, I'd arranged to meet Susie at Denbies. It was lovely to get out a bit further again; even though it's only 50 minutes from home, I think this was my first longer distance trip out this year. And of course it was lovely to see Susie.

As we stood talking with the sun setting behind us, Chalkhill Blues, Marbled Whites and Small Skippers all around us were finding roosts for the night.

Susie showed me some areas of the hill I didn't know and also found a mass roost site for Chalkhill Blues. One small area held many butterflies, with up to 10 together on a couple of adjoining grass stems.

Altogether, we saw: 1 Small Tortoiseshell (my first of the year), 25+ Marbled White (first of the year), 25+ Meadow Brown, 5 Gatekeeper, 1 Small Heath, 10+ Small Skipper (1 possible Essex) and 30+ male Chalkhill Blues and 1 female.

All together, a very nice day. 😊

Again, (hopefully some nice), photos will follow.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-Jul-12 10:01 PM GMT

Monday 23rd July

I just had to go after my local Chalkhills when I got home this evening. I didn't find a roost site but I did find a few individuals about to settle down.

In total I saw 2 male and 1 female Chalkhill Blue, 1 Comma, 2 Ringlet, 4 Meadow Brown and 1 Small Skipper.

I could get used to walking on the downs in lovely evening sunshine.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-Jul-12 10:06 PM GMT

Tuesday 24th July

As I was home a little earlier tonight I had to go back. A surprise lay in the small field I walk through to get to the downs – a Marbled White, nectaring on buddleia. As far as I know, this is some way from the nearest colony and is another first for me at home. I was speaking to a Kent BC branch committee member recently about Kent sites for Marbled White and he suggested going to Dover...and then one turns up on my doorstep 😊

1 male Gatekeeper and a male Small White were also in this field.

I carried on into the large field below the downs and found a Comma basking on the hedge just inside.

Up onto the downs and Chalkhill Blues were more numerous than last night. I walked further this time and found a roost site at the top of a hill in a patch of long grass.

I also saw another (the same?) Sparrowhawk and a Kestrel, this one with its supper.

Another Comma was a few feet from the first on the way back.

In total I saw 15+ male and 5 female Chalkhill Blue, 2 Comma and 8 Meadow Brown

There WILL be some lovely photos to follow from this evening 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jul-12 09:48 PM GMT

Thursday 26th July 2012

My third evening trip this week in search of roosting Chalkhill Blues. I headed straight for the roost site and sure enough they were there again although I didn't have long left of the sun. But I had enough. 😊

10 male and 5 female Chalkhill Blue, 1 Red Admiral, 1 Meadow Brown, 2 Gatekeeper and 1 male Large White.

The downs are so beautiful in the evening sun.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by essexbuzzard, 31-Jul-12 06:07 AM GMT

Great stuff Lee, it's good to see you're getting to know your new area.

Chalkhill blues are wonderful, aren't they? They seem to be having a good year. On the face of it, that's surprising, but perhaps the wet weather has promoted lush growth of the Horseshoe vetch. We don't have that in Essex, I can feel a trip Kent, Surrey or somewhere coming up! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 31-Jul-12 03:48 PM GMT

Thanks Essexbuzzard. It's true I've missed a fair bit this season, but that means more to explore next year 😊

If you fancy a trip south of the river, I'd be happy to show you my local patch, plus I'm only a couple of miles from the Kent branch's flagship reserve (which I'll be visiting any day now!)

That invite extends to anyone who finds themselves in Kent, just send me a message.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Aug-12 09:26 PM GMT

Delighted to see my first live Hedgehog in many years having a bumble (thank you, Susie 😊) through the garden last night. I normally only ever see squished ones...

Friday 3rd August

With tonight being another lovely sunny evening, I shot straight up the downs when I got home. A female Chalkhill greeted me on the way to the roost site, where 3 other females and 2 males had gone to bed. 3 further males were at the Grizzled Skipper site a little further along and another male in was in Blacksole field, below the Pilgrim's Way.

In total I saw: 5 male and 4 female Chalkhill Blue, 1 Comma, 11 Meadow Brown and 11 Gatekeeper, some of which were still flying at 8pm.

It was another lovely late sunny evening.

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Aug-12 11:46 PM GMT

This morning I met up with Susie, Chris C, Philzoid, PJU, Mrs PJU, Butterfly Bill and Mrs BB at Denbies in less than promising conditions – at 10am it was lashing down. However, it was lovely to see those I've met before again and to meet those I hadn't.

But the cloud broke and throughout our 4 hours on site we enjoyed some lengthy sunny spells (and a couple of showers).

As the sun was edging out we made our way to the mass roost site underneath Steers Field and I cannot really describe in words the pleasure experienced in seeing so many Chalkhill Blues. I've never seen anything like it. They were everywhere. Clouds of them. I've never seen a field come alive with butterflies like I have today; the sun would come out and they erupted. It is a memory I will not forget. There quite a few aberrations and many mating pairs too. When people say 'you don't see butterflies like you did as a child', this is always what I had pictured in my mind. A truly magical experience.

A conservative estimate for the number I saw today in total would be over 1500. Given the size of the site there must be tens, possibly hundreds of thousands on the wing right now. It was at least an (again, conservative) average of 3 to 4 per square metre.

Later we met Nick (Hideandseek) over in the meadow where he had seen a couple of Silver Spotted Skippers earlier in the day. We soon found some more and we all had good photo opportunities.

We struck out on Adonis Blue though, perhaps just a little too early for this year.

My sightings: 1500+ Chalkhill Blue, 1 Small Copper, 10 Marbled White, 30 Meadow Brown, 25 Gatekeeper, 1 Small Heath, 8 Silver Spotted Skipper, 10 Small Skipper and 1 Large White. Some of the group also saw Essex Skipper and 1 male Common Blue.

It was lovely to see everyone again on what turned out to be a fantastic trip to Denbies – my thanks to Susie for organising it.

As is the way right now, photos to follow.

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-Aug-12 06:29 AM GMT

Sunday 5th August

Chores done this morning and with the afternoon looking nice and sunny, I again walked my local downs. I was curious to see if the numbers of Chalkhills reported by Neil and those I'd seen at Denbies were also going to be replicated at home. I'd counted 57 the last time I was here during the day, 2 weeks ago.

In short, the answer was no. I counted 6 males in the small field on the way to the downs and 25 on the hills. I'm not going to speculate as to why...Also in the small field were 5 Gatekeeper, 5 Meadow Brown, 3 Large White and 5 Small White.

Along Pilgrim's Way, 3 Comma, 3 Large White, 4 Small White, 3 Gatekeeper and 2 Meadow Brown were along the banks of Buddleia.

In Blacksole field I found another Comma, 4 Gatekeeper and 3 Meadow Brown.

Upon entering Battlefields to go up to the downs a lovely fresh female 2nd brood Holly Blue was dancing around the gate and posed beautifully for a few photos. A Comma (almost ab. o-album) was here on the way back down.

Up on the downs, I spent ages walking along and did see the 25 or so Chalkhills, including good numbers of females and a mating pair. Gatekeepers were common with 30 seen and quite variable in size. I also saw a mating pair of these. 20 Meadow Brown, 1 Ringlet, 1 female Large Skipper (I think this is another first for home), a stunning, fresh female Common Blue (unfortunately I only managed to photograph her underside), 5 Large White and 5 Small White made up a decent tally.

I was photographing a female Large White on Teasel at one point and felt a nip on my leg. I was covered in ants; on my shoes, in my shoes, inside my jeans etc. I must have been standing on their nest and they were understandably put out by this.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Aug-12 09:40 PM GMT

Monday 6th August

At 08.15 I saw what I thought at first was a Painted Lady fluttering about the platform at Herne Hill station, south east London. Luckily it settled before the train I was on moved off to reveal it wasn't a Painted Lady at all, but a Jersey Tiger moth. Surprisingly colourful in flight!

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Aug-12 05:56 AM GMT

Friday 10th August – The Return of the Peacock

An unexpected day off today (a quite serious and heavily debilitating bout of man flu) meant I could nip to Dene Park before my first doctors appointment of the day. I visited both hotspots but there was still no sign of big purple Him. I did see 2 Purple Hairstreak though so it was well worth going. 3 Speckled Wood and 15+ Meadow Brown making up the other sightings.

Outside my front door today I was kept busy with 1 Peacock, 2 Holly Blue, 2 Meadow Brown, 15+ Large White and 15+ Small White.

Later in the afternoon, having seen one Peacock, I figured there had to be more. And there were. In the field on way to the downs there is plenty of buddleia of all colours and in here were at least 6 pristine Peacock, 1 pristine Red Admiral, 3 Comma, 3 male Chalkhill Blue, 25+ Meadow Brown, 30+ Gatekeeper, 15+ Large White and 20+ Small White.

In Blacksole Field I found 1 male Holly Blue, 15+ Gatekeeper, 5 Meadow Brown, 5 Large White and 5 Small White.

In Battfields, another Peacock, 1 Comma, 1 male Common Blue, 1 male and 1 female Chalkhill Blue, 10 Gatekeeper, 5 Meadow Brown, 10 Large White and 10 Small White were present.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 12-Aug-12 04:43 AM GMT

Saturday 11th August

With the promise of fresh Adonis and sunny skies all day, a return visit to Denbies was very much in order.

As it turned out the Adonis are still to emerge and the sky did go a bit hazy but I still saw lots of lovely things. Chalkhills were still extremely numerous although perhaps numbers were slightly down on last week. There were loads of fresh male and female individuals so they are still emerging. I also found this odd looking female, later identified as perhaps ab. *caerumaculae*. (Thanks Roger).



Female Chalkhill Blue ab caerumaculae

There were fresh Brown Argus and Small Copper in the meadow along with the Silver Spotted Skipper.

A lone Dark Green Fritillary and 2 Marbled White along with my first 2 summer male Brimstones also being highlights.

And to cap it off, a pristine Painted Lady offered lovely photo opportunities back near the car park 😊

Sightings: 1500+ Chalkhill Blue, 8 Brown Argus, 1 male and 1 female Common Blue, 5 Small Copper, 5 Silver Spotted Skipper, 10 Small Skipper, 2 male Brimstone, 5 Large White, 2 Speckled Wood, 100+ Meadow Brown, 100+ Gatekeeper, 2 Marbled White, 1 Dark Green Fritillary and 1 Painted Lady.

A very enjoyable 4 hours or so.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Nick Broomer, 12-Aug-12 07:26 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

so you had an enjoyable day at Denbies, seeing a great variety of butterflies and ONLY ONE PHOTO, 😊 What did i tell you the last time i saw you, this is just not good enough 😊 No really, glad you had a successful trip.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 20-Aug-12 09:38 PM GMT

Sunday 12th August

The small field on the outskirts of the village containing the buddleia this afternoon held 5 male and 3 female Chalkhill Blue, 5 male Common Blue, 1 Holly Blue, 8 Peacock, 1 Red Admiral, 3 Comma, 3 Meadow Brown, 15 Gatekeeper, 5 Large White and 3 Small White.

Blacksole field had 3 male Common Blue, a mating pair of Common Blue, 2 male Chalkhill Blue, 6 Gatekeeper and 2 Large White.

Just 2 Large White were seen in Battlefields.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 20-Aug-12 10:05 PM GMT

Saturday 18th / Sunday 19th August

A visit to a friend's in Hampshire on the hottest weekend of the year was a lovely way to enjoy the sun. Visits to the villages of Hartney Wintney, Odiham, Hook and then boating on the Basingstoke Canal produced Red Admiral, Peacock, Comma, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Speckled Wood, Brimstone, many Large and Small Whites. There was also a *possible* Grayling on Hazeley Heath. The damselflies and dragonflies on the canal were stunning too.

I stopped off at Denbies on the way home, arriving about 6ish. Surely the Adonis must be out by now?

Well, not really no. I saw one male and a couple of possible females. Chalkhill numbers continue to decline but female CHB, Brown Argus, Small Copper, female Meadow Brown and Silver Spotted Kipper are still showing some fresh individuals.

Sightings: 1 male Adonis Blue, 25+ Chalkhill Blue, 5 Common Blue, 1 Holly Blue, 1 Small Copper, 1 Small Heath, 50+ Meadow Brown, 5 Gatekeeper, 5

Silver Spotted Skipper, 1 Small Skipper.

Unfortunately I missed Nick (hideandseek) who was there at the same time, but maybe next time.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by essexbuzzard, 21-Aug-12 05:46 AM GMT

Hi Lee,
If you want to see Silver-spotted Skippers and Adonis Blues, don't forget to take a trip to Lydden Temple Ewell Downs, near Dover, at the end of August. I will be going, as I have done for many years, and it's only an hour down the M20 from Wrotham. It's quite an extensive site, looked after superbly by the Kent Wildlife Trust. Maybe see you there!
In answer to your earlier post, I certainly do find my way south of the river, and it would be great to meet up, I would like that.
Cheers. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Sep-12 07:43 PM GMT

I'm just back from a lovely long weekend not too far from Barcelona. It wasn't a butterfly break but I did see several Long Tailed Blues, some other unidentified blues and the silhouette of a large Nymphalid while I was there.

Back to work today and on a visit this morning, at 9am in the middle of nowhere near Longfield in Kent, on large Ivy bushes in full flower, it was lovely to see at least 4 Red Admirals enjoying the nectar and morning sun.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 01-Oct-12 10:10 PM GMT

I had a lovely couple of hours in Richmond Park yesterday. I'd not been there before and was marvelling at the deer when I was surprised to see a Red Kite being mobbed, not only by crows, but also by parakeets!

Also saw just the one Speckled Wood.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by essexbuzzard, 02-Oct-12 04:24 AM GMT

A Kite being mobbed by Parakeets—that's a new one on me! I bet the Kite had never seen a Parakeet before, must have been some sight for all concerned!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 02-Oct-12 04:46 AM GMT

Their ranges now overlap a fair bit in the Thames Valley – I spotted a pair of Red Kites earlier in the year wheeling over the village here just west of Heathrow. The parakeets have been around these parts for quite a few years now – they are nearly as noisy as the aeroplanes.

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by David M, 02-Oct-12 06:09 AM GMT

"essexbuzzard" wrote:

A Kite being mobbed by Parakeets—that's a new one on me! I bet the Kite had never seen a Parakeet before, must have been some sight for all concerned!

I believe some of these Indian Ring-Necked Parakeet colonies number into the thousands.

I read once that the largest roost was 4,000 strong at Esher Rugby Club.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 02-Oct-12 09:18 PM GMT

I'd certainly never seen Parakeets do that before.

I have seen a Red Kite high above the college car park in Acton, west London and another from West Drayton train station, near Heathrow before.

Lee