

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Mar-14 11:08 PM GMT

It's exactly four months since the last time I posted anything – almost exactly four months between the last sighting of 2013 and the first of 2014. Yes, at last I've seen my first butterfly this year.

Saturday (8th) was brilliantly sunny, and there was warmth in the air too. I'd missed out on Friday by being at work on suitably warm day, but now there was a chance. After a leisurely stroll locally, I had almost given up, but on arriving home, there on the front wall of the building was a Small Tortoiseshell.



Later in the day I drove up to see a friend in Holmfirth in Yorkshire. On the Sunday, it was another beautiful day, quite warm enough to have lunch outside, and as we sat and ate, a series of Small Tortoiseshells passed through the garden, including two sets of amorous pairs. One stopped long enough on some flowering Heather for me to get a distant photo.



Today was equally sunny, but much, much colder – nothing appeared that I saw, but no doubt in more sheltered spots more Tortoiseshells were to be found. Home again now – hopefully there will be chances to get out locally during the week before the weather cools again.

Dave

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 11-Mar-14 12:31 AM GMT

Great to see you're off the mark Dave 😊 here's to many more (raising my Crafty Old Hen 😊). The first shot is lush colour wise and the second is a nice and unusual angle 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 15-Mar-14 11:05 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel – lovely to see them again.

Today I was up in the Rugby area with the full brood of boys, so we took advantage of yet another lovely day to pay the first visit of the year to Ryton. We stayed in the country park area, but on our gentle stroll around we came across six Peacocks, three Small Tortoiseshells, two Commas and one male and one female Brimstone. Unfortunately the ploy of offering small rewards for whoever spotted butterflies first resulted in several squabbles and frequent misidentification of a number of dead leaves. And there was no bonus for the dead rat.





Most of the Peacocks were congregating on one particular flowering prunus (or "snow tree" as Elliot decided to call it). The last one above was in contrast taking minerals from a muddy patch. All the butterflies were very active, and the nectaring shots were full zoom at arms length. This does capture the real feel of the glorious spring sunshine – which culminated in the colourful sunset Neil (nfreem) captured beautifully in the photo in his diary. We saw that too, but from the car somewhere near Southam on the way home.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 15-Mar-14 11:53 PM GMT

Hi Dave, lovely photos from Ryton 😊

Looks like you benefitted from the blue sky that I could see in the distance, unfortunately just that bit too far for me in the time I had available today...

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 16-Mar-14 01:00 AM GMT

Lovely Peacock shots Dave, places them nicely in their environs 😊 I wold have given a prize for the dead rat though 😊😂

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Mar-14 08:04 PM GMT

Thanks, Neil and Wurzel. There might have been more reward for the rodent if Elliot hadn't proposed taking it home and cooking it...

Sunday 16th March. On an absolutely brilliant sunny day, Elliot and I walked around the local patch for the first time this year uninterrupted by water. The paths were still quite muddy where the Colne had overflowed onto them, but the standing water had gone. We were out between about 1100 and 1230, and the first thing we saw was a Comma just warming up in the sunshine.



Gradually other butterflies began to appear, and by the time we had returned home we had seen eight or nine Brimstones (all male), five or six Peacocks and around the same number of Small Tortoiseshells.



Commas are always slower to emerge here after hibernation, and we only saw one other after the initial sighting. Near home, but too far away to identify for certain, I glimpsed what could well have been a Small White.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 16-Mar-14 11:40 PM GMT

More great stuff Dave 😊 I'd count the Small White 😊 Love the Peacock shot 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 17-Mar-14 03:58 PM GMT

#### "millerd" wrote:

Near home, but too far away to identify for certain, I glimpsed what could well have been a Small White.

If it was flying in a largely urban location, I'd be pretty certain it was a Small White. I saw one myself in Ewenny on Sunday, though it flew right by my car so I was able to rule out Green Veined.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-Mar-14 11:11 PM GMT

I think it was almost certainly a Small White, David. The local area hosts good numbers of both Small and Green-veined, but the former are always out first around here. So I shall count it, Wurzel, as you suggest!

Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-Mar-14 08:51 PM GMT

The weather forecast was spot on today, and on opening the front door at around half nine this morning gusts of warm sunny air wafted in. Screwing up my eyes in the brilliant light, I became aware that two Brimstones were fluttering around the front of the house – and both stopped to nectar.



It's a good time to grab a quick photo as they fuel up at the start of a long morning's patrolling. I had an hour or two gently walking around my local patch and many more Brimstones were in evidence, along with Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells and a few Commas.



I also counted three Small Whites, but photos were, as usual, impossible to come by. Several of the Small Tortoiseshells were investigating nettle patches, so a mental note has been made to look out for larvae in a few weeks time. No sign of any Speckled Woods yet, but I suppose if all the local ones hibernated as larvae rather than pupae, they'll be out later...

Dave

## Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 29-Mar-14 10:07 PM GMT

Hi Dave, great shots, I particularly like the Brimstones 😊 I have yet to see one settle this year 😊

No Specklies for me yet either, any time now I reckon going by the way this Spring is shaping up.

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-Mar-14 12:28 AM GMT

Good to see that you had a good day Dave 😊 I know what you mean about the Small Whites – I saw my first today but it wasn't stopping for love nor money 😊 Great shots I especially like the Peacock with the coiled proboscis 😊

Have a godun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 30-Mar-14 09:45 PM GMT

Thanks chaps!

Today (Sunday 30th) wasn't so sunny, but was probably just as warm. I repeated yesterday's walk and the first thing I came across was a Small White, which actually stayed still long enough for a record shot.



Soon I was seeing lots of Brimstones and Peacocks again, and one or two more whites. I found a patch of cuckoo flower, well advanced into bloom, and old habits prompted me to look for little orange eggs – but hang on I thought: I haven't seen a butterfly yet, so there aren't going to be any eggs... Then that all changed. Bumbling along the embankment of the J14 roundabout came the familiar flash of orange and white – the first male Orange Tip of the year. I watched it complete several circuits of a route about 300 metres long, back and forth, up and down. It stopped at least once a circuit, for the briefest of nectaring, so I tried to find the right place to wait. As it came round once again, it hesitated, and decided that this time it would not stop here, but up on the bank 50 metres away. Typical. And the spell was broken, as it made off out of the loop and onto pastures new over the M25 and into Berkshire. Anyway, surely the first of many more to come.

Peacocks predominated today, and I didn't see a single Comma.





One Peacock had major symmetrical wing damage – bird strike?



Another had wide pale circles around its hindwing "eyes".



There were a few Tortoiseshells around as well, on the dandelions as usual, and just before reaching home another white fluttered down in front of me.



This was the first Green-veined I had been able to identify this year.

Dave

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-Mar-14 11:00 PM GMT

Great news Dave. I seem to recall from reading your PD last year that over here in Salisbury we're about 4 or 5 days behind you so I reckon I'll have to keep taking the back route on the way home and keep my eyes peeled. That's a great shot for a spring Small White as they are rally active at this time of year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Mar-14 11:04 PM GMT

### "millerd" wrote:

Another had wide pale circles around its hindwing "eyes".

Lovely! That's an odd looking Peacock, nice find Dave.

Best wishes,

Lee

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 08-Apr-14 09:15 PM GMT

Thanks for the kind comments, chaps – there seems too be more variety in Peacocks than you would think, judging by some of the postings on here this year.

It's been a week since the last trip out, and I didn't have high expectations of my quick walk round the local circuit today. It was quite chilly (12–13 degrees maybe), breezy and not particularly sunny either. In fact, I saw only four butterflies – but they were all different species and three of them were new for the year. A wholly unexpected outcome.

The first one was spotted by Elliot, who asked what kind of blue it was – yes, the first Holly Blue of the year, which kindly fluttered down to perch at just the right height. The sun stayed in, so the wings stayed closed.



Next, Elliot disturbed a Speckled Wood, another first for 2014.



We came across a Peacock after this, investigating nettles on the other side of a fence, so out of range for any photos. Finally, walking through the sunny glade next to the River Colne which has been home to many interesting bits of Red Admiral behaviour over the years, we saw exactly that – a Red Admiral swooping and diving energetically in the same spot as its predecessors have done, year in, year out. A reassuring sight and another first sighting for the year.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 08-Apr-14 10:30 PM GMT

I'm green with envy, Dave. Just hoping that this forthcoming weekend will see sufficiently opportune conditions to observe these newcomers myself.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 08-Apr-14 11:31 PM GMT

In terms of envy I'm right up there with David Dave 🍷 I have still to see my first Holly Blue, Speckled Wood, Green Veined White and Orange-tip...still the season has only really just begun.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 09-Apr-14 09:06 PM GMT

Nice ones Dave 😊 not much out around here for the past week or so with the weather not being much cop. Still waiting for my Specklies to show up, maybe in the next few days with the forecast looking a bit better.

#### "millerd" wrote:

- there seems too be more variety in Peacocks than you would think..

Peacocks are not the easiest butterflies to tell the sexes apart but from what I have noticed during the past couple of years it seems to me that it tends to be the males that look to have the brighter eye-spots on the hind wings. I have also noticed a number with that extra little bit of blue that looks like it has spilled out from the eye-spot.

All the best,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 09-Apr-14 09:15 PM GMT

The weather looks reasonably fine for the coming days, so I'm sure you'll get to catch up David, Neil and Wurzel!

I had a walk with Elliot along the Thames Path at Runnymede today. Much sunnier and warmer than yesterday. We saw the usual suspects: Small Tortoiseshells, Peacocks, Brimstones, one Orange Tip and a couple of Commas, but nothing unusual.





The Small Tortoiseshells were mostly investigating new nettle growth along the edges of paths – right where they are liable to be cut down the next time a tractor-drawn mower comes along in a few weeks time. Quite why a four-foot footpath requires a fifteen-foot wide swathe cut for it, I'm not sure, but I suspect many Tortoiseshell caterpillars meet their doom in this way.

Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Apr-14 09:10 PM GMT

Another lovely morning, and we kept the walk local today. We were out between about 10 and 1130, and during that time it warmed considerably, and out came the butterflies as the temperature rose. Today was the day of the Speckled Wood, with no less than seven individuals seen. There were Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells (to think that a couple of years ago I waited until 1st July to see a Small Tortoiseshell locally), a Comma or two, three male Orange Tips patrolling and never stopping, two Holly Blues and one Small White. No Brimstones today, curiously.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 10-Apr-14 11:15 PM GMT

Nice images, Dave. Spring's definitely accelerating in your part of the world.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-14 11:43 PM GMT

Those Specklies look fresh out of the box and are great to see Dave 😊🍷 Hopefully I'll catch up with them soon.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-Apr-14 07:21 PM GMT

I seem to have got a bit behind here. I'll try and catch up...

Saturday 12th April – a day up in the Rugby area with all the boys. If the forecast had been more encouraging we would have ended up at Ryton, but as it was chilly and grey, we took advantage of some every cheap train tickets and went to Stratford. This involved a visit to the butterfly house, so all was not lost.



*Eumaeus toxea* (thank you, Guy!)

At the end of the day, I drove up to York to stay with my sister. It was even chillier up there! However, on Sunday 13th, we had a walk around Allerthorpe Common near Pocklington, notable in August for good numbers of Small Coppers in particular. Spring was noticeably less advanced up here, so no Coppers were around, but there were Brimstones, Small Tortoiseshells and a single Green-veined White. However, the headline act was the large number of Peacocks along the sunny rides. I initially thought they were just basking on the paths and muddy ground, but in all the photos I took, scrutiny showed they were taking minerals. Well, it was either that or dandelions for lunch again...



On the 14th, there was a bit more cool sunshine, and I spotted a few butterflies in my sister's garden, including my first Large White of the year, plus Green-veined and Small Whites and an Orange Tip.

15th was the day to travel back, and with the next three days at work, I was unable to make the most of probably the best days of the week. I finally got to walk round my local patch latish on Good Friday, hoping to find at least one roosting Orange Tip. Garlic Mustard is the favoured plant around here, but I've noticed that it is relatively abundant only every other year. 2014 is unfortunately the "wrong" year, and patches are few and far between. However, as luck would have it, I finally spotted what I was seeking. After a few shots of the lovely mossy underside, the sun decided to emerge for all of five minutes. This was just about enough time for the butterfly to wake up, stretch its wings, and set off for a few patrols up and down a small length of path. Other than this individual, a Small Tortoiseshell was the only other butterfly seen.



Saturday 19th. With the forecast for Sunday particularly dire, I just had to go somewhere today. I chose Totternhoe in Bedfordshire, as on a good day at this time of the season, it is possible to find several spring chalkland species. But the weather gods were conspiring again. Promising sun on the M1 turned into breezy cloudy cold by the time I reached the car park. Sunny intervals still looked possible, so I wandered gently over to the old chalk pits, and sat down. The sun peeped through, encouraging a solitary wasp to investigate holes in the turf. Following the yellow dot, my eye was caught by a different type of movement, and a more orange colour. Something had darted up and flown behind a stand of scrub. I walked around to the other side and there on the grass sat a fresh male Duke of Burgundy. It basked for a while in what limited sun there was, and then flew off behind the scrub again.







The sun went in, it became even colder, and I went back to the car. I was very pleased with this piece of luck, though the spot is a known haunt. Despite a good old look, I saw no Grizzlies or Dingies, nor a Green Hairstreak. The only other butterflies were two Small Tortoiseshells and an Orange Tip.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Neil Freeman, 19-Apr-14 09:31 PM GMT

Hi Dave,

Nice catch-up posts and some great photos 😊

I too have noticed a that Garlic Mustard is thin on the ground at some of my local spots, including my garden, and most of what is around is only half grown so far.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 20-Apr-14 10:42 PM GMT

Even though you didn't see many different species that Duke has to make up for it he's a cracker 😊🍷 I especially like the last shot 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by Susie, 21-Apr-14 08:53 AM GMT

So pleased you found your duke 😊

**Re: millerd**

by robpartridge, 21-Apr-14 09:20 AM GMT

Also agreed on the Garlic Mustard situation – thin on the ground in my parish and relatively late,

Rob

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 21-Apr-14 08:40 PM GMT

Interesting to hear from Neil and Rob that I'm not alone with a dearth of Garlic Mustard – at least it makes finding the roosting Orange Tips that much easier to find – as I shall describe again in a bit.

Thank you Susie and Wurzel for your kind words about the Duke. I was feeling under the weather, both literally and figuratively, and sitting in a chilly Bedfordshire chalkpit I did begin to wonder why I had bothered. And then there was the flash of orange followed shortly afterwards by the butterfly itself, and suddenly the day seemed worthwhile.

After yesterday's washout, I was back at work today and gazed out on warm hazy sunshine. By the time I escaped at four, dark clouds had gathered in both the south and the northwest, but I set off round my local patch regardless. I was met immediately by two Holly Blues and two Speckled Woods, but the early promise faded with the sunshine, and only a Green-veined White taking minerals from a muddy puddle provided interest.





When the sun went in properly, it lost interest in the mud and set off into a nearby field to roost out of sight. Only one option remained – would there be Orange Tips roosting on that patch of Garlic Mustard again? There were: two of them this time.





They weren't budging either – I think that though it was warm, what sun filtered through was too weak to rouse them. With lower temperatures, but stronger sun, I think they would have been active. One was finally disturbed by a Bee fly and eventually roosted again about 20 metres away in a relatively inaccessible spot.



There definitely seem to be favoured roosting spots – I have never had any trouble locating roosting Orange Tips – which is good, as I love them as a subject for photos as well as just a beautiful natural object in themselves.

Here incidentally is a typical habitat shot of my local patch... you do get used to them!



I was going to say something about Beefly followed by Flybe, but I think it's Malaysian Airlines, so perhaps I won't after all... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 21-Apr-14 09:39 PM GMT

By God, Dave, that aircraft shot looks like a crash landing!!

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 21-Apr-14 11:05 PM GMT

Cracking shots Dave – I need to find a local roosting site for Orange-tips if that's what it can lead to 😊 How you out up with those planes I don't know 🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

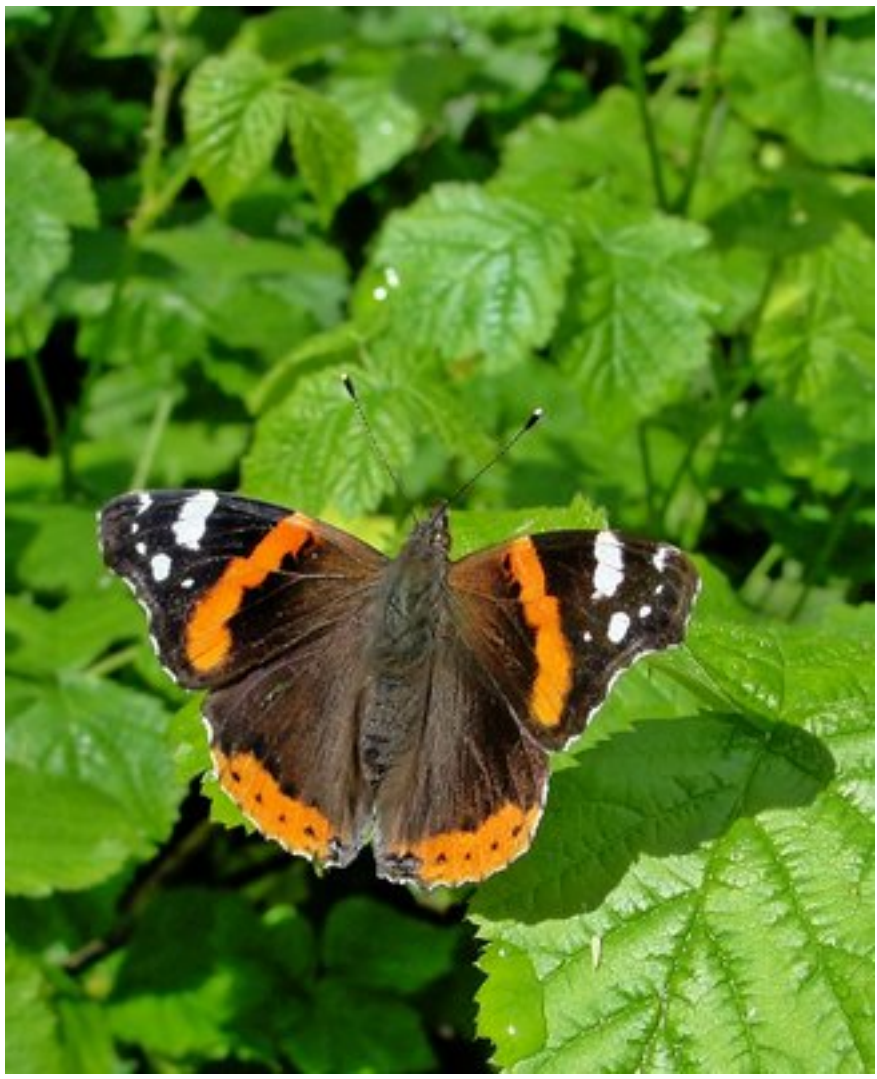
by millerd, 27-Apr-14 02:52 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel – more OTs to come, in fact at this time of year I think I go a bit OTT to be honest 😊. You do get used to the planes, and when the wind is easterly as it now is they are coming in to land over this side of the airport, and you hardly hear a thing.

**Saturday 26th April** – a typical sunshine and big shower April day. Luckily there were few of the latter and good spells of the former, so I was able to stroll in more leisurely fashion around my local patch. The route I chose today took in the sunny glade next to River Colne as the first stop. The nettles have grown hugely recently, and as I scanned for evidence of caterpillars I spotted a shiny blue patch up ahead. This turned out to be a basking female Holly Blue.



After posing nicely, it was disturbed by a flurry of other wings, which turned out to be a Speckled Wood and the latest incumbent Red Admiral fiercely disputing the territory.



As mentioned before, this spot rarely lacks a resident Red Admiral: this one was fairly new, and clearly wasn't the one I saw several weeks ago. As I left the sparring pair, a couple of Green-veined Whites trundled through and got briefly embroiled.

Next stop was Orange Tip country and didn't disappoint. There were a dozen or so in the area where I see them roost, plus nearly as many Whites, all of which appeared to be of the Green-veined persuasion.



Several Peacocks occupied portions of the path, and I found a solitary Comma (I've not seen one here lately at all).



The weather conditions (cloud, the sun, with a stiff breeze) seemed to cause the Orange Tips to settle more readily and the roosting patch of Garlic Mustard hosted a couple of individuals who nectared for some while.





Returning along the more open bits of riverside, more Whites were in evidence, and at least one was a female Small White which paused for a while in a cloudy interval affording a good photo opportunity.







Others turned out to be female Orange Tips, and one of these was ardently pursued by a male high into the trees. The other was solitary and again allowed a photo.



Finally, in the last few metres before reaching home, I reached a sheltered hedgeline full of ivy, holly and brambles, plus a variety of flowers in the grass below. Here were yet more Orange Tips and Green-veined Whites, and higher up Holly Blues. A female was extremely obliging with regard to opening its wings, but the intensity of the reflection of light from those glorious shiny blue wings defeated my best efforts at getting a Really Good Photo.





So – eight species (no Small Tortoiseshells or Brimstones today) – nothing exotic, but some lovely butterflies. I would not swop Orange Tips or Holly Blues for anything.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by David M, 27-Apr-14 03:04 PM GMT

Indeed, Dave. Open wing shots of male Orange Tip and female Holly Blue are manna from heaven at any time!

**Re: millerd**

by Maximus, 27-Apr-14 07:16 PM GMT

Lovely photos Dave, great Holly Blue open wing shots.

Mike

**Re: millerd**

by Neil Freeman, 28-Apr-14 07:54 PM GMT

Some great photos in your last couple of reports Dave 😊

I know what you mean about being able to block out the aircraft, a couple of my local spots are in the shadow of Birmingham Airport, in fact Sheldon Country Park is at the end of the runway and is a favourite place for plane spotters. After a while you simply don't notice.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 28-Apr-14 11:34 PM GMT

Those Holly Blue shots are lush Dave, I wish I'd taken some of those 🍷 😊 You can never have too many Orange-tips 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-Apr-14 08:06 PM GMT

Many thanks everyone for the kind comments! 😊

I had unusual luck with the second Holly Blue in particular, but often it's just going slowly, keeping your eyes open and expecting the unexpected!

Tuesday 29th April. The sun was out at six o'clock this evening, so I took a chance on finding a few more Orange Tips settled down for the evening around my local patch. I found two males, neither of them anywhere near the spot I'd seen them snoozing before. The low angle of the sun made for some interesting light, so there was some variety to go with previous shots. One of them wasn't properly settled, and set off for a brief flight, posing for a moment or two before choosing a less obvious roost up in a tree.





During the search for Orange Tips, I came across two Green-veined Whites hiding in plain sight on the abundant wild parsley.





They (and the Orange Tips) cleverly select plants that are relatively sheltered, yet keep the last rays of the setting sun and are well-placed for the first sunbeams in the morning too. Natural selection at work, no doubt.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-Apr-14 11:48 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the evening whites, the first Orange-tip is practically glowing in the sunset 🌅🦋

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-May-14 10:37 PM GMT

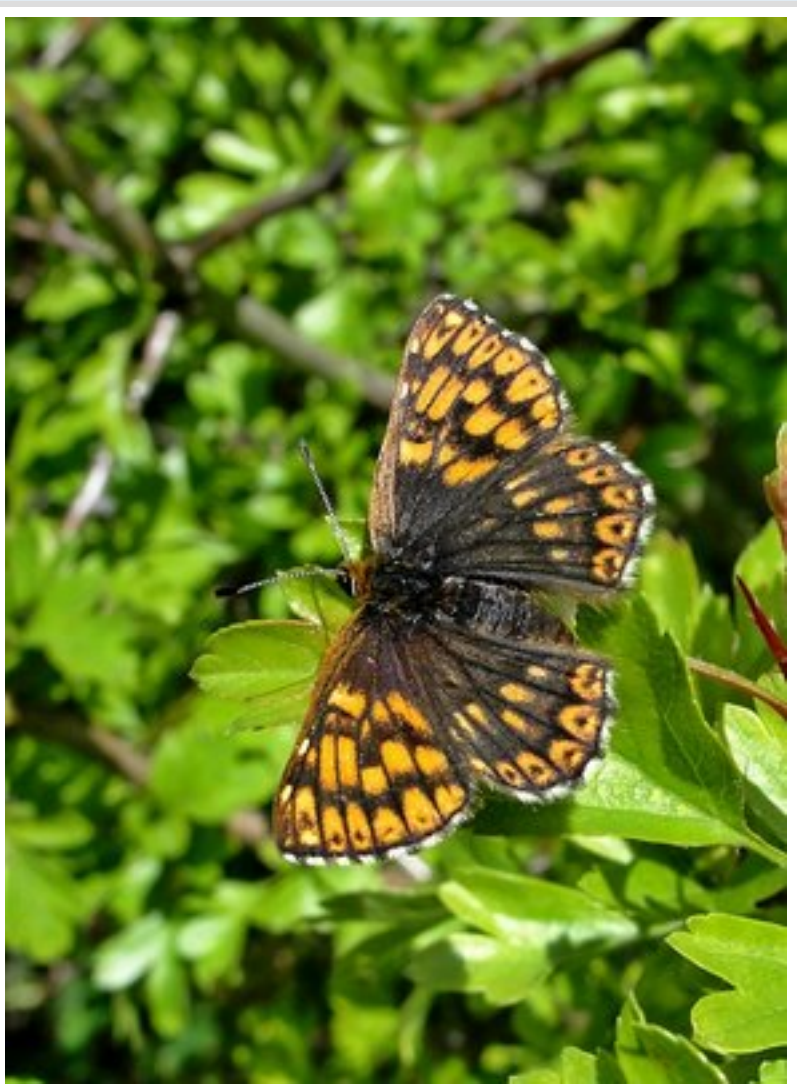
**Saturday 3rd May.** A sunny day! Just a bit chilly, but at least the sun would be strong.

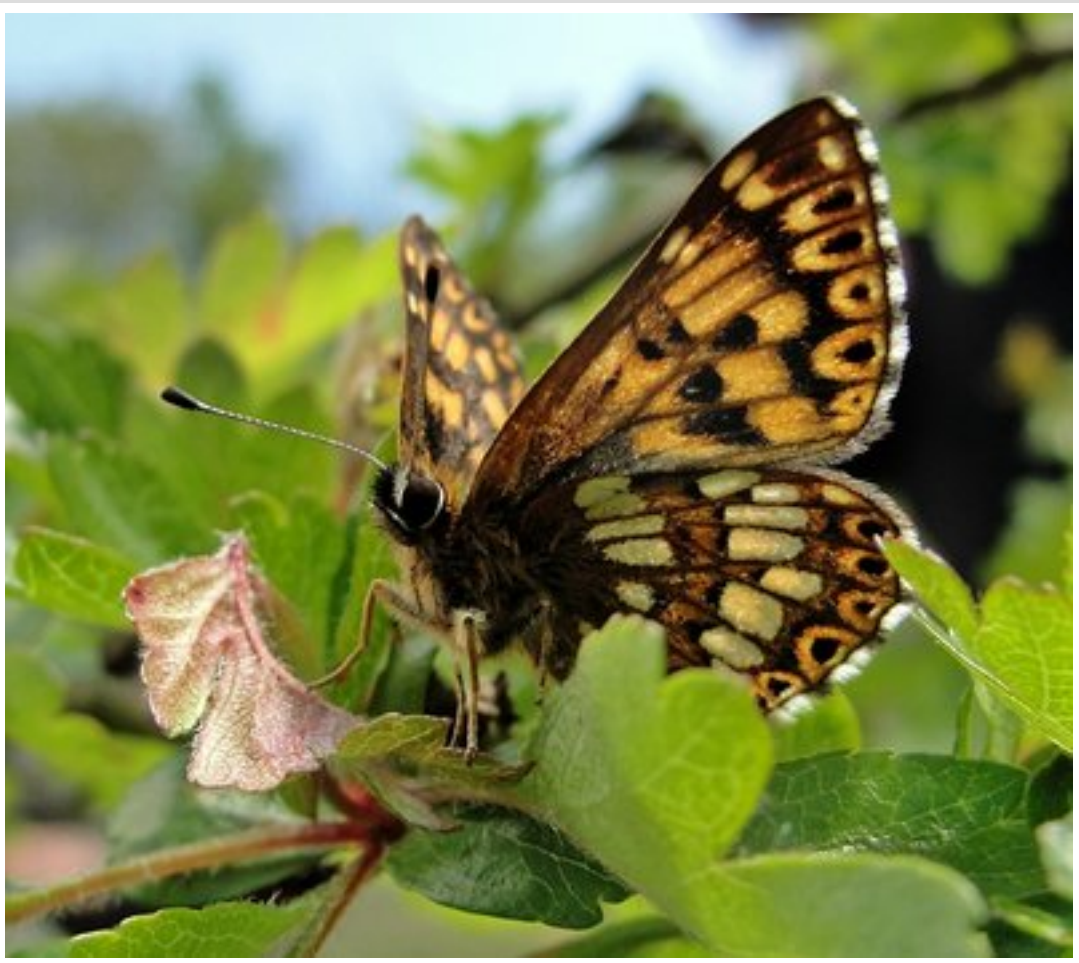


After encountering a Speckled Wood on my doorstep, I set off for Totternhoe again, hopeful of better results than last time. Before too long I had found a Dingy Skipper (my first this year), and met up with some like-minded people down from Derbyshire for the day.



We ambled along to the chalk pit where the Dukes can be found and met two more folk in search of the same goal. As the sun warmed up the ground, and stayed out for longer periods, we were treated with at least four, probably six or more, Dukes. They were very approachable, though quite active in chasing each other around, spiralling into the sky before plummeting back to earth. There was at least one female too, though she seemed to escape the attention of the males.





Returning slowly to the car park, there were more Dingy Skippers, a few Green Hairstreaks, and Orange Tips, Brimstones, Small Tortoiseshells, and Peacocks.



On the look out for Small Blues, I finally spotted one, but it eluded the camera by heading for an area cordoned off by virtue of a dangerously crumbling chalk face. No doubt the next week or so will bring out quite a few more.

From Totterhoe, it is a short drive along the foot of the Chiltern scarp to Ivinghoe Beacon. I was hoping to see Grizzled Skippers, but in a sheltered gully I have visited before, I found more Dukes. There were probably ten or a dozen, with territories spaced out along the length of the dip, and frequent clashes at the overlap points. Again, there was at least one female, but she did not succumb to any advances made so may well have already been mated. Dukes were by far the commonest species here, with just a couple Dingies, a few Brimstones and a solitary Peacock.









On returning home, there was just enough time to walk around my local patch. The usual customers were in evidence, with Orange Tips and Green-veined Whites settling down for the evening, and Peacocks still patrolling the paths.



Notably, I did see three Red Admirals – whether these are new arrivals from the South, or locally hatched, I can't really say – they were quite worn, so maybe the former.



I also saw two Commas and a female Holly Blue.



All in all, not a bad day at all.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 03-May-14 10:54 PM GMT

It's never a bad day when you see a DoB, Dave!!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 04-May-14 09:21 PM GMT

That makes yesterday an excellent day, David! It was good to see them apparently thriving in two separate localities.

Today (4th May), I spent part of the afternoon down at Botany Bay. The sunshine was a bit hazy, but there were several Wood Whites flying in their characteristic unenergetic way. I spotted two before even reaching the bridge, and came across perhaps ten more in various different places beyond that.



There were a couple of sets of courtship behaviour, but no mating observed.



I usually see a Grizzled Skipper here at this time of year, but instead found a Dingy – something I'd not seen here before.



There were Peacocks, Green-veined Whites and Orange Tips, and a single Speckled Wood. However, the most abundant species was the Brimstone, flying in their dozens, and almost all males. At around four o'clock, they stopped patrolling, and headed for the frequent bugle and bluebell flowers to nectar for fifteen minutes or so. And then they vanished.



I did find one pressed flat against the leaf litter, absorbing the weakening sunshine, but the others had concealed themselves well.



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Susie, 04-May-14 09:25 PM GMT

Well done on getting the brim on bluebells! I couldn't get that shot last time I was there 😊

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 04-May-14 11:26 PM GMT

Absolutely fantastic reports and shots Dave. The Duke shot where you can see the "new emerged" green sheen on the wings is ace 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 05-May-14 10:04 PM GMT

Thanks, Susie – it was a lucky shot, of course. Mostly they wouldn't stand being approached that close, and this was the one in twenty that didn't make off that quickly!

And thanks again, Wurzel. That was indeed a lovely new specimen. With so many around, it's noticeable how there is a lot of variety in the markings. I seem to have missed you by 24 hours – I went down to Bentley Wood this afternoon, where I bumped into RobS who had been there since early in the day.

Monday 5th May: Bentley Wood (eastern clearing). I arrived around two o'clock, and it was still fairly sunny and warm. There were good numbers of Pearl-bordered Fritillaries flying, and because the sunshine was quite hazy, they readily stopped and basked on the leaf litter on the ground to warm up.





There is very little bugle blooming (though plenty of bluebells) so I didn't see many nectaring on their favourite flower. Rob pointed me at a lovely fresh dark Duke of Burgundy, one of three that had been seen that afternoon. This is the first of these I have seen at this location, despite at least one visit here annually in season since 2008, so I was very pleased with that.



Gradually the sun grew fainter, and the butterflies less active. Rob and I searched for roosting spots so the beautiful underside of the PBF could be seen, but the best we managed was to watch several head up into the trees. We tracked one to about 12–15 feet up in an oak, where it stubbornly settled down, but the others just disappeared.



Of other butterflies there was very little variety – lots of Brimstones while the sun shone, and a couple of Peacocks tussling with them when they wandered through their territory. This seems to be a good spot for moths – of those I could identify, there were Speckled Yellow and Argent & Sable. We saw a fast-flying largish brown/orange insect, that definitely wasn't any butterfly we could identify – could this have been an Oak Eggar? Finally, I found a single Brimstone egg on the buckthorn which is quite widespread in the clearing.



Last of all was this very large fly – what on earth is it?



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Susie, 05-May-14 10:40 PM GMT



I can see the leaves better in your picture, Dave; Silver birch! Putting two and two together, obvious really – Birch Sawfly! Nice find. 😊  
<http://www.naturespot.org.uk/species/birch-sawfly>

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-May-14 10:46 PM GMT

Thank you, Susie! Not something I would have guessed in many moons of wondering... It was huge.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Susie, 05-May-14 10:47 PM GMT

It's a nice find. I've never seen one 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 05-May-14 10:59 PM GMT

Missed you again Dave 😊 We'll have to synchronize calendars next year 😊 Great stuff with the Bentley Duke – they can be unreliable little critters at this site.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 06-May-14 09:06 PM GMT

Great photos of the PBFs and the Duke Dave 😊

The PBFs that I saw in the Wyre were either basking low down or heading high up into the trees and disappearing like you describe. I have yet to find one here in the classic 'roosting' pose.

I see that your Duke has very dark hindwings like the one that Pauline commented on in her dairy a little while back. It seems that there is quite a variation in markings in some individuals.

Cheers,

Dave.

### Re: millerd

by David M, 06-May-14 10:21 PM GMT

#### "nfreem" wrote:

I see that your Duke has very dark hindwings like the one that Pauline commented on in her dairy a little while back. It seems that there is quite a variation in markings in some individuals.

That was something I noticed too. The hinwings of that individual are almost completely black.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 06-May-14 10:44 PM GMT

It struck me when I first saw it in the flesh too. I'll be interested in seeing Wurzel's photos from the same location taken the day before to see if he encountered the same individual. If you look at the examples I saw at the two Chiltern sites on Saturday (not to mention all the other examples posted on the site), there is a wide variety in markings. The females are generally more orange with brown markings than brown with orange markings, but even aside from this difference the males vary enormously amongst themselves.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 09-May-14 10:12 PM GMT

A very late opportunity to walk around part of my local patch today – nearly six o'clock. Not much to see, but inevitably there were a couple of roosting Orange Tips, one female (below) and one male.



Both were stirred into activity by a brief burst of bright sunshine.



The female had quite a strong yellow cast to its upper hindwings, as some individuals seem to have.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 09-May-14 11:42 PM GMT

Two more posts to go before I get to the Bentley Wood one Dave – sorry about that 😞 From what I can remember though I thought at the time that my

Duke was pretty dark – sometimes you can see a black marking on the fore wings but not on my one/yours 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-May-14 10:24 PM GMT

I shall be patient, Wurzel – it will be interesting to see if it was the same individual or just a close relative.

Saturday **10th May**. I was up in Rugby on one of my periodic visits, and with two out of three boys in tow headed off a few miles west to Ryton. The weather was not exactly promising, with strong winds blowing grey clouds quickly across, and only brief bursts of sunshine. We wandered through the woods, where it was very wet and muddy underfoot (so much so that they plan to close the wood to the public for eight weeks from 19th May to let it recover). Where one of the rides opens out a bit and bluebells are blooming, one of the boys spotted a Green Hairstreak. In fact there were two of them, down on the bluebell patch and side-on to the sun as usual.



Continuing out of the wood to the path alongside the meadow, I disturbed a single Grizzled Skipper, which unfortunately was caught by the breeze and whisked out of sight. After sheltering from a sharp shower, we returned back through the woods to the Country Park during a spell of sunshine, and en route came across another three Green Hairstreaks which this time were dancing around the scrubby trees.



There is a lot of straggly honeysuckle in these woods, but a very unscientific cursory glance or two revealed no White Admiral larvae. Other butterflies seen in not the best of weather were a Green-veined White in the woods, and Orange Tips and a Small Tortoiseshell near the visitor centre.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 11-May-14 08:43 AM GMT

Great Greenstreaks Dave 😊 – I can appreciate them this year now I've conquered them 😊 I'm keeping an eye out for the Bentley Small Pearls so we might end up meeting there – we've come close a few times before 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 12-May-14 08:26 PM GMT

Hi Dave, I wondered if you had made it to Ryton, with the strong winds I only ventured out for an hour at one of my local spots by Solihull. Glad to see you managed to see some butterflies despite the conditions.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-May-14 10:13 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel – yes, the next Bentley trip will be for SPBF, but it's difficult to say when that will be. I have to bear Marsh Frits in mind as well for an excursion southwestwards. 😊

It is always worth a visit to Ryton, Neil – the weather did just enough to bring those Hairstreaks out at the right moment. There seem to be four different individuals there too. 😊

**Monday 12th May.** There were big showers around, but after work a big patch of blue sky hovered over my local patch. Too good to miss, but the walk was disappointing, with the sum of four GVW, three Brimstones, two Commas, two Peacocks, a Small White and an Orange Tip being all there was to see.



I hope the fact that quite a lot of the paths were underwater, and other areas very soggy, has not affected the later-emerging species. No Brown Argus, Common Blue, Small Heath or Small Copper seen yet.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 14-May-14 10:26 AM GMT

That walk doesn't sound too bad to me Dave - it's more than I'm seeing on my stop-offs at the moment. Good luck with the Marshies 😊

Have a godun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-May-14 09:10 PM GMT

**Wednesday 14th May:** What a glorious day. I had resolved from the start to escape work after about four and head down to Denbies. For once the M25 was not a complete nightmare, and I was on the hillside just before five. I saw nothing in Steers Field, but immediately after passing through the gate onto the main hillside, I disturbed a Green Hairstreak from the ground, and then another. They took off horizontally and went down into the grass again, but I couldn't find either one: my efforts merely stirred a Small Heath into flight, and then a Dingy Skipper.

I set off across the slopes, aiming diagonally down to the opposite corner with the plan to come back along the bottom of the hill. Within a short time, I was seeing Adonis Blues, and it became apparent that they were widespread across the whole slope. By the time I had turned to walk back, they had started to gravitate generally to the bottom of the hillside, along with Dingy Skippers, Small Heaths and one or two Common Blues.



Finally I spotted a definite Grizzled Skipper as well, though I had seen a few unconfirmed possibles before this.



Nearly back to the gate, it was clear that the blues were starting to roost, and characteristically they opened their wings for a last soak in the rays of the westering sun. Little blue jewels dotted the green.







Overall, I must have seen 20 or so Adonis Blues (including three or four females), half a dozen Common Blues, a Brown Argus, a dozen Small Heaths, those two Green Hairstreaks, around ten Dingy Skippers (a bit poor, really), one definite Grizzled Skipper, four or five Brimstones, two Peacocks and a Speckled Wood. There were also a lot of day-flying moths, especially Burnet moths.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 14-May-14 09:25 PM GMT

Hi Dave, some nice shots there, particularly like the Grizzled Skipper and the last Adonis Blue 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by David M, 14-May-14 10:13 PM GMT

Lovely images, Dave.

I'm tempted to see if Adonis Blues are out at Rodborough Common in Gloucestershire this Saturday (assuming the weather holds).

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 14-May-14 10:51 PM GMT

Great shots of the Adonis Dave 😊 I've been checking out one of my local sites a fair bit recently but still none – in fact I still haven't seen a Common Blue or Brown Argus 😞 Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-May-14 10:19 PM GMT

I'm sure they'll be out soon, Wurzel! This warm weather will bring everything out...

**Friday 16th May:** Following advice from Wurzel on their Wiltshire whereabouts, I headed off early in search of Marsh Fritillaries. Arriving on site around ten, I quickly found that they were already up and about, and in very good numbers. Over six hours, I may well have seen a hundred individuals. In addition, I have never seen so many Green Hairstreaks in one locality. They were everywhere, with males tussling around the hawthorns and females popping up in the grass every few yards and being chased by the Marsh Frits.



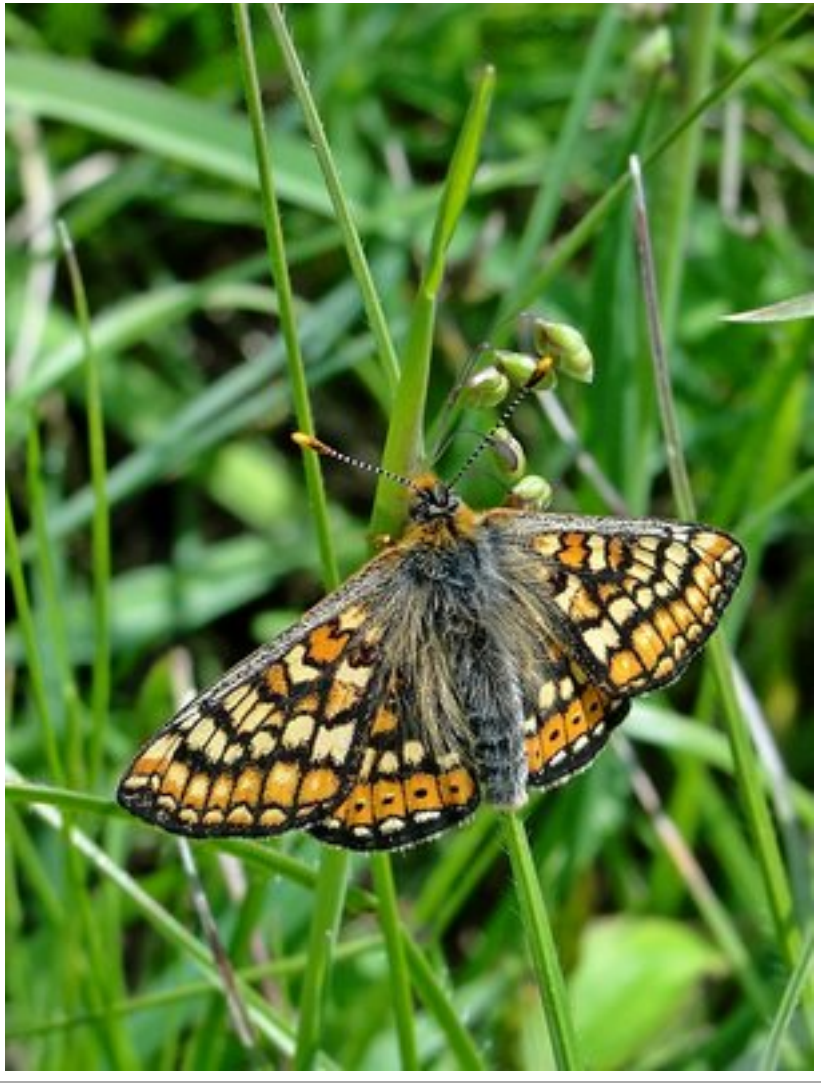


Add to that lots of Dingy and Grizzled Skippers, Small Heaths, a Brown Argus or two, Common and Small Blues (though not many of either), a few Peacocks and Orange Tips and a couple of Small Tortoiseshells flying manically around at the top of the hill, and you have a most extraordinary place.



What struck me was the amazing variety in colour there is with Marsh Fritillaries. I took a lot of photos, many of which were spoiled by the habit this butterfly has of basking under grass stems, but which clearly demonstrated the colour differences. These are the better ones! Just look at the difference between the third and fourth ones below...







Goodness knows what a typical one is supposed to look like! Most were recently emerged - in fact I found several which were still drying on grass stalks.



All in all, it was well worth the drive – the countryside looked splendid today at what has to be my favourite time of year.



## Re: millerd

by Lee Hurrell, 16-May-14 10:26 PM GMT

Beautiful Dave, lovely photos. They are so different! Like two species.

Best wishes,

Lee

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-May-14 10:37 PM GMT

Thanks, Lee! Beautiful creatures. 😊

**Saturday 17th May:** Another excursion, another Fritillary. I have always wanted to have a look at Hutchinson's Bank, which has always boasted a good variety of butterflies, especially at this time of year. Added to this, it is really close to the end of one of the branches of the Croydon Tram system, so can be reached from me (Heathrow T5) for the price of a one-day travelcard. And now, to make the idea irresistible, it turns out that there are Glanville Fritillaries.

It took a tube, a bus, two trains and a tram, but I found my way onto the hillside before eleven. I had no idea where the Glanvilles might be found, so set out to explore. Dingy Skippers and Common Blues popped up everywhere, not huge numbers, but widespread and regular.





Brimstones were possibly the commonest species in fact, with females right across the slopes and males concentrated more towards the bottom.



I came across an area that had clearly been prepared with butterflies in mind, carpeted with wild strawberry and with regular scrapes and scallops sown with kidney and other vetches. Curiously I saw no Grizzled Skippers (though I was later told they are here), but did see Brown Argus, Small Blues, Small Heaths and a single Small Copper.







Wandering back to the start (the cutting), I encountered some similarly-minded folk with whom I walked down to the bridle path next to the main road – this is where Glanvilles had been seen earlier. A chap with eagle-eyes spotted one on the path, and it spent a good 30 minutes cruising up and down and posing on the bare ground very nicely. It recalled my first ever sighting of this species – in Greece, and on a remarkably similar dry path. However, despite patient searching, this proved to be the only one in evidence.





Other than those species mentioned above, there were still a few Orange Tips and Peacocks about, some Speckled Woods along the bridle path, and apparently some Green Hairstreaks (which eluded me completely).





It was then time to sample London's assorted public transport once again.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 17-May-14 10:47 PM GMT

Some fabulous Fritillary action Dave 😊🇬🇧 I'm glad the Marshie site worked out well and the Glannie looks lush 🇬🇧

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 17-May-14 11:31 PM GMT

Hi Dave, a great series of Marsh Fritillary photos 😊 Not a species that I am familiar with, I only saw them for the first time last year, but even then I noticed how variable they are.

Cracking Glanville shots too, another species that I have yet to see.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by David M, 18-May-14 12:07 AM GMT

This site is becoming increasingly interesting, Dave. Clearly, someone has introduced Glanvilles here so it remains to be seen whether it's a viable location for them.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-May-14 10:21 PM GMT

Thanks once again for your kind remarks – you can hardly go wrong with such photogenic creatures! 😊

The Glanvilles are an introduction (or more strictly a re-introduction, though it is a long while since they flew here before). It is a warm site, with lots of the food plant, so who knows what may be possible. There's more about them in the May 2014 thread.

**Sunday 18th May:** much sunnier today, but a bit of a breeze too. Inspired by seeing ones and twos of Small Blue over the last couple of days, I decided to return to Totternhoe to see how they were doing there. Pretty well, is the answer! There was the usual concentration in the dozens around the spot under the cliffs, but they were spread out thinly everywhere else as well, even into the sheltered pit where the Dukes were to be found a couple of weeks ago (none today), which is some way off.





Several mating pairs were seen, attracting constant interference from other males.



There were also good numbers of Dingy Skippers, and frequent Green Hairstreaks too – females by their ground-hugging behaviour.



A couple of Grizzled Skippers were also seen, as well as plentiful Common Blues (including a couple of females), a few Brimstones and Orange Tips, the inevitable Peacock hanging on in there, and a Small Tortoiseshell too.





In the woods near the car park, I had seen a pair of sparring Speckled Woods: when I returned a few hours later they were spiralling in exactly the same spot. Such energy! Finally, I came upon this splendid beast of a caterpillar – is it a Drinker moth, or am I thinking of something else?



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-May-14 11:00 PM GMT

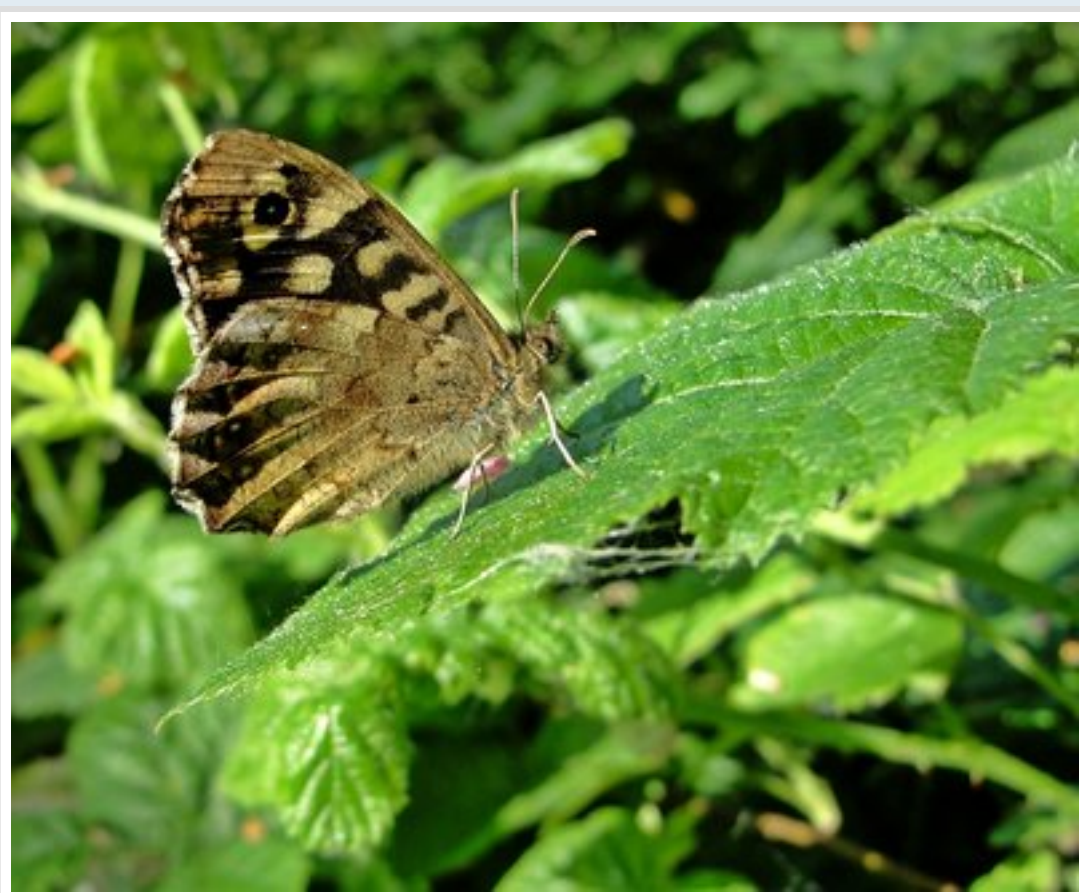
On both the last couple of days, after the trips out I had quick walks around my local patch – I try not to neglect it! There was nothing spectacular, but the first local Small Heaths were out.



Commas and Peacocks amazingly hang on in there, and even though it was pretty late in the day, I still saw Brimstones. Inevitably, I came across roosting Orange Tips – a male on Saturday and a female yesterday.



One marked difference between the days was that on Sunday a new round of Speckled Woods had appeared.



There were all three common white species, and a few Holly Blues around their favourite holly tree bedecked with ivy.

Today, I went straight from work a whole quarter of a mile to Bedfont Lakes Country Park. It was very warm and muggy at five o'clock, and I didn't see a great deal in terms of numbers, though there were perhaps a dozen Common Blues and four or five Brown Argus, a couple of Small Heaths, several Brimstones and a Peacock.





By the time I left at half six, the blues were starting to settle down, and as often seems to happen on very warm evenings, they were mostly going from flight to repose without an interim basking phase.



One female luckily was an exception.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 20-May-14 09:33 AM GMT

Great Blues Dave they're still in on they ground over this way 🇩🇪 The Small Pearls are building still – 6 were reported yesterday at Bentley 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 21-May-14 10:23 PM GMT

That's good to know, Wurzel – hopefully I'll be able to fit in a trip at the weekend – weather and assorted boys willing!

**21st May.** I wasn't back from work until after six, but I thought I'd have a short local walk. The dreaded mowers had been out, and great swathes of grass had been cut, but the job looked unfinished. However, one field of lush nettles had been razed to the ground as usual. Goodness knows how many caterpillars perish annually here. Along the path edges where the blades had not yet reached, I noticed a series of nibbled nettles. a closer look revealed a few leaves that had been fastened together, some piles of frass, and some discarded caterpillar skins. After a good bit of searching, I eventually found two plants where the stems had been bitten partly through, and the tops folded over. Altogether, discovering that some of the sewn leaves were inhabited, I found four Red Admiral caterpillars and one small spider. The two in the folded over plant tops were quite large, but the other two were small. In view of the precarious nature of their location, with the possibility of imminent strimming, I decided to look after them. This means digging the caterpillar cage out of the loft, but I am confident none will stray from their tents in the very near future. I managed a couple of very poor photos of the largest individual before it carefully closed the gaping vent in its home.



Incidentally, I left the spider behind – it will have a much better chance of surviving after the cut...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 22-May-14 12:15 PM GMT

Good luck with your charges Dave 😊 Small Pearls at Bentley update – 9 yesterday with 15 Pearls 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-May-14 10:28 PM GMT

Oh for a window of decent weather to seek out those SPBF, Wurzel! Tomorrow, maybe...

Today, I managed to see one Small Heath locally, and that was all.



The four Red Admiral larvae are still alive and well – all have constructed new tents, and one is now hanging up prior to pupation. The one below has tripled in size over the last few days after eating the whole of his tent leaf. Literally eating himself out of house and home, you could say. He is now engaged in making a new one.



These caterpillars are very easy to look after, requiring no confinement as they wouldn't dream of wandering off, even being quite happy to stay and pupate in situ. Quite unlike their close relative the Painted Lady which a few years ago I kept in the same way. There were chrysalids in a variety of odd places in the kitchen after that.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 25-May-14 05:20 PM GMT

Great photos of the Red Admiral cats Dave 😊

I still haven't seen a single adult yet, mind you checking back I didn't see one in the past couple of years until well into June.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 25-May-14 10:59 PM GMT

Thanks, Neil. One caterpillar has pupated and another is now hanging up. One of the other two attempted to construct a new tent by moving in on the chrysalis, but thought better of it and has set up home on a different plant now. So all four still going strong.

May 25th. The only decent weather of the weekend, so a trip out was obligatory really. I headed off to Bentley Wood with two out of three boys. However, we stopped en route at the Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop, which kept them happy for a couple of hours first. Bentley was very wet and muddy from recent rain, but both Pearls and Small Pearls were flying, and in roughly equal numbers. Some of the PBF were not all that worn, and I managed the underside shot that had eluded me three weeks ago. No similar luck with the SPBF, though!



PBF



PBF



PBF





SPBF



SPBF



SPBF

I bumped into Lee Hurrell, who was on his way back from deepest Wiltshire and the Marsh Fritillary site I visited last weekend. Still amazing by all accounts – great to see you again, Lee, and catch up. As well as the Fritillaries, we saw three Grizzled Skippers and a few Brimstones, but not a great deal else.



Hopefully the SPBF numbers will increase, but overall there weren't as many as I've seen in previous years.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Lee Hurrell, 25-May-14 11:05 PM GMT

Hi Dave, it was great to see you again and catch up. You have some lovely pictures from today 😊

I did manage the SPBF underside in the end 😊

I'm only a month behind in my diary...need to crack on! 😊

See you at Fairmile next?

Best wishes,

Lee

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 27-May-14 09:44 PM GMT

Missed you again Dave!! 😊 Great (Small) Pearls Dave 😊 The Small Pearls didn't play ball for me either – lots of topside and very little underside 😞 Still I may be able to do a few evening runs to try and catch them out! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-May-14 10:43 PM GMT

How do we do this, Wurzel? 😊 No doubt we'll bump into each other somewhere when least expecting it.

Could be Fairmile, Lee, or possibly Denbies, which is where I went to this evening.

**29th May:** After three straight days of grey damp gloom, I had itchy feet. The weather maps seemed to suggest that only 25 miles away to the south, there might be some sunshine, so I left work early and headed for the North Downs. The M25 was one big rude word, so it took most of an hour to get to Denbies, but the sun was indeed out when I got there. It was quite breezy as usual, but there were a few things flying. The commonest species was the Adonis Blue, with good numbers of both sexes around, including a mating pair.



Many are looking worn now, with the characteristic concentrated blue look the males have as they age.



However, there were still a few fresh ones, displaying the more usual clear turquoise in the sunshine.



*AB female*



*AB male*

In amongst them were also Common Blues, plus Small Heaths and a couple of Dingy Skippers.





I found one of the latter deep in the grass wrapped around a grass stalk in roosting pose.



The M25 was no better on the way back – goodness knows what it will be like if I do the same trip after work in August... 😞

The third of my Red Admirals pupated today, leaving just one still as a caterpillar. This last one was wandering yesterday, looking for suitable leaves in which to construct a new tent – which was completed this morning.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-May-14 09:08 AM GMT

As you say we'll probably bump into somewhere totally unexpected – like the Beer aisle of Tesco's! 😊 Thanks for the tip off about the Crafty Old Hen. Lovely Adonis shots Dave 🍷, I keep checking for them at my local patch but they're still not out, they must be saving themselves for when I need a fix next week on my way back from work 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 01-Jun-14 10:53 PM GMT

Ah, but which Tesco's, Wurzel? 😊

I spent the weekend in Holmfirth in Yorkshire – the weather wasn't bad at all, with sun on both days, particularly today. Not many chances to go out actively looking for butterflies, so I had to be satisfied with seeing what passed through the garden. This amounted to all three white species, and quite a few rather aged Small Tortoiseshells, but little else. However, the star of the weekend was a lovely new Large Skipper seen on Saturday morning in amongst the herbs – which just happened to be the first one I've seen this year, and quite unexpected.



I also got a shot of a couple of damselflies – very elegantly enamelled in deep red. I'm afraid I really don't know which species they are.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Willow, 02-Jun-14 02:46 PM GMT

Lovely mix of subject matter Dave and some nice images also 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 02-Jun-14 11:16 PM GMT

Great Large Skipper shot Dave 😊 I love this time of year when the golden skippers start to emerge. As for which Tescos – which ever one has the most Crafty Old Hen left just before the offer ends 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-Jun-14 08:50 PM GMT

Thanks for those kind words, Bill. I have always stuck to your motto, and it has brought many unexpected and rewarding things my way. 😊

Thanks Wurzel – more Large Skippers coming up! 😊

**Thursday 5th June.** A decent day, but stuck at work until four, when I escaped and set off for my local patch. Before leaving home I found that the first of my four Red Admiral chrysalids had hatched and there was a brand new butterfly patiently waiting to go outside. I took it to a few yards from where I had found it as a caterpillar and settled it onto a piece of sunny hedgerow. It was not ready to fly, but flapped its wings a couple of times before sitting back quietly.



What I had not considered was that it probably hadn't been alone when I'd found (I had rescued another from the same spot, true). As soon as I left my charge, I was buzzed by another very fresh Red Admiral, one which had no doubt been around all day, and which would not leave me alone until I had moved off its territory. Moving on, I encountered a single Speckled Wood, but nothing else until I reached a sheltered corner where there has reliably been a colony of Large Skippers for a few years. Today, I saw six or possibly seven males, some new, one or two which had been out a day or two. The new ones were a glorious golden colour underneath, a rich orange brown above. Delightful butterflies.







I was then distracted by what appeared to be a ghost of a butterfly – in fact I thought initially it was some kind of moth. It fluttered as feebly as the weakest Wood White, but obviously wasn't that in this location. It settled and opened its wings completely: a very old and tired female Orange Tip.



Progressing into the open grassy areas, I disturbed a few Small Heaths and lots of day-flying moths.



I also put up a much larger beast which turned out to be my first Meadow Brown of the year. The sun was in and every time the butterfly went to ground it burrowed into the bottom of the grassy tussocks.



A couple of bursts of sun energised a male Common Blue for a while, and a brilliant new Small Tortoiseshell led me along the path for a couple of hundred metres, but never allowed me closer than about 20.



I tried to get a few photos of some of the moths, but largely failed. I identified Cinnabar, Burnet Companion and Yellow Shell (I did get a shot of this attractive insect), but then came across one considerably larger individual, shiny pale green, which I did not know at all.



Returning home, I spotted "my" Red Admiral exactly where I had left it. However as I approached, the sun came out and the butterfly flexed its wings and took off to settle high up in some ivy. I may well go and look for it early tomorrow morning.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 06-Jun-14 11:58 AM GMT

Aother great report Dave, more 'great Skippers' indeed 😊 and the Red Admiral underside is cracking 😊 I reckon that your Green moth is a Light Emerald as the hind wings are scalloped and the second white line runs smoothly across both fore and hind wings 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Willow, 07-Jun-14 04:03 PM GMT

Good selection of subject matter Dave all nicely supported with lovely photo's 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 07-Jun-14 11:10 PM GMT

Thanks for the moth I/D, Wurzel – what a delicate looking creature it was. 😊 And yes, Red Admiral undersides are an amazing display of subtle colouring and no doubt very effective camouflage. This one was of course straight out of the wrapper.

And thanks again, Bill – another trip out with no particular expectations brought all kinds of interest. 😊

I did pop out very briefly on Friday morning to see if the Red Admiral was still around. I did indeed see one, but even at eight in the morning the sunshine had made it hyperactive, so it was a brief glimpse only. I did see a single Speckled Wood as well, probably the one that had eluded the camera on Thursday.



**Saturday 7th June.** I drove up to Rugby accompanied by the leading edge of the rain. Once there, it overtook and rained for three solid hours. The boys and I took refuge in the Leicester Space Centre, and then as the weather cleared, had a trip on the nearby Great Central Railway. With the sun out on the return trip back down the line, we spotted considerable numbers of Cinnabar moths along the lineside, plus a few whites and at least two Peacocks. Now the weather had improved so much, I knew that on the drive back home from Rugby we would be able to stop in a convenient layby on the Southam bypass to look for Small Blues. The cutting was much lusher than in some years, quite soggy underfoot in places, and the kidney vetch was luxuriant and widespread.



Between the layby and the roundabout at the top of the hill, we saw perhaps as many as ten Small Blues, all looking somewhat careworn (and who wouldn't within a few metres of the traffic?). I imagine that earlier in the season, the count might have been quite a few more.





Elliot drew my attention to a couple of Common Blues, one sitting on one of the vetch flowers, and also a male Brimstone patrolling the hedge at the top of the cutting.



Finally, I came upon a single orchid in amongst the grasses – not sure which one this is.



An unlikely spot for a bit of butterfly interest, but very reliable for Small Blues over the last few years.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 07-Jun-14 11:35 PM GMT

Great report Dave, I'd be interested in where that lay-by is – I might have to PM you if it's sensitive 😊 . I forgot to mention that I thought that your Meadow Brown looked a bit unusual – paler especially on the trailing edge? 😊 I recognise the Orchid from last year – it's the Gnome Orchid, previously the Bee but that was boring so I renamed it 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 08-Jun-14 09:33 AM GMT

Hi Dave,

Nice photos from Southam, good to see the Kidney Vetch and Small Blues doing well along there 😊

Glad to see you made the most of your day up here despite the horrible weather in the morning.

Wurzel, the site is not sensitive, it is on the A423 Southam Bypass in Warwickshire. It is one of a number of sites that are being managed and seeded with Kidney Vetch by Warks BC to help the Small Blue in the area.

Cheers,

Neil.



## Re: millerd

by Willow, 08-Jun-14 02:45 PM GMT

The **Small Blue** seem to be doing ok in the area, so any work to help by the Warks BC Branch seems to be paying dividends 😊

Your not the only one that seem's to be getting regular soakings...I'm a fellow sufferer too 😊 Nice report Dave 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 08-Jun-14 10:31 PM GMT

Thanks for the kind comments, chaps. Small Blues do seem to respond well to a bit of help in this way.

Sunday 8th June. A lovely sunny morning, and the first task was to release another Red Admiral, patiently sitting next to his empty chrysalis. Another lovely underside photo will be the lasting record of this one.



Elliot and I went south today, down to Box Hill for the first visit this year. We ventured first out onto Burford Spur, where there were a few Common Blues around, mostly females like this one.



There were a couple of Meadow Browns, some Large Skippers dashing about in the sun, plus Brimstones, Small Tortoiseshells (new ones I'd say) and Speckled Woods. Elliot spotted a couple of bees which he declared to be dead on the ground, but were anything but: the female and male were quite different to look at – I hope the beemeister Wurzel can identify them for us! 😊



We then wandered back past the throngs of lycra-clad would be Touristes de France (one Bradley Wiggins lookalike spoiled the effect somewhat by puffing on a fag), beyond the viewpoint slopes and out onto the area known as Dukes. There were quite a few folk sunbathing in this area, so the sight of us heading diagonally down the hillside, camera in hand, was perhaps a bit disconcerting. This also meant that when an unmistakable Marbled White appeared in amongst the scrub at the top of the slope, giving chase was not an option. This was the first one I'd seen this year, and it was quickly followed by another first – a Dark Green Fritillary at the bottom of the hillside, flying up into the trees and back in a highly energetic fashion. Hot sun is not the best weather to make close observations! There were a few other butterflies – Small Heaths, Meadow Browns and a Blue or two. I think the fringes on this one make it a female Adonis, but I'm happy to be corrected.



We headed for home. The M25 traffic at 4 o'clock was surprisingly light, so I risked a minor detour to Fairmile Common. It was worth it as we quickly found two, maybe three male Silver-studded Blues in the area across the road from the car park.







After investigating the area in the other direction, we returned to find Lee Hurrell just arriving. Together we relocated a male, and Lee spotted a female as well.





Where next Lee? Your prediction was uncannily accurate! 😊 😄

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 08-Jun-14 11:57 PM GMT

Lovely Silver Studs Dave – I'll have to wait a week or two before they're out here so to keep me busy...your Bees...a Queen and male *Bombus lapidarius*, they might have introduced themselves but were obviously too engrossed in each other 😊 😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Lee Hurrell, 09-Jun-14 11:29 AM GMT

Lovely photos, Dave! Great to see you once more.

I predict....Botany Bay or Denbies. I will go back to East Blean too.

I must crack on with my photos....so much summer, so little time. The summer emergences are coming thick and fast now.

PM me if you'd like to actually arrange a meet.

Best wishes,

Lee

## Re: millerd

by Willow, 10-Jun-14 01:03 PM GMT

Ditto the others comments Dave...can we keep up with it all 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Jun-14 11:24 PM GMT

Thanks once again for your kind comments all of you. You're right, Bill – how to keep up? 😊 😊

**10th June.** One way is to take a last minute day off work and head round the M25 for Essex. The 75 mile trip was done in even time and I was at one of the Heath Fritillary sites near Rayleigh by 0930. There was intermittent sun only to start with and it was a while before the butterflies appeared. To be honest, I didn't see all that many (ten to a dozen at most) – there were many more last year apparently, but I could not find any cow-wheat in any of the clearings. If that disappears, so will the Heath Fritillaries. Most of those I saw showed signs of wear, but there were one or two fresh ones. The strong sun later in the day may have brought out some more.











As well as the Heath Frits, I saw a few Meadow Browns and Speckled Woods, a Large Skipper (looking paler than its Middlesex cousins), a Small Tortoiseshell and an energetic Red Admiral which paused briefly to take minerals from my trouser leg.



Finally, I discovered a female Holly Blue circling around a coppiced sweet chestnut. A pity she was a bit worn, as she posed rather nicely.



She then landed on a trefoil plant, and looked for all the world like she was laying an egg.



A close look afterwards revealed this was indeed the case. Looks like anything will do...



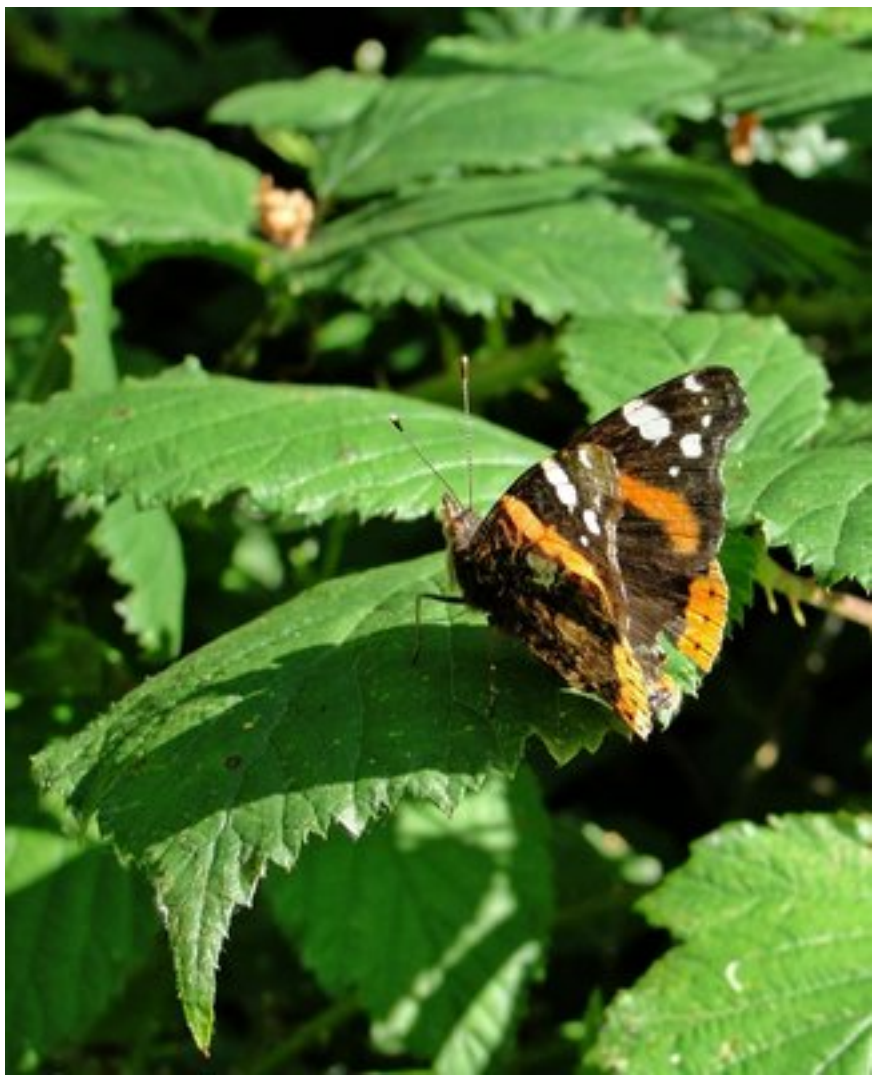
Back in Middlesex early afternoon, I popped into Harmondsworth Moor to look for early Marbled Whites. There were none around as yet, but Meadow Browns had emerged and quite a few Common Blues were being blown around in the wind.



I did come across a Silver Y moth, which is always a sign of high summer to me.



Finally, I had time to look round my local patch. Not a great deal, really – Speckled Woods, Small Tortoiseshells, Large Skippers, Small Heaths and several Red Admirals.



Finally, with summer in full swing, a ghost from last year appeared – a very decrepit Peacock, still flying amazingly well considering its apparent lack of aerodynamic capability.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 11-Jun-14 09:31 AM GMT

Cracking report Dave – those Heaths are mighty fine 🍷😄 You do seem to have a special talent at attracting Holly Blues as well 😄😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 11-Jun-14 09:07 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel. 😊 It's time I tried some West Country Heaths – Essex/Kent are getting a bit routine, however rewarding it is to see them. Oddly enough I hope to be in Taunton over the coming weekend, though whether excursions to deepest darkest Exmoor are likely, I'm not sure. 😊

**11th June:** I managed another trip out after work today (thanks to British Summer Time – imagine how much better still it would be if we were on the same regime as France, with extra evening daylight in the summer...). Bearing in mind the glimpses I'd seen at Box Hill on Sunday and the prospect of a National Trust cup of tea, I headed southwards to the downs. It was pretty warm, but largely cloudy, and I chose to go out onto Burford Spur, the top of which would be catching the best of the warmth from the late afternoon sun (even if it was behind the clouds). Most notable to start with were the Large Skippers, perching on almost every shrub, and with quite a few down in the grass as well.



Next in evidence were good numbers of male Meadow Browns, all new and characteristically dark at this time of year.



However, a burst of bright sunshine brought out a beautiful pristine Marbled White, a mixture of freshly cut chalk and black velvet.





After a while it became evident that there were three or four around at the top of the hillside, though none elsewhere yet. Before long, this area should be awash with them. Immediately after my sojourn with the first Marbled White, I was distracted by a flash of bright orange down in the grass, too large to be yet another Large Skipper. Hunkering down, and not looking at all comfortable, was a Dark Green Fritillary. I managed a very average underside photo before it decided to fly.



Under bright cloudy skies it performed a varied series of aerobatics up and down the slope, but amazingly it eventually returned to a spot very close to its starting point – where I still stood. It settled, opened its wings for a few seconds, and then took off again who knows where.



Having achieved the objectives for the trip, I strolled gently along the various paths across this slope. In the shelter of the dip towards the east, several Common Blues and one or two Small Heaths were roosting.



I disturbed what I took to be a diminutive female Common Blue: the impression in the air was of a deep worn blue. However, the flight was entirely wrong, and the perching position that it took up upon landing was wrong too. This was a Small Blue, a rather worn female.





It is fascinating that something silvery underneath and worn brown on top should appear inky blue in flight. This is the first Small Blue I have seen in innumerable visits to Box Hill over more than ten years: The NT "Box Hill Book of Butterflies" declares them extinct on the hill since 1996, though it probably needs a bit of revising! I remember that Philzoid saw them here a couple of years ago, so somewhere there is some kidney vetch with a colony of Small Blues. A very heartening thing to see.

All in all, it was a most successful visit and once again Bill's (Willow) advice held good: always go out – you never know what you might see.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 12-Jun-14 11:32 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Dave – two more species I've yet to see this year! 🍷 😊 I ran the idea of visiting Haddon Hill past my wife and the 200 mile round trip didn't go down well 😞 But when I suggested that next year we could find a B&B she seemed much more up for making the trip – so Heath will go from a 2014 target to 2015 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Jun-14 01:10 AM GMT

Stunning Marbled Whites, Dave. Absolutely gorgeous. I saw my first of this year this evening, unexpectedly, along with some Meadow Browns. 😊

I wonder where we will meet next... 😊

Best wishes,

Lee

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 15-Jun-14 10:07 PM GMT

Thanks for the appreciative comments again, chaps. I found the brand new Marbled Whites particularly impressive – even more than the DGF to be honest, and a fresh one of those is a beautiful sight.

**Sunday 15th June:** Well, Lee, I fully expected you to heave into view when I popped into Collard Hill this afternoon on my way back from a weekend in Taunton with an old school chum. 😊 That might have been one coincidence too far, but I did meet LancsRover all the way down from the North West – good to meet you and chat for a while! 😊

It was around four, the sun was coming through a fair bit and it was hot on the slopes. There was not much flying at all, which was disappointing, but I did get to see two, perhaps three, Large Blues – which was not disappointing at all! 😊 They were very fresh male butterflies, and with the sun out were very reluctant to stay still, charging along the slopes at top speed before executing right angle turns up the hillside just as I thought I might have caught up. The first one I saw did briefly stop to nectar, and flashed a tantalising glimpse of its upperside.



The other one I approached closely perched unhelpfully on a breeze-bedevilled stalk, after a brief spell down on the grass.



Hopefully this is the vanguard of a good emergence, and with reasonable weather forecast the signs are good. Also seen were several Small Tortoiseshells, Meadow Browns, Small Heaths and Common Blues, plus a couple of Marbled Whites and a Painted Lady.



The latter flew from thistle plant to thistle plant, pausing on each for a few moments. I would guess that it was egg-laying, so in a week or so it may be worth checking for larvae.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 15-Jun-14 10:13 PM GMT

Excellent stuff Dave - I've never seen Large Blues 🍀 😊 - guess where I'll hopefully be going next weekend 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 15-Jun-14 10:23 PM GMT

Go for it, Wurzel - shouldn't be difficult to get to from you. At least you will avoid the road chaos on the A303 next weekend caused by the solstice - you're already well past that when you join the road. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 15-Jun-14 10:24 PM GMT

Catching up on your diary again Dave, great reports and photos 😊, especially the Heath Frits... and the Marbled Whites...and the DGF...and all the rest 😊

Congrats on the Large Blues, from what I have been reading they are just beginning to fly and not many have been seen so far.

Cheers,

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 17-Jun-14 08:58 PM GMT

Thanks again, Neil - I will continue to envy you your Mountain Ringlets and the NBA though! 😊

**Tuesday 17th June: Part One.** With a sunny day forecast, I managed to squeeze out another day off work. After dropping Elliot at school, I sped off towards Oxford and arrived at Whitecross Green Wood soon after ten. With the sun breaking through nicely, I headed for the hotspot near the pond, and within a few minutes had seen half a dozen Black Hairstreaks. They started to come down onto the dogwood flowers and posed quite well, though most seemed rather worn.





I was joined by a gentleman from the Midlands whose first visit and sighting of this butterfly this was – he was very pleased to find them so easily. We in turn were joined by another group of folk, including the Chair of Butterfly Conservation, David Dennis. We were then treated to some unusual behaviour from the butterflies. Two Hairstreaks came down to the ground and settled on the grass, one of them for several minutes.



No one could fathom out what they were doing before they returned to more characteristic perching high in the blackthorn. I then spotted a much newer individual on a dogwood on the other side of the path, and it sat there happily nectaring for some while as many pictures were taken from every angle. The consensus was that this one was a female.



I decided to investigate one of the side paths off the main one, and it quickly passed through a thicket of mature blackthorn. Emerging into a sunny gap with brambles, I soon encountered several more Hairstreaks, one worn male on a bramble flower and a newer female sitting low down on a leaf.



The latter then flew into the blackthorn opposite, and spent a long while low down just wandering amongst the branches.





Returning to the main path, another group of enthusiasts had appeared, and were admiring another Hairstreak on the dogwood – this one seemed fresher than any of the others I'd seen earlier.



All in all, I must have seen at least a dozen different butterflies, and for the first time got some reasonable photos.

Whitecross is not all about Black Hairstreaks: there were dozens of Large Skippers (Not one of the Skippers I looked at was a Small or Essex Skipper, so they appear not to be out here yet), including a mating pair.



I also glimpsed two different White Admirals flying high up in the trees, and there were Meadow Browns, Ringlets, Speckled Woods, Small Tortoiseshells



and Marbled Whites.



Finally, I saw both a male and a female Brimstone, and back at the car park a Red Admiral was cruising around.



With the afternoon ahead, I decided to stop off on the way back at Aston Rowant (Part Two coming up...)

Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 17-Jun-14 10:39 PM GMT

Good choice to visit Whitecross, Dave. many of the females are still looking good, although the males are invariably tatty by now.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Jun-14 09:48 PM GMT

**17th June:** Part Two. On the way back from Whitecross I stopped off at Aston Rowant. I usually leave it until a bit later to visit, once the Chalkhills are out, and there wasn't as much to see just yet. Many of the flowers were still to come out, with the marjoram just poised to open and the thyme just starting to bloom. The slopes were quite breezy near the top, though more sheltered lower down. Two distinct types of bright orange blurs were whizzing up and down the hill: Small Tortoiseshells and Dark Green Fritillaries. The former species were pausing to nectar from time to time, the latter were diving down to hide in the grass. The former were spottable but unapproachable, and the latter were almost impossible to find except by inadvertently disturbing them from their hiding places. I pretty well gave up trying, but did track one down to its grassy nook.





I also saw a sprinkling of new Marbled Whites in the more sheltered areas, plenty of Meadow Browns, a few Small Heaths and Speckled Woods, and a cluster of Brown Argus chasing anything else that moved.



There were no Adonis Blues that I could find, though this was made up for by a beautiful blue female Common Blue which posed very nicely. There were a few other Common Blues as well.





As I moved on from the female blue, I noticed a chap who had been standing for a while in a spot just onto the hillside from the entrance. I thought he was probably a fellow enthusiast, so headed in his general direction to chat. However, he rather self-consciously moved away and headed back to the gate, and I realised that the various bits and pieces he was carrying appeared to me to include a net rather than a camera. As there is no butterfly species on this hill that cannot be readily identified, I have to jump to the worst conclusion... And no, I didn't get a photo! 😞

**17th June:** Part Three. There was still time to circumnavigate my local patch once I got home. This is still currently dominated by the thriving colony of Large Skippers, with several females emerging now to keep the males busy. I saw at least a dozen altogether in what is a relatively small area.





There were more Small Heaths than last time, looking new and therefore perhaps a new brood – they seem to appear pretty well continuously until October now.



Elsewhere, the walk was quiet, though there were three different Red Admirals each actively patrolling and defending their patches of sunlit path. All looked fresh, and could well be local-grown examples (all four of the caterpillars I had nurtured were released here last week – they would no doubt have had wild siblings emerging a little later).





Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 18-Jun-14 10:16 PM GMT

Great set of reports Dave 😊 Those Black Hairstreaks are brill and another butterfly I have still to see 🍷 I don't know how you do it – I have to beaver away earning brownie points all week just for a few hours of butterflying 🤪🍷😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

**"millerd" wrote:**

Well, Lee, I fully expected you to heave into view when I popped into Collard Hill this afternoon on my way back from a weekend in Taunton with an old school chum. 😊 That might have been one coincidence too far

It wouldn't have been while my mum still lived in north of Taunton! You are racking up the miles, Dave but great reports and photos. See you at Chiddingfold soon then 😊

Best wishes,

Lee

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 19-Jun-14 10:29 PM GMT

Thanks again, Wurzel! Careful planning is the trick (and a generous manager!). 😊

How curious, Lee. My mum (sadly no longer with us) lived for some 40 years in the Taunton area (Crowcombe first and then Trull). I went to school there, hence the odd visit back to see friends. Could well be Chiddingfold next time round – depends which day I can be let off work again! 😊

**Thursday 19th June:** a strange weather day with sun early then warm cloudiness for most of the remainder. I needed to pick up Elliot in West Drayton at half six, so worked out I could fit in a quick visit to Black Park between leaving work and the child collection. I walked the mile to the Strawberry wood area, hoping that the sun might burst through and bring out something interesting. As it was, this didn't happen until the last possible moment, close to six o'clock, so I didn't see anything special. The cloudy conditions didn't put off Meadow Browns and Ringlets, and there were quite a few of both.







I also saw the inevitable Large Skipper – they are everywhere at the moment.



Just as that burst of sunshine blasted through the clouds, I spotted a smaller golden dart amongst the foliage: this resolved itself into my first Small Skipper of the year.





A few quick photos and I had to walk extremely fast to get back to the car and then whizz off to the rendezvous, which was only 10 to 15 minutes drive. Phew! 😊😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by LancsRover, 21-Jun-14 09:49 PM GMT

Hi Dave, just a quick belated message back, it was nice to meet you at Collard last Sunday and it's good to put a face to a UKB name 😊 and after seeing your superb pics. of the marbled white's dated 11th June, and how much you get about, I will be following your personal diary from now on.

Cheers Russ.

### Re: millerd

by Willow, 22-Jun-14 08:00 PM GMT

Super reports from your last few adventures Dave, fine images to enjoy too 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

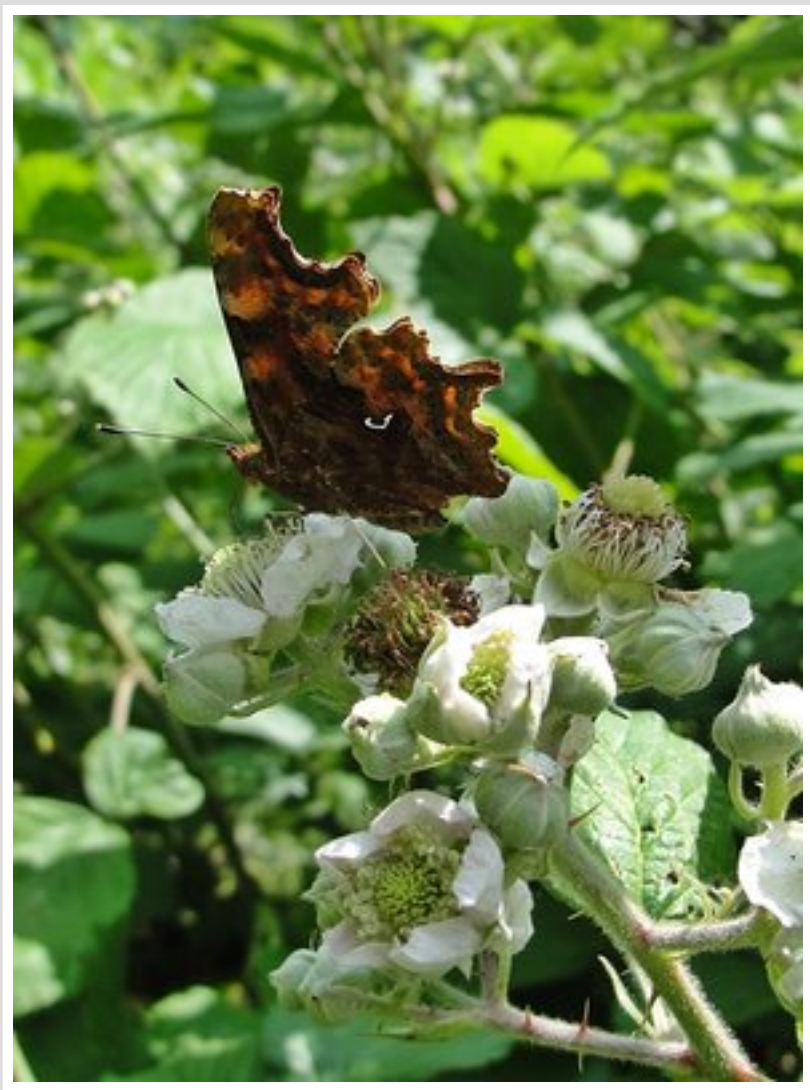
### Re: millerd

by millerd, 22-Jun-14 11:22 PM GMT

Thank you both for your generous comments – I've been lucky with some cooperative subjects lately! 😊

Not quite so much this weekend. I've been mostly out in the heat of the day, and quite a few of the darker butterflies have been taking shelter whilst the others have been whizzing about alarmingly. However...

**Saturday 21st June.** The annual trip to Alice Holt Country Park with boys today: though enticingly close to the more interesting bits of the woodland, they were too hot to persuade into more than a short walk down ones of the rides leading from the visitor centre. Plenty of bramble in bloom against the trees, but a thick barrier of bracken made close approaches to any nectaring butterflies impossible. We saw a couple of White Admirals (one of which nectared half in and half out of the shade), three new brood Commas, several Small Tortoiseshells, Meadow Browns, Small Heaths and a Red Admiral. The hoped-for Silver-washed Fritillaries did not appear.





Heading for home in the afternoon, we stopped off at Dawney's Hill near Pirbright. Large areas of gorse have been cleared since last year, and the Silver-studded Blues appear to have been displaced somewhat towards the far end of the heathland, but were in reasonable numbers. The bright sunshine kept the males with wings closed and the females largely in the shade.





It was a bit early for Graylings, though I am aware these have been seen elsewhere already. Finally, I had a brief scout around my local patch, which produced no surprises, though I did see a Large Skipper (of course!), several Small Tortoiseshells, a couple of new Commas, and at least seven Red Admirals. Unlike reports from elsewhere, it has not been an untypical year for them hereabouts.



**Sunday 22nd June.** I had an extended walk locally today, accompanied by Toby who was more interested in the aeroplanes than the butterflies. The main thing of note was a definite Ringlet, the first seen for a couple of years and in the same location as before. The colony must be very small and easy to overlook during its window of activity. There were good numbers of Small Tortoiseshells, which is something I could not have said a few years ago – a real revival of fortunes.





All along our route were Meadow Browns and Small Heaths, and at the point we turned around I found a single worn Common Blue and some new Small Skippers.



Just nearby was a large area of head-high nettles, and suddenly I realised I was also looking at dozens of Peacock caterpillars of a variety of sizes.



Unlike yesterday, several Large Whites were on the wing, and I also spotted a mating pair of Green-veined Whites perched well up in a tree.



I then had to ferry two out of three boys back to Cherwell Valley services on the M40. The meadows round the back have always been good for butterflies, but whether there is active management, I don't know. In any case this evening, the grass was full of Marbled Whites and Small Skippers, and the nettle beds alive with Small Tortoiseshells.







It's a while since I've seen so many. I also noticed that the road verges on the approaches from the motorway to the services are full of kidney vetch at the moment – however, I will have to wait until I am stuck in a queue at the right time of year to look for Small Blues – not a place to venture safely on foot!

Finally, on getting back home soon after seven, Elliot and I were greeted by a splendid stag beetle just outside the front door. Unfortunately we did not see it fly, as they buzz around like miniature helicopters and are quite disconcerting if you don't know what they are.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 23-Jun-14 10:39 PM GMT

I know what you mean Dave – butterflying on Saturday was a nightmare – I saw plenty but getting a shot was next to impossible 😞 You did mighty fine getting teh White Admiral 😊🍷 That Stag Beetle is something else 😲😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 25-Jun-14 11:37 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel – he was a fine wee beastie!

**Wednesday 25th June:** After Sports Day at school, I had the rest of the day off too, so decided to head down to Botany Bay. With delays on the M25 and the rather late start anyway, I didn't get down there until around one, and it appears I missed all the day's Imperial excitement – I didn't see any Purple Emperors. 😞 However, there was plenty of other butterfly interest, and it wasn't long before I came across my first Silver-washed Fritillaries of the year.



The sun became a bit intermittent, but this didn't seem to affect the dozens of Ringlets swarming along the rides, nor the Large and Small Skippers down there with them.



I saw several White Admirals, mostly flying high in amongst the trees and only occasionally coming down to the brambles for some nectar. They were very hard to approach.





It was good to see some new *hutchinsoni* Commas, every bit as attractive as a fritillary, and tussling with anything else that moved (usually Large Skippers).



There were also Red Admirals, varying from tired and worn to nearly new, a couple of Small Tortoiseshells, Speckled Woods, a male and a female Common Blue, and somewhat incongruous-looking for a woodland ride, a couple of Marbled Whites.





I shall have to return soon, but earlier in the day.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Pauline, 26-Jun-14 06:35 AM GMT

I like your cheeky little Skipper shots Dave – they always seem to be so feisty and full of charisma.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 26-Jun-14 02:14 PM GMT

Great stuff Dave – I have still to photograph White Admirals and Silver Washed Frits 🇬🇧 I've seen them but they're either an orange blur or cutting their way through the air 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Willow, 26-Jun-14 10:01 PM GMT

Couple of really fine reports Dave, that Stag beetle is really something, a species I'm yet to see 🇬🇧

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

## Re: millerd

by David M, 26-Jun-14 10:40 PM GMT

Aaah! So **redolent** of midsummer – White Admirals, Silver Washed Fritillaries and Silver Studded Blues.

We'll all be dreaming of this come October!

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-Jun-14 10:01 PM GMT

Thank you all for the appreciative comments – yes, Pauline, the Skippers are delightful subjects and I saw a lot more of them today. 😊 And for you, Wurzel, one of your favourites! 😊

A mild crisis kept me at work until later than I intended, but as it's very close to the office I had a look around Bedfont Lakes Country Park. I hadn't visited for nearly six weeks, so the most interesting area alongside the railway line was now lush with grass and flowers. There was abundant knapweed, bramble, purple vetch, lucerne, plaintain, everlasting pea, marjoram and huge swathes of birds-foot trefoil, all ideal for butterflies. After a wet spell overnight and this morning, the sun was out and it was warm but breezy at six o'clock. It was quickly apparent that the long grass was full of Meadow Browns and Skippers. There were a handful of Large Skippers, but almost every single other individual I checked (and I looked at quite a few) turned out to be a Small Skipper.







It was only once I got a chance to look at the photos that I discovered one I'd seen right at the start looked much more likely to be of the Essex persuasion.



*black underside to antenna tip*



*sex brand parallel to wing edge*

A first for the year, and followed very quickly by another. I had seen a Ringlet in amongst the Meadow Browns, but then a much more orange butterfly darted up from the dense ground cover. This was a fresh male Gatekeeper. It appeared there was just the one, but you forget over the year just how intense the orange colour is, and also how by August you just take them for granted.





Other sightings were a single Small Tortoiseshell, one Small Heath, a Green-veined White, and a few more Ringlets.



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 27-Jun-14 11:28 PM GMT

Hedge Browns are here 😊😊😊 Great to see that you've started off with a "zero spot" Dave I can't wait to see my first now 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 28-Jun-14 03:35 PM GMT

I shall be snapping as many as I can this year, Wurzel, to study the variation in spots – you have me hooked! 😊😄

**Saturday 28th June:** The less said about the weather here the better – though I've just noticed there are clear blue skies down along the south coast and some way inland: grrr. Nevertheless, I had a coffee in the local café at lunchtime, and as this is a few hundred metres from the Essex Skipper colony next to the southwest corner of the airport, I carried on to have a peep. Under grey skies with the odd spot of rain, and thunder rumbling in the distance, I found half a dozen of the little chaps perched on the vegetation.



They were actually fairly active, despite the lack of sun, but provided some of the typical cute skipper poses which are hard to resist.







This is a very small area, but nevertheless the quest for skippers turned up a Meadow Brown and two Gatekeepers as well. No chance to count spots here, as they remained resolutely perched with wings closed.



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Hoggars, 28-Jun-14 04:09 PM GMT

Hi Dave, fabulous pictures – I can't wait for my Gatekeepers to appear now as your photos have certainly whetted my appetite!

Best Wishes,

Hoggars.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 28-Jun-14 08:54 PM GMT

Thanks, Hoggers – give them a week and they'll be everywhere I hope. I follow your Kentish activities closely, having lived in Dover for a while 20 or so years ago.

Later the same day... A bit of brightness lured me out onto other parts of my local patch, where I thought I'd see if the *other* Essex Skipper colony I have was active. I saw one rather coy individual, but there may well have been more roosting in the grass.



The warmth coming through thinning cloud livened up a few Meadow Browns and a single Ringlet. One of the former even indulged in a bit of basking, unheard of in full sunshine – the advantage of a bit of cloud.





I also found another new Gatekeeper, which did exactly the same thing, spreading its wings under the warm overcast. Another zero-spot individual, Wurzel – *nul points* in fact...



*in the shade*



*with a bit of sunlight on it*  
There was nothing else except a Cinnabar moth sheltering under a leaf.





I succeeded in getting very wet from the long grass after the rain and discovered that my shoes leak really badly. 😞😂

Dave

### Re: millerd

by MikeOxon, 28-Jun-14 09:22 PM GMT

It's easy to slip into thinking that 'browns' are a bit boring but your splendid pictures prove otherwise 😊

Mike

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-Jun-14 09:16 PM GMT

Thank you, Mike. 😊 No, those brown butterflies can be very interesting in their variety. And as they aren't averse to a bit of cloud and the odd drop of rain, so much the better in an English summer.

**Sunday 29th June:** Not such a brown day today – more a case of purple, blue, white and dark green...

I left home at half eight, confident that the cloud cover would move off within an hour or two as the Met Office promised. They were right, and my arrival at Botany Bay coincided with sunshine. There were already several folk in the wood eagerly looking for Purple, but they were concentrating up the top of the hill so I decided to focus my efforts back towards the bridge, and down the other path from the triangle. Good idea! I soon came upon a chap (whose name I didn't get) down on the ground with a male Purple Emperor. Despite a variety of angles, the full purple eluded us, but we had it down for nearly a quarter of an hour, and it had been there a good fifteen minutes before I arrived, apparently.





I wandered back up the hill and then down again. With no one else in sight, not far from the first sighting I came across another grounded male, intent on a large and disgusting-looking piece of poo. This individual resolutely sat with wings closed for some while, even after the other group of observers had arrived and began to photograph it. It took the arrival of Neil Hulme to make it completely open up, and the full purple came into view.





After well over half an hour on the ground, it took off to a hazel bush to clean its tongue – I'm not surprised... Neil set off to seed the path with a disgusting fishy concoction, hopeful of enticing others down, leaving a trail that might cause you to think some incontinent and possibly seriously ill animal had been along... However, though I saw at least two Emperors up in the trees, no others came down before I left at 1230.

Next stop was at Denbies. The sun had become a bit hit and miss again, but there were dozens and dozens of Marbled Whites flying, basking and scrabbling around in the grass.



It was fairly breezy too. I also saw Ringlets, Meadow Browns, Skippers of several sorts, Small Heaths, a couple of fast-flying Dark Green Fritillaries and at least a dozen Small Tortoiseshells. These were mostly settled along the top path, flying up as you reached them and settling further on.



In amongst all the fluttering black-and-white, I noticed a flash of icy blue – the first Chalkhill of the year.





I saw four altogether, but no doubt they will be the first of a great many more if the last two summers are repeated.

Finally, to Box Hill for refreshment and a look around there too. Now, I thought the Tour de France was in Yorkshire... Driving up Box Hill, you would never know it. It's a bit hairy at the best of times, but it was very tricky today with so many cyclists. I walked out onto Burford Spur: as with Denbies, there were lots of Marbled Whites, perhaps a greater concentration here, even. Every last bit of knapweed had at least one in residence.



Added to this, there were Dark Green Fritillaries whizzing around everywhere, diving into the grass when the sun went in and then taking off madly at an alarming rate if disturbed.





They often seemed to seek each other's company when going to ground, though when active in the sun, there was many a tussle and chase.



Great characters.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Neil Hulme, 29-Jun-14 09:22 PM GMT

Hi Dave,

Great to catch up with you today and glad to see you got some stonking good pics. Later in the day my baits began to work their magic and all but one was visited by HIM, as were my trousers and boots! Hope to get some images and a report up later tonight.

Best Wishes, Neil

### Re: millerd

by David M, 29-Jun-14 10:03 PM GMT

Great sequence, Dave. Nothing better than a grounded Emperor, that's for sure.

The Essex Skipper images are really nice too.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 29-Jun-14 11:46 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Dave, looks like you had a brill weekend, if only mine had been as fruitful 😊🎁

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Maximus, 02-Jul-14 09:30 PM GMT

Hi Dave your PD is always full of lovely photos of butterflies especially those from your 'local patch' which I know very well, as I lived in Ashford and worked on the T5 project, and was based in Longford Village. I well remember my summertime lunch hours spent walking the footpaths between Longford and Harmondsworth, spotting the butterflies which were surprisingly plentiful, glad they still are!

Great pics. of the PE at Chiddingfold, and yes I recognise that bit of poo too 😊 amazing that you saw two different individuals to the one I saw, makes one wonder how big the population at Chiddingfold is?

Mike

### Re: millerd

by Willrow, 03-Jul-14 12:53 PM GMT

What a great variety of species Dave and your images support your summary perfectly...much enjoyed 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 04-Jul-14 11:47 PM GMT

Neil – good to see you too (it's been a while...). I've been following your further adventures at Fermyn with great envy from behind a desk! 🎁

David – yes, I like the Essex Skipper, and having such a compact and reliable colony (albeit in a precarious position) is a real bonus. 😊

Wurzel – you'll have some more good weekends soon, I'm sure. Some of your outings have been amazing. 😊

Mike – I had no idea you used to tramp the lanes around here! It is surprisingly good, with 25 species seen within two miles of my house over the last two years.

Bill – I am so pleased you enjoyed the variety and the commentary too! 😊

...and thanks to all of you for the kind comments about the photos. You all produce much better stuff than I do, you know.

I've been out locally twice this week, my horizons limited on a really warm and sunny week by that perennial bugbear known as working for a living. 😊

**Wednesday 2nd July:** I ventured forth in the morning, and discovered that my local Ringlets were more widespread and numerous than I realised. Over the last five years, I had only seen two altogether, but today I came perhaps a dozen which is most encouraging.





I also saw plenty of Meadow Browns, increasing numbers of Gatekeepers, Large and Essex Skippers, Small Heaths, Large and GV Whites (no identified Small Whites at all), six or seven Small Tortoiseshells, three Red Admirals and a solitary Comma. Commas have definitely not been as abundant as usual in the summer emergence (yet).







On the way back, I was on a piece of concrete road usually occupied by minicabs on breaks between their Heathrow clients, so not looking out for anything at all. Consequently I nearly stepped on a second brood male Holly Blue, which was frantically fluttering at ground level, pausing every so often on various unsavoury patches on the road, including a piece of poo in classic Imperial fashion. I have seen the males of this brood do this before – no doubt it is for the usual reasons of reproductive advantage.





Before getting home I saw another Holly Blue, but in the more conventional setting of a riverside hedgerow.

**Friday 4th July:** Out after work today at around half four. The main difference from two days ago was the sudden arrival of the Comma contingent. I counted around ten in a variety of places on the circuit, mostly territorial and chasing everything, but a couple were skulking in the shadows and behaving quite differently. I assume these were females.





The combative males were a different story, and I witnessed several scraps, including a high-spiralling one involving two Commas, a Speckled Wood, a Red Admiral and an unsuspecting Green-veined White which got carried aloft quite inadvertently. The roster was generally as it had been earlier in the week, though the afternoon heat kept many darker butterflies in the shade. I came across a patch of pathside verge that had been mown once earlier in the year, but now supported a flourishing growth of young nettles. There was also a nest of young Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars.



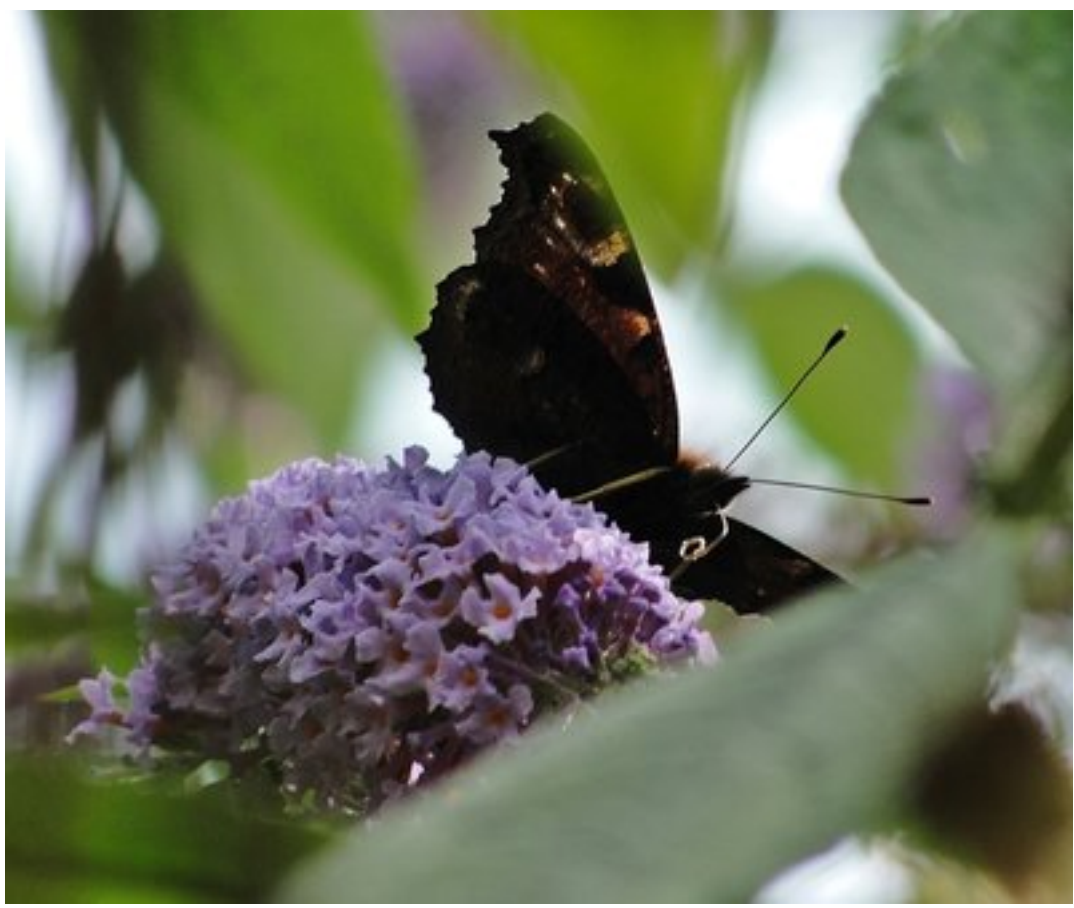
Going back past the same spot later, I saw a pair of courting Small Tortoiseshells preparing to create a few more caterpillars and another couple of the same came down to investigate while I watched.





The unfortunate thing is that this nettle patch and others like it along this path will almost certainly be mown again before too long. I wonder how many nettle-eating larvae are lost to unnecessary mowing in this way? 😞

At one point I was buzzed by a very fast-moving black butterfly, which then circled and landed high up on a buddleia. I could just make out (and get a record shot of) a new season Peacock, the first I'd seen.



Towards the end of my walk, I came across a female Essex Skipper, a long way from either of the other two colonies I know of, and in a place I had not seen one before. Curiously, it was being constantly hassled by a male Large Skipper which clearly had poor eyesight.





I in turn was then hassled by an aggressive Red Admiral which clearly objected to me stopping on his bit of path to look at the Skippers.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 05-Jul-14 10:35 PM GMT

Excellent four spot Hedge Brown Dave 🍀 And you've managed another Holly Blue – they seem to be rarer than Dukes this year! 😲

Have a goodun

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-Jul-14 11:43 PM GMT

I'm hoping the summer crop of Holly Blues will be better, Wurzel... fingers crossed. 😊 I'm eagerly awaiting you joining the fray with those Hedge Browns too! I was also brought up with the old name for them.

A few more seen today on a trip to Ryton Country Park:

**Saturday 5th July.** One of my regular visits up to Rugby, and luckily the rain stopped as we arrived so it was worth a trundle down the road to Ryton Pools Country Park. Unfortunately the path into the woods from the Park is shut until 14th July to allow the various tracks to dry out and recover after the winter rain, so there was little chance of seeing (except by luck) any of the woodland butterflies today. However, we were treated to the sight of plenty of meadow and grassland species, flying in considerable numbers under overcast skies. The lack of sun did not deter Ringlets (in their hundreds), Meadow Browns, Marbled Whites, Small Skippers and Large Skippers, nor the first of the Gatekeepers/Hedge Browns. When the sun did come through, they rose up in even greater numbers. Points of particular interest:

A mating pair of Ringlets...



A newly emerged male Meadow Brown with a bit of the "bleached" effect on one upper hindwing...



A fresh Small Tortoiseshell...





A new Comma feasting in Imperial style...





A very tatty Common Blue – the new brood are not out just yet.



And a selection of the rest:







This last Ringlet epitomises the day...The grass was very wet!



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 06-Jul-14 10:21 AM GMT

Hi Dave,

I haven't been to Ryton for a couple of months now, must pay a visit soon. I usually enter the wood from the other side to the country park and walk through to the meadows, not sure what the condition of the paths are like on that side but they are used far less.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Willrow, 06-Jul-14 10:39 AM GMT

Most of us seem to sometimes overlook the beauty of our more common species of butterfly Dave 😊 the images from your Ryton walk seem proof that we should all take far more note...lovely stuff 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 06-Jul-14 09:28 PM GMT

Neil – you must let me know the location of the other way(s) into the woods, and where to park. The Country Park has always been the easy option (and is not a bad location in itself).

Bill – you are very kind. 😊 And you are absolutely right about the commoner species. There's lots of interest in their behaviour and variety, and for attractiveness it's hard to beat a Marbled White, a Comma or a Tortoiseshell.

**Sunday 6th July:** only time today for the briefest of forays locally. I started with the nearest large oak tree, looking for the Purple Hairstreaks that inhabit it in low numbers. I reckon I caught a glimpse of one, maybe two, towards the top – but didn't have time for a longer study or examination of any of the other oaks on my patch. The short walk turned up a couple of Commas, a Meadow Brown or two, several Gatekeepers/Hedge Browns (still no females out yet), three energetic Small Tortoiseshells, a few Large Whites, and rather more Green-veined Whites.





I paused to take a shot of female GWW, and she rudely elevated her abdomen at me. It turned out to be nothing personal, as the male I'd been unaware of swooped down to investigate and her rejection behaviour was meant for him.



The final bit of interest before returning to base was this shiny green beetle, which I believe Susie told me last year is a Rose Chafer.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 08-Jul-14 10:14 PM GMT

Not much to report since I've been stuck at work and the weather has been a bit mixed over the last couple of days. Driving home this evening I did notice that, much as predicted, the local council have mown one of the nests of Small Tortoiseshells I'd been watching. It's not as if the nettles had grown enough to encroach on the path (they were barely a foot high). No, it's all for the sake of artificial neatness. To be honest, I don't think the airport minicab/taxi drivers who park along the road at this spot give a tuppenny damn (there, wasn't that restrained!) what the grass looks like. Not judging by the amount of litter they leave, anyway. 😞

Dave

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 08-Jul-14 11:02 PM GMT

Well held Dave, well held 😊 Those shots of the Green Veined Whites are great 😊 The weather has been a right pain so far this week. It seems to be okay during the day and just as I'm loading the car up and doing my run to The Devenish to check for Chalk Hills the heavens open.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by Willrow, 10-Jul-14 07:30 PM GMT

Thoroughly enjoyed latest report Dave 😊 you really do justice to the subject matter covered...cheers 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

## Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 10-Jul-14 07:39 PM GMT

Hi Dave,

I feel your pain at the mowing of the verge, the same thing happens around here. There doesn't seem to be any thought behind where they do the cutting back either, verges are left by road junctions where you would think they would be cut back for 'safety' reasons and cut back where it is not necessary. It is almost as if the council just send their workers out with their strimmers at random just to give them something to do.

Rant over,

Neil

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Jul-14 10:05 PM GMT

Thanks once again for the comments, chaps 😊

A bit of catch-up is needed...

**Saturday 12th July:** my birthday, and for something rather different I went to the Hampton Court Flower Show. I'm glad the tickets had been a bit of largesse from someone unable to go, as I was a bit disappointed to be honest. Very few genuine exhibits, very large numbers of trade stands and refreshment tents all eager to relieve you of as much money as possible. The day was hot, however, and I did end up splashing out on perhaps more Pimms than necessary... 😊 😊

But enough of that, this is a butterfly forum! Waiting for the ferry from the station side of the bridge to the show, quite a few people watched a Red Admiral land conspicuously on the rear end of a goose. The goose was not happy with the arrangement, and before I could line up the camera, had managed with some difficulty to shake off the butterfly. It promptly landed on the same region of another goose. This one reacted much more energetically, setting off several of its fellows. All the commotion appeared to enrage the Red Admiral, which started attacking the birds at random, flying at and around them with enormous energy before finally settling down some way away. I really don't think the geese could work out what was happening, and it did cause a fair bit of amusement. (Remember, this was *before* the Pimms...)

The Flower Show must be set up on a large grassy field. This can be the only explanation for the fact that the whole site was full of Small and Essex Skippers. There were hundreds of them everywhere, and they had almost universally succumbed to the lure of so much nectar – that's all they were doing. They were inside and out, getting trapped in the greenhouses, trying every conceivable type of bloom. I heard lots of folk remark on them.



Essex Skipper





*Essex Skipper*



*Essex Skipper*



*Small Skipper lost in the alliums*

Aside from the skippers, there wasn't much else: a few Commas, Meadow Browns, Whites; another Red Admiral and one Holly Blue.

Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Jul-14 10:43 PM GMT

**Sunday 13th July:** I drove the short journey down to Dawney's Hill, near Pirbright, this afternoon to see if I could see any Graylings. It was largely cloudy, with a stiff breeze and I found just the one, and wouldn't have seen that if it hadn't been drawn into flight by a very energetic Peacock. Tracking it down wasn't easy, and twice I nearly stood on it before I finally managed to spot it first. The camera had just as much trouble seeing it, and neither of these shots are quite in focus.



*Spot the butterfly*



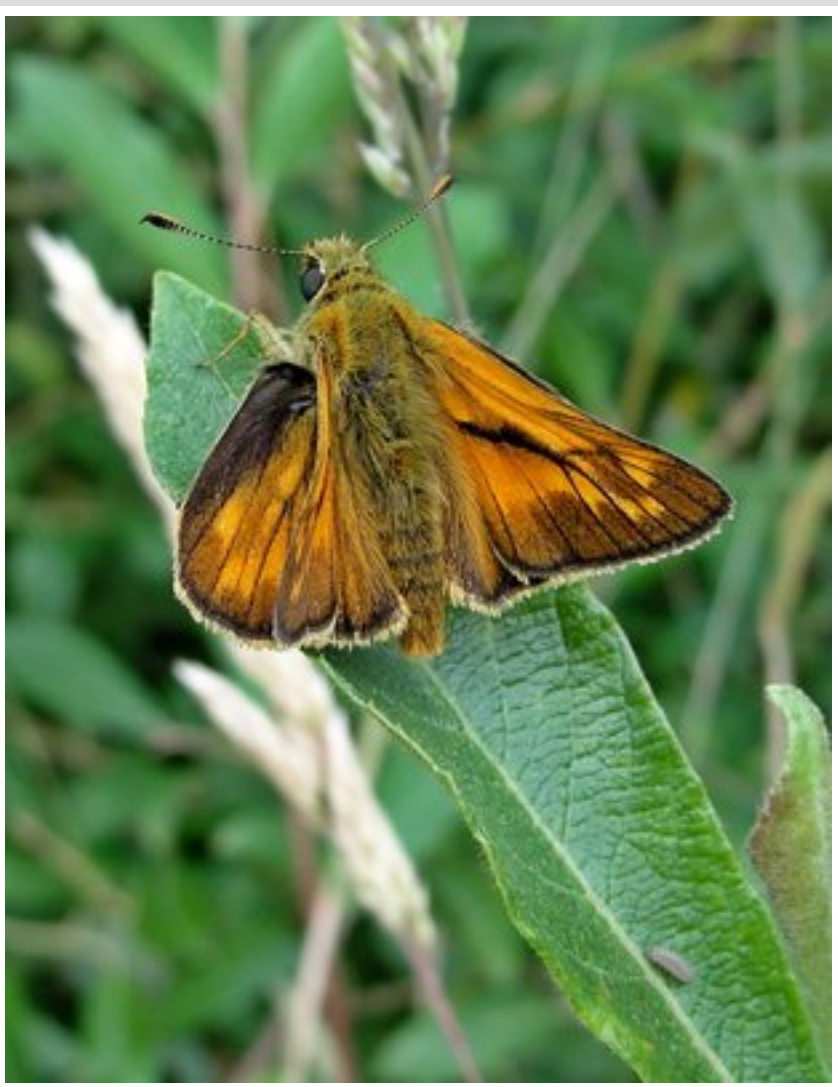
As well as the Grayling, I counted well over a dozen Silver-studded Blues, mostly pretty worn, and the majority females.





Other species seen included Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns, including a very large female of the latter sort doing passable Grayling impressions with bursts of random floppy flight into the air followed by a sharp plummet to lie sideways on the sand. Interesting.

On the way home, I popped into Chobham Common to see if any Grayling were out there. I drew a blank, but came across a couple more Silver-studded Blues, some surprisingly fresh Large Skippers, Small and Essex Skippers, Small Heaths, Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers.



Dave

Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 14-Jul-14 11:11 PM GMT

Great stuff Dave 😊 I was at a loss as to where the Grayling was in the first shot but then glanced a way and it magically appeared out of the corner of my eye...that is if I'm not seeing things that is 😊😊 I hope to catch up with them too soon.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Jul-14 10:57 PM GMT

**13th July** (continued): After the trip out to see Graylings, I did fit in a short tour of my local patch. Notable was the large emergence of Peacocks, which were in every nook and cranny, on the ground, nectaring on thistles and Buddleia or just soaring around for the hell of it. Female Gatekeepers had also appeared since last time, more retiring than the males. I encountered another Holly Blue down low on a path, looking for minerals to suck up, though the path was across a grassy meadow some way from any hedges or trees. Easy to mistake for a Common Blue, but it certainly wasn't. After failing to take The HB's picture, I immediately caught sight of a largish white butterfly being blown across the grass. I very nearly took no further interest, but instead tried to get a bit closer. I approached it closely enough to identify it as a Marbled White. This is the first one I have seen here in eight years of looking (though they do occur a couple of miles to the north), making a total of 25 different species for the site, all of which have been seen over the last two seasons. I was very pleased with this, though I failed to record the moment for posterity.





**14th July:** Another trip locally, again late in the day. More of the same, really, with Peacocks and Red Admirals dominating the scene. The Essex Skipper colony is booming too, and well spread out now. I also recorded a first for the year – tussling Purple Hairstreaks in their usual place next to the M25 J14 roundabout. I also saw my first new brood Brimstone (a male).







**15th July:** The same again, though I extended the walk a bit to the north. This revealed that Common Blues are now out again, with a goodly number of fresh individuals over a large patch of BFT. Amongst the many nectaring Peacocks, it was apparent that one or two were behaving territorially, and also indulging in courtship behaviour. One diminutive male was harassing every female he could find – there were no takers. With the warm weather continuing, it is possible that there may be a second brood this summer. With abundant Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers and Skippers, there really were a lot of butterflies about.











Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 16-Jul-14 11:35 PM GMT

Great read and shots Dave, great reports – you've been pretty busy recently. 😊🇬🇧 I'm struggling to work out which shots are my faves – but I'd have to go for the Hedge Browns of course 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Maximus, 17-Jul-14 01:43 PM GMT

Very nice reports and lovely photos Dave, I particularly like the flower show Skippers 😊 The council have been busy strimming around here too, unnecessary tidying up! Earlier in the year we managed to rescue twenty Orange-tip larvae from a footpath which was being strimmed, but just how many were lost 🤔😞

Mike

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 17-Jul-14 08:53 PM GMT

Hi Dave, some great reports and photos from your local spots recently 😊

...and a belated Happy Birthday for last Saturday.

Cheers,

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-Jul-14 11:14 PM GMT

Thank you for the kind comments, chaps! 😊 Every year my local patch surprises me in some way or another – it's very difficult to predict what will appear next. There's sometimes more on the doorstep than you'd think.

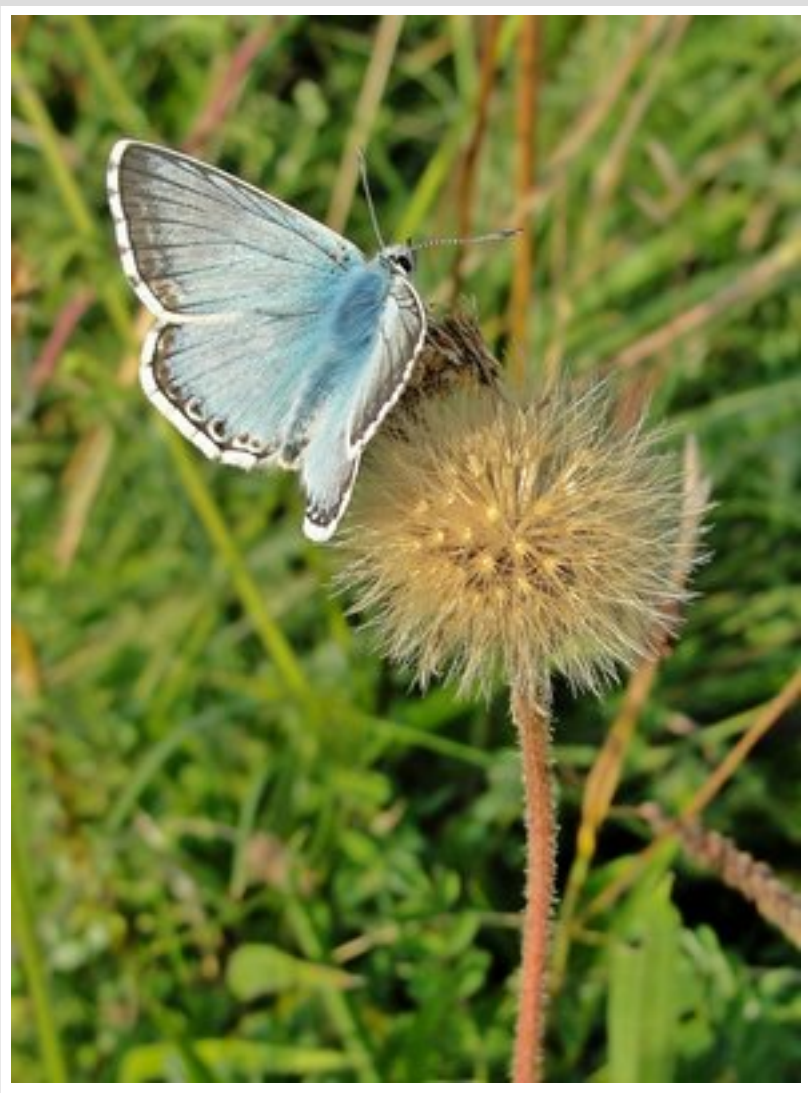
**17th July:** Straight from work up to Aston Rowant, though the traffic made it not quite as easy as that sounds. Nevertheless I was on a very hot hillside by half five. The heat was keeping the butterflies relatively inactive, but I was soon aware of an exception. There were little orange blurs whizzing around, which turned out to be Silver-spotted Skippers. I managed to track one or two to ground or onto scabious flowers, but they really were mobile today.



Much easier to find on a day with sunny intervals and the temperature around 21, rather than 30. As the heat eased, Chalkhill Blues began to appear, and it also became evident that there were dozens of smaller Skippers around along the whole of the hillside, both Small and Essex.







Add to this a few Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns, Small Heaths and Small Tortoiseshells, plus a super-charged female Dark Green Fritillary, and there was in the end quite a bit about.



Not many Chalkhills yet, perhaps, but already good numbers of (mostly male) Silver-spotted Skippers.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 18-Jul-14 12:00 AM GMT

Cracking Silver Spotted Skippers Dave 🍷 😊 I just can't keep up it's all happening so quickly 😲 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 18-Jul-14 09:35 PM GMT

Great shots from Aston Rowant Dave 😊

It will be another week or so before I get a chance to get down there myself, this year seems to be whizzing past far too quickly...

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-Jul-14 11:22 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel – yes, not much more to actually come out, but plenty of interest to come: I have several targets still to achieve this year 😊

Thanks to you too, Neil – I plan several more trips to Aston Rowant if I can, hopefully when it's a bit less hot! It seemed very odd with not a single Brown Argus to be seen!

On **18th July**, I had to drive past Aston Rowant (which looks unremarkable from the M40) on my way to Cherwell Valley services to pick up no.2 son William. The meadow area round the back has met with mixed fortunes in the last fortnight, with the portion to the right next to the big radio mast being mown flat. The portion to the left remains untouched so far, and remains full of butterfly life: both Small and Essex Skippers, Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns, Small Tortoiseshells, Small and Green-veined Whites and one or two Marbled Whites hanging on.



*Small Skipper (I think!)*

**19th July:** It was still raining a little when I set off with all the boys down to Box Hill, but the temperature was nudging 25 degrees. Down there it was bright, with a bit of sun pushing through, which made the butterflies at least a little sluggish. The first thing we saw along the path from the visitor centre was a Holly Blue taking salts from the path - I have seen this a lot lately.



On the viewpoint slopes, we saw Small/Essex Skippers, Chalkhill Blues, Gatekeepers, a couple of Dark Green Fritillaries (very pale and probably females), and around a dozen Silver-spotted Skippers.





*Essex Skipper (definitely!)*



*Silver-spotted Skipper*

The sun came out properly and it became almost pointless trying to follow anything. We wandered round to Burford Spur, encountering a few Speckled Woods, Red Admirals and even a Ringlet in the shady parts. Emerging into the sun again, I spotted both male and female Large Skippers, dozens of Small and Essex Skippers, Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns and quite a few Marbled Whites.



*Male Large Skipper*



*Female Large Skipper*



*Small Skipper (I think!)*

Several more Dark Green Fritillaries were active across the slopes – again very pale and worn.



As part of a plan to avoid the M25 for the return trip, we popped into Denbies, indulging in the obligatory ice cream of course. Once again there were a lot of Skippers about, but I only glimpsed one Silver-spotted whirring past. There were still reasonable numbers of Marbled Whites, and the Chalkhills are building up nicely. It was by now really hot again, so it was time for drinks and the roundabout way home.



*lunch for a crab spider*



*unsavoury lunch for three Chalkhills*





I had to have a quick look at my local patch at the end of the afternoon – lots of Commas, Red Admirals, Speckled Woods and Gatekeepers, assorted Whites, and several Common Blues.





In amongst the latter group was a single silvery blur, which stopped just long enough to identify as a Brown Argus. This one, however (which was a suspect briefly) is a female Common Blue.



*Female Common Blue*

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 20-Jul-14 11:24 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Dave, pretty envious of your Silver Spotted Skipper 😊🍷 I had the option to go for them today but Graylings won out in the end 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 21-Jul-14 07:55 PM GMT

More Silver-spots to come shortly, Wurzel... 😊

**20th July:** Unable to persuade any of the boys to venture forth into the heat, I had a lunchtime walk around my local patch. As much of what I saw was similar to other recent days, I'll try and concentrate on the interesting bits! First off was a Small Tortoiseshell on a bit of wild Buddleia – more of a common sight again, I'm pleased to say.



There were several Red Admirals, but one in particular was behaving very differently – it was fluttering close to the ground, even flying in and out of the brambles at low level and stopping briefly every now and again. I watched it pause on the tiniest of nettle plants, growing in a crack in the tarmac path and destined to dry out or be squished at any time. Looking closely, I saw the tiny green egg. Not a very well chosen spot!



*Red Admiral egg*



*The lady responsible for the egg above*

Nearby, I saw another low-flying butterfly, this time a Holly Blue. Instead of settling on the ground as it looked as if it would, instead it sought out a bramble flower and settled there to nectar.



I progressed into the extensive meadow area north of the A3113, and went left instead of right, finding myself in the bit very close to the M25 itself. Here were thistles and various other flowers, and amongst the many Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns and Skippers were several new Common Blues and two freshly hatched Brown Argus. The deep chocolate colour of a new Brown Argus is just amazing: I had to take a few photos!





*Incoming! Brown Argus about to disturb a Gatekeeper*









The walk back was unfortunately marred by the irresponsible owner of a growling terrier who told me to "get over it" when I objected to my heels being nipped at. 😊😞

Later the same day... After dropping the two large boys off with their mum at Cherwell Valley, on the way back down the M40 the traffic ground to a standstill close to J6. What a pity – there was nothing for it but to turn off and wait out the jam up at Aston Rowant. It was late, but still very warm and the sun still quite strong. I found the Chalkhill Blues all going to roost at the far end of the slopes, with both sexes basking for a while first.





Skippers (both Small and Essex) were congregating in large groups in the grass, but were not joined by their Silver-spotted cousins which were still whizzing energetically about. One or two stopped to nectar, but most rested on the ground between flights.



I saw a few females in amongst the males this evening, looking very dark in comparison to the other Skipper species there.





I also came across a female Common Blue, noticeably small compared to the Chalkhills, and a single Brown Argus: the first of many here, no doubt.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 21-Jul-14 10:50 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Dave 😊 My envy has increased even more as the weather isn't looking good for Friday which is when I was planning my outing for Silver Spots 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 21-Jul-14 11:02 PM GMT

**21st July:** The car had to go for a service, but I took the courtesy car down to Denbies for the morning. It was a day almost exclusively devoted to Chalkhill Blues, of which there were many. Perhaps not as many as the last couple of years (yet?), but really good numbers. I saw lots of courtship and mating pairs, and a wide variety of colour and spotting.



*Female unfortunately in the clutches of a crab spider*



*Aberrant male*





*Aberrant female*



Their attraction to smelly things is undiminished, and there were several accumulations which flew up in pale blue clouds if you got too close.



Aside from the Chalkhills, One female Dark Green Fritillary was down in the grass, repeatedly flying up and then disappearing quite deeply into the tussocks.



There are lots of violets across these slopes in spring, before the grass gets long, so I can guess what she was doing. As well as one crab spider tucking into the female blue of a mating pair (shown above), I found another that appeared to have give up on camouflage altogether.



Maybe when the Chalkhills are out, you just can't fail... 😬  
Here are a selection.





*Female with a fair bit of blue*







*ab. suavis* (orange dots on the upperside)

Later on, another foray locally.



After finding an obliging Green-veined White, yet another Holly Blue put in an appearance. It was behaving most oddly, fluttering back and forth close to a piece of hop entwined around a metal gate. It alighted once or twice, and backlit for a moment, it revealed itself to be a female. Then it settled again, paused, and opened its wings. The light reflected off the shiny pale blue made the photo tricky – but whatever was it doing? I had watched it for several minutes before it settled.



A little later, I found a very fresh male Common Blue – they look like this for such a short time, more's the pity.



Dave



## Re: millerd

by David M, 21-Jul-14 11:12 PM GMT

Hi Dave,

Your images just serve as a reminder of how this time of year is the absolute peak for seeing as wide a variety of species as is possible in the UK.

We all ought to enjoy the next fortnight, as 'pickings' will grow ever more rare as August progresses.

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 23-Jul-14 10:16 AM GMT

Another great report Dave – finally got my Chalk Hills 😊 but loving your Suave Chalk Hill ab 😊🇬🇧

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 23-Jul-14 10:32 PM GMT

You're not wrong, David, and we may (fingers crossed) be blessed with good weather for the next couple of weeks as well. 😊 I shall make the most of it if I can.

I was pleased with that one too, Wurzel. There were so many fresh Chalkhills, I just snapped away merrily and hoped for interesting variations amongst them. I did pursue a really pale one, but it made its escape – there is another very pale one at the front of the group photo above, but not such a pleasant context. Despite the lovely Chalkhills, that female Holly Blue was the most exciting bit of the day – and quite unexpected. 😊

**23rd July:** Elliot and I visited Butterfly World, near St. Albans. The rather ambitious schemes for this attraction have tripped up rather on the stony ground of a lack of funds, but the various themed gardens are interesting and the artificial chalk ridges covered in flowers are worth investigation. There is also the tropical butterfly house, though today there was no contrast at all between inside and out – which seemed odd. There are vast numbers of buddleia bushes, and though not exactly covered in butterflies, there were a lot of Peacocks around enjoying them, and a few Small Tortoiseshells too.



I watched one of the latter nectar for a while and then settle on a wall where it proceeded to violently clean its proboscis with its front legs. How it managed this, bearing in mind it only has four legs to stand on, I really don't know.



There were the next generation on some of the nettles as well.



Along the chalk ridges, there were plenty of Common Blues, Small Skippers, Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns.



There is abundant kidney vetch, and in the dip between the ridges, I spotted about half a dozen second brood Small Blues darting around. None came near enough for a photo, though. After a spell in the tropical house with the Blue Morphos and others, we wandered back through the themed gardens, and as well as more Peacocks, we saw a Red Admiral and last of all a very fresh-looking Painted Lady – only the second I've seen this year.



After returning home, I noticed that the rather "natural" looking front garden of a house around the corner was now home to Common Blues – I suppose the big patch of BFT in the middle of the lawn had something to do with that.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 26-Jul-14 04:37 PM GMT

Great stuff Dave 😊 I remember seeing about Butterfly World on a BBC program about butterflies a few years back but hadn't heard anything much since – was the aim to produce habitats for all species of UK Butterfly or just the local species?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 31-Jul-14 11:18 PM GMT

I think the original aim was to have a really large enclosed habitat featuring a big variety of British species, as well as creating favourable conditions in the open. You can see where this dome is supposed to go, but there is no money to take it beyond foundations. However, the "artificial" chalk ridges have done well in attracting Small Blues in particular, which must have come some way to colonise the area. With the nymphalids on the buddleias last week, it did go some way to looking the part.

I've been up in Yorkshire for the last few days, with fine warm weather as well – a bit of relief from the hot down here, which was pleasant. On the way up on **Saturday 26th**, we made the customary detour via Arnside (yes, a fairly big detour...). It was decidedly warm (around 26 degrees) and mostly cloudy, which discouraged many butterflies from flying apart from the numerous Gatekeepers.



I'm sure that as little as five years ago, these were a rare sight this far north, but they were by far the commonest butterfly on the Knott today. However, we saw plenty of Scotch Argus (one of the targets for the day), plus a few Grayling, Small Skippers, Meadow Browns, Peacocks, and a couple of worn Fritillaries.



*Dark Green?*





*A freshly emerged female*

Down in the meadow south of the Knott were a few more Scotch Argus, Common Blues and a couple more Fritillaries, one of which was approachable as it nectared on thistles. My immediate thought (and hope) was that it was a High Brown, but from the photos I'm not so sure.



*High Brown?*



*High Brown? (same individual)*

It steadfastly refused to close its wings and settle the argument in my head!

Dave

### **Re: millerd**

by Neil Freeman, 01-Aug-14 10:05 AM GMT

Hi Dave,

Nice Scotch Argus shots from the Knott 😊

Is it really a year since I met you up there, where has that gone? 🤔

Cheers,

Neil.

### **Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 01-Aug-14 01:35 PM GMT

Great Scotch Argus Dave 😊🍷 As for the HBF/DGF dilemma that's one of the few times I'm kinda glad they don't both fly round my neck of the woods 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: millerd**

by Padfield, 01-Aug-14 02:22 PM GMT

I'm confident you've labelled the dark green and high brown correctly, Dave.

Guy

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 01-Aug-14 09:09 PM GMT

Thanks for the ID confirmation, Guy. 😊 I was fairly sure at the time, but looking at the photos without the butterfly actually there sows the seeds of doubt.

Yes, Neil, a whole year has passed since we bumped into each other. Time just vanishes 😊 That HBF was on a thistle a yard or two from the very spot!

All Dark Green down here for me too, Wurzel, which does make life easy – HBF is a rare treat. 😊

**27th–30th July:** We stayed with my sister in Wilberfoss, just off the York–Hull road. Her splendid semi-wild garden provided (as it did last year) dozens and dozens of Peacocks, plus Small Tortoiseshells, Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers, Speckled Woods, all three varieties of White, Commas and single examples of Holly Blue and Painted Lady.



*Comma on rotting plum*







*Small White*



*GW: camouflage comes into its own*



There were a few points of interest: Large and Small Whites laying eggs on the nasturtiums, and Peacocks heading in through opened doors of the sheds and outhouses – one at least appeared to have settled down to hibernate.



*Large White laying: the eggs can be made out under the leaf*



*Hibernating(?) Peacock in the shed*

Here is a selection of Peacocks to finish off with: this beautiful insect should never be taken for granted.









As we were about to leave, this little chap appeared for a few moments.



Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 02-Aug-14 05:42 PM GMT

**1st August**, part one: Another warm and sunny day not to be wasted. I had been going to comment on how few Small Coppers I'd seen this year (one in fact), but having seen one at each location I visited today, I don't think I'll bother!

First off, I had a wander around Box Hill, concentrating on Dukes, the slopes to the east of the viewpoint. There were not many Chalkhills today, but they were supplemented by numerous Common Blues, plus a Brown Argus, a second brood Adonis male and the first of the day's Small Coppers.





*Brown Argus (m)*



*Common Blue (f)*



There were good numbers of Silver-spotted Skippers, and three aged Dark Green Fritillaries wafting around at the foot of the slope.







Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers were ubiquitous and Speckled Woods patrolled the hedge line. I walked on round to Burford Spur, where a few Small Skippers remained and more Common Blues, Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns were flying. In addition, I was pleased to find further Silver-spotted Skippers, at least half a dozen, as I've not seen them on this part of the hill before.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 02-Aug-14 08:38 PM GMT

**1st August** part two: It's hard to visit Box Hill without also calling in at Denbies. It was clouding up a bit and getting windy by now, so even the Chalkhills were relatively hard to see. However, every time the sun came through, they would be up and about and nectaring on the marjoram. Fresh ones are probably still emerging in small numbers.



Various CHB abs with deficient underside spotting are quite common here, but I saw an unusually pale example where the underside of the forewings was almost white. The upperside was normal.



There were Silver-spotted Skippers around too, but well-spread out across the slopes and usually discovered when they flew up to intercept something else. Their ability to dart behind you at top speed even against the wind is just uncanny.



Along the lower part of the slopes, there was a degree of shelter and this area proved more productive – here I found the second Small Copper of the day, Common Blues, and Brown Argus.



There was also the first of five or six second brood Adonis Blue males. Curiously, it was being pestered on the ground by a male Chalkhill.



The others were well separated across the hillside and I hope were the vanguard of many more to come.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by essexbuzzard, 02-Aug-14 10:06 PM GMT

Great report and images from Box Hill and Denbies, Dave. That last Adonis is a stunner, and the Chalkhills are pretty good, too

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-14 11:18 PM GMT

I agree with Essex that last Adonis is stunning 😊 Is it just me or are the second brood Adonis more showy than the first?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-Aug-14 02:19 PM GMT

**1st August** part three: Another summer Friday late afternoon with the M25 best avoided. Consequently I drove home the back way via Woking and a short stop-off at Dawney's Hill. The first butterfly I saw was my third Small Copper of the day, far tattier than the other two and much more energetic. Walking on to the far end of the heath, I started disturbing Graylings from the bare patches of ground. The wind whisked them away before they would plummet back again, completely disappearing. However, I did manage to track down a couple, and inevitably while scanning a patch of sandy scrub for a vanished butterfly, one landed on my leg.



*Spot the butterfly*





As the sun went down, I noticed that instead of dropping back to the ground, the butterflies were heading for the line of gorse and trees at the western edge of the heath, where I assume they roost for the night. Facing east, no doubt it's an ideal spot to be woken by the first of the next morning's sun.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 03-Aug-14 11:11 PM GMT

I love Graylings Dave they are in my top three butterflies and it took a while to spot it but I got there in the end (it helped that I remembered to put my glasses back on 😊 ) 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-Aug-14 11:32 PM GMT

Thanks Neil and Wurzel for the kind remarks about the Adonis Blue. They are glorious when as fresh as this one was – I don't think I've seen any appreciable difference between broods to be honest. I'll have to go and look at the photo collection now! And I've just realised my Grayling spotting competitions are too easy: the insect is always in the middle! 😊

**2nd & 3rd August:** I stayed local over the weekend, but on both days took in the extended part of my usual walk. If the Heathrow expansion ever happens, all of the current options would wipe out this area completely – a sobering thought. Particularly so, as over the two days I added two more species to the tally of those seen this year here, totalling 24. The only one not seen so far from past observations is the Small Copper, which in 2012 waited until October to put in an appearance!

Saturday started with a few Speckled Woods and a bright male Holly Blue.



The Peacocks and Commas of a fortnight ago have almost all disappeared now, but Red Admirals and Small Tortoiseshells turned up regularly in a variety of spots.



Out onto the open grassy area north of the A3113 between the M25 and the River Colne, lots of Common Blues were flying, certainly more than at this time last year, and vastly more than in the first brood.







One male lacked underside spotting as in the abs commonly seen amongst Chalkhill and Adonis Blues.



I've not seen a Common Blue affected this way before. A few Brown Argus were in amongst them, their darting flight so different from the ground-hugging female Common Blues with which they can be confused.



*Brown Argus*



*Female Common Blue*



*Female Common Blue*

Gatekeepers were still much in evidence, though almost all females now, and looking very pale.





There were Meadow Browns widely scattered, and several concentrations of Small Heaths at a number of points along the path. All Skippers, both Small and Essex, have now gone for the year. All three White butterflies were around, with an increased number of Large Whites since my last visit – migrants, perhaps? This thought occurred as a notable migrant did make its presence evident: Clouded Yellows. Just how many was difficult to say, as they moved at speed in the wind, up and down the path at low level with occasional bursts of flight out over the grass and even more infrequent pauses to nectar on Burdock or to drop to the ground when the sun went in. I made around ten separate sightings, but I would guess that no more than three individuals were present. Photos were extremely hard to come by!





I repeated the excursion on Sunday with similar results – certainly one of the Clouded Yellows I saw was the same as one seen on Saturday.







The bonus today was a Painted Lady high on a distant Buddleia, making that 24th species here this year. No photos, though.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 04-Aug-14 11:20 PM GMT

More great shots Dave – those Cloudies are cracking 😊 I've started seeing Small Coppers again but whether they're late second or final third broods I'm not to sure 😊  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 08-Aug-14 07:53 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel – it sounds as if Clouded Yellows are turning up all over the place now! If they ever make it to this bit of field, they tend to stay as there are plenty of flowers and larval food plants. And another Small Copper in a moment... 😊

Back to work this week, but on a couple of days I was able to leave early enough to pop two minutes down the road to Bedfont Lakes Country Park. On Monday 4th it clouded over for almost the whole time, which sent the butterflies into a sulk, and then on Thursday 7th, it was really quite hot and they were superactive even at 5 o'clock. You can't win. On both trips, the roster of species was actually the same: Common Blues were the most numerous, followed by Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers and Brown Argus. There were smaller numbers of all the White species, Speckled Woods and Small Heaths and singleton Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral and Small Copper.







I had hoped Clouded Yellows might be around, because as well as my sightings a few miles west, there have been others nearby at Hounslow Heath. However, if there were any they didn't come and see me. Some of the Brown Argus were pretty fresh, and there were a few females amongst the males. The females' behaviour is very similar to female Common Blues, staying closer to the ground and with none of the energetic forays that characterize the males.



The Small Copper was equally aggressive, chasing absolutely anything that infringed its airspace.





I also encountered a male Common Blue sucking minerals from a damp patch of path.



It fluttered feebly over the ground in exactly the way the Holly Blues I've seen recently have done – this is what I thought it was initially. It's a shame we so rarely see groups of "puddling" butterflies in the UK – just the odd one like this. the photos are a selection from both days.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-14 10:07 PM GMT

Lovely Brown Argus shots and that Small Heath is very finely marked Dave 😊 I hadn't noticed the different behaviour between the sexes of the Blues like that so I'll keep it in mind and look out for it, cheers for that useful obs 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerdre a lot of Common Blues

by millerd, 09-Aug-14 10:09 PM GMT

Thanks again, Wurzel – that was a particularly fine Brown Argus. 😊 I realise now that I didn't see any today, which is odd...

**Saturday 9th August:** I thought I'd set off early and pop down to Noar Hill and make the most of the weather before tomorrow's storm rolls in, plus a chance of Brown Hairstreaks and second brood Dukes. Unfortunately I saw neither of these, but there was plenty of other interest across this site packed with flowers. I was there by half nine, but it was quite cool and the butterflies were only just warming up. It was evident that there were a lot of Common Blues, and it was fascinating to look at the wide variety of patterning and blueness on the females. No two were alike – and there were dozens and dozens of them.





The males, however, were much of a muchness, except for wear and size.



As the day progressed, Meadow Browns appeared, and Small Heaths, plus a few Small Skippers. A walk to the far end where the pits border woodland revealed eight or nine worn Silver-washed Fritillaries of both sexes nectaring on hemp agrimony, thistles and marjoram.





In amongst them were pre-hibernation Brimstones, mostly females, behaving so differently at this time of year to how they are in Spring.





Towards midday, numbers of Small Tortoiseshells appeared, choosing scabious as their preferred nectar source. They are far too heavy for the slender stems (unlike Silver-spotted Skippers, which hardly bend them at all), but they still persisted despite a brisk breeze and many other options being available. At one point I thought I might have found a Duke, but it turned out to be a Small Copper chasing the Blues away – but just the one seen.



There were also a few Gatekeepers and Speckled Woods, a couple of Red Admirals, a Peacock and a very old summer Comma.



Finally, I saw two Clouded Yellows, both beautiful new females. I thought at the time that it might be the same one twice, but the photos show two very similar, but non-matching sets of markings. They were nectaring when the sun shone, and diving to the ground when it didn't, with energetic and frequent bursts of flight in between.







However, neither of my hoped for species were in evidence, though I did see two butterflies tussling around the top of a tall ash tree on the south side which may have been Hairstreaks. There was no way I could confirm what they were, and something lower down was very definitely a Speckled Wood! The cloud had now built up, so I headed for home after nearly five hours, smelling strongly of marjoram...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Aug-14 09:57 PM GMT

**Sunday 10th August:** After a great deal of rain and strong winds, around 3 the sun came out, with me following smartly behind. I set out around my local patch, not visited since last weekend, to see what was about. It was still very breezy, but the sun had got things moving and Small Whites were soon to appear.



I then spotted several Speckled Woods and Red Admirals contesting the same bits of path. One Speckled Wood looked worn, probably rain-affected, with some of the spots looking almost green.



Further along I saw a Comma flying low along the nettle regrowth at the edge of the path, stopping briefly every four or five seconds – egg-laying perhaps. It was a late example of the summer brood – the hibernating ones will no doubt be appearing soon. Considering the storms of the previous 36 hours, it was good to see plenty of Common Blues, fighting strongly against the wind and nectaring whenever they could get a grip on a thistle.





There were a few Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers and Small Heaths, generally looking rather sorry for themselves, but I disturbed a Clouded Yellow from the path which didn't look too bad. It dived to the ground again where I managed to grab a quick photo – confirming that it was neither of the ones I'd seen last weekend. There must be quite a few around. As usual it had plonked itself in amongst a nest of grass stalks, making for a far from perfect photo.



A definite autumnal feel about today...

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 10-Aug-14 10:22 PM GMT

Great reports Dave – that has got to be one of the most worn Specklies I've seen – almost complete but scales gone 😊 And that is a tantalising Clouded Yellow shot – I bet it left you feeling "if only it had opened slightly more"... 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 13-Aug-14 08:39 PM GMT

Yes, Wurzel – it landed with the grass stem between its wings, which caused it to twitch them open and shut a few times before compromising on the pose with just a hint of that wonderful yellow upperside. I've loved the colour of Clouded Yellows since (dare I admit it?) catching a couple as a child in the sixties using a net my mother had concocted from an old net curtain. They were just *so* yellow! 😊

**Wednesday 13th August:** a foray locally between 5 and 6 this evening was not very productive. There was some sunshine, but at this time of day now it's not so strong, and it was still pretty breezy. I did see several Red Admirals – there seems to be an inexhaustible supply of new ones stepping in as the old ones fade from the scene. One decided that I was a suitable site to survey its territory, and stayed awhile before launching off at another individual that swooped down to investigate.



There were far fewer Common Blues than a few days ago (they were rather tatty too), no Gatekeepers at all, and only one or two Small Heaths and Meadow Browns.



A single Small Tortoiseshell basked on the path before disappearing downwind. I paused occasionally to pick blackberries – really past their best already with the recent rain spoiling them somewhat so that a faint smell of fermentation hung over the bushes. Those pre-hibernation Commas had better appear soon, or they'll miss their favourite treat! Disturbing the brambles caused several roosting Green-veined Whites to appear and then disappear again further on: one paused to nectar briefly.



I'm hoping the recent storminess has subsided and that the wind will drop to accompany some sunshine. It's not particularly cold (22 degrees here today), but the other factors have conspired against good sightings.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 13-Aug-14 10:20 PM GMT

" They were just so yellow! 😊" I reckon they should have been called Clouded Mustards 😊 Lovely Red Admiral BTW 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 15-Aug-14 10:14 PM GMT

Friday 15th August: I had just enough time before picking up children to divert off the M40 and dip in and out of Aston Rowant around 5 this afternoon. It was overcast, not too dark though, and about 18 or 19 degrees. My first thought on walking across the slopes was "where have all the flowers gone?". Aside from patches of marjoram and one or two sad-looking scabious, there was next to nothing blooming. Following on from that, I saw very, very few butterflies. There were eight or nine Small Tortoiseshells basking on the paths, and A fair few Meadow Browns scattered in the grass, but other than that: one Red Admiral, a couple of Chalkhill males (one of which was actually quite fresh), a Common Blue, and a single Silver-spotted Skipper whirring off into the distance.



The only excitement was when I disturbed a largish bright orange-pink butterfly that flew rapidly up the slope. Puffing off after it, I just managed to identify it as an absolutely beautiful new Painted Lady before it took off again up and over the trees at the top of the hill. Nothing pale pink about this one – it was a really rich salmon shade. I would hope that a bit of proper sunshine might likely reveal a few more butterflies, but comparing notes with late August last year (when hundreds, maybe thousands were flying here, and of perhaps 20 species), it was rather disappointing. The storms have no doubt taken their toll on such an exposed hillside.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 15-Aug-14 10:28 PM GMT

I think you need to put things into perspective, Dave. Last year was abnormally late, meaning that Aston Rowant was probably still 'buzzing' in mid-August.

I went there on 8th August 2013 and Chalkhill Blues were absolutely at their peak. This year, I visited on 26th July and many of them were visually past their best.

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-14 10:18 PM GMT

I now how you feel Dave - I'm seeing the 'usual' late summer early autumn selection already - and the Low pressure systems aren't helping 😞 Looks like 2014 is going out with a whimper 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-Aug-14 10:30 PM GMT

You are right of course, David. My visits in August last year were on 23rd and 28th, and the slopes were still a riot of flowers and butterflies (though not many Chalkhills on the latter date). And of course it was really warm and sunny both times. A late season in real contrast to this year's somewhat early one.

Yes, Wurzel - the report below has a distinct autumnal tinge to it...

**Saturday 16th August:** A contrast in weather with yesterday - largely sunny, though a bit breezy again. My opportunity today was around lunchtime, and only a local walk was possible, but as ever there was something different to see with subtle changes to the same circuit a few days ago. First up was a finding a Common Blue male nectaring less than ten feet from the front door, in amongst half a dozen or so Small and Green-veined Whites.



Not much further on, I reached a wild buddleia, where a Red Admiral and a new pre-hibernation Comma were indulging themselves. When disturbed they both headed instead for the blackberries, which as noted earlier are beginning to ferment nicely.



This in turn disturbed a couple of Speckled Woods and a Holly Blue.





Seven species in five minutes – a good start indeed, and more than Aston Rowant could offer the day before. It transpired that the new round of Commas were out everywhere – I counted about seven or eight in various spots, mostly on the abundant blackberries.





They were probably exceeded in numbers along the wooded and brambled riverside path by Speckled Woods with maybe a dozen spotted.



Here too were another four or five Holly Blues, with two seen nectaring together at one point.



Moving into the large field/meadow area between the river and the M25, I found it had been mown (as last year). As a consequence, the butterflies were all now around the edges, with Meadow Browns, a few Gatekeepers and Small Heaths, and a reasonable showing of Common Blues.



These were more than 50% females, and most of these were dark examples, rather than blue ones.



One landed on the bottom of my jeans, and wandered around for a while before walking off onto the nearby vegetation.



Returning by largely the same route, I paused to see if a Holly Blue would settle, but I disturbed it and at the same time caused a Red Admiral to flutter up a little unsteadily from the brambles. It was beautifully new, scarcely a mark on the velvet black, but was quite restless as it walked around on the spray of blackberries.





A really lovely insect.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-14 10:38 PM GMT

I should of held fire for five minutes before posting Dave 😊😄 There was a definite autumnal feel indeed but the Red Admiral shots are fantastic, the one sitting on the Brambles is stunning 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 18-Aug-14 08:19 PM GMT

Lovely fresh Red Admiral Dave 😊

It looks like your season is a fair bit ahead of mine around here, no autumn brood Commas for me yet.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 22-Aug-14 09:46 PM GMT

Thanks chaps – a lovely Red Admiral indeed.

**22nd August:** a rare chance today to nip out from work at lunchtime and see what was around in Bedfont Lakes Country Park. I only had time to visit

the path parallel to the railway, but at least there was some sun for a change, not a bad sort of day at all. Common Blues were still flying, but getting rather worn now.



Also very worn was this male Brown Argus. I knew it couldn't be a female Common Blue because I first spotted it chasing a wasp – no female Blue would do such a thing.





There were quite a few Brown Argus, though mostly much fresher females.







Meadow Browns were flopping around in the grass still, and amongst them was just the one Small Heath.





Aside from a few Small or Green-veined Whites (I think the latter), that was all.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 23-Aug-14 09:56 PM GMT

Lovely chocolatey Brown Argus's Dave 😊 I have seen hardly any Small Heath this year Dave – where have they been? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 30-Aug-14 04:54 PM GMT

Back from a week up in Yorkshire, where despite noticeably lower temperatures, there were still things to see.

On **Saturday 23rd August**, we stopped briefly at Cherwell Valley services – several Small Tortoiseshells were nectaring on the uncut part of the water meadows.



**Sunday 24th** turned out to be pretty sunny, and my sister's garden in Wilberfoss attracted several Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells, Red Admirals, Whites of all types and a couple of Speckled Woods.





We also went out to nearby Allerthorpe Common, where a few more Peacocks and Speckled Woods were flying.





On the way back from Allerthorpe to Wilberfoss, we stopped at Calley Heath, a Nature Reserve maintained by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (SE 751496). Very quickly, we came across Small Coppers, and must have seen a minimum of half a dozen, all rather worn.





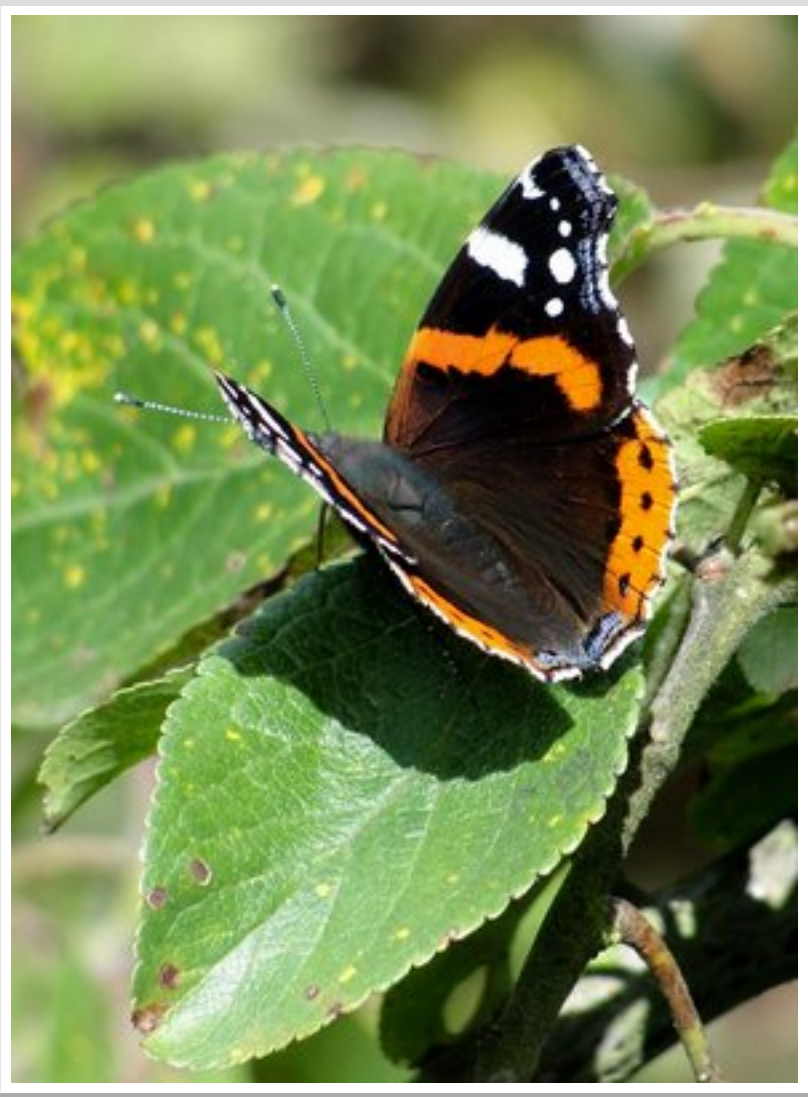
I then spotted a couple of other brown-looking butterflies that I took at first to be female Common Blues. However, closer scrutiny showed them to be a male and female Brown Argus, and altogether I would guess that there were at least four individuals.





Other butterflies seen were one each of Speckled Wood, Red Admiral and Peacock. The latter butterfly seemed to be investigating the numerous rabbit-holes on the site – I can remember reading that they may use these for hibernation. A knowledgeable fellow on site told me that Brown Argus had not previously been noted here (though Common Blue have). Judging by the time of year, these were likely to be second brood individuals (their wear was similar to those I have seen down south) – although some of the literature says they are generally single-brooded at this, the northern extreme of their range. The late date also rules out NBA (though I believe this would be just too far south for them anyway).

The weather turned wet on Monday, but a bit better on Tuesday and Wednesday: however, nothing much new was seen. One Red Admiral discovered the rotting Victoria plums, and will no doubt be fixture there for a while now.



I watched a male Small White vigorously assault a female before they both flew off together.





I also noted several Large White caterpillars on the nasturtiums, and one Small White totally uncamouflaged on a flower, plus a Large White chrysalis on the edge of a window.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 30-Aug-14 08:58 PM GMT

Excellent array of late season images, Dave.

There's still life yet in 2014!!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 31-Aug-14 08:11 PM GMT

There is indeed, David!

Back home in the south, **Saturday 30th August** provided warm hazy sunshine, enough to tempt me out for a walk around my local patch. There was no shortage of variety, with once again seven species seen in as many minutes: Red Admiral, Comma, all three Whites, Holly Blue and Speckled Wood. Over the couple of hours I was out, good numbers of all these were seen, plus a Peacock, two Common Blues and several Small Heaths. The Red Admirals and Commas were largely new, as were some of the Whites and Speckled Woods, but both species of Blue were getting rather worn. As well as fermenting blackberries, and a wild buddleia in bloom for the second time, the ivy is now coming into flower and attracting the Red Admirals in particular with its nectar. Despite fluttering around the ivy a great deal, the Holly Blues were more inclined to nectar on what bramble flowers remained.







*Common Blue*



*Holly Blue*



*Holly Blue*



*Green-veined White*



*Large White*



*Small White (f)*



*Small White (m)*



*Small White (m)*







*The variety with the extra white dot (bialbata)*







One extra point of interest was when a large and brightly coloured insect fluttered across the path – clearly not a recognisable species of butterfly. I tracked it down to where it had hidden and found it to be a Red Underwing moth: a large and very handsome species rarely seen flying during the day.



*Red Underwing*

Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 31-Aug-14 09:27 PM GMT

**Sunday 31st August:** With reasonable weather forecast today, I made an effort to see some Brown Hairstreaks without going too far from home. This meant a shortish drive down to Bookham Common, where I was lucky enough to find one last year. I parked in the Hundred Pound Bridge car park at midday and set off down the small path at right angles to the main track. Compared to last year, the bracken has spread enormously along this path, and combined with bindweed and encroaching bramble, the blackthorn in some places is becoming swamped. I started to see a few butterflies: Speckled Woods and a couple of Meadow Browns, followed by two or three Commas.



As I progressed to where the path runs between hedges next to a field, I spotted a fluttering of orange in the next patch of sunlight. Round the kink in

the path, there it was – a female Brown Hairstreak. It was a bit worn, lacking tails, but it briefly half-opened its wings before disappearing high into the hedge.



However, within five minutes, I caught sight of another female down on a bramble leaf. This one was in better condition, but wasted no time while the sun was shining, skipping off to some blackthorn low down where she wandered animatedly in and out of the twigs looking to lay. If the sun went in, she stopped dead – completely invisible to casual observation – and then a burst of sunshine would revive her activity. After a few minutes, she re-emerged and basked again, before disappearing on the field side of the blackthorn hedge, where there were many more egg-laying opportunities.







Unexpectedly, I had seen two Hairstreaks, and without really looking! I took a few moments to examine the younger blackthorn shoots nearer the ground, and within a short time, I had found an egg – only a foot above the ground at most. Another good result.



I walked on a bit to where the hedge next to the field peters out and is replaced by wildflowers, and soon came across a Common Blue or two and a Small Copper.



Pleased with a most successful outing, I ambled gently back down the path, encountering nothing more than a few more Speckled Woods and a Small Tortoiseshell.



However, just before the car park, there is a small pond near the eponymous Hundred Pound Bridge, very overgrown but currently with some of the rampant vegetation cut down. I saw a Comma down there, briefly jousting with something smaller, so went to investigate. The something else turned out to be a third Brown Hairstreak, which obligingly sat for a few minutes before flying a little way to investigate some low-growing blackthorn. After

emerging from here, it flew up into a tall piece of the same shrub (a tree, really) and stayed put.



From here it was less than fifty metres to the car, but astonishingly I saw a fourth Brown Hairstreak before I reached it. One appeared at ground level, fluttering for some distance over the grass and settling briefly on it at one point. Having reached my car before me, it flew vertically up into an oak tree and disappeared.



Four individual butterflies, an egg, and some interesting behaviour – quite a walk! 😊 (And Brown Hairstreak is my 50th species of 2014 too. 😊)

Dave

**EDIT:** I took some video of Hairstreak No.2 as she meandered through the blackthorn – and upon reviewing this I now realise I caught her in the act of laying the egg pictured above. now I'll just have to work through the process of posting the footage!

D.

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 31-Aug-14 10:27 PM GMT

Congrats on the big 50 Dave – I've never reached those heady heights 😊🍷 Some great reports recently with cracking shots of a great range of species, those Commas are especially lush 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 01-Sep-14 09:00 PM GMT

Thank you, Wurzel – I haven't seen a Wall yet, so maybe number 51 is still possible...

**31st August** continued... After the unexpectedly productive sojourn at Bookham, as I was halfway there anyway, I carried on to Denbies. The main surprise here was the appearance of a van selling tea, coffee and a whole variety of snacky food – that wasn't here last time! So, fortified with a cappuccino and a piece of flapjack I set off down the slope. At this stage of the season, numbers were very much depleted, but Chalkhill Blues were still to be found, though invariably rather worn.



Adonis Blues were less so, and some of the males still caught the eye with that glorious sky-blue.





I saw quite a few female Blues overall, but when they are as worn as these were, telling the three species apart I find very tricky. There were also a few Brown Argus and a few Small Heath, quite a number of Meadow Browns with several mating pairs seen, and even one or two Silver-spotted Skippers.





I spoke to a couple of chaps who intended to look for Brown Hairstreaks at the top margin of the hillside – I didn't encounter them again so don't know how successful they were.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Maximus, 01-Sep-14 09:13 PM GMT

Nice shots from Bookham and Denbies Dave, and a visit to Steyning might give you the 51 😊😊

Mike

## Re: millerd

by David M, 01-Sep-14 10:56 PM GMT

I never cease to be amazed at the sight of certain species in decent nick that have long since disappeared in south Wales.

Brown Argus have vanished and Meadow Browns are looking ragged here.

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-14 11:11 PM GMT

That is a great Silver Spot portrait Dave 🍷 Good luck with number 51 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 02-Sep-14 09:30 PM GMT

Thanks Mike – Steyning may be doable, definitely somewhere towards the south coast. Maybe I should wait for a third brood?

Things are hanging on in places down here, certainly, David – the Meadow Browns at Denbies were pretty fresh, by and large. Are they really one long emergence, not a second brood? Surely even the latest laid eggs from 2013 would have hatched long since and completed their life cycle well before now.

Thanks, Wurzel – nice to still see some Silver Spots some six weeks after the first ones were out. As well as possible Walls, do you think any Lulworths are left down near Swanage? I haven't seen them this year either.

Summer returned properly today, but I couldn't get away from work until four. At this time of year this left a very small window to see anything before the sun dipped low and the butterflies disappeared. I managed about an hour locally, and saw the same as at the weekend, with Whites and Speckled Woods predominating and a few Small Heaths and Common Blues making an appearance.



Only one Comma and one Red Admiral were in evidence. There seem to be a lot of fresh Small Whites at the moment – towards the end of my walk, I was disturbing them from their resting places in the brambles every few metres.



## Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-Sep-14 09:08 PM GMT

A Green-veined White was nearly on the doorstep when I arrived home this evening at half five.



I had seen a fresh-looking Holly Blue earlier in the day around some ivy very close to the office at Bedfont Lakes. Far too nice a day to be at work... 😞

Dave

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 03-Sep-14 10:49 PM GMT

Lovely Whites Dave 😊 The last Lulworth I saw was in mid August and it was pretty shabby looking although it wasn't at Durlston where they seem to last longer 😞 Your best bet would be to check the 'Daily Diary' on the Durlston website or maybe give them a ring? Good luck with it 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 06-Sep-14 06:50 PM GMT

No sign of any Lulworths left at Durlston by the look of it, Wurzel. 😞 Never mind – More effort needs to be made next year. 😊

**Saturday 6th September:** The sun started to filter through at lunchtime, so following the advice of Maximus, I thought I'd try for some more Graylings down at Pirbright. On the way down, where the A322 bypasses Lightwater, an unmistakeable Clouded Yellow flew across the road in front of me – good thing there was no traffic around! On arrival, I wandered gently all over the site, and though it was mostly warm bright overcast rather than true sunshine I did indeed find a few Graylings – perhaps half a dozen. They were very difficult to get close to as usual – or rather you could get very close, but you wouldn't actually know it until the butterfly launched itself from under your feet, up and away, jinking behind the gorse clumps and disappearing again. One pale wraith of an insect flew slightly differently, and turned out to be the most decrepit Small Tortoiseshell I've seen in quite a while.



Shortly afterwards, however, I finally tracked a Grayling to ground as a thicker bit of cloud came over.



I saw my first one here this year on 13th July, nearly two months ago – I had no idea they had such a long season – I'd have sought them out in September before. After this little bit of success, a bright orange blur whizzed across in front of me and turned into a Small Copper. It seemed quite content to fly, bask and nectar under the overcast skies.





There were one or two Green-veined Whites around as well.

Returning home, the sun made more of an effort, so I had a look at my local patch too. Speckled Woods continue to emerge all along the riverside path and elsewhere, and I probably saw a good dozen altogether.



A few Small Heaths were still fluttering low over the meadow area, and there were quite a few Small and Green-veined Whites: one of the latter was very yellow underneath, but sadly none was allowing any close approaches. This was unlike the last butterfly I saw, a Red Admiral patrolling one of the usual territories.



If I stood still in full sun, it repeatedly came and sat on me for a few seconds at a time, even settling briefly on my hand if I stuck my arm out. I must appear very tree-like...

Dave

## Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 06-Sep-14 10:07 PM GMT

### "millerd" wrote:

...No sign of any Lulworths left at Durlston by the look of it...

Dave

Hi Dave,

Just returned from Dorset this afternoon, visited Durlston a couple of times last week and didn't find any Lulworths there this year. The past couple of years they have still been around at this time albeit mostly rather faded.

Just catching up with your diary, great reports and interesting to see how things are doing in your neck of the woods.

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 06-Sep-14 11:55 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Dave, that Small Tort is practically an OAB 😊 On behalf of Dorset I apologize for the lack of Lulworths, we will try to do better next year 😊 Also does that Small Copper have traces of blue spots?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

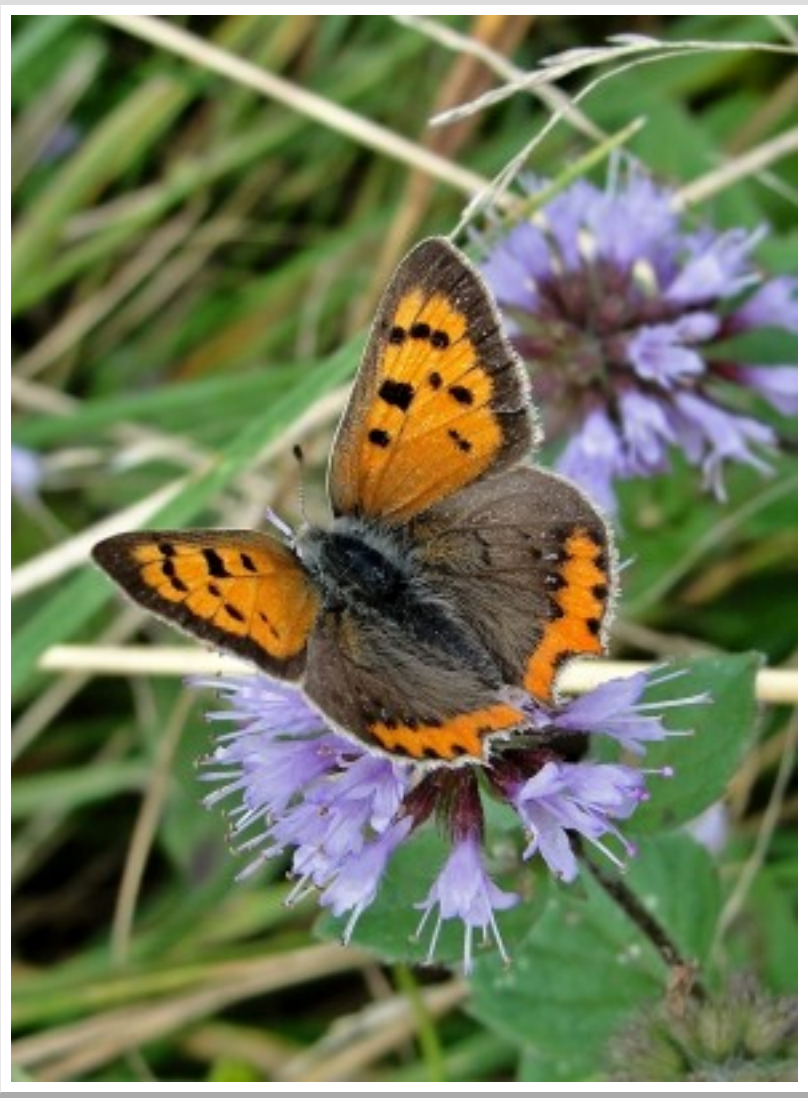
## Re: millerd

by millerd, 07-Sep-14 07:21 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments, chaps! Yes, Wurzel, that Small Copper does have some blue scales, and I saw another like it today. They don't seem to be that unusual, though really significant spots probably are. (Dorset is forgiven, by the way. 😊)

**Sunday 7th September:** the sun came out at midday, as the trailing cloudy edge of a defunct cold front moved very slowly southeast. So slowly in fact that I overtook it again crawling along the M25 down to Bookham. My success with Brown Hairstreaks was not repeated today, though by two o'clock conditions were warm, sunny and absolutely windless. I did however see a few Small Coppers: I think there are three different individuals here, one of them with some small blue spots.



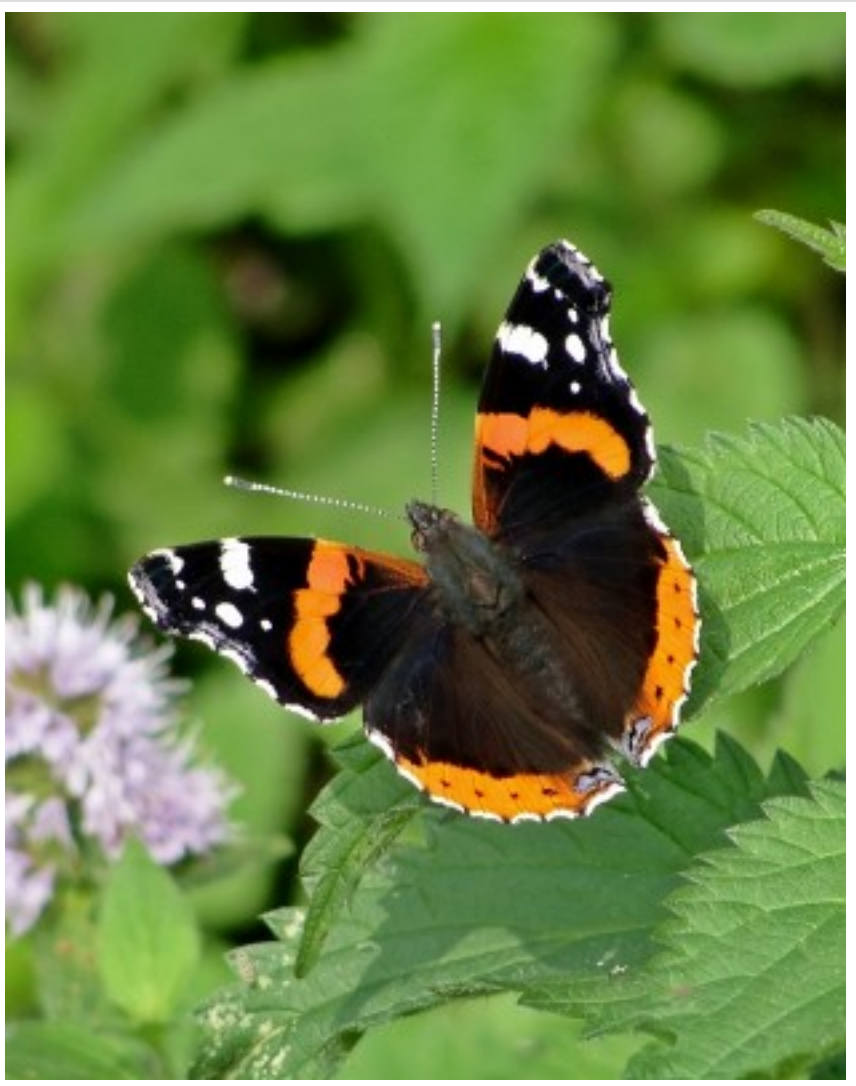






There were also a couple of Speckled Woods, a Green-veined White, a Peacock, a Red Admiral, and a Comma.







**Part Two:**

Like last weekend, I carried on down to Denbies, and the sun had managed to get there ahead of me. There were still plenty of fresh-looking Meadow Browns and some fairly new Small Heaths, but everything else seemed to be well on the way to worn out now. The female Blues were especially difficult to identify, but I think one Adonis was recognisable.



There were half a dozen or so male Adonis still gleaming brightly as well, and even a couple of male Chalkhills that were just about flying.





I saw nothing that I would have said was a Common Blue, but there were a few Brown Argus around.



I did find one female Silver-spotted Skipper, which was alternately nectaring and looking to lay eggs.



She eventually found a tiny tuft of suitable grass in a rabbit scrape.



Returning to the top of Steers Field for a cup of tea (the refreshment van was there again), I spotted a Painted Lady basking on the brambles. It looked far from new and I suppose could be a recent arrival on the winds from the continent.



A bit further on there was also a Comma, sitting on a faded bramble leaf looking very autumnal.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 08-Sep-14 08:39 AM GMT

That's an impressive collection of species for early September, Dave.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 08-Sep-14 09:51 PM GMT

I agree with David that is an impressive selection for September Dave – especially a Silver Spot in such good nick 😊 Also is it just me or is that Painted

Lady a pretty dark example?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

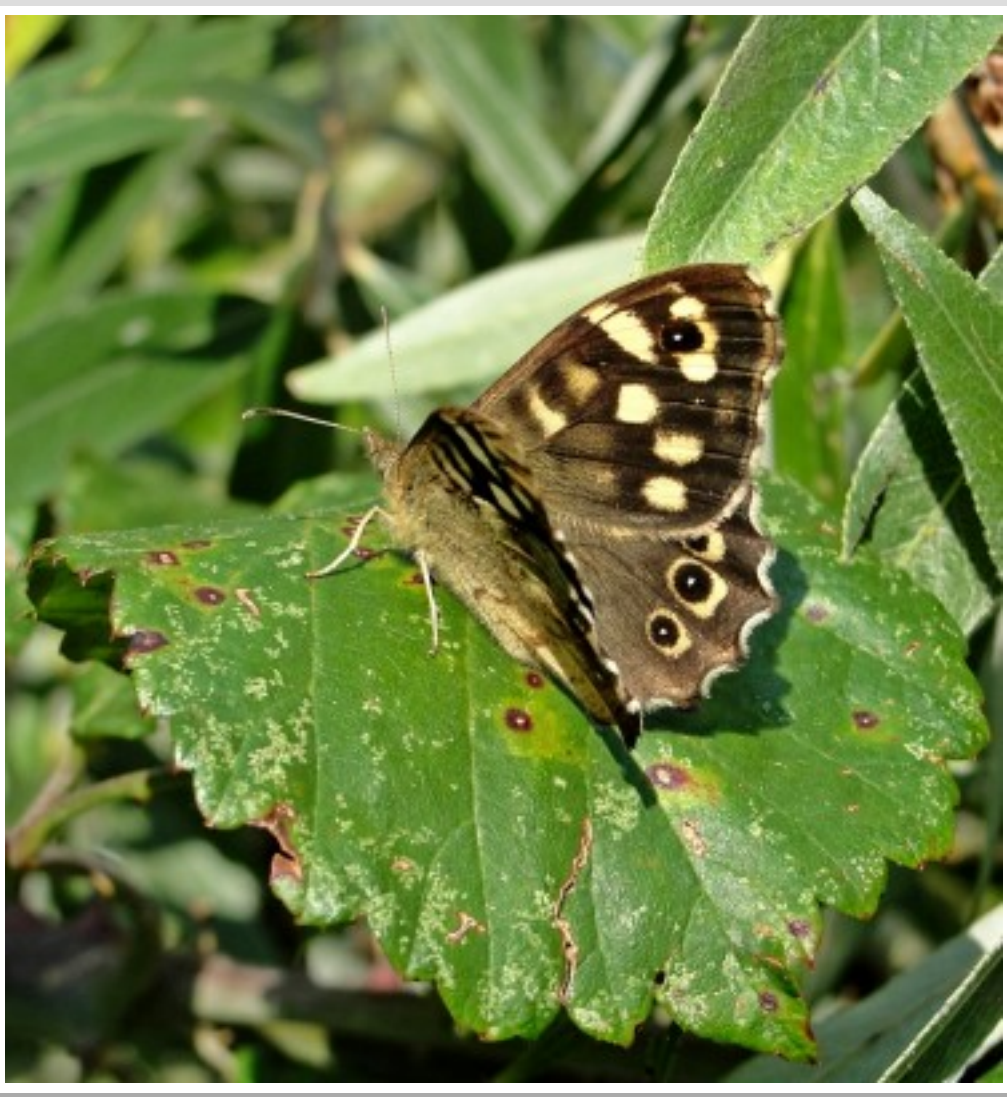
## Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Sep-14 09:03 PM GMT

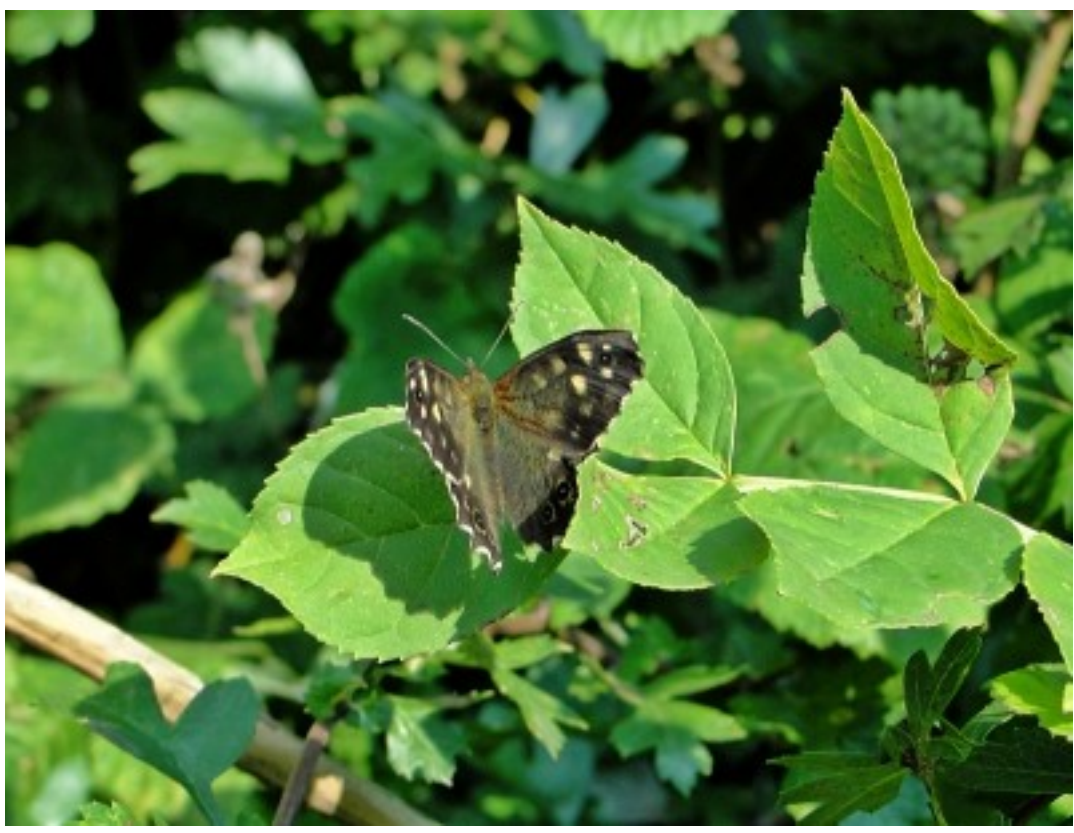
It has been good to see so many species still going strong, and the continuing good weather will no doubt prolong things even further. Looking back, that was quite a dusky Painted Lady, but I've seen so few lately that I had forgotten what they usually look like – and it was a bit worn too.

**Wednesday 10th September:** only the briefest look locally late in the day after work. Briefer than intended in fact, as my normal walk has suddenly been obstructed by a rather unexpected encampment of folk who were thoroughly suspicious of me breezing along nearby with a camera. I can't see Heathrow Airport being happy with the situation for long (it's their land I believe), so we shall see what happens. Anyway, back to the butterflies. There were half a dozen very fresh Speckled Woods by the River Colne, plus a couple Whites, which interestingly enough were both Large ones.





There was also just one tired old Red Admiral, and that was it. One of the Speckled Woods was darker than usual with reduced spotting, but didn't come close enough or open up enough for a decent photo.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 12-Sep-14 10:58 PM GMT

Great shots of the Specklies Dave 😊 I never realized how much variation they seem to show, something I'll have to have a look at next year along with Hedge Browns and Meadow Browns... 🤔 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 13-Sep-14 09:28 PM GMT

They are worth a bit of study, Wurzel. Taken for granted most of the time until there's not much else around. 😊

Friday 12th September: I had a chance to pop briefly into Aston Rowant en route to pick up a son from Cherwell Valley. It was warm and mostly overcast, and I didn't see a great deal. However, at the bottom of the slope, there were Brown Argus at regular intervals, easily a dozen in all.







There were a few Blues as well, mostly Common Blues, but I think one was a female Adonis by the deep hue of the blue scales and hints of chequering on what remained of the fringes – easier to see in life than on the photos I took.





I also saw a couple of Small Heath, and that was about it.



I would like to have spent a bit more time as the sun was about to come out, but I probably would have just seen more of the same.

Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Sep-14 10:27 PM GMT

**Sunday 14th September:** Firstly a walk along the Thames Path at Runnymede at lunchtime, and not a lot flying. One Red Admiral tore along the line of the river (downstream) at one point as I walked along concentrating on the blackthorn hedge that lies between the path and the Thames on the Surrey bank. I have yet to see a Brown Hairstreak here, though the hedge looks ideal. Today however I did see a bright orange insect fly up from low down and disappear over the top of the hedge, but I've seen too many false alarms to be certain of its identity. I think a winter egg search is the only sure way of knowing whether they are here. Immediately after this, a Meadow Brown fluttered up from the grass, but that was about all.



Returning home, a brief look near to home threw up more and more Speckled Woods, including one (The same? Another?) with the spotting rather obscured.



*Spotting obscured somewhat*





There were at least four Red Admirals, several Large Whites, and at one point a fresh-looking Holly Blue was disturbed by a Speckled Wood and disappeared into the ivy generously festooning many of the trees. Still worth going out as often as possible while the sunshine lasts (though to be fair, all the above sightings were made in bright rather than sunny conditions). I saw a Speckled Wood yesterday too, very close to home, but all I could do was watch it fly unerringly into the clutches of a large (and by now, no doubt larger) garden spider.



*Untimely end*

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 15-Sep-14 10:37 PM GMT

The untimely end of the Specklie is made even less bearable as the underside looks so beautiful – almost purple by the border 😞 Still that's the way of nature, interesting variation shown by the first Specklie BTW 🍷 .

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Sep-14 06:02 PM GMT

It was a very fresh one, sad to say, Wurzel. I noticed afterwards that the colours of the butterfly and of the spider are pretty well the same shades of brown – there must be a reason for this!

I imagine the dusky Speckled Wood is within the boundaries of natural variation: there is far more than you'd think, looking at all the photos posted recently.

**Tuesday 16th September:** Very warm today, and I was able to pop out from work into Bedfont Lakes Country Park at lunchtime. Initially, all I saw was a Small Heath, a Meadow Brown, a Speckled Wood and some Large and Green-veined Whites. However, the sun came out at the time I reached the western end of the path parallel with the railway, and the unmown areas of grass and flowers immediately came to life. I saw at least half a dozen fresh Common Blues, probably a third brood as the second brood were looking tired when I was last here four weeks ago.

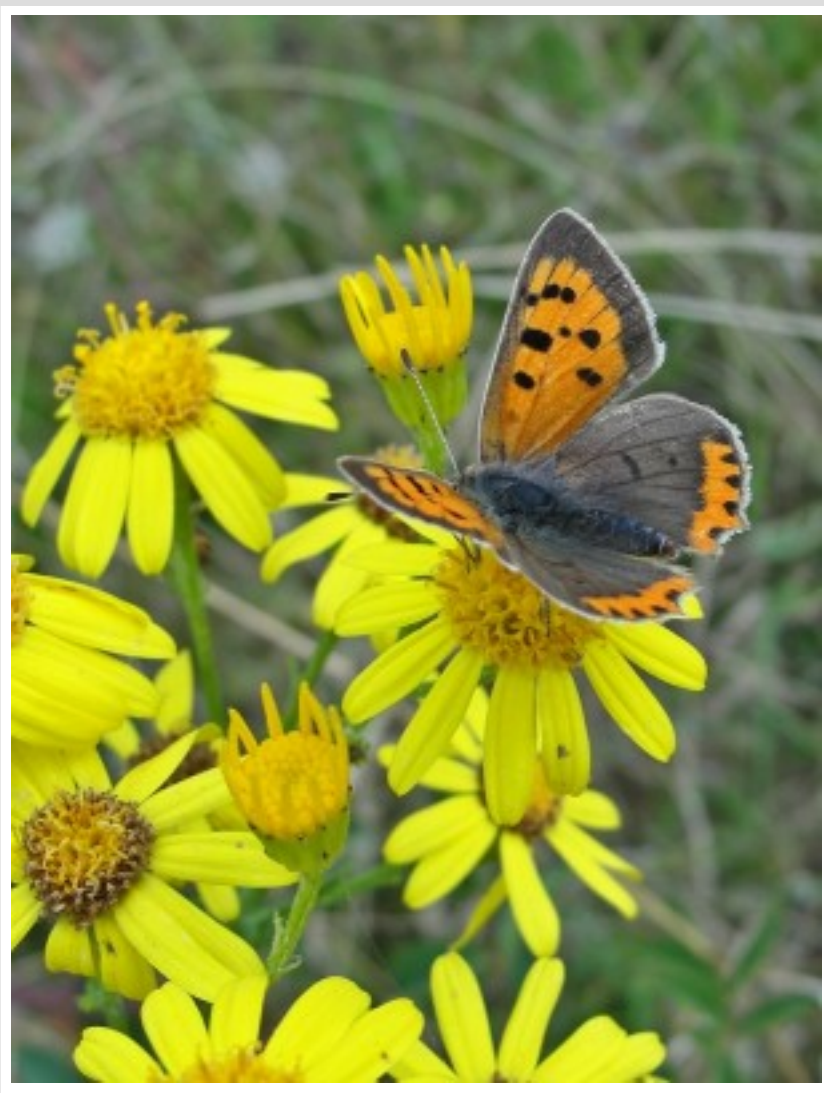




The males were chasing each other vigorously about in twos and threes, completely overlooking the presence of a couple of females. Caught up in the tussles was an elderly male Brown Argus, resolutely defending his patch.



Finally, around the fringes of the conflict I spotted a fairly new Small Copper.



On the way back, a Peacock flew strongly in the opposite direction. Well worth nipping out for. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 16-Sep-14 08:05 PM GMT

Great reports lately Dave, good to see stuff still hanging in there 😊

"millerd" wrote:

...I imagine the dusky Speckled Wood is within the boundaries of natural variation: there is far more than you'd think, looking at all the photos posted recently...

Dave

I have noticed a lot of variation whilst watching and photographing the Specklies in my garden, in fact I tell individuals apart by differences in markings to keep track of them. The later brood(s) tend to be darker than the spring emergence but I have seen darker ones in the spring too. The males are always (usually) darker than the females as well.

Cheers,

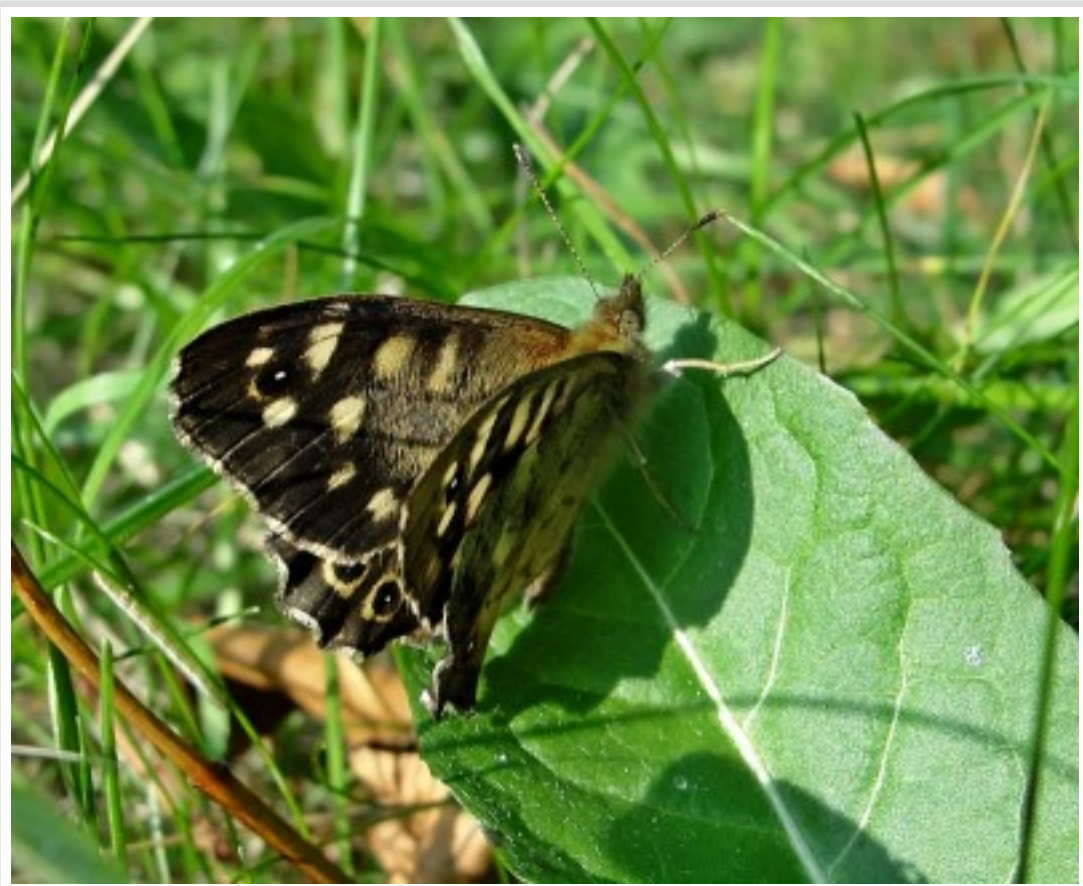
Neil.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Sep-14 09:45 PM GMT

Thanks, Neil. I follow all your Speckled Wood postings and the variety you get just in the garden is amazing. Your photos are stunning as well.

**Thursday 18th September:** I saw a good number of Speckled Woods on my local patch mid-afternoon today – a nice round dozen in fact.







With things generally tailing off now, it has actually become possible to count everything with a degree of accuracy. The one-two-three-many approach I end up adopting for most of the season is no longer necessary. 😊 So – the walk started with another Holly Blue fluttering high around a large area of ivy, followed immediately by a couple of tussling Red Admirals. Moving swiftly out to the meadow area (the itinerant folk who had lodged across the route for a week have as expected been moved off Heathrow's land...), I encountered a couple of Small Whites, three Small Heaths, and two female Meadow Browns.





One of the Meadow Browns finally stayed on the ground a while, and looking closely now at the photo she appears to have been in egg-laying posture. I wish I noticed at the time, so I could have searched for the egg.



The return journey threw up most of the Speckled Woods, a Large White high on a wild buddleia, and two more Red Admirals.





Dave

**Re: millerd**

by David M, 18-Sep-14 10:01 PM GMT

Aah! Butterflies feeding on ivy. That's always the precursor to the oncoming of winter.

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 18-Sep-14 10:14 PM GMT

Please don't say things like that, David! 😊 It was 26 degrees here today, so winter felt a very long way off! (You are right, of course. When the ivy flowers, summer is definitely over.)

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by David M, 18-Sep-14 10:31 PM GMT

Things warm here too, Dave. It's a perplexing night here in south Wales. It has that air of an evening spent abroad when you meander back to your hotel at 11pm and it's still ridiculously warm and humid.

There's no wind, my bedroom window is wide open for the night and I reckon it's still at least 19 degrees outside.

Definitely not what one expects of a late September night.

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 18-Sep-14 11:02 PM GMT

You did better than me today Dave – I could only manage a brief Small Tort and a single Red Admiral on Ivy 🍀 I hope the warm weather lasts until the weekend so I could squeeze in one more trip...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-Sep-14 11:05 PM GMT

It's another warm evening here, David. After the brief but violent storm last night it came out very warm and sunny after lunch and possibly even more humid with all the puddles around. There were still storms in the distance.



With barbecue scents wafting around now, it feels more like a Mediterranean than a Middlesex night.

**Friday 19th September:** after work I went to the nearest place worth a visit: Bedfont Lakes CP again. With 24 degrees at five o'clock and the sun strong, the butterflies had not quite settled down – in fact they were posing nicely. I found the Small Copper I'd seen three days ago and it showed no obvious signs of wear in the interim. The shots I managed today were (in my humble opinion 😊) rather more artistic, though.







I saw a few more Common Blues, eight today altogether and including two females.







In amongst them were at least two Brown Argus, neither of which were the male seen on Tuesday. Despite their advanced age, the male was still frantically pestering the female, but to no avail. Amazing energy!







There were also a couple of Small Heaths, one rather old, but another fairly fresh, and nectaring on ragwort.



This may be an evil weed in some eyes, but late butterflies can't do without it. The Small Copper returned to the same plant many times, as did the Brown Argus. A couple of Whites (one Small, one Large) completed the picture, which was in the end an outing without a Speckled Wood seen...

Or so I thought – however, I spotted one at the roadside near the cargo terminal as I waited at lights on the way home. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 20-Sep-14 12:24 PM GMT

Love the Small Copper photo's Dave, the very last one is super, your also very lucky to see them they've vanished from around here now 🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 20-Sep-14 11:17 PM GMT

Thank you, Goldie – I liked that one too. It is lovely to keep seeing them.

**Saturday September 20th:** ten minutes of sun today – I rushed out the door and managed to count 14 Speckled Woods, a Red Admiral and a Large White before the gap in the clouds closed.



Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 21-Sep-14 07:58 PM GMT

**Sunday 21st September:** My first opportunity for a drive out a bit further in decent weather for a while, and probably my last chance to see another species this year. I therefore headed off down to High & Over, on the hills behind Seaford, with a walk to the coast and back and Wall Browns in mind. The path from the car park to the viewpoint was populated with three or four Speckled Woods, and at the viewpoint itself, there were two Walls flying around in the strong wind, never settling for a moment. I was hopeful of seeing some more nearer the coast, so I set off down the hill. As it turned out, I didn't see another butterfly until I was past the pub at the bottom (Cuckmere Inn nee Golden Galleon) and on the path to the sea alongside the river. Here I saw a Red Admiral, and then two more Walls. One of them settled a distance away (as is customary!) and all I could manage was a long shot – a male.



I carried on to the beach (where there were a couple of Large Whites) and then round and up the path further away from the river. This was quite sheltered and there were a good half a dozen Speckled Woods here, a Comma basking high on a tree trunk, two Meadow Browns, a Small Copper and a

Small Heath.



A little further on I disturbed another Wall, a female, which was almost cooperative with photos though still denied any close approach.





After some refreshment, the remainder of the walk back up to the car was beset by cloud, and only a Green-veined White and a further selection of Speckled Woods was seen.



The days just aren't long enough any more!

However, it was a successful day, and I had seen my 51st species of the year. This has to be the third brood of Walls, and they all looked new. If the weather stays reasonable, I imagine they'll last into October.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 21-Sep-14 09:47 PM GMT

A fantastic haul for the year Dave, congrats on the Wall/number 51 😊 and great shots too 📷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 22-Sep-14 08:39 PM GMT

Hi Dave, glad to see you got your Wall Brown(s), I was thinking that I was going to miss them myself this year until I saw a couple in Dorset the other week 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: millerd

by Maximus, 22-Sep-14 09:31 PM GMT

Great that you got your 51 species, Dave 😊

Mike

## Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 23-Sep-14 03:19 PM GMT

You lucky thing Dave still seeing Wall Butterflies, 🍷🍷 we've had great weather here no rain for a couple of weeks and we missed the storms but still the amount of Butterflies spotted is low, mostly we've got Red Admiral's and Speckled Wood, we did have a slight frost Sunday morning and a couple of cloudy days but nothing to warrant the disappearance so quickly of say butterflies like the Tortoiseshell etc which have been few and far between around here.

I can only think it's because they came out early, Your shots of the female Wall are great and I'm really envious 🍷 Goldie 😊

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Sep-14 06:12 PM GMT

Thank you all. The 50 mark seems to be about the realistic limit – I find I have to trade off making one effort to see something against not seeing something else. And every year works out differently.

It was good to see the Walls, as I'd missed them in at least two spots earlier in the year and was heavily reliant on a third brood and well-timed decent weather. I just wish they were as widespread as they used to be.

The situation here is the same with the Small Tortoiseshells, Goldie – they and the Commas and Peacocks have all disappeared into hibernation, just leaving lots of Speckled Woods and a few Red Admirals. I had to go 75 miles or so to see the Walls! However...

**Wednesday 24th September:** The sun was back out this afternoon after some rare overnight rain – a bit cooler perhaps, but still 18 degrees when I popped into Bedfont Lakes CP after work around half four. Today, I had no luck finding the Small Copper seen last week, but there were a few Common Blues around and one Meadow Brown. The Blues were already roosting...





...but two of them were awake enough bask a little first. One of these was probably not all that old, but had suffered somewhat during its brief life, judging by its wings.



The other wasn't scarred at all, and really was a lovely sight for so late in the year.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Pauline, 26-Sep-14 05:40 PM GMT

Well done with the Walls Dave – I've struggled to see them this year – but I really like the GVW shot 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 26-Sep-14 07:32 PM GMT

Thank you, Pauline – one day I shall get some shots of Walls as good as Neil's recent Mill Hill ones! The GVW was a bonus – it plonked itself right in front of me as the sun went in, but chose its background well. 😊

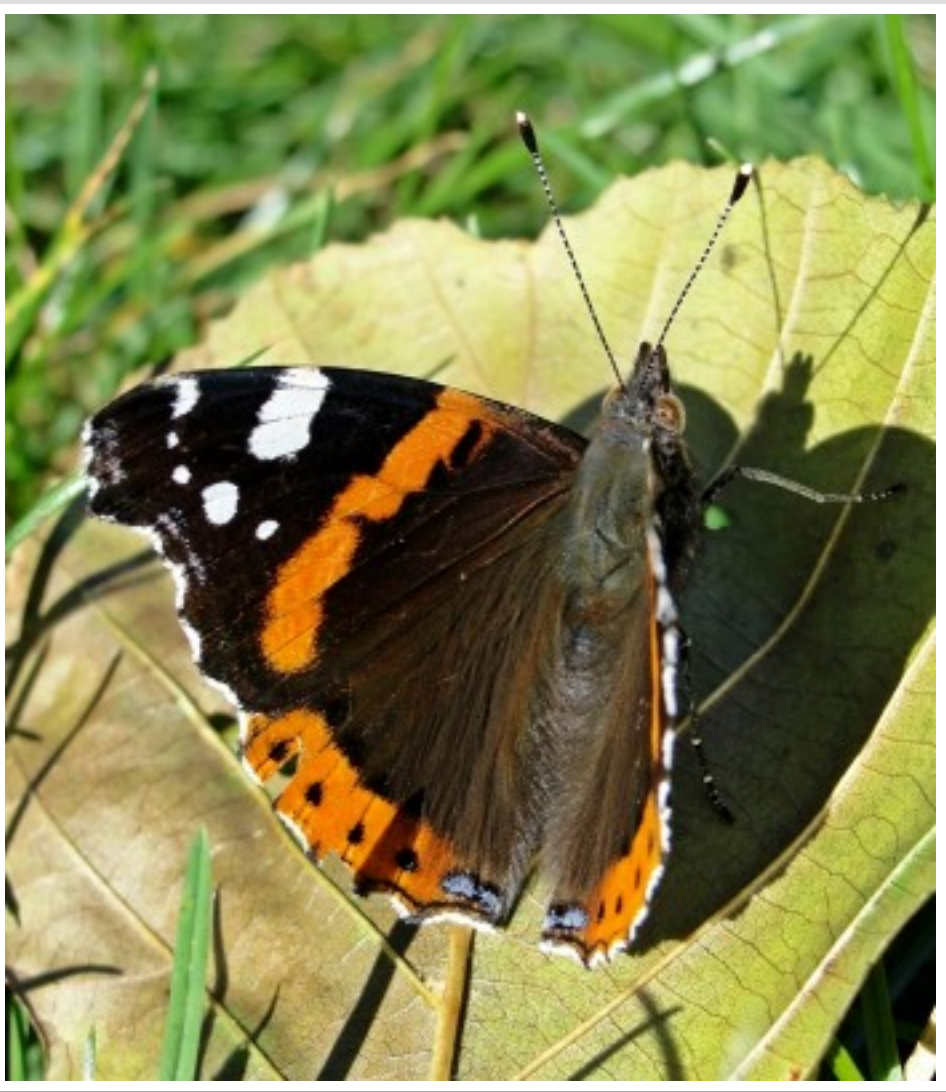
**Friday 26th September:** Continuing warm round here, and the sun put in appearance after three o'clock. I was home in time for a walk round my local patch between four and five (the sun really is low by five o'clock, however warm it is, unfortunately). Nevertheless, during the hour, I managed to see one Green-veined White in a straggly bit of wild buddleia, one male Large White investigating bindweed flowers draping some riverside brambles, and two Small Heaths out on the grassy areas but looking rather tired now.

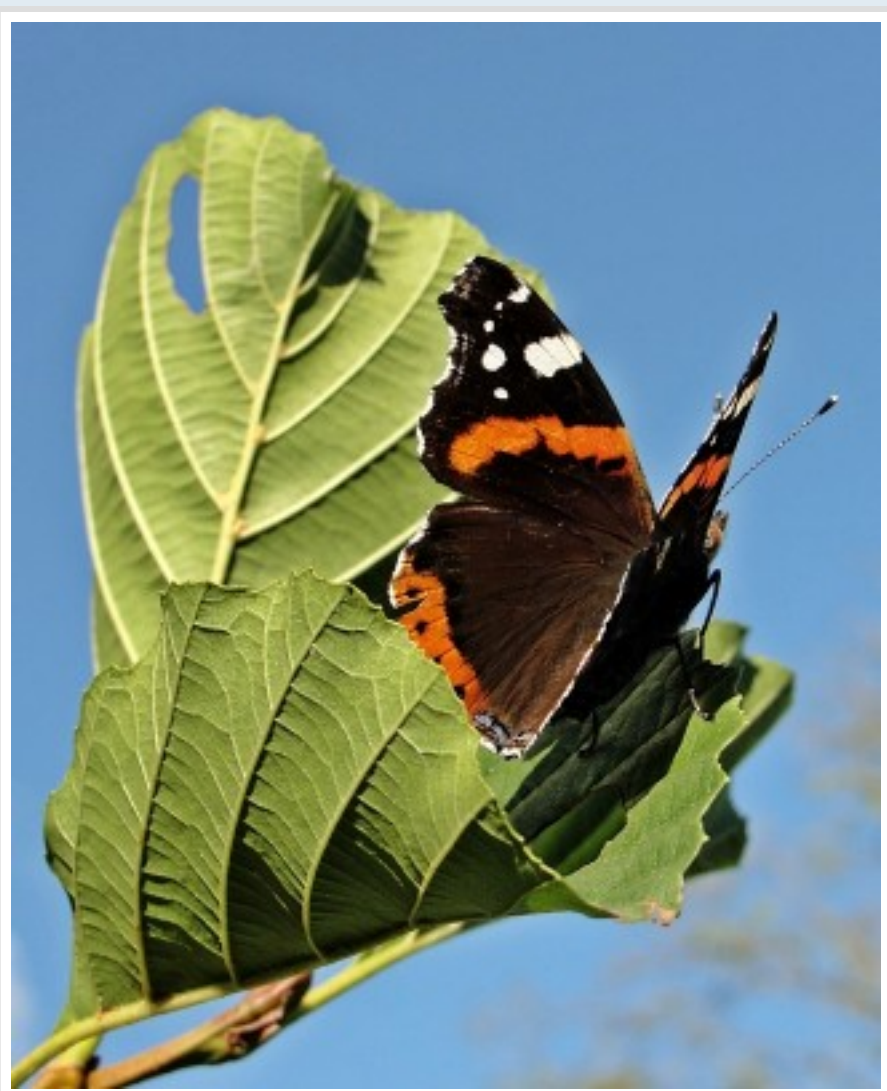


On top of this, there were four Red Admirals nectaring on ivy or scuffling with Speckled Woods over the best bit of sunshine...









...and no less than 17 of those Speckled Woods altogether. This has to be the largest single count of this species I have made here at any time since I first walked round this patch in 2007. They are beginning to show their age, though; I also found one in deep shade burrowing in the grass, which I took to be a female laying eggs. Almost all the rest were spiralling in threes and fours or perching high in various trees to catch the dying sun.





However, the biggest surprise after some weeks without them was the sight of two entirely separate Peacocks. No doubt the current weather pattern had somehow disturbed them from their hibernation niches.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 28-Sep-14 08:42 PM GMT

A mostly cloudy couple of hours at Ryton Country Park on Saturday 27th with no butterflies at all. A quick look at the blackthorn revealed no Brown Hairstreak eggs this year (unlike this time last year). There are always some disappointments.

**Sunday 28th September:** walking back from breakfast at the local café in Stanwell Moor, I finally spotted a new third brood Holly Blue before disturbing it. I managed a couple of shots before my none-too-subtle attempts to coax it into opening its wings by shading it merely sent it up into a tree where it looked down disdainfully.



Elsewhere in a very brief look locally I saw a Peacock, a Small White, three Red Admirals and half-a-dozen Speckled Woods.



Elliot and I went a bit later in the day down to Box Hill. Sun and temperatures nudging 24 degrees made it seem like July, but despite a walk down to the stepping stones and back via Burford Spur, we saw nothing other than a couple of Speckled Woods – and then two Red Admirals back at the car park.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 29-Sep-14 07:33 PM GMT

#### "millerd" wrote:

A mostly cloudy couple of hours at Ryton Country Park on Saturday 27th with no butterflies at all. A quick look at the blackthorn revealed no Brown Hairstreak eggs this year (unlike this time last year). There are always some disappointments.

Dave

Hi Dave,

Unfortunately Saturday was a bit gloomy up this way all day 😞

I have not seen any Brown Hairstreak sightings from Ryton at all this year, a bit worrying.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 29-Sep-14 11:10 PM GMT

Great reports Dave, I've been doing some catching up as I've been snowed under at work 😞 Great shots of the Red Admirals but the stand out butterfly has to be the Holly Blue, it looks so fresh for September 🤩😊🌿 Still trying to catch up on my PD, maybe by Christmas I'll have gotten there 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 30-Sep-14 05:04 PM GMT

Hi! Dave, I don't think the Butterflies up North think about a third Brood 😊 I wish they did 😊  
Love the Holly Blue nice to see, not seen one since the Spring Goldie 😊

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-Oct-14 05:36 PM GMT

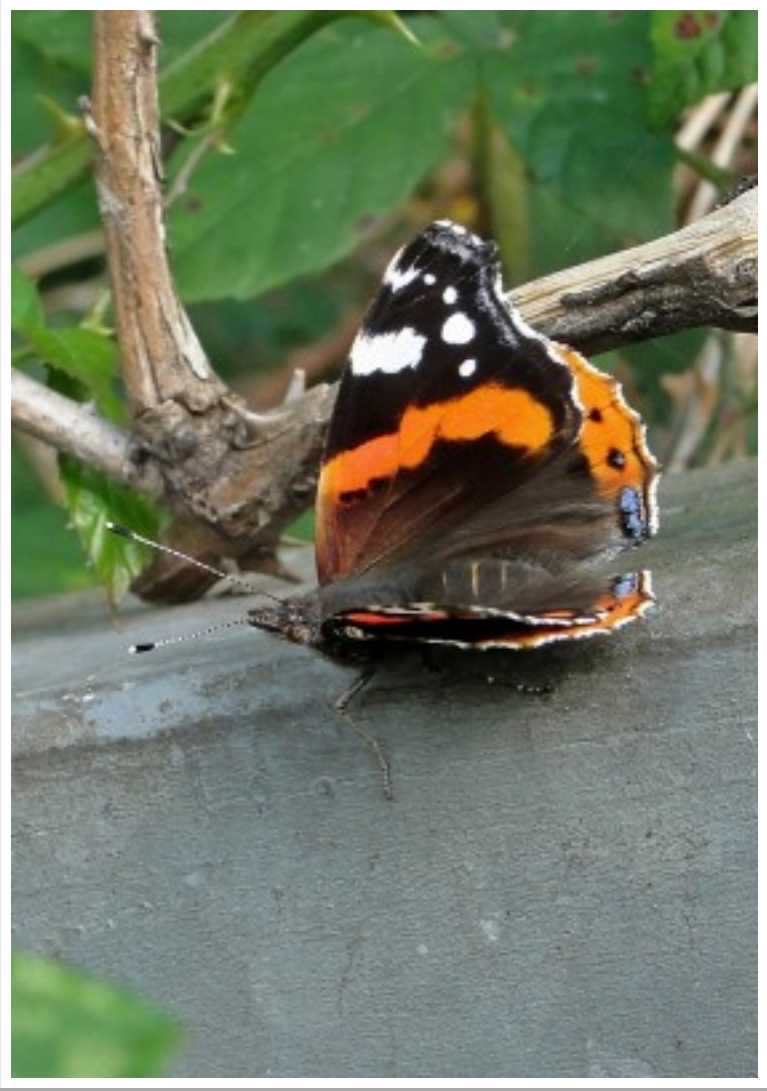
That's a shame about the Brown Hairstreaks at Ryton, Neil. If I pop in during the winter I'll look out for eggs.

Thanks, Wurzel and Goldie. Amazingly another Holly Blue today, even better than the last. I've seen them almost every time I've gone out locally, from April onwards. Very reliable in these parts! 😊 It would be good if it took until Christmas for you to catch up, Wurzel – it'll brighten up those long dark damp evenings... 😊

**Friday 3rd October:** Another splendid sunny and warm day straight out of summer. With the forecasts universally agreed that tomorrow will mark a big change in the weather (the season, even), I had to escape work and head on out round my local patch here on the western fringes of Heathrow. As you might expect, I saw half a dozen Red Admirals and around the same number of Speckled Woods. The former were resplendent and new-looking, but the latter were a bit on the tatty side now. However, they were full of life, chasing each other around in prolonged spiralling flights high into the trees. There was not a great deal else numerically, but early on a Holly Blue joined a couple of Speckled Woods in one of their sorties, and there were some Whites: two Large, one Small and one Green-veined. I was surprised to find a couple of Small Heaths hanging on in the meadow area, and then finally I spotted another Holly Blue down low on a thistle, deigning to open its wings just a little for the camera. That's definitely an October first for me!











*A glorious sight for early October!*

Just previewing the photos, I notice that the third Red Admiral above has the extra white spot – but only on one side. The second one has one on each wing, and the first one none. However, the first one has noticeably more blue in the corner of the hindwings, including blue centres to the black spots further in. Endless variety to look at...

Dave

### **Re: millerd**

by Pauline, 03-Oct-14 06:04 PM GMT

Great shot of the Holly Blue Dave – it looks in fantastic condition too 🍷 You could count on one hand the few I have seen this year. 😊

### **Re: millerd**

by David M, 03-Oct-14 09:22 PM GMT

That Holly Blue in October would be noteworthy for timing alone, but for it to appear so fresh makes it even more satisfying.

### **Re: millerd**

by Goldie M, 04-Oct-14 01:40 PM GMT

I second Pauline, One seen only this year , lovely shots of all the Butterflies Goldie 😊

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 04-Oct-14 02:01 PM GMT

Thank you, Pauline and Goldie! I've been lucky with Holly Blues locally this year, seeing the first one on 8th April and then regularly ever since. Not in any great numbers, perhaps, but they've been around most times I've been out. The habitat round here is good, with quite a bit of holly in the hedgerows and plenty of ivy everywhere. I hope you both have more luck next year. 😊

Nevertheless, as you point out, David, October sightings are not particularly common. The literature does acknowledge a third brood in a prolonged warm season, and I have seen recent reports from elsewhere this year as well. Still, a shiny new Holly Blue is a delightful sight at any time of year. 😊

**Saturday 4th October:** It was still sunny and pleasantly warm at nine this morning, so I popped out nearby. You could see the clouds ominously massing out to the west and the breeze was getting up. However, I quickly found a few Red Admirals alternately basking and soaring about, plus a couple of Speckled Woods gyrating in a sheltered sunny spot.



*A last chance to bask in the warm*



*Taken from a distance: making the most of the sunshine*



*A nice underside*

This was to be a last glimpse of summer before autumn barged its way in an hour later... by ten o'clock it was cloudy and noticeably cooler; by eleven it

was drizzling and by twelve it was pouring down, dark and cold. An amazing clear-cut change of season and predicted with uncanny accuracy several days ago by the Met Office.



*Summer departs...*



*... and Autumn rolls in*

With a bit of sunshine in the weeks ahead (even if it's a fair bit cooler) no doubt Red Admirals will still be around, but I'm not so sure about the Speckled Woods.

Dave

### **Re: millerd**

by trevor, 04-Oct-14 08:38 PM GMT

Hi, Millerd,

Who cares about Red Admirals with extra white spots when you have a Holly Blue with its wings open. 🍷

And what's more a beautiful shot too!. Well done.

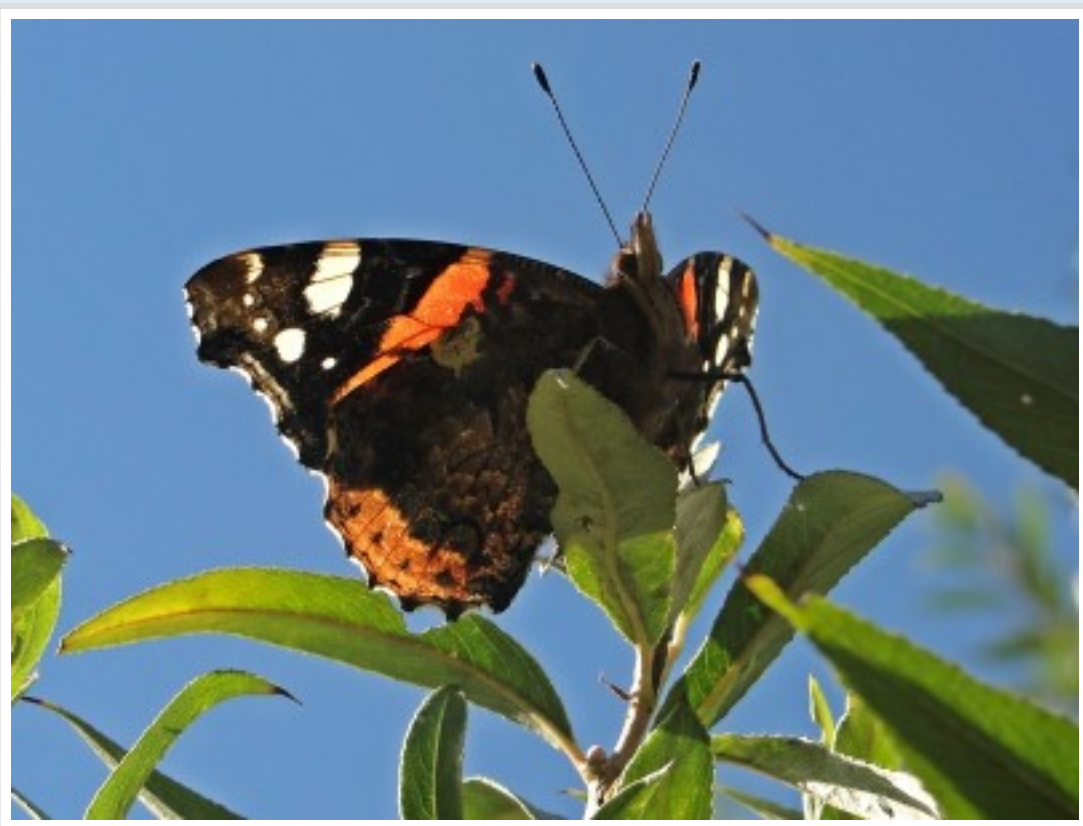
All the best TREVOR

### **Re: millerd**

by millerd, 04-Oct-14 11:38 PM GMT

Thanks, Trevor. I'm beginning to realise what a lucky shot that was to bring the season to a close (or nearly so). 😊

It turns out my day wasn't quite finished today – the rain cleared around half past three, leaving brilliant blue sky and temperatures of only about 12 degrees. I just had to look and see whether any Red Admirals would be tempted out. They were, of course: I saw two, plus a Speckled Wood and strange to say (since I hadn't seen one for a while) a Comma perched high up in an ash tree.



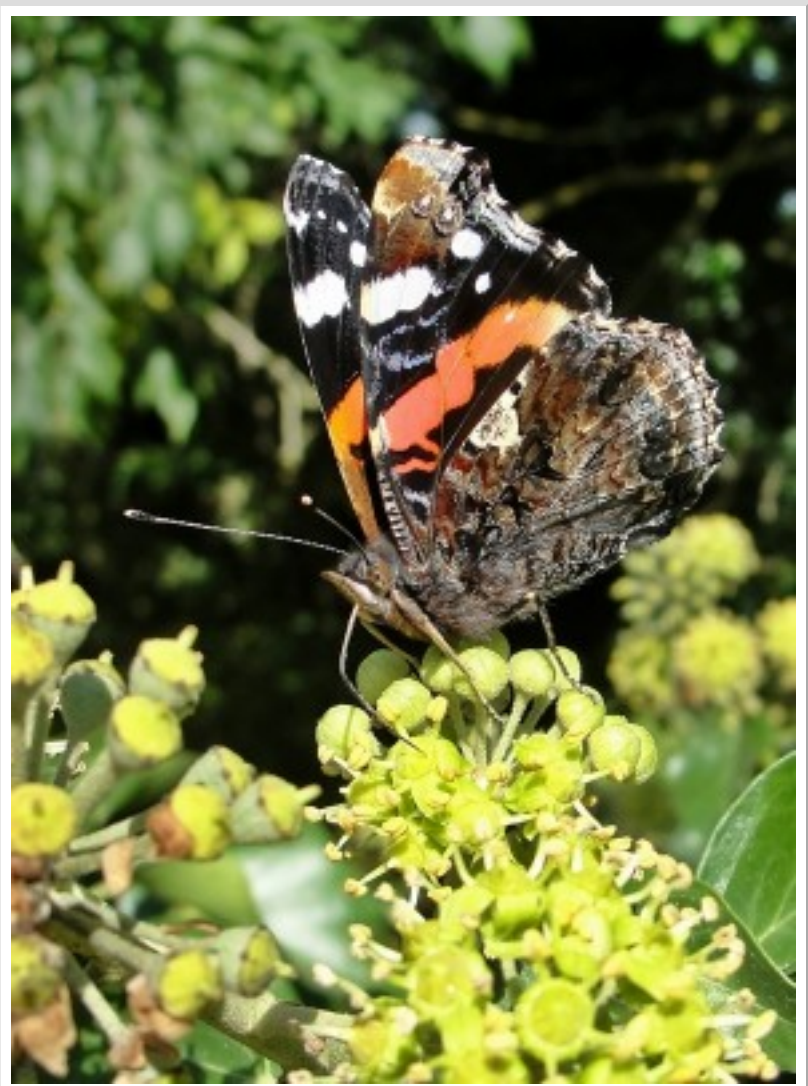
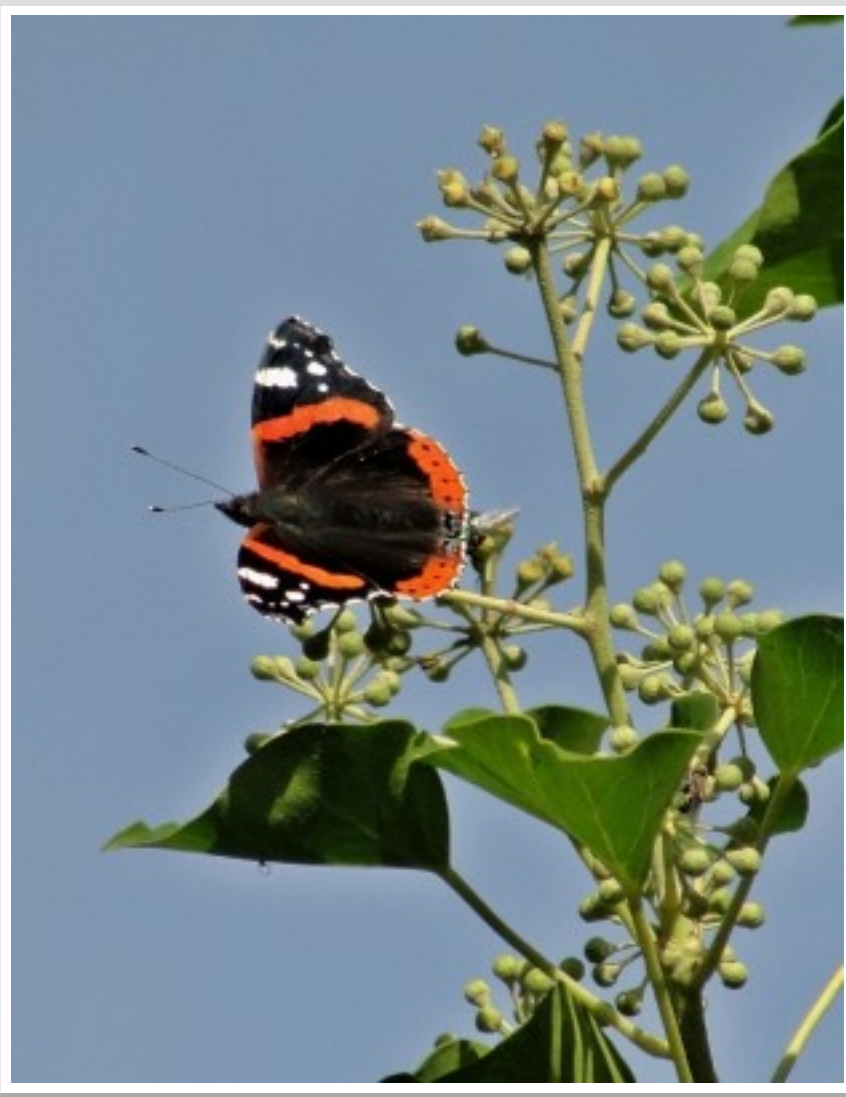
It's now really cold outside – I wonder what will be around in the morning?

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-Oct-14 04:12 PM GMT

Well, to answer my own question... The morning of Sunday 5th October brought lots of sunshine, but at ten this morning it was only 8 degrees instead of the 18 at the same time yesterday. However, I should know by now that for butterflies, sunshine is much more important than the actual air temperature, particularly if it is calm and pockets of warmth can build up. At just before midday, I set off round my local patch once again, the shirt sleeves of yesterday morning replaced by three layers! Very quickly, I found a couple of Red Admirals on a large patch of ivy, and then after a while, came across another lower down and relatively easy to get close too. This one looked small, and pretty new – but then all those I've seen lately looked new.



A couple of whites ambled along the hedgerows, and for once one stopped just within range. As suspected, it was a male Small White. After a while you do notice that Small and Green-veined do not fly quite the same, but for the life of me I can't describe exactly what that difference is...



Continuing round the loop, several Speckled Woods flitted in the sunshine, stopping to sunbathe more frequently than recently, and keeping well out of the shade. One individual was nectaring up on the ivy – not something I've seen before.



I caught up with a lady taking photos of swans on the river, and we ended up chatting about what there was of interest around. She liked wildlife in general but took an interest in dragonflies. I explained I was looking for butterflies, so she told me that a few minutes earlier a shiny blue one had been down on the path, but all she had snapped was a white splodge. She carried on: I stayed, knowing that Holly Blue males when taking minerals often return to the same spot for hours on end. I was right, as moments later, the Holly Blue returned to the path, taking particular interest in a large patch of horse dung. I observed it for around half an hour in all, and identified its routine. After taking minerals from the dung or the path for several minutes, it would fly up and settle on the nettles at the side of the path. After another minute, it would slowly open its wings and bask. At around maximum extent, it would then twitch, fly off and flutter up and down the path before settling back down to slurp up some more goodies. I watched this sequence repeat five or six times (about every five minutes I suppose). The only deviation was when a passing family disturbed it and the basking took place higher up on the opposite side of the path. I assume that whilst taking on minerals, with wings closed, the relatively cold air today caused the butterfly

to need to warm up – so it flew up to sun itself. With less heat in the sunshine than at other times of the year, it had to open up quite a lot to do this. Once warmed, back to the path it went... and repeat! In the end I had to drag myself away, leaving a lovely butterfly happily sitting atop a pile of manure. Something we've all done, I'm sure... 😊  
Half an hour with a very obliging Holly Blue led to a lot of photos, for which I won't apologise!





*A completely different angle to the sun – startlingly blue!*







After all that I did see another two Red Admirals, and finally a Comma (probably the one I'd glimpsed late on yesterday).



Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 05-Oct-14 08:12 PM GMT

Hi Millerd,  
You have done it again! but even better this time. Those Holly Blue shots are some of the best ive ever seen, and it is in superb condition, it looks like the same specimen as the other day.  
All the best TREVOR.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 05-Oct-14 08:44 PM GMT

👍👍👍 Holly Blue in such great condition!? 🍷🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 05-Oct-14 09:58 PM GMT

Hi Dave, great reports and some superb Holly Blue photos. I must admit Holly Blues have been a bit scarce around by me this year, I saw a few spring brood but have only managed to see a couple of summer brood.

#### "millerd" wrote:

...One individual was nectaring up on the ivy – not something I've seen before...

Dave

I regularly see autumn Specklies nectaring on the Ivy in my garden, particularly females but some males as well. I have seen females nectaring on flowers right through the year but with the males it is only at this time that I regularly see them on flowers, usually Ivy but I have seen them on other flowers as well.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 06-Oct-14 03:38 PM GMT

Once again fantastic shots of Holly Blues, I seem to be going green these days quite a lot 🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 06-Oct-14 10:03 PM GMT

Thank you all for your kind comments! 😊

I think it was the same Holly Blue, Trevor: even though I found it in a different spot, it wasn't that far distant. Comparing my (poor) shot of the underside of the one I saw on 3rd, the pattern of spots matches near enough exactly.

I've never come across such an obliging individual, Wurzel and one so fresh in October? 😊 Definitely not something you could set out to see. The behaviour was fascinating, too.

You're right, Neil – my nectaring Specklie was definitely a female. It was large, too, not much smaller than a nearby Red Admiral and noticeably bigger than the males I'd been seeing earlier.

There's a lot of luck in this, Goldie – and I bet I out-greened you two years ago when you posted your beautiful white Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary! 😊 That was an amazing butterfly.

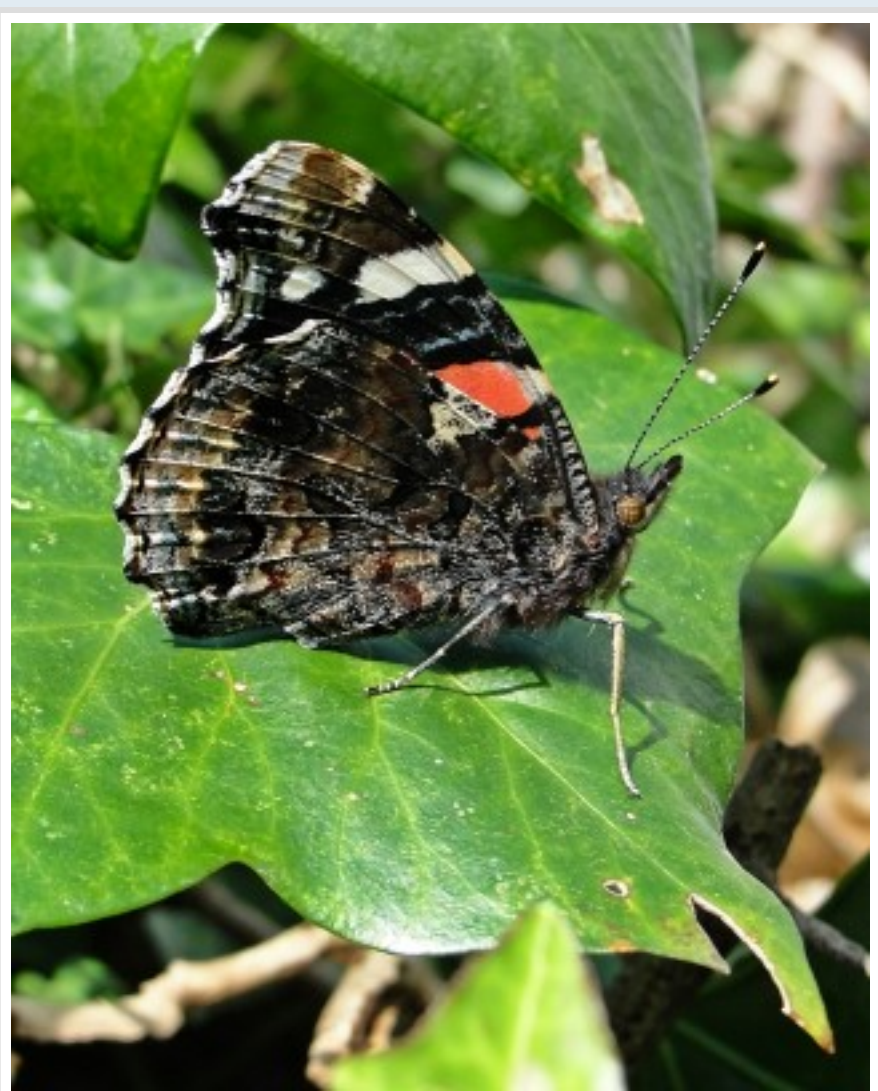
Well – nothing more today. It rained all day, it was chilly and I was stuck at work. 😞 I would defy anyone to conjure a Holly Blue out of that. 😊

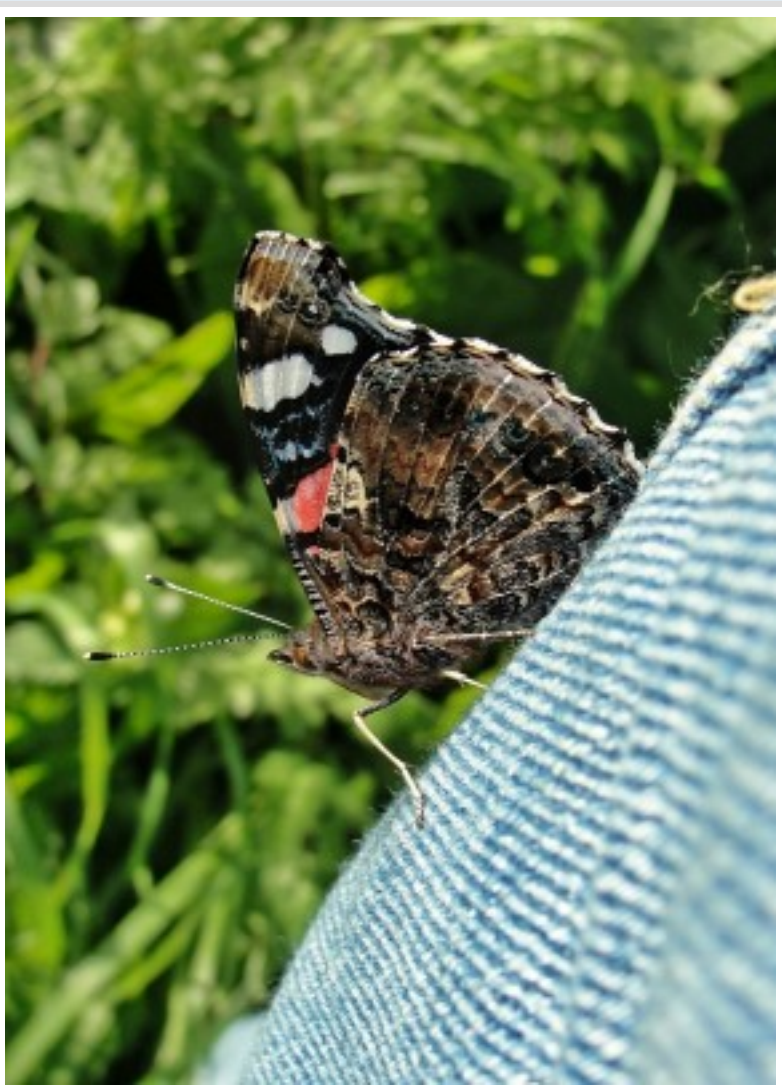
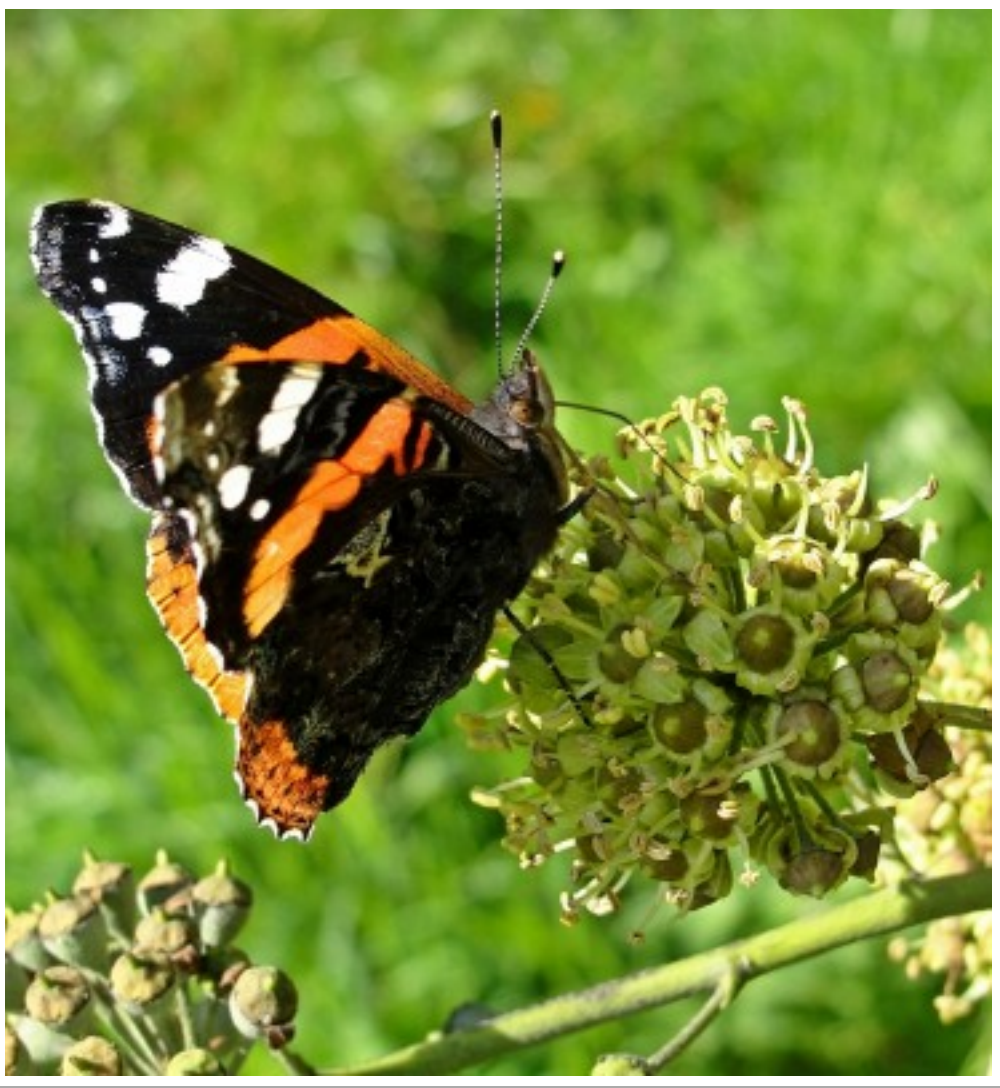
Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 11-Oct-14 03:02 PM GMT

**Saturday 11th October:** A calm sunny interlude at around midday drew me out onto my local patch again. Five species seen altogether, including a profusion of Red Admirals. I counted over a dozen in two separate patches of ivy, a mixture bright new specimens and a few more tattered individuals.





*my tree impression again*



In one, the angle of the light produced a purplish iridescence on the hind wing not something I've seen before.

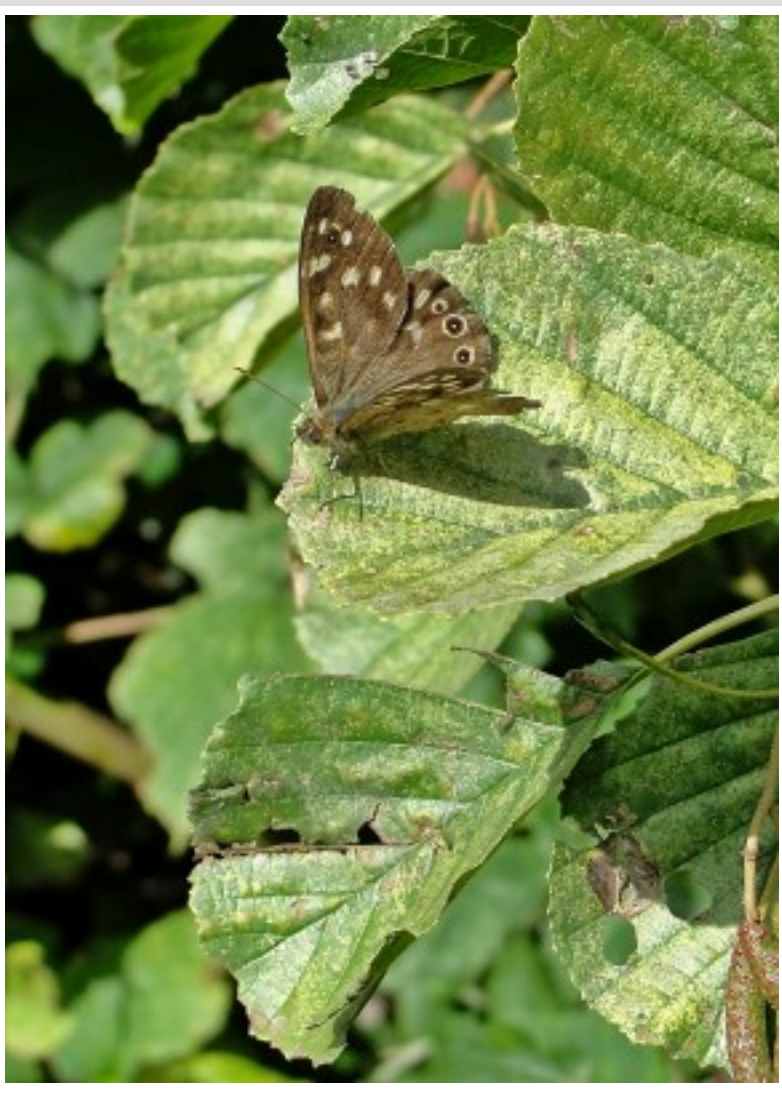


In amongst the Red Admirals was a single Comma for a bit of colour contrast.



Moving away from the ivy, I found a single Small White, and then three Speckled Woods still patrolling the edge of the path.





There followed a long gap with nothing at all (not even a dragonfly), and then another pair of Red Admirals. Out of habit, I continued onto the meadow area near the M25, but no Small Heaths flew up from the grass, and the Common Blues have now long gone. However, something did appear, moving along from flower to yellow flower, and then plummeting to lie low when the sun went in: a male Clouded Yellow. Not quite a brand new one, but likely to be the offspring of those I saw back in early August.





Holly Blues last weekend, a Clouded Yellow today – whatever next? 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Pauline, 11-Oct-14 04:23 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Clouded Yellow Dave 🍷

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 12-Oct-14 06:43 PM GMT

Knowing the roll you're on Dave a Camberwell beauty! 😲😄 Cracking shots of the Cloudy 🍷 Unfortunately for me my Brownie points for this year are all gone and so the entire weekend was spent shopping 🛒 Still I've saved my sorrows ready to drown them at the Social 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

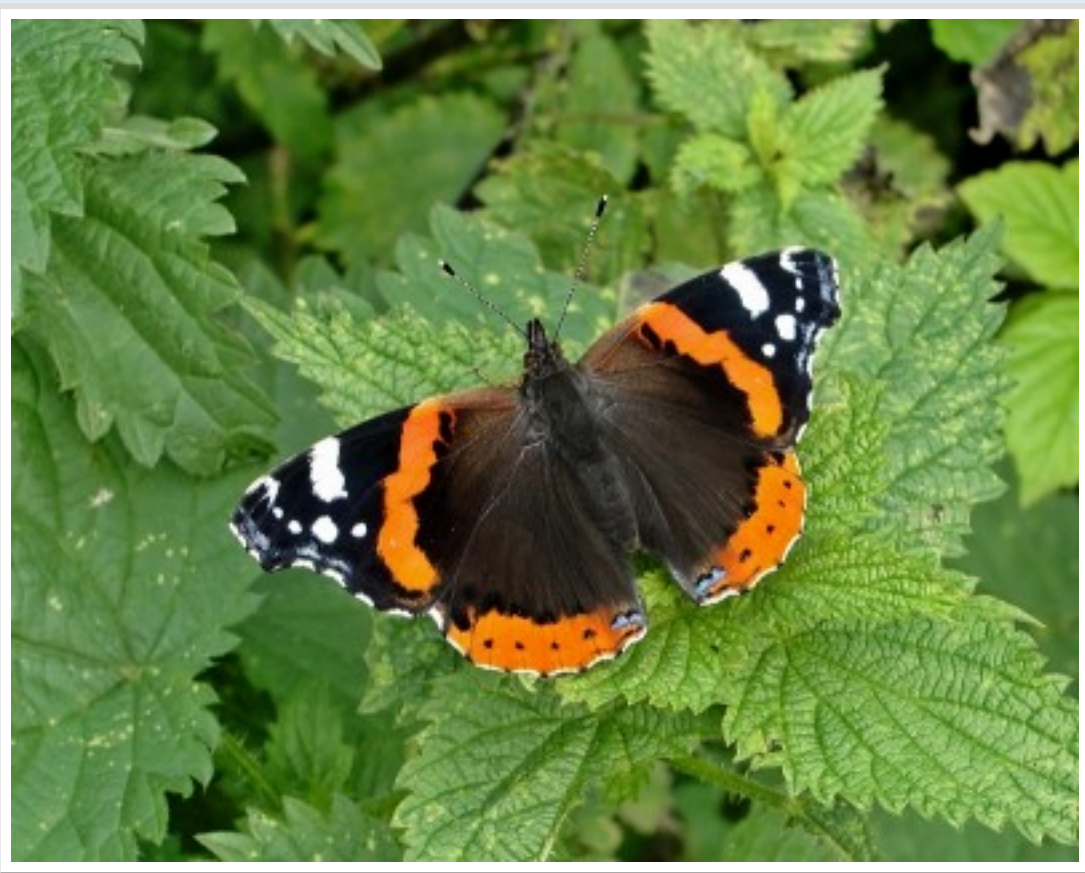
by millerd, 12-Oct-14 08:40 PM GMT

Thanks, Pauline. Once it had gone to ground it sat tight and I had lots of time to try and get the photos a bit better than usual. The sun had of course gone in (which is why it was there in the first place), so that didn't help. 😊

Thanks Wurzel: I don't think my luck will stretch to a Camberwell Beauty or a Monarch – I should think you're more in with a chance of the latter than me, being further southwest! 😊

**Sunday 12th October:** some very hazy sunshine in the early afternoon – however it was enough for half a dozen Red Admirals to come out to nectar on the ivy again, and to bask on and nearby.





It's a good thing I really like Red Admirals... There are some lovely ones around at the moment.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 16-Oct-14 10:45 PM GMT

Lovely Red Admirals Dave 😊🍷 I haven't seen a butterfly for about a week now as the weather has been so bad – hopefully things will brighten up for the weekend.

Have a godun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-Oct-14 10:45 PM GMT

No Red Admirals since last weekend, unfortunately, Wurzel

Up in Yorkshire for this weekend: it was blowing a gale up in Holmfirth, and the not unusual local phenomenon of sunshine and rain simultaneously, which is very strange for a soft southerner like me... In one of the sunnier bits today (Sunday 19th) I did see a Small Tortoiseshell battling the wind and hopping from garden to garden looking in vain for a sheltered flower or two.



*A Small Tortoiseshell flew across the foreground five minutes earlier, honest!*



*Yorkshire rain and Yorkshire sun*

Dave

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 19-Oct-14 11:40 PM GMT

Lovely double rainbow shot Dave 😊 Isn't Holmfirth where they filmed 'Last of the Summer Wine'? Quite apt for this time of the season if it was.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by Maximus, 21-Oct-14 12:32 AM GMT

Great butterfly shots for the end of the season Dave, the Holly Blue with wings wide open and the Clouded Yellow are especially magnificent 😊

Mike

## Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 21-Oct-14 08:06 PM GMT

Great photos of Holmfirth Dave 😊

Back when I was a youngster, my parents used to take us to visit some relatives (sadly no longer with us) who lived in Mirfield and we would often go sightseeing around the Holmfirth area. Seeing your photos has brought back some happy memories.

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 26-Oct-14 09:38 PM GMT

Yes, Wurzel, that's where that series was filmed, and there are a number of related tourist attractions. All done very tastefully, mind. They are still recovering from the excitement of the Tour de France at the moment!

It is a lovely spot, and I'm pleased I've brought back some memories for you Neil.

Thank you for your kind comments, Mike – it has been an interesting wind-down too the season here, and not how you might predict it (apart from the Red Admirals!). I think I shall remember the Holly Blue for a long time.

No butterflies today (though a friend reported a Red Admiral yesterday from further up the River Colne towards Uxbridge). However, a walk at Runnymede with the leaves turning colourfully and a warm breeze blowing produced this little chap. I have seen many variations in the colour of ladybirds over the years, but not this particular one. It lacks pigment to such a degree that I wondered if it were albino – though the dark eyes appear to contradict this.



Dave

## Re: millerd

by David M, 26-Oct-14 09:48 PM GMT

That's a highly unusual insect, Dave. I've never seen anything quite like it.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 26-Oct-14 10:06 PM GMT

Found it! It would seem to be the Orange Ladybird *Halyzia sedecimguttata*. It was once not common at all, but now is.

Obviously not *that* common or I would have recognised it without resorting to Google! 😊

Dave

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 26-Oct-14 11:17 PM GMT

Great shots Dave of a species I've yet to encounter 😊. I counted the spots – 16 – so is that the other name? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 26-Oct-14 11:52 PM GMT

Yes, Wurzel – it seems to be alternatively written *16-guttata* to avoid the Latin prefix... Cheating in my book! 😊

Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-Oct-14 10:43 PM GMT

**Monday 27th October:** The sun shone brightly this morning, it seemed warm and Elliot wanted to go to the beach. How could I refuse? Unfortunately, the sun turned to low cloud just past Southampton, and we arrived at the nearest bit of decent seaside (Southbourne) in not ideal conditions. However, nine-year-old boys are not daunted by such things, and he set about with bucket and spade like a good 'un. The sea wasn't cold, but really was too rough to swim in unfortunately. By early afternoon, the sun struggled through, the wind dropped a bit, and it became really pleasant. We walked along the prom to get a drink, and then a bit further. On the way back, I spotted a male Clouded Yellow on the slopes to the west of the Bistro On The Beach, and then chatted to a chap with a camera who pointed out another (female) settled on the ubiquitous sea asters. He has obviously made a study of this site, describing the Clouded Yellow caterpillars that were lurking in the undergrowth and the variety of plants on which they were feeding. January is apparently the only month he hasn't seen an adult butterfly here.



*Dozing (antennae together and forewing lowered)*



*Alert (antennae apart and forewing raised)*

I also came across a couple of birds which I am struggling to identify from the lousy photos I took!



??



?

Dave

## Re: millerd

by David M, 27-Oct-14 11:33 PM GMT

That's a pretty productive visit for late October, Dave.

I only wish south Wales could see clouds lift (temperatures are fine) sufficiently for me to venture out.

At the moment I don't even know when I last saw a butterfly, and if things don't change very quickly, that will remain the epitaph on 2014! 😞

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 27-Oct-14 11:59 PM GMT

Great report Dave – I'd probably go for Stonechat for the birds although Whinchat could be a possibility 😊 Like David I've struggled to see butterflies let alone photograph them over the last month 🍷, every time I've had the time the weather hasn't been conducive and when the weather has been good I haven't had the time 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 28-Oct-14 10:02 PM GMT

David and Wurzel pretty well sum it up for me as well.

Mind you, one of the reasons I have been so busy at work lately is that we have been preparing for my department to move to another location. Next week will be the fist at this new site and as it happens it is in Ryton, just a couple of minutes away from Ryton Wood. Too late for this year now but as you can imagine I will be ideally placed for some sneaky visits after work next year 😊 I am already working on those brownie points 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 28-Oct-14 11:26 PM GMT

Thanks once again for the comments, chaps. I am very envious of that as a workplace, Neil – I'd be there every day from late April onwards, I think! 🍷  
Just get saving those brownie points... 😊

**Tuesday 28th October:** Well, this really is the season that just keeps on giving. It was another glorious day today, brilliant sun and Temperatures nudging 20 degrees. Elliot and I stayed close to home today, with a gentle circuit around the nearer parts of my local patch at around eleven o'clock or so. On the first patch of sunlit ivy, we found four Red Admirals and a Comma, alternately nectaring and swooping off on aerobatic sorties – A fine start. The nettles along this route are truly luxuriant at the moment, looking as they normally do in early May, rather than late October, which is a measure of the very mild autumn thus far. Emerging into full sun from a bit of woodland, we found a sheltered patch of ivy-covered wall. This particular patch had been cut back earlier in the year, but had regrown, though flowering had been delayed by the trim. This was proving much to the benefit of another six Red Admirals (a minimum count – we had six in sight at once briefly).





And that was not all. Elliot shouted "blue butterfly!" and he was right: a Holly Blue was also flying back and forth across the ivy. It settled a couple of times, but not for long.



The strong sun kept it from opening up more than a smidgen, but it was enough to see that it was a beautiful new female.



After she had flown up over the wall out of sight, my eye was caught by something else dancing along very close to the foliage. This was a male Brimstone, clearly woken from its slumbers by the unusually warm sunshine and looking to settle down again in another cosy nook.



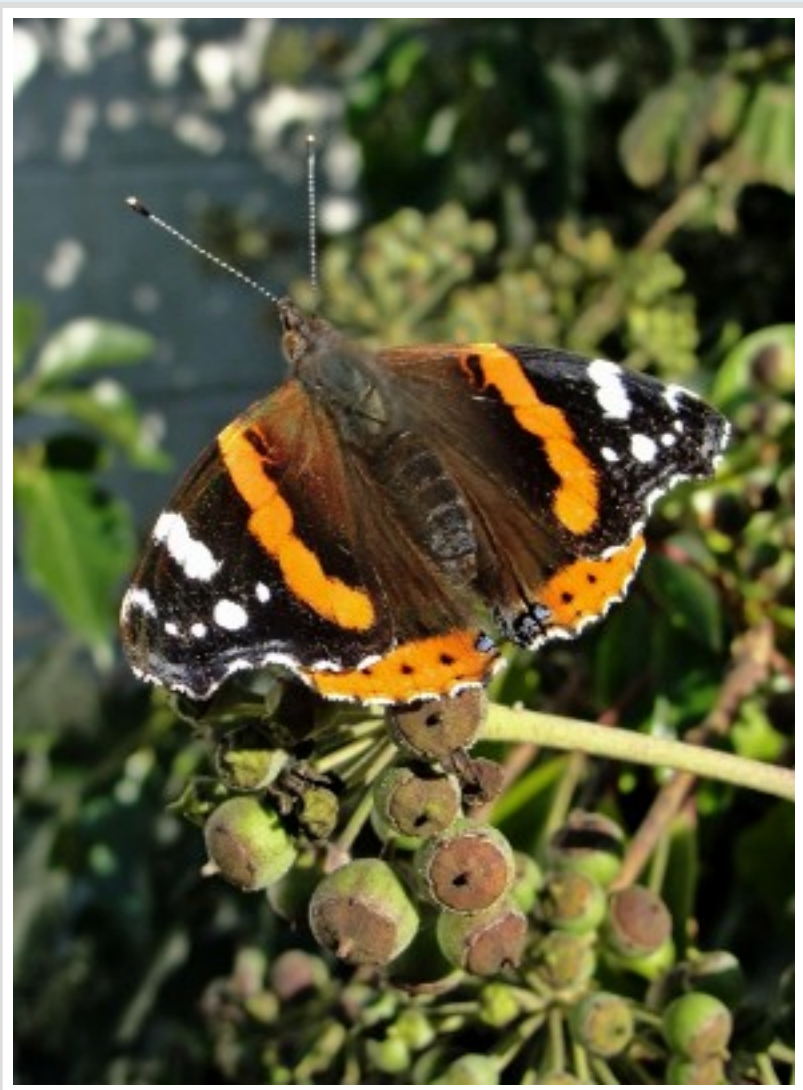
I tracked him to one possible spot, but he emerged again and settled in the sun for a while before renewing his quest.







We carried on to near the end of the circuit, where a final stand of sunlit ivy remained to be investigated. Just before the target bushes, another Holly Blue flew past about ten feet up along the hedge-line and disappeared. The ivy itself had another couple of Red Admirals and a Comma.





On the point of calling it a day, I saw another flash of blue. A Holly Blue had settled just ahead on the nettles – male, and one that had been out a day or two. Whether this was no. 3 or just no.2 again, I can't really guess.



After lunch, I nipped out very briefly again, but saw just one Red Admiral and one Comma – both in splendid autumnal poses, basking in the late afternoon light.



If anyone had told me at the start of the season that I'd have been writing all this as a diary account for this date, I'd have been mighty sceptical! 😊  
Amazingly, the weather forecast for Friday promises more of the same. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 28-Oct-14 11:29 PM GMT

Wow! That is an incredible haul on the eve of November! 🍷

### Re: millerd

by NickMorgan, 30-Oct-14 02:19 PM GMT

Yes, wow indeed! It has been a couple of weeks since I saw my last butterfly. I can't believe that Holly Blues are flying now. Do they manage to overwinter as adults? Surely there is no chance of any eggs making it through the winter. 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-Oct-14 09:25 PM GMT

🍷🍷 Is all that I can add 😊 You are the go to man for Holly Blues for sure Dave 😎

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 30-Oct-14 09:48 PM GMT

Thank you all. It was a very rewarding outing on a really lovely day. 😊 Memorable.

Holly Blues are always reliable round here, and though the overall numbers this year have been very average, I have seen them regularly, and in every month since the first one on 8th April. They have been a delightful bonus this month in particular, but there is a sting in the tail for them of course. 😞 They normally pass the winter as pupae, entering this stage from September onwards in normal years, and becoming dormant as the weather winds down. However, this year, the weather hasn't wound down, and particularly warm stretches (few if any cold nights this month and last) have kept development going. Consequently, days of bright warm sunshine have triggered emergence. Sadly, the butterflies out at the moment have no real prospect of keeping their own line going. They would need to mate, lay eggs, and for those eggs to hatch, caterpillars to feed up and successfully pupate – all in time for winter. The caterpillars in the late summer feed on ivy buds – but most buds have opened, flowered and are now turning into berries. Food would therefore be hard to come by. The shame is also that because some of the autumn pupae have now hatched, there will be fewer hatching in April and therefore reduced numbers to keep the circle turning. Late third broods are a really risky strategy!

Dave

## Re: millerd

by David M, 30-Oct-14 11:01 PM GMT

Interesting comments, Dave.

As you rightly say, Holly Blue adults have prospered like never before, but they are out of their 'comfort zone'. This abnormally mild autumn has seen them emerge far too early and one wonders whether this will have an impact on next spring's generation.

I may be in a minority of one, but the sooner the truly cold weather arrives the better.

## Re: millerd

by Maximus, 31-Oct-14 06:45 PM GMT

Nice sightings and photos, Dave 😊 I thought I was doing well spotting a Brimstone in flight today 😊 Tomorrows forecast shows plenty of sun, but not so good after that, I must try and get out.

Mike

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 02-Nov-14 09:26 PM GMT

Thanks, Mike. 😊

You were right, **Friday 31st October** was wall-to-wall sunshine and extraordinary temperatures (23 degrees hereabouts). I was stuck at work until 1 and had a planned visit to Somerset for the weekend, so the window of opportunity to make the most of the conditions was very narrow. I managed an hour on my local patch, where I saw many of the same butterflies as on Tuesday, and in the same spots (the RA wing damage identified them pretty well). There were around a dozen Red Admirals altogether, and a couple of Commas.





The female Holly Blue I'd seen on Tuesday was also around, buzzing around the Red Admirals, but with the temperature several degrees higher and the angle of the sun different, she unfortunately declined to stop. Moving on, I found one Red Admiral patrolling the section of path habitually occupied by both the first and last ones I see each year – what the attraction is, I really don't know.



When I finally arrived at the last bank of sunlit ivy, there was initially only one Red Admiral and one Comma nectaring here.





However, as I tried to get a bit closer to the former butterfly, another Holly Blue flew straight across my line of sight and settled initially on the nearby nettles, and then on the ivy. This was another female, one which was probably out that day, but with symmetrical wing crumples indicating a difficult emergence perhaps. She could certainly fly perfectly well!



I returned home, reckoning that had I been here the following day, I would almost certainly have seen a November Holly Blue – oh well, seeing two on 31st October is pretty amazing, really. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 03-Nov-14 08:25 PM GMT

Hi Dave, nice sightings with the Holly blues although I agree with your thoughts about them being 'out of their time' and being unlikely to fulfil their natural function towards the continuation of their line.

I like the Red Admirals against the blue sky in your last post. Unfortunately the sky wasn't that blue around here last Friday, it was warm but stayed overcast most of the afternoon.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 03-Nov-14 10:56 PM GMT

That is a pretty cracking visit/report and shots Dave 🍷 So will the Holly Blue gamble play off 😊? It has to at some time otherwise the genetic tendency would disappear completely?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 04-Nov-14 12:50 PM GMT

Lovely photo's Dave, my one and only HB was way back in Spring Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 04-Nov-14 10:13 PM GMT

Thanks to all of you for your encouraging comments. It was a good week last week. 😊

Those blue skies and heady temperatures of just four days ago are now but a distant memory! At the same time today (within an hour, certainly) it was 8 degrees rather than 23, and the rain was tipping down. 😞 The first frost looks likely on Wednesday night and I turned the heating on for the first time this evening. It does look likely to warm a bit again, but other than a resilient Red Admiral or two, I suspect that the season is pretty well done here, having started around eight months ago on 8th March with this Small Tortoiseshell.



*A Retrospective to March*

Not so long to wait.... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 05-Nov-14 11:43 PM GMT

Hopefully only four months now Dave 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 09-Nov-14 10:15 PM GMT

In the end, the wait for more butterflies was only nine days...

**Sunday 9th November** dawned bright, and after a bit of mist and low level cloud cleared, it became a lovely sunny day. It warmed up a bit, too, with 14 degrees or so by the early afternoon. I reckoned that there was almost certainly a Red Admiral or two out there, so set off round my usual circuit near the River Colne. I quickly found my first Red Admiral, high up and nectaring on ivy – one that had been through the wars somewhat.

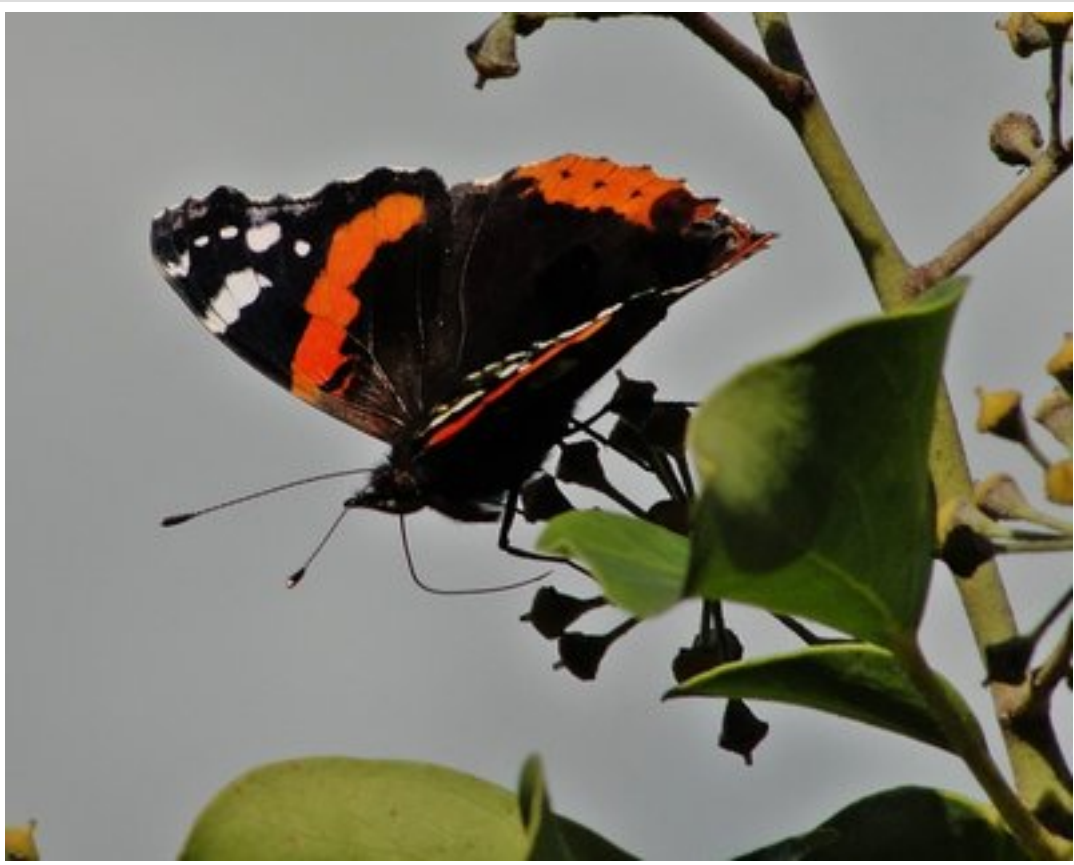




It flew off, distracted by another which I didn't get a close look at. However, a third butterfly appeared, which turned out to be a Comma.



I moved on to the patch of ivy where I had seen most butterflies last time round. There were two more Red Admirals here, again high up on the ivy.



Almost before the possibility had entered my head, another butterfly fluttered into view, settling initially right on the highest spot it could find.



Luckily, the constant wasp and bee activity disturbed it and it came a bit lower to sit on an ivy leaf. It looked quite large in flight for the species, but once settled it was clearly a Holly Blue.



Obligingly, it opened up a bit revealing itself to be a male.



Interesting – the Holly Blues I saw in this particular spot before were all females (and all well over a week ago now), so I would guess there have been quite a few around altogether.

My final patch of ivy provided views of another stunning Red Admiral, probably fresh out of the box.





I disturbed another low down on shaded nettles, but was unable to find any eggs – maybe just resting.

Considering there was a ground frost here a few mornings ago, plus some torrential rain and some windy days during the last week, to see the Holly Blue seemed frankly astonishing. However, they do emerge in April most years and survive everything the "cruellest month" can throw at them... Never underestimate a butterfly! 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 09-Nov-14 10:23 PM GMT

Absolutely cracking Dave 😊 I just wish I'd been able to get out this weekend to look for my own 🎁

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 10-Nov-14 07:51 PM GMT

Great stuff Dave 😊

I've not seen a butterfly for weeks now, too busy catching up on household stuff and building up those brownie points for next year 😊 We also had a couple of frosty mornings around here last week, twice I had to clear ice off the car windscreen at 06.15 to go to work.

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-Nov-14 09:50 PM GMT

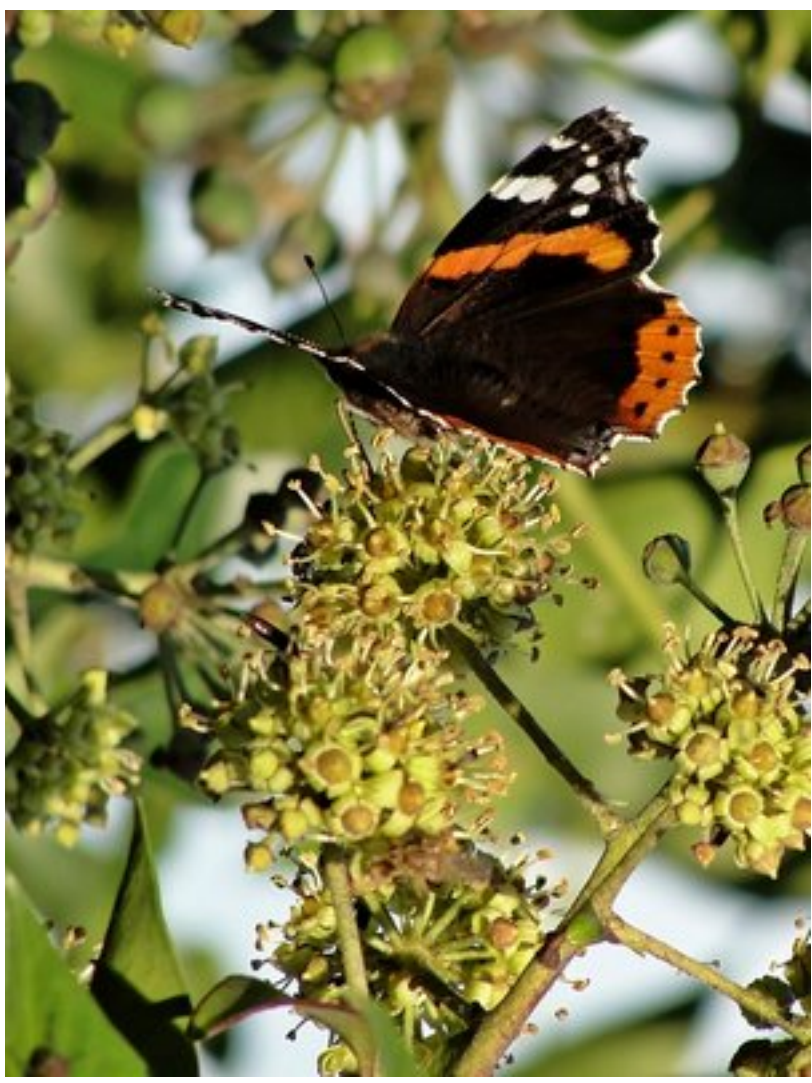
Thanks chaps. 😊 That could well be it now – no sunny days forecast, and not any free time to look either. However, with so many false ends to the season, I will no longer be surprised at anything. I'm into my third diary page since the start of October – and I only used one for the whole of August! 😊😊 That speaks volumes...

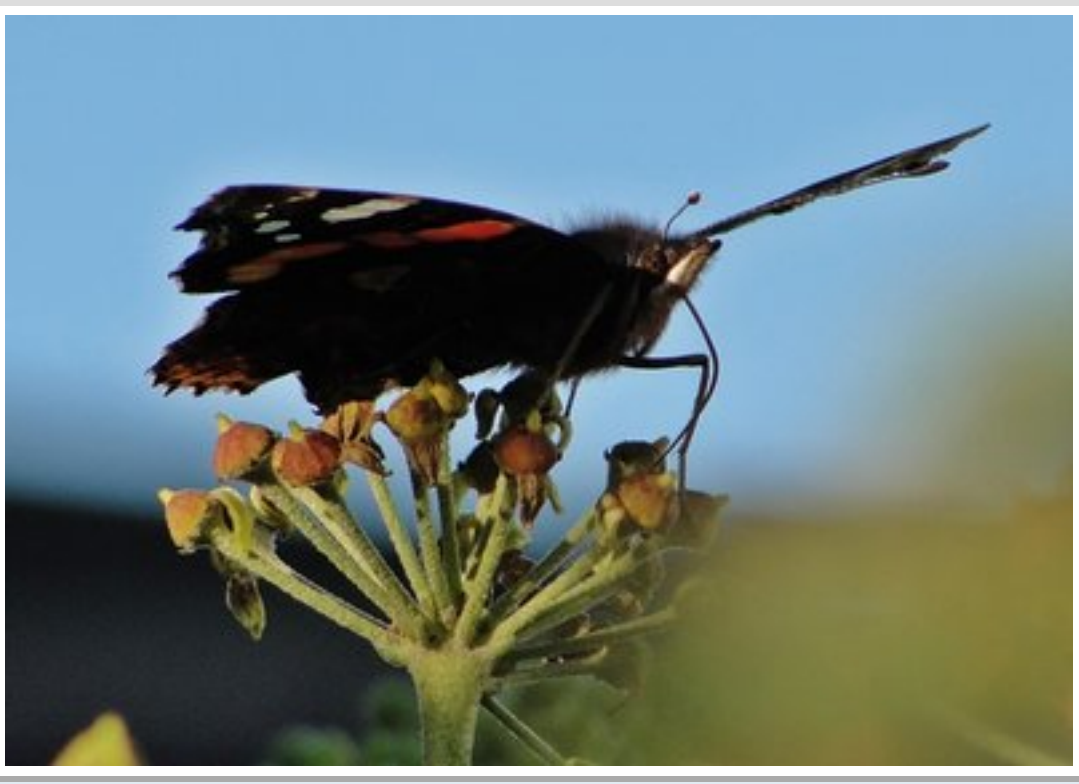
Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Nov-14 10:22 PM GMT

**Friday 14th November:** The briefest of looks on the nearest piece of sunny ivy near home this afternoon before a trip up north. One Red Admiral remained – still in good condition considering the recent heavy rain. It didn't come very close unfortunately and was very active in the sunshine (14 degrees, maybe a tad higher).





Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 19-Nov-14 10:49 PM GMT

Great shots there Dave, especially the last one, a really interesting pose 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-Nov-14 10:17 PM GMT

**Saturday 29th November:** The day of the Winter Social, and late on during Friday I had discovered that engineering works would mean a rather more circuitous route down to Shawford than usual, by way of Reading and Winchester. Allowing a bit of leeway for unforeseen railway circumstances, I ended up on a late-running (but earlier) train from Staines, and then a very late-running one from Reading. All this had somehow brought me just ahead of a train from Winchester an hour earlier than my target one.

With time in hand and the sun starting to shine quite strongly, I walked down to Otterbourne and then about half a mile beyond, up to a very pleasant open green at Otterbourne Hill.



The green is bounded largely by flowering gorse, but some of the gardens nearby had ivy, with some still in flower. Before long, I disturbed a butterfly from the ground – not a Red Admiral as I expected, but a Peacock. It settled briefly but in a very awkward spot, and this shot is the best I could manage before it set off again.



The camera hadn't worked out what it was supposed to be looking at! That's my excuse anyway 😊  
Soon afterwards, I spotted a Red Admiral high up, spiralling around a great whirl of ivy round a tree, and settling briefly on the topmost, sunnier parts. No photo of this one at all.

All in all, a very appropriate curtainraiser to the main event down the road, where a thoroughly sociable few hours were spent in excellent company. 😊  
Great to see you all again, and here's to an interesting 2015!

Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 29-Nov-14 11:19 PM GMT

What a curtain-raiser, Dave.

Any butterfly would have been good but a Peacock is highly notable in late November.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 30-Nov-14 02:30 PM GMT

It surprised me to see it too, David. I hope it found a good spot to settle down again later.

**Sunday 30th November:** Another sunny day – though distinctly chillier than yesterday, the sun still had some strength in it from about 11 o'clock onwards. I set off round my local patch for the first time in a fortnight, hoping that after yesterday there might well be something on the wing here too.

I was not disappointed: close to the M25 roundabout, I spotted a Comma basking high up amongst some ivy. After soaking up the rays for a while it launched off into the nearby woodland.



Walking on a bit, and then returning past the same spot, I spotted a Comma in a much better position, sunning itself on a piece of fencing nearer the ground.



I assumed at the time that it was the same one as before, but the photos show a different pattern of dark spots.

Carrying on back round the circuit, I came to the last patch of ivy where once again, relatively high up, sat another Comma.



As before, after a good long stretch of sunbathing, it set off energetically into the air, circling around several times before going up to bask a long way up in a birch tree.

Commas 3, Red Admirals nil – an unusual result so far... I decided to extend the walk a bit and take the game into extra time by just walking round the semi-suburban residential streets of the village. Very quickly I had seen two different Red Admirals flying strongly near two separate clumps of ivy (there is a great deal round here), and then another perched high up on a window-ledge.



Finally, no more than a hundred metres from home, I noticed one of my neighbours had a substantial mahonia in the front garden, just coming into full bloom and a blaze of yellow in the sunshine. No less than three more Red Admirals were nectaring on this shrub, though one always seemed to be in the air at any given moment.





Having found this source of energy, I suspect that these individuals will not stray too far away, and given further sunny days will be out again until it really does get cold.

It was good to see the Red Admirals – as any grammarian will tell you, it would be entirely wrong to end a report with a Comma (even three)... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 01-Dec-14 10:19 PM GMT

It was great meeting up again at the Social Dave and perhaps this year we might find ourselves at Bentley at the same time, it was close this year 😊 It seems that you've been treating yourself to some late November butterflies 🦋 and you're quite right about the grammer,,, 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 02-Dec-14 08:08 PM GMT

Great stuff Dave, you are certainly seeing more than me, I have not seen a single butterfly since early October. Mind you I have been busy with work and household stuff so I haven't had chance to get out anywhere for a look.

Cheers,

Neil.