

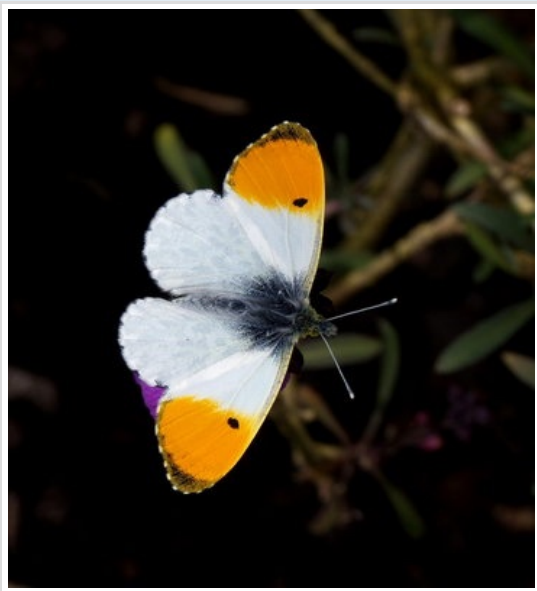
Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 07-Apr-17 12:02 AM GMT

Now that April's arrived I thought that it was about time I dusted off my camera, put on my walking shoes and got out and about to enjoy a new butterfly season.

Probably like most people on this site, over the last couple of weeks we've seen the five post hibernators, with only the Red Admiral appearing to be in low numbers at the moment. Commas appear to be the most plentiful species so far, at least at the sites we have visited, we've also had garden flypasts of Small Whites and a single Holly Blue.

The stars of our show however have been the Orange-tips which we 'rescued' as eggs/cats from a road verge before it was strimmed last summer, and which after overwintering in our shed, have now finally begun to emerge. So far we have released two males and a female into our garden, what stunning butterflies they are and so evocative of spring.



Male Orange-tip



Female Orange-tip on Blackthorn



Male left, Female right

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 07-Apr-17 06:14 AM GMT

Welcome back Mike. Some great shots to kick off 2017 😊

Re: Maximus

by Neil Freeman, 07-Apr-17 08:01 PM GMT

Pauline wrote:

Welcome back Mike. Some great shots to kick off 2017 😊

Agreed, welcome back to a new season Mike 😊

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-17 10:12 PM GMT

It looks like you've hit the season running as it were Mike 😊 Great stuff, I'm looking forward to more 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 07-Apr-17 10:15 PM GMT

I'm very envious of those glorious Orange Tip shots, Mike. I can rarely get that close to the non-roosting ones. 😊

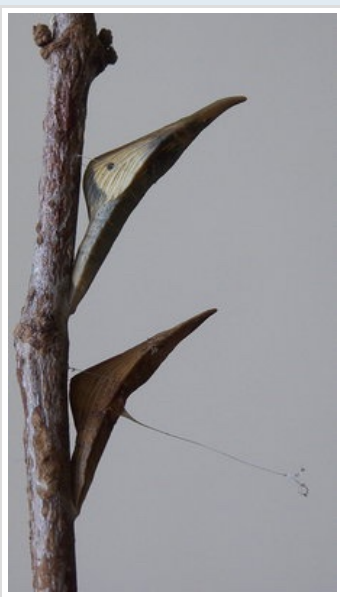
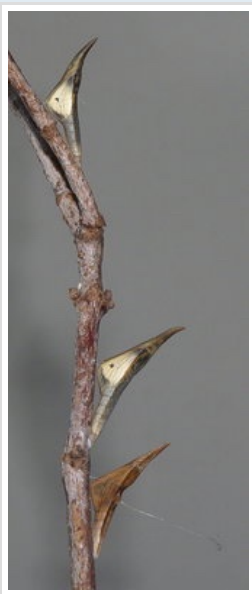
Dave

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 17-Apr-17 02:27 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline, Neil, Wurzel and Dave for your kind comments.

Our remaining Orange-tips, all females, have now emerged, apart from one where the pupa didn't appear to form properly. Another had been parasitized and I was able to watch the larva of the parasitic fly emerge from the Orange-tip pupal case.



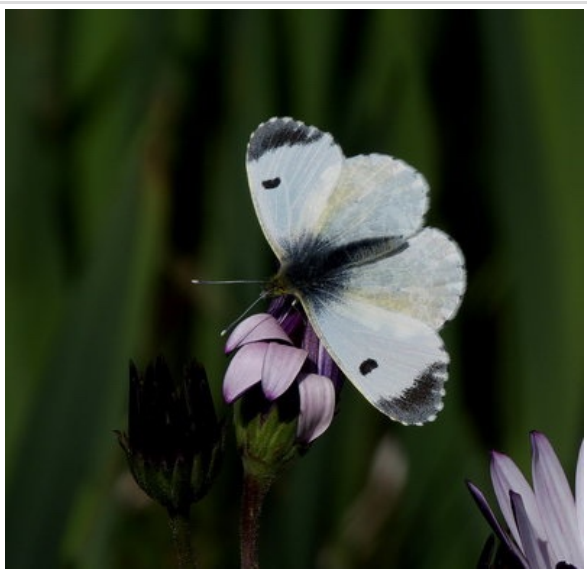


Parasitized pupa and emerged larva

Fortunately that was the only one parasitized, the others were successfully released.



The top female was very small



We also have two Purple Hairstreak eggs found on windblown Oak, which have hatched over the last couple of days – 14th/15th April. I was luckily able to spot the first larva on an Oak bud, just after it hatched at around 10am, and managed to get a quick pic.



unhatched eggs



Hatched egg and larva on tip of bud

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 17-Apr-17 07:08 PM GMT

That is a cracking topside shot of the female OT Mike 🤔🇩🇪 If only they all posed like that 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 17-Apr-17 08:21 PM GMT

Good to see the Winter hibernators are out. Welcome to the new season Mike !.
Well done rescuing those Orange Tip pupae last year. At my local site they don't strim, they flail.
If OT larvae wander off to pupate they may survive. On the bright side they appear in good numbers most years.

Have a great season,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 18-Apr-17 12:22 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, but you do have a real advantage when you've reared them 😊😊

I get your drift, Trevor, and I will move out of my garden very shortly 😊😊 Outside of the hibernators and Orange-tips I've only seen Small White, Holly Blue and Speckled Wood so far, with no photos to show!
It is a shame that so many Orange-tips are lost to strimming/cutting each year, but they certainly do appear to be plentiful this year.

I hope that your great season continues,

Mike.

Re: Maximus

by David M, 18-Apr-17 11:53 AM GMT

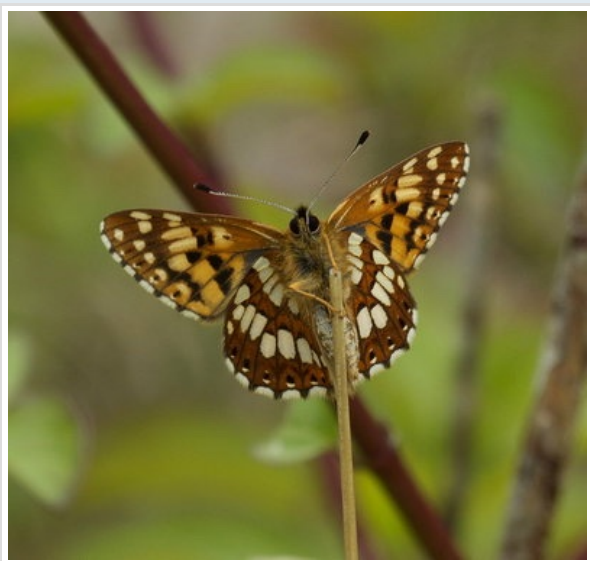
That fresh, female Orange Tip is to die for, Mike. Let's hope all your emergences go on to have a productive life.

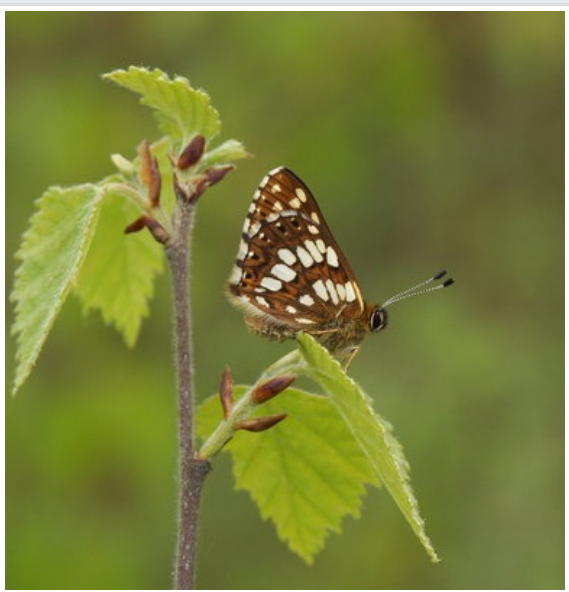
Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 26-Apr-17 12:51 PM GMT

Yes David, she was a real beauty and I'm sure they will lead productive lives, as the last we saw of her was with a male in hot pursuit 😊

Just returned from a four day break with family in Kent, where we managed to take time out on Friday 21st to look for Duke's in Denge Woods. The weather was fairly cool with a mix of hazy sunshine when we got there, and after a few wrong turns we found the spot we'd visited a couple of years ago where we'd been unsuccessful in finding any. However, this time we were lucky, as I spotted one immediately fluttering low in the grass, keeping out of the cool breeze. But as soon as the sky brightened a little and it warmed up we started seeing more Dukes, mostly basking in elevated positions. In the hour that we spent looking we found six in total, both males and females. It was nice to reacquaint ourselves with these beautiful little butterflies after last seeing them at Noar Hill almost a year ago.







Re: Maximus

by trevor, 26-Apr-17 01:27 PM GMT

Well done with that open wing underside shot, most unusual. Arguably more beautiful than the upper side

Best wishes,
Trevor..

Re: Maximus

by David M, 26-Apr-17 07:06 PM GMT

Agree with Trevor on that. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that Neil Hulme would have been proud of that.

Excellent image that gives us a different perspective.

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 26-Apr-17 08:11 PM GMT

Yes, lovely shots, Mike. The underside one is a real cracker. 😊

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 27-Apr-17 11:11 AM GMT

Love he underside of the Duke in your second shot Mike, Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 27-Apr-17 06:35 PM GMT

Some stunning shots there Mike, especially the double stained glass – real cracker that one 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 27-Apr-17 08:32 PM GMT

I can only add to the others comments, they've really whetted my appetite for getting my annual fix of Dukes. 🍷

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 27-Apr-17 09:03 PM GMT

Thanks Trevor, David, Dave, Goldie and Wurzel, I'm glad you like that shot, it's all really down to lady luck 😊

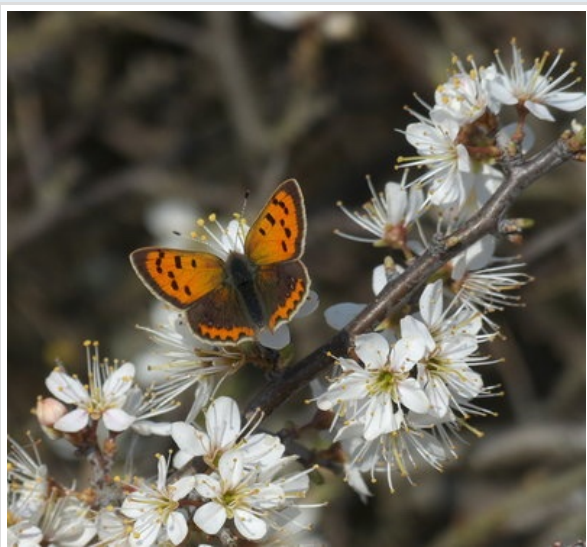
While we were in Kent it would have been remiss of us not to have paid a visit to that Mecca of the Small Copper, Dungeness, so we settled on Sunday 23rd as it appeared that it would be the best day weatherwise.

The breeze however was cool as we walked across the shingle towards the moat at around 1pm, and halfway across we saw a Small Copper on the

ground struggling to get airborne. It appeared to have a deformed wing so I coaxed it onto my finger and found it a sheltered spot in the moat. I had just relocated it when a chap appeared who I recognised. It was UKB's Hoggers, who was just leaving. (Nice to meet you again and have a brief chat Hoggers).
It soon became apparent that there were plenty of Small Coppers on the wing, mostly nectaring on Blackthorn blossom and on the abundant clusters of Hoary Cress...



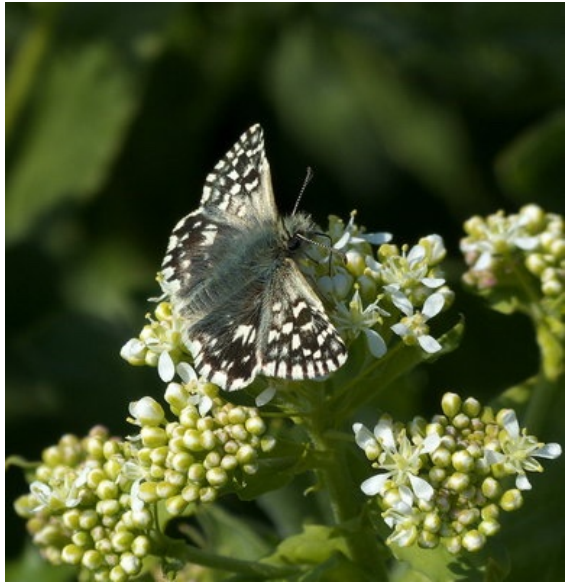
A pale Copper



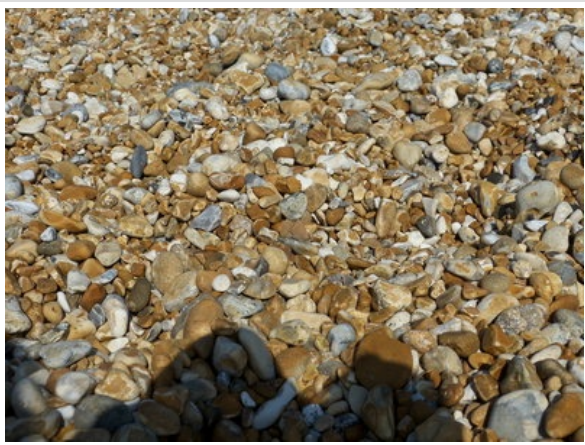


A Grizzled Skipper suddenly zoomed in to nectar on the Cress, our first of 2017...





We were also lucky to find two mating pairs of Small Coppers during our visit...



Spot the Coppers!



First pair



Second pair



Second pair just after separation

As we were leaving a beautifully marked Small Tortoiseshell with lots of white on its forewings, suddenly flew in and landed on some nettles right in front of us...





I only managed to take the two shots above before it took flight and did a disappearing act, but I was more than happy with that, (this must have been the one that eluded Hoggers)?

And just a final shot of the lovely Small Coppers..



Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 27-Apr-17 09:09 PM GMT

Just picked up your comment bugboy as I was posting at the same time. I'm glad that your appetite is whetted, as I know that on your recent form you will have a real ball with the Dukes 😊😊
Mike

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 28-Apr-17 11:19 AM GMT

Wow abs and 'forms' galore – that pale Small Copper is lush and probably a named aberrant "leu" something or 'pallid...' something (being from Dorset I struggle with English let alone Latin 😊😊). 😊🇬🇧

I reckon your Small Tort could be either a pathological effect or some form of temperature shock 😊 Really interesting findings 😊🇬🇧

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Hoggers, 28-Apr-17 04:03 PM GMT

Hello again Maximus, you picked the perfect day to visit as the Coppers were all fresh and in good numbers. Yes, that's the Small Tortoiseshell that eluded me! At least you managed to get some decent photos! And I admire that pale Copper too! I'll keep my eye open for it.

Interesting that we both found mating pairs : I reckon it must have been a day when the females were emerging,

Hoggers

Re: Maximus

by David M, 28-Apr-17 10:36 PM GMT

I love that last shot of the four Coppers nectaring together. This is a species normally intolerant of its own kind, so to see a group in such proximity is notable.

Well done.

Re: Maximus

by kevling, 29-Apr-17 01:27 PM GMT

Maximus,

Nice shots of the Small Coopers. I too like the last group shot. The Dukes look very striking too. I hadn't heard of Denge Woods being a spot for them. Do they appear in good numbers there?

Regards Kev

Re: Maximus

by Allan.W., 29-Apr-17 10:18 PM GMT

Great shots from Dungeness Maximus ! enjoyed looking for the pair on the shingle,found them eventually ! the pale individual was very striking,and unusual ,but not surprising at Dungeness, I was lucky enough to find 2 last year,but neither as striking as that one ... Nice one.

I ,ve been surprised by the number of Coppers feeding from the Blackthorn,don,t think I,ve seen this in previous years. As for groups of Coppers Sharing the same plants , I don,t find it that unusual to see so many together, both males and females. When the males are in courtship mode they generally won,t except other males in their vicinity,but when their on feeding mode it seems to me that anything goes ! A couple of years back the Bird warden took a shot of a pot plant (senetti sp;) in the observatory garden sporting 40 !! Small Coppers,when I tried ,I managed 14.

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 03-May-17 09:05 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, as there's such a large population of Small Coppers at Dungeness, you never know what you're going to find 🤩😊

Yes, Hoggers, there must have been some females emerging on that day. Also most of the Coppers we saw looked pretty fresh too.

Thanks, David, they were very well behaved at that time, even accepting a Grizzled Skipper into their midst!

Thanks Kev, I'm not absolutely sure of the Duke numbers at Denge having only visited twice. I did however read somewhere that BC have been/are involved in providing 'corridors' to connect the isolated colonies that exist within Denge woods.

Thanks Allan, when I was chatting with Hoggers he mentioned that he occasionally bumped into you there.

There were quite a number of Coppers (and other species) nectaring on the Blackthorn during our visit, I guess they'll use any food source available to them at the time?

Forty Coppers on a potted plant is amazing, fourteen is also brilliant 😊 Senetti, I believe, is a very bright, daisy-like plant and contains many individual blooms, so would be of great attraction to the Coppers.

Tuesday 2nd May, Noar Hill

Due to other commitments we missed out on the morning's good weather, so had to settle for an afternoon visit to Noar to look for our local Dukes. By the time we arrived it was cool, overcast and some dark clouds were appearing as we walked up the lane to the reserve. Our first butterfly sighting was an Orange-tip settled on a leaf, but at least he had his wings open!

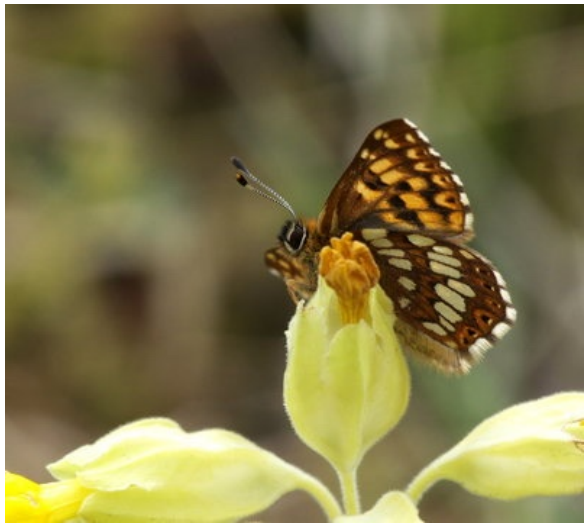


Once in the reserve we headed for one of the deepest pits hoping to find some Dukes sheltering there. Sure enough we found four or five sitting among the Cowslips on a sheltered bank. Occasionally one would take flight and battle with what we first thought was another Duke, but in fact turned out to be a Dingy Skipper, our first of 2017. Also in the same pit we found our first Small Heath of the year, doing its best to hide in the grass..





Later on, as we reached one of the top pits, it warmed briefly and several Dukes and two Duchesses made an appearance..



We saw a total of twelve Dukes, but there were probably more hidden in the grass. What we really needed, as did the Dukes, was better weather!

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 03-May-17 09:38 PM GMT

Yes, yesterday morning, glorious weather and an afternoon of cloud. As for today forget it !. You were lucky, given the cloud, to find those Dukes, love the one on the Cowslip. I'm also in awe of your trip to Dungeness, so many Small Coppers and that pale Small Tort.

A great couple of trips !,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 03-May-17 11:21 PM GMT

You did well to find those Dukes in yesterday afternoons weather! Another week or two and the Chilton's colonies should be in full flight 😊

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 04-May-17 06:03 AM GMT

Just catching up Mike. Pity I missed you at NH but great report and photos from Dungeness, esp. that ST 🤔👍

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 04-May-17 09:58 PM GMT

Absolutely cracking set of Dukes/Duchesses Mike 😊 They've only just started emerging here – the first was on Monday 🇬🇧

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Allan.W., 08-May-17 06:41 PM GMT

Hello Maximus,

Just been looking through a wildlife blog that I follow (and superb it is too !), " NORTH DOWNS AND BEYOND" and I found the picture of the Small Coppers on the "Senetti " plant in the Dungeness bird obs garden,i mentioned in my post to you,a short while back, its on 29th May 15' and entitled "The Pulling power of Sennetti " ,if you get a chance take a look. Regards Allan.W.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 17-May-17 11:58 PM GMT

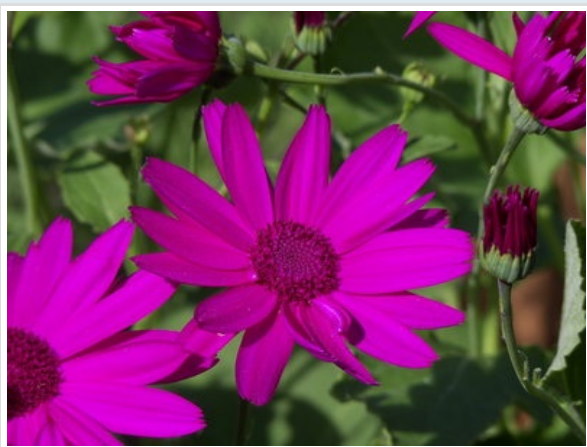
Thanks, Trevor, we were very lucky to find the Dukes at Noar given the weather conditions. The visit to Dungeness was superb, and we were also very lucky with the Tort!

We were very pleased to find some Dukes on that day, Bugboy, and you were obviously bang on regarding the Chiltern colonies.

Thanks Pauline, it's a pity we didn't see you at Noar, since then other commitments have 'stolen' our time. Feels like we've missed out on spring again. Fortunately I've been able to read all about it in other diaries. I'm sure that we'll bump into you soon!

Thanks Wurzel, have you seen your Dukes yet?

Hello Allan, thank you for the pointer to the photo of the Small Coppers on the Senetti, what a brilliant shot! I was so impressed that I took a trip to our local garden centre...



... and bought one!

On the 9th June 2016 a Large White laid her eggs on a brassica that I was going to plant in the garden. The plant was transferred to a net cage and things were allowed to run their course. The cats began to pupate around the middle of July...



...with the adults emerging around the end of July....



However two pupae remained, so we left them in the cage over-winter, although thinking that they might not develop any further.

But on 10th May 2017 two adults emerged, it's strange that these two didn't emerge in July 2016 with the others.



The Large White is a beautiful butterfly

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 18-May-17 06:28 PM GMT

I'm intrigued Mike and I'm hoping someone is going to be able to shed some light on it 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 18-May-17 10:23 PM GMT

Cheers Mike, I have now cracked the Duke 😊 A great set of shots of the Whites, interesting that a couple had a protracted pupation, has that been documented before?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

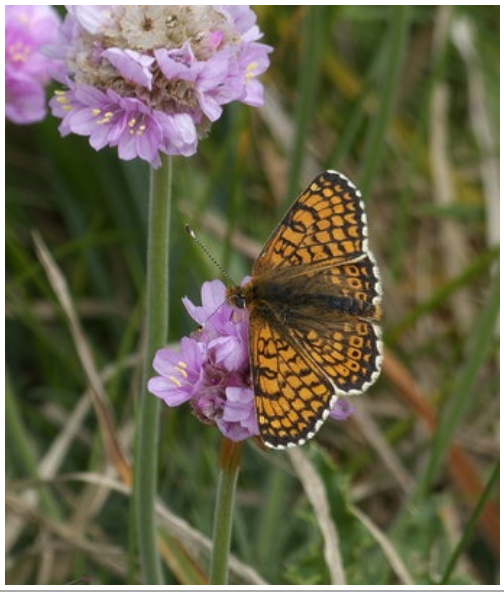
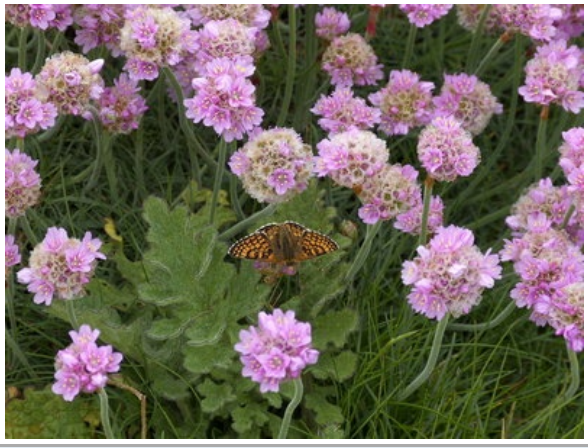
Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 31-May-17 01:08 AM GMT

I'm not sure if anyone will, Pauline 🙄 😊

Glad you got your Duke, Wurzel 😊 I'm not sure why the Whites had a protracted pupation, perhaps it's normal?

We have recently returned from our annual trip to the Isle of Wight. It would appear that this year is another good one for Glanville Fritillaries, as we found them to be plentiful at all sites along the south coast of the island, although the hot weather meant that they were hyperactive!







It was really great to see these lovely butterflies again.

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 31-May-17 08:27 AM GMT

You deserve two mrgreens, one for those superb Glanville images, and another for spending time on the Isle of Wight. 🍵🍵.

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 31-May-17 09:14 AM GMT

Sorry to hark back to this Mike but I am really interested in that protracted pupation of the Large Whites. Wurzel asked the question 'has it ever been documented?' but no responses. Is it because no-one has come across this before or is it because no-one knows? I can't believe it is either of those as there are so many smart folk on this site who are very experienced and knowledgeable. Have you thought about putting it out there, more widely, on the Board Index somewhere - just to shut me up if nothing else 😊😊 Very envious of your recent trip btw 🍵

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 31-May-17 10:27 AM GMT

Really envious Mike of your lovely Glanville's and your trip to the IOW 🍵🍵 Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

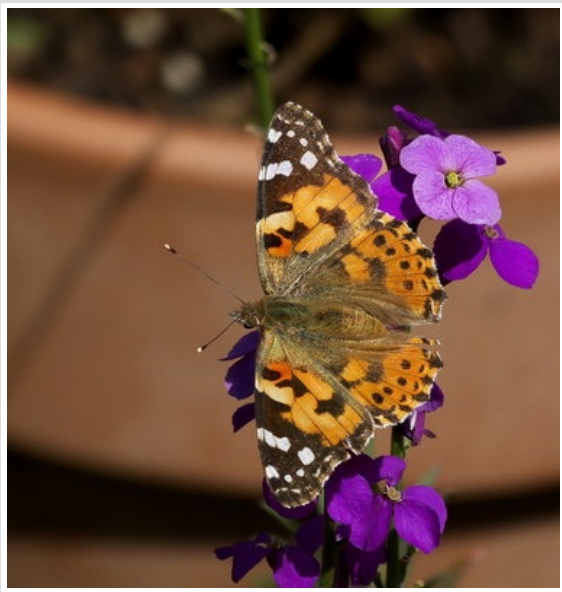
by Maximus, 01-Jun-17 12:37 AM GMT

Thanks, Trevor, we always look forward to our annual visit to the Isle of Wight and it's Glanvilles 😊

That's OK Pauline, but I'm not sure it's anything new 🤔

Thanks Goldie, we enjoy our visit to the IOW every year, it's just like a trip abroad 😊

This beautiful lady paid a visit to our garden this morning..



..she was a real sight for sore eyes.

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 01-Jun-17 08:00 PM GMT

Glorious Glanville images, Mike. As others, I am most envious of your trip to the Island! 🍷

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-17 09:48 PM GMT

Fantastic Glannies Mike 😊 🍷 You seem to be able to time your trip to the Isle of Black to perfection 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 02-Jun-17 01:02 AM GMT

I've seen Glanvilles to the point of distraction in southern France lately, but there's always something reassuring about seeing UK specimens from their natural habitat in the UK.

Well done for making the journey and reporting back!

Re: Maximus

by Neil Freeman, 05-Jun-17 08:25 PM GMT

Hi Mike,

Great report and photos of the Glanvilles from the IoW. I really must plan another visit, maybe next year. To my mind it is the only proper place to see Glanvilles in the UK.

Maximus wrote:

...I'm not sure why the Whites had a protracted pupation, perhaps it's normal?..

I am sure I have heard of this before, it is certainly not uncommon in the world of moths. I have a dim recollection of reading something somewhere about Orange-tips sometimes missing a year. Apparently it is normal for a proportion of Emperor Moth pupae to go through two winters before emerging.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 07-Jun-17 11:39 PM GMT

Thanks, Dave, it's always great to be back in Glanville territory 😊

It's always down to pure luck, Wurzel, but we do look forward to our time on the Black 😊

I can imagine how one could become blase about seeing a rare British species that is common in Europe, David. It's nice though that you appreciate the significance of the UK population 😊

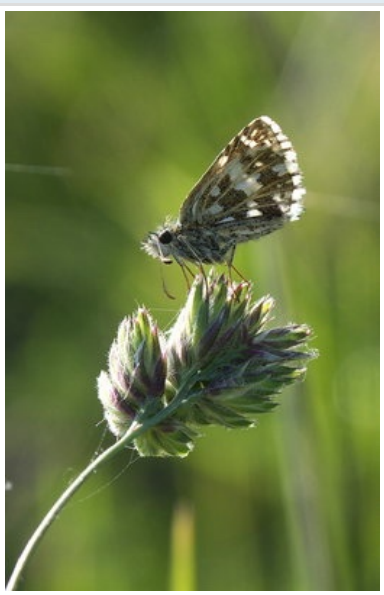
Cheers, Neil, and yes it is the best place to see Glanvilles in the UK 😊 Interesting that delayed pupation is common in moths – perhaps it's common in certain species of butterflies too?

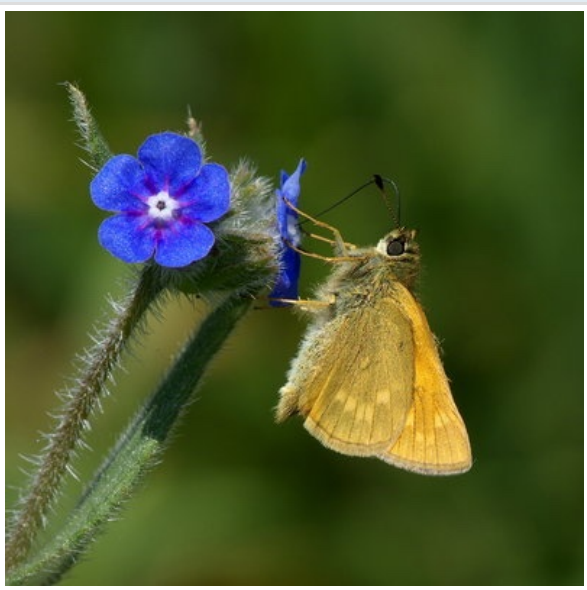
The Others

I've now fallen a little bit behind with my diary, and it's been a while since I posted on our visit to the Isle of Wight to see Glanville Fritillaries. So here are some shots of the other species that we saw during our visit.



Green Hairstreak, worn, but the only one I've photographed this year





Our first Large Skippers of the year



Roosting Small Blue, with a distinct lack of spots on the hindwing



'Blue' female Common Blue

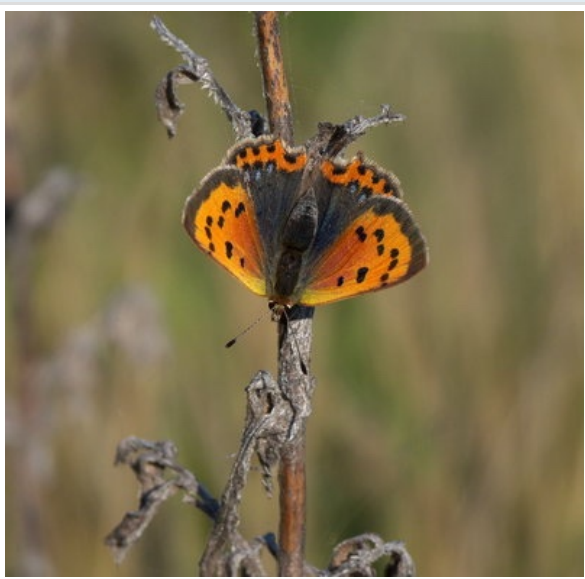


Male Common Blue



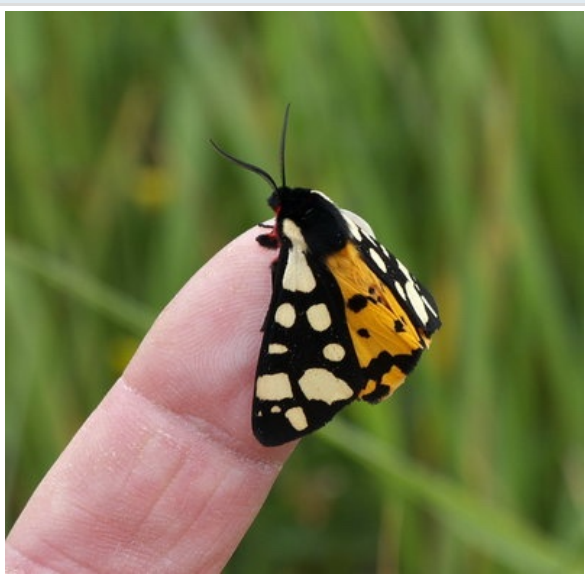


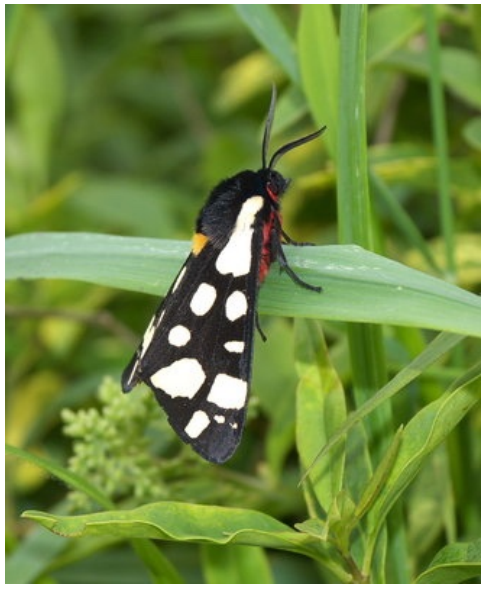
Not many Wall Browns this year



A beautiful female Small Copper - ab. caeruleopunctata

A Cream-spotted Tiger moth rescued from a footpath, a lifetime first..





Cream-spotted Tiger, psychedelic underside!

Finally a shot of Glanville land, looking West towards Compton Bay from St. Catherine's Hill, with the military road receding into the distance...



Re: Maximus

by David M, 08-Jun-17 12:02 AM GMT

Mike, that female Common Blue is one of the best I've seen.

What a stunner.

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 08-Jun-17 07:14 AM GMT

A great selection from the IOW., Mike.
Lovely Cream Spot Tiger, I like the Wurzelesque underside shot, very unusual.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 08-Jun-17 09:02 AM GMT

Fantastic array of variety and forms Mike – a 'blind' Small Blue, Blue Badger Copper, really Blue female Blue and to top it all a Large Skipper tree 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

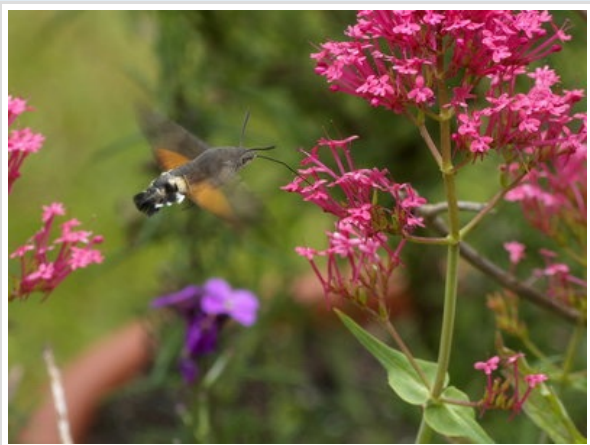
by Maximus, 09-Jun-17 12:09 AM GMT

She was a real stunner, David 😊 but it was difficult to get a good open wing shot due to the strong wind which kept forcing her to close her wings 😊

Thanks,Trevor, I like the term Wurzelesque 😊 the Cream Spot Tiger is amazingly well marked on the underside.

The Isle of Black has it all, Wurzel 😊 especially the Large Skipper tree 😊😊

This lovely migrant was seen on the potted Valerian on our patio, 'twice' today 😊😊



Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 09-Jun-17 08:09 PM GMT

A very enviable image Mike. Can't tell you how many times I've tried to get a shot like that and failed miserably 🙄

Re: Maximus

by essexbuzzard, 09-Jun-17 09:03 PM GMT

Agreed. A great sighting and excellent image.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 10-Jun-17 09:47 PM GMT

That is a cracking shot Mike – did you use Sports Mode? Even then getting something like that mighty difficult 🙄🙄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 14-Jun-17 09:47 PM GMT

Thanks, Pauline, I've always failed before too 😊 it was a slower moving individual 😊

Thanks Mark, it was nice to see it in our garden, a first for us.

Cheers, Wurzel, it was in 'lucky' mode 😊

2ND June

Today we decided to visit MHD as we had not been there since 2015.

In near perfect weather conditions we were surprised to find far fewer butterflies than we'd expected. The most abundant species were the Small Blues, but even they were not in the numbers we'd seen in previous visits to this site.





Small Blue eggs - I think?



Common Blues were a bit thin on the ground too, but, on a positive note, we did find this lovely female..



We did, however, see our first Meadow Brown of the year..



And were pleasantly surprised by our first Dark Green Fritillary of 2017..



So all was not lost. Perhaps the June gap is coming to an end!

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 14-Jun-17 10:53 PM GMT

I think you could be right, Mike – a DGF sighting definitely heralds the end of the "gap"! 😊

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 15-Jun-17 12:17 PM GMT

A splendid set of images Mike, especially the Small Blue egg-laying, and yes, those are definitely Small Blue eggs 😊 Tiny, aren't they?!

Re: Maximus

by David M, 15-Jun-17 09:38 PM GMT

millerd wrote:

I think you could be right, Mike – a DGF sighting definitely heralds the end of the "gap"! 😊

Dave

Absolutely....and that 'gap' is about to be obliterated given the magnificent weather conditions forecast for this weekend.

Normal service (perhaps extraordinary service) is on the cards!

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 16-Jun-17 08:22 PM GMT

I obviously need to invest in a new camera Mike – which models feature 'Lucky Mode'? 😊 Great to see such lush Small Blue shots 😊📷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 18-Aug-17 04:48 PM GMT

For various reasons it's been a while since my last diary entry. I have however been able to keep up to date with other PD's and through these witness the ebb and flow of the season.

Although our butterfly trips have been restricted, we did manage to spend a few days at the end of July down in Dorset. Our visit coincided with some typical English summer weather (wet and very windy) but we were fortunately able to make the most of the dry spells between showers.

As we were staying near Weymouth we decided that on our first day we would head to Portland, to Tout Quarry in particular, to which we had paid a brief visit in 2016. The great thing about Tout is that there are plenty of nooks and crannies where it's possible to get out of the wind.

Walking in from the car park I very quickly spotted a nice, fresh looking Chalkhill Blue, but it was hunkered down in the grass to escape the wind. When it did fly it was blown quickly away and out of sight, so we set off to find a more sheltered spot. Running in from the cliffs there are a series of deep gullies full of nectar sources; Valerian, Hemp Agrimony and Buddleia, and here we found numerous butterflies. There were a large number of male and female Chalkhill Blues on the wing which were particularly fresh.



We found a few mating pairs including this stunning looking pair



This male was taking water from the wet grass





There were also some nice fresh Common Blues.





During our visit we found one Silver-studded Blue, a male which looked very fresh.



Only one shot before he vanished

And a handful of Small Blues.



We didn't find any Adonis Blues, a bit too early perhaps.

Our trip to be continued..

Re: Maximus

by David M, 18-Aug-17 06:54 PM GMT

I love that first Chalkill, Mike. It's posed beautifully in perfect light.

Will look forward to your next instalments.

Re: Maximus

by Neil Freeman, 18-Aug-17 07:23 PM GMT

Hi Mike,

Great selection of blues from Tout Quarry 😊

Maximus wrote:

... at the end of July down in Dorset...

...We didn't find any Adonis Blues, a bit too early perhaps...

Late July would be right between broods for Adonis, too late for first brood and too early for second. I have always found late August/early September to be good for second brood Adonis in Dorset although I believe they are on the wing a bit earlier in the south-east.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 18-Aug-17 09:04 PM GMT

As Neil says, a great selection, Mike. There can be very few spots in the UK where you would see those four species of Blue together. 😊

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 19-Aug-17 10:09 AM GMT

Great set of shots Mike especially as David said that beautifully posed Chalkill 😊 That Silver-stud is also very fresh for that time of year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 22-Aug-17 12:42 AM GMT

Thanks, David, the Chalkhill Blue did pose perfectly and the light was just right to show it's lovely pale blue sheen.

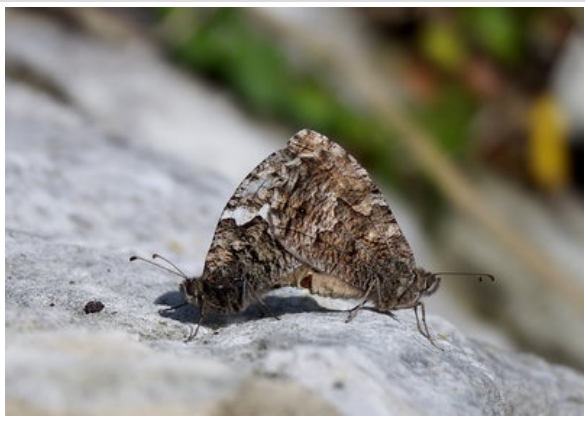
Thanks, Neil, Tout Quarry is a great place to visit 😊 I suppose that I hoped the second brood Adonis might be much earlier this year 😊

Cheers, Dave, I've not seen those four species of Blue together before, but I guess there must be one or two other spots where this can happen 🤔 😊

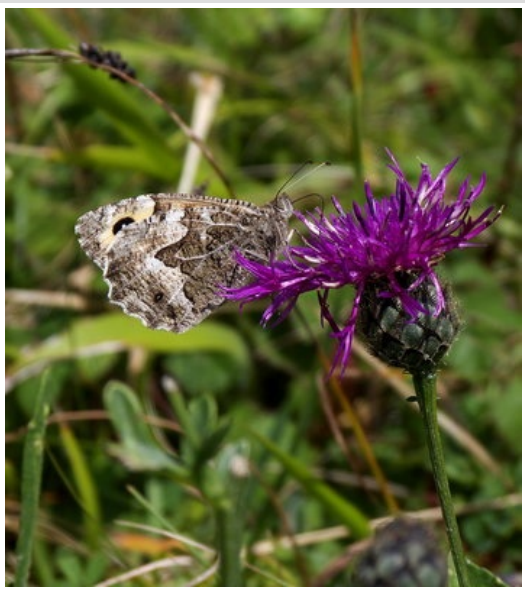
Cheers, Wurzel, we were also surprised at how fresh the Silver-stud was, given the date of our sighting 😊 😊

....our Dorset trip continued.

After Chalkhill Blues by far the most abundant species we saw at Tout Quarry were Grayling, they were everywhere. Obviously the terrain is ideal for them and I have never seen them in such numbers at any other site, it was just great to see so many! Just a few shots of those taken.



A mountaineering job was needed for this shot, after which I slid slowly down the rock face!





Our Dorset trip to be continued...

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 23-Aug-17 06:50 PM GMT

I understand now why I haven't seen you both all season - you've been exploring further afield and some great shots too 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 25-Aug-17 09:46 PM GMT

Cracking set of Grayling shots Mike 🙌🏻👍, you're showing off Dorset in a great light 😊👍

Have a goodun

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 26-Aug-17 06:58 PM GMT

Thanks, Pauline, and there's still time for us to bump into you 😊

Cheers, Wurzel, Dorset is a great, shining light 😊😊

...our Dorset trip continued.

While we were on Portland we also had a look around Broadcroft Quarry. It's a much more exposed site than Tout, so it was open to the strong South Westerly wind. It is bordered on one side by a new housing estate and a Quarry access road on the other, although there was further habitat on the other side of the road. We were however reluctant to explore this as we could hear regular explosions which we guessed was due to the mining of Portland stone and we found no site information signs.

We were aware that the Lulworth Skipper is supposed to fly on Portland but we had not seen any at Tout and a wander around Broadcroft did not reveal any to us either. The site was however covered in a beautiful array of wild flowers and lots of Buddliea which were attracting plenty of butterflies, including, Common Blue, Small Blue, Wall, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Peacock, Green-veined White, Large White, Small White, Small Skipper, Gatekeeper, Marbled White, Small Copper, Ringlet and Hummingbird Hawk moth.









Our Dorset trip to be continued...

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 28-Aug-17 09:42 PM GMT

More fantastic shots Mike, I thought that Wall was lush and then the next shot down is the two species Marbled White/Painted Lady – brilliant! Keep em coming 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 28-Aug-17 09:52 PM GMT

Hard to pick a favourite image there, Mike.

I love the last habitat image but I think the Green Veined White just edges out the female Wall Brown.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 31-Aug-17 12:50 AM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel, here comes the last part.

Thanks, David, glad you like the habitat shot, and the GWV.

25th July

On the final day of our Dorset trip we headed to Lulworth Cove. After parking the car we set off up the narrow footpath that leads onto Bindon Hill. Having climbed over the (rather high) stile at the top of the path, it only took us five minutes to find our first Lulworth Skipper of the trip.



Once we had found the first one, we began to find more as we walked along the path. Quite a lot were showing signs of wear..



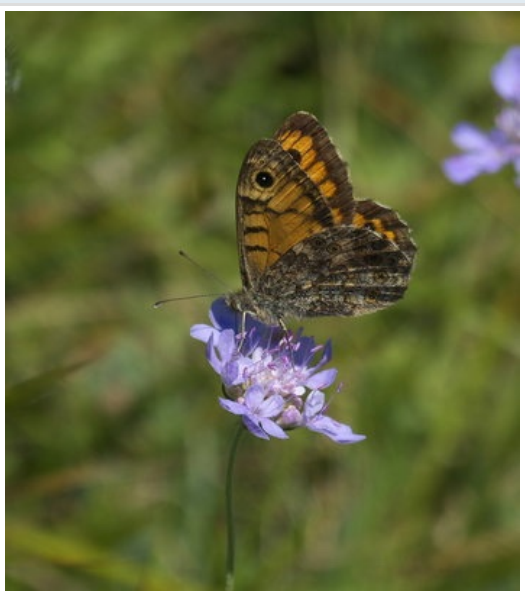
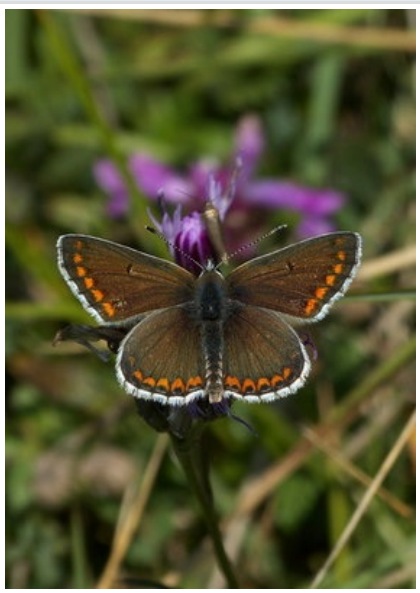
..but we also found some nice fresh looking individuals.



Chalkhill Blues didn't appear to be as abundant as they were when we last visited in 2015, perhaps they emerge later here, however those that we saw looked nice and fresh.



Other Butterflies we saw during our visit were: Marbled White, Brown Argus, Wall Brown, Dark green Fritillary, Common Blue, Small Copper, Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper.





During our pleasant walk across the hill, down the steps and back across the beach we also found a Green Bush Cricket, and a Humming Bird Hawk Moth nectaring on Valerian.



View from the top of Bindon Hill with Portland in the distance and Lulworth Cove below





During our four day visit to Dorset we made the most of the two good weather days and saw a total of 23 species.

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 31-Aug-17 08:00 AM GMT

One of the best Humming Bird Hawk Moth images, Mike. 🍷
Forget composition, there's never time for that, the way they dart about !.

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 31-Aug-17 03:54 PM GMT

I agree with that, Trevor,they give you the right run-around 😊

I'd do a trade for your superb Qos 😊😊

Mike

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 31-Aug-17 07:16 PM GMT

Just catching up with your Dorset trip, a very good range of species and a wonderful set of images 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 31-Aug-17 08:23 PM GMT

Great shots of my favourite butterfly Mike and that Hummingbird Hawkmoth is a cracking shot 🍷🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by essexbuzzard, 31-Aug-17 09:16 PM GMT

Hi Mike

I was on Bindon Hill a few days before you, and only saw three Chalkhills, but they do emerge late on that coast. Where as Lulworth Skippers emerge early 😊

Great hummingbird Hawkmoth, we didn't see any while we were there so well done!

Re: Maximus

by Butterfysaurus rex, 31-Aug-17 09:25 PM GMT

Great shot of the Hummer mike, they are **really** tricky to photograph! Lovely part of the UK that, I lived near there for a few years – many years ago.

Re: Maximus

by David M, 31-Aug-17 10:09 PM GMT

The area around Lulworth Cove is extraordinarily striking, and I haven't been there for 3 years so thanks for reminding me of what I've been missing!

As others have said, Hummingbird Hawk Moths are difficult at the best of times, so well done for capturing your subject as sharply as you have.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 05-Sep-17 09:03 PM GMT

Thanks bugboy, a Dorset visit is the highlight of our year 😊

It's a favourite of mine too, Wurzel 😊 for the Hummingbird Hawkmoth it was lucky mode, yet again 😊

Hi mark, we only saw a handful of Chalkhills on Bindon Hill, whereas there were dozens at Portland.

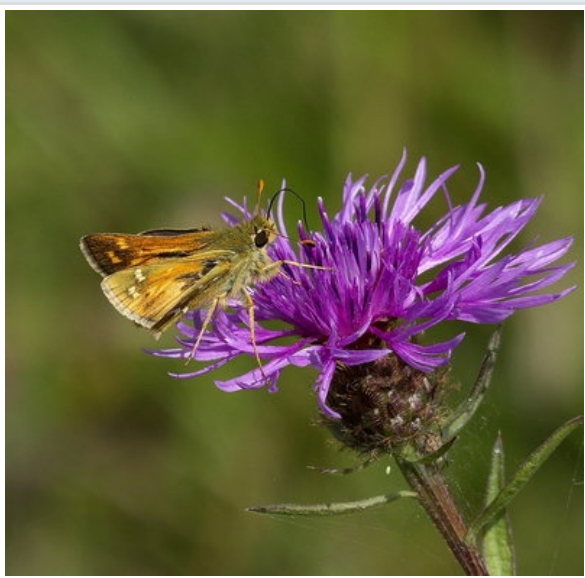
Thanks James, it's a great part of the UK, you were lucky to live nearby, but now you live in Sussex 😊

The Dorset coast is beautiful, David, and it's just a nice place to be.

15th August

We decided that it was about time we paid a visit to Old Winchester Hill in the hope of finding some Silver-spotted Skippers with the possibility of also seeing some second brood Adonis Blues. It's a late site for Silver-spotted Skippers so we were hopeful that any we did find would be in good condition. After parking the car we set off along the upper path and had only walked about 100 meters from the car park when I spotted a male SSS nectaring on a Knapweed flower and another close by on a Scabious.





What long-legged beasties they are

Happy with our early success we continued along the path and began to see some other species, plenty of Meadow Browns, Essex Skippers, lots of Brimstones, several Painted Ladies and also a couple of nice fresh Small Tortoiseshells.



Essex Skipper



We then made our way to the hill fort and into the meadow below it where it was more sheltered, there we soon spotted some more Silver-spotted Skippers along with a few Brown Argus. There were also some Chalkhill Blue male and female but they were looking a bit worn.



Hill fort ramparts with the Isle of Wight in the far distance





We then searched for at least an hour before we eventually found an Adonis Blue right at the bottom of the slope, a very fresh looking male which we observed having constant ariel battles with Common Blues. It was joined by a second, by it wasn't until it clouded over that they settled and opened their wings allowing some shots. We eventually found another for a total of three (males) and concluded that we were witnessing the beginning of their emergence. (I've since seen reports of counts of ten plus a week or so later).







We decided to take the lower route back in the hope of seeing the Clouded Yellows we had been told about by another butterfly enthusiast who had seen them there that morning. Sure enough when we reached the spot in question we had fly-bys by at least three different individuals. Getting a shot was a challenge but I eventually got a couple of record shots. They were a little bit past their best, but I was not too unhappy with that 😊





The bank where the Cloudies were flying

Silver-spotted Skipper numbers were possibly a bit lower than we've seen in previous years (our total count was ten plus) but it's a large site and as you're encouraged to keep to the path it would be easy to miss some.

All in all it was a great visit to a lovely site.

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 05-Sep-17 09:31 PM GMT

Some lovely Adonis shots, there, Mike – I may have to add this spot to my places to visit next year; after all it's not too far distant. 😊

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 06-Sep-17 11:05 PM GMT

Stunning Silver-spots 🤩👍 some Cloudy action 🌧️ and the colours on those Adonis – electrifying 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 07-Sep-17 03:46 PM GMT

I love the SSS on the scabious flower, Mike. A very striking image.

The habitat looks heavenly too, so no surprise Adonis Blues are at home there.

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 07-Sep-17 06:18 PM GMT

You've certainly captured the 'electric blue' sheen on those Adonis Blues.

Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 22-Sep-17 08:06 PM GMT

It's been a little while since I last posted so apologies for the late replies.

Thanks, Dave, it would certainly be worthwhile for you to pay a visit to Old Winchester Hill next year 😊

Cheers, Wurzel, it's not always possible to do justice to Adonis Blues 😊

Cheers, David, yes the habitat there is managed perfectly for the Adonis Blue (and others).

Thanks, Trevor, just occasionally the light is just right to show off that electric blue 😊

22nd August

Another visit to Noar Hill today looking for Brown Hairstreaks, having failed to find any during our previous visit. During that visit we had found Noar to be strangely devoid of butterfly life in spite of the massive amount of nectar rich plants to be found there. The met office had predicted sunny spells for the Selborne area today, but they were well off the mark and as we walked up through the site we soon had to seek shelter from a heavy downpour. Once it stopped raining we headed on up to the triangle and spent a while searching this area as it can be a bit of a hotspot for BH, but not today, so we moved on. When I arrived at the top pit a butterfly flew across the path in front of me, landed on a leaf and opened its wings to reveal the orange bands of a female BH. I quickly took several shots before she flew back over the path and landed facing me. I only got one more shot before a Meadow Brown chased her off and she disappeared up the bank. Unfortunately, Cathy had walked on ahead so didn't get to see her.



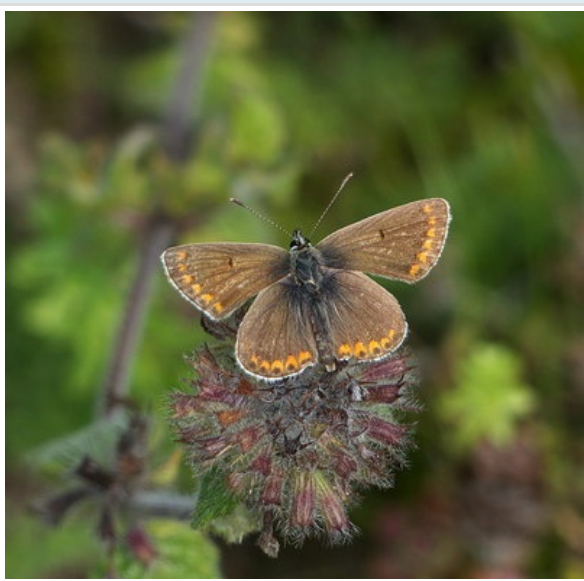
We hung around for a while but she didn't re-appear, so, pleased with the sighting, we decided to look elsewhere. In the centre of the reserve we found several lovely Brimstones feeding up for their hibernation. We also spotted some Meadow Browns, Common Blues, Brown Argus, Large Whites, Small Whites and a single Green-veined White.



Autumn Lady's-Tresses with Female Common Blue

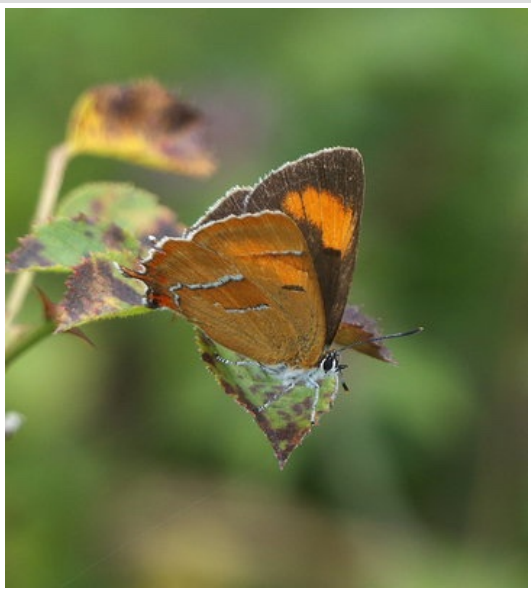


A fairly blue female.





As it was now getting late we began to make our way towards the gate when another BH flew across the path and settled right in front of me. I called Cathy so that she wouldn't miss out this time and we both watched as she searched out Blackthorn suckers to lay her eggs on. In between bouts of egg laying she basked with her wings open allowing some shots. She appeared more worn than the first female, but still a lovely sight.





The path where the second Brown Hairstreak was seen.

Re: Maximus

by essexbuzzard, 22-Sep-17 08:33 PM GMT

She is still a fine sighting and thankfully you both got to see her 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-17 10:37 PM GMT

Great report and set of shots Mike, and it's really useful seeing the habitat shot/where the butterfly was found, helps out it into context 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 24-Sep-17 04:57 PM GMT

That scrubby area looks like butterfly heaven, Mike, with its sheltered dip and masses of what I presume are blackthorn bushes at the bottom?

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 24-Sep-17 09:01 PM GMT

A nice pair of Brown Hairstreaks there, Mike. Neither of them was the one I saw there a few days earlier, and both of yours were in better condition. 😊

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 26-Sep-17 08:40 PM GMT

Thanks, Mark, Cathy was still a bit disappointed to miss the first BH 😞

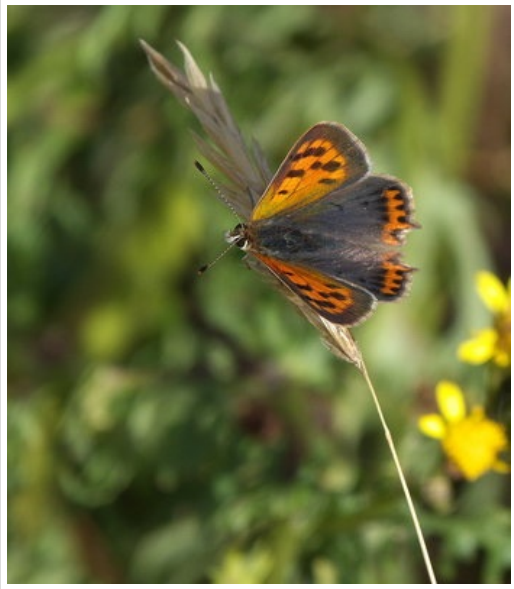
I agree with you about the relevance of habitat shots, Wurzel 😊

It's certainly butterfly heaven, David, and yes, those are blackthorn bushes.

I must try to get there when the BH are still fresh, Dave 😊

Autumn Coppers

Looking through my photos recently I was surprised to find these beauties, taken at Hoggers' great stomping ground Copperness, which, for one reason or another, I never got round to posting. So here they are..







Absolutely stunning little butterflies.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 27-Sep-17 01:52 PM GMT

This was the butterfly that got me hooked - I'd been messing around with my wife's camera taking shots of Specklies etc and I got a shot of a Blue Badger ad that was it! 😊 As I look out of the window at the drear these shots remind me to cheer up as some of these little beauties are still out there 😊 A lovely set of shots 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 27-Sep-17 04:55 PM GMT

I love your Copper shots, they reminded me of my visit to Kent and the Copper ab I saw there, my first for Copper's Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 27-Sep-17 08:06 PM GMT

That is a real gem of a blue badger and is it my imagination or is there a distinct tendency towards short tails down that way?

Re: Maximus

by David M, 30-Sep-17 10:37 PM GMT

Absolutely stunning Coppers, Mike, and as others have commented, that's one hell of a *caeruleopunctata*!

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 02-Nov-17 09:03 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments.

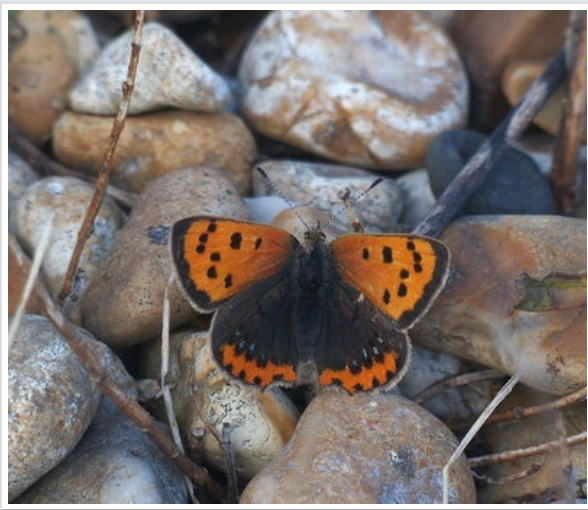
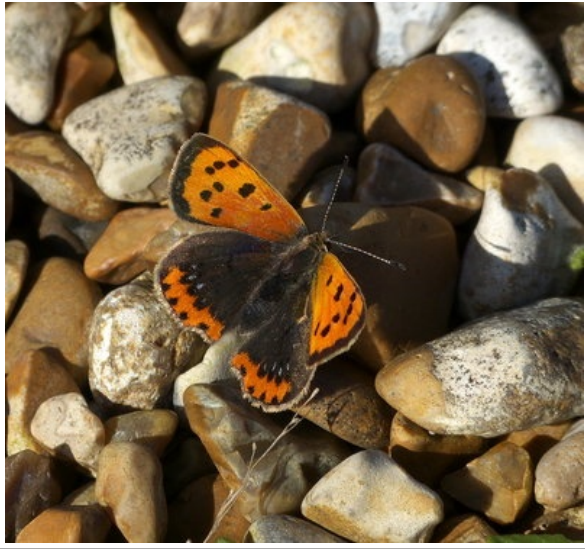
Friday 27th October

We recently spent a few days in Kent enjoying a family break. Apart from the Wednesday and Friday, which were sunny and warm, the weather was mainly grey and mild. On the Wednesday we were at Kingsdown for lunch with friends, after which we were gagging to take a walk along the clifftop, but not wishing to appear rude we had to pass up on the opportunity. We did, however, spot a Small White and some Red Admirals from the balcony of their home which overlooks the clifftop. Given the shirt sleeve weather, and with Calais clearly visible across the channel, we felt that a Long-tailed Blue could have been a real possibility!

On the Friday, as a means of compensation, we headed over to Dungeness to see what we could find. The car temperature sensor was showing seventeen degrees as we parked up by the lighthouse. We headed across and into the moat with no real expectation, but to our joy we quickly spotted our first Small Copper. Exploring the area we began to find more, some which were fairly worn but also some lovely fresh looking individuals.



Some of the Blackthorn was in flower

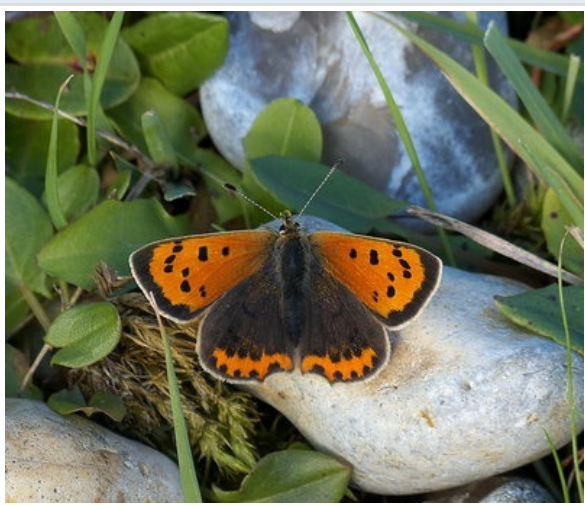


A lovely caeruleopunctata female



A fresh female

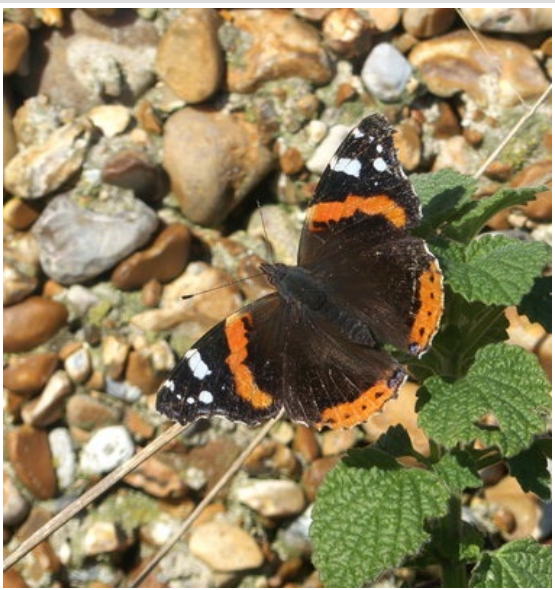
And this stunning individual



Surprisingly, we also found two Small Heaths which were in remarkable condition.



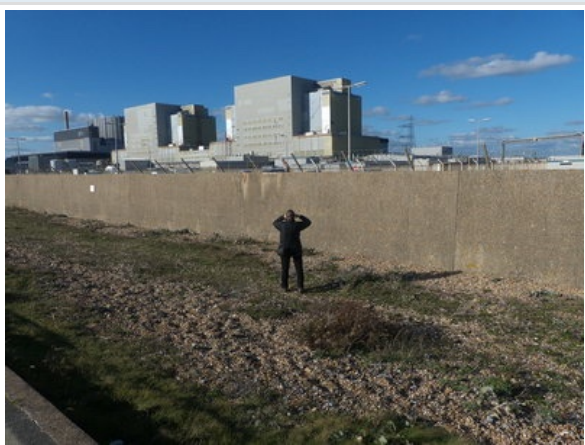
And several Red Admirals





The moat

After spending a couple of hours in the moat we decided to head for the power station wall in the hope of finding a Clouded Yellow. Although it didn't look particularly promising territory we were very pleased to find a total of three flying along the wall, stopping to nectar on dandelions. They were a little flighty as it was particularly warm in the shelter of the wall, but we managed a couple of shots.



The power station wall

Four butterfly species seen on a late October day, now that really made our trip special!

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 02-Nov-17 09:10 PM GMT

What lovely glowing Coppers – and Small Heaths at the tag end of October is exceptional. Sounds like a splendid day out! 😊

Dave

Re: Maximus

by David M, 02-Nov-17 10:31 PM GMT

Thanks for the context shots, Mike. It's nice to see images of features several others have written about.

Lovely Copper shots, and as others have said, those Small Heaths are a real bonus.