

## Painted Lady

by False Apollo, 01-Mar-14 10:47 PM GMT

Having been out chasing an Iceland Gull and Siberian Chiffchaffs today 1st March at Stanpit Marsh, Christchurch, I decided to check the CHOG (Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group) website tonight to see what else had been reported. In the area known as North Scrubs a Painted Lady was seen. I have seen early Painted Ladies before, and not just at coastal sites. I believe these to be hibernators tempted out by the warm weather and not fresh immigrants. Indeed around 1987 I also recall seeing a few from around Boxing Day to the end of the year. It will be interesting to see how many other early individuals are reported. All the early individuals (March/April) I have seen in Hants/Dorset have been worn and a bit faded.

As an aside I wonder if anyone has any information on Marsh Fritillary sightings in Hampshire in 2013. I am writing the species account for the Hampshire Butterfly Report and have very little data so far, so would be grateful for any interesting records accounts from anywhere in the county. Adults/larval web counts etc. I will of course keep any sites confidential if requested. Particularly interested in any sightings from the North Hampshire/Wiltshire areas. As for my other species account, the Clouded Yellow, I have more than enough information to be going on with!

Regards  
Mike Gibbons

## Re: Painted Lady

by Wurzel, 01-Mar-14 10:57 PM GMT

I've got some bits and pieces Marsh Frit wise from the areas you're talking about so I'll send a PM Mike.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Painted Lady

by False Apollo, 01-Mar-14 11:13 PM GMT

Many thanks for that Wurzel, I was a bit despairing for the species as I have received records North Hampshire in the past and was sure they had not died out, but coverage was not brilliant. Understandably many people do not want some areas publicised, so exact site details are kept confidential for the species safety and if the observer wishes the site kept quiet. We would rather know where they are so their future (hopefully) can be made as secure as possible and the distribution map can be kept up to date.

Regards  
Mike

## A Visit to the Isle of Wight

by False Apollo, 10-Mar-14 09:21 PM GMT

On the spur of the moment on Saturday I booked a trip to the Isle of Wight for Sunday on the strength of a good weather forecast. As Sunday dawned I was not disappointed, the weather looked like we were two months or more further into the year, it was glorious sunshine. When Melanie (my other half) and myself boarded the Lymington Ferry and glided smoothly across the Solent to Yarmouth, it got warmer and warmer. We had decided to visit a wood on the north of the island to see what butterflies were flying. Not long after we had arrived walking through the wood, Brimstones were on the wing around 15-20 at least, but the most amazing thing was the amount of Commas in such a small area of woodland, I reckon there were around 30 altogether. A little later the first Peacock was evident, and around 10 were noted. We both very briefly saw a large gingery butterfly associate with a Comma, it flew purposely high into the trees, and unfortunately never reappeared. There were only one or 2 Small Tortoiseshells around. After lunch and a few more circuits we eventually saw a Red Squirrel, which soon scurried off. Most of the Commas were on willow catkins or down on crab apple windfalls between sunning themselves. We also saw a Raven and heard Mediterranean Gulls overhead. After a cream tea we left the sunshine isle to make our way back to the ferry with that mysterious butterfly still on our minds, was it or wasn't it?

Mike Gibbons



*Red Squirrel not stopping for long*





*Catkin feeding station*



*Peacock basking*



*One of many Commas*

### **Re: False Apollo**

by Wurzel, 11-Mar-14 12:24 AM GMT

Great shots and report Mike 😊 I'd go for the 'stringy' record 😊 it certainly sounds like a LT (not that I've seen one in the flesh but in many books I have)

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: False Apollo**

by False Apollo, 11-Mar-14 01:06 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

My immediate thought at the time was of a female LT, but I had such a brief view I could not stake a claim for sure. I have seen them here 2 years running though, my first being a magnificent female imbibing in a muddy area on the main path which I photographed and videoed. When this female took off, it was with a very powerful upward flight, which was pretty effortless. It was soon around the top of the trees and lost to view. The one I saw



last year with other observers was a tatty male sunning itself in a recently cleared area. I hope to go again if the weather is as good in a week or so.

Regards  
Mike

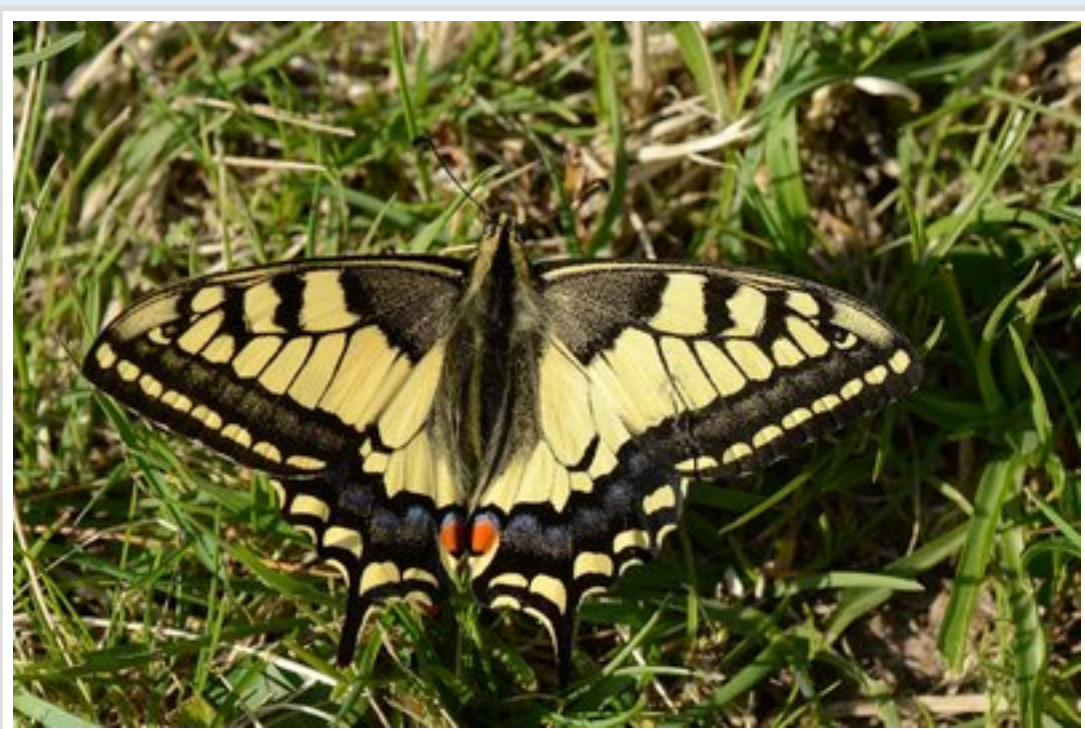
PS From the Marsh Fritillary records you sent me I believe you saw the earliest adult on the wing in Hampshire in 2013!

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 14-Apr-14 08:45 PM GMT

What a fantastic weekend and Monday I have had. The garden has had Orange Tip, Holly Blue, Brimstones, Small Whites and Peacocks. Locally in West Christchurch, Green-veined White as well. Today (Monday) I visited Hengistbury Head which was heaving with Peacocks and I also saw my first Speckled Wood of the year. I saw my first Ring Ouzel and 2 Redstarts of the year near the new visitor centre in this glorious sunshine. I then decided to visit Magdalen Hill Down, Hampshire Butterfly Conservation's flagship reserve and what a surprise awaited me there! Two people approached me to say 'You will never guess what we have seen'. They then proceeded to tell me they had seen and photographed a Swallowtail along the path not far from the entrance. After getting the directions I soon located this magnificent beast. It kept flying around up and down, landing from time to time on bushes fence posts and on the ground where I obtained the photos. I was unsure as to whether it was a British race or continental race, I think now it to be of the continental race, but would be keen to hear any comments to the contrary if anyone thinks otherwise. It does look extremely likely that has been released but nevertheless it is a splendid insect and it was only chance that led me to visit the lovely site. I also saw Small Tortoiseshells and my first Small Copper here as well. What a day!

Mike Gibbons



Swallowtail - Magdalen Hill Down 14/04/14.

## Re: False Apollo

by Neil Hulme, 14-Apr-14 09:04 PM GMT

Fantastic sighting Mike, but I don't agree with your captive/release theory. *Gorganus* Swallowtails invaded the UK last August, alongside the Long-tailed Blue. They laid eggs quite widely across the Southern Counties and a number of *gorganus* caterpillars were tracked until they pupated in gardens in Chichester and Hastings. The whereabouts of a dozen pupae are known. Other caterpillars were thrown out with the carrot tops. There is an article on this in the BC Sussex spring magazine.

So we are fully expecting an emergence of British *gorganus* Swallowtails this spring, this being a happy hangover from the momentous 2013 season. I believe this is the first of hopefully more. Don't write them off!

BWs, Neil

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 14-Apr-14 09:16 PM GMT

This is great news Neil, I was rather erring on the cautious side. It is certainly a strong possibility. There is however little in the way of foodplant on the reserve I believe after speaking to Colin the warden and Jenny Mallett who also saw the Swallowtail. It was incredibly territorial and faithful to returning to the same area though, even after being spooked by Peacocks and Brimstones who seemed intrigued by this large visitor. I hope there are other emergences to give more credence to this being a wild Swallowtail.

Regards  
Mike

## Re: False Apollo

by Wurzel, 14-Apr-14 09:30 PM GMT

Absolutely stunning 😊👍👍👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: False Apollo

by Neil Hulme, 14-Apr-14 09:36 PM GMT

Hi Mike,

The likelihood is that it emerged from a garden or allotments in the vicinity, before heading up there. Although there is a precedent for *gorganus* getting through its life-cycle on the southern Downs (Dorset to Kent) on wild umbellifers, occasionally becoming established for short periods during the last two centuries, I believe it has an easier time on cultivated plants, with much e.g. wild parsnip shrivelling (in the true 'wild') before the caterpillars have pupated in the autumn.

I don't know MHD very well (single visit), so just looked at a Google map. Plenty of gardens and a sizeable allotment less than a Km away. I know where my money lies!

BWs, Neil

### **Re: False Apollo**

by David M, 14-Apr-14 09:51 PM GMT

Given the abnormally benign winter, it wouldn't be surprising to learn that a handful of continental migrants have successfully overwintered in their appropriate life cycle stages.

Even so, a mid-April sighting of a Swallowtail outside its English heartland is a remarkable thing.

### **Re: False Apollo**

by Pete Eeles, 14-Apr-14 10:32 PM GMT

Incredible! Well done on getting a decent photo and sharing it with us Mike!

Cheers,

- Pete

### **Re: False Apollo**

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Apr-14 09:19 PM GMT

Stunning! What a find, Mike.

A lovely post script to some wonderful sightings in 2013.

Best wishes,

Lee

### **Re: False Apollo**

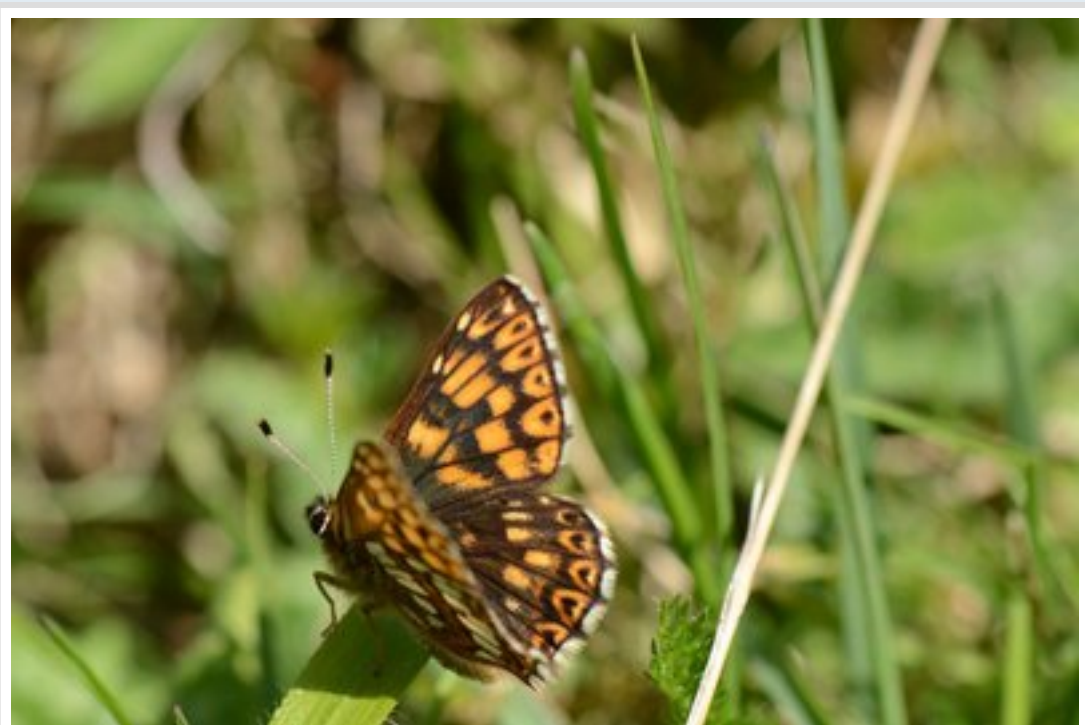
by False Apollo, 15-Apr-14 09:47 PM GMT

Sorry to hear that the Swallowtail was not seen at Magdalen Hill Down today. I spoke to Neil today at Noarhill and everyone was looking in the right place as per where it was yesterday. It would have been large and unmistakeable, so I very much doubt that anyone would have missed it. Vince asked me to add a photo to the species specific album which I have now done.

I visited Noarhill today as per above and managed to see around 5 or 6 Duke of Burgundy dashing around the cowslips. A Red Kite overhead was a fantastic sight to crown a lazy sunny afternoon.

Regards

Mike



*His Grace posing.*



*His Grace.*

### **Re: False Apollo**

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Apr-14 10:42 PM GMT

Lovely Dukes, Mike.

Perhaps there will be more Swallowtails in Sussex!

Best wishes,

Lee

### **Re: False Apollo**

by False Apollo, 15-Apr-14 10:49 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

Neil assures me there will be. So any day now !!! Yes it was great to see the Dukes, as it is a species I don't usually see every year, and I just happened to be off work while they were out.

Regards

Mike

### **Re: False Apollo**

by Pauline, 16-Apr-14 06:26 AM GMT

Lovely shots of the Duke Mike. I am pleased to hear that the Red Kite is still around. It was coming down really low on Monday and I was thrilled to see it, quite a rarity for me.

### **Re: False Apollo**

by William, 16-Apr-14 08:51 AM GMT

Superb stuff Mike – you've had quite a week with those Dukes and the Swallowtail – one to set the pulse racing 😊😊

### **Re: False Apollo**

by False Apollo, 16-Apr-14 09:06 AM GMT

Thanks everyone, this week has been a bit special. In all the excitement I lost my red glasses case at Noarhill yesterday, so if anyone finds it, please let me know. I'm taking my son back to France today where he is studying acting, so there is a possibility I may have time to look around south of Paris, I'm taking my camera just in case. I will be back over the Easter weekend.

Mike

### **Re: False Apollo**

by False Apollo, 22-Apr-14 10:51 PM GMT

Arrived home from a sunny warm three days in France on Saturday. I managed to spend a day on 17th April in Fontainebleau Forest, south of Paris. Unfortunately I did not manage to get any photos but my butterfly highlights were Scarce Swallowtail, Wood White and Weavers Fritillary along with Orange Tips, Green-veined Whites, Brimstones and Speckled Woods. There were very good numbers of Holly Blues all over the place.

On the birding front I recorded around 8 Bonelli's Warblers, Serin, Cuckoos, 5 singing Nightingales, Black Redstart and Redstart, not bad as I was strictly on a family trip to take my son back to Etampes where he is studying. There was a Honey Buzzard seen on the journey home.

Meanwhile on the home front I could not find any PBFs in the New Forest on Bank Holiday Monday. No bugle was out in flower so could be a week or so yet before any are seen in this part of the world.

Regards



Mike

PS Did manage a trip to the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre to tick off the Mona Lisa on the cloudier and cooler day!

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 05-May-14 09:21 PM GMT

On Sunday 4/5/14 I visited Bentley Wood to search for Pearl Bordered Fritillaries and bumped into Wurzel and Philzoid who had been there for a while. It was great to meet people on the forum, and it turned out we had met each other before, not too long ago. The Pearls were certainly out in force, and by the end of a warm sunny day we had counted around 24. I was lucky in that I found a freshly emerged female late afternoon which had crawled up a stem and eventually opened it's wings in the late sunshine. It even walked on to my hand before flying off a short distance allowing Philzoid's daughter to get some photos.

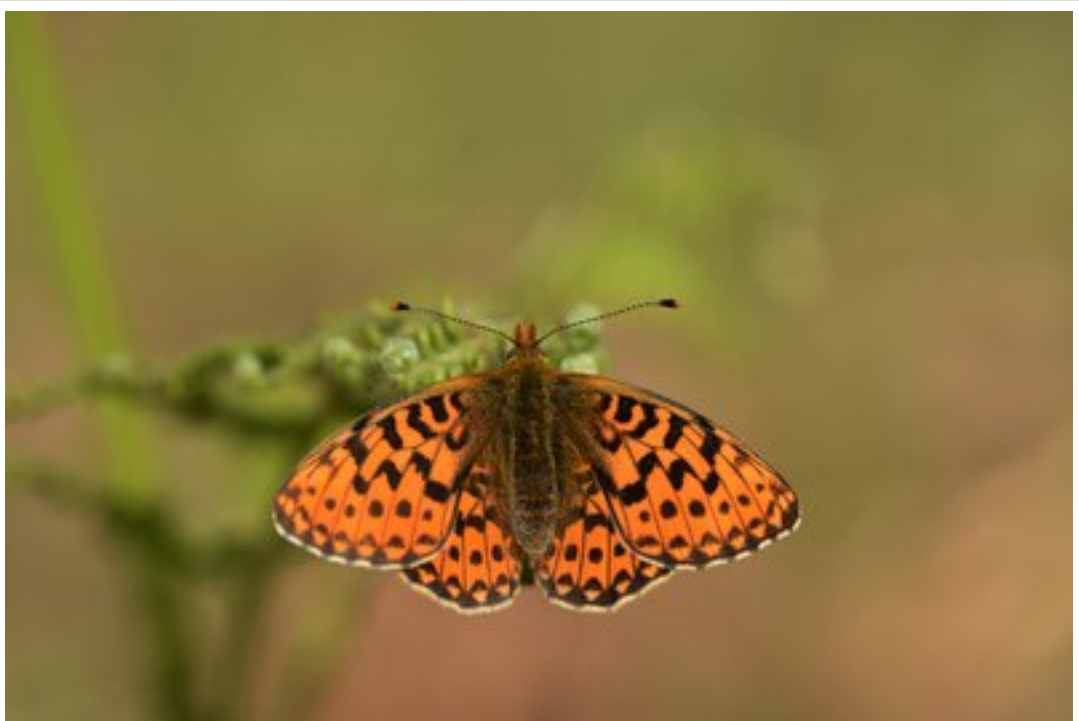
I know that earlier Wurzel had seen a Duke of Burgundy. I also saw a Large White, male Orange Tip, Peacock, Comma.

Regards

Mike



*Large White posing nicely*



*Freshly emerged Pearl taking in it's first rays of sunshine*



*Another Pearl basking*



*Freshly emerged Pearl-bordered Fritillary*

### Re: False Apollo

by Wurzel, 05-May-14 11:10 PM GMT

I am pretty darn envious of the closed wing Pearls 🍷 Good to meet up again and finally put a UKButterfly name to the face 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 05-May-14 11:28 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

If only you had returned with Philzoid, you could have had the PBF to yourself. It was only because I was patrolling the same area most of the afternoon that I noticed this one suddenly appear. As it never flew off and the antennae were not straight, it was soon apparent that it had just emerged. Still, if you can get back soon there could be even more out, they do seem to be having a good year. As we saw, much egg laying was happening during the afternoon, and all PBFs were in tip top condition.

Regards

Mike

### Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 17-May-14 07:08 PM GMT

I look forward to this time every year, chasing Marsh Fritillaries in Dorset. Last year I visited Cerne Abbas and Hod Hill. I did not see any at Hod Hill on my first visit then, but on my second and a visit to Cerne, I was lucky. Today was my first visit of the year to Hod Hill. It was a slow start, but I eventually saw my first Marsh Fritillary. After this I saw more and more, and my total rose to 14. One of these was an interesting aberration with interestingly patterned forewings. The underside showed the 'rayed effect', see my photos. When it clouded over, almost all disappeared, and it was hard to find them again. Just one or two showed and posed for photos. I also recorded 5 Small Blues, 4 male Common Blues, 1 male Orange Tip, 4 Brimstones, 1 Brown Argus, 3 Speckled Woods, 20+ Dingy Skippers and 4 Grizzled Skippers. It was amazing how quiet it went when it went cloudy, but in the sunshine, the place came alive.

Regards

Mike Gibbons





*Marsh Fritillary ab*



*Marsh Fritillary ab*



*Marsh Fritillary semi-open*



*Nice bright Marsh Fritillary*





*Marsh Fritillary*

### Re: False Apollo

by Padfield, 17-May-14 07:24 PM GMT

Very interested in your aberrant marsh frit, Mike. I found a very similar aberration last year high in the Alps in the quite different subspecies/form *debilis*.



Guy

### Re: False Apollo

by badgerbob, 17-May-14 07:25 PM GMT

Really nice Marsh Fritts, especially the ab. Very fresh too.

### Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 17-May-14 07:42 PM GMT

Thanks Badgerbob for your comments. I wish my ab had posed like yours Guy, but unfortunately it flew off and then the sun went in and it was lost to view. When I used to take slides I photographed a really extreme aberration near where I live in Christchurch. Unbelievably the colony was near the centre of the town for many years before it eventually died out, it proved controversial as it was most likely an introduction, but nobody was really sure. One year numbers went through the roof. Next year the crash began, the following year they had gone. I am interested in any Hampshire sightings for the Hants Butterfly Report, so I will be visiting a Hants site soon.

Regards  
Mike



## Re: False Apollo

by Wurzel, 17-May-14 10:40 PM GMT

Great shots there Mike and that an is great 😊 Good to see the Marshies are still at Hod Hill – last year I only heard negative reports 😞 Good luck at the Hants site.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 10-Jun-14 09:37 PM GMT



*Green Hairstreak, St Catherines Hill 8/6/14*

After a couple of disappointing visits looking for Heath Fritillary at East Blean (to early) and Haddon Hill (bad weather), hopefully this weekend things will look up. I did manage to get my first photograph of Hairy Dragonfly at East Blean though as a bit of compensation for the very long journey . I have been busy on the birding front watching Short -toed Eagle near Wareham, Dorset and Ross's Gull in Devon along with my local Nightjars, so it's swings and roundabouts. I noticed a distinct influx of Red Admirals last week-end which by their erratic fast flying behaviour I believe were incoming migrants, the first dashing through my garden, then another 2 at St Catherines Hill in Christchurch. I was on the Hill looking for SS Blues, but they were not out, I did however see a Green Hairstreak and Holly Blue.

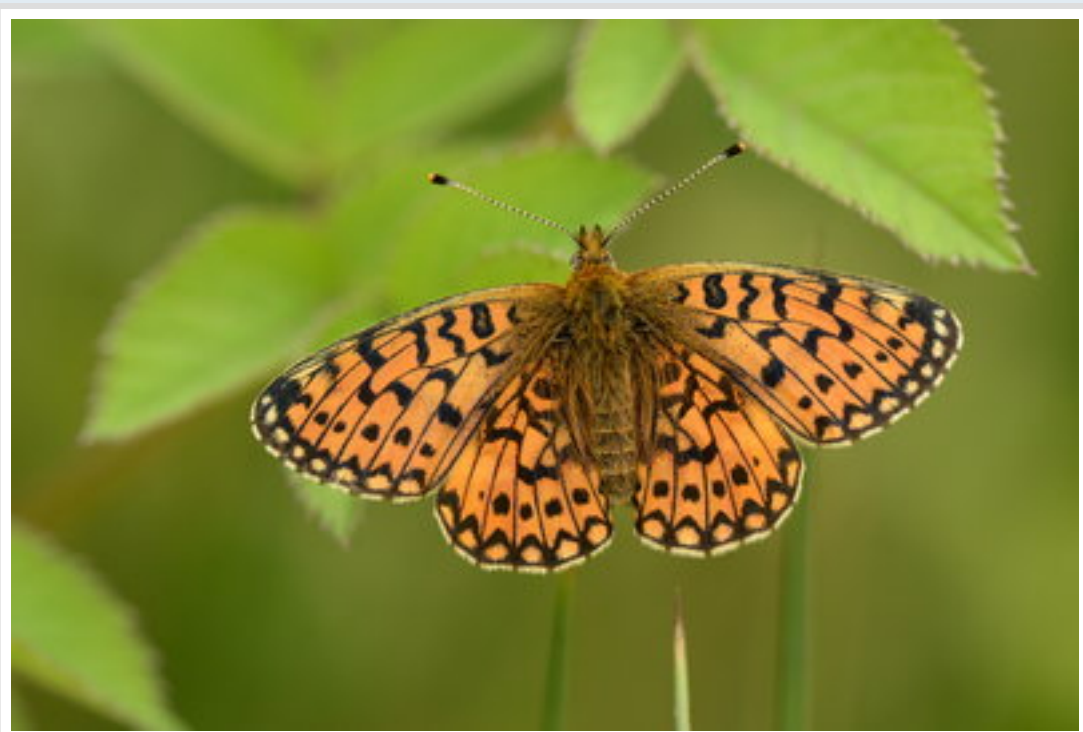
I have been lucky elsewhere with the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries at Bentley Wood, having 6 or 7 to myself a couple of weekends ago.

Today I had a Small Tortoiseshell in the garden nectaring on the scabious for at least half an hour but this was not quite the star of the show. Late afternoon I was in the garden and found a basking Grass Snake which had just had a large meal (see photo) peeping out of some shrubs. This was exactly the same place where I saw one 2 years ago, could it be the same one or has breeding taken place? Hopefully it will hang around for some better photos.

I will be active this weekend, making up for lost time!

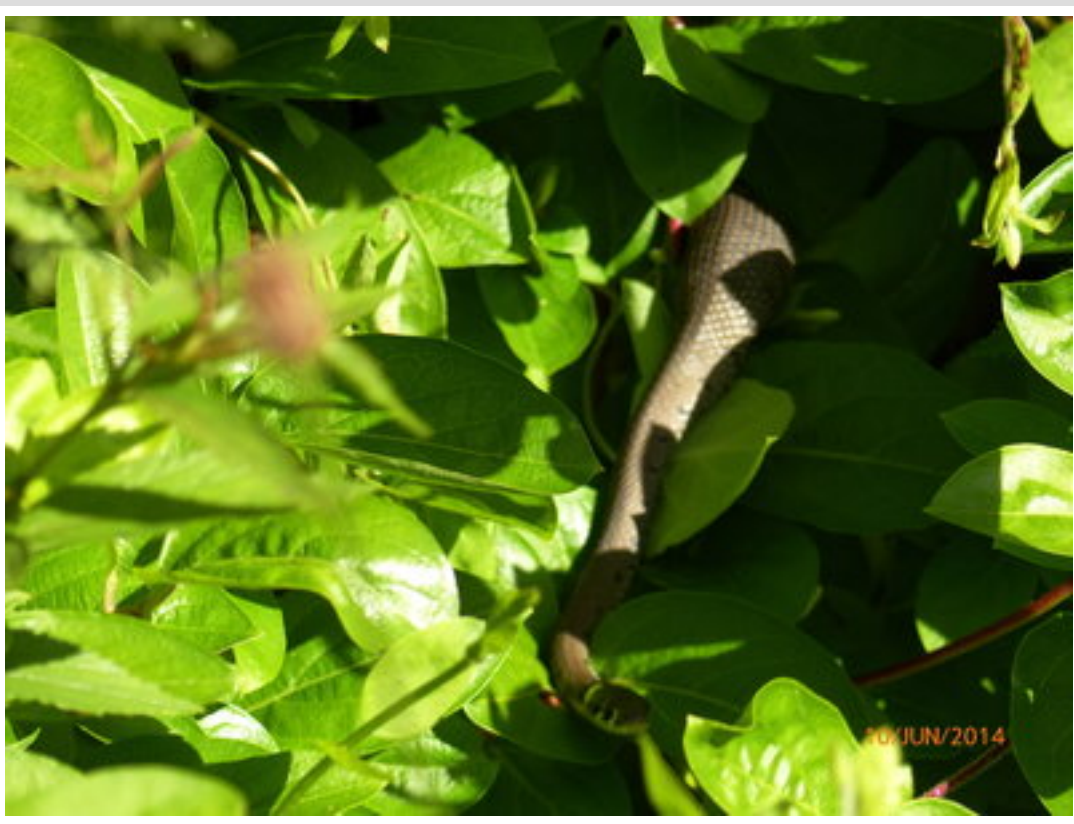
Regards

Mike



*Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Bentley Wood 31/05/14*





*Well fed Grass Snake in garden 10/06/14*



*Small Tortoiseshell in Garden 10/06/14*



*Hairy Hawker, East Blean 25/5/14*

### **Re: False Apollo**

by Wurzel, 11-Jun-14 09:29 AM GMT

Good luck this weekend with the Heaths, Ross's Gull and Short-toed Eagle are pretty fine compensations though 🍀 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: False Apollo**

by False Apollo, 11-Jun-14 10:30 PM GMT

Thanks for that Wurzel,

I'm planning a bit of a 'Butterfly Blitz' this weekend and am aiming for both Heath Fritillary and Black Hairstreak. This will very much depend on the weather though. After this it should be White-Letter Hairstreaks and Purple Emperors much more locally. I will be travelling to Sweden in late June for a few target species which I have long wanted to see and photograph, so I am preparing for that trip at present. I have been following your blog and can

see you have been very busy lately, some lovely shots. I will post some photos after this weekend, if I am lucky enough to see both species. 😊

Regards  
Mike

### Re: False Apollo

by David M, 11-Jun-14 10:37 PM GMT

"False Apollo" wrote:

I'm planning a bit of a 'Butterfly Blitz' this weekend and am aiming for both Heath Fritillary and Black Hairstreak.

Great minds think alike!! 😊

### Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 11-Jun-14 10:43 PM GMT

Yes David,  
Hope to see you if you are at Haddon Hill or Whitecross Green Woods this weekend.

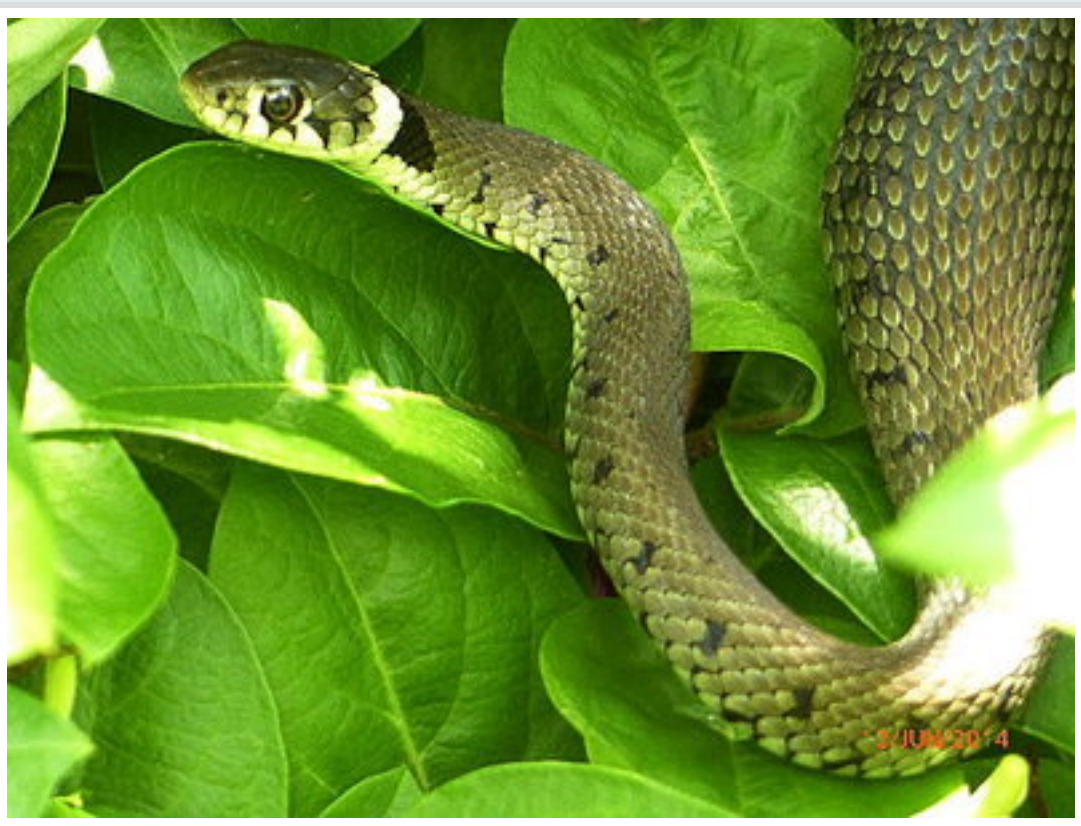
Regards  
Mike

### Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 12-Jun-14 07:33 PM GMT

In the garden today watching the Grass Snake when a Meadow Brown flew past. Things are really hotting up now in more ways than one!

Regards  
Mike



*Grass Snake showing better and still well fed!*

### Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 21-Jun-14 07:36 PM GMT

3 Purple Hairstreaks flying around the top of a tall oak by my garden this evening (Christchurch, Dorset), my first this year. Earlier in the day I struggled to see a White-letter Hairstreak at Alners Gorse. I could not find any near or around the elms but eventually saw one well in the woodland on top of a medium sized shrub (not sure what type of shrub it was).

Plenty of Small Tortoiseshells (one egg laying) and Red Admirals around too.

Regards  
Mike

### Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 06-Jul-14 08:59 PM GMT

First Time at Fermyn.

As I arrived at 9.30, the weather looked poor, wall to wall cloud and cool with little chance of seeing a Purple Emperor. But this is Fermyn I thought, a 'Premiership' Emperor wood, and from what Matthew and Neil had mentioned on the forums, it had to be only a matter of time.



I need not have worried as the locals were very friendly and helped me find the right locations.

Around 10.30 things started to happen with 5 seen around the oaks on one corner including at least 1 female.

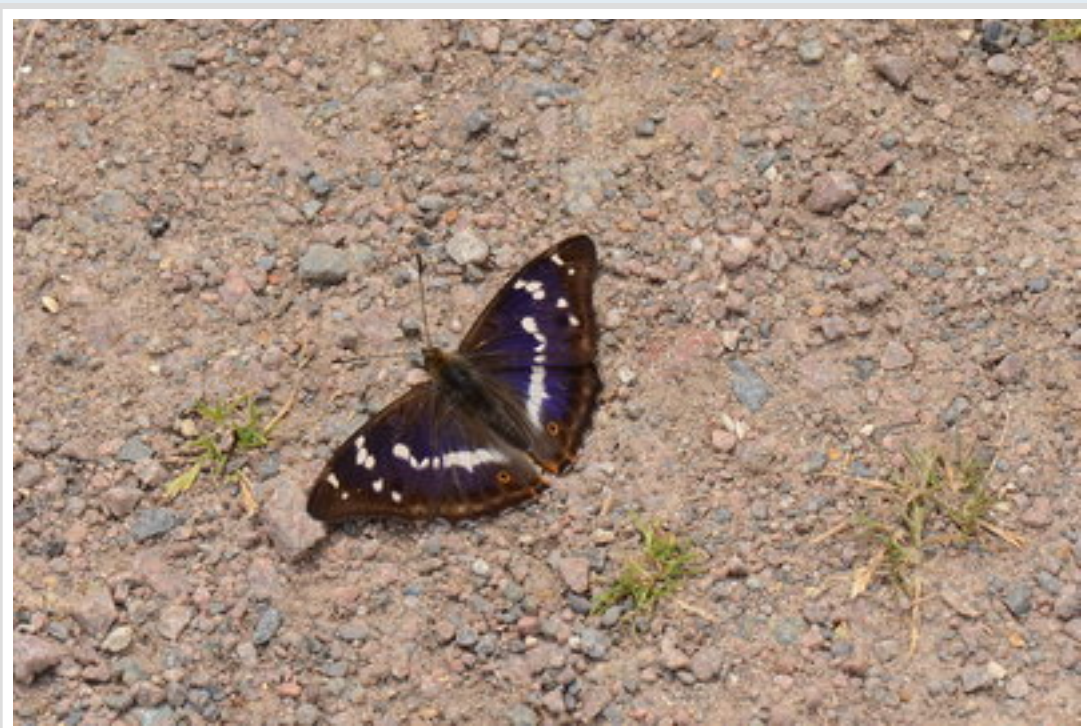
From 11.30 – 14.00 all hell broke loose, I was being bombarded by males. At one point I had 4 down at once on the track to myself. I photographed one trousering, one shirting me, one on my finger and another on a bewildered lady's arm finding out the time. This was like all my Christmas's coming at once. His Imperial Majesty also granted me permission to 'badge' him, which I duly took advantage of.

Altogether I had 11 groundings and estimate around 40 were seen altogether. Most looked like they had been out a little while, with a few fresh examples. Myself and the local did briefly see a male with very dark forewings, and regular hindwings, but it did not land unfortunately. I stayed until 15.30 and was watching individuals right up to that time. The ladies were more evident in the afternoon.

I have 2 more days to go, and I feel I am only scratching the surface. It cannot get any better than this, can it? I'll do my best tomorrow to make sure it does!

Regards

Mike Gibbons



*Purple Heaven!*



*Not bothered about the wing problem.*



*'Badged'.*





*Finding out the time.*



*Unable to fit all in the viewfinder.*



*A welcome from HIM.*

### **Re: False Apollo**

by Pauline, 06-Jul-14 09:10 PM GMT

Great shots Mike 🍷 . It sounds a whole lot easier than patrolling up and down the Straits hoping for sight of one in the canopies 😊😄

### **Re: False Apollo**

by False Apollo, 06-Jul-14 09:28 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Nice to hear from you. Yes I have not had much luck locally with Purple Emperors, hence I had to get my fix at Fermyn. It is just incredible here, and not too busy even for a Sunday! I will be out locally towards the end of the week so may see you at Straits if you are visiting.

Regards  
Mike

### **Re: False Apollo**

by Wurzel, 06-Jul-14 10:43 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Mike and a 'badged' one too 😊🍷 Bentley was hard work so I think I might have to try Fermyn next year too...

Have a goodun



Wurzel

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 06-Jul-14 10:57 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel,

Yes it is another world up here. I wish I could have got time off work earlier but it wasn't possible. I would recommend a visit. The only thing to take into account is that Silverstone takes place this weekend and I was lucky to get anywhere to stay. I have struggled to see any early Emperors down nearer home too, but they seem to be out in better numbers now so things may be looking up.

Regards  
Mike

## Re: False Apollo

by PhilJohnson, 07-Jul-14 07:53 PM GMT

Excellent report from Fermyn, Mike. It's great that your first visit was such a success! In my "neck of the woods", the Purple Emperor is often not seen by visitors to Bookham Common, Surrey and many leave a bit disappointed. I don't think there are "loads of them" at Bookham this year but I am told they can be quite widespread. My walk around the common in the mornings looking for them grounded is usually unfruitful. I know a couple of good places to look in the tree canopies to find them in the afternoon and passers by can be shown them usually within 5 minutes or so if timing and conditions are right. I also find this a bit frustrating as their response is often "**yes, I think there are loads of them around but just not usually seen very often !**". Then they continue on their walk around the woods and usually don't see another Purple Emperor in any other place on the common! Your report is encouraging for me.

Best Wishes,  
Philip

## Re: False Apollo

by Willrow, 07-Jul-14 09:01 PM GMT

Nice Fermyn report Mike!

Lovely picture posts of **Purple Emperor** really putting on a personal show for you, simply magic butterflies 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

**"When in doubt...venture out"**

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 07-Jul-14 09:39 PM GMT

Thank you for your comments everyone. Yes this is a truly magic butterfly, like no other in the UK in my opinion. I would love to see numbers on this scale in my own area. Every time I see one it is just like the first time. I remember it well because I was exploring a Hampshire wood and saw none at all and gave up and went back to the car. On arrival at the car a male was on the tyre, I was hooked from then on.

I will here visit again next year and try to get here earlier.

Regards  
Mike

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 07-Jul-14 09:44 PM GMT

As I arrived and parked at the small entrance to Fermyn (note I have got spelling right this time as I have slightly recovered from yesterday) I was greeted by HIM as I got out the car, he circled but did not land. Today was much sunnier and warmer this morning than yesterday and behaviour was a bit different. Again I found 11 down including a female effortlessly cruising start/stop along a track around 12.30 when at least one other was seen elsewhere, reminding me of the butterfly equivalent of a Boeing 747 but on a smaller scale. The males were not that interested in opening their wings wide for photography and were distinctly restless, although one or 2 would not budge. As per yesterday, I was circled by a few males, who then dropped on the track. Certainly a lot of the Emperors I have seen down have been 'old stagers' and have a few battle scars, but there were still one or 2 that looked newly emerged. One which I videod had a fixation with a patch of pink clover flowers and kept returning and climbing up the nearby grass stems, I think this was newly emerged.

Around 13.00 it started to rain and I headed back, one more day to go, I hope the weather holds.

Regards  
Mike





*A Flash of Purple.*



*Trousered!*

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 09-Jul-14 12:06 AM GMT



*The Great Wood.*

My day did not start well as the fire alarm went off at the hotel I was staying at around 4.30. Needless to say it was a false alarm. However I arrived at Fermyn at 9.30 and saw my first airborne Iris soon afterwards. It was not long afterwards that a rather worn male landed on a gentleman's bottom and made it's way on to his boot. He was very popular with the surrounding photographers.

I personally only had 5 males down in total, but 2 of these were very fresh. One was down, circling me, perching up nearby then back down again. It was here or thereabouts for over an hour, so other visitors got a chance to see it. This gave me the opportunity to capture the purple on both wings. Earlier it had been difficult to get an open winged shot due to the hot weather, but as some cloud came over, the opportunity presented itself. In total I saw around 15+ but I know other people saw more. Nevertheless there were fewer around today than yesterday and the day before.

Unfortunately on a sad note a large grass cutting machine was undertaking management work in the wood today ( which was probably essential)



however it flattened an unsuspecting male, totally oblivious of it coming along the track.

I left around 14.00 and saw another 2 as I was heading for my car.

I will certainly return to this magic wood next year now I have seen the promised land.



*It was a truly worthwhile visit.*

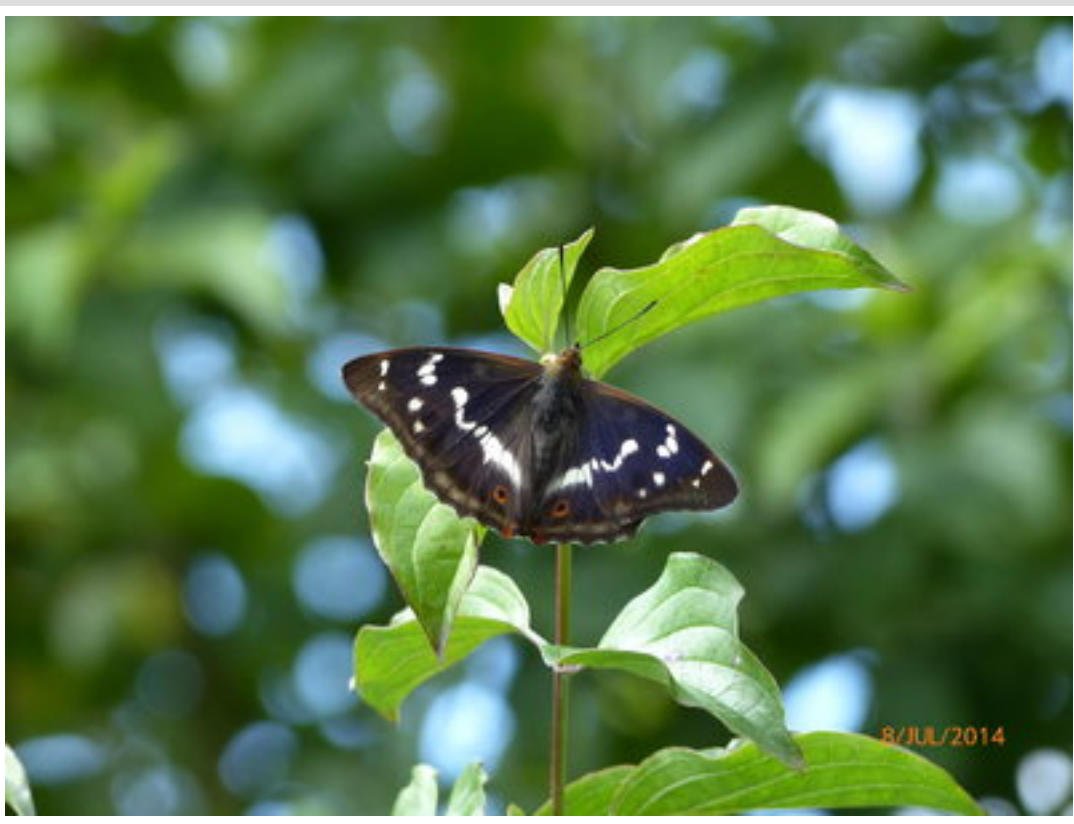


*The money shot I had been hoping for.*



*Being snapped by an admirer.*





*On show higher up.*



*A nice fresh underside.*



*On the boot!*

## **Variant Valesina**

by False Apollo, 09-Jul-14 08:18 PM GMT

Having been to Sweden, seen the first night of Monty Python at the O2 and a 3 day visit to Fermyn, I thought I would take it easy today. I decided to stay local and visit a Dorset wood to see what was about. On arrival I found an unusual Valesina Silver-washed Fritillary with an interested male SWT. It was always in a difficult position to photograph, and I forgot to take my Lumix. I only had one chance, so unfortunately this was the best I could get before it flew off. It, as was to be expected flew up high in a shady area and did not return. Note the white line toward the outer forewings and apex area. I later saw another Valesina which was as I would expect one to be. I also saw a fresh standard female SWT as well. Numbers seem to be rising. Good numbers of commoner species including Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshell and Ringlets. I will post about my Swedish trip soon.

Regards  
Mike





*Variant Valesina*

### Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 10-Jul-14 05:24 PM GMT

After all the excitement of the last few days, I thought things were going to quieten down, but how wrong I was. I visited a private wood not too far from where I live to search for Purple Emperors today. I managed to see a female in flight and a circling active male, but none were down. I decided to go back to my car and have a rest around 13.00. Should I go home or have another walk in the heat, you guessed it, I decided to go back. Around 13.30 I saw a large butterfly down on the track. On further investigation I could see it was a female Purple Emperor. She was a little restless at first gliding low over the track but soon settled and I mean settled. She was down for 45 minutes in total, imbibing for 30 minutes. Wings were closed, then flat out wide open. I have not seen a female Purple Emperor this confiding for many years (if at all). From my experience they are only down briefly (unless you are fortunate and lucky) or see them egg laying. I'm off to celebrate!

Regards  
Mike



*Empress giving me an audience.*

### Re: False Apollo

by Willow, 10-Jul-14 07:25 PM GMT

#### "False Apollo" wrote:

After all the excitement of the last few days, I thought things were going to quieten down

No peace for the wicked Mike...but we don't mind having our peace disturbed with butterflying adventures do we...wicked 😁

Bill 😁

"When in doubt...venture out"

### Re: False Apollo

by Wurzel, 10-Jul-14 11:01 PM GMT



When you had your rest were you in "the comfy chair"? 😊 Brilliant Empress shot which falls into my category of "I wish I'd taken that" 📷📷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 10-Jul-14 11:25 PM GMT

Thanks Willrow and Wurzel.

I took this week off work to search for Purple Emperors and it's been absolutely great! Thanks for your comments. Wurzel, 'Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition, so yes I did use the comfy chair'. I will be out tomorrow though.

Regards

Mike

## Re: False Apollo

by Neil Hulme, 10-Jul-14 11:30 PM GMT

Nice shot Mike. Quite a few females seem to have hit the deck today, from Fermyn Woods to Houghton Forest (W. Sussex). Sadly none for me, apart from the one I didn't see and nearly trod on in Eartham Woods. 😞  
BWs, Neil

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 10-Jul-14 11:51 PM GMT

Hi Neil,

Very interesting to hear about the other females coming down, I wonder if the warm weather is a contributing factor. To see one down and stay down is something I have long hoped for, but it has been quite a wait. This female eventually settled and imbibed in an area of the track which was pretty moist. I was so transfixed on the situation I forgot to try some badging. I didn't want to disturb her, she flew off when she had finished which was nice to see.

Regards

Mike

## Re: False Apollo

by Neil Hulme, 10-Jul-14 11:57 PM GMT

Hi Mike,

Have you seen the new *iris* underside badge yet? (<http://apaturairis.blogspot.co.uk/search...-results=7>). I think it will be important to coordinate open and closed wing individuals with the appropriate badge next season. Standards just keep getting higher. 😊  
BWs, Neil

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 11-Jul-14 06:14 PM GMT

Hi Neil,

Yes I have seen the new badge and I ordered it immediately. Both badges are almost essential for Iris fans. I have complemented Paul on his designs and although we are having fun badging Purple Emperors when we can, they have a more serious side as well. The money raised goes to a good cause and they are a talking point. I visited a shop after I went out yesterday and got talking to the shop owner who was extremely interested after I explained about my keen interest in the Purple Emperor. I feel a conservation message can be communicated if worn prominently. The first thing she said was 'I like your badge, what butterfly is it'? Then I was away, telling her about our star butterfly. It was great to speak to someone who was genuinely interested.

Regards

Mike

## Re: False Apollo

by Neil Freeman, 11-Jul-14 08:26 PM GMT

Hi Mike,

Just catching up on your diary, great reports and photos from Fermyn 😊

Cheers,

Neil

## First Brown Hairstreak Sighting

by False Apollo, 12-Jul-14 07:46 PM GMT



I visited Alners Gorse in Dorset today and was informed by 2 observers that the first BROWN HAIRSTREAK was seen today. Unfortunately I did not see it, but apparently it was seen well. This site is notorious for early Brown Hairstreak sightings as per last year.

Regards  
Mike

### **Re: False Apollo**

by False Apollo, 13-Jul-14 10:53 PM GMT

Absolutely superb aberration rogeri Painted Lady discovered on the Purbeck coast by Peter Moore today. I have seen the photos and they are breathtaking. Seems like a small influx of Painted Ladies has occurred along the Dorset coast today. In due course the photos should appear on his blog <http://www.petermooreblog.blogspot.com/>.

Regards  
Mike

### **Re: False Apollo**

by Mark Tutton, 13-Jul-14 11:34 PM GMT

Hi Mike  
That is just the most stunning aberration I have seen other than iole absolute cracker!  
Kind Regards  
Mark

### **Re: False Apollo**

by Pauline, 14-Jul-14 06:25 AM GMT

Wow! That is simply beautiful and in fine condition – seems like Dorset is the place to be 🍷🍷

### **Re: False Apollo**

by False Apollo, 14-Jul-14 01:29 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,  
Yes I wish I could have seen it myself. Apparently Peter was searching for the Swallowtails at the time. Incredibly rare to see this form. I cannot recall this form being found in the recent invasion years, but I could be wrong.

Regards  
Mike

### **Re: False Apollo**

by dilettante, 14-Jul-14 01:56 PM GMT

Amazing aberration – hard to believe it's the same species.

### **Re: False Apollo**

by David M, 14-Jul-14 02:27 PM GMT

What a cracking find! Absolutely amazing.

### **Re: False Apollo**

by False Apollo, 28-Jul-14 07:15 PM GMT

On 15th July I visited the location on Purbeck, Dorset, where the Painted Lady aberration var rogeri had been recently seen. I had been told not to reveal the location where it had been seen by finder Peter Moore, Steve Smith and Dr Phil Stirling, Dorset Conservation Officer, whose wishes I naturally respected as it would be highly sought after by collectors. I believe this aberration is a temperature induced form which is extremely rare in the wild, but can be induced in captivity.

It did not take me long to find this glorious butterfly as it seemed more confiding than the typical form of Painted Lady. It hardly strayed away from its favourite bramble bush all afternoon and was busy nectaring, occasionally dashing off or vanishing as it was well camouflaged when it closed its wings. Later in the afternoon it moved onto the grass as the sun was less strong, basking and resting before a later visit to the brambles.

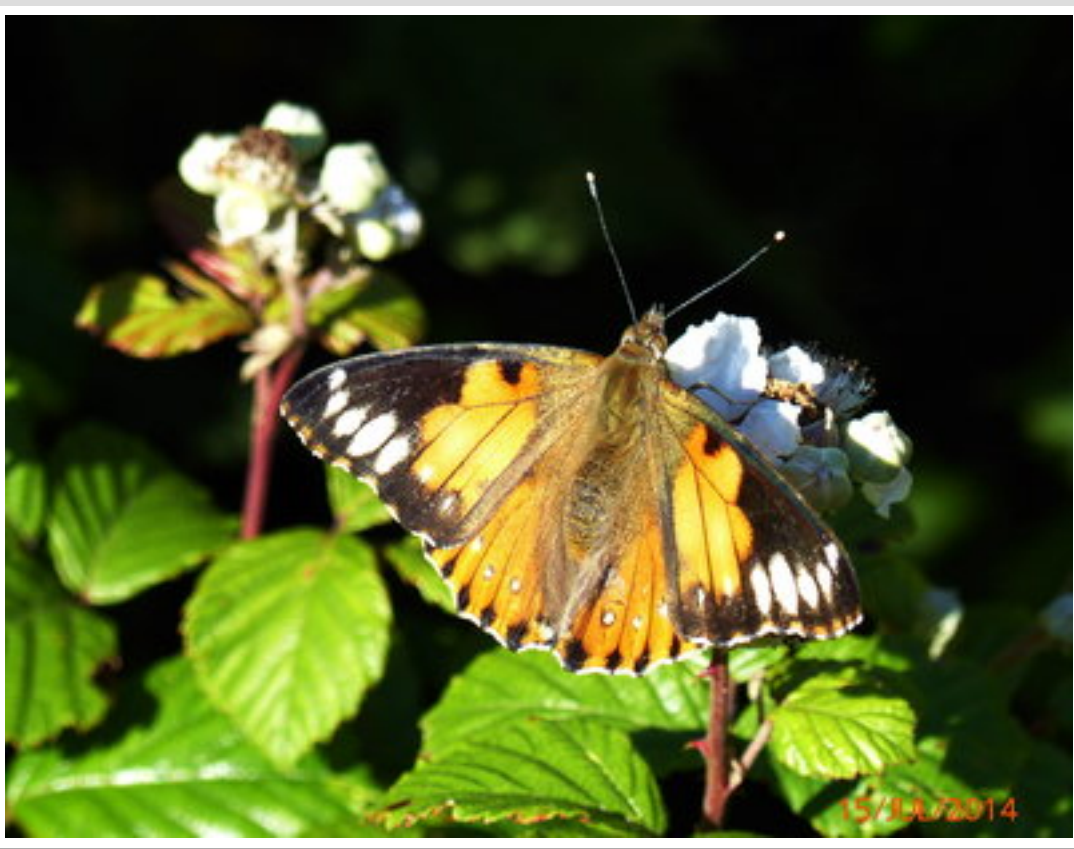
I also saw a couple of Painted Ladies hurtling north, which made it all the more remarkable that this individual had stayed put for at least 3 days. I really hope it was not collected as I know a couple of other butterfly enthusiasts saw me watching it and I asked them to keep it quiet due to its prestige value to collectors. I believe it was not seen after 15th July.

I make no excuse for going a bit overboard with the photos!

This was an experience I will treasure and an everlasting memory of the summer of 2014.

Regards  
Mike

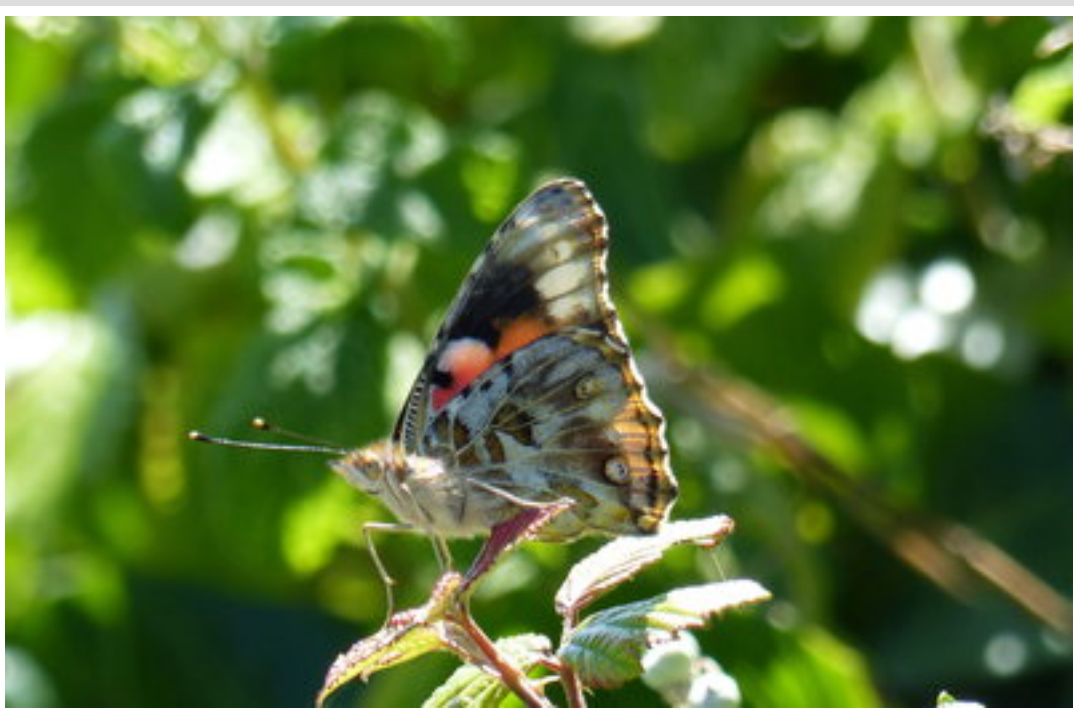




*var rogeri*



*var rogeri*



*var rogeri underside*





*var rogeri*



*var rogeri*



*var rogeri underside*





*var rogeri*



*var rogeri*

**Re: False Apollo**

by Vince Massimo, 28-Jul-14 08:49 PM GMT

Great shots, Mike 😊. A very rare find

Could you add them to the Species-Specific Album when you get time please.

Vince

**Re: False Apollo**

by Padfield, 28-Jul-14 09:10 PM GMT

To see something that rare and get such brilliant photos of it ... Very special!

Guy

**Re: False Apollo**

by Nick Broomer, 28-Jul-14 09:17 PM GMT

Well done Mike. Stunning photos of a stunning butterfly.

All the best, Nick.

**Re: False Apollo**

by Neil Freeman, 28-Jul-14 10:36 PM GMT

I have to agree with all the other comments Mike, a stunning butterfly and great photos 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: False Apollo

by David M, 28-Jul-14 10:38 PM GMT

Absolutely incredible specimen. Had I seen that without prior warning I think I would have risked cardiac arrest!!

## Re: False Apollo

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-14 09:41 PM GMT

Wow! 🤩🍷🍷 That is a real corker of a butterfly Mike 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 02-Aug-14 04:24 PM GMT



*Brown Hairstreak 1/8/14*

I visited Shipton Bellenger yesterday in cloudy overcast conditions to look for Brown Hairstreaks. It took a while to see any, but around 13.00 it warmed up as the sun peeped out and I saw a beautiful female nectaring on bramble, then a male appeared. At one point they were about a foot apart on the bramble. Another 2 males showed during the afternoon, all were very approachable. After their fill of bramble nectar the female and 2 of the males had a well earned rest on the surrounding foliage, allowing me to get some snaps. One male and the female were pretty fresh.

I was a bit disappointed that a lot of the hedgerow bramble had been crushed into and flattened by previous photographers, I have not seen it this bad before.

Regards

Mike



*Brown Hairstreak 1/8/14*





*Brown Hairstreak 1/8/14*



*Brown Hairstreak 1/8/14*



*Brown Hairstreak 1/8/14*

**Re: False Apollo**

by David M, 02-Aug-14 04:29 PM GMT

They are so beautiful when fresh like that. Well done, Mike.

**Re: False Apollo**

by False Apollo, 02-Aug-14 04:53 PM GMT

Thanks David,  
I always think that Brown Hairstreaks are a fitting end to the main butterfly season. There is always the Clouded Yellow autumn to look forward to though! Thanks to all regarding comments on the Painted Lady aberration also.

Regards  
Mike



## Re: False Apollo

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-14 11:03 PM GMT

Cracking Brostreak Mike 😊 It seems weird that the season is almost over yet I'm just starting my holiday 😬 I hope there will be some left in about a weeks time when I can get at them.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 02-Aug-14 11:41 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

From what I have seen Brown Hairstreak wise, I'm sure you will be spot on when you start your holiday, especially for the females. They are not as advanced as I thought they would be considering the hot weather which should mean they will be on the wing for some time yet, cooler weather should prolong the time they stay in good condition for longer as well. Good luck.

Regards

Mike

## Re: False Apollo

by Wurzel, 03-Aug-14 10:55 PM GMT

Cheers for the reassurance Mike 😊 I checked the weather reports and this week is going to be cooler and wetter than of late so that bodes well – one of teh few times I'm hoping for bad weather 😬 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 21-Sep-14 06:53 PM GMT

This is the time of year when our legendary strawberry tree comes into flower, and on a sunny day like today the magic happens. Around 6 Red Admirals were nectaring on and off, a Peacock and Speckled Wood. The Red Admirals were soaring around the garden like Purple Emperors in July. The tree is only in flower for a short period, so with the weather the butterflies arrive, ignoring the buddleias and it is quite a sight.

After a morning in the garden, I ventured out to Southbourne Undercliff , before it clouded over later, the weather was near perfect. I saw around 30 Clouded Yellows of varying condition, but mostly fresh, the best though was a pristine helice which was very large and distinctive. Large Whites were everywhere, over 100 with smaller numbers of Small Whites. Also Common Blues, 1 male, 1 blue female, 2 Red Admirals and a probable Small Tortoiseshell.



*Common Blue female (blue form)*





*The Strawberry Tree*



*Red Admirals on Strawberry Tree*



*Speckled Wood on Strawberry Tree*



*Peacock on Strawberry Tree*





*Female Clouded Yellow, helice form*

### Re: False Apollo

by Wurzel, 21-Sep-14 09:42 PM GMT

That Helice is absolutely fantastic Mike 🍷🍷 I'll definitely have to try and swing a trip back to Dorset to try and get me one of those 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 22-Sep-14 12:24 AM GMT

The next couple of weeks look good for a visit to the coast. The Clouded Yellows are probably a mixture of new arrivals and progeny of those arriving earlier, as are the Large Whites. The Large Whites are quite a spectacle, all along the undercliff. I saw a pair in cop on the slope, so adults should be around until the frosts and maybe the larvae will have a successful outcome. . The Clouded Yellows could try overwintering again. In fact the autumn looks bright, in fact it looks yellow!

Regards

Mike

### Re: False Apollo

by David M, 22-Sep-14 12:32 AM GMT

Wow. That tree looks like a real magnet, Mike. I wish I had one myself (though I suspect it'd take 30 years for it to get to the height of yours).

### Re: False Apollo

by False Apollo, 22-Sep-14 04:57 PM GMT

Hi David,  
Yes the tree came with the house as did the big yellow buddleia (a real selling point). The strawberry tree is at it's best for butterflies from early to around mid-morning, then they all seem to disappear. Of course they could have moved around the other side as the sun would have moved, but they are not that obvious flying around. I have had Red Admirals well into double figures on it some years, but only for a limited time before the fruit appears.

Regards

Mike