

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 06-Apr-15 08:11 AM GMT

For various reasons this is my first diary entry of 2015. My last butterfly sighting was a Red Admiral on 13.12.2014. Nothing much to report for January and February except for captive rearing of some late Red Admiral larvae, but more details of that in later posts. My wife's ill health has been occupying me much of the time but thankfully there have been windows of opportunity. However, my laptop completely failed several weeks ago and I have just got full laptop useage again (thanks to my brother for sorting it). I have also had an SD memory card fail on me, losing many of my reared Red Admiral pictures.

It will take me a while to get up to speed with others doings on here, but for now a quick catch up with my own butterfly antics over the last few weeks:

Saturday 7.3.2015 Hedge End

The weathermen had promised 'springlike' weather so I was determined to get out and hopefully get my first sighting of the year. The footpaths around my house have seen some fairly drastic tree felling and shrub removal over the winter and the council seem to have gone all artistic. At the moment it all looks fairly bleak, but I am sure it will grow back eventually. The weather did not disappoint and a mild and sunny day ensued. I did not have to walk very far before I came across my first butterfly of the year, a Small Tortoiseshell. As I walked the path several more appeared at evenly spaced intervals using some of the freshly cut wood and chippings to bask upon. Further down a male Brimstone breezed past me without stopping to introduce himself. A great start to my 4th butterfly year 😊😊



First butterfly of the year



The council seem to have gone mad removing trees and shrubs. 2 months ago this area was wooded, it is now completely open.



The council have gone all artistic on us. This wall was almost completely obscured before a thick band of shrubbery was removed. I personally think it was better as it was

Sunday 22.3.2015 Bitterne

Another sunny day. Unfortunately I was involved in my sons football during the best of the sunshine. A white of some description fluttered along the edge of the football ground, but I was too far away to make a positive id. I imagined in my mind that it was the first Orange Tip of the year but who knows 😊 On my return from football I went out for an hour but at 3pm I would have been very lucky to see anything as it had already started to cool down. Needless to say I saw no butterflies at all.

Thursday 26.3.2015

Isn't it always the case that most of the decent weather conditions seem to occur whilst we are at work 😊 Today was no different but a very warm day meant my drive from Farlington to Farnborough up the A3 was brightened up by at least 5 male Brimstone 😊

Monday 30.3.2015 Knowle Village/Aytesbury Copse/Heytesbury Farm

I took a day off from work really to get some 'me' time after a hectic few weeks. Hoping for good weather it did not look too good, but miraculously on the day I awoke to clear blue skies if a little breezy. I had planned an early walk with my brother and later a more leisurely look for butterflies. We set off before 9 and not expecting any butterflies that early I left my camera in the car, stupid of me of course. Surprisingly a Small Tortoiseshell appeared fluttering across the path at 9am. After an hour my brother left me to it and I retraced our steps (with camera) and caught up with what I assume to be the same Small Tortoiseshell from earlier still fluttering around in the same location.



Small Tortoiseshell



In the next hour and a half I notched up a couple more Small Tortoiseshell, a male Brimstone and my first Red Admiral and Peacocks of the year. I was a little dismayed to find that an area in which I had found so much butterfly interest last year had been desecrated by the tracks of some heavy machinery and logging operations. The tracks going right through an area where White Admirals were found. I spent some time, unsuccessfully looking for White Admiral larvae. They definitely inhabit this area and there is what I assume to be some likely looking Honeysuckle plants in the shade. At 11.30 the sky clouded over and I called it a day.



Peacock



Hopefully there will still be plenty of butterfly activity in this location after some recent logging operations

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-15 06:15 AM GMT

Lovely shot of the Peacock Paul 😊🌱 It's that time of year when the Councils have to spend their cash or face (further) budget reductions next year - hence madly ripping out trees and shrubs, fixing roads etc 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 13-Apr-15 07:29 AM GMT

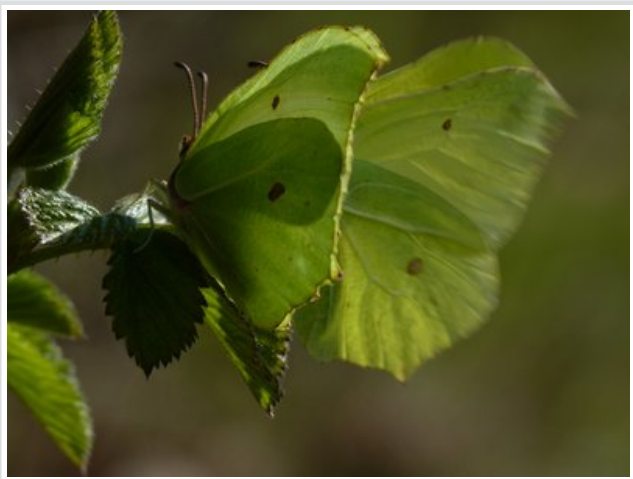
Thanks Wurzel 😊

Monday 6.4.2015 West End, Southampton

I was hopeful of at least one butterfly hunt over the Easter weekend. As it turned out Monday looked like the best day so I made sure that Brownie points were earned during the previous days. I decided to have a look at an area I last visited this time last year near West End Cemetery. A large sheltered field with a wooded corner. As I made my around the field margin it was apparent that, as others have noted, there were Brimstones and Peacocks everywhere today. Early on many of the Peacocks were seen to be probing the damp ground for nutrients. Later I watched many in aerial combat with each other. The Brimstones were mostly males but I did count my first 3 females today. The females settle much more readily and are easier to photograph of course and whilst photographing one such female a male barged in at exactly the right moment and I managed to catch both by chance.



Peacock West End Southampton 6.4.2015 One of many



Female & male Brimstone West End, Southampton 6.4.2015

I thought I might have an outside chance of an Orange Tip today, no such luck. However I spotted what looked like a Small white quite early on but it did not stop for positive id. Later on my first Speckled Wood of the year presented itself in a pool of sunlight in a wooded area where also I spotted a single Bluebell in flower a couple of weeks ahead of its counterparts.



Speckled Wood West End, Southampton 6.4.2015 First non hibernator of the year.



Female Brimstone 6.4.2015

Along the sheltered south facing edge of the field are half a dozen Sallows, all currently in full flower. Although other diaries/sightings pages seem to be awash with butterflies on Sallow they do provide us with butterflies in photogenic orientation. So here are some of my own. My first Comma of the year was found here together with even more Peacocks and a few Small Tortoiseshells.



Comma West End, Southampton. First of the year 6.4.2015



Small Tortoiseshell West End, Southampton 6.4.2015

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 21-Apr-15 07:33 AM GMT

Wednesday 15.4.2105 Otterbourne

Although I was working this was a beautiful butterfly day 😊 Just down the road from 'The Forge' (where the winter social is held) I spotted my first Holly Blue and Orange Tips of the year as well as several other unidentified whites amongst plenty of Brimstone, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell.

Saturday 18.4.2015 Moorgreen Meadows

This is my local Orange Tip spot, a short walk from home. I thought I would take a look to see if there were any about. Last week when I looked there was no sign of any Cuckoo Flower, but today the flower heads were all up and out. At 10am I think I was a bit early for Orange Tips but managed to get some interesting shots of Beeflies on Cuckoo Flower. I was passing again at 2pm and popped in again *without* camera and spotted one male Orange Tip and also my first definite Small White of the year



Bee fly on Cuckoo Flower. Moorgreen Meadows 18.4.2015



Sunday 19.4.2015 Stephens Castle Down

Today I made my first visit of the year to my local Downland site. I was hoping for my first Duke of Burgundy, Green Hairstreak, Dingy and Grizzled Skippers of the year and perhaps a few Orange Tips. However this site is a little later than some so I would need some luck as well. The conditions were sunny but a little cooler than of late with a bit of a breeze.



Peacock. Stephens Castle Down 19.4.2015



First Grizzled Skipper of the year. Stephens Castle Down 19.4.2015

First up was a Peacock, one of several seen during my visit. After a couple more Peacocks It was not long before my first Grizzled Skipper of the year zoomed past me one of only perhaps 3 or 4 seen during the few hours that I was on site. This is one species that always takes me by surprise every year, the first of the high speed flyers. I think that perhaps I was too early by maybe a week or more for my other target species. Even the Orange Tips eluded me. Last year there was huge swathes of Garlic Mustard at this site at its peak, today the Garlic Mustard was barely out of the ground. What a difference geography can make, just up the road the Garlic Mustard is in its prime in full flower. In fact I saw no whites at all other than Brimstone of which the females were very actively egg laying. It was whilst attempting (unsuccessfully) to get a shot of a female Brimstone laying an egg my attention was drawn by a passing Holly Blue. I know there is nothing particularly special or rare about a Holly Blue, it is just that over the last few years it is one species that I have struggled to pin down. They always appear when you least expect them and it is difficult to find any where they are guaranteed to show up. So I was thrilled when this fine individual settled in front of me at head height, unfortunately the windy conditions did not make it ideal for taking photos.



Holly Blue. Stephens Castle Down 19.4.2015



Female Brimstone resting after egg laying activity. Stephens Castle Down 19.4.2015



Freshly laid Brimstone Ovum. Stephens Castle Down 19.4.2015



Small Tortoiseshell egg laying

It was not just the Brimstone that was in egg-laying mode. Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell were also playing their part. I have been aware that it was going on before, but this is the first time I have actually sat and watched the process with these 2 species. The adults seem to spend quite a lot of time assessing the Nettle patches for just the right leaf. The Peacock that I watched spent about half an hour laying her eggs mostly still but with an occasional gentle flap of the wings. Hopefully the next time I visit this site it will be Duke of Burgundy and Green Hairstreak grabbing my attention.



Peacock egg-laying. Stephens Castle Down 19.4.2015



The resulting Peacock egg mass approx 1hr later. Stephens Castle Down 19.4.2015

Re: jackz432r

by trevor, 21-Apr-15 02:43 PM GMT

Hi Jack,
Well done with that Holly Blue image . One behaved for me yesterday too.

All the best,
TREVOR.

Re: jackz432r

by millerd, 22-Apr-15 05:17 AM GMT

I'd second that with regard to that lovely female Holly Blue. You're never going to get one any further open than that, and it's beautifully captured.

Dave

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 25-Apr-15 07:55 AM GMT

Hi Dave & Trevor
Thanks for your comments 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 26-Apr-15 03:12 AM GMT

That's the best shot of a Holly Blue I've seen in a long time. You must be pleased as punch 🍷

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 26-Apr-15 04:44 AM GMT

Indeed as the others say that's a cracking Holly Blue shot 🤔👍 The Brimstone is a bit of all right too 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 27-Apr-15 07:08 AM GMT

Hi Pauline & Wurzel

Thankyou for your kind comments 😊

Re: jackz432r

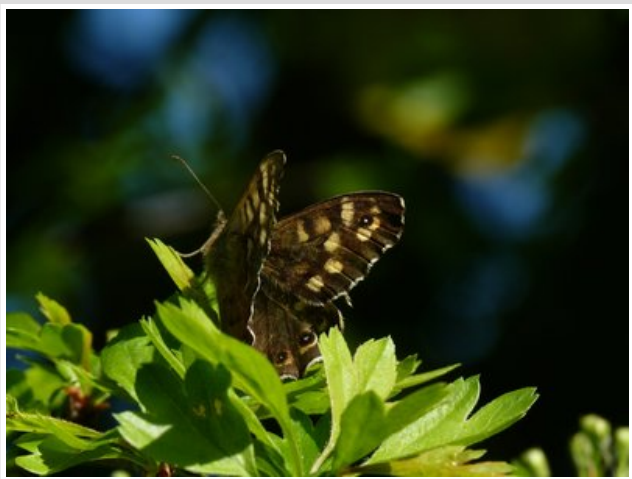
by Paul Harfield, 28-Apr-15 07:46 AM GMT

Thursday 23.4.2015 Hedge End

An hour or so out around the footpaths near my house provided lots of fresh Speckled Wood, in all the usual spots. The Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks, however, are now starting to look a little ragged. I found a new spot close to home, a small area enclosed by 2 gates. Today I counted 6 species including a male Holly Blue which unfortunately spent most of its time high up around the Ivy and Hawthorn. It settled low down once, but I was on the wrong side of the gate. My clumsy negotiation of the gate was enough to send it back up high, where it stayed 😊 As I returned home at around 3.30pm there was another female Holly Blue examining the Holly bushes near my house. It looked like it was searching for somewhere to lay eggs, but it did not appear to lay any at all as far as I could see.



Speckled Wood 23.4.2015 Hedge End





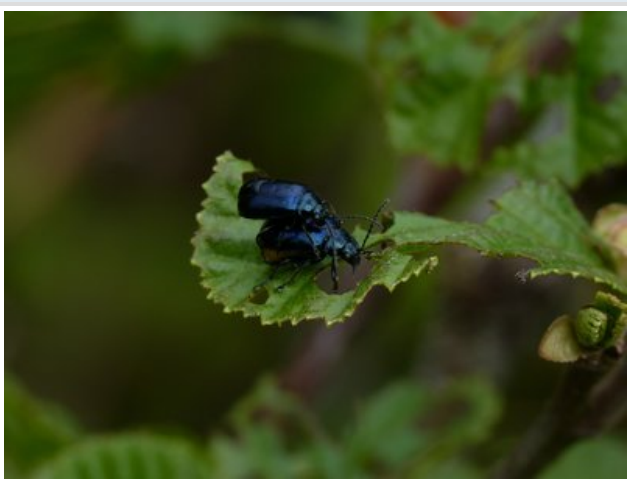
Holly Blue 23.4.2015 Hedge End

Saturday 25.4.2015 Hatch Grange, West End

Another butterfly that seems to have eluded me as far as decent photos are concerned is the Orange Tip. I see plenty every year but I just don't seem to be able to get a decent image. Today I set out to change that whilst one son was at football training and the other was out for the day. I started off at a new site for me this year, Hatch Grange at West End, Southampton. I visited a couple of weeks ago and thought it was the right sort of environment for Cuckoo Flower, a sheltered sunny corner of wet meadow. I did not actually notice any evidence of Cuckoo Flower at the time but today there was a large patch of it in full flower just where I thought it would be 😊 Unfortunately the sky was heavy with the threat of rain and the only butterfly that put in an appearance was a single Speckled Wood. One thing that did catch my eye was that the Alder saplings around the edge of the meadow were all completely covered in beetles. There were literally thousands of them, almost every leaf had at least one. With rain more likely than Orange Tips I made a hasty retreat leaving just enough time to pop in somewhere closer to home.



Just the one Speckled Wood at Hatch Grange



Almost every Alder leaf had one or more of these beetles on it

Saturday 25.4.2015 Moorgreen Meadows & Home

Back in Hedge End I popped to Moorgreen Meadows just as the sky began to brighten slightly. Nearly all of the Cuckoo Flower here grows within a fenced off area out of reach, but I could just make out one roosting Orange Tip low down in the vegetation. I hung around for a while praying that the sun would appear, Within 10 minutes it did and with it appeared a couple of male Orange Tips. They patrolled the fenced off Cuckoo Flower frustratingly stopping to nectar way out of reach. I waited and waited and eventually one fluttered outside the fence and settled conveniently on a daisy 😊



Male Orange Tip 25.4.2015 Moorgreen Meadows



The sun then disappeared for a while giving me plenty of photo opportunity.

Later in the garden a female Orange Tip settled down to nectar just as I opened the back door. With camera conveniently close by I was able to grab a couple of shots before she flew off. She briefly investigated my own Cuckoo Flower before disappearing over the fence, but disappointingly did not stop to lay any eggs 😊



Female Orange Tip 25.4.2015 In The Garden



Male Orange Tip 25.4.2015 Moorgreen Meadows



Re: jackz432r

by kevlng, 28-Apr-15 05:31 PM GMT

Jack,
Nice photos of the Orange Tips (especially the female). They seem a little reluctant to put in an appearance for me so far, but hopefully I will have some photos of my own soon.
Regards Kev

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 01-May-15 08:00 AM GMT

Hi Kev Thanks 😊

Thursday 30.4.2015 Stephens Castle Down

I unexpectedly had a couple of hours free this morning so I decided to have another look at my local downland site. After failing to find any Duke of Burgundy, Green Hairstreak or Dingy Skippers a fortnight ago, I felt slightly more confident today. In an hour and a half butterflies were very thin on the ground despite good spells of warm sunshine. In fact I only saw 10 individuals of 6 species, but I was pleased with the few that I saw. First up was a Brimstone and then very little else except clouds of annoying black flies. This lack of action gave me a chance to check on the batch of Peacock eggs laid on my last visit here, which have yet to hatch.



Surprise of the day a Painted Lady



Duke of Burgundy Stephens Castle Down 30.4.2015



Male Holly Blue Stephens Castle Down 30.4.2015



Literally thousands of these flies filled the air today

Eventually a couple of fresh Dingy Skippers showed themselves briefly, my first of the year 😊 I spotted a single Duke of Burgundy again my first of the year 😊 Whilst spending some time with the Duke something orangey caught my eye a short distance away. Once I had a few shots of the Duke I went over to investigate. I was pleasantly surprised to find a Painted Lady, it was a bit flighty and was very reluctant to stay still but eventually it settled as the sun clouded over. Making up the numbers today were a single male Holly Blue and a ragged Small Tortoiseshell. No Green Hairstreak though, much to my disappointment 😞

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 03-May-15 06:57 PM GMT

Saturday 2.5.2015 Out and About

After 3 years of failure, I am still on a quest to grow an Elm tree from seed or cutting. Yes, I could go and buy one ready grown, but that is not half as much fun and I like a challenge 😊 Today on my way home from dropping my son at football training I stopped off to collect some more seed. This trip involves deviating from my normal route into one of the dodgier areas of Southampton 🤪 The Elm here overhangs the fence of what looks like a derelict youth centre. So today it was a case of leaving the engine running and quickly liberating some seed when nobody was looking and making a quick get away before I was spotted. On my return home I found I had an unexpected passenger in the car, no not one of the local 'n'er do wells' but a lovely little micro micro moth 😊



Extreme antennae!



I am not sure what species this is, but after looking at UK moths it looks like *Adela reaumurella*, maybe somebody could confirm that. It has extremely long antennae, so I would assume it is a male. It also has a very hairy head and thorax. Before setting it free I used the opportunity to take some pics. I found it quite tricky getting the antennae in focus with the rest of the insect, the breeze not helping. It also set to (what I assume to be) cleaning of its antennae one by one, hooking each antennae into the spines on its forelegs and gently pulling the antennae through. Photography is not my primary interest on here, but I have experimented here with different crops and used a tripod for these.



Almost more hair than moth here



Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 04-May-15 05:40 AM GMT

Cracking Duke and Holly Blue Paul 😊🍷 I reckon you've got the correct ID for the micro moth too – crazy long antennae 🤪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 15-May-15 07:34 AM GMT

Cheers Wurzel 😊

Sunday 10.5.2015 Stephens Castle Down – Peacock Eggs

I have been monitoring some Peacock eggs at one of my local sites. This egg mass was laid on 19.4.2015 around midday. The eggs are quite easy to locate, the clump of nettle being quite distinctive. I have also noticed that the leaf itself is quite contorted on the upper side immediately above the egg mass. I have not seen this before, is it typical? I checked these eggs on 30.4.2015 when there was no more than a slight colour change. I visited on 10.5.2015 expecting the eggs to have hatched, but was greeted with quite a different scenario.



Eggs being laid about midday 19.4.2015



The freshly laid egg mass 19.4.2015



The same egg mass 30.4.2015

There was no sign of the eggs hatching but when I turned the leaf over there was some sort of large mite gorging on the eggs 🤩 It was difficult to see exactly what was going on and just as difficult to get a good picture of the mite but hopefully you can get an idea. Some of the eggs seem to have deflated so I wondered if the mite could somehow suck out the insides. Is it conceivable that eggs deep within the egg mass could still be viable. I left the mite in situ and will check on the eggs next time I visit, hoping that some may have survived.



Upper side of leaf showing contorted area immediately above egg mass 10.5.2015



Mite/spider feeding on Peacock egg mass 10.5.2015



Re: jackz432r

by jonhd, 15-May-15 10:45 PM GMT

Excellent shots of the carnage, Paul. Last one, in particular. And, so brave! – using bare hands to hold a nettle leaf 😊

Jon

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 18-May-15 06:31 AM GMT

Thanks Jon 😊 Just a slight case of numb fingers afterwards 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 25-May-15 07:16 AM GMT

Sunday 10.5.2015 More From Stephens Castle Down

Green Hairstreaks are proving a little elusive for me at the moment. So this would be my third hopeful visit of the year. The day started well with at least half a dozen male Orange Tips along Dean Lane leading up to the reserve 😊 A small clump of White Honesty proving to be very popular with as many as 4 males nectaring together. A few days earlier Common Blue and Small Heath were reported here so I was hopeful for those as well. Conditions were a little cool and breezy at times but there were plenty of male Brimstone around with the few females being pestered sometimes 4 at a time. A few Dingy and Grizzled Skippers and A weary looking Small Tortoiseshell took centre stage with perhaps half a dozen Dukes which all appeared to be males. Eventually a single Green Hairstreak fluttered down to nectar, but it was the only one I saw all day.



Orange Tip on White Honesty



Dingy Skipper



Female Brimstone under siege



My first and only Green Hairstreak of the year

One last check of the main area before I left revealed a single Small Heath as well as a couple more Dukes. My walk back to the car ended as it had begun, watching several male Orange Tips dancing along the lane in the dwindling sunshine. One setting up roost for the night, well camouflaged, on Cow Parsley. The Common Blues would have to wait until next visit.



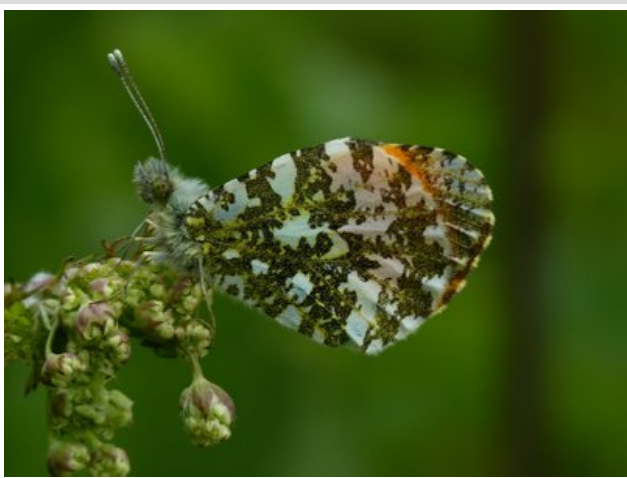
Duke of Burgundy



Grizzled Skipper



First Small Heath of the year



Last encounter of the day with a Male Orange Tip settling down to roost

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 26-May-15 05:27 AM GMT

Cracking shots Paul, especially the Greenstreaks and the side view of the Grizzlie 😊🌿

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 26-May-15 10:35 PM GMT

I agree with Wurzel, I really like the Green Hair Streak though Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Willow, 27-May-15 11:19 PM GMT

Catching up with your diary Paul, some interesting images, well spotted and illustrated 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: jackz432r

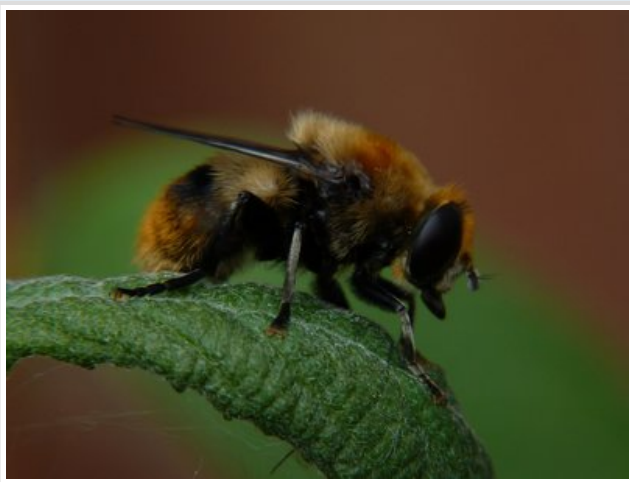
by Paul Harfield, 28-May-15 07:59 AM GMT

Thanks all for your comments 😊

A few bits and bobs from the last few days:-

Sunday 24.5.2015 At Home

I was doing a few bits in the garden when I noticed this Hover Fly which appeared to be freshly emerged, allowing me a couple of close up shots.



Monday 25.5.2015 Stephens Castle Down - Peacock Eggs

An update on the fate of the Peacock eggs I mentioned in a previous post. Today it would seem that at least some of these Peacock eggs have survived. A healthy looking larval group was found working its way up the Nettle stem. I imagine these are first instar larvae as there was no sign of any a week ago.



Tuesday 26.5.2015 Manor Farm Country Park

I unexpectedly found myself at this location for work at around 6pm. The work aspect was a non starter so I took the opportunity for a quick walk. I am glad I did because of the two butterflies I saw, one was my second Painted Lady of the year 😊 That must be a good sign, after all it is still only May 😊 I managed a couple of pics with my phone



Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 02-Jun-15 12:54 AM GMT

I have managed to get out quite a bit over the last week 😊 so my diary is a bit behind. Here are a few brief bits and bobs:

Monday 25.5.2015 Stephens Castle Down

I was getting a bit worried that I had not seen any female Duke of Burgundy at my local site. It is quite a late site but just males to date. Today I was pleased to find my first pair of Dukes 😊 and thus my first female of the year. A few fresh common blues around as well including a couple of 'blue'

females. After a few years struggling with Holly Blues there now seems to be abundance of them at my local site 😊 Other species seen were Brimstone, Green Hairstreak, Orange tip, Dingy and Grizzled Skipper on this cool and breezy day.



Duke of Burgundy pair



Common Blue male



'blue' Common Blue female



Common Blue male



Green Hairstreak



'another' Holly Blue female

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 02-Jun-15 01:26 AM GMT

Really nice photos of the Dukes and Common Blue's jack, I also like your Hover Fly, You've made me wonder about some shots I put in my posting, I think my Bee could be an Hover Fly, 😊 I give up, I'd better stick to Butterflies 🤔 Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 02-Jun-15 07:35 AM GMT

Love the blue Common Blue female Paul 😊 And what hone do you have cos the Painted Lady shots came out really well 😊

Havea goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 03-Jun-15 07:16 AM GMT

Thanks Goldie 😊 Sometimes I have to double check with the Hoverflies they are such good mimics. I think yours is definitely a bee though.

Thanks Wurzel 😊 Yeah I was quite chuffed with that 'blue' female. Don't ask me about the phone 😊 Its a newish work phone and its a Nokia that's about the limit of my knowledge, I have almost worked out how to use it 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 08-Jun-15 07:54 AM GMT

I have been spending a little bit of time recently looking for new sites locally, without a great deal of success it has to be said 😊 Although I have not made any earth shattering discoveries here are few 'bits and bobs':

Wednesday 27.5.2015

Within a mile or so of Beacon Hill at Warnford I inadvertently found myself within, what seemed to be, somebody's private hunting estate. I had a mooch around before I left. Plenty of Peacock, Small White, Holly Blue and Common Blue including more 'blue' females. Just down the road my first Large Whites of the year accompanied by Brimstone and Orange Tip were enjoying a field of Mustard. Whilst here I also found an amorous threesome of the Golden-Bloomed Grey Longhorn Beetle. I first encountered this species last year when one almost flew into my face and landed on the brim of my cap. In trying to dislodge it I became aware that they can emit a loud squeak. Today they were too otherwise occupied for squeaking. By this time I had exhausted my camera batteries, but managed some shots on my phone 😊



One of many butterflies enjoying the Mustard flowers



Another 'blue' female Common Blue unfortunately inside somebodys private estate



Six antennae! That cant be right



Oh its an amorous threesome. Golden-Bloomed Grey Longhorn Beetle

Thursday 28.5.2015 Botley Park Hotel

Within walking distance of home is some land which I think is imminently about to disappear under new housing. There is a small hill on the edge of the Golf Course covered in wild flowers so went to have a closer look before it is lost. It is what appears to be no more than a spoil heap from the creation of the golf course but it is densely covered in Vetch, Oxeye Daisy, knapweed etc. It was a bit on the windy side whilst I was there but I did manage to find another 'blue' female Common Blue 😊 In fact I have yet to see a normal 'brown' female this year. I wonder if anybody has done any monitoring of the ratios of 'blue' to 'brown' females 🤔



Yet another 'blue' female Common Blue at Botley Park Hotel

Thursday 4.6.2015 Monks Brook, Stoneham, Southampton

Land just off J6 of the M27 which I pass several times a week. It always looks very tempting to pop in. Today weather looked very promising, sunny and warm and the site densely covered in wild flowers. However, butterflies were in short supply, just 2 species seen. Common Blues and my first Large Skippers of the year 😊



First Large Skipper of the year at Monks Brook, Stoneham, Southampton

Sunday 7.6.2015 Knowle/Aytesbury Copse

Today another Painted Lady came my way, my third of the year so far 😊 This one was a little more ragged than the others I have seen. Hopefully there will be more here as there is a large expanse of Thistles close by. Today is also the first time I have seen Common Blues at this location 😊 Unfortunately this place is also likely to suffer at the hands of the developers 😞



I wonder how far this Painted Lady has travelled to be here?



First time I have seen Common Blues here

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 08-Jun-15 06:15 PM GMT

I've been waiting to see those shots Paul (the Longhorn) and they were worth waiting for 😊 Great find and well captured 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Willow, 09-Jun-15 11:48 PM GMT

Just love your imaginative shot of the six antennae Longhorn...obviously new to science 😊 nice one Paul!

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 13-Jun-15 06:24 PM GMT

Hi Pauline & Willow

Thanks for your comments 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 16-Jun-15 07:36 AM GMT

Sunday 14.6.2015 Bramshott Common - Silver Studded Blue

Last year I managed to completely miss this species despite it being one of my favourites. So I was determined not to miss out this year. After reading of the colony at Bramshott Common in Paulines diary and armed with her directions I headed off. It was actually raining when I left and I almost did not go at all until I remembered previous experience to ignore the weather.



White Ermine moth *Spilosoma lubricipeda*



This is MOD land managed by Hants & IOW Wildlife Trust



Habitat here is totally different to where I have seen this species in the New Forest. Here the Heathland feels almost like a woodland clearing.

I found the spot very easily, but when I arrived at 9.15 it was cool, grey, breezy and with the faintest whiff of drizzle. There also seemed to be some active military goings on as this is an MOD training area. Not much chance of seeing anything flying today 😞 so I set about looking for butterflies roosting. After an hours search all I had found was a couple of fresh White Ermine Moths, no butterflies at all 😞



Roosting Common Blue



Roosting Silver Studded Blue



Male and female Silver Studded Blue roosting together

Then BINGO I spotted a little flag waving on a grass stem and went to investigate. This one was a Common Blue and close by were three more, but none of the Silver Studded variety 😞 After another 20 minutes I was on the point of calling it a day when I spotted one, a beautiful fresh Silver Studded Blue roosting on a grass stem 😊 Whilst taking a few photos of this individual a passer by directed me to another area close by where I immediately found a second male. Both had looked pretty fresh but with wings firmly shut in roosting mode and no sign of brighter weather I thought that would be it. To be honest I would have been happy with just the two, but I thought I would go and have just one last look at the first area before I left.

Well they must have been there all along but now I could see 4 Silver Studded Blues all fairly close together including a male and female together on one grass head 😊 and one that looked as if it had just emerged:D I spent some time taking pictures and then noticed the sky was looking marginally brighter, I decided to hang around in the vague hope that there might be a chance of an open wing shot though I was not very hopeful.



Just as I started to feel some warmth I was surrounded by several Silver Studded Blues in this head down, wings outstretched pose



This female Silver Studded Blue was freshly emerged. She crawled up a grass stem pushing the tip of her abdomen against it leaving a trail of meconium droplets



This rather more worn female looks like a completely different species!

I sat patiently as the distant sound of machine gun fire seemed to get closer by the minute. After 20 minutes or so I started to feel some warmth although there was still no sunshine. That was just enough, when I looked around me there were now several sets of blue wings shining up at me 😊😊 and most looked freshly emerged. There were several females amongst them, some were so different you could be excused for thinking they were entirely different species.



A freshly emerged male Silver Studded Blue



This freshly emerged male seemed particularly heavily marked

The moral of this is never be put off by the weather. Although it took a while to get going this was a wonderful morning spent with one of my favourite butterflies 😊

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 16-Jun-15 07:54 AM GMT

The duller light often makes photographic results rather more appealing. Some lovely shots there, Jack. Perseverance sure paid off there.

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 16-Jun-15 02:55 PM GMT

I'm glad you found the spot Paul. You managed to get some lovely images there. I've seen lots of moths there but not that type so I'll have to keep my eyes open – and thanks for the tip re PE.

Re: jackz432r

by Buchan Boy, 16-Jun-15 08:45 PM GMT

Them male Silver Studdeds are real beauties,nice one.

I must go and find some this weekend.....

Dave

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 21-Jun-15 07:22 AM GMT

Hi David, Pauline & Buchan Boy

Thanks for all your comments 😊 Good luck at the weekend Buchan Boy and thanks again for the directions Pauline 😊

A couple of bits and bobs from the last week:

Saturday 13.6.2015 In The Garden

My washing line is right next to my wild patch in the garden 😊 My wife has not worked out yet why I spend so long hanging out the washing 😊 It gives me a chance to check on whats lurking 😊

I noticed a small bee had been nectaring on our Potentilla for quite a long time. When I looked more closely something more sinister was going on.

Then I found another similar spider close by. Are they the same species ?

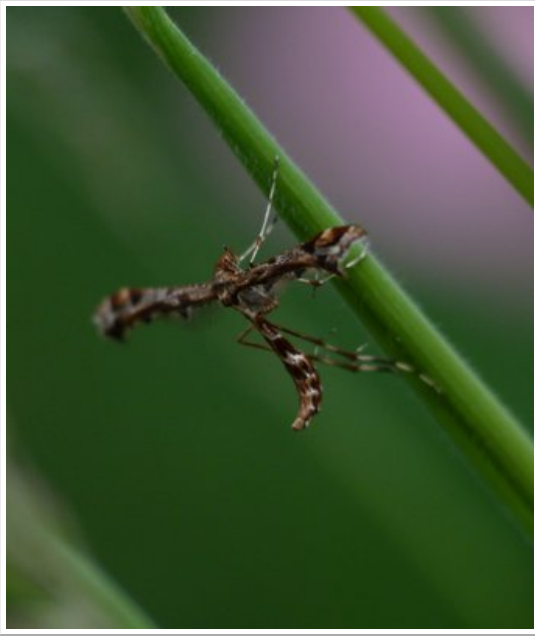




Thursday 18.6.2015 In The Garden

This rather nice plume moth is one I have not seen in the garden before. I am not sure if it is *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla* or *punctidactyla*. Maybe somebody could confirm the id for me ?





Re: jackz432r

by Willow, 22-Jun-15 12:53 AM GMT

Amblyptilia punctidactyla **Brindled Plume** for me Jack...but I've been wrong before now 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 22-Jun-15 05:48 AM GMT

Beautiful Silver Studs Paul 😊👍 I would go with Willrows moth ID too.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

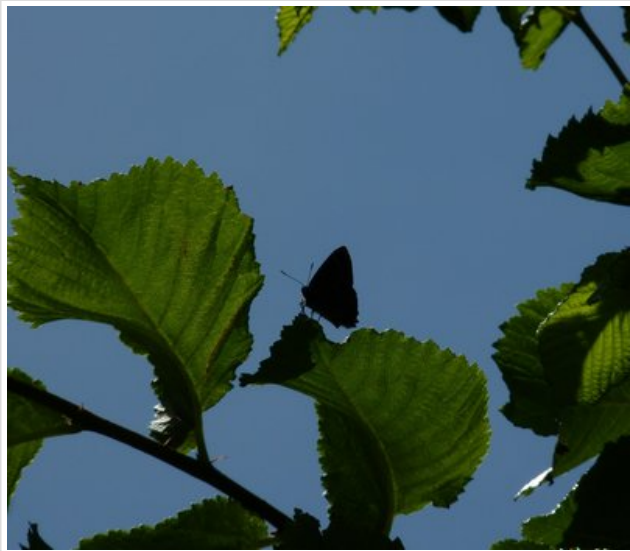
by Paul Harfield, 25-Jun-15 06:51 AM GMT

Hi Willow thanks for the id 😊

Thanks for the comments Wurzel 😊

Wednesday 24.6.2015 In Search Of The White Letter Hairstreak

I went out today hoping for my **first ever** encounter with the White Letter Hairstreak. Over the last couple of seasons I always seem to have missed the opportunity. My intentions were to spend the whole day just on this one species, starting in some known sites and then hopefully discovering my own. It did not quite work out that way, lack of time meant that I had to make do with just the one location. Searching for my own colony will have to wait for another day.

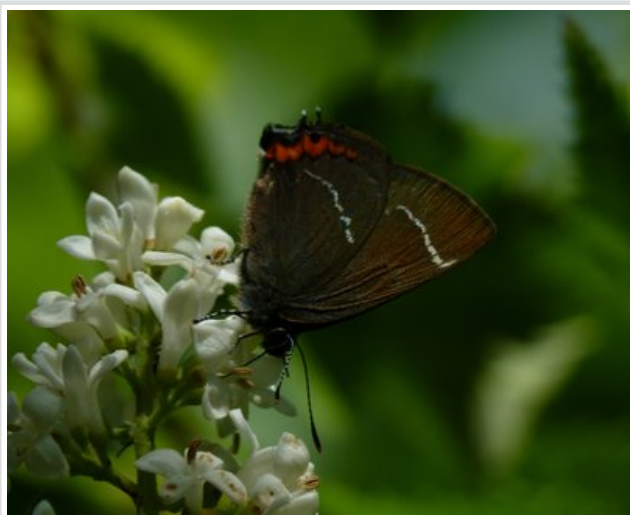


Most of the time this is the view I had, a metre or two above my head



Always seemingly at the wrong angle

The location was easy to find and I appeared to have the place to myself. I did not have to search very hard either, as soon as I arrived there was my first White Letter Hairstreak sitting on an Elm Leaf in front of my face 😊😊 In fact it was too close really I struggled to get far enough away to get a photo, by which time it had flown back up to the canopy to join the others. It was a hot day today in the blazing sun and Hairstreak action was frantic at times. Every few seconds 2 or 3 or even 4 would spiral off at high speed, whizzing around just above my head. I would have benefitted from eyes in the back of my head because they seemed to be darting around all over the place. Typically they settled just slightly too high for a decent photo. It was difficult to keep track of how many there were but there were at least 6, and probably double that, all looking pretty fresh.

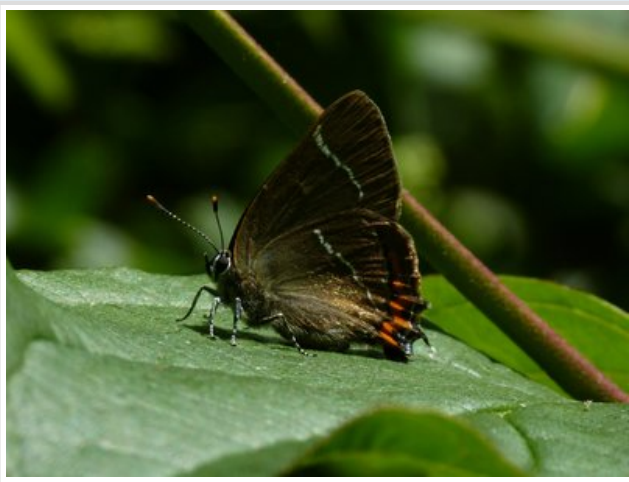


Eventually a White Letter Hairstreak found the Privet Blossom too much of a temptation



This Speckled Wood kept me company for the duration of my visit

In the best spot there was a single spike of Privet flowers at convenient height. Several came to investigate, frustratingly not stopping. Eventually one settled on the Privet nectaring for a while allowing me to take some pics. A further couple settled briefly on leaves close by. All the while I was accompanied by a Speckled Wood which did not leave my side the whole time I was there. It just occasionally fluttered around distracting my attention when I could see it out of the corner of my eye 😊 Marbled White and Meadow Brown also visited briefly.



White Letter Hairstreak

To be honest I was not expecting this enigmatic species to be so easy, beginners luck maybe 😊 I did however feel a little strange lurking in the bushes out of sight, the things we have to do in pursuit of our hobby 😊😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 07-Jul-15 07:41 AM GMT

I seem to be way behind with my diary, here is a few bits from June:

Sunday/Wednesday 21/24.6.2015 Knowle Village/Aytesbury Copse

I thought I would have a look for an early White Admiral before going to search for Hairstreaks. No White yet but Red Admirals, Speckled Wood, my first Marbled White and Meadow Brown of the year.



Female Speckled Wood Aytesbury Copse 21.6.2015



Large Skipper Aytesbury Copse 21.6.2015



Red Admiral Aytesbury Copse 24.6.2015

I still can not believe that I spent so much time at this site last year and did not see a single Common Blue. I have now seen several here this year and there is acres of vetch to keep them here. I have also seen my first Small Heath at this site. I have hardly seen any Large Whites anywhere this year, just one today as well as a single Green Veined White. The stars by far were the Small Tortoiseshell, lots of them mostly very fresh and very active in the warm sunshine. Plenty of egg laying going on as well.



Lots of fresh Small Tortoiseshell here today 21.6.2015



Looking for somewhere to lay her eggs. This Small Tortoiseshell appears to be tasting the Nettle leaves with her tongue



Egg laying female Small Tortoiseshell Aytesbury Copse 24.6.2015

Thursday 25.6.2015 New Forest

I happened to be working in the New Forest all day so I stopped off for ten minutes near Telegraph Hill. It was already hot at 9am and the Silver Studded Blues were already active by the side of the road. Lots of males and a few females seen in the short time I was there as well as a couple of Small Heath.



Silver Studded Blue New Forest 25.6.2015

The thing that caught my eye though was an unbelievably huge fly at rest on a Heather twig. It looked quite a mean character and, at a guess, I would say an inch and a half long. Apparently this is the Dark Giant Horsefly *Tabanus sudeticus* it is the heaviest fly in Europe and can apparently draw blood when it bites 😬 Luckily this one stayed at rest.



Nothing for scale here but this fly was huge. Tabanus sudeticus Dark Giant Horsefly

Saturday 27.6.2015 Monks Brook/Stoneham Meadows

This is a new area for me this season. There are a lot of Elm Trees here so I thought I would check some out for White Letter Hairsteaks. Unfortunately I did not find any, but there are more Elms here to check. Plenty of Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Large and Small Skipper around. I also found my first Gatekeeper of the year but failed to get a photo. A single Comma and Red Admiral also made an appearance.



Meadow Brown Stoneham Meadows 27.6.2015



Marbled White Stoneham Meadows 27.6.2015

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 08-Jul-15 06:19 AM GMT

Great shots Paul, especially the Small Tort tasting the leaf, I wonder if she favoured that particular vintage? 😊 As for the Horse-fly what a beast 🤩🤩!

Have a gooudun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 08-Jul-15 02:12 PM GMT

Great shots of the egg-laying Paul - that's the fly I posted recently too so pleased to know what it was 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 13-Jul-15 06:54 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel & Pauline

Thanks for the comments 😊

Re: jackz432r

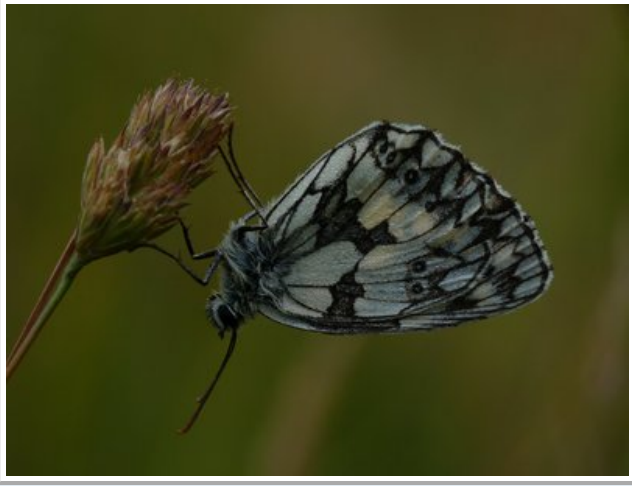
by Paul Harfield, 15-Jul-15 08:12 AM GMT

Saturday & Sunday 4 & 5.7.2015 Stephens Castle Down

I had decided that a really early morning visit was required to try and catch the butterflies roosting/waking up. On Saturday I confidently (naively) arrived at 7am but it was already too late, the sun was warm and most species were already active. Sunday was a more cool and cloudy affair and at 7.30 there was still no activity, perfect 😊 I spent a few minutes locating some of the easier species.



Small Heath 5.7.2015



Marbled White 5.7.2015



Female Meadow Brown 5.7.2015

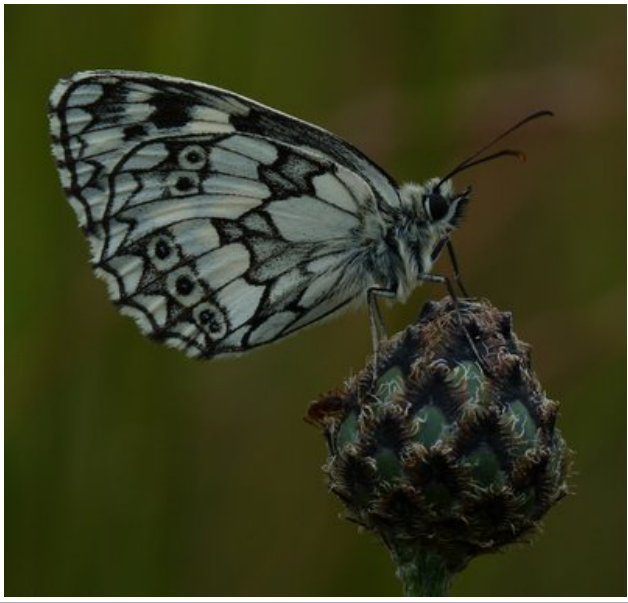


Male Meadow Brown 5.7.2015

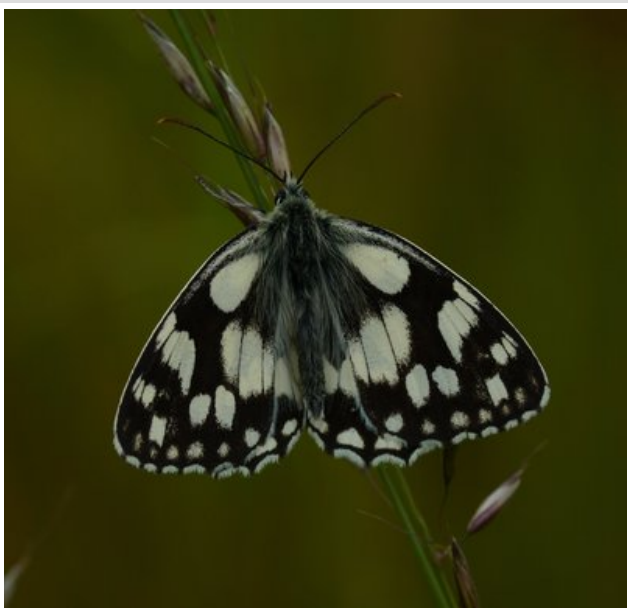


Small Skipper 5.7.2015

The first one was a Small Heath, dew covered and in deep slumber. Then Marbled Whites, Meadow Brown and Small Skipper, once you have found one and got your eye in all of a sudden you are surrounded by them. There was also a single Common Blue, rather aged and probably the last of the first brood I would imagine. I did not manage to find any roosting Ringlets, but when the sun finally came out they suddenly appeared around every bush.

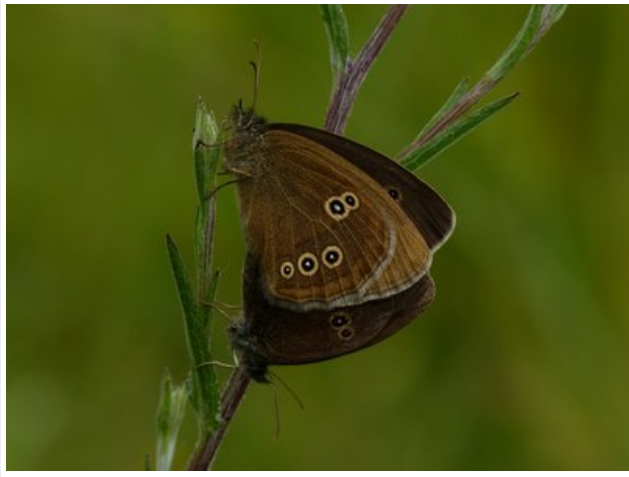


Marbled White 5.7.2015





Marbled Whites 5.7.2015



Mating Ringlets one of several pairs seen

Then I thought I would try for Dark Green Fritillary I have never found a roosting one but guessed they would be in the long grass somewhere. I spent an age looking without success and then suddenly a female feebly flew past and settled in the grass a little way off. when I caught up I managed a nice open wing pose before it disappeared again, she was a stunner 😊😄 The males then appeared, no warming up period for them apparently, they were just immediately full on. Zooming around, occasionally stopping to nectar in their fidgety energy filled way before they were off again. Large Skipper, Small White, Small Tortoiseshell were also seen once the morning had warmed up. Great to be out and about so early, trouble is it took me a few days to recover.



Female Dark Green Fritillary 5.7.2015



Female Large Skipper 4.7.2015



Female Small White 4.7.2015



Female Small Tortoiseshell 5.7.2015

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 16-Jul-15 07:00 AM GMT

Lovely dusky DGF Paul 😊 How did you manage to find such an accomodating mating pair of Ringlets, all the ones I've seen are always tucked away deep in the grass? 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Willow, 18-Jul-15 01:11 AM GMT

That female DGF is a real eye-catcher Paul, lovely bold markings, very nicely captured pic 😊

BW's

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 20-Jul-15 07:08 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel & Willow

Thanks for the comments 😊 I was lucky with this pair of Ringlets. Like you say Wurzel they are all normally well down in amongst the grass.

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 21-Jul-15 12:03 AM GMT

Hi! Paul, I really like your shot of the Small Heath, I think they're very difficult to to Photograph Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 21-Jul-15 08:47 AM GMT

Hi Goldie

Thanks for your comments. This photo was taken early in the morning before that Small Heath had woken up. They are quite easy to locate when roosting and you have all the time in the world to get your shot 😊

Saturday 11.7.2015 Botley Wood - Part 1 'Emperor Watching By A Novice'

It dawned on me last Saturday that I had not seen any of the classic summer woodland butterflies this year, something I needed to put right immediately. So I headed off for my local site, Botley Wood. To be honest I have avoided this site for the last couple of years, great though it is, because it has been by far the worst site for Ticks I have experienced. I was hoping primarily for Silver Washed Fritillary and White Admiral. I saw my first ever Purple Emperors last year at Straits Enclosure, they are seen a lot less frequently at Botley Wood, but there was always a chance 😊





This Marbled White was conveniently roosting on a head high Thistle in deep shade. A couple of metres away they were already flying in the sunshine 11.7.2015 Botley Wood

I started early and arrived at 7am and headed straight to a known good spot for the expected species, I appeared to have the wood to myself. After 10 minutes my first butterfly appeared a Red Admiral basking in the sunshine which, spooked by my clumsy approach, immediately flew up into the surrounding Oak trees and was not seen again. Shortly afterwards the first of several male Silver Washed Fritillaries (my first of the year) gently flew down from the trees to nectar on the brambles for a while before returning to the Oaks. I then walked on to a couple of other areas close by to see what was about. In the first open grassy area things were just coming to life. Marbled White, Small Skipper, Ringlet and Meadow Brown were becoming active in the early sunshine but large areas were still in shade with roosting butterflies. However this was not what I had come for and with limited time I returned to my original spot, I am glad I did.

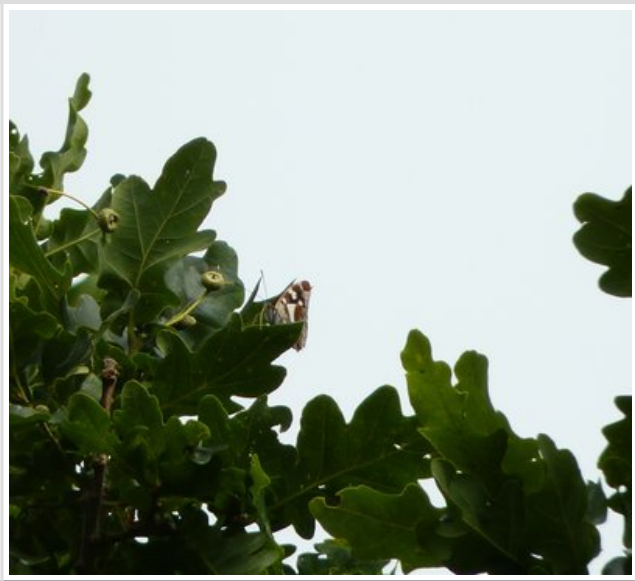


Male Silver Washed Fritillary 11.7.2015 Botley Wood

As I stood watching, what was now several male Silver Washed Fritillaries nectaring, I looked up at the large Oak Tree just in time to see a much larger butterfly majestically gliding in out of the upper branches of this Oak Tree. I could not really believe it but I knew instantly this was a Purple Emperor 😊 Then shortly after there were two Emperors flying. This was 8.30am and not the time that I normally see reported for Purple Emperors. There was also no aerial combat here, in fact as far as I could tell there was little or no interaction between them just gentle gliding in and out of the upper branches, settling for periods (mostly in positions I could not see from the ground). They were occasionally in the air together sometimes in close proximity momentarily playing follow the leader, perhaps just the butterfly equivalent of a 'good morning'. A Silver Washed Fritillary briefly flew into their airspace and again there appeared to be no reaction from the Emperors. Eventually one of these Emperors settled in a position where I could see it quite clearly, albeit high up in the tree, and I was able to reel off some long range shots.



This Purple Emperor eventually settled in a position that was clearly visible allowing me a few shots. I am surprised my camera can pick up as much detail at such a distance, even its tongue is clearly visible. 11.7.2015 Botley Wood





By just after 9am the sun had disappeared completely and there was now complete cloud cover, my battery expired and it was time for me to leave, but I think I was now hooked. I rushed home to check my photos to double check what I had seen.

Saturday 18.7.2015 Botley Wood – Part 2 'Emperor Watching by not quite such a novice'

I was so enthralled over my Emperor sighting from the previous weekend that I just had to head for Botley Wood again. I headed straight for the same spot. I arrived a bit later at 7.25, it was sunnier but perhaps not quite so warm as the previous weekend. There was already just a Ringlet dancing around the Large Bramble clump, but as I glanced up at the Oak Tree to my disbelief there were already two Purple Emperors doing exactly the same act in the same spot as last week (is that possible?). So by 7.30am my tally for the day was one Ringlet and two Purple Emperors 😊 that does not happen very often. After 7.30 they stayed out of sight until just before 8am when they took to the air, one circled away from the tree toward me and then back and the other disappeared into an adjoining tree. After a period of Emperor inactivity I decided to go and have a look at the Whiteley Pastures site next door, after an hour there was not much occurring there so I returned to my original spot. By now there appeared to be just the one Emperor which made short gliding flights close to the tree settling in various positions where I could just about see its position but not really in a position where I could get a picture. Just after 9.30 this particular butterfly all of a sudden made a much more purposeful direct flight away from this tree and disappeared over the tops of the trees, that was the last I saw.



This was the best of my Purple Emperor photos from 18.7.2015. It is highly cropped and I only post it because to me it confirms this one as a male (as it seems to have a hint of purple)



Female Silver Washed Fritillary 18.7.2015 Botley Wood

I wondered if I had found a tree where this species return to roost each evening. Could this in fact be the 2 same butterflies as last week? I decided to return later that same evening to see if there was any additional activity at this particular tree. Sadly by 4.30 pm it had clouded over and become much cooler with a threat of rain. I did return but the conditions were not right and I saw no more Emperor activity. There did however seem to be some Purple Hairstreak activity in the tree which was not apparent earlier in the day. I know some people devote their lives to the Purple Emperor, maybe somebody more experienced than me could explain what was going on here 😊

All in all an excellent return to Botley Wood for me. I also saw my first female Silver Washed Fritillaries, White Admirals and summer Peacock of the year at this visit. I can not wait till next week to see if there is still any Emperor activity in that tree. I am well and truly hooked 😊😊

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 21-Jul-15 02:56 PM GMT

Fantastic report Paul. It can be frustrating to get only such a small glimpse into the lives of these creatures but it is the mysteries and intrigue which makes this so compelling for me.

Re: jackz432r

by Mark Tutton, 21-Jul-15 03:02 PM GMT

Hi Paul

From the photos it looks like you have found a sap run on an oak – these are particularly attractive to both males and females but they are often difficult to spot as the butterflies don't move much – but once found they can be very reliable – well done 😊

Kind Regards

Mark

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 23-Jul-15 06:59 AM GMT

Hi Pauline & Mark

Thanks for your comments 😊 Thanks for the insight Mark, I think I have a lot to learn about this species.

Re: jackz432r

by trevor, 23-Jul-15 02:20 PM GMT

Hi Paul,

Congrats. on your Purple Emperor adventures. You mention the early hour of your first sighting, last year i had one down at 8.35am and this year (see my 9th July report) i found one on the path at 8.05am, but that one gave me the impression it had been there all night. There are always exceptions to the classic text book timings !.

Best wishes,
TREVOR.

Re: jackz432r

by Willow, 24-Jul-15 07:23 PM GMT

Your return to Botley Woods was well rewarded Paul, great report and those pics relay a very authentic feel of actually being there – great stuff 😊

BW's

Bill 😊

"When in doubt – venture out"

Re: jackz432r

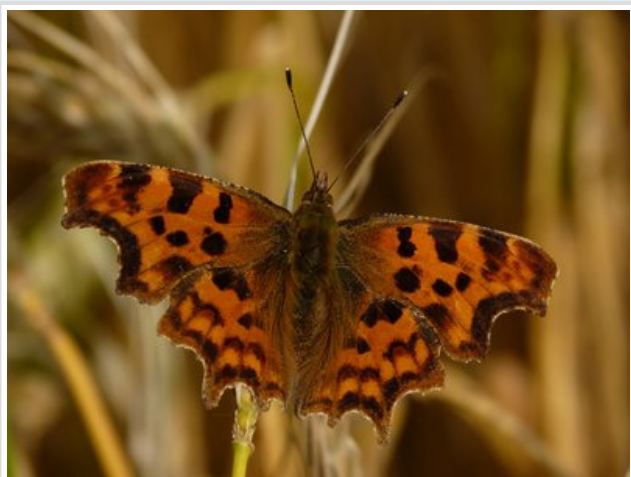
by Paul Harfield, 26-Jul-15 05:02 PM GMT

Thanks Trevor & Willow for your comments 😊

Thursday 16.7.2015 Southwick Park

This site is situated just to the north of Portsdown Hill and is convenient for popping in after work if I take the scenic route. This is the second year I have looked at this site, primarily for White Letter Hairstreak. There is a fair amount of Elm here but I have yet to find any Hairstreaks and this visit too was unsuccessful 😞 Thankfully there were some other highlights.

I have not seen many Comma this year, until today that is. In a small Oasis of late afternoon sunshine there were probably more Commas than I have ever seen in one spot. 6 or 7 of them nectaring, basking and jostling for best position in this small sunlit area.





As I left the road behind and went through the gate there were several smart new Green Veined Whites flying. I have never noticed this species looking so yellow before, in fact momentarily I thought I had stumbled across something much more exotic. These Green Veined Whites must have only emerged that day. Frustratingly I could not get a decent photo of this species. More Commas her as well 😊



I struggled to get a decent Green Veined White photo





A little further along the path I noticed a larva which at first I thought was a Small Tortoiseshell. I found several more and soon realised they were Painted Lady larvae. This is the first time I have seen the larval stage of this species. I easily found about 8 of these, but I am sure if I had really got down to it there would have been many many more. About half of these larvae were on Burdock and the rest on Thistle. Interestingly, although there is loads of Thistle in this location, all of the larvae I found were on young plants surrounded by bare ground and that had yet to flower. The Burdock feeders seemed to have two very specific methods of construction for their nest. Several of the Burdock larvae were noted to be feeding within a Burdock leaf where the edges were slightly drawn up with a roof in the form a silken sheet loosely woven. The larva clearly visible feeding on the upper leaf surface but under the silken sheet, eating the flesh between the veins of the leaf. Alternatively ther was the completely enclosed cocoon type nest. The Thistle dwelling larvae seemed to be a much more randome construction. I have retained a couple of these larvae to rear through (more on those later).



Some of the many Painted Lady larvae here today. These are feeding on Burdock



Also seen were Large White, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Ringlet and Small Skipper.

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 26-Jul-15 11:42 PM GMT

Great find Paul. Can't wait to hear more about them. Will reply to your pm v. soon.

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 27-Jul-15 04:55 AM GMT

Lovely range of Commas Paul 🍷 Looking forward to hearing more about those cats 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 28-Jul-15 07:59 AM GMT

Hi Pauline & Wurzel Thanks for your comments 😊 Hopefully more on the Painted Lady larvae in my next post

Saturday 25.7.2015 Botley Wood – Purple Emperors – Part 3

I am sure I can be forgiven for becoming a little obsessed with my local Emperors. For the third Saturday in a row I just had to take another look, hoping my luck would hold. I started a bit later this week. I would like to say that was because I was in tune with this butterfly's habits, but in reality I slept through my alarm 😊😊 After continuous rain the previous day and much cooler temperatures I did not think my late start would be too much of a hindrance.

As I approached the same tree there were no butterflies at all, but I did not have to wait long. At 9.15 I was pleased to catch sight of a Purple Emperor 😊 I had my binoculars with me for the first time and confirmed this one as a Female, behaving much the same as in my previous visits. Basking/feeding for periods and then a gentle glide in and out of the upper branches of this tree. The last Purple Emperor photo I posted was of an Emperor perched on a branch. This female and also a Red Admiral visited the same branch today so this could indeed be the location of a sap run as Mark Tutton suggested. In fact the Red Admiral accompanied this Empress for most of the time I was there, proving something of a distraction at times though it seemed more content to bask than fly. It soon became apparent that there seemed to be just one Purple Emperor here today.



Although I had plenty of good photo opportunity after my camera batteries failed this was the best I could manage beforehand

I stayed in this one location today, my eyes peeled, without being tempted to other areas. I am glad I did because this week I was treated to the best display so far 😊 It did not come to the ground, but after an hour or so this particular butterfly started to settle at lower, more open positions. I unfortunately forgot to charge my camera batteries beforehand, of course they lost power just before I was provided with by far the best photo opportunity 😊 Whilst I was gazing upward keeping tabs on this settled female I was approached by a couple who asked what I was looking at. When I told them they said that was what they had come for, they were quite pleased when eventually it took to the air and they were able to get a glimpse. They had apparently been to Bentley Wood recently and not seen one. I think they left quite satisfied.

Once I was back on my own I quickly realised that there were now two Emperors settled before me 😊😊 Though I did not notice this second individual arrive or see from where it appeared. This one was noticeably smaller and somewhat ragged so I think it was probably a male. This one also seemed more content to bask for a long time open winged in the same position. I spent nearly 2 hours watching today, but eventually I had to leave. At 10.50 I left both Emperors at the tree both showing no signs of imminent departure.



Early evening at Botley Wood. Oaks on the left and Sallow on the right

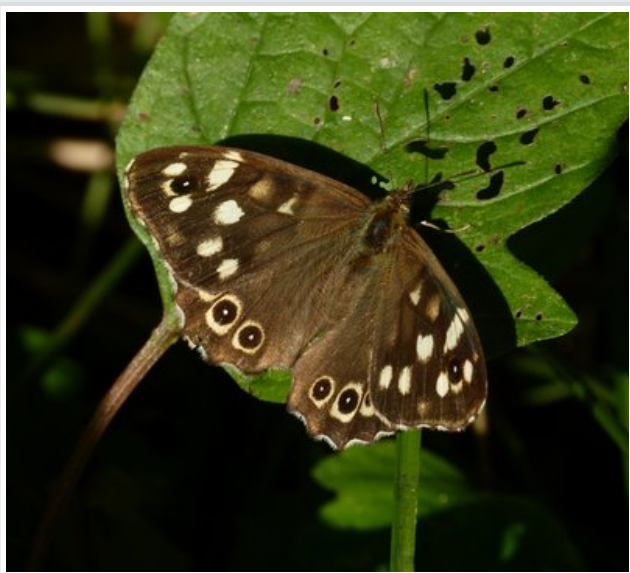


By far the most numerous butterfly in the late afternoon were female Silver Washed Fritillaries like this one still in quite reasonable condition



White Admiral enjoying the last of the afternoon sunshine in Botley Wood 25.7.2015

I could not resist the opportunity of returning later in the afternoon to see if there was any more Emperor activity. At 4.15 this part of Botley Wood feels entirely different, relaxed and gentle. The exposed side of 'the Emperor tree' was now in complete shade, this tree is right on the edge of denser woodland so the now sunny side is not accessible. I stayed till 6.30pm but saw no Emperor activity at all. The butterfly activity that was occurring was all very low key relaxed and gentle in the pools of late sunshine and half light. Most numerous were female Silver Washed Fritillaries some still looking quite fresh, I saw only one male. There were a couple of fresh Peacocks, a few Gatekeepers, Speckled Wood, a couple of worn White Admirals and a single Comma, Ringlet and Purple Hairstreak. There were quite a few Dragonflies and what I initially thought were spiders crawling across the path in front of me. It was not until I bent down to take a closer look that I realised they were tiny Toads no bigger than a penny, believe it or not that is the first time I have seen a Toad.



female Speckled Wood Botley Wood 25.7.2015



female Gatekeeper 25.7.2015



One of several tiny Toads seen crossing the track in front of me

If weather is reasonable I will definitely revisit next weekend though my luck will surely have to come to an end soon.

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 29-Jul-15 06:24 AM GMT

Great White Admiral and Silver-washed Paul 😊 Looking forward to seeing how far you can push your luck 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 05-Aug-15 08:11 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Thanks for the comments 😊 Sadly, though, my luck did not hold out 😞 so there is not really a Part 4 to my Purple Emperor story. Perhaps I was a little over-optimistic 😞 I spent a lot of time on Saturday morning with very little reward, not even the faintest glimmer of Purple. In fact I saw hardly any butterflies at all. Thankfully Sunday was rather better.

Saturday 1.8.2015 Botley Wood - No Purple Emperors - Part 4



My Purple Emperor viewing point



I think this Deer found me rather amusing



Does anybody know what this curious halo around the sun is?

I set off all enthusiastic and fully prepared on Saturday morning hoping for more Purple Emperor action. My enthusiasm was not even dampened by the fact that it was a chilly 8 degrees when arrived at 8.15 😬 For two hours I waited without a butterfly of any description, that's commitment (or perhaps stupidity 😊) with just a curious deer, a strange phenomena in the sky and an amorous pair of dragonflies to occupy me. It was not until just gone 10am and the temperature just started to rise above 14 degrees that the first butterfly of the day appeared. A brief flutter from a Silver Washed Fritillary as it found itself somewhere to warm in the sun shortly followed by a Speckled Wood doing the same thing.



I had better post some butterfly photos I suppose. A week on, the Silver Washed Fritillary and White Admiral are now looking rather ragged



I stayed until 11.40 in the vague hope that something Purple might appear, but it did not 😞 My tally for the day was barely into double figures. Red Admiral, Green Veined White, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Brimstone and White Admiral mostly singular individuals some looking rather ragged now. This small area of Botley Wood will be my first 'port of call' next Emperor season.



Speckled Wood and Green Veined White were looking a little fresher



Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 10-Aug-15 05:35 AM GMT

Sunday 2.8.2015 Meonstoke & West Meon

My brother and I have been walking the disused Meon Valley railway over the last few weeks. On Sunday we did the last section, Meonstoke to West Meon. I had delayed this last section because I wanted to be in the Meonstoke vicinity during Brown Hairstreak season as one was reported from the area last year. I did not expect to find any Hairstreaks, but I could dream 😊 To be honest this popular Hampshire walk has not been particularly productive for butterflies so far, but today would be different.



Small White was by far the numerous species today





Female Brimstone outnumbered the males today

We met at Meonstoke and it soon became clear that this would be a butterfly day. There were lots and lots of whites around particularly Small Whites which were by far the most numerous of the day closely followed by female Brimstone. The area close to the site of West Meon Railway Station being particularly fruitful. One particular Small White was unusually creamy in colour compared to the others flying, I managed to get a couple of shots of this individual.



This Small White was unusually creamy in appearance



I spotted an area where there were some large Buddleia bushes which I just had to check out of course. Lots of Whites, Brimstone (mostly females), Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Peacock, Red Admiral and Comma. As I looked on at the assembled butterfly masses I was aware that we were both on a

bit of a time constraint and our time was nearly up. Just then I spotted something different low down on a Thistle a few meters away. As I approached I could see this was a very unexpected White Letter Hairstreak 😊😊😊 Well, I could hardly contain my excitement. It was not the freshest example but was not too ragged either. I guessed it must have wandered in from somewhere else, but as I took photos another one fluttered by and settled right next to me 😊 This one was a lot more ragged but I was now thinking they must have come from somewhere a lot closer and I immediately started scanning the area for Elm Trees. To be honest I have become quite expert over the last couple of years at spotting Elm, but today I must have switched off because there was a large Wych Elm just to my right which I had not noticed. As I walked over to take a closer look at the tree I noticed several more White Letter Hairstreaks on the large Bramble bush below it 😊 I will definitely be checking this location out next season as it seemed perfect for viewing this species.



White Letter Hairstreak one of several seen

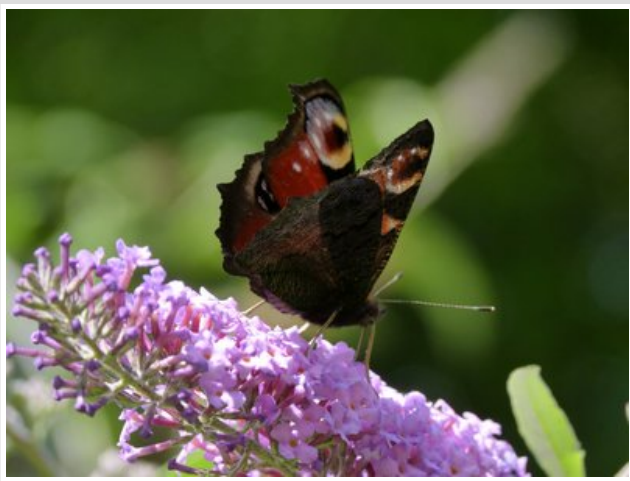




We spent about half an hour with the Hairstreaks, making ourselves late in the process. The first Hairstreak we had spotted was still on the same Thistle when we left 😊 There was just time to see a fresh Common Blue egg laying on Black Medick. When I got back to the car, which was parked right next to the River Meon, I took one last look across the fields before I went home. On the banks I was surprised to see three Small Whites 'mudpuddling' This was first time I have seen this phenomenon and it finished the day off rather nicely 😊 No Brown Hairstreak, unsurprisingly, but the White Letter variety were a great consolation. All in all a great day 😊



Common Blue egg laying on Black Medick



Plenty of Peacock on Buddleia



Small Whites 'mudpuddling' on the River Meon

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 13-Aug-15 06:57 AM GMT

Painted Lady Larvae

On Sunday, after returning home from a Brown Hairstreak hunt, I was surprised to note that my Painted Lady had emerged. So I thought it was about time to post the differing story of these two captive larvae.



Parasitised Painted Lady larva above & Healthy larva below 16.7.2015 Southwick



The first larva has perhaps the more interesting story. I did not notice at the time I collected it, but in the photo it is apparent that it looked slightly unusual. Within a day or so it stopped feeding and started to behave strangely. On 23rd July some small parasitic larvae emerged from the larva accompanied by the production of some clumps of silk. A couple of these larvae were clearly visible but I guess there were more within the mass of silk. One of these remained exposed and I was able to see the resulting red pupa after a few days. One might think that was enough horror for one larva, but

after a day or so I noticed that the body of the larva still had what appeared to be something larger moving within it. On 27th July a larger parasitic larva emerged producing a much larger brown pupa, which has yet to emerge. This unfortunate larva appeared to have been subject to a double parasitisation by different species.



Tiny red pupa visible amongst the clumps of silk



Silk clumps, small parasitic pupa and the remains of the empty Painted Lady larval skin bottom right



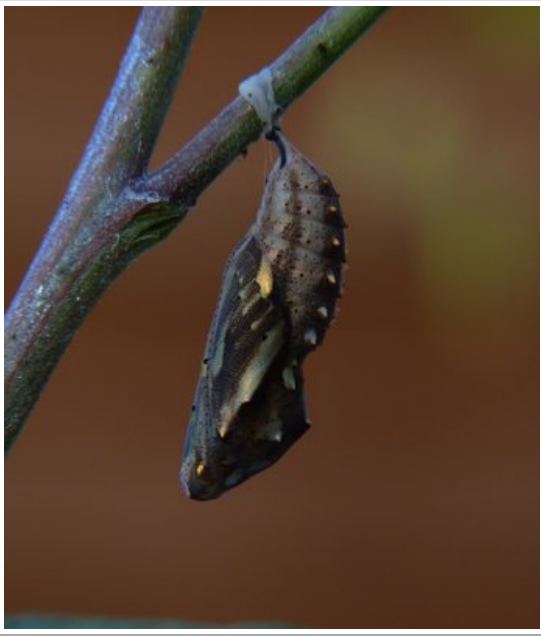
This pupa appeared on 27.7.2015 . It was the second parasite to emerge from this unfortunate larva

Two weeks after the tiny parasitic larvae appeared, I noticed there had been an emergence of between 20–25 tiny wasps. These were no more than 2mm long (4mm including antennae). It was difficult to count or photograph these wasps as they were extremely small and mobile. I was able to get around this by putting them in the fridge for 10 minutes to slow them up. These wasps look like the Braconid wasp *Microgaster subcompletus* shown in 'The Butterflies of Britain & Ireland'.



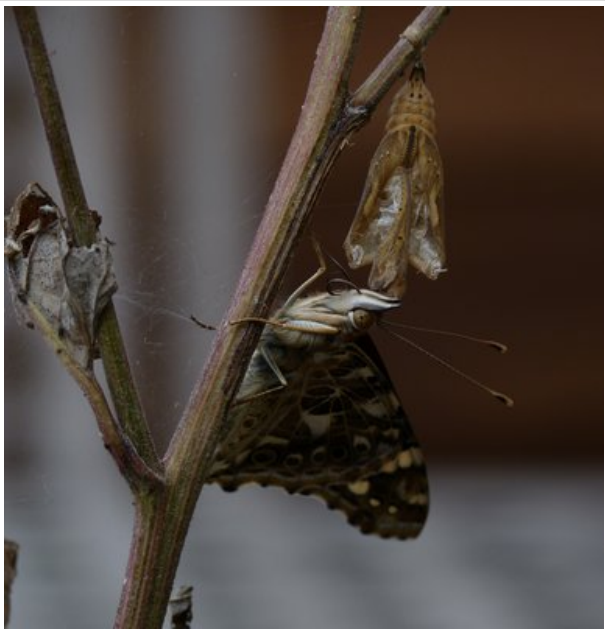
One of the tiny parasitic wasps a few hours after emergence 6.8.2015



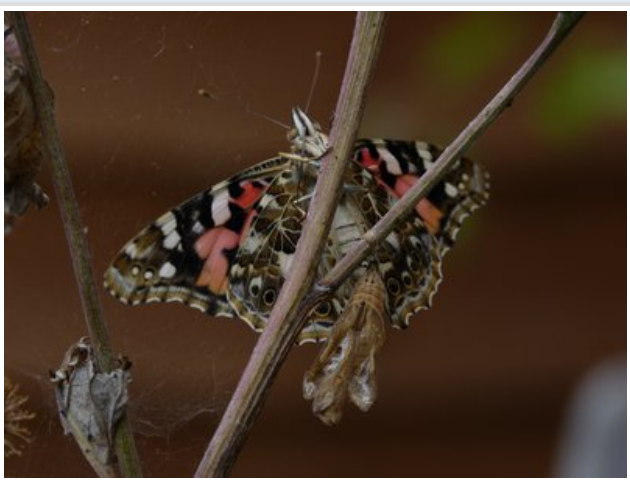


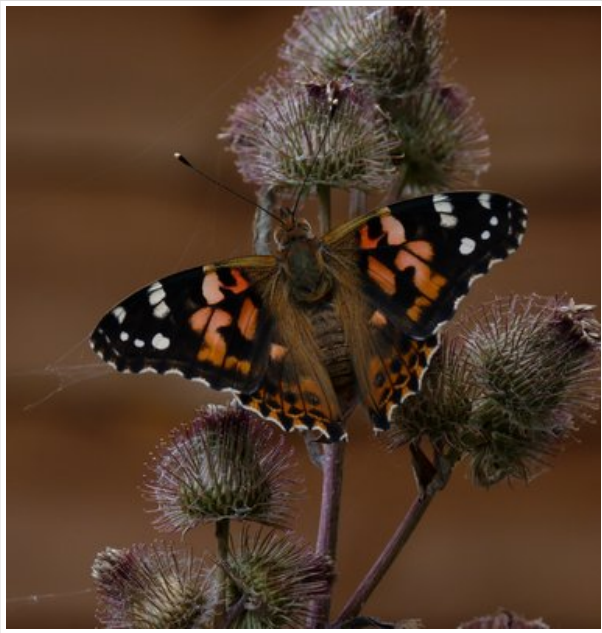
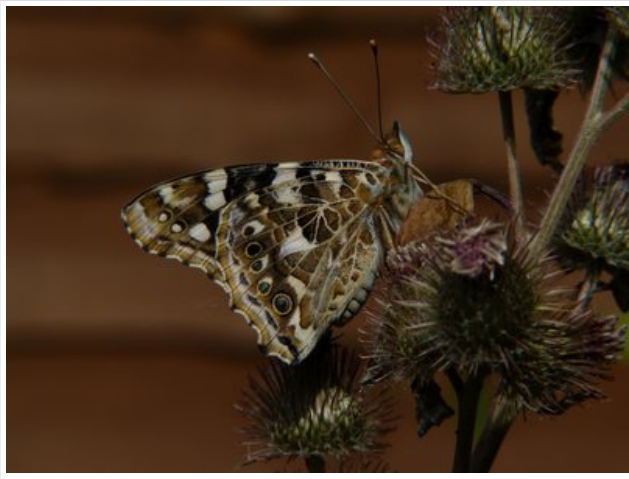
Painted Lady pupa 27.7.2015

The second larva was pretty well advanced when I collected it and within a few days had pupated. This resulted in the beautiful adult that emerged on Sunday after 18 days in the pupal stage.



Painted Lady shortly after emergence 9.8.2015





Re: jackz432r

by trevor, 13-Aug-15 01:51 PM GMT

Hi Paul,
Congrats. on finding that White Letter Hairstreak colony. I found a lone one in an unknown location, and like you, the excitement was in the surprise. Also your gruesome Painted Lady story is fascinating, I am pleased that a partial success was achieved. 😊
TREVOR.

Re: jackz432r

by Hoggers, 13-Aug-15 04:57 PM GMT

Fascinating report, Jack, thanks for sharing your observations

Hoggers

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 13-Aug-15 10:24 PM GMT

Great reports Paul. I've been waiting for news on the Painted Lady cats and you must have been over the moon at finding the WLH – surely got to be 2 of the highlights of your butterfly season 🍷🍷

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 14-Aug-15 11:12 PM GMT

Hi! Jack, wish I could find some White Letter's like you 🍷 I keep looking but no luck yet Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 25-Aug-15 10:42 PM GMT

Hi Trevor, Hoggers, Pauline & Goldie

Thanks for all your comments 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 25-Aug-15 11:51 PM GMT

Friday 7.8.2015 & Sunday 16.8.2015 Twyford & St Catherines Hill Winchester

Like many people, I imagine, I have a long list of places which I intend to go back and visit at some point. This was one of those locations; a track/bridleway heading North from the main road between Winchester and Twyford which I often pass on the way home from work and never have time to explore. This particular Friday I had finished earlier than expected so I decided to stop off and have a quick look. To be honest at 5.30pm it was a bit too late to have much chance of seeing anything, but I am always optimistic 😊 There is quite a bit of Elm in this area, along the road and at the start of the track but it was probably too late in the day to see any White Letter Hairstreaks if they were there. I walked up the track for about 30 minutes and it quickly became apparent that this was good for Holly Blues with a total of 8 seen. I also saw my first Small Copper of the year high up on a hedge 😊 Much of the path was now in shade with just a few sunlit openings. A few whites, a couple of Gatekeepers, a Meadow Brown and a Brimstone rounded off the day. With that I called it a day and headed home intending to return when I had more time.



What sort of bird is this? Twyford track 16.8.2015

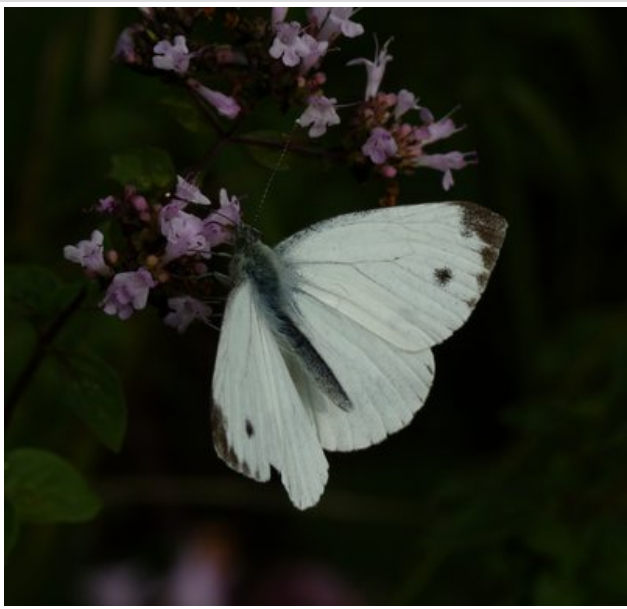




One of many Holly Blues seen. This worn female taking time out after a bout of egg laying



Female Green Veined White



Male Green Veined White



This male was very persistent before he got the message

A week later and my intention had been to head to Shipton Bellinger for Brown Hairstreak, but weekend chores took longer than expected and I did not get out till gone 1pm so I skipped Shipton Bellinger and went to investigate the track at Twyford again. Although the morning had been perfect, by early afternoon cloud cover had thickened and it even looked like rain might be a possibility. I retraced my previous steps and counted 10 Holly Blues in about 15 minutes including several Females egg laying. Further on I started seeing Common Blues and a few small skippers as well as lots of Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown. Being up quite high now Magdalen Hill Down was clearly visible in the distance.



Magdalen Hill Down in the distance with dark clouds looming



Male Chalkhill Blue



Male Common Blue



Brown Argus



I unexpectedly found myself on St Catherines Hill south of the M3

I then bumped into a Chalkhill Blue, my first of the year 😊 I had not been looking for these but it was a very pleasant surprise. However, I did not have to go much further before I arrived at a gate beyond which there was an open downland meadow which was alive with Chalkhill Blues and Common Blues. At that point I had no idea where I was and there were no signs indicating the location. It was not until I reached the far side of this downland that I discovered a sign which said ' St Catherines Hill!' I was somewhat confused by this sign as the classic image of St Catherines Hill is on the opposite side of the M3 motorway, anyway that's what the sign said. By now it was 5pm and there were heavy clouds rolling in and butterflies were settling already. A great time for photos. Brown Argus, Green Veined White, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell and small Heath were now added to the days tally as well as a couple of Wasp Spiders.



This Chalkhill Blue was devoid of underwing spots



Chalkhill Blues settling down for the night





Wasp spider

Re: jackz432r

by Allan.W., 26-Aug-15 01:30 AM GMT

Hi Jack, your bird on the fencepost looks like a Buzzard to me. Nice shot of Wasp spider too ,I've found 4 myself this year including a huge individual at 2013,s Kent Long tailed Blue site ,Kingsdown Leas. regards Allan W.

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 27-Aug-15 05:52 AM GMT

Just catching up as I seem to keep missing your postings Paul 😞 First very interesting reporting of the parasitism – whilst gruesome also fascinating. The Painted Lady that emerged looks really dark to me, hardly any Orange on it 😊 Great Chalkhills and Wasp Spider and as for the Whitters 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 30-Aug-15 07:25 AM GMT

Hi Allan

Thanks for the id 😊 I am not a birder, but this large bird looked rather interesting sitting on a fence post

Hi Wurzel

Thanks for the comments 😊 I don't know how you find the time to keep track of and post on everyones diary as well as your own 😊 I struggle just to keep mine up together.

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 31-Aug-15 07:56 AM GMT

In what would seem to be a great year for Holly Blue, they have been unusually numerous at almost every site. They have also been constant visitors to my garden over the last few weeks. They seem to find a large Hebe bush irresistible both for nectaring and basking. I have not heard of Holly Blue larva on Hebe before, but I observed the following:

Saturday 22.8.2015 - I spotted a female Holly Blue spending longer than normal on one of the Hebe flower heads in the garden. On closer inspection I could see she was probing between the florets with her abdomen looking for a place to lay. Upon examination afterwards I found a single ovum.



Wednesday 26.8.2015 - By now the florets were open. The flowers are normally very short lived on this Hebe and I suspect that the flowers will have finished by the time this egg hatches. Today I noticed that another egg of a different sort had been laid next to the Holly Blue one. I suspected that this was the egg of a parasite of some sort, but on inspection of several other flower heads, both open and in bud, there seemed to be quite a few more of these. So hopefully that fact that it is right next to the Holly Blue egg is purely coincidental.



Holly Blue ovum with a 2nd unidentified egg 29.8.2015

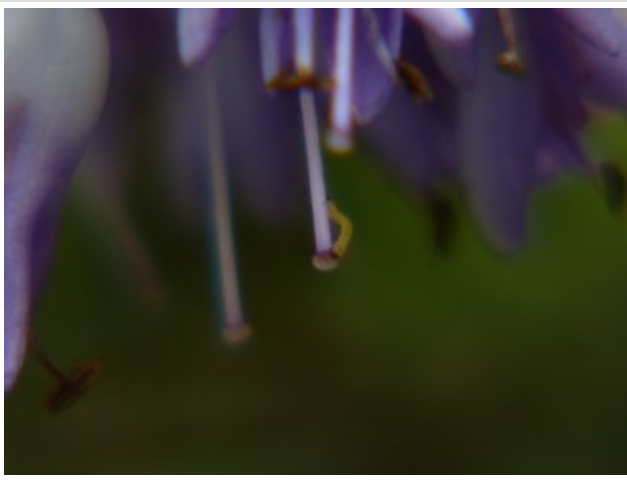
Sunday 30.8.2015 - Today the individual florets are already starting to drop off. At midday I noticed a dark spot in the middle of the Holly Blue egg and shortly afterwards it was obviously hatching. Unfortunately I was called away at the crucial moment 😞 and by the time I returned the larva had left the scene. I made a thorough inspection of the flower head and found a small larva, but this is obviously not the Holly Blue. Hopefully it is still located somewhere close by.



Holly Blue larva hatching 30.8.2015



Vacant Holly Blue ovum



I found this larva on the same flower head but it is obviously not a Holly Blue larva!

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 31-Aug-15 03:03 PM GMT

Keep a close eye on that plant Paul for any signs of feeding damage which might lead you to the culprit – you might still spot it.

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 01-Sep-15 07:15 AM GMT

Monday 31.8.2015 Holly Blue Update

There is nothing like a bit of rain and drizzle to bring larvae out into the open. After a wet start, a quick glance at my Hebe this afternoon revealed the Holly Blue larva which was playing hard to get yesterday.



1 day old Holly Blue larva



Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 01-Sep-15 07:53 AM GMT

"jackz432r" wrote:

Monday 31.8.2015 Holly Blue Update

There is nothing like a bit of rain and drizzle to bring larvae out into the open. After a wet start, a quick glance at my Hebe this afternoon revealed the Holly Blue larva which was playing hard to get yesterday.[attachment=1:3bscwxa3]P1070347.JPG[/attachment:3bscwxa3]
[attachment=0:3bscwxa3]P1070362.JPG[/attachment:3bscwxa3]

Superb! Certainly looks like a Holly Blue larva to me – and possibly the first record of this species on a Hebe! I'll have to change my gardening plans for next year. In the meantime, we'll get this recorded in a Notes and Views article. Top stuff – and let us know if you get to see later instars 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 05-Sep-15 07:53 AM GMT

Sunday 9.8.2015 & Saturday 22.8.2015 Shipton Bellinger

Last year I saw my first ever Brown Hairstreaks at this site, but did not manage to get any photos. My first visit to Shipton Bellinger this year was perhaps a little early in the season, but I had a day to myself and the weather was good. I arrived nice and early and did not have to wait long for some Hairstreak action. Rather than the Ash, this year the hotspot seemed to be a large Sallow tree between the two parallel tracks. At least 4 males flitting around this tree quite early. I waited patiently for one to come down but probably not patiently enough. I eventually moved on to investigate other areas as I had the whole day. I saw a couple more Hairstreaks in flight on the perimeter of the main field but not much more anywhere else. I returned to the Sallow tree several times during the day but by midday activity had died down somewhat.



Small Tortoiseshell 9.8.2015



Brown Argus 9.8.2015



Common Blue 9.8.2015



Holly Blue 9.8.2015

As is always the case here there is plenty of other species to keep you entertained when Hairstreaks are playing hard to get. Lots of Holly Blues again this year as well as Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Speckled Wood, Large White, Small White, Brimstone, Green Veined White, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Small Skipper, Small Heath, Comma, Red Admiral, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and for the first time I saw several Silver Washed Fritillary here. But of course it was the Brown Hairstreak I had come to see. My final Hairstreak encounter was when I returned to the main field via the cut through in the bottom corner. As I exited the gap in the hedge a butterfly flew up from low down and perched up high on Blackthorn giving me a silhouetted view against the sky. I left with a grand total of 6-7 Brown Hairstreaks seen.



My final view of Brown Hairstreak 9.8.2015



Brimstone 9.8.2015

A couple of weeks later I got a second chance at Brown Hairstreak and again I got there nice and early. First up a fresh Painted Lady near to the car park and then several Common Blues sucking nutrients from the still wet track. I headed straight for the Sallow tree. As I approached I could see there were already a couple of chaps 'camped out' at the Sallow. Nigel Kiteley and John Starkey had come some way and been there several hours already. There was already some action up in the Sallow and they had also located some Brown Hairstreak eggs close by which they kindly pointed out to me (my first) Soon after that we were joined by Roger (from Hertfordshire) and then by a lovely fresh Female Brown Hairstreak. She came pretty low but was frustratingly not showing her full beauty. Nigel and John went off for a wander after which a male settled down low for some time, but wings were kept firmly shut.



Male Brown Hairstreak 22.8.2015



Female Brown Hairstreak 22.8.2015

We then went off for a look around the main field where a young chap in a tractor was looking quite pleased with himself as he cut the grass down together with all the wild flowers etc. We saw no sign of Brown Hairstreak in the field but we were quite pleased to see a single Small Copper, only my third of the year. We returned to the Sallow only to find Nigel and John already there having seen a female Brown Hairstreak low down, wings open and egg-laying. Oh well that's the way it goes, maybe next year. That was the end of my final visit to this site for the year as I had now run out of time and had to go, but not before getting some handy tips from Nigel and John (thanks guys 😊)



At last! This was only my 3rd Small Copper of the year 22.8.2015



Speckled Wood 22.8.2015

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 06-Sep-15 06:57 AM GMT

Glad Shipton Bellinger produced the goods Paul 😊, especially as I was there 2 days before and it was miserable weather and there was only one single Brostreak to be seen 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 10-Sep-15 08:26 AM GMT

A few 'bits & bobs' from the last couple of weeks:

Holly Blue Larva on Hebe

There has been no further sign of this larva since 31.8.2015, despite checking everyday. I found a small spider living on the flower head 6.9.2015 which I have relocated elsewhere (not sure if that is too much interference with nature) Hopefully the Holly Blue larva is still in there somewhere. I shall keep looking.

Small White in the garden

I found a couple of what I believe are Small White Ova on a potted Garlic Mustard plant in the garden. They have both now hatched although I have lost track of one larva. The other one took up residence within the then still furled young leaf at the base of the plant. This leaf has now started to unfurl, the young larva being extremely difficult to see laying along the midrib of the leaf. There is also a Bright Line Brown Eye moth larva living on the same plant.



1st instar Small White larva within furled Garlic Mustard leaf 1.9.2015



1st instar Small White larva incredibly difficult to see along the midrib of this Garlic Mustard leaf 5.9.2015



This is the leaf approximately in the centre of this picture in context with the rest of the plant



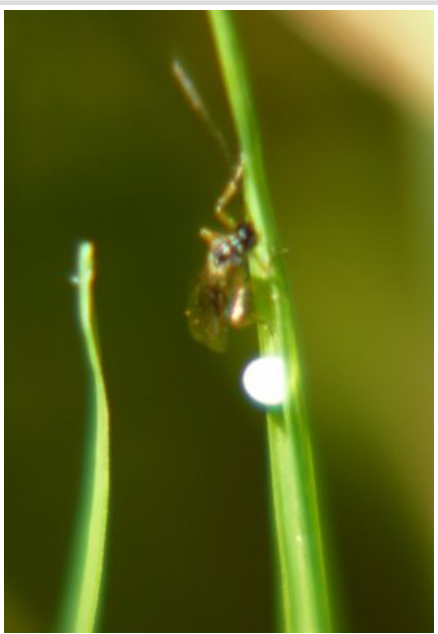
This Bright Line Brown Eye moth larva is occupying the same plant as the Small White Larvae

Sunday 6.9.2015 Speckled Wood in the garden

I was lucky enough to be in the garden whilst a Speckled Wood laid eggs. This is the 4th year in succession that I have positively identified early stages of this species in the garden. It surprises me how little one has to do to encourage this. I watched as it laid at least 2 eggs probably more, one of these I have marked so I can monitor it. A few minutes after this egg was laid I managed to catch an intruder in frame. This settled momentarily and it was pure luck that I managed to snap it. I have no idea if this was anything sinister or just coincidence that it settled next to the egg, any ideas ?



Speckled Wood ovum a few minutes after being laid in my garden 6.9.2015



Out of focus, but this insect momentarily settled right next to the freshly laid Speckled Wood ovum. By pure chance I managed a snapshot of it

Friday 4.9.2015 In Search Of The Long Tailed Blue

A few weeks ago I spotted this area of scrub locally where there was a profusion of Everlasting Pea. Whilst not being strictly coastal as it is next to Southampton Water, it is definitely 'Worth checking out' I thought to myself. Today was pretty cool and overcast and hardly any butterflies on the wing, just a couple of Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown and an unidentified moth. The Everlasting Pea here ranges from completely finished to yet to flower. I could not find any evidence of Long Tailed Blues here today 😞 but I will definitely be back in a couple of weeks, just in case one deposited an egg or two 😊



Not strictly coastal, but worth a second visit



Plenty of Everlasting Pea in various stages of growth



Not much flying except this Unidentified Moth

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 12-Sep-15 04:24 AM GMT

Hope you find some Long Tailed Blues Jack, that certainly would be exciting Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 14-Sep-15 04:43 AM GMT

Good luck with the LTB searching Paul, if you find one don't be afraid to share it, I still might have one days worth of Brownie points left in bag 😊😂

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 16-Sep-15 07:56 AM GMT

Hi Goldie & Wurzel Thanks for the encouragement 😊 Watch this space but don't hold your breath 😊 I have little opportunity at the moment to get out and about. My wife is recovering from yet another operation on her poor knee, this time a full replacement. Outings are likely to be brief and local for the foreseeable future so I am also making the most of goings on in the garden 😊



Lots of these in the garden at the moment. Female Garden Spider making itself at home in the same pot as my Garlic Mustard

To add to the 2 existing **Small White** larva, on Saturday I noticed that 6 more eggs had appeared on the same plant. I imagine that these are more of the same. 5 have been laid on the upper leaf surface and 1 on the underside of the leaf. I am amazed at how quickly the existing Small White larva has increased in size. Just prior to taking these pics there was a small wasp like insect walking around the leaf, but I was too slow to photograph it. I am not sure if it was up to no good.



Further Small White eggs laid in the garden this week



Small White larva rapidly increasing in size

The **Speckled Wood** eggs laid last weekend are yet to hatch.

The **Holly Blue** larva still has not reappeared but I did spot some signs of feeding damage and what looks like frass. Having had no experience of Holly Blue early stages I am not sure if this feeding damage is compatible with Holly Blue. Another unidentified larva has appeared and I have also had to remove yet another spider from this flower head 😊



Is this characteristic Holly Blue larval feeding damage?



Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 16-Sep-15 08:04 PM GMT

"jackz432r" wrote:

The **Holly Blue** larva still has not reappeared but I did spot some signs of feeding damage and what looks like frass. Having had no experience of Holly Blue early stages I am not sure if this feeding damage is compatible with Holly Blue.

It certainly is – and the larva should be visible if it's still around, although is probably still very small.

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 22-Sep-15 08:25 AM GMT

Hi Pete

Thanks for the confirmation 😊 Found more feeding damage today but still cant locate the larva 😞

Sunday 20.9.2015 Searching For Something Unusual

On Sunday I was allowed a few hours break from being nursemaid 😊 I tried to make the most of it by visiting 3x sites in hope of something interesting 😊

My first port of call was the area of Everlasting Pea mentioned previously. The Weather was much better this time but still no sign of Long Tailed Blues 😞 In fact still not many butterflies, perhaps I was a little too early in the day. Several Small Whites, a Speckled Wood, a Red Admiral and an Angel Shades moth was all I saw. I also spotted yet another Wasp Spider, these seem to be at every site I go to now. This one seemed to be constructing a package of some sort, is it an egg sac?



Speckled Wood



One of several Small Whites seen. This was the only female I saw at this site



This Wasp Spider was busy constructing some sort of package. Is it an egg sac?



Angel Shades moth

My second location was my Clouded Yellow site at Haslar Gosport, reliable for the last couple of years but not today 😞 Again Small Whites were the most numerous species with a single Large white and a Red Admiral for good measure.



My Clouded Yellow spot did not come up with the goods this visit

Finally a little further away from the coast I visited one of my favourite butterfly hotspots from the last couple of years at Aytesbury Copse, Knowle. This is has been a sort of migrant catcher over the last couple of years 😊 Clouded Yellows last year and Painted Ladies this year. Again Small Whites were the most numerous including a mating pair, a lovely female Green Veined White, only my 4th Small Copper of the year 🤩 a Comma and finally a male Common Blue.



Lovely female Green Veined White



No Long Tailed Blues, but I was very happy to see this female Small Copper. Only the 4th Small Copper I have seen all year



Mating pair of Small Whites

Re: jackz432r

by Butterflysaurus rex, 23-Sep-15 05:29 AM GMT

Keep on looking for those LTB's Jack, I think you've got a very good chance of finding some. We've got some better weather coming up too. 😊😄

ATB

James

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 23-Sep-15 06:46 AM GMT

That's a strikingly marked female GVW, Jack, a species I haven't seen much of this late summer/early autumn.

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 24-Sep-15 12:53 AM GMT

Hi! Jack, some nice shots 😊 If you do find some LTB's I'd keep the location quiet, the man or woman with the net could pay it a visit, seems these people are checking out UKB's Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 24-Sep-15 07:50 AM GMT

Hi James

Looks like you have had a good share of the luck where Long Tailed Blues are concerned 😊 I think I am less likely to come up trumps down this way, but I shall continue to keep everything crossed 😊

Hi David

Yes she did stand out amongst the all the more mundane Small Whites 😊

Hi Goldie

Thanks for the comments 😊 and don't worry I can be very vague with details if required 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 29-Sep-15 07:53 AM GMT

The season has definitely wound down significantly. My weekend was sadly characterised by its lack of butterflies despite some excellent weather 😞 In several places where I would expect to have found at least some butterflies I returned a count of zero. Here is a round-up of my recent doings:

Holly Blue In The Garden I keep hopefully checking my Hebe bush but I have not seen any more of the larva although there did appear to be some additional feeding damage.

Speckled Wood In The Garden The Speckled Wood eggs which were laid in my garden recently appear to have hatched and there would seem to be some feeding damage. However, I have not actually seen any larvae yet.

Small White In The Garden The most recent eggs to have been laid have now gone. Hatched or predated I am not sure as I can not find the larvae. I am sure they are likely to be well hidden. At least one of the larger larvae is still present and not far off being fully grown.



Small White larva almost fully grown in the Garden 27.9.2015

Saturday 26.9.2015 Southampton

A quick check of my Everlasting Pea site did not reveal anything exciting. Several Small Whites and single male Large White and Red Admiral. A second, smaller area of Everlasting Pea on a sunny South Facing grass bank beside a busy road also did not hold any surprises other than my 5th Small Copper of the year 😊



Male Large White 26.9.2015 Southampton. I have not seen too many of these this year



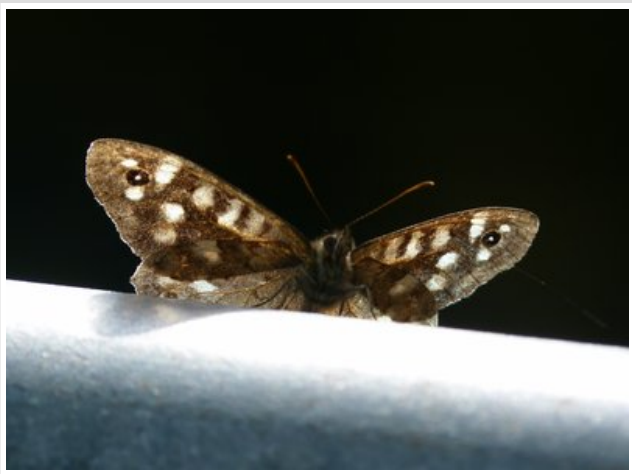
Red Admiral 26.9.2015 Southampton

Sunday 27.9.2015 Hedge End

I have neglected the footpaths close to my house for most of the year. Last year the council cutdown/severely trimmed back many trees and shrubs giving a totally different feel to many of my local haunts. A quick circuit of the usual 'Hotspots' was disappointing in several places with no butterflies at all. Thankfully there were a few butterflies around but only 3 species seen in total. Speckled Wood were the more numerous as well as a couple of Comma on the local Blackberries and a single large White. Highlight of my day came in the shape of a Comma pupa. I think this is the first time I have ever found an unhatched pupa in the wild 😊 Hopefully it should be out within the next couple of weeks. It should be easy enough to keep tabs on it



Speckled Woods 27.9.2015 Hedge End





Comma 27.9.2015 Hedge End



Highlight of the day a wild Comma pupa



Re: jackz432r

by millerd, 29-Sep-15 08:09 AM GMT

That's a good find – coming across pupae of any kind in the wild is really tricky 😊🍷

Dave

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 01-Oct-15 05:55 AM GMT

It's all gone quiet round here too Paul 😊 Cracking GVW a few posts back and a great pupal find 😊
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 05-Oct-15 06:41 AM GMT

Hi Dave & Wurzel thanks for the comments 😊

A quick round up of whats going on In The Garden

I have to assume that the Holly Blue larva that hatched after being laid on Hebe has sadly perished as I can find no trace at all 😞

The Small White larvae must now be close to pupation and I have now found at least one more larva on a second Garlic Mustard plant In the garden 😊
I have not managed to locate any Speckled Wood larvae but they must be there as there is increasing feeding damage.



Small White larva in the garden 30.9.2015

Saturday 3.10.2015 Knowle Village/Aytesbury Copse

A quick visit to one of my favourite local butterfly spots where I saw just 5 species. Despite the season feeling like it is rapidly fading away, Small White numbers actually seem to be increasing here 😊 Of the 16 seen in an hour and a half, most were males. I counted 3 Commas enjoying the Blackberries including one very fresh example.



Just a few Commas seen mostly enjoying the Blackberries 3.10.2015



A solitary Speckled Wood caught my eye. I spent a lot of time last year looking for variation in this species without finding any. This one although quite faded seemed to have very indistinct markings and only a hint of hindwing eyespots. I wonder could this be *ab. saturator*? My day was rounded off with a single Red Admiral 😊



*Unusually marked Speckled Wood. Is this *ab. saturator*?*



Small White numbers seem to be increasing



Sunday 4.10.2015 Southampton

Another hopeful inspection of my area of Everlasting Pea was disappointing. There was a good amount of sunshine but it was quite windy near the water and in fact I recorded no butterflies at all here. I was still seeing butterflies up until the middle of December last year, but at the moment it feels like I would be lucky to be seeing any by the end of October this year 😞

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 06-Oct-15 03:18 AM GMT

Hi! Paul, love the Comma upside down on the Berries 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Allan.W., 06-Oct-15 04:38 AM GMT

Hi Jack.

That Speckled wood was a good find ,and as you suggest it is very like,Ab;Saturator I was lucky enough to find one similar to yours back in September(page 1,Sept; sightings) you could also check it out on the Cockayne website. Nice one ! Regards Allan.W.

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 15-Oct-15 07:42 AM GMT

Hi Goldie & Allan

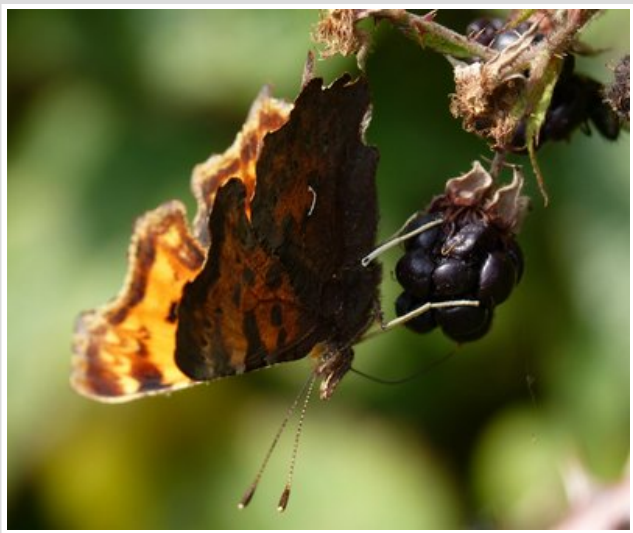
Thanks for your comments 😊

Sunday 11.10.2015 Hedge End

I managed to completely misjudge the weather this weekend 😞 I set off on Saturday (expecting it to be the better day based on the forecast) looking for Clouded Yellows along the Gosport Coast. When I arrived it was cool (barely 14 degrees), overcast and windy and I saw no butterflies at all 😞 I returned home disheartened and hoping that Sunday was not warm and sunny 😞 Of course Sunday was in fact very warm and sunny 😊 After the normal Sunday football run with my eldest son there was not enough time left for a productive trip to the Seaside so I made do with a quick look around close to home.



Plenty of Commas around





Lots of Commas were found feasting on Blackberry juice in several of the usual spots. It always amazes me how well camouflaged they are when supping Blackberry juice even with open wings, but maybe that's my colourblindness 🤔 I have to stand in front of a Bramble bush for ages initially seeing none when maybe there are actually half a dozen or so before my eyes. The Comma pupa I found recently has now gone, the nettle stem trampled and just the tip of the pupa still attached to its leaf. Whether it had emerged or just been trampled I don't know, but there were several Commas close by. However, I managed to find another Comma pupa in a completely different area. This one is on wild Hop, but it does not look quite so healthy.



Another wild Comma Pupa. This one on wild Hop but looking rather unhealthy



This assembly of Shield Bugs were also tucking in to the local Blackberries



I am not very good on Grasshoppers/Crickets but I guess this is male and female located a leaf or two away from each other



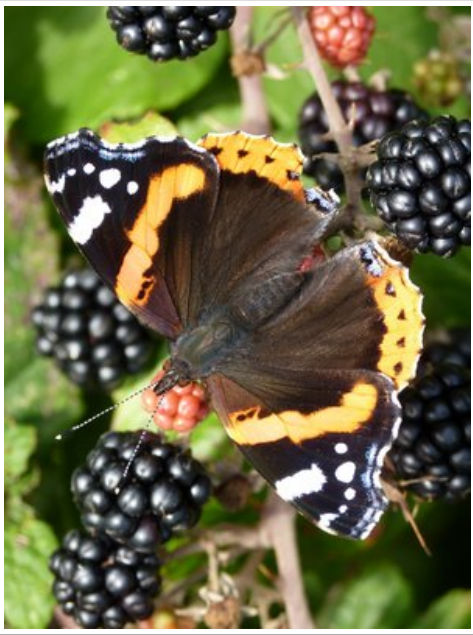
Several Speckled Wood were seen as well as what looked like a female Brimstone in the distance. The Blackberries/Brambles were also proving very popular today with other insects. Red Admirals were conspicuous by their complete absence, until I decided to call it a day and then spotted one engorged in Blackberries. It was totally oblivious to me taking pictures from every possible angle and trying all tricks to get it to open its wings.



Speckled Wood



Just one Red Admiral seen



I have heard we we are in for a harsh winter for a change (something to do with there being lots of nuts around apparently 😊). A few more weeks of butterflies first though, please 😊

Re: jackz432r

by trevor, 16-Oct-15 02:55 AM GMT

SUPERB COMMAS & RA 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 17-Oct-15 06:24 AM GMT

Cracking Red Admiral shots Paul and that was a great aberrant Specklie previously 🍷 A harsh winter could be good for our butterflies, so long as it's followed by a decent spring and summer for once 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 18-Oct-15 06:47 PM GMT

Love the Red Admiral's on the Berries Paul, your shots are great for this time of year , very Autumnal . Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 19-Oct-15 07:46 AM GMT

Hi Trevor, Wurzel & Goldie
Thanks for your comments 😊😊😊

Today the conditions were right on the cusp of butterfly activity here. I made three passes of my closest Bramble patch without seeing any butterflies at all 😞 On the fourth pass the sun came out briefly and all of a sudden there were 5 Commas and a Speckled Wood 😊 Similarly in another location nothing to begin with and then the moment the sun appeared there were 3 Commas and a Red Admiral on the Ivy 😊



Comma 18.10.2015 Hedge End



Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 19-Oct-15 10:24 PM GMT

Nice Comma Paul ,Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 27-Oct-15 07:43 AM GMT

Thanks Goldie 😊

Sunday 25.10.2015 Knowle Village/Aytesbury Copse

I thought about visiting Beeding Cement Works today but I had not allowed for the change of clocks 😞 By the time I got out after returning from my boys football match I had already missed the best of the day. There were still a few butterflies around at one of my local spots but not making it into double figures today. 3 Red Admirals, a couple each of Comma and Small White and a single Speckled Wood was my tally for the day.



There were 2 Red Admirals fluttering around in this sheltered spot



At least 2 male Small Whites flying continuously back and forth over the track. This one eventually settled, making the most of a late Bramble flower



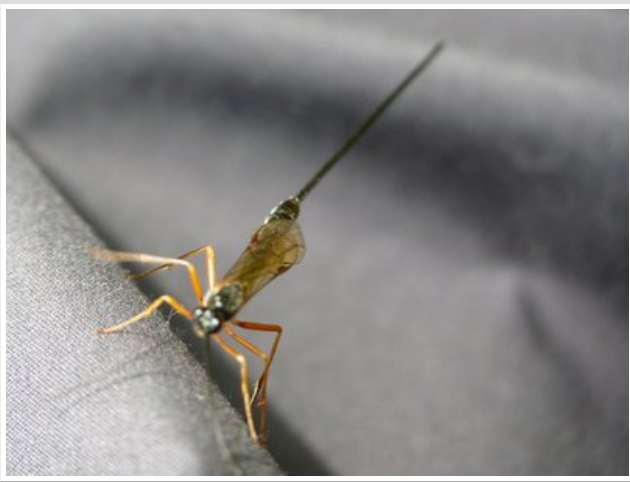
Just a couple of Commas taking turns on this small clump of Ivy



This young Deer kept me company for a while



This large parasitic Ichneumon wasp caught my attention when it landed on me! Is it Dolichomitus imperator ?



Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 27-Oct-15 10:34 PM GMT

Love the Deer shot, I'd definitely try that cement works if I lived down there, you can't miss out on the lovely Butterfly, 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 28-Oct-15 02:58 AM GMT

Well Paul even if you did miss out on the LTB those Comma shots offer some compensation as they're great 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 28-Oct-15 03:48 AM GMT

Well done, Jack, particularly with the Small White. I've certainly never seen one so late in the year.

Re: jackz432r

by Katrina, 28-Oct-15 05:20 AM GMT

Gorgeous Comma photos.

Re: jackz432r

by Butterfliesaurus rex, 28-Oct-15 05:47 AM GMT

Yep you can certainly put a nice full stop after those splendid Commas Jack. Really nice Red Admirals earlier on as well. 😊

ATB

James

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 02-Nov-15 02:23 AM GMT

Thanks all for your comments 😊

Not much to report on this week, as the season dwindles away. I used up every brownie point I had left yesterday on a fruitless search for Long Tailed Blues in Sussex. I had a choice of sites and unfortunately did not pick the one that came up trumps 😞😞 That's the luck of the draw I suppose. At least I now know where to look next year 😊



Everlasting Pea at Southwick Dock Basin

Beeding Cement works came up with more butterflyers than butterflies 😞 Just one Comma and a distant Red Admiral. At Southwick Dock Basin just down the road it was completely devoid of people and butterflies. Just a couple of Silver Y moths was all I could find amongst the remains of the Everlasting Pea.



Small White larva looking rather damp this morning



By lunch time he was looking slightly less wet



This morning after a heavy dew and mist the Small White larva in my garden was looking rather damp. By the time I returned from football it dried out a little. I lost track of the larvae that resulted from eggs laid at the end of August. This one is the result of several eggs laid around 10.9.2015 and appears to be the only survivor of this batch. It looks to be in its final instar so should not be too long before pupation.

Hopefully there will be a few more butterflies before the winter sets in 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 02-Nov-15 07:16 AM GMT

Sorry you didn't get lucky with the LTB Paul 😞 Great shots of the larvae, especially the penultimate one 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 02-Nov-15 11:35 PM GMT

Sorry Jack better luck next year Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 08-Nov-15 08:25 PM GMT

Hi Goldie & Wurzel Thanks for your comments 😊

This butterfly year has been my busiest yet. Reluctantly, I have had to leave certain things out of my diary so I don't get too far behind. This is a bit annoying as I try to use this as a proper 'diary' and I like things to be in the right order and as well as current.

I always remain hopeful of some butterfly activity over the winter, but things seem to have dwindled away around here. So in the meantime I thought I would start posting a few bits that did not quite make the cut during the year.

My year started with Speckled Wood and Red Admiral early stages:

Speckled Wood Winter 2014/2015

As I have mentioned previously Speckled Wood seem to be quite at home in my garden. I have found early stages every year recently. Back in October 2014 I found 3 final Instar Speckled Wood larvae in the garden. As you will know this species can overwinter in different stages. I have reared this species several times in the past, during the winter of 2013/2014 they spent the winter as larvae. I was pleased that on this occasion all three larvae

pupated within a few days of each other between 26th October and 1st November and spent the winter as pupae. These were kept outside for the duration of the winter and started to show the first signs of change in April.



One of 3 Speckled Wood larva in the garden 20.10.2014



Speckled Wood pupa 21.2.2015



First signs of colour appearing 16.4.2015

I seem to have been rather unlucky when it comes to seeing the actual moment of emergence of butterflies I have reared recently, and this occasion would be no different. Only two of the three pupae survived to produce an adult. Although initially one of the remaining pupa seemed to be a few days ahead in development they both emerged within a few hours of each other on the morning of 21.4.2015, after 172 days as pupae. I had prewarned my wife they might emerge that day and asked her to keep an eye on them. I rang from work to ask if there was any sign to which she initially said no (I don't think she had actually looked! 😊), her tone then changed to one of surprise and she announced that there were two butterflies sitting on the edge of the pot. She thankfully took a few pics with her phone. By the time I returned from work they were long gone.



Speckled Wood pupa 3 days before emergence 18.4.2015



Speckled Wood pupa the morning of emergence 21.4.2015



A pair of freshly emerged Speckled Wood captured on my wifes Iphone 21.4.2015. Curiously they are huddled together although their pupa were a few inches away from each other!



I am pleased to say that there are currently Speckled Wood larvae in the garden again, but this time I have left them to their own devices. They obviously don't need any help from me 😊 (next instalment winter Red Admiral larvae)

Re: jackz432r

by bugboy, 08-Nov-15 11:26 PM GMT

Great stuff Jack 😊. One of the joys of this hobby is the eternal fascination with the whole metamorphosis process.

Re: jackz432r

by Gary.N, 08-Nov-15 11:59 PM GMT

Great Speckled Wood piece 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 09-Nov-15 06:20 AM GMT

Cracking shots of the various stages Paul 😊 Those final shots from the phone are pretty smart too – which version of the iPhone were they taken with?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 10-Nov-15 12:10 AM GMT

I had lots of Speckled Woods in my Garden this year Paul, so may be if I look out for them in April I may get to see some results from their visits, your shots are great Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 10-Nov-15 02:25 AM GMT

This species has one of the most beautiful pupae of all.

Interesting too to see the pair of them interacting with one another so soon after emergence.

Re: jackz432r

by Neil Freeman, 10-Nov-15 04:30 AM GMT

A fantastic report on your Speckled Woods Jack 😊

This is one of my favourite species and you have probably seen in my diary that I have a small resident population of Specklies in my garden which I take a great interest in. I have seen females egg laying a number of times but usually leave them to their own devices, not really having the facilities to rear them through. I have found eggs and caterpillars but have never yet found a pupa although they must be there somewhere for the population to continue.

As you say this species can overwinter as a larva or pupa, a fascinating survival strategy that leads to a succession of overlapping broods which in my garden means I usually see them on the wing from early April until mid October with maybe a short gap sometime in June.

Great Stuff,

Neil.

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 20-Nov-15 07:17 PM GMT

Hi All Thanks for the comments 😊

Red Admiral Larvae Winter 2014/2015

Back in November 2014 I was lucky enough to observe two female Red Admirals laying eggs locally on one of the last summery days of the year. I was curious by what mechanisms, if at all, the early stages of this species could survive the winter. So I decided to retain one of these eggs to rear through. I returned home surprised to find that I had in fact unknowingly brought 2 eggs home. I am sure they were probably both laid that day. I decided to keep one outside (L2) and one in a slightly more protected surroundings, as a sort of control (L1). I will focus on L2 which had perhaps the more interesting development:



My Red Admiral hotspot



One of 2 Red Admirals busy laying eggs 1.11.2014



L1 1st instar larva moments after hatching 15.11.2014



(sorry not the best image) L2 1st instar larva in the pre-moult stage attached to the remains of the leaf on which it spent all of January, the coldest part of the winter. It remained in this state for a further 2 weeks 25.1.2015



L2 2nd instar larva 1.3.2015

This egg was laid on/about the 1.11.2014. After 20 days it was evident under a magnifying glass that the larva appeared to be fully formed within the egg, finally hatching 27.11.2014. The L2 first instar larva made a home between the ridges on the underside of a nettle leaf with quite a dense silk pad. By the end of December it had not progressed any further than its 1st instar. On the 19.1.2015 I had recorded -3 degrees at 9.30pm and noted that the larva had taken on typical pre-moult appearance. This was the coldest part of the winter and by the end of January it still had not moulted. At this stage I was convinced that this larva would not survive the winter. It was not until the 11.2.2015 that L2 was found freshly moulted, having spent a remarkable 76 days in the 1st instar enduring the coldest of the winter and still only measuring 3mm in length. Similarly, 2nd instar took a further 51 days to complete.

Daytime temps had increased significantly by the beginning of April and accordingly development of L2 speeded up noticeably. 3rd, 4th & 5th instar all with a duration of 13 days each. On 9.5.2015 I was surprised to find L2 was showing signs of moulting again. On 11.5.2015 L2 became a 6th instar larva. This larva suspended itself for pupation on 26.5.2015, but unfortunately this final moult did not complete successfully and after nearly seven months this larva had failed to survive. Whether this was due in some way to the prolonged development or possibly I kept conditions too cool in the later stages.



L2 5th instar larva surprisingly in the pre-moult phase again 9.5.2015



L2 larva freshly moulted into 6th instar 11.5.2015



L2 6th instar larva 3 days before pupation 24.5.2015

L1 was reared in less cold conditions with less temperature variation. Whereas L2 endured the coldest part of the winter in the 1st & 2nd instar L1 spent this time in the pupal stage. L1 pupated on 24.1.2015 and spent 50 days at this stage. By the 11.3.2015 there were definite signs of colour on the developing pupa. On 13.3.2015 there seemed to be signs of emergence, but unfortunately the emergence failed.



L1 Pupa shortly before failed emergence 16.3.2015

Ultimately, without a successful outcome for either of these larvae, it is difficult to draw any conclusions. However, the young larvae can certainly withstand low temps and survive for long periods in a semi dormant state.

In late January 2014 I returned to the location where these eggs were originally laid to spend some time looking for Red Admiral larvae. There was barely any green Nettle growth at all, just a few shrivelled and withered leaves. Unsurprisingly, I did not find any larvae and think it highly unlikely that any would have survived at this location. Given the opportunity I will certainly like to rear this species during the winter again with better preparation and hopefully a better outcome.

I spotted my first adult Red Admiral of the year on 30.3.2015 at the same location, a rather tattered individual which had probably survived the winter as an adult.

L1 & L2 development overview *(L1 1st & 2nd instar duration is combined)

L1

Ovum 15 days
 1st Instar *
 2nd Instar 18 days
 3rd Instar 14 days
 4th Instar 13 days
 5th Instar 25 days
 6th Instar none
 Ovum-Pupa 135 days
 Pupa 50 days

L2

Ovum 27 days
 1st Instar 76 days
 2nd Instar 51 days
 3rd Instar 13 days
 4th Instar 13 days
 5th Instar 13 days
 6th Instar 16 days
 Ovum-Pupa 209 days

Re: jackz432r

by Vince Massimo, 21-Nov-15 12:13 AM GMT

Excellent observations and reporting Paul 😊. It certainly makes very interesting reading and validates the reports of larvae regularly surviving the winter on sheltered sites on the south coast. viewtopic.php?f=110&t=8143#p94263 viewtopic.php?f=110&t=8295#p98371

It is particularly helpful to me at the moment because I am monitoring a Red Admiral larva, which I have kept in a sheltered location since it hatched. This is more for the benefit of the young plant, which was being battered by the storms and would not survive the coming frost.

Egg laid on 9th October 2015

Egg hatched on 6th November (after 28 days)

1st instar 12 days

2nd instar presently.

I will be writing an article on the subject in due course and would like to include your data please 😊

Vince

Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 21-Nov-15 02:59 AM GMT

Excellent report, Paul – I especially appreciate the data!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 21-Nov-15 06:06 AM GMT

Really interesting report Paul, as you've evidence the larva can make it though the extreme cold temperatures – perhaps if it hadn't of been as cold for so long it might have made it through? You're certainly becoming a dab hand at rearing now – I have a couple of moth pupae – should I be putting them outside? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 23-Nov-15 08:10 AM GMT

Hi Vince, Pete & Wurzel

Thanks all for your comments 😊 Vince I have sent you a PM. Wurzel I think you should certainly keep your moth pupae in an environment as close to where they would be naturally 😊

I had not seen a butterfly since 1st November. However, yesterday whilst at the hairdressers there was a Red Admiral fluttering around outside the window 😊 I could see it in the mirror and out of the corner of my eye. I think my hairdresser thought I had developed a nervous twitch 😊 as I kept moving my head to get a better view. Luckily I did not end up with any bald patches 😊 This was between 2.30 and 3.00pm, sunny but cold and windy. Unfortunately it had disappeared by the time I left the salon 😊

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 24-Nov-15 05:49 AM GMT

Some fantastic larval shots there, Paul, and how unfortunate were you to have seen an abnormally late butterfly when you were in no position to go and investigate? 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 30-Nov-15 05:49 AM GMT

Following on from the theme of things I missed out during the year this takes me back to the end of May:

Saturday 30.5.2015 Thundry Meadows, Surrey

I do nearly all of my butterfly watching within Hampshire. This was one of my rare excursions outside of my home county. My wife had taken me away for the weekend as a surprise 😊. It was such a surprise I did not get to do any forward planning. On the Saturday I was told I had the day to go and find some butterflies so I drove off *blind* without a map and stopped at the first likely looking spot 😊



Male Brimstone



female Orange Tip

That likely spot was Thundry Meadow, a small SSSI managed by Surrey wildlife trust containing a variety of different habitats beside the river Wey. One interesting fact that I learnt here was that mature Alder trees are something of a rarity in Surrey. This is such a contrast to my home turf where Alder is one of the commonest trees. The site is also specifically managed for Adders amongst other things, But I did not see one.



Ragged Small Tortoiseshell



One of many Mayflies

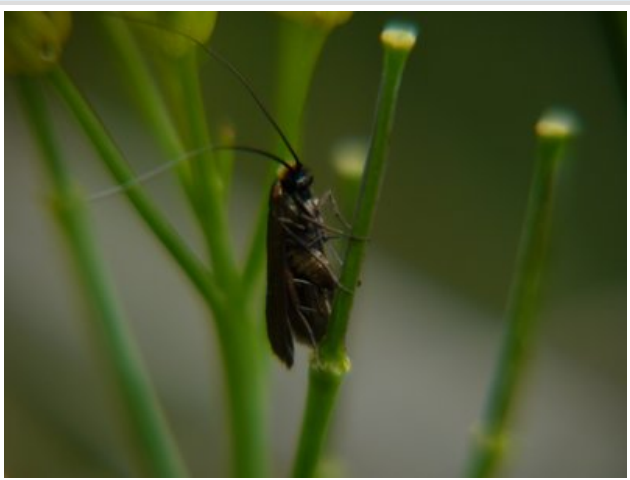


The Peacocks all looked a bit tired

The weather was just about ok, a bit windy but mostly sunny with a chance of rain. Things were a bit slow to start. A few whites, orange tips, Brimstone, Peacock and a single Red Admiral but everything seemed to be looking a bit tired and worn out, the last throws of spring perhaps. One poor Small Tortoiseshell looked particularly ragged, but still had bundles of energy. Being a wet site there was plenty of Cuckoo Flower and Orange tips around, adults as well as a few larvae. Whilst taking some photos of Orange Tip larvae I managed to capture a micromoth of some sort which appeared to be egg-laying on the same Cuckoo Flower. There were also plenty of Mayflies around



Orange Tip larvae large and small



This micromoth appears to be egg-laying on the same Cuckoo Flower plant as the Orange Tips

I thought I had exhausted the whole site and was on the point of leaving until I realised there was more to see. Through a gate and small wooded area I emerged into habitat which reminded me of the New Forest. By now it was a bit more sunny and the wind had died away somewhat. Peacocks, Orange Tips and Brimstones were all enjoying this more sheltered area. I then spotted a something silvery Grey. I was surprised to find a pristine Brown Argus, my first of the year. Another Brown Argus flying together with a single fresh male Common Blue completed my species list for the day.



My first Brown Argus of the year



A pristine male Common Blue to round off the day

This was a pleasantly relaxing few hours in unfamiliar territory. I met several people here, some of which had come from quite distance. One lady had come all the way from Switzerland! Looks like I happened upon a nice little spot 😊

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 03-Dec-15 02:40 AM GMT

That Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell look ready for their free bus passes! You did well to spot these species on the eve of June!

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 06-Dec-15 07:00 AM GMT

Looks like you discovered a real gem of a site there Paul 😊 and that is a cracking shot of the Brimstone 🇬🇧

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 14-Dec-15 07:07 AM GMT

Thanks David & Wurzel for your comments 😊 😊

I fear that there will not be much more from me in the form of retrospective or missed posts. Whilst UKB was resolving its technical issues, I appear to have simultaneously had some of my own 😞. All of my data, including all of my photos from early 2015 to date seem to have been deleted sometime between Thursday and Saturday 😞. Embarrassingly, none of this years pics were backed up 😞. I am not sure if I have a virus but everything has gone, including my desktop. This all occurred immediately after a windows update.

This is the second time I have had a similar problem. My brother is my IT brains, but I think this time the situation is beyond even his help 🙄 🙄

Re: jackz432r

by peterc, 14-Dec-15 03:41 PM GMT

I am very sorry to hear about problems with your desktop and all those missing photos, Paul.

Were you updating (or upgrading) to Windows 10? I have Windows 8.1 and am contemplating upgrading but I am holding back for now as I've read that there are some issues with it.

ATB

Peter

Re: jackz432r

by trevor, 14-Dec-15 04:16 PM GMT

Hi Paul,

Being a fairly newcomer to the high tech age, I don't put too much trust in it's capabilities. As some sort of safeguard I always keep my camera memory cards, and buy a new one when the previous one is full. Hope you didn't lose many treasured images.

All the best,
Trevor.

,

Re: jackz432r

by Vince Massimo, 14-Dec-15 09:04 PM GMT

Sorry to hear about your problem Paul. You can of course copy any of the images you have previously loaded onto the website and store them, but they will only be at the (lower) resolution that you used.

Vince

Re: jackz432r

by MikeOxon, 14-Dec-15 11:46 PM GMT

"jackz432r" wrote:

All of my data, including all of my photos from early 2015 to date seem to have been deleted sometime between Thursday and Saturday

First rule, in this situation, is not to panic – the data may well be there, somewhere, lurking on the hard disk. You mentioned a Windows update and this process usually copies files to another location, while it works. The very first thing to try is to use the 'search' function in Windows Explorer to search the whole of your drive for a file name that you remember – it might turn up in a strange place and lead you to other files. In my experience, although people often jump to the conclusion "it's a virus", it rarely is.

There are many other possibilities: The free version of [url=http://www.z-a-recovery.com/tutorials/digital-image-recovery.aspx:3rvoxc]Zero Assumption Recovery[/url:3rvoxc] can recover files even after they have been deleted (or even after a memory card has been accidentally formatted), providing the images have not been over-written by later 'saves'.

Finally, if all else fails, you can try removing the hard disk and connecting it to the USB port of another computer, to search its contents from there. Sometimes, an update can create a new drive letter, to act as a temporary storage area. I realise this last step needs some computer knowledge and I normally only try it, if the original computer is totally 'dead'.

Mike

Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 15-Dec-15 04:52 AM GMT

"jackz432r" wrote:

Thanks David & Wurzel for your comments 😊😊

I fear that there will not be much more from me in the form of retrospective or missed posts. Whilst UKB was resolving its technical issues, I appear to have simultaneously had some of my own 😞. All of my data, including all of my photos from early 2015 to date seem to have been deleted sometime between Thursday and Saturday 😞 Embarrassingly, none of this years pics were backed up 😞 I am not sure if I have a virus but everything has gone, including my desktop. This all occurred immediately after a windows update.

This is the second time I have had a similar problem. My brother is my IT brains, but I think this time the situation is beyond even his help 😞😞

Oh crap. Sorry to hear this, Paul. I've had this happen to me once and figured that this is all it takes before you put serious thought into backups (I had a hard disk drive fail). I now backup to a NAS drive and the Cloud for every image I ever take. But it was a hard lesson to learn.

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 15-Dec-15 04:55 AM GMT

"MikeOxon" wrote:

First rule, in this situation, is not to panic – the data may well be there, somewhere, lurking on the hard disk.

Good point, Mike. After a trip to Bulgaria, one of my Sandisk disks refused to be read. I paid £60 to get this sorted, but I recovered a couple of dozen Mazarine Blue shots that were, to me, irreplaceable.

It might be worth getting someone to examine your drive since the operating system update shouldn't have touched your data.

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: jackz432r

by Neil Freeman, 16-Dec-15 04:19 AM GMT

Sorry to hear of your computer problems Paul.

I am no IT expert but it was explained to me once that deleting stuff on a computer doesn't really get rid of it as such but overwrites that bit of disc space and makes it available for use again. Think of it as building up layers like the skin of an onion with the old layers still there underneath. Someone who knows what they are doing should be able to retrieve the data/photos for you.

It is the same reason that police investigators often take away computers and are able to retrieve evidence even after it has apparently been deleted.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 16-Dec-15 07:36 AM GMT

Thanks all for your advice and concern 😊

"Pete Eeles" wrote:

Oh crap.

Yes that pretty much sums up the situation Pete

peterc. My problems followed an automatic update for Windows 7.

That sounds like a sensible idea to me Trevor. I currently keep my camera memory cards empty which, with hindsight, is perhaps a bit stupid of me.

Thanks for the advice Mike. I am not generally one to panic, at the end of the day if the images are lost I will just have to grin and bear it. I will certainly investigate every possibility, but I am not very hopeful.

The most annoying thing is that my brother has been telling me for the last few years that I should keep a backup or ideally 2 backups in different formats to avoid this happening. He has been able to help me through minor hiccups which have perhaps been a warning. He even bought me an external harddrive to use for the purpose (that still sits in the box unused 😞) I suppose that is what is called 'learning the hard way'

Re: jackz432r

by MikeOxon, 16-Dec-15 05:18 PM GMT

I'm sorry that you have found out the hard way but, yes, backups are a great idea!

I use a cheap NAS enclosure (<http://www.amazon.co.uk/D-Link-ShareCenter-Network-Storage-Enclosure/dp/B008HNRD41/>) with two large-capacity hard drives, one of which is set up to back-up the other at the same time each day. I also make reduced-size copies (1024x768) of all my photos that can be stored easily 'in the cloud' and are adequate for 'on screen' viewing anywhere that I have a web connection.

Here's a picture to hang on your wall above the computer:



Mike

Re: jackz432r

by Padfield, 17-Dec-15 01:02 AM GMT

I've very often had to recover data from crashed computers, my own and others'. In the short term at least, it's all there – which is why, when I eventually get rid of machines, I take out the hard drive and destroy it physically.

"MikeOxon" wrote:

The very first thing to try is to use the 'search' function in Windows Explorer to search the whole of your drive for a file name that you remember – it might turn up in a strange place and lead you to other files.

If you're lucky enough for this to be the case, the file explorer will not record any space having been freed up after the update. If you've really lost (i.e., the computer registers as having been deleted) a significant number of pictures, videos and other data-hungry file formats, you should notice a big leap in the amount of free space (if you were aware of how much you had before).

I often search for merely 'misplaced' files by file extension (.img or whatever)

"MikeOxon" wrote:

The free version of [[url=http://www.z-a-recovery.com/tutorials/digital-image-recovery.aspx:1mawa3g7](http://www.z-a-recovery.com/tutorials/digital-image-recovery.aspx:1mawa3g7)]Zero Assumption Recovery[/[url:1mawa3g7](http://www.z-a-recovery.com/tutorials/digital-image-recovery.aspx:1mawa3g7)] can recover files even after they have been deleted (or even after a memory card has been accidentally formatted), providing the images have not been over-written by later 'saves'.

If you have to go down this line or something similar, the sooner the better. Space registered as free will be used, both for storage and for the running of the computer, and over time your precious image data will be corrupted.

Good luck!

Guy

Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 17-Dec-15 01:07 AM GMT

"MikeOxon" wrote:

I also make reduced-size copies (1024x768) of all my photos that can be stored easily 'in the cloud' and are adequate for 'on screen' viewing anywhere that I have a web connection.

Hi Mike – since I think this thread is relevant to every visitor of this website! ... why don't you backup your full-size images? I use Carbonite for this and, thankfully, have never needed to use it to recover – but I do look at what it's storing every now and again and it's definitely worth it! Crashplan provide a similar offering. Whatever, you choose, I highly recommend it – my backup is a NAS drive that is sat 3 inches from my computer. If someone were to break in, they'd probably take both 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: jackz432r

by MikeOxon, 17-Dec-15 04:43 AM GMT

"Pete Eeles" wrote:

why don't you backup your full-size images?

Just me being old-fashioned and used to slower internet links! I only tend to look at my pics on-screen anyway, and sub-200kB images are very quick and easy to handle. The only precious pics, like the early years of our son, are on several DVDs scattered around the family 😊

Mike

PS re. the original post – don't forget to look in the recycle bin !!!

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 19-Dec-15 06:08 AM GMT

Sorry to hear of your loss – good luck with the retrieval 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel