

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 01-Jan-15 06:07 PM GMT



Happy 2015!

I hope this year will be the one which finally sees me seeing a Heath Frit and I wish everyone else every success with their targets for 2015! 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 02-Jan-15 03:12 AM GMT

Hope you get to see the Heaths, they're on my 2015 list as well. Looking forward to seeing more of your pics as the season goes by!

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 02-Jan-15 05:11 AM GMT

Haddon Hill or Blean Woods, surely?

The good thing about this species is if you visit a site where it is resident, you should see quite a few of them.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 04-Jan-15 12:17 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 - I'll dig our my grid references for Lulworths and Marshies for you 😊

Cheers David 😊 As you say 'one or the other' - it's just working out which one is easier to get to...

With this Lost Post I got as close as I could to posting it...but then I went to Bentley Wood and Collard Hill...so those sightings took precedence...

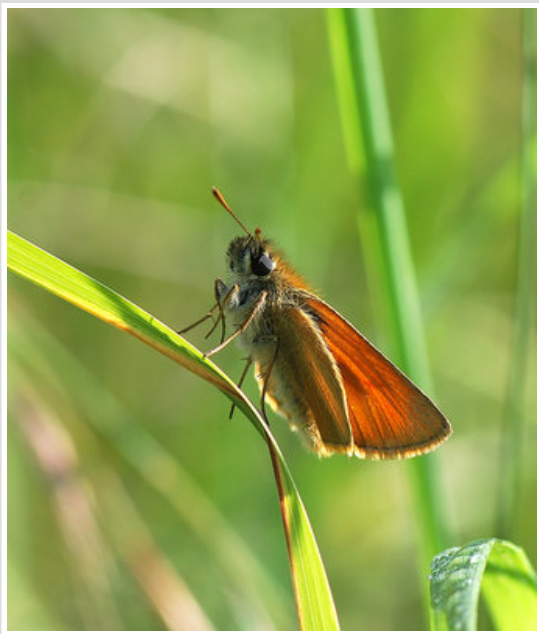
20-06-2014 Woodhenge

The day before the Solstice but there were only a few more cars in the car park and a few more "good mornings" as I made my way to the longer grass

side of the field. Again the Browns dominated with even more Ringlets and Marbled Whites this morning and now possibly outnumbering the Meadow Browns 2 to 1. The Knapweed has started to show through and it is acting like a magnet for the Marbs. If I wanted to find them this morning I just had to stalk towards the purple plants and there they would be.



Also here this morning were a couple of Small Skippers slightly slowed down by the cooler morning temperatures though they still do the annoying thing of flying towards you and then disappearing as you struggle to turn quick enough to follow them. Eventually they'd decided that they'd given me the run around enough and so I peeled off a few of shots.



After a few more 'mornings' to various Travellers exercising their dogs I headed onto work, the Solstice is tomorrow so come Monday only the real stalwarts will still be here and things will be back to normal. Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Jan-15 07:13 AM GMT

Larkhill 26-06-2014

This became a Lost Post as there was just so much going on at the time and also because it didn't quite get the shot I was trying for. It was back at the tail end of June and we had a few days of cloudier weather so I was hoping to catch some of the roosting Marbled Whites with the dew still bedecking them. Once on site it became apparent that whilst it as cloudier then usual it was still just as warm and hence the dew was long gone.

I then started hunting round for individuals that were in a particular pose. Over the years I've noticed that Marbled Whites will climb the grass stems pirate fashion in the early morning as they seek out the sun to warm up. Then when they've reached an appropriate height they sometimes hold their wings open as they start to bask. I was hoping to witness this again and get some shots of the finale of the action as it should be possible to get a of both under wings at once whilst the grass stem it clutches at highlights the mid line.

I walked the path watching Marbled Whites fluttering by and luckily one or two individuals did start climbing the grasses, foot over foot but I couldn't find them with just a single central stem.





*One stem too many*



*Almost...*



*Best I could get*

Still it was fun trying for a particular shot rather than the usual 'see what's about' approach and there's always next year 😊.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 06-Jan-15 07:38 AM GMT

That last image in particular is a stunner, Wurzel.

**Re: Wurzel**

by kevlng, 06-Jan-15 08:11 PM GMT

Wurzel,

Love the Marbled White photos. My favourite is actually the one on two stems. It kinda looks like a circus insect on stilts.

Regards Kev

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 07-Jan-15 04:25 AM GMT

Great Marbled Whites Wurzel. I totally agree about trying for some different shots, something I have had a bit of a go at myself and hopefully will get more chances this year.

Cheers,

Neil

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 07-Jan-15 06:09 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

No doubt, the best Marbled White underside shots i've ever seen, gorgeous. 🤩👍 .  
TREVOR.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 07-Jan-15 09:11 PM GMT

Happy New Year Wurzel, love your Marble White shots, the MW's are great to photograph and when captured like yours are they look unreal, great shots, I'll take a leaf out of your book for next year and concentrate more on position I think, that's if they stay still long enough 😊

I go down to my daughter's in Kent every year usually the last week in June the 1st week in July and East Blean Woods has been the place to go, last year I didn't get down there until the 12th of July, I still managed some shots but I was lucky as I only saw a couple of Heath Frit's the car park is usually full of them.

My daughter lives near Blean Woods but not near to where the HF's are usually found in abundance, your best bet to see them if you decide to go there is to go to towards Hern Bay, if you need any more directions I'll be glad to help Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 10-Jan-15 06:38 AM GMT

Cheers David for your kind comment 😊

Cheers Kev 😊 Now you've mentioned it I can't get it out of my head that it is a stilt walker 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I liked your PBF from the Species – perhaps as well as stained glass, in cop, on poo I should also start a 'double winged' collection 😊

Cheers Trevor you're to kind 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Thanks for the info I might tap you up for some more later in the year if I can wangle a trip for Heaths – got to earn the Brownie points first 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 10-Jan-15 07:30 AM GMT

Larkhill 10-07-2014

This was one of those Lost Posts which came about during my usual daily routine of stopping off here or there before work and heading out during the break time. It entered the vaults of Lost Post-dom as nothing really stood out as at the time there were plenty of species emerging and most of what I saw I had documented previously. However now in the dark and cold days of winter a quick revisit to that day seems much more rewarding and holds my interest more as the contempt of familiarity has faded.

During my morning stop-off it seemed quite quiet with fewer browns flying around and some of the Blues looking slightly worn. Remembering back now I really miss those morning stop-offs, the morning sun warming my back and the 5 minutes of tranquillity were like my morning meditation.



As it was a Thursday it meant swapping my afternoon stop-off for taking my camera out and around with me whilst I was on Duty. I'd completed the first half of my route checking all the usual stop-offs for smokers with no joy so I moved on towards the garages behind the school. To get there I cut through the back gate and wandered along the footpath. On the way a few butterflies appeared to brighten the walk. First was a Small Tort feeding half way up someone's drive way and then slightly further on a Meadow Brown





Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 10-Jan-15 05:29 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Love that shot of the Small Tortoiseshell, beautifully simple, colour just right and an uncluttered background.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 10-Jan-15 08:38 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I love the insect in the flower, the colour of the flower brings back thoughts of things to come this year Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 12-Jan-15 02:58 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor - I was cuffed with that shot, especially as I'd forgotten about it until recently 😊😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 Not long now although in mid January it always seems toooooo long! 😊

I've just started my Tally 2014 so I need to crack on and get my Lost Posts posted...there are still a couple left though...

This became a Lost Post because at the time I was rushing to and from work stopping off whenever I could as I was awaiting the emergence of the first Chalkhills. I could have gone to any number of other sites but I set my mind to finding them at The Devenish and so I finally saw my first Chalkhills of 2014 a week after this visit. It is one of the very few Lost Posts that I struggled to remember as usually my memory is really good, and if not there may be some supporting notes hastily typed at the time. However for this visit there was nothing and so I had to trawl through my memory until eventually it started to come back to me...

Stop-offs - 11-07-2014

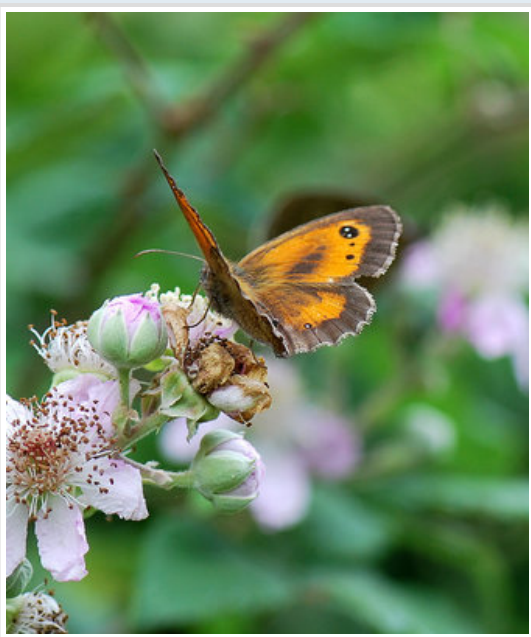
Larkhill

It was a cracking bright morning and perfect conditions for a stop-off so I pulled into the car park and set to wandering the Northbound path. The small patch of flowers about half way up was the best spot so I settled there to watch the Hedge Browns. A couple of the males stood out in particular, one because it looked slightly unusual and the other because it appeared so bright and vibrant. The aberrant had greatly reduced pupils of the left hand forewing and the right hand forewing had only one pupil.





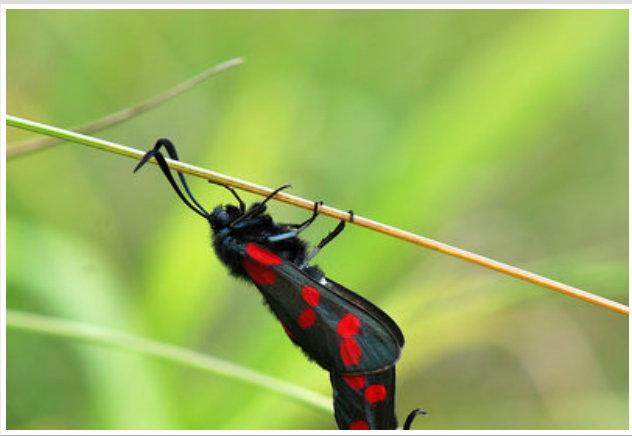
After work I managed the manic rush to The Devenish and again I focused on the Hedge Browns as I felt like I'd been neglecting them at this site after the first initial rush of my first sightings and all the time spent looking for Chalk Hills. The Brambles at the bottom of the Down provided most of the sightings and in fact it was quite difficult deciding which butterfly to watch and then photograph. In the end I managed to spy an excessa among the throng and even more luckily it landed within camera lens range. Having got a few shots I went back to searching through the numerous Hedge Browns and this time a female caught my eye for the exact opposite reason the excessa had - the lack of spots and the small amount of orange on the hind wing. Time was passing and I had to head onto work.







Up at the top of the Down there wasn't too much about, the odd Blue and Brown and also a pair of 6-Spot Burnet locked in copulation. It must be hard work mating as a butterfly/moth as not only do you have to cling on to the grass stems whilst the breeze rocks you backward and forward but you also have to support the weight of your partner from your genitals! 🤔



After this I needed to head home as my timing on the afternoon stop-off is even more critical but I couldn't resist one last Hedge Brown – a five spot under wing or "5su" in my personal notation.



Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 12-Jan-15 10:57 PM GMT

Great shots Wurzel, The Gate Keepers were few up here last year and after the bad August with the heavy rain practically none existant the ones that did survive were pretty ratty I hope they've a better year up here this year. Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Jan-15 07:21 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie, I hope the Hedge Browns are good up there in 2015 😊

Old Garden 01-08-2014

I stumbled over this folder whilst clearing through my "Work in Progress" folder. I realised that I hadn't even sorted through the shots let alone processed them or written the blurb to complete it as a post. The main reason was that they were taken all the way back in August. My family and I had just returned from our annual camping holiday back in Dorset and were due off again, this time to the Outlaws in Wales, the following day. As we'd sold our Tumble Drier (at a more than reasonable price) to my sister-in-law previously and we needed to get our clothes laundered urgently we asked if we could borrow her machine for one load.

So it was that I found myself with a little free time in what used to be my back garden. Gone though was the greenhouse and its footings, the borders, the Ivy and Honeysuckle arch, gone to the flower patch at the very top of the garden. In fact it was looking very barren as my in-laws awaited the landscaper so they could start the garden from scratch. The dusty and bare earth wasn't looking too promising for butterflies and I was convinced that my searching would draw a blank...right up until a tiny orange blur caught my vision. It landed and proceeded to have a bit of a crawl about enabling me to get down to its level where I watched it for a couple of minutes before it decided to try for lusher pastures and it bombed over the fence.





I was glad I rediscovered this folder in the end as when I was sorting through I realised that this was a Blue Badge Small Copper which made a nice find even better 😊 .

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-Jan-15 10:57 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, just read your post, I think a Small Copper I posted a few weeks back was a Blue Badge the spots were a bit faded so I'm not sure, I'm saying spots because I'm not too well up on Blue Badge Coppers, hope it is the spots I've got right Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Jan-15 08:02 AM GMT

Alright Goldie – I saw someone refer to a blue spotted Small Copper as a "Blue Badge" and I liked the term so I carried on using it – they do have blue spots though 😊

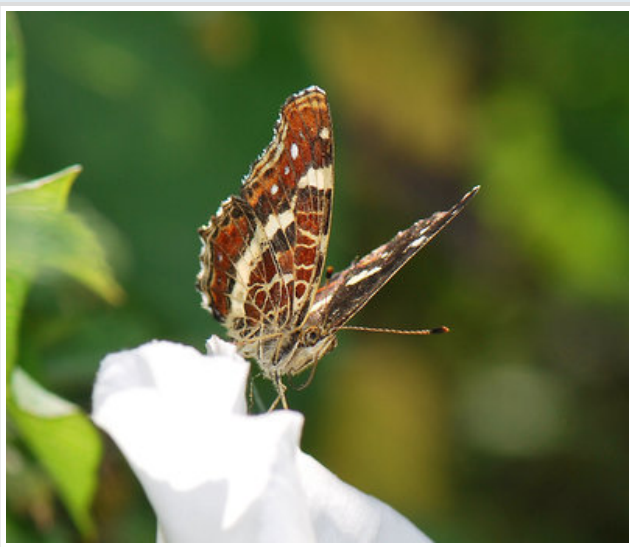
Site X Part 1

Way back in summer there was a lot of excitement over the discovery of Map butterflies at an undisclosed site near Swanage in Dorset. As it was back in my homeland I thought it would be rude if I didn't at least look in and pay my respects and I managed to ask the right people the right questions and so discovered the location of the undisclosed site. Since then someone has stepped forward and claimed the butterflies as their release which has obviously taken the edge off of the sightings but it was still a fantastic trip, with cracking butterflies and so I feel its worthy of a trip report whatever the provenance of the butterfly.

The day before Philzoid and I were due to go I was slightly nervous as none had been reported during the previous day but the weather hadn't been good so I was still hopeful of finding them and I sold it to Philzoid with the promise of a late Lulworth Skipper. So we went for it...

On arrival we walked into the field and were greeted with a depressing sight – a few disconsolate individuals wandering around peering into bushes and some standing around chatting seemingly having given up. We made enquiries with one chap and it turned out that he'd been there for three hours and hadn't seen one. "Oh" I said and turning to look back over the field – "isn't that one there?" as a miniature White Admiral flew down the hill straight past us, landed and started to feed right in front of us. Literally on site for four minutes and there was one flying past, the lucky Hat does it again. After a few shaky shots (I'd forgotten about the twitch that comes with Twitching it's been so long) it was gone almost as quickly as it had appeared.





Chuffed with the reward we thought we'd have a bit more of a look around the site to see if we could find some other Maps and also to see what else it had to offer. Which as it turned out was a great range of species. One little area bordered by two paths on either side of it held all of the locales specialities. It was hard to know where to begin as three species of Blue, a Clouded Yellow, an aged Lulworth Skipper (I do try to honour my promises 😊), Wasp Spider and Grayling all vied for our attentions. It was great I didn't know where to point my lens first but that wasn't a problem as it was a small area so when a butterfly would take off a slight head movement would be enough to bring another into view.



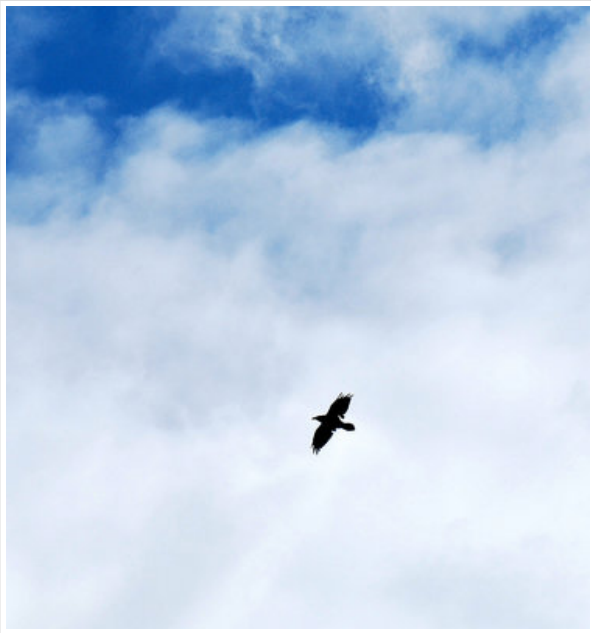
A Cloudy flew into view and led us a merry dance up the hill. It would settle just long enough for us to see where it went down, relocate it, approach it and then it would be off. It would seem to feed very briefly before flying taking off again and taking nectar only a few metres away whilst all the while ascending the side of the hill. I was confident that this was just a Cloudy being a Cloudy and it wasn't us continually disturbing because most of the time we didn't move and it still fed, took off, landed, fed, took off, landed etc. In the end I reasoned that it was working it's way up the hill and so I ran up the path so as to get above it and then I tried to anticipate where it would land. The trick paid off with the butterfly landing quite close to me twice, with a blue in between and a Brown Argus for afters.







By now we were half way up the hill and vegetation changed from flowers to short thin turf and a Small Tort, Red Admiral and Peacock all did a fly along the hedge but other butterflies were a bit thin on the ground here. Instead we watched a pair of Raven overhead like flying crosses and 'gronking' loudly.



We decided to head back down the hill for lunch and as we descended we saw someone peering into a bush with great interest...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pete Eeles, 18-Jan-15 02:18 PM GMT

**"Wurzel" wrote:**

I stumbled over this folder whilst clearing through my "Work in Progress" folder.

It's not just me then – that's good to hear! Every winter, I always come across something that I'd forgotten to process! Nice photos, and congrats on the Map!

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Wurzel**

by MikeOxon, 18-Jan-15 07:46 PM GMT

**"Wurzel" wrote:**

.....On arrival we walked into the field and were greeted with a depressing sight – a few disconsolate individuals wandering around peering into bushes and some standing around chatting seemingly having given up. We made enquiries with one chap and it turned out that he'd been there for three hours and hadn't seen one. "Oh" I said and turning to look back over the field – "isn't that one there?".....

Isn't it a great feeling when that happens! It happened to me once with a bird and a group of disconsolate twitchers. (mind you, I've had the opposite too, and 'dipped out' on a bird.)

Your description of anticipating the movements of the CY is an example of good field-craft. It works well with Silver-spotted Skippers too, where I think the best plan is to stake out a likely flower and wait for the quarry to come and pose.

It's splendid to read a post like this in the middle of Winter – there's something to be said for holding these reports back, so that they can be enjoyed without the distractions of planning and making one's own butterflying trips.

Mike

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 18-Jan-15 08:16 PM GMT

You kept that one quiet, Wurzel. 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 19-Jan-15 05:25 AM GMT

Stonking set of pics Wurzel! Sounds like a great day out 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 19-Jan-15 05:35 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

You've kept that Map sighting very quiet!. As for your images ,well done!. The Bindweed flower makes an excellent backdrop for the Map.

I wonder if anything will survive for this year,if it does the Sandbanks ferry will be very busy 😊 .

All the best ,

TREVOR 🇮🇪

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 20-Jan-15 12:10 AM GMT

Once again Wurzel, your Shots are tops, don't think I've seen a Map Butterfly yet only in a book they look lovely.Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 20-Jan-15 05:07 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel, great post and photos 😊🇮🇪

Funnily enough, back when these were on the wing and I was reading various posts on here about them, I wondered if you would go to see them, what with it being your home turf and all that. Great stuff.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 23-Jan-15 06:33 AM GMT

Sorry I haven't replied before now but work has been horrendously hectic 😞

Cheers Pete 😊 It was a cracking little butterfly, and there were more to follow 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 I made a promise to the finder that I wouldn't post until about now and then once it was okay as they were finally declared a release it was too late to post.

Cheers David 😊 It was very tricky but then once their origin had been revealed the moment had passed.

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Indeed it was, the Map were just the icing on a pretty sumptuous cake 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 If anything does make it through the winter then I know the back way 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 they are cracking little butterflies and deceptively small 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Well as they were on home turf I had to... 😊 In fact looking back on it now I remember that Iphad visited the site before – on a Scout night hike – I should have been looking out for Moths 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Jan-15 07:49 AM GMT

Site X Part 2

As we approached the bush it quickly became apparent that the gent was watching a Map butterfly and once he'd finished we moved in a little close so we could get a good look. The bush hung onto the side of the hill with the path on the lower side so by climbing up the hill the whole bush could be encircled. This meant that while I was up top Philzoid could be below and we could both access the same butterfly.

Occasionally it would take off and move further round the bush finding fresh nectar sources. It was on one of these forays that both Philzoid and I lost sight of it. So in order to relocate it we headed round the bush in opposite directions and both ended up with a Map, so two different individuals. In fact over the time we watched I think there were possibly three Maps each distinguishable by the various nicks and tears (or lack of them) in their wings.

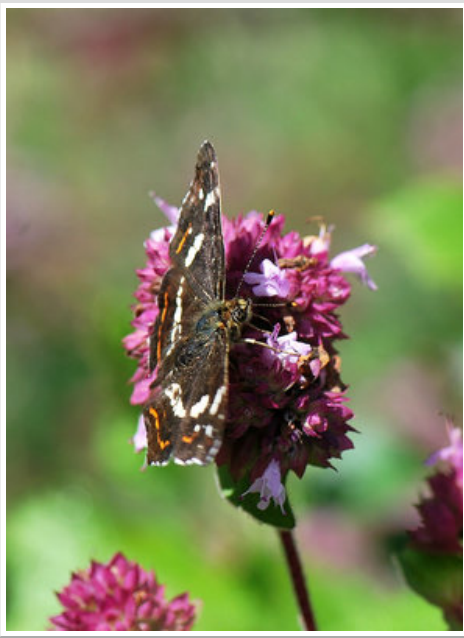


*left fore chunk*



*right hand nick*



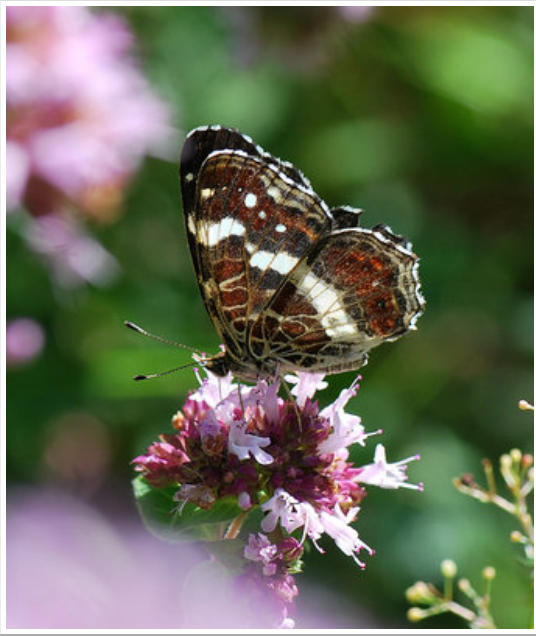


*no nicks*



We were soon joined by others including a certain Sussex Kipper (great to meet you Neil) and took more and more photos while we chatted about butterflies in general, the origin of these Maps, the story of their discovery and so on and so forth. As they were being so obliging I took the opportunity to try for the full range of shots including the "stained glass" which showed off the stunning purple colour to the underside yet in full light it seemed more brown and orange. One individual should have been named "Number 56" because with my usual propensity for pattern recognition those were the digits which clearly stood out from the under wings.



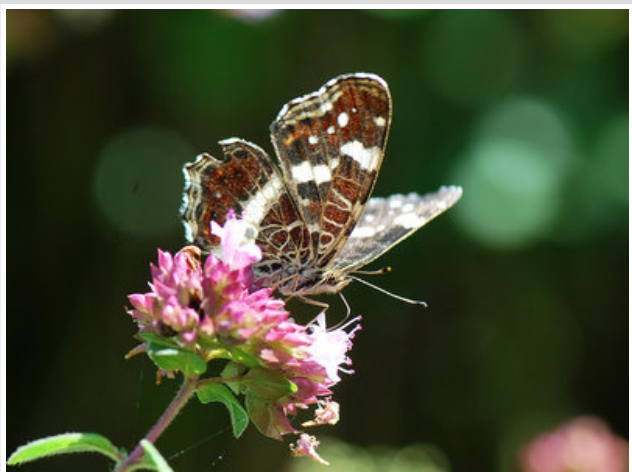


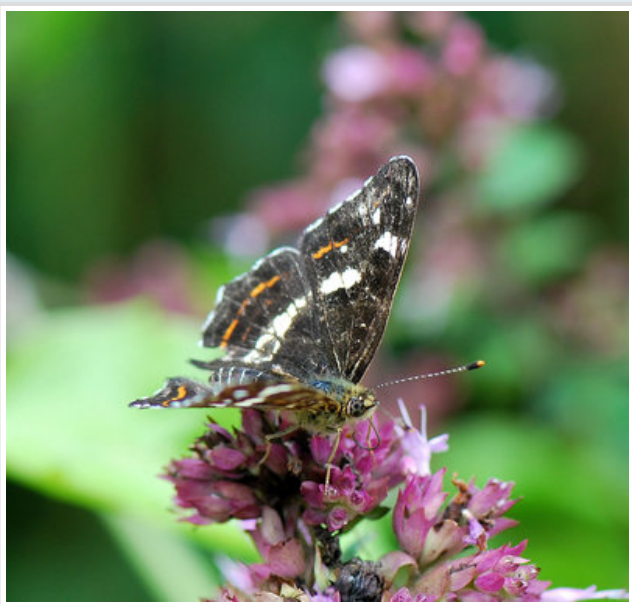
*purple*



*brown and orange - also Number 56*

About now my stomach was clutching my backbone so we left the Maps with three or four observers and strolled down the hillside and back to the car for lunch and on the way we were joined by another Clouded Yellow. We were soon back by the bush and taking shots in between slurps of coffee and mouthfuls of sandwiches.



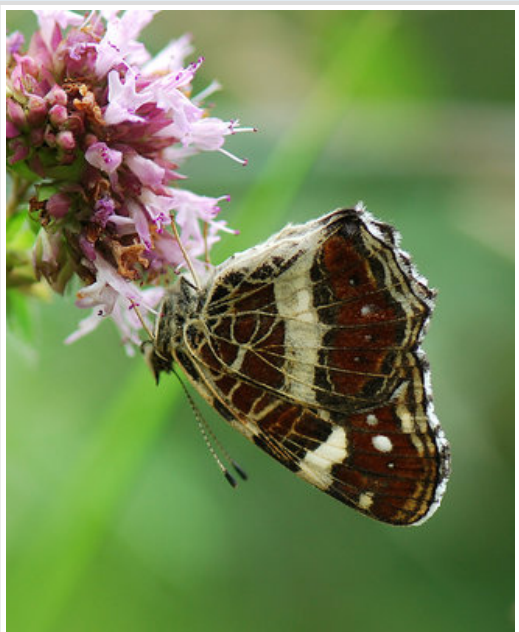


We then took a stroll further along the path to see if we could find any more Maps hiding and feeding away from the main group. There was a nice selection of butterflies here with Common and Adonis Blues, a Small Tortoiseshell and various whites. The best thing about this little area was

witnessing the courtship of a pair of Brown Argus. It was great to watch the frenzied fast flights back and forth along the side of the Down as the male tried to persuade the female to mate. But she wasn't interested in the slightest and each time she'd land and the male would "buzz" her she would raise her abdomen defensively while the male got the message and then she would fly off...only to be followed by the male doggedly.



We headed back to catch a final few shots of the Maps as the weather turned and the rain came down in a brief shower. The sun went behind the clouds and the temperature dropped and as it did the butterflies disappeared...all apart from one Map roosting at the very edge of the bush



Happy with the haul we headed back down the hill and wended our way homeward. A cracking day, cracking company and a cracking little site. It would have been worth the visit even without the Maps and even though I now know that they were releases my delight in witnessing them hasn't dimmed. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Susie, 25-Jan-15 05:00 PM GMT

Cracking set of images, Wurzel!

**Re: Wurzel**

by Nick Broomer, 25-Jan-15 08:00 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

congratulations on finding the Map, [kept that quiet]. Lovely set of photos, well done. Did you see any behaviour? for instance courtship, would be interested to hear anything on the subject.

All the best, Nick.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 25-Jan-15 08:15 PM GMT

Lovely Photo's Wurzel, I always look forward to your postings Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 26-Jan-15 03:41 AM GMT

Really lovely to see Maps in the UK. Wouldn't it be wonderful if they could establish themselves naturally?

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 26-Jan-15 03:55 AM GMT

Superb Map pics 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by keving, 26-Jan-15 08:03 PM GMT

Nice sequence of the Map Wurzel. That must have been a special moment. My only Map was seen in Garmisch (Germany). Wasn't expecting to see one and remember how exciting it was.

Regards Kev

**Re: Wurzel**

by Trevor, 26-Jan-15 08:38 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

You're really rubbing that Map sighting in. 😊😊 Lovely images.

TREVOR

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 28-Jan-15 04:50 AM GMT

Seriously impressed and extremely envious of the Maps Wurzel 🍷

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: Wurzel**

by millerd, 28-Jan-15 05:09 AM GMT



More extreme envy here, Wurzel. 🍷 😊

Lovely to see them!

Dave

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Jan-15 07:13 AM GMT

Work, work, work recently 😞 😞

Cheers Susie, Goldie and Bugboy for your kind comments 😊

Cheers Nick 😊 Unfortunately I caught them late in the day when all the interesting behaviour had happened and they were enjoying their retirement as it were, saying that I did notice how gregarious they were with at least 3 feeding on the one bush.

Cheers David 😊 Indeed it would be fabulous, but with LTBs and YLTs in recent years who knows what 2015 will bring? perhaps... 😊

Cheers Kevling 😊 Hopefully I might see them in more natural habitat on my summer holiday 😊

Sorry Trevor, I'll put the salt down and give it a rest now 😊

Cheers Neil and Dave sorry for inflicting you with envy 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Jan-15 07:26 AM GMT

End of Year Tally 2014

For me 2014 was a bit of a mixed bag. Things started well with Bob seeing me in at the New Year, a Red Admiral in January and a Small Tortoiseshell in February. It then got slowed down as the mild, stormy winter calmed; there were periods of activity interspersed with cooler times so things would get going to then be held back when the weather changed. Eventually things seemed to get going proper and not as late as last year. The summer passed by quite quickly and then the autumn seemed to go on and on, not exactly an Indian Summer just a never ending autumn with butterflies in October and November. I even managed to film a Red Admiral on 23rd December so 2014 was the year I had a full house, with butterflies in every month.

One thing I noticed this year was an East/West split with almost a fortnight difference between the emergence of species in the warmer, sunnier and drier eastern side of the country compared to those in my local neck of the woods. It felt like I was forever playing catch-up with the first sightings generally coming in from the East and then I'd have to sit around and twiddle my thumbs whilst the butterflies got round to emerging near me. Things in the west started to speed up and then things started coming earlier – but still behind eastern part of the country generally.

It felt like quite a frustrating year for me – I did get to see more species this year compared to last but often it felt like hard work. If I wasn't rushing to beat the weather I'd only see one or two of my intended targets or I didn't manage to get a photo as they were playing hard to get. Also I didn't manage to make visits to some of the places I'd intended and often I'd choose to go somewhere and the call would turn out to be the wrong one and there to rub salt into the wound would be a report from someone detailing the bucket loads of butterflies at the site I'd chosen not to visit. So yes 2014 felt like hard work, hopefully 2015 will be easier and more relaxing!

And so to work...

The Skippers



1 Small Skipper, 14-06 Five Rivers

Almost three weeks earlier in my locale than last year although that could have been down to actually getting out and looking and finding rather than the actual emergence. To me they seemed to put in a good showing this year and I saw them in good numbers at a range of sites including first sightings at work and even at the girls local play park.





2 Essex Skipper, 30-06 Five Rivers

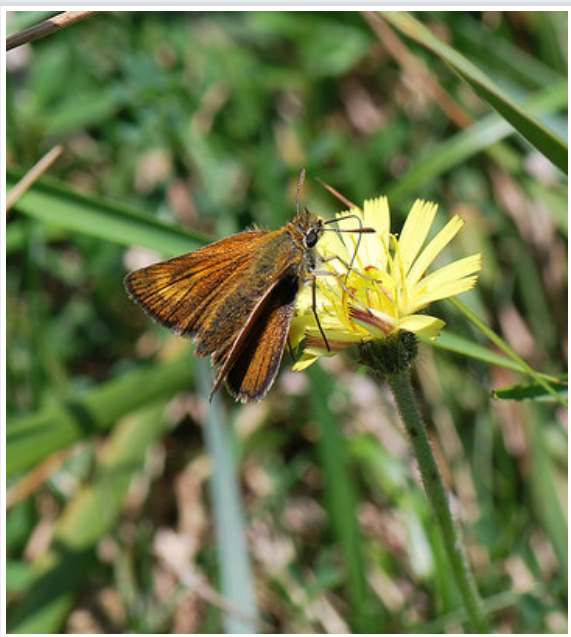
Essex Skippers also seemed to have a good year in my neck of the woods and I was seeing them at most sites that I visited. I'm finding it easier to identify them now although how long that will continue I don't know as my knees are starting to wear out. The easiest place to identify them is The Devenish as the side of the down is so steep that I don't need to clamber around to see the presence or lack of ink pads so long as I'm higher on the down than the butterfly. In terms of emergence they came out slightly earlier than last year but only by about a week.





3 Lulworth Skipper, 15-06 Lulworth Cove

The recorded emergence of the first Lulworth was much earlier than last year. In fact when I went to see them in mid June they were already looking pretty worn and this was almost 6 weeks earlier than my first sighting in 2013. That being said they were still around the Lulworth site in mid August. I found it difficult to judge how well they did as I saw them at several sites this year (including one at my annual camping holiday site Downshay). However the seemingly ever changing phenology of this species does seem to be having an effect as although they are around for a huge length of time when I did see them they weren't in the huge numbers that I've encountered before and rather than seeing what felt like hundreds on a visit at the new sites they were individuals and at Lulworth itself I was scrabbling around trying to find them. Hopefully they'll get their timing sorted and settle back into a routine to enable them to start building in numbers.





4 Silver Spotted Skipper, 25-07-2014 Stockbridge Down

Last year I was lucky enough to find a Silver Spot at Martin Down but I didn't have the same luck this year. In fact I only managed a single trip out to look for Silver Spots at Stockbridge Down. They were easy enough to find at this site but they were definitely down in number compared to last year. I'm just hoping that they did better at other sites nearby and that after a few not so good years they can pick up at Stockbridge.

I did find them earlier this year, by a fortnight but that is more to do with being able to get out and find them than their actual phenology. This year unlike previously I was able to take advantage of the first couple of days of the holiday s I broke up on the Wednesday so I had a spare couple of days before we set off on our camping trip. On my trip to Stockbridge this year I was accompanied by both my daughters and they had a great time trying to hunt down the Silver Spots for their dad and I think that they're my younger daughter's favourite butterfly as she remarked on how much they look like a Teddy Bear when we were able to approach one as it was feeding.



5 Large Skipper, 25-05-2014 Marshie Site

I'm not really confident with explaining how well Large Skippers did this year as I saw them in just as wide a range of sites as last year and my first sighting was three weeks earlier. Yet on the other hand I don't recall seeing them in such large numbers as I did last year. Then on the further other hand (or should that be foot?) they still seemed abundant. Can't quite fathom it if I'm honest but my gut tells me that they didn't have as good a year as other species.





6 Dingy Skipper, 03-05 Martin Down

It seemed like this species emerged a few weeks earlier this year and also they seemed to have a good season with numbers on the rise. There were a couple of highlights with this species for me this year including finding them at The Devenish for the first time. The second was witnessing some unusual behaviour at the same site. The Dingy flew up high and perched in a tree about 12 feet up where it adopted the usual roosting pose with the wings held back like a moth. Hopefully I'll be able to add them to the Larkhill list in 2015.

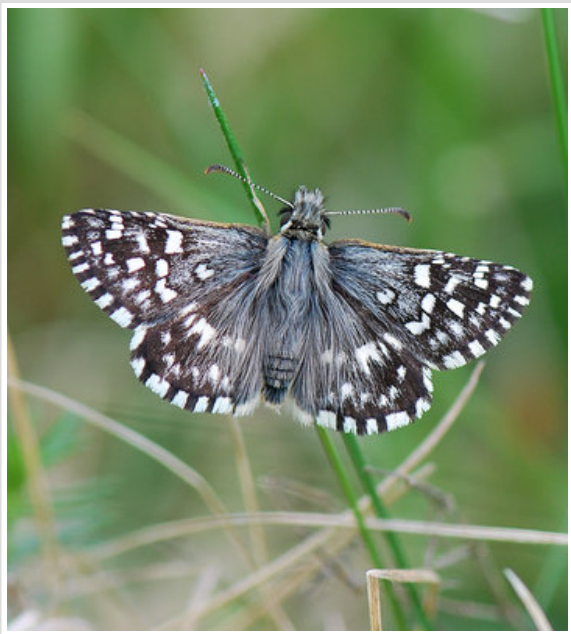






7 Grizzled Skipper, 18-04-2014 Duke site

One of the best things about 2014 was that Larkhill threw up plenty of Grizzlies after finding my first there in 2013. I found that by walking further along the West bound path brought me to the best parts of the site for Grizzlies as here the shrubs were sparser and the path was stonier and the Grizzlies liked to bask in the early morning sun. This year I found my first Grizzlie of 2014 almost a month earlier than in 2013 at my Duke site. In fact I saw Grizzlies at a wide range of sites and in good numbers so I feel that they had a good year.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 31-Jan-15 06:13 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Image wise you have saved the best till last , love the Skipper on Orchid .  
After advise from you and others about choice of replacement camera, I have purchased an FZ 38,  
So i am now armed and dangerous,or rather hope to be, once i have got used to it !! 😄

All the best ,  
TREVOR

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Feb-15 08:14 PM GMT

Once again Wurzel you've given us a real treat, your photo's are lovely and I'm envious of your Lulworth, and Grizzled Skippers 🍷 never having seen them yet 😊 I don't know of any sites near us, I always seem to have to go miles to see most Butterflies which is a real drag some times and what makes it really annoying is the fact (like you experienced) when I travel and it's got to be for at least a few days (like my trip to Bently Woods) I don't manage to see them (the Purple E) but I suppose that's all part and parcel of being a Butterfly enthusiast 😊 It's so brilliant if we do 😊 and the expectation of where and when keeps us going 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Feb-15 06:45 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 The FZ38 is the camera I'd have gone for if I hadn't have been forced into buying my wife's old Nikon - still I'm very chuffed with it 😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 The Lulworths are easy so long as you can get to Dorset coast between about June and August. I don't know too much about the distribution of Grizzlies so I can't help much there 😊 What you say about the expectation is true and I go though it for pretty much every species throughout the year - but I wouldn't have it any other way 😊

February 2015

Well it still is...just I suppose...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Nick Broomer, 02-Feb-15 06:54 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Lovely reports and photos but, that opened wing shot of the Grizzled Skipper deserves a round of applause. Excellent.

All the best, Nick.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 02-Feb-15 07:13 AM GMT

#### "Nick Broomer" wrote:

Hi Wurzel,

Lovely reports and photos but, that opened wing shot of the Grizzled Skipper deserves a round of applause. Excellent.

All the best, Nick.

Agreed, that Grizzly is gorgeous! Hope to see my first this year 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 02-Feb-15 09:50 PM GMT

Wurzel, great sequence of photos with the Skippers. Reading your review of 2014, I can sympathise. Mine felt very similar. A number of my target species involved a trip from the east of England to the west. Unfortunately the weather beat me when I holidayed in Gloucestershire and other planned trips were cancelled on the back of poor forecasts. I think I will just go for it this year and hope I strike lucky.

Regards Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 04-Feb-15 04:42 AM GMT

Cracking photos and observations on the Skippers Wurzel 😊

Looking forward to the next post.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Feb-15 06:57 AM GMT

Cheers Nick 😊 You're too kind 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 The best thing about that shot was that I took it after shwing the local warden, Mr Death 😊, the Grizzlies 😊

Cheers Kevling 😊 Let's hope 2015 is 'easier', good luck with your targets.

Cheers Neil 😊 I need to get writing proper for that next post...but work keeps getting in the way 😊

Into February...

Still no butterflies for me in 2015 in fact the closest I got was seeing the photo of a Small Tort taken by my sister in-law in my old garden on 2nd Jan 📅. So I have taken to reading in the downtime between work and sleep (usually about 20 minutes 😊) and I've just finished reading 'A Buzz in the Meadow' by Dave Goulson. It was a very informative read covering various aspects of the natural world from mating behaviour of the Deathwatch Beetles to plant reproduction. After reading 'A Sting in the Tail' I expected plenty of Bee stories and there were but two butterflies also got starring roles and both species were reasonably topical.

The first referred to a PhD project the author completed on Meadow Browns to determine whether the small spots on the under-wing serve any purpose. Through the chapter various reasons for the small spots were given however towards the end of the chapter is the topical part. One of his studies was into the genitalia of Meadow Browns and it seems the males are highly variable in shape, not fitting the expected lock and key model seen in most other species. This may explain why Meadow Browns are physically capable of mating with a wide range of species; their genitalia are like skeleton keys. However it doesn't give any suggestion into the 'why'.

The second relevant chapter comes towards the end of the book and uses Glanville Fritillaries as an example of meta-population collapse due to inbreeding. Strange that one the same day that I read this the Matthew Oates article on Sand Point was published.

Anyway - sorry no photos but if like me you're suffering from SLB disorder this book makes for a good distraction.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by David M, 04-Feb-15 07:00 AM GMT

Things are looking up, Wurzel!!

The mornings and evenings are getting lighter and butterflies are only a few weeks away from stirring. By this time next month I'm sure many of us will have had our first encounters of 2015.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Feb-15 07:31 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 We're currently in the middle of cold snap here - snow and hard frosts - let's just hope it's enough to mean a great season ahead 😊

The Whites



8 Clouded Yellow, 08-06 Martin Down

Last year I found a nice little spot at Martin Down near the hollow about mid way along Bokerley. Away from the Dyke is part of the hill where there has been a slip and the chalk underneath left exposed. Sunning itself there was a Clouded Yellow possibly picking up the sun rays as they reflected off the bright white chalk. This year when Philzoid and I paid an early visit to Martin Down that's where we headed straight away and there was our first Clouded Yellow of the year, a whole two months earlier than last year. It wasn't really a vintage Clouded Yellow year but I did alright for them with sightings at 7 or 8 different sites, mostly singletons but with the odd couple amongst them so a pretty good year for them considering that it wasn't an actual 'Clouded Yellow Year'.

Seeing one of these canary beauties is always a bit special and this year there were lots of highlights courtesy of the Cloudy - whilst having a picnic and over looking Lulworth Cove, a late showing at The Devenish and a totally unexpected surprise find at Collard Hill. But the best sighting of 2014 for me unfortunately wasn't accompanied by a photo and was at Five Rivers. Next year it would be nice to get one at Larkhill to complete my 'local site set'!





9 Brimstone, 08-03 Five Rivers

This species actually had a pretty similar emergence this year compared to last and bucked the trend as when I look at the actual number of days difference it is 3 days later, although the statistical confidence in this data is very low. With the first Brimstone it normally comes down to being in the right place at the right time rather than any particular pattern in emergences as they fall into the 'hibernator' class and should there be favourable weather there one will be. Last year I was lucky enough to witness some very unusual behaviour with a male basking open winged which I couldn't match this year. However I did manage to capture my first ova and ovi-positing female and through the wonders of Sports mode I did capture another male with wings open. Brimstones seemed to have a pretty good year number wise this year and my gut instinct is that they did well because of the milder winter and I even managed to photograph one at Larkhill which was probably my most impressive 'Brimstone first' for 2014.





10 Large White, 11-04-2014 Harcourt Terrace

I found my first Large White of 2014 about three weeks earlier than last year. I was walking into town with my girls and I'd taken my camera but I wasn't quick enough and the butterfly had nipped from the edge of the bush next to the side of the footpath further into the garden and onto private property so I couldn't get a shot off. "Never mind there will be plenty more" I thought. Wrong! I think in all I managed to photograph only four Large Whites all year. I was seeing them when I was out and about but nowhere near as many as last year and so I think that 2014 was a bad year from them.



11 Small White, 31-03 Kingston Lacey

The Small White I think had a reasonable 2014 - I saw my first one earlier by almost 4 weeks this year and they were a common sight when out looking for other species. That being said I don't recall seeing them in such high numbers as last year although perhaps 2013 was a particularly good year for them and so skewed my perceptions? They were also one of the later species that I saw with a mating pair well into September so it will be interesting to see how they fair in 2015 and whether later broods have an impact on their numbers?



12 Green-veined White, 13-04-2014 Ffos-y-ffin

I saw this species about 3 weeks earlier this year than last and surprisingly after my first Small White. Out of the three 'named 'whites' (the others being Small and Large) I think this species did the best this year as I saw it at pretty much each site that I visited and also in higher numbers than last year. It still wasn't as common as the Small Whites but it was catching up and easily outnumbered the Large White. It was one of my favourite butterflies of my first trip to the Outlaws as a male entertained me up the Lane leading me a merry dance up and down the roadside ditches before eventually settling down to feed and enabling me to approach close enough for some shots.







13 Orange-tip, 11-04-2014 Broadchalk

I finally saw my first Orange-tip on a trip out with the girls as we were driving over the 'top way' through Broadchalk. The first sighting of the OT is one of my most anticipated moments of early spring as to me it is a sign that things are really underway. Up to that point there may be hibernators flying and the odd early species like a white, Speckle or Holly Blue but I only really start my stop-offs once the OT is on the wing. That flash of white and vivid, vivid orange is like my starter pistol to the new season, everything before is just a warm up, hold onto your hats here we go!

This year they were a month earlier and easier to find but they didn't hang around long and before I knew it their season had closed. Most that I saw were in full-on patrol mode hardly ever stopping as the weather was clement on the whole with days that were beneficent for butterflies or days when nothing would be out and about anyway. Still I saw them in good numbers and as an extra bonus I've found somewhere local with plenty of Cuckoo Flower - I just need to work out who the best field belongs to now so that I can ask for permission to access the land, failing that I better get longer arms and hope they come to the flowers close to the hedge!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 07-Feb-15 07:05 PM GMT



Hi Wurzel,

Glad you enjoyed my DGF. images, I didn't know that male qualified as an ab.,but it is good to know that the professionals in our hobby sometimes scan our images!

Near to home there is a large clump of Cuckoo Flower by the roadside, it was Orange Tip heaven last year, but no females. You're right they were a good month early in 2014, but I was still seeing them well into May.

Have a 'cracking' good 2015 season,

TREVOR

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 07-Feb-15 09:16 PM GMT

Another interesting posting Wurzel, not long before we get to see them again now, lovely shots Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Feb-15 04:15 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Good luck with the OT's this year 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I've seen butterflies around the 16th Feb for the last couple of years so I reckon only a week or so to go 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Feb-15 07:16 AM GMT

While I work on the next round of my 2014 Tally and await my first butterfly sighting of 2015...

Moths of Downshay - Part 1

Way back in the summer I took the family back to my old stamping grounds around the Isle of Purbeck. The camping site we stay at is a real gem and I've spent many an hour just wandering around the hills and hedges. Apart from the birds and butterflies there are also moths a plenty as the toilet blocks are pretty open air and at the same time well lit.

I found it was best to have a quick look around while taking my ablutions in the morning and then head back down camera slung over my shoulder, washing up in the bowl after lunch. Most of the moths were still around and there was little chance of other humans being around. The first day threw up some great moths including a lot of different 'Footmen' and one or two firsts for me.



*Riband Wave*



*Riband Wave*



*Chinese Character*

Over the years I've trained my older daughter to keep a look out while I try to get a few shots but it doesn't always work and so I've developed a capture and release technique using one of the girls lidded cups. Unfortunately they weren't happy about the moth scales in their cups last year so this year I had to improvise. I settled for the Waitrose coffee cup and lid which felt good as I was up-cycling it although I did lose a lot of micros through the drinking hole.



*Blood Vein*



*Spectacle*



*Spectacle*



*Brussels Lace*

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 12-Feb-15 11:17 PM GMT

Love the moth pictures Wuzel, theres so many different kinds and I find the small ones hard to photograph but when I do get it right I'm amazed at their

colours, shapes and various sizes, I keep a folder just for them now 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Feb-15 03:47 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I must confess that my moth mania has gone one step further as I've got a folder for each species, even if I get only a tenth of the British species that's a whole lot of folders! 😲😞😞

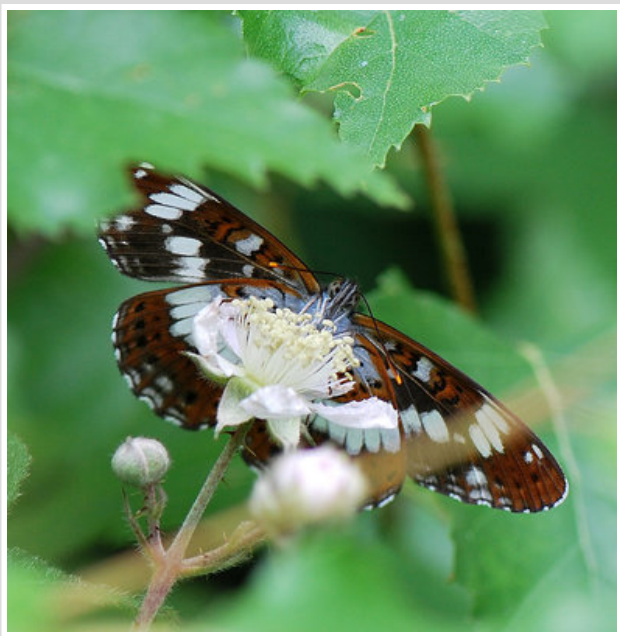
The "Aristocrats"



14 White Admiral, 21-06 Bentley Wood

I love White Admirals and yet of all the butterflies they are the most likely to make me curse. I just can't seem to ever get the perfect classic closed wing shot of those stunning underside markings. They will glide by cutting through the air, appearing more white than black; shining in the dappled July woodlands before they slow and turn and drop to a Bramble or Fern frond. As I approach and get set to take my shot they will slowly lower their wings and that will be my chance gone until they depart and land somewhere else when the ritual will be repeated. I also swear that their wings morph as when in flight they appear to be much, much longer resembling the Julia of butterfly houses and Zoos. However, when I examine photos or watch one resting on a leaf the wings don't seem noticeably longer and just look normal...

Anyway back to business. This year I felt concerned for the White Admirals - well those at Bentley at least as despite being almost a fortnight earlier they didn't seem to be around in the same numbers as last year, and that year they seemed to be down on the year before etc. I hope this isn't an actual trend and is just an artefact caused by not being able to visit Bentley Wood as much as in previous years? To temper this slightly depressing thought; I was lucky enough to find 4 individuals in one glade at a new site for me so perhaps it isn't all doom and gloom?



So close!





15 Purple Emperor, 06-07-2014 Bentley Wood

They were only slightly earlier this year and in terms of numbers it is very difficult for me to judge. The populations further afield seem to be doing very well - with Fermyn and Botany Bay producing great results for fellow butterflyers. There were also a couple of reports closer to home from new haunts. So taking this into account they could be judged to have had a good year however for me personally it was another frustrating one! Two trips led to views of two individuals but they were both very, very fleeting and getting shorts just wasn't a possibility. This is the second poor year for me for Purple Emperor but I'm taking to heart the fact that this has happened before. In my first proper year of butterflying I managed only glimpses of His Nibbs through a telescope. The second year 'He' was in a similar place and slightly lower down but the views were still not the best. Then in my third year I was buzzed, had two males on the deck in different places along with an Empress on the deck to cap it all. Hopefully my there cycle will come to fruition in 2015!



*"Here's what you could have won!"*

16 Red Admiral, 19th January Harcourt Terrace

I think it was an improved year all round for Red Admirals in 2014. First up a Red Admiral was my first 'official' butterfly of 2014 and it was a massive 3 and a bit months earlier than in 2013! The earlier sighting of an awakening hibernator boded well for the species and so it continued throughout the year. Whilst there weren't record breaking numbers there definitely wasn't the paucity of 2013 and there were individuals present on most trips and at most sites. My sightings throughout the year showed a few times when they were absent which would tie -in. It was harder for me this year to judge the autumnal showing. In previous years I'd relied on observations made in the back garden of the butterflies in the Ivy Arch and bushes. Even in 2013 I was still able to use this as an indicator despite moving home as my sister-in-law bought the property so I was able to visit and observe. Unfortunately this summer as well as breaking out and shifting 14 tons of concrete from the old paths, patios and green house footings I also had the horrible task of ripping out the trees and shrubs including the Ivy from the old oasis. This meant my indicator was gone but luckily the Devenish stepped in and sightings there at the end of October as well as individuals at work and on the eve of the Social (in the train station ticket office) allowed me to estimate their presence. To which end I reckon there was a pretty good autumnal showing this year still not as good as previous years but better than last for sure. There were also some really late, late records and I myself was lucky enough to film one on my iPod while I was doing some last minute Christmas shopping! I will partly remember 2014 as the year the Red Admiral became my Alpha and Omega butterfly; first of the year to awaken the desire and finally there in the dim lights to bid the year farewell. In fact I might have recorded a Red Admiral sighting in every month of 2014...



17 Painted Lady, 06-06 Larkhill

My first sighting of this species was almost 2 months earlier than last year and was a much appreciated addition to my Larkhill list. However the early arrival didn't equate to the bucket loads that I'm longing to see. In fact this year was probably on a par with my worst ever year for sightings of this species with a paltry 4 individuals all year! It was also a quieter year for Clouded Yellows and the rise and fall of both species are said to be in sync. I must remember that when a 'big one' comes not to get lost in yellow and ignore the ladies! Whilst I saw only 4 individuals they were reasonably widely dispersed with sightings in Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset and Ceredigion in chronological order. So not a good year for Painted Ladies; perhaps 2015 will be the one or will we have to wait longer?



18 Small Tortoiseshell, 1st January Bob

For me it was another great year for Small Torts and they seem to be thriving in the west. I also heard reports that they're on the up in the east as well, so overall I would say that it was another great year for them. This year I started walking a path at the back of work regularly and these almost daily walks often threw up Small Tortoiseshells in excess of 20. Adding further evidence to their booming numbers was the fact that I saw a Small Tortoiseshell at all bar one of my visits/sites; with only Slop Bog not holding a Tortie (I reckon there was one there but the Silver Studs had tied it up so they'd get all the attention 😊). It would be nice if their continued good fortune was shared by their larger cousins.

In terms of their phenology my view was slightly skewed because I had Bob, so a sneaky look on New Year's Day meant my first sighting was almost as early as possible. However my first proper sighting of a free flying imago was the 16th Feb and so was a couple of weeks earlier than 2013 - possibly due to a generally milder start to the year.





19 Peacock, 08-03 Five Rivers

My first Peacock this year was almost a month earlier than in 2013 and from then on Peacocks seemed to show similar patterns to their cousins the Small Torts. So not only were they earlier but they were also about in good numbers – possibly more than last year. As they were having a good year I managed to see them in almost as many sites as the Small Torts with Collard Hill possibly being the only site that didn't throw up a Peacock to add to the Small Tortoiseshell on the day list.

I noticed two things about Peacocks this year. First was the subtlety (not a word often associated with Peacocks I know) of the differences in variations of the markings – most noticeably the ground colour which serves to highlight the 'eyes' on the hind wings. Some were wearing dark mascara and eye shadow and others had gone for more golden hues.

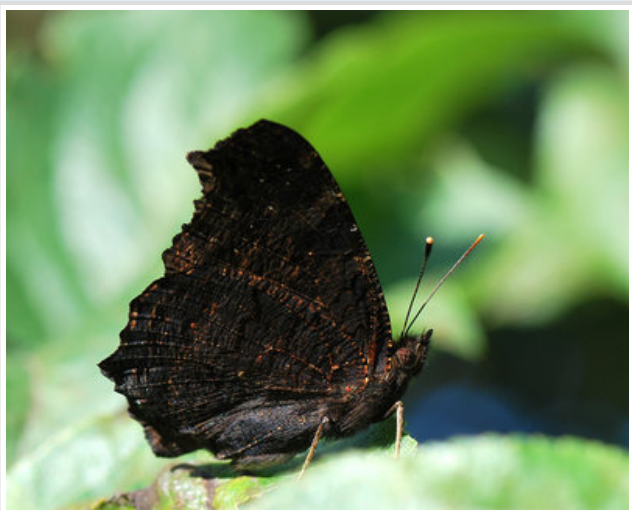


'Golden'



'Panda eyes'

The second thing was that there seems to be the opposite distribution pattern to the Small Tortoiseshell with Peacocks more numerous in the East whereas Small Torts seems to favour the West. The evidence for this is only anecdotal but of the people that I've spoken to that feel the Peacock did better than the Small Tort this year almost all live in the Eastern side of the country.



20 Comma, 08-03 Five Rivers



All in all I think the Comma had a pretty good year. It's really hard to judge this as it is one of the commoner species and is always 'there' turning up in a range of habitats and often when something else that you were hoping for has also just turned up. I often feel guilty at the short shrift that I give Commas especially as they have such splendid livery which would make them even more spectacular and much sought after if they were rare.

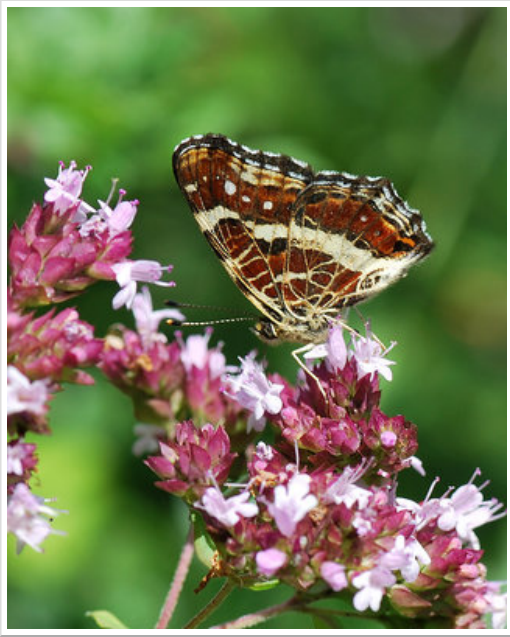
So apart from a general gut feeling that they too had a good one I also call upon other anecdotal observations to back this up. For example the fact that my first one of 2014 was a whole month earlier than 2013. Also I recall seeing good numbers at all three key times throughout the year; emerging hibernators, H.Commas in the summer and the final brood settling down to hibernate and emerge, hopefully quite soon!



21a Map, 13-08-2014 Site X

I shouldn't really have included this in my Tally but I put it on the when it was still possibly a natural immigrant from the continent. But then the rumblings as to their origins took a different turn I was considering removing it from the Tally. In the end I settled with making it an 'a' for posterity. I would really like to see a real life Map immigrant one day but what if the caterpillars from this clutch survive? Would the possible 2015 spring

generation count as British born or do the Map have to survive for a number of years before they are included on the British list? What happens if some Maps do make it here, stay and survive to set up colonies that come into contact with this one at Site X? It hurt my head thinking this through so in the end I gave up and just enjoyed remembering the day.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 16-Feb-15 04:26 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

That is my best open wing PE shot, but all four wings purple is my main quest for 2015!  
Why don't you join in the party at Botany Bay this year?.If it's a good year you should see plenty of HIM.  
and maybe some Wood Whites as well. 😊 ( if they coincide).

All the best ,  
TREVOR

PS A certain Mr. Hulme provides the party food for HIM. 🙄

### Re: Wurzel

by Nick Broomer, 16-Feb-15 04:54 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

lovely photos as usual, especially the Small Tort. and the Map. 😊

All the best, Nick.

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 16-Feb-15 05:52 AM GMT

Nice selection, Wurzel. I see you couldn't resist rubbing it in with another Map!! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 16-Feb-15 07:59 AM GMT

Hi again Wurzel,

I was wondering if your 'golden ' Peacock 'is an ab.,of the hundreds of Peacocks i've seen over the years i have never seen one with that pale wing border or with so much blue on the eye spots.

If it's not an ab. its still a great find 🍷 😊 .

TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-Feb-15 08:53 PM GMT

Fantastic photo's again Wurel 🍷🍷 I really envy you your PE , I hope I'm able to get some photos this year, I was at Bentley Wood for a week from the 6th July and never saw one, may be I was too soon . Also the Peacock looks great with the unusual blue eyes.roll on Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 18-Feb-15 05:40 AM GMT

Just noticed on the index page that it's your birthday today, Wurzel.

Many happy returns! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 18-Feb-15 06:38 AM GMT

Happy Birthday Wurzel, enjoy your last 365 days of being under 40 😊😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 18-Feb-15 06:05 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

A belated birthday greeting from me too, if you're 39 you have only one year to go before life begins!!! 😊

Happy days  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Feb-15 07:29 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I might try Botany this year but it will feel like a betrayal of Bentley Wood 😊😊 I was wondering about that Peacock myself 😊

Cheers Nick, thank you for your kind comments 😊 Cheers David 😊 Sorry about the Map, only one more posting I promise 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 That PE was from two years ago at Bentley Wood so I'm hoping for thrid year lucky this year 😊

Cheers David, Trevor and Bugboy it was my birthday on Tuesday and I'm sorry that i didn't reply sooner but my arthritis is playing up and what with my long-sight I'm having trouble with seeing the screen and don't get me started on my knees etc etc 😊😊😊 It's nice to know though that I share my birthday with something much older - the Periodic Table as I feel like a spring chicken compared to that 😊😊

Moths of Downshay - Part 2

The second day at Downshay offered me more oppotunities for my Mothing as well as a trip to Corfe Castle and Wareham so amongst the reading, lazing and drinking tea I did a few trips down to the Toilet block for washing up. Whilst there the Waitrose cup (there are other brands of course 😊) was put into good effect and I picked up a couple of nice little firsts including one that I'd wanted to see for a while a Small Waved Umber.



*Single Dotted Wave*



*Small Waved Umber*

The following day I managed to pick a few moths up before we headed out to Studland. The first of these was an Early Thorn. I'd clocked it the night before as it was visible through the open door of the Ladies. So the next morning I took my older daughter down with me, sent her in to check that all the cubicles were empty and then quickly nipped in, collected the moth and legged it out. My daughter said she felt like a spy and enjoyed the recon! It is a cracking Moth and reminds me of the Comma, even down to the little white marking in the middle of the wing.



*Early Thorn*

The other was quite unusual looking and at first I thought it was an aberrant form of Buff Ermine. Though that didn't fit right as they have varying amounts of black markings not orange and the antennae were totally the wrong shape and structure. When I got back my 'Moth expert in residence' Philzoid identified it straight away as a female Ghost Moth. So I checked on my British Moths App and sure enough there it was. The reason I'd missed it is that it is actually a Micro moth and very early in the Bradley Number system and I was looking at the other end where the Ermine moths were found



*Ghost Moth*

We were off to Studland for the day shortly for Graylings and paddling among other things and so I released the moths back down near the toilet block and we headed off...

Have a goodun

Wurzel



## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 20-Feb-15 09:24 PM GMT

Great Shots of the Moths Wurzel, do you ever do any night trapping of them? I know a teacher who does and he then shows the moths to his pupils before letting them go, great for the children, they can't wait in the mornings he say's to take a look what's in the night trap 😊 I've rather fancied doing that myself but not a clue how to start so never bothered 😊  
They've just forecast snow showers again for us for tomorrow, let's hope the cold weather is good for Butterflies because we've had some cold day's and night's up here, shouldn't be long now though just four weeks off Spring, roll on Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Feb-15 04:58 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I might be able to get my hands on a Moth trap this year so I'll be able to try that out as well 😊 . I tried my local 'early site' today – no joy still a week or two more to wait 😊

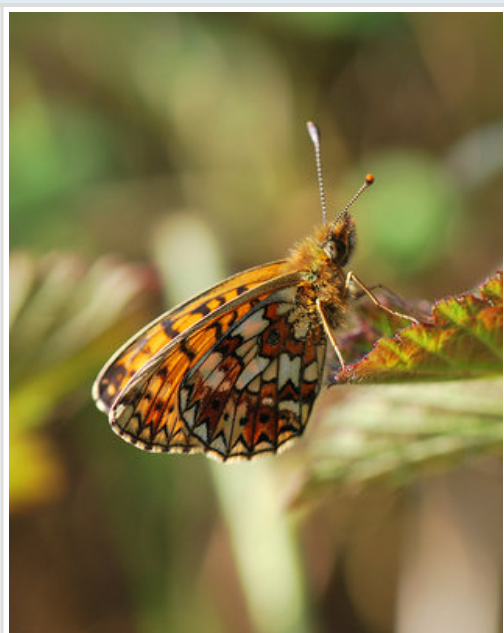
Fritillaries



21 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 18-05 Bentley Wood

I saw my first Small Pearl a little over two weeks earlier in 2014 than 2013. However I'm not sure if this was because they had emerged earlier or because I visited the site earlier? At the time my sister was over from Oz and so much of my butterflying was of the 'have a quick look over here' variety whilst on family outings. I was also keeping a look out for Philzoid so he could make the trip over for them and hence I was keeping a very close eye on the Wiltshire sightings page. When there was the first sniff of one at Bentley Wood during the week I was there that weekend grabbing my chance when I could and also doing my required recon; there too was my first Small Pearl.

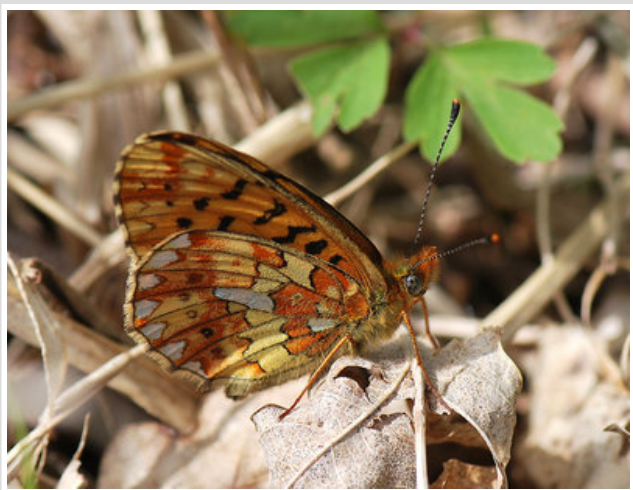
My second trip with Philzoid was the following weekend and by then they'd built in numbers but they still weren't as common as last year so I felt they didn't have as good a year this as last and I'm hoping that this is just a blip or even better, an error of my judgement.

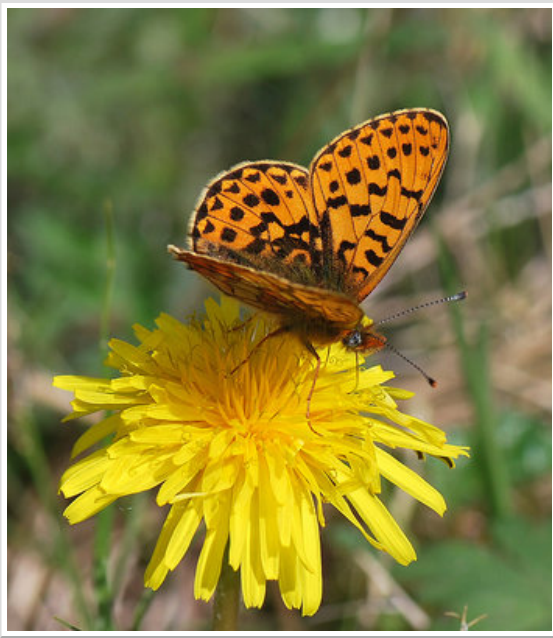




22 Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 04-05 Bentley Wood

Like a lot of species in 2014 the Pearls were out earlier this year than in 2013 but only by about a week for myself personally as I visited once they had started emerging. When I made my annual visit to Bentley for them they were out in greater numbers than I recall but again this was because I was visiting slightly later in their flight time and so they were already actively seeking a mate and some were already egg-laying. This was great as I witnessed behaviours that I hadn't seen before which added to my overall view of the butterfly but it also meant that those gorgeous closed wings shots just weren't possible as the butterflies were flying, feeding or rummaging around on the ground amongst the grass. Despite feeling like their numbers were slightly down this year they seemed to last longer than in previous years - possibly because there a few cooler days so they didn't burn out as quickly.





23 Dark Green Fritillary, 15-06 Martin Down

I picked up my first DGFs almost a month earlier this year compared to last but apart from that it felt like things were pretty much the same with no real change in their numbers. I managed to find them at Lulworth again which was pretty late and they were at Martin Down although I made far fewer visits there this year. What was nice was that I managed to find them The Devenish which was a 'first' sighting for me from that site although there were only one or two.

The main thing I noticed this year was the level of variation in the females. The males to me look pretty alike and all conform to the 'big, powerful ginger beastie mould' whereas the females show a range of variation from subtle to almost garish. Over the course of one visit I saw the more usual females with the spots on the rear margins looking white but there were plenty of females that were more dusky, diffused with colours from green through to purple as they caught the light. One individual in particular took on the greenish hue of a valesina along the wing margins closest to the body.







24 Silver-washed Fritillary, 21-06 Bentley Wood

When I came to think back over my encounters with the Silver-washed over 2014 I found it a tricky task. I hadn't visited Bentley Wood nearly enough this year and also missed out on trips to various other woodlands during their flight times so my initial thoughts tended towards them not having a particularly good year. But then I realised that I was biasing myself as when I thought more and more about where and when I'd seen this species I came up with more and more highs.

They arrived a couple of weeks earlier than last year and I had a flurry of sightings during this period when there were one or two early males flying. At this stage I became quite frustrated with them as they just didn't want to play ball almost constantly patrolling and when they did occasionally break to take nectar they never stopped long enough for me to train my lens on them. Eventually this period passed as their numbers increased and I entered into a joyous time where I experienced ONE Silver-washed related high after another. There was the stunning Valesina, my first few at The Devenish, a surprise male doing a fly-by whilst having a picnic at Studland, good numbers all on one Bramble on a later trip to Bentley and then the 'piece de resistance' a female egg-laying four/five feet up a tree. So the more I recollect the more I'm convinced that they actually had a good year - not the best ever but at least slightly up from last year.







25 Marsh Fritillary, 15-05 Marshie Site

For me 2014 was a spectacular year for Marsh Fritillaries as I was able to make three visits to my Marshie site at various stages of their flight period. This meant that I witnessed the full gamut of 'state of dress' that the Marsh Fritillary can show from pristine through to greasy individuals on my final visit.

My first visit was only a couple of days after their emergence had first been observed and was about 10 days earlier than last year. I found myself in the golden glow of the early evening I standing on the side of the down surrounded by them. They were by far the most common butterfly and it seemed that at every footfall 6 or 7 would be disturbed to flap away a short distance. As there were so many butterflies the probability of some variants/aberrants was greatly increased and so I wasn't surprised when I was able to find a couple on my first two visits.

On my second visit numbers had built still more to higher numbers than last year and there was a nice mix of fresh and tired along with representatives of both genders. By my final visit they were all past their best but there were still bucket loads of them. Adding to my feeling reckoning that 2014 was a good year for Marshies was the fact that I also relocated some at a site in Hampshire in similar numbers to last year.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 22-Feb-15 06:18 AM GMT

Wow! That last Marshie is a real beauty, Wurzel.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 22-Feb-15 07:04 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

It must be something about my shoes !. Don't forget I had one on my shoe at Cotley Hill as well.

For the benefit of my friends I do like to think that I have hygenic feet!! 😊.

B

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 22-Feb-15 07:16 AM GMT

PS. If you think those shoes will bring down His Nibs I will gladly bring them along!!.

As for that Valesina 🍷

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 22-Feb-15 09:22 PM GMT

Fantastic photos Wurzel, I was at Bently Wood from the 5th of July we went for a week and we saw loads of Silver Washed Frit's, I saw my first Valesina she was at the base of a tree in the bushes, I got one or two shots of her( not very good) because she never showed all of herself, I was pleased to see her and didn't care too much at the time, having seen your lovely shot I feel abit dissappointed now 🍷😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Nick Broomer, 22-Feb-15 10:22 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

a lovely selection of photos, especially the 3rd, 5th, 11th, and 13th photos, excellent.

All the best, Nick.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Feb-15 06:52 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 I was really chuffed with finding that one 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I hope you have some Odour Eaters for when His Nibbs ins't flying 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Sorry to have caused some disappointment 😊

Cheers Nick for you kind comments 😊

I was at Five Rivers at the weekend hopefully checking the banks but still no joy. Just as things start to look promising the weather changes and the rain and snow return. I even had my spring shave in preparation and when the wind bites at my face I deeply regret it! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by keving, 25-Feb-15 08:32 PM GMT

Wurzel,

Playing catch up with everyone PDs at the moment.

Great photographs of the Small Pearl Bordered at Bentley Wood (not that the other Frit images were any less exciting). It's been a long time since my one and only encounter with a SPBF (which was in the Yorkshire Moors).

Hope you don't mind, but I have sent a PM to you with a couple of queries.

Kind Regards Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Feb-15 06:44 AM GMT

Cheers Kevling 😊 No worries I'll try and reply to your PM tomorrow night.

Moths of Downshay Part 3

Well not really at Downshay, I should have named this post 'Moths of Studland' as that's where they were found 😊. After the morning spent paddling we repaired to the Discovery Centre up on the edge of the Heath for lunch. Whilst the girls played on the rope swing I went for a quick wander with my

camera hoping to get a few shots. I wasn't disappointed with Graylings abounding and a small Buddleia behind the building holding Red Admirals, a Small Tort, a Peacock and a Wall.

Also round here sheltering in the shade were a few Moths. There was a Buff Ermine which I've photographed before but the other four visible moths represented three new species for me. The first two were male and female Black Arches and they were the first as they were the most obvious - their black and white livery standing out from the reddish wood of the building. The next one that stood out was, I later identified using my Moth App, a True Lover's Knot. It was a lovely middle sized moth with subtle and beautiful markings in creams and an 'almost pink'. The final species was the most cryptic of all and I only saw it when I did a double take. At first I thought that I was seeing things as it looked just like a rough bit of snagged wood. Then I noticed that it was a slightly different shade and on closer examination it turned out to be a Coxcomb Prominent.







After this brief moth foray I moved out of the shadows and the dark side and back into the sun where butterflies prevailed – but only for a few grab shots as the girls wanted to get home and wash the dried salt from their skin. Once back at the campsite we had to pay an early visit to the showers and once again the cup accompanied me. Most of the moths I'd already caught and released and those that had escaped the morning visit were up high now and so out of the way. All except for a Lesser Yellow Underwing that is. I get confused by which 'Yellow Underwing' I've already seen so this could have been a repeat 'tick' or a first timer, either way it was a cracking looking moth, moving its' forewings teasingly to reveal the golden glow behind.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 27-Feb-15 06:58 AM GMT

Enjoying your diary at the moment. Some fantastic pics practically making me drewl in anticipation for the new season to start! And the moths easily holding their own against the butterflies!

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Mar-15 06:26 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 My daughter saw a Red Admiral on Thursday, my sister in-law saw a Small Tort on 3rd Jan and I've still seen nowt 😞

March 2015

Surely it can't be long now?...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 02-Mar-15 04:53 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel, still nothing for me either, mind you I have been a bit busy lately and haven't really been looking yet. Mid March is when things usually get going around here in a normal year so that is when I will probably aim to start getting out, weather permitting.

Great photos and reports in your last few posts, I particularly like the SPBF basking in the sun 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Mar-15 06:50 AM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 Mid March isn't that far away now 😊

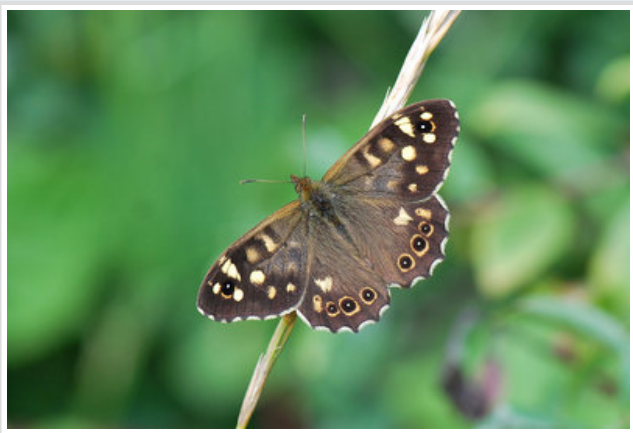
Browns

Overall this is one of the hardest groups to consider as their relative abundance often belies a slight fall or rise in numbers so the summations and reflections here are probably the most 'gut produced' of all of my estimations.



26 Speckled Wood, 16-04-2014 Aberystwyth

I seem to see my first Specklie in a different place each year and this time round it was in Wales about a fortnight earlier than my first last year. When contemplating the numbers I began by thinking that perhaps I had seen fewer of them over the course of the year as I don't recall seeing them in masses at the various sites where they were present. I then remembered that in 2013 we had a slow start to the season and the Specklies were thin on the ground to start with. Then they seemed to catch up and the broods all blurred into one giving them impression of higher numbers. In 2014 though we had a more normal start to the season and so I reckon they did the same number wise but the butterflies were spread out over more months, not compacted into a shorter flight season. They did last well to as I saw my last Specklies on a visit to the Devenish on Halloween and as the weather then was exceedingly warm and remained mild into November I daresay that they clung on well into that month to.



27 Wall, (05-05 Duke Site?) 15-05 Marshie Site

I saw my first 'official' Wall of 2014 at my Marshie site which was a couple of weeks earlier than last year. I say 'official' as I think I had a possible Wall a fortnight before that at my Duke site. A marmalade butterfly proceeded to bomb around the side of the hill while I was busy trying to sneak up on Dingy Skippers. It was only when I saw the flight of my first 'official' Wall that I started to consider the UFB as another Wall. It didn't stop so I guess I'll never really know whether two weeks or a month it didn't really matter as overall Walls followed the similar pattern to most other butterflies with an earlier emergence.

My first sightings were heartening as they were inland sites rather than their usual coastal haunts and so hopefully they will be making a comeback in rural areas out of sight of the sea. Here they were in good numbers with both males and females showing on three out of four visits to these sites.



Subsequent trips meant that I also encountered them at a further seven coastal haunts; five were on the Isle of Purbeck and the sixth and seventh much further afield in Ceredigion. The sixth sighting could have been considered 'inland' as it was in my Outlaws back garden but a walk round the corner of the building and there is the slightest sea view so perhaps not. All of these sightings only featured one individual but the fact that they were from different sites on different days led me to believe that the species had a good year. In fact for me 2014 could have been considered 'the year of the Wall' as I have never seen so many of them or from such a range of sites.

There were some great highlights for me with this species this year; witnessing them on Buddleia, as a garden butterfly, managing to get decent shots of both upper and under wings (including 'Ed') as well as capturing my first decent shots of females; long may their up turns in fortune continue!

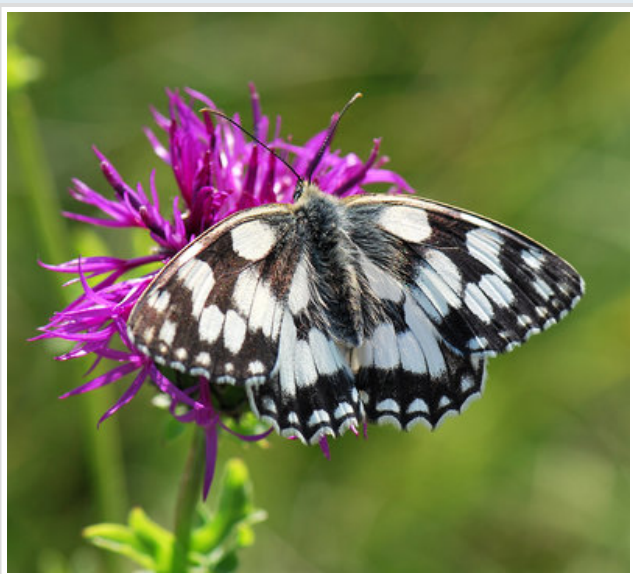


28 Marbled White, 14-06 Five Rivers

Their emergence was about a fortnight earlier than last year which was the same for a lot of species. Number wise they seem to have held their own and at Five Rivers they seem to have increased slightly in particular. Also this year most places seemed to hold reasonable numbers unlike last year where



there were lots in some places and very few in others. More evenly spread as it were. I wasn't able to track down too many dew bedecked Marbs this year but I was happy to find a few piratical fellas as well as seeing them at a few new place when I was looking here and there for other species in particular, possibly the oddest place was half way up a cliff face at Lulworth Cove, perhaps some of the ancestral Grayling genes were showing through?



29 Grayling, 20-07-2014 Godshill

By the time the Graylings are out and about I'm generally ready for my holiday and as such I often get to see them almost as soon as I hear they've started emerging. Also by midsummer things seem to have gotten back into the correct rhythm and emergences have either lowed back down or caught up after a slow start. For these reasons I find their emergence time is often very similar to year on year and this year they were only nine days earlier

which had more to do with me getting out and looking for them than anything else.

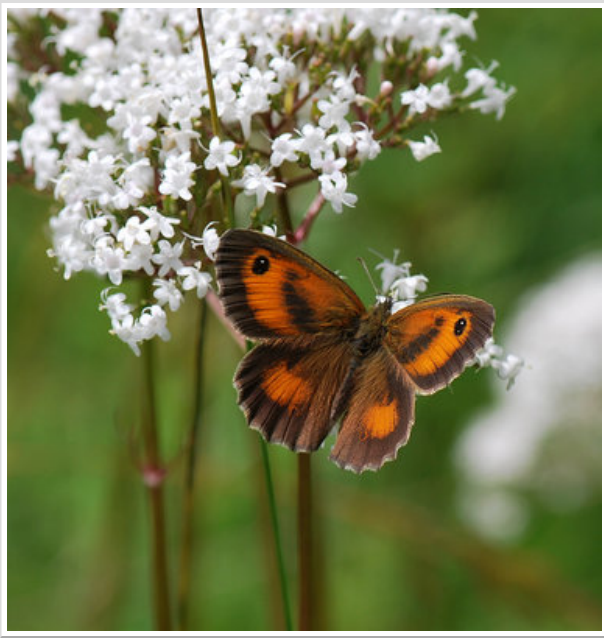
For me it was another good year for Graylings with sightings from three different sites. As well as this it was encouraging that at the main sites where I regularly see them their numbers seemed to be up. At Godshill in particular they were almost common.



30 Hedge Brown/Gatekeeper 30-06 The Devenish

The old Hedge Brown had a good innings in 2014, arriving about a fortnight earlier than the previous year and showing well at pretty much all the sites that I visited. That being said they seemed to be 'over' more quickly than in previous years as usually they hang around and pretend to be Brostreaks to annoy you whereas this year when I was looking for Brostreaks they seemed to have finished. Whether this was merely a case of arriving sooner and therefore finishing earlier I'm not sure as they seemed to have passed more quickly than expected if this was the case. Possibly the decent weather we had over the tail end of the summer meant that they could just get down to business and so didn't need to hang around.

The Lane at my in-laws didn't disappoint this year with various numbers of spots on both upper and undersides, some very nice 'excessa' as well as the star of the Hedge Browns for the year the aberrant female with eyes all over the place. This year i seemed to fins more excessa than usual with them present at Larkhill, the Lane and also at The Devenish - in fact my first Hedge Brown of the year was actually an excessa. What could have accounted for this surge in spottiness I'm not sure but I loved counting every single one of them!



31 Meadow Brown, 10-06 The Devenish

This is one of the hardest species to make an estimation of. With other species that are also difficult to guide the numbers of there are often mitigating factors such as their propensity to remain high in the canopy, they are found half way up a mountain in mobile colonies or they have very, very short flight time so blink and you could miss them. Yet for the Meadow Brown there is no excuse it's actually laziness on my part as I get bored counting MB after MB and trying to figure out if I've already counted a certain individual. So bearing that in mind I'm not actually sure if there were as many about as last year, certainly in good numbers but down slightly surely? They also slightly bucked the trend shown by other species as they were only 9 days earlier this year and not the fortnight like the others.

Other things to note were; like their relatives the Hedge Browns they showed an increased amount of spottiness this year mainly in the guise of two



pupils in the eye on their forewings and also there seemed to be more 'blondes' this year, the paler more golden hued and less brown Browns.



32 Small Heath, 09-05 Larkhill

My first Small Heath was almost three weeks earlier this year but again this year I felt quite concerned about their numbers. I recall a few years ago that I would be complaining about Small Heath as they were always getting in the way when I was getting ready to get a shot of another butterfly. I would carefully stalk the butterfly, slowly reaching in closer, focusing and then just as I was about to press the shutter up would fly a Small Heath and it would disappear along with the butterfly I was about to photograph. Yet this year I was struggling to find them at most of the sites that I visited, even at Martin Down which used to hold them in bucket loads they were scarce. This seems to be an ongoing trend as I recall saying a similar thing last year, and the year before that too.





33 Ringlet, 14-06 Five Rivers

Last year I was lucky enough to get the first Ringlet for Wiltshire and even that was only a few days earlier than 2012. This year Ringlets were back to being early emergers with my latest first sighting 9 days earlier than in 2013. The milder year with a wetter start to the year seemed to favour them as not only were they earlier arriving they also seemed to abound on the paths of Larkhill and in the fields of Five Rivers and The Devenish. A bit like the Hedge Browns once here they didn't hang about and again it seemed like they were over so soon.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 03-Mar-15 12:19 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Lovely Wall shots. Do you have a secret method of sneaking up on them, or do they just like you. 😊

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 03-Mar-15 02:39 AM GMT

Absolutely gorgeous photos Wurzel, I love them all, it won't belong now before we're off and running 😊 Incidentally I saw my first Grayling last year on the the 16th of June which seemed early at the time until I realised nearly all the Butterflies were early.

I don't surpose the Butterfly you saw() the orange Butterfly) you mentioned that flew near where the Dukes are could be a Pearl Bordered Fritillary ? at Gaits Barrow they fly at the same time has the Dukes and it's not impossible to catch the two near to one another , not got that shot yet but I keep trying 😊 All the best for the weekend they say the weather could be milder at the weekend, I hope so we've had snow showers again today( getting fed up with it now) Goldie 😊😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 03-Mar-15 06:21 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Have just caught up with your diary. Excellent well written observations on the numbers and some smashing photos as always (the one of the female Marbled White under the ox eye daisy is a real beauty) 😊 .

Your assessment of the Marbled White holding its own, borne out by good coverage in your diary, raised a gut feeling concern however, about my own sightings of this species 😊 . Having sifted through all my 2014 pictures I didn't find a single MW photo 😊 . I do remember seeing them when we were at Collard Hill on the 22nd of June and they were particular flighty. As we were focussed on looking for Large Blue, and were also distracted by a female Cloudie and a 'rare' Painted Lady, they didn't get a look in. Though still plenty of time the holiday abroad in July meant I was away for the peak in their flight period. Can't remember seeing any at the Map site either but that would've been at the back end of their season.

Along with Dark Green Fritillary, this was a species which slipped off the radar last year 😊 ...not to be repeated.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Mar-15 06:42 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I mooch about pretending to take photos of another species and then I suddenly turn and click away at the Wall before it realises 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I reckon it was a Wall now as the floght was similar, orit could have been a Painted Lady 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 We'll try for plenty of DGFs this year 😊

As the season seems to be getting under way I better get a wriggle on and finish up my winter savers 😊

Moths of Downshay Part 4

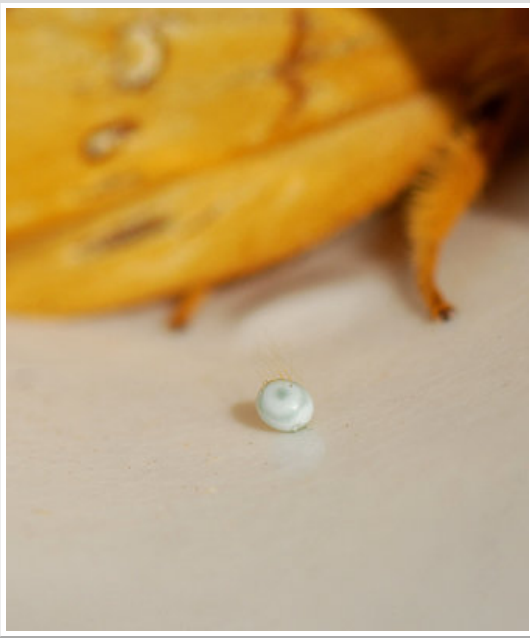
When I returned from my sabbatical back in Dorset I had a lot of Butterfly and Moth photos to sort through which was a nice chore, if there is such a thing. However it also meant that I missed out one or two of my moth shots so they got a little out of sync.

The main one was a cracking female Drinker moth. It was the same morning as the Studland trip and I had spied her first but left her until last as she seemed like she wasn't going anywhere plus I'd gotten some great shots of a female Drinker the year before. She was really gorgeous and was resting low down on the toilet block wall so eventually once I'd dealt with all the other captures I went back for her. A tiny little nudge with my finger and she bumbled her way in to the cup which I then gently carried up to the car.

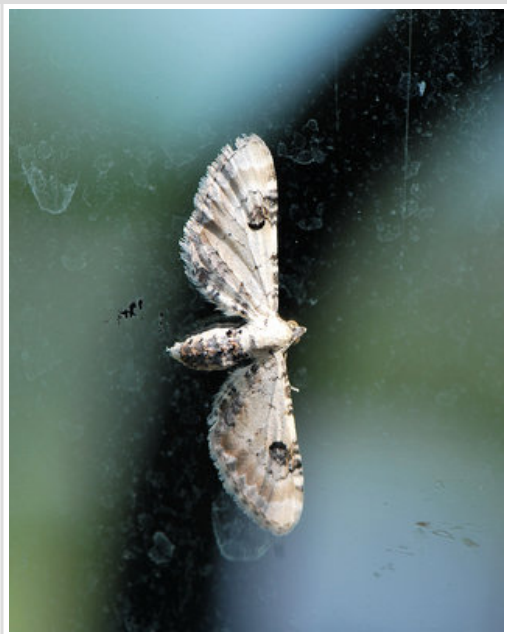
Once back in my 'mobile studio' I carefully lifted the lid off and there she was tucked up at the bottom of the cup and she'd deposited a single egg. I didn't know what the caterpillars fed on so I took a few shots and then released her as quickly as I could only it wasn't as easy as that as she decided to cling to my daughters' leg rather than flying free! In the end we offered her a low branch in a tree and she transferred herself ever so slowly from the leg to her tree.







After the great day at the beach we returned and I've already covered the moths that I found that evening so it is to our final day. There were plenty of moths that morning but my favourite by far was a tiny little Pug. It's markings reminded me of the under wing of a pale Buzzard a similarity accentuated by the shape of the wings and the manner in which they were held.



After our trip out I found one last moth down at the toilet block - to complete the set finally a male Drinker!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 09-Mar-15 11:27 PM GMT

Some interesting moths there, Wurzel.

Ironic that the Drinker was found in a toilet block. 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 10-Mar-15 07:23 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 You don't want to know what they were drinking 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Maximus, 11-Mar-15 04:05 AM GMT

I've finally caught up on your diary, Wurzel. You always keep some fabulous photos up your sleeve for your end of year report.

The Valesina and the Marsh fritillary ab photos in particular, are simply stunning 😊👍

All the best,

Mike.

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 11-Mar-15 06:04 AM GMT

**"Wurzel" wrote:**

You don't want to know what they were drinking

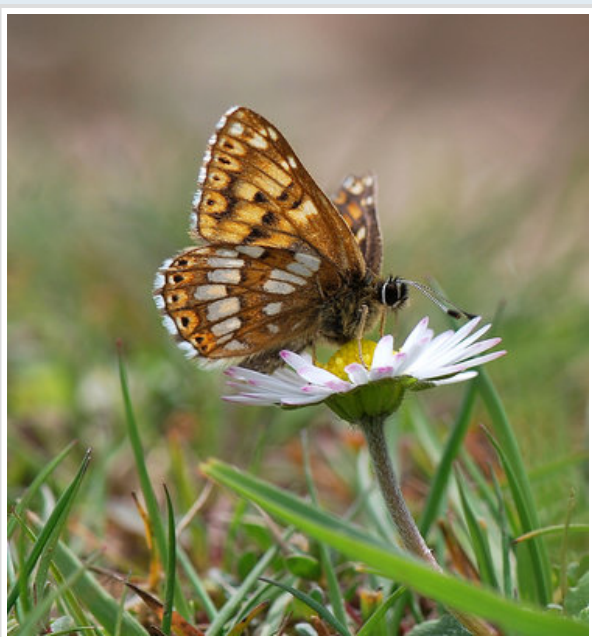
I think I already **do**, Wurzel.

Shades of His Majesty, I assume?

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 13-Mar-15 07:39 AM GMT

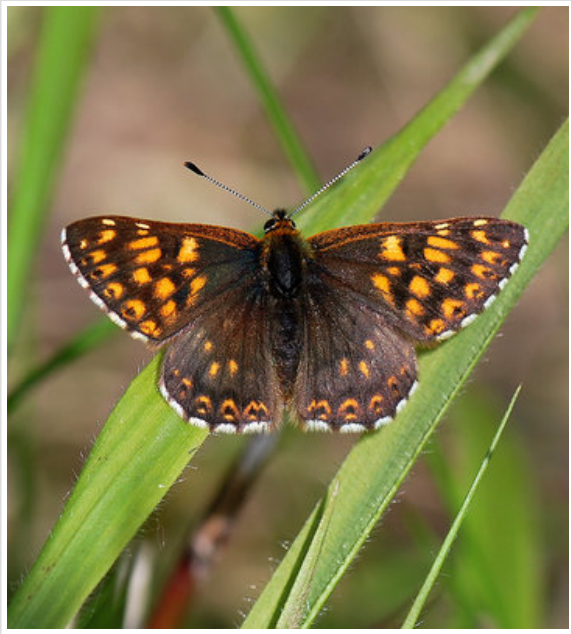
Cheers David 😊 It certainly seemed that way 😊



Metalmarks

"Almost a month early!?" When I checked my records for this year and the last this is what it worked out as. Caution is needed with this date though as although I'm in no doubt that they were out early so was I. As far as I was aware my first of the year at Bentley Wood was one of the first emerged at that site.

One thing that interested me this year was the contrast in colour between those found at Woodland sites and those from the 'grasslands'. My first in woodland was much darker, almost black when the light caught it. Those on grass at my Duke site seemed paler by comparison, a bit like the difference between milk and dark chocolate.



*Woodland*



*Grassland*

My Duke site held good numbers and also threw up the full gamut of wear and tear from tired and faded to one late Duchess resplendent and glowing orange. I guess when there are so many Dukes flitting around you it's hard to reconcile this thought with their fragility and scarcity. All in all another good year.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 13-Mar-15 09:11 PM GMT

Great photo's Wurzel as usual, no Butterflies here yet, much to cold, it's great to see your Duke photo's because I'm planning my visit to Gaits Barrow, just sent for my permit 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 14-Mar-15 03:00 AM GMT

Good to see those lovely Dukes, Wurzel. Only a couple of months before they'll be about again. 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by NickMorgan, 14-Mar-15 06:28 AM GMT

What great little butterflies. It is a species that I would love to see. I wonder how long it would take them to spread up here!!

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 17-Mar-15 06:47 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck tracking the Duke and Duchess down 😊

Cheers David - I can barely wait 😊

Cheers Nick 😊 I'm not sure of the northern most range but they are around at Gait Barrows? I'd hazard a guess at 25 years (no science, no knowledge



just a punt! 😊)

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 21-Mar-15 04:47 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel, doing some catching up again, great Duke photos 😊

Interestingly, the Dukes that I have seen previously at Prestbury Hill have tended to be lighter like your 'grassland' one whereas those that I see posted from Sussex often look darker like your 'woodland' example.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Mar-15 06:39 AM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 Interesting obs I'll have to keep my eyes peeled this year to see if I pick up any differences 😊

The Hairstreaks



I did manage to see four of the five UK Hairstreaks this year but as I was only lucky enough to get photos of two of them I will have to fill the subsequent pages with them to make up the numbers.

35 Green Hairstreak, 18-04-2014 Sidbury Hill

I reckon that the Greenstreaks had a great year. Obviously this could just be personal bias as I had a great year with the Greenstreak. It seems that my days of death are finally over and the Green one and I have made peace and come to an understanding. They will appear before my very eyes and I won't go around the countryside cursing their name and smashing branches into Hawthorns \*!

However self-satisfaction aside I still feel that Greenstreaks put in a very good showing. At my regular sites for this species (get me "regular sites") they were well up. The only reason I didn't see any at Martin Down and more to do with not visiting than them not being there. In fact it went one better than that for me with my first ever Larkhill Greenstreak. I had a feeling that they would be on site as the habitat is almost right - not at the bottom of a slope but everything else ticks the boxes.

As with most species this year I didn't have to wait as long for them this year as they were over three weeks earlier than in 2013. This still wasn't as good as in 2012 when they were reported in March but was still nice and early. This could be why I've struggled with them in the past - I've waited too long.

\*NB this is a total fabrication for comedic effect.



36 Brown Hairstreak, 09-08-2014 Shipton Bellinger

I was a little worried about the Brostreaks at first this year. I paid an early visit to Shipton, almost a fortnight earlier than last year and they played hard to get at first, with both a male and female staying out of reach of my lens. Perseverance paid off and as I was leaving a fresh male landed low down. I thought then that my luck was changing but on my second visit despite walking as much of the site as possible and hanging around a large Ash I managed only fleeting glimpses of a male right at the top of the tree. It wasn't until my third visit and third time lucky that I got the proper Brostreak experience. By the end of a three hours at Shipton Philzoid and I had found at least 11 individuals the majority of which were at the hotspot but there were others scattered here and there on the way to pique our interest. Plus I had the pleasure of watching one female ovi-positing and photographing the egg when she was complete.

Because of this I think they had a great year in 2014 as despite my earlier tribulations over the three visits I saw more than I ever have. I can't wait for next year now.





37 Purple Hairstreak, 06-07-2014 Bentley Wood

I didn't do too well with Purps this year. I struggled to find His Nibbs managing only glances and it was the same with the other Purp – the Hairstreak variety. They were one of the few species that broke the mould with my first sighting almost month later than last year. Mind you they were probably about I just couldn't find any. Bentley Wood is a large site and when I did see them there were only a couple so a pretty disappointing year for me and the Purp which was tempered only by seeing them at a new site whilst visiting the Worcester contingent of my in-laws. I'm not sure if my views would be reflected by others? I think one season I need to forsake all others and concentrate all efforts just on Purple Hairstreaks.

38 White-letter Hairstreak, 21-06 Bentley Wood

As they are our most under-recorded butterfly it was tricky for me to make the correct judgements for this species. I saw more than on my first ever encounter but it wasn't exactly a vintage year with only 4 or 5 seen on one visit and all were up high and they were about a fortnight earlier. Judging by other reports they seemed to have an unspectacular year but whether this was because they were flying under the radar I can't tell? Also I sometimes wonder if we butterflies work on trends. I remember a couple of years back there were lots of shots of Whitters from a particular site where they regularly came down to Thistles. The following year many more people went to the site including myself and there were plenty of reports from that year. Yet this year the trend wasn't set and so there didn't seem to be that many Whitter encounters. Just a thought of course...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 22-Mar-15 05:47 PM GMT

Wurzel, your close up of the Green Hair Streak is fantastic, I love it, I think it's one of my favourite Butterflies because it's so cute 😊 I've yet to see the other's (hope fully this year) I'll have some traveling to do for the Brown HS but that's Butterflying 😊

We've got the other two locally it's just finding where they are that's the problem, like you I seemed to have mixed my times up because when I've gone to said sites , no luck, not to worry try, try, again they say, all the best Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Mar-15 07:02 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I'm hoping to find more Greenstreaks at Larkhill his year. The timing issue seems to be getting wore by the year things re either early or late and rarely fit in the time frame given in the books 😊 The best bet is to check the local branch websites and make a move as soon as you can once the initial sightings have been recorded 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 27-Mar-15 03:40 AM GMT

hi Wurzel,

You have an image of a MALE Brown Hairstreak 🐛🐛.

At my favourite site only the females oblige for the camera.

The Purple Hairstreak, however can be seen from my patio ( with binoculars). 😊

Lovely shots!  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Mar-15 05:31 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Shipton has been quite reliable for male Brostreaks – I've photographed them there for the last three years. Saying that this year now I probably won't get a sniff of one! 😊😊

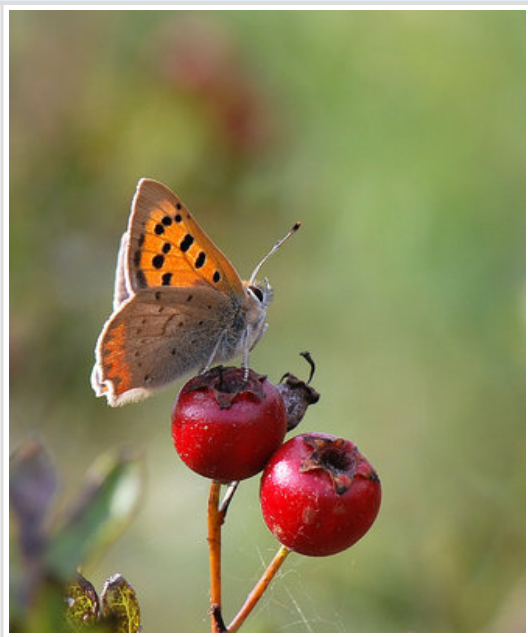


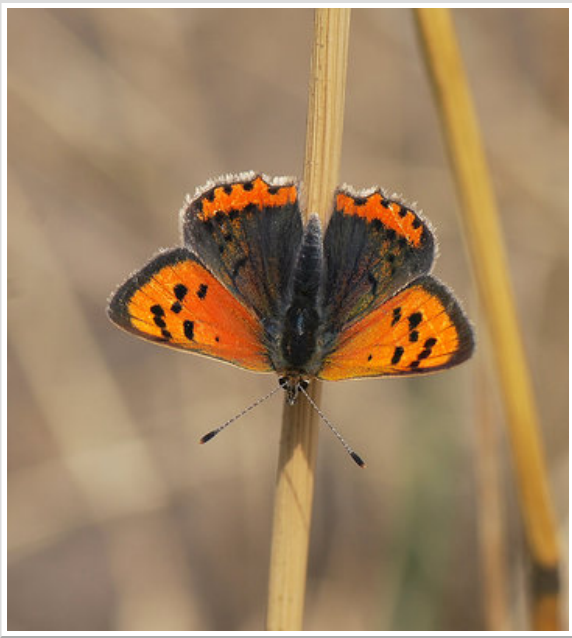


39 Small Copper, 03-05 Martin Down

My first 'fuzz' was 22 days earlier this year which is probably a mixture of them emerging earlier and me getting out and looking earlier. In terms of numbers this is a tricky one to gauge as it has a long flight season and is also one of the 'common' species. By that I mean that it isn't restricted to a particular habitat or geographical location. It's one of those species that you don't set out to specifically see, they're a welcome bonus. Therefore a good way of trying to judge their fortunes is to recall how many different sites I've seen them at. On this basis I believe the Small Copper had a good year as I found them at 10 different locations.

They also had a good showing in their final brood and so made great subjects for me into September and beyond. From the various sites Blue Badgers also featured prominently this year with almost 40% of the individuals seen showing some form of blue. I'm not sure if this is statistically significant or if it is an observation mirrored by others but what felt like a gut guess was evidenced in my sighting notes.





40 Small Blue, 15-05 Cotley Hill

I felt that this species struggled this year as they were only present at two of the five sites I found them at last year. Also when I did see them there weren't so many. Also despite being 10 days earlier I didn't see any second brood individuals in 2014. Of those that I did see not many had the full complement of spots on the under wing. I'm wondering if this is more down to me either developing a slight mania for seeing variation in spotting or suffering from visual disturbances or whether this is a usual form of variation?



41 Silver-studded Blue, 15-06 Slop Bog

My first Silver Studs were a good fortnight early this year at my usual first site the wonderfully named Slop Bog. Possibly because I saw them earlier this

year they weren't in such large numbers as they were only just getting going and I only saw two females on my first visit. I would have loved to have gotten back to Slop Bog just so I could have my usual experience; meandering through the heather, the sun beating down and the Silver Studs drifting up and over the heath from beneath at each footfall. As it was there were reasonable numbers but not to the scale as previously encountered later in the season. The early start didn't seem to be the detriment of the Silver Studs as I also found a few whilst busy with my first Graylings at Godshill at the end of July. These were mainly females who were getting on a bit which was to be expected as they emerge later than the males. Because of this reasonably long flight period and despite not experiencing them at their peak I reckon the Silver Studs had a good year on the whole.



42 Brown Argus, (05-05 Duke site?) 16-05 The Devenish

I think I saw my first Brown Argus at my Duke site almost a month earlier this year than last but it was a fleeting view and I couldn't be sure if the silver flash was a Brown Argus or whether it was a moth of some description as it was gone before I'd really noticed it. However I had a definite BA two weeks later (and a fortnight earlier than last year) at The Devenish. After repeated visits to this site over the course of the season I was really pleased to see so many BAs here and they lasted right through until the end of the season. And this seemed to hold for the other sites that I visited and so I think that they had a slightly better year this year than last, which if I recall was also slightly better than the year before. One real observable piece of evidence for their up-turn in fortunes was that I saw the return of the Brown Argus to Five Rivers - for me the undoubted Brown Argus highlight of 2014!



43 Common Blue, 15-05 Marshie site

As with most species the Common Blue made an early start to 2014 with the average fortnight ahead of schedule with my first at my Marshie site. In fact the individual I saw had probably been out even earlier than I recorded as his wings had lost their lustre, they looked thinner with the under-side markings showing through and the margins were looking very threadbare.

When I consider how well they fared in terms of their numbers I'm not disappointed in my reckoning that they held their own. Last year they seemed to be bouncing back after a successive run of poor years and so were living up to their name; Common, and so it was this year. I found them across the board at almost every site that I visited - it could have been a full house but they were replaced with Silver Studs at Slop Bog and Godshill! In fact I saw them in some unusual places this year; around the ruins of Corfe Castle, by the tap at Downshay, on the running track during Sports Day (if it hadn't of distracted me I'm sure I would won the 100m relay) and half way up a cliff near Newquay. There was also, as like last year, a male that was confusing itself with a Small Copper as it was hanging out around Aberystwyth Police Station and two females seemed to love a debris strewn bit of verge on the edge of a building site in Ffosyffin that was only a metre square. Hopefully they will have another prosperous year in 2015 and I look forward to the odd places they will hopefully turn up at.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 28-Mar-15 05:59 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

RE. Small Blue. I note that we visited Cotley Hill 5 days after you on the 20th May.

The main reason for the visit was the Marsh Frit. But we didn't have to look too hard to find the Small Blues, enough to keep the camera happy.

We didn't explore the hill itself, as there were enough Butterflies in that area to the left of the main path at the base of the hill. What a superb site !.

As for fidgety Brimstones, at least they are good practice for Wall Browns etc. 😊

All the best,  
TREVOR

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 28-Mar-15 06:17 AM GMT

Nice reminder of some species that we ought to be seeing very soon, Wurzel.

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 28-Mar-15 06:20 AM GMT

Just catching up again Wurzel, great reports and photos 😊

I too saw more blue spotted Small Coppers last year than ever before. In fact most of the ones that I saw had some degree of blue spotting, even if only slightly. The ones with no hint of spotting at all were definitely in the minority around my patch.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Hoggers, 28-Mar-15 07:07 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, beautiful photographs and a thoughtful report as always. Can I single out for special praise the Small Copper perched on a Hawthorn berry? That's my Pin Up Poster favourite!

I too see good numbers of Coppers who are fully paid up members of the Blue Badge Club but these last two years I wondered if I was going mad in that I seemed to see fewer in the first generation but more as the season progressed ?

I think what I will do this year is try to keep a note of how many I see, where I see them and when.

Best wishes,

Hoggers.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Apr-15 06:49 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Perhaps I missed their peak emergence 😊

Cheers David 😊 We just need the Jetstream to \*\*ger off a bit and things could really get started...

Cheers Neil 😊 I'm glad it wasn't just me 😊

Cheers Hoggers for your kind comment 😊 I reckon you could be onto something there - I'll try and remember to note down when and where I see any Blue Badgers - the problem is that I get so easily distracted 😊😊

April 2015

A bit of positive visualisation... 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 02-Apr-15 04:09 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel;

If you have Camberwell Beauties in Salisbury i'm moving in !! 😊

TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 03-Apr-15 06:56 PM GMT

Love the photos Wurzel, nothing here yet it's been too cold, milder for the Easter weekend so I'm hopeful Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Apr-15 04:43 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'll keep my eyes peeled – there was one nearby two years ago...get those Tea crates ready 😊😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 I hope the Easter Bunny brings you butterflies along with the Chocolate eggs 😊

The Blues – Part 2



44 Chalkhill Blue, 18-07-2014 The Devenish

The local Chalkhills really took their time for me but I was adamant that I wanted my first Chalkie to come from The Devenish so I was prepared to wait. Possibly because the slope they are found on there is West facing rather South facing they were slightly later than at most other sites. Saying that, my first was still 6 days earlier than in 2013 so the overall pattern for most species was continued. In terms of numbers I was slightly disappointed this year

as though there were plenty to see at the three sites that I normally see them at they didn't seem to be in such a high numbers as previously. Instead of a cloud at Stockbridge there was more of a 'selection of puffs of smoke' that would arise from each footfall.

This is another species which I need to spend some quality time with this year as I'd love to get a lot more photos of some of the aberrant forms. I've previously found a male with the spotting missing and this year I got a few shots of a male with orange spotting on the upper hind wing margin and I'd like to build up my 'collection' (yet another species to obsess over 😊).



45 Adonis Blue, 25-05-2014 Marshie Site

So not only did my Marshie site hold a fantastic number of Marsh Frits and Greenstreaks along with Walls and Small Blues but it also yielded my first



Adonis Blue of 2014. In fact on that one visit I think it produced possibly 6 firsts for Philzoid and the first Large Skipper for the county. Again the Adonis Blues were about a fortnight earlier than last year.

I felt that the Adonis, unlike their cousins the Chalkies, had a good year with a slight increase in their numbers. There were certainly more at The Devenish this year and my Duke Site was crawling with them. In fact they were so numerous here perhaps my opinion has been swayed? One thing I did notice was that the first brood seemed more numerous than the second – though this could be because I didn't witness them at their peak the second time round?



46 Holly Blue, 15-04-2014 Llanachaeron

This year felt like a better year for the Holly Blue as they seemed to be ever so slightly on the up. For the past couple of years I've felt like they were struggling yet this year whilst I saw them at probably a similar number of sites there seemed to be a few more about. But only a few so perhaps they are on the upward trend of the parasitic cycle. Like most other species they emerged early in 2014 by almost 3 weeks.



Large Blue, 22-06 Collard Hill

I can't really comment on whether this species was earlier or later than normal from personal experience as this was the first year that I saw this species. In fact this was third time lucky as I have spent the last couple of years umming and ahing about whether I should drive into Somerset to see Large Blues. For some reason I had gotten it into my head that Collard Hill was miles away – yet actually it took just about an hour to get there.

I had read that the site abounded with them and all you had to do to photograph them was turn up with your camera. It didn't turn out like that however as Collard was almost bereft of the Large One – so much so that the official Blog carried a warning of their low numbers. When Philzoid and I did risk the visit we were rewarded with only two females from almost an entire day of searching. Both only provided closed wing shots but I was able to observe the low, fast and flurried flight revealing the almost purple colour from the upper wings. Saying that the closed wing view is still a cracker and the contrast between the white/powder blue of the ground colour and the large, sharp black spots is stunning.

It seems that the Large Blue had a reasonable year despite the poor showing at Collard as good numbers were reported from Daneways this year so perhaps next year I should try there instead (hopefully it's roughly the same distance as the trip to Collard)? Perhaps the dry and cold start to the year didn't do them any favours?





My 2014...

First up the lows 😞 ...

- I had a poor showing of a couple of species this year including Large Whites and Purple Hairstreaks.
- I missed out on photos of His Nibbs (who was playing hard to get), White-letters and Purple Hairstreaks.
- In general I had difficulty with catching up with stuff at times it was a trying year and was quite hard work at times?

Enough maudlin on with the Highs! 😊

- My favourite outings were visiting my Marshie site and going for the Map with Philzoid.
- Starting the year with plenty of visits to Five Rivers with my daughter and bucket loads of Small Tortoiseshell.
- Wall Browns – a great year for me with this species
- Finally 'ticking' Large Blue.

Targets for 2015

- Having gone for and succeeded with Large Blue this year in 2015 I really want to finally go for and photograph Heath Frits.
- To spend a lot more time with Chalkhills.
- To get more shots of the Purple varieties.
- To try and get a Foreign Visit in....

Have a goodun, 2015 that is!

Wurzel

p.s now I can start my 2015 posts proper – only 8 or 9 behind now! 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 06-Apr-15 06:07 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel, nice wrapping up of your 2014 reports 😊

If you are starting this season already behind in your posts, how far behind will you be by the end? 😊😞

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 07-Apr-15 02:40 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, hope you get your Heath Frits, I might miss them this year, I'm not going to Kent while August, but if they're late I'll stand a chance 😊  
I did all right with the Butterflies this weekend (at last) also got my chocolate egg 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-15 06:41 AM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 I'll try and get caught up as soon as I can 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I hope you get the Heaths 😊

Five Rivers 07-03-2015

Saturdays now pass in a whirl of two trips to the swimming pool (as both my daughters are swimming at different times), then there's the trip to the vets for the cat food, followed by the trip to town for the banks, market and library. Added to this list today were other errands to run and starting to strip wall paper through the whole house in readiness for Lime plastering. Somehow though, I managed to crow bar in a free thirty minutes at Five Rivers with my older daughter.

As we arrived the sun peered through the clouds and started to hang around a bit so we headed straight to the Banks. As we made our way along the narrowest of paths amongst the new growth of Stinging Nettles the wind tore across the river and up the hill. When it did the temperature would drop noticeably and just as I was pointing this out to my daughter when a leaf fluttered out of nowhere and dropped onto the path. Only it wasn't a leaf it was my first butterfly of the year - Small Tortoiseshell. It was a tired looking insect with one hind wing missing but I didn't care and as I knelt to take a few shots a wave of calm passed over me and so returned 'that' feeling that has been missing since last November. A moment of stillness, the warmth radiating up from the ground, the sun on my back and my mind entirely absorbed by the scene in front of me.



Later as we carried on round another Small Tort bombed down the hill this one was complete but it didn't stop for a photo. It was an incongruous sight to see as a slight head turn and there were a small group of Redwings - the old and the new at one site. On the way back we checked out a couple of the roof lining squares to see if there was anything underneath. One held a very fast moving Shrew (or rather it didn't hold it), another a collection of snails and the last one was hiding a Toad much to the delight of my daughter.



So one Small Tort does not a spring make but it's a start at least! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 07-Apr-15 06:53 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Blow the dust off the camera , and give the shutter button finger a work out !

I saw some Cuckoo flower and Cowslips today, so OT's and Dukes will follow 😊

All the best

TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 07-Apr-15 06:43 PM GMT

No Cuckoo flowers here yet Wurzel, I don't think the Orange Tips will arrive here for a couple of weeks yet, mind you if it rains and things start growing better and quicker you never know 😊 Glad you've made a start with the Butterflies, I'm off this afternoon to Whalley Abbey may be I'll see something there (hope fully) Goldie 😊



## Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 07-Apr-15 08:08 PM GMT

Great that you're off the mark, Wurzel 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Mike Robinson, 08-Apr-15 02:33 AM GMT

Well done with the Small Tortoiseshell. A nice couple of pictures.  
I had to smile when you mentioned kneeling down; with my knees my days of doing that are long gone.

## Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 09-Apr-15 06:32 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
It won't be long before other species appear around here, but for now it's Comma after Comma.  
Even when I go to areas where they are not usually found.

All the best  
TREVOR.

## Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 09-Apr-15 06:39 AM GMT

Nice start with that "Small Threequartershell", Wurzel. I'm eagerly awaiting your sudden sprint to come bang up to date! 😊  
(And I do sympathize with Mike's knees – I'm sure the butterflies can hear the creaking as I try to get that bit nearer...)  
Dave

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Apr-15 06:47 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I've finally gotten my Commas, Red Admiral, Peacocks and have added OT and Holly Blue but no Cuckoo Flower yet – still hopefully by next week, I might have caught up by then! 😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 I hope the Abbey paid off.  
Cheers Mike 😊 And thanks for sending one of our OTs over my way 😊  
Cheers Mike 😊 I'm getting my daughter tarined up so she can lift me up in a few yers time when my knees do pack in – they're in need of WD40 now so I don't know how much longer they've got 😊  
Cheers Dave 😊 I'm just warming up ready for the genlte amble – I do like to be at least 3 weeks behind on my PD 😊😊

Five Rivers 14-03-2015

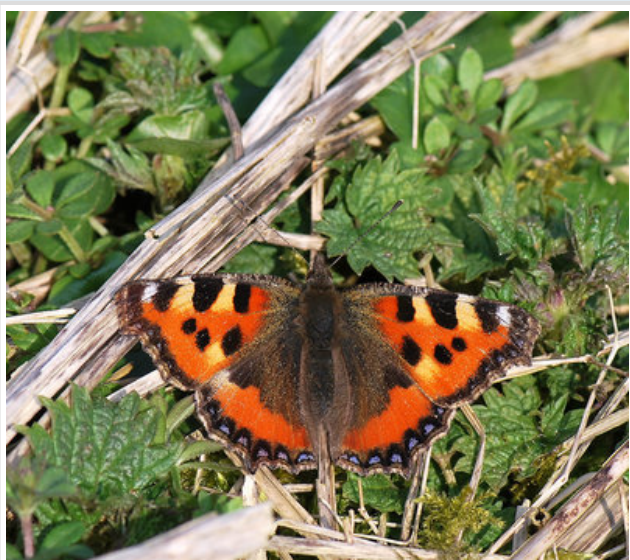
After the brief foray the previous weekend had yielded me my first butterfly of 2015 I was eager to get out again. However the two 'w's that are the bane of my life conspired against me; work was ridiculous, there just aren't enough hours in the day to plan, mark and do all those other little jobs that you're asked to do and the weather wasn't that great either.

Still after all the usual chores were completed I set out with my older daughter to Five Rivers. She is something of a Talisman for me and I will ask her as we set off whether we will see a species or not. If she answers quickly the affirmative then I generally see that species, the slightest hesitation often means it will be hard work or I will draw a blank. I know this kind of superstitious twaddle is nonsense but the success rate of this technique goes beyond coincidence and my daughter likes this silly ritual so I still use it. Today when I mentioned Brimstone and Red Admiral there was a deafening silence (had she heard me or was she too busy daydreaming and gazing out of the window?) but Small Tortoiseshell got a response.

Once on site we headed to Comma Corner straight away but the breeze was strong and the cloud hid the sun so we doodled along the Banks. We were about half way along when the breeze dropped, the sun came out and the temperature increased almost to the point of not needing a coat, Bumble Bees bumbled buzzing by. These are two of my indicators that I look out for early in the season as Bumble Bees and not needing a coat often mean suitable conditions for Butterflies. And so it was now as a Small Tortoiseshell suddenly appeared in a place where 2 seconds before there wasn't one. Because of the wing damage I was able to recognise this as my 'first' from the week before. It was still quite distant but I took a shot just in case – a good ploy at this time of year when a single sighting may be all you get on a trip out.



Then there was another slightly further away, as I scanned around it caught my eye and I swear that it 'reverse faded' into view. Then there was a third.



We then both spent the next 20 minutes or so alternately wandering back and forth along the Banks or waiting for the sun to come back out from behind the cloud or the breeze to drop. Each time that it would the butterflies would appear from places where they clearly hadn't been just seconds before. In the end we thought that we had better head home and save my wife from the clutches of my younger daughter 😊 and so we made one last tour of the Banks before rounding Comma Corner (still no Comma) and a last final Small Tortoiseshell bombed by as if to wish us farewell. Including this last one and looking through the photos I reckon there were about 5 different Small Torts present so things are a little behind last year but at least we've started!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 09-Apr-15 07:24 AM GMT

Lots of activity there, Wurzel.

You realise that you are risking actually catching up with your personal diary? 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Mike Robinson, 10-Apr-15 01:48 AM GMT

Some lovely pictures.

Thanks for noticing my Peacocks yesterday.

Mike ...

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-15 07:11 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 I don't think I will get caught up as everytime I sort a set of photos and write a post ready I head out teh enxt day and get more photos!  
😁😁

Cheers Mike 😊 No worries!

Work 20-03-2015

It felt like Spring was finally in the air and so as luck would have it I was stuck in work with 6 lessons out of a possible 6 to teach and no PPAs in which I might be able to nip off and take a few photos about the site. As if to rub salt in the wound a male Brimstone (my second of the year) spent the 2 lessons before lunch patrolling around the quad which my lab overlooks. Even worse than this, he kept resting on the small strand of Ivy which is only three steps away from my lab 😞.

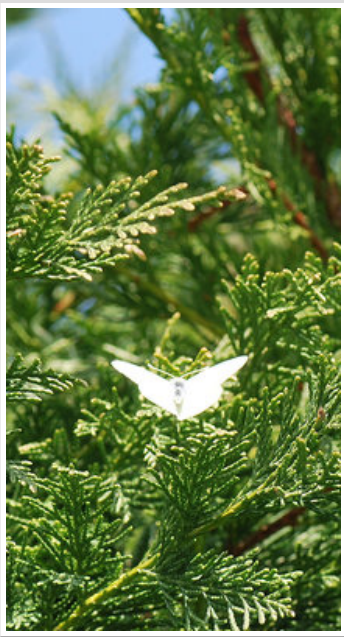
Fed up watching his antics I waited for lunch and tried my hardest to avert my eyes from the windows. When lunch came the Brimstone that was outside the window and had kept stopping decided that enough was enough and as I unclipped my lens cap and took the first of the three steps he gently took off, gave an agonisingly slow circuit round the Ivy and then drifted up and over the building and out of sight. It felt like he'd just flipped me the bird! 🙄

Teeth grinding I went back though the building and scanned along the car park but he was already gone. A darker flickering movement did catch my eyes and one small area of gravel next to the Transformer revealed itself to e a Small Tortoiseshell. I slowly approached and it seemed quite happy sunbathing. My breathing slowed as I sidled in took a few shots and then sidled back without the butterfly being obviously aware of my presence.





As I was enjoying that meditative moment a small shadow passed overhead and looking up at an angle I spied a blinding white butterfly. I followed it along the Leylandi and it landed very high up. I was only just able to stretch my arms out and reel off a few snaps. They didn't come out to well due to a combination of factors including the fact that the angle I was photographing it from reflected the maximum amount of light and so it looks like a white blur. I didn't mind as it was my first Small White of the year and something of a surprise beating Comma, Red Admiral and Peacock onto my year list.



*A poor record shot*

I headed back in to give up the rest of my lunch time for a revision session but at least I'd had those 4 or 5 minutes of tranquillity.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 10-Apr-15 03:57 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

You say that you have a lot going on at the moment. Lets hope its to do with Large Tortoiseshells or Scarce Tortoiseshells , as both have been seen in Sussex this week !! (see Sussex BC website , sightings page ).

Good hunting,  
TREVOR.

### **Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 11-Apr-15 06:10 AM GMT

I reckon he's out and about busy tracking down Map early stages to show off over next winter 😊

### **Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 11-Apr-15 06:32 AM GMT



Sorry to disappoint you guys – I was just revelling in spending time with my girls over the holidays and also feeling quite chuffed that more is getting done to the house – who knows in 6 weeks we might have plaster on the walls 😊😊

Five Rivers 21-03-2015

What happened? Things were building nicely – one week there was only a single Small Tort, then the next there were 5, I was on yearly count of three species and then today when I visit Five Rivers it was freezing cold. I was only really visiting as a recce as I was interested to see if I could make it across to the Banks, do a circuit or three and make it back to the Leisure Centre in time to help my older daughter get changed after her swimming lesson. The answer to this is yes it is possible, all those years honing my skills on 5 minute stop-offs are paying dividends.

Due to the cold I didn't expect much and there was only a single Small Tort hunkering down amongst the growing nettles buffeted by the breeze and shivering possibly to get it's flight muscles up to temp so that it could find somewhere less exposed.



On the way back there were a flock of Redwings still hanging around on the football pitch. As I watched them hopping their way across the field I wondered if this was a sign of things to come, would the cooler weather be around for a bit longer, did they know something that I didn't? It seemed odd seeing a winter visitor and a spring emerger on the same day and in the wrong order?



Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 12-Apr-15 08:24 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, just catching up on postings, I never got to the Abbey some thing came up and that was that. 😊 I have had lots of sightings in my own back garden so i've been quite happy 😊

Your STS photo's are great, I've been looking for Whites no luck here yet although the've been seen in Lanc's just have to keep looking they certainly won't be out today we've got strong winds rain 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

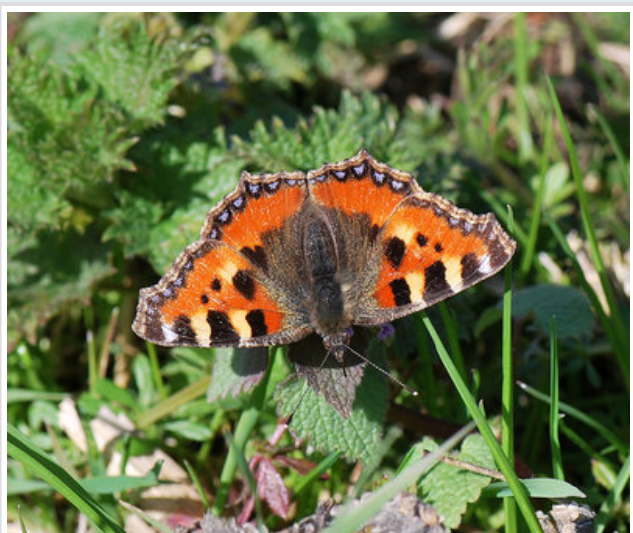
by Wurzel, 13-Apr-15 06:40 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I reckon things will really get going now so it won't be long before the Whites are out in full force.

Five Rivers 22-03-2015

Yesterday afternoon the last of our Lathe and Plaster ceilings came down. Again it was hot and dusty work but I'm getting the hang of it now and the whole job was finished in 4 hours. As a reward I headed out today over lunch to make the most of the weak spring sunshine at Five Rivers.

Comma corner drew a blank again as I headed onto the Banks but I did keep looking back at it wistfully, I just had a feeling that a Comma would turn up there. It didn't though so I spent some time wandering the Banks. There were plenty of Small Tortoiseshells around to keep me company they were hard to count as they would buzz all around. I reckoned about 11 for the whole site as the Banks held 6 individuals in one view at one point and there were a few more flying about and further on as well.







Further on round I stopped by the hedge that marks the boundaries. A Brimstone, a male, flipped over from the neighbouring Allotments and slowly, teasingly slowly flew backwards and forwards along the hedge in tighter and tighter circuits. As it moved it lost altitude until eventually it flipped down. Now it was my turn to move slowly, teasingly slowly and lose altitude as I approached it.



Happy with the shots I reversed and as I did so another male flew over the hedge and both males chased after each other and were gone. Feeling a bit lonely I headed back to the Banks where the boisterous Small Tortoiseshells were having a ball. After another couple of laps of the Banks I headed home. As I approached Comma Corner a different looking butterfly approached. It was more ginger biscuit coloured than the reddish Small Tortoiseshells and also seemed to have a more direct flight with a heavier build. As it powered past I focused on it - my first Comma of 2015, and at Comma Corner too! 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 13-Apr-15 06:47 AM GMT

Lovely Beefly there Wurzel 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 13-Apr-15 11:43 PM GMT

Love that Bee Wurzel, you caught the flight just right, 😊

Last week I went up to Gaits Barrow I didn't see much but the weather was great, the usual early Butterflies were there , I hadn't get a Brimstone( couldn't get close enough to take any shots) so I'm still without my Brimstone 😞 Yours looks great a really great shot 🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 14-Apr-15 05:20 AM GMT

Nice variety of Small Tortoiseshells, Wurzel - and a rather good Brimstone to boot. Winding the time machine back, you were seeing more than I was three weeks ago! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel



by Wurzel, 15-Apr-15 06:44 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I've got a soft spot for Beeflies they do look kinda ridiculous 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Brimstones are usually really hard work at this time of year so I was dead chuffed that this one just sat there 😊😊

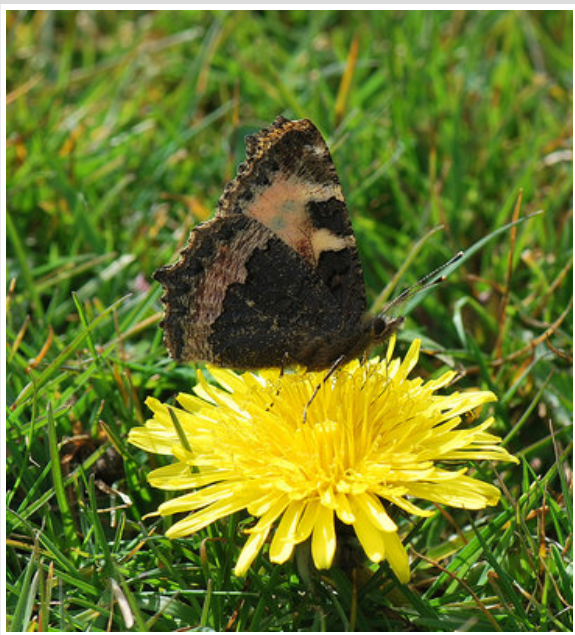
Cheers Dave 😊 There were plenty of butterflies but with a very restricted range of three species, still I've ticked off a couple more since 😊

Work 24-03-2015

Today came as something of a shock for me - for the first time since January I actually had a full lunch break all to myself! That means I've clocked up almost 40 hours since January; if only I was paid overtime 😊. Still as it was a nice day I grabbed my camera, stuffed a sandwich in me gob and headed out to follow the same route that I did regularly last season.

I was hoping for a Peacock or Red Admiral but in the end it was just Small Torts that kept leaping before my lens. As if to make up for the absence of their cousins the Small Torts appeared by the bucket load and on the walk there I counted 13. On the return journey the sun had come out more strongly and I had a count of 20 (which is the number I'll probably report).





Work 25-03-2105

What's happening? Are lunch breaks like buses? You don't get one for three odd months and then two come along at once? If I get one tomorrow I won't know what to do with myself - the shock will be too much for my cardiovascular system!

Today same I followed the same routine as yesterday - grab camera, sandwich in gob and walk same route. The weather wasn't as convivial today and the sun seemed a little shy, it kept hiding behind the clouds and only occasionally peeped out. But when it did come out so did the butterflies. Despite this I still got a good haul with 14 Small Torts today, the last of which was just outside my lab!







Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 15-Apr-15 05:00 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Glad you liked the snake shot , it was a fluke, when it was spotted my camera was switched off and it was only in view for about 10 secs. Just lucky !



Happy hunting,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 15-Apr-15 05:40 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, nice Tort's again your right about them I counted loads at Hall-Lee-Brook yesterday, more Peacocks as well, I did get an Holly Blue yesterday 😊 Quite pleased about that 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-15 06:45 AM GMT

No worries Trevor 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Back then Small Torts were pretty much my staple diet...butterfly photography wise 😊 And so it continued...

Middle Street 28-03-2015

After a few trips out to five Rivers my older daughter K decided that we should try our luck at Five Rivers. The day wasn't looking too crash hot but we set off anyway and as it was so cool, grey and windy we had the whole of the site to ourselves with not even a dog-walker in sight! We cut across the edge of the football pitch and headed towards the pond area which is more sheltered and while K watched for Minnows at the edge of the stream I checked out the dried pond right in the corner of the reserve. Nothing was about and even the most likely looking spots held nowt.

All of a sudden the cloud cleared and the sun came out. There was a noticeably increase in temperature and the wind dropped to the lightest of breezes. Where before there was nothing but old dried grass stems now there was a grounded pair of miniature orange kites. They both took off, rising it seemed with the temperature as if pulled skywards by a convection current, and headed in the direction of one of the gardens that backs onto the reserve. As these houses don't have a back garden fence, just relying on the natural water course to demark their properties, I watched the pair land at either end of a row of Daffs. They worked their way along the row until they met roughly in the middle and then they spiralled upwards locked in a scrap.





We completed our circuit of the pond and at least a further 3 Small Torts put in an appearance but they were very flighty and edgy. As we left the pond behind the sun dived back behind the clouds and remained there for the rest of the day. We didn't see a single butterfly after that, they disappeared with the sun. We didn't mind too much as for once we were in the right place at the right time so we took advantage of the only 20 minutes of sunshine all day!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

p.s I'm wondering if the reason for the reports of fewer Small Torts now is because they've just got on with things almost as soon as they came out from hibernation? Are we seeing more Peacocks because they came out later once the Small Torts started to wane?

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 16-Apr-15 03:19 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I think you are right that Small Torts. are the most uncommon of the hibernators. Around here there are fewer STs than Commas or Peacocks . Your last ST image is superb 😊 .

Happy hunting,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-Apr-15 04:13 AM GMT

Your photos are very good of the Small Tart's Wurzel, get me, I've started calling them Small Tart's now 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

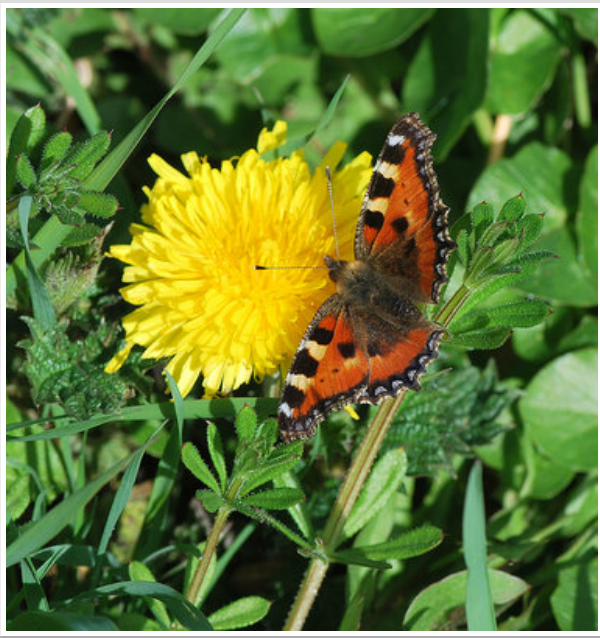
by Wurzel, 17-Apr-15 07:14 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 They do seem to play up to the camera 😊 😊

Out and About 31-03-2015

Today my girls were busy getting ready for our holiday to the Outlaws. As I had a free hour I headed over to five Rivers hoping to get onto the Comma at Comma Corner and so that's where I made for first. It would have been a wonderful piece of narrative if there was a Comma waiting for me but this is the real world and so there wasn't. There were still plenty of Small Torts just up from Comma Corner on the Banks though but as I have taken shot after shot of Small Torts from this site I found myself concentrating on trying to photograph a different aspect of their behaviour. I was hoping for some courtship but all were being very stand-offish so I had to persevere. In the end the 12 or so Small Torts that I saw pretty much displayed the same behaviour - bask, fly up when a neighbour gets too close, which in turn sets up the neighbour from the other side and so on. So I tried for a few shots at odd angles and then got something more interesting. A Small Tort started probing the soil with its proboscis presumably taking up salts.



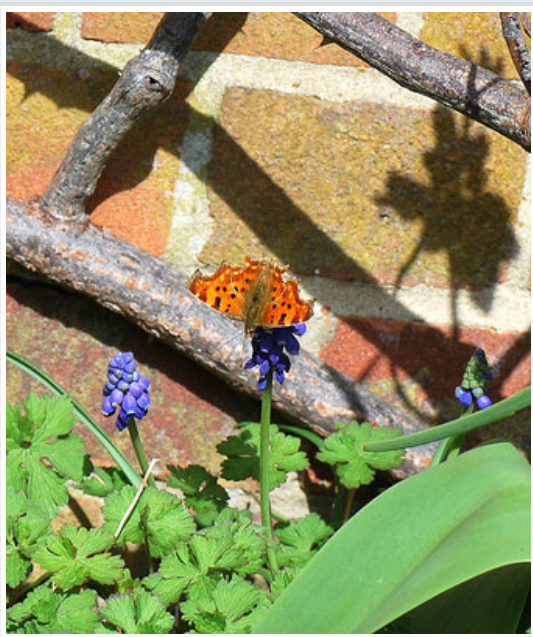
As I left and made my way back along the banks what should be bombing towards me from Comma Corner? Indeed a Comma, the wonders of narrative just a bit delayed. Unfortunately it didn't stop. Once back home the girls had finished their tasks and so we went to the park. I took my camera just in case and was rewarded with a slightly blustered Small Tort by the riverside, and then a second one later. As these individuals were at a different site I didn't worry about photographing something unusual.





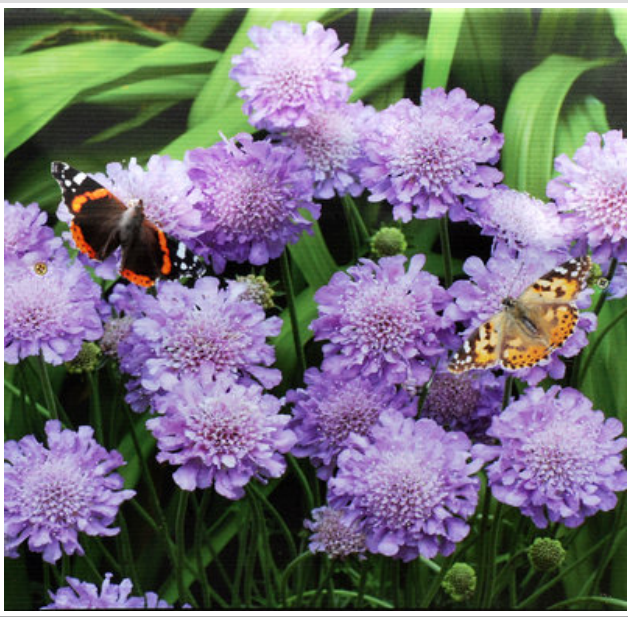


Later that afternoon I had to pop to town to do some errands and so I took my camera and loitered down the local streets on the return journey. Some of the small front gardens are little gems for wildlife and there are a couple at the end of one cul-de-sac that are particularly good. The first is very open with low growing, dense shrubs and heathers and the other had a nice assortment of flowering plants - really good nectar sources and both gardens have a good aspect so trap the sun. As I strolled up the pavement peering into other people's gardens a butterfly took off from the Heather in the end garden and landed next door. I thought it must have been a Small Tort but as I peered into the garden it revealed itself to be a Comma and one that appeared quite sparse in the marking department. I wanted to get in closer but the butterfly was staying right at the back of the garden so I risked the owners wrath and took two steps into the garden and leaned as far as I could to get a closer shot.





The next day a quick trip to the local garden centre meant that I was lucky enough to tick another species and get my first shot of another 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 17-Apr-15 05:55 PM GMT

Wurzel you're a brave man, it would take something truly special (perhaps a mating pair of Scarce Tortoiseshell) for me to contemplate stepping into someones garden uninvited with my camera.... or maybe thats just the effect of living in East London has on you!

**Re: Wurzel**

by kevlng, 17-Apr-15 08:25 PM GMT

Wurzel,

Love the Red Ad/Painted Lady combo. Can't wait to see the latter, as 2014 turned out very lean in the East of England (or at least where I was looking 😊)

Regards Kev

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 18-Apr-15 04:53 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I now have a picture in my head of you sneaking into gardens whilst the mission impossible theme tune plays in the background 😊

Great reports and photos as usual, nice one with the Red Admiral and Painted Lady. I have still not seen a RA this year but that is normal for me around here, I don't think many (if any) survive the winter in these parts.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 18-Apr-15 05:57 AM GMT

You really should have photoshopped the screw heads out, Wurzel 😄😄😄

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Apr-15 06:25 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😄 Most of the neighbours have seen me out with my camera and the garden was really small – literally two paces width, plus there wasn't a fence so if the owner did come out I'd act all indignant and make out that I'd tripped on their rockery and had fallen into the garden! 😄  
Cheers Neil and Kevling, I thought that might be the only chance I get of a Red Admiral this year – I've seen one (for real) and that's been it 😄  
Cheers Mike 😄 I was only being cheeky, if I'd photoshopped the screw heads out I would have been deliberately misleading 😄 Still Karma bit me in the bum, today would have been great for my Duke site but I spent pretty much the whole day hammering plaster off the walls 😞😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Apr-15 10:31 PM GMT

Love the photo's Wurzel, a Painted Lady as well as an Admiral 🍷 Great Goldie 😄

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 19-Apr-15 10:39 PM GMT

Hmmm. You had me fooled for a moment there, Wurzel, but I thought I'd seen the photo before somewhere... I think it was a packet of seeds 😄 Still, by the end of the summer you might have snapped that for real somewhere! The immigrants have started arriving, so let's hope for a few more Red Admirals soon. I'm still reliant on the increasingly decrepit overwintered ones. Lovely Tortoiseshells – you have far more of those than I do!

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Apr-15 06:54 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😄 I feel slightly embarrassed that my little bit of fun has been taken so seriously – check out the screws in the Admiral/Lady shot 😞  
Cheers Dave 😄 You are indeed correct the shot was of a seed advert display board. Everything else is kosher though 😄

Welsh Trip 04-04-2015

Despite driving up to the Outlaws on the Thursday it was two days before I could get out with my camera. Our first day in Wales was spent visiting various parts of the local area – the town centre of Aberaeron and also the swimming pool as surprise, surprise it was grey, cold and occasionally raining. 😞

The weather was starting to cheer a little by the Saturday and so we headed to Dolaucothi (is that the correct spelling) to the only remaining Romano-Welsh gold mine. It was great fun donning hard hats and lanterns, touring the mines and climbing out via the Indiana Jones route in the Victorian mine. Up at the Roman mine it was a different kettle of fish with huge workings and a tunnel entrance wide enough to fit a carriage through. There were also some strange Roman numerals, an upside down number 8 written as 'IIX' and probably the work of some humorous Manchester Uni students as well as a few web balls from a Cave spider.





Despite the sun and rising temperatures there was a definite dearth of butterflies here and so on our return home I grabbed my camera and headed up the Lane. The cottage on the corner has been renovated and the angry dog gone so I was free to admire the rockery which formed a combination of bank, wall and boundary. It threw up many different sorts of bees including representatives from *Andrena* and *Nomada* as well as Tawny Mining Bees, Red Mason Bees and the odd bumble bee too.



Further up the Lane I was hoping to pick up some butterflies and the first turn off on my left hand side looked like the best bet. It offered me shots of Green-veined White last season so I was hoping for something this time round. In fact I was hoping for anything to be honest as although it had only really been a couple of days it felt like an age since my last butterfly sighting. Just as I rounded the corner a butterfly flew across from one side of the road to the other.

"Why did the butterfly cross the road?"

"To cheer up Wurzell!" 😊

It turned out to be a Small Tort but I really didn't mind in the least it just felt good to get my lens onto a butterfly again.



On the walk back I stopped at the Rockery again and the bees put on a good show again possibly as a dessert after the main course of Small Tort?







Tomorrow is Llanachaeron and the weather seems to be set to improve slightly, here's hoping!

Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Apr-15 07:28 AM GMT

Easter Sunday – Llanachaeron

As the weather had finally turned we took the girls to Llanachaeron once we'd checked that the Easter Bunny had made a visit, luckily he had. While we waited for the Outlaws I checked out the boundary of the car park and there was a cracking Comma that finally posed long enough for me to get a few shots. In fact it really hung around as it was engrossed with taking fluid from a small puddle on a tree stump. I remember when I was a little lad watching the Small Tortoiseshells and Wall Browns around my Granny's rockery and then using the Ladybird book of butterflies to identify them. The one species I always wanted to see was the Comma, but alas for me back then the Comma was only to be found in Wales. Therefore seeing a Comma in Wales is always more special to me than an English one, I guess part of me thinks of it as a 'proper' Comma.







While we were completing the Eggsplorer Egg Hunt I kept my eyes peeled not just for eggs and clues but also for butterflies but it was quite quiet with only a single Small Tort. Once the eggs had been won and the lambs had been fed we entered the Walled garden and suddenly there were butterflies. My first red Admiral for the year didn't stop for long, just long enough to see the epaulets. One of the Daffs housed a Small Tort and by the wrecked greenhouse there was my first Peacock of 2015. This was quite distant but I took a few shots for 'proof'. Walking backward and forwards between the two walled areas meant I saw up to 8 Small Torts in this little area as well as a couple of other Peacocks and fluttering round by the lake was a Small White which was in full on patrol mode. All in all it was wonderfully restful to amble about and have butterflies almost on tap.

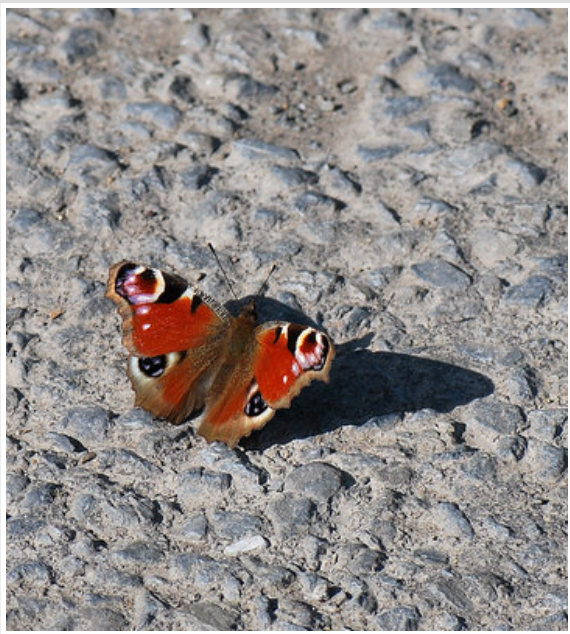




Once back I took a quick stroll around the garden and up the Lane. The garden held a single Comma whilst I connected with the miniature green bee again as well as seeing 2 Small Torts and 2 Peacocks up the Lane. The first three were all hanging around the farmers track where I saw my first GWW last year and the last of the Peacocks was basking on the road almost back at the house.







Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 23-Apr-15 03:28 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Yes that patch of Cuckoo Flower is large . my image only shows about half of it. Thats why it usually performs so well. The OT's settle on it even in the heat of the day.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 25-Apr-15 04:32 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

More great reports and Photos 😊

You know you had me checking that Peacock photo on the purple flowers (Aubretia ?) for screw heads 😊😂

Cheers,  
Neil



## Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 26-Apr-15 03:11 AM GMT

I'm loving your sense of humour Wurzel – some great shots recently 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Apr-15 05:37 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 You're really lucky to have such a productive patch 🍷

Cheers Neil 😊 Everything is kosher now I swear but if I try and pull a funny again liek that I'll use a three wink signal 😊😊😊😊

Cheers Pauline 😊 I just wish I could get out a bit more but the Lime Plasterers are due on Monday so the last few weekends have been sent hammering old plaster off the walls and riing off skirting boards. I just hope that everything waits for me 😊

Easter Monday

The final proper day and it started well so I was hopeful of finding some butterflies when we visited Newquay. However as we drove the sea mist came in and settled over the beach It would break every now and again and then the temperatures would start to rise slightly but then the mist would roll in again, sleeves would be rolled back down and jumpers put back on. In the end I sat back and watched the girls build sand castles in between reading the paper and pouring coffee.

Once back at the Outlaws the mist cleared for a longer period and so I took my chance and headed off to see what I could find. At the Dog cottage I caught up with my first Ashy mining Bee of the year as well as the tiny green bee again.



Up at the farmers track the resident Small Tort appeared briefly and then headed off but here there was also a Peacock that had taken up residence at the Small Torts favourite spot. I carried on further up to the Telephone tower and the track there held two more different Peacocks. All of a sudden I'd gone from no shots and sightings to an abundance of both.



*Peacock number 1*



*Peacock number 2*



*Peacock number 3*

As I strolled back a fourth Peacock buzzed me by the Dog cottage probably on its way to somewhere more sheltered as the sea mist rolled back in and up the hill. Back home tomorrow...  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 27-Apr-15 06:21 AM GMT

07-04-2015 The Journey Home...

We said our goodbyes and then with the car fully packed and the kids belted we set off. It was still cool as the sun was struggling to get p to full speed and the sea mist kept drifting in and building as we headed down the coast road. Once further inland and on the motorway we couldn't really call it sea mist but every now and again the mist would roll over the road and we would be transported back in time to early February!

We were back on English soil and had only just crossed the border into Wiltshire (luckily) when I saw my first butterfly. As we were stop-starting through Brad-on Avon a small, light almost creamy orange butterfly was fluttering along a steep bank. As it got closer the creamy colour resolved into the striking orange and white of my first Orange-tip. I viewed it with mixed emotions - frustration as even though my camera was within reach I was unable to get out and take a shot as I the traffic had started moving but elation at seeing my first OT a sign that spring really is here. As it stands at the moment it was the first for the County and so I was doubly elated at seeing it! 😊

As we continued south through the county it felt like the butterflies had waited for me to see the OT before coming out as now almost every available glance threw them up - almost all we Brimstones. The count ran as follows:

Cley Hill roundabout - 2 males

Heytesbury - 2 males

Codford 1 male, 1 female

Stapleford - 2 males

Langford Lakes - 1 male

Wilton - 2 males (and 1 Small Tortoiseshell)

Once we were in and unpacked we set out again to pick up Teddy and again there were Brimstones everywhere and all were males. With this in mind once Teddy was in, cuddled a plenty and left sleeping I went for a quick walk with my older daughter. We watched 2 Peacocks in two different gardens - the first was just in range from the footpath the other was much further in and also sitting at the top of a small Magnolia. We checked out the Town Path and the field there also had two Peacocks as well as an embattled Small Tortoiseshell.







On the walk back we encountered 2 Peacocks again – probably the same ones as the later was on the same Magnolia. The first landed on a car and the reflection of the wings made for an interesting shot.



Hopefully the weather will last a few more days and give me enough time to get out and catch up with plenty more butterflies!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Padfield, 27-Apr-15 07:16 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel. You are posting some fantastic pictures but that last one is really doing my head in. I just can't see how the reflections work!

I'm glad spring has finally sprung for you ...

Guy

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 27-Apr-15 07:19 AM GMT

Mmm. You're right, Guy.

Puzzling. I can only assume the glass part is concave.

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 27-Apr-15 03:32 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

You discovered, on your trip home, the worst place from which to spot a desirable Butterfly..... through the windscreen of a moving car!!.

Many years ago the car in front of me flushed a huge ginger/brown Butterfly out of the hedgerow, I had the briefest of glimpses of it as it was swept over the roof of my car. What it was I will never know, but a Monarch would have fitted the bill! 😊

Best wishes,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 27-Apr-15 05:27 PM GMT

Just checked your postings Wurzel, (Cheeky) 😊 pulling tricks like that, I fell for it as well 😊😊 Incidentally love the Peacock and reflection ( have you pulled another trick there? 😊) Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-15 06:37 AM GMT

Cheers Guy and David 😊 The butterfly was sitting on the edge of the spoiler so perhaps it was acting like a parabolic mirror? 😊 Sorry to do your head in 😊😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I had another great sighting from the car yesterday – a Stone Curlew no less 😊 That goes on the list with Clouded Yellow, Ring Ouzel and Monty's Harrier 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I did leave the screwheads in the shot as a clue 😊 The Peacock on the car was just a coincidence, I took the shot of the butterfly and only noticed the reflections later 😊

08-04-2015 The Devenish and Five Rivers

Back home and into the familiar routine...jobs in the morning followed by a trip out over lunchtime with K. The jobs today were mainly tip runs (sorry - recycling centre visits) in readiness for the big clear out of our courtyard garden. Even while I was chucking wood into the appropriate skip I was checking the surrounding trees but nowt was about.

K (my older daughter) decided that we should try The Devenish so off we set stopping on the way briefly to check on the progress of the Cuckoo Flowers at the site I discovered last year. Sadly it was bereft of OTs and Cuckoo Flowers too so we carried on our way. The Devenish was hard work, and I don't just mean the long slog up the side of the down. The little paddock housed only a single, edgy Peacock by the wood pile and the meadow only had a few Brimstones knocking about with another edgy Peacock. We checked the Down, more for the view than for butterflies and a Peacock played a brief game of Peek-a-boo with us. It would circle us really closely before sailing down the hill and dropping into the grass. Having relocated it and after a few shots it repeated the manoeuvres. We both agreed that Five Rivers might be more fruitful and K assured me that we would see a Comma there...

At Five Rivers it was a case of from one extreme to another; from edgy, flighty butterflies in single figures we observed butterflies all over the place! The bank leading to Comma Corner threw up a Peacock and 2 Small Tortoiseshells but the best thing was there was finally a grounded Comma at Comma Corner. Further along the banks there were two more Commas and the banks also held up to 8 ST's and a Brimstone did a quick fly-by to represent the Whites. After noodling round here for a bit we then branched out and headed across the reserve to the far side.





Further round the back it was a far bit quieter with another Comma and a further 6 Small Tortois scattered about. But we stopped counting after that to prevent counting them twice and also so we could just enjoy them.



On our final lap of the Banks we took a cut up the side of the Banks and as we did something blue went by. I thought at first that it was a very early Common Blue but the Hairstreak like flight soon had me re-identifying it as a Holly Blue which in terms of timing was much more expected but in terms of Five Rivers was even rarer than a Common Blue in March! To make it even more unusual it stopped fluttering round the tree-tops and landed on the grass a behaviour I've never seen before.

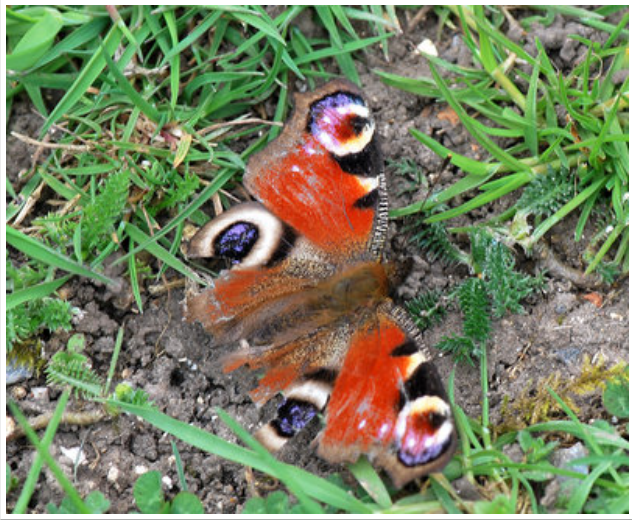




After this we headed home stopping briefly for a final Comma at where else but Comma Corner. 😊



When I got home there were plenty of shots to sort through...not only my shots but also those taken by K...



K 1



K 2



K 3 She really got the hang of it, I wish I'd taken this one!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 29-Apr-15 06:47 AM GMT

Interesting image of the Comma stretching its upperwings away from its hindwings. I've seen a few do that but I can't think what purpose it serves.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 29-Apr-15 11:35 PM GMT

Great photo's Wurzel, love the Holly Blues on the grass, may be their fed-up of the trees wafting them about 😊 If it's as cold there as it is here they'd be more sheltered on the ground 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 30-Apr-15 05:30 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
Great set of images from your trip . The Peacock on the car makes a nice change to the more usual background.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 30-Apr-15 05:41 AM GMT

Very nice pics in your diary recently, Wurzel 😊 Nice Comma and Holly Blue shots 😊 Hope your Orange-tip sightings improve SOON!

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 30-Apr-15 06:18 AM GMT

That Holly Blue on the grass is reminiscent of a Small Blue – that's what they like to do. It doesn't look as comfortable, though, as a Small Blue would be. 😊

A nice selection of Commas too, Wurzel – from both of you! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-May-15 07:07 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 No idea why they do that either, perhaps they're limbering up or could it be to increase the surface area exposed helping them to warm up more quickly 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I reckon they're getting less shy which can only be a good thing 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 That was a nice flukey shot 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 As I'm slightly behind in my PD (who'd have thought it eh? 😊) I can reveal that I have caught up with a couple of OTs 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 It does look a little out of sorts 😊

May 2015



Have a goodun

Wurzel



## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-May-15 06:14 AM GMT

09-04-2015 Tutor Day

This turned into a bit of a Monster Day butterfly wise - not in terms of number of species but because of the number of places I visited. It all started off with dropping K off at her 11+ Tutor. She's decided that she wants to go to our local Grammar and the only way of getting in is for her to pass the 11+ and as the schools don't offer any assistance and we're competing with Independents that do, we've had to pay for a Tutor for her. I don't mind as it means that she's flying ahead at school, I have somewhere to do an hour worth of work during the week or can use it as somewhere to park before heading off for an hour for some butterflying - which is what I did this morning.

I parked outside the local church and wandered down through the church yard, along the side of the river and across to the footpath that leads to Bishopdown. Just before the bridge I found a small area of nettles and there were three Small torts flitting around. I clambered over the bridge and hopped down onto the town path and carried on round. Those initial Small Torts were the only butterflies I saw but at least I'd done recce. On the way back the number of Small Torts had doubled to 6 and I headed straight back to pick up K after her first session, stopping only for a few Bee-flies on the way.





As soon as K and I got back we picked up the others and visited the local garden centre. There were two Small Torts around, one by the Boules Mauve the other inside with the warmer plants. A Peacock did fly by and there were a couple of male Brimstones but they didn't stop. There was also a female that did.



After this K and I didn't stop as we took a lunch break over at Middle Street. We started at the other end of the reserve by the football pitch and we got bombarded by 12 Small Torts along with a couple of Peacocks. From the fields we then mooched along the river side and K stopped to do some fishing and while she did I found another Peacock and 3 Small Torts. The dried Pond proved to be great with a Small Tort, Brimstones flitting by, a Comma and 3 Peacocks in various stages of wear.







Then it was back to the Tutor for K and back down the church route for me. I started with a Peacock and a Small Tort in the grave yard itself which was quickly followed by 6 Small Torts back by the nettles. Whereas before that was it now the path had a Brimstone and there were two good little patches. One was a spinney of May with 2 Small Torts and 3 Peacocks and the other was a massive dung heap with 2 Peacocks.





Finally I raced back down the path, almost flew over the bridge and over the side, legged it through the Graveyard (as respectfully as possible) and back to pick up K before finally heading home - what a day!! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 02-May-15 07:08 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I'm pleased that you agree that the female OT is ovipositing, in my image. It wasn't until I viewed the image at home, that I realised what she was up to.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-May-15 06:03 AM GMT

No worries Trevor 😊 It's often the way that you capture the moment and then work out what the moment actually was later 😊

11-04-2015 Duke Site

As is usually the way the Law of Sod was in fine form today. My folks were having the girls and my wife was on a course so I had a free afternoon for some uninterrupted butterflying. So it was no surprise when I awoke to grey skies and rain. Even when it cleared up the wind was ferocious at times and ripped away any of the sun's warmth.

I set off hopefully not expecting anything much but with the idea that often things turn up when you don't expect them to. I checked the fields on the way to The Devenish but there were no OTs nor Cuckoo flowers. On the drive over to my Duke site I scanned the verges but there were no whites flying anywhere. Once at the Duke Site I walked all over the hill, traipsed every path that last year held Grizzlies and Greenstreaks but there was nothing small and greyish about. In the end I had to settle for two Small Torts and a Peacock.



12-04-2015 Five Rivers

The following afternoon I took a brief trip to Five Rivers having taken my wife to her special place (Ikea) during the morning. The wind was still quite strong and at times ripped across the grass but at others the sun's warmth started to build nicely. Instead of heading straight to the Banks I walked to the far side of the reserve along the main footpath as I thought the ditch might throw up some whites. In fact just as this thought had entered my head I spied one. As I tried to follow its manic fluttering I almost stepped on another, a female Small White hunkered down in the grass. This side of the reserve, which I seldom visit, proved to be quite productive throwing up another couple of Small Whites, 7 Small Tortoiseshells and a single Brimstone.



I worked my way round the far side and approached the Banks from the end opposite from Comma Corner. Once here I did what I usually do which is stroll up and down along the Banks and wait for the butterflies to appear before my eyes. The next 20 minutes was cracking - 3 Small Whites, 4 Peacocks a further 9 Small Tortoiseshells and at least 4 Commas the last of which was very battle scarred and worn!





I know that I only saw 5 different species but the numbers were quite heart warming so all in all not too shabby for a quick hour out!  
Have a goodun  
Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 04-May-15 04:37 PM GMT



In a bid to catch up I'm trying to post more times than I make visits and as I made two yesterday I need to make a second post in quick succession ...

15-04-2015 Work and beyond...

Today at work we had a visit from Starchaser a rocket which has been to space and certainly helped to pique the interest of all the pupils that got to see it and hear about how it worked. As I headed out at lunch for a break to walk my usual route the rocket was still there and it provided a very different back drop to the start of my walk.



Unfortunately the walk wasn't as Earth shattering with only a couple of aged Small Torts and three Peacocks. Slightly disappointed I headed back and the rocket had either taken off or been driven away.



On the way home I stopped off at my little "White site" near Enford. There is a long bungalow that lines the road and which is cut into the bank. On the other side of the building is a lay-by so I park here and then wander up and down the road searching for various species. Today I found a Comma nicely positioned at the tip of a branch and hanging out along the car park were a white and an Orange-tip. Both didn't stop so I switched the camera to sports mode and tried for a few shots. They weren't great but this could be the only OT shot I get this year as the warm weather is keeping them patrolling. I wasn't sure what the white was either as it also wouldn't stop (it was only when I got home that I discovered that it was my first Green-veined White).



As I carried on bombing along the country lanes homewards I slammed the brakes on, grabbed the camera and hopped out. A couple of shots later I had my first Green-veined White in the bag (as it turned out it was actually my second one).



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 05-May-15 02:39 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
That's a stunning Peacock shot, a few images back, lovely capture. Any Dukes yet?.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-May-15 04:45 AM GMT

I love the Peacock shot as well Wurzel, but the Green Veined is also a winner Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-May-15 06:56 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 No Dukes for me yet - I've visited my site twice now...so third time lucky this weekend 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I was chuffed with that Green-veined, but even more so with the 180 handbrake turn I had to pull to stop and get it 😊😊

Way home 17-04-2015

Having started my stop-off's at the little pull-in at Enford I quickly followed u the first visit with a second. I was hoping for a slightly tired OT that would finally stop patrolling long enough for a couple of shots. Having pulled into the lay-by I popped out of the car and there was an OT but surprise, surprise it was on patrol. It did stop momentarily but right on the far side of the little garden and just out of reach of my lens. Slightly miffed I strolled up the road and a few shots of a female and then a male Green-veined White were some consolation.







Back at the car an OT toyed with me by perching just long enough for a single shot! 😡



But as he took off I followed him and kept him in sight as he flew down the back of the house. When he came out on other side he must have thought that he'd lost me but I'd run on ahead and there waiting for him when he plumped down on a Bluebell for a quick pit-stop - gotcha!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 06-May-15 04:16 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
I pass a Duke site every Thursday so i'll pop by tomorrow. Fingers crossed !

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 07-May-15 01:02 AM GMT

Lovely shot Wurzel, you got it at last 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 07-May-15 04:09 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Glad to see you got your Orange-tip, it must have been all the sweeter for pulling off the ambush at the other side of the house 😊 You seem to have mastered a particular kind of field craft there 😊

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 07-May-15 11:44 PM GMT

I'm so pleased you're trying to catch-up Wurzel 😊 . I love reading your diary but when it is a bit behind it doesn't half confuse me 😊😊 . Must be an age thing! 😊 Some great shots recently.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-May-15 07:47 AM GMT

Good luck Trevor 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 It was hard work getting it 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I am the guerilla butterflyflyer 😊 Cheers Pauline 😊 Almost there - only 7 posts behind now 😊😊

Quick pull-in 18-04-2015

I'm still behind on my PD but trying desperately to catch up. The only problem is that the Lime Plasterers have been in for almost two weeks now which

had meant that I don't get as much time in the evening to do all the usual chores, my usual 3 hours of 'homework', sort photos and write posts. It could have been worse though, pretty much 3 of the weekends were spent knocking old plaster off the walls and filling rubble sacks before taking them to the 'recycling centre' (also known as the tip).

It all started on Saturday 18th but before I donned boots and started wielding the lump hammer I had some errands to do including dropping some bits and bobs up at my sister in-laws. As we walked across the small drive something small and blue fluttered down onto the Bluebells. I nipped back to the car and grabbed my camera and there sitting and sunning itself on a Bluebell was a nice little Holly Blue. He hung around here for a bit before flying up onto the hedge at head height. One there he acted in a more usual fashion for a Holly Blue, peering out at me from behind a curtain of leaves.







There must have been a mini emergence as I saw another across town and a third in my local road. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 08-May-15 08:28 AM GMT

Holly Blue on a bluebell!

That's a first for me, Wurzel. great image!

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 08-May-15 02:48 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I feel that your most recent images are rather blue !!.

TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-May-15 06:08 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 I was quite chuffed (and very lucky) with the shot 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 It is very blue, but this only reflects my general mood and not my political leanings 😊

Tutor time again...20-04-2015

So far my cunning plan for some extra butterflying whilst my daughter is being tutored hasn't paid off too well. There has been one incredible day but every other time has been wet, cold, windy or all three things together but not this evening. It actually started with a lizard as the tutor's house backs onto fields and Cokey Down and they are lucky enough to have Slow Worms that bask in their back garden. Under one of the mats were two, both with the ends of their tails missing.



With this great start I headed off down to the local graveyard to follow the route previously worked out. I started on the less maintained side of the Graveyard where a male OT led in down the hedge and promptly disappeared over a lower section. I was annoyed with it teasing me right up until I spied a beige butterfly which as I approached it became my first Specklie of 2015.



My trek down along the river side was actually quite quiet with a Small White fluttering around the pea sticks in the allotment, a Small Tort in the nettle bed and a Peacock further along the path. The Peacock was actually quite aggressive and made a couple of passes over my head as if to drive me away. When I stood my ground it perched rather sheepishly but with a nice background.



I headed back to the Graveyard and it all kicked off around a large Yew tree. I was lured towards it with the promise of a male Orange-tip that didn't pay off but once there it was hard to fell too bad as I was mobbed by at least 6 Specklies and 5 Holly Blues. The Holly Blues spent the whole time fluttering around the top of the tree, scraping and eventually two of them drifted further into the branches and disappeared from sight for some privacy. The Specklies on the other hand were their usual rum bumptious selves mixing u the fluttering and scraping of the Holly Blues with a little bit of seed basking. They would land, settle and then within less than a minute they would be off again up to about 9ft high and scraping again.





Whilst I was enjoying the blues and browns a white wafted slowly past. Its contradictory sedate yet frantic flight suggested a Green-veined White so I followed it closely as it flew from one side of the graveyard to the other. I thought that it wasn't going to settle when it started to fly round the flower tops but to my surprise and pleasure it landed and settled. After a short while it took off to look for somewhere more comfortable where it settled down.





So all in all, not a bad haul.

22-04-2015 Woodford Valley

I don't know where else to fit this in and it doesn't seem enough to warrant an entire post...My local Orange-tip site has finally produced the goods as the Cuckoo Flower burst forth. A very brief 5 minute stop-off saw me catch up with a single Orange-tip which stopped only long enough for a couple of rushed shots.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Nick Broomer, 09-May-15 06:23 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

lovely set of photos, especially the Peacock. Beautiful. 😊

All the best, Nick.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 09-May-15 03:40 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

There can be no doubt that a Peacock on Blackthorn with a blue sky as a backdrop, has all the ingredients for a very fine Butterfly ' picture '. I attempted one , but the image by Mike Robinson must take 1st prize for image of the year so far. Yours has me slightly 🍷 .

I am also 🍷 of your ' blue ' images. Thats one Butterfly that's given me the runaround this year !.

Keep up the good work,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Pete Eeles, 10-May-15 05:22 AM GMT

Nice Holly Blue shots Wurzel – and glad to see you've added (what I consider to be) the best shot to the species-specific albums! Although you might have to wait a while before I create a Slow Worm album 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-May-15 02:02 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, Great photos of the Green Veined White, I think I'mm going to visit the Grave Yards more often,Goldie 🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 11-May-15 02:36 AM GMT

Your Holly Blue shots really bring a smile to my face, Wurzel 😊🍷 Simply stunning 😊

Mike



### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysauros rex, 11-May-15 06:32 AM GMT

For me your Holly Blue photos really hit the spot Wurzel, excellent images of a difficult species to get a good photograph of.

All the best

James

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 12-May-15 06:04 AM GMT

Just been catching up on your Diary Wurzel. That rocket looks more like a missile with that angle of trajectory.

You've been pulling out the stops with some of those photos. That first of three Green-veined White shots is an absolute beaut 😄🌿

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Willow, 13-May-15 12:14 AM GMT

Your probably the most prolific Personal Diary poster on **UK Butterflies** Wurz, I've just caught up with your more recent adventures and there's much quality included with the quantity...really great stuff, very well done 😊

My Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-May-15 07:09 AM GMT

Cheers Nick 😊 I was very happy with that Peacock shot 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 The background does add to the shot doesn't it.

Cheers Pete 😊 It was Vince what told me to add it 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Graveyards are great for wildlife and they're easy to find to being the dead centre of town...I'll get my coat 😊

Cheers Mike and Rex 😊 only he'd opened up a little...

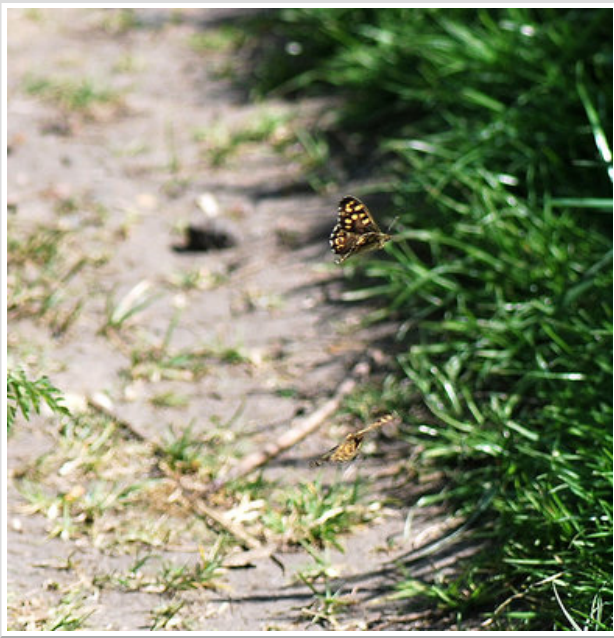
Cheers Philzoid 😊 I was chuffed with that one myself, I've since discovered that the rocket had wooden fins to go into space? hmmm:?

Cheers Willow 😊 After your comment I had a night or three off but back to the grind stone now 😊

Work 23-04-2015

Another day, another dollar. Somehow I managed to get another free lunch time possibly because the pupils were preparing for another subjects exam which meant I was able to duck out and make the most of the reasonable weather. How long it will last who knows - I'm slightly dubious about nice weather this early in the season - it often means that some pretty dire weather is just round the corner but I hope that I'm wrong.

I took the usual route and headed out across the fields to the back path. Whereas before there were Small Torts to accompany me the whole way now there were none and I didn't see a butterfly until I reached the back path. Once there a Small White and then a Large White flew by which was a great way to prompt my memory on the how to identify them. The Small White looked creamy almost whereas the Large white was striking pure white with black wing edges visible even in flight. The path then threw up the usual smattering of Small Torts (5 in total) and a couple of Peacocks. When I reached the far end I finally found what I was looking for. Up ahead were a couple of lbj's having scrap, spiralling over and over each other.



Almost at the end of the path there were another air of combatants and as I approached they broke apart and headed into opposite directions. Luckily I managed to follow one with my eyes and it must have felt a little depleted after its previous exertions and so too nectar from a Dandelion. This gave me the ideal opportunity to get in real close.



Happy with my find I took the short cut back through the housing estate and just as I was about to walk back onto the premises proper a Holly Blue caught my attention and then of all things a female Orange-tip flew into view and investigated some Cuckoo flower that I never knew flowered here – perhaps Orange-tips are going to be easier next year? She was very flighty and the wind kept swinging her backwards and forwards like she was on a playground ride so all I could manage was a record shot but it was a first for this part of the 'school patch'.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 13-May-15 07:31 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Keep that camera handy, there's a Holly Blue near you! , they seem to be everywhere at the moment.  
No Dukes last week , hopefully tomorrow,

Best wishes,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-May-15 07:20 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Hopefully I'll get my Dukes now 😊

Way home 28-04-2015

I've been a bit busy over the last couple of weeks at work – in fact things have been really hectic and so it's seems like an age since I've stopped off at Enford when in actuality it's only been 11 days. I'm trying to get home as quickly as possible as the Lime Plasterers are in and so I have to clean through behind them and set the TV, DVD and sofa up. But tonight I did stop off for a couple of minutes. it started off well enough with a Green-veined White slightly further up along the road.







Then it got really good with an absolutely cracking Orange-tip which settled three times! In fact the only reason it took off the second time was because a Bee bothered it. I would have cursed that Bee if it hadn't then settled on the bank slightly further up the road! Once it had taken off I walked beside it and watched it as it patrolled up the road. It would fly in a diagonal line up the bank, circle a flower a couple of times and then fly back down to the road before flying along parallel with the road for a short distance and then it would repeat the whole procedure again. Luckily it did stop for the third time and there weren't any interfering bees around this time so I was able to get in really close a second time!



Have a goodun

Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 15-May-15 07:45 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Just Catching up. That third Green Veined White on Cow Parsley? is super 😄 Also love your 'in flight' Speckled Wood 😄

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 15-May-15 03:39 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Excellent OT.images, they don't usually stop long enough for shots like that !.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 16-May-15 05:30 AM GMT

Really nice shots Wurzel. That OT is a stunner, and I notice your reports are very nearly into May now 😄

### Re: Wurzel

by Willow, 16-May-15 05:33 AM GMT

I never get open-winged shot's of **Orange-tip** like that Wurz...you must know a trick... 😄

Bill 😄

"When in doubt - venture out"

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-May-15 01:43 AM GMT

Love the Orange Tip photos Wurzel, your after the Dukes and I'm looking for the PBF Lets hope we both get what we want shortly. 😄

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 17-May-15 06:43 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Thanks for the comment, she was also nice and fresh. ( finished that wall yet ? ! ). 😄

All the best,  
TREVOR.

PS. Any news from Cotley Hill yet ?.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-May-15 07:17 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😄 Those shots were a long time coming 😄

Cheers Buggy 😄 When I read your comment I thought I ought to slow down a little 😄 The main problem is my browser seems to be infected with a Pup called Delta Homes which is making it ridiculously slow 😄

Cheers Willow 😄 The trick it to visit the same place again and again until the OT gives up and plays ball in the hope that you'll \$\*¥get off and give it some peace 😄

Cheers Goldie 😄 Fingers crossed for your Pearls and my Dukes 😄

Larkhill Stop-off 29-04-2015

I risked another quick stop-off on the way home on the basis that I'm getting in the habit of cleaning up and re-dressing my living room as soon as I get home. I walked down the Westbound path all the way to the little hollow where the path is more sparse of grass. It was pretty desolate and with the precious seconds ticking past I turned and started to head back up the hill to the car. As I did some small, light gray micro-moths caught my attention along the side of the path. As I turned to watch them something larger and gray flurried pass. At first I took it to be just another moth but for some reason I followed it with my eyes until it landed and then when it did I could clearly see the chequer board fringe, the purple ground colour and white markings. My first Grizzled Skipper of the year and my first payment from the various stumps around Larkhill.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 17-May-15 07:37 AM GMT

You're right, Wurzel – patience pays off with Orange Tips, and you were rewarded royally. Great shots. 😊 I like the Grizzlie, too – interesting you said purple for the ground colour... They vary from this to charcoal grey to chocolate brown to black – and sometimes all at once. 😊😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-May-15 06:15 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, Great photo of the Grizzled Skipper, that's one Butterfly we don't get round here worse luck 🍀🍀 and one I'd love to get but it would take quite a journey to see it so it's one for the future I'm afraid 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-May-15 07:48 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Patience and me are only fleeting friends 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I'm surprised Grizzlies aren't up there as they seem so well wrapped up in fur I thought they'd do well in the colder climes 😊

First Meet-up of 2015 – 03-05-2015

Part 1 – Bentley Wood

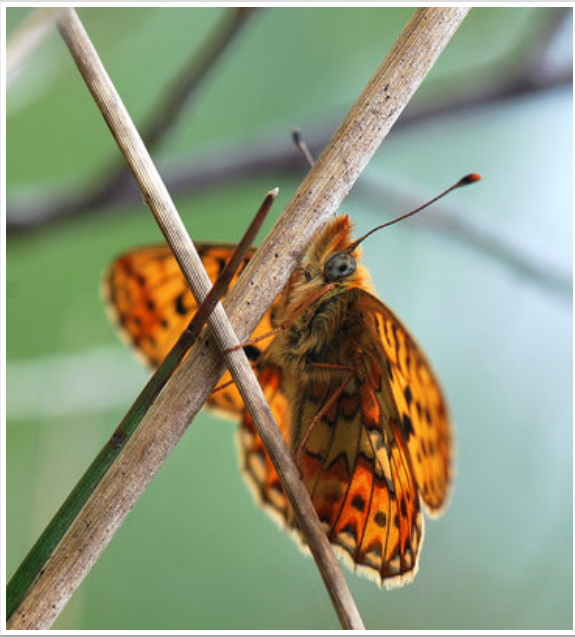
K and I set off from Salisbury with fingers crossed. We were heading towards Bentley hoping for our first Pearls of the year and the rain had stopped and the cloud was clearing. Yesterday the Weather men had been wrong so instead of the rain and wind it was a reasonable day which meant that they'd projected all the doom and gloom onto today. Hopefully though they were just being overly pessimistic with today's forecast. It was looking good as the



cloud continued to clear and once at West Tytherley with Philzoid hand his girls arrived the sun actually seemed to be peeping out.

We went straight to the Eastern Clearing and split up to cover more ground. Recent reports had been of 4, then 2 most recently and 'The Book' had 12 but we suspected that we wouldn't just fall over them but rather we'd have to actively hunt them down. Philzoid called out and there was the first Pearl. In actual fact the weather was almost perfect for Pearl photography - dry, warmish (easily above 12°) and the cloud cover kept the Pearls fairly static allowing us to get the full range of shots. However once the sun did come out it didn't take the Pearl long to get up to speed and it was gone.





After a continued mooch around which took in the main, established part of the EC and didn't produce a single butterfly we headed back to the track along the back of the clearing along-side the major cleared area. The sun was in again but we scanned the bracken as we've found Pearls emerging here in previous years. As I scanned one patch something didn't seem right so I looked back and there was a Painted Lady - no screw heads in sight I promise! We spent some time with it on the Bracken and as more and more of the sun started to show it got more and more fidgety until it shot off like a rocket across the cleared land, dropping swiftly like a stone the minute the sun went back in.







After this definite psychological pick-me-up we decided to make way back to first sighting area when second flew by and down along the track and then a third. I managed to follow this one as it didn't seem to want to fly too far between each landing. When I got a decent look at it I thought that it looked like a female as the wing margins were white rather than muted ginger that the males seem to show? I could be wrong of course as it seems so long ago since I last encountered a Pearl.



After this we started making our way back to the car park via the main part of the EC. On the way a tiny Pearl flopped about (no 4) and seemed to be struggling to fly. Once it landed in a small Birch sapling it was looked pristine so perhaps it was so freshly emerged it was just working out how to use its wings?







On the continued trek back to the car park we were joined by a couple more as the sun came out and with it a Brimstone and two Small Whites. Next we decided to head North along the border to my Duke site for lunch and well, Dukes...



Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 19-May-15 02:34 PM GMT

That's a beautiful shot of the fresh closed winged Pearl Wurzel (no.267). Very crisp with complementary background. I love it 🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-May-15 11:34 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Pearl's Wurzel, 🍷🍷 I thought they didn't fly in the gloom, Sat may be a good day to go back to Gait Barrow and look, it's got to be warmer but slightly cloudy up there, I'll have to keep my eye on the weather. Good hunting for the Dukes, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by keving, 20-May-15 03:31 AM GMT

Wurzel; I love the Pearls, especially on the sapling. Great stuff

Regards Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 20-May-15 04:06 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

More great reports and photos, particularly the undersides of the nice fresh PBF 😊

Keep 'em coming.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 21-May-15 07:01 AM GMT

Lovely Pearls, Wurzel - you found them beautifully new, and proved that less than brilliant sunshine is best! Definitely worth awarding a couple of 🍷🍷 for that...

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 22-May-15 06:17 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Thanks for the info. Those closed wing Pearls on Birch are something else, the leaves of which contrast with the Butterfly. Top class photography.

Best wishes,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-May-15 07:03 AM GMT

Cheers Pauline for your kind comment 😊 - most of the work was done by the butterfly 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck with your Pearls, I'm going to try for my Dukes one more time...or maybe two...maybe more 😊

Cheers Kev for your kind comment 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I'll try and keep em coming but work is getting in the way somewhat 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 You're too kind with your comments 😊

No worries Trevor and cheers for your kind comment 😊

First Meet-up of 2015 - 03-05-2015

Part 2 - Duke Site

As we drove out of car park there was male OT along the road and there were plenty of other whites on the way from Bentley to my Duke site. The drive was frustrating as there was someone at the front of a queue of cars who was driving at least 10 miles below the speed limit. Also the sun was out but started disappearing almost as soon as we hit the tank tracks.

Once parked we all set out straight across the old tank tracks towards the track where I've encountered them 2 years before. There was a Grizzlie on the way and then a second but no Dukes as well as a reminder that we were just visitors to the site and whilst we were here for pleasure, others had work to do.





The Cypress tree area at the top held another Grizzlie as well as a few Greenstreaks my first for the year. As is mostly the way when seeing the first of the year I just fired away, anxious to make sure that it didn't escape the reach of my lens. We then headed back to the track and set the girls up so that we could use them as a base from which to check all the microhabitats on offer. The track again didn't have any Dukes but a Small Copper dropped in, another first for the year and a Blue Badger too. Once back at the Cypress there were a couple more Greenstreaks to add to the tally, another Grizzlie, a second Blue Badge Small Copper and finally to wrap up this foray the fifth first of the day - a Dingy Skipper.







We then headed back to check the girls before setting out on another foray, this time further up to the Beech wood, then to the mossy slope before coming back down across the glade and back to the path. In the wood the Birds Nest Orchids haven't appeared but there is an interesting fungus which I think is called a 'Jews Ear'. The little mossy field is a real gem as the trees and other vegetation all around shelter it from the wind and the mossy ground hugging vegetation itself acts as a sun trap as well as making kneeling and crouching for photography very comfortable! Up here there were a few more Greenstreaks and a couple of Dinghies making a nuisance of themselves but I think it was about a week too early for the Brown Argus and Common Blues. As we pushed through the trees into the glade below we were greeted by three Dinghies scrapping and an OT flying overhead.



Another final foray back near the Cypress and a few more (or more of the same) Greenstreaks along with another Grizzlie a Silver-Y and as a finale 2 Small Coppers battling each other back near the girls.









Finally we gave in as the sun stayed hidden behind the clouds and the wind had picked up and it was really blowy at some points lowering the temperatures. So no Dukes from my Duke site, mind you none had been reported in the book at Bentley at the time and none had been reported elsewhere in Wiltshire either so perhaps they hadn't emerged – things seem to be about a week to two behind this year on last year. And over the course of the day I'd notched up 5 firsts for the year which has to make this a great day.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 22-May-15 10:21 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, sorry about the Dukes but you got some nice firsts, love the Coppers and the Dingy photos, One I've not got the SC, hope fully if the weather improves this weekend I'll get a chance, don't think I'll be looking for Pearls though the Bank Holiday's are crazy round here, every one goes to the Lake's, we may try Southport.

With luck you may get them this weekend Sat day is ok weather wise I believe Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-May-15 07:07 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I did get my Duke this weekend but I'm so far behind with my posts this is from three weeks ago when I hadn't 😞

Duke Site 09-05-2015

Afternoon off as I had finally finished the wall prep – well almost...and where else would I head? No competition really as I was desperate to see my Duke. Once on site I checked the path to no avail so concentrated instead on the area around the Cypress trees as I was after more Greensteaks. I thought perhaps I had left it too late after my first couple last week were a bit worn and battle scarred but I managed to find some really fresh ones amongst the older, more ragged individuals. They seemed to have got a little confused as they were all perching in the grass or on Bramble leaves rather than the textbook head height in a Hawthorn. Also here were a few Grizzlies and Dinghies as well as my first ever Green Carpet.





From this area I made my way up the further path to the Beech Wood and the spongy mossy grass. On the journey a battered Peacock collapsed onto the path and I felt surrounded by plenty of Dinghies and the odd Grizzlie – but alas no Dukes still.



The area at the top of the field threw up the best looking Greenstreak that I've ever seen - it was quite simply stunning and my photos just don't do it justice. It was actually on Hawthorn which for the site is actually quite unusual. It was busy leaning to catch the sun and throwing some interesting shapes as a consequence





Leaving the Greenstreak sunning itself I cut across the field and something flew up into the Hawthorn. I thought it was a Greenstreak at first another that was behaving as it was supposed to but it turned out to be a Dingy behaving slightly oddly. Also present at the edge of the glade was a Small Copper looking lovely and fresh.





I thought about trying further afield but it was actually quite quiet over the rest of the site. There were plenty of Cowslips so I was hopeful but still no Duke. Instead I did find my first Brown Argus of the year making busy and feeding frenetically. I was struggling to follow the silver streak as it blurred by. So instead I sat by a patch of flowers and waited. Somehow this paid off and I managed a couple of shots before it moved off again.



I headed back to the main track and hung around here for some time. There were plenty of Grizzillies and Dinghies, the odd Small Copper as well as my first ever Ruby Tiger moth but yep, you've guessed it, an absence of His Grace.







So still no Dukes...I'll have to try again in a week or two's time. They will turn up!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

The very next weekend a friend of mine visited and saw 4 Dukes in exactly the same areas that I had been searching...that is the Law of Sod!

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 26-May-15 07:09 AM GMT

That Green Carpet is a lovely critter, Wurzel. Don't think I've ever seen one myself.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 26-May-15 08:02 AM GMT

Indeed – a lovely moth, and well spotted in the grass, Wurzel. Better camouflaged than those showy old Green Hairstreaks! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 26-May-15 03:45 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Lovely selection of Spring species, as for the weather, lets hope it behaves for HIM !.

All the best,  
TREVOR

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 26-May-15 09:52 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, Glad you finally got your Dukes, I'll look forward to seeing them 😊 Great photos now too, I envy your Grizzled Skipper 🦋 wish we had them round here, I'm off to Suffolk for week, in a weeks time, don't suppose they have them there 🤔

That means I've just a week to sort some thing out with the Pearls but by the looks of the weather forecast we're in for some rough weather up here 😞  
Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 27-May-15 06:17 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Great reports and photos again 😊 love the Green Hairstreak photos and I agree with Dave and David, that Green Carpet is a cracking moth.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Willrow, 27-May-15 10:52 PM GMT

Having done a bit of catch-up on your PD, I'm very impressed with the species range covered and the images – nice stuff Wurz 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt – venture out"

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-May-15 07:26 AM GMT

Cheers David and Dave 😊 They acted very like the Wiltshire Greenstreaks ie bombing across the tops of the grass and then diving down into cover – this could be why I struggled to see Greenstreaks for so long – in Wiltshire they don't behave at all like the books say 😞 😞

Cheers Trevor 😊 Indeed!

Cheers Goldie 😊 Just go for the Pearls I would, I've seen them in rain and temps hovering at 10 degrees, Bon Chances! 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 It's always nice to get a lifer 😊

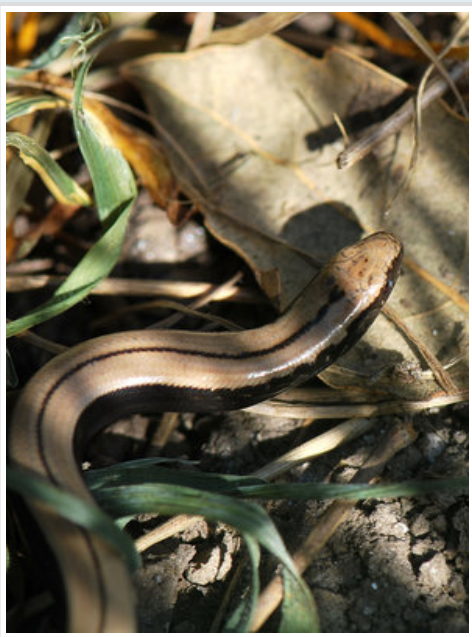
Cheers Bill 😊 I do like to try and get out and about – but that's being hampered somewhat this year by renovating my house 😊

Tutor Time Again 11-05-2015

The day started really well for me. Over the last couple of years I've built quite a tally of sightings from Larkhill with Small Blue, Green Hairstreak, Grizzled Skippers etc. However I've never seen a Dingy on site...until this morning. I'd wandered aimlessly down the Eastbound path and on the trip down I didn't see a single butterfly. I was just bemoaning the dearth of butterflies when a little greyish blur shot across the path as I carried on back. Along with a couple of Grizzlies this really made my morning!



Once K was in the tutor room and the mats had been checked for Slow Worms I hopped over the fence and was away up the Downs. My initial plan was to ignore everything else on the way and set course for Cokey Down which at a good pace I should have reached in 15 minutes and then I'd have 30 minutes mooching around. As it happened I'd not even got through at Laverstock Down before I was distracted. In amongst the shrubs and bushes to the right were a Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and a selection of whites. The Small Tort was looking very aged but it was nice to see them hanging on in there.



I then worked my way back towards the gate and headed left. Making good time I could still have 25 mins or so at Cokey Down. Once again though the butterflies conspired against me. Whites fluttered along the hedgerows on both sides and I was able to make out a Green-veined White amongst the cabbages whilst lemon and lime Brimstones interfered with a male Orange-tip on patrol still - you'd have thought he'd have found what he was looking for by now! While I was enjoying the whites something brown and dingy looking hove into view and it turned out to be my first Mother Shipton of the year. Then a blue landed in the grass. I thought at first it was going to be my first Common blue but it was actually a knackered Holly Blue.





“Right” I thought “better get back to the plan” and so despite Mother Shipton tempting me I set off firm of purpose. Once more I didn’t get very far when at the base of the hill my attention was caught by a speeding silver bullet - a wonderously fresh Brown Argus. The margins were clean and intact, the chocolate almost black an oily sheen over the surface contrasting with the blazing orange. I was riveted and spellbound as time ticked inevitably onwards.





Having had the spell broken by a particularly large fly which disturbed the Brown Argus I checked the time. Possibly just enough to route march there and spend 15 minutes or so getting a feel for the site. So up the other side of the Down I headed...

This time I managed only about 20 paces up the hill before my progress was once more hindered. This time by a couple of Dingies, Grizzlies and 5 orange explosions – my first Small Heaths of the year. They were difficult to keep track of as even the most cautious approach led to them erupting from the grass. Luckily a few clouds passed over so they started staying put rightly more.



Happy that I might have at least a couple of shots bagged I checked my watch. Too late – all I had time for now was a quick stop off to see if I could relocate the Brown Argus and then retracing my steps back to the tutor. I did find the BA hanging like a wind deprived white flag. When I got in really close I could see that it was very lightly marked with some spots missing almost entirely.



When I made it back to the tutor I had a few free moments to contemplating the visit and with the image of the fresh BA and my first Small Heath still

tingling on my retina I really didn't mind that they'd mucked up all my well laid plans.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 29-May-15 03:21 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
Your Small Heath is showing a little of it's orange upperside, the first time i've seen this on a settled specimen.

Nice shot,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 29-May-15 08:45 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Nice sharp images of the Brown Argus and the Small Heath is great too. I saw my first heath of the year but couldn't get within two feet of it before it fluttered away. To get an image like that is good going.

Regards Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 31-May-15 08:52 PM GMT

Just catching up Wurzel on the postings, great shots of the Brown Argus, I went to Gaits B looking for the Pearl BF, no luck, if their late I may catch them yet, glad you got your first Small Heath Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Willow, 01-Jun-15 12:11 AM GMT

House renovations or not Wurzel, your postings are still of the same high standard 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 02-Jun-15 05:28 AM GMT

You've obviously got your work cut out with the house renovation Wurzel 😊 but you're still doing O.K. 😊😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 02-Jun-15 06:08 AM GMT

Lovely images as usual, Wurzel. 😊 It's a shame you haven't been able to get out as much recently. 😞

Just looking at that last BA underside, it struck me as very blue close to and on the body - could it possibly be a Common Blue rather than the butterfly you saw earlier? With it so sparsely spotted, you can't see the "colon" mark that would give away Brown Argus, and there is just a hint of a spot where one would be if it were a Common Blue instead. Just wondering... having made the same mistake both ways several times in the past! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Jun-15 08:06 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 They do rub their wings together sometimes and then they don't quite close properly, if you're really lucky you might catch them using Sorts Mode on your camera 😊

Cheers Kevling 😊 It was down to luck and also a very quick drop to the knees...for which I'm still suffering somewhat now 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Have a great holiday 😊

Cheers Willow 😊 I do seem to be getting further and further behind 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 The Lime Plaster is now on all the walls...next up floorboards 😊



It could well be Dave – I think I'll pass it over to the experts – I just assumed that as it was in the same locale as the BA that's what it was...and there was me thinking I had CB and BA ID down 😊

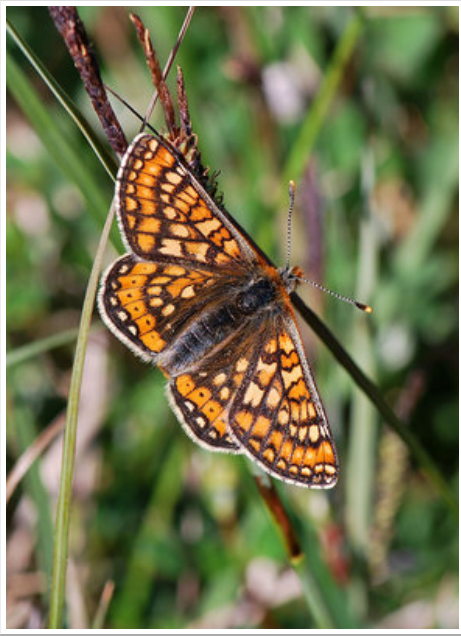
What a Day! 13-05-2015

It actually started off pretty depressingly I strolled almost the full length (well the full length of my walk) of the Eastbound path at Larkhill with not a single sighting of a butterfly. So I turned round and trudged back disconsolately – grumbling and mumbling under my breath as I did so. Back at the car I checked my watch and realised I was cutting it a bit fine so I was about to jump in and put pedal to the metal when something caught my eye on the opposite side of the car park. There was something darkish amongst the greenery so I cautiously approached and then I realised it was a Painted Lady in much better nick than my first of the year from Bentley Wood. Eventually by imaging the angry look on my boss's face I tore myself away and zoomed off to work.



As the day wore on I kept checking BBC Weather and looking longingly out of the window, it looked like it would be a lush day...I plucked up the courage and phoned my wife enquiring as to the possibility of making a quick visit on the way home? To my surprise she agreed so after work I headed straight off. After the lack of success at my Duke site I decided to try a different tack – so Marshie site it was!

As I ran up the hillside I wondered how many would have emerged as the most recent report mentioned only 20 or so? Almost as soon as I broke through the trees I spied one, jinky flight and orangey red in colour. It didn't hang around for long and so I made my way through the hollow (minus Small Blues) and then up to the side of the Down proper. It was here and in the sun that it started to kick off with Greenstreaks, Small Heaths, Grizzlies, Dingies and Marshies seemingly by the bucket load.



Once I'd spent some time on the lower slopes and in the 'amphitheatre' I set out to the further reaches hoping for a Wall Brown. Again all the usual early spring specialities were present with the addition of various moths, a Brown Argus or three and a solitary Peacock. Once down in the bottom and along the path I was surprised by how overgrown the chalk 'mini' cliff faces had become but settled in amongst the vegetation in one of the bare spots was a Wall. Unfortunately it took off before I could get a shot off and try as I might I couldn't relocate it but figured that perhaps I'd used up all my Wall luck over previous visits/years.









Having worked along the bottom path back towards the amphitheatre I then took to traversing the side of the down, clambering up the terraces and trying to sneak up on the Marshies and Small Heaths. The Heaths seem to be having a good year with more than I can recall from previous years. Finding the Marshies actually proved to be hard work despite there being so many of them as I would see one basking, start to approach stealthily and 4 or 5 would erupt from close to my footfall, spooking the one I was stalking! In the end I took to crouching low and then popping up over the terrace, taking a few shots before the Marshies had realised what was happening!







In the end as the sun lowered and the light turned ever more golden I managed to tear myself away. To bid me farewell a male Orange-tip and Large White put on a brief show over the cow parsley and then I set off. I managed to arrive home half an hour earlier than expected...always pays to bank a few Brownie points this early in the season. 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 02-Jun-15 06:31 PM GMT

I'm a very happy customer Wurzel 😊, it's a magical site! We popped into Warminster and found a nice country pub, forget its name but the food was delicious!

### Re: Wurzel

by NickMorgan, 02-Jun-15 08:48 PM GMT

Wow, look at all of those exotic creatures! The weather has been so cold and windy for the last six weeks that we are struggling to get many records. Hopefully things will change in the next few days.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Jun-15 09:30 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, glad your getting more Butterfly shots, great, as always 😊

Three days of wind and rain here, at least the forecast is better mid week, we're ready for off now, hope the weather keeps up and I can get some decent shots Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 03-Jun-15 06:56 AM GMT



Hi Wurzel

Loving your Marsh Fritillaries especially the longer range one 😊 Your Painted Lady is also a dazzler, hopefully there are a few more on their way 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 04-Jun-15 06:32 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Lovely shots from C.H., you had better luck with the weather than i did .

As for the quiet times, i reckon things will kick off in about 20+ days, for the summer spectaculars.

Bring it on !! 😊

TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Jun-15 06:49 AM GMT

No worries Bugboy 😊

Cheers Nick 😊 Hopefully the summer roper will arrive soon 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Get a Swallowtail for me 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 If the reports are right then I reckon there are certainly more than a few on their way 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Only three weeks to go then!

June 2015

Slightly late now, but better late than never...



Back to proper posting...

Larkhill 15-05-2015

The quickest of stop-offs on my way to work but no joy and no well behaved Painted Lady this morning. Instead it was a bit grey and much cooler than recently. In fact only three steps in and my trousers were already soaked below the knees. Still I pressed on looking out for any white flags. I was halfway along the Northbound track when I spied two.

I checked the first one and it was roosting Grizzled Skipper. Whilst clicking away I made the mistake of sitting on my haunches – add a soaking wet arse to shoes, socks and trousers below the knee. Mind you it was worth it to get any shots of the beautifully marked under wings of a Grizzlie. The second flag was still there once I'd finished with the Grizzlie, unfortunately it turned out to be just a feather – so I headed onto work with the blower set to 'feet' and on maximum. By the time I got to work my damp trousers were hardly noticeable but I had cold, damp feet all day. Oh how we suffer for our hobby.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 04-Jun-15 07:25 AM GMT

Lovely Grizzlie under wing shot Wurzel 😊 know what you mean by damp, been there, done that 😊😓 we do suffer for our shots 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 05-Jun-15 06:42 AM GMT

Wurzel –that last Grizzlie, and your almost spotless Green Hairstreak on the forget-me-not, are just stunning photos. 😊👍

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Jun-15 07:05 AM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 I can handle the trousers being damp it's my shoes and socks that are the most uncomfortable part 😊

Cheers Dave for your kind comments 😊😊

Five Rivers 16-05-2015

On a quick stop-off whilst my daughter was swimming I didn't expect much. So I started off strolling alongside the river. The sun which had been playing hide and seek all morning suddenly decided to emerge and almost as if by magic so did the butterflies. With the whites flitting along the tops of the Cow Parsley and Garlic Mustard I followed one and it turned out to be a Small White although I couldn't be sure of some of the others. There was a definite Large White and a couple landed briefly and just long enough to get a glimpse. So in total I reckon there must have been at least two a piece in this little area. A Specklie flounced out and dived into the stinging nettles on the other side of the path when it realised I was slightly bigger than its' usual sparring partner.



I was hoping for a few Brown Argus and maybe my first Common Blue so I worked my way along the trail on the Banks. What a difference a few weeks makes; the last time I was here I could wander across the Banks and the vegetation would barely cover my boots. Now I felt like I needed a machete to make progress.



Unfortunately the Banks didn't produce my first Common Blue or indeed any Brown Argus but I was lucky enough to find a Five Rivers Grizzlie. This was a cracking find as they were absent last year so hopefully this tiny colony is still holding on.





As I rushed back to collect K from swimming I had to stop as a male Green-veined White fluttered up and landed ever so invitingly. It must have thought that I wouldn't have stopped and so was taunting me, ha ha, I had the last laugh!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 05-Jun-15 03:02 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
Thanks for the ID. Large Skipper was my first thought.

All the best.  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Jun-15 06:14 AM GMT

No worries Trevor 😊

Tutor 18-05-2015

Another Monday and another tutor session for K, I started the evening by checking the Slow Worms and there two young-uns under two different mats and one slightly mature one.



From here I made my way up the Down and as usual as soon as I got on site the cloud covered the sun and got very windy and really cold. Never mind I carried on up the side of the down right to the top and seeing one Grizzlie, one Dingy and one Small Heath on the way but apart from the first nothing really stopped as the sun finally went in and the wind picked up even more to some nasty gusts. I was starting to regret not bringing my coat!



On the other side of down there was much of the same with the added bonus that the wind whipped up the hill. I made my way down to the bottom of the hill as it seemed to be sheltered slightly by the hedge and shrubs. I found another Dingy sheltering in the long grass; it took off and flew a short way before it went down again when I almost trod on it. To help it out I let it crawl onto my finger and then placed it back in grass away from the path.



I worked my way all the round so completed a rough circular walk and every now and then the sun started to creep out and brighten things for a short while. I was almost back at the start of the Down when I noticed some white flags in a small patch of longer grass. One seemed larger than the other so checked that first and from the markings it was my first Common Blue of 2015. As the Sun came out and so too did the butterfly, though it stayed in this sheltered little spot fluttering around and around. The other butterfly was a Brown Argus.



Almost back at the start of the site I kicked up a couple more Small Heath and got onto a lovely Grizzalie which was a gorgeous purple colour. After a few more shots I realised that I'd tarried too long and so I had to leg back to pick K up.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by dave brown, 09-Jun-15 04:01 AM GMT

Wurzel,

I see you plan to come to East Kent for the Heath Fritillary on Sunday. I assume you are going on the guided walk with the Kent Butterfly Society which I believe is visiting a different part of the Wood complex for the Heath F. Should it be a personal visit then the Heaths are easy to find at the public site at East Blean Woods. Park in the car park at East Blean, walk through the gate which has a wildlife sign on the right. Walk 20 metres to a clear area. If none here turn right and walk for about 100 metres, turn right. There is a clear area on the left which seems to be holding the best numbers at present. We had 16 last week and fellow member Heathy had over 30 on Saturday.

Enjoy your visit.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Willow, 09-Jun-15 11:32 PM GMT

Nice report Wurz, and good luck on your **Heath Fritillary** adventure 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 10-Jun-15 03:33 AM GMT

Great reports and photos Wurzel 😊

Good luck with the Heath Fritillaries, I am looking forward to reading the report...eventually 😊😊

Cheers,

Neil

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Jun-15 06:55 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 That's really useful information which I hope to use to good effect 😊

Cheers Willow and Neil 😊 Hopefully the weather stays good or it'll have to be another weekend 😊

Larkhill Week Beginning 19-05-2015



*View down the Westbound path*

19-05-2015

The week started in a quite disappointing fashion with only 2 Small Heaths on a cool and windy afternoon visit. It was so windy and cool almost nothing was flying and so I reckon there was a lot more present but they were sensibly hunkering down somewhere amongst the grasses. However I did spook two Small Heaths one of which flew into a Hawthorn and tried to settle down.



20-05-2015

Things seemed to be picking up weather wise today with the wind dropping the temperatures rising. I was able to make an afternoon stop-off and didn't get much further than 4 metres from the car park. The little open area at the edge of the Northbound path came up trumps again with 3 male Common Blues and a single, slightly older looking Brown Argus. Right at the very edge of the grasses was a solitary Small Heath - whether it was one of the pair from yesterday I couldn't say - one year I'll have to paint numbers on them to see how long they last...



21-05-2015

The weather was gorgeous today and a brief morning stop-off seemed like it should pay dividends which it didn't. In fact the brief walk up the Northbound path produced just a single each of Brown Argus and Small Heath. The former was a little stunner and the light caught the chocolate wings and glistened with an oily sheen whereas the latter was in a very similar place to yesterday.

Despite weather a lunch trip to the Down at Jones Mill near work only threw up a male Orange-tip, a Large white and two Holly Blues. The weather was even better in the afternoon and typically I didn't get to stop on the way home!





22-05-2015

Yesterday I thought this morning was going to be great, perhaps the summer was finally here, perhaps we were finally going to get a period of settled, pleasant weather? Then I woke up and it had all been a dream and so we were back to square one with much cooler and greyer weather. My morning stop-off was okay with four little white flags waving in the grasses at the Northbound path. Closer examination turned them from flags to three Common Blues and a Brown Argus roosting amid the chill. It felt more like March than May!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Jun-15 07:01 AM GMT

Duke Site Part 3



Or is that four? Actually it might be 5 - I've lost count. Anyway I managed to persuade my wife that it would be a good idea to get out for a couple of hours in between loading the loft with all our goods and chattels and ripping off skirting boards upstairs in preparation for yet more Lime Plastering. Actually I think I was a little too persuasive and so ended up accompanied by both girls.

I did the usual 'ask K' trick and she seemed positive for Duke and Adonis but unsure about Small blues. It was the usual race against the weather as well with the threat of cloud miring my plans but when we arrived the breeze was minimal and the sun beat down so we quickly made our way across to the hotspot/main track to make the most of the sun. On the way we notched up Small Heaths, Brown Argus and Common Blues and once on the track proper there was also a Small Copper and a couple a piece of Grizzlie and Dingy. A female Brimstone landed to nectar right in front of us before being sent packing by a belligerent Brown Argus. I've since learnt that the main track 'hotspot' perhaps isn't and instead we set up in the Glade behind the Cypress/Greenstreak Tree. From here I ambled about almost stunned by the profusion of Lepidoptera; Mint and micro Moths a plenty, a Treble Bar, Fox Moths flying in their bouncing bomb style and Foresters buzzing by like flying jewels. In amongst the Common Blues, Skippers, Arguses, Heaths (Small) and Greenstreaks the odd Burnet Companion Moth would erupt from the foliage.





I was just about to dismiss another brown/orange job as the same species when it flew differently – less buzzy and more fluttery and somehow it seemed slower and more direct? Luckily it landed and there was my Duke! I stayed with it for a while as the cloud covered the sun.

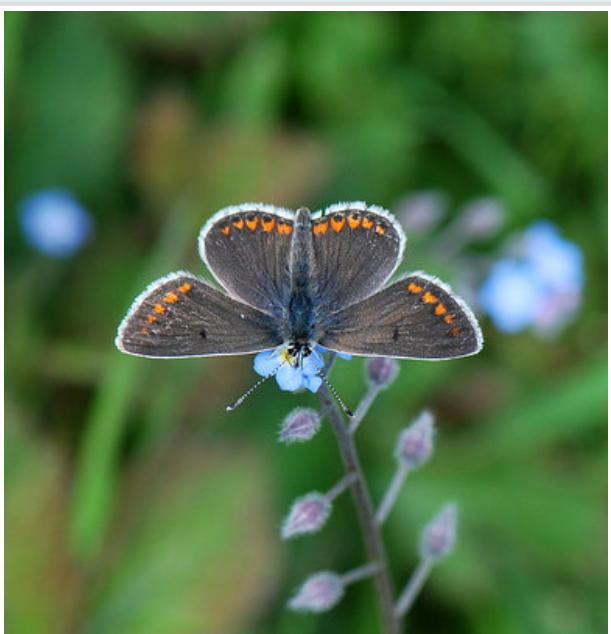


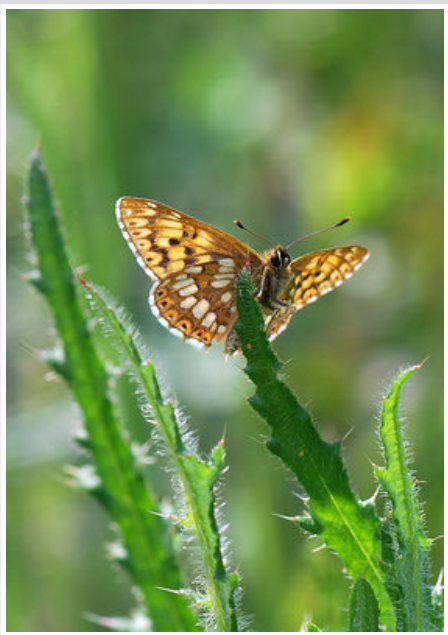




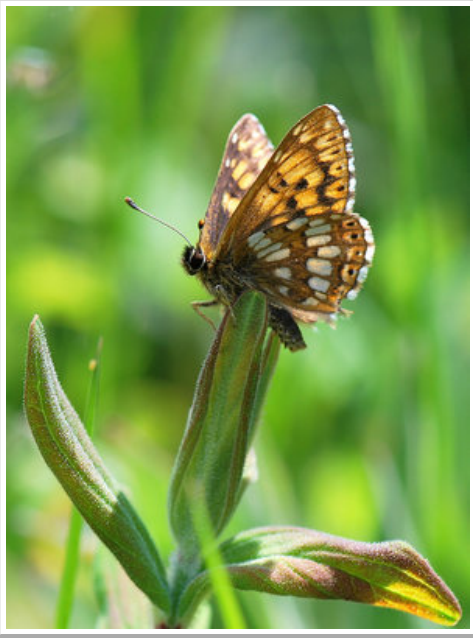


The rest of the afternoon was spent wandering around and across and back to where the girls had set up camp. Occasionally though I would leave the confines of the Glade and branch out into other parts of the site. One time I entered the Beech Wood and there were Bird's Nest Orchids - lacking chlorophyll and looking like dead twigs. Another foray out saw me back at the Track and the grasses were alive with Small Heath and Blues of three species (Common, Brown Argus and Small Coppers) all jostling and upsetting each other. A flash of electric blue led me to my first Adonis of the year.









Back to the Glade and I discovered two more Dukes right in the top corner – Philzoid will know where I mean if I mention 3 Dingies and an OT! Whilst here I also pulled off a shot that I have been trying to emulate for the last 5 years; when I first started I fluked a shot of a female Common Blue sitting on a Dandelion Clock. Since then I've always kept an eye out and hoped to replicate it. Today was the day with a Brown Argus perched and pointlessly trying to nectar on one.



*Where the Dukes play!*





Time passed and on my final transect of the Glade a black and white moth caught my attention - it turned out to be a Wood Tiger - another Moth first from this site.





All three of us gently ambled back to car and on the Track the odd BA, Grizzlie, Dingy or Small Copper slowed out progress very couple of steps. Almost back at the car I let the girls go on ahead so I could investigate the final little triangle. This is a great little area with at least 9 Adonis Blue males. Star of the show was a stunning male Small Blue right in the middle of the path. As I reached for my camera and slowly inched down the girls called and in the fraction of a second that I lost concentration it was gone. Never mind it would have been the Sprinkles on top of an already very well iced cake!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 13-Jun-15 07:45 AM GMT

That really is quite a site, Wurzel. 🍷 You really do have some corkers in your neck of the woods. What a selection, and some great photos too. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Willow, 13-Jun-15 06:22 PM GMT

Great stuff Wurz...your batting towards a hundred now, don't know where you get the energy from 😊 lovely recent reports and pics to match 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

## Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaorus rex, 13-Jun-15 07:42 PM GMT

Looking forward to your Heath Frit diary entry Wurzel. I went there on Wednesday and there were plenty of fresh ones about. You should do well even if the weather is not good. Despite the powerful wind and mostly dull conditions I still managed to get some photos!

All the best

James

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Jun-15 07:34 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Hopefully I'll be able to make it back here to find some Dark Green Frits too 😊

Cheers Willow 😊 Just think what I could achieve without work getting in the way 😊😊

Cheers Rex 😊 It was definitely worth it - they were everywhere! 😊

Lulworth Cove 27-05-2015

During the half term break we were refugees at my parents' house as we were having the final stage of the Lime Plastering done. This meant that I wasn't able to get out and butterfly as much as I'd hoped and so a suggested day trip down to Lulworth sounded just perfect, especially as Lulworths had started emerging. After the drive down from Sixpenny Handley we stopped off for lunch in a pub on the outside of the village but it wasn't open until 12 so we had a little stroll to sharpen the appetite and I spied two Holly Blues, both unfortunately too high up in their respective trees. Over lunch I did get a glimpse of a Lulworth.



Having parked we made our way down to the Cove proper in amongst all the Grockles and while my mum and the girls set up on the beach I checked out my little path way on the West side of the cove. It was surprisingly quiet and so I quickly made my way to the top and out onto the field where a Red Admiral went hurtling by at an impressive rate of knots. Further along I found a Common Blue nestling down in the longer grasses but there was a definite lack of little ginger jobs and so I made my way back to the path almost missing a basking lizard on the way.





After a little time on the beach I headed back up the side of the cliff and the sun was out more strongly now and so I hung around the main paths and all the little ones that snaked up the side of the cliff. I quickly found a Dingo skipper that looked a little unusual, probably due to wear, as the ground colour was a light grey with the brown markings like little tear drops.



Over the next 20 minutes or so I became like a Mountain Goat, gambolling along the narrow tracks along the edge of the precipice trying my damndest to follow the seemingly numerous Wall Browns. There must have been at least 5 as I'm fairly confident that I got shots of three distinct males (one surprisingly worn) and also a pair in cop.









Eventually I had to make my way back to the beach and the girls as it was time for an ice cream and to make our way back to car park. Hopefully I'll be able to make a return journey back here for my Skippers but even if they're not here the trip will be worth it.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 16-Jun-15 04:46 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Your penultimate image of the mating Wall Browns is a real gem, it just shows what can be found by chance when out and about.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 17-Jun-15 06:36 AM GMT

Cracking Walls Wurzel, your nimble, mountain goat like stalking paid dividends there 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Willow, 17-Jun-15 08:31 PM GMT

Agree with Trevor about that mating Wall shot...great capture Wurz 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-Jun-15 04:01 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, love the Wall shots, and i'm looking forward to seeing your Heath shots, my daughter lives in Kent and I won't be going there till August so I'll probably miss them but hope fully I'll get the Adonis at Temple Ewell Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 18-Jun-15 05:18 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

More great reports with some smashing photos. I love the Wall Brown pair 🍷 😊 .

It seems that you had a successful trip for Heath Frits, looking forward to the report.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 18-Jun-15 05:42 AM GMT

Those Walls are terrific, Wurzel. I have to go out of my way to find just the one, and you find a mating pair with a lovely female as part of the partnership. Great shots. 🍷 😊

(Swop you a Holly Blue?)

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 18-Jun-15 06:08 AM GMT

Wall Browns are hard work aren't they Wurzel! But well worth it, I love them, their flighty nature only seems to make them even more alluring to me for some reason.

Great photos. 😊

ATB

James

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 20-Jun-15 06:59 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

The aftershave i use is one recommended by Gumby in Monty Python, It's called Rancid Polecat ! 😊  
I'll be splashing it on in couple of weeks time for HIM..... Should work a treat !.

Keep up the good work,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Jun-15 07:26 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I shall head to my local Boots straight away to order a bottle! 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I don't know how much longer my knees will let me complete manouvres like this 😊

Cheers Willrow 😊 Lucky that was 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I'm trying to gte cuaght up - but work and migraines keep getting in the way 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Only 8 posts to go til my Heaths 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I am quite jammy when it comes to Walls 😊

Cheers Rex 😊 I know what you mean, things you have to work for are always mean more. 😊

Tutor Time Part 1 and 2 - 28-05-2015

As it was K's birthday today she was delighted to spend two separate hours at her tutors enjoying Holiday Revision sessions! 😊 😊  
As usual I checked the Slow Worms first and one mat held 4, another had 3 so not a bad haul and then I hopped over the fence and set off up the path. The weather report had said that there should be sunny intervals but there wasn't - it was blowy and almost chilly and so most butterflies were hunkering down amongst the lower blades of grass. I didn't make it too far u the side of the Down instead I concentrated my efforts in the little scallops of grass surrounded by the scrub as here the wind couldn't get in and it was warmer even though the sun was still hiding behind the clouds. I soon started seeing the odd butterfly with a Small Heath, Dingy Skipper and archaic Grizzlie. I spotted a slate grey butterfly feebly flying against the breeze and after a short distance it dropped down knackered onto the path. I approached it ever so slowly as I really didn't want to disturb it and tire it any more but it was exhausted and gratefully clambered onto my hand.



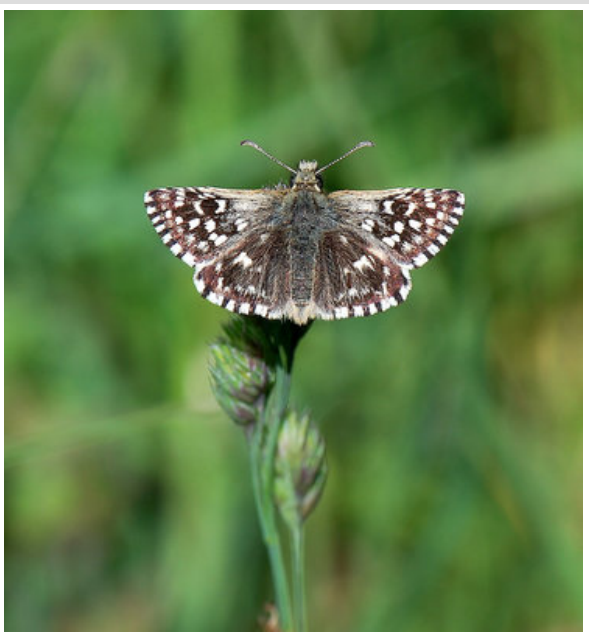


After I'd placed it on a grass stem further away from the path I decided to cut my loses and head back to the tutors house stopping on the way only for an Adonis Blue and another aged Dingy.



By the time I'd arrived for the later session the sun had actually come out and the temperatures had risen so now I powered up the hill noting plenty of Small Heaths and Skippers on the way and also many more blues – mainly Common but with the occasional obvious Brown Argus and Adonis. Up near the top of the Down the path snakes its way through the scrub and bushes and on the other side of the Down top it opens up again, traversing the slopes. Here I found first a Speckle and then a Green-veined White which seemed to be taking quite an interest in a leaf – possibly still coated in Honeydew? There was a nice collection of butterflies here with both skippers, more Brown Argus and Common Blues but time was against me and so I had to retrace my steps stopping only for the occasional shot on the way including a late showing from a Peacock and a lovely fresh Common Blue with some of the most pristine margins I've ever seen – they practically glowed!









It wasn't all work and no play for K as she did have a laugh with her tutor and the other tutees and her tutor was sharing out Marshmallows as if there was no tomorrow! Plus when we got back to my folks there was a Birthday tea in the sunny garden, cake and more Marshmallows to roast over the fire-pit! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Willrow, 22-Jun-15 01:20 AM GMT

Lovely report and images – but Wurz you need to *revise* too cos' your now 3 weeks behind with your reports (it only used to be 2 😞)...and I thought I was behind with mine...you give me great hope...and I now realise why your so passionate about Slow Worm's 😞😞

Bill 😊

"When in doubt – venture out"

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Jun-15 06:28 AM GMT

Cheers Willrow 😊 I am glad that I give you hope 😊, the problem I have is that it's so much easier to go out and get shots than to sort through them and write up reports 😞 especially when the dreaded "W" word gets in the way, if only I could afford to take really, really, really early retirement 😞

Wicked Day 30-05-2015

## Part 1- Bentley Wood

Sometimes fate smiles on me. Today was one of those days. True I had a massive clean-up job ahead of me at the house but the girls (wife included) were off to London to see Wicked in the west End and even better the weather men had got it wrong in a good way for once. Instead of the predicted cloud cover all day there were long periods of glorious sunshine!

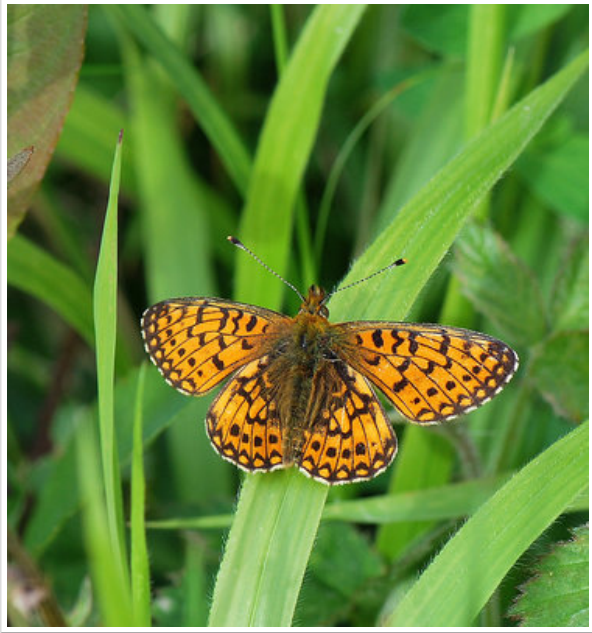
Having got the cat food I then headed off towards Bentley. There were already a few people in the Eastern Clearing and there were two Small Pearls already present and being photographed. After a wander I added Drab Looper, some Lizards and unusually for Bentley, a Common blue to the day list.



From there I carried on wandering round the middle of the Eastern clearing in amongst the narrow weaving track ways. After a second Small Pearl I notched up 2 Pearls, one was faded, really pale and it got away. The other was remarkably fresh but even then the ginger colour was still much less intense than that of a fresh Small Pearl.

Back in the middle I eschewed the small group that had arrived and wove my way through the small track ways again. I found my own Small Pearl and after following its jaunty flight for a bit it landed a few times and I was able to get a few shots including a few stained glass and the briefest closed wing showing the Pearls. I also saw the most perfect image ever. It's still emblazoned on my retina when I shut my eyes but my camera chose that moment to

'go slow' on the Autofocus. There was the Small Pearl perfectly poised, wings wide open balancing delicately on a Bluebell!







After following it for a bit a second one intervened and somehow I managed to follow it after its brief bit of argy bargey. This one had some nice markings with the outermost spots and chevrons near the tips fused together.





Another quick circuit before I moved on meant I finally caught up with a Pearl and got a few more Lizard shots a long with a larvae/cat on the main track on the way back to the car park.







Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Jun-15 06:57 AM GMT

Wicked Day 30-05-2015

Part 2 - Duke Site

I then headed over to my Duke Site to see if I could get some Small Blues as well as to see if the 'hotspot' track was going to live up to its reputation. Once on site I checked out the thinly vegetated bank and it was alive seemingly with Adonis Blues - mainly males but with a few slate coloured females amongst them as well as the less azure blue Common blues plus the odd Dingy. I cut my over to the main track and again there were Dingies, Grizzlies, as well as Bimstone, various blues and lots of Brown Argus in the grasses at the edge of the field. There was also plenty of Small Heath erupting in a flap at almost every other footfall on the path and at the top a pair of sparring Small Coppers.







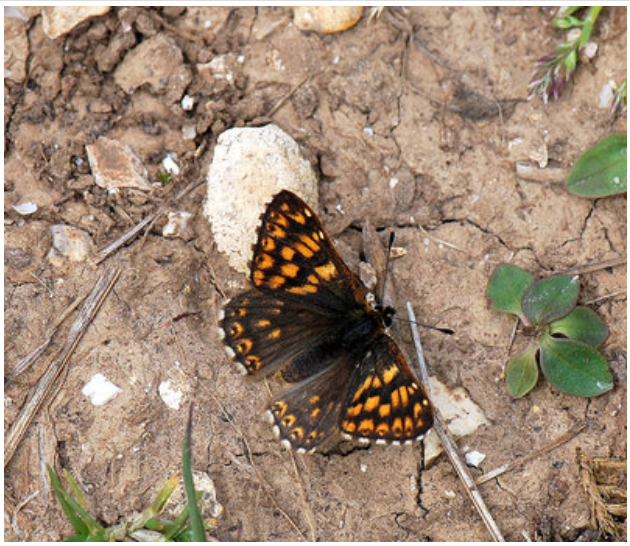
Once in the Glade I encountered the first cloudy interval so I sent my time walking and waiting at different spots in the Glade for the sun to reappear. As I watched the mossy ground tucked away in the trees it started to change hue as the sun crept out from behind the cloud. Once clear of the cloud the temperature rose and within a minute where there had been no butterflies suddenly there were several. A Small Copper stood out most obviously a close second was a Brown Argus. A Dingy put in an appearance, briefly bothering the Small Copper. A Greenstreak did a fly-by and several Forester moths vied for my attention. Then there it was, a little brown job, less bright and obvious and less feisty than a Brown Argus but only slightly a lovely little Duke and probably the same one I saw previously. It was joined by a second and so I spent some time here just enjoying the shenanigans of the butterflies.



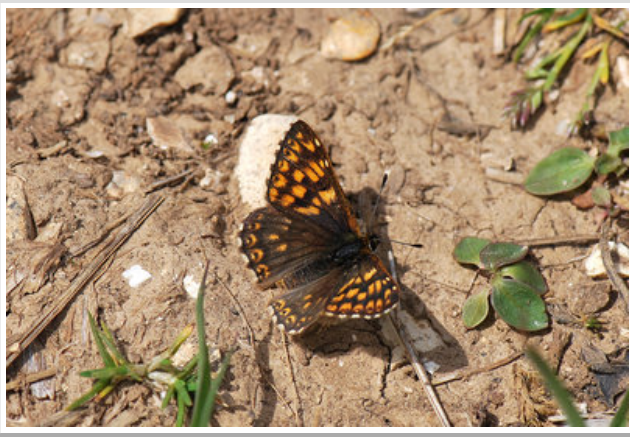


I then started to make my way, slowly, ever so slowly back towards the car but it was hard going. Every time I'd set off something, it would fly close by and then land, tempting me to take photos of it. Somehow I made it back to the track and spent a while in the grasses. There were blues everywhere, mainly Brown Argus and Common Blues but with the odd Small Copper and occasional Adonis thrown in for good measure. I stumbled dazed by the plethora of butterflies onto the track. A really dark little butterfly, almost black settled on the path. Finally; a Duke at my 'hotspot'! It was a lovely little fella.









I then carried on back to the car until a Wall distracted me and once again I left the path to capture a record shot of my first confirmed sighting at this site.



Almost back at the car, within touching distance, I check the time and thought I could squeeze in another 10 minutes or so and headed to the little thinly grassed patch near the car. Again Small Heath, Adonis and Common Blues predominated so I made my way towards the longer grasses at the edge of the spinney - reasoning that this might be good for Small Blues. I was proved right almost immediately when one did a fly-by and then settled! Happy with the haul; first proper shots of Small Blue, first shots of Wall from this site and cracking little Dukes I headed homewards to face, what turned out to be, 6 hours of non-stop cleaning and bed building.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 24-Jun-15 11:46 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
I'm curious to know how your expedition to East Blean went. As for Boots they'd be closed down and have an exclusion zone placed around their stores if they sold it. 🤔

Heaths please!  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Willrow, 25-Jun-15 04:58 AM GMT

Well worth waiting for those 'wicked' reports Wurz...I really loved em' 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt – venture out"

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Jun-15 06:51 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 My trip to East Blean went exceedingly well only saw three species of butterfly all day but what seemed like bucket loads of Heaths. Managed to find fresh, old, mating, open and close winged and also two being ripped to pieces by Wood Ants 🤔 Mind you I am a victim of my success as I've only just finished sorting through the 800 photos 😊😊 Hence it will be a little while longer yet til I manage to post, sorry about that. 😞  
Cheers Willrow 😊 Only another 7 or 8 posts to do and then I'll have caught up, tell me what does that feel like 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 26-Jun-15 06:14 AM GMT

Your "Duke site" has everything, Wurzel. Quite a place. And I'm envious of your Small Pearls from a few weeks back, as I didn't get to see them this year (car trouble - now thankfully resolved).

I'm looking forward to your diary keeping us going right up till Christmas at least... 😊 😊

Dave

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Jun-15 06:18 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I was at Bristol Zoo today getting a few posts worth in the bag ready for just after Christmas 😊 😊

WB 02-06 Larkhill

02-06-2015

This was a quick afternoon pop-in during which I mainly focused on the area at the entrance to the Northbound path. After recently seeing my first Common Blues I was hoping to get some good numbers at Larkhill and so it seemed with the longer grass holding at least 14. I say 'at least' because it proved impossible to make an accurate count because one would decide to take off and then fly through the occupied by another which would set him off, and then a female that didn't want any hassle would also move off and set off a chain reaction of blues flying.

As I made my way further in towards the path proper I also managed to pick out a couple of Brown Argus. The first indication that they were something different was their much smaller stature, then as I was able to get closer they were much more world weary and finally as I made to pass by they closed their wings so I was able to see the arrangement of their spots. There was also a Grizzlie present and a second one. At least that was my first fleeting thought but something was wrong with it and so I twigged that it was a Small Blue which was cracking news after not seeing any here last year.







03-06-2015

AM

Again I tried to count the Common Blues that were hanging around the entrance to the Northbound path this morning, and again I got to roughly 14 so perhaps my count from yesterday afternoon was more accurate than I thought?

Again I found a Small Blue, a Grizzlie but this time I could only see one Brown Argus...perhaps the second one prefers to sleep in? I spent some time looking for it and also marvelling at the variety shown by the Common Blues from those with the slightest tinge of blue through to those that had less brown than blue.





PM

Things had cheered up by the afternoon and I was able to have a scan around and just enjoy the sight of Common Blues living up to their name, they were packed into a small little area looking like a meadow of blue petaled flowers. The eventual count came in at 24 (after adding a couple on the Westbound path) although I'm sure a few slipped by in the general melee that ensued just as I was reaching the end of each count!

I was also able to get in a bit closer to the suspect Brown Arguses which seemed odd as normally things are so solar charged by the afternoon that they don't sit still for more than a second or two. Perhaps they felt that they had been misrepresented recently? It was also good to see 9 Small Heath and three Brimstones putting in an appearance. Even better than that they stopped long enough for a photo or three!



04-06-2015

After a manic afternoon yesterday things were much quieter this morning and it seemed to be back to business as usual with only 2 Brown Argus and again a count of 14 Common Blues. That number has been my total on three occasions now so I'm assuming that it's an accurate observation.







Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 26-Jun-15 07:32 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Your Grizzled Skipper shot is perfection !,iv'e seen very few this year,and so i have avoided a shot like that 🍷. Also your Brimstone with wings partly open gets a mrgreen 🍷.

Best wishes,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Jun-15 07:21 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor for your very kind comments 😊

Weekend Doings

06-06-2015 Five Rivers

The weekend started with a very quick check of Five Rivers whilst K was at her swimming lesson. After the large number of Blues that were emerging at Larkhill it actually turned out to be slightly disappointing as the Banks, both top and bottom, were bereft of butterflies although they did hold plenty of Banded Demoseilles, a Yellow Shell and some Slow Worms. It wasn't until the return journey that I saw my butterflies the first of which was a worn looking female Common Blue. Perhaps I've missed this brood at this site? I also saw a Specklie near the Spinney but the most impressive sighting was of a glorious Small Tortoiseshell which looked so resplendent that he had to be a second brood.

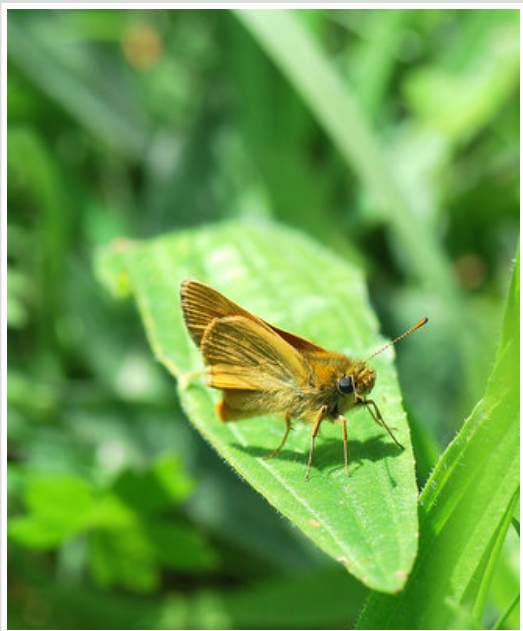


During the afternoon whilst enjoying a Cream tea at the vicarage in Sixpenny Handley I watched a Small White, a Painted Lady and Hummingbird Hawk Moth all enjoying their own repast on the vergers borders.

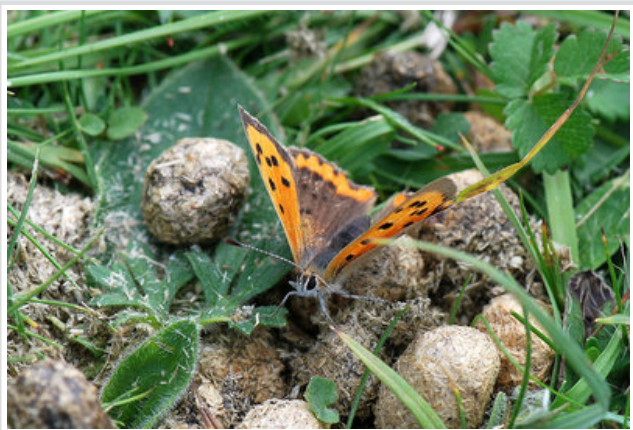
07-06-2015 The Devenish

The next day I had some time just with K and so we headed to The Devenish to try and break the 'bad form' it's been having because of the June gap. Once there the sun was blazing so K had to stay in the shade where possible as I'd been caught out and not brought the sun cream. We were greeted in the car park by a Specklie and there was a second among the trees on the way to the Meadow.

Once over the fence the first butterfly I saw was the one I was hoping for - my first Large Skipper of 2015. We settled down to watch it for a bit before moving further into the Meadow. It looked gorgeous and practically glowed when the sun hit it. After this I took to wandering around while K sat in the shade on the stile calling me back when the occasional Jewell Wasp stopped on the wooden beams. In the Meadow there were butterflies about but they were very flighty and hard work, seldom stopping for longer than a quick drink would allow.



Up on the Down itself I settled K down and then strolled around for a bit, traversing back and forth. On the way I picked up a more mature Common Blue, a Small Copper nestled on some Rabbit Droppings (and so another entrant into my "Butterflies on \$\*@£" book) as well as a few Skipper towards the lower slopes of the Down where the grass is more tussock like. As we started to make our way back down a flash of electric blue blazed across the grass tops in front of us. A cracking male Adonis Blue. After watching it flutter about it eventually settled once or twice and so I was able to move in.







Once back in the Meadow I put in a lot more effort with trying to get shots of the butterflies but in fact rather than pacing back and forth the easiest thing to do was stand still and watch. Then when the butterflies landed, or rather if they landed, I could take a couple of steps, crouch and click. This worked out well as I was able to find a further two Large Skippers, Small Heath, Common Blues, Brown Argus, Green-veined White and a Grizzlie.



With time seeping away we had to pack up and head homewards but only after stopping to check out an old tree stump which was literally crawling with bees of several species. There was a Jewell Wasp, and even smaller all green one, Potter wasps as well as a couple of species of bee. This on stump was so enthralling I was almost late back to pick up my wife and younger daughter.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 28-Jun-15 07:58 AM GMT

What a beautiful Adonis Blue, Wurzel. An absolute stunner. 😊🇬🇧

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Jun-15 06:34 AM GMT

Cheers Dave it was a little cracker 😊

Tutor Time 08-06-2015

The day itself was an unusual day for June as the sun was shining, yet there was a breezy wind. Mind you it only lasted as long as it took me to get up to Laverstock Down having dropped K at her tutors and then it was business as usual as the cloud rolled in and covered the sun for pretty much the whole time I was on site. After a few grumbles I carried on regardless.

Once on site I got waylaid almost immediately by a couple of Mother Shipton moths (are the males called Fathers?). I watched them for a good while and tried my hardest to get shots but they were very flighty and when they finally did land it was either for the briefest possible time or deep down in the grass where their wonderful markings were obscured by the blades and leaves.



Having worked my way up to the main side of the Down the sun was still in and so not much was about. Still I wandered back and forth checking among

the more sheltered spots for tiny white flags fluttering in the breeze. Even then nowt presented itself to me so I made to head home. It was then that I saw a 'flag' flying from some long grass in one of the most exposed arts of the Down! As I approached it flew and spooked another previously unseen 'flag'. I managed to follow one and it landed in a scrape. Due to the lack of sun it seemed loathe to move and so I was able to get in really close.



After this I carried on looking for 'flags' having now got my eyes in and I managed to discover a number of butterflies bringing me a total of two Small Heath, a Grizzlie, 6 Common and 7 Adonis Blues.







Time was racing away from me and so I started the return journey. Guess what happened next? Yep the cloud shifted and the sun beat down. With a wry smile a carried on back and a lovely Small Tort was on the path.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by keving, 30-Jun-15 04:18 AM GMT

Wurzel,

The close up of the blue is a belter, such great detail.

Regards

Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Jul-15 04:42 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, Love the Blues, especially the Adonis photos, hope your headaches are better, you seem to have a lot of work on your shoulders at present, I've been a bit fed up with the Butterflies around us lately,( Late) is a good word for them they've been very few and far between up to now, I've got no fritillaries yet. Hope I see some soon Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Jul-15 06:47 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 The migraines come and go but it'll soon be the holidays so the stress will pass. I reckon you'll be into bucket loads of butterflies anyday now – to make up for the dearth 😊

WB 08-06-2015 Larkhill

08-06 AM

I don't know what happened over the weekend but I think that there has been another emergence of Common blues as they've gone from 14 back up to 24 and some are looking resplendent in their fresh livery. It was also nice to see a little Grizzlie still clinging on in there, mooching around and complaining about all the 'flashy Johnny-come-latelys that are, quite frankly, just showing off!'  
1GS, 2SH, 3BA, 24 CB



09-06 PM

There must have been a couple of Blues hiding yesterday as the maximum count reached 26 Common blues today. There could possibly be more as I didn't venture very far down either of the paths instead I just concentrated on the little patch near the car park and with numbers like these I didn't really need to either! Some of the female Blues were looking particularly fine with their brown dusted in blue whilst others were almost entirely blue.  
26CB, 3BA, 1GS, 1SH





10-06 AM

More of the same this morning and what I lost - 2 Common Blues I gained with an extra Brown Argus. I must confess to getting slightly lazy when identifying Brown Argus because it been so long since I've seen a female Brown Common Blue that is sufficiently 'brown' as to prove tricky to identify. Most over the last couple of year have been well shaded in blue, if not entirely covered.

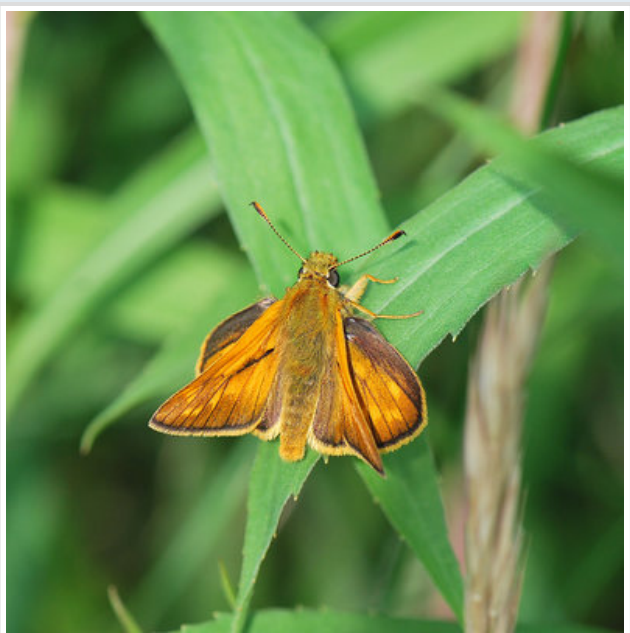
24CB, 4BA, 2SH, 1GS





11-06 AM

I did stop for slightly longer than the usual allotted 5 minutes this morning as I wanted to try for some Large Skipper shots before they start looking more shabby. Also the Common Blues are either on the wane or starting to disperse as they were back down to 19 this morning.  
3LS, 4BA, 3SH, 19CB





12-06 PM

I didn't even count on this stop as it felt cooler and murky and so I just stole a few shots and then skidaddled homewards as quick as I could.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

ps Almost forgot...

July 2015



### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 02-Jul-15 07:45 AM GMT

A great collection of female blues, Wurzel! 😊 I agree – they seem to have a second wind mid-June on my patch too. Fading out now for a short while though... 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Jul-15 07:43 PM GMT

Lovely Blues Wurzel, I agree, you don't see many brown females these days but I must admit I like the blue ones best Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 03-Jul-15 06:16 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
What would you have done in my circumstances, ASDA or White Letter Hairstreak!.  
Funny there was nothing in the fridge for tea tonight.

TREVOR.



## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-15 06:30 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 They've just seemed to fill the June gap nicely the past couple of years 😊

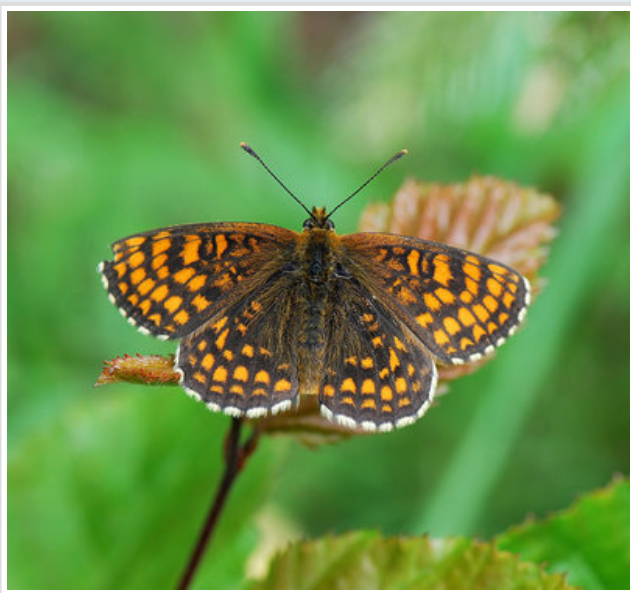
Cheers Goldie 😊 Me too, the really blue female Blues are more spectacular than the males 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Definitely WLH, just don't tell the wife 😊

East Blean 14-06-2015

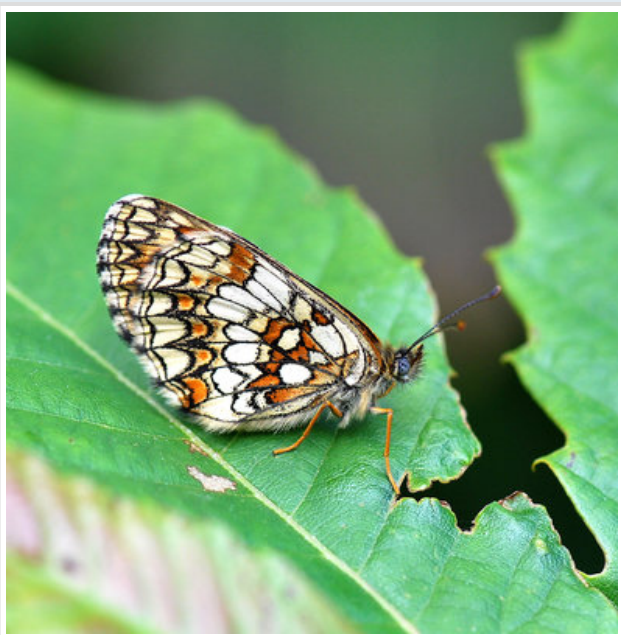
What a totally fantastic day! This trip has been three years in the making...It didn't start too well with an early start, rain on the drive down and SatNav trying to send me down a one way street once I was almost at my destination. However after a brief catch up and car change Philzoid were on our way and the sun started to break through the cloud, there were even patches of blue sky! Having easily found it and parked we headed onto the first clearing where a visitor dampened our spirits slightly by informing us that he'd visited the day before and spent several hours seeing nothing! He followed us on into the first clearing which is where they were to be found a couple of years ago and continued with his tale of woe, really bringing us both down after the elation of the trip and seeing blue skies peeping out amidst the cloud despite all weather reports to the contrary. "Oh" we both thought... 😊

However after a Red Admiral did a fly-by something smaller and more brown took off - my first ever Heath Fritillary. It was followed by a second and Philzoid found a third all in the space of two minutes. Heartened by our immediate success we set off deeper into the Wood searching for more coppiced clearings and Cow Wheat.





Just along from the first clearing we headed onto our left and stumbled onto another couple of Heaths basking open winged in a clearing with slightly taller/older coppiced stools. Having previously discussed how it might be difficult to get the classic closed wing shot an unusual looking leaf proved that actually getting the closed wing wasn't that hard! While we were getting shots Philzoid pointed out a movement on the floor and we thought we'd found a couple more Heaths. We had but they were in a sorry state. The first was already dead, flat on its back the movement not from it but the Wood Ants in the process of removing its abdomen. The second was still putting up a fight but there were three or four ants all stinging and ripping at it, it seemed to succumb as we watched. Nature can be harsh to watch sometimes.

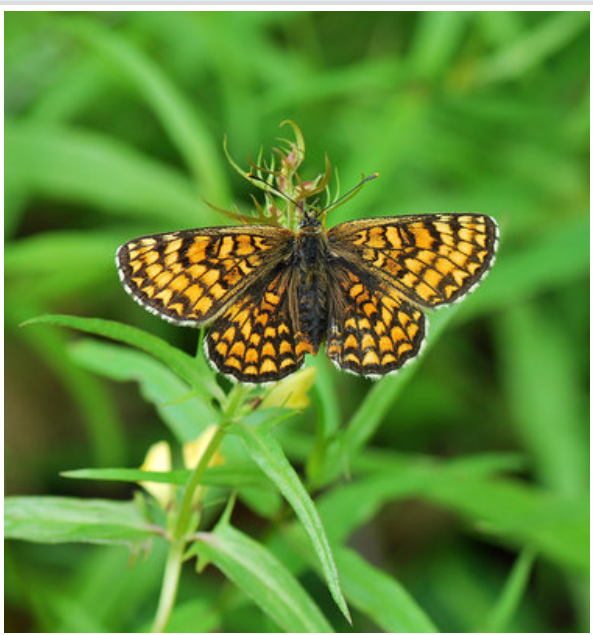


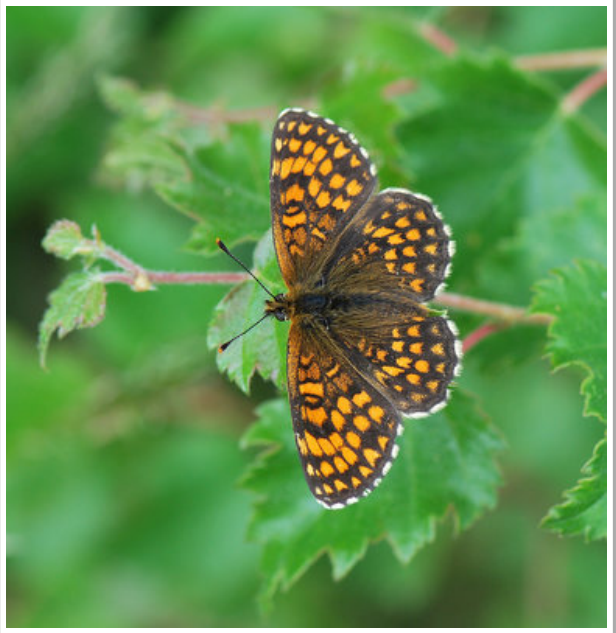
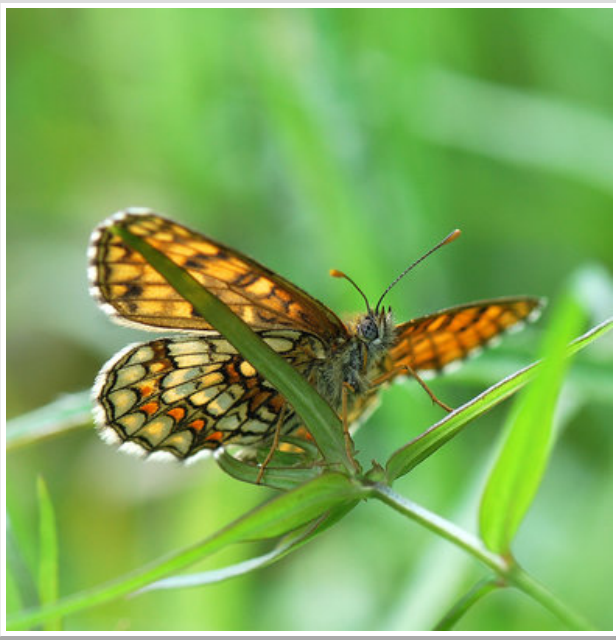


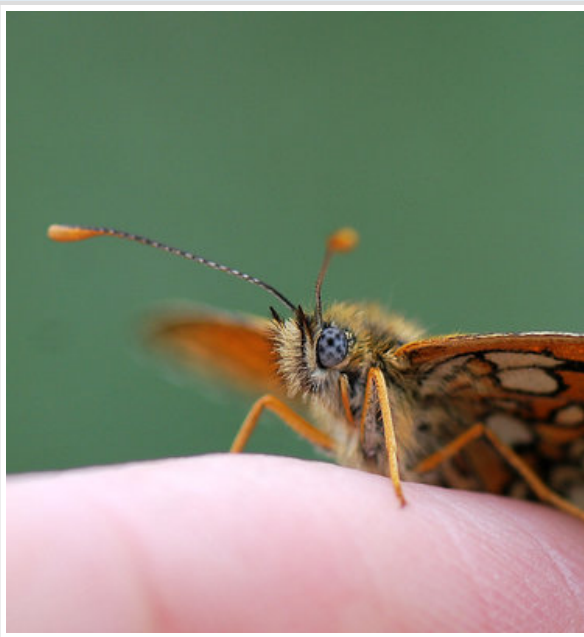
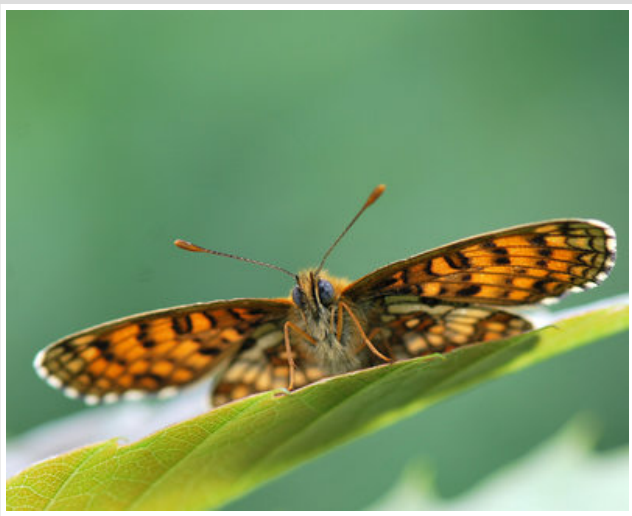
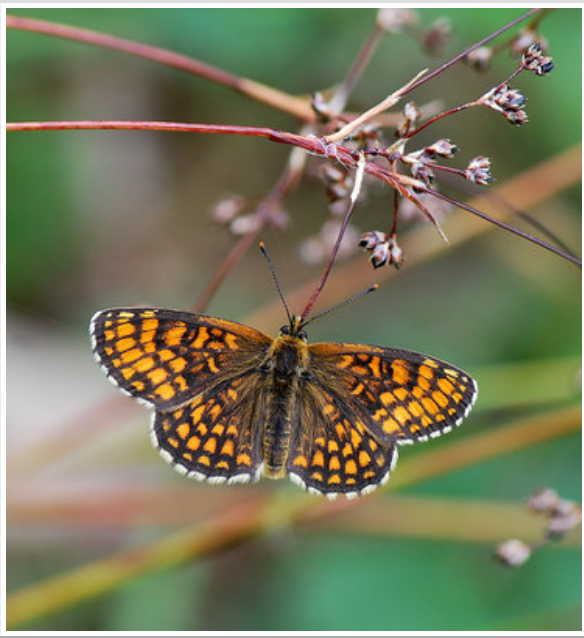


We carried on into and around as the sun came out just enough for the Heaths to suddenly emerge and then they were everywhere. In fact the weather was pretty perfect - no wind, just enough warmth for the butterflies to bask and fly but yet not be solar charged to frenetic flights. As we walked in amongst the coppice stools we seemed to encounter more and more Heaths - we got to 19 and then lost count! We also checked out another couple of Clearings but these were much newer and the Cow Wheat had only just started coming up and we didn't see any Heaths there at all. Also it was strange but apart from the single Red Admiral the only butterflies that we were seeing were Heaths - not even a Large Skipper or Specklie. Back at the first clearing we settled into finding four or more at each spot we stopped in including a couple of mating pairs.









Sorry for going a bit Heath mad 🤪 but these were my first and I tried to get shots of almost every single one I saw...so the shots here and in part 2 are just a small selection 🤪 ...

Have a goodun



**Re: Wurzel**

by Maximus, 03-Jul-15 06:44 AM GMT

Great shots of the Heath Fritillaries Wurzel 😊 really glad you finally got to see them, cos they're worth it 😊😊

Mike

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 03-Jul-15 06:57 AM GMT

Hi, again, Wurzel,

A brilliant report and images from East Blean, it's always satisfying when a long journey is rewarded. Heaths used to fly in the car park, in good numbers but that area has become overgrown.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 03-Jul-15 07:02 AM GMT

Sorry for going a bit Heath mad 😞 but these were my first and I tried to get shots of almost every single one I saw...so the shots here and in part 2 are just a small selection 😞...

Thats exactly what I was doing a day or two later at that same spot 😊, they really are fabulous, charismatic little butterflies aren't they.

Oh and congratulations on getting to page 100 on your PD 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Hoggers, 03-Jul-15 10:37 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel I don't have far to go to see the Heaths but I know what it's like to travel a long way to see a butterfly I've dreamed about for ages and every time I make these long journeys I always bump into that guy who says he's been looking for hours and not seen a thing . It's either him or his mate, the one who greets you with the news that it was there a minute ago but just flew off strongly into the distance. So I'm glad you did see the Heaths!

Best wishes

Hoggers

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-15 02:23 AM GMT

Lovely shots Wurzel, I'm so glad you got to see the Heaths, their really some thing aren't they! I see you got your glassy shot 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 04-Jul-15 03:12 AM GMT

Congratulations on your Heath Fritillaries Wurzel, great report and photos 😊, you can feel the happiness building through your report when you started to see them after your meeting with the prophet of doom.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 04-Jul-15 05:21 AM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 Indeed they are, just as David Ginola once said 😊😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Thhta's what 'the Prophet' was telling us, but this year they've moved onto a small area almost directly behind the car park 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 They're great little butterflies almost as if the great characteristics of the other Fritillaries have been rolled into one 😊

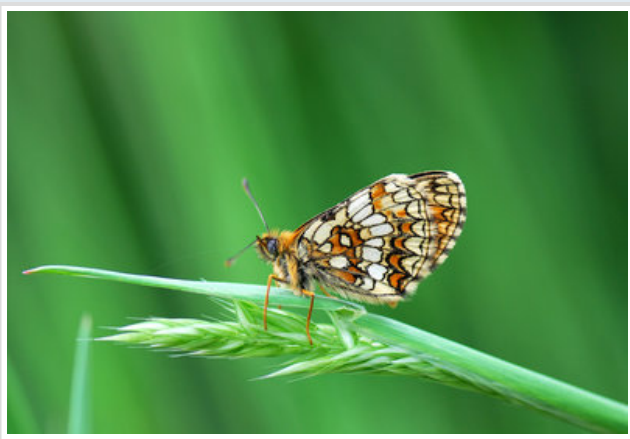
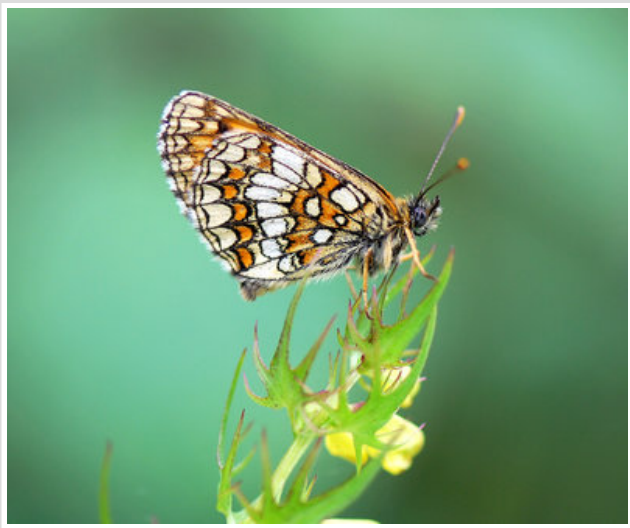
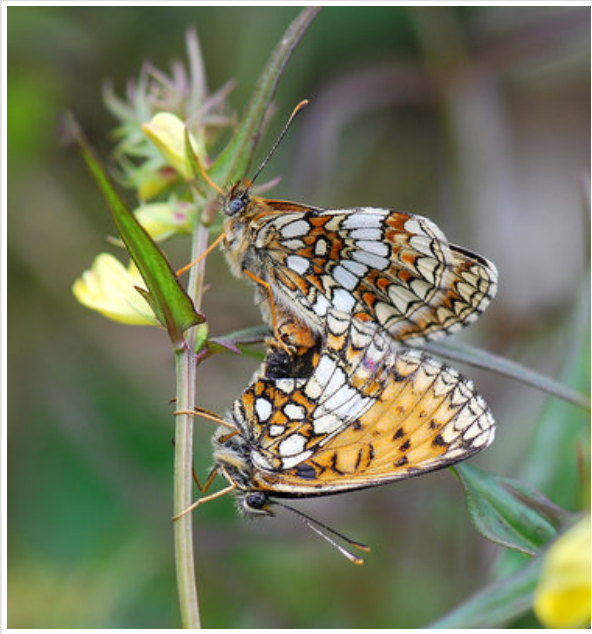
Cheers Hoggers 😊 That phrase 'you should have been here...' should be banned from all nature watching activities 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 It wouldn't be a Wurzel report without at least one attempt at a 'stained glass' 😊

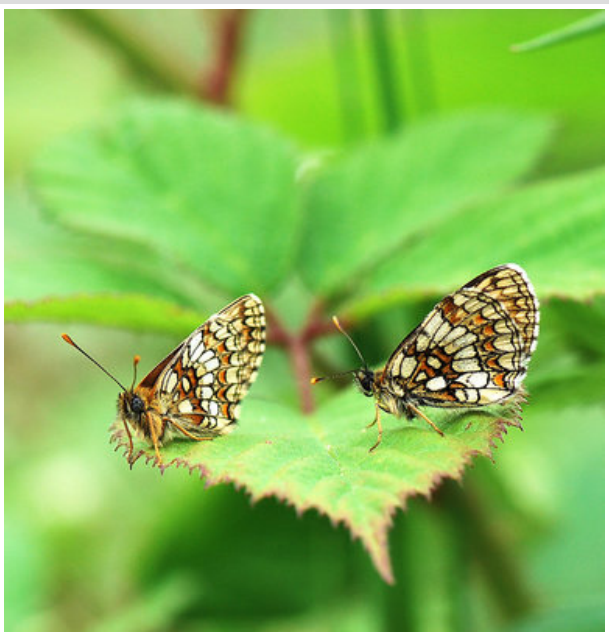
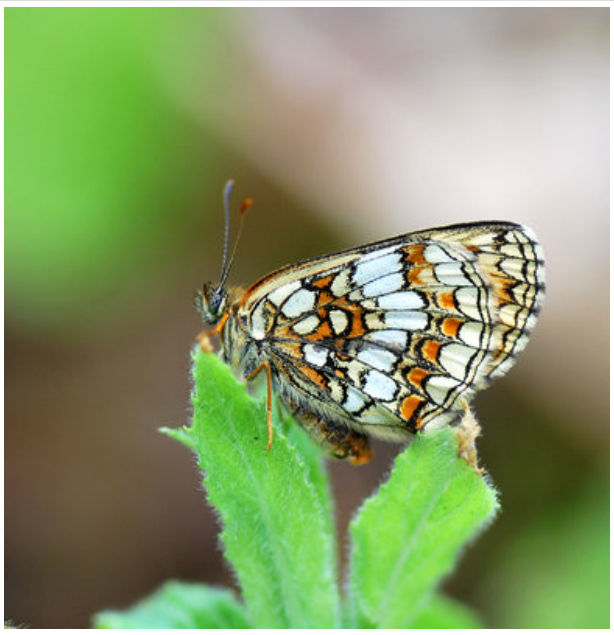
Cheers Neil 😊 The prophet himself cheered up quickly enough too once we got into bucket loads of Heaths 😊

East Blean Part 2

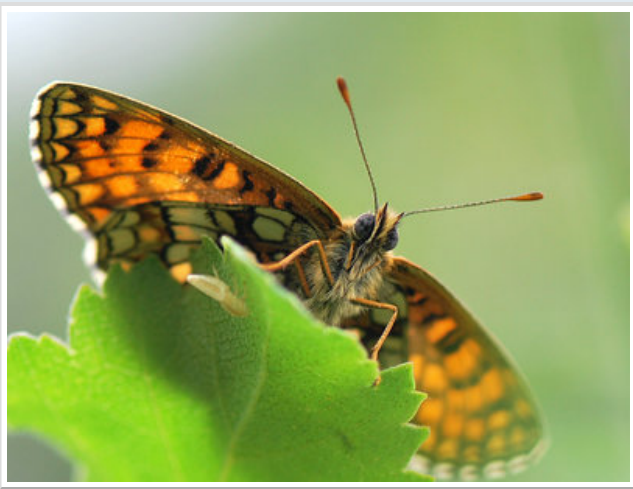
After returning to the car park for lunch we headed back to the clearing the cloud had returned and it had cooled slightly and so all the Heaths we were finding were roosting - often communally and we also found some more mating pairs.



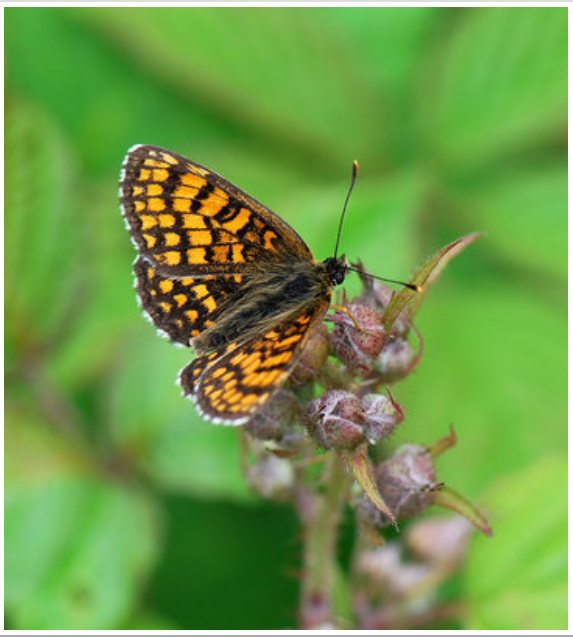
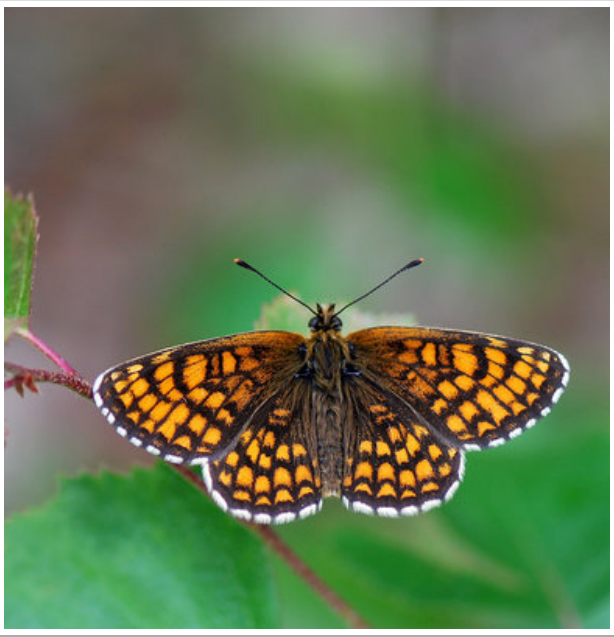
We headed back into the clearing and ambled back and forth checking the Brambles, the grasses, the Cow Wheat and also the leaves up to about head height for any Heaths. A Hummingbird Hawk moth did a few fly-bys and we were both surprised how fast it was going despite the cooler temperatures. For the briefest of seconds it landed on the deck and I managed a total of two shots before it was off again doing whatever it needed to do and zipping by us a few more times before we left. There was the briefest of brightness and some Heaths gave up roosting to fly quite feebly or to bask in the little sun there was but mainly it was getting dimmer and cooler so eventually all the Heaths that we found were roosting. Whilst investigating a patch of Brambles along the path something larger and darker flitted by and proved to be my first Meadow Brown of 2015.

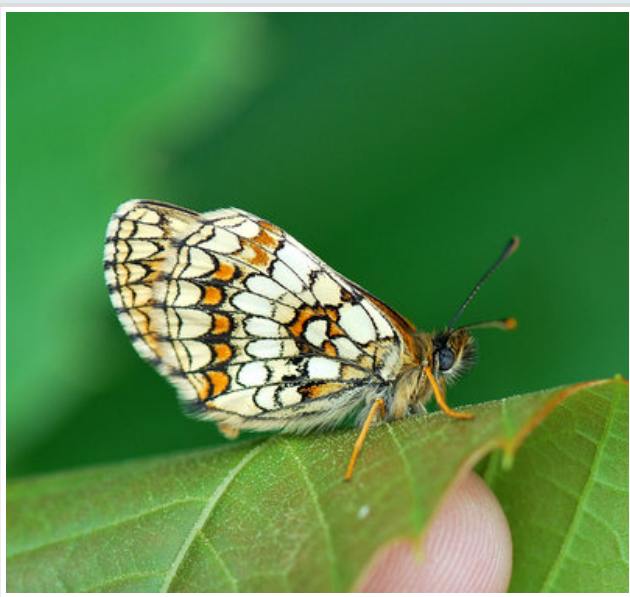






We finished up with more roosting Heaths and then headed back to the car park and home – to muse and discuss our observations from the day. It seemed ironic that we only saw three species all day and the most numerous (probably into triple figures) was the rarest. Also despite there seeming to be large areas of perfectly acceptable coppice the Heaths were mainly restricted to the one clearing where the coppice was just mature enough but not too mature, the Goldilocks clearing. It seems that we'd timed it perfectly as 3 minutes into the journey home the rain started which I didn't mind as I'd seen mine Heaths!





Heath madness over, normal service will resume for a couple of posts and then there are some Large Blues 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel



## Re: Wurzel

by Willow, 04-Jul-15 06:07 AM GMT

Super shots of those fantastic **Heath Fritillary** Wurz...one small point though, regarding that last image – I'm glad there is a leaf between your finger and a species you need a license to handle otherwise you could have been in some real trouble...cos' we would have snitched on you... 😊😊😊

BW's

Bill 😊

"When in doubt – venture out"

## Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 04-Jul-15 06:21 AM GMT

Great photos Wurzel. The three on one leaf shot is brilliant!

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-15 07:59 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I love the three on a leaf as well, also the one showing your finger, don't know how you managed that 😊

It's great to know the Heath's are still doing well, when I was there last year I saw only an odd one or two, that was about the 12th of July, they could have been early though because the weather was better last year and every thing was early.

I'm surprised you didn't see any White Admiral's their usually about at this time of year and in the car park the Oak Tree's there are supposed to have Purple Hair Streaks ( that's according to the Ranger I met there) not that I've seen them 😊 I'm going there in August, the Ranger said tea time was the best time to see them so fingers crossed 😊

Looking at your dates it was probably too early any way. Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

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

Cheers Willow 😊 It was more a case of them handling me than the other way round 😊 Cheers Katrina for your kind comment 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 The Heaths were certainly worth waiting for – only problem is that now I want to see them next season too 😊😊

Larkhill WB 15-06-2015

15-06-2015

I couldn't stop here today as I had to get to work early to invite a new member of staff but as I drove past I saw a familiar White van with black stars painted on it as well as a proper Romany caravan and horses grazing. I'll have to have a proper look tomorrow and possibly catch up with my Traveller mate, him with the Tats and ears bedecked with piercings.

16-06-2015 AM

I felt a bit bad about stopping off this morning as I didn't want to disturb the Travellers but I made it as quietly as possible to the Westbound Path. A quick wander along was slightly derailed as I had to manoeuvre around one of the tethered horses. There wasn't an awful lot around and so after grabbing a few shots of one of the three Large Skippers and memorising the tally of 3 Small Heath, 2 Common Blues and a Brown Argus I made to set off for work thinking that at least I hadn't woken the Travellers – that was until their dogs spotted me. The big Alsatian stayed back giving hoarse barks whilst the tiny Jack Russell came over to investigate, a little scratch behind the ear and he toddled back to report to the main guard that I was 'ok'. 😊







PM

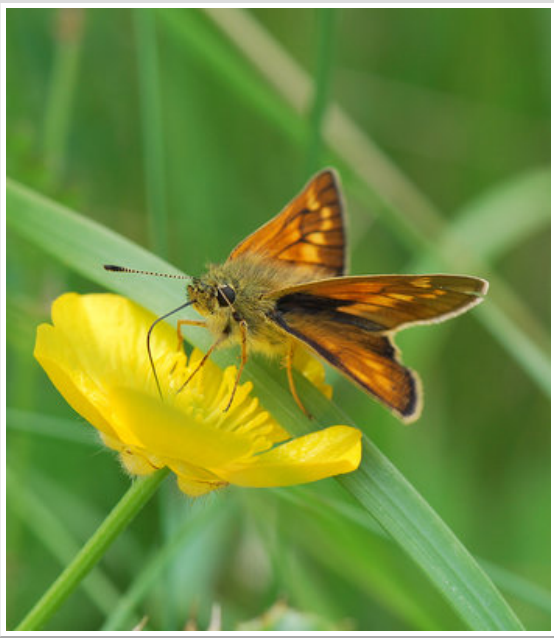
That afternoon I was hoping for my first Small Skipper so I set off down the West bund path - only one horse to get past here unlike the three blocking the Northbound path. A quick stroll down and back and I came up with the largest count of; 1 Small Tort, a male Brimstone, 4 Brown Argus, 2 Large Skipper, 3 Small Heath, 16 Common Blue (really are common this year) a possible Painted Lady and precisely zero Small Skippers - oh well they'll appear!



17-06-2015 AM

As the exam period has drawn to a close at lunch I was able to head out and over to the small field on the edge of the housing estate. A 10 minute walk around led me to believe that we are really entering into the June hiatus as I managed to notch up only a single Common Blue and numerous skippers, all of which turned out to be Large. As I was heading back to the car a Small White, lovely and fresh stopped salving my despondency.





PM

A brief usual stop-off on the way home with very changeable weather – one minute grey, windy and cool the next absolutely roasting! I strolled down the Westbound at past the horse and the closely cropped grass. On the way down I counted 7 Common Blues, 8 Small Heaths and four Large Skippers

there were also plenty of grass moths and Burnet Companions along with a couple at least of Silver-Y's. On the way back I notched up a Specklie looking lovely and fresh as well a Cinnabar and Mother Shipton. Once back at the car park I caught up with my traveller friend and we discussed that he'd missed the Small Blues and various other aspects of emergence patterns and just as I was talking about gaps between broods a spied a very fresh Small Tort and a very worn Brown Argus as if to illustrate my point. I bade him 'have a goodun' and 'see you Friday (course tomorrow) I put the pedal to the metal to get home before I was considered 'late'.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by millerd, 06-Jul-15 07:25 AM GMT

Just caught up with your Heath Fritillaries, Wurzel. They are amazing. I think I shall miss out on them this year, sadly, but those wonderful shots of yours nearly compensate! 😊 Nearly... 😊

Dave

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 06-Jul-15 10:20 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I think we're a long way behind you up here, we've got the Large Skipper's no Small yet and the Meadow Brown's have only just shown up, it's raining again here and I'm confined to the house for this week (some thing I've eaten) are could be the Sun, it came as a shock to us last week 😊  
Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 07-Jul-15 03:27 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

More great Heath Frit shots, my turn to be feeling 🍀

Looks like the Hedge Browns are starting to show up, time to start checking those spots 😊😊

Cheers,

Neil

**Re: Wurzel**

by keving, 07-Jul-15 04:40 AM GMT

Wurzel,

Just catching up with your PD. Your Heath Fritillaries are fantastic. The three on a leaf shot is possibly my favourite photo of the year so far. I also like the female Common Blue too.

Regards Kev

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 08-Jul-15 06:43 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Glad to be of service 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 The sun will shine soon, it has too 🙄😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I had my first the other day - no excessa yet but soon hopefully 😊

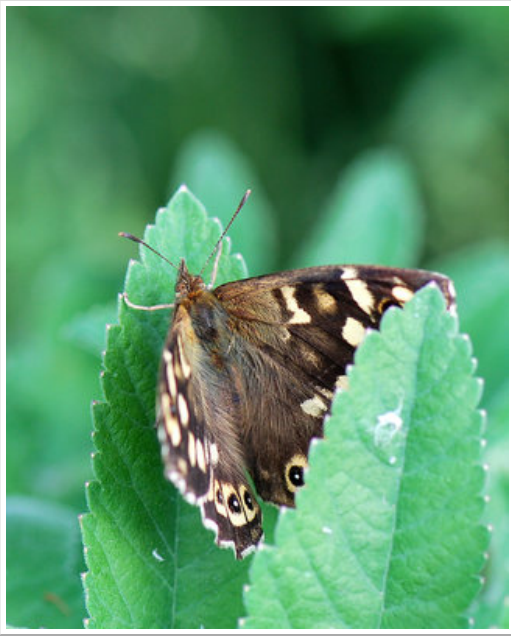
Cheers Kev for your very kind comment 😊🙄

Laverstock/Tutor 15-06-2015

I left K in the room hard at work and I was away up the Down after a brief stop counting 13 Slow Worms under three mats all before 5pm. As I cut across to make my way onto the site proper from the track I headed right this time and worked my way along the Bramble bushes that line the edge of the reserve.

This proved to be a very productive spot and I soon started notching up the species count. First up was a Specklie that decided to play a quick game of hide-and -seek. Once I'd won the first round as a prize it posed nicely for me, wings stretched wide and catching the sun. Then a Small Tort stopped briefly and I started getting distracted by Meadow Browns and Large Skippers with a couple of pairs battling it out among the Bramble flowers. As I was making my way back a belligerent Peacock made a swooping dive at me before settling down in the evening sun on a small log. It was obviously vying for my attention so I took a few shots to keep it happy.

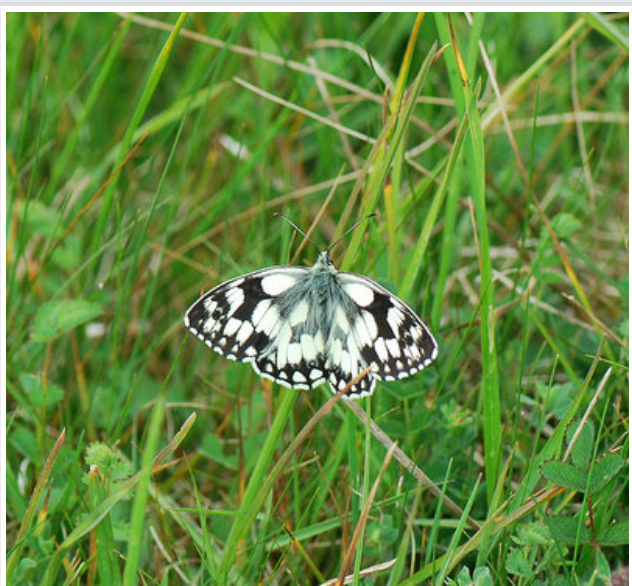






Eventually I made my way along to the path where I'd started out from and continued along the usual route to the main part of the Down. It felt cooler now, the wind had picked up and the sun was hiding behind the clouds so there wasn't an awful lot about on the journey just the odd Meadow Brown or two at each Bramble bush it seemed. As I started to work my way up the side of the Down there were the usual Common Blues, Small Heaths and a Dingy with a few Adonis intermingled with them.

It was while I was trying to work out whether to pursue the Adonis or whether I should move on up the Down that a White flew from amongst the grass. Only it wasn't a White, it seemed more grey and smaller than other Whites. I watched it from a far as it landed and then worked my way round and down so that I would be facing up hill at it and it wouldn't take off. As soon as I clapped eyes on it my memory jolted and synapses that hadn't been fired for almost a year kicked in. It was my first Marbled White of 2015 and hence the grey/off white colouration as it flew.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 08-Jul-15 02:10 PM GMT

Some stunning shots there Wurzel, especially that Peacock - I've never managed to get one as good as that, definitely a 'wish I'd taken it shot' 🍷🍷.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Jul-15 03:38 AM GMT

Love the Marble Whites Wurzel, their stunning Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-15 05:42 AM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 A lucky shot that was 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊

Collard Hill 2015

Last year I finally made the journey to Collard Hill to make acquaintance with the Large Blue. It was a poor year for them and so I only saw two females, both with wings closed. This year, fresh from Heath Fritillaries, I was hoping for a few more encounters with Big Blue! 😊

Somehow I managed to wangle some time out from the chores and so set off bright and early for Somerset with the added bonus of an "open and closed wing" prediction from K. After shaving a number of minutes off of the SatNav time I pulled into the car park, booted up and was away. There were several Meadow Browns in amidst the longer grasses on the way as well as plenty of Spotted Orchids with the odd Butterfly Orchid thrown in. A blue bombed towards me and just for a fraction of a second I wondered if I could really be that jammy, of course I wasn't it was just a Common.





Having eventually crossed the road – possibly the most dangerous part of the whole trip – I was on site and eyes peeled. Reports on the Blog suggested first that the Quarry would be good, then the Glades and then the scrub; so pretty much the whole site then. This led me to think that it would be a case of bumbling along until I eventually stumbled onto one rather than actively stalking out one little part and with this plan in mind I set off first down the quarry, across the field and towards the Glades. On the way I spied a female Common Blue, looking all slate blue and trying to convince me that she was a Large but her orangey spots gave her away. There were also some more Meadow Browns, the odd Small Heath as well as a Large Skipper hanging out near the Brambles and in the Glade a Marbled White. No Large Blue though – and I started to criticise myself for not “genning” up before coming as I didn’t really know what I was looking for.

My meanderings meant that I was now back at the line of scrub in the middle of the Down and at the foot of the hill I saw a couple of people leaning over a patch of ground and as I got closer I could make out a little white flag. Two of us managed to stay with it as it fluttered weakly around the foot of the hill amongst the scrub. Luckily it opened up despite the sun and there was my first open winged shot of a Large Blue.





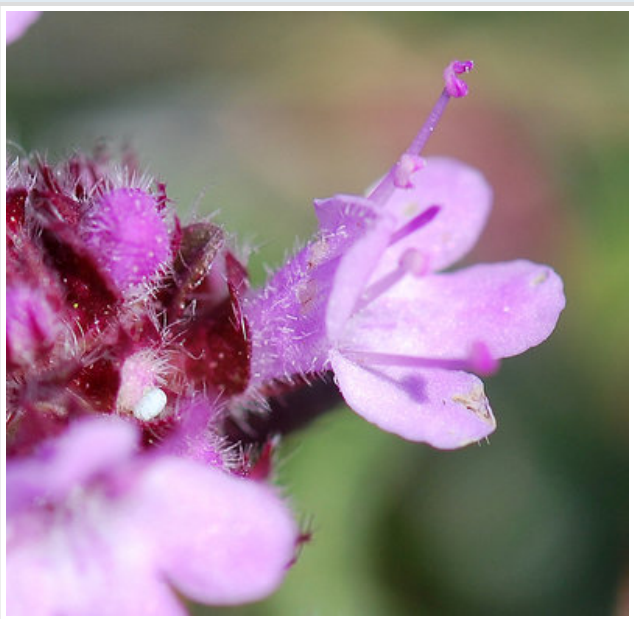
*Not the best shot but check the colour!*



After following it up the side of the slope and through one of the gaps in the scrub it started making as if to oviposit and so we watched it even more intently and as it landed again I spied a second one. The other couple of gents followed one and I stayed with the second which I also thought was a female. I was able to ascertain that it was because it moved and then laid an egg on a small patch of Thyme, right next to an ant burrow.







Things were going brilliantly; I'd equalled the two that I had seen last year as well as getting my first egg and open wing shots. I paused in the shade to

check through my photos and saw two blue butterflies moving slowly up the hill, the smaller one was hassling the large one and the something about the shade of blue suggested they were both Large. They passed me by and I then watched their progress. I was hoping that they were going to mate and eyed the large Dragonfly that made a few passes cautiously - although what I would have done should it have struck I don't know? Luckily neither was taken and they landed the bigger one seemed calm and just perched with wings closed whilst the smaller one buzzed around it in an agitated manner until eventually it backed up and locked on. Amazing a pair in cop! They seemed to have found an unsuitable place to mate as they constantly moved around the leaf changing their position as if trying to get comfortable. They couldn't and so took a very short flight still locked together to a blade of grass which the larger one (female?) shimmied up to the top of dragging the smaller (male?) one behind.





I left them in relative peace having put someone else onto them and then checked out the very top of the field where there were two blues, a Common and a male Large Blue, fresh out of the box! It was simply stunning. While I was photographing it an ant crawled onto my jeans which if it is the correct species would make a great addition to the day.







I started to make my way homewards only to be waylaid by another two Large Blues – one sitting and waiting to be found, the other not stopping at all and actively seeking.



What a morning! Males, females, open wings, closed wings egg laying and egg, mating pair, freshly emerged and possibly the ant – almost the entire life cycle!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 09-Jul-15 05:56 AM GMT

Well, Wurzel, that is an absolutely stunning set of Large Blues. They do seem to be having a good year, but to get so many beautiful fresh ones is brilliant – the colours are extraordinary. Add to that the egg and a likely-looking ant... It all deserves a full set of 🍷 from me! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 09-Jul-15 06:10 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
Your report and images of the Large Blue deserve nothing less than a load of mrgreens.  
Mrgreen is particularly appropriate because i have never seen a Large Blue. 🍷

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 09-Jul-15 06:45 AM GMT

🍷🍷🍷 is all I have....

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 09-Jul-15 02:38 PM GMT

Wurzel, you've excelled yourself. That has to be the best post I've ever read in your diary. Cracking shots showing what was clearly a marvellous day 🍷. You just need to go back and photograph the larva now and then I'll be completely happy 😊😊

### Re: Wurzel

by dilettante, 09-Jul-15 05:14 PM GMT

Not bad, I suppose, if you like that kind of thing.

😊🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 09-Jul-15 08:16 PM GMT

Great set of Large Blue shots from Collard, Wurzel and I'm in full agreement with other comments made 🍷😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Jul-15 02:06 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 After the bad year for them at Collard last year it was geat to see them bounce back 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I put off and put off the trip untl last year, and then it turned out to be surprisingly easy 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊

Cheers Pauline 😊 I don't think they'd let me loose with a shovel on the site 😞

Cheers dilettante...I think 😊

Cheers Mike for agreement with the very kind comments 😊

Kingston Lacey 21-06 – After the High...

As my Brother in-law was down we all made a visit to Kingston Lacey. I was still on a high after my Large Blues and Heaths and so I was hoping for lots but ended up scratching around for butterflies...

The day started well enough with a Small Tort near the entrance while all the females disappeared to the loo and that is usually a good portent of what is to come. But this time it went really quiet. There were no whites or browns on the lawns or borders, the Fernery didn't have any Brimstones or Specklies and he Avenue of trees was a complete blank. Finally at the very end of the Avenue just before the track bent round and through the woods a few Meadow Browns flitted about amongst the small patches of longer grass; but that was it. I even took to photographing flies, various bugs and Hoverflies just so that I could have something to show for the day! I couldn't decide if this was just the June gap, the weather was 'wrong' (cooler than it should be, patchy sun and the threat of rain) or a mixture of both. The fact that Meadow Browns were out suggested probably just the weather...



Over at the kitchen garden didn't get any better with a single white flying about while we ate lunch and only 3 more Small Torts flapping around in the Allotments. I did manage a few shots of two but the second one was pretty distant and the third was in a "none shall pass" area. Luckily the first one posed very nicely just on the edge of the allotments otherwise I might not have had a single butterfly shot to post on a PD on a Butterfly website 😊



Even the Pacific Garden was quiet with just 2 Marbled Whites and a Meadow Brown constantly moving and stopping for only the briefest of sips of



nectar. It was pretty infuriating as I'd watch the butterfly for what felt like an age, it would land and by the time I'd stalked a few paces towards it it would have finished drinking and off we would go again in the same fashion ad infinitum!

For once the Japanese garden was actually open and so we all Zened out and took in the Cheery trees, raked gravel and miniature tea house. Of particular interest was the pond as every now and again a Newt would come up for air and so cropping like mad I was able to get a few record shots which I will try and use on one of those cold, dark winter evenings to make an identification (I'm not up to speed on my Herp IDs).



Finally just as we were leaving I managed my second Butterfly shots of the day with a Meadow Brown hunkered down expecting rain at any moment!



Pretty disappointing again (this is my second visit this year) from what used to be a cracking little site due to the vagaries of the weather 😞 . Are we ever going to get some perfect weekend butterflying weather?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Katrina, 13-Jul-15 02:31 AM GMT

Superb Tortoiseshell and Meadow Brown shots Wurzel ! 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 13-Jul-15 03:12 AM GMT

Looks like you've peaked to early Wurzel 😊 nice pics though 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 13-Jul-15 05:58 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Just catching up with your diary 😊 Really loving your Large Blues and Heath Fritillaries especially 'three on a leaf', are they really that accommodating? These are two species I have yet to see, maybe next year.

## Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 13-Jul-15 06:08 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Trying to catch up again on various diaries, like others I seem to keep running out of time, where does it go 😊

Superb report and photos of the Large Blues, you seem to be in full payback mode, my turn for 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 13-Jul-15 10:04 PM GMT

Wurzel just saw your beautiful Blues photographs SUPER 🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Jul-15 07:12 AM GMT

Cheers for your kind comments Katrina 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Not a case of peaking too soon just having a little breather, I've got to pace myself otherwise I might starting posting on the actual day I made the visit 🙄😓😓

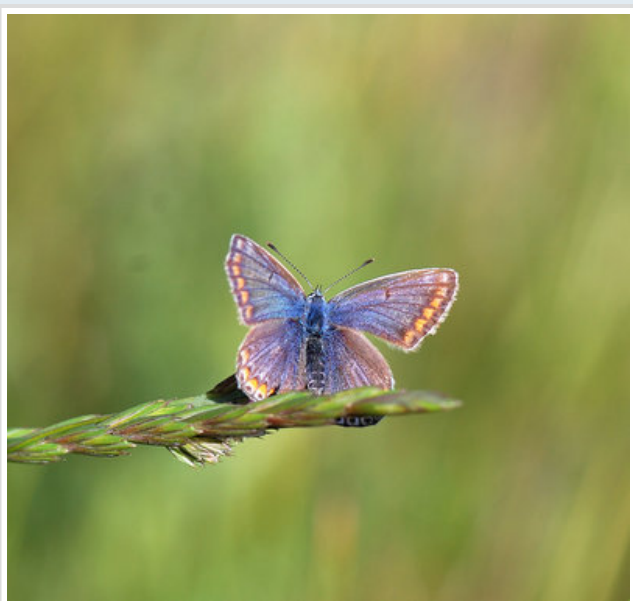
Cheers Paul 😊 I don't know if they're usually that eager to pose but I think it was a combination of temperature and cloud cover 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 "Time is an illusion, lunchtime doubly so!" 😊 Thanks for all the Mr Greens, much appreciated I was starting to run a little low after reading your PD 😊

Cheers Goldie for your very kind comment 😊

Tutor Time 22-06-2015

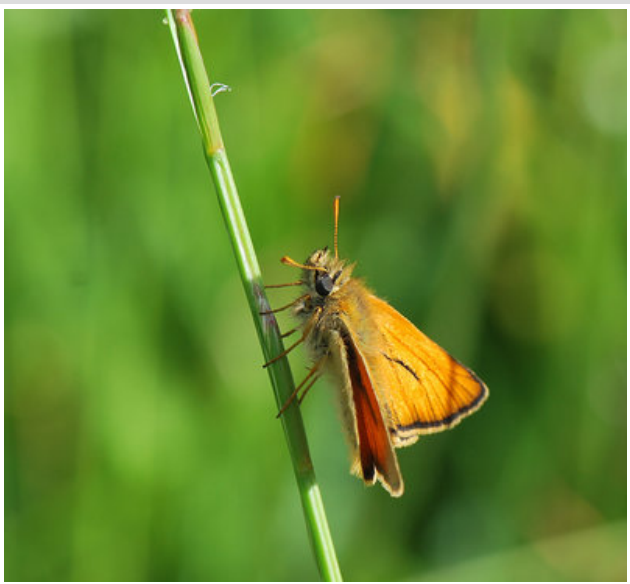
So today was Report Day as K had just sat her third set of Mock Exams gulp! Instead of acting like a parent I acted like a typical school kid and placed the report in the bag to deal with later and headed out through the back garden to the Down. A Common Blue on protected field on the way seemed to set the tone well. There was also a Small Tortoiseshell on main path again and I'm wondering if this is the same individual as I've previously seen and this is its territory?



There were butterflies aplenty as soon as I was through the gate and I spent the first 10 or so minutes just working my way round the shrubs and longer grasses as I looked set to pick up some firsts for the year. And so it proved to be with both Small Skippers and Ringlets putting in an appearance. The later only showed once and I couldn't relocate it for a shot so I spent time instead with the Small Skippers as there were good numbers showing well. Strange to think that a week ago the weather was cool and cloudy and there was only just my first Marbled White and now the weather was glorious and there were Marbled Whites all over the place and Small Skippers buzzing all over the place. For me the Skippers make most summer visits as I just love their goldenness. There were a few Common Blues around here as well as another Small Tort and lots of Meadow Browns but for me it was the Skippers that were most memorable as each time I stopped there seemed to be another couple at least amusing me with their shenanigans.









I did make to the end of the path eventually and up onto the Down briefly with more of the same showing and adding to the Common Blue tally taking it up to 8 for the day. Somehow I came down off the Down and off my Skipper high and started to make my way back along the dry and dusty path to pick up K. While I'd been up the Down it seems that the Small Tort had received some (possibly unwanted) company and now there were four Small Torts battling it out and squabbling on the path. Plus a last minute addition was made to the tally as just as I was about to hop over the fence a Painted Lady landed briefly.





Once at home my wife and I looked through the dreaded report and it seems that not only is the tutoring a success in terms of me getting to get out for butterflies but it's obviously working for K too. A pass rate of 71% is what's needed and K managed an average of 83% 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 14-Jul-15 08:11 AM GMT

Been catching up, after not commenting for some time. We seem to have been enjoying similar experiences with our butterfly species this year 😊 It's good news re. K's tutoring – I'm sure that it is an investment that you will not regret.

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 16-Jul-15 07:09 AM GMT

Unlike Trevor I **have** seen Large Blue at Collard. Nevertheless:- 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Love your other insect shots Wurzel 😊. The fly is a beaut but also a biter ...*Tabanus bromius*, Band-eyed Brown Horsefly I think.

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Jul-15 07:29 AM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 I know what you mean about catching up – there's lots of good reading to be done on the UKB PDs now 😊

Cheers for your very kind comments and your ID Philzoid 😊

Larkhill WB 22-06-2015

22-06

Didn't stop on Monday as when I drove past there were still lots of Vans parked up and everyone seemed to be recovering from the celebrations!

23-06 PM

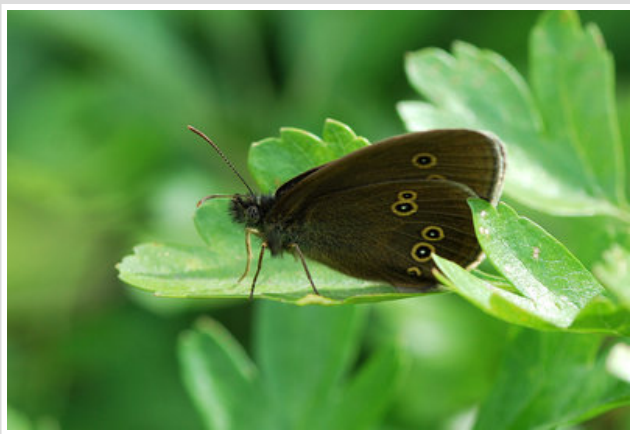
There were still some errant Travellers parked up as I drove by in the morning. I could see that my mate had moved on and so had the horse drawn wagon and as I didn't know those that remained I left them in peace and went on to work.

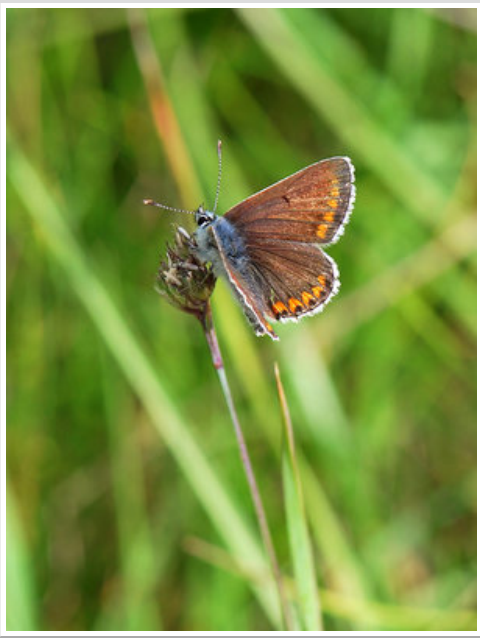
I was able to stop on the way home and once I pulled in I was quite shocked at how much had been grazed. What I was most gutted about was that the little area that had held all the blues just days before was now totally obliterated in fact a huge swathe of the North bound path was completely grazed to buggery!





Gutted that such a thriving little area had been destroyed I checked the damage down the Eastbound path which was nowhere near as bad. Here there were plenty of butterflies flying so I felt slightly better. Ringlets are still going strong and still looking in fine fettle and a reasonable Brown Argus was a nice addition as I thought they were over.

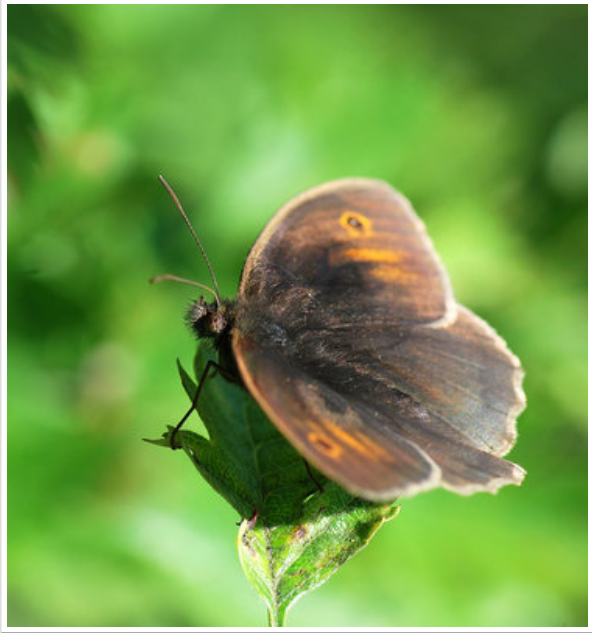




24-06 AM

I roused myself this morning and headed down the Northbound path tutting all the way until I got about 50 metres or so down the path by the large Bramble patch when I started seeing the butterflies. The Meadow Browns are taking over as the most numerous butterfly from the Marbled Whites some of which are starting to look grey and shabby. I concentrated my efforts on trying to catch the sheens on some of the browns as for once the light was great.





Just as I was turning to go a Ringlet walked out to the tip of the branch as if to say "look at me" and so I did and was glad because it was very lightly spotted - a possible aberrant?



PM

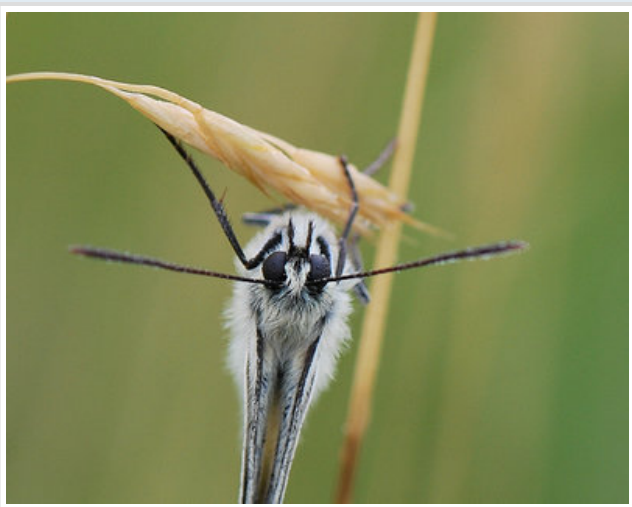
This really was a flying visit and I got a bit mesmerised by all the butterflies flying down the Eastbound path. In the end I managed to pull myself away and was stopped short again as I found my first Small Skipper at Larkhill.





25-06 AM

It being Thursday I wouldn't be able to stop on the way home as I'd already be late because of a Staff Meeting so I made sure to call in first thing despite being late leaving and having to get petrol on the way. It meant a bit of a flying stop again and it seemed that no-one had told the butterflies that I was coming and they were still in bed. It was strange as all the Marbled Whites seemed to be clustered together roosting communally some still with dew covering them.



26-06 AM

Another morning stop-off spent with the Marbled Whites who were again clustered in little groups along the Eastbound path. First however I encountered a bedraggled Brown Argus who looked most out of it with the weather. From there I carried on down looking for Marbs. Most were about half way down the grass stems and as they started to wake up they would climb pirate fashion up the stem to the top where they would stretch their wings to wring out every last bit of the sun's warmth. I felt a bit odd as at one point I almost stood on one on the path which wasn't quite charged up and so I picked him up and gave him a lift.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-Jul-15 06:22 AM GMT

Smashing Photos Wurzel, 🍷🍷 we seem to be seeing plenty of Small Skippers at present, I know your frustration as well at the loss of grass( destroyed, ) it seems quite a few of us have seen the same same destruction this year. On a happier note we've got an invite from our daughter to come to Kent next weekend 😊 ( 2 weeks) Great!! I should see some MW's hope fully, your photos are fantastic. 🍷🍷

We are going to set off early and call at Fermyn Wood on the way down, who knows might see a PE yet 🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-15 06:35 AM GMT

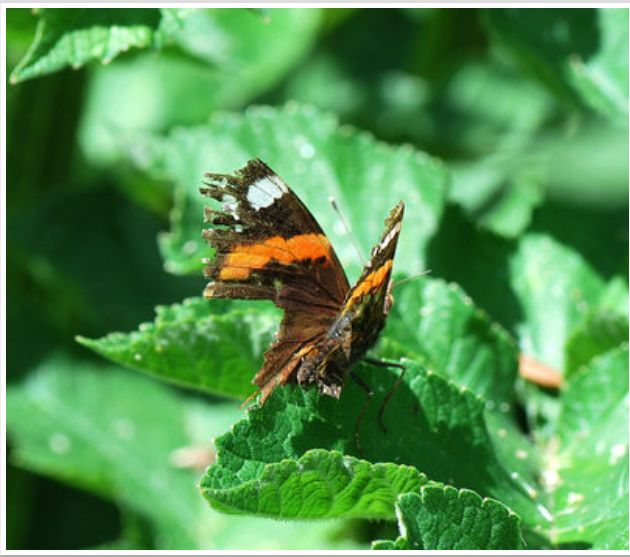
Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck with a late PE showing 😊

Five Rivers 27-06-2015

Finally the weekend arrives and with it the promise of some butterflies. All the while L was swimming I was keeping one eye on her progress and one eye on the large window and watching as the sun abed and flowed. L showered and dried, cat food collected from the vets and K picked up and in the swimming pool I headed out in the spare 20 minutes available.

I followed the path that ran along the river under the willows hoping for some whites but instead something much better landed before my lens. I've seen a couple of different Red Admirals this year at Aberaeron, Lulworth and the most recent in East Blean Wood. However not one of these has stopped for a photo but luckily that changed today with one walking from leaf to leaf and looking slightly frayed around the edges. Slightly further one was a second, even more battered and torn, this one had most of its wings missing!





Chuffed that I finally 'had' a red Admiral I carried on briefly to the banks. It seemed quiet for this part of the site for the time of year, but things are slightly behind last year so the waning Marbled Whites and Ringlets haven't been fully replaced by the Smessex Skippers yet although they are on the rise and there seemed to be 6 or more on each of the banks. I suspect that they're all Small at the moment and despite looking I didn't see any noticeable Essex.





All too quickly time was passing and I had to head back for the second round of hair washing and drying and all the usual Saturday chores, still I'd had my daily butterfly fix.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 17-Jul-15 06:51 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

After all the mrgreens i awarded to your Collard Hill escapade, it's nice to receive some from you in return. Two unusual Butterflies in one week is too all too much !.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 17-Jul-15 06:52 AM GMT

I love the Marbled underside, Wurzel, and of course the Skipper on the thistle – unbearably cute little creatures! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Willow, 18-Jul-15 12:48 AM GMT

Wow Wurz! I've finally managed to catch up with your recent posts and like most of the other guys I'm really impressed with your Collard Hill report, your **Large Blues** are absolutely spiffin' 😊

BW's

Bill 😊

"When in doubt – venture out"

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 18-Jul-15 05:32 AM GMT

I agree with the others, you're really doing the business this year Wurzel. If you're diary weren't so epic I might be able to catch up more often! Of course I wouldn't want it any other way.

Hopefully one of these days we'll finally meet up.

Until that fine day keep up the great work. 😊

ATB

James

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Jul-15 06:13 AM GMT

No worries Trevor 😊 What goes around comes around 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Skippers and their cuteness are my secret weapon for getting my younger daughter out butterflying – I just mention that we're going to see the Teddy Butterflies and she'll be in the car in 12 seconds flat! 😊😊

Cheers Willrow 😊 It was one of those days when everything came together 😊

Cheers Rex 😊 It would be good to finally meet in the field cheers for keeping up the reading, it is developing into something of a saga 😊😊

Bentley Wood 28-06-2015

Weather reports recently have been overly pessimistic and so I hoped it would be today as I was without the girls and heading to Bentley to try and help Philzoid catch-up. It certainly seemed that indeed the weather was following the usual pattern as when I pulled into the car park I had about 20 minutes to spare before Philzoid arrived and it felt warm, there were bright spells and little or no wind. A brief check of the cleared area of the EC threw up Ringlet, Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns and a couple of Small Skippers. "Brill" I thought...And then the clouds rolled in and it started to rain so I retreated back to the car and had an early lunch – mature cheese with extra hot Lime Pickle.







When Philzoid arrived he joined me and we sat in my car, trapped by the rain, for about an hour. It seemed to ease off so we ventured forth to the EC. It was surprisingly damp even accounting for the recent shower and almost bereft of butterflies apart from the occasional rain flying Ringlet. We carried on chewing the fat and mooching around.



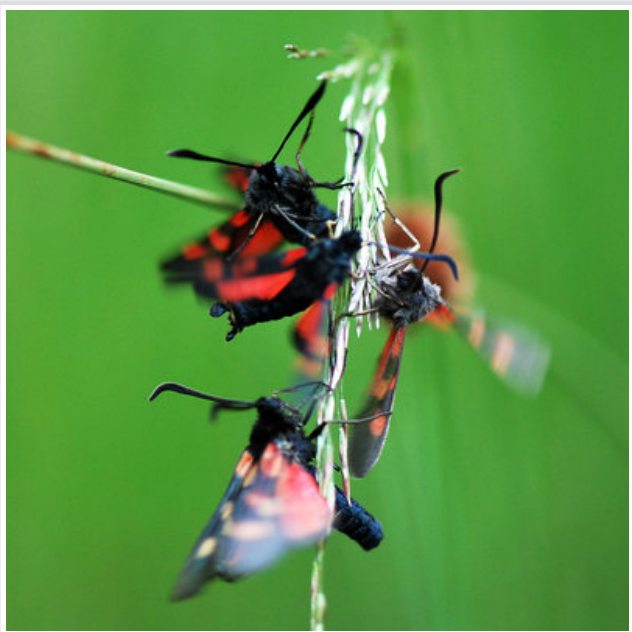
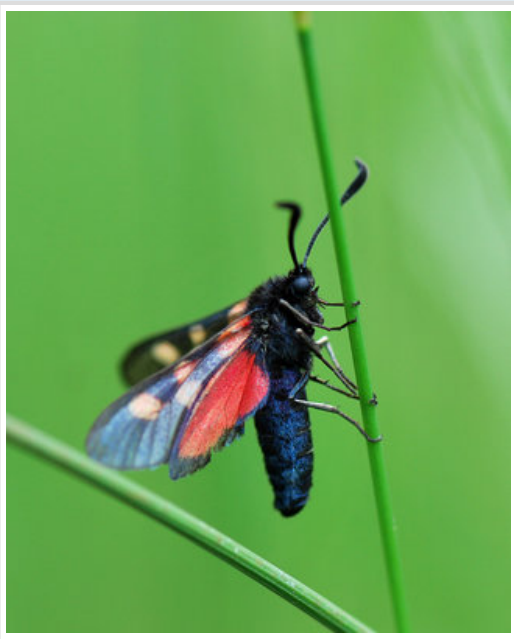
Suddenly and despite there being no apparent change in the conditions we started seeing butterflies, all concentrated in one small area. I can't remember the exact order but a Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Small Skipper and Small Tortoiseshell were all spotted as well as one or three Ringlets. A further walk back along the edge of the recently cleared field saw even more Ringlets, Marbled Whites and Ringlets before we ended up back at the car park for lunch take 2.



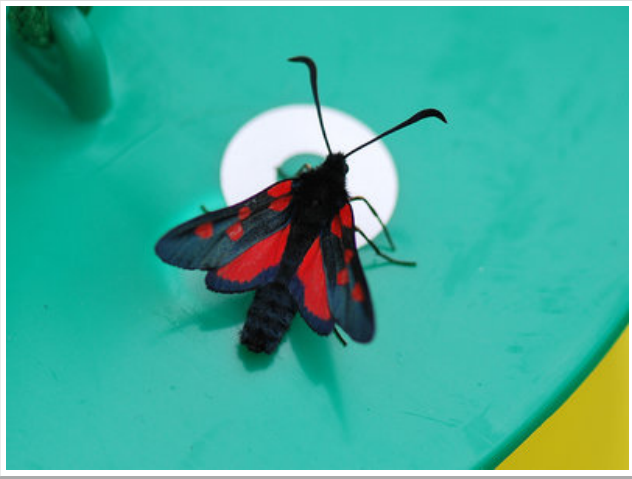




The original plan was to head over to Martin Down for possible DGFs but I had a feeling that we still might find Phizloid a SPBF and so we set off back to the EC minus the girls and plus lures for Burnet Moths. The lure definitely worked for 5 Spot and they were crawling all over the nearby foliage, the lid and in the pot. As we headed off for another foray we could watch them fly-in from round and about zeroing in on the scent.







Eventually Philzoid spotted something and there was his SPBF. After the briefest of flights it landed and closed its wings in a fashion which I wish my fresher ones had adopted.



Job done we checked the lures, emptied the copious amounts of moths and I bade farewell to Philzoid until the next meet up.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

ps - I did pull over very briefly on the way home for a Small Tort. Once I'd saved it from the road I noticed the forewings were much smaller than they should be?



### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Jul-15 05:57 PM GMT

Great shots Wurzel, I love all the Burnetts, how do you manage to keep getting the Butterflies to stay on your finger 🤔 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Jul-15 06:29 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 The hypothesis I'm working on at the moment is that it's down to eating a lot of Extra Hot Lime Pickle which causes some sweating and so a higher salt content than usual 😊

Laverstock 29-06-2015

Only a couple more drop-offs of K at her tutor time to do so I'll try and make the most of it (and hope for good weather during the holiday sessions). I did the usual drop-off and then headed out the backdoor, over the fence and away up the Down with a couple of Meadow Brown and Small Tortoiseshell on the path. I put my foot down and made it to the top stopping only a few times when I mainly saw more Meadow Browns, Marbled Whites, Ringlets and the occasional Small Heath, Common Blue with plenty of the tiny blurs that were Small Skippers.



I carried on over and round the other side of the Down and in doing so added a couple of Small Whites, Large Skippers and a single Large White to the tally. Once at the bottom I walked back along the foot of the Down and the Bramble bushes seemed alive with butterflies and I realised I'd taken hardly any shots so cracked on. There were Brimstones and Green-veined Whites but no Dark Green Fritillaries despite finding some good growth of Knapweed. I also found specimens of my first Fragrant Orchids a lot like the Spotted but without the spots and with 'arms' held out straight from the 'body'







Instead of walking round and following the same track back I used the cut-across the edge of the farmers field as this was a much more direct route. I don't know why I thought this would be a good idea as the track is hard and there is little vegetation of interest – a school playing field, a low scraggy bit of hedge and then monoculture. However I was a third of the way along bemoaning to myself the lack of butterflies when a Golden Skipper flew across the path and landed in a very picturesque fashion right on the edge of field. It seemed more rounded and 'fluffier' than the Small Skippers and so I moved round and dropped onto my knees so that I could if it possessed ink dabs which it did – my first Essex Skipper of 2015. With the rarer species the first sighting in a year is normally at the 'usual' site; one which you visit every year at a particular time to see the particular species (e.g. Duke site, Marshie site, Bentley for Pearls and then Small Pearls, Slop Bog for Silver Studs and Godshill for Grayling etc). With the commoner the joy comes from the fact that you can never guess where you will see your first one of the year, which was the case now. 😊





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Jul-15 12:10 AM GMT

Lovely Skipper Wurzel 🍷 Hope I meet up with one in Kent, I'm hoping for loads of Butterflies, I should really be hoping the weather is good Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Jul-15 06:30 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck in Kent with your Essex...if you know what I mean 😊😊

WB Larkhill 29-06-2015

29-06

Today saw a change in the guard with the blues being replaced by plenty of the summer browns. Brown Argus and Common Blues are still about but in much reduced numbers now whereas Marbled Whites, Ringlets, Meadow Browns and Small Skippers are all over the site!





30-06 AM

More of the same this morning but I headed down the Westbound Path for a change. I'm tempted to say that all the Smessex that I encountered were Smalls as that's what some proved to be on closer examination. Plus only saw my first Essex yesterday so I'll have to keep knacker my knees, risking Tick bites and checking for those 'dabs'. It was already noticeably warmer than any time so far this year and this was at only 8!

I must send out a big 'Thank you' to two sets of people - those that didn't bother to set the temporary traffic lights at Larkhill up properly and second to the phallus head that refused to move even though 8 minutes is a bit long to be waiting at traffic lights!



01-07 PM

Quick stop off and set off down the Eastbound path. I'd barely crossed the threshold from the car park into the grasses when I saw a Small Tort being harassed by something much bigger, faster and bright ginger in colour - my first DGF of 2015 and possibly ever for Larkhill. The only drawback was that due to almost 30°C heat and the glaring sun it was so super charged it didn't stop at all. Still great to see!

A further walk down the path meant I also added all the usual summer specialities as well as an aged couple of Common Blues plus a trip of Small Torts (making it four if the original harassed one was a different individual) and a lonesome male Brimstone. I still couldn't get the DGF out of my head, hopefully I'll be able to get out at the weekend, and so I struggled to do anything more than watch the butterflies as one would set of a couple and then another couple and so on in a lepidopteral chain reaction.



02-07 AM

A very brief stop this morning with a decidedly damp feel; I thought the mornings of having to drive to work with wet trousers legs had passed for another year? I concentrated my efforts up the Northbound path this morning as that was where the DGF was last seen yesterday and I was hoping to catch it roosting - well we can but dream. As I wandered up the freshly grazed path the odd Ringlet would fly but it wasn't until I got to the first large bush that I started seeing Marbled Whites, clustered together amongst the long grasses. There were a few Meadow Browns here but as it was cooler and much damper than yesterday not a sniff of a Skipper. I made my way back accompanied by Marbled Whites, Ringlets and Meadow Browns flitting up from the grasses nearby like little clouds of smoke.



PM

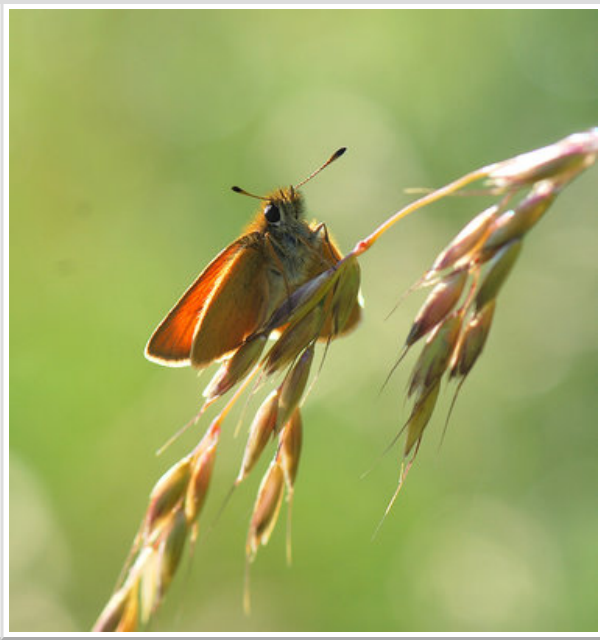
As I pulled into the car park the cloud cleared and the sun came out – I'm not used to the weather being on my side! I set off down the Eastbound path determined to make it to the 'dip' and checking every Knapweed that I saw on the way. Butterflies were flying everywhere this afternoon; in fact it was almost impossible to count the Marbled Whites, Ringlets and Meadow Browns. I did see two Small Tortoiseshells, a few lingering Large Skippers and also at one point a (possibly the?) DGF but again it was tearing by at full throttle. However for me today the real stars of the show were the Small Skippers, they seemed to be everywhere and I couldn't take more than a few steps before golden blurs whizzed past me in all directions it was a joy to behold!

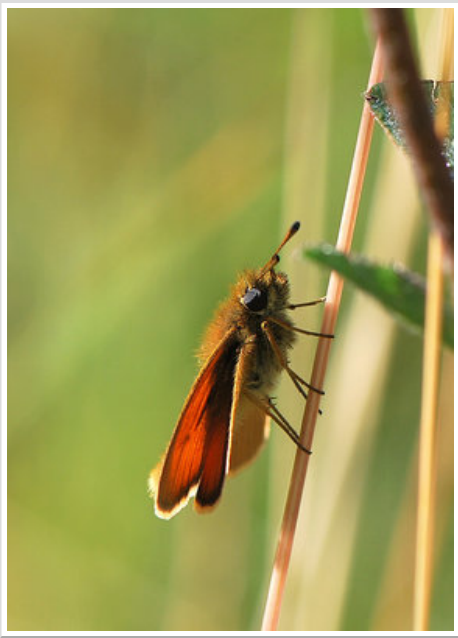




03-07 AM

Despite the grass being wet it was already hot and humid first thing. I checked out the Eastbound path and a few paces into the long grass I started putting up Ringlets. As I got further in Marbled Whites joined them along with Meadow Browns and the occasional blur of a Smessex Skipper. They're usually easier to approach during my morning visits but the heat this morning meant that they were still pretty flighty. Even so I was able to approach a couple and they turned out to be Essex Skippers! And now the knee and back busting work of trying to ID and count Smalls and Essex separately as opposed to lumping them all as Smessex!

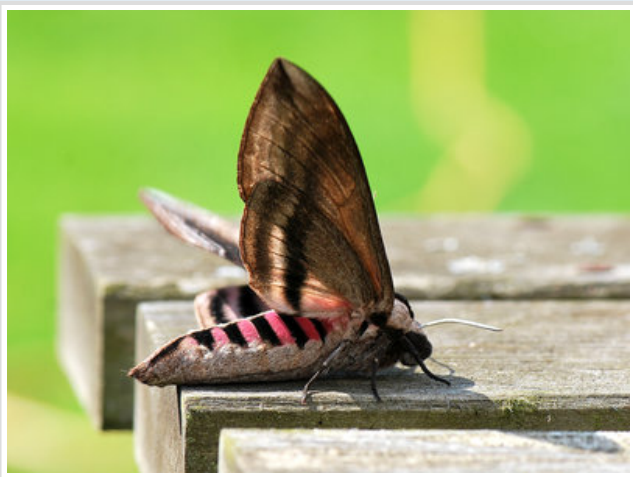


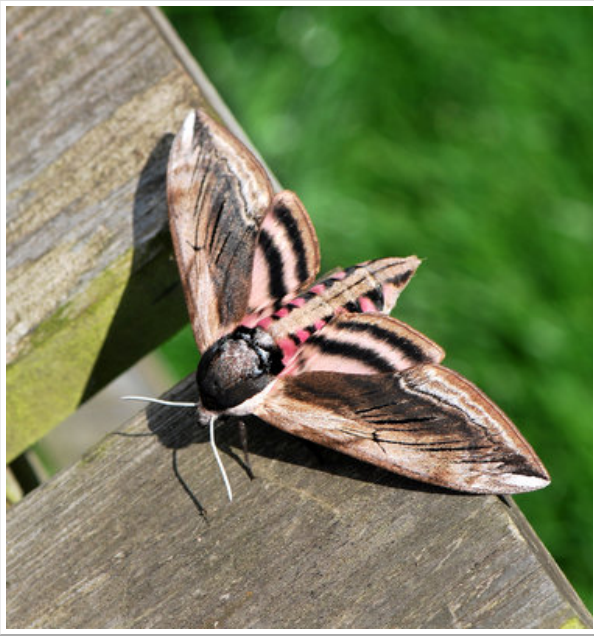


PM

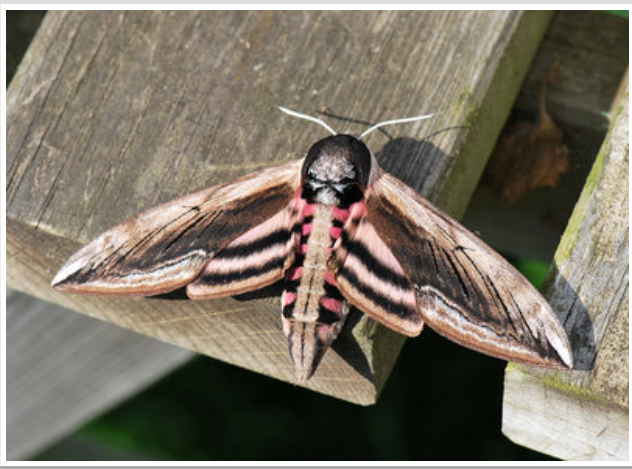
By the afternoon visit the heat had really risen and it was baking. I wandered down the path in something of a daze, bewildered by the masses of butterflies that surrounded me. The Browns must be having a fantastic year as the main three species are in fantastic numbers. The golden Skippers aren't that far behind either! Additional species this afternoon came in the form of 2 Small Tortoiseshells, 8 Small Heath and the rascally DGF that keeps flitting by at breakneck speed, never stopping just taunting me!

I had to call in at my sister-in-laws on the way home and while she was collecting up the bits to pass onto my wife I got called into the garden by my niece. Apparently there was a butterfly that didn't fly away but just moved its wing when she touched it. It turned out not to be a butterfly at all but a monstrous Privet Hawk Moth, as big as my hand it was, and I know as I helped it first onto the table for some shots and then onto the fence so it could seek some shelter.





Have a goodun  
Wurzel



### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 21-Jul-15 06:51 AM GMT

Wow! That's one hell of a hawk moth, Wurzel.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Jul-15 08:30 PM GMT

That's a beautiful moth wurzel, I've never seen one but would like to.  
your shots of the Marble White's are great too, I hope I'm not too late to see some in Kent Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 24-Jul-15 04:39 AM GMT

Thundering through your reports I see 😊, I do like that double Marbled White shot 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 24-Jul-15 05:12 AM GMT

Fabulous Privet Hawk moth Wurzel. Have yet to see one of those. Great shots 🍷



## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Jul-15 06:34 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 It was a bit of a beast that one, over a handspan in size 🤩

Cheers Goldie 😊 The Marbs are looking pretty faded round our way but you might get onto some nice ones, I hope that you do 😊

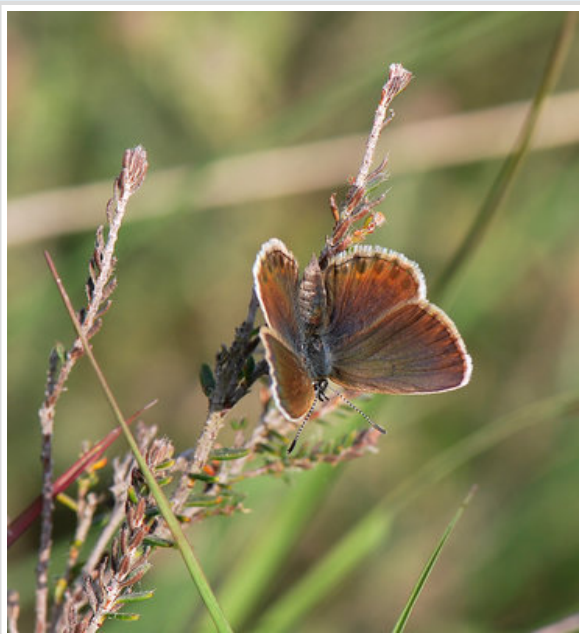
Cheers Bugboy 😊 I was posting so frequently I had to have a couple of days off to recuperate! 😊😊

Cheers Pauline 😊 I'd always wanted to photograph this species as it's my "Bradley Birthyear Moth", 1976 😊

Slop Bog 30-06-2015

Having witnessed some fantastic SSB shots from others a while back I felt that it was time for me to try my luck at my regular site – Slop Bog – surely one of the best named sites in the country. All day there had been wall to wall sunshine and it had been gloriously hot so it came as no surprise that having been on site for three minutes and seen my first Silver Studs of the year the sun disappeared behind a cloud. Seriously? I've joked about the weather and my bad luck with it before but it's now starting to go beyond amusing. 😊

Still I persevered and just adapted my field-craft accordingly. I'd slowly wade through the heather seeking out little silvery white or creamy flags. Once found I'd crouch down and take a few shots of the closed wing variety. Then I'd wait for the sun to peek out from the clouds. The slightest brightening was enough it seemed to make the roosting butterflies open their wings. As the sun went in again they'd shut up shop and I'd move off searching for the next set of flags.





In this way I eventually managed to get shots of both males and females; wings open and closed. The time spent waiting for the sun wasn't wasted. It allowed me to muse and reminisce. The reminiscence was of hours spent on the heaths around Poole when I was a nipper. The musings were obviously related to Silver Studs; how they seem to arrange themselves in small groups around the taller heather crowns, that I must be slightly later this year as there was an almost 50:50 ratio of males to females and some of the males were decidedly worn and finally how the colours, almost purple in some cases didn't seem to come across in my shots?









Unfortunately this tactic of sitting and waiting meant that I was a prime target for all the neighbourhood Ticks! Ticks seen and intercepted: 2 on leg, massive one on arm 🙄 4 flicked from jeans – regular checks meant I caught all before they'd settled down and latched on so a quick flick and they were gone – horrible little things! 😬

Eventually I headed home as the sun went behind a large mass of cloud which field the sky in a single solid mass. Another lively evening on a Dorset Heath but only one species of butterfly seen all evening.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

PS I must have missed one as it had managed to latch on to my hip hidden by the waist band of my Boxer shorts – I shall be keeping an eye on the area for any redness and hoping that any symptoms are down to end of year exhaustion 😬.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 24-Jul-15 07:50 AM GMT

Nice SSB with some really vivid studs! All mine this year had only the mearest whisper of studs 😬

### Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 24-Jul-15 08:02 AM GMT

Amazing Privet Hawk Moth – I have never seen anything like it! 😬

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 24-Jul-15 04:12 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel.

Your Hawk Moth is something else !. The tactic you used for open wing SSB shots also works for Holly Blues, i managed more open wings on Weds.

Fabulous MW images too 😬.

TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Willow, 24-Jul-15 06:08 PM GMT

I think we're all mighty impressed with your Privet Hawkmoth shot Wurz, excellent capture 😊 ...as are so many of your others!!!

BW's

Bill 😊

**When in doubt - venture out"**

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Jul-15 06:37 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 The females are more marked than the males but there also seems to be a wide variation between sites too 😊

Cheers Katrina 😊 They're cracking beasties 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'll give it a go the next time I find a Holly Blue

Cheers Willow 😊 One of the few times I've been glad to have had to have stopped off on the way home to 'just pick up something' 😊😊

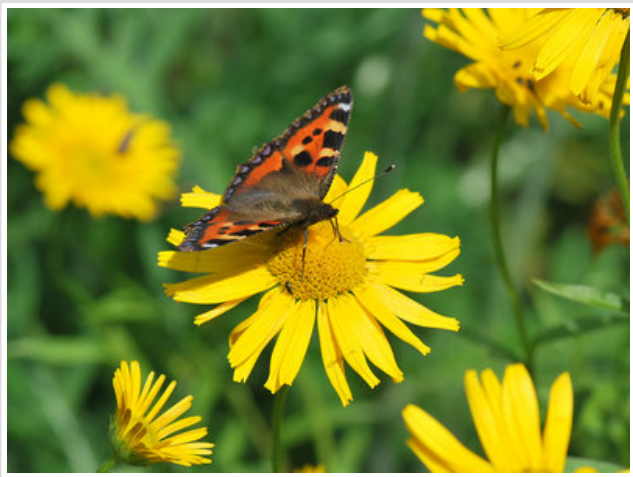
The Barons...or Not quite Independence Day 04-07-2015

As my wife had to travel to London for work (she is now a 'Not on the High Street' partner 😊) I had both the girls...all day 😊! Normally this would mean lots of butterflying but I'd previously promised the girls that we would visit all the Barons. So that's what we did, ticking off a couple on the way back from swimming and the food shopping. After lunch we headed out to pick off the remaining 21 of 25. At each Baron I'd get photos of the front, the sign, possibly back and also the girls posing next to it.





On the way we managed at stop-off at the market, saw some Owls, visited the Arts Centre where there was live entertainment and also saw the stage I once played on plus we fitted in a trip to the Park for a play. A pretty busy time really, which was also interspersed with the occasional butterflies. There were Small Tortoiseshells along the river, a Meadow Brown right in the centre of the town - so more of a 'Concrete Brown', as well as the odd White.







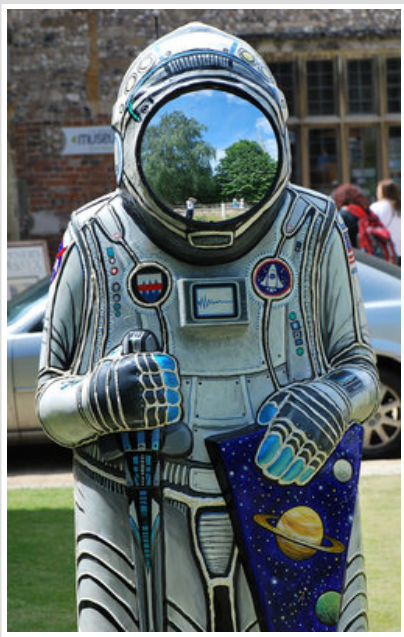
The best sighting of all however was of my first H.Comma of 2015. It was quite near the end of the quest and we'd found the Spaceman Baron. While the girls were parking their scooters I found a Scarlet Tiger and was just showing K when the H.Comma flew in and promptly landed on L's head. It didn't just stop there but also took salts from the handle of the scooter, my shoulder and also K's arm. I think it liked something in the sun-cream.



*L's head*



*Scooter handle*



*Where's Wurzel?*



*K's arm*



*More natural pose*

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 25-Jul-15 06:48 AM GMT

I like the Comma photos, Wurzel. Sometimes once a butterfly gets a taste for you, it's hard to get it to leave you alone! 😊 Trev's methodology for the Holly Blues does work, especially in cooler weather. And a lot of patience... 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 25-Jul-15 04:35 PM GMT

Lovely SSB Wurzel (great studs) – interesting how the different backgrounds either compliment or contrast with the butterfly. I'm probably the only one who doesn't know what the Barons are but looks great fun 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 25-Jul-15 08:33 PM GMT

That female SSB has brilliant silver studs Wurzel 😊 I've also noticed that in general the females tend to have better silver studs than the males, at least on the sites I visit 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

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

Cheers Dave 😊 If only it had been a Purple Emperor 😊😊

Cheers Pauline 😊 The Barons were 25 statues scattered round the city to celebrate Magna Carta, couldn't publish my favourite one because of copywrite as it had the face of the brilliant Terry Pratchett and Paul Kidby paintings all over it 😊😊

Cheers Mike 😊 Those ladies really do love their bling 😊

Grovely Wood 05-07-2015

I managed a couple of hours out over the lunchtime today and so I was wondering where to go? Bentley was my first choice but I like to spend more than a few hours at the site so I headed West and not East and ended up at Grovely Wood. This time I risked the bumpy drive up to the Lodge knocking 10 minutes walking time off which proved useful later in my visit. Once in the wood proper I found the same track that had proved so fruitful for White Admirals last year and almost immediately I found my quarry; a silvery white glider, cutting and arcing through the air and then landing frustratingly high in the canopy. This seemed to be the way with most things including my first Silver-washed Frit of 2015 and my second H.Comma as well as 3 representatives of the Whites – all busy fighting, nectaring for the briefest second and landing only in the uppermost reaches of the canopy.

I persevered here and managed a few shots of bits and bobs before carrying on further along the track deciding that the butterflies weren't coming to me so I would go to them. But again each time I'd stop to try and get some shots everything was in such a rush. Despite this I did manage to pick up my first Hedge Brown of the year.





By following the track I was getting deeper into the wood but the trees were thinning with larger and more mature trees rather than those packed in rows. Eventually I reached a freshly forested/coppiced area, a field almost, right in the centre of the wood. I've read reports of PBF and DGFs from this site so perhaps this is where they're found? Hence I tarried a while here to check it out.

The number of Marbled Whites and Meadow Browns increased dramatically and I also started seeing much higher numbers of Smessex plus my first Small Torts of the visit. Then along the track, flying towards me at breakneck speed was a DGF, really bright and ginger it seemed. Further along there was another which cut along the edge of the field and dived down into the Bracken that was covering the coppice stools and tree stumps. There was nothing for it but to risk further Tick bites (four so far this year) and wade into the Bracken. It was easier than I thought as there were furrows for drainage on either side of the stumps so I walked down these, brushing the fronds aside. Unfortunately I lost my DGF so made my way back to the main track and carried on down to the corner. Here there was more open ground and Thistles growing so I worked my way in and there was a big ginger beauty, a lovely buxom DGF. I managed a few shots of her on the thistles before the wind caught her and off she shot. A largish Skipper caught my eye due to its size. As I knelt and focused in I worked out why it seemed to big. It wasn't one but two Skippers – a pair in cop. Chuffed with my first pair of mating Smalls I swung round and cut diagonally across the field to get back to the main track. I found and photographed a second DGF on the way as well as seeing a Small Tort, Peacock and Red Admiral. So my tally was ticking along nicely.





On the return journey I stopped occasionally at likely looking Bramble patches in an effort to get some shots of SWFs and White Admirals and I did manage a few distant shots and the odd backlit SWF but it all felt a bit like hard work as despite there being only being sunny intervals everything was pretty much on the go non-stop.

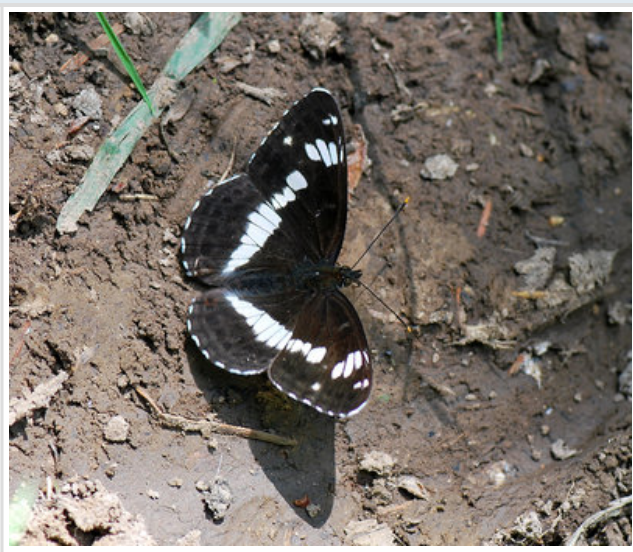






As I mooched back something fluttered down from the treetops. It was difficult to work out what it was in the dappled light and amongst the branches until it landed and then it became immediately obvious that it was a White Admiral. What had thrown me was the different flight pattern - less gliding and more falling. I'd almost given up hope of getting any shots until this one came down to the ground and started mud-puddling/taking salts. I couldn't believe my flukiness!





All in all a cracking couple of hours which allowed me to notch up three firsts for the year, a 'first shot' for the year and also my first ever Small Skippers in cop!  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 27-Jul-15 05:38 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Go and find some Holly Blues soon, there's some lovely fresh males around at the moment. Like HIM. the new males seem to search the ground for their preferred delicacies for a few days, then head for the trees. I've seen lots lately, but no females yet.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

PS. That's one gorgeous White Admiral, and some superb images 😊 .

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 27-Jul-15 05:45 AM GMT

Splendid White Admiral, Wurzel – great to see one that hasn't ripped itself to bits on the brambles. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Jul-15 06:39 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I did find a Holly Blue but it was too far into an Ivy bush to try out the technique 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I was lucky with this one as most White Admirals it seems just want to mess themselves up the minute they're out of the chrysalis 🙄

Week Beginning 06-07-2015 Larkhill

06-07

AM

I didn't really take a count this morning as once again I just walked as clouds of butterflies magically appeared from my feet. It seems that old guard are heading off as what was once a mixture of small blues and greys have now been replaced with larger browns and little golden bullets. This morning I spent some time (4 out of my 5 minutes) checking out antennae tips on as many golden skippers as I could approach. It was tricky work, not so much the checking more the approaching as even this early in the morning they were very active, all charged up and ready to go! Of those that I did the majority were Small but the number of Essex are increasing and possibly by the end of the week there could be a 50:50 ratio of Small:Essex. One Essex was particularly well marked with the black antennae appearing almost green in colour.

I did see a few Small Heaths in amongst the multitudes of skippers, Ringlets, Meadow Browns and Marbled Whites which seem to be reaching their peak now.







07-07

AM

What happened? This morning everything was wet underfoot - I even ended up driving to work with the blowers on full - something I've not had to do for a couple of months now! It showed in the morning count - with only 3 Meadow Browns, 7 Marbled Whites (all of which were communally roosting), 6 Ringlets and 11 Smessex Skippers.



PM

I wandered the Northbound path today for a change and also as the wind was blowing and the line of scrub sheltered this path whereas the Eastbound it would have whipped down it. I had to walk a far bit up the path to get beyond the line of grazing and I'm not convinced that this first part of the path

will return to its former glory but as the grass started to lengthen I started to see butterflies. First up a couple of Ringlets, then Marbled Whites and it was only when I got really into the grass that I started seeing golden skippers. Once I'd seen one they seemed to be everywhere and I would stop and count them, well try and count them. I'd get to 27 or so and then one of the little bu\$\$ers would set the whole lot off and they would whiz here there and everywhere looking a little like someone had knocked a beehive over! It made counting almost impossible so after noting the one offs - Small Tort, Hedge Brown and a Common Blue I just enjoyed the show once more!



08-07

PM

Just walking from my front door to the car was enough to soak me to the skin so I decided not to even bother stopping off for a morning visit. The afternoon was only marginally better, cooler and greyer than of late with a wicked gusty wind. I'd have lined a shot up of something on a Knapweed and the shots would be blurred as the wind ripped along the Eastbound path. The butterflies would grimly hold on like a toddler on one of those play ground spring horses. Not happy I beat a hasty retreat without making a proper count.



09-07

AM

This morning was much better and as I was going to have to get home pronto in order to see K playing the part of Eliza Doolittle in Olivia I tarried a little longer than usual. After the grimness of the Eastbound path yesterday I decided to head oop North instead and I was glad that I did as there was a cracking sight to see. Meadow Browns seem to be coming into their prime with Marbled Whites still holding their own and the Ringlets fading with each passing day. Some are a shadow of their former selves not so much chocolate more old chocolate that's starting to go white. However the real stars at the moment are the golden Skippers as I lost count at a maximum of 40 although I'd only managed to count about half of what I could see! One would blunder into another patch and they would all go up and so I would be back to square one, in fact I was in danger of dropping off such was the amount of counting that I was doing!







10-07

No count as I was ill again 😞 Off to the Quacks in the holiday methinks 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 28-Jul-15 06:50 AM GMT

Have just been catching up on your epic diary Wurzel. So many good things to comment on I don't know where to start. The first picture of mating pair of Small Skippers is a beautiful capture 😊👍. Also liked the female Dark green fritillaries and the near mirror image Marbled White 😊.

The Privet Hawk (the UK's largest resident) was a great find ...have yet to get one in my garden light trap 😞. It's also a tad more impressive than my Bradley Fletcher birthdate moth the Clouded Silver 👍😊.

Your description of the dawdling driver at the lights 🙄.... I fully understand where you're coming from 😂😂😂

. Finally, you may have said it in jest but I wonder if sun-cream does attract the butterflies 😊. In my post (part 3) on Tenerife from last year I hinted that it was the Nivea factor 50 pulling in the Canary Blues, so much so we were beating them off in the end.

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 28-Jul-15 02:43 PM GMT

Some great shots there Wurzel (how did I miss them?). Love the mating Small Skippers and the recent Essex shots. Agree with Phil, DGF splendid also 😊👍  
👍 Do try to catch up tho' 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Willrow, 28-Jul-15 11:59 PM GMT

Really like your skipper shots Wurzel, sometimes the critters can frustrate the pic-taker, but they pose nicely for you on the above images 😊

BW's

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 29-Jul-15 12:30 AM GMT

Great couple of recent reports Wurzel, that's a lovely White Admiral that graced you with it's presence 👍

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Jul-15 06:52 AM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Very lucky that Privet Hawk moth was 😊 If there is anything in the suncream as attractant then I'll be sure to slap on loads when I'm

in Czech 😊 As for the 'driver' I'm glad someone else gets it 😊

Cheers Pauline 😊 I'm trying to catch up – but I keep going out just as I start to make head way on the backlog 😊

Cheers Willow 😊 The trick was getting there early enough 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 That White Admiral was almost as regal as his Nibbs 😊

Laverstock 06-07-2015

So we entered the penultimate week of K's official tutoring and my opportunity of getting out for a quick butterfly fix 😊 . Hopefully the weather will play ball during the holidays and I can get up here when K has her Summer classes 😊 .

After finally photographing a DGF in Grovely Wood at the weekend I thought that I should really try to find one here at Laverstock and so I reasoned that I had best take the farm track as that would mean getting onto the Down proper without the distractions of the path on the way. It worked well and I arrived at the bottom of the reserve and then I worked my way along the path at the bottom of the hill checking out every Knapweed and Hawthorn scrub on the way. However I was still drawing a blank for the DGFs although there were plenty of butterflies around with all manner of whites and browns plus the seemingly ubiquitous Smessex Skippers.



At one of the little stands of Hawthorn I was busy watching an almost lemon Small White when a small grey butterfly buzzed in. From the speed and the nature of its flight as well as the territorial behaviour I was convinced it was a Greenstreak – but in July? I didn't think that they had this long a flight period but as I leant in with my camera that's what it turned out to be. 😊



I carried on checking each bush on the way and it was a joy to see the bushes alive with butterflies. By far the most numerous were Meadow Browns but the numbers of Hedge Browns seemed to be building although I didn't see any excessa. There were still many Marbled Whites flying but they seem tatty and grubby compared to the bright and fresh Whites of four species.





Eventually the path opened up and I'd reached the 'flower meadow' at the bottom of the Down and the Marbled Whites took over as the most numerous species. As I was enjoying the spectacle a ginger beastie shot by and then landed on some Knapweed. It spent the whole time it was nectaring partly obscured by the long grasses and I didn't want to move the grasses like pulling back a curtain as I was sure that it would flush it. Instead I did my best to find a hole amongst the grasses and focus through them.



Chuffed I strolled back to collect K. It didn't matter that the DGF was torn with holes in its wings, all that mattered was that I'd set out hoping to see all the butterflies listed from this site and now I was only one, possibly, two species away.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 29-Jul-15 07:29 AM GMT

A July Green Hairstreak, Wurzel? 😊 Your bogey species from a year or two back? 😊 Pretty unusual, though – it must have been getting on a bit. Well done on getting close to that target – those little achievements are very satisfying. 😊

Dave

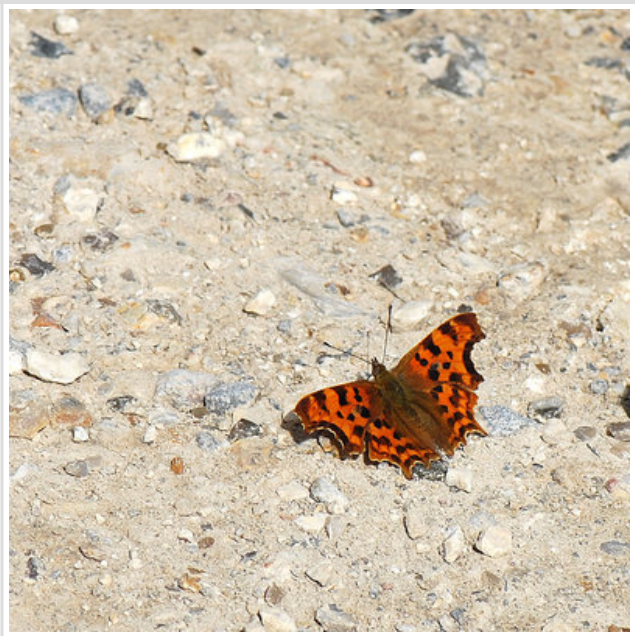
### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-15 06:58 AM GMT

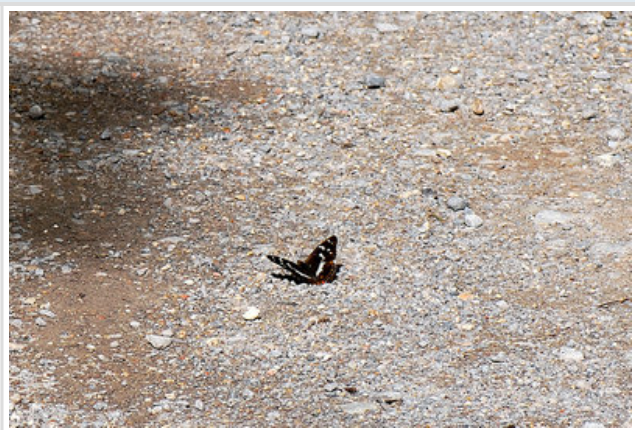
Cheers Dave 😊 I have since met my target, well that is if I don't include a Brostreak as they're not mentioned in any of the literature 😊

Bentley Wood 11-07-2015

Somehow I managed yet another wangle out of the Saturday chores – I'm getting good at this – if only I could work out how? I arrived in the car park early and there were still spaces to park and it was quiet with no butterflies flying over so I headed off down the switchback towards the cross roads. As in previous solitary PE visits I didn't stay solitary for very long and when we got about 100m along butterflies started landing on the deck. First a Red Admiral and then an H.Comma both fluttering down to take salts. It was great as I haven't had much luck with Red Admirals this year. A few little grey blobs fluttered out from the tops of the trees and crossed from one side to the other – my first Purple Hairstreaks of 2015. It was fun watching their exploits through my bins but that wasn't why we were here.



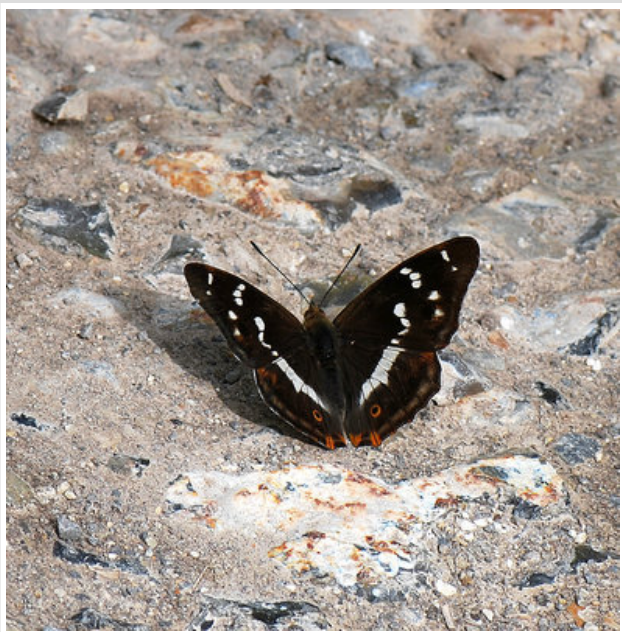
Luckily we weren't kept waiting long by His Nibbs and a monster butterfly came roaring down, did a fly-by circling the group and me in particular a couple of times and then landed on the deck – get in! I clicked away from a distance but it wasn't to be as one over eager chap rushed in too quickly. Honestly I think guidance leaflets should be printed and distributed from the car park to prevent this type of thing happening! 😊



Never mind a second one came back down (different markings) but it was struggling to find minerals on the dry stony ground despite at least 2 contributions from the group. I was a little put out as I'd spent the previous day eating lots of salt and vinegar crisps and drinking Badger beer especially! As it was trying unsuccessfully to find something to probe it kept walking around and going in and out of the shade so the double purple



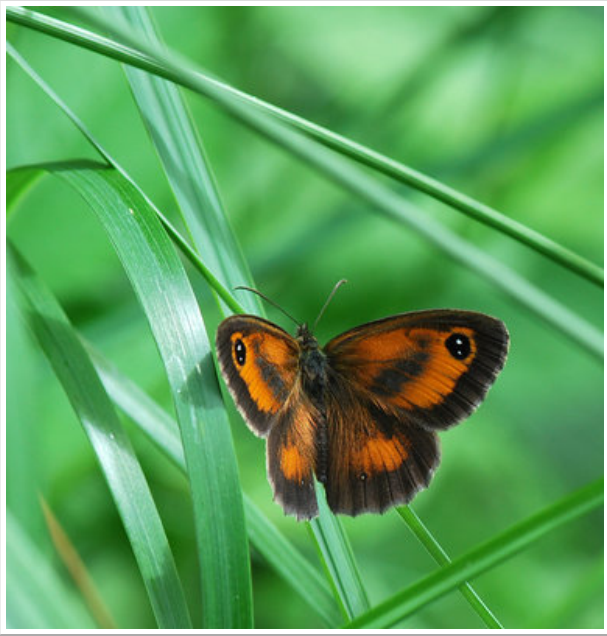
shot wasn't on the cards. In fact by the time it did settle and the purple did show it was pretty distant and we were loathe to approach it after the first had been flushed. Eventually He decided that He'd had enough and flew up to sit in the treetops waiting for a scrap.







It was tempting to wait here to see if he'd come down again but I decided to head off and try Donkey Copse. It's surprising the effect that His Nibbs has on you as I spent all of the walk almost oblivious to the other species all around me. I ignored the Ringlets, Hedge and Meadow Browns, Large and Smessex Skippers, Silver Washed Frits and White Admirals. Instead I kept scanning the path ahead for shark fins whilst at the same time watching the treetops! I gave up in the end and started noticing other things around me including; a few more Purple Hairstreaks that flew up from the Bracken into the Oak just before I reached them and the fact that the verges on the way to Donkey Copse had been hacked back.



I then retraced my steps and upon reaching the crossroads crossed over to see if the Whitters were about. The walk there was kinda frustrating as



everything by now was in full-on flight mode apart from the occasional salt taking Red Admiral. Once there it was a case of pouring a coffee and standing with my neck at 90° to my spine. Occasionally a few little brown squares would flip across from one branch to another or two would detach themselves and spiral briefly locked in combat. So Whitters seen but not a chance of them coming down and to rub it in even more His Nibbs did a fly-by! As my neck was now in serious need of some chiropractic maintenance I headed back to the car park stopping on the way for a brief encounter with a Dark Green Fritillary.







In the car park it was decision time...check out the Eastern Clearing or move onto the Forest for Graylings at Godshill? I plumped for the EC and so set off. There didn't seem to be too much around in the main part (the bit which is good for Pearls/Small Pearls) and so I ended up at the bottom in the tussocky grass and where there is a large collection of Bramble. I spent a good 45 minutes here picking up White Admiral, Silver Washed, 4 species of whites and a Peacock as well as the usual Browns. The star of the show however was an H.Comma, the usual comma mark was completely joined to make an 'o' - is this a named aberrant?



Please with my haul - three species for the tally, a Bentley DGF, possible aberrant Comma and an audience with His Nibbs I headed home early, a few extra Brownie points earned.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 31-Jul-15 07:22 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Very well done with his knobbs 😊. When there is a crowd waiting for an audience patience is essential.

Charging in ruins any chances of a photo for everyone. Though i did accidentally spook one this year 😞

But hey!, i found it, and called out to the other photographers who did at least get some shots. 😊

Great reports as usual,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 31-Jul-15 08:00 AM GMT

Great report and shots of the Purple Emperor 😊 it's always difficult when a group of keen people want to get a photo of HIM! As Trevor says, patience is a virtue, if that's possible 😊😊

BTW Lovely Comma *ab o*-album 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 02-Aug-15 01:22 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I'm playing catch up again, some great reports with cracking photos in your last few posts 😊

With regards to your late Green Hairstreak, I saw a remarkably good condition one in the Heddon Valley this year at the end of June and a couple of years back, in the same spot, there were was one in the first week of July.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 02-Aug-15 03:28 AM GMT

Nice PE shots Wurzel, I have seen a few very late Green Hairstreaks in the past. One of them was so old and worn that practically every last bit of green was gone!

ATB

James

### Re: Wurzel

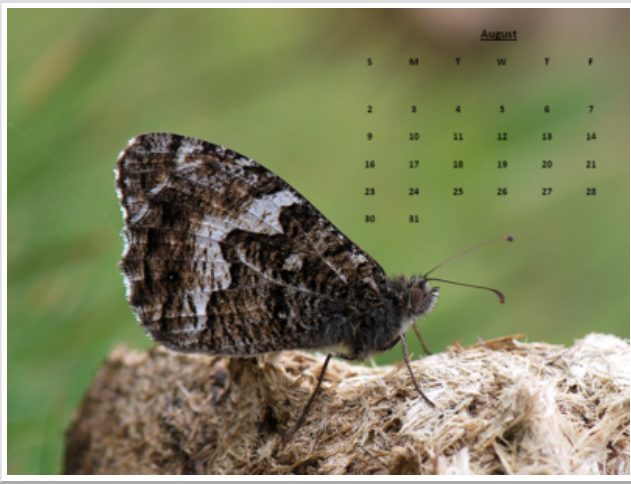
by Wurzel, 02-Aug-15 07:24 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 As I said in my post there should be a guidance leaflet given out to everyone trying for His Nibbs 😊

Cheers Mike for the coments and also the ID 'ab o-album' 😊 Cheers Neil and Rex 😊 Climate change is doing funny things with butterfly lifecycles 😞

August 2015

What already! 😞 Where has the summer gone, and more to the point have we actually had one? 😞



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Aug-15 06:34 AM GMT

Larkhill WB 13-07-2015

13-07

Horrible weather meant that I didn't stop either in the morning or on the way home, in fact it was so bad I didn't even get out while K was at tutoring!  
☹️

14-07 PM

The weather was still wet in the morning and so I ended up driving to work with the blower on full, my trousers soaked through from the knees down and no butterflies to show for my efforts. By the afternoon it was still cloudy but at least it was dry. I wandered up the Northbound path not seeing an awful lot until I got to the large patch of Brambles about 100 metres in. It felt like all the butterflies of Larkhill were crowded into this one area and in one view I could see Marbled Whites, Ringlets, Meadow Browns, Smessex Skippers all over the place as well as a couple of Hedge Browns. It was fantastic to see so many butterflies all jam packed into this one little area. The stroll back down to the car was strangely quiet until I got buzzed by a possible H.Comma. It was flying really fast and seemed far too ginger to be DGF?







15-07 PM

More moist weather again this morning so I didn't bother stopping and instead I waited until things had cheered up on the return journey. Checked out the West bound path and mooched around the Golden Rod to start with accompanied by Meadow Browns, Smessex and the odd Marbled White. Ringlets seem to have really dropped off in the last day or so and the only definite one I saw was very faded, no longer the delicious chocolate velvet but looking a bit flaky and pale. It was difficult to count most things as they were all pretty active and would take off from around your feet sometimes flying forward down the path directly and others swinging out wide to suddenly drop down on the path, again in front of me. I checked out the Golden Route on my return and spied plenty of Smessex Skippers, the golden blobs showing against the grass belying their presence. As I scanned across them one looked much bigger than the others and on closer examination it turned out to be a pair in cop, and even better than that they were my first ever Essex pairing.





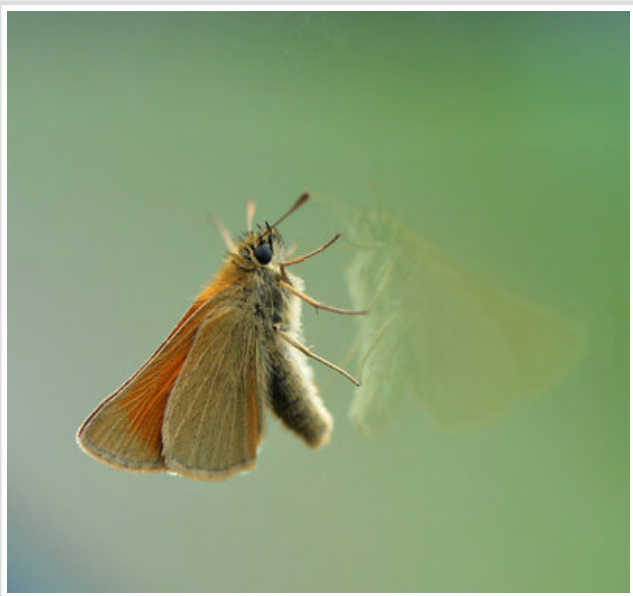
16-07

After the joy of finding my first Essex Skippers in cop yesterday I headed back to the stands of Golden Rods and there again was an Essex, then a second and when I peered closer a third, fourth, fifth, sixth and a seventh! I decided to check the other side of the Golden Rod and there a Hedge Brown tried to lead me on a merry dance. From here I strolled briefly down the Eastbound path and noted the butterflies. I find it a good habit to count both ways and then I use the larger of the two numbers. Generally the second trip produces the larger number and so it was today with the final numbers reaching 1 Hedge Brown, 8 Essex Skippers, 3 Small Skippers and 12 Smessex, 6 Marbled Whites, 9 Meadow Browns and 2 Ringlets.





As I was driving to work I realised that I had a visitor when a Small Skipper landed on my dashboard and seemed to be enjoying the view through the windscreen. So I had to pull over and try and shoo it out, but it didn't want to leave first resting on the window, then back on the dash and back on the window a second time. Finally it fluttered off to pastures new, literally!







Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 03-Aug-15 02:47 PM GMT

I love the first skipper and reflection shot. I wonder if he could see himself.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-15 07:42 AM GMT

Cheers Katrina 😊 I's like to think so but probably not 😊

Godshill and The Devenish 18-07-2015

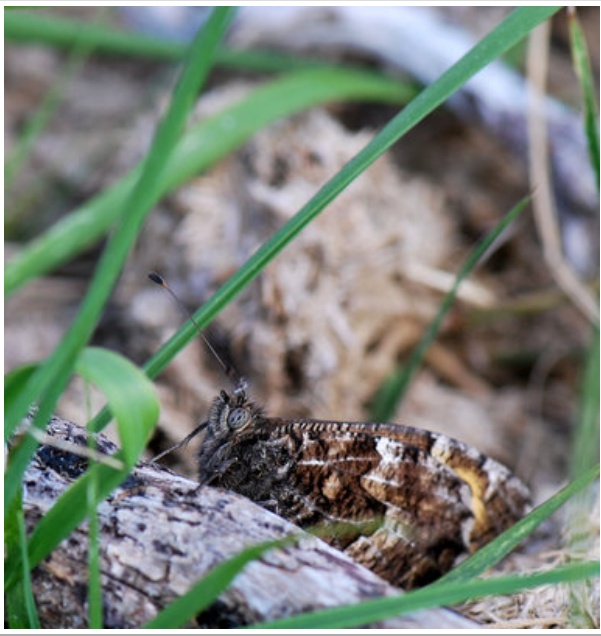
I was already in the holiday mood and so when I'd done my Saturday jobs and I looked out the window and it was stills sunny I jumped at the chance of a pre-holiday butterfly trip. There was only one place on my mind and that was Godshill. If I drove without any interruptions and could get there and have a good hour on site as it were. As luck would have it I made it in great time and was soon walking off the cricket pitch and down the path threading my way through the gorse and I didn't even get to the bottom of the hill before I found what I was looking for. There sitting in the middle of the path was a Grayling. Normally it takes a while to remember how to approach them so as not to spook them but this year I got it right first time and was able to get right in close, actually lying down on the path and resting on my elbows so that I was on the same level as the butterfly. A local horse rider approached and so I elbow crawled backwards and then gradually got up still not flushing it and moved to the side of the path while they moved on. The butterfly however didn't appreciate the vibrations made as the horse went by and it skittered off with an arcing flight which was interspersed with a few glides. Landing further down the path and raising its eye to scare the horse away.





I carried on down and made my way to the triangle of paths that is my preferred spot. After walking around and seeing Graylings on the Adjacent and not the Hypotenuse as in previous years I concentrated my efforts mainly here. There were other butterflies around with plenty of Meadow and Hedge Browns, some Small Heath as well as a couple of battered Silver-studded Blues and the odd Smessex Skipper but I focused mainly on the Grayling. They really are a value for money butterfly as they offer not only the hidden beauty of the orange of the top of the wing, fantastic cryptic patterning, loads of variation, interesting behaviour but also offer a really entertaining chase. Their flight pattern seems erratic and very flappy with gliding thrown in for good measure and they just seem to melt into the background as soon as they land. This species is probably in my top three!





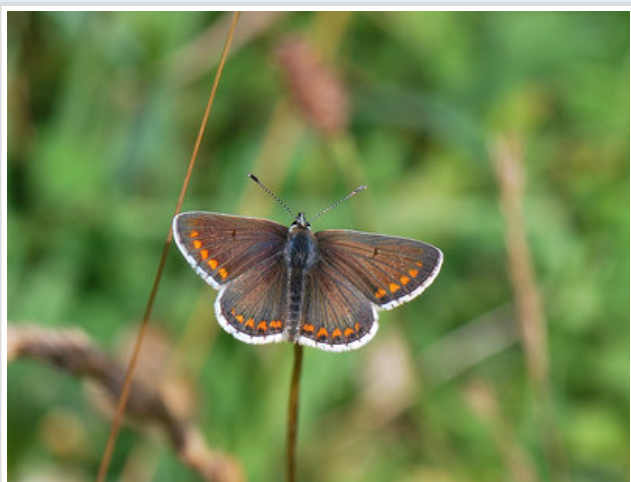
All too soon I had to make my way home as I had to drop my younger daughter off at a Birthday Party so I made my way back up the hill, stopping every now and again for another errant Grayling that caught my eye and wanted to play!



I managed to get back in time to pick my little girl up – she was dressed as a Black Cat – and drop her off at the party. I then had about an hour and a



half to kill before I needed to pick her up which wouldn't be enough time to get back to Godshill but would be enough to pop over and check out The Devenish so that's what I did. It was nice to park up and not have to run up the side of the Down but rather take my time and just noodle around. I started at the Tree Stump in the lower Meadow/Paddock. There were a couple of different Bee species, all very small and I managed a record shot of the smallest which was metallic green. Getting anything better was really tricky as it was so small and didn't stay still. I then strolled round the Meadow and was delighted at how many Hedge Browns there were and I then cut through the Orchid field to get up to the side of the Down. There were a couple of Specklies here as well as a lovely fresh Brown Argus.



Once up on the Down I didn't see a single Blue and certainly not any of the ghostly pale variety that I was hoping for (Chalkhills). However the flowers at the base of the Down at the margin with the wood were crawling with butterflies. It was a fantastic sight to behold with 10 species visible at once. I

checked the numerous Hedge Browns and found a mating pair as well as a possible ab which had an extra 'eye' on the underside of the forewing. To be honest it was mesmerising and in the end I just sat down and watched and enjoyed.





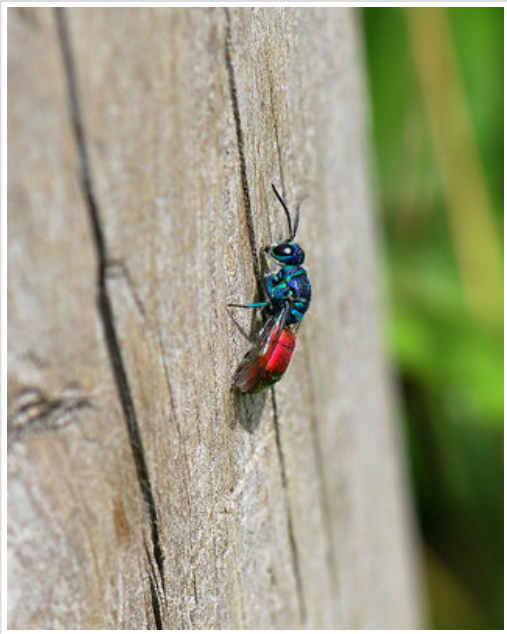
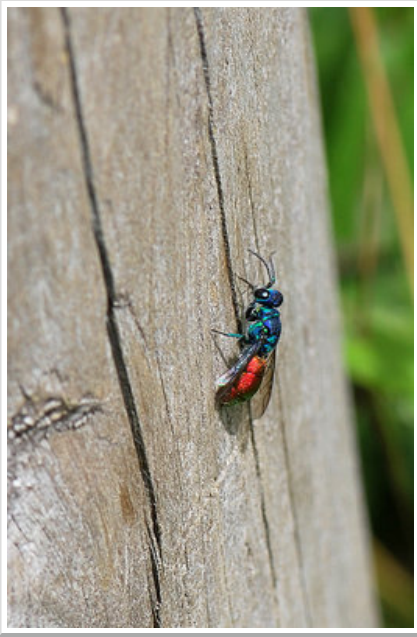


I then took another stroll around the Paddock and as I was buzzed by an H.Comma a couple of times I thought that I should get my own back and get some shots. Eventually I managed to track it down to the far side of the field where it was roosting up in amongst some of the fallen/felled trees. Here again were huge numbers of Hedge Browns, but try as I might I didn't dings any excessa, I might have to wait until the annual trip to Aberaeron for some Hedge Brown abs.





I needed to get back but I was almost late as a tiny iridescence caught my eye on the stump. I approached at almost a snail's pace as every time I've approached this stump to get shots the bees will be gone. My caution worked and there was a beautiful Jewel Wasp! The colours so stunning it looked artificial.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 06-Aug-15 04:21 PM GMT

Some lovely shots of Gatekeepers there Wurzel – and I have never seen a wasp like that before, stunning! I must check to see how widespread they are and likely environment. Good find with mating Essex too 🐝🐝 How come I can find 2 pairs of SSS on a site where there is only about a dozen but where there are hundreds of Smessex I never see a mating pair? 😞

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-15 07:40 PM GMT

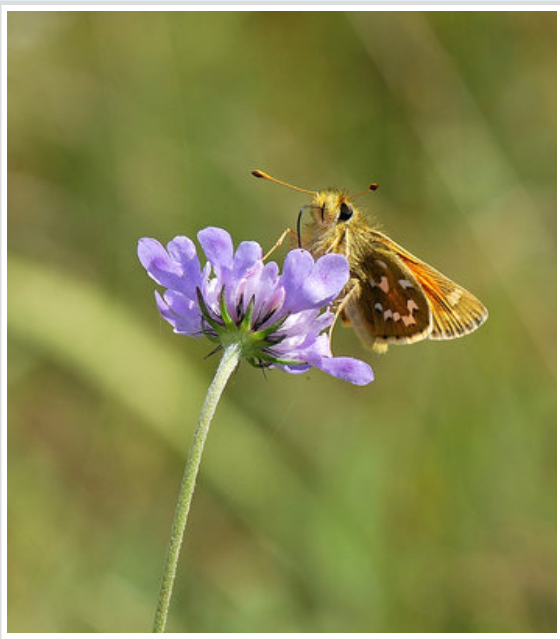
Cheers Pauline 😊 I think that they're pretty widespread as I've seen them in both my old garden and at work before now. The Smeesex I've found recently have either been 'at it' early in the morning or deep in the vegetation so that could be why 😊

The family Wurzel are off to the Czech Republic tomorrow (well Saturday really but we're staying at the airport tomorrow night) so to keep appetites whetted here are a selection of images from the posts that will be available upon my return...

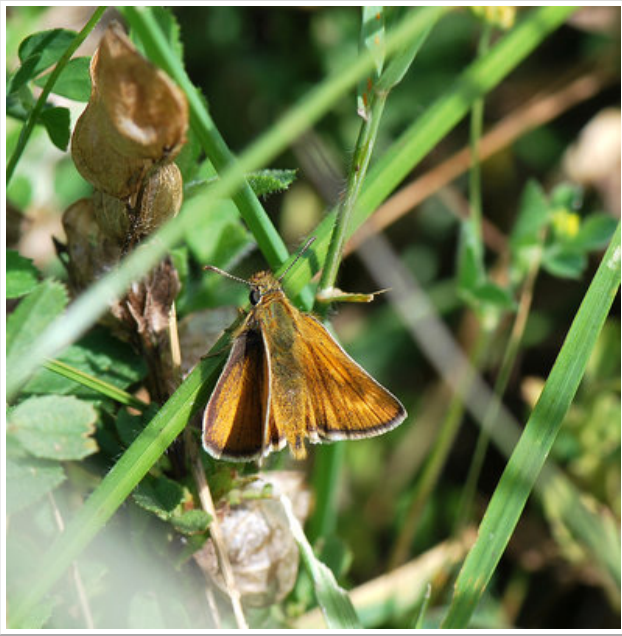
Botany Bay



Broughton Down



Studland and Durlston



Sipton Bellinger







See you when we get back! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 06-Aug-15 08:11 PM GMT

A MALE Brownie!!!! 🍷🍷🍷

That second wasp you saw is a Ruby-tailed Wasp, probably *Chrysis ignata*. To quote **Micheal Chinery's** pocket guide to insects: *Commonest of several similar species... Parasites mason bees mainly, and often seen running over walls and tree trunks in search of their nests.*

And to think it looked like you were catching up on your reports..... 😊 Looking forward to seeing whats flying in the Czech Republic 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Aug-15 08:27 PM GMT

Wurzel, I'm late catching up on your posts but just to say have a great holiday, your photos are fantastic, White Admirals, PE, every thing. Goldie 😊🍷🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Aug-15 04:05 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 That's the wonder of Shipton Bellinger. I've had males come down there for the last 5 successive years. Cheers for the ID of the jewel wasp - I'm always a bit hesitant as BEWARS has it that there are a number of similar species and dissection is the only way to ID 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully I'll latch onto a few new species for the life list 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 07-Aug-15 04:51 AM GMT

Have a great holiday Wurzel 🍷🍷🍷😊, looking forward to your reports when you get back.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 07-Aug-15 05:27 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I think you deliberately posted an image that would leave us seething, spitting blood and flying into an uncontrollable rage of jealousy by sharing that male Brown Hairstreak photo as a parting shot before your hols. Talk about being in the right place at the right time!! What's worse i've never seen a male 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷.

Seriously, have a good'un 😊

TREVOR.

## Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 07-Aug-15 05:35 AM GMT

Some more of 🍷🍷🍷 from me for the Brownies, SSS and Wood White – all fantastic shots 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-15 06:37 AM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 I'm so far behind it'll probably be Christmas before my holiday snaps are sorted 😞😞

Cheers Trevor 😊 They were supposed to be taster shots not 'bad taste in the mouth shots' 😊 If you're after a male Brostreak Shipton Bellinger and an earlier visit should see you right 😊

Cheers Katrina 😊 I'm looking forward to sorting the rest of the shots 😊

Having gotten back from the Czech Republic yesterday and visited Shipton Bellinger for female Brostreaks today I've got even more behind on my PD so without further ado the catch-up begins!

Mottisfont 19-07-2015

The final Sunday before the holiday and it was a family day out for me to Mottisfont. I had suggested a trip to Lulworth but my wife's 'butterfly trip' radar was obviously switched on! Still I took the camera and away we went. It was actually quite handy as we took a new and shorter route and drove through Broughton so now I know roughly how to get to the Down for Silver-spotted Skippers.

Things were reasonably quiet with only a Large Skipper on the brambles when we arrived and I missed a grounded Holly Blue when some oaf wandered straight up to it whilst I was knelt ready to take my shot: "Oh look, a blue butterfly" he exclaimed. Indeed a blue butterfly and one I didn't get a shot of thanks to you numpty boy I felt like replying.



We ambled and little L cart-wheeled our way up to the Walled Garden stopping on the way for face painting. A Comma and a Peacock both did a fly-by on the way in and there were a few Meadow Browns and Whites scattered around in the part with the four lawns. They were all very solar charged unfortunately and so I couldn't get onto any. Once in the end art of the garden things seemed much quieter and calmer possibly because of the heady scent of the Lavender? Whilst here I saw a 5 or 6 Spot Burnett, Common Blue, Meadow Browns, Large White, Green-veined White and both varieties of Smessex Skipper – a first for me here I think.







After eating lunch and ice-creams we moved onto the other areas of the grounds including the house where we were looked at the Charlie and Lola exhibition in the house so I didn't get many more opportunities for many shots. Still it was a pleasant trip out and it's always nice to add some new species to a 'site list' with the added bonus that now I know where Broughton is...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 17-Aug-15 06:39 AM GMT

Looking forward to your Czech Republic reports, Wurzel.

I trust you had a good trip?

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 18-Aug-15 04:04 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel, hope you had a good time in the Czech Republic, looking forward to the reports.

Love the shot of the Skipper on the Lavender (022), cracking combination of colours with the background 😊

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Aug-15 06:56 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 I could eb a while as I have about 10 oher postings in various stages of completeness but I will get round to posting a Czech report or two. The species count was a lot lower than I expected but I thought it was a successful trip as it was really a family holiday with me nipping off where I was able to 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I was happy with that shot too 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-Aug-15 09:57 PM GMT

Glad you had a good holiday Wurzel, looking forward to your Shots Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Aug-15 06:53 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 There will be a bit of a wait as I've got a lot of other posts to catch up on 😊

Laverstock - 23-07-2015

#### Part 1

I was gutted when poor weather meant that I missed out on my final chance for an afternoon visit to Laverstock Down. Luckily K has been enrolled in the summer classes at her Tutors so now, weather permitting, I might be able to make two visits a week, possibly even three.

Today was the first and I practically flew up the Down as I was anxious of finding a Chalkhill for the yearly tally. I mean why not? I've encountered everyone of the other species mentioned in various SSSI reports or Species lists associated with the Down. The most likely place I thought would be the furthest 'flower meadow' at the bottom of the Down so I motored along the farm track and around the base of the hill trying not to get distracted on the way. It seems that I need to try harder as it felt like I was stopping every 30 seconds or so - for a nice fresh Peacock, Green-veined Whites as well as the obligatory checking of every Hedge Brown for excessa or other aberrations.



Eventually I reached the 'meadow' (not really a meadow at all but I don't know how else to describe it!) and scanned across the tops of the grasses. A DGF caught my eye and as I approached it and it shot off I spied a ghostly blue skimming by - my first Chalkhill of 2015 - job done! I spent the rest of the remaining time here before legging it back to pick up K stopping only briefly to note a Holly Blue when almost back at the Tutors.



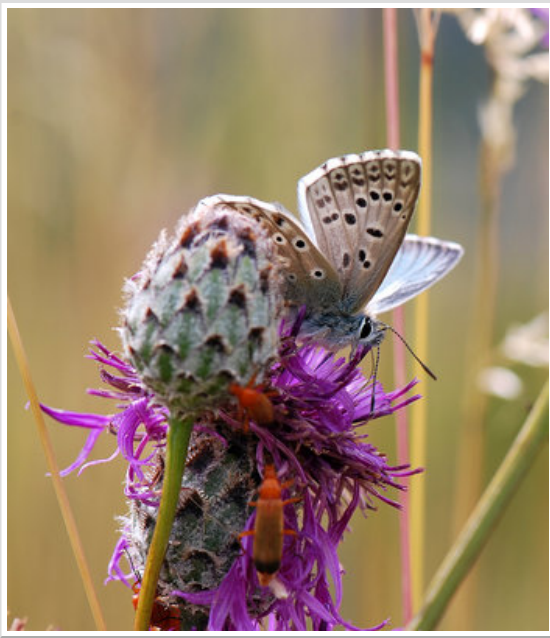




Suitably refreshed and refuelled after lunch I took K back to the Tutors for the English session. Once more I hot footed it back to the Meadow noting 2 Holly Blues on the fallen Ivy at the start of the track. Once on the reserve proper I headed straight up the hill to the area which had previously held Adonis Blues so I could walk round to the meadow and come to it from above. I was pleased to find a couple of Chalkhills here before I carried on round.



Once at the meadow I spent some more time with the Chalkhills here, encountering about 6 different males. They all seemed very fresh, almost immaculate, and it will be interesting to watch the rise in numbers as they work their way to the peak.



I also spent some time wandering round the slopes of the Down in the hope of finding a Silver-spotted Skipper. They're not mentioned on the SSSI report but the habitat looks good. Unfortunately I didn't strike gold...sorry I mean Silver. Mind you over my visits here I've totalled 28 species, a mighty fine haul for a small bit of Down on the outskirts of a city!

On the way back I realised that still had 10 minutes or so which was lucky as the pair of Holly Blues were on the fallen Ivy again. This time I managed to lean in close enough for a few shots before one of them nipped off upsetting the one I was photographing. So I got back from Part 2 chuffed once again but my chuffed-ness quickly turned into embarrassment as I was 10 minutes late. The lesson had finished at 45 minutes past, not on the hour which I'm used to! Opps! 😞





Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Maximus, 19-Aug-15 08:43 AM GMT

Great catch-up shots and narrative Wurzel, so often in life there's a 'numpty oaf of Mottisfont' to frighten them off 😊😊

Mike

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 19-Aug-15 11:21 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, glad your back I like to read your reports, 😊 lovely photos too of the Chalkhill Blues Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 21-Aug-15 06:31 AM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 The numpty's are just another way we have to suffer for our hobby 😊😊

Cheers Goldie on both counts 😊

Broughton Down 26-07-2015

Having driven through Broughton, completed some research and got some very useful information advice from Pete I packed the girls and the camera into the car and headed off to try my luck at Broughton Down for Silver-spotted Skippers. My aim is to try to 'wrap things up' save for a possible Cloudy before jetting off to the Czech Republic so a Silver-spot would add nicely to my tally. Hopefully the predicted mix of sun and cloud would be mainly sun.

Once were got there we walked up the hill, stopping on the way so K and L could admire a three-legged dog and then dove down along the wooded 'tunnel'. I think we entered the reserve too early and so ended up at a small patch of ground which quickly sloped steeply down. K and L set off mountaineering down and we had lunch on the soft, springy turf at the bottom of the hill. Well they ate lunch whereas I wandered around after DGFs and mint moths nipping back to the picnic rug for another mouthful occasionally. The DGFs were tired and faded but were still hard to track down. Suddenly an orange/green blur buzzed by and landed just long enough for a few shots. Ace - with the Silver-spot in the bag I could now have a proper look around.



Once the girls had finished lunch we moved up the other side of the hill and while they read I mooched around finding the suggested entrance in the process. This area had similar low turf with a scattering of scrub and bramble and it felt slightly like the top of a cliff in the way the slope dropped away so steeply again. I set about looking for the Triple-S and they proved surprisingly easy to find. They'd pop up from under your feet and veer away in a fast buzz to drop down amongst the vegetation and become lost from view. Or they'd be sitting on a flower feeding in the sun and swaying backwards and forwards in the breeze like a Woodpecker pencil topper. Over the next hour I probably saw and photographed at least 8 individuals although the intermittent sun made photography tricky despite slowing the little blighters down due to the quality of the light.





There were again DGFs including one which seemed remarkably fresh as well as having white wing edges – a possible partial albino?





Eventually I felt that I'd gotten what I came for and so we walked through the wood, down the hill and then we drove on to Mottisfont - the sweetener/bribe and why the girls accompanied me. During a walk along the river in between playing ice-cream huts and using the wooden dams I checked out a large bramble bush which held 4 Commas, 2 Brimstones, 2 Peacocks, a Specklie, Large White, Small White and more than a few Meadow

Browns and Hedge Browns.



Eventually we all drove home happy; me because of finding a cracking new site and Silver-spots, the girls because they'd had the water play at Mottisfont and my wife because she'd had 5 hours peace! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 21-Aug-15 06:33 AM GMT

You almost gave me a heart attack, Wurzel, posting images of Large Skipper on 20th August!!

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Aug-15 08:37 PM GMT

Great Silver Spotted Skippers Wurzel, 🍷 they seem to be every where but where I was in Kent, it would be interesting to know if any one did see them there at Temple Ewell, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Aug-15 07:36 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 Sorry about that, I'm trying to catch up 😞

Cheers Goldie 😊 They do seem to have had a good year 😊

The Devenish 27-07-2015

Today I was supposed to be walking around Botany Bay photographing my second ever lot of Wood Whites but the weather reports on the Saturday when plans were laid were abysmal. Instead I spent the morning taking my wife to Shaftesbury for her 'shop stuff' and then dropped all three of my



girls off for swimming in the afternoon. As I had an hour or two to kill and the weather wasn't perfect I thought that I'd try The Devenish to keep my hand in.

Once on site I checked the stump and again there was a different type of wasp on the opposite fence post. The little tunnel of trees had a couple of Specklies guarding it and as I haven't taken many Specklie shots this year I tarried here for a bit. One of the Specklies didn't have very strong markings but I'm not as clued up about Specklie abs as I am Hedge Browns.



In the Orchid Meadow there were plenty of Meadow Browns, Hedge Browns as well as the odd white and a fresh Common Blue. There were also a few worn Smessex on their way out and nowhere near as active as they once were. The large Bramble had more of the same plus an H.Comma.



As I walked up the side of the Down a ghostly blue was flushed by a passing Marbled White. Ace the Chalkhills are out here too. But just as I thought that the sun disappeared behind the cloud and the wind whipped up the hillside. Because of this I found a sheltered little scallop area on the leeward side of the wood on the Down top. In here Meadow Browns, Smessex and a Small White were all feeding whilst the brambles had a few Hedge Browns and an immaculate Red Admiral.



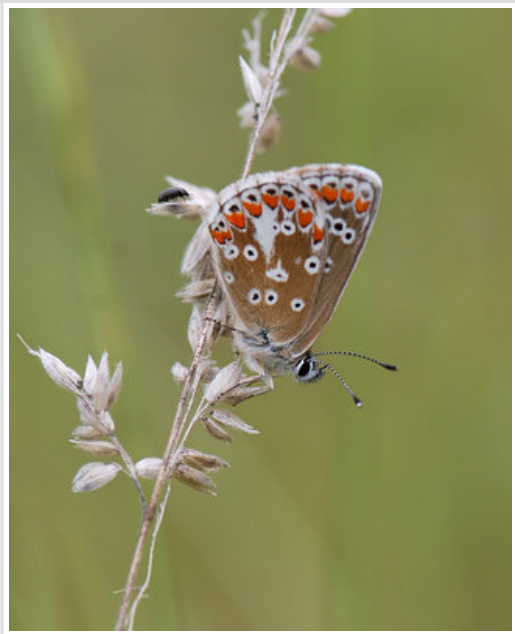




As time was ticking by I needed to make a move back but I decided I'd better have a look for one more Chalkhills. So I wove my way forward and back across the Down using the rabbit run terraces. Suddenly glinting silver there was a male Chalkhill. It closed its wings took off and it was gone. Luckily I watched where it had landed and then somehow managed to relocate it amongst the low grasses. The cooling effect of the sun being in behind the clouds meant that I was able to lie down and steady myself to get in really close.



A quick check of the other Meadow offered a fantastic sight with Hedge Browns on almost every stand of the tall yellow flowers with the largest grouping numbering 9 individuals. Unfortunately despite my careful stalking and patient checking not one was an excessa. Last year almost every other one had some extra spotting yet this year so far I've found only two slightly 'different' Hedgies. A Brown Argus fresh out of the box did its best to cheer me up and succeeded especially when it closed its glorious chocolate wings to reveal a lovely orangey brown underside.



Not bad really, although Wood Whites would have been preferred 😊 .

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 24-Aug-15 01:16 AM GMT

#### "Wurzel" wrote:

...One of the Specklies didn't have very strong markings but I'm not as clued up about Specklie abs as I am Hedge Browns...

Hi Wurzel,

That looks to be within the range of normal variation for a late summer male Speckled Wood, albeit at the darker end of the range. They tend to get darker as the season progresses although that is a generalisation and I have seen dark individuals in the spring and bright looking ones later in the year.

That is a lovely Brown Argus, great stuff 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 25-Aug-15 12:10 AM GMT

Love the close up shot Wurzel 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Aug-15 06:39 AM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 I'll have to do a bit more reading up on this species methinks 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I think I might try these types of shots more often 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Aug-15 07:05 AM GMT

Botany Bay 29-07-2015

Again I bit the bullet, out 'Botany Bay - Chiddingfold' into Google and out came a postcode. When I put it into my SatNAV and it told me a journey time of about 1 hour 30 minutes I thought 'what the hell' and chose a day to head off. Before I went I checked the weather, got some general tips from Philzoid and finally checked with my older daughter K who is also known as 'the Oracle'. Armed with all this info plus a positive response from the oracle I drove off. The journey was okay but roadworks on the M3 mean that I wasn't able to shave any minutes off the SatNav arrival time and there were the occasional exclamations at slow drivers (I mean 20 in a 40 zone - come on find the accelerator or use the bus!) but I got there and there were still some blue sky patches.

The area Philzoid told me about was a bit of a walk in so I ran to get there whilst the sun still shone. Down the path, bear right, over the bridge and up the other side. Right here was the place I saw my first ever Wood White so time to walk slowly. I managed to see the odd Ringlet holding on and looking battered as well as Smessex, Large Skippers and the other Browns but not a single white on either side of the path. I was just past the turning and almost at the 'field' when a white blob stood out from the top of a purple flower. I thought at first that it was a feather but as I approached closer it resolved into a butterfly - Wood White on the tally! I'd only ever encountered this species once before so I spent some time with this individual just in case it was the only one. Eventually however with the sun coming and going I carried on down the path and cut across into the triangular field.







It was a lot more overgrown than I recalled with certain parts actually impenetrable so I avoided the far end in particular. As I wandered with the cloud still obscuring the sun I noted Large White, Peacock, Common Blue, Smessex, Comma as well as 5 or 6 Silver-washed Frits. However I did my best to ignore these and managed to find a couple more Wood Whites.









With my target found what to do next? May as well have a look around to get a feel for the site. So I broke through back to the main track and carried on further into the wood. Just along the path there was a small scallop and this held a White Admiral, Peacock as well as 2 or 3 more Silver-washed. Further on still I found a couple of Hedge Browns but with the sun coming out less and less frequently it seemed a good idea to focus my efforts in the field.



Once back I set up camp having located a Wood White which was sitting out the cloudy spell. I'd have a few bites of lunch, a sip of coffee and take a few shots, few bites, sip, few shots and repeat etc. Eventually the sun came out for another brief spell and then, just as Philzoid had warned me about, the behaviour of the Wood Whites changed. They went from unobtrusive, zen like butterflies to restless wanderers, a lot like patrolling Orange-tips. It was quite frustrating as they would make as if to land only to zip off to another patch of flowers where again they would pretend to land etc.





Whilst following and searching for Wood Whites I covered most of the field a few times over seeing Common Blues, Large White, Silver-washed, Smessex as well as a plethora of Hedge and Meadow Browns. There were also other interesting things to see such as a Hornet killing a bee. It flew slowly over the bramble tops, found its prey and then landed on it stinging it and wrapping itself around its smaller prey. I also almost trod on an Adder and found a Puss Moth caterpillar (a crackingly comical little beastie).







As the cloud settled in and a few spots of rain fell I thought that I should make a move homewards and so I left the field and started back down the track. I suppose by now I'd gotten my eye in because I ended up dawdling along the path from one Wood White to another. I went from a couple here and a couple there around the wood to 8 or 9 along this stretch of path.





As I packed up the car a Purple Hairstreak did a brief fly over as if to wish me farewell. A cracking day and now I know how easy it is to get here return visits are a definite.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 27-Aug-15 02:53 PM GMT

Great shots of the Puss Moth cat Wurzel – they are amazing creatures aren't they? Did you know that they can squirt formic acid at predators 🤩

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 28-Aug-15 03:12 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Fabulous report and images from Chiddingfold Forest. The Wood Whites certainly were worth the effort. I always look forward to my visits to BB.in July, For high summer species there's no place like it. Strange that your Satnav sent you to the M3 though.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 28-Aug-15 06:16 AM GMT

Your image of the Wood White preparing to land on a thistle head is particularly glorious, Wurzel.

Great shot!

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 28-Aug-15 07:14 AM GMT

Great Wood Whites, Wurzel. I shall definitely visit Chiddingfold for the second brood again. And that caterpillar is amazing. 😊😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 28-Aug-15 07:50 AM GMT

Great that you bit the bullet and visited deepest Surrey Wurzel, lovely Wood White shots 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-Aug-15 10:49 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Wurzel, I envy you your Wood White shots, it's( wish I'd taken them time) 🙄🙄

May be I'll see them next time. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Aug-15 07:21 AM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 I didn't know that they could do that – what with Adders, Hornets, Horseflies and now formic acid squirting cats Botany Bay is sounding almost as lethal as the Antipodean one! 😊😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Definitely a 'worth it' species 😊 My SatNav does seem to have a penchant for the M3 and any time I head East it directs me to it 😊

Cheers David 😊 I was dead chuffed with that shot as it was the only one out of 40 or so that cae out anywhere near decent 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 The cat was a great find, one I've always wanted to see

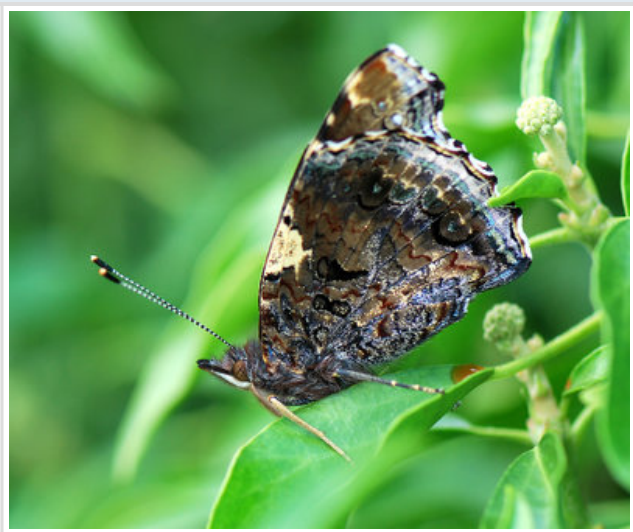
Cheers Mike 😊 It wasn't too bad a journey really especially with the Wood Whites as a reward 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Go for it/them next year, they're a great species to see 😊

Laverstock Down 30-07-2015

Another Thursday, another two tutor sessions and so another opportunity to get up the Down. As things were busy at home I didn't get to the morning session and so instead made damn sure that I could get out.

I only got as far as the fallen Holly bushes as something a little like a bird dropping caught my eye. At first glance it was just a bird poo streaked leaf. Second glance it didn't look exactly right and finally it became a Red Admiral, wings tightly closed. I spent some time admiring the markings that appeared almost ultra-violet in colour.



As I headed on my way I started to motor on as I realised that I's spent too long with the Red Admiral. As I stomped on I saw all the usual butterflies but I'd decided to just get to the Chalkhills. So this I did only finding a couple where they had been before I was able to get in really close to one individual and then it was gone, nipping off.





I trailed back over the top and down the other-side before making my way back to pick up K. I did stop briefly to take a few shots of the Down. The first shows the main body of the Down with the path that skirts the farmer's field and the Fallen Holly bush on the left with the path leading into the screen. Over the Down and further along is where the Chalkhills and DGFs were found. Apparently it used to feature a Pandas head back in the 1970's, a student prank 😊



The second shows the main part of the Down which was where I spent most of my time earlier in the season and produced my first Marbled White and Small Heaths.



The final one shows the main path up to the Down that I used on all my early forays. The small patch of longer grass towards the bottom and on the right of the shot is where my first Ringlets and Small Skippers came from. The path carries on to the left and eventually runs up to the Down coming in on the right hand side of the previous photo.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 30-Aug-15 07:36 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Your Laverstock Down site looks great. Is this the downs you can see behind the schools? I occasionally visit this area for work. I have often wondered what delights are to be found up there, but of course I never have time to stop 😊 .....One day maybe.

Looking forward to seeing your reports from the Czech Republic 😊 Lovely Wood Whites as well, not yet seen these myself

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 30-Aug-15 07:37 AM GMT

"jackz432r" wrote:

Looking forward to seeing your reports from the Czech Republic 😊

Me too.

When can we expect them, Wurzel?

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 31-Aug-15 03:07 PM GMT

"David M" wrote:

"jackz432r" wrote:

Looking forward to seeing your reports from the Czech Republic 😊

Me too.

When can we expect them, Wurzel?

Probably about March! 😊😂 Seriously, that's a great underside shot of the RA Wurzel – you have captured the stunning colours which I have never been able to do 🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 31-Aug-15 09:35 PM GMT

Fantastic shots as usual Wurzel, love the Admiral Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 01-Sep-15 01:27 AM GMT

"Pauline" wrote:

"David M" wrote:

"jackz432r" wrote:

Looking forward to seeing your reports from the Czech Republic 😊

Me too.

When can we expect them, Wurzel?

Probably about March! 😊😂 Seriously, that's a great underside shot of the RA Wurzel – you have captured the stunning colours which I have never been able to do 🍷

You have to catch them 'fresh out the box' to use a Wurzelism to get those colours!

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-15 06:33 AM GMT

Cheers Paul 😊 You're right Laverstock is the hill behind the schools and is well worth a check if you get the chance 😊

Cheers David 😊 I'm working on sorting the shots out and my real problem is that I have some Ringlets to identify 😊 But also bear in mind I probably only had a 12 new species from the holiday, nowhere near the 100 plus you managed to rack up 🍷 ...

Cheers Pauline 😊 I think it was 'mint' as the liquid on the leaf behind it is merconium 😊

Cheers Goldie for your kind comment 😊

Cheers Buggy 😊 I have started work on a Wurzel/English dictionary and now it seems I could produce a Wurzel Quotation Dictionary 😊😂

Broughton Down 31-07-2015

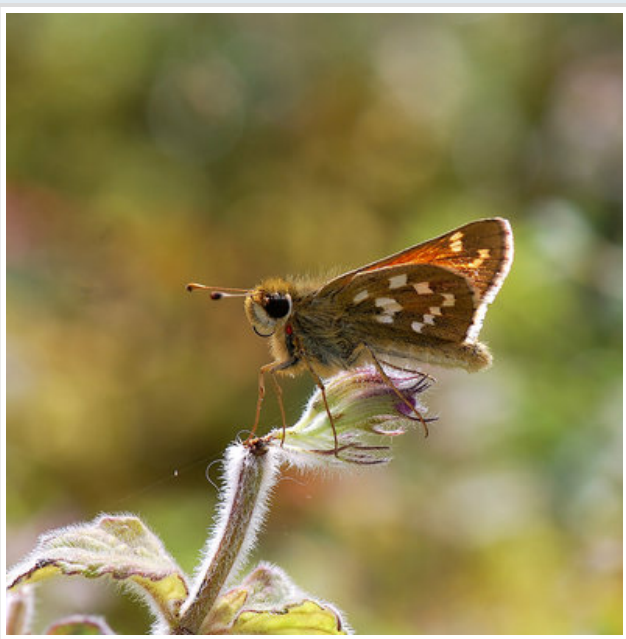


The final day in July and less than a week since my first visit but the weather looked to be better today with much more sun. Hopefully I thought this would mean more Silver Spots...  
This time we walked further through the woodland at the top of the Down and came out at the 'proper' entrance. This proved to be much easier as now I stepped from the wood into Skipper territory immediately.





Once the girls were set up in the shade I started wandering the main path and along the rabbit runs picking up Silver Spots every 5 metres or so. It was as I'd hoped; more sun had equalled more Silver Spots. There were also Brown Argus and a couple of Common Blues around amongst the Meadow Browns plus the occasional faded DGF contrasted nicely with the fresh looking Peacocks and Brimstones. All in all it was a glorious way to spend a lunch time.







I completed a few circuits of this area and then started investigating other areas of the reserve, always coming back to check the girls and keeping within earshot of their calls of 'Wurzel!' In this way I was able to check out the steep down side, some of the lower areas and also the further end of the reserve. By far the best area for Silver Spots was undoubtedly just off the main path at the top of the Down. It was here that I was able to get really close to a Silver Spot.







Whilst making the last and final recce I found myself on a small mound that afforded me views across most of the site (which will make that perfect 'base' on future visits). Here I made two observations. The first was my only Chalkhill sighting of both visits and the second was of an unsuccessful courtship attempt. I stumbled across a lovely looking female when another Silver Spot buzzed in. There was a brief tussle and then both plopped back down. From the open wings I could see that one was a male and he edged up to the female bending his abdomen around as he did so. The female didn't seem interested yet didn't move from the spot. Instead she started to open her wings up to rebuff the male. He didn't give up though and eventually ended up standing on the females back. Finally he seemed to get the message and he was off in a blue presumably to try his luck elsewhere.





Happy with all that I had seen I picked up the girls and we set off to Mottisfont. This time we headed straight to the ice-creams and approached the fishing hut through the fields. On the way I had to stop because of a lush Brown Argus. Surrounding it were numerous Common Blues - finally living up to their name. Various other butterflies and insects were seen but now I just relaxed while the girls played.





Another brill day – Lulworth next time?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 01-Sep-15 06:45 AM GMT

Lovely Skippers, Wurzel. It's good to go back a month in time and see them fresh again. 😊 Great classic scabious poses and the head-on shots – not so much cute teddy-bear, more like cuddly hamster! 😊 And that female Brown Argus is a splendid insect. Those spots are real vermilion red, not just orange.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 01-Sep-15 07:30 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

I agree with Dave, lovely Silver Spotted Skippers 😊 That 2nd one is 'just right' I managed to completely miss them this year 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Sep-15 11:36 PM GMT

You and me too Jack, lovely SSS Wurzel 🍷🍷 I like the Brown Argus too, that's one I did manage to get this year after missing it last year, so who knows may do the same with SSS next year 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel



by David M, 02-Sep-15 04:45 AM GMT

Some lovely, fresh looking specimens for the time of year, Wurzel.

I feel a bit guilty for having 'dipped out' on Silver Spotted Skippers in the UK this year.

I'll have to make up for that in 2016!!

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Sep-15 06:43 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 There was something about the light that day it made everything that extra bit special 😊

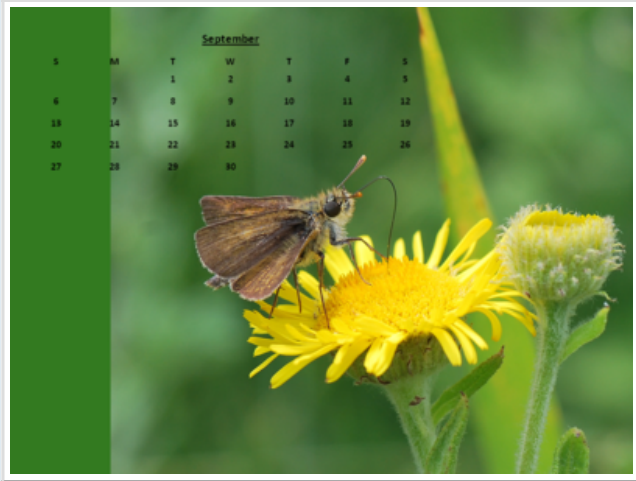
Cheers Paul 😊 Broughton Down is a little gem of a site and much easier to 'work' than Stockbridge 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I'm sure you'll get onto them next year, fingers crossed for you 😊

Cheers David 😊 Good luck with the Silver-spots next year 😊

September 2015

So not only am I behind with my PD but I'm also behind with the calendar as well 😊

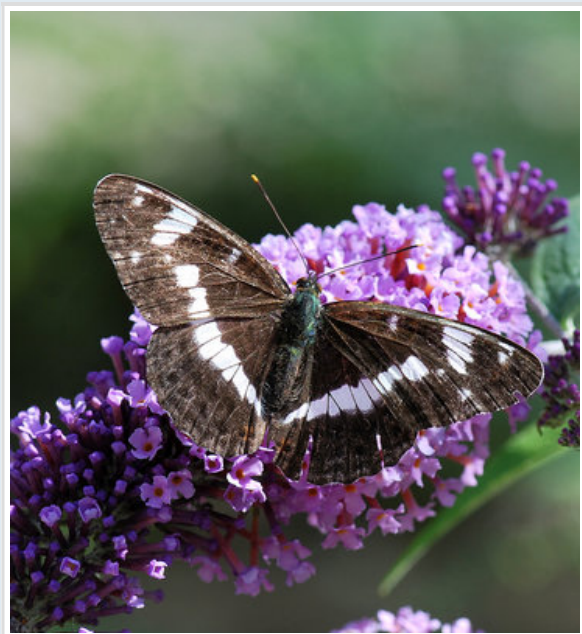


Only a month behind now though...

Day out by the sea...Part 1 - 02-08-2015

This wasn't really supposed to be a full on trip. As we were heading to Czech we wouldn't be able to have our usual week camping at Downshay. To make up for this I'd promised the girls a trip to the beach and so as Lulworths were still on my and Philzoids hit-list I thought I'd combine a trip to Studland with a Lulworth site. So on a beautiful sunny day we set off cross country with me cheering as we crossed back into the Wurzel homeland of Dorset. 😊

Once at Studland we parked up near the Discovery Centre as it meant keeping away from the Grockles 😊 and while the girls slapped on suncream and played on the rope swing I checked out the small Buddleia bush at the front. It was acting like a magnet for butterflies and I managed to count a total of 10 species on this one bush over the time I spent here. At first there was a single Small Tort amongst 2 Peacocks and 5 Red Admirals with a few Graylings skipping around the Heather and the boardwalk. As I watched something silvery glided in - a White Admiral. I was just getting over this unexpected visitor when I spied a Painted Lady too.





After paddling, sand castle building and pebble/sea glass seeking we headed back to the Discovery Centre to make use of the shade and the picnic benches. I had lunch properly with the girls for once and instead mooched around between sips of coffee. All the usual suspects from before were present with a second Painted Lady, a battered Silver-washed Fritillary, Meadow Browns and a pair of Hedge Browns adding to the Buddleia tally. The occasional Grayling would land on the bush too before nipping off and blending in with the decked veranda or cladding. Finally a single white landed for

a split second to make it an even 10 species on the one bush.



I also had a quick walk around amongst the Graylings that were bedecking the decking and cladding. Some were rubbish at trying to blend in as they would forego the subtle greys and browns of the woodwork and cling to the blinding white doorframes instead? 😞







Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 03-Sep-15 07:26 AM GMT

That's an excellent 'spot' to find a White Admiral nectaring on buddleia, Wurzel.

Never seen that before.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 03-Sep-15 05:05 PM GMT

I was going to say ' nice one ' with that WA on Buddleia , but your Graylings with an uncluttered background make it two nice one's. 😊😊

I would like to visit Shipton next year, some precise directions to the site would be good. It's just about do-able in a day from here.

All the best,  
TREVOR.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 05-Sep-15 04:30 AM GMT

At least the Graylings let you get better shots of them with going onto the white setting Wurzel 😊 But I like the White Admiral on the Buddleia best lovely shots Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 05-Sep-15 05:44 AM GMT

Some excellent recent posts Wurzel. That mating Gatekeeper shot is particularly vibrant. I notice you have a Red Admiral with a white spot on the red forewing band, there's several of those abs on various PD recently I've noticed.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Sep-15 07:39 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 It was a new one for me too 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'll PM the details for Shipton as soon as I've gotten my work back under control 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I was doubly happy with the WA shot, but more was to come 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I've only seen a few Red Admirals so far this year and most seem to have the White spot - is it ab.bialba 😊

Day out by the sea Part 2 02-08-2015

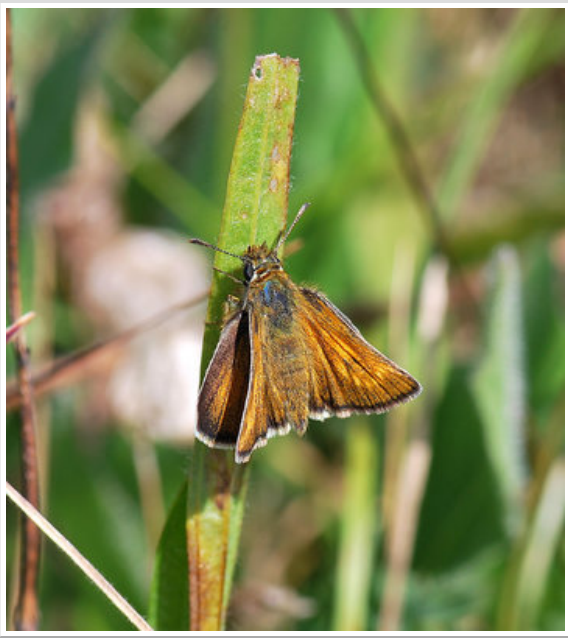
It was now decision time... Lulworth was crossed off as the skippers are not in good nick there as this time in the season, plus I'm not sure long hill walks would have been popular with little L. Corfe Castle went the same way as Lulworth for similar reasons plus I'm not sure how large a population there is present there. In the end we plumped for Durlston. I have fond memories of this reserve as it's produced my only Arctic Skua, my only British Red-backed Shrike as well as my first ever male Pied Flycatcher. However I've never been butterflying here before. So while getting change for the parking I asked the warden and suggested a few areas (which amounted to pretty much everywhere! 😊).

We set off to the Meadow just behind the learning centre and it was a fantastic sight. The cream of the taller grasses intermingled with the yellows and

purples of the flowers. It was stunning. This was actually supposed to be a recee for a visit with Philzoid the following day but the butterflies were so numerous I still ended up with a bucket load of shots.







The Lulworths that were fresh were easy to distinguish from the Smessex present. The females had the clear crescent moon and males had an olive like colouration. In fact I soon noticed that even the faded ones weren't too tricky to differentiate as Smessex seem to go a pale, creamy orange as they get older. Lulworths however seem to get darker and more olive with greenish thorax hairs. Also they're smaller in size, more gregarious and seem to keep lower down in the vegetation. So with some useful field craft learnt we carried on, leaving the meadows and strolling down through the closely cropped grass towards Tilly Whim.

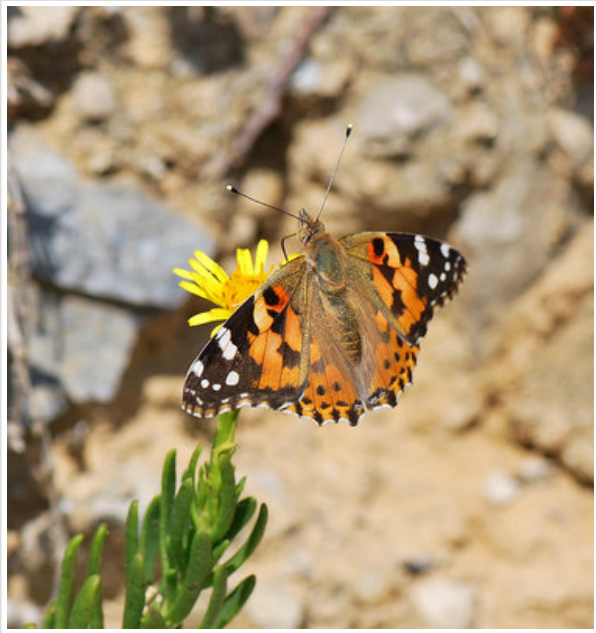




On the way there was the odd Marbled White and Meadow Brown as well as the occasional Lulworth. The girls loved the climb down to the raised beach

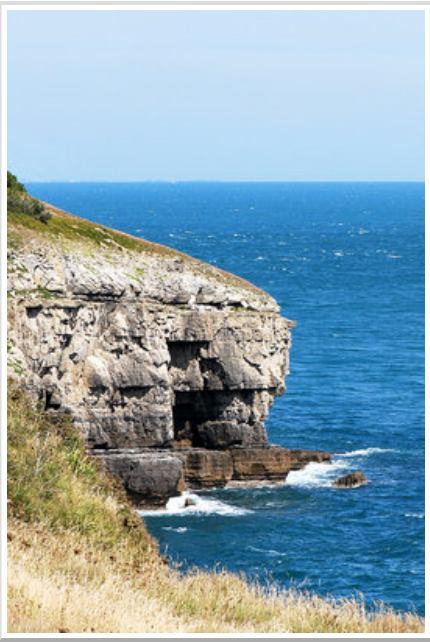


with the Lighthouse on one side and Tilly Whim Caves on the other. I pointed out the 'gully' cutting inland from here which is great for migrants acting almost like a natural Heligoland Trap and funnelling them in off the sea. As if to prove my point a Painted Lady flapped in and took nectar briefly before flying off (more strongly now it seemed?) straight up the gully.



We then strolled up and along the coastal path stopping occasionally to admire the view. Even here there were Lulworths plus a second generation Small Blue. We eventually made it to the Castle and the odd Painted Lady and Red Admiral on the buddleia diverted my attention from the sea rescue going on just past Peveril Point.







So what had meant to be a trip to the seaside and a quick recce had finished up being a fantastic trip with a wealth of butterflies – 20 species in all. But most importantly the girls had a fantastic time and were raving all the way home and all the way to bed! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 07-Sep-15 12:47 AM GMT

Great Shots Wurzel once again, I must visit Lulworth again, it was May when I went there last no Lulworth Skippers then, May be July some time in the future Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 07-Sep-15 01:50 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel, great report and photos from Durlston 😊

Interesting comment about the gully funnelling migrants in off the sea, I have seen Clouded Yellows coming in there in previous years just like you describe the Painted Lady doing. I was also there last week and saw another Clouded Yellow heading up the gully, stopping very briefly to nectar along the way.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 08-Sep-15 06:43 AM GMT

A brilliant day at Durlston by the look of your terrific photos, Wurzel, only two days after I was there with Elliot following our trip to the beach at Studland. I was impressed by all the Lulworths as well! 😊 A stunning bit of coastline.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Sep-15 05:56 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 July is probably your best bet in case they're late or early emerging as July will still be well within their flight period 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 It's a surprise (but shouldn't be really) that such different organisms take advantage of the same geographical features 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 It's a cracking site, I'd forgotten how good it was so a visit next year is a must 😊

Shipton Bellinger 03-08-2015

With the weather reports suggesting slightly more sun (actually some), no black cloud and warmer temperatures it seemed Shipton rather than Durlston would be a better bet for my meet up with Philzoid. True this would mean a postponement of Lulworths for Philzoid and my recce visit the day before might be the only chance of Lulworths for me in 2015. However there was always the possibility that we would find a cracking fresh Brostroke. When we met in the car park Philzoid had already had enough driving so a further 20 minutes to Shipton was preferably to an hour plus to Durlston.

Once there we set off up the main track with Holly Blues and Meadow Browns doing their best to trick us into believing that they were Brostreaks. Annoyingly there were no Brostreaks along the path and before we knew it we'd arrived at the main field to be greeted by a strange sight. There in

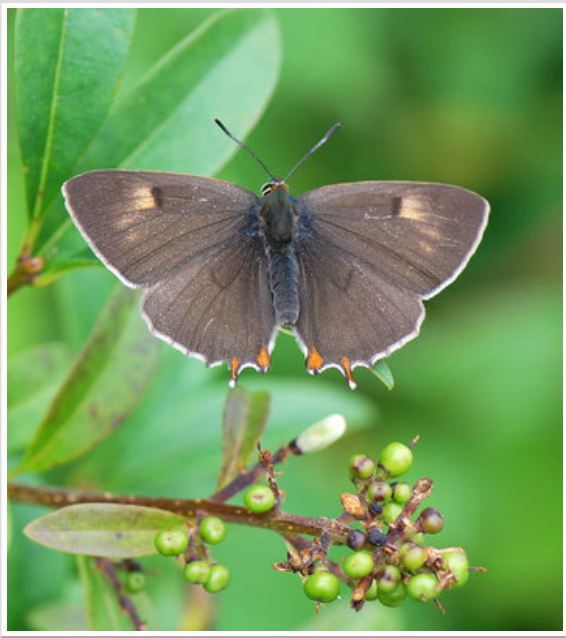
the field were a collection of thrushes. If this had been November onwards I would have been confident that they were Fieldfares but they didn't have the black markings. It turned out that they were Mistle Thrushes - I've seen small family groups before but never an entire flock!

We set the girls up and then started working our way along the 'Hedge hotspot' peering into the leaves and checking each and every orange leaf. It seemed very quiet despite the good numbers of Holly Blues and the occasional Peacock and Comma bolstering the Hedgies and Meadow Browns. I realised what was missing - the Blues and Brown Argus that were here in large numbers last year. Perhaps we're earlier than the Dog Show and the lack of faeces has meant the Blues are elsewhere? As we walked we chatted and it was only our return back that we struck gold. For their, up quite high, was a Brostreak and judging by the honeyed colour it was a male. My guess was confirmed when it started to open its wings. It took off but luckily it landed lower down and this time it opened its wings out wide. It was immaculate and stunning, my best male Brostreak ever!









After some time it flitted off leaving us with our jaws dragging on the floor and rubbing our eyes in disbelief. Had that just happened? Checking back the camera yep it had. We strolled around a bit more up and down the hedge and then found a second and possibly a third. Three males this early in the season down at the lower levels is a pretty good tally!









After about three hours which had only felt like 30 minutes we started back down the track. As we bumbled along we'd stop every now and again for the occasional nicely presented butterfly but I was still mesmerised by the Brostreaks so I didn't take as many shots as I usually would have. Before I knew it we were back near the car park and the girls were in the play park, their reward for letting Philzoid and I get on with the serious butterflying!





From here it was still relatively early and so we packed everyone into the cars and drove over to my Duke site to see whether there were any Chalkhills about? The usual bare ground near where I park didn't have any blues on it at all which I thought was surprising. We did find some fresh Common Blues slightly further in but all was quiet. It wasn't until we were working along the main track towards my Duke hotspot that we started seeing plenty of butterflies. We broke off the path and waded into the long grasses. All around us were Common Blues, Brown Argus, Small Heaths, Meadow browns and the occasional Chalkhills. There were also a few DGFs still flying and they were their usual flighty self. The best butterfly here though was a lovely Small Copper with the slightest of blue badges.







All too quickly time was up and we had to say our farewells and make our way home. As we walked back a few Chalkhills flew up right near the car and when I turned to try and signal to Philzoid he was waist deep in grass and deeply engrossed so it looks like he had as a great a time as I had.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 10-Sep-15 06:01 AM GMT

Some great images of male Brostreaks there, Wurzel.

They NEVER descend so low at my site in west Wales, so I can only look on with envy at your close encounters. 😞

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 10-Sep-15 06:26 AM GMT

Those are staggering male Brown Hairstreak photos, Wurzel. 😊 I've still yet to see a male closer than the top of an ash tree, but those are absolutely stunning. Impossible to beat unless you get one like that with an open-wing female next to it. There's a target for you! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 10-Sep-15 06:27 AM GMT

Indeed! The first person to post male and female Brostreaks side by side should win an award!

## Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 11-Sep-15 06:36 AM GMT

Have just been catching up with your diary after a recent abstention from UKB to sort out my holiday photos from France. A great and accurate report from Durlston and as you know I did get to go there myself and may get around to doing a post for the winter months. As in your report the butterflies were there in good numbers: Lulworths; Marbled Whites; Walls and Painted lady's, and although I didn't see any rare bird species, I did get to see the 'green beast of Durlston' a female Great Green Bush-cricket 🐛 which was well worth the trip on its own 😊.

The male Brown Hairstreaks at Shipton were magnificent examples of this species .... we did get lucky 😊. I also got some good pics of my own of the Small Copper at the duke site, as well as DGF's and a Dusky Sallow moth. A great day all round 😊. I look forward to seeing what Brostreak delights we'll have lined up for us next year, although Dave's challenge may be pushing it a bit too far 😊😊

## Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 11-Sep-15 03:17 PM GMT



Trevor.

## Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 11-Sep-15 10:04 PM GMT

It's really good to be able to read posts from better times now that the season is drawing to its close!

You had a great day at Durlston – on my last couple of visits I found Lulworths quite hard to find. Also, those photos of BH are truly splendid – I've never experienced such pristine males – and with open wings too 😊

Mike

## Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 12-Sep-15 12:02 AM GMT

Seriously, that last MALE Brown Hairstreak image is a prize winner, i think it's the same one you cruelly left us to drool over whilst on your hols. There's a well known Guy who lives in West Sussex, who is known for his exquisite photography and i think he would be hard pushed to beat that.

So i will have to leave some more mrgreens 🍃🍃🍃.

All the best,  
Trevor.

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 12-Sep-15 03:45 AM GMT

I'll Second Trevor on the Greens Wurzel 🍃🍃🍃🍃🍃😊 Fantastic shots, I hope when I do finally see a BH it's in the condition your's was in but I couldn't get a better shot Wurzel 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Butterfliesaurus rex, 14-Sep-15 05:39 AM GMT

Absolutely wonderful Brown Hairstreaks Wurzel! I've not done very well with those at all this year. I will have to invite you down here to show me how it's done. I did see my first ever male BHS a few weeks ago though! That's not a frequent occurrence in these parts so I was well chuffed. Anyway my quest to photograph a really pristine BHS will have to continue next year.

All the best

James

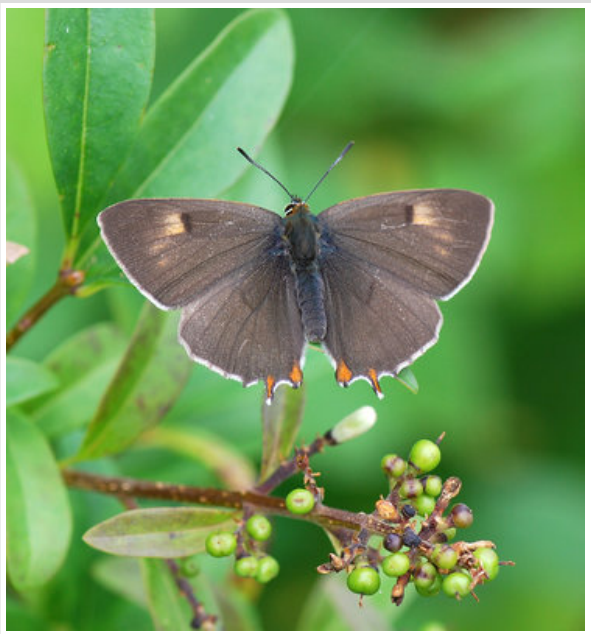
## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Sep-15 06:02 AM GMT

Cheers for your kind comments Dave and David. Do the shots below, if seen as a montage, count as 75% towards the target set? 😊😊



*Female open wing (2013)*



*Male open wing (2015)*



*Male and female (2012)*

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Looking forward to the Holiday report 🍷 I reckon Shipton will deliver next year 😊😊  
Cheers Mike 😊 I got lucky at Durlston as everything has run a bit later than recently this year 😊



Cheers Goldie and Trevor for your very kind comments 🙏 Cheers Rex 😊 I'll trade you some Brostreak secrets for some LTBs inside info 😊🙏🇬🇧

Have a goodun

Wurezl

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 14-Sep-15 06:12 AM GMT

Excellent effort to get male and female in the same frame, Wurzel.

It helps, of course, if these insects are nectaring which, sadly, they never do in west Wales. 😞

### Re: Trevor

by trevor, 14-Sep-15 01:54 PM GMT

#### "David M" wrote:

Excellent effort to get male and female in the same frame, Wurzel.

It helps, of course, if these insects are nectaring which, sadly, they never do in west Wales. 😞

The same is true of Steyning. When the Brown Hairstreaks appear the Bramble beneath the Ash trees is very largely over. To the best of my knowledge there are no other flowering plants, at that time of year, that are likely to attract a male down from the trees at Steyning. Of course Hemp Agrimony is a classic attractant for males and there is some in the area, but not close enough to the BH site. I intend to visit Noar Hill and possibly Shipton Belinger in 2016, where males are seen low down, to see what differentiates these two sites from Steyning.



### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 14-Sep-15 10:01 PM GMT

At least 75% Wurzel 😊 Well captured closed wing shot of male and female together, and stunning male Brown Hairstreaks at SB, this year 😊🇬🇧 An open wing shot of male and female together would require a massive slice of luck, but, never say never 😊😞

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 14-Sep-15 11:03 PM GMT

Once again Wurzel you've hit the jackpot 😊 I'm looking for the best places for next year now to find BH's 😊 Your's shots are fantastic I can't wait to see what else your going to post 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 15-Sep-15 03:52 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel, just catching up on your Brown Hairstreak adventures...stunning open wing male, what can I say apart from follow Trevor and hit you with a load of 🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Sep-15 06:57 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 Another good site to see male Brostreaks low down is Alners Gorse 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Philzoid and I always check the Brambles and if the flowers have gone we look for the really ripe Blackberries as they sometimes sup from them.

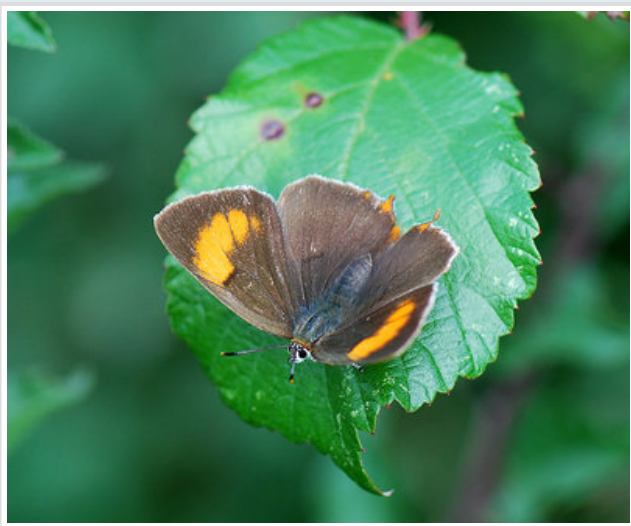
Cheers Mike 😊 I'll take the +75%, you've got to "know when to walk away" as a wise man once sang 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 If you can try for Shipton Bellinger

Cheers Neil for your very kind comment and Mr Greens 😊

Shipton Bellinger 16-08-2015

This was probably the final meet up of the season (not including the Social of course) and so it was off to Shipton Bellinger. By now the females should be flying and numbers could be reaching a peak so it was with high hopes that we set off so much so that I didn't even curse once at the slow drivers in front. Once in the car park we made our way straight up the path and found a Comma on the tiny Buddleia and a few Holly Blues on the way. Just before the path split something caught my eye - the flash of brilliant orange turned out to be the first Brostreak of the day - a female with wings open basking for all she was worth in the cloudy cool air. We were just getting our shots as other butterflies approached with their dog off its lead and our Brostreak was gone.



Muttering under our breaths rather like Muttley we carried on taking the left-hand path. It was all very quiet with the odd Specklie and Hedge and Meadow Browns flitting around. When we started chatting with another pair of Brostreak hunters this quietness became even odder as they regaled us with tales of '100 females here yesterday'. Had we missed them, would that be it and what does a female Brostreak do once her eggs are laid? Or was it the Japanese collector that had been here yesterday and had gone away with a lunch box full of Brown Hairstreaks? 😊



Because of this we hurried along to the hedge hotspot paying scant attention on the way as it felt like all the Brostreaks were spent. At the hedge we saw evidence of other Brostreak Hunters with little scallops trampled into the Brambles. It was these areas that we paid attention too as it seemed better to use these than commit fresh trampling. But again all was quiet here - there even seemed to be fewer Meadow Browns and only the occasional Vanessa. Holly Blues were in good numbers and I would watch these as they fluttered around the Bramble tops in the hope that they would 'upset' a Brostreak. We were lucky enough to get a few open wing shots of Holly Blue amongst the brown butterflies.



Eventually my technique paid off as a male appeared resolving before my eyes. Slightly further along and higher up was a second and possibly a third and so we would wander back between them alternatively gazing and watching one in turn.





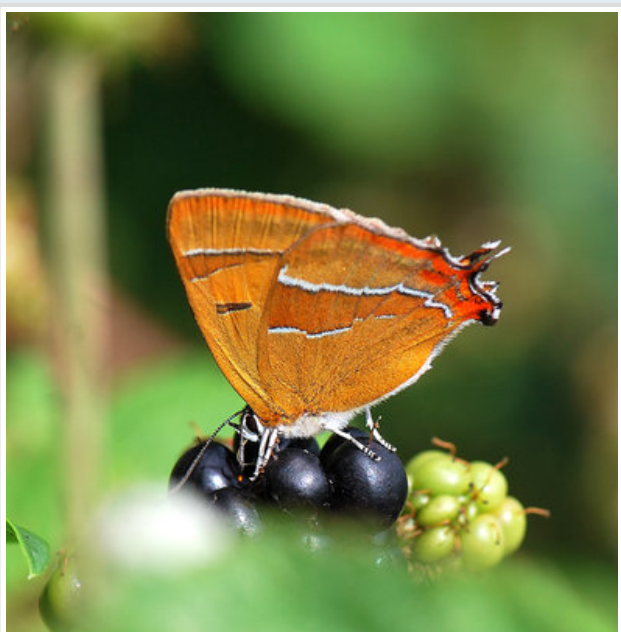


Another person had found a female low down and so we waited until they had finished and then got a few shots of our own. She was stunning and it was hard to imagine her 'blending in' with the background because of her vividness.





At one point she moved, flew a little way and then walked and clambered over the leaves towards a cluster of fruit. She then started feeding not on nectar but on the older blackberries themselves probing in amongst the 'droplets'. I need to remember this behaviour as they seem to adopt it in the later part of their season once the flowers have passed.



With the sun coming and going we finally started our way back discovering a further two males in the '100' hedge on the way back to the car amongst other little gems. Both were tired looking and battered and had that decidedly tired look that is the marker of time telling me that the season is drawing to a close.





Quite a sombre end to the season and one that matched the start – perhaps it's not all over yet? 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 16-Sep-15 07:28 AM GMT

The fresh female Hairstreak is amazing, Wurzel. 😊 I wish I'd had the chance to get down there this year. 🇮🇪 If the last two years are anything to go by there may still be some mileage in 2015! LTB caterpillars are apparently munching peas all along the south coast as I type... 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 16-Sep-15 04:02 PM GMT

There's an old saying ' quality not quantity ', but with your BH adventures this year you've managed quantity and quality. Perhaps your target for next year should be a set of Purple Hairstreak images to the same standard.( A drone or cherry picker for Christmas ? ) 😊

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-Sep-15 06:46 PM GMT

Wow Wurzel, it's a wonder some one didn't say some thing to that Jap collector 😊

Thanks for the name Shipton Bellinger III Look it up I 've not a clue where it is, but by the looks of your Butterflies Wurzel it'll be well worth a trip next year 😊 Your female Bos streak is fantastic, 🇮🇪.Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Sep-15 06:40 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Good luck with any LTB forays, I have pretty much had it for this year, Brownie points are all used up, work is frantic and Mrs Wurzel has invested in large amounts of paint 😊😊😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I have actually toyed with the idea of a Cheery picker for Purps 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I think someone did have a word with him 😊 I can send you some info on Shipton nearer the time if you need 😊 .

Shipton Bellinger 20-08-2015

Today was 'Results Day' 😊 and as I drove across the Plain to work the clouds thickened and the rain gathered. Having collected the dreaded Results I chucked them in the boot – not to be looked at for another fortnight hopefully– and we headed home.

On the way we called in at Shipton. The weather was pretty dreadful perhaps not as bad as it could be but nowhere near the weather conducive to Brown Hairstreak. However I was adamant that something good would come from this wretched day. After a 10 minute spell in the park we set off. A solitary White flew slowly across the path dodging the rain drops as it did. All the way up the main track it was very quiet and at the branch I opted to head down the left hand path. It wasn't until almost the end of the path that I finally found a male Brostreak. It was hiding high up in the bushes so I couldn't get a shot but it was still looking smart which bodes well if I can make a return visit in better weather.

Just round the corner was the crossroads and instead of heading straight up towards the hotspot we turned right and started working our way round stopping for lunch mid-way along. As the girls ate I wandered in the drizzle and found a couple of Holly Blues and a Green-veined White sitting out the rain. A Specklie belligerently flew from the tree top down and along the path, flew round me a few times and then landed.





Once lunch was done we broke out into the field and stalked around the edges. The rain had momentarily eased off so we saw a few Meadow Browns, a Common Blue and a couple more Holly Blues - but no more Brostreaks. On the way back the only things of note were the puddles which the girls took great delight in stomping and sloshing through. To be honest apart from the warmth it could have been a February day! Still the fact that I'd found a Brostreak on such a pointless seeming day cheered me no end.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 20-Sep-15 06:44 AM GMT

You did well to see anything in those conditions, Wurzel.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 20-Sep-15 08:00 AM GMT

Yes, August could have been better couldn't it! As David says, you did well seeing what you did though 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 20-Sep-15 08:33 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I looked up Shipton Bellinger and found it's in Hampshire, I've added the info to my Favourites column for future reference in the cold days to come .Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Sep-15 06:47 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 With the weather that we had you had to just go out and try regardless 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It felt more like February than August 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I've started producing Word/pdf files with instructions on how to get to some sites so I'll see if I can attach it to a PM. I would post it on my PD but as it seems that collectors are now trawling through UKB so I think we all need to be a bit more secretive 😊

Wales 1 22-08-2015

Having endured daytime temperatures in excess of 35 everyday whilst in Czech it was something of a shock to the system to come back and face usual British summer weather consisting of changeable conditions. During the week the weather steadily got worse reaching its nadir on Thursday when I had planned for three butterflying trips – two visits to Laverstock Down with a Shipton foray sandwiched in between – none of which happened. So due to the usual 'Law of Sod' come Friday when we were setting off for Aberaeon the weather was warm and sunny.

It didn't stay like that though as the minute we crossed the old bridge into Wales the rain arrived. It then stayed grey and dull with a bit more rain until we arrived. Come Saturday morning the rain was back with a vengeance and we thought that the holiday was going to be a wash-out. With the girls rattling round the bungalow we coated them up and went for a walk up the Lane and things started to improve. By the time we'd gotten back the sky had cleared and instead of grey and threatening it was blue and warm. While the girls played in the garden I had a look around and amongst the bees I saw a Common Blue fly across the garden along with a white. On one of the statuettes a green shield bug caught my attention – a Hawthorn shieldbug.





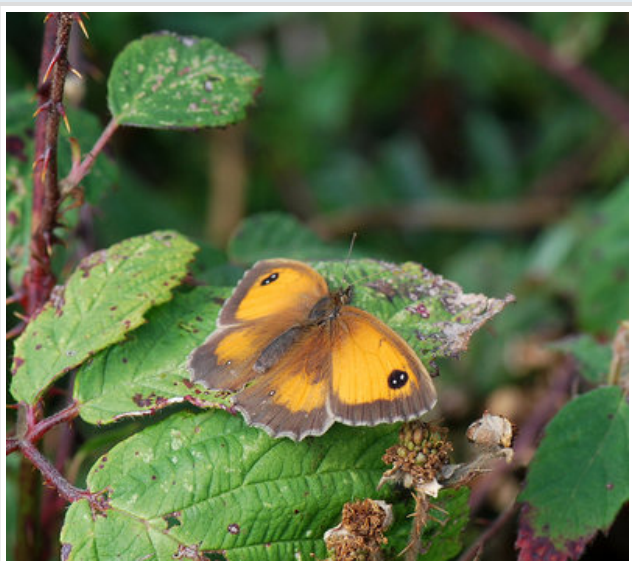


I then suggested a quick stroll to the post box and back hoping for some excessa Hedgies. The hedge that has held some cracking examples in the past had been trimmed and was looking a lot less wild than in previous years but despite this and the later visit there were still plenty of Hedgies present, though none had those extra spots. One tired looking female did have one extra brown spot on her left fore-wing but I didn't find the spectacular versions that have been here in previous years.



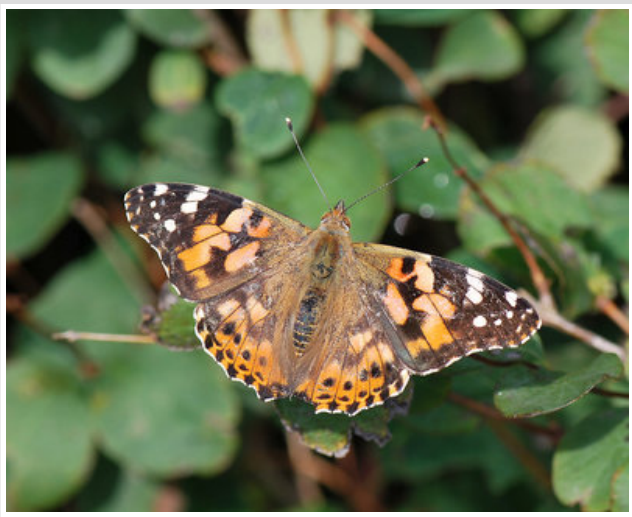


I then moved on to check the hedges along Rhiw Goch and even these have been 'tidied' up but luckily the pruning seems to have encouraged the hedge to grow even more and there was also the addition of plenty of honeysuckle snaking up and through the main body of the hedge. There were plenty of Hedgies here but still no excessa. Instead I spent some time with a very fresh looking female and also found a Hummingbird Hawk Moth - the main advantage of the presence of Honeysuckle.

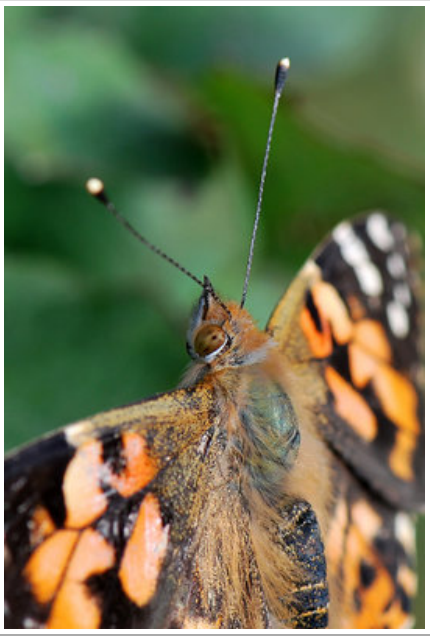




The final part that I checked out was the raised verge and the gate half way along the road and before it starts to slope steeply down. In here I watched three or four Common Blues flitting around unfortunately for me, on the wrong side of the gate. Something large and creamy in colour fly-by strongly and circled back. At first guess I thought Wall Brown but it wasn't orange enough and was fling far too powerfully. Luckily it settled just in front of me – a dark Painted Lady. As it sat there, perched on a twig I was able to get in pretty close and was surprised how it 'face' resembled the beak of a bird?









As it motored off back across the field I turned and made my way back home. On the way I stopped to get a shot of the famous hedge and as I was doing so something landed briefly on the footpath opposite. I couldn't get anywhere near as close to this Painted Lady but this was in a lot better nick.



*The Hedge*



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: Wurzel**

by millerd, 22-Sep-15 06:51 AM GMT

You're right, Wurzel – those "eyes" and the abdomen as beak look very owl-like. Enough to scare off a small rodent if flashed suddenly from a closed position? Nice photos. 😊

Dave

### **Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 23-Sep-15 04:59 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel, I have noticed that 'birds face' image on some other species as well, particularly on PBFs and SPBFs, on some individuals it can be particularly

striking. I remember wondering how it would appear to a potential predator and indeed if it had evolved for that purpose or if it was just coincidental.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 23-Sep-15 05:55 AM GMT

The colour and pattern on a Painted Lady has always reminded me of a Tigers face. I'm sure that would scare a few birds away in India. Probably not as effective in Wales though! 😊

ATB

James

### Re: Wurzel

by CJB, 23-Sep-15 05:44 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Great shots as ever!

I was on one of your local(it) patches last week at Durdle Door hoping to snap a Lulworth Skipper but sadly failed in my task.

Was I looking in the wrong area or is their season at an end? I saw lots of other species but not the one I was hoping for! 😞

Keep up the reports, which I read avidly, even if I don't comment.

Flutter on!

CJB

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 24-Sep-15 12:47 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, great shots again, I was wondering about what you said, " people trawling through UKB's " is it possible that by posting shots of the habitats like we have been doing that this also could lead these people to find the Butterflies ?

I was thinking about this Spring when I was up at Gaits Barrow, the Duke was out then and I saw a woman with a net, she wasn't near the Dukes and we walked in the opposite direction in case she followed us a way from where we knew the Dukes to be as a precaution, it's the very first time i've seen any one at Gait Barrows before with a net Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Sep-15 06:18 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I don't now about small rodents, when I clocked it close up it almost scared the bee-jees out of me! 😞

Cheers Neil 😊 The similarity was probably coincidental in an early ancestor, but if it helped them survive to breed then it would have been maintained. 😊

Cheers Rex 😊 Perhaps it's hoping to look like a Dragon? 😊

Cheers CJB 😊 I think it might be a bit late for them. Also they seem to emerge earlier in the western side of their range. I've put together some maps to help you next year but I can't PM them to you 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I don't know how much info they could get about sites from our habitat shots as they're probably pretty familiar with them anyway, I'm just going to be a bit more careful to keep my less well known sites to myself and only pass on info to those I know and through PMs. 😊

Wales 2 24-08-2015

After a brief respite on Saturday late afternoon the wet weather rolled in and stayed until about 7pm on Sunday. Fingers were all crossed that the weather report for Monday was unduly pessimistic...Amongst clouds and greyness we all set off for a morning walk to the Secret Cove. It was a totally new walk for me and was much more interesting than the usual walk up the Lane passing next to some lovely looking habitat, diving down through a small wood and crossing the stream, running along a farm before walking down a steep hill with a glorious sea view before us.





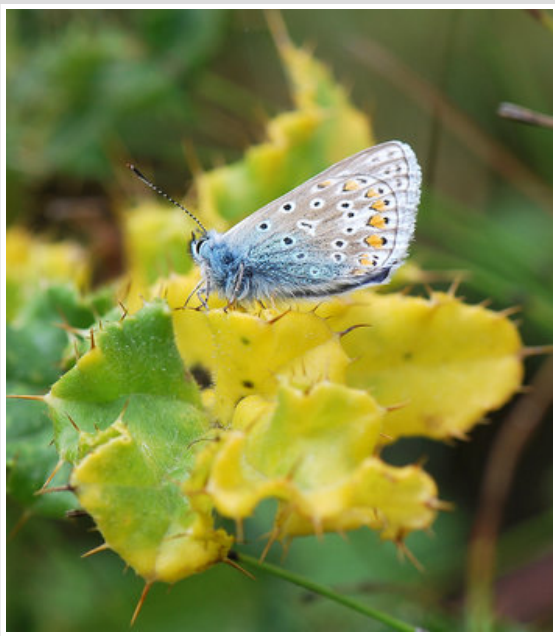
At the top of the Cove the stream continues to flow; snaking around in meanders before cutting through the rock and meeting the sea as a small waterfall. This little area proved to be absolutely brill for butterflies with Common Blue in their droves amongst the slightly larger Hedge Browns and larger still Meadow Browns. Each place I looked three or four Blues would appear. As I only had a limited time here before the girls would want to climb down to the beach to investigate further I took a scatter gun approach to my photography. I'd find an area and take a few of the easier shots, if the butterfly flew or was in an awkward position I'd leave it and look for another. In this was I got to see most of this little hollow and I encountered most of the species. A Peacock startled me as I rounded a bend and it flew up from me, a Small Copper flashed like burnished gold in the weak sun and a Small Skipper was living out its retirement years.







There were more blues around including one which was acting like a Greenstreak and tilting its wings to angle them for maximum exposure to the sun. I also found a smattering of 'blue' females one of which had some interesting markings on the hind wing margins and the tips of the fore wings. As I started the climb down to the small private beach a Brown Argus appeared as if from nowhere amongst the Common Blues and a pair of Chough passed by over head. This was turning out to be a real gem of a site.







Once down on the beach we had a root around for sea glass and nice looking pebbles as well as admiring the waterfall cascading down the cliff. The girls were loving it here and it was quickly being referred to as the 'Secret Cove'. On the climb back up a more orange brown caught my eye and a careful stalk led me to a very dark male Wall. As usual it stopped for the very briefest of times and was then gone.





On the walk back a pair of Chough flew by calling and a there was the possibility of a Dolphin but little L was hogging the bins so I couldn't be sure. There were also a few whites, a Comma high up in a bramble bush and a Small Tort sitting in the middle of damp field (for some reason?).





All in all a cracking little place to add to the day trip list when we come to Wales again. On a warm summer day it would have the works – streams to play in, rocks to climb, rock pools to investigate, the sea to paddle in and plenty of butterflies for me to photograph. Have a goodun

Wurzel

PS – As I was sorting out things before turning in for the night I picked up my wife's iPad and resting on it was a 20 Plumed Moth a great finish to the day.



## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Sep-15 06:44 AM GMT

Shipton Bellinger 28-08-2015

With the holiday fast coming to an end I managed to squeeze in one more 'big' visit out. After the visit to Shipton in terrible weather I checked the Met office and decided on a return trip. Once I started up the track the cloud rolled in and a breeze picked up – a bit of an ominous start which only got worse when the breeze helped carry a howling noise to my ears. Surely not this weekend not today? But yes the Sled Dogs were here. I almost felt like giving up there and then as all the best 'spots' would be hemmed by tents, caravans, dogs and faeces; bit I was here now so I felt like I had to make the best of it.

Up the main path I notched up a Small Tort and both Small and Large White and then I came to the branch. I opted for the left-hand path as this had lower vegetation and there were many more young branchlets for egg laying. However despite wandering up and down numerous times I couldn't locate any Brostreaks. I did see a Common Blue, several of the Browns, 5 Holly Blues and at least 3 Specklies (marking their territories) but this didn't quite satisfy.



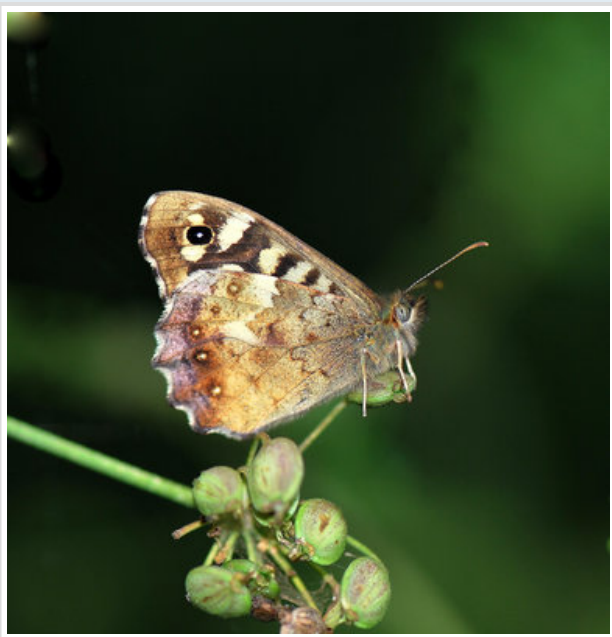
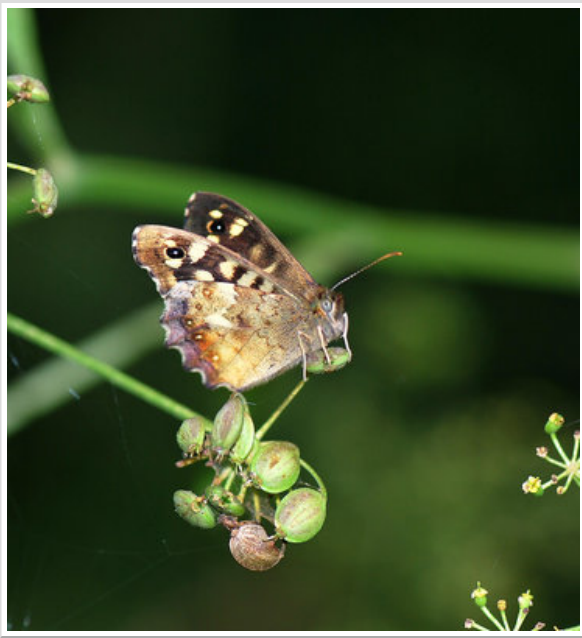




I carried on round up towards the Hedge Hotspot and this year not only was the field filled but a lot of the smaller scallops on the left of the field too – so many chances of finding any were diminishing fast. Even the back area by the road was devoid of my target species having a single Large White and Common Blue amongst the Browns.



To make matters worse a massive cloud had rolled in, very befitting of my mood, and as I made my way back along the other path (completing a circle) it started to rain! I'm actually all in favour of the BBC sacking the Met as other companies can't be any less accurate and at least my expectations will be lower. I did manage a few shots of a Specklie in the gloom, the flash picking up a lovely lilac band on the hind wing.



Anyway eventually it cleared and for brief intermittent spells the sun shone and everything warmed up. Towards the crossroads I started seeing butterflies again but they were of the same ilk apart from a surprising Silver-washed Frit gliding powerfully along the track. A further set of wanderings along the left-hand path (now the right-hand) still didn't produce any Brostreaks. I did glimpse a small orange, jinking, flying thing but it was probably a Vapourer Moth.







So not a successful trip mind you I was scuppered threefold:

1. Lateness in the season. After the '100 in a day' perhaps they're all over and the Japanese collector didn't help matters 😊 ...
2. Weather. Nothing like the forecast...again.

3. Access. All the best spots were there but to get to them I had to walk through a canine latrine, feeding bowls or someone's bedroom! 🤪  
So the season seems to be ending not with a bang but with a whimper, in fact just like it started.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by David M, 28-Sep-15 06:48 AM GMT

You may have felt 'scuppered', Wurzel, but you got a cracking underside image of that Speckled Wood. Excellent stuff!

## Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 28-Sep-15 03:43 PM GMT

"David M" wrote:

You may have felt 'scuppered', Wurzel, but you got a cracking underside image of that Speckled Wood. Excellent stuff!



## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 30-Sep-15 07:59 AM GMT

Lovely shots once again Wurzel, the weather's been great lately hope you've got more to show us Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by CJB, 30-Sep-15 05:49 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Thank you for your replies and I will look into how to activate my personal email?! 😊

Still lots flying around and I am trying to work out how to swing via Sussex to scout for LTB's!

Flutter on!

CJB

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Oct-15 06:53 AM GMT

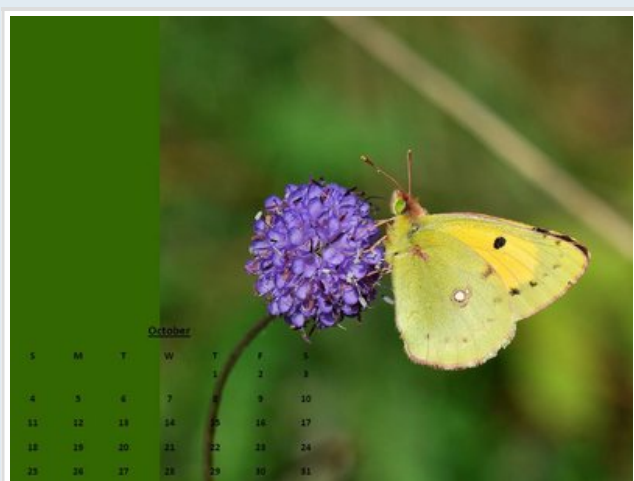
Cheers David 😊 I was happy with that one 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 There are a few more posts in the bag 😊

Cheers CJB 😊 As soon as you've got it sorted PM me and I can send the details on 😊

October 2015



Just one, please 😊

The Devenish 29-08-2015

With the season to fast disappearing and the end of the holiday just a long weekend away I wanted to cram in a few more visits before the drudgery of an excessive workload once again ruins my existence. As I'd done all the jobs I found that I had a few hours to spare, not enough for another foray to Shipton but after yesterday that seemed futile anyway and so instead I bombed across the city to The Devenish.

I checked the 'Old Stump' first and after finding an all black bee I watched fascinated as a wasp landed, unsheathed an ovipositor longer than she was and then proceeded to insert it into the stump. A second one joined me in watching the first. Though mesmerised by this I became increasingly ware of a persistent humming that would occasionally crescendo. Taking a few steps over to the large Holly Tree I discovered the culprit(s) - an open Hornet

nest. They would arrive in waves like fighter jet squadrons hence the intermittent crescendos. I didn't know if this was a new nest or an established one which had been ransacked by a predator so I retreated in case it was the later and they were upset.



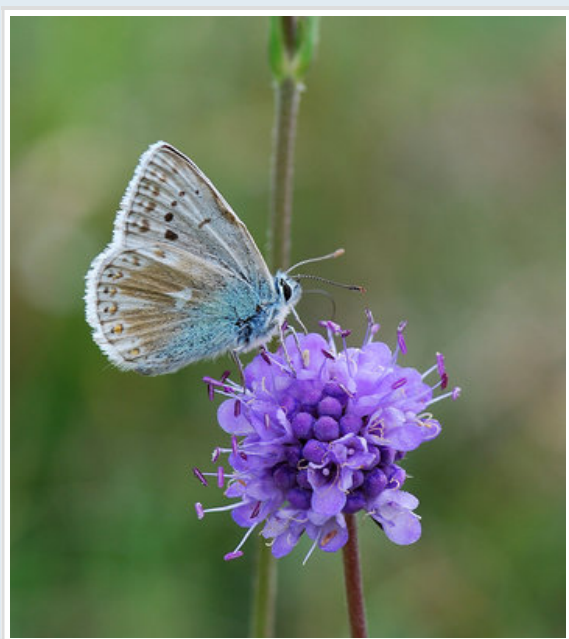
Cutting across to the Orchid Meadow there were a couple of Specklies and in the meadow itself I saw a single Chalkhill and two male Common Blues the second of which was so small I had to do a double take in case it was a bright Small Blue.



The nectar source on the Bramble at the foot of the Down was spent and the berries hadn't yet ripened so this was devoid of butterflies. It wasn't until I was on the Downside proper that I started finding them again. I started skirting the bottom of the Down amongst the vegetation at the wood margin. Here was a Peacock, Brown Argus, a few Meadow Browns and finally a couple of Chalkhills. One was lacking almost all of its underside spots and was a particularly attractive aberrant. Whilst watching this I stumbled onto another couple of males and flashes of electric blue told me that there were also some second brood Adonis Blues. Further along this row of plants a Red Admiral looked resplendent and there were also Green-veined Whites and a second Peacock. From here I climbed up to the top and checked the flower rich flatter areas on the Down top. Despite the shelter and plenty of rich



nectar sources there were surprisingly few butterflies with only a strangely out of place Specklie and a handful of Meadow Browns. A second Red Admiral cut through the air near the Beech wood but I didn't see the hoped for Cloudy.





I then spent some time walking the rabbit run terraces seeking out Adonis and Chalkhills in the hope that I could catch them sitting out the cloud and so allowing me to get in close. I managed to find females of both species and both made me wait a considerable amount of time before they deigned to reveal their upper wing surfaces. This seems in stark contrast to the males which were much easier to spot as they seemed to land and open their wings wide basking in the sun. It was interesting to see how the light affected their appearance. The male Chalkhills would go from pale blue to a slaty light grey whereas the Adonis would change from bright vivid electric blue, almost artificial looking to a powdered sky blue as the light levels dropped. This really became apparent when I managed to photograph two males next to each other but in different orientations so I could witness the differences all at once.









The Orchid field didn't add much more to the days tally and before I knew it I'd climbed over the penultimate fence before the car. As I'd now gotten my other shots I risked creeping closer to the Hornet's nest. It was tricky getting shots as there would be a lull and then a squadron would return entering the hive and disappearing from view. About a minute later the next squadron would leave. After a couple of changes two or three Hornets started flying in ever tighter circles around the tree so I think my presence had been detected hence I retreated back to the car and headed home.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 02-Oct-15 06:00 AM GMT

That's a striking Chalkhill, Wurzel. It almost reminds me of Glandon Blue undersides.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 03-Oct-15 03:11 AM GMT

Love the Adonis Wurzel, I missed out on those this year, I hope you get your Clouded Yellow before the season ends, with the weather being so good lately I think you'll be lucky Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 05-Oct-15 04:56 AM GMT

More great reports and photos Wurzel, that Chalkhill ab. is a cracker.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Oct-15 05:13 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I looked Glandon Blue up on 'tinternet' and I see what you mean 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Still no Cloudy for me and time is ticking ever inwards 😊

Cheers Neil - I was well happy with that one 😊

Larkhill 01-09-2015

This post should really have been titled "Back to Work Blues" as today was probably the worst day of the year, the start of the new term. Luckily it was a TD day so it was slightly more bearable. On the way to work it felt a bit too cool for butterflies but I did stop by the Stonehenge bus depot as the in the field opposite the two Great Bustards were back. At Larkhill itself it was all very quiet and in the limited time available I couldn't locate any roosting, dew bedecked butterflies.





During the stop-off on the way home it was a different story entirely. I started down the Eastbound path and right at the start by the stand of Golden Rod a Small White fluttered over the yellow tops and a slightly worn male Common Blue landed in the grass. Slightly further down I tried to follow a White or a while but it nipped in amongst the young Hawthorns. I nipped in myself and this opened up new possibilities as I usually stick to the paths but these sheltered little nooks held more butterflies with five Meadow Browns and a pair of Hedge Browns as well as the afore mentioned white.



My next stop along the path was more open, the Hawthorns being replaced by tall, blonde grasses. was here that I tarried for the remaining time of my stop-off as there were several Common Blues and two belligerent Brown Argus, who I wouldn't have been as frustrated by if I'd had more time. You see each time I knelt to take a shot, focused and was about to click one or both would reel in and cause my subject to dart off. In the end I waited until they shot off on one of their 'flights of chaos' before stooping in to get shots of any remaining butterflies that hadn't been bothered by the BAs 😬😬.





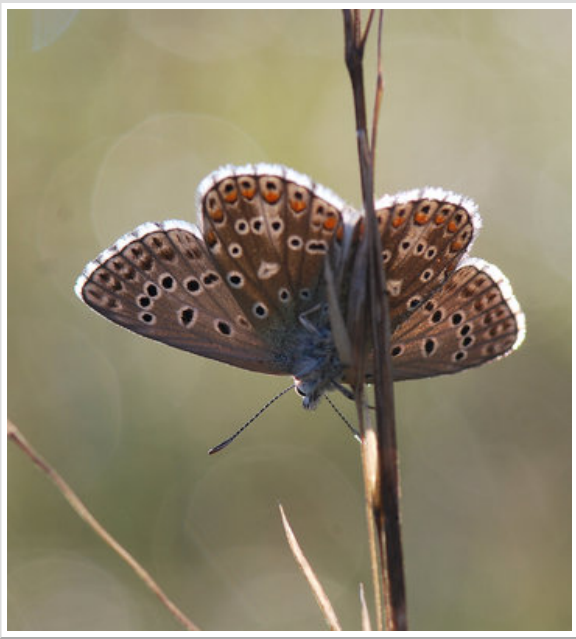
02-09-2015 Larkhill

AM

Another day another stop-off looks like I'm back into the routine already. The Bustards were there again this morning but I couldn't stop this morning as I had an Audi up my arse the whole way. I headed straight along the Eastbound path and it was really quiet as I walked about 75 metres down, in fact I didn't see a single butterfly so I turned around to walk back to the car and there glinting like a bolt from the blue was my first ever Larkhill Adonis sitting perfectly on a grass stem. With its wings held wide open it presented me with a great opportunity to add another species to my 'Stained Glass' collection as well as allowing me to get in really close.







Chuffed I carried on back to the car and now there were Common Blues and Brown Argus everywhere that I looked. I couldn't fathom it as on the way down the path nothing; now 2 or three here, another clump over there, a couple here etc. Perhaps it was because of the angle they were orientated at placing them in the shade as I walked down the path but on the return journey with the sun behind me they practically glowed from amongst the grass.





In the end I ended up with a count of a single Adonis Blue, 2 Brown Argus and 12 Common Blues.

PM

During my afternoon stop off I expected to find a collection of Blues, flying freely along the edge of the path after the number that I'd seen roosting this morning. But started the familiar walk down the Eastbound path I saw only a Small Tortoiseshell and that was at the Golden Rod. Further along a few Meadow Browns flew up from the grass and I found a pair in cop but I didn't see a single Blue? A wonder if they'll be back tomorrow morning?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 05-Oct-15 05:45 AM GMT

A lovely selection of Blues there, Wurzel. Where has that last month gone? 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 05-Oct-15 06:07 AM GMT



### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 05-Oct-15 08:12 AM GMT

Lovely selection of Blues Wurzel, where has the summer gone 😞😞

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Oct-15 03:14 AM GMT

Fantastic Adonis Wurzel, 🍷🍷 and your other shots are beautiful Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 07-Oct-15 01:11 AM GMT

Nice Bustards Wurzel, I've never seen a true wild one. Its great to have these magnificent birds back in our countryside 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 07-Oct-15 05:40 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:



Nice Bustards Wurzel, I've never seen a true wild one. Its great to have these magnificent birds back in our countryside

Definitely! You'll have to show me them when I'm next over your way 😊

Lovely pictures of the Adonis Blues warming up in the morning sun .... best way to see them I reckon 😊 .

Hornets are fearsome looking but less aggressive than other wasps ..... until you get near their nest 😲 Did you use a phone camera on the end of a stick? 😊 Great shots 😊

Phil

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Oct-15 05:00 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 The last month disappeared into the void that is 'work' 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 I was hoping for a bit of an indian summer but no joy 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I was well chuffed with the Adonis 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Hopefully the one without the tag (not number 15) was a true Wiltshire Bustard 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 I'll try and get you a few Bustards next time you're over 😊 . I got to within about three feet of the nest but didn't hang around too long... 😊

Larkhill 03-09-3015

I pulled in this morning hoping to find the blues from yesterday morning which were absent during my afternoon meeting but things didn't look good. The light was poor and there was a fine coating of dew across the grass and latterly on my trousers. I wandered down the path looking every which way for butterflies and occasionally kneeling down and scanning from different angle. This was a trick that I picked up yesterday and it paid off as on first look there weren't any butterflies, kneel down and look from a different angle and there was one!



In this way I racked up two more Common Blues bringing my total to three and it felt like I was walking forward through time as each subsequent blue I found seemed more aged and battered. It didn't get any better on the way back when I found a Meadow Brown and a different Common Blue, the most aged of the lot!

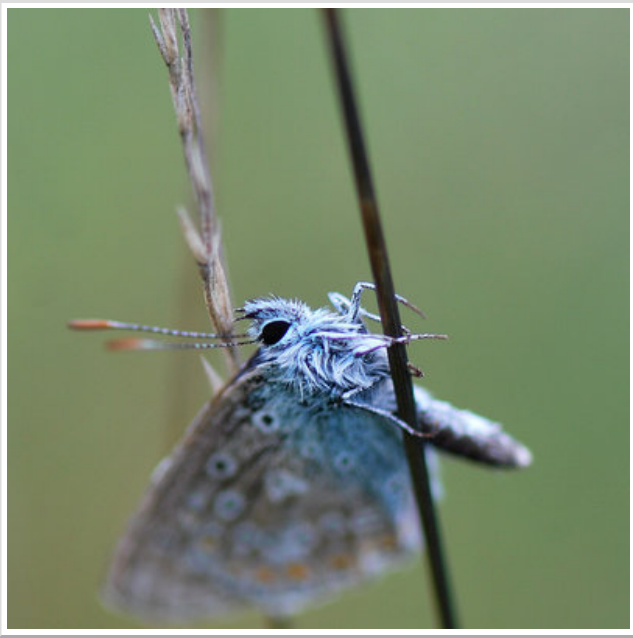


*Older*



*Older still*





*Ancient!*

And so onto work! I wasn't able to stop on the way home as I had to attend a meeting so I had to wait to the following day to further test out my new technique.

Larkhill 04-09-2015

Another day and another stop-off at Larkhill, as long as I keep seeing butterflies I'll keep on stopping. This morning it seemed cooler and darker than previously and I struggled to find butterflies at first despite using the techniques that I've developed over the last couple of days. Eventually though it did pay off and as I continued down the Eastbound path I started finding a few clinging on. First was an aged Common Blue standing proud on the top of a flower and this was quickly followed by a pair of Meadow Browns in cop. I did a double take of these as they appeared to be in a very similar position to the pair yesterday. However the way they sitting low in the grass and holding their wings at different angles meant getting a shot was nigh in impossible as t last half of the couple would be out of focus.



I then got onto two more blues and a Brown Argus in a single small group bringing the tally to 3 Common Blues, 2 Meadow Browns and a single Brown Argus cling to a stick - I'm sure there's a tune which would fit this?





During my afternoon stop all the blues were again strangely absent, I suppose they were off doing what they needed to do and during eh morning I'm catching them before they've gotten out of bed as it were. I checked briefly down the Eastbound path an then up the Northbound path but the only butterfly I saw was on the Golden Rod and it was a Green-veined White looking mighty fine.



Have a goodun  
Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 11-Oct-15 06:44 AM GMT

Just been getting to grips with the epic-ness of your diary again Wurzel. I don't know how you find enough time to do so much! I feel knackered just looking at it. If you're using any good 'over the counter' stimulants please would you kindly PM me the details 😊 thanks.

Too many things to comment on so I'll just say it's all great.

I trust you have enough to keep us all entertained until Christmas. 😊

All the best

Rex

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-Oct-15 06:00 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I like the colour of the Blues, they look cool like the morning air you describe ( turning them a little more Blue ) 😊  
Lovely shots, I still hope you get your Cloudy, the weathers hope fully going to stay dry they say for this next week. Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Oct-15 06:56 AM GMT

Cheers Rex for your very kind comments 😊 - I took them to heart and so had almost a week off 😊 The trick is to consume as much coffee as possible during the day and then have a strong beer ready to send you to bed in the evening 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I think I may have left it too late now for a Cloudy now 😊 Still maybe next season...

Laverstock 07-09-2015

The weather held all day and onto into the evening with the sun shining gloriously and at times the heat was decidedly noticeable. K was ensconced in her tutors, there were Slow Worms under the mats and I was walking the Down with a full day over and done life was pretty great at this moment. As I walked through the gate I started seeing butterflies, mainly Small Heaths at first but they were soon joined by Meadow Browns. I took the lower path and followed it round checking every white on the way in case it had a Yellow companion or it was a Yellow in disguise. My hoping didn't pay off and the whites I was seeing were mainly Small Whites.





Once I reached the taller vegetation at the Chalkhill/DGF area I still kept an eye on the Whites but now my attention switched to the Blues. I'd already seen a couple on the way but each time I approached Small Heaths would spook them and so it was now as each Adonis or Chalkhill I stalked would eventually move to a nice pose I'd line up the shot and then a Small Heath would nip out and there would be no shot. In fact they were decidedly twitchy and wouldn't settle even for photos on their own.

My White vigil meant that I started moving up the Down so that I could scan across the slopes and so cover more ground in my limited time. There were plenty of Meadow Browns around surprisingly fresh looking some were and they were intermingled with the occasional Chalkhill and Adonis, both of which also had very fresh representatives. One male Adonis was particularly attractive and I managed to crawl along the ground and focus in from below so the blue sky filled the back drop.









I then worked my way back down the hill, hung around in the taller vegetation for a bit finding some more representatives of the same set of species and then made my way back to pick up K. Still no Cloudy but you never know what's round the corner.





Have a goodun

**Re: Wurzel**

by millerd, 17-Oct-15 07:45 AM GMT

I like your "Blue against blue" shot there, Wurzel – it just shows the brilliance of an Adonis can hold its own against the sky. 😊

Dave

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 17-Oct-15 03:52 PM GMT

GORGEOUS BLUES 😊😎

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 17-Oct-15 07:44 PM GMT

You did well to get that shot of the Adonis with the sky as the backdrop, Wurzel. Lovely image.

**Re: Wurzel**

by kevlng, 18-Oct-15 05:31 PM GMT

Wurzel,

I too enjoyed the Adonis photos. Very nice.

Regards Kev

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 18-Oct-15 06:40 PM GMT

The Adonis look great Wurzel, you've got a real knack for getting just the right colour setting for back grounds 🇩🇪 I must get some shots of Adonis next year, hope fully I'll get my times sorted out better for then 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 19-Oct-15 04:24 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Blue on blue doesn't normally work unless you have the brilliance of an Adnois 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊

Cheers David 😊 I had to approach from below crawling up the hill to get that shot but it was worth it.

Cheers Kevling for your kind comment 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I wouldn't say I have a knack more like just happening to be in the right place at the right time 😊

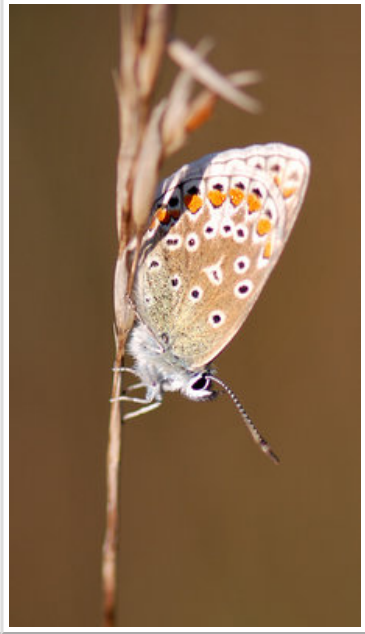


Larkhill 07-09-2015

As I passed the over the roundabout at the Stonehenge depot I checked the field on the left and there again were the pair of Great Bustards, with one looking more 'fluffed' up around the tail area meaning it could be the male? I couldn't stop again this time because there was a white van parked where I normally pull in so I headed onto Larkhill.

This was a very quick stop off as I'm probably approaching the point of diminishing returns and I need to get to work to face my busiest day of the week/timetable. As I walked down the Eastbound path I tried the technique of checking the grass top at a different angle but it didn't produce any results. I carried on slightly further than previously but conscious of the time I had to turn back with no butterflies seen.

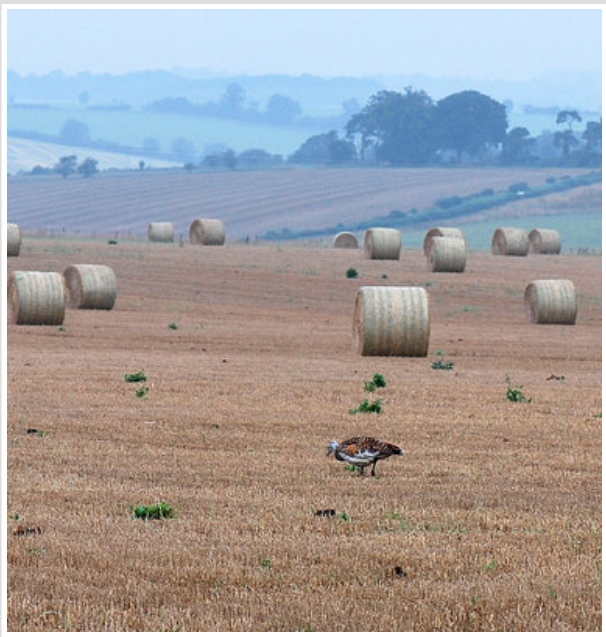
It was then that I saw them, a group of two Common Blues and an Adonis all reasonably close together. I think that I'd been dazzled by the rising sun streaming down the path and reflecting off of the spiders webs and dew. It was a strange sensation to suddenly see butterflies clinging to the grass where before there had been none despite close checking. Part of me had the sneaking suspicion that they'd been there all along but lower down the stems and hidden from view. Once I'd walked past they'd shimmied up to sit there at the top of the grass proudly waiting for me to see them and feel like a numpity!



Time had ticked away and so I headed off hoping that the weather holds for a few more days...

Larkhill 08-09-2015

Things weren't looking good for a stop-off this morning as I was running late and the clouds hung low and grey in the sky. In the end I still managed a quick pull over only stopping long enough for a single Great Bustard. From the number 15 on its wing panel I could tell it was one of the pair that I had seen previously. Where the other one was I don't know perhaps already on its way south?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 19-Oct-15 05:23 AM GMT

Nice shots again, Wurzel. Early September was clearly a productive time for you.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 19-Oct-15 10:41 PM GMT

Nice shots once again Wurzel, I love the scenery shots, typical of English scenery getting ready for Autumn, Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 20-Oct-15 03:27 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel, love the 'blue against blue' of the Adonis shots 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 23-Oct-15 02:06 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 It certainly was at the start of the month but once the realities of being back to work kicked in it started to tail off quite quickly 😞 Still it was nice while it lasted 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 It was starting to look all 'mellow and fruitful' 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 One of those made it to my 'favourite' selection! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Oct-15 07:02 AM GMT

Larkhill 10-09-2015

My morning stop off on the way to work wasn't as productive as usual. Perhaps the end of the season is approaching? For my 5 minutes of hard work all I could muster as a single Common Blue.



At break time I was on Duty and the weather had cheered up, the sun had burnt the mist away and the temperature was rising so I took my camera with me while I checked there were no pupils off site. At the Buddleia a small collection of butterflies distracted me in my vigil for smokers and skivers. A Large and Small White had a brief tussle and disturbed a Small Tort that looked fabulous in its fresh livery. At the end of duty as I entered my lab a Small White fluttered by to round off a successful break time.

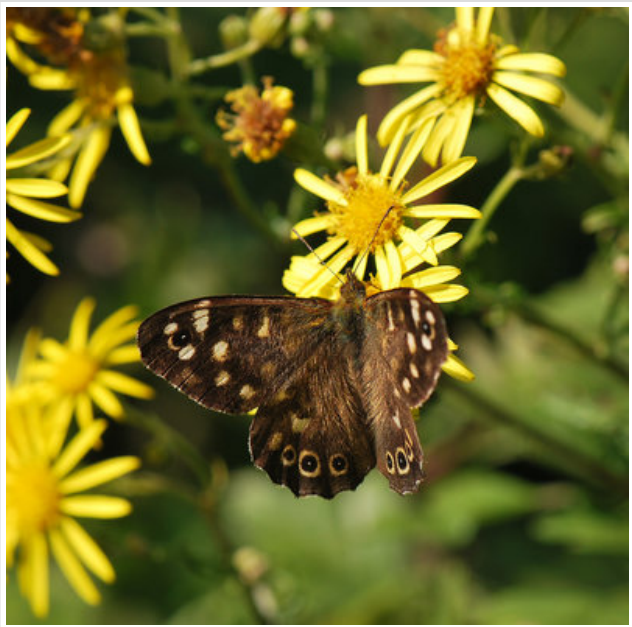




I don't normally stop on Thursday as I at work late for meetings. However tonight I did as the day had been such a glorious one. And so it continued into the evening. At the Golden Rod there were three blues, 2 females one of which looked fresh as a daisy and a male further back and just out of range. There was also a Meadow Brown hanging on in there.



Down the path at least 3 Small Heaths were on the path and as I knelt down to try for a shot of a Small White a dark brown butterfly flew up from the Hawthorn, did a circuit around me and then landed in an adjacent bush – a Larkhill Speckle which is something of a rarity and it looked fresh too.



As I walked back to the car there was a growing thunderous beating and various Helicopters passed over.





Larkhill 11-09-2015

AM

A very quick stop off at Larkhill and I headed off straight down the Eastbound path. One of the things that I've learnt from working this site is that at this time of year, when the morning sun is low yet still bright, is that there isn't really any point looking for butterflies until the return journey. Then the sun catches their closed wings and instead of blending in they positively glow from the beige grass. I reached the usual place, about 20-30m along, and started scanning about. A few steps back to the car and there was one with a second just behind it.







I headed onto work ready to face the day. Only I didn't get very far as an accident blocked the only road through to Pewsey. It meant a detour via first Shipton and then past my Duke site. I was sorely tempted to pull in, turn the phone off and make a day of it...

PM

I did get to work as quickly as possible and as a reward I treated myself to a quick stop on the way home. As the weather reports keep delighting in telling us that the 'summer' weather will end shortly I thought that I should make the most of it. The Eastbound path and the patch of Golden Rod was totally barren so I chanced a walk up the Northbound path which had the advantage of being out of the wind.

Up by the bramble patch a butterfly flew from the path. I thought that it looked too dark for a Meadow Brown so I followed it with my eyes and after a quiet stalk I relocated it when it landed. Another Larkhill Speckle. This species is quite a rarity for this site so to see two on two consecutive days is something of a purple patch. It shortly got even better when a second one went up from the grass.



Time up I headed home and a weekend of marking, wood sorting and ceiling painting awaited me...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 24-Oct-15 05:35 AM GMT

Some mint butterflies in that posting Wurzel. Love the female Common Blue and chocolate speckle 🍷

The OFSTED helicopters were out looking for you Wurzel 😊

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 24-Oct-15 05:05 PM GMT

I like the Tortoiseshell Wurzel, you can't beat the lovely bright colours 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 25-Oct-15 06:25 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Great to see you still have plenty of interesting stuff to post about from September 😊 Do you have enough to keep us going till March 🤔

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Oct-15 03:06 AM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 You may jest about the OfSTED but that's actually the kind of tactics they use 🙄 😞 😞

Cheers Goldie 😊 I reckon it was trying to compete with the trees for golden glory 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 I do still have some posts in the bag – whether I can get to March or not I don't know – maybe 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Oct-15 04:55 AM GMT

Week Beginning 14-09-2015

Things are starting to get quieter and I reckon I will curtail my stop-offs in about a fortnight to avoid disappointment. I'll still take my camera in case but if this week is anything to go by then we have past the point of diminishing returns and have entered the realm of 'any butterfly will do...please just one'. And so will end another season at Larkhill.

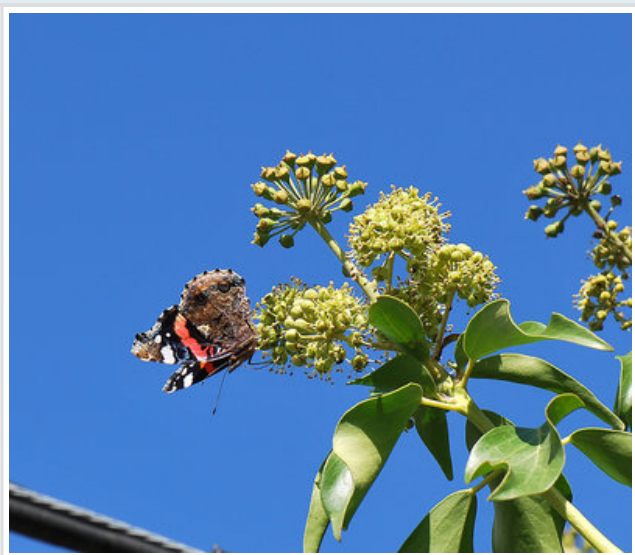
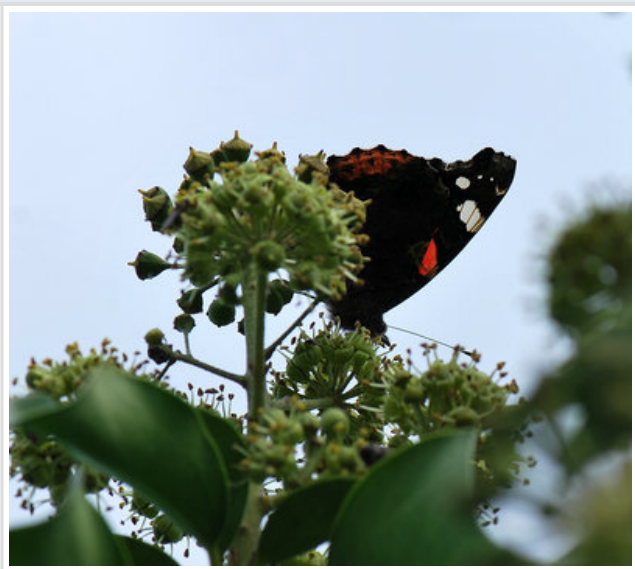
This week didn't start very well and it took until Wednesday before I managed a stop-off. The rewards weren't that great with an early morning, dew sodden (they have gone past the point of 'bedecked like jewels' to plain old wet) Blue. It looked miserable and who could blame it?



On Thursday things were more cheerful and the warmer weather had settled in just in time for the weekend it felt like. Again there was only a single solitary blue which played the usual game of hide and seek with me. Down the path I would walk with no butterflies in sight, up the path I would walk to get back to the car and the butterfly would almost leap out from the foliage. It looked a lot happier than the one from the previous day and seemed to have a bit of attitude still.



When Friday came I was gutted that I needed to get to work early and so was unable to stop and as my wife likes me to be home early on Friday there would be no more stop-offs this week. However as usual the butterflies chucked me a curve ball and most of the morning a Red Admiral was noodling around on the Ivy just across from my lab. Eventually I succumbed and gulping down my wrap (a mistake as it contains several extra hot Jalapenos) I grabbed my camera and a stool in order to get a few shots. The stool was necessary as it refused to come down to a sensible height and so if the Red Admiral wouldn't come to me I'd go to it. Stabbing the stool into the ground to anchor it I balanced on top of it and then stretched my arms out to full reach in order to get the shots.



And so ended the week with things seeming to be tailing off quite rapidly...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 28-Oct-15 05:42 AM GMT

*"then stretched my arms out to full reach in order to get the shots"*

This is why butterflies should come fitted with telescopic arms. I often use this technique, we may look a bit silly doing it but it is surprisingly effective. 😊

ATB

James

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 29-Oct-15 02:46 AM GMT

Nice Admirals Wurzel, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Oct-15 06:24 AM GMT

Cheers Rex 😊 It was a case of "go, go gadget arms!" 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Something a little closer coming up...

The Devenish 19-09-2015

As the season wound down Mrs Wurzel started eying the Lime plastered walls that have now carbonated (they're supposed to have at least 6 weeks and in actual fact have more than likely had 16 weeks), suggesting trips to various paint distributors and the accursed 'yellow and blue' bedecked shop that I cannot bring myself to mention. So it was no real surprise this weekend when I was awoken by my wife, cup of coffee in one hand and a paint roller in the other. What was surprising was how warm and sunny it still was and even more surprising when my suggested that I should get out over the lunch as I'd done a coat on the ceiling!

As you can imagine it didn't take me long to be out and on the road and it was soon decision time at the end of the road – left and Martin Down or right and The Devenish? In the end I turned right...The Devenish it was then. Pulling into the car park a Comma greeted me and then I made my way to the small paddock where the Hornets were still sending out squadrons and I started scanning the trees. There was one a Specklie guarding the tunnel of trees that leads to the Orchid Meadow. I headed down the tunnel and out into the sun again and spent some time with the Brown Argus that was hanging out there. It was a feisty little fella occasionally nipping off to have a go at the tired and worn Common Blue that also inhabited the meadow.





As I made my way up to the down I was quite surprised to see a Hedge Brown still around and a very tired blue. It was so worn I couldn't work out what species it was as the margins were gone. Slightly further along a Small White fed blissfully, unaware of my presence; which was unusual behaviour as normally they are off a soon as a shadow falls near them.



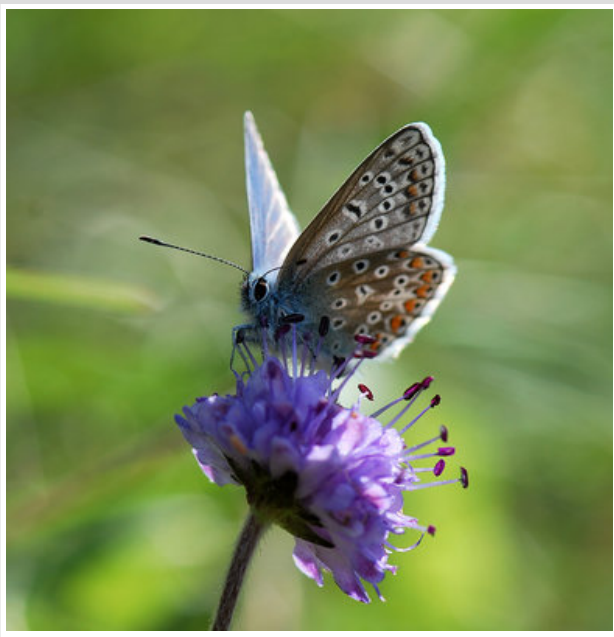


Across the side of the down I couldn't see any Chalkhills or Adonis clinging on along the rabbit formed terraces and the small scallop at the top of the far side didn't hold any butterflies either and definitely no Cloudy (SAD FACE). However there was a Comma on the Bramble bushes pootling around and taking nectar on the few remaining flower heads. It was great watching it as it moved forward and backwards and then pirouetted around feeding. Occasionally I could catch a glimpse of the marking on the underside of the wing and it looked like a 'question mark' so I reckon I should name it 'The Riddler'.



As I made my way back down the side of the down butterflies seemed to appear as if from nowhere with Adonis and Common Blues, Small Whites and down near the large bramble lining the track a Speckle.







Not too shabby for a quick lunch break but all too soon it was back to the brush and the roller, I loathe 'cutting in'.  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 31-Oct-15 07:06 AM GMT

Nice set of late summer pics Wurzel

That place you can't mention, maybe make a special butterfly hunt out of it. its not beyond the realms of possibility for a Camberwell Beauty to have stowed away and be awaiting discovery..... not sure what Mrs Wurzel will think about you rooting around in all the pine 🤔

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 31-Oct-15 07:39 AM GMT

Yes, good to go back in time a few weeks, Wurzel. A lovely little selection – I especially like the "?" Comma. 😊 Definitely a typo in its genetic code...

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 31-Oct-15 07:47 PM GMT

I think the Comma and Small White look great Wurzel, especially the Small White, that's a great shot Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 01-Nov-15 07:43 PM GMT

Some great photos there Wurzel. Great exposure of that 2nd Red Admiral against the sky.

In case you didn't know there is a butterfly related to the Comma called the Question Mark *Polygonia interrogationis* (though I prefer Batman's arch enemy) 😊. A species native to North America 😊

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Nov-15 07:29 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I have actually already tried that – there was an interesting moth flying around on a previous visit and the embarrassment suffered by Mrs Wurzel means that now butterflying is banned during shopping 😊😊

Cheers Dave 😊 A bit of an over-reach on the keypad I reckon 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 That was a lucky shot as the butterfly actually stayed relatively still for once 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 I'll have to look that one up. 😊

November 2015

The Social is just round the corner now... 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Nov-15 07:32 AM GMT

Larkhill 25-09-2015

This was the first time that I'd stopped in a little over a week and after the age I spent at work yesterday (I was out of the house for 14 ½ hours) I treated myself to a five minute stop off. It was nice to walk swiftly down the Eastbound path and then start the slow amble back to the car in the cool and fresh air. The morning sun made the dew twinkle and the cobwebs glow and amongst the straw coloured grasses a Common Blue popped out and into view. It cheered me no end to see one still present.







Chuffed I strolled back to the car and started packing my camera away. As I was closing the boot I glanced around and there was something on the Golden Rod. I hastily unpacked my camera and in five steps I was onto the butterfly. It was a Red Admiral sitting waiting for the sun's warmth to strike.



After this fantastic five minute stop I headed onto work refreshed and ready to face another day in The Vale.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 05-Nov-15 02:44 AM GMT

Super photo of the Common Blue Wurzel, Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by David M, 05-Nov-15 05:46 AM GMT

Good to see that a mere 5 minutes spent in the company of barely awake butterflies can alleviate 14.5 hours of work!

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Nov-15 06:44 AM GMT

Cheers for your kind comment Goldie 😊

Cheers David 😊 That 5 minutes was a life saver that week 🙄

Laverstock 28-09-2015

This was the last visit I was going to make to Laverstock this year. As K had sat the 11+ at the weekend this was the 'Coco and Cake' session which marked the end of an era really. For almost a year I've been coming to the Tutors house, marking during the winter months or when it rained or finding my way round the down when the sun shone and the butterflies flew. I shall miss my weekly visits and next season I will need to find some way of disappearing off once a week as it really did me good. As it was the final session I had been accompanied by little L and my wife and I left them talking to the tutors youngest son about our cat Teddy.

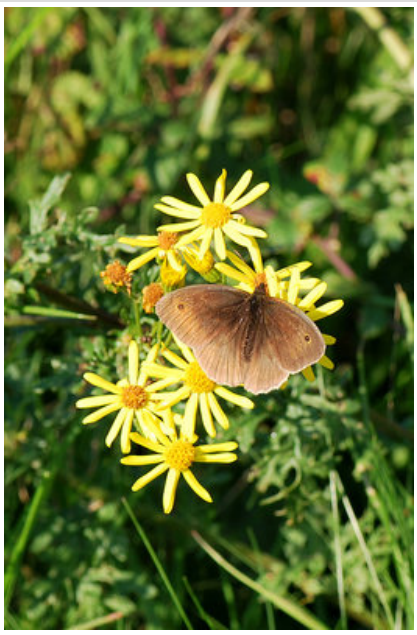


Along the path that bordered crop field all was quiet and so it continued as I broached the reserve and made way along the bottom path. The usual bramble bushes were today bereft of butterflies and I was starting to wonder if on this final visit I would draw a blank. I needn't of worried the 'Dark Green hollow' finally broke my duck and there was a battle weary and torn Common Blue. At least I thought that it was, when I got home and looked through the pictures I could just make out the faintest of chequering along the margins. It also lacked the double edge on the margin and so it became an Adonis.





As I wandered I recollected of all the special things that I have observed here; the range of firsts for 2015 that it offered me, stunning Chalkhills and close ups with Adonis, the Skippers Golden and not so golden, freshly emerged Red Admirals and belligerent Small Torts holding the line on the footpath. Mostly though, I will remember it fondly for the hour of solace from work that it offered me once a week. If I hadn't have been able to escape up the Down I think I might have lost it. I carried on up the hill reminiscing and skirted round the top Copse hoping to catch a Specklie or two but there was nothing flying here either. I was again wondering if a single Blue would be all for my final visit when a couple of Meadow Browns flew by and had a small tussle and a Small White nipped by as well.



Time as always ticked away and before I really knew it I was back outside the back garden and then saying thanks and goodbye. As I left the tutor did say that I was always welcome to cut through the house and make my way up to the down and I think I might take her up on the offer as it is such a splendid place!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 09-Nov-15 06:54 AM GMT

Hard to believe this was all a mere 6 weeks ago, Wurzel! Things have changed completely since. Now, any butterfly at all is a result.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Nov-15 07:42 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 Six weeks is a long time for a butterfly 🦋🦋 I've almost caught up with my postings now and I've finally finished writing up my Czech Report too – so only another couple of weeks til I post 😊😊

Have a goodun



Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Nov-15 11:15 PM GMT

I'm Looking forward to seeing your Czech postings Wurzel Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 10-Nov-15 02:19 AM GMT

#### "Wurzel" wrote:

...and I've finally finished writing up my Czech Report too – so only another couple of weeks til I post.

I've been looking forward to this, Wurzel. Bring it on.

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 10-Nov-15 04:47 AM GMT

Me too Wurzel 😊 😊

Cheers,

Neil

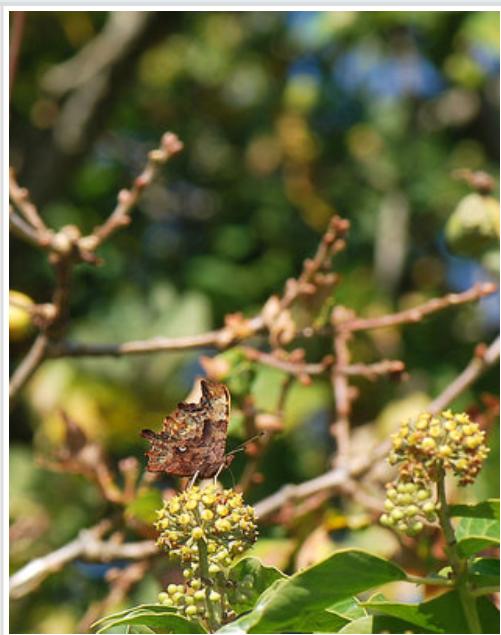
### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Nov-15 06:55 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie, David and Neil 😊 I would have posted more recently but I am snowed under with work and at the moment I seem to be living to work rather than the much more sensible way of doing things 😞 Still only three more and then I've caught up with my PD...including this one...

Work 02-10-2015

This could be one of the shortest posts that I ever write. I was waiting to attend a meeting during lunch break where I would find out the wonders of 'Show My Homework' when something much more interesting caught my eye. I could see through the open door of the staff room, across the corridor, through the window and across the car park to the stand of Leylandi that border the car park. There was a Comma flitting around its way along the trees. I nipped back to my lab, nipped out to the car park and got a few distant shots as it fed in the Ivy on the top of the transformer hut.





So it's come to this snatching shots of single species...the end is now in sight. 'Show My Homework' wasn't that awe-inspiring either.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 14-Nov-15 07:36 PM GMT

Nice shot Wurzel, some times I think the Comma looks better when not opened winged like in your shots , the shape of the Comma is so different to all the other Butterflies, I remember the first time I ever saw one, I was in awe 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Nov-15 06:07 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I know what you mean Commas are cracking butterflies, I love the underside probably more than the upperside.

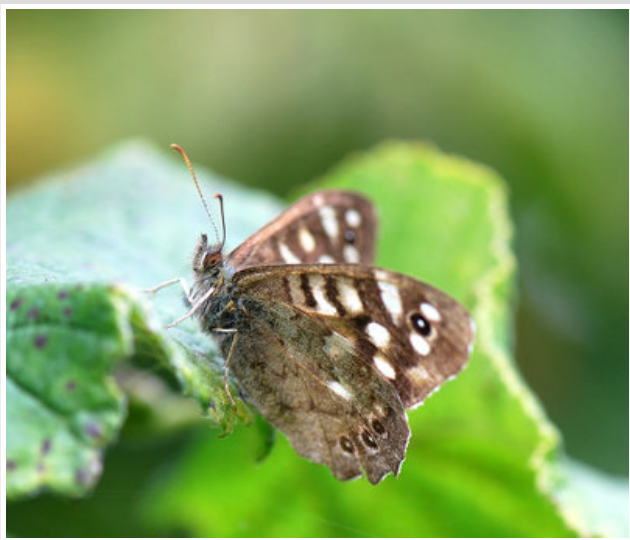
Five Rivers and The Devenish...last trip of the season? 04-10-2015

As we had reasonable weather for October and I needed yet another break from the painting I took a lunch break at two of my local sites to wrap things up for the year. First of all was Five Rivers as I like the symmetry of visiting this site for my first and on one of my final outings. Despite there being a reasonable amount of nectar sources around still there was a dearth of butterflies. As I wandered along the riverside path I kept my eyes open for any late Red Admirals to no avail. The break between the path and Comma Corner didn't yield any Whites and Comma Corner wasn't living up to its name either. I eventually found a butterfly on one of the Banks; a Specklie high up in the tree. I couldn't work out if it looked so pale because it was worn or because it was backlit? Apart from this the Banks too were bereft of butterflies and only threw up a single Common Darter as I rejoined the riverside path further along.





The walk back was just as dismal and once back at the small wood I gave up butterflies and started looking for mushrooms instead. As usually happens this meant that butterflies started appearing but due to the late timing 2 Specklies were all it could muster. From here I thought I would try my luck at The Devenish as it couldn't be any worse and so I set off.



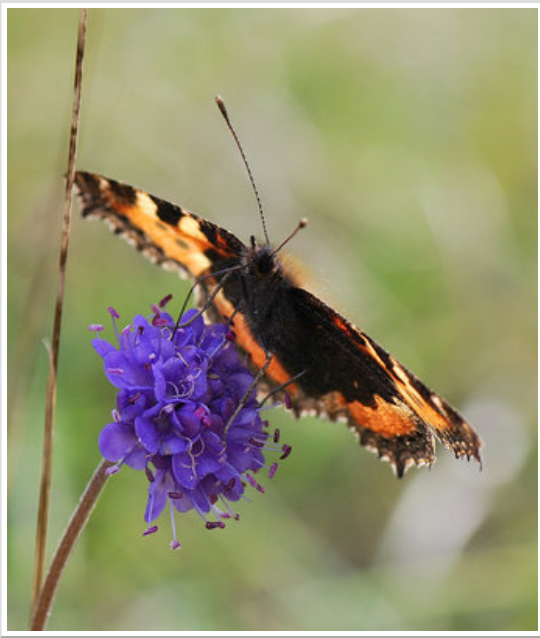
I didn't have long as I needed to get back to apply another coat of paint and so I hurried through the Paddock, the Tunnel and across the Orchid Meadow. My hurrying didn't scatter any butterflies as there were none about and so before I knew it I was traversing the side of the Down. A Small Tortoiseshell greeted me feeding and appearing to hang suspended in the air as it did so. A Red Admiral was showing well amongst the foliage at that bordered the edge of the Down and the Copse and after some careful stalking I managed to get in nice and close and so my species count for the day was raised to three.



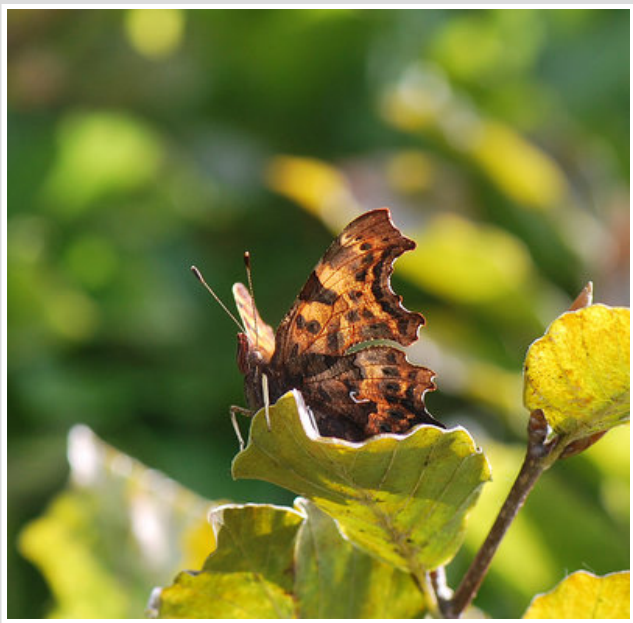


I carried on up to the top of the Down and scanned across the valley laid before me. It was a scene of mellow fruitfulness, the weak sun still providing enough warmth for the hibernators and final stragglers. Speaking of which a straggler appeared - a Small White which unlike previously didn't play ball and stayed almost at the limits of the reach of my lens. As if to make up for its cousins rudeness a/the Small Tort gave me some really close close-ups.





Time was ticking away but a late showing from a Comma on the way back was enough to make me tarry for another five minutes or so. I've often wondered if these late showing individuals could be the same ones that I will see here next spring? And still wondering and trying to work out the implications of a catch, mark and release scheme I headed homewards, five species in the bag perhaps the end is here?



Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 18-Nov-15 07:54 AM GMT

A fine selection of butterflies for a late part of the season Wurzel. Nice fungi shot too 😊.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-Nov-15 09:34 PM GMT

I love the Comma Wurzel, great shots of the others too 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 18-Nov-15 09:38 PM GMT

Good selection of photos, Wurzel, and a reminder that, although our British list may be small, it contains some real beauties 😊

Mike

## Re: Wurzel

by Gary.N, 19-Nov-15 04:00 AM GMT

Excellent last Shot of the Comma. 😊😊

## Re: Wurzel

by David M, 19-Nov-15 04:20 AM GMT

Now you've reported on your 'last trip of 2015', Wurzel, surely your Czech Republic instalments are next? 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 19-Nov-15 05:00 AM GMT

Great report and photos Wurzel to finish off your 2015 UK season...looking forward now to your reports from abroad and no doubt you will be doing a report or two looking back on your season. Which reminds me, I really must start sorting out some 'looking back' stuff myself. Like you I keep seeming to be short of time lately.

Cheers,

Neil

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Nov-15 06:24 AM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 You can tell it was the turn of the year as other fungi started appearing in my shots 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 It looks a little imperious doesn't it 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 I think having a small number of species makes us appreciate them all the more 😊

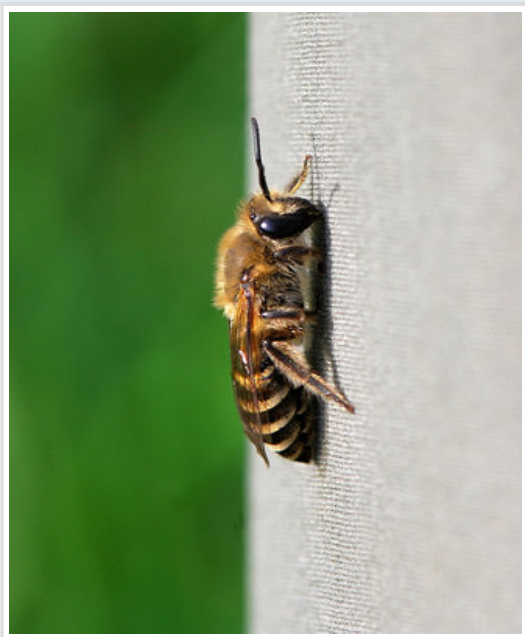
Cheers David and Neil 😊 Sorry to disappoint but there is one more post from this year...

Five Rivers 25-10-2015

This could well be the final visit I make specifically for butterflies this year. Obviously I'll be taking my camera everywhere with me - I didn't last year and missed a Christmas Eve Red Admiral - but any butterflies I find will be a happy coincidence. Whereas today I was still on the hunt!

I tried Comma Corner first as this usually holds Commas at both ends of the season but no joy. I moved on to check out the banks starting above the hedge, rounding the corner and working them from the other side. Again no joy and I ended up back where I'd started with very little in the way of invertebrates and surprisingly few birds too.

Due to my lack of success I changed tack. And so instead of searching I waited at Comma Corner to see what would appear. As I waited I zoned out, the traffic noise and Coots calling became muffled background fuzz. My breathing slowed, tension in my shoulders that I'd been carrying since September melted away and it felt like my vision had switched to zoom mode...Before there was nothing but dead leaves before me; now instead a myriad of buglife appeared. I could see 6 or 7 fly species including green and blue bottles and cluster flies as well as a miniscule wasp, the odd hoverfly and Nettle Moths. As I slowly scanned down the foliage an Ivy Bee landed on my trouser leg and as I released it a wasp was startled but not an ordinary one. This has red 'feet' and its hair covered body ended in long antennae - *Vespa sylvestris*(?) a new species for me anyway.







I bumbled my way back towards the car park and ended up in the small clearing which had previously held Specklies. As I examined the brambles an angelic Brimstone descended glowing in the golden light. It passed round and climbed round higher and higher before disappearing over the other side of the river. I would have been content with just this sighting but it soon came back and this time landed amongst the yellowy leaves, disappearing from view and only reappearing when I squinted and scrunched up my eyes. I cautiously approached, got a few shots and left it in peace posing as a leaf.



*ou est le papillon?*



The spell was lifted and it was back to normality – picking the girls up from swimming, relations (by marriage) filling our house etc but those precious few moments did more to lift my spirits and salve my stress than anything.

And that is that for 2015 surely. So there are a few 'Lost Posts' as well as a couple of reports from Bristol Zoo and from a trip I made to a collection, introducing Bob, Bobette and Bobina as well as my yearly Tally to tide me through until next spring. Next up Czech Republic stuff – though I hope the expectations are tempered as I only managed to get just into double figures of 'Lifers'.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 21-Nov-15 07:02 AM GMT

Bring on the Czech beauties, Wurzel!

By the way, your first Brimstone shot reminds me of the days when I used to do 'Spot the Ball'. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 21-Nov-15 04:25 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
Lovely late Brimstone.

I don't like the sound of 'lifer's barely into double figures' from your holiday in the Czech Republic. If you are planning to hit us with some sensational images of exotic species, could you please post them well before Christmas. I for one don't want my Yuletide lunch spoiled by stomach churning envy. 😊

Good to be back,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Nov-15 09:59 PM GMT

Looking forward to seeing your photos Wurzel 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Nov-15 06:49 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 I hope the reports live up to the hype! By the way did you 'Spot the Brimstone'?

Cheers Trevor 😊 No worries most of my lifers were the common European species.

Cheers Goldie 😊 Here they come! Quite a sedate start...

Czech Republic 2015

This was my first ever family holiday abroad – unless a few nights on the Isle of Black count. I remember when I was 14 I went on a school visit to Italy and being an avid birder I eagerly gazed through the European Fieldguide hoping to tick off a huge number of new species. In actual fact it wasn't to be and whilst I did add a few new species (Black Kite, Crag Martin, Alpine Swift, Serin, Night Heron, White Stork and House Sparrow d'Italie) I saw nowhere near the number of species to match my expectations. Hence on this holiday I was looking forward to seeing new species of butterflies but I wasn't

expecting an awful lot for several reasons:

1. Time of year – August isn't the best time to be going as, if the continent is anything like the UK, late spring early summer generally produces the widest range of species flying.
2. The weather – The Czech Republic was in the middle of a heatwave with temperatures consistently in the mid thirties for about a fortnight previously.
3. Location – The place we were staying was in the lower foothills of the Eagle Mountains with the highest local point at just over 500m so I wouldn't be seeing many serene changes. Plus we didn't have access to a car so we may be pretty restricted with where we could go as it would all be on foot and little L only has little legs that get tired easily.
4. Knowledge – I have never been butterflying abroad before and so I don't know what to look for or where to look – I was going on a very steep learning curve!
5. Family – This was probably the main reason I wasn't expecting to add 50+ species to my 'life list'. As this was a family holiday the wishes of my girls would come first and any butterflying would have to be on the hoof or stolen five minutes here and there, no long visits for a set of target species, no waiting and watching. It would be a case of 'quick they're in the loo are there any butterflies on that flower bed' and 'I'll just get a few shots and catch you up'. In fact I was treating this as more of a training exercise where I could pick up some field craft techniques to use on future trips.

That said I have gotten quite good at 'grabbing' as much as I can on my five minute Larkhill stop-offs so I reckoned I might be able to add 10 new species to my life list and if that included a Camberwell Beauty then I would be very happy indeed!

Better get started...

07-08-2015

We had a pretty horrific journey with heavy traffic from the end of the A303 until we reached the M23. Mind you on the way I managed to spy a Peacock and various Whites at the start of the traffic jam and a couple of Holly Blues near the Heathrow turn off (I wondered if they were Dave Miller's?). Eventually we got to the Travelodge and bedded down for the night.

08-08-2015

First butterflies of the holiday this morning actually in Gatwick airport itself, four male Purple Hairstreaks! Mind you they were printed on our Passports 😊.

Once in Prague I managed to get us off the airport bus far too early (well the driver did say that it was the train station) so after a very hot walk, two tube changes we got to the train station and from there we had a two hour journey to Ceska Trebova in East Bohemia. Despite the fantastic train at fantastic prices (single fare for 2 adults and 2 children £14! 😲😄) it was quite frustrating as we whizzed past great looking habitats that I was itching to explore. Once the train pulled into Ceska Trebova we (or rather I) lugged our gear off and Thomas one of our hosts greeted us and drove us onto Pastviny (495m above sea-level) stopping at Tesco's on the way for us to pick up some groceries and a Holly Blue flew through the car park. The Tesco's was quite surreal with the same uniforms and signage but Lidl like produce 😊. On the drive to Plasviny I saw plenty of whites and what I am convinced was a Large Copper (flying near some reedbeds). The scenery was amazing with rolling hills and fields filling your field of view, the absence of hedges and fences offering an almost panoramic vista.

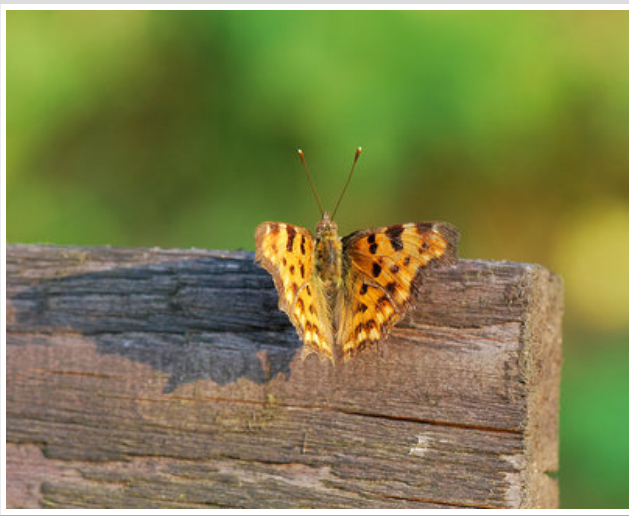
The house itself was no less stunning with a huge field in front of it sloping down to a stream hidden by vegetation. I managed a quick 5 minute wander while waiting for the girls to get ready for dinner and found a couple of Smessex, 3 species of white (the usual British varieties I presumed), a Hummingbird Hawk Moth and 2 Wall Browns.







All through dinner (al fresco as the temp was still about 28–29) politeness prevented me from investigating the orangey butterfly that had landed on a bench at the top of the garden. Unfortunately for me it was only a tired Comma and not a much anticipated Large Tortoiseshell. I slept well after a good number of “Bernards” and dreamt about exploring the fields.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 23–Nov–15 06:58 AM GMT

What was the motivation for you to visit the Czech Republic, Wurzel? It's not normally the destination of choice beautiful though it undoubtedly is.

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 23–Nov–15 08:16 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Looking forward to the next Czech instalment 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23–Nov–15 06:28 PM GMT

Can't wait for the next instalment Wurzel Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 25–Nov–15 04:30 AM GMT

Great start to your Czech reports Wurzel, it sounds like a lovely place 😊

Looking forward to your next one.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 25-Nov-15 07:18 AM GMT

Great report Wurzel 😊. You're already beginning to capture the trials and tribulations that a family holiday, nature spotting combination invariably brings. Fantastic setting too 🤩🌿. Shame the weather couldn't have been cooler for you all.

Looking forward to the next interesting and entertaining episode 😊.

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 26-Nov-15 06:18 AM GMT

I take it that the exotic, envy inducing stuff is yet to come.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Nov-15 08:06 AM GMT

Cheers David - years ago (before we were married) my wife worked at a Camp America and made friends a Czech girl over there. They stayed in touch and Eva owns the cottage that we stayed in so we managed to get a great holiday with fantastic company in a less than usual destination 😊

Cheers Jack and Goldie read on... 😊 Cheers Neil, it was a stunning place, a little like Poland and a little like Switzerland 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 It was definitely "mighty W" to quote my dad over in Czech! 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 As I think I've mentioned I don't know how envy inducing the species will be... 😊

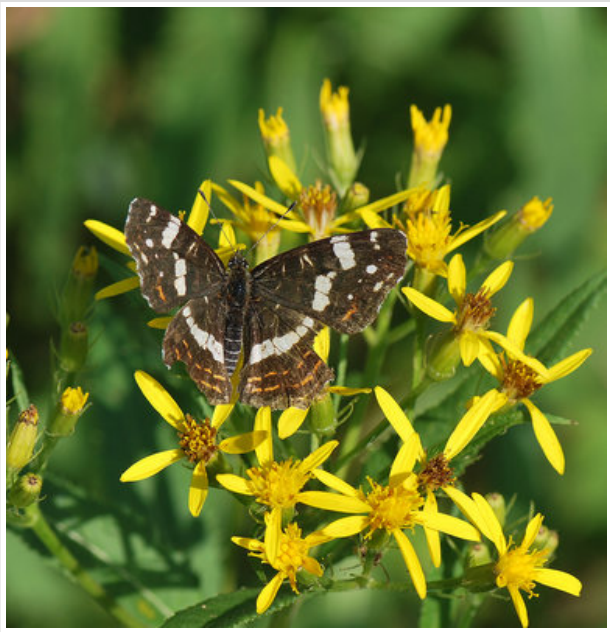
09-08-2015 The first day Proper!

We awoke after a fantastic nights sleep and at 7am it was warm enough for shorts and T-shirt so breakfast was taken on the decking. While the girls ran wild in the meadow I set off out across it towards the lower boundary which was damper and had taller vegetation. On the way I noticed a Small Tortoiseshell, several Smessex and Small Heaths amongst the occasional Common Blue (I did check them for Chapman's) and not as many Meadow Browns as I had expected. There were also some larger Frits flying. When they stopped they appeared to be missing the third spot on the fore wing and the occasional flash of an underside revealed an extra row of spots. I presume that they're all High brown Frits and not Niobe, but if anyone can turn them form HBFs into Niobes that would be greatly appreciated.

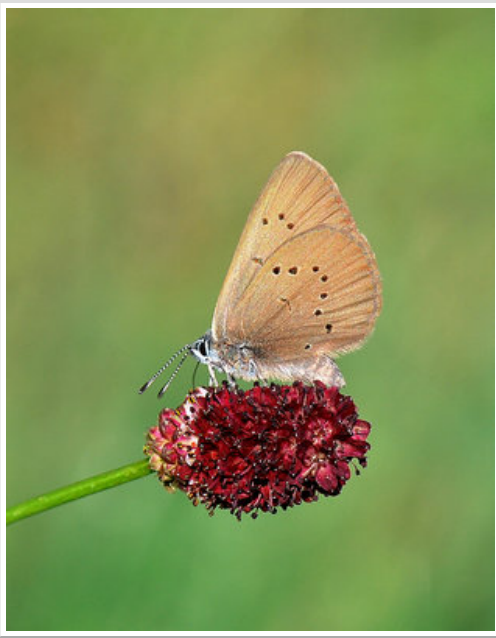




On the bush at the bottom there were a few whites feeding and a Small White Admiral flew by – a species I'm familiar with – a Map. Things were shaping up nicely and I then followed the boundary round to the left which started to rise up hill. In the longer grasses a dark blue, almost black butterfly flew past me and landed on a red topped grass species. I cautiously approached it and it glinted almost bronze in the morning sun. A Dusky Large Blue, a stunning looking butterfly but a bit of a bugger to photograph as it kept walking round as it was taking nectar rarely stopping.





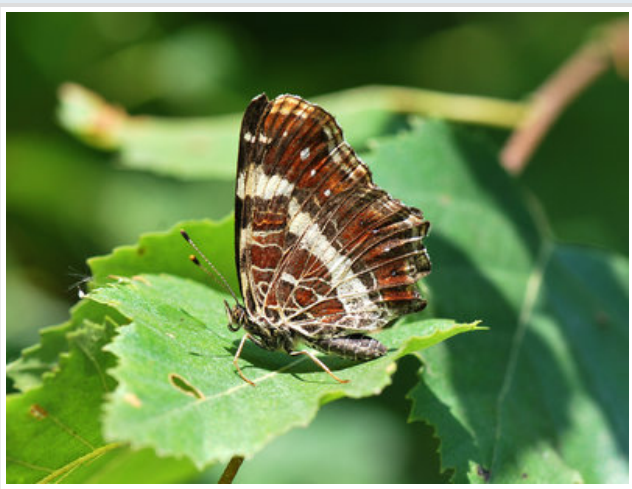


As I started to make my way back another Map fluttered by and another smaller dark butterfly did too. Unlike the previous Dusky it seemed to glint silvery and when it flew it reminded me of a Brown Argus. Luckily it landed and I managed to both get down to its level and get to ninety degrees to it. I could then see why it appeared silvery as the underside was white with black spots and just the hint of orange along the margins. As I watched it started to open its wings ever so slightly and then there was a dark chocolate upper with the black spots showing through – a Sooty Copper. Realising that I'd been at least 15 minutes I made my way back to the cottage as we were heading out for the day with our hosts.





Tom drove us to a local nature reserve called Zemská Brana (Earth's Gate) with the river Diovka Orlice running through it. While we waited for Tom to come back with Eva and Lucas I had a pootle around. A Silver-washed Fritillary flew by a minuscule female Blue pretended to be a Brown Argus and another Map kept me amused.



Once everyone was together we set off on the woodland walk. The first part was reasonably open and there was a small area full of Cabins. A large dark butterfly flew by on my right dipping in and around the cabins. At first I thought it was a Peacock but as it was almost pure black and I belatedly noticed the pale edge to the wings as it drifted past at its closest point I realised it was a Camberwell Beauty; no photo though 😊. We then reached a tiny bay of the river and so we all went in for a dip to cool down from the 35+ degrees heat. A Common Blue and Silver-washed both

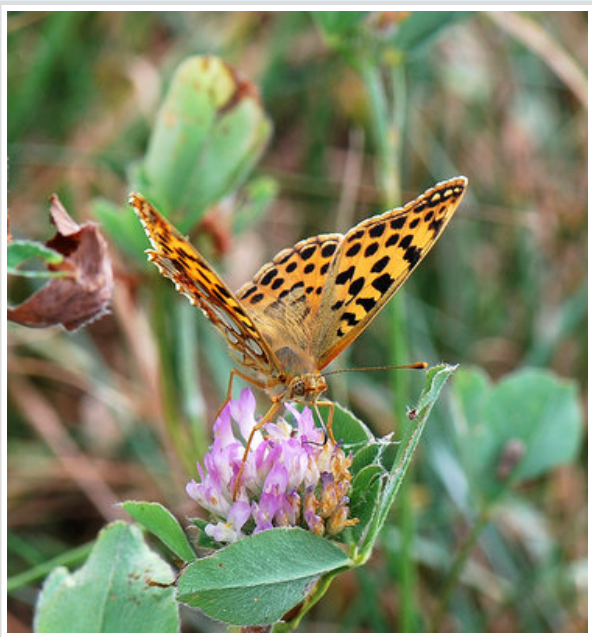
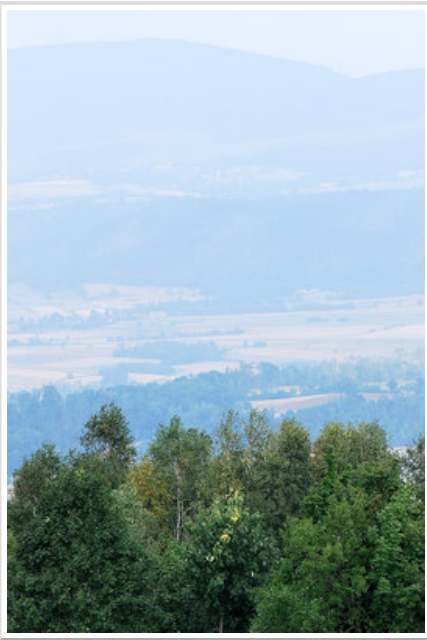
landed on the gravel probing amongst it presumably for salts. I nipped off for 5 minutes while the girls built towers out of ever smaller pebbles (a common pastime for local children) back to the edge of the path where there was a cleared scallop. Here there were more Silver Washed, a tiny unidentified Fritillary tore by and a multitude of Brimstones fed here and there. I flushed a massive orangey butterfly and when I relocated it found it to actually be a pair of High Brown Fritillaries. One was slightly older and grainy looking whilst the other was almost a blank canvas with most of the spots missing.



Having had some relief from the heat we carried on with the walk. On the way there was the odd white, a Red Admiral, a cave where the local Czech version of Robin Hood had lived and two renowned bridges. At the second, a stone bridge, we headed up hill to a restaurant in a clearing for lunch but it was heaving so we retreated back down to the bridge so the girls could have another paddle and Tom walked back for the car. He then picked us up and we headed to a different roadside tavern. While we waited for Eva Black Redstarts flitted around in the place of sparrows and then when we were all reunited we had lunch and I discovered Kofola 😊.

The day didn't end there and Tom dropped us off at the highest local point (Kasparova chata na Adamu I think it was) so the girls could enjoy the views and look across to Poland. This was great for me and I hoped for some hilltopping butterflies. It started quietly enough with a Small Tortoiseshell and then I glimpsed a frit - much more golden than orange and as I stalked closer I could make out metallic flashes on the body edge of the wings. It was my first Queen of Spain.



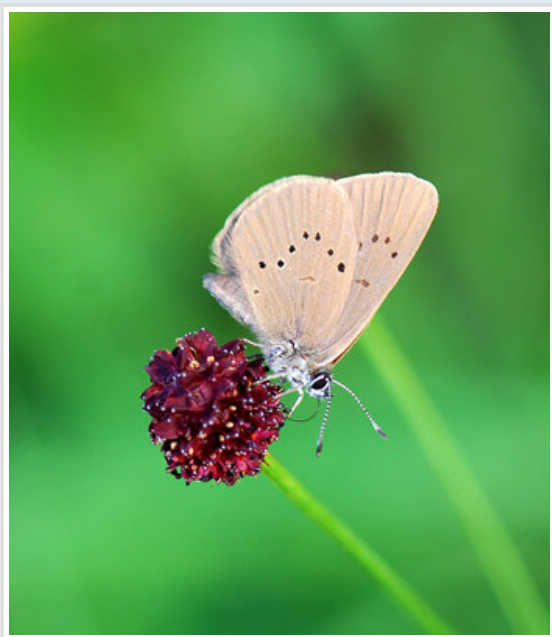


While I was still enjoying the warm glow from seeing this species for the first time my wife called me over as she'd seen a 'massive yellow' butterfly. It turned out to be a slightly beaten Swallowtail but I didn't mind the nicks and tears in the wings it was still so impressive, the stripes, the tails, the sheer size of it. Things did quieten down again but there were a few Small Heath and DGFs to keep me entertained as well as a few Silver-spotted Skippers. As we drove home Tom pointed out Poland, just on the other side of the verge!





Once back home I took another stroll around the field once again finding Dusky blues (apparently they're common here), Common Blues, Brown Argus as well as Smessex, Whites, Red Admiral, 2 Walls and three species of Fritillary – High Brown, Dark Green and Silver-washed.



As I strolled up to the cottage K called out to come quickly as she'd found a frit. I raced up the garden path and she pointed to a tiny frit sitting on Clover. It was a cracking little butterfly, holding an unusual posture. I photographed it from both sides and it was great to see how in the shade a purple band would appear at the margin of the hind wing yet in the light it would become much paler and pinker in colour. A Weaver's Fritillary as I identified it



later. As I backed away it stayed in place, as I pointed it out to L it remained so I took my first sip of Bernard and that was when it flew landing a short distance away with wings open. So I had to put my beer down, grab a few shots and return to supping ale, it's a hard life this foreign butterfly!





As we headed down and round the corner to our part of the cottage I thought back over a fantastic day, 6 new species with 3 found directly after breakfast. But that wasn't the last sighting of the day. For as I passed the flowers just outside our door there was a Hummingbird Hawk Moth.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 27-Nov-15 04:23 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

There are several mrgreens in your report, notably High Brown, Map, Queen of Spain and Swallowtail. Also if any of those Blues turned up on our shores euphoric crowds would be sure to gather!.

For your personal PE.you'll have to get up earlier. I also had one down at 08.35 a couple of years ago.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by jenks, 27-Nov-15 06:40 PM GMT

Great report and photos. Looks like a wonderful place to be. And I agree with Trevor – definitely produces a case of Mr Greens in the reader !

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 27-Nov-15 09:14 PM GMT

You obviously had a great time in CZ and have some splendid photos. I particularly admire your beer/camera juggling skills, with the Weaver's Fritillary – the beer clearly did not inhibit your concentration 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 27-Nov-15 09:37 PM GMT

It's ramping up nicely Wurzel 😊 Your Sooty and Weavers have turned out much better than mine from France 🇫🇷, the Dusky Large Blue and QoS are real beauts 🇫🇷🇫🇷 and as for the large fritillary I'd have been quite happy with a High Brown having never seen this species 😞.

If you haven't beaten me with lifers I'm sure you'll get me on the species count 😊

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 27-Nov-15 11:52 PM GMT

Lovely butterflies, Wurzel. Your dusky large blue shots illustrate a key feature of this butterfly – that it is almost always stuck to a greater burnet head. It also very rarely shows the upperside, but it does do this occasionally.

Your first, female blue looks like *Plebejus* sp. – possibly *argus*. But I expect you saw plenty more of these, so it doesn't really matter. If you saw the underside, and confirmed it as *icarus*, then I take that back!

Guy



## Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 28-Nov-15 03:29 AM GMT

A very enjoyable read Wurzel.looking forward to the next instalment 😊

oh yea you get a few ofthese as well 🍷🍷🍷

## Re: Wurzel

by Pete Eeles, 28-Nov-15 04:17 AM GMT

Excellent report – and glad you're getting to see some of the rarities (from a UK perspective)!

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 28-Nov-15 04:41 AM GMT

Terrific shots of a whole range of species it would be nice to see. Much 🍷 indeed. Looking forward to more of this – it's far too grey and colourless at this time of year and needs brightening!

Dave

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Nov-15 05:54 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 There are a few more lifers to come 😊.

Cheers Jenks 😊 It would have been even more spectacular if I'd been there a couple of months earlier during the main

Cheers Mike 😊 In my previous incarnation as a bass player I got used to juggling pints, seems I still have the knack 😊 Cheers Philzoid 😊 I'm still hoping for a Niobe 😊

Cheers Guy 😊 I had a look back and some other shots showed the under wings which were lacking the silver studs but if there is a possibility of it being something else I could PM you with the shots? And if any of my HBFs are Niobes just let me know 😊

Cheers for the Mr Greens Bugboy, mind you when it comes to careers yours gets plenty of 🍷 from me! 😊

Cheers Pete 😊 I know I said it was c££p but only in relation to what it could have been and because of the high expectations that I had so lesson learned, expect less, enjoy more 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Hopefully the next set will keep the brightening going 😊

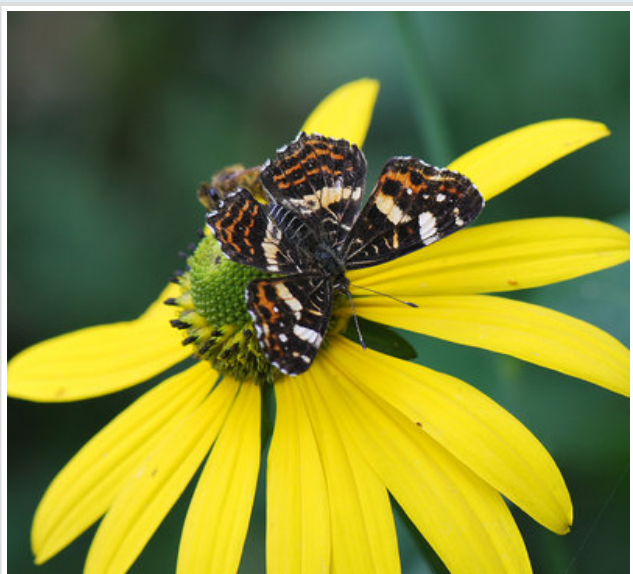
10-08-2015 First day at the Dam

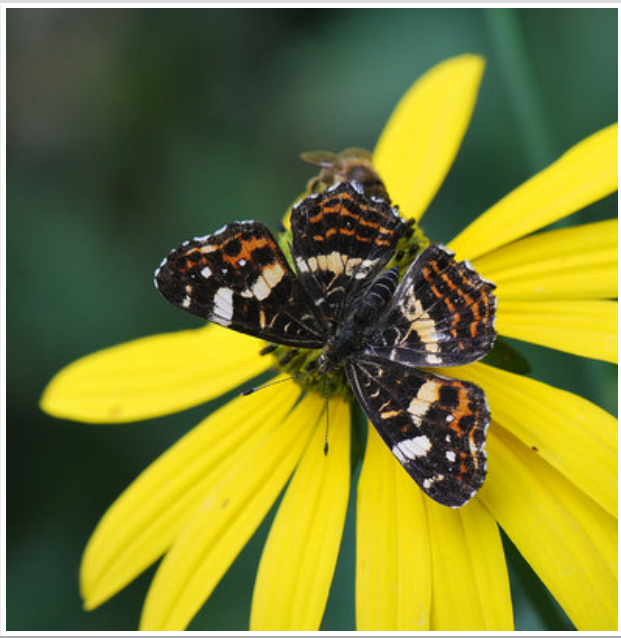
Once again we were up early, which because of the time difference was even earlier so as soon as breakfast had been dealt with the girls went out to run around, my wife relaxed with a cuppa on the terrace and I disappeared out with my camera – pretty idyllic really! As I made my way down towards the bottom of the hill and the damper ground I was accompanied by Dusky Blues, High Browns, Silver Washed and Dark Greens as well as the odd White and Common Blue. At the yellow flowered bush the Map didn't reappear, instead it was replaced by a Small heath. On the way back a dark vanessid had me holding my breath until it came out of the shade and revealed itself to be a Red Admiral.





Today's activity was visiting the local lake formed from flooding by the Pastviny Dam. It meant a 45 minute walk down through the woodland, past the local shop and along a footpath with a few fields along the side. On the way there were whites and a few Maps to keep me busy and outside the shop a Small Tort, Common Blue and Dusky Blue caused me a bit of a problem as I tried to take photos of them while holding a 'Nogger' (like a Toffee Feast) at the same time.





The best bit of the trip was when we took the footpath on the final stage of the journey. Having crossed the road there were a couple of fields and in them Common and Dusky Blues (no Chapman's though I did check) a Brown Argus and numerous whites plus two very pale Yellows. I managed to get the briefest of shots.







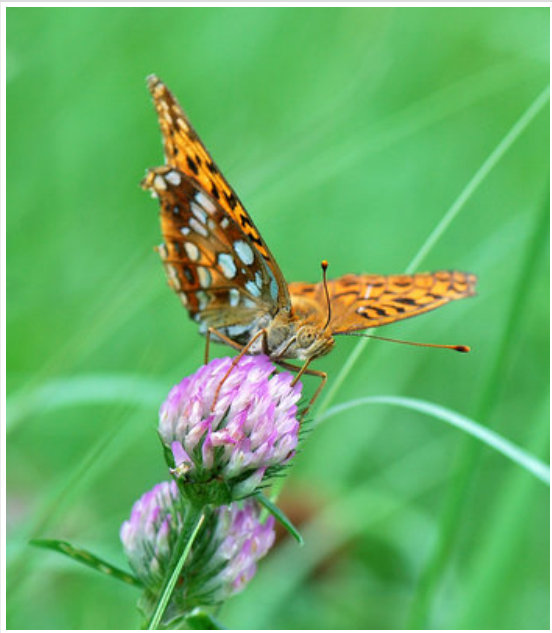
We carried on over the bridge and my butterflying became slightly curtailed; not just by the pressing and incessant heat but also because I had to revert to Dad mode - driving the boat for an hour, ordering lunch by pointing at a phrase book and supervising the girls on a pedlo for a further hour. Then came the return journey with tired legs, hot heads and a massive thirst. To keep us going we stopped for more ice creams before continuing the slow walk up through the wood. I stopped occasionally; for a Map and a stunning Sooty Copper (female?) and unlike usually these little stops were welcomed by the girls as they could have a rest.

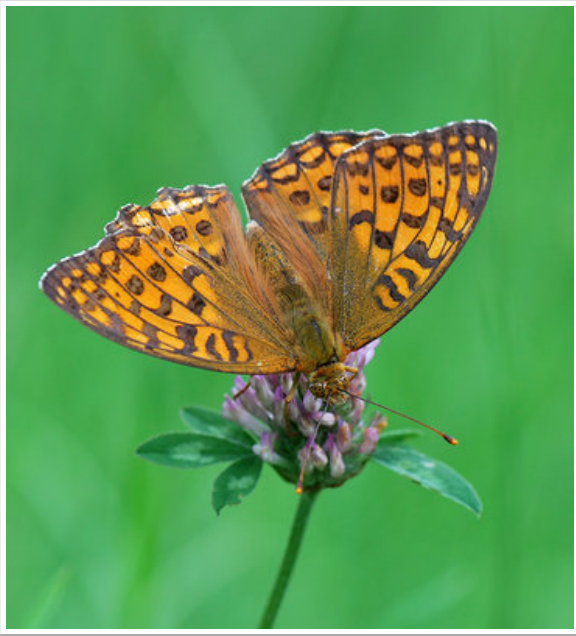




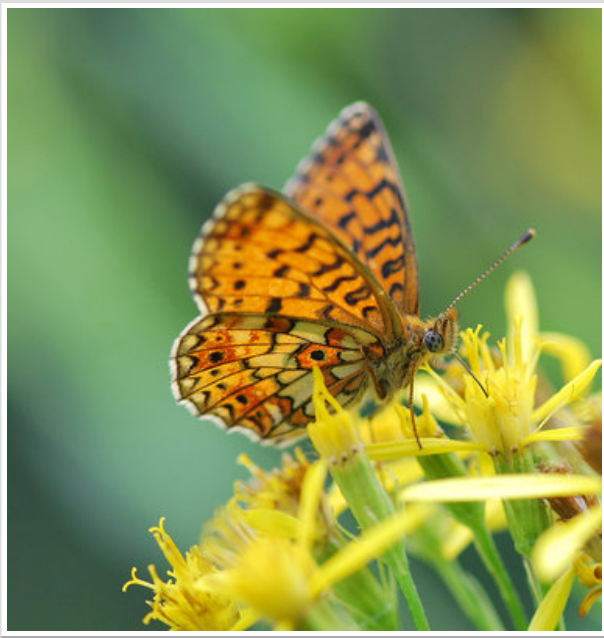
Once back the girls seemed to find more vim and so they bounded off giggling to run around the field a la Heidi. This meant that once I'd unpacked the day bag, sorted out the towels and swim suits and had an all important cuppa I too could bumble out and around the field, hopefully a lot less Heidi like! 😄😄

Flapping around all over the place were HBFs as well as a few more aged looking DGFs. I'd scan around the red topped grasses and each little clump seemed to have its own Dusky Blue. Down at the yellow bush there was no sign of the Map but this time there was a Small Pearl (in August!) and an older Sooty Copper (male?). I strolled back up the hill ready for something to eat stopping occasionally for the HBFs, wondering if there was a Niobe amongst them, and a lovely Common Blue which I wish was a Chapman's. And so ended yet another glorious day, more species added to the life list, a few more added to the trip tally and for the first time in a very long time I was calm and relaxed 😊.









Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 30-Nov-15 06:03 AM GMT

Cracking stuff, Wurzel. Looks like you had a great time.

I look forward to more instalments.

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 30-Nov-15 06:19 AM GMT

Great report Wurzel 😊 Particularly that Weavers Fritillary and thats just the first day. Looking forward to more 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 30-Nov-15 06:45 AM GMT

Now you're getting to the stuff that would have spoilt my Christmas dinner!.

Some lovely images there. 🍷🍷

Trevor.

## Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 30-Nov-15 06:40 PM GMT

Loving the Sooty Coppers Wurzel. Lovely open-wing intermediate form (f. porina) Map too

### "Wurzel" wrote:

ordering lunch by pointing at a phrase book

🤔 smart move. I'd draw the line at trying to read out Czech.

Phil

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 30-Nov-15 08:39 PM GMT

Just catching up Wurzel ,Fascinating report Wurzel, it must have been great seeing all the different Butterflies sorry you missed the Camberwell, 😞 but hope you got it eventually , looking forward to the next instalment Goldie 🍷🍷🍷

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Dec-15 06:31 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 Day three will follow soon 😊

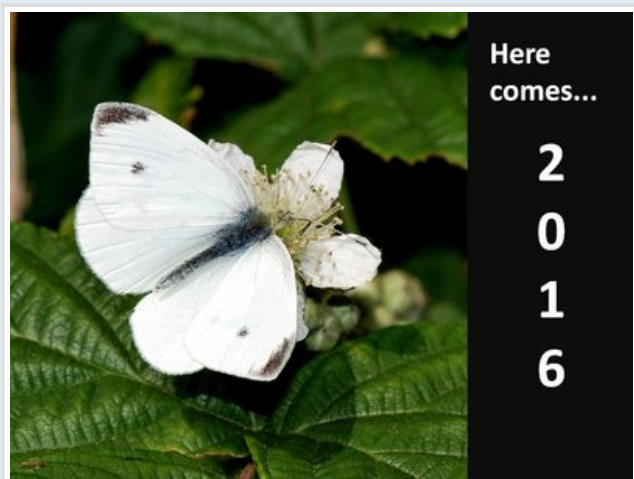
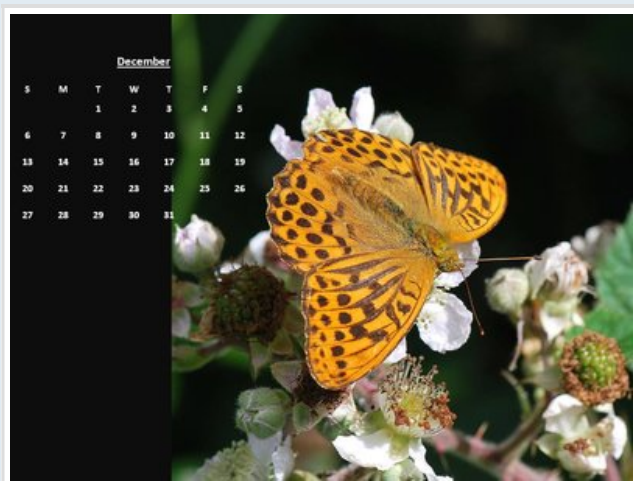
Cheers Paul 😊 A few more days to report on yet 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'll try and get the other posts out before the big day, I wouldn't want to ruin your sprouts 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 The language was really tricky so 'point and gesticulate' was a useful fall back 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Missing a Camberwell was pretty much the sub-story of the holiday 😊

December 2015



Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Dec-15 07:29 AM GMT

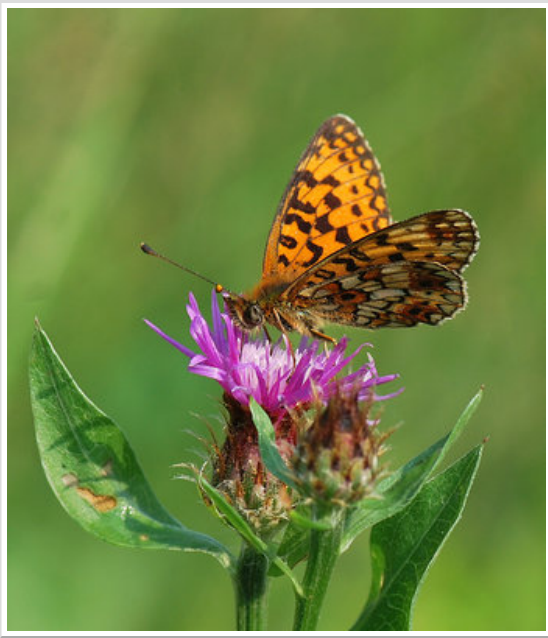
11-08-2015

After two cracking days I was probably due a quiet one and so today turned out to be...

It started well enough with yet another post brekkie sortie in glorious weather and this time I worked my way up the hill towards the road. It seemed that the Walls preferred this area with three representing the species and behaving in their usual frantic manner. As I worked my down the hill towards the damper area near the stream I found a few Small Heath, the odd Meadow Brown and a Common Blue. Once here I managed to relocate the Small Pearl from the day before or found a different one. Also here was a Silver-spotted Skipper amongst the tussock grass, 3 Maps on the yellow flowers and 3 Dusks on various red topped grasses. When I got back to the cottage K wandered off with my camera and found a Red Admiral as well as an alien looking grasshopper. Thomas lent us his car and with the reminder to drive on the right and a quick glance at a google we set off for Potstajn and its castles.

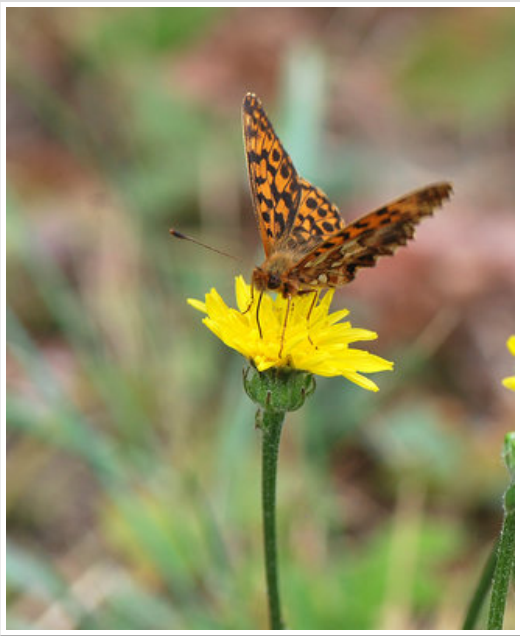
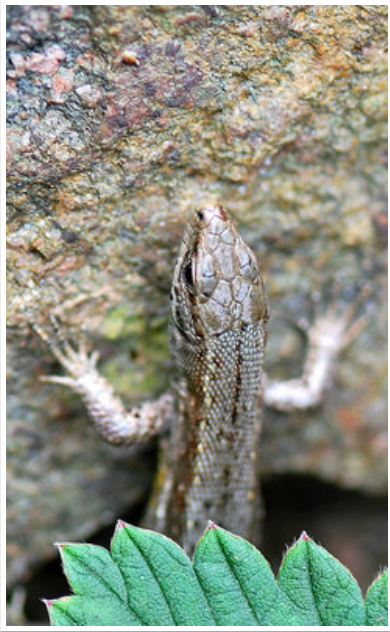






The first one that we visited was the old ruined castle and after a walk up a steep wooded hill we reached the fortifications and sat down to wait for our tour guide. While we waited a Common Lizard popped up between L's feet and scuttled up the wall much to L's amusement and a few whites fluttered here and there. As the tour started a smallish Fritillary hove into view whilst I was watching it I couldn't decide if it was a Small pearl or a Weaver's and it was only when I managed to have a quick check in the wine cellar later that I could see the large spotting on the hind wings - so another Weaver's it is then. The only other butterflies about were the odd Wall Brown and a single Peacock so quite quiet really and I was left wondering whilst wandering the

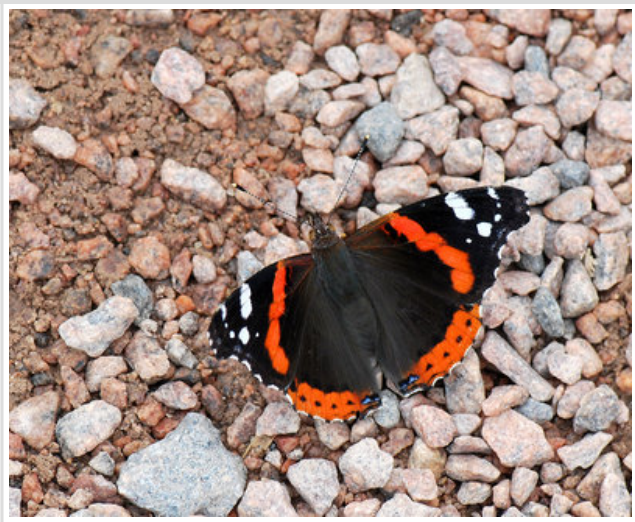
ruins whether it was too warm? 😊



I zoned out from butterflies and settled into 'Dad' mode for a while trying my best to answer questions for my daughters by scanning through the English guide notes. It seems that this castle was destroyed not by soldiers trying to winkle the bad Count out from his lair but by the Count himself as he was searching for treasure that had been hidden somewhere within the grounds or the fortification itself by a previous occupant who was a bandit chief. A few embellishments along the lines of 'blood, gore and hacking limbs off' and my daughters were happy 😊. And when we meet the resident goats they were ecstatic! 😊😊

As it was quiet at the Castle we set off to the next place, another Castle this time at Zamberk and I was pinning my hopes on this one as not only was there a small petting Zoo (grasses, animal dropping etc) but also a 'maintained' garden. However as we drove through the town we reached the railway crossing and the road was closed! So we turned round and headed back to Potstejn. Really we should have parked, crossed over the railway on foot and there we would have been at Zamberk Castle but with no SatNav, maps and only the briefest of glances at Google Earth that morning it seemed better to head to where we knew.

After lunch we took a tour of the 'New Castle', more of a manor house really. A quick shuffy round the garden yielded a Red Admiral, Silver-Y and a Common Blue, a whiz round inside and a quick Kofola later we were heading back to Pastviny. A good family day out but a poor butterfly one with no new species.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Dec-15 08:56 PM GMT

Nice photos Wurzel I wouldn't have minded the Silver Spotted Skipper 🇹🇹 didn't get one this year 😞 I must rectify that next year. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 06-Dec-15 09:04 PM GMT

Great weavers shots again Wurzel 🇹🇹🇹🇹.



Potstejn castle looks smashing (I've googled it) and comes with a handy ready-made history story for the kids 😊.

Your Grasshopper might be a male Oak Bush Cricket *Meconema thalassinum*. 😊

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Dec-15 07:05 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Over the summer I discovered a great site for them nearby but it was odd seeing them in what was essentially the back garden 🤪😊  
Cheers Philzoid for the ID 😊 The castle was a great place apart from the heat and the lack of butterflies, though the blood, guts and treasure made up for it, for the girls anyway 😊 Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 08-Dec-15 02:01 AM GMT

Nice images again, Wurzel. Did you get to any high altitudes whilst you were there?

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 08-Dec-15 02:58 AM GMT

I am really enjoying your Czech reports Wurzel and some lovely photos to accompany them 😊

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Dec-15 06:39 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 With regards to getting to altitude...read on 😊 Cheers Neil 😊 Despite the lack of species due to the incessant heat it was still great seeing so many new things 😊😊

12-08-2015 - Mountains!!

Today was probably the day I had been looking forward to most as we were going to drive to a ski resort and take a chair-lift to the mountain top. I didn't even do my morning check of the field as I was checking my kit again and again but I did stop for a huge Cricket next to the back door.



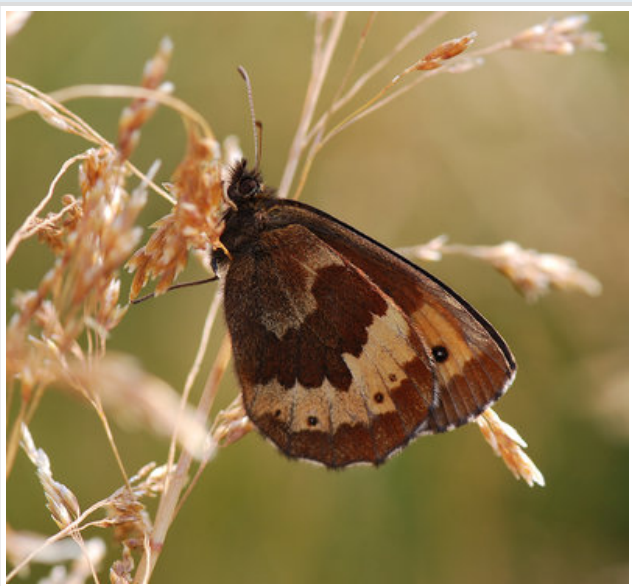
The drive was quite long but there various notable things on the way - huge bunkers from WWII, rolling hills changing to forests, a native American camp with Tee-pees and Totem pole plus we got to count how many times we criss-crossed the same rail track (11 in total). Once there we parked and waited for the others to arrive. Around the car park a Peacock and a couple of Whites flitted about and try as I might I couldn't get the Small Tort to change into a Large one! A quick trip to the toilet revealed a few more Small Torts and a Black Redstart.



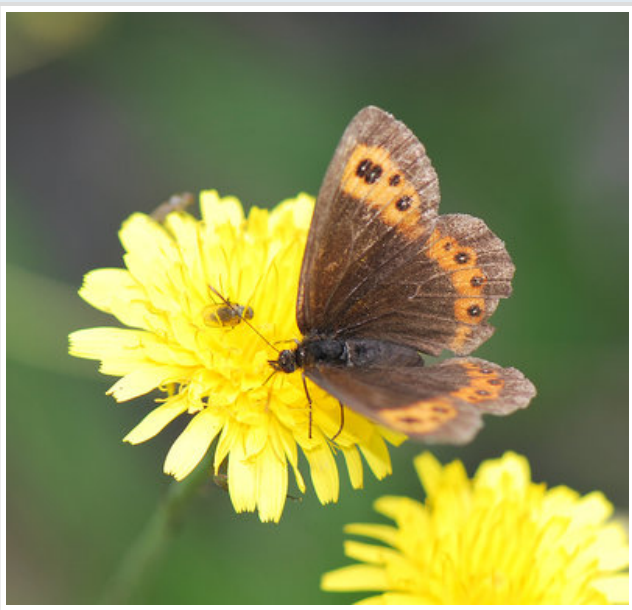
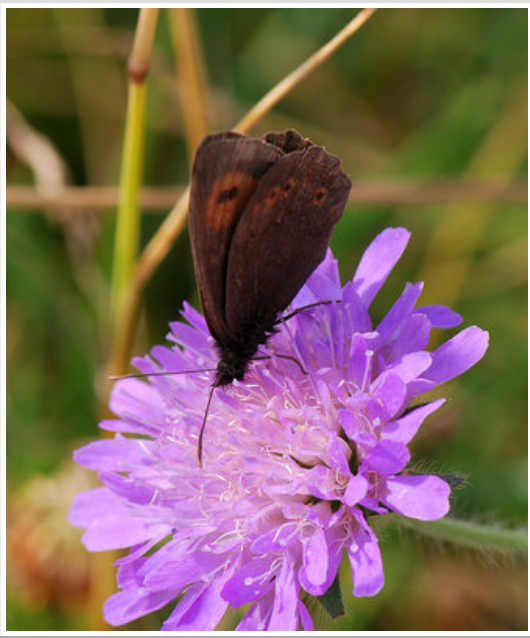
With the whole group together we then boarded the four seater chair-lift for the first stage of the ascent. Below us were butterflies a plenty - more Peacocks, Small Tort's plus a smallish Fritillary - possibly Small Pearl Bordered? Then we had to disembark before switching to an older, less comfy and much more rickety looking two seater chair-lift. As I thought little L was going to hate it I went with her. In fact she loved it, wanting to rock it, asking questions like 'what happens if the cable breaks?' and pointing out the butterflies below - which were Ringlets of some sort - with great delight as "you can see them but you can't photograph them Daddy - ha, ha". 🤔🤔 We carried on chatting as the chair traversed the air and L revealed that actually she wanted to find me a 'tick' as "mummy found you the Swallowtail and K found you the Fwatillary".



Luckily as soon as we got off at the top little L ran straight over and pointed at a Ringlet - job done! 😊 We all then strolled along the mountain top path to a chalet building for a beer at 10:30 am. There was a stunning view across the range and in the direction of a nearby Spa town the buildings resembled Lego blocks in the distance. All around butterflies flew and besides a single Red Admiral they were all Ringlets. As I wasn't up on my identification so I tried to photograph each and every one that I saw and I'd worry about what they were later. For now they were just Ringlets (turned out to be Large Ringlets with the odd Arran Brown - both ticks for me).





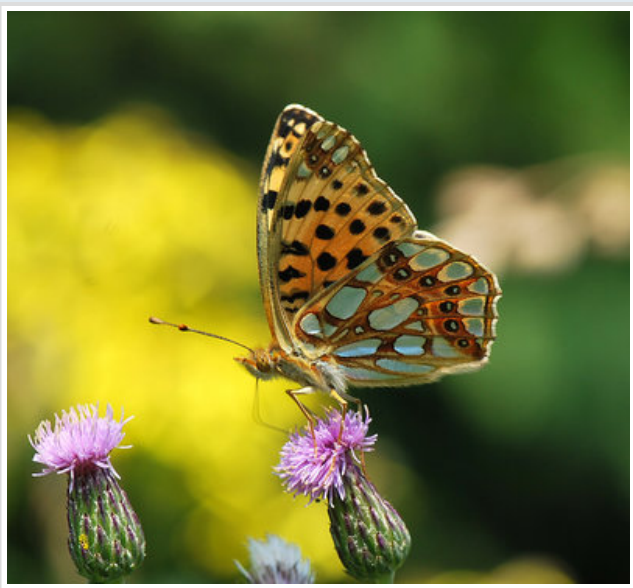


Suitably refreshed after a Holba it was time to head back down. Luckily for me my wife had hated the journey up and couldn't face going back down so I got to accompany her on her descent by foot. The girls went down with Eva, Thomas, Luca and the Grandparents and we waved them off expecting to see them two hours later once we'd zigzagged down the mountain side under and round the chair-lift. On almost every clump of flowers there were Ringlets, they were all over the place and it was only when we got about half way down that other species started to appear – Small Whites, Small Torts, Peacocks and the occasional Comma. Some of the Peacocks were tiny, smaller than the Small Torts.





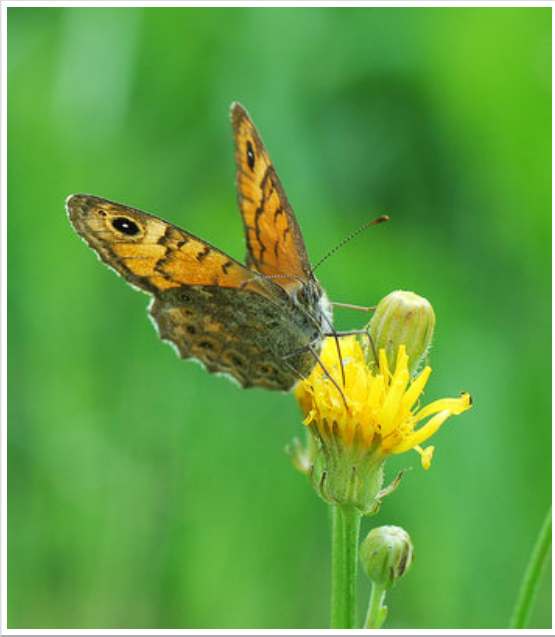
As we approached the final stretch a Queen of Spain showed itself amongst the taller vegetation and there were now Silver-Washed, HBFs, Brimstones as well as the ubiquitous Ringlets whose numbers were now starting to drop off. A vivid orange butterfly flew up and down the verge a couple of times, never stopping close enough but I was able to see that it was a Large Copper and one that got away though a fantastic sight to see.



We then had lunch and the girls played in a small park while Lucas had his nap. A Wall Brown stopped just long enough for a photo but the Red Admiral and possible Large Tort didn't. All the while a Peacock was sitting, wings closed on the gravel in the car park. As everything else was flying away I decided to try for a photo of this. As I approached I realised that it was large for a Peacock. It also had a very pale margin and when it flew I was in no



doubt - a Camberwell Beauty - possibly my third of the trip. As with the others this one proved to be a bugger but it stopped just long enough for me to sprint towards it, take two distant shots before it carried on and off into the woods not to be seen again. It may only be a record shot but I don't mind as I'd actually gotten a shot!



Happy with my haul I didn't mind when we moved on, or when the weather broke and the inevitable thunderstorm and torrential rain came - I'd gotten a Camberwell! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 12-Dec-15 06:59 AM GMT

Great stuff, Wurzel! Glad you found some *erebia* (not to mention a Camberwell).

Your QoS is posing beautifully too. Excellent image.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 12-Dec-15 05:21 PM GMT

That QoS image would have spoiled my Christmas lunch !. Gorgeous stuff.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 12-Dec-15 05:21 PM GMT

That QoS image would have spoilt my Christmas lunch !. Gorgeous stuff.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 12-Dec-15 07:55 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Wurzel and you got a Camberwell 🇧🇪🇧🇪 well done, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 12-Dec-15 08:01 PM GMT

Great read Wurzel. Love that QoS, looks only a day old if that and I'm very 🇧🇪 about your Camberwell!

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Dec-15 07:08 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 It was great to see the erebia as they were my first members of this species that I'd encountered 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'm glad that you'll be able to keep your sprouts down now 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I got there in the end 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 That was probably my fourth Camberwell of the trip, and the only shot – distant 😊 but still identifiable as a Camberwell 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 13-Dec-15 08:41 PM GMT

No Mistaking the Camberwell, well done 😊🇧🇪

Love the Large Ringlets, very handsomely marked butterflies 😊.

The 2 seater Chair lift brings back memories when I went to Bavaria (Konigsee) on a school trip when I was 11 😊

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 13-Dec-15 09:24 PM GMT

Should be in any way disappointed with your Camberwell image, I can sympathise.  
Only to get a quick glimpse, and even quicker image of such a desirable Butterfly must have been excruciating:( . But I must say I wish I'd been there !.) 🇧🇪

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 14-Dec-15 07:18 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

I am enjoying reading of your Czech exploits. As others have said that Queen Of Spain is gorgeous 😊. As you said at the beginning this was primarily a family holiday, but you don't seem to have done too badly on the butterfly front.

Looking forward to the next episode 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Dec-15 06:53 AM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Got there in the end 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 After all my sightings – generally as it departed – to get any shot was really pleasing 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 I learnt a few more tricks to add to the repertoire so managed to get more butterflies in than I expected 😊

13-08-2015

So began our final day at Pastviny 😊 and once again I headed out to the field, this time for the final time. As usual there were the HBFs, four definite individuals plus an assortment of Small Heath , Meadow Browns, two silver spots and a Smessex as well as the usual Dusky's – they're so last week dontcha know!







So what to do with our final day? I would dearly have loved to revisit the wood from day one or the high point from the same day but I was outvoted. So instead we packed the swim things and set off down the hill to the Dam for the day. A Red-backed Shrike watched from the overhead cables as we set off.



On the way down through the wood I missed out on yet another Camberwell Beauty. They seem to appear from nowhere and flap away deep in amongst the trees so that you can't relocate them. A quick check of the field revealed a few Common Blues, a Brown Argus and quell surprise a few Dusky Large Blues.



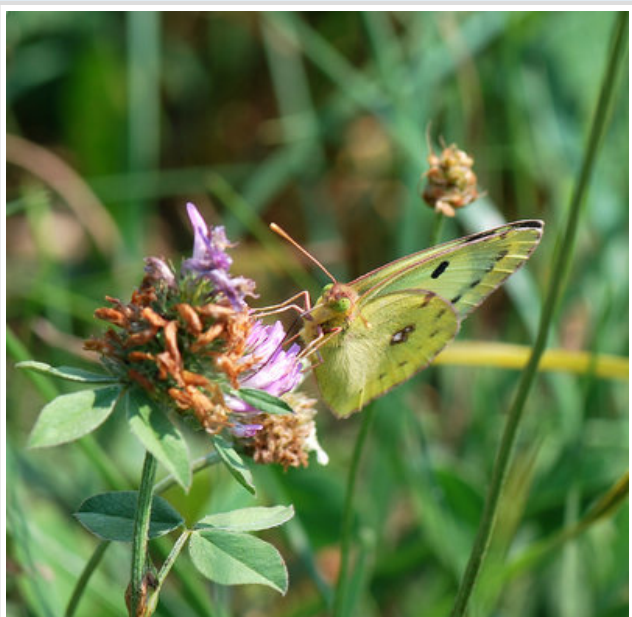


Whilst the girls took their first Pedlo ride I legged it up to the fields behind the dam. Unfortunately for me everything seemed to be frequenting the one field with restricted access and I could only watch a Pale/Bergers from the sidelines. To further torment me everything that was taking nectar from the verges disappeared across and in to restricted field filed so I came away with only a few fleeting shots and a Hummingbird Hawk Moth from the woodland at the end of the road. I mean the end of the road literally as there is tarmac road and then woodland no cul-de-sac, no kerbs the road just ceases to be...transmogrifying into forest 🤪. I retrace my footsteps and neck a beer to stave off the heat - it's starting to get quite unbearable now, but a pint of Holba helps and all for the princely sum of 19K (48p)!





After lunch (lucky dip for me again – point at the menu and see what comes out – in this case dumplings with gravy, a minute steak and whipped cream?) the girls head out again on the Pedlos so I again make my way to the fields and luckily now the butterflies were playing ball and are in a different field, one that I have got access to so I manage a few shots this time. Again a quick beer (I'm starting to enjoy the heat again now) and a spot on the pedlo and then we start the hot, tiring walk/trek back home.







We were able to stop frequently so the girls could; have a drink, eat an ice cream, have a paddle in the stream or just have a breather so my butterflying took place in a series of 5 minute bursts. The first of which was in the 'Yellow field'. There were three Small Torts (still no Scarce) a few whites, the odd Dusky and a Queen of Spain. Just over the road was a Common Blue and a Chapman's (no cell spot when wings forward) – finally all the eyestrain caused by trying to follow the blue bu\$\$ers visually and the calf strain from frenetic runs when they finally deemed to land for a few seconds paid off.





The second stop was at the little break in the woods where I'd previously found the female Sooty. While the girls had a breather I found a few Small Heaths and singles of Silver-washed and Queen of Spain Fritillary.



Further up and stop number three was a female Pale/Berger's that just wouldn't settle, 2 Silver-washed and yet another fly-by Camberwell Beauty. I reckon that I've gotten so used to identifying them in flight that if one actually landed I wouldn't have a clue what I was looking at! The final stop was so the girls could have a paddle and here there was a Map and a Green-veined White.

Once home we had to pack as we were off to Prague on the morrow so I managed only a quick mooch round the field with the usual suspects.







No Niobe's in my Frits?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 19-Dec-15 08:12 PM GMT

#### "Wurzel" wrote:

Once home we had to pack as we were off to Prague on the morrow so I managed only a quick mooch round the field with the usual suspects.

High Browns ain't bad as "usual suspects" go, Wurzel!

Not seeing anything Niobe-like, unfortunately. 😞

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 20-Dec-15 02:09 AM GMT

Now that you have taunted us with High Browns, as well as Queen of Spain I have no sympathy whatsoever for 'no Niobe's.' 🍷 Hope you are enjoying the summer temperatures, it's 16c here at the moment!

Have a great Christmas,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 20-Dec-15 02:59 AM GMT

You'll get your Niobes, Wurzel, and after that every time you pop across the channel you'll see them ... But that can't be said of those dusky large blues! 😊

Guy

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Dec-15 12:17 AM GMT

Really enjoyed your Butterflies Wurzel and your adventures 😊 I hope you and your family have a great Christmas and New Year Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 23-Dec-15 05:16 AM GMT

A rested Hummingbird Hawk-moth 🐛 Also suffering from heat-stroke I suspect 🥵 That's at least two great shots you've got of this species in that uncommon settled pose (East Blean I seem to remember 🌳 😊)

Nice photo of the cloudie ☁️. Any further views on whether it's the alfacariensis / hyale ? 🤔

Phil

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Dec-15 07:05 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊, thanks for looking for some Niobes – maybe next time 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 It's one of the annoying habits I've picked up off of my pupils – always wanting more 😊

Cheers Guy 😊 We're working out where we're heading abroad this week – so hopefully there will be some Niobes waiting for me 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 We did indeed have a good Chrimble, I hope you and yours did too!

Cheers Philzoid 😊 You're right about the Hummingbird Hawk – and it couldn't even have a refreshing pint of Holba to help it cool down 😊

14/15-08-2015

The final day we said our goodbyes to Eva and Lucas and Thomas drove us to the railway station as Czecka Trebova and from there onto Prague (White Stock in a field on the way). Prague itself was fantastic and in a short space of time we'd seen the various parts of a Castle (Prague Castle – more like a small town 🏰), the famous clock (astronomical clock), a square (Wenceslas Square) and the (Charles) bridge. See I'm a butterflyer and the cultural stuff passed over my head – I had to look it all up when I got home and have since correctly named it (in the brackets) 😊🤔. With very few butterflies the highlights of Prague for me were the Spitfires outside the castle and a pub that was an entire street long! 🇬🇧🇨🇪🇬🇧





The final butterflies of the trip were four Purple Hairstreaks, all males and all in our passports 😊 as well as four hidden Common Blues – also in our passports and courtesy of millerd 😊 .

I said before that I was treating this holiday as a training exercise so here is what I learnt:

1. To maximise the number of species seen the best thing seems to be to go on an organised tour. I did this when birding and visited Poland and I added over 50 new species to my 'life list'. So in future I might consider trading in all my Brownie points for a week on an organised trip. That's expensive however so...
2. If I do go on a family holiday abroad I will read up before we go! It was difficult this time as there wasn't much info about the place I was visiting so...
3. Next time I will ask if anyone has any tips or information regarding the area that I'm going to visit or ask if they have any suggestions of places to go that could be combined with a family holiday.
4. If you know it'll be warm where you're going get up and go early while a. the family are still in bed and b. it's cooler.
5. Check the habitat before you go – then you can work out which species to look out for.
6. Do a similar thing for any possible day trips.
7. Hire a car as this increases the range of places you can visit and therefore the range of species you could possibly see.
8. When out in the field scan ahead for all possible nectar sources as usual but also look for shade spots – three of the four Camberwell Beauties that I were all in shade and the fourth few into it. Tied in with this is trying to make a mental note of the types of flowers visited by certain species so when you encounter a new species which flower was it visiting and then look out for it subsequently. This was how I found all of my Dusky Large Blues – I simply looked on the tops of the purple/red grass heads.
9. Finally get a smaller, lighter camera!

All of this seems pretty obvious really still I found it useful to note down and now I'll be more likely to put it into practice!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 28-Dec-15 09:15 PM GMT

Glad you enjoyed your trip, Wurzel. Prague is definitely the most beautiful city I've ever visited but I doubt it's somewhere to go when looking for butterflies.

Your 'lessons learned' made me chuckle too. Points 1 and 7 are spot on (though they are mutually exclusive given that an organised trip will negate the need for a hire car).

Much as I like wandering around independently, you'll miss out on a great deal. A guided tour will take you to all the best localities and maximise the range of species. You'll also probably get the most coveted rarities that way too.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 29-Dec-15 10:55 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, your advice sounds good I'll put it into practice next year, not sure about the arranged holiday though 😊 Not unless it's in Mexico to watch those lovely Butterflies come out of Hibernation (that would be fantastic) so would the price 😊 Happy New Year ! Goldie 😊