

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 01-Jan-16 10:41 PM GMT

Cheers David 😊 I hope to put my lessons into practice – unfortunately lesson number 1 is a bit out of my price bracket at the moment and I don't think it would go down too well with the rest of the Wurzel household 😊😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 I hope the 'lessons' help out 😊

The New Year 2016



Happy New Year!  
Have a goodun, 2016 that is!

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by MikeOxon, 02-Jan-16 12:08 PM GMT

Happy New Year to you also and let's hope that 2016 is a good'un (as you might say)

I agree with your checklist, which certainly applied very well to my own trip to Borneo. That is, perhaps, a rather extreme case but, if you wanted to photograph butterflies, then before dawn was the only time to catch them at rest! My 'Naturetrek' trip was principally aimed at birds and the spotting skills of our leaders were simply amazing. Luck will always play its part and, when an extremely rare Borneo Ground Cuckoo strolled along a log, a short distance in front of us, our leaders were as gob-smacked as we were!

I am glad that I paid attention to Point 9, since a heavy camera kit would have been a severe burden in the tropical heat and humidity (and was, to some of my fellow travellers!) As I have written elsewhere, my lightweight Olympus kit was superb and the fast (wide aperture) lenses, coupled with excellent high-ISO performance, were great for night spotting expeditions and for 'stopping' very active butterflies in flight.

Mike

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 02-Jan-16 10:13 PM GMT

Not sure that your comment regarding 'price bracket' is entirely accurate, Wurzel, as my own independent holidays have generally cost almost as much as the guided ones (only the latter have seen far better rewards species-wise).

Agree that the rest of the Wurzel family may not be too happy though. To make the most of it you'd have to travel independently, which would obviously go down like a lead balloon! 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Jan-16 10:30 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 The smaller camera might be a while in coming for me but it just means taking less clothing in my luggage so that I can fit in my trusty old Nikon 😊

Cheers David 😊 I will just have to get even better at nipping off for some butterfly shots on days out during the next Wurzel family holiday - still no idea where we're going yet though 😊

Collection?

This is possibly the most difficult post that I've ever written as it is about a collection of pinned specimens...

First of all I need to make my opinions on collecting clear. When I grew up the habit seemed to be dwindling and was starting to be frowned upon - so just like I missed getting into 'egging' before 'birding' I didn't collect butterflies prior to getting into them either. And now apart for valid scientific purposes I can't see the point as you can get almost as much information (if not more at times) from a digital image compared to from a pinned specimen. This is why I didn't get embroiled in the recent furore on the forum as no matter how much reasonable argument was given the viewpoints would never be changed; I didn't want to add fuel to the fire either.

So why am I posting about this collection? Well first of all the majority of the specimens were collected from schools and were due to be destroyed before the current owner saved the specimens and added them to his much smaller personal collection - which hadn't been added to for some considerable time. Secondly having invested huge amounts of time and effort sorting, resetting and ordering the collection it is now being donated to the Natural History museum for their use.

Finally the diversity and variation present in any one of the many drawers was astounding. When Ronniethepoo who knew the entomologist arranged an invite I was interested. When I left I was amazed and astounded. I was lost for words and as drawer upon drawer was opened and yet more aberrants were placed before me I felt slightly annoyed with myself that I had never had such an appreciation variation possible in such a range of species. The only word I could utter was "Wow" and this just couldn't sum up what I was seeing but I was all my brain was able to conjure up as huge amounts of my processing power were being utilised in trying to comprehend and remember what I was seeing. This could have been my one chance to view it so I was so grateful to Ronniethepoo for arranging it.

After poring over the Clouded Yellows for what felt like a minute but was actually 5 we realised that there were another 30 odd drawers in this cabinet still to see, and this was a single cabinet of which type there were another 3 plus another four or so double cabinets. So we frenetically opened drawers scanned over the contents and then swiftly moved on. Even with this technique it took almost two hours to look through the entire collection and we couldn't recall seeing some groups of the Browns - Marbs, Meadow Browns and particularly worrying for me, Hedge Browns.

Sorting through my photos later I had so many that I need to break them up into two posts.

Part 1

There were a few shots that I particularly wanted to capture and these fell into two types - the impossible and the aberrant. The impossible also fell into two groups. The first were impossible as they as they are extinct and the second are almost impossible because they always land with their wings tightly shut.



*Black Hairstreak*



*White-letter Hairstreak*



*Green Hairstreak*



*SSB 'Cretaceous'*



*LC dispar*



*LC dispar*

I also snuck in this one after having such poor returns for my hard work in Czech Republic.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Jan-16 01:52 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I would love to have seen those Butterflies, I don't agree with collecting Butterflies that way except for research but has you say to see them like that well preserved must have been very interesting.

I'm glad also they're being given to the NHM for others to see, I just hope they don't encourage the wrong people to go out and collect them that way, lovely shots by the way Goldie 😊

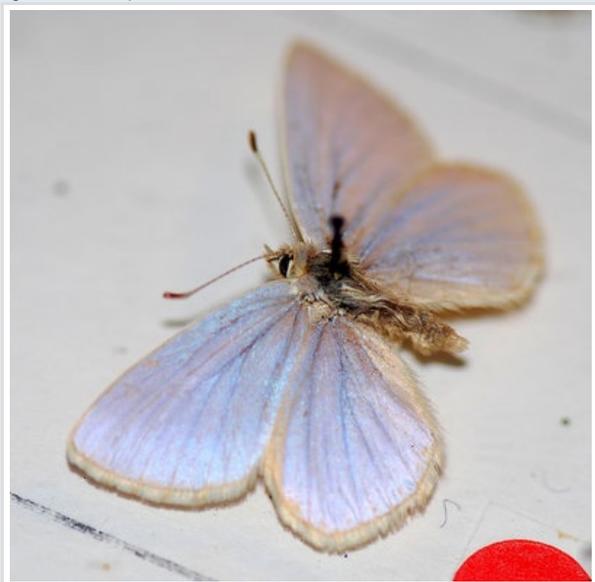
### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Jan-16 10:32 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Most of the collection were very,very old the Camberwell for instance was pinned in 1903 and whilst it was a slightly sad sight my curiosity and the spectacle of variation overcame this.

#### Collection Part 2

Having dealt with the impossible we then came to the aberrants and this was where my 'cup runneth over'. In fact I seemed to lose track and there was so much to see that at times my camera hung by my side, unused as I couldn't tear myself away from the spectacle before me. Here there were rows and rows of aberrant forms - gynandromorphy, slight variations, striking variations, lack of pigmentation, over pigmentation and some so different from the 'type' that seemed to be a different species entirely. I would simply forget that I actually had my camera and occasionally my arm would brush against its body and I would remember. Then I would take a few shots, a few more and then I would forget that I had it again.



*Adonis Blue*



*Orange-tip gynandromorph*



*Green-veined White ab.*



Green-veined White *ab.citronea-flavescens*



Camberwell Beauty *ab.hygieia*



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary *ab.stramineus*



*Small Copper ab. alba - schmidt*



*Purple Emperor ab.*



*Small Heath ab.*



*'blind' Peacock*



Peacock *ab.albomarginata*

I came away very grateful to Ronniethoop for making the introductions and transporting me to and from the Collection, a good thing really as when I was left I was still in a bit of a daze.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 07-Jan-16 10:44 PM GMT

Some truly amazing specimens there, Wurzel. No wonder you were in your element.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 07-Jan-16 11:00 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
Congratulations, you now have open wing shots of every UK Hairstreak 😊  
Some of those AB's are amazing.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 08-Jan-16 02:04 PM GMT

I must apologise Wurzel, seems I made a big Boob with my Small Heath ab 😊 I totally forgot I'd been fiddling around with stuff earlier in the year and this one escaped me, all I saw was the two spots 😊 until Mike pointed out the various differences I'd never noticed it, so much for looking back at things 😊

Your shots of all those abs are great no wonder you were enthralled 😊 I noticed there was one like the Butterfly I saw at Gaits Barrow Small Pearl BF and honestly that was real, I'm not that clever to produce those photos and besides I've two witnesses. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 09-Jan-16 10:44 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

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Hi Wurzel

I can understand your reservations about posting on this subject or admitting to find this sort of thing of interest. I am not ashamed to say that personally I find great interest in looking at cabinets of historical specimens that have already been caught in the past. Well done for posting details 😊 I was also given the opportunity to view a collection held by an educational establishment most of which was 80–100 years old. When I talked about mentioning and posting photos of the collection in my diary they were very emphatically against it. Their feeling was that they did not want to risk damaging the reputation of the establishment or submit themselves to any unsavoury criticism.

That Camberwell Beauty ab is impressive, was it caught in the UK 🤔

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Jan-16 10:55 PM GMT

Cheers David 😊 It was a very impressive sight – but no Hedge Browns 🙄🙄

Cheers Trevor 😊 Probably the only way to get those type of shots 😊

No worries Goldie 😊 Even hindsight isn't 20:20 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 I was a bit concerned how it would be taken and as you mentioned the key word was 'historical' collection. The Camberwell ab was from France and was very old, but not as old as the first one I featured which was collected in 1903.

### End of Year Tally 2015

Jan cold yet dry, Feb cold, just as things seemed to start cold fronts would rip in and we had snow and sleet mid month with heavy frosts almost into March. March was a fitful month – just as things would get going a Low would sweep in and in the last week of the month there were a few frosts and even gales and sleet. April started cold and windy with a few dire days of rain but mostly just grey and cold and it felt like Spring would never truly arrive. Luckily it did, just in time for the Easter Sunday! But it didn't last as most of the early summer was cool and windy and getting out for decent butterfly days was difficult. Things finally seemed to be getting better but by then we were into June and we were hit by a heat wave. Once again it was all over so quickly and from mid July through we had lot's of 'nothing days' – days when it's a bit warm, a bit grey, there might be some rain but mainly just nothing. When the 'summer' started to tail off we didn't get our much deserved Indian Summer either and the season seemed to be over quicker than last year. That being said there were still butterflies around in October and the period from November through to the end of the year was extremely mild. Whether this will portend for a poor year to follow (2016) I'm not sure – parasites and pathogens could well have a field day. As well as the almost incessant and very annoying wind the rain clouds did their usual trick of always hovering over Salisbury so whilst others had one of two species under their belt I went two months without a butterfly. What made all the more galling was my Sister in-law saw a Small Tort on 2nd Jan and my daughter saw a Red Admiral on 26th Feb! Grrrr!

These climatic conditions made it a difficult year again. Being restricted by work as to when I could get out butterflying as well as more renovations (preparing for plastering and then painting) on the house meant that I was severely limited in how many trips that I could make out. Much of my butterflying was reliant on key trips and for some species I only saw them once in the whole year and others were photographed by the old tried and tested 'smash and grab' not made any easier by the wind blowing constantly. If it wasn't for a weekly trip to Laverstock I doubt if I'd have seen any butterflies at all!

Any way enough moaning, to work...

### The Skippers



### 1 Small Skipper, 22-06 Laverstock Down

My first Small Skipper appeared about a day earlier this year than last – probably still a hang-over from the delayed start to the season? My first was at Laverstock and then I encountered them at a whole host of sites, in fact almost at all that I visited. Because of their frenetic behaviour it was difficult to do accurate counts at each place I went to but my gut feeling suggests they either did as well this year as last or more possibly they did slightly better.



2 Essex Skipper, 29-06 Laverstock.

As for the Small the Essex were seen at most sites that I visited, even cropping up on my 'school' tally and also like the Small I think they did as well, if not even better, than last year. Of the two species in fact I think that the Essex did best in 2015. Also like the Small my first came from Laverstock but differently a day earlier than last year. Perhaps things were already starting to catch up and by the time the Essex emerged they were back up to speed after the delayed start to the year?



### 3 Lulworth Skipper, 02-08 Durlston Country Park

I didn't have a particularly good year for Lulworths. My first trip to the Cove itself was possibly too early in a 'late' year and none were seen. Then I missed out on my usual camping holiday so no chance of seeing them at the Cove, Corfe or Downshay itself.

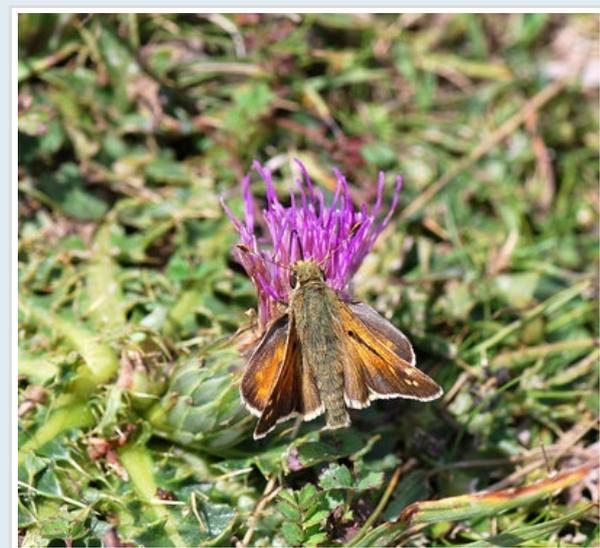
Eventually I got down to Durlston and caught up with them for my first sighting but 6 weeks or so later this year. Other reports have suggested they were well down but not visiting my usual haunts and going to Durlston for the first time also threw out any chance of considering numbers as I don't have a couple of years worth of memories/notes to compare to. All I can really say is that in early August there were good numbers at Durlston, both in the meadows and along the coastal path.





4 Silver Spotted Skipper, 26-07 Broughton Down

I saw this species for the first time only a day later than last year so by the mid-summer it seems that most species had caught up after a delayed start to the year. In terms of numbers it was again difficult to say for sure. Over the past few years I've always visited Stockbridge Down and picked up the odd sighting at Martin Down. However this year I visited Broughton Down for the first time and probably saw as many if not more here and over a smaller area compared to Stockbridge. So I'm unsure whether they had a better year or I visited a particularly good site?



5 Large Skipper, 07-06 The Devenish

I eventually caught up with my first Large Skipper at The Devenish about a fortnight later than my first last year so this was one of the species that was still a little behind. My gut feeling was that there were fewer this year; a trip to Bentley usually sees them all over the place but this year there were only a few. In fact my view of their smaller numbers may have been because I found that I didn't try as much with this species. There was always something

else around that I'd travelled for or was more unexpected which I found occupying my attention.



6 Dingy Skipper, 03-05 Duke Site

Dingy Skippers seemed to buck the trend for me this year as instead of seeing them later I actually saw them on the same exact date. They seemed to be around in good numbers at a good range of the sites that I visited and I think they had a reasonable year despite the slow start to spring but perhaps not quite as good as last year? Last year I remember saying that I hoped to find them at Larkhill in 2015 and it happened and not just a singleton but several over different parts of the site. Where they were hiding previously I don't know!





7 Grizzled Skipper, 29-04 Larkhill

Due to the late coming of spring I didn't see my first Grizzlie until a fortnight later this year. Once they did arrive they did so in reasonable numbers and it felt like they had a good year at certain sites. Whereas at others they were missing, for example I didn't see one at Bentley at all this year so pretty patchy in terms of their distribution?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-Jan-16 11:08 AM GMT

Lovely Skippers Wurzel, especially the Grizzled, I've booked a holiday for the middle of June in Sussex, I'm hoping to see a Grizzle SK, hope it's not too late then. Considering what little time you had last year you did really well with all the skipper photos you took Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 11-Jan-16 06:42 PM GMT

Nice images, Wurzel, and a commentary that I largely agree with vis-à-vis the weather. 😊

Let's hope 2016 is a bit better...well, a LOT better!

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 12-Jan-16 08:57 AM GMT

Lovely Grizzled Skipper images 😊. I only saw two last year, and neither were very co-operative. My main weather memory of 2015 was the constant wind. While on the subject of weather it looks as though a cold snap is on it's way, not too late I hope.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 12-Jan-16 05:00 PM GMT

Yes I think I may have mentioned the wind one or two times in my PD. Some llovely imagies there Wurzel 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 12-Jan-16 08:11 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, just catching up.

I love your post with the historical specimens. I don't want to say too much about the 'right and wrongs' of such things in your PD but for me the key word here is 'historical' and the specimens are the product of an age when opinions and sensitivities were very different to what they are now. I for one found it a fascinating read, thanks for posting 😊

And great round up of the skippers...looking forward to the next post.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Jan-16 10:37 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck with the Grizzlies 😊

Cheers David 😊 Indeed lets hope for a much better 2016!

Cheers Trevor 😊 I hope the cold snap works it's magic so we have a great season next year

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It was a very windy year!

Cheers Neil 😊 There is another post on the collection, when I can get it sorted out and I concentrated just some of the aberrants and the variation was astonishing

The Whites



No Clouded Yellow this year – and with my usual propensity for spotting patterns where they aren't any – I think that I see a pattern here. In years when I travel to see Wood Whites no Cloudy, and when I see a Cloudy no Wood Whites – ho hum perhaps next year I can break the pattern?

#### 8 Wood White

No comparison can be made in terms of emergence timing for two reasons. First it's been two years since I first and last saw a Wood White and second the first time I saw the first brood and this time it was the second, late into July. In fact if it had been sunnier and warmer I might have been keeping my open for His Nibbs as I strolled along the pathways towards the 'triangle'.

I was always under the impression that the second brood were fewer in number? If indeed this is the case then it looks like the Wood Whites might have had a good year as they seemed to be similar in numbers along the pathway and in the triangle as when I saw them for the first time a few years previously.

They are a cracking little butterfly and another one of those species that on the surface could appear boring after all it's just a white butterfly. But when you get up close they're a joy to behold with their totally different profile, marked scales presenting a mosaic pattern on the wings and the delicacy of the patterning is matched by the almost fragile appearance of the butterfly itself. I'm glad that 2015 gave me the opportunity to reacquaint myself with this delightful little butterfly.



#### 9 Brimstone, 18-03-2015 –Chippenham

Brimstones seemed to buck the trend of the whites in general and seemed to have a good year. As with most of the early emerging species they were later in 2015 than 2014, by about 10 days in this particular case. However once they emerged I saw them pretty much everywhere and with multiples at Larkhill it seemed that they were heading for a successful year. In fact on the drive back from Wales between my Marshie site and Salisbury in April I counted over 14. They also hung around and I saw them in each month right through to my final butterfly sighting of 2015 in late October.



10 Large White, 13-05-2016 Marshie site

Possibly the easiest species to consider and the also biggest concern? All the whites had a great time a couple of years back but this year Large White were a month later and in far lower numbers then I can recall over my five years of butterflying. So low in fact that I can count the number of individuals that I photographed on one hand! Allowing for three times the number seen and not photographed and twice the number seen and positively identified my count for the entire year comes out at less than 50...

Hopefully this is just an artefact of me spending more time on other species, visiting the wrong places at the wrong time or not paying too much attention to the whites, but if not it is a worrying figure.





11 Small White, 20-03-2015 Work

Unusually my first Small White was actually earlier this year by a little under a fortnight. However they were also lower in numbers. Nowhere near as poor a showing as their larger relatives but still far fewer than I can recall. Again this could be because perhaps I didn't try as hard to see them or it could have been that the later start to spring meant that they never really got going from the first brood in?



12 Green-veined White, 15-04-2016 Enford

This was one of those species that slipped under the radar this year. There was always something else around when I could have been photographing a Green-veined White. A later start, lower numbers in the early brood and then picked up to possibly just less than last year in subsequent later broods.

One thing in particular that I did notice with Green-veined Whites this year is that they seemed to be much harder work. They were generally in full

blooded patrol mode when I encountered them – possibly trying to catch-up after a later start? It meant photography of them was really tricky. One in particular did stand out this year, one from Laverstock Down in which the whole underside was almost entirely lemon yellow similar in tone to a Pale Clouded Yellow.



13 Orange-tip, 07-04-2016 Bradford on Avon

Another of those hard work species! I've found a couple of reasonable spots for them now where eventually they will land briefly because of cloud cover or to nectar. However I still haven't found the crème de la crème of sites where they roost up for the night. I really need one of those types of sites so that I can get some of the lush shots that I've seen from Philzoid and Dave Miller. That being said I didn't do too badly for Orange-tips with some great close ups of a male.

Their emergence was slightly earlier than last year but that is more down to me getting out and looking earlier than anything else. Numbers wise I felt like they were up on last year but perhaps not to the heights of a couple of years ago.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 17-Jan-16 11:10 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Nice piece on the whites 😊

Interesting what you say about the Large White, I also saw worryingly few this year and in very few locations 😞.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-Jan-16 11:41 AM GMT

Great shots and info Wurzel, I agree the large White, also the Green veined were few and far between this year up our way, but whilst I was in Kent in August I was amazed to see loads of the LW's at St Margarets on the cliffs there, they were everywhere, as for the Orange Tip, I saw only one Female and that was at Gait Barrow, I'm hoping that's not a bad omen for this Spring Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 18-Jan-16 05:51 PM GMT

Love the Wood White in flight shot, Wurzel. Such delicate little creatures.

## Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 23-Jan-16 10:00 PM GMT

Excellent report on the Whites Wurzel 😊.

I have to say that for me too that 2015 wasn't such a good year for the Green-veined White and even worse for was the Orange-tip with only a solitary female photographed 😞. I think your OT pictures are very good and you have them on Cuckooflower too 🍷. My hotspot is the Basingstoke canal and the tow-path is lined with a lot of Garlic Mustard, the Orange-tip's other plant of choice. Getting to photograph them is difficult but if they're in good numbers (by that I mean 2's and 3's every 50 yards or so) you have a chance to track and catch one nectaring ... or better still, settling down to roost in the late afternoon.

### Goldie M wrote:

I was in Kent in August I was amazed to see loads of the LW's at St Margarets on the cliffs there

The large numbers on the coastal areas may be migrants Goldie. I remember seeing massive numbers in August 2013 at Southwold on the grassy banks behind the beach-huts and I think this was attributed to an influx of migrants.

### David M wrote:

Love the Wood White in flight shot, Wurzel

Indeed 🍷 😊, and a reminder that I must try out the camera's sport mode a bit more often.

Phil

## Re: Wurzel

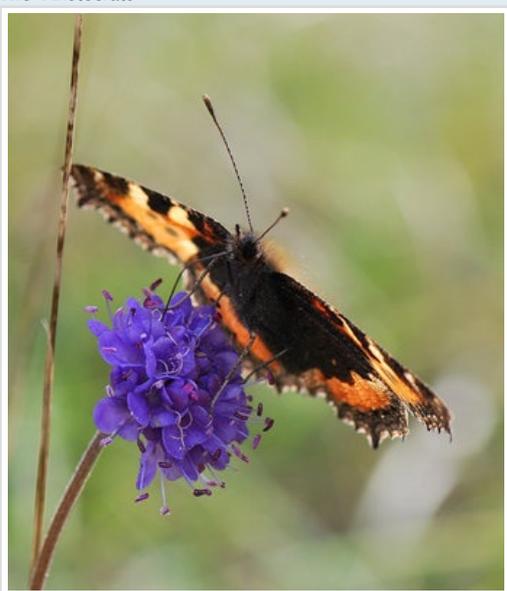
by Wurzel, 24-Jan-16 10:18 PM GMT

Cheers Paul 😊 Let's hope that they can make a comeback this year 😊

Cheers David 😊 I've always been told that Fairies don't exist but hen you watch Wood Whites flying a little part of me always thinks that actually they do.

Cheers Philzoid 😊 I need one of those OT roosting sites 🍷

The "Aristocrats"



14 White Admiral, 05-07-2016 Grovely Wood

Quite a good year for me in terms of White Admirals this year. They were never really around in huge numbers but I still saw more this year than last and also quite importantly I saw them at a couple of times at one site and at an additional site where I'd not encountered them before. They were a fortnight later than last year but this could have been due to a slower start but more likely because I didn't get out looking for them until they'd been widely reported on UKB. Bentley seemed to hold similar numbers as last year if not slightly up but I only really did the one trip here during their flight time this year so it was difficult to really judge. At Grovely where I saw my first for the year I encountered a least 4 if not 7 individuals as I walked through the Wood which was up on last year and an encouraging sign.

For me the highlight of the White Admirals this year was a totally unexpected sighting down at Studland during the start of August while I was watching a number of butterflies all taking nectar from a Buddleia bush next to the 'Discovery Centre'. This Buddleia, like most, seemed to act as an oasis bringing butterflies from all around, and I set up camp here and waited a technique similar to that used on safari when they wait by the water hole. Included in amongst the gentle feeding frenzy here were Grayling, Red Admirals and Painted Ladies when a greyish butterfly flew in and started nectaring. I couldn't work out what it was at first as I didn't expect to see this species this close to the coast, in a heath land habitat or feeding on Buddleia but when I focused in a White Admiral it indeed turned out to be.



15 Purple Emperor, 11-07-2016 Bentley Wood

This species was only 5 days later for me this year and by now the delayed start to the season was pretty much caught up, plus we were entering into a period (all too brief) of reasonably warm and sunny weather. I get the general impression that His Nibbs didn't do as well this year as last? I could be mistaken but there didn't seem to be as many reports from Fermyn and the huge numbers (100) recorded at the Knepp Estate (I think that's what it was called?) were all aerial and I'm not aware of how the count this year compared to that of 2014?

Still Bentley came up trumps for me and repaid my faith and obstinacy over the last couple of years with four PEs; 2 at the Switchback, 1 at Donkey Copse and another the Ralph McKintock memorial whilst I was watching White Letters flitting around the top of the Elm. The best Emperor was number one which came down and wandered about for a bit taking salts here and there in the middle of the path, showing off a little of the purple. Unfortunately number two which I managed to get really close to was in the shade and so the refracted rays only appeared black and the purple only came once the butterfly was further away and starting to show signs that He wanted to make a move.

Hopefully this will be the year when the 'three year cycle' is broken and there will be more grounded Emperors for me in 2016.



16 Red Admiral, 05-04-2015, Llanachaeron

This species had a massive difference between the emergence times in 2014 and those in 2015, in fact two and half months later! I finally saw my first in April at Llanachaeron on a visit to the outlaws and it was actually a relief to eventually see one. Up until this point I had only seen 4 other species of butterfly so late was the season running.

After this slow start things seemed to go well for the Red Admiral this year. It wasn't exactly a fantastic year and I can certainly recall seeing many more in some years but there were reasonable numbers across the coming months. In fact on my first ever trip to East Blean a single Red Admiral was part of a species count for the day of three. They also seemed to pick up number wise in the later half of the season and visits to Bentley Wood, Studland and Sipton Bellinger threw up multiples. However the late November flourish that I witnessed a couple of years back never really materialised and this year there weren't any November or December Admirals for me.

Two things I did notice this year was that of all the Red Admirals that I saw almost half were of the form 'bialbata' and some also had blue spotting in the second spot of the hind wing marginal band, something to look into a bit more this coming season.



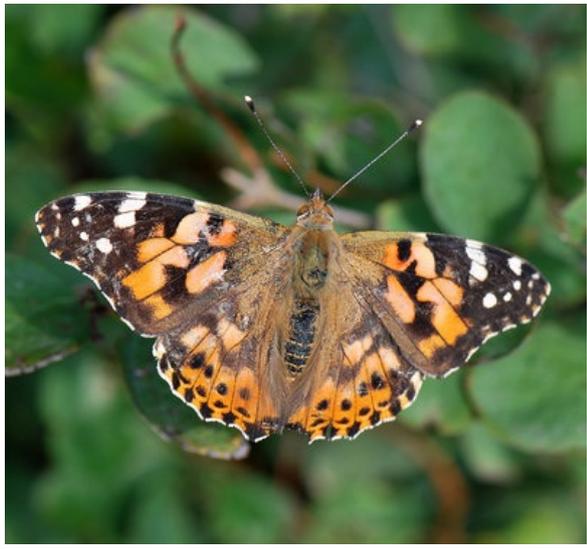


17 Painted Lady, 03-05-2015 Bentley Wood

It wasn't exactly a typical 'Painted Lady Year' never reaching the heady heights of a few years back when even Springwatch covered the mass invasion of the species. However that being said for me it was the best Painted Lady year since that time for several reasons.

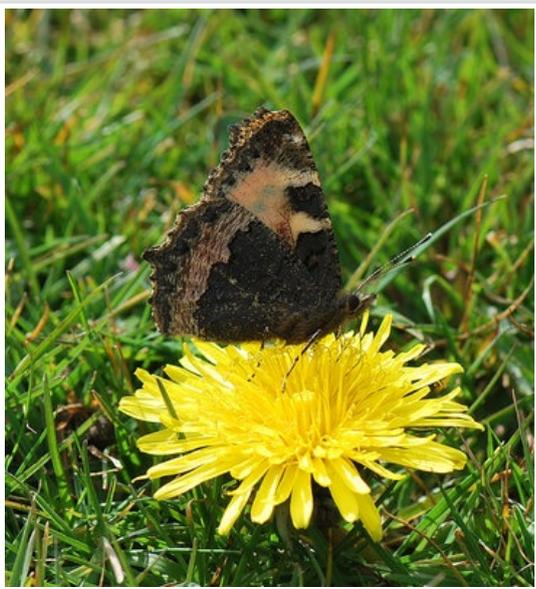
First up they were a month earlier than my first of 2014 bucking the trend of a slow emergence due to the cool spring – although as they are a migrant species their 'emergence' probably wouldn't follow the overall pattern of indigenous species. Secondly I saw them at a greater number of sites including Bentley Wood, Lulworth, Durlston, Studland, my Duke site, a couple of places on the west Wales coast, Laverstock and Larkhill. Finally it was the numbers in over half the sites that I saw them in there were pairs at least and at Durlston I saw over half way towards double figures. This reasonable year for Painted Ladies wasn't echoed by that other migrant the Clouded Yellow and normally their invasion years coincide and yet despite seeing plenty of Painted Ladies I didn't see a single Cloudy – perhaps next year will really be the 'big one'?





18 Small Tortoiseshell, 07-03-2015, Five Rivers

Artificially the latest emerging species compared to last year; a whole three months and one week later than in 2014. However the key word here is 'Artificially' as this was only because my first last year was Bob on New Year's Day. However in 2014 I made trips to Five Rivers and started seeing good numbers of Small Torts from the end of February whereas this year had to wait until well into March to start seeing them in similar numbers at my favourite early site. So they were definitely later coming out of hibernation. Once they made an appearance they had another good year and over the coming months they were easily the most commonly seen Aristocrat. In fact they were only outnumbered by Peacocks on one occasion at one Buddleia bush. However unlike previous years they didn't hang around at the tail end of the season and seemed to finish up a lot more quickly than before although this was a trend that I noticed with most other species. So to sum up - later, good numbers (common) plenty of different sites and over quicker.





19 Peacock, 05-04-2015, Llanachaeron

My first of 2015 was same day as my first Red Admiral and was just over a month later as with most early spring species. In fact it felt like a case of everything happening at once. I'd waited and waited and worked and worked Five Rivers, my 'work route' and various stop-offs on the way home to come up a paltry 4 species by April and then in one visit to Llanachaeron I picked 2-3 new species in the space of 30 minutes. Like the Small torts once the Peacocks had gotten started there seemed to be no holding them back and they were everywhere, yet always in slightly lower numbers than their cousins the Small Tort. In fact this trend seemed to continue throughout the year apart from a single trip to Studland where the Buddleia by the Discovery Centre had only 1 Small Tort and 3 Peacocks. It was heartening to see another 'showy' Aristocrat have a good year and I could sum up their year in a similar fashion to the Small Torts - later starting, good showing, quicker passing.



20 Comma, 22-03-2015, Five Rivers

Tepid is how I could sum up the Comma year - neither one thing nor the other; not particularly good yet neither particularly bad. I think that at most sites they held similar numbers as last year but nothing really stood out Comma wise for me this year apart from the fact that whilst they emerged only 2 weeks later other hibernating Aristocrats seemed to be a month late and then the Commas also lasted if not as long perhaps longer as well.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by David M, 24-Jan-16 10:40 PM GMT

Good stuff, Wurzel. Glad your persistence paid off at Bentley with His Majesty....and what a surprise not only to see a White Admiral on buddleia, but also for it to be a coastal sighting!

## Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 25-Jan-16 11:02 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Interesting report. Your 2nd shot of His Majesty is so typical of that first tentative approach with the camera!. Get something to take home in case he flies off if I try and get closer. That magic moment of seeing one land is then tempered by trepidation and fear that he will make for the nearest tree before that open wing shot is obtained.( been there, done that, got the badge!). 😊.

Trevor.

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 25-Jan-16 12:03 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, you've got some great shots there, it seems we got a great influx of Butterflies up here in the North in September and October with the weather being so nice, has my photos in the garden showed, but like you said the Peacock was down in numbers. March and April, we usually see lots up here but they were fewer last year. I'm really enjoying your posts. Although I got three new lifers this year, I still missed out on a lot of BF, SPB, PB, in particular, lets hope this year is not as wet and windy. Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by NickMorgan, 25-Jan-16 01:20 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

just catching up with the forum a bit and I read your post about the collection. I share your views entirely and this year a friend showed me a very small collection that she had inherited from her great uncle. It probably consisted of about 30 specimens from the south of England. It was amazing to see so many species that I haven't previously seen and it was very interesting being able to compare the size and colour of different species. I still wouldn't start a collection myself, but I know exactly what you mean about how enthralling a collection can be.

On the other hand, you do wonder what impact collecting so many aberrations may have had on a population. It is good to think that this practice is much reduced these days.

## Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 26-Jan-16 08:36 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, great posts again with some smashing photos 😊

I had to smile at your comments about not seeing a Red Admiral until April...I have never seen an early Red Admiral around my patch in the midlands and my first sightings are usually not until late May or June. I don't believe they manage to overwinter successfully around here yet, or at least not often.

Cheers,

Neil

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Jan-16 10:57 PM GMT

Cheers David 😊 That WA was possibly my favourite find this year 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 That moment is made even worse by the fear that someone will push their luck and approach too quickly. 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully the weather will be better this year 😊

Cheers Nick 😊 That was one of my only 'should I shouldn't I post moments. I did make a second visit and spent more time on the aberrants but I don't know if I'll get time to post those shots.

Cheers Neil 😊 I was spoilt a year or so ago with a January sighting you see and now I just expect it 😊

Introducing Bob...

Well actually this is Bob V.1. Bob was collected from the drive way behind little L's friends' house. The mum of L's friend had mentioned to my wife that there were these horrible caterpillars on the path leading to their garden one of which reared up and looked like it was going to attack snake style. As soon as my wife had relayed this piece of info to me I knew exactly what she was referring too. As the caterpillars were down on the ground beetling around I reasoned that they were nearing the end of the larval stage of their lifecycle and would pupate shortly.

I thought about getting some shots and the mum gave me permission to see if they were still there the next morning before work. So Bob v.1 was collected in an 'almost dawn raid'. When I got there I could only see one caterpillar immobile in the middle of the drive. When I approached and gently teased a grass stem over its dorsal side it still remained immobile so I collected it into a some tissue and placed it in a Waitrose coffee cup. Once at work I moved it to a plastic pot so that I could take some photos of Bob and he/she was then placed in the glass box that I'd used before for rearing moths. Bob then took to walking round and round but didn't go anywhere near the foodstuffs that it was offered. The next morning Bob wasn't a caterpillar, Bob was a pupae.



A few weeks later I moved Bob from work to my courtyard and placed him/her on some soil in our butler sink flower bed and protected the pupae with a net pop up laundry 'basket'. Unfortunately Bob didn't emerge the following spring...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-Jan-16 10:26 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, that's so sad, at least you tried, what kind of moth would it have been? I'm not too well up on Moth Caterpillars, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by NickMorgan, 28-Jan-16 04:34 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Do you have any pictures of Bob as a pupae? I don't think I have seen an Elephant Hawk Moth pupae.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Jan-16 10:32 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 It was an Elephant Hawk Moth cat – but I think something had gotten at it despite being protected by a bright pink Taz laundry net.  
Cheers Nick 😊 See below 😊

Bob Continued...

...And that was that for a while until this September when the Nancy our Technician mentioned there were snake like caterpillars munching through her flower bed. She was concerned not really for her flowers but for the caterpillars as there was very little Fuscina left in her garden. The next day she brought in the sole remaining caterpillar that she'd found clinging to the final leaf – the others I assume had gone down to pupate. We collected some Willow and Bob v2 munched away for the day. The fact that Bob was feeding I thought meant that I would be able to get some photos on Monday. When I got in however I had lessons all day and Bob had stopped eating. The following day I didn't get round to checking Bob until the afternoon and when I did Bob was clearly preparing to pupate and he'd/she'd made a tent in readiness but sticking together various leaves and twigs with silk. It amused Nancy that Bob had not just incorporated one of his lumps of poo but also some Blue tack. Getting shots was very tricky as on the room facing side Bob was hidden behind his tent and on the other side I had to focus through the glass and Bob's woven silk but you can just make out Bob's face as the tent is completed.



I tried to give Bob some peace and quiet over the next few weeks and checked in on him (from now on I'll use the male pronoun) a month later. By now he was happily ensconced in his tent and was encased in his pupa. Pupils often asked where Bob had gotten too and at first I would just point out that he was still in there. Then I would very carefully turn the 'rearing case' around so that they could see the leaf tent he'd constructed from the other side.



And that's where Bob is currently at. When the colder weather hits and the heating finally comes on at work then I might move him outside – there's on old paint store which should protect the rearing case from the elements whilst being at ambient environmental temperatures? (This was written some time ago and that is indeed where Bob now resides)

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 01-Feb-16 11:56 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I'm has bad as the kids I'm impatient to see what he's like when he comes out 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 01-Feb-16 10:46 PM GMT

Sorry Goldie you'll have a bit of a wait – a couple more months at least 😊 Should Bob emerge it will be worth the wait though 😊

February 2016

Good job it's the shortest month a it's often the most horrible weather wise!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 02-Feb-16 07:05 PM GMT

Your right about February being the coldest month Wurzel, It's my Birthday month. I was born in a snow storm, married in one, had my daughter in February, guess what! Snow storm 😊😊 This year even has 29days as well 😊 (and to cap all that, one of my Grandson's was also born in February) 😊 By the way Pauline has just sent a photo to my Diary you must see 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 02-Feb-16 11:12 PM GMT

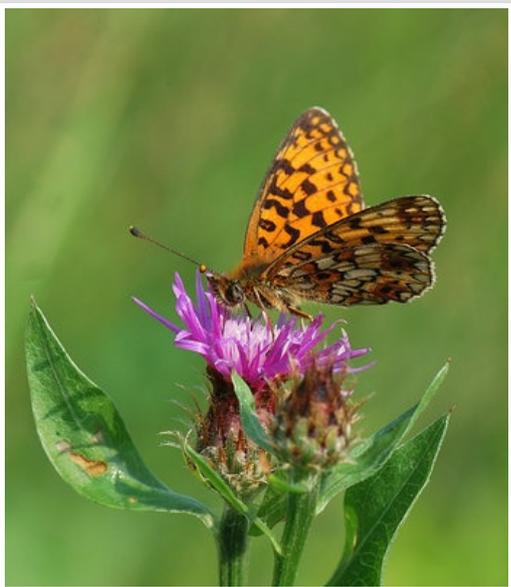
That was a great photo of Pauline's Goldie 😊😊

Fritillaries



21 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 30-05-2015

It seems a shame to start with this species as it was later emerging and also was down in numbers from what I have seen in previous years. Mind you I did visit at the very start of its emergence again and again I somehow confined myself to the Eastern Clearance. I'm sure there are plenty more Small Pearls out there so next year I need to check out more of the wood as well as some of the smaller woods nearby. Mind you I suppose seeing a second brood in August in the Czech Republic might count as getting around a bit 😊





22 Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 03-05 Bentley Wood

Normally the Pearls are the first sign of things really kicking off and if things are running late then so to do the Pearls. This year however, whilst most species were dragging their tarsi the Pearls actually emerged at pretty much the same time as last year. When Philzoid and I visited Bentley Wood there seemed to be fewer Pearls flying than last year. However from checking the book it seemed that they'd only just started emerging a couple of days before and so we'd arrived very early in their flight period whilst last year (2014) we were actually quite late and individuals were already ovipositing. So to see as many as we did so early in their flight led me to believe that at Bentley they had a reasonable year - although still nowhere near the high numbers a few years back they hadn't declined any further. They were still around a month later when I went looking for my Small Pearls.





23 Dark Green Fritillary, 01-07-2015 Larkhill

I saw my first DGF a little over a fortnight later this year compared to last. This however could have been because I didn't get to Martin Down this year for my usual 'fix' of DGFs early in the season. Not only did this have an impact on how accurately I could compare their emergence times this year but it also meant that judging how well they did would be difficult and if I was to go by numbers alone then I would have to say that they had a poor showing. That being said again this could be because I didn't visit Martin Down and so had no direct comparison available. An alternative way to judge how good a season they had would be to look at the range of sites at which I saw them. Most years I can see DGFs at Martin Down and down at Lulworth if I'm lucky as well as possibly a couple at The Devenish. This year The Devenish held none and my only early trip to Lulworth was too early for them - so things still aren't looking good for the poor old DGF. But hold on there seems to be an upturn in their fortunes as not only did I see them at Larkhill for the first time ever but I also found a couple in Bentley, 5 or 6 in Grovely Wood, good numbers at Broughton Down and eventually a couple at Laverstock and a further couple at my Duke Site. Of these all apart from Bentley Wood were 'firsts' for the site and so on this basis I judge the DGF to have a pretty successful year.



24 Silver-washed Fritillary, 05-07-2015 Grovely

As I only made the one trip to Bentley Wood at around the same time as the Silver Washed were out it is difficult again for me to judge how well they did as I have no point of comparison. So I can only judge how well they did by thinking back at which sites I saw them at – Bentley Wood, Studland and my Duke site as well as Shipton Bellinger. This may seem a nice wide range but I've seen them at a similar range before and I feel that they were slightly down in numbers.

One thing I did notice was that certainly hung around and my last one was at Shipton Bellinger whilst looking for Brostreaks and was almost into September. Whether this is a usual occurrence here or an artefact of their later season, emerging a fortnight or so later this year, I'm not sure.



25 Marsh Fritillary, 13-05-2015 Marshie site

Although it seemed that the Marshies were about at about the same time this year that was only because this year I didn't hang around to see if they were emerging. In previous years reports have come in from various other sites across Wiltshire and as soon as I start seeing counts in excess of 20 then I start making plans to head over to my Marshie site. This year I didn't wait as they were slightly later in emerging and I was champing at the bit by the time they arrived on the scene.

Number wise I feel that they had another good year and were equally as numerous at my Marshie site as in previous years despite some concerns about the huge numbers of larvae that had been seen wandering round once the main food source was depleted. Unfortunately I can't comment on how they did anywhere else as this was the only place that I saw them this year as I didn't make the trip to my Hampshire site but hopefully how they did at my Marshie site was mirrored elsewhere.



26 Heath Fritillary, 14-06-2015 East Blean

This was the year that I finally made good on my plans to 'go for Heaths' and so early one Sunday I drove up to meet with Philzoid and then onto Kent. So having never seen this species before I can't comment on how well they're doing or their emergence time this compared to...well any year. A couple of things I did notice were that one they were so, so variable. At times I was questioning whether they were all the same species. Also they've moved on slightly. I was reliably informed that I'd only have to pull into the car park and there they would be. Only when I visited they weren't and neither where they just along the path by the notice board. Things weren't looking good until we found a couple in the first clearing. Finally in a newer clearing we came across almost a hundred all in one small area. This coming year I have my eye on a couple of other species so I don't know if I'll be able to go back to East Blean but I would love to...





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 03-Feb-16 12:04 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

That's a gorgeous female DGF you have there. I've seen fewer DGF over the last two years around here, than in previous years.

The Heaths used to be found right at the end of the car park, but this area was very overgrown, none seen there, but we found plenty a little into the wood.

This year it would be good to meet you at CH. for the Marsh Frit. as last year I missed you by a day at two sites.

May 2016 bring bountiful riches,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Feb-16 10:29 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor I was more than happy with that DGF 😊 I normally keep my eyes on the Wiltshire updates and when I see numbers reaching 20+ I head to my Marshie site on the next available weekend, so this year I'll give you a heads up and we can arrange a meet to make sure you get plenty of Marshies 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 03-Feb-16 10:45 PM GMT

Well done with the Heaths, Wurzel. Some nice, sharp images of this rare UK species.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 03-Feb-16 10:49 PM GMT

A veritable feast of Fritillaries, Wurzel! Some top notch images there.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 04-Feb-16 09:51 PM GMT

A nice report and great photos Wurzel 😊. I too missed out on my fix of DGF's at Martin Down, normally one of my highlights of the season. It was scuppered by that unseasonal cold afternoon on the 28th of June 😞 (after our meet-up at Bentley for my successful last minute dot.com Small Pearl sighting). Despite missing out on the DGF's at Martin, I was able to see them at zig-zag Box hill in good numbers, certainly more than I've seen there before.

Fully agree with you regarding the Heaths and their variable colours and markings. Variation is further evident when I compare the East Blean (ssp. athalia) ones to the ones I photographed in France (ssp. athalia or celadussa?). Overall the EB woodland Heaths were darker and more heavily marked than the French ones seen in meadows and along roadside verges. Perhaps this is a function of their different habitats 🤔 (woodland Dukes are darker than the grassland ones for example 😊)

Silver-washed numbers seemed to be down this year

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 05-Feb-16 07:18 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I missed out on every Frit last year would you believe it 😞 The weather was so bad at Gait Barrow and I decided to go to Norfolk in June and Kent in August, and although I went up to Arnside Knot I still couldn't find them, I hope this year will be better 😊  
Your photos are really great and make me more determined to find them this year 🍀🍀🍀 Goldie 😊 PS forgot I did see the High Brown 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 05-Feb-16 08:11 PM GMT

Another great report with some cracking photos, I particularly like the female DGF and the PBF underside framed by the leaves 😊

I have never seen the Heath Frits in Kent or Essex, mine have all been seen in the west country where they can also be quite variable in appearance.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Feb-16 10:23 PM GMT

Cheers David 😊 At East Blean photography of this species is relatively easy as there are so many 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I found Heaths to become of the species which it's actually harder to get a rubbish shot of than a good one 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 We need to remedy the lack of Martin Down DGFs this year 😊 Hopefully I might get to experience some of the Heath-a-likes is year 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck on the Frit hunt 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I was tempted to try no find some Westcountry Heaths but as it was the first time I'd have seen the species it seemed preferable to go for a "sure thing". Hopefully this year or next I'll be able to experience some Westcountry Heaths for myself 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Feb-16 11:17 PM GMT

Introducing Bobette!

About a week after Bob was settled in and had pupated I was paid a visit by the Technology Technician. She'd found a caterpillar crawling across the Quad and wondered what it was? I recognised it but couldn't remember which species it was but after a quick check it turned out to be an Eyed Hawk Moth.



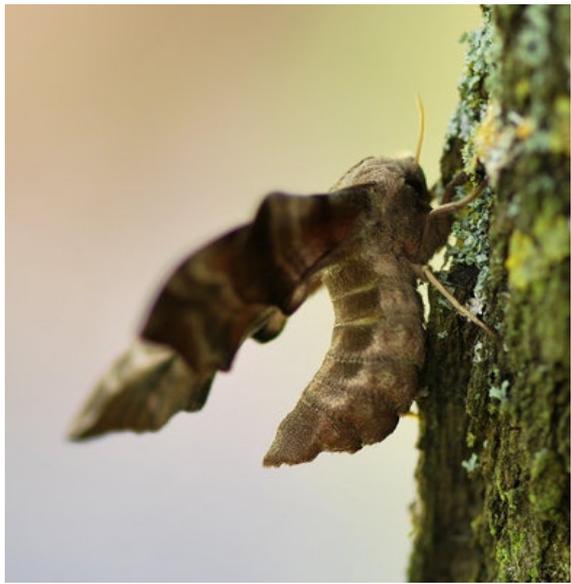
'Bobette' was placed in the case with some food and I checked up on Bobette every hour or so. Bobette was a right wanderer and didn't seem interested in the food sources I'd placed in the case and this observation combined with how he'd/she'd been discovered led me to believe that Bobette would soon pupate...

I came in on the following Monday morning and my prediction had come to fruition. There in the case was a dry husk reminiscent of a dead alien and a shiny pupal case.





There is a back story to the appearance of Bobette. Last season (2014) Philzoid gave me five Eved Hawk Moth caterpillars which he'd brought on from eggs left by a female in his Moth trap. All five emerged over a weekend and when I came in on Monday morning four were in cop. I took two home as they were still in cop at the end of the day but the other three I released in the school grounds. One of the three, a female, I released on the same Willow under which Bobette was discovered. Could Bobette be the progeny of the 2014 female pictured below?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 07-Feb-16 11:55 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Those Heath Fritillaries are real beauties 😊

There is no turning back once you start rearing larvae 😊 Great stories and Pics as usual Wurzel 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 08-Feb-16 12:55 PM GMT

Great shots Wurzel, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 09-Feb-16 06:48 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

There is a back story to the appearance of Bobette. Last season (2014) Philzoid gave me five Eved Hawk Moth caterpillars which he'd brought on from eggs left by a female in his Moth trap. All five emerged over a weekend and when I came in on Monday morning four were in cop. I took two home as they were still in cop at the end of the day but the other three I released in the school grounds. One of the three, a female, I released on the same Willow under which Bobette was discovered. Could Bobette be the progeny of the 2014 female pictured below?

Great find Wurzel 😊 . The Bluish green colouration and blue tail horn of the larva help separate it from the similar and more common Poplar

Hawk.

Although Eyed hawk are not uncommon I think it's very likely that Bobette was a descendant from that last years' moth. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 10-Feb-16 06:24 AM GMT

That's a fabulous array of Fritillaries Wurzel. Great story of Bob and Bobette too 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Feb-16 11:09 PM GMT

Cheers Paul 😊 I think my rearing will be curtailed by my wife will only want me to 'rear' at work 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully there will be a few more to come...

Cheers Philzoid 😊 I really did get value for money from those cats you gave me then 😊

Cheers Pauline 😊 Keep your eyes peeled for Bobina 😊

Browns



27 Speckled Wood, 20-04-2015 Laverstock Church

I started seeing Specklies at around about the same time as last year, in fact only four days later and this seemed to set the precedent for the Browns which as a whole seemed less affected by the late, cool spring which held back a lot of other species. I don't think I've seen my first Specklies in the same place ever and this year was no exception with my first turning up in the graveyard of Laverstock church.

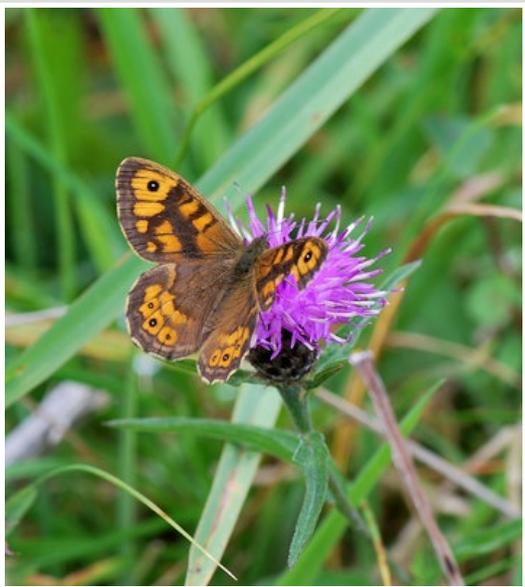
I terms of numbers judging Specklies is always difficult as I don't always visit the same exact sites at a similar time each year and so comparison is made difficult. Also they are such a ubiquitous species. However my general feeling is that had a good year and this hunch is further backed up by my observation of at least three at Larkhill.





28 Wall, 13-05-2016 Marshie Site

My first of the year was either a couple of days early or a week and a half late depending on which one I Wall I counted as my first last year! Although I didn't see them in numbers larger than 3 this isn't that unusual for me and so I still reckon that they had a good year just unfortunately they didn't have a brilliant year. One interesting thing I saw this year was their distribution. It seems over recent years that they have become more coastal yet this year I saw Walls at four different sites and two of these were inland.



29 Marbled White, 15-06-2015 Laverstock

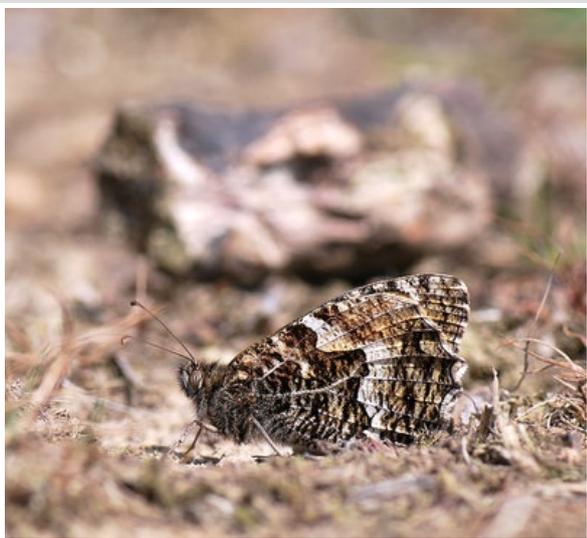
Only one day later this year! Mind you this could possibly be because I waited last year until they came out in force before going and looking for them? When I saw my first there wasn't a single butterfly but there were 30 or 40 across the Banks at Five Rivers. This year when I found my first it was a singleton at Laverstock and it was the only representative of the species I saw until a week later by which time their numbers had built. Despite seeing many wherever I went and seeing them at a range of different sites I still felt that they were slightly down compared to last year? Could the cooler spring have had an effect - a lowering in numbers instead of a later emergence?



30 Grayling, 18-07-2015 Godshill

Graylings were out at the same sort of time this year and like most of the Browns didn't show that much difference in the timing of their emergence. For me their arrival on the scene is bittersweet as I love the 'hunt' involved and the fact that soon Silver-spotted Skippers and Brown Hairstreaks will be showing but also rue the passing of the year and drawing to a close of the season as it is one of the later species.

Then main conclusion that I drew from my Grayling sightings this year is that I need to get out more as I only encountered them at two sites. At Godshill there seemed to be about the same and at Studland their numbers seemed slightly up so I'd go for up overall although others I've spoken to have thought the numbers were down?





31 Hedge Brown/Gatekeeper 05-07-2015 Grovely Wood

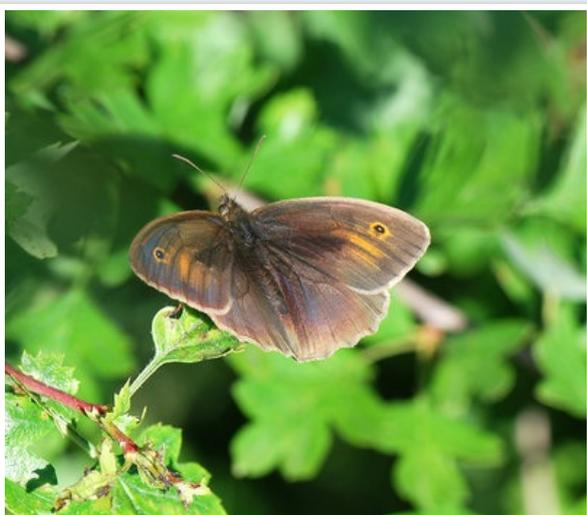
Slightly later the Hedge Brown arrived as Yoda would say. For me they seemed to have a good year though whether this was reflected nationally I couldn't say. In fact on one visit to The Devenish there were so many of them flying around I thought at first that they were small Meadow Browns. Only when I approached did I realise that they were Hedge Browns, on some flower heads there were 12-14 all perched and taking nectar. I've read about clouds of Chalkhills but this was almost clouds of Hedge Browns, well perhaps a bijou cloud, small and exclusive. Surprisingly despite the masses of Hedgies I saw I had a poor year for aberrant - with only two or three excessa. Even the lane didn't throw up the usual selection of oddities - perhaps our later visit to the Outlaws was a bit too late and all the good stuff was gone?





32 Meadow Brown, 14-06-2015 East Blean

Meadow Browns followed their usual story arriving at a similar time and in similar numbers, always ubiquitous and always misleading; "is that a Grayling/Wall/Brown Hairstreak I saw out of the corner of my eye - nope it was a Meadow Brown." This year was a good one for me as I managed to capture the wonderful oily sheen on the wings as well as being able to enjoy the subtlety and beauty of the common. The most unusual sighting was my first for the year Meadow Brown deep in East Blean, unusual not because of where it was but because it was one of only three species seen all day despite seeing over 150 or so butterflies.





33 Small Heath, 11-05-2015 Laverstock

I'm still worried about the Small Heath as even though they didn't do any worse than last year they didn't do any better either so levelling out to roughly the same numbers. Sometimes I want to gee them up a bit, "come on you chaps get cracking, think of the good of your species, get some toughened exoskeleton (well I can't encourage them to get some backbone)". But the last couple of years they don't seem to show any signs of getting back to their former glory days of being those pesky little blighters that spook everything else. They seemed to be out at a similar time and so perhaps this accounted for their lower numbers – not so much held back but down? I really struggled to photograph them as well as most would be down low and there were always blades of grass in the way.



34 Ringlet, 22-06-2015 Laverstock

The Ringlets arrived about a week later this year and I don't feel that they had a particularly good year. Like a lot of Browns it always difficult to tell unless there has been a pretty drastic change in fortunes but it felt like I didn't see so many at all my usual sites. Normally a damper start to the season seems to benefit this species but perhaps it was too cool for too long? Despite seeing fewer I seemed to encounter more variants this year with some males no having any spots on their upper side at all whilst others had much reduced spotting on their underside – is this the arête form? I always feel that this is a 'smart' butterfly and if it were human it would be dressed in bow tie and velvet smoking jacket pouring a large Cognac.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Pete Eeles, 11-Feb-16 12:15 PM GMT

Nice work, Wurzel!

Your Ringlet ab. may be parvipuncta. Although this was a quick scan of the relevant aberrations page since I'm on a plane and about to take off!

<http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/aberrations.php?species=hyperantus>

Cheers,

- Pete

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 14-Feb-16 10:58 PM GMT

Cheers Pete – I hope there are plenty of butterflies or 'early stages' wherever you're jetting off to 😊

Introducing Bobina...

At around the same time as Bob and Bobette were happily ensconced in the old case in my lab some of my year 11's arrived with an unusual looking caterpillar which they'd found wandering along the footpath. Luckily they'd brought it wrapped up in a few leaves as once I'd placed the leaves in the case and the caterpillar had emerged it was very hairy and brightly coloured, usually a sign of toxicity or irritating hairs. After a quick check on my British Moths App I was able to identify it as a Sycamore Moth caterpillar and so determined that it wasn't toxic but the hairs were an irritant.



Bobina displayed the usual nomadic propensity, crawling around the entire case searching for somewhere to settle down and start to pupate.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-Feb-16 03:52 PM GMT

Won't be long now Wurzel, we've had four cold but lovely frosty days here, the Sun was lovely and brought out the first Daff's, just another week or two now. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 16-Feb-16 07:27 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, more interesting comments and cracking photos in your look backs. I think I am in general agreement with your observations for most species except Ringlets, there were hordes of them around here.

Also enjoyed your reports on the cats. I have a Lime Hawk Moth pupa in the garage which I found as a wandering caterpillar on the pavement outside our house last September and put into a container with a few inches of garden soil where it pupated a couple of days later.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Feb-16 11:14 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Counting down the days now surely, hopefully we won't have one of those annoying Springs which never get going 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Hordes of Ringlets eh? sounds like someone was keeping them all to himself 😊 Looking forward to the Lime Hawk Moth shots later in

the year.

#### Bobina Part 2

The very next day after being saved from being squished on the path I thought that I'd see how Bobina was faring and whether some food was required. However the case was Bobina-less. I looked all around, checked the corners and then noticed that there was a small hole through the wood that was just about Bobina size. Bobina was gone...Or so I thought. For some reason, probably when trying to slide the glass front back down, I glanced up inside the top facing and there was Bobina looking a lot less active than on the previous day. I got some tissue and carefully teased Bobina out of the crevice and placed it on the base of the case. Bobina didn't move much, just the odd 'head wave'.

The next day Bobina was gone and in Bobinas place was a silken mat stitched to the tissue with Bobina presumably nestled inside. It took me about a fortnight before I got round to taking some photos of the larval casing.



And there Bobina remains possibly until March!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

#### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-Feb-16 09:29 AM GMT

Looking forward to seeing Bobina in March 😊 Goldie 😊

#### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Feb-16 09:11 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 As am I, I've never seen a Sycamore moth before 😊

Metalmarks



35 Duke of Burgundy, 23-05-2015 Duke Site

It felt like hard work getting my Duke this year. Over the last couple of years I've found that at one site in particular, my aptly named Duke Site and so it

was again this year but only after several failed visits. It seems that they emerge about a month behind other sites here which could account for why they seemed later by 3½ weeks. As well as the general lateness caused by the slow start to spring last year my first came from Bentley Wood whereas this year it was from my Duke Site. I think I made about 4 trips there hoping to see my first Duke of the year only to have to come away with various other species (including the several of the Blues) but not the tried for Duke.

When I did eventually find them they were fewer in number and also they seem to have moved. The first time I visited this site they were pretty much all over it with one particular track seeming to be the hotspot. Last year the track was still producing the goods but other areas seemed to have far fewer Dukes. Yet this year I saw only one on the track and that was on my second visit. It seems that they were now favouring the top corner of the clearing and there were at four individuals in this little area. Hopefully this is because this area is sheltered from the prevailing, and this year blooming persistent, wind on two sides by tall stands of trees which hem the clearing into a tidy square. Or equally as hopefully they're just moving as to more suitable habitat as the 'succession' continues.

I don't know if I'd caught them early in their flight at this site but I only saw a maximum of five on both of my fruitful visits which after the highs of the last two successive years was disappointing. Added to this the fact that I didn't see any at Bentley led me to believe that in this area they didn't have to good a year, particularly when compared to those areas where the habitat is managed specifically for this species.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Feb-16 12:34 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel your Duke photos were well worth the wait 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 21-Feb-16 02:18 PM GMT

If at first you don't succeed.....

Persistence pays off, Wurzel. Hopefully, the Dukes will enjoy a better season this year (and the start isn't too far away) 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Feb-16 09:48 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I've twigged that this is a 'late' site so this year I possibly won't have the wait 😊

Cheers David 😊 Yep let's hope they have a better year in 2016.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 25-Feb-16 03:56 PM GMT

That's a smashing shot of a Duke wurzel and a lovely shot of the Fritillary your eldest found 🍷 Pleased to see you're keeping them well trained 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by NickMorgan, 25-Feb-16 07:10 PM GMT

Lovely pictures Wurzel. The Duke is one of many UK butterflies I have never seen.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Feb-16 03:59 PM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 As they get older it get's harder to keep them well trained but hopefully letting them take their own shots will keep them interested 😊

Cheers Nick 😊 I'm sure you'll get to see one, if climate change continues maybe even at a local site...

Lime Hawk Moth

Way back in May a colleague called me over to their room as they'd found a 'large moth'. Normally if it was any other member of staff I might have given them a cursory 'thanks' and had a little look later on. However this particular member of staff had good form having previously found me my first Large Emerald and so I grabbed my camera straight away and headed over. I was really glad that I did as there was a beautifully marked large moth, a Lime Hawk Moth. It wasn't nearly anywhere as big as the Privet Hawk moth I found but was still a good size and the markings were cracking changing as it moved and caught the light. There were greens and greys and pinks in there with fine lines and blotches of colour.





Unfortunately the member of staff has since left to run their own guest house in Tregaron so no more Moth finds for me but fortunately their guest house is just down the road from Cors Caron, I'll find out the name and I can let any Large Heath hunters know! For me 2015 seemed to be the year of the Hawk Moth with my first Privet, my first Lime and soon to be revealed Bob and Bobette 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 28-Feb-16 05:49 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

What a stunning specimen !. It reminds me of a ' Vee ' bomber in full combat livery. I must look harder for Hawk moths, they really are show stoppers.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-Feb-16 08:53 PM GMT

The Moth looks great Wurzel, can't wait to see Bob and Bobette Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 28-Feb-16 08:56 PM GMT

That's a beautiful moth, Wurzel. Such a shame that these hawk moths tend to fly at night meaning we rarely catch a glimpse of them.

## Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 29-Feb-16 08:47 PM GMT

A Lovely marked moth ...and the most variable of a trio whose larvae are tree feeding species (Eyed and Poplar being the other two) 😊. Also (perhaps) the most difficult of the three larvae to rear.

### David M wrote:

Such a shame that these hawk moths tend to fly at night meaning we rarely catch a glimpse of them.

The species is not uncommon, certainly in the South east and you may be lucky enough to find it resting on a fence post or tree-trunk during the day. I found one on a petrol pump at a Sainsbury's station in Sunderland a few years back 😊. Most night-flying moths are attracted to light so leaving a downstairs or external light on through the night might get you one. Some moths are also attracted to sweet things tree-sap or sugar preps (recipes can be found on the internet) but it won't work for any of this trio as the adults have no mouthparts.

Hope you don't mind me posting these pics in your diary. Certainly feel free to remove them if you want to 😊.



2nd instar larva



*F. brunnea* (Brown form) this one with reduced median band

Phil

## Re: Wurzel

by MrSp0ck, 29-Feb-16 09:01 PM GMT

Lime Hawks fly at Dusk, if you hang a female out, a male usually arrives about 9.30pm in May.

Eye and Poplar Hawks are later flyers, and usually come to a female after 1am.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Mar-16 10:20 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 'V Bomber' is a spot on description 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Not long now - Bob, Bobette and Bobina are all still tucked up... 😊

Cheers David 😊 You're right it is a shame that they're night-flying, but it makes them all the nicer when you find one in daylight. 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Of course I don't mind you posting those cracking shots, once I'd got over the jealousy that is 🤖 😊 I'd only just discovered the brown form of the moth as my Moths App had finally updated and then you've got a photo 😊

Cheers Mr Spock 😊 This one obviously hadn't read up on itself as it was flying around mid morning 😊😊

March 2016

Hopefully this will be the month when it all starts happening...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Mar-16 09:56 AM GMT

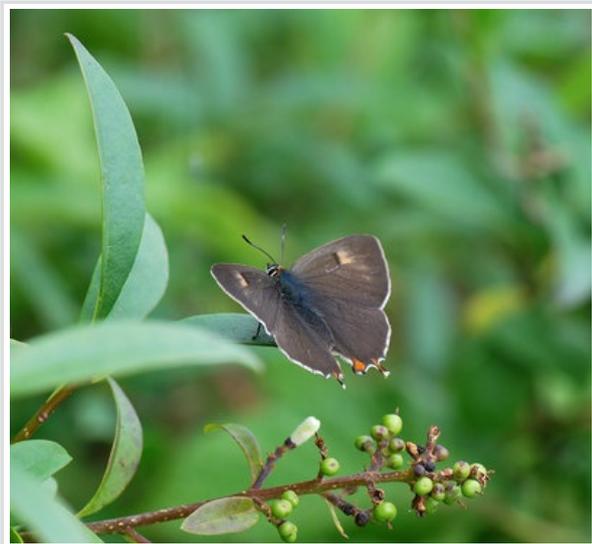
It's all happening here Wurzel only it's not Butterflies it's Snow 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Mar-16 11:04 PM GMT

Sorry to hear that Goldie 😊 Mind you it might mean that any last minute pathogens get knocked on the head and so you'll get to see more butterflies eventually 😊

The Hairstreaks



36 Green Hairstreak, 03-05-2015 Duke Site

Quite a bit later this year than last (about three weeks) but I may have left my first visit until later in their flight time than I intended which may account for this. My first sighting was an individual with quite a bit of wear on the wings and even a few tears and nicks so it had been so knocking about for a bit. It was great to see them at the same site in the 'usual place' - check me out a few years ago this species was causing me to tear my hair out and now I have a 'usual' site.

They seem to have had a reasonable year, noting earth shattering but possibly not a backwards move. My Duke site threw up a good smattering across all of my visits as did my Marshie site on the single visit I made there. Unfortunately though I didn't get to Martin Down this year and Larkhill didn't have any either but Laverstock did - which was a new site for me to encounter the Greenstreak. That being said I'm not too sure if this is a regular site for this species as I saw my single Greenstreak here at the end of July which suggests that it could have been a transient individual that was hanging on past its 'end date'. Still the end of July is pretty good going for a Greenstreak although it was so worn perhaps Grey streak would have been more appropriate?



37 Brown Hairstreak, 03-08 Shipton Bellinger

Almost a week earlier this year and reports from elsewhere would suggest that Brostreaks did okay in 2016. For me it was a bit up and down. After some phenomenal luck with a beautiful male early in their flight subsequent weeks away in Wales and Czech Republic meant that I almost missed the females at Shipton. There were reports from the previous days of at least 100 females all coming down and egg-laying. We had to settle for brief sightings of Brostreaks but one female was nice enough to come down for some close up shots of possibly the most gorgeous coloured UK Butterfly. After that I was limited to the odd sighting and eventually two trips when I didn't see a single Brostreak so perhaps they'd just gotten on and finished early as the weather took a real turn for the worst in the later part of August. So it is difficult to judge how well they did. Brilliantly judging by what others were saying but perhaps not so well from personal experience? I'll go with what others were saying...



38 Purple Hairstreak, 11-07-2015 Bentley Wood

Very slightly later this year, about 5 days, but this was mainly because I didn't get to Bentley Wood until slightly later. From my own experience although things still seem dire Purple Hairstreak wise there was a slight upturn in their fortunes. Last year I saw a most a couple of Purps at Bentley whereas this year there were at least a dozen or so along the main track, with a couple here and there further on in the wood towards Donkey Copse so definitely looking ever so slightly better. From a personal perspective a disappointing year as I missed out, again, on a photo of this species. However I am getting closer as I watched one drift down from the top of an Oak tree, it was looking like it was going to land and then someone coming along the

path seemed to spook it so it flipped away from the leaf and floated back up into the canopy. I was gutted, especially as this chap was the same one that had spooked a grounded Emperor earlier. Oh well it will make getting a photo all the more sweeter when i eventually capture an image of a Purp.

39 White-letter Hairstreak, 11-07-2015 Bentley Wood

This species emerged much later this year but this later sighting could have been because I wasn't actually looking. It's a bit embarrassing to admit but I didn't set out to see any Whitters this year. As I wasn't going to be visiting the well known site where they come down frequently they were well off my radar. The only reason that I did see one was because I just happened to be in Bentley, things were going well for Emperors and so I wandered up to the Memorial and after a wee bit of neck craning there were the tell tale LBJ's flitting out from the top of the (Wytch)Elms. I can't really make an accurate judgement on how they did as I only ever see a few anyway but one thing that has concerned me is that the Elms this colony rely on are diseased and dying. Hopefully the surrounding suckers will be mature enough to offer the colony a suitable base.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Mar-16 10:42 AM GMT

Fantastic Wurzel, I love the open winged shots you don't often see them, hope fully I'll get to see some BHS this Summer. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by NickMorgan, 04-Mar-16 01:34 PM GMT

Lovely pictures Wurzel.

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 04-Mar-16 01:35 PM GMT

I agree with your comments about the scarcity of Purple Hairstreak Wurzel. In the hairstreak table I would say they've been relegated to 3rd (possibly fourth) behind Green and Brown (and white-letter) 😞. I have not been seen them locally at all this last couple of years, yet 5 - 6 years ago they were common and certainly easy to get to see if not to photograph 😊.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Mar-16 10:57 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 If you can get the timing right you're almost sure to get some Brostreaks - the golden time is from 11am to about 2-3pm 😊

Cheers Nick for your kind comment 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Hopefully the Purps will bounce back like the Holly Blue and Small Tort have 😊

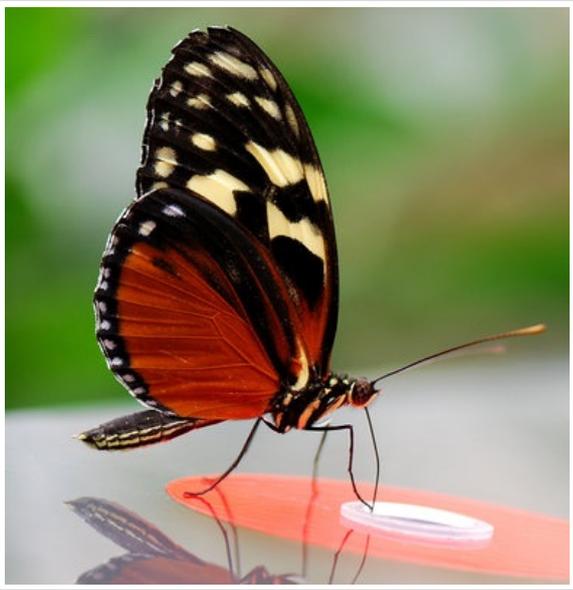
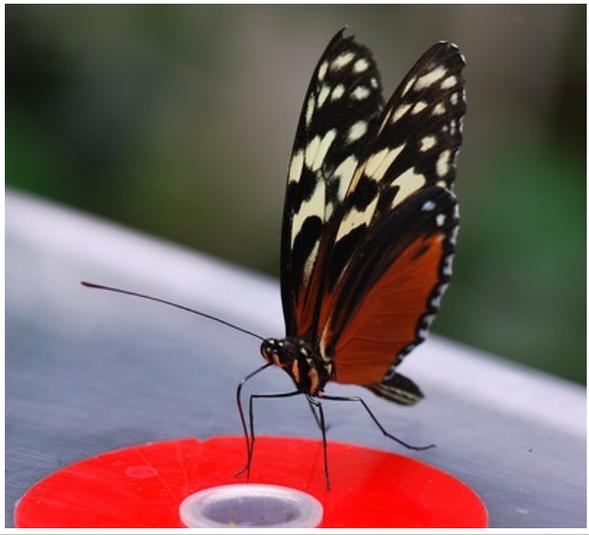
Bristol Zoo - Part 1

It's getting to that time of the year again - I'm progressing/almost finished with my 'Tally' posts, I've covered my Moths and everyone else is heading to Wisley for the Butterflies Under Glass. However I get to go to a different butterfly enclosure as each year I run the year 7 trip to Bristol Zoo. Once the pupils have seen the majority of the exhibits and have covered the work we need to do (adaptations and environments this year) they are allowed to look around in small groups. This allows some of the staff time for a coffee and me time in the butterfly house. Last year we left it until the summer to visit and so there were a few new species for me to acquaint myself with amongst the usual range.

First up the usual suspects...

Tiger long wing







Julia



Glasswing



Morpho



Paper Kite



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 07-Mar-16 09:51 AM GMT

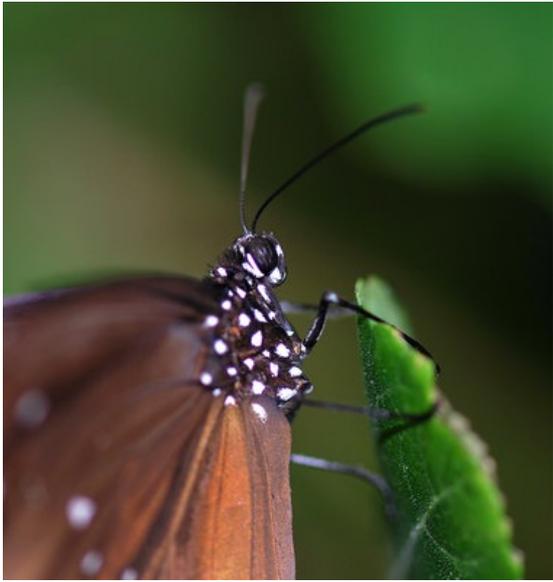
Lovely shots Wurzel, thanks for the advice, I plan to find them this year all being well. Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 08-Mar-16 11:35 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck with the Brostreaks.

Bristol Zoo – Part 2



The most common 'newbie' at Bristol this year (well really last year) was the Common Crow, *Euploea core*. This is a common lowland species from S Asia and Australia and is found in a wide range of habitats from tropical rainforests through to parks and gardens and even woodland near the beach. They often roost communally and so at dusk you can find 12 or so hanging from a twig and they also aestivate during the hotter parts of the year.



They have a steady, slow flight gliding with minimum effort as they seek out moisture, decomposing fruit and leguminous plants to imbibe from and are very bold when nectaring. Indeed when I was taking their photos they didn't seem bothered in the slightest.



After a bit of research on the internet later all became clear as they are the 'model' in a Mullerian ring. The caterpillar feeds on noxious plants absorbing pyrrolizidine alkaloids. These are carried through to the adults making them distasteful to insectivorous birds. If a bird is desperate or inexperienced enough to try taking a Common Crow then the butterfly plays dead and exudes this noxious liquid and the nauseous bird lets go. When I was visiting I was lucky enough so see almost the entire life cycle as there were eggs, caterpillars and the remains of pupal cases looking like miniature glass bottles.





I also witnessed the courtship behaviour. The males process the same alkaloids that offer them protection to produce pheromones to attract the females. They will glide slowly past the female and yellow brush like organs project from their abdomens to disperse the scent into the air to entice the female.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Mar-16 10:36 AM GMT

That's fantastic Wurzel, what an amazing Butterfly, some of our BF's could do with a few of those Characteristics to survive here. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 09-Mar-16 01:47 PM GMT

Excellent report and pictures Wurzel on the Common Crow. 😊 Funnily enough the only stage I've seen of this species *is* the pupa in the Benalmadena BH on my Spanish trip.

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 09-Mar-16 08:37 PM GMT

If seeing tropical species in butterfly houses during the off-season is good enough for Guy Padfield, then it's good enough for all of us! I've done this myself and it provides a bit of a lift at a time when we cannot indulge ourselves outdoors due to inclement conditions.

Some interesting species there, Wurzel, and if I had somewhere local like this that I could 'dip into' during the winter then I'd be doing so two or three times a month!!

### Re: Wurzel

by MrSpOck, 09-Mar-16 08:59 PM GMT

A few of us are lucky enough to have a Tropical Butterfly House in our own garden, but I only keep it going in the Spring, Summer and Autumn, as it is too difficult to keep the butterflies going through the winter.

We added a word Heliquarium to the language.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Mar-16 11:17 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Mimicry is a fascinating thing. 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 If I'd have known that I'd have asked to borrow your shots for the complete lifecycle.

Cheers David 😊 It's a once a year thing for me and barely 40 minutes if I'm lucky. 😊

Cheers Mr Spock 😊 Sounds interesting – how many species do you have?

### Bristol Zoo – Part 3

Another new species for me was the Mosaic or Dirce Beauty, *Colobura dirce*. When it came to identifying this species it was relatively easy as there are only 2 species to choose from in the Genus. Both are Neotropical favouring primary and secondary forest between 0–1400m and most frequently below 800m. They can also be found in orchards and shady forest. *Colobura dirce* does have two subspecies and 'm guessing that this is the type and not *wolcottii* the Caribbean form.

I'm not sure if the adults are toxic but the young larva display an interesting behaviour to protect them from carnivorous ants. They produce frass chains from which they hang safe from the ants as the ants don't like walking over it.

The pose shown below is fairly typical as the butterfly often perches, head down, about 2, up a tree where it imbibes sap and moisture from the cracks and crevices in the trunk, it may also imbibe from urine taking the salts. Once feeding it is reluctant to move but if not and it is disturbed it will evade predators and photographers by running around the tree trunk to the other side. I witnessed this once when a party of toddlers came racing in and spooked the butterfly. It was quite comical to watch it running round the trunk and is possibly the most pathetic predator evasion technique I've seen.



Near to the exit of the enclosure there are the rearing cases and it is interesting to see the pupal cases and the larva in various stages of development but a bit of a pain trying to get photographs through the glass. Inside were several adults that had recently emerged and hadn't yet been released into the enclosure.

One looked like a massive Brimstone and turned out to be *Anteos chlorinde*, the White Angled Sulphur. This is a wide ranging American species seen throughout the year in the tropics and from August through to December in the northernmost part of its range (the Mexican subspecies *nivifera*). Not only is it wide ranging geographically but it is also found across most habitat types possibly because of its strong flight and migratory tendencies. Like the Brimstone of Europe it never settles with its wings open, relying on its cryptic shape and leaf veins to protect it.



The second butterfly visible through the looking glass as a real calico beauty. I finally nailed the identification down to *Februa* or Gray Cracker, *Hamadryas februa*, a neo-tropical species found in Central and South America in deciduous and subtropical woodland. They get their name because some of the Genus can produce a cracking sound when they take off. As the males open their wing they cause spiny rods on the abdomen tip t brush

against bristles on the anal spurs. Whether this is used to trigger excitement in the females, deter other males or both is unclear.

In terms of photography they would seem to be real pains and so capturing this one on film before it could start showing 'normal' behaviour was quite lucky. They adopt a similar pose to the one in the shot; head down, wings wide apart and flat against the trunk but generally 10m up the tree. The males may come down to 2-3m but that's still a bit of a pain for photography. If disturbed they'll fly up high again but should return to their original resting place eventually via a series of 'hops' becoming increasingly lower each time



We have another visit planned for this year in July so hopefully I'll see these species flying and behaving, not just sitting against the glass. Hopefully too they may have a few 'new' species as well...  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 13-Mar-16 06:21 PM GMT

Some smashing shots there Wurzel of exotic species. I'd be interested to know how big that White Angled Sulphur was? It looks quite impressive and remarkably similar to our Brimstone.

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 14-Mar-16 02:33 PM GMT

Great report and pictures Wurzel ... and you've featured three species I've never seen at Wisely nor any other butterfly house for that matter 😊👍.

Interesting to see a butterfly that has adopted the evasion tactics of a squirrel 😊😄. Also, that cracker lives up to its name in looks alone 🙄!

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 14-Mar-16 04:01 PM GMT

Lovely pictures and an interesting write-up, Wurzel. I've yet to see the magnificent *Anteos chlorinde* in my local butterfly house (the Papiliorama) – nor have I seen *Euploea core*, though I've seen that commonly in India (where, as you describe, it hangs from trees in numbers with other Danaids). The Indian subspecies lacks the whitish apices. I have seen the closely related *E. midamus* in the Papiliorama, so watch out for that on your next trip. Both are mimicked by females of *Hypolimnas bolina*, another common butterfly house species. I've also seen both *Colobura* species in the Papiliorama – so it's worth examining those closely. They're obviously both on the breeding circuit.

Guy

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Mar-16 12:33 AM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 The Sulphur ranges from 70-90mm wingspan, and I think the maximum Brimstone is in the mid 70s.

Cheers Phil 😊 The cracker is certainly named well!

Cheers Guy 😊 I'll have to keep my eyes open when I make my next visit in June, I might also take the girls to Butterfly World during the break as they're both still young enough to be interested in their 'uncool' dads hobby.

The Blues



40 Small Copper, 03-05-2015 Duke Site

If number of sites is anything to go by then possibly Small Copper didn't have as a good a year this year as last? I saw my first one on exactly the same day as last year but at a different site. I missed out on them at both Larkhill and The Devenish this year so I'm not sure why this was - were their numbers down or was it just that I mistimed my visits and they coincided with the gaps between broods? Yet at my Duke site they were around in multiples? My gut feeling is that they had a slight downturn this year but nowhere to the extent or the depths of a few years hence.



41 Small Blue, 23-05-2015 Duke Site

When I started considering how this species had fared this year I was struggling to make my mind up at first. You see somehow this year I neglected to visit Martin Down and this is my 'usual site' for them so it was difficult to make a comparative decision. Despite this this I did encounter them at four sites, including Larkhill, so going by these sightings I feel they had a reasonable year. Also I found one at Durlston Head along the coastal path whilst I

was looking for Lulworths and this was in early August. I was considering this as a possible second brood individual. They seemed to be about a week later emerging this year but I don't think that extra week would have accounted for the fresh individual that I saw in August?



42 Silver-studded Blue, 03-07-2015 Slop Bog

I only saw this species at two sites this year, but then I only made three visits to Heathland sites so a 66% success rate is pretty good! They emerged at the first site, Slop Bog almost three weeks later this year. That is; I saw them for the first time in 2015 three weeks later than in 2014. When I managed to get there one evening there were almost as many females flying as males which suggested that they were well advanced into their flight period. From this site numbers didn't seem as high as in previous years but again this could be because I'd missed the peak or due to the lateness of the day of my visit - many may have already gone to roost and I would have been left with the stragglers and dirty stop-outs!

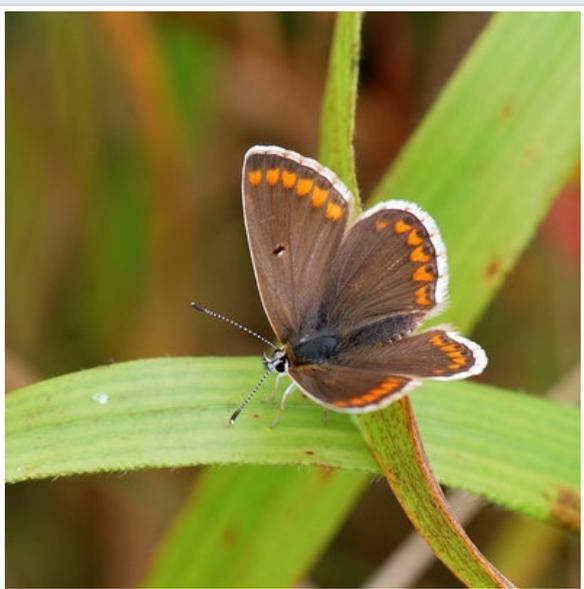
At my second site it was a slightly different story and it felt like they were up on last year, though I always visit this site for my Graylings and so it's always towards the end of the Silver Studs flight. So a later start to their season or my arriving at this site earlier could have accounted for this apparent increase in numbers. Overall I'd probably hedge that they did about the same this year as last.





43 Brown Argus, 09-05-2015 Duke Site

Possibly the shortest species to right up which doesn't seem to do it justice really. Next year perhaps I'll have something else on the B.A. Baracus of the butterfly world. I think this year I might have given them short shrift and neglected them somewhat as they always seem to appear when something more 'showy' does. Still they did throw a surprise my way – emerging earlier whilst all others seemed hunkered down and overall my feeling is that they did on a par with last year.



44 Common Blue, 18-05-2015 Laverstock

'Common' Blue indeed this year! It was definitely a good year for Common Blues as I saw them at a huge range of sites right across the season suggesting three broods and the June gap was hardly that either. In fact I don't think that I've ever seen as many Common Blues at Larkhill. During June when they were peaking I could easily find 25+ in an area of 4m<sup>2</sup>. True this was early in the morning when they were just waking up but even taking this into consideration it as still a spectacular sight as I had to put down '+' as there were so many that I managed to accurately count to 25 before a

slight movement from one or two would put up even more and I'd lose count!

Having emerged at a similar time to last year (only three days later) I then encountered them at most sites that I visited including the little scrap of ground at the top of Ruw Goch and at the 'hidden Cove' back in Wales and most impressively in the Eastern Clearing of Bentley Wood. They were all over the place and very rarely did I encounter singletons. I also started to encounter slightly more of the more 'Brown' females. It got me wondering if this could be some form of adaptation in order to protect the females from pestering behaviour from males? My idea runs like this: when the numbers are down it pays the females to be more conspicuous in order to be sure to be mated. But when the population increases females may get pestered having successfully mated and so there are more 'cryptic' Brown females present. Just a thought...it could just be due to temperatures during development?



45 Chalkhill Blue, 23-07-2015 Laverstock

Chalkhills were five days later this year but I don't really think that is too significant. This is also one of those hard species to judge because of a lack of comparison. Normally trips to Martin Down and Stockbridge give me the inkling as to how this species fared but in 2015 I visited neither of these sites.

Instead I found them at Laverstock and Broughton Down and as these were both first ventures I lacked a point of reference and also a general history of the site. Are Broughton or Laverstock well known for their populations of Chalk Hills? Have the sites held this species historically or was I witnessing a colonisation - who knows? What was heartening was that they seemed to be thriving at Laverstock which made up for the smaller numbers I witnessed at The Devenish. This decline at a site which I could make a comparison from might have worried me if not for the good numbers I saw at my 'new' sites and the fact that I turned up rather late at The Devenish.



46 Adonis Blue, 07-06-2015 The Devenish

I first saw this species a fortnight later this year but once they started they soon picked up and really took off. It felt like this was a particularly good year for the Adonis Blue - I saw them at 5 or 6 different sites and all but one were in multiples. This species offered me several personal highlights this year; I got some close ups that I was really happy with, I finally got an Adonis with the sky as the background and the best of all - I saw my first Larkhill Adonis.





47 Holly Blue, 08-04 Five Rivers

Over the last couple of years there has been much concern and discussion about the plight of the Holly Blue and how they follow a boom and bust cycle which is linked to the plight of their main parasite. When Holly Blues have a great year then the following season there is a greater likelihood that the parasites will find viable hosts. In subsequent years as the parasite becomes successful the numbers of the host decrease. So the boom and the bust cycles follow each other with one always lagging behind the other. Well this year there was a definite improvement in the fortunes of the Holly Blue and I started seeing them in a number of places rather than just the occasional glimpse of one. They were also a week earlier this season.

The main thing that I noticed this year was that I didn't have to crane my neck to see them as on a number of occasions they behaved more like the Blue that they are rather than the Hairstreak that they seem to think that they are. In fact my first was on the Banks at Five Rivers and was flying low to the ground, skimming the grass tops and then it settled only a few cm off the ground. Another was skimming over the Pulmonaria in my old/sister in-laws garden and landed on the Bluebells there. Both of these types of behaviour I've not witnessed before.

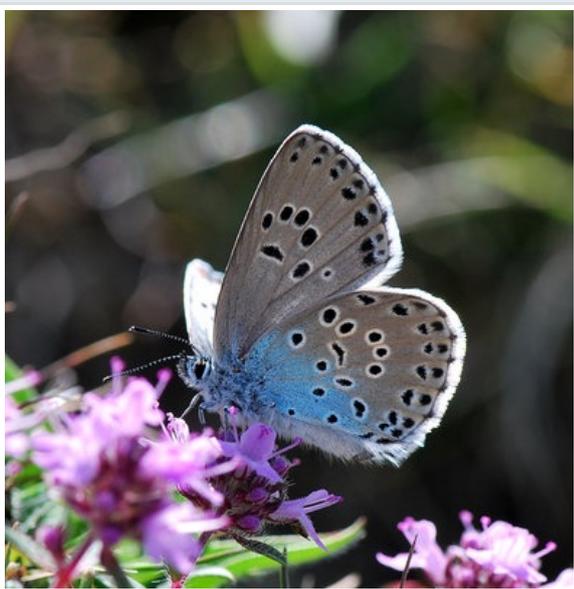




48 Large Blue, 20-06-2105 Collard Hill

I saw my first Large Blue at roughly the same time this year at the same site - Collard Hill but could only make the one visit. Last year had been tough for the Large Blues at this site possibly due to an extended dry spell had which meant that the ground was rock hard. It was all a bit 'Doom and Gloom'. Over the course of a day Philzoid and I saw only two individuals - both females, one freshly emerged and the other very flighty and eventually ovi-positing. It was great to see a new species but on the whole I left feeling slightly deflated.

This year was a different kettle of fish and there were many more on site. In fact over the four hours I spent on site I saw at least 7 different individuals if not more. One was very freshly emerged, another pair were in cop, another was an obvious female laying eggs which I also managed to get a shot of. There were also males and both sexes presented their open wings. To top it all off I possibly even got a photo of the host ant. This time I went away feeling much more satisfied and with a feeling that the Large Blue is still going strong.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-Mar-16 11:08 AM GMT

Beautiful photos Wurzel, I love the close up shots and your photo of the pair of Large Blue Goldie 🤔👍

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Mar-16 01:51 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 🤔 That was one of the benefits of the changeable weather – it meant that getting up close and personal was that much easier 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 18-Mar-16 04:26 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Your Large Blue's are worthy of a mrgreen 🤔. I have never seen one, hope to put that right this year. I also note that you are still rubbing in that male Brown Hairstreak image. Lovely golden female too 🤔.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 18-Mar-16 10:06 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, just catching up on your recent posts, interesting stuff and great photos 😊

Love your Large Blue photos, I must try and see this species again having only had the pleasure once before and that being during a fairly short stop off at Collard Hill on the way back to the midlands from the Heddon Valley a couple of years ago.

With regard to very blue female Common Blues I have noticed that around here at least they are more numerous in the first brood with 'browner' females dominating in the second. Also the further north I go the more brown the females seem to be.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Mar-16 10:56 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 🤔 If you're trying for them this year at Collard Hill make sure you regularly check the 'Large Blue Blog' as they give you really useful info. Cheers Neil 🤔 I reckon that you're onto something there as I definitely see more 'blue' females in the early brood. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 19-Mar-16 11:47 PM GMT

Time to decamp to Daneway Banks for Large Blues, methinks. It's a much bigger site and, from what I've seen in my two visits thus far, has a greater number of the target butterfly than Collard Hill.

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 21-Mar-16 06:47 PM GMT

I've been meaning to comment on your Blues for a while now Wurzel so apologies for the delay. Just wanted to say what lovely images they are - all 3. I have only seen these once and having seen your smashing shots I now want to return.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Mar-16 11:39 PM GMT

Cheers David 😊 I'll have to look into it but I think it's a bit more of a drive for me than Collard.

Cheers Pauline 😊 Your return visit is getting ever closer Pauline

The 2015 Season

So overall how was 2015? For me there were possibly more highlights but the lows were of a more enduring nature. Generally it felt like a year of lows interspersed with various little highlights to get through the rest of the year...

Lows

As mentioned at the start of this series the weather was the major of 2015. Never perfect and seldom conducive for butterflying would be the best way of summing it up. If it was warm, still and sunny it was during the 'June Gap' between emergences. If it was still and clear it was too cold etc.

On top of this there were at times noticeably fewer butterflies making the marking the worrying decline in a lot of species.

A personal low point was my lack of a Cloudy in 2015 which limited me to equally my best ever total of 48 species a number I seem to be stuck at despite a few longer trips this year for some specialities.

The biggest low was missing out, again, on Long-tailed Blues. For next time they show up I do have a car and am willing to travel so a heads up/sharing of information would be greatly appreciated 😊 .

Highs

The most obvious highlight for me was my trip to the Czech Republic which for a short time I thought wasn't too good even branding it crap. 😞 However whilst writing it up and rereading and reliving the moments since I've changed my mind and it's become very special to me. Sure I didn't see too many new species but Dusky Large Blue is a gem of a species to have seen and for it to have been so common added a certain 'wow' factor. 😊





Other British highlights were my various trips further afield for more Large Blues, Wood Whites and Lulworths. However the greatest was to East Blean, finally meeting my target after three years of trying! It was a fantastic trip made all the more sweeter by the "will I/won't I?" worries and anticipation. I was astounded by how docile they were, how 'common' they were and the huge array of variation that they showed.

The final highlight for me came in the form of Laverstock which slightly surpassed Larkhill and Five Rivers in my affections becoming my local patch. I read up about it during the winter months and somehow managed to see all the species that had been recorded there barring a wandering Brostroke...

So that was 2015, what next for 2016? Well as usual I've set myself a couple of targets:

1. Add another British tick to the list. I have, or will have, some 'days owed' to me in Brownie points and so should have the opportunity to go for a new species – possibly two? I'm debating which to go for but Large Heaths or High Browns would be the safest bet as they're the closest...Although a Scotch Argus could be more of a sure thing? If I could sort out the timing maybe I could fit in a Northern Brown Argus.
2. Make the trip for Wood Whites and also Glannies.

3. Try to see 49 species in 2016, I've got to get off the 48 maximum!

4. Add to my European list. I'm heading to Iceland in July but that only has 6 species (all of which occur in Britain) but hopefully Lisbon in early August will produce the goods, including a Long-tailed Blue.

So that was my 2015, bring 2016 good luck everyone! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 24-Mar-16 12:10 AM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

Cheers David 😊 I'll have to look into it but I think it's a bit more of a drive for me than Collard.

I used to think like that, Wurzel, but I soon realised that the extra miles translate into far more satisfying experiences...

....talking of which, your trip to Portugal will be interesting. It's one European country that seems rather 'off the radar' in terms of those travelling to see butterflies. I'd love to know what's lurking in the hillier areas of that country.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 24-Mar-16 07:34 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

For me 2015 was an average year with some very special highlights, two of which you enjoyed, Heaths and Wood Whites. You're right about 'specialist sites', hit them at the right moment and that speciality can seem quite common!. As for this year 'kick off' has been a bit slow.

Good luck with the Brownie points,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 26-Mar-16 12:08 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I've tried to get a new species each year and I've never got more than 36 species in all 😊 which includes the new ones 😊 So your total of 48 sounds fantastic to me. 😊

If you intend to go for SA or NBA, end of July into middle of August is good for Arnside Knot that's the times I've seen them there, late August both are not looking that good. you could also see the HBF then, also at Arnside K. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Mar-16 11:08 PM GMT

Cheers David 😊 My trip to Portugal is another family holiday based in Lisbon so I don't know how much I'll get to see - it will be a case of take my camera everywhere and check out any greenery/verge/park/waste land 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I fully intend to rack them up while the weather is so grim/changeable 😊

Cheers for the info Goldie 😊 Hopefully I'll be able to sort something out.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 27-Mar-16 01:02 PM GMT

Wurzel, I hope you make it to the magic 49. The only year I got anywhere near that was 2015 (and I needed a trip to South Of France for that 😊).

If the weather plays ball, I'm hoping to have my best year yet with regards new species, visiting parts of the country I have never explored before (i.e Wiltshire).

Good luck in 2016.

Regards Kev

## Re: Wurzel

by MrSp0ck, 27-Mar-16 02:58 PM GMT

Wurzel

3. Try to see 49 species in 2016, I've got to get off the 48 maximum!

i managed one year [1996] to see 50 Species in the South of England, so it is possible to get 49 there, the 50th was Pale Clouded Yellow [male] so that was probably a one off.  
but it didnt include Large or Long-Tailed Blues.

## Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 27-Mar-16 09:09 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

A great final summary of 2015 and one which pretty much mirrors my own thoughts.

I have twice now managed to see 50 species in a year, the first time in 2012 and again last year. Both times this was 'helped' by cool and wet summers which meant that I managed to see some species that I didn't originally plan to due to delayed or extended flight times. Of course I am also lucky in that my location in the midlands means that it is just as easy for me to head north for the northern specialties such as Scotch Argus than it is to head south for species such as Adonis Blue and Lulworth Skipper.

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Mar-16 08:15 PM GMT

Cheers Kev 😊 I'm just about to get you some useful Grid References

Cheers Mr Spock 😊 I'm going for it this year then! 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 You do have that advantage – but I might bite the bullet and head for a Welsh Large Heath – Brownie points banked 😊

Work 11-03

This was to be my first lunch time walk of the season. Not only had I been snowed under recently but the weather has been terrible – possibly the worst start to a season in my five years of butterflying? So finally the wind was light, the sun was shining and it was warm enough to venture out in just a shirt a thin jumper.

I'd left it slightly later into lunch before setting out as I was out of practice and also had to deal with just one more student request so I forewent the usual route across the field and instead cut straight across the local housing estate to the back path which has thrown up so many Small Torts in the past. As I made my way things started coming back to me – I'd check shadows, a fly would take off and I'd catch the movement out of the corner of my eye I was remembering all my tricks and I think the long wait to get started had sharpened my senses. I cut through across the verge to the back path and even before I'd stepped onto it proper something took off from basking on the steps. My first butterfly of the year and surprise, surprise it was a Small Tort. It flew into the field that the path borders and I didn't think that I get a photo but luckily it came back and landed just within camera shot. A careful sneak and I managed to get in a bit closer.





From there I carried further along the path and on the bank was a fresher Small Tort. Even further a long were another pair both of which were hanging around the Daffs and Primroses.





I then started back and my count began in earnest, half way along the path I counted 7 Small Torts so things were going great and then they got even better. As I approached a large bush at the edge of one of the gardens I thought to myself "I'll just check this as it usually holds something good" and then a male Brimstone flew by. It seemed to dip down more than it needed to as it crossed into the garden over the wire fence. As I peered in and through the mesh I made out a familiar shape another Brimstone on the deck and it seemed to be a female. I took some very distant record shots having to frame it between the diamonds of the fence and also managed a still distant but slightly closer view from the other side of the bush.





I carried on pleased with a brace of Brimstones and a brace of ticks on the year list. I didn't get any more shots on the rest of the walk back but did add a further pair of Small Torts on the edge of the field and another three at the far reaches of one of the gardens so bringing my total to a maximum count of 11 Small Torts. A great start to the season...finally!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 29-Mar-16 09:56 PM GMT

A lovely set of Tortoiseshells there Wurzel - I still haven't seen one yet this year... 😞

If you are looking to travel to far-flung corners of the UK to seek out hitherto undiscovered delights, you can't do any better than take Goldie's advice and visit Arnside Knott. On a good day at the end of July or beginning of August you could see Scotch Argus (very fresh), High Brown Fritillaries (middling, but there might be a reasonable female), and Northern Brown Argus (at the end of their season). As well as those, you stand a good chance of some tatty Dark Green Fritillaries, Grayling and Wall, plus a variety of commoner species. Gatekeepers are everywhere at this time of year, but are a relatively new arrival apparently. If you travel a bit further, I think there are a couple of Large Heath sites not too distant.

All good in theory - I've managed the SA and HBF on one visit - more than once - but have yet to see the NBA. I think Neil Freeman (who is also a regular and stays locally) has managed the three major attractions in one trip.

Quite apart from the butterflies, the scenery is stunning, so it's worth the trek up the M6. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 29-Mar-16 10:06 PM GMT

**Wurzel wrote:**

...I'd check shadows, a fly would take off and I'd catch the movement out of the corner of my eye I was remembering all my tricks and I think the long wait to get started had sharpened my senses...

I empathise entirely! 😊 A fly, a falling leaf or a bird's shadow all invoke a trigger-reflex in me this early in the season. Whilst butterflies are thin on the ground in these early spring days, one's senses remain forever on high alert.

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 29-Mar-16 10:25 PM GMT

Good to see you're off the mark and from the looks of things you're only 3 weeks behind on reports this year 😊!

If you're planning a trip up to Arnside Knott at the end of July, I might bump into you, I've booked myself a few nights up there to explore the place properly and tick off a few more lifers... fingers crossed the weather behaves itself!

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 30-Mar-16 03:29 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, the first Butterfly of the year is always the best I think. 😊 Glad you got yours 😊

If you do plan to go to the Lakes, there's a place called Roudsea wood, it's under Roudsea & Mosses, it's good for the Large Heath and the Osprey's are there has well if your Interested. Another place is Meathop Moss, thats where I took the shots of the LH last year at the end of June. You can get a free parking permit if you apply on line to Gait Barrows for both GB and RW&Mosses.

Gait Barrow, is between Arnside and Silverdale, it's just a thought. 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 31-Mar-16 10:06 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

**Wurzel wrote:**

- possibly the worst start to a season in my five years of butterflying!...

For me 2013 was the worst start in the past five years, we had snow in late March which lay in our back garden for a couple of days and my first sighting was not until April 6th.

I will be heading up to Arnside again this year for a few days at the beginning of August. Dave is correct, I managed to see HBF, SA and NBA last year when I went at the end of July. The SA were just starting and apparently came out in greater numbers the week after I was there, the ones I saw were all males. I have previously found the first week of August to be the prime time to see both sexes looking fresh. Depending on the season, both DGF and HBF should still be hanging in there but neither species did very well up there last year due to the cold and wet summer.

NBA are usually just about finished when I have been there at that time previously but last year they were still around in good condition both at Arnside and Gait Barrows, apparently their emergence was more drawn out due to the weather.

I went up there in June in 2014 and found fresh NBA at a number of sites in the area and also drove up to Irton Fell for Mountain Ringlet. On that trip I also saw Large Heath at Meathop Moss which is just around the other side of the estuary from Arnside.

Cheers,

Neil

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 03-Apr-16 05:44 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Arnside looks to be the place to go then!

Cheers David 😊 I'm looking forward to later in the season when everything settles down a bit and it's a bit more relaxing! 😊

Cheers Buggy 😊 I may well do...if I can make it up there, it all depends on how many Brownie points I can hold onto until then 😊

Cheers Goldie for the info 😊 - it's something I'm seriously considering - but knowing my m.o. it'll probably be a few more years until I actually manage it 😊😊😊

Cheers for the info Neil - I might need to have another look at my plans/timing 😊

April 2016

This is very late now but things have been very weird in the Wurzel house. My wife has just got back from a week at a Yoga retreat in India so I looked after the girls and being a big soppo Bu\$\$er spent the whole week lost and miserable 😊. She's back now though 😊😊 so things are getting back to normal plus I have lots of Brownie Points banked 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Apr-16 11:21 AM GMT

First Trip to Five Rivers 12-03-2016

With my older daughter occupied all day in rehearsals my younger daughter decided that we should head out for a picnic at Five Rivers. As the weather was reasonable – almost spring like we packed some fruit snacks, I called in at Waitrose for a coffee and away we went for the first trip of the season.

We headed by the back route towards Comma Corner to start and L was continually surprised as each Bumble Bee took off from the bottom of the bank and then we were at Comma Corner with no Commas. Still a bit early possibly? From here we strolled along the bank and L set up on the bench really close to the area which usually throws up the early Small Tortoiseshells. Once she was comfy sitting back, sunglasses on enjoying the sunshine I started a little wander. Within a little under a minute I'd found my first Small Tort and it did a fly-by of little L much to her delight.



Little L was then in a quandary as she wanted to see the butterflies but also wanted to enjoy just sitting in the sun. So I'd wander along the Banks, find a Small Tort and then she would come running over to have a look at it. It was while watching our third Small Tort that disaster struck. L knelt a little too close to the Stinging Nettles and got stung on the knee. She coped with it very well and in the absence of a Dock leaf just spat on the sting and rubbed it so it went away. Phew!

All too soon it was time to head homewards and so off we strolled, 4 Small Torts in the bag and a wonderful afternoon. What a great first trip.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by MikeOxon, 04-Apr-16 11:57 AM GMT

Those Small Tortois. look to be in remarkably good condition – must have found a good place to hibernate. I'm relieved that the 'disaster' was soon overcome 😊

Mike

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 04-Apr-16 12:32 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I see you've had a Small Tortfest too !. Never seen so many, so early.

Lovely shots,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 05-Apr-16 06:38 PM GMT

Nice Small Tort's there Wurzel, they are all busy pairing up down this way, I couldn't get a photo of two apart today! 😊

ATB

James

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Apr-16 10:17 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 Little L is made from stern stuff! 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 It was about par for Five Rivers – just a couple of weeks later than usual 😊

Cheers Rex 😊 That's a great sign – plenty of Small Torts through the year hopefully 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-16 10:24 PM GMT

Another quick outing at Work 21-03-2016

After another full on couple of days I really needed to take a break and with the weather slightly warmer than it has been recently I made a quick move at lunch time and made it out before a year 11 appeared and asked me for a bit more help.

To save time I cut through the housing estate again and so missed out the playing fields which aren't that productive this early in the season plus I could come back that way to check out the small bank by the garages and gardens in the estate. There has been an unfortunate precedent set recently and a number have replaced lawns and flower beds with astro-turf.

As I cut through the houses and reached the house a Small Tort took off and flew into the field beyond the reach of my lens. So I carried on along the thin path scanning the bank and something orange caught my eye as it seemed out of place amongst the straw coloured dead foliage. It was too bright and light to be a second Small Tort and I guessed at my first Comma of 2016. As I approached it suddenly metamorphosed from orange blob to crackling butterfly. The temperature had dropped slightly and so I wasn't concerned about getting too close and spooking it.





From there I carried on slightly further and another blob appeared out of place. This one was much too dark and slightly larger than a Small Tort blob. "Surely not my first Peacock within five steps of my first Comma?" I thought. But as I cautiously crept closer that's what it turned out to be. This butterfly was far from chilled out and after two record shots it was gone up and over the fence.



At the end of the path there were a couple of Small Torts to further add to the daily tally but the hoped for Specklie (I mean why not I wasn't really expecting a Comma or Peacock) didn't materialise and so I turned and made my way back the Comma was still in the same place and so a couple of shots later I carried on.



Along the path and the playing fields there were some more Small Tortoiseshells bringing the total number to seven for the visit and then I was back on tarmac and peering into the residents' gardens. The astro-turf it seems has put paid to the butterflies but at the last garden which is still gloriously natural there, again amongst the straw coloured dead foliage was my second Peacock of the day/year. This one did hang around for a lot longer but was further away.



Happy with the haul I headed back to work not knowing when the next time that I'll be able to get out...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-Apr-16 12:41 PM GMT

Just catching up on my posts Wurzel, great Butterflies, seen nothing here until yesterday when after 24 days of my first sighting I went to Hall-Lee=Brook and actually saw a Comma. The weather's been really cold, wet, plus snow on hills again UGH! Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Apr-16 09:32 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 The weather has certainly taken a turn for the worst recently down this way we've had rain and biting cold winds 😞 And just as it's set to get better I head back to work...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 11-Apr-16 09:42 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

...And just as it's set to get better I head back to work...

Tell me about it, Wurzel. 😞

That's been the most frustrating thing thus far in 2016. Those rare fine days we've had have almost exclusively fallen in the week, rather than at the weekend.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Apr-16 11:05 PM GMT

Yep David - the best two days of the year so far were yesterday and today - when I was stuck at work - oh to be retired 😊

Good Good Friday

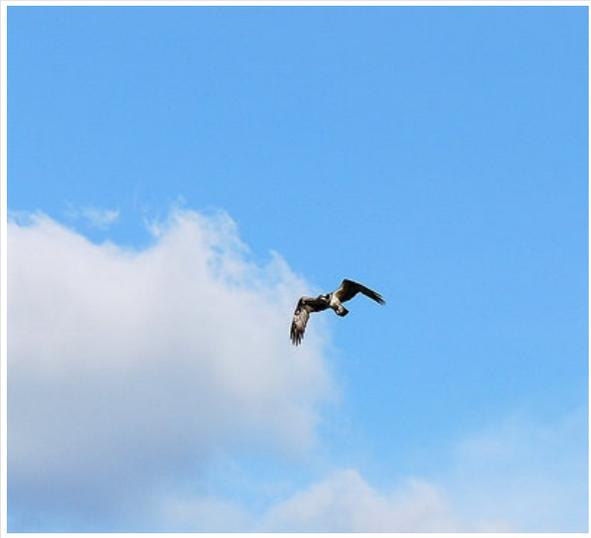
With my wife waved off the night before so began eight days of just me and the girls. I didn't know how much butterflying I'd be able to fit in amongst the activities that were planned and the weather didn't look hopeful - cool, wet and windy. Good Friday however arrived with plenty of sun and so I was hopeful that I might be able to pick up one or two butterflies when I visited my parents.

On the journey over we counted 7 Brimstones and a single Comma but as I was driving the narrow country lanes I couldn't stop for any shots plus the Brimstones were in typical early Spring patrol mode stopping only for the briefest of seconds. Still there should be time later during the afternoon walk...

So lunch digested my dad and I took the girls to their "Castle" (Knowle Church near Wimborne St Giles) for a run around the rings. I was hoping for a Small Tort or maybe a Peacock at the bottom of the sheltered rings but despite several turns around none appeared and it was only at the start of our return journey that I saw a Small Tort on the opposite bank. Again we couldn't stop and so I thought that the day would end with three species seen and none photographed. Indeed it did...butterfly wise.

Slightly further on from the Small Tort we drove towards a large tree near to the fish farm. Sitting at the top was a large bird. The unforked tail meant that it wasn't another Red Kite, one of which was circling above, and it was far too light on the breast and head to be a Buzzard.

"It's an Osprey!" I cried and my dad pulled into the lay-by as soon as it appeared. The bird had now taken off and for the next 15 minutes or so all four of us, plus another couple of lucky people enjoyed the show. It went through the full gamut of its flight; soaring, hovering, diving and fishing, coming into land. It was fantastic to watch, the best views I've ever had of this bird. To cap it all at one point the nearby Red Kite started hassling the Osprey and so I was witness to two rare raptors in one viewfinder. Stunning. 😊





Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by David M, 13-Apr-16 11:12 PM GMT

Wow! What a sighting.....and excellent images too!

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 14-Apr-16 10:15 AM GMT

Cheers David 😊 I was quite chuffed that my macro lens did such a reasonable job, now I just need to find some butterflies...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 14-Apr-16 11:16 AM GMT

Magnificent!!! 🍷🍷🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 14-Apr-16 12:29 PM GMT

Stunning shots Wurzel, Bet you were so Pleased. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Apr-16 02:45 PM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 I'd have swapped it for a Duke though 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I was indeed suitably chuffed! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 14-Apr-16 03:54 PM GMT

Congratulations on spotting the Osprey. Several of these birds are now satellite tracked and you can see the data at, for example, <http://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/osprey/>

A friend of mine saw from the tracking signal that one was due to fly over Oxfordshire at a particular time, so he went up onto the Downs and actually saw the bird as it passed!

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Apr-16 07:44 PM GMT

That sounds like a great device Mike , if only there was one for Long-tailed Blues 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 14-Apr-16 07:57 PM GMT

Nice one Wurzel 🍷🍷🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterfysaurus rex, 14-Apr-16 09:55 PM GMT

What a fantastic sighting Wurzel, there was an Osprey around here during the Autumn, it stayed around for a few weeks. I went to see if I could locate it as it had been seen just the day before. So I made my way over to the spot where it was last seen. I stood there for several hours with some other hopefuls under overcast skies and.... nothing! Unfortunately I had an appointment so I was forced leave. when I got home I was told that had turned up again just after I'd gone, and the very next day it was seen flying south out to sea TYPICAL! 😊

I'm glad you got to see one, and in the sunshine too.

ATB

James

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 15-Apr-16 07:10 AM GMT

Glad you are enjoying the Bird of Prey fest. An Osprey is special though.  
Great stuff.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 15-Apr-16 08:19 PM GMT

Great report and photos of your Osprey sighting Wurzel 😊.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Apr-16 11:40 PM GMT

Cheers Buggy 😊 It certainly made up for the lack of butterflies 😊

Cheers Rex 😊 I know the feeling, many a time I've been 'gripped' – there is always some bright spark that comes out with the immortal line "you should have been here 5 minutes ago..." 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 It certainly is – this is my fourth ever sighting 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 It was one of the few times that I've been in the right place at the right time 😊

Honeybrook Farm 05-04-2016

According to the weather reports this was supposed to be the best weather day of the week and so we headed out for a family outing. However it wasn't to Middle Street, Five Rivers or another of my early sites but instead was to Honeybrook Farm so that the girls could have a run around and feed lambs etc. I took my camera just in case as I was hoping that the riverside walk would yield at least a Brimstone and hopefully an Orange-tip...Once there things didn't really go according to plan. The riverside walk was closed due to flooding 😊, the weather turned for the worst clouding over and bursting into a hail storm and heavy showers 😊 and the activities for the girls were crowded as there were three nursery schools on trips 😊.

During one very brief sunny spell I did see two butterflies – one was a definite male Brimstone and the other could have been a female or a Small White. It didn't stop for an actual ID unfortunately so I'll have to note it down as a UFW. As we were heading to the stable block ready for 'Small Animal Handling' I saw a Peacock in the corner of the window of one of the buildings. It was a Peacock and due to the placement and the large number of webs around it I assumed that it was dead and so took a picture of it through the glass. The flash went off and this meant that it went from deceased to active and annoyed!



*Misty as through glass...*



After that we cut our losses and headed homewards. Oh well nothing ventured nothing gained, I just wish that spring would stop beating around the bush and actually spring...  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Apr-16 10:00 PM GMT

Five Rivers 10-04

The Easter break is almost up - I've had two weeks during which time I've seen very few butterflies and had almost no opportunities to get out and try and find any - either because of renovations, work, because I was looking after the girls or (mainly) because the weather has been so non conducive. To be honest at times it's felt like we've picked up the wrong card on a Monopoly board: "Go directly to Autumn/winter, do not pass spring/summer and do not see any butterflies". So on my final day of the break in sheer desperation I visited Five Rivers with K. Over the years she has been something of an oracle and so I asked my usual question "Will we see anything?" which got a negative response...

Once on site it seemed that the oracle was indeed correct as the sun was pretty intermittent, and even though the ground was a couple of degrees warmer than the ambient temperature the wind was keen and biting. We scanned Comma Corner and the Banks waiting for the few minutes of bright sun and the wind to drop. But after a 15 minutes or so with no joy we moved on round to the other side of the reserve where hopefully it might be a bit more sheltered from the freezing wind.

There were positive signs with several species of bee flying including a large red tailed one but even here we drew a blank for any butterflies so we tried once more at the Banks before calling it a day. On the stroll back to the car we checked out the heat mats as I was hoping for a Grass Snake - a species that I've not photographed before. We found nests of Black and Yellow ants and a Slow Worm but drew a blank on the Grass Snake as well. I've never known Five Rivers to be so disappointing in April.





The highlight of the day must have been the odd sight of seven or eight bumble bees all on the deck in a line along a small animal track. It must have been because the temperature had dropped again as the sun had been behind the clouds for about 10 minutes or so and hence the Bees flight muscles were too cool. It looked like they'd all dropped to the ground from flying in formation and were all frantically vibrating their thorax and their flight muscles in a bid to raise their core temperature to such a level to allow flight. One by one they took off so job done!



And so here I am in April still posting but with very few butterflies, in fact only four species...what is going on? Have we been spoilt by previous years when the weather has been good, is this a 'normal' spring? I hope things improve drastically soon...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 20-Apr-16 10:02 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

"Go directly to Autumn/winter, do not pass spring/summer and do not see any butterflies"...

Like the analogy, Wurzel. I empathise 100%.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Apr-16 11:07 PM GMT

Work 12-04

And so nose back to the grind stone it was...and wouldn't you know but the weather drastically improved after a pretty dismal break for butterflies. Such was the improvement that all morning I was pestered by a Brimstone. I kept flying past my window taunting me. Come lunch break I grabbed my camera and headed out to see what I could find and maybe even nail the frustrating little yellow blighter!

I didn't hang around and cut straight across to the housing estate noting a single Small Tort in one of the gardens on the corner. Once on the path there were a few more Small Torts and a Peacock along the path on the way to the end and back and then I carried back towards the school playing fields. As I strolled along scanning a white flew by. The size and colour made me realise that it was a 'proper' white and not a female Brimstone but it was very distant and wasn't stopping for love nor money so I tried a few aerial shots as it bombed across the path and into one of the gardens. Looking at the photo zoomed in a lot I'm fairly confident that it was my first Small White of 2016.



I got back to focusing on Small Torts reaching a total of nine, once back and approaching the garden where I saw my first butterfly of the outing I saw a Peacock backing on the path. I was in a bit of quandary what to do next as the butterfly was a bit of a way away and on the other side of the gate. Now if it had been my first of the season or something slightly rarer I would have just gone through the gate and down the path as if I was calling on the house owner, got my shots and then acted as if I'd changed my mind and would try again later. But as it was a Peacock and hopefully I should see plenty more this season I stuck with just reaching my camera out as far as my arms would stretch and then clicked a few times with the autofocus whirring away.



Back in the lab I was gutted to see the Brimstone complete several more fly-bys. At one point it made as if to land and I paused mid-way through explaining Lamarckism and held my breath but it only landed for a second or two and then was off again. A little later it landed and my year 11's aged me on to nip out and get a few shots so I did. It was literally a case of grab camera take 12 steps outside, take a shot, another step another shot and then rapidly fire of 5-6 shots before heading back into the classroom again. I think I was out of the lesson for less than a minute. Still shot in the bag so it was worth it!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 22-Apr-16 11:10 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

Back in the lab I was gutted to see the Brimstone complete several more fly-bys. At one point it made as if to land and I paused mid-way through explaining Lamarckism and held my breath but it only landed for a second or two and then was off again. A little later it landed and my year 11's aged me on to nip out and get a few shots so I did. It was literally a case of grab camera take 12 steps outside, take a shot, another step another shot and then rapidly fire of 5-6 shots before heading back into the classroom again. I think I was out of the lesson for less than a minute.

LOL! That's dedication for you.

Quite a result too, given you only had a few seconds to devote to it.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-Apr-16 10:07 AM GMT

Lovely shot of the Brimstone Wurzel, it must have been hard to concentrate with the Brimstone flying back and forth 😊 Hope the weather has been kinder to you since. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 23-Apr-16 10:26 PM GMT

I admire your dedication to getting our Brimstone 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Apr-16 10:54 PM GMT

Cheers David 😊 I was in a Moutie mode that day 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Unfortunately the weather has been all wrong – too cold yet sunny or just warm enough and raining stroll on June 😊

Cheers Buggy 😊 So long as my boss doesn't read UKB it'll be all alright 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 26-Apr-16 10:15 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I'm luckier than you because I'm not tied to work (just house work) 😊 I'm retired and can go out when the weather is good, even so I've only seen eight species so far, like you say, hope the weather gets warmer soon. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 26-Apr-16 12:47 PM GMT

I think your boss should be delighted with you, Wurzel, even if he does read UKB! When I watch University Challenge – or any other quiz programme for that matter – I find it depressing how even the brightest people seem to have no knowledge of natural history. I know at least two heads of biology who couldn't tell a brimstone from a clouded yellow or an oak from an ash. Your students have got a *real* biology teacher.

Guy

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-16 11:49 PM GMT

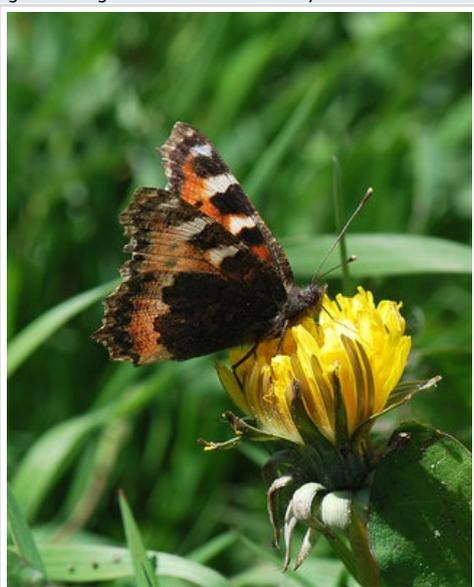
Cheers Guy 😊 I might use your comments in my next 'Performance Management/Performance Related Pay' meeting if that's alright? 😊 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 8 Species – you're beating me by one! Let's hope the weather gets warmer soon!

Work 13-04

And so to work on yet another great day. I guess that by the weekend the weather will have turned back to the worst so it will either be mild but wet and windy or sunny but biting cold. Oh well best make hay while the sun shines. And with this in mind I headed out at lunch with my camera and Chilli Chicken sandwich.

Again I cut through the housing estate which means I get to the main track much quicker. The banks held a few Small Torts and a single Peacock which was playing hard to get again so I walked to the end and doubled back. I'd gotten to 4 Small Torts so far and after doubling back I started my count again adding another Tort to the tally.





I now moved onto parts of the path that I hadn't already covered and up by the large bush a male Brimstone did a fly by and another/same Peacock again played hard to get sitting at just the right elevation and angle to make a shot impossible. I carried on my way and tried for a few aerial shots of a female Brimstone but even better she landed just long enough for a grab shot and then I got a few by shooting through the gaps in the fence.



Back on the field a third Peacock was feeding up and I was able to add another couple of Small Torts but still no Orange-tip, not even a sniff of one. Back through the estate all bar one of the gardens was bereft of butterflies. The single inhabited one held a white but it was so distant I was only able to get a very unclear record shots and one which would actually be better for a game of 'find the butterfly'.



I also stopped on the way home in my spring pull in spot having been encouraged by seeing 7 Brimstones on the journey up until this point. I did manage to find a single Comma but no whites and still no OT. Of all the spring species this is the one I worry about – the hibernators, Specklies and whites I'll get another crack at. The Grizzlies and Greenstreaks I know that I need to go to the correct places but the OT could turn up anywhere, you only get one shot a year and they are fully intent on finding a mate not sitting still for photographers – plus they're around when the weather is at it's most unpredictable and so blink and you may miss them in a bad season. Oh well hopefully I'll find one soon and my worrying will be over...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 30-Apr-16 06:10 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I agree about the Orange Tip. My main concern with the population from the old railway is that the Garlic Mustard only grows close to the path, also there is no Cuckoo flower at this site. Every summer the site is cleared by a tractor and flail to within several feet of the path. I wonder how many pupae are destroyed. Hopefully it's just the cold that's keeping them quiet.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 30-Apr-16 10:00 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, at least your seeing a few more Butterflies now 😊 Here it's the odd one let's hope you see OT's soon. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-May-16 10:11 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I've finally seen OT's now – both males and females so I think it was just a case of them staying hidden away while it was too cold. Next on the worry list is Duke and Pearls...maybe next weekend!

Cheers Goldie 😊 Finally got some OTs but I'm so far behind with my PD/work/house renovations I don't know when I'll be able to post them...better get on with it! 😊

May 2016

Oh for some decent weather when I'm not at work!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 01-May-16 10:29 PM GMT

looking good by the end of the week Wurzel, 20 degrees in places 😊 I was starting to worry I'd picked the wrong time to take a bit of holiday but it's come up trumps after all 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-May-16 10:32 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Here's hoping the weekend is a good as I'm hoping it will be – enjoy your break I hope it's fruitful 😊

Middle Street 17-04-2016

I took great delight in getting out today, risking the cool weather and not seeing anything and even greater delight when someone I meet tells me that's it's too cold for Butterflies yet I've just counted 7 Small Torts within my first 5 minutes on site! I was back at Middle Street one of my early sites – generally after the Smessex have appeared I find that I don't get back here but during the first part of the season it's generally a good site to visit with some nice, sheltered hot spots which act as...well hotspots.

I'd started off at the small unmown area behind the football pitches and there were many Small Torts flitting about between backing on the molehills and feeding on the Coltsfoot/Dandelions. At one point I was able to see four Small torts all sitting in a line but I could only manage to get three of the four in shot. From here I wandered along the raised bank/flood defence a peeped over to the river. The sun was heading in and out of the clouds and it was alternating between dark and nippy to bright and pleasantly warm. Whilst the sun was in I'd watch the birds and it was great to catch a glimpse of a Sedge Warbler, hear the explosive ching, ching-ching, ching-chingity-ching-ching-chhinng of a Cetti's and watch Swallows stooping low over the river. A male Reed Bunting appeared close enough for a few grab shots.





When the sun came out I'd focus my efforts on the butterflies which seemed to appear after a couple of minutes of prolonged sun. The trick I used was to time my ambles to try and reach a sheltered little nook of the reserve just as the sun cut through the cloud. Then I'd sit back and scan about watching for any movement. It seemed to work as round by the dry pond I'd set up shop, all was quiet and then as the sun crept over the earth a blinding white butterfly appeared and flew along the edge of the neighbouring garden. It came back round and did another pass and I was able to creep up on it and so got my first definite Small White of 2016.



I carried on round the pond checking out the habitat thinking how good it looked for Commas but finding more and more Small Tortoiseshells until eventually the sun headed back in, the cool air hit and I was back to watching birds again. At the same stand of reeds a male Reed Bunting was calling so this must be a territory and this was the same bird as earlier.



I was back round by the dry pond by the time the sun came out again and there was a Peacock basking in the grass where two seconds ago there had been nothing. It was joined by a second and a very brief Comma all taking great delight in the old dead reeds. What was a barren dull waste land all of a sudden holds butterflies. From here I made my way back the pond seeing another or the same Peacock again along with at least a further three Small Tortoiseshells.





A large cloud now covered the sun and it didn't look like there would be anything but the slightest break for a while and so I thought it best to head home and salvage some Brownie points for another day. As I was walking back long the bank the briefest break in the cloud produced a Small White. The sun was out for now more than a minute or minute and a half and in it danced a Small White. What was even more striking was as the sun disappeared the White just dropped like a stone down into the tangle of vegetation. I had a rough idea where it was and so worked my way round and used animal (Rabbit?) tracks to work my way into the vegetation without trampling and there it was hunkered down.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 04-May-16 10:29 PM GMT

I particularly like that first Small White, Wurzel. Perfect delicacy and such a pure white colour. And as ever, I envy you your Tortoiseshells! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by jenks, 05-May-16 09:51 AM GMT

A lovely Small White, AND a Ladybird keeping him company !

Its easy to ignore how beautiful Peacocks are. Familiarity breeding contempt and all that, but your photos bring out their beauty.

My own butterfly season got started over the weekend with Small Tort, Peacock, Small and Green veined White, and Orange Tip seen at Kenfig NNR, and Speckled Wood, Brimstone, and Grizzled Skipper seen at Merthyr Mawr dunes. And Holly Blue in Cathays Cemetery, Cardiff. Cemeteries provide amazing cover for butterflies and migrant birds. You just have to ignore the odd looks of people passing as you wander around with a pair of binoculars !

Jenks.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-May-16 08:35 AM GMT

Great shots Wurzel, looks like Spring has arrived at last 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 06-May-16 05:15 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Love your Small Whites 😊 Great to see spring has now arrived in Wiltshire 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 06-May-16 05:41 PM GMT

Looks like things are picking up down in the 'shire! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 06-May-16 08:43 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I agree with all the comments on the Small Whites, lovely photos 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-May-16 11:24 PM GMT

Cheers Dave for your kind comments 😊 This seems to be a good area for this species 😊

Cheers Jenks for your kind comments 😊 Good to hear that you're up and running 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Not a moment too soon I was starting to go a little stir crazy 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 Hopefully it will be here to stay now 😊

Cheers Buggy 😊 Slowly but surely we're getting there, just two weeks behind the rest of the country it seems. 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Sometimes the shots just come off.

Five Rivers 17-04-2016

After the success at Middle Street earlier in the day normally I would have been quite content to have stayed in but my wife was taking my girls swimming and so I could wangle an extra hour out and at Five Rivers...

I have often commented how the weather seems to have it in for me and so it seemed again this afternoon as the sun had been shining strongly over lunch but now I was out with my camera it was in behind the clouds. This made it hard work at first as the sun was stubbornly in or only peeping out for 15 seconds or so at a time neither of which were conducive to butterflies. I'd worked my way round the entire site; Comma Corner, the Banks, the Spinney and the Back and all I had to show butterfly was a single Small Tort! I was starting to think that I'd used all my good fortune up on my earlier visit of the day.

Still back to the Banks I headed and as I arrived there the sun finally came out and then things started to happen again. As I worked my way along the Banks I counted at least four Small Torts and a Small White did a fly by. Comma Corner was quiet again but on the side of the 'hedge' which runs along this side of the Banks a Brimstone was fluttering about so I broke through and followed it across the path and down towards the spinney. Despite the fact that it didn't land I was glad that I'd followed it as there were a pair of Peacocks here and a Comma put in a brief appearance.



Round on the other side of the Spinny there was another very bedraggled Comma which I almost missed thinking that it was just a tatty dead leaf that hadn't fallen over the winter. It flew a short way and then sought cover deep in the undergrowth amongst the brambles which probably explained its knackered state.



The Peacocks were still in the same places when I returned, basking in the middle of the animal worn tracks or on one of the black sheets used to encourage reptiles. This time they weren't joined by a Comma but a UFW which looked suspiciously like a Green-veined white although I'm not keen on

'stringy' sightings so a UFW it will remain. After taking a few shots a Comma in much better condition posed nicely before the bully boy Peacocks chased him off! They then had a bit of scrap between themselves before settling back down to their respective basking positions.



All to quicker my bonus hour was up and so I packed the camera away and headed in to help wash and dry hair, wring out costumes and remember to find pairs of goggles. Oh the joy! Still could have been worse, I could have had to have gone in the pool!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 08-May-16 09:41 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, the Peacocks around here seem to be in decline now, I went to HLB yesterday and although the weather was hot you could count the

Butterflies on one hand, we're in May now and should be seeing far more of them, I can't help thinking all the grass cutting as affected the Green Veined W badly, I'll wait and see what happens when the Meadow Brown arrive, question is ,will they after what happened in August last year when they cut the grass. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-May-16 09:58 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 There could be something in that, plus it has been a very slow and fitful start to the season 😊 Mind you things seem to have picked up – I got four firsts for the year today including two firsts for the county 😊😊 Mind you at the rate I'm posting it could well be next year that I get the report on my PD 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 08-May-16 10:10 PM GMT

I had a 'double-take' moment until I realised your images were from 3 weeks ago.

Vanessids practically absent now, although I saw 4 Peacocks as well as a Small Tortoiseshell today.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 08-May-16 11:27 PM GMT

#### David M wrote:

I had a 'double-take' moment until I realised your images were from 3 weeks ago.

Vanessids practically absent now, although I saw 4 Peacocks as well as a Small Tortoiseshell today.

You should know how Wurzel operates by now David 😊

I'm still seeing good numbers of Peacocks about and I was watching 3 Commas doing battle for a prime basking spot today 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 09-May-16 03:53 PM GMT

That last Comma has a fragmented "comma" mark – more like " ( ) ". A very variable feature, but I've not seen this particular variant. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 09-May-16 09:15 PM GMT

#### bugboy wrote:

#### David M wrote:

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You should know how Wurzel operates by now David 😊

I'm still seeing good numbers of Peacocks about and I was watching 3 Commas doing battle for a prime basking spot today 😊

Peacocks and Tortoiseshells still about here in the midlands too although I haven't seen a comma for a while now.

Hi Wurzel, I like the way the damaged wing on the Peacock is exposing the eye spot, almost like it is raising an eyebrow 😊

Cheers,

Neil

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-May-16 11:44 PM GMT

Cheers David 😊 The cursed 'W' word is keeping me from posting 😊 Still better late than never... 😊

Cheers Buggy 😊 You do have to remember that we're about 2 weeks behind everyone else in this neck of the woods.

Cheers Dave 😊 I hadn't noticed that. Perhaps they should rename the Comma the 'Punctuation Mark' 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Was it in admonishment or surprise I wonder?

Offsite! 19-04

I took a bit of a gamble at lunch today and used the car to get further into Pewsey. This does come with the drawback that it reduces time in the field as I have to allow time to get back but I was hoping to check out a few of the old haunts from last year.

I started out by looking in briefly at Scotchell Park but there was nothing doing there, all was quiet and the cloud was mustering overhead. So from here I wandered back towards the car and along the railway bank with a view to cutting through to Vera Jones's Mill - another small nature reserve this one run by the local Wildlife Trust. The cloud persisted and it still felt too cool for April plus I was forced to use the footpath through the houses as the track I'd used last year was blocked by brush and cut shrubbery. Whilst walking I scanned for Cuckoo flower but there was nothing towards Vera Jones and not even a sniff of an Orange-tip or any other butterfly for that matter.

Somewhat deflated I turned and made my way back, a single worn Peacock offering some solace. I was almost back at work and resigned to not seeing an Orange-tip when I had to complete an emergency stop and park. I'd spied a creamy butterfly making its way frenetically along the verge. It seemed to be an almost tangerine colour as the orange and white blur in flight - my first OT of 2016 - finally. I hopped out of the car and fired a few shots when it eventually landed oh so briefly. As seems the way at this time of year all my shots were distant/in flight. Still you can see that it is an OT! Hopefully the usual pattern will occur - shots will be difficult to start with and then with each new sighting I can get closer and closer!





Spot the OT?  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 11-May-16 07:38 AM GMT

First prize for the most obscure OT image ever. It would make a good mensa test. 😊  
C.H. soon, hope for better weather this time !.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-May-16 10:27 AM GMT

Well done Wurzel! I think your shot though far a way of the OT is original,( love the 2nd shot with the OT on the Spring buds) A promise of things to come 😊 Goldie

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-May-16 10:00 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Good luck at my Marshie site – 2 have already been reported from a reserve slightly further West so they could be emerging in numbers any day now 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 There may be a few more OTs to follow 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 12-May-16 08:11 PM GMT

Blimey Wurzel, that was harder than my daughter's 'Where's Wally Book'. Found the OT eventually.  
Nice shot of the Peacock too!

Regards Kev

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-May-16 10:38 PM GMT

Cheers Kevling 😊 Hopefully today's one is a bit easier 😊

Vera's Place 20-04-2016

I decided to follow my previous days success with another Lunch visit this time though to Vera Jones's Mill proper. I can't actually remember the proper name of the reserve but the name I've given it seems familiar and sounds good! 😊

As the sun was shining which this spring has been a rarity I ran down the Down and got into the wood to make the most of it. I had an idea that along the board walk on the further side of the river would be the best place to start looking for any OTs. At the gate I stepped onto the board walk and almost stood on a Peacock! As it flapped off I turned right and worked my way round two sides of the rectangle that the board walk makes. The first part is wooded with the river running through it and fen on the other side but there were no Specklies. The second side is a raised stony path with boggy ground on either side. Here there was a second Peacock which I didn't try and stomp on and so it let me take its photo 😊. I turned left and walked back onto a boardwalk but a wider one this time for the third side of the rectangle. This board walk cuts across 'fen' and there seemed to be plenty of Cuckoo Flower showing and then dives back into the wood and again I almost stood on another Peacock! I don't know what's up with me today?



The path starts meandering a bit now but as I followed it on I saw a familiar tangerine looking butterfly – a male OT so I happily followed it onwards through the reserve. It led me on a merry dance and promptly flew into a mown field before disappearing completely offering me another 'where's the OT' shot. I didn't mind though as now I was distracted by a white butterfly. It seemed smaller than a Small White with a daintier flight. Luckily it landed and I'm able to see my first female OT. It had a slightly deformed fore wing; much smaller which I thought could possibly explain the daintier than usual flight?

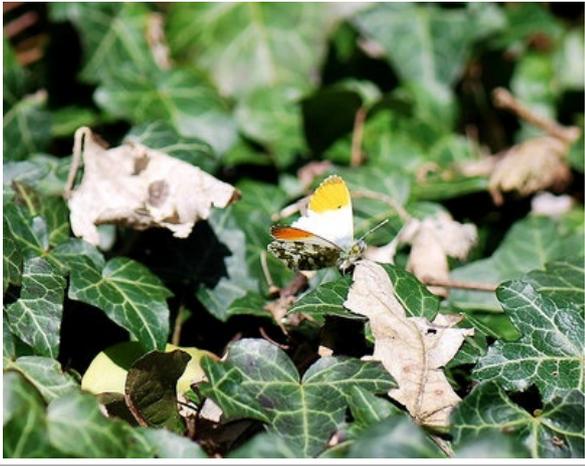


It gets a bit hassled by a male which quickly gets the message and as I'm watching it a large white butterfly moves pass swiftly. It wasn't limey like a female Brimstone but Farrow and Ball All White (you can see what Mrs Wurzel has had me doing recently! 😊) and with dark tips to the wing – a male Large White. Also a Comma put in a brief appearance which I only mention for completeness.

But I've almost used all my time so I head up the hill at speed. Unfortunately I've forgotten my usual technique for hill running and so when I get back to the car I'm knackered but relieved that at last I seem to have found a 'good' site for OT's!

Have a goodun

Ps On the way home I made a cheeky stop at my 'Early pull in' site and after a bit more running along the road I managed a somewhat closer male OT... I'm getting closer every time!



### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 13-May-16 11:02 PM GMT

That first Peacock really doesn't look as if it's spent six months hibernating – beautifully fresh. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by prettybutterfly, 14-May-16 02:24 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Fantastic photos of Peacocks and female Orange Tips. It's lovely to see them, it feels like spring.

from Emma

### Re: Wurzel

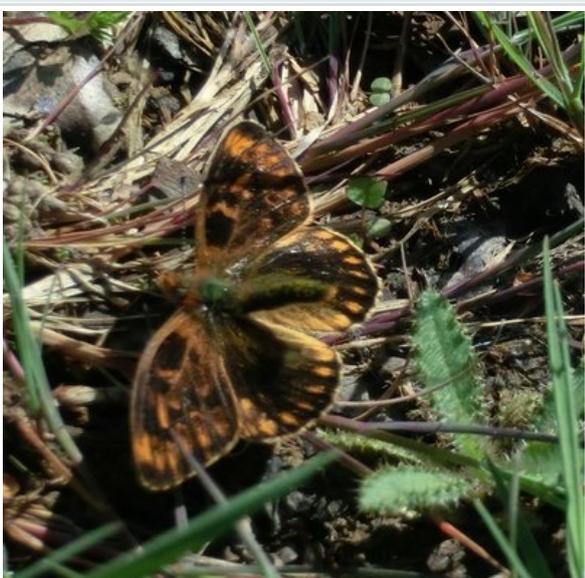
by Goldie M, 15-May-16 09:53 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, lovely Butterflies, I think I'm following in your footsteps with Holly Blues, 😊

Up to now I've seen them at a distance but after a brief visit to Hall-Lee-Brook I managed a distant shot just (one) before the HB took off again 😊 so I hope when I do manage a shot it'll be as good as your OT ones. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by ronniethepoo, 15-May-16 04:07 PM GMT



*aberrant fritillary in flight*

followed your advice Wurzel – got her in flight



underside

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 15-May-16 10:53 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

If by HB you mean Hutchinsons bank, then yes, you could do Chiddingfold on the way home. Especially as Wood Whites are easier to get near in late afternoon. My suggestion would be more brownie points coupled with some old fashioned grovelling.

PS. I should be visiting CH. in the next week or so.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-May-16 11:49 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I don't know where that one had been hiding...

Cheers Emma 😊 Spring indeed, finally!

Cheers Goldie 😊 The Holly Blues are still playing hard to get for me 😊

Excellent news Ronnie 😊 I got some shots as well 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'll give it a go...but if it doesn't work there's always the second brood 😊

Vera 29-04

Another lunchtime trip and another race against the weather...This time though my sprint across the Down wasn't really necessary because as soon as I got into the fen/wood the sun broke cover and burnt the cloud away for a spell...but it was all that I needed. This time I went round the rectangle in the reverse direction and about half way in a male OT fluttered on the other side of a stream. I thought at first that it was going not play nicely, doing that thing where they patrol, stop for a microsecond and just as you're getting the shot lined up off they go for a dizzying further five minutes.

However this one had fallen foul of the temperature as even though the sun was shining there was still a nip in the air and a thermometer would barely show double figures. I approached and hoped that it would stay relatively still. It seemed fine with my close approach but occasionally it would move to a new position. I don't think this was anything to do with me as I'd finished taking some photos and was just watching it each time it moved on. The temperature started to rise and it set off for a further flight and I let it go just watching and enjoying the site; dappled woodland with an Orange-tip doing what it does so well.





It then settled down again as the sun went in for a minute or two and it closed its wings. I couldn't resist moving in for one final time to try for a few closed wing shots. After which I left it and headed on my way.



Further along there was nothing and as the sun remained in I thought that would be it so I turned back with the view of retracing my steps but as I started back something fluttered weakly on the boardwalk – a GVW, my first 'definite' for the season. It seemed to really be struggling to fly in the cool temperature and a little warmth from my finger meant that it could eventually flutter off to hopefully find shelter elsewhere.



So only two butterflies to show for my 20 minutes but more than worth the effort for the time spent with the OT.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-May-16 04:19 PM GMT

Lovely photos Wurzel, such clarity in the Butterflies , mine never seem to look so clear 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-May-16 06:09 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 It's a combination of getting close enough, good light, a great lens and mostly ...a total fluke! 🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 17-May-16 11:00 PM GMT

Love the detail on that Green-veined White Wurzel, not to mention the Orange-tip shots 📷 The in-flight shot of the male OT from distance is superbly sharp 😊

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-May-16 11:28 PM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Just chucked it in Sports Mode and away I went 😊 Hoping that the weather improves this weekend... 😊

Duke Site - First Visit 30-04-2016

I was still very, very early for a visit to my Duke site but with both daughters fully occupied, paint drying between coats and all the 'chores' done what else could I do? So I bombed over reckoning on one, maybe two Skippers for the Yearly Tally.

Once there I stared towards the base of the hill and watched as the hillside went from lush green to darkness as clouds drifted under the sun. With the cool wind whipping up it looked like it was going to be a tricky session. One of those where you wait for the 2-3 minutes of stillness with sun in amongst the 'dross'. I set off up the path and before I knew it I was at the Cyprus tree which was bereft of Greensteaks.

I reached the 'Springy' bank before I encountered anything remotely butterfly like. There were plenty of Mint Moths about here, flitting about, catching my eye and distracting me from looking for Skippers though eventually something larger and beiger appeared on the scene. It buzzed me a couple of times and flew in typical Skipper fashion; fast, low and veering suddenly. It did land in time and I crept up on it and was surprised to see that it was a Dingy. I know that Grizzlies appear much smaller and greyer but I usually see them first and the Dingy second. Either way a little cloud cover was welcome as it enabled me to actually get some shots of the frenetic beastie.





I left the Dingy among the stones and made my way across the track and up the tiny 'valley'. As I hopped over the stile the sun broke again and all around me was minute action. It was like the Star Wars battle scene but in miniature and in daylight. At least 3 Grizzlies were hassling/being hassled by 2 further Dingy's (the Tie Fighters and X-wings). The odd GVW, Brimstone and a single Peacock made occasional forays into the fry before moving back to the edges of the battle (like the Battle Cruisers picking off the occasional fighter). I kneeled down and watched in rapt fascination. It was utterly brilliant and even salved my memories of Han's death! 🥰





*The Dark Side...*



...or is it a Jedi?

The sun went back in and what had been a bustling little battleground became silent so I used the time between the sunbursts to move back to the Springy bank. When the sun came out again there Skippers of both species, another Peacock, another Brimstone and a male OT did a few patrol passes.



By now time was eeking on and the sunbursts were becoming lass and lass frequent and shorter in duration. As I reached the Cyprus tree having retraced my steps a large, solid mass of cloud, uniform in it's greyness blocked the sun and showed no signs of shifting. I was treated to a short sharp shower to see me on my way and so on my way I went to pick K up.  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 17-May-16 11:31 PM GMT

I presume that's a mint moth, Wurzel?

You've caught the colours really well.

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 18-May-16 12:54 AM GMT

Nice shots of the Skippers, Wurzel, the Grizzled Skipper on the Oxeye Daisy especially 😊 Have a goodun at HB 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 18-May-16 12:48 PM GMT

Gorgeous Grizzled underside, I've yet to capture it as well as you got it there 🍷

I hope the weather improves for you at the weekend, maybe time to start worshipping some Gods! All you need is half an hours worth of warm sun and you'll get something as long as you're in the right place.

### Re: Wurzel

by MrSp0ck, 18-May-16 03:05 PM GMT

#### bugboy wrote:

I hope the weather improves for you at the weekend, maybe time to start worshipping some Gods! All you need is half an hours worth of warm sun and you'll get something as long as you're in the right place.

Yes with a bit of luck Sunday might be sunny, but at the moment Saturday looks a washout. No sun = no butterflies in the cutting, unless you find a few roosting ones.

Saturday Patchy Rain. Sunday, Monday & Tuesday Fleeting Showers.

Wednesday we have a Butterfly Conservation Walk so hopefully the dull weather forecast will change by then

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 18-May-16 03:14 PM GMT

That's a lovely shot of the Grizzled on the daisy Wurzle but my favourite is that moth. What a great shot- for me colours, composition, everything just works. I would frame that one 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-May-16 04:58 PM GMT

Lovely shot of the Grizzled Skipper on the Daisy Wurzel, 🍷 nothing doing here at present. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-May-16 11:26 PM GMT

Cheers David 😊 It is indeed one, well one of the two species anyway, not sure which yet as I need to consult with my Moth Man, Philzoid 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 Just relying on the weather 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 So far I have joined The Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster and I am now a practicing Pastafarian, Ramen :lol:I hope it works!

Cheers MrSpock 😊 I hope Sunday will turn out okay, fingers crossed 😊

Cheers Pauline 😊 I would like to frame it along with a few of my other shots, but Mrs Wurzel is in charge of the interior design and is into monochrome at the moment - maybe I could get away with a Marbled White? 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I hope it picks up soon!

Lunch at Vera 03-05-2016

Another quick lunchtime trip to Vera's place. I'm sure if my wife sees me typing this I'll get into a whole heap of trouble! 😊

The Spring conditions continue pretty much as before, fleeting sun and when it's gone cool. I made my way across the field which is still a riot of yellow clothed as it is in Dandelions as far as the eye can see. Hopefully this will be conducive to the Blues when they finally arrive on the scene. Today I cut into the wood and headed left and managed to get all the way round to where I saw my first GVW of 2016 before encountering a butterfly. When I did it looked to be a GVW and so I crept towards it camera at the ready. As I peered over the grasses to locate my quarry the white blur resolved itself into two GVWs.



Eventually they broke off each in the opposite direction. I tried to follow one, lose it and so head back for the second only for a third to fly by – then all three were on the wing! Honestly you wait ages for one and then there are loads.



Out on Boardwalk a Painted Lady does a flyby almost as soon as I step through the gate and out of the wood. Another GVW and a male OT patrol by as well. I can't get over what a difference there is today – from two butterflies previously to 5 already. On the other side of the fen another male OT and Brimstone are about but very active. I consider following them further across the Fen on the boardwalk but a Small White (or what appears to be) appears behind me so I work back across the boardwalk. I walk along feeling my way with my feet so as not to drop off the side and into a mire and at the same following the butterfly. It comes nearer and nearer and something isn't right; it's too fluttery and not white enough. It comes even nearer and lands on a Cuckoo Flower and reveals itself as a female OT, this time with evenly sized wings.





Luckily I've remembered how to run up Downs; small steps and don't look up just keep staring at your feet and before you know it you're at the top, as I was dangerously near to being late back at work.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-May-16 01:38 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Female OT's Wurzel, have you got your Speckies yet :?:they're every where you go here I wish the other Butterflies were as plentiful, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-May-16 10:26 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I've seen the odd one here and there but nowhere have they been in real numbers apart from Hutchinson's Bank today where there were four or five down the entrance path 😊

This is totally out of sync with my PD but whilst at Botany Bay today Philzoid found a Wood White behaving oddly. It was seemingly roosting with it's wings wide open. There was a few strands of spider web behind it so at first we thought that it was dead but after a few record shots I placed my finger under it's abdomen and it tried to shrug off my finger so was clearly still alive. What was going on is a bit of a mystery to me – any ideas? There does seem to be a dark swelling in the middle of it's head cold this have something to do with it's unusual behaviour or was it because the wings were a bit tattered and it couldn't fly or it had got caught out as the cloud had thickened blocking the sun and lowering the temperature?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 22-May-16 10:32 PM GMT

This is something I have seen before in wood white. I photographed this one last year:



That wasn't a chance moment or action photo - it was sitting like that. But the butterfly seemed unharmed, if a little dopy:



Guy

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 23-May-16 06:39 PM GMT

I've never seen a Wood White like that, Wurzel – as you say it looks as if its head is damaged in some way, and the wings are a bit wonky. I wonder if it had been subject to the attentions of a bird which let go (nasty taste?) before actually killing the butterfly. Other white butterflies taste unpleasant because of what the caterpillars eat, so Wood Whites may be no exception.

Your earlier Skipper shots are terrific, by the way, and I await with bated breath your report from the weekend just past... sometime soon anyway 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 23-May-16 07:57 PM GMT

Given that it has spider web stuck to it we can presume its had a recent encounter with a spider so I wonder whether it got bitten but managed to free itself before enough spider venom entered its body to kill it outright. Perhaps the open wings were due to 'mild' effects of the venom (relaxing/spasming muscles in some way?) all just speculation 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by kevling, 23-May-16 08:07 PM GMT

Wurzel,

Lovely photos of the female OT. I saw plenty in my local park today including one that was much bigger than any I have ever seen before. I think it had been eating it's Spinach 😊. Seriously though, it would be worth knowing what makes them fluctuate so much in size. Also very interested in the Wood White photo. Perhaps with the proximity of the web, it was a would be target for the spider, but managed to fend it off.

Regards Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-May-16 11:49 PM GMT

Cheers Guy 😊 So could it could be torpor – Philzoid and I have seen something similar before with a male Brimstone

Cheers Dave 😊 That's another possibly then – bird strike, I wonder if butterflies experience 'shock' – 😊 possibly a surge in certain hormones similar to adrenaline?

Cheers Bugboy and Kev 😊 another plausible theory – still not sure which but it was interesting to see 😊

Doings...05-05-2016

After a very busy day at work I made a quick stop-off on the way home at my early site at Enford. Over the five minutes I was there I saw one Small White a male Brimstone and four male Orange-tips. It was great to watch them interact; patrolling from opposite directions, meeting in the middle in a mass of cream tangerine, spiralling upwards in a dizzying ascent before breaking apart and jinking off in opposite directions. Occasionally they'd break only to buzz straight back into each other to start round 2. Whilst it was fantastic entertainment it meant getting photos was tricky and I managed only 3 shots before my quarry disappeared off on patrol again.



06-05-2016 Jones

After not being able to escape the building yesterday I was glad today when I checked the Revision timetable and I wasn't down. Doubly so when at break 2 Holly Blues flew through the Quad without stopping...my first for 2016 and possibly an positive omen?

So at lunch it was off to Vera's again, I cut down the Down, right through the wood and straight to the Fen/Meadow. There were plenty of Whites flying, nipping this way and that, fluttering just out of reach. Here there was a single Peacock 3 each of male and female Orange-tip, 2 definite male Brimstones, what looked like 3 Small Whites but I was only able to confirm one GVW. All the butterflies were playing hard ball and those that landed close enough to the boardwalk to be within range of my camera either landed for the briefest of seconds or held themselves at awkward angles so my shots didn't come off. There was only one decent one amongst the lot.



I carried on through the wood not adding much else to the tally apart from 3 GVWs but then right round and just on my way out a medium sized brown jobby fluttered by - my first Speckle of 2016 finally! Unfortunately it didn't stop for a photo so I was forced to carry on up and into the field with yet another GVW and a Brimstone.



I almost made it back to the car but got waylaid right at the top of the hill by another male Orange-tip which appeared to be roosting on a Dandelion

clock. It then set off on patrol but stopped frequently for nectar at a range of different plants including Daisies which is something I've not seen before.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 26-May-16 08:11 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel It's the first time I've seen an opened winged Wood White, they look fantastic 🍷 even if your's was a little twisted 😊 it's one BF I've yet to see 😊

You sound bit like I was with the Dukes and the PBF, now you see me now you don't 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-May-16 10:52 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Or should that be Scarlet Pimpernel 😊😊

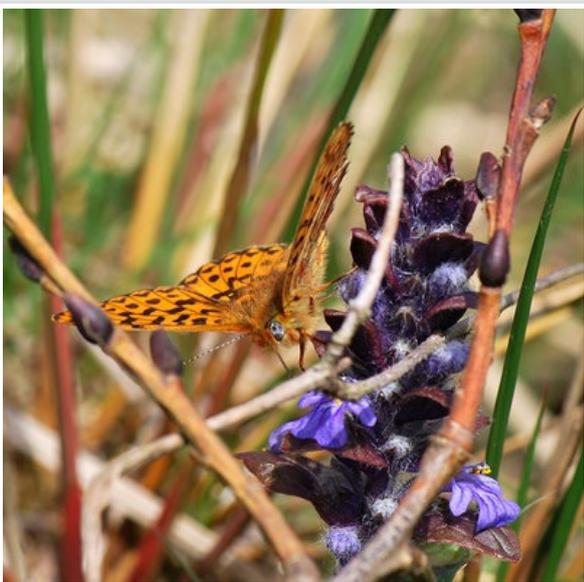
The Oracle...08-05-2016

One of the ways I've found to ensure that I don't burn through all my Brownie points and 'bonus' days too early in the season is to take both the girls with me. Therefore my wife can have the day to focus on doing what she wants, I get to go butterflying and the girls get to 'chill outdoors in beautiful surroundings or 'hang' with Philzoid's daughters if it's a joint trip. I fancied going to try for Pearls and Dukes so I suggested packing a picnic and taking the girls out all day. As we were getting ready to go I asked the Oracle (or my older daughter) about three key species that I was hoping to see Pearls, Dukes and Greenstreaks...an emphatic yes to all three meant that it looked like being a cracking day! So off to Bentley Wood...

It was cool but sunny when we arrived and when K checked the book it showed that the first two from Bentley had been found the day before. So there would be some Pearls but they may be tricky to locate. With this in mind we headed to the usual emergence hotspot, the path that runs parallel to the road on the far side of the clearing and I set up camp for the girls so that I could go off looking. A female Brimstone caught my eye almost immediately and as I turn to call the girls over something else appears, smaller and ginger...my first Pearl of the year, just like that. I manage a few shots and then it's off!



Despite walking up and down the path several times with plenty of scanning I can't relocate it so I zone out and try for shots of the usual 'Pearl Visit Suspects' (lizards, Oil Beetles, Tiger Beetle etc.). Having had success with all of these I move back to the girls and we move over to the main clearing. While the girls get comfortable on the bench under the tree I have a chat with Baitman and another Pearl puts in an appearance. However it still feels 'early' and finding more Pearls is hard work with very little reward for plenty of searching down at the lower end of the site and criss-crossing through the tracks around the centre of the site. In the end I check out the new cleared area which produces a further two Pearls so taking the tally to four.



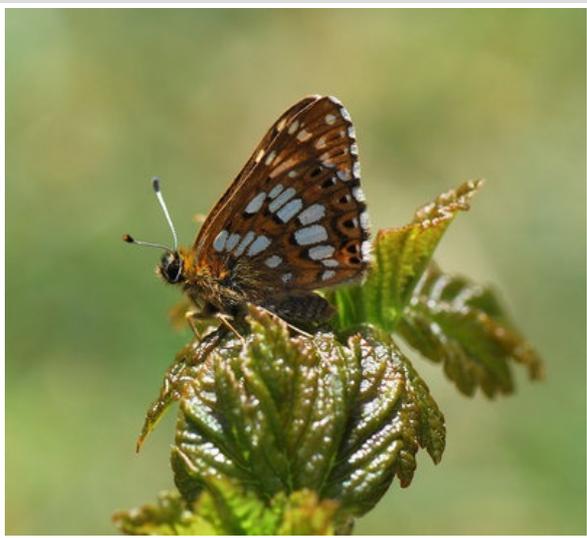
Job done the girls want to move onto my Duke Site so instead of trying for a better underside shot we pack up and head off, noting a Specklie in the car park and a massive patch of Garlic Mustard on the way out which unsurprisingly has an OT patrolling it. Once we've pulled off the dusty tank track and parked we head up the straight up the main track stopping for the odd view of a Dingy or Grizzlie along the way. When we reach the top of the path I bump into Rob Howe and he kindly puts me onto my first Greenie of 2016 (2 out of 3 Oracle) in the usual bush as well as pointing out some other of their other haunts, one in particular is pretty good as it's out of the wind.



*Nowhere near as good as Ronniethepoo*

Unfortunately he's not found any Dukes though. Could the Oracle be losing her touch? Not to be too pessimistic I slowly work my way up to where I found the Dukes last year and after a quick check of the spongy area behind the tree line which is covered in Grizzlies and Dinghies, I'm convinced that this is a late site for the Dukes. As I come back through the trees and there is a familiar orangey butterfly whizzing about...a Duke and fresh out of the box, resplendent even down to the ginger hairs. I call and wave but Rob's car has already gone...so I settled down and enjoy the Duke. Three for three, the Oracle is on fire and the Duke is a little beaut!





I get back to the girls and they're watching tadpoles in a flooded tank track. Little L is trying to shoo them into the deep end so they don't dry up and K/the Oracle is trying to work out where they will go if they make it to froglets? Then we all go looking for Greenstreaks, both the girls love the bustling green one and much giggling ensues as we watch them scrapping it out. A Small Copper gate crashes the party and makes four firsts for the year in one visit.





Tired and chuffed off homewards we head, what a brilliant day!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 27-May-16 11:00 PM GMT

There are some great shots in there, Wurzel! 😊 I especially like the Duke underside – always a favourite, and you have it perfectly. You have your girls well-trained too! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-May-16 08:43 AM GMT

Lovely shots of the Duke's Wurzel, 📷 I only got long shots 😞 I hope to go up to Gait Barrow again, so hope fully they'll move bit nearer for a better shot. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-May-16 11:31 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 My girls are growing up fast – I don't know how much longer they'll want to go out butterflying with their old man 😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck with the Dukes next time 😊

Finally a working lunch...13-05-2016

After almost a week since my last outing, a week of extra teaching sessions before school, after school, boosters in 'free' lessons and during four lunchtimes and I was so relieved today when I checked the schedule and I was free at lunchtime!

As soon as my class were dismissed I was out of the door, camera in one hand and car keys in the other. Within 4 minutes I was running down the Down and trying to decide which way to work round the Vera reserve? I went right hoping to get my first shots of a Speckle but although I did see one it didn't stop for a photo, neither did a male OT, Peacock nor a Brimstone and in fact the only butterfly that did stop long enough was a Green-vined White.



I made my way from the lush dappled lighting of the wood into the blaring sunshine of the open Fen and almost immediately a male OT hove into view, settling for just long enough for a distant shot.



There were many whites criss-crossing the Fen as I wandered across the causeway but none stopped long enough nor close enough for me to train my lens on them and then I was plunging back into the lush dappled lighting of the far side wood. As I traipsed the boardwalk another male OT flew alongside me for a while keeping me company and then in the small field three Green-veined Whites and a female Brimstone all made passes, flying low and then dipping down for a fraction of a second, teasing me. As I reached the turn of the path a Green-veined finally landed close enough for me to make an approach - another Green-veined White.



My trip had taken too long and so again I had to make a run for it! I got back just in time...just!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 30-May-16 09:00 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, no Dukes today at GB 😞 so I'm not sure what's going wrong up there, did get my first Dingy of the year though Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 30-May-16 09:14 PM GMT

Great stuff Wurzel, those PBF, Greenies and Dukes look stunning 😊. Nice to see your reports are currently coming out in the same month as we are in.... 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 31-May-16 08:34 PM GMT

Just catching up Wurzel, great reports and photos again recently 😊

Keep 'em coming.

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 01-Jun-16 06:53 PM GMT

Great reports and pictures Wurzel ....that first image of the duke is stunning 😊

The blurred image is a Bee Hawk-moth by the looks of it but cannot make out which one 😞

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 01-Jun-16 07:06 PM GMT

#### Philzoid wrote:

The blurred image is a Bee Hawk-moth by the looks of it but cannot make out which one 😞

Phil

I thought it was a Greenstreak

### Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 01-Jun-16 07:10 PM GMT

Looks like a green hairstreak to me ...

Guy

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 01-Jun-16 10:26 PM GMT

Ooops.Think you're right chaps. Clubbed antennae for a start 😞

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-16 11:05 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Fingers crossed for Dukes 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Looks like you spoke to soon 😞😞

Cheers Neil - will do! 😊

Cheers Philzoid - sorry to have caught you out with my very poor shot of a Greenstreak 😞 - as I said it's certainly nowhere near as good as Ronniethepoo would have taken...

Cheers Bugboy and Guy for managing to work out what the mass of blur was 😊

Bentley Wood and on... Part 1 14-05-2016

I couldn't believe my eyes when I checked through the PDs one evening as there were some stunning photos of a magnificent aberrant Pearl-bordered Frit on Dave's PD. So different it looked like a totally different species and I had to do a double take of the images and re-read the text in case I'd made a mistake - it looked more like a Heath Frit aberrant than a Pearl! As Bentley is one of my 'local' sites being less than 25 minutes away and as Philzoid and I were planning a meet for Pearls at the weekend looking for this seemed like a no brainer. And so for the next couple of evenings I watched with a mixture of mounting envy, as more people found the aberrant and trepidation, what a 'pinner' got there first? I needn't have worried though as the Oracle had already said "yes, of course dad" 😊

Finally Saturday dawned and so various family members dropped off at their respective activities I bombed over to Bentley, with Eurovision 'classics' playing on Radio 2, I do like a bit of fromage every now and again. As I pulled into the car park the day was warm and bright and there weren't many places available and so I abandoned the car in the overflow, grabbed my camera and lucky hat and made for the Eastern Clearing.

There were several groups of people spread across the Clearing and so I set to looking, all the time hoping that I would find the little beauty or that the cry of 'aberrant' would echo across the site. While mooching around and watching the very active 'normal' Pearls I bumped into False Apollo and so we had a catch up.



I then headed down to the bottom end and spent some time with a lovely Pearl that kept posing here and there always looking nice but always keeping me at a distance. Eventually it posed nicely, sitting up on some turf and I had the closed wing shot that had eluded me previously in the bag. It seems that this year is again a more 'orangey' than 'red' year.

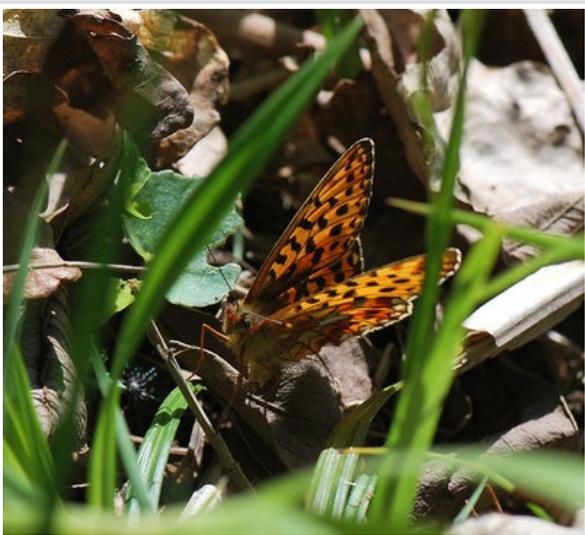


My strolling had brought me back to the top end of the Clearing near the newly cleared area when someone called out 'Aberrant' and a much darker butterfly flew across the stream and landed on the deck amongst the dead bracken. I and several others watched it and photographed it for some time. Ordinarily I'd let it alone after it 'flew' for the third time but this one didn't seem to mind us and when it flew it was because it had chosen to, not because it had been spooked or bothered. After I had a several shots and some reasonably alright underwings to compliment the more common topside images I stood back and just watched – keeping an eye on where it was waiting for Philzoid to arrive.





Once Philzoid had arrived and I'd put him onto the butterfly I stood back and let him get his shots and whilst doing so I got that rarity of Bentley - a text message. It informed me that I had missed a call from Mrs Wurzel and so I spent the next 40 minutes or so wandering round the Eastern Clearing holding my phone aloft and seeking the tiniest bit of signal. Luckily Philzoid and False Apollo were still on the Aberrant and so when I gave up on the mobile I set to. But a 'normal' Pearl had other ideas and flew before me and promptly started ovipositing/positing.



I then took to trying for a mobile signal again which took me all over the clearing and I would alternately check my phone and check a butterfly. In doing so I managed some more aberrant shots and my first Large Whites shots of the year as well as a shot of that most tricky of species, the Speckled Yellow.



After this Philzoid and I decided to try our luck at my Duke site to see if it would produce Philzoid some first for the year and so off we headed, not stopping even for my first decent chance of a Specklie shot...to be continued.

Have a goodun

p.s the call I missed was not an emergency - just the standard 'do you know where the...is?' 🤔

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 01-Jun-16 11:58 PM GMT

Brilliant day Wurzel and that aberrant was a little beaut 😊👉.

Most of my calls follow the line of "where did you put the" ... "or have you remembered to" ... it's worth chancing your arm and leaving the phone behind in the car once in a while 😊👉.

Great shot of the Speckled Yellow .. a hard one to get at the best of times 😊.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 02-Jun-16 07:15 AM GMT

Take a big dose of mrgreens 🍃🍃🍃, great stuff.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Jun-16 10:19 AM GMT

Great shots Wurzel of the ab, 🍃🍃 I thought I was lucky find the SPBF at GB 🤔 I tell you what the ab has become famous 😊 Looks like your wife did you a favour sending you all over the Clearing 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 02-Jun-16 05:59 PM GMT

It's quite a while since I last visited Bentley, so it's nice to know that the Pearls are still thriving there. Even better that the aberrant was around for plenty of people to see it, without it being pinned and vanishing into someone's cabinet. Like many people, I can remember being very puzzled by the Speckled Yellow moth in my early butterflying days, because I couldn't find it in my butterfly books 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 02-Jun-16 10:51 PM GMT

Good to see you got some great shots of that ab., Wurzel. It looks a lot more active during your visit than it was a couple of days before. I'm envious of your "normal" underside too – one of those things I always struggle with. 😊🍃

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Jun-16 10:55 PM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 'Phone in left in car' sound advice that! 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'm sure the Mr. Greens are only borrowed 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I wasn't that appreciative at the time 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 I don't know if the Pearls of Bentley are thriving – they seem to be decreasing in numbers – perhaps we need Neil to come and sort it out 😊 When I first went looking for Pearls I had no clue as to their size and so Speckled Yellows were my Pearls for about an hour until I saw my first proper Pearl 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 It was great to catch up with the ab and it did like to give us the run around. My 'normal' underside was a chance moment after lot's of stalking and waiting and cussing 😊👉

Bentley and on...Part 2 14-05-2016

And so eventually we arrived at my Duke Site. I say eventually as the journey took an age – I thought that with spiralling fuel and insurance costs the Sunday Driver was an extinct species but we encountered at least two of them on route as well as a foreign driver who had forgotten or was ignorant of the fact that our speed signs are in miles and not kilometres per hour! Still we were on site but the torturous journey had seriously depleted my time allowance and so for me it would be a case of find as many butterflies as possible and then leave Philzoid to enjoy them!

Off down the track we went heading towards the Cypress tree and the promise of some Greenstreaks. Actually we didn't have to wait that long as on the incline there was a beautifully fresh Greenstreak down on the deck to greet us almost. It was very polite choosing not to land on the small scrapes of turf but on unfettered soil so there were no blades of grass protruding or getting between our lenses and subject. With a quick breakdancing move (I believe aptly named 'the caterpillar') I was flat on the deck and perfectly level with it.



Slightly further up amongst the Grizzlies and Dinghies that seem to line the path a Small Copper made an appearance in a very similar place to where I saw one last week. It was adopting a novel way of nectaring – holding itself completely upside as it drank! As it righted itself after the sun caught it and before our eyes it went from Small Copper to Small Golden Nugget! I think this was a first for the year for Philzoid and another was quickly to follow when he spotted something orange flitting around near the Cypress tree. It landed and perched for a short while so we were able to confirm that it was both of our first Small Heath of 2016.





Up by the springy turf along the margin of clearing Burnet Companion Moths pretended to be Dukes and Grizzlies and Dinghies vied for our attention and another Small Copper put in an appearance. Then we both found a Greenstreak at exactly the same time and mine (I don't know about Philzoids) seemed to be laying.



We cut through to the hillside with the mix of stony ground and spongy turf and there seemed to be even more Dinghies and Grizzlies here than on the whole rest of the site put together - it was bewildering and in the end we just stood and chatted and watched as the butterflies went about their frenetic business. Time by now had almost run about for me and so I left Philzoid surrounded by butterflies and cut back through the trees with a promise to holler if I found a Duke.

As I brushed aside the final branch upon leaving the treeline a small Brown butterfly caught my eye...  
"Duke!"



But as I was already late I could only fire off a few shots, put Philzoid onto the butterfly once he'd located my holler, and head on my way. A cracking outing despite the time constraints!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Also I'm only a teeny bit behind... 😊😞

June 2016



### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 04-Jun-16 11:07 PM GMT

That first Green Hairstreak is a terrific butterfly – so much better than all the green-against-green shots we all find ourselves stuck with most of the time... 😊 And a lovely row of white spots, too. Not that common at all. 🍷

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 05-Jun-16 11:56 AM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

as well as a foreign driver who had forgotten or was ignorant of the fact that our speed signs are in miles and not kilometres per hour!

Yep! 😊

That grounded greenstreak was a beaut and another first for the season 😊

#### Wurzel wrote:

put Philzoid onto the butterfly once he'd located my holler, and head on my way. A "cracking" outing

That was the sound of branches breaking as I desperately tried to find my way back before the Duke was gone 😊 .

It was indeed a cracking day 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 05-Jun-16 08:37 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

With a quick breakdancing move (I believe aptly named 'the caterpillar') I was flat on the deck and perfectly level with it.

This is something that I think deserves a wider audience, perhaps after a few pints at this years winter get together 😊

Great pics, I'm off to investigate this place this coming week and hopefully come home with my first lifer of 2016 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 05-Jun-16 09:08 PM GMT

Nice shots of the Bentley PBF ab, Wurzel 😊👍 and the normal underside is 'lush' too, to borrow one of yours 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Jun-16 10:00 PM GMT

Great Butterfly shots Wurzel, your one up with the Copper I've not seen one yet. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Jun-16 11:47 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I'm sure you'll get one soon!

Cheers Mike 😊 I was chuffed with the Pearl ab. 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Unfortunately I'm banned from performing Breakdancing moves due to Health and Safety 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 It was a brill day let's hope for another one soon! 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 That was one of the highlights of the day 😊

Marshie Site 15-05-2016

After the delights of the 'Rock and Gem' show at Shepton Mallet we were driving back and looking for somewhere to eat out picnic lunch. Stourhead was the obvious choice but I chanced my arm and suggested that we could wing by my Marshie Site. Surprisingly that got the okay and after a bit of rigmarole getting there we were soon up the track and sitting pretty on the hillside or "assis a c'est tranquille". While the girls munched and looked out across the valley I munched and enjoyed fleeting views of Marsh Frits!

While the girls let their dinner go down I cracked on and had a quick walk around. There were reasonable numbers of Marshies around along with many Grizzlies (including the lightest I've ever come across), Dinghies, the odd Small Heath and down near the bottom of the hill many Greenstreaks along the fence line.









3.)The gorgeous Marshies in a multitude of guises and poses. To start with most preferred the standard open wing pose but by the end there were a few that were rocking the closed wing look!





Eventually I'd walked my way back to the family and so we packed up and headed homewards one more...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by David M, 07-Jun-16 11:49 PM GMT

Love those dark Marsh Frits, Wurzel. They're much bolder than ours here in south Wales.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 08-Jun-16 09:53 AM GMT

Fantastic photos Wurzel 🍷🍷 Sounded like a great day out 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-16 11:13 PM GMT

Larkhill the story so far...16-05-2016

Actually the story so far has been pretty dire - not even a penny dreadful, just dreadful! 😞 I'd stopped off at various different times of day on 10 different days and seen absolutely nowt! Finally on 16th May I broke the Larkhill duck seeing and photographing my first butterfly on site. Despite the poor lead up the season started with a bit of a bang, not because the first species was a Brimstone but because it was resting on the deck with its wings half open. It looked like it had been flying along the path when the weak sun had gone in, the temperature had dropped and it had just fallen out of the sky.



Over the next week work and weather conspired against me and it wasn't until Friday afternoon on the way home that I was able to stop and check out how the butterflies were doing.

Slightly before that however I was able to get out on the Friday lunch to check out what was happening at one of my other local 'work' sites. Vera will be quietening down prior to the Hedge and Meadow Browns arriving so I went instead to a small field in the middle of one of the new estates. At the right time of year it is crawling with three species of golden skipper and while that time is still not quite upon us I was hoping for maybe a Specklie or a Common Blue?

As I took the most frequented path across the site something flew by me and landed just up ahead – I could see that it was a Specklie but as soon as it became properly aware of me it disappeared down into the scrub. I'm not having much luck with this species this year as for some reason they're just playing fair and always hiding away. Despite waiting for valuable minutes it made no signs of leaving its hideaway and so I continued on my way.

I didn't have much luck for the rest of my stay and somewhat dejected I made my way back up the hill and back to the car. A Small White then chose to stop by and later a Large White stopped for a few shots too so the trip out wasn't a total loss – still no Blues and even worse the Specklies are playing hardball!



On the way home I stopped off at Larkhill. Instead of the Westbound path I checked out the Northbound instead but it wasn't until almost the very end of the path that a small, grey blur materialised into the familiar form of a Grizzlie. In fairness it was very smart looking and as I straightened up to make my leave a male Brimstone headed back down the path as if to show me to my car.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 11-Jun-16 07:59 AM GMT

Great Grizzlie shot Wurzel, lovely and fresh looking.

### Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 11-Jun-16 11:08 AM GMT

Wurzel, loving the Marshie photographs. When you get a fresh looking specimen they are amazing. They will certainly be my highlight of the year I'm sure.

Regards Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Jun-16 11:53 PM GMT

Cheers Katrina 😊 It was a fresh out of the box Grizzlie 😊

Cheers Kevling 😊 Marshies make or break my year every year – there are a 'must see' species for me 😊

Hutchinson's Bank 22-05-2016

It's been several years since I saw my last Glanville during the final success season at Wrecclesham. Since then I've not been able to persuade myself to make the journey to Hutchinson's Bank and have also missed out on them on the Isle of Black by about 3 hours! This year however I needed to reacquaint myself with them and so despite a disappointing weather forecast I set off to meet Philzoid. On the drive there the weather got better and better until eventually I arrived amid warm clear blue skies, for once the Met had got it wrong but in a good way!

We set off in Philzoid's car with the Satnav taking us on a novel route and passing a convoy of Mini's doing the Brighton run. Soon we were parked and

heading down the wooded avenue. The first butterfly of the day was a Speckle and one which finally allowed me to get a photo of it. Then there was another and another and a Brimstone flew by and a Holly Blue or two fluttered about just out of reach as is usually the way.



The trees fizzled out and we were in 'the cutting'. Almost immediately a marmalade butterfly made a pass, followed by another. Two Glanvilles and we'd only been on site for about 45 seconds! There was a sudden surge of activity with both a Small and Common Blue (two firsts for the year) putting in an appearance along with at least 3 maybe 4 Glanvilles, ad OT, Large White and many, many Dinghies which were taking great delight in annoying all of the other species.



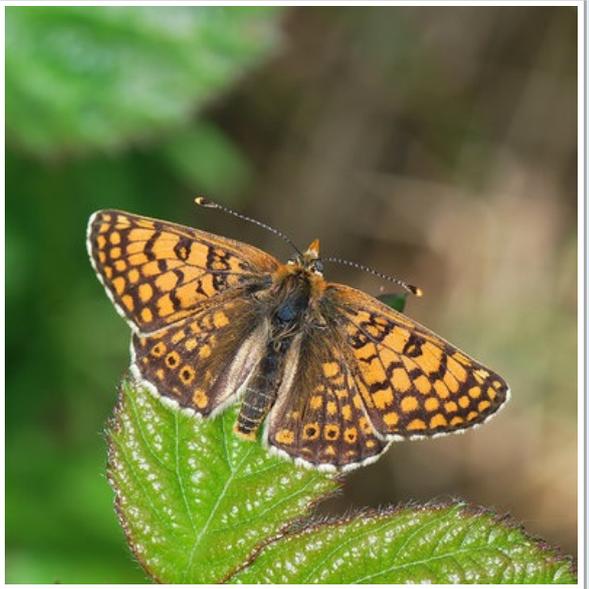


Deciding to make the most of the weather we headed out of the cutting to explore the rest of the site, turning left this is my only at the gate and heading up the hill. A Large White flew by and a Holly Blue landed long enough for a record shot. I didn't mind at it was such a short sighting as this is my only shot this year despite several sightings. A Greenstreak popped up for just long enough to get on the day tally and then we walked across the Down where another Glanville put on a bit of a show amongst the Dinghies and False Dukes (Burnet Companion Moths). We then toured the bottom footpath turning up a Small Heath, another Glanville, a couple of Dinghies but no Small Blue. I noticed a bright but tiny orange blob on a blade of grass which turned out to be a bit of a score - the very scarce Orange Conch. It was a weird little thing - so bright with seemingly metallic tufts and stripes.





Over at the Big Scrape there were very few butterflies - in fact only a single Small Heath amongst the edible Snails - huge shells! So we made our way back to the cutting chatting with the Wildlife Trust Ranger about the Glanvilles - he was at a loss to explain their presence and they don't seem to be condoned or vilified they don't seem to have made up their minds about the Glanvilles presence yet? At least this was the impression I got. Back and ensconced in the Cutting we went a little more Glanville happy but also I found a more obliging Small Blue and Philzoid finally turned up a Grizzlie. I was feeling slightly manic as after my efforts at my Duke and Marshie site and Bentley Wood it felt almost disconcerting to be working such a small area and getting such great rewards.







The cloud as starting to build now and the sunny morning was starting to become one of cloudy intervals. Having had out fill of Glanvilles (is this even possible?) we made our way home...well after a quick detour to Botany Bay...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 14-Jun-16 10:26 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,  
Brilliant report from HB. Glad the weather played ball for you.  
Also I missed you ( and Susie ) by one hour at Botany Bay that day.  
I called in at about 4pm, for Wood Whites and met John W who told me you had been there.  
One day we will clash 😊 .

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

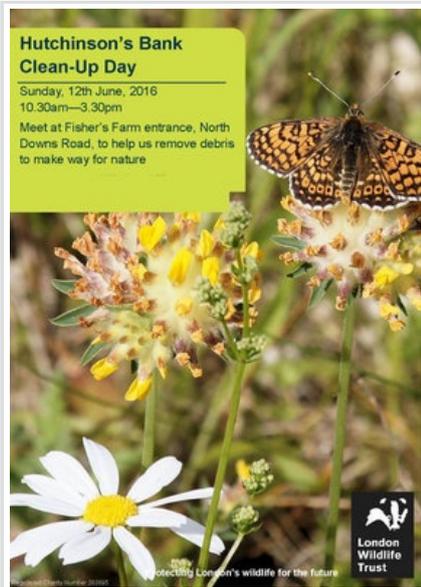
by MrSp0ck, 14-Jun-16 12:15 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

Hutchinson's Bank 22-05-2016

chatting with the Wildlife Trust Ranger about the Glanvilles - he was at a loss to explain their presence and they don't seem to be condoned or vilified they don't seem to have made up their minds about the Glanvilles presence yet?  
Have a goodun

Wurzel



The Wildlife Trust have been using Glanville Pictures on their posters [see above], I have removed the contacts mobile number.

Glad you got to see the Glanvilles, I was on a Vintage Bus Rally, which also mingled with the minis, so I missed you all that day.

The Orange Conch [*Commophila aeneana*] is known from Hutchinsons Bank, one of its few Surrey Sites, with only the following records, 19.6.95 & 11.6.04 so a great find.

Today I had 4 Glanvilles still flying after 5 weeks, although they are now mainly in the Big Scrape, and Bottom Bridleway, and females dotted about on the upper slopes, and warm spots.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Jun-16 11:05 PM GMT

One Trevor we'll meet in the field – and then the butterflies will have nowhere to hide 😊

Sorry to have missed you MrSpock and thank you for all the information – glad to hear that the Glanvilles are going strong 😊

Botany Bay 22-05-2016

Once at Botany Bay I changed the focus of my scanning activities – no longer was I seeking out marmalade instead I had 'weak white' on the radar. It was quite quiet on the journey down with only a Large White and a Brimstone to keep us company and as we got deeper into the wood it seemed to get quieter and quieter.

Just before the bridge the silence was broken as we spied a Wood White and whilst we moved in for a few shots a GVW and a second Wood White came into view. We just needed a Small and an OT to have the complete English full house. On over the bridge and up the track we went with the sun dipping in and out of the cloud for longer and longer intervals. We seemed to be stopping every 20 paces or so; first for a Brimstone, then for two Wood Whites, then for 2 more Wood Whites and an Orange-tip which were locked in Mortal Kombat.





However the biggest halting influence was a Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth. I was watching a Longicornis Bee when a far chunkier and brighter individual appeared. It was a Bee hawk and Philzoid and I tried for some shots - good old Sports Mode. Philzoid pointed out to me that they didn't hover like their relative the Hummingbird Hawk-moth but instead they flap away while clinging to the flower head with their front pair of legs. We had a second encounter with a Bee-hawk but I don't know whether it was the same individual?



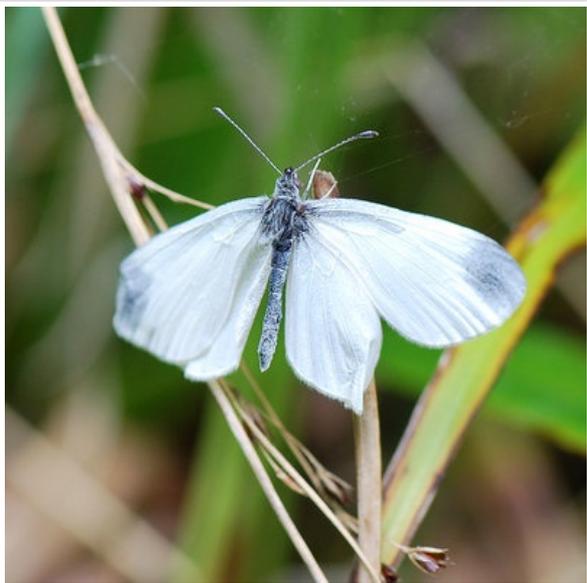


We moved on to check out the triangle clearing and it was almost unrecognisable from last year with almost every Bramble bush gone – so cleared in fact that you could see from one side to the other. We bumped into Susie here which felt slightly incongruous as I, used to seeing Susie beside a roaring fire in a Pub whilst I'm holding a pint of Doom Bar.





After a trapse around had provided some good opportunities but only 2 species and four Wood Whites we waved goodbye and started making our way back. I'd gotten my eye in now and so again progress was made haltingly as I'd keep seeing a Wood White hunkered down amongst the foliage sitting out the cloudy intervals. Back at the bridge Philzoid found the highlight of the day. A Wood White, wings wide open. In a previous post various ideas have been postulated for its behaviour including a non-lethal dose of spider venom and a sudden drop in temperature with its adverse effects on flight muscles. Whatever the reason it gave Philzoid and I the chance to look closely at the wing markings. I'd not realised that there are also a couple of black dashes below the wing tip splodges.





The return journey through the pointless 50mph speed restriction stretch of the M3 was actually pleasant as I relived the various wonders of the day – 4 new species for the year tally, 2 moth lifers, unusual behaviours and chiefly the chance to have reacquainted myself with a cracking Fritillary.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 17-Jun-16 11:22 PM GMT

That was quite a day, Wurzel. That's a splendid moth too, just to put the icing on the cake. 😊

That poor Wood White really doesn't look at all well, though. The crumpled hindwings (and deformed head) make it look more like a defect from the chrysalis now. 😞

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-Jun-16 11:32 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, looks like we both got our WW's , 😊 what a great time you had, it was an awful week we had in Sussex but at least I got what I went for thanks to Pauline before the bad weather really got going. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Jun-16 12:10 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Another possible 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 It's a good year when you can get Wood Whites 😊

Larkhill WB 23-05-2016

23-05-16

AM

The very briefest of stop-offs bow that the site has finally woken from its winter slumbers. Honestly over the last couple of years this is the latest start to a season that I've witnessed here. A quick stroll down the Westbound path produced very little right up to the point where I was going to turn round when a male Orange-tip crossed my path. That seemed to wake the other species and two Small Heaths and a lonely Grizzlie appeared as if from nowhere. The return walk didn't throw up anything else but at least it finally feels like things are moving and species are being added to the tally.



24-05-16

AM

Four butterflies again this morning but the species count is now down by 1 as this morning the Westbound path only had the lonely Grizzlie and 3 Small Heaths. I don't know if it's because I've switched to cords from chinos but I don't seem to be getting as soaked in the trousers as last year? The Small

Heaths were quite away along the Westbound path – in fact the top end doesn't seem to have much to offer in terms of butterflies this year as the grass is very long and the scrub is starting to make it feel very claustrophobic as it pens you in to the middle of the path. Further on its much more open and that's where I'm finding everything. I might get the chance to look a little further afield and see if there are any other suable pull-ins so I can get to the decent stretch quicker. The Small Heaths that I did find were in good nick and backlit they almost glowed. I also found one which had a second spot under the pupil.



PM

Things were more cheerful during the briefest of afternoon stop-offs. On the wander down very little was showing and I'd just reached the area where the scrub was starting to thin when I recognized a pungent aroma. I stopped and raised my camera ready and stalked forward even more carefully. After a few steps what I hoped I'd see came out and crossed the path. The Fox looked ahead working out that there was a road on the otherside of the bushes and so made to turn right – saw me and then swiftly legged it away left and down the path.



With the Fox offski'd I carried on looking for much smaller beasties and after a few minutes looking I'd found three Small Heaths and 2 Grizzlies. Cheered after a long day at work I mooched back to the car but had to spend a few more minutes on site in order to admire a Peacock that had turned up and was making a nice contrast with the blossom.



26-05-16

The final stop off of the week and things are looking slightly better but still way behind. This morning I was back down to a single species with four Small Heaths only seen down the Westbound path. One was possibly the same individual I'd previously commented on with the extra spot under the usual 'single' pupil - but this time it showed much better.



A quiet week of a very slow season; by now I've usually added Brown Argus and Common Blue to the Tally and I still haven't seen a Dingy Skipper at this site. Oh well hopefully the Dinghies are all up the Northbound path.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 21-Jun-16 09:48 AM GMT

Those shots of the Bee Hawk moth are pretty damn good Wurzel – wish I could get one like that! 🍷 Mind, it's a few years since I've seen one 😞

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 21-Jun-16 10:57 AM GMT

I must agree about the Bee Hawk – excellent shots. The last time I saw one was at Bentley Wood, many years ago. I had better whisper this very quietly here but, sometimes, I think the extraordinary variety in moths makes butterflies seem a bit boring 😞

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Jun-16 02:44 PM GMT

Nice shot of the Small Heath Wurzel and you got a nice Back shot as well Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Jun-16 11:55 PM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 There were a couple about at Botany Bay – normally I'm so stunned to have seen one that I forget to try for any shots 😊, I was lucky with this one as it hung around long enough for me to 'snap out of it' 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 SSSHHHH don't mention Moths, I did once but I think I got away with it 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I got lucky with those as somehow I managed to approach the butterfly without it doing its usual thing of bu\$ering off just as I get focused 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 22-Jun-16 08:43 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Entertaining reading in your recent reports with some great photos to accompany them. I have to agree with the comments by others about the Bee Hawk, great stuff 🍷 😊

#### MikeOxon wrote:

... I had better whisper this very quietly here but, sometimes, I think the extraordinary variety in moths makes butterflies seem a bit boring 😞

Mike

Hee hee 😊 I quite understand the fascination with moths having jumped into that world this year with my garden trap but I still find our butterflies fascinating too. For me they are just two aspects of the same interest...just need to find a way now to stretch time to fit it all in 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Jun-16 11:23 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 If only there was 25, 26 or even 27 hours in a day...I'm sure my wife would find me lots of other things to do rather than spending those extra hours on butterflies 😊😊

Working Lunch 24-05-2016

Probably one of the worst things about working where I work is that I'm surrounded on all sides by rolling Chalk Downland and there are often reports pinging into my inbox informing me that there are Dukes and Marshies or Dark Green Fritillaries a very short drive away. However up until recently I didn't think that I'd really have enough time to reach any of them during a lunchbreak plus there is the other problem of not knowing a site well enough. With Larkhill, Vera Jones and The Devenish I'd visited them before they became 'stop-off' destinations and so I would get there as quickly as possible and then leg it to the area which I knew had previously held a certain species e.g. at Larkhill Westbound path for Adonis or at The Devenish smaller Paddock for Gatekeepers. However with visiting new sites I feared that I'd arrive and not know where to go to maximise my haul as it were. But today I bit the bullet and did a trial run.

I set upon visiting the Down up by the Horse and so come lunch time I was ready. A steady walk to the car and then I timed how long it took to arrive (so the same time to return plus 5 minutes should mean not being back late). First problem – where to leave the car? So a bit of time wasted with a three point turn and heading back over the same ground and eventually my Note was ensconced in a lay-by. Problem 2 – how to actually get onto the site. There were no noticeable footpaths near the lay-by so I walked along the verge down the hill until I found a stile. And now I faced the biggest problem – I was almost 'on site' but where to go, what should I look for? The habitat didn't look as promising as it had when I'd gazed longingly out of

the window from work. Now I was walking along the 'creep' walkways most of the vegetation was of the same type same length. I decided to head straight down to the bottom and then cut across through the scrub which would offer a more mosaic habitat spread and so hopefully different species.

It seemed to pay off because as soon as I reached the bottom I found 2 Small Heaths and a single tired but resilient looking Dingy. Another couple of minutes scouring the 'foothills' however didn't turn up anything else so I set off working my way back up the very steep hill, zig-zagging for all I was worth to make the ascent feel easier. As I continued my ascent I kept my eyes peeled in case anything should turn up but very quickly the vegetation soon became a monoculture and I held little hope of seeing anything else, though calves burning with lactic acid I still scanned for butterflies. Soon I was back at the top near to where I'd made my original descent but this time I cut back to the stile via a footpath which hugged the side of a field. I did see another butterfly a female Large White. She was posing nicely, far to intent on feeding to worry about how she looked for the camera and so she let her guard slip and so for the first time in a couple of years I managed to get a decent-ish shot of an open winged Large White.



I made it back in time for the end of the lunch break and in the few moments of peace that remained before the hoards arrived I reflected on the

lunchtime trip. A bit to frenetic even for my liking? Not exactly that rewarding after all that effort? And as I continued reflecting the same thought came back – is there somewhere better I could try next time?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 24-Jun-16 03:31 PM GMT

Lovely Opened Winged Large White all the same Wurzel 😊 not quite a total loss. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 24-Jun-16 03:31 PM GMT

Lovely Opened Winged Large White all the same Wurzel 😊 not quite a total loss. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 24-Jun-16 10:37 PM GMT

I'm often surprised by how what seemed such a small place, when viewed on a map, seems absolutely *huge*, when you're out in the field. It's always good to explore new places, however, and there's usually something interesting to be found, even if not the original target.

Nice 'White' photos – a very under-recorded species, photographically 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Jun-16 11:28 PM GMT

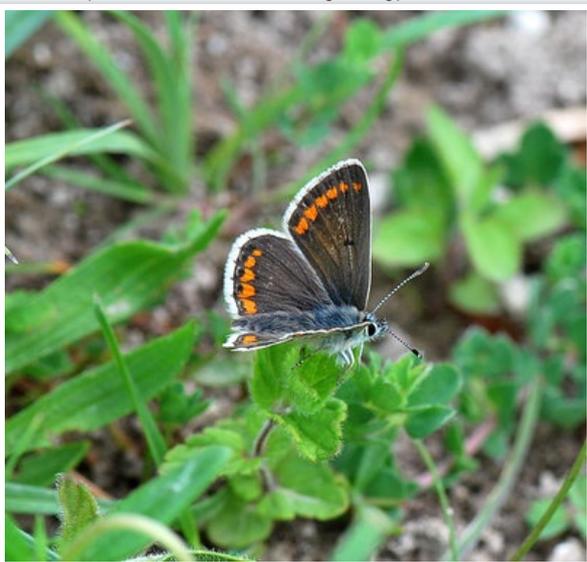
Cheers Goldie 😊 Nope but not quite worth the burn in my calves 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 I know what you mean about getting the idea of the scale of a place wrong – I got the idea that Hutchinson's would be huge from looking at Google Maps when actually it was much smaller. The Whites are under photographed probably because they can be such pains – never sitting still for long enough, never opening their wings for very long etc etc.

The Devenish 28-05-2016

After a hectic few weekends of mixing work, painting and butterflying it was all set to be more of the same with but somehow I found myself with a spare hour between pick-ups and so I headed over to the Devenish to try my luck. I was hoping for some Common Blues after my initial sighting at Hutchinson's Bank and also my first Brown Argus of the year. This little butterfly has been a long time emerging this year and has been worryingly absent from a number of sites which I've visited and where it has been previously common. The weather wasn't too great so it was going to be a case of 'suck it and see'...

Upon arrival I set up the track and over the first of the three fences to get into the Orchid Meadow as it is termed. The grass in places here was waist deep and it was a case of trying to find the narrow track and then appearing to wade through the grass with the Banded Demioselles taking to the wing all around. Once I'd reached the shorter turf I scanned about and a silvery blur passed before my eyes – my first brown Argus of 2016. I tried to follow it but it was so small and frenetic that I lost it but I didn't mind as another put in an appearance almost immediately the first had left. Also here there were a couple of Small Heath and a single Dingy.





I then made my way up the side of the Down hoping to find a few Adonis as well as some Common Blues but again the late spring and poor weather dashed my hopes and the Adonis weren't out yet – that is if they do emerge here? I traversed across the side of the Down from the still a Peacock took off from one of the small patches of soil and glided down to the treeline. I followed it as carefully as I could and managed a few shots before retreating not wishing to disturb it. Back up the Down side I went and there finally was a proper Blue. The first views I had of it were of a butterfly partially concealed by blades of grass had I had to contort my neck at strange angles to get even a half way decent shot. Even then half the head or antennae were missing but even these dismal shots were worth it as they showed the variation in the underside markings. Luckily it decided to move off and I managed to stalk it whilst it was relatively clear of stray grass blades.





I then made my way across both sides the Down and only added a solitary Grizzlie for all that walking - here we are almost in June and it's like we've already entered the June gap before the Blues have even peaked. Back down in the Orchid Meadow I spent a bit of time patrolling the and in doing so caught up with a Dingy, Grizzlies and both of the Brown Argus. They were like a complimentary pair who between would have made the perfect specimen. One was beautiful chocolate brown with really bright lunules but with a tear in the hind wing and the other was almost complete but had lost the lustre and chocolatey freshness. I realised that I was running out of time and so had to leg it back to the car if I was to pick up K. In fact I was so short of time I didn't even stop for the Specklie that seems to have set up territory by the gate.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 26-Jun-16 11:42 PM GMT

Lovely Grizzly shot, Wurzel. We saw lot's of Grizzly types in the Cevennes, but none of them UK varieties. Very confusing, enough to fry the brain !! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 27-Jun-16 12:15 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

I agree with Trevor that second Grizzled Skipper shot is super 😊 It is also nice to see some Brown Argus, I have just realised that I have not seen one this year 😊 .

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-Jun-16 03:48 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel fantastic shots of the Butterflies, I was at Gait Barrow yesterday, no NBA yet, I hope to see the Brown Argus when I come South in three weeks, your shot is lovely. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 28-Jun-16 09:45 PM GMT

Great stuff as always there Wurzel, I too love the Grizzly shot with the two Soldier Beetles having a face off in the foreground 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 29-Jun-16 03:51 PM GMT

I agree with that – it's a great (and unusual) Grizzly shot! 😊 I also have concerns about the Brown Argus this year – just one seen locally and very few elsewhere. 😞

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Jul-16 11:27 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 My jealousy prevents me from feeling any sympathy at having to sort through the ID of all those different Grizzlie species 🙄 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 I was chuffed with that shot – the BAs don't seem to be having the best time at the moment 😞

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck with the BAs 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It was nice to get a familiar species in a different aspect 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I saw my first BA at Larkhill today which makes sightings at only three sites 😞 I hope they can bounce back in the second brood 😊

Marshie Site 29-05-2016

Since discovering my Marshie Site Philzoid and I have tried to make it an annual event. Well we tried, but last year we failed and so this year we needed to make amends. Things looked good – I'd done a sly recce and so knew that they were flying, my wife was taking K to London to see Matilda and the weather for the weekend was looking good for once. So it was all systems go for Philzoid, little L and I!

After a quick car change in Salisbury we were bombing on our way and very shortly we were at the Round About. The pull in was packed with the most cars that I've ever seen here so I had to abandon the car on the verge. We grabbed the gear and cameras (Little L had my old iPod) and up the track/hill we went. Progress was slow as every few steps something would catch our eyes, from Beetles to caterpillars, the odd fly-by butterfly (Orange-tip in this case) and eventually Philzoid found my first Large Skipper of 2016 just as we'd broken out of the tree cover. By now we'd reached the first little flattened hollow and there were are first couple of Marshies along with a Brown Argus, 2 Common Blues, Dinghies and Grizzlies, a single Greenstreak as well as numerous Whites patrolling along the hedge row and distracting us temporarily from the Yellowhammer singing from the top of a Hawthorn. Little L was delighted by the 5-6 Spot Burnett Moths, gingerly stalking them with iPod held out at arms' reach; it was great to see.





After the brief but productive explore here we carried on round to the Amphitheatre. A brief pause here saw us add Small Heath to the days tally a long with further Dinghies, Grizzlies, Marshies and Common Blues. In the longer grasses a Small Blue flew seemingly setting up a territorial watch area on a bent blade of grass. This was all during just a few minutes but we decided to crack on further round reasoning that we'd probably end up spending a good while back here later.





As we traversed the Downside putting up all manner of moths and butterflies from beside the narrow tracks created by creep or rabbits a familiar figure appeared. A Miller finally met in the field! After catching up and setting up camp for Little L (there is only so much butterfly photography she can do) we three trepid explorers set off to see what we could see. We worked our way along the hillside with some Adonis appearing amongst plenty of Marshies, including one huge female who was massive. The cleared area along the bottom of the hill held numerous Greenstreaks but nothing in the way of a Wall although there was another Red Admiral and a definite Large White plus a couple of luscious Small Blues another couple of Large Skippers and the ubiquitous Marshies.





I found a pair of Brown Argus that looked like they were going to copulate. However at this point a group of 'fellow' enthusiasts arrived on the scene amongst much trampling of vegetation. It's a good job butterflies don't seem sensitive to loud noises as one woman crashed through the undergrowth hollering "What's he got there?" and "Is it a mating pair?". Luckily the butterflies were on a steep part of the slope and Philzoid managed to fend her off but by the time I'd gotten back onto them the female had decided that copulation wasn't on the cards and so they parted company.





We'd almost arrived back at camp L and Dave was remarking how similar a Grizzlies pattern was to a certain species of flower (can't remember what it's called now) when the same woman came bustling over again asking all manner of questions and threatening to wade in to get her shots. Luckily she'd 'got loads of Grizzlies' and so the butterfly escaped with no more disturbance as she then trampled her way back to wreck/trample one of the small hollows with her group. Little L had been an angel so far and now was keen to get some more shots so we all headed back to the Amphitheatre and all four of us set about with our cameras. Dave found a lovely female Adonis and Little L was delighted with the Small Blues and out us onto a Brown Argus with the faintest of orange lunules. As we finished up and made our way slowly back I spied something amongst the grasses that seemed larger than the other surrounding species. It turned out to be a mating pair of Marshies and so our exit was postponed slightly.







It was postponed a few more times as we made our way through the 'hollow' and down the track - each time adding something nice - more Marshies, a Small Tort, Red Admiral, Clouded Silverline and a Peacock. Eventually we did make it back to the cars (but it was a close thing if it hadn't of been for Little L I might still be there!) and bade farewell to Dave who was heading off to Bentley. I asked Little L if she was up to another trip but she was very tired. So while Philzoid headed over to meet up with Dave at Bentley Wood I took a very tired and still beautifully behaved Little I home for a rest, Scrambled Eggs (I make the best in the World, L says so) and her allotted weekly TV allowance.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 01-Jul-16 11:50 PM GMT

A totally brilliant account of what was for me the best day out this year, Wurzel. I can't add anything - it brings it back so vividly! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Jul-16 04:21 PM GMT

WoW! Wurzel, what a great variety of Butterflies at that site, end of May beginning of June, is there any good Bed & Breakfast places around there 😊  
Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-16 11:11 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I know what you mean about the day - I started thinking back and typing and before I'd realized it was all typed up and done and I was left with a smile on my face from the memory 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I don't know about really close but it's close to Warminster and close to Salisbury so there should be some good places to stay at either of those places.

July 2016

Better late than never...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-16 03:09 PM GMT

Love the Grayling Wurzel 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 04-Jul-16 07:37 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

That certainly sounds like a great site you have there with a wonderful election of species 🌿 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 04-Jul-16 10:20 PM GMT

Great report Wurzel, brings back happy memories from my trip last year 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Jul-16 11:49 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 It is a cracking site, one of the best early sites that I know 😊

Cheers Buggy 😊 Glad to be of service 😊

Bentley for Small Pearls 30-05-2016

As little L had decided the previous day that she didn't really fancy an additional outing to Bentley for Small Pearls I decided to try today instead. Unfortunately the weather was nowhere near as good with cloud all day plus additional drizzly patches. However having gotten more paint on the walls and had lunch I set off anyway - the weather for the rest of the week looked even worse!

When I got into the Eastern Clearing there were two other couples about and no butterflies so we all wandered lonely among the clouds. Finally what I'd been hoping for happened, there was a break in the cloud! It only lasted a couple of minutes but it was enough to drive forth two faded Pearls, a single Brimstone and several Speckled yellow moths at the small cleared area near the notice board. I got chatting to one of the couples and was able to help out on how to ID a Pearl as a Pearl - quite easy at this time of year. A second 5 minute break saw 2 possibly 3 Pearls and so I moved over the ditch and started quartering the central area of the Clearing. I chatted to the second couple who'd seen a Small Pearl but had lost it when the sun had gone in.



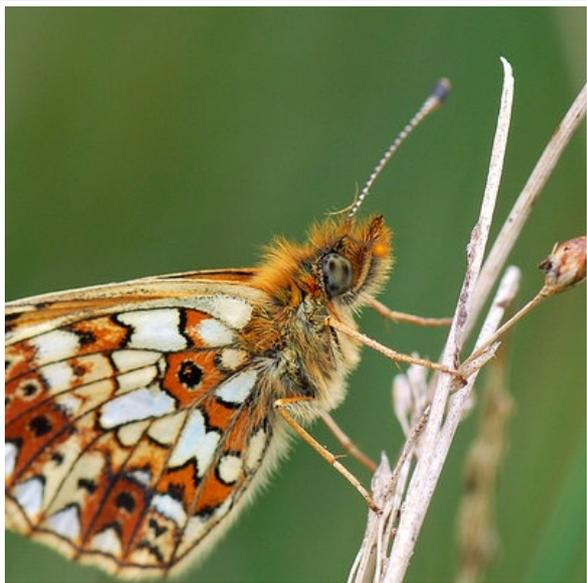
Undaunted I carried on quartering, following the animal trails and slowly criss-crossing the area, covering as much of the ground as I could and looking all the while for needle in a haystack. It was me against countless millennia of natural selective processes, all working towards the end goal of a sublimely but deceptively cryptically marked butterfly. Bring it on Wallace/Darwin!

Actually when I did find one it was only because the sun came out again and it was basking to absorb as much energy as possible. After taking a single record shot I called out "Small Pearl" and then carried on photographing it. When it had decided that it had had enough I followed it with my eyes. It started well enough but again luckily the sun went in and it dropped down into the foliage. It started roosting and so the much sought 'closed wing' shots were a possibility.





I have recently read of someone else's Small Pearl Experience at Bentley. A saddening and infuriating affair which hopefully won't be repeated. However what happened now was a total contrast. Five people (3 with cameras) were watching one small butterfly. All were able to watch it, all able to get the shots they wanted with many polite pauses when we chatted about ID features, compared it to Pearls, talked about other butterflies and then went back to all having fair access to the best view. When you'd taken your shots you moved to the back of the queue as it were while someone else took their turn. The butterfly itself posed nicely and occasionally had a brief flutter to about 1 metre away. When it did move everyone was quick to apologise in case it was them that had inadvertently spooked it and then we let it alone for a few minutes to resetttle before the final creep in.





Another few people arrived and we pointed the Small Pearl out to them, said our goodbyes and evaporated off to other parts of the clearing. It was a thoroughly decent and polite experience with minimal disturbance to the butterfly. After a quick once over (picking up a Specklie) I headed home to pick the girls up from the 'family fun day'.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 07-Jul-16 08:43 PM GMT

Great close up shots Wurzel, Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-16 12:10 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 The butterfly WA almost as well behaved as the butterfly watchers 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 09-Jul-16 10:53 AM GMT

Good to hear your companions were well behaved butterfly enthusiasts. I have to say when I was watching the mating pair (and for some time before hand, the freshly emerged female) my companions were as equally well behaved (one was of course Neil Hulme) and queued politely. I think if I'd have been present when it all went stupid I wouldn't have been able to control my temper 😡

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 09-Jul-16 03:44 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Your Small Pearl was probably the nearest one to me, these days.

Just to think, only a few years back, we had some 7 miles up the road.

Your camera has done it full justice 😊📷.

All the best,  
Trevor.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 10-Jul-16 09:19 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It seems that my experience was a total contrast to what happened a day or so later 😞

Cheers Trevor 😊 Hopefully they will remain 'just up the rad' from me too, but they were worryingly low this year 😞

Anyway with usual Wurzel luck just as the Purple Emperor Season starts to begin in earnest I am dragged away from my Wiltshire base 😞 ... to Iceland 😊 Soon be leaving to catch the plane - my main target is to photograph just one butterfly as they only have 6 regular species 😊 and I'll try not to mention football 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by millerd, 10-Jul-16 10:05 PM GMT

Have a good time, Wurzel - I'm expecting some highly unusual butterfly pictures from this trip! 😊

Dave

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 10-Jul-16 10:24 PM GMT

I wish Dave 😊 I looked it up expecting Artic Frits and North American species but they have only 6 species regularly recorded - all of which are 'common' British species, so my target is to photograph a butterfly, any butterfly will do! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 10-Jul-16 10:29 PM GMT

That's bad planning at it's worst, jetting off to an ( almost ) Butterfly desert at this time of year.

Have a great trip.  
Trevor.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-16 10:47 PM GMT

Indeed Trevor 😊 Mind you it was a fantastic trip and I saw some mind blowing things 😊😊 Hopefully there will be a late Purp around Bentley next weekend 😊  
I've got a lot of catching up to do so better get cracking...

The Devenish 06-02-16

Chores done I headed out to the Devenish hoping maybe for an Adonis up on the side of the Down. For once the sun was with me and so I didn't feel as rushed as I have recently hence I wandered round to see what there was to see. I started at the smallest field and checked out the old stump where again there were the same interesting bees, including what I think was an *Osmia caerulescens*? Also here was a Specklie holding territory by the gate. It was good after so many concerns and worries etc. this season to see something 'normal' at this site.



I then moved in the Orchid Meadow but only briefly paused here, just long enough to pick up odd Brown Argus before starting the ascent of the Down proper. It was surprisingly quiet up here with not an Adonis in sight and neither a Common Blue. A Red Admiral did the briefest of fly-bys and before I realised it I was at the far side of the Down and almost into the woods. As I brushed aside the shrubs and 'waded in' I spied 2 and then 3 Specklies so I paused for a while here to get some shots.





I then zig-zagged my way across the Down and right across the other side of the field too ending up back in the Orchid Meadow. As I was back here with no new additions to the day list (back to feeling concerned and worried) I spent a bit more time here. My slightly longer wanderings produced a mating pair of Ermine Moths, a GWW and also a slightly aged Grizzlie. Also present were two Brown Argus, one beautifully fresh, and at least two Large Skippers.





I then realised I didn't have enough time to do any more circuits so headed back through the 'wood tunnel' and the smallest field disturbing the Speckle on guard duty once again. However I didn't head off immediately as I couldn't resist another check of the stump which again had the Osmia and also an unusual looking mite.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 17-Jul-16 10:48 PM GMT

Now you've had a look at my diary, you'll have a good idea of what you have missed. 😊  
Still there's the summer break to play catch up. 😊

Hope you had a good trip.  
Trevor. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Jul-16 11:48 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Catch-up indeed 🍷

Larkhill 03-06-2016

It comes to something when I'm heading to work during my holiday. But that's what teaching has come to now a days and so on the last day of the break I found myself driving into work to deliver a revision day. As I was passing Larkhill I found myself indicating and then turning into the car park on autopilot! So as I was on site and parked I thought that I'd better have a quick check to see how things were progressing. It was quite grey as I set off around the Northbound path and there didn't seem to be anything much about apart from a couple of Small Heath. It was only on the return journey that I spied the familiar little flag fluttering in the breeze. It was a Common Blue roosting on the grass stem.



Physics pretty much covered and the pupils sent off to continue their revision independently (fingers crossed they did) I tidied up and headed for home myself. Once again I found the car tugging to the right as I approached Larkhill and once again the autopilot seemed to have taken over and I was parked in the car park. "Surely the Northbound path will house more butterflies now?" I thought and set off in that direction to test my hypothesis.



Once almost back at the car park I found not one but two Common Blues – both males and both wanting the same territory from the long of the fight that ensued when they met. The victor remained the loser moved on and by a happily for me out me onto a male Brimstone. After a while here I was tempted to try down the Westbound path but I didn't give in and so I was soon bombing on homewards again.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 19-Jul-16 08:10 PM GMT

If you're going to post shots of Red mites Wurzel I am not sure I will be able to read your diary ever again 😊😄😄

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 20-Jul-16 09:27 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, nice shot of the CB, I didn't see many round here in June, in fact there's not been much of any thing up here and what as been seen is usually in poor condition, the Gate Keeper doesn't seem to have arrived yet and I've only seen one Small Skipper so far at HLB, it's been a poor year up

here for Butterflies. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 21-Jul-16 11:13 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Just catching up with your recent posts, nice shots. That Brown Argus close up is superb 😊 I have still not seen one this year 😞

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 22-Jul-16 08:19 PM GMT

jackz432r wrote:

...That Brown Argus close up is superb 😊 I have still not seen one this year...😞

Me neither, *agestis* that is, made up for it with *salmacis* when I went north though.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Jul-16 11:28 PM GMT

Sorry Pauline 😊 I promise not to mention anything remotely small nor red in future 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 The CBs seemed to be around and then before I knew it we were in the June gap, only they were so late it's more like the 'July gap' 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 They have (along with lots of other species) been thin on the ground this year 😊

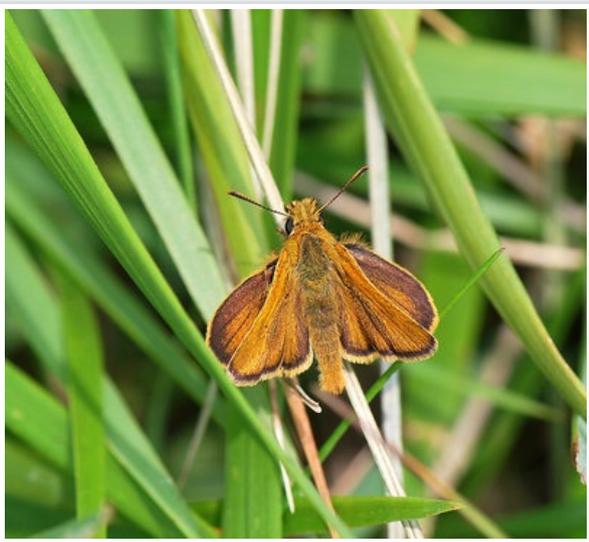
Cheers Neil 😊 I still think that counts 😊

Lulworth Cove 05-06-2016

Pretty much the entire week had been cool and cloudy or warm and cloudy with very little butterfly activity. As per usual the day before the end of the holiday was a scorcher! To make the most of it we all headed to Lulworth Cove. I reasoned that it would be a bit too early for the 'named' skipper but I took my camera anyway.

When we arrived the cloud still looked heavy and so we wandered down the tracks and made the necessary 'pit-stop'. I checked out the little wildlife area and found what I think is a Common lizard - although it looks a little green? We then made our way down the Cove, turned right and wandered along to our usual spot. The cloud was starting to be guzzled by the sun and so after a leisurely lunch I took little L off as she wanted to explore and climb the cliff (in reality walking up the steep footpaths). We stopped in the hollow and there were butterflies almost immediately. The most worn Grizzled Skipper appeared on the path so pale it looked like a ghost butterfly. It was harassed by a tiny golden skipper and then another couple joined in before forgetting the skipper and attacking each other. Little L was delighted and so we avidly waited for them to settle - both their disputes and also onto photogenic perches. When they did I could see one was very worn, one very fresh and one was a female, with crescent moons. All three were Lulworths. On the other side there was another and a Brown Argus. Further up a Common Blue hung around so we set to climbing the paths, stopping occasionally to admire the view and with little L babbling away on almost every subject - this is now another one of those treasured moments.





All three of my girls decided they wanted to explore round the other side of the Cove (the Eastern side) and so I arranged to meet them in a short while and headed back up the cliff path for another mooch around. I checked out the main footpath and round towards Stair Hole seeing a few more Lulworths and another Common Blue and back in the hollow another much newer Dingy joined the seemingly three resident male Lulworths along with a female Large Skipper. However try as I might I couldn't find a Wall – yet last year I was tripping over them here? Could it be a gap between broods? So instead of hanging around I picked my way through the beached Grockles and the boat queue and located the girls about 2/3's of the way round the Cove.





After the briefest of sit-downs K and I set off to explore the far side of the Cove. It was mainly sheer chalk cliff face on one side of us with the sea on the other but eventual we came to a less steep part of the cliff where there had been some slippage revealing the softer sandstone underneath. There were plenty of Vetch growing here in little islands of yellow and a movement caught my eye. A Red Admiral bombed away and as I turned back a smaller movement caught my eye again. This time it was a Lulworth and it was taking salts from the rock, something I'd not seen before. A little further on was a second doing the same thing and a brief climb of the wooden steps here produced a totally black lizard hiding from view and possibly the sun too.





Once back at 'camp' the girls had a paddle and then we headed inland back to the car. Just near the site of the old Bucket Tree (alas no more) a familiar ginger/brown butterfly detached itself from the wall, flew towards me, circled twice and buggered right off again! Still there was no mistaking my first Wall Brown of the year.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-Jul-16 10:11 AM GMT

Sounds like a great holiday Wurzel, the photos of the Lulworth Skippers are great I've yet to see one myself, I thought they didn't arrive until July, 😊 Must admit to not looking them up yet too busy trying to get PE/PHS the last couple of years 😊 now they're in the bag the search is on 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Jul-16 11:14 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 They have a really long season sometimes from May til September so when you try for them they should be easy to get 😊 Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Jul-16 11:52 PM GMT

Lark Hill WB 06-06

06-06

AM

After not making many stops the week previously I set to too make sure that this week I'd be able to make more stop-offs. So it was that I found myself heading down the Westbound path first thing in the morning prior to work and enjoying that rarity of 2016 - a sunny, early summer day. Despite the great weather there didn't seem to be much about and as I walked to the usual half way point I clocked up a single Grizzlie and 4 Small Heaths. I didn't see any other butterflies until I was back in the car park when a male Common Blue appeared and cheered me up.

Come the afternoon everything was solar charged! So I headed up the Northbound path anyway just in case. First up was a Mother Shipton moth and further on there were various Large Skippers, numbering 4 and 5 Small Heaths. Back almost at the car park there were 3 Common Blues all males and a male Brimstone.



07-06

AM

Another morning and I was back at the Westbound path. I took the usual route half way along the path with a Grizzled Skipper, Large Skipper and three Small Heaths for company. Also present this morning was a Forester Moth, looking resplendent in the morning light. It practically glowed.

PM

Another afternoon and I was back at the Northbound path. The short trip up the path yielded only 2 Large Skippers and a single Small Heath and the car park area was down to a single male Common Blue so perhaps I was observing the victor of all the territorial battles yesterday? The Brimstone was still around though, a bit too big for the Blues to fight perhaps?





08-06

AM

My morning visit was a bit of a bust as after a few days of glorious sun today was cloudy and grey and no butterflies. However I did find a singing Corn Bunting and was able to sneak up and catch a glimpse of him through Hawthorns.

PM

Come the afternoon the sun had returned and so I tripped down the Westbound path. There were Foresters and Burnet Companion moths everywhere as well as the odd Cinnabar. In terms of butterflies there were 5 Small Heaths and singles of everything else including Common Blue, Large Skipper, Brimstone and a Small White. As usual time was limited so I had to head off as quickly as possible.





09-06

As I'd been burning the candle at both ends since September I was running late and so I didn't get to stop in the morning and in the afternoon I had a meeting and so no stop-offs today.

10-06

AM

After the no show yesterday I wasn't able to stop again. This time it wasn't because I was knackered but in fact was the opposite. Today was the first Science GCSE exam and so I was in work by 7:10 getting the revision breakfast up and running.

PM

I made up for my absence in the morning by making sure that I stopped on the way home. This time I didn't stop at the half way point along the Westbound path but carried on to where the path dipped down and there is a small lay-by. Along the way there were 6 Small Heaths and a Large Skipper but at the hollow a Red Admiral and Small Tort both did a fly by. There was loads of Vetch here and with it Blues, and finally they were Adonis. I was getting a bit worried as I hadn't seen any here so far this year, but they'd just moved on. I counted 8 in total in one small area, seven males and a single female.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 26-Jul-16 05:56 PM GMT

Thats what I like to see, getting a few days packed into one report Wurzel, at this rate you'll be back in the same month as everyone else by Christmas 😊

Nice to see some Common Blues as well, which seem to have been anything other than 'common' this year for me at least!

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 26-Jul-16 08:29 PM GMT

Lovely Photos Wurzel, especially the Common Blue they were bit scarce round here this year but I did manage a few shots. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Jul-16 11:14 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 If I did post things up to date I wouldn't have anything to post for the last week and a half - the weather and work have not been conducive for butterflying 😞

Cheers Goldie 😊 Blues have forgotten that they're supposed to live up to their name of 'Common' 😞

WB 13-06-2016 Larkhill

13-06

AM

Well the week didn't start well with a 'No stop' first thing due to the cloudy and showery conditions. It wasn't looking good the rest of the week either as I had two breakfast sessions, two afters school sessions and a trip to Exeter for training! Oh well hopefully I'll be able to make up time. 😊

PM

Come the afternoon I stopped in the little lay-by further down the Westbound beyond the half way point near to where I'd found the Adonis before. On crossing the road I found butterflies almost immediately with three or four Small Heath. I then made my way down the path and back up the hill on the other side. The ground here looked good for Dark Green fritillary so I'll have to try here again in a little while when they start flying. Just off the path were a few Blues, 2 Common Blues, a male and female and 2 Adonis, both males.





As time was getting short I made my way back towards where I'd seen the Adonis previously and found 3 males and a female. However time was seriously eking away and so I had to cut and run in order to get home before I was missed.

17-06  
PM

As expected I didn't get back to Larkhill until the Friday and so I again pulled in at the lay-by closer to the camp. I did check out the 'Adonis site' but they appear to have moved on and so I took a closer look at the field on my left as I walked along the path. A Red Admiral took off from the path, I saw a couple of Large Skipper and only three Adonis. There were Foresters everywhere as well, in fact so many I didn't know where to put my lens first. 🤔





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 28-Jul-16 08:59 PM GMT

Nice Adonis, Wurzel. Nearly time for them to be going round again... 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 28-Jul-16 10:02 PM GMT

Those underside shots of the Adonis Blue are excellent. They have been a rare Butterfly for me this year.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-Jul-16 10:12 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, lovely Adonis, I hope I see some in Kent next week. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Jul-16 11:25 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Indeed, but I am trying to catch up – it's just that everything has gone crazy at the moment in the week I've added three new species to the yearly tally 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I reckon the only Blues that have done any where near well this year are Holly and Large, all the others (although I can't consider Chalkhills yet) seem to have had dire first/second broods 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck with your Adonis hunt 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-16 10:45 PM GMT

The Devenish [18-06-2016](#)

As K was in the choir for 'Joseph' at the Mayflower it meant lots of Saturday afternoons waiting round to pick her up from rehearsals. The weather hadn't been great recently but today I finally thought 'stuff it' and set off to the Devenish with little L. She decided that she was going to be the boss and so I followed her lead. L said that we should go straight to the Orchid Meadow and so I missed out the Stump and we were soon wandering around the grasses looking for butterflies having successfully climbed over all three sets of gates. While little L had fun admonishing the belligerent Brown Argus and a Common Blue I stumbled across a Silver Y. They have been pretty common this year, generally veering away from me after the initial eruption from the grass or hunkering down wings blurring amongst the turf. Today however it was happy to sit in the open and have its photo taken so I did.



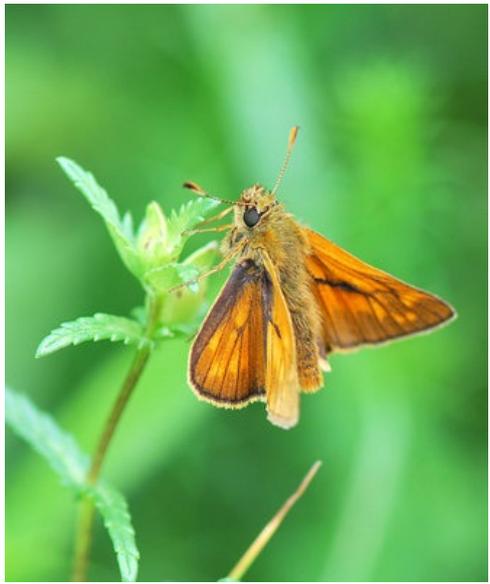
Little L then requested that we went up the Down so off we set (with another gate for L to traverse) but it was very quiet with only the odd White fluttering by along the tree margin. We did the complete circuit and were working our way back down the steps cut into the chalk when a large brown butterfly took off. My first Meadow Brown of 2016 and also unusually willing to pose. Normally they don't sit with their wings nicely opened until the later in the season by which time they're torn and tatty. This male was resplendent and the sex brands almost jumped off the wings! Slightly further down the slope was a second as well but this one was more of a Meadow Blonde than brown.





We were now back into the Orchid Meadow and exploring the far end under little L's orders. There were wild flowers and Orchids all over with the latter represented by three species. Something would fly and L would tell me to try and get shot of it and in this way a Grass moth and Cinnabar, Large Skipper and the third Meadow Brown of the day all fell below my lens. Back near the gate I was under orders to try and get the Brown Argus and so I tried to oblige. I didn't realise that she could be such a hard task master.





As we headed off little L was relishing the chance to practice her new gate climbing skills and so we had to take the same route back that had brought us here as that meant a further three gate climbs. As we were in the small paddock we did stop for a short while at the Stump much to L's delight as the bees were peeking out of their burrows at her. We tore ourselves away and made the final gate climb before speeding off to pick up K although we did stop in the car park once there for a large moth (something yellow underwing?). A lovely afternoon when all was said and done.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Aug-16 10:33 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, sounds like you were under little L's wing that day 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 01-Aug-16 09:33 PM GMT

Great selection of photos Wurzel. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-16 11:19 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I don't know about wing, more like under the thumb - the power an 8 year old daughter has over her dad 😊😊😊  
Cheers Katrina 😊 There is still a nice selection of stuff out there...just in much smaller numbers than I can recall 😊

August 2016



Have a goodun

Wurzel

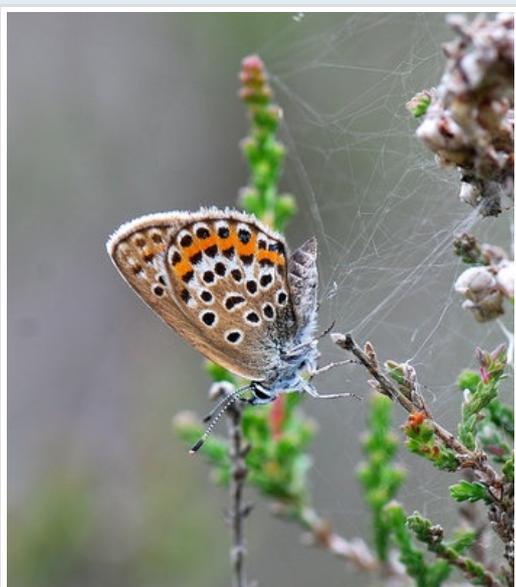
### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Aug-16 10:52 PM GMT

Slop Bog 19=06-2016

With the photos of Silver Studs coming in from further East I thought it was about time that I visited 'The Bog'. The sun wasn't playing ball - determined to remain hidden behind the cloud but I didn't mind really so long as there were a few glimpses. I'm getting used to the weather being rubbish this year!

Once on site I headed straight across the boardwalk and out onto the heather. It is classed as a 'dry, lowland Heath with bogs' but the recent wet spells have turned it into a 'Bog with a few areas of damp Heath'. It was also quiet and the only action were a couple of fluttering Common Heath moths. The first was a male and then a female with its more striking contrasting markings. There were a few Dragonflies around including a reasonably tame 4-spotted Chaser and also my first Large Red Damsel of the year. By this time I'd worked my way across the 'Silver Studded Heath' and was mooching around the verges of the larger body of heather. Finally something more butterfly like flew from one stand of heather to another. Amongst the gloom and rain drops a couple of gorgeous blue flashes shone out, a Silver-Stud and unusually my first was a female.



I spent some time with her and then moved off back towards the small area of heath at the end of the boardwalk. While skirting around the edge of the heather I spied a male and so approached slowly, lowering my feet down in the holes between the heather. As I watched it I noticed some ants

appearing so I took a series of shots thinking I would see them tending to the possibly newly emerged butterfly. It was then that I noticed the damage to one of the forewings and as I focused in I saw a bulge underneath the tear from which an ant emerged. It also looked like the other ants were attacking the butterfly, biting at its tarsi and abdomen. The butterfly flew leaving the first ant with the fragment of wing looking a lot like a rolled up carpet slung over its shoulder. I caught up with the butterfly and it seemed to have suffered only a little from the attack.





I then set to quartering the heath and this turned up a couple more fresh makes and a new moth species for me.





Over the further side a Large Skipper appeared during the briefest of sunny spells as did a Cloudy Buff but then it was back to photographing Silver-studs in the gloom. I finally had a count of 6 males and 1 female and it was time to head home. Hopefully the low numbers are just a reflection of the comparative earliness in the season of my visit or the less than conducive weather but it felt like an all too familiar story. A trip to see a particular species and very few of them once found.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 03-Aug-16 11:02 PM GMT

The story does sound familiar, Wurzel. The numbers just aren't there. However, your SSB were lovely and fresh, and the one molested by ants is extraordinary. Usually the ants appear to protect emerging butterflies, but these seem to have turned on it completely. 😞😞

I love the "strawberry-jam-and-custard" Clouded Buff too. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 03-Aug-16 11:54 PM GMT

Great SSB's Wurzel, your day out seeing fresh animals was better than mine, I had to settle with photographing them in drizzle!

### Re: Wurzel

by peterc, 04-Aug-16 07:14 AM GMT

Fantastic photos, Wurzel.

Your moth looks like a Marbled White Spot to me.

ATB

Peter

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Aug-16 11:11 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 It was really unusual behaviour to see as, like you say, I though the ants 'tended' to the butterfly 😞 Perhaps it's been a bad year for the ants and so they've sussed the butterfly out and turned on it? 😞

Cheers Bugboy 😊 But only slightly better Bugboy - I did only get 15 minutes of sun the whole time I was there 😞

Cheers Peter 😊 Thanks for the ID 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 05-Aug-16 07:39 AM GMT

Fascinating observations and great shots of the Blue with ants. I hope Vince picks up on this and includes it in his 'notes' (if he hasn't already) as it must surely be very unusual behaviour. I am intrigued and interested in any theories why they would do this? Are they a different type of ant perhaps?

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 05-Aug-16 09:16 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, great shots of the SSB's I hope it's not a new trend this attacking of the SSB, like Pauline, I'm hoping it's a different Ant. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 05-Aug-16 10:21 PM GMT

I agree, it's extraordinary behaviour, I wonder if it has been a bad season for ants too, forcing them to turn rogue?

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Aug-16 11:18 PM GMT

Cheers Pauline, Goldie and Essex 😊 It could be a different species of ant - I've seen wood ants ripping Heath Fritillaries apart or the correct species gone rogue due to them having a poor season as well, either way it was a fascinating spectacle and luckily the SSB survived.

Larkhill WB 20-06-2016

This was going to be one of those funny old weeks I reckoned - first there was the Solstice, then there was the ever changeable weather and finally there were so many activities going on at home and work that I didn't know when I'd be able to check out the further goings on at Larkhill or not.

20-06

Not a good start to the week as I couldn't stop in the morning as it was peeing with rain and then come the afternoon when things were slightly better the lay-by was completely full of vehicles all parked in readiness for the Solstice. There wasn't even space to squeeze right at the edge of the car park area. 😞

21-06

AM

I didn't think that I'd have been able to have made the stop this morning it being the day of the Solstice but when I drove up towards the lay-by there were only a couple of vans left and even they looked like they were making ready to be offski. So I pulled in anyway and started down the Westbound path. I think the butterflies must have realised that the Solstice had occurred as today there was a changing of the guard. Whereas usually I would be greeted by the odd Small Heath, Blue and then not much else today the first butterfly of the morning was a Meadow Brown. A few more steps down the path and there was my first Marbled White of the year - despite bemoaning to millerd only the day before that it would probably be another fortnight before I saw my first! A few more steps and there was my first Ringlet as well. I walked down to the half way point and then back and in the end came up with a best fit total of 2 each for Meadow Brown, Marbled White and Small Heath and three each of Ringlet and Large Skipper. So it seems that the Solstice really is the start of summer!



PM

By the afternoon I had Larkhill to myself and so I gave the place the once over. It seemed in a lot better nick this year than how it had been left last year - probably due to the lack of grazing by the horses and the sward was at full height. There was more of the same down the Westbound path with all the same species seen as during my morning visit but all were now much more active bombing up and down the path.

As I made my way back to the car something larger and brighter flew around the shrubbery near the patch of Golden Rod. I carefully got closer in and there was a beautifully fresh Small Tort putting on a great display - turning and twisting its way round the food source and posing every now and again alert and upright.



I drove home experiencing mixed emotions. Relief and happiness that the summer butterflies have finally arrived and concern as I still haven't recorded Brown Argus, Small Copper or Small Blue at the site this year. Hopefully a second or third brood might fare better than the first but for the Dingy Skipper which I also haven't seen here this year the only hope is that I missed them and they had quietly got on and bred whilst evading my lens/eyes?

23-06  
AM

All five species were present again this morning although the Small Heaths are starting to look really tired and worn. I hadn't been happy with the shots that I'd gotten of the Marbled White the day previously and so I focused all of my attentions on them this morning. A couple were easily disturbed as I haven't remembered how to stalk them yet but luckily I came across another couple that were much dopier and more docile. One in particular sat nicely on a network of grass stems which made it look like I'd interrupted it just as it had started weaving a basket. As I took a few shots it seemed to wake up a bit more and so lifted its forewings up as if to flash its eyes as Grayling and Meadow Browns do. I'd not seen this species do this before and was surprized that they'd bother as they don't have the most obvious eyes to startle potential predators with?



24-06  
AM

I'd have to make this stop count this morning as I knew that I wouldn't be able to stop on the way home as it was the year 11 Prom and so I was on Bouncer duty with one of the Maths teachers. Again Large Skipper, Ringlet and Meadow Brown were all represented as I waded down the Westbound path - the grass is now at mid-thigh height and when walking down the track in the wheel ruts can sometimes reach my waist. Most were roosting open winged and trying to catch the early morning sun and would flutter off weakly as the grasses swayed back from my passing. It was interesting to see the different approaches of the Ringlets and Meadow Browns. The Ringlets fluttered low, just bobbing over the tops of the grass stems and would then bury themselves down lower in the vegetation whilst the Meadow Browns gained height and flew up to the tops of the bushes and sought somewhere to land from up there.

The Marbled Whites are building nicely in numbers it seems with 11 the maximum count this morning and some were roosting open winged on the ground in the tyre ruts whilst the others were making flags on the stems. On the return journey I had something of a blast from the past as a Common Blue put in a brief appearance, sitting on its own little 'bridge'.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Aug-16 12:48 PM GMT

Love the Marbled Whites Wurzel, I'm just wondering if they'll still be there for next week when we travel down South, I hope so, your shot's of them are great. Goldie 😊🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Aug-16 11:21 PM GMT

Cheer Goldie 😊 You might be slightly too late for the MW but hopefully the Brostreaks and Chalkhills will make up for it 😊

Large Blue 26-06-2016

So the question was Daneway or Collard? Philzoid and I had been wondering which site for about a fortnight previously and this morning it was decision time. The weather, lack of Glastonbury traffic and a very favourable report from Essex Buzzard swayed it in favour of Daneways. So I tapped the postcode into Satnav (cheers Tuts!), checked the parking directions (cheers CJB!) and we set off.

I was a surprisingly straight forward route and before I knew it the car was ensconced in the in lay-by and we were on the road heading for the Pub with what we thought was the site peeping out behind the trees. By the pub there were so many likely looking fields it was lucky that a local lad pointed us in the right direction. On the steep incline we met another group of three so we arrived at the site en mass as it were but Philzoid and I tried to slope off. We'd only just been on site for about 3 minutes when a slatey blue butterfly, a good size too, flew towards me, veered left and disappeared down the bank. Both Philzoid and I had seen it so another one for both out tallies. We'd gotten what we'd come for so now it was time to relax and enjoy! The same butterfly or a different one was located on the banks and all five of us edged in hoping for some shots. I manged a few before one of the others spooked it and then we all watched it until it landed, This time it shut its wings tight and the sun had nipped behind a cloud so it wasn't going anywhere fast. Despite this one of the three felt that she should make the decisions regarding the butterfly. If felt a bit like being corralled by a sheepdog - 'come by, wait, wait, away, come by etc'. All her concerns about spooking it came to nothing and I was even able to fold down and hold back some of the grasses for a totally unobscured shot. I was even happier with these shots as I was holding the grass with my right hand and the shots were taking with my left, so I had to overcome the 'handed' bias of cameras.



After Philzoid and I had had our fill of shots (and possibly commands?) we again tried to slope off and explore the rest of the site. The only problem was that the butterflies kept drawing us back in. There were beautiful fresh Ringlets, their delicate white margins brilliant and contrasting with the velvety uppers. Marbled Whites abounded and the odd Meadow Brown and Large Skipper put in an appearance too to keep us busy. We'd worked our way ever so slowly to the 'end' of the first bank where the track was through a few trees when we spotted another Large Blue. This one held its wings open and both Philzoid and I were able to get in really close and enjoy it to ourselves. It really is a cracking butterfly.





Happily we backed away and carried on into the reserve. It was fantastically lush and there were Orchids everywhere but we did have to sit out a short shower and wait for the sun to reappear. When it did again there were Ringlets and Marbled Whites as well as a faded Common blue but no more Large ones. We'd reached the final third of the Banks by now and stopped to chat with a local butterflyer. As it was a cloudy period we caught up and he regaled us with tales of his mate who it seems was forever getting in the way of shots or spooking the butterfly much to his chargin! When the sun reappeared out came the butterflies but as Philzoid predicted it was a couple more minutes before the Large Blues joined them.

When they did it all got a bit confusing and it's hard to remember the exact order of the sightings. Our new found friend put us onto one which was on an Orchid and very graciously let us both get in close with our Macro lenses. Then there were two Large Blues that went up from either side of the path, met in the middle and then flew off in totally opposite directions. Another moment to savour was when there were two Large Blues within 3 paces of each other and finally there was the possible aberrant which seemed to be ovipositing.





It was a breathtaking 30 minutes or so and somehow we tore ourselves away to make it to the end of the reserve which seemed to terminate in an old quarried area and then a wood. On the return journey Small Heaths appeared and a Small Tort ventured out at the start of the walk. This time we took the top path as we headed back towards the entrance. As we reached the far side and were just discussing making a move another Large Blue turned up and then another when we were 12 steps away from the entrance. It flew back into the reserve so we recovered old ground and ended up criss-crossing the initial bank once more. This time a female Common Blue and aged Dingy added themselves to the days tally.





We decided we really should make a move as the weather clouded over and we walked along the main track towards the entrance. It seemed like the Large Blues didn't want us to leave and so we were forced to stop as another perfectly posed open winged for us before we finally escaped and retired to the Daneway Arms for refreshment and a quick check of what we'd got.





On the drive home, with some of the afternoon ahead of us still, we planned to go to Martin Down for DGFs. However that would mean driving through Salisbury and would add 50 minutes more driving time. So instead we pulled off the A345 and nipped over to my Duke Site.

But now the sun had hidden itself and the wind had picked up so the butterflies present were all holding onto flowers like Rocking Horses...that is the ones which were visible as it felt strangely quiet. I was only just commenting on 'where are the DGFs?' when I turned around and there was one of the pristine ginger beauties. A little further on a second flew by and then it went quiet again. We entered into one of the 'fields' where the grasses were shorter and almost immediately a DGF went up, and then a second but both were caught by the wind. A little further in and Philzoid found three all roosting together. I managed to get a shot of two together and then the final remaining one once the other two had flown. They'd take off, fly a short way and then if the wind didn't catch them would drop back down to the deck - possibly because it was too cool?





The penultimate leg of our massive trek was down the rocky path, my Duke hotspot of two years ago. Strangely there were no butterflies here, not even a Small Copper but a couple of micro moths kept our interest before we finally made the last leg of our trip – the home stretch!





Have a goodun (we certainly did)  
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 07-Aug-16 11:58 PM GMT

You do seem to have made the most of Daneway Banks, in spite of mixed weather conditions! It's easy to get a misleading impression from photos, so I was interested to see your shot that includes another camera (DSC\_0749). This brings out how small even a 'large' blue really is. There are some butterflies (Marsh Fritillary is one) that, I feel, can only be appreciated fully when seen in the magnified view offered by a photograph.

### Re: Wurzel

by keving, 09-Aug-16 08:10 PM GMT

Wurzel,

As ever, some good reports and photos to accompany. I love the DGF pairing.

Regards Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 09-Aug-16 09:39 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Large Blue, Wurzel - brings back my trip to Collard Hill a couple of days earlier, though your butterflies seem a bit fresher than the Somerset ones. The second photo (underside) is a stonker! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-16 10:44 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 The hand belongs to Philzoid and like you say was used to show the real scale. I know what you mean about the Marsh Frit - when you see them flying or from a distance they juts look like a brownish blob and then through the lens - woah! 😊

Cheers Kev 😊 When Philzoid found them it was a bit of a manage a trois 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 That was a hard one to get as I was using only my left hand at the same time as having orders barked at me 😊

After a week in Lisbon I'm even more behind so my aim is to have gotten into August by September, if that makes sense, so better get cracking...

### Larkhill Week beginning 27-06-2016

27-06

No stops today as despite the weather looking good I was in a rush to get to and from work, typical tomorrow when I have more time I bet the weather will suck!

28-06

AM Westbound

Luckily the sun held out for the morning so when I stopped at 8 it still felt warm and there was a slight haze while the dew evaporated. I didn't venture too far down the Westbound as after initially surprising a very faded Common Blue and a few each of the three Brown species something much smaller and golden caught my eye. At first I thought that it would be just a Large Skipper but it was much too small. As I crept round in a wide circle to get in close I could see that the wings were a uniform gold with the kinky streak of the male Small Skipper - my first of the year. I looked up momentarily and saw a second that I'd walked straight past as it was so small, I was expecting to see it and also because it was totally concealed from view from my previous angle of approach. Also here was a lovely female Large Skipper offering a clear comparison with the smaller cousin.



Slightly further along I was in proper Brown territory with representatives of all three species flying weakly amongst the grass tops and always looking like they are about to land but never committing themselves to it. Eventually a pair of Marbled Whites landed momentarily next to each other and the odd Ringlet would play ball but the Meadow Browns were always out of reach and the first to take to the wing.



As I headed back to the car a Ringlet posed wings open wide and I managed to first creep round it, then lower myself into a reasonable position before and then even managed to brush the grasses aside so that I could get my shots. I was chuffed with the outcome as usually just getting close is tricky let alone holding the grass aside.



30-06  
AM

I could only make the briefest of stops this morning as I really needed to get to work. Today is the Bristol Zoo trip and so I had the coaches and whole of year 8 waiting for me to organise them. So to work and I quickly had a look in at the Northbound path. Amongst the early morning drear I counted only a single Marbled White and a pair of Ringlets.

Leaving this poor showing I made my way about half way along the Westbound path and it really turned up the goods with a Small Skipper, Meadow Brown and reasonable numbers of Marbled Whites and Ringlets. The Marbled Whites seems to be fading fast this year or have that not really started yet as today they were outnumbered by the Ringlets? My final Ringlets on this stretch were busy ensuring that there are at least some more Ringlets here next year.





All too soon I had to head on with the joys of Gorillas and the Butterfly house awaiting me!

01-07

AM

Well what a surprise Sports Day and it's drizzling already! I stopped anyway but things were pretty dire. The odd Ringlet would erupt from the grass but due to the dull and damp weather I set my eyes to scan for little flags amongst the grass stems. It paid off not once but twice with an eventual Common Blue but even better was my first Larkhill Brown Argus before that.

PM

Sport days over for another year - somehow we managed to cram it in before the rain threatened didn't arrive - I was on the way home and made a very quick stop-off. The weather hadn't improved noticeably since the morning but at least it was warmer. It seemed to favour the butterflies as now the Marbled Whites and meadow Browns were flying amongst the Ringlets and I also managed to add a Large Skipper to the tally for the day.



*worst photo but it's a Larkhill BA!!*



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 18-Aug-16 11:49 AM GMT

I know you like 'stained glass window' effects but that Ringlet (DSC\_0899) is simply amazing 😊 The most remarkable photo of a Ringlet I've ever seen! Stunning!!

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 18-Aug-16 07:51 PM GMT

Welcome back, Wurzel! That is indeed a very unusual shot of a Ringlet. A transformation of the ordinary into something quite the opposite. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Aug-16 11:09 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 You're too kind 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Likewise 😊, and it's good to be back too.

Bentley Wood 02-07-2016

A couple of spare hours was all I would get all weekend so tried for the Saturday as that looked to have the better weather. They said it would be sunny – they lied! I can't recall a time in three years when they got it so wrong in fact. Still I was on site with some free time between painting walls and oiling floors so I was determined to make the most of it.

As I set off the sun was hiding behind the clouds and it felt warm and moist so I took my rain coat and made my way up the main track towards the crossroads. It was really quiet with only a few Large Skipper, Ringlets were more numerous and Meadow Brown the most common species seen. I was half way along the main track where it dips down and the sides open out. In a few weeks time this is prime Emperor habitat but try as I might I couldn't successfully turn the Meadow Browns into His Nibbs. I did pause at the large Oak here and just like last year it provided me with my first Purple Hairstreak. Two tiny grey/silver blobs detached themselves from the tree top, circled and then fluttered high over the path to another tree where they promptly disappeared. So a first for the year but no photo. 😊

At the crossroads I turned right and made my way to the deeper wood and the butterflies seemed scarcer here as I wound round with the path until I reached the Memorial. A few steps along a so two Whitters assuming the fiscing with my bins both the top of the diseased/dying Elm and the new Suckers that clump here until the crick in my neck was so severe that my vertebrae had fused or I saw a Whitter. However my plan came to nothing as a heavy shower occurred lasting 25 minutes during a time when the Met said there was a less than 5% chance of a shower (the never have anything lower than this value) 😊. I hid my camera in my jacket, pulled my hood up and buried my chin into my chest ending up with the opposite type of crick in the neck that I'd expected.

Once the shower passed I resumed my vigil being distracted by the occasional Large Skippers playing on the Bramble flowers, a few Ringlets and my first White Admiral – which again avoided my lens, two new species a not a shot of either. 😊



Eventually my (im)patience paid off and a darker butterfly crossed the, now, blue gap between one Elm and another. Through my bins I could see what it was, darker and square cut – a Whitter. A few moments later a second made the same journey – so two Whitters assuming the first hadn't doubled back on itself. So three new species and not a shot of any! 😊

I headed back hoping for a SWF or a DGF or something, anything in fact, anything to land long enough for a shot. Unfortunately nothing did and so in desperation I took a few shots of a Meadow Brown and a Ringlet. I then walked despondently back towards the car park in a split mood; cheered by the three additions to the yearly tally but at the same time annoyed that I didn't have the shots. Oh well. 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Aug-16 10:31 PM GMT

Larkhill WB 04-07-2016

04-07 AM

A five minute stop as I'd heard the occasional clunk from under the bonnet – nothing serious I hope and I couldn't see any damage when I checked under the wheel arches. Still as I was in the pull in a I set off down the Westbound path to see what I could find. No Smessex to greet me today just a solitary Common Blue hanging on in there. I'm used to relying on the long suffering and surviving Common Blues to keep me going much later in the season. So for them to be such a prominent feature this early is a worrying trend.

Mind you a few more steps in and things were almost back to normal with a few Ringlet and the odd Meadow Brown erupting from the grasses just in front of me. Grasses which I would have sworn blind didn't contain any butterflies up until 3 seconds before my foot hit the ground. A case of Spontaneous Creation? I carried on along the path and it was very quiet with only a total of 7 Ringlets and two Meadow Browns. I didn't see a Marbled White until I was almost back at the car and there one was amongst the long grass in the middle of the path, holding its wings in tribute to Batman!



05-07

AM

The morning had that feel that it was going to get a lot better but just not for a while so I strolled disappointedly down the Westbound path to the half way point. There were only a few Ringlet fluttering about on the way down and before I knew it it was time to turn round and head back. Last year and this year this has been the literally the turning point of the stop-off and so it turned out today. After a few steps back a couple of Meadow Brown had been added to the list, then a Marbled White and a second and then looking back something didn't seem right about the grass head that had caught my eye. It seemed too big and the wrong colour. As I approached it resolved before me into a Skipper. The more subtle hues, sandy margins suggesting it was my first Essex of 2016. Standing directly over it and staring down the antennae I could clearly see the ink pads so indeed it was. After a few shots I carried on back to the car but had to stop briefly for my second Essex. Chuffed I went on my way to work.





PM

The afternoon as I'd predicted (who needs the bloody weathermen - just look out the window - that's my new method of meteorological prediction) turned out great if a bit windy. I'd been trying recently to work out where all the butterflies were and so I guessed that they might be further along the path so this afternoon I stopped at the pull in even further along the Westbound path. As soon as I'd crossed the road it seemed that I'd been correct in my supposition. Playing at my feet were three Small Heaths, Ringlets, Marbled Whites and Meadow Browns fluttered by slowly or nipped here and there once caught by the breeze. There seemed to be endless little golden blurs (Smessex) and the occasional frantic fly-by of my first Larkhill DGF of 2016. The whole, 5 minutes I was here I saw this same individual (if it was) on 5 occasions but it didn't stop once. Perhaps a stop off here in the morning might yield better results? I got back onto the Westbound path and a Common Blue had set up territory mid-way along it although he backed off when I appeared. Up the hill I went and there was a Small Tortoiseshell on the deck and slightly further on a second. I know they were two different individuals because the first only had half a wing! The stroll back to the car saw the same set of species, including passes 4 and 5 by the DGF and the count of Common Blues rose to two. It was just great to finally be surrounded by so many different species of butterflies - long may it continue!

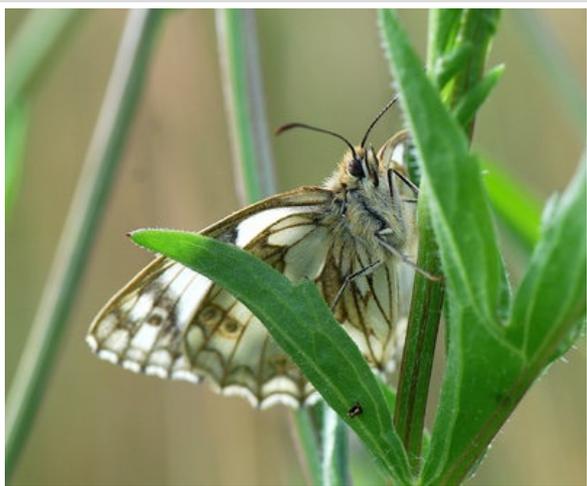


06-07

AM

I took a chance this morning and pulled in further along the road and where I normally turn around on the Westbound path and start making my way back. The parking space barely fits my Nissan so I was slightly apprehensive about leaving my car but hey-ho. The very first bush was alive with Ringlets and they appeared to have just awoken from their roost as I counted 14 on one bush but I could only squeeze in four in one shot. Slightly further in a couple of Small Heaths made themselves a pain constantly landing and then flying away once I'd focused on them. In the end as I was short of time I gave up on them and took a quick stroll even further West down the Westbound path. There were Meadow Brown, Ringlets and Marbled Whites a plenty - with the blonde females much more noticeable now. Also around were singles of Small Tort, Common Blue and a Small Skipper amongst the mainly Smessex.





PM

On the afternoon stop-off the weather was brilliant and hot! I didn't think that I would see much because of this bit I was proved wrong. I again stopped at the same place but on the other side of the road and so having crossed I carried on Westbound. The Small Heath were again present but I decided to ignore them and spent some time instead with a fresher and darker Small Tort. Continuing on I spied a ginger beastie in the distance amongst the grasses and so I took a distant shot - my first ever DGF photo from this site. Luckily it came in closer and so I broke my golden rule and risked the unexploded ordinance so I could get a little closer, in fact I ended up almost on top of it. Chuffed I headed back to the car stopping on the way for some Small, Essex and Smessex as well as a Common Blue. Unfortunately I'd been rendered colour blind as all I could see was a ginger hue.





07-07  
AM.

The very briefest of stop offs this morning working my way down the Northbound track this time. I stopped for an Essex and another slightly further on. A Ringlet caught my eye, one among the many, as it had two spots on it's left wing and three on it's right. Another had a couple of tiny extra pupils on the hind wing underside. But all too soon it was time to head onto work...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 21-Aug-16 06:48 AM GMT

I don't know how it could have happened, I offer no excuses, but I have only just seen your Large Blues 🍷. As they are a species I have yet to see even more mrgreens are appropriate 🍷🍷. Lovely stuff.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Jack Harrison, 21-Aug-16 09:06 AM GMT

I too have only today come across your Large Blues. What an impressive butterfly when wings open. I have seen the uppersides a few times (Collard) but never managed photos anywhere remotely as good as yours.

Jack

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 21-Aug-16 05:07 PM GMT

While not wishing to downplay your splendid photos, Wurzel, I found, during my own visit to Daneway Banks this year, that the Large Blues were unusually willing to pose with open wings! The weather did not seem particularly unusual – fairly warm with sunny intervals, as far as I remember, so I wonder why they were so obliging?

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 21-Aug-16 10:23 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Just catching up with things in 'Wurzeldom' 😊. Lots of great stuff in your recent posts. Your Large Blues are great 😊, that is one species I have yet to see. Your Dark Green Fritillaries are always fantastic 😊, I have only seen one of those this year 😊.

I was working at Larkhill a week or so ago, I wondered where abouts *your* Larkhill site is in relation to the army camp 🤔 Great backlit Ringlet and head on shot of the Essex Skipper 😊.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 22-Aug-16 10:50 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel just catching up at last on the post's, your Butterfly shot's of the LB and that gorgeous Ringlet are really out standing , I should put the Large Blue on my list for next year together with the BHS 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Aug-16 11:54 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 No worries I myself 'discovered' a few posts of Dave's that I'd missed 😊 There are a lot of people posting on UKB now 😊

Cheers Jack 😊 I'd quite happily swap you a few Large Blues for some of the cracking Scotch Argus shots you've gotten 🍷

Cheers Mike 😊 I went to Collard the last two years and this year went to Daneways and I definitely agree – they are much better behaved at Daneways! 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 Everything seems to have had a bad year in 2016 😊 My site is the Shrewton side of the camp, just up from Stonehenge. Once I've got my shots I have to drive through the camp on my way to work.

Cheers Goldie 😊 Go for it – if you go at the right time you'll get them 😊

Bentley Wood 17-07-2016

Having missed a week and seen reports of Purple Emperor coming in whilst in Iceland I decided to chance it and try for His Nibbs at Bentley. So I set off on a bright Sunday morning with fingers crossed that I'd broken the 'three year' cycle last year. Once in the car park I didn't hang around before starting off down the main track hoping that I could develop Archer fish eyes to enable me to scan both the path and up at the tree tops at the same time. In the end I progressed along a path a bit like a head-banging Metallica fan.

I was seeing butterflies but not the correct species unfortunately. It was only when I got BOUT half way along the track to the dip and the cleared area that I saw my first SWF. Also here around the usual Oak were a fluttering of Purple Hairstreaks. At the crossroads I paused and scanned around and decided to head left. I bumped into another enthusiast and we chatted of this and that as we made our way towards Donkey Copse. At 'Baitman' Corner I opened up the tin of Sardines that I'd brought and we stood back and waited. Meadow Browns, Hedge Browns (my first of 2016) and Ringlets were all about along with the occasional Silver-washed and a scything White Admiral. Again some Purple Hairstreaks put on a display of jinking high jinks and then I went on to check out further into the wood.



Along the way Silver-washed were being particularly active seemingly to make up for their low numbers by being in three place at once! Again a few PHs flew by up high and there was another scything White Admiral. Unfortunately though every shark fin on the path was actually a Red Admiral which did become an H Comma on my return. As I approached the corner a large butterfly, bat like in appearance flew fast towards me and disappeared over the tree tops – a PE as verified by my fellow enthusiast who was watching it from the other direction. It didn't come back though and the bait didn't draw it back either so after a fair amount of waiting around we both decided to head back to the car park. On the way we bumped into a few others and one pair of gents had been lucky enough to have one down on the deck for about 5 minutes back on the main path.



Once along the main stretch we did our best to avoid being caught out by the Red Admirals that appeared to be settled all over the path and settled down to wait out of sight in the shade. Suddenly a PE flew past us and landed on the desk. As we waited for it to settle a jogger appeared and put it up. It flew a little way on and landed again and was put up by the same jogger and again and again before it finally gave up and disappeared. Why do butterflies do this? Surely it would make more sense to fly and land behind the object approaching them? And also why do joggers do this? Oh well there was some consolation for the three year cycle starting again in the form of a Valezina – which might come in handy as a tie breaker in my annual competition for Philzoid. As everything seemed to be starting to go turbo charged I cut my losses, scored Brownie points and headed home early.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 23-Aug-16 07:18 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, what do you know a positive ID for GB of the Brown Hairstreak being there. 😊 I wonder what else will move North !! Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Aug-16 12:03 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Great news for you about the Brostreak – you ask what else will move up North – well at this rate me 😊

Burcombe 17-07-2016

After a getting back home and getting my breath back I was off out again. My younger daughter on a play date and my wife and I dropped my older daughter round to one of her friends' house to 'hang out'. So we were sans kids in the middle of the Wiltshire countryside and so went for a walk round Burcombe. It was an area I'd not visited before so I didn't know what to expect and I really enjoyed the wandering and wondering.

Once on the path and out of the village the path ran up hill bordered on one side by a hedge and beyond a golden field. On the other side was another, lower thinner hedge and downland grassland. The walk was circular and this part formed a horseshoe round the punchbowl down. There were some fresh looking Small Torts as well as all the usual suspects – Smeesex Skippers, Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns and Ringlets. A Peacock, Red Admiral and a Painted Lady all did fly-bys and a DGF popped in and I was able to get a few shots by poking the lens through the fence. Also here was a stunning view across the hills, snaking through the villages and there standing imperious in the distance Salisbury Cathedral.





At the top of the hill we turned right and started a much slower descent and the path broke free from the agricultural fields and came out onto the top of the Punchbowl. We stopped for a cuppa and a sit down amongst the bird songs to enjoy the sun and I had a little mooch. There were more of the same species around and a couple of Common Blues to add to the tally but no Chalkhills which I was surprised by but it may have been still too early? The Marbled Whites and Ringlets were looking tired and worn – they'd entered the grey phase whereas the Meadow Browns were still looking fresh.





Cuppa drunk and rest over we carried on down and around the other side of the Punchbowl. Amongst the smaller butterflies something dusky ginger and much bigger flew - another DGF and this one landed just long enough for a few shots.



After this the path became stone and gravel based and enclosed on one side by trees but there were still butterflies about and a set of Small Tortoiseshells seemed to follow us down the path amongst a Red Admiral and various whites. A great little walk that produced some real gems - it's nice to visit somewhere new.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

PS Chalkhills were reported a day

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 26-Aug-16 07:32 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, I have been a bit slack at keeping up with everyone else's diaries lately and missed your Large Blues, great photos and Daneway Banks certainly sounds like a site I must pay a visit to...maybe next year.

That backlit Ringlet underside is a cracker too...lovely shot 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Pete Eeles, 26-Aug-16 08:16 PM GMT

#### MikeOxon wrote:

I know you like 'stained glass window' effects but that Ringlet (DSC\_0899) is simply amazing 😊 The most remarkable photo of a Ringlet I've ever seen! Stunning!!

Wow - how did I miss that! Very nice, and very different!

Cheers,

- Pete

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 27-Aug-16 09:30 PM GMT

That female DGF you chanced upon is a lovely butterfly. I've rarely seen a fresh-looking female - usually they are well down in the grass seeking/avoiding/putting up with the intentions of a male! 🍷 They are much more subtly marked than the males, and much more attractive. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Aug-16 11:50 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 Daneways was a brilliant place to visit - I'd definitely recommend it 😊

Cheers Pete 😊 I was chuffed with that one 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I definite Dusky Maiden that one 😊

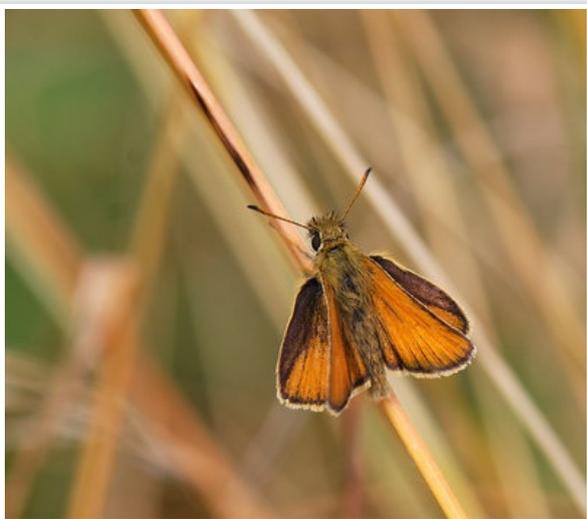
Week Beginning 18-07-2016

It was a funny old week, the final week of term and yet so many things seemed to be going on, plus the weather wasn't exactly decent - the story of the last few years and so I only made a couple pf stop-offs. The first was on Monday 18th on the way home. I checked out the now 'usual' stop along the Westbound path and encountered all the species that I expected to see - Smessex Skippers, Blues and the last members of the current brood of Small Heaths. There were also a few Common Blues around and some pretty faded looking Marbled Whites. But it was a pretty quiet stop and so I headed on home with a banging headache.



Tuesday came and went and I was so busy tying up loose ends and getting everything tidied up that I didn't get to stop, plus my head was banging which then accounted for nothing on Wednesday as a migraine struck. I sometimes get a couple a year but I thought that I might make it without one this year - no such luck. Thursday came and went in a blur as I was still catching up from Iceland plus there was marking from the cover from Wednesday. The joys of teaching - even when you're off ill the work still mounts up.

Finally Friday came and for possibly the first time this week everything fell into place - weather, weather, health etc. So I stopped in the car park and checked out the Northbound pathway. The usual suspects were all present and so I moved further up to the large patch of shrubbery about half way up. I was almost there when I found what I was hoping to see - Hedge Browns - and a reasonable number of them - spread across the top and basking in the early morning sun. Most seemed to fall within the usual range of variation but a couple did stand out - one was an excessa and the other was a very, very dark individual almost two tone in appearance. Not wanting to be late for work on the last day I quickly retraced my steps and carried onto work.





This will be my last visit here until September now...hopefully the later end of the season will be more butterfly packed than so far,

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Sep-16 05:24 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I'm still playing catch up, 😊 It's depressing here at present Butterfly wise, I keep hoping some thing will happen and we'll see some, although I love the Speckies I'd enjoy seeing some thing else besides them 😊 They've done very well this year and every where you go here, there they are. 😊

Hope you've a better September , I'm still living on hope's 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-16 10:07 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 There's a bit more of the season to go yet so hopefully things will still turn up – you just need a day with reasonable weather – fingers crossed 😊

The Devenish 22-07-2016

On the last day of term we generally have half a day and after saying good bye to all those staff leaving we head home. It's become something of a

tradition of mine that instead of rushing straight home, cracking open a bottle of something alcoholic and sinking into the sofa with a weary sigh I instead call in at The Devenish and 20 minutes or so. It often gives me my first Chalkhill of the year and as I drove the frustrating and torturous route that's was I was manifesting, repeating over and over in my mind that I would see a Chalkhill.

I parked and quickly made my way through the paddock and Orchid Meadow to head straight up the Down giving everything else short shrift and focusing solely on my goal of seeing and photographing a Chalkhill. There were a few other species about - Hedge Browns were almost rampant on the brambles that lined the path up the Down and Meadow Browns were seemingly everywhere with the odd Marbled White fluttering by and looking well past it. Gone is the glorious vibrant two tone colouration to be replaced by a drab dish cloth grey and lighter grey.

I scanned across the steep slope looking for anything blue and there being buffeted by the wind was a ghostly looking blue. Boom my first Chalkhill! I watched it flutter around in the breeze waiting for it to settle. When it did I traversed across the Down, leaning in towards the hill to keep my balance and then cautiously approached. Footstep, click, footstep closer, click, footstep even closer click, lower to knees, click, lean forward, click. The technique worked for once and I was in really close to my subject. As I'd taken a few photos I watched it through the lens and realised that it was a slight aberrant as the arc of spots on the hind wing underside were practically non-existent. It flew a brief way and opened up so by using the same cautious technique I was able to get topside shots as well.





I reversed and made my way back down the Down and headed straight home. Once the chores were done, the girls were in bed and tea was dealt with I finally poured myself a large drink and sank into the sofa with a weary sigh. I clicked the TV on and the first thing I saw? A @\$&\*ing 'Back to School' Ad 😊 Jeez!  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 01-Sep-16 10:14 PM GMT

Nicely marked Chalkhill, Wurzel! 😊 A great way to start seeing the 2016 emergence. Back to School is now upon us of course 😊 Where did the summer holiday go?

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 01-Sep-16 10:15 PM GMT

Beautiful first photo Wurzel, it almost looks like a painting 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-16 11:24 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Where indeed, back to work today and so the season is drawing to a close for me 😊  
Cheers Katrina 😊 I was mighty chuffed with that shot 😊

September 2016

There's still life in the season, so long as the weekend weather is good 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Sep-16 07:15 PM GMT

Lovely shots wurzel of the Chalkhill, I didn't miss that this year thank goodness 😊  
My Daughter's in the same boat has you, back to school 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Sep-16 10:37 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Yep back to work again – no respite now until July 2017 😊

Godshill 23-07-2016

Well it didn't really start at Godshill. It started over at a place called Dinton as I had to pick up my daughter from a friend's house where she had had a sleep-over. As the traffic had been a nightmare the day before and it's bad form to pick up late I arrived in the village earlier than expected and so with 20 minutes to kill I parked at Little Clarendon House and took a five minute stroll across the grounds towards the lake. As I moved through the grass Meadow Browns erupted and the odd white fluttered by. As I approached the lake I could see small blue Damselflies and more pleasing a GVW taking salts from the edge of the lake – something I've wanted to capture for a while.



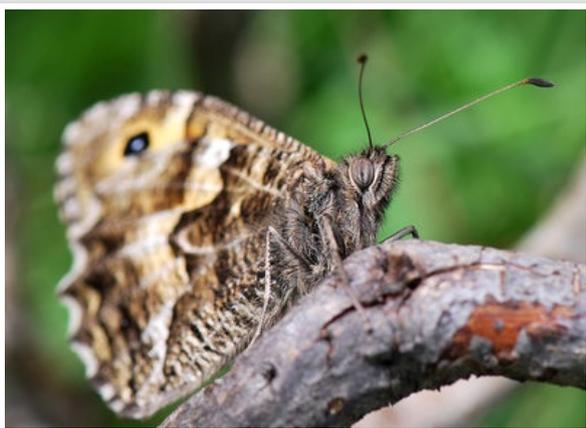
Once K was picked up, all the usual chores were completed and I was just finishing applying a layer of paint it suddenly dawned on me that it was actually the start of the holiday, there was no work to do for Monday, there was no work on at least five successive Mondays! Elated I carefully cleaned the paint brushes, folded the dust sheets and headed out with my camera. Due to the late running season and a week in Iceland I was running behind schedule and so I drove over to Godshill my usual choice of site for my first Grayling.

As I arrived the sun headed behind the clouds but I carried on down the hill amongst the heather as I could see blue skies on the horizon. Whilst the sun was hidden the Grayling were likewise and so I mooched around in new areas noting many Meadow and Hedge Browns and a fly-by Peacock and Red Admiral. The cloud cover made photographing Dragonflies easier and I also found several, tied looking Silver-studs, with the females looking a lot less care worn than the males.





All the while I kept checking the heavens and as the sun started to come out for longer and longer periods I'd manoeuvred myself round to the usual piece of track which is indicated on Alan Thornbury's site guide with a massive arrow. I took a stroll down the track once and as I was wondering if I was actually a little early a butterfly took off. The flight was different from a Meadow Brown - with a few more glides intermingled with a stronger more powerful flight. The butterfly landed and disappeared from view - so a Grayling then! I managed to relocate it as I must have gotten too close so it flashed me the warning 'eye'. Despite this it was content for me to get down and crawl ever closer until I was to use a crass American term, right up in it's grill.



I crawled backwards and then straightened up leaving this Grayling in peace yet only a few steps away a second took off, glided, fluttered, glided and fluttered and landed. I'm always struck by the difference in patterning that this species shows and this individual definitely was at the darker end of the variation spectrum being a mixture of greys and black with hardly any brown present. A real contrast to the first which was a warmer combination of cream, browns and subtle shades in between.



I then carried on my wandering taking a convoluted route back towards the car park. On the way various Grayling (I think I counted 7 in total during the few hours I was on site) played hide and seek with me and I was also able to catch up with various Dragons too.





When I reached the stream I settled down for 20 minutes or so to marvel and the antics of the Dragons – I could see 5–6 species of Dragon and a couple of different Damsels too. It was interesting to see the different behaviours and the hierarchy of the stream system. The Keeled Skimmers and Common Darters stayed well clear of the stream when the Emperor flew into their airspace – they vanished, landing on the deck in the grasses at the waterside. The Broad-bodied Chaser on the other hand would go hell for leather towards the Emperor seemingly trying to knock it out of the sky. I realised that I'd not taken any shots so enraptured was I so I set about trying for a few here and there. Unfortunately I wasn't able to capture anything from watching a female Emperor laying her eggs but it was a delight to observe.



Somehow I dragged myself away and made my way up the hill and cut across the cricket pitch feeling relaxed and mellow – what a great start to the holidays proper.  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 04-Sep-16 10:49 PM GMT

Not a Butterfly, but that last shot is stunning.  
Great Graylings too !

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 04-Sep-16 11:38 PM GMT

I agree, great shots especially the fifth Grayling shot! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 05-Sep-16 01:28 PM GMT

One of the few species that lets you get right "in its grill" ... when you've found it 😊 . Very nice Grayling shots Wurzel 😊 . Its camouflage works well on the dried cop-pat .. not so good in the grass (or on Shingle like the ones I saw in Dunwich)

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 05-Sep-16 06:16 PM GMT

Some lovely looking Dragons mixed in with the butterflies there 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Sep-16 08:06 PM GMT

Just catching up Wurzel, I love the Grayling shots, mine always seem to blend in with the lime stone at Gait Barrow. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 09-Sep-16 09:11 PM GMT

Still running a bit behind on your diary then Wurzel, not that I can talk of course, Mine is still back in the spring! How you manage to maintain such an epic diary along with your job and young family is beyond me. You certainly have my admiration. Lovely Grayling and dragon shots btw.

Please could you PM me and let me know what super strong blend of coffe you're taking, I could really do with some 😊

BW's

James

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Sep-16 11:43 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 They were mesmerising 😊

Cheers Katrina 😊 That one posed nicely for me, unfortunately on a cow pat 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 That's the choice you have - nice view of the butterfly on a grotty background or you a nice background just where's the butterfly? 😊😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I could get in Dragons - of they weren't so quick 😊

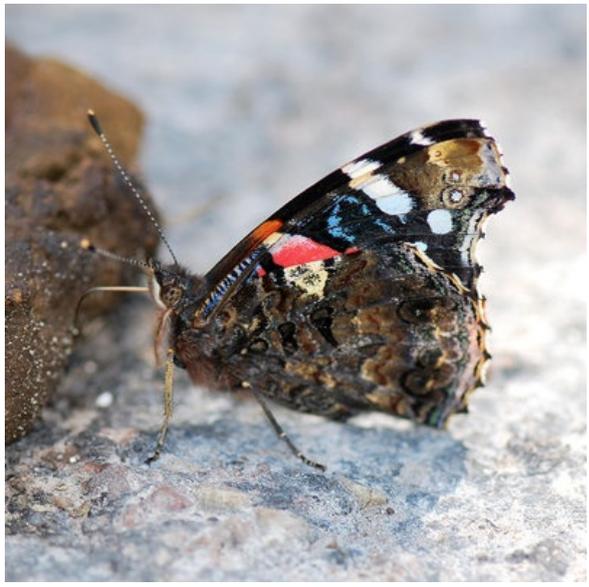
Cheers Goldie 😊 A Grayling blended in with the background is the classic Grayling fu]shot[/u] 😊

Cheers Rex 😊 It's not the brand/quality of coffee, it's the huge quantity 😊

Broughton Down 29-07-2016

It felt like an age since I'd last gotten out; the weather had been so-so and there had been painting and trips to the tip so for the first week of my holiday I'd been pretty restricted to being home. Finally I couldn't bear it anymore and sun was set to shine for once (well intermittently) so off I heeded to look for Silver Spots at Broughton Down. On the journey I uneasily watched a large bank of cloud which whilst still a hell of a way off was moving in the direction of the site I was visiting. It was the usual story - back to racing the oncoming cloud.

I rapidly parked car i.e. abandoned it and was onto my first butterfly of the day before I'd even gotten out. A Red Admiral was feeding on dog muck in the middle of the path and I kept half an eye on it while I put my boots on, grabbed my hat and set my camera up. The a few shots taken I set off. I scanned across sky and could see the cloud rolling in and so I ran up the hill pausing only slightly at the top to catch my breath before carrying on running down the tree tunnel, through the small wood and then breaking out on to the top of the Down.



The sun was still shining started and so I hurriedly looked around and my first impression was that there seemed to be Meadow Browns all over the place. A golden blur caught my eye – yep a Silver Spot. A few shots later it was off but I didn't mind as that sighting meant that I was still on track for my 49 species target so now I could relax and enjoy the sights and sounds, including several more Silver Spots. My Zen approach was slightly disrupted as I was somewhat distracted by the appearance of a Painted Lady among the other species. I did my best to watch it but it was feeding frenetically, flying from one stand of flowers to another, taking the briefest sips of nectar so I could only get distant views.



Having devoted more than enough time to the Lady I set off again and walked all the way along to the fence and through to the small mound. There was the odd red Admiral, numerous whites and Brimstones and also the odd faded DGF to add to the flavour, most of which were busying themselves on the Agrimony. A DGF landed on the other side of the fence and rather than go round I focused through the gaps in the wiring and a good job as it was soon offski.



I worked my way back along the various rabbit trails and again saw Silver spots here and there. Not as many as last year possibly but still good numbers and many more and in a much, much smaller area than over at Stockbridge. Most often I would see them veering off the path and into the grasses to disappear from view, only to reappear and repeat the process again a few steps later. The Painted Lady also did her best to thwart my efforts of getting any shots of her again as well. But then I came across something that I'd been hoping to see for the last couple of years – a pair of Silver Spots in cop.



So as I was doing alright for Silver Spots I thought that it would be okay to devote some time to the Painted Lady that was still knocking about. Again it was a frustrating process as the butterfly would spend a miniscule amount of time at any given flower and then just as I'd think about approaching it

would be off. IN the end I found myself clicking away with each step in the hope of capturing a shot. This brazen move seemed to pay off and in the end somehow I managed to get in close enough and the Lady stayed still long enough for me to achieve my goal.



Then it was back to the Silver Spots and they were a joy to watch. I was so mesmerised by their actions and habits that I found myself back at the point where I'd initially started and so I carried on onto the really short turfed area. There seemed to be even more Silver Spots here taking advantage of the opportunity to bask in the intermittent sun. Actually looking back on it perhaps there weren't more it was just that they were much easier to see here without the long grass and vegetation to hide in? I witnessed a courtship but it didn't come to a second pairing as a third individual kept butting in and after a few attempts the original male gave in and the female had had enough and so disappeared off to get some peace.





On my next repetition of the site a started seeing a few more females and also a lovely fresh Brown Argus. I carried on through the gate and had a brief explore at the furthest reaches of the site, adding more DGFs and a Holly Blue to the day list. The Painted Lady seemed to be following me about and in the end I did my best to ignore her, as she was proving to be a bit of a timewaster. And so I made my final walk back and decided to concentrate on the species that I'd come to this site specifically for.





Last year I made three trips here, to this site but I get the feeling with the dodgy weather this season this could be my one and only this year. Still hopefully the pairing that I witnessed will come to fruition along with many others and there will be plenty of Silver Spots here next year. Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 11-Sep-16 05:44 AM GMT

I don't think your Dark Green Fritillary is faded, it's a beautifully marked female. I've seen some like this, so much so, they could fool the unwary into thinking they were a different species. Painted Lady colours come to mind.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-Sep-16 09:45 AM GMT

Great shots of the SSSK's Wurzel, they bring back good memories for me of Kent. 😊  
I also took a shot of DGF at Arnside Knot, mine also looked faded but Trevor say's they tend to be so I feel better about my shot now. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 11-Sep-16 09:43 PM GMT

Nice Silver-spotted teddy bears, Wurzel. 😊 Well done with the mating pair too – I don't think I've ever found a pair with both partners so fresh. 🍷

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 11-Sep-16 10:12 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Great selection of Silver Spotted Skippers. Especially that mating pair, very nice 😊.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 11-Sep-16 10:20 PM GMT

A very good selection there Wurzel and looks like you had perfect lighting for them as well, some very nice colour saturation, especially in the SSS. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 12-Sep-16 07:41 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, great report and photos from Broughton Down, especially the Silver-spotted Skippers 🍷 😊 ...one species I have missed this year. In fact I have missed all the southern downland species this year as my plans took me elsewhere.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 15-Sep-16 10:34 AM GMT

Superb pictures of the silver-spots Wurzel 😊. Love the shot of the one on the Self heal (and the mating pair 🍷 🍷 !)

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Sep-16 08:14 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I know what you mean about the DGFs I've seen that could almost be 'partial Valesinas' – a Greenish Dark Green Frit 🤪

Cheers Goldie 😊 Silver spots always casue mixed feeligns – joy of just witnessing them 😊, and sadness as they're one of later species and the season is on the wane 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I've been hoping for them for a few years now – another addition to my Lepidoptera Karma Sutra' – there only seems to be one position though 😊 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 I was well chuffed with that find 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It was a close thing with the lighting – one of the few sunny breaks 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 You did get some cracking butterflies though 🍷

Cheers Philzoid 😊 I think next year we should make a joint visit here?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Sep-16 11:25 PM GMT

The Devenish 30-07-2016

Following on from the great day at Broughton Down I found myself trapped into the vagaries of finishing yet more work on the house – this time adding to the layers of paint but somehow managed to escape for an hour or two in the afternoon. I'd been disappointed with the lack of Chalkhills the previous day and so I headed back to The Devenish in the hope that they had emerged there and I would be surrounded by pale ghostly blues.

Once in the car park I made my way straight through the meadows and towards the Down only stopping briefly for a worn Silver-Washed. I hadn't seen that many this year and so every extra one was great to see. This one looked like it had done its job and was now enjoying a little R'n'R with a few chips out of its wings and the odd faded mark. Also here was what I'd come to see a male Chalkhill posing on the florets. It too was slightly battle scarred and the lack of spotting on the underwing seemed quite familiar. I looked remarkably similar in fact to the one I'd seen a few days earlier.





I then made my way up the steep Down via the steps cut into the chalk and I scanned around. It seemed reasonably quiet and so I worked my way along the track along the side of the Down making my way down to the area of larger shrubs. A Marbled White flew by looking more like a Marbled Grey and here amongst the shrubs were a few Hedge Browns a very fresh Red Admiral and surprisingly a Ringlet still clinging on.





I walked across the Down and apart from Meadow Browns and Whites aplenty it seemed reasonably quiet so I made my way right across the top and started back down the other side. A Golden Skipper caught my eye and so I started working back down towards the stile and the track back down into the meadows. Here I stumbled onto a bit of a Blue fest. There was a defiant Brown Argus taking on all comers, a couple of male Common Blues which the Brown to a special dislike too and also another male Chalkhill. Of them all the BA was the hardest to capture on film as he buzzed around a ballistic ball of androgen attacking anything that dared enter his airspace. Whilst here a second brood Peacock did a fly-by and one of the several Brimstone males actually paused for nectar within range of my lens.





I carried on down and into the Orchid Meadow and tried my luck at the far end which I hadn't visited for a while. There were several Whites here and another Red Admiral and I pottered about here for a bit without much success and so started back towards the car park. A Brown Argus stopped me in my tracks. There was something about it that didn't seem right? When I knelt down and focused in I could see that the spot on the forewing was really obvious and the lunules looked so bright because surrounding them were dark, almost black 'highlights' it was a real cracker.



With that I headed home to pick up the paint brush and carry on with yet more painting...  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 18-Sep-16 04:31 PM GMT

Love the Brimstone shot Wurzel, nice Brown Argus photos too. You certainly did better than me with the Chalkies this year, I hardly took any photos of them at all, so I'm happy to enjoy yours instead. 😊

ATB

James

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Sep-16 12:51 PM GMT

Lovely photos Wurzel, so clear , I wish we were back in July 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-16 10:52 PM GMT

Cheers Rex 😊 Unfortunatley there were very few Chalkhills at the sites that I visited apart from Martin Down, they had a terrible year at The Devenish and I didn't see a single individual at Broughton Down 😞

Cheers

Goldie 😊 So do I, but I'm wishing for a cold winter and 'normal' spring more 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Sep-16 12:19 AM GMT

Wales - The Lane Part 1 - 31-07-2016

Typical the weather had been steadily getting better for the last couple of days culminating with today when there was glorious sunshine amidst lovely warmth. Guess what I was doing? Nope not butterflying and making the most of it. Instead my morning was spent doing various errands, packing, putting another coat of oil on the corridor floor, dropping the cat off at the cattery and then driving to Wales to visit the Outlaws. Once there and unpacked the next thing I did was check the weather App - Salisbury looked good for the week ahead but Aberaeron wasn't up to much with barely a break in the clouds and the strong possibility of heavy rain.

I looked despondently out of the window and it was still sunny so I grabbed my camera and set off to make hay while the sun still shone. The little field was gated off so instead made my way up and Lane scanning the tall hedge row and every leaf for my quarry. I ignored the whites - they never settle anyway and instead peered into the shady areas hoping for a glimpse of brown and orange. I soon got onto my first Hedge Brown. It was a lovely marked individual with a very slight extra white pupil in the 'eye' and the hind wing was decorated with 5 spots - 6 if you counted the miniscule one third from bottom and 7 if the dashed spot counted as 2! A good start to the 'unusual' Hedgies of Ffosyffin.



From here on I don't think I even noticed another butterfly species as I was so zoned in on Hedgies. Next was a male looking fairly normal and then another male with two spots on the right hind wing and only one on the left. These two were only a pace apart and only 4 paces away from the female. A few more paces and I was onto another female with huge spots on her hind wings. They were massive, almost as big in fact as the 'eyes' on her forewings! She was a beauty but refused point blank to open her wings any further than three quarters and so I had no clue as to any further markings that she had.





I wrapped things up with a final female on the return wander almost in the same position as my second male. I'd been photographing for 15 minutes and as I said I was only popping out for 10 back to the Outlaws I scurried or I'm sure I'd have found more. There were 5 definite individuals along only a 5m stretch of hedge so it seems that Hedgies are having a good season here, I can't wait to get back out to see what other surprises there are!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 24-Sep-16 08:20 PM GMT

Lovely fresh examples of a surprisingly variable species. The female with the giant spots looks really odd. When new like that the orange colour is really striking, but sadly they don't stay like that for long! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Sep-16 11:10 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I don't now what it is about the Hedges around my Outlaws but they seem to throw up a high proportion of variants – which is a great consolation for me 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 26-Sep-16 08:02 PM GMT

I love to see Gate Keepers on white Blossom Wurzel, it bring's out there lovely orange colour, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Sep-16 11:19 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 There is a great contrast between the white and orange 😊

Wales cont'd 02-08-2016

Having had such a great quarter of an hour with the Hedgies the day before I was bitterly disappointed to wake up to see blue skies replaced with dark grey almost black clouds and various shades of rain from pelting to mizzle. In fact I only saw two butterflies all day. The first was a Holly Blue being blown by in the briefest breaks in the rain while we were walking back to the car. The second was a female Large White a few moments later taking nectar while she could.



Llanachaeron 03-08-2016

The weather was improving throughout the day and so we all headed out to Llanachaeron. After a walk through the woods and lunch while the sun burnt off the cloud we wandered into the estate proper. Swallows were whizzing about and the odd White passed by overhead and then we walked through the gate and into the Walled Garden. A Peacock passed by and the odd Small Tort but the main pints of interest were the three species of Whites which thronged around the Lavender. After a dire first brood this was a much better showing.





After this we headed around the lake (noting a Chicken of the Woods?) and then the house. The girls like this part as they could try the Welsh cakes and little L loves pretending to be the washer woman. So I had a mooch around and found a few moths and a crazy legged spider and out the back a Meadow Brown which was quite willing to sit wings open wide - it must have gotten to that time of the year.





Once back home and refreshed from a brew I headed back out to the Lane and the hedges. I stopped briefly at the neighbours Buddleia where a pair of Red Admirals and a Small White fed. I headed up the Lane to where I was the day before and was soon onto a Hedgie and a Common Blue by reaching through the gaps of the fence to the Paddock.



I then made my way as if to head back but at the entrance to the cul-de-sac I carried onto the end of the road and checked out the tall hedge near the Post Box. Here the length of the hedge could, I thought, only support a few butterflies, one of which was a Small White. However there were several Hedgies even here and a couple of them were 'excessa'.





After the dismal day yesterday it was nice to get back into the butterflies...  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 30-Sep-16 09:42 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel i love the first shot of the Large White on the Pink , has you've guessed, I love the contrast with colours 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Oct-16 10:23 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I do try and catch the butterflies when they make a fashion faux pas 😊😊

October 2016

A little late but got there in the end...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Oct-16 10:21 AM GMT

I think it's great and I look forward to see which Butterfly you'll choose for the month Wurzel 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Oct-16 11:56 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Only two more to go and then I have to make next years! 😊😊

The Lane - Part 3 04-08-2016

Another day and another trip down the Lane but this time I had half an hour to spend so I headed towards the Post Box and then started down Rhw Goch. The Buddleia bushes bordering a driveway have yet to recover to their former glory and instead of a range of butterflies feeding it housed a party of House Sparrows. A few metres further along the verge and I'd reached another good area for Hedgies. In fact I found a gorgeous 'normal' female, no extra spots just lush vivid colours. Just up from her I stopped for a Green-veined White which was feeding on the Bramble flowers.



After this slight distraction I carried on determined to focus just on the Hedgies. This was actually harder than it seemed as they were present in good numbers along this stretch of hedge and the biggest problem I had was selecting which butterfly to focus my attentions on. I'd see a Hedgie and stalk ever closer only for one to be feeding in the Brambles and it would erupt in front of me and my original quarry would be spooked and I set off stalking once again. Occasionally a Hedgie riot would ensue and three would bowl along the hedge setting off others in a Mexican wave of squabbling and jostling. Somehow amongst all this action I managed to persevere and get photos of couple of individuals including one cracking male. It got me wishing that I'd started looking here a few days earlier and I might have encountered him looking much smarter.





As I was pondering the excessa male I spotted a female out in the open. As I approached I couldn't believe my luck as she was similarly marked to the male but was fresh out of the box and looking resplendent.



I headed back to the house, time almost up, in a bit of a dream, all those spots burnt onto my retina. I did make one brief stop for another excessa male and I think that I've encountered him before?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 06-Oct-16 09:56 AM GMT

You've certainly got some nicely marked Hedge Browns in your ( our! ) area. Now that your diary has crept into August I expect your next posting will contain some sickening, envy inducing shots of Brown Hairstreaks. That shot last year, of the open wing male was too much. 🍷 .

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 08-Oct-16 02:41 PM GMT

Just what I was I was thinking Trevor 😊 I've yet to see one 🍷🍷🍷 great gate Keeper's Wurzel, 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Oct-16 06:45 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I've still one more Posting from the trip to my Outlaws and then as you've guessed it's off to Shipton Bellinger for Brostreaks 😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 If they've been reported from up your way your chances of seeing them are getting better and better, if they're on your target list for next year good luck 😊  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Oct-16 10:48 PM GMT

The Lane - the final instalment 05-08-2016

My time at my Outlaws was coming to an end and as is usually the way the final days weather was pretty good with the day following set to be even better - when I'd be trapped in a car for the long drive back. So to make the most of it I headed out as soon as I was able to - which actually meant not until mid-afternoon as we had to make the obligatory trip to Newquay Beach. I was looking forward to this as a short walk along the beach should have produced a Wall or two. However I only saw three butterflies the whole time I was there - a lost looking Small Tort which was flying over the sandcastles and heading out to sea and a couple of Whites far too high up the crumbling cliff to identify. So I was quite glad to head home, not least because I was getting irritated by 'The Mission' but also because there was a cracking Buddleia in the car park which looked good for some butterflies.

Once back and refreshed with yet more tea I tried up the Lane proper, turning left at the end of the cul-de-sac. I first checked out the Buddleia belonging to the neighbour on the corner. It was a great little spot with four species scattered over the shrub. First spotted was a Peacock - well with those eyes staying hidden is never easy for this species then a Small White, Red Admiral and finishing up with a Small Tort.



After this I wound my way up the Lane, steeling myself to ignore the Hedgies until I reached my destination. On round the bend, past dog cottage and took another left down a farm track. The only butterfly I found here was a Small Tort and I had been hoping for at least a couple of Peacocks here. So I strolled back spying the odd Hedgie and White on the way but not stopping really. I didn't want to be too late back and I was worried that once I started counting Hedgie spots I might not make it back until well after dark! I did arrest my hike back at one point though. I was almost back, on the final stretch and a golden blur flitted along the hedge on my right. I watched it settle and the sun glistened off of it and it shone golden in the afternoon sun. I managed to get in really close and so was able to really appreciate the beautiful colours and the feeding dance of the Small Copper that had presented itself to me.





A great way to end the visit. Home tomorrow, I wonder what's happening at Shipton Bellinger?  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-Oct-16 10:50 AM GMT

Nice shots of the Small Copper Wurzel, it's always great to see them, they were bit scarce around here this year but I did manage one . 😊  
The Peacock was missing this year I only saw one in the garden all year which is worrying considering the amount that used to arrive , hope fully next year will be better. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 13-Oct-16 01:17 PM GMT

#### Goldie M wrote:

Nice shots of the Small Copper Wurzel, it's always great to see them

totally agree on that 😊 The stained glass Peacock is a beaut too 😊  
Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 13-Oct-16 05:08 PM GMT

Lovely stuff, Wurzel.  
I think I know what happened at Shipton Belinger 🇧🇧 .

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 13-Oct-16 06:54 PM GMT

Nice Coppers Wurzel, come to think of it I believe I've only seen 2 Coppers all year! At least one was an ab. I've almost caught up with you now I think my next diary post will have a Gatekeeper in it.

All the best

James

## Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 15-Oct-16 10:06 PM GMT

I'm also waiting expectantly for Shipton Bellinger, Wurzel... 😊😊 Somewhere else I missed out on this year.

That was indeed a lovely bright Copper to finish off your trip away, too. 😊

Dave

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Oct-16 10:30 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Coppers were a bit thin on the ground all over this year, hopefully they'll bounce back...

Cheers Philzoid 😊 I was chuffed with that Peacock 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Read on and you'll see for sure...

Cheers Rex 😊 I'm surging ahead now - Brostreaks soon 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 The Copper was indeed a little beaut 😊

Well as there seem to be a few people waiting I better get on with the Shipton Post...

Shipton Bellinger 07-08-2016

When I made my first trip to Shipton Bellinger last year I was still to head off on holiday and so I could enjoy my first foreign butterflies with the job done back home as it were. I worked so well that this year I tried the same thing. So having driven back from Wales and unpacked I headed out to Shipton almost immediately. I took both the girls with me to make sure that I had some Brownie pints stashed in...

All three of us set off down the main track and about half way along I felt myself switch from scanning for Vanessids and Whites to specifically looking for 'Brown and Orange'. Luckily it was still early enough in the season that the leaves weren't turning and so hopefully the Brostreaks should show against their background. It was all very quiet though with only the occasional Specklie breaking the monotony of the Meadow Browns and even the False Hairstreaks (Hedgies) were hard to find. We broke through the path and started across the field not having seen any Brostreaks at all which was slightly disconcerting as usually I can at least see a few along the main track - perhaps the collector from last year succeeded in wiping them out there? The girls ran on ahead and set up camp just off the main track where it cuts through the hotspot hedge and so I was free to wander. There was at least one other butterfly already present staring into the hedge and so I called out a hello and set to looking...

Almost immediately I found what I was hoping for...there low down was a male Brostreak and looking in very good shape. It was feeding on what looked like Cow Parsley and was at about waist height. I called across to the other butterfly that I'd found one and he replied that so had he and so after a while we swapped.





Shots taken we then started chatting and we'd bumped into each other before down at Alners Gorse. While we were talking another Brostreak landed in amongst the pair that we were surreptitiously keeping an eye on and so we started up photographing again before another intermission to chew some more fat.





Once again while we were talking another Brostreak caught my eye. This one however was slightly higher up in the foliage. Carefully stepping round the low plants and shrubs I managed to approach it without spooking it and then I watching as it tentatively started opening its wings. As the wings opened wider and wider it also gradually turned to its right until it stopped, wings as wide spread as could be and at a right angle to where it started from. It was a little beauty and possibly an aberrant as it lacked the light flashes on the fore wing that I'd seen before? We took it in turns taking a few shots, carefully backing out, waiting out turn and then carefully moving back into position. It stayed there for a good 10 minutes and we left it in peace.





After this I wondered what spectacle would be presented to us next? We went from definite quality to quantity with three males all feeding on adjacent plants and all within the same camera view. The smallest I seem to be able to get it down to was 2.39MB so I don't think I'll be able to post it until I 'downgrade it' but as well as the group shots we were able to admire each individual.





By now the girls were wanting to head back and sample the delights of the local park and so we said our goodbyes and headed back - going the long way of course! On the way there were plenty of Meadow Browns to keep us occupied as well the occasional Blue, Brown Argus and also a Small Copper. The Holly Blues were very much in evidence and it's certainly been a bumper year for them, although I still can't get my ideal male open wing shot - I'll need to ask Millard for some tips on Holly Blue Whispering.



When the girls were happily screaming, screeching and spinning around all over the place (which seems to be the norm behaviour wise at parks now) I headed to the back of the park to have a look along the little hedge there. On the way a Peacock did a fly by spooking a Holly Blue and I got onto both a Comma and a Red admiral. I had the full set with a Small Tort on the Buddleia on the way out of the park but all too soon we were in a sweltering car driving home.



Job done, I could head off to relax to the sun with the season wrapped up, my tally from last year equalled and some cracking Brostreaks shots to sort through on my return!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 15-Oct-16 10:51 PM GMT

Amazing shots of those male Brown Hairstreaks, Wurzel. I'll willingly swop you a few Holly Blues for one of those! 🍷🍷😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 15-Oct-16 11:06 PM GMT

You've done it again !. Open winged male Brown Hairstreaks ! 🍷  
Tempered with some closed wing females, at least we get those in Sussex.  
Count me in at Shipton next year. Any where near Great Cheverell ?.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 15-Oct-16 11:33 PM GMT

Well done with those Brownies 🐛 . I was there a week after you and found a similarly unmarked male, somewhat more worn than yours, I wonder if it was the same animal?

### Re: Wurzel

by peterc, 16-Oct-16 09:29 AM GMT

Some stunning Brown Hairstreak images you have there, Wurzel. Well worth waiting for

ATB

Peter

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-Oct-16 04:53 PM GMT

I'm green with envy Wurzel 🐛🐛🐛 Hope I see some B HS next year at Gait Barrow, I'll not wait till then , hope fully I'll see some sooner. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 18-Oct-16 07:04 PM GMT

Loving those Brown Hairstreaks Wurzel, particularly the open wing male shots 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Oct-16 10:06 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 It's a deal – now how do we get the butterflies to comply? 😊😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I would say that Shipton is about 25 minutes away from Salisbury and so probably about 40 minutes from Great Cheverel 😊 It could be more if you get stuck behind a Tractor, Bus, Sunday driver or Tank – all of which are possible round this way 😊😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It could well have been the same unmarked individual if it was only a week latter, Shipton is a great site for Brostreaks

Cheers Peter 😊 I was chuffed with the selection available 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I'm sure you'll get onto your Brostreaks next year 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Shipton certainly seems to deliver when it comes to males and open wings shots! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 22-Oct-16 11:11 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

You forgot Horse box, can you imagine one of those when the Emperor is on the wing ! 😊

Or the Range Rover towing a Rice trailer at the weekend, when on Monday he'll be tailgating you 😊 .

Anyway, it's been a wonderful season,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Oct-16 11:42 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I forgot about those 😊😊

Martin Down 17-08-2016

It was over a week later that I got out again having had a little sojourn in Lisbon. When I did I was tempted to head back to Shipton hopefully for some more Brostreaks. But as I was getting my gear together to head out I stopped, checked the App on my iPod and noticed that I'd left it on 'Clouded Yellow'...a few minutes later minutes later I realised that my species count for the year was at 48, equal highest and a number that I can't seem to get past. So instead I chanced my arm and set out for Martin Down instead as this seems to be the most regular site for Clouded Yellow that I know.

I parked at the Sillen's Lane end, jumped out the car and set off down the path towards the hotspot where the path transects Bokerley Ditch. The weathermen, radio presenters etc had all pronounced that it was 'hot' which was a bit of a surprise to me as it just felt 'nice' rather than scorching, mind you I had just gotten used to 35 °C but even so my rapid progress meant that I'd worked up a bit of a sweat on the route march to the hotspot. There had been a few Golden Skippers lingering, plenty of Meadow Browns cutting across the path and a Comma, two or three Common Blues and a Specklie on the way and try as I might all the Whites remained just that and didn't morph into a Yellow.

Once at the hotspot I was pleased to see it thriving with activity and living up to my expectations. It was hard to keep track of the numbers of species as they were all very active and didn't sit still long enough for counting let alone photographing. It made a welcome change both because of the paucity of butterflies this year at several sites and also after a very lean holiday butterfly wise in Lisbon. Hanging around this area were some beautifully fresh

Adonis, ghostly Chalkhills, belligerent BAs, a few Common Blues, Brimstone, Small Copper, aged Dark Green Frits as well as an Essex Skipper, Small and Large Whites, a Small Heath and Hedge and Meadow Browns. It was brilliant!





In amongst all this a couple of gents ambled in and we got to talking just as a Clouded Yellow did a fly-by taking my total to 49 – my best ever year! I was doubly chuffed as breaking past 48 species was one of my personal targets for this year. After a brief chat and a bit of info swapping I headed off Northwards along Ditch in the hope of catching up with the Cloudy (which if memory serves me correctly is the same (mis)pronunciation as 'Black Lion' in Welsh...sorry wee digression there to see if you're paying attention and also my mind wandering and reminiscing). About 50 metres along the ditch it appears bombing along the bottom of the ditch and luckily heading in the same direction as me. I started to run so that I could keep it in sight but once or twice it seemed to hit the turbo and would be gone. I'd keep running and then it would take off having taken a quick refuel break of all of 30 seconds. I managed a couple of the most rubbish record shots from distance as a precaution as I didn't think that I would be able to get anything more...

And then as so often happens my luck changed and the butterfly took off again, flew in a massive arc and started back towards me and this time at a more leisurely pace. It would stop frequently on this return leg and it would linger for longer which was great news for me. As I could watch it fly, watch it land and then cautiously approach, clicking away all the time until I was finally able to get in really close. It was almost as if it was doing a recce on that initial long fast flight and having noted all the decent nectar sources it was now taking advantage of them. This idea seemed more and more a true reflection of its behaviour because it would now fly more slowly but more directly from one flower to the next.





Shots in the bag, target met and strolled back to the car almost oblivious of the other butterflies as the yellow had been burnt onto my retinas.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 23-Oct-16 07:40 AM GMT

It's amazing that Cloudies seem to use the same hot spots, year on year, when they visit the UK. I know of three sites in Sussex, and all three were well populated this year. Outside of these areas I have not seen a single one.

Glad you got to see one,  
Trevor.

PS. I'm off to Wurzeleland once I've typed this. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-Oct-16 09:39 AM GMT

Glad you beat your target Wurzel, 😊 I can't seem to get beyond 38 species a year 😊 It's a case of Butterflies I captured one year I seem to miss the next 😊 One year I hope to capture them all, well at least over 40 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 23-Oct-16 03:09 PM GMT

I managed 50 species this year 😊. just thought I'd mention that small detail 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 23-Oct-16 04:37 PM GMT

Great going for a less than vintage year Wurzel! after reading about your victory I realised that I hadn't even bothered to tally up my species this year, probably because I was didn't have a very good season. So I decided to tally em up to see if I'd done as badly as I'd thought. Much to my surprise I managed see 37 species all within the confines of Sussex, in fact all within a 35 mile radius! A much better result than I'd imagined. not far off the 40 species I saw in 2015.

Smashing Brostreak photos btw.

ATB

James

## Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 25-Oct-16 10:18 PM GMT

Well done, Wurzel – 49 is the same as my tally and I know how hard it is to get there.. Are you sure you haven't got another one hidden up your sleeve? 😊 I like the first Adonis pic as well...

Dave

## Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 26-Oct-16 12:03 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Just catching up with your antics. That Male Brown Hairstreak is a beauty, it almost looks like a different species 😊. Glad you got your Cloudy and number 49.

As Trevor says they always seem to return to the same spots, I have had them in the same spot at Gosport 3 out of the last 4 years 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 28-Oct-16 01:40 PM GMT

Great report Wurzel and a perfect summing up of a Cloudies flight behaviour: – fast movers but they do need to refuel ..thankfully 😊. Martin Down had done well for me in the past but Sheepleas Nr. Guildford is turning into my reliable local hotspot 😊.

Great season' total too 😊. I managed 47 but missed out on notable species that I might've got with a bit more effort : – White-letter Hairstreak; Wall and Lulworth Skipper (all seen last year). A 50 species total looks to be in reach ...one of these days 😊

Phil

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Nov-16 11:20 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I hope Wurzel-land was good 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I know what you mean – I was stuck on 48 for about three years and this year I managed to get all three of the species that had let me down in the past.

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Congrats on 50...that's my next target to beat 😊

Cheers Rex 😊 As you said 'less than a vintage year' in fact at times it was pretty dire – so I was doubly pleased with my tally. Congrats on yours – within such a small area that it a cracking tally! 😊😊

Cheers Dave 😊 If only...then I could get to the elusive 50 😊 Maybe I'll find a LTB or geranium Bronze in the veg section of the supermarket 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 How do they do that I wonder – is it genetic memory? 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 It was the Wood Whites and Glanvilles that let me get to my total. I reckon 50 is definitely do-able but only with plenty of planning. Unfortunately I don't get holidays at the right time of year – a 3 week period in late June would be ideal 😊

November 2016



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 02-Nov-16 08:08 PM GMT

Great report and photos from Martin Down Wurzel, a site I have never been to. Jealous of your Adonis Blues and Clouded Yellows, both species I missed out on this year, mainly because I didn't go further south than the midlands until our week in Cornwall in early September.

I have managed 50 species a couple of times but my tally this year is well down with a final count of 41 species...but that did include my number 58 which was my main target for this year 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Nov-16 11:11 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 Martin Down is definitely worth a visit as there is such a wide variety of species on offer. I think my target next year is to see a 'lifer' so my tally might drop 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Nov-16 05:59 PM GMT

Shipton Bellinger 18-08-2016

After the last visit to Shipton I left on this morning with high hopes of finding a nice and fresh female. I don't know why but contrary to what various texts say I seem to have more luck with open wings males the female – would today be different?

I set off up the path and it was relatively quiet and I didn't see a single Brostreak all the way along the track. There were good numbers of Specklie13s, lining the path almost, amongst the Meadow Browns and the odd White. Surprisingly though I didn't see any Hedge Browns/False Brostreaks? Once the path opened up at the field the Specklies were swapped for Blues (including a Brown Blue) and even the odd brown Argus – a butterfly that has had a terrible season in 2016. Before I knew it I was at the Hedge Hotspot and so again I switched observation mode from ground based to tree scanning. It paid off with sightings of two male Brostreaks. Both were on the other side of the Brambles and were quite distant. I only had one option now – that was sitting and waiting to see if they'd come and closer. At the same time I pressed myself against the wall of thorns so I could get as close in as possible without trampled or crushing the foliage. It was quite uncomfortable but luckily there was a 'window' in amongst the Brambles which I could fit my lens through and arms through and so when one did finally move within range I was able to get a few shots. Even more fortuitously it moved even closer and rested with wings open – showing a much more normal pair of orange markings on the fore wings.





I then carefully extracted myself from various thorns and gently backed away from the wall of Brambles pleased that my discomfiture had yielded good results. I then made my up and down the Hedge a few times but apart from Holly Blues and Meadow Browns all was quiet here. I moved onto another patch of hedge right alongside the road where I have had success previously and set about scanning. A Hedge Brown finally appeared and there were plenty of Meadow Browns and a few Common Blues about. Something really orange caught my eye and so I approached cautiously. After the honey like appearance of the males the female seemed to be glowing like a beacon. She remained quite aloof and high up but with a bit of straining of the arms with the camera at the end I was able to get a couple of shots. As well as staying out of the way she didn't hang around either and set off up and over the hedge - I couldn't follow her but had my fingers crossed that she would land and lay eggs on the other side of the road and hence in Wiltshire.



Chuffed and running out of time I made my way back very directly for me - with only the occasional stop for the odd shot when it easily presented itself.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Nov-16 10:19 AM GMT

Shipton Bellinger 23-08-2016

What with one thing and another I didn't get out again properly for another 5 days but it was shaping up to be a good day as it was to be the annual meet at Shipton with Philzoid. Conditions looked favourable with a warm and sunny day ahead of us and favourable reports from the site recently. So after the first meet in the Central car park in Salisbury we headed off into the wilds of Wiltshire and Hampshire to Shipton Bellinger.

Once we arrived we chatted as we made our way up the hill and it was all pretty quiet. There were no Brostrecks waiting for along the way although there was a Small Tort, a few Specklies and good numbers of Holly Blues. The quietness continued all the way along the duel track with not a single sighting of Brostrecks. In previous years we've encountered them all the way along here with 6 sightings before we've even gotten to the hotspot but this year nowt. It seems that the Japanese collector from 2015 had done some serious damage in 2016. 😞😞

Once at the Hotspot however our hopes rose and there were Brown Argus and Blues fluttering around amongst the Meadow Browns and Holly Blues up

in the bushes. There were one or two others around further along but we started checking all the usual inlets, bays and breaks amongst the cover where Brownies have hung out in the past. However it was hard work and the bushes were all looking very worn and in places depressingly trampled. Eventually our waiting, scanning and chatting paid off and a female flew down from on high and landed very briefly on a Bramble leaf. Unfortunately she then walked into the shade and was partially hidden from view.



Slightly further on where I'd previously found my two males I came across a male. It was in such poor nick I didn't know if it really was a Brostreak at first. I went through a range of species first – Hedge Brown, small Meadow Brown and because of the damage to the wings Small Copper; before edging close enough to make out the very faded livery and coming to the correct identification.



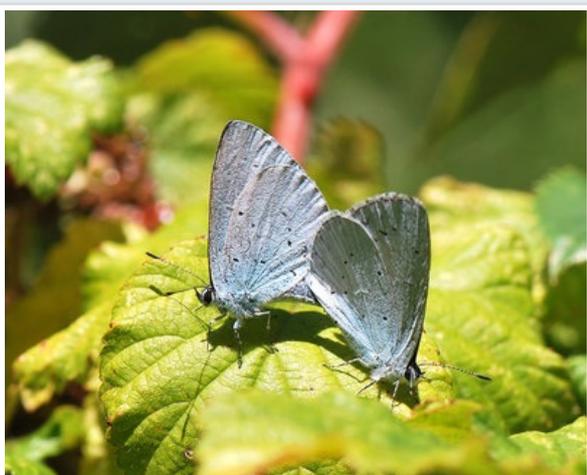
With two Brostreaks in the bag as it were and all the girls settled down in their camp, we carried on working our way along the hedge. Along the way we met the same bloke from Collard Hill and had a bit of a chat and a catch up. From there we tried round the back and the small area alongside the roadside. Once again there were good numbers of Common Blue and Whites, the odd Brown Argus and even an aged Hedge but try as we might we couldn't locate any more Brostreaks.





Once we were back from our circuit the girls went on back ahead and we potted along in our own time. On the way we walked through the hedge tunnel and encountered a failed menage a trois before finding a more standard mating pair of Holly Blues





Once the girls had joined us back at the cars (they'd gotten lost on the way back) we stopped for a much needed drink on the way to Duke site and then once there promptly set about looking for more species to add to the days tally. Again it was really quiet with none of the Adonis or Chalkhills I was hoping for. We came across another mating pair this time Common Blues and there were plenty of Meadow Browns and Small Heath but not the hoped for Wall or Cloudy and no Small Copper either.



It had been a great day company wise, we'd found and photographed our quarry but it felt like a bit of an anti-climax to the season. Perhaps we'd left it too late? Oh well lesson learned for next season – get on and get to Shipton early!

Have a good

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by jenks, 10-Nov-16 03:02 PM GMT

Catching up on your posts and photos from the last couple of months ( a joy to read and to view, as always).

I visited Shipton Bellinger on 6 August this year and saw 4 Brostreaks, all males. That same morning a group from Hampshire Butterfly group were also there but they seemed to be doing far more talking than searching for or looking at ! Just as well butterflies, unlike birds, dont get put off by noise. Re your musings, whether the Brostreaks were earlier or fewer in number here than in previous years I wouldn't like to speculate . Also seen there were Meadow Brown, Hedge Brown, Red Admiral, Peacock, Comma, Small, Large and Green veined White, Brimstone, Holly Blue and Speckled Wood so a good morning for me.

The welsh for Black Lion is Llew Ddu ( pronounced llow thee ) so your (mis) pronunciation of Cloudy is pretty close ! The welsh name Llewellyn means lion-hearted. That ends my lesson for the day ! I do hope you`re not teaching your young girls about menage a trois ?

Regards, Jenks.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 10-Nov-16 04:11 PM GMT

Nice mating pairs there, Wurzel. I expect Dave ( millerd ) will be sending you some mrgreens when he sees the Holly Blue pairing. Before he does here's one from me 🍷

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-Nov-16 12:55 PM GMT

Just catching up on posts Wurzel, what fantastic shots you got of the Holly Blue, I've never seen a mating pair before 😊  
Weather here cold! we just missed the Snow but we certainly didn't miss the frosts, hope fully it will benefit the BF for next year if it keeps up. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 11-Nov-16 05:33 PM GMT

You really made the most of Shipton this year Wurzel, great stuff 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 11-Nov-16 09:53 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel. I have to agree that it would've been a better day had we seen more of our Target Brostreaks, but the mating Holly Blues did make up for that to a large degree 😊. Also, your cracking picture of the barely recognisable male Brostreak reminds me you might have another similar picture lurking in the back pages of your diary, taken in 2014 as we made our way along the track up to the hot-spot. How about using it to start a pictures thread of 'battered but alive butterflies' ? (if it hasn't been done already) although I vaguely remember you having a photo of a Small Tort "Stumpy" I

think? which would take some beating 😬.

I cannot remember if you saw the red Grasshopper at the Duke site before you had to leave? For me it was one of the highlights on a day that was disappointedly lacking in butterflies (although I did see one male Adonis), .... so I hope you don't mind me posting this on your PD.



The species may be *Chlorthippus parallelus* but ID would be appreciated.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Nov-16 08:41 PM GMT

Cheers Jenks 😊 Thanks for the Welsh lesson, it's been a few years since I've had to use anything more than Diloch! 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 It was nice to catch up with this species in cop to add to my "Butterflies Havin' in!" book 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 A good hard winter should be great for butterflies – it will knock off the parasites and pathogens, we need more cold weather 😊 But then a good spring!

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Shipton is one of those sites that it pays to visit a few times at least!

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Ah Stumpy...that takes me back 😊 It was a great day despite the lack of butterflies, great shot of the Grasshopper by the way 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 20-Nov-16 01:52 PM GMT

I'm a bit late Wurzel but those are some fantastic Holly Blue action shots there! I don't think I've ever seen mating Hollies before. Almost finished my diary for the year, it's been an odd one, hopefully next year will be an improvement with what appears to be a colder winter – some good weather during the spring would be nice.

ATB

James

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 21-Nov-16 07:12 PM GMT

**Butterflysaurus rex wrote:**

... I don't think I've ever seen mating Hollies before...

James

Nor me. Great shots Wurzel 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Nov-16 09:20 AM GMT

Cheers Rex 😊 I agree – cold now, mild spring, warm and dry summer – great 2017, fingers crossed 😊 I've even sent a letter to Father Christmas 😊  
Cheers Neil 😊 It was a first for me too 😊  
Martin Down 24-08-2016

It was nice to take a break from prep work for the year ahead and make my way over to Martin Down to have a brief break. With the end of the holiday looming I looked ahead and realised that I was going to be pretty busy once I was back at work. So I decided to head towards Martin Down for two reasons:

- a. – make the most of the good weather
- b. – make the most of my time remaining

I started by walking to Bokerley from the Sillen's Lane end car park. On the way I was entertained by a Comma and a few Specklies skimming along the hedge and flitting in and out every now and again. There were also the usual Blues and Whites on the way and they were joined by plenty of Meadow Browns which seemed to abound as well as a single Peacock.

The hollow was heaving and it was great to see it so full of butterflies after a pretty dismal year for most species. Because of this I just pootled around and enjoyed what I saw. There were Common Blues and Brown Argus, Chalkhills looking like ghosts of butterflies and Adonis Blues looking resplendent and more numerous than their cousins even including a mating pair. It was a joy to behold.



Further up on the grass land I scanned around hoping to find another Cloudy or two but the only yellows I could find were Brimstones. The males would stop and were much more sociable than those around during the spring. Occasionally I could get in just the right position so that they were lit from behind. Then the overlap of the wings and the body would shine through like a shadow theatre image.



I headed on up the hill to the accompaniment of more Meadow Browns and also a Small Tort. As well as these species there were Blues on the way as I passed through the hollow again it would have been rude not to have stopped...





Eventually right at the top I realised that I was running out of time and so I quickly walked back, cutting across the side of the Down and checking the bottom of the hill with no luck for Silver Spotted Skippers. It was a great afternoon just enjoying what I saw, so much so in fact that I had barely any photos but plenty of great images burned into my memory.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-Nov-16 05:00 PM GMT

Oh the joys of Summer Wurzel! roll on on, 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Nov-16 10:59 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully it doesn't come too soon – we need a nice cold period it'll do the butterflies good, so long as we get a 'proper' Spring 😊

Have a goodun

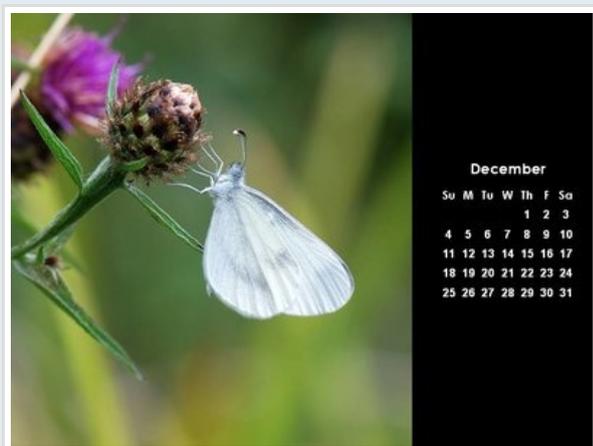
Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Dec-16 01:42 PM GMT

December 2016

Finally some cold weather – it'll do the butterflies good so I hope that it lasts for long enough but not too long...never happy are we 😊😂 I better start on next years calander...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Dec-16 06:31 PM GMT

That's a great photo of the WW Wurzel 😊 I'm looking forward to next years calendar. Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Dec-16 06:36 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I better got on and start it, I've only got three and a half weeks to get it sorted out 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 06-Dec-16 07:19 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Good to meet you yesterday, thanks for coming along. I am now a little more confident of finding some of the more exotic Wiltshire sites.

Even the immediate area around Great Cheverell has some interesting looking sites.

Best wishes,  
Trevor.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Dec-16 10:28 PM GMT

No worries Trevor 😊 Just give me a shout nearer the time and I'll dig out my trusty OS Map 😊 You're right about the area around Great Cheverell I'm certain it'll hold some cracking butterflies.

The Devenish 29-08-2016

After what felt like an age but was really only a few days I managed to head back out for some proper butterflying – not just keeping my eyes open when out and about. The Devenish had been slightly disappointing this year with very little in Spring and also very few Chalkhills during the summer so I was hoping for a late showing to bring me back round to this site. So I headed out hoping to find some late summer Blues.

I found my first butterfly pretty quickly and it was the usual suspect in the usual place – a Specklie guarding the gate at the tunnel of trees that leads to Orchid Meadow. Unlike in the Spring this one was amicable enough to hang around and pose for a few photos as I made my way down the tunnel. Once I broke out and climbed over the gate on the other side of the tree tunnel I scanned around to work out where to head first. Straight away I could see a few whites fluttering about so I set up camp near a likely looking set of flowers and waited for them to flutter in my direction and eventually a couple did just that.



After this I made my way up to the Down side proper. There were butterflies still around and the second brood Adonis seemed to be putting in a much better showing than the 'spring' brood. The first male that I came across featured an extra 'cell spot' if that's what it's called. Also here were another couple of Adonis, a couple of Common Blues and a nice Brown Argus. I skirted my way along the side of the down gradually working up and across diagonally, walking on the sides of my feet occasionally or trying to stick to the rabbit trails. Eventually after flushing a few tired looking Meadow Browns and the odd white I'd reached the far side of the reserve. There's a ditch running down the Down here on the other side of which is the treeline which demarcates the boundary. Checking in here is always worthwhile and so it was again today with yet a Brown Argus (a male?) and another which was definitely female as it attempted to lay.





I then wandered about the top hoping for a Clouded Yellow as I've seen them here before but the only white available was a tired Small and so I started to work my way back to the other side of the Down when I was stopped in my tracks. A tiny sliver flash had crossed the path of my vision, normally this would register as 'brown Argus' but there was something different about this one, it was much more silver if that makes sense? When I approached it I could see that it was a Brown Argus but a nice ab (Snellini or some such?) with the black spot on the forewing ringed in white and the underside was quite heavily bedecked in white – much more so than usual it appeared. I spent some time watching it bumble around, took a few shots and then stood back and enjoyed it for about five minutes or so.





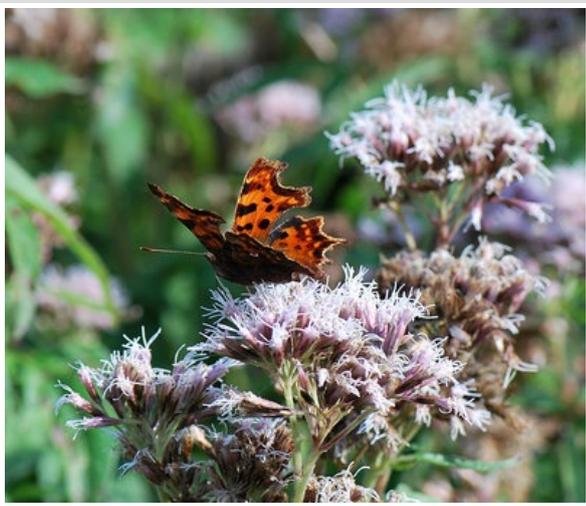
Once there I wandered about the short, closely grazed turf which was springy underfoot but there were only a couple of Adonis about here – both females. So I thought it best to check them out as I'd already encountered two abs over the visit. Sure enough one of them was seriously spotted on the underside with a line of spots running from the cells spot vertically up to meet the usual arc of marginal spotting. She was actually in very fine, almost 'mint condish' and so I battled the strong breeze blowing over the top of the down to get some shots. It wasn't easy; I'd approach stealthily, line up the shot and then the wind would pick up and the butterfly that had been perfectly posed on the flower head would start rocking forward and backward like one of those Woodpecker-esque pencil toppers (the ones that 'peck' their way down the pencil?). After clicking away for what felt like an age I moved on hoping that there were at least a couple of good shots on the card.





I then spent some time down in the Orchid Meadow with the three species of Whites, 2 Red Admirals and yet another Brown Argus. They've had a terrible season but might just be rallying now, fingers crossed. The Red Admirals kept out of the range of my lens - either high up a tree or too far back in the tall flowers but a Comma was a bit more accommodating, but not that much more.





After saying good bye to the Speckle I headed home thinking that there may be the possibility of maybe one last trip here this year?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Lee Hurrell, 08-Dec-16 10:41 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

Sure enough one of them was seriously spotted on the underside with a line of spots running from the cells spot vertically up to meet the usual arc of marginal spotting

What a stunning underside! Lovely, Wurze.

Best wishes,

Lee

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Dec-16 03:06 PM GMT

Really great shots Wurzel, they bring the Summer time back 😊

I love the ab, I don't think I'd have recognised the difference in the Butterfly, much more to learn obviously 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Dec-16 11:08 PM GMT

Cheers Lee 😊 It was a good afternoon for abs with three in the space of 20 minutes 😊 This site seems to have more than it's fair share of aberrants 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I know what you mean about having more to learn – a reckon I might just about know everything about butterflies if I could last another 3–400 years (and then that would only be British species 😊) but even with a super healthy diet and exercise I can't see that happening 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 14-Dec-16 09:06 PM GMT

Just catching up with your diary again Wurzel...that second Green-veined White photo is a cracker 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Dec-16 06:11 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 Sometimes they let you get in so close, but then on other occasions you can't get within a mile of them 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Dec-16 11:24 PM GMT

Mottisfont 30-08-2016

I was really settling into 'relax' mode having reached one of my targets for 2016 and seen the most butterflies ever in a year when I made a visit to Mottisfont in late summer with my family. Our first port of call was the Walled Garden where the girls ran round, my wife enjoyed the warm sunshine and I mooched about the Lavender borders. The Whites were numerous with three species present but for some reason they behaved more like the Spring forms – racing around, nectaring briefly and never stopping either long enough or close enough for any decent photography. In the end I contented myself with locating both Common Blue (3 males) and my first ever Brown Argus in this part of the site. After an appalling first (and second?) brood it was heartening to see yet another Brown Argus bolstering the later brood.

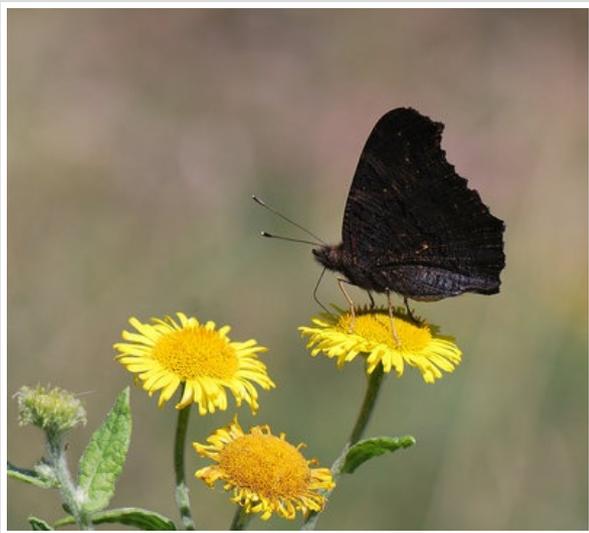




From here we moved onto the Parkland, a bit more adroitly than normal due to the new rules prohibiting picnics at the Walled Garden. After a Specklie and Emperor Dragon joined us for lunch I was left to my own devices for a bit so I set to mooching again. I checked out more Lavender but this time the thin strips running perpendicular to the house. In previous years I've been lucky enough to find a Cloudy in amongst the Whites but no such luck today. Instead there was a Small Tort sticking out like a sore thumb.



From here we followed the usual route - ice cream, look in the crypt, feed the fish, cross the bridge and wind our way to the 'mud play area/climbing' area. Again there were a couple of Meadow Browns, assorted Whites and the odd Specklie but these all stood out less amongst the Fleabane than the solitary Peacock. It was a right cracker, even if it did refuse to open its wings fully for me.



And so eventually we made our way home - my wife nicely relaxed, the girls tired, happy and with damp and muddy feet and myself contented after an easy day butterflying.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 22-Dec-16 06:52 AM GMT

Lovely shot of the Small Tortoiseshell on Lavender, nice background hue.  
Pity the Butterfly has some damage.

Have a great Christmas, 😊

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 22-Dec-16 02:50 PM GMT

Love the Peacock Wurzels, we saw very few this year, hope fully next year will be better for them. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Dec-16 09:51 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I was chuffed with that shot even if the wings were a bit ragged - still it's a natural pose 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Peacocks did seem less common this year, hopefully just a blip 😊

Also - Have a Fantastic Christmas one and all

Have a goodun

## Re: Wurzel

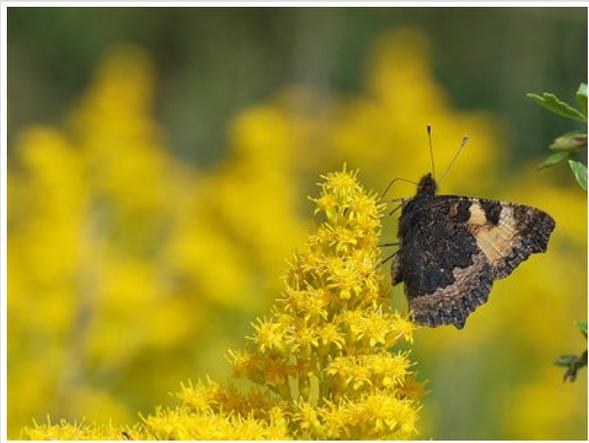
by Wurzel, 30-Dec-16 11:07 PM GMT

Larkhill 06-09-2016

Changes to the timing of the school day have meant that my stop-offs are going to be harder to do. I start earlier so my morning stop-off may be quieter as the butterflies mightn't have come out of roost and in the afternoon I can be back early enough to pick little L up from school. Hence I've not made nearly as many stop-offs; something which I remedied today.

I gave myself a full 15 minutes to make up for all those weeks when I've been unable to stop previously. There didn't seem to be a lot going on either of the paths so I concentrated my efforts on the patch of Golden Rod. It's probably about 4 metres round so there was a lot of frustrated pleading from me to the butterflies; "just come a bit closer"; "no don't land there" etc. They must have been listening as eventually I was able to get shots of all five species present on the bush.

There were 9 Small Torts which kept moving around and so were very difficult to count. Also they'd flutter further into the patch and disappear from view once they'd settled. Nine is actually the best estimate and the lowest count that I could be sure of.



A single Meadow Brown stayed a bit too far back but the Red Admiral behaved much more like a tease - fluttering into range and then moving away again before I could fire off any shots. It must have tired or found some good nectar because after a while it settled just long enough for me to get a couple of shots off.



I then turned my attention to the whites and as luck would have it both Small and Green-veined stopped for long enough and close enough for a few photos.



Job done I headed home wondering when I'd be able to stop again.  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 31-Dec-16 11:44 AM GMT

Love the shot of the small tort Wurzel, in close up it seems to have some pollen from the flowers on it, lovely!

Have a great New Year Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by MikeOxon, 31-Dec-16 07:22 PM GMT

It's always nice to dip into your diary for a look back to glorious summer days! From your recent comment in Goldie's diary, I assume you have a 'thing' about hedges 😊 I'm not too sure about 'hedge sparrow', though, since the bird is not really a 'sparrow' at all and has a beautiful song that no sparrow could aspire to.

Mike