

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Jan-17 06:34 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 It was possibly using the pollen as foundation? 😊 Happy New Year to you.
Cheers Mike 😊 I think Hedge Sparrow is a local name, mind you I also grew up knowing that a Pied Wagtail was actually a 'Polly Dishwasher' 🤪 – how it got that name I don't know 😊 Happy New year to you.

Happy New Year!

Let's hope that 2017 brings with it a period of cold weather lasting into early February and then a warm spring before a great summer and autumn, fingers crossed...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Jan-17 04:26 PM GMT

It's certainly cold here Wurzel, deep frost last night but a lovely cold day today with sunshine, love it. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Jan-17 10:24 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully it'll do the butterflies the power of good – so long as come the spring it doesn't hang around like last year...

January 2017



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 06-Jan-17 09:34 AM GMT

That Pearl AB. certainly helped to boost the petrol companies profits last year.
With people from all over travelling to photograph it. I didn't 😊 .
Still we may get one at Abbot's wood one day.

At least the daylight hours are on the mend now !. 😊

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Jan-17 06:11 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 You never know if the variation was genetic the butterfly from last year could have passed on the genes responsible and there could be one or two more this year – fingers crossed 😊 Yep the nights are starting to draw out now 😊

Larkhill 07-09-2016

I reasoned that this was to be my last stop-off of the year and so I was hoping to go out with a bang – plenty of Red Admirals on the Golden Rod or perhaps my first Larkhill Cloudy? As it was when I pulled up in the car park it was all very disappointing. The Golden Rod was becoming more and more bereft of flowers and was totally bare of butterflies. A quick scan along the Westbound path didn't yield anything either. I strolled back to the car slightly annoyed that here I was with time to spare and there were no butterflies. Just as I started cursing a butterfly flew across the path and dived down into the long grass around the base of a shrub. I thought it must be a Meadow Brown by it's behaviour so I was surprised to find a Speckle covering in the bushes. It's not one of the usual species that I find here so I was actually quite pleased to see it.



It spurred me on and so I tried up the Northbound path where a Red Admiral nipped off the Michaelmas Daisies as I approached. On the way back another Larkhill oddity landed and briefly posed for shots – a Comma. Again not something I'm used to seeing at this site. Time was ticking away and so I had to make a move for home.



The stop-off today kinda summed up the year – despite some highlights generally disappointing and so instead of the year here ending with a bang it finished more with a resigned sigh...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Jan-17 09:52 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I've been to Gait Barrow each year since I saw the White SPBF ab with no luck 😊 the Lancs BC say it was caused by the severe Winter we had in 2012, I suppose the same thing happened with your ab (different weather issues causing this to happen) I did wonder at the time if this could be passed on but was told , they didn't think so but that a cold Winter again might cause this to happen once more, I've been waiting for another bitter cold Winter ever since. 😊

By the way my Nephew's were here over the New Year and decided for me that I should have the Butterfly in my posts, yes! I've got bossy Nephew's has well has Grandson's 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Jan-17 11:36 PM GMT

So if yours was caused by the cold and it got lighter the one at Bentley must have been caused by heat as it was darker. Mind you there is still part of me hoping that it isn't caused by heat shock but is genetic and then there could be more this year! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 14-Jan-17 01:00 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I've looked up what was said about the WSPF and it said, it's caused by Extreme Temp's fluctuation's in the pupa stage, I hope you see your ab again, I wouldn't mind seeing it either 😊 let's hope it's a genetic thing, it was great that other's enjoyed it has well. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Jan-17 10:24 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Fingers crossed 😊

Martin Down 11-09-2016

Somehow or other I managed to get all the usual chores done and dusted and so we had an afternoon free. I tentatively suggested an afternoon trip to Martin Down which was accepted and so off we went. We parked at the Blandford Road side and wandered to the Butts. Thought there might be some odds and sods around so I prepped my camera and started to keep a look out.

Once at the Butts the girls climbed up and we set up camp at the bottom. This was a little microhabitat with the 'field' of very thin turf protected by a screen of shrubs on three sides. There were the odd patches of cut turf where the exposed chalk dazzlingly reflecting the autumnal sun which was surprisingly warm. While the snacks went round and the coffee cooled I had a little pootle about noting both a tired Common Blue and Brown Argus. Heading back to see if the coffee was ready I almost stood on a beautifully fresh female Adonis. She fluttered around us the whole time that I had my coffee and then once refreshed she led me off to explore again.



In amongst good numbers of Blues (Common, Adonis and Brown Argus) the odd Meadow Brown 'lumbered' by, I saw a tired Small Heath but these were quickly joined by an absolutely cracking Painted Lady. It seemed very jumpy at first but eventually calmed down so that I could approach and get some decent shots. So close that once or twice I managed to fill the frame.



After that I spent some time just enjoying the various different butterflies and seeing what I could. Just mooching around I picked up another Small Heath, Large and Small Whites and 2 Cloudies. The first settled half way up the side of the Butt but only just long enough for me to climb up and fire off 2 or 3 record shots. The second was really vivid but didn't stop, it just flew by really strongly and left an impression of pure mustard floating across my retina.



After this yellow interlude I settled back own again to the Whites and Blues. Most, if not all, were on the tired looking side and apart from the vivacious Lady and the awesome Cloudy there was a definite feel that the season was drawing to a close...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 21-Jan-17 11:04 PM GMT

That's a post to warm the cockles on this bitterly cold weekend 😊. Thanks Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 21-Jan-17 11:19 PM GMT

That certainly is a gorgeous Painted Lady.
I will award it my first mrgreen of the year. 🍀

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 22-Jan-17 09:50 AM GMT

Fantastic shots to see at this time of year Wurzel,
It won't be long now before we're venturing fourth again, in the best day we've had so far (sunny and not too bitter for a walk) I went out into the garden just to check up on things and the Daff's are on their way but best of all snuggled in the side garden was an handful of Snow Drops with others fighting through, Spring isn't far a way. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Jan-17 06:38 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Only a few more posts left from 2016 😊 Mind you perhaps by then I might have started 2017 😊
Cheers Trevor 😊 I'm honoured 😊
Cheers Goldie 😊 Not long to go and after this cold snap it's shaping up nicely 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Jan-17 11:29 PM GMT

Southampton University 15-09-2016

As I was going to be welcoming a PGCE student come October I had to attend an Introduction Course at Southampton University. As the weather was still warm and sunny I took my camera along for the walk from the car park. I was glad that I did as the walk there was through parkland with large, old Oaks and Bramble bushes. It was a bit of a way to the lecture hall so I only stopped twice briefly -both times for a Speckle. The first was up high and seemed slightly tired and worn whereas the second was down low in the grass and looked resplendent.



During the course of the day various Whites fluttered by outside so I was looking forward to the return journey when I'd have a bit more time. Apart from a single fly-by White it seemed that all the butterflies had been replaced by Dragonflies which were making the most of the afternoon sun and the various perches from which to sally forth.





More unfortunate still I found out that I was having a Placement 1 student so I there would be no need to make a return visit around May/June time. A pity as the parkland seemed good for a range for Browns and Blues and with all those Oaks around there would surely be Purple Hairstreaks a plenty. Oh well...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Jan-17 10:50 PM GMT

February 2017

I thought I'd get a post done early for once 😊

This could be the month when it all starts...that is unless the Arctic Blast hits next week...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 01-Feb-17 07:06 PM GMT

I think a February Orange Tip might be stretching optimism a bit. But I share your desire for a few Butterfly sightings this month.

Best of luck,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Feb-17 11:19 PM GMT

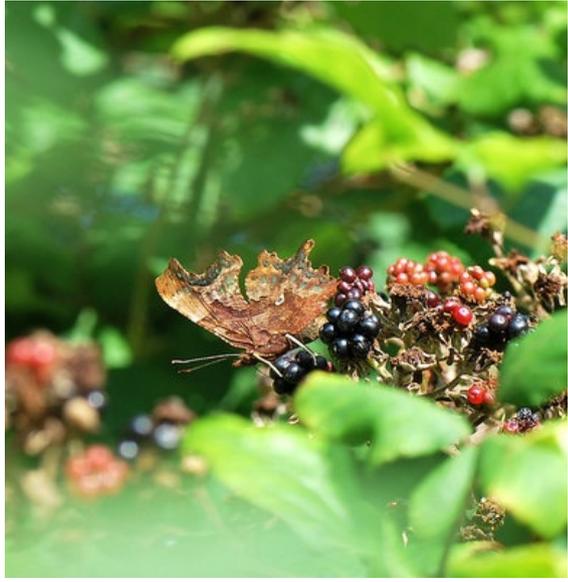
Cheers Trevor 😊 I was just chuffed to be getting a post that was due out for February out in January – posting in good time – not a habit I'm known for 😊

The Devenish 18-09-2016

This was probably the last outing that I would make this year and hope to see a butterfly. True a few years back we had a cracking October with highs of 25 degrees and a year or so before that I was seeing Red Admirals all the way through November; but this year there was a definite feel that this was the end. So on another family afternoon I took my camera and we all set out to see what we would see.

It was quiet through the bottom paddock and on through the Orchid Meadow. The girls took great delight running through the kissing gate and up the

first part of the hill. After they'd posed for a few more photos I sent them on to run to the top and followed them up with my wife at a more sedate pace. While they got their breath back and the coffee cooled I made my way back down. The large Bramble bush on the left hand side as you come up the hill is a regular little hotspot during the main part of the season and I was hoping for a Red Admiral or maybe a Comma and sure enough there was the later – a little far back but with a bit of cropping I got a record shot.



After I'd re-joined the group we all wandered across the side of the down and then made out way once at the far side to the top before working our way back roughly where we'd started. We found a patch of bare chalk to sit on and take in the view and enjoy the final rays of summer. Then it was time to head back home at an even more sedate pace. Up until now I'd only seen the one Comma but all the family chipped in and found me a couple butterflies – two tried looking blues both of which were tried and so they proved quite tricky to identify. The male looked good for a worn Adonis but a nagging part said 'Common' as I couldn't make out any chequers on the wing margins as the wing margins were gone!



We were back by the large Bramble bush by now and I asked the girls to see if they could find me anymore blues while I checked it out. Now there wasn't just one Comma but a pair. I'd been confused at first because there appeared to be a large orange blob on the bush but it was both of the Commas really close together. They didn't seem to like being this close and so they drifted apart and then one flew.





The girls had found me another 'blue' only it was brown and a whole host of eggs of some unknown species covering some grass stems. I came back to the blue/brown and managed a few shots but I'm still not sure what to identify it as?



After this was made our way homewards for an early tea as the girls had exhausted themselves running up and down the vertiginous Down. It seems my girls are sprinters not marathon runners! Mind you they had kept some energy in reserve and so little L showed off her gate traversing skills, hurdling them almost!
Have a goodun

Wurze

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 06-Feb-17 11:49 PM GMT

Some lovely autumnal Comma's 😊

My first impression of the male blue (before I read the accompanying text) was that its a Common Blue, the underside doesn't look quite right for Adonis to me? The 'Brown' Blue is a Brown Angus, no doubt in my mind on that one 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Feb-17 10:53 PM GMT

Cheers Buggy 😊 They were in such a state it was difficult to know which way to go. 😊

End of Year Tally 2016

Having finally caught up with my posts from last year I can now take a look back at 2016. It won't be too long now until the new season starts but in the meantime while I await the seasons start I'm casting my mind back...

Jan mild, too mild? February cold, March all over the place and too cold never really got going. April dismal - too cool, too blowy and at the end of the month hail and frosts! A really dismal start and having to really take chances to get out and see any form of butterfly!!

Luckily things started to change in May - but only after the Bank Holiday of course...and even then it didn't get that much better. Despite being warmer and drier than the terrible year of 2012 there just didn't seem to be the butterflies 😊. To cap it all there was no Indian Summer and for me it was all over by the end of September with only the little oddment. So for me 2016 was probably an even harder year than 2015. At times it was really hard work and something that seemed to continue from 2015 was that instead of seeing good numbers on trips for particular target species you were lucky if you saw a handful.

The Skippers



1 Small Skipper, 28-06-2016 Larkhill

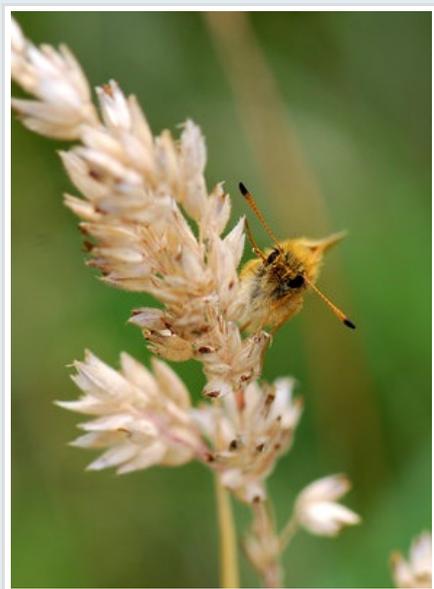
What a way to start the tally off...A week later than last year and very few in number. Thinking back over the year I feel more and more depressed about how few of this species I saw. True I found them all in the usual spots but only in single figures whereas last year they were buzzing around like cluster flies at Larkhill and The Devenish. I didn't get to Five Rivers so perhaps they did okay there but elsewhere they were well down.





2 Essex Skipper, 05-07-2016 Larkhill

Like the Small this species was also a week later than last year. Perhaps they're reverting to a more usual phenology? They did keep to the usual pattern of emerging about a week after the Small however. They did seem down number wise although again I didn't get to Five Rivers which locally is a bit of a stronghold, but elsewhere they were ridiculously thin on the ground. In fact I think I saw them on 3 or 4 occasions and in single figures.



3 Lulworth Skipper, 05-06-2016 Lulworth Cove

Much, much earlier this year - but that was only because I left it so late last year. So late in fact that I had to take a visit to Durlston 'the' late site. This

year I was lucky enough to make the most of one of the few sunny days in June and make a visit to Lulworth. My usual hotspot came up tumps but most of the individuals that I saw were showing signs of wear – with worn, ragged margins and brown spots/lines on their wings a little like the golden paint was flaking off. I reckon they were also down numbers wise as a wander round the hotspot didn't produce the crowds of buzzing skippers that I'd encountered previously.

One thing I did differently this year was making my way round to the other side of the Cove, with Bindon Hill at the top of the cliffs. Here I also found Lulworths and they were taking minerals/salts from the clay slips.



4 Silver Spotted Skipper, 29-07-2016 Broughton Down

Only a couple of days later this year for me from the same cracking site that I discovered last year – Broughton Down. Because it's a smaller site it's much easier to find your quarry and they seemed to be in as good a state numbers wise as in 2015. This is a tentative estimation however as I was only able to make the one visit this year but they were buzzing around all over the place. The highlight for me had to be finding a mating pair for the first time ever.

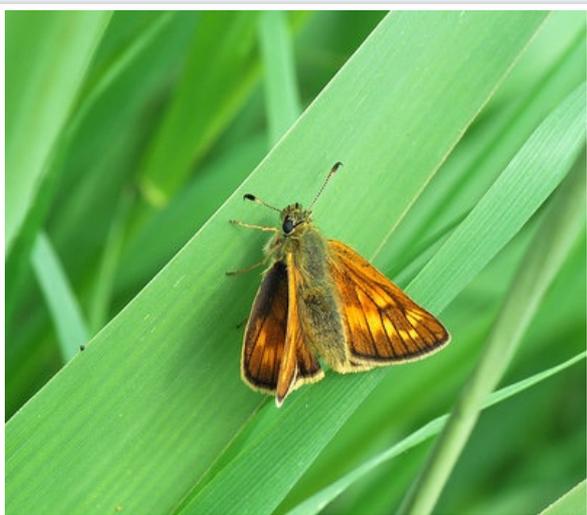


5 Large Skipper, 29-05-2016 Marshie Site

This species seemed to buck the trend in one respect but unfortunately followed suit in the all important one...

So earlier this year, interestingly it was from my Marshie site which is further West than where I encountered them first last year at The Devenish. This seems to support the theory of the local Branch leader who has stated in the past that certain species (Marsh Frits, Greenstreaks etc.) seem to emerge in the west first and then there are progressive emergences over the coming days until finally things start appearing much further east over at my Duke site.

Unfortunately the trend that the Large Skipper followed was that there were noticeably fewer about. This dearth wasn't just restricted to the odd site but across the board with some sites quiet due to the absence of the usual hoardes of Large Skippers.





6 Dingy Skipper, 30-04-2016 Duke Site

Very slightly earlier than last year and also down in numbers. Perhaps the cold snap that was the feature of March/April stalled them after the relatively mild start to the year? What was disappointing was that they were absent from Larkhill this year – I didn't see a single one – further evidence towards my original estimation.

One thing I did find odd this year was that the Dingy beat the Grizzlie to the punch. Normally my first Grizzlie means a Dingy will be about a week behind. But this year while wandering round my Duke site at the appropriate time a small Skipper-esque butterfly landed near me. "Oh my first Grizzlie" I thought. Only it wasn't, it was a Dingy.



7 Grizzled Skipper, 30-04-2016 Duke Site

As single day later than last year and beaten by the Dingy...by 7-8 minutes! It may have missed out in the battle for first emergence but the Grizzlie did better in the numbers game – comparatively speaking. I didn't see them at Bentley and there were fewer around but the fared much better than the Dingy and much, much, much better than the golden Skippers.

One thing I will take away and look for next year is the variation in the amount of white on the wings as some this year were very hirsute, definitely properly Grizzled.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Feb-17 11:33 PM GMT

Forgot to mention that I saw my first butterfly – Red Admiral at work the other day 07-02-2017...great to be off the mark 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Pete Eeles, 11-Feb-17 08:50 PM GMT

Goldie M wrote:

Hi! Wurzel, I've been to Gait Barrow each year since I saw the White SPBF ab with no luck 😞 the Lancs BC say it was caused by the severe Winter we had in 2012

I would suggest that the ab. is genetic, rather than environmental, given the extreme appearance. Environmental factors would seem to lead to more subtle changes in dark / light. The good news is that, if it is genetic, then that population may see the ab. reoccur at any time 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Wurzel

by NickMorgan, 11-Feb-17 09:21 PM GMT

Amazing collection of skippers Wurzel. I really must try to have a holiday in southern England some time!

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Feb-17 11:21 PM GMT

Cheers Pete 😊 There have been slightly melanistic forms before, nothing as extreme as this but the genes do seem to be present in the population, I'll definitely be keeping my eyes peeled this year!

Cheers Nick 😊 You'll notice that there is one British Skipper missing from my haul 😊 Still you've got to keep something to try for at a later date 😊 I am lucky down here in that it is possible to see Dingy, Large, Essex, Small and Lulworth (I think Grizzlie might be possible as well?) all on the same day if some species are late and others are early. 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Feb-17 12:04 PM GMT

On two butterflies for the year – just seen my second Red Admiral flying over the roundabout. Better check out Five Rivers this afternoon! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 16-Feb-17 02:40 PM GMT

Two Red Admirals is a bit flash, if I may say so. 😊
However, I had a distant flypast of either a Red Admiral or Peacock, just after lunch today.

Kick off can't be long now,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 16-Feb-17 05:47 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

On two butterflies for the year – just seen my second Red Admiral flying over the roundabout. Better check out Five Rivers this afternoon! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Looks like today was the day of the Red Admiral, saw one too at work 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Feb-17 11:33 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Glad you're off the mark as I predicted 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Perhaps they're all using the same letting agent for hibernation suites and today they all got evicted? 😊😊

The Whites



8 Wood White, 22-05-2016 Botany Bay

For the second successive year I managed to make it to Botany Bay for Wood Whites. However there is no real way that I can make any comparative statements about how well they did this year as I made the trip much earlier and so caught the first brood. This also negated any idea of whether they emerged earlier or later.

As Philzoid and I walked along the paths all was quiet. We rounded the corner and worked our way down the hill and towards the little bridge and from where there were none Wood Whites just appeared as if evaporating from the grass, eerily materialising like spectres. There were certainly more around this year compared to last though I seem to recall reading that the first brood is generally larger in number? However compared to my very first visit four years ago (also during the first brood) they did seem scarcer, the odd few here and there along the main track and in the triangle and not the rolling, fighting menage a trois's previously encountered.





9 Brimstone, 11-03-2016 Work

Brimstones seemed to have a fairly unremarkable year in 2016. I saw my first about week earlier than in 2015 but despite that they seemed to be around in their usual density and at the usual sites. The danger is that as they are so common unless there is a drastic decrease they could end up in trouble before we pay attention...



10 Large White, 20-04-2016 Vera Jones

My first Large White of the year came 3 weeks earlier this year and I took it as a positive omen and it indeed seemed to be the case. Not only did I encounter them at many more sites and also across the usual range of sites but instead of one here and there they were in good numbers. Last year I

think I saw only about 5 or 6 all year, this year at one site I saw that on one visit! A definite upturn in fortune and hopefully it will continue and they'll get back to pre-crash numbers soon.



11 Small White, 12-04-2016 Work

This species didn't follow the same pattern as its larger cousin. For a start there was about a fortnights difference between when I first saw it this year compared to last. Also my general feeling was that there weren't quite as many as in recent years - although this is only a gut feeling, nothing more substantive.





12 Green-veined White, 29-04-2016 Vera Jones Mill

This species was also affected by the late showing put in by spring, again by about a fortnight. This tardy start to the season however seemed to be beneficial for this species as nationally it increased by 58% (Waitrose Weekend, 20-10-2016). A species after my own heart this - it likes and functions better after a bit of a lie-in! They did take a while to get going (again like me) but subsequent broods did better and better. Any qualms over the Small Whites were salved by the GVW which from personal experience had a very good year. I'm still slightly concerned though - is this bounce back temporary, will they get back to a similar population density as in by gone years?



13 Orange-tip, 19-04-2016 Pewsey

For me this was probably my best ever year for Orange-tips. I'd finally found a site with plentiful Cuckoo Flower and damp woodland rides that meant that seeing Orange-tips finally became easy. Previously I'd relied on my garden (since moved) or a little stretch of road with very steep banks on my way home (tricky for photography). Now however I have Fenland and boardwalks so the nectar sources are at knee height. Nationally this species seemed a bit patchy. So on the UKB boards some people were worried others were seeing plenty, luckily my personal observations placed me in the latter camp. I was worried for a while as my first came 12 days later in 2016 plus others had been seeing them for a while before me. That was until I checked out my new site and it paid dividends.



14 Clouded Yellow, 17-08-2016 Martin Down

Unfortunately I have no comparative data for this species as last year I didn't see one despite being in the what should have been the right places at the right times. I almost didn't see them this year and thought that I spied a pattern in my yearly observations...In 2012 I saw Wood Whites but not a Cloudy, 2013 and 2014 Clouded Yellow but no Wood White, 2015 Wood White and no Clouded Yellow...and this year? Well I saw both, phew! It wasn't really a vintage year for Cloudies but I managed to get onto 3 in total, all from Martin Down, my first on one day and the other two on my penultimate trip out. My first at Martin Down was along Bokerley Ditch near my favourite hotspot. I've found a Cloudy in roughly the same place on three successive occasions. Whether this is due to the habitat being just right or some form of genetic memory I'm not sure. Either way I need to remember the frequency with which I've found the species here during my visits to Martin Down this season!





Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Feb-17 10:13 PM GMT

The tale of 2017 so far...

I was lucky enough to break my duck on Tuesday 7th February. I was loading my box of marking into my car ready to head homewards when a dark 'leaf' made its way towards me, only as it grew closer I could see that it wasn't a leaf but it was my first butterfly of the year, a Red Admiral. One of my final butterfly sightings (or was it the last one?) of 2016 was of a Red Admiral during the school Remembrance service which was only 8 steps away from where I was parked. What were the chances that my first butterfly were also my last from last season?

This spurred me on and on the first day of the half term with a sunny and warmish (almost into double figures) forecast actually panning out I took little L out for a trip to Five Rivers in between her various dancing exams. We didn't see any butterflies although little L assures me that she did "you just missed it daddy, honest" but the signs were good with Celandine like flowers bursting from their buds and nettles poking their heads through the soil on the Banks.

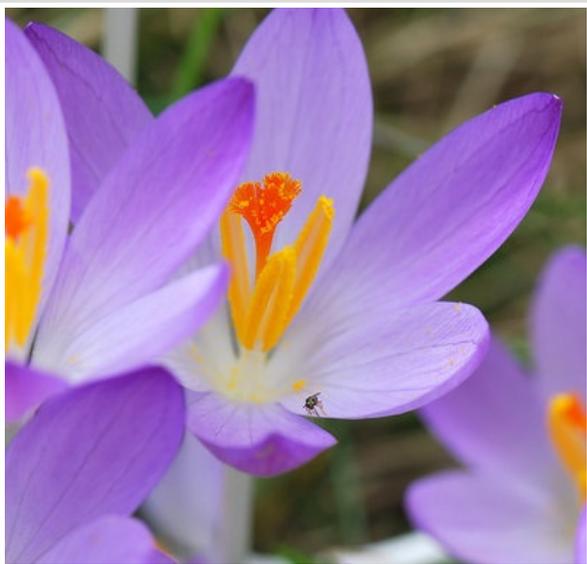


Little L took this...

Following my second sighting on 16th Feb, another Red Admiral flew across my line of sight whilst I was waiting at traffic lights, I again headed out. This time the forecast was wrong and the sun only poked through the clouds very briefly and a cold breeze ran along the Banks. The nettles seemed noticeably taller after only a few days and I found interest in some unusual fungi on the walk back without seeing further butterflies.



Today was my Birthday and I had to go into work during my holiday so I felt that I was owed a butterfly. At lunch between finishing up the Chemistry and preparing for the Physics session I grabbed my camera and took my usual 'early route' at the back of the school along the tiny pathway. On the way there were the occasional riots of colour from Crocchi and more subtle reminders that there are certainly nectar sources around like the small clumps of Snowdrops. I got to the end of the route with not a sightings and so started to make my way back. Something moved. I managed to follow it with my eyes...it was a butterfly and it had gone down on the path...I edged towards it as quickly as I could not wanting it to put it up again but not wanting to miss it if it decided to push off of its own accord. I was within luck as at the moment the cloud hide the sun, the temperature dropped so I could approach it relatively easily. It was my first Small Tortoiseshell (and the first for Wiltshire) of 2017 - a great B'Day pressie! I even got a few shots so my season has now properly started, although the wing trembling it was doing to keep itself warm meant that those shots were difficult to get into focus. Still can't complain - as I'm on 2 for the year...





Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 17-Feb-17 10:38 PM GMT

Wow, what's this I see before my eye's, a Wurzel post from the same day it occurred 🤖 you feeling ok 😊

Looks like you had a good birthday, can't be often you see a native butterfly on this day 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 17-Feb-17 10:51 PM GMT

Happy Birthday, Wurzel – great to celebrate with a Small Tortoiseshell! 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 17-Feb-17 10:54 PM GMT

Congrats. from me too. That Small Tortoiseshell is a great find.
I'm taking the Kiddies back to Great Cheverell tomorrow, so hopefully Wiltshire will provide my first Butterfly shot of the year. I'm getting left behind !.

Thanks for the prompt report (new years resolution ?) 😊 .
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-Feb-17 08:51 AM GMT

Happy Birthday Wurzel, you could see even more Butterflies in the next few days if the weather men are right 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Pete Eeles, 18-Feb-17 04:18 PM GMT

Happy Birthday for yesterday, Wurzel!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 18-Feb-17 08:02 PM GMT

Your Small Tort looks decidedly lop-sided in the photos, Wurzel. I was wondering if it might be a bilateral gynandromorph?

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 20-Feb-17 08:16 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Belated Birthday wishes and great to see you got a pressie of a Small Tortoiseshell 😊

Just catching up on your round-ups of last year...great comments and interesting to compare with my experiences, most broadly similar although for me there were definitely fewer Orange-tips around my patch.

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Feb-17 11:08 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy and Trevor 😊 It was kind of a resolution but mainly it was because I was on half-term break and as I'd spent a good three hours everyday of the holiday catching up with marking and planning and I'd gone in for a day as well I treated myself as a reward by NOT TAKING ANY WORK HOME FOR THE WEEKEND 🤪 This was probably the only time I have ever done this and I found that I had so much more time 🤪 It was actually a little scary 😬

Cheers Dave 😊 Thanks for the heads up about the Wisley photo board – I've told everyone about it! 😊 I don't know how many will make the pilgrimage to see it? 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Unfortunately the weathermen did get it right but I'm too far West, so instead of warmth and sunshine I got mild and cloud 😊 Oh well it's still very, very early in the season 😊

Cheers Pete 😊 Another year older, another year closer to retirement and plenty of time for butterflying 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 I didn't know if it was just the angle that I took it at but like you I also noticed that one side did seem smaller than the other...I think I'll have to wait to see if anyone else picks up on it 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 The OT's did seem to be a bit patchy last year, hopefully we'll have a reasonable April this year and so they'll be a bit more evenly distributed.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 22-Feb-17 10:07 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I'd like to say THANK YOU, for all the Favourite Butterfly posts, I looked forward to putting at least one or two shots in every week, looking through the various photos and sorting out which to post, brought the memories back of the nice warm days and helped also to plan by reading other posts some of the places to go this year. 😊

Nothing seen here yet all we've had so far is rain for the last four days and with Doris expected tomorrow it sounds like another day to stay home, at least the Daff's are nearly out, hope fully they'll still be there after tomorrow. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 22-Feb-17 10:17 PM GMT

I'd like to second that thank you, Wurzel! It's the thread that gets me through the winter and has been almost perfectly timed this year with the new season kicking off as the series completed. Brilliant. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Feb-17 10:07 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie and Dave 😊 It's all thanks to Celery for getting it started and Vince for carrying it on and then asking me to run it really, I just do my little bit and enjoy it to boot. Hopefully 2017 will be a great year, numbers will be up and we'll all have a really difficult time choosing our favourites 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Feb-17 12:08 AM GMT

The "Aristocrats"



15 White Admiral, 02-07-2016 Bentley Wood

There is probably only one positive to the White Admiral story this year – and that is that this season I know that I need to invest much more time in finding and photographing this species. I saw my first three days earlier last year but it was a fleeting view as the butterfly cut through the air and disappeared into the canopy. I wasn't too concerned and had high hopes but unfortunately this didn't come to pass. True this year I was only in the correct habitat a few times and so my view may be slightly jaded but I reckon that they had an abysmal year. Even when I was in the right place at what should have been the right time they were there only as occasional fleeting views. They were so uncommon and hard to latch onto when you finally did encounter one that I didn't get a single photo this year – not even a distant, badly cropped or slightly out of focus record shot. When one did put in an appearance it was usually high and fast and gone before you could even contemplate turning the lens on it. Terrible.

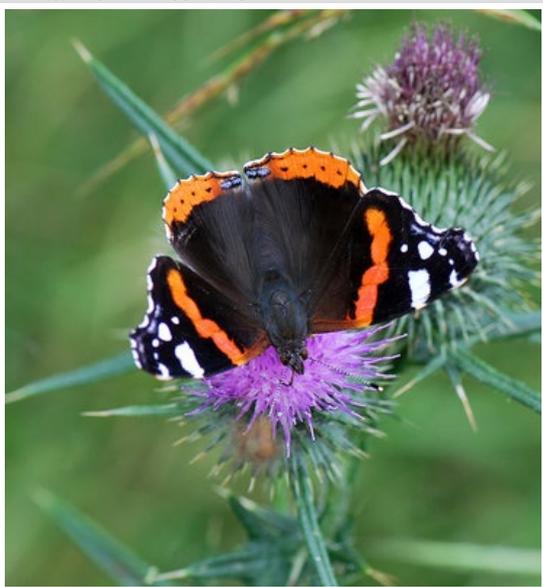
16 Purple Emperor, 17-07-2016 Bentley Wood

Another species that seemed to have a poor year. From Bentley they were about a week alter and despite checking all the usual haunts in reasonable weather I only saw two. The first came tantalisingly close to a decent grounding. Three times it landed, opened its wings and did the little walk come shuffle before finding a nice looking patch of something icky. Unfortunately each time it looked like settling the same jogger would out it up and the third time it was put up was the last I saw of it. So it seems that I'm back on the first year of the three year cycle...hopefully I'll be able to break it this season and so I have another reason to get to Bentley much more in 2017. I also got the impression that it wasn't just Bentley where they were down as this year there didn't seem to be quite as many amazing stories of buckets of butterflies from Fermyn Woods – or is that because most people have tried there and are now looking for somewhere else? There does seem to be a run on certain species; one year everyone went for Black Hairstreak, then White-letters so perhaps 2015 was the year of Pes from Fermyn Woods?

17 Red Admiral, 15-05-2016 Marshie Site

It took a while longer to see my first in 2016 than it did in 2015 but actually despite what seemed like a difficult start they actually seemed to have a reasonable year. They were present at all the usual sites that I would expect to see them and those present in July whilst searching for Purple Emperors certainly seemed slightly more numerous. They also seemed to disappear earlier and I only saw one in November, on Remembrance day when it flew by in its very appropriate livery. This is surely a good thing as in those years when they are still showing strong during a balmy November they are very difficult to find the next so hopefully their increase will continue.

My highlight for the species this year I have already detailed as the reason for the selection of two shots for the 'Favourite Shot' thread. It was my first ever sighting of an egg laying female and some of her ova.





18 Painted Lady, 03-05-2016 Vera Jones Mill

I saw my first Painted Lady on exactly the same day in 2016 as in 2015. However once I'd had my fleeting few of my first I had to wait a further 3 months for my next one and my first chance of a photo. After this there was another long wait of almost 6 weeks until the final of my 'triad of Ladies'. So not a particularly good year for this species, it didn't seem to get here in any numbers so we'll have to wait and see if next year is the next 'big one' (was 2010 the last time - if so we're about due?) Actually there didn't seem to be much going on for any of the migratory/vagrant species; very few Long-tailed Blues, Clouded Yellows were about but were thin on the ground. Perhaps the all important spring hadn't been conducive?



19 Small Tortoiseshell, 11-03-2016 Work

Only a few days later but worrying times ahead? With national reports of a decline of 48% almost sounding a death knoll I'm finding it difficult to consider the plight of the Small Tortoiseshell from my own perspective. Initially there seemed to be good numbers around, the small path at the back of work held mid to high teens on several early visits, they were present at middle Street and the Banks at Five Rivers and I found them at a range of sites throughout the year. Whilst this seems positive the national figures do seem indeed to ring true. The very same path last year had low to mid-twenties

and at Five Rivers I couldn't get into double figures whereas in other years this is easy an task. However they do seem down but nowhere near as bad as in other parts of the UK so hopefully this will be a blip in their stronghold – is it a natural rhythm, a slight fall as the level of their parasite increases?



20 Peacock, 21-03-2016 Work

I found my first Peacock on the same day as my first Comma this year, which is earlier than last year and also unusual. Normally the running order is Red Admiral or Small Tort then Brimstone or Comma and then Small White and Peacock. Yet this year they were flying on the same day as my first Comma. This turned out to be quite a good sign as like the Red Admiral they had a positive year. In fact they were the second most common Aristocrat that I saw over the course of the year. The Small Tort still holds onto its first place but the crown does appear to be slipping and the Peacock could be there to succeed.





21 Comma, 21-03-2016 Work

They were late this year, almost being beaten to the punch by their cousins the Peacock. They were also a bit up and down with good number of hibernators merging early in the season and good numbers of the next set of hibernators at the late end of the season. However the H.Comma seemed to be the blip in the middle of the year, although the later good showing suggests that perhaps they were busy getting on with the important stuff. One disappointment this year was not finding one at Comma corner. I did find a couple nearby but not at the area of Five Rivers that I specifically designated for Commas! Mind you those that I did find were towards the end of the brood and were quite worn so perhaps they have been inhabiting Comma Corner and had moved to the new area which is more like a retirement home for Commas; away from all the strife and hassle of seeing off other Commas and other species or trying to woo the opposite sex?





Have a goodun

Wurzel



Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Feb-17 11:59 PM GMT

March 2017

This could be the month when it all kicks off!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Mar-17 04:21 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I must have gone to Fermyn Woods at the right time, 17th July because I managed to see the PE, WA,PHS, SWF and lot's of other's on the same day and get some shots of all of them. needless to say I'll certainly be back this year as soon has I hear some ones seen them 😊 Can't wait! 😊

Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Mar-17 08:29 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I saw all those species I just could 't get any shots 😞 Hopefully this year... 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 02-Mar-17 09:11 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

You'll have to come over to Chiddingfold forest, and I'll bring some of my special potion !.



Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Mar-17 01:28 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 There's no need to rub it in...or is there? 😊 Is that how you got this one down with your special potion? 😊 I might try and get over that way this year...though if I do I'll feel like a traitor to Bentley Wood 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 03-Mar-17 01:39 PM GMT

trevor wrote:

..... I'll bring some of my special potion !.

I can't help noticing that your PE has turned its back on that tin. Perhaps it prefers Waitrose? 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 03-Mar-17 02:20 PM GMT

I was at Bently Woods about 3 years ago and didn't see any PE's, but the one's at Ferymn were attracted to Dog Poo 😊 Have you got a Dog Wurzel? 🤔
Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Mar-17 08:24 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 I too noticed that the PE was turning it's nose up at the tine, but if could get a few more shots like that I wouldn't mind how much of a diva the butterfly is being 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I don't have a dog but I do have an indoor cat...Teddy is fed on raw oraganic/wild caught meat (which is a lot better than the stuff I get 😊) so perhaps that would work? 😊 I've seen and photographed them on specially mixed bait, my own urine, decomposing rabbit and dog poo

before but only ever on a three year cycle 😊 If this continues then I won't get any photos until 2018 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 03-Mar-17 09:30 PM GMT

For the record, that Purple Emperor was indulging in my offering at the time. I placed the tin behind the butterfly so as not to scare it off. I will stick to the same brand this year. Imagine getting all the way to Chiddingfold, then finding that His Majesty rejects the Waitrose concoction, which is probably more refined, and thus less attractive.

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Mar-17 11:50 PM GMT

I reckon you're onto something there Trevor, I can't imagine the Waitrose faithful assaulting their noses with the smell of Tuna fish 😊

Fritillaries



22 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 30-05-2016 Bentley Wood

Another coincidence with a very high probability – my first SPBF of 2016 came on the same date as in 2015. Locally this was the species which had the worst year. I saw a single Small Pearl all year! To slightly mitigate this doom and gloom it should be noted that I did visit as they were first appearing and I didn't venture farther than the Eastern Clearing, plus the weather was less than adequate but a singleton? Very poor and very worrying as for a while now the population at Bentley seems to have been thinning. Usually the Pearl gets all the attention so perhaps it's time the local branch turned the spotlight on this species? It wasn't just me, others too found the going hard for this species at Bentley, in some cases there were even fights breaking out as people strove to get a shot.

Hopefully the few that were encountered were particularly fecund and we might see a turn around this year.





23 Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 08-05-2016 Bentley Wood

Unlike their smaller cousins the PBF seemed to be doing okay in 2016. Again I kept to the Eastern Clearing but I saw slightly more here this year and after a later start they held up well so I was able to encounter them over three visits. The first was when they'd just emerged, then there was the furore over the aberrant and the final visit was when the Small Pearls were on the wing, though by then the Pearls were looking a shadow of their former selves.

The aberrant was the obvious highlight of the year for this species and as some have suggested the melanism has a genetic basis I'll be looking out for other melanics this year, fingers crossed!





24 Dark Green Fritillary, 26-06-2016 Duke Site

If the plight of the SPBF was a depressing start to the Frits tally then the PBF was a welcome upturn and things got even better with the DGF. I'm basing this on the fact that two of the sites that I saw them at were 'new' and I also saw 'multiples' at Larkhill! Even more impressive than this I finally bagged a Larkhill DGF photo! In fact they were in good numbers at all sites so when I think about the DGF I'm left with a much more cheery feeling. Again this year I was struck by how different the genders appear. The earlier males appear two tone, black and vibrant orange whilst the later emerging females are often straw coloured with greenish-purple near the body and the sub-marginal spots can be almost white.





25 Silver-washed Fritillary, 17-07-2016 Bentley Wood

Almost a fortnight later this year although that could have been because I was away for a week of that time in Iceland and so didn't manage to get out for that fortnight. Mind you when I did get to see them it was a petty mixed bag. On the positive side I found one at The Devenish again which suggests that my first there wasn't just a one off and the Silver-washed is present in the Woodford Valley. Also on the positive side I found a Greenish again this year, I'm having a good run with this form. Unfortunately we now get to the negative, it's bigly, sad (sorry too much Trump). I don't think I've ever had a worse year for this species. True I didn't get to Bentley as much as usual but even when I did they were so few and far between that I only managed a handful of shots.





26 Marsh Fritillary, 15-05-2016 Marshie Site

It's hard to judge the fortunes of this species as they are in such large numbers. Whilst there were still loads around it felt like they were slightly down on last year - perhaps owing to their success. They do have a boom and bust population dynamic and so after a few years of boom perhaps this year was a little bust, not a full on collapse though, more of a slight dip. I saw my first 2 days later this year although they had been flying for a while. Then a few weeks later on a visit with Philzoid we still found good numbers but there were still some caterpillars crawling around the ground - possibly because they didn't find enough food and so developed too slowly? Hopefully after a year of lower numbers the balance will shift and they'll be up in 2017.





27 Glanville Fritillary, 22-05-2016 Hutchinson's Bank

I didn't see this species in 2015 and so I can't make any comparisons. Also I finally bit the bullet and made it to Hutchinson's Bank to see the released population. I have had qualms about this before but then it's a shorter trip to get to this site compared to the Isle of Wight and visiting here means less pressure and disturbance on the truly native population. Also with only one site remaining for this species it's good to have a safety net should there be a disaster on the Isle of Wight.

Personally I'd love it if a female travelled across the Solent and the now extinct mainland colony was re-established as that's even closer!





Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by MrSp0ck, 06-Mar-17 09:12 AM GMT

The Glanville Fritillaries would benefit from another natural migration from IOW to either Hurst Castle or Hordle Cliff [if it is still suitable], as the 2 other former/hanging on mainland sites are on the Brink. [Sand Point and Wrecclsham]

There are Historic links of this species to Sand Point and Hutchinsons Bank, Sand Point was the home of Eleanor Glanville, she lived next to the site, and Hutchinsons Bank was probably one of the "Dulwich" colonies, noted by Petiver, as other species seen in West Wickham and Addington were also recorded as "Dulwich" which is a couple of miles away. [White Admiral] "He later gave the London locality as Dulwich, and later still in 1717 "Wickham near Croydon" = West Wickham, at the same time changing the name to White Admiral". [Glanville Fritillary], *Melitaea cinxia* As: Lincolnshire Fritillary (1703), Dullidge (i.e. Dulwich) Fritillary (1717), so we know Petiver was in the area of Addington & West Wickham in 1717 from the White Admiral name change.

The HB population has spread into 4 x 1km squares in 2016, larval web searches will be carried out in late March and April, to see its status, the Kent Border sightings in June 2016 need to be followed up as well, as the site is also very warm and sheltered, and had males and females flying together. The Kent Border site, would fall into the "Wickham" description, as it is on farmland in the Parish of West Wickham, on the edge of ancient woodland. The pictures of the habitat were taken in July, but there were still lots of young plantains in warm bare earth habitat.
Photo Greenie





Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Mar-17 10:07 AM GMT

Lovely shots Wurzel, I've yet to see a Glanville Frit don't know where to start to look either, 😊
I've tried to fit my travels into different times of year to see the Butterflies I've yet to encounter , has you know, this doesn't always work out, this year I thought I'd take a journey to Cornwall in May, I've not seen the Marsh Frit for a while and they're on Bodmin Moor I believe, so I thought if I traveled there looking for the Grizzled Skipper which I've not seen yet I'd also see both and may be other's as well, any advice on this would be great! 😊
I've also heard The Lizard is a good spot for Butterflies, Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by MrSp0ck, 06-Mar-17 10:34 AM GMT

Goldie M wrote:

Lovely shots Wurzel, I've yet to see a Glanville Frit don't know where to start to look either, 😊
I've tried to fit my travels into different times of year to see the Butterflies I've yet to encounter , has you know, this doesn't always work out, this year I thought I'd take a journey to Cornwall in May, I've not seen the Marsh Frit for a while and they're on Bodmin Moor I believe, so I thought if I traveled there looking for the Grizzled Skipper which I've not seen yet I'd also see both and may be other's as well, any advice on this would be great! 😊
I've also heard The Lizard is a good spot for Butterflies, Goldie 😊

Wurzels Marshy Site has Marsh frit and Grizzled Skipper, and Hutchinsons Bank has Glanville Frit and Grizzled Skipper, at both those sites the species are on the wing at the same time.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Mar-17 08:38 PM GMT

Cheers for the info Mr Spock 😊 I wasn't aware of the history of some of the Glanville sites, it puts a new slant on it. It would be good if the Kent site came to fruition as then it should be possible to view both Glanvilles and Heath Frits on a single trip – always good in terms of petrol/carbon Dioxide/Brownie points 😊 I wasn't sure that we were supposed to publicize the name of the naturalized mainland sites on UKB hence why I didn't refer to them in my Tally Posting.

Cheers Goldie 😊 If you want directions to my Marshie site then send me a PM – you could visit it on the way down to Cornwall – it's a slight diversion of the M5 and you can easily get back on the A303 which heads on down to Exeter and beyond 😊 It's got Marshies, Grizzled and Dingy Skippers, Greenstreaks, Small Blue, Adonis Blues and (possibly) Wall Browns. If you're lucky they all go up in a massive 'Battle Royale' 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 08-Mar-17 10:14 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I've sent you a pm (hope fully you'll get it okay) 😊 I've not sent before only replied, so just in-case you don't get it, I'm very interested in going to your site.

Thanks mrSpock has well, I'm putting the Glanville into another year as one yet too see! Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Mar-17 07:30 PM GMT

No worries Goldie 😊 I didn't get your PM so I'll send you one now so then you can reply a bit closer to the time for the details 😊

First Brimstone today whilst out at work – hopefully might get a post done for later – that would be two posted on time 🤪🤪🤪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

EDIT: Just tried but for some reason it wouldn't let me PM you Goldie – do you have to switch something on on your Control Panel in order to send/receive PMs?

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Mar-17 11:42 PM GMT

Work 09-03-2017

As the pupils were sitting an early starting Maths Mock I was able to get out for a brief time at lunch today but it was hard watching the sun shine into the room and feeling the warmth as I crossed the Quad knowing that on the best day of the year so far I'd be trapped inside. When I did make a break for it at lunch I thought it was going to be easy going but I ran up against the one of the new Groundsmen's penchant for locking gates. Finally after trying my fourth gate I was able to cut across the school field to the small path which is my usual early season haunt.

Once there I almost immediately spied a Small Tort fluttering about. It was quite active and stayed just that little bit too far away on the other side of the fence for both my liking and any chance of a half way decent shot. Nevertheless I took a couple of record shots holding the camera at arms-length and staring myopically down the viewfinder.



It took off and I tried to follow it as it looked to be heading to land on the bank which would have given me a much better chance of a shot but I got distracted by a brilliant yellow – my first Brimstone of the year! It was very busy bombing up and down the path, nipping over the fence into gardens and so disappearing from view. In the end I set the camera to Sports and clicked away each time it appeared in the hope that maybe one photo would make a passable record shot.





The rest of my walk up and down the path didn't yield much else and so with time ticking ever onwards I started back towards work, taking a short cut through the housing estate when a second Brimstone flew ahead of me. It accompanied me all the way back to work, always staying that little too far ahead and never landing. Oh well it was just a joy to see it...and now it feels like Spring is actually here. It doesn't matter if it Snows next week, now I've seen a Brimstone it's officially Spring! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 10-Mar-17 02:38 PM GMT

Sorry about that Wurzel, I've received PM's in the past so i don't know 😊 May be that's why you didn't receive mine ! I'll take a look but I'm not too well up on these things, I'll try again.

Well done incidentally with the Butterflies, it was a lovely day here yesterday as well but the wind was strong and very cold, today it's dull and cold again 😊 Goldie 😊

Think I've cracked it Wurzel, hope you get the post Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 10-Mar-17 07:08 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, just catching up on your recent posts...great reports and some interesting observations on last season 😊

Good to see you managed to escape for a brief lunchtime session and see some butterflies 🍷 ...something I haven't yet managed being stuck in the office this week 😊

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Mar-17 10:04 AM GMT

No worries Goldie 😊 The PM came through so now I have to work out my description of how to get there 😊 The problem is that I get asked each year and each year I forget where I saved the description from the previous year 😊😊 Still there's a couple of months to get myself sorted 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I sure I'll be returning the envy when things kick off in your garden 🍷 My lunch time sojourns are going to be less frequent this year as we now have to offer intervention over several lunchtimes a week and they've shortened the lunch break to 30 minutes. This means that I can just about leg it to the hotspot, have 10 minutes there and then leg it back. 😊 Mind you on the flip side I finish at 2:45 so I can have longer stop-offs on the way home 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 12-Mar-17 08:41 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Those pesky groundsmen 😊

Great review of last season as always and thanks for keeping us entertained through the dark months 😊
Looks like you had a cracking birthday surprise with that Small Tortoiseshell.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Mar-17 11:55 PM GMT

Cheers Paul 😊 The Small Tort was a welcome B'Day pressie, I've still got a few groups to go on the Yearly Tally but I'll have to fit them in and around my sightings for 2017 😊

Five Rivers 11-03-2017

After the briefest of runs out on Thursday lunchtime I was hankering to get out again but Friday didn't work out either work or weather wise and the forecast for Saturday didn't look that promising and so I didn't make any plans. However it seems that the forecasters have had enough of being moaned about for their optimistic forecasts and now we have quite pessimistic ones instead and so it was on Saturday morning which cleared up nicely, the sun came out more and more and the temperatures rose nicely.

Whilst little L was at her Modern Dance lesson I somehow managed to wangle some free time. I was tempted to make the visit to Middle Street for a Peacock but getting there and back would take too long. Instead I tried Five Rivers; drop L off early, 5 minutes there and back and boom I had about 40 minutes on site.

I headed straight away towards Comma Corner. So many people had seen Commas already this year I was confident that there should be one about here, plus I'd checked with the Oracle (K) and she assured me that I would both see and photograph this species. Comma Corner was all quiet and I walked the entire length of the Banks and back without seeing a single thing. So I started my second lap and just up from Comma Corner something fluttered up from the foliage. I could tell it was a Comma from the ginger colour. I watched it for what felt like an age because it didn't want to settle. It would land for a fraction of a second before going up again, a bit like a Brimstone. I managed to fire off one shot of it and then it took off again and flew up and I lost it in amongst the tree branches. I had my sighting, I had a record shot but nothing more meaty; 'is this the way my season is going to pan out?' I wondered, glimpses and half shots?



Oh well I took another wander across the Banks and back and noticed that some work had been done on the reed beds lining the path, they'd been cleared back so now there was an 'almost' path running along the waters' edge sheltered by tall reeds on either side - I likely looking spot for a butterfly. I strolled down towards it scanning ahead and there was a Comma down on the deck. Looking at the images now I'm fairly confident that it was the same individual, but there was a second here slightly further along the path. Occasionally one or the other would take off and fly into the others territory, a small fight would ensue and they would spiral upwards before breaking apart and landing pretty much back where they started. The second was slightly more worn than the first and the first obviously wanted to stay looking good as it spent a good while preening and cleaning its antennae.





One of the reasons that I love Brimstones is that whilst following them patrolling and awaiting for them to land I often stumble across something else. And so it was now with my first and as it turned out only Small Tort for the visit. It didn't hang around long and after a few shots it was off to harass the third Comma of the day. This one stayed up high taking nectar at the tree tips and posing nicely for a different looking shot.



After this I realised that I needed to make my way back to pick everyone up after Dance. So I made my way across the Banks and was almost at the end when I remembered that I hadn't checked the other side of the Bank where it meets the Spinney. This is a good little area for Peacock so I cut up through the wall of trees. As I did a Red Admiral took off. I saw it a few more times but I just can't seem to get Red Admirals to pose for me at this time of the year? Still a welcome addition to the day list. On the other side of the Bank in the scallop of grass bordering the Spinney two Brimstones were patrolling. 'Oh well they won't land' I thought. But bugger me if they both didn't! They were really very nice about it. Whilst one was down and I was getting a few shots the other fluttered about and when I'd finished with the first it too settled down in an area without grass stems or twigs in the way.



So I headed back over to get the girls with 3 Brimstones, single of Small Tort and Red Admiral and 3 Commas - is it just me or is this cacophony of Commas a little bit unusual - I can't recall a time when they've been more numerous than Small Torts?
From here, with girls in the car and my wife dropped off at her sisters to do her product photography I headed North to meet up with Trevor...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 13-Mar-17 05:59 PM GMT

You certainly struck gold before heading for Great Cheverell.
I have now seen plenty of Brimstones but none have stopped.
Looking forward to your images from the Churchyard.

I'm glad your girls enjoyed playing with Lorna's three, that's one disadvantage
of living in a village, not many kiddies to play with. 😞
I'm sure they'll all meet again (by popular demand !). 😊

Great day, Saturday.

Trevor

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 13-Mar-17 07:42 PM GMT

Love the shots of the Comma's up high Wurzel, nothing but dark skies here and rain at the weekend in-between we caught a glimpse of the Sun but that didn't last long, at least it's warmer! Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 13-Mar-17 08:03 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I too love the Commas against the sky, particularly the second shot, and also the last Brimstone photo 😊👍

Still no butterflies for me...Saturday was wall to wall dull grey cloud here and Sunday little better although the sun did make a bit more of an attempt to break through but just not for long enough.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Mar-17 12:45 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Both the girls have informed me that we are going back to the Bell 🍷 See below for the photos from the day 😊
Cheers Goldie 😊 The butterflies will be out before you know it 😊
Cheers Neil 😊 It can't be too long to wait...

The Bell 11-03-2017

We got to The Bell slightly later than expected partly because the Courtesy car I'm in has a digital petrol gauge which suddenly drops to nothing so I had to refuel and also because of a Caravan, my first of the year and I'm hoping they'll have a bad one!
After the introductions between children and Grandchildren Trevor and I could catch up as the children disappeared off to either play hide and seek, arrange pranks or complain about schools. We then had a great lunch – I can still taste the burger now, lush and then Trevor and I took a little stroll to the local church and the attached graveyard. The sun was still shining intermittently but it was noticeably cooler and now being in just a T-shirt was slightly chilly when the breeze picked up.

On the far side of the graveyard there was a big wood heap with dead foliage and old Christmas trees on it. Three little brown blobs rocketed skywards from amongst the debris. Two entwined and kept flying upwards and the third detached itself and flew towards us landing briefly on a small clump of Heather that had been placed on someone's grave.

Trevor and I then staked out the clump and set about getting some shots. Two of the Small Tortoiseseemed particularly fond of this heap, constantly flying around, landing and buzzing each other. The third occasionally put in an appearance but seemed to be heading further and further out each time until eventually we were left with the pair. Despite the chill they kept flying but getting shots was tricky as they were rapidly vibrating their wings in (I'm guessing) an attempt to keep their flight muscles up to temperature.





A later trip and walk down a local Lane didn't yield any further sightings but it looks like Trevor has a great little 'Local patch' for when he's down visiting this way. Unfortunately I had to get back to pick my wife up else I and the girls could of stayed there for much longer but duty called and so we made our goodbyes.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

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

Hi Wurzel,

You've summed up Saturday nicely. I think we were both surprised by how fresh those Small Torts appeared to be. At last things have perked up at home too. Had a great morning yesterday.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 14-Mar-17 11:52 AM GMT

More than happy to swap a few Commas for some Torties. Still waiting to see some day-glow orange this year!

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Mar-17 02:21 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I saw your cracking morning 🍷 I did manage to see a Peacock but it didn't stop for any photos 😞 Cheers Bugboy 😊 I've got my Commas now, but I'd be willing to swap some Small Torties for a Peacock? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 14-Mar-17 03:19 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

I am busy catching up with all of the diaries (I have a fair way to go still!) but your posts of 2017 have given me a 'kick up the a..' (in a good way) as I have clearly got to get busy. The pictures of torts and commas are very encouraging. Hopefully I'll get something worthwhile tomorrow in Oxfordshire.

Peter

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Mar-17 12:10 AM GMT

Cheers Art Frames/Peter 😊 If the weather report for Oxford is like that for Salisbury then I'd probably leave it until midday – mind you the weather reports have been unduly pessimistic recently so the best way is too look out the window and go if it looks good 😊😊

Browns



28 Speckled Wood, 06-05-2016 Vera Jones Mill

I think the Specklies round my way had a bit of a 'down and up' year. I saw my first one a fortnight later than last - this time at Vera Jones's Mill and I wasn't able to get a photo. After this the rest of the first brood proved to be just as hard to either track down or photograph. The cold March and April didn't help this I think as perhaps they had started to emerge but were knocked back?

After this I had much better success and they seemed to have come on much stronger, were in all the usual haunts and also lasted well into September and possibly through into October - though I can only speculate on this from my observations of freshly emerged individuals in the second week of September. Their greater success in later broods is further supported by finding one at Larkhill during my final visit there of the season, a bit of a rarity at this site!



29 Wall, 05-06-2016 Lulworth

If the Small Pearl was a catastrophe then the Wall Brown was only just shy of an un-mitigating disaster! I missed them at my Marshire site, usually a sure thing, on both occasions that I visited. Likewise they were absent from my Duke site and were non-existent on any of my trips to the coast when I visited the Outlaws (again another sure thing). I only saw one all year, a fleeting view of one taking off from a wall, it flew past me and disappeared at Lulworth. That was it. The dearth of this species could have a number of reasons; the further contraction of its range, it's put too much into a risky third brood in 2015, or the weather are among a few off the top of my head. That being said there was a plus pint; 25 were recorded on one visit by a lucky blighter to Morgan's Hill. Perhaps the usual crew that frequented my Marshie site up moved North? Fingers crossed that was the reason...

30 Marbled White, 21-06-2016 Larkhill

This species was about a week later this year but as I saw them further North in Wiltshire I don't know if this portrays any pattern? I must confess to be at a loss when it comes to considering this species. After my first I found them in all the expected places and in such numbers that at times I didn't even give them more than the cursory glance only noting their presence which I'm embarrassed to admit. The one site which I did record numbers from was Larkhill, where I saw my first this year and they seem to be roughly on a par with last year.



31 Grayling, 23-07-2016 Godshill

By the time the first Graylings were on the scene things had really settled down and we were looking ahead to more a more productive summer some species had caught up from the slow start to the season yet the Grayling were still 5 days behind. It certainly felt that way as Godshill presented me with reasonable numbers of Grayling perhaps not as many as last year but still good numbers. I missed out on any chance to corroborate this feeling as I didn't make it back home to Dorset this year during their flight. Again as last year I was struck by their variability as this year I found two individuals from the extreme ends of the scale. One was honey coloured and the other, sitting nicely on a cowpat was almost jet black. It would be interesting to see if females showed any preference for a colour type, a form of sexual selection, or whether mating choice is purely based on chemical attraction?



32 Hedge Brown/Gatekeeper 17-07-2016 Bentley Wood

Almost a fortnight later this year and my first came from Bentley Wood. Now when this has happened in the past I've then gone on to find His Nibbs as well, and so the pattern continued this year as well. It's difficult to make an overall estimate of how well this species fared as there seemed to be so much regional variation. I would guess overall that they were down - they certainly were at The Devenish, Larkhill and Bentley Wood. However the The Lane (Ffos-y-ffin) was absolutely jam packed with them during my annual summer visit to my Outlaws. Those present were also well represented by the 'excessa' with two particularly heavily marked individuals, one form each gender and also in opposite states of repair. I don't know why this little area seems to produce so many excessa - whether it's to be expected as others have reported their prevalence further North or because it's an small, semi-isolated population? Whatever I'm just pleased that they appear to be doing so well somewhere.





33 Meadow Brown, 18-05-2016 The Devenish

This species really became the prime 'bucker' of trends this year. First up it was almost a month early. I had to wait until the second week of June last year before finding one at East Blean (it was one of only three species seen on that day!). And so it continued when it came to numbers as they did well this year, definitely on the increase in my neck of the woods at least.





34 Small Heath, 14-05-2016 Duke Site

I found my first Small Heath at roughly the same time this year but at my Duke Site further North in the county. For a number of years now I and others have been bemoaning the decline of the Small Heath and so it continues this year with them still on a downward trajectory. When will their fall top?





35 Ringlet, 21-06-2016 Larkhill

Only a day earlier this year but unusually I saw them on the same day as my first Marbled White. Normally this species is around at the same time but often a few days to a week later. This year I got a nice little 'twofer' at Larkhill which suitably set me up for the day. I feel that the Ringlets had a very good year particularly at Larkhill where the highlight of the year for me for this species came when I made an early morning stop-off. As I crossed the road and started down the small track I caught sight of something dark brown in the bushes, a Ringlet and I could soon see another, and another and so on until eventually I counted over 20 just sitting in the same bush. I really struggled to get even a quarter of them in a single shot. Over the season they provided more great moments – great shots of the underside, odd numbers of spots, huge spots on the underside and the endless times they would erupt from the path as my dew drenched trouser legs scythed through the long grasses but this was the best Ringlet moment of 2017.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 15-Mar-17 06:03 PM GMT

You've got some great shots there Wurzel, beautiful Butterflies 🍷

It was a lovely day here today 15c but still no Butterflies spotted but lets hope the weather got them to wake up 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 16-Mar-17 10:55 PM GMT

Ah, summer days, summer days... I love the stained glass Ringlet – unexpectedly beautiful seen like this. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Mar-17 11:15 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 The butterflies will come soon I'm sure, just hang on in there 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I was happy with that shot even though I spent the rest of the day with dew dampened socks and shoes 😊

Work 13-03-2017

At this time of year there is so much going on at work that I have to take whatever chances present themselves to me, doubly so now that lunch has been reduced to 30 minutes. Today was one of those times as I knew no-one would be turning up for Intervention/Revision as:

- I hadn't emailed them to tell them they had to come
- I hadn't corralled them into my classroom after assembly
- They were sitting a Maths exam all afternoon.

So as soon as they were off for lunch so too was I. I cut straight across the field scanning the panel fences and every yellow flower within range on the football pitch. It paid off with Small Tort number 1.



From there I made my way along the path with the field on one side and gardens on the other. In one of these gardens another Small Tort appeared. As

it was right by the edge of the garden I focused in through the wires took a few shots in the hope that they'd crop okay.



I carried on and it got a bit quieter along the next stretch until the path dropped down and started back up. Here it opens up with another path leading off back through the housing estate towards work. This is a good little spot and just past the concrete stairs I spied a large little Tort which quickly refocused into a pair. After a few shots I left them in peace and carried on along the path. A butterfly took off from the fence and flew overhead. It looked a lot like a black bat – my first Peacock of the year but it didn't stop so no shots. I might have to try my luck at Middle Street latter in the week for this species.



A Brimstone then flew over another fence before disappearing back again and there was a distant Small Tort. I took a photo anyway just in case it proved to be a Scarce but no matter how I squinted at the cropped image it just remained a distant Small. Right at the end there was my 6th Small Tort and then I started back encountering four previously met Small Torts including the courting couple who'd only moved up slightly.



Time was running out and so I took the short cut back up through the estate noting Small Tort number 7 on the way but it was too far into someone's garden for any shots.

Not a bad haul for 20 minutes work, it would be nice if I can get out again this week...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 16-Mar-17 11:37 PM GMT

So many Small Tortoiseshells, I can't remember when I last saw that many in a single day. Also I'm not sure who you are but can you hand this diary back to the real Wurzel, the one who's about 6 months behind the rest of us, its very disconcerting seeing up to date posts here 😊

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 17-Mar-17 12:02 AM GMT

Swap you some Commas for some Wiltshire Small Torts.

Loads of Commas locally, but no Small Torts yet. Even along the old railway they have always been scarce.

I think this week has seen one of the best hibernator awakenings for some years.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by NickMorgan, 17-Mar-17 02:51 PM GMT

Great to see that you are off to a good start Wurzel. My available time hasn't coincided with the warm sunny days, so only a distant Peacock for me so far.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-Mar-17 02:55 PM GMT

Glad your seeing the Tort's Wurzel, it proves they're out some where at least 🍀🍀😊

Not a chance here, cold yesterday, nothing but rain today, at least the daffs are out 😊 looks like the Butterflies will be late round here, maybe that's a good thing, last year I saw my first Tort March 7th then nothing until March 17th, then just a few, so if they're late they could have a better chance of missing the bad weather. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Mar-17 11:22 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 A cold snap is generally a good thing and is better than it getting warmer, the butterflies emerging and then getting knocked back by a cold snap...

Cheers Nick 😊 I'm sure your fortunes will improve soon.

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'd be up for swapping a few Peacocks for some Small Torts 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I'm purposefully holding back on a post from midweek to stop you freaking out anymore 😊😊

36 Duke of Burgundy, 08-05-2016 Duke Site

I think I only saw one Duke all season but on two separate occasions. The first time I saw it was five days later than last season and it was beautifully fresh, so much so it looked like it had only just emerged. I think I'm correct in assuming this as it was the first record for the County. I then saw it a week later when Philzoid and I headed there after picking up the aberrant Pearl at Bentley Wood. I'm pretty sure that it's the same individual a week older as the markings seem very similar?

As I saw only one I'm left with a slightly concerned feeling towards the Duke in Wiltshire. They also didn't do too well at Bentley Wood but on a more positive note I didn't make a return visit to my Duke site at the peak of their emergence here so they could have done alright and I just didn't witness it. On a very positive note one was observed and photographed at my Marshie Site. This would be great news especially as the local branch have been managing/clearing back the wood to encourage this species.

At my Duke site this year I noticed that again they seem to have moved even further up the hill. When I first encountered them here they were all over the paths a field away from the car park. The following year they were moving into the next 'field' up from the paths, then about half way across this 'field'. This year they were right at the top of this path in a little patch of very springy turf with a line of trees forming a border before the next section up the hill. So in 2017 I guess I start looking just beyond this line of trees?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Mar-17 11:45 AM GMT

The Dukes were very sparse at Gait barrow last year Wurzel but they've opened their site up more by coppicing and people can't go beyond the roped area's so it's very hard to see them and get shots of them if they're in the distance, still, if it protects them that's more important, I suppose there could have been more', I hope so like you we only saw one. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 20-Mar-17 09:59 PM GMT

Great Duke photos Wurzel 😊. I was so glad you spotted that one on your way out of the Duke site. At the time, I was too far 'north' on the chalk escarpment and had to make a mad dash through the undergrowth. Perhaps that will be the ideal spot in a couple of years' time if your theory holds 🤔 That Duke was one of only two seen all season (the other at Butser 10 days earlier), so for me it wasn't a particularly fruitful year for them either, although I may have missed going at peak emergence.

Phil

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Mar-17 11:46 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully they were ding their thang just out of view Goldie 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Hopefully my hypothesis won't be proven and they'll be all over the place! This does seem to be a late site compared to elsewhere in the country (although my first was also the first for the county) so hopefully we were there to witness the first emergence 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

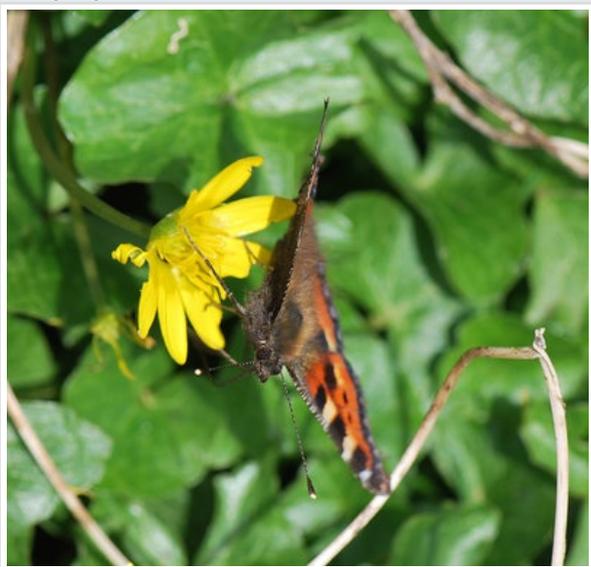
Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Mar-17 12:56 AM GMT

Work 15-03-2017

The continuation of the exams for year 11 meant that rather than having to round them all up and herd them into my lab for Intervention I was able to nip out with my camera over the lunch break. This won't be happening for the foreseeable future so I need to make the most of it now. It seems that the Junior Groundsman had been on duty again and so I had to miss out the first part of my usual route and cut through the housing estate. On the way there were two Small Torts to start the lunchtime foray off.

Once onsite proper I walked along to the end of the path stopping now and again for various Small Torts on the way. At one point there were three all basking in a garden on the dug over soil and I also encountered a courting pair. By the end of the walk my Tally had reached 11 Small Torts and three Barking Dogs.





I then turned round and mad my way back to school restarting my count. I probably encountered the same butterflies on the way back just in different places but by the time I'd reached the school agates the grand total was 13 Small Torts - not too shabby for about 20 minutes counting. The best by far was one beautiful female that looked so vibrant and fresh you'd be forgiven for thinking that she had just emerged from a chrysalis rather than from hibernation over winter. Still no photos of Peacocks though...oh well I'll have to try Middle Street as soon as I'm able.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 25-Mar-17 01:00 AM GMT

👍👍👍 20 minutes 🤔 I'd have to search for a week to see that many Torts round here! 🍷🍷🍷

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 25-Mar-17 06:18 AM GMT

Well done with all those Small Torts., I've only seen one briefly since returning home. Still I'm off to Halnaker tomorrow, where there was a mass awakening last Spring.

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 25-Mar-17 11:48 PM GMT

Nice Tortoiseshells, Wurzel, and I was envious until I went out this morning! They've appeared round here too. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by NickMorgan, 26-Mar-17 01:19 AM GMT

It is great to hear of so many Small Torts. They almost disappeared here for the second half of 2016. We have managed to find a few hibernating in the usual spots, but not as many as usual. So far all I have seen this year is Peacocks, although I saw a couple of butterfly shadows when I was out painting the house today. Unfortunately, I didn't get a good enough view of the butterflies to identify them.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Mar-17 11:39 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 This seems to be a particularly good area for Small Torts 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Looks like the visit paid off – a blooming OT 🍀 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 It's unusual for your neck of the woods to be running behind mine, I normally wait and read your PM so I know what to look out for in a fortnights time 😊

Cheers Nick 😊 I was a bit worried about the Small Torts as they were quite strong here in the spring and then just dwindled away to next to nothing...still it seems that at least one or three were pretty successful 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Mar-17 11:36 PM GMT

The Hairstreaks



37 Green Hairstreak, 08-05-2016 Duke Site

This species emerged 5 days later it seemed this season, whether this was indicative of when I was able to get out or because it was catching up after a delayed start I'm not sure? They seemed to do quite well this year over this way. Two main things struck me this year. The first was that I saw quite a lot low down on the ground. There were quite a few involved in aerial battles, zipping out from the Cypress for a quick skirmish at my Duke site, but then quite a number landed down on the deck in amongst the grass. They could have been females but I wasn't always sure though one definitely was as she tried to deposit some eggs.

The second thing was the increase in the punctata form that I saw. I have photos of three definites from two sites but I do recall seeing a few more at my Duke Site. I can't recall seeing this many but perhaps it's the 'usual' proportion and the increase in this form was merely more noticeable due to the good year for them?



38 Brown Hairstreak, 07-08-2016 Shipton Bellinger

When it comes to considering the Brostreaks I feel all out of sorts. Firstly it felt like I'd seen them earlier but actually my first came four days later. Then the males seemed to be doing quite well with 5 all visible from one position at the Shipton Hotspot. Though this was a bit of a concern as they weren't elsewhere. I walked round the entire site without encountering any males anywhere bar this little patch of hedge. On subsequent visits their numbers seemed lower than before and again I only encountered them in two places over the whole visit; back at the hedge hotspot and one solitary female in the little thicket next to the main road behind the hedge. In previous years I encountered them from about 50m along the path from the car park, on both sides of the hedges and at various places on the way to the hotspot. Perhaps the Japanese pilferer that was shovelling them into a Tupperware container in 2015 had had a deleterious effect on the population? Or perhaps they put on a better showing during my time away from Shipton? Either way I hope that more normal service is resumed with the Hairstreaks in 2017...



39 Purple Hairstreak, 02-07-2016 Bentley Wood

My first Purple Hairstreak came 9 days earlier this year from Bentley Wood as per usual. I was only able to make two trips to Bentley but I found Purple Hairstreaks on both occasions in various places scattered throughout the wood. This was quite reassuring and they definitely seemed to be in higher numbers than the last couple of years. My main bug bear though was that none came down anywhere near low enough for a photo, not even a heavily cropped record shot. All were flitting high up from one tree to another. I think one year I'll have to bite the bullet and try Brown Down with it's miniature Oaks...

40 White-letter Hairstreak, 02-07-2016 Bentley Wood

My first Whitter came on the same day and from the same site as my first Purp. But this is where the similarity in their tales ceases. The Whitter I saw was 9 days early which hopefully explains why I saw only one at the top of the Wytch Elm near the memorial. Otherwise it turns to a tormented tragic tale of woe. For not only did I see a single Whitter all season but the stand of suckers that has been their stronghold is in serious trouble and I'm left hoping that a sucker will grow quickly enough to provide the colony with a new home before their current abode declines any further.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-Mar-17 10:59 AM GMT

That seems a great shot of the PHS to me Wurzel 🍷 Love the BHS has well 🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 28-Mar-17 08:30 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I love that initial Brown Hairstreak image with the out of focus yellow flowers in the background 🍷 🍷

It is never easy to assess how well these species have done with their elusive nature meaning that they can easily be overlooked. I totally missed White-letters last year and the only Purples I saw were high up around the tops of Oaks.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by NickMorgan, 28-Mar-17 08:39 PM GMT

Nice pictures Wurzel.

You are up to No 40 now. Are all of these butterfly species reasonably local to you?

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 28-Mar-17 09:48 PM GMT

The male Brown Hairstreak is deserving of much 🍷, Wurzel – I have yet to get more than a glimpse of one, let alone a photo... 😊

dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Mar-17 06:50 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Shipton Bellinger is a great site for low down male Brown Hairstreaks if you're down this way... 😊😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I know what you mean, often it's a case of 'well what do you reckon stomach?' 😊 And then the only answer I ever get back is 'Curry' 😊

Cheers Nick 😊 Of the 40 so far all bar three can be found within 35 minutes of my home. Lulworth Skipper is about 45–55 minutes away depending on traffic so reasonably local, just, and for Wood White I have to travel to Botany Bay and it's Hutchinsons Bank for Glanvilles. This is a great area for butterflies the only thing I find frustrating is that there seems to be between a 1 to 2 week delay from the first sightings in the South East and over here in the West. So even if I wasn't so tardy at posting my sightings they'd still be considered 'old news' 😊😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Try and get over to Shipton Bellinger this year when the Brostreaks first start emerging. Alners Gorse is also good, often with the first sightings as well as Whitters and Purps although it's a lot further to travel.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 31-Mar-17 08:10 PM GMT

Really enjoyed your write up about the Hairstreaks Wurzel, in particular BH

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Mar-17 11:57 PM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 Only a couple more to go and then 2016 can be put to rest,

April 2017

Hopefully the good weather will continue for those that have already had it and things will improve over here in the Westcountry where it's been okay but not as good as elsewhere...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 01-Apr-17 07:01 AM GMT

Lets hope the Westcountry weather comes up trumps around May 20th !.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Apr-17 12:57 PM GMT

Yes I hope so to Trevor, middle of May hope fully but either Dorset or Cornwall for us. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Apr-17 10:31 PM GMT

Fingers crossed that things stay on track for a normal spring Trevor and Goldie, lets hope the jet stream plays ball this year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 01-Apr-17 10:40 PM GMT

Fingers heavily crossed here, Wurzel, and that lovely Duke photo on the calendar makes me think that the first ones will be out at any time if the weather continues kind... 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Apr-17 11:57 PM GMT

Middle Street 25-03-2017

Well what a day it turned out to be today, cracking weather and a reasonable time slot in which to enjoy it with the prospect of some delicious scran in the evening! The morning started off in a normal fashion but once the jobs were done, the bank had been visited etc and little L was off to her dancing lesson I grabbed the camera and jumped in the car. Where to go? Possibly a little too early for Specklies so a "no" to The Devenish, Five Rivers I've already visited and I fancied a Peacock so it had to be Middle Street.

As I waited at one of many sets of traffic lights on my way out of the city a Peregrine flew over the roofs of the shops as did a Small Tort and a Brimstone flew over the White Hart. I knew then that it was going to be a cracking visit. A further three Brimstones put in an appearance on the remains of the drive and before I knew it I was pulled up, kitted up and strolling along the grassed path on site heading towards the hotspot. Once settled down, sitting on my haunches, and watched over the small bowl that is sheltered from the wind that can cut across the rest of the site. I didn't have to wait long as a Brimstone flew languidly over and then I noticed a brown butterfly deep within the bowl – a Small Tort.



I took a little stroll to stretch my legs and went round the pond once. On the more sheltered side a distant orange blob became a Comma but I was only able to get a few record shots before it was disturbed by a dog flew up into a tree. On the further side there was another Small Tort – this one looking worn around the edges with all the blue triangles missing.



After this I settled back down at the hotspot with only an occasional foray out to briefly check along the river side. I sat at the top of the bowl and when something landed I'd stalk down get a few shots and then edge my way back out. This technique worked for the numerous Small Torts (maximum count of three at one time although I'm sure that several others dropped in and out) and the single Brimstone that actually landed but not so well for the odd Comma that dropped in. For them I found it easier to keep an eye on the white blossom as I could creep up on them easier. Eventually the inevitable happened and a small bat glided into view, did a couple of circuits and then dropped down to the deck, only it wasn't a bat it was a Peacock. I only had time for a record shot before a belligerent Small Tort drove it out of the bowl. This happened a further four times but each time I got a little closer until I had a more passable record shot.



After this I made my way round the whole site to make a count. I recorded 2 male and a female Brimstone, a single Comma and 14 Small Torts and one maybe two Peacocks. Not a bad tally but with the cold wind whipping across the site I reckon there could have been more keeping their heads down. The wind was quite chilly and so I made my way back to the hotspot to warm up and see if I could get even closer views of a Peacock. On the way I phoned my wife to see if she wanted me to come and meet her. This is a good idea as when I ask this I generally get 'no you stay out' as a response 😊. On the way back a white fluttered by. It was too small to be a female Brimstone and not 'green' enough, also there was a clear contrast between the black body and white wings. I managed a couple of record shots and with some zooming in I could see that I had my first Small White.







Back at the hotspot the lack of Small Torts meant that when a Peacock did land there was nothing to disturb it but despite being able to approach it had a sizeable chunk missing from its wing. The hotspot it seemed had served its purpose by now and as I left only a single Small Tort was left holding its territory. I decided to head on home, always a good plan to arrive home earlier than expected 😊 but on the way I made a stop near a pile of brush cuttings and hold trees. A Peacock was basking here and would fly a short way before settling to bask in a different spot. It meant I finally got the close ups that I'd been after and it meant that my departure was made with a spring in my step. 😊



That's how the day was to end so I thought. But as I was turning the car at the end of the road I spotted something on the small bank. I pulled in and

what I'd spotted was a Comma, just to the left of it was a Small Tort and then a Peacock flew over the hedge and landed before both the Comma and Small tort set about it. As all three spiralled upwards a second Comma landed briefly only to take off after a Brimstone. It was like my morning in a microcosm!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Apr-17 09:19 AM GMT

Sorry Dave I missed your comment 😊 Cheers for the kind comment about the calendar shot 😊 I seem to recall a few years back that we had a great year and it started early and there were Pearls, Greenstreaks and Dukes flying from April onwards 😊 Fingers and toes crossed 🙏😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 02-Apr-17 06:19 PM GMT

Good to see that Spring has caught up with you, a great selection there. Also great to read a prompt Wurzel report.

All the best,
Trevor.

PS. Flying visit to Great Cheverell tomorrow, only staying one night.

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 02-Apr-17 08:34 PM GMT

I love the backlit Tortoiseshell on the blackthorn, Wurzel. A spring photo par excellence. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Apr-17 11:54 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Things are going on a pace at the moment – I got my first Specklies and OTs yesterday and my first Large White today 😊 Still no Holly Blue though 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I was chuffed with that one – sometimes (sometimes very, very rarely) butterflies pose 'just so' 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 03-Apr-17 07:26 AM GMT

Your Green Hairstreak sighting is certainly early, but i'm not surprised at where it was seen. That place was heaving with them last year.

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 03-Apr-17 07:51 PM GMT

Some more great reports and photos Wurzel 😊

I see there have been a few Green Hairstreak sightings around the country – the first was in Cumbria about a week ago – so well worth looking out for.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Apr-17 12:11 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Hopefully they'll last until 20th May 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Things are coming on nicely – we just need to keep a look out for Grizzlies next 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by sonomoha, 05-Apr-17 12:34 AM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

Things are coming on nicely – we just need to keep a look out for Grizzlies next 😊

Alright then, are you gents having some places there to plant a tent ? I am craving to see butterflies but the reserves around Bristol are quite shy for now 😊😊

Really impressive count Wurzel. congratulations ! 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Apr-17 08:26 AM GMT

Cheers Sonohoma 😊 I know what you mean as on some visits I've made it's been really quiet – but then I have a good day when there's loads about – things are defo on the way up though 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 05-Apr-17 03:40 PM GMT

Your very lucky seeing all those Butterflies in one go Wurzel, 😊 it seems ages since I saw the Small White's last week, no Whites sighted since, it's been too cold for them, roll on weekend when it's warmer, at least we've made a start though with the Comma's etc, Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Apr-17 08:57 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully the weather will continue to improve as I'm getting by on 'smash and grab' at the moment, I'm really starting to envy those people that are retired or able to choose when they can have their days off 🍷

The Blues



41 Small Copper, 08-05-2016 Duke Site

My first Small Copper of the year came again from my Duke site and at a time when everything was running late this species came in relatively early, only 5 days later than last year. Over the course of the season I found P.C.s at three other sites; Martin Down, Shipton Bellinger and also up The Lane in Wales. On all occasions I never saw more than 2 and this fact coupled with their absence from Larkhill and The Devenish makes me slightly worried about their security.



42 Small Blue, 22-05-2016 Hutchinson's Bank

It's difficult to say how Small Blue fared this year as I had limited experiences with them. The first came a day earlier than in 2016 from Hutchinson's Bank. That was only a singleton and as it was my first it didn't provide me with much insight. The second site I found Small Blues in two or three areas which suggested a more reasonable showing although I never saw more than two at any one time so perhaps they didn't have a good year? Unfortunately I didn't pay trips to Martin Down or my Duke site at around the correct time so I can't confirm my suspicions.



43 Silver-studded Blue, 19-06-2016 Slop Bog

This species seemed to have an alright year, nothing special and nothing to worry about. I saw good numbers at Slop Bog despite the onset of cooler, duller and slightly damper weather. The heathlands becoming much more of a lowland bog than I've ever seen before. I also found them at various places across my Godshill hotspot when looking for Grayling. The one thing I did notice was that they were 16 days later than in 2016. I don't think this was down to the lateness of my visit because the records were hardly pouting in from the rest of the country and I made my visit relatively early in the Slop Bog flight.





44 Brown Argus, 28-05-2016 The Devenish

Patchy - that's the word that first comes into my head when I start considering the Brown Argus. They were three weeks later this year, but then most species were late, hammered by the really cold snap in March/April. It was probably for this reason that the 1st brood seemed down compared to the later broods?

I saw BAs at the usual range of sites with the addition of Lulworth Cove but I only saw one at Larkhill which I would have been more worried about if it wasn't for the fact that all species seemed 'down' here. Possibly the sward was too high and dense crowding out the other species or at the other extreme the hotspot hadn't recovered from the grazing by the Travellers ponies last year? On a more positive note they seemed to be doing well at The Devenish and this site continued to offer up a nice range of variants.





45 Common Blue, 22-05-2016 Hutchinson's Bank

My first came 4 days later this year from Hutchinson's Bank. As this is so far east I wasn't surprised that it was about a week later before I started seeing them back on home turf as we're generally behind when it comes to emergences. Butterflies are like the sun it seems; rising in the east. I don't know if it was because I was distracted by other species but I felt like the Common Blues were slightly down, the first generation in particular? This could be explained by a more protracted season. I was seeing decent looking Blues through September with my final sightings at the end of the month. A really fresh CB was even reported in October so perhaps the numbers were the same just spread over a longer time frame?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 06-Apr-17 09:06 PM GMT

That's a lovely selection to whet the appetite, Wurzel – it won't be long now before we see all these again. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-17 10:17 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Some of them have already started appearing 😊 Hopefully get onto some Grizzlies this weekend, fingers crossed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 07-Apr-17 07:59 PM GMT

Blimey Wurzel, you threw me a bit there...seeing your recent posts from this year and then being confronted with some of those Blues, I thought they can't be out already 😊 ...and then it clicked 😊

Like Dave says, a lovely selection to look forward to 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Pete Eeles, 07-Apr-17 08:04 PM GMT

Neil Freeman wrote:

Blimey Wurzel, you threw me a bit there...seeing your recent posts from this year and then being confronted with some of those Blues, I thought they can't be out already 😊 ...and then it clicked 😊

😊 Yeah – they threw me too 😊 I almost changed my plans for tomorrow!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-17 10:43 PM GMT

Sorry Neil and Pete – I think I might need to make the text of the dates a little bigger 😊 In my defence I only have one more post of the '2016 Tally' to go and I'm only 14 days behind on my PD now, which is very close to a Personal Best for me 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-17 11:55 PM GMT

Work 30-03-2017

I'm only posting this for the sake of completeness...and also because I need to 'just get on with it'...

Another quick trip out to make the most of the reasonable weather was actually less productive than I hoped. There was a strong breeze and a real chill in the air. As I walked past the allotments there was only a single Small Tort and as I carried on the breeze rolled cloud over the sun. As I reached the hotspot a single Small Tort took nectar in what remained of the sun but it was very flighty and took off for the other side of the fence. A walk to the end of the path produced only a distant Small Tort in a garden but it was now cold enough to make me regret not wearing a jumper so slightly disheartened I headed back to work picking up an Oil Beetle on the way.



As the Law of Sod predicts as I made my way back the breeze dropped, the sun came back out and so did the butterflies. First a fly-by Brimstone and then a fly-by Peacock. All too soon I was trapped back at work with a tally of 5 butterflies of 3 species.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 08-Apr-17 09:57 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I agree about the chilly breeze this past week, only yesterday did I see any real Butterfly action. One highlight has been the huge number of Holly Blues, both in the church grounds ,and the pub.

No image yet though 😞 .

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Apr-17 11:53 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 You're lucky with the Holy Blues, I'm still looking for my 'regular site' - if only I had somewhere like Dave Miller 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Apr-17 07:50 AM GMT

Five Rivers 01-04-2017

As little L now has dancing on a Saturday I'm able to nip off for an hour while my wife 'gets the goss' like a proper Dance Mom. I took K and we headed over to Five Rivers. On the way I quizzed K, aka The Oracle, and I got a prediction that we would see Red Admiral, Orange-tip and Specklies! We parked and then having loaded up with the kit we cut across to take the riverside path that winds its way through the trees to Comma Corner and The Banks. We'd barely set foot on the reserve proper when I spied a white butterfly. I followed it hoping that it would land and thinking that I might be able to get a decent shot of a Small White. It made towards the foliage on the side of the river and then I caught a glimpse of a Red Admiral out of the corner of my eye. The White spooked the Red Admiral and I was left in a quandary - what to follow? Go for my first decent shot of a Red Admiral or

Small White? The decision was made for me with the Red Admiral flying off strongly to my left and the White disappearing from view. So I'd missed out on both! Slightly dejectedly I turned to follow the path to my right and there was the White. As I crept up to it, it landed and instead of a triangle of yellow white it became a broken blob a little like a bird dropping. My first Orange-tip and unexpectedly a female (2-0 to the Oracle).



We then set up camp on a bench near Comma Corner so K could have her lunch. In between bites of sandwich I made little forays out to Comma Corner and the little field behind the spinney. Comma Corner was quiet but the little patch held two Commas and one and a half Small Torts – a Stumpy for 2017.



Once the Oracle was replenished we set off to do a circuit. At Comma Corner a small dark butterfly buzzed me, a Specklie. Then another, or more likely the first on again landed so I could get a shot or three. Chuffed with the success (3-0 to the Oracle) the active hunting became more of a stroll and we settled into a blissful rhythm of stroll and chat, a few shots by more or K, then stroll and chat etc. On our first stop K was heading towards a patch of Bluebells on the side of the Bank when a cream tangerine hove into view. Unbelievably it landed wings wide open – my first male Orange-tip!



In the end we covered the whole site with the odd Small Tort appearing here and there before ending up back at the patch behind Comma Corner where we played a game of 'spot the butterfly'. I saw a Small Tort and a Comma and once K had caught me up she got onto them right away too - the training of my young Padawan is going well 😊.



After this it was homewards but as little L was so tired after her dancing we didn't get to go out again. Fingers crossed this weather holds until next weekend!
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Apr-17 04:00 PM GMT

Wow Wurzel, I reckon we're about a week behind you here, I just saw my first Speckie today and only two Orange Tips sighted by Lanc's Butterfly Conservation's reports so far and the weather's turned cooler this afternoon and the Sun's disappeared, let's hope it's good for Easter. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-17 11:31 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I know what you mean we're about a week behind the South East round our way. Currently experiencing the joys of queuing at Legoland 😊 Still just seen a Specklie and a Peacock 😊
Have a goodun
Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Apr-17 11:01 PM GMT

Kingston Lacey 02-04-2017

The good weather continued and so to make the most of it we went for a family day out at Kingston Lacey - well I say family day out, little L was with her Nanny so I had one less pair of eyes to rely on. On the journey down things were really quiet with only a single Brimstone in Wimborne. Once we entered things continued in the same vein with singles of both Small Tort and Brimstone while we ate our lunch and petted the House cat. My wife was most put-out when after sitting with us and receiving copious amounts of fuss it sat up, stretched, gave us a slow blink/kiss and sodded off to another family who were just laying out their picnic rug! 😊

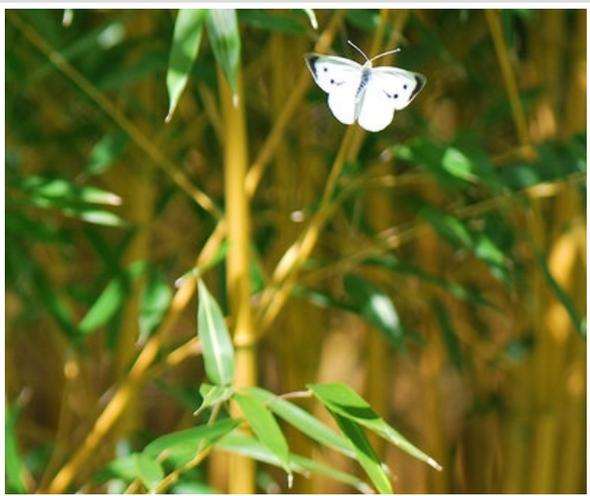


We then followed the usual route to the shade garden (Specklie), the Bluebell walk (though with plenty of Daffs instead), through the wood (3 Brimstones) ending up at the Allotments and the Veggie Garden where a male OT and Peacock both did a fly-by. At the Allotments there was a second Small Tort but apart from the Specklie and a single brief Brimstone nothing was stopping.



After a suitable break we made our way to the Pacific Island garden. This is a personal favourite of mine as it's a great little hang out for butterflies. It's been created in a bowl screened by the surrounding trees and bamboo. This means that it gets very little wind and traps the sun. This is further accentuated by the small areas where shrubs had previously been uprooted. The bare soil heats up like a little butterfly steam bath! I took a look around with a couple more Brimstones for my trouble and the things picked up nicely. An Orange-tip did a fly through and then something larger and almost black landed. I gingerly approached and managed a few shots and then backed out and away and it stayed there the whole time. Then a white freaked it out and it took off. The white looked interesting, it was much too large for a Green-veined or Small so I followed it but it landed at the top of a tree. Stretching my arms up to their full reach and balancing on tip-toes I was just able to get a distant shot of it through the leaves. It then took off and as it fluttered down lower I fired off a few shots in Sports mode which meant I was able to ID it as a definite female Large White. Luckily it landed and took nectar from several sources so I was able to get a few closer shots to add to the distant and in flight one.







I took another stroll around and behind between the bamboo and the bank demarcating the path I found a Comma hiding away. It was busy feeding so I got a nice side view and then managed to work my way round behind it so it looks a little like a strangely marked set of petals, a 'proper' butterfly Orchid!





A further stroll around didn't add anything to the daily tally of species but it did throw up a Specklie when I went a bit further afield of the Pacific Garden, almost back into the wood. After this we made our way slowly back with only another/the original Peacock turning up over some Cheery Tree blossom at the Japanese garden.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 13-Apr-17 08:35 PM GMT

Wurzel, Nice shots from Kingston Lacey. I'm particularly fond of the Large White in flight. You can have a lot of fun in sport mode 😊

Regards Kev

Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 13-Apr-17 09:01 PM GMT

What a lovely family day out Wurzel, sounds like the butterflies were the icing on the cake.
Can't blame the cheeky cat for trying it's luck, I'm sure it was just as ungrateful to the next family.

ATB

James

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Apr-17 09:59 PM GMT

Cheers Rex 😊 It was a great day. We've encountered the Cat before and it did the same exact thing last time, we've only got ourselves to blame for being suckered in a second time and I daresay we will be again 😊😊

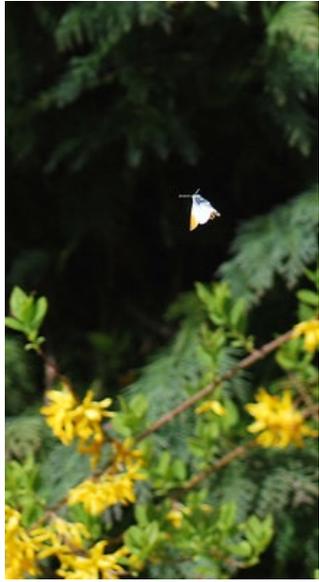
Cheers Kev 😊 I love Sports mode the only draw back is that the light always seems quite harsh when I use it 😊 Specking of which...

Enford stop-off

It's gotten to that time of year again when I start making stop-offs on the way home. This early in the season it's generally for 5 minutes or so as there isn't too much about and most of the stuff that is about is rather frustrating in that it keeps on patrolling, never ceasing and always on the go. I generally set the camera to Sports mode clock away at roughly where my target is and then hope that maybe one shot comes off. Two years ago I got really lucky in that a male OT stopped for long enough for me to make a close approach now I stop-off in the vain hope that history will repeat itself.

05-04-2017

Having spent all day inside either work, a coach or the Living Rainforest I felt like I needed a break and so I stopped very briefly on the way home. On the way I spied a couple of Brimstones and when I cautiously pulled round a sharp corner I was rewarded for my slow speed with a male OT. At the lay-by I grabbed my camera, locked the car and then took a couple of steps back to see what would fly into view. After a very short time a Brimstone flew by and upset an OT which must have been resting low down in the foliage. This was how it continued for most of the time I was here - a Brimstone would fly by and be intercepted/intercept and OT, there would be a bit of argy-bargy and then they would continue off on their way.



Eventually I tried a different ploy and set off back up the road following a single male OT. Every now and again he would revisit an area and fly slowly around it before carrying on his way almost as if he was teasing me; "I might land here...oh no I'm off again, where will I land?" When he did come down it was up high on a steeply sloping part of the bank. I had to climb up one handed, hang onto a branch of a small tree and take my shots with the other hand. When he set off again I kicked off against the side of the bank like an abseiler and jumped back down to the road. I tried to keep up with him but got waylaid when a small blue butterfly fluttered down from a stand of Ivy. It didn't hang about either but I could confirm it as my first Holly Blue of the year.



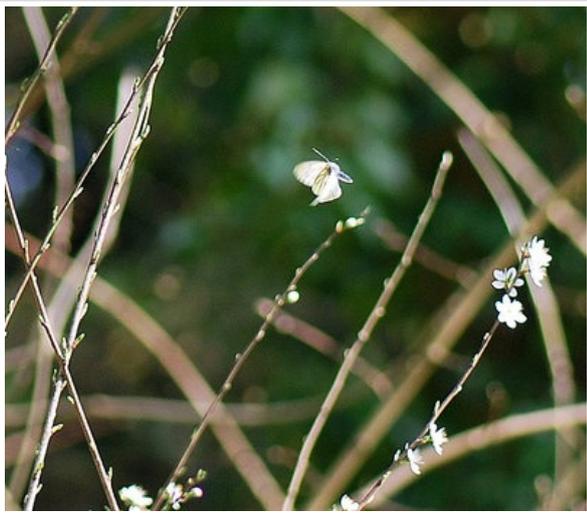


There is a Holly Blue there honest - not quite a Dave Miller shot!

06-04-2017

Almost immediately I pull in I spy a male OT patrolling and a smaller white. They approach each other from opposite sides of the lay-by, meet and spiral upwards locked in some form of mortal combat only to separate again and continue on their way. Frustratingly the white stayed high so I couldn't make a positive ID. Oh well there was another OT to distract me. I tried the same tactic of following one like yesterday to even less effect although it was a Specklie that fluttered down today and not a Holly Blue.

Back at the lay-by I was revisited by the white and this time sports mode gave me just enough detail to ID it as my first Green-veined White of the year. Hopefully sometime soon I'll be able to spend some quality time with the species I've recently added tot eh yearly tally in order that I can get some decent shots but until then the grab/record ones will have to suffice.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 14-Apr-17 10:43 AM GMT

Love the Green veined White Wurzel great shot for Spring Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by NickMorgan, 14-Apr-17 07:51 PM GMT

Good to hear that you are seeing a reasonable number of butterflies. Any you are remarkably up-to-date with your diary! 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-17 08:27 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully I'll be able to catch up with a few more but I'm in Wales for the next week and the weather doesn't look favourable 😞
Cheers Nick 😊 As I'm so up to date I think I might have a little break 😊

Happy Easter (or equivalent seasonal greeting)
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-Apr-17 10:55 AM GMT

Good luck in Wales Wurzel, it's been awful here weather wise but it's early days yet, hope fully next week will be better, HAPPY EASTER, Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 16-Apr-17 11:18 AM GMT

Yep, good luck in Wales Wurzel. I am off next week too...no particular plans but some work on the house to do and hopefully squeezing in some butterflying, weather permitting.

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-17 11:54 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie and Neil 😊 After the weather we had today that luck is even more important 😊

Blues Part 2



46 Chalkhill Blue, 22-07-2016 The Devenish

This actually emerged at roughly the same time but other than this it was quite a disappointment as they were well down and in some cases they were non-existent. My first was from The Devenish and it was an aberrant with hardly any markings on the hind wings, one of which was slightly stunted giving it a very slightly Swallowtail appearance. After this I really struggled to find them at the Devenish on subsequent visits and I didn't see a single one at either my Duke Site or Broughton Down. There were also very few at Martin Down and towards the middle of August when I visited they were outnumbered by Adonis Blues from their second brood.



47 Adonis Blue, 29-05-2016 Marshie Site

I found my first Adonis a week earlier this year at my Marshie site. This is much further West than The Devenish (where I found my first of 2015) and so bears out an idea that I've mentioned before. Whilst Wiltshire is generally a week or two behind the South East in terms of emergences when things do start to happen in this part of the county it happens in the West first and then works its way back along the valley eastwards. Overall Adonis seemed to have a good year. I found them at all the expected sites and the second brood in particular seemed more numerous. They definitely did better than their cousins the Chalkhills.



48 Holly Blue, 06-05-2016 Work

This species had an amazing lie-in this year being almost an entire month later! But when they did appear they were on the upswing towards a 'Boom' moving rapidly away from 'Bust'. It must have been a good lie-in and I remember particularly picking K up from Stagecoach in the spring and spying 3 individuals along one piece of hedge. The second brood was also strong and ever so at Shipton Bellinger where I was lucky enough to find my second pair of mating Holly Blues (I thought at the time it was my first). Perhaps I should visit here in the spring as I'm still struggling to get those classic open wing shots and there were so many here I might be able to pick a few up - failing that I think I need to encourage Dave Miller to go on tour with his 'HB Whispering Show'!



49 Large Blue, 26-06-2016 Daneways

What a species to finish with. My number 49 and taking me to my largest ever yearly total. It's actually very difficult to make comparisons for this species as I viewed them at Daneway Banks instead of Collard Hill. Hence I can't tell if they were 6 days later or on time from a more Northern site? The general consensus is that they had good year and this seems born out by the good numbers that Philzoid and I found. It was fantastic to wander and see them across the site, it's definitely on the schedule for next year.





The 2016 Season

Lows

The year was hard going again hit by a cold snap just as things were about to get going which put everything back. Then even though the summer was much better – warm and dry – the butterfly numbers didn't really pick up and at times it was hard going finding the species.

The worryingly low numbers of Dukes, Small Pearls, White Admirals and golden Skippers.

I wasn't able to pick up a new UK lifer this year; too much time spent working and there was a poor showing from the Long-tailed Blues. I also got a poor return from the family holiday to Lisbon.

Highs

Trips to new sites paid dividends as I finally made it to Hutchinson's Bank to reacquaint myself with Glannies and also the marvellous Daneways.

I had a good year with aberrants – with representatives from Brown Argus, Adonis Blues, Chalkhills, Brown and Green Hairstreaks and the unforgettable Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

Finally finding a site with regular Orange-tips

The biggest personal high was reaching 49 – my best ever total over a year.

Targets for 2017...

1. Add to my UK list – possibly Blackstreak or a British High Brown Fritillary.
2. See if I can equal the 49 total.
3. Get decent shots of White Admiral, Wall and Purple Emperor to make up for the lack of them this year.
4. Hopefully witness an upturn in the fortunes of butterflies.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Apr-17 07:43 AM GMT

Vera Jones 07-04-2017

Somehow I'd made it! Don't ask me whether it was the caffeine, the red wine, re-watching Red Dwarf or the fact that I'd been out and seen some butterflies as I couldn't tell all I knew was that I'd gotten to the end of term. True I was falling to pieces – mouth ulcers, heart palpitations, I'd forgotten what a full night's sleep felt like but I was still (barely) alive. And so to celebrate I called in for half an hour or so at Vera Jones Mill on the way home.

With the changes made to timings of the school day I hadn't been able to get here yet this year so I had high hopes of bagging some OTs. Instead of cutting straight across the fields and down to the Fen I made my way round the edge of the field and down. This ends up at exactly the same stile but there's more of a chance of a butterfly on the way. This time it was a Peacock which flew up from the ground and disappeared from view. Slightly further down I tried for a few inflight shots of an OT with limited success and the Peacock made an appearance this time flying close and fast over my head before alighting very high up amongst the blossom.



I then made my way over the stile and onto the boardwalk taking it towards the right and so more quickly to the Fen. As I made my way through the gate another Peacock took flight from the edge of the raised stony path and as I watched it I spied the familiar flash of orange of a male OT. Unfortunately it was right on the other side of the Fen and probably as far away from the boardwalk as could be so I settled for making my way out across it and kept wandering forward and backwards across every time an OT hove into view. I'm not really sure how many there were but I saw at least three males all at the same time. Eventually they started coming a little closer and then closer still until I was finally able to kneel down and lean out over the Fen to get a few shots.



Chuffed that they'd played ball I set off to continue along the boardwalk for the rest of its circuitous route through the more wooded Fen. I stopped just as it was about to make the curve back towards the stile and watched as a Peacock explored an adjacent field and two male OTs sparred with each other completely oblivious to the female that fluttered by underneath them as they spiralled upwards locked in combat. They broke apart and one of them set off possibly looking for the female and the other went off to harass a passing Small White. After this little spectacle I realised that I hadn't taken a single shot and so carried on round with the path to the start. Once there I was able to enjoy another spectacle as three males Brimstones chased down a female. Well I say 'chased down' it was more like three males mooching about until a female went by and then they set off. As they left a smaller white flew up and landed again about a metre from where it had taken off. I cautiously approached it as the flight seemed like that of a Green-veined White (though I'm not sure why I thought his?) and that's what it appeared to be. It took off again and flew between the wires of the fence back into the field but landed again so now I was able to get a topline shot of it.



I finished up with another quick check of the Fen. Again there was a maximum count of three male OTs but I also found a good little spot. The raised stone path runs across the Fen at right angles to the boardwalk and turns into a path through the surrounding fields. Quite near the end there was a patch of particularly damp patch of Fen with a nice collection of Cuckoo Flower and I found that the OTs seemed to like this spot so I waited and watched and then one landed I got my shots.





All in all a fantastic start to the holiday!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 18-Apr-17 09:33 AM GMT

Top class images there Wurzel. Spring captured to perfection. Butterflies are brilliant for relieving stress !!.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 18-Apr-17 07:33 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

... Then even though the summer was much better - warm and dry...

I keep reading this about last summer but that was not my experience here in the midlands, lots of cloud and a cool breeze from the north/north-west most of the time which made for a very challenging year. I actually saw more butterflies in the now legendary 'washout' year of 2012. Mind you I didn't go further south than the midlands until September last year so my perspective is skewed a bit.

Great 2016 roundup Wurzel 😊 and some great spring images in your last report 😊

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 18-Apr-17 08:19 PM GMT

The underside shot of the Orange Tip on the cuckoo flower is an absolute cracker of a photo and quite possibly my favourite ever of this species. I tried to emulate it today, but got nowhere near... 🙄 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Apr-17 08:16 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 It was a cracking half hour and I drove away from the site like a new man 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Sorry about 'rubbing it in' - we can often forget that what we experience in one part of the country can be really different from elsewhere and sometimes we need to step out of our local bubble 😊 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 😊 I've been trying for one like that for a while now and it seemed on that day fate was smiling on me kindly 😊

Duke Site 08-04-2017

With both Greenstreaks and Grizzlies being recorded at other sites around the country I wondered if there might be some already out at my Duke site? It was worth a chance and so once little L had finished her dancing we got into the prepacked car and away we went.

On the journey there I counted 11 Brimstones, a female OT, a male OT and an UFW. Things were looking good and I practically jumped out of the car when we arrived. But I was greeted by a strange site - all the fields that before were a sea of long grasses punctuated with islands of shrubbery were uniform - short and green. Also the path/hotspot of previous years was ripped and gouged by tank tracks. This might be a good thing, a clearing back of the old stifling plants and a breaking up of the compacted hard path as it will give new plants light and soil they can penetrate. At least this is what I'm hoping...

I set up base camp by the clump of Hawthorns adjacent to the Cypress tree and took my first wander around. I don't recall coming to this site this early so perhaps I shouldn't have been surprised again to set it looking so sparse with the vegetation low to the ground? A Peacock was spooked but there were no small fluffy grey Grizzlies nor any piratical Greenstreaks so I made my way up to the Duke hotspot from last year. It was quiet here too with the occasional Brimstone. We moved basecamp to this area so that I could check out a couple of other areas on the other side of the trees. Again it was quiet and over the course of my sojourns I saw a Small White, a couple of male Orange-tips, another Peacock, a Comma and many Brimstones. None of these stopped long enough for a photo so I headed back to the girls slightly dejectedly. We decided to try our luck at The Devenish and so packed up and made our way back to the car stopping just long enough for a Peacock (possibly the original) and a Small Tort.



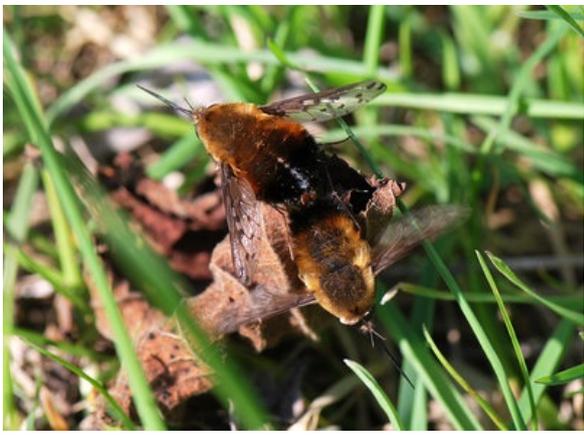
On the journey over I noted a Holly Blue in Tidworth and the odd Brimstone but to be honest I was mulling over why there were no Grizzlies? Once in the car park we were greeted by a Brimstone and a Holly Blue which weakly fluttered from one tree to another on the other side of the path. I was hoping to watch it land but a Blackbird came hurtling down the path at the moment and I can't work out whether it took the HB or whether that it was sent careering off course due to the wake from the Blackbird. Either way it was gone so I'll have to wait a little longer for my Holly Blue. Instead a Comma landed and posed nicely for us all to admire.



In the Orchard Meadow the girls set up camp in the shade and so I made my way up the Down. A Peacock fly overhead as if to encourage me and in the scallop at the very top near the fence a Specklie tried to hide in amongst the nettles. Again all was quiet and so I wandered along the top of the Down and was able to find a Small Tort and then another by the time I'd reached the opposite side of the reserve.



Having worked my way back to the girls we watched a male OT patrol for a bit and then packed up to head homewards. We climbed the penultimate gate into the small field when a Red Admiral buzzed me, then a Brimstone hove into view followed by a pair of male OTs in quick succession. K pointed out a butterfly landing in a nettle patch further up the Down. It was the Red Admiral and so I set off to see if I could finally bag me some shots. As I approached I slowed down, positioned my camera ready and I was just about to 'click' when an errant Comma buzzed it and they both went spiralling upwards. I managed to follow them for a while but then they flew into the direct sun and I lost them. As I looked down I saw another Small Tort bumbling around looking a lot like a female searching for somewhere to lay. A few quick shots and a few of the Comma which had returned to Lord it from the Red Admirals spot and then I headed down the hill. The original Comma was there to wave us adieu as well as a Green-veined White.





So a case today of the right weather and being in the right place just unfortunately at the wrong time. 😞 The good weather has lulled me into expecting too much too soon. Whilst this is the type of weather I'd appreciate in May we're still only just into April so I think I need to give it a few days yet...saying that I wonder if anything's about at Martin Down yet?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Hulme, 19-Apr-17 09:39 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Nice shot of mating Dotted Bee-flies; the first I've seen! This far-from-common species is extending its currently restricted range – but still a notable sighting.

Plenty of cooler sites are yet to get going for butterflies – the best is yet to come.

BWs, Neil

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Apr-17 07:15 PM GMT

At last Wurzel, I got an Orange Tip 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 19-Apr-17 07:56 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

...Sorry about 'rubbing it in' – we can often forget that what we experience in one part of the country can be really different from elsewhere and sometimes we need to step out of our local bubble 😊😊

No worries Wurzel, I think we all do it a bit.

Although the internet can be a wonderful tool and a valuable resource, I think that is very easy to forget that seasons can vary a great deal around the country. Flight times and even numbers of broods of some species can be markedly different even here around my patch to those both further south and also further north than me.

Going by your last report, it seems like your Duke site is another good example.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 19-Apr-17 08:56 PM GMT

Some gorgeous vibrant images there Wurzel, still getting used to seeing in-season butterflies popping up on your diary though lol

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Apr-17 07:45 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 The anticipation is starting to get to me plus I've developed a serious bout of 'METisis' 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Yay for the OT 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 The weather has taken a turn for the not so good round here so things have slowed down noticeably – I my turn to be 'rubbed in' now 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I better get a move on and catch up else I'll be behind again before I now it 😊 Right where was I...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Apr-17 11:47 PM GMT

Martin Down 09-04-2017

After a pretty poor return from visits to both my Duke site and The Devenish and with the weather set to peak I headed out to Martin Down in the hope of some butterflies just waking up and before they got too solar charged. There was a hazy feel to the morning as I parked at the main car park and made my way through the 'island of scrub' to investigate the 'Skipper Scallops'. However after much mooching around and a single Peacock flying high over the scrub tops it became apparent that I was too early either in terms of time of day or emergence maybe even both. So I changed tack and set out to the half way point at Bokerley via the little patch behind the Butts. Skylarks were going crazy and their songs were interspersed with those of Yellowhammers, Chiff-chaffs and my first Whitethroat. I made it all the way to the patch behind the Butts before I saw my first butterfly; a Specklie appeared on a Bramble patch and stopped for three photos and then was gone.



I carried on to the half way point, reached it and then turned back to wind my way along the top of the Dyke. I'd worked my way to just about level with Butts where the Dyke levels out and so left the path to carefully work my way around the clumps of vegetation. Obviously not carefully enough as I almost tumbled on an Adder and it slithered off before I could get a shot off. Heart still pumping I made my way even more carefully towards the path to carry on along the Dyke. Something small and brown flew by and landed on a Dandelion. As I edged closer I thought I'd lost it but it was still there, the green triangle I thought was a leaf wasn't, it was my first Greenstreak, a two spotter (I've started already, I can't wait for the Hedge Browns). I spent some time with it cursing the less than brilliant light conditions as though I got my shots they didn't really shine out like they can on a bright blue sky day.





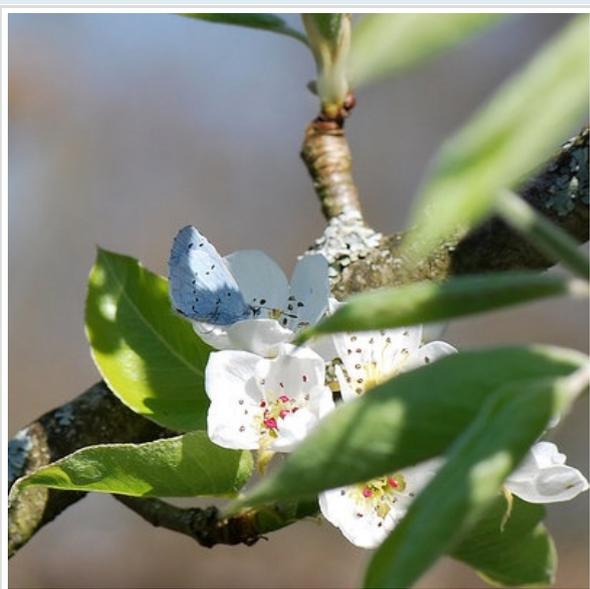
Leaving the Greeny in peace I carried on only to be brought to a swift stop as a female Brimstone looking like a ghost of a male hove into view.



From the Dyke I cut back in and headed to the scrub island to re-examine the scallops. Unfortunately there were still no Grizzlies or Dingies so I made one final pass. The final scallop saw me disturb a Comma so I checked the scrub just in case and one of the leaves didn't look right? It was a Brimstone backlit - I'm pretty fond of this type of shot.



After this in the afternoon we headed out to Mottisfont for an afternoon picnic. As we queued for the car park (it seems that everyone had had a similar idea) a Holly Blue planted itself perfectly in a Holly next to the car just to annoy me. Later despite almost perfect conditions my tally came to only a single OT upon entry along with another Holly Blue. A third provided a distant photo op at the Walled Garden and finally by the stream and mud park two a piece of Green-veined Whites and Specklies. Apart from the distant HB none gave any opportunities of a shot but never mind at least I got my Greenstreak!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 22-Apr-17 07:11 AM GMT

Very nice Green Hairstreak. Hoping to call in at 'The Hill' on my way home Monday, should be a few there by now. Winter woollies at the ready for next week! 😊

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 22-Apr-17 08:07 PM GMT

Love the Hair Streaks Wurzel but my favourite is the Holly Blue in the Blossom 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Apr-17 07:34 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 If The Hill is anything like my Duke site it will be crawling with the Green one – keep your eyes peeled as well as there may be a Duke about 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 That was taken using my 'extension tubes' – not proper camera gear just holding the camera out as far as my arms would extend 😊

Having gotten back from Wales I'm once again behind with my PD so U better get back to sorting all those photos...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Apr-17 11:23 PM GMT

Middle Street 12-04-2017

The weather was very changeable but after spending most of the day doing chores and shopping I really needed to get out. So I grabbed my camera and K and I headed out for some fresh air and a wander along the tow path. Having reached the Mill on the other side of the meadows we spied a male OT and so carried on our walk to check out Middle Street.

Once on site things weren't looking to hopeful with a cold wind and cloud covering the sun. The small stands of Cuckoo Flower on the edge of the football pitch were bereft of butterflies and so we carried on round to the more sheltered area and the hotspot. We were about half way there when I spied a broken white outline amongst the grass. Normally this is just some bird droppings that have painted the leaves but it's always a good idea to check them out as it could be an OT roosting, which in this case it turned out to be. As I cautiously approached the sun came out, of all the moments to! The OT took off but luckily for me landed again quite close by. I was able to stalk close enough to get a few shots before the sun had charged it sufficiently and it was off.



A couple of paces further along the path and a Specklie appeared. It too was quite flighty but after a bit of waiting and watching it seemed to disregard us so that I could also get a few shots. K and I then spent the next 10 minutes strolling around the pond, chatting and watching the action that ensued as there were now at least 2 different Specklies and three different male OTs around this little area.



As we were only going to be out for a 'quick' walk K and I decided to start making our way back. Our progress was hampered though as another white hove into few back by the small stand of Cuckoo Flower. I was hoping it would be a female OT but when it settled I could see the tell-tale markings of a Small White so I was finally able to catch up with this species photographically.



As we carried on home the odd male OT kept us company and a Holly Blue as well but what I enjoyed most was spending time with K who is growing up so fast...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 24-Apr-17 03:26 PM GMT

Your quite right Wurzel, time goes so quickly and looking back I treasure every moment I've had with my family and still do 😊
Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 26-Apr-17 03:24 PM GMT

Clouds are handy for settling Orange-tips 😊

Looking forward to meeting up at Bentley. May bring my 'grown-up' daughters along if I can drag them away from their lap-tops 😊

Phil

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 26-Apr-17 08:20 PM GMT

That beats any Small White photos I've managed this year, Wurzel! 😊 They have been most uncooperative and in fact nearly non-existent round here. I shall also be headed for Bentley at some point, and like Phil, possibly accompanied by a somewhat unwilling child welded to his i-Pad... 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Apr-17 06:43 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Is it just me or does time go even quicker as I get older 😊 The only plus side is that I'll be retired soon at this rate 😊 Only 27 more years 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 It's one of the few times I've been able to put the technique into practice - normally they're bombing around like they're on Meth-Amphetamine! 😊 Looking forward to the first meet up of the season too, not long to go now 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I seem to be able to get one decent set of shots for the whites this year and then they play complete hard ball so that could be my last Small White for a while 😊 Is it just me or do there seem to be fewer whites so far this year? 😊 iPads - how long before they're grafted on at birth 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 27-Apr-17 08:19 PM GMT

You're doing a brilliant job of keeping up-to-date with your 2017 diary entries, Wurzel 😊 😊 ...so far.

That's a stunner, the underside of the Orange-tip on the Cuckoo flower, you must have been full flat out to get that one 🤩 🤩

Lovely Green Hairstreaks too, one I've yet to encounter this year 😊

Mike

Re: Wurzel

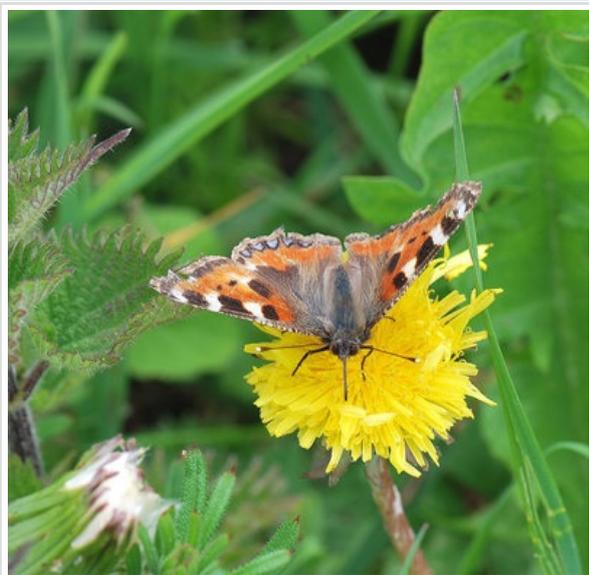
by Wurzel, 28-Apr-17 11:58 AM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 I was lucky that it landed close enough to the boardwalk that I could reach over from there – otherwise I wouldn't have gotten the shot 😊

Wales Easter 2017

So began one of the twice yearly trips to my Outlaws, this time on Easter Saturday and as usual the weather was great on the journey across and set to deteriorate almost as soon as we got there. Once the motorway dwindled to dual track I was astonished by the sheer number of Cuckoo Flowers growing on the verges and in the surrounding fields. I was even more astonished that over the course of the whole journey I saw only one Brimstone and my tally didn't get any higher despite a walk up The Lane.

Llanachaeron on Easter Sunday didn't produce anything and we were rained off once the Easter Eggs had been found. On Easter Monday we visited Aberystwyth my old stomping ground taking in the backstreets, the seafront, Inn at the Pier (where I met my wife) and the Castle. Despite the bright conditions there were still no butterflies although I did see a Whitearse/Wheatear amongst the rack and ruin. Finally on the return journey to the car I found three butterflies – 2 Small Torts and a Specklie all within 20 metres of each other along the Riverside path.





On the Tuesday we packed lunches and headed off on an Enid Blyton adventure (little L's idea egged on by her bigger sister), walking from Ffos-y-ffin along the coast to Newquay. Unfortunately and much to little L's dismay the local shop didn't sell 'lashings of Ginger Beer'. The walk started off quite slowly with a Red Admiral hanging off the wall of one of the local cottages and then a Small Tort bombing by over the top of a hedge as the path dove down towards the coast through the local farmland. Across a few more fields we carried on through a small wooded area disturbing a Specklie on the way and it settled a couple of times. Back out the other side to a riot of coconut and colour, the gorse was so bright it looked almost aflame and nestled in the florets amongst the various hoverflies and small bees was a green shieldbug which had a bright yellow tip to its rump.





After this the path kept hugging the cliff tops and a white flew by without stopping and we reached what was the favourite part of the walk. The path cut back inland slightly and down to a hanging valley. The river flowed down several small waterfalls and then flowed off the side of the cliff. The reason I liked the look of this place was the sheltered aspect and the fact that the hillsides were covered with old bracken and heather which looked really good for DGFs so I might try and make it back here next time we visit.



In the next little wooded area it all went a bit Neilfreem as there were Specklies everywhere – or so it felt. First one appeared staying back a bit from us all whilst I took a photo of a micro moth that had landed on K's glasses but then through the gateway there was another, and another and a third and fourth. The first had a go at the second which bumped into the third and so all three spiralled upwards with one occasionally breaking from the fray momentarily before getting right back into here. All the while number 4 was just sitting it out on the stone and then it flew a short way to land n some cooler vegetation.





After this frenetic few moments things calmed down, I caught up with the others and we finished our walk munching on rounds of sandwiches overlooking the harbour. Little L was very pleased with her adventure and decided that she wanted another one – although this one entailed taking the bus back home!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-17 11:58 PM GMT

Aberaeron 19-04-2017

Our holiday/break in Wales this time was played out in reverse. Usually it goes; local area, Newquay, Aberystwyth, National Trust...so today we went 'local'. This meant taking in the sights and sounds of Aberaeron. In the morning the girls went swimming in the local schools pool and as we made to leave I spotted a white fluttering from Cuckoo Flower to Cuckoo Flower. Throwing the swimming gear into the boot with one hand I grabbed my camera with the other and then stalked after it. It was very busy and stopped for only a second or so at each flower so I sat in between two clumps and waited

for to land near me, which it did.



After that it was back home for lunch and then back down to the town for walk along the front. The girls spent some time looking for sea glass and I dreamed of Walls clinging to the sea defences. We then headed back in-land via the harbour taking in a Honey ice cream and admiring all the different colours the houses had been painted in.

The riverside walk is always promising and a Holly Blue interrupted my scanning of the rocks in the river for Dipper which I never did see this time. We were almost at the bridge when I spied a white on the other side hanging around another of the ubiquitous clumps of Cuckoo Flower. Eventually we made it across the bridge, the girls ran onto the park and I could investigate along the river properly. My first pass produced nothing but this looked like such an inviting little spot I returned a couple of minutes later and was treated to some great behaviour.

I saw the male first feeding frenziedly and then a female popped up. She must have been there the whole time as the minutes the sun broke through the cloud there she was and I hadn't seen anything fly in. I think the male spied her at the same time as me and it was difficult to actually get a shot of her as the male persistently buzzed her. The raised abdomen she showed him didn't put him off at first and he kept on making pass after pass. So I set my camera to Sports and took a few shots just in case anything came out okay. When I looked at them alter most were terrible with the autofocus finding the florets rather than the butterfly but one did come out much better than expected. I like the way that the female seems to be pointing her antennae at the male like a cow showing her horns, the way the male is backing off shows he clearly got the message this time! After this the male retired to a nearby flower to get his breath back and regroup. This meant I was able to get in nice and close.





When the male had recovered he took flight and I swear he looked like he was thinking 'stuff her then, little miss lady Muck'. The exertions of fending off the male must have taken it out of the female as well as she didn't move far and occasionally sort of leaned over and climbed onto another flower rather than fly. She was beautifully marked with a large crescent moon fore wing 'spot'.





I left her in place after this and caught up with everyone back in the park. That has been the one good thing about the cooler weather – the OTs are much more approachable and because of that I've had one of my best years for them.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Apr-17 11:12 PM GMT

Sorry can't seem to get to comment on others PDs due to the website probs...

May 2017



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-May-17 11:41 AM GMT

Duke Site 22-04-2017

As we were back from Wales and the weather was actually better than forecast I took a chance and made a break for it to my Duke Site. It was a bit early still for Dukes from here as I have encountered them in full peak as late as 28th May but this is also a good site for Grizzlies and Dingies.

It all started quite quietly and I didn't encounter a butterfly until the bend at the top of the main track when a Red Admiral flew by and then landed a few times each time too far beyond my lens. The vegetation is still quite low here and so I was able to stroll straight across the field whereas later when the Dukes are about you might need to wade across. Around by the Duke spot there were no Dukes but slightly further on a Greenstreak put in an appearance and was much better behaved than my first of the season. This one practically glowed when the sun caught it. On the next tussock a 'punctata' hung around for a bit showing up the two spotter I'd previously seen – "call that a streak?"



I checked out the spongy turf on the other side of the trees and then made my way across the path and over the fence to the small valley. Almost immediately a tiny grey blur buzzed around, landed and resolved into my first Grizzlie of the year. It didn't stay long as a second one buzzed it. This little area was quite the hive of activity with Brimstones, GV Whites, the odd Orange-tip and a Peacock all putting in an appearance although nothing really stopped so I made my way back towards the field across the spongy turf picking up my first and second Dingies on the way and finding another Grizzlie to boot. I time at the small field with the Greenstreaks and I was also finding more and more Skippers but for me it was the sheer plethora of Greenstreaks – they were everywhere!







After this I started to make my way up and around the hill to the other more exposed side. On the way I managed to get my first Red Admiral shots of the year (finally) and enjoyed the sight of so many Greenstreaks buzzing about amongst the gorse. As the path wound round I reached the top and there was a patch of Bluebells at the edge of the clearing at the top. I could see at least 5 green flags hanging from the blue blooms. As I cautiously approached I could see that they were Greenstreaks and they weren't the least bothered by my approach. After I got the all-important record shot one of the Greenstreaks caught my eye as it didn't look right. Instead of the brilliant bluey green this was more a Kakhi-streak as it was olive in colour and in some lights appeared brown 🤔. I don't think it was wear as despite some wing damage (bird strike, Gorse or Bramble?) the orange and white wing margins were still intact. After counting spots and streaks it was nice to find something even more different. 😊





I left them feeding gluttonously in peace and carried on. Again there were Greenstreaks at every turn and the only other butterflies I encountered were a hilltopping Small Tort and Peacock. By now I'd worked almost right round the hill and so I cut back across the top along one of the rings. All the usual suspects from previously in my visit were around when I spotted my first Small Copper. It was a little too distant and an Orange-tip must have gotten too close because it was off. A fair bit further on I found an even smarter looking one and this one allowed an approach.



Chuffed I broke out of the rings and made my way back downhill towards the car via the main track which yielded only a Dingy that seemed to have trouble with one of it's wings. It was clinging to a rut in the path so I don't know if this was because of damage or whether it was still pumping fluid into its wings? A Whitearse bid me farewell and I was off home wards in good time so saving a few Brownie points for later in the season when they can be cashed in. 😊





Have a goodun

Wurzel

43

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 05-May-17 12:29 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Wurzel, love the Green Streak on the Blue Bell and the Grizzlies ,hope they're there after next week for me. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 05-May-17 09:12 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

...In the next little wooded area it all went a bit Neilfreem as there were Specklies everywhere -

Hee hee! that's the first time I have seen it put like that 😊

Great reports and photos from Wales Wurzel...and from your return. Love the Green Hairstreak on bluebells shots 😊 I have yet to see these, or Dingies, or Grizzlies, or Small Coppers for that matter. Oh well!, plenty of time yet I hope.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 06-May-17 12:10 AM GMT

Splendid Hairstreaks, Wurzel. 😊 They do vary in colour but you have two real extremes there - brilliant almost turquoise and nearly olive-green. The fact the bluebells look identical next to both butterflies highlights the fact they really are very different. Along with everything else, that really is a great site. And you've seen Small Copper... I'm still waiting for one of those. 🍀 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 06-May-17 07:54 AM GMT

The Greenie with a full arc of white spots/dots deserves it's own mrgreen 🍀 .
I like the sound of 'Greenies everywhere', I usually only find singletons.
I hope to put an end to my Grizzled Skipper famine today.

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 08-May-17 01:36 PM GMT

Love the picture of the Orange-tip pair the picture tells the story perfectly 😊

That Olive Green Hairstreak is an aberrant surely? 🤔

Phil

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-May-17 11:33 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 You should be onto a sure thing for both Grizzlies and Greenies if you go to the right site, good luck 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I thought you'd like that phrase 😊 We are about a week behind the South East so your time will come 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I'm sure you'll get a Small Copper soon to add to your Wood Whites and Adonis 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'll get you a grid reference the next time we meet up, it's a cracking site with a great range of species possible 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 I'm thinking the Greenstreak is an ab - it looks like it could be a brunnea?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-May-17 07:54 AM GMT

Bentley Wood 23-04-2017

As I was back to work and the holiday was fast coming to an end I decided to make the most of it and so I grabbed my camera and a picnic lunch for the girls and we headed off to Bentley Wood. I've seen Pearls there this early once before but wasn't expecting to see them really, it was more of a recce. Mind you the Oracle gave a resounding 'yes' when I asked her if I would see and photograph Pearls...

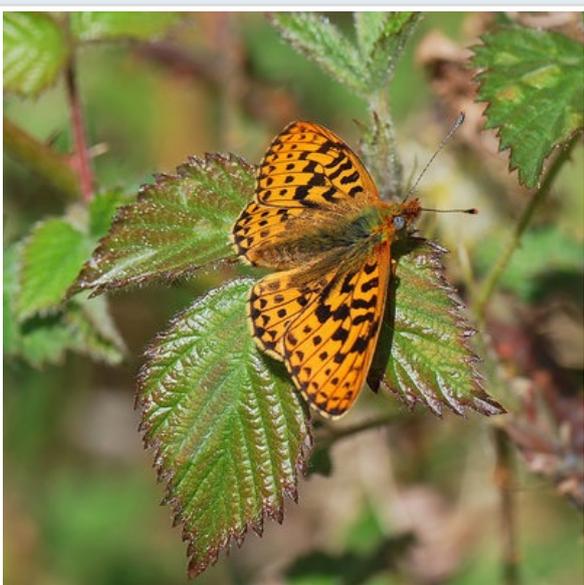
Once on site having negotiated all the new fences and barbed wire (what's all that about?) the girls set up camp by the bench under the tree in the middle of the Eastern Clearing. I took short circular walks out from here and managed to cover various parts of the Clearing in doing so but apart from the odd Brimstone it was strangely quiet. The sun was shining and it was warm enough to walk around in just a shirt - no jumper today - yet it was so quiet. As I munched down on my Houmous and Lime Pickle roll I decided to change tack. Instead of actively looking I would set the camera to Sports mode and try for some open wing Brimstone shots.

The Brimstones kept veering away from the Clearing proper and moving towards the recently cleared plot where I saw the second butterfly of the day, a fly-by Peacock but I persisted in following the Brimstone taking shot after shot reasoning that whilst possibly 99% of them would be binned the occasional one would make the grade. This reasoning seemed to bear some veracity and actually the ratio was slightly better than expected.





As I was making one last pass past the notice board a Pearl appeared before my eyes. I couldn't believe my luck and frantically changed the settings whilst trying to keep an eye on the rapidly moving butterfly at the same time. Even more luckily for me it paused on a Bramble leaf and I was able to approach it. It was absolutely glorious to see, the ginger glimmered in the sun and the markings looked quite heavy.



I kept an eye on it as it bumbled around from perch to nectar source to different perch and so on until eventually it stopped in some interesting places. Then I would nip in take a few shots and back off before it decided to fly again so I knew that I wasn't disturbing it and it was moving to new places as it felt the urge to do so. It stopped at one time on some dead Bracken and was only visible from certain angles and then only if you knew that it was there, turn your head too quickly and you'd miss it. It also stopped on the deck and balancing on a bridge like blade of grass and these occasion gave me the opportunity to capture the closed wing shots.



After this the girls wanted to head homewards as the lunch was all gone though I did persuade them to allow me to make a stop off near West Dean Farm. The North facing hillside is covered in Cowslips and the occasional cutting into the Chalk offers little sheltered hotspots so it looked good for Dukes. I wandered about back and forth and picked up a Peacock, Holly Blue and saw several Brimstones and Whites but the Dukes weren't at home, perhaps it's still too early in this neck of the Woods as they still haven't been recorded in the County yet?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

20

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-May-17 07:08 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, great shot of the Pearl hope I'm has lucky tomorrow and at the the week=end with the Grizzles, Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 09-May-17 08:10 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Just catching up on your diary. Glad you found some patient Green Hairstreaks. Those photos are great, especially the first one on the bluebells. I was fortunate to have a close encounter with one on my local patch last week. It was so friendly it stayed in front of me on and off for over 30 minutes 😊 I also enjoyed those fresh PBF at Bentley Wood. They look stunning.

Regards Kev

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 09-May-17 10:15 PM GMT

That's a nice PBF from Bentley, Wurzel, and as you mentioned, it is not the same as either of the two I saw a few days later. 😊 Yours has much heavier markings. I may well be up a certain Hill tomorrow since the forecast looks good... 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-May-17 11:01 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I hope you get well soon and get your Pearl 😊

Cheers Kev 😊 I don't know why the Greenstreaks were so well behaved, I think they were getting near their bedtime as I tend to visit later in the day 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Glad there was at least one Marshie but more importantly a Wall, see I did say they were there 😊

Things have been hectic this week as OfSTED have been in the last two days – but on the plus side I got a Larkhill Marshie yesterday 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 12-May-17 05:38 AM GMT

I'm a bit behind with the diaries Wurzel (too much time spent watching pupa and the last still hasn't emerged!) but you've got some smashing Hairstreak shots there which clearly demonstrates their variability. Wonderful when you can see a fair few together 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-May-17 06:04 PM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 It seems that my Duke site is coming more of a Greenstreak site as they were all over the hill that day and on subsequent visits 😊 I better get my map put so I can send you that PM...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-May-17 10:49 PM GMT

Garston Wood 01-05-2017



I woke on Bank Holiday Monday feeling great. The sun wasn't yet shining but I was hopeful. I'd done all the chores, seen butterflies, painted like a demon and now I had the day ahead of me. Then my dad called, my Grandad had passed away in the night. I'd seen him the day before at my Gran's 90th Birthday Party and today he was gone. I wandered around the house dazed and upset so my wife suggested that we headed out as planned.

We drove over to Garston Wood through Broadchalke, the village where he'd lived for 70 odd years and as we did the memories, long thought forgotten, came flooding back. There was the Cleeve ahead, the field where I'd steered the Combine while Grandad worked the pedals, the forge where I watched him work, the see-saw tree right at the far end of the Cleeve before finally driving past 'Homelea' where I could just see that the apple tree that my Grandad had grafted from his fathers' apple tree was in full blossom.

Once parked we set off to take in the spectacle of Spring – Wood Anemones, Ransoms, Bluebells and the occasional Purple Orchid. It wasn't until we'd wandered about half way round, and rather ironically left the 'butterfly' enclosure, that we encountered our first butterfly. The sun broke from the cloud and drove towards us down the track when little L let out a cry 'white butterfly dad!' It was a Green-veined White but it wanted to roost up high. I tried a few record shots but gave up, instead letting little L try out her wildlife filming. The highlight of it for her was when a male Orange-tip bustled in and there was a bit of argy between it and the GVW. She had the presentation down pat, even doing the Attenborough-esque narration!



A little further on a Peacock stopped on an old branch. I don't know if it was unusual behaviour or because the cloud had momentarily hidden behind the cloud but rather than flying off at my approach it walked away along the branch. I halted and let it settle and backed off after a couple of shots.



The walk continued a Greater Spotted Woodpecker drummed, a Marsh Tit 'pit-chooed' and a Cuckoo called. Little L found me a strange larva and chattered away. By the end of the walk I felt not anger or upset, no real morose sadness but a calm feeling of gladness, glad for having known him and learned from him, thank you Grandad.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 13-May-17 11:47 AM GMT

So sorry to hear about your Grandad Wurzel but Happy you found some piece, it's the unexpected that upsets the most it's like a shock wave, my Husbands brother passed a way in December they were very close and he went through the same emotional's remembering what they did when boy's, plus the fact it was so near Christmas, which by the way is the worst time so I hope when that time of year comes round you'll think of all the Happy times you had together and not get too upset. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 13-May-17 06:47 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Grand Parents are special, and the loss of one does evoke memories of ones childhood and happy days, in my case playing in the corn fields in a remote part of Bedfordshire.

Sorry for your loss,
Trevor.

PS. No Marshies at the hill today, I was the only one there.

Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 13-May-17 07:11 PM GMT

My deepest sympathies, Wurzel. I'm glad you were able to find some solace in nature.

Guy

Re: Wurzel

by jenks, 13-May-17 08:12 PM GMT

Sorry to learn of your loss Wurzel and my condolences to you. Your account is a very moving tribute to the legacy that your Granddad left you, a country upbringing and a love of nature. You cant beat it !

Jenks.

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Hulme, 13-May-17 08:25 PM GMT

Sorry to hear your news, Wurzel. He'll live forever in that landscape.
BWs, Neil

Re: Wurzel

by Vince Massimo, 13-May-17 09:14 PM GMT

Sorry for your loss, Wurzel. Getting out into the countryside is the best thing you could have done.

Vince

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 13-May-17 09:22 PM GMT

Very sorry to here of your loss Wurzel. I can only add to what others have said, we all live on in the memories of our loved ones.

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 14-May-17 10:03 AM GMT

Sorry to hear of your loss Wurzel...it sounds like that walk was just what you needed.

Your strange larva looks like a glow worm but I haven't really seen them side on like that before.

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 14-May-17 11:04 AM GMT

My condolences and very best wishes to you Wurzel.

James

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-May-17 10:01 PM GMT

Thank you all for your very kind comments and thoughts. I found that one of the hardest posts I've written and I was unsure whether I should have posted it but I'm glad that I did now as your responses have helped me immensely, thank you all again.

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 14-May-17 10:45 PM GMT

Your post was very moving, Wurzel. It evoked all kinds of pictures of peaceful countryside scenes and pursuits, and of a world that seems to be disappearing. My sympathy for your loss, Wurzel. With memories like those you will never truly lose him.

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-May-17 10:47 PM GMT

Thank you Dave - your kind comments meant a lot.

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 15-May-17 11:27 PM GMT

Sorry to hear of your loss, Wurzel.

Mike

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-May-17 08:24 AM GMT

Thank you Mike, the kind thoughts from UKB, like yours, have greatly helped.

Duke Site 02-05-2017

Back at work and with there being plenty of butterflies about and a reasonable weather forecast I was finally in a position to take advantage of my early finish on a Tuesday, possibly the first time in this academic year plus I still needed soem respite. So instead of cutting directly across the Plain I took a more circuitous route home, via my Duke site. As I arrived the sun was still shining and it looked like the forecast 'sunny intervals' was going to be slightly pessimistic but there wasn't a single butterfly all the way down the main track nor through past the Cypress tree. It was only whilst I was crossing the field to the favoured Duke spot that a silver bullet caught my eye, my first (and county) Brown Argus of 2017. I stayed with it a while reacquainting myself with one of my favourite species – diminutive but boisterous and equally as contrasting in livery as nature.



I carried on up across the field to check out the main Duke spot which was still lacking in a Duke despite the fact that the first record for Wiltshire had come in from this site the previous day. However to keep my company there were still two Small Coppers one of which was a Blue Badger but it played very hard to get.

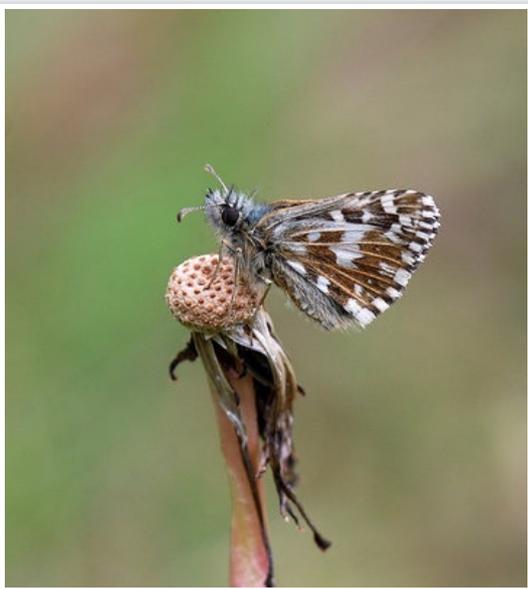


I then carried on my rambling reaching the tiny valley and so I set up camp here and had a snack while waiting to see what would turn up. There were a few Grizzlies and a Dingo to watch as well as a male Brimstone and Orange-tip both of which patrolled by. A small orangey butterfly went up from my footfall as I started to make my way back to the Duke spot. I followed it as it weakly flew a zig zag pattern and it plonked down on a bare patch of soil, my first Small Heath of the year and another first for the County.



I main my way back to Duke spot and walked up and down the little track there finding the Blue Badge hanging around and also getting onto a bit of Grizzlie action – a few squabbles and different individuals hanging about but by now the sun had gone in, had taken it's ball with it and wasn't coming out to play again! Still this meant that I was able to try for some closed wing/roosting shots and I managed to find a willing Grizzlie volunteer.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-May-17 02:37 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel , your getting some great shots lately and I envy your Grizzly 🍷🍷

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 16-May-17 04:33 PM GMT

Probably the best Grizzlie images so far this season !. Even a certain Butterfly book author will be gnashing his teeth if he sees those. 😊

At the moment the hill is not looking good, no sign of the Orchids, which the Marshies like to perch on. Everything else seems to be present, including hoards of Brown Argus .
Going back next week, so we'll see then.

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 16-May-17 06:37 PM GMT

Yes, excellent Grizzly images, Wurzel, and once again I have to look enviously at your glowing Small Copper. 🍷 I've still to see one this year... 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-May-17 11:34 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 That Grizzlie was well behaved which made it much easier getting the shot, one of the few benefits of cloud cover
Cheers Trevor 😊 High praise indeed, I just hope I can live up to it 😊 Hopefully the Hill will start producing properly this weekend, fingers crossed...
Cheers Dave 😊 I'm sure you'll have a 'Hoggers' moment soon 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 19-May-17 06:03 AM GMT

I agree with Trevor. Opinions expressed on many shots are frequently subjective but nothing subjective about those GS images. Smashing shots 🍷🍷

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-May-17 01:44 PM GMT

First Big Trip Out! Part 1 07-05-2017

The weekend had finally come and it was time for the first BIG TRIP of the season. Philzoid was due to come over on Sunday the idea being that we would go for Pearls at Bentley Wood and then make our way over to my Duke Site, hopefully to finally find a Duke. I spent the Saturday doing all the chores, even fitting in a trip to the Yellow and Blue Hell and then sitting down on the new sofa on Saturday night disaster struck. The BBC weather forecast had radically changed - from sunny intervals through to the early evening when the sun would shine unhindered it went to Black cloud and single figure temperatures all day! 😊

The next morning it seemed like they were going to be proved right (typical I thought they only seem to get it right when the weather is atrocious 😊) but Philzoid and I had waited too long for this day and so we headed out from opposite directions to meet up. As I made my way through Salisbury it was getting noticeably brighter, as I pulled off the Southampton road it was definitely brighter so much so I had to reach for the shades. By the time we were at West Dean Farm there were patches of blue sky visible through the white-not-black clouds and as the girls and I strolled through the trees and out into the clearing the sun was shining. 😊 It made the most of its fleeting presence and scanned around but it was to prove futile. When it broke through a second time however the other visitor to the EC found a Pearl and kindly shared it.



We then headed off in different areas - me checking out the bottom, tussocky area and him back by the notice board. I almost trod on a Red Admiral basking in the thin sun on the path and then found a second Pearl. I was getting my shots when Philzoid arrived and he followed my voice to find my crouched over a Pearl.



We then settled back into our usual rhythm. Wandering round chatting, heads down and stopping every now and again when we think we've spotted something. It was hard going but another Pearl turned up the and the other visitor located a fourth Pearl – this one looked to me to be a female (larger abdomen and more rounded hind wings?) and it posed nicely wrapping it wings round a spurge.



The sun came out some more and so we made our way down towards the bottom end again stopping for a basking Lizard and the odd Brimstone. A male OT patrolled by and several Pearls were very active at in the sun in this area. We also came across the something of a rarity a Green-veined White and it posed nicely for us as did a really fresh Pearl.







Happy with the haul, possibly 8 Pearls in one small part of the Clearing we made our way back to the cars and then onto my Duke site with a Specklie waving us farewell in the Car Park. Only we didn't go directly to my Duke Site instead with gave the north facing slope of Down near West Dean Farm a try for Duke. From the road it looks yellow there are so many Primulas but despite a different carpet, a fly-by Peacock, Brimstones and OTs and a giant Grass Snake we couldn't locate a Duke. I was starting to feel like I might miss the species in 2017...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-May-17 05:51 PM GMT

Fantastic Pearl's Wurzel, now it's my turn to be envious 🍷🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 19-May-17 08:05 PM GMT

Those are some lovely Pearls Wurzel, looks like you got perfect light conditions for them as well 😊

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 20-May-17 03:50 PM GMT

It looks as though the Bentley Pearls emerged later than those at Abbots Wood, going by the date of your visit. Abbots Pearls were a little worn by then. You've captured their ginger/brown colouring to perfection.

Catch you soon,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 20-May-17 08:37 PM GMT

Ahh I've been waiting to see your PBF's Wurzel, lovely images and they all look very fresh. Very nice open wing Grizzled Skipper there photo too.

ATB

James

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 20-May-17 09:18 PM GMT

Beautiful Pearls, Wurzel, every one. 😊 They really glow, don't they? You're right about that being a female – slightly different wing shape and not quite so "glowing" in colour as well as the egg-laden abdomen. I think I may have to stray back down there soon, especially as the latest weather forecast looks good for about ten days! 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 20-May-17 10:18 PM GMT

millerd wrote:

Beautiful Pearls, Wurzel, every one. 😊 They really glow, don't they? You're right about that being a female – slightly different wing shape and not quite so "glowing" in colour as well as the egg-laden abdomen. I think I may have to stray back down there soon, especially as the latest weather forecast looks good for about ten days! 😊

Dave

and also the SPBF are out there now as well!

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 22-May-17 07:54 PM GMT

Lovely Pearls Wurzel and those Grizzly shots from your previous post are stunners 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-May-17 11:03 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 This is when you find another 'pallida' Pearl 😊 Fingers crossed for you!

Cheers Bugboy 😊 The lighting was down to luck of the draw, we turned up and the lighting was laid on for us 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Even taking into account my tardiness of posting there is a bout a 1-2 week difference in emergence times between the East and West of the country 😊

Cheers Rex 😊 I think I need to start putting an information notice at the end of each of my postings "There may now be a short interlude prior to the posting of the Small Pearls, your patience is appreciated" 😊 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 If you can get back this was the Small Pearls are just emerging Philzoid and I saw one there on Sunday and one was reported there today. Also the Hill has started yielding Marshies 😊

Cheers for you kind comments Neil, I was pretty chuffed with the Grizzlie shots 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-May-17 08:26 AM GMT

First Big Trip Out Part 2 07-05-2017

By now there sun was pretty much out all of the time only occasionally hiding behind the smallest of clouds and we'd made good time to my Duke Site despite my SatNav trying to take me across MOD property and land owned by Porton Down, I could really do without contracting Anthrax! Once on site we were practically greeted on the main track by Small Heaths and Dinghies and we quickly made our way across the field to the Duke spot. Straight away things started to happen. Butterflying is like this sometimes and these are moments to cherish, when everything clicks into place and you can go from one sighting to another, to another. At the little scallop where the Dukes like to hang out there was a Small Copper (a blue badger as well) then a Greenstreak put in an afternoon appearance making as if to oviposit. I was calling out species that just kept appearing in this little area; another Small Copper, Greenstreak, Grizzlie, Dingy, Brimstone flying past, Duke...wait what was that? Duke!! At last it was fourth time lucky and in the very same spot that I've found them for the past three years, a cracking looking little fella. It put on a bit of a show for me; perched wings three quarters open, then a bit of a clamber over a twig pulling a stained glass pose before finishing up open winged from above looking like it was hovering in mid-air. Smashing!





We then made our way along the little path stopping for the odd Dingy or Grizzlie and made out way to the little valley. Almost the first butterfly we encountered here was a Brown Argus and a first for the year for Philzoid.





After spending some time with it we slowly started making our way back across the spongy turfed hillside and then across the field towards the main track where the girls had set up camp. It was slow going as we kept getting distracted on the route. There was another Brown Argus, a Green Carpet and then several Small Coppers as we walked the field. An absolutely cracking array of species.





It was an awesome day with some delectable species but there were some drawbacks; it whetted my and Philzoids appetite and it could be a week or two until we can get out again properly plus I didn't want to leave!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 24-May-17 12:53 PM GMT

A cracking post with some cracking butterflies, that's not a Green Hairstreak, its a **GREEN** Hairstreak! 🌱

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 24-May-17 09:26 PM GMT

A brilliant selection, Wurzel! No wonder you struggled to drag yourself away. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-May-17 11:18 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Sometimes they just glow don't they 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 It was very tricky and to be honest I'm still not sure how I managed it 😊

Larkhill 10-05-2017

The weather had been great all day, the best day often week, nay the month! And in typical fashion as is the way of the Law of Sod OfSTED had been in and were due in again on the following day. Plus even if I'd wanted to make an evening trip I couldn't of as my wife has Yoga on Wednesday nights 😊. Added to this was the sure knowledge that certain UKBers had been to a certain Hill where they would have been lapping up lots of lovely Lepidoptera 🦋.

To console myself and get 5 minutes of respite I made my first stop-off of the year at Larkhill. I started at the half way point, crossed over and started to make my way Eastwards up the track. A few Small Heaths fluttered about my feet trying to distract me. I'd go to stalk them and they'd be gone. Something was bombing down the path towards me, bigger and darker than the Small Heaths. "It couldn't be could it?" I asked myself. I followed it with my eyes and watched it land and there was a pristine, beautiful Marshie. It was my first for the season and even better my first ever from Larkhill! It settled a further three times and then I left it to its own devices.



Very chuffed I popped back in the car and pulled in at the main car park. This seemed really quiet and despite a few Burnet Companions I didn't think I'd see anything else...that is until a little grey blur stopped long enough for me to confirm it as a Grizzlie.



I headed homewards restored, chuffed and also ready for the further onslaught of OfSTED.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-May-17 10:04 AM GMT

Lavender Farm 31-05-2017

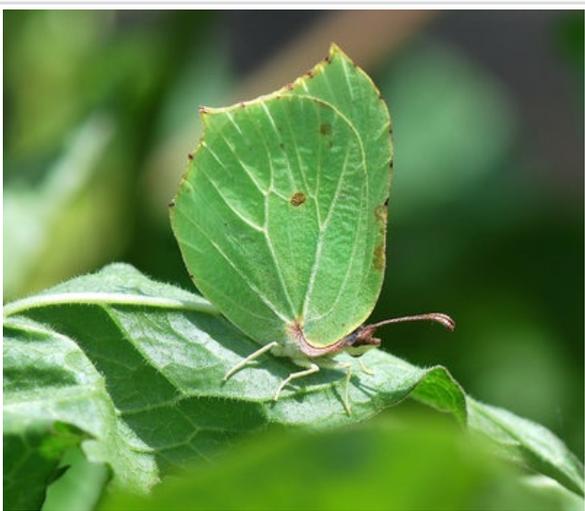
A few people had suggested that we made a visit to the Lavender Farm near Landford. After a very busy Saturday morning my wife wanted to head out somewhere. A certain hellish Warehouse like space with blue and yellow livery popped into my mind so I blurted out "Let's get a cream tea at that Lavender place, my treat". And so I escaped a trip to Ikea and all the evil it entailed! So I chivvied the girls along, grabbed my camera purely out of habit and away we went.

The Farm itself is viewable from behind a rickety fence but apparently you can't walk up and down the rows due to 'Elf and Safety' but there were other rows amongst parts of the gardens and they looked like they'd offer a reasonable return in terms of butterflies. I eyed them as we awaited out cream tea and the House Sparrows kept us company.



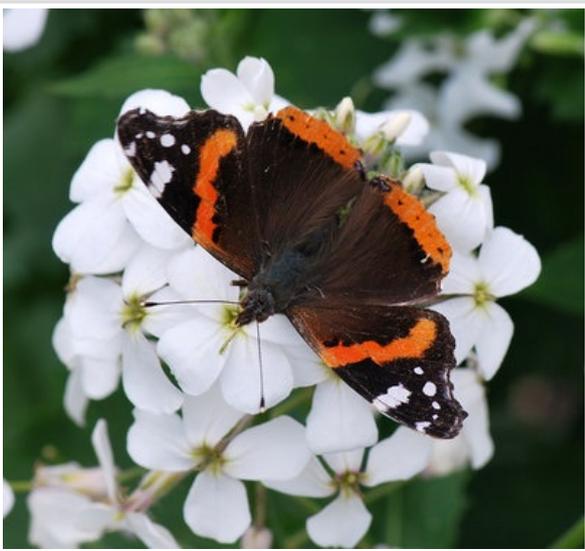


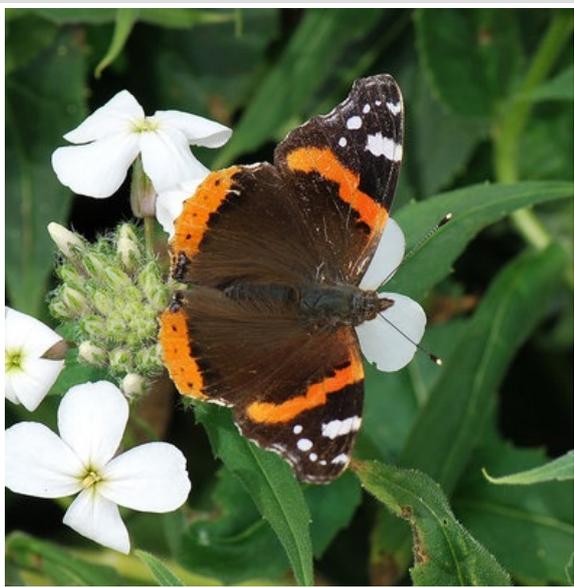
I quickly discovered the draw back and that was after the monster cream tea had arrived and been consumed I didn't really fancy walking, in fact I didn't think I would be able to! Finally rousing myself I set off for a little explore. A Brimstone was the first butterfly I spied and I managed to follow it with my eyes until it landed. Luckily the sun hid behind a cloud and so I could get in really close. I went for a wander round and it was still in the same place. As the sun came out again it slowly tilted its body from upright through 90 degrees to horizontal so it was lying flat on the leaf. After a few seconds it must have gathered sufficient warmth and it took off again. A lovely bit of behaviour to witness.



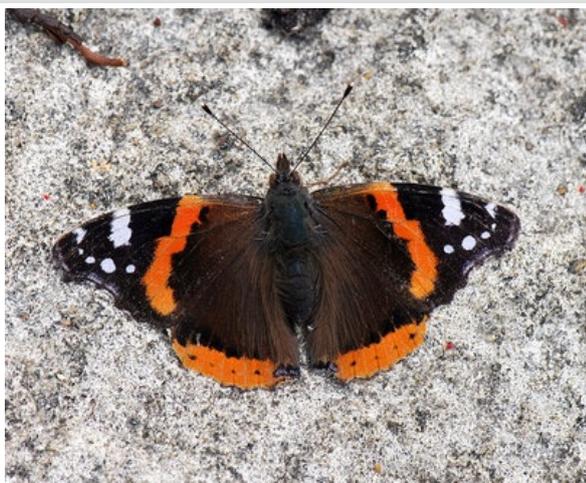


The next butterfly was a Large White and then a Red Admiral but it kept buzzing forward and back but never stopping until I eventually tracked it down where it was contrasting nicely with the white flowers in the background. I spent a bit of time with the bees feeding on the *Alium* as the sun went in and out. The Large White actually stopped again so I got a few shots and it started to open up, the single black tips and totally white wings revealing it to be a male.





The Red Admiral was back basking on a stone bench, immovable for some time and it was just great to amble about enjoying everything I was seeing and hearing. A cracking little place which by the end of June will be in full flower and peaking in butterflies...best to leave the cream tea until later in the visit next time though!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 26-May-17 07:11 PM GMT

Lovely shots Wurzel , love the Marshie shot also the Brimstone Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 28-May-17 07:56 PM GMT

Butterflies **and** cream teas, Wurzel? Now there's a combination I could get into the habit of doing... 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 28-May-17 08:59 PM GMT

millerd wrote:

Butterflies **and** cream teas, Wurzel? Now there's a combination I could get into the habit of doing... 😊

Dave

Oh yes!...in fact cream teas are one of my weapons with the family...they seem to accrue a large number of brownie points 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-May-17 11:57 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 The best thing about that Marshie was that it was from a 5 minute stop-off on the way home 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 It's hard work this butterflying 😊 Mind you still not as quite as good as sitting back in the sun with a bottle of Warka and watching a Greater Spotted Eagle 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Same here Neil, in fact that one cream tea got me two trips out! Bonus 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-May-17 11:03 PM GMT

Martin Down 14-05-2017

Having had a busy/hectic weekend I finally managed to shoehorn in a couple of hours butterflying at Martin Down. When I say finally I mean finally as it comprised the final few hours on Sunday afternoon before starting the 'back to school routine' for myself and the girls.

As I hit the small section of dual carriageway the two available options ran through my mind. Sillen's Lan end and straight to the hotspot or main car park and wander along the Dyke - this time all the way along to the hotspot? While I was deliberating I realised that I'd missed the turning to Martin/Sillen's Lane and so the decision was made. I cut through from the main car park across the depression towards the ridge marking the start of the Dyke. The cloud momentarily hid the sun and the powder blue butterfly I'd been watching landed on a scrape. I managed to get in nice and close to my first Adonis of 2017. Brill the first of my thee targets. Next a larger, darker orange butterfly tumbled about despite the cloud, too larger and dark to be a Small Heath, a Marshie and target number two. I followed it with my eyes and as it landed the sun reappeared making the chequers positively glow from the dark background.





I then started on my way along the Dyke with the sun occasionally being covered with small clouds which actually helped with the photography but the strong gusty wind was a bit of a pain. Luckily the walls of the Dyke offered a little shelter and when I broke away from the main Dyke the trick was to check the leeward side of the bushes. On the way to the small island of scrub past the Butts and about half way along the Dyke I encountered all the usual suspects. Another Adonis, Brown Argus, plenty of Small Heaths, Grizzlies and Dingies including my first pair in cop. There were also Marshies intermittently, possibly a further five after my initial finding. Generally I'd be watching something else and a larger, whirling butterfly would drop in and then whirl away again and I'd have to make a choice of which to follow, the Marshies seemed to come out best from these decisions. In the lead up to the half way hot-spot things quietened down with only the odd Grizzlie or Small Heath about so I took a moment to enjoy seeing my first ever Burnt Orchids.





As the Dyke wound round and down towards the main hot-spot numbers picked up and there seemed to be more and more Grizzlies and Dingies. The number of Marshies increased as well and there was further variety added by a Small Copper and target species number three, Small Blue. The Small Blues here often seem more diminutive than at other sites and this was one of those; a really, really small male with only the very faintest of dusting of blue scales. It was great to catch-up with this gorgeous little fella and watch how the colour of the forewing changed as he ever so slowly opened up; from slate blue through to almost purple.





I had a quick routine around at the hot-spot seeing more of the same minus the Small Blue and then I started the return journey. I'd only just started off when a blue flew into my face. I turned my head which enabled to slide off and land. I thought I'd try for a few shots where the lack of chequers meant that it was my first Common Blue of the year. I was probably most chuffed about seeing this one species as it had actually grabbed me in order to get my attention so that I'd see it - if only other species acted in the same way!





After a relaxing wander back I spent some more time in the initial field before deciding to head home half an hour early so as to bank some Brownie points. That didn't work out as in the car park I bumped into my mum and dad so we had a stroll, searched in vain for Marshies and had a chat - much more important than Brownie points.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 31-May-17 10:43 AM GMT

Fantastic shot's Wurzel, much more going on down South than up here at present, 🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-17 11:21 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I'm sure you'll catch-up eventually 😊

June 2017



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 02-Jun-17 05:37 PM GMT

The burnt tip orchids are wonderful Wurzel. Perfect condition. And lots of pictures of butterflies I never get to see – Marsh Frits. 🍷🍷 Lovely to enjoy seeing them via your diary. Thank you.

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 02-Jun-17 08:44 PM GMT

Looks like you had a splendid trip To Martin Down, Wurzel. That was the tails side of the coin the other day when I called heads and went further north... 😊 The Adonis is particularly magnificent, with overtones of purple and turquoise in the mix. Lovely butterfly. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 02-Jun-17 11:30 PM GMT

Great to see some Marshies away from the Hill.
As I now frequently drive through Wiltshire, and Salisbury Plain in particular,
I often wonder how many Marshie sites I am passing. Some areas look just right.

Great images,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Jun-17 11:09 PM GMT

Cheers Art Frames 😊 If you ever fancy a trip to see some Marshies I can pass on details of a couple of top sites for them and/or wife/family permitting could act as a guide 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I was mighty chuffed with that Adonis myself 😊 It seems like it's okay to mention that there are Marshies at Martin Down now 😊 although there weren't nearly as many as at the Hill 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 You're right there are loads of areas round this way that hold Marshies – they're pretty much all over the Plain and any likely looking habitat could hold them. My first Marshie of the year was actually from my 'on the way home' stop-off 😊

Big Trip Number 2 Part 1 – Bentley Wood 21-05-2017

I arrived at Bentley Wood earlier than Philzoid as unlike him I didn't need to venture anywhere near the extension of the M25 car park that the M3 has become. As he was travelling I felt duty bound to find a Small Pearl to hand over on a platter as it were. So to this end I started a slow wander along the

various rabbit runs and small tracks that wend their way around and about. There didn't seem to be anything about apart from the occasional Speckled Yellow Moth and a grounded Red Admiral that erupted from beneath my feet at the far end of the Clearing. I started my way back from this bottom end towards the bench under the tree and I was just approaching it when something flew up from the vegetation. I followed it with my gaze noting its much darker colour than the Pearls I had seen previously. It looked good for a Small Pearl even from distance and as I continued to watch it, it landed and so I made my approach. As I caught a glimpse of the under wing illuminated from the back I knew immediately that it was a Small Pearl. Quarry found now I had to sit on it until Philzoid arrived 😊. Luckily it clouded over and so it seemed content for me to have a mooch around and try for various different shots.





I stepped back to check through my shots and pour a coffee and then sun briefly came out again. This small amount of sun was enough to get it moving again but it didn't go very far, only about a metre or two at most and as the sun dipped behind another cloud it dropped again. This time it was in an amazing position. Over the few years that I've been butterflying I've always hankered after specific types of shot - there's the classic open and closed wing, in cop, close up and stained glass but one that I've always wanted for this particular species is the double open underwing...





As the Small Pearl closed up again I stood and waited and watched. Philzoid arrived and was able to get straight onto the Small Pearl, almost on a platter. We spent a bit longer with it and then started our way round to see what we could find and also to set up a few moth lures. Over next hour we made our way round the site checking out various different places, commenting on the overgrowth in the main part of the clearing, the new fencing that's appeared all over the site and hoping that it will lead to a resurgence of the Small Pearl here. There were also a few faded Pearls around, still motoring about although some were looking more than a little jaded.





On the way back to the car we had to stop momentarily to enjoy a Speckle, it's almost a ritual to see one at this site.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 04-Jun-17 06:06 AM GMT

May I be the first in the queue to award those SPBF open wing undersides some mrgreens.
Talk about jam on it !! 🍷🍷🍷
The underside of the forewing is something not often seen.

Great stuff,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 04-Jun-17 09:02 AM GMT

And I'll be the second, beautiful SPBF underside shots, Wurzel 😊🍷🍷

Mike

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Jun-17 03:17 PM GMT

I'm just Green Wurzel, 🍷🍷🍷 such lovely shots Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 05-Jun-17 03:31 PM GMT

I'm a built late on the scene (catching up with your diary that is) 😊. I have to say the picture of mating pair of Dingy skippers is brilliant as is the Small Blue with green-blue overtones 🍷. And, as you say, the Small Pearl was put on a plate for me ... out the car ... into the clearing .. straight into the butterfly couldn't be easier 😊. I seem to remember a similar thing happened when I turned up for the aberrant Pearl the year before.

Another thing you touched upon was the size of Small Blues at Martin Down it's not easy to judge relative size on such a small butterfly but the ones I saw at Hutchinson's Bank were definitely on the big side. Even the Brown Argus's thought twice about messing with them 😊. I need to acquaint myself again with some Martin Down 'tiny's' 😊

Still no joy with the clearwing lures. Still time though 😊

Looking forward to journeying out your way again and an escape from the South-east congestion 😊

Phil

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 05-Jun-17 05:59 PM GMT

Adding my appreciation to the others, Wurzel - unbeatable underside shots of the SPBF. 🍷🍷 They rarely seem to pose for me anywhere it is possible to actually get underneath them! 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 05-Jun-17 06:00 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Great reports and photos from Martin Down and Bentley Wood 😊

I love the SPBF undersides, really lush to borrow one of your terms 🍷😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Jun-17 11:51 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor, Mike and Goldie 😊 I was very chuffed with those Small Pearls so thank you for all the Mr Greens 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Well you'd travelled quite a way so it was the least that I could do 😊 Not sure what species to try for next...what a great problem to have 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I got lucky with that one, everything seemed to fall into place - timing, weather and location 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 The compliments are returned for your lush Marshies 😊

Have a goodun

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Jun-17 09:00 AM GMT

Big Trip Part 2a Marshie Site

The drive over from Bentley to the Hill was relatively uneventful and Philzoid and I chatted about this and that. We'd had a delectable entrée at Bentley and now we were preparing ourselves for a smorgasbord of butterflies, an all you can eat buffet. There were only a couple of cars parked in the car park which boded well and we started off in the little flat patch at the bottom of the Hill. There was a Holly Blue fluttering about up high and a beautifully marked female Green-veined White trying to shake of the arduous advances of a male. In the end he eventually got the message despite forcably trying to join genitalia several times while we observed. It must have worn him out as upon finally getting the message he quickly found a sheltered spot and settled down for a recuperative roost.



We then started to work our way up the path towards the Hollow. The butterflies must have been impatiently for our arrival as they started coming down the Hill to greet us. A Speckle, Green-veined White, a Peacock, and Orange-tip and a Red Admiral. We broke out onto the Hollow and the list started burgeoning and Philzoid and I didn't know where to point our lenses first. There was a Small blue, then a Dingy, a beautifully fresh Brown Argus and the species we'd come to see - there were four Marshies looking pretty good. Towards the other end of the hollow there was another Brown Argus, another Dingy, a Common Blue and on the Bramble a Greenstreak looking a little tired and worn. As we scaled the short but almost vertical track out of the hollow Small Heath and Marshies were flying everywhere on the hill in front of us. It was a fantastic sight to behold. There were some really nice variations on a theme visible and I tried my best to capture as many different specimens on film, desperately trying to drink in the evolutionary wonder before me.





Round in the Battledrome/Bowl area things were slightly quieter as it looked like this area had been recently grazed there were still a few Marshies about here, the odd Brown Argus and an Adonis male passed through but we only made short stop here and had a quick conference on which way to head next. As all three of us (we'd picked up another butterfly in the Hollow - something that would never have happened when I was birding) fancied adding Wall Brown to the day list and yearly tally it seemed that the best option was to stick to the path that skirted around the bottom of the Hill as this would give us access to the bare soil areas and small scallops that the Walls seem to like. At the first Hollow there were a couple more Marshies, an Adonis, a couple of Small Heath, and a couple of Brown Argus - they seemed to be pretty much everywhere we looked - almost second in number only to the Marshies!







We carried on round scanning up the hill side and watching Marshie after Marshie flutter around, occasionally disturbing another butterfly, occasionally being disturbed themselves. We'd worked round to almost the end of the path when up ahead I spied something fast moving that disappeared from view into a clump of vegetation. It was a Wall and I called it out loudly - it then led all three of us on a merry dance and we desperately tried to follow it with our gaze. It landed on a clear scrape just long enough for some distant record shots, another time on a small branch and another time further up the side of the hill so we all scrambled up. While I followed the initial one, a male with some damage to the hind wing Phizloid and the other butterfly put up a female.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 07-Jun-17 09:56 AM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

Cheers Art Frames 😊 If you ever fancy a trip to see some Marshies I can pass on details of a couple of top sites for them

and/or wife/family permitting could act as a guide 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Thank you for this kind offer. I would love to see some, but am going to Hungary till 20th June so probably would need to be next year. But the more I see the radical difference living in the South makes the more likely a series of trips or short break becomes. I will need to do some planning. I usually manage a trip to Dorset once or twice a year, maybe I am going to far! 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 07-Jun-17 07:14 PM GMT

That was a cracker of a trip to the Hill, Wurzel. I can picture every step in my head! You saw the Marshies much fresher than I did and got some terrific shots - it's somewhere I could happily visit daily throughout May I think... 😊 And I do believe in the Walls, now - a real bonus for me.

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 07-Jun-17 08:46 PM GMT

Lovely shots from the hill, Wurzel 😊 especially those beautiful Marsh Frits 🍷 something I have missed this year 😊

Mike

Re: Wurzel

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

Cheers Peter 😊 The offers there and if you would like any more pointers then just let me know - there are some great sites for Marshies in Dorset as well.

Cheers Dave 😊 There was more (of the same) to come Dave 😊 I'm glad the Walls finally came out to play 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 There's always next year Mike, this year has felt a bit 'blink and you'll miss it' 😊

Big Trip Part 2b Marshie Site

...After a few shots we headed back down reasoning that it would probably come back to us. So I poured myself a coffee and low and behold it indeed did come back. After a few more shots it again took off for a fly around and we headed back to the bags - only to find a Dingy was enjoying my coffee! I was just berating the little 'tea-leaf' when a blue fluttered by and landed on the Hawthorn. The glaring silver white from the underside meant that it was unmistakable as a Holly Blue and we both watched (and possibly whispered under our breaths) while it opened up. Nowhere near a full 'Miller' open 😊 but a definite start - I think I have a future in this Holly Whispering game!





Suitably refreshed we started to make our way back and on the way we were joined by a faded Grizzlie, a torn Orange-tip and finally a few Small Blues which became quite approachable. There was also another, much fresher Wall which only stopped for long enough for us to point the camera in its

general direction before it was gone, the odd Adonis and plenty of Marshies and Brown Argus. Back at the Hollow Philzoid spent some time with a Yellowhammer while I encountered the oldest Dingy ever which was nicely countered by a really fresh Brown Argus and Common Blue. The Blue was so fresh that when it caught the light the wings appeared white as the scales reflected rather than refracted the light.





The final 20 minutes or so were spent leaning into the hill on the newly cleared patch just to the right of the main path as it reaches the Hollow. Here were the usual suspects including plenty of Marshies and we watched one pair desperately trying to mate. They both seemed to want to join but the male just couldn't get his abdomen into the right position, bending this way and that. Eventually they both gave up and went their separate ways. There was also a Hummingbird Hawk Moth which totally escaped my lens and an awkward Wall which kept landing and taking nectar just long enough for a stealthy approach, set up and just as you'd focus it would fly. Eventually he must have decided to stop toying with me, either that or he was finding the nectar particularly delicious, as I was able to finally get a few shots.



Red Admiral waved us off as we made our way back down towards the car. As we packed stuff into the boot we reeled off a list of the species we'd seen over the course of the day - the finally tally came to 20, though I'm sure we missed one out? A twenty species day is always good at any time of the year but in May? It had been another epic day at the Hill!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 10-Jun-17 11:21 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I see you got your Wall, great! Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Jun-17 10:26 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Makes a nice change from last year when I saw exactly one all year and got nay photos whatsoever, hopefully this means I'll be tripping over them now 😊

Have a goodun
Wurzel

11

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Jun-17 11:34 PM GMT

Larkhill Stop-offs Week Beginning 22-05-2017

I haven't been able to stop anywhere near as much as I'd like to have over the last year despite work finishing earlier. In fact it's been a bit of double whammy as I have to start work earlier - less time and less likely to see butterflies first thing - and then on most days I finish just in time to make it back to Salisbury and pick up little L from school. However things seemed to fall into place during this week...

23-05 pm

The very briefest of stop-offs on the way home and I headed down the Eastbound track in dull weather not expecting much. Near the start of the quick walk I almost jumped out of my skin as a Red Admiral erupted from the path but I didn't add to the tally until I was almost at the end of the track when it opens up at the half way point. I turned round here thinking that I wasn't going to find anything else and that's when I spied a little white flag flying from the grass tops. It was a Common Blue sitting out the drear. I've noticed this has happened before. On the trip 'out' from the car park nothing and then on the return all manner of butterflies suddenly become visible, fading into focus as if from nowhere. By the time I'd gotten back to the car a further 3 Small Heaths had been added to the Tally in a similar fashion.



24-05 am

There had been some rain during the night it seemed and I was hoping for some Gladder to make the photos better but as it was I had to make do with sleepy butterflies sitting out the drear and trying to dry off once more.

I chanced my arm down the Northbound path first but the grass here is long, almost waist height and there is barely a path here anymore. Hopefully it will be good for Smessex Skippers and Marbled Whites but for the smaller butterflies it seems like an imposing canopy. I did find one Small Heath here, but in a more trampled area close to the car park.



On the way down to the half way point I found a cracking Common which still had the finest of sprinkling of water droplets clinging to its wings. Then further along another Small Heath and a Brown Argus. Last year here I saw only one all season so to encounter one this year is quite a relief. It too had a fine sprinkling of dew droplets.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 10-Jun-17 11:40 PM GMT

Nice dew-bespecked butterflies, Wurzel – I'm never up early enough for those. And the shots from Part 2b of the Hill are terrific too, especially the Wall and dare I say it the female Holly Blue... 😊 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 10-Jun-17 11:44 PM GMT

A great stop off Wurzel, It's amazing how hairy Small Heaths are when fresh. I noticed this when I managed some close ups, last Autumn.

Chiddingfold forest soon, what's the brownie points situation like ?.

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-Jun-17 01:26 PM GMT

Lovely shots again Wurzel , I went back to the Dunes last week but no sign of the Wall, I'll have to wait for the second coming I think. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Jun-17 10:16 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Your very kind comment about the Holly Blue is much appreciated, words of praise from The Master 😊 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 They remind me of the musician Seasick Steve 😊 The Brownie pints re stashed nicely, but everything seems to be happening at once! 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully that won't be as long a wait as certain religious groups are having 😊 Have a goodun

Wurzel

12

Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 12-Jun-17 05:56 AM GMT

That's a great shot of the rain splattered Blue Wurzel – I've not managed one that good yet 🍷

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 12-Jun-17 08:15 AM GMT

You've been a busy boy with your posting in my absence Wurzel, several 🍷 for all those Marshies!

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Jun-17 09:26 AM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 Sometimes these things just present themselves to us 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I'm trying to catch-up but it seems to be a case of 'one step forward two back', what an unfortunate situation to be in 😊

Larkhill Stop-off Week Beginning 22-05-2017

25-05 am

By now the weather was much warmer and nicely sunny and over the course of a brief wander down the Eastbound path I was able to notch up a nice eight Small Heaths and a single Brown Argus. Looking at the markings I think it might have been the same individual as yesterday which is a shame as I was hoping to see 'multiples' back at this site.



By the afternoon things were cooking, almost literally as temperatures broke into the low to mid 20's. Having had a meeting after work I'd missed the possibility of a pick-up and so I was relatively 'safe' to make a stop-off. I pulled in at the tiny stop-off and crossed the round which brought me to my usual half-way point. The vegetation here opens up and the path works more inland away from the road. Also the start of the walk, continuing Eastwards, is at the bottom of a small hill and the path runs up this to another path which is barer with only the lowest and thinnest of plants.

Almost immediately things started kicking off. There were a couple of Small Heaths, three in fact all engaged in a three-way tussle. There an electric blue male Adonis Blue shot by and even an aged Dingy Skipper was mighty nippy; bombing away before I managed to get a single shot off. It seems that the higher temperatures were going to make any shots today a bit more 'Smash and grab'. I tried my best to follow the Dingy and when it landed I scooted across towards it, but it took off again careering into something small and very dark blue. I managed to get reasonably close and it was a Small Blue. It too was very flighty and so I settled for getting shots of the second Small Blue that I found.



Chuffed to acquaint myself with this species at this site I finally made it to the top of the small hill and looked back down from whence I'd come. As I did another butterfly caught my attention. It seemed that it was going to be a day of reacquainting as when I finally tracked the butterfly down it resolved into a Greenstreak - my second ever from this site. As I made my way back down to the car a Brimstone did a fly-by as if to say 'look at me' but I needed to head home. What a great little site this is.



26-05 am

The journey to work took longer than usual this morning, not because of traffic or roadworks but because the car was somewhat laden down as we were heading off camping as soon as I got back from work. This meant that it was handling like a wallowing Hippo and also I would have to make the briefest of stop-offs. Still it was a joy to wander down the Eastbound track with Small Heaths erupting from the grass along with Crambus moths and Burnet Companions. I turned around juts before the half way point and there was a female Blue and she really was blue, a lovely shade of dark blue, different from the lilac tones of the males.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Jun-17 09:11 AM GMT

Downshay Camp 26-05 onwards...

With the holiday due to start and the weather reaching into the mid-twenties a few days camping down at Downshay looked like a really good bet. Most of my previous trips here have been in August but the first time we visited I photographed my first ever Silver-studded Blues at Arne and also got my first ever Wall Brown 2 metres from our Bell tent. And it looked like being a great one with glorious weather on the trip down and glorious weather for the weekend head according to my latest check on my weather app. Then on the first night there was a massive thunderstorm a real Roarie bumblers and it seemed to go on for hours, waking both the girls, the lightning intermittently lighting up the tent brighter than the torch.

We awoke to find the tent hadn't let in any water, it was still standing but outside was all grey cloud and it was noticeably cooler! We headed to Studland Beach anyway even if it was too early for Grayling and too grey for Silver studs on the heath...Instead I made do with taking photos of a few gulls.





Once back at camp and with the girls showered and the tea underway it started to brighten ever so slightly so I wandered to the top of the Camp. Previously here I've found Lulworth Skipper and Common Blues but no such luck this time though there were a few nice bits; a Red Admiral flew into the 'grass fence' on the walk up but quickly righted itself and flew off again before I could get a photo, there were some nice micro moths, a Cardinal beetle and Azure Damselflies. There was also another (or the same?) Red Admiral playing hard to get but eventually it landed long enough for me to get the first, if somewhat distant butterfly shot of the holiday.



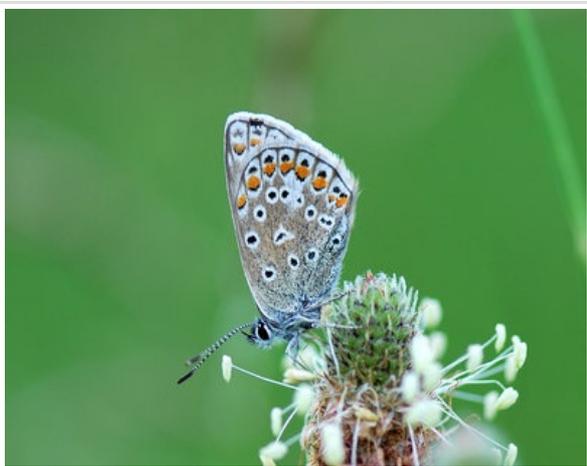
That night the weather was okay, no storms but the next morning I could barely see beyond a few metres. The mist but did start clearing so we set out to take in the delights of Swanage getting there by Steam. On the walk to Harman's cross I stopped for a Specklie at the Rope Swing, butterfly number two – I didn't think it was going to be this hard going!



From the train I spied a White and despite looking in likely looking places; gardens, the several planted areas and also a nice looking bank near the play park I didn't find anything. We had chips for lunch on the seafront and then a further wander round Swanage. I was called over by the girls as they'd seen a butterfly. I was expecting it to be a wind up, some garish foil butterfly shaped kite or a plastic butterfly on a stick but there was a Meadow Brown sitting on a shop window. I grabbed my camera, turned it on, removed the lens cap and as I start focusing it shot upwards, caught the breeze and was gone. I did find it several windows along up higher and took a record shot as it was still my first of the year. Home/back at camp and I nipped off to check the top again. There were no more butterflies to add to the paltry list but the Damselflies put on a show again.



On the final day I would have liked to have checked out the car park at Corfe Castle as Lulworth Skippers are often recorded here early in their season but again the weather, cool and grey with a touch of drizzle, put a spanner in the works (Lulworths were recorded here 3 days later). So I just enjoyed the sights and running around in the ruins with the girls. We stopped on the way home to drop girls at my mums who wasn't in so we took the girls to the play park while we waited. The girls swung and see-sawed and I had a bit of a mooch in the damp grass finding a roosting Common blue.



So a bit of a mixed bag – disappointing in terms of butterflies but still great as a camping trip and spending time with my girls...I'll be back for Lulworths soon anyway!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 14-Jun-17 10:59 PM GMT

It's hard to imagine Studland under cloud, Wurzel – but I suppose I never go all the way down there unless it's good weather! 😊 The steam train is good fun, though, whatever the weather. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by keving, 15-Jun-17 06:17 PM GMT

Wurzel,

I like the Small Heaths you took at Larkhill. I don't possess any decent photos of this species. I must be too clumsy, as I can't seem to get within 5 feet of the little buggers before their off.

The Azure Damsel is a treat too.

Regards Kev

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Jun-17 10:42 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 The steam train did in part make up for the lack of butterflies but I wouldn't want to make it a common occurrence 😊

Cheers Kev 😊 The trick I've found with Small Heaths is to turn up early in the morning when they're a bit dopey 😊

Lime Kiln Way 31-05-2017

As the weather finally turned managed to blag an afternoon out. I headed towards Middle Street but then turned into the other lane and made towards the Hospital. As I've driven past here I've always wondered what lay behind the other side of the road? So today I decided to make a stop here and actually find out. As it was a brand new site for me I hadn't the foggiest where to head so I set out for a nurdle. The site is a local Nature reserve, an old Lime works with thin soil and lots of small hollows where material has been ripped out of the ground. The initial part felt quite hemmed until it opened up to this area which seemed ablaze with various species of yellow flower. My first scan produced a female and then male Brimstone.



I wandered this way and that until nearer the bottom of the reserve, the local housing estate visible on the other side of the scrub I find a lush male Common Blue. He was very busy flying from flower to flower and feeding ferociously. I watched as he flitted back and forth, biding my time until he eventually settled for long enough so that I could make the approach.



I made my way back up the hill circling back round to where I'd started finding another Common blue male, another male Brimstone and a fly-by Small White (what's happened this year, the first brood has been practically non-existent?). I was almost back at the car when I spied another butterfly in one of the scallops cut into the scrub from the edge of the path. It was a female Common Blue, not the bluest individual I've ever seen but the markings looked quite interesting, with the blue blocks on the forewing resembling a Purple Hairstreak and a blue dash across both of the hind wings.



This seems like a good little site but the problem of parking and the fact that Middle Street is closer with the same (if not more species) may mean that I'll have to make more of an effort to get back here...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 17-Jun-17 02:52 PM GMT

Very nice female Common Blue, Wurzel – that blue flush on the forewings is very similar the that on a female Purple Hairstreak. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Jun-17 01:04 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I was quite chuffed to find that female Blue – I'm tempted to have a play with photoshop to see if I can turn it into a Purple Hairstreak 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-Jun-17 03:34 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, there seems to be quite a lot of those lovely blue Butterflies this year, love your shots Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Jun-17 04:39 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 It seems that it's harder to find the brown female Common Blues 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Jun-17 11:53 PM GMT

Middle Street 31-05-2017

After sampling the delights of Lime Kiln Way I moved over to the other side of the City to the tried and tested 'Middle Street' for a quick check in. I was hoping to find my first Large Skipper(s) and so on entering I started scanning the longer grasses for small ginger blurs. It didn't take too long for my plan to come to fruition and there in a small patch near the football pitch I found my first Large Skipper. I got a few record shots but got distracted by a fast moving tangerine looking butterfly (a Painted Lady?) and also by an ill-saved football which spooked the Skipper.



Leaving the lads to their game I wandered over to the pond. Making my way slowly round I found/startled a Red Admiral that was basking on the path. It flew high, circled and then plopped down amongst the reeds, wings held low Batman style. I carried on mooching around seeing a 4-Spot Chaser and Common Damselflies. What I was really hoping for were some of the different colour variants of the Blue-tailed Damselfly and I was lucky enough to find the green form (infuscans) and the pink form (rufescens) to add to my 'typical' shots...just got to find the stunning 'violacea' form to complete the collection.



I then followed the path along the river heading towards the Meadow on the other side of the football pitch. A Hobby shot across the tops of the trees following the watercourse possibly to fresh hunting grounds upstream. Shortly after a Painted Lady followed suit (but for different reasons I expect) and a bit lower down, bombing in and around the trees. In the Meadow I found my second Large Skipper which was much more approachable revealing the dark underside of the antennae and the androconia shone out metallicly in the sun.



Burnet Companion moths fluttered about doing their best to distract me but they didn't achieve their aim as I still found three Common Blues, all males.





As I wandered back to the car a Brimstone appeared out of the blue as if to wish me farewell.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 19-Jun-17 05:01 AM GMT

Stunning Common Blues. The few males left at Tilshead were at death's door.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Jun-17 08:04 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, lovely shots of the LS's and CB's, I saw one CB at Gait Barrow, I thought it was a Northern Brown at first because like you say very few females seem to be Brown these days. 😊

When I was at Foulshaw Moss most of the people there were looking for a White Faced Darter, I don't know much about DF's but it seems this one is rare. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Jun-17 12:52 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 It's surprising what a difference a couple of weeks makes 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 A Brown female Common Blue - that's a real rarity now-a-days 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 19-Jun-17 02:14 PM GMT

Very nice Common Blue shots, Wurzel. 😊 Going back a fortnight, that's what they looked like here too! Looking forward to the next round now... 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Jun-17 06:58 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Saw my first Smessex today so the next round won't be far behind 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Jun-17 12:39 PM GMT

Mottisfont 01-06-2017

We took advantage of the relative peace that comes from Little L being on a play date to head over to Mottisfont for picnic lunch. It seems that everyone else must have had the same idea as the main car park was full and we had to park in the overflow instead. Actually this is better as it's directly opposite the Walled Garden. As we went in I was bemused to see a Painted Lady do a fly-by – still no photos of this species...

After lunch we set out for a stroll about the gardens starting off in the Walled Garden. Before we'd even gotten in proper there was a Hummingbird Hawk moth which got the better of me. Everytime I'd be set up, focused ready to shoot it would nip off to another flower. I swear it could hear the gears of the autofocus. Once inside my wife and K enjoyed the sun while I wandered round and round. The only butterfly it seemed was a GVV which despite being at the perfect height was always on the far side of the wide borders, staying well back so just out of reach of my lens. Any shots I got were all distant and heavily cropped. As we set off a Red Admiral shot by, over the wall and was gone.



We walked from here across the estate and down to the river and then strolled along the banks to the Fisherman's Hut where there was another distant GVV and another (or possibly the same) Red Admiral. There was the occasional Specklie but I managed very few shots. It was all getting a bit frustrating. Luckily my wife and K set up camp on the Lawn and so I was left to my own devices. I decided to check out the bank on the other side of the 'Ha-Ha' (if that's the proper name?). The ten minutes or so that I spent here were the most productive all day. I spied a male Common Blue so hopped down and made my way across just as the sun went in, for the first time all day, but it worked as it rendered the butterfly inactive. It was swiftly joined by a second and then as I was about to leave I clocked a Bee Orchid which swiftly became a patch of Bee Orchids.





As I'm about to leave for the second time two Meadow Browns hove into view and are having a bit of a barny. I didn't mind though as they gave me the first proper opportunity to photograph them in 2017. We then made our way back to the car and made it home just in time to pick up Little L.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-Jun-17 01:30 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, a Humming Bird Hawk Moth was seen at Brockholes near where I live, I'm thinking that may be unusual 🤔 also a White Letter Hair Streak's been seen there, so you know where I'll be visiting when the Sun returns 😊 (I've not seen the WH's yet Goldie 😊)

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Jun-17 10:07 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 The Hummingbird Hawkmoth was a right pain, I swear it could hear the autofocus 😞 Good luck on your quest for Whitters 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Jun-17 11:54 PM GMT

Larkhill 02-06-2017

This was a 'usual yet unusual' stop-off. I'd spent the day running a holiday revision session and to give my wife a break and earn some Brownie points I'd taken the girls with me. Little L had really enjoyed watching the sessions and sing the electronic whiteboard whereas K spent her time revising for her own exams and drawing cells on my main whiteboard.

On the way home I mentioned stopping off at Larkhill and they both seemed keen and so we parked and strolled down the Eastbound path to see what we could find. Little L was delighted by the masses of Small Heaths and Burnet Companion Moths on the walk downhill. As we neared the half way point we'd counted 5 Common Blues, all males and found a lovely little Brown Argus



Slightly further on there was an Adonis Blue hanging out on the path and blazing blue amongst the greenery and dingy brown. This went down even better than the Small Heaths with the girls.



We worked our way back to the car confirming at least three of the Common Blues and on the way adding a local scarcity to the yearly tally – a Specklie which unfortunately seemed to realise how out of place it was and so soon scarpered without me being able to get any shots.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Jun-17 11:37 PM GMT

Bentley and onwards... 03-06-2017

I was all set for another big trip, off to see Glannies at Hutchinson's Bank and then 'pop' in for Wood Whites on the way home...but it wasn't to be and on Friday I had to make the tough call and not head over to Woking for Big Trip Number 3. The Glannies were having a poor year here and my summer cold that had been malingering for a few weeks took a turn for the worst which was all topped off by exhaustion from seemingly never ending working days. Luckily I woke and it's moved to my chest but it was too late to head over to meet up with Philzoid. As I made the short journey to Bentley I found that so long as I could hold onto the steering wheel tightly enough the coughing fits could be dealt with and at least my nose had stopped streaming - I just needed to get out before another week locked away at work.

As soon as I reached the Eastern Clearing I found a Painted Lady taking salts on the path, something I've not seen this species doing before. The Lady I encountered seemed less bright than those I've seen in late summer but then those are 'home-grown' about to depart whereas this Lady had almost reached her destination.





And then there was nothing apart from a few Speckled Yellows as I made my way down towards the until a Red Admiral at the bottom in the same place that I found one on my previous visit. I decided to branch out and check out the 'new field' so I made my way across the ditch, followed the track and then bore left towards the new enclosure. Three Small Pearls were all visible at once, seeming to prefer the damper ground where the short rushes grow. Even in the early morning sun they were still very flighty but occasionally they would stop - for just long enough for me to think that they were going to settle. They didn't though although I did manage a few shots. Also here were a few Meadow Browns, a female Broad-bodied Casher and what I think are my first Black-tailed Skimmers?





I worked back round encountering a couple more Small Pearls and a few faded Pearls and back near the little bridge I bumped into the same chap I'd met at Martin Down on my 'Marshie outing'. While we're chatting the we're joined by another chap (who will always be Whitter man as I'm reaching the age where names escape me) and then we were all joined by a Small Pearl. It flew in exactly the same patch where I'd encountered my first a fortnight earlier but as it was so fresh I thought it was a another individual. This was born out as the lighter wing margins suggested it was a female.



Another was spotted flying in the same area and then a third slightly further away so in total there were at least 8 in this one area of the Clearing which hopefully bodes well for them next year. As I take my leave and head for home I'm joined by a couple of Meadow Browns and the most two-tone Speckle I've encountered.



As I was still going to be home in good time I made a right at the Castle Street roundabout and cut through all my short cuts to get to the Devenish. It was only going to be a quick stop-off and as it turned out it was even quicker than I imagined. There was a real dearth of species which I couldn't fathom was it the June gap has hitting home here or was it that the sward was so high? I worked all the way along the side of the Down from one side to the other and then the other half as well and all I found was a Silver Y, three Specklies in the little hollow and a Mother Shipton. In the Orchid Meadow I check out the Spotted Orchids and I'm joined by a couple of Large Skippers. Pleased with encountering at least some different butterflies I head home in time for lunch.





Have goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 26-Jun-17 06:27 AM GMT

A relaxing day with ' His Majesty ' would be a great tonic for that chesty cold !.

Take care !.
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 26-Jun-17 01:05 PM GMT

It was fortuitous you never made it to Croydon for the glannies, very few were seen and I'm not sure any were even photographed 😊 .

Looks good for a female Black-tailed skimmer to me 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 26-Jun-17 10:27 PM GMT

I like your two adjacent photos of the Blues a couple of posts back, Wurzel – great contrast between Adonis and Common. 😊 I'm also glad the SPBF were in reasonable numbers in the end at Bentley – I only saw a couple on my visit.

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 27-Jun-17 09:51 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I envy you those lovely Small Pearls 🐛 it looks like I'll miss out on those this year, the weather's pretty bad over the next few days, a bit of good news though for me, seems there's WLH near by so I'm on the hunt when the weather picks up 😊
Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Jun-17 10:07 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I don't know if an audience with His Nibbs would be considered relaxing Trevor 😊
Cheers for the confirmation Bugboy, I got some Heaths to make up for the Glannies 😊
Cheers Dave 😊 There were some disconcerting reports coming from Bentley but I think that they might have had a slightly protracted emergence, fingers crossed that was why there were fewer at the start of their season 😊
Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck with your hunt, I falling way behind species wise this year – still no DGF, SWF, PE, PH or WLH 😊 I need to get to teh woods pronto 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by MrSp0ck, 27-Jun-17 10:31 PM GMT

There were a few lucky photographers who managed to get Glanvilles at Hutchinsons Bank in 2017, some from Norfolk who turned up late on the best day, when this picture was taken.

Next year will hopefully be better for them, as a lot of the site had been worked on last winter making their areas more widespread on site.



Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-Jun-17 09:17 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I'm the same with those species, I want to call at Fermyn Wood on my way South to Kent in a couple of weeks but I'm thinking I may be to late, they all seem to have come out soon this year 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Jun-17 11:28 PM GMT

Cheers Mr Spock 😊 Hopefully a trip next year will be on the cards 😊
Cheers Goldie 😊 I hear what you're saying, everything has happened all at once 😊 Good luck on your visit 😊

Kingston Lacey 11-06-2017

With the June Gap well and truly on us I didn't know where to head for the best this weekend. Lulworths are emerging but they should be around for a while yet, DGFs and Large Blues have been recorded but their numbers may take a while to build yet and the week of stormy weather may have held them back. So when it came to what to go for next Philzoid and I thought it would be a good idea to gain the Brownie points and stay closer to home.

As it was a nice looking day the family Wurzel met up at Kingston Lacey for a picnic and a bit of a nurdle. We started off on the Lawn and while everyone else made themselves comfortable I took a little look on the bank of the 'Ho Ho' (or whatever it's called). There were a couple Large Skippers - both males - I've still not seen a female - and at least five Meadow Browns fluttering about. After a few shots I thought it wise to head back to the others and as I turned there was a familiar face to greet me the House Cat. He greeted me with a Miaow and then followed me back to the picnic rug where we all got straight down to munching. Like last time the House cat joined us, twining himself round the base of the deck chairs and visiting each person in turn to see what was on offer, he seemed to really enjoy my mum's Pork Pie! After lunch while the others had a snooze little L and I headed back to the 'Ho Ho'. She kept watch from above and directed me to the butterflies so that I could get the shots.





We then set off to wander the gardens taking in the Fernery, the 'blue and white' borders and strolling down the Avenue. It's almost unrecognisable now with all the Daffodils and Bluebells gone for another year. Again there were plenty of Meadow Browns inhabiting the longer grass in the field on one side of the Avenue. There were also the odd one or two in the clearer areas of the Woodland walk though there wasn't much else.

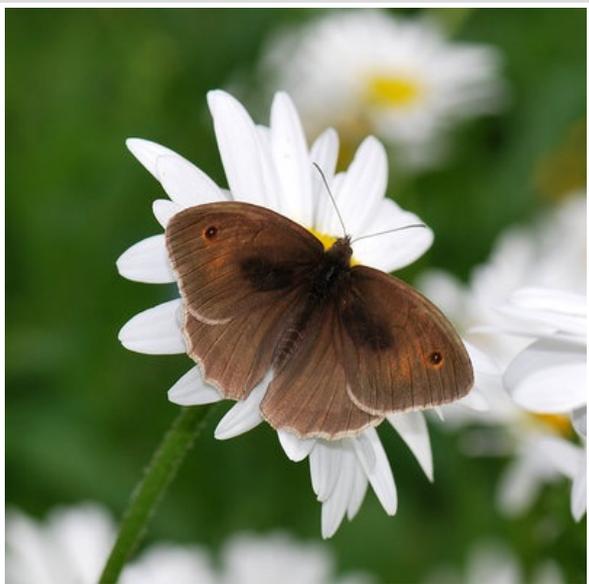


In the Walled garden we stopped for an ice cream and I had a quick look around the allotments. A Scarlet Tiger Moth bombed by and I watched a very frustrated Small White. It was trying to get some cabbages, presumably to lay its eggs but it couldn't get past the protective mesh. Watching it I too was getting a little frustrated as I wanted to get a shot of it but even with Sports Mode it didn't work out. Sighing I turned to watch it fly away thwarted by a polymer. As it flew into the next garden it put up something larger and ginger. I followed this with my eyes and I instantly knew what it was, it couldn't be anything else but a H.Comma. They can be quite flighty at this time of year so I was pleased to get some nice close-up shots of both top and underside.



We then made our way back through the wood to the Pacific Garden so we could have a sit down in the sun and the girls could play in amongst the small Bamboo Spinney. On the way we didn't see the pigs being used to sort the woodland understorey out but I did find a green Jewell Wasp. While everyone did their thing I enjoyed more of a nurdle and mooched about with the Meadow Browns.





All good things must come to an end eventually so we wound our way back, through the trees, across the lawn (the cat was still doing the rounds), past the Brass Band and said our goodbyes. One of those really relaxed days to remember and cherish.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Janet Turnbull, 29-Jun-17 08:48 AM GMT

Lovely pics of the Comma Wurzel – I have seen only two this year so far.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Jun-17 11:57 PM GMT

Cheers Janet 😊 I'm sure you'll pick up a few more, they're much more approachable in the autumn 😊

July 2017



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 01-Jul-17 08:20 PM GMT

That's a nice "brown-and-orange" day you had there Wurzel. 😊 The June Gap butterflies generally are – I wonder why?

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 02-Jul-17 11:11 AM GMT

I like those Meadow Browns on the Ox-eye Daisies 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 02-Jul-17 09:50 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

I really enjoy reading about the outings of 'The Family Wurzel'...it is great seeing what you find in places that aren't the usual 'butterfly hotspots' 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 02-Jul-17 10:45 PM GMT

Sorry (not sorry) about all His Nibbs pictures 😊. just to pre-warn, there will be more purple in the coming days 😊😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Jul-17 11:38 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Now you come to mention it I know what you mean, why is that they're all 'golden' or orange and brown?

Cheers Bugboy 😊 The Ox-eyes seem to contrast nicely 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Seeing what is about at non-butterfly sites is great, but doesn't always go down well with Mrs Wurzel 😊😊

Cheers Bugboy (again) – I'll get a bucket ready before I read your next couple of posts 😊😊

Larkhill 07-06-2017

This was the quickest of quickest of stop-offs – I didn't even make it to the paths as I was rushing to get to work and not be late. As it was I managed to find two Large Skippers immediately I left the car so I kept an eye on them while I got my camera from the boot. One made to leave so I concentrated on the second, a few shots in the bag and I was away to work.



And that was it for that week due to Breakfast revision sessions, after school sessions and meetings.

Larkhill 13-06-2016

A morning stop-off and things were warming up nicely. I walked down the Eastbound track scanning ahead and then left and right. I wasn't expecting too much as the outgoing trip often yields fewer butterflies but this time things were different. There were a couple of Small Heath and a velvety chocolate butterfly caught my attention. My first Ringlet of the year which was closely followed by my second.





Further along I added two Large Skipper and 3 Meadow Browns before turning round and starting the return journey. Again there were a few Meadow Brown, the same Large Skippers but this time a Small Tort and Red Admiral put in an appearance. I was left musing whether they'd been there previously and I'd missed them or perhaps they'd just dropped in. Either way they made a nice change from the other species even though there were still largely orange/brown.





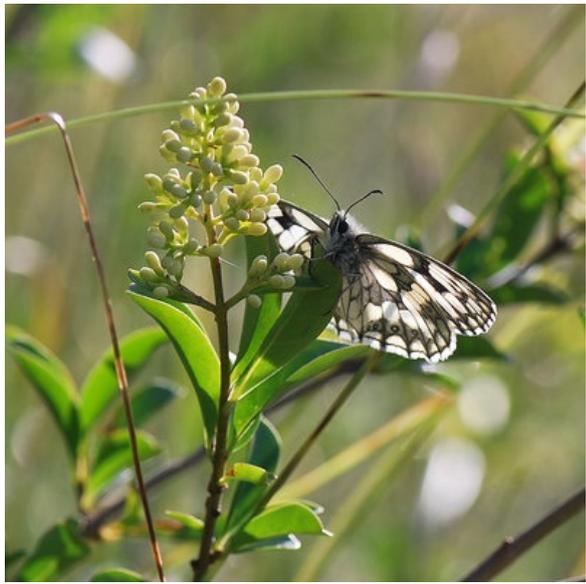
A little further on I found one then a second Common Blue, both males but the second was certainly getting slightly past it.



Larkhill 15th June 2017

AM

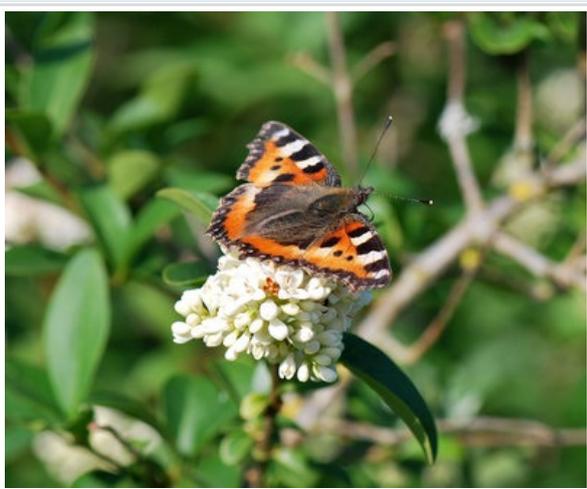
I set off down the Eastbound path expecting to see plenty of butterflies but it was actually pretty quiet. I then remembered that due to the change in the times of the school day I've been making my walks 30 minutes earlier, so when I arrive at Larkhill now only the early risers are up and about. Those up with (and hoping to avoid) the Larks this morning were a Small heath and Large Skipper. I'd reached the same place that a couple of days earlier had held my first Ringlets and there was my first Marbled White of the year. Rather unusually it seemed to want to land high up on the Hawthorns rather than down in the grasses where I'd expect to see it.



I got down to the half way point and saw a second Marb, a few more Meadow Browns and Ringlets (they're old hat now) and a couple of Large Skippers. At the bottom of the little depression a female Common Blue shone out from the grass looking gorgeous.



On return journey male Common Blue failed to impress but I was wondering whether it was the same decrepit one that I had seen a few days previously only ravaged by a few more days. A Red Admiral erupted from the path and there were three Small Torts in the little lump of Hawthorns. By the time I was back at the car my tally of Marbled White had reached three.



PM

I started the stop-off at half way point and there were Small Heaths and Large Skippers a plenty along with 2 Meadow Browns and a single each of Marbled White and Common Blue. Rather than turning left and taking my morning return journey I turned right, got to the top of the hill and turned right again along the track which cuts not the MOD land. There must have been an emergence of Small Torts as at least 5 were flying in this one little area. On my return back to the car there were a further three Small Torts down on the deck so 8 Small Torts in as many minutes.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 03-Jul-17 06:46 AM GMT

Larkhill looks a busy place. Is the site along the Packway ?
Looking forward to your Emperor.

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 04-Jul-17 05:51 PM GMT

Nice range of species there Wurzel and I'm glad I'm still not as far behind as you in the updates 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-17 07:17 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel just catching up with my posts, been busy with the family etc 😊 I love your Marbled Whites, I hope I don't miss them this year, I'm off on the 14th to Kent, on the way we were going to stop at Fermyn Wood but it seems like we may have missed the PE this year, I think we'll still give it a go you never know! looking forward to seeing your photos. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Jul-17 10:13 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 My site is along the Packway, there's a pull in at the crossroads which leads to the Quinetic site (used to be the Bustard Inn 😞)
Unfortunately I only saw my Empress, she didn't come down, but the day was still one of those 'days of legend' 😊 Come September you might be able to read about it 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Unfortunately some of us have to work for a living 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I hope you get your Marbs 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 06-Jul-17 10:21 PM GMT

Nice selection, Wurzel – even though you're a bit behind, they all look familiar and could have been seen today, except for the Common Blues. There should be a new lot of those arriving any time I should think, though! 😊 Looking forward to your Legendary Day... 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Jul-17 11:37 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I hope I haven't built it up too much now...

Slop Bog 13-06-2017

The speeding up of the season had slightly caught me out and so I found myself on my annual pilgrimage to Slop bog. The earlier finish time of the school day meant that I got to change at home and get a few chores completed before heading out – it's always a good idea to pick up Brownie points before a trip.

As with most of my journies to Slop Bog I again found myself racing the clouds which seemed to be thickening and the periods of blue sky and sun were becoming less and less frequent as I approached and then made my way across the site. However almost immediately I found my quarry and the first part of Silver Studded Heath held at least 5 males in a few metres square. Because of this I spent some time here and I was just about to wander off I spied a female. It wasn't hard as her studs were huge and glowed fiercely in the early evening sun.





From here I traipsed along the paths some of which proved impassable as they petered out to Bog. One such path housed a small pond which was fenced and here I switched briefly from butterflies (after a few more Silver Studs) to Dargonflies. There were some blue Damselflies including one which was actually violet - my first violacea Blue-tail completing the set. A male Broad-bodied Chaser held court for a while, always returning to the same perch after his roving and quartering was completed. All of the Dragons and Damsels disappeared though when a faster, larger Dragonfly appeared - an Emperor?





After my Odonatological interlude I worked my way back onto the drier Silver Studded Heath seeing the usual moths and a different looking Dragonfly on the way - Clouded Buff, Lattice and Common Heath.



As I reached the area I'd started at the sun finally broke free from the clouds and I was able to start getting some nice stuff; nice bright closed wings and the males started opening up as if from nowhere when they'd been there all along. I also found a female and she posed beautifully for me, the evening light refracted at a multitude of angles made her transform before my very eyes. She went from a uniform milk chocolate to an iridescent rainbow jewel. There was an oil like quality to her wings with oranges, reds and greens highlighted by the brilliant purple and white margins.







Absolutely stunning and worth any possible risk of Tick bites. I headed home with her lusciousness still emblazoned on my minds' eye.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 07-Jul-17 05:47 AM GMT

Wow! What a smashing set of shots Wurzel, but I don't think I have ever seen that 'oily' sheen captured quite so well. I've never managed it. I don't think any photo can quite capture that beauty but your images come as close as is possible 😊😊

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 07-Jul-17 06:53 AM GMT

Those are the best Silver Stud. images I've seen this year. Great stuff!. 😊👍
Off for some French Butterflies this morning, catch you next week.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 07-Jul-17 12:17 PM GMT

I think you've caught the beauty of that Butterfly Wurzel, what a great day out you had. 😊👍 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 07-Jul-17 01:18 PM GMT

Great Silver studs Wurzel, in particular that first oil-sheen female .. lovely 😊.

I like the Dragonfly shots too 🍷. Did you get the in-flight male Emperor in "Sports mode" 😊

Phil

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 07-Jul-17 02:28 PM GMT

Absolutely beautiful Silver Studs, Wurzel. You have managed to capture a brand new female in all her glory – there is nothing like this and those shots are perfect. Huge 🍷🍷🍷

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 07-Jul-17 06:10 PM GMT

I can only concur with what everyone else has said about those Studgies, the evening light has really done them justice! 🍷

your unknown Dragonfly is a female Keeled Skimmer btw, a very nice one as well 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 09-Jul-17 10:52 AM GMT

Have to agree with the others Wurzel, that's a great set of SSB images, You've captured some beautifully 'studded' examples there, the ones I photographed a couple of years ago were not particularly well endowed with studs. Being a Dragonfly fan myself I'm always pleased to see some photos of these fabulous insects.

James

Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 09-Jul-17 11:38 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Like many others, the Silver Studded Blues photos are wonderful. The second shot of the male is amazing, I've never seen those blue markings so vivid before.

And what a name for a location, Slop Bog 😊😊

Regards Kev

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-17 11:30 PM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 It was all down to the butterfly and the evening light 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Hope you find some corkers 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Sometimes things just work out right 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Sports mode it was, just click the wheel round to the little running man and away you go 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Thanks for all the Mr.Greens – they're only borrowed and I'm sure I'll be sending a load back your way soon 😊😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Thanks for ID I was struggling with that one – the females are much harder to ID 😊

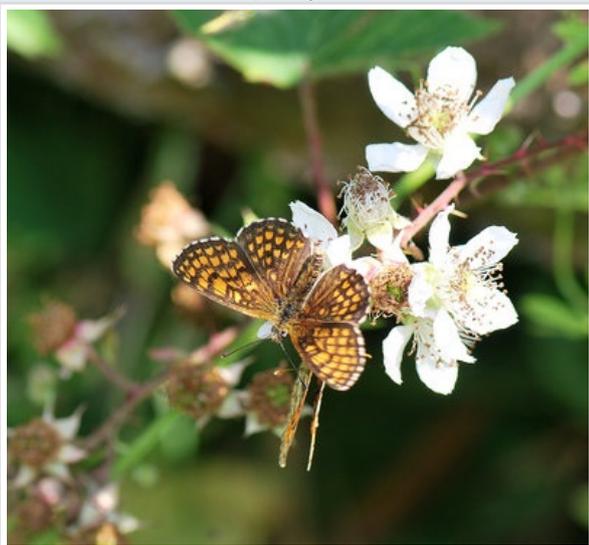
Cheers James/Rex 😊 I was surprised how well studded they were – usually the males have hardly any 😊

Cheers Kev 😊 It has to be one of the best named sites in the UK an that's art of the attraction as I think the name puts off many and you end up with the place to yourself 😊

Big Trip Number 3 17-06-2017 Part 1

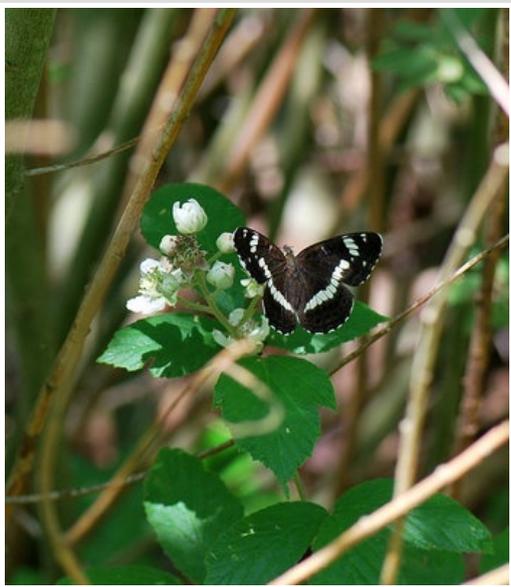
So where to head next – that was the question? There were several options but these had been whittled down to two options – Large Blues or Heaths. As the temperatures looked like being in the mid to high twenties with strong sun Large Blues would be bombing around and we wouldn't be guaranteed a mating pair so we plumbed for Heath Fritillaries (and having read David M's PD since this actually turned out to be the best decision). So nice and early I set off to Philzoids' and on arrival he presented me with several nice Moth ticks, so a great starter.

We then changed to his car an using a mixture of Philzoids recall of traffic reports and Googlemaps and Dr Nightmares dulcet tones form my Satnav we made it to East Blean in surprisingly good time. As we pulled into the car park I spied two small brownish butterflies. Hopping out of the car I confirmed them as Heath Fritillaries – job done, time to go home! In amongst getting cameras ready and boots on we racked up at least 3 different Heaths, a Meadow Brown and a brilliantly orange and massive Comma. We could have stayed here all day but instead we set off to explore the reserve itself.

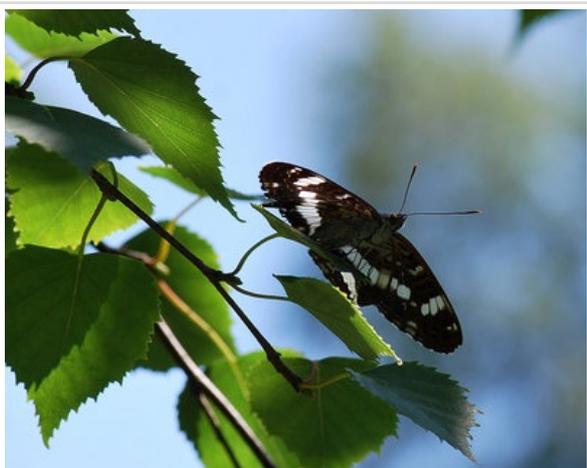




We started off in the small section where we found our first Frits two years ago and here there were plenty fluttering around more weakly than their larger cousins but making up for speed in stamina. They could fly and fly. Also they had an annoying habit of looking like they were about to land but then not doing so, a bit like Orange-tips. Also around in this section were Meadow Browns, a Large White and Ringlets. A real bonus was my first White Admiral of 2017. Although it was very flighty it was still a joy to behold as it would pick up speed, slicing through the air and then glide. Just before turning sharply it would seem to hang in the air from a piece of string like an Airfix model. Due to the sun and the heat all the butterflies were very flighty so we moved on through the wood, the Bracken along the side of the track would occasionally hold a Heath or Meadow Brown or Ringlet. We also managed a record shot of a White Admiral which chose to take nectar from a Bramble in the shade of a small tree.



The next section we came across had been coppiced even more recently and there were only a couple of Heaths here. The White Admiral reappeared and seemed to be using a certain tree as a sentry post. It would fly off and quarter the clearing or maybe challenge a second White Admiral before landing back on an adjacent branch on the same tree. I was chuffed to witness this behaviour but even more chuffed as now I had two sets of White Admiral shots - two more than last year!



We then slowly headed back to the car after a nurdle through various section of the wood, some of which looked pretty overgrown and in need of a coppice. Whilst in the first section we'd checked out the mercury climbed even higher, so high that the butterflies only started landing for the briefest of refuelling stops. In fact apart from a courting couple most shots were a bit smash and grab. In fact some butterflies seemed to be actively seeking shad, landing on the lower leaves of the Hornbeam and so sheltered by the leaves above like a sun parasol. Just as we were tearing ourselves away we encountered a White Admiral (the first we'd seen?) which again seemed to be holding territory.





We finally made it back to car park and so retired for lunch...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Andy Wilson, 10-Jul-17 09:30 AM GMT

Great Heath Fritillary shots, Wurzel! I am closer to East Blean Woods (only 2 hours away) and I've made an annual pilgrimage there for several years now, which I always combine with lunch at an excellent pub I know just outside Canterbury!

The site is amazing, with butterflies all over the place, and 95% of them are Heath Fritillaries. This year, the only other things I saw were a few Meadow Browns and a single White Admiral.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 10-Jul-17 09:54 AM GMT

Lovely Heath shots Wurzel, 🍷🍷 they make me nostalgic, I used to see them every year when I went to Blean Woods but I went to the other entrance which is in Blean itself near where my Daughter lives, our Grand Children were at school then, we go to Kent July or August now so I've not seen them for a few years. 😊 So it was great to see your shots 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 10-Jul-17 01:26 PM GMT

Andy Wilson wrote:

The site is amazing, with butterflies all over the place, and 95% of them are Heath Fritillaries. This year, the only other things I saw were a few Meadow Browns and a single White Admiral.

Indeed. When we went there in 2015 it was a solitary Heath fest. The only other butterfly seen I think was a Red Admiral 😊. This time lots of other species with the White Admirals an unexpected welcome bonus 😊

That open-winged white Admiral is a cracking "record shot". Love the description of the WA flight behaviour 😊

Phil

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 10-Jul-17 08:26 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Just caught up with your Silver-studded Blues...cracking shots and that female is a beauty 😊

Looks like a great day with the Heath Fritillaries, I have never seen them at any of their south-east colonies, my own experiences of this species being in Cornwall and Exmoor.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 11-Jul-17 08:21 PM GMT

Excellent Heath Frits, Wurzel - I somehow missed them this year through some lapse in organisation. Blean Woods remains my favourite site. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Jul-17 11:05 PM GMT

Cheers Andy 😊 As Philzoid said the first time we went there were only 2-3 species in the entire place. We did slightly better this time but it strange to think of Heaths as a 'rare' butterfly when you go to East Blean and see practically nothing but them 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 That must have been great, to just pop over to see the Heaths 😊🍷

Cheers Philzoid 😊 There's more White Admiral action to come 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I'm the opposite having never seen Heaths in the West, maybe next year - it would be interesting to see them in a different setting 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Missing out on a species has been easy this year as everything seems to have happened at once 😊

Have a goodun

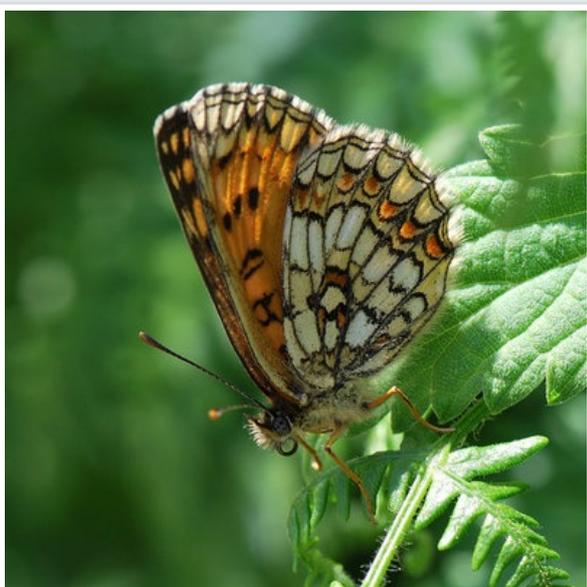
Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Jul-17 11:32 PM GMT

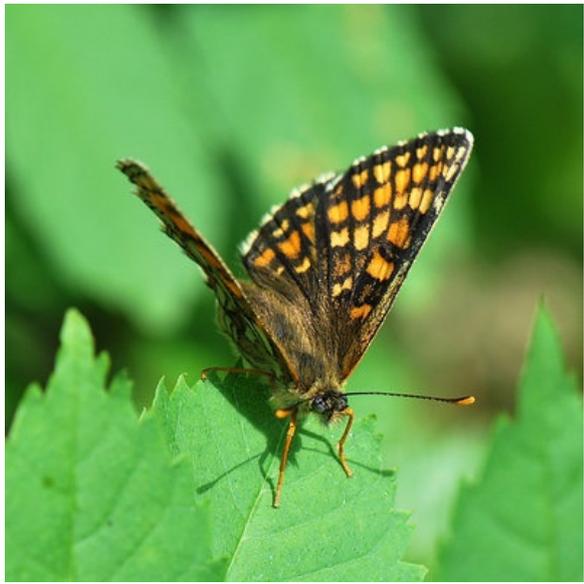
Big Trip Number 3 17-06-2017 Part 2

We retired for lunch but the butterflies were never far away in fact we were both able to take shots while munching as the butterflies would take nectar in the Brambles behind the car and there were also visits from Large Skippers as well as a White Admiral and H.Comma.



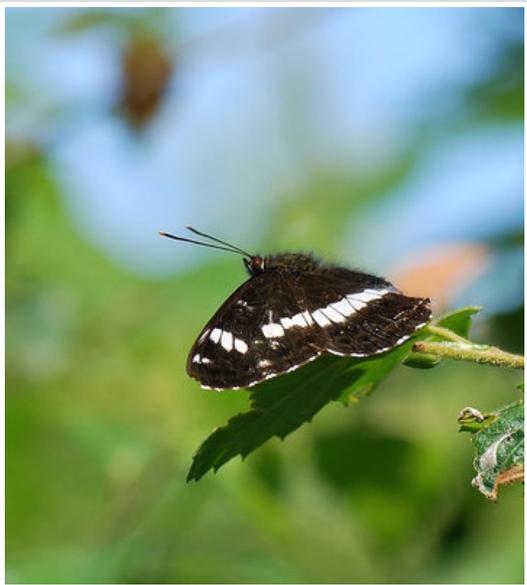
We then checked out the little section by the entrance to the reserve where there was a profusion of Common Cow-wheat. As the area was more shaded with shivelight the butterflies were less flighty and we also had a few fleeting clouds which further helped to settle the butterflies. We also found another White Admiral holding territory and I was able to get a little bit closer than the last time; 'if it continues like this then I'll eventually end up right in one's grill!' I thought to myself.





We then headed back into the wood via a different path from the car park which eventually ended up back at the second coppiced area we'd visited earlier where the White Admiral was still holding court. As second flew in and it seemed to be duelling before they broke and our one returned to its' tree. Another White Admiral or the same one came in again and 'our' WA took off and approached like a Spitfire, all guns blazing heading into the melee but when it reached the 'invader' its behaviour was different. It followed behind flew higher and overtook and then dropped lower and hung back, circling the 'invader' repeatedly a bit like a Silver Washed courtship. We stayed in the same place upwards of quarter of an hour and the White Admiral would fly out and come back again and again. It enabled me to get some of the best and closest underside shots, capturing the orangey-red along with the bluish tinge of the abdomen.





Somehow we tore ourselves away and set off for Wrecclesham with the vague hope of picking up a faded Glannie. The field area of the site is still in good nick but the pond has gone and the track and surrounding verges are ruined, tarmacked over and ripped to shreds. We saw numerous Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns and Large Skippers and I also saw my first Small Skipper of the year along with other highlights like a fresh looking Common Blue and 8 Small Tortoiseshells – a supposed Surrey rarity! Unfortunately we sought in vain for the Glannies and headed for home hot, tired and thirsty.



After a stop-off in the clubhouse where the barman broke the world record for slowest pulled pint of Shandy we continued homeward, still tired but thirst slaked and now cooler. The final part of the trip was bombing back West down the M3 and A303 which...h was spent remembering the cracking butterflies we'd seen – what a fantastic day...Large Blues next? Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 13-Jul-17 11:59 PM GMT

What a great selection, Wurzel. 😊 My personal favourites are the second Heath Frit and the first White Admiral. Lovely photos, both of them. 🍷

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 14-Jul-17 11:50 AM GMT

What a splendid Heath-fest, Wurzel, and some delightful shots to remind me how beautiful are the undersides of White A.

It's strange, the way that Heath F seem to like to have a place to themselves, so that Blean is almost a butterfly mono-culture. It was just the same when I visited one of the Exmoor colonies, a few years ago. Other butterflies seemed to stay away from the main Heath F site. I wonder why this should be so?

Mike

p.s. Liked your use of 'shivelight', presumably from Hopkins "Shivelights and shadowtackle in long lashes lace, lance, and pair." – so wonderfully evocative of light and shade in the forest!

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Jul-17 10:15 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Both of those shots are high on my fave list as well 😊 To be honest I was more chuffed at actually getting a White Admiral shot at all as

last year I drew a blank for this species 🙄

Cheers Mike 😊 I've only been to East Blean once before but it was very similar, if not worse. The butterflies seem to be in the most recently coppiced areas so perhaps they're one of only a few species that can utilize the resources on offer? Thanks for the appreciation of 'shivelight' – I read an article recently that detailed how certain words and phrases were disappearing and so I noted them down with the intention of trying to use them where appropriate. Shivelight was one such word, nurdle is another. There are a few more so keep your eyes peeled 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 15-Jul-17 10:43 PM GMT

Great White Admiral shots! I find them very tricky to get close to.

Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 15-Jul-17 11:16 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, it's been a while since I visited East Blean but the coppiced areas were where I found the majority of the Heath Frits as well. I was told the car park was the best place to see them, when I arrived there were none to be found there! I had to search for half an hour before I found them. Fabulous set of WA shots, as Katrina says they can be very tricky indeed to photograph.

James

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-17 12:54 PM GMT

Cheers Katrina 😊 I've struggled with White Admirals myself but I've found two tricks that work, first see if they're 'holding a territory' like the ones I saw at East Blean as they'll keep coming back to a similar spot, second one is find a large Bramble as when they're nectering they hang around for ages. 😊
Cheers Rex 😊 I was told the car park as well and it was only this time that they were actually there 😊

The Little and Large Show...or Daneway Banks 18-06-2017

Once I got back from the epic day with the Heath Frits I poured myself a glass of medicinal, settled down on the sofa with Mrs Wurzel and took in some Netflix. I didn't really watch the show (Anne with an E?) instead I rewound the memories of the day and relived the glories. I then started musing about what to do next...I realised that what with one thing and another I wouldn't be able to make any big trips for at least the next two weeks, I may be able to fit in a quick trip to Bentley but that would be about it. Hence come Sunday morning I was making my way to Daneway Banks with the bank of Brownie Points seriously depleted (two trips in a weekend 🙄). I was trying to make it before the temperature got too high and the butterflies gave it up for the day.

Almost as soon as I got on site I spotted the slatey grey-blue of arion; it put up a second and they momentarily went into a pitched battle. When they broke apart I followed one which flew up the bank to the more level ground beyond where it perched just long enough to get a record shot. Job done I could relax and enjoy the butterflies more as now the trip wouldn't be a write-off in terms of mileage/petrol.



I followed the path along the top towards the diagonal path that bisects the reserve and rises, breaking through the trees to the top meadow and the Dew Pond. On the way there were Meadow Browns and Marbled Whites and occasionally a darker Ringlet fluttering around busily. As I crossed from my path to another I spied a grey silver blob, far too large too to be a grass head, it was a mating pair. I managed just a couple of shots before they broke and they were swiftly followed by a second pair. Or it could have been the same pair reconnecting. Another patrolling male dropped in occasionally to chance his arm at spoiling the party without any success.



A fourth Large Blue visited the area, missing out the mating pair and flying differently. It flew with more of a search pattern, seeming to seek out purple flowers and ignoring all the others. It settled and started thrusting its abdomen around and into the Thyme it had alighted on. It was interesting to witness the different flight patterns of the genders. On one stop it was just taking nectar and so I held my head over it casting it into shadow. This trick worked as she opened up so I was able to get an open wing shot to add to the days' collection.





From here I made my way back to where the mating pair had been and followed the diagonal track up and through the trees to the top meadow. The temperature had crept up a few more degrees and a lot of the butterflies were flying more frantically. I tried the shade technique once more but it didn't yield such good results and so instead I focused on closed wing shots instead.





I worked my way back to the little copse near the entrance and paused here a while amidst the Large Skippers and a territorial Specklie to have a coffee and get out of the heat. Feeling cooler I set out for my final once over as the butterflies were getting silly frantic as the mercury continued to rise. I followed a female and tried some in flight shots, flicking between Sport and Macro as she'd fly then settled and feed/egg lay.





A tiny darker butterfly crossed paths with the Large Blue and so I followed it. As it settled I realised I was experiencing my very own Little and Large show. I'd spent time with Eddie and now here was Syd.



Feeling chuffed at seeing the smallest and largest of the British Blues I headed home. As I enjoyed the shade of the canopy on the walk back down the hill to my car I realised that I'd seen a reasonable range of butterflies including; Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Common Blue, Large Skipper, Speckle and an unidentified Smessex but I'd only photographed two species all day! Here's to Little and Large.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 17-Jul-17 09:40 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

So disappointed not to have made it to Daneway this year 😞 . Last year we had a great day out, with butterflies galore not to forget the 'characters' we met too 😊 .

It's been quite a contrast over the two visits. Last year it was nearly all open-wing whist this year mostly undersides and in-flight shots. But, that mating

pair 😊 That is one hell of a capture ... pose and detail, a brilliant photo 🤩 🇩🇪 . In just two trips there you've almost got the lot. Larvae next ? 😊

Btw desperately waiting for that shandy reminded me of this: - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAGLstjclZA>

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 17-Jul-17 10:40 PM GMT

Large and Small together, Wurzel - that's a first! 🇩🇪 Lovely shots from Daneway, and that mating pair is brilliant: the ageing male and the lovely new female - how do they do it? 😊 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 18-Jul-17 07:12 AM GMT

It's always a risk when travelling a long distance for a particular species, Salisbury to Canterbury is quite a long journey. So i'm glad you were rewarded at East Blean and Daneway, with some great shots.

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Jul-17 10:36 PM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 I was chuffed with that one 😊 I reckon the bloke in the Club was worse as he was just pulling the beer and mixing not even waiting for it to settle 😊 Next year we will make it to Daneways, I think I'm going to give up the 'number of species in a year' and focus on completing teh list... Cheers Dave 😊 As I get older I'm more inclined to believe that it's because the females appreciate experience over exuberance Dave 😊 😊 Cheers Trevor 😊 There's always that little thought at the back of your head..."I'm travelling all this way and I'm going to dip" 😊 Luckily it usually turns out nice again 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

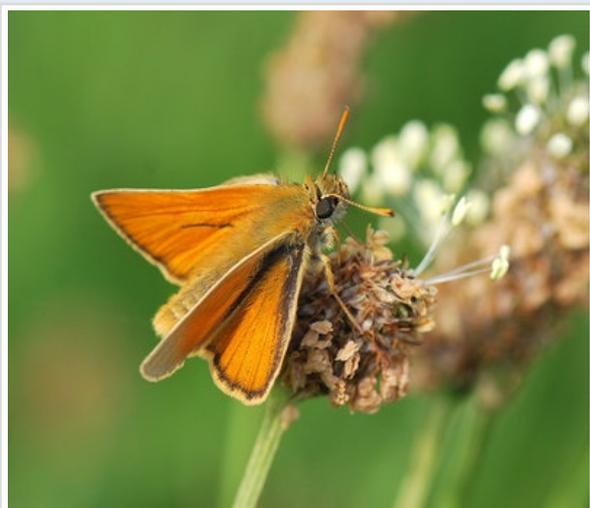
Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Jul-17 12:06 AM GMT

Larkhill 21-06-2017

AM

I started at the half-way point and made my way to the main track. The usual species were about and evident but I started to see more golden skippers - in fact they were all over the place. There had been a literal population explosion and as I walked down the small part of the track and my legs brushed against the grasses and they'd fly around in a swarm almost. I imagine from a distance it would be like witnessing pollen billowing from grass heads.



Also amongst the Smalls and Smessex I find my first definite Essex Skipper of the year, the ink pads clearly visible without having to get down a crunch my neck to confirm the identification. Other identification features seem to leap out as well, the sex brand is thin, short and straight and the overall impression is of sandy and beige than orange if that makes sense?



There are also a few females around - like this small - which showed that species really aren't hanging around this year. They're emerging early and in mass and then getting on with the business in hand, meeting their biological imperative. I might have wondered this before, and I know that I will do again, but could we be in for a quiet autumn as species will have been and gone?



22-06-2017

AM

I again stopped at the half-way point and this time I took my life into my hands as I transected the main path and kept on the smaller track that headed North. Alongside this there is a small 'hedge' of scrub with Bramble and Knapweeds so I investigated what was roosting in amongst this. There were still Marbled Whites but they're not looking quite as smart as only a week ago, less two tone black and white and more on a grayscale. A similar thing can be said for the Ringlets which as starting to lose their margins and fade at the edges. The highlight though was the sheer number of Smessex Skippers, with 16 in a single view at one point all roosting together.





PM

A very quick afternoon stop-off again at the half-way point and there were butterflies everywhere although most would take off at the merest of approaches. There were so many Skippers and Meadow Browns and Ringlets that it was impossible to count them. Much easier was observing a single aged Common Blue and 4 Small Tortoiseshells



23-06-2017

AM

I was only stopping the once today as it's POETS day. I stopped at the half-way point but this time checked out the small bushes near the car and they were alive with Ringlets including some nice fresh ones. At one point I could count 14 in one view as they were scattered around the bushes at various heights. There was a nice range of spotting to be seen with some nice bright 'eyes' as well as one with an unusual ampersand looking spot.





I moved further on and checked out the 'hedge' which held the usual suspects including a stunning set of Small and Essex Skippers who both posed beautifully for me allowing a nice comparison of the two different looking sex brands.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 20-Jul-17 10:14 AM GMT

Great Skipper shots Wurzel, I think the Essex is much lighter in colour than the Small Skipper when fresh what do you think?
Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Jul-17 11:55 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I find Essex to be less in your face orange compared to that of Small. It was more difficult telling the Essex from Lulworths than Small from Lulworth the other week. Mind you by the time I get round to posting that the summer could well be over 😞😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 24-Jul-17 11:00 AM GMT

Always look forward to your post Wurzel 😊 I've yet to see a Lulworth Skipper so when I do looks like I'll need some help with the ID 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Jul-17 11:48 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 With Lulworths the females are really easy Goldie as they have a little crescent moon markings on the wings, the males are trickier but have a more olive colour to them and both genders are much smaller than Smessex 😊

Larkhill 26-06-2017

Another morning stop-off which unfortunately was cloudy and cooler than it has been although still warm and best of all no wind! This morning I

thought I'd give the Northbound path a go as this is a better bet for Hedge Browns and what with the season being so early I might be able to find one. Saying that I didn't find anything until I got about 25 metres in when I started seeing Ringlets including one which had four spots on hindwing.



As the path opened up, the encroaching Hawthorn peters out at certain points, more and more Meadow Browns appeared as well as some Marbled Whites although they don't seem to be as numerous in this part of the site, possibly a bit too hemmed in? Eventually there were some golden Skippers. The order of viewing went; Small, Smessex, Small, Essex, Essex, Smessex.





Time had passed and I was nearing the point of no return; that time when if I left any later I could well be late for work. So I headed off with damp trousers and soaked shoes and the blower on full, hot and directed to the foot-well I'd forgotten how high the grass gets on the Northound path.

27-06-2017
AM

Again it was a bit grey and damp feeling during the morning and I again found the same range of species as yesterday only down at the Eastbound path at the halfway point. It's gotten me wondering if this cooler break is going to mean that things slow down a little and we in the West will be even further behind those in the East? Today the Essex seemed to be outnumbering the Small or is it just that I'm more prone to seeing the dark eye catching antennae?





The Ringlets are still going strong but seem to fading fast – it sometimes feels that despite the slight slow-down there won't be any butterflies left come August!



30-06-2017

There was a slight break in the weather this morning and it felt a fair bit sunnier – perhaps things are on the turn again? Again I had no luck searching for roosting DGF. They've been out for a while now elsewhere and it seems there is still a difference between this and the other side of the country –they're still a week maybe two ahead over in the East. Oh well I'll just have to enjoy the Skippers and Marbs!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 25-Jul-17 09:03 AM GMT

Wow! Wurzel, those Skipper's look fabulous , I just love the second shot, Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 25-Jul-17 09:19 PM GMT

A very nice selection of Small and Essex, Wurzel. Nice to see them looking so bright and new when they've all but finished here now. 😊 Time travel again...

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 26-Jul-17 01:19 PM GMT

That second to last shot wouldn't happen to be a three species one would it 😊?

It's late July but it feels like summer has gone based on what I'm not getting my garden moth trap. Was heading for a record number of species this year but recently numbers have fallen off much earlier than expected. Many have come early this year with the peak (numbers and species) in May-June rather than the usual July 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Jul-17 10:12 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I was chuffed to get some proper ID shots in the bag especially as they sat up and made it easy for me, no crick in the neck and damp knees for me this time 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 WRT time travel I was being considered as the next Dr Who though apparently I didn't have the legs for it 😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 It's all gone a little bit frantic and to be honest its caught me out slightly. I'm in Wales next week and so I'm dangerously close to missing out on Browstreaks 😊 It could be a three species shot...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Jul-17 12:06 AM GMT

What a day!!! 02-07-2017 Bentley Wood

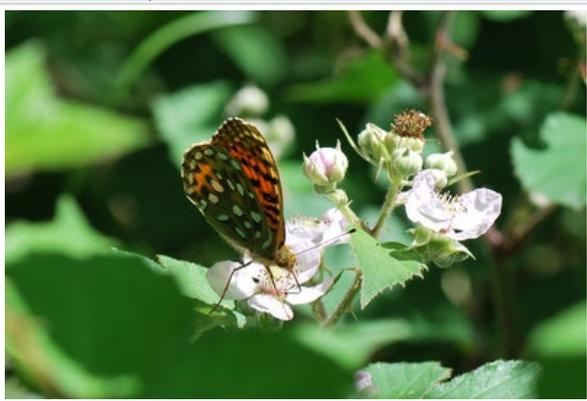
What with one thing or another; work, weather, the burning desire of Mrs Wurzel for a white, minimalist house, I'd become aware (acutely after certain people' posts) that I was missing out on a lot of species. The weekend wasn't looking great either with family business and painting all day Saturday and more painting and seeing friends on Sunday. Luckily I managed to squeeze in a couple of hours break. Thinking about the five species that I wanted to see (Purple Emperor, Purple Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak, Silver-washed Fritillary and Dark Green Fritillary) Bentley Wood seemed like the best bet to pick up two maybe three of my targets and maybe even my first Hedge Brown of 2017? So I rounded up the girls, packed some snacks and we set off. On the journey over I spied a Red Admiral and a Comma and there were numerous Whites as well which boded well I thought...

At the car park a few Large Skippers messed around about on the Brambles, a H.Comma flew across and a Specklie went and hid in the in the shade. As we set off down the main track Ringlets and Meadow Browns arose like smoke out of the verges and the occasional golden blur of a Larmsessex added a bit of colour, like flickering flames. In amongst this a ghostly figure appeared, my first Silver-washed of the year and a Valesina to boot! She didn't hang around long though and so was soon drifting back into the shadows. I was still reeling from this piece of luck when a small grey butterfly flew in a U-Shape pattern, from high down low and back up again to perch on a trailing branch of an Oak. As I focused my bins it resolved to become my first Purple Hairstreak OF 2017. I turned to pint it out to the girls only to spy another flutter down and land within striking distance. A few shots later it flew off in the same direction as its predecessor. I could have packed up then and there, job done, two of my targets seen, photographed and in the bag but my Spidey senses were tingling. I reckoned this could become one of those epic days...





We carried on down towards the Cross-roads, scanning both high and the deck. Silver-washed Frits joined the Ringlets and Meadow Browns and occasional golden blur of a Smessex. Something cut across the path and landed on the deck – but it was a Red Admiral. As I cautiously approached to try for a few shots it shuffled away crabwise rather than flying away. I stopped and it stopped, I approached and it shuffled off sideways. Little L found this most amusing and she kept looking back longingly after we'd overtaken it with a wide berth. At the Cross-roads we had a decision to make. Left or right? We went left down towards Donkey Copse. We'd only taken a few steps down our new path when a Fritillary did a few circuits. It was slightly smaller and more rounded than a Silver-Washed and appeared darker orange too. It landed and instead of a painting that had run the undersides had clearly marked spots. I managed only a couple of shots before it flew and they were enough to make me want more so a trip to Martin Down might be needed to catch up with some more DGFs.



On down the path we went, the odd White and Brimstone standing out amongst the orangey blurs of Ringlets, Smessex and Meadow Browns. An Emperor...dragonfly buzzed us for a bit and a White Admiral out in an appearance, scything through the air, gliding and turning through 180 with the tiniest flick of its wings. I'm always struck by how long its wingspan seems and also by how dominant the white markings appear when its' in flight. At the corner the girls set up camp in the shade and we had lunch. While they enjoyed a leisurely lunch I would take a few mouthfuls, nip off along the tracks still chewing, looking for butterflies before returning to repeat. This worked well and I managed to find my first Hedgie and then photograph my second of the year as well as picking up a few more Silver-washed and seeing the odd silvery grey Purple Hairstreak up in the canopy.





Lunch munched we made our way back to the Crossroads. A H.Comma came down and stayed on the deck, the DGF was in a similar spot but we moved on quickly as a Deerfly kept landing slightly ahead of us and eying us for it's lunch! We carried on over the Crossroads making our way to the memorial. A new Peacock was a lovely colourful addition to the growing day tally even if it did hang around in the shade. As I turned from this K pointed out another butterfly. This was large, with contrasting stripes and was flying more slowly and determinedly than a White Admiral it also had a more 'batlike' shape. It was investigating a Sallow flying slowly up the tree. Unfortunately it mustn't have liked what it saw as it kept on rising and disappeared over the surrounding Oaks. So no photo again (this is the last of the three year cycle so next year one on the deck is a definite) but an audience with His Nibbs none the less, although judging by the behaviour perhaps an audience with Her Nibbs would be more appropriate? That made it 5 ticks for the year and 4 /5 of my targets...Chuffed I rallied the girls to make the final push towards the 'memorial'. There was the slightest of slim chances that I could get my final target but what the hell, even a glimpse of a dark, square cut butterfly high above in a Wycth Elm would do. On the way a Red Admiral did a lovely impersonation of an Emperor, buzzing and circling us a few times before coming down on the deck and walking proboscis quivering towards a large pile of dog poo.



Almost immediately on reaching the stand of Elm Suckers there was indeed a dark, square cut butterfly high up in the canopy. Job done! I couldn't believe it all of my targets found. I poured myself a celebratory coffee and enjoyed the butterflies passing by; Red Admiral, Comma, SWF, Ringlets, Smessex, Large Skipper, Meadow Browns and a White Admiral, as well as catching up with another enthusiast. He headed off five minutes or so previously and I was just heading offski myself so I did one last scan. There on a low Bramble was a grey 'shark fin'. As the butterfly pirouetted the white 'W' and tails hove into view. My first ever photos of a Bentley Whitter. I called the girls and little L had a new favourite butterfly. After a bit it

started feeding too far in the shadows and then fluttered up towards the tallest sucker. An 'arete' Ringlet popped in and then out as a distraction and when I looked up from getting a few shots there was the same/another Whitter back.







The journey back from here passed in a bit of blur with more of the same species but to be honest I was a bit dazzled and so didn't notice much. The fresh Peacock managed to briefly lure me out of my daze but I quickly reverted to allowing all the images to pass through my minds' eye again. Six year ticks, photos of 5 including of two Hairstreak species including a Bentley Whitter and all in a few hours – what a day!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by keving, 28-Jul-17 06:22 AM GMT

Wurzel,

What a day indeed. To start with Valesina is good enough, but what follows is fantastic, including the photos of your first Bentley Whitter. Those sort of days just make you feel warm inside.

Regards Kev

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Jul-17 07:53 AM GMT

Cheers Kev 😊 It was one of those days which will live on and help you get through the winter months – hopefully it'll still have a warming effect then 😊
Have a goodun
Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 28-Jul-17 08:41 AM GMT

Lovely story which had me hanging on your words and hoping for you at every twist and turn. Pleased you had such a successful trip. Especially the WLHs

Interesting to see the geographical and weather related differences between all of the diaries.

As I go out today I shall set myself a target list. Top of it is not to get the promised weather forecast and then some butterflies which brave the cold and rain. And a mating valenzina would be nice. 😊😊

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 28-Jul-17 02:55 PM GMT

What a Hairstreak year !. Glad you saw some Purples low down, and the White Letters are envy inducing. 🍷
Until last week I had never seen an identifiable male Brown Hairstreak, but by weeks end I had photographed twenty two. 😊

2017 has been a season full of surprises.
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-Jul-17 05:02 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, what a great day out you had, lovely shots as well, I know that elevated feeling these last two weeks have been great for me, looking forward to seeing more post's Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 28-Jul-17 05:47 PM GMT

Great shots of 2 Hairstreaks Wurzel and a Valensina! 🍷 Really enjoyed reading this post; you had me on edge wondering what was coming next 😊. Looking forward to the next one.

PS. Footnote for Peter :

"Interesting to see the geographical and weather related differences between all of the diaries".

Don't forget Peter, Wurzel is a season behind the rest of us 😊😊😊

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 28-Jul-17 06:18 PM GMT

That's a day you wont be forgetting for some time to come! I think this year will go down in history as the year of the Hairstreak.... well unless we get a second brood Purple Emperor that is!

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Jul-17 12:00 AM GMT

Cheers Peter 😊 Looks like you met your targets 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I was pretty envious of your Brostreak especially as the weather is playing silly bu£ers now so I'm going to have to wait for at least another week for any chance to see them 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I better get on and write them then 😊

Cheers Pauline 😊 I think... 😊😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Fingers crossed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 29-Jul-17 07:00 PM GMT

What an amazing day out, Wurzel. A staggering selection of premium butterflies there. The WLH in particular was really obliging, beautifully marked (you can see the blue spot!) and your photos do it justice. I am naturally very envious of the valesina too... 🍷 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-17 11:26 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 It was great to get so many 'First for the Year' in one outing especially as time was such a premium due to the accelerated rate of the season 😊 😊
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Aug-17 10:50 PM GMT

August 2017



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-17 11:56 PM GMT

Larkhill 04-07-2017

04-07

After an amazing day at Bentley Wood it was back to the chalk face and with it the usual, more 'mundane' stop-offs. I stopped at the half way point on the way to work. A quick stroll along the Knapweed Hedge and back produced the usual array of species. The Marbled Whites are starting to look a bit faded, as are the Ringlets but eh Meadow Browns seem to be coming into their own. Unfortunately the sky was grey and overcast and so not as conducive to the bright summer like shots I was hoping for. However it wasn't all melancholy for the quick passing of the season as there was a fine collection of caterpillars espying their future home from the safety of their web.





Tears for the passing summer?





05-07
AM

Another morning and another stop-off at the half way point but this morning the sun is with me and I see the same range of species as before but more pen up and throw different shapes and poses rather than just sitting there grimly holding fast to the grass heads and flower tops and sitting out the drear. The one drawback is that things are more active and more flighty with the coming sun.



I also checked out the small scrub right at the edge of the track and the roadside and it was heaving once again with Ringlets – they really seem to like this area as a roost site. One was carrying an enormous mite.



06-07

AM

I stopped very briefly at the Northbound site on the way to work and found at least 6 Hedge Browns in amongst the odd Ringlet and Meadow Brown but what with the roadworks at Larkhill I needed to get moving fast if I wasn't to be late to work.

06-07

PM

In the afternoon I had slightly longer and so stopped at the half way pint and worked my way up and across to the ridge. Meadow Browns, Ringlets, Marbled Whites and Smessex were all over the place in amongst the occasional Small Tort of which I was able to count only 9 though I'm sure there were more. I then spotted the butterfly I was hoping to catch up with. A Dark Green Fritillary. It didn't stop for long but up at the ridge I found a further two one of which did allow me to get a few shots. It was great to see the difference in the underside markings when the light hit it from different angle. The markings when from white spots on a green background to an almost metallic grey on a beige background.





07-07

AM Couldn't relocate despite looking for DGFs

A morning tramp around didn't yield any further DGFs roosting unfortunately so I enjoyed the surrounding Skippers and Marbled Whites as well as a freshly emerged Six-spot Burnet. Mind you the Skippers are starting to look a little tired now - everything is moving at such a pace this year!



PM

Come the afternoon I was again at the Ridge seeking out DGFs as this seems to be the place that they like. And I was proved correct as almost as soon as I reached the ridge I saw my first DGF, a slightly jaded looking male that had obviously seen some action. It had lost the golden glow of the freshly emerged DGF. Slightly further along the track a further couple went up and I had trouble following them as the wind was gusting. A quick mooch around and I found a grounded female, at least she appeared grounded but soon took off, luckily in a lull in the wind so I watched where she landed. She was really dusky but a right bugger to photograph as she seemed to like sitting on the flimsiest of Knapweeds which got knocked about in the wind.



As I made my way back down the track towards the car another (or one of the earlier?) DGF flew and landed just to my right. I didn't want to risk losing a leg to unexploded ordnance and so I just reached my camera arm out as far as it would reach and clicked a few times.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 03-Aug-17 06:30 AM GMT

I love the underside of the DGF Wurzel and you've got some nice poses there - also, that's an astonishing number of Skippers in one shot!!! 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 04-Aug-17 07:55 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Catching up on your posts again...I seem to be falling behind on everyone's diaries lately. Some great reports and photos, I particularly like the freshly emerged Burnet Moth with its old cocoon 🍷😄

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 05-Aug-17 07:04 AM GMT

Wurzel; Some nice photos from your last post. The freshly emerged DGF and Burnet look beautiful.

I particular like the Essex? on the grass stem and the group shot too. It gives a good impression of just how many seemed to be about this summer 😊

Regards Kev

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Aug-17 02:23 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, love the shots of the DGF , I always find it hard to capture side view shots when they close their wings , they never seem to do it when I see them, come to think of it I don't think I've got one shot of them with wings closed 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Aug-17 12:00 AM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 There were even more around, they were all over the place 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I was chuffed with the story that that photo told as well 😊

Cheers Kev 😊 It does seem to have been a very good year for the Smessex Skippers 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 It took me a while to get my first closed wing shot but they tend to shut up more in the evening as they start to go to roost 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Aug-17 12:04 AM GMT

Search for Lulworths 08-07-2017

It had been a while since our last meet-up and things had really moved on a pace so when Philzoid and I started hatching a plan for another Big Trip there were only a few options that would offer either of us new species for the year. We went for the most obvious - down to the Isle of Purbeck for Lulworths.

Before we knew it we were bombing along hoping to miss the Grockles, literally flying over my favourite hill and taking in the heathland views. We stopped off at the Corfe Castle car park for possibly the easiest year tick ever. Nine steps from the car and on the steep bank there was an undeniable Lulworth, the crescent moon markings looking a little like a welcoming smile. Job done again and now to relax and enjoy.



We ascended the steep bank/cliff and strolled about the top area finding Marbled Whites, Ringlets, Hedge Browns, Meadow Browns as well as the occasional Smessex and the odd Lulworth. The Steam engine puffed by adding to the nostalgic and vintage feel that came from being surrounded by a plethora of butterflies.





We carried on chuffed by our early success and made our way through Corfe towards Swanage and arrived in the car park at Durslton without a Grockle slowing us down once. We had to go to the Castle to get the ticket but on the way we got lost. One of the little tracks enticed us with a Red Admiral so we mooched down and followed it through a tunnel of trees adding Holly Blue and a Speckle before the tunnel opened up into a small field hemmed in by Brambles and cliff face. Here there was a Peacock, a Silver-washed bombed around along with a H.Comma. In a low patch of Bramble a Small Copper put in an appearance and in the grasses a Smessex, Large Skipper and a Lulworth were all present. We could have stayed here much longer but I remembered that we still hadn't gotten a ticket for the car.

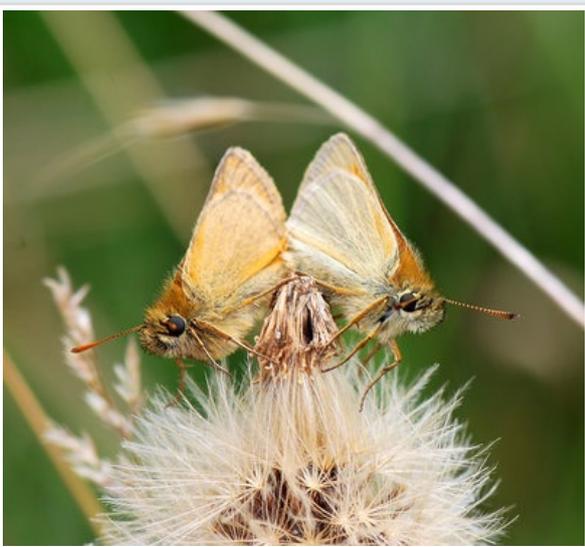




Coming out from the Castle there was a Large White and another Red Admiral which did their best to keep us from our main quarry but we overcame these distractions and cut up the top fields. As we were heading into the main field our way was blocked by a Wall. It was acting in the usual fashion but it kept coming back to the same spot between the gate posts. We guessed that it was holding a territory and so we waited a while to see if we were correct and also to try for a few shots. He did keep returning but always that little bit too far away for a decent shot.



This creep and wait, creep and wait had led to us reaching the top field where we spent a good while wandering and wondering. There was a profusion wild flowers and though we were sticking to the tracks butterflies would erupt from every footfall, the browns and Skippers were everywhere. The warm sun was making identification difficult as they'd be off in the blink of an eye in a dizzying, zig-zagging blur. We settled into the 'grab shot' mentality finding an egg laying Small, a mating pair of Small Skippers and an Essex via this method. There were Lulworths around but they were much harder to pick out in the dense sward.



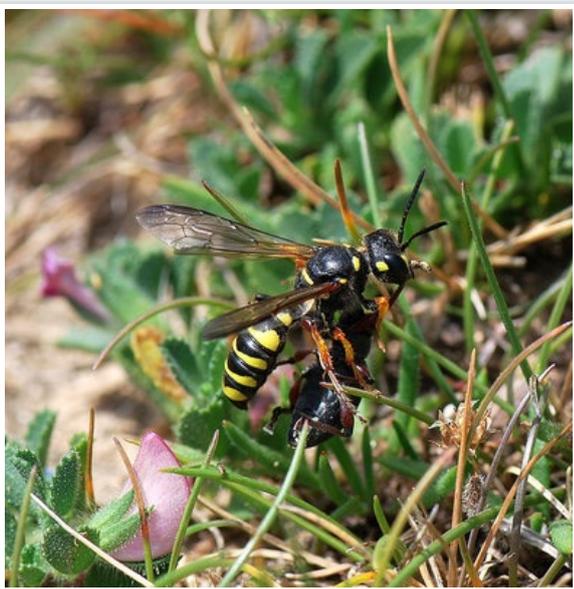


We ended up in a small patch sheltered from the onshore breeze by a low drystone wall and a ring of Brambles. As I started to pour a coffee I took in my surroundings, the odd Brown and then an almost mustard yellow Skipper. A very fresh male Lulworth. When Smessex are fresh they look almost metallic orange, gloss coated whereas this Lulworth looked like it had been thickly covered in powder paint. He was cracking. Another male was more the traditional olive colour and kept hanging around and there was also an attempted 'menage a trois' of Small Skippers.





After lunch we headed down the hill to the coastal path. On the way Common Blues, more Lulworths and a Small Blue and Small Heath were added to the tally as well as a couple of DGFs. Along the path some we found both Spider Wasps and Bee Wolves and the 'gully', which I have fond memories of from my youthful birding days also turned out to be pretty good for butterflies. Although it didn't produce the hoped for Cloudy or Painted Lady there was another Small Blue and a striking Small Copper. We completed the walk up the slope with Lulworths and Large Skipper on one side and Guillemots and Razorbills on the other.







We could have given up there but we headed back to the small field we'd started at taking in a glorious Peacock and relocating the Silver-washed. In the end we drove home with a dally tally of 24 species, and this was without Grayling, Clouded Yellow or Painted Lady all of which were possibilities. What a day - again!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 09-Aug-17 07:00 AM GMT

That really was some day out, and worthwhile too.

Your steam loco. is a Drummond M7 of the LSWR, this type of engine was no stranger to Salisbury.

The Lulworth Skipper would be a 'lifer' for me.

Trevor.

PS. Another Long Tailed Blue was found yesterday, at Shoreham.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Aug-17 09:26 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'll let you know next time and I could give you a lift 😊 Interesting news about the LTB I'll keep a look out for further reports though it would be nice if a few were found a bit closer to home 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Aug-17 09:44 AM GMT

That was a fantastic day out Wurzel, Lulworth Skipper's are on my books for next year hope fully, I wouldn't mind Going to Dorset in September if I can twist some arm's 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 09-Aug-17 03:08 PM GMT

What a terrific day you had down on the Isle of Purbeck, Wurzel. Some excellent shots, particularly of the assorted Skippers. I wish I'd had more time down there (the day after you, in fact!) – only a month ago when it was still summer... 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 09-Aug-17 04:12 PM GMT

It was a particularly fine day a month ago wasn't it (seems like an age ago now looking out my window at the monsoon we're getting in the south east right now!) I have no idea how our paths didn't cross, I was at Durlston for a good few hours that day. Add the Cloudie and Grayling I saw and we can get a respectable 26 species that day 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Aug-17 11:46 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Juding by how things seem to be starting earlier and fading quicker if you could get to Dorset for early August you'd stand a better chance of picking up a Lulworth 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Autumn has come early again, what happened to the Indian Summers of yesteryear? It seems like we get to summer and blink and you'll miss it 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I'm tempted to do that 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by kevling, 11-Aug-17 06:52 AM GMT

Wurzel, Nice report and photos from your search for Lulworths. I often wondered how I would identify these from Smessex when I see one, so I will remember your 'crescent moon markings looking a little like a welcoming smile' observation.

Regards Kev

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-Aug-17 10:27 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, looks like I'll have to wait for next year for the Lulworth but I may need ID from you when I do, Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Aug-17 08:23 PM GMT

Cheers Kev 😊 The crescent moon/smile only works with the females, the males you need to use first sex brand and then colour. The sex brand is similar to a Small so you can rule out Essex and it's smaller and more Yellow when fresh, Olive than orange when worn and more matt than gloss than Small.

Cheers Goldie 😊 They should be easy to find and the females are easy to ID, see above for the males and failing that PM me any images 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Aug-17 07:58 AM GMT

Larkhill Week Beginning 10-07-2017

After a few big trips it was back to business as usual and stop-offs at Larkhill on the way to and from work became the order of the day...

10-07 AM

I tried my arm up the Northbound path as I was hoping to find some more Hedgies. There was a definite changed feel to the place. Gone were the low grasses and the Marbled Whites, the endless Skippers seemed to have waned to be replaced with faded Meadow browns and the occasional Ringlet and fresh and vibrant Hedge Browns. A couple of males flew across the path occasionally before reaching the other side and burying themselves in a Hawthorn. The wall of scrub thinned and petered out to be replaced with tightly growing plants that just about reached knee height. I didn't make it much further than this little area and found all three species seen here. There was a single Green-veined White and few more Meadow Browns and more numerous Hedge Browns.





13-07 AM

It wasn't until a few days later that I was able to make another stop-off. I again chose the Northbound path and again the usual suspects flew but this time there wasn't a Green-veined White to mix it up a bit instead there was just a medley of Browns. It was also one of the shortest stops I've made here, literally just walking up to the 'plant patch' and back.



14-07 AM

It was the same again, though brightened by both the weather and that Friday feeling. Again I found the palette was heavily dominated by Brown though a ghostly Marbled White flew slowly by at one point though they didn't affect the brown feel as it is one! It was interesting and also slightly bewildering to see how quickly the season is moving ahead as the male Hedgies are looking less than pristine and the females are emerging in growing numbers. All that I saw were 'type' but one did have some nice markings visible on its underside. A few of the spots had small horizontal lines coming from them which made it look like when they were being formed the paint had ran.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 13-Aug-17 10:01 AM GMT

Nice second gatekeeper photo - really sharp with nice shades of green in the background.

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 13-Aug-17 07:58 PM GMT

Great Hedge Browns, Wurzel. A lovely Butterfly when fresh, but a real pain when Brown Hairstreak hunting. Those flashes of orange on a Brown Butterfly..... 😬

Watch out at Larkhill, the road is temporarily one way, in the Durrington to Shrewton direction only.

All the Best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 14-Aug-17 09:46 AM GMT

Nice Gate Keepers Wurzel, I was surprised to find some in my garden last week, wish some Brown Hair streaks would appear in it save me going to Gait Barrow 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 14-Aug-17 07:05 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

...Before we knew it we were bombing along hoping to miss the Grockles...

Wurzel

I have got to ask Wurzel...if you leave Dorset and then return for a day trip, do you become a Grockle 😬😬

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Aug-17 11:43 PM GMT

Cheers Katrina 😊 I was chuffed with that one myself 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Yep I know what you mean, Philzoid and I rechristen them False Hairstreaks at this time of year 😊. You can get through Larkhill, so long as you're a 'resident' 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 That would be a great 'Garden tick' for sure 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Fortunately not Neil and especially not if you're Dorset born and bred 😊 Who's afeard? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

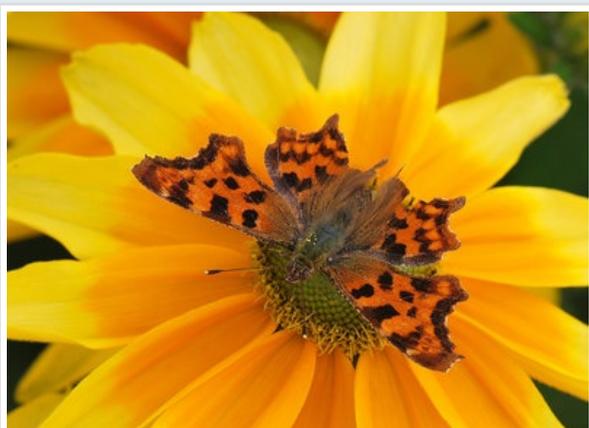
Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Aug-17 08:34 AM GMT

Lavender Farm 15-07-2017

Having discovered the Lavendar Farm at Landford earlier in the year I awaited the warmer weather that would bring on the Lavender so that I could; a. see the fields in all their glory and b. have another gurt lush Cream Tea. So it was great that the time had arrived and my mum and dad came with us to sample the delights as well. This meant that first we dealt with activity 'b' and it was as good as the last time with lashings of clotted cream and fragrant tea and a welcome escape from the drizzle that had set in. With the weather becoming drier and warmer we then took to wandering the paths taking in the heady air and using up some of the excess calories from the tea.

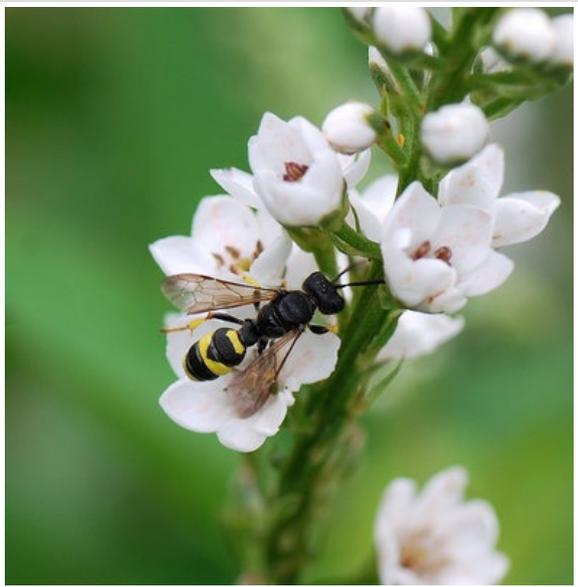
Through the Lavender a Red Admiral flew and a few whites fluttered by. At the top end there was a small patch that had been planted up with garden flowers, arranged in rows it looked like a floral version of an allotment with rows of Dahlias and the like instead of rows of carrots and potatoes. The only problem here was that there were no paths offering access to the butterflies that seemed to have a penchant for this little space. I watched as a couple of whites flew up the field making a bee-line for the flower patch only to disappear once they reached it somewhere in amongst the multitude of blooms. In the end I took to walking round the margins and trying to spot the butterflies on the edges a trick which seemed to work as I soon found a Hedge Brown, Comma and ripped and torn Meadow Brown.





We then made our way back towards the bottom on the Lavender field and while my mum and wife sat and chatted, my dad had a nap the girls set out to explore and play in and around the wild flower garden. This left me free to have a bit of a nurdle by myself. Apart from a territorial Hedge Brown that I could keep going back to the only other butterflies were a few whites a few of which eventually landed. There were also some interesting bees that had burrowed into the stone centre piece in one of the small areas of garden. They had three white markings on their heads which gave them the look of a Marvel character. Despite there being only a few butterflies about it didn't really matter as it was such a peaceful and meditative place to be that I could feel myself unwinding with each step and as we left I gave a huge contented sigh.







Have a goodun

Wurzel

p.s. Before we left we had quick look in the greenhouses at the plants for sale and I came across a tiny little fly - at least I think it's a fly and not a micro moth as it only has one pair of wings?



Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 16-Aug-17 03:03 PM GMT

Sounds and looks like a lovely place Wurzel. Your last image is a Moth Fly. A cunningly inventive name for a fly which looks a bit like a moth!

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-Aug-17 08:32 PM GMT

Wurzel, Lavender does that to you, it's the most relaxing thing you can have in your House, I always get a bunch from the garden before it dies off and you were in the fields where it was growing, what with that and the cream tea 🍵🍵 (not had a one since I left Kent) no wonder you were so relaxed. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-17 10:22 AM GMT

Cheers for the ID Bugboy 😊 They have come up with something a bit more interesting sounding as a name couldn't they 😊
Cheers Goldie 😊 It was a most chilled out afternoon indeed and it'll hopefully now be a regular fixture in our diary 😊 obviously to see what butterflies there are at different times of the year and definitely nothing to do with the Cream Teas 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 17-Aug-17 09:12 PM GMT

Sounds like a great trip with nice images of Lulworth Skippers from Swanage a couple of posts back. I was there about a week after you, and my impression was that numbers of Lulworths, while reasonable, were slightly lower than recent years.

Interesting that you saw an Essex Skipper, for I have never seen them there and didn't know they occurred.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Aug-17 10:28 AM GMT

Cheers Essex 😊 It's difficult for me to make a judgement on numbers at that site as that's only my second visit for butterflies. Possibly they emerged earlier and so there were fewer about or perhaps they hadn't reached their peak yet? 😊

The Devenish 16-07-2017

Having spent time the day before out at the Lavender Farm I felt the need to get out once again and see what was out there. So I packed the girls into the car (one Padawan and one Oracle) and we headed out to the Devenish. As I pulled into the car park The Oracle gave a positive for Chalkhill but not for Clouded yellow, hopefully not a forebear of things to come and with her prediction cast she led the way up through the wood and over the gates. My young Padawan demonstrated her gate traversing skills which she had learnt here on a previous visit and once we were in the Orchid Meadow they set up camp by the stile; one reading some Teen-Vampire-Roman God-Monster story and the other the Beano. Instead I set about mooching and scanning across the flower tops for butterflies teetering on the top. The first I encountered was a Small Copper which turned out to be the first of many. A tired looking Brown Argus fluttered past and put up a Common Blue. The odd Hedge Brown and Meadow Brown flew by and there was also a roving Brimstone and Small White. So far pretty much the usual with perhaps the exception of the Copper. As I carried on scanning a white flag caught my attention and as I approached it became apparent that it wasn't one but two butterflies; a pair of Common Blues in cop. I started to make my way back to the girls when a ghostly blue drifted across the meadow, appearing from higher up on the side of the Down. It was my first Chalkhill but as luck would have it as I moved in to take some shots the cloud covered the sun and I didn't really get to capture the true colours and the shots felt a bit washed out.





After a quick check in with the girls I headed up the track and the steep path right up the side of the Down. I must be getting older as my knees sounded like Castanets as I took the 'stairs' cut into the chalk. Once at the top I then took a left turn and followed the track that cut diagonally across the side of the down. Another Chalkhill flew by, male again and then I found another Copper, slightly tired looking but still holding on. A Brown Argus caught my eye and when I turned back to the Copper it had moved slightly and rejuvenated in the interim.





As I started back up on the far side of the Down and then worked my way along the top the precious little else about and I didn't see anything other than Meadow Browns right up to the pint when I started my descent back down towards the Orchid Meadow when I was joined by several Whites, a male Chalkhill and yet another Small Copper.



As I been gone for a bit I checked in once again and my Padawan had finished the Beano and so joined me in exploring the far end of the Meadow. She spent a lot of the time collecting burrs and then calling me back to 'point something out' to me. This apparent interest was all a ploy and I found myself covered in little prickly/sticky green cones with little L in stitches. Mind you on the plus side her eye sight is sharper than mine now and she quickly pointed out one of the smallest Brown Argus that I've ever seen. It was more akin to the smallest of Small Blues in size.



As we headed back guess what we saw? Yep another Small Copper. There must have been an emergence of them here as this was number 5 for the day. After years of struggling to see the odd one at a site to come to this small reserve and find 5 really easily was a pleasure.



As we were leaving another or the first Chalkhill put in an appearance amongst the ubiquitous Meadow Browns but again the light was weird and it always looked washed out again. I'll have to have another try for this species. Once we broke from the tree tunnel into the field on the other side the sun and came back out and I was tempted to head back but there were two tired ladies that decided that they were going home and so I was outvoted. They did let me have five minutes in the final field though where the Ragwort(?) proved to be very popular. There was a lovely Brown Argus but unfortunately I couldn't quite get it into the shot with the the other selection of species and so I settled for an individual shot of it and then a four species shot to account for the others.





It really was time to go and so we bundled back in the car. The Oracle was correct again and the Padawan had learnt how to spot a Brown Argus as well as how to infuriate dad...I'm still finding burrs now!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 18-Aug-17 09:08 PM GMT

A four-species shot, Wurzel - with another nearby... 🍷 You don't get many of those! A nice selection all round, in fact. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Aug-17 10:32 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 There was a nice selection, the best thing about the trip is that that range was present in two small fields, it's a great little micro site 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Aug-17 09:06 AM GMT

Larkhill Week beginning 17-07-2017

AM

The final week of term had finally arrived and somehow I'd made it despite everything that had been thrown at me. To celebrate I made a quick stop off at Larkhill. I didn't get further than the half way point on the Northbound path as I was slightly rushed for time but to be honest I didn't really need to go much further as it was very quiet and everything was centred around the patch of flowers there. There were a few tired looking Meadow Browns, even more tired looking Ringlets and a smattering of Hedge Browns. They seem much more flighty this year and approaching for photos proved difficult but in the end I managed to find a few that were willing to pose. After the initial 'excessa' here on the first day that I saw them on site I haven't encountered anything unusual since.



PM

I wasn't able to stop on the way home as I was on a mission from my wife to procure a Fiddle-leaved Fig plant from a Lidl. This meant cutting across the Plain in a diagonal to get to Lidl Tidworth first before heading to Amesbury should I draw a blank at Tidworth. Unbelievably I struck lucky and managed to get the last one in the shop so with it strapped in passenger seat I set off homewards. I didn't fancy getting caught in the traffic and so I cut through the backway to Amesbury via Bulford. As I was motoring along I suddenly recognised the road ahead, it was behind the Hotspot Hedge at Shipton Bellinger. So I pulled in and strolled along the Hedge as a bit of a recce. It would have been absolutely ideal if a Brostreak landed in front of me but I knew this wouldn't happen as they hadn't been recorded from this site and it was long past the 3pm curfew this species seems to adhere to. Instead there were Red Admirals, a Comma, various Whites and Browns and several gorgeous Peacocks. I drove homewards wondering why I hadn't twigged about driving here before as the route was much quicker and easier than traveling through the Winterbournes etc.





18-07

AM

This really was a quick stop-off as the road works after the Pack Way had added an extra 10 minutes to my journey time. So I pulled in and legged it along the Northbound path to the halfway point and scanned around quickly. There were the Meadow Browns and Hedge Browns and that seemed to be it. Then there was a Smessex still hanging on but not quite past its sell by date. But I couldn't hang around so I had to pack up and leg it back to the car so as not to be late for work, doing so for the first time in the final week would be bad form.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Aug-17 09:06 AM GMT

Homewards! 21-07-2017

On the last day of the summer term we often finish early so we can have the 'final lunch' and say our various goodbyes. This is really handy as I can make a longer stop off at a site on the way home and so start my holiday properly. This time I had the idea of stopping at Shipton Bellinger as a Brostreak would have been a proper start. With the goodbyes done I hit the road and set off at a pace across the Plain. Unfortunately I still didn't make it to the site while the sunshine lasted, in fact as I pulled into the car park the last glimmers shone down to be replaced by thickening cloud. Still I set off up along the hedge anyway scanning both high for flying and alighting males and down low for females looking for Blackthorn 'whips'. I also scanned at mid-range for those nectaring on the Brambles. By about half way along the hedge I was feeling pretty dizzy and things weren't looking hopeful. I couldn't find much apart from the odd fly-by white and Meadow Browns. Even the Hedge Browns seemed scarce as the cloud thickened some more. I then started a return walk back along the hedge and added a couple of Hedge Browns to the list and decided to cut my losses hopefully things will improve here...



I then set to driving across the ranges, through Bulford Camp, over the A303 and on round the outside of Amesbury. From there I cut down through the Woodfords and called in at The Devenish. This stop was to be even shorter than that at Shipton as by now the clouds had thickened some more and had darkened as well. As I broke up through the wood the raindrops started to fall so I stood up close to the trunk of the biggest tree I could find and waited for it to pass. The drops got smaller and the drips sounded quieter and so I moved out from cover and directly into Orchid Meadow. I scanned about and managed to pick out a little white flag - a Chalkhill sitting out the rain. There was a reddish coloured drop on the grass stem which looked like it could have been meconium but I'm too sure? My time with the Chalkhill was cut short as the rain started to fall again and with much more gusto this time.



Not a brilliant start to the holiday, fingers crossed it picks up some.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

<http://wurzel.weebly.com/>

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 29-Aug-17 10:13 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I know just how you were feeling after spending a couple of hours looking for the Brown Hair Streaks at Gait Barrows the other week and finding nothing. 😞 I love your shot of the Chalkhill it sums up the weather for that day (Rain! not again) 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Aug-17 03:12 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Some days are just like that aren't they 😊 Good luck for future visits 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Aug-17 01:04 PM GMT

Godshill 23-07-2017

So the holiday had begun and with it some time to try and catch up with a few species that I hadn't had the time to make trips for in this fast moving season. Seriously normally this time of year is quite relaxing but this year everything has come thick and fast that I'm behind not just with my PD but also with the butterflies. Hence today I took a mid-morning stroll to the triangle hotspot at Godshill to try and find some Grayling. As I crossed the Cricket pitch and started down the stony hill tracks the sun was shining and Meadow Browns and Hedge browns did their best to distract me. A single Red Admiral buzzed a few times as I continued on my way downhill hemmed in on other side by Bracken.





From here I forded the stream and started to walk along the hypotenuse of the triangle of paths here. Just to my left I spotted something which seemed too large to be a Meadow Brown. Also the flight was wrong, it was less flappy than a Meadow Brown as it threw in the occasional glide as well. I slowly moved across the through the heather and got into position. The clicking of my knees must have spooked the butterfly as it flashed the orange underwing at me as a warning. So I moved backwards and watched as a second flew into view and landed nearby. Again I managed to get in for a few shots. This seemed to be a productive area with a third and fourth all in this one little area. I was able to accurately count as two landed quite close to each other while another pair flew around behind me. I could have stayed here for the rest of the day but felt the need to check out the other areas to see if they held more Graylings...







(Better head off now as my winters log supply has arrived and it needs getting of the road 🤪)

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 30-Aug-17 05:58 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

Cheers for the ID Bugboy They have come up with something a bit more interesting sounding as a name couldn't they

They are also known as the Owl Midges; or more aptly Drain Flies or Sewer Flies in relation to where their larvae are found. I've found them in my car on a few occasions 🤪 perhaps it's in need of a clean out 😊 .

Great report from Durlston by the way 😊 . The "powder paint" covered was a spot-on description of that male Lulworth. The 24 species seen easily beats the number I saw in Southern Spain in 2 weeks but I won't give too much away.

Phil

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 30-Aug-17 06:48 PM GMT

Great to see your Graylings. I missed the local population around here this year. But just like yours, it is almost impossible to obtain an image without grass blades in the way. I prefer Graylings on Heather, but that involves a long journey from here.

Glad you found some Wall Browns in the church grounds (but where are the Ladies ? !).

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 30-Aug-17 07:54 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

... and started to walk along the hypotenuse of the triangle of paths here...

Wurzel

I reckon only a teacher would put that in a butterfly report 😊

Great reports and photos as usual Wurzel. Don't worry about being behind with your reports...I am behind in keeping up with reading everyone elses lately.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Aug-17 10:10 PM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Owl Midge is a much better name 😊 Looking forward to your Spain posting as I'm sure there will be some good stuff in there 🇪🇸

Cheers Trevor 😊 The trick to a Grayling without the grass is to try and find them on a path, but then they fly off too quickly 😊 Fingerr crossed that some lady a Walls make it 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 It was the most accurate way to describe it 😊😊 Thank you for relieving me of the pressure of catching up with my PD 😊 that being said I better try and finish off the posting from this morning which got interrupted by the wood delivery 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Aug-17 10:52 PM GMT

Godshill continued...(now the wood is stored 😊)

...The Adjacent of the triangle didn't actually hold much a fact which wasn't helped by the decreasing drop in sunny weather. Instead of blue skies and sun it was grey cloud and the odd drop of rain in the air. All I could muster was a purple bar moth and a few Hedge Browns and Meadow Browns, even the Dragonflies were keeping a low profile. At one point I even had to sit out a small sharp shower by rolling under a Gorse bush. My trekking round brought me to a wide cleared area with the occasional patch of Cotton Grass, an area which looks good for Silver-studs next season, though none were seen today. After this I found myself back within view of the Hypotenuse and so started back across the brush towards the main path. I was about a hundred yards away when butterfly went up from under my feet. I stalked it and there was another Grayling. Whilst watching this one take off and fly free I spotted a different one, really contrastingly marked.





After this I decided to call it a day as I had to race back to pick my daughter up from a sleep over. As the law of sod decreed as I reached the car the sun had come back out...oh well Grayling down, Silver-spots next...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

PS As always here are a few 'Where's the Grayling'...



Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Sep-17 12:52 PM GMT

Nice shots of the Grayling Wurzel, I laughed at your last two shots, that's the way I usually find them 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Sep-17 09:57 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Did you find them? 😊

September 2017

Fingers crossed for something over this way... 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Gary.N, 02-Sep-17 10:05 PM GMT

Great shots of the Graylings. I keep meaning to go to my local spot. A mile from my transect, but I have not made it there in 3 Years. I'll have to go next year.

Gary

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Sep-17 11:24 PM GMT

Cheers Gary 😊 Graylings are good value for money butterflies; interesting behaviour, nice range of variation, different habitat and the intrigue as to whether you can capture an topside view 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 03-Sep-17 05:33 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I was lucky this year I found some Graylings on Heather at Arnside Knott, my first and last of the year. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Butterfysaurus rex, 03-Sep-17 06:11 PM GMT

It's great seeing your Grayling shots, unfortunately I missed them this year, the first time for years that I've not seen them. You've just made up for that. 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 03-Sep-17 06:58 PM GMT

Nice Graylings, Wurzel – yours seem more colourful than those on the sandy Surrey heaths. A butterfly full of character, this one. 😊 I do like your annual "Spot the Grayling" competition: I always forget and put the butterfly in the middle when I try to set these up – bit of a giveaway, that. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 03-Sep-17 07:46 PM GMT

Ahhh the old 'spot the Grayling' segment. I forgot to take some this year 😊 (bit sneaky putting one in 'soft focus' 😊)

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Sep-17 12:05 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Arnside sounds better and better 😊🇮🇪

Cheers Rex 😊 There's always next year to catch-up with them, not so with the QoS 🇮🇪

Cheers Dave 😊 The Graylings at Godshill do show a nice range of variation 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 That's not sneaky it's 'offering challenge' 😊😊

Have a goodun

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Sep-17 11:39 PM GMT

Broughton Down 24-07-2017

With my success at 'mopping up' species the day previously I managed to wangle a few more hours out over at Broughton Down. It was still early for Silver-spots here as we're normally a week or two behind areas further East from this site but then most things seem to have been early this year and with my holiday calendar getting rapidly filled by Mrs Wurzel it had to be now or never. So I was soon making my way up the steep hill and then down through the tree tunnel to the gate. One of the best things about this site is the way that you enter. From the shade under the canopy of large Beeches where you can only see a metre or so in front of you then you step out into the sun with the world dropping away beneath your feet. After a few minutes on site I'd seen numerous Meadow Browns, a few faded DGFs and a small female Common Blue. So small I had to check cell spot and look for the 'arch' on the underwing to confirm. Then something buzzed by me, my first Silver-spot of the year.



After this early success I made my way around the site. I started by walking back along the path and then started down the Down. A Painted Lady played hard to get for a while and while I was following Her I'd ended up at the bottom of the Down. I'd not been here before and so it made a change to visit Broughton and actually walk on level ground! All along the bottom the foliage was fresh and filled with a lovely selection of Blues and Brown Argus. There were also a nice selection of Vanessids with a single Red Admiral and two a piece of Comma and Peacock. All the butterflies were taking advantage of the slight brightening of the sun and so they were very difficult to approach.



My mooching took me right the way along the bottom of the site and back up the other side putting up many Meadow Browns and the occasional ripped or tired looking DGF. A couple more Silver-spots were about but slight temperature rise brought about by the sun peaking out from behind the clouds meant that they too were very flighty. I'd forgotten how difficult they are to follow in flight as they zip in one direction, pull a 120 and zip off in another before veering right round and behind you. Then they're gone, often landing quite close to where you initially saw them but in the all the confusion you are totally oblivious to the fact that they're right there in front of you. This happened numerous times on a short turfed area at the top of the down. I

reckon there were at least 3 different males here as but that can only be an estimate. I decided to try my luck back off the path and so I was back where I'd started having completed a circular walk. I carried on as this little area with its path, small tracks and criss-crossing rabbit runs as well as plenty of nectar sources seems to be a haven for the Silver-spots but they little blighters were even harder to follow here as now they could weave in and out of the foliage. So again I carried on this time working about half way down the Down where the turf became more closely cropped and straight away I saw and managed to follow a Silver-spot. It landed and so elbow crawled across the turf so I could get close enough for a few photos and then a bit of video on my iPod. It was joined by a second which was more intent on nectering than basking but when the former caught sight of the latter there was a short scuffle and both slowly vanished from view in an ever decreasing golden blur.



I made my way up hill a little more and re-joined the main path heading towards the Mound and beyond. Along the way there were more of the usual suspects joined by a few Hedge Browns and a single Holly Blue. Down a steep sided ditch path up again and the field opened up. It was like I was at Martin Down. Even more so when a couple of male Chalkhills flew into view.





Time was running away from me and the sun was spending more and more time behind the clouds so I slowly started to wend my way homewards stopping on the way for another cracking little Silver-spot. After this I bumped into a couple who were looking for Silver-spots and so I said I'd follow the usual protocol of giving a holler should I see one. A few minutes later I was hollering as I almost stumbled onto one sitting backing on the edge of one of runs. He very nicely remained in position so both I and they were able to get some nice close up shots.



I made my way down the hill and homewards ruminating to myself about what I'd seen. Not one female but several males and this early in the season that boded well so I started humming an Ian Dury song..."Reasons to be cheerful"...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 05-Sep-17 04:20 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I love to read your Posts it's just like being there 😊 Great shot's of the SSS, I just missed them in Kent , but last year I was lucky and got some good shots so no worries 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 05-Sep-17 08:07 PM GMT

When I saw the Silver-spotted Skipper I thought you were up to August, Wurzel 😊😊😊 but I guess they're early at Broughton this year 😊 Great third

shot of the SSS 😊

Mike

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Sep-17 01:02 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I was chuffed with the Silver-spots as I wasn't sure that they'd actually have merged that early 😊
Cheers Mike 😊 Everything was early this year, and I don't know if that was a good or a bad thing 😊?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 07-Sep-17 07:55 PM GMT

Very nice Silver-spots, Wurzel. Not only were they early this year, they seem to have had quite a long season. Lovely to see them fresh from back in July, though. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Sep-17 11:09 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 The Silver-spots do seem to have hung about, I reckon it's because the weather has been so up and down this summer, we've only had a couple of great days in a row before going back to cool and cloudy for a day or two, particularly round this way. It's been a double edged sword as getting the timing of a trip right has been awkward but at least there's been something to see if it works out 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Sep-17 11:27 AM GMT

Oxford 25-07-2017

Having bagged some more Chalkhills and Grayling and Silver-spots for the season next on the list was a Brostreak. The weather looked great and today looked like being the only decent day of the week but instead of heading to Shipton to reach my target I was driving into the cloud and mist heading Northwards towards Oxford to visit friends. The butterfly prospects didn't seem that great but I had a mooch around the garden in between cups of tea etc. The flower beds in the back held a couple of Hedge Browns, I'd watch as various Whites would enter over the ancient forge's roof and work their way along the border before disappearing up and over the other end of the house and a Red Admiral stopped in very briefly, very high up on the tall wispy Buddleia. There were also a couple of Meadow Browns round the garden one of which landed and took nectar posing like a tired and worn Hedge Brown. In the front garden the Whites stopped fractionally longer but still not long enough for a decent shot. There was also a Hedge Brown here close to the dried up pond.





After lunch we took a walk there and back which provided me with the opportunity to see a greater range of species. There was quite a mixed bag with and despite the fact that the sun had come out and it was now nice and warm there was a strange almost autumnal feel to parts of the walk due to the butterflies seen, yet at other times it felt obvious that it was mid-summer. First we found a Red Admiral and a Comma, so far a bit autumnal. Then further along a tired looking Ringlet and Large Skipper dragged us back to mid-summer. On the return leg another worn Comma and a Peacock lent itself to the autumnal feel; strange as we were still in July and in previous years I've encountered Purple Emperors around now and fresh SWFs. Mind you it has been funny old year...





Have a goodun

Wurzel

PS When I got back I happened to see that it had indeed been a fantastic day at Shipton 😊 – oh well some you win, some you lose...

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 10-Sep-17 11:20 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, seems like the SSS emerged whilst I was in Kent at Temple Ewell but I never saw them when I visited there and by the last weekend there I was ready for home and didn't feel like climbing any more slopes. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Sep-17 12:02 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Maybe next year then, they certainly seem to be hanging around over the summer period 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Sep-17 10:06 AM GMT

Welsh Trip 30-07-2107

It seemed that the precedent had been set for his holiday; it was going to be one 'of those'. Last year was stunning with plenty of trips out here and there wrapping things up nicely at Shipton before jetting off to Lisbon then popping out to Martin Down for a Clouded Yellow upon my return. This year it seems that whenever the weather was good I'd either be somewhere else where the weather isn't great or travelling. And so as we set off towards Aberaeron it was no surprise that the forecast was great at Shipton, in fact it was going to be great the whole way only it would get worse over the course of the week once in Wales and where I'd come from was going to stay pretty good.

On the journey up there were plenty of Whites on the verges which once past Swansea were awash with colour but try as I might even squinting as hard as I could I couldn't magic any of the Brimstones into a Cloudy. When we arrived a Red Admiral flew across the garden to greet us and then we had to set to unpacking.

31-07 Monday

When we awoke on Monday the weather had started to roll in but it seemed to not be able to make up its mind and so there were glorious periods of sun intermingled with noticeably cooler greyer weather. After the girls had been swimming at the local pool, lunch had been obliterated and cleared away I nipped out for a short while to investigate the Lane and Rhu Goch. First round the corner and across the road to work my way along the flat top stretch of Rhu Goch. The tall Buddleia bush on a neighbour's drive was packed with Red Admirals and I counted 5 and Green-veined White thought there could have been more on the garden side hidden from view. The clouded rolled in and it all went grey and the butterflies disappeared. I carried along checking the hedge hopefully and munching on Blackberries until the road started to drop and then I turned to make my way back. Then the sun came out and with it the butterflies. At first I noticed the buzzing of the bees and then as the temperature crept back up, the breeze slowed and the sun shone more strongly the butterflies started to join them. Whites at first and then what I'd been hoping for a lovely fresh Hedge Brown. She was resplendent with extra spots on her forewing, even with a tiny spot above each of the 'eyes' and a band of colour – mid way between the orange and brown colours of her livery – which ran along the length of the body to the tip of the hind wing.



After a brief sojourn (minus kids) with my wife into town I was back out in another of the brighter spells. This time I headed up the Lane only as far as the first farm entrance. A different neighbour's Buddleia had another couple of Red Admirals and Large White that just refused to settle. The steep banks of the Hedge housed several Hedge Browns but only a few were well behaved enough to stop for a photo or two. I wasn't that worried as I was able to give each a quick check and nothing stood out apart from a 'normal' female with a sizeable chunk missing from her hind wings – possible bird strike?



01-08 Tuesday

I had high hopes for today as we were off to Aberystwyth to walk Constitution Hill. This would mean the walk along the riverside path into town and then up the gorse and heather laden hillside with hopefully a Wall or maybe even a Grayling gracing the slate paths. However it wasn't to be as it was

cool enough for a fleece and the likelihood of rain was high enough for a raincoat as well. There were a couple of Specklies and a single Holly Blue on the walk in but nothing stopped. Then by the time we were in the foothills of Constitution Hill the cloud had covered the sun and the only Lepidoptera I saw was a Burnett Moth at the top. As we were coming down the heavens opened and there was a deluge for half an hour so we took refuge in the Vernacular railway station. Not great.

Once back and with the raincoats drying the sun poked his head out for a bit so I headed back to Rhu Goch. The Red Admirals were on the tall Buddleia, only four this time and all up high though 'number 98' did stray a little bit lower. There was also a Small White which had been something of a rarity this year, true they've been about but they've certainly been difficult to photograph.



Further along the hedge is prime Hedgie habitat and set about looking for interesting variations. I relocated the female excessa from the day before but also found a slightly battered male which was very busy holding a territory from another male that wasn't allowed to land. Further along was a Green-veined White and one of the Red Admirals had decided to leave the Buddleia for a bit.



On the return journey I found a cracking looking male which looked a little odd. It was only when I focused in that I realised that the 'eye' only had one and not two pupils. I don't know what it is about this little area but it is really good for throwing up variants. The other Buddleia only two Red Admirals on it today but at least they were low down. It's been a good year for this species.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 13-Sep-17 10:07 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I agree with you, it's been a great year for Gate Keeper's and there seems to have been a lot more excessa's than I've seen before, in-fact the the very first Gate Keeper I saw this year was an the ab excessa. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Sep-17 09:09 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 My first at Larkhill was also an excessa but they always look better on the ladies, more contrast between the spots and the orange background I suppose 😊 I better crack on and get the second half of the holiday written up, so much to do, so little time 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Sep-17 11:41 PM GMT

Welsh Trip Part 2

02-08 Wednesday

The weather forecast said it was going to be terrible so we spent the day inside pottering about and getting various things done. It was only after lunch that we 'risked' going outside for some fresh air and a trip en masse up the Lane to the Dog Cottage. True is was cooler than it had been and it was a little grey but again the forecast was wildly inaccurate, I think I might bin off the weather apps. There were some Hedge Browns as we made our way along the Lane and round the corner. A Red Admiral was backing on a slate driveway in the weak sun and Swallows chittered from the overhead cables. About half way along the walk one of the Hedge Browns really caught my eye as it was so unusually marked. The usual white spots were elongated into streaks and there were accentuated by being surrounded by the usual orange background colour in rings against a much paler hind wing. Unfortunately it decided to sit at a difficult angle which meant that I couldn't get the whole butterfly in focus in one shot. Still it's pretty impressive looking.



03-08 Thursday

Having been incorrect all week the weather app was even worse as today was supposed to be the best day of the week, at least that's what it was saying right up until the previous evening. Now in the morning it was looking distinctly wet and wild. There was a break in the weather in the morning so we quickly made our way over to Llanachaeron but it was still pretty dire. A bedraggled Meadow Brown and a fly by Peacock in the walled garden were the

only butterflies and there was a nice moth sheltering in the kitchen courtyard but that was about it and as the mizzle became drizzle which became proper rain we headed back home. So the holiday ended in a whimper in scenes reminiscent of the very end of the season.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 15-Sep-17 12:07 AM GMT

As the acknowledged champion of all things Hedge Brown, it is only right and proper that you should find such a splendid aberrant underside! 😊👍😊
It's a stunning individual – I wonder what it looked like on top?

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 15-Sep-17 07:01 AM GMT

I am afraid to say I failed to recognise your Hedge Brown, my first reaction was for another rare migrant! 😊. What a find!

All the best,
Trevor.

PS. The Wall Browns at Great Cheverell seem to have finished.

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-Sep-17 10:48 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, nothing was lost that day if you got an ab, unusual one as well 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Sep-17 08:02 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I would have loved to have had a glimpse of the topside but it was such a dreary day it was shut up tight 😞
Cheers Trevor 😊 No worries Trevor I didn't know what it was when I first saw it either 😊 Fingers crossed for the Walls next year, did you ever see a female on site 😊
Cheers Goldie 😊 Indeed that ab certainly made up for the day, the whole week actually 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 17-Sep-17 08:33 PM GMT

No female Walls at Great Cheverell apparently, and I've only seen two round my way.
With so few females no wonder the males are always ready for a squabble !.
Of course the Ladies can always play hard to get.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Sep-17 09:59 PM GMT

I'm hoping that the females will move from territory to territory until they find a male they approve of – so hopefully another male will hold territory there next season OR a pair might have already bred and we missed it, there were a good few males there so the habitat suits them, fingers crossed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 19-Sep-17 08:16 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, that is a great looking Hedge Brown ab. cracking find 😊

Your moth looks like a Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Sep-17 10:11 AM GMT

Cheers Neil for the Hedge Brown comment and also cheers for the ID, another one to add to the ever growing iPod gallery – at this rate I won't have any room for music, apps etc 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Sep-17 08:43 AM GMT

Shipton Bellinger 05-08-2017

So having to sit out the Brostreak fest that had been ensuing on UKButterflies I was finally back with time to spend at Shipton and wouldn't you know it the weather which had been terrible in Wales was now not particularly crash hot round home. So I found myself playing the usual demoralising game of 'race the clouds'. To make matters worse it seems that while I'd been away in Wales Wiltshire Council had decided to improve the highway at some point on very road that I needed to take 😊😞. When we pulled in at the back entrance to Shipton the girls were straight out of the car and we practically ran round the corner and along the hotspot hedge in an effort to catch the final rays of sun that were fast disappearing behind the cloud. As I looked ahead to check the terrain I spied a small cluster of people circling a small area of bush. As we drew up I swung my camera around and fired off a few record shots – Brown Hairstreak on the yearly tally. I then did something very strange, I joined a queue to get some decent close-ups! 😊 It was a strange affair; you'd queue, then take your shots and then join the back of the queue so you could check what you'd gotten and try for a different angle when it was your next turn.



After a couple of turns at the Brostreak I shook myself out and setting the girls with their lunch and books in the edge of the wood I set about to have a closer and independent look at the hedge. Don't get me wrong the female I'd seen was nice but it felt like a bit of a cheat to have it handed over on a plate on arrival. My own spade work paid dividends almost immediately. At the corner of the hedge is a large clump of Bramble which rises at the front edge to between chest and waist height. A few centimetres in it drops down to just below waist height forming a bowl of bramble. Right in the middle of this was a strangely triangular dead leaf. I slipped one leg down between the brambles, feeling my way through and articulating my foot this way and that so as not to crush the stems and once my boot reached the ground I repeated a similar action with my other leg and what had been a distant butterfly was now almost right in front of me. It was a male Brostreak and although worn and tired still maintaining his wing margins and tails and the more honey like colour. After a few shots I reversed my initial procedure and felt very satisfied when looking at the bush you wouldn't have known that I'd been standing in it a few minutes previously. 😊



I carried on along the hedge but got waylaid again by the showy female who was still in the same place. Luckily by now most of the crowd had dispersed so I stood back and waited for only one or two people to get their shots. I noticed that it seemed slightly brighter and checking the clouds was surprised to see the clouds parting and the twinkling of some blue sky; "hmmmm this might be good". As I thought this the Brostreak started to twitch her wings and ever so slowly she started to open up. I took a few shots and got in a little closer as she opened up some more to almost wide apart. She was finally totally open, wings a kimbo and then someone got a bit over eager and pushing front of me from below spooked the butterfly, she started closing up again and the overeager butterfly spooked her again and she was gone!



Slightly irked I cheered myself up by finding another male a few steps away. He was right at the top of a Bramble right on the edge of the hedge for all to see but strangely no-one seemed interested in him? 😊 Bemused by this lack of excitement (every Brown Hairstreak is special to me) I went and picked the girls up. At least they were chuffed to see the two tired looking males as I pointed them out as we went past...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 21-Sep-17 10:40 AM GMT

"Every Brown Hairstreak is special to me", my thoughts exactly 😊 Glad you didn't miss out the Hairstreak fest!

Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 21-Sep-17 10:57 AM GMT

Well I missed out this year so I have enjoyed seeing all of the lovely BHs on here. Yours are lovely and it is a good story too. Next year I may be lucky too.

I would extend your philosophy to say every butterfly is special. I try and stop myself getting blasé about any species, as some years I don't see them and miss them. It was hard this year on a few occasions when I was seeing extraordinary numbers of a few species, but I just had to say next year it may be different. So I have taken a huge number of similar pictures and tried to ensure I checked everything out. It is great to be able to go back over some of the days to remember just how great the numbers were. 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Sep-17 08:10 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It was a close run thing this year, I almost thought that I wasn't going to make it as the weather was never really that crash hot and there were plenty of other commitments keeping me out of the field. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 21-Sep-17 08:29 PM GMT

Magnificent brostreak shot Wurzel. If only I had a time machine and could go back and take some more photos of them this year!

Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 21-Sep-17 08:58 PM GMT

Great stuff there, Wurzel. I too thought I would miss out again this year, but everything came together, just in time.

Re: Wurzel

by Butterflysaurus rex, 21-Sep-17 09:28 PM GMT

~~quote~~"It was a strange affair; you'd queue, then take your shots and then join the back of the queue"

Ah yes queueing up for Brown Hairstreaks, I've spent many an hour doing that at Steyning. Only for it to fly off just when it was my turn! 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 21-Sep-17 09:58 PM GMT

I'm glad you got your Brown Hairstreaks, Wurzel, especially that male which you discovered independently – very satisfying. Great shots: the colour is really quite subtle compared to the brightness of the female.

This year I've only had to queue behind Bugboy for Brostreaks... 😊😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Sep-17 11:40 PM GMT

Cheers Peter 😊 Glad you enjoyed the narrative, there is a bit more to come but it's tricky fitting in everything 😊
"I would extend your philosophy to say every butterfly is special". Definitely something to be more conscious of...each year I do a look back and sometimes I surprise myself with how many images I have of certain species and how few I have of others and then I make a pledge to myself 'next year I will focus more on...' 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 22-Sep-17 07:58 AM GMT

Very much enjoyed your Brown Hairstreak saga. Male and female in one session is great going. For me 2017 will go down as the year of the Hairstreak. We had the impeccably behaved Purple's, a good showing of White Letters, then for me 22 male BH in one week.

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-17 11:06 PM GMT

Cheers Katrina 😊 I know what you mean 😊 It would also be good to see what taking the other side of a decision would have revealed; what would I have found if I'd checked the other side of the hedge first etc 😊

Cheers Essex 😊 We did cut it a bit fine but like the Tortoise we got there in the end 😊😊

Cheers Rex 😊 This was the first time I've queued for a Brostreak, it was a bit of culture shock 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I still don't get the disdain shown to the males 😊😊 I have found them fresher but even then they don't glow as much as the female 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Sep-17 10:48 PM GMT

Sorry Trevor I missed you out when I did my last set of replies, that's the wonders/dangers of vino 😊 It has been a good Hairstreak year, I wonder if that's been anything to do with the early start to the season? Mind you 22 Brostreaks in a week isn't really good, it's actually pretty awesome 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 24-Sep-17 11:41 PM GMT

Nice shots of the Brown Hairstreaks, Wurzel 😊 However, if queueing (as described in your blog) became the norm I would give up butterflying and take up stamp collecting 😊

Mike

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 25-Sep-17 09:38 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, just catching up on my posts 😊 I'm glad you got your Hair Streak shots and there fantastic especially the one with the open wings 🦋🦋 I wasn't lucky this year but I did get my first WHS shots which was brilliant! 😊 Next year I'll cover Gait Barrow and the South for BHS 😊 A bit of good news though, they were seen at GB on the 2nd Sept (just wish I'd known) also I've heard a second brood DOB was seen , not sure if at GB yet but hope fully it was. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Sep-17 03:42 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 It was the first time I've experienced it 😊 Hopefully it was just because there were two separate groups on a trip on the same day and it was good in that it made me work that little bit harder to find my own which I did...but more of that later 😊
Cheers Goldie 😊 I think it was Karma pay back for taking my wife to see her friend in Oxford 😊 Didn't you also get a Helice Cloudy this year 🦋 ...if so that would make the year mighty fine in my book 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 27-Sep-17 04:32 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, yes I'd a pretty good year this year I'm highly satisfied, 😊 I got the shots of the Hellice Cloudy whilst in Kent, that made my year 😊 Also got my first decent shot's of the Large Heath, before that I'd got them flying in the distance 😊 I hope the weather stays warmish because I'm still getting Butterflies in the garden, it's been a great September here in the North. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Sep-17 11:40 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 It's not been too bad down this way but generally while I'm at work or doing chores 😊 Still hoping for a late flutter to pay off with a Cloudy, fingers crossed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Sep-17 07:53 PM GMT

Shipton Bellinger 05-08-2017 Part 2

...The cloud was really starting to thicken and it seemed like the threatened shower was definitely in the offing so my plan of attack was get back to the car, sit it out and then have a proper look round on my own as by now the masses were dissolving. On the way I bumped into a couple that had missed all the commotion earlier. They were certainly putting in the work checking the bushes thoroughly so I said if I found anything further along I'd give them a holler. Which I did a few moments later. As I'd rounded the far end of the hedge to walk back along the road/track to the car I'd again spotted an orange leaf that looked out of place. This time it was a lovely fresh female but she was playing hard to get being perched quite high up and set back a little from the edge of hedge. She also liked to hide behind Bramble buds so most of my shots she looks like a disembodied pair of wings. I was just saying that I was going to head off and wishing them luck when the heavens opened and the girls screeching legged it back to the car to escape the downpour.





After the downpour had passed we explored the area noting a few blues and a Comma round the back area as well as fly-by whites and plenty of Meadow Browns and hedge Browns. It was still a bit early it seemed for the Holly Blues as we didn't see a single one. I was just thinking of calling it a day when I got a real surprise. There was a little brown blur. The flight looked a little like a Skipper; veering off in one direction before jinking back to another, but it was the wrong colour for Smessex? Cautiously I approached and I could see it was a Dingy, in August, my first ever second brood Dingy. I knew that it happened but seeing something for the first time always makes it more special.



This seemed like as good a time as any to make the move home, leave on a high.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 30-Sep-17 08:38 PM GMT

There's nothing dingy about that Dingy, I've never seen a second brood Dingy. Lovely golden Brown Hairstreak too. Mint females evaded me this year.

I'm visiting Wiltshire on the 9th Oct. How are the Butterflies over that way ?

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Sep-17 11:57 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Things seem to have curtailed over this way – there's still the Vanessids and the odd Small Copper and White about but things have really quietened down – I'm hoping for a few days of good weather mid October for a final flurry but the season looks to be finishing early this year... 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 01-Oct-17 10:20 AM GMT

Things have fizzled out around my local patch too.. apart from a few Red Admirals, Commas, Specklies and a few Whites, I have seen nothing else for more than a week now.
Mind you, that is quite normal for my local patch here.

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Wurzel

by Butterfysaurus rex, 01-Oct-17 09:21 PM GMT

A second brood Dingy is always a great find, seems they were widespread this year with a couple seen over here too. My shot was terrible compared to yours though!

If feels a bit odd having autumn arrive on time this year, I've been getting used to summer lasting until the end of October.

Cheers

James

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Oct-17 11:07 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 I've gotten used to seeing butterflies right up to November so for the season to end so abruptly is a bit of a shock to the system though hopefully it's just a blip in the weather 😊

Cheers Rex 😊 I know what you mean but there might be the odd few days of good butterfly weather still to come, hopefully it'll arrive at weekends so I can make the most of it, fingers crossed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 03-Oct-17 10:36 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I'm green with envy 🍋🍋 about your Brown HS shots 😊 hope fully next year I'll get them. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Oct-17 12:48 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I have gotten slightly complacent about Brown Hairstreaks as I'm lucky enough to live very close to one great site and near to a second as well, however the major fly in the ointment is the poor weather we seem to have had over the last couple of summers 😊 But pick your day and site correctly and they'll be in the bag 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 03-Oct-17 09:49 PM GMT

Really lovely Brown Hairstreaks at Shipton, Wurzel – and then a second brood Dingy! I've seen them occasionally at Denbies (not this year) but have never managed a photo, so lots of 🍋 for that one. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Oct-17 09:33 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Shipton threw up a couple of surprises this year but that was the best one, another 'not quite as suprising but still mildly so' to follow at a (much 😊) later date...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

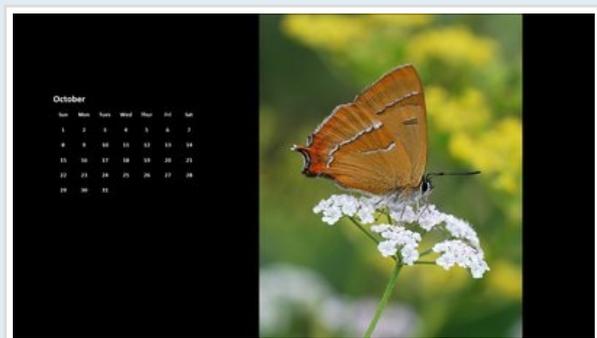
Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Oct-17 12:45 PM GMT

Crickey I could at least be up to date with the Calendar... 😊😊

October 2017

A time of mellow fruitfulness, fingers crossed...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 04-Oct-17 03:34 PM GMT

That calendar shot is jus..... I've run out words. 🍷😊😊

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Oct-17 07:07 PM GMT

WOW!! Wurzel. if I could get a shot like the one on your calendar of a Brown Hair Streak I'd be in heaven! Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Oct-17 10:23 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Though I've traded a few 🍷 back in your direction, so many in fact I think I'm now Overdrawn in that department 🙄😊
Cheers Goldie 😊 Next season Goldie, right place at the right time and you'll have one of equal measure I'm sure 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Oct-17 11:14 PM GMT

Kingston Lacey 13-08-2017

Over the next couple of week I spent almost every waking hour (well maybe not quite that much but it certainly felt that way) finishing up the paint work on the house and getting various bits and pieces sorted out ready for the arrival of my sister, brother in-law and my niece who were back from Oz for a month. Luckily the weather wasn't the best although there were times when I would catch myself gazing out of the window during a few moments of respite for my knees - its hard work painting skirting boards and now I reckon that my knees are 30 years older than the rest of my body!
After the usual doings and meet ups with various relations come Sunday we all headed over to Kingston Lacey for a picnic and then a mooch around the grounds and gardens. Once on site we set up on the lawn and ate heartily, it was nice to see colours and not just 'Farrow and Ball - All White' and I managed to make a couple of sojourns out from the picnic rug and check out some of the flower laden borders. I was accompanied by my niece and what she lacked in subtlety she made up for in sheer enthusiasm and she happily pointed out butterfly after butterfly; each one would receive and appreciative "Wow" before she would bustle off to find the next one. In this way I notched up a couple a piece of Meadow Brown, Brimstone, Red Admiral, Comma and Green-veined White as well as both Small and Large Whites and a female Common Blue and all within a couple of steps. The thing I was most pleased about was watching a Hornet take a bee and then dispatch it, all whilst hanging upside down from two of its tarsi. My niece wasn't that impressed though and we had to head back to the others.



This was the ab with the white spot – which can be seen from the underside as well.





We made our way across the lawn, through the Fernery and along the large border. Here I saw a few more Whites none of which were stopping. A Peacock stood out and even though it kept its distant it was much better behaved than the accompanying Red Admiral. An orangey butterfly landed quite a way back and at first I thought it was a faded Comma but when I checked through the viewfinder it resolved into a Silver-washed. I don't know why but I was surprised to see it here amongst the herbaceous borders. Further along the Woodland drive another one teased me by feeding in such a place high on a Buddleia that made even getting a semi decent image impossible. But now I know they're here so maybe next season a slightly earlier visit would see me finding more and racking up a few extra Brownie points?



Down through the Woodland walk we stopped to see the pigs that are being used for clearing the woodland floor and there were only a few Brimstones (in the sunnier more glade like areas) and Specklies (on the edge of the shady spots) about but I was saving space on my memory card for the allotments as I reckoned that's where most of the butterflies would be. So instead I focused, along with my sister, on taking the mickey out of my mum. It is one of our favourite past times and while we were rocking with laughter about using Beech Mast and Pine Cones as Christmas decorations (you've got to spray them silver first though) the journey to the allotments passed by in a jiffy. Once here there was almost an explosion of butterfly activity. There were Cabbage White caterpillars all over the Cabbage, a Specklie that had been in the wars outside the Orchid House and the flower garden beyond was a riot of colour butterflies. I'm used to having the problem of approaching a butterfly to get a shot off but here the problem was twofold. First working out which butterfly to photograph; I counted two Commas, four Red Admirals, two Peacocks, at least five Brimstones and various other

Whites of three different species that were too numerous and too mobile to count at all! The second problem was getting the shot before another butterfly bundled in and bundled your subject out of the way! In the end I just set myself to mooch mode and pointed and shot at anything that was in the same place for long enough.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

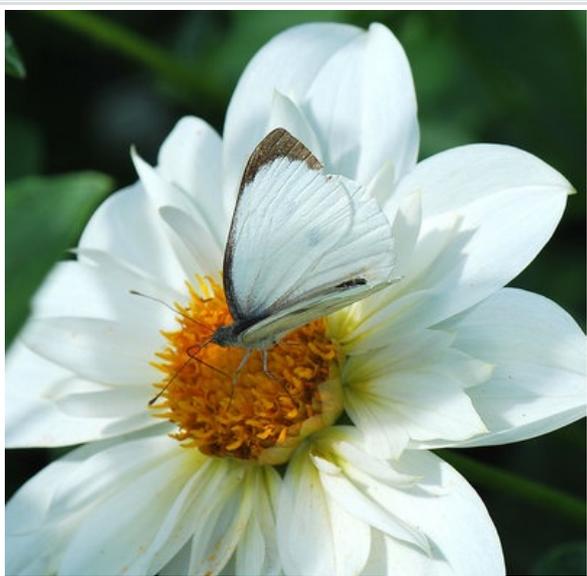
by Wurzel, 10-Oct-17 02:22 PM GMT

Kingston Lacey Part 2

After I'd caught up with the conversation and whilst the adults tea and the girls ran riot on the mini tractors I nipped off to the allotments and the drainage pond just beyond it. There were even more whites fluttering around here and there must have been a fecund female as 6 or 7 other butterflies were very intent on following one other butterfly. I got talking to one of the local allotmenters as she'd planted a Buddleia in one corner of her plot and was growing lots of other insect friendly species. It seemed to be working because feeding on it were Red Admirals, Peacocks, four species of White and a Small Tort! Unfortunately I didn't get many decent shots as the breeze had picked up and I also missed out on the Painted Lady that, as usual, had "been here yesterday". There were a few Darters round the pond which I think were Ruddy (tapered waist?) but I had to get back to the group.



When I rejoined the others the adults were still drinking tea and the girls were still running amok so I nipped back over to the floral garden and tried my hardest to accurately count the butterflies. My efforts again proved frustrating. This time I found a couple of likely looking spots and hovered between them waiting for the butterflies to come to me. It paid off and before I knew it I was up to my knees in Red Admirals, the odd Peacock and Whites all over the place. They've been really flighty this year but they seemed to be starting to settle down this afternoon and I was finally able to get a semi-decent open wing shot of a Large White male. To top it off I think I might even of had an aberrant Red Admiral.





Ab. fructa?



By now the girls were all tuckered out and we slowly and wearily made our way back through the Pacific Gardens to carry on back across the Lawn and homewards. The only thing of real note on the way back that was different from all else I'd seen was the Dragonfly which I think is a Migrant Hawker, I need to look into the ID of this group a little more.



All in all a surprisingly productive day— especially as much of it wasn't actually spent looking for butterflies. It may read like I spent the whole time away from the family but most of my little trips off lasted about 10 minutes and the majority of the time was spent just being a complete family again for the first time in two years – can't put how much that meant into words so I'll leave it there.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 10-Oct-17 04:38 PM GMT

That sounds like a great day out in every way, Wurzel. Even though the butterflies were perhaps incidental, they certainly enhanced it no end. To me it seems odd seeing all those species on ornamental flowers: they are clearly growing the right varieties that have not foregone nectar in the quest for showy colours. Some lovely combinations there. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 10-Oct-17 09:21 PM GMT

Certainly a very productive day Wurzel. Your Dragonfly is a male Southern Hawker, the large blobs on the thorax behind the head distinguish it from the Migrant Hawker 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 12-Oct-17 06:23 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I know just how you felt when decorating 😊 I'd to have help getting up off my knee's today 😊

I love the Butterflies in the flowers , they couldn't have picked better coloured flowers to land in to set off their own beauty 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Greenie, 12-Oct-17 07:02 PM GMT

Your Ruddy Darter ID is correct . Apart from the tapered abdomen , males like yours have a deeper red abdomen than the Common , and all black legs . The Common Darter having a yellow stripe down their legs . As well as the broad antihumeral stripes mentioned by bugboy , those three blue markings on the end of the abdomen are diagnostic of the male Southern Hawker . The smaller male Migrant Hawker having blue markings along the length of his abdomen .

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 13-Oct-17 08:02 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Some cracking reports recently and some great photos, I particularly like the selection of shots on the garden flowers with some unusual colour combinations 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Oct-17 11:25 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I don't know what was happening there that day as I've only ever seen one, maybe two, butterflies in that section of garden before now and nowhere near the number that I did 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Thanks for the ID, once you know what to look for it's gets much easier 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Oct-17 06:50 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 The best thing about painting is once it's done you don't have to face it for at least another 12 months 😊 It seems that butterflies do have a certain amount of taste 😊

Cheers Greenie 😊 Thanks for the ID and confirmation, something to store away until next year 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 They were certainly more discerning in their colour choice than I would have been – normally I range from butterfly with greenish or greyish background 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Oct-17 01:13 PM GMT

Sixpenny Handley 14-08-2917

To make the most of my sister's visit we headed back out to Sixpenny Handley the very next day. As always I took my camera but I almost needn't have bothered as the weather was decidedly inclement. Here we were in August and it was cool enough that a jumper was comfortable and the sun was veiled by grey cloud; the type of cloud that only weakly threatens rain but still manages to sap all the light out of everything. We risked the gloom and headed up the hill, through the Churchyard to the park. I took my camera as before there have been Spotted Flycatchers perching on the tombstones and Painted Ladies in the Vicar's flowerbed but not today.

As the girls played I took a few minutes break from pushing swings, catching flying children at the bottom of slides and working out how the hell one of the rides worked to check out the banks that surround the football pitch on two sides. The last time I was here was back in May/June at the end of our camping trip and the only real difference between then and now was that then the weather was slightly worse! Where it was similar was that the only butterfly present was a member of the Blue family, either a female Common or Brown Argus. As I knelt down amongst the damp grass I could make out the 'badly drawn arc' of spots which made it a Brown Argus.



It served as some form of reward for making the effort to carry my camera, nowhere near a Gold Medal and still not enough for a Bronze maybe, possibly a recycled Tin can medal? And to think that I had such high hopes after such a cracking trip the day before...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 18-Oct-17 02:07 PM GMT

That Brown Argus was some compensation considering the weather, great shots. I once took a wrong turn in Salisbury, and passed through Sixpenny Handley, that tight spot in the village is scary. Picked up the A30 again at Shaftesbury.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 20-Oct-17 09:29 AM GMT

Impressive diary entries Wurzel! I enjoyed reading them. Love the contrasting colours on display, great stuff.

Cheers

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Oct-17 01:07 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 There were rumblings of protest in the 70's that they were going to have to change the name to "3 and a half New Pence Handley" 😊
That tight spot is even worse if you're a pedestrian 😊
Cheers Andrew 😊 There are still plenty more to come, it's just I've got to write them yet 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Oct-17 12:00 AM GMT

Shipton Bellinger Again 15-08-2017

After the previous day at the park the girls had sweet talked their Nanny into letting them stay over with their Auntie, Uncle and cousin so I had the day to myself. As the weather was set to be a mixture of sunshine and cloud I risked another trip out to Shipton. Like last time I left in good time and like last time the road works which were everywhere held me up but despite this this I was still at the 'Hotspot Hedge' ready for the golden hours between 11 and 3 as I'd parked on the other side again. Yet things were very quiet and it felt like I was running the previous trip in reverse as along the hedge there were no Brostreaks and only a few Whites a couple of Holly Blues and the usual smattering of Browns and the odd Blue. It was strangely quiet and after a couple of circuits forward and back along the hedge I decided to change tack. And so I headed across through the scrub and uphill towards a new part of the site which I'd not visited before. The Hawthorn scrub opens out into a large swathe of grassland that I'd never realised was there and so I took to mooching around here enjoying the prolific Browns and Blues that seemed to buzz around everywhere. Amongst the Whites were a few Brimstones but alas still no Clouded Yellow despite the area having the appearance of suitable habitat.



After some time here, enough to consume my extra hot Lime Pickle sandwiches, I followed a different path back down the slope which came out by the Master Tree and so I made my way along the main track but downhill towards the bit of Hedge that I usually start out at; again a bit topsy-turvy. Where the track branches into two I went down the more lush and verdant track and bumped into a couple staring high into the treetops. There, just about visible was a male Brostreak, so I took a record shot just in case and walked to the end of the path and back with no other Brostreak sightings but a few Meadow Browns, Specklies, Whites, Hedge Brown and a Comma to go onto the Tally. The couple and the Brostreak were still there but I was hoping for a closer encounter and so back to the Hotspot Hedge I headed.



Having walked back to the Master Tree I cut across the springy turf rather than use the hard track. The last time I was in this area I was dealt a Skipper surprise with a second brood Dingy and today also. A tiny blur of a butterfly caught my attention as if took off having been hassled by a silvery Brown Argus. Somehow I managed to follow it and as I approached I could see whiteish spots on the wings which at first made me think of a Large Skipper but it was too small so here was my second surprise Skipper, a Silver-spotted. I knew that they were in the surrounding areas but not that they were to be found at this site so another species to look out for here next season.



Back at the Hedge I adopted the usual Brostreak search pattern. The first walk along carefully scanning each Bramble top and examining every Brown, Hedge Brown, Comma or remotely orange coloured leaf. The second run scanning again but this time watching carefully for anything taking off that might have been unsettled by or unsettle a Brostreak. Neither of these techniques came to fruition which was a shame as they produced the goods in terms of either species and they have come up trumps in the past. True there were all the usual species but a Small Copper was a nice addition as was a fresher Holly Blue but still no Brostreak. Hence I tried technique number three; nonchalantly strolling along the hedge whistling a jaunty and carefree tune and then stop and turn suddenly and without warning so as to catch a Brostreak out. Bugger me if on the second such random and rapid spin and stare it didn't work! Where there was nothing before now there was a male Brown Hairstreak practically right in front of me!





"Where there's one there must be more" I thought...
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 22-Oct-17 06:10 AM GMT

It would seem that we have two things in common.
Charging enthusiastically over to a possible Brown Hairstreak sighting,
only to find upon closer inspection it was a Brownie coloured leaf after all, been there, done that.
It is also reassuring that there is a fellow devotee of fiery lime pickle out there ! 😊 .

Love that Brown Argus shot,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 23-Oct-17 10:33 AM GMT

Is there anything better than having a day to yourself and a landscape filled with butterflies to wander through ?
Probably.. but not much! 😊 Some great sightings Wurzel

Cheers

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 24-Oct-17 10:36 AM GMT

Great reports from Six-penny handley and shipton Wurzel 😊 . They should call you the butterfly whisperer after that successful brostreak attracting stunt 😊 . I might give it a go myself providing there's no-one around 😊 😊

Phil

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 24-Oct-17 11:49 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, what can I say about your BHS 🍷🍷🍷 Can't wait for next year!!!! 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 24-Oct-17 08:05 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

....Bigger me if on the second such random and rapid spin and stare it didn't work! Where there was nothing before now there was a male Brown Hairstreak practically right in front of me!...

Interesting field craft skills there Wurzel 😊

Brown Hairstreaks were one of a number of species I missed this year due to being elsewhere at the time. Still, gives me plenty to look forward to next year.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Oct-17 09:16 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 You have to check those orangey leaves just in case... 😊 The Lime Pickle has to have '3 out of 3 Chilli's' on the label and has to be sold with it's own protective gear if it's to grace my sandwich 😊😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 That is one advantage about being behind with your PD, you get to relive it all again – a wonderful 'twofer' 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 25-Oct-17 03:59 PM GMT

That really is a great mixture of species all at once, Wurzel – a Silver-spot as well as a male Brown Hairstreak! 😊 Not to mention a Holly Blue as well. 😊 I haven't been to Shipton for a while – I need to rectify that next year I think.

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Oct-17 11:54 PM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 The Whisperer accolades must rally go to Dave Miller 😊 Definitely wait til you're on your own else you'll look a bit strange(er) 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Me neither, I'm counting down the days even though this season is still just about going. 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I'm a few species down this year compared to last as well, must try harder next year 😊😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Oct-17 11:38 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 The range of species at Shipton is mighty fine – and just up the road is a good site for Walls, Adonis and Chalkhills as well – I can let you have the grid references at the Social 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Oct-17 12:06 AM GMT

Shipton Bellinger Part 2

Having found my own Brostreak and my second of the day I headed back to the start of the hedge to start looking in earnest again. The next thing to catch my eye wasn't another Brostreak although that would have fitted the narrative better it was actually a pair of Small Whites. They were busy making sure there were some future Small Whites and as they haven't had a brilliant year more power to their elbow. I mooched along the Hedge some more and reverted to the 'rapid spin' technique and again it came up trumps as there was another Brostreak, another male which was even more tired and battle scarred than the first. It was also having some difficulty in coiling up its proboscis. Nice though these males were what I was really hoping for was female as she'd probably be in finer fettle plus I was starting to cut it fine for time as the golden hours between 11 and 3 were slipping away.



A few moments later it happened. There slightly further into the Brambles was a small, orangey leaf looking thing that wasn't actually an orangey leaf. As the sun came out from behind a cloud the butterfly opened her wings and there was the gorgeous orange flash against the chocolate background, she was almost good enough to eat. I spent a little while with her as she pootled about taking nectar here and there, attempting the briefest of basks and generally teasing me by never fully opening up. I didn't mind though to be honest as watching her go about her business was just as rewarding as seeing her wings akimbo posed 'a la field guide'.





Not wanting to hassle her to her detriment I made my way back along the Hedge to the starting point to see if I could relocate any of the males and also to see if the Small Whites were still at it? I could see that they were but I was momentarily distracted as a female Brostroke appeared to take off from the grass. "Was this a new ploy to catch out the humble butterfly?" I wondered to myself but then a Meadow Brown dove in and started harassing her. She retreated into the Hedge into a space too small for the slightly larger Meadow Brown and I watched bemused - what had caused such an interaction between species? I knelt down and the Brostroke made her way back out and flew to a spindly looking whipping of Blackthorn and made an attempt to lay before flying further into the hedge and beyond the reach of my lens.



I caught up again with the Small White couple and then made one final pass along the Hedge and back towards the car. I managed to relocate my male number 1 on the way and then the Brostroke action ceased. All this happened over a thirty minute time frame and then there were none again, they melted away into the Hedge like little hedge nymphs. I was aware, and have mentioned the golden hours but today it seemed like there was the platinum half hour. And so it was back to the more usual 'after Brostroke' fare and my topsy-turvy trip was reverting to normal. The Browns and Brimstones amongst the odd white were nice but eh real highlight were the Holly Blues which were busy putting on a show. One landed near to me and I thought "well why not?" and started whispering "Open up, open up, come on my lovely open up" And she did!





I made my way back to the car mightily chuffed with the haul from the day...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 29-Oct-17 10:14 AM GMT

What a fantastic half an hour you had Wurzel 😊 One of those moments to reflect on through the Winter, 😊 I love the fact you could have eaten the BHS has well 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 29-Oct-17 07:57 PM GMT

Nice Report Wurzel 😊 . It reminds me of our time there in 2015 (Brostreaks and Holly Blue) though the mating pair on that occasion were Meadow Brown.

The photo of the pair of Small White is fabulous. The position of their wings overlapping rather than interlocking give the image a pleasing symmetry 😊

Phil

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 29-Oct-17 09:00 PM GMT

A great report from Shipton, Wurzel. Every time I pass the turning off the A303 i'm reminded that it is a site I have yet to visit. Mind you the Brownies were very well behaved in Sussex this year. Great mating Whites and Holly Blue.

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 29-Oct-17 10:26 PM GMT

A worthwhile day out at Shipton there Wurzel and a nice finish with that Holly Blue, you must have had a bit of 'essence of Millerd' about you 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 29-Oct-17 11:38 PM GMT

Lovely Hairstreaks, Wurzel, and what a splendid Holly Blue to finish with. You must have said all the right things... 😊 😊 (Incidentally, I have no idea what Bugboy means... 🤔)

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 30-Oct-17 12:09 PM GMT

Wow, what a perfect end to your day Wurzel, lovely stuff. (I'm making a note of your techniques!)

Cheers

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Nov-17 11:27 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 It'll certainly warm the cockles (along with a nice Scotch and the woodburner on full 'roar' 😊) 😊
Cheers Philzoid 😊 I was chuffed with the mating shot, but my knees weren't 😊 better get on the Cod Liver Oil before next season 😊😊 The site still hasn't gotten back to it's full best but it was better than last year so fingers crossed.
Cheers Trevor 😊 It's definitely worth a visit when you're over this way 😊
Cheers Bugboy 😊 I have been picking up a few tips on 'butterfly whispering' from the Master 😊
Cheers Dave 😊 I'm sure Bugboy wasn't referring to 'Eau d'Dave' 😊😊
Cheers Andrew 😊 I think I might write a book of 'Top Tips for a Butterfly nut' 😊 I also have some useful ways for sneaking in some extra butterflying without the better half noticing, sshhhhh 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Nov-17 08:19 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I'm missing your November Calendar 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Nov-17 12:39 AM GMT

As requested Goldie 😊, and with 20 minutes to spare before being late...

November 2017



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 03-Nov-17 03:30 PM GMT

Now it feels like November Wurzel 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Nov-17 12:05 AM GMT

Glad to have been of service Goldie 😊😊 Better start work on next years version soon 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Nov-17 11:51 AM GMT

Martin Down 17-08-2917

Both the girls were at their Nanny's spending time with their Australian cousin, my work was up to date, the house was painted to within an inch of its life and all the chores had been done...what else was there to do but grab my camera and head over to Martin Down. On the way I planned ahead - I was going to go to the main car park off the Blandford Road and then walk Bokerley to the hotspot and back. But somehow I found myself at the Sillen's Lane car park? Autopilot had taken over. Oh well I set out towards the hotspot regardless.

The stroll there was pretty uneventful in the most part with only the odd Common Blue or White bombing by. At the first fork in the track I headed right

looking to make my way round the earth work rings and to come to the hotspot from the other side. I bore left and made my way along one side of the earthworks and the butterflies started appearing. Small Heaths, a Small Tort, Common Blues and Brown Argus. But unfortunately this area was really exposed to the strong breeze and all my shots were wind blurred. A real jewel of butterfly struggled into view and plopped down practically in front of me. It was as if the butterfly Gods had just granted me a favour because at that precise moment the wind dropped to barely a breath and the sun caught the electric blue of the wings to perfection.



I carried on round to the hotspot the wind bending my soft brimmed hat which is always a bad sign so I was hoping the Dyke would offer some protection from the strong breeze. As I ambled into the middle of the hotspot it certainly seemed to as there were butterflies everywhere. Amongst the odd Meadow Brown and Small Heath the odd Brimstone did a fly by. The Blues in particular were very well represented with 5 Lycaenids. So I settled down and just enjoyed them and every now and then I remembered to take a few photos as well. I was particularly pleased to see some Chalkhills here and though some were looking past their best others were in fine fettle.





I followed the Dyke on up the hill for a bit and this produced a bit more variety with 4 species of whites, an unusually marked Meadow Brown and a fly-by Small Tort but the Blues soon muscled back into prominence with Brown Argus looking like a good call for an aberrant (though I can't remember the name - Snelleri?) as well as some more Chalkhills, Adonis looking resplendent and a pair of Common Blue in cop.





Time was running by and despite not locating the species I was hoping for, a Clouded Yellow, I made my way homewards. Off to Devon in a day or two I wonder what that will hold in store?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 06-Nov-17 02:06 PM GMT

Lovely to still be in August...and seeing a really beautiful Adonis. This has made my day 😊😊

Having just been out taking pictures of winter visitor birds with a sharp frost white on the ground I do prefer British Wurzel Time (BWT) to the GMT that seems to be all the rage around here. I'm looking forward to Devon in a day or two, I hope to see ice creams and scones and jam too. 😊

I must update my diary too!

regards

Peter

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Nov-17 06:56 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Adonis Wurzel, fantastic colour you've caught, it's on my list for next year 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 06-Nov-17 06:59 PM GMT

Lovely Adonis, Wurzel, and the Chalkhills too. Martin Down is a great spot – I generally park off the main road as you mentioned and walk down. At the right time of year you can cross the road and see what's flying in the woods as well. 😊 Goodness knows how many species you can find in the two areas combined! 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 06-Nov-17 07:16 PM GMT

Fantastic Blues Wurzel, sounds idyllic there.

Cheers

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 06-Nov-17 07:40 PM GMT

That first Adonis should only be viewed through a pair of dark glasses !.
Beautiful fresh specimen

Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Nov-17 07:51 PM GMT

Cheers Peter 😊 I can't wait for the day when I retire as then I'll be able to actually fit in all the important stuff – like family, beer and butterflies. Work keeps getting in the way of at least two of these at the moment 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Adonis are one of those 'kind' species that let you have two cracks at the whip 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I know where you mean it used to be called Kitts Wood years ago when I visited it with my parents. I've been back since and it held both DGF and Silver-washed as well as White Admiral 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Nov-17 09:29 AM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 It's a cracking site and well worth a visit 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Perhaps I should have put a row of 😊😊😊😊😊😊 around the image 😊😊? It was easily the stand out butterfly of the trip 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Nov-17 11:54 PM GMT

Devon Holiday 2017

18-08-2017

To make the most of my sister being back from Australia my parents had booked a holiday cottage down at Dartington in Devon for all the family. I didn't mind the drive down too much despite only seeing a few Whites along the verges as I'd been out the day plus there were only a few species that I could still possibly see. The journey was pleasant right up until half way through the Blackdown Hills when the 'weakest link' lived up to it's name. After an hour of sitting and crawling, sitting and crawling along we finally passed the burnt out car that had been the hold up and we were again on our way, finally reaching our destination an hour later than planned and so limiting any chance to check out the garden apart from the briefest of glances while carrying luggage in from the car. I did clock what looked like a female Common Blue on the drive way – or it could have been a rain damaged Holly Blue but that was it and so ended day one.

Oak Barn Cottage 19-08-2017

Come Saturday morning the weather was a bit iffy; cloud covered the surrounding hillsides but it looked like it might brighten later so I took the girls and went with my dad to stock up with provisions at Totnes. Once back and lunched the sun broke through and while everyone else decided what we were going to do over various days I headed out to have a look round the garden. The 'upside down' cottage was built into the side of the hill with a small leveled lawn also cut into the hillside at the same level as the upstairs kitchen. A small path and steps took you up and past the woodshed on one side and a small flower patch on the other coming out at the parking spot – again cut and leveled into the side of the hill. On the other side the garden was allowed to be a 'hill' with a few fruit trees and a swing which little L made very good use of. The main area of interest was the almost vertical banks surrounding the parking spot as here there were good nectar sources cascading like Victoria Falls. I spent most of my time here when I was 'up the garden'.

On this first visit I got straight onto a couple of older looking Hedge Browns. Actually looking back at the photos there were at least four different identifiable females. The first was great as despite not being in the best nick she had reduced orange panels on her hind wings and was a single spot excessa but the spot had run into the 'eye'. The second was a cleaner looking excessa, the third and the fourth were more typical Hedge Brown females. Also around here were a few Small Whites and a heavily marked Green-veined.





Not a bad start and I was obviously going to have to keep an eye on the Hedgies as it looked like there could be some interesting variations available here. I wandered back down the little path to the cottage and a blue fluttered across the garden. As it landed in some Ivy I was pretty sure that it was a Holy Blue. Luckily whilst the Ivy being a good height would normally mean that the HB would land beyond reach because of the way the garden was plotted I was actually seeing the top of the bush and so the HB was pretty much level with my camera. She was pretty tired and her fore wings seemed to have lost a lot of their blue colouration – possibly water damage (?). Mind you she still played hard to get, hiding herself in amongst the foliage. I channeled a bit of Miller luck and whispered away and she did come out into the open but I don't think I've got the technique quite right as she didn't open up for me.





Back to the cars I headed and this time I arrived to watch a Speckle land and sup nectar for a while. It looked really fresh and still had golden sprinkles around the margins of its wings and close to its thorax. The Hedge Browns were still bumbling around and a Red Admiral did a fly past, stopping too briefly for my lens. As I watched it sail up and over the wall of vegetation something else caught my eye, a Southern Hawker. After watching it not move for a good few minutes I got back to the butterflies, finally locating a male Hedgeie which seemed to have three and not two pupils in its 'eye'.





Just as I was about to head back in to find out where we were heading (despite a Large White final settling) I was stopped in my tracks by a little jewel of a butterfly – a Small Copper. True it was tired and ragged looking, it lacked blue badges but when the light hit it glittered golden.



Chuffed I went in to face my fate...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 10-Nov-17 01:44 PM GMT

Great entry Wurzel, this helped ease me through a friday afternoon. 😊
That is one fine lookin' Speckled, love the Small White and the Copper on those red flowers.
All good stuff. 😊

Cheers

Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 10-Nov-17 03:03 PM GMT

Agree with Andrew, a nice start to the story and a lovely small copper on the red flowers (Crocsmia?)and an even nicer Southern Hawker. Glad to see Dragonflies on here as well as butterflies as I do spend time watching and photographing those too.

Speaking as a semi retired person I do get to do a few more things I enjoy, but I do wish I still had the energy and commitment of youth! i'd swap the beer for that!

Re: Wurzel

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

Keep on talking to those Holly Blues, Wurzel – they do play hard to get sometimes. Females do pop out for a bask in sunny weather in between bouts of egg-laying deep inside the bushes. A bit like Brown Hairstreaks in that respect: in fact they have quite a lot of Hairstreak behaviour. 😊 Tat's a lovely Speckled Wood by the way, and those flowers really bring out the Small Copper's colours. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Nov-17 10:13 AM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 Glad it helped get you through the afternoon, Friday is the most painful afternoon of the week – if I had my way I'd ban people from working from around midnight on a Thursday...but then I suppose Thursday afternoons would become the new Friday? 😊

Cheers Peter 😊 I don't know about this 'energy thing – i seem to have missed out on that when it was handed out 😊😊 Cheers for the Dragonfly comment – I try and fit them in if I can, under the radar like 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I'll keep practicing and maybe one day I'll be able to talk them down out of the trees like what you does 😊👍 You're right about the Holly Blue, it is the most Hairstreak like Blue 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 13-Nov-17 10:19 AM GMT

Great shots Wurzel , they bring back great memories of Summer 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Nov-17 11:06 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 As I sit here with the embers dying in the burner any memory of summer's warmth is more than welcome 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Nov-17 08:31 AM GMT

Buckfast Abbey 19-08-2017

I headed back inside and we started planning out what we would do over the coming days and it was decided that as we were so close we should look around the grounds of Buckfast Abbey. SO we bundled into the cars and headed over. When we arrived there was a slightly autumnal feeling with some of the leaves starting to turn and a cool wind. The lack of butterflies didn't help with the strange feeling. The only butterflies I saw flying were whites and those that I could get close enough to were all in some state of disrepair. They were also very fidgety, not staying still nor indeed in one pace for long enough for any type of shot apart from the worst ones. In the end I waited for a while in the tiny Lavender garden while the girls ran over the lawns. The occasional white and even a Brimstone stopped but I was only able to capture a few shots of one of the less worn whites. Their fidgety mood was further exacerbated by the breeze that seemed to strengthen just as I was getting any subject in focus.



After this despite checking out the other small gardens I wasn't able to capture any more butterflies. There were other highlights including watching a Peregrine come in to roost atop the Abbey and spying a Red Admiral flying across the stained glass windows but the afternoon activity was drawing to a close and we needed to get back for tea. In the car park a Common Darter landed on one of the walls. These were covered in Ivy but the Common Darter landed on one of the only clear patches, almost like a chopper landing on a Helipad.



The Autumnal feel to the afternoon was nicely rounded off by a set of fungal fruiting bodies...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 14-Nov-17 09:57 AM GMT

That's a great close up of the Darter Wurzel 😊

Cheers

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 15-Nov-17 09:19 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I saw loads of Darters this year, more I think than I've seen in other years, your shot looks like I feel some times when the weather's wet and I can't get out with the Camera 😞 (disgruntled) Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Nov-17 01:02 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 I was chuffed with that one as the light caught the facets of the compound eye just right 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 he does have a slightly annoyed expression 😞 ...probably from having a camera shoved in his grill 😊😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 17-Nov-17 08:23 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

Cheers Peter 😊 I can't wait for the day when I retire as then I'll be able to actually fit in all the important stuff – like family, beer and butterflies. Work keeps getting in the way of at least two of these at the moment 😞😞

I could have said those words myself.

Just catching up on your recent stuff Wurzel, been a bit busy lately and not logged on that much. Some great reports nicely illustrated with great photos as usual. Hard to pick a favourite but I do like the colour combination of the Small Copper on the crocosmia 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 17-Nov-17 08:59 PM GMT

That Specklie image is one of the best I have seen of that species, nice and fresh, and in full Pullman livery!. 😊

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 18-Nov-17 12:43 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Just doing a massive catch up on your diary.

Great selection of Hedge Browns as always, I love the ab. from your Welsh trip 😊.

I can always rely on you to provide some Brown Hairstreak action from Shipton. I am very envious this year as I missed out both the site and the species 🙄🙄

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Nov-17 08:38 AM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 Only another 27 years and counting – that is 27 until they raise the Retiring Age again 😞😞

Cheers Trevor 😊 That one was fresh out of the box and off for it's first day at work 😊😊

Cheers Paul 😊 'The Lane' always seems to throw up something good Hedge Brown wise 😊 If you can make to Shipton next year I reckon Karma will come into play and after all your sterling work with WLH this year you'll be tripping over the Brostreaks 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Nov-17 09:55 AM GMT

Devon Holiday 2017 Cont'd

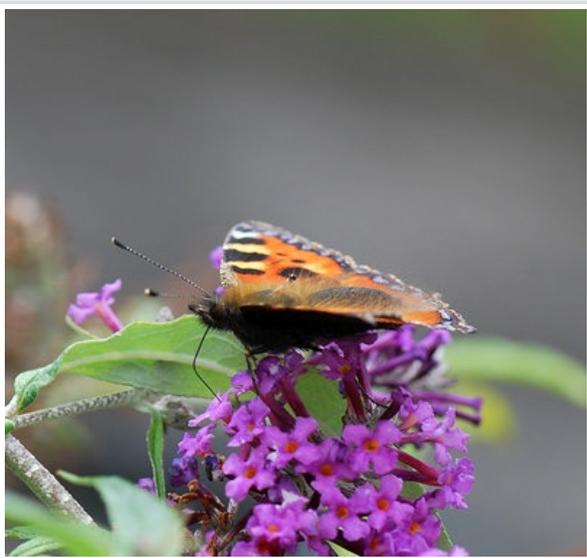
Pennywell and 'Home' 21-08-2017

The day after the Abbey I spent mostly in bed and so missed out on visiting the Riverford Farm which supplies the Wurzel World with most of it's food. All the muscles in my limbs felt like they were about to cramp and I could barely walk at one point. Luckily it must have only been a 24hour thing as the next morning I was right as rain and we all headed out to Pennywell, a local farm park. There would be pig cuddling and pony rides as well as small pet handling I was sure but I took my camera along anyway reasoning that there would be hedges and therefore Hedgies...

Once we were there and through the gate the girls, all of them (my sister, wife and mum included) had a great time. While they were all engaged with the pigs I sloped off, primarily to find out about the pony and tractor rides but really to scope out the site. At the bottom pf the park was a small pond where the visitors could go pond dipping and the Swallows were making much use of it. However the best thing about it was a small Buddleia bush along the path between the pond and the go karting course.

As I approached it a Peacock took off never to return but it was crawling with butterflies and I counted at least 8 Red Admirals, I say at least because it was a struggle to see round the whole bush as half of it hung over go karting track. Also present were two Small Tortoiseshells and a real surprise find –

a female Silver-washed. I have seen them slightly later than this in previous years but I was under the impression that they were all over for this season. She wasn't anywhere near pristine but still enjoyable to watch as she fed, another diner at the butterfly bush.



After this I tried for a few shots of the Swallows as they took sips of water by skimming the surface of the pond but by now the sun had gone in, just like the Peacock it didn't return, and so getting shots was difficult in the less than ideal light. I made my way back to the others and enjoyed the rest of the farm yard frolics.



We got back and while tired and happy girls had their baths I nipped out for a few minutes to bring in some things from the car and I took my camera just in case. The usual suspects were present but two Hedgies stood out as it were. One was a 'one spot' excessa with very small orange areas on the hind wings and the other had extra eyes visible on the fore wings.



Chuffed with the brief interlude and the butterflies from a family trip I headed inside for tea wondering what the wilds of Dartmoor would bring on the next day?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Nov-17 10:57 AM GMT

Always great to follow your escapades Wurzel, 😊 Like you I love to watch the Swallows when they dip for water, that's a good shot considering how quick they are. You always seem to find the Gate Keeper ab's has well on your travels 😊 There did seem to be quite a lot of the excessa ab this year. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 22-Nov-17 02:41 PM GMT

I like your 'strategic spotting' here and there Wurzel. 😊
Love the shot of the RA feeding. 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 22-Nov-17 08:34 PM GMT

Making the most of the opportunities, Wurzel – finding the SWF was a real bonus. I love the swallow shot – perfect reflection in the water... 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 24-Nov-17 08:06 PM GMT

I love the shot of the Swallow with it's reflection in the water. I spent some time watching Swallows skimming over water in Cornwall earlier this year and tried taking some shots but they were just too fast for me.

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Nov-17 08:16 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 There did seem to be a lot of excessa around this year, I do count myself lucky with finding Hedge Brown abs – but I do check every one that I find 😊😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I was chuffed with that shot; with a 'youngish' family butterflying generally involves carrying our camera around everywhere and hoping for a few minutes peace 😊😊

Cheers Dave 😊 It's the way I have to roll Dave I've no choice as I'm still stuck in the world of work 😊🙄😊

Cheers Neil 😊 That was one of two shots that I managed to salvage from a 100 or so, most were perfectly focused pictures of where the bird had been a fraction of a second earlier 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Nov-17 12:05 AM GMT

Devon Holiday cont'd

21-08-2017

I didn't have to wait long for some more 'butterflies' as after the evening meal and while preparing another round of drinks my dad pointed out a small black and white moth on the wall. Best ID so far is Nemapogon clematella . Either way it was a species that I'd not encountered before so I was chuffed with one of my easiest lifers; "I was getting another G&T and there it was" I'll be able to recount in future years... 😊



22-08-217

The next morning the moths again took the limelight with my first Setaceous Hebrew Character. I'd wanted to photograph one of these for ages as it's a species that stands out when swiping through my UK Moth App, not for its appearance but its unusual name.



Today was the day that we were going to get booted up and head out onto the Moor. I've been out and about on Dartmoor many times but not since I'd gotten into butterflies and so I was intrigued as to what it would offer species wise, where the butterflies would be and whether it would be like the Heathlands of home in species range? However I'll have to make another visit to answer these questions as the day was the worst of the holiday weather wise. It was terrible with cloud blocking out all the sun, a cool and damp feel to the air and as we headed up and up onto the moor the fog rolled in. For most of the drive all that could be seen were the hedges on either side of the road. Even when we stopped occasionally (Widdecoombe "where the hell are we going to visit?", "pee stop" and Becka Falls "How much to park? Stuff that") visibility was poor and it was so cold and clammy you were glad to get back in the car.

Eventually we made it to Badgers Holt and the magnificent cream tea more than raised my spirits. Outside the River Dart flowed eventually dropping off the moor and flowing more sedately past the cottage we were staying at. The Grey Wagtails 'chiswick-ed' away and added a splash of vibrancy as did an Emperor Dragonfly and a few of the Common Darters. On the stroll down towards the old bridge a Red Admiral flew by a few times - well it was either that or 6 different individuals - possibly the vanguard of the subsequent high numbers we've seen this autumn? The girls loved the place splashing about, climbing the rocks and dipping their toes into the icy cold water.



As is typical it started to brighten up as we headed homewards. We could see further and further on either sides of the hedges and walls and eventually right across the moor. After another brief pit stop for the Pixie Museum we got back home. By now the weather had turned for the better, we could see all of the surrounding hills and the sky was blue with only slight cloud mottling. I headed straight out into garden this time walking up to the top of hill/garden. The large bramble bush housed a Common Carpet and a Red Admiral basked in the sun in quite a precarious place - under the swing in the scuff marks. There was also another moth but this one was really worn so any ID was difficult to make (Common Rustic/Lesser Common Rustic).



The weather didn't hold and so we headed in, lit the wood burner and started to get cosy.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 26-Nov-17 01:21 PM GMT

Once again you've made the most of the inclement weather that can so often curse the enjoyment of a lovely part of the world in the summer. Of course it may have been the weather gods following the instruction on Essex Buzzard's t-shirt... 😊😄

By the way, what does "setaceous" mean? I had confused it with "sebaceous", but the images that conjures up are not good ones. 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 26-Nov-17 01:36 PM GMT

millerd wrote:

By the way, what does "setaceous" mean? I had confused it with "sebaceous", but the images that conjures up are not good ones. 😊

😄 It means hairy or bristly, from the Latin *saeta* (meaning hair or bristle). Presumably there is something particularly hairy or bristly about this moth ...

Guy

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 27-Nov-17 10:58 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, nice shots of the moths, I was surprised last year when I didn't see very many, I took lots of the Burnetts and one or two more but it was my worse year for seeing them. Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 27-Nov-17 11:47 AM GMT

Nice moths Wurzel, always good to see and identify a new one. 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Nov-17 09:20 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I hadn't thought about the link between rubbish weather and Essex's T-Shirt 🙄😄

Cheers Guy 😊 It does look quite hairy round the top of the thorax, but no more than any other moth 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Last year was a bit hit or miss for a whole range of species, hopefully things will be a bit more settled this coming season 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I'm always a little unsure as to how welcome moths are on UKB, but then I reason that butterflies are moths so it's alright 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 29-Nov-17 09:35 PM GMT

So now you know, Wurzel, where Cornwall throws all its rubbish weather as well! 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Nov-17 09:27 AM GMT

Cheers Essex 😊 I hadn't twigged until Saturday 😊 I'm going to look into the Dorset equivalent, then they'll get it from both sides 😊

23-08-2017 Steam Trains, Otters and a few butterflies...

So after a poor day on the Moor it was decided that today we would do more children orientated activities. So we set off back towards Buckfast Abbey but turned left instead of right to take the steam train to Totnes and back. The girls loved it and I enjoyed the gentle rocking which you don't get on today's diesel locomotives. My first shots of the day were of an Otter, unfortunately not a real one but a golden statuette. Two years back Salisbury was decked out with 'Barons' to celebrate Magna Carta. It seems that this area was doing something similar but with Otters instead...



Activity 1 done we found a quiet spot for lunch so the girls, particularly my niece, could run about. As usual between munching I wandered here and there with my camera hoping that the more obvious foliage would offer up some butterflies. There were a few Whites about but the first butterfly that stopped long enough for a few shots was a Red Admiral. It landed on the flagstones to soak up some warmth. It must have wondered what was happening, here it was at the height of summer feeling the cold! After this a Peacock dropped in and between pointing out various of its features to my niece I snapped away as it fed away. I then tried for some of the more active Whites. It proved to be difficult but despite my dearth of opportunities for photography I was able to watch some interesting behaviours. Both Small and Large Whites flew strongly with the Large flying across the middle of the clear area before working its way along the margins quite high up dipping down to feed. The Small would work its way here and there in an apparent random fashion and the Green-veined fluttered weakly from flower to flower. Hence it was no surprise that the only I managed to get any shots of was the Green-veined. While I was photographing it my niece joined me and together we took it all in, a special memory shared. With lunch over we moved onto the next activity – the Otter Sanctuary and Butterfly Farm. I'm so far behind that I'll have to leave the Exotics for another time...





Once back at home the girls called me away from the dinner prep as they'd found a caterpillar (Vapourer?) and while I was there a Specklie was feeding on some Blackberries so I got a few rushed shots that weren't up to much before heading back in to continue chopping veggies.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 30-Nov-17 10:12 AM GMT

Some immaculate specimens there Wurzel, particularly like the Green veined White image. Glad you enjoyed your steam train ride !. That line used to carry on to Ashburton, but after it closed the present A38 road severed it just past Buckfastleigh station.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 30-Nov-17 11:37 AM GMT

Very nice Wurzel 😊. Another great close up, of the Peacock.
And that is a cracking shot of the Green-veined White 🐛.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Nov-17 08:35 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I was dead chuffed with that Green-veined White it was fresh out of the box. I waxed a bit more lyrical about it in the Favourites posting 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Dec-17 10:52 AM GMT

Love the Green Veined White Wurzel, I'm always amazed at the different brightness in their veins, some dark ,some light, they can vary quite a lot, roll on next year 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 01-Dec-17 12:42 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

As others have said that Green Veined White is a beauty, they always seem to look good on White flowers.

What is the significance of the otters?

We had Zebras down here a couple of years ago and now we have Rhinos every where in hundreds of different designs, but I have to say I don't know the significance of any of them 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 01-Dec-17 08:20 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

... I'm always a little unsure as to how welcome moths are on UKB, but then I reason that butterflies are moths so it's alright 😊
..
Wurzel

Speaking for myself, I am always interested in seeing the moths that are posted on here. I have been known to post one or two myself 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Dec-17 10:13 AM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 I was really chuffed about that GVW, it was fresh out of the box 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I know what you mean about the level of variation in GVWs but I'm struggling to keep a lid on my 'spots and Hedge Browns' obsession 😊😊😊

Cheers Paul 😊 There were a hundred of them placed around the Tarka Trail and the aim was to note down a code on the base and then you'd win a prize – as if you'd need to be encouraged/bribed to enjoy getting out in nature 😊😊

Cheers Neil 😊 'Just one or two' 😊

December 2017

Better late than never and now I better start getting the next one sorted...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by philm63, 03-Dec-17 07:07 PM GMT

Just to second (or third or whichever) what everyone has said, a lovely image
Phil

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Dec-17 10:54 PM GMT

Cheers Phil 😊 I reckon the memory will last longer than the image 😊

Blackpool Sands 24-08-2017

Today was apparently going to be the best day of the week weather wise; at least that's what three Weather Apps and the BBC reckoned. So we loaded the cars and drove through the mist, cloud and eventually rain, to head to the beach.

After a few stops on the way and a ferry trip across the River Dart we were rolling along narrow country lanes closed in by tall hedges very reminiscent of those in Dorset (though not quite as good 😊). After sweeping down the hill there was an Agatha Christie scene laid out before us. Tall dark cliffs, bedecked with a thatch of green, the occasional Pine sticking out like an errant tousled hair, at their feet golden sediments rhythmically washed by the Azure sea. The sun came out at this exact moment lighting it to perfection.

We parked up, gathered our things and then made our way across the fine shingle with a Red Admiral bombing by to set up camp. Because of the action of the tide the beach ran in a series of steps and lining each were silver strands. As we walked down the he first 'step' the silver strand went from beautiful to grim as it was composed of masses of washed up Whitebait.



After a paddle and some time spent looking for sea glass and having a kick about we wandered back to the beachside restaurant for lunch (Vegan burgers - I couldn't believe it!). While we waited I noticed that there were some moths clinging to the walls of the building. Two really stood out - black and white against the yellow paintwork, a possible pair of Black Arches. Next to one was a Crambus moth looking much bigger than I remember and I was also struck by the fantastic patterning.





The third species was much less noticeable and I missed it the first time that I scanned the walls. When I did clock it I put it down as a 'Wave' but now go for Mullein due to the coastal habitat.



The final one should have been the most obvious against another background but here was quite cryptically patterned. Only when it moved onto the green shrubbery did it finally stick out like a sore thumb. What a cracking looking species - a Canary Shouldered Thorn, looking more like a Muppet than a Moth.





After this we spent some more time rock-pooling, paddling etc. and so ended our final day out. When we got back the rain had closed in and so we stayed in and enjoyed a cracking curry. Home tomorrow...

Have a goodun
Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 05-Dec-17 06:47 PM GMT

Great reports Wurzel 😊. Brought back some memories of a family holiday in Devon 2003, when we travelled by steam train from Buckfastleigh station to Dartmouth (pulled by a GWR 1400 class or Oliver to any Thomas the Tank Engine aficionados 😊). I remember going to the butterfly house too 😊. Liked your moths from Blackpool Sands (Mullein Wave is a good find) 😊. I think the crambid may be a nicely marked *Agriphila tristella* although the angle isn't the best. Back then I remember seeing Hummingbird Hawkmoths at that beach. I think it was a good year for them in Devon.

BTW already said, but that Green veined White image is a beaut 😊👍

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Dec-17 09:42 AM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 More to follow on the butterfly house...I'm almost into September with my PD now so I'll have to find some more posts to get me through the winter 😊😊 It was a surprise to go to the beach and see so many moths particularly during the main part of the day – it felt a bit wrong – wrong time of day, wrong habitat – even though it was right 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 06-Dec-17 11:09 AM GMT

Wow beautiful moths Wurzel. 😊 Great finds.

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Dec-17 02:28 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 Just being in the right place at the right time and just looking around; if they'd been any faster preparing the Vegan burgers then perhaps I mightn't have seen the Canary-shouldered Thorn? 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 08-Dec-17 08:27 PM GMT

Cracking selection of moths there Wurzel 😊 Black Arches is one I have yet to get in my garden although they are more common down south than around here and well done with the Mullein Wave 🍷

Agriphila tristella for the micro is a good call by Philzoid. I had half a dozen different species of these crambid 'grass moths' in my garden this year and spent some time trying to ID them.

Cheers,

Neil.

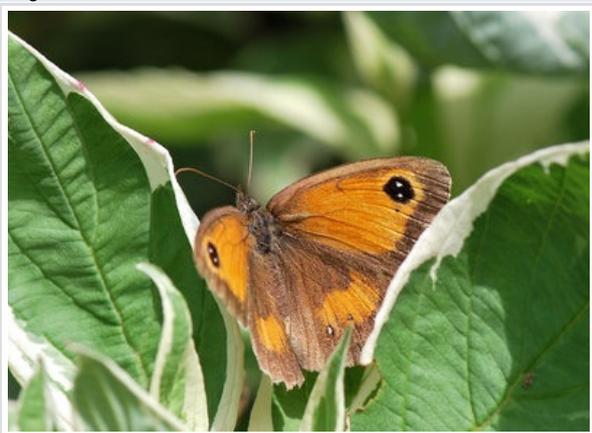
Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Dec-17 10:22 AM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 Those Crambids are the LBJs of the moth world 😊

Packing the Car - Barrington Court - Homewards 25-08-2017

Our Devon sojourn had come to an end and the time had come to pack our things into the car for the return trip. I put my camera round my neck and started carrying bags and boots and boxes. True, lugging my camera about meant I'd have to make more trips but at least I wouldn't have to worry about missing out on any butterflies. And it paid off despite the Red Admiral, Specklie and numerous Whites not landing. Instead I was treated to an assortment of Hedgies (the usual crowd?). There were at least 5 present but in between packing the next section of the car I'd focus on one individual so in the end I don't think that I captured all on camera. All the ones I did manage shots of were excessa with one showing an extra 'eye' on the fore wing underside.



Once packed we said our goodbyes and set off. The journey to Exeter was really quick and we also made good time over the Blackdown Hills. Despite this there were some hangry rumblings from the back of the car so we went of piste to find somewhere for lunch. My wife flicked through the National Trust guide, we entered the appropriate postcode and there we were soon enough sitting under an Apple Tree and munching away at Barrington Court.

After lunch we took the tour, the house was really interesting but the gardens were stunning. On one Buddleia outside the formal gardens I counted 16 Small Tortoiseshells, 3 Red Admirals and a Peacock. We wandered through garden type after garden type; wildflower, nursery, veggie, formal, Rose etc. It was a joy to behold with each new section offering new scents and sights, structure and colour suddenly changing and so too the butterflies. At least that's the way it seemed...The wildflower section held Red Admirals, the Lavender the Whites, in the veggie garden Large Whites and Brimstones and a Comma whilst the formal garden borders housed Small Tortoiseshells a plenty. It was a fantastic break from sitting and watching the white lines blur and the tarmac ahead...





So finally ended our Devon holiday. Looking back the only real surprises were that I saw the Silver-washed but didn't see a Painted Lady. I was a funny time to visit really and the place we visited weren't your typical butterfly haunts yet despite that they held typical butterflies.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 12-Dec-17 08:26 PM GMT

Great shots Wurzel, those Torts in particular are making me yearn for spring already 😊

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 12-Dec-17 10:01 PM GMT

I haven't been to Barrington Court for years, Wurzel. I do remember the gardens as being rather splendid, though, and particularly that my mother used to sneak cuttings from various plants... She always liked Small Tortoiseshells too and would have been delighted to see so many. Lovely shots.

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 13-Dec-17 01:20 PM GMT

Some lovely shots there Wurzel, and from your Devon holiday as a whole, thanks for sharing. 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Dec-17 09:26 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 It was a serendipitous stop-off indeed so much so that it might become a more regular visit 😊
Cheers Andrew 😊 Finally caught up with that, and now on to the next multitude of posts I need to write 😊😊
On that note...

Martin Down 26-08-2017

Having gotten back from our family holiday to Devon I thought we'd have a few days kicking our heels and settling back into our usual holiday routine. But that wasn't the case and so on Saturday I was heading back towards Sixpenny Handley so that the girls could have a sleep over with their cousin. I left an hour early in order to make a stop-off at Martin Down on the way.. I was still hoping for a Clouded Yellow so once in the car park we followed Bokerley down towards the Butts as this is usually a good area for them.

We arrived at the Butts with no Cloudy and only a few Blues and Browns and the girls disappeared off to make 'Musically' videos or some such so I was free to take in the short turfed areas sheltered by the Butts. Since our return the weather had sorted itself out somewhat but there were still a few cloudy moments. The trick was to find your quarry and wait with it while it sat out the shade. Then when the sun reappeared click away to capture it in the best light before it became active again, just like I did at the start of the year with Orange-tips. I didn't get the timing right all of the time but it meant that I could observe the difference in appearance that different lighting produced.



This species was the most numerous and not just because it was the most 'noticeable'. I did see Common Blues, Brown Argus, Small Heaths, Meadow Browns and various Whites but the 2nd brood Adonis were the main attraction and I was finally able to do the females justice.





Having flattened the battery on my iPod the calls of "Wurzel" from the girls weren't that unexpected and I left the ladies to re-join the girls. We packed up and started back towards the car park though we didn't get too far - only to the other side of the Butts before a few Brown Argus caught my eye. One was miniscule and as I leant in to take my shot I felt like Gulliver towering over a Lilliputian. I was checking my shots back when a beautiful blue Blue flew into view.





We were almost back at the car but with some time remaining before I needed to drop the girls off we walked round checking the little scallops in the scrub island next to the car park. A Small Copper landed and for a moment I held my breath and my heart was in my mouth...from the quick glance that I'd had it appeared to have white forewings...Nervously I took a second look. It was really tatty and unfortunately the white looked like water damage or wear than it being a Schmidt...Oh well, after a few bad years for this species seeing Small Coppers of any hue is always a delight.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 14-Dec-17 11:14 AM GMT

Those 'blue' female Adonis Blue shots caused me to drool a little !
Don't forget the Tilshead site next year, a superb Adonis site.

Go to the end of the Village, and by the filling station the A360 turns sharp right, go straight on, after half a mile or so, on your right you will see several concrete 'car parks' park in the last one. You will see the grassland beyond the hedge.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 16-Dec-17 09:07 AM GMT

Absolutely beautiful Blues there Wurzel. And well caught on camera, I'd be over the moon to see those. 🍷 😊
I just realised where Martin Down is, I must have past it a few times, I've an Uncle in Coombe Bissett.
Another site to put on the list. 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Dec-17 06:58 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I'm looking forward to trying out that site this coming season, it's always nice to find a site that's even more local 😊
Cheers Andrew 😊 Martin Down well worth a visit - it holds Greenstreaks, Silver Spotted Skippers as well as Marsh and Dark Green Frits and across the road at Kitts Wood there are White Admirals and Silver Washed. There's also a good Wiltshire Wildlife Turst site in Coombe Bissett itself the next time you visit.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 17-Dec-17 11:55 PM GMT

Gloriously fresh female Adonis, Wurzel. I seemed to miss out on the best of the females this year, so that more than makes up for it. 😊 That female Common Blue is a bit special too! 😊

Dave

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Dec-17 08:50 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I was made up with my Blues from this trip – they more than made up for missing out on them earlier in the season 😊

Happy Solstice to one and all! Saying that I'm still in August with my PD 😊😊 ...

Mottisfont 28-08-2017

A quick trip out with the girls to make the most of the glorious weather, why couldn't it have been like this at the start of the holiday when the Silver-spots and Brostreaks were emerging and the Chalkhills and Graylings were in their prime? Still I got on and enjoyed what there was on offer. It seemed like everyone else had the same idea as we were demoted to the 'Overflow' car park but to be honest this is probably better as I didn't have to walk as far to return the picnic once we'd all munched down. The odd white fly by during my lunch but nothing to pique my interest and make me bound off leaving sandwiches behind!

After the repast we sedately made our way to the Walled garden and as my wife set off to seek some shade to read her book in and the girls did likewise I made my way round scanning for butterflies. It was actually trickier than I'd anticipated as the heat had made them all very active and they stopped most of the time for only the briefest of refuelling sessions. Even the single Meadow Brown that I saw stopped for only a few seconds and just long enough for a couple of record shots. After little reward for trawling round various Lavender beds and roses patches I located myself by one of the Buddleia bushes and waited. This plan worked a treat and I'd soon seen three species of whites, a fly by Red Admiral, three Small Tortoiseshells and the best of the bunch a gorgeous Painted Lady, only my third this year.





I site had a bit more of a wander and the shade of a Quince tree offered some respite to a shade loving Specklie and one of the other Buddleia bushes held a(nother) Red Admiral. It was quite interesting to see the Specklie taking juice from one of Quinces it hadn't fallen from the tree but something had damaged it and that was enough for the Specklie.



After this though we strolled round various other parts of the site including the excellent exhibition of the art work of Axelas Scheffler and the only other butterflies of note were a single Common Blue at the Ha-Ha and numerous whites in the shade near the stream. We headed home sun tired and happy...a great little day.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Dec-17 06:09 PM GMT

[color=#FF0000]Happy Christmas Everyone! 😊

St Peter's, Great Cheverall 29-08-2017

Having discovered Wall Browns at the churchyard local to his daughter's excellent Pub and Hostelry (The Bell Inn) Trevor was kind enough to pass on the info to me as well as some useful tips about when they were flying. So while many butterfly enthusiasts were making their way eastwards and to the coast I was heading North and inland. I suppose I could have joined the throngs looking for Queen of Spain but it just seemed a little too far to travel when fingers crossed they'll be breeding along the entire south coast in about 10 years time.

As usual for this season I set off in sunny weather with blue skies overhead and headed into greyer and greyer weather. Luckily the sun still managed to shine through some of this so it was still bright enough for decent shots but there was no danger of glare or the quarry becoming super solar charged. Abandoning the car I strolled up the path and through the gate, carried on up the stone paved path towards the entrance to the church and something on the small path to the graveyard caught my eye. It took off from the path and flew towards up the length of the path before doubling back down. It was a male Wall Brown and the butterfly I'd come to see. I watched it for some time as it moved from one grave to another before always returning back to a similar spot about half way along the small path.



Having found one I set about to look for more and so I mooched around the headstones finding a Specklie and a few different Whites, although all of these were very flighty. Somehow I ended back at the same place (well it is a small church) and there was the Wall, waiting for me. A few more shots and then a bit more of a mooch this time finding a Meadow Brown and the Whites increasingly frustrating. They'd land I get in position and then they'd fly off just as I was focusing. I managed to get to the other side of the church on this recce and put up a Peacock as well as discovering five Specklies.



Back on the path the Wall was still there but once the sun came out he was off. I thought I'd lost him but then I saw two brownly-orange blurs buzzing around amongst the headstones. I thought at first it might be a male and female as one seemed to be flying in circles around the other and the chase went on for a good 15 minutes from right across the graveyard, the neighbouring field and back, along and over the church, back to the top of the graveyard etc. I saw them go over and along the church roof at least 7 times. In fact when I thought I'd lost them I'd simply look to the top of the church roof and presently the pair would reappear and I could watch them again. As I say I thought it was a pair but some distant Sport Modes shots suggested otherwise.



After this I made my way to work and then back with the briefest of stops at Larkhill; Small Heath, 3 Adonis, 5 Common Blues and at least 3 Small Tortois were the best of the bunch - but still no Cloudy!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Dec-17 03:39 PM GMT

Larkhill 13-09-2017

It had been a good while between my last outing looking for butterflies and when I was able to get out again. Work had been full on since I'd gotten back and the weekends had been spent sorting out all those things that needed to be sorted out during the week but couldn't be because of work. But finally things fell into place and I was able to make one of my stop-offs at Larkhill on the way home. I parked in the 'main' car park and then worked my way downhill along the Eastbound path. Instantly I was struck by how long it had been - the last proper time I'd visited there had been DGFs and Small Blues and multitudes of Golden Skippers. Today there were a few Whites bombing about and the odd tired and faded Blue. I'd walked down the path and was approaching the half way point when a few butterflies out in an appearance and sat still for long enough so that I could get a few shots. The first was a nicely placed Common Blue, one of two that were flipping around this little area.



Slightly further on, only a couple of steps I was brought to a stand still by a flash of electric blue from the light beige of the dried grasses. The butterfly in question took off but luckily came in closer and landed practically in front of me. A male Adonis which close up seemed more powder blue than Electrical and was also more worn than I'd been led to believe by its show-stopping entrance.



I left it in peace and carried on down to the half way point seeing a few more Common Blues on the way, or possibly the same pair of males. I started back towards the car and was just wondering if there were any Brown Argus about when a small brown Blue showed itself from the edge of the path. A close inspection later along with a few shots and brown Argus was ticked off the list.





Happy with this I thought about heading back to the car so I checked my watch and I was well over the allotted 10 minutes that I usually gave myself so I made haste back up the hill heading Westwards along the Eastward path stopping only briefly for the 'original' Common Blue which despite several bouts of fighting was in a very similar situation to where I'd left it.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 31-Dec-17 11:14 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, hope you had a good Christmas, we certainly did 😊 I love that little Common Blue shot, it brings back this years warmer weather, 😊 2018 tomorrow won't belong now before the Spring.

When I arrived back home on Thursday the first thing I saw in my Rockery, Snow Drops! Roll on. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Dec-17 06:41 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I can almost feel the spring – mind you that's probabyl wishful thinking 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Jan-18 12:02 AM GMT

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL AT UKB



Have a goodun

Wurzel