

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 01-Jan-19 07:28 PM GMT

First butterfly activity 2019.

My box of chrysalises (whites various) was transferred from the shed to the fridge where temperature circa 4C/5C. The reason for not leaving them outside is that experience has shown that they often emerge too early – doesn't happen if kept in fridge until early May.

All chrysalises looked healthy today. No signs of mould on the twigs (for climbing up after emergence)

I remain healthy enough myself but having just become an octogenarian, I have to anticipate that I won't go on for ever. I have left instructions on the chrysalis box just in case..... 😊

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Wurzel, 01-Jan-19 08:47 PM GMT

Have a happy New Year Jack! 😊 I reckon the safest thing to do when referring to people is to use *Homo sapiens* as that is gender neutral...alternatively you could rebel and put it down to silly nonsense that will fall out of fashion within a few years 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 02-Jan-19 08:13 AM GMT

{quote}Wurzel: I reckon the safest thing to do when referring to people is to use *Homo sapiens* as that is gender neutral...alternatively you could rebel and put it down to silly nonsense that will fall out of fashion within a few years 😊😊 Must not forget the sub species *Homo non-sapiens* aka *Homo politicus*

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jenks, 02-Jan-19 09:16 AM GMT

Wurzel wrote; ".alternatively you could rebel and put it down to silly nonsense that will fall out of fashion within a few years" .

Oh I do wish ! Have a good New Year and good butterfly-ing 2019 everyone.

Jenks.

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by David M, 06-Jan-19 06:44 PM GMT

{quote}I have to anticipate that I won't go on for ever. I have left instructions on the chrysalis box just in case...

Very commendable of you, Jack.....although I have no doubt those instructions won't be required!

Happy New Year to you! 😊

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 07-Jan-19 09:44 AM GMT

I had said

{quote} I have to anticipate that I won't go on for ever. I have left instructions on the chrysalis box just in case... David replied {quote}Very commendable of you, Jack.....although I have no doubt those instructions won't be required!

Happy New Year to you! 😊 Ah! it's an Annual Standing Order not due to be cancelled until at least 2039.

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by David M, 12-Jan-19 02:15 PM GMT

**Jack Harrison wrote:**

Ah! it's an Annual Standing Order not due to be cancelled until at least 2039.

**Northern Brown Argus**

by Jack Harrison, 26-Jan-19 03:33 PM GMT

No reaction to a posting I made on the species specific page so trying here.

I plan to return north (mainly A1) on or about 3 / 4 July after a Purple Emperor odyssey in Fermyn Woods.

The Burnnmouth/Eyemouth area appeals for Northern Brown Argus. For this 80 year old who struggles on slopes, rough ground and long hikes, how easy is say the Partanhall site? Are there any others that I might find easy to visit? It is many years since I last saw NBA (30+)

I'm assuming that early July would be a suitable time?

I do in fact live near the south coast of the Moray Firth. Any suggestions for NBA in this area?

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by MikeOxon, 27-Jan-19 01:54 PM GMT

Cannot help, Jack, but one of the problems with the 'new' approach to diaries is that entries, other than the owner's, don't appear in the 'Recents' list. I've only seen NBA at Arnside Knott and those aren't the real white-spot version!

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by bugboy, 27-Jan-19 05:46 PM GMT

Hi Jack, my advice would be to drop IAC (Iain Cowe) a message. What he doesn't know about the east coast populations isn't worth knowing! He was most helpful when I went to tick them off two years ago.

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by dave brown, 28-Jan-19 03:11 PM GMT

Hi Jack,

I have seen NBA at Granttown on Spey and near Aviemore in the past (2005?). Both not far from your home. I will dig out my old notes over the next few days and PM you. Neither site was difficult to reach in terms of length of walk or steep slopes. In fact one was by a main road. Hopefully both sites still remain undeveloped.

I also believe they are fairly easy at the entrance to RSPB Insh Marshes near the car park but not looked myself.

Dave

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 28-Jan-19 03:44 PM GMT

Thank you so much Dave (Brown). Yes Granttown and Aviemore are quite close.

Looking forward to the PM and then you can have my e-mail address.

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by dave brown, 29-Jan-19 05:15 PM GMT

Hi Jack,

Have sent you a PM re Granttown.

Dave

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Allan.W., 23-May-19 09:11 PM GMT

Hello Jack ,  
Just been flicking through the "May sightings " section and noticed you,d asked for a plant ID , I don,t know if you had any responses ,the small low growing white flowered plant along a sea dyke , I believe is Common Scurvy Grass (Cochlearia officianalis ) ,if not possibly one of the other Scurvy grasses . Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 24-May-19 01:37 AM GMT

Some of my May entries would have been better in my personal diary so minor apologies for cluttering up that thread.

Thanks Allan for the Scurvy Grass i/d.

And to Dave Brown, thanks about the Northern Brown Argus info at Grantown on Spey. I had lost your PM for some reason but it has just come to light (?) That site at Grantown might have been lost due to a mini-heritage railway museum project. Old quarries near Tomintoul though are still promising.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 21-Jun-19 10:11 AM GMT

#### Is there a more bizarre hobby?

I collect a few Orange Tip eggs each year. Then as I need more foodplant (usually Hedge Garlic), inevitably I accidentally get more early-stage Orange Tips. I just stand the cut plants in pots of water on a window ledge.

It is almost impossible to count just how many I have. My wife – who is tolerant but not in truth a great butterfly enthusiast – does a morning check and has a knack of finding caterpillars that I have overlooked. Many of these are soon to pupate so need to be caged in a closed box otherwise they are apt to wander to obscure locations within the house.

I am reminded of the late Tony Valletta [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony\\_Valletta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Valletta)  
I got to know him during my Air Force days when I would often work in Malta for short periods. I once visited his house and met his wife. She could speak no English but managed to convey her minor dislike at regularly finding large Swallowtail caterpillars around the house pointing out some in various places in the kitchen 🤔

Happy days.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 23-Jun-19 03:12 AM GMT

#### Jack Harrison wrote:

Is there a more bizarre hobby?

There are plenty, Jack. 😊

What you're doing is laudable and educational in equal measure. I only wish more people were as interested in the natural world as you. 😊

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 04-Jul-19 06:40 PM GMT

Lucky Large White

I collected five or six caterpillars late last summer on nasturtiums growing in Findhorn. The resulting butterflies have been emerging since mid-June with the last today, 4th July. This strongly suggests that Large White is single brooded in this part of the British Isles. Moreover, I'm not convinced that Large White is a true resident here. It is scarce and probably only a temporary inhabitant after immigration.

Anyway, the latest to emerge was lucky. I just happened to see him flopping around at the bottom of the box with wings only partially extended. He had for some reason missed the twigs I had placed next to the chrysalis. I coaxed him on to a twig and he then expanded his wings perfectly. It's bitterly cold this evening and his "first solo flight" has been postponed until the morning.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 05-Jul-19 09:37 AM GMT

5th July. On his first solo, he flew around the garden for a bit and then landed in a convenient spot for his portrait.



Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Wurzel, 05-Jul-19 12:24 PM GMT

"On his first solo, he flew around the garden for a bit and then landed in a convenient spot for his portrait." looks like you trained him well Jack 😊😄  
Interesting to read about your thoughts on the number of broods – it would tie in with what other species show in that generally the further North the fewer broods 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 07-Jul-19 07:53 AM GMT

Good work, Jack. He looks quite dusky...is this a feature of Scottish Large Whites?

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 07-Jul-19 08:04 AM GMT

[quote]He looks quite dusky...is this a feature of Scottish Large Whites?Don't think so. Most likely camera setting and/or Paint Shop Pro and/orthe dull weather when photographed.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 07-Jul-19 08:25 AM GMT

Jack Harrison wrote:

[quote]He looks quite dusky...is this a feature of Scottish Large Whites?

Don't think so. Most likely camera setting and/or Paint Shop Pro and/or the dull weather when photographed.

Aah! Thanks for the explanation, Jack.

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 07-Jul-19 09:21 AM GMT

Another point to be made is that in four years living in this area I have seen just one [wild] Large White. In the previous three years living in Mull, I saw none. A professional gardener there told me in answer to my question that he had never been plagued with caterpillars. The greatest number of wild Large Whites I have seen was last year at Findhorn – caterpillars.

So I cannot say if the butterfly is more dusky here than in the south. PhotoShop in auto colour mode produced the result you have seen so I have little idea how realistic that is. I am inclined to agree that "in the flesh" it probably looked a little more yellow.

Findhorn village is right on the coast so frosts are rare and if they do occur are not normally severe. The vegetation reflects that: Fuchsias for example don't die back in winter. Nasturtiums seem to get a much earlier start than I can manage in my garden a few miles inland. So maybe, just maybe, Large Whites are confined to a few places with micro climates. Although this is arable country with plenty of brassicas grown, I presume they are heavily sprayed. Large Whites here are possibly totally dependent on Nasturtiums.

Jack

## Re: Jack Harrison

by MikeOxon, 07-Jul-19 11:36 AM GMT

### Jack Harrison wrote:

[quote]He looks quite dusky...is this a feature of Scottish Large Whites?

Don't think so. Most likely camera setting and/or Paint Shop Pro and/or the dull weather when photographed.

I think 'auto white balance' has made a mess of things here, having been confused by all that green foliage. The result is that the image has a strong magenta cast – look at the leading edge of the forewing for example. I tried correcting the colour balance in Photoshop (a subjective process, I admit) to produce the following result:



colour re-balanced

I suspect that this may be a little nearer the original but only Jack will know! The moral is always to be wary regarding any 'auto' settings – they can easily be fooled.

Mike

## Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 07-Jul-19 03:33 PM GMT

Thanks Mike, much more realistic.

Six species today beside the River Findhorn:



Painted Lady, Dark Green Fritillary, Ringlet, Meadow Brown, GV White, Common Blue. Only Ringlet in double figures. Scotch Argus here around the end of the month.

Jack

## Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 04-Aug-19 02:08 PM GMT

Was it stealing?

I "liberated" five Large White caterpillars from Nasturtiums overhanging a garden wall in Findhorn on the Moray Coast. Large Whites are certainly not common in these parts.

Findhorn is *almost* frost free so maybe Nasturtiums can survive winters (as they do in a few places in the Channel Islands and in Malta) – I need to check next winter. As a parallel Fuchsia bushes are evergreen in Findhorn but where I live a few miles inland, new growth doesn't start until mid to late May.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 06-Aug-19 05:42 PM GMT

I have now met the "owner" of the Findhorn Large Whites, Steve. He works in the adjacent Kimberley Inn and looks after the garden of a holiday let where the Nasturtiums self-seed each year. So they aren't evergreen perennials (as Nasturtiums are in some truly frost-free climates) but Steve tells me that the location is an almost frost free and some other extremely tender plants do survive the winters.

I have looked at other patches of Nasturtium in Findhorn but not yet found and Large White caterpillars. Here is the hot spot.



Steve says I can take as many caterpillars as I like. They are mostly nearly fully grown at the moment although there are a few much younger ones. I can't handle more than about two dozen in total and will probably collect the final eight or nine tomorrow.

My expectation is that they will be parasite-free (they were last year) as I would think that the caterpillar population is too small to support the parasitic ichneumon wasps. We'll see. Watch this space.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 06-Aug-19 06:31 PM GMT

I recall a chap who used the same pub when I lived in Sussex in the 1970s (Kevin was a lorry tyre changer/repairer by profession).

*The Fountain at Ashurst was a superb meeting place in those days. I could cycle there from my bungalow in Partridge Green so wasn't worried about breathalyzers! People from all walks of life socialized: me (airline pilot), lawyers, delivery drivers, carpenters, bankers, refuse collectors, farm workers (I had a bit of a soft spot for a milkmaid!) It was a truly classless mix.*

Anyway, Kevin – he who attended road side tyre failures – lived with his mother. He would always joke about her dreadful cooking. One day he apparently complained about a **black caterpillar** in his cabbage. Mum said: "Well it was green when I put it in the pot".

But we weren't all equal. I was the undoubted "liar dice" champion. Good old days.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 07-Aug-19 06:05 AM GMT

Large Whites.

I've had further thoughts. Although there were still plenty of caterpillars at the Findhorn site when I last checked, I won't be taking any more as that might be irresponsible. The adults, when they emerge, will be released back in Findhorn.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 07-Aug-19 02:13 PM GMT

Returned to Findhorn today. Still several Large White caterpillars but only on that patch. All other Nasturtiums drew a blank.

Weather was overcast and drizzly (after it had rained buckets overnight). In that most unlikely of places, far from any woodland, a single Speckled Wood.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-19 08:06 PM GMT

Just back from Portugal, Porto airport via Easyjet last night and wondered if your son was working on the (delayed) 19:35 to Gatwick? 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 08-Aug-19 09:50 PM GMT

**Jack Harrison wrote:**

...Large Whites are certainly not common in these parts....

They've been uncommon practically everywhere this year, Jack. I've hardly seen any in the UK, and even during my regular foreign jaunts they've been few in number (or even absent).

What has happened to them this year?

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 09-Aug-19 01:32 AM GMT

[quote]Wurzel: Just back from Portugal, Porto airport via Easyjet last night and wondered if your son was working Miles certainly does that route but was on a day off on Thursday.

Miles (as passenger) and his sister Felicity are actually flying up to Inverness on Friday. Miles returns south later, Felicity stays with me for a week.

Meanwhile, my younger daughter, 26 year-old Polly, has just started her pilot training but won't be earning her keep for another 18 months or so.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 10-Aug-19 01:18 AM GMT

My Large Whites now beginning to pupate. Two so far.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 11-Aug-19 09:10 PM GMT

**Jack Harrison wrote:**

My Large Whites now beginning to pupate. Two so far.

I shall look forward to their emergence, Jack. It's the one supposedly common species I've seen very few of this year, both at home and on my travels.

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 17-Aug-19 06:10 PM GMT

My captive Large Whites haven't done very well, but this might reflect what happens in the wild.

15 larvae collected one of which was quite small. That one simply vanished. 14 left.

Six of these died at the pupation stage - they shriveled up without pupating. Eight left.

Three of these *did* pupate but look bloated and sick and rather grotesque. Maybe parasitized. Five left.

These five changed into healthy pupae. They are now in a dark corner in the shed. I have no idea whether they will emerge this year or hibernate. If by November it is obvious that they are hibernating, then they will join the Orange Tip pupae in the fridge and be brought out to warm up in mid-April next spring. If they were to be left in the shed, they undoubtedly would emerge too early. This fridge technique is tried and tested and to date has been 100% successful. I already have two Tortoiseshells in boxes in the fridge that had earlier come indoors with hibernation in mind. In early autumn, I will probably capture a couple of Peacocks that clearly are ready to hibernate. It is always a joy to see these adults wake up on the first fine spring day.

*At risk of sounding melodramatic, being 80 years old now I am aware that I might not make it to next spring. Among my best laid plans, 75 year old wife Stella has the instructions as to what to do with my butterflies in the event of me not still being here. There is of course the minor matter of my own "natural" disposal at a woodland site but that is far less important than my butterflies.* 😞

Jack



**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Padfield, 17-Aug-19 06:50 PM GMT

Hi Jack,

Whatever your state of health – and I wish you many more years of happy hunting – I think it highly commendable that you have left provision for your livestock in the event of your death! I did the same with my stick insects even when I was a child. Like you, I hope, I outlived my protégés, but they bred so fast (no males necessary in the stick insect world) I eventually released them onto our bramble to live out their dotage, knowing they would not survive the winter.

Guy

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-19 08:41 PM GMT

A very responsible thing to do Jack. A third success rate from caterpillars to pupae sounds pretty reasonable. Wishing you all the best so that you can witness your proteges emergences 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 18-Aug-19 07:22 PM GMT

You people in the south wind me up with your reports of Long-tailed Blues, second brood Small PB Frits, Chalk-hill Blue *abs*. So my turn from the north to get my own back: Scotch Argus, perhaps our most numerous species.

18th August – coming to the end of their short flight season.



Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Wurzel, 18-Aug-19 10:13 PM GMT

If revenge is a dish best served cold Jack then that shot is pretty glacial 😏👍👍 I've not seen a Sassenach Argus let along a proper Scotch Argus 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 19-Aug-19 03:52 PM GMT

Wurzel.

Should you want to enjoy Scotch Argus next year, first few days of August are ideal. Flights to Inverness (where hire car) from Gatwick or Bristol.

Two additional bonuses. My son might be your driver; normal route into Inverness (in SW winds) passes over my house.

I can of course point you to guaranteed Scotch Argus sites but you might want find your own. Three years ago a visitor from London was able to see Scotch Argus within four hours of leaving home.



More exciting than all these northern browns, again a Small Copper in the garden this lunchtime. They crop up two or three times a year. I have no idea where the colony is but in this predominately arable area, my guess would be field margins.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Wurzel, 20-Aug-19 08:39 AM GMT

Cheers for the information Jack – I don;t think I'll be able to put it to use yet as I've still got the girls at home for a few more years and that's where my cash seems to go 😊😊 Great news about the Small Copper 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 20-Aug-19 09:17 AM GMT

#### Jack Harrison wrote:

You people in the south wind me up with your reports of Long-tailed Blues, second brood Small PB Frits, Chalk-hill Blue *abs*. So my turn from the north to get my own back: Scotch Argus, perhaps our most numerous species.

18th August – coming to the end of their short flight season.19-08-18-019-Scotch-Argus.jpgJack

Touché, Jack! 😊

I get envious about the chalk downland species too, although my area, like yours, DOES have notables of its own, e.g. Marsh, Small Pearl Bordered and High Brown Fritillaries. 😊

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 20-Aug-19 05:37 PM GMT

North Scotland 20th August

Astonishing numbers of Peacocks.



Neighbour's large Buddleia had perhaps 40 plus a few Red Admirals, Small Tortoiseshells, Small and GV Whites and amazingly two Small Coppers.



But most frustrating was a fly-by of what I am 99% convinced was a Comma, a species I have been expecting to turn up here.

Peacock resting on wall.



I go back to the 1980s when I lived in the Aberdeen area. Peacocks were very rare and I saw only one in the five years I lived there. Going back even further – 73 years to 1946 – I can still recall the excitement of seeing a single Peacock in east Norfolk. They were not common in those days.

*And – at risk of boring the pants off you – more nostalgia. On this date, 20th August 1965, I achieved the first leg of three in my quest to qualify for my diamond gliding badge. It took a few more years to get all three diamonds. Today, I don't think anyone bothers to chase diamonds. Gliders and navigation aids not to mention weather forecasting are so much better now. But way back in the 1960s/1980s, to have just one diamond was considered to be quite something. To have all three 😊 (Boasting).*

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 21-Aug-19 08:09 AM GMT

#### My Small Coppers

I have overlooked the obvious 😊 : they are probably breeding in my garden.

My so-called lawn has more weeds than grass – including of course sorrel (Small Copper foodplant). It is left to grow to 10 – 15 cms tall by which time it annoys me and is cut down to about 4 cms. Quite unintentionally, I might have created the ideal Small copper habitat.

Confirmed breeding species: Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Orange Tip, Small White. Suspected: Ringlet, Speckled Wood, Red Admiral and now Small Copper.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Matsukaze, 22-Aug-19 08:49 PM GMT

Jack, you would have enjoyed Draycott in the Mendips. The gliding club is on top of the hill, Draycott Sleights reserve with its Chalkhill Blues just the other side of the stone wall.

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 24-Aug-19 11:59 AM GMT

#### Jack Harrison wrote:

Confirmed breeding species: Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Orange Tip, Small White. Suspected: Ringlet, Speckled Wood, Red Admiral and now Small

Copper.

That's pretty good going considering where you are, Jack. That was a serendipitous discovery regarding the shorn common sorrell. Must admit when I've seen female Coppers ovipositing it **does** usually seem to be on the short stuff.

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 25-Aug-19 04:37 PM GMT

25th August. Sunny Sunday, blue skies, 26C

Yellow *Buddleia weyeriana* is as good for butterflies as the common purple form and has the advantage of flowering later in the summer.



Jack

## Re: Jack Harrison

by Wurzel, 26-Aug-19 09:58 AM GMT

It also has the advantage of complimenting the colours of the butterflies nicely Jack – great shots 🤔📷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 28-Aug-19 09:34 AM GMT

### Large Whites – North Scotland

27th August, about 8 kilometres inland from the coast, single Large White female on 27th August. But information from another 4 kilometres inland – many caterpillars on garden Kale (photos sent to me confirmed i/d). The gardener does not spray the Kale.

So a hypothesis to explain the scarcity of Large Whites here.

This is mainly arable farmland (apart from the forestry plantations – unsuitable for Large Whites). Brassicas are widely grown and no doubt sprayed heavily with pesticides. So apart from a few isolated examples like that gardener, Large Whites don't stand a chance on cabbage, cauliflower, etc. So only really nasturtium. The first hint of frost kills Nasturtiums but frosts are later on the coast, such as Findhorn (where I have found caterpillars). Even so, it must be a race of time to pupate before the food becomes unavailable so mortality must be very high. I am aware, including personal experience, that in the south of England, caterpillars can still be around in December on brassicas (and can apparently tolerate slight frosts). But they need to eat and that doesn't seem to be possible up here.

QED? Or other ideas?

As for Large White life cycle here – it doesn't seem to follow the conventional pattern of two broods. I don't know what the life cycle is. Maybe it's simply one long spread out brood.

Jack

## Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 29-Aug-19 01:08 PM GMT

Well, Large Whites are breeding in my garden and I'm not entirely pleased about that. Obviously a batch of eggs was laid on one of my few Sweet Rocket (aka Dame's Violet) plants. I can't find a garden centre that sells them so I am having to laboriously build up the numbers from seed. As biennials (or short lived perennials) this is a slow process.

Primarily, the Sweet Rocket is for the benefit of Orange Tips – although it has to be admitted that the flowers are quite attractive. Orange Tips eat only seed pods but the eight Large White caterpillars I have found have absolutely ruined the plants. I do have some Nasturtiums, but one large caterpillar will eat a big leaf in about two hours: I don't have enough Nasturtiums.

So whether they like it or they are needing to feed on brassica leaves from the Farm Shop. They don't seem to be enthusiastic about Purple Sprouting and have wandered to all corners of the box they are in.

Had they been left outside on the Sweet Rocket, undoubtedly most if not all would have starved to death. My method might not work – I don't know. Watch this space.

Jack

## Re: Jack Harrison

by Sonam Dorji, 30-Aug-19 07:48 AM GMT

Hi Jack,

Sorry to hear about Large White ruining your plants. Hope it goes as per your planning. Do keep posting. Would love to see plenty of Orange tips on your doorsteps!!

rgds  
,Sonam

## Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 01-Sep-19 08:42 PM GMT

### Jack Harrison wrote:

Well, Large Whites are breeding in my garden and I'm not entirely pleased about that...

Shame there isn't a way for you to safely send them to me, Jack. South Wales has seen a near absence of this species in 2019 and in all honesty, if a few were found flying around our vegetable patch I'd be far from disappointed!!

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 04-Sep-19 04:13 PM GMT

**Update on Moray (and area) Large Whites.**

I am not collecting any more caterpillars and my final eight are in position to pupate. They all look healthy and if they do pupate that will make 14 out of 25, a success rate in excess of 50%

Today in a different part of Findhorn (*The Findhorn Foundation*) about a kilometre from the coast, I found about a dozen large caterpillars but did not search very thoroughly so there must have been many more. Several were on Nasturtiums but many were on [obviously unsprayed] nearby Brassica plants. My big puzzle is why, with caterpillars numerous, the adults have been – as is the case in most years – scarce? Poor observation I presume.

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by essexbuzzard, 04-Sep-19 06:28 PM GMT

Hi Jack, do you have a local garden centre or small holding that has brassica plants for sale? My local centre is selling plug plants ready for planting. If so, your caterpillars could move onto these if the nasturtium are killed by frost.

Good luck, regardless.

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 05-Sep-19 01:44 AM GMT

The way these things eat, a plug plant would not even provide an hors d'oeuvre! But I have enough caterpillars/pupae now. Just one still eating, four spun up ready to pupate (although one might not make it as the holding silk is broken) and ten apparently healthy pupae. (Totals to be confirmed). This is from 25 caterpillars collected so not a bad success rate. No ichneumon parasites so far.

I'm off on holiday to Orkney at the weekend. I doubt I'll find any butterflies there but will check for caterpillars if I come across Nasturtiums. David: might be worthwhile checking Nasturtiums in South Wales.

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 05-Sep-19 07:24 PM GMT

Sadly I have to report a case of manslaughter. When I cleaned out the box of Large Whites, I failed to notice that one caterpillar had crawled off and was now hiding in the rim of the lid of the box: it was squashed on replacing the lid. RIP 🐛

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by David M, 06-Sep-19 05:21 PM GMT

**Jack Harrison wrote:**

David: might be worthwhile checking Nasturtiums in South Wales.

I always do when I see them at this time of year, Jack. However, if there are hardly any adults around I wouldn't expect there to be many eggs.

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 06-Sep-19 05:38 PM GMT

David[quote]However, if there are hardly any adults around I wouldn't expect there to be many eggs. But that is exactly why I am confused. I have seen very few adults this year but am currently having no trouble finding caterpillars.

I'll see if there any on Orkney when I go there on holiday tomorrow.

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by David M, 07-Sep-19 07:55 PM GMT

**Jack Harrison wrote:**

...I'll see if there any on Orkney when I go there on holiday tomorrow.

Good luck with that, Jack. If you **do** then I'll wave the white flag. 😊

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 13-Sep-19 06:52 PM GMT

#### "Wiltshire" Blue.

This strange butterfly came up during a conversation this week in Stromness, Orkney (where I was on holiday). A lady told me she had seen a "Wiltshire Blue" on Orkney. My investigation suggests the following explanation.

I visited a museum in Stromness and looked at the butterfly collection. The staff at the museum was unable to confirm that these butterflies were in fact collected in Orkney but the species list suggests that it probably was.

Small White  
Large White  
GV White  
Clouded Yellow  
Peacock  
Small Tortoiseshell  
Red Admiral  
Painted Lady  
Dark Green Fritillary  
Meadow Brown  
Small Heath  
Common Blue

The Common Blues were interesting in that every female specimen was the blue form. So there perhaps is the lady's "Wiltshire Blue". She had previously lived in the Marlborough area. So is the "Wiltshire Blue" Chalkhill or Adonis?

Michael Morpurgo's classic *"The Butterfly Lion"* (my children loved it when they were young) is maybe relevant. The narrative suggests an unhappy pupil at Marlborough College (although this is not explicitly stated) and his "butterflies" were Adonis Blues – the "Wiltshire Blues" perhaps?

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Wurzel, 13-Sep-19 08:09 PM GMT

Interesting Jack – I reckon that you're right in your surmise that she was seeing very blue female Common Blues as they're more like Adonis than Chalkhills (both of which fly in good numbers on the Downs around Marlborough) which would tie in with the "Butterfly Lion" link too. Interesting that all the females were 'blue' which is a bit like the mariscolore form (or is it a species?) found in Ireland? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 13-Sep-19 08:14 PM GMT

Incidentally, I didn't see a single butterfly on Orkney. Even the Nasturtiums drew a [caterpillar] blank.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 14-Sep-19 10:12 PM GMT

#### Jack Harrison wrote:

Incidentally, I didn't see a single butterfly on Orkney. Even the Nasturtiums drew a [caterpillar] blank.

Do they have any resident butterflies there, Jack, or is it just migrants that turn up occasionally?

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 19-Sep-19 05:13 PM GMT

Full house (for these parts) in the garden today:

Peacock  
Red Admiral  
Painted Lady  
Small Tortoiseshell (likely to be second brood)  
Speckled Wood  
Small White (probably third brood)

The Small White was egg-laying on Nasturtium. There isn't a hope-in-hell that they will get through to the pupal stage (and thus be able to hibernate)



before frosts kill off the Nasturtiums. So this [presumably] third brood is destined to fail. Compare the hypothesis that third brood Wall Brown larvae often don't succeed in reaching a suitable development to be able to over-winter explaining the Wall has seen a serious decline in recent decades in hot central England. A consequence of global warming perhaps?



The windsock in the background is for the benefit of birds and butterflies 🤔 Commercial aircraft inbound to Inverness airport fly overhead so might find it helpful but my pilot son mentions some new-fangled idea called "radio" so maybe they don't need windsocks these days. However, when I retired some 21 years ago, windsocks were still useful as was the resident Kestrel - hovering into wind - when about to take off from Amsterdam's northerly runway.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Wurzel, 19-Sep-19 10:41 PM GMT

That's a good list Jack - I'm not seeing much more round about now 😊 Lovely looking Painted Lady - quite swarthy looking 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 20-Sep-19 05:49 PM GMT

Taken in grounds of Cawdor Castle today 20th September



A German tourist told me (in the usual impeccable English) that they call them "Peacock's Eye". Any idea what flower it was using? It looks almost like a Bluebell but of course it isn't. A scrambling shrub to about 2 metres high. Clearly an excellent butterfly attractant.





This Red Admiral was feeding on *Doronicum* for the entire two hours I was there. Note the damaged right wing and the missing antenna. (circled). *I blame this fellow who was hanging around nearby.*



I pointed out the Red Admiral (by gesture) to some Japanese. Click click click with their smart phones. All over in about 30 seconds and they moved on. I just wonder how large are the hard drives that Japanese people have: they must take millions of photos.

I do have to say that Japanese are always impeccably dressed, unlike the ubiquitous tourists from a certain large country in the western hemisphere who display a sartorial *non-elegance* like us Brits.

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Allan.W., 20-Sep-19 08:17 PM GMT

Jack ,  
Your plant could be *Clematis heracleifolia* "Cassandra " ..... Just seen it on Gardners World !  
Regards Allan.W.

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 20-Sep-19 08:30 PM GMT

Allan: [quote] Your plant could be *Clematis heracleifolia* "Cassandra " ..... Just seen it on Gardners World ! That's it. Thanks.  
Certainly a good late season butterfly plant.

Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by David M, 21-Sep-19 09:32 PM GMT

Fabulous, Jack. That's a good count for your latitude at this time of year.

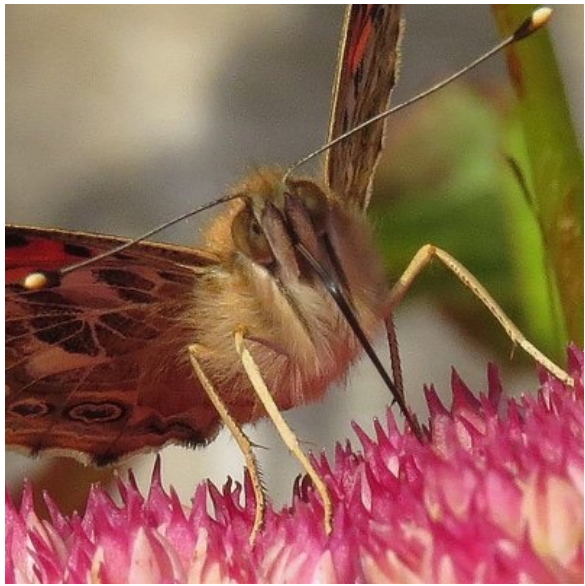
Peacocks have all disappeared round my way, so it's enviable that you're still seeing them. 🇮🇪

## Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 22-Sep-19 03:29 PM GMT

In the garden today.



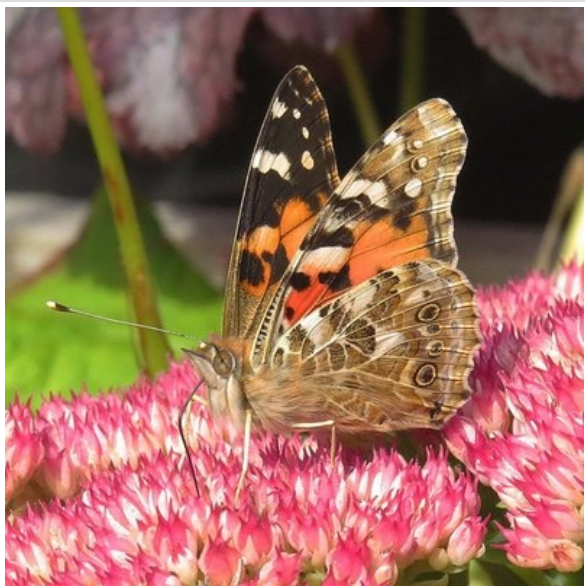


Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by Jack Harrison, 23-Sep-19 02:32 AM GMT

Intricate undersides are sometimes overlooked. It's not just uppersides that are impressive.



Jack

**Re: Jack Harrison**

by millerd, 23-Sep-19 07:47 PM GMT

Absolutely, Jack. Painted Ladies have wonderfully intricate underside markings that make ideal camouflage when sitting wings shut on dried up dusty Mediterranean grass and scrub. They work quite well on British gravel paths too! 😊

Nice photo.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-19 10:22 PM GMT

Spot on Jack 😊 The Map is another one where the underside is where it's at 😊 Cracking close up a post ago 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 24-Sep-19 11:20 PM GMT

#### Jack Harrison wrote:

Intricate undersides are sometimes overlooked...

Not by me, Jack. This species has one of the most striking undersides of all our butterflies. They don't tend to show it off too often though, mainly preferring to nectar with wings open.

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 09-Oct-19 04:52 PM GMT

I am not the world's best birdwatcher but I am not a complete novice. In a hide on Friday, there was the classic know-all – birders seem to have this species among their number; butterflies by contrast are invariably polite. I said to the other birders in the hide: "Well I'll go off now and see what Gannets are like on the coast." "You won't find any – maybe the occasional juvenile – at this time of the year. They have moved south." said *Mr. Know-All*. Who was I to question an obvious expert?

Today – a small part of a Gannet flock.



(Please click to see larger image)

My birding "friend" is now *Mr. Know-F-All*. 😊

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Wurzel, 09-Oct-19 10:54 PM GMT

I've encountered one or two of those over the years Jack 😊 it can be quite good sport letting them waffle on nonsense until someone calls them on it 😊 The Know-all is also more often or not 'Mr Competitive' too and another good trick is to reel off a load of rare birds that you've allegedly seen and see how many the Know-all comes up with to try and trump you 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 10-Oct-19 09:12 PM GMT

#### Jack Harrison wrote:

...In a hide on Friday, there was the classic know-all – birders seem to have this species among their number; butterflies by contrast are invariably polite.

I don't know, Jack, I get the occasional one on my tours. By the end of the week though they have largely been shunned and often discredited.

### Re: Jack Harrison



by Jack Harrison, 10-Oct-19 11:45 PM GMT

I don't suppose Mr Know-F-All is likely to read this. My estimate of around 400 Gannets on Wednesday was surpassed by another birder on Thursday with circa 1,400. But we both had similar counts of Razorbills east to west at the rate of around 1,600 per hour.

Butterfly count this week has been precisely two – a Peacock and a Small Tortoiseshell.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 13-Oct-19 05:38 PM GMT

**Jack Harrison wrote:**

Butterfly count this week has been precisely two – a Peacock and a Small Tortoiseshell.

That's better than mine, Jack – just one Small White.

I guess you haven't had the perpetual stormy weather we've seen down south?

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 13-Oct-19 06:26 PM GMT

You should visit the Moray Firth David. Today:



Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 14-Oct-19 11:27 PM GMT

That's beautiful, Jack. More like Cornwall than the north of Scotland.

### Mixed up butterfly names

by Jack Harrison, 29-Oct-19 07:51 PM GMT

I sometimes suffer from insomnia. I find that doing word or number puzzles in my head usually sends me to sleep quickly. Last night I tried mixing butterfly names and combining:

eg Wood White + Purple Emperor >>> **Wood Emperor** or **Purple White** (?) Some were quite bizarre – The **Orange** [tip] **Blue** for example. But I did invent a real rarity, Essex (skipper) + (Painted) Lady. >>> **Essex Lady**.

I then fell asleep.

Your ideas please.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Wurzel, 29-Oct-19 09:05 PM GMT

I like some 'factually correct' ones Jack like Duke of Burgundy and Red Admiral – Burgundy Red or Painted Lady and Glanville Fritillary – Lady Glanville though the one I'd really like to see is an Emperor Skipper 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Mixed up butterfly names

by David M, 29-Oct-19 11:24 PM GMT

Jack Harrison wrote:

..Your ideas please.

Marbled Argus would be interesting. 😊

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Neil Freeman, 01-Nov-19 08:33 PM GMT

Chequered Skipper and any of the whites for;

Chequered White...and would seem quite appropriate as an alternative for the Marbled White.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Jack Harrison

by Jack Harrison, 28-Dec-19 03:44 PM GMT

I have just checked my overwintering butterflies in the fridge.

*I keep in a box in the fridge as experience has shown that even in a cold shed, they can emerge too early. They will be taken out of the fridge late March/early April. Of early in the case of the Tortoiseshells (which warm up very quickly) if there is a find spring day earlier. I saw my first one in 2019 on 21 February on the Moray Coast.*

The two Tortoiseshell adults look healthy as do about two dozen Orange Tip pupae one of which is the green form.

I had about a dozen Large White pupae but one soon when black. The remainder are all of the green form. In this part of north Scotland, Large Whites seem to rely very much on Nasturtium. Many larvae are unable to complete development before autumn frost kills the leaves (However, I did find some in the garden on Dame's Violet aka Sweet Rocket). Large White is quite scarce up year and maybe not a permanent resident. This is an arable area and plenty of brassicas are grown but I guess they are heavily sprayed. I have never found a larva in my cauliflower or sprouts (from the farm shop!) Last season emergence of captive adults was not until July – so maybe single brooded here. I found plenty of larvae but saw only two adults. Not a single larvae was parasitised so I guess the ichneumons have not got this far north in great numbers.

They are now back in the fridge.

Jack

### Re: Jack Harrison

by David M, 31-Dec-19 08:55 PM GMT

Good luck with the hibernating species, Jack. Given the years you've been doing it, I doubt there are many better placed to guide these creatures successfully through the winter.

Have you been privy to any of these record breaking December temperatures in your neck of the woods?

Happy hogmanay and all the best for 2020! 😊

