

### Re: jackz432r

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

Fabulous *betulae* sequence, Paul. I hope your suspicions regarding the new potential site are proved correct later this year.

### Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 02-Jan-19 10:48 PM GMT

Thanks Bugboy, Wurzel & David for your comments 😊

#### The Whites

I should probably give this group more attention. I failed miserably in getting any decent images this year which is probably due to lack of effort on my part. Large White in particular seems to have been a bit of a struggle.

These are from various locations across Hampshire, but all have one thing in common. They all fall into my 'camera operator incompetence' period.



2.7.2018 - Green-Veined White - West Wood

### Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 04-Jan-19 07:11 PM GMT

I echo your sentiments about this collection of species Paul - after an initial flourish of the first for the year unfortunately for them there's always something less common, more interesting or easier to photograph 😊😞 Also, as you mentioned, Large White seemed to have a 'bad year' in 2018 - hopefully they can bounce back 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: jackz432r

by David M, 06-Jan-19 06:46 PM GMT

I agree, Paul, that Large Whites were tricky - they were around in very poor numbers in 2018; Green Veined Whites didn't fare so well either. However, Small Whites bucked the trend for this group, with more seen than usual in south Wales. Hopefully all three will have a productive 2019.

### Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 09-Jan-19 08:27 PM GMT

A short detour from my 2018 catch up with some more recent doings:

During the winter months I spend my butterfly time finding, revisiting, recording and assessing new sites for the White-Letter Hairstreak. I am generally disappointed if I don't locate at least one new Elm tree during an average week. Though I have no evidence as yet for White-Letter Hairstreak at any of the following locations. They were all found in the last couple of weeks and all look particularly promising.

**Hayling Island** - The main road into Hayling Island has one particular stretch between Mill Rythe and the Maypole Pub which is lined in Elm with half a dozen good Wych Elms amongst them.



*Hayling Island – Havant Road*

**Portsmouth** – This tree next to Lake Road Health Centre in Portsmouth is about 500mtrs from the Tree in Church Street which supports a colony of the Butterfly. The Health Centre car park provides a convenient viewpoint.



*Portsmouth – Lake Road Health Centre*

**Basingstoke** – Basingstoke looks like it could become quite a good area for White-Letter Hairstreak. Crabtree Plantation on the outskirts is already a well known site together with those I found at Viables last year. This group of seven ornamental (American?) Elms looks very promising and is conveniently equipped with a carpark, perfectly placed for observation.



*Basingstoke – Winklebury Way*

**Otterbourne/Cranbury Park** – I headed up to Otterbourne on Sunday close to the venue of the UKB winter Social. I have been aware for a while of a stretch of Elms alongside the M3 I wanted to see if I could get close to them, but unsurprisingly I could not.



*Cranbury Park*



*Cranbury Park – It was also good to see that not far away six Elms had been planted more recently along this field margin. These should become attractive to White-Letter Hairstreak within the next few years.*

### Re: jackz432r

by bugboy, 10-Jan-19 10:47 AM GMT

Hi Paul, happy new year, slightly jealous to see you're out and about doing your thing, I'd normally be out egg hunting at this time of year but current events unfortunately mean no rummaging through the undergrowth for a few weeks as yet! I can just see enough in that Cropped shot to say those two birds are Goldfinch. Most likely all of them were Goldfinch although they will sometimes form mixed flocks with winter visiting Siskin and Redpoll at this time of year. Not sure what they were eating but there's clearly something of interest to them!

### Re: jackz432r

by Andrew555, 11-Jan-19 04:59 PM GMT

Well done with the Orange-tip Paul, a beautiful sight. 😊

Yup, we've all had our camera snafu's. Worst for me was the flat battery or memory card left plugged in the PC at home, preventing any shots at all. 😞

Good to hear the Brostreaks did well. Funnily enough I saw a female on my lunchbreak walk in Redhill, never seen one around there before. 😊

Great report on your Elm hunting activities. 😊

Cheers

### Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 12-Jan-19 01:20 PM GMT

More sterling investigative work Paul 😊 Nice to see Elms being planted out – are there DED resistant forms now? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: jackz432r

by David M, 12-Jan-19 02:18 PM GMT

You sure use the winter months to your advantage, Paul. I sincerely hope a few of these sites provide you with what you're looking for....although I think you'll have to admit defeat with the M3 location!

### Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 19-Jan-19 03:43 PM GMT

Thanks all for your comments 😊

Thanks for the bird id Bugboy 😊 .

Wurzel, yes there are DED resistant strains of Elm available these days 😊 .

Back to my 2018 catch up....

#### The Golden Skippers (and Chalkhill Blue)

I find that this bunch (the Golden Skippers) are one of the most difficult species to really do justice to in a photo, but maybe that's just my inexperience 😞. I did not catch up with Silver-Spotted Skipper in 2018 and Essex Skippers seem to have avoided my camera lens completely.

**22.6.2018 Butts Ash nr Fawley Oil Refinery** – This was one of those really hot days last summer (probably too hot really). It was also memorable for me because it was a magical 'all dayer' in the pursuit of the White-Letter Hairstreak. This was late afternoon, the last of 6 separate sites in the general area of Southampton and was one that I had only discovered a few days earlier whilst I was passing. By 4.30pm Hairstreak activity had completely dwindled away so I set to explore the site. I only photographed one butterfly and it was not a White-Letter Hairstreak!



*Butts Ash nr Fawley – Hairstreak habitat. The Elms here look really luscious in this shot. The photo below shows a further area here which looks to be worth further investigation.*



**24.7.2018 St Catherines Hill nr Winchester** – This visit was memorable for different reasons. It had been a beautiful day and I had planned an early evening visit to capture various species as they settled down to roost. Of course, as I arrived it immediately clouded over and a very gusty wind blew up making it virtually impossible to get any photos. However, this wholly unsuccessful visit resulted in the only Chalkhill Blue shot I took all year.



*24.7.2018 – Small Skipper & Chalkhill Blue 'Top and Tailing' – St Catherines Hill nr Winchester*

**23.6.2018– 4.8.2018 Southwick** – Large and Small Skippers were as plentiful as ever at this, one of my favourite sites.



*4.8.2018 – Small Skipper – Southwick, Hampshire*



23.6.2018 – Female Large Skipper – Southwick, Hampshire



...this particular Thistle seems to have been really popular!



23.6.2018 – Male Large Skipper – Southwick, Hampshire

### Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 19-Jan-19 06:35 PM GMT

You may have only gotten one shot Paul but it's a cracker – almost Yin and Yang though I can't work out which is which 😊🍷🍷 The site does look interesting as there's quite a mix of habitat there with grasses, gorse and what looks like stony ground – any chance of Wall there?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: jackz432r

by David M, 21-Jan-19 07:58 PM GMT

Those habitat shots look to be good for both skippers AND Hairstreaks, Paul.

Don't be ashamed at how few images you've taken of certain species; every year I have a list of half a dozen or so where I 'must do better' the following year. Trouble is, I then largely ignore a different half dozen....

Never enough time to do justice to everything! 😞

## Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 03-Feb-19 05:09 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel & David for your comments 😊

### ERRATUM 😊

For anybody who who pays any attention to the content of my diary please note the following. I recently posted a photo of a tree near Lake Road Health Centre in Portsmouth. I confidently identified this tree as an Elm, it is in fact not an Elm tree at all 😞😞.



*Lake Road Portsmouth – I mistakenly identified this tree as Elm! IT IS NOT ELM*

### Recent Doings:

Thankfully I don't get caught out too often with my tree identification skills. Here are a couple more that I will be checking later in the year. I intend to report back on each one that has featured in my diary recently. These definitely are Elms!



The Red Admiral that had taken up residence in my garden has now gone. It spent 3 months amongst plastic foliage in a hanging basket and was joined for a month by a second Red Admiral.

Without anything else of note happening in my butterfly world the only other thing I should mention would be the weather. The snow of recent days down here has I am sure been good for the butterflies, but it caused havoc for me on my journey home from work on Friday. I left Fleet at about 4.15 pm and arrived back home in Hedge End just before 2am!! almost 10 hours later, this would normally be an hour drive! The thing that struck me most was the community spirit amongst members of the public in the Basingstoke area assisting stranded drivers, directing traffic and pushing stuck vehicles out of the way. Many thanks to them 😊





1.2.2019 – M3 Basingstoke 6.45pm– 2 and half hours into an epic journey. Stuck just before Junction 6 contemplating if I should come off the motorway



1.2.2019 – Basingstoke 11.06pm– Nearly 7hrs in. I had lost my mojo at this point and was wondering if I would actually make it home at all.

### Re: jackz432r

by David M, 07-Feb-19 07:07 PM GMT

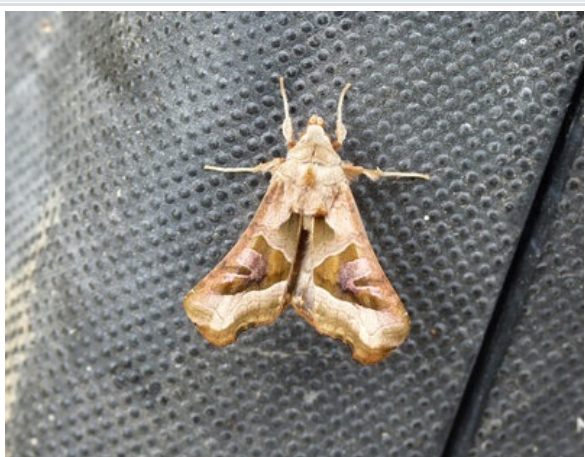
That's some journey, Paul! I saw it on the news and it looked awful in that area. Glad you managed to navigate through it in one piece!

Good luck with your further elm hunting in 2019. I wish I could find a few on the Gower Peninsula! 😊

### Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 25-Mar-19 11:23 PM GMT

For various reasons I was unable to capitalise on the good weather at the end of February. Though I did spot a couple of male Brimstone butterflies at home on the 24th and 25th of Feb.



After spending what seems like weeks out in the garage rebuilding my sons car engine, I decided I deserved a couple of hours fresh air. There was a good omen on Saturday when I opened the garage door to find a freshly emerged Angel Shades moth perched on my socket set inflating its wings! So yesterday I headed out to one of my favourite spots at Southwick in the hope of some butterflies. It was a good decision that has certainly got my butterfly year off to a good start. Brimstone, Peacock, Comma, Orange Tip and Small White were all on the wing. Despite this being my Red Admiral hotspot, disappointingly none were seen.





24.3.2019 - Comma - Southwick



24.3.2019 - Female Brimstone - Southwick



24.3.2019 - Male Brimstone - Southwick. One of 30+ individuals seen on Sunday



24.3.2019 – Male Small White – Southwick



24.3.2019 – Male Orange Tip – Southwick. This butterfly had me breaking into a light run in order to capture a photo. It only settled the once, in this very unphotogenic pose!



24.3.2019 – Peacock – Southwick

**Re: jackz432r**

by Wurzel, 25-Mar-19 11:59 PM GMT

Cricky Paul it looks like the butterflies were waiting for you 🤪🤪🤪 Good point about the OTs I need to dig out my running shoes and start warming-up ready 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: jackz432r**

by Goldie M, 27-Mar-19 01:03 PM GMT

WoW! an Orange Tip already 🍀 I can't get a Brimstone to land at present 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: jackz432r**

by David M, 28-Mar-19 09:08 AM GMT

You may have missed out on the balmy end to February, Paul, but the line up you've just posted sure provides compensation, especially the Orange Tip.

Looks like we now have double figure numbers of species out.

**Re: jackz432r**

by Paul Harfield, 08-Apr-19 10:57 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, Goldie & David for your comments 😊

**Sunday 7.4.2019 – Old Winchester Hill, Barton Meadows & In The Garden**

**Old Winchester Hill** – This visit was not intended as a butterfly watching excursion. An early 2 and a half hour walk with my brother starting and finishing at Old Winchester Hill gave me the opportunity afterwards of spotting some butterflies. It was still a little early, but Peacock and Brimstone were on the wing as well as my first Speckled Wood of the year 😊.

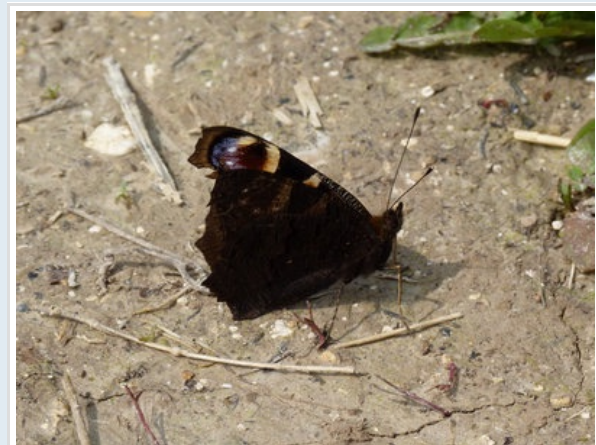


7.4.2019 – Speckled Wood – Old Winchester Hill



7.4.2019 – Brimstone – Old Winchester Hill

**Barton Meadows** – After spending an hour at Old Winchester Hill I made a quick dash over to Barton Meadows Nature Reserve at Winchester. Male Orange tip and Brimstone were in good supply as well as battling Peacocks and my first Small Tortoiseshells of the year 😊.



7.4.2019 – Peacock – Barton Meadows

**In The Garden** – Whilst packing away garden furniture towards the end of last year, I found a Speckled Wood Pupa. It was attached to the underside of a plastic garden chair which I carefully stored over the winter. I noticed a few days ago it was starting to change colour and on Saturday emergence looked imminent. On Sunday morning it had not yet emerged, but by the time I returned from finding my first Speckled Wood of the year it had unsurprisingly emerged and flown.



...and 6.4.2019 – a day before emergence

### Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 09-Apr-19 08:55 AM GMT

You did well with the Speckle Paul 🍷 I've found them to be really twitchy so far this year, they're 'pumped' having a go at anything that moves 😲  
Interesting to see the Speckle pupa, that's quite a change in a week 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: jackz432r

by David M, 10-Apr-19 11:49 AM GMT

Speckled Wood is one of the most beautiful pupae of all British species and that colour change you depict is quite striking.

Such a shame you missed out on the emergence but then again I don't expect you anticipated finding it when clearing away your garden furniture for the year!

### Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 16-Apr-19 11:33 PM GMT

Thanks David & Wurzel 😊

#### White-Letter Hairstreak & Elm – Window of Opportunity

There is a window in the year of a few weeks where flowering Elm becomes really easy to spot in the landscape. We are right in the middle of that window now. So if you feel inclined to find your own White-Letter Hairstreak colony, now is perhaps the best time to go looking for suitable Elm trees. At this time of year Elm trees will be somewhere between being in full flower or coming into leaf, many being covered in seed which is perhaps when the trees stand out the most against the rest of the landscape. Timing will of course vary according to location, species and also tree to tree. Wych Elm, particularly, that is in full seedbearing mode can be an almost luminous beacon in the landscape, sticking out like the proverbial 'sore thumb'. Hopefully some of the following recent images demonstrate this effectively.



Compton, West Sussex – 4.4.2019



*Headborne Worthy, Winchester – 6.4.2019...*



*...and for comparison the same location 8.7.2018*



*...and Elm seed from the same location*



*Alton – 6.5.2018. This was last year but it demonstrates how Elm (centre of frame) can stand out at the right time. Sadly all the trees in this shot have recently been cleared!*

One of the challenges I have set myself this year is to try and locate the origin of sporadic sightings of White-Letter Hairstreak at well known butterfly spots such as Noar Hill and Old Winchester Hill. I struck gold at Old Winchester Hill recently with a large stand of Wych Elm just outside the reserve and further flowering Elm close by within the reserve but well away from the recognised Butterfly hotspots. It will be interesting to see if this provides reliable sightings of the butterfly later in the year.



*Old Winchester Hill - 7.4.2019 - This clump of Wych Elm just outside the reserve may be the source of sporadic sightings of White-Letter Hairstreak here*

**Re: jackz432r**

by Pauline, 17-Apr-19 06:45 AM GMT

I shall watch with interest Paul as I, too, would like to know where the NH individuals originate from. If I find out before you do, you'll be the next to know 😊

**Re: jackz432r**

by Wurzel, 17-Apr-19 10:37 AM GMT

That's really interesting and useful information Paul - I'll keep my eyes open more especially as the Wilshire Branch is on a drive to plant resistant Elms at the moment 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: jackz432r**

by David M, 18-Apr-19 07:45 AM GMT

Thanks for the pointers regarding the flowering elms, Paul. I shall be keeping an eye out for them over this Easter weekend. They certainly DO stand out, as you say.

**Re: jackz432r**

by Paul Harfield, 27-Apr-19 10:27 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, David & Pauline for your comments 😊

**Monday 22.4.2019 Stephens Castle Down**

I felt I had earned a few hours in the company of butterflies so I went out in the hope of finding some spring beauties of the green and grizzled variety at one of my favourite spots. Having not made that many visits here during 2018 I was pleased to be back with the place to myself, just the way I like it. There has been much scrub clearance at this site in the last 2 years, some areas looking rather barren, but I am sure the benefits will be apparent in the long term.



*Holly Blue male and female*

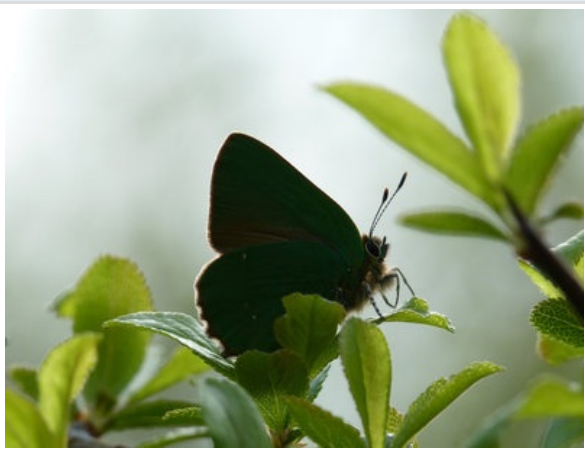


*Female Brimstone egg-laying*





Monday saw a complete change in the conditions of the previous few days. It was cloudy and cooler and to be honest things took a while to get going. Orange Tips and a few Peacocks were already on the wing when I arrived at 9.30, closely followed by a few Brimstone and the odd Holly Blue. I searched all the usual spots for Green Hairstreak without success. In frustration I decided to look at the farthest end of the reserve, somewhere I had not seen Green Hairstreak before. It was not long before I had my first Green Hairstreak encounter of the year 😊 together with my first 'camera strap caught on a bramble bush' moment of the year 😊. As I walked back to the main butterfly hotpot I added Small Tortoiseshell, Green Veined White and Speckled Wood to the tally as well as more Peacock and Brimstone action.



*First Green Hairstreak of the year...*



*...and probably the same individual in the same location later in the day*





*Speckled Wood*

Despite not being the only observer that failed to find any Duke Of Burgundy at this site last year, I was surprised and pleased to come across 3x pristine males, at least one exhibiting that distinctive, just emerged 'floppy flight'. One male in particular was very accommodating and I spent some time in close proximity as he flew between 2 or 3 favoured perches chasing off anything else that ventured too close. This was perhaps my most enjoyable moment of the day having been convinced last year that this small colony had been lost. For the moment at least they hang on.



*Duke Of Burgundy*



Further searching did not turn up any Grizzled or Dingy Skippers and no further Green Hairstreaks. Before I left I could not resist searching out that original Green Hairstreak which was still in the same location, the sun now in a completely different position giving some different lighting.

**Re: jackz432r**

by Wurzel, 28-Apr-19 03:31 PM GMT

Lovely shots Paul 📷📷 - that Brimstone is a bit of a contortionist 😄 It's great when you find a species still present at a site 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: jackz432r**

by David M, 28-Apr-19 04:56 PM GMT

Fabulous, Paul. I'm delighted you got your Dukes this year...and very attractive they are too!

Well done for capturing not only the ovipositing Brimstone but the Holly Blue as well. Try as I might, I have never yet got to see either of these species in the act of egg laying.

**Re: jackz432r**

by Pauline, 28-Apr-19 09:26 PM GMT

That's an interesting take on the egg-laying Brimstone Paul. I enjoy seeing something a bit different - unusual angle you've managed to capture.

**Re: jackz432r**

by ernie f, 01-May-19 09:16 AM GMT

Paul, great shots of spring butterflies. Also looking back into your PD a couple of weeks I was fascinated about what you wrote on Elms. I will keep an eye out in future.

**Re: jackz432r**

by Goldie M, 01-May-19 01:33 PM GMT

Love your Holly Blues Paul 📷📷 Wish I could see some 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: jackz432r**

by bugboy, 02-May-19 06:43 PM GMT

Those are some gorgeously fresh Dukes Paul 📷📷📷. I need to go find some for myself soon.

**Re: jackz432r**

by Paul Harfield, 07-May-19 10:54 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, David, Pauline, Ernie, Goldie and Bugboy for all those comments 😊

**White-Letter Hairstreak & Elm - NOW Is The Time To Look For Larvae**

The window of opportunity for easily locating Elms is rapidly closing. However, as one window closes a new one opens. NOW is a great time to be out looking for White-Letter Hairstreak larvae. Timing will, as mentioned before, vary from place to place and tree to tree, but in most places larvae will now be at their most conspicuous feeding on the leaves. The larvae are still very well camouflaged but once you get your eye in they are easier to locate. Often the leaf damage can be a giveaway but even this varies from place to place. If you can view leaves from underneath with the light above the larvae often stand out as a silhouette. Low branches (or a ladder 😊) is a key requirement when searching for larvae.

All of the larvae in the following reports were found between chest and just above head height and all were between 10mm and 15mm in length.

**Southwick 4.5.2019** - I visited my prime White-Letter Hairstreak site at Southwick yesterday to get my eye in. The low branch that provided much in the way of egg laying and larvae last year seems to be dead. It had eggs on it which have all hatched, but no flower or leaf buds are open. On other similar low branches nearby I was able to locate half a dozen larvae fairly easily. As mentioned previously these branches are not in full sun, they are in the understorey partially shaded by foliage above. Also the leaves here are distinctly more mature than in other locations.



*Southwick – Larvae showing leaf damage. Leaves in this location are distinctly tougher and more mature looking than those at Old Winchester Hill for instance. Feeding damage is subsequently subtly different in the two locations.*



*Southwick – Larva viewed from under the leaf. A handy way of spotting larvae that are just out of reach.*

**Old Winchester Hill (SU64182136) 5.5.2019** – With my eye now 'in' I ventured to a new site. I mentioned Old Winchester Hill a few posts ago and that was my destination today. Here, the seed is now brown and falling rather than green, but the trees are still quite prominent in the landscape due to the fresh leaf growth. As is often the case with a new site, more time and effort is required for smaller rewards, but I was pleased to locate 2 larvae in an hour.



*Old Winchester Hill - These trees still stand out in the landscape due to the bright green new leaf growth*



*Old Winchester Hill - Larva showing distinct leaf damage*



*Old Winchester Hill – View from above and below leaf cluster.*



**Whitchurch (SU45734773) 7.5.2019** – Today, whilst at work I was driving from Andover to Burghclere along the B3400 Andover Road. This is a route I have not travelled on before. I spotted a promising looking tree and was in a position to stop and investigate. Unbelievably, the first cluster of leaves I looked at had a White-Letter Hairstreak larva on it 😊. I could hardly believe my eyes. In fact I promptly walked along the road side and bashed my head on a road sign and dazed myself a bit more 😊😊. No research here or weeks of previous visits, just a 5 minute stop off on the spur of the moment.

### **Re: jackz432r**

by Wurzel, 07-May-19 11:06 PM GMT

Careful Paul your Whitter searching isn't supposed to be bad for your health 😊😊 I like your handy way of spotting larva without the need for a ladder 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: jackz432r**

by Pauline, 08-May-19 06:47 PM GMT

I think your research and findings has shown quite clearly Paul that the WLH is not just under recorded, it is MASSIVELY under recorded. I think you're also probably doing a fine job educating folk and I include myself in that. Thanks for the details you sent me recently. If I check it out I'll let you know. In the meantime keep up the good work. 😊

### **Re: jackz432r**

by David M, 09-May-19 09:33 AM GMT

Great tutorial, Paul. Very helpful. It's interesting to see the pattern of feeding and as you say, with elm leaves now unfurled, this is the best time to go looking.

### **Re: jackz432r**

by Paul Harfield, 12-May-19 11:03 PM GMT

Thanks all for your comments 😊

#### **Recent Doings**

**Old Winchester Hill 5.5.2019** – After having a result with the White-Letter Hairstreak larvae I spent a further hour soaking up the rest of what this site

had to offer. I notched up 4 season firsts in low numbers with several Grizzled and Dingy skippers as well as solitary Common Blue and Small Copper with a couple of delightful Green Hairstreaks for good measure.



5.5.2019 – Grizzled Skipper – Old Winchester Hill



5.5.2019 – Dingy Skipper – Old Winchester Hill



5.5.2019 – Common Blue – Old Winchester Hill



5.5.2019 - Small Copper - Old Winchester Hill



5.5.2019 - Green Hairstreak - Old Winchester Hill

**West Wood 11.5.2019** - I come here specifically for Pearl Bordered Fritillary. My visit this year was better timed than previously catching some fresher individuals than I have done in the past. The weather also was ideal for capturing this species, cloudy and cool with short spells of warm sunshine. This is not a well known site for this species, but gone are the days when previously I had the place to myself. Today there were at least 3 other observers. I counted at least 7 Pearl Bordered Fritillaries all of which seemed to be males.



11.5.2019 - Pearl Bordered Fritillary - West Wood



11.5.2019 – *Duke of Burgundy* – West Wood

The job of finding a Duke Of Burgundy, which also occupy the same area of regenerating woodland, was a little more challenging. After an hour and a half on site I was beginning to think I would not see one. Before that thought had even left my mind one appeared in front of me in almost exactly the same spot as in previous years. Also on the wing here several Grizzled Skippers, Speckled Wood and just as I was leaving the Brimstones had woken up with half a dozen males seen whilst walking back to the car.

**Re: jackz432r**

by Wurzel, 13-May-19 06:28 PM GMT

That is a cracking Duke – a great reward for all the hard searching – I swear that Butterflies have an innate telepathic capability 😊😄 I often find pouring a coffee or having a mouthful of my extra hot Lime Chilli Pickle has the same affect 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: jackz432r**

by David M, 13-May-19 11:31 PM GMT

**Paul Harfield wrote:**

...I come here specifically for Pearl Bordered Fritillary. My visit this year was better timed than previously catching some fresher individuals than I have done in the past. The weather also was ideal for capturing this species, cloudy and cool with short spells of warm sunshine.

Yes, Paul, cloudier, cooler conditions are better for this species. Their flight season coincides with quite a spectrum of potential weather, but hot sunny days are not ideal.

Congratulations for the Common Blue. They seem rather shy this year! 😊

**Re: jackz432r**

by Paul Harfield, 14-May-19 11:01 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel and David for the comments 😊

**More Recent Doings**

I recently 'rescued' a Garlic Mustard stem from a verge that gets routinely mowed. On close examination the rescued stem had surprisingly 11 Orange Tip eggs crammed onto its small flower head plus one further egg laid on the underside of a leaf several tiers down from the flowers. I had assumed



this egg was from a Green Veined White. All the eggs have now hatched. Unfortunately a spider unseen by me had managed to occupy the flower head and seems to have feasted on all the Orange Tip eggs/larvae as none seem to be present. However, the one hatched larva on the underside of the leaf seems NOT to be Green Veined or Small white 😊🤔



*What I thought was going to be a Green Veined White larva obviously isn't. Feeding damage is also visible close by.*

### **Re: jackz432r**

by Paul Harfield, 20-May-19 10:12 PM GMT

#### **White-Letter Hairstreak**

Whilst it is still possible to find actively feeding larvae, some will already be looking for a suitable place to pupate. The larvae will stop feeding, change colour and wander before settling in a suitable position. Over recent days I have encountered several in this pre-pupation stage and today a rescued larva has pupated. Conveniently these larvae have demonstrated a variety of different approaches to finding a 'suitable place':



*18.5.2019 Pitt Down - This larva has chosen the fork of a branch*





18.5.2019 Pitt Down – This larva has chosen the underside of a leaf but is otherwise exposed.



20.5.2019 – This rescued larva is newly pupated. it has loosely attached 2 leaves with silk to form a chamber in which to pupate.



**Re: jackz432r**

by Wurzel, 20-May-19 11:22 PM GMT

Interesting report Paul – I'm wondering which strategy will work best and what agents will do the testing 😊 The chamber is the most hidden but then birds could learn that there's a tasty morsel hidden away in between the leaves so it could almost be an advertisement 😊 Great work.

Have a goodun  
Wurzel

**Re: jackz432r**

by David M, 21-May-19 04:40 PM GMT

It really is a superb skill you have, Paul, being able to locate them at this stage. Thanks again for increasing our knowledge of this species.

**Re: jackz432r**

by Paul Harfield, 05-Jun-19 11:14 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments Wurzel & David 😊

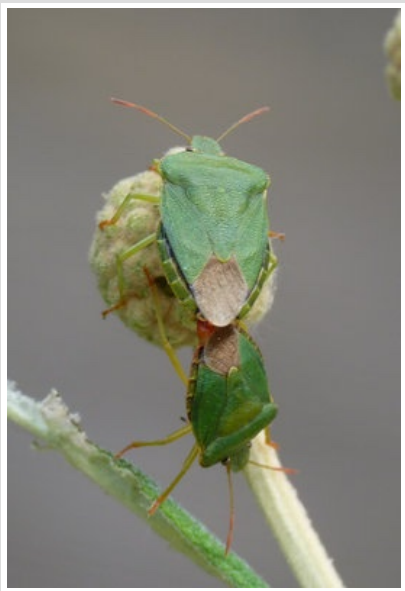
More recent doings..

### In The Garden

A significant event in my garden this year is that my *Buddleia globosa* has flowered for the first time. I have spent several years unknowingly pruning it in completely the wrong way 😊 and wondering why it never flowers. I now know what I should be doing and have been rewarded with a generous show 😊. It has also attracted the attention of several other admirers.



5.6.2019 – Tonight this bee seems to have fallen asleep whilst indulging in *globosa* nectar!



27.5.2019 – These amorous shield bugs spent several days gorging on the unopened flower buds  
**White-Letter Hairstreak**

I was recently invited to a private site to look for White-Letter Hairstreak larvae. On 25th May I accompanied Andrew Brookes (Hants & IOW BC species champion for the White-Letter Hairstreak) to the site where he had planted Elms of various types and cultivars 20 years ago (as trials for DED resistance). To date no evidence of the butterfly had previously been found at this site. I was initially doubtful of finding larvae due to the timing of our visit, I suggested we were perhaps a week too late. However, there was plenty of feeding damage evident on various trees particularly a White Elm (*Ulmus laevis*). After an hours searching I managed to locate a single White-Letter Hairstreak larva on a Japanese Elm (*Ulmus davidiana* var. *japonica*). This was a magical moment.



1.6.2019 – *Ulmus davidiana* var. *japonica* and 'columnella' just 2 of many varieties of Elm at a private site in Hampshire.



25.5.2019 – White-Letter Hairstreak larva on Japanese Elm (*Ulmus davidiana* var. *japonica*)

He then suggested we visit another site not too far away where further Elms had been planted 10yrs ago. Again White-Letter Hairstreak had not been recorded there thus far. This site is a rather more exposed location but I managed to locate a pupa on provenance Field Elm on this years growth. Unfortunately the pupa had been predated but nevertheless proving that the butterfly has reached both locations.



25.5.2019 – Predated White-Letter Hairstreak pupa

Meanwhile at home I patiently await the imminent emergence of White-Letter Hairstreak from x2 rescued larvae.



27.5.2019 – White-Letter Hairstreak pupa

### Re: jackz432r

by David M, 06-Jun-19 10:38 PM GMT

Great observations, Paul. The clock is now ticking for WLH emergence. I expect the first to be around the weekend after next.

### Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 08-Jun-19 05:26 PM GMT

**David M wrote:**

Great observations, Paul. The clock is now ticking for WLH emergence. I expect the first to be around the weekend after next.

Thanks David 😊 – Last year the earliest record down here in Hampshire was 2nd June and in 2017 it was 9th June I think. If I can find a gap in the weather I had my fingers crossed for some action this weekend. Nothing doing today though, it is all a bit wet, windy and unpredictable 😞.

Last year Pauline and I had some discussion about pupation habits of the White-Letter Hairstreak and the possibility that they do in fact pupate in leaf litter in the ground. This is contrary to most British references about the pupation of this species. I was recently shown this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdDNGF2HDr0> the most interesting bit is at the end.

Interestingly, it only refers to pupation on the ground for this species with no mention of leaves or twigs as a chosen position for pupation. It was recorded in southern France. Could this be something driven by climate/temperature ie the hotter it is the more likelihood that the larva will go to the ground to pupate? Any comments are welcome.

### Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 08-Jun-19 05:44 PM GMT

Hi Paul, what we need is irrefutable proof that they pupate in leaf litter (when not captive reared). I have been doing my bit and I know you have too. Great video which goes a long way to support our views. It is quite possible that the variation in choices of pupal location are part of a transitional phase which could be down to climate change or something else. I'll keep in touch tho it may now be a bit late for this year.

### Re: jackz432r

by David M, 09-Jun-19 06:29 PM GMT

**Paul Harfield wrote:**

..Last year Pauline and I had some discussion about pupation habits of the White-Letter Hairstreak and the possibility that they do in fact pupate in leaf litter in the ground. This is contrary to most British references about the pupation of this species. I was recently shown this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdDNGF2HDr0> the most interesting bit is at the end.

Interestingly, it only refers to pupation on the ground for this species with no mention of leaves or twigs as a chosen position for pupation. It was recorded in southern France. Could this be something driven by climate/temperature ie the hotter it is the more likelihood that the larva will go to the ground to pupate? Any comments are welcome.

Those VarWild films are as good as anything I've ever seen. Thanks for highlighting this one, Paul, as I hadn't hitherto seen it.

Like you say, the most interesting bit is near the end, when the butterfly emerges from the pupa within the leaf litter.

### Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 11-Jun-19 10:09 PM GMT

Sunday 9.6.2019 IBM/Lakeside Cosham

This site is always reliable at providing my earliest White-Letter Hairstreak sightings, but it has become less user friendly over the last few years. However, they have now mown/cleared a wide walkway through the grass and trees which has restored access to the best area. When I arrived, just after lunch, the sun was frustratingly hidden behind cloud despite half the sky being blue.



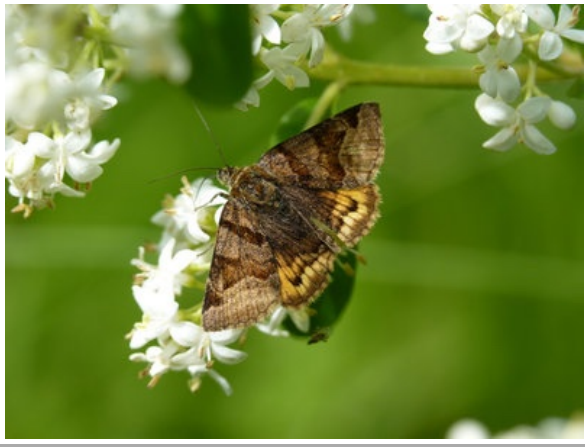
The first thing that caught my eye during the cloudy spell was my first Marbled White of the year. There was not much else going on but I had a feeling that my target was there just waiting for some sun. A few Meadow Browns stirred and a beautiful blue female Common Blue posed nicely as well as few other inhabitants.



*My first Marbled White of the year*



*Female Common Blue*



After waiting an hour and a half for the sun to reappear I was eventually rewarded with a single White-Letter Hairstreak 😊. This moment marks the beginning of an intense few weeks following this species around Hampshire.



*A distant shot of my target which did eventually appear during a period of prolonged sunshine*

**Re: jackz432r**

by Padfield, 11-Jun-19 10:36 PM GMT

What is the creature on the leaf below the adult hairstreak, Paul? It looks very like a *w-album* cat, though it seems to be on the upperside of the leaf.

Guy

### Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 12-Jun-19 11:09 PM GMT

A great find Paul 🍷 – is that the first in the UK this year? 😊 It's been a few years since I've been to Cosham – I've been keeping half an eye on the Bentley Whitters – if only I had more time I'd like to get there again 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 12-Jun-19 11:14 PM GMT

#### Padfield wrote:

What is the creature on the leaf below the adult hairstreak, Paul? It looks very like a *w-album* cat, though it seems to be on the upperside of the leaf.

Guy

Hi Guy

To be honest I had not noticed it, this was a long range and highly cropped shot. I would have thought it was unlikely to be a WLH larva, but it is possible I suppose. Or maybe a gall of some description or other leaf blemish, we will never know.

### Re: jackz432r

by peterc, 13-Jun-19 09:11 AM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

A great find Paul 🍷 – is that the first in the UK this year? 😊 It's been a few years since I've been to Cosham – I've been keeping half an eye on the Bentley Whitters – if only I had more time I'd like to get there again 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Hi Wurzel,

A White-letter was reported from Durant's Park, Enfield on Saturday 8 June and another one from Sussex on the same day.

ATB  
Peter

### Re: jackz432r

by David M, 15-Jun-19 06:45 AM GMT

Nice finds, Paul. The lack of sun probably helped to becalm that beautiful, fresh Marbled White you saw.

No doubt the White Letter Hairstreaks will build in numbers rather quickly over the next week or so.

### Re: jackz432r

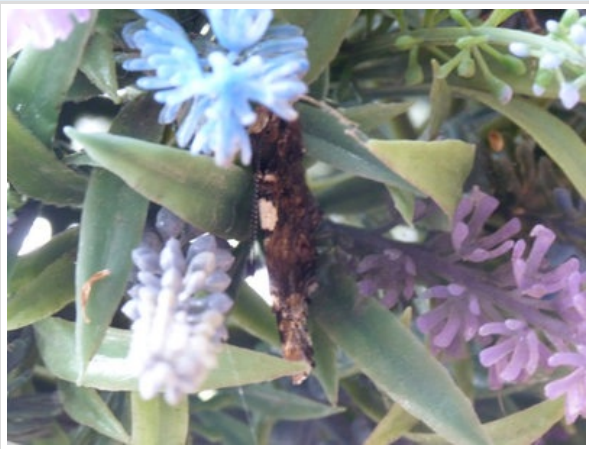
by Paul Harfield, 16-Nov-19 06:34 PM GMT

I can not believe it is 5 months since I last posted in my diary 😊 . I have a bit of catching up to do which should keep me going through the winter months 😊 😊

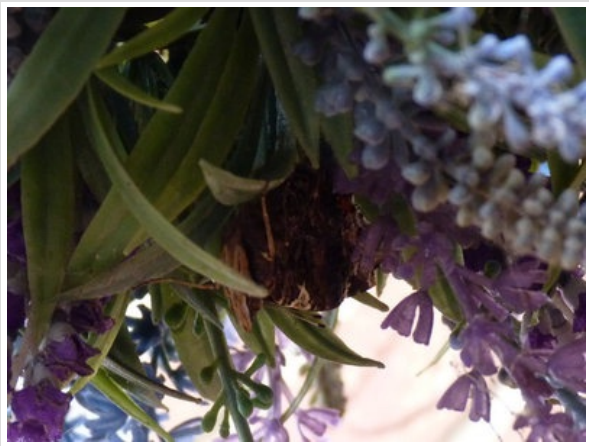
#### November 2019 – Deja vu in the garden

Some may remember during winter 2018 I found a couple of Red Admirals roosting for several months amongst the imitation plastic foliage of a hanging planter in my garden. That planter is still in exactly the same location, just outside my kitchen door. I again have Red Admirals in residence 😊





*Last Sunday I noticed there was again a Red Admiral in residence.*



*Today I noticed Red Admiral number 2 had arrived*

**Re: jackz432r**

by Wurzel, 17-Nov-19 06:27 PM GMT

After two years on the trot I think that you need to stop referring to it as an 'imitation planter' Paul and start calling it a Butterfly Hibernation Hotel 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: jackz432r**

by David M, 21-Nov-19 08:15 AM GMT

I can not believe it is 5 months since I last posted in my diary. I have a bit of catching up to do which should keep me going through the winter months...

I shall look forward to any updates, Paul.

Given your contributions in the past, I am sure what you have to share will be of significant interest.

## Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 28-Nov-19 12:00 AM GMT

Thanks David and Wurzel 😊

### White-Letter Hairstreak - Ova

The White-Letter Hairstreak ovum is perhaps one of the most distinctive in appearance of UK Lepidoptera. Here is some brief information on where to find them and how their appearance varies in different situations.

The White-Letter Hairstreak ovum is bright green when first laid (photo 1) becoming duller and less green with age. Ova are laid singly, but one occasionally finds groups of two or even three ova together (photo 2 & 3). They may even be stacked one on top of the other.



Photo 1 - 23.6.2018 - Ovum immediately after being laid on a terminal bud.



Photo 3 - 24.7.2018 - Three ova laid together on a terminal bud.

The White-Letter Hairstreak typically lays its ova either at the base of a terminal Elm bud (photo 4) or on the girdle scar (photo 5) at the beginning of the current years growth. The girdle scar is what is formed when last years terminal bud has grown out into the current years growth. Thus these two positions are effectively a year apart in the Life of an Elm tree. A hatched egg which at first glance appears to be on a girdle scar at the beginning of the current years growth is not an egg that has hatched early, but is in fact an egg laid in the previous year just below a terminal bud (no photo)



*Photo 5 - 4.2.2018 - Ovum laid on girdle scar.*

Eggs may occasionally be found in other positions. On a side bud (photo 6), adjacent to a side shoot (photo 7), on a leaf scar (photo 8).



*Photo 7 - 11.8.2019 - Ovum laid adjacent to a side shoot.*



*Photo 8 - 25.11.2019 - Ovum laid on last years leaf scar at the base of a side shoot also showing predation hole.*

A hatched ovum is indicated by a perfectly central exit hole (photo 9). An ovum with a hole which is not perfectly central is likely to have been predated (photo 10). I recently found 17 eggs on an un-named Elm cultivar known as FL506. Of these 17 eggs, 2 were healthy, but 13 were showing a predation hole. This is quite a high percentage and not something I have seen before in such high numbers. I understand that this high percentage of predation has been reported elsewhere this year. I have no idea what would cause such predation but I imagine it would be an invertebrate of some sort. Any suggestions are welcome. Sometimes an ovum may appear as if it has been smashed and may show just have fragments remaining. This is likely to be bird predation (photo 11)



Photo 11 - 20.10.2019 - Two ova laid on terminal bud, at least one showing possible bird predation.

**Re: jackz432r**

by Wurzel, 29-Nov-19 10:54 PM GMT

Fascinating stuff Paul, one day I hope to have the time to go and have a look for these - I'll have to bookmark this page so that I now what to look for 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: jackz432r**

by David M, 04-Dec-19 03:46 PM GMT

**Paul Harfield wrote:**

...The White-Letter Hairstreak typically lays its ova either at the base of a terminal Elm bud (photo 4) or on the girdle scar (photo 5) at the beginning of the current years growth..

Another excellent tutorial, Paul. I **did** manage to find a few more elm trees in my vicinity so when I am passing by them I will take a look for ova using your advice as a guide. Many thanks.