

Re: Maximus

by Neil Freeman, 01-Jan-19 06:01 PM GMT

Great photos of the Fieldfare, I never manage to get close to them.

Hope you have a great 2019 too and get to see everything you wish for.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 01-Jan-19 08:30 PM GMT

I concur with Neil – great photos of a very charismatic bird – a lot less shy than their smaller cousin the Redwings. 😊 If the Beast makes a return visit then we can expect a few more of these 😊 Have a cracking 2019 yourself Mike 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 01-Jan-19 09:13 PM GMT

Beautiful bird, Mike, and how kind of him to book in *chez toi* on his travels! 😊

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 24-Feb-19 06:08 PM GMT

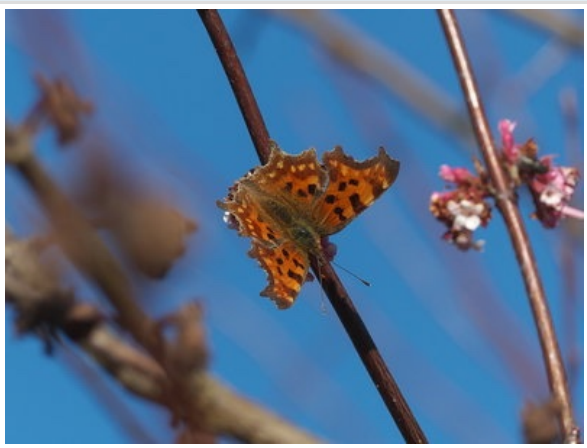
Thanks, Neil, Wurzel and David.

Underway at last

We spent couple of enjoyable hours today walking our local patch in the warm February sun. Our first sighting of 2019 was of a Brimstone, (followed by at least 6 others). As they weren't really stopping this was the best record shot I could manage.



Also seen were several Peacocks nectaring on Heather, and a lone Comma which had the Viburnum blossom, all to itself.





It's great to get out again, and seeing these beauties really made our day.

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 24-Feb-19 06:11 PM GMT

Those Peacocks don't appear to have suffered one bit from probably having been tucked up in the dark somewhere since July. Splendid insects!

Dave

Re: Maximus

by David M, 25-Feb-19 06:01 PM GMT

Great way to herald the new season, Mike. I know what you mean regarding Brimstones being constantly on the move though... 😡

You should have put a warning on that second Peacock image however – I had to reach for my sunglasses! 😊

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 25-Feb-19 08:09 PM GMT

Good to see you out of hibernation as well, Mike.
Lovely shots as always. Great Peacock images.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 25-Feb-19 10:16 PM GMT

Great shots, especially the Peacocks, still awaiting to find one of those. I don't think this site has ever been this busy so early in the year 😊

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 24-Mar-19 07:52 PM GMT

Thanks, Dave, David, Trevor and Bugboy for your comments 😊

A female Brimstone paused just long enough for a photo in our garden this afternoon.



Males were seen just passing through, both yesterday and today, probably looking for this female 😊 Two Peacocks were also seen spiralling upwards locked in combat.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 25-Mar-19 11:26 PM GMT

Cracking set of Peacock shots Mike 😊 And that female Brimstone is a great capture particularly at this time of year 🍀🍀 Fingers crossed the promised 'spring weather' continues...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 26-Mar-19 09:22 AM GMT

Nice image, Mike. If only the males were as co-operative!

It's always nice when they settle on blue flowers....usually I see them on primroses or dandelions where the effect isn't quite the same.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 31-Mar-19 05:42 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel, it looks like it may cool down a bit next week 😞

It was nice to see the Brimstone on the Grape Hyacinths, David, Bluebells would also be good.

Having been incapacitated by an evil bug over the last over the last few days, I have been unable to get out and make the most of the recent spell of warm weather.

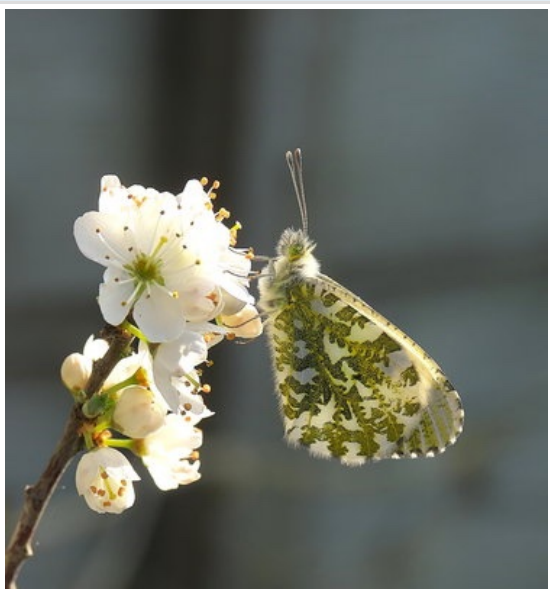
During this period however, on 29th March, one of the two Orange-tips which we 'rescued' as cats from our garden last June, decided that it was time to emerge (we had loads of cats on our Garlic Mustard, but most were predated) giving me some respite my malaise 😊



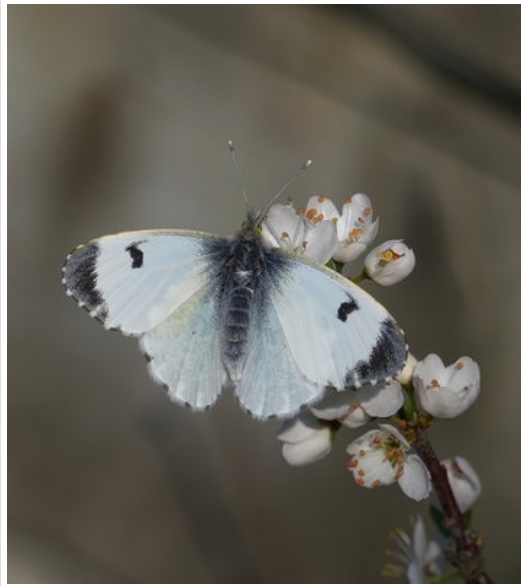
22 1/2 hours before emergence.



10 minutes after emergence.



Wings hardening, 26 mins after emergence.



Open wings just before taking flight, 40 mins after emergence.

She left it a bit late in the day emerging at 3.45pm, as I've found in that they tend to emerge in the morning. However she was lucky, as the sun was still warm enough for her to take flight, forty minutes after emerging.

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 31-Mar-19 06:39 PM GMT

Beautiful sequence Mike. When you have a bad bug, a nice bug can be good therapy!.

Get well soon,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 31-Mar-19 10:18 PM GMT

That is a fantastic sequence Mike 🤩👍 The only benefit of feeling under the weather 😞
"Thanks, Wurzel, it looks like it may cool down a bit next week 😞" Just in time for the Easter holiday 😞😞 Still tomorrow looks reasonable, hope you can get out 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 01-Apr-19 06:48 AM GMT

Beautiful images, Mike. It must have been thrilling to observe this and hopefully it will have helped your recovery from the 'evil bug'.

Re: Maximus

by Andrew555, 02-Apr-19 12:50 PM GMT

Beautiful, well done Mike. 😊 Get well soon.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 16-Apr-19 04:11 PM GMT

Thanks, Trevor, a nice way of putting it 😊

Thanks, Wurzel, I should keep quiet about the weather 😞 although it now looks like Easter may be ok 😊😊

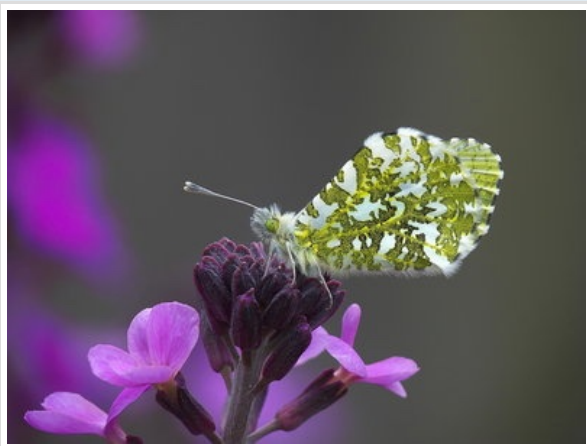
Thanks, David, I will never tire of seeing a butterfly emerge 😊

Thanks, Andrew 😊

The second of our reared Orange-tips really made my day when she emerged this morning, more than two weeks later than the first. As the morning was cool with light rain she 'roosted up' until it became warm enough, about ten minutes ago, for her to take flight.

Looks like she emerged at the right time, given the weather forecast for the next week 😊

Once her wings were inflated, she rocked from side to side for a short while. I guess this is to help distribute fluids equally throughout each wing before they harden, as I've seen this before.



Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-19 10:51 PM GMT

"Thanks, Wurzel, I should keep quiet about the weather 😊 although it now looks like Easter may be ok 😊😊"
I just checked the weather app – gales, downpours and temperatures just above freezing... 😊😊😊

Seriously though simply stunning shots 📸📸 The rocking back and forth seems to have done the trick as she's immaculate 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 17-Apr-19 06:41 AM GMT

Lovely images, Mike. I see she made for the bowles mauve once she was mobile.

Re: Maximus

by Andrew555, 17-Apr-19 01:34 PM GMT

She's a stunner Mike! 📸😊

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 14-May-19 09:25 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel, David and Andrew 😊

Noar Hill 13th May

Due to unforeseen family circumstances we have not felt like, or been able to, take any trips out in search of butterflies, until today. What better place to spend our thirtieth wedding anniversary than at Noar Hill, a really special site and one of our favourite places of all time. Conditions were not ideal, (are they ever), too hot and with a strong easterly breeze, but what the heck. We saw plenty of lovely butterfly species, which were quite difficult to photograph, as they were mostly keeping their wings closed, (particularly the Dukes), but we did manage a few half reasonable shots.



Tatty but nice.



Small Blue female.



Small Blue Male.



Male Common Blue.



Holly Blue ovipositing on Holly bud.



Holly Blue ovipositing on Dogwood.



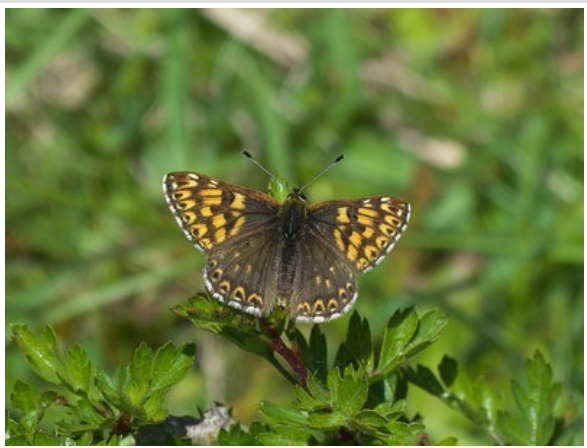
Green Hairstreak ovipositing on Dogwood.



Green Hairstreak ovipositing on Dogwood.



'New' Green Hairstreak.



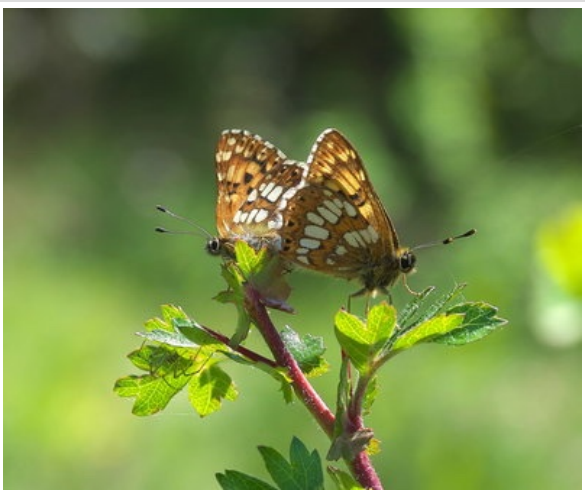
Male Duke.



Male Duke.



Female Duke.



Mating pair.



Dingy Skipper.



Dingy Skipper.



Male Orange-tip.

At the end of the day we headed home tired but happy and feeling re-connected with the natural world.

Species seen:-

Brimstone - loads - mix of male and female.

Small Blue - most we have ever seen at Noar, where's the Kidney Vetch?

Common Blue - several very new males.

Holly Blue - loads, plenty of females ovipositing.

Green Hairstreak - many ovipositing and some brand new examples.

Dukes – Numbers lower than in previous years but are still emerging.
Dingy Skipper – most we have seen at Noar.
Orange-tip – plenty of males/females flying through.
Small Heath – several seen.
Speckled Wood – one seen.
Comma – one seen.
Red Admiral – one seen.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 14-May-19 11:26 PM GMT

Fantastic shots from a fantastic sounding day Mike 😊 That first Small Blue shot is something else 🤩 stunning 😊👍👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 15-May-19 09:14 AM GMT

Mid to late Spring all in one posting!. I think I have to agree, the Small Blue is stunning.

Great stuff, Mike.
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by David M, 16-May-19 02:01 PM GMT

Given you experienced 'difficult' conditions for photography, you've done an excellent job, Mike, particularly with your female Small Blue, who is in a pose I've never seen captured before.

Nice range of species too. Looks like the dogwood was getting a peppering!

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 18-May-19 04:07 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel, Trevor and David 😊

Being unable to get out again since our trip to Noar Hill, I have had to be content with whatever I could find in our garden. I've been watching some Orange-tip eggs which were laid on some garlic mustard. This chap hatched first, ate his eggshell, then moved up the stem until he encountered an unhatched egg, which he also made short work of.



first instar, eating the other egg.

I kept tabs on him for almost two weeks, but not long after this photo was taken he disappeared, probably taken to feed a young Blue Tit in a nearby nest box.



Second instar.

Also from the garden a couple of firsts for me on the butterfly front. A Green-veined White looking for some honesty to deposit some eggs on, and a lovely fresh looking Large White nectaring on some bowles mauve.



Green-veined White.



Large White.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 18-May-19 04:36 PM GMT

Cracking shots Mike – especially the Large White 😊👍 – I've not been able to get a single shot so far this year – they don't seem to be as numerous as they were last year 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 19-May-19 08:47 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel, I agree that Large Whites don't seem to be around in any numbers yet.

An afternoon trip to a local site today, produced the following species, which were very active in the warm sunshine.



Our first Brown Argus of the year.



Some lovely Common Blues.



Some beautiful Green Hairstreaks.



Several Small Coppers.



Mother Shipton moth.



Several Roe deer, two females and a male.

Plenty of male Orange-tips also seen, searching for females.

Re: Maximus

by David M, 19-May-19 09:58 PM GMT

A lovely gallery there, Mike, but that Mother Shipton wins first prize! 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 19-May-19 10:37 PM GMT

A lovely selection Mike 😊 That Mother Shipton is cracking and the Greenstreaks are lush, I especially like the second one, it looks like a cheeky chappy with the little tuft of hair/quiff 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by kevling, 20-May-19 09:25 PM GMT

Mike,

Congrats on the photo of the Mother Shipton, it's a corker! I have never had one settle long enough for more than a record shot. This shot is so beautifully composed. A like the fresh common blue too.

Regards
Kev

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 23-May-19 08:24 AM GMT

Some really nice shots in your diary this year Mike. I particularly like the egg-laying ones (both Holly Blue and Green Hairstreak) which are not easy to achieve – and your Mother Shipton moth is way better than mine! Hope to see you around before too long.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 24-May-19 11:58 AM GMT

Thanks, David, Wurzel, Kev and Pauline 😊

Today we decided to venture further afield, so crossed over into Wiltshire, in search of some Marsh Fritillaries. We chose to visit today due to the predicted weather forecast, which turned out to be totally wrong as usual. Instead of the calm, beautifully posed butterflies we'd hoped for, they were all totally supercharged in the strong breeze and full sun. Getting some shots became a bit of a challenge, you only had to look at a butterfly and it took flight, it was one of 'those' days. By the end of the day we were hot, thirsty, sunburnt and totally knackered, but we managed to get some shots.

There were plenty of Marsh Fritillaries, both males and females and mating pairs, with some lovely fresh examples seen.





Several Duke of Burgundy.



Common and Adonis Blues, including a mating pair.





Grizzled Skippers including this fine individual.



Several Wall Browns – this was the best shot I could manage.



I also had my sights on a stunning Marsh Fritillary ab. but it was impossible to get a shot as it was so lively, and then it disappeared 😞 Although we searched for half an hour we didn't relocate it 😞 I got a very good look at it, and it appeared very similar to one I saw several years ago in Dorset.

Also seen were, Brown Argus, Green Hairstreak, mainly females egg laying, Dingy Skippers, a Peacock 🦚, Orange-tips and GV Whites.

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 24-May-19 03:04 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Max, you've certainly seen some great species, I'd be happy with seeing a few of those especially the Adonis 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

by David M, 24-May-19 08:48 PM GMT

That's a healthy return, Mike, so it was a productive day in spite of the wind.

Some of those marshies look quite dark, or is that the norm on that site?

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 25-May-19 04:46 PM GMT

Brilliant shots Mike 😊 Glad the Hill paid off even it if was as hard work 😊 Did you try the other side of the Hill? I know what you mean about the aberrant. Dave found one there and then despite quartering every part of the Hill I still missed it. 😞 😞

"Several Wall Browns – this was the best shot I could manage." And it's mighty fine, I'd be more than happy with one like that 😊 🍀 🍀

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 26-May-19 06:54 PM GMT

Thanks, Goldie, I hope you get to see some Adonis Blues soon 😊

They are quite dark, David, not sure if it's normal for that site, Wurzel would possibly know!

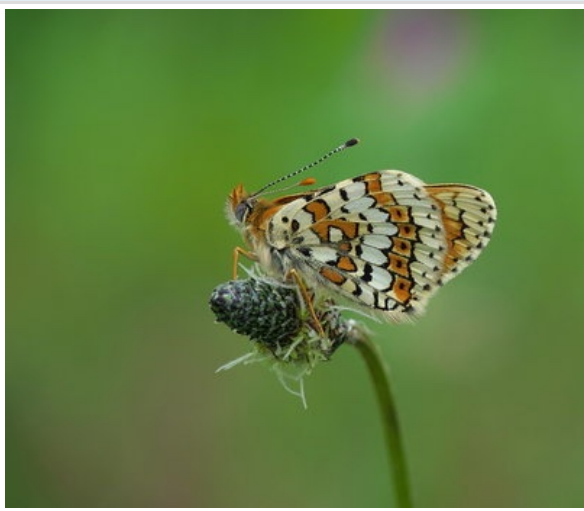
Thanks Wurzel 😊 😊 yes we tried both sides, not so many on the normal side, but I saw the ab. there 😊

We visited Wreclesham last Sunday hoping to see some Glanville Fritillaries, but unfortunately we saw none. We did however find some stunning butterflies of various other species.

We planned to make a return visit this Sunday, and then this morning I also saw Pauline's diary post, with the Glanvilles she saw there yesterday.

We were unable to get away early so we didn't arrive there until 1pm. The weather was not good, a very strong breeze and some heavy showers made the going tough. We spent an hour without seeing any butterflies at all and were on the verge of calling it quits, when it brightened up a bit and felt a tad warmer. All of a sudden we saw some Common Blues in flight, so we resumed our search with renewed optimism. Within ten minutes I'd found our first Glanville, a really fresh looking male. We then spent a very enjoyable hour, during which we found a total of six Glanvilles, all of which I think were males, all in mint condition, a very pleasing result.





We also saw some very fresh Common Blues, Brown Argus and Some worn Green Hairstreaks.



But the Glanvilles stole the show 😊



Re: Maximus

by millerd, 26-May-19 07:02 PM GMT

Simply lovely shots of the Glanvilles, Mike. Sometimes less than perfect weather helps make the butterflies pose more amenably! They certainly cooperated for you. 🤗🍷

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 26-May-19 08:16 PM GMT

That's great news Mike – 6 is the most I have seen recorded from outside of the fence for a few years and perhaps more to come 🤗

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 27-May-19 09:27 AM GMT

Fantastic shots Mike 🤗 I'm a bit confused about this 'right side of the fence' as when I visited back when it was heaving with Glannies there was only a tiny bit of ground on the right side of the fence – was I approaching the site from the wrong side? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 27-May-19 11:12 AM GMT

Great shots Mike, they look fantastic even with closed wings 🍷 Goldie 🤗

Re: Maximus

by David M, 27-May-19 07:59 PM GMT

So pleased you found the Glanvilles, Mike. They really are beautiful insects, especially the undersides, which you have framed perfectly in your fourth image.

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 28-May-19 08:20 PM GMT

Wonderful stuff with your latest few posts, Wiltshire's finest selection of late spring butterflies followed by some sublime Glanvilles, those undersides 🤗🍷

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 03-Jun-19 12:32 AM GMT

Thanks, Dave, Pauline, Wurzel, Goldie, David and Bugboy, for your comments 😊

First shot, shows the Wrecclisham main site as it is now, taken from the bridge.



A few shots of the twelve Orange-tip larvae we rescued from a footpath which was already being strimmed. Although we have had various instar stages on the garlic mustard together, none have been cannibalized by their siblings. In fact they appear to enjoy close contact with each other, something that we have witnessed before. We have however seen first instar cats eating unhatched eggs, but perhaps that's part of their survival instinct.





It's not as though they have finished feeding, prior to pupation, as they are clearly still feeding! Perhaps their cannibalistic tendencies are not always as bad as reported?

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 03-Jun-19 12:37 AM GMT

These are final instar larvae.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 03-Jun-19 08:59 PM GMT

I didn't check out the main site this weekend Mike – it looks alot different from what it was back in the glory days 🤔😞 Mind you the other field looks like it's safe from development for a while, fingers crossed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 03-Jun-19 10:54 PM GMT

Thanks for the evocative (if a little depressing) shot of Wrecclsham, Mike. It's 8 years since I went so I can't pinpoint which area I visited, but that certainly looks to be a destructive scar through the landscape. 😞

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 21-Jun-19 07:43 PM GMT

[Our local SSB site - 21st June.](#)

Although this appears to be a late site for SSB emergence, in 2018 we saw our first (a male) SSB at this site on 8th June. A later visit on 15th June, and we found that numbers were building nicely at 30+.

This year we visited on 10th June and drew a blank. On 17th we found only one male during our visit. Today, 21st June we found a total of six males and one female during our two hour visit. Let's hope that the warm weather forecast for next week encourages them to emerge in greater numbers!

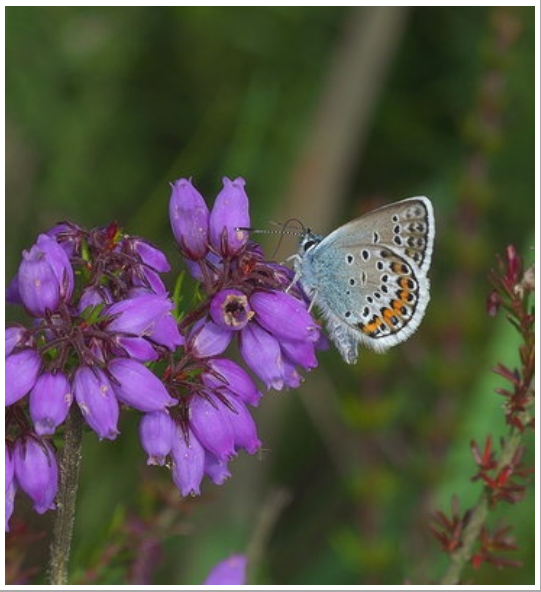
It was nice to get out again, as this season our butterfly trips have been put on the back burner.



The single male from 17th June.

21st June visit.







And the stunning female



Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 21-Jun-19 08:03 PM GMT

It takes more than a bit of skill to capture that oily sheen to the extent you have on that gorgeous female. You have made it look easy! 😊

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 21-Jun-19 11:01 PM GMT

Stunning female is an understatement, Mike!
Can only agree with Pauline's comment.

Great capture,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 22-Jun-19 08:25 PM GMT

That female is something else Mike 🤩😄👍👍 Also interesting to see the dark markings on the hind wing of the male, shot number 5 😊
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 22-Jun-19 08:35 PM GMT

That really is an incredible shot of that female, she can't be more than a few hours old! 🤩😄

Re: Maximus

by David M, 23-Jun-19 05:09 PM GMT

Very nice, Mike, especially that female which has a lustrous glow to it. 😊

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 24-Jun-19 08:30 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel, Bugboy and David 😊

I finally got to see some painted ladies, I didn't go looking but took my camera, just in case, and it paid off. There were perhaps half a dozen, with most if not all being females.





Nectaring on bramble blossom.

They appeared quite faded, and had probably travelled some distance with their precious cargo of eggs.

There was also a fresh looking Small Tortoiseshell with them, the first I've seen for some time.





Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 24-Jun-19 11:04 PM GMT

The Painted Ladies that I saw over the weekend were in a similar if not worse state Mike, but still lovely to see 😊 – hopefully these are just the vanguard – fingers crossed 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 25-Jun-19 08:57 PM GMT

I've just caught up with your incredible female Silver-studded Blue, Mike. For me, that is the most impressive image I've seen posted this year – of any species. Extraordinary. 🍷😊

Painted Ladies are arriving in numbers now, but all do seem quite worn as yours are – and they do seem to be predominantly females. This bodes well for a home-grown generation at around the end of August. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Maximus

by David M, 26-Jun-19 10:38 PM GMT

Looks like there will be many more Painted Ladies in the near future, Mike. Hold onto your hat!!

Nice, fresh Tortoiseshells there – is that verbena that they are nectaring on?

Re: Maximus

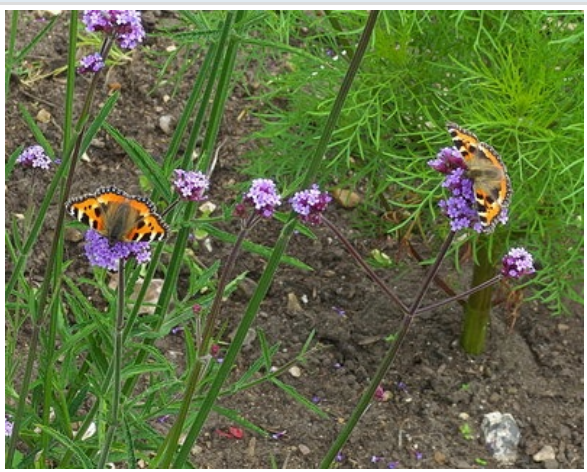
by Maximus, 28-Jun-19 09:13 PM GMT

I'm sure they are just the vanguard, Wurzel 😊 and that we have a real treat in store for us at a later date 😊

Thanks, Dave, glad you like the SSB, she was rather stunning, I've never seen one quite as good as her before 😊

I can't wait, David, bring on those Painted Ladies 😊 and yes that's verbena the Small Torts are nectaring on, as are these.

Another visit to the Painted Lady location, but this time it was some recently emerged Small Tortoiseshells that stole the show, what really stunning insects they are. It would be really tragic if we lost these beautiful butterflies, they're a joy to behold 😊





Not a pairing, as we had hoped for.

We also saw this rather lovely, dusky individual..



Also seen, our first Meadow Brown and a rather travel weary Painted Lady..





Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 29-Jun-19 08:06 PM GMT

Fabulous shots of the Small Torts Mike 🤔👍 There seem to be a good few about at the moment, fingers crossed their numbers keep on growing 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 30-Jun-19 01:01 AM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel, I hope so too 😊

White-letter Hairstreaks

We finally decided to make the long trek around the M25 to (hopefully) see some White-letter Hairstreaks up close and personal, for the first time ever.

On arrival at Hadleigh the wind was much stonger than the forecast 20mph, it was not much short of a gale force easterly 😞 After parking in the station car park we made our way along the footpath towards the country park. It took all of five minutes to spot our first WLH which was sitting on a bramble leaf, which was unfortunately being blown all over the place by the strong gusty wind. This turned out to be the pattern for the day and what should have been easy shots of WLH posing perfectly, were ruined by the poxy wind. 😞

The problem with photographing Hairstreaks when nectaring, is that they constantly pirouette on the nectar source, allowing few square-on photo opportunities, which is extra impossible when the plant (they are nectaring on) is being blown violently to the left and right by as much as a foot!

Having said all that, by persevering we did manage to get some reasonable shots, which we were very pleased with. Here's a few from the many taken.









This female was so fresh, her wings were not yet fully hardened.



Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 30-Jun-19 06:00 AM GMT

I smiled in empathy when I read this post Mike as you have described perfectly my frustration with the PH at Browndown. Under such circumstances you did incredibly well to get such lovely shots.

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 30-Jun-19 06:07 AM GMT

Lovely as those White Letters are, it's your Small Torts. that steal the show. Who would have said that 10 years ago!.

A sterling effort with both Species. 😊
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 30-Jun-19 09:05 AM GMT

Great photos, Mike – it's difficult not to take loads of shots of that particular colony of butterflies even when conditions aren't problematic! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 30-Jun-19 10:20 PM GMT

Absolutely fantastic Whitters Mike 😊👍👍 The twofer is a cracking shot and easily enters the "I wish I'd taken that" category 😊👍👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 01-Jul-19 12:54 PM GMT

Thanks, Pauline, I'm glad you smiled 😊 as you know just how frustrating it is 😊

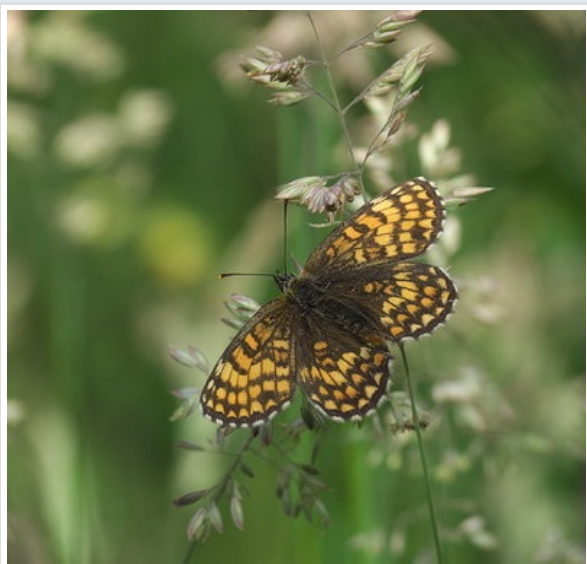
Thanks ,Trevor, it's sad how things have changed in just ten years 😞

Thanks, Dave, yes it's difficult to hold back with the shots, when there are so many WLH 😊

Thanks,Wurzel, it was nice to see them at close range for the first time 😊

Having satisfied ourselves with WLH 😊 we decided to head for Hockley Woods, which are quite close to Hadleigh, as we had not seen Heath Fritillaries for some years.

We didn't arrive until 4pm, but as we walked along the woodland ride, we soon found loads of Heath Fritillaries enjoying the late afternoon sun.

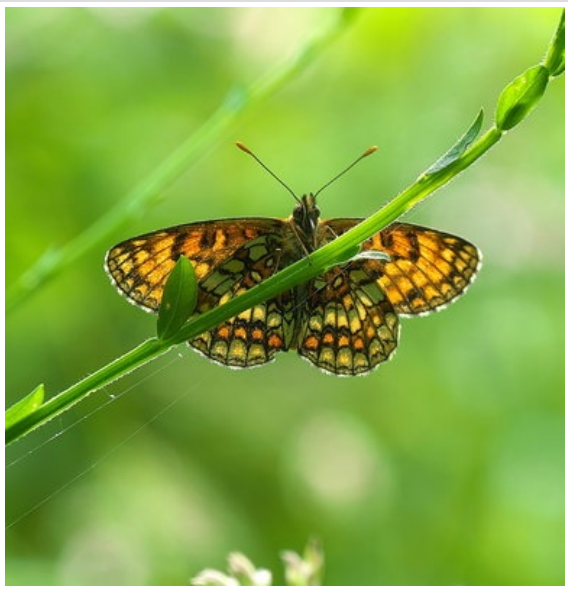




Heath Fritillary on its larval food plant – Common Cow-wheat.



A nice dark individual.



Woodland ride in Hockley Woods..



We found loads of Cow-wheat along the woodland edges.

We had a really great day out in Essex.

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 01-Jul-19 01:05 PM GMT

Some lovely shots recently Max, I'm glad my WLH didn't disappoint, im currently sat on a train heading that way again, just time to fit in another dose of them before His Purple Majesty takes over!

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 01-Jul-19 10:39 PM GMT

Cracking shots again Mike 😊👍 The Heath Frit has to give the Marsh Frit a run for it's money when it comes to the title of 'most variable' butterfly 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 02-Jul-19 05:38 PM GMT

Looks like you had an excellent trip, Mike. Heath Frits have got more attention than usual this year and it's nice to see so many images of them posted on here.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 02-Jul-19 11:38 PM GMT

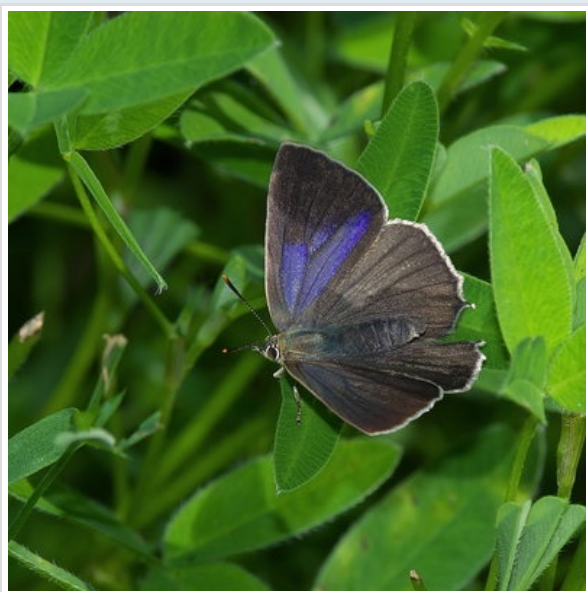
Cheers, Bugboy, I hope you did alright.

Thanks, Wurzel, yes Heath Frits do appear to be very variable 😊

Today we saw no purple on these wings 😞



But we did on these 😊



The PE which didn't stay long, was found by Mark and Dave, nice to meet you both again.

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 02-Jul-19 11:48 PM GMT

I think I expressed my 🍷🍷 with regard to that Purple Hairstreak at the time, Mike... 😊 That's a smashing shot of a gleaming new female.

Yes, very good to see you again – it was a bit of a UKB gathering down in the woods today. My shots of that Emperor have just a hint of purplishness on them, but not a lot.

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-19 06:52 PM GMT

I agree totally with Dave – that is a cracking Purp shot 😊🍷🍷
I reckon there is the slightest bit of purple on the third shot Mike 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 03-Jul-19 10:02 PM GMT

I'm getting a bit behind now Mike but enjoyed seeing that Heath Frit hanging from the grass stem. More recently, nice shots of both PE and PH. Reckon I

missed you by a day?

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 06-Jul-19 09:12 PM GMT

Thanks, Dave, glad your shots of the Emperor showed a bit of purple 😊

Thanks, Wurzel 😊 maybe just the slightest hint of purple 😊

Thank you, Pauline, it's a shame we missed you, it would be good to catch up 😊

During our visit to Chiddingfold, in addition to the PE and PH we also saw the following butterflies.



White Admiral.



SW Fritillary, with bracken shadows, which is why it opened it's wings.



Large Skipper, male.



Large Skipper, female.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 06-Jul-19 11:08 PM GMT

and Small Tortoiseshell, which we are seeing everywhere at the moment!



and an acrobatic Large Skipper.



Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 07-Jul-19 04:55 PM GMT

"Thanks, Wurzel 😊 maybe just the slightest hint of purple 😊" Still more Purple than I've seen this year 🤔🇮🇪 I got caught out by very inaccurate weather reports all weekend - 🤔 I just hope that next weekend is fair 😊 Cracking White Admiral shot - they can be right pains as even when they do land they seem to pirouette round and round 🤔🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 07-Jul-19 09:36 PM GMT

Maximus wrote:
and Small Tortoiseshell, which we are seeing everywhere at the moment!

Very pleasing to hear that, Mike. Hopefully they'll pick up here in south Wales after the most dismal spring I can remember for them.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 11-Jul-19 08:50 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel, maybe just a hint of purple 😊

I hope that Small Tortoiseshells buck the trend, David 😊

Today I found two Puss moth larvae, I've not seen them before (apart from in Paulines PD 😊) what an amazing larva they are. This is a first for me, and makes you realize what non-moth-ers (like me) are missing out on 🤔

They were on a willow, about three feet in height, and in the shots you can see where they have been feeding on the willow leaves.



This was the second individual, it seems to have a blacker 'saddle', not sure what instar they both are?



Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 11-Jul-19 09:06 PM GMT

Well spotted Mike. Despite their size they blend in really well don't they. My guess would be that they are final instar – their colour can vary between individuals. They are fascinating creatures aren't they and very photogenic. Did you know that they can squirt formic acid as a defence mechanism. The pupa they construct is also incredible. They chew up bark which becomes rock hard and invisible as it matches its background perfectly. I'd be interested to know where you found them.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 12-Jul-19 10:55 AM GMT

Hi Pauline, yes they are amazing creatures and they're also such large cats! We found them on a friend's allotment, she was thrilled, as she plants flowers among her vegetables with insects in mind. We recently found some large Mullion moth larvae on her mullion, but I didn't have my camera with me that time 😊

Interesting that you mention their formic acid defence mechanism, and the incredible pupa. I've also seen photos of their flagellae extended when they are alarmed.

Time for us to consider a moth trap – it would probably open up a whole new world of insects.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 12-Jul-19 12:21 PM GMT

Fantastic find Mike 🤩👍 Really interesting to see how the brown band when seen from the side appears almost to divide the caterpillar up into two smaller green ones? 😊 Cryptic camo?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 12-Jul-19 01:45 PM GMT

Thanks for that Mike. I have seen the eggs all over (much easier to spot) – Bramshott, Browndown, Chiddingfold, Abbots Wood etc. It's amazing more larvae are not seen but despite their size (can be as thick as a man's finger), they blend in well. If you get a moth trap Mike you'll never have time for anything else 😊 However, there are some amazing moth larvae out there (esp Hawk moths) as you have discovered 😊

Re: Maximus

by David M, 13-Jul-19 06:43 AM GMT

Great find, Mike. These are particularly attractive creatures.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 25-Jul-19 12:03 AM GMT

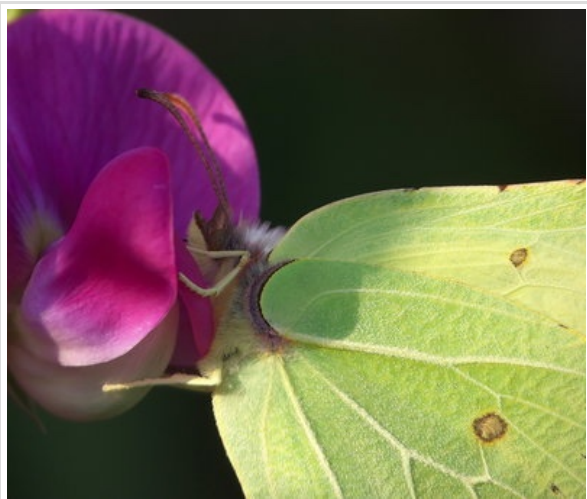
Thanks, Wurzel, Pauline and David 😊

We've not been able to make any butterfly trips lately 😞 but over the last few days the garden has provided us with plenty of visiting butterflies.

Several Meadow Browns, Gatekeeper, Painted Lady, Holly Blue, Small Skipper, Red Admiral, Large Whites, Small Whites, Peacocks and a single Brimstone. The only shots taken however were of the following..



Small Skipper, only the second we've recorded in our garden.



A brand new female Brimstone.



Small White.





A brand new female Peacock.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 25-Jul-19 10:03 AM GMT

Hope things are okay with you Mike 😊 at least the garden has offered some cahcne of getting a butterfly fix – the Small White take off shot is absolutely brilliant 🤩👍👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 26-Jul-19 10:22 PM GMT

Beautiful shot of the airborne Small White, Mike. Hope you are able to get out and about again very shortly.

Re: Maximus

by Neil Freeman, 28-Jul-19 10:40 AM GMT

Maximus wrote:

...Time for us to consider a moth trap – it would probably open up a whole new world of insects...

It would indeed Mike...but it is a slippery slope 😊😞

Once you succumb to the dark side, you will be amazed at what is about in your garden that you were previously unaware of.

When I started running a trap in my garden I promised myself that I would stick to the larger(macro) moths but I soon got sucked into trying to identify the micros as well...and then there are a variety of other insects that turn up.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 03-Aug-19 12:13 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel, things are not too bad with us at at the moment 😊

The White in flight was a fluke shot, David 😊 We got out yesterday which was very enjoyable.

One day, Neil, we will probably succumb to the dark side 😊

First Gatekeeper and Painted Lady in our garden this morning.



Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 03-Aug-19 05:56 PM GMT

Lovely shots Max, looks like the Painted Lady is spreading her wings all over now 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 07-Aug-19 02:24 PM GMT

Thanks, Goldie, the Painted Lady certainly is becoming widespread now 😊

MH Down 2nd August

My sister was staying with us for a few days and wanted to take a trip to MH Down, so off we went, our first trip out for a while. I had looked at the forecast before we went, which promised light cloud in the afternoon, but we arrived in full sunshine and 25 degree temps with a fair breeze.

Upon entering the site the first butterfly we encountered was, not surprisingly, a Painted Lady, which proved difficult to approach and was very lively.



There were quite a few across the site.

Walking along the footpath we found a group of Brimstones, both male and female, busy nectaring in preparation for hibernation. Being so preoccupied they allowed a close approach.



I was lining up for a shot of a female nectaring on a Scabious flower, when another settled on the same flowerhead.



There were plenty of Chalkhill Blues around, both male and female, but they were very lively in the hot conditions. There were also a few very fresh second brood Common Blues and Brown Argus.



Chalkhill Blue Male.



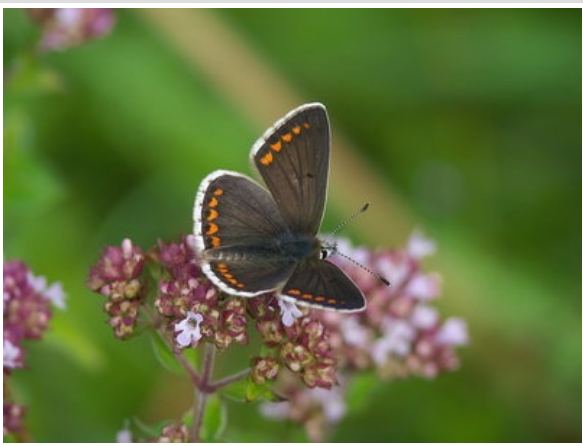
Chalkhill Blue Female.



Common Blue male.



Common Blue male.



And a couple of Small Blues, including this female ovipositing on Kidney Vetch.



We saw a few fresh Peacocks and a single Red Admiral, which appeared to have had a hard life. No Small Torts were seen.



This Meadow Brown was posing nicely with it's wings open.



We also found two Clouted Yellows, our first of the year, nectaring on Knapweed flowers. As usual they didn't spend long on each flowerhead and were very touchy, so it was a case of trying to second-guess which would be the next one they landed on.



It was a nice afternoon out at a lovely site that we've not visited for some time.



Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 07-Aug-19 06:20 PM GMT

That 2 for 1 Brimstone shot was a good catch and your Meadow Brown is rather unusual, I don't think I've ever seen one with an extra spot on the forewings like that.

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 07-Aug-19 07:23 PM GMT

Great shots of that vibrant yellow, Clouded Yellow, Mike, It looks very fresh, possibly home grown. This species has taken my season into November!

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 07-Aug-19 08:16 PM GMT

Great shots of the Clouded Yellow Mike, 🍷🍷 I can only keep repeating the usual in my garden, I'd swap you some for a Clouded yellow 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-19 08:09 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Mike – especially the "burst out of the screen' Cloudy and the 'excessa' Meadow Brown 🍷 – I didn't think that they showed the extra spots like Hedgies, looks like I better start counting spots on this species as well now 🤔😄😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 09-Aug-19 04:54 PM GMT

I didn't notice the extra spot until I saw your comment, Bugboy, well spotted 😊😄 Perhaps I'd better start looking a bit closer at Meadow Browns from now on 😊

Thanks, Trevor, yes I remember how CY's extended your season last year 😊

Thanks, Goldie, I'd swap you a Clouded Yellow if I could 😊

Thanks, Wurzel, nice to see you back 😊 From now on I'm also going to start counting the spots on Meadow Browns 😊

4th August

A trip to Noar Hill today looking for Brown Hairstreaks, but despite a careful search of the site, we found none. However we did find enough other species to keep us occupied.

Only a few years ago the Hemp Agrimony would be covered with nectaring Peacocks, Red Admirals, Small Tortoiseshells and Commas 🤔 But at least there were several Peacocks and Red Admirals to be seen on this occasion. Some lovely fresh Painted Ladies did help to make up for the lack of the other species.

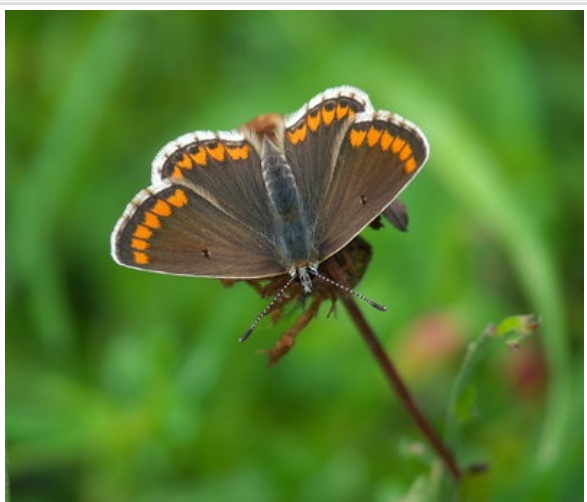




There were plenty of Brimstones however.



Second brood Common Blue and Brown Argus did not appear as plentiful as in previous years, although several fresh examples of each were seen.



A lovely fresh female Brown Argus.



This Common Blue was carrying a couple of Trombidium Breei mites.

The real surprise was finding this male Chalkhill Blue, the first that I've ever seen at Noar, it would be interesting to know where he originated from.





Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 09-Aug-19 05:03 PM GMT

Hey, Mike, I saw that Chalkhill earlier this week. I thought I was imagining things! I didn't get a shot as it flew into thick vegetation and as I only had shorts on and have already taken 4 ticks off me this week Really glad you got that shot. How d'you think it got there?

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 09-Aug-19 05:18 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, i'm not sure where the nearest Chalkhill Blue site to Noar Hill is!

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 09-Aug-19 07:54 PM GMT

Cracking shots of the Painted Ladies Mike 😊 The Brostreaks don't seem to be playing ball yet this year, there's still hope though, last year I was still seeing females in good nick on 25th August – fingers crossed 🤞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 10-Aug-19 11:40 AM GMT

Nice find with the Chalkhill, Mike. Lovely, vibrant Clouded Yellows in your earlier post too. 😊

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 14-Aug-19 07:57 PM GMT

I'm very envious of the Clouded Yellows, Mike. 😊 They look pretty fresh too. Fingers crossed a few more turn up later towards the end of the summer. Chalkhills do range out a bit, but it only seems to be the more obvious males. Females would probably go unnoticed. Noar Hill is chalk of course so as long as there is horseshoe vetch, colonisation is possible.

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 22-Aug-19 07:28 PM GMT

Thanks,Wurzel, the Brostreaks are definitely not playing ball 🙄 but you're right, there is still hope 😊

The Chalkhill was unexpected, David, as were the Clouded Yellows 😊

It was just right time right place, Dave, for the CY's, they'll probably be around well into November 😊😊 There may be some horseshoe vetch on the south side of Noar, near the stone circle.

21 st August

Another trip to Noar today, to look for that 'needle in a haystack' the Brown Hairstreak. We scoured the site looking in all the usually reliable places, but

once again we drew a blank. They really do appear to be a bit thin on the ground this year! We moved on to another area and I went off to look in a side pit while Cathy looked elsewhere. Having no luck, I retraced my steps until I found Cathy again. When I got closer she quietly called me over as she had found a Brown Hairstreak nectaring on some hemp agrimony. When I joined her I could see the beautiful fresh female which she had found.





She was reluctant to open her wings, and then only to this degree!

The BH was very easy going, but it was not easy to get a good shot as firstly the wind was blowing the flower all over the place, and also she had her head buried deep in the blooms most of the time. She stayed nectaring for at least an hour, giving some other enthusiasts a chance to get some shots. The site was very quiet on the butterfly front, which was rather surprising given the wealth of nectar sources! During our search we found plenty of Brimstones nectaring, in the usual place.



This one appeared to have some extra underwing markings, something I've not noticed before.

We also found a few Common Blues(male and female), Small Heaths, Brown Argus, Small and Large Whites and a couple of Red Admirals and Peacocks. Nice finally catching up with you P.





Re: Maximus

by trevor, 22-Aug-19 07:40 PM GMT

Lovely Brown Hairstreak, Mike. You are right they do seem rather scarce this year. I've only seen two so far this season.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 22-Aug-19 08:37 PM GMT

That is a lovely Brostreak Mike 🍷🍷 At Shipton they've been in reasonable numbers – slightly less than usual but they're just not coming down as much as they have done in previous years and you have to really put the legwork in to get something 😊 Hopefully it was something to do with last seasons weather and they'll bounce back next year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 24-Aug-19 11:56 AM GMT

Nice find with the Brown Hairstreak, Mike. They DO appear to be about in fewer numbers this year. Not quite sure why that might be.

Great that you saw plenty of Brimstones too. I see loads in spring here in south Wales but they're not a common sight in late summer. 😊

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 24-Aug-19 02:19 PM GMT

A terrific Brown Hairstreak, Mike. 😊 I've never had much luck for them at Noar Hill in any season (only one butterfly in several years of looking) so that was a brilliant find. Brand spanking new, too. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

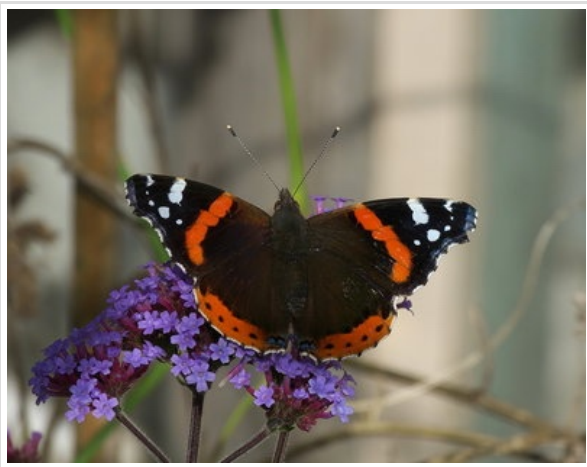
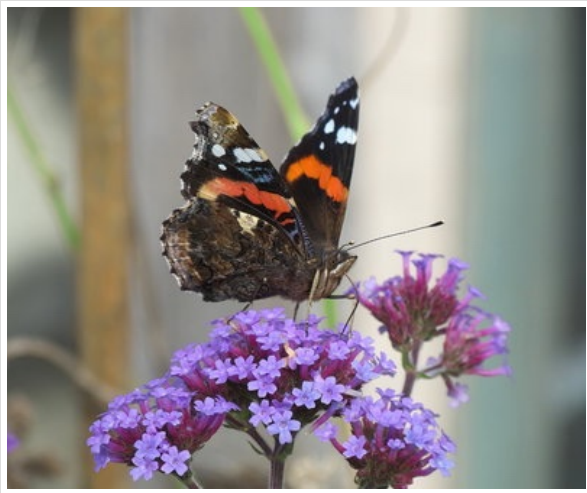
Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 19-Oct-19 07:46 PM GMT

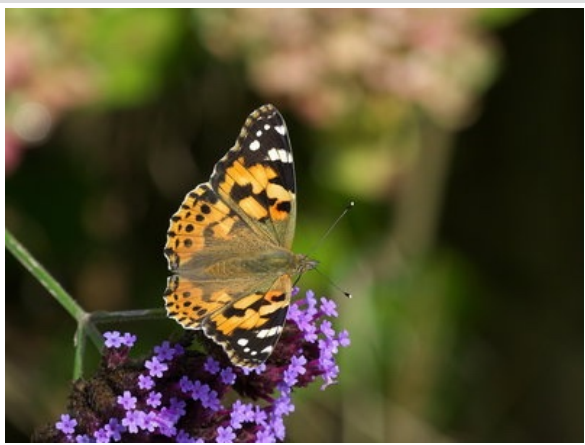
A belated thanks, chaps 😊

This morning when my wife shouted up the stairs, "there's a Red Admiral in the garden", I was straight out of my sickbed and down the stairs like the proverbial rat up a drainpipe, grabbing a camera on the way out into the muddy quagmire that used to be our garden.

Sure enough this beauty was busy taking nectar from the verbena, making my effort of getting out there very worthwhile.



A couple of weeks ago I found this Painted Lady in our front garden, also nectaring on verbena, between the heavy showers on that day. She stayed feeding and resting for a while before finally disappearing – to the south I hope!



I also saw a male and female Brimstone in the garden on the same day, but alas no photos!

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 19-Oct-19 08:31 PM GMT

Cracking set of shots Mike – I can see why that Red Admiral had you racing out of your sick bed – cracking looking butterfly as was the Painted Lady 😊
Hope you an get to leave the sick bed soon 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 21-Oct-19 08:47 PM GMT

Nice Red Admiral, Mike – enough to make you feel better all on its own I should think. 😊 The Painted Lady was a lovely individual as well.

All the best to you – I hope you are properly up and about before the season finally comes to an end.

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 22-Oct-19 07:51 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel and Dave 😊 I've had a very bad bout of the flu which has lasted for almost three weeks 😊 Can't have a flu jab as I get very bad reaction to it 😊

Lovely sunny day and I found two Red Admirals bushwacking each other in our front garden. Managed to get a shot of one basking in an unusual place.



Also saw a Large White which didn't stop, first one for ages.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 23-Oct-19 08:51 PM GMT

Hope you're on the mend Mike. Cracking shots – I like it when butterflies pose on something a little different – it seems to make them even more attractive 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by David M, 24-Oct-19 08:47 PM GMT

Seems like there is collective suffering on UKB right now – you, Trevor and ernie f have all been laid low lately.

Glad to know you were able to get up to see the Red Admiral. Hopefully it provided a temporary lift.

Here's wishing you well, Mike. Three weeks is a long time to be affected by flu'. 😞

Re: Maximus

by Neil Freeman, 25-Oct-19 07:48 PM GMT

Sorry to hear that you have been ill Mike, hope you are on the mend now.

Cracking Red Admirals and Painted Ladies, does me good to see them and I haven't been ill 😊

Cheers,

Neil.