

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 01-Jan-19 02:53 PM GMT

Dave, I've thoroughly enjoyed reading your resumé of the year this last few days, but those last couple of postings from the Highlands were as wonderful as they were unexpected.

Midges aside, that part of the UK is incomparable in late spring when the sun is out and temperatures rise. The scenery and just the general 'wildness' are things that more people need to connect with.

The McSkippers are mint too. What a joy!

Re: Buchan Boy

by trevor, 01-Jan-19 03:42 PM GMT

10 points for your wonderful Chequered Skipper shots. I've never seen one, but if the Northhamptonshire release is successful it will save a long journey.

Trevor.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Neil Freeman, 01-Jan-19 05:57 PM GMT

Some great reports, especially the last two from Scotland and congratulations on the Chequered Skippers 😊

I was up there a couple of years ago and stayed in Fort William, I wasn't aware of South Shian at the time but if I make the trip again it certainly looks to be worth a visit.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 01-Jan-19 08:33 PM GMT

A fantastic set of posts Buchan and those Chequered Skippers 😊 I can only look on in envy and drool at the prospect of seeing those – I think they'll be one of my 'retirement' species (so only only 26 or so years to go then 😞) 🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧 Have a brill 2019 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 02-Jan-19 04:04 PM GMT

trevor wrote:

...but if the Northhamptonshire release is successful it will save a long journey.

It **will**, but you'd miss out on some of the greatest scenery the UK has to offer. It's truly wonderful to see them up in Scotland in such unspoiled settings.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Maximus, 02-Jan-19 05:17 PM GMT

A great set of recent posts, Dave, and in particular the Scottish one. Congrats on the Chequered Skippers, it's great to see a new species for the first time 😊

We visited Scotland in 2013, from 30th May to 4th June and found our first ever Chequered Skippers at Glasdrum Wood. (It doesn't seem that long ago). We visited other sites further north first (Loch Arkaig and Glen Loy) but drew a blank at both of these. We decided to visit Shian Wood near the end of our stay, hoping (like you) to find some Marsh Frits, but unlike yourself, we saw none. We also didn't see any Chequered Skippers at Shian, perhaps they had a late emergence in 2013.

The other interesting thing is that we had mainly good weather, (apart from the day we were at Glasdrum), but during the five days we spent in Scotland we didn't encounter a single Midge! I wonder if it was a late year for Midges too?

Mike.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 05-Jan-19 02:10 PM GMT

Thanks my fellow butterfly people, I just got very lucky to be honest, really I just knew there were small accounts of Chequered Skippers here but never

expected the sheer frequency of encounters, this day surprised me further.

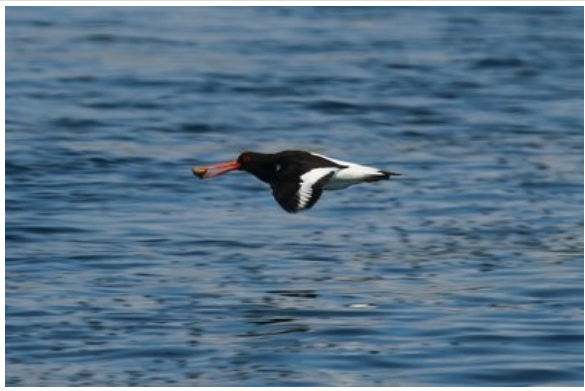
26th–30th May 2018

South Shian, Lorn, Western Highlands

When the west coast of Scotland is like this, weather wise, its really difficult to think of another place, probably in the world, I'd rather be. Just love it up here and thoughts of when I can retire and get up here oh so much continually plague my mind. 😊

I spent the morning on a Seal watching trip out of Oban, not too many Seals but plenty of other stuff to see.

Oyster catcher with limpet!



Oban Oystercatcher
Lazy Days



Oban Seal
Just amazing



Oban

Back up to the reserve for the afternoon and I thought I'd go and have a good look around quite a bit outside of the reserve boundary's. I left the reserve and just marched South West across moorland before coming to a low lying area of grass and heather with small runs of willows and birch's. Still hoping for Marshies, but to my surprise more Skippers...this was quite away from the wooded reserve and has changed my assumptions of the habitat requirements of this butterfly. Or maybe the sunny weather draws them out into other areas, not sure (one to study during retirement!)



South Shian open grassland



South Shian Chequered Skipper

I spent this glorious afternoon just milling around here with the Skippers, upwards of 20 adults here and opportunities to get the shots were numerous.



South Shian Chequered Skipper

Looking South over Ardmurkish Bay towards Mull, this is Marsh Fritillary habitat no doubt but at the time I was here it was the Chequered's domain.



South Shian

Difficult to explain how wonderful these few days here were with what seems like a very healthy population of skippers and I'll be back again and again. This year I intend to get up here for Marsh Fritillaries but on the Mull Of Kintyre, hope I get more days like these, with them. Crawley to Shian and back and a little bit of driving around, but not much, 1304 miles....ouch

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 05-Jan-19 04:39 PM GMT

2-3rd June 2018

Mount Caburn,nr Lewes,West Sussex

Back to my local stomping ground and the beginning of the rather long dry spell that culminated in a marvelous summer. A couple of days to check in on the Burnt tip orchid colony here,always fascinates me how small they actually are. They were also probably about a week to 10 days past their prime.



Caburn Burnt tip Orchid

Also a good showing of Fragrant Orchids with a rather delightful all white version.



Caburn Fragrant Orchid

A few Adonis Blues around and all rather fresh.



Caburn Adonis Blue Female

There is a Small Blue colony here but failed to locate any this year.



Caburn Bottom

Remember watching the sunset from the Hill-fort at the top with a couple of Painted Lady's and Red Admirals in that perpetual game of winding each other up!



Caburn Painted Lady



Caburn Red Admiral

Worth noting the Meadow Browns starting to put in an appearance.



Caburn Meadow Brown

A few Small Coppers



Caburn Small Copper

But the Male Adonis's were beginning to steal the show, handsome devils 😊



Caburn Adonis Blue Male

This view across to Beddingham Hill would become yellower and yellower as this summer went along, but for now various shades of green won the day.



Caburn to Beddingham

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 05-Jan-19 09:38 PM GMT

More discipline required with my diary, catching up in mid-winter just sends me into melancholia (is that a word)... 😊

6-9th June 2018

Ware Cliffs, Lyme Regis, Devon/Dorset

I always thought the colonies of Wood Whites along the Dorset/Devon coast here were particularly interesting, I'd been to the Branscombe cliffs about 20 years ago and seen them there but that was before my butterfly infatuation took hold. Sure we've got them up here in Surrey, but on the cliffs? All that wind buffeting them around, they never look like the strongest of fliers....

And as a bonus, one of the really rare Tiger Beetles is also found here in exactly the same habitat... well close enough. Time to go and have a look.

Also noted from previous readings is that this colony of Wood Whites is moving into Dorset with the colony on the county boundary. I do have a very precise GPS but still couldn't work out exactly where the boundary is! Anyways it's helped Dorset's Wood Whites records because that county's colonies are now foundering on the precipice of extinction.. all good, not really...

I remember noting records of sometimes vast amounts of Wood Whites here and always thought that that needs to be seen.

Off I trundled, camping at a small farm just outside of Lyme I was able to walk to the cliffs.

The weather, although warm, was murky and sea misty and I knew I needed sun to lift the Woodies.

I did walk the undercliff to Seaton from here and having walked it several times in the past a good opportunity, whilst the weather was dank, to walk it again was seen, so I did.



Lyme to Seaton Undercliff path

Quite an oppressive walk, its pretty much 8 miles of this, much like a long walk through deciduous woodland anywhere, but quite distinct in that once committed you have to finish it or turn back, no way off half way through and therefore not many people. And when you pop out on the Seaton end, Orchids arrive.



Undercliff Butterfly Orchid



Undercliff Spotted Orchid
That was that day, no butterflies.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 05-Jan-19 10:29 PM GMT

6-9th June 2018

Ware Cliffs, Lyme Regis, Devon/Dorset

The habitat here is rather ephemeral,always changing,always moving,and trying to get around presents its own set of challenges.You do need to have spent time as a mountain goat to avoid the crevices and be very nimble footed.And also much of it is simply inaccessible so actually monitoring a butterfly colony here,I would imagine, be very difficult.



Ware cliffs habitat

However,one rule of thumb,wait for the sun and see what pops up,luckily i did get that two hours of sun and the Wood Whites obliged. Only counted maybe 6, but more than enough to make this trip worthwhile.



Ware Cliffs Wood White



Ware Cliffs Wood White

And back to that Tiger Beetle,it hangs around the moist flushes that seep out of cliffs at various points along the coast,I did find it here on this day.Difficult to photograph but delightful to see.



Cicindella germanica



Cicindella germanica

Also worth noting were the Large Skippers



Ware Cliffs Large Skipper



Ware Cliffs Large Skippers

And this particularly approachable Lady who would almost let her touch her so was her passion for sugar.



Ware Cliffs Painted Lady



Ware Cliffs Painted Lady

Another bonus was when leaving Lyme, on a roadside verge, this bunch of Scarlet Tigers strutting their stuff, never seen anything like this, probably upwards of 20 of them enjoying this summers evening.



Lyme Scarlet Tiger

And a rather strange slow shutter speed shot that I quite liked.



Lyme Scarlet Tiger
Good trip that, loads of Tigers.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 06-Jan-19 06:10 PM GMT

Fantastic set of reports recently Buchan - I'm just about to comment on one and then another one appears 😊 So Chequered Skippers 🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧
Stunning Orchids 🇬🇧🇬🇧🇬🇧 And the best to my biased self obviously were the Wood Whites. I remember reading that they were in various parts of Dorset but that was a good few years back and scanning through the reports on the County Branch website I've missed seeing this species so to know that the Lyme Crew are still there is a bonus...now I just need to work out which colony is closer, Botany Bay or Lyme 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 12-Jan-19 12:47 PM GMT

You certainly packed a lot in last year, Dave, and the variety of both habitat and wildlife is a feast for the eyes.

I'm intrigued by your Wood Whites, as that is a site I haven't seen them reported from before...and then there are those glorious orchids! The Scarlet Tiger rounds things off in a riot of colour too!

Re: Buchan Boy

by Goldie M, 12-Jan-19 01:59 PM GMT

Lovely Butterflies BB, and I love the Wood Whites and didn't know they were to be found in Dorset, that news makes me put Dorset on the map for this year 🇬🇧🇬🇧 Goldie 😊

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 12-Jan-19 07:31 PM GMT

Thanks all, Dorset Butterflies link to the distribution in that county of the Wood White

<https://www.dorsetbutterflies.com/recording/atlas/species/atlas-wood-white.html>

Its rather depressing to be honest but that 10+ red blob in the super duper south-western of the county is that Ware Cliffs colony, right on the border.

There is a fabulous report from someone on it as well, which gave me the inspiration to go have a look, but where that was fails me. The report, which I think was from spring 2015/16 maybe said that there were 40+ and that they were flitting along the vegetation that joins the beach. If I can find it I'll stick it up.

16th June 2018

Hinkley Point, Somerset

I did not go to Somerset to look at a power station!, let me get that straight. But the girl and me had been given a pressie to stay at a rather bizarre cottage in the village of Nether Stowey. So it was up to Bridgewater Bay to watch the birdlife for a couple of days, Shelducks really, that spook when within one mile! Good fun nonetheless.



Bridgewater Bay Shelducks



Bridgewater Bay Shelducks

My weird fascination with distinctly ugly buildings took hold and a closer look at the power station was needed, so wandered along the coast to it, and just as you're about in the shadow of it you get these little pockets of meadows (clearly maintained to offset the guilt of the massive humming box behind them). And they were rammed with Pyramidal orchids, a delight.



Hinkley Point Pyramidal Orchid



Hinkley Point Pyramidal Orchid
And a rather lovely Female Common Blue



Hinkley Point Common Blue
And a big humming box,with another one being built behind it....gotta keep those lights on!



Lovely hmmmmmm

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 12-Jan-19 07:41 PM GMT

Back a bit and this half-dead Hornet turned up in my back garden,the scream from my wife told me something was not quite right...



Bewbush, Crawley, Hornet

More on Hornets a bit later, but this one was photographed and jam-jarred up to the woods where I hope he/she met a peaceful end.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 12-Jan-19 08:38 PM GMT

Just North-East of my town (Crawley, Sussex) along a seldom used footpath by the airport, there's this bit of land that the farmer never touches, because it tightens to a tiny aperture, that can't get machinery through. It's always left to go and grow to its own potential in the summer months and being flanked by woodland from the South and West it can get incredibly hot, but I've been watching this little piece of land for years. Almost a little study of my own, didn't Gilbert White say that someone that studies a small area with absolute dedication can offer far more to the knowledge of nature than the wanderer of many places?, something like that!

8th July 2018

Gatwick Meadow

Looks like this, just a wealden clay meadow, may have been farmed once, probably no more than an acre, nothing special but it's quite alive.



Gatwick Meadow

It's held my love because it contains a colony of Common Green Grasshoppers and despite their name, they are getting increasingly difficult to locate around this part of Sussex. Not sure why.



Gatwick Meadow Common Green Grasshopper

It's a good place to test camera skills, with the Large Whites on this day. A bank of knapweed always has them oblivious to me being around. Backlit?



Gatwick Meadow Large White
Frontlit with a bit of negative exposure control?



Gatwick Meadow Large White
Frontlit with a lot of negative exposure control?



Gatwick Meadow Large White
Always love the contrast between the purple and the white.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 12-Jan-19 08:49 PM GMT

15th July 2018

[Gatwick Meadow](#)

Got odd here today, never seen a Marbled White here so it was a complete surprise to see this utterly shattered individual trying to get around.



Gatwick Meadow Marbled White

How it arrived and where from, not sure but grateful for the movement of this species.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 12-Jan-19 09:22 PM GMT

Same meadow again, different day.

22nd July 2018

Gatwick Meadow

Common Blues now enter the theatre in good numbers.



Gatwick Meadow Common Blue

Meadow Browns, competition for the sugar.



Gatwick Meadow Meadow Brown

This was odd as well, a male Brown Hairstreak in the grass, in the dewy shade, there is blackthorn here but not this side of the meadow. My only Brown Hairstreak of the year.



Gatwick Meadow Brown Hairstreak



Gatwick Meadow Brown Hairstreak
My meadow 😊



Gatwick Meadow Meadow Brown

I'd started to notice good amounts of Silver washed fritillaries starting to patrol as well, but getting photographs was another story...

Re: Buchan Boy

by trevor, 13-Jan-19 09:36 PM GMT

Brilliant shots of that male Brown Hairstreak, two of the best I've seen.

Well done,
Trevor.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Goldie M, 14-Jan-19 09:31 AM GMT

Hi! BB, I don't think you need another shot of a BHS, what you've taken shots is superb 🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 14-Jan-19 08:27 PM GMT

I think from the look of it Buchan you used all your Brown Hairstreak luck up with that shot - it's in mint condish and what with the hot weather open

wing shots were at a premium this year 🤔👍👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 14-Jan-19 09:15 PM GMT

Those are fabulous (and rarely seen) images of mint fresh male Brown Hairstreak, Dave. I have to give you 9.9/10 for these.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Andrew555, 18-Jan-19 02:11 PM GMT

Some fantastic sights and shots in your reports Dave. Especially the Chequered Skippers and Brown Hairstreak. 🤔👍👍

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 01-Feb-19 03:50 PM GMT

A few non butterfly related things through July in my neck of the woods.

July 2018

Crawley surrounds, West sussex

Firstly a Red Kite wandering around, very close to the North Western conurbation of my town, and it is a conurbation these days! I think this may have been a wandering youngster, amazing to see though... Wealden Sussex with Red Kites, I hope many more "wander" over this way. I never see Buzzards get spooked but this Eagle, almost, scared the local Buzzard population, and everything else, a moment.



Ifield, Crawley, Red Kite

We'll have Parakeets here soon as well, spreading south out of London.

And our local streams and culverts are now full of these American crayfish, incredibly weird creatures. They were bred around here and are now in all the local streams, some are huge as well. Probably doing immense damage to the local ecology. hmmm



Furnace Green, Crawley, American Signal Crayfish



Furnace Green, Crawley, American Signal Crayfish 2

I also managed to locate a Hornets nest at a site near Newdigate, scary BIG wasps, I've never met anyone who's been stung by one these. If there's anyone out there that's been stung by a Hornet please tell me how bad the pain is, intrigued I am. 😊
Best way I figured was to stand a way off and have a big lens.



Newdigate photographing Hornets



Newdigate Hornet



Newdigate Hornet 2

Last summer was hot and on a dreary February day after snow Ardingly Reservoir in Summertime reminds me of Southern England's beauty at that time of year.



Ardingly Res July 2018



Ardingly Comma

Cool, actually nearly 32 degrees that day.....about 3 today.
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 01-Feb-19 04:24 PM GMT

Newdigate old brickworks always beguiles me, been coming here since I was a kid, mainly to fish the lakes, but recently, last 20 years, it's been left to nature since industrial activities ceased. The Brown Hairstreak colony is the main draw but I seemed to miss them this year...but other stuff is here

July 2018

Newdigate Brickworks, Surrey

White-legged Damselflies used to be so rare, find them everywhere around here now.



Newdigate White Legged Damselfly

And some Brown Argus's, which actually was a first for me here.



Newdigate Old Brickworks Brown Argus



Newdigate Old Brickworks Brown Argus 2
Chase the Brimstones...hehe



Newdigate Old Brickworks Brimstone
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 01-Feb-19 04:39 PM GMT

Back to my Gatwick meadow and a check on the Common Blues

July 2018

Summer



Gatwick Meadow Common Blue



Gatwick Meadow Common Blue 2

Takes me back.

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 02-Feb-19 03:07 PM GMT

Those American Crayfish are a right pain – they out-compete the slightly smaller and more timid native Crayfish 😊 – the best thing to do with them is pick up up by the bucket load and have a Barbie 😊
Lovely sequence of shots Dave 😊 – my favourite has to be the Brown Argus tip-toeing across from one Dandelion to the next 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 02-Feb-19 08:50 PM GMT

Ha,American Signal Crayfish=Barbie,probably need to purge them through for a quite a while first in fresh water,the streams they in habit around here arn't your lovely chalk steams...yuck I reckon,but if foraging for food becomes a necessity,top of my list!

Anyways,my love of Orthoptera is well documented and this year held some good stuff for me.
And the odd Arachnid.

Work was becoming heavy and my butterfly antics were quickly diminishing.

Late Summer 2018

Southern Oak Bush crickets have established themselves in Southern Britain over the last decade and the long hot summer seemed to bring,these normally arboreal crickets,into lower foliage ie gardens,cars etc 😊

Its mad to think that when I was a kid and my interest in Crickets and Grasshoppers was set,we had and always had the same amount of species in this country since books were written!,then in the last 20 years we have had some incredible expansions of previously rare Orthoptera and several new species added to the Fauna book of Britain.Three new confirmed breeding species in the last 20 years and that equates to a 10% rise in known species in this country,remarkable.Somethings going on.....Southern Oak Bush crickets being one of the new species in the last few years.



Crawley, West Sussex, Southern Oak bush cricket.

Wingless and unable to spread on the wind, clearly using other means to move across from the continent, but it's likely they were here before but unable to breed, now are fully able to breed and conditions are right for it to colonise. I guess it will never be able to be known if it has an impact on our native Oak Bush cricket and hopefully they can co-habit together. Also the native Oak Bush cricket came down from the trees in late summer, found both species a lot last year in August.



Crawley, West Sussex, Oak bush cricket.

And Wasp spiders are everywhere these days, used to be so rare. I counted over 200 webs at Rye harbour in August, just amazing, my friend got a photo of one trussing up a Grey bush cricket, and that is a reasonably strong and big cricket. Probably quite a major dent in the insect predator world.



Newdigate, Surrey, Wasp Spider

Got a bit arty with a female Speckled Bush cricket, always luck involved in finding these, they do not stridulate, they do however sun bathe, so inspection of nettle and bramble thickets on sunny August mornings and evenings can yield dividends.



Bewbush, Crawley, Speckled Bush cricket

And one of the jewels of aberrations in the Grasshopper world is finding a Rufous rufous Grasshopper, and although its more purple than rufous it certainly roles off the tongue better. And this coloration is normally only found in the more Western colonies of Dorset and Devon, so to find one in a Kentish colony, actually made my year, and may well be the first colour variant of this species in Kent, somethings going on. Rufous's are diagnostically notable by their white tipped clubbed antenna. Easy distinguishing feature.



Folketsone Warren, Kent, Rufous Grasshopper

Summer was nearly done and I had to work, still struggled to locate any Brown Hairstreaks at my Surrey colony, last year, 2017, had been incredible.

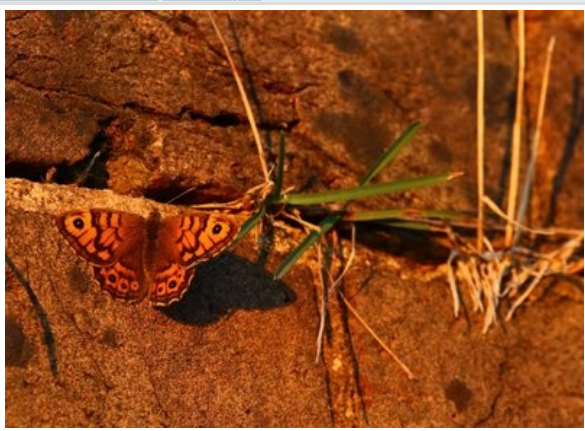
Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 02-Feb-19 09:24 PM GMT

That was my year as work took more, almost, than I could give 😊

But then right at the end of the insect season I went down to Devils Dyke to watch the sunset before the clocks went back... just to sit there and watch the sun go down as you do. And low and behold a Wall Brown fluttering around, couldn't actually believe it, it wasn't warm and that night it almost frosted. So I don't think this one had much fun, and caught in all the lovely sunset orange against that weird derelict brick building there, for anyone that knows Sussex.

19th October 2018, Devils Dyke



Devils Dyke, Sussex, Wall Brown



Devils Dyke and South Downs

That was that really, pretty much a cool year for the targeted species, Chequered's in Scotland and Wood Whites in Dorset but my local stuff suffered. Some years go like that. Already booked in for High Browns on Dartmoor this year and Marshies on the West Coast of Scotland, love that place. And where has that Small Blue colony gone on Mt. Caburn?, I'll let you know, taras Grizzled?, white Small Copper?, Long Tailed Blues?, all good.

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Allan.W., 02-Feb-19 09:54 PM GMT

Great couple of posts there Dave, must admit I was so excited seeing my first Wasp Spider some years back, but they now seem to be turning up all over (but, no matter they are stunning !!) I've been lucky enough to find several of their elaborate cocoons at Dungeness and on a 100 metre stretch at Samphire Ho! (Dover) we found 25, and the warden counted 150 + in a short walk. Have you tried for the Sickle Bearers and Tree crickets at Dungeness, may be worth a trip for you next season! That Rufous Grasshopper is quite stunning! Is it a particularly rare aberration? I've certainly never seen anything quite like it, great find! We're hoping for a short break down in Sussex in June, and we'll probably try mount Caburn for the Burnt tip orchids (if we can find them!) and we'll keep our eyes open for the Small Blues! . Once again great posts! Regards Allan.W.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 02-Feb-19 11:20 PM GMT

More great posts - the Rufous Grasshopper doesn't look real - it looks like an individual in a release and recapture experiment 😲 Mind you it certainly rocks the look 😊😄 Love the golden Wall brown - lush that is 🍀

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 03-Feb-19 10:17 PM GMT

Lovely, eclectic mix of images there, Dave. Nice to see a few non-butterfly subjects, although I'm not too sure about those crayfish.... 😞

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 23-Feb-19 08:10 PM GMT

Good to be away, gonna keep on top of this!

23rd February 2019 Buchan Park, Crawley, Sussex

Peacocks around today, just a couple



Buchan park Peacock

This one had scaling bleaching that looked liked me digging down the allotment!



Buchan park Peacock

Also the Commas have woken up,sat and watched a couple spiral upwards waiting for the settle and shots.



Buchan Park comma



Buchan Park Crawley

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 23-Feb-19 10:49 PM GMT

I can see the image you mean Buchan but it does look slightly more like someone leaning on their spade and having a bit of a breather to me 😊😓 Not seen a Peacock yet 🐣

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 25-Feb-19 06:07 PM GMT

Good to see things getting active round your way, Dave. Is the long, parched-looking grass in the park a legacy of last year's drought?

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 06-Apr-19 09:39 AM GMT

I think so Dave,its been a mighty long dry spell,although this spring water has fallen with a bit more proficiency.

5th April 2019 Willoughby Fields,Crawley,Sussex

One of the joys of having a half day on Friday is having the ability to get out before the weekend starts. A slight chance of my first Orange Tips in a wet meadow near me, got lucky.

Of all the butterflies local to me,these have always been somewhat of an enigma to photograph,ok to follow and watch to settle but those open wing shots have eluded me for years.Managed a Peacock doing some groundwork also a couple of Commas.



Willoughby Fields Peacock

This has always been a good spot for Small Tortoiseshells in previous years, but not seen any yet.

Pretty cool today but the sun did pop out for about 45 minutes, allowing me to track the 3 male cardamines.

The first took a rest on the Blackthorn blossom, allowing me the chance to get this and it sat there for ages, so I went hunting for others.



Willoughby Fields Orange Tip Male

Tracked two other males across the meadow and just pounced when they were on the Ladies Smock



Willoughby Fields Orange Tip Male2

Then waited for the sun to go behind some clouds and waited for this one to settle.
Shots on the larval host plant,always precious



Willoughby Fields Orange Tip Male3

Then the 10 second window as the sun reappeared and to get those lovely oranges in full tilt.
About time...



Willoughby Fields Orange Tip Male4

Orange Tip country, *cardamines* on the [\[u\]cardamines\[/u\]](#)



Willoughby Fields Crawley

Always chuffed to get the year off with goods shots of these.
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 06-Apr-19 03:42 PM GMT

That is a beautifully marked OT Dave I can't recall seeing one with such a contrast between the black tips and the orange 🤔🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 06-Apr-19 05:10 PM GMT

Beautiful, Dave, especially that second Orange Tip image, which is absolutely redolent of spring.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 06-Apr-19 09:31 PM GMT

Cheers Dave and Wurzel,they were fresh out I reckon,beauties.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 26-Apr-19 08:36 PM GMT

19th April 2019 Samphire Hoe,Kent

I've been after the Early Spider Orchid colony here for a while now and although not out of reach for a day trip from where I live(Sussex),I'd always wanted to find them with the my sister,who lives in Dover,and who with I stay every Easter.So wandering down to Samphire Hoe is always a joy and of course the added benefit of butterflies,always exposed and difficult to stay wind free,perseverance can pay dividends.Samphire was the additional bit of the British Isles,that was formed when all the Channel Tunnel spoil was placed here to form what we have now(although there were old coal mine workings here before).A quick look at the rangers siteings board said Dingy Skippers and Clouded Yellows....hello for the Cloudeds...yep. First off were the Speckled Woods on the sheltered side of the cliff tops,all pristine and fresh,like many of the butterflies this weekend.



Samphire Hoe cliff top Speckled Wood

Once down to the reserve,and still very Winter bleak looking,and with a stiff Easterly wind it was difficult to note any areas that were sheltered enough,but in the far Western corner the first butterflies were beginning to congregate.First noted were the Dingys,my first of this year.



Samphire Hoe Dingy Skipper

Several here but with the wall to wall sunshine and temperatures rising they were beginning to move fast.Already noted a Clouded Yellow that was patrolling up and down and....no chance. But my first Small Copper of the year in the bag.



Samphire Hoe Small Copper



Samphire Hoe Small Copper (2)

Noted a dark butterfly wizzing around that turned out to be a Wall Brown, tetchy gits, a bit of chasing round but got the record shots for the diary. Naff shots but a marker.



Samphire Hoe Wall Brown



Samphire Hoe Wall Brown (2)

I still couldn't locate the Early Spider Orchids here, bit of an enigma for me this, considering its one of the biggest colonies in Britain and the board said they were starting to flower, doing the old noggin in a bit! 😊



Samphire Hoe Western End

Also worth noting was a Rose Chafer and an Adder that I failed to photograph...



Samphire Hoe Rose Chafer

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 26-Apr-19 08:45 PM GMT

19th April 2019 Samphire Hoe, Kent

And as an addendum on the Ornithological side of stuff, Fulmars nesting on the cliffs here.



Samphire Cliff Fulmar 1



Samphire Cliff Fulmar 2



Samphire Cliff Fulmar 3



Samphire Cliff Fulmar 4

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Allan.W., 26-Apr-19 09:05 PM GMT

Hello Dave,

Good report from Samphire Ho ! I see that you're struggling with the Early Spiders . May I suggest that if you do manage to get there again instead of going "over the top " you go through the far Car park (where there are generally a few to be seen) and follow the path that leads alongside the railway line ,after a few steps you should begin to see the orchids on either side of the path ,keep looking mainly to your left ,

but for me the best area is actually along the beach ,you go through the metal fence and along the small raised concrete path ,when it finishes and you hit the beach ,look along the base of the cliff ,at first in the hollows ,and as you proceed towards the concrete dwelling ,they are a little higher up the chalk cliff. We saw 30 + Early Spiders here a couple of weeks back and they should now be at near peak . also along the beach section you can find Adonis ,Small ,Common Blues and brown Args, and Green Hairstreaks. I posted a few shots of various Early Spiders at Samphire Ho ,last year Good Hunting !
Regards Allan.W.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 26-Apr-19 09:38 PM GMT

Ha thanks Allan,just writing up now from last weekend,I did locate them exactly where you noted,well chuffed.

20th April 2019 Dungeness,Kent

I had some vague recollection of Grizzled Skippers being located here,right on the vegetated shingle mass.....I also was well aware of the Small Coppers here.Quite breezy and no Grizzleds but loads of Small Coppers.And a sister that was rapidly falling into Willow pollen hay fever...



Dungeness Small Copper



Dungeness Small Copper 2
Vast expanse of vegetated shingle...



Dungeness shingle stuff
If there are Grizzleds here,maybe a few more weeks,would like to know if they are here though.

Watched a Peacock come across from the sea here and land on the beach shingle bank,thinking it must be knackered,try to get shots and it motored off,top speed.Another lovely Power Station.....



Dungeness
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 26-Apr-19 09:55 PM GMT

20th April 2019 Park Gate Down,Kent

Once again after those Early Spiders, there are reports of them here as well,but none today.No Dingys either,had that as perfect. The odd Orange Tip and the odd Peacock,not stopping,where are the Small Torts this year? But the Early Purples were a joy.



Park Gate Down Early Purple Orchid



Park Gate Down Early Purple Orchids



Park Gate Down, Kent Wildlife Trust

Glorious weather as well.

Worth noting that on the cliff path towards the end of the day, loads of Wall Browns, but as Wall Browns are, can't get near them in the sun.
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Allan.W., 26-Apr-19 10:10 PM GMT

Hello again Dave,

Good ! I,m glad you found the Early Spiders ! At Dungeness the Grizzlies haven,t been reported as yet , I was there this afternoon and I spoke to Dave Walker from the obs; and he,s had no reports as yet , Amongst the high numbers of Small Coppers at Dungeness this afternoon ,I did glimpse one possible Grizzle ,but can,t be sure .

I always find it difficult to actually pinpoint the best areas for them at Dungie ,and I have seen them ,in the moat ,along the power station fence , along the long pits and along the grassy area in the trapping area along the old railway line line they are very spread out !

I haven't found any (as yet !) at my local inland sites either ,I reckon the first 2-3 Days in May.

Good Hunting ! As a matter of interest there is one !! Early Spider at Dungie .

Regards Allan.W.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 26-Apr-19 10:22 PM GMT

Great shots of the Small Coppers and the Orchids – they're much more 'open' than the ones I've seen 😊🍷 Lovely shots of the Fulmars – the strangest place I saw them was nesting in Iceland. They were nesting one what was once a seacliff but as the glaciers and ice sheets receded the land mass 'sprang back up' and so their nests are now a little over a mile 'inland' 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 27-Apr-19 12:18 AM GMT

21st April 2019 Samphire Hoe

Got down there early next morning,as from the evening before and finally locating the Early Spiders,which in retrospect,wasnt that difficult.The one area that you dont go to.....elimination and all that.



Samphire Hoe Early Spider Orchid



Samphire Hoe Early Spider Orchid 2

Wandered down to the butterfly hotspot, that was already warming up, and my first Holly Blue of the season just wafted down and had a sunbathe, always found exposure so difficult with these, I think it's the only butterfly I don't quite get!



Samphire Hoe Holly Blue

Small Copper, which I think was the same one as yesterday...



Samphire Hoe Small Copper

More Dingys were beginning to show their wares, remember these are pretty much first for the year, so I'm chuffed.



Samphire Hoe Dingy Skipper

Finally the nailed Kent Early Spider Orchid, been down here for several years now trying to get the timing right with Easter at my Sisters and to show her what they look like, job done.



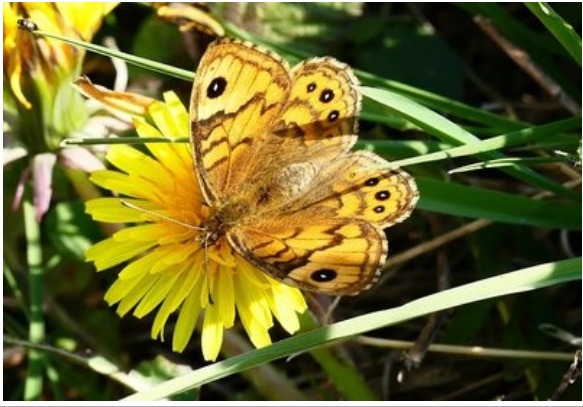
Samphire Hoe Early Spider Orchid

That Clouded Yellow settled on a Dandelion.....happy boy.



Samphire Hoe Clouded Yellow

Another Wall Brown, just.....these guys are top difficult, but what else would I do?



Samphire Hoe Wall Brown

Come to Samphire, from the non-officiated Kent tourist board official that isn't! 😊



Samphire Hoe, how you get there!

Cheers
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Goldie M, 27-Apr-19 12:41 PM GMT

So glad with your report Dave, when the weather settles down I'll go to "Samphire Oh" before I go home and hope fully I'll see some more Butterflies, looks like my trip would have been wasted had I gone to Dungeness for the Grizzlies, may be I'll see some there. Not sure I could make the Beech though!!!! 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 27-Apr-19 01:09 PM GMT

Great that you got the Orchid Dave, persistence and quartering every inch of the reserve pays off 😊😊 The Cloudy must have been the icing on the cake 🍷🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 27-Apr-19 08:59 PM GMT

That's one hell of a comprehensive set of reports, Dave. You've seen some lovely flowers (particularly the orchids) but the Clouded Yellow is the most eyecatching sighting, although Wall Browns are always very welcome.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 28-Apr-19 02:52 PM GMT

Thanks guys, it's most rewarding when the unexpected pops up, I'd given up on getting close to the Cloudy but as I was studying the Early Spiders that one can down and landed on a Dandelion within 6 feet of me, and hung around for enough time to get the shots, chuffed.

Same day, later on.

21st April 2019 Lydden Temple

This reserve is fab and has captivated me for a few years now. Met my Sis at Dover station and we got the train to Kearsney, 1 stop and 4 minutes up the track and £2.70 return. A walk through the village, which is delight, and up onto the hills behind it. Classic downland site with loads to find. I was still on my Grizzly hunt and I'm not sure of any records here, but the habitat is pristine for all manner of stuff. First off on the lower slopes staring at the trees we'd noted our first Green Hairstreaks of the year, leading a merry dance up to higher bits of the trees, no chance with these guys but within another half hour and further up towards the Beech wood here I found some more.



Lydden Temple NR

The Greenies were on that patch on bramble in the foreground to the left, had about 4 or 5 around me, quite tetchy but with patience I was able to get my reward. Luckily they all stayed low.



Lydden Temple Green Hairstreak



Lydden Temple Green Hairstreak 2

A corker that one!

After my fill of Greenies I wandered down to the bottom of this combe to see what was congregating in warmth at the bottom, loads of Dingys just wizzing around, a site to see to be honest, I managed to kneel in some stinging nettles that went straight through my walking trousers....that left me tingling for days!



Lydden Temple Dingy Skipper.

The Dingys were at the bottom here, no Grizzlys, but you can't always get what you want.....said Mr Jagger!



Lydden Temple NR another view

We wandered off the hill, and realising we had no car to worry about it was time to pop into the Fox at Temple and have a few Stellas in the sun. Back here again for the Orthoptera in August, fab site, or those Late Spider Orchids that pop up in a month or so. The Greenies were top today though.

Cheers

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 28-Apr-19 03:44 PM GMT

Butterflies and then a few beers in the sun – sounds like a GREAT day 😊🍷🍷 It's always good to leave something for later 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by Allan.W., 28-Apr-19 03:58 PM GMT

Enjoyed your report from Lydden, Dave along with Dungeness my favourite Kent site, I agree with your excellent looking Grizzle habitat, can't say I've ever seen (or heard of any) any here, but as you know Adonis, Chalkhills, Wall and all the other usual suspects, and there used to be a small colony of Small Blue as well, but I haven't looked for them myself lately. Lydden's also a good site for Straw Belle, and Burnt Tipped Orchids showed up again in 2018 after an absence of some years, and I'm sure you're aware but you need to be in the Wye/Brook area for Late Spiders or the Folkestone area. Regards Allan.W.

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 28-Apr-19 11:45 PM GMT

Some lovely looking habitat there, Dave, and that is a beautifully marked Dingy Skipper. I hope I can find one similar to that during the next week or so!

Re: Buchan Boy

by trevor, 29-Apr-19 06:30 AM GMT

Excellent Green Hairstreak shots, and it's good to know that Samphire Hoe has attracted Wall Browns. Hopefully a stable colony.

Great stuff,
Trevor.

Re: Buchan Boy

by CallumMac, 30-Apr-19 12:07 PM GMT

Fabulous selection of orchids Dave! Something of a relief to see that your Kent Early Purples aren't quite at peak yet - I've been looking hard for them here in Yorkshire without success so far, but I guess it's still just slightly too early.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 30-Apr-19 09:40 PM GMT

Thanks all and Allan W, just noted your Early Spiders at Samphire, they are immense, makes me want to go back down there. I take it they were on the Western side outside the reserve? amazing. Used to stumpy wind blown ones down here in Sussex!

22nd April 2019 Folkestone Warren, Kent

First to note some super scrub clearance has gone on here over the Winter, good effort that, hope the butterflies respond, the Green Hairstreaks clearly have...

I'd always thought there was an introduced Wall Lizard colony here and I have searched and searched to no avail... anyways my Kent adventure was drawing to a close but not before I popped into Folkestone Warren for a quick look see. Just over the lip of the cliff and down to the right, follow the path down and this spot is always the first place I head to when here in the morning, everything congregates here.



Folkestone Warren

Twayblades just beginning their way up.



Folkestone Warren Twayblade

Always a good spot for Wall Browns before they get too active but couldn't locate any here, but not before long this small area became Green Hairstreak central, unbelievable, never expected this trip to contain so many of these, seems like they're having a goodun. Just standing in a small ditch with them all around me, opportunities to get some shots were endless, could've of stayed all day but needed some Grizzlies and needed to be closer to home.



Folkestone Warren Green Hairstreak



Folkestone Warren Green Hairstreak 2



Folkestone Warren Green Hairstreak 3

Vast amounts of Dingys as well, moving around at pace but as everyone is different its worth getting the shots.



Folkestone Warren Dingy Skipper

A couple of Speckled Woods, that looked like theyd been around a while already,probably tired from the Hairstreak onslaught!



Folkestone Warren Speckled Wood

But another day that belonged to the Hairstreaks,love these days,all in area the size of a parking space!



Folkestone Warren Green Hairstreak 4

Folkestone Warren,looking a bit tidy!



Folkestone Warren

Off for those surrey Grizzlies now, fingers crossed.

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by ernie f, 01-May-19 08:25 AM GMT

Dave – Aha, You got a Clouded Yellow. Not seen one of those yet this year. Love the Wall shots too but what really took my fancy was your Early Spider Orchids and Fulmar. The close-up on the orchid bloom is a stunner. Samphire Hoe looks to be a great place. Also I used to visit Folkestone Warren when I was a kid. We went to the campsite nearby on a few occasions. Your pics brought back great memories. Thanks.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Allan.W., 01-May-19 04:38 PM GMT

Hello again Dave,

Glad you liked the Early Spiders , the ones with the bins were about 350 mm tall ,and there were taller ! like yourself up until the SH; Colony appeared ,I was also used to seeing tiny, stunted individuals on the Chalk downland near Crundale , the best area for the larger specimens ,is as I said in my first post along the raised concrete path ,and onto the beach (towards the Warren) as you hit the beach ,look along the hollows at the base of the cliff .

As for Wall Lizards at the Warren ,a friend of mine saw several a year or two back ,and I think he said they were along the footpath that comes down from the "Little Switzerland café " ,but never looked for them myself . (Although I have seen them at Ventnor IOW.)

Enjoyed your Warren report by the way ! Regards Allan.W.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 01-May-19 07:43 PM GMT

Absolutely lovely Greenstreaks there Dave – they're fantastic when they're that fresh 🍃🍃🍃

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 01-May-19 09:29 PM GMT

You got the 'Holy Grail' of Greenstreaks, Dave – one with a continuous line of white markings. They don't pop up that often so consider yourself privileged.

Nice Dingy too. I love those individuals with the strong silvery markings.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Goldie M, 02-May-19 09:20 AM GMT

Hi! Dave, I hope you find your Grizzlies 🍃

I would love to go to Lydden again, I went to the slopes besides the road but saw nothing and of course no way I could climb the steps to go any higher, I missed the Butterflies, at least I saw your great shots and look forward to seeing more 🍃 Goldie 🍃

Re: Buchan Boy

by Andrew555, 02-May-19 11:28 AM GMT

Love those Green Hairstreaks Dave, really nice. 🍃🍃

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 03-May-19 10:19 PM GMT

Thanks Guys,was so chuffed with the Greenies and on to my Grizzled saga.
Really trying my best to keep on top of this,this year,not writing up in Winter again. 😊

22nd April 2019 Brockham Limekilns

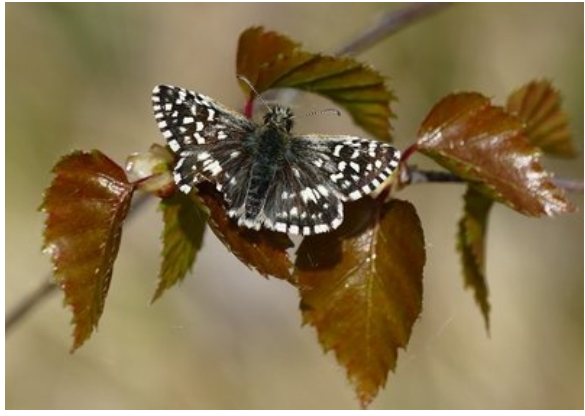
After wizzing down the M20,which is currently being made up to "Smart motorways",ie.more lanes and a 50mph restriction for many a mile and a promise of burgers at my daughters I had to wander into one of my fave reserves on the North Downs.Parking in Brockham and walking up to the hills is still one of my favourite joys of Spring/Summer,the Buckland Hills,just a small run of South facing man-attacked Downs that thankfully now,in my lifetime,have been given back to nature.

Always quiet and I very rarely bump into anyone else here,but perfect butterfly weather followed me from Kent,bit cloudy and a bit sunny,those spells when you know you can watch and know things will calm down,then go nuts!

Hardly any flowering flowers yet,some violets,some very early wild strawberries,but first Grizzled s were on the wing.

Only two,and temperatures a little over 13 degrees,job done.

This one had already suffered a bird attack,seemed to be flying ok though.



Brockham Limekilns Grizzled Skipper



Brockham Limekilns Grizzled Skipper 2

The second one of the afternoon was in much dapper fettle.Beauties,chased this one around for a while,keeps you fit 😊



Brockham Limekilns Grizzled Skipper 3



Brockham Limekilns Grizzled Skipper 4
I do love these insects,wish I had more time.



Brockham Limekilns
Leg it on the Pilgrims Way..hehe



Pilgrims Way
Cheers
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by trevor, 04-May-19 07:46 AM GMT

Stunning Grizzled Skipper images, Dave.
How do you get on with tracking one in flight? (near impossible for me).

Trevor.

Re: Buchan Boy

by kevlng, 04-May-19 08:40 AM GMT

Dave,

A little late catching up with the diaries this week, but worthwhile looking at yours. Samphire Hoe looks an incredibly interesting place, as does Folkstone Warren, With such a great selection of species, I shall put them on my wish list. Love the Green Hairstreak photo in which the specimen has a long line of white dots (Not seen one like that before).

Kind Regards
Kev

Re: Buchan Boy

by Goldie M, 04-May-19 08:56 AM GMT

Now you've really made me green Dave 🍃🍃 lovely shots of the Grizzles 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 04-May-19 04:00 PM GMT

What an absolute stunner that second Grizzled Skipper is, Dave. I'm not sure the nominate form can get any more attractive than that.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 05-May-19 07:58 AM GMT

Fantastic shots of the Grizzlies Dave 😊 and that habitat looks brilliant, it's great when nature can take it back 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 08-May-19 06:35 PM GMT

Thanks Guys,I do love Grizzleds.

26th April 2019 Brockham Limekilns

Back up to my favourite little reserve on the North Downs,to check in on the Grizzleds again,been a rather strange spring so far,another long run of Easterlies, head for the sheltered spots.

Two sheltered hollows on this reserve,one to the West and one the East,the Grizzleds normally appear a few days later on the Eastern side its just a tad more exposed.But the Western side di provide me with more Dingys,4 or 5 in all.



Brockham Limekilns Dingy Skipper

And luck fell onto me with an egg-laying female Holly Blue, and rather oblivious to me she was,always find these with luck!



Brockham Limekilns Holly Blue



Brockham Limekilns Holly Blue Female



Coltsfoot

Absolutely zero Orchids up here at the moment, I've also struggled with finding Early Purples anywhere in Surrey and Sussex, should be up by now. A couple of lovely Speckled Woods running the shade/sun gauntlet, not really very warm here today. Lovely dark ones, fresh.



Brockham Limekilns Speckled Woods

I know there's Green Hairstreaks here, they use one of the young Beech trees as territory and are quite a reliable colony whenever I need my fix. But these guys had clearly been around a lot longer than the Kent ones I'd been seeing a few days earlier.



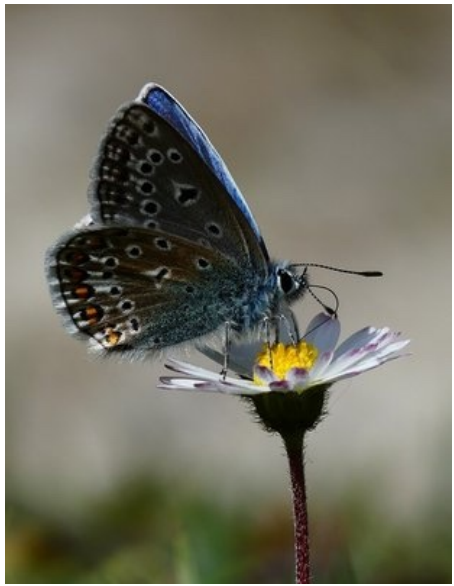
Brockham Limekilns Green Hairstreak

My trick for Grizzleds is just to sit down on the ground and watch the lower vegetation, one thing about getting older is tracking Grizzleds becomes more difficult but one lively individual did make my day, when the sun popped out to play. With that becoming increasingly rarer today.



Brockham Limekilns Grizzled Skipper

That was my only Grizzled today, but confirming presence here year after year in one of those things we just do! Tracked my first Common Blue of the season as well, just before roosting as the clouds gathered.



Brockham Limekilns Common Blue



Brockham Limekilns Common Blue

And as luck would have it, just as the rain started to pelt down i noted a roosting male Orange Tip, lucky again.



Brockham Limekilns Orange Tip

A fine assortment of Spring species there in about an hour and a half.



Brockham Limekilns

Then it rained, and looking out across the Surrey countryside with the sheets of rain coming down, I was thinking of Wales! haha.

Cheers

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 08-May-19 06:52 PM GMT

Did manage this rather funky shot of backlit Oaks across the fields one evening.



Charlwood Oaks

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 08-May-19 07:21 PM GMT

4th of May 2019 Buckland Hills, North Downs

With that nasty Northerly I figured the South facing slopes of the North Downs might fare better for butterflies than the South Downs today. Dawcombe being my place of choice today. With bright blue skies interspersed with massive showers, a photographer's dream for landscape work! Quite a trek to get to this place from Betchworth railway station, sort of 😊

Man Orchids just starting to appear on the Pilgrims way. Couple more weeks these will be amazing.



Dawcombe Man Orchid



The Buckland Hills

Found plenty of Fly Orchids just beginning to sprout but one only with a flower.



Dawcombe Fly Orchid

Just on the lower slopes on the big open bit of downland at Dawcombe itself, pleasantly surprised by a few Dingys again and one Grizzled, that was not really expected and once again another day was made.



Dawcombe Grizzled Skipper

Then a case of tracking and waiting for the cloud and a roost up.



Dawcombe Grizzled Skipper 2

Good numbers of Dingys(when the sun appeared).



Dawcombe Dingy Skipper

The White Helleborines here are rather impressive under the massive Beech canopies,not really in flower yet though.



Dawcombe White Helleborine

Staring at Beech Trees in utter awe, hope that feeling never leaves me, it wont 😊



Dawcombe Beech

I never see anyone else here,not sure I'm actually allowed,I'll wait to get told off!
But in a month this place is utterly stunning,already is to be honest.



Dawcombe Wood

Nice
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 08-May-19 07:38 PM GMT

5th May 2019 Staplefield

Staplefield churchyard has my closest colony of Green-wing Orchids,I think its my closest anyway,they are loved there and are left to grow with everything else until over and the strimmer appears!

Not as prolific this year as I've seen but nonetheless still very lovely,they also spread out around Staplefield from here,worth checking the virges around the church,have to admit, all quiet,happily zoned out with my camera and the bell tolled for one,geez made me jump!



Staplefield Green-winged Orchid



Staplefield Green-winged Orchid 2

That elusive white version still hasn't graced my presence, I'll keep looking.



Staplefield Bluebell

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 08-May-19 08:00 PM GMT

5th May 2019 Glovers Wood, Surrey.

Did eventually locate some Surrey Early Purples with the help of my Grand-son. The Woodland ones are always up earliest and these have been up a while.



Glovers Wood Early Purple Orchid



Glovers Wood Early Purple Orchid 2
A White Early Purple



Glovers Wood Early Purple Orchid 3
And hopefully I can inspire this little fella to find a lifetime of joy with these.
A noble cause indeed 😊



Henry and his first orchid.

Also these woods now being in close proximity of my Daughters family deserve a big summer study,I suspect Purple Hairstreaks,White Admirals,Silver Washed and maybe Purple Emps,getting some close attention this summer,these woods.

Grandad Dave.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 08-May-19 08:36 PM GMT

6th May 2019 Rewell Wood and Coates Common,Sussex

Pretty much impossible to ignore the magnificent Pearl-bordered emergence at Rewell this year,with all that work going on it must be hugely satisfying to all involved.Never one for the more popular spots but this had me absolutely enamored.

Not really much I can say that hasn't already been said.Sussex Pearl-bordered in numbers.



Rewell Wood Pearl-bordered



Rewell Wood Pearl-bordered 2



Rewell Wood Pearl-bordered 3
Oh there was a Common Blue as well



Rewell Wood Common Blue
And a Cream Spot Tiger



Rewell Wood Cream Spot Tiger
But really what can I say?



Rewell Wood Pearl-bordered 4



Rewell Wood Pearl-bordered 5
And the East West ride at Rewell



Rewell Wood

Popped into Fittleworth to see how the Field Crickets were faring, much warbling going on and a happy boy went home.



Coates Field Cricket
Coates Common



Coates
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Allan.W., 08-May-19 09:19 PM GMT

Mouthwatering post there Dave ! what are the chances of the field crickets still warbling 3rd week of June ?
Lovely picture of your Grandson admiring the early PurpPriceless !! regards Allan.W.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 08-May-19 11:21 PM GMT

A fantastic array of wildlife Dave you've certainly been busy 😊👍 Great to see the love of wildlife passed on – we need more of this 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 09-May-19 09:17 AM GMT

That's a veritable orchid fest you've served up, Dave. Absolutely stunning. It's a beautiful time of year which, sadly, doesn't last long as soon the grasses will shoot up and strangle everything.

Some fabulous butterflies there too, the pick of which is your roosting Pearl Bordered Fritillary.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 10-May-19 10:03 PM GMT

10th May 2019 Washington Chalkpits,Sussex

I remember last year some reports of Dukes turning up here,perfect habitat,scoured the place but no Dukes.Other stuff though included.
Plethora of Dingys,they are cooking this spring.



Washington Chalk Pits Dinky

Walked out of a thicket with a Green Hairstreak attached to me,not sure how that happened,we became friends.Never been so close to so many of these as I have this year.



Washington Chalk Pits Green Hairstreak

The Grizzled's were already over,quite surprised by that,just two.



Washington Chalk Pits Grizzled Skipper
Early Purples really short and stunted this year, on the hills anyway.



Washington Chalk Pits Early Purple
The odd reptile, loads of young-uns



Washington Chalk Pits Common Lizard
As I was leaving a pair of Orange Tips in full loveliness, just good that.



Washington Chalk Pits Orange Tips
I'll be back.



Washington Chalk Pits
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 11-May-19 07:54 PM GMT

Certainly looks excellent habitat, Dave. I don't know either how you carried your Hairstreak passenger out of that thicket. I don't recall ever having one land on me.

Nice shot of the Orange Tip pair as well. In spite of the hundreds I've seen this last few weeks, that particular spectacle has eluded me. 😞

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 11-May-19 07:56 PM GMT

Great shot of the Greenstreak Dave 😊 I was having a bad time with this species a few years back but I knew that I'd been forgiven when one took to my finger 😊 They do seem to be having a good year this year 😊 Great shot of the Lizard too – was a black one as it looks very dark? 🟢 🟡

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 11-May-19 10:31 PM GMT

Na Wurz, just backlit 😊 love those melanistic ones though..

11th May 2019 Heyshott Downs

Time to get a look at some Dukes, got up early for a wizz down to Heyshott, see how they're doing. Not promising with leaden skies, but the forecast was for some sunny intervals. Watching the skies with a Northern wind and updraft on the Downs, it looked not very good....but out and done. Arrived at the reserve, not promising, but did locate a roosting Grizzled.



Heyshott Grizzled Skipper

Spent the next couple of hours wandering around admiring the Early Purples and Fly Orchids, in the decidedly dank conditions....



Heyshott Early Purple Orchid



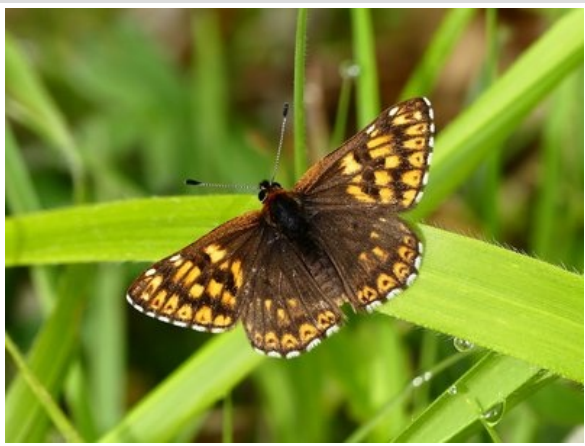
Heyshott Early Fly Orchid

The sun said hello and it was time to see if anything was going on, was on the top plateau and my first Duke of the spring, quite languid and slow but amazing to get the shots.



Heyshott Duke Of Burgundy

The sun then finally arrived in good spells and opportunities were there to get the photos. Numbers rising and probably 30+ seen today.



Heyshott Duke Of Burgundy 2



Heyshott Duke Of Burgundy 3



Heyshott Duke Of Burgundy 4

Got lucky really because although the weather forecast was sunny spells, it hammered down with April showers.



Heyshott



April showers.
All good that.love this place.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 11-May-19 10:44 PM GMT

Brilliant shots of the Dukes Dave 😊 Interesting to see the view of Heyshott – I've not been myself but it does look very similar to Noar Hill 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 12-May-19 07:58 AM GMT

Nice work, Dave. The fly orchid is sublime, and I love the Duke perched on the on the pink orchid.

Good that you post habitat images too. It's always nice to get a look at the sites people have been visiting.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 18-May-19 10:05 PM GMT

17th May 2019 Lewes Downs

A rather speculative effort to maybe get my first Adonis's of the year, failed miserably with very low cloud, nice walk though. And Burnt-tips.



Caburn Burnt Tip



Caburn Burnt Tip 2



Caburn Burnt Tip 3

And ticks!, mental, talk about a brush down needed, had about 40 on me, tuck those shirts in!



Caburn Tick

Found one on my arm later in the evening,gives you one of those weird reactions,that judder! 😊
Back tomorrow.

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 19-May-19 06:22 PM GMT

Lovely Burnt-tips Dave, served as a reminder to get back to Martin Down 😊🇬🇧 I've been lucky with the Ticks so far this year found five or six crawling over me but none attached (so far 😊). I got a great little set of Tick removers from my local Vet which I always carry with me now as well as a sealed plastic bag to put the Tick in, it's useful to keep it so they can test it should you develop any side affects from the bite 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 19-May-19 09:38 PM GMT

Those burnt tip orchids are divine, Dave. The way the colour increases in intensity is a joy to the eye, as too is the combination of colour when the flowers open fully.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 28-May-19 07:01 PM GMT

Already slipping off the pace....noooo

18th May 2019 Malling Down,nr Lewes,Sussex

AM

My Adonis mission for the weekend was now in full tilt,and Malling Down holds a good colony.Day a two halves really,murky humid morning,sunny lovely afternoon.Decided to get stuck into the combe at Malling,which,as people know is extremely steep to say the least, and quite a work out on these 51 year old legs 😊,stayed in the Southern spur at the top of the combe,the habitat here is a superb example of Southern Downland,unimproved.At the top in the bramble thickets were good numbers of Cardinal Beetles.
This is the commoner red - headed version *Pyrochroa serraticornis*



Malling Down Cardinal Beetle

Just as I started to slowly work the slope, my first Brown Argus of the season was worth chasing until it settled.



Malling Down Brown Argus

Loads of fresh Common Blues just starting their daily ambles and daily copulations.



Malling Down Common Blue



Malling Down Common Blues
Male taking a breather 😊



Malling Down Common Blues 2

After much trekking up and down two Adonis males finally made their presence known and records were duly noted. Under these conditions it was surprisingly busy with butterflies, but then I think this place is noted as one of the warmest spots on the South Downs.



Malling Down Adonis Blue



Malling Down Adonis Blue 2

Towards the bottom of this side of thecombe Dingy Skippers and Brown Argus's were the order of the day. Dingys are everywhere this year, I have not found a site without them.



Malling Down Dingy Skipper

The East end of the Malling Downcombe with the snout rising in the middle.



Malling Down
PM to follow.

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 28-May-19 08:38 PM GMT

PM

18th May 2019 Lewes Downs and Environs, Sussex

I'd always known of the Small Blue colonies at Caburn Bottom but never really found them in good numbers, this afternoon's search begins. Walked out of Malling across the hill tops to the valley North of the hill fort at Caburn, temperatures were now rising and wind was easing, getting warm at the bottoms of these valleys. I noted a wandering Small Blue as soon as I was over the style at Bible bottom but quickly lost track of it. As soon as I approached the nettle bed at Oxtedde/Bible it was clear to see a good Small Blue emergence was in progress. Counting around 20 here as quick check.



Oxtedde Nettle Bed



Oxteadde Small Blue



Oxteadde Small Blue

Spent an hour or so with this colony, just watching, as they would rise to meet any other flying object that came nearby. One Peacock incessantly went through them time and again, such joy to watch. Once I'd had my fill here it was time to have a look at Caburn Bottom itself but not before I'd managed to see Small Blues in the open grass clearly congregating around something, quite cool really around 6-8 at any one time on one cow-pat. Odd that in a field with myriads of cow-pats they were all on this one, something in that manure must be tasty 😊



Caburn Bottom Small Blues



Caburn Bottom Small Blues



Caburn Bottom Small Blues

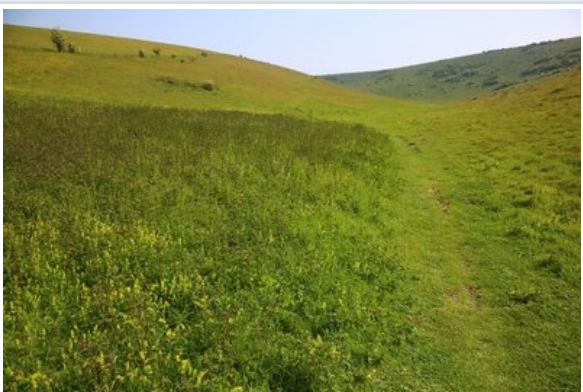
Even on my boot there was something worth looking for, salts coming out the leather no doubt, Italian leather!



Caburn Bottom Small Blues

It was behaviour I have never witnessed before so amazing.

After that and pretty much made up I moved onto the first big nettle bed at Caburn Bottom, just through the gate and many more Small Blues, clearly the corridor between these two colonies has much traffic as noted above.



Caburn Bottom Nettle Bed



Caburn Bottom Small Blue



Caburn Bottom Small Blue

Also numbers of Brown Argus's increasing here.



Caburn Bottom Brown Argus



Caburn Bottom Brown Argus

But that was a Small Blue day, i wanted to stay and watch the roost but i was running out of water and it was quite a trek back to the car. Ho well.



Caburn Bottom Small Blue

You alright? 😊



Calf

The Lewes Downs



Caburn Oxtedde and Bible Bottom

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 28-May-19 09:09 PM GMT

18th May 2019 Lewes Downs and Environs, Sussex

And whilst coming off the hills into Malling chalk pits noted this lovely Wall Brown that was quite approachable, for a change.



Malling Down Wall

And a Small Copper enjoying the evening.



Malling Down Small Copper

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 28-May-19 11:09 PM GMT

Wow that Wall is a fantastic shot Dave 😊 and all those Small Blues! 🍷🍷 Don't worry about slipping off the pace – the pace is much over rated in my opinion 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 29-May-19 07:00 AM GMT

What a magnificent day! Thanks for putting things in context with the habitat shots, Dave. Helps me experience things vicariously!

Lovely Brown Argus to start your year, whilst the Adonis Blue, Dingy Skipper and Wall Brown are equally striking.

Re: Buchan Boy

by millerd, 29-May-19 09:57 PM GMT

That is a brilliant photo of the Wall Brown – as fresh as they come and astonishingly amenable. Extraordinary. 😊

That could well be my shot of the year so far. 🍷

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 30-May-19 04:20 PM GMT

millerd wrote:

That is a brilliant photo of the Wall Brown – as fresh as they come and astonishingly amenable. Extraordinary.

Having had a further look, is that some sort of aberrant? The patterning on both wings is more intricate and heavier than normally seen.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 02-Jun-19 08:01 PM GMT

Thanks guys,I think the Wall was somewhat understated by me as I was still in my Small Blue zone.....amazing.Looking at that Wall now I see what an amazing shot it is,best I've certainly ever got.One for the Grandchildren to admire hehe 😊

Managed to squeeze in a few days down Dorset with the girl,primarily to look for Scaley Crickets on Chesil and Wall Lizards on Portland but as these habitats are generally favourable for many other things,including butterflies,my focus swings all over the place!

Couldnt resist popping up to Cerne though to check in on the Marshies,I also wanted to check out the Lankham Bottom site but didnt quite make it.A day of two halves again..

24th May 2019 Giant Hill,Cerne Abbas

Love this site,I know most people head straight for the more easier walk at the bottom of the Giant but I prefer the wander round to the Eastern facing scarp,that is really much quieter,actually normally on my own.



Giant Hill, Eastern scarp.

It really was a matter of minutes before my first Marsh Fritillary of 2019 was safely in the camera,cool conditions after quite a cool night, but the sun was burning off the cloud and I wouldnt have long before these were on the wing.



Giant Hill Marsh Fritillary

As the day warms they move up the slope,so at the moment they were all on the lower third of the hill.Plenty of Burnets around.



Giant Hill Six spotted Burnet

As I approached the normal hot-spot I could see Fritillaries moving around but my initial attention was taken by my first Large Skipper of the season.



Giant Hill Large Skipper

Also good numbers of Grizzled Skippers, some quite battered but some very fresh.



Giant Hill Grizzled Skipper



Giant Hill Grizzled Skipper 2

Also noted were many Dingy's, a couple of Green Hairstreaks, Orange Tips, Brimstones and Whites. The Marshy action was well away and for the first time on this side of the hill I saw Duke Of Burgundys engaging the Marsh Fritillaries, always a give away when they do that 😊 I always knew there was a Duke colony on the Southern side but here not seen them before. Ficking through the 20 or so Marshy's here I quickly saw one that was so much more Orangey than the norm...taking a closer look definately an aberation but what type is beyond me, anyone help? Be gratly appreciated.

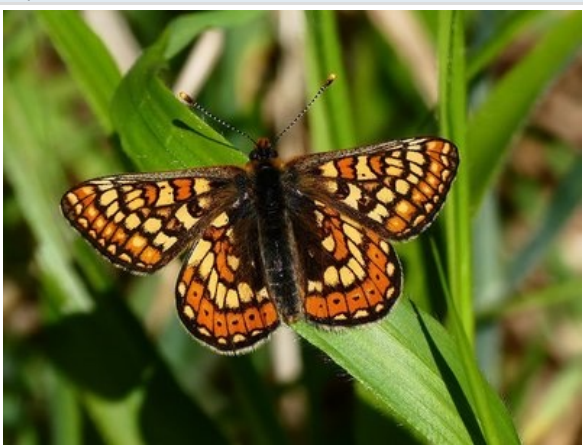


Giant Hill Marsh Fritillary ab?
The Spot!



Giant Hill Habitat

They are without doubt beautiful animals.

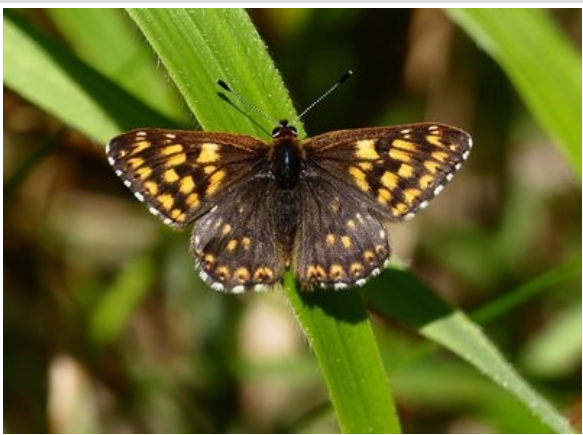


Giant Hill Marsh Fritillary 3

They were now, with the sun on full tilt, beginning to become unapproachable so I focused in on the Dukes for my record shots and let them be, maybe 10 adults here, a full survey across this side of the reserve would no doubt produce good numbers methinks, another retirement thing...



Giant Hill Duke Of Burgundy



Giant Hill Duke Of Burgundy 2

The Mrs even found a lovely spot to do the knitting...not so bad.



Buchan Girl!

Off to the Portland quarries now.

Thanks
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 02-Jun-19 10:47 PM GMT

Those Dukes look in really good nick Dave 😊👍 Great shot of the Marshie – it's difficult to say if it's an aberrant as they are so variable although the orange marginal band is noticeably bigger than most 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 03-Jun-19 10:23 PM GMT

So many things to like about that latest post, Dave.

I'm sure that Marsh Fritillary is an aberrant; there have been many so far this year.

Good too to see both Large and Grizzled Skippers together (and the Grizzlies are still in reasonable nick).

The Dukes are wonderful too. Shame they don't occur near where I live. 😞

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 27-Jul-19 09:27 AM GMT

A dreary wet July day, opportunity to catch up on some of my wanderings this year. I was going to go down to Littlehampton to have a look for White Letter Hairstreaks but the rain changed my mind. So on with where I was.

24th May 2019 Cheyne Weare Portland

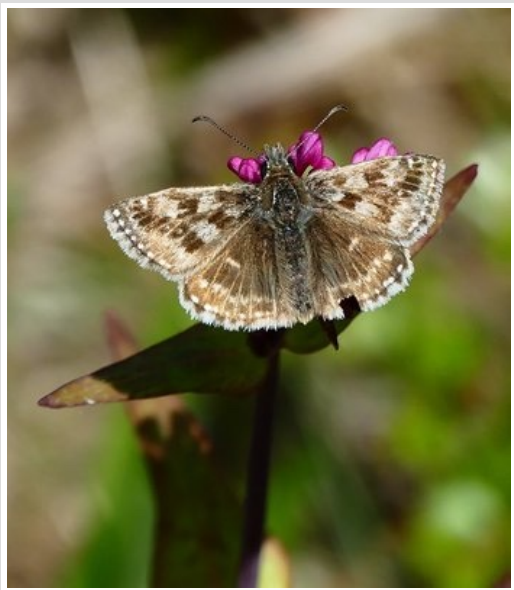
Whenever I'm down here I always check in on the colonies of Wall Lizards in the quarries of Portland and of course these places are always good spots for anything whacky coming in from the continent, I recall Large Tortoiseshell and the odd Monarch turning up, so you never know.

Cheyne Weare is an old working on the coast just past Easton on the Bill road, been coming here for years.



Cheyne Weare

Butterfly wise still some Dingy's around and the odd Common Blue, also noted one Small Copper that I failed to photograph and there always been a Small Blue colony here but failed to locate any this time.



Cheyne Weare Dingy Skipper



Cheyne Weare Female Common Blue

Also some rather brilliant Rose Chafers buzzing on the sea pinks, these chunks are quite remarkable.



Cheyne Weare Rose Chafer

But the Wall Lizard colony was in fine fettle and clearly self-sustaining judging by the amount of immatures around, good fun to chase around and using my 180 macro on an SLR which is rare these days.



I can see you Cheyne Weare Wall Lizard

The males were strutting their weares (see what I did there 😊) and quite approachable-ish, I suspect they had other things on their minds.



Cheyne Weare Wall Lizard

These are of unknown provenance but a suspected unauthorized release at some point in the 90's seems to be the accepted introduction date. Mostly the Brown form, but some are the lighter, more colourful form as well. About the same size as Sand Lizards but not such a massive head and if you've

travelled in Europe,they are an everyday site.

Good numbers here today, 50 plus adults within the confines of the quarry,not sure if they're spreading up and down the coast from herebut they seem to feel at home.



Cheyne Weare Wall Lizard 2
Lovely day.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 28-Jul-19 10:24 PM GMT

Great set of shots Buchan 😊👍 I've seen this species at Corfe Castle so if they are spreading from here then they've got a fair old way already 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 03-Aug-19 02:07 PM GMT

Love the lizard shots, Dave. The habitat looks good too and, as you say, is a choice little area to search for immigrants.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 30-Sep-19 08:45 PM GMT

25th May 2019 Broadcroft Quarry Portland

I do love these quarries on Portland,todays little jolly was to Broadcroft,some outside hope of Silver Studded Blues but nope tooooo early.But,the Small Blues were all in fine fettle,they keep calling me back and I keep answering,spent a few glorious hours wandering around this place,a bit windy but in the sheltered spots,butterflies congregated.

Typical Small Blue habitat.



Broadcroft Quarry

Loads of small colonies dotted across this site,but during the windy days they get down in the hollows.



Broadcroft Quarry Small Blue



Broadcroft Quarry Small Blue 2

Up on the exposed plateau between the two working quarries the Bee Orchids were just arriving, a few around here but most hadn't got to flower yet.



Broadcroft Quarry Bee Orchid

Then chased a Holly Blue and got lucky with the shots I've always wanted, also some Wall Browns here but much too lively to track.



Broadcroft Quarry Holly Blue

Plenty of Broomrape here, funny looking plant, not sure which species this one is?



Broadcroft Quarry Broomrape

The top open area at the Quarry, bit breezy but lovely.



Broadcroft Quarry

Thanks

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by jenks, 30-Sep-19 10:33 PM GMT

Excellent photos, Dave. It's always difficult to identify correctly from a photo as you can't judge size but I would say the Broomrape is Ivy Broomrape. I've seen this species near Broadcroft quarry and on waste ground near the Verne. As I'm sure you know Broomrapes are parasites on the roots of other plants so if you can recall seeing Ivy in the location then that's what you've captured. Martin Down in Dorset has a fine colony of Knapweed

Broomrape.

Jenks.

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 30-Sep-19 11:30 PM GMT

Brilliant report Dave with lush shots 🌿 😊 I've never made it back to Portland for butterflies, seen plenty of good birds there though (Woodchat Shrike, Pomarine Skua, Balearic Shearwater etc) – looks like I'll have to try and get there next year 🙄 🌿

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 01-Oct-19 08:04 PM GMT

Thanks Jenks, interesting stuff on those Broomrape's, think I'll be keeping a special eye out for them in future and as luck would have it I photographed one here on this day with some suspiciously looking ivy in the background (see below).....Ivy Broomrape is in my species log! 😊 And Wurzel, these quarries and Portland are so cool, but I think the Silver Studded Blues here maybe on the wane, haven't seen much in the way of records lately. 😞

26th May 2019 Broadcroft Quarry, Portland

Back up here again today for another quick scoot around, the weather got dank and windy quickly, just enough time for some more record shots.



Broadcroft Quarry Common Blue

Still some fine Dingy's around as well.



Broadcroft Quarry Dingy Skipper

More Small Blues



Broadcroft Quarry Small Blue

And.....Ivy Broomrape methinks, cheers Jenks 😊



Broadcroft Quarry Ivy Broomrape

Good stuff.

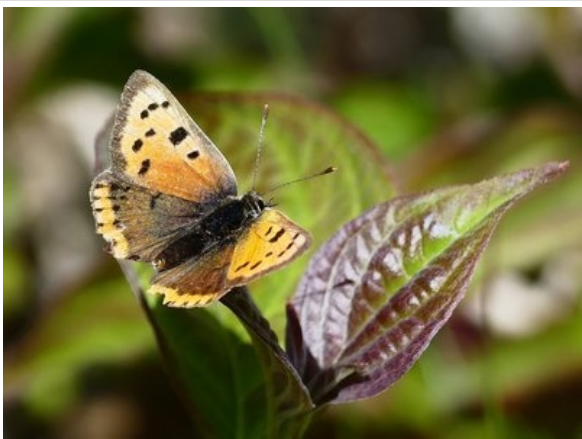
Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 02-Oct-19 08:17 PM GMT

27th May 2019 Broadcroft and Kings Barrow Quarries, Portland, Dorset

The weather deteriorated quickly today, didn't have much time but did manage a quick wizz round the quarries again. First back to Broadcroft to see if I could catch up with the Wall Brown's I'd seen yesterday....not sure how I missed this rather tired Small Copper



Broadcroft Quarry Small Copper

Good numbers of Dingy's now showing



Broadcroft Quarry Dingy Skipper

Two Wall Browns here on a sheltered path here, luckily they had'nt warmed up too much, in the limited sunlight, and were reasonably approachable.



Broadcroft Quarry Wall Brown

Then round to Kings Barrow to see if Adonis's were on the wing, not many at all but enough to get some shots.



Kings Barrow Adonis Blue



Kings Barrow Adonis Blue 2
More Dingy's



Kings Barrow Dingy Skipper

The weather was now closing in and I had to call it a day, back here soon...



Kings Barrow Quarry

Also managed to spend sometime watching the Little Terns rising over Chesil Beach from their nesting grounds on the lagoon.



Chesil Little tern

Excellent

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by Wurzel, 02-Oct-19 08:24 PM GMT

More cracking shots Dave – that Dingy from Broadcroft is really smart looking 😊👍 Love the Little Tern shot – good to see they're still there 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Buchan Boy

by Buchan Boy, 03-Oct-19 08:40 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel...those Little Terns are just brilliant and Portland 😊

2nd June 2019 Gatwick Meadow,Crawley,Sussex

Back home for a weekend and quickly noted the Large Skippers emerging at a meadow close to the airport.



Gatwick Meadow Large Skipper

Also the Beautiful Demoiselle's are here on the River Mole,female.



River Mole Beautiful Demoiselle

Short entry that one 😊

Dave

Re: Buchan Boy

by David M, 06-Oct-19 07:30 PM GMT

Those Dingies are so bright I'm prone to wonder whether they're a different race, Dave. I've never seen any like that either here or on the continent.

Love the Little Tern by the way. Such agile and attractive birds.