

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 21-Jan-19 12:11 PM GMT

January 21st 2019 - 4.30 am to 5.15 am

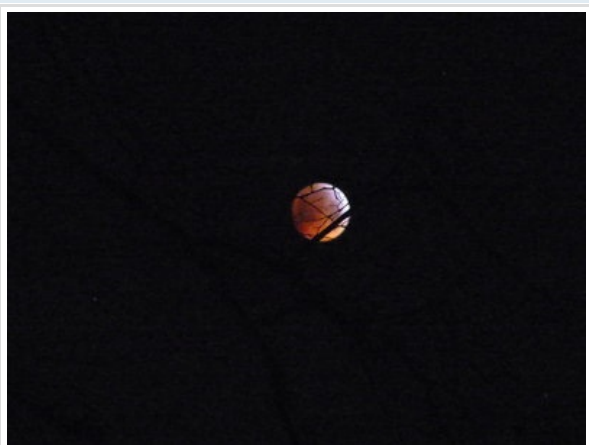
Total Lunar Eclipse this morning and wonder or wonders it was a clear sky here in Hampshire.



*Partial - leading up to total*



*Just a slither left*



*Trying to hide behind a tree*



*A bit blurred – but it is total and blood red*



Previous years...



*2015 – coming up to total*





2007

And just to finish off – The Supermoon of 2014, the closest the Moon approached Earth for 70 years.



A date for your diary. The next total lunar eclipse can be seen from the UK on 8th April 2024.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 21-Jan-19 01:00 PM GMT

CORRECTION!!!

I gave a wrong date for the next TOTAL LUNAR Eclipse from the UK.

It is actually the 20th–21st December 2029.

Its 10 years away!

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 21-Jan-19 10:26 PM GMT

I'll set an alarm for that Ernie 😊 as the cloud here wasn't conducive 😊🇬🇧 Great set of shots but the 2014 Supermoon is a real cracker 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by Goldie M, 22-Jan-19 11:12 AM GMT

Great shot's of the Moon ernie, but you've reminded me that I probably won't be a round then 😊 I'll have to make the next few years really special 😊  
Goldie 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 24-Jan-19 10:08 AM GMT

Wurzel, Goldie

We have had a spate of Total Lunar Eclipses these past few years so it came as a bit of surprise to me that the next one is 10 years out – but then, that is the way with eclipses I suppose – the same as Red London busses. You have to wait a long time and then a whole bunch of them come along at once!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 24-Jan-19 10:24 AM GMT

January 24th 2019 – 9.30 am At Home – The Owl in the Towel

Some years ago in the middle of the night our cat was going bonkers, mewing and rushing around like a lunatic. I got up out of bed to investigate and found a Tawny Owl in the dining room sitting on the back of one of our dining room chairs. As I came in, it swivelled its head and just glowered at me while our cat danced around it. No, it wasn't a dream – it was really happening – the daft Owl had toppled from its perch on our chimney pot and slid down the chimney and spilled out into the dining room. Without thinking I walked over to it and grabbed it – then IT grabbed ME with its talons. Aarghh!

I rushed it over to the front door and while holding it, tried to get the door unbolted and opened. I then chucked it out and it flew off to a tree on the other side of the street apparently unharmed by its ordeal. I cannot say the same for my fingers though!

Some say lightning never strikes twice in the same place. Well it did today. This time in broad daylight, another Tawny Owl had done the same thing

and ended up in our dining room. This one was repeatedly banging against the glass window trying to get out. With the benefit of hindsight, this time I opened the front door first and then got a towel to protect my hands from gripping talons. I picked up the Owl in the towel, took it outside and placed it on the ground. It flew off, I hope appreciative of my efforts.

Of course I did not hang around to take any pictures because the poor thing was very distressed.

**Re: ernie f**

by Padfield, 24-Jan-19 12:28 PM GMT

Wow!

You did well to take precautions the second time. The photographer Eric Hosking lost his eye to a tawny owl, as I'm sure you know. Maybe put some goggles on if it happens again ...

Guy

**Re: ernie f**

by Goldie M, 25-Jan-19 03:11 PM GMT

Hi! ernie, we used to get Birds down our chimney, we have a cage over the chimney pot now, it's only small but the Birds can't fall down, it's done the trick 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 27-Jan-19 05:53 PM GMT

As Guy said you did well to cover it with the towel Ernie – if I was you I'd invest in some Ice Hockey Goal keeper gear ready for the next time the Owl takes the plunge! 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 29-Jan-19 11:21 PM GMT

Sounds like a stressful experience for both human AND bird. I remember taking an exhausted Collared Dove to a sanctuary in the south of France a few years back. In there they had a rescued Barn Owl and I recall noting the size of its talons (when it wasn't even full grown). I guess it's like grabbing a bunch of Gillette razors!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 23-Feb-19 12:58 PM GMT

Goldie, Wurzel, David

Thanks for your comments re the Tawny Owl I had down my chimney. I have lived at this house for 18 years now and this is the second time I have had one. Looks like its a once per decade event.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 23-Feb-19 01:04 PM GMT

I recently posted a pic of the closest Supermoon for 70 years (2016 was the year in question). Last year I got a new camera and it has a better zoom on it than my previous one so this Feb's Supermoon came out brilliantly...



Feb 2019

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 23-Feb-19 01:06 PM GMT

And let me add my first butterfly of the year to those of posts from other people over the past couple of days. On 22nd Feb I saw a Brimstone fly past our front window. It was fleeting. Today it was back, this time flying back and forth along the hedge of a neighbour's garden.

No pics yet though.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 23-Feb-19 03:00 PM GMT

So I went out into my garden and almost immediately two Brimstones flew through it. One circled around my head a couple of times then flew off. There were bees nectaring from the Windflowers and Crocuses while Long-tailed Tits were flitting about in the Beech Trees. All the while the unseasonally hot sun beat down on my back. Lovely.

I looked back through my diary. Last year I did not see a butterfly until March 15th (three Brimstones then), but then the weather turned bad of course. Not another one until April 14th (four Brimstone and 3 Comma then).

This year everyone seems to be seeing butterflies from mid Feb.

How can two consecutive years be so different?

(Well yes, the Jet Stream is the main factor of course and its certainly whooshing in the right place for us this year).

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 23-Feb-19 05:38 PM GMT

... and to round off the day – a Treecreeper visited the Sycamore opposite our house.

Two pics from the bedroom window.





### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 23-Feb-19 10:44 PM GMT

Great Treecreeper shots Ernie 😊🇩🇪 Interesting to read of the different dates for the first butterflies...I'm finding the opposite in that the last couple of years I was seeing butterflies from 7th to 17th Feb yet I saw my first this year today – looks I'm bucking the trend 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 24-Feb-19 09:14 AM GMT

#### ernie f wrote:

....This year everyone seems to be seeing butterflies from mid Feb.

How can two consecutive years be so different?

(Well yes, the Jet Stream is the main factor of course and its certainly whooshing in the right place for us this year).

Correct, ernie. On this corresponding weekend in 2018, we were in the grip of 'The Beast from The East', which didn't release it's hold for some while.

I didn't see any butterflies until 13th March last year, but am well into double figures so far in 2019. Looks like we've a few more days of this too, so everyone should get out and enjoy it, as it might be some considerable time before we get another period like this in the month of February!

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 24-Feb-19 05:07 PM GMT

24th Feb 2019: Noar Hill and Kingsley Common

I am indebted to Dave for suggesting it would be a good idea to get out and about during this warm spell. He had said he had already seen butterflies in double figures this Feb and I wanted to do that too so I took a break from my Winter DIY schedule.

I have now seen 18 butterflies this year, 17 of them today!

There are two Brimstone in my garden of which I saw one again this morning. Then I tried Noar Hill – 10 there (and I was very careful not to double-count) with another 4 while driving en-route to the reserve. All Male and none of them stopped for a pic.

Birds there included Yellowhammer, a small flock of Bullfinch, 4 Buzzard and a Green Woodpecker.

Then onto Kingsley where I saw two Commas, both male – repeatedly having jousting bouts where their boundaries met.

One of them wondered who this madman was who was running up and down the path in hot pursuit. He fluttered down and landed on the back of my hand momentarily before wheeling around me. I turned around to find him and saw him come down once again. This time he landed on my head!!! I could actually feel him land (because it has to be said I am a little bald on top nowadays).

I also got some fine pics from an assortment of angles.









Temperature peaked today at 16 degrees, but the Kingsley location where I saw the Commas around 3.30 pm seemed to hold a microclimate which felt more like it was over 20 degrees. It genuinely felt like summertime and it almost seemed foolish to be wearing a jumper in February.

**Re: ernie f**

by millerd, 24-Feb-19 06:01 PM GMT

That's a splendidly cooperative Comma, Ernie – it clearly took a fancy to you! 😊

Dave

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 25-Feb-19 05:41 PM GMT

These recent conditions have been splendid, ernie. I'm sure there will be plenty more on the wing; we've still got a couple of days of it left before we're back to normal temperatures.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 25-Feb-19 06:23 PM GMT

Cheers, guys....

.... and so the "heatwave" continued today. Apparently its the hottest Feb day on record today (over 20 degrees in Wales) and it climbed to 18 degrees at around 3.30pm around here.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 25-Feb-19 06:36 PM GMT

... and because of that, my DIY projects languished for another day.

This time I explored...

Alice Holt Woods = 5 more Brimstones, another Comma and a Red Admiral.



Mostly the Brimstones just would not stay still. This was the only one and was a distance shot – blurred due to heavy cropping.







Also I visited the village of Worldham = Two more Brimstones.

So thats now 27 butterflies I have seen so far this year. Smashing any previous "record" I may have had for February.

And perhaps two more days of warm weather to go!

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 25-Feb-19 10:44 PM GMT

Definitely time to down tools and pick up the camera Ernie – it certainly looks like you've had a very fruitful couple of days 😊🍷🍷 That Comma took a shine to you so much that if I was you I'd be tempted back to see if it was still enamoured with you 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

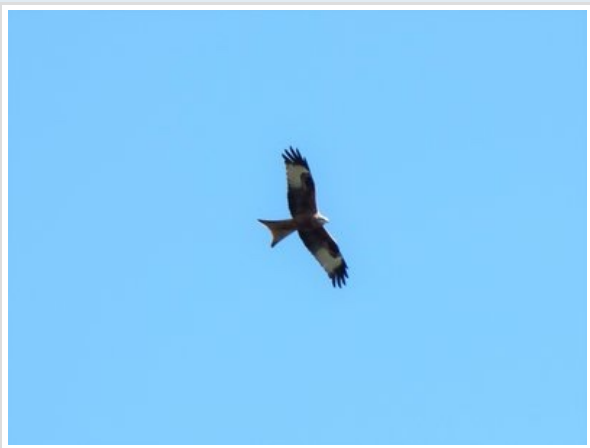
by ernie f, 26-Feb-19 03:47 PM GMT

26th Feb 2019

Broxhead Reserve: 2 Brimstone and 2 Comma. This time one of the Brimstones settled down for a short while long enough for me to get a close-up pic.



Also a Dartford Warbler and a Red Kite.



Kingsley Common – Manor-side: 2 Brimstone.

That's now a total of 33 butterflies I have seen this Feb.

But what you don't see can sometimes be just as informative as what you do.

I revisited Noar Hill. If you remember a couple of days ago I reported seeing a total of 10 Brimstone there. Today, between 2 and 3 pm – nothing, no Brimstones, in fact not a single Butterfly.

Then I did a quick check of the two Commas at Kingsley – one of which recently perched on my head. Again they were not there.

Now although it was 18 degrees pushing 19 at times today, the previous evening there had been a frost.

I wonder if the sub-zero night temperatures are culling butterflies – even the ones that over-winter but got pumped up by the recent heatwave. I must admit I don't know but there are some odd things going on at the moment.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 26-Feb-19 10:44 PM GMT

How dd you get that Brimstone to sit so still Ernie 🤔🍷😄 I noticed something similar; yesterday up to 7 Small Torts at lunchtime, slight frost last night, today only 2 Small Torts 😞 Fingers crossed they've just moved on 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 27-Feb-19 01:32 AM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

...This time one of the Brimstones settled down for a short while long enough for me to get a close-up pic.

How kind of him! Must confess, a couple actually settled for me on Tuesday afternoon....unfortunately, I had left my camera at home. 😞

Nice image of the kite.

### Re: ernie f

by Goldie M, 27-Feb-19 09:35 AM GMT

Cracking shot of the Brimstone ernie, not seen one yet 🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 27-Feb-19 04:32 PM GMT

Goldie - We are quite lucky round here for Brimstone, quite a few at the moment - but I have seen no Small Torts or Peacocks.

Wurzel - Although overall numbers are good, it appears there are big fluctuations from day to day. I expect it will all go quiet again in the next few days as it cools once again.

David - Thanks re the Kite. I seem to see at least one a day around here at the moment but they are not the easiest bird to photograph.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 27-Feb-19 04:44 PM GMT

The weather forecast suggests we will come out of our February heatwave tomorrow and rain is arriving so today may be the last for Winter butterflies. (I never thought I'd ever use that expression in the UK!)

Today's finds are:

Alice Holt Woodland - Batt's End = 1 Brim  
Sleaford Common = 2 Brim  
Broxhead - Anvil End = 1 Brim, 2 Comma  
Kingsley Pond = 1 Brim  
En-route home = 1 Brim

So my total winter count for Butterflies (all in Feb) now becomes 41!

At Broxhead I also saw this tiny moth...



I do not know what it is. Perhaps a Winter Moth? It was on the edge of the heath beside a line of trees. Perhaps it is a Mottled Grey? Does anyone know?

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 24-Mar-19 12:23 PM GMT

I folks, I have a question.

This morning there were two Brimstone Butterflies in my back garden. It is 24th March 2019.

On 23rd Feb 2019 there were also two Brimstone Butterflies in my back garden.

I did not see any Brimstones in my back garden from 27th Feb until now as the weather got very cold and windy.

So I got to thinking - are these the SAME TWO I saw in February or are they another two newly out of hibernation? In other words, can butterflies that overwinter as adults come out of their dormant phase when it is warm and then re-enter that phase when it gets cold again and then come back out of it again when it warms up again? Even if the cold spell is as much as a month?

I checked my books, the internet and also a quick search of this website but found no answers. Any ideas anyone?

### Re: ernie f

by bugboy, 24-Mar-19 04:38 PM GMT

I would say absolutely yes Ernie. Given that our climate is so changeable and unpredictable they've evolved to be able to cope with it. The species that

can't cope with our silly winters naturally aren't residents here 😊

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 25-Mar-19 10:46 PM GMT

Butterflies are used to sitting out spells of inclement weather, particularly springtime species, which have to withstand much more of it!!

Quite often, Brimstones will take to the air on a mild January day, but they clearly find somewhere to retreat to until temperatures rise in March.

They're pretty long-lived too - I've seen them in early June sometimes, meaning they must be around 11 months old!

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 26-Mar-19 09:55 AM GMT

Thanks for your views Bugboy and David

I must admit it does seem the most likely scenario. In fact I started to think back to other occasions in the past. For example I seem to remember a time one early Autumn when it appeared the Small Copper population at Broxhead had crashed during a cold spell. But then it warmed up again and the population blossomed again. They must have just gone "into hiding". It seems then that it is not just overwintering adults that can become dormant but potentially any UK butterfly might have this ability at any time of year should the weather prevent their normal activities.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 28-Mar-19 12:09 AM GMT

I would agree with the others Ernie - I've seen it happen as well with an OT many years ago. I know it the same one as it was an aberrant and it sat out a couple of days of inclement weather in my garden before magically reappearing with the sun. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 29-Mar-19 06:07 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel. I had pretty much guessed they could sit out a couple of days of bad weather - what amazes me is that my two Brimstones may have sat out almost a month of bad weather after becoming "activated" the first time during that warm February spell we had.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 29-Mar-19 06:19 PM GMT

29th March 2019, 11.15 to 12.45, Kingsley Common, 17 degrees, full sun

I had almost forgotten the delight of having a number of different species of butterfly buzzing around me pretty much at the same time. At one point I had a Peacock coming at me from one direction along the path whilst a Comma passed by both the Peacock and me going in the other direction while at the same time a Brimstone passed overhead - the Peacock then chased the Brimstone off.

Within the space of 10 minutes I had seen all this plus an Orange Tip, Small Tort and Specked Wood.



In all today at and around Kingsley:

Brimstone - 11 (3f, 8m)

O Tip - 2m

Peacock - 2

Small Tort - 1



Comma - 1  
Speckled Wood - 1

Plus, in the churchyard - my first blooming bluebell of the year.



And a baby bunny who did not see me. Ah, cute.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 29-Mar-19 09:37 PM GMT

It's a great feeling isn't it Ernie? 😊 Though I didn't haven't had the pleasure of an OT or Specklie yet this year 🍀 , fingers crossed that the nice weather continues...

Have a goodun

Wurze

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 31-Mar-19 03:41 PM GMT

#### ernie f wrote:

I had almost forgotten the delight of having a number of different species of butterfly buzzing around me pretty much at the same time....

Indeed, ernie. It's a wonderful time when the first of the chrysalis hibernators come to join the adult overwinterers. Suddenly, your outlook and serotonin levels go sky-high and you forget that winter was only a matter of weeks ago.

Glad to see you're keeping up your tradition of a non-butterfly image....that young rabbit is extremely cute. 😊

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 01-Apr-19 10:07 PM GMT

Thanks David and Wurzel – it certainly is good to see the spring is starting to get going now.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 01-Apr-19 10:15 PM GMT

A slow warm-up today but by 1 pm the butterflies were up and about with 1 Brimstone and 1 Red Admiral at Hartley Maudit and 2 Peacock, 1 Comma and 1 Brimstone at Empshott Green.



The wooded valleys at Empshott Green are known for their Ramsons and while none were in bloom yet the smell of garlic was quite pervasive!

At Kingsley

A Grey Squirrel found a nice branch to sunbathe on.



While I watched it decided it had had enough doing one side and turned round to warm up its other side!



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 02-Apr-19 06:46 PM GMT

That squirrel is certainly enjoying the spring, it has a lovely drowsy look 😊😴 You did well with the Red Admiral I've only seen them on 2 occasions this year 🍀

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 03-Apr-19 06:19 AM GMT

I like your 'take' on some of your butterfly shots, ernie. Brings a different dimension to things.

I daresay the sleepy squirrel (along with the butterflies) is about to receive a rude awakening with an easterly blast about to strike! Let's hope it's short lived and doesn't do too much damage.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 10-Apr-19 10:08 PM GMT

Wurzel, David

My drowsy squirrel was not quite so drowsy today. Spring had sprung and his was getting rather frisky with a female! Lots of mad dashing about in the trees.

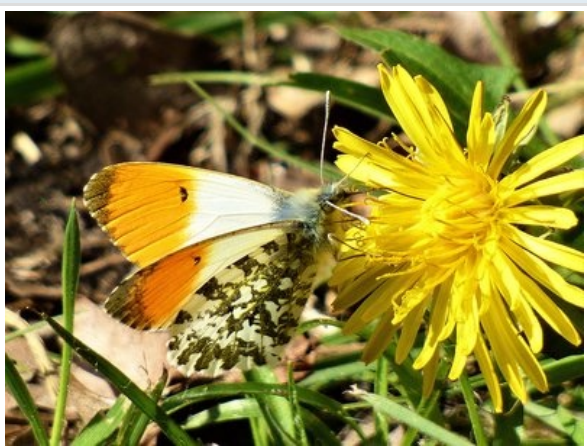
**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 10-Apr-19 10:28 PM GMT

10th April 2019: Kingsley Common. 3-4 pm, 14 degrees, full sun

After yesterdays rains the butterflies were out in force (given it was only 14 degrees at max).

2 Brims, 1 Comma, 2 Peacock, 1 Specklie, 2 Orange Tips and 3 Holly Blues, the latter all in the same tree and holly hedge below.











I had never really noticed before but Peacocks markings can vary a bit. Here are two I saw today. Check out the rear "eyes" of these two.



Wood Anemones are showing well too.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-19 10:34 PM GMT

Lovely set of shots Ernie especially the Holly Blue 🤩🌿 I know what you mean about the 'eyes', sometimes they look like faces and other times more like Pacman 😊 I've not seen a complete circle yet so something to keep and 'eye' out for 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 11-Apr-19 12:15 PM GMT

Wurzel – So now I have a new quest. Find a Peacock with a full circle rear eye. Of course that means finding and taking pics of hundreds of Peacock Butterflies!

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 11-Apr-19 12:19 PM GMT

11th Apr 2019, 10.30–11.30am, Kingsley – 7 degrees, mostly sunny

I thought I'd try a little experiment. Because there were quite a few species flying here yesterday afternoon in 14 degree temperature I thought I would return to see what was flying at exactly the same spot but at half the temperature.

Answer – A single Specklie. Nothing else, not even a Brimstone.

Last year it was a Specklie that was my last butterfly spot of the year and was very late. It appears this species is particularly hardy.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 11-Apr-19 05:59 PM GMT

11th April 2019, 1.30–2.30 pm, 11 degrees, Full Sun: The Devils Jumps

Gloria wanted to go the Frensham Garden Centre so I dropped her off and nipped round the corner to this amazing location of heath edged with grassy rides and woods. The area around the pond is very beautiful and the hills behind are a wonder. Today I had just enough time to visit the pond area.



On the track beside the pond, three Brimstone males were having a fight. One won the location and came down to nectar from a dandelion and held its wings ajar. To my recollection I have not seen one do this before.





Same spot, two male Peacocks were jousting. They would spiral around each other high into the sky before breaking apart and descending at speed. While I was there they clashed repeatedly in this way. However one came down to sunbathe for awhile to recharge his batteries.



They are a really wonderful butterfly. Being so common it is often easy to just dismiss them and walk on. I have done this many times in the past but I

am gaining a new respect for them.

The Devil's Jumps are called that because on dark stormy nights lightening bolts jump across them as they are capped with Ironstone.

Here are some past pics from the hilltop.

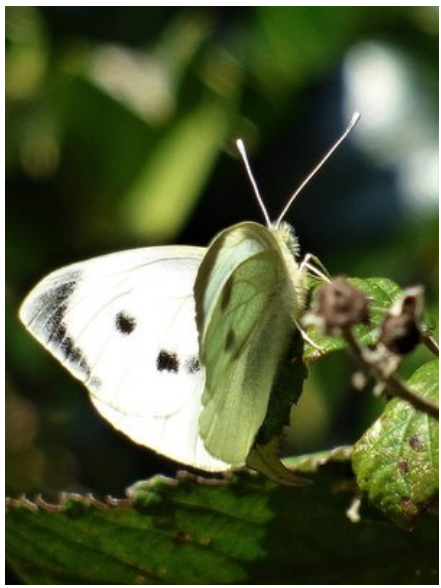


Note the contortions of this Ironstone which looks as if it came out of a volcanic vent millions of years ago – but this is Surrey! Not your typical volcanic landscape it must be said. I actually haven't bothered to look up how Ironstone is made. A nice little project.



11th April 2019, 4 pm, 13 degrees, Full Sun: Kingsley (again)

At 13 degrees we had two Specklies flying alongside 2 Peacocks, two Holly Blues and my first Small White (f) of the year. The latter had a corrugated look to its wings suggesting to me it was newly emerged.



**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 11-Apr-19 06:13 PM GMT

Some nice returns there, ernie. Looks like you've had a productive last couple of days. That's interesting behaviour from the Brimstone. Usually it's only the females which open their wings and that's generally when they're beating off the advances of a male!

Your 'Small' White is most definitely a Large White, and a female too, something I've yet to see this year. 🍷

**Re: ernie f**

by millerd, 11-Apr-19 09:19 PM GMT

I agree with your appreciation for the Peacock, Ernie. I was watching them today too, and they are colourful, graceful and have lots of character – great entertainment at this time of year.

Your photos sent me away to look up Ironstone... apparently, despite its appearance, it is a sedimentary rock. I suppose this fits with the sandy heathland nature of the landscape around Frensham ponds which I think is home to Silver-studded Blues and Graylings. I expect you know far better than I!

Cheers,

Dave

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 11-Apr-19 09:49 PM GMT

David M

Thanks for correcting me re the White. When I first saw it from a distance, it had its wings firmly closed and I thought it was a Green Veined White! Only as I got closer did I realise the wings were actually folded.

I have seen a female Brimstone warn off an ardent male by opening its wings just twice in my life. Once I even got a pic of it but did not back it up and had a disc crash some time after. Its one of the pics I regret losing but it made me change my lax approach to back-ups!



Dave (Miller)

Yep – I just checked out the Ironstone too. Sedimentary – as you might expect for Surrey. I still wonder how that cylindrical formation came about though.

Also, another folktale regarding the "Jumps" is that the Devil liked to jump from hill to hill and it annoyed Thor who chucked a big rock at him and missed (of course), but it was enough to make him flee, but the rock (I guess the Ironstone) still remains to this day.

I also found that Ironstone, like many other sedimentary rocks can contain fossils. I must go up there again one day and take a look for them.

And yes, you can see Silver–studded Blues and Grayling around here but they are surprisingly not as predominant as elsewhere on the Frensham and Thursley heaths nearby. It is in fact quite damp around the base of the hills, so that probably explains it.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 12–Apr–19 08:00 AM GMT

Interesting to see the contortions on the Ironstone Ernie – if I remember correctly its a Sedimentary rock but I won't say anymore than this so you've still got plenty to investigate 😊 Great set of images – you did really well catching the fresh Large White – particularly as you saw one before a Small White 🤩 And those are lovely Peacock shots – I reckon the eye is about 80% on that one, it's a Gibbous eye 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 12–Apr–19 12:24 PM GMT

#### ernie f wrote:

I have seen a female Brimstone warn off an ardent male by opening its wings just twice in my life.

That's the same number as me (at least, in the UK), ernie. I see it more frequently on the continent as Brimstones are much commoner there.

### Re: ernie f

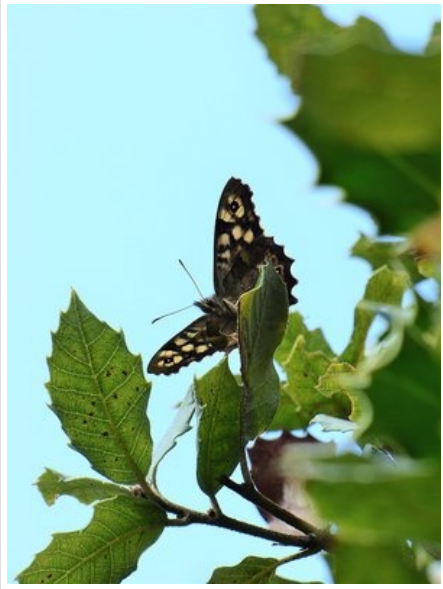
by ernie f, 12–Apr–19 05:41 PM GMT

Kingsley – 12th April 2019, 11.15–12.15, 10 degrees, Mostly Sunny

I continued my experiment to discover at what temperature different butterflies become active. It was 10 degrees during my visit to Kingsley today and all I saw were two Specklies again. I saw Specklies flying at 7 degrees recently. Also, the other day I saw a few active Brimstone and Peacocks flying at 11 degrees plus Holly Blues and Large White at around 13 degrees. Comma, Orange Tip and Red Admiral at 14 degrees. These are of course not definitive but just indicative of my observations over the last couple of weeks. My guess is its not as simple as ambient temperature alone – other factors may be more to do with the directness of the sunshine on the butterfly, local protection from the wind, where a butterfly decides to park itself for the night and whether that position gets morning sunshine or not, etc, etc.

But I still find it interesting that yet again its the Speckled Woods there were up and about in the lower temperatures. Today's Specklie pics...





#### More on Ironstone

Ironstone I have now read comes in a number of varieties, the type at The Devil's Jumps in Surrey is Carstone, dating back to the Cretaceous period (145 to 66 million years ago) - a time when dinosaurs were still roaming around, including T-Rex! It is one of the sandstones which can contain macro-fossils and is red because it has 15% or more iron which of course oxidises into a rust colour.

Here are some more pics of the Ironstone outcrops on the top of the Jumps which I took a few years ago.





I once visited Hunstanton Cliffs on the north Norfolk coast where I have only just realised Carstone outcrops and many years ago took pictures of the fossils embedded in the rock strata there however it was not from the Carstone but from its adjacent rocks in the strata.

Here are some pics of Hunstanton's cliffs and its fossils.







This makes me want to go up to the top of the Devil's Jumps again even more now to see if I can find the fossils in the Carstone.

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 12-Apr-19 10:40 PM GMT

Interesting observations about the effects local climate on butterflies Ernie. I've noticed some similar things in that even when below double digits the butterflies will fly so long as there is very little wind and strong sunshine 😊 Interesting that the Specklies are 'up and at em' first or hanging around in the lower temperatures – could this be because they're adapted so living lower in the canopy in woodlands with 'dappling' – so they're used to the temperature differences and so might respond more slowly to the fall in temperature? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by millerd, 12-Apr-19 11:45 PM GMT

I know it's not about the butterflies, Ernie, but the ironstone shots are fascinating. Some of those outcrops look like chocolate flake! 😊

Nice Specklie shots too. They do seem to stay up late when the sun is still shining, and I often see them towards the end of the day tangling with that other afternoon flyer – the Red Admiral.

Cheers,

Dave

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 13-Apr-19 04:17 PM GMT

Dave, Wurzel – Those Specklies are hardy little fellows. I don't get out much in the early evenings so its nice to know they are still flying around. It seems they burn the candle at both ends. Wurzel – I think you may have hit the nail on the head with why they can be like this. They are used to being in cooler temperatures in woodlands, indeed its what they do best.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 13-Apr-19 04:34 PM GMT

13th April 2019, 11.15 to 12.15 8-9 degrees: Hartley Maudit

The Specklies were still flying about at 8 degrees but three Orange Tips were also out and about at 9 degrees!

Regarding the OTips - I think I may have discovered the pivotal temperature for them to become active. I followed one of the three as it zoomed back and forth in search of females. It was 9 degrees in the sun. As soon as a cloud came over it perched, put its wings firmly up and went into a mini-roost. The shade had caused a one-degree drop down to 8 degrees. As the sun came out again it opened its wings, first ajar and then full and after about a minute was flying again.

Because it perched still I was able to get in close and it did not budge while I took a few pics.



Compare the underside of the wing when the sun was not shining so bright with the same wing as the sun came out full and the butterfly held its wings ajar to capture its energy.





And to round of a pretty good hour – a fledgeling blackbird stood its ground while I took its pic.



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 13-Apr-19 06:16 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie, it's great when a hunch makes sense 😊 I too observed the same thing as you with an OT today although I didn't get any of those lovely stained glass shots 🍷🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 14-Apr-19 08:35 AM GMT

The recent cool weather has made many an Orange Tip 'sit still', ernie. Clearly, 8c is not optimal temperature for them to fly, although Speckled Woods don't seem to mind.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 15-Apr-19 12:22 PM GMT

Wurzel, David – Its a great time of year when its cool in the morning but warms up in the afternoon (well a bit anyway). Plenty of opportunities to get close to sitting butterflies without them spooking too quickly.

Although it was 12 degrees at 11 am at Kingsley today – the breeze saw to it that only the Specklies were flying. I guess the wind-chill can affect butterflies in the same way as it affects humans.





Incidentally, today marks my first full year posting on UK Butterflies.

Tempus certainly fugitted these last 12 months!



### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 15-Apr-19 04:27 PM GMT

This nice female O Tip dropped into my back garden this afternoon.



I looked a bit closer and saw something I had not noticed before. Is it me or is there a yellow chevron on the head and a red chevron on the thorax?



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-19 10:33 AM GMT

Happy UK B'day for yesterday Ernie 😊 Cracking shots of the Speckle and OT 😊🇬🇧 You're right about the cool mornings, the only problem is having to wander around for a bit before finding any butterflies 😊😊 I too have noticed the yellow mark at the top of thorax and I've not worked out if it's pollen or actual markings 😊 I think the red chevron could be where the hairs have parted or worn away revealing the ground colour of the carapace? It's great isn't it the more questions you try and answer the more questions there are to answer 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 16-Apr-19 10:49 AM GMT

One other thing that your image shows is the waxy, translucent look to the hindwings. I'm sure this is as a result of the yellow/black mottling on the underside showing through the upperside in certain kinds of light conditions.

### Re: ernie f

by Andrew555, 16-Apr-19 11:13 AM GMT

That Ironstone looks amazing Ernie. Very nice Orange-tip shots as well. 😊

Cheers

### Re: ernie f

by Goldie M, 16-Apr-19 02:12 PM GMT

Great shots of the Orange Tips ernie , they really show the lovely patterned undersides of the wings 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 17-Apr-19 08:19 PM GMT

Wurzel, David, Andrew, Goldie – Glad you like my OTips. As someone on this website said last year. You can never have too many pics of them.

So – more to come!

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 17-Apr-19 08:39 PM GMT

17th April 2019 – Selborne Church Meadow 10.30–11.30 am, 13 degrees

5 OTip (4m, 1f), 4 Brim (3m, 1f), 1 Peacock, 1 H Blue (m), 1 Small White (m)



Another thing I have only just noticed about Peacocks is how their hindwings curve around their rear eyes.









17th April 2019 - Folly Hill 3-4 pm, 17 degrees

1 OTip (m), 1 Brim (m), 1 Sp Wood, 1 Sm Copper



**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 18-Apr-19 01:38 PM GMT

18th April 2019 - Noar Hill, 10.30-11.30 am, Hazy Sun, 14-15 degrees

5 OT (4m, 1f), 5 Brim (4m, 1f), 1 Peacock, 1 Sp Wd, 1 Duke







Selborne Church Meadow (again), 11.30–12.30, Full Sun, 16–18 degrees

Butterflies as of yesterday with additional H Blue and Small Tort on path leading to the meadow.





**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 18-Apr-19 05:34 PM GMT

18th April 2019, Four Marks, 3-4 pm, Full Sun, 20 degrees

1 H Blue, 2 OTip (1m, 1f), 3 Sp Wd, 2 Sm Tort

The two Small Tortoiseshells were a courting pair.



The male (I guess) was behind the female. He would creep up to her and duck and bob his antennae up and down and then from side to side touching her hindwings as he did so. Intermittently he would lay his wings very flat and vibrate them quickly. I watched this performance for about 10 minutes. She did not respond that much other than to flap her wings but she wasn't saying no exactly either other than to keep her abdomen low - maybe she was playing hard-to-get?

Antennae up and down...



... and from side to side.





Unfortunately after taking pics I backed away to quickly and disturbed them. They flew off together (into the sunset to live happily ever after?).

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 18-Apr-19 10:29 PM GMT

Great to see the Duke shot from Noar Hill Ernie – how long will they be out there as I don't think I'll be able to make it this Bank holiday weekend? 😊  
Interesting behaviour you captured with the Small Tort; the antennae waving is something I seem to recall another species doing (Peacock?) but I can't work out why that would help make him seem attractive/suitable to the female 😊 Evolution is a wonderful thing 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 18-Apr-19 11:36 PM GMT

Seems like all our Welsh Tortoiseshells have migrated east this year! 😊

Well done with the Duke too; I suspect their flight period will be rather successful with four glorious, sunny, warm days to come.

**Re: ernie f**

by trevor, 19-Apr-19 06:40 AM GMT

Well done finding an early Duke, Ernie. I note that several people on here have also found the odd one. I have seen the Small Tort 'nose to tail' behaviour several times at Halnaker, West Sussex.

Great start to the season!  
Trevor.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 19-Apr-19 01:02 PM GMT

Wurzel – Its right at the start of the Duke season at Noar Hill. They will be here for some weeks to come.

David – It was a bumper crop of Dukes at Noar hill last year so maybe things will get even better this year after the few days of sun to come.

Trevor – I have seen Small Torts nose-to-tail before but this was the first time I have seen this odd courting behaviour.

I have witnessed something like it with Wood Whites. I also was having a chat to one of the Wardens at Magdalen Hill reserve today and he said he had seen the wing vibration during the Lulworth Skipper courtship.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 19-Apr-19 01:10 PM GMT

19th April 2019, Magdalen Hill Bottom, 11-12noon, Full Sun, 20 degrees

3 OTip (2m, 1f), Brim (m+f) > 10, 1 H Blue, 1 Comma, 1 Peacock, 1 Grizzled Skip, 1 Burnet Companion.



**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 20-Apr-19 05:21 PM GMT

April 20th 2019, Magdalen Hill Bottom (again) 9.15 - 11.45 am, Full Sun, 15 to 21 degrees

Another visit today and I'm glad I did.

7 H Blue, 6 Grizzlies, 2 Greenstreak, >10 Brims, many females looking for egg-laying sites, >10 OTips, 1 Peacock, 1 Small Copper, 2 Mint Moth, 1

Common Marbled Carpet moth (I think)

A number of Blackcaps singing, Skylarks, Yellowhammer, Dunnock, Red Kite, Kestrel

Pics now. First the Grizzlies.



This one had a rather large chunk taken from its forewing.



A "Mug shot"



And this one perched up on its back legs resting on a grass blade using its front legs.





Next the Greenstreaks

In silhouette – notice how the white spots still stand out clearly.



Side on – the "classic shot"



Three-quarter profile



"Mug shot"



One of these Greenstreaks would perch on a leaf, do a wing-roll and then stamp his feet on the leaf over and over again. His front legs were lifted up in normal male Lycaenidae mode but even they moved up and down in sequence. I thought it was a fluke but he flew off, round the bush and landed on an adjacent bush of a different type. He then did the wing-roll and foot-tapping performance again. Of course I spent a lot of time last year investigating the wing-roll so why didn't I see the foot-tapping before? The mind boggles.

Next the Orange Tips. There was a pair mating. I saw their first contact and stayed with them for about 30 minutes but they didn't break off while I was there.









Then a fleeting pic of what I think must be a Common Marbled Carpet Moth. If anyone can give advice as to the ID of this one I would appreciate it. Thanks.



And all the while the Blackcaps were singing all around me in the trees.



Back home once more and I found my first ever Vinegar Cup fungus in my own back garden! One of our few spring-fruiting fungi.



### Re: ernie f

by David M, 20-Apr-19 05:33 PM GMT

Well done with the Grizzlies and the Green Hairstreaks, ernie. Great too that you saw a pair of mating Orange Tips. In spite of the hundreds I've seen these last three weeks, I haven't managed that! 🍷

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 20-Apr-19 07:01 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Ernie especially the OTs in cop - I still need that for my version of the Butterfly Karma Sutra 🤪😄🍷 That Grizzlie didn't do so much as have a chunk missing as half a wing 😞 it always amazes me that they can still get about even with such reduction in their wings 😞😄 I headed to Noar Hill anyway as I don't trust the weather staying like this and so made hay while the sun shone - numbers are starting to build and I got a count of 15 - which is probably the most Dukes I've ever seen in one sitting 😄😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 21-Apr-19 01:15 PM GMT

David - I was well chuffed with the mating OTips. It was a first for me.

Wurzel - I went to Noar Hill today and found 15 Dukes too. I wonder if they were all the same ones. 😄

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 21-Apr-19 01:24 PM GMT

21st April 2019, Noar Hill, 9.00 - 11.30 am, Full Sun, 13-22 degrees

15 Dukes, 1 Burnet Companion, 3 Mint Moth, 3 Greenstreaks, 2 Peacock, 1 Sm Tort, 3 Sp Wd, 7 H Blue, >10 Brim, >10 OTip, swarm of Adela Reaumurella moths and my first two Dingies of the year.

Dukes







Dingies



Adela Reaumurella







### Re: ernie f

by Janet Turnbull, 21-Apr-19 01:34 PM GMT

Wow Ernie - 🍷🍷🍷! You are lucky to be so close to Duke country.  
Janet

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 21-Apr-19 09:59 PM GMT

Cool looking moth Ernie but not as cool as Adela metallica 😏😏😏 I reckon of those 15 there must be at least some that were the same, if not all of them 😊 Good job with the Dingies - looks like I missed them by a day 😊😏🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 21-Apr-19 10:51 PM GMT

Great Duke haul, ernie, and good that a couple of Dingies put in an appearance. They're definitely next on my radar.

### Re: ernie f

by CallumMac, 22-Apr-19 08:57 AM GMT

Great shots as usual Ernie, especially of the *Adela* - not an easy moth to photograph! Interesting to see Dukes alongside Greenstreaks and Dingies - the latter two are both well on the go in Yorkshire but I haven't heard any news from the Duke sites. Maybe I'll have to check for myself next weekend...

### Re: ernie f

by Goldie M, 22-Apr-19 11:01 AM GMT

Great shots ernie 😊 I particularly your pair of Orange Tips, 😊 I've yet to see a Holly Blue this Spring so I'm still hoping on that one but I'll give you a couple of Greens 🍷🍷 for the Grizzle which I've never seen yet 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 23-Apr-19 12:44 PM GMT

Janet - I have lived less than 10 miles away from Noar Hill for nearly 20 years now so I sometimes forget how difficult it is to get to see Dukes without a bit of a journey for other people. But then for me to see PB Frits takes a journey of around an hour.

Wurzel - It was a funny thing. As I was wandering around Noar Hill looking for Dukes it crossed my mind that perhaps there may be some Dingies amongst them, and then, as if on cue - one appeared right in front of me. Also, I am beginning to think you may be a fan of Metallica. Just a hint I am getting!

David - By the time I write this you have probably already seen your first Dingy this year.

Callum - You are not kidding when you say its difficult to photograph the Adela. I must have spent 20 minutes trying to get my shots of them. They keep buzzing about, up and down and around and around.

Goldie - Grizzlies are another of those butterflies that I am lucky enough to live close to. Magdalen Hill is a regular haunt for them.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 23-Apr-19 12:53 PM GMT

23rd April 2019, Kingsley, 10-11 am, very hazy, some sun, 16-18 degrees

Nothing new today - really just a bit of a consolidation of springtime species.

5 H Blue (all male), 5 Sp Wd, 2 OTip (1m, 1f), 1 Greenstreak.

Unfortunately all pics were taken at distance on long zoom and hand-held so I had a devil of a job with camera-shake.



## Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 23-Apr-19 04:48 PM GMT

23rd April 2019, Noar Hill, 1-3pm, hazy, 20 degrees

Noar Hill more or less goes to sleep at far as butterflies are concerned mid-afternoon (butterfly siesta?) but I thought I'd give it a try. My reasoning was that the Dukes and Dingies might be less skittish without the direct sun on them and to a certain extent they were.

At 1 pm in a single pit (the one at the bottom near the farm), the following species were in flight - Brim, OTip, Sp Wd, Duke, H Blue, S White - and this is a very small pit. By 3 pm next to nothing was flying - just a couple of Dukes and a single Dingy in the next pit along.



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 23-Apr-19 09:22 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Ernie it must be nice to be rolling in Dukes 🍀🍀 I love it when you're able to manifest Butterflies like you did with the Dingy- I did that myself the other day at Sidbury Hill and it threw up 2 Small Heaths 😄😄 I do like a bit of metal, I find Iron Maiden Killers is a great album for the journey to a butterfly site 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 24-Apr-19 09:43 PM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

...David - By the time I write this you have probably already seen your first Dingy this year.



Not so, ernie, and it might be a few days yet given the weather forecast. 😞

In the meantime, I'll just have to visit your PD to get my fix. 😊

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 25-Apr-19 09:45 AM GMT

David – The weather has taken a downturn here too – so no more Dingies for me either – at least for a week.

Wurzel – Nice to hear you got Small Heaths up on Sidbury Hill. Also, did you know this bit of interesting info about Sidbury Hill? It is the highest hill on the horizon from Stonehenge and the solstice line through the centre of Stonehenge passes right across the top of Sidbury Hill! Plus – re Metal. I went from Purple and Sabbath when I was a kid straight to Dream Theater and Tool as an ageing adult, missing the late 70's and all the 80's altogether. Did I miss something? 😊

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 25-Apr-19 08:50 PM GMT

"re Metal. I went from Purple and Sabbath when I was a kid straight to Dream Theater and Tool as an ageing adult, missing the late 70's and all the 80's altogether. Did I miss something? 😊🤪 Only one or two bands Ernie 😊 If you get a chance try and listen to Freelance Fiend by Leafhound, make sure that it's turned up to 11 when you do, it's not exactly heavy but the guitar sound tears the air to shreds 😊😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 26-Apr-19 08:08 AM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel – I'll check 'em out.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 26-Apr-19 08:17 AM GMT

25th April 2019, Kingsley, 12noon – 1pm, 80 percent cloud cover, keen breeze, 14 degrees in sun, 13 in shade

I was not sure if I would find much under these conditions but I got five species. OTip, H Blue, Sp Wd, Peacock and Greenstreak. None flew for long because the breeze and shade kept them down, but when the sun came out they all had a go. The Peacock for example kept trying to find sheltered spots – on one occasion settling in a small hole in the ground. I stood right beside a roosting male OTip without at first knowing it while I was looking for the Greenstreak that had just zipped past. When I had finished with the Greenstreak I looked round and found the OTip on a Bluebell. While the cloud was overhead it held its wings closed but as the sun fleetingly made an appearance it slowly opened its wings. I grabbed a shot before it flew off.



### Re: ernie f

by Goldie M, 26-Apr-19 10:25 AM GMT

Orange Tips always look great on Blue Bells ernie, lovely shot, Goldie 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 26-Apr-19 02:46 PM GMT

I agree, Goldie. The very essence of spring.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 26-Apr-19 02:54 PM GMT

26th April 2019, Noar Hill, 12.30 – 1.30 pm, 80% cloud, keen breeze, 15 degree in sun, 14 in shade

Like yesterday, given the conditions I was lucky to see 5 species. This time Brim, OTip, Peacock, L White and Duke.

But today the flowers were the thing. Firstly the Early Purple orchids are out. Then in the valley between Noar Hill and Empshott Green, the Garlic Ramsons were almost at peak.



Then along the open section of the bridlepath inside the Noar Hill reserve, a flower I have only ever seen once in my life before, the False Oxlip. This is a natural hybrid of the Cowslip and Primrose.



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 26-Apr-19 07:59 PM GMT

Interesting to read about the False Oxlip. I seem to recall seeing something similar mentioned in a GCSE Biology question based on Genetics which mentioned that the hybrid showed polyploidy (a doubling of chromosomes) is that the case with this hybrid do you know? I tried googling it and read some very interesting abstracts/scanned some papers but they didn't actually answer this question? 😊 Still it was an interesting 30 minutes 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by keving, 26-Apr-19 08:06 PM GMT

Ernie, Great photo of the Orange Tip on bluebell. This is the one shot I haven't managed yet (they seem made for each other)

Kind Regards  
Kev

**Re: ernie f**

by Allan.W., 27-Apr-19 03:17 PM GMT

Hello Ernie ,  
Just seen your False Oxlips ,we found two clumps at our local Duke site, in mid-Kent (no Dukes as yet !) amongst a mass of Primroses ,we generally find them at this site in most years ,also curiously one single red flowered primrose ,obviously with some garden escape influence ,  
I posted a shot of the Oxlips (false ) in April sightings .  
Regards Allan.W.

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 27-Apr-19 08:46 PM GMT

That wild garlic image is intoxicating, ernie. Fortunately, we've plenty around here and I love the gentle aroma it gives off as you walk beside it.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 27-Apr-19 08:48 PM GMT

Kev - I was lucky with the OTip shot but I was able to do the same last year at this location too. Its a sheltered spot in a churchyard given over to the wildlife and it seems to be working wonders.

Wurzel - I have no clue at all regarding polyploidy of false oxlips. In fact until you told me about the possibility I had never heard of it. Its staggering how much I don't know about stuff! 😊

Allan - I looked up hybridisation of this family of plants and it appears there are all sorts of rare crosses occurring naturally in the wild. I default them all to False Oxlip as its easier but in fact they may not all be. For example - I saw this example below a few years ago in Chappett's Copse, a woodland near me known for its rare plants.



The one I saw yesterday was in open grassland surrounded by Cowslips. This one was in woodland surrounded by Primroses. They are clearly different in look and habitat. I am sure an expert (not me) would be able to tell which hybrids they actually were.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 27-Apr-19 08:51 PM GMT

David - I actually have a fair size patch of Ramsons growing in the woodland right next to my house and the "gentle aroma" as you put it so well, likes to waft through the open windows of our house when it gets a chance! 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 28-Apr-19 04:23 PM GMT

ernie f wrote:



David – I actually have a fair size patch of Ramsons growing in the woodland right next to my house and the "gentle aroma" as you put it so well, likes to waft through the open windows of our house when it gets a chance! 😊

It's one of my favourite spring aromas, ernie, and you're lucky to have it so close to your windows! 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 28-Apr-19 04:54 PM GMT

28th April 2019, Royal Wood, 1.30–2.30 pm, Overcast, 13 degrees

Gloria was doing a garden centre trip so I dropped her off and spent a while at this common – part woodland, part scrub, part heath. Not a lot was happening but I did see a bunch of day-flying micro-moths buzzing around a few gorse bushes.

I am usually hopeless at identifying micro-moths but got lucky scouring a moth website. I found this species was called *Grapholita internana*, and these were males.



**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 29-Apr-19 03:15 PM GMT

29th April 2019, Noar Hill, 10.30-12 noon, 50 percent cloud, 14 degrees

Mother Shipton, Cinnabar, Adela Reaumurella (another group)

> 10 Dukes, 2 Dingies, >10 OTip, 2 Small Tort, 1 Brim, 3 H Blue, 1 Sp Wd, poss 1 Small White but it just would not stop for positive ID (or pic).





Where shall we three meet again?  
On Noar Hill, at half-past ten!







I did a quick google of this moth and it suggests the eggs are laid in the flowers of its host plant, usually low down – but this one appears to be in an egg-laying pose high up. Problem is – I can't even tell if its a female, let alone whether it is really egg-laying or not. See what you think.



**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 29-Apr-19 07:40 PM GMT

Same day, Kingsley Old Church, 3.45-4.45 pm, 80% cloud, 15 degrees

Two H Blue, 1 Greenstreak and 1 Comma were all on the same Lilac at the same time, even though they all moved onto other things like Yews and Bluebells and even a Gatepost, etc at certain times. Also Sp Wd, OTip.









And what has happened to the scales of this Holly Blue?



**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 30-Apr-19 05:10 PM GMT

You're doing pretty well to see these butterflies in the weather conditions you describe, ernie. Like you, I'm puzzled by the 'speckled' appearance of your final Holly Blue. I presume it must have come into contact with some liquid that had later dried.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 30-Apr-19 06:02 PM GMT

David - That's an interesting idea re the Holly Blue scales. Adjacent to this churchyard (but obscured by the lilac and other shrubs) there is a sand and gravel extraction works. I wonder if they have any processes that involve liquids that may have affected this butterfly? I guess we shall never know for sure.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 30-Apr-19 06:13 PM GMT

30th April 2019, Magdalen Hill, 10.15–12.15, 50% cloud, 11–15 degrees

6 Brown Argus (my first this year)

1 Small Heath (my first this year)

1 Sm Copper, 3 H Blue, 4 Brim, 2 OTip, 1 S White, 2 Grizzled Skips, 1 Dingy Skip, 2 Red Ads, 7 Greenstreaks.





A male Brimstone pursued a female for awhile but it never ended in mating even though at one point they were dancing cheek-to-cheek.







**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 30-Apr-19 06:20 PM GMT

30th April 2019, Alice Holt Woods, 4-5 pm, mostly sunny, 17 degrees

2 Green-veined Whites (my first this year)

1 Red Ad, 2 Brim, 3 OTip, 3 Sp Wd, 1 Comma and 4 H Blues (including my first female of the year).







*Coming in to land*

Also heard my first Cuckoo of the year.

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 30-Apr-19 07:31 PM GMT

Great to see the Brown Argus – that means Marshies, Common Blues, Adonis Blues etc aren't far behind 😊 Cracking cheek to cheek and coming into land shots 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 01-May-19 08:35 AM GMT

That's quite a range, ernie. Love those Brimstones....I guess they won't be around for much longer but they've had a great time of it thus far in 2019.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 01-May-19 09:23 AM GMT

Wurzel, David – In one day, my first GV White, Brown Argus and Small Heath of the year. So with all the stuff that's going on round here for me at the moment I was surprised that the Brimstone was the species that offered the greatest surprise. I don't even know how it was possible for these two butterflies to fly while physically in contact with each others wings in this way. I was not able to capture the wings downstroke in the next second after the "cheek-to-cheek" shot but presume the action must have pushed them apart.

**Re: ernie f**

by Goldie M, 01-May-19 01:30 PM GMT

Well done ernie, seen nothing here at all and I keep going out in the garden hoping , if I can't get out much that some thing will land 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 01-May-19 09:25 PM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

...I was not able to capture the wings downstroke in the next second after the "cheek-to-cheek" shot but presume the action must have pushed them apart.

Only solution is to set your camera to 'burst' mode, thus taking about 10 images in quick succession. Whether they'll return a sharp image is another matter....

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 02-May-19 07:07 PM GMT

2nd May 2019, Bentley Wood, 9.30-11 AM, 95% cloud. 10-12 degrees, 13 degrees in the fleeting sun

Cool and overcast. I must have been mad to travel from Alton in East Hampshire across to Bentley Wood on the border of Wiltshire and as it was the morning rush hour when I did, it took 1.5 hours.

I stayed no more than about 1 hour and saw only four butterflies while I was there – but am I disappointed? No! Because the butterflies I saw were 3 Pearl-bordered Fritillaries and a Duke. Usually I visit this site later in the month when the PB and S-PB Frits are flying together but when I do this, the PB



ones are usually getting a bit worn and tatty, so this year I decided to go earlier in May (knowing that Wurzel had already said they were there) so that I could get pics of them in better condition.

The cool, overcast weather meant they did not fly about much. Only when a sporadic bit of sun showed itself did they move from their perches but this was to my benefit because I could follow them and when they perched again they would do so for a long while and allowed me to get in close.

Both male and female were represented amongst the three I saw today.











At one point, one came to me and I was able to photograph it on my hand. It stayed there quite content for about 5 minutes before it flew off, none the worse for its experience with a human. It made my arm ache though to hold it still for so long.



A beetle I had never seen before came barrelling along the path. I looked it up when I got home. It is one of the species of Oil Beetle, most likely the Black Oil Beetle. They exude a substance that can cause blisters on the skin so should not be picked up. For this reason they are also known as Blister Beetles.



I knew that Dukes flew here but this is the first time I have seen one at this location.



2nd May 2019, Magdalen Hill, 11.30-12 noon, 100% cloud, 14 degrees



I had heard that Small Blues had already been recorded this year in the scrape at the top of the hill so despite the clouds I gave it a try on my return home. No Blues but did see a single Small Copper. The only butterfly that I did see at this reserve today but it was on a Primrose and I had never got a pic of a Copper on a Primrose before.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 03-May-19 09:15 AM GMT

Cracking Pearls Ernie especially the 'double page spread' 🤩👍👍 The cooler weather works wonders for the Pearls as you said, the last thing you want is a warm sunny day 😊 I'll send you a PM about the Duke as I'm heading back to the EC this weekend so it would be good to catch up with it? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by Andrew555, 03-May-19 10:13 AM GMT

Lovely Pearls Ernie, particularly the 'on hand' experience. 😊 You've managed to get some real close up's recently, glad the trip worked out for you. 😊

Cheers

### Re: ernie f

by bugboy, 03-May-19 09:12 PM GMT

Hi Ernie, like you did on my diary I had to go back a bit to catch up on yours, some lovely juicy closeups of various species and quite a few I've yet to pin down this year too 🤩, although I may get a few more species over the weekend as long as the promised sun shows up!

Cow-wheat: It's a plant I only ever notice when looking for Heath Fritillary since it's the principle food plant of the Kent & Essex colonies. Easy to find when they're on the wing as it's in flower at the same time but at this time of year it's quite inconspicuous and does bear a passing resemblance to grass. Like it's relative, Yellow Rattle, it's a partial parasite on nearby plants. I think it prefers acid soils.

### Re: ernie f

by Goldie M, 04-May-19 09:08 AM GMT

Lovely Pearls ernie 🤩👍 especially the one on your Hand 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 04-May-19 03:43 PM GMT

Cool weather at this time of year is never terribly exciting, but it CAN play into your hands as far as photographing butterflies is concerned, as your images show, ernie.

Great that you managed a full underside shot with that specimen hanging on to the grass blade. Well done with the Duke of Burgundy too.

Have to say that last image of Magdalen Hill is amazing. I don't think I've ever seen so many cowslips!

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 04-May-19 04:35 PM GMT

Wurzel – It was my lucky day. I was pleased just to be able to get the standard single under-wing shot but could not believe it when the double underwing shot presented itself.



Andrew – Thanks. Its not often you get a butterfly land on you but when you do it makes you feel great. The last time this happened to me was when a Silver-studded Blue landed on my ear. Luckily I was with my wife at the time and she took that pic!

Bugboy – I am trying to get close-up shots whenever I can this year. Of course the cool and often cloudy weather makes it a bit easier. I am looking forward to the warmer, sunny summer days but know that will be the end of the super-close-up shots. Also, thanks for the lowdown on the Cow-wheat. I have never seen a Heath Frit but then I have not gone looking for them either. One day I shall and probably get the Cow-wheat at the same time.

Goldie – The Pearl on the hand was one of those lifetime experiences. It may have helped that the butterflies were not being constantly disturbed. On sunny days at this location during Pearl flying time it can get a bit crowded with butterfly enthusiasts chasing them everywhere. On that cool, overcast morning – I was the only one there. I had the place to myself. For some of the time I just sat on the bench and watched how serene and quiet the Eastern Clearing was.

Dave – Re the pic of Magdalen Hill. That is the Cowslips looking in just one direction (I think south). I could easily have taken another to the west and another to the north and got almost as many in shot each time. They brightened up an otherwise gloomy day.

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 05-May-19 12:55 PM GMT

[quote] Re the pic of Magdalen Hill. That is the Cowslips looking in just one direction (I think south). I could easily have taken another to the west and another to the north and got almost as many in shot each time.

Amazing. Sounds like the UK's cowslip capital, ernie. Who needs sunshine when you've got 10,000+ bright yellow flowers in all directions?

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 10-May-19 12:53 PM GMT

10th May 2019, 11-12 noon, Noar Hill, 60% cloud, 13 degrees, light breeze.

After days of drab, cold, rainy weather – a break opened up!!! So I went to Noar Hill for an hour.

I only visited three pits and a small part of the bridleway but in that time plenty of Dukes and Dingies. In one pit three Dukes and a Dingy were twirling around in a sparring flight. On the bridleway another three Dingies were doing the same. Also I saw 1 OTip, 1 Greenstreak and 3 S Heath.



My primary aim today though was to try and get a close-up shot of a Small Heath. If you have been following my PD recently you can see it has become a quest of mine to get Butterfly close-ups.



Yep.  
Mission accomplished.

**Re: ernie f**

by Neil Freeman, 10-May-19 06:56 PM GMT

I'm really impressed by all those Cowslips on Magdalen Hill, nothing like that around my way. The only comparable amount of yellow here is in fields full of oilseed rape. I know what I would rather see.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 10-May-19 10:27 PM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

..My primary aim today though was to try and get a close-up shot of a Small Heath. If you have been following my PD recently you can see it has become a quest of mine to get Butterfly close-ups.

You're absolutely right to do so, ernie. It's always good when someone conjures something up that's a little 'removed' from the norm, be that early stages, interesting behaviour, or views of butterflies that tend to be overlooked.

Personally, I just need to catch up with Small Heath, period.

So many of us take them for granted but they're becoming scarcer every year.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 11-May-19 06:00 PM GMT

Neil - There are thousands of Cowslips at Magdalen. Here is a pic from a previous year of the bottom of the hill on the other side.



They were not quite as dense there this year but the field above it was! Also the central part of the reserve had a whole bundle of them too.

However, having said all that, if you look closer at the image I posted the other day, you will see that the hill in the distance that looks continuous with Magdalen, in fact is not and the distance yellow is in fact a field of Rape!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 11-May-19 06:03 PM GMT

David - I am beginning to take none of our butterflies for granted. Even some of the others that have been common in the past may take a hit at any time what with climate change and all.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 11-May-19 06:11 PM GMT

11th May, 12 noon - 1 pm, Noar Hill, cloud variable, 15 degrees, light breeze

3 H Blue (2m, 1f), Brim (3m, 2f), >10 Dukes, 5 Dingies, 1 Red Ad, 2 Small White (m), 3 OTip (2m, 1f)  
1 Green carpet moth.







A female OTip on an Early Purple Orchid. A "grab" shot as it was only there fleetingly but nice moment.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 11-May-19 08:14 PM GMT

Lovely stained glass Duke Ernie 😊 I know what you mean about the female OTs I've seen plenty but only gotten two images of them 😊 they have been on a mission this year more so than in others it seems 😊 Great close-up of the Small Heath – close ups for me always reveal more of the (anthropomorphosised) character of the butterfly – in this case a slightly grumpy, bearded old codger 😊😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 11-May-19 11:32 PM GMT

Good that you're still seeing Holly Blues, ernie. Mine ran out today; mind you, they've had a good innings....5 solid weeks.

That Green Carpet moth is most attractive. Not sure I've ever seen one in my area.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 12-May-19 01:39 PM GMT

Wurzel – That Small Heath is a bit like me – a slightly grumpy codger – but without the beard!

David – That was only my second ever Green Carpet Moth, so they can't be too common round here either.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 12-May-19 04:01 PM GMT

12th May 2019, 11-12 noon, Noar Hill, mostly sunny, 14-16 degrees

In the bottom pit alone there was Peacock, Sp Wood, H Blue, GV White, Brim, OTip, Duke and 4 Greenstreaks – I think all male as they were in two sparring pairs.



Nearby there was Dingy Skip and S Heath.

Plus my first ever Ashy Mining Bee.



**Re: ernie f**

by Goldie M, 12-May-19 05:37 PM GMT

Hi! ernie, I looked for Dingy Skippers today but couldn't find any, love the Green Hair Streak on the Buttercup 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 13-May-19 06:28 AM GMT

That's an impressively marked male Green Veined White, ernie. The ones I'm seeing have scarcely any at all; you have to take a close look to make sure they're not Small Whites.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 13-May-19 05:03 PM GMT

Oh, Goldie – I hope you find a Dingy soon. They are all over the place down here. I'm not boasting. Honest!  
David – I agree. I was pleasantly surprised by this ones veining too.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 13-May-19 05:35 PM GMT

13th May 2019, 10.45 – 12.15, Full Sun, 13–16 degrees

I saw my first Common Blue of the year today. Hooray! Then a moment later, another one. Then another, and another, and another....  
Until there were 17 in all.

They were a bit too skittish in the warm sun for an ultra-close mug shot though.



This one seemed to have a mutated forewing and other oddities.



But even more remarkable than that I counted 35 Brown Argus. That for me is a day/location record.

This one was rather fine, nectaring from a Milkwort.





Also 2 H Blue (1 wing rolling), 1 Small Copper (also wing-rolling very strongly), 1 Greenstreak, 2 S White, >10 Brims, >10 Dingies, 1 Grizzlie, 1 Peacock, 3 S Heath, 1 Burnet Companion and 1 Mint Moth.

Plus my first Clouded Yellow of the year. Only a fly-by though so no pics.

Not a bad roll-call for mid-May

This pony seemed to want to pose against the skyline for me. No-one told him they had branded LOL on his arse though (and that did make me laugh out loud!)



Because I had such luck with numbers of species I thought I'd stop off for half an hour at Noar Hill.

I additionally got OTip and Duke there, so thats a count of 14 species today. Normal for summer, but exceptional for me for May.

Not only that I got two more Greenstreaks here today bringing my reserve count for this species at this reserve to 13. Nowhere near my max for Beacon Hill a few years back but not a bad count by any means.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 13-May-19 06:34 PM GMT

Sounds like a blinder of a day Ernie 😊 That Common Blue is interesting to see, the fringes are pretty worn but that wouldn't explain missing half a fore wing - perhaps the wings didn't inflate properly? 😊 That Horse had my daughter chuckling as well when I showed her the picture 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 14-May-19 06:17 AM GMT

#### ernie f wrote:

..Plus my first Clouded Yellow of the year.

Excellent sighting, ernie. They don't turn up too often prior to August.

Nice to see Common Blues finally emerging round your way.

**Re: ernie f**

by Andrew555, 14-May-19 03:51 PM GMT

Great numbers Ernie. I've seen a few of those bee's flying low over the ground, good to put a name to them. 😊

Cheers

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 15-May-19 01:45 PM GMT

Wurzel, David, Andrew - Thanks guys. Things are starting to "take-off" around here now. I was surprised I hadn't seen a Common Blue yet but it seems they were just biding their time.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 15-May-19 01:54 PM GMT

15th May 2019, 10 am - 12 noon, St Catherine's Hill (Valley), Full Sun, 13-18 degrees

1 OTip, 2 H Blue, 2 Peacock, 1 Sp Wood, 3 Grizzlies, 5 Brim, 20 C Blue, 6 Sm Heath, 5 Dingies, 1 Sm Copper, 13 Brown Argus

Plus remember recently I posted I had seen my second ever Green Carpet Moth? Well today I saw my third! Two in a week while only ever having seen three makes me suggest they must be coming along well around here.

I got 3 fair "mug shots" today.



*Common Blue*



*Grizzled Skipper*



*Brown Argus*

Then the underside of a Grizzlie...



... and my first ever Brown Argus pair in-cop. First the conventional way round.



And then some experimentation. Ooh-er, missus!





**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 15-May-19 07:09 PM GMT

Crickey Ernie it looks like the pair of Brown Argus are Masters of the Butterfly Karma Sutra – that's a very advanced position 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by jenks, 15-May-19 07:37 PM GMT

Blimey. We have Wurzel discussing the Butterfly Karma Sutra and Pauline saying she watched a pair of Dukes in-cop for 1 hour and 10 minutes. What would Mary Whitehouse have made of this ? And to quote the sports commentator Barry Davies "Frankly, who cares". Butterflies giving it their all to try and ensure the species survives among relentless pressure on the environment from humankind.

Jenks.

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 16-May-19 07:39 AM GMT

Nice work with the Brown Argus pair, ernie. I don't recall ever seeing this species in cop myself so it's clearly not something you come across every day.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 16-May-19 01:57 PM GMT

David, Wurzel – Yes, I was very pleased with the Brown Argus pair. My first in-cop as I said. Also, they were in a part of the reserve that used to be fenced off but the fences have now all been removed so I was doubly lucky.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 16-May-19 02:09 PM GMT

16h May 2019, 9.45-11.45PM, Oaken Wood, Mostly Sunny, sporadic breeze, 17 degrees

I don't visit this reserve every year because its a devil of a job to get to from where I live. Narrow roads most of the way and I have to fight to get through Godalming (or is it God-awful-ming?).

Nevertheless, its the only place near me to get a Wood White fix, so here I was today getting just that. 6 in total which for me is a site record (although I was reliably informed that if I had bothered to scour the whole reserve I would have got 20).



*Nice backlit pose*



*Just good friends*

And I was even able to get mug-shots when the sun went behind a cloud.



Also, 6 Brim, 2 Small Heath, 5 Sp Wood, 3 OTip.

Loads of Speckled Yellow moth and a single 4-Spt Chaser.

The male OTips kept getting confused chasing the lady Wood Whites.

And a Broad-bodied Bee Hawkmoth. My first ever definite sighting. I got a pic but its far too fuzzy to show here and embarrass myself.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 17-May-19 10:28 PM GMT

You got a good range of shots there Ernie – like the back lit one and the close ups in particular but the second to last is a corker, I love the way it's holding the antennae 😊 I hope they last long enough as I might be able to make a run to see them in a week and half 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 19-May-19 05:07 PM GMT

19th May 2019, 2-3 pm, Manor Farm, Hazy sun, 18 degrees

I don't visit this location often because quite frankly it hasn't been very good in the past. It is a working dairy farm but its fields are open to the public. However it is now organic and the field boundaries are left to grow wild. They are even re-introducing hedgerows! It appears to be improving a bit because today I saw...

2 Brim, 1 OTip, 4 C Blue (3m + 1f), 1 Sm Copper and 8 Small Heath all along one side of one field.





Also 4 Mother Shipton moths (a record for one location/day for me). This one was a lucky shot – posing so I could get a shot of its under-carriage.



And a *Cantharis rustica* soldier beetle



Plus a Sainfoin just coming out and plenty of Ribwort Plantain in flower (much overlooked I think)



Last night a Cockchafer Beetle dropped by for a visit.



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 19-May-19 07:13 PM GMT

Good to read of the Farm 'reverting' though if Brexit goes ahead will Farmers keep going with the stewardship that's been encouraged by EU policies 😊 fingers crossed that they do...getting back to Lepidoptera thanks for posting the underside view of the Mother Shipton – I had a similar view today, didn't have a clue what it was and it flew away before I could get a look at the topside 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 19-May-19 09:41 PM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

19th May 2019, 2-3 pm, Manor Farm, Hazy sun, 18 degrees

I don't visit this location often because quite frankly it hasn't been very good in the past. It is a working dairy farm but its fields are open to the public. However it is now organic and the field boundaries are left to grow wild. They are even re-introducing hedgerows!

Well, it's a start at least, ernie. If all farms allowed field margins such latitude then some of our wildlife might increase in numbers!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 22-May-19 05:19 PM GMT

22nd May 2019, 10.45-11.45 am, Magdalen Hill, Mostly sunny, 17 degrees

A short trip here today, only to the scrape and back.

2 Small Copper, 4 Brim, 12 C Blue (1 ab), 1 Sm White, 1 Br Argus, 6 Sm Blue

My first Small Blues of the year. Tried to get a mug shot.



The "mug" shot, after a bit of cropping.





This one shows individual blue scales.



This one shows difference in degree of blue on the wing depending on light/shade and sun direction.



And finally a nice female ab Common Blue.



There was also one Holly Blue still in my garden when I returned home.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 23-May-19 01:57 PM GMT

23rd May 2019, 9.45-11.45 am, St Catherine's Hill, Full Sun, 20 degrees

21 Brown Argus, 22 Common Blue, 3 Brim, 3 Sm Heath, 2 OTip, 1 Griz Skp, 1 GV White, 1 Spec Wd, 1 Peacock, 4 Dingy Skip, 1 Sm Blue, 1 Red Ad, 2 Adonis Blue, 1 Marsh Frit

Cuckoo Heard

Pics now

Brown Argus - the one on the right was wing-rolling right in the face of the one on the left.



Never seen Adonis at this location before. The warden of Magdalen Hill put me onto them.



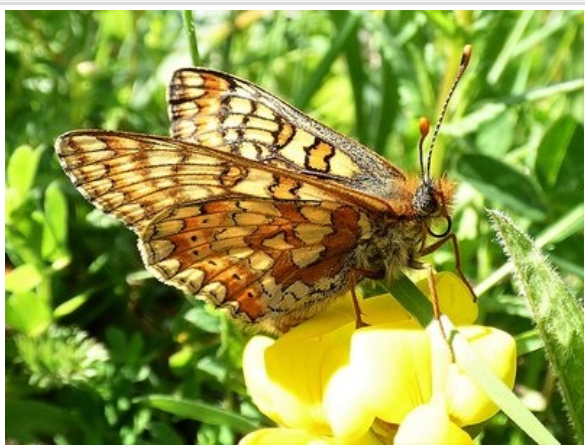




This Grizzlie spent ages taking salts from the chalky path.



Hampshire is not known for its Marsh Frits. This is the first one I have ever seen at this location and the closest one to where I live.







**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 23-May-19 08:50 PM GMT

Great work with the Small Blues Ernie 😊 Loving the Marshie too - it's great finding a butterfly in a new setting/site 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 24-May-19 09:01 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel. It was a good day for me. Even when I got home I found a Small Tortoiseshell in my back garden - not a species I have seen there before. This brought my daily tally to 15 species. I have not looked back through my records yet but it feels like that is a max species count for any day in May for me.

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 24-May-19 02:51 PM GMT

A great count and an excellent range there, ernie. Looks like many species are consolidating on last year's positive showing.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 25-May-19 12:27 PM GMT

David – I am sure you are right. The current weather is making it a bit easier for them too.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 25-May-19 12:40 PM GMT

25th May 2019, 8.45–10.45 am, St Catherine's Hill, Mostly sunny, 17 degrees

I started off in the same place I saw the Marsh Frit and Adonis Blue two days ago. Saw neither today.

Then I continued my butterfly count, this time along the central section of the hill facing the river.

8 Dingy, 25 C Blue, 10 B Argus, 3 Griz, 4 S Heath, 2 Brim, 1 L White, 1 H Blue, 2 Sp Wd



*Backlit Common Blue*

Also 1 Burnet Companion and 2 Mint moths

Also a *Strangalia maculata* beetle.



The most notable records I seem to be getting over the last week or so are for Brown Argus.

I have broken three of my records with them.

Location max = 44 (St Cats)

Daily max of 35 (Mag Hill)

Annual max of 80 (all locations visited so far this year).

And we are not finished with them this year of course so things can only get better.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 25-May-19 04:42 PM GMT

25th May 2019, Home Farm, 2–3 pm, mostly sunny, 20 degrees

Two entries in my PD today. This one because my wife wanted to go to a garden centre. I take her in the car and this gives me the opportunity to "slope

off" for a quick butterfly hunt.

I spoke about this location recently, Same stuff as before but suddenly there were also 3 (maybe 4) Burnet Companion moths. I gave chase.





This fellow got so peeved by me chasing after him and getting right up his snout with a camera that he vibrated his wings the speed of a hummingbird while clinging on for dear life. He just would not stop so I gave him his space and chased a different one instead.



Then a nice Sloe Bug to round off the hour.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 25-May-19 05:25 PM GMT

Good skills Ernie – that's a technique I use too 😊😄 Another good one that I use is taking everyone to Ikea and calling in at Bentley Wood one the way home 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by millerd, 25-May-19 08:51 PM GMT

Good to see Marshies popping up unexpectedly, Ernie. There was a time not so long ago when it was taboo to mention seeing them in Hampshire at all as they were so infrequent. I like the backlit blue shot too! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 25-May-19 08:53 PM GMT

#### ernie f wrote:

...The most notable records I seem to be getting over the last week or so are for Brown Argus.

I have broken three of my records with them.

Location max = 44 (St Cats)

Daily max of 35 (Mag Hill)

Annual max of 80 (all locations visited so far this year).

And we are not finished with them this year of course so things can only get better.

That's really encouraging, ernie. Strange that Common Blue isn't delivering similar statistics. Perhaps the rock rose did a lot better than the bird's foot trefoil last year?

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 27-May-19 06:17 PM GMT

Wurzel – Yep. Gloria loves going to garden centres. I now have at least one butterfly location for every garden centre within a 20 mile radius of our house! 😊

Dave (Miller) – Thanks. I had no idea that Marshie would be there and when I went back two days later it wasn't anymore. Also, I was careful not to say precisely where I saw it. St Catherine's Hill is a massive location and where I saw it was not that obvious anyway.

David – I don't know why the Common Blues are not so common at the moment. Getting 200+ at Magdalen Hill is a possibility but so far I have only seen a fraction of that number there this year. Maybe more to come?

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 27-May-19 06:23 PM GMT

27th May 2019, 10.30–11.00 am, Noar Hill Overcast, 16 degrees

A quick look here today. Just 2 Small Blues in the lowest pit on the reserve. I got a proper mug shot this time though rather than my last effort which was a cropped shot.





**Re: ernie f**

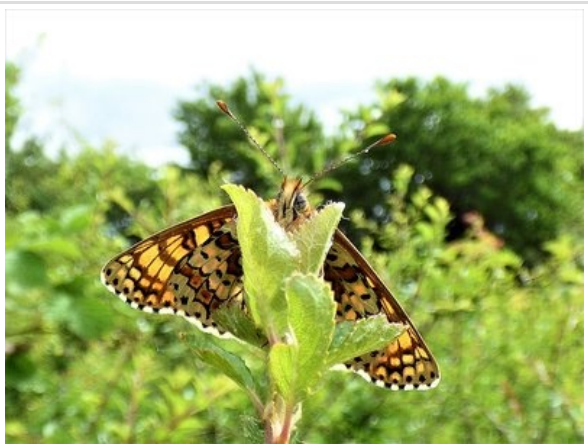
by ernie f, 27-May-19 06:36 PM GMT

27th May 2019, 2.30-4.00 pm Wreccllesham Pit, 40 percent sunshine, 18 degrees, gusty light breeze

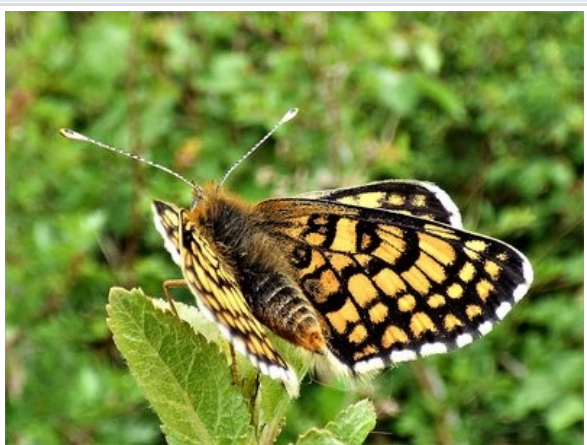
3 Glanvilles here.











The front legs of the Glanville are vestigial. I like to think of them as "arms". It was gusty today. When the wind blew one way, one perched individual would fling out an arm the other way to balance. When the wind blew it the other way – out would go the other arm. It was quite comical to watch.



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 27-May-19 07:23 PM GMT

Brilliant stuff Ernie 😊 Whereabouts at Wrecclisham are they – it's been a few years since saw them there? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 28-May-19 07:18 AM GMT

Wurzel – I'll send you a private message.

**Re: ernie f**

by millerd, 28-May-19 12:13 PM GMT

Hi Ernie – I dropped by Wrecclisham yesterday morning, but couldn't work out how to access the likely area – could it have been you I saw contemplating the field across the back of the cricket pitch? I was discouraged as well by the lack of sunshine and those gusty winds and went over to Chiddingfold instead.

I should have persevered – those are great shots of the Glanvilles in distinctly tricky conditions. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 28-May-19 04:00 PM GMT

Dave, nope it wasn't me you saw. I visited in the afternoon.

Thanks for the comment re the pics though. I consider myself lucky, because even in the afternoon it was gusty.

You are right about the entrance to the Glanville site. It is accessed via a small lane at the back of the cricket pitch.

**Re: ernie f**

by Janet Turnbull, 28-May-19 04:49 PM GMT

Hi Ernie – those are wonderful photos of Glanvilles! And I thought they lived only on the IOW. – Janet

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 28-May-19 10:56 PM GMT

Cheers for the PM Ernie – I've now got to try and wrangle a visit – are there any good garden centres nearby, ones that would be worth a 1hr 15 journey? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 29-May-19 06:41 AM GMT

Nice work with the Glanvilles, ernie. Sure beats a boat trip and a drive to the south coast of the Isle of Wight.

They're doing well to hang in at Wrecclisham. It's been nearly 10 years now since the colony was transplanted there.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 29-May-19 04:20 PM GMT

David – I wonder if in fact someone may have introduced those Glanvilles to Wrecclisham twice over the last decade because I have been informed by two separate people that they were not seen there by them for a couple of years. This is of course hearsay. They may just have been unlucky on their visits.

Wurzel – I think I can say without fear of contradiction that there is NO garden centres worth travelling 1 hr 15 for! 😊

Janet – Thanks. Even though I can see Glanvilles within 10 miles of where I live I would still like to see them on the IOW. Firstly there are a lot more of them there and I saw a TV programme where one person was surrounded by them. Fantastic. Also, on that same IOW south coast I am told there are imported Green Lizards roaming wild PLUS there is one beach not far from both of these where you can find real prehistoric dinosaur foot-casts

(Iguanodon) right beside the remains of fallen prehistoric fossil trees!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 29-May-19 04:25 PM GMT

I didn't go butterflying today. Rain forced DIY on me!!!

However I neglected to post my pics of two moths seen over the last week. Nothing rare – but nice enough.

Silver-ground Carpet at Noar Hill



Speckled Yellow at Alice Holt



**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 29-May-19 05:16 PM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

David – I wonder if in fact someone may have introduced those Glanvilles to Wrecclesham twice over the last decade because I have been informed

by two separate people that they were not seen there by them for a couple of years. This is of course hearsay. They may just have been unlucky on their visits.

Wouldn't surprise me, ernie. I know the population that used to exist at Sand Point, near Weston-Super-Mare was occasionally topped up.

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 30-May-19 12:28 PM GMT

I know the feeling Ernie - Lime plastering the cracks and chips this morning - mind you this has cleared up Sunday so I won't need to worry about using the garden centre tactic now 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 30-May-19 01:22 PM GMT

30th May 2019, 10.30-12noon, Beacon Hill, Mostly Sunny, 19 degrees

Well that was a surprise. The weather forecast said overcast with light cloud all day but it cleared for a while this morning and the sun burst through.

4 Greenstreak, 12 Small Heath, 39 Common Blue, 16 Dingy, 6 Brim, but only 1 Brown Argus, however also 1 Clouded Yellow, my second this year and its still only May (just)!

Also, 1 Mint Moth, 2 Cinnabar and 1 Yellow Shell



3 Man Orchid





And 1 Hare!



It was only there for a moment or two. A case of Hare today, gone tomorrow. Ho, ho. 😊

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 30-May-19 05:05 PM GMT

Great shots of the Man Orchid Ernie and the Hare, a very Bunny joke too 😊 ...A Clouded Yellow 🤔🇮🇪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 30-May-19 08:29 PM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

...however also 1 Clouded Yellow, my second this year and its still only May (just)!

That's noteworthy, ernie. We seem to be seeing more and more of this species earlier in the year. I don't wish to force the words 'global warming' down anybody's throat, but I'm struggling to see how else they can be appearing in the earlier part of the season if it isn't due to more amenable conditions in southern parts of the UK.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 01-Jun-19 01:23 PM GMT

1st June 2019, 9-10am, Wrecclesham, Full Sun, 16-20 degrees

I thought I'd get here early today as the forecast is going to be "A Scorcher". I was not the only one. I bumped into Jenks while there and yes we both got Glanvilled. I counted a total of 7 today. Two males were having a sparring session. Its quite startling if you don't know they are there, then all of a

sudden they leap up off a shrub and soar together up into the sky at speed, split and then drop back down again.

It was very sunny so I didn't expect to get too close but I did OK.



Jenks was on an ambitious round trip of central southern England so he said his goodbye's and departed, but I stayed a bit longer and I am glad I did...







I have never seen mating Glanvilles before and don't expect to ever again. What luck. I did not see them court and connect but I did see them disconnect. I expected them to just fly off but they didn't. They hung around for a while (sharing a ciggy?) and a couple of minutes later they flew off in different directions.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 01-Jun-19 01:33 PM GMT

Same day 10.30-11am, Broxhead Heath

Tried for SS Blues but as usual at this time of year I was too early. This is not one of the earlier sites for them. However did get 2 Greenstreaks that were still hanging on in there. This one was a bit worn but somehow the colouration was still pretty spectacular.



Then I gave chase to a lovely Grass Wave moth.



And then up-close and personal to a Gorse Shieldbug





**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 01-Jun-19 06:33 PM GMT

Same day, between 3-4pm, Alice Holt Woods, Full Sun, 24 degrees

Another "garden centre" trip today.

You don't expect much from Alice Holt at this time of year but its a nice shady walk on a hot day like today. Nevertheless...

1 GV White, 1 Common Blue, 1 Comma, 1 Sp Wd

Lots of Banded Demoiselle, 1 Cuckoo heard but not seen, 1 Common Lizard scuttling across the path, 1 GSWPecker, 2 Pyrochroa serraticornis Beetles and a Roe Deer.

Not bad for less than an hour in total.







Also we went to the pub late afternoon and sat in its garden. A Holly Blue visited the flowers repeatedly while we were there.

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-19 10:28 PM GMT

Great shots of the Glanvilles Ernie 🤔👍 Fingers crossed for tomorrow – thank you for the directions 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 01-Jun-19 11:11 PM GMT

There aren't enough hours in the day for you right now, ernie! 😊

Well done with the Glanvilles, though my favourite image is the fleeing roe deer.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 02-Jun-19 12:38 PM GMT

2nd June 2019, 9–11 am, Wrecclesham, Full sun, 19 degrees

Nice to see Dave Miller, Philzoid and Wurzel getting their fill of Glanvilles today. Another couple joined us and it was getting pretty busy.

So number of humans counted was 6, BUT the Glanvilles outnumbered us I am pleased to say. For the first time ever I circuted the field and quartered it too and my count of Glanvilles came to 19. I was regularly coming across them in twos and threes in flight and nectaring.









Also plenty of C Blues and yet another Green Hairstreak (getting quite late in the year for them now of course).

**Re: ernie f**

by bugboy, 02-Jun-19 02:04 PM GMT

Great stuff Ernie, I'd heard there had been a small UKB gathering there today 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 02-Jun-19 10:34 PM GMT

Brilliant posting Ernie from a brilliant morning it was great to meet up and put a face to the name 😊 Cheers for the detailed OS Grid co-ordinates – it was like there was a big red arrow hovering over the first set of Glannies that we saw 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 02-Jun-19 11:24 PM GMT

Good to see the Glanvilles thriving there, ernie. This is such a common and widespread species on the near continent that I find it strange that it is so restricted in its range in the UK.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 05-Jun-19 01:47 PM GMT

Bugboy, Wurzel, David – Thanks guys. It was a great morning at Wrecclisham. It seems the Glanvilles may well be on the up there once again.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 05-Jun-19 02:06 PM GMT

5th June 2019, 8.45 – 10.30 am, Bentley Wood, 12–15 degrees, started full sun, ended 90% cloud, sporadic breeze

I am glad I got here early – most of the action happened while the sun was out.

3 Small Pearl-bordered Frits (are they in decline here?)







2 Common Blue

1 Grizzled Skip (my first at this location and it actually landed on my camera lens at one point)







*Playing peek-a-boo*



1 Mother Shipton



1 Brown Silver-line



Also a Tree Pipit



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 06-Jun-19 11:34 AM GMT

Great shots of the Small Pearls Ernie 😊 Sadly they are in decline – you used to be able to find them fluttering about across the entire wood. The last couple of years have seen a drastic drop in their numbers but hopefully the recent clearing will benefit them as much as it seems to have benefited the Pearls. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 06-Jun-19 03:23 PM GMT

Wurzel – Its sad to hear of their decline at Bentley Wood – I hope you are right that with the right environmental management they can improve.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 06-Jun-19 03:25 PM GMT

Here is a pic of a Grizzlie I forgot to add to my Bentley Wood post the other day.



**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 06-Jun-19 03:33 PM GMT

6th June 2019, 12.30–2pm, Noar Hill, 70% sun, 17 degrees, keen breeze

A bit quiet at Noar Hill this afternoon but not without interest.

9 C Blue, 5 S Blue, 5 S Heath, 3 Brim, 1 S White, 1 Sp Wood, 1 Large Skip (my first this year)  
1 Mint moth, 1 Five-spot Burnet

1 Musk Orchid in bud

I am always surprised how much blue a Small Blue can have.



And I was shocked at the eye-colour of the 5-spot burnet. I had never looked before.





Here it is again sharing a buttercup with a fly (cannot Id as yet)



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 07-Jun-19 09:14 AM GMT

I've seen those fly things before but can't remember the name but for some reason Radagast (Lord of the Rings) comes to mind when I see it 😊😏 Love the intimate shot of the Grizzlie 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 07-Jun-19 11:45 AM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

...I am always surprised how much blue a Small Blue can have.

Yes, they always seem to be up to mischief, don't they? They're feisty and punch above their weight too, which gives them character. 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 08-Jun-19 04:21 PM GMT

David – I love those little ones too. I was amazed at the recent count of them at Hutchinson's Bank, Surrey. I think it was mr Sp(o)ck who recorded well over 1000! I am sure someone will correct me if my memory about this is flakey.

Wurzel – Yes its my aim this year to get as many mug shots of butterflies as I can. I will probably falter with the Hairstreaks though.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 08-Jun-19 04:32 PM GMT

8th June 2019, 2–2.30pm, The Straits, Sun and cloud in equal measure but rain either side of the half hour, 16 degrees

A very short walk at Alice Holt Woods – The Straits, mainly just to take a break from the DIY!!!

2 Sp Wd, 1 GV White, 1 C Blue.

Aced the Common Blue Mug–shot.



But also this nice Blood–vein moth.



And a Coreus marginatus bug.



**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 09-Jun-19 12:31 PM GMT

9th June 2019, 9.30-10 Broxhead, 50% sun 14 degrees

Awful. Did get my first Meadow Brown of the year and OK pics of a Common Heath but that was it.



10-11 am Alice Holt Woods, getting cloudier, 15 degrees

I saw more dogs being walked than butterflies. Number of dogs = 6, number of butterflies = 1 (It was a Speckled Wood)

But other stuff was:

Nemophora degeerella moths





Brown Silver-line moth



A Scorpion Fly



And a White-tailed Bumble Bee having a nap on a Buttercup!



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-19 03:27 PM GMT

Great shot of the Blood-vein Ernie 😊 I reckon you might do okay with the Hairstreaks if you can find them low down they can be quite accommodating? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 09-Jun-19 09:27 PM GMT

You're certainly making the most regarding what's available to you, ernie.

At this time of year, we shouldn't be having to defer to day-flying moths, but that said, it's handy to have an interest in them for those occasions when the sun is on strike and the temperatures travel back in time to mid-April!!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 14-Jun-19 05:40 PM GMT

14th June 2019, 3.45-4.15 pm, 60% cloud, 17 degrees, breezy

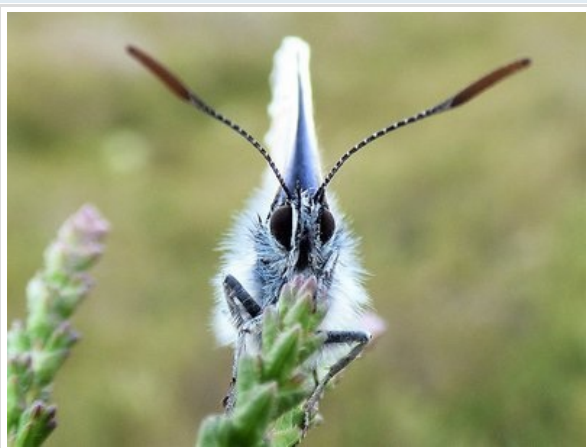
For the last three days if it hasn't been raining it's been threatening to. Today at last the sun broke through. I spent 1/2 hour at Broxhead Heath in pursuit of Silver-studded Blues. It's been so atrocious they had not emerged here so far when they ought to have done so by this time of year.

You know when you go somewhere with hope but no expectation? That was me at Broxhead today.

When the cloud came over and the breeze picked up I wondered what the hell I was doing here at all.

Then I saw one. Yes, only one – but the conditions meant it wasn't going anywhere. I took a few shots then I thought, I know, I'll sever the heather frond it was roosting on and see if it stays. It did for a while so I took more pics and got really in close. It got fed up with me doing that so it flew, but to my amazement it landed on my camera. I edged it onto my finger and got a finger shot, then it flew onto my jumper – so I got a jumper shot. Finally I edged it back onto my finger and placed it back on a heather frond.

Nothing else there today except quite a lot of bees collecting nectar from the heather. There were so many I guessed they may have come from a local bee-keeper's hive.









**Re: ernie f**

by millerd, 14-Jun-19 08:20 PM GMT

Hi Ernie - just caught up with your diary, including those Glanvilles from way back on 2nd. That was a great morning, wasn't it, and good to meet you at last. 😊 Also good to see the SSB are out now - we just need some sunshine to tempt me out to see them! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 14-Jun-19 10:34 PM GMT

That's the great thing about butterflying Ernie - it only takes one butterfly to make the day 😊 Lovely set of shots - especially like the close up and on the finger - both would be welcome additions to my 'collections' 😊📷📷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 16-Jun-19 02:24 PM GMT

Dave - Yes, it was a great day with the Glanville's, it was good to talk to you. It seems such a long time ago already. Sunshine! Ah, yes - I remember that.

Wurzel - SSB's are here at last (well, just the one) that day but still - it means for me that summer is here. Even though we have the temperature and showers of April. (As I recall in April we had the temperature and sun of June).

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 16-Jun-19 02:42 PM GMT

16th June 2019, 1.15-1.45 pm, Broxhead Heath, Full cloud, 16 degrees, breeze and drizzle

Do I get a gold star for dedication to butterflying? Going out in drizzle!

My count of Silver-studded Blues DOUBLED today. I got a Grand Total of two!

Conditions meant they kept their wings tightly closed like the other day.



I recently bought myself a cheap UV torch and carry around with me in my camera bag. The idea was to see if shining it on butterfly wings would reveal anything special (like I might have expected from the Whites). I tried it on a couple of species but even in cloud mostly the sunlight is too much for anything to show up. I had the idea today to see if I shone the UV light on one SSB, maybe it would be fooled into thinking the sun had come out and open its wings for me.

Within a couple of seconds of shining the torch on it this happened!



This is the picture in natural light after I had used the torch.

By juggling camera and torch I was able to keep the UV light on the tops of its wings AS I took a picture and I got this...



Same butterfly, a bit blurred, but it's almost as if you can see through the upper wings to some of the markings it has underneath.

I was well chuffed.

The UV torch was in my left hand so the effect is greater on the left wings of the butterfly.

## Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 17-Jun-19 11:52 AM GMT

Definite marks for dedication Ernie 😊 Useful little trick I wonder if it only works on those butterflies that regularly open their wings or would it work on Hairstreaks – it would be great if it did 😊 I wonder how the butterfly is detecting UV – possibly seeing into that end of the spectrum like bees can? 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 17-Jun-19 05:23 PM GMT

ernie f wrote:

Do I get a gold star for dedication to butterflying? Going out in drizzle!

My count of Silver-studded Blues DOUBLED today. I got a Grand Total of two!

Conditions meant they kept their wings tightly closed like the other day.

Yes you do, ernie. 😊 At worst you'll see the same total as you would if you remained at home.

That's an interesting experiment regarding the UV torch. I guess it would work best in early spring?

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 17-Jun-19 08:06 PM GMT

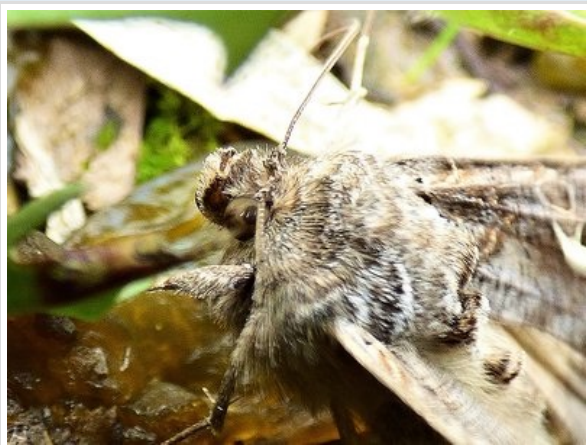
Thanks, guys. I must try that UV-light more often. I don't think I gave it a proper chance. Of course it means going out on dull days more.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 17-Jun-19 08:43 PM GMT

17th June, 10-11 am, Alice Holt Woods, 10% sun, 16 degrees

2 Red Ad, 1 Silver-Y, 1 C Blue (f), 1 Brim, 3 Sp Wd



10 M Brown. One male Meadow Brown was pursuing a female but she was playing hard to get. He seemed to want to get underneath her, open his wings, and vibrate them for a bit – I presume to maximise his scent for her. She let him do this but at one point they seemed to have a bit off a tiff and she flew off, he in hot pursuit.









Broxhead 3-4 pm, 40% sun, 18 degrees

SS Blues coming along nicely now. There were 8 today.





Two males had a short sparring match and then settled down together on the same heather clump for a snack.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 18-Jun-19 10:27 PM GMT

Interesting courting behaviour Ernie - I've not seen that before though I reckon you're right about him waffing her with more pheromone 😊😄 Good to see a slightly better haul of SSBs 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f



by David M, 19-Jun-19 05:56 AM GMT

Nice to know the SSBs are picking up round your way, ernie. Good to also see a few open wing Meadow Browns so early in the season.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 20-Jun-19 05:33 PM GMT

20th July 2019, 9.30 - 11.30 am, Ditchling Common Country Park, 70% sun, 18 degrees, increasing breeze and cloud eventually to 90%

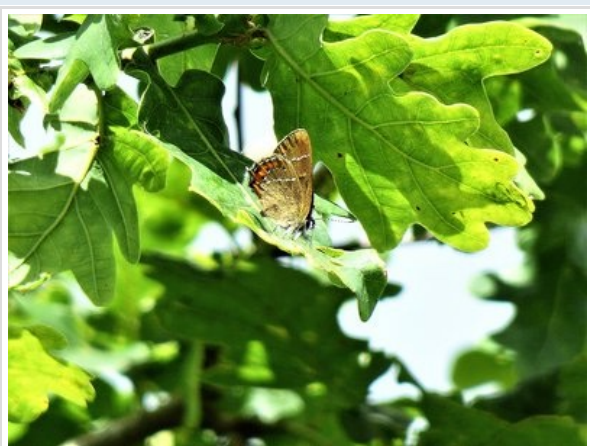
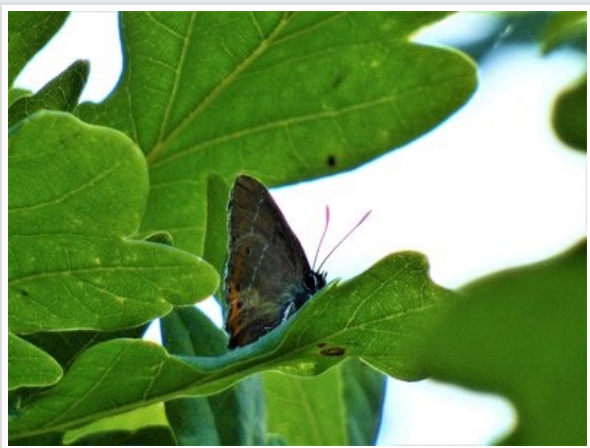


OK. I could not resist it. So many great pics of Black Hairstreaks from lots of people on this forum and there I was, never having seen one in my life before. It's a two hour drive from where I live in Alton and because of circumstances beyond my control - that's quite a commitment for me. I only do such a journey once a year. Last year it was for the Large Blues at Daneway Banks (another 1st first for me), this year Ditchling Common for Blackstreaks.

Without guidance it took me some while to pinpoint their location but when I did it was obvious - so many people - so many cameras, and this was Thursday - not a weekend.

What can I say - It was great. All my shots are distant and taken on zoom with a bit of a breeze to make things difficult so they do not come up to the standard of many of the pics I have seen by other people but what the hell. It was my FIRST TIME for them. I saw three in flight at once - two males were sparring. I think I saw four in all in the two hours I was there.

Here are my efforts...







Also, my first Ringlet of the year.



Also 1 Red Ad, 3 Speckled Wd, 3 S Heath, 19 M Brown (one mating pair)



8 Large Skips





Two Caspian Turtles on the pond...



And a large patch of Dyers Greenweed, a plant I don't think I have seen before.





All things considered – not a bad morning's work.

**Re: ernie f**

by trevor, 20-Jun-19 06:26 PM GMT

You took the plunge then Ernie!. You were probably just in time before the Black Hairstreaks start to fade, and you managed some shots too.

Hope you had a great day,  
Trevor.

**Re: ernie f**

by Goldie M, 20-Jun-19 07:07 PM GMT

Glad you found some Butterflies ernie 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by Neil Freeman, 20-Jun-19 07:09 PM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

...It's a two hour drive from where I live in Alton and because of circumstances beyond my control – that's quite a commitment for me...

I totally understand that Ernie, 2 hours is the absolute maximum I will do for a day trip and then only once or twice a year.

Well done on the Black Hairstreaks, a species I have only seen a couple of times as their short flight period tends to occur when I am otherwise engaged.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: ernie f**

by bugboy, 20-Jun-19 07:25 PM GMT

That last Hairstreak with a chunk out of his hindwing looks very familiar, I saw him on Monday, in slightly better shape 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by kevling, 20-Jun-19 07:51 PM GMT

Hi Ernie,

Enjoying your diary and those Black Hairstreaks are very nice. Glad you have seen them I saw my first and only ones a couple of years ago and it was worth the effort, particularly as you have to time your visit just perfectly given their brief flight period. Loved the SSB too. They are now gathering pace on the Suffolk Heaths and are such a beautiful species, particularly when fresh.

Regards  
Kev

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 21-Jun-19 12:37 PM GMT

Trevor - Yes you are right, of the four Blackstreaks I saw, two were already tatty. I got there just in time.

Goldie - I hope you get some luck - this latest blast of weather has been getting us all down I suspect.

Neil - Also, I have not had a holiday for over 5 years and not been abroad for 10. It's just as well I live where I do so there are plenty of butterflying opportunities closer to hand.

Bugboy - Wonderful. It's nice to be able to recognise an individual like that.

Kevin - Yes, at last the SSBs are on the increase. My local reserve for them is only a 15 minute drive from my home. A bit better than the 240 minute drive for the Black Hairstreaks!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 21-Jun-19 12:41 PM GMT

21st June 2019, 11.00 - 11.30 am, Broxhead Common, 60% sun, 17 degrees

Last year I did a thorough survey of the Silver-studded Blues at Broxhead Common. I don't intend to cover the whole reserve again in the same way this year as it's too exhausting, but I will review what is going on at the lek site within the reserve from time to time as this is the key place where most of them reside.

It's interesting to make a comparison between this year and last. Last year you remember we had a long, hot summer and for the entire time the SSB's were in flight we did not have a bad day.

This year could not be more different. It's far cooler (so far), with more overcast and rainy days. So how has this affected the colony?

Last year I saw my first SSBs in the lek on the 6th June, this year it was on the 14th June - 1 week later.

Last year on the 20th June there were 312 SSBs in the lek, this year on the 21st June it is only 18.

By this time last year I had seen 10 females but this year none at all so far.

Last year, in the first week of flight, the number of SSBs had climbed from 5 on day 1 to 51 by day 8, but this year they climbed from 1 to 18 in the first week of flight, a far slower rate of increase.

I am hoping the weather next week which by all accounts is going to be very good, will change this around and we shall see a major emergence erupting.

Fingers crossed.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 22-Jun-19 12:22 PM GMT

22nd June 2019, 9.30-11 am, Noar Hill, 18 degrees, Full Sun

Musk Orchids now in bloom but far fewer than in recent years for some reason.

My first DG Frit of the year. This one was bombing around the reserve without stopping causing mayhem wherever it flew – putting up Common Blues, Small Heaths, Meadow Browns and even a Scarlet Tiger and a Cinnabar.

Also a Red Ad and four Small Blues. The Small Blues were showing signs of wear and tear by now though.



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 22-Jun-19 08:33 PM GMT

Great work with the Blackstreaks Ernie 😊👍👍 I too try to only do one 'big trip' a year which is probably why I've still to see Blackstreak – mind you if Ditchling continues in a similar vein I don't think I'll be leaving it for much longer 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 23-Jun-19 03:26 AM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

...OK. I could not resist it. So many great pics of Black Hairstreaks from lots of people on this forum and there I was, never having seen one in my life before.

Can't say I blame you, ernie. Seems like you had plenty of like-minded company too. 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 23-Jun-19 11:12 AM GMT

Thanks guys – It's nice to have a bunch of other butterfly enthusiasts to talk with and those extra eyes can be a boon in spotting blackstreaks.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 23-Jun-19 11:22 AM GMT

22nd June 2019, 4-5pm, Alice Holt Forest, 20 degrees, full sun

Nothing "purple" did I see there yet but did get my first local Ringlet of the year (saw one at Ditchling the other day but that's Sussex)





Also, I am not up on bugs but I saw this trundling up the forest path. I think it is the final instar of the Red-legged Shieldbug. If so, it's a first for me. If someone can confirm or otherwise I would be grateful.



## Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 23-Jun-19 11:36 AM GMT

23rd June 2019, 9.30-10am, Broxhead Heath, 18 degrees, fully overcast with light cloud

I noted on this forum that many people have been reporting the advance of the Painted Lady migration from Europe. I have been waiting and waiting but so far no luck in my area - until today. During my SS Blue survey one zoomed in and landed on the sandy ground but it was very twitchy and did not let me get close for a pic. One grabbed zoom shot from a distance is all I got.



Still they have arrived in NE Hants so that's good news. This one was a bit worn from its journey though. If I remember correctly this is the first time I have seen one on a heath and certainly the first at this heathland reserve.

On the SSB survey front, the numbers held static at 18 (most unusual), but it was rather a drab morning so many were roosting and some probably out of sight. The main feature was my first female SSB of the year. This is quite late for a first sighting of a female at this reserve.



Re: ernie f



by ernie f, 23-Jun-19 10:30 PM GMT

23rd June 2019, 4-5pm, Windmill Hill, 19 degrees, overcast

I live in a house at the bottom of a hill called Windmill Hill. It's actually in the town of Alton but if I walk up my road through a housing development, a path leads to open countryside near the top of the hill. For years it was a muddy, cow-patty pasture but recently the local council have started to manage it as a flower meadow. They have let the grasses grow long and seeded it with all manner of wild meadow flowers such as Poppy, Cornflower, Corncockle, Corn Marigold, Scented Mayweed and a host of others. It is an amazing sight now but it's only just beginning. The butterflies are starting to find it. Every few paces we took, up flew a Meadow Brown and at one point while my wife and I walked one grassy path, a Dark Green Frit took off and zoomed off at full pelt. This is the closest to my house I have ever seen this species - only about ½ mile away. What might the future hold for this wonderful site? I can hardly wait!







*Meadow Brown on a Corn Marigold*

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 23-Jun-19 11:25 PM GMT

That looks fantastic Ernie – just what the butterflies (and we humans) need 😊😊 Just goes to show – plant it and the butterflies will come 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 24-Jun-19 05:53 PM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

..I live in a house at the bottom of a hill called Windmill Hill. It's actually in the town of Alton but if I walk up my road through a housing development, a path leads to open countryside near the top of the hill. For years it was a muddy, cow-patty pasture but recently the local council have started to manage it as a flower meadow. They have let the grasses grow long and seeded it with all manner of wild meadow flowers such as Poppy, Cornflower, Corncockle, Corn Marigold, Scented Mayweed and a host of others. It is an amazing sight now but it's only just beginning. The butterflies are starting to find it.

How I wish more councils would do likewise, ernie. It looks absolutely delightful and will no doubt continue to attract increasing numbers of insects so long as it is allowed to thrive. Here's hoping.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 24-Jun-19 06:46 PM GMT

Wurzel, David. No doubt this will be a regular summertime stroll for me now to see what pops up.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 24-Jun-19 07:40 PM GMT

24th June 2019, 4–5 pm, Four Marks, 20% sun, 22 degrees

I thought today was going to be a complete washout. How wrong could I be? Gloria wanted to go to a garden centre so it was one of those trips! This one is in the countryside down a quiet lane. Opposite the main gate is a public footpath that runs beside a grassy field and for about 20 paces there is a hedgerow combined with bramble and wild flowers such as Red Campion and Green Alkanet.

Within this short stretch of hedgerow there were two Painted Lady, three Meadow Brown, 1 Red Ad, 1 Large Skip, 1 Small Tort and a Small Magpie moth plus I think nesting Wren.

Also a pair of mating *Coreus marginatus* bugs.

I was able to get exceptionally close to the Painted Ladies. They hung around this hedge the entire hour I was there.











### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 24-Jun-19 11:01 PM GMT

A fantastic set of shots Ernie – those Painted Lady close ups – brilliant 😊😄 Who'd have thought a trip to the Garden Centre could be that productive 😊😄  
😄 I just wish my wife would start to prefer garden centres to Ikea 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 25-Jun-19 02:25 PM GMT

Wurzel – My wife's liking for garden centres certainly can work in my favour. I had been waiting for the Painted Lady influx and now they have finally arrived I am able to extend my close-up gallery which is my main goal this year.

I forgot to add this one to my recent post.



### Re: ernie f

by trevor, 25-Jun-19 06:47 PM GMT

There are plenty of Painted Ladies around here too, Ernie. Mostly worn and tatty, but one can only admire them for the distance they have flown. Perhaps it's the severe heat on the continent has sent them north.

Trevor.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 25-Jun-19 06:54 PM GMT

Trevor – I think they will have to keep on going north then if this weekend's forecast is anything to go by!

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 25-Jun-19 07:21 PM GMT

25th June 2019, 3-4.30 pm, Alice Holt Woods, Overcast, Very Humid, 22 degrees

4 L Skip, 2 P Lady, 1 Comma, 1 S White, 3 Ringlet, 1 Red Ad, 3 S Skip, 1 White Ad  
And loads of Meadow Brown.

But the main feature of today was the Small Skippers, all of them at "The Straits" Trailhead. More opportunities to extend my Close-up gallery.







**Re: ernie f**

by millerd, 25-Jun-19 08:00 PM GMT

Great Painted Lady shots, Ernie – suddenly there are dozens around to choose from, and they don't mind the warm cloudiness at all. 😊 Your Small Skippers are splendid as well.

Cheers,

Dave

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 26-Jun-19 01:39 PM GMT

Thanks, Dave. The painted Ladies are really picking up around here now. I saw lots more today, in various states of tattiness – mostly fading colours.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 26-Jun-19 01:56 PM GMT

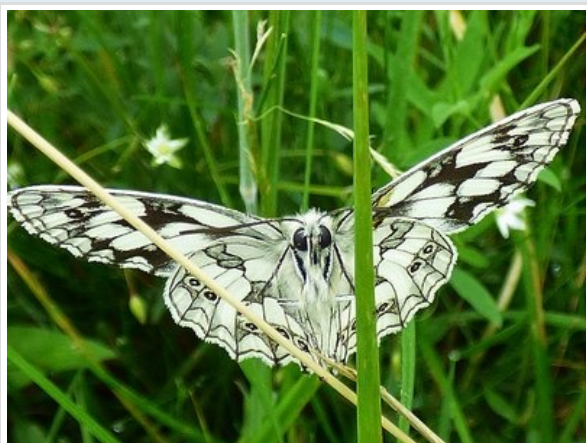
26th June 2019, 9.30–10.30 am, Odiham Common, Overcast, 16 degrees, fair breeze

6 Painted Ladies, mostly coming to the ground or low on the grass, 2 Marbled White, 1 Large White, loads of Meadow Brown.

I came out under these conditions and early-ish on purpose. When it gets much warmer or sunnier than this, trying to get decent close-ups of most butterflies gets troublesome with my camera – not having spent over £1000 on an SLR and a decent zoom lens. It means I have to set my Bridge Camera to super-macro and get within a few centimetres of the beast.

Now I have found Marbled Whites are one of the worst for flitting off just as you take their pic in such situations so you are left with a nice picture of a leaf instead.

I was after Marbled White pics today and my strategy of coming out early on an overcast day worked. They were quite lethargic.









**Re: ernie f**

by Old Wolf, 26-Jun-19 03:22 PM GMT

Beautiful close up shots your are catching ernie with a marbled white 'in hand' 🍷

I am yet to see a marbled white this year so your pics give me hope that I will be seeing some myself soon and hope to get some pics as good as yours. I have noticed that all of the marbled white in your shots have lazy deely boppers. Is this due to the cloudy weather?

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 26-Jun-19 05:05 PM GMT

Thanks Old Wolf. I don't know whether the droop is due to the weather being cloudy or not, it was 16 (going on 17) degrees so while not hot, it wasn't particularly cold either. At the time I first spotted him I assumed that it was a roosting posture but he did it every time he landed after a short spurt. One thing though, all these pics are of a single individual so maybe it's just a characteristic of this one.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 26-Jun-19 05:16 PM GMT

26th June 2019, 3.30-4.30 pm, Windmill Hill Flower Meadow, 90% Sun, 22 degrees, breezy.



I just had to come back again to my new most local site. I wanted to see what was there now the sun had come out. And the result was:

- 4 Painted Lady
- 1 Red Ad
- 1 L White
- 2 Marbled White
- 10 Large Skips
- ... and even more Meadow Brown.

The Large Skippers were particularly good here.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 27-Jun-19 02:13 PM GMT

Brilliant set of posts recently Ernie - I'm having trouble keeping up! 🤔😄 The close-up are cracking and the collection is building very nicely 😊 Cooler, damp days are great for Marbled Whites - sometimes you can capture small droplets of rain running over their compound eyes 😊 I'm seeing Painted Ladies all over the place at the moment - long may it continue and if they could invite some of their yellow cousins so much the better 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 27-Jun-19 02:36 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel.

Small droplets of rain running over their compound eyes!!! My you do set the bar high, don't you? 😊  
I need to add a bottle of eye-drops to my butterflying kit now just to get that shot!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 27-Jun-19 02:54 PM GMT

I was up quite early today and covered three reserves before noon. It was quite a varied day for wildlife with some unexpected encounters. My main task today was to try and get a close-up of a Dark Green Frit. I got a fleeting chance at my second reserve. I think I'll do this in three separate posts as Gloria is hinting she needs to go shopping and I am her chauffeur!

27th June 2019, 8-9 am St Catherine's Hill, Full Sun, 15 degrees, breezy

2 P Lady, 4 Red Ad, 35 Marbled Whites, 4 L Skip, 3 S Heath, 1 C Blue, and the usual loads of M Brown.

It was amazing how many Marbled Whites there were. I only saw my first one of the year yesterday!

Also 7 Bee Orchids – a flower I have never seen here before. I came across them quite by chance.



And I liked this cluster of Common Spotted orchids.





**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 27-Jun-19 05:45 PM GMT

27th June 2019, 9.30-10.30 am, Magdalen Hill, 18 degrees

Part 2 of today's posts. I parked at the bottom of the hill in the lay-by. There is access to the reserve from here but mainly I did it because of the huge number of Dark Mullein growing by the roadside. I have never seen so many Mullein spikes before.

This picture shows just one portion of them.



They were interspersed with many other plants, notably Bladder Campion.



And also on the Great Mullein I found a Mullein moth caterpillar basking in the sun.



I finally entered the reserve. Butterfly counts were as follows:

4 P Lady, 3 L Skip, 2 Ringlet, 3 S Heath, 2 Red Ad, 1 S Skip, 1 DF Frit, loads of M Browns of course but also 67 Marbled White!

So I found my quarry – a single Dark Green Frit.



I got a bit closer to try and get a close-up shot to continue with my close-up gallery. I thought to myself – I'll be lucky to do this now as I had missed my window of opportunity – ie the cooler early morning. It was now above 16 degrees which seems to be the trigger temperature for butterflies to fly about willy-nilly. But I hadn't reckoned on the effects of the keen breeze. This DG Frit seemed to want to do a spot of nectaring and was being rocked back and forth in the wind. It was clinging on for dear life. I did a burst shot and hoped for the best. I got just that little bit too close and it flew off. When I got back home I discovered the best of the burst sequence was...



I have got used to getting closer to butterflies recently but this is actually OK I think.

Mission accomplished I made my way back to the car when I came across this.



Well there were two of them actually. I have never seen a Bolete fruiting in June before. I had to look it up. The only one that grows on calcareous soil in summer is the Lurid Bolete and the colouration is the same as the pics I have seen. This is a new one for me. A lifetime first.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 27-Jun-19 06:05 PM GMT

27th June 2019, 11.15-12 noon, Binswood, 20 degrees

Last year in July Binswood gave me the most Purple Hairstreaks I have ever seen at one location and some fair pics too but I was a little late and by then many of them were a bit tatty. I decided to go earlier in the year this time.

Butterfly counts:

En-route from the car, saw what appeared to be a Brimstone. Then at the reserve itself...

1 P Lady, 6 M White, 1 L White, 2 L Skip and of course it almost goes without saying by now loads of M Brown.

But also four Purple Hairstreak. All of them came down momentarily. Two in flight and one landed but as soon as I had focussed my camera on it – it flew off again. Blast.

My consolation prize was a damselfly – I think a male White-legged damselfly (I am sure someone will let me know if it isn't)



I walked back to the car, just a little disappointed as you would be, but beside the actual entrance gate I got this.





It was a bit wobbly-looking, one wing-tip cocked to one side and the other ruffled a bit. Probably not yet having fully pumped-up after a recent emergence.

I still think I am going to have to make the trip to Browndown to get a proper close-up though.

PS:

Totting up the Marbled White count for the day I got 108. I only had my first one of the year yesterday. What an explosion in numbers.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 27-Jun-19 10:39 PM GMT

Brilliant stuff again Ernie 😊 That is often the way with butterflying – just when you think the day is a dead loss a butterfly appears as you're almost in the car park and rescues the day 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 28-Jun-19 02:02 PM GMT

28th June 2019

10-11 am, Binswood, Full Sun, 19 degrees

I added a Sp Wd, S Skip and Cinnabar to my list of yesterday at this site.

The Cinnabar had almost completely lost a wing.



Also a *Sicus ferrugineus* fly



11–11.30 am, Broxhead, Full Sun, 20 degrees

My Silver-studded Blue survey continues. Last year at this time we had already passed the peak in the lek (346 on 23rd June) but this year we were still clearly on the up-slope toward peak. I counted 54 in the lek – only 3 were female, and one mating pair.



All were in fine fettle but the increase is slow and I cannot see how the numbers can ramp up to last year's peak. The mating pair had an intrusion of a rival. In response they both fluttered their wings at him.



11.30–12 noon, Alice Holt, Full Sun, 22 degrees

5 SW Frit, 4 Red Ad, 5 Ringlet, 1 Purplestreak, 6 L Skip, 1 S Skip, 1 Comma, 1 White Ad.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 29-Jun-19 06:41 PM GMT

29th June 2019, 6 – 9.30 am, Browdown, Full Sun, 18–23 degrees

The hottest day of the year so far – it peaked at 31 degrees in Alton mid-afternoon. Phew what a scorcher!

Of course we were pre-warned about this so I decided to go very early. I arrived at 6 am, and it was already 18 degrees!

Browdown as you probably know is a prime Purple Hairstreak site because the coastal oaks are stunted here and so the canopy is very low. I parked in the car park beside the diving museum and walked into the reserve from there. I took a collapsible stool with me. This has two advantages. While you wait for the action you can sit in the shade and when the action begins you can stand on the stool to gain a bit of height!

First of all, the butterfly count: 1 L White, 1 L Skip, 1 S Skip, 2 Painted Lady, 7 Purple Hairstreak.

I only saw 7 Purple Hairstreak at a site that can contain hundreds because within a few minutes of arriving I found what must have been a master tree for them. There were 5 Purplestreaks on this one tree, 4 male and 1 female I think.

Next the side shot. It's a bit like a stage set with a spotlight on the main actor!



Being early meant that they were at times willing to open their wings for me.











And I was able to get some great close-ups which was my main reason for being here.







Also some unusual shots, such as this one from behind – you can see between its closed wings.



But I think what surprised me the most was the actual physical combat going on between males. There were as I say four males I think and they were sparring in pairs for awhile, but on three separate occasions while I watched they grappled directly face-to-face for some considerable time. I have never seen this behaviour before. It frequently appeared to get quite violent.







There never seemed to be a victor though. Adversaries often stopped their fighting only to feed side by side for a while.

The heat started to build up and it touched 23 degrees. They all suddenly stopped. Nothing moved. I saw two of them close together - they had orientated themselves so as to be on the shady side of their respective leaves. The leaves acted like butterfly parasols! And there they stayed. So I left them to it. It was only 9 am!

On the way back I took in the scenery which is quite wonderful with some beautiful flowers such as Yellow Horned Poppy, Vipers Bugloss and Rosebay Willowherb in some abundance.





Even the Sea Kale was interesting.



Then half a boat went by in the Solent. Weird. I wonder where the other half had gone?



A pretty good few hours.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

Fed up being bitten by midges and ticks? Or stinging yourself on nettles, Or what about snagging your clothes on brambles? Wish their was a solution to your woes?

NOW THERE IS.

Introducing the new Flutterby Mk I protection suit.



No more sprays that don't work. Just slip this on and you can get on with your butterflying experience without hindrance.

Price is only £199,999 (post and delivery extra). Hurry while stocks last (1 remaining).

#### Re: ernie f

by kevlng, 29-Jun-19 07:55 PM GMT

Ernie,

A very entertaining post from you today. Your anti bite suit is a little out of my price range though. I'll see fi I can pick one up at a car boot sale 😊

Those Purplestreak photos are a delight and capture some very interesting behaviour, something I haven't seen before.

Regards  
Kev

#### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 29-Jun-19 11:14 PM GMT

Whilst the anti-bite suit certainly looks effective I'm not sure how easy it would be to get down for some low shots although I reckon it would easily fit a tripod on it 😊 Cracking set of Purps 🟢🟢🟡 and some really interesting behaviour – I've seen male blues competing and they seem to do it aerially but nothing like this 🤔🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 30-Jun-19 03:57 PM GMT

Fabulous Purple Hairstreak reportage, ernie. That's a fascinating sequence of behaviour shots you've posted.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 30-Jun-19 04:28 PM GMT

Kev, Wurzel, Dave – Last year I saw hundreds of Purple Hairstreak – it was a great year for them, but not once did I see this behaviour. I guess it usually happens in the higher canopy and only at places like Browndown where the canopy is low is it possible to witness it.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 30-Jun-19 04:39 PM GMT

30th June 2019, Alice Holt, 9.30–10.30 am, overcast with the odd bit of sun, 18 degrees

1 Wt Ad, 4 Red Ad, 2 P Lady, 1 Comma, 3 S Skip, 11 L Skip, 1 L White.

Suddenly the Ringlet emergence has erupted. I am sure they outnumbered the M Brown here today.



I found a pair in-cop. The grass they were perching on was blowing about in the breeze so I held onto it while taking my pictures of them and what do you know, next thing they had walked onto my finger! They seemed to like it there too. I had a hell of a difficulty getting them back off again safely.







Also – a Painted Lady that was in the greenery around our driveway two days ago seems to like it here. It was here again today.

### Re: ernie f

by trevor, 30-Jun-19 07:03 PM GMT

Great Purple Hairstreak shots, Ernie.  
Personally I like the first image, which shows how striking the colours/markings can be, when caught in the right light. You did well to get male and female in one session.

A mrgreen is in order! 🍷 .  
Trevor.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 30-Jun-19 10:31 PM GMT

"They seemed to like it there too. I had a hell of a difficulty getting them back off again safely." I bet you had difficulty knowing where to look Ernie 😊  
😊 Fair play those are great shots especially as they're twofers – they'd fit in my "In cop" and "In the hand" collections 🍷 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 01-Jul-19 04:25 PM GMT

Trevor – Until you mentioned it I didn't realise my luck on getting male and female pics from the same tree.  
Wurzel – It did seem odd to have a pair of copulating butterflies on my finger – but I quickly got over it when I found I could get close-up shots, albeit with my camera in one hand and butterflies in the other!

### Re: ernie f

by Goldie M, 01-Jul-19 04:36 PM GMT

Hi! ernie, love the Purple Hair Streak shot's ,Fantastic 🍷 🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 01-Jul-19 04:48 PM GMT

Thanks, Goldie – I consider myself very lucky in being there in the right place at the right time.

1st July 2019, 10.30–11.30 am, Odiham Common, 50% sun, 18 degrees

First the bad news. My main reason for coming to this site is for White-letter Hairstreak. I saw none today but that is not my bad news. They may come along soon. No my bad news is the state of the Elms here. In the three years I have been visiting this common they have been in decline but this year is noticeably worse than last year. I did not even need to take before and after pictures – many were VERY bad, losing not just tips but entire branches were wilting.

On the plus side I have just learnt of a project where a new, hardier Elm variety has just been planted in Basingstoke close to where WLH's have been seen recently.

Today I did see some great things though. An Essex Skipper hung around long enough to have his mug-shot taken.



My first ever Forester moth. Fantastic!







And a Southern Hawker.



Now my book says there is a rare type that has all blue abdominal markings, usually only the ones toward the tail are blue. Is it me or do I see all blue markings on the abdomen here? Maybe it's just wishful-thinking.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 01-Jul-19 10:50 PM GMT

Cracking view of the Essex Ernie – that's definitely not a Smessex 😊😄 There does seem to be some blue on those markings Ernie 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 02-Jul-19 01:36 PM GMT

2nd July 2019, 9–9.30 am, Broxhead, 95% sun, 18 degrees

SSB survey this morning. There were 101 in total, of which 8 were female and there was one mating pair. This is around double the numbers of my last survey day on 28th June. It seems they are still on the increase whereas around this time last year they were around the same number but on the decline. As a consequence last year there were far more females than so far this year – by a factor of 7, but this is a function of where we are on the population curve – I am expecting the female numbers to increase soon.

The mating pair were – well – how can I put this delicately? Hmm. I can't so I'll just say it – they were thrusting! I have seen SSB's mating before many times but have never witnessed this. They weren't messing about either, it was definite and repeated for some time and it appeared to be the female doing all the work.





10-12 noon, Alice Holt - The Straits Enclosure, cloud increasing, 19 degrees

And the same thing goes for here too as far as the late and slow increase in numbers goes. The SW Frits and White Ad numbers are gradually increasing, I saw 6 of both today. Last year my count of Purple Emperors had already climbed into double figures here but still so far this year - none.

Also seen here today, S&L Skip, MB&R, L&MWhite, Red Ad, P Lady, Comma, Pstreak, two of the latter came down momentarily but did not stop for a pic.

Got some nice close-ups of the SWFrits and a backside shot too.







Sleaford

One last bit of info. I met a guy who put me onto this. There is a large mature hedge of Elm along a path between The Straits Enclosure and the garden centre next to Sleaford crossroads. I checked it for WLH's but I saw none. I'll give it another go in a few days time.



### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 03-Jul-19 01:55 PM GMT

3rd July 2019, 9-11 am, Alice Holt - Straits Enclosure, Full sun then clouding to 80%, 18 degrees

The White Ad and SW Frit counts are going up rapidly now. Here is the full set:

10 Wt Ad, 15 SW Frit, 3 Pstreak, 1 P lady, 1 L White, 2 Comma, 1 S White, 6 Red Ad

Also MBrown, Ringlet, L&S Skip but not counted. L Skips had to be between 20 and 30 though.

Yesterday I met Mark here who told me he had seen a black version of the White Admiral. I came across it today and got close. The ab oblitterae seems the closest fit but I bow to other's better judgement on this.









As I was taking my pics of the ab I could not believe it but a Purple Hairstreak landed on the foliage directly beside me! I didn't know what to do. Continue with the ab or divert my camera to the Hairstreak. I chose the Hairstreak.



But both butterflies then flew off.

I saw Mark again here today and he too had pics from his previous encounter with the ab White Ad but his had wing chunks missing. We compared and worked out there must be at least three individuals of this aberration here at the same time.

Try as we might we together could not spot a Purple Emperor. He said he had seen one at Abbots Wood Enclosure yesterday so guess where I went next?

3rd July 2019, 11-11.30 am, Alice Holt - Abbots Wood Enclosure, cloud 80%, 18 degrees

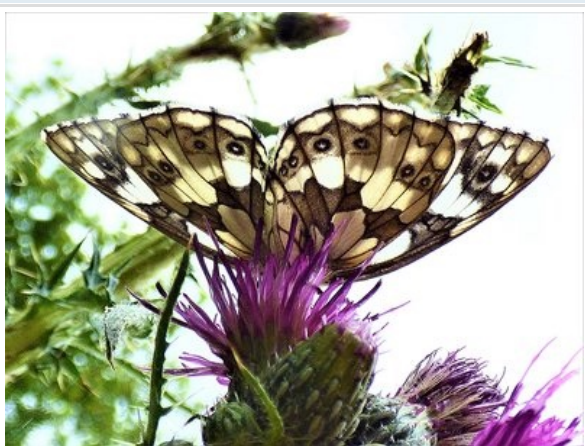
1 P Lady, 1 Pstreak, 2 Wt Ad, 1 M White, 1 Comma, 1 Red Ad, 1 L White

... and then two Purple Emperors flying low at each other. They split, one flew off but the other landed on the ground. My first of the year and it had landed!





The Marbled White held his position while I photographed him from underneath.



Finally, a not-very-well Shrew.



Well, dead really to be honest.

But nevertheless it was one of those pretty-good days.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-19 07:10 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Ernie 🍷🍷😄 I wouldn't know where to begin with the compliments/envious comments 😊 I think my favourite has to be the underside shot of the White Admiral – really interesting looking individual 😊🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by Mark Tutton, 03-Jul-19 09:42 PM GMT

Hi Ernie

Glad you got your Emperor – well earned!

I think there are possibly four obliterae including yours and Pauline's and possibly a nigrina- completely black – too which I haven't managed to catch up with.

Apologies for posting photos on your diary but I thought you might be interested?





**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 04-Jul-19 07:44 AM GMT

Wurzel – Thanks – I liked the underside of the ab White Ad too – lovely colouration.

Mark – It was good to see you again and to get some of your valuable knowledge on Purple Emperors and White Admirals. I do not mind you or anyone else posting pics on my PD. The more the merrier I say, especially when it is on such an interesting subject as aberrations.

**Re: ernie f**

by Janet Turnbull, 04-Jul-19 11:58 AM GMT

Playing catch-up again, Ernie – your PH photos are amazing; it's odd how the protagonists go back to their corners between rounds 😊 and as for the close-up of the Ringlet's eye...! stunning!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 04-Jul-19 03:50 PM GMT

Janet – thanks. Regarding the Purplestreaks wrestling, there is no referee to break them up either. Only they know when they are finished! 😊

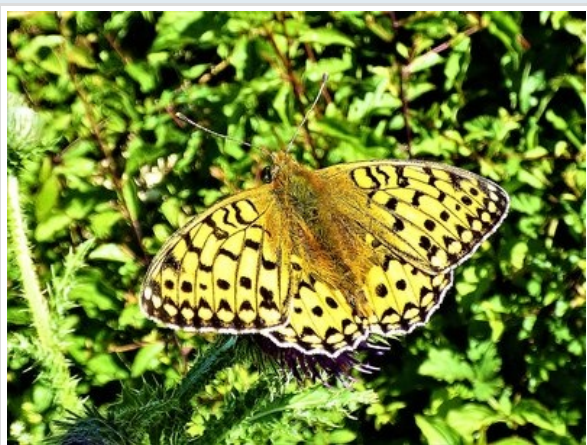
**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 04-Jul-19 03:59 PM GMT

4th July 2019, 9–10.30am, Noar Hill, 16–19 degrees, full sun

L Skip, S Heath, P Lady (2), MB&R, Comma, S&L&M White, Cinnabar, Small Magpie and one Small Blue.

But the stars of the show today were the four DG Frits.



10.30–11 am, Chawton Estate Elms, 19 degrees

At last – my first WL Hairstreaks of the year. I know many other people have seen them so far on this forum – with some fine picks (even in-cop!!!), but I was just satisfied to see two males sparring up in the canopy through my binoculars. No pics – they were too far up.

Also a pair of Peregrine Falcons using a thermal to gain height. These of course are the fastest bird in the world on descent but it is surprising how fast they can go UP too using thermals. They were quickly out of sight. I bet they could still see ME though.



**Re: ernie f**

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-19 04:55 PM GMT

Hi! ernie, good shot of the DGF, your pic has made me long to get this darn boot off and get driving again, I know they're out at Southport but I can't get there, never mind, maybe next year if I don't fall down stairs again. 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 05-Jul-19 05:46 AM GMT

You sure are busy right now, ernie. Love the White Admiral abs and you've managed to get close to PurpleHairstreaks/Emperors too! 🍷

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 05-Jul-19 08:18 AM GMT

Goldie – I hope you can get the boot off soon, too. We need you back in the field as soon as possible.

David – Thanks – There is always something of interest to see and every so often you get one of those "moments". Sitting beside an ab White Ad and a Purple Hairstreak with its wings ajar at the same time can certainly be classed as a "moment"! 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 05-Jul-19 08:24 AM GMT

It has just occurred to me. Yesterday I reported I had seen a Small Blue at Noar Hill. Now Magdalen Hill has a whole bundle of them and last time I visited there were none – which did not surprise me as I was just out of their season. So what was this one doing at Noar Hill and then it dawned on me (call me stupid) it was a second brooder. The pic I took of it was blurred so I deleted it but I remember it was pristine – having no cuts and abrasions. Now I wish I hadn't deleted it.

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 05-Jul-19 12:21 PM GMT

"my first WL Hairstreaks of the year. I know many other people have seen them so far on this forum" still not seen one myself Ernie 🍷  
You're right about the DGFs being the star of the show – they generally are and if not have a dam good go at stealing the limelight 😊👓

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 05-Jul-19 01:30 PM GMT

5th July 2019, Alice Holt: Abbot's Wood, 10.15–11.15 am, Mainly sun, 22 degrees

2 Pstreaks, 11 SW Frits, 2 P Emps (same two as last time no doubt), 8 L Skip, 2 Red Ad, 2 Wh Ad, 1 S White, 1 L White, 1 M White.

One Pstreak was demonstrating how to use a leaf as a sun parasol!



11.30–12 noon, Broxhead, Mainly sun, 23 degrees

SSB survey continues...

Today I counted 92 individuals in and around the lek of which there were 21 females. Three days ago there were 101 of which 8 were females. It looks to me as if we have just gone past peak. Last year at peak there were 346, while this year there were 101. If we really are on the downward side of the slope now, it appears numbers have been slashed by 2/3 since last year. I can't say for sure yet until I get another couple of data points but the increase in females certainly points that way.

Also L White, P Lady, L Skip, MBrown, Silver-Y

Today I saw the antics of a female rejecting a male. She would vibrate her wings very fast and also put her rear up in much the same way as Whites and Brimstones do. In these pics the male is actually underneath her.



I also visited my father at his care home today (I do so twice per week). He was in the dining room and right beside him on the window and ledge were two moths. I had my camera with me, so...

I think this one is a Treble Brown Spot.





And this one may be a Small Dusty Wave.



Please let me know if I have these ID's wrong. Thanks.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 05-Jul-19 08:52 PM GMT

I reckon you could be right with those IDs Ernie – but then I don't have that good a track record with Moff's Ernie 😊😄 I've seen that rejection technique in Silver-studs as well Ernie, it's surprising how long the male persists for 😊 The two pairs that I've seen in cop didn't hang around so you'd think that after 30 seconds of trying and not getting anywhere the males would get the message 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 06-Jul-19 03:39 PM GMT

Wurzel – talk about the persistence of male SSBs. A few years ago I watched one male trying to mate with a rejecting female but she didn't do this wing-vibrating, rear-up technique. She may have done before I got there but while I watched she just clung on to a heather frond. She had probably by then just given up trying to give him signals and instead resorted to cold-shoulder. I watched her unmoving for about 20 minutes and he was still there bothering her as I left.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 06-Jul-19 03:54 PM GMT

5th July 2019. 5–5.30 pm and 6th July 2019, 7.30–10am, Binswood, mostly sun both times, 26 degrees afternoon, 15–19 degrees following morning

Two trips to the same site but a different location within that site each time – separated only by one night so I shall combine up.

3 Comma, 1 Common Blue, 2 S White, 2 S Skip, 19 M White, 1 P Lady, 16 L Skip, 1 Red Ad, 1 SWF, 2 Gatekeeper, combined Meadow Brown and Ringlet in hundreds, 1 Cinnabar and 19 Purple Hairstreak.

I saw my first Binswood Pstreak this year only a little over one week ago and already some of the individuals I saw today were getting a bit frayed around the edges. But the numbers were on the increase and some of them were fairly fresh.







I found three locations where they were coming down quite low. One came down to ground foliage but others stayed on the low boughs of oaks. At one point there were so many flitting about on one tree I had difficulty counting them, definitely at least seven because at one point I prodded one low bough with my hand (that's how low it was) and seven took off from it all at once. I have now counted 23 here so far this year but I do not intend to scour the place for them like I did last year as I don't have the stamina for it.

Also my first Gatekeeper of the year and my first for the year second-brood Common Blue.



Also an late-afternoon shot of a Large Skipper nectaring.



And a close-up of a Meadow Brown.





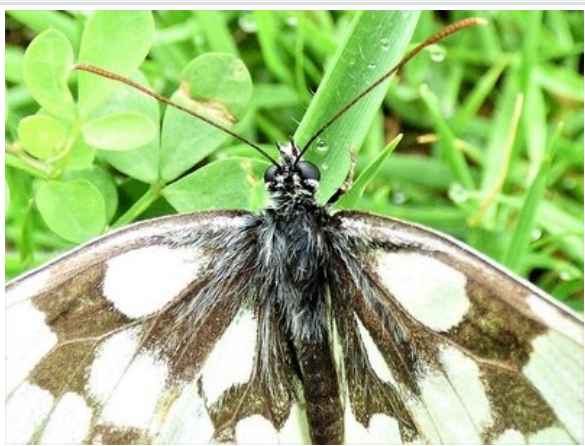
**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 07-Jul-19 12:23 PM GMT

7th July 2019, 10-11 am, Binswood, Overcast after a misty drizzle, 16 degrees

I admit I am an optimist. I didn't know what to expect under such conditions but I came here anyway – and the answer was that no Purple Hairstreaks moved and none were roosting low down.

So I diverted my attention to a very amenable Marbled White who posed for a few shots.







**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 07-Jul-19 05:33 PM GMT

Great shots of the Purps Ernie 🤔🌿 Also really great close-ups of the Marbled Whites but my favourite has to be the stained glass MW 🤔🤔🌿

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 07-Jul-19 09:54 PM GMT

You're certainly cleaning up with the Purple Hairstreaks, ernie.

Looks like another good year for them following on from their 2018 display.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 08-Jul-19 04:48 PM GMT

Wurzel, David - Yep the Purple Hairstreaks seem to be building up nicely again this year and again like last year often seen low down.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 08-Jul-19 05:03 PM GMT

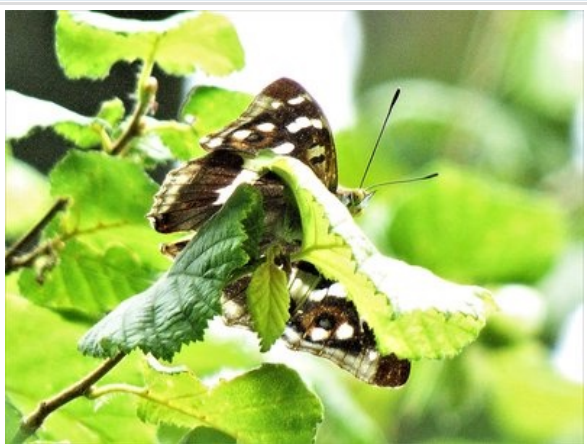
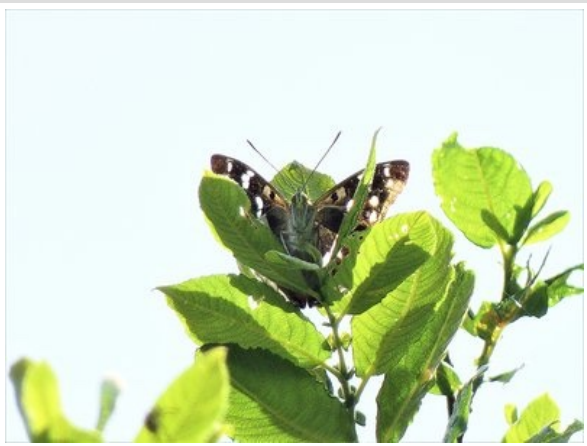
8th July 2019, 10.15-12.15, Straits Enclosure, 80% cloud, 19 degrees

8 SWF, 2 M White, 2 S White, 4 W Ad, 3 R Ad, 1 P Emp, 15 L Skip, 7 S Skip, 4 Pstreak, 3 Gkeeper, 1 Brimstone

1 Golden-ringed Dragonfly



Good views of P Emp in trees and seen flying low around a group of butterfly enthusiasts (myself included) for a couple of minutes.



Also a close-up of a Gatekeeper.



Broxhead

Met Roger at the Straits Enclosure, got talking about SSB's. I showed him the Broxhead lek. We saw a number of males and females and he also spotted this tiny grasshopper. I think it might be a Mottled Grasshopper. Any ideas?



1.30-3.00 pm, Abbots Wood mostly sunny, 22 degrees

I think Mark must be camping out as he was there again today - of course he might probably say the same about me!!! Together we saw three P Emps of which one he suggested might be a female, because it was flying in shade in the trees.

Also: 3 Wt Ad, 3 SWF, 2 L Skip, 7 Pstreak, 1 M White

And a Southern Hawker.

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 08-Jul-19 08:38 PM GMT



Tantalising views of His Nibbs Ernie – I bet everyone was willing him down 😊🍌🍌

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 08-Jul-19 10:01 PM GMT

You're seeing some great stuff, ernie. Where do you find the energy?

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 09-Jul-19 01:51 PM GMT

Wurzel – Funnily enough he was on the ground but none of us noticed until he flew up!

David – Re "where do I find the energy" – well I took a tip from the Minions – I eat a banana a day.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 09-Jul-19 02:13 PM GMT

9th July 2019, 10–11 am, Farlington East, weak sun through slight cloud, 19 degrees, onshore breeze

Speaking with Mark yesterday, he put me onto a good WL Hairstreak site near the south coast just east of Farlington Marsh. It is I found out today the closest point to me where I can access the coast path. No WLH's as I was too late, the bramble down here is already sprouting berries. Nevertheless the coast was lovely. I don't think I have ever seen Pyramidal Orchids growing side by side with Reedmace! There were lots of these orchids and they were some of the largest examples of the species I think I have ever seen.

Butterflies were:

1 Comma, 2 S White, 1 L White, 2 Peacock, 2 L Skip, 8 M White, 13 M Brown (not very many really) but 103 Gatekeeper! An astonishing number considering I saw my first of the year within the last few days and I guess this was a small fraction of the total here because they were everywhere and I didn't cover all the paths. Also there were 22 S&E Skippers, one of which was definitely a Small Skipper and two were definitely Essex. I don't know the true ratio because I did not scrutinise every one of them up close.





Plus a bunch of Cinnabar larvae.



It was low tide and there were a couple of cockle-pickers out on the tidal marsh. One had left his bike in the middle of the bay. It made an odd scene.



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-19 10:31 PM GMT

Great close up of the Essex Skipper Ernie 😊 That Hedge Brown is looking a little tired already 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 10-Jul-19 06:51 AM GMT

I guess that bike will be swallowed by the tide?

Nice views of the Essex antennae, ernie. No doubting that one.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 10-Jul-19 03:22 PM GMT

Wurzel, Dave

I like it when I can be sure I've seen an Essex Skipper. I come from Essex originally so I have a kinship with them. 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 10-Jul-19 03:33 PM GMT

We've got the decorators in today so I have not been able to get out but I did go out for an hour yesterday afternoon (another of those "Garden Centre" trips).

3.30-4.30pm, Straits Enclosure, 23 degrees, sunny start, clouded over later

4 W Ad, 2 Comma, many S,E,L Skips, usual MB,R&G. One P Emperor swooped down to check me out then flew off while I stood beside the first Deer Lookout tower along the path (I have never seen a deer looking out from this tower though!). The P Emp flew down to me three separate times in the space of 15 minutes. It did not stop though.

Also along the path, 13 Pstreaks, each one of which flew low down, mostly just above head height, but none stopped.

Did get a close-up of one of the Comma's though.



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 12-Jul-19 11:57 AM GMT

Nice close up Ernie 😊 You can see the diamond thingy on thorax (the scutum?) 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 13-Jul-19 06:26 AM GMT



**ernie f wrote:**

...The P Emp flew down to me three separate times in the space of 15 minutes. It did not stop though.

That's the very definition of frustration, ernie! If only they were as regularly obliging as your Comma.

### **Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 13-Jul-19 06:00 PM GMT

Wurzel – I had to look up Scutum as I admit I didn't know what it was. I found out from Wikipedia it was a Roman shield! 😊

David – It is interesting when Purple Emperors fly around you and its nice to see their antics from afar but nothing really matches getting up close and personal with one does it?

### **Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 13-Jul-19 06:21 PM GMT

13th July 2019, 9–11am, Straits Enclosure, mostly sunny at first, clouding gradually later, 20–22 degrees, slight breeze

This was a rather good morning. First I got a couple of close-up shots of a White Admiral on the ground. It was not in the best condition but was still pretty active.



Then there were multiple opportunities with Purple Hairstreaks. Quite a few came down – in fact at one point there were three all together on the grass at once and at another time, much further along the track, beside the first tower, another two came down together. These were not the only ones either, others were flying low and perching momentarily almost anywhere along the track verges.

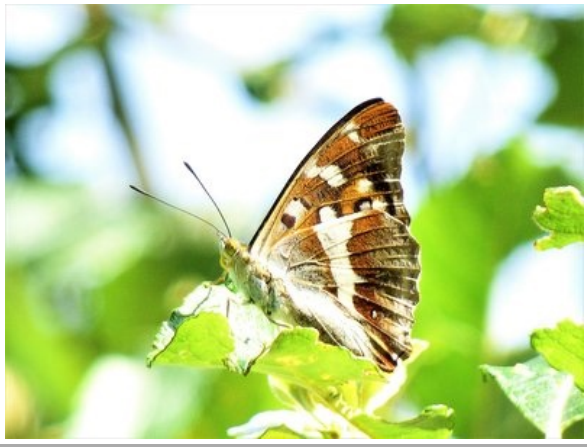


Then a mated pair of Gatekeeper. First time I've got a pic of a pair in-cop with wings open.



And his nibs came down too. Saw three altogether, one came to low foliage and one came down to the ground. One male seemed to find a female and pursued her for awhile but she flew off, obviously a rejection there then. Shame.



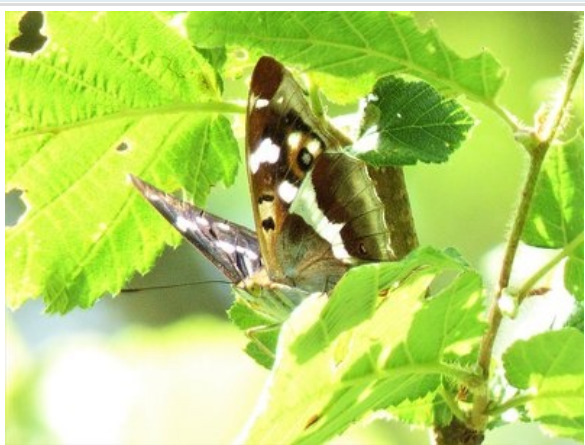


One was dropping and raising its antennae.



I don't know why.





Also this morning on my way there, I saw a wild black rabbit snuzzing in the sun.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 14-Jul-19 08:18 PM GMT

Cracking shots of the PE and PH Ernie 🤔🇩🇪🇩🇪 I think you need to market your cologne 😊 Great shot of the Black Rabbit – which is probably even rarer than the PEs – I've only ever seen two myself 🤔🇩🇪

### Re: ernie f

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

Looks like a great site for all things 'purple', ernie.

Enjoy it while it lasts.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 15-Jul-19 06:45 PM GMT

David – The PE's and PH's were late starting around here so I think we may have hit peak now.

Wurzel – It wasn't my cologne that attracted the PE. I borrowed Nick's finger for those shots. For Info – A finger dipped in shrimp paste does the trick so it seems. The downside is that it attracts dogs too!!!

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 15-Jul-19 07:00 PM GMT

July 15th 2019

I saw two blue butterflies today. One in my own garden and another near my house. Both were fleeting glimpses but seemed to behave like Holly Blues.

3.15–5pm, Binswood, sunny, 21 degrees

A great time had with Pstreaks. One Oak had six on it and an adjacent one had another two I think. Anyway – they were all pretty low, basked with wings ajar on occasion and sometimes came down to the ferns. One came to the ground but only for a moment while others wheeled around me to find out what I was. I hope I didn't disappoint them.







Also of note – Small Coppers were out here and both of the ones I saw were unusual. One (no pic) was a mini and the other was severely deformed (pictured below). You can see one hindwing is shrunk and the forewing on the same side is ruffled. The body (withered?) seems also to curve to that side.



It could still fly but in an odd way which is what drew my attention to it in the first place.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 17-Jul-19 08:35 AM GMT

16th July 2019, 8.15-9.30 am, Binswood, Sunny, 14-17 degrees

Purpling today – majoring on Pstreaks. Lots of open-wing picture opportunities. Hurrah!

Here are some. I am always fascinated by the variety in colour of this species dependent on age, condition and direction of sunlight.











Also some Beautiful Demoiselles living up to their name.



I unwittingly disturbed a Tawny Owl from its daytime perch too. I don't know who was startled the most – him or me!

**Re: ernie f**

by trevor, 17-Jul-19 09:04 AM GMT

You have found some great Purple Hairstreak sites, Ernie.  
I particularly like your 'all purple' shots of the male, something that has eluded me so far.  
PH have been particularly obliging this year.

All the best,  
Trevor.

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-19 10:46 PM GMT

Cracking Purps Ernie 😄 I know what you mean bout the colour change/variation – I saw a Purp in the Dordogne last year and it wasn't purple in the slightest 😄 Soon their Brown cousins will be out 😄😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 18-Jul-19 03:17 PM GMT

Fantastic, ernie. This is such a difficult butterfly for me to even find in south Wales, let alone have them posing wings–open within striking distance of my camera lens. 📷

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 19-Jul-19 08:11 AM GMT

Report on the Silver–studded Blue colony at the Broxhead Lek – 2019

Last year I reported on both the Broxhead Lek site for the Silver–studded Blue and also a summary of the whole reserve for this species. This year I compare the 2019 numbers with those from 2018 at the Lek site only as last year I found this to be representative of the whole reserve.

I had performed a full survey (not reported) some years ago and last year the numbers tallied closely with that first survey. I assumed last year therefore that the population of Silver–studded Blues at Broxhead was stable. However the figures for 2019 have overturned that assumption. It now appears that the fortunes of this species may be greatly affected by factors unknown to me. What can be said though is that last year we had one of the longest, hottest summers on record and this year, although we have had some fair days in mid–summer, it was unseasonally cold and wet well into June. This latter factor was the probable reason for the delay in the start–up of the flight period this year and may even be responsible for the ongoing figures.

Start of flying season at Broxhead in 2018 was 6th June, in 2019 it was 14th June, about 1 week later.

I did not witness the final day of the flight period last year so I did not try to do that this year either – I merely surveyed up to the point where I achieved approximately the same numbers as last year on my last survey day that year.

Survey end in 2018 was on 11th July with 17 males and 12 females still flying, whereas in 2019 I ended my survey on 16th July with 18 males and 9 females still flying, nearly 1 week later.

Thus the flight season started later and ended later than last year, the whole flight season shifted forward by about a week.

The most startling discovery though was the greatly reduced numbers overall this year. Last year the max number of males recorded was 346 on June 23rd but this year the max number of males recorded was only 93 on the 2nd July, almost a quarter of those last year.



It was a similar situation for the females, with a max count for them of 52 on 4th July in 2018 but only a max count of 21 on 5th July 2019. Less than half the previous year.





Whatever affected the population this year hit the males a lot harder than the females. Whilst this is bad news overall it is the females which dictate the potential for the next generation and the fact they were less hit than the males does at least give us some reason for optimism for next year.



**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 19-Jul-19 08:15 AM GMT

Trevor, Wurzel, David – I have been lucky with the Pstreaks these past two years. At my two local sites for them, Alice Holt and Binswood, they seem to have been coming down quite a lot. It's great for me but I wonder about how great it is for them. The Oaks around here seem to be suffering quite badly. Many of the leaves are withering and are coated with a white film. I wonder if it is the condition of the oaks that is forcing the Pstreaks down more?

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 19-Jul-19 08:23 AM GMT

I just looked it up – it's called "Oak Powdery Mildew". Luckily it does not kill the host tree (but unfortunately we do have Oak diseases that do!)

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 19-Jul-19 08:29 AM GMT

It would be interesting to know why the numbers seem down at this site Ernie as the site I visited had a very good year, possibly one of the best I've encountered? 😊 I wonder how influential micro climate is on the habitat at Broxhead as Slog Bog is, as the name would suggest, a wet bog/heathland, if Broxhead is a dry heath perhaps it was more affected? It's encouraging though that the females seemed less affected – it could mean that they have to breed from a choice of fewer males BUT perhaps those males will be 'better' stock? Fingers crossed for next year.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 20-Jul-19 11:09 AM GMT

It's always interesting how populations fluctuate from one site to another. I guess local conditions could be a factor or perhaps the exceptionally warm, sunny weather during the 2018 flight period was influential in last year's superior figures?

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 21-Jul-19 07:10 AM GMT

Wurzel, David – It's very strange. The fact that it was such a dramatic drop in SSB numbers at Broxhead this year and it affected the males far more than the females. Last year the numbers were good but the same as a previous year that I did a survey so I do not think it was just that last years figures were exceptionally good – it's certainly more likely that this years figures were worse. Plus – if Wurzel's site in Wiltshire had a good year, it's doubly odd (Wiltshire being next door to Hampshire). If overall climate is part of the reason it cannot be the whole reason. I agree it's more likely to be local issues of some kind but it's not something that is very obvious when you visit Broxhead. The place looked no different from usual. Last years heat may have impacted the ant population here which may explain the overall drop in numbers but not the disparity between the male and female numbers. I am still a little flummoxed by it.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 21-Jul-19 07:19 AM GMT

20th July 2019, Straits Enclosure, 1.30–2.30pm, mostly sunny, 22 degrees, after a day and night of almost continuous rain

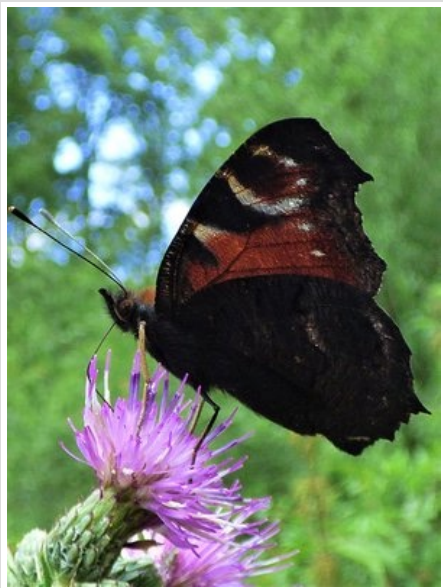
Possibly my last visit to this site for this year – I felt like I was closing down a chapter. Change is in the air. I saw only one fading White Ad and one fading Pstreak and no P Emps, but as mid summer moves into late summer it was marked by seeing 4 Peacock, a Holly Blue and a Brimstone. Also Large Skips and Meadow Browns fading out, while there were far more Small and Large Whites.

Others today were Small Skip, Comma, Red Ad, Ringlet and Gatekeeper, SW Frits

Outgoing...



Incoming...



## Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 21-Jul-19 04:07 PM GMT

21st Jul 2019, 8-8.30am, Magdalen Hill, 15 degrees, Full Sun turning abruptly to Full Cloud at 8.30

Another day – a change of scene. Mag Hill can get Chalkhill Blues in the hundreds as can its neighbour, St Catherine's Hill. Just a few miles away at Old Winchester Hill there can be thousands! Guess how many I saw today?

One!

But it was a good one. I had come early hoping to get a close-up pic of one roosting and what I got was a series of pics of one very fresh male basking and feeding. I had a window of opportunity of about 30 minutes before the cloud set in. After that, apart from 1 Peacock, 1 Small Skip, 1 Marbled White and a handful of Meadow Brown – all was very still.







Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 21-Jul-19 07:30 PM GMT

Good to see you got a Chalkhill Ernie – bit one is definitely better than none and what a one 😊👍 Are they later emerging this year? 😊 Really interesting final shot 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 22-Jul-19 07:02 PM GMT

You did right to get there early, ernie. I'm sure numbers will increase rapidly but in the meantime you had an audience with one admirably mint-fresh specimen.

### Re: ernie f

by millerd, 22-Jul-19 09:15 PM GMT

A very nice Chalkhill, Ernie. There should be few more soon, as they are well and truly out at Denbies and at Aston Rowant, though perhaps in fewer numbers than usual on both sites.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 23-Jul-19 04:46 PM GMT

Wurzel, David, Dave – I am sure over the next few days we shall witness an eruption of Chalkhill Blues around here as we are getting proper summer weather now.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 23-Jul-19 04:57 PM GMT

23rd July 2019, 8–10am, Folly Hill (Caesar's Camp), Full Sun, 18–23 degrees

The other day I went to Magdalen Hill early, wanting to get close-up pics of Chalkhill Blues, and luckily I got one – but only one. Yet again, another species starting a bit later in the year than it normally does around here.

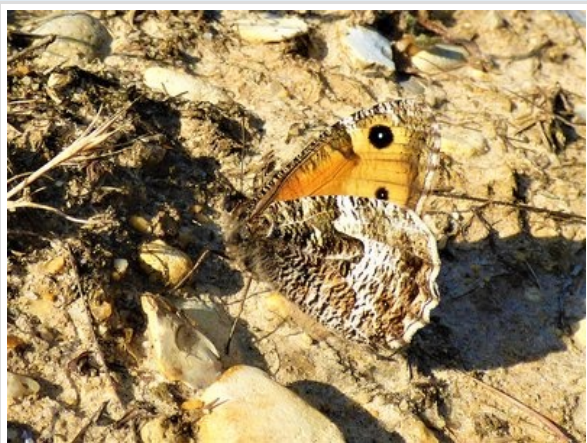
Today I went to Folly Hill with the same idea – to get a close-up of a Grayling. This time though I wondered if any would be flying there yet. I need not have worried. I found eleven without trying very hard and was early enough for them to stay still long enough for close-ups. By 10 am, at 23 degrees there was no chance, they were far too active, the males sparring regularly when they got too close to one another.

It never ceases to amaze me how well they can hide in plain sight. More than once I nearly stepped on one on the path!

When I got too close and disturbed them, they did their usual trick of flying round my back and landing directly behind me but I have sussed that trick now and spotted it every time they did it. However one clever little b\*\*\*\*r, did it twice in succession and as I twirled round to look behind me I glimpsed it had taken off again and so I continued to twirl round – it ended up back in front of me again and landed pretty much on the spot from where it took off in the first place!

Also seen today at Folly Hill – 1 P Lady, 1 S Copper, 1 L White, 1 L Skip, 2 S Skip, 1 E Skip, 2 S White, 2 Peacock and 1 DG Frit (surprisingly for a heath, although it seemed to be just flying through). Also I cannot be sure but in the grassy area at the back I thought I saw a Small Blue – if it was not then I can't think what it could have been.

All pics today are of the Grayling though.











## Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 24-Jul-19 04:59 PM GMT

24th July 2019, 9.30-11am, Noar Hill, Full Sun 23-28 degrees

4 Brim, 4 Peacock, 3 L&S White, 1 L Skip, 9 S Skip (of which some prob Essex but didn't check)  
2 Red Ad, 6 M White, 1 GV White, 2 Sp Wd, 1 S Heath, 2 Cm Blue (M&F), G&R&MB  
2 DG Frit - a male pursuing a female.

Also a Shaded Broad-bar moth...



...and a Hummingbird Hawkmoth. Not the best shot in the world and heavily cropped too, but my first of its snout-end.





### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 24-Jul-19 10:55 PM GMT

Great set of shots Ernie 😊 Grayling for me are probably the most entertaining butterflies, you can really interact with them unlike other species 😊😊 They certainly give me the run around 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 25-Jul-19 12:05 PM GMT

Wurzel – Yes, Grayling can be fun to watch and at times you seem to be in the centre of it all as they flit around you.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 25-Jul-19 12:25 PM GMT

25th July 2019, 7.15–9.30am, Folly Hill, Full Sun, 20–27 degrees, slight breeze

So on a day that was forecast to be the hottest July day on record with temperatures touching perhaps 38 or even 39 degrees in the south-east I thought I had better get out early and just as well I did because I was on site by 7.15 and it was already 20 degrees in the sun.

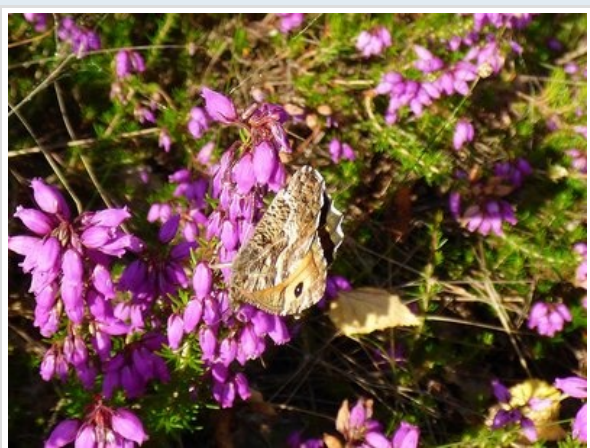
I decided to go to the spot where for the past two years the Grayling had been at their best. For a while I roamed, searched and found nothing. Then near the main entrance path I disturbed one and it flew off. A little later, ditto. Bother. But then one came to the ground for a while. Nice. But then it, too flew but I saw it go and it went quite some way. Luckily I was able to follow it and I arrived at the very spot I had originally set out from. This tree.



At this place I had found none at all between 7.15 am and 8.30 am but now, at 8.30 am I found five. It seems they had slowly been making their way to this spot from their roosts. At one point I saw all five at once. Three males were in the air sparring together while two were on the ground beneath (spectators?). A moment later two were sparring, then they split and one got entangled in a bout with another that flew up to engage him. It was all very boisterous.



One was feeding from the heather and would move one of his forewings independently of the other. Was he doing this to keep balance in the slight breeze?



One landed on my shoe.





Then one landed on my arm momentarily (twice). Then on my shoe again, then my T-shirt and repeatedly on my trousers. In fact one seemed to like me so much that he chose me to be his ally in battle. He would land on my trousers, use me as a look-out tower, chase off any other butterfly he saw from that vantage point then came back to land on my trousers again. I lost count how many times this happened but it had to be at least half a dozen.



As time wore on, there were fewer and fewer near this tree. Each time one broke away I followed it and each time they would cross over some sandy ground before finally pushing-off for good. This sandy ground was an open round expanse encircled by heather, gorse and young pines. It reminded me of an arena and it only then dawned on me that what I had found was Grayling lek.





At 9.30 am only one Grayling remained. The pine tree which is the main focus of all this activity is on a slight mound so I called him the "King of the Hill".



*The King of the Hill*

There was an interloper working the grasses on the periphery of the Grayling lekking "arena". He was a Small Copper.



Busy doing repeated "stalk-walks" down various grass and plant stems. He kept himself very much to himself and was never chased by a Grayling while I watched. The Grayling seemed to find it more fun to chase the Gatekeepers or each other all the time.





**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 26-Jul-19 07:50 PM GMT

Interesting description of the behaviour Ernie – from reading it I think I found a 'lek' when I visited my site 😊 Great set of shoe and trouser shots 🤔🇮🇪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 26-Jul-19 10:33 PM GMT

Glad you got your Grayling 'fix', ernie. They're wonderful butterflies, constantly interested in we humans (and with a penchant for blue jeans too!)

Going early was a good move – this species is notoriously tricky in warm weather.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 30-Jul-19 10:13 AM GMT

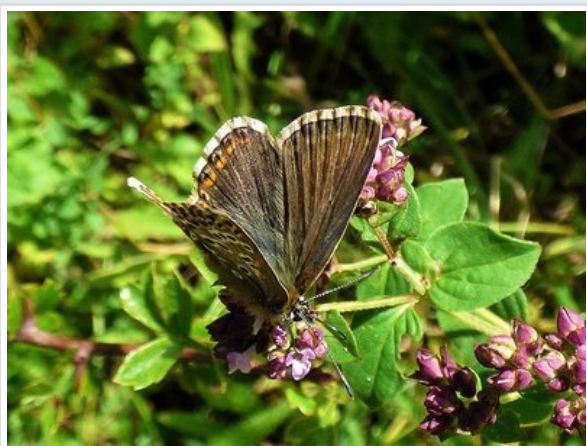
Thanks guys. Its nice to have a Grayling site no more than 10 miles from me. There are heaths closer to me but they don't seem to attract this species.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 30-Jul-19 10:23 AM GMT

29th July 2019, 3-4 pm, St Catherine's Hill, Mostly sunny, 23 degrees

A short trip here today. I only visited one small part but it was very clear the Chalkhills were finally out in force with quite a few females in the mix too. Also Common and Holly Blue, Brown Argus, Comma, Small and Large Skips (fading a bit by now), S&L White, Brim, Peacock.





The late summer bunch (SS Skip/Adonis/Clouded Yellow) were not yet in evidence here but it can only be a few days wait now.

**Re: ernie f**

by trevor, 30-Jul-19 11:53 AM GMT

Some lovely Graylings there Ernie. They look very fine on Heather.  
The one posing on a Heather stem is a gem of a shot.

Trevor.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 31-Jul-19 11:33 AM GMT

Thanks, Trevor - Grayling are a fun butterfly to be with aren't they?

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 31-Jul-19 11:58 AM GMT

31st July 2019, 9.30-10.30 am, Noar Hill, 80% cloud, 17 degrees, keen breeze

I did not actually get as far as the reserve proper today. I spent the entire hour standing in front of the Brown Hairstreak Master Tree (A Beech) on the bridlepath side of the first entrance gate to the reserve.

While there I saw: L Skip, SW Frit, Sp Wd, M Brown, GKeeper, Red Ad, S White, Yellow Shell and three male Brown Hairstreaks.

I first saw the hairstreaks all in flight at the same time but only for a moment. After that it was one at a time. They never came down while I was there, remaining in the middle section of the tree all the while. However I managed to get a couple of record shots but these are on 60x magnification and then cropped afterwards so they are not my best Brostreak pics by any means. But it's great to seem them again - my first this year.





*Yellow Shell*

**Re: ernie f**

by Goldie M, 31-Jul-19 02:37 PM GMT

Hi! ernie, great shots of the Graylings, I've to travel to Southport Dunes to see them next this year I'm afraid, so it's good to see yours 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by Janet Turnbull, 31-Jul-19 09:56 PM GMT

I love your grayling shots Ernie – and the description of your encounter! So far this year I have seen only one, an accidental!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 02-Aug-19 07:09 AM GMT

Goldie – I wish I could post a couple up to.

Janet – Thanks. By accidental I guess you mean at a location you have not seen them before? Down here they are all on heaths, but the heaths have to have exposed pebbly patches. All the heaths that are on sand only don't seem to support them here.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 02-Aug-19 07:18 AM GMT

Hi, all – I saw this perched on the outside of my kitchen window yesterday morning. Can you guess what it is from this peculiar angle?





**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 03-Aug-19 11:00 AM GMT

Did you get it? Here is another clue if not.



**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 03-Aug-19 11:52 AM GMT

2nd Aug 2019, 10-11.30am, Noar Hill, Mostly Sunny, 20 degrees

Common Blue, S&L&GV&M White, Sp Wd, MB&G&R, Comma, Red Ad, S Heath, S&L Skip  
SW Frit, 3 DG Frit, 1 Brownstreak

Mint Moth, Silver-Y, 6-Spot Burnet, Common Carpet, Shaded Broad Bar, Yellow Shell, Vapourer

The main feature today was the Dark Green Frits. The underside of one caught me quite by surprise. As it moved round, the underside blotches shined out silvery almost like mirrors. The pics don't do it justice at all. Maybe it has something to do with it being old now and fading somewhat but it was a remarkable sight.



2.30–3.30 pm, Home farm, Mostly Sunny, 23 degrees

Peacock, S&L White, 2 S Copper, MB&G, S& Essex Skip, S Heath, 3 C Blue, Red Ad, Brim

And the main feature here was the fresh second brood Painted Lady.



### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 03–Aug–19 12:08 PM GMT

3rd Aug 2019, 8–10 am, Old Winchester Hill, 16–18 degrees, mostly cloudy, breezy

From the car park at the top of the hill walking down I saw perhaps only two Chalkhill Blues in flight. I went slowly and saw others roosting. I got to the bottom and turned round to come back up. Any small amount of sun fizzled away and the clouds rolled in properly. It became 100% overcast but suddenly it was as though the Chalkhill Blue flight operations centre manager had seen it was now 17 degrees and flicked the flight OK switch. They got the "Green light" to fly and thousands of male Chalkhill Blues were in the air at once. This location usually has over a thousand on this slope at this time of year. I have in the past estimated them to number about 1,500 but today it looked like there were twice this amount. Maybe even more. The whole hillside giggled with a mass of blue. I stood there in disbelief that this could have happened within a few minutes.

No pics. I didn't even try to capture this scene as I knew it was impossible. I just took it in as an experience.

### Re: ernie f

by Goldie M, 03–Aug–19 06:00 PM GMT

That must have been fantastic ernie 🍷 which i'd seen it 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 07–Aug–19 11:35 AM GMT

Thanks Goldie – yes it was quite an experience. You never know what you are going to see next.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 07–Aug–19 11:38 AM GMT

4th Aug, 2–3pm Broxhead. 30% sun, 23 degrees

Well, well – I didn't expect it but the Small Coppers are coming out here already. I spotted four today and one was a female doing a Turkey Trot in front



of a pursuing male – 1st time I've seen it this year.

Usual MB&G and also a single Brown Argus.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 07-Aug-19 11:42 AM GMT

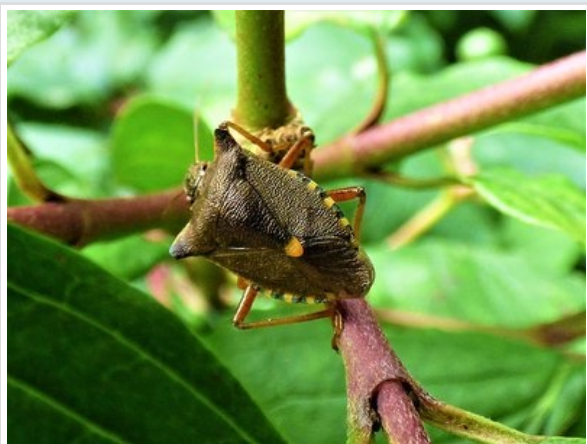
7th Aug, 9.30-10.30, Noar Hill, 40% sun, 19 degrees, breezy

3 Brostreak males were in the sky at once in a 3-way sparring match on the Beech beside the first gate to the reserve. However again no close pics as frustratingly they were too far off.

This was the best shot I could get of one of them...



Although this Forest Bug was far easier.



**Re: ernie f**

by Goldie M, 07-Aug-19 08:32 PM GMT

Hi! ernie, I really envy your Bros streaks 🍷🍷 but you can keep the Bug 🐛 Goldie 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 08-Aug-19 12:13 PM GMT

OK, Goldie. I'll keep the bug. 😊

I just wish the Brostreaks would get as close as he did to me. I have usually got closer to them by this time of year but so far they have been keeping well out of my reach. Just luck of the draw I guess.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 08-Aug-19 12:22 PM GMT

8th Aug 2019, 8.30-10 am, Oxenbourne Down, 80-100% cloud, 16-18 degrees.

Another early-ish start to try and get a close-up shot, this time of the Silver-spotted Skipper.

I got there around 8.30 am and the temperature was reading 16 degrees. I saw a couple of Chalkhills, a Meadow Brown, a Small White, a Small Copper and some gatekeepers and then yes, aha, a Silver-spotted Skipper. A few distant shots at first and then closer and closer still until I got my full close-up shot. Excellent.

Then the temperature must have hit 17 degrees because just like at Old Winchester Hill the other day - the Chalkhill Blues suddenly erupted as if out of nowhere. There were loads of them. Not the thousands that were at Old Winch but certainly enough to be getting on with and it seemed the Silver-spotted Skippers took their lead from them because just as suddenly I was seeing them everywhere too. Not in great numbers (it's far rarer) but nevertheless I counted a definite 8 - with three at once at one point. Two males pursuing a female I think. But now I was spotting them about once every 5 minutes. I'm guessing there were more than 8 but cannot be sure because when disturbed they can fly off some way, so the chance of double-counting is quite high.

The good thing about SSS's at this location is that they can all be found in just one area no more than about 50 paces square and you are more or less guaranteed to see them at this time of year so you don't have to tramp far and wide. Basically you just re-work the same patch over and over until you see them.

The only problem is that when it warms up they get very, VERY skittish and it's difficult to keep your eye on them when they are flying because they are so small and fast and can cover some distance quickly. Many is the time I disturbed one underfoot only to see it buzz off into the distance. In fact the better way is to stand still in the centre of the patch and wait for them to come to you. Keeping a close eye on the Dwarf Thistles and Hawkbits growing out of the close-cropped grass generally yields results.





My aim this year (as you may know by now) is to get close-up shots of as many UK butterflies in my area as I can and so far I have been reasonably successful. (Still got to get a close-up of the Brostroke and Clouded Yellow though). But in this quest I have co-incidentally achieved my personal record for the number of UK butterfly sightings in a year. It is never my intent to try and break that record because I don't want the disappointment of failure and anyway I cannot stray too far from home for personal reasons. Nevertheless, my record now stands at 47, beating my previous annual record (set only last year) of 46. All these species I found local to me (within a 1 hour drive) except the Black Hairstreak which was my single more distant drive this year.

### Re: ernie f

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

Cracking shots of the Silver-spots Ernie 😊 I've still to see this and Brostroke this year and now the weather isn't playing fair 😞😞 On a lighter note having just got back from Portugal I can let you know that you can add Lang's Short-tailed Blue, Southern Brown Argus, Iberian Sooty Copper and Southern Common Blue to the wig rolling list if that's still running? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 09-Aug-19 06:22 PM GMT

Some nice butterflies you've been seeing lately, ernie, but I'm sure the sight of 3k+ Chalkhill Blues must have topped everything else?

### Re: ernie f

by Janet Turnbull, 10-Aug-19 11:08 PM GMT

Those Chalkhills must have been a jaw-dropping experience Ernie - I would have been quite incapable of taking any photos! I do like your final shot of the skipper on a thistle flower - particularly impressed with the depth of field. May I ask what camera/lens are you using?  
Janet

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 11-Aug-19 12:07 PM GMT

Wurzel - Yes the wing-rolling topic under the general forum is still open to anyone to add their findings and comments. I shall add yours to the list. Looks like you had a great time in Portugal.  
David - Re the Chalkhills at Old Winch. The memory is already fading and I still can't quite believe it. I shall have to visit again soon under similar circumstances to see if it happens again.



Janet – My camera is a Panasonic DMC-FZ72, fixed lens. It is capable of 60x optical zoom and has a super-macro setting which allows focus from a distance of 2 cm. It also has a wide-angle setting which I don't often use. Many years ago before digital I had a manual SLR with three lenses. It was cumbersome and awkward to use. Who would have thought technology would have advanced so that I could get the same features (and more) all in one fixed-lens camera!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 11-Aug-19 12:26 PM GMT

11th Aug 2019, 9-11am, Mostly Sunny, 16-19 degrees, breezy

I must be mad. I spent two hours today standing in front of a Beech tree willing Brostreaks to come down.

The three male Brostreaks were still battling it out on the Beech Tree by the gate. On two occasions two of them would spar away from the tree, circling upwards before splitting up at the apex of the climb. On one occasion one of them came down to where a Red Ad and GV White were perched side by side to see what was going on but he did not stop when he realised nothing was.



But otherwise they stayed doggedly in the mid-canopy.



Also seen were Sp Wd, GKeeper and MBrown.



**Re: ernie f**

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

Good to see the Brostreaks out today after the rain and strong winds of the last few days Ernie – you did well to capture the males like that 😊 interesting to see the males sing a Beech as their master tree – that's good news should Ash die back continue unabated 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 13-Aug-19 02:23 PM GMT

Wurzel. Yep, Brown Hairstreaks using a Beech. Not only that but I know a place where Purple Hairstreaks regularly use an Ash. It's a bit like musical chairs! 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 13-Aug-19 02:28 PM GMT

13th Aug 2019, 1–2 pm, St Catherine's Hill, 50% sun, 19 degrees

I ventured here one day in late spring because I had a tip that Adonis Blues flew here and I didn't know it up to that point. I went there and saw them and also a stray Marsh Frit. That was a great day. While I was there I met a guy who said that if I came back at the right time I would see Silver-spotted Skippers in precisely the same place. It was the right time so I went again today but sadly, in that location I saw none. Feeling a bit disappointed I trudged back to the car park but as I got there I met another guy on a transect and he told me there was another location further up the hill on the other side. He agreed to show me and sure enough as soon as we got to the place he described we saw two. I did not come here to get great pics, but one of them stayed around long enough for me to get a distance shot.



I am happy because this is the first time I have seen SSS's at St Cat's.

Also seen here today: S&L White, MB&GK, S Heath, S Copper, a fair number of Chalkhill Blues  
4 P Ladies and 8 Brown Argus.

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 13-Aug-19 10:22 PM GMT

Great shot of the Silver Spot Ernie – it's great when new species 'arrive' at a site 😊👍 Still to see a Silver Spot but I got lucky (with Dave Miller) today at Shipton – double figures of Brostreaks with 6 or 7 down low enough for photos, if you're struggling for them then I recommend a visit to the back hedge 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by Goldie M, 14-Aug-19 06:35 PM GMT

Lovely shot of the SSS ernie, some shots are better from a distance 🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: ernie f

by millerd, 14-Aug-19 07:00 PM GMT

I've not visited St. Catherine's Hill for ages – it sounds like it would be worth a trip with SSS flying there too now. Nice shot as well – not easy to pin them down when nectaring like that, especially if it's in any way windy.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 14-Aug-19 09:11 PM GMT

Very satisfying when you see an unexpected species at any location, ernie.

There's still plenty of life in the flight period of Silver Spotted Skippers so I'm sure if you return you'll be able to study them more closely.

### Re: ernie f

by CallumMac, 15-Aug-19 08:48 AM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

I got lucky (with Dave Miller) today at Shipton – double figures of Brostreaks with 6 or 7 down low enough for photos

I didn't miss you chaps by much – I was at Shipton on Monday afternoon! Not nearly so successful with the Brostreaks but plenty else to see. Full report coming on my PD once BT reconnect my internet... 😊

Ernie, you've done amazingly to get such close-up shots of that SSSk – I always find them very unapproachable!

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 15-Aug-19 10:25 PM GMT

Wurzel – glad you got close to Brostreaks – they are defeating me this year. Thanks for the tip but Shipton is just a little too far for me this year. I have never been there but heard it was an excellent spot.

Goldie – thanks – its often quite difficult to focus when such a small butterfly is so distant, but I got lucky that day.

Dave (Miller) – St Cats is a great place, there are so many aspects at so many times of year, it's always worth dropping in.

David – That is very prophetic – I did actually see more of them today.

Callum – thanks – I find the only way to get close is to be on location early (or at least when its not too warm).

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 15-Aug-19 10:36 PM GMT

15th Aug 2019, 9.15–11am, Old Winchester Hill, Mostly Sunny, 16–17 degrees

A few days ago I reported how I witnessed about 3000 Chalkhill Blues at this location suddenly taking to the air when it got to around 17 degrees. It wasn't a fluke. I got here just as it got up to 16 degrees today and whilst a few Chalkhills were flying about, you could not see many – until a few moments later when I guessed we must have reached 17 degrees because there they were again. OK, the numbers had declined over this period of bad weather we have had, and some were looking a bit ragged already – I estimated around 1000 remained, plus the strong breeze probably kept a few others down – but nevertheless, there they were. But while I was there it never climbed above 17 degrees and when clouds did come over many of the Chalkhills dropped back down again. Sun out – up they went, cloud out – down again. Now it isn't the cloud per-se because if the temperature is up but its cloudy they still fly. They seemed to be flip-flopping around the 16–17 degree mark. It reminded me of this...

And when they were up they were up

And when they were down they were down



And when they were only half way up  
They were neither up nor down

Next came the Silver-spotted Skippers. Last time I was here I saw none. Today, without leaving the path, I saw three. All three of them posed for me for varying lengths of time. One of them didn't budge from the ground for some while allowing lots of photo opportunities.





However I did not see any Adonis, nor any Clouded Yellow and this is my "guaranteed" location for them at this time of year.

Did see 3 Painted Lady, S&L White, MB&GK, Small Heath, 2 Red AD, and what I think was a faded DG Frit zooming by.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 16-Aug-19 10:04 PM GMT

Cracking Silver-spots Ernie 😊 especially the close ups and the last but one i particular 🍷 - there is a cartoon character/muppet whose name is at present eluding me that is the dead spit of that one 😊😎

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 17-Aug-19 02:29 PM GMT

Those are still notable numbers of Chalkhill Blues, ernie. Must have been quite a spectacle.

Well done with the Silver Spotted Skippers as well. Nice that you got one so well behaved. 😊

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 21-Aug-19 01:17 PM GMT

Wurzel, Dave - Thanks, guys. It's been great with the Silver-spotted Skippers this year, both in numbers and getting in close.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 21-Aug-19 01:31 PM GMT

21st Aug 2019, 9-11 am, St Catherine's Hill, Misty sun clearing to 80% sun, 14-19 degrees

For one reason or another I haven't been able to get out butterflying over the last few days but I have rectified that today.

Seen today: S&L White, MB&Gkeeper, CH&Com Blue, 1 Red Ad, 2 Plady, S Heath and...  
11 SSSkip, 8 B Argus, 3 Adonis Blue

I have today broken two personal annual record counts. I now have seen 101 Brown Argus this year and 22 Silver-spotted Skippers and it is this location



that has enabled me to do this. It has been excellent for these two species this year.

Also a Green Woodpecker perched in a tree.









**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 21-Aug-19 08:34 PM GMT

Congrats on your record breaking Ernie 😄😄 Those Adonis and in 'mint condish' 😄 and the Silver-spots seem to be holding up well and still in good nick 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 22-Aug-19 01:10 PM GMT

Great that you've notched a century of Brown Argus, ernie. I consider myself lucky to see more than a dozen in a normal year.

Your first Adonis Blue is particularly attractive. Perfect use of the light.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 23-Aug-19 07:15 AM GMT

Dave, Wurzel - Thanks. I was pleased to find the Adonis here. I only learnt last year they were at this location, now I have seen them here in both their early and late broods although only in low numbers. Also, even though they were on the same side of the hill, it's a big hill and the early and late broods were not co-located.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 23-Aug-19 07:23 AM GMT

22nd Aug 2019, 9.15-10.30 am, Magdalen Hill, Full Sun, 16-18 degrees

Seen today, Ch Blue, Com Blue (6m, 2f), 4 PLady, S Heath, 4 Brown Argus, S&L White, M Brown

The Chalkhills were very much down in number now - certainly past their peak but with many females still about. The Brown Argus were in fine fettle. Not very much going on at the top of the hill, mostly the action was down at the bottom.



**Re: ernie f**

by Neil Freeman, 23-Aug-19 07:03 PM GMT

Just been doing some catching up on your diary Ernie, some interesting reports and great photos of a cracking selection of species 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 24-Aug-19 01:02 PM GMT

Thanks, Neil – I've had a few highlights this year so I am well pleased in the run down toward the end of the season. Don't laugh but I visited a garden centre the other day – they were packing away the garden furniture and barbeque stuff and starting to put out Christmas decorations!?! 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 24-Aug-19 01:04 PM GMT

23rd Aug 2019, 9.30–11.15 am, Noar Hill, Full Sun 19–22 degrees

1 BArg, 2 SWFrit, 3 RAD, 3 PLady, 3 Brim, many SHEath, Com Blue, M Brown, S&L White

A Tawny Owl hooted.

3 Spotted Flycatchers in a family group.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 24-Aug-19 01:15 PM GMT

24th Aug 2019, 9.30–11 am, 15–19 degrees, Full Sun  
Broxhead

1 Sp Wd, 2 PLady, 3 BArg, 1 S Heath, MB&G, L White, Yellow Shell very faded and tatty – it looked more like a Pug Moth of some kind. No S Coppers though and this is a late brood site usually. Maybe they will show soon.

But the highlight was the Brown Argus.







Sleaford (just round the corner from Broxhead)

Usually at this time of year if there are BARGs at Broxhead you get 2 or 3 here too but not today. Did see this very fine Common Footman Moth though.



**Re: ernie f**

by millerd, 24-Aug-19 02:17 PM GMT

Going back a bit, Ernie, that Adonis from St. Cats is a lovely shot. 😊 Some more great Silver-spots as well.

Cheers,

Dave

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 24-Aug-19 10:57 PM GMT

Great stuff Ernie 😊 Interesting to see the Footmans hind wings – not seen that before 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 26-Aug-19 06:04 PM GMT

Even though the season's winding down, you're still seeing some good stuff plus a few surprises, such as that lovely footman moth.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 29-Aug-19 12:55 PM GMT

David, Wurzel - That Footman moth was my first ever. I saw something tumble from the sky and land and thought first of all it was just a birch leaf. As I got closer it looked less and less like a birch leaf but I still couldn't make it out. It did not move. I took a picture and then got close enough to give it a prod with my finger. It flew UP! Aha, I thought. It isn't a birch leaf then. I'm clever like that you see. It landed again and I got further shots now realising it was a moth of some kind. My first Footman moth as I say and my first view of it was from underneath.

Dave - Yes its a good time of year for some colourful butterflies.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 29-Aug-19 01:14 PM GMT

29th Aug 2019, 9-11 am, Old Winchester Hill, Full sun, 14-18 degrees

AT LAST! This is a good site for Ad Blues, SSSkips and Clouded Yellows flying all at the same time and all in the same place, along the path on the lower slope below the car park. I was last here two weeks ago and saw only 3 SSSkips and no Adonis or Clouded Yellows at all. Today it all changed. Allowing for double counting I saw 7 SSSkips, 13 Adonis and 1 Clouded Yellow. The latter of which was making it look as though there were more because he zoomed back and forth over the entire hillside slope repeatedly.

Although I had already achieved my record annual count for SSSkips this year, if I remove the 3 I saw here two weeks ago from the 7 I saw today, I increase my annual count to 26.

Also seen today - Small Heath, S&L White, M Brown, Ch Blue (mostly females now), Com Blue and a PLady (still brightly coloured).









### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 29-Aug-19 08:00 PM GMT

Great stuff Ernie 😊 I would give you a few 🍷 for those shots if I hadn't had a similar experience at Martin Down today 😊 Mind you those are cracking photos... 🍷🍷 😊 I was going to suggest Broughton Down if you wanted to see some easy Silver Spots thinking that it wouldn't be too far from Old Winchester Hill...which I've since discovered is nowhere near Winchester and even therefore even further from Broughton 🤔🤔 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 31-Aug-19 04:12 PM GMT

Nice Clouded Yellow, ernie. I'm surprised there haven't been more of them given the influx of Painted Ladies & Long Tailed Blues. Perhaps September will bring in greater numbers.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 01-Sep-19 01:06 PM GMT

David - I was wondering when the Clouded Yellows were going to appear. I've only seen one this summer so far.

Wurzel - I don't know why a hill so far from Winchester is called Old Winchester Hill. I don't think there is anywhere near it called "Old Winchester" either. I shall have to look it up.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 01-Sep-19 01:15 PM GMT

1st Sept, 9.30-11 am, Noar Hill, 14-18 degrees, Full to 90% sun

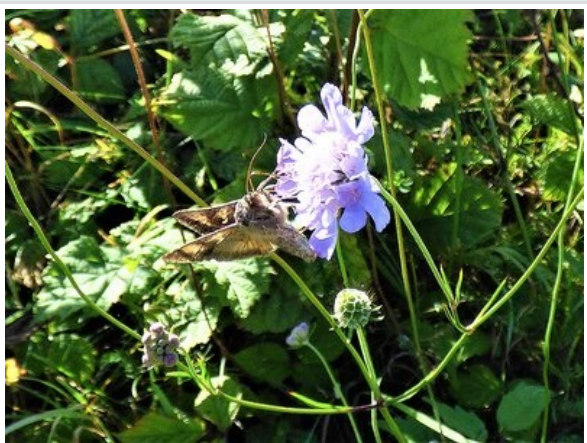
MB&G, S&L White, PLady, loads of S Heath, Com Blue, S Tort, S Copper, Silver-Y

and 2 more Brown Argus to increase my annual record count to 112. One was doing a wing-roll.

The sun was low-ish so backlit shots possible.







**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-19 08:46 PM GMT

Cheers for the additional info Ernie - I was hoping to have helped you out with an easy site for Silver Spots but in the end ended up in a geographical conundrum 😊😊 Great back-lit shots especially the Small Heath 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel



**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 05-Sep-19 04:16 PM GMT

Good to hear you're seeing plenty of Small Heaths, ernie. Wish I could say the same about this species round my way. 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 08-Sep-19 09:45 AM GMT

David, Wurzel – With a warm spell coming up there may be a few more Small Heaths (and many others) yet.

Yesterday I went to Frensham garden centre with my wife. This time I didn't zoom off for a quick butterfly session but stayed with her choosing plants. I am no gardener so I was surprised to find a whole bunch of butterflies visiting the Hebes. There were about 20 plants of this variety for sale all together and I counted 2 Small Whites, 2 Red Admirals and a Comma on them and they allowed me to get very close. Pity I had not brought my camera.

There is a small patch of parkland beside the garden centre and while Gloria and me scoffed our ice-creams we watched the antics of a Red Admiral taking sap from a tree and a Common Darter resting on the fence directly in front of us.

What could be better?

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 08-Sep-19 07:14 PM GMT

Sound like my kind of butterfly watching Ernie 😊 I've seen some good stuff in Garden Centres – they're quite good in spring as well as the 'forced and early blooming species they sell can offer much needed nectar for the early emergers 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 09-Sep-19 06:30 PM GMT

**ernie f wrote:**

...I am no gardener so I was surprised to find a whole bunch of butterflies visiting the Hebes. There were about 20 plants of this variety for sale all together and I counted 2 Small Whites, 2 Red Admirals and a Comma on them and they allowed me to get very close. Pity I had not brought my camera.

Hebe is a tremendous late season nectar source, ernie. It grows wild on the Gower seafront and even into December its flowers attract the odd Red Admiral & Painted Lady.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 10-Sep-19 05:25 PM GMT

Wurzel – I am coming round to the idea that Garden Centres are the place to be at this time of year. Our garden is a bit of a trial to find plants for. We have two mature Beech trees in our back garden with a Sycamore and Chestnut tree across the road from us and a Wellingtonia on our south side. We don't have a massive garden but as you can imagine, the lack of sunshine we get in it means we cannot grow too many flowering plants so we get very few butterflies that hang around for long. So Garden Centres are the next best thing.

Dave – I am amazed. I did not know Hebe's grew wild in this country and for them to attract butterflies in December is incredible. I went to the Gower on holiday once many years ago – wonderful place for so many reasons, not just the wildlife.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 10-Sep-19 05:38 PM GMT

10th September 2019, 2–4 pm. Kingsley Garden Centre

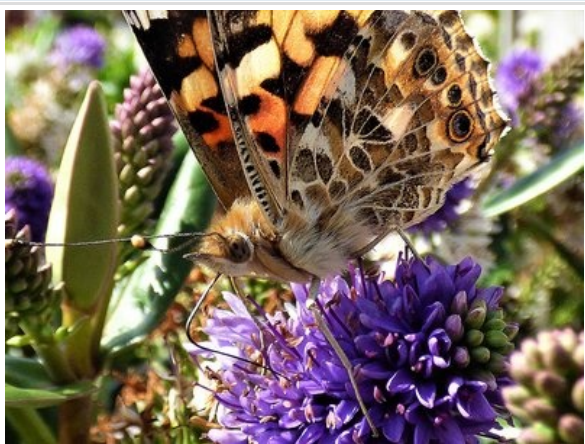
OK, so Gloria wanted to go to another garden centre today but this time I went armed with my camera! So while she looked at plants, I chased butterflies. I think I may have got some strange looks from other customers and even stranger looks from the staff!

It was good though.

One Red Admiral decided to grace the hair of a statue...

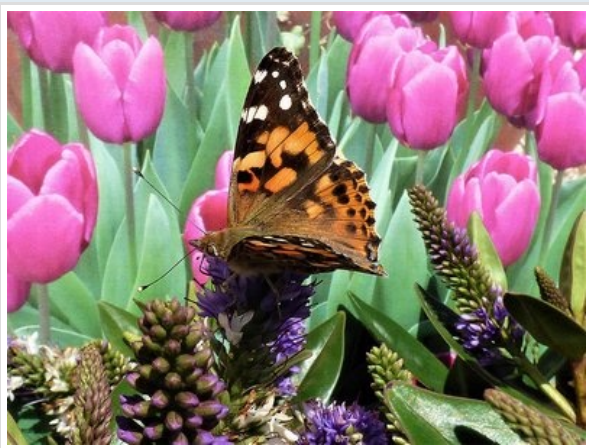


The Hebes were a favourite again. This Painted Lady just could not leave them alone...





It perched in front of a picture of tulips which I thought was quite funny as it's September!



**Re: ernie f**

by Goldie M, 10-Sep-19 07:27 PM GMT

Lovely shots ernie, I got myself a shot of a painted Lady recently from a Garden centre , I wouldn't be without my camera now when I visit one this September. 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by millerd, 11-Sep-19 08:18 PM GMT

That's the thing to remember – always take the camera, whatever the weather and whatever you're doing. Expect the unexpected and you won't go far wrong! Great shots from the garden centre – butterflies seem to get so engrossed you can get really close. 😊 And well done with that Clouded Yellow, too – as David mentioned they've been very thin on the ground this year (I found my only ones so far in Yorkshire of all places...).

Cheers,

Dave

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 12-Sep-19 08:51 AM GMT

Red Admirals **do** seem to enjoy perching in unusual places, ernie! And yes, those tulips in shot with the Painted Lady look somewhat out of place; I had to do a double-take when I first saw them. 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 14-Sep-19 12:31 PM GMT

Thanks, all. Garden Centres do seem to be good for butterflies at this time of year although it is not guaranteed of course. I took Gloria to yet another one near us yesterday. One Small White flew through but that was it – and there were loads of Hebes there for them too!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 14-Sep-19 12:35 PM GMT



14th September 2019, 9.45-11 am, Old Winchester Hill, 14-16 degrees, Full Sun

My last visit here for the year I think. Certainly it was winding down. Did see over 30 M Brown and 12 Small Heath, a few S&L White and 3 Adonis Blue (2m & 1f). The two males were very tatty.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 14-Sep-19 07:48 PM GMT

Cracking Garden Centre butterflies Ernie 😊 That Red Admiral in particular is a blinder of a shot 📸 I looked at the images first before I read the text and thought you'd mis-posted that final Painted Lady shot 😊😊 I was at one of my local sites this afternoon and there was a definite autumnal feel – vanessids and whites and very, very tatty Blues in very low numbers 😊 Oh well take what you can while it lasts – I think I need to head to the garden centre 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 15-Sep-19 12:55 PM GMT

Wurzel – My ambition now is to go to a garden centre in spring and get a picture of a butterfly on a tulip with a picture of Hebe's in the background! 😊

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 15-Sep-19 01:03 PM GMT

15th Sep 2019, 10.30-11.30am, Broxhead Heath, 16-20 degrees, Full Sun

With the weather in Hampshire turning sunny and warm I thought I'd give Broxhead a try. There were 6 of the 3rd generation Small Coppers flying about and possibly more. All very fresh individuals.



This female was doing a "Turkey Trot" along a stick completely unaware that the male she was fending off had already flown away! I saw him go but she didn't.



And this Forest Bug with a damaged wing.



### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 16-Sep-19 10:13 PM GMT

"Wurzel - My ambition now is to go to a garden centre in spring and get a picture of a butterfly on a tulip with a picture of Hebe's in the background! 😊

" Sounds like a plan Ernie, you'll have to put them up next to each other side by side 😊

Cracking Small Coppers, love the stained glass shot 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 17-Sep-19 04:40 PM GMT

17th September 2019, Kingsley Common, 3-4pm, 19 degrees, Full Sun

It's usual that when the 3rd brood Small Coppers start up at Broxhead, they also come out at nearby Kingsley too. So it was today - 4 fresh ones seen.

Got a duplicate shot at Kingsley today of the shot I took at Broxhead the other day but although it's marginally sharper the colour is not so vivid.



One female was egg-laying...



**Re: ernie f**

by millerd, 17-Sep-19 08:06 PM GMT

A great selection of Small Coppers, Ernie. The third brood are popping up everywhere at the moment and they are a lovely sight. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 19-Sep-19 11:32 PM GMT

Must say, there are plenty of Small Coppers in my area too at the moment. I guess this warm September has played into their hands.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 25-Sep-19 09:41 AM GMT

With the current bad weather it is unlikely that I will see any more Brown Argus this year. I decided at the start of the year to survey this species in my area and here is the result. The largest number I have ever seen in a year and the earliest I have ever seen one.

I have included my previous years surveys for comparison.



**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 26-Sep-19 07:44 PM GMT

Thanks for the stats, ernie. Good to see Brown Argus having an iconic year on your patch.

I must say, I too have never seen this species as early as I have this year.



**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 26-Sep-19 07:52 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Small Coppers Ernie 😊 Interesting reading your Brown Argus surveys – looking at the figures from this year it seems that Magdalen Hill in mid May was the place to be for Brown Argus 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 22-Oct-19 12:26 PM GMT

Dave, Wurzel, Yes the Brown Argus have been good to me this year. Mag Hill is always pretty good for them at some point.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 22-Oct-19 12:35 PM GMT

22nd Oct 2019, At Home

Haven't been able to get out much recently. Back problems amongst other things. Do you know what its like to have lumbago, sciatica and then cramp in both legs at the same time? No, neither did I until last week! It was an experience I can tell you. At least it didn't happen in the middle of the butterfly season.

The last butterfly I saw was way back on the 17th September but today I saw another one from my bedroom window. Yay!

It was a Brimstone fooling around outside for a while before flying off over a neighbours garden. No pics.

I have dreamt of butterflies a couple of times over the last month or so but unfortunately didn't have my camera with me at the time so cannot share any pictures of them with you! 😊

**Re: ernie f**

by trevor, 22-Oct-19 07:16 PM GMT

Get well soon, Ernie. I thought you had been rather quiet lately.

Trevor.

**Re: ernie f**

by Matsukaze, 23-Oct-19 08:18 PM GMT

Hope you are well soon – it's not over for the butterflies here in Somerset (a large dark vanessid and a white doing fly-bys yesterday) so they ought to be about in Hampshire for a little while yet.

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 23-Oct-19 08:45 PM GMT

That butterfly must have been a sight for sore eyes (if not a sore back) Ernie – hope you get well soon!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 24-Oct-19 12:29 PM GMT

I'm sure that Brimstone gave you a lift after your suffering of late, ernie.

Hope you're on the mend now.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 28-Oct-19 12:46 PM GMT

Thanks to you all, I am on the mend now.

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 28-Oct-19 12:54 PM GMT

28th October 2019, 9am, Sunny, around 2 degrees, Care Home at Holybourne

I visit my father regularly at his care Home in the village of Holybourne. Today there was a Red Admiral flying around the outside of his window. Maybe he was looking for an hibernation site I thought, then he flew off across the gardens. There was still frost on my car which I had to brush away before driving to the care home only a few minutes before I saw this!!!

Two hours later, the temperature had crept up a bit but was still well below 10 degrees. I was now at home which is two miles away from where my dad's home is located and I saw ANOTHER Red Admiral do exactly the same thing outside my living room window. It flew back and forth for a while as though looking for a place to hide-up but then flew off.

I have seen Red Admirals fly later in the year than this but I don't think I have seen one flying when it is just above zero degrees and there is still frost around.

### Re: ernie f

by Wurzel, 28-Oct-19 01:42 PM GMT

Good to hear you're on the road to recovery Ernie (if not already there) 😊 Interesting to read about the Red Admirals still out and about in the cool weather – mind you I think Guy Padfield has the best 'cold' record – a Green Hairstreak on snow 🤪🤪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: ernie f

by David M, 29-Oct-19 10:36 PM GMT

#### ernie f wrote:

..I have seen Red Admirals fly later in the year than this but I don't think I have seen one flying when it is just above zero degrees and there is still frost around.

Red Admirals are practically indestructible, ernie!

They will fly if the sun is out and the temperature is above freezing. I remember picking one up as dusk fell in November one year....it was still trying to fly even though it was only a few degrees above freezing and was getting dark.

### Re: ernie f

by ernie f, 23-Dec-19 11:59 AM GMT

Hi,

I have updated my Hampshire Butterfly spreadsheet. If anyone intends to visit this neck of the woods next year, I hope this helps in any plans you might make.



Also

I happened to hint to my wife that I might like a new phone for Xmas this year, but this is not what I had in mind!!!



Happy Christmas to you all.

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 24-Dec-19 06:04 PM GMT

😄😄😄 That cheered me right up Ernie!

Have a cracking Christmas and a Prosperous New Year! 😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: ernie f**

by David M, 27-Dec-19 03:57 PM GMT

Thanks for the species checklist and numbers, ernie – very interesting.

What a year Chalkhill Blue had in 2019!

**Re: ernie f**

by ernie f, 30-Dec-19 04:03 PM GMT

Wurzel – I thought it was hilarious. Whoever went to all that trouble wrapping a public phone box for Xmas I don't know.

David – I like to keep that spreadsheet up to date but as time wears on of course there are fewer and fewer updates to it.

Also

If anyone sees Santa before next Xmas day let him know I found the hat he dropped! I didn't know Santa had gotten so big. No wonder he doesn't come down our chimney any more! Must be all those millions of mince-pies he eats while on his rounds!





Happy New Year

**Re: ernie f**

by Wurzel, 30-Dec-19 05:11 PM GMT

Cracking! 🤔🤔🤔

Have a great New Year Ernie!

Have a goodun

Wurzel