

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 10-Apr-19 10:16 PM GMT

Now is the best time of year to find elms, when they're in full flower. I've been meaning to get some elms near to my house identified for some time, so here are two different species or hybrids (I believe). The first is on the A4 at Thatcham:



And the second is a magnificent tree just off the A4:





All IDs welcome! I'll post some leafage when it's out!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 11-Apr-19 02:44 PM GMT

Thanks for the heads-up, Pete. I've just received notification of some elms in my area so this could well be a plan given we've a cloudy weekend forecast!

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 23-May-19 08:59 AM GMT

With the text of my book now written, this season is all about getting better photos of life stages, habitats etc. Since I'm currently 'in-between' jobs, I've spent this week running around to various sites to fill some gaps. Martin Warren kindly offered to show me around Alners Gorse in Dorset – what an amazingly diverse site, and highly recommended! The commonest butterfly, by far, was Marsh Fritillary. As you can imagine, I also learned quite a bit while talking with Martin! That was followed by a trip to the Cotswolds to meet up with David Simcox and Sarah Meredith to undertake the final review of the Large Blue, Small Heath and Small Blue species descriptions – always great company and, again, another learning experience. I thought I'd pretty much read everything there was to be read about the Large Blue, but David and Sarah are a mine of information!



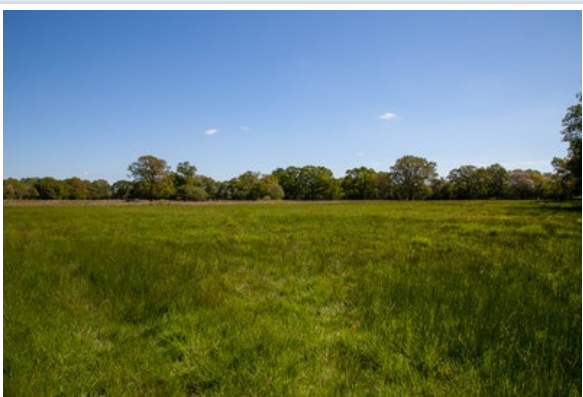
Martin Warren



Small-leaved Elms near the reserve entrance. Lots of nibbled leaves but no WLH larvae on show!



Mixed scrub in the middle of Alners Gorse



Rooksmoor that adjoins Alners Gorse, which also had Marsh Fritillary flying

Yesterday I met up with Angela Leaman who showed me around parts of Salisbury Plain, somewhere I've never really ventured since I've never been sure where you're allowed to go, or where the best spots are. Again, Marsh Fritillary seemed to pop up just about everywhere, especially in a couple of hotspots – along with Dingy and Grizzled Skippers, Green Hairstreak, Common Blue, Brown Argus (including an egg), Small Heath and Small Copper.



Salisbury Plain, with the ever-present distant sound of gunfire

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 23-May-19 08:46 PM GMT

I know what you mean about The Plain Pete – I seem to only visit areas around the edges (Sidbury, Tilshead, Larkhill and Shipton Bellinger) as well for exactly that reason. There's also the added concern that whilst out looking for butterflies you could get your leg blown off by unexploded ordinance 😬 Hope you're still in one piece 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by Matsukaze, 23-May-19 09:24 PM GMT

Nibbled elms – it's mostly not White-letter Hairstreak doing the nibbling! I'm currently rearing larvae of Brick, Winter Moth, Dun-bar, Satellite, Lesser-spotted Pinion, November Moth egg, Svensson's Copper Underwing, Common Quaker, Twin-spotted Quaker and a couple of tortricids I haven't yet put a name to, all from elms and found in the last month or so. Of the butterfly, not a sign, though the adults seemed to do well enough last year. That said, I seem to find fewer WLH larvae each year.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 24-May-19 11:28 AM GMT

I'm still in one piece, Wurzel!

That's really interesting, Chris. I hope you post photos in due course.

Yesterday afternoon I spent an hour at Greenham Common watching a Grizzled Skipper egg laying. Incredibly, an egg was laid on an Agrimony plant that was already occupied, with a 1st instar larva found in its shelter (with its egg shell on the outside) – with the shelter formed by silking together the leaf edges (silk contracts as it dries, causing the edges to come together). Not a single egg was laid on the (abundant) Wild Strawberry.





Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 24-May-19 03:24 PM GMT

Some familiar territory in those habitat images, Pete. 😊

I'm equally intrigued as to why the Grizzled Skipper ignored the wild strawberry, especially when there was so much of it around. I guess we humans will never understand everything regarding butterfly survival strategy.

Re: Pete Eeles

by NickMorgan, 30-May-19 08:25 PM GMT

Wow! Fantastic pictures. I really can't wait to see the book!

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 31-Jul-19 10:15 PM GMT

Thanks both – and apols for not responding, David! I suspect that the Wild Strawberry was used in places, just not where I was looking (and they've used that foodplant in previous years here for sure).

Anyways ... today I started my annual White Admiral larvae hunt, as part of the monitoring I do at Pamber Forest in Hampshire. I also created a video to help others looking to find larvae, which you can find at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3p7EjWQig>. Enjoy!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 04-Aug-19 07:24 PM GMT

Great tutorial, Pete. Now, if only I had colonies of White Admiral near to me I could go and look for larvae...



Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 25-Aug-19 09:42 AM GMT

Thanks David!

I spent an hour or so checking up on the White Admiral larvae I'm monitoring, and most have now gone into hibernation. Unfortunately, thanks to a new job that I started in May, I've had very little time to undertake extensive searches, so will only be following a few through the winter. This 3rd instar (note the brown rather than black head) is McCoy, from a Star Trek honeysuckle spray (I like to name each group since it helps me remember the individuals). Kirk and Scotty still present, but the search for Spock continues ... 😊



Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 25-Aug-19 10:20 AM GMT

Let's hope your Enterprising critters haven't discovered warp speed and transporters, Pete! 😊 A lot of caterpillars I know use these devices ...

Guy

Re: Pete Eeles

by Charles Nicol, 25-Aug-19 10:49 PM GMT

Pete Eeles wrote:

Thanks David!

I spent an hour or so checking up on the White Admiral larvae I'm monitoring, and most have now gone into hibernation. Unfortunately, thanks to a new job that I started in May, I've had very little time to undertake extensive searches, so will only be following a few through the winter. This 3rd instar (note the brown rather than black head) is McCoy, from a Star Trek honeysuckle spray (I like to name each group since it helps me remember the individuals). Kirk and Scotty still present, but the search for Spock continues ... 😊

IMG_1826.jpg

Cheers,

– Pete

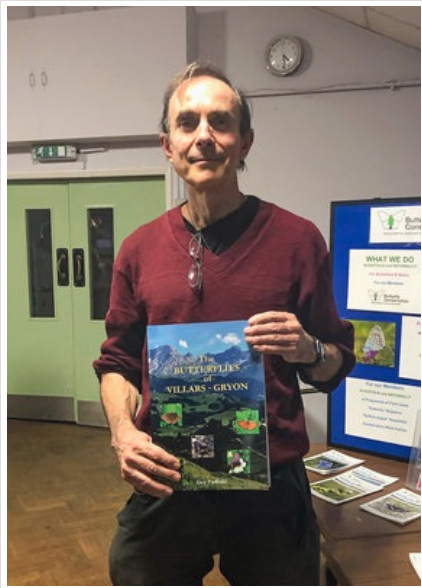
Let's hope they live long & prosper 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 30-Nov-19 09:54 PM GMT

It's been a while since I posted in my diary, but today I had a really warm reception at the Suffolk AGM, the last in a series of presentations I've delivered of late. It was great to see so many UKBers in attendance, and a special thanks to Bill Stone (Billbutterfly) for a wonderful endorsement of my book!

It was also a delight to meet up with Guy whose own book can now be ordered on Amazon (https://www.amazon.co.uk/Butterflies-Villars-Gryon-appendix-covering-species/dp/1082842834/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=Guy+Padfield&qid=1575150688&sr=8-1). It looks amazing – well laid out and substantial – which I'll be reviewing in due course.



Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 30-Nov-19 10:08 PM GMT

It was very good to see you again too, Pete – first time on Crown British territory, I believe!

For those who haven't had a chance to see Pete's presentation at one venue or another (or, shame on you, read his book ...), it was predictably fascinating stuff, seasoned with his characteristic blend of retiring modesty and passionate enthusiasm.

I only took one picture with Pete in it. Behind him, diminishing piles of his *Life Cycles of British and Irish Butterflies*, aka Frohawk 2.0, and spread out on the nearer table a copy of Frohawk 1.0 rescued from a skip! I shall have to start rummaging through skips ...



Guy

Re: Pete Eeles

by kevling, 01-Dec-19 02:33 PM GMT

Pete,

It was wonderful to meet you yesterday and thank you for attending our Branch AGM. Your talk was inciteful and entertaining. I particularly loved the account of the Large Blue larva.

Guy,
Can I also say how happy I was to meet you yesterday too.

Kind Regards
Kev Ling

Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 01-Dec-19 06:53 PM GMT

Likewise, Kev. It was very good to meet you – and put a face to a few other names as well.

Guy

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 01-Dec-19 08:01 PM GMT

Thanks Guy and Kev – yes, a most enjoyable afternoon in good company!

Cheers,

– Pete