

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 15-Jan-19 09:48 PM GMT

Cheers all – I seem to have left it a while before resuming the 2018 Review, and now 2019 is upon us. No butterflies seen this year so far as sunshine has been a rare thing here despite the mild weather – and now it's getting colder.

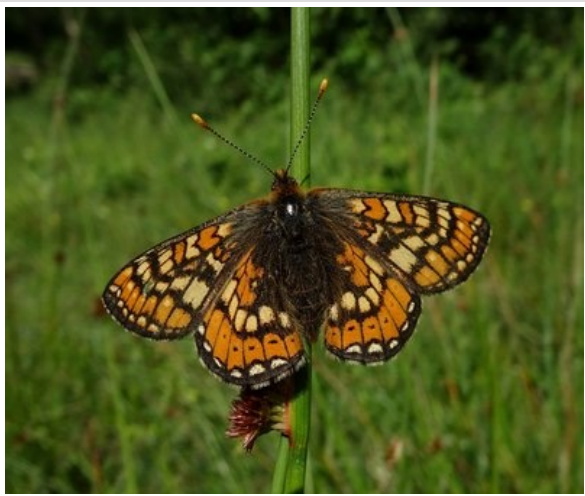
Better to return to the torrid days of June 2018...

### EARLY JUNE

With the season turning into an early one, the first ten days of the new month became hectic, with more new species appearing almost daily. I stayed local on 1st, with some nice examples of new Small Heaths in increasing numbers.



However, the continuing fine weather on 2nd June enticed me back down to Bentley Wood for what turned out to be one of those rare things: a three-fritillary afternoon. The last of the Pearls were flying alongside a few more Marshies and just a couple of Small Pearls, one of which was distinctly undersized. A Grizzled Skipper also put in an appearance.





On 3rd, I made another trip up to Aston Rowant in the Chilterns. It was great to see good numbers of Adonis Blues (out later here than at sites further south)



plus the usual Brown Argus



...and Common Blues too, including this beautiful female.



I also saw the year's first Meadow Browns and a very ragged Green Hairstreak. Another tour of my local patch later in the day produced some more splendid female Common Blues.



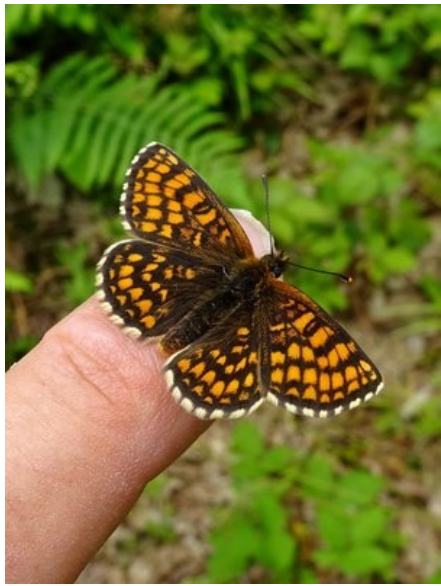


4th June was unusual - I didn't see any butterflies 😊 - and on 5th (a cooler day - only 19 degrees) I stayed local, seeing mostly Common Blues...



However, with sunshine forecast for 6th, I was off on my travels again. I headed for Kent, and East Blean Woods, but as I drove east, I kept catching up with the north sea cloud that wasn't retreating as fast as I was driving. On arrival I had to wait a while before the sun broke through and worked its magic - Heath Fritillaries appeared in their dozens, with a few new emergees dotted around the clearings.





Well worth the drive to catch up with this species, which I hadn't seen for a few years. I returned home the (very) long way round, taking in Samphire Hoe near Dover. Despite strong sun, it was blowing a gale on this exposed bit of artificial coast, and I soon continued westwards. Eventually, in late afternoon I wound up at Park Corner Heath in Sussex, my first visit to this reserve. After some considerable searching I finally tracked down a handful of Small Pearls from the successful reintroduction to this bit of woodland, as well as bumping into Katrina.



A successful day again. By contrast, 8th June was cloudy, though warm and bright. I headed north to Whitecross Green Wood in Oxfordshire, where I knew Black Hairstreaks were out in very good numbers. The lack of actual sunshine didn't seem to worry the Hairstreaks at all, and I saw dozens flying over the stands of Blackthorn. Getting close enough for photos was trickier, and there were many near misses before one stayed down as I approached.



Giving the car a rest on 8th, my local patch rewarded me with new Meadow Browns



and the first Painted Lady of the year here. It was nectaring avidly on brambles, and hadn't moved when I returned to it after a couple of hours.



Another expedition awaited on 9th, though only as far as Fairmile Common (near Cobham) to see the first of the Silver-studded Blues. Once again, numbers were good and they must have been out a few days (perhaps a fortnight earlier than most years). One of the first butterflies seen was an unusual female, with notable patches of blue on the hindwings.



Quite a contrast to the standard version.



...to those that were almost silver like this one.



Before heading for home, I quickly detoured to nearby Bookham Common, and found a couple of lovely newly-emerged White Admirals, and managed a shot of one from longish range.



10th June was relative uneventful for a change – there were butterflies, but nothing of note. Perhaps this was the "June Gap" I've heard tell of? 😊  
Looking at the next few days, twenty-four hours was as long as it lasted... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 16-Jan-19 09:56 AM GMT

Hi Dave,

As your last post demonstrates, the ' June gap ' didn't really happen last year.  
From memory it was one of the busier months.  
I hadn't realised that you visited two Black Hairstreak sites in 2018.  
At least we can see them without doing battle with the M25/M40 now.

A great review,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 16-Jan-19 06:45 PM GMT

Lovely to look back at your Butterflies Dave, you've got a few in there I'd love to see again, maybe this year 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by Andrew555, 18-Jan-19 03:28 PM GMT

Great review Dave, some real beauties in there. 🍷 😊

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 18-Jan-19 07:20 PM GMT

#### trevor wrote:

...As your last post demonstrates, the ' June gap ' didn't really happen last year...Trevor.

Although around my local patch here in the middle of the country there was a definite lull before the summer species got going. I remember going out a couple of times in early June when there were more day flying moths than butterflies to be seen at my immediate local sites..

Another great review Dave with some lovely photos of a good selection of species 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 19-Jan-19 06:14 PM GMT

Some really great memories there Dave, it's got me itching to get out there – if only the weather wasn't so pants and we were four months in the future



🤔😅 Some really cracking female blues in the mix – especially the almost silver blue and I too saw some of the 'blue' Silver-studs for the first time this year – I wonder if the weather had a part to play in that?

The star of this report though has to be the Black Hairstreak – teasingly showing the open hind wing margin 😊🍀🍀🍀

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 19-Jan-19 10:52 PM GMT

Some beautiful butterflies in that last sequence, Dave, but am I alone in being particularly appreciative of that mint-fresh Small Heath?

They seem to be becoming less commonplace by the year. 😞

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 22-Jan-19 08:02 PM GMT

Thank you all for the appreciative comments. It really was a congested time of year, and continued to be so for a few weeks. It is interesting to see how the varied aspects appeal differently to different people. 😊

#### MID-JUNE

As midsummer approached, the excellent weather continued with barely a hiccup over the next ten days. I set off for Somerset on 11th June, with Collard Hill and Large Blues the target. No disappointment here, other than the fact that it was far TOO sunny, and upperside views were very much at a premium.



A less good day on 12th saw only a local wander, but I did find a curious-looking Meadow Brown, which looked at first glance to have a "blind" eyespot.



The 13th was better, and the exciting news had now broken that there were Black Hairstreaks in Sussex. On arrival at Ditchling Common, it was like a UKB Convention, with lots of familiar faces and quite a few new ones too. Better still, the hairstreaks were most amenable, with good views of several individuals.



All in all a great day out at a site that also looked good for the summer trio of White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary and Purple Emperor to appear within a couple of weeks. None of these were seen, but I spotted my first Ringlet of the year. On the way home, I diverted slightly to call in on Box Hill at the end of the afternoon, hoping that the first Dark Green Fritillaries would be flying at my favourite time of day for them. I had timed it right, and half a dozen or so brand new butterflies were enjoying the late sunshine.





I half-expected there to be Marbled Whites too, but there weren't...yet.

On 14th, a change of scene: the shorter drive to Dawneys Hill and sandy heath with heather and gorse. Silver-studded Blues abounded, both males...



I also spotted a mating pair, nicely posed for a context shot.



All change again on 15th June, with one of my circular Surrey tours. I started down at Chiddingfold, to concentrate on White Admirals as a curtain raiser before the Emperor season which could not be far away. There were good numbers around, but all very active in the sunshine and mostly on the ground constantly a few metres ahead of me.



The next stop was Denbies, where a few Marbled Whites and DGF were now flying alongside the remaining Adonis Blues.



It was windy at Denbies as it most often is, so I carried on to Box Hill again where there were more new Marbled Whites mixing with an increasing number of DGF.



16th June was quite cool and cloudy (a shock to the system) but I went down to Chobham Common anyway (and managed to miss Bugboy who was somewhere nearby I believe). A few SSB made an appearance, but little else.



It was warmer on 17th, but I stayed local: the first Ringlets on this patch were flying...



18th June dawned brilliantly sunny, and I was headed down to Somerset to stay with a friend in Taunton. Stopping at Collard Hill again was essential, and as luck would have it, the sunshine gave way to bright overcast about ten miles short of the Polden Hills. Conditions were as ideal as they could be for Large Blues, and they were opening up readily all over the hillside, both males and females. There were good numbers of new-looking butterflies too.





Brilliant – certainly my best day ever with the species. The following day, a trip to Haddon Hill on the fringes of Exmoor drew a blank on the Heath Fritillary front, probably because of the drizzle and cool wind blowing up there on the day: this day was probably my least successful butterfly trip of the year in fact. On 20th, I returned home again, but via the Dorset coast and Durlston Country Park. I found a handful of Lulworth Skippers in rather windy conditions, managing to hunker down in a bit of shelter down along the path above the cliffs.





Another hectic few days, with a new site for Black Hairstreaks (and for me), several new species for the year, and the best ever day for Large Blues. Towards the end of the month, the heat would build, and every day would be full of butterflies... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 22-Jan-19 08:44 PM GMT

Another cracking read Dave and pretty envy inducing at the same time 😊👍 I have still to see a Black Hairstreak as I'm usually trapped at work when they're flying so definitely a few 👍👍 there. As you said the open wing Large Blues were definitely at a premium this year, in fact when I went a Large Blue sitting still for more than 3 seconds was at a premium so another helping of 👍👍 Throw the Marbs, Lulworths and Silver-studs into the mix and well...the wait for the season start is even more unbearable now 😊😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 24-Jan-19 11:06 AM GMT

That's a pretty comprehensive post, Dave. Plenty of interest to see, especially those beautiful Black Hairstreaks.

However, your Large Blue images stand out, particularly given how their flight period coincided with weather conditions more akin to those in southern Europe, which made open wing shots far trickier than usual.

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 25-Jan-19 02:13 PM GMT

That's probably your best retrospective report yet. Especially well done with those Large Blues, and a 👍 for the open wing shots. Like your first Collard visit, I tried in vain for an open wing shot in 2017, but did find two mating pairs. I also missed the Dark Greens last year, so good to see yours. Your report also backs up what I said earlier, that June was a very busy month.

Not too long now.  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 25-Jan-19 03:17 PM GMT

Love the Butterflies Dave, 👍👍 Some in there I've yet to see Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-Jan-19 06:42 PM GMT

Thanks again, everyone. 😊 Those few days were outstanding, but overall I think the Large Blues edged to the top of my favourites.

LATE JUNE: part one



Into the end of June now, and for once the weather really matched the idea of midsummer, with long hours of sunshine and high temperatures every day. In fact, by the end of the month it was so warm at night in my neck of the woods that sleeping was quite a problem. However during the day, there was lots to see.

On 21st I started out at home, and was rewarded with a whole series of "firsts". The first Small and Essex Skippers were out – very unusual here to see them both debut on the same day – and so were the Gatekeepers. The pairing Essex Skippers by the T4 roundabout was another first for me.



This species seems, despite its close similarity, to have the edge on the Small Skipper in terms of cuteness.



Other new arrivals were all second broods: Small and Green-veined Whites, plus a welcome Small Tortoiseshell.



No fewer than 16 species were seen on my local patch today.

Later the same day (that sounds like a stage direction! 😊), I drove the handful of miles to Black Park near Pinewood Studios. I visit at this time every year, ever hopeful of seeing a Purple Emperor in the Strawberry Wood area, but there was no success this year either. However, White Admirals and Silver-washed Fritillaries made up for it, though the latter was just a distant singleton (another first for the year).



Purple Hairstreaks were seen up in the many oak trees, but none deigned to come lower, and the many Ringlets proved surprisingly difficult to pin down in the strong sunshine.



22nd June – more perfect weather and the start of the pilgrimage down to Chiddingfold for a series of audiences with the Purple Emperor. More White Admirals greeted me, and after a couple of close shots on the ground, I met up once more with Trevor.



Before many minutes had elapsed, the first of at least half a dozen Emperors appeared, and we were able to get a few decent images from lots of angles.



Another look round my local patch later in the afternoon produced the first Purple Hairstreaks here for the year, a few more Small Tortoiseshells, and some more summer Commas (amongst a dozen species altogether).



On 23rd June, I headed east for a change – around the M25 to Leigh-on-Sea and the reliable and quite prolific colony of White-Letter Hairstreaks between the station and Hadleigh Country Park. In hazy but very warm and muggy conditions, they didn't disappoint to any degree...



*a female – longer tails, though one has been neatly clipped by a bird*



*a head-on view*



*drinking honeydew or spilt nectar from the leaf surface*



*a male – shorter tails*



*another female*

Elsewhere in the Park were numerous Essex Skippers, Marbled Whites, Ringlets, surprisingly fresh first brood Holly Blues, and a handful of other species.

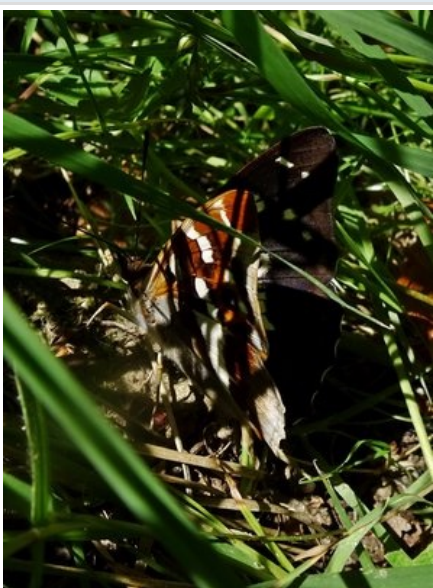
24th was a purely stay-at-home day, but my local patch provided 16 species again (though not precisely the same ones as on 21st). Having thoroughly got my eye in for the species, I did manage to spot a first for the whole site – a brief encounter with a definite White-letter Hairstreak. There are several patches of hedgerow elm, some quite tall, but this is the first WLH I've been able to track down here. No photos, sadly. However, this tinge of disappointment was soon forgotten by dint of an encounter with a Small Heath that has to rank as a real highpoint of the year. I spotted a new-looking butterfly that was flicking its wings every time it settled. With some camera-fiddling and a large helping of luck, I ended up with some decent open wing shots of an almost pristine Small Heath. It's a real shame we generally don't get to see this – the wings are a glorious golden colour, and a meadow full of these would look stunning.



Essex

Altogether, I counted over two hundred different butterflies on my local patch today.

For the next two days (25th and 26th June) I was down at Chiddingfold again, enjoying the company of Trevor and several other UKBers – including Pauline on 25th. There were many Emperors to see (though I missed Trevor's ab... 😊) but the heat did make them a bit tricky to photograph as they meandered through speckled sun and shade. They also noticeably stood on tiptoe when on the sun-hot newly-laid gravel of the paths, and I also found one wandering in the shade of the grassy verge – which I initially took to be a small animal from its movement.



I shall break here – this is such a concentrated period of activity that only six days has already taken up a lot of space. More shortly! 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 31-Jan-19 08:26 PM GMT

Only 6 days worth 😊 That must be one of the greatest things about being retired 🍷 Cracking shots especially the Small Heath, they've teased me before but it looks like they finally put out for you 😊 Was there some whispering involved I wonder? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 01-Feb-19 08:32 PM GMT

A nice reminder of how fabulous late June was for butterflies in 2018, Dave.

Normally, I'd be concentrating on the White Letter Hairstreaks & Purple Emperors, but as I mentioned on another thread, those open wing shots of Small Heath have such rarity value that they take 1st prize by a distance!

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 02-Feb-19 12:10 PM GMT

I remember that hectic month well, Dave. Particularly the number of Purple Emperors at Chiddingfold, normally three or four on the ground is good going. I also recall how tricky they were in the heat, rarely opening up and skittish.

I have recently seen some images taken using burst shooting, particularly useful for species that never open up when at rest. Your Small Heath proves that luck can sometimes win over expensive, heavy DSLR's. Absolutely brilliant!

Not too long now,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-Feb-19 01:36 PM GMT

Cheers, all. 😊 Yes, the Small Heath does stand out, and there was no small amount of luck involved in achieving those shots!

#### LATE JUNE (part two) + EARLY JULY

On 26th June after Chiddingfold, I popped into Box Hill again, but it was really too hot to closely approach the DGF and Marbled Whites that were flying.



The following day I had another visit to Dawneys Hill where the first Graylings of the season were just starting. All males at this point, and as ever attracted to my jeans as soon as I stopped moving.



There were still good numbers of reasonably fresh Silver-studded Blues flying as well, a big contrast in size and behaviour to the larger species.



On both 28th and 29th June, it was the turn of Bookham Commons. I met up with Bugboy on both days, and we were treated to unusually large numbers of Purple Hairstreaks during the early part of both mornings. They were frequently to be seen down low, and at last I managed a halfway decent shot of an open-winged female.



There were also numbers of increasingly worn White Admirals and lovely fresh Silver-washed Fritillaries...





Right at the halfway point of 2018, I set off on a long circuitous trip with the intention of adding a couple of new species to my all-time list. However, I had to include a stopoff on 30th with friends in Stamford which neatly allowed me to include a look at Bedford Purlieus, an area of woodland near Peterborough I hadn't visited for a number of years. There is one ride in particular here that is good for both variety and numbers, and on another hot and sunny day it didn't disappoint. An area where the grass had been rather trampled next to a stand of brambles underneath some elms cried out "White-letter Hairstreak!" and there they were.



As I had already seen Purple Hairstreaks in the trees, this became my first triple-Hairstreak day. It was also the third different site at which I had seen Black Hairstreaks this year, at pretty well the extremes of their distribution in the UK.

On 1st July, I headed northwestwards to the hotel I had booked in Lancaster, within easy reach of Arnside Knott. It was now very hot, and fires were breaking out on the northern moors with smoke blowing across the M61 as I drove along – the smell was quite noticeable in the car. I decided to make a late survey of the Knott after I had checked into the hotel, hoping that it might be cooler by this time. It wasn't: even up on the normally airy and cool slopes, the low sun was still scorching and the butterflies were still very active. That said, I did see my first ever Northern Brown Argus, though photos of this auspicious occasion were frustratingly impossible to achieve. 😊 However, there was some recompense in the form of a completely unexpected sighting – another White-letter Hairstreak.



...and a nice fresh Small Tortoiseshell.



I resolved that I would be up early on 2nd, and try and at least start the day in relatively cool conditions. A forlorn hope: the temperature was well over 25 degrees even at around eight am, and the Knott was just as hot as the day before. This time I managed to go one better and actually achieve a shot of an NBA - though barely more than "one for the record".



..but the stand-out moment was finding a reasonably fresh male High Brown Fritillary.





There were lots of butterflies overall, with 21 species seen over the two days I was at Arnside – an amazing place.

After Arnside, I headed over to York to stay with my sister for a couple of nights. The plan for 3rd July was to drive up onto the North York Moors and visit Fen Bog, noted for Large Heath amongst other species – another that I had not yet seen. It was blissfully cool up there, and the sun took a while to break through. However, when it did, I found more SPBF (fresher than those I had seen at Arnside)...



Down on the bog itself (which was unusually dry), I went on to find my first Large Heaths. Though anecdotally difficult to approach, I had some success with getting close and found them no more difficult than Wall Browns and only slightly more nervy than their near relative the Small Heath.



Another very successful day at a particularly attractive location – at least when the sun is shining!



High Summer was here, with only a handful of species left to emerge; the weather stayed fine though and the days continued to provide interest and new things to see...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 06-Feb-19 08:43 PM GMT

A fantastic selection of species there Dave – including three lifers for me 🍷🍷🍷 Interesting to read about the Large Heaths not being as nervous as expected – that's one of the things that's put me off going for them – the possibility of failure after such a long journey 😊 Mind you what with being a gentleman of leisure you don't have that concern 😊🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 07-Feb-19 07:22 PM GMT

Impressive stuff, Dave. It can't be often when one is standing on Arnside Knott that late in the day in such sultry conditions!

I'm pleased you caught up with your target species. Certainly, you did well with your Large Heaths, and the habitat looks far more attractive than the sites where I have seen them (Whixhall Moss and Cors Caron).

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 09-Feb-19 10:33 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel and David.

The Fen Bog day was a real highpoint of the year – a new site, a new species, and two other fritillaries as well! Not to mention sunny (but comfortable) weather and passing steam trains. What more could you ask. The only downside was this...



This was taken from some distance away and I was unable to enquire what was actually happening before the individual concerned left the site. I didn't mention this at the time: as we know there are legitimate reasons for using nets.

#### INTO JULY...

The next few days were spent with my friend in Holmfirth. I saw more butterflies here than I have ever done before, but nothing unusual. Ringlets were the most common, followed by Gatekeepers. The most interesting sighting was a bird on a wire – this Little Owl.



I returned south on 7th July, dropping briefly into Aston Rowant where the first Chalkhills were out. The heat and strong sunshine kept them largely tightly shut, but one half-obliged.



Back home, and 8th July was simply too hot to go out comfortably. In fact, staying in was uncomfortable too with temperatures not dipping much below 30 degrees at night inside. However, on 9th I set off round my local patch for the first time for ten days. The second broods of several species were well underway now, with high counts of Brown Argus, Common Blue and Holly Blue.



However, they do hide in hot weather. Peacocks were feeding prior to their long hibernation as well.



It also appeared to be between Small Heath emergences as none were seen today at all. 15 species seen today, though and over 200 individual butterflies.

On 10th July I took in both Denbies and Box Hill. At Denbies, the Marbled Whites were already looking worn, but the male Chalkhills were now in full flow, with some lovely examples.



Box Hill proved more interesting. At Denbies I had spoken to a couple who had come across a WLH along the fence line at the bottom of the slope. I failed to find it, but shortly after arriving at Box Hill I walked down to the old fort en route to Burford Spur and there on a stand of brambles (hiding behind a Comma which I had accidentally disturbed to reveal it) was another White-letter Hairstreak.







I think there were at least three or four WLH there altogether, but I was then surprised by the arrival of a much larger butterfly... A White Admiral appeared out of the trees and set about nectaring, completely oblivious to my presence and allowing very close approaches. I believe it was a female.



Unfortunately, I could not persuade this otherwise amenable insect to sit next to any of the WLH for an unusual combination shot. 😞

Once again the motto has to be: expect the unexpected. 😊 The following day was another trip to Aston Rowant which proved that point over again.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 10-Feb-19 06:29 PM GMT

Is there someone you could pass that photo onto Dave so that they could reassure you that the net was being used for legitimate reasons? 😊  
Another great review it was certainly a busy time of the year this year what with a distinct June Gap missing from the calendar 😊 You did really well to get some of those shots – most of the butterflies I found at this time were either wings tightly shut to try and keep cool(Chalkhills) or they were bombing around like their back ends were on fire (WAs)! 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 10-Feb-19 07:20 PM GMT

You've certainly clocked up some miles in your 2018 quest, Dave. I concur with your view regarding the guy with a net; sometimes they are there for legitimate reasons as I found myself a couple of years ago at Prees Heath, where the individual concerned was doing a survey on the bee population.

Love the Chalkhills. They had a wonderful flight period in the UK last year (although I never got chance to go and see them). The White Letter Hairstreaks are always a joy too, especially when you find them low down and posing. 😊

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 10-Feb-19 08:38 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

...it was certainly a busy time of the year this year what with a distinct June Gap missing from the calendar...

I have seen this said a few times now but I think it really depended on what part of the country you were in, there was a definite gap in early June for me. Yes, there were a lot of species appearing on top of each other around this time but a lot were down south and from here in the midlands I would have had to put in an awful lot of miles and time to see some of them.

Having said that, it certainly looks like you made the best use of trips that you were going to make anyway to see family and friends and managed to see a cracking selection of species, many of which I completely missed last year. Still, more to look forward to this coming year 😊

Regarding the Large Heaths you saw, were those the *polydama* form? I must admit that I have never found Large Heaths to be particularly nervous in themselves but the habitat can make it difficult to follow them, particularly the mosses where *davus* is usually found and where it can be dangerous to go off the boardwalks. *The scotica* that I saw in Scotland a couple of years ago where much easier being in habitat that was much firmer underfoot.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 23-Feb-19 10:40 PM GMT

I have got rather behind with my look back at 2018, so much so that 2019 has kicked off well before I have finished. 😊 To be rectified soon...

I think the Large Heaths at Fen Bog are the intermediate *polydamus* form, Neil, but I'm sure Callum can say for certain.

So, I do now need to interrupt the review of 2018 to register my first 2019 butterflies. Having been out locally at some point on every sunny day over the last ten days and seen nothing at all, today I counted over ten Brimstones. All the more interesting as I had only seen one new emergee round here during the whole of last summer. They must have taken one look at the hot weather and hidden away almost immediately. Encouraging numbers, but possibly worrying that there were no Peacocks or Commas out there with them.

Getting shots of any of these butterflies was pretty well impossible as constant sunshine kept them 99% airborne, but here are three yellow blurs on the move.



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 23-Feb-19 10:53 PM GMT

Those shots look very similar to the ones I've gotten of Brimstones today Dave – they are a right pain at this time of the year. They tease as well – fluttering as if they're about to land and then nipping off again just as you complete the approach 😞😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Feb-19 11:45 AM GMT

I shall keep plugging away, Wurzel, though ironically days with a bit of cloud to ground them occasionally are more productive. When you think about it, you get better photos in the summer when they are not only more prone to settle and nectar, but are beautifully new as well! 😊

Back to **JULY 2018** now, though:

11th July saw another trip up to Aston Rowant, and though early Silver-spotted Skippers did not appear, no fewer than 23 other species did. This included a surprise Purple Emperor flying around the treetops at the car park on the north side of the reserve. Other highlights of yet another brilliant day were brand new Chalkhills including one so fresh the meconium from its sojourn as a pupa could be seen below it.



There were also new Small Coppers, dark and dusky – a trait I saw commonly this year as I believe it is a characteristic of hot summers.



However, it was back at the car park that as well as the Emperor I found numerous Purple Hairstreaks, not something I've noticed here before...



...and a Painted Lady, seeking out the scrubbiest thistles and laying a selection of bright turquoise eggs.



On 12th July (which happened to be my birthday) I met up with Bugboy again down at Bookham Commons, and we were treated to a great selection of Silver-washed Fritillaries, with females in particular posing beautifully.



White Admirals played second fiddle, appearing somewhat worn now.



The many Purple Hairstreaks were also showing signs of wear, but there were a sprinkling of new Holly Blues.



From Bookham, we then went the few miles south to Denbies. Amongst the Chalkhills here was a great example of ab. *suavis*, with small marginal orange spots, something that appears regularly here.





The next three days were notable for once again being very hot. I stayed close to home and spent more time counting butterflies rather than trying to photograph them. 18 species were seen overall, with a peak count of 288 butterflies on 14th. This included 25+ each of Common Blue, Holly Blue and Brown Argus – an excellent showing of each, particularly the latter which has steadily increased in numbers here over the last few years. A selection:







With a slightly cooler day in prospect I went down to Chiddingfold on 16th July. Second brood Wood Whites were on the wing...





It was cooler again on 17th, and I met up with an old friend for a non-butterfly walk on Dunstable Downs. However, we had a very close encounter with an unusually lethargic female DGF which may have kicked into life a hitherto dormant interest in butterflies... 😊



The remainder of July, especially another notable visit to Chiddingfold, deserves a separate post.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Feb-19 03:56 PM GMT

All this time-travel is getting confusing! Back to the present day, and another wander round my local patch, a bit later in the day. There were more Brimstones to start with, but by the end of the walk they had all disappeared – they do retire early for the night. However, today they had been joined by Small Tortoiseshells (at least three) and Commas (also probably three seen).



However, the surprise sighting was of a Hummingbird Hawk Moth, not something I see with any frequency here at any time of year, but most unusual for February.



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by ernie f, 24-Feb-19 04:48 PM GMT

A Hummingbird Hawkmoth !?!

Fantastic for Feb.

Its a bit crazy out there at the moment.

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 25-Feb-19 11:13 AM GMT

A bit of research tells me that Hummingbird Hawk Moths do manage to overwinter in the UK occasionally, which means that this one could possibly have done so along with our hibernating butterflies.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 25-Feb-19 04:46 PM GMT

A very nice haul there, Dave. You are right about Brimstones retiring early, after about 2.30pm no sign of them. The Hummingbird Hawk-Moth must be the prize of the day.

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 25-Feb-19 05:24 PM GMT

Cheers, Ernie and Trevor – I've learned over the years to always expect the unexpected, but when I first saw the Hummer, it took a while to work out what it was! Luckily its desire for nectar kept it around the dead-nettles for a while, so I managed a few shots, most of which were rubbish because of the rapid wing movement. Still, one of those memorable moments.

The weather today (25th) was a repeat of previous days, though it started colder (a sparkling ground frost and an air temperature of +1 degree at 0800) and ended up warmer (up at around 19 degrees or so by 1500). I went out around 1100, and the Small Tortoiseshells were already out and about – I saw three, only one of which was one of the three seen yesterday.



I saw no Commas today – they are late risers – and I am yet to see a Peacock or Red Admiral. However, I spotted a feeble white fluttering which I initially thought might be a female Brimstone, but was in fact a newly-emerged Small White. It was unsteady to start with, but after a bit of basking in the classic white butterfly position with wings angled to maximise reflection of the sun's heat onto the flight muscles in the thorax, it started to fly more strongly and investigate other white and shiny objects. Luckily it decided to pause on a bramble leaf at a convenient height, and opened up a bit further as it warmed up.



My earliest ever Small White, but in the context of this extraordinary February, not that surprising. Orange Tip by the end of the month, anyone? 😊

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by David M, 25-Feb-19 06:04 PM GMT

I bet you've been caught unprepared, Dave, what with all this early activity getting in the way of your 2018 review!

Nice to see some of the beauties that will follow later in the year, but for the moment there can't be any doubt that your male Small White is of greatest significance. That's quite some sighting! (although the Hummingbird Hawk Moth is highly notable too).

### Re: millerd

by Allan.W., 25-Feb-19 06:11 PM GMT

Nice find with the Hummingbird Hawk ,I saw one in early Feb ; about ten years ago ,and one(at least ) was seen at Dungeness sometime last week ,we,ve also had some early Swallow sightings, with three in residence at Littlestone ,for about a week now .  
Regards Allan.W.

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 25-Feb-19 10:32 PM GMT

I'll do my best to find you an OT before this weather breaks down, although I do feel a bit sorry for any of these non adult hibernators emerging so early. The chances of them doing what they supposed to do to continue their species are rather slim 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 25-Feb-19 10:39 PM GMT

A cracking couple of days for you Dave – a really early Small White there! 😊😄🍀 I'm pretty envious that you'll be able to take full advantage of the next few days of great weather to the full Dave 🍀 If things do keep on like this then we could be on for an early OT 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 26-Feb-19 06:15 PM GMT

Cheers everyone – some extraordinary stuff already this season and we've hardly started.

Tuesday 26th and unbelievably an even warmer day with 21 degrees recorded around London, with wall-to-wall sunshine. I had two trips out locally today to make the most of the weather, and notched up two more species: Peacock and Red Admiral. Across the whole area covered, the day's totals were:

Brimstone 8 to 10



Comma 5



Peacock 2



Red Admiral 2

Small Tortoiseshell 1



No Small Whites today. However, the main point of interest was seeing one of the Red Admirals laying an egg on some low-lying sheltered scrubby nettles.



Dave

Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 26-Feb-19 08:32 PM GMT

Just catching up on your recent forays Dave, must admit I am a little jealous of you being able to get out and make the most of this warm spell 🌞🌱

I have seen reports in the past of Hummingbird Hawks Moths successfully overwintering in the UK but I would be inclined to think that yours is a migrant going by the other reports I have seen over the past few days which have included more HBHMs along with Painted Ladies plus a selection of migrant moths coming to light traps at night.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 26-Feb-19 10:49 PM GMT

Good to see that Red Admiral laying eggs – that's a good insurance policy for when the weather turns back to the usual February fare – just in time for the weekend 😊😄 Great set of shots and you nailed the Brimstone 😊🌱

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 27-Feb-19 01:41 AM GMT

I don't blame you for getting out twice, Dave. It's impossible to reconcile oneself with the fact that it's still February, isn't it?

Great to see all the species in your post, but the laying Admiral is particularly welcome.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 27-Feb-19 09:11 AM GMT

Lovely shots Dave, March on Friday and you've already got 5 species in February 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-Feb-19 07:53 PM GMT

Many thanks for all the comments, everybody. It's been a great few days and very nice to see Red Admiral laying. I assume she's been keeping those eggs on ice, so to speak, since the autumn. I think it's up to six species, Goldie, quite astonishing before spring officially starts.

A change of venue today (27th), with a trip down to North Stoke, a sheltered spot nestling under the South Downs in Sussex. I met up with Bugboy who was hoping to repeat his success here in a previous season with a most elusive species, but sadly, despite our best endeavours in bright warm sunshine there was not a glimpse of anything unusual. Brimstones appeared not long before midday, and perhaps a dozen were seen before they disappeared again before two o'clock. Aside from that, half a dozen or so Commas and slightly fewer Peacocks were all that we saw flying.







Back to normal weather tomorrow, though hopefully nothing drastically cold.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 27-Feb-19 09:10 PM GMT

You were too far East, Dave. Portland was the place to be!  
See facebook ' Butterflies UK '.

**Re: millerd**

by bugboy, 27-Feb-19 09:15 PM GMT

Never mind Dave, it was a nice day for a wander in the countryside even without a certain special encounter, although I couldn't help but feel we were being watched from the trees we spent a large portion of the afternoon staring at 😊

**Re: millerd**

by Goldie M, 28-Feb-19 05:24 PM GMT

I love those shots you took last year of the open winged Wood Whites and your Peacock Butterfly is fantastic, really bright colours Goldie 😊

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 28-Feb-19 10:41 PM GMT

Bad luck with the LT search Dave 😊 I wonder how often the population remains in the same place as a few years back Neil Hulme was finding them on

the Isle of Wight – they're quite big and so could disperse a fair old way 😊 Mind you you've certainly got the time to spend to keep looking 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 01-Mar-19 10:02 PM GMT

Well done for giving North Stoke a go, Dave. It's easy to stick with the herd when you know a site is likely to be productive. Far more praiseworthy is a trip to somewhere out of the limelight but with history for LTs.

Keep persisting. It usually pays off.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 01-Mar-19 10:11 PM GMT

I'm afraid Portland was just a bit too far for a daytrip, Trevor, though it looks as if it would have been great day.

They could have been there, Buggy, but maybe we just weren't looking the right way at the right time. A pleasant day of amazing weather nevertheless.

Yes, David and Wurzel, always worth looking in likely places. There could easily be a very low level population of LT in suitable woodland across southern England, and we'd probably never know – except when the odd one gets itself spotted somewhere. What would be good is if the current good numbers appearing over in the Netherlands breed successfully and have lots of offspring in the summer just at the same time as warm easterlies start to blow. A major influx then might not be noticed until this time next year, though, as they hibernate so early.

Thank you, Goldie – now that the weather has returned to normal I will continue my 2018 review. Now where was I? Ah yes, July, and all that hot weather.

**JULY 2018** continued...

On 18th, I had agreed with Bugboy to meet at Bookham again, and then head down to Chiddingfold for a good look at the second brood Wood Whites.

At Bookham, the Purple Hairstreaks were still down from the treetops, and still in good numbers – several were noted right down on the grass, probably sipping the early morning dew. They had started to become worn now, however.



So, on to Chiddingfold. For once, it wasn't wall-to-wall sunshine, but it remained very warm, and there were plenty of Wood Whites around – so many that we decided to perform a semi-scientific count on a linear walk from the Oaken Wood entrance back to Botany Bay. We reached 122, and reckoned that there were many more as when the sun was in, numbers in view dropped quite a bit. There was quite a bit else to see, with one highpoint being the appearance of a very large female Purple Emperor which appeared on the walk down to Oaken Wood. Bugboy managed a distant shot as it briefly landed, but my camera wasn't up to the task. However, it was Bugboy's eagle eyes which again produced the best sighting – a brand new Wood White drying its wings immediately above its discarded pupal casing.



I even took a few ordinary views of the species!



Other interest: a pair of Ringlets...



...and some nice SWF (no *valesina* today, though).



Quite a day – again!

19th July saw me up at Aston Rowant again, in search of Silver-spotted Skippers. The target species was out in good numbers, but characteristically whizzing madly about in the sunshine.



20th July was a day to stay local, and dominated again by the reliable trio of Common and Holly Blues, and Brown Argus.



The following day, I took in the Denbies/Box Hill combination again – nothing too unusual, though both sites had new Small Coppers. These again looked darker than usual, probably in response to the heat.



I did see a surprisingly fresh female DGF at Denbies, though most on both hillsides were quite tatty now...



On 22nd, I had another look at some different habitat down at the sandy heath of Dawneys Hill. Graylings were the main attraction, the Silver-studded Blues having disappeared now. Once again Small Coppers put in an appearance, plus one or two Common Blues. The Graylings may have been the main attraction for me, but it appeared that as usual the reverse was true too.





A brief look at my local patch later in the day showed that Small Coppers were appearing here too...



I took a rest from the heat and sunshine on 23rd, and only went out for a short while locally on 24th. Many Brown Argus and Common Blues had been notable for being small this summer, but this particular Brown Argus was minuscule. My forefinger is in the same plane as the butterfly.



The last week of July and the beginning of August were not so hectic, but I'll leave that for another post.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 02-Mar-19 08:49 AM GMT

With your description and images from Chiddingfold, I was able to re-live a day out there. A magical forest with so much to offer. All that is required is some fine weather.

Some great shots, Dave.  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Benjamin, 02-Mar-19 11:50 AM GMT

Great reporting of the warm spell Dave – i imagine we nearly crossed paths alongside the Arun somewhere, but were probably so busy stalking empty trees and vacant patches of bare ground, that we prob wouldn't have noticed each other anyway!

You've posted some great shots already, and it's always a pleasure to keep up with your diary – good luck with the season ahead....

cheers –

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 02-Mar-19 08:28 PM GMT

Cheers, Trevor – you're quite right about Chiddingfold. It's a terrific bit of woodland, and all it needs to round it off would be the return of the Spring fritillaries that used to live here not so long ago.

Hi Ben! I wondered if we'd see anyone familiar out there also intent on tracking down those elusive big orange butterflies. It seems you weren't far away... 😊 Thank you for the words of encouragement – luck seems to play a big part in it all, so fingers crossed all round for a good season! Hope to bump into you again before too long.

Saturday 2nd March and a spell of warm sunshine early afternoon. It was getting a bit windy though, and I considered myself lucky to see a Comma tussling with the breeze.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 02-Mar-19 09:59 PM GMT

A cracking Wood White sequence Dave, only missing the middle stages of the life-cycle 😊🍷 I seem to recall the unusually fresh DGF from your post in year as it were – still a bit of a surprise even now, she must have been one of the latest emergers and I'd forgotten about the later brood miniscule blues/brown argus – the heatwave certainly helped to add even more variety 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 07-Mar-19 05:19 PM GMT

Fabulous commentary and pictures of the Wood Whites, Dave. The Small Copper is interesting too, being very dark (much like the ones I see in the south of France).

The real treasure for me though is that mint fresh Holly Blue. The brilliant white underside is most striking.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 08-Mar-19 02:24 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel and David – the Wood Whites made that day a real high point of the summer.

There'll be more Holly Blues, David, count on it... 😊

So, cracking on now, into high summer 2018.

#### JULY/Early AUGUST

The last few days of July were spent up in Yorkshire again, with butterflies mostly limited to the selection available on the first couple of days in my sister's garden, as the weather changed markedly in the middle of the visit.



However, there was time on 28th for a trip to a new site for me (as recommended by CallumMac), Kiplingcotes – an old chalk quarry on the edge of the wolds. It was windy and not particularly sunny, but in one sheltered corner I found a variety of butterflies, including an unexpected one – Wall Browns. I saw both a male and a female, and just about managed a photo of the latter.



Travelling home on 30th, the route took me past the village of Bishop's Itchington in Warwickshire, so I took the opportunity to pop into Bishop's Hill, a site renowned in the spring for its Small Blue colony. I had no idea whether they produce a second brood here, but it was worth a look. As it turned out, there were no Small Blues, but instead there were good numbers of Common Blues, including a variety of different females across the whole spectrum of shades from brown to blue.





On 31st, I caught up with my local patch. Perhaps most significant was that two of the ivy-festooned ash trees had fallen over, despite there not being any wind to blow them down. One had fallen on a parked car, the other went in the opposite direction onto grass: I imagine their roots had been weakened by the lack of rain. Worryingly, these trees are where substantial numbers of my local Holly Blue population base themselves, and as subsequently adjacent trees have been (rightly) removed as being potentially dangerous, there could well be a knock-on effect on local numbers. However, not so yet: dozens of Holly Blues were flying today, as were many Common Blues.



A short repeat visit the following day produced more of the same, and was notable for being the last day I saw a Gatekeeper here in 2018, a very early date I would say. I managed a nice Holly Blue close-up...



...plus a rare shot this year of a Meadow Brown opening up.



Later in the day I went down to Denbies, finding amongst other things, good numbers of Adonis and Chalkhill Blues, plus the first Silver-spotted Skippers of the year here.





On the 2nd August, following reports of sightings, I went down to Bookham again to see if there really were any Brown Hairstreaks around. A simple answer: there were not, or none that I could spot anyway. However, there were the usual Small Coppers, new Brimstones, aging SWF, Small Heaths, Comon Blues and Brown Argus.



Time to break again, before another new sighting for the year on 3rd August.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 10-Mar-19 07:45 PM GMT

Another great report Dave 😊 You've spurred me on to actually start on my 2018 Tally 🤖 Should be up on UKB some time in 2020 😊😊 A lovely collection of shots especially as you say the contrasting 'Beauty and the Beast' moment 😊 My favourite shot however has to be the Silver Spot - cracking 😊👍👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 13-Mar-19 03:01 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel - I need to get on with this before the weather changes, the sun comes out and 2019 get properly underway.

### INTO AUGUST...

Reading more Brown Hairstreak reports, I thought I'd give Noar Hill a try on 3rd August. I'm not sure why I bother, as in all the years I've come here, I've only ever seen one butterfly. Nothing changed today, despite suitable weather, but it was not a wasted trip as the site looked resplendent if a little dry and other species were flying. In fact within the first ten minutes I'd found my first Clouded Yellow of the year, along with a fellow immigrant - a Painted Lady.



A Red Admiral may have been in this category as well, and there were SWF, Brimstones and Common Blues.

Staying local on 4th, I had what turned out to be my only Cloudie sighting of the year here – but no photo. Holly Blues reached their peak numbers today, and well over a hundred individual butterflies were seen of 12 species, but nothing else remarkable.



5th August was going to be another very hot day, but I set out early for Aston Rowant with Silver-spotted Skippers the target again.



There was a fair bit of egg-laying activity amongst the skippers, and examining a patch of grass newly-vacated by such a female revealed no less than six eggs scattered in the one small area. Goodness knows how many there were across the whole hillside.



The 6th was just too hot to be worth going out anywhere comfortably, and not good for photography in any case – far too sunny. The 7th was not much better, but my itchy feet took me out locally again. Again there were high numbers of Holly Blues, and also Common Blues. The former species was to be found in the shade for the most part, nectaring on the abundant fleabane clumps. One patch had attracted quite a few, with eight individuals in this one view (at least two others had been disturbed by my movement in taking the photo).



As is traditional in one particular spot by the lake, I attracted a Red Admiral.



Good to see as they have been few and far between this year so far.

Over the next few days, I managed three separate trips down to Bookham in search of Brown Hairstreaks (8th, 11th and 13th). The days in between, amazingly, were wet. On 8th, some likely BH candidates were seen high up, but at ground level, the Small Coppers, Brown Argus, Common Blues and Speckled Woods provided the interest.





On 12th, I met up with Bugboy, and we had better luck, seeing at least two Brown Hairstreaks low down.



The fermenting blackberries were proving quite a draw all round, and had also attracted a rather worn Purple Hairstreak as well.



The third visit on 13th produced another nice female Brown Hairstreak, posing appropriately next to a sloe berry.



I also found a male Common Blue with noticeable dark spots on the hindwing margins.



Between 14th and 18th, I was up in Yorkshire again. On 15th, I popped up the road from my base in Wilberfoss to Calley Heath. This lowland sandy heath site has colonies of Small Coppers and Brown Argus, and both were seen in reasonable numbers, with the former showing interest in the tiny sorrel plants recently reappearing after the dry weather.





There was also a Peacock which appeared to be investigating the many rabbit holes on the site, perhaps with a view to hibernation.



On 17th, I had another look at Kiplingcotes, where I had seen the surprise Walls a few weeks earlier. None today, but there were some nice fresh Common Blues and Small Heaths. I am now very keen to visit this site in spring, as it has even more to offer then.





Back in my sister's garden, the buddleia attracted a variety of common species as always, including at least one Painted Lady. I don't think I have ever not seen one here in the summer.



There were also some fresh Commas of the darker hibernating variety.



The rest of August is still to come, with a couple of unusual sightings, plus three further months full of butterflies – what a long season it was to be.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 13-Mar-19 04:56 PM GMT

Indeed it was a long season last year, Dave.

Since the last November 2018 sightings, there have only been two months with no Butterflies for me, Dec 2018 and Jan 2019.

We have already had a good February spell with plenty of sightings, and once this turbulent weather has finished with us, hopefully, normal service will resume, and we can look forward to another long season this year.

Can't wait!  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 15-Mar-19 07:52 PM GMT

Another cracking selection of summer butterflies Dave. They brighten things up appreciably after a rather grey and gloomy week.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Mar-19 07:33 PM GMT

Cheers, Trevor – I can go one better (just!), as I saw my last butterfly of 2018 on 2nd December and the first of 2019 in late February. A shade under 12 weeks gap. Quite bearable, really. 😊

Thank you, Neil – more to come now, and I might just squeeze 2018's review in before 2019 begins in earnest... 😊

#### LATE AUGUST

Only one day of the rest of August (26th) was wet enough to preclude seeing a butterfly, another indication of how good a summer it was. Back home on 19th, the priority was my local patch which I had not looked at for nearly a fortnight. The usual triumvirate of Brown Argus, Common and Holly Blues were still in the ascendant, but there were no stand-out new examples of any of these, though a few brown female Common Blues made an interesting change.



Notable was a sudden increase in Red Admiral numbers with nine seen – the highest so far this year.

On 20th, I started with another trip to Bookham to look for further Brown Hairstreaks. It was warm and bright rather than sunny, and on arrival at an area of water mint that often attracts Nymphalids at this time of year, I came across a butterfly I could not immediately identify. From a distance it looked silvery white, though too small for any Pierid species and not really white enough. Not a Hairstreak and not dark enough for a Common Blue – a bit too big as well. Suddenly I worked it out: completely out of context I had come across a male Chalkhill Blue, some five miles due north of the chalk at Denbies Hillside. Most intriguing!





Seeing the relatively fresh Chalkhill inspired me to carry on down to Denbies. Though there were still a few nice Chalkhill males, it was the Adonis that stole the show here, with a few chocolatey females joining the sky-blue males.





There were also a handful of Silver-spotted Skippers. More of these were seen the following day on another trip up to Aston Rowant...



22nd August was one of those days when annoyingly the weather forecast failed to deliver, continuing to promise sunshine on an hourly basis but not following through at all. Bugboy and I had decided to go down to Steyning on another Brown Hairstreak hunt, and though topping and tailing the day with patient scrutiny of the rifle range area, we came away with photos of eggs and nothing more from the site. However, with Mill Hill only a short drive away, we popped over there for a while in between. Adonis Blues appeared magically every time the sun's strength came through the cloud cover that bit more, and there were some beautiful examples.





We also found an unusual Meadow Brown, lacking in pigment in a random pattern across all wings.



Along the Downs a little way is Anchor Bottom, where in the first brood the population of Adonis had been quite something by all accounts. We had a look here, and though not in vast numbers, there were still some nice examples of Adonis to be seen.



A pale wraith of a butterfly that I initially thought was a Painted Lady turned out to be a very faded female Wall.



To be continued...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 17-Mar-19 09:21 PM GMT

More great posts Dave - I've been struggling to keep up to date as work is getting pretty hectic - something I reckon that you'll have forgotten all about now 🤔🇺🇸 It was a tricky year for Brostreaks - open wing shots were definitely at a premium. Normally they stick to a standard pattern of behaviours and so you can plan ahead but this year they took the rule book, ripped it up and made it into a nice little hat! 😂😂 Interesting that you had that errant Chalkhill Blue I wonder if the heat had them seeking out pastures new/less dehydrated? Looking forward to the next installment - the jet stream is moving so you might need to take a break from looking back and enjoy looking forwards this week 😊

Have a goodun

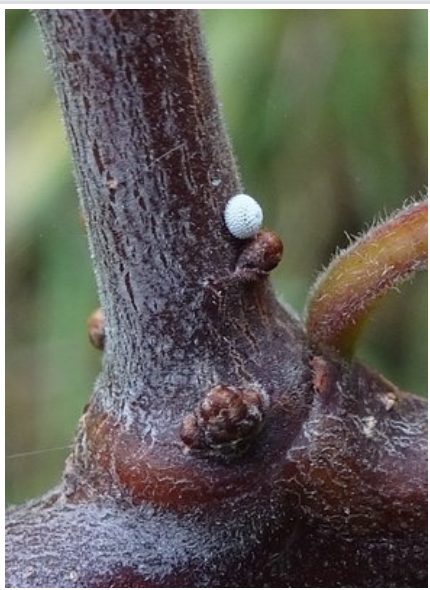
Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Mar-19 01:10 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel - yes, work is now a fading memory, but you'd be surprised what takes over to limit the time spent out there in the sunshine. However, the combination of more free time and excellent weather made 2018 the best year yet probably from a butterfly perspective.

For some reason, I forgot to post a shot of the Steyning Brown Hairstreak eggs - nearly made up for the lack of adults, but I did rectify that deficiency a couple of days later.







Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Mar-19 01:11 PM GMT

I have had some issues viewing these posts on my laptop, probably because of the number of images on an overall page, so I shall start a new one for the next installment of this 2018 retrospective.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Mar-19 02:51 PM GMT

AUGUST 2018: the last week.

I went out locally on 23rd, and with the strength of the sun fading a bit now the Holly Blues had started to open up again, though they were getting a bit worn. I did spot one laying on the ivy buds which were now beginning to swell.





There was definitely another round of Small Whites appearing.



After the disappointment of 22nd, on 24th I drove down to Steyning again. Though it was hardly wall-to-wall, there was sufficient sunshine to bring out a few Brown Hairstreaks, and a Neil Hulme with them.





The species can become a bit addictive, and on 25th I started the day with another visit to Bookham, meeting up with Bugboy again. No disappointments today, with three probably seen.



I followed this by driving down to Box Hill - seeing Adonis Blues (and some very faded Chalkhills), but strangely no Silver-spotted Skippers.



26th was the wet day – still a rare phenomenon!

27th August saw me out locally again, and this time there were new Holly Blues. At this stage of the summer, it is difficult to know whether these are late second or early third brood individuals. A new male Holly was indulging itself on a huge pile of horse manure...



A single Meadow Brown remained, though if all were camouflaged like this one there could well have been a few more.



On 28th, it was time for Denbies again. Today was a real Adonis Blue day, mostly because of the array of new females, but there was other interest too: including mating pairs, a fresh male or two and a beautiful example of a female ab. *krodeli*.



There was also a fresh-looking female Chalkhill...



...and a photogenic Silver-spotted Skipper that was happy to sit for the camera for quite some time.



I took an extraordinary number of photos today... 😊

Home again on 29th, but far from dull – new Small Coppers had appeared...



Space precludes me finishing August in one go, but the next post should do it. 😊

Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Mar-19 03:21 PM GMT

AUGUST 2018 – the last two days.

On 30th August it was one more trip to the Bookham Brown Hairstreaks. There were three seen altogether again, including some egg-laying activity.



but as she paused in the sun to get her breath back she was accosted vigorously by a male small Copper. They disappeared over the trees – he returned but she didn't.



After Bookham, for some reason instead of my usual drive down to the slopes of the North Downs, I went the few miles northeast to Fairmile Common. What a good choice this proved, as flying over the heather of this sandy heathland was a male Silver-studded Blue. I was aware that second brood individuals had been seen in Cornwall: at such a late date as this my sighting could only be the same thing.





Highly unusual.

On 31st, in view of the previous day's surprise, I went to my other relatively close bit of SSB habitat down at Dawneys Hill. No SSB, but there were good numbers of Graylings.



...and also succeeded in a distant shot of a courting pair with the female open-winged.



There was also a splendid new blue badge Small Copper, which provided a colourful contrast to the subtly sandy Graylings – and also to the purple heather it chose to sit on.





Home again, and this time a fresh female Holly Blue provided the main interest, as well as another shiny new Small Copper.





September next...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 21-Mar-19 12:01 AM GMT

Terrific sequence, Dave. You sure had a busy August!

The Holly Blues are, as ever, ravishing, particularly that last female but pride of place has to be that stunning Adonis ab; I'm not sure how that can be improved upon.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 21-Mar-19 01:44 PM GMT

An Awesome August for you Dave :-). A cracking array of Brostroke shots and great to see gre Meadow Brown pretending to be a Grayling :-). The MrGreens (which for some reason I can't enter but there would easily be a couple) go for the courting Grayling something I keep trying to find but don't have any luck with.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Mar-19 10:55 PM GMT

Cheers, both of you - August was a great month last year, and amazingly so was September, with only a handful of days lost to the weather. However, once again I have to interrupt last year with an update to activity in 2019. 😊

On **Saturday 23rd March**, it felt warmer and the dreary grey skies of the last few days had finally broken a little to allow some sun to filter through. This was enough to tempt out a single Brimstone, plus three of four Peacocks.

On **Sunday 24th**, the sun blazed forth at last, winds were quite light and it felt very pleasant. The butterflies responded: on my local patch over a couple of hours in the middle of the day I counted 30 individuals of five species:

Brimstone 11

As half past two approached, the Brimstones ceased their patrolling and came down to nectar on the abundant dandelions, becoming very approachable.



Peacock 7

Along all the paths, and also nectaring on the dandelions, but this one basked for a while:



Comma 5

In the same spots as the peacocks, but more inclined to bask and pose in the sunshine. Quite variable in colour and degree of wear.





Small Tortoiseshell 5  
Inseparable from the dandelion flowers.



Small White 2  
This one chose a daisy instead.



With the current forecast, there could be many more flying by the end of the week. Spring would appear to really be here this time! 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 25-Mar-19 08:19 AM GMT

An excellent weekends work there, Dave.  
Although we were seeing Butterflies at the end of Feb, it was yesterday that seemed to spark off the Spring emergence.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 25-Mar-19 05:55 PM GMT

Cheers, Trevor - after today's showing on top of the weekend, I would say that spring is most definitely here... 😊

It's amazing how two consecutive days are never the same, despite very similar weather.

**Monday 25th March** was not quite so warm, and a fraction windier, than Sunday. However, the sun was shining strongly and I set off round my local patch at near enough the same time. In a spot sheltered from the northerly breeze, I glimpsed a flutter of blue wings over the ivy - a Holly Blue, my first of 2019. For a few seconds, I thought it wasn't going to settle, but a burst of stronger wind grounded it for a moment fairly high up. I had just enough time for one quick shot before it was off again.



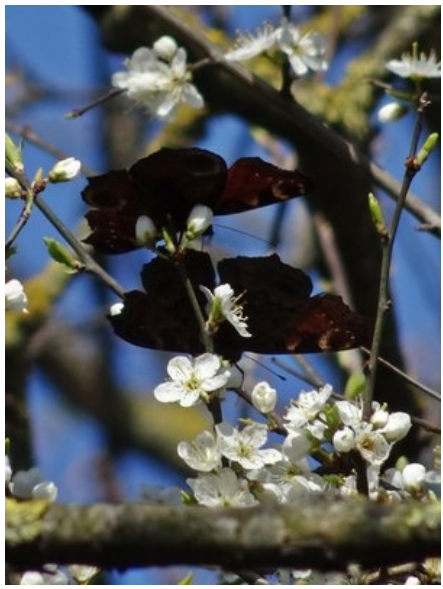
I followed it, but as it wafted out over the River Colne, something else caught my eye down near the bank. Sitting on a dock leaf, about a metre or so below me was an Orange Tip – another first for the year.



Frustratingly I couldn't get that close, and in any case after a couple of shots, it was disturbed by yet another butterfly – A Red Admiral. This butterfly was happy to pose while sunning itself on the bridge over the river.



That meant that the none of the first three species seen today were amongst those seen yesterday... Very strange. A bit further on I spotted another Holly Blue high up amongst the ivy-festooned trees, and then along the rest of my route I encountered four Small Tortoiseshells and eight Peacocks.





Unfortunately, they eventually disappeared from sight before anything further happened.

Another interesting day, with my 2019 total now standing at 8 species. Curiously, after their frequency yesterday, I saw not a single Brimstone today (nor were there any Commas). Some subtle difference in the weather must have kept them grounded.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Maximus, 25-Mar-19 06:06 PM GMT

Nice haul, Dave, your Orange-tip might be the first – reported – this year 😊 Interestingly we also saw no Brimstones today, as you say some subtle difference in the weather seems to have kept them grounded in our area too.

Mike.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 25-Mar-19 11:40 PM GMT

Cracking 'fluke' shot Dave 😊👍 You've shot out of the blocks this year – 8 species with an OT already 😊👍 Here's hoping that this little warm patch is the proper start to Spring 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 26-Mar-19 08:37 AM GMT



A couple of very nice new season 'firsts' there Dave.  
Your arboreal Peacock shots are my favourite type of Butterfly image,  
ie. Sun, bossom against blue sky. Camera problems scuppered my day yeaterday,  
with the thing not focusing properly. Taking my old one out today.

Hoping for a cracking day today!  
Trevor.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-Mar-19 03:44 PM GMT

Interesting that your experience of the Brimstones matched mine, Mike. Curious. It appears that Orange Tips came out all over the place on Sunday and Monday – amazing synchronicity across the country! 😊

Cheers, Wurzel – I do like it when accidental shots come out well, especially considering the frustration sometimes when attempting to set up the deliberate ones... 😊😊

Thank you Trevor – I was pleased with that Peacock sequence, especially as it was at full stretch on full zoom. It was also good to get the Holly Blue and Orange Tip within seconds of each other. almost one of those "which one do I follow" moments. 😊

No surprises on **Tuesday 26th March**. Less sunshine, but less breezy too and after their complete absence on 25th I found three Brimstones, one of which was a female. The first male was nectaring and therefore easily approached.



I saw just the four Peacocks today, including this one flat on brambles.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 27-Mar-19 05:58 PM GMT

Doing well there Dave 🇩🇪. I'm somewhat behind in my UK sightings now as it was straight back to work after my little continental jaunt, and with a level of precision the weather forecasters can barely dream off, the cloud cover arrived at noon on my half day and continued over most of my day off today. No doubt sunny skies will return tomorrow with the start of my 6 day stretch at work 😊😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 28-Mar-19 12:26 AM GMT

"Their bright colours can actually provide a degree of camouflage against the old bramble leaves from last year, which are often shades of maroon and chestnut by the spring."

I was thinking exactly the same thing this lunchtime Dave. First there was a discarded crisp packet (now in the bin) and then there was said old bramble leaf before finally actually finding what I thought was a leaf was actually a Peacock 😊😊 Your great start to the season continues unabated – brill – keep up the good work!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 28-Mar-19 11:44 PM GMT

Cheers, Bugboy – you'll soon catch up, though I think your trip abroad more than makes up for it! 😊

They keep on coming, Wurzel – another first for the year today, making nine all told. This must be a personal best for this time of the year I reckon, and with three days of March to go. 😊

**Thursday 28th March.** Warmer, sunnier and hardly a breeze – and the butterflies responded. I saw my first Speckled Wood of the year, and after a couple of hours had spotted all nine of the species I've seen in 2019. A great selection:

Brimstone 15  
Peacock 5  
Orange Tip 3  
Comma 2  
Small White 2  
Red Admiral 1  
Small Tortoiseshell 1  
Speckled Wood 1  
Holly Blue 1





More sunshine to come, apparently... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 29-Mar-19 09:47 AM GMT

WoW! Dave, what a day you had, I've only seen four species so far and got shots of three hope fully more will be out before it goes cooler at the week-end it's still misty at the moment here. Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-Mar-19 09:04 PM GMT

Thanks, Goldie, and today was even better! 😊

**Friday 29th March:** A glorious day with sunshine dawn till dusk, only the slightest breeze, and at least 16 degrees by afternoon.

I spent about four hours altogether on my local patch, seeing 60+ butterflies of nine different species, including another new one for the year. Brimstones and Peacocks were the commonest by far, with 20 of the former and 16 of the latter seen – conservative estimates I'd say. Various white butterflies were next, with six Orange Tips (including a female), six Small Whites and – the first ones of 2019 – two Green-veined Whites, one of each sex. Rounding things off came five Small Tortoiseshells (including a courting couple), three Speckled Woods, two Commas, and two Holly Blues. The only absentee from the party was the Red Admiral.

As you might imagine, I took a lot of photos, and paring these down to a reasonable number to post was quite tricky. Here goes!



*a female*



*settling down for the evening (aka hunt the Brimstone!)*  
A splendid day, given the date... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 29-Mar-19 09:47 PM GMT

That was one hell of a day Dave! 😊😊👍👍 I'm surprised that you were able to get a post out having had to sort through all of those shots! 📷 I was slightly surprised to see female OTs already as it feels like the males have only just emerged and normally the females are a week behind 😊 Love the smoking Green-veined White 📷

Have a goodun

p.s found the Brimstone 😊

### Re: millerd

by David M, 29-Mar-19 10:23 PM GMT

Wow! There's so much going on at the moment that I've been struggling to keep up to date with everybody's PDs.

Shame on me for missing those early Holly Blues/Orange Tips of yours.

You have amassed about as much as one could reasonably expect to be about thus far.

Great to see a Green Veined White in particular. I'm hoping they won't be long round my way.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 02-Apr-19 02:09 PM GMT

Thank you, both – yes, good to see some Green-veined Whites, a very attractive butterfly in my book.

**Saturday 30th March** brought forth fewer butterflies, but Peacocks and Brimstones were still the most numerous. Seven species seen today, with Orange Tips being the most photogenic.



The sun came out late on Sunday and I didn't see any butterflies, but on **Monday 1st April**, it returned for the day, and was reasonably warm too. I counted 47 separate butterflies, with due allowance for double sightings, with again Peacocks most numerous. Holly Blues are gradually building too, with six seen today.







Now the weather goes downhill for a while... 😞

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 02-Apr-19 02:52 PM GMT

Very nice OT shots, Dave 😊. Believe it or not, none have shown up in my area yet! And it's not for the want of looking. I've searched all their previous regular haunts, but nothing yet. Still, it's early days for them.

Looks like Spring is cancelled for the time being, Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 02-Apr-19 06:51 PM GMT

Lovely OTs Dave I'm especially appreciative of the third shot - you've managed to encompass all manner of shots in one (fore wing, under wing, stained class, three quarter, close up 😊😊😊). 47 in one sitting at this time of year is quite a feat, hopefully the cooler spell will just be a blip...it's because the holidays are approaching 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 03-Apr-19 06:28 AM GMT

Encouraging stuff, Dave. Things certainly seem to have taken off round your way, and one hopes this brief cold snap will be but a pause. We look to have more mild weather on the way once we get beyond this low pressure system.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-Apr-19 10:23 PM GMT

Cheers, Trevor - strange that your sheltered southern location should be bereft of Orange Tips. I imagine they will appear during the next urst of warmth. 😊

Thanks, Wurzel. So far this year, the Orange Tips I've seen have been relatively sluggish and willing to settle, so there have been some decent poses. You have to make the most of them while they are around. When you think about it, numbers have been unusually high this year - 50 seen round here in February (six different species) and another 200 in March (ten species), with as many as 60 on a single day. Quite something. 😊

I hope this cold snap is exactly that, David - it was a nasty shock to have to scrape ice off the car this morning and it still be only 4 degrees at ten o'clock.

However, it remained mostly sunny and calm round here, despite the chill, and the big storm clouds avoided the area though you could see curtains of precipitation cascading from them in the near distance. Around three I had a brisk walk around the usual route, and was surprised to see a Small White gamely fluttering along one of the paths. It settled briefly to warm up, its wings angled in the classic position to maximise reflection of the sun's heat onto its body.





A typically pale spring brood male.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Andrew555, 04-Apr-19 12:44 PM GMT

That is an enviable local patch you have Dave! Brilliant stuff. 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 04-Apr-19 08:44 PM GMT

I don't know what the weather forecast is like over in the East Dave but in the West it looks like the cooler, wetter weather is here for a while – just in time for the two week Easter break 😞😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 05-Apr-19 06:36 AM GMT

You did well to see anything given how foul the weather's been, Dave. Let's hope we don't get stuck in another stormy pattern like we did in March.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 05-Apr-19 11:48 AM GMT

Glad somebody is seeing Butterflies, 😊 Goldie 😊😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-Apr-19 08:25 PM GMT

Cheers, Andrew – considering the rather unprepossessing location next to the airport, my patch does alright for itself! 😊

The forecast is not very encouraging, Wurzel – too much cloud really, even when it's reasonably warm. It doesn't look exactly stormy, David, just dull. 😞

Butterflies are certainly hard to come by over the last few days, Goldie, but I managed to conjure one today.

**Friday 5th April:** a bit warmer at least, but what little sun appeared was shining through a thick veil of high cloud so there was little warmth from it. I did my usual circuit, and noticed that neither the garlic mustard nor the cow parsley were flowering yet, these being the traditional roosting spots round here for Orange Tips grounded by adverse weather or the onset of evening. However, one solitary cuckoo flower plant was blooming next to the river (there is very little of this anywhere round here), and sat tightly on the top and wobbling around in the breeze was a male Orange Tip.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 06-Apr-19 03:30 PM GMT

You had more luck that I did yesterday than I did today Dave – the weather lied and said it was going to be sunny intervals all afternoon right up until the minute before I was walking out the door when it flipped to 'dark cloud cover' 😞😞 A single view of a Specklie was all I had to show for my troubles, nowhere near the reward you got with your superb OT 🍷🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 06-Apr-19 04:54 PM GMT

It's not always a bad thing to have inclement weather, as your images demonstrate, Dave.

At least you know they're not suddenly going to shoot off as you're about to click the shutter!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 08-Apr-19 11:20 PM GMT

Cheers, chaps. The weather here has remained resolutely cloudy and cool since the last post, so no more butterflies.

However, on **Sunday 7th**, I checked up on the Orange Tip: it was still hanging on to that flower head, though it had moved a bit as some of the flowers had dropped off and new buds were opening.



I managed a close-up shot or two.



On **Monday 8th**, it actually brightened a bit mid-afternoon, and just as I stopped to look again at the Orange Tip, it started to shuffle around a bit, and then tentatively opened its wings. However, its chosen spot was actually rather shaded at this time of day, and despite more sunshine and a bit of warmth, the butterfly decided enough was enough and went back to sleep. Full morning sun will no doubt re-energise it, and if we get a morning like that, it will be up and away.





Hoping for some more sunshine: one butterfly, however photogenic, is not quite enough... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 09-Apr-19 08:58 AM GMT

Cracking stuff Dave 😊 I've not had the pleasure of a roosting OT this year so my shots have all been a bit smash and grab when one finally sits still for more than 5 seconds 😊 Mind you I wouldn't have it any other way really - what would Spring be without chasing OTs 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 09-Apr-19 11:36 AM GMT

Lovely shots Dave, 📷 I keep looking but nothing yet 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by David M, 10-Apr-19 11:51 AM GMT

You made hay while the sun didn't shine with that one, didn't you, Dave? 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 11-Apr-19 10:45 AM GMT

Cheers, everyone -yes, I certainly made the most of that one butterfly! Orange Tips are hard to resist though, in the all too brief time of year when they are around.

**Wednesday 10th April.** Brilliant sunshine at last, but a very chilly morning. I decided to see if I could find any more early Dukes down at Noar Hill after Pauline's precocious sighting on 1st. There was some cloud down here to start with, but it soon disappeared, and things warmed up a bit. In nearly three hours I saw no Dukes, but there were (in order of appearance) Peacocks, Brimstones and Orange Tips, all in decent numbers. However, as I should come to anticipate really, there was an unexpected bonus. Somehow my eye was drawn to a spot of green down on the grass that was perhaps too apple-green amongst the darker shades of the vegetation. There, sitting angled to catch the most sunshine, was a fresh Green Hairstreak. Though common enough at this site, it was what seems to be an early date for them, and certainly unusual for me to find one here before seeing any Dukes.



A remarkably easy drive home saw me out on my local patch just over an hour later. I soon came across my first of three Holly Blues, initially seeking minerals on the path, but then finding these or honeydew on the leaves above.



Several Small Whites were flying, but generally above head height and not pausing for a moment. Finally, there were at least half a dozen Orange Tips – these were less energetic, and because of the generally lowish temperature I suspect, stopped to bask and/or nectar fairly regularly.



Spring resumes – though it could be a bit warmer! 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Andrew555, 11-Apr-19 11:47 AM GMT

Great selection Dave, lovely Orange-tips, I like that close up. 😊 Well done finding the Greenstreak. 😊

Cheers

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 11-Apr-19 12:01 PM GMT

Great stuff Dave, blinding Greenstreak 🌈 😊 Things are starting to get going now – so the weather will probably deteriorate again 😊 😊 Mind you if it doesn't at this rate we could be into Pearls by the end of next week, fingers crossed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 12-Apr-19 08:16 AM GMT

I see the Holly Blues are back to their usual standard, Dave. 😊

Nice Green Hairstreaks too. Always a sign that we're well into spring.

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 12-Apr-19 09:15 PM GMT

You certainly managed to get that Hairstreaks good side, that's for sure 😊. That orange-tip looks to have very prominently dark wing tips!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-Apr-19 09:35 PM GMT

I liked the close-up shot too, Andrew. These days as long-sightedness gets gradually worse, it's the only way I get to see that kind of detail! 😊 The patterning is exquisite.

Cheers, Wurzel – the Green One was a surprise, but hopefully there will soon be more in various places. Like the Orange Tips a real Spring-feeling butterfly. 😊

There are not very many Hollies this year so far, David, but they are starting to perform a wee bit. 😊

Yes, Buggy – the other side of the GH was a bit distorted, probably during its emergence, but it looked pristine from the good side. 😊 And you're right about the OT – the black seems to be very prominent.

Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-Apr-19 09:41 PM GMT

**Thursday 11th April:** a day very much like yesterday – strong sunshine, but a lowish air temperature. I spent the day locally, and managed a respectable total of 44 butterflies of ten species, including a new one for the year: a Large White. A brilliant new white male, it unfortunately was constantly on the move, especially when hassled by its smaller cousins (as happened several times). Both Small and Green-veined Whites were around, but difficult to approach closely.



*GVM male – quite a long way up*

Orange Tips were the most frequent species seen, though not a female amongst them.



a handful of Brimstones and a couple of Speckled Woods seemed to complete the set, until along a particular stretch of the riverside path where I often see them in the late afternoon at all times of the year I came across a battle-scarred Red Admiral, another victim of a bird-strike but no less aerobic for that.



The species total here is up to 11 now: very respectable, but it'll probably be a little while before I add to it.

Dave



### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 12-Apr-19 10:56 PM GMT

I'm in agreement about the Peacocks Dave – they've been about in really good numbers this year 😊 unlike the Red Admiral – I've only seen one definite so far this year 🙄 Your one looks pretty battle hardened but they do wear the scars well 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 13-Apr-19 08:31 AM GMT

Double figure species at last, Dave! Things are moving on and hopefully when the warmer weather arrives next week we'll start seeing good numbers.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Apr-19 03:38 PM GMT

Not much slows down a Red Admiral, Wurzel, they are nearly as reckless at chasing things as a Purple Emperor. 😊

The Easter weekend does look good, David – I shall be in York, so we'll see what can be found up there.

**Monday 15th April:** I was down near the Sussex coast today anyway, so managed to fit in a side trip to Mill Hill for about an hour or so. Though sunny, there was a stiff breeze and it became very hazy: however, in the shelter at the bottom of the slope, I briefly tracked down a Grizzled Skipper.



There were a few Brimstones and Peacocks, plus an anonymous white and a couple of Speckled Woods. I also bumped into Benjamin, continuing his surveys of Adonis caterpillars (of which there are good numbers as might be expected at this site).

I was home in time for a quick wander round my local patch in the late afternoon sunshine. I soon found a Red Admiral, in better condition than the one a few days ago.



It may have used the underpass, of course, which is what I did... 😊  
Finally, I came across a Speckled Wood, taking the opportunity for a late basking session.



I saw several Brown Argus laying here last summer, as well as elsewhere, so hopefully there will again be good numbers in 2019.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by CallumMac, 16-Apr-19 04:34 PM GMT

Great to see that the Grizzled Skippers are starting to get going – I think I'm going to make an effort to catch up with them this year. And with that Comma, a really nice demonstration of how we are probably guilty of underestimating the dispersal abilities of butterflies. Researchers go to some effort to get "mark-release-recapture" data like that! 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-19 10:46 PM GMT

I know what you mean about the Red Admiral Dave they can just go and go 😊 I was out on Monday as well and it was very hard work with that biting wind – you did well to get a Grizzlie in it 😊 I got two for my troubles but I did cheat – finding them in the shelter of the rings of a hillfort 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 17-Apr-19 06:44 AM GMT

Nice work, Dave. There's a good range of species about right now, although I expect the adult overwinterers to be on the wane very soon.

The Easter weekend should give us all the chance to see a few before they disappear, as well as some of the newly emerged species.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-Apr-19 08:42 PM GMT

More Grizzlies today, Callum – well worth finding some I'd say. 😊

Much more pleasant conditions to see them today as well, Wurzel– no need for the shelter of ancient ramparts! 😊

Numbers seem to increase every day now David, including new Commas I haven't seen before on my local patch. Some are definitely still waking up, but by this time next week I reckon they'll all be out. It's a terrific forecast right now. 😊

**Wednesday 17th April:** A full-on expedition today, with the advent of proper warm sunshine at last. I started at Noar Hill again, and soon encountered Brimstones and Orange Tips stretching, yawning and enjoying breakfast.



I then found the male again – I hope he encountered the female later in the day.



Next stop would be Denbies – a separate post.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-Apr-19 09:26 PM GMT

17th April (continued)

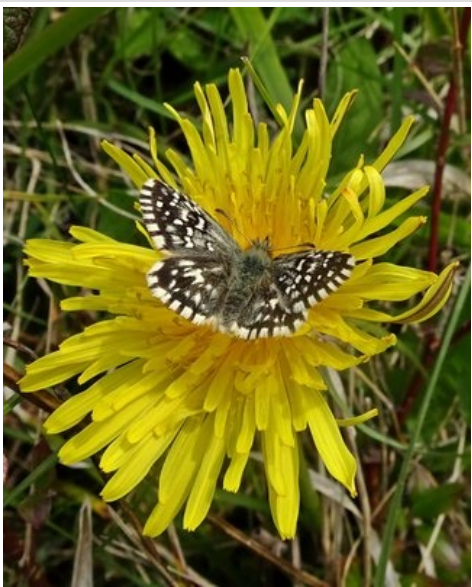
So – over to Denbies, where it appears I somehow missed seeing Lee Hurrell. A shame not to have bumped into you again, Lee! 😊

I headed down the right-hand edge of Steers Field, along the hedge, and just before the bottom saw a flash of orange cross my path. A new Small Copper! It soon made for that ever-popular spring nectar source – the nearest dandelion.





From here I set off across the hillside, returning along the bottom of the slope. I soon came across a series of fresh Grizzled Skippers, probably five or six in all.





I hoped for a definite sighting of a Dingy Skipper too, but (unlike Lee!) had to make do with a "possible" near the top of the slope later on. Also seen: Orange Tips, Brimstones, Peacocks and a Speckled Wood.

I returned home in time for a quick look at my local patch in the late afternoon hazy sunshine – another post I think.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-Apr-19 10:02 PM GMT

17th April (concluded):

After four, but still very warm (noticeably warmer here than down at Denbies), with very hazy sunshine. My walk around my local patch took me to a point I have always called Comma Corner – today it lived up to its name, as there were at least four individuals basking and tussling with each other and a similar number of Peacocks. Throw in a few Orange Tips and whites, plus an excitable Speckled Wood and it was quite a sight. One Orange Tip kept out of the kerfuffle, quietly nectaring in the shade.





Leaving the excitement behind, I came upon a Red Admiral sunning itself on the path.



Quite a day. Two new species for the year for me and a terrific selection seen over the day. With the current forecast showing at least a week of warm sunshine (in the south at least), we appear to have a really good spell ahead.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by bugboy, 17-Apr-19 10:23 PM GMT

That was a good day Dave, wish I could have joined you but other commitments kept me at work but you'll be pleased to know if you need someone to climb a ladder, I'm your man 😊😄!

**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 18-Apr-19 08:41 AM GMT

That was some expedition yesterday, Dave. A Duke already! 🇬🇧  
Added to that a couple of great Green Hairstreak shots.  
Around here too, yesterday was the grand wake up day.

Classic stuff.  
Trevor.

**Re: millerd**

by Andrew555, 18-Apr-19 02:16 PM GMT

What a fantastic day Dave! That female Duke is indeed beautiful, and I love your dueling Comma's. 🇬🇧🇬🇧

Cheers

**Re: millerd**

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Apr-19 08:59 PM GMT



**millerd wrote:**  
17th April (continued)

So – over to Denbies, where it appears I somehow missed seeing Lee Hurrell. A shame not to have bumped into you again, Lee! 😞

What a shame to have missed you, Dave! I'll see you for Marsh Frits 😊

Lovely photos by the way. With regard to Green Hairstreaks, do you mean the steps that lead down to the woodland in the middle of the hillside – is that is the best spot?

Best wishes,  
Lee

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 18-Apr-19 10:16 PM GMT

That was a hell of a day Dave 😁😁 That Duchess is a stunner 🍷🍷 It may have been warm enough but I still got back to the Ramparts 😊  
I'll keep my eyes open for signs of Marshies and give you and Lee the heads up 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 19-Apr-19 07:04 AM GMT

Breathless stuff, Dave. You've pretty much covered everything that's about...and with 4 glorious days to follow!

### Re: millerd

by kevlng, 19-Apr-19 09:58 AM GMT

David, What a lovely collection of photos this week. If that doesn't fill us all with excitement for the weekend ahead, nothing will. Love the Orange Tip and Grizzlie photos and also the duelling Comma's.

Kind Regards  
Kev

### Re: millerd

by ernie f, 20-Apr-19 07:39 AM GMT

Dave

Well it looks as though you have seen and pictured all the early spring butterflies!

But from the last few weeks, my favourite pic of yours was the airborne "fighting" Commas at "Comma Corner". It gives a hint of the excitement of seeing such butterfly behaviour without actually being there.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Apr-19 04:07 PM GMT

Many thanks to all of you for the great comments 😊 – it was a particularly good day, and I did have to make the most of it as the next few days were to be spent further north without too many similar opportunities for such variety. However, the extraordinarily good weather was a bonus, and wherever I went there were Peacocks, Brimstones and Orange Tips – and a few other things besides.

I was staying for the Easter weekend with my sister in Wilberfoss, and the semi-wild nature of part of her garden meant that butterflies constantly passed through it. Orange Tips and Holly Blues were probably the most frequent visitors, with Peacocks, Brimstones, Speckled Woods, Small and GV Whites, and Small Tortoiseshells all stopping at some point or another. One Holly Blue was the first definite female I've seen this year, and obligingly opened up while nectaring on a currant flower.



A male Orange Tip stopped on an Honesty plant, which had already been visited by at least one female – there were three eggs altogether on different flower spikes.



The following day, I popped into Calley Heath. The standout feature was that this sandy heathland area was incredibly dry – it looked no different to its appearance last August. Even the damp and boggy bits seemed dried up. Again, Peacocks were everywhere, and did seem to be popping up from the various rabbit holes that pepper the ground. However, the high point was the appearance of a single Small Copper – the vanguard of this ever-reliable colony.



Back to the garden again, and while generally surveying the more overgrown area I spotted a Small Tortoiseshell skimming some low-growing nettles.





All in all, a good weekend – there is always something of interest to see, wherever you are. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 24-Apr-19 04:37 PM GMT

Interesting that your Small Tort kept her wings open whilst laying, normally close them to stay hidden whilst in that vulnerable situation 😊. Your moth is that ever reliable Dingy imposter, the Burnet Companion 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Apr-19 08:56 PM GMT

That's the first time I've ever come across a Small Tortoiseshell in the act of laying, Buggy, so I didn't realise the posture was unusual. My sister has undertaken to keep an eye on the eggs and not dig up the nettles too!

I should have realised what the moth was – I've seen them often enough! 😊 Perhaps a bit early, like everything else.

Home again, and **Tuesday 23rd April** brought much hazier sunshine, though it remained warm. The weekend of heat and sun had clearly brought many more butterflies out, and I reached my highest counts of the year so far: 121 individuals of 11 species. The tally was led by Holly Blues, which seem to have emerged in numbers – no less than 31 seen today.



plus only two Commas.



Last in the list were a couple of Speckled Woods, and a bright new-looking Red Admiral, which settled for half a second before dashing off.

Always good to be home! 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Allan.W., 24-Apr-19 09:27 PM GMT

Excellent flight shots of the Orange-Tips ,Dave. Seen very few myself this year ,and my one really reliable site with (normally !) a mass of Cuckoo flower ,has been stripped by the sheep ! Oh Well !  
Regards Allan.W.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 24-Apr-19 11:05 PM GMT

Those are brilliant flight shots Dave 😊😊 Great news about the Small Torts and lovely photos of the Green-veined White 😊 Going back to the egg laying Small Tort; that's the posture that the ones I've seen egg laying adopted? 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 25-Apr-19 06:41 AM GMT

Your sequence of a female Orange Tip rejecting the male's advances is priceless!.  
I've seen this behaviour myself, but never captured the action.

Great ' frozen ' shots, Dave.  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 25-Apr-19 08:59 AM GMT

Great shots of every thing Dave but my favourite has got to be the Orange Tip on the seed head of the Dandelion 😊 What a shot!!! Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 25-Apr-19 12:49 PM GMT

Your patch definitely knocks spots of mine Dave. Only had one fleeting glimpse of a Holly Blue so far and I don't think I've got close to double figures of any one species yet this year!

### Re: millerd

by David M, 26-Apr-19 09:15 PM GMT

13 Small Tortoiseshells is more than I've seen all year, Dave, and this in an area of Britain that's supposed to be good for them!

Nice to see you've got to grips with your Holly Blues too; I expect plenty more before their spring flight period is over.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-Apr-19 12:00 PM GMT

Thank you once again, everyone. 😊 The Orange Tips are as ever a delight at the moment, and there are some more bits of behaviour to come...

I was quite surprised to see so many Small Tortoiseshells. Early in the season they seem to appear much nearer home, generally just nectaring on the dandelions ( I have a theory about the first sunny Sunday of spring: this is when a lot of garden sheds get opened for the first time and out come the hibernating Tortoiseshells... 😊 ). However, they must then disperse, and a lot seem to have ended up in this wild expanse between the River Colne and the M25.

Overall it's a very fruitful patch, Buggy – nothing too unusual, but generally good numbers of everything there is. 😊

I stayed local for the next three days, as the weather forecast was not too promising. However, the advertised mix of sunshine and showers eventually leant more towards the former, with virtually no rain to speak of. On the morning of **24th April**, I saw only Holly Blues (11) and Orange Tips (5), before the hazy sunshine succumbed to cloud.



I also found some Orange Tip eggs on one of the few cuckoo flower plants around here.



**Thursday 25th April** was a better day, with sunshine and cloud alternating – good in that the butterflies frequently stopped, but not so good in that the light was constantly changing and making photography rather more challenging. The same two species predominated, but there were now more GVW and Small Whites. I also saw three Red Admirals today, all looking new, and none stopping long enough for a photo – immigrants or new hatchlings? Either is possible.

Two male GVW posed together – why they were not squabbling with each other I don't know.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-Apr-19 12:18 PM GMT

**Friday 26th April** demonstrated the versatility of the Holly Blue. It was breezy, it was again alternately sunny and cloudy with a spot or two of rain, but this butterfly was flying continuously through it all, and even greater numbers – I counted over 30 today.



...and one of two Speckled Woods seen today



Dave

### Re: millerd

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

Lovely shots of all the Butterflies Dave, but the Holly Blue ones are exceptional 🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 27-Apr-19 01:04 PM GMT

Fantastic array of shots again Dave 😊 I was hoping to find a pair of OTs in cop this year but so far haven't been lucky 🍷🍷 Love the "sexual dimorphism comparison" shot 😊🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 27-Apr-19 08:29 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

....I have a theory about the first sunny Sunday of spring: this is when a lot of garden sheds get opened for the first time and out come the hibernating Tortoiseshells...

You may have something with that theory, Dave. They DO seem to appear in greater concentrations early in the spring. Perhaps the nearest dandelion/celandine patch to an estate full of garden sheds is the reason! 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 28-Apr-19 03:07 PM GMT

I forgot to say that I was looking at your Holly Blue with the funny marks and if the hind and fore wings were orientated slightly differently the marks would form a triangle so are they an unsuccessful bird strike?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Andrew555, 29-Apr-19 11:55 AM GMT

Love the side by side shots of the OT's Dave, and the GVV's. 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-Apr-19 02:20 PM GMT



Cheers, everyone – the Orange Tips have been putting on a particularly good show this year, and the mix of sun and cloud really helps in getting close to them. I was pleased with the side-by-side shots in particular – almost text-book stuff. 😊

Thank you for the support for the "garden shed" theory, David – it would make an interesting study for anyone sufficiently interested. PhD, anyone? 😊

You could be right about that Holly Blue, Wurzel. I did see the other side of the butterfly (it was unmarked) but not the top of the wings. It may have been snapped by a bird on one side only, and not sufficiently hard to pierce the wings – hence the mark, but no actual damage. Tough little things, aren't they? 😊

Saturday was dismal – not even worth going out. **Sunday 28th April** was better, but not very warm and with very little sun. Nevertheless, a few Orange Tips were around, including this rather dopey female.



The latter will no doubt hatch first and the caterpillar is likely to set about eating the other one apparently, which is why they are not normally laid close together like this.

One or two GVW appeared as well every time the sun did.



However, it was not really good enough for the Holly Blues, which by and large remained roosting amongst the brambles and ivy, and also in a rather large buddleia bush which catches the morning sunshine. As I've noticed before they like to roost in company, and several were seen together in pairs.



*this one had found something to slurp at on the leaf*





I was also able to get a shot of a rather splendid queen wasp – normally I see these desperately trying to escape the house, or scratching away at garden fences and furniture making the paper for their nests.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Allan.W., 29-Apr-19 05:10 PM GMT

I think its a Hornet ,Dave . Regards Allan.W.

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 29-Apr-19 06:36 PM GMT

Good to see your local Patch performing well, Dave, even in adverse weather. There is certainly a good selection of species there. I doubt you'll find a Small Tortoiseshell around here.

Great images of the Orange Tip pair.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-Apr-19 11:32 PM GMT

I did wonder about that, Allan – looking online for pictures of wasps and hornets has confused me further as an almost identical beast is identified as a queen wasp, but the hornet pictures are similar too. One rule of thumb quoted was that hornets are yellow and brown rather than yellow and black. My beastie is a bit of both... 😊 It was certainly very docile, which is not very waspish behaviour.

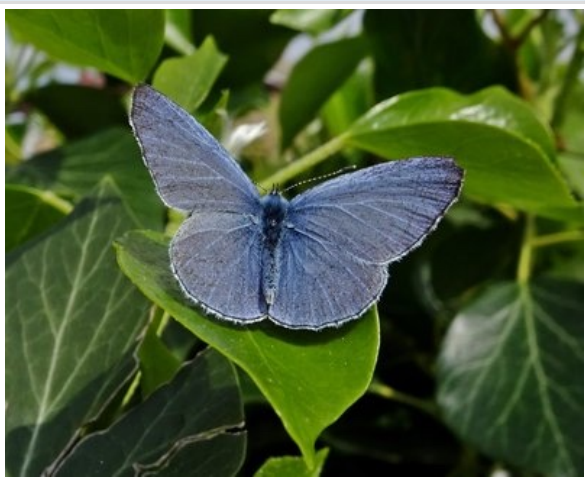
Cheers, Trevor – yes, it's a great spot I seem to have, and despite more unpromising weather some late afternoon sun worked wonders again.

**Monday 29th April:** the sun that appeared briefly first thing this morning then stayed away until after four. Its appearance tempted me out of course, and the timing was perfect – the nearest part of my patch was full of Holly Blues waking up and making the most of the sunshine. There were no brand new ones amongst them, and the females were much less evident (the males could find them far better than I could) but they put on a great display.





*There are three in this shot - female to the left and two males on the right*







I dragged myself away to wander further afield – there were a few more Hollies about (I counted 16 altogether), as well as Orange Tips, both Small and Green-veined Whites, a Red Admiral, a Comma and a Speckled Wood. However, the highlight of the outing, despite the display of blue splendour, was a newly-emerged Small Copper. I was lucky to spot it sitting on a tangle of dry old stems, but a burst of sun made it open up to reveal its burnished wings – with a hint of blue spots as well. The first one I've seen here this year, and the first one here in April for about ten years.





*Still a bit sluggish*

Another unexpectedly good day. 😊

Dave



### Re: millerd

by trevor, 30-Apr-19 02:01 PM GMT

Just what one would expect from ' Mr Holly Blue '. What great shots!  
You should have seen the Holly Blues flying at High and Over this morning,  
I would stop just short of calling it a swarm.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-Apr-19 07:09 PM GMT

My Mr Greens runneth over Dave 🍷🍷🍷🍷 Seriously I reckon you must have gone down to the crossroads at midnight... 😊😄 The Bentley Pearls are out, I saw 5 last night with very little effort just thought you'd like to know 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 01-May-19 08:38 AM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

...the sun that appeared briefly first thing this morning then stayed away until after four.

Highly irritating when that happens, Dave. 😞

Still, as you've shown, these conditions can allow you to observe butterflies in a more torpid state. Nice to see you getting back to grips with Holly Blues.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 01-May-19 11:19 PM GMT

Thank you all - yes, the Hollies are performing nicely at the moment. Any hint of sunshine and they are up and about.

Good to hear the Pearls are out at Bentley, Wurzel. I do hope to fit a trip in soon, but I did see one or two yesterday down at Rewell Wood, as you'll see soon. 😊😄

Likewise High & Over, Trevor. I did manage a Wall or two at Mill Hill yesterday, but it's not anywhere as good as H & O.

**Tuesday 30th April.** A good weather forecast which was spot-on accurate. I decided to do one of my multi-site tours to make the most of it before the icy blast forecast for the weekend. I also needed to catch up with a few species that are out that I haven't seen yet this year.

First stop was Denbies. It was still a bit chilly when I arrived, but despite this, along the hedge on the right of Steers Field I found half a dozen Small Coppers ranging from the brand new to quite world-weary.





Returning to the steps, I found the Hairstreaks had now appeared and were already chasing each other madly, but adopting their sun-catching posture in between.



Next stop would be Mill Hill in Sussex...

Dave

### **Re: millerd**

by millerd, 01-May-19 11:38 PM GMT

**30th April** – part two: Mill Hill

As I wandered down from the car park via the mix of open areas and scrubby woodland at the top of the hillside, I became aware that there were Green Hairstreaks on many of the trees, and a few down on the grass as well. I counted at least ten on the way down to the main slopes.



One more new species for the year (four so far today altogether), and one more place to visit. Onwards to Rewell Wood for the late afternoon.

Dave

### Re: millerd

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

Lovely set of Butterflies Dave, 🍄🍄 I think they're hiding a round here 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 02-May-19 02:09 PM GMT

A cracking set of shots Dave – though I was expecting a few Pearls in there – yo're just toying with us now 😊😊 Isn't there an aberrant Grizzlie that is half way between ab. Taras and the 'type' – your one looks like a good candidate for this? 😊 Maybe see you in Bentley soon... 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 02-May-19 09:44 PM GMT

That's an interestingly marked Grizzled Skipper, Dave. Very unusual. Nice to see the first Small Heaths emerging too, as well as the Dingies. Two species that often get overlooked.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 02-May-19 10:52 PM GMT

Thank you, Goldie – they seem to respond to the slightest bit of sunshine at the moment. 😊

I wonder if that Grizzlie variation has a name, Wurzel? It does look a bit odd. Working out when to do a few future excursions – the weather for the next few days looks decidedly iffy, though. 😊

Yes, David – both species, especially the Dingies, have lots of subtle variation in their patterning. And there's always the chance of that elusive Small Heath upperside shot... 😊

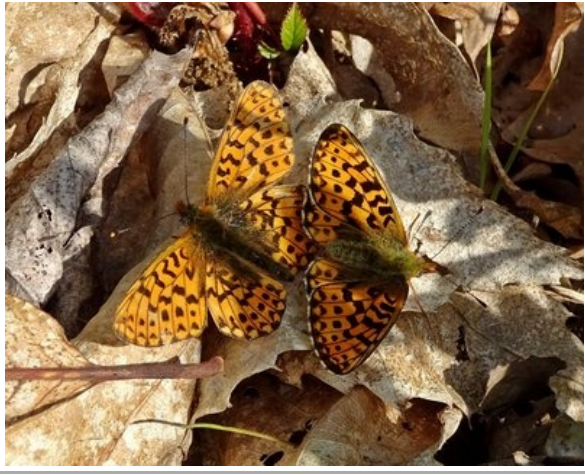
**30th April** – part three: Rewell Wood.

This is a spot I hadn't visited for several years, and it seemed like a great way to finish off the day. I was right – all the descriptions Neil H has posted were completely accurate and more. The Pearls were out in greater numbers than I have ever seen them anywhere. I reached them not long before they began to settle down to nectar and bask a bit before going to roost, almost the ideal time. A fellow enthusiast pointed out a freshly emerged female, and reckoned it was a matter of minutes before a male found and mated her.



There was a lot of other courtship behaviour which came to nothing as presumably the females had already been mated.





There was a good mix of older and newer butterflies, and in amongst them several somewhat aberrant individuals with heavier black markings.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 03-May-19 06:57 AM GMT

Very much enjoyed your Pearl fest, Dave. It was also a great idea to visit Rewell whilst in Sussex. I have only made one fleeting visit to Rewell Wood, but with Abbots just down the road I get my Pearl fix there. On my recent visit numbers were low compared to Rewell.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 03-May-19 09:28 AM GMT

Fantastic stuff Dave 😊 Really envious of the mating pair – still something that has eluded me 🙄🙄 I'm hoping that this weekend they'll still be out in cooler conditions and maybe just not as flighty 😊 Finger crossed...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Andrew555, 03-May-19 10:26 AM GMT

Beautiful sights Dave. 😊

#### Wurzel wrote:

I'm hoping that this weekend they'll still be out in cooler conditions and maybe just not as flighty 😊 Finger crossed.

You echo my sentiments as well Wurzel! 😊

Cheers

### Re: millerd

by Allan.W., 03-May-19 12:51 PM GMT

Terrific series of Pearl shots Dave ! For me your Grizzle is a bit of an " inbetweenee " Ab; Scabellata has the two lowest spots on the forewing joined together to form a line (which yours has ) but yours also has a much enlarged spot above it ! For me its as you say between the norm and Taras ..... so maybe AB; Intermedia . And also as you say ,they are very variable.....Nice find !.

Regards Allan.W.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-May-19 01:22 PM GMT

The Pearls are terrific, aren't they? 😊 It was well worth the detour on the way back to take in Rewell Wood. Though it's a bit of a trek from parking at Fairmile Bottom, with a short steep climb to start with, the scenery along the path through the bluebell woods is a delight in itself. It was just under half

an hour's drive from Mill Hill to Fairmile Bottom, despite the crawl along the A27 around the back of Worthing. I think another go might be in order – I can see why it's actually a fair way for you though Trevor, and that with Abbots Wood within walking distance you can stay close to home. 😊 Thanks for the info on the Grizzlie, Allan – interesting... 😊

I reckon they'll be flying at Bentley if the sun shines, Wurzel and Andrew – far more important than the actual air temperature. Down near the ground it'll be much warmer, so there should be a bit of basking going on! 😊

Back on home turf on **Wednesday 1st May**, and it remained pretty warm, despite only very hazy sunshine. I thought I'd go over to Bedfont Lakes Country Park to see if Green Hairstreaks had appeared – one of the few colonies in Middlesex, and pretty reliable though in small numbers. The two sections of the Park lie to north and south of the Waterloo – Reading/Windsor railway line, with no connection between the two (except as the butterfly flutters, of course 😊). I started off at the quieter southern part, which has the railway to the north, an industrial estate on one side and the Feltham Young Offenders establishment on the other. It is not signposted, the entrance gate is easily overlooked and parking is by the roadside. However, once inside, it is a quiet and very pleasant location.

I spotted my first Green Hairstreak immediately inside the entrance (in fact the second gate you go through), down on the grass where there are trefoil plants growing.



After that initial success, I had to walk to the path bordering the railway to find another, and it was a friendly Holly Blue that actually disturbed it.



This pattern was repeated a bit further on on the far side of the lake, where another Holly Blue became involved in a tussle in the trees between two more Hairstreaks.



Finally, returning nearly to the start, I found another three squabbling in the mixed shrubbery.



Seven is the highest total I have ever found here. Also seen: 8 Speckled Woods, a couple of Peacocks, and 9 of those helpful Holly Blues.







I drive round the relatively short distance to one of the car parks for the northern part of the Park. After an annoying interaction with some unrestrained dogs (another owner who seemed to think the bye-laws didn't apply to her), I soon found two more Green Hairstreaks along the path on the northern side of the railway.



I'm guessing the populations do move between the two bits of the park, the railway not representing a barrier to them. The sun had largely disappeared by this time, and aside from these two butterflies, one Holly Blue, four GVW and another couple of Peacocks were all I could find.

The closest Green Hairstreaks to home, and good to see them apparently doing well. They appear to be widely spread throughout this bit of habitat too, rather than concentrated in one spot.

Unexpectedly, the sun returned in the late afternoon, so I had to fit in a trip around my local patch too. A very good idea that turned out to be – amongst nearly 50 butterflies seen altogether were my first two Brown Argus of the year. I was pleasantly surprised, having seen none at either Denbies or Mill Hill the previous day. Only one presented itself for the camera – the other was smaller and shyer, with much smaller orange–red spots on the upperside.



I also found another Small Copper (not the same one as a couple of days before)...



and one or two Holly Blues – well, 23 in fact... 😊

Once again, a good day – always worth venturing out. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 03-May-19 07:46 PM GMT

A fantastic selection of species in you recent trips Dave. I am extremely jealous of what you (and others) have seen this week while I have been stuck in work.

I know I shouldn't be wishing my life away but oh for the joys of early retirement, just a couple of years for me now when I plan to retire at 60.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by essexbuzzard, 03-May-19 10:15 PM GMT

Your Grizzled Skippers I think is called Intermedia.

Good to see you made it to Rewel, where PBF numbers are still increasing daily!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-May-19 11:32 PM GMT

Cheers, Neil – I know you shouldn't wish your life away until retirement, but it is very liberating when you get there. 😊

Thank you for the confirmation on the Grizzlie ab, Mark. And everyone should visit Rewell if they have the chance – just walking through the woodland is a pleasure in itself, not to mention the spectacle of glowing golden butterflies all over the place. Brilliant. 😊

**Thursday 2nd May** brought a bit of a change in the weather, cooler and cloudier, though a couple of sunnier spells made it worth going out onto my local patch. I followed the Brown Argus sightings of the 1st with another two today – a mating pair.



However, Holly Blues (17)...



and singletons of Small White, Speckled Wood, Brimstone and Peacock.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by bugboy, 04-May-19 06:31 AM GMT

Just catching up on your epic 3 site trip. The highlight is definitely those Pearls. Everyone involved in that reintroduction must rightly feel a huge sense of pride 😊

**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 04-May-19 07:34 AM GMT

It's your Green one(s) that deserve a mrgreen 🟢, lovely specimens, well captured, not easy to do. As for the Brown Argus, aren't they gorgeous when fresh, dark chocolate, bright orange spots with white wing fringe.

Well done with the mating pair.  
Trevor.

**Re: millerd**

by keving, 04-May-19 08:33 AM GMT

Dave, A lovely diary for last week and great pictures. I'm a little envious of those mating PBF, how beautiful. I was planning the long trek from Ipswich this weekend, but the weather does not look like that will happen now 😞

Kind Regards  
Kev

**Re: millerd**

by Goldie M, 04-May-19 09:00 AM GMT

Dave I love the the Pearls, that shot of the Green Veined White though is lovely, very Spring like 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: millerd**

by David M, 04-May-19 03:33 PM GMT

You've been so busy lately that I can scarcely keep up, Dave. 😊

There seems to be plenty going on round your way. Well done with the mating PBFs, and nice to see a female Holly Blue image (I keep trying but all the ones I see are males).

Nice too to know that Small Heaths are emerging. Must keep my eye out for them here in south Wales.

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 05-May-19 08:07 AM GMT

You were spot on about the weather/butterflies Dave cracking it was and finally got a pair in cop 😊 Also glad that Essex was able to ID the ab as I got on just like it 😊 Twenty three ( I had to write it as the digits don't do justice) Holly Blues 😊😊 and then 17 I know we joke about you being the HB Whisperer but are you now wearing black and white and playing a pipe - you must be bringing them in from everywhere 😊😊  
Looking forward to reading your next set of reports 😊  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 06-May-19 04:37 PM GMT

Once again, thanks to all of you for the great comments - it was a good week one way and another. 😊

Those Holly Blue figures are quite modest, Wurzel - the peak day count this year so far has been 34... 😊

After a good week, a rather anticlimactic weekend. Almost entirely cloudy on **Friday 3rd May**, though not too cold. A bit of brightness stirred an Orange Tip (but not for long), and I did see both a Small White and a Green-veined White.



**Saturday 4th May** was much colder, but between hefty showers there was bright sunshine and I managed a reasonable local walk without getting wet. The Holly Blues once again responded (I saw 17 altogether), and the cool air and bright sunshine was a good combination for them to open their wings. It became apparent that there are still new individuals emerging.







I also chanced upon a Small Copper, plus a few Orange Tips and GW.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 06-May-19 04:50 PM GMT

On **Sunday 5th May**, it looked quite reasonable early on, and I set off hopefully at around half ten with temperatures nudging 12 degrees in some sunshine. I headed up to Totternhoe near Dunstable for a walk around this area of old chalk workings. However, by the time I had arrived, cloud had spread in from the north and it was only 9 degrees. I saw absolutely nothing in the way of insect life at all, and only the brisk walk kept me warm. 😞 Returning home, at around half four a patch of blue sky appeared to be approaching, so I headed off onto my local patch. There was virtually nothing flying here either, though I did spot a GVW up in the trees, and a single Speckled Wood in a patch of sunlight. However, my arrival in the main open area near the motorway coincided with a particularly strong burst of sun, and before long I succeeded in finding two Brown Argus, one male and one female. Whether these two are the mating pair from a few days earlier, I can't be sure, but there were several bouts of courtship behaviour which led nowhere.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 06-May-19 07:57 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Brown Arguses Dave 😊 When the two are together like that I wouldn't know which one to look at first 😊 a nice problem to have 😊 Love the final shot most of all that's one that I don't think I age in my collection 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Ps Marshies are out at Martin Down 😊

### Re: millerd



by David M, 06-May-19 10:34 PM GMT

What a stunning female Brown Argus, Dave. Absolutely mint with gorgeous, well-pronounced orange lunules.

Nice to see you're back in business with your Holly Blues too. Mine are starting to look rather worn. 😞

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 07-May-19 07:49 AM GMT

Beautiful Brown Argus shots, Dave. Is there a finer small butterfly when fresh. I will never forget my one a only visit to Toternhoe. We found a colony of Small Blues which took a liking for my shoes, they followed me as I walked and landed on them when I stopped. I think there is a shot of this early in my diary. Bizarre!. There was no Tesco Tuna on them either 😞.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 07-May-19 06:49 PM GMT

Cracking Holly Blues as usual Dave but for once I think they have been outshone by that Brown Argus couple. Lovely fresh examples and I love that final underside shot 📷 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 07-May-19 09:42 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel – yes, it was difficult to know which way to point the camera, though the butterflies solved that by getting together in the same shot... 😊 I thought you'd like the backlit shot – once down on the ground behind it I was there for a while so made the most of the forced opportunity. 😊

They were both lovely fresh butterflies, David, beautifully marked. I was surprised by the fresh Holly Blues as well – I did think they had pretty well stopped emerging, but on they go. I shan't complain. 😊

Thank you, Trevor – you're right, a fresh Brown Argus is hard to beat. I hope my next visit to Totternhoe will have Small Blues in it – I have seen them in sizeable numbers there before, and they can be very approachable.

Thanks, Neil – I have to agree that those Brown Argus did trump the Hollies on the day, even though the latter were doing their best to impress me! 😊

**Monday 6th May** was cold and grey almost all day, with only a hint of brightness late afternoon. I saw one Orange Tip flying feebly up into the hawthorns, and tracked down a roosting Brown Argus, probably the male from yesterday's pair.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 07-May-19 10:23 PM GMT

**Tuesday 7th May** was a better prospect. The early sunshine looked as if it would stay around longer, and it wasn't as cold. I headed for Denbies, being perhaps the closest of the really good sites within reach of here, and following Susie's report of yesterday.

As ever, Small Coppers greeted me as I walked down the edge of Steers Field, and today they were tussling with a couple of Dingy Skippers and a Common Blue.



Green Hairstreaks were also to be seen regularly, with several hotspots other than the usual one by the steps: females were also down in the grass almost anywhere.





*unusual to see two so close together: showing off the colour variation, not entirely down to the angle of the light.*

Also fairly ubiquitous were Small Heaths. Grizzled Skippers were fewer in number than last week, and looking rather worn now, but still fairly common along the bottom of the slope. Finally, there were the Blues: a handful of Common Blues were around, again mostly along the bottom of the hillside:





However, the Adonis were also out (my first this year), encountered slightly more often than the Common Blues, and more widespread.





*there were a number with slight wing defects like this one*





Numbers of both should build as the weather improves. There was one curious sighting: As I lined up a shot of another Adonis, I became aware that it was not alone. Crawling up behind it from the grass was a Grizzled Skipper, which carried on until it was also mostly in the sun, but somehow not shading the larger butterfly. They stayed like this for a while – a very unusual juxtaposition.





Also seen was this unusual green-bodied spider, which was lurking in one of the bushes frequented by the Green Hairstreaks – it certainly appeared to have consumed a few, judging by its colour...



A much better day again. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 07-May-19 11:01 PM GMT

The Adonis aren't quite ready over this neck of the woods yet Dave but yours have really whetted my appetite for them 🤤🍷🍷 What is going on with

that Grizzlie? In the first shot the way its holding its abdomen it almost looks like it's trying to either mate or repel the advances of the Adonis? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 08-May-19 09:58 PM GMT

Looks like I picked the right week to take off, another trip to Denbies beckons for the weekend me thinks! Light winds, sunny spells and mid teens temperatures if the forecast is to be believed, perfect conditions!

### Re: millerd

by David M, 09-May-19 07:26 PM GMT

Great to know Adonis Blues are starting to emerge, Dave. Right now is the start of the 'small butterfly' season, with the likes of Common/Adonis Blue, Dingy Skipper, Small Heath, etc, taking the place of the vanessids and Whites. Times are a changing...

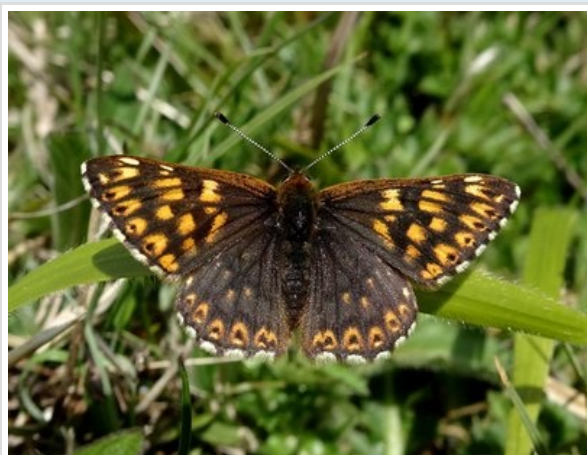
### Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-May-19 11:47 PM GMT

The next few days of sunshine and warmer temperatures should really bring a few things out in a big way – choosing where to go will be the problem! I could well be headed down your way, Wurzel – apart from anything, the west is more favoured with the sun this time it seems.

Definitely a good week to take some leave, Buggy... 😊

**Friday 10th May.** After three dismal, cold and often wet days, today looked a better bet. I thought I might try Chiddingfold for possible Wood Whites, but the signs flashed up on the M25 that the A3 was closed south of Guildford, rather scuppering that idea. I diverted down the M3 and then across to Noar Hill instead. By the time I got there, there was a lot more cloud, but enough sunshine and brightness persisted to allow the Dukes to fly. I probably saw ten or so in various spots, plus a few Dingy Skippers, a couple of Small Heaths and two Green Hairstreaks.









Dave

### Re: millerd

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

Fantastic Dukes and Duchesses Dave and great to see that they're still going strong. I visited Noar Hill about a 3 weeks ago and there were similar numbers there then so this is a really productive site 😊 I did a recce for you to Martin Down today 😊 Small, Adonis, Common Blues as well as all the usual suspects along with 14 Marsh Frits so if you do come over this way you should have a cracking time 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 11-May-19 10:50 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel - thank you for the reconnaissance! You've pretty well made my mind up now... 😊

**Saturday 11th May:** A tour of my local patch first, dodging showers (or nearly - only one soaking though 😊). 48 butterflies of eight species seen:

Holly Blue 18

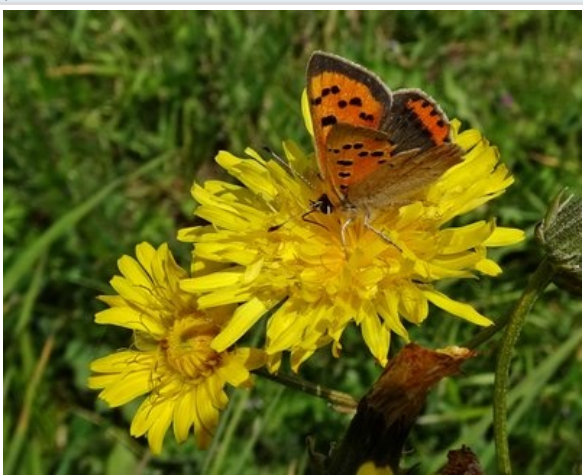




Small Heath 9



GVW 5  
Small White 3  
Speckled Wood 2



Orange Tip 1

Good to see the numbers of Brown Argus and Small Heath building, though strange that they haven't been joined yet by a single Common Blue.

As the day wore on, the blue sky increased so I decided to head for Chiddingfold as I had originally planned to do yesterday. The Wood Whites were out, and from their condition some had been around for several days. I saw over a dozen, but aside from a similar number of Brimstones and a couple of GVW, there was nothing else.



Dave



### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 11-May-19 11:18 PM GMT

Fantastic Wood White shots Dave 🍷 I'll probably have to wait or the 2nd brood unfortunately. The first one looks really 'smokey' I can't recall seeing one that had that much black scaling on it 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 12-May-19 07:45 AM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

Good to see the numbers of Brown Argus and Small Heath building, though strange that they haven't been joined yet by a single Common Blue.

I've been puzzled about that too, Dave. Although I saw a single specimen last weekend, I was surprised not to see any at all yesterday at the site where I saw my first Brown Argus on 18th April! Surely they must come to the party very soon?

### Re: millerd

by kevlings, 12-May-19 08:40 AM GMT

Dave,

Some nice photos this week. I particularly love the super fresh Brown Argus, beautiful. Glad you got close to a Small Heath too. They are not easy to photograph at close quarters.

Regards  
Kev

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 12-May-19 05:49 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Dave, Love the Duke shots 🍷 and the Green Hair Streaks shots are Brill 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-May-19 08:56 PM GMT

Thanks, Wurzel – yes, that is a very dark individual. Though the first brood have darker undersides than the second (and more black on the upperside too), that one seems extreme.

I hope the Common Blues appear soon, David. I've not seen many yet anywhere to be honest.

Cheers, Kev. The Brown Argus are a delight at the moment, and it's still early days for them. Hopefully there will be more shortly. I tracked that Small Heath to the ground when the sun went in, and it became immobilised (hence it being tightly shut). It has to be the hairiest example I have ever seen as well – phenomenally so. 😊

Thank you Goldie. Green Hairstreaks are great value, and make such splendid subjects for the camera. Like Orange Tips, it's a shame when they disappear each year. I've bumped into several people this year who were seeing them for the first time, and all were really taken with this attractively coloured insect. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Andrew555, 13-May-19 11:11 AM GMT

Really nice selections Dave. It's the Brown Argus I'm most taken with, beautiful. 🍷 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-May-19 09:45 PM GMT

Cheers, Andrew – I rather like the Brown Argus too. They are a real success story on my local patch, with numbers increasing year on year, and it has been good to capture them as they emerge this year in all their glory. Incredibly attractive for what is actually a little brown butterfly – though so much more than that of course! 😊 😊

Time to go further afield again. On **Sunday 12th May** I had arranged to take advantage of the improvement in the weather by meeting up with Wurzel down at Bentley Wood. As expected, there was a good showing of Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, perhaps more than either of us can remember seeing in recent years. There were still fresh examples, and all had to be checked out to see if any Small Pearls had emerged amongst them. As it turned out, none was the sister species: all were Pearls.



As Wurzel and I made our way back to the car park, he spotted a Marsh Fritillary to add to the list. I failed to get a lens on it, but Wurzel managed a quick shot for the record.

It was good to see you again Wurzel – I suspect we spent much more time chewing the fat than actually getting close to the butterflies! 😊 😊 😊

With the day still relatively young and continuing sunny, my plan was to circumnavigate Salisbury and head for Martin Down, so I bid farewell to Wurzel and set off westwards.

Another post is required for that...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 14-May-19 11:33 PM GMT

Great set of shots Dave, there was a indeed a lot of fat chewed so much so in fact that I was quite surprised that I had any shots on my memory card when I got home 😊😂 Looking forward to the Martin Down installment 😊

### Re: millerd

by David M, 15-May-19 06:02 PM GMT

This seems to be a good year for Pearl Bordered Fritillaries. Perhaps the spectacular warmth of the Easter weekend got them off to the best start possible.

Nice to see a few still flying. I'm sure the stragglers will soon be joined by their cousins, Small Pearls.

### Re: millerd

by Pauline, 15-May-19 06:16 PM GMT

I'm struggling to keep up with the diaries Dave as you can probably tell but I'm trying to catch up in fits and starts. I just have to comment on those outstanding Brown Argus shots from way back, especially the underside – even better than the Green Hairstreaks ..... and now I've just seen that shot of the multiple Small Blues 🌈😂 Slow down a little can you? 😊😂

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-May-19 12:16 PM GMT

I'm struggling the same way, Pauline, and I now can't keep up with my own diary let alone anyone else's! Too many sunny days... 😊 I was especially happy with that backlit Brown Argus – not a common shot to get, that one. 😊

I'm sure the Small Pearls will appear soon David. 😊

Martin Down coming up, Wurzel – it's taken a while just to go through the photos... 😊

#### Sunday 12th May (continued):

The drive into and around Salisbury was fairly easy, and I was soon at Martin Down. Within a few minutes of leaving the car at the main car park, I was seeing Marsh Fritillaries along Bockerley Ditch. Overall I saw a couple of dozen Marshies, and I didn't even reach one of their other hotspots somewhat further on across this large area of downland. Other species seen: Orange Tip, GVW, Brimstone, Small Heath, Peacock, Holly Blue, Small Blue, Common Blue, Adonis Blue, Brown Argus, Small Copper, Green Hairstreak, Dingy Skipper and Grizzled Skipper. Of these, Dingies and Brimstones were probably the most frequently seen. Here is a selection:



*Just the one seen*



*A mating pair*



*Good numbers of Grizzlies*  
I'll reserve a separate post for the Marshies.

Dave

### **Re: millerd**

by millerd, 17-May-19 12:37 PM GMT

12th May, Martin Down: Marsh Fritillaries.







A rather splendid afternoon. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 17-May-19 06:48 PM GMT

Another one here struggling to keep up with diaries with so much going on lately.

A great selection of species in your last couple of reports Dave, especially the Pearls (which it looks like I will miss again this year) and the Marshies (which I caught up with this week 😊)

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 17-May-19 10:56 PM GMT

I think I recognise a couple of the older ones there Dave 😊 Martin Down has really come on over the last few years – it's always been a 'safe bet' but now it seems to be working upwards to 'number one choice' 😊 Great shots of the pair in cop – she looks fit to burst 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 17-May-19 11:40 PM GMT

How I love that truly atmospheric image of the jousting, airborne Marshies set against a quintessentially British backdrop of green fields and part cloudy skies!

They are the winners in the photography competition as far as I'm concerned.

**Re: millerd**

by keving, 18-May-19 07:48 AM GMT

Dave,

Lovely set of Marshie photos, especially the two in flight. Great work

Regards  
Kev

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 20-May-19 11:30 PM GMT

Thank you all once again. 😊

The continuing reasonable weather has kept me out most days, and I have become distinctly behind with my diary – a week adrift now. So I have to go back to **Monday 13th May** for the next installment(s).

A lovely sunny day with a cool start, and I headed for the Chilterns – first stop Totternhoe. I initially looked in vain for Small Blues, but soon found Dukes in all the usual spots and good numbers of Dingy Skippers and Green Hairstreaks as well.





I also bumped into Wolfson in exactly the same spot we had encountered each other this time last year – a curious coincidence. Overall, I think we saw a dozen species, including a single Small Blue amongst the many Dingies, and large numbers of Brimstones.

My plan was to continue on to Pitstone Quarry, with guaranteed Small Blues to be seen there, and Wolfson decided to come as well, having never previously been to the site. It certainly didn't disappoint – there were probably hundreds of Small Blues flying, mostly males, but there were one or two females.



Both the first two species seem to be having really good years on all the sites where I've seen them. At one point, we were talking about the infrequency of groups of puddling butterflies in the UK when there on the path in front of us was a cluster of over twenty Small Blues. Not puddling as such but taking salts from something noxious on the path. In getting close to take photos, we disturbed a few, but a core of fifteen or so remained.



While down on the ground getting my photos, I became the centre of attention for further Small Blues, and I ended up with butterflies on my hand and arm, and on the screen, lens and shutter button of my camera.



Wolfson headed off back to Cambridgeshire now, but I had time to go the short distance to Ivinghoe and have a quick look at one of the gullies below the Beacon. Here were more Dukes and Dingies, plus a few Brown Argus for a change.



Another good day, and a sociable one as well – it was great to see you again, Wolfson. 😊

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 21-May-19 04:05 PM GMT

How I've managed it I don't know, but I've only just seen your Marshie & Small Blue adventures. Both very successful by the looks of it!. Love the Small Blue huddle. Some great shots there.

Trevor.

**Re: millerd**

by Wolfson, 21-May-19 10:11 PM GMT

It was a memorable day that was full of butterflies and the Small Blue finale will take some beating. Thank you again for the tour of Pitstone.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 21-May-19 11:09 PM GMT

Fabulous Small Blues Dave – love the way the white fringes looks silver 😊👍 The group 'taking salts' (such a polite way to describe what they're actually doing 😊😄) is a sight to behold and to get them on your hand 👍👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 22-May-19 04:52 PM GMT

Small Blues (along with marshies and greenstreaks) are having a great flight period, Dave. Usually when I see images of multiple butterflies puddling it's from the continent, rather than from within the UK!!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 22-May-19 10:01 PM GMT

Cheers, everyone – yes, the three species David mentioned (plus Dingies as well) seem to be doing well this spring. In particular I have seen Green Hairstreaks almost everywhere I've been this year so far.

However, there are none on my local patch unfortunately, but on the morning of **Tuesday 14th May** I counted 74 butterflies of nine species – which is pretty good. The vast majority were Brown Argus, Small Heath and Holly Blue (of course... 😊), with only ones and twos of others. However, Peacocks have reappeared – like the Small Tortoiseshells of a couple of weeks ago they are out in the open areas away from where they first appeared back in March (and February!). The Brown Argus were especially fresh.



*female*



*male*



*Holly Blue scavenging for minerals in the "Badlands"...*



*One of a couple seen today*



*A new individual*



*Lovely fresh female Small White*

After that curtainraiser, I headed south, and first of all to the Box Hill area, starting with Juniper Bottom. I always think this spot has a foreign feel to it – I don't know why.



Up on the main slopes, there was very little more – a handful of Common Blues and a single Adonis. Things must be a bit behind here.

After a cup of tea, I headed across the Mole Valley to Denbies Hillside. There was far more on the wing here, including good numbers of Adonis Blues, Green Hairstreaks and Dingy Skippers.





*All blue butterflies seem to like the way I taste...*





Dave

### Re: millerd

by kevling, 23-May-19 06:28 PM GMT

Dave,

Playing catch up with the diaries this week. Some lovely photos of the Small Blue cluster. It's not often you see that. You must let me know what line of aftershave you use, as those blues seem to like you 😊

Regards  
Kev

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 23-May-19 07:55 PM GMT

Some fantastic shots of those Small Blues Dave, I'd loved to have seen them 😊🇬🇧 I'm hoping I'll see some thing different when I'm in Eastbourne, I hope lots of Butterflies are still about 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 23-May-19 08:41 PM GMT

Stunning Blues there Dave and lush chocolatey Brown Argus 😊🇬🇧 I see what you mean about that spot, Juniper Bottom, Dave, it looks very continental – reminds me of the areas in the Dordogne 😊🇬🇧 It would be even better if it held the same species 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 24-May-19 03:08 PM GMT

Nice report, Dave. It's absolutely redolent of late May with all the grassland species building in numbers. Won't be long before Meadow Browns and Ringlets boost overall numbers still further.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 25-May-19 11:31 PM GMT

Many thanks again, everyone – it was good to see so many Small Blues all together. They seem to be doing well as I've seen good numbers elsewhere too.

**Wednesday 15th May.** Another sunny day, and I headed this time up to Aston Rowant (north side) for my first visit of 2019. Walking along the bottom of the hillside, I soon encountered Green Hairstreaks and Dingy Skippers.



...plus Small Heaths and Brown Argus. The slopes are covered in Rock Rose plants, which must be the foodplant here for the latter (unlike my local population which thrives on cranesbill). I also found a few Grizzled Skippers, which I don't recall seeing here in previous years, though I suspect they must have been here all along.



Finally, I was taken by surprise when this very large moth emerged from the grass in front of me.



Any ideas as to what it is, anyone?

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by peterc, 26-May-19 06:52 AM GMT

Hi Dave,

Perhaps Oak Hook-tip *Watsonalla binaria*?

All the best

Peter

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 26-May-19 03:43 PM GMT

I'd go for Fox Moth – you've actually got shots of one sitting still and not bombing around and almost taking yer head off 🤪😄 Great shots especially the two Coppers 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 26-May-19 04:16 PM GMT

Having looked online at both those suggestions, I will come down in favour of the Fox Moth – Wurzel: deux points. 😊 It certainly did fly around madly before plummeting back into the grass in front of me.

Later on 15th May and also first thing on **Thursday 16th**, I had walks around my local patch. The first of the year's Common Blues had finally appeared, quite surprisingly a whole fortnight behind the emergence of the first Brown Argus here.



*nectaring on the foodplant*



*not many more of these to come, sadly*  
Dave

## **Re: millerd**

by millerd, 26-May-19 04:33 PM GMT

On the afternoon of 16th May I returned to the northern, more frequented, portion of Bedfont Lakes Country Park. I once again found Green Hairstreaks – three of them in fact, in widely separated locations including one within sight of the visitor centre.



...and three new Common Blues. One of these was a female, found in an area described specifically as a nature reserve and off the more beaten tracks (dogs forbidden! 😊). She looked almost white in flight in full sunshine, a shining pale blue close to mimicking the look of a male Chalkhill, and even in less strong lighting was unusually blue with virtually no brown scaling at all.





I always enjoy the huge variety of colouration that female Common Blues provide, and this one was a corker to start the selection for 2019.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Neil Freeman, 26-May-19 05:52 PM GMT

Hi Dave, I was going to say Fox Moth but I see Wurzel has beaten me too it.

That female Common Blue is a real stunner 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 26-May-19 10:45 PM GMT

That is one stunning female Common Blue, Dave.  
I have never seen one with so much blue, lovely markings too.

Great to see you briefly the other day!  
Great shots.  
Trevor.

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 27-May-19 09:42 AM GMT

Glad I got the ID right Dave 😊 That female Blue is a stunner – almost a ghostly blue and an almost silver cell spot – lush 😊👍👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by Goldie M, 27-May-19 11:09 AM GMT

Hi! Dave, really lovely female Common Blue shots 🍷 nothing here too windy and wet. 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: millerd**

by David M, 27-May-19 07:53 PM GMT

Good to hear about the Holly Blues, Dave, and nice that you've seen plenty of females, including the one pictured which looks extremely fresh.

The female Common Blue is mightily impressive. As you say, almost a touch of the 'chalkhill' about it.

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 27-May-19 08:13 PM GMT

Thanks, all – that was a great way to start the female Common Blue 2019 collection, certainly. Hard to better... 😊

Friday 17th May was an odd one – completely blank and no butterflies seen. There haven't been many of those recently.

**Saturday 18th May** was actually better than expected, but in the end I just stayed local and decided to perform one of my periodic butterfly counts and resist the temptation to take too many photos. The result was a total of 102 individuals seen, of 12 different species:

Brown Argus 27  
Small Heath 20  
Common Blue 11  
Holly Blue 10  
GVW 7  
Orange Tip 7  
Peacock 7  
Small White 5  
Small Copper 3  
Brimstone 2  
Red Admiral 2  
Speckled Wood 1

OK, there were a handful of photos...







Good to see Red Admirals again, and the burgeoning population of Brown Argus continues to surprise me.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

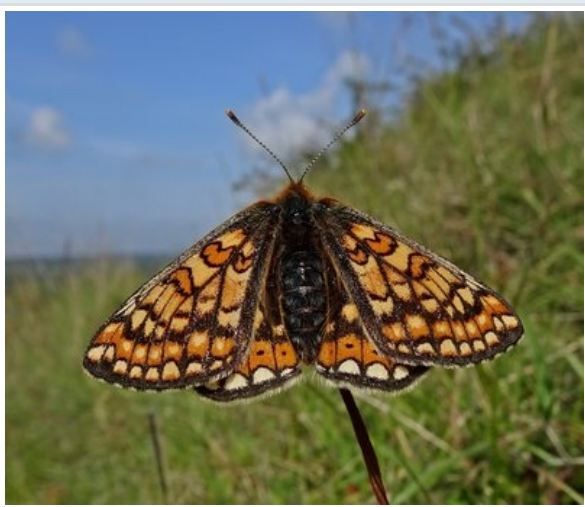
by millerd, 27-May-19 08:37 PM GMT

On **Sunday 19th May**, I was up early, trusting the weather forecast, and heading west to the fabled hillside near Warminster and another meetup with Wurzel. Following Trevor's recent advice, I turned right just past the gate at the bottom of the hill and found myself on the south-facing slope, rather than the west-facing one I normally wander across.

There was a great variety of species flying – at least 15 I think – with the most prominent and most numerous being the Marsh Fritillaries. Paring down the many photos to a relative few select ones representing this most variable species has not been easy.



...and numerous gravid females struggling to fly



I also came across an aberrant individual, with the congenital deformities that commonly accompany such forms.



There was a lot else to see, but I'll put that in a separate post.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 27-May-19 08:58 PM GMT

That Marsh ab. is very striking, but their markings are so individual and varied it's sometimes difficult to differentiate normal from ab. Glad the trip went well. On the same morning I went through several torrential showers on the A27, and would have turned back if I had planned to visit that day!.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Katrina, 27-May-19 09:45 PM GMT

A load of great photos there - wonderful!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-May-19 09:47 PM GMT

It was a good day, Trevor and Katrina, and the Marshies weren't all by any means. I was joined by Wurzel, and then later by Philzoid - very good to meet up with you both on what has become an annual event. Exactly the same date as last year in fact!

There were Adonis...



...and Common Blues around





There were only a few Small Blues flying that we could find, but they included a nice mating couple.



Also seen: Green Hairstreaks, Small Heaths, Brown Argus, Orange Tips, Brimstones, Dingy and Grizzled Skippers, various Whites, Holly Blues, a single surprise Small Tortoiseshell and finally a selection of Walls. The latter were typically proving impossible to approach, as is their wont, but I think Wurzel managed a few shots – better than I could do. Today's moth: a Forester, doing its best but still coming second to the Hairstreaks in the greenness stakes.



The cloud built, and with a few drops of rain falling we called it a day around lunchtime – an excellent day out in good company. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-May-19 09:55 PM GMT

A postscript to the day: I arrived home on 19th with time for a quick look at my local butterflies again. It was late, and not very sunny, but the Brown Argus were still performing.





I also managed a decent shot of a roosting Small Heath.



Interestingly I'd come away from Wiltshire with no photos of either of these species...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 28-May-19 07:32 AM GMT

Two great reports from Wiltshire, and good value for your tank of petrol!.  
If you meet Wurzel there again, ask him to show you the site at Tilshead.  
It can easily be combined with a trip to ' the hill '. The A303 or Salisbury( A360 )  
are easy to access from there. It's a wonderful grassland site.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 28-May-19 08:39 PM GMT

Well worth the trip down tere, Trevor! Yes, I ought to investigate other sites in the area while I'm down there (Tilshead does sound rather good) but on that day we ran out of weather rather than time, unfortunately... 😊

**Monday 20th May:** another day to stay local and look at the area near home. Considering how often I do this, this patch rarely disappoints and frequently throws up something new. Today was no exception – I spotted my first Large Skipper of the year overseeing the crowds of Brown Argus from a shrub.







Another surprise was a Small Tortoiseshell, a good four weeks since the last one I'd seen here – maybe someone had been late getting their mower out this year... 😊





Altogether I saw around 80 butterflies of 13 different species, the highest species total for the year so far.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 28-May-19 09:50 PM GMT

Some impressive recent posts Dave with a good range of butterflies, I don't think there's going to be much if any of a June gap this year the way the traditional spring species are still emerging.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 28-May-19 11:05 PM GMT

That person getting their mower out is a good few months late – their lawn must be a right state 🤔😄  
Great reports Dave – I'm even more envious of the ab Marshie now – what a cracker 😄🍷🍷 Glad the Hill paid off again, phew 😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 29-May-19 06:48 AM GMT

Good to see fresh Large Skippers joining the action, Dave; something for me to look forward to when I get home.

Again, those female Brown Argus are a joy, as are the recently emerged Holly Blues.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-May-19 03:51 PM GMT

Yes, the Hill has never yet disappointed, Wurzel, and I think I've been there five or six years running now. 😄

Curiously, David, that is the only Large Skipper I've seen so far round here. I hope a few more appear now the weather is set to warm up for a few days.

**Tuesday 21st May:** A day with a different focus. I had arranged to have a walk with a friend of mine up at Sharpenhoe Clappers in Bedfordshire. This is at the north-eastern end of the Chilterns, and as not unusual in these parts has the remains of old chalk pits. Butterflies had to be incidental to the day, but I was pleased to point out Green Hairstreaks to my friend, who like so many folk had never knowingly seen them before. There were also Brimstones, Orange Tips, GVW, Common Blues, Brown Argus, Dingy Skippers, Speckled Woods and Small Heaths. Apparently there are supposed to be Small Blues somewhere, but despite finding a bit of kidney vetch, I didn't spot any. I took astonishingly few photos... 🤔📷



It was actually my first visit to this spot – it is a delightful site, with some lovely views, and worth going back to look more closely at what it has to offer.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-May-19 04:20 PM GMT

**Wednesday 22nd May:** Back to the butterflies in earnest today, and another of my annual pilgrimages, this time down to Hutchinsons Bank near Croydon. As usual I followed Bugboy's example and made the trip on public transport, using pretty well everything on offer – tube, bus, train and tram.

Unusually, Mr Sp0ck was not on hand to provide the latest news on what was around, so I made my way through the Cutting and headed by a fairly indirect route over to the "scrape" to see Small Blues. In fact, I encountered ones and twos of this species every few metres along all the paths, and arriving at my destination I found hundreds. There were also a couple of folk from the London Wildlife Trust, who were performing timed counts: they had just clocked 134 in 14 minutes. There was a good mix of male and female (fresh and worn), some mating pairs, and lots of egg-laying activity. Hundreds of Small Blues aren't as impressive as, say, hundreds of Marsh Fritillaries, but nevertheless, they were a great sight, and worthy of a separate post.

Obviously, I was also on the lookout for Glanville Fritillaries. I know a few had been seen the day before and though there appeared to have been none in the Cutting, in the past I had also encountered them on the path along the bottom, parallel to Featherbed Lane. Almost by magic, a medium-sized orange insect came towards me, skimming the path at no more than knee-height. As it sailed past, it was easy to identify – a Glanville. As expected it soon returned, and as luck would have it, the sun became a bit hazier causing the butterfly to stop and bask at regular intervals and take on nectar. It was a male, perhaps a couple of days old, but still very presentable. This turned out to be the only one I saw, but well worth seeing.



During the visit, I counted 15 species altogether, from the myriads of Small Blues to singletons of Large Skipper (probably the same female Bugboy had seen), and of course the Glanville Fritillary. Only 500 or so photos to sort through... 😊 But a great day out. A few of the rest before the Small Blue extravaganza.



**Re: millerd**

by ernie f, 29-May-19 04:36 PM GMT

Fantastic recent pics, Dave.

Two years ago I was told of Hutchinson's Bank and went there for the Glanvilles because I was told they had died out at Wrecclesham. For me the trip to Hutchinson's is awful. I went by car both times and it took ages down all the suburban roads with an enormous amount of traffic. I saw no Glanvilles on either of my visits!

But as you say, the Small Blues are there in great numbers. I have never seen them in such numbers anywhere else. So my trips were not a complete wash-out.

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 29-May-19 04:44 PM GMT

The Small Blues of Hutchinsons Bank...

There really were a lot...



...mating pairs...







As with those up at Pitstone, they took a liking to my sweat if I stayed any time in one spot



An endearing little butterfly! 😊

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by essexbuzzard, 29-May-19 11:48 PM GMT

They are indeed, Dave. Must have been a wonderful sight!

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-May-19 12:32 PM GMT

Great looking set of Glannie shots Dave 😊👍 Are they 'wild ones' (or at least wild as in the progeny of last year) ?  
Fantastic Small Blues – it seems that most species so far are having a great season 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 30-May-19 04:40 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

The Small Blues of Hutchinsons Bank...

There really were a lot..

I made it 13, Dave. 😊

The only other UK butterfly I've seen in such numbers in a small area like that is Silver Studded Blue at Prees Heath.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 01-Jun-19 09:48 AM GMT

Cheers, chaps. The Small Blues are definitely doing well this year, and yes, I made it 13 too, David – there were many more not far out of shot as well.

**Thursday 23rd May.** Another decent day, and this time a longish drive down to Sussex to look at the Small Pearls at Park Corner Heath. As Neil Hulme has described, this reintroduction is proving very successful, and I saw good numbers of fresh butterflies. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to stay until the early evening, when they start to pose particularly well, and as I left a variety of other folk began to appear, including Neil himself, Andrew and Trevor.

The most notable butterfly of the day was the unusual ab., pictured beautifully in Neil's PD and which I'd encountered on and off throughout the afternoon. I spent most of the time in one spot, and it came along regularly, easy to recognise by its darker appearance (it appeared in flight to have black borders), smaller size and less energetic flight. I managed a few shots from time to time when it appeared and reappeared.



There were plenty of other fresh individuals to choose from as well.





Dave



**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 01-Jun-19 06:47 PM GMT

Lovely PBF ab Dave, and a nicely marked female. It was an all male show, after I saw you.

A mrgreen for that ab. 🍀 .

Trevor.

**Re: millerd**

by Pauline, 01-Jun-19 06:54 PM GMT

I'm with Trevor on that one Dave - stunning Ab 🍀 Small Blues certainly seem to be having a great season as they were in unprecedented numbers at Paulsgrove (100's) - great shots of them too. I'm waiting here impatiently for your shots of my local Glanvilles behind the fur coats 😊 - hope you're not going to keep me waiting 2 weeks? 😊

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-19 10:12 PM GMT

I'm with the others Dave that is a cracking looking aberrant 🍀🍀 Hopefully you can show me the way to Narnia tomorrow 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by David M, 01-Jun-19 11:59 PM GMT

That's quite some aberrant, Dave. Lovely specimen.

Great to see SPBFs doing so well after a long absence.

**Re: millerd**

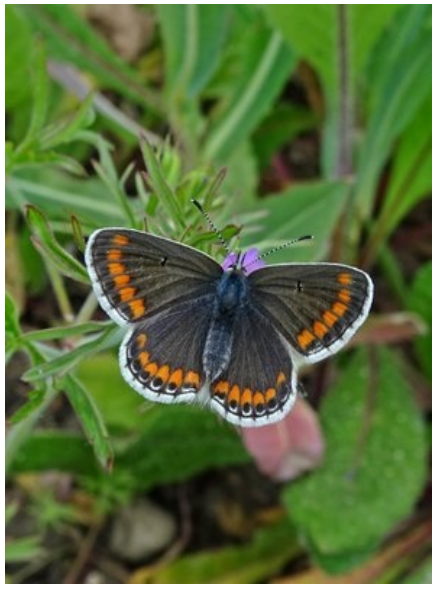
by millerd, 05-Jun-19 05:12 PM GMT

Cheers, Trevor – good to see you, if only in passing (though we've caught up since of course!).

Thank you, Pauline! Glanville shots coming up in due course... It was a very successful outing as I'm sure Wurzel will agree. 😊 Narnia came good 😊😊

The SPBF are indeed doing well down there, David. 😊

**Friday 24th May:** Back to my local patch for the day. I counted 118 butterflies of 11 species today, with Common Blues now topping the list with 34 seen. Colourful females were now appearing amongst the males.



...and there were still one or two fresh examples of Holly Blues around too.



As ever there were a few Small Coppers in the mix.



Always some interest here... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-Jun-19 06:06 PM GMT

On **Saturday 25th May** with a decent bit of weather forecast I thought I'd have a look at a new site for me, the BBOWT reserve at College Lake near Tring. In fact, this spot is very close to the old chalk workings at Pitstone and the Chiltern ridge including Aldbury Nowers, Pitstone Hill and Ivinghoe is

within sight too. College Lake is mainly a "bird" site, but it advertises a decent selection of butterflies as well.



Well worth the visit, and easily combined with one or two of the other sites in the area.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-Jun-19 06:21 PM GMT

After the visit to College Lake on **25th May**, I drove along the foot of the ridge of the Chilterns to Aston Rowant. As is usual, it was fairly windy here, but it was soon apparent that there were good numbers of Adonis Blues across the hillside along with the Common Blues. The latter probably outnumbered the former (but only just), though the Brown Argus outdid both of the other two by some way. It is an excellent site for them, with rock rose being the favoured foodplant here rather than the cranesbill used on my local patch. This butterfly certainly seems to have made a success of this diversification. Also seen were Small Heaths, plus a few Green Hairstreaks, Small Coppers, threadbare Dingy Skippers and Brimstones and a single very worn Grizzlie.



And the Blues...

Adonis:



Common:



Dave

### Re: millerd

by MrSp0ck, 05-Jun-19 10:07 PM GMT

#### ernie f wrote:

Fantastic recent pics, Dave.

Two years ago I was told of Hutchinson's Bank and went there for the Glanvilles because I was told they had died out at Wrecclsham. For me the trip to Hutchinson's is awful. I went by car both times and it took ages down all the suburban roads with an enormous amount of traffic. I saw no Glanvilles on either of my visits!

But as you say, the Small Blues are there in great numbers. I have never seen them in such numbers anywhere else. So my trips were not a complete wash-out.

Off at Junction 6 M25, and via Caterham by-pass and country lanes Halliloo Valley & Featherbed Lane, takes about 14 minutes from the M25. I put a map up on here a couple of years ago with all the junctions marked with Street View, We had 44 Glanvilles on transect this year, but they have emerged in small numbers from April 20th - to 1st June. so far on the transect Small Blues are 1062. Some Glanville females were laying over easter, so will be interesting to see if they go through, larvae hibernate from the end of July in the 5th sometimes 4th instar.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-Jun-19 11:20 PM GMT

Thanks for the info, Mr Sp0ck - I have never considered going to Hutchinson's Bank by car, as the public transport route for me is a better (and cheaper) option. I spend too much time on the M25 as it is... 😊

Another reason to stay local again on **Sunday 26th May**, though the weather wasn't so good today anyway. Only half a dozen species seen around

lunchtime, though Common Blues and Brown Argus both managed well into double figures again.

Holly Blues are laying now on Goat's Rue, as I saw them do last year. As this grows in the middle of the field area where there are plenty of Common Blues, there can be real confusion as to what is what.



and there was a very fresh male.



Amongst the rest, a couple of Small Coppers and a nice-looking Small Heath.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 07-Jun-19 09:49 AM GMT

Woah Dave I reckon you're 'working' harder now that you're retired 🤔😄👍 A cracking collection of butterflies – especially the BA ab which I reckon is good for that particular ab 😄👍 Good use of threadbare to describe the worn Dingy (I'll have to remember to use that term 😄), very fitting especially (if my memory serves me correctly 😊) as those terms for moths etc came about because they were compared to carpets 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 07-Jun-19 12:12 PM GMT

You're right, Wurzel – there's a lot going on and it is a job to keep up, even just on my local patch... Never mind everything else! 😊 I agree – Dingy Skippers bear a strong resemblance to carpets, especially as they wear and the fringes become tatty.

**Monday 28th May** – I thought I'd try Wreclesham following Pauline and Ernie's selection of shots, but failed to find the mysterious point of access to the site today. It clouded over as well, and wasn't particularly warm, but I returned home via Chiddingfold to look for roosting Wood Whites. More sunshine did appear, so the butterflies were flying as well as roosting, and there was plenty of interaction between them too.

On arrival just past the bridge, I met a couple of ladies who had found an Eyed Hawk Moth, something I'd not seen before. Quite an impressive insect:



However, I was really here for the Wood Whites. Firstly, some nice individuals:







Next, an attempt at an open-wing shot which even a pretty quick shutter speed couldn't freeze:





After the arrival of the second male, the sun went in and they settled down like this:



Fascinating species!

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 07-Jun-19 12:27 PM GMT

Some superb Wood White sequences, Dave. I note that some seem quite fresh.

I went there for them on May 10th, and they are still going strong.  
It is unusual to find any by the time the Emperor arrives, but at this rate, who knows?.

Catch you soon,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 07-Jun-19 01:23 PM GMT

Thank you, Trevor. 😊 There were indeed still a lot of fresh ones. Interestingly, I have seen both very worn first brood and brand new second brood examples when going there for Emperors. Not the same year, mind! On both occasions, they were being completely overlooked by almost everyone there for some reason... 😊

The rather iffy weather continued on **Tuesday 28th May**, but as ever, I had to make a foray onto my local patch. This was a typical vista, but somehow the hefty showers avoided me and there was sufficient warmth and brightness to activate the butterflies from time to time.





There were a dozen or so Blues flying, and other blue females, but not in quite the same league.



An attempt to capture open-wing Small Heaths in flight didn't really succeed.



Also seen were Brown Argus (though no interesting or fresh ones today), a Small Copper and a distinctly weary-looking female Orange Tip.



Finally, amongst the numerous Burnet Companion moths, I came across my first Silver-Y of the season.



Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 07-Jun-19 02:30 PM GMT

**Wednesday 29th May** was one of those unusual "blank" days, with no butterflies to grace it. **Thursday 30th** once again produced unspectacular weather, but it was worth a trip out locally, and my resolve was to perform one of my periodic more rigorous counts. The results:

Brown Argus 40  
Common Blue 36  
Small Heath 19  
Holly Blue 15  
Large Skipper 3  
Orange Tip 3  
Brimstone 1  
Peacock 1  
Small White 1  
Speckled Wood 1

That is by far the highest total of Brown Argus I have come across here. There used to be only a handful in years gone by. Most were worn now, but there were one or two quite fresh ones.



Generally today I took fewer photos than usual, but as I have come to expect there were particular butterflies worth recording. A couple of fresh Common Blues...



A Large Skipper...





The relatively low light levels really enhanced her blue colour: she was a beautiful insect.

Dave

**Re: millerd**



by Neil Freeman, 07-Jun-19 07:22 PM GMT

**millerd wrote:**

...she was a beautiful insect...

I absolutely agree Dave.

And beautifully photographed as usual 😊👍

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 07-Jun-19 07:52 PM GMT

Crickley Dave I only commented this morning and now there are three more posts 😊😊 It's difficult to know where to begin - the female Common blue is stunning - surely an ab. as it's lacking the orange lunules 😊👍 Cracking Wood Whites but that Holly Blue 😊👍👍 Words fail.. 😊.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 08-Jun-19 06:21 PM GMT

**millerd wrote:**

...However, I was really here for the Wood Whites...

....and you've done a superb job with them, Dave. I think I've seen more forewing images in this post than I have in all others combined!! 😊

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 08-Jun-19 08:29 PM GMT

That is one glorious female Holly Blue, Dave. They don't open up better than that!. On the subject of 'blue', That all blue female Common Blue is a gem, never seen one a pure as that. You've certainly earned a couple of mrgreens 👍👍.

Sure to see you again soon!  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Pauline, 08-Jun-19 09:10 PM GMT

That's an impressive female CB Dave - I've seen an awful lot of blue females recently but not one as striking as that!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 09-Jun-19 11:23 PM GMT

Thank you everyone for the appreciative comments. 😊 Those two female blues (one Common, one Holly) are just what keeps me looking at my local patch almost every day in the season. It's constantly throwing up surprises and terrific individual butterflies. 😊

I was pleased with the Wood Whites as well - the intermittent sun was quite useful in keeping them less active - a Wood White in full sunshine can fly (albeit very slowly) for a long way without stopping! 😊 And the "burst" mode on the camera enables the capture of the open wing shots, as long as you are prepared to sift through dozens and dozens of useless images for the one in 20 or so where you've have chanced to get it right. There can still be movement even at 1/2000 s.

On **Friday 31st May**, the weather was nothing special again, but there was still no rain. I started off at Fairmile Common, with the outside chance of an early Silver-studded Blue. There were none, and not much of anything else either. A tally of one Red Admiral, one Green Hairstreak, one Common Blue and one Brown Argus was the lot. The heathland currently has a carpet of sorrel plants, but despite this bounty, last autumn's brood of Coppers did not appear to have produced any progeny.

I then had a look at Box Hill which more surprisingly was almost equally bereft of butterflies. The total of two Common Blues, two Small Heaths, a Speckled Wood and another Red Admiral was really quite worrying.

Finally, it was over to Denbies, where I'm glad to say things were a great deal better. The lack of sun probably reduced sightings somewhat, but I still counted several dozens of Adonis Blues, of both sexes. Most are getting worn now, the males taking on the more electric blue sheen that they acquire with age.



These are not uncommon at Denbies, with a few appearing in both broods every year.

In contrast, the other main point of note was my first sighting this year of the ubiquitous Meadow Brown. Getting that first shot of a new velvety male every year always feels like an achievement though!



Also seen: Small Heath, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Dingy Skipper, and a Red Admiral. Interesting that A Red Admiral should turn up at each of the sites I visited today... 😊

Dave

## Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 10-Jun-19 09:16 AM GMT

Cracking shots Dave 😊 You're right about the Meadow Browns they can be really hard work at this time of year right up until when they look all tatty and ragged and then they can seemingly sit for hours 😊 I've found Specklies to be similar in behaviour this year too – very flighty 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Jun-19 10:45 AM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel – Meadow Browns at the start of their year feel like almost a different species to those you see in September and later. As for Specklies – they do seem very thin on the ground generally and certainly on my local patch.

However, on **Saturday 1st June** I did find a couple of them, and one posed rather well in the morning sunshine.



Guest moth today – I finally relented and managed a shot of a Burnet Companion. There are dozens of these around, confusing Small Heaths, Small Coppers and me in equal measure... 😊



Dave

### Re: millerd

by kevling, 10-Jun-19 06:40 PM GMT

Dave,

Playing catch up with the diaries. Wherever you were on Saturday, 78 butterflies is a decent haul. Interesting that you have seen low numbers of Specked Woods this year. Up here in Suffolk, they seem about on par with normal. Hats off to you for the photos of the newly emerged Holly Blue. What a stunner, I don't think I have seen one that fresh before.

Regards  
Kev

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 10-Jun-19 08:29 PM GMT

Still making the most of retirement there Dave 😊. Have a 🦋 for those mating Large Skippers, I've still only seen the one so far this year and it doesn't look like that will be changing for the next few days at least and going back a bit further, 🦋 for that stunning Holly Blue!

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 11-Jun-19 09:37 AM GMT

Hi! Dave, those Holly Blues are fantastic, also the Large Skippers mating 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 11-Jun-19 11:10 AM GMT

Cheers, Kev – it was the previous Saturday (1st) with reasonable weather, rather than 8th, which was a lousy day.

Thank you Buggy and Goldie – I haven't seen many Large Skippers either, so finding those two was a real bonus. As for the Holly Blue, I was very surprised to find such a new example so late on in the first brood. She was laying, so must have been mated as soon as she emerged and had managed to remain in pristine condition since. This species is a constant joy around here regardless of how everything else is going! 😊

**Sunday 2nd June.** I had arranged to meet up once again with Wurzel and Philzoid, this time at Wrecclesham for the population of Glanville Fritillaries that persists there, and seems to have done for at least ten years now. Unfortunately (as is widely known) the main part of the site is now a working sand quarry, and incursion on foot is thoroughly discouraged by warning notices threatening helicopters, CCTV and the instant arrival of officers of the law. However, there is a broad area separate from the working part of the site which has been left as a wild field/meadow and is full of trefoil, plantain and brambles – and currently good numbers of Glanville Fritillaries. This area also sports warning notices, but the perimeter fence is not robust and virtually nonexistent in places. The danger here derives from its previous existence as a landfill site: there is a selection of visible pipework in many places, intended to facilitate the venting of flammable gases (principally methane I imagine), and you can appreciate why a casually discarded cigarette might be problematic... That said, the area is clearly used (as it has been for many years) by locals walking their dogs, and also at this time of year by certain folk taking an interest in a rare species of butterfly.

I arrived at the same time as the other two and we found our way to the butterflies with no difficulty, with an ideal mix of hazy sunshine and cloud. We found Ernie was already there – good to meet you for the first time, Ernie! 😊 A rough count he undertook produced 19 Glanvilles – there could well have been more. Also seen were Green Hairstreak...



Brown Argus, Small Heath and Red Admiral.

However (as you might expect) the Glanvilles were the stars. Picking out the best of the photos has been very difficult – perhaps the most difficult sift for any visit I've made anywhere, but here's a selection.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Janet Turnbull, 11-Jun-19 11:38 AM GMT

Those glorious Glanvilles, Millerd! Especially the underwings – I never managed to get a shot of them with their wings closed 😊👍👍👍  
I guess the paler one with darker markings will be an ab.  
Janet

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 13-Jun-19 10:26 AM GMT

Thank you, Janet. 😊 They were a great set of butterflies, even though with the fencing and the notices, and the fact that technically they are an introduction here, it did feel a bit like being in a zoo. 😊 On the other hand, it would be terrific if they gradually spread across the plantain clumps that grow quite readily on scrubby land all over southern England. My local patch has loads... 😊

The forecast for **Monday 3rd June** had been favourable for a while, and actually remained so on the day. I had decided to head for Norfolk, and the Swallowtails. I had not made this pilgrimage for a good number of years, and in order to make the most of the day had booked into a hotel in Norwich. However, butterflies first. I reached Strumpshaw RSPB reserve around 1100, and ended up parking by the roadside. Though the area was clearly busy, many of the folk there were looking at the birdife, and a good proportion of the remainder were concentrating on the dragonflies. I headed off to the area recommended by Bugboy, passing the flowers of the Doctor's garden (nothing there at that time) and progressing through a bit of meadow. I was very soon hailed by the familiar tones of Trevor, accompanied by Doug and Gary. It just shows – anywhere you go, however far, you will come across people you know.

Trevor had found a Swallowtail which had established a territory along a sheltered bit of path. It made regular sorties, usually when another one passed through its territory, but returned faithfully to the same nettle stalk to bask in the hazy sunshine. It allowed many photos – including some at very close range – and was quite happy to stroll onto my hand. This does give an idea of the size of this beautiful insect – the forewing extends the full length of the top two joints of my forefinger. Though Trevor has posted a few shots of this individual (which he christened "Nicky" because of the distinct nick in its left forewing), here are a few more.





There was more to come – but I shall post the further adventures separately. The day had started very well. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 13-Jun-19 11:47 AM GMT

' Nicky ' was, without doubt the best behaved of all the Swallowtails as far as photography was concerned, and seemed to be unique in having a territory to defend. All others seen were frantically nectaring while the sun shone, and sometimes went to ground if the cloud lingered.

I wonder how the Swallowtails have coped with this weeks weather!.

A memorable few days,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 13-Jun-19 12:01 PM GMT

Wow! Dave, Glenvilles and Swallow Tail's 🍷🍷 what's in your next post 😊 can't wait 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by keving, 13-Jun-19 08:38 PM GMT

Trevor,

Great Glanvilles at Wrecchlesham. I was not previously aware of this site and that it had this species.

Lovely Swallowtails at Strumpshaw Fen. We must have passed each other, as I was also in that meadow late morning. I certainly remember seeing Gary, who I had met for the first time a few days earlier at Rowland Wood in Sussex. It's a shame we didn't get to have a chat.

Regards  
Kev

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 13-Jun-19 09:02 PM GMT

Great selection of Glanville photos Dave, another species I must catch up with sometime.

#### millerd wrote:

...They were a great set of butterflies, even though with the fencing and the notices, and the fact that technically they are an introduction here, it did feel a bit like being in a zoo... Dave

Must admit that for me the right and proper place to see them is on the IOW...although I can appreciate that is not always possible and the introduced colonies mean that people can see them that would otherwise not be able to do so.

Lovely set of Swallowtails too 🍷🍷 It is beginning to look like UKB on tour at Strumpshaw this year, shame I went elsewhere this year, would have loved to have met up with various characters from on here.

Cheers,

Neil

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 13-Jun-19 10:21 PM GMT

Fantastic shots from Wrecclesham Dave – you did really well with the stained glass views 🤩👍 (I need to get mine off the camera 😊) Those Swallowtails are something else 🤩👍👍👍 Rain might stop play this weekend for me unfortunately 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 13-Jun-19 11:24 PM GMT

Yes, Trevor, that was a very amenable butterfly. None of the others I saw were half as cooperative, but I did get quite a few shots, nevertheless. 😊 There was also this action photo I forgot to include earlier, of you with your chum Nicky...



Cheers, Kev – I had no idea you were up at Strumpshaw on the Monday as well! A shame not to have met you.

Thank you, Goldie – more posts shortly, with more Swallowtails and then another favourite of yours to follow. 😊

I have seen Glanvilles on the Island, Neil, but it is a bit of a trek and Wrecclesham is only half an hour away. It does seem a bit artificial though, but less so as they have been there quite a while now. Strumpshaw was terrific, and I regret not going to the Broads more often. Well worth the trip. 😊

Looking forward to seeing your Wrecclesham shots, Wurzel – I had to prune down a vast number of photos so I know what you will be going through... 😊 Fingers crossed there will be a bit of sun in the coming days. 😊

Back to Strumpshaw. Over the course of the day, I think I probably saw around a dozen Swallowtails. However, the most frequently encountered butterfly turned out to be the Red Admiral, with at least 15 counted around the reserve. Also seen: Painted Ladies, Small Tortoiseshells, Common Blues, Brown Argus, Small Heaths, Large Whites, Brimstones, Peacocks, Holly Blues, Green-veined Whites and a single Comma.







A selection of the other Swallowtails coming up in the next post.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 14-Jun-19 05:58 AM GMT

Sweet revenge, Dave, sweet revenge! 😊.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Jun-19 11:17 AM GMT

It's a classic pose, Trevor! 😊

And so, back to Strumpshaw and the other Swallowtails I saw back on **Monday 3rd June**.

The flowerbed outside the visitor centre, carefully planted with this butterfly in mind, succeeded in its aim. However, any Swallowtail taking advantage of the nectar to be had was immediately besieged by eager photographers, myself included. All were well-mannered and everyone had their turn. Truth be told though, the incessant movement of this species when nectaring made decent shots hard to come by.



After a late lunch, I had a walk around the reserve – surprisingly, I didn't see any Swallowtails out here beyond a couple in the distance, but this is where I found most of the other species, including the Red Admirals. Towards the end of the afternoon, I made my way back to the Doctor's garden, and this time, Swallowtails were indulging themselves happily on the variety of flowers on offer. There was no one else here, except for a German gentleman and his wife: he was greatly interested in the species, being familiar with its continental counterpart, and we chatted at length – despite almost a complete lack of each other's language. He was a delightful fellow. I found time for an extraordinary number of photos, and the following is just a small sample.









Eventually I dragged myself away, undecided as to whether to return in the morning or head off for something different. It had been a terrific day.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Goldie M, 14-Jun-19 11:27 AM GMT

Hi! Dave, FANTASTIC!!!! is the only word to describe your shots 🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 14-Jun-19 09:24 PM GMT

"I found time for an extraordinary number of photos", completely understandable, I came away with nearly as many pictures as 9 days in Spain 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 14-Jun-19 10:31 PM GMT

Absolutely fantastic images Dave 😊👍👍👍 I've only ever encountered the continental race and they don't sit still for very long at all; a matter of seconds and they're off 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Jun-19 09:57 AM GMT

Thank you, Goldie and Wurzel. To be honest, they were easier to photograph than I expected: as Wurzel says my experience of the species abroad has been that they don't sit still for a second. However, it's always been in hot places, so no doubt that makes a difference. 😊

Yes, their cooperativeness led to a lot of photos, Buggy! 😊

On **Tuesday 4th June**, the weather was not as good, and if I was going to make the most of it I would have to hurry. Instead of staying around and adding to the Swallowtail collection, I decided instead to head due south to Essex and the Heath Fritillaries of Hockley Woods. The road between Norwich and Ipswich could have been better and frustratingly was mostly bathed in sunshine, but things improved (roads) or the opposite (weather), and I reached my destination just as the last of the sun was being engulfed by cloud.

I walked briskly down to the southern perimeter of the wood, and there they were = a dozen or so Heath Fritillaries. Most seemed very new, probably having emerged that morning in some cases, and they basked in what now had become merely bright overcast.[]





*pink meconial fluid from the pupa can be seen on the leaf*







*they were quite docile*



Luckily, I had just made it back to the car before the rain came down properly. The only other species I saw was a Red Admiral – two in fact.

It was definitely worth the lengthy detour on the way home! Despite the rain (which must have been an Essex thing as it wasn't wet when I got back), the M25 was unusually kind too. Another great set of butterflies, and despite the increasingly low light levels I was very pleased with the photos.

Dave

### **Re: millerd**

by millerd, 16-Jun-19 10:41 AM GMT

For **Wednesday 5th June**, it was back to my local patch. A morning stroll produced around 70 butterflies of 9 species, including another first for the year here – a Painted Lady.



Holly blues, however, were declining – despite new examples still appearing. Looking at these you could be forgiven for thinking it was April.







Another highlight was a fresh new brood Small Tortoiseshell.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 16-Jun-19 11:16 AM GMT

More fantastic Butterfly shots Dave, love the Heath Fritillary shots 🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Jun-19 10:33 PM GMT

Thanks, Goldie - I remembered from last year that you like the Heath Fritillaries. They are such an easy subject to photograph too, I find. 😊

On **Thursday 6th June**, there was a bit of sunshine in the forecast and as I would be away in the cold wet north for the weekend I set off on another morning out. This took me up to Whitecross Green Wood in Oxfordshire and a traditionally reliable site for Black Hairstreaks. They were flying in their usual spots, and I saw about a dozen, all males, and as far as I could tell they were all fresh. While the sun was out they tended to stay higher up, but in cloudier spells, they had a tendency to drift lower down. A couple of times I was watching a particular individual do this when the sun went in, only to turn round and find another sitting right behind me on a bramble leaf. In the end, I took more care and managed to get some closer shots, but initially most were of the semi-obscured up-in-a-tree variety. Also seen: Large Skipper, Red Admiral, Small Heath, Common Blue, Small Copper, Meadow Brown and happily flying under cloudy skies, good numbers of Speckled Wood.



A bit of energetic wing-rolling revealed the red spots on the upperside for a moment



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by essexbuzzard, 16-Jun-19 11:40 PM GMT

Glad you got to see the Essex Heath Fritillaries, Dave. The weather has been a bit testing for this warmth loving species this year!

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 17-Jun-19 12:14 PM GMT

Fantastic images Dave, the Heaths do just seem to sit out in the dull weather don't they? Next time we meet I might tap you for a nit of info on the Blackstreaks if that's okay? I think 2020 is the year I'll finally bite the bullet and try for this species 😊😊 Those lush wing rolling shots have sold me on the idea 🤔🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 17-Jun-19 06:16 PM GMT

That last one's got a very sqwiggly hindwing streak!

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 17-Jun-19 06:31 PM GMT

Lovely shots Dave, I've yet to see the Black Hair Streak, may be some day 😊

At present I'd be glad to see a Meadow Brown, the weather's been awful here and I'm depending on Garden Butterflies, 😞 at present there's none about 😞 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by ernie f, 18-Jun-19 09:42 AM GMT

Dave

Thank you. I thought I saw a Holly Blue in my back garden yesterday but thought, no it can't be, wrong time of year. But if you are seeing them then it probably was after all.

Great Black Hairstreaks recently and that shot further back of the Heath Frit – all four wings from underneath – stunning.

### Re: millerd

by David M, 19-Jun-19 05:50 AM GMT

Some good stuff in your latest posts, Dave. That female Holly Blue is mint fresh – I haven't had the opportunity to get an image like that so far this year; all the ones that have posed well for me have been males. 😊

The Heath Fritillaries are far duskier than those I'm used to seeing on the continent. Like the Swallowtails, I wonder whether this is a local form.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-Jun-19 10:02 AM GMT

Cheers, Essex and Wurzel – the Heath Frits were doing their best in low light and a hint of rain. 😊

Go for it, Wurzel, those Black Hairstreaks are just waiting for you and they don't seem to mind poor weather either. In fact duller days seem to persuade them down lower. 😊 I'm sure you'll get to see them one day too, Goldie! 😊

You're right, Buggy – that streak has been drawn by a very shaky hand! 😊

I was surprised (even with the track record of my local patch) to see fresh first brood Holly Blues, Ernie. It's now a fortnight later, and though I think they have disappeared now, I saw a fair few in Essex a couple of days ago. Interestingly, David, I find egg-laying females the most obliging in opening up as they come out and bask between bouts of laying.

I have also wondered about the UK Heath Fritillaries and their deep colouration, as the many images from the continent posted here do indicate much lighter forms. However, they are very variable, with virtually no two alike.

A brief late afternoon stroll on my local patch later on 6th June revealed that there are still overwintered Commas here too, plus new Red Admirals.







I travelled north for the weekend, and the weather (especially in Manchester on Saturday 8th) was dreadful. It was not much better back south on Monday 10th... A four-day "blank" in mid-June? Fairly unusual I'd say. 😞😓

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-Jun-19 11:30 AM GMT

On **Tuesday 11th June**, some brightness appeared late in the afternoon, and I had a quick survey of my local patch to see how it had fared since my previous visit five days earlier. The vegetation was a lot higher for certain! However, it really wasn't warm enough for there to be much flying: I only saw eight butterflies. One was a relatively new Red Admiral...



The third was a female, and she was very lethargic in the dull and cool conditions.



I also came across a plume moth of some sort, a very delicate-looking thing.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-Jun-19 12:19 PM GMT

The weather had improved on **Wednesday 12th June**, though it remained pretty cool. I decided to do one of my regular counts on my local patch this morning in case it rained yet again later:

Common Blue 33



Meadow Brown 24



Small Heath 23



Brown Argus 9



Red Admiral 2



Small Tortoiseshell 2



Speckled Wood 2



Large Skipper 2



Finally, Cinnabar moths seem to be unusually common this year, turning up in good numbers everywhere and in all weathers.



97 butterflies of eight species, and not a Holly Blue amongst them... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-Jun-19 01:02 PM GMT

**Friday 14th June** was a better day, with more warmth and more sunshine. Oddly enough, on a shortish lunchtime amble around my local patch I saw only around 50 butterflies, but there were nine species today including four I hadn't seen a couple of days earlier: Large White, Painted Lady, Comma and Holly Blue. A selection...







Dave



### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 20-Jun-19 09:42 AM GMT

Where to begin Dave? 🤪 Great X-wing shot (Large Skipper) 😊😎 Your last moth is a Yellow Shell, not sure about the spotty one 😊 That looks like a very sneaky Painted Lady, hiding away in amongst the foliage - that's just not playing fair 😊😎 High pressures building so summer might (very briefly) return 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 20-Jun-19 07:31 PM GMT

Hi! Dave, you seem to be seeing all the Butterflies 🍀🍀 I've not seen any since the 6th Of June , let's hope this weather picks up in the next few days 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by kevlng, 20-Jun-19 07:45 PM GMT

Hi Dave,

I think Wurzel's description of X wing cannot be bettered, so I'll just add what an excellent profile of that Large Skipper. Never seen one like that before.

Regards  
Kev

### Re: millerd



by trevor, 21-Jun-19 08:26 AM GMT

Glad to see that you are seeing Small Tortoiseshells, Dave. They seem to be all but extinct here in my part East Sussex at the moment. I've seen just one locally this year. By now they should be visiting every garden. Last year I saw more Purple Emperors than Small Torts., what's gone wrong!.

Great report, as usual.  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by David M, 23-Jun-19 03:09 AM GMT

Nice to see a *hutchinsoni* Comma, Dave, as well as Small Tortoiseshell. You're going to have your hands full with this warm spell of weather, I'm sure.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Jun-19 12:57 PM GMT

Thank you once again, everyone – the local patch continues to thrive and to throw up interest. 😊 I do like that unusual view of the skipper too – it makes me think of Space Invaders more than anything... 😊

I've been away again, and have got rather behind with the diary, and the trip away is going to add a bit to the problem. Oh well... 😊

**Saturday 15th June:** I decided on a visit to Fairmile Common between Cobham and Esher, as there was a bit of sunshine and Silver-studded Bues should be making an appearance. They were, but not yet in big numbers – I saw perhaps half a dozen or so, including a couple of females.





In amongst the Blues was a single new Small Tortoiseshell, settling on the carpet of Sheep's Sorrel that supports good numbers of Small Coppers.



Hopefully, SSB numbers will build shortly.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Jun-19 01:14 PM GMT

With sunshine again in short supply, I stayed local again on **Sunday 16th June**. I managed to see around 40 butterflies, mostly Meadow Browns, Small Heaths and Common Blues, but there were also several Large Skippers...



...and a couple of rather newer Red Admirals.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by ernie f, 24-Jun-19 02:13 PM GMT

Nice to see the SSBs are out round your way and also interesting to note that just like near me – the numbers are still low. Great pics by the way. The in-cop 90-degree pivot shot is notable.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 24-Jun-19 10:50 PM GMT

"I've been away again, and have got rather behind with the diary, and the trip away is going to add a bit to the problem. Oh well... 😊"...Don't worry about it Dave it's one of the enjoyable problems that comes from too much butterflying 😊

Cracking set of Silver-studs – the oily sheen is becoming something of a 'must see' when it comes to female Silver-studs – at least it is in my book 😊  
😄👍👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 24-Jun-19 11:32 PM GMT

Local isn't always bad, Dave, although it's tricky to find the rare, specialised stuff unless you're fortunate enough to live on the doorstep of colonies of scarce species.

Taking a breather can be a good thing. Few if any of us have time to go chasing the iconic UK species long term.

Occasionally it's good just to see a few Meadow Browns, Ringlets, Large Skippers, et al, without breaking sweat.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 25-Jun-19 11:35 PM GMT

Cheers, Ernie – complete luck to find that pairing. The male found the female at the same moment I did, and wasted no time. 😊

You're right Wurzel – the more behind I am means the more and varied the butterflies have been that I've seen! This must be a good thing... 😊😊

Absolutely, David – local trips out are the staple, and the variety round here provides constant interest – sometimes within ten minutes of leaving the house. My local tally is up to 20 species this year, 14 of which I saw today – not bad at all. 😊

However, on **Monday 17th June**, the sun shone, and the forecast for the Thames Estuary area was particularly promising. A perfect day to head along the good old M25 to see the White-letter Hairstreaks at Hadleigh Country Park in Essex, plus the rest of what this excellent site has to offer. The journey was easy and as I went east, the sunnier it became. I parked as usual at Leigh-on-Sea station, and walked along the short piece of path bounded by brambles, and behind those the stands of elm trees. The bramble flowers were alive with Hairstreaks, as many as I've ever seen here and numbering in dozens. In amongst them were quite a few Holly Blues, behaving very similarly and today at least earning the title of honorary Hairstreak.

After getting a few photos, I carried on into the park, and walked up to Hadleigh Castle itself. There were lots of skippers flying, and aside from a handful of Large ones, all those I was able to positively identify turned out to be Essex.





The selection included this particularly dark Small Tortoiseshell.



I'll add the WLH selection in a separate post, but here's a taster...



Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 26-Jun-19 07:29 AM GMT

You've had some very productive trips out recently, Dave. Especially your trip to Essex for the White letters, but three in one shot is plain greedy!.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Pauline, 26-Jun-19 08:48 AM GMT

I was interested in your comment re mating SSB Dave. I have seen countless pairs over the years but only twice have I seen the act initiated and both times it by the female who flew to the male. I saw this again recently when a fresh female flew to the male but he rejected her advances and flew off 😊

### Re: millerd

by Maximus, 26-Jun-19 08:54 AM GMT

Just doing some catching up on your diary, Dave, you've certainly done some travelling around 😊

Fantastic Swallowtails and Heath Fritillaries, among many others 😊🌿 Hard to believe that it's five years since we visited Strumpshaw Fen 😊

Mike.

### Re: millerd

by essexbuzzard, 26-Jun-19 09:08 AM GMT

Looking forward to more Essex pictures, Dave!

If you park a bit further on, a Two Tree Island, you don't have to pay.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 26-Jun-19 09:38 AM GMT

Cheers, Trevor – more trips out to come, but first the rest of the White-letters! 😊

That's very interesting, Pauline. My observations have always been of male SSBs seeking out females that are hiding in the heather clumps – in fact, this has been a reliable way of finding females early in the season when they are more elusive. In this particular case, I had just found the female, and a male spotted her at the same time and leapt in right in front of me with no preamble at all.

Thank you, Mike – after this year I am resolved to make Stumpshaw (or Norfolk at least) an annual visit. The Swallowtails were magnificent. 😊

Thanks for the tip, Mark! 😊 I did consider heading further on along the road, but there were sounds of noisily revving engines from down that way and I wondered whether there might be some kind of event going on. £3 for the day isn't bad at the station.

Now, as promised, a small selection of the many photos taken of the WLH at Hadleigh CP.











My day in Essex was not over yet, however... 😊

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 26-Jun-19 03:54 PM GMT

Beautiful shots of those WLH, Dave. Looks as though you filled up a memory card!. I must catch up with the Brighton WLH soon.

I did have some luck with another Hairstreak species today though!.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 26-Jun-19 10:39 PM GMT

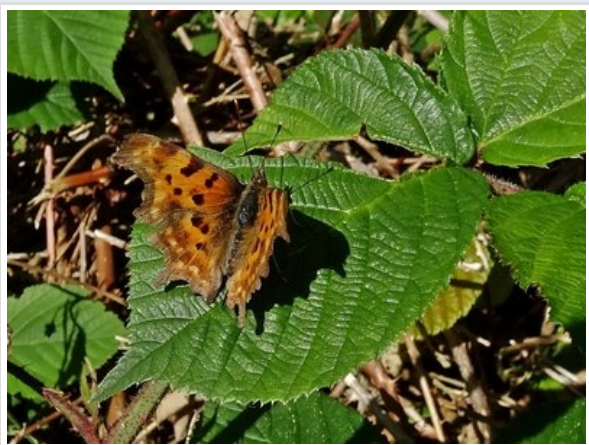
You're right, Trevor, I did take quite a few photos – but I had to leave room for the next part of the day. 😊

Just seen your *other* Hairstreak shots... 🍃🍃😊

As it isn't far from Hadleigh to Hockley Woods, before going home on 17th I decided to visit again in much sunnier conditions than my previous look a week or so earlier. In fact, the sunshine made it far harder to get decent photos, especially as the Heath Fritillaries (of which there were probably into three figures) were quite happy to sit in shade or partial shade. I made my way down to one of the hotspots, and as I emerged from the trees, the first bramble bush was covered in butterflies, flying up in a cloud as I approached – wonderful. A bit further on, I was hailed by a familiar figure sitting on a bench taking in the spectacle – Dave Cook. He pointed out a mating pair he had been watching, and I have to say we then spent more time in chatting than actually getting close to the Fritillaries. There wasn't much else flying, though we did encounter an ageing but energetic Comma



– and I found another a bit later.

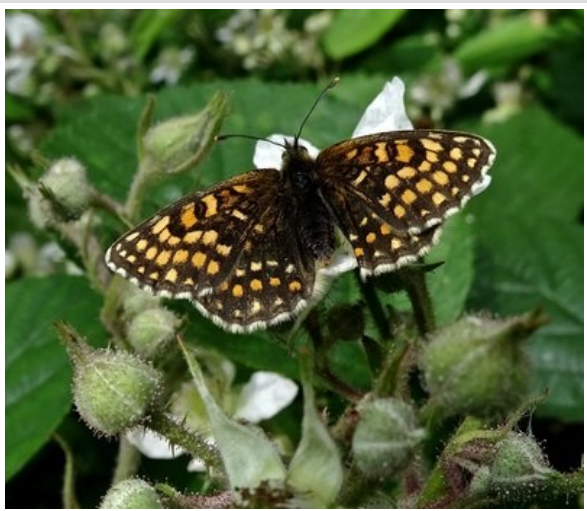
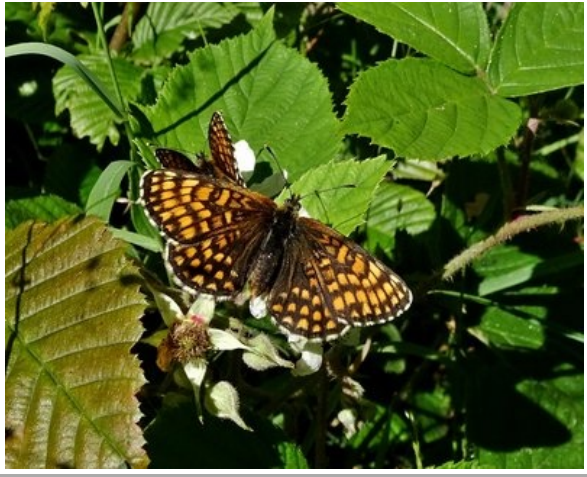


Here are the Heath Fritillaries. First, the pairing:



A selection of others showing just how variable the species is, especially the females of which there were quite a few today. Contrasting these with the much darker males I saw on my previous visit is interesting.







Finally, a couple of shots of a particularly unusual-looking female



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 27-Jun-19 02:26 PM GMT

Cricky Dave your 'taster' wasn't just an amuse bouche it was a full on smorgasbord and then after the actual post 🤪 – well if this had been a meal I would have been Mr Creosote 😄😄🍷🍷 Finally you offer us the not quite so 'waf-fer thin mint' of the Heath Frits 😄😄 That final female looks good for some form of aberrant, definitely a fair bit melanistic 🤪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by essexbuzzard, 27-Jun-19 11:13 PM GMT

More congratulations from me, Dave–you've certainly have a couple of good trips to Essex recently, and I'm glad the weather has been kind. Also nice that Dave Cook managed to find his way up here, sounds like you both had a nice time.

### Re: millerd

by ernie f, 28-Jun-19 08:44 AM GMT

Dave

Perfect WLH shots only to be followed up with a pair of in-cop Heath Frits. You are having fun, aren't you? I have still yet to see my first WLH. I must make an effort soon.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 28-Jun-19 11:16 AM GMT

Hi! Dave , I'm just catching up on my posts, lovely Hair Streak shots and I love the Heaths 😄 Goldie 😄

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 28-Jun-19 10:14 PM GMT

Thank you all for the appreciative comments – it was quite a day, and great to have these two species at sites relatively near to each other. 😄 Hadleigh Country Park is a lovely spot.



*Hadleigh Castle*

On **Tuesday 18th June**, I stayed nearer home and arranged to meet up with Bugboy at Fairmile Common. This was my second visit here for Silver-studded Blues this year, and I hoped a few more would be flying. They certainly were, and the mix of sunshine and cloud (the latter began to predominate) meant varying light levels produced different intensities of blue in the butterflies – and as they started to roost, some good undersides were on show.

Aside from the SSB, we only saw one other butterfly – a Small Tortoiseshell







Dave

**Re: millerd**

by kevlng, 29-Jun-19 08:11 PM GMT

Dave,

Cracking diary this week. Love the Heath Frits. I normally do an annual trip to Hockley Woods and Hadleigh CP, but alas not this year. Nice SSBs. When fresh they are one of the most beautiful butterflies.

Regards  
Kev

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 29-Jun-19 11:03 PM GMT

Fantastic shots of the Silver Studs 😊👍 I need to get my skates on or I'm going to miss out on em 😞 That penultimate shot is a corker 🍷😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 30-Jun-19 09:39 AM GMT

Cheers, Kev – SSB are terrific, aren't they? There will be more of them down the line as I've visited a couple of other sites for them in recent days.

Thanks, Wurzel – I also like that shot you picked out, plus the last one as it was resting on something other than heather or gorse! 😊 It's a good thing there is only one possible species in the UK, as there is a lot of variety between individuals in terms of width of black borders, marginal spots and presence/absence of the spot on the forewings. And variation in the light or not, some are definitely much bluer than others.

19th June was another rare day without a trip out of any sort, but I soon made up for that.

I had been invited down to see my old schoolfriend in Taunton for the weekend (I always seem to get an invite at this time of year, strangely...), but I headed out a day early on **Thursday 20th June**, and by a circuitous route to Glastonbury, having booked a night in a hotel there. I was lucky to get a room, as it being the solstice the place was full of people planning to go up the Tor early the following morning. I had different plans of course.

My route took me down to Dorset, avoiding the other solstice traffic around Stonehenge, and taking into account that the weather forecast for the coast was markedly better than that inland. The first port of call was the National Trust car park at Corfe Castle (as recommended by Wurzel) and as soon as I stepped out of the car I spotted a Lulworth Skipper on the grassy bank up to the railway line.



There were quite a few more, in varying condition, plus a few Small Skippers (much brighter in colour), Meadow Browns, Marbled Whites and Small Heaths. The steepness of the slope made things tricky, but the butterflies compensated by posing beautifully.

First, a Small Skipper for comparison.





A couple of the darker males, more olive in colour





It's a great little spot, and I believe there are also Lulworths up and around the castle as well, but I didn't investigate. It's a steep climb.



That was just the start of the day... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-Jun-19 10:28 PM GMT

Glad my tip off paid off Dave 😊 You almost perfectly described my last visit there 🤔😁 They're cracking butterflies although once they get going finding a fresh one can take a bit of work – though worth the trouble as your last female shows 😊😁 I possibly have an inkling of where you're headed next... 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 01-Jul-19 09:00 PM GMT

Beautiful Lulworths, Dave, but it's your earlier Heath Fritillary sequence that caught my eye.

I'd have sworn that really dark individual was a False Heath Fritillary had I seen it in the French mountains!

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 01-Jul-19 10:04 PM GMT

I have visited the Swanage railway every July for years, so any ' Large Skippers ' seen may have been Lulworths. We always visit at the end of July, so they would be past they're best.

Some difficult shots there I should think.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-Jul-19 12:18 AM GMT

Yes, thanks for pointing out that unlikely gem of a Lulworth site, Wurzel. As you'll see in a mo, a much larger location proved much less productive! 😊

Almost every Heath Frit is different, David, and looking at all those posted in various PDs here, it's hard to believe we are looking at just the one species. 😊

If you visited every July, Trevor, you almost certainly saw a Lulworth in amongst the steam trains – though they are somewhat smaller than the average Large Skipper. They have a long season, though, and can be found between May and as late as September.

Not too far away from Corfe is Durlston Country Park, so that was my next call on **20th June**. It was pretty windy here (when is it not?), and getting close to any settled butterflies proved not so easy. There certainly were more Lulworth Skippers here, but the wind and their normally swift darting flight made them very hard to pin down. Nevertheless, I did eventually get close to one or two.





The other complication was that there were also large numbers of Small Skippers around (though thankfully, the Essex Skippers that live here too hadn't yet emerged). However, these are bigger and brighter, and compared to others seen elsewhere, this population seemed especially big and bright. Most were fresh, and some provided some unusual views with wings almost completely flat.







With so many flying, unsurprisingly I came across a mating pair.







Also seen: Marbled Whites, Small Heaths, Common Blues and Meadow Browns.





Durlston is another great place to visit.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-Jul-19 12:38 AM GMT

There was still some time left in the day on **20th June**, and the weather along the coast seemed set reasonably fair, so I drove along westwards with the idea of visiting one of the quarries on the Isle of Portland. I hadn't reckoned with horrendous traffic around Weymouth, so I ended up at Tout Quarrey rather later than intended. The sun had also disappeared and it was noticeably cooler. However, this place seemed thoroughly conducive to butterflies, full of sheltered gullies and flowers. I wonder why all I saw were a couple of Red Admirals and a distant unidentified blue? Well worth another trip (preferably when a Large Tortoiseshell has just been reported! 😊).

After that somewhat disappointing detour, I headed north via Yeovil towards my hotel in Glastonbury. I now passed through some heavy rain accompanied by surprising dips in temperature, but my luck swung back again, and a pool of sunshine appeared as I reached the crest of the Polden Hills just next to Collard Hill. It was quite late, and everywhere was wet, but a quick walk out onto the hillside seemed a good idea in my mind. True enough: I found several roosting Large Blues.



Just as I was about to leave them until the following morning, I spotted one just responding to the evening sunlight – a nice fesh male.



This boded well for the next day.

As I headed back to the car park, I had this view roughly northwards.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-19 07:00 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Dave 😊 Durlston is a cracking site but a little windy – I try to find the little fields further West at the reserve as there the drystone walls make quite good windbreaks 😊

I see that your Whispering ways now work on Large Blues too 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 04-Jul-19 10:03 PM GMT

Impressive stuff with your recent Lulworths/Large Blues, Dave. You did right to check in even though the weather was far from ideal that evening.

I'm sure you saw plenty more the following day. 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 07-Jul-19 10:54 AM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel – those areas you mention were nearly as windy on the day. That's where the Marbled White shots were taken... 😊

More to come now, David. 😊

Up early on **Friday 21st June** (though not as early as the folk headed up to the Tor for the solstice sunrise...). A lovely sunny start, with cloud building throughout the day – not perhaps ideal conditions for open-wing Large Blues, but certainly very good for seeing them generally. Looking through my shots I do indeed find that a lot of them are of butterflies perched with wings closed.



There were other species around as well, notably a handful of new Marbled Whites...



...and a Small Tortoiseshell.



However, the main attraction put on a good display for the fair number of enthusiasts present, some of whom had come considerable distances. The NT guide for the year (India) did an excellent job, being very approachable, helpful and informative especially to those visiting for the first time.





The views here were stunning as ever.



Finally, along the walk back to the car I noticed the many flowering orchids, of several different kinds. All these four were close to each other.



Well worth the overnight stay.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 07-Jul-19 05:30 PM GMT

Brilliant stuff Dave a cracking selection of shots 😊📷 The penultimate open wing shot looks different from the others with more globular markings 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 07-Jul-19 09:18 PM GMT

Lovely shots Dave, I've yet to see the Large Blue, it looks fantastic with it's wings open, great shot 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 08-Jul-19 11:10 AM GMT

Thank you both – the annual trip down to see these butterflies is always a treat. 😊 It would be terrific if they were able to spread further afield (though apparently they can be found at a number of spots along the hills here, though generally on private land).

Unfortunately despite excellent weather on the Saturday (22nd), I was unable to go out anywhere for butterflies, and Sunday 23rd lacked the sunshine. So I was back at home on **Monday 24th June**, and started with a catch-up on my local patch.

There were a couple of notable sightings. Firstly the influx of Painted Ladies was now properly underway, with 16 mostly faded individuals seen.



One of these had markedly reduced underside spotting, apparent despite the wear.



Small Heath were numerous...



...and the first of the second brood Small Whites had appeared.





As ever, there is always something of interest here. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 08-Jul-19 08:26 PM GMT

That's a lovely selection there Dave 😊 16 Painted Ladies in one sitting 🤪 stop hogging em 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 08-Jul-19 09:59 PM GMT

Some more excellent content in your recent posts, Dave. Very much a 'Festival of the Fresh' with practically all the butterflies looking to have recently emerged.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Jul-19 10:22 AM GMT

Thanks, both – plenty of variety as ever, and there are some new butterflies appearing. 😊

I've slipped even further behind now – you'll be catching me up anytime now, Wurzel! 😊😊

Back to **24th June**, and Later The Same Day...

I popped down to Box Hill for the latter part of the afternoon, to indulge in another annual favourite – the period when new Dark Green Fritillaries and Marbled Whites abound together on Burford Spur and with luck pose nicely as the sun goes down.

As expected, the Marbled Whites were out in their hundreds, and in amongst them ten to a dozen DGF were zooming around. Mixed in with these were half a dozen Painted Ladies (just to confuse things), plus Meadow Browns, Small Heath, Large Skippers, a few new Ringlets, elderly Common Blues, and a couple of Red Admirals. As the afternoon wore on, there was rather more cloud, and the butterflies began to settle down.

Marbled Whites:





DGF:





Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Jul-19 10:40 AM GMT

**Tuesday 25th June:** Out again on my local patch, I concentrated on counting the butterflies rather than anything else. Interestingly, there was virtually no sunshine today (only an hour all day according to the Met Office record for Heathrow), but it was up to 24 degrees, making it very muggy.

The butterflies were flying in good numbers as if it were an ordinary sunny day, and over 90 minutes in the middle of the day I counted more than 150 of 14 different species. After the inevitable predominance of Meadow Browns (66 seen), the influx of Painted Ladies provided the next highest total – 29 is a conservative total. This proved to be the peak of this little invasion as they moved on through the following days.

Compared to some, this one was in pretty good condition and still quite bright in colour.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 14-Jul-19 08:38 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Dave – your local patch is certainly producing the goods 😊

"I've slipped even further behind now – you'll be catching me up anytime now, Wurzel! 😊😊" I'll slow down Dave 😊 Mind you I'm still a month behind you 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Jul-19 11:41 PM GMT

It certainly does, Wurzel, and I discovered recently that Green Hairstreaks were spotted on it in late April, adding another species to the possible list. I've never seen one here, but I now know where they are and have seen a photo to prove it! 😊

**Wednesday 26th June** – I met up with Bugboy down at Bookham, hoping to see the first Purple Emperors – they had been reported from here a few days earlier. We were eventually successful in this, but the sightings were limited to some skirmishes and perching at tree-top height.



However, the woods had good numbers of new White Admirals and Silver-washed Fritillaries, some of which came just about close enough for a shot or two.



We spotted a couple of dark "Black" Admirals, one of which looked almost completely dark and the other just a bit subdued. I managed a rather distant shot of the second one.



There were also a number of Painted Ladies, as you might expect at the moment...



...and some new Red Admirals.



One of these took a particular liking to Bugboy, and when we were trying to pin down the second dark White Admiral, it became a bit of a nuisance by repeatedly settling on one or other of us.



However, it did at one point take an appropriate interest in the various badges on Bugboy's rucksack.



Dave

Re: millerd

by bugboy, 15-Jul-19 09:58 AM GMT

I'm sure without that Red Admiral distracting us we'd have got some much better shots of that White ab.!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 15-Jul-19 12:36 PM GMT

Definitely, Buggy - I'm sure at one point the ab was sitting right behind us nectaring conveniently on a bramble while we were suffering the attentions of that Red Admiral! 😊😄😄

Having now seen the first Emperors of the summer, on **Thursday 27th June** I set off for Chiddingfold to see if they might be appearing down there too. The answer was in the negative - not even a fly-by - but the wonderfully fresh Silver-washed Fritillaries and White Admirals put on a good show in the meantime.



As I've now been seeing them everywhere, the powerful take-off from a hidden standing start of Painted Ladies had become much less of a "what was that?" moment - it was still quite tricky to actually get close to one.



As happens almost every time I'm down here, I managed to disturb a series of hidden Purple Hairstreaks from the side of the track, watching their leisurely silvery flutter of wings up into the trees. On the fifth occasion, when the butterfly settled a couple of feet directly above me but completely unphotographable, I was beginning to get a trifle fed up with it all. 😊

There were about a dozen species flying overall, including increasing numbers of Ringlets, and plenty of Large Skippers.





One of the slight surprises was finding that there were still half a dozen or so first brood Wood Whites on the wing – in fact they were the only white butterflies I saw during the visit. Despite their worn condition in terms of scale freshness, it was interesting to see that none showed any wing damage at all. Presumably this is a result of their gentle flight mode and careful avoidance of brambles, in complete contrast to the White Admirals which can shred their wings on their maiden flight by the look of some of them.



With the forecast very favourable, I decided to return again on Friday.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by ernie f, 15-Jul-19 06:15 PM GMT

I liked the clean shots of the Frits but looking back on this page my favourite pic was the red admiral's new camouflage technique by "hiding" amongst bugboy's badges! 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 15-Jul-19 10:45 PM GMT

Cheers, Ernie – that male SWF was absolutely spotless and was such a good poser as well! However, the Red Admiral probably outdid it in terms of posing... 😊 😊

I do like these long summer evenings – after Chiddingfold there was plenty of time left on **27th June** for another wander round my local patch late in the day. What a difference a couple of days make too – Painted Lady numbers had dropped since Tuesday to only eight. A couple of them were unusually dark compared to many of the pale ones that were thronging 48 hours earlier.



Most striking though was that there had been explosion of brilliant new *hutchinsoni* summer Commas. I counted no fewer than 13, popping up regularly along the circuit.







I say it every year, but having good numbers of this glorious butterfly around – performing aerobatics, chasing anything that moves, and sitting photogenically on the brambles – makes up for the lack of any fritillary species on my local patch. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 15-Jul-19 10:59 PM GMT

You are right about the Commas, Dave. Always a delight to see. Superb images of that male SWF, and the 'dark' White admiral. I might try Chiddingfold for one last time tomorrow/Weds.

Great to see you there recently.  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-19 10:35 PM GMT

Cracking set of reports Dave 🤔🍷 You're right about the H.Commas although they can be annoying when you're looking for SWFs as they can leave you second guessing until you get your eye in 😊😊 There isn't a lot of time difference between the first and second brood Wood Whites, the 2nd brood starting emerging this week 🤔😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Jul-19 10:25 AM GMT

Cheers, Trevor – that one last Purple hurrah at Chiddingfold on Tuesday was exactly that I think. Yesterday was a bit of a contrast (hardly any people for a start!). 😊

Thanks, Wurzel. At least on my local patch the whizzing orange maniacs have to be Commas, with no Fritillaries to confuse the issue. 😊 Yes, there was a scant fortnight between the last first brood Wood Whites and the start of the second. One or other brood tends to just overlap with the Emperors at Chiddingfold, but this year it's been both... 😊

Another visit to Chiddingfold on **Friday 29th June** also drew a blank Emperor-wise, but the SWF and White Admirals were getting into their stride and the first few Ringlets were starting to appear. It was also another sociable day with several familiar faces present. As I ended up down there most days over about a week, and then again after a few days break, I have lost track a bit of who I saw and when! 😊

I took surprisingly few pictures today (it must have been all the chatting!), but one fresh – and more importantly, whole – White Admiral obliged.



At lunchtime, the consensus was that no Emperors were going to grace us with their presence, so with the afternoon still to play with I decided to have a look at a couple of Silver-studded Blue sites before heading homeward.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 18-Jul-19 11:38 AM GMT

Cracking set of WA images Dave I really like the three quarter shots – you get the brilliant contrast between the stark black and white topside and the luscious reddy underside – for my money the best underside out of the Aristocrats that we get in the UK 🤔👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 18-Jul-19 11:56 AM GMT

I agree Wurzel, I missed out on side shots with my WA , it never closed it's wings and they are the best to catch, so yours Dave are great to see ,lovely shots. 🤔 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Jul-19 12:09 PM GMT

I agree 100% with that assessment of the White Admiral, Wurzel. 😊 This was a lovely fresh individual and I was lucky to get close enough for these shots. 😊

Thank you, too, Goldie – I think the bright sunshine encouraged it to close its wings from time to time. 😊

I now headed over to Thursley Common, conveniently just off the A3 and not far at all from Chiddingfold. The heathland here is quite extensive, but the area I usually visit is a walk of only five minutes or so from the road through Thursley village, with a patch favoured by Silver-studded Blues surrounding the weather station. I was quickly surrounded by small shining blue butterflies, though perhaps not in quite the numbers I have seen here before. However, all were fresh, so it was possibly slightly early in their season. Almost all were males, which tends to support this idea as well – later on, females predominate.

Males:



And there was still time to take in another site on the way home... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 18-Jul-19 02:38 PM GMT

Flippin heck Dave I only read your last post a little bit ago! 😊 I love seeing those Silver-studs 😊, great in cop shot and vivacious female 🍷; although they are a bit of a monoculture butterfly – when i saw mine at Slop bog I saw 2 butterflies of two species and almost 200 Silver-studs 😊😊. I'm left wondering where you're heading next – Local Patch?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Jul-19 08:42 PM GMT

Not this time, Wurzel – some more Silver-studs to come... 😊

My route home on **28th June**, conveniently avoiding Thursday evening traffic on the M25, took me via Dawneys Hill near Pirbright. This time last year, there were a few male Graylings out as well as Silver-studded Blues, but not this year. The Blues were down in numbers too, and it was noticeable that where the site had been cleared in previous years to prevent overgrowth, it was gorse that was now regrowing rather than heather and it looks to be taking over. The Silver-studs are to be found wherever the heather flowers, so if its area diminishes, so do they. 😊

Though later in the afternoon, it was becoming hot, and the butterflies I found were mostly keeping their wings shut. I tried some experimentation with shading them – which actually worked! They opened up in the shade, and would stay open briefly when exposed once again to the sunshine.



The only other species seen here today was the Meadow Brown but there were quite a few dragonflies whizzing about – this one chose to take a beather, however.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 19-Jul-19 08:20 AM GMT

More lovely shots Dave including an oily female 😊👍

" He was nothing special either, being both worn and torn." – this could be why she chose him, if he's a bit worn and tatty he's a survivor and so might possibly have those all important "good genes", or perhaps she had a penchant for Old Spice 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-Jul-19 08:47 AM GMT

Could be, Wurzel – I've noticed that pristine females often seem to end up with males that look a bit worse for wear... 😊

**Saturday 29th June** was, as predicted accurately for some days, a very hot day – it reached 34 degrees local to me at Heathrow. I had decided to be out early and was down in the relative cool of the woods at Bookham before eight o'clock. Large Skippers were already setting up shop on prominent bits of bracken, and Meadow Browns and Ringlets were darting in and out of the shade. The difference between the sex brands of these two male Large Skippers is quite striking: the first seems a bit unusual. The third is a female.



I was looking mainly for emerging Purple Hairstreaks, but once again failed dismally in this respect, seeing at best one or two above head height.

I did however find a particularly favoured bit of bramble, sheltered and in sunshine even this early on while most of the tracks were still in shade. White Admirals and Silver-washed Fritillaries had also found this, and along with a solitary Comma were fuelling up for the day.





We spent a while hopefully looking for Purple Emperors, but had no luck on this score, and by eleven the heat had increased quite a bit. Painted Ladies were appearing everywhere now, and substituting for the missing Emperors (which they mimic in a few aspects of behaviour) were Red Admirals.



At lunchtime we called it a day, and knowing 30+ degrees is not conducive to productive butterfly watching, I didn't venture out again today.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Pauline, 19-Jul-19 09:47 AM GMT

Interesting find Dave. I've never seen a Skipper with sex brands like that. Perhaps someone here might be able to explain.

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 19-Jul-19 10:51 AM GMT

A definite mrgreen 🍀 for that pristine White Admiral.  
Especially that final shot, a classic pose. Nice Purple Hairstreak underside shot.

They are all looking worn or tatty now,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 19-Jul-19 03:14 PM GMT

Lovely Butterfly shots Dave, the White Admiral looks really pristine, I didn't realise they'd been out so long, so glad I found one when I did here. Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 19-Jul-19 08:49 PM GMT

It is an odd one, Pauline, even taking account of the camera angle. The sex brand looks like a deep scar almost right through the wing. 😞

Cheers, Trevor – that White Admiral was far more intent on a bit of nectaring than bothering with me standing over it. Considering how flighty and nerry they can be most of the time, I considered myself quite lucky. 😊

Yes, Goldie, they've been around near enough a month now, and most are torn and tired. However, there seems to have been a prolonged emergence (possibly caused by that spell of cool weather in June) of several species – including SWF, White Admirals and Purple Emperors as well. This means there are some fresh-looking ones still around as well.

Thankfully, **Sunday 30th June** was not so hot, and more conducive to going out. I started off as I so often do with a morning walk around my local patch. Nearly half the 70-odd butterflies I saw were Meadow Browns, but I managed a pretty reasonable 15 different species today though with Small Skippers being the only other one in appreciable numbers.



...or this Red Admiral.



The new male GVW was not so spectacular...



...or a Holly Blue, though this one must be the last of the spring brood, surely.



It's never dull round here... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 20-Jul-19 08:11 PM GMT

With the afternoon of **30th June** looking to continue fine and increasingly warm again, a breezy hillside might be just the place, so I went north for a change, up to Aston Rowant. As I expected there were lots of Marbled Whites flying, with nearly as many Meadow Browns – plus Small Skippers (I didn't find any Essex), Small Heaths, Small Whites, Red Admirals, a Small Tortoiseshell and a few Painted Ladies.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 20-Jul-19 08:14 PM GMT

Lovely stuff Dave 😊 That Green-veined White is stunning even if it is a 'only a tiny bit Green-veined White' 😊😄🇬🇧 Lucious Red Admirals as well, although the Holly Blue does look a lot like I feel at the moment 😊😄😄  
Cracking DGFs - they're cracking looking butterflies 😊😄🇬🇧

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 20-Jul-19 08:18 PM GMT

**Monday 1st July**, and Chiddingfold beckoned once more. Would there be Emperors on the track at last?

The answer was in the positive, though my photographic efforts were minimal and nothing special. I know I did spend a lot of time chatting again! 😊  
😊😊 It was a very sociable morning.



I see a White Admiral joined in the feasting on the ground too.



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 20-Jul-19 08:27 PM GMT



Cheers, Wurzel – that GWV was exceptionally lemony and looked very yellow in flight, to the extent of me wondering what it was to start with. And you can't beat the velvet blackness of a fresh Red Admiral... 😊

A quick afternoon stroll around a bit of my local patch later on **1st July** threw up nothing exceptional today. Another Marbled White and a Small Tortoiseshell perhaps stand out.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 20-Jul-19 09:02 PM GMT

**Tuesday 2nd July**, and Chiddingfold it was again. Another extremely sociable day and this time many more photos were taken.

Not just of Emperors either. Along with the Silver-washed Fritillaries, a female Dark Green was spotted. Apparently, this species is seen most years in these woods, but only in very small numbers. It was the first I'd seen here, certainly.



The SWF were starting to change behaviour a bit, coming down to take minerals from the track and nearby as well as nectaring on the bramble. I managed to observe this bit of behaviour pretty closely, with the butterfly becoming totally engrossed. Though mostly in the shade...





...it did eventually emerge into sunlight, still sucking up the salts it needed.



White Admirals quite often do this, and one quite fresh one was a case in point, allowing shots of that colourful underside.



However, the main event once again was the coming to ground of a Purple Emperor, this time affording us all some better views.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 21-Jul-19 03:28 PM GMT

Always nice to see a grounded Emperor, Dave, but that White Admiral on the stone path gives it a run for its money. Lovely specimen.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 21-Jul-19 07:24 PM GMT

Brilliant set of images Dave 😊 As David says that WA does give the Emperor a close run for its money 🤔🤔🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 21-Jul-19 11:10 PM GMT

Cheers, both – I've had a decent run with White Admirals this year and there have been some nice individuals. 😊

The thing about grounded Emperors is that generally by late lunchtime, the excitement is over and there is the rest of the day to carry on and see something else. So later on **2nd July**, I headed first for Denbies to see if there were any early Chalkhills out. I searched in vain – the hillside still largely belonged to the Marbled Whites. I did however see a new Small Copper in the usual spot at along the western side of Steers Field...





Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 21-Jul-19 11:35 PM GMT

It was turning into a fine evening, so I scurried from Denbies over to Box Hill (sadly too late for a NT cup of tea) to see if the DGF over there were calmer than those at Denbies. They were, somewhat, and the odd bits of cloud around sent them down into the grass. Annoyingly, when shaded like this, they had a tendency to shiver slightly which is apparently a warming mechanism but leads to blurred photos. I found a particularly new female that was particularly prone to this and provided not a single clear shot.



That would have made a good end to the day, but there were one or two other little extras: a Small Tortoiseshell (I've been recording as many of these as I can since they are so thin on the ground these days);



Another Marbled White pairing



Finally, one or two more Marbled Whites, with a perfect male...



...and the underside of a female with more subtle colours.



That really was the end of the day – getting on for seven o'clock. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 22-Jul-19 09:25 AM GMT

Some lovely shots there Dave, 🍷🍷 especially the Marbled White, Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 22-Jul-19 07:01 PM GMT

What a cracking Day you had there Dave with an enviable selection of species 🍷 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 22-Jul-19 11:01 PM GMT

That's a lovely dusky Copper Dave and some luscious Marbs and DGFs – the evening is the best time for them, the golden glow sets of their gingeriness a treat 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 22-Jul-19 11:56 PM GMT

Some sublime images in your recent posts, Dave, and I feel a bit guilty for overlooking the obvious candidates and saying that your abnormally vivid yellow Green Veined White is the most striking amongst the smorgasbord you've presented.

I'd love to see one marked like that! 🍷

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 23-Jul-19 10:41 PM GMT

Thank you all – it's been quite a few days, with lots of variety. That GVW did stand out as unusual, considering it's one of the commoner species amongst all those I've been seeing. 😊

**Wednesday 3rd July** was a day off from Chiddingfold, with just a local trip out. Notable today were the numbers of Small and Essex Skippers, allowing some contrasting shots...







Another Small Tortoiseshell...



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Jul-19 09:30 AM GMT

The mornings of **4th and 5th July** were both once again spent in convivial company down in the woods of Chiddingfold, teasing this year's reluctant Purple Emperors down to the ground. We had hoped for better things as the weather had become a bit more humid as well as sunny which the consensus was that this is more conducive to this kind of sighting. On both days we were rewarded with sightings, but as earlier in the week, only small numbers. Writing this a few weeks later the memory blurs a bit, but on one day I particularly remember Andrew and I following an Emperor for some considerable distance along the track as it touched down for a few teasing seconds at a time – long enough for us to catch up, but not enough to even get the camera out. It keeps you fit... 😊

A few shots from both days:





There would be one more trip down here to visit the Imperial court, a bit later on.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 24-Jul-19 09:58 AM GMT

Some cracking shots Dave, I love the Emperor shots , I've not managed to see one so far, bit late now I think, so it's great to see yours 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Jul-19 10:24 PM GMT

Thanks, Goldie. It takes a bit of perseverance but it's always worth it in the end. 😊

I tried an early start down on the North Downs on **Saturday 6th July**, to beat a promised change in the weather and also to try and catch a few butterflies waking up. I started at Box Hill, and was greeted before I even reached Burford Spur by a White Admiral breakfasting on the brambles by the old fort.



After a coffee, I popped over to Denbies, where it was much the same story. I did get some shots of what I think may have been the same Small Copper in Steers Field that I encountered last time.



The clouds soon caught up with me and I returned home. The now rather dull conditions meant I didn't see too much, but I managed a shot of one of the few remaining Painted Ladies...



...and one of the small number of Ringlets that can be found here.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Jul-19 11:08 PM GMT

On 7th and 8th July, I stayed local, and later on 8th I travelled up to Yorkshire. My local walks produced a few things of interest – increasing numbers of Essex Skippers...



Reports from northern climes will have to wait – until I return from another trip up there! 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 24-Jul-19 11:11 PM GMT

Fantastic Emperors Dave and some luscious Essex among a fantastic eclectic collection 🍷🍷 I'm looking forward to the Northern posts – I'm trying to work out what caught your eye up there?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 25-Jul-19 02:11 PM GMT

You've certainly seen a huge range of species during the latter part of June and early July, Dave. I love your fresh Brown Argus in particular.

Looking forward to finding out what you saw up north. 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 31-Jul-19 10:48 AM GMT

Cheers, both – June is a busy month in terms of variety of less usual species. I think the idea of the "June Gap" must have referred to the more common ones, or is simply out of date these days as the warming climate changes the emergence dates of quite a few butterflies.

I travelled first to Holmfirth late on 8th July and stayed a couple of days. The weather was not particularly good, and I didn't see anything of note. I then moved across to my sister near York for two nights, and on 11th July the sun appeared enough to entice me out to the old chalk workings at Kiplingcotes. Marbled Whites were the dominant feature here – there were appreciable numbers enjoying the various types of knapweed – plus a modest selection of other species.



*Common Blue*



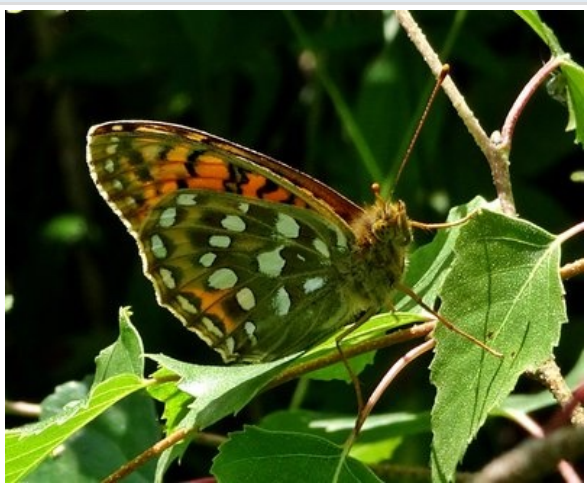
Dave

### **Re: millerd**

by millerd, 31-Jul-19 11:07 AM GMT

On **Friday 12th July**, I drove across the country to Cumbria, and Arnside Knott. It took far longer than anticipated, as I was held up for ages just getting from one side of Harrogate to the other. The main advantage of a later arrival though was that the sun had come out, and so had the butterflies. I saw perhaps 17 species this afternoon, including two new ones for the year: Grayling...





Great views from the Knott as always.



After a night in a hotel, I would be back the next morning, hoping for another Fritillary... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 31-Jul-19 02:46 PM GMT

Hi! Dave , there not so tatty now the Painted Ladies, the new arrivals are great 😊

It always amazes me Dave, the fact the Marble White's are in Yorkshire and not in Lancashire as well, unless nobody as found them yet 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 31-Jul-19 10:22 PM GMT

The Marbled Whites seem to be spreading in Yorkshire, Goldie, but the Pennines seem to be too big a barrier for them to cross over to your part of the world. You would have to have them arrive from the south, and I'm not sure where the nearest ones are to you that way.

Up fairly early on **Saturday 13th July**, and back to Arnside. The Knott sat in a pool of sunshine, defying the forecast in a favourable fashion for once. 😊



I also came across an attractive new Green-veined White...



...and several more Painted Ladies.



It was the only Fritillary I saw today, and a welcome sight indeed – making the pilgrimage very worthwhile. 😊 I don't think I've ever seen more than two of this species here, but curiously on each visit I have almost always seen one.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 01-Aug-19 07:31 PM GMT

Congrats. for finding that wonderful Dark Brown, Dave. 🍷  
Especially envious of the last two images, must make the effort one day.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

PS. Dawney's performed very well today.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 01-Aug-19 10:11 PM GMT

Cheers, Trevor! Yes, the High Brown was a lovely insect, and posed nicely too – I find they are far more amenable than their close cousins, the Dark Greens. 😊

Back south again, and on **Sunday 14th July** it had to be a local walk to catch up after the break. I managed to see around a hundred butterflies of a respectable 14 species in the 90 minutes between five and half six, and the late afternoon light really made the colours glow. All three skipper species put in an appearance...



...and Peacock numbers are starting to build.





They are having a better season here than last year already, and it's still early days. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 02-Aug-19 08:26 AM GMT

**Monday 15th July** – continuing reasonable weather, so it was time for a trip down to Denbies for the first Chalkhill Blues of 2019. There were good numbers flying, almost all new males, but by no means in the proportions you sometimes see here. They were still sharing the slopes with the Marbled Whites, but it was clear that this would not be for much longer – the latter were fading fast.



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 02-Aug-19 09:37 PM GMT

With the end of the afternoon left on **15th July**, there was time to pop over from Denbies to Box Hill for a welcome cup of tea and a few more butterflies. Out on Burford Spur, there were still numbers of DGF flying – mostly females, but a few worn males were hanging on too.





I counted about a dozen species, including a feisty Large Skipper that still looked fairly fresh.



A good end to the day.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 03-Aug-19 06:07 PM GMT

Hi! Dave, I'm really 🍷🍷 about your Dark Green fritillary 😊 lovely shots but I'll miss them this year 😊😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 03-Aug-19 06:12 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

...amongst the variety of moths disturbed as I walked, there was this one – not one I've knowingly seen before.moth 150719.JPG  
Dave

Shaded Broad-bar Dave, a nicely marked one too.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-Aug-19 09:15 PM GMT

Thank you, Goldie – it's a shame you won't get to see the DGF this year. There are still a few around, but they are getting rather worn now.

Cheers, Neil. That's not a moth I've come across before, so I shall tuck it away in my moth album! 😊

**Tuesday 16th July:** There was one last gathering of people of a purple persuasion down at Chiddingfold, and we were duly entertained by a rather

scruffy male Emperor who came down to the track and an area of mature bait of unmentionable origins. Over the Emperor season this year, many very sociable hours have been spent in a variety of excellent company, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for making it such an enjoyable midsummer climax to the butterfly season. I'd name everyone individually – if my memory were up to it! It's been great. 😊

Before I had reached the main event, I was side-tracked by one of the most cooperative White Admirals I have come across for a while. Unusually, despite not being particularly new, it was almost entirely whole.



...and a new second brood Wood White, of which five or six were seen.



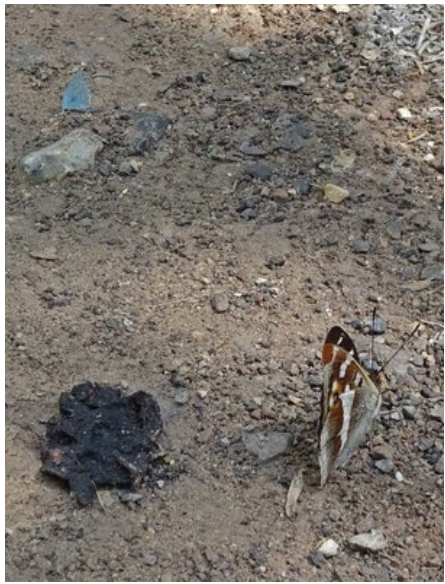
Not much gap between the broods this year.

Also attracted to the patch of imperial bait was a Holly Blue.



Completely unconcerned by the presence of the much larger species (which at one point it attempted to chase off – with little success), it made quite a contrast of the "little and large" kind.





However, the Purple Emperor was what we were really all here to see, somewhat faded or not.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-Aug-19 09:45 PM GMT

After all that, a ramble on my local patch later on **16th July** was always going to seem a bit tame, but there were 15 species flying, including some nice new Brown Argus and a splendid fresh Red Admiral.





Dave

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 03-Aug-19 10:09 PM GMT

On **Wednesday 17th July**, I had arranged to meet Bugboy down at Bookham. After an unexpected shot of a Meadow Brown with wings akimbo...







After meeting up with Bugboy, we drove on down to Chiddingfold. What a contrast to only twenty-four hours earlier! Gone were the groups of purple people, and gone were the Emperors too. The atmosphere was quite different. We looked mainly for Wood Whites, but found perhaps only ten at most.



On the black and white theme, there was also a White Admiral – seen from an unusual angle.



With plenty of hours left in the day, we decided to continue at Denbies – an entirely different kind of site.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 04-Aug-19 09:47 AM GMT

**17th July** (continued): Denbies Hillside. The Chalkhill Blues had now taken over from the Marbled Whites – noticeably even since my last visit only a couple of days before. Photos were exclusively of these, with the exception of a single female DGF, even though a dozen species were on the wing.









Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 08-Aug-19 05:34 PM GMT

Some beautiful Chalkhills in your recent posts, Dave. It's that time of year though when much of the rest is starting to look a little worn. Nice that you've got Wood Whites to search for not too far away from your neck of the woods. I so wish we had them here in south Wales.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-19 08:51 PM GMT

Crickey Moses Dave - I go away for a week and the reports flood in 🤖😄 It's difficult to know where to begin having finally caught up but those NBAs and the High Brown underside definitely deserve a few 🍷🍷🍷 cracking stuff! If the weather reports are to be trusted then I might be heading to Shipton on Monday or Tuesday next week - I'll PM over the weekend 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Aug-19 10:11 PM GMT

Thanks, David - fresh male Chalkhills are lovely insects and there is infinite variety. No two are the same, and it's no wonder the Victorians amassed large collections of them displaying every nuance imaginable.

It was a great little visit to Arnside, Wurzel, one of my favourite places even if the butterflies weren't quite so good there. However, the range of species there is amazing considering its northerly location, and seeing both NBA and HBF on the same day is a real highpoint of the year. The HBF was a corker

too, with just the small tear on one hindwing and kind enough to pose for the underside shots with its good side toward me! 😊

**Thursday 18th July** started wet, but by lunchtime it was very warm and muggy with some sunshine breaking through. I decided to undertake one of my periodic counts on my local patch, but inevitably there were photos as well. I counted 337 butterflies of 18 different species over around three and a half hours:

Gatekeeper 91

After a mediocre season in 2018, they are doing extremely well this year.



Small White 63  
Ubiquitous today.



a very dusky underside  
Meadow Brown 60  
Numbers waning slightly now.

Peacock 32  
An unusually large emergence this year, and some territorial behaviour seen too.



Essex Skipper 15  
Small Skipper 11  
An estimate – but of those counted, there was a definite majority of Essex.



Red Admiral 11  
A steady increase in numbers now.



Brown Argus 11  
The second brood is well underway, with some nice new examples.





Comma 9

It seems to be a very average year for this species. Both summer and winter forms are around.





Holly Blue 7

New second brood males are appearing, and many of them are headed straight for muddy patches to take minerals.





Large White 6

A poor year so far around here, but I did find a mating pair today.



Speckled Wood 6

Another common species that has been thin on the ground - this is the highest count this year.





Small Heath 5  
It is between broods at the moment.

GVW 4  
Very few amongst the many Small Whites.

Common Blue 3  
The second brood is just appearing.





Small Tortoiseshell 1  
Once again, just a singleton.



Brimstone 1  
Never seen in any numbers in the summer here, despite their reliably good showing each spring.

Ringlet 1  
Another singleton only – curiously never common on my local patch.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 11-Aug-19 09:25 AM GMT

Good to see your local patch performing so well, Dave.  
With nearly all specimens crisp and fresh!  
Send that Small Tort over this way, and my count for East Sussex will increase to five, so far this year.

Keep busy,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 11-Aug-19 07:52 PM GMT

A cracking array of butterflies and some impressive numbers from your local patch Dave – that's the gift that keeps giving 😊😄 Hopefully get some Brostreaks tomorrow 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 11-Aug-19 10:10 PM GMT

Cheers, Trevor and Wurzel! 😊 Three weeks down the line and looking back, that was probably the peak day in terms of overall numbers on my local patch (the peak for number of species was a few days later). It is interesting that a bright (rather than properly sunny) day produced the goods.

#### A Grayling Day

19th July was wet, and I didn't venture out, but on **Saturday 20th July** the forecast was more encouraging despite heavy showers being threatened. I headed for Dawneys Hill near Pirbright, parked, and set off along the eastern edge which is lined with some particularly healthy-looking oak trees. I hoped to see Purple Hairstreaks, but the sky suddenly darkened and abruptly I was subjected to a major drenching. It wasn't cold, but I headed back to the car and sat it out with the heater on full blast (it made little difference in fact). The downpour lasted another fifteen minutes or so and was then replaced with sunshine, so I set off again, dripping gently and squelching through the puddles. It was odd to see this invariably dry piece of heathland looking so wet, and I wondered whether the Graylings would be discouraged by it. Definitely not – they were soon out and about, paddling on the wet ground and behaving generally as they normally do.



Dawneys Hill is a Silver-studded Blue site as well, and the two species usually overlap a bit. However, there were not many left today and very few were in any way new. The best of the bunch:





One curiosity today was finding a dead Adder. This reptile has only been seen at this site a couple of times, apparently. It is difficult to imagine how it met its end, as most creatures tangling with a venomous snake tend to fare badly. There was no obvious damage (from a bird of prey for example).



Finally, not one, but two opportunities to play "Spot the Grayling"! 😊





On the way home, I had a look at another Grayling site, but that'll be a separate post.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-Aug-19 06:47 PM GMT

My route home on **20th July** avoiding motorway traffic took me close to Chobham Common, so I popped in to see how the Graylings were faring there. This site is much more open and exposed, and there was quite a breeze blowing. I was only able to find a handful of the target species...



...and a very sandy-coloured Small Heath.



Back at home, there was still enough time to be entertained by an evening Red Admiral or two.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 12-Aug-19 07:01 PM GMT

I's say that second Skipper is a Small with that scent brand 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-Aug-19 07:22 PM GMT

I stayed on my local patch again on **Sunday 21st July**, heading out early for a change. I saw around 150 butterflies of 16 species before eleven o'clock, without covering the whole area by any means. Many of those I saw were very new, including the Holly Blues. All those seen were male, and were found puddling in a muddy area left by recent rain. Despite four or five fluttering around the same spot, no more than two ever landed together, though the pair made for some interesting shots.



There were Common Blues of both sexes...





...new GW...



...and new Large Whites as well.







Amongst many others, a brand new shiny Small Copper also stood out, sporting particularly prominent tails.



This really is a great time of year here. 😊

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 12-Aug-19 07:31 PM GMT

bugboy wrote:

I's say that second Skipper is a Small with that scent brand 😊

I think you could be right 😊 ... It's not the best of photos, but I can now there is just a hint of orange just at the tip of one antenna. However, what deceived me was the fact that the scent brand is apparently divided, which usually means it's Essex...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-Aug-19 07:56 PM GMT

On **Monday 22nd July**, I did a quick local circuit again to start the day. More new butterflies...



However, the main event today was a trip up to Aston Rowant to see if the first Silver-spotted Skippers were flying. I was greeted with good numbers of Chalkhill Blues and it was noticeable that the Marbled Whites had already virtually disappeared.



There were a few new Small Coppers...



...and a couple of Small Tortoiseshells



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 12-Aug-19 08:57 PM GMT

Where to start Dave? At the beginning...cracking twofer shot (in cop and in the hand) of the Graylings 😊🇩🇪 A very continental looking Small Copper (most of them had tails in Portugal) 😊🇩🇪 and an absolutely sublime Silver-spot 😊🇩🇪🇩🇪🇩🇪 Fingers crossed tomorrow is as productive 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 14-Aug-19 06:39 AM GMT

Some lovely butterflies there, Dave, but that Small Heath in you latest post is particularly striking.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Aug-19 12:33 PM GMT

I think I caught that Small Heath just as it was preparing to take off, David, hence the large amount of forewing visible.

Cheers, Wurzel – interesting observation about the Small Copper. I know they are darker in warmer climes (and in hot spells in the UK), but I hadn't picked up on the prominence of the tails. Always something new to learn. 😊 Yesterday did turn into a productive day, though it was hard work for a while! 😊

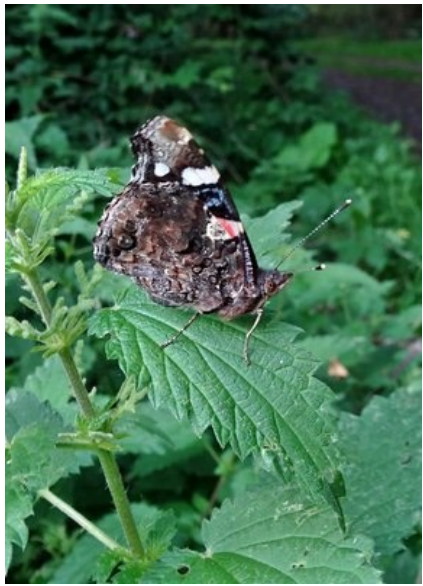
**Tuesday 23rd July** – the weather was seriously heating up now, with 34 degrees reached at Heathrow this afternoon. I ventured out before it got too uncomfortable (plus an early evening foray), and recorded the highest number of species seen on my local patch on a single day – 20. The overall total wasn't as high as on the 18th (only around 250), but I wasn't out for so long today. The 20 species were:

- Meadow Brown
- Gatekeeper
- Small Heath
- Speckled Wood
- Ringlet
- Peacock
- Small Tortoiseshell
- Red Admiral
- Comma
- Brimstone
- Large White
- Small White
- Green-veined White
- Small Copper
- Common Blue
- Brown Argus
- Holly Blue
- Purple Hairstreak
- Small Skipper
- Essex Skipper

Only a few photos – the brilliant sunshine made things really difficult.



However, I did manage a couple of shots of Red Admirals in the fading light at around half eight in the evening.



They continued to fly into early twilight, presumably as it remained in the high twenties until nearly midnight.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Aug-19 12:44 PM GMT

**Wednesday 24th July** – fractionally less hot (only 33 degrees at Heathrow today), but fewer butterflies seen on my local patch. More puddling on the rare muddy spots – Holly Blues again, and a Peacock.



Also seen today was a Jersey Tiger moth, breaking cover along the shaded path next to the lake with a flash of brilliant red-orange.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Aug-19 12:56 PM GMT

On **Thursday 25th July**, my son and I were headed north to my sister's place in Wilberfoss just east of York. We set off early, knowing it would be very hot, and managed to escape the record temperatures notched up today (38.7 degrees at Heathrow apparently). It was a bit cooler in Yorkshire (still an unbelievable 35 degrees when we arrived though). Butterflies were not high on the agenda today, but the garden buddleia hosted a few.



There was also a mating pair of Small Whites.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 14-Aug-19 01:25 PM GMT

Last month was a hectic one wasn't it 😊 Seems like a very long time ago now what with today's washout of a day 😊!

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 14-Aug-19 06:09 PM GMT

I like that Small Heath shot has well Dave in your post for the 22nd July, it's surprising really how a distant shot can stand out occasionally from the close up ones, "lovely" 🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by David M, 14-Aug-19 08:58 PM GMT

Great to see the odd vanessid within your posts, Dave. It's hard to imagine temperatures of 33c in the UK for me, as here in Wales we only reach 30 once every Preston Guild. That said, I'm sure it elicits unusual behaviour in our home-bred butterfly population, so tales of mud-puddling are not surprising.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 15-Aug-19 08:39 PM GMT

More cracking reports Dave 😊 Interesting to see the Red Admirals flying into the evening – mind you with those temperatures it must have felt like midday at midnight 😊 That Jersey Tiger is such a striking moth it should be an honorary butterfly 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Maximus, 15-Aug-19 09:09 PM GMT

An interesting report from Dawneys, Dave, in your recent posts. Nice Grayling shots including the mating pair, and the one on the picnic table 😊 It's sad that you found the dead Adder as we've not seen one there since the site was 'refurbished' 😊

Mike.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Aug-19 09:34 AM GMT

Glad you liked that one, Goldie – you're quite right, the more distant shots often have more "atmosphere" and you get a better all-round feel for where you found the butterfly. 😊

July was pretty full-on, Buggy! 😊 Out nearly every day – lots of sites, lots of species to see.

Here in the southeast, David, the thermometer seems to top 30 degrees quite regularly every summer, and at least one day a year gets close to 35.

Things really do seem to be warming up. 😊

Red Admirals tend to be most active in late afternoon around here, Wurzel, and it's common to see them still flying towards dusk. After sunset is a little unusual though! 😊 I agree - Tiger moths all deserve to be associate members of the butterfly club! 😊

Cheers, Mike - not exactly a picnic table, as I suspect you know... 😊 😊

The next few days in Yorkshire were a bit cooler and less settled, but my sister's garden did as usual provide some interest (28th and 29th July).











There were a couple of trips out as well, which I'll post separately.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Aug-19 11:02 AM GMT

My first side trip up in east Yorkshire was to Kiplingcotes on **Friday 26th July**. It was still pretty warm, but not particularly sunny. I remember that at the same time in 2018, I had seen Wall Browns here, but the two seasons have run differently and none were seen today. For one thing, there were still a few worn Marbled Whites left.





...and good to see several Small Tortoiseshells



This included one that appeared to be playing peek-a-boo behind a grass stem.



It became clear it was laying.



With Large White, Peacock, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Meadow Brown and Speckled Wood in addition to those depicted, it was quite productive despite the absence of the Walls.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Aug-19 11:30 AM GMT

On **Monday 29th July**, I popped just down the road from Wilberfoss to Calley Heath. I came across a couple taking an interest in the butterflies too (though they were principally there to count the Hebridean sheep grazing part of the reserve) and it turned out they knew Callum. The small world of UKB! They told me of a major emergence of Painted Ladies just up the road at Allerthorpe Common, and also directed me to an area of Calley Heath I had not hitherto explored – a meadow beyond the trees to the north. Apparently Marbled Whites had been seen here – a further expansion of their range. However, I couldn't track one down amidst the myriad of white butterflies flying in this area.

As ever with this site, Small Coppers were the stand-out species...







Always worth a visit here! 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Aug-19 11:40 AM GMT

Also on 29th July, back in the garden, I noticed the large numbers of eggs laid on the nasturtiums by both Large and Small Whites. The clusters of

Large White eggs stood out in particular.



I then became aware of a bit of movement under one of the larger leaves, and in the shade this afforded a female Large White was laying.







Dave



### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 16-Aug-19 10:16 PM GMT

Great sequence of the egg laying Large White Dave something I've not witnessed before 😊 Also the Painted Lady from before is a cracker – a real stand out butterfly and about a million miles away from the state of the ones I've been seeing 😊🇩🇪 So going back to what we were discussing the other day are those Brown Argus or Northern Brown Argus? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 18-Aug-19 10:07 AM GMT

Very nice, Dave. Those Brown Argus are a real delight. Good to see that Large White ovipositing too....hopefully they will recover in numbers in 2020 because they have had a shocking year in my area.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Aug-19 12:47 PM GMT

The butterflies from both these Yorkshire sites are standard Brown Argus, Wurzel, not the Northern version. They are very much double-brooded and appear to have spread from the south relatively recently. I'm not sure where your first encounter with NBA going north from here – it may be County Durham. Brown Argus do seem to be doing well up here.

It's the first time I've successfully pictured Large Whites in the act of laying – when I've tried before, the butterfly has always made its escape. It does seem that they haven't done very well this year, David – maybe the usual top-up from the Continent hasn't arrived. It could perhaps be widespread use of insecticide both here and abroad, especially on the acres and acres of fields of rape that must tempt this species into laying.

Home again on **Wednesday 31st July**, a catch-up with my local patch was required. The major event was that the expanse of grassland between the M25 and the River Colne had been mowed flat. This basically had put an end to the season for Small and Essex Skippers, and severely curtailed the activity of Brown Argus, Common Blues, Gatekeepers, Small Heaths and Meadow Browns. Aside from the skippers, all were seen but in much reduced numbers.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Aug-19 01:02 PM GMT

On **Thursday 1st August**, I started the day at Bookham, once more meeting up with Bugboy. The possibility of early Brown Hairstreaks was there, but they didn't materialise. However, I finally encountered a couple of their Purple relatives low down – but at this stage of their season, they were far from new.



The Silver-washed Fritillaries were past their best too...



Bugboy somehow managed to find his way to the shaded honeysuckle where he had found tiny White Admiral caterpillars.



Next stop would be Box Hill...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Aug-19 01:12 PM GMT

Continuing my day on **1st August**, I arrived at Box Hill and headed for the slopes at Dukes, a good area for Silver-spotted Skippers. They didn't disappoint.







There were certainly well into double figures. There were also a few Common and Chalkhill Blues, plus the odd Brown Argus and Small Copper.



Of course, if you are at Box Hill, it would seem silly not to go to Denbies as well.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 18-Aug-19 01:34 PM GMT

The final stop on **1st August** was therefore Denbies Hillside. A few Silver Spots were flying here too, but much more spread out than over the other side of the Mole Valley.



However, Chalkhill Blues were in charge today, the males beginning to fade but fresh females appearing in good numbers. At least at this point in the season there is no confusing them with Adonis females, which have yet to appear.





Variations in the light made big differences to the appearance of an individual, with degrees of iridescence on this particular new butterfly.







Finally an aberration, though a congenital one rather than genetic I think.



Another varied and interesting day. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 18-Aug-19 04:58 PM GMT

Lovely shots Dave, I thought the Adonis might all be out by now, I did wonder if they'd still be about in late September, I don't think I've mentioned this before 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 18-Aug-19 10:02 PM GMT

Thanks for the info on the BAs Dave - I wonder if the powers that be in the butterfly world will come up with a new geographical boundary for this species? More cracking reports with a fantastic collection of butterflies. 😊 I don;t know how you manage to fit so many trips into one day 🍷🍷 Those Pups are still nice to see despite their vintage appearance and those Silver Spots are cracking 😊🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 18-Aug-19 10:16 PM GMT

Those WA cats came out pretty good in the end (with the help of your makeshift flash diffuser) 😊

### Re: millerd

by David M, 19-Aug-19 06:54 PM GMT

It's a funny time of year, Dave, with fresh and faded often side by side. Nice work with those larvae, although perhaps Bugboy should get a mention for his detective work!

## Re: millerd

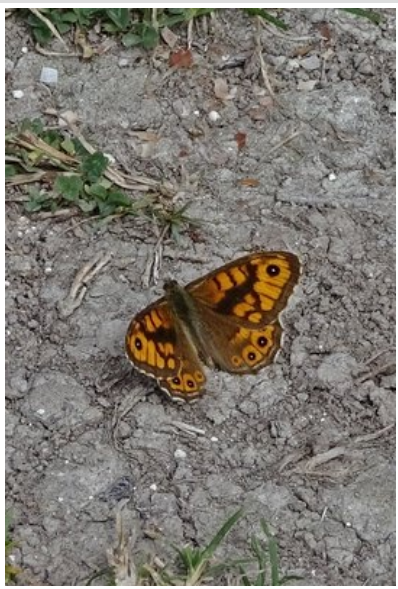
by millerd, 20-Aug-19 08:39 AM GMT

The second brood Adonis seem to be a bit slow in coming out, Goldie, and a bit thin on the ground – my post was back at the start of August too. 😊

Cheers, Wurzel – just the start of the Silver Spots, and they seem to be doing pretty well in contrast. More to come... 😊

Yes, David, Bugboy did all the groundwork with those WA caterpillars! I just waved a camera at them... 😊 As he mentions, my improvised method of reducing flash and intensity glare seemed to do the trick. 😊

Another decent day on **Friday 2nd August**, so I went a bit further afield, starting with Steyning Rifle Range for the possibility of Brown Hairstreaks. I did actually see one, briefly down on the hedge along the path up from the bowling club before it was disturbed by someone coming the other way and flew up into the trees. However, I saw none either in the mass of blackthorn and bullace at the bottom of the main area, nor along the blackthorn hedge at the top (aside from a possible male flying around the top of an ash tree). However, along the path by this second hedge, there was a constant stream of patrolling Wall Browns – perhaps half a dozen males all told. They were typically problematic to photograph, and my best effort in the end came with a fairly fresh female that joined them and caused much excitement later on.





With lack of success on the hairstreak front, I carried on down the road to Mill Hill.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 20-Aug-19 08:57 AM GMT

**2nd August** - continued.

Mill Hill was characteristically alive with a variety of butterfly life. New Adonis Blues were sprinkled amongst the more worn but more numerous Chalkhills...



I came across two species I'd never seen on this hillside before – a female DGF hiding in the grass...



...and several Silver-spotted Skippers, one of which posed rather nicely.



There were Wall Browns here as well, no more cooperative and mostly considerably more worn than those at Steyning.



Finally, there were a selection of newly emerged Painted Ladies, looking resplendent in deep salmon-pink.





Another worthwhile excursion to the Sussex countryside. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 20-Aug-19 09:08 AM GMT

Brilliant stuff Dave 😊 Cracking Silver Spots 🍷 I'm starting to panic now as I've still not seen them and I don't think I'll be able to get out until the weekend ahhhh 😱

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 20-Aug-19 12:25 PM GMT

Lovely Adonis Blues Dave, and quite a good collection of Butterflies Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by David M, 21-Aug-19 10:09 PM GMT

Those are great images of the Silver Spotted Skippers in particular, Dave. The Adonis and Chalkhills are pretty impressive too.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 22-Aug-19 09:32 AM GMT

Cheers, everyone. 😊 There were still plenty of Silver-spots up at Aston Rowant a few days ago, so you should still have a chance elsewhere, Wurzel. 😊

On **Saturday 3rd August**, it started off fairly cloudy so I stayed local initially. A good choice as around 150 butterflies of 15 species were seen in around 90 minutes. Despite the depredations of the mower, the grassland butterflies had bounced back a bit – goodness knows how many there might

have been... In that context, here is a rather ironically incongruous bit of signage.



I plan a separate post relating to Heathrow expansion and its effects on this and other green areas owned by the airport.

Brown Argus in particular were still doing well today.







A few others. Painted Ladies are reappearing now...



...and of course, there were the Holly Blues.



Jersey Tigers continue to burst alarmingly brightly from cover and then settle again less ostentatiously.



The sun started to appear at lunchtime, so an excursion seemed in order for the afternoon.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Goldie M, 22-Aug-19 09:51 AM GMT

Hi! Dave , great shots of the SSS, I've never seen a Jersey Tiger moth, they look fantastic, that's another moth for me to look out for. Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 22-Aug-19 07:53 PM GMT

That's a very fine female Wall, a couple of posts back, Dave. Holly Blues seem to follow you around too. I eagerly await the results of your trip to Shipton Bellinger with Wurzel, double figures of BH I understand. The Sussex ones are a little scarce this year.

Some great images lately !,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 22-Aug-19 08:29 PM GMT

One of those Brown Argus has the look of Snelleri about it (if that's the correct term?) Dave 🤔 Cheers for the SSS reassurance, Saturday looks good for them so long as I can make an early start before they get too silly 😊 Cracking Jersey Tiger - I've not knowingly seen one in the UK 🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 22-Aug-19 10:29 PM GMT

Thanks, Goldie - Jersey Tigers are generally a southern English species I think, and for some reason are increasing in the London area. I've certainly seen more round here this year than ever before.

Cheers, Trevor - it was a pleasant surprise to find pretty fresh Walls at Steyning, making up a bit for the lack of Hairstreaks. Your informant was correct - Shipton B. provided a good number by way of compensation. 😊 There will be plenty more Holly Blues in the coming posts too, including a very friendly female I encountered yesterday. 😊

You could be right with the name for that one, Wurzel - that variation on the Brown Argus seems to crop up fairly regularly on my local patch.

As Saturday's weather improved, for the afternoon of **3rd August**, I headed up to Aston Rowant. It was pretty well perfect for seeing Silver-spotted Skippers, with a mix of sun and cloud, not too warm, not too windy. They were around in excellent numbers, every couple of paces along the paths criss-crossing the slope, basking on rabbit scrapes and sitting on flowers.



They really are a very attractive and engaging butterfly.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 22-Aug-19 10:46 PM GMT

In fact there were other butterflies out and about at Aston Rowant, and I also began chatting with a fellow enthusiast who seemed vaguely familiar. She had a bit of a Glasgow accent, and the penny dropped – we had encountered each other a year back, up at Arnside Knott, where we had been entertained by a High Brown Fritillary. Very pleasant to meet again. The other principal species on the wing today was the Chalkhill Blue. Both males and females were flying, and with no Adonis around yet to confuse the issue, all the females had to be Chalkhills.





The males were generally not as fresh...



Amongst others, there were a few Common Blues...



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Aug-19 01:21 PM GMT

From **4th to 10th August** I was staying with my friend in Holmfirth. The weather was a bit mixed, but there were some sunny and warm spells, during which it was apparent that the Painted Lady invasion had comprehensively annexed this part of Yorkshire. They were everywhere, along with good numbers of Peacocks too.

I had a couple of days left to my own devices, so on **Thursday 8th August**, which luckily looked pretty favourable from a weather point of view, I headed up to Cumbria for the day. The plan was look for Scotch Argus, firstly at Arnside and then at Smardale Gill if the first spot failed to deliver and/or if time permitted. As it turned out, as I approached Arnside the clouds parted (though clearly remained to the north) so I became ever hopeful. My first stop was once again the Heathwaite meadow, which had burst forth with flowers since my last visit a month earlier. It had also burst forth with Painted Ladies, and I counted over 30 before losing track. They were immensely variable in depth of colour and degree of wear, but there were one or two paler ones that caught the eye. I concentrated on the most extreme of these individuals, which almost looked white in contrast to some – this normal one for example.



It was stunningly different.



Also flying in this area: Common Blues...



...and a female Wall Brown



Lots of interest already, and I hadn't even ventured up the Knott itself to seek out my target for the day.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Aug-19 02:09 PM GMT

**8th August:** Arnside continued.

With the sun shining and it becoming warmer, I set off up the path to the top of the hill. There were still plenty of Gatekeepers around, nectaring on the abundant flowering marjoram, and then I noticed something else amongst them – firstly a very faded Grayling...



...and then both male and female Scotch Argus.







I continued to the trig point at the top of the hill, and found a further little concentration of this species in sheltered spots up here.



Up here I also came across another Wall, a male this time.



Wandering back down to the car, I meandered across a scree-covered area just above the woods at the bottom of the hill. There were lots of flowering scrubby brambles, and as it turned out at least a dozen Scotch Argus. Mostly quite worn, there were nevertheless one or two fresher ones. I had a bit of camera trouble here, with the clever autofocus resolutely deciding the brightest bits were the important ones. This meant the big dark brown butterfly in the middle was ignored in favour of a bright white bramble or one of the yellow flowers the butterflies also liked. That said, I did manage a shot or two.









Arnside is an amazing place, with a terrific range of species and always a surprise or two. I had inevitably run out of time, so Smardale Gill would have to wait for another season.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 24-Aug-19 07:37 PM GMT

Send a couple of those this way, and save me the journey. That last Scotch Argus does look very fresh.

Well earned images, Dave, Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Maximus, 24-Aug-19 08:21 PM GMT

Nice to see those Scotch Argus, Dave, some look very fresh 😊 That's one we've yet to see 🙄

Mike.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 24-Aug-19 11:06 PM GMT

That Painted Lady has to be an ab. surely Dave? The wings look in really good condition with all the margins in tact? 🙄🇧🇪 Those Scotch Argus 🙄🇧🇪🇧🇪  
🇧🇪 I really need to get 'opp North' one year - that last one is in mint condish, lovely and velvety 🙄🇧🇪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 26-Aug-19 09:22 PM GMT

You took the risk, and you were rewarded, Dave. Fair Play.

Interesting to see the degree of wear on those Scotch Argus even on that relatively early August day. Just shows how far advanced the seasons have become generally.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 31-Aug-19 10:57 PM GMT

Thanks, everyone. It was worth the return trip to Arnside for the Scotch Argus, and I was lucky I had the opportunity. In fact though, the day was made by the shining pale Painted Lady – as you say, Wurzel, it must be an aberrant. It certainly wasn't particularly worn.

As I've just been north again, I've slipped well behind with this diary. There were some surprises on this latest trip too, but I'll get round to them in a week or two... 😊

So, back home on **Sunday 11th August**. Nearly mid-month and still no Brown Hairstreaks definitely seen, so I headed down to Bookham again in warm sunshine, though more in hope than genuine expectation. However, At 1115, I spotted a female down in the foliage. She looked very new, and could well have been freshly emerged, especially as when she finally took off, it was straight up into the trees. Underside views only, but very nice for all that.



After an hour of searching the hedgerows, I managed to find another. This was also a female, the difference being that she was much more worn – but she did oblige with an upperside view.



Shortly after this one had sailed away down the track I found another new-looking one, but failed to get anywhere near it before it too made a swift exit from the scene. Feeling pretty satisfied with the day so far, I then came upon an unsurprisingly disgruntled Bugboy, who had been searching high and low far longer than I had, but with no luck. We continued to search and I did spy another quite low down along the hedge, and at least Bugboy managed a glimpse before this one escaped our gaze.

Lunchtime arrived and we called it a day. I counted myself quite lucky in the end to see what I did.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 01-Sep-19 12:42 PM GMT

I remember that frustrating day! I wasn't that far away when you saw her but i had my phone off 😞

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-19 08:34 PM GMT

Cracking set of Brostreak shots Dave 😄👍 There's definitely been something amiss with the Brostreaks this year as they have been really hard work 😞 Hopefully things will be better next year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 01-Sep-19 10:32 PM GMT

I think you were really unlucky that day, Bugboy. Those are the only ones I've seen down at Bookham all season, mind. 😞

Cheers, Wurzel - more Hairstreaks to come from the morning at Shipton B. a couple of days later. 😊

However, I also had to catch up with my local patch later on **11th August**. The second brood Brown Argus and Common Blue numbers have been noticeably hit by the mowing of their habitat, but there were a few reasonable specimens around.









Red Admirals are increasing in numbers...



However, for the first time in a while, Holly Blues were the most numerous species today: I counted 22 altogether.







Top of the pile was this very dusky female.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 02-Sep-19 10:45 AM GMT

Two outstanding images recently, Dave. That pristine female Brown Hairstreak, and that last female Holly Blue image. I found a rather special Blue this morning.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 02-Sep-19 03:08 PM GMT

Just catching up Dave on my posts, we set off for the Lakes on the Bank Holiday and had to give up on the journey and settle for Brockholes, the traffic was horrendous , 😞 Fantastic shots of the SA 🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

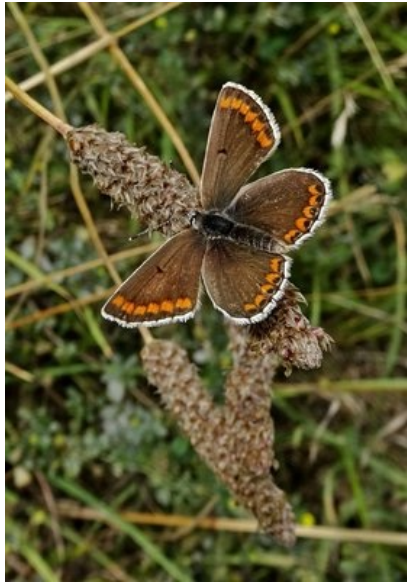
by millerd, 02-Sep-19 07:25 PM GMT

Thank you, Trevor. She was a particularly fresh Brown Hairstreak, and I wish I'd had a glimpse of the upperside. The Holly Blue was a very nice one as well, with the second brood now in full swing. 😊

Thanks, Goldie – the Scotch Argus weren't pristine, but at least there were one or two that were fairly fresh. 😊

Very little sunshine to be had on **Monday 12th August**, and noticeably cool. However, it was bright, and though most species on my local patch were down in numbers on the previous day, there was a surge in sightings of Meadow Browns (I counted 29 against only 6 yeasterday – most curious).

As well as the usual small selection of Brown Argus and Common Blue...



...I tried my hand at some of the Whites flying...



...and then some of the Painted Ladies and Red Admirals.





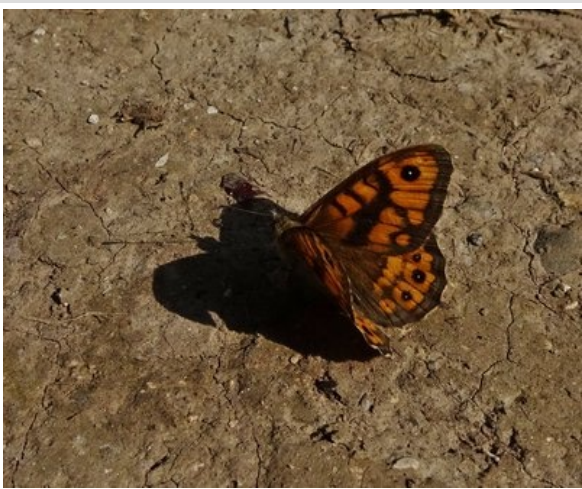
Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 02-Sep-19 08:19 PM GMT

The plan had been to meet up with Wurzel at Shipton Bellinger on 12th, but the lack of sunshine on the day mentioned above meant a postponement for 24 hours. So on **Tuesday 13th August** instead, I headed southwest to a spot renowned for good numbers of Brown Hairstreaks.

Coming from the London side, it was easier to park in the village and wander up the track to the hotspot. With large amounts of blackthorn on either side, I wondered whether I would have an early sighting. However, I was soon distracted by the somewhat unexpected sight of a Wall pottering along the path in front of me, always keeping a little way ahead as usual.



After that surprise, only a few minutes later I caught sight of the familiar chocolate and orange colours of a female Brown Hairstreak, half-hiding in the hedgerow.



First success, only 20 past 10, and I hadn't even met up with Wurzel yet!

Soon afterwards, the rendezvous was accomplished, and we set about scouring the various hedgerows for further butterflies. There were a number of

other folk on a similar quest, and though some Hairstreaks had apparently been seen distantly, it wasn't until midday that one came close enough for me to try a shot or two. This particular butterfly had been in the wars somewhat too.



Whilst searching the site with Wurzel, it became clear that there was quite a lot else to see. The number of Wall Browns probably reached double figures – apparently they are on the increase again, and this is exciting stuff as technically these were *Hampshire* butterflies, not by any means a common occurrence at all.





...fresh Brimstones...



...Meadow Browns basking with open wings...





...and new Speckled Woods in the shady bits



It was getting on for two o'clock before more Hairstreaks appeared in positions where some reasonable shots could be attempted. We had seen a number of others in a variety of very brief encounters, and were beginning to wonder if that was all we'd get to see. There were certainly just into double figures of actual sightings. However, all came good at this point, and the ripe (and more particularly, overripe) blackberries proved to be the main attraction.







There were other aspects of behaviour too – in fact, this individual was egg-laying.



Though it was hard work today, the rewards (eventually!) were really worthwhile. Good to meet up again, Wurzel! We've seen some cracking butterflies this year. 😊😄



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 02-Sep-19 08:34 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Dave – great set of shots 🤩👍 and you did really well to capture the War Veteran, my lens just couldn't do her justice 😊 It was hard work wasn't it? And a week or so later it was just as difficult – it seem that the Golden Zone was from 10–10:30 and the from 2–2:45 this year 🤔🙄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 04-Sep-19 08:56 AM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel – I was surprised at how well the shots of that very torn individual came out. Those two anyway... The deletions were manifold. 😊 The species has been very tricky this year, and I haven't seen another one since.

In fact, I tried again at Bookham on **Thursday 15th August** and failed. Truth be told, butterflies were hard to find altogether with only tired-looking Gatekeepers being around in any numbers.



The only other thing that caught my eye was this dragonfly pairing.



With so little to be seen here, I moved on.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 04-Sep-19 09:31 AM GMT

From Bookham down to Denbies is only about 8km as the butterfly flutters, though by road it's quite a bit further and can take surprisingly long. Nevertheless, this is where I headed next on **15th August**. Halfway through August now, and the downland had begun to have the feel of approaching Autumn, and the butterflies were no longer fresh. Scattered across the slopes there were a dozen or so Silver-spotted Skippers. They are never at the density found at Aston Rowant, and seem to fly further and more energetically between flowers.





A single Small Tortoiseshell had also found the marjoram.



Most of the interest was, unsurprisingly, provided by various Blue butterflies. Neither Common Blue nor Brown Argus were numerous, but popped up singly here and there.





Chalkhills were probably the most frequent, and although most were worn...



Most striking, and generally fresher, were the Adonis. Numbers this year have taken a hit – one theory (as expressed by Mr SpOck elsewhere on UKB) lies with the browsing habits of the Belted Galloway cattle grazing the hillside. I'm not sure why they are let out on the hill so early on, as I'm sure grazing used to start later in the year.







I have not included female butterflies in either of the selections of Chalkhills and Adonis above. The two species are amazingly difficult to distinguish, and were flying together today. Here is a selection – I have made a guess for each as selected in the captions and filenames, but am not really 100% sure of any of them! Happy to be corrected on any or all of these assumptions... 😊 😊



75% Adonis



55% Adonis



55% Chalkhill



95% Chalkhill



95% Chalkhill

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by essexbuzzard, 04-Sep-19 06:46 PM GMT

Interesting observations, Dave. My feeling was that butterflies in general were fewer at Denbies on my visit. I remember a few years ago, the site got very overgrown during the summer, so perhaps that's why they have had grazing animals on this year.

For what it's worth, I think all your females could be Chalkhills, though I'm not 100 % certain. I have always found Adonis to be a richer, deeper shade of brown, and a bit smaller.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 05-Sep-19 10:25 PM GMT

Lovely set of shots Dave, luscious Chalkhills and Adonis (like the one in the hand in particular 🍷) and really cute Silver Spots. I had a look at the females and wondered if they were all Chalkhills and then I saw that Essex had already posted similar 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-Sep-19 11:09 PM GMT

Denbies doesn't seem as good as it used to be for certain, Mark. Hardly any Common Blues, and fewer of almost everything else, though the Marbled Whites were okay and the Silver-spots have never been very numerous.

Cheers, Wurzel – the one on my finger just happened to be the best shot I managed all afternoon... 😊

Well, they must all be Chalkhills, then! 😊 I know Bugboy is in agreement on this as well, so a three-nil vote is good enough for me. I shall change their filenames forthwith.

Another local walk on the morning of **Saturday 17th August** after a blank day on 16th. Around 150 butterflies of 13 species seen, so a pretty good outing really – though a third of them were Small and Green-veined Whites. This Small White was particularly strongly-marked underneath.





...and one or two other things in the overall mix.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 06-Sep-19 12:10 PM GMT

With the sunshine continuing, I headed up to Aston Rowant for the afternoon of **17th August**. There were continuing good numbers of the site speciality, Silver-spotted Skippers, with females beginning to predominate.



The Chalkhills were generally getting tired, but some of the females were still quite fresh.



As at Denbies, very few Common Blues were flying, but there were quite a few Brown Argus.





In contrast with the North Downs site, this west-facing Chiltern hillside now had a decent population of Adonis Blues, all males so far from what I could see.



No trip anywhere at present is complete without at least one Painted Lady.



Will we be sick of them by the end of the season? I doubt it somehow... 😊

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 06-Sep-19 12:19 PM GMT

Home again for **Sunday 18th August**. A different selection today: This trio of Nymphalids...



...and a pair of Green-veined Whites illustrating the contrast between male (larger and paler) and female.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 06-Sep-19 05:04 PM GMT

Love the Adonis Blue shots Dave, I wish they'd come further North 😊 I seem to miss them each year 😞

I've not seen too many Green Veined White in my garden either this year just a couple compared to the SW's, lovely shots of those and love the Comma on the Berries 😊 Goldie 😊



### Re: millerd

by David M, 06-Sep-19 05:36 PM GMT

That's a beautiful pair of Green Veined Whites, Dave, although your female Holly Blue from a couple of posts back is even **more** irresistible. Those black forewing borders are huge.

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 06-Sep-19 07:20 PM GMT

Hi Dave,

Just caught up with your visit to Arnside, I missed going there for Scotch Argus this year having gone in the other direction to Cornwall instead.

What was your impression of Scotch Argus numbers this year? You will probably remember I was a bit concerned about them there last year.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 06-Sep-19 10:20 PM GMT

#### Neil Freeman wrote:

...Just caught up with your visit to Arnside, I missed going there for Scotch Argus this year having gone in the other direction to Cornwall instead. What was your impression of Scotch Argus numbers this year? You will probably remember I was a bit concerned about them there last year.

Cheers,

Neil.

Hi Neil – I haven't been up there at the right time for Scotch Argus for a few years, but my overall impression this year was that there were noticeably fewer, and that they were no longer as widespread across the Knott as they once were. I only found them in three distinct areas, and only one of these (near the edge of the woods at the bottom of the western side) scraped into double figures. 2018 was very warm and dry in the lead up to their season, which may have made a difference last year I suppose. Gatekeepers on the other hand seemed to be far more numerous this year than before, as were Ringlets a month earlier. I believe there is some concern locally about the continued existence of Scotch Argus in this southern outpost.

Thank you Goldie – Adonis certainly are lovely insects, and if you time one of your visits to Kent for mid-May or mid-August you should find them in the Dover area. There were a few at Samphire Hoe a couple of weeks ago. 😊

Cheers, David – the GVW is a very much underrated butterfly, especially when very fresh (I think I've commented to this effect before). 😊 There will be some more female Hollies to come as well, again with varying degrees of black borders. As with those above, some just have rows of black spots on the hindwing, much like the first brood, but others have quite a wide solid black border. I continue to be fascinated by this species. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 07-Sep-19 06:30 PM GMT

Cracking set of reports Dave – stand out species are the Small White, various Silver Spots and the GVW 😊🇬🇧 I think we're quite lucky in the UK in that some of the most common or widespread species are spectacular to look at (Small Tort, Holly Blues, Peacock etc) and those GVWs fall into that group – interesting to see the difference in the yellow between the male and female 😊 Better make the most of the Painted Ladies though – I seem to recall that last time they were in such high numbers there was a dearth the year following 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 07-Sep-19 11:55 PM GMT

Many thanks, Wurzel. Having relatively few species in the UK does mean it's worth looking more closely at some of them and seeing just how much variety there can be within a single species. Some are definitely underappreciated too! 😊 It's been ten years since the last really big immigration of Painted Ladies, way back in 2009, and you're right, 2010 was not particularly good for them at all. Let's hope 2020 is better than that. 😊

More local adventures on **Monday 19th August** after a brief trip to Bookham which drew almost a complete blank for butterflies – certainly nothing of note. At home, there was a certain element of déjà vu, with another GVW pairing...



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 08-Sep-19 07:21 PM GMT

Fingers crossed Dave 😊 Those are lovely GVWs again, really well marked 😊 Is it just me or have they suddenly shown a massive increase in numbers after a dearth during the spring? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 08-Sep-19 07:37 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

Fingers crossed Dave 😊 Those are lovely GVWs again, really well marked 😊 Is it just me or have they suddenly shown a massive increase in numbers after a dearth during the spring? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

You're right Wurzel, I've seen a significant increase recently. The recent rains must have helped keep their foodplants nice and lush for the hungry larvae, something that was lacking last year which probably led to the poor spring showing this year. Same can be said for the Specklies too.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 08-Sep-19 10:04 PM GMT

I have to agree with both of you here – GVW figures went up noticeably about three weeks ago, then subsided a bit, only to rise again last week – and now Small Whites seem more numerous once more. To be fair, accurate counting of these two species on sunny days is a nightmare since they don't settle for more than a second or two. 😊 😊

After another blank day on 20th, I went out locally once more on **Wednesday 21st August**. More White butterflies, and this time it was the turn of the Large Whites to get up close and friendly with each other.



Small Whites outnumbered the GVW today.





Then, after a rather nice new Comma...



...I had yet another rewarding interlude with a female Holly Blue...







Dave



### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 08-Sep-19 10:37 PM GMT

As we're about a week behind over here Dave the GWs are still the most numerous although the Small Whites do seem to be picking up 😊 Cracking Painted Lady in among the great sequence of shots but the most envy inducing shot has to be the Holly Blue in the hand – that fill a gap in my 'collection' nicely 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 09-Sep-19 08:15 AM GMT

Good to see your Comma, I've not seen one for sometime.  
I've also never met a tame Holly Blue. Perhaps she's taking a well earned break from egg laying.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 09-Sep-19 09:10 AM GMT

Cheers, both. As you know, the Hollies round here are specially trained to be amenable to photography, so it was only a matter of time before one became tame enough for this... 😊😊 Seriously though, it worries me that I must be indistinguishable from the surrounding greenery. 😊 Male butterflies are far more inclined to wander onto a finger, as they are interested in salts from the skin surface, but females don't generally have this requirement, being more interested in sugars. I may have recently picked a few blackberries of course, so that could have been it.

I also briefly popped into Bedfont Lakes Country Park on 21st, as I was passing nearby at the end of the afternoon. Not much flying here, except in one

small area where I found Common Blue, Brown Argus,



Small Heath and a single Small Copper. The last of these was good to find as they used to be quite common here but I hadn't come across one for a few years.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 09-Sep-19 09:29 AM GMT

**Thursday 22nd August.** More sunshine forecast, so with reports of interesting arrivals along the south coast, I set off for my first visit to Southwick of the season - where Bugboy had reported Clouded Yellows. I drew a blank here, and in fact aside from a selection of Painted Ladies on the buddleias there was little else to see.



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 09-Sep-19 09:42 AM GMT

After the disappointing look down at Southwick, I then moved a couple of miles inland to Mill Hill. Still sunny but rather windy, it was difficult to approach the various things flying. Adonis Blues were the standout species, with a few Chalkhills remaining...







Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Sep-19 04:29 PM GMT

Things were starting to heat up on **Friday 23rd August**, so I tried Bookham again for those elusive Brown Hairstreaks. Still no more luck, but the local Small Copper population obliged, as did the inevitable Painted Lady.



I decided to follow up with something slightly different and another look at Dawneys Hill for Graylings. The first couple appeared almost as soon as I'd come out onto the site, and while wandering over the whole expanse, I came across at least 12 to 15 of them. Most were worn, characteristically torn by their existence among the gorse bushes.



I came across one female flicking her wings open and shut, normally indicating the presence of a courting male, but I couldn't spot him: maybe the camouflage was just that bit too good!



However, this did provide one of those rare open-wing views of the species.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Sep-19 05:04 PM GMT

**Saturday 24th August** reached 31 degrees at Heathrow. At that sort of level, the butterflies start to hide away, and if they are out in the open, they are very active and tricky to approach. I went out on my local patch quite early but found that this was already the case. I managed a small selection of the fifty or so seen of a dozen species.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by ernie f, 10-Sep-19 05:14 PM GMT

David – Great open-wing pics of Grayling.

Re the male. He was behind you. Rest assured, if you turned around – he would still be behind you!!!



### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 10-Sep-19 07:27 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

...it's worth looking more closely at some of them and seeing just how much variety there can be within a single species...

Indeed Dave, over the past couple of years I have really started to notice how variable some species can be.

Great reports as usual. That Bank Holiday weekend certainly was a scorcher, we even topped 30 degrees here on the Monday.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 10-Sep-19 08:22 PM GMT

Great set of reports Dave – that open winged Grayling is a cracking shot, as is the Small Heath in the subsequent report 🤔👍 I reckon Ernie is spot on with where the male was, although I didn't have the Grayling down as a bit of a pantomime butterfly 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Sep-19 09:19 PM GMT

Cheers, Ernie – very good! The chances are, though, you were probably right... 😊 Earlier on, one persistently settled on my back and there was no way I could twist myself to record the event. What a great species they are – I love the way they bound around the place, especially when the sun shines.

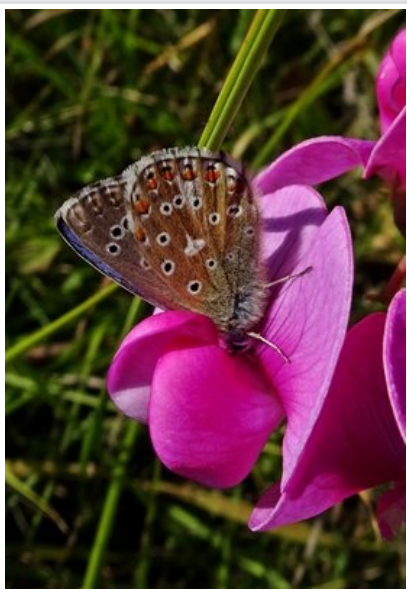
It certainly got hot round here, Neil, topping 33 degrees for the next three days running. However, I managed not to be here... 😊

Cheers, Wurzel – Graylings are certainly entertaining, whatever genre they fit into... 😊😄

On **Sunday 25th August**, I decided somewhere coastal would be cooler, with refreshing sea breezes to make things more bearable. With reports of Long-tailed Blues coming in thick and fast, I thought I would head for somewhere slightly different, where in fact it all kicked off back in 2013. I therefore drove down to the southeast corner of Kent, parking by the memorial at St Margarets and walking along the clifftop path along to Kingsdown Leas.

So much for sea breezes – the temperature was even up to 31 degrees at the top of the cliff, the Channel was millpond calm, and a brown haze could be seen just above the horizon drifting gently over from the continent looming indistinctly 35 km away. About halfway along the path, I came across the first clumps of Broad-leaved Everlasting Pea (BLEP). Much of this had gone over, and some (along with other vegetation along the edge) appeared singed by salt water. There had of course been a very windy spell only a couple of weeks before, and a lot of salt spray would have blown up here.

Nevertheless, some of the BLEP was in flower, and required a closer look. Before very long, I found the first LTB egg.



...and a pair of Common Blues that appeared to be sheltering from the heat.



After finding a third egg along the way...



...I came to the last big patch of BLEP. Here finally, I found a Long-tailed Blue. In fact there appeared to be two of them tussling with each other. I took a couple of distant shots to be sure, and couldn't believe my eyes when examining the photos – the butterfly I had photographed sitting on a bramble was actually a Purple Hairstreak!



Left wondering what a Purple Hairstreak was doing right on the coast, with no obvious oak trees in sight, and flying so late in August, I did however have the other butterfly to consider. This time the shots confirmed that it was what I'd been looking for. And there were two of them as well. This time I watched the pair perform the spiralling soaring flight I have seen described by Neil H., disappearing almost out of sight into the blue sky above. They were very active in the hot sun, but regularly performed a circuit around the patch of BLEP and bramble, and occasionally would settle on one group of flowers not too far from the edge. Eventually, after one or two incidents of swearing at hidden bramble runners, I managed a few shots – my first ever

of this species.







Like everyone else, I am now looking forward to the next brood. The weather has been reasonable, and the forecast for the next ten days at least is very good – if anything the worry might be that the lack of rain down here in the South might dry up all the BLEP before the LTB larvae have eaten what they need! Fingers firmly crossed. 😊

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by bugboy, 10-Sep-19 10:29 PM GMT

Your one looks slightly better conditioned to my first ever one but yes, roll on two weeks time and with a few sunny days we should all be filling our boots with pristine LTB. I got my time off work approved too 😊

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 11-Sep-19 08:38 PM GMT

Congrats on the lifer, your first LTB Dave 😊🍀 I think it's an unwritten rule that anyone's first LTB isn't pristine 😊 I'm hoping that some will miraculously turn up in Salisbury – fingers crossed 😊😬

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 11-Sep-19 10:38 PM GMT

Cheers, both. It was quite an occasion, really – I think I saw one back in 2013, but didn't get a photo, and this time when that Purple Hairstreak appeared on the camera screen, I thought it had happened again for a moment. 😊😬 But it all came good, and species number 55 for 2019 was

added. 😊 Here's hoping for a good emergence of local-grown butterflies shortly. 😊

On Bank Holiday Monday (26th August) it was hot, and once again on a really hot day I found myself driving north to Yorkshire. It was still hot on arrival, with 31 degrees notched up in York apparently. The buddleia in my sister's garden was covered in butterflies, which boded well for the stay.

On **Tuesday 27th**, with it remaining sunny and very warm, I went out to look at a couple of the usual local sites I visit. Firstly was Calley Heath which is only five minutes away. I did some counting, and the site lived up to its reputation as a good one for Small Coppers.

Small Copper 12-15  
Brown Argus 7  
Common Blue 5  
Speckled Wood 2  
Red Admiral 3  
Painted Lady 5  
Meadow Brown 2  
Small White 10+  
Green-veined White 3  
Large White 2  
Small Tortoiseshell 1  
Peacock 1  
A few photos:





Dave

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 12-Sep-19 07:36 AM GMT

Hi! Dave , I'm so glad you got your shot's of the LTB 🍷🍷 you must have been really chuffed 😊 I'll be in Kent in two weeks and I hope I'm lucky and find some, I'm afraid I'll have to twist a few arms to see them, everybody will be working, any way, fingers crossed I will. Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-Sep-19 03:53 PM GMT

I think your timing could be near enough spot on, Goldie! The weather forecast still looks good too, if you can believe what they are guessing at two weeks ahead... 😊😊 Maybe I'll bump into you down there. 😊

After Calley Heath on **27th August**, with cloud building ominously in the west, I carried on down the A1079 to Market Weighton and then a bit further east to Kiplingcotes reserve, the old chalk pit on the edge of the Wolds.

I encountered a whole series of Speckled Woods along the path from the car park to the reserve, along with Small and Green-veined Whites. Through the gate, and the bit of longer grass and flowers immediately to the left had Painted Ladies, Small Tortoiseshells, Brown Argus and more whites. I was watching a Brown Argus persistently chase a Painted Lady off the knapweed flowers, and failed to get a shot of either. I relaxed and turned round and was stunned to see a Clouded Yellow patiently nectaring just behind me. Instead of dashing off as soon as I focussed any attention on it, it stayed put and when it did move it just hopped along to another flower. This was my first Cloudie of the year (2019 species no.56 too!) and in a most unexpected location.



Having spoken subsequently to Callum, I found out that a number of the species had been seen recently arriving off the sea at Spurn Head – which is not far from Kiplingcotes at all. It is likely that this individual (a male) was one of those, dispersing inland. Callum also mentioned that there were some others in Yorkshire too... 😊 😊

Once again, I made a count of what I'd seen overall:

Small Tortoiseshell 6  
Painted Lady 6  
Red Admiral 2  
Speckled Wood 9  
Meadow Brown 3  
Brimstone 2  
Common Blue 7  
Brown Argus 5  
Small White 10+  
Green-veined White 4  
Large White 2  
Small Heath 2  
Clouded Yellow 1

A few other photos from the site:



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-Sep-19 04:26 PM GMT

Callum had told me that a little group of Clouded Yellows had been seen at the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust reserve at Ripon City Wetlands. By chance, on **Thursday 29th August** I needed to be in the Wetherby area and was free from midday onwards. The target site was therefore not far away at all and hoping the weather would hold for the afternoon, off I went.

In fact it wasn't very kind initially, being windy and mostly cloudy...





I think I saw five different butterflies, though it was tricky to eliminate double-counting – I did have three in view at once at one point.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 13-Sep-19 07:48 PM GMT

A cracking set of reports from oop North Dave 😊 Those Cloudies are cracking looking 😊🇬🇧 Reading the incident of the transect walker makes me realise that I couldn't do that – I don't think I could be disciplined enough and ignore butterflies that weren't within a certain distance either side of the route 🤔😅 It's also made me appreciate what the Transect walkers do a bit more 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 13-Sep-19 10:18 PM GMT

Nice to see a few Clouded Yellows, Dave. This warm, settled spell could bring in a few more.

Still lots to look forward to.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Sep-19 12:53 PM GMT

I have to agree, Wurzel – I could never abide by the rigid rules transect-walking involves. I admire those who carry out this important bit of work, which is rewarding and frustrating in turns I should think! 😊😅

Good to see the Cloudies, David, especially in a different setting. I've still to see one down here in the south yet... Hopefully there may soon be some more new arrivals plus some more home-hatched ones too. The weather still looks to be favourable in the south and east for a several days yet. 😊

I was not quite finished with Yorkshire yet. I will finish up with a selection seen in my sister's garden from the whole stay up there, but first there was a separate visit to Allertorpe Common on **Friday 30th August**. This is a mixed area of woodland (both oak/birch deciduous and planted conifers – the latter are being widely felled at present opening up lots of space) and sandy lowland heath with gorse and heather. In the past, the open rides have been good for a variety of butterflies, but in recent years it hasn't seemed so bountiful. However, today, with the sun shining, and with the main ride sheltered from the worst of the wind, I managed to see the following selection along this stretch:

Painted Lady 6  
Red Admiral 5  
Small Tortoiseshell 12  
Peacock 1  
Small Copper 3  
Common Blue 5  
Gatekeeper 1  
Meadow Brown 2  
Speckled Wood 5  
GVW 6  
Small White 4  
Brimstone 2

A selection:







Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 16-Sep-19 07:44 PM GMT

Where do I start Dave ?!,

LTB's, all those Cloudies and a Small Tort. and excellent reports, and images of them all! 😊🌍

I've yet to see a Clouded Yellow this year, like the Painted Ladies they seem to prefer the North this year.

As for the Brown haze at sea, I've seen this many times, and I put it down to intensive shipping in the Channel.

Trevor.

PS. The Wall Browns are showing well at H&O, but quick and frisky!

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 16-Sep-19 10:27 PM GMT

Brill shot of the Small Tort Dave and the Painted Lady though the 🌍 has to go to the 'excessa' Meadow Brown 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Sep-19 10:49 PM GMT

Yorkshire and the North generally have been very productive for me this summer, with those Cloudies an unexpected bonus, Trevor. Small Tortoiseshells were plentiful too, just to make you more envious. 😊

It's a pity that Meadow Brown was not exactly whole, Wurzel, as it was strikingly marked... 😊

Now for the Yorkshire garden selection, probably easiest to do by species. First up, the afore-mentioned **Small Tortoiseshell**. Seeing so many on the buddleia took me back years to childhood butterfly-gazing.





Dave

**Re: millerd**

by trevor, 16-Sep-19 10:57 PM GMT

My East Sussex count of Small Tortoiseshells for the year so far has risen to five. I have seen more in other locations, but not near home.

Good to see yours.  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 17-Sep-19 02:00 PM GMT

Great to see those Clouded Yellows Dave, some lovely shot's of them as well, I wonder if they've arrived over the border into Lancashire yet 😊 I'll have to go to Brockholes again and see if anything turns up there 😊  
The Small Tortoiseshells have arrived here and in my garden every day but the Painted Ladies seem to have faded a bit now.  
Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-Sep-19 08:25 PM GMT

There were far more Torties up in Yorkshire than down here in Middlesex Trevor, though there were a few around down here in the spring. There's a definite northern bias these days.

I hope some Cloudies find their way to you too, Goldie – if they can manage Yorkshire, I'm sure they can find Lancashire too! 😊 And yes, I've noticed the Painted Ladies fading out a bit over the last couple of days as well – maybe they are heading south again.

However, back in the last week of August, in my sister's Yorkshire garden, **Painted Ladies** put on a great show.







Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-Sep-19 08:34 PM GMT

In amongst all the other Aristocratic Nymphalid splendour on show over the five days was a single **Peacock**. A month earlier, this species had been the most numerous, but all the others had now apparently disappeared into hibernation, probably into the sheds and outhouses down the garden.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-Sep-19 08:46 PM GMT

Easy to overlook in some ways were the **Large and Small Whites**. There were more of the latter – unless you counted caterpillars, in which case there were overwhelmingly more Large Whites. They had made a complete mess of the nasturtiums in some areas.





Earlier breeding had led to there being many chrysalids attached to various parts of the house.



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 17-Sep-19 09:06 PM GMT

To conclude the Yorkshire adventures, there were the **Red Admirals**.





Overall, it was like going back in time for these few days – a buddleia full of glorious butterfly colour! 😊



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 17-Sep-19 10:23 PM GMT

A stunning sequence Dave though I reckon the final image is the take away shot – almost sums it up! 😊👍 I find it hard sometimes to work out why some of the commonest species are also the most dazzling whilst people have to go to great lengths to see rare little brown jobs 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 18-Sep-19 10:32 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel. I know it has often been said, but if any of those species were truly rare, we would travel a long way to see them for certain. 😊

Back on home turf again on **Sunday 1st September**. Nothing too surprising, but there was a very new Small Copper flying...



Dave

### Re: millerd

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

Lovely Small Copper Dave and the Painted Lady has one set of blue pupils in the hind wing eyes 😊👍 Interesting observation of the sexual dimorphism in the Commas – I'd noticed that some were more 'pointy' than others but hadn't twigged that it could have been down to gender 😊😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 20-Sep-19 09:31 AM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel. 😊 The Painted Lady was very new, and had a sheen across its wings at certain angles to the light. I hadn't noticed the extra blue spots, though – I've seen this before, though it doesn't seem to crop up very often.

I only read this recently about distinguishing the sexes of Commas. It seems to hold for both broods too if I remember rightly.

With lots more sunshine, I took a trip up to Aston Rowant later in the day on **1st September**. I was hoping that one or two Clouded Yellows might have found their way here, as it is a spot they have favoured in other years – but no luck today. However, there were still plenty of (mostly a bit worn) Silver-spotted Skippers still on the wing.





This last one actually looked completely new.



There were some late Chalkhills, definitely showing their age...





...and I found one example of ab. *krodeli* – or a close approximation. Reduced underside spotting certainly.



Also flying were numbers of weary-looking Brown Argus, one or two Common Blues, plus Small Whites, Small Heaths and Meadow Browns.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 20-Sep-19 08:08 PM GMT

"I only read this recently about distinguishing the sexes of Commas." Certainly a useful little trick Dave –I'll have to give it a try the next time I come across a Comma, luckily there still might be a little time left to do so this season 😊

That Silver Spot does look in fine fettle 🤔🍀 – which means that they have a pretty long flight period – must be a Skipper thing? 😊  
You also do alright for ab. *krodeli* – I think I've only ever seen 2, one of which was with you at the Hill 🤔🍀

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 21-Sep-19 08:48 PM GMT

The Skipper looked unusually fresh for the time of the season – but they do go on for a while. I saw a very battered individual at Denbies yesterday (20th September) which will no doubt be posted here at some future date... 😊

I seem to find the *krodeli* ab. at one site or another almost every year, Wurzel. As with this one, there often seems to be some other congenital wing damage.

**Monday 2nd September.** Between getting the car serviced and successfully MOT'd, I found time for one of my regular counts on my local patch:

Green-veined White 22  
Small White 19  
Speckled Wood 8  
Common Blue 8  
Brown Argus 7  
Red Admiral 7  
Painted Lady 7  
Small Heath 7  
Large White 5  
Meadow Brown 5  
Small Copper 2  
Holly Blue 2  
Comma 2

There really had been a sudden upswing in GYW numbers with the new brood apparently emerging all at once.



No other surprises, though interestingly this was the last day I have seen Meadow Browns here this year.

As ever, a selection of what was on offer:



*almost managing to be camouflaged*



*another bright new example*



*a nice new example*



*wings tight shut in the strong sunshine*

On **Tuesday 3rd September**, I only had a very short trip out, but managed a rare shot of a Large White...



...plus a Small White couple with the female rebuffing an over-eager male.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 22-Sep-19 10:14 PM GMT

Cracking stuff again Dave 😊👍 I was out myself this weekend and there are still one or two 'fresh' looking butterflies about though they're getting fewer and farther between 😊😞

Am I right in thinking that Comma is male – just trying out the ID trick 😊😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 22-Sep-19 10:54 PM GMT

Could be, Wurzel... 😊 Admittedly it's easier when there's one of each in front of you to see the subtle difference! 😊

There are still new butterflies about three weeks on from the events covered by this diary – I shall get there in the end! Meanwhile, back to **Thursday 4th September**. Mornings are distinctly cooler now as you might expect so I delayed going out a bit. First stop was at Fairmile Common, just on the off chance that there might be a rogue second brood SSB as there was here last year. No luck, but I did have a long chat with the chap from the local council who leads the management of the site. There were a few butterflies – notably Small Coppers, doing well on the abundance of sheep's sorrel growing here.





Also seen were a scattering of Small Heaths and one or two faded Brown Argus.



Next stop on 4th was just down the road at Bookham for one last search for Brown Hairstreaks. Warmer and sunnier by the time I arrived, it wasn't very long before the familiar figure of Bugboy came in sight, clearly determined on a similar mission. Today, our combined resources did the trick and we found two (possibly three?) different female Hairstreaks.





Hopefully the site will have recovered a bit next year from the loss of one of the principal blackthorn hedgerows – at least there were a few butterflies around in the end.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 22-Sep-19 11:02 PM GMT

After so many failed attempts I felt like we were almost tripping over the little blighters that day, and there were no Gatekeepers getting in the way to which was a bonus 😊

### Re: millerd

by David M, 23-Sep-19 09:50 PM GMT

Better late than never with the Hairstreaks, Dave. In fact, for the first week in September they're actually quite presentable looking.

Where were they all in August? 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-19 10:20 PM GMT

Congrats on the Brostreaks Dave 😊 They aren't too shabby for September though I don't know why I'm surprised at that as when I started butterflying I used to leave seeking the Brostreaks until the very end of August and I can remember some flight charts showing them almost into October 😊 Looking for them at the end of July is, for me, a relatively new habit 😊 Lovely Small Coppers too, although they probably won't get much of a look in with the Brostreaks hogging the limelight 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Sep-19 10:58 PM GMT

It was a bit of a welcome change, Buggy, after so many blanks drawn at Bookham this season. 😊

Cheers, David and Wurzel – I've lost track of what those Hairstreaks were up to this year, but it was good to see them again, even if it was September. 😊

No more of them now, but there will be plenty of Coppers in the posts ahead.

For the next few days I stayed local, with the weather not being that brilliant, and no definite targets out elsewhere just yet. Things here were gradually on the decline, as might be expected, but as ever there were one or two points of interest among the outings on **5th, 7th and 8th of September** (6th was one of those "blank" days – which are actually rather rare).

First of all was a puddling Holly Blue – not a rarity you might think, but instead of the fresh male I expected, this one turned out to be a worn female. This does seem unusual behaviour...





...along with the ubiquitous Painted Ladies.



One was spotted cleaning its proboscis after a long stint of nectaring on the buddleia.



There were some fairly fresh Small Coppers around...





I found some Common Blues, possibly a new brood or maybe just some late ones from the summer emergence.



Just a few Red Admirals...



Today's guest moth spot goes to this one: The Box Tree Moth.



This is an attractive, but rapidly spreading pest species which is capable of ruining many hours of careful topiary. I have found an infestation very close by and will post more on this separately.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by David M, 25-Sep-19 01:29 PM GMT

**millerd wrote:**

Today's guest moth spot goes to this one: The Box Tree Moth.....This is an attractive, but rapidly spreading pest species which is capable of ruining many hours of careful topiary. I have found an infestation very close by and will post more on this separately.

Yes, Dave. It has done great damage to the area where we stay in the Mercantour in the French Alps. The damn things are like a plague, flying by day as well as by night. There aren't enough predators to check their numbers and the wild box trees have been decimated.

I sincerely hope we don't suffer a similar invasion in Britain.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 25-Sep-19 10:38 PM GMT

**David M wrote:**

...It has done great damage to the area where we stay in the Mercantour in the French Alps. The damn things are like a plague, flying by day as well as by night. There aren't enough predators to check their numbers and the wild box trees have been decimated.

I sincerely hope we don't suffer a similar invasion in Britain.

Unfortunately, David, I think we already have. Once people start to realise what's happening to their carefully manicured hedges, it will be too late. However, I don't know how wild trees and bushes are faring (at Box Hill for instance – the name is no coincidence), but this is a real threat to them.



As I mentioned, I will start a separate thread on this subject and include my local discoveries.

**Tuesday September 10th:** After several days at home, my itchy feet took me down to Denbies for another late summer look and the hope of a Clouded Yellow or two. Yet again, they hadn't appeared, but the remaining population of blue butterflies was some compensation. First of all, there were still Chalkhills flying – their season is quite an extended one compared to their near relatives. I think these two were females (so tricky with both on the wing together with a high degree of wear).



...but amazingly one or two were really quite fresh in appearance.





There were far more Adonis, but only one or two of the females actually looked new.





The males were definitely showing signs of wear, but had taken on the characteristic deepening of their blue colour that comes with age.





I found one congenital aberration – not quite a *krodeli*...



The Blues were the main attraction, but a rather splendid Small Copper was also flying...



....and one of the many Small Heaths was quite striking too.



There was even a brand new Comma, a telltale splodge of meconium on the leaf below it.





Late summer – or early autumn? Elements of both. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

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

That is a late Chalkhill Dave 😊👍 I wonder why he'd slept in? That is a lovely looking Small Heath 😊 with those little white spots 🍷 It's a shame the Box Tree Moth is as attractive as it is – it's so much easier to dislike invasive pest species when they're obnoxious 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 26-Sep-19 09:19 PM GMT

A male Chalkhill looking newer than the Adonis was a bit of a turnup, Wurzel: the latest one of the year quite probably. 😊 Small Heaths were numerous across the hillside, as they have been all year from the end of April. I think Denbies must be the best site I know for them, and this one looked to be a newly-emerged specimen.

The Box Tree Moth has a different colour variant which is if anything subtly more attractive – as you'll see in forthcoming installments... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by essexbuzzard, 26-Sep-19 10:15 PM GMT

Box moths have arrived in Essex the last couple of years—my neighbours hedge has gone from green to bare within weeks.

I have tried feeding the caterpillars to robins—they don't seem interested!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 26-Sep-19 10:38 PM GMT

That's a shame, Mark – something must eat them surely! 😊

The change in the weather to what I suppose is actually more seasonal has provided an opportunity to catch up a bit with my diary... Only about a fortnight behind! 😊

**Wednesday 11th September** was another local foray. Overall numbers had unsurprisingly dropped, but there were still 50 or so of 12 species – though nearly half of these were Small Whites.





Brown Argus were more numerous, but not so fresh.



Red Admiral numbers are building a bit, and there are definitely more around than a year ago.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 27-Sep-19 01:01 PM GMT

That really is/was a fresh Painted Lady Dave 🤩🍷 The whites in general did seem to have a better second half of the year – hopefully that'll bode well for next spring 😊 – just glad I don't grow Cabbages 🤔😅

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-Sep-19 04:44 PM GMT

The Small Whites in particular have had a good year in these parts, Wurzel. I'm not sure there are many cabbage farmers round here, so I think they do well on all the wild related plants that do grow all over the place. 😊

**Thursday 12th September** ended up as another stay-at-home day. There was a similar mix as on 11th, but with temperatures into the mid-twenties, a somewhat higher total number was seen altogether.





There were more of those Box Tree moths: my neighbour's front hedge has been thoroughly attacked. 😞



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 27-Sep-19 08:30 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

...The Small Whites in particular have had a good year in these parts...

And around my patch from mid August onwards and they were easily the most numerous butterfly seen during our recent trip to Dorset.

Those Box Moths started turning up in Warwickshire a couple of years ago and I have seen quite few reported from moth traps here this year, but not in mine...yet.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-Sep-19 09:02 PM GMT

I reckon it won't be long before you see this moth as well, Neil. An emergence seems to be underway at the moment, though I'm not sure how they spend the winter.... 😞

The weather had turned distinctly summery again now, so on **Friday 13th September**, I headed up to Aston Rowant to see what remained here at the close of the season. The commonest species flying were probably the Meadow Browns and Small Heaths, with the former actually opening up for once.



Unlike Denbies, there were no Chalkhills left here, and all the Blues I came across appeared to be Adonis, shining electric blue jewels in the grass.





However, I spent most of my stay being entertained by two brand new Small Coppers, which were flying close to one another and frequently tussling between bouts of basking in the sunshine. One sported the blue spotting characteristic of form *caeruleopunctata*...



I looked back over the hillside as I left the slopes, seeing how dry the landscape appeared to be.



Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Janet Turnbull, 27-Sep-19 10:03 PM GMT

The Adonis butterflies seem to be enjoying the carline thistle which I noticed the Chalkhills also favoured. The Small Heath is displaying a lot more of its underwing than the ones up here!  
Janet

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 28-Sep-19 09:11 PM GMT

Both Chalkills and Adonis seem to like the carline thistles, Janet...



They must smell right as there is no purple colour to attract the butterflies (unless they have an ultraviolet signature we can't see but they can!).

Small Heaths (and other browns) tend to flash more forewing underside when they are alert and not fully settled (like when I'm a few centimetres away with a camera for example 😊).

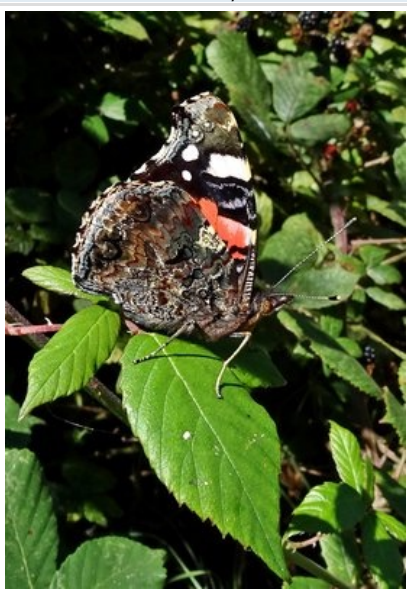
On such a lovely day, I had to go out once again during the afternoon of 13th to my local patch. I do find it interesting that I consistently find both Common Blues and Brown Argus easier to find here than at either Denbies or Aston Rowant – particularly at the tail end of the year.



The blackberries continue to provide a feast for the usual suspects...



The Red Admirals are mostly new...



...and Small Whites still the most frequent species to be found.



Close to home, the neighbour's box hedge continued to erupt moths, and today I managed to find one of the darker variant. This has a violet/purple iridescence at certain angles to the light (sound familiar? 😊) and seems to crop up about one in five or six individuals.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 28-Sep-19 09:30 PM GMT

The weather continued glorious for the weekend of **14th and 15th September** – the latter day was particularly warm. However, I spent most of both days in Central London for a concert, so only managed a short walk later on the Sunday. The Lycaenid species on my local patch are currently mostly concentrated in one area on the edge of where the field has been cut...





Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 29-Sep-19 07:11 AM GMT

The Box Tree Moth, although a pest, is certainly beautiful, lovely image, Dave. Still some action around your local patch, lets hope the weather improves soon!. I feel a bit redundant at the moment.

Great stuff, as usual.  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 29-Sep-19 11:35 AM GMT

Good to see those Silver Spots still looking good. 🤔🌿 That dark form of the Box Moth is cracking looking- a pity it's a pest 😞 Our flora is certainly having a tough time - Elm, Ash diseases; Oak Processionary and Box Moths, rampaging Himilayan Balsam choking and smothering everything and to top it all I read today that Horse Cheatnut is in danger of extinction 😞😞 Looks like we might have to learn to love the invaders 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-Sep-19 11:58 AM GMT

I'm with you on the weather, Trevor. There's still a few things flying here when the sun comes out briefly, but the next time we're due for proper sunshine there's a good chance a touch of frost will come with it... 🤔

Well Wurzel, we all seem to love some of the invaders - LTBs are pretty popular at the moment. 😞 Imagine if they arrived in numbers earlier in the year and set about eating everybody's peas, sweet peas and broad beans. I wonder what the reaction to that would be. 😞😞😞

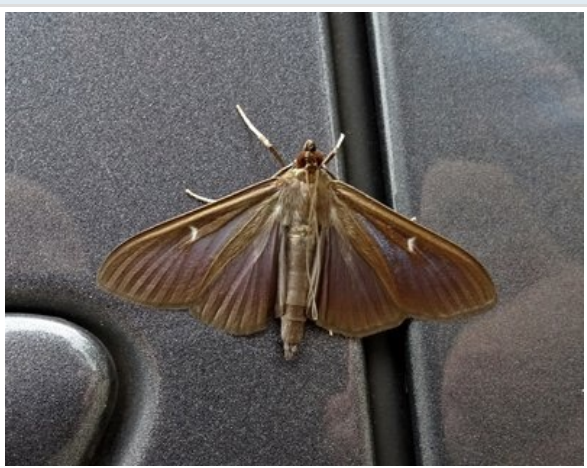
Mostly cloudy on **16th September**, but still quite warm. A shorter local walk today:



*Standard version*



*Underside*



*The Dark Side: Did it think it was camouflaged on the car?*



Back on the hedge  
Dave

### Re: millerd

by Pauline, 29-Sep-19 05:59 PM GMT

Interesting shots of the dark form of the Box Tree moth Dave. I only saw the one earlier in the year, normal form, and my first impression was that it was a very attractive moth but perhaps the dark form is more so. I was surprised to learn the extent of the damage it can do. I was about to ask what the larva look like but I guess I can go and look that up.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-Sep-19 07:59 PM GMT

"I wonder what the reaction to that would be. 😊😊😊" I reckon that some would be out there with the spray 😞😞 That dark is very striking – almost reminiscent of a Purple Hairstreak 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 30-Sep-19 10:00 PM GMT

I found some caterpillar images online, Pauline, so I know what to look for. Nothing spectacular. However, there's a lot of interesting stuff about the spread of this species and how to go about controlling it.

The dark ones are very reminiscent of Purple Hairstreaks, Wurzel. 😊 There's sometimes a hint of the violet sheen on the fresh ones of the ordinary form as well, along the dark borders.

After a "blank" day on 17th, I had another local ramble on **Wednesday 18th September**. Nearly 50 butterflies of nine species – not too bad for the time of year. Some new Common Blues...





Best of all today were a selection of Small Coppers, including one splendid fresh one.



I also had a brief side trip to Bedfont Lakes Country Park, to look at the patch of Everlasting Pea. It looked to be thriving, but was totally undamaged by any chomping caterpillars and was bereft of eggs.



Still, we are 50 miles from the south coast here. 😊😄

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-Sep-19 11:33 PM GMT

Those are some really fresh Common Blues Dave 😊🌱 I love seeing them like that – the neat margins look like they're sewn out of mithril 😊😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by David M, 01-Oct-19 09:23 PM GMT

Interesting that you're seeing several of the 'dark' form of Box moth, Dave. I don't recall seeing any of these amongst the multi-thousands during my French Alps trips. Perhaps I wasn't paying them enough attention?

Further to the comments earlier regarding predation, in spite of the huge numbers on the wing in France, I have never seen the local house martins make any attempt to take them. Perhaps they are distasteful?

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 01-Oct-19 10:45 PM GMT

There were actually more fresh Common Blues at home today, Wurzel, but you won't get to see those for a few days... 😊 The later ones never seem to have the depth of colour the first brood have and seem somehow more transparent.

The background info I've seen about the incidence of the dark form of the BTM, David, roughly corresponds with my own observations – about 10–20% of individuals. It appears that either the larvae are distasteful to birds, or that they haven't yet learned to find them! 😊

I now realise that **Tuesday 17th September** wasn't blank at all – I actually went on the first of three trips down to Sussex and had a look at High & Over for Walls. It was very sunny, and they were their usual active selves – I saw half a dozen in their usual haunts, and also walked out along the ridge and part of the trackway known as The Comp, where I found another couple – they were outnumbered here by Speckled Woods. Also seen were Red Admirals, Commas, Small Coppers, Common Blues, Brown Argus and Large and Small Whites.



The Walls were a nightmare to photograph, and this was the best I could manage.





It was later than I intended when I set off home, and unbeknownst to me I sailed past a patch of BLEP en route that was going to prove very interesting a few days later... 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 02-Oct-19 07:39 AM GMT

It's good to see that you enjoyed a keep fit session with the High and over Walls, Dave. They were livelier than usual on my last visit. How many times did you have one lined up in the view finder only for it to escape just as you clicked!.

Your last image was worth all the effort. 😊

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 02-Oct-19 08:31 PM GMT

Cracking images Dave – good to see the results after the thrill of the chase offered by the Walls 🤔👍 They should carry the title of the most health improving butterfly due to how much work you often have to do to come away with any shots! Mind you I suppose the health benefits of the exercise will be negated by the stress and frustration of all those times that they escape your lens 😊😂 Perhaps the most curse inducing butterfly would be better? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 02-Oct-19 10:01 PM GMT

Yes, chaps, there was a lot of brisk walking and a fair amount of dark muttering under the breath as far as the Walls were concerned. There was indeed mild cursing, Wurzel... 😊 I didn't mention that I saw two sets of courtship where the enamoured couple dived into the hedge and disappeared, plus one other where the pair flew way off down the hillside towards the sea. Those were fairly frustrating moments too... 😊 Considering how obliging that Speckled Wood was, the Walls just seem to be deliberately contrary. At least when settled with wings closed they were a bit more approachable, and I was quite pleased with that final shot too, Trevor. 😊

On **Thursday 19th September**, with continuing decent weather, the Sussex coast beckoned again so this time I went for the Southwick Basin/Mill Hill combo.

At Southwick, I was immediately greeted by a Clouded Yellow. However, it didn't prove particularly amenable, and after a couple of relatively distant approaches, it sailed off over the top of the slope and disappeared inland.

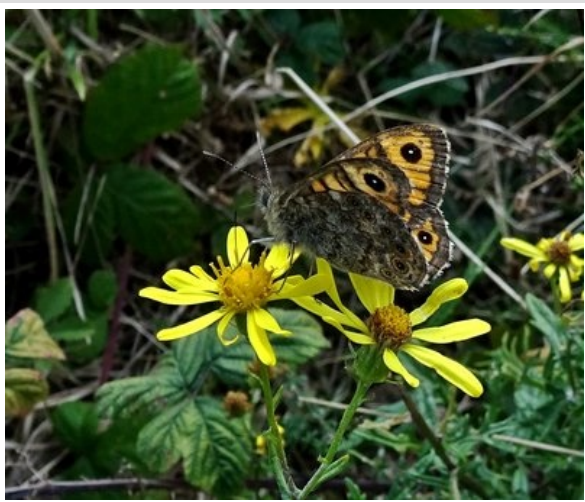


Having exhausted the possibilities of this relatively small site, I moved on to Mill Hill. Remembering the late season bounty that stretched well into October last year, late September of 2019 was a bit disappointing, with noticeably fewer butterflies in all parts, even in the well-known sheltered hotspot NW corner. Common, Adonis and Chalkhill Blues were all present, with the first of these sporting some new third brood examples.





Also seen were Small Heaths, Meadow Browns, a few Whites, Painted Ladies and Red Admirals. There were a couple of male Clouded Yellows too, but they failed to stop anywhere nearby at all, despite regular patrols of the lower slopes. A look around the area at the top of the hill, near the car park, paid off more handsomely, as a number of reasonably fresh Walls were flying. The species in this spot seems more relaxed than at High & Over and photos were a bit easier to come by.



A view looking north.



One more Sussex trip this week, a couple of days later...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 02-Oct-19 11:30 PM GMT

I hear it was a successful visit to Whitehawk today, Dave.  
A certain law dictated that today was the day that my car was booked in for a service!.  
Otherwise I would have joined in the party up there.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 03-Oct-19 08:24 PM GMT

It was a good day up there yesterday, Trevor – your absence was commented on! A pity that particular law prevailed on the day and kept you away from a very sociable gathering. 😊

On **Friday 20th September**, it was another warm sunny day and I had a quick look round locally in the morning, before popping down to Denbies later on, encouraged by my Clouded Yellow sightings in Sussex the day before.

The one thing of note at home was a glimpse of a Peacock, possibly a second brood individual since their main emergence was way back in mid-July. No photo today, though one or two other species posed for me.







At Denbies, there were still no Clouded Yellows – in fact there was very little of anything. Meadow Browns were the commonest, but most of the many Small Heaths seen last time had disappeared now. I eventually spotted a scattering of female blues, worn and difficult to confidently identify, though I suspect this one is Adonis.



More surprisingly, and even more worn, was a single Silver-spotted Skipper. It was well down in the grass and may well have still had a few eggs to lay.





It was flying somewhat recklessly in the vicinity of this beast, which having no Chalkhills on the menu was making do with grasshoppers.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by essexbuzzard, 03-Oct-19 08:33 PM GMT

Glorious Walls from Mill Hill, Dave. I was there yesterday afternoon, and there were still a few on the more sheltered lower slope. But most of the butterflies there were showing their age, and will soon be gone, a bit earlier than last year.

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 03-Oct-19 08:39 PM GMT

More lovely shots Dave 😊 – you're right they did sit well for you 😊 especially the Painted Lady – a nice angle giving the wings a more curvy look 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 03-Oct-19 09:17 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel – always worth another Painted Lady shot – there might be very few around next year. 😊

Thank you, Mark – the Walls behaved unusually well that day and I came away more than happy with those photos. 😊

**Saturday 21st September.** A forecast was in place for a perfect summer day – sunny, very warm and light breezes, despite this being the equinox. I had arranged to meet Bugboy down at Tidemills near Newhaven to look for Long-tailed Blues, there being a reasonable chance there could be a mixture of new arrivals and locally emerged individuals with just the right weather to encourage them out.

Our searches of the likely areas proved unsuccessful, but we encountered James (Butterflysaurus Rex) engaged upon a similar quest. He had some ideas where else there might be some flying not too far distant, and after a bit of walking we came upon a patch of BLEP which was to all intents and purposes the jackpot. The various groups of flowers were regularly visited by LTBs, which were flying with great energy in the warm sunny conditions and only very rarely basking anywhere. The consistent pose we were faced with was wings closed and nose buried deep in a pea flower seeking nectar. We were joined after a while by Neil H. and his expertise established that there were at least nine different individuals, with boths males and females represented, and including one or two new males as well as older ones of both sexes (quite probably primary immigrants). To be honest, I was happy just to get some reasonable photos of this rare and attractive butterfly.





*two hiding here...*









*a bit of wing-rolling*



*two here as well*



*a female opened a little*



*a female, possibly looking for a spot to lay*





One distraction came when a very friendly lizard decided to bask on Bugboy's rucksack...



A very memorable day indeed, and I make no apology for the number of photos here – this species still doesn't appear very often, even if its arrival is becoming commoner.

Many thanks to James. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 03-Oct-19 09:46 PM GMT

What a great haul of LTB's, Dave.

Looks as though you achieved a good mix of migrants and home grown on that trip.

Super images too!

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 03-Oct-19 10:15 PM GMT

That's nearly a fortnight ago now, seems like only yesterday... although we did actually have similar results yesterday anyway 😊

### Re: millerd

by David M, 04-Oct-19 12:15 PM GMT

Great sequence of the Long Tails, Dave, even if many are frustratingly nestled amongst pea flowers. I find this a tricky species even in France & Spain where there are obviously many more of them, so any decent upperwing shot is well earned.

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 04-Oct-19 07:14 PM GMT

Nice Wall Browns a couple of post back Dave and a cracking selection of LTB photos 🍷 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 04-Oct-19 08:36 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Dave – looks like you saved the best of the season until last 😊 🍷 🍷 From when I've seen them abroad they do seem to behave a little like Hairstreaks in that they don't often open up 😊 So how much warmer do our winters need to get to see them establish themselves – perhaps Bournemouth Council should plant up a load of BLEP at Soutbourne 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 05-Oct-19 12:03 PM GMT

Many thanks to all of you. 😊 It was one of those days that will linger long in the memory. They may not have been the first LTBs I'd seen, but seeing so many and being able to approach them so readily (despite some of the more unusual and precarious positions adopted!), plus a sociable time in illustrious company, made it one that will stand out.

I do need to scrutinise the photos a bit more rigorously and try to establish how many individuals are actually depicted. Their underside patterning is almost like a fingerprint – no two seem to be exactly alike. Even the eye-spots at the hindwing apex vary markedly in size. A rare opportunity – goodness knows when so many will be available again for such a bit of research. Really extraordinary. 😊

So, how to follow that then? On **Sunday 22nd September**, the weather hadn't quite given up. It remained warm and quite muggy, there was even some early sunshine. I set off onto my local patch, but only managed to find 13 butterflies. However, eight species were represented, including a couple of surprises, one of which was a great piece of good fortune.

First of all, there were one and three-quarter Small Coppers. One was older and paler, but the newer, brighter individual had met with an accident that had all but removed one hindwing. It made no apparent difference to its ability to manoeuvre, and the pair of them spent a great deal of time chasing and sparring.



The last of the Small Heaths were flying: they may just scrape into October, but I suspect not this year.



Then came the first surprise – flying fast and low over the ground was a dark shape, which as the sun went in dived down to reveal itself to be a very fresh-looking Peacock.



Finally, as darker clouds gathered intent on eliminating what was left of the sunshine, pottering along from flower to flower came an even better surprise: a Clouded Yellow. This was the the first (and to date the only) one that has appeared on my local patch this year, taking the species tally here for 2019 up to 25. It was a fresh-looking female, and with the sun now becoming very intermittent and within a short while actually likely to disappear altogether, I reasoned that all I needed to do was keep my eyes on the butterfly and eventually it would settle and be completely approachable.





I mused on another good day, certainly easing the anticlimactic feelings following on from the previous one, as I wandered back home with the rain starting to fall.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 05-Oct-19 03:02 PM GMT

Well done with that female Clouded Yellow, Dave. 😊👍

This species has taken me into November in previous years, but not this year.

I have yet to see one in 2019. Shoreham and Tide Mills have been useless.

Might give Mill Hill a try.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 05-Oct-19 06:51 PM GMT

Cracking stuff with the Cloudy – it must have meant that there wasn't so far to come down from from the day before 😊 the Peacocks must have helped with that as well – lush looking 🍀 Interesting looking damage on the fresher Small Copper – it looks very ragged and also like something has scarped all the scales off from the edge of the damage – doesn't look like a bird strike which would be much cleaner? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 06-Oct-19 07:33 PM GMT

For once, poor weather conditions played into your hands, Dave. That said, I find female Clouded Yellows reasonably approachable even in warm, sunny conditions. It's the males that are almost permanently supercharged!

Lovely, mint fresh Peacocks too. Not a particularly common sight towards the end of September.

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 07-Oct-19 10:29 PM GMT

Thanks, all of you – the Cloudy was very welcome, and even better that it was in such good condition too. The Peacock was a pleasant surprise as well. I hope you have some luck with the Yellows in Sussex, Trevor – I've seen one or two in various spots down there, but not more than that.

**Monday 23rd September** – it was too much to hope that the weather would say really warm, but in fact it wasn't too bad and there was some sunshine: another trip out on my local patch was worth doing. No Cloudies today, but instead I recorded the highest Small Copper count of the year here – six individuals, in various states of wear and tear. Some of the settings were distinctly autumnal, but this wasn't really surprising, given the date.







Another Peacock was also spotted...



However, a very new Common Blue turned out to be the real highlight.





Still a bit of life in the season round here. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 07-Oct-19 10:41 PM GMT

24th September was a "blank" day, and my trips out locally on **Wednesday 25th** and **Thursday 26th** were relatively brief. There's always something to see, though, and both days included a new-looking Common Blue – possibly the same one.





...and they were joined on 26th by a rather new and quite friendly Painted Lady.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 09-Oct-19 09:56 AM GMT

Friday 27th September continued the trend of providing a brand new male Common Blue when I went out locally.



Saturday 28th was less conducive weatherwise, and felt distinctly more autumnal with more Red Admirals around.

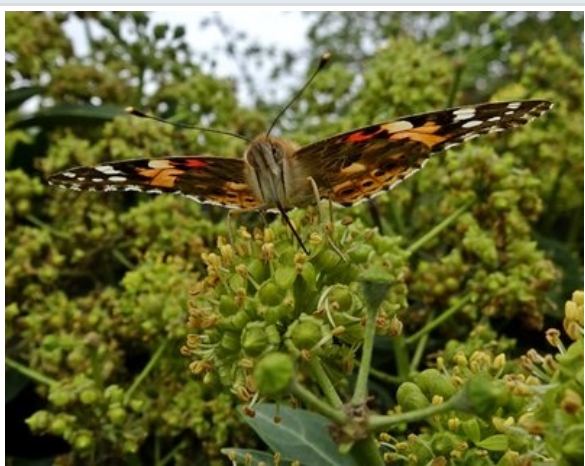


Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 09-Oct-19 10:10 PM GMT

On **Monday 30th September**, there was once again very little sunshine, and aside from Red Admirals...



One of the definite highlights of summer 2019.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 09-Oct-19 11:07 PM GMT

What is going on with those Peacocks Dave –they should be tucked up and settling down to hibernate shouldn't they? 😊 Those Painted Ladies look in really good nick – heading southwards to you reckon? It has been a great year for them hopefully we won't have to wait another decade for the next one



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Oct-19 01:26 PM GMT

I think the Peacocks are second brood individuals, Wurzel, which probably only emerged in September and are busily taking on fuel to get them through the winter. It's a bit trickier in October than it is in July, and looking at the insects in the photos they need to put on a bit more weight! 😊  
The Painted Ladies may well be locally emerged ones, just feeding up before flying south. It would be brilliant if 2020 gave us a repeat influx, but experience shows that doesn't generally happen... 😊 Maybe it'll be something else – Southern Small Whites? They've been confirmed on the Channel coast a couple of km south of Calais... 😊

**Tuesday 1st October.** A new autumn month, but actually it felt a bit more like summer again, with highs here of 21 degrees and some good spells of sunshine. I counted 18 individual butterflies of eight species:

Red Admiral 6  
Common Blue 3  
Small White 2  
Painted Lady 2  
Comma 2  
Small Copper 1  
Holly Blue 1  
Peacock 1

Small Heath and Brown Argus seem to be over for the year, but I was surprised not to see a Specklie today. A few highlights:



It's difficult to drag myself away at this time of year, as it is actually (strange to say) quite difficult to find the variety elsewhere. However, there was one thing that wasn't going to turn up on my local patch...

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 10-Oct-19 05:31 PM GMT

On **Wednesday 2nd October**, I had once again arranged to meet up with Bugboy down at Tidemills near Newhaven. The weather had changed overnight, the humid warmth of the day before being swept away ahead of a stiff northerly breeze, though there was quite a bit of sunshine. Anywhere in the shelter of the wind felt the benefit of the sun, but down by the seashore such spots were hard to find. We started by walking to the location where there had been such success on 21st September, but the BLEB had largely gone over, and there were no butterflies of any kind. Heading back across Tidemills, the story was the same, except for one brief intake of breath when a female Common Blue bowled along past us.



Soon afterwards, I spotted a Clouded Yellow also battling the breeze. However, it managed to find some flowers in the lee of an embankment, and slowed down to get some sustenance. We eventually caught up with it.



Having failed to find any Long-tailed Blues down here, Buggy and I embarked upon Plan B, which was to head over to Brighton on the next train and walk up to the TV mast on Whitehawk Hill, the scene of a good number of sightings this year. An hour or so later, after an invigorating slog up from the station, we found ourselves in the company of a host of other UKB folk. They greeted us with the sorry tale that we had missed a new male LTB by a matter of minutes, and after a few conversations everyone dispersed across the hilltop to see if it (or another) could be located. It wasn't long before the shout went up – Mark (Essex Buzzard) had found what we were all looking for. A small crowd gathered, the butterfly opened its wings a bit, and as is traditional blades of grass obscured the best views.





The butterfly, energised by the sunlight, started to move around a bit.







Suddenly, it was off onto the breeze, and this was my last shot, just after the moment of takeoff.



And that was the last we saw if it.

An excellent day up there on the hill - very sociable indeed and great to meet everyone, plus the bonus of a rare and lovely butterfly. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 10-Oct-19 07:57 PM GMT

Amazing how just one butterfly can turn a day around like that 😊. Also good to see not all your pictures of that LTB were upside down 😊

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 10-Oct-19 08:20 PM GMT

That's the one I missed, Dave. I heard that a strong UKB contingent was present that day, and how Mark saved the day by relocating that LTB. What with Neil's find on Sept 30th, I think most Whitehawk devotees have seen a fresh 2019 LTB.

All we need now is for the weather to settle down!

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 12-Oct-19 06:29 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Dave, a great narrative and a nice reminder that unlike Swallows and Summer it does only take one butterfly...to make a day 🍷🍷🍷🍷  
I reckon if Essex makes it to the Social, so long as there a members present from this outing, he won't need to buy a drink all day 😊😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 13-Oct-19 06:18 PM GMT

Love it, Dave! I was on the edge of my seat reading your LTB exploits and I'm so glad you managed to track that one down – it's a lovely specimen.

Not surprised Mr E. Buzzard was the one to locate it – I know from experience that he has a fine pair of eyes!

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 14-Oct-19 12:46 PM GMT

Cheers, Buggy – though the butterfly was indeed upside-down (or was it me?) I managed to compensate in various ways. 😊 All credit to Mark for the deft use of Neil's cutting-edge technology... 😊

A shame you weren't there, Trevor – a lot of very satisfied folk came away from Brighton that day. 😊 The weather since has been unsettled (to put it in temperate language) and the chances of any repeats have been minimal, sadly. 😊

Thank you, Wurzel. One butterfly was definitely all it took that day, and one that will stay in the memory for quite a while. Yes, Mark should do well for refreshment at the social: I promised him one before we had left Whitehawk! 😊

Many thanks, David – sometimes it's good to tell the whole story of a day, particularly a significant one, just so more of the details stay in the memory. In essence, that day sums up what this hobby is all about really. 😊

Follow that – quite impossible... 😊

The weather really did now take a turn for the worse (it became typically autumnal in fact). I didn't get out again until some sun shone on my local patch on **Sunday 6th October**. 17 degrees and five hours of sunshine – not so bad really. Since my last look, species seen and overall numbers had dwindled – except for Red Admirals. This butterfly comes into its own at this time of year, with fresh examples occupying every patch of flowering ivy as soon as the sun comes out.





Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 14-Oct-19 11:03 PM GMT

I'd forgotten about that particular Red Admiral ab Dave – cheers for the reminder 😊 Those butterflies are looking in great nick – the Red Admirals look particularly velvety 😊🍃 Love the 'typical' shot 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 14-Oct-19 11:40 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

...Follow that – quite impossible... 😊

Probably, yes, but Red Admirals feasting on ivy are quintessentially the last images of autumn I'd expect before things start to drop off.

Mind you, capturing a passenger jet in the same frame isn't something you see very often, so 10/10 for imagination, Dave! 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 16-Oct-19 11:41 AM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel – more lovely fresh velvety Red Admirals on the way. 😊

They are indeed the essence of autumn butterflying for me, David, despite the regular appearance of third brood Holly Blues. 😊

I'm glad you both liked the bit of local colour... Not a difficult shot to get if you stand in the right place, as another chance comes along at least every minute or so! 😊

The next chance to go out locally came on **Wednesday 9th October**. 16 degrees, four hours of sun and at least 28 butterflies of six species seen today: the majority by far (17 individuals at minimum) were Red Admirals.

The last of the year's Small Whites were still struggling on, with this one repeatedly returning to the very last bit of buddleia flower still available.



...a Peacock again...



...and a single fresh Painted Lady.



Of the many Red Admirals it is difficult to choose particular favourites; I have included a couple of *bialbata* individuals – the degree of prominence of that additional white spot varies quite a bit.



However, last but not least on the species tally were the Holly Blues. I came across two: a female (which I saw twice in slightly different spots), showing notable symmetrical wing damage...





...and a male, discovered first puddling for salts and then retiring to the trees to rest.



A very rewarding bit of autumn butterfly colour. 😊

Dave

Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 16-Oct-19 10:49 PM GMT

Your diary is one of the ones keeping me going at the moment Dave 😊 – work is torture and the weather has been terrible I almost can't remember when I saw a real life butterfly 😊😊 I hadn't twigged before this evening when I was sorting through some photos that the white spot on a bialbata shows through onto the underside of the wing as well, as confirmed by your shot 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

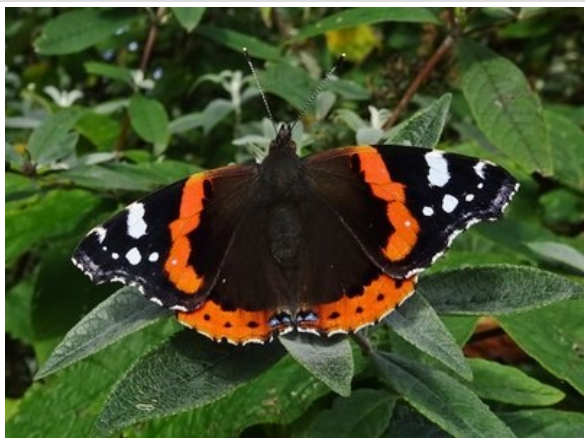
by millerd, 17-Oct-19 11:58 AM GMT

Hopefully there will be some sunshine soon at a time when you can nip out, Wurzel – there must be a few things left in your neck of the woods. 😊 I'm glad my sightings are providing some alternative sustenance... 😊😊

Meanwhile, some more sunshine here on **Thursday 10th October** lured me out onto my local patch again. Only three species today, but each was well-represented I would say. 😊 Firstly, some lovely new Commas.



As expected there were lots of Red Admirals again, with today's count reaching 19 – the highest total of the year.







However, species number three deserves pride of place. I had spotted a couple of Holly Blues, probably males, flying high and settling on the tops of the ivy to nectar.



Out of the corner of my eye I then caught a glimpse of a small silvery triangle down on the brambles.



It eased its wings open a bit in the sunshine, revealing itself to be a female.



It took off – but didn't fly very far, landing on a bit of willow.



It was a bit restless, shuffling around before settling down to feed from liquid on the surface of the leaf.



Once again, the wings opened...



...but as before this was just a preamble to flying off to another spot on a different type of willow.



This perch was more breezy than the last two, and I thought chances of further photos might be limited. However, I was wrong. For some reason, the wind caused the butterfly to open its wings again, and during a brief calm spell amid the buffeting, they opened as wide as any I have seen with this species.





I count myself very lucky to have been able to spend so much time with such a lovely insect. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 17-Oct-19 04:47 PM GMT

That is one gorgeous female Holly Blue, Dave, and this late in the season! 🍷

Great stuff!,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 17-Oct-19 09:18 PM GMT

She is a beaut! I'm happy to say I'm still managing to see a few butterflies this week, not quite the wash out it looked like it was going to be but definitely a case of diminishing returns now, although if I come across a Holly Blue like your one in the next few days (or any type of Blue 😊) I will very happy indeed!

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 19-Oct-19 05:55 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I did manage to get out this afternoon but what I saw wasn't a patch on that female Holly Blue – a first rate fu&ng stunner to quote a little known song of yore 🤪🍷🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 20-Oct-19 02:29 PM GMT

That's an absolutely impeccable female Holly Blue, Dave. The black margins on the forewings are really striking, but it's the clean, fresh white underside that really stands out, as if it's just been painted in gloss.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 21-Oct-19 08:09 PM GMT

Many thanks to you all for the complimentary remarks about that Holly Blue. 😊 She was a splendid butterfly, and keeps up the terrific run of third brood sightings here over the last few years. Because the weather is cooler, it's definitely a bit easier to find them open-winged and lower down than second brood individuals. Though there is some variation, third brood females are similar to those of the second, with markedly heavier dark markings than the spring brood.

After those sightings, the next few days consisted of a run of poor weather, but higher temperatures returned on **Tuesday 15th October** with a bit of that all-important sunshine too. The steady diet locally of Red Admirals (12) and Commas (5) continued (a few days of rain and cloud seem to leave them unaffected) and there was also a rather ancient Speckled Wood fluttering around like a pale wraith.



The Commas just glow amongst the ivy...



...with their beautiful dark velvety texture and striking red banding.





While the ivy flowers, temperatures don't dip too low, and the sun peeps through, there will still be butterflies here.

Dave

**Re: millerd**



by millerd, 22-Oct-19 10:35 PM GMT

**16th October** was cooler, but if anything a bit sunnier.

I saw an additional species on my local patch, a rather battered Small White. From being the most frequently encountered species for most of the year, numbers really drop off sharply at the tail end of the season.



...a very nice Peacock...



...and another Speckled Wood...



...made it up to five species flying today.

Dave

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 23-Oct-19 10:48 AM GMT

Both **Thursday 17th** and **Friday 18th October** had some spells of quite warm sunshine. However, I found that variety had diminished when I went out for my usual local walk, with only one Comma seen each day (plus a brief sighting of a Speckled Wood on 18th).



17th



17th

They were particularly numerous on 18th, with no fewer than 14 individuals seen.



18th: almost *ab. fructa*



18th: a new one



18th: perhaps even newer, and also nearly *ab fructa*  
Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 23-Oct-19 08:59 PM GMT

Fantastic set of Admirals Dave with the Commas thrown in for good measure 😊🇩🇪🇩🇪 I must remember to keep an eye out/pay more attention to Red Admirals as they show some subtle yet interesting sets of variation 😊😁 I do like my aberrants 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 23-Oct-19 11:27 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel – when you are down to pretty well just the one species left in any numbers, you start looking a bit more closely. 😊 In fact, the red banding patterns on the forewings are very variable and almost every butterfly is slightly different. Looking at this feature, you discover that (perhaps surprisingly) the same butterflies are not necessarily seen in the same spot two days running.

I was down in Somerset for the weekend, and failed to see any Red Admirals at all despite mostly dry weather. On **Sunday 20th October** my host (an old school chum) and I visited old haunts in Taunton and at one point walked round Vivary Park – which is generally rather too manicured to attract many butterflies. However, someone had thought to plant some *verbena bonariensis*, which is a great late season nectar source. Sitting happily on this was a fairly fresh Painted Lady.



Dave



### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 24-Oct-19 07:48 PM GMT

"when you are down to pretty well just the one species left in any numbers, you start looking a bit more closely. " true indeed 😊 Mind you it's kinda like that with the first butterflies of the season – you drink them all in 😊 You did well with that Painted Lady – it's in very good nick, I'm surprised it hadn't already made the journey back south 😊🇬🇧

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 25-Oct-19 08:02 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

...when you are down to pretty well just the one species left in any numbers, you start looking a bit more closely. 😊 In fact, the red banding patterns on the forewings are very variable and almost every butterfly is slightly different...

Very true Dave, in fact I find this to hold true for many of our butterflies which is why I am more and more of the opinion that many of the common and minor abs are actually within normal variation for many species.

#### millerd wrote:

...Looking at this feature, you discover that (perhaps surprisingly) the same butterflies are not necessarily seen in the same spot two days running...

Also very true. It is interesting how different individuals will pick the same spots.

A cracking selection of Red Admirals and supporting species, certainly brightens up a wet and windy night here.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: millerd

by David M, 26-Oct-19 03:32 PM GMT

Just Red Admirals and Painted Ladies down my neck of the woods too, Dave. 14 in a small patch of ivy is good going though – it can't be coincidence that the Red Admirals disappear when the ivy flowers die back. Once you get beyond the middle of November, there are hardly any nectar sources left, and that's usually when the butterfly season is effectively over. 😞

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 30-Oct-19 12:01 AM GMT

I think that Somerset Painted Lady must have only just emerged, Wurzel, and still needed to take on fuel before heading off. Hopefully it is somewhere in France by now. 😊

Cheers, Neil. 😊 I reckon you're right. Neither *bialbata* nor *fructa* are so infrequent in Red Admirals to truly qualify as aberrations – they both crop up regularly every year in all populations and there are degrees of "abnormality" between the standard pattern and extreme examples. To me this equates to normal variation.

The ivy is so important to late season butterflies as you say, David. When it finally finishes, there is virtually nothing left except sometimes the odd dandelion.

Back home again, a bit of sunshine and reasonable temperatures tempted me out on **Tuesday 22nd October**. I was surprised to find four species today, including a Painted Lady far more worn than the Somerset example, and which was making the most of the afore-mentioned dandelions.



There were a couple of Commas, both seen flying amongst the trees initially, but one of which came closer to the ground. It seemed darker than some.



There were of course several Red Admirals (I counted nine) with some already nectaring on the ivy...



*I think this one was newly-emerged*



*an encounter with a ticket-collector?*

I suspect this is where many of them spend the winter months, where any hint of slightly warmer sunny weather percolates through relatively quickly and stirs them into action. One fresh-looking individual struck a fine autumnal pose on a yellowing leaf.

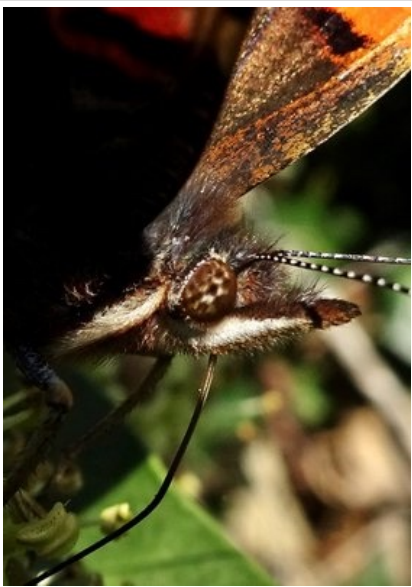


*sucking liquid from the leaf surface*



*also very new*

I also tried a few close-ups, making the most of the species' seasonal approachability.





However, that was not all. I had hoped that the sun and warmth might have stirred one or two Holly Blues, and I spotted three in total. One was flying vigorously high up (probably a male), the second was down low, but was disturbed by another insect when it tried to settle and disappeared (another male I think). Shortly afterwards, I spied the silvery triangle of a third, and this time it stayed put for a while. The sun was brighter and warmer than it had been on 10th when I had encountered the last most obliging female, so though this one creaked open its wings, it appeared to feel quite warm enough without opening them very far. Nevertheless, it was great to see another nice new female third brood Holly Blue.



Another satisfying autumn day.

Dave



### Re: millerd

by trevor, 30-Oct-19 09:32 AM GMT

I wonder why your local patch seems to suit Holly Blues so well. Without doubt you have one of the best sites for them on your door step. And yet another very late, fresh, female! 😊🍷.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 30-Oct-19 01:30 PM GMT

I have no idea what the secret is, Trevor, but a handful of third brood Hollies appear pretty well every year round here in late October/early November. 😊 I even saw a female egg-laying on 31st October a few years back. Interestingly, the majority of those I see are females, probably because they don't fly so much - any males I see tend to be either puddling, or more often flying strongly higher up. There was another one today (30th), which I've already posted in the "October 2019" thread, and which will also appear shortly in this PD.

Meanwhile, on **Wednesday 23rd October** it was cloudy almost throughout the day. A ten-minute splash of sudden sunshine had me out the front door in no time, and amazingly half a dozen Red Admirals had been equally quick off the mark.



I had a general look around, but the cloud soon returned and even the Red Admirals disappeared back to their hiding places.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-Oct-19 11:42 PM GMT

A cracking array of Red Admirals Dave especially like the close-ups 😊 But that third brood Holly Blue – phew a sight for sore eyes 😊🍵 Sometimes the third brood messes things up for the first brood the following year though that doesn't seem to be the case round your way 😊🍵

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 31-Oct-19 02:31 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel! 😊 I think I'll leave talking about third brood Hollies to the next couple of posts, when there will be illustrations! 😊

On **Thursday 24th October**, I headed north to stay with my sister again. The rain was heavy all through the drive, and on Friday and Saturday it continued to pour down, raising the local river levels to a worrying degree. It also became very chilly, with it only 5 degrees around midday on Saturday (it was apparently up to 16 in London... 😊🍵) Needless to say, no butterflies were to be seen, and though the nasturtiums were yet to be affected by frost, no white butterfly caterpillars remained to munch them. However, as usual, a number of chrysalids adorned the outside of the house and outbuildings.



On Sunday 27th, the sun shone, though the wind was cold. The sudden change woke up a Small Tortoiseshell which had been hibernating somewhere in one of the bedrooms. It was very active, and was unwilling to pose for a portrait before it was released to find alternative accommodation.

Back south later in the day, followed by a couple of distinctly cool and gloomy days. However, better was to arrive on Wednesday 30th.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 01-Nov-19 01:15 AM GMT

After two cool and cloudy days, **Wednesday 30th October** dawned with a bit of hazy sunshine. It looked strong enough to wake up a few Red Admirals, so I set off round my local patch. I took in the whole of my usual walk, including the open meadow area by the motorway, but there was nothing here at all. However, returning to area by the lake, the expected Admirals appeared, warming up on the brambles and beginning to feed on the ivy.



However, casting my eyes down, I immediately caught sight of something else – the familiar silvery-blue shape of a fresh Holly Blue waiting for a bit of stronger sunshine.



The butterfly suddenly decided to move – but only as far as some nearby brambles, a good choice as the nettles had been mostly shaded but the brambles were in sunshine.



At this point the thin high cloud was appreciably thicker, but I could see that before too long there would be a brighter spell and with luck the Holly Blue would start to bask. Patience... There were one or two strange looks from a couple of dog-walkers, but thankfully they kept their animals from disturbing the butterfly as they passed by. Anticipation built as the sun toyed with further bits of stray cloud, but the Holly Blue (another female) finally obliged.





I had the opportunity to take a great number of photos, and and having taken it in a big way, sorting through the results has been mighty difficult. 😊



I managed a close up at one point, taking advantage of the docility of the butterfly.



In fact, I probably like this shot as much as any of them – it shows some real character. 😊

It's worth waiting all season for the third brood Hollies, as they are so amenable, accessible and fairly predictable in behaviour, particularly the females. Checking back, a third brood has appeared here in every one of the last six years. Those that emerge first, in September, may have a chance of breeding and increasing the numbers to appear in Spring, but the late October and November butterflies almost certainly will run out of sunshine and warmth. However, numbers of third brood individuals are never great, and the strength of the second brood is sufficient to ensure this butterfly is a common sight throughout a large part of the year. In fact, in terms of numbers seen, my rough counts have it in third place after Meadow Browns and Small Whites – and it is seen on many more days than the first of these. 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 01-Nov-19 10:37 AM GMT

Interesting information about the Holly Blue Dave and cracking images 😊👍👍 Is it just me or does she seem to have even thicker dark margins than the 2nd brood females? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 01-Nov-19 12:02 PM GMT

Absolutely stunning, Dave. What a find.

Amazing you're seeing anything to be honest. The weather has not been conducive for a while now.

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 01-Nov-19 02:22 PM GMT

Stunning stuff, Dave.

( A few Wurzelisms coming up! ) That's a gurt lush female Holly Blue, and some cracking shots too !. 👍😊

Some of the best open wing shots I've seen.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 01-Nov-19 03:42 PM GMT



### Re: millerd

by Neil Freeman, 01-Nov-19 08:29 PM GMT

Flipping 'eck Dave...that female Holly Blue is just rubbing it in 👍👍👍😊

Seriously though, that is an amazing series of photos.

I think you have seen more third brood Holly Blues than I saw second brood around my patch. They were a bit thin on the ground around here this year, I reckon most of them migrated down the M40 corridor 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: millerd

by millerd, 01-Nov-19 11:28 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel – you'll be able to compare the black margins with another example now! On this one, they aren't quite as extensive. 😊

Just a bit of sunshine seems to be enough, David, and the Red Admirals are out. It seems to be enough to bring one or two Hollies out of their chrysalids too. 😊

Thank you Trevor – the conditions seem just right for them to open up like that, and it is possible to get really close as well. 😊

Not often you're speechless, Buggy... 😊😊

Many thanks, Neil. There haven't been quite as many Holly Blues around here as there are in some years, but peak day counts of 34 in the first brood and 24 in the second, and 562 butterflies counted altogether (with them being seen on 67 days between 25th March and 31st October) means they've had a pretty reasonable year. 😊

**Thursday 31st October** was very similar to the previous day, with perhaps a bit more sunshine. Red Admirals were slower to appear today, and once again it was while looking down at the new nettle growth that I saw something move in the wet grass. In view of the day before I wasn't really surprised to find another fresh female Holly Blue.



She struggled a bit to find purchase on the damp grass, and was partly shaded, so I lent a hand and helped her to a better spot in the sun.



She immediately started seeking moisture from the surface of the leaf.



I was also able to get some close-up shots of this behaviour.



Not so much patience was required today – the butterfly soon decided the bask in the sunshine.



Before the butterfly finally flew I managed a nice back-lit shot.





Encouraged by such a good start, I carried on around my usual route, finding most of the five Red Admirals today in slightly different haunts.





In one of these spots, one of the Admirals was being bothered by another butterfly. When it finally settled, it turned out to be a male Holly Blue, somewhat battered but still able to pose nicely.



Finally, back nearer home again, down on the nettles I found a third Holly Blue. This is where luck ran out – this one had clearly warmed up in the sun, and after allowing a couple of resting shots it set off into the trees, revealing itself in the process to be another male butterfly.



So, eight butterflies altogether, two species – and once again including a lovely fresh Holly Blue female.



There is one shot I haven't yet posted, but I think I'll save that for a more appropriate time... 😊 😊

The weather now goes downhill, and the chance of another outing like the last two steeply diminishes. Still, fingers crossed – you never know. 😊 😊

Dave

PS: And at long last, my diary is up to date! 😊

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 03–Nov–19 10:21 PM GMT

Interesting Dave – that female looks more like the 1st brood – perhaps the third is mixture of both – late 2nd and early 1st 😊 A great set of shots again and I'm 'well jel' (as the kids say) as I've not seen a butterfly for a week now 🍀

"And at long last, my diary is up to date! 😊" – what does it feel like – it's something I've yet to experience 😊 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 06–Nov–19 03:39 PM GMT

Time to update, again, Wurzel – though this won't take very long this time... 😊 😊 There seems to be quite a bit of variation in these third brood female Hollies, so I may put them all alongside one another and see what it looks like – with typical examples from each of the other broods for comparison.

Unfortunately, there have been no further sightings of any Holly Blues. I say "unfortunately" but in view of their minimal chances of successfully reproducing, it's almost certainly better for them all to stay tucked up until spring now, much as I love seeing them so late in the year. It's been a long season, with the first Holly Blue sighting on 25th March this year. (The first butterflies were on 23rd February, after a winter gap of only 83 days from the last sighting of 2018 on 2nd December).

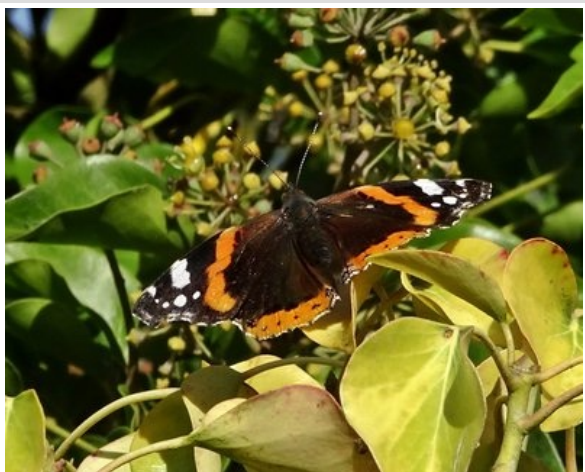
A few November butterflies on my local patch:

On **Sunday 3rd November**, I was mildly surprised to find a Comma on the ivy, having not seen one for a couple of weeks. I had imagined they had all finally disappeared into hibernation.



There were a couple of Red Admirals around as well, but one was too high on the foliage to get even a semi-obscured shot, and the other was a rapid fly-by.

On **Monday 4th**, in the limited sunshine available, I did find a fairly accessible Red Admiral, but just the one, and no other species were seen at all.



So far, that remains the last butterfly of 2019 – today's morning sun was chilly, and by the time temperatures had reached double figures (just), the cloud had rolled in again from the west.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 08-Nov-19 08:20 PM GMT

I'd be interested in seeing that comparative study Dave 😊

We've had a few light frosts the last couple of days so I don't know if that could be it now for me though in the 'Heathrow bubble' you could still have some tolerable days and sneak the odd Red Admiral in 🍷🍷 Mind you on the plus side I can now try and catch-up on my PD 😊😊

Have a goodun

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 09-Nov-19 08:25 PM GMT

I'll see what I can do when the season has finally ground to a halt, Wurzel (any time now I should think! 😊).

**Thursday 7th November** was actually bright sunshine for a lot of the day, but distinctly chilly with it. I went out for my usual walk soon after 1000 and I doubt it was more than 8 or 9 degrees out there. Nevertheless, I soon encountered a Comma sunning itself.



It was quite active, and as can be seen it changed perches periodically to try and find the most sheltered and sunniest spot. Looking at the photos, this was not the one I had seen a few days earlier.

After spending a bit of time with the Comma, I carried on round. The next sighting was a Red Admiral flying past overhead, and then I spotted another one in a novel position on a passion vine. This plant is a huge affair, covering a considerable area and stretching way up into neighbouring trees. There are currently still lots of flowers on it, and a scattering of the ripening orange fruit, though most of these have rotted and fallen off. A close relative of

the more tropical plant that bears commercial passion fruit (with the dark leathery skin and sweet acidic pulp), this more temperate variety grows well down here: the fruits are also edible if a bit on the bland side.



Finally, I found another Red Admiral in a more traditional position.



The weather has definitely nosedived now, but I am still vaguely hopeful of one or two more sightings.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 10-Nov-19 06:58 AM GMT

The fat Lady has yet to sing around your way Dave.  
She's in full voice in my area.  
Your Comma is a sight for sore eyes!

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 10-Nov-19 06:07 PM GMT

That is a cracking Comma Dave and I love the shot of the Red Admiral next to the Passion Vine 🤩🌿 Finally got a November butterfly today, no shots though but still great to see. It was flying around a large growth of Ivy so I was confident that it'll be alright when the temperature drops 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 10-Nov-19 10:33 PM GMT

A Comma a week into November is no mean feat, Dave. Looking forward to seeing your montage of gorgeous Holly Blues – is your 'special' individual to be presented when the 'Favourites' thread gets to 'H'?

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 11-Nov-19 09:32 AM GMT

Well Trevor, after finding nothing yesterday on a promising sunny day, I reckon my local diva has got herself poised for the aria with lungs full and is

just waiting for the conductor's baton... 😊 I reckon Commas are light sleepers round here, since I saw one in December in 2018, and they were up and about in February this year.

Cheers, Wurzel – good to see you clocked up a November butterfly. It's quite a normal occurrence these days it seems. 😊

November Commas are a regular thing hereabouts, David – but then so are Holly Blues in recent years, though not (so far) in 2019 it would appear! 😊 When I've run out of new sightings I shall put together a Holly Blue special, featuring all three broods – it won't be long coming I suspect. Hmm – I reckon the "Favourites" thread will get round to this species on 1st December... That's near enough. What I've kept back is nothing spectacular, just a serendipitous juxtaposition! (I don't often get to use two of my favourite words together – and they are perfectly describing themselves at the same time! 😊)

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 11–Nov–19 09:02 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

Well Trevor, after finding nothing yesterday on a promising sunny day, I reckon my local diva has got herself poised for the aria with lungs full and is just waiting for the conductor's baton...

It turns out that she wasn't actually quite ready to burst forth into choral virtuosity... 😊

Seen basking high up in a tree today (11th November) was a Red Admiral.



It was quite sunny, but there was a chilly wind blowing from the north.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 11–Nov–19 10:25 PM GMT

Your Red Admiral popped out during an intermission in her performance, Dave !. Well found.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by David M, 12–Nov–19 12:17 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

..It turns out that she wasn't actually quite ready to burst forth into choral virtuosity... 😊

LOL. That'll teach you! 😊

Given recent history, Dave, I think it likely that there will be continued sightings on your patch until the first serious frosts.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 12–Nov–19 10:27 PM GMT

Great to see that the Mezzo Soprano had a touch of the laryngitis Dave 😊 What do reckon the chances are of a December butterfly 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 12-Nov-19 10:32 PM GMT

It was a piece of luck, Trevor – I just happened to look up and there it was. 😊

Still no frost here, David, not quite... However, it is decidedly cold now, even when the sun shines for a couple of hours as it did yesterday and again today. The wind was a bit sharper today and before the cloud and rain arrived at lunchtime, I not suprisingly didn't see any butterflies. I think our operatic prima donna is just clearing her throat now... 😊

However, the day was not without something lepidopterous... Down on the white dead-nettles (some of which remain in flower) I saw something move. Close examination revealed this caterpillar, remarkably spiny and cactus-like.



I am guessing it is a Tiger moth of some sort, but I'm not sure which. Others have recently posted photos of Ruby Tiger cats, so that's a possibility, but there were a few Jersey Tigers around here this summer, so maybe that's an alternative.

Any ideas, anyone?

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 12-Nov-19 10:51 PM GMT

I reckon it could be a Ruby Tiger as well Dave as a quick spin through Goggle showed up a few that looked as dark as that one 😊. The Jersey Tiger Moth cats are almost as bright as the imago 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 17-Nov-19 08:39 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel – I suspect that's what it is then. 😊

The way things have been since then, the chances of anything more have pretty well disappeared. There have been spells of sunshine early on, but it has always fizzled out by lunchtime and temperatures have not been above 10 degrees. We have come close to a bit of ground frost, but not quite – none of the plants has shown any signs of frost yet. However, it looks as if Monday night may change that.

On my recent walks I still keep an eye out for that little unusual something, and consequently investigate any possibility of a surprise butterfly. This means a number of false alarms, but for a moment the other day, I did think I'd found something. Gleaming silvery Holly Blues with their wings closed become camouflaged against the shiny leaves of holly and ivy, and I've also found that they are adept at mimicking the white smear of a bird dropping. This does mean of course that the reverse becomes true too – a bird dropping can mimic a butterfly.





By taking the photo, I've obviously concentrated on the subject, but at a casual glance you can see how you could be fooled.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 18-Nov-19 12:01 AM GMT

I had to do a double take with that one Dave 😊 A quick glance and it was a Holly Blue and then a proper look and it was something else not quite so nice 😊😊 I've been caught out by various leaves and things over the years, generally when a glimpse is caught out of the corner of your eye 😊 Still it keeps you on your toes 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 18-Nov-19 09:05 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

...Gleaming silvery Holly Blues with their wings closed become camouflaged against the shiny leaves of holly and ivy, and I've also found that they are adept at mimicking the white smear of a bird dropping. This does mean of course that the reverse becomes true too – a bird dropping can mimic a butterfly.

By taking the photo, I've obviously concentrated on the subject, but at a casual glance you can see how you could be fooled.

It's surprising to hear how things have dropped off so suddenly in your area, Dave. It's not as if there has been any serious cold weather.

I get what you mean regarding the 'bird dropping' camouflage. I spent some while the other day concentrating on a butterfly shaped brown patch but closer inspection revealed it to be a dead leaf. 😊

We observant butterfly aficionados can have our attention caught by just about anything.

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 18-Nov-19 09:39 PM GMT

I agree with that being a Ruby Tiger caterpillar. It fits in with it's lifecycle too, hibernating as a full grown cat.

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 24-Nov-19 10:14 PM GMT

Cheers, all. Ruby Tiger it is.

No sign of anything else now until today (not even any camouflaged bird poo), and this next sighting doesn't really count.

On a grey and miserable afternoon (**Sunday 24th November**), though the temperature had scraped its way up to 11 degrees, I became aware of something fluttering at the window. This turned out to be a Small Tortoiseshell, wakened from sleeping in some dark and cool corner of the house perhaps by the slight rise in temperature. I set about releasing it, as at least the weather looks relatively benign for a day or two and it stands a chance of finding somewhere else to hibernate. I haven't seen any of this species since the middle of August, so it had been tucked away for several months already. I hope it survives.

I managed a rather poor record shot before stopping the butterfly from damaging itself in vain fluttering against the glass.



Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 25-Nov-19 08:58 AM GMT

I can actually claim a Christmas Day Small Tort sighting, in similar circumstances to yours. I thought it was dead, but it fluttered off my hand and landed back onto the carpet. This was at the Bell Inn, Wiltshire. Not unfortunately at home in Sussex.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 25-Nov-19 11:21 PM GMT

Fingers crossed for the Small Tort Dave – it should be okay as there must be a shed or two locally that it could sneak into 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 26-Nov-19 06:26 AM GMT

It's been quite mild lately, Dave, so hopefully your Tortoiseshell will have been able to find a more suitable spot to overwinter. I'm already looking forward to seeing them again in around 3 months time.

### Re: millerd

by Goldie M, 27-Nov-19 09:27 AM GMT

Hi! Dave, I was surprised when early in Spring this year when I entered my Green house a Small Tort suddenly came out of one of my plant pots and quickly disappeared out through the door 😊 I usually leave the window open in there in October and November just in case one needs shelter for a while but it's the first time i've actually seen one in there 😊  
Hope your Tort manages to survive 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-Nov-19 11:55 AM GMT

Interesting comments, everyone! 😊

The common thread appears to be that butterflies encountered in this way are almost invariably Small Tortoiseshells. The species seems to be particularly attracted to hibernating in homes and sheds, and no doubt makes its way in when we all have doors and windows wide open in high summer. It obviously doesn't take much of an upward swing in temperature to rouse them. I commented in the spring that numbers of Small Tortoiseshells seem to appear on the first sunny Sunday, coinciding with the emergence of fleets of lawn mowers and other garden equipment from sheds: perhaps one factor in the worrying decline in this species' numbers is its association with human beings and their habits? 😊

Dave

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 27-Nov-19 12:14 PM GMT

Wednesday 27th November.

It would appear that the recent cold and wet has caused my local generously-proportioned songstress to contract laryngitis... 😊

The weather has been milder for a few days, but far from sunny. However, after a very damp start today, things cleared up at around half past nine and the sun appeared. The winds were light, and temperatures may well have touched the dizzy heights of 13 degrees. Not one to miss the slightest opportunity, I set off onto my local patch and plodded across the muddy grass. It was only a matter of minutes before I caught sight of a Red Admiral basking on the brambles.



The butterfly was restless (I think it was a male) and moved on a bit to another spot low down before taking off to a much higher location amidst nearby ivy-festooned ash trees.



This is by some margin the latest I have seen the species (the previous record I think was 16th November in 2017) and even by my rather unusual standards was a bit of a surprise considering the weeks of distinctly indifferent weather recently. The last Holly Blues I saw before this one were on 31st October – and the last free-flying butterfly was on 11th November.

By eleven o'clock the clouds were building, and by noon it was raining once again.

Dave

### Re: millerd

by bugboy, 27-Nov-19 09:59 PM GMT

Amazing to see a Holly Blue flying in the last week of November but I fear its days are very much numbered with the end of this milderish spell just round the corner 😊

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 27-Nov-19 11:25 PM GMT

I Red Admiral at this time of year is feasible, but a Holly Blue?. An absolutely incredible sighting, Dave. A record ?.

The fat lady has been good to you !. She's singing even louder around here.

All the best,  
Trevor.

**Re: millerd**

by Neil Freeman, 29-Nov-19 07:12 PM GMT

Amazing stuff Dave 🍷 😊

There must be a significant heat island effect around your patch.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 29-Nov-19 10:47 PM GMT

Cheers, all.

Though the Holly Blue sighting is pretty unusual by any standard, I don't think it's a record, Trevor. I think one was seen in December last year (in Sussex?) believe it or not. Unlikely to be beaten this year, I suspect. 😊

I wondered if it might reappear in today's sunshine, Buggy, but I saw nothing on my usual walk and like you I doubt whether it has any chance of survival now. They do survive spring frosts, but the sun then is a great deal stronger and there are more nectar sources available.

Whether the tendency for very late Holly Blue sightings here is a heat island effect, Neil, I couldn't say. It is noticeably hotter here in summer, but the contrast in winter is not so obvious, and you would expect other parts of the London area to be similarly blessed – maybe no one is looking... 😊 It is true to say that the first air frost of the autumn is forecast tonight, and that is probably late compared to some other areas. No doubt the reasons are far more complex than we imagine.

Dave

**Re: millerd**

by Wurzel, 29-Nov-19 10:51 PM GMT

Cricky Dave – we know that you have a habit of pulling Holly Blues out of thin air but one this late in November 🤩 that must have really taken some effort 😊 🍷 🍷 I think it's been at least two weeks since my last butterfly though it's been so long I can't really be sure 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: millerd**

by David M, 02-Dec-19 06:30 PM GMT

**millerd wrote:**

Whether the tendency for very late Holly Blue sightings here is a heat island effect, Neil, I couldn't say. It is noticeably hotter here in summer, but the contrast in winter is not so obvious, and you would expect other parts of the London area to be similarly blessed – maybe no one is looking... 😊 It is true to say that the first air frost of the autumn is forecast tonight, and that is probably late compared to some other areas. No doubt the reasons are far more complex than we imagine.

Complex indeed, Dave, but food for thought nonetheless. One of the things I notice about living in south Wales is how often butterflies are seen active quite early in the year. I guess that's 'heat island' in reverse, in the sense that due to proximity to the coast it's far milder throughout the winter yet cooler than most inland parts from mid spring onwards.

**Re: millerd**

by millerd, 23-Dec-19 10:10 AM GMT

Despite a number of spells of relatively warm sunshine between the periods of heavy rain (not to mention a tornado a few miles down the road in Chertsey...), I have not seen any more butterflies. In fact it's another glorious-looking morning today, and there are still a few dandelions flowering along with white dead-nettle and one or two other things. The best I could manage was the flash of a Kingfisher along the River Colne, though it would have been hard-pressed to see anything to catch in the turbulent overfull stream: in fact the river had overflowed in a few places and had flooded the path so that the extra water was trickling gently into the lake (which I believe it is designed to do in these circumstances).

So, in the absence of anything lepidopterous to report, all that remains is to wish everyone a terrific Christmas and a New Year filled with interesting butterflies. It's been great meeting lots of you in the field (and spending inordinate amounts of time chatting!), and reading everyone's fascinating diaries from both home and abroad.

I shall leave you for the time being with the long-promised and particularly appropriate pose of my favourite butterfly...



Dave

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 23-Dec-19 10:34 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Hope you have a cracking Christmas and a New year brimming with Butterflies 🦋🦋 Looking forward to chatting/looking for butterflies next season already 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: millerd

by David M, 23-Dec-19 10:32 PM GMT

That's a highly festive shot, Dave, and I sincerely hope your chosen species provides you with super abundance next year.

I shall look forward to seeing the images.

All the best. 😊

### Re: millerd

by millerd, 29-Dec-19 09:01 PM GMT

#### Christmas Day 2019

As usual, I spent Christmas up in Yorkshire with my sister and an assortment of our offspring. On Christmas Eve, just as it was getting dark, a Small Tortoiseshell appeared in one of the bedrooms. It was very active, but we managed to capture it and place it in a tupperware box. We then put that in turn in one of the outhouses where a number of other butterflies usually spend the winter. I reasoned that in the box it would cool relatively slowly and would therefore return more gently into winter torpor. My sister mentioned that this was the third Tortoiseshell she had moved from indoors to this spot in recent days. On Christmas morning, the butterfly was now largely inert, but still alive, as it gripped the surface it was moved to.

Christmas Day was of course largely bright and sunny to start with. Around lunchtime, there was fluttering in the hall, and yet another Small Tortoiseshell had made an appearance from some indoor hiding place. This time, with such comparatively decent weather, the individual was released into the open air. The first thing it did was to bask briefly on an ivy-clad wall in the sunshine, before moving onto a piece of bare wall well out of reach of the camera. No doubt the bricks had warmed a fair bit in the sun. However, while it was sitting on the ivy, I managed a quick shot.



Talking to a few folk up there over the next couple of days, it appeared that several of them had also found Small Tortoiseshells in their homes, awoken from winter slumber. Perhaps people turn the heating up a notch when visitors arrive for the festive season, air their spare rooms and open cupboards to extract spare bedding. It's always Small Tortoiseshells, too, never any other of the hibernating species.

Interesting. Does this count as a December sighting? Not really I suppose, but nearly... 😊😊

A Happy New Year to you all!

Dave

### Re: millerd

by trevor, 29-Dec-19 10:08 PM GMT

Your Small Tortoiseshell shot is about as un- Christmassy as it's possible to get !.

A real taster of things to come. 😊

I too found a Christmas Day Small Tort in Wiltshire, again in a warm bedroom, a couple of years back.

Great stuff !,

And a happy new Decade, Dave.

Trevor.

### Re: millerd

by Wurzel, 30-Dec-19 05:08 PM GMT

That was a delightful Christmas present Dave – so thoughtful of your sister to have laid on some butterflies for you 😊😊 As it was 'free flying' I don't know why it wouldn't count as a December sighting? I reckon you're onto something with the reasoning for the sudden emergence 😊  
Have a great New Year!

Have a goodun

Wurzel