

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Jan-20 08:03 PM GMT

I bloody love baths too Bugboy but not as much as that Swan 😄😄 Have a great New Year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 05-Jan-20 07:14 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy post\_id=150076 time=1577815294 user\_id=13753]Here's hoping we get a nice cold snap in the coming months to set us up for a good productive 2020..

Happy New Year to you too, BB, and yes, I concur 100% with your wishes for a cold snap. Around 10 days towards the end of January would be perfect, thank you. 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Jan-20 02:01 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments guys 😊

### January 2020.

It may be mild but still no butterflies seen since my last outing. Although I've seen a few reports of Red Admirals and Peacocks at nearby Epping Forest, that's not been one of my destinations recently. I'd booked a few days off which helpfully coincided with a reasonable break in wet weather, at least during the day anyway.

On the 9th I ventured down to the Wetland Centre at Barnes, south London. There was no sign of any Bittern today and the sightings board said only one had been seen in recent days. The Wigeon were looking rather smart in the sun.



*Wigeon drake*

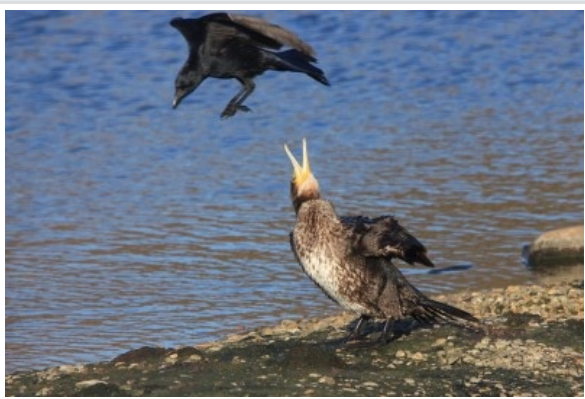
These two Egyptian Geese provided a handy point of reference when pointing out the only Snipe I saw to other birders.



Gulls were everywhere with first winter Herrings outnumbering all others, here's two Common Gull closest to the camera (not Britain's commonest Gull), two Black-headed Gull with the red beaks (in their non breeding plumage and lacking the dark brown, not black, breeding plumage heads) and a Lesser Black-back Gull (with its dark grey back).... common names eh 😊



A few Cormorants were sat around, drying off after a hard mornings fishing but one Crow was being a right little s\*&%! There were several around but only this one was causing trouble, persistently creeping up behind them and pecking at them. I'm not entirely sure what the Crow was getting out of it but he was clearly being a right pain in the butt!

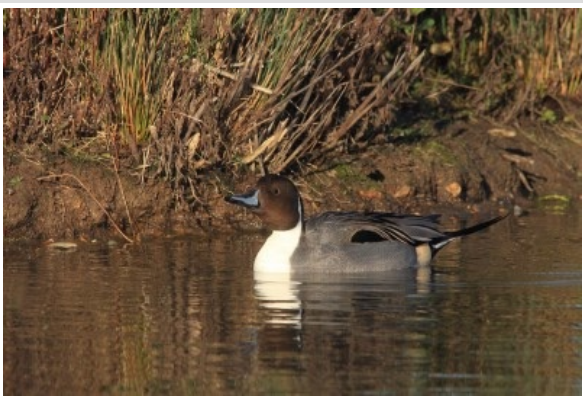




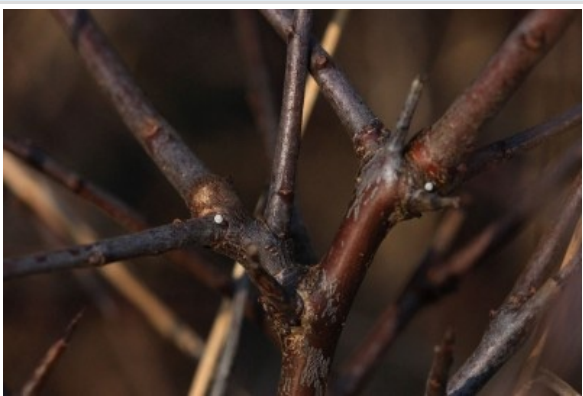
after 5 minutes and a few belligerent 'corrs' he was off to cause trouble elsewhere.  
Other noteworthy inhabitants today were some Shelduck



and a pair of Pintail, the drake looking particularly splendid.



On the **10th** it was off to Bookham for the first visit of the new decade. I didn't come away with a great deal of pictures. The first thing I did was egg hunting, quickly finding eight Brown Hairstreak along a short stretch of hedgerow.



Banks Common still seems to be empty of livestock despite the new fence line and large pond being over a year old now, but I did disturb the first Redwings I've seen this winter there. Being in the countryside they proved near impossible to approach (the ones that turn up on my local patch are far more approachable), not helped by the ever-present Blackbird shouting my presence from the safety of every bush I tried to sneak past.



*Redwing*

A quick check on my White Admiral larvae had mixed results. Pete was taking thing esay, still safely tucked up, much like his namesake would have preferred to have been in recent weeks no doubt 😊!



Bad news awaited me further on though, Dave and his hibernaculum were nowhere to be seen 😞

After that is was more a case of just enjoying the afternoon, precious little sat still long enough to point my camera at. Some more egg hunting gave me a final total of just twelve Brown Hairstreaks and no Purples.

Quite a bit more scrub clearance has been going on again this winter, and also, they've been cutting down Turkey Oak which will create a few new clearings in the wood. It'll be interesting to see what effects these will have in the coming months.

I also took a few shots of the Moon in the evening, think I managed to capture the penumbral eclipse with this Gif. The 3 photos used to make it were taken at 19:06, 19:18 and 20:29



## Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 11-Jan-20 06:06 PM GMT

Lovely set of shots Bugboy – I really need to get out but accruing Brownie points and looking after the recovering cat is taking it's toll 🤔🐱 so seeing your shots is a great boost 😊. I've never understood how we've managed to get the 'common' naming of gulls so wrong? Perhaps the non distinct appearance of Mew/Common Gull is how it got it's name – as it was just a 'common or garden' gull? I prefer 'chocolate headed gull for BHGull when it's in summer plummage 😊😁

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by essexbuzzard, 11-Jan-20 09:36 PM GMT

I agree with Wurzel. The true black-headed gull is the Mediterranean gull, with a truly black head in the breeding season.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 15-Jan-20 05:39 PM GMT

Always nice to see your avian presentations during the winter, BB, not to mention the early stage butterflies. Well done too with your lunar image....something I absolutely must try myself when the next opportunity presents itself.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 15-Jan-20 07:20 PM GMT

Great Bird shots Bugboy, You've made me want to get my camera and get out there 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Jan-20 08:30 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, glad I can help whilst your accruing your brownie points, hope the cat is ok. Yes Chocolate Headed Gull is a far more accurate name! As Essex says there's plenty of dark headed Gulls with genuinely black heads out there 😊

Thanks **David**, more birdies below 😊

Thanks **Goldie**, you're not doing to bad with your garden birds yourself 😊

### January 2020.

On the 12th I went over to Two Tree Island in Essex. If it wasn't for the strong wind it may have been sunny enough to get a butterfly sighting, as it was, it was strictly a birdie day out.

Since the hides were destroyed by vandals over a year ago, wader watching on the sheltered lagoon hasn't been nearly as good as it once was. Today there were some flocks but they were staying on the far islands and seemed very fidgety. As far as I could tell they were mostly Knot with a sprinkling of Dunlin. On another island Redshank ruled the roost, whilst dotted here and there others were found including Curlew, Oystercatcher and Grey Plover.

Avocet were nowhere to be seen. After watching them for around half an hour a female Sparrowhawk came through low down, on a hunting sortie and put everything up. She didn't catch anything but there was much murmuring before pretty much everything vanished across the Hadleigh Ray channel towards Canvey Island putting an end to any real birdwatching in this corner of the island.



*Murmuring Knot*



*Grey Plover*

Along the southern edge of the Island Curlew were as usual sitting out high tide on the bits of saltmarsh vegetation still visible and I put up a small flock of Snipe who were to fast to get any pictures of.



At the other end of the Island the high tide had brought the large flocks of Brent Geese close to the shore as they fed in the 'shallows'.



I once again spent some time trying to get some shots of the very flighty and shy Kingfisher, failing again so I did one more circuit of the Island before I lost the light. On the Lagoon a small group of Wigeon had turned up but with the tide now on its way out little else was there apart from a trio of Ringed Plover



*Wigeon with a Ringed Plover in the foreground*  
And in the dying embers of the day I found a pair of Shelduck

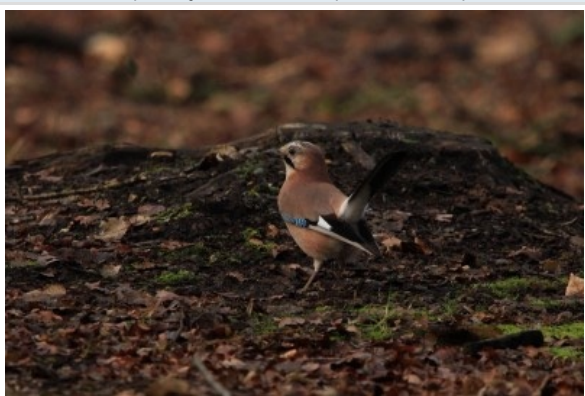


Today (the **15th**) a predicted sunny afternoon tempted me out locally for a couple of hours in Epping Forest. The recent rains had created much flooding with many of the ditches and brooks that become The Ching, (hence nearby Chingford) overflowing onto the paths and made me question my choice of footwear for the day, wellies would have made life much easier.

The weather also made me question (as is so often the case) my reliance on the forecasts. Despite my phone apps dogged insistence that there was just be harmless fluffy clouds around I got drenched and bombarded from the heavens



I left rather damp with just a handful of pictures of a Jay



1/24th of the way through the year already, where does the time go 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 17-Jan-20 07:51 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy, just catching up on your recent posts, a cracking selection of birds there and some great photos of them 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Jan-20 10:31 PM GMT

Thanks Neil, they do help fill the butterflyless void which is potentially only another 6 weeks long... at least down here anyway 😊

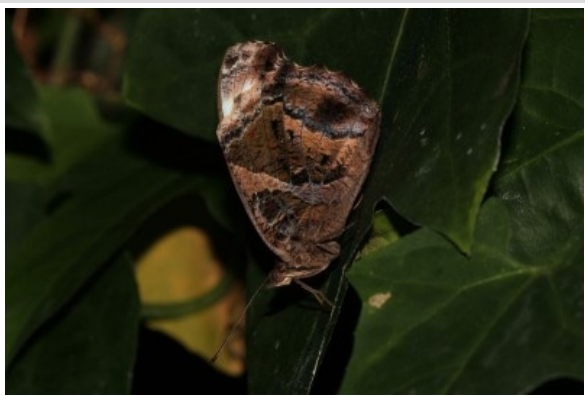
### January 2020.

20th, a little break from UK wildlife. Here's a selection of tropical butterflies from London Zoos Butterfly Paradise exhibit. Since it's the depths of winter and the 'off' season there wasn't a great deal around but enough to point a camera at. Sadly it was a bit overcast at the time so light levels were basically useless and many of the butterflies were roosting. It also meant I had to use flash with mixed results.

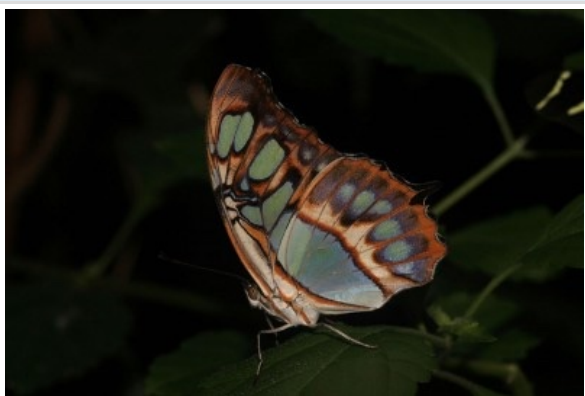
A single Leopard Lacewing *Cethosia cyane*.



Next to it, and largely overlooked by everyone else here, was this butterfly which looked like a cross between a Red Admiral and a Nettle tree Butterfly.... more of it later.



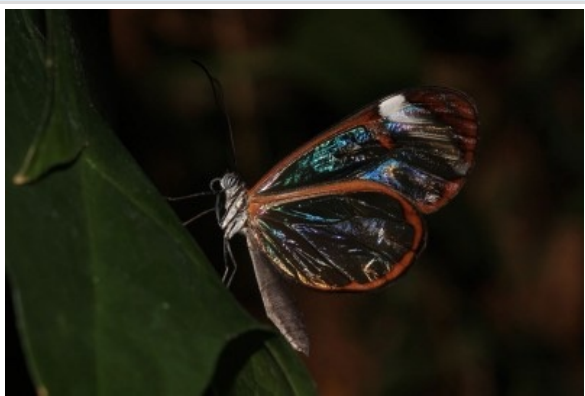
A couple of Malachite *Sipreota stelenes*, one showing it's close relationship to Heliconids, feeding on a dish of pollen. Some of their larvae were also on show which I've never seen before. They're quite magnificent creatures but my pictures didn't really come out particularly well.







Next up a couple of tropical butterfly house staples, a Zebra Heliconid *Heliconius charitonius* and a Glasswing *Greta oto*, the flash giving the Glasswing some eye catching refracting iridescence.



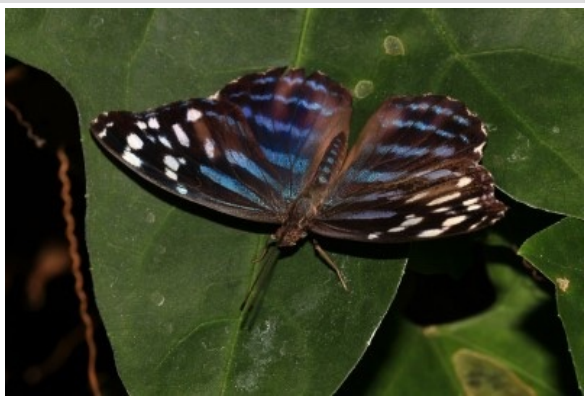
Another less commonly encountered Heliconid is *Heliconius sara*. The inner half of the wings, up to the pale-yellow bands, is iridescent blue but in this case, the flash ruined it no matter from what angle I tried to photograph it from.



There were a few of that other staple Heliconid, The Postman *Heliconius Melpomene* but the final one of this group I managed was the Tiger Longwing *Heliconius hecale*.



Back to that camouflaged roosting one that looked a bit like a Red Admiral, here's its upperside



A Mexican Bluewing *Myscelia ethusa*

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 21-Jan-20 09:03 PM GMT

A cracking collection of bird shots and then exotics Bugboy – and some of those are tricky ones to separate out/identify. I had a go a few years back and ended up getting very enjoyably lost in the wonders of Batesian and Mullerian mimicry rings 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

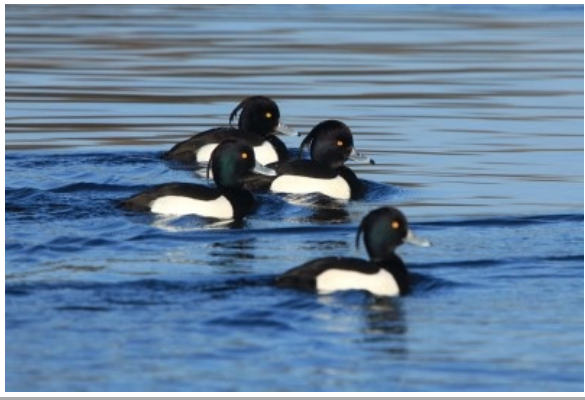
by bugboy, 30-Jan-20 08:51 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel. Aaaahh mimicry rings, fascinating evolution 😊

### January 2020.

Wednesday the 29th turned out to be a nice sunny day and tempted me out for a local jaunt again. Still no butterflies for yours truly but then I'm not really expecting any for a while yet unless we get a silly warm spell like last year. Anyway I took the short train ride up to Cheshunt to wander around the lakes and woodland of the Lea Valley up there. Once again there was not much in the way of winter avian visitors but there was plenty of interesting things going on. (They just mentioned the lack of winter migrant birds on WinterWatch as I write this!)

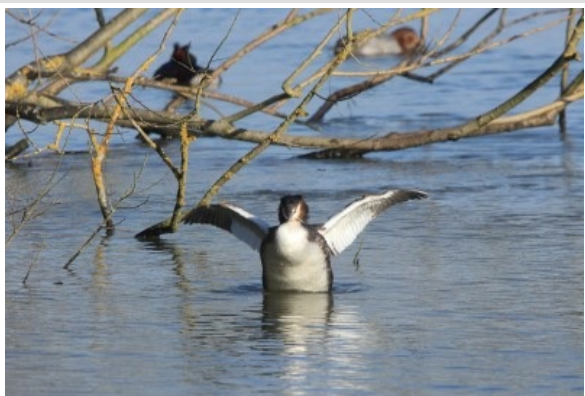
Here's a small portion of a larger group of Tufted Duck, all Drakes



The Great-crested Grebe are starting to colour up now and I caught a pair practising the elaborate courtship ritual, just a short preliminary round before the breeding starts in a few weeks' time.



A quick flap to loosen up after.



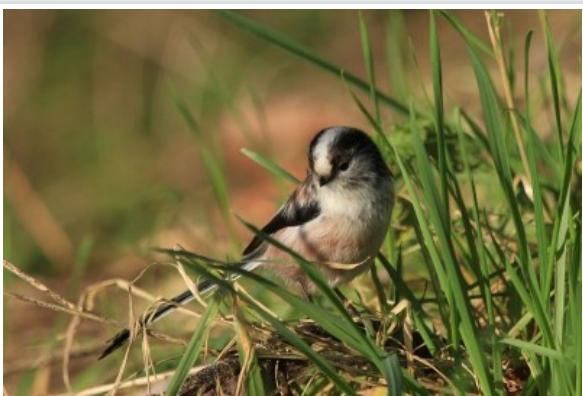
Coots were causing trouble as usual, here's a group thinking about reeking havoc!



A few Heron were about and I was watching this one pick around in the turf and mud. It was only when I looked at the image on my computer that I saw it was eating worms.



Pick of the day though goes to a little Long-tailed Tit who completely ignored me as it foraged down in the grass by the side of the path 😊.





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Feb-20 11:04 AM GMT

Great bird shot Bugboy 😊 The Long-tailed Tit is great – always value for money they are! I was in the New Forest after Christmas and saw some good stuff including a Firecrest and a small party of Crossbills but the highlight was actually a family of LT Tits 😊 The Tufties were brilliantly captured – you can see the fabulous sheen on their heads 😊😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Feb-20 11:04 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, Crossbills is a species I've never seen and only once have I seen a Firecrest so a 🍷 for them!

### February 2020.

**Wednesday the 5th** was another sunny day when I thought perhaps my luck might be in with an early butterfly sighting. There's certainly been a good few sightings scattered across social media, mostly Peacocks, over the past week or two. I stayed local on Walthamstow Marshes and set out early. Despite the bright skies and virtually still air, I wasn't to find any butterflies in my few hours ambling around though, but the birdlife kept my camera busy.

Here's a female/juvenile Grey Wagtail with a Pied cousin in the foreground



A Song Thrush singing the song of his people!



A nervous looking Wood Pigeon eyeing up the recent arrival in the tree.



It needn't have been worried though, the Kestrel had his eyes on much smaller prey and demonstrated the remarkable eyesight Birds of Prey possess by spotting an earthworm halfway across the field from the vantage point high up in the tree. He also proved that age old saying about early birds and worms.



In the next field another worm was also meeting a sticky end (or should that be a stretchy end 😬), this time the early bird being a Mistle Thrush.





Also searching for breakfast was a Magpie, rooting through the leaf litter.



Robins, always commonplace, were in fine voice.



Last time I was here I photographed a pair of Swans rather exuberantly enjoying a bath, they looked far more serene and graceful today.



Although there were no butterflies to be seen, many Bumblebees were active. One in particular didn't go unnoticed by a local Great Tit and met with a particularly gruesome end. From the Great Tits perspective it makes perfect sense to remove the stinger before eating the Bee but it does mean a rather slow death is to be had by the unfortunate victim.



As a sign that spring is just around the corner some of the Blackthorn here is in full flower already. This is actually perfectly normal on my local patch with some areas all but gone over by the time the adult hibernators begin to emerge in 4 or 5 weeks time.



Hopefully my next post will have a butterfly or two 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 12-Feb-20 10:43 PM GMT

More cracking shots Bugboy 😊 Especially like the Song Thrush – it's throwing an unusual shape there, caught in mid riff 😊 Good work with the Kestrel down on the deck, don;t often see that 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 13-Feb-20 07:44 PM GMT

That's fascinating regarding the Great Tit and the Bumblebee, BB. I never knew small birds would prey on bees but the truth is staring me in the face there!

I'm also surprised by your blackthorn blossom. I've never heard of it flowering so early.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-Feb-20 09:32 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments Wurzel and David 😊



## **February 2020.**

I promised butterflies last time for the next post, I've failed....sorry about that but I'm gonna blame it on weather, we've had an awful lot of weather recently 😞 .

Well anyway, I bought a new camera recently, I'd noticed the old one was starting to show its age (or rather how much use I put it through). Just a few mildly annoying glitches but I thought I'd invest in a slight upgrade which at the first opportunity got a test drive. The first opportunity turned out to be the afternoon of the **23rd February**, when there was noticeably less rain than what has become 'normal' and the sun even came out periodically giving me a sense of what Noah must have felt on day 41 😊 !

I stayed local again on the marshes where the large patch of early flowering Blackthorn is now in full swing, just a shame there's no butterflies to enjoy this early bounty like there was last year.



Out on the horse paddocks I saw the first Redwings of the winter here, only half a dozen or so but at least some have turned up at last.



*Redwing*

Lots of small birds were flitting around but I managed to pin down a Chiffchaff and I had some more luck with another Long-tailed Tit.



*Chiffchaff*



*Long-tailed Tit*

Here's a Stock Dove with it's larger relative lurking in the background.



*Stock Dove and Wood Pigeon*

Some Black-headed Gull's were mucking around in the more waterlogged parts of the fields



*Black-headed Gulls*

And just before heading home a young male Kestrel put on an excellent display rather close to me, shame about the electricity pylon in the background 😞.





*Doing it the easy way!*

The camera did good though, close enough to the old one to get the grip of it without too much searching for buttons and settings. Just need to play with the brightness on the rear screen so I'm not overcompensating exposures etc.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 25-Feb-20 10:12 PM GMT

Great shots again Bugboy – especially like the Stock Dove – easily overlooked and the overwintering Chiff Chaff:D To say we've had a lot of weather is putting mildly so you can be forgiven for no butterflies 😊 Mind you things don't look much better any time soon, fingers crossed for some more stable weather patterns soon 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 27-Feb-20 03:13 PM GMT

Love the Bird shots Bugboy, I tried to get a shot of the Sparrow Hawk yesterday but just missed him 😊 Lets hope your next shots are Butterflies 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-Mar-20 09:02 PM GMT

Thanks **Goldie**, sadly still no butterflies but we're in March now so surely we'll see some soon.... as long as the weather settles down a bit! THanks **Wurzel**. According to the Countryfile weather forecast we might have a quieter week so just perhaps something will poke it's antennae out from it's hiding place 😊

### February 2020.

I had a half day on the 27th. I spent the morning working in torrential rain but come the afternoon the sun was shining. Another chance to take the new camera out for a test drive. Off course no butterflies were about, it may have been sunny but the brisk wind was a tad chilly.

I did find a Blue Tit nectaring on the Blackthorn. Just like an insect, each flower was probed/nibbled in turn.



*Blue Tit*

A grey Squirrel put on it's best 'innocent, butter wouldn't melt' pose.



*Grey Squirrel*

Out on the horse paddocks I glimpsed the first Fieldfare I've seen this winter.



*Fieldfare*

A couple of Little Grebe/Dabchick were feeding and perhaps toying with the idea of making chicks, they certainly looked like they were dressed in their breeding plumage.



*Dabchick*



Joining them were some Gadwall, a very understated duck.



*Gadwall*

The Stock Doves were still hanging around, this time a bit closer



*Stock Dove*

And lastly a man made flying thing. I see Chinooks quite often flying over my local patch. I really do need some butterflies to point my camera at soon though 😞 !



*Chinook*

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 02-Mar-20 08:24 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy\_post\_id=150846\_time=1583096557\_user\_id=13753]...I see Chinooks quite often flying over my local patch. I really do need some butterflies to point my camera at soon though

I feel your pain, BB. Yes, I suppose when you are photographing helicopters then something is seriously lacking. 😞

Won't be long now. By mid-March we'll all be struggling to remember these levels of frustration.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 02-Mar-20 10:03 PM GMT

More great shots Bugboy 😊 Really interesting behaviour you captured – I've never seen nectaring in Blue Tits before 😊 but then every source of carbohydrate needs to be exploited 😊 Love the Dabchick shots too and you're right too about the understated Gadwall – mind you when the sun catches them and you get a close look the fine markings are really stunning 😊😊 Fingers crossed for some better weather – though it'll probably get worse just in time for the weekend 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Mar-20 07:58 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel and David, fingers crossed things are going to improve in the coming days 😊

### March 2020

Well I'm officially off the mark with butterflies this year, but don't get too excited 😊. I've been out a bit in the recent (relatively speaking) benign weather, both on my lunch breaks at work and days off but it was on **Sunday the 8th** that I finally found a butterfly. A Peacock flew by near the end of a few hours on Walthamstow Marshes. Unfortunately it was during a cloudy spell and it had closed up by the time I was in range for a quick record shot and then flew off over the hedge before I could get any closer, so all I have to show is this 😊



I won't be entering that into any photographic competitions anytime soon!

I went out again today, buoyed by a message from Millerd over on the other side of London about good numbers on the wing but I came home with an empty camera. Still, I'd booked a week off back in January, hoping it would coincide with a return of springlike weather. That week in question is next week and it looks like the law of sod was looking the other way when I made this particular arrangement... if the current forecast is to be believed 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 11-Mar-20 08:23 PM GMT

Hopefully that Peacock won't be your only March sighting, at least it's a start. Remember late last Feb?, sightings of the five hibernators was almost routine!. It will be interesting to see whether each species will be on time this year, rather than early, as in recent years.

Keep up the good work !.  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 11-Mar-20 09:51 PM GMT

Congrats on getting off the mark Bugboy! 😊😊 It's a great feeling getting that first sighting 😊 Hopefully the Met Office will finally get the forecast correct...fingers crossed, touch wood, flip my lucky coin and wear my lucky hat 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 11-Mar-20 10:21 PM GMT

`{quote=bugboy post_id=150954 time=1583953138 user_id=13753}`...I won't be entering that into any photographic competitions anytime soon!

Matters not, Paul. An early March butterfly is precious irrespective of its corresponding image. 😊

Things look to be awakening now. Let's hope the forecast for a relatively benign spell from Friday holds true.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Mar-20 04:37 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments. It would seem most of us are finally off the mark but it remains to be seen if we will be able to enjoy the rest of early spring 😊

### March 2020.

**Monday 16th.** Finally some relief from the dreadful weather to get me out into the countryside chasing butterflies at last. Through a series of events my occasional chauffeur was also free and so I was able to be responsible and avoid public transport for a long-distance trip. (I'm not sure when next any rail company will be able prize money out of my bank account!)

Despite the almost endless amount of rain we've had I plumped for a trip down to the North Stoke site. For those not familiar with this site, it's part of a

low laying flood plane near the River Arun and gets very boggy even after a small amount of wet weather. I really wouldn't bother going here if you don't have wellies!

As promised, it was a beautiful day and an hour after arriving the first butterfly of the day floated past me, settled and sat soaking up the rays.



Shortly after that a female Brimstone played hard to get (I suspect deliberately) which signaled it was 'Brimstone O'clock'. Males appeared everywhere, all in full patrol mode and with no clouds, there was little chance to get my camera on them, but if there's one thing that signals the end of winter, it's a Brimstone flying along against a backdrop of the still leafless trees.



Another Peacock was found feeding on Sallow catkins before we sat down for our packed lunch.





After lunch we wandered further afield, walking along the river but all I saw was a single Peacock flyby. I was a little surprised to find a few patches of Cuckooflower already in full bloom.



Whilst my Chauffeur explored another dryer path, I braved the mud again. The local Rooks looked like they had chicks to feed, stuffing their throat pouches full of whatever they could find and Rabbits had been doing what Rabbits do 😊!







A few clouds had bubbled up which gave me the chance to grab a few Brimstones who were otherwise still very active. Peacocks also turned up fairly regularly, mostly males staking out territories from the behaviour exhibited.



And finally another species turned up, a trio of Comma. Two flew up into the air (looked like a courting pair rather than males battling) whilst the third sat for me.



It was on my on my return that I finally succumbed to the mud, one foot slid one way whilst suction kept the other firmly in place and over I went, camera and all! All the hardware survived it's brief encounter with the soggy ground but a towel had to be put down for me in the car for the drive home 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 18-Mar-20 07:27 PM GMT

A shame that North Stoke didn't deliver what you were hoping for !.  
But for everything else you did very well. Cracking shot of the Peacock on Willow blossom.

Great stuff, stay safe,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 18-Mar-20 07:47 PM GMT

At least it wasn't actually underwater, Buggy! A nice selection there – I remember a similar set from our excursion there last year in February. I suspect that the hoped for other species may no longer be present, but always worth a look. There may not be many more legitimate longer-distance trips out this year by the look of things, so good to have got one in. 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 18-Mar-20 09:05 PM GMT

Glad you managed to get out while you still could Bugboy 😊 A lovely selection of images my fave probably being the ethereal Peacock on the catkins – gorgeous 😊👍👍 Fingers crossed you might be able to make some further escapes in the near future 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

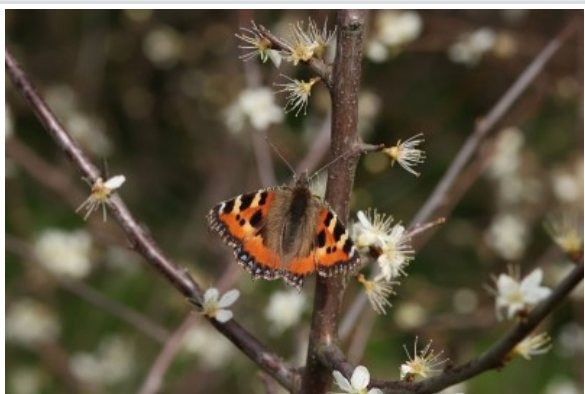
### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Mar-20 08:30 PM GMT

Thanks Guys, even if those Large Torts are known to be there it is always going to be a very very long shot to track one down, most of the habitat is inaccessible anyway. The main reason for going there was simply to get out of London for a day! It looks like we will still be able to venture out at least for now plus I have a job which can't be done from home, so I will have my camera at work every day. Transects start in a couple of weeks too so hopefully I'll still be able to post a few pics.

### March 2020

**Tuesday 17th.** No chauffeur availability today so it was a local wander around Walthamstow Marshes for a few hours. Within five minutes I was on to the first butterfly of the day and species number four for the year, a rather vibrant Small Tortoiseshell





Further along the path I was a little surprised to disturb a White. Today was somewhat more cloudy than yesterday so I was able to follow it until it was forced to settle where I could confirm my suspicions about it being a male Small White.



A few more sheltered hotspots turned up nothing until I found a small corner occupied by three Comma and a Brimstone. The Comma rested regularly in-between bouts of battling/courting. The Brimstone just fluttered back and forth mostly but I did manage a couple of shots during a cloudy spell, just missing the moment when a Drone fly decided to try and land on him.





I spent a bit of time here, the Commas remaining quite active even as the sun became more and more intermittent, the sheltered aspect keeping the wind off probably helping to maintain air temperature just enough for them.



After this small flurry things quietened down as the cloud cover thickened. Even so a few Peacock could still be found here and there before I decided to head home.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Old Wolf, 19-Mar-20 08:48 PM GMT

Hello BB, six in a trip! That is good going and great shots of them too 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 19-Mar-20 09:13 PM GMT

Great stuff Bugboy! Love the shots of the Comma and Peacock 😊👍 as I've seen em but not got any shots myself...yet 😊 I too will be traveling to work with my camera in tow and I might have to have a 'diversion' on the way home as I might be caught short – so Bentley Wood, my Duke Site or Larkhill might have to be my 'pee stop' 😊 Failing that we might have to take the pupils up the field to do some Quadrat Sampling 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 19-Mar-20 11:12 PM GMT

Now that Small Tortoiseshells are starting to appear in our diaries let's hope they are in for a better year in 2020. And I agree that one of yours is very vibrant.

Yes, you would have a job working from home, a flat full of guano if you did! 😊

Keep well,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Andrew555, 20-Mar-20 08:42 AM GMT

Beautiful stuff BB, love that Tort, great haul. 😊  
(like your bird shots as well!)

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 21-Mar-20 02:18 PM GMT

Great to see your Butterfly shots Bugboy, means Spring has definitely arrived, not here yet, the wind is really cold although we've got the Sun it's not encouraging too many Butterflies out just yet. Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 21-Mar-20 06:27 PM GMT

Nice selection, Paul, especially the Small Tortoiseshell on the tree blossom – don't you just love it when they do that?

The Small White is a nice surprise. With sunny (but cool) weather to come over the next few days, I daresay there may be further sightings very soon.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 22-Mar-20 07:24 PM GMT

Once again, thanks for all the comments 😊

## March 2020

**Saturday 21st.** Back out for a wander around my local patch again and it was a day of Comma's. They did seem to be everywhere but upon checking my images I only managed to get pictures of 3 individuals making a maximum total of 5 seen (along with a fleeting flyby with a single Peacock, busy in an aerial battle with one of the aforementioned Comma's).





London, I fear, is rapidly spiraling towards lockdown so I think the only pictures I'll be posting will be from work soon 😞

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 22-Mar-20 08:33 PM GMT

Commas seem to have come through the Winter very well, with good numbers being reported from all over the country. Peacocks too are appearing everywhere. I expect the odd Speckled Wood will be seen next week. I will keep going out until it's illegal, and keep a safe distance from other people, not that i'm likely to meet anyone else where I go.

Keep well,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 22-Mar-20 08:52 PM GMT

Cracking set of Commas Bugboy 😊👍 I'm hoping that people might get the message and work from home and take all of the other precautions but I fear that some Muppets will ruin it for the rest of us 😞😞 If that comes to pass then here's hoping that your work produces plenty of interest 😊 Stay safe.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 23-Mar-20 08:10 PM GMT

A nice set of Commas Bugboy 😊

I didn't see that many around here last year but there appears to be plenty coming out over the past few days.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 24-Mar-20 02:18 PM GMT

Lovely Commas, Paul. I think there are few things finer than these early season butterflies nectaring on the fresh blackthorn blossom.

It's yet to emerge properly here in Wales, but should do so over the course of the next week or so. I'll be eagerly anticipating similar scenes to those you have captured.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 25-Mar-20 10:08 PM GMT

Love your Comma's on the Blossom , great shots Bugboy 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by ernie f, 27-Mar-20 10:30 AM GMT

Great Butterfly pics as usual but I really liked the pic you got a little while back that I just found which you took looking up at a kestrel which was perched looking down.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 28-Mar-20 12:29 PM GMT

Thanks **Trever**, Peacock and Comma always do well on my local patches in the spring 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, The butterflies have only just started to appear at work but being central London (and only having my lunch break) numbers will be low so only a few snaps so far.

Thanks **Neil** It was all about to explode as the lockdown arrived. Ironically I'm now finding myself praying for rubbish weather on days off and good weather on work days now 😊😞!

Thanks **David**, plenty more butterflies on Blackthorn below 😊

Thanks **Goldie** they are the perfect antidote for a long dreary winter aren't they 😊

Thanks **Ernie**, that Kestrel completely ignored me as I crept up on it, here's what it looked from the other side of it's perch, somewhat menacing I think:



## March 2020

**23rd March.** What ended up as the last day of freedom for the foreseeable future was a day wandering my local patches where keeping my distance from other people proved relatively easy.

I'd left early, seeing very few people, and no butterflies until it had warmed up sufficiently. Around 10.30, whilst wandering the near-deserted Tottenham Marshes a Brimstone nonchalantly fluttered past and as I watching it disappear along the hedge, I noticed an orange splotch on the Blackthorn Blossom I'd just walked past. The Comma was well behaved and sat for me.



It was still going to be a slow start to the day since there was a chilly stiff breeze but I killed time doing a bit of birding, a Little Egret catching Breakfast, the spines on the Stickleback not being much help this time and a friendly Coot who was clearly used to being fed by people and was expecting something from me.





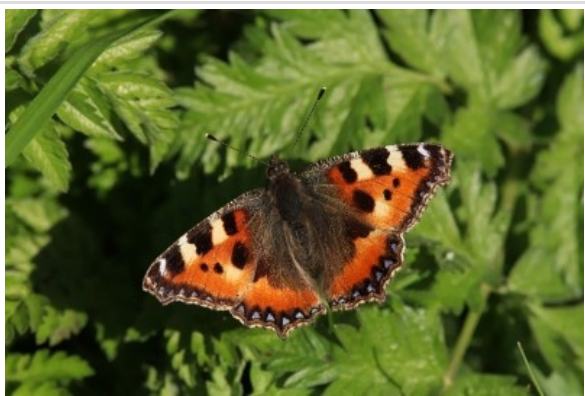


Things livened up properly by 12 at my regular hotspot here with Peacock and Comma numbers increasing by the minute and I eventually had about half a dozen bickering and/or flirting of each species in this narrow strip of sunlit sheltered habitat. A few Brimstone also wandered through occasionally and a Small White settled briefly. Unusually though not a single Small Tortoiseshell was seen here, it's normally a guaranteed spot for them! One particularly fresh Peacock spent it's time licking everything it landed on, mostly likely it had only just left hibernation and was trying to recover from dehydration.



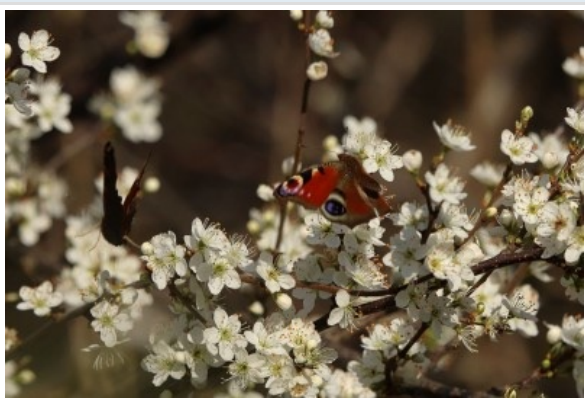


I intended to go straight home but passing Walthamstow Marshes on the way, that was similarly deserted so I took a wander here too, finding more of the same but also a couple of Small Torts.





Near the end of my walk I found a pair of Peacock indulging in some courtship. No chance of any closeups though since it was all happening up a Blackthorn bush.



Stay safe people 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 28-Mar-20 08:28 PM GMT

"Ironically I'm now finding myself praying for rubbish weather on days off and good weather on work days now 😊😊!" Me too! Also a period of poor weather will certainly help with FOMO 😊 Cracking set of butterflies Bugboy - I noticed something similar with the Small Tortois last year at Five Rivers but they'd just moved to a more suitable spot 😊 Hope your work days are productive - stay safe.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 28-Mar-20 10:42 PM GMT

That last Comma looks slightly unusual with those paler yellow patches on the forewings – quite striking actually. They seem to have done well through the winter everywhere this year. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 29-Mar-20 08:14 AM GMT

Lovely feast of colour, Paul. Has to be one of my favourite periods of the year when the blackthorn is blossoming, the adult hibernators are all over it and are being joined by Whites, Holly Blues & Orange Tips. 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-Apr-20 01:32 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, Looks like things are getting warmer this weekend so if the sun comes out too, might get some pics 😊

You're right **Dave**, a minor ab perhaps? Yea Comma's always do well in my neck of the woods 😊

Thanks **David**, sadly I'm not sure how much I'll be seeing of the next wave of emerging species. Work isn't the most productive site (my end of year transect totals are generally 300 to 400 hundred individual butterflies which I'm sure is a monthly total on some countryside sites) and it depends how easy it will be to get to my local patches in the coming weeks 😊

Well I've been back to work (on slightly reduced hours and a drastically altered rota for the time being) since last Thursday. It's very weird down here in London, eerily quiet as it seems most people have started to take the lockdown seriously at last. We've started car pooling as much as possible too to try and stay away from public transport, luckily a colleague lives 5 minutes away.

As for butterflies I've been out for a lunchtime wander a couple of times but this chilly spell seems to have put everything to bed again and the only day I saw anything was my first day back. A Peacock escaped the camera as it flew up from under my feet but I found a Comma at the regular spot I invariably see them in the spring at work.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 01-Apr-20 04:32 PM GMT

It does look like a decent weekend, and even into the following week as well, so hopefully you'll get some opportunities for a bit of sunshine and

exercise to boost the old immune system – oh, and see some more butterflies as well... 😊😊

That's another wonderfully fresh Comma, hardly looking touched by six months of hibernation. Not a mark on it! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Apr-20 08:16 PM GMT

That Comma is in great nick Bugboy, it looks like it's fresh out of the box 😊😊👍 I hope you can still make it out and about for some exercise Bugboy 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 02-Apr-20 09:52 AM GMT

Lovely shots of the Comma Bugboy, London's been hit bad with the Virus, stay safe. Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 02-Apr-20 07:16 PM GMT

Paul, the only positive at this time of year is that all the species we're likely to find are the wide-ranging ones.

Speckled Wood, Orange Tip, Green-Veined and Large Whites can turn up anywhere. What's of more concern is that as we march through April, there will be habitat-restricted species emerging, such as Grizzled Skipper, Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Green Hairstreak & Duke of Burgundy.

We can just hope that the situation will have eased somewhat by then (though I doubt it, personally). 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Chris L, 02-Apr-20 07:34 PM GMT

Great photos Bugboy.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Apr-20 11:58 AM GMT

You were right **Dave**, it was a decent weekend although that was a double edged sword. Lots of butterflies but also lots of selfish, ignorant people potentially ruining things for the majority 😊.

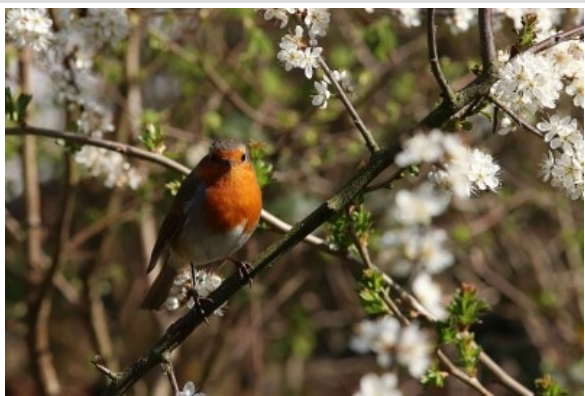
Thanks **Wurzel** Nearly all the Comma's I've seen this spring have been in good nick, along with the other hibernators, they must have fattened up quickly and gone straight into hibernation.

I think you're right **David**. The only Fritillaries I stand a chance of seeing in the flesh this year if we're lucky will be a tatty Silver-washed or a second brood SPBF. I reckon I'll be lucky to see more than 30 species this year 😊. Still, there's always next year 😊

Thanks **Otep** 😊

### April 2020

**Saturday 4th.** The promised warm spell arrived and for once I was glad to be at work to enjoy it without the worry of overstepping the line with regard to the current regulations. Lunchtime arrived so off I popped to the butterfly hotspot.... to find just a lone distant Brimstone. The only thing that sat was a curious Robin.



The current reduced working hours have us all currently finishing at 4, meaning there's still a bit of time before everything goes to bed, and since my colleague who is helping me get to and from work without the need for using public transport drives past my local patch on the route to her home, it's a convenient dropping of point for me. The short walk through the Marshes, avoiding the main paths enables me to get a nature fix without flouting the

rules.

The sunny weather had certainly helped to wake up the butterflies which had all found sheltered sun traps to soak up the evening rays in. The spot I stopped at first is a fenced off pond in the middle of what is primarily a small Sallow copse. The far side faces south and it was here that I could see a trio of Peacock and a couple of Small Tortoiseshell in near constant battle. I didn't have my big lens so I had to be content with just watching their aerial dog fights for the most part.



*Spot the Small Tortoiseshell.*



Around the corner I found a nice Comma.



A few more Comma were found before getting home including the one with the pale patches still defending the same territory as when I last saw him a week ago.





Stay safe

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 06-Apr-20 01:59 PM GMT

Hi! Bug Boy, great shots of the Comma's when I was in Kent last year I saw a similar Comma to the one with the Yellow spots you've shown, It's in my posts from last year. I thought at first it may have been pinned to some thing but got a way,( just fancy thinking on my part 😊) Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 06-Apr-20 06:12 PM GMT

You're certainly using all your tricks to get your fix of nature, Paul. Well done.

I can't spot that Tortoiseshell though, try as I might.

**edit** - Ah, yes I can! I had been looking on the foliage. 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 06-Apr-20 06:40 PM GMT

I like the 'context' shot of the Small Tortoiseshell 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 06-Apr-20 07:49 PM GMT

Great stuff Bugboy 😊 We're living in strange times indeed; looking forward to going to work to get your nature fix 😊😊 More cracking COMmas and I love the peek-a-boo Peacock 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Apr-20 05:06 PM GMT

Thanks **Goldie**, given that the pale patches on my Comma are symmetrical it might be a genetic mutation?

I'm doing my best whilst staying within the regulations **David**.

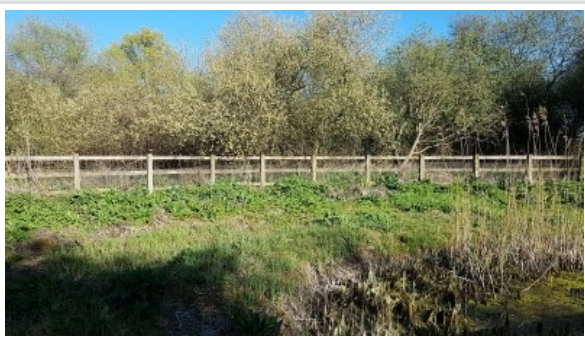
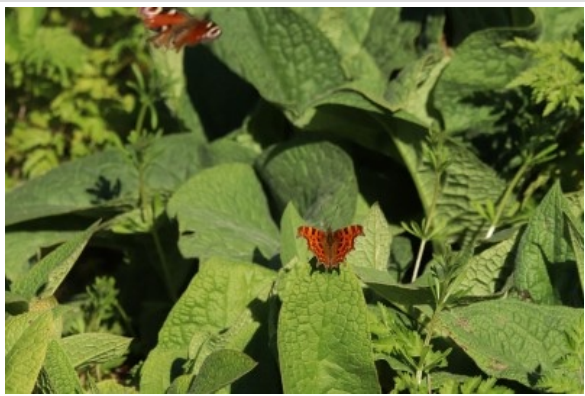
There was a lot more 'context' in that picture before it was cropped **Neil** 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, we can only do what we can at the moment.

### April 2020

**5th April.** My lunchtime wander at work today produce three butterflies although given the 21 degrees and cloudless skies getting any photos was going to be a longshot. A Peacock (I'm assuming the same individual) flew up unseen from under feet three times, a male Brimstone fluttered past and joining them today my first Orange-tip of the year. A male did several flybys, taunting me I'm sure but just the sight lifted my spirits. Still no Speckled Wood yet which I would have expected to be appearing now.

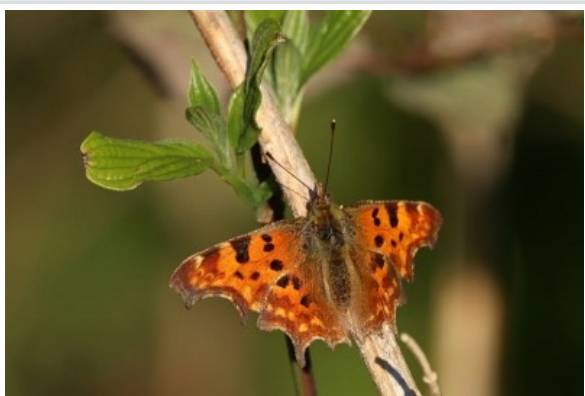
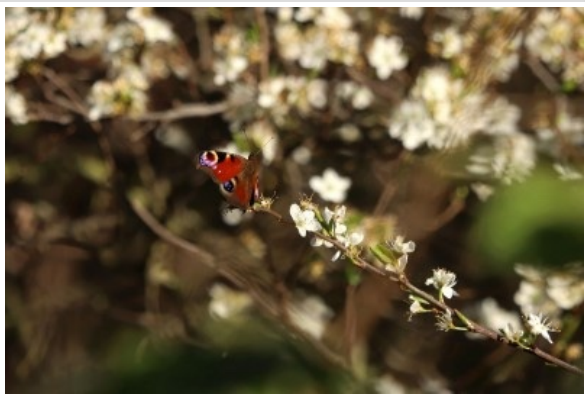
My walk home was a little more successful since I'd packed my long lens today. The butterfly playground next to the pond was still as active as the previous day but Comma's had replaced the Small Tortoiseshell from yesterday and I managed a few passable shots as they sat between frolics in the evening sun.



*context*

Elsewhere some more Peacock were enjoying Blackthorn blossom and a new kid was on the block. Old pale patch Comma had been ousted by this fella who was now vigorously defending his newly acquired territory. Bees and Bieflyes seemed to be of particular annoyance to him!





Stay safe.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-20 10:09 PM GMT

Sorry to read about the usurping of Ole Pale Patch 😞 I'm with him though the bees are annoying at this time of year in that they're constantly spooking the butterfly I'm trying to get a shot of 😊😁

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 08-Apr-20 03:57 PM GMT

Surprising your Specklies aren't out yet, Paul. Mind you, if they were then I guess that'd just mean more irritating interlopers for the Commas & Peacocks to joust with!

Lovely shots of the Peacock on the blackthorn. I never tire of these.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 08-Apr-20 05:45 PM GMT

I always love to see peacocks on Blossom, lovely shots Bugboy 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Apr-20 11:12 AM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, yea I've not come across ole pale patch since, maybe he came to a sticky end now all the summer avian visitors have started to arrive... 😊

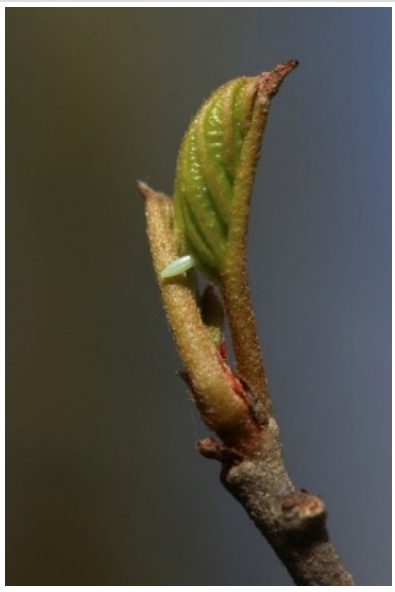
Thanks **David**, don't worry things have livened up in recent days 😊. The Blackthorn has all practically gone over now though so those Peacock shots are soon to become a thing of memory for another year.

Thanks **Goldie**, I love those shots too, along with Orange-tips they are what spring is made from for me 😊

### April 2020

**Monday 6th.** This was a day off so I took a bit of extended exercise on my local patch. The day started off with a layer of thick cloud which meant when the butterflies woke up they were immediately supercharged in the midday sun, so I had very little time to catch them warming up Peacocks were once again plentiful. I also had a few Small White and some non-stop Brimstone. The only chance of a Brimstone picture was a single egg I found on some Alder Buckthorn though.





With the butterflies mostly fluttering and gliding around I paid more attention to the local birdlife than I normally would at this time of year. Males of many species were busy proclaiming their territories with Chiffchaff's, seemingly chiffchaffing from almost every tree and bush, by far the most noticeable.



*Greenfinch with a damaged upper mandible*



*Blue Tit*

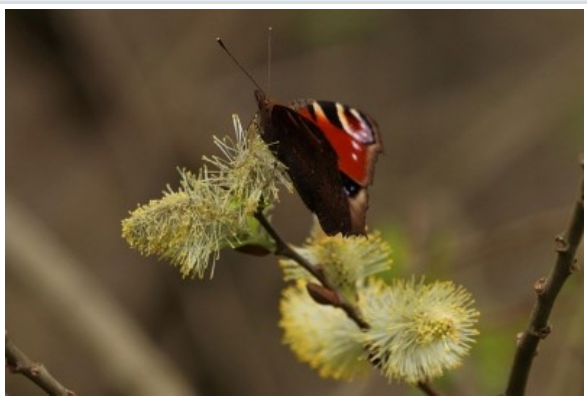


*preening Chiffchaff*



*chiffchaffing Chiffchaff*

Near the end of my 2 hour walk it began to cloud over a bit more, calming a few Peacocks down enough for a few more snaps.



Surprisingly, still no Speckled Wood though...

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 12-Apr-20 11:43 AM GMT

### **April 2020**

**Tuesday 7th.** Another day off and with the sun out first thing I went out for a morning walk. Despite the warmth I didn't see that much though. Peacocks were still around and Small Whites seemed to be increasing in numbers and I finally had a Brimstone settle for me.



Checking out one of my usual Speckled Wood hotspots I saw in the distance the familiar fluttering of a dark butterfly, at last. He only sat for a single rushed record shot but his appearance brought my yearly total to six species.



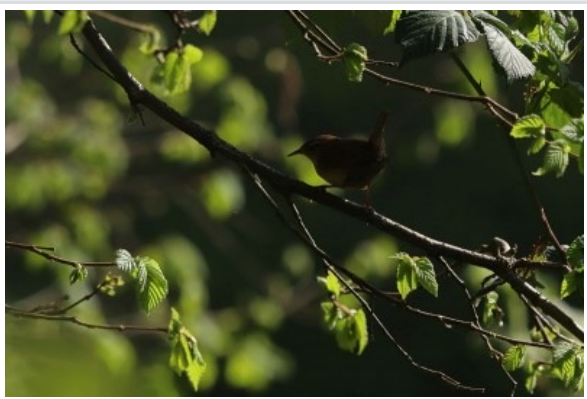
As with the previous day I spent a bit of time noting the local birds. The Chiffchaffs were once again outnumbering everything else, at least vocally, but other Warblers were also in fine voice.



*First Whitethroat of the year*



*Male linnet just coming into his breeding plumage*



*A Wren lurking in the shadows*



*Long-tailed Tit with a feather for the nest*



*Blackcap in mid song*



Oh and the super moon had me poking my big lens out the bathroom window in the evening 😊



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 12-Apr-20 01:05 PM GMT

Great set of shots Bugboy – the Specklies do seem to be very flighty at this time of year 😊 – they're much more lackadaisical in the summer 😊 Good to see the Whitethroat I was wondering how long til they started turning up 8) Lovely shots 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 13-Apr-20 02:24 PM GMT

Nice range of images there, Paul, especially the linnet – lovely birds.

Good to see your Specklies are out. I'm sure their numbers will explode these next few days.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Apr-20 07:15 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, I think everything's a bit flighty in the recent warm spell!

Thanks **David**, I think 'explode' is a bit of an exaggeration on my patch. Most species, even the common ones, generally potter along in low numbers here. At peak I'll expect to see not many more than a dozen Specklies in a day, I had just four this afternoon in bright sun in widely spaced spots.

## **April 2020**

**Wednesday 8th.** Back to work and the continuing warm weather brought out a few butterflies during my lunchtime walk. I had a trio of male Brimstone fluttering around, one of whom stopped long enough for a few snaps. I also had another brief encounter with a Peacock. It really has been a good year for them so far. I've had more Peacock sightings at work this year than the previous five years combined.

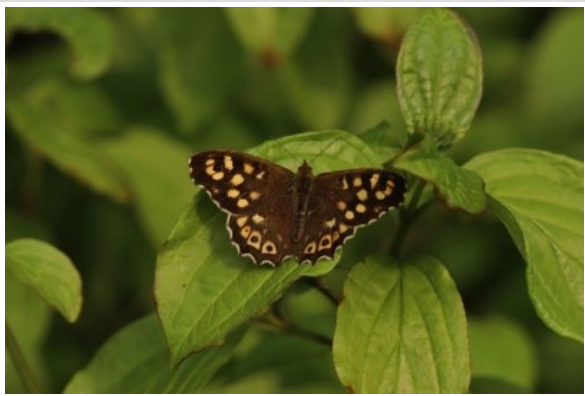


At the end of my walk, passing a nectar border with its Bowles mauve Wallflower that had been planted last year at my suggestion, a female Brimstone was nectaring.



On my now traditional walk home through the Marshes it was much the same as my last evening wander. A few Peacock and Comma holding territories in the same sunlit spots plus another Speckled Wood.





I also found a Wren having a post bathe stretch & scratch and a couple of 7 spot Ladybird busily working on the next generation.





Safe butterflying everyone 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 13-Apr-20 08:07 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the female Brimstone Bugboy 😊😊 And the Wren action shot is a brilliant capture 😊 That looks like a cracking walk home from work 🍷  
Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 13-Apr-20 10:06 PM GMT

Love the Brimstone Bugboy 🍷 I've yet to find one 😊 I find the Wren very hard to get shots of, they seem to be a shy Bird and very quick from one tree or bush to another, too quick for me, your shots of it are great. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 13-Apr-20 10:44 PM GMT

You did well to get the Brimstones settled, Buggy - unless it's very early on or during that brief window before they head for bed, I find them nearly impossible. 😊 Good to see the female not on a dandelion too! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 14-Apr-20 12:20 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy\_post\_id=152146\_time=1586801736\_user\_id=13753]...I also had another brief encounter with a Peacock. It really has been a good year for them so far. I've had more Peacock sightings at work this year than the previous five years combined.

Certainly has, Paul. I must have seen approaching 100 this spring, even though I haven't been out as often as usual.

Nice to see a female Brimstone in your gallery. Only had one myself so far, but they are always far more co-operative than the males when it comes to photographing them.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Apr-20 06:54 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, It certainly beats walking along a street which is the other option 😊

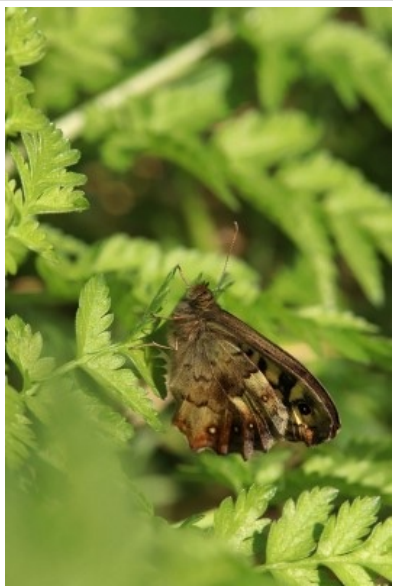
Thanks **Goldie**, Brimstones seem to be down in numbers this year, certainly locally to me. I was lucky with that Wren, I had my big lens pointing at a Peacock when it popped out from the undergrowth near me 😊

Thanks **Dave**, if memory serves it was a bit of a cool or overcast morning so they were still warming up 😊

Thanks **David**, Peacock and Comma have both been good this spring but Brimstone's seem to be way down near me, that was the last sighting of one in fact!

## **April 2020**

**Thursday 9th.** Today's lunchtime walk produced a single female Small White and a very fresh Speckled Wood which flew up from the grass under my feet. His wet look, weak flight and willingness to settle more than would be expected in the midday sun suggested this was his maiden voyage.



The first thing that caught my attention walking home was a white that from a distance looked smaller and somewhat more fluttery than any I'd seen so far this year. Her identity was confirmed as I closed in and I watched as she laid a couple of eggs on some Garlic Mustard as I fumbled to get my camera out my bag. Luckily, she hung around to restock on fuel before fluttering off.



The rest of my walk turned out to be as equally as satisfying. Several Whites were around and everyone that I could identify turned out to be of the Green-veined persuasion, the first of the year, including a mating pair halfway up a Blackthorn.



The sunlit glade which used to belong to 'ole pale patch Comma' has never been without an occupant so far. Today there were 3 battling for this prime bit of Comma real estate. I was curious to see if Ole patch himself had returned but pinning any of them down was near impossible due to the endless quarrels, added to by the addition of a couple of Peacock who regularly joined the aerial skirmishes. Watching them something else flew into view which turned out to be my first Red Admiral of the year. I kept an eye on it as it tried to find somewhere to bask unaccosted. That somewhere happened to be halfway up a Hazel but just as it settled something else fluttered into view, small and silvery-blue and showing an avid interest in the Dogwood buds. I focused on her but she didn't settle and I lost track of her. The Red Admiral had also vanished, still that was three season firsts in the spate of 10 minutes 😊.

I moved on to see if some more speckled Wood were about but was stopped by the sight of a couple of Comma engaged in some courtship behaviour, well the male was as far as I could tell. Unfortunately this was going on in a bit of a thoroughfare in-between a couple of my 'off the between track' patches so I wasn't able to hang around long enough to watch in detail or get any decent shots. From what I did see it looked like the female was rejecting the male's advances. She was content with basking but as soon as the male approached, she would snap her wings shut. Also if the male accosted her in flight, she would immediately land and keep her wings tightly closed. The male seemed to get the message straight away from this behaviour and there wasn't the constant badgering you see with Whites. It was fascinating to watch even if I was forced to move on after a minute or so.



*Female Comma sending the 'not interested' message*

I returned to the quieter spot where all the butterfly action was going on and managed shots of two of the three Commas before focusing my attention on the return of the female Holly Blue. This time she behaved and I discovered she'd clearly had an eventful time since she'd emerged.





### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 15-Apr-20 07:32 PM GMT

Very nice image of the mating Green Veined Whites, Paul.  
Saw my first one today in the garden, it was in a bad place for a shot though.  
It won't belong before the lock down starts to restrict the number of species  
we will see this year once the common Spring regulars, to be seen locally, have faded.

Hopefully restrictions will be eased by high Summer, and this dreadful virus is  
under some sort of control.

Keep safe and well,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 15-Apr-20 07:39 PM GMT

Looks like the female Holly Blue is laying on the dogwood, Buggy – or at least thinking about it. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 15-Apr-20 08:16 PM GMT

Lovely Green-veined Whites Bugboy and that female OT is a corker – love the lemony tinge on the edge of the hind wing 🤓🍋  
"It certainly beats walking along a street which is the other option"...I'm finding that I walk down the middle of the (quieter) roads as if I'm in a Zombie  
movie...though in London I can see that that might be tricky 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 15-Apr-20 10:52 PM GMT

God alone knows what that Holly Blue's been up to, Paul. She's pretty beaten up but she's still ensuring a future generation!

Well done with the Green Veined White pair too. I think it's only me who hasn't photographed this species this year now. 😞

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 16-Apr-20 06:53 PM GMT

Still catching up Buggy. Love the bird shots – used to get all of them in the garden (bar the Linnet); don't know where they've all gone 😞. Good find with the mating GVW too 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Apr-20 07:27 PM GMT

Yup, Dogwood it is **Dave**, the only foodplant here I've seen them interacting with until the Goat's-rue appears which my local population seems to obsess over.

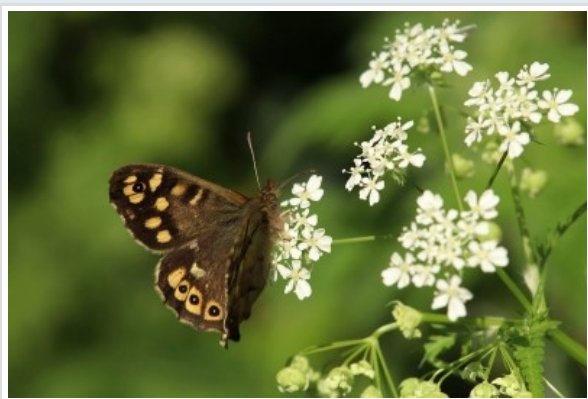
Thanks **Wurzel**. Actually to get to my patch from my flat is a 10 minute walk along a side road and walking down the middle of it is a viable option at the moment, especially with occasional #@\*\*# who assumes that me moving to one side on the pavement means I'm giving them permission to hog the center 😡😡😡

Thanks **David**, yes she been around the block a few times hasn't she. Hopefully that means she's already laid most of her eggs. I find mating GVW's are one of the commoner in-cop species to come across, although I only noticed this pair when a spare male I was following showed an interest.

Thanks **Pauline**, good to see you came out of hibernation 😊. I have the nose male GVW to thank for mating pair sighting 😊

### April 2020

**Friday 10th.** My final day at work before a week off. I'd had in mind things like Green Hairstreak and Grizzled Skippers when I'd booked the week late last year 😊. I guess I'll have to wait until next year for them now....hopefully at any rate! Anyway today's lunchtime walk proved quite successful (by my works standards) some more Brimstones, a Speckled Wood looking very dainty on the Cow Parsley, a couple of Peacock (the first I've managed to photograph at work) and a very fresh mud puddling Small White on the freshly watered nectar border.





The walk home was once again successful and presented lots of interesting behaviour. First up a couple of Male Orange-tip and I managed to grab a couple of shots as one took a short pit stop on some Cherry blossom.



Comma's once again littered to the usual spots, like the Peacocks they've had an amazing spring locally although they are now starting to show their age. I also once again found a pair of Comma engaged in similar activity as the previous day. In this case the male either didn't see or was simply ignoring the basking female. He was holding a territory next to a young hazel on which the female had chosen to rest. Whenever he glided near the female on one of many and constant sorties, she would close up but other than that there was no interaction until she took flight. It was very clear that the closing of wings had nothing to do with temperature regulation and was a direct response the males coming and going.



After losing the male she flew into a nearby Ash where she sat on a low twig supping on some leaking liquid from a bud.





The final encounter of the day was a couple of Green-veined White. Despite the female's very obvious 'bugger off' signals he was extremely determined (it got him nowhere obviously). Perhaps he should take a leaf out of a Comma's book!





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-20 10:48 PM GMT

A cracking set of shots Bugboy – especially the failed courtship shots – he should have gotten a medal for trying at least 😊😞  
"especially with occasional #@\*\*# who assumes that me moving to one side on the pavement means I'm giving them permission to hog the center" – yep I've encountered a few of these you go as far as you can to one side on the understanding that they'd do the same but no, they just carry on, muppets 😞

I don't suppose the new advice about driving to do exercise would be any use for you – there must be a way round it? 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 17-Apr-20 12:40 PM GMT

Some interesting behaviour in those images, Paul. I've never seen a Speckled Wood on cow parsley...come to think of it, I don't think I've ever seen any butterfly nectaring on this plant, apart from possibly a Duke of Burgundy at Rodborough Common a few years back.

As for Green Veined Whites, all I can say is that I wish I could locate the females as easily as the males can! 😞

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Apr-20 08:38 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**. Not a great deal of help for me unfortunately. Perhaps in another 3 weeks they'll reduce some of the restrictions and my chauffeur (who also lives alone) might be able to take me to a few more distant sites. In the meantime I'm gonna have to make do with my local patch but then when all is said and done I'll count myself lucky, it could be a lot worse!

Thanks **David**, I don't often find Speckled Wood nectaring full stop. I did however get a Peacock feeding on Cow Parsley last year and also on the 9th of April this year so just for you to prove it wasn't a fluke...



### April 2020

**Monday 13th.** Like most of the country, I made a conscious decision not to go out over the weekend but today was significantly cooler meaning there would be less incentive for people to go out, and it would be easier to keep a suitable distance from them during my exercise. It was rather chilly and I didn't see much in the way of butterflies to start with and once again I found myself focusing on the birdlife.



On the only Buckthorn I know of here, an Alder Buckthorn, I found a few more Brimstone eggs but nowhere near as many as I was finding last year. I've not seen many adults so far and this would seem to be more evidence of a poor spring for this species locally.



Getting out of the chilly breeze and perusing all my favourite sheltered sun traps finally started to come up trumps though, with many of the usual suspects appearing. I finally managed a total of seventeen individuals of six species (no Peacocks today though).





### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 17-Apr-20 10:16 PM GMT

Interesting that you also failed to find a Peacock on Monday 13th, Buggy – even though the sunshine enticed out a variety of other species despite the cold. Their collective consciousness must have made a decision to stay put... 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 18-Apr-20 07:35 PM GMT

Great stuff Bugboy 😊 The Comma and his mate the Hoverfly is a cracking shot but what happened to the Comma? It looks like a pair of scissors has been taken to its back end 😲 a very neat bird strike? 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 19-Apr-20 09:52 AM GMT

[quote=bugboy post\_id=152396 time=1587152301 user\_id=13753].I did however get a Peacock feeding on Cow Parsley last year and also on the 9th of April this year so just for you to prove it wasn't a fluke...

Right, I'm going to make a special effort to watch for this, Paul. The cow parsley is just beginning to emerge here.

[quote].I found a few more Brimstone eggs but nowhere near as many as I was finding last year. I've not seen many adults so far and this would seem to be more evidence of a poor spring for this species locally.

I think we were spoiled in 2019 with the numbers of Brimstones. They were all up and flying well before the end of February due to the mild weather. I too haven't seen anything like last year's numbers, and the last couple of times I've been out I've seen only a handful. Good image of the ovum, however.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 19-Apr-20 10:14 AM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, your doing okay with the Butterflies, I'm like you, hoping it won't be too long before we can get out again 😊  
I really like your Peacock the white really shows it's colour's up. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 19-Apr-20 10:19 AM GMT

Great reports recently Bugboy with some interesting comments.

I am not seeing so many Brimstones this spring and no females yet either. Mind you my sense of time has been thrown out by working from home and now on furlough, I have to remind myself we are still only in mid April.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Apr-20 11:25 AM GMT

There must have been something in the air that day **Dave** 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, the bird must have made a grab when its wings were closed, its not the only one I've seen this year with neatly scissored hindwings 😊  
Thanks **David**, the last Brimstone I saw was on the 7th on my patch and on the 8th at work (although I've been on AL from work last week so they may still be active there)

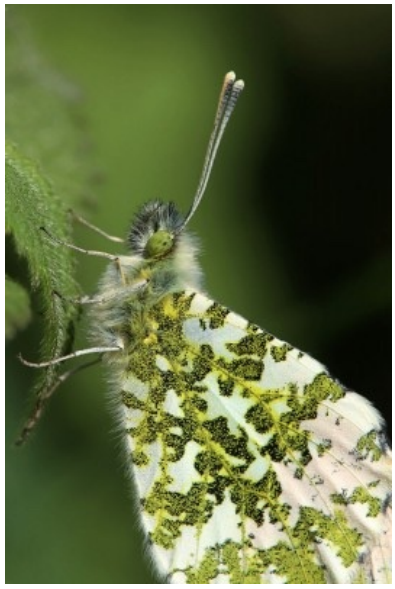
Thanks **Goldie**, I think we're all hoping for the same thing but at least we're still allowed out for daily exorcise, it looked like banning that was on the cards not so long ago 😊

Thanks **Neil**. I know what you mean about the sense of time, it feels like June with this weather. My work rota has significantly changed and I work weekends too so I don't even them to help reset my clock. Being on AL at the moment hasn't helped either, I have no idea what day of the week it is without checking my phone... sometimes more than once a day, don't even know if I can blame that on age anymore either 😊

### April 2020

**Tuesday 14th.** Another day that seemed to make me work hard to find butterflies, what I did come across was quality over quantity though. A nice fresh Speckled Wood started the day and this was followed up half an hour later by an equally fresh Orange-tip. He was so fresh that despite the growing warmth he was very reticent to fly, only taking to the wing when a nosey GVW dropped by to pester him.





Birdlife is taking up a significant portion of my diary this spring. As I'm stuck to my local patch the butterfly variety is pretty limited (if I'm lucky I'll hit 21 species by the end of the year), and on some days few and far between so hopefully it will break up the monotony a bit. Here's a foraging Blackcap



*Male Blackcap*

And this Lesser Black-backed Gull looked to be playing with something, it was only when I got home for a closer look that I realised it'd found a bird's foot!





*Lesser Black-backed Gull*

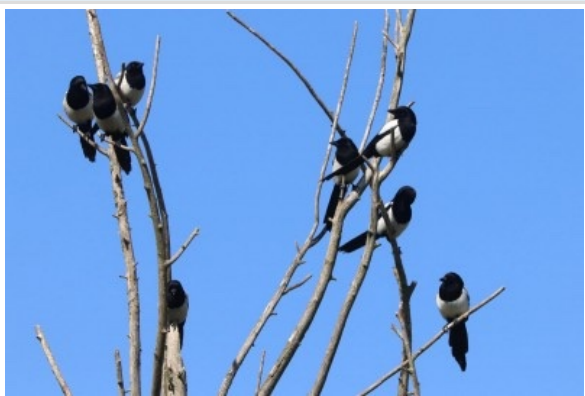


In the same bit of water a Dabchick in his full breeding regalia was having a spruce up.



*Dabchick (little Grebe)*

Overlooking all this a large group of Magpies chattered away.



*Magpies*

Back to the butterflies a tatty Small Tortoiseshell showed up



And a few more Orange-tip were patrolling, one of whom stopped long enough for a few snaps



Small and GV Whites both were about and in the regular Comma hotspot I found a particularly eye-catching individual, almost hutchinsoni in his brightness!



*An unusual lul in activity!*

The final butterfly of note was a very spritely female Large White, my first of the year. She had yet to be mated, a conclusion I came to due to the fact that she acted very male-like, chasing and investigating every other White she came across. She brought my yearly total to 11 species which it will likely stall at for the next few weeks until the summer emergents begin to show, starting with the Large Skipper (unless an early summer migrant shows up of

course, or perhaps even, dare I suggest it, a wandering Large Tortoiseshell 🐞 I can but dream 😊).



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 19-Apr-20 12:51 PM GMT

Well done on getting the Large White, Buggy. 🐞😄 Really tricky at this time of year. Like you I am stuck on eleven species, but hoping for a Small Copper before too long, especially as the fine weather looks set to continue at least until the end of the month.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 19-Apr-20 05:51 PM GMT

I echo Dave's congratulations on the Large White – still not seen one this year and even if I had they rarely settle 🐞😄 Lovely shot of the Dabchick and the super bright Comma 😊 So if "7 is for a secret ever to be told..." what does 8 mean – or does the rhyme start again? 🐞😄

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 20-Apr-20 05:13 PM GMT

Great selection again, Paul. The female Large White is, I always think, a tremendously beautiful insect that doesn't get the attention it deserves.

Mind you, they aren't all that easy to photograph so well done on your effort there.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Apr-20 09:16 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave** it did take a while to pin her down, there was a whole gaggle of male Whites flitting around 🐞. Small Coppers are resigned to the 'maybe' file for my patch, I do see the odd singleton from time to time but it's stretching it a bit to suggest there's a colony here I think 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, there was actually 13 magpies in that tree but I thought better of getting them all in the picture, there's enough bad luck going round at the moment without me tempting fate 🐞😄 It's 8 for a wish and goes up to 12 if Wikipedia is to be believed... lucky I didn't try for 12 from the looks of it 🐞😄 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One\\_for\\_Sorrow\\_%28nursery\\_rhyme%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_for_Sorrow_%28nursery_rhyme%29)

Thanks **David**, they are lovely for a butterfly with no real colour, especially when freshly minted like my one 🐞

## April 2020

**Wednesday 15th.** I went for a morning exercise today which meant the butterflies were in short supply, with clear skies at night it takes a while for things to warm up. The birds were up and singing away (and in some cases still getting dressed) as usual 😊



*Wren, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Song Thrush*

Speckled Wood are ok with a cool start though, pretty sure I'd photographed this chap a few time already, flitting around his little sunny glade.

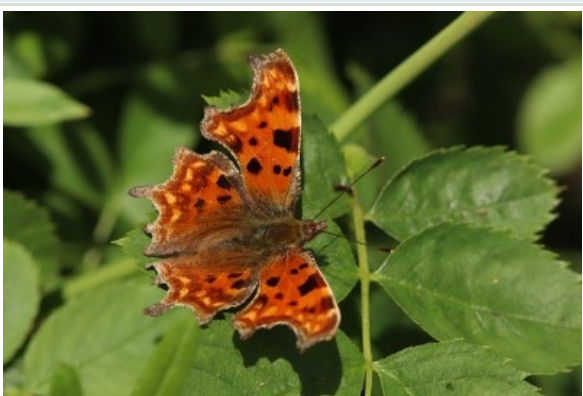


It was good to find a couple more Small Tortoiseshell. They're few and far between here but numbers do seem to be stable as best as I can tell.

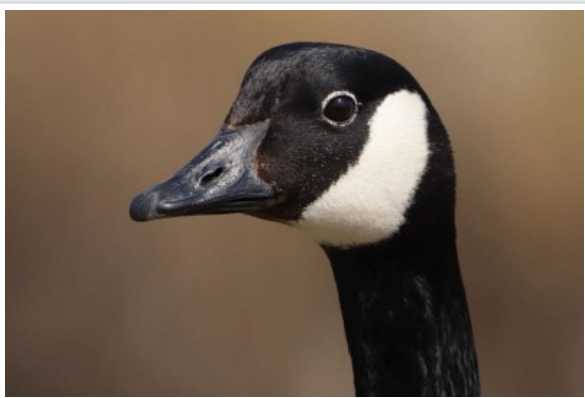
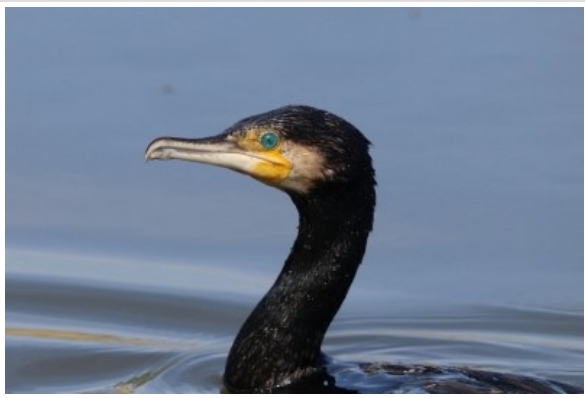


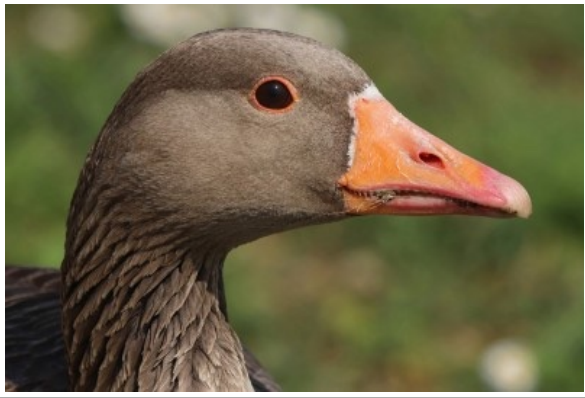


Things were livening up by midday, I found a female Peacock looking for somewhere to lay, doing the whole toe-tappy thing on the fresh nettle foliage whilst a female CVW was busy laying on Rape that was growing in amongst the same nettle patch. The bright Comma from yesterday was lurking too



On the way home I took a slight detour into Walthamstow Wetlands where the relative tameness of the waterfowl meant little or no stalking is required to get up close. I watched from a suitable distance as an extended family of Greylag Geese walked through (not round) a family out for their daily exercise without so much as batting an eyelid.

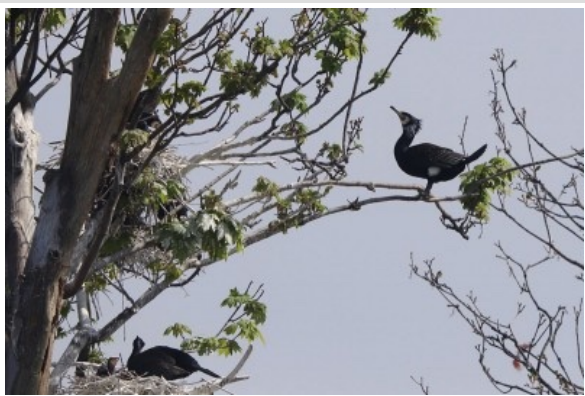




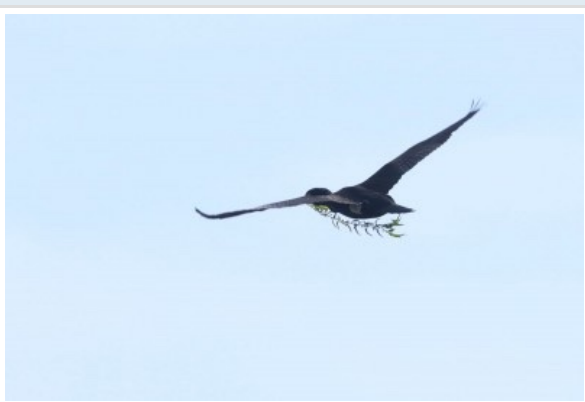
The cormorant colony are well into their breeding season but that doesn't mean you can't still do a bit of redecorating to keep your partner happy (eh Wurzel 😊😏)



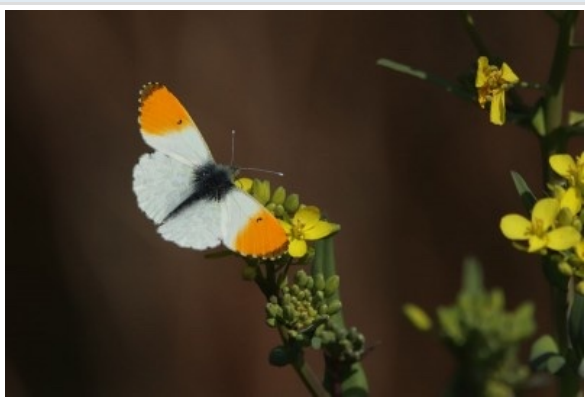
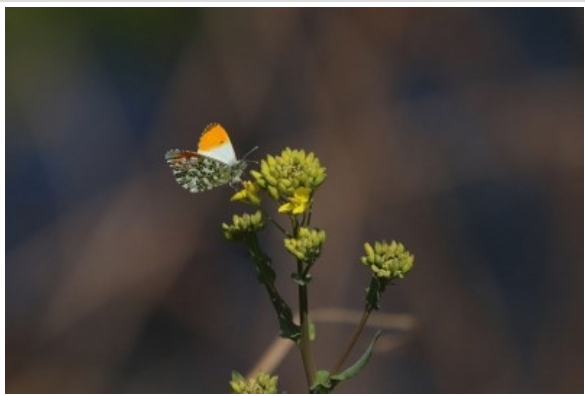
*Notice the huge column of a nest in the middle, probably at least 10 years old*



*Nesting in the bottom left corner*



*Re-decorating time...*  
Before leaving there was another female GVW and a male Orange-tip stopped off to refuel.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 21-Apr-20 08:52 AM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, love the GVW on the Daises , a real Spring shot 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 21-Apr-20 03:54 PM GMT

Hellfire Bugboy – good job you didn't 😊😊 A great set of shots – love the underside of the Small Tort – something that is always overlooked because of the showy topside 😊 In my book it's too late for redecorating – one Essential Travel rules state that you can't get the materials (rejoice! 😊) and two there are butterflies outside so redecoration is left for the Autumn – it's time to start spending the Brownie Points 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Apr-20 08:50 PM GMT

Thanks Goldie, she was particularly photogenic sat there amongst the daisies wasn't she 😊

Thanks Wurzel. So trips to your favourite blue and yellow Swedish home furnishings store are out as well then, that's sad 😞 ... 😞

### April 2020

Thursday 16th. I spent most of the day queuing outside shops but did manage a bit of movement late in the day after things had clouded over. It was



still very warm, almost muggy and you could be forgiven for thinking it was July. Still on the wing was a Peacock and GVW, neither settling for me.

Being next to a water treatment works there's often clouds of midges. I always find it amusing when a cloud of these harmless non-biters gathers above someone and suddenly there's arms flailing all over the place. In the overcast weather the swarms were mostly settled.



After this it was all rather quiet with on and off light drizzle. I spent the majority of my walk looking for roosting Orange-tips, not finding any until near the end, back where I'd started, a lovely fresh male.



Spot the Orange-tip



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 22-Apr-20 05:53 PM GMT

Yep no trips to Swedish Hell for me - I'm loving some things about Lockdown! 😊

That camo is brilliant Bugboy - for a moment I thought you might have been 'extracting the urine' and there wasn't actually an OT there at all 😊😂

Cracking shots I love the furry chevrons on the hind wings 😊😂

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 22-Apr-20 10:00 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, some more 'furry chevrons' for you below 😊

### April 2020

**Saturday 18th.** Another overcast day but looking out my window I did notice the cloud thin regularly enough to suggest there might be a bit of activity. Before I popped out, I was doing some cleaning and came across a tiny Jumping Spider lurking in my bath, barely 3mm long but very cute up close.



I'm not going to go out at the weekend if it's warm and sunny, all those people who are working from home during the week like going out and it becomes impossible to stick to the regulations even in the quieter spots on my patch. However it's amazing how fewer people need their exercise on a cloudy day, I suppose you can't have a vigorous picnicking session on a dull day 😊!

More midges were loitering around today, I believe the slimmer black ones are the males to the fatter brown females here and on Thursdays walk.



It didn't take long to find the main target, a roosting OT in the same spot as Thursday. A close examination of both individuals proved this to be a different one. A few times the cloud thinned enough for him to stir from his slumber. At one point it seemed warm enough for him to fly and he took to the air... but he quickly changed his mind when the cloud thickened again. Anyway as befits a subject as willing as this one, many, many pictures were taken!







You can never have too many can you 😊

In my search I also found a couple of Green-veined White using the same principle of camouflage.





Stay safe 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 22-Apr-20 10:47 PM GMT

Those are a cracking set of chevrons again Bugboy – cheers mightily 😊😁🌍 If that spider is on your bath it definitely looks like it needs a clean 😊😁

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 23-Apr-20 01:57 PM GMT

`{quote=bugboy post_id=152611 time=1587589234 user_id=13753}`...In my search I also found a couple of Green-veined White using the same principle of camouflage.

Beautiful, Paul. What on earth is contained in the umbellifers round your way? Just about every butterfly you depict seems to be settled on one.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 23-Apr-20 02:26 PM GMT

First up Buggy, I don't believe there is such a thing as midges that don't bite 😊 I'd prove it to you if I were there 😊  
Second up, really like the second to last GVW – haven't seen one this year yet 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Apr-20 10:39 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel** and no that's not my bath 😊, I placed him on a decorative piece of wood in the front room for his photoshoot 😊  
I've always found Cow Parsley THE plant of choice for roosting Orange-tips **David**. I strongly believe it is this plant their camouflage has evolved to mimic!

Thanks **Pauline** to be honest I'm only presuming they're non biting midges since I've never had a problem with them here (just the occasional mozzie that sneaks into my flat for a midnight feast!) The males are 100% non biting though, guaranteed!

### April 2020

**Monday 20th.** I hoped my morning walk would be in time to find the Orange-tips just waking up. That hope was dashed when upon arriving at the entrance as male fluttered past, the last thing on his mind was stopping for a quick photoshoot. This was going to be the theme for the walk and by the end of it I'd had a fair few flybys but not one single Orange-tip settled, as one would expect for a clear blue sky and temperatures nudging high teens. A few Green-veined Whites stopped, one of them making friends with a Hoverfly 😊



It's been a fair while since seeing a Brimstone so I was pleased to come across a male, even more pleased when he settled!



Talking of Brimstones I had a look at the Alder Buckthorn, finding a single egg and a single first instar caterpillar.



Speckled Woods were in all the usual spots, one in particular was fast running out of eye spots to keep him safe!



I also managed another single Small Tortoiseshell



As with the Orange-tips, other Whites were very much on patrol duties but I managed a few shots of the less active females who take much better care of themselves than the males do. One Small White had a broken spot much like Goldies the other day but I only got a shoddy record shot before the wind took her to the other side of the field. Another Small White was laying eggs on Hoary Cress like it was going out of fashion!







With my days off at the moment I'm tending to go out in the morning when there's less joggers and other people out for their daily exercise. The downside of this is I'm not coming across many Nymphalids until I'm close to leaving the site, at this time of year they're very much butterflies of the afternoon, the exception being the Small Tortoiseshell who seem to be active earlier than Peacocks and Commas. Anyway as I was about to leave today a Peacock briefly settled for a side on portrait.



The final shots of the day belonged to this Great Black-backed Gull, a true beast of a Gull 😲!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 25-Apr-20 10:07 PM GMT

Great stuff Bugbouy – Peacocks with their wings closed in the right lighting look just as spectacular to me as when they're showing off their topsides. 😊  
Interesting that you also have seen a Small White like Goldie's – I found one the other day as well 😊 GBB are great gulls – proper monsters! 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 26-Apr-20 08:58 AM GMT

Nice find with three Brimstone stages simultaneously, Paul. 😊 I've seen a few females buzzing round the shrubs lately but I've not managed to find one actually ovipositing.

That great black-backed gull looks pretty imposing. I'm sure the herring gulls will mind their manners.

### Re: Bugboys mission

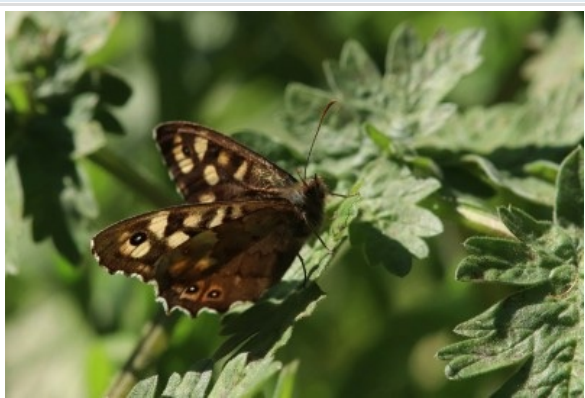
by bugboy, 26-Apr-20 07:00 PM GMT

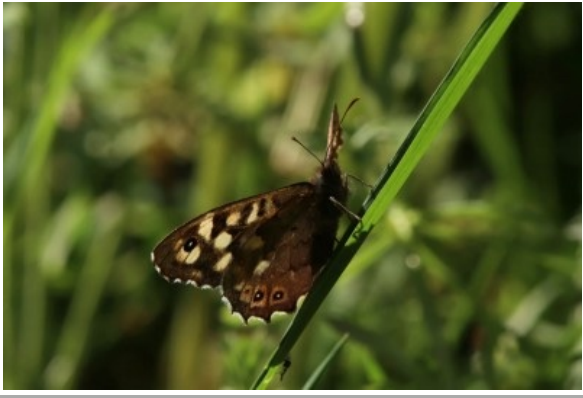
Thanks **Wurzel**, we might all be seeing abs. in the more 'mundane' species this year for obvious reasons 😊

Thanks **David**, No i've not seen any egg laying females as yet, just the aftermath of their visitations 😊

### April 2020

**Tuesday 21st.** Another early start but once again I missed finding any early morning Orange-tip, just a female Green-veined White who had seen better days but for most of the morning the only butterfly that was willing to settle were Speckled Woods.





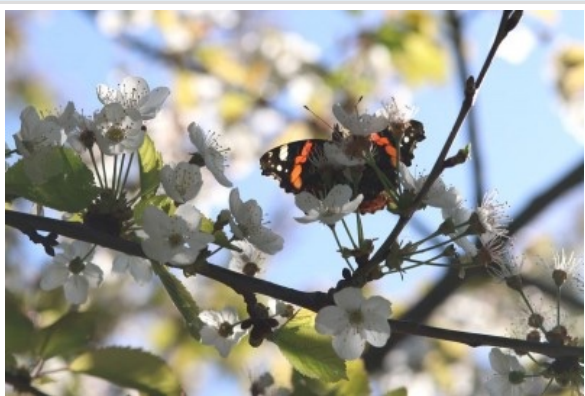
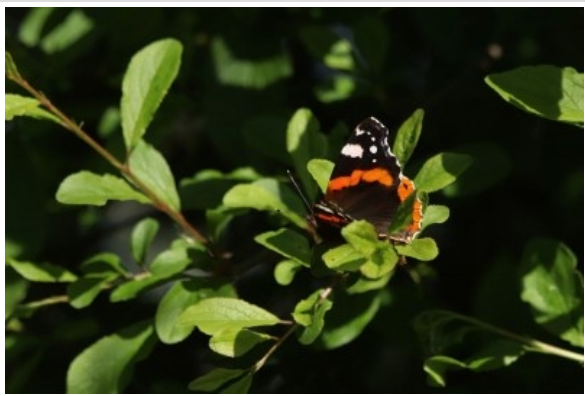
Whites either flitted or were getting blown around and a single Red Admiral whooshed past me heading north. The local Whitethroat population seemed to have exploded overnight, nearly every bramble thicket had a noisy owner. I always think of these as the Jazz artist of the hedgerow Warbler fraternity, not nearly as tuneful as the other hedgerow Warblers and often interspersed with the scolding noises as you pass by (to continue the analogy, Chiffchaff's are the little schoolboy at the edge of the School band armed with a tambourine).



Of in the distance I noticed a Crow spiraling in the sky. Looking through my big lens I could see the Kestrel easily out maneuvering it. I'm not particularly good at judging distances but it was probably all going on a mile or so away, these pics are severely cropped!



The walk back was a little more successful, amongst the whites and Orange-tips patrolling, a Peacock and a Small Tort were both enjoying the sun and I came across another Red Admiral in a Cherry tree and got my first pics of one this year.



The slightly bent tail of this long-tailed Tit shows it's been sitting on eggs in its domed feathery nest.



A Green-veined White was the penultimate encounter of the day,



the last butterfly which captured my attention deserves a post of its own 😊 ...tbc

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 26-Apr-20 09:21 PM GMT

Just catching up with your diary, Buggy. The shots of the roosting Orange Tips and GWV are clear favourites – they are so well camouflaged that I frequently walk right past them and only discover their existence when my heavy footfall disturbs them. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 27-Apr-20 08:41 PM GMT

Crikey Bugboy that Green-veined White had definitely been in the wars 😲 Great butterfly shots but the stars of the sequence have to be the Whitethroats 🤩🍷 I saw and heard a few of their Lesser cousins over the weekend 😊 If these are the Jazz musicians does that make the Cetti's a drummer/percussionist? 😊😂

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Apr-20 09:10 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, yup those Orange-tips are amongst my fav pics of the year so far 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**. I tried getting a picture of a Lesser the other day but he stayed well hidden before flying off, little bugger 😊. Cetti's are Animal, the drummer from The Muppet Show 😊

### April 2020

**Tuesday 21st cont.** So just before leaving I had one last look at the sunny glade where the Comma's normally hang out and noticed a Peacock fluttering low over the nettle bed, obviously a female searching for that special leaf to lay on. I wanted to get some shots of her using her vestigial front legs so I watched her until she settled within range where she decided to use her tongue.



A couple of minutes later she had chosen her leaf, right at the edge of the nettle bed and well within range of my camera and being in a quiet corner with no other people around I was able to observe and photograph the action. As she moved into position she continued to test the leaf with her front legs.





12.05

After a few snaps I walked off for a few minutes to allow her to settle, returning to find a small handful of eggs in place. I did this a couple of times. The laying process is a relatively long drawn out act, only one or two eggs are laid at once, interspersed with breaks as presumably the next egg moves down ready to be laid.



12.15



12.17



12.27

The final pictures was taken 30 minutes after the first eggs were laid. Its impossible to be accurate but it looks like around twenty eggs were laid over this period of time which would mean she would have to spend in excess of 2 hours to lay the full clutch if this rate of laying were maintained.



12.33



12.33

I was actually most interested to discover the long hairs/cilia at the end of her ovipositor. Clearly they have some function, I'm concluding they for feeling around to make sure the eggs are laid in the right place since she has no way of seeing with her eyes.



Its not the first time I've watched this but it is the first time I've been able to capture it in detail 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 27-Apr-20 09:51 PM GMT

Fascinating sequence, Paul. I saw two female Brimstones egg laying yesterday,



they hardly paused at all, but every Alder Blackthorn leaf visited contained a single egg. What was amazing was how they instinctively sorted out the right type of shrub among the dense foliage. Nature is amazing!

Stay well,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 27-Apr-20 10:22 PM GMT

"Cetti's are Animal" – that's what I was thinking 😊😄

Fascinating observations Bugboy – I did a bit of reading and it seems that butterflies have 2 pairs of extraocular genital photoreceptors and it's these that they use to make sure that they've made enough contact to deposit the eggs safely though I reckon that the hairs must have an assisting role in this as you described? 😊 It made for fascinating reading...I would include the link but it ran on for several pages – it was in a paper from the Oxford Academic Journals – Hindsight of butterflies – by Kentaro Arikawa.

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 27-Apr-20 11:23 PM GMT

A terrific sequence of the Peacock laying, Buggy. 😊 I've been watching several Peacock females size up a large nettle patch over the last week (along with a single Small Tortoiseshell) but had no opportunities like this one. Brilliant. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 29-Apr-20 08:43 AM GMT

Great observations, Paul. Given the numbers of Peacocks this spring, there shouldn't be any shortage of early stages of this species.

Given the lockdown, I may even rear a few if I manage to find any.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 29-Apr-20 09:07 AM GMT

Great sequence with the egg laying Peacock Buggy 😊

I wonder what she looks for in that one leaf that makes it suitable, given that a batch of eggs that size will result in larvae numbers that will soon need to move onto other leaves anyway. Maybe some mineral content that is important in the first few days of the larvae's life.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-Apr-20 03:43 PM GMT

Thanks Trevor, It is amazing how butterflies can sniff out their LHP in amongst the sea of greenery isn't it 😊

That's a fascinating article Wurzel, I reckon the hairs must fine tune what their butt-eye's can see 😊

Thanks Dave, I was very pleased she didn't choose a leaf in the middle of the nettle bed although it was far from pain free getting down to her level 😊

Thanks David, I was thinking about rearing something this year too. Something I've not done that for about 20 years!

Thanks Neil, that's something I've often wondered. They do seem a lot more fussy than most other butterflies but then they are quite literally putting all their eggs in one basket so it has to be just right!

### April 2020

**Wednesday 22nd.** My first day back to work after a week off. A few of the usual suspects were flitting around during my lunch break but I only managed a female Small White who was briefly resting after a prolonged bout of egg laying.



I also found a loose herd of 7-spot Ladybird larvae munching aphids on some nettle and a quick browse of Garlic Mustard found a couple of Orange-tip eggs.

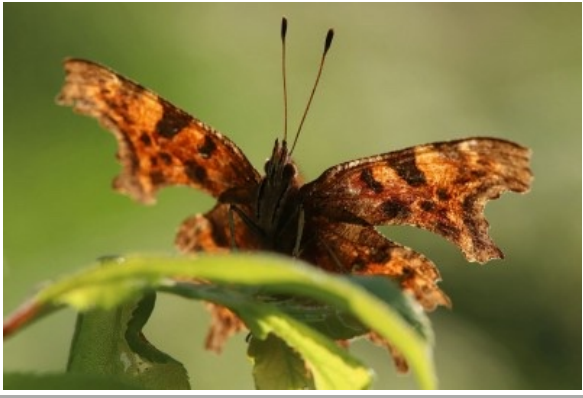


My new work finishing time of 5pm means the sun is that little bit lower in the sky during my walk home through the marshes. The usual spots are getting shaded out at this late time but with the current mini heatwave it's still warm enough to find activity if you know where to look. Now the Blackthorn and Cherry blossoms have all but gone over, Hawthorn has come into its own and it was here that I found three of the four Peacocks seen.



A Green-veined White also stopped by whilst a Comma was sat nearby soaking up the rays, totally ignoring the current government regulations!





Around the corner I had a look to see if the Peacock from yesterday had successfully finished laying her egg mass. The nettles were now in shade so I had to use flash but it was a healthy batch of eggs. However look closely and you can see a couple of tiny dark wasps who I'm sure weren't there for the scenery. There's plenty of eggs to go round though and the vast majority should successfully hatch 😊 .



*Closeup of the upside down mountaineering wasp.*

Commas and Peacocks were still in the usual clearing but had followed the shadows up and were now mostly out of reach. The long shadows had also trapped a male Orange-tip in another clearing. He would flit lazily round, hit a shadow, turn around and come to rest in the same spot time and time again.



## Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 29-Apr-20 04:04 PM GMT

Great shots of the Peacock egg-laying Buggy – certainly worthy of note. I also happen to like the composition of the GVV 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-20 10:50 PM GMT

Cracking Comma shot Bugboy 😊 My favourite from your latest offering has to be the final OT – with the mark in the wing it looks like too orange Trumps having a fave off – one is non-committal the other not best pleased 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 30-Apr-20 01:30 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy post\_id=152893 time=1588171394 user\_id=13753].Around the corner I had a look to see if the Peacock from yesterday had successfully finished laying her egg mass. The nettles were now in shade so I had to use flash but it was a healthy batch of eggs. However look closely and you can see a couple of tiny dark wasps who I'm sure weren't there for the scenery. There's plenty of eggs to go round though and the vast majority should successfully hatch

Fascinating, Paul. Those wasps don't waste any time, do they? Like you say, surely they won't parasitise all the eggs. There are so many Peacocks around this spring I'm sure plenty will escape their attention.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-Apr-20 06:53 PM GMT

Thanks **Pauline**, hopefully I can track these as they grow over the next few weeks 😊

Haha, thanks **Wurzel**, I hadn't noticed that but now you mention it I can't unsee it 😊

Thanks **David**, I think I'm right in saying that each wasp deposits it's own load in just one or two eggs, they're certainly small enough not to need many to complete their own lifecycle and in any case, the eggs at the bottom of the pile are very safe from these tiny critters.

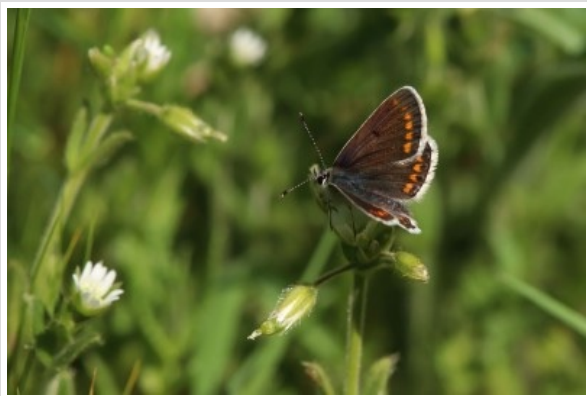
### April 2020

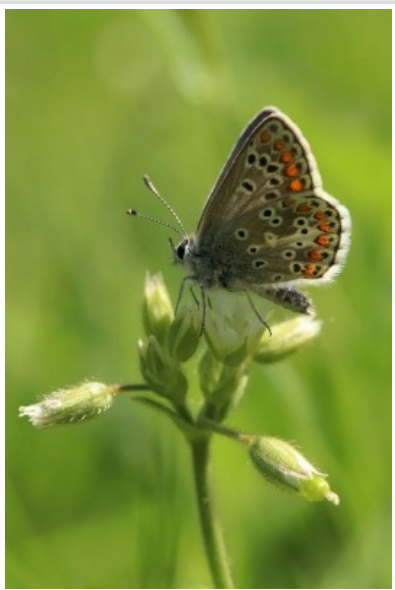
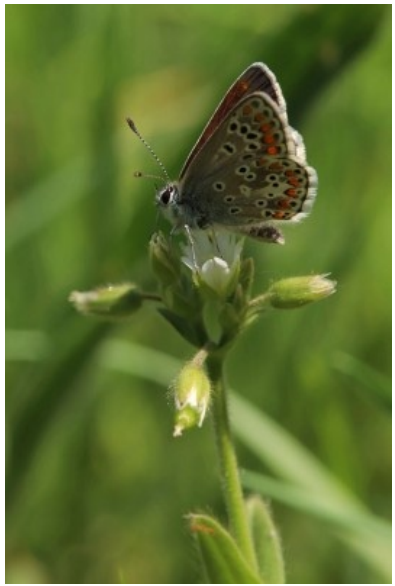
**Thursday 23rd.** Yet another cloudless sky (what do clouds look like like again..?) and although I didn't see much at work it was all noteworthy. I had a female Holly Blue laying on Holly. She would vanish into the undergrowth to do the laying but would pop out from time to time to warm up again.



Around the base of the Holly a Red Admiral was also busy laying eggs but she was too fast to get a snap off.

By far the best sighting this lunchtime though was a male Brown Argus. At first, I thought he was a Common Blue, based on what I had and hadn't seen here before but he was tiny and I quickly concluded I was looking at the 22nd species I've recorded at work.





The walk home was quieter than previous afternoons, some high misty cloud had taken the edge off the day's heat and had sent most things to bed but a few Comma where still active, high up in some Hawthorn.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 30-Apr-20 08:36 PM GMT

"what do clouds look like like again..?" So now I know who to blame for the torrential rain showers and flash flooding I experienced on my way home from work today! 😊😂 – Mind you I was at work so didn't mind the terrible weather 😊😂  
That Brown Argus is lush and I love it when they pull the pose in your second shot 😊📷

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-May-20 06:47 PM GMT

Ahh, sorry about that **Wurzel**, if it makes you feel any better by flat roof above the bathroom sprung a leak in the downpoors 😊. Only a small one but my useless freeholder needs to get a shift on 😞

### April 2020

**Saturday 25th.** Although I'm not planning on going butterflying on my patch on sunny weekends due to the amount of people it attracts, I hoped the overcast morning today would give me a window of opportunity. Indeed it did and I was amply rewarded for my effort. First up, especially for David M, a Small White feeding on Cow Parsley.



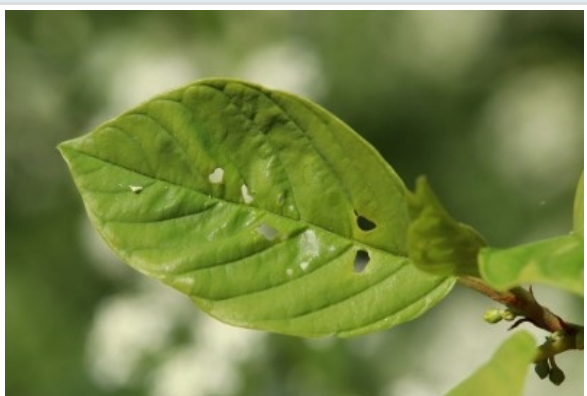
This was followed up by a gorgeous female Orange-tip and then a Holly Blue who was very much in favour of the Hairstreak/Brimstone school of thought where basking is concerned, making no attempt at all to flash me some blue!



A few other seasonal regulars put in appearances as I made my way to see if I could re-find my first instar Brimstone caterpillar to the sound of the first Swifts screeching overhead.



At the Alder Buckthorn it didn't take long to locate the leaf, young instar Brimstones tend to add a swiss cheese effect to their leaves. The caterpillar itself had moved to a fresher leaf and was preparing to moult. Nearby I found another freshly laid egg.



*Typical young larval feeding damage*





The late start to proceedings meant that a tatty old Brimstone was still breakfasting on some Comfrey in the early afternoon and whilst watching him a couple of male Orange-tip joined him. I came to within a hairs breadth of capturing two male Orange-tips nectaring next to each other!



Before leaving I once again took a slight detour into Walthamstow Wetlands where I heard my first Reed Warblers of the year and for a little while one popped out to shout his presence quite close to me.



*Reed Warbler*



To finish here's some Greylag goslings



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 01-May-20 07:10 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy\_post\_id=152976 time=1588355247 user\_id=13753]...Although I'm not planning on going butterflying on my patch on sunny weekends due to the amount of people it attracts...

Same here. My local parks have become more popular than they ever have been this past couple of weeks so I have been avoiding them too.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-May-20 07:52 PM GMT

Sorry to hear about your leaky roof Bugboy 😞 I really didn't mind the appalling weather as I was at work anyway 😊 That shot of the female OT with the closed wings is fantastic – beautifully backlit 😊👍 Good to see the Reed Warblers – don't often 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 02-May-20 03:05 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy\_post\_id=152976 time=1588355247 user\_id=13753]...First up, especially for David M, a Small White feeding on Cow Parsley.

😊 Where have I been looking all these years, Paul? Honestly, I don't ever see butterflies using cow parsley round my way!

Nice work with the Brimstone early stages, not to mention the birdlife.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-May-20 10:11 PM GMT

Yes its very much avoiding the 'peak' times for me on my patch at the moment Neil 😊

No we definitely needed the rain Wurzel. From my point of view my patch needed a few days break from all the footfall, I was starting to worry some of the areas that are left to grow long during the season would stay flattened from all the sunbathers and picnickers 😞!

Its like a substitute for Buddleja round here David 😊. More baby Brimstone below 😊

### April 2020

**Wednesday 29th.** A small window during the late morning when no rain was forecast but not enough sun came out to wake anything up meant I had

time to look for some babies. Rape seems to be the plant of choice for my local Orange-tips. There's not much Cuckoo Flower here and not a great deal of Garlic Mustard around either so I think it's a case of needs must rather than a preference.



Over at the Alder buckthorn my Brimstone cat had successfully completed his moult into 2nd instar and was going for his daily government allowed exercise.



Looking around I started to see more and ended up with a total of eight, mostly 2nd instar, Brimstone Caterpillars, the feeding damage starting to become rather obvious now.



*Freshly moulted 2nd instar*



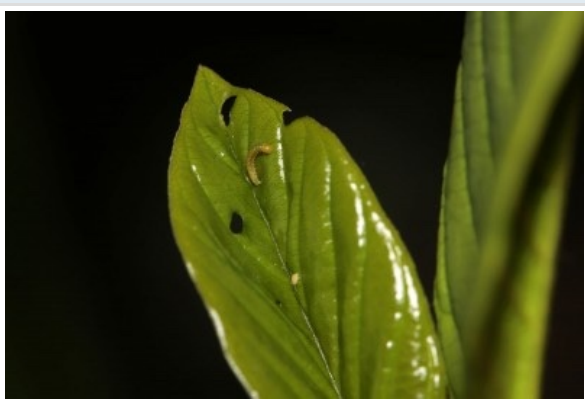
*2nd instar*



*1st instar*



*2nd instar*



*1st instar*

A quick check on the Peacock egg batch finished my walk. You can see in the image where they are. The glue that holds them in place stops the leaf

expanding as it grows leading to a distorted area.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 03-May-20 06:30 PM GMT

"I was starting to worry...would stay flattened from all the sunbathers and picnickers 😡!" Some people don;t really understand Lockdown or exercise do they 😊

"leading to a distorted area." that's a useful tip - I'll keep my eyes open for that now 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

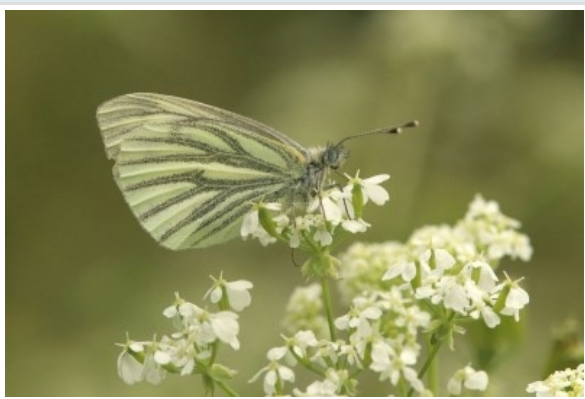
### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-May-20 08:35 PM GMT

Muppets the lot of em Wurzel 😡😡 The nature of this forum stops me from using the actual language I mutter when I see them 😊

### May 2020

Friday the 1st was a mix match of weather, April showers was a month late this year! I had a few Whites to start with and A holly blue wandered through without settling.



I also managed to locate a Red Admiral larval tent, the owner likely to be half grown, around 3rd instar and I checked on the Peacock eggs which all looked very healthy despite some of them almost certainly currently incubating some parasitoids.



It then went a bit downhill from there and I spent a while dodging heavy showers and hail. Whitethroats kept me company in the less damp spells.



*Whitethroat*

For the rest of my walk it was more cloudy than sunny and what I did see were flybys, an Orange-tip here, a White there and I was never in the right place to be able to see them as a cloud obscured the sun, oh well. Birdlife kept my camera busy though, I found a gang of Pochard loitering and in the reedy edges there was a Reed Warbler turf war going on, at least four individuals flying backwards and forwards whilst shouting at each other. On the far side in the shadows there was also a reed Bunting lurking.



*Pochard drake*



*Reed Warblers*



*Reed Warbler*



*Reed Bunting*

Coots and Dabchicks were doing their thing, I suspect the Dabchicks are sitting on eggs somewhere out of the way of nosey people with cameras, whilst on the side a Heron was having a tidy up.



*Coot and chick*



*Dabchick*



*Heron*

The final stop off was the Alder Buckthorn which seems to be being slowly slowly devoured by the Brimstones, my original one I'm following looking really rather chunky compared to when I last saw him.



*3rd instar?*



*2nd instar and egg*

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by Wurzel, 03-May-20 10:23 PM GMT

I have an inkling about what you mean when you use "Muppets" Bugboy 😊😄 Love the shot of the male Pochard – they are one of those underrated species which if they were rare people would be raving about and would travel miles to see 😊😄



Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 05-May-20 09:44 AM GMT

Love your shot of the White Throat Bugboy, he looks really happy 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-May-20 07:22 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, I love the males piercing blood red eyes 😊

Haha, thanks **Goldie**, hopefully all his singing has got himself a lady 😊

### May 2020

**Saturday 2nd.** Not a great deal happened today. At work I had just a single male Brimstone flyby. A friendly Starling posed whilst searching for food.



On the walk home the cloud cover and chilly breeze had made sure anything that was on the wing had gone to bed long before I arrived on the scene. I had a quick check up on the Brimstones, finding my main one now adopting the classic pose along the centre rib of the leaf, he must be a third instar then according to a certain very useful book!



Elsewhere a female or two had visited since yesterday, freshly laid eggs littered the leaves, most of which already had owners.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 05-May-20 07:44 PM GMT

"I love the males piercing blood red eyes" – yeah a definite Metal Head the Pochard 🤩🤩🤩 In the states they're even luckier as they have Canvasbacks and Redheads which have a similar livery 🤩🇩🇪 Cracking Starling shot – another underappreciated beauty 🤩

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 05-May-20 11:25 PM GMT

Great shots of the ever-fatter Brimstone caterpillars, Buggy. 😊 Having been guided to some buckthorn by a friendly female, I have been unable to locate any of her offspring, which is disappointing. The do appear to eat a great deal in a short time from what you've recorded.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 07-May-20 02:45 PM GMT

Interesting to see the feeding damage on the buckthorn, Paul. I presume the smaller perforations are made by the young larvae who then go on to decimate much of the leaf as they grow bigger like in the first image?

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-May-20 09:05 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, shame the sun wasn't out on that Starling to show the rainbow of colours 🤩

Thanks **Dave**, I think that well known children's book may have been based on Brimstone caterpillars based on how fast they munch through the leaves 🤩

That is indeed the case **David**, I imagine it won't be long before the local avian population start noticing them though so numbers will be thinned out and they will be harder to locate. At the moment nibbled leaf = caterpillar but once the birds start munching on them they'll be lots of red herrings. Since they hide in plain sight on the upper side of the leaf I wonder if they glow under UV like WLH who hide away on the underside?

### May 2020

**Monday 4th.** The day really did start of on a high point. Just walking through the entrance to the Marshes I noticed a small dark butterfly jinking around. Instinct took me to the most likely suspect but no, can't be, surely not, but he landed and indeed it was possibly a new species for my local patch, I've certainly never seen them here before!



That evening I discovered from the county recorder it was indeed a new record for the site 😊😄.

Female Green-veined Whites and Holly Blues flitted around, the latter constantly menaced by the Hairstreak, the former drew the attention of a marauding Small White.

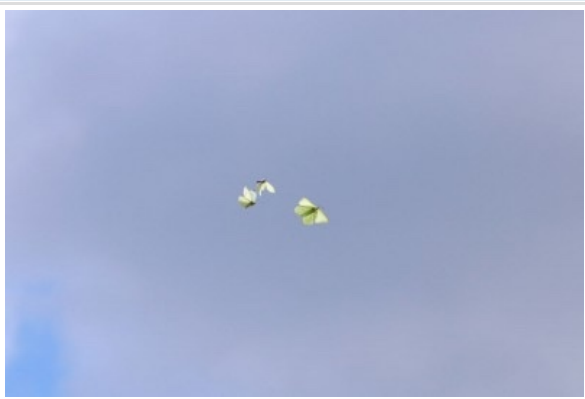


The Peacock eggs were still a healthy emerald green although there are some faintly darker areas beginning to show in some of them. A few adults were still active too, one of whom was about as mint as they come, I'm not sure where she's been hiding, maybe she just had an exceedingly long lay in this spring.

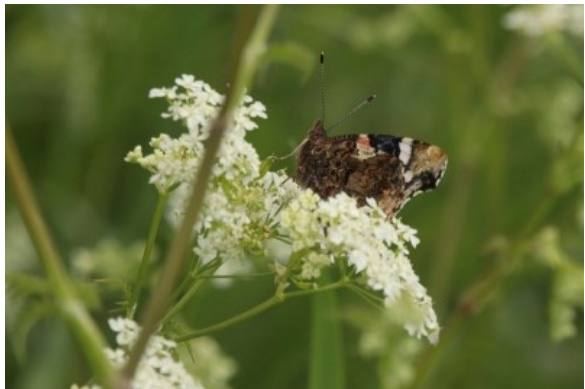




In the same sheltered sun trap a female Brimstone was breakfasting... in-between being harassed by a couple of amorous but misguided Small White.



Of course no post from me is complete without a butterfly posing on Cow Parsley at the moment, today we have a Red Admiral 😊.



My Brimstone caterpillar is doing well and may possibly be settling down to moult again whilst around him eggs are still appearing. They don't seem to worry whether a leaf is already occupied, this leaf already has two 1st instars!



The Reed Warbler turf war that was occurring last time I visited the waterworks nature reserve seemed to have settled down and one of them hopped out in front of the hide, unusually quiet, and just sat in plain sight for a few minutes 🤪 .





I took a short wander along the river lea and found a few odds and ends taking refuge on a small shingle island. A pair of Egyptian Geese were having a good old preen and freshen up.



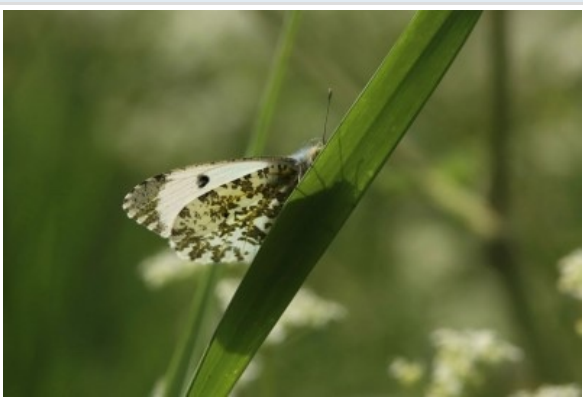
Whilst a coot was causing trouble as they so often do, a Mallard duckling in this case seemed to irk him in some mysterious manner.



I also rescued a Rose Chafer from certain death, trundling nonchalantly along the main path with cyclists and joggers going to and fro. I found him some Hawthorn blossom to tuck in to.



The final find of the day that was photo worthy was a particularly large female Orange-tip. Little fluffy clouds prompted her to rest regularly for her photo shoot 😊



A particularly good day 😊

Stay safe



### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 08-May-20 08:26 AM GMT

One of the pleasures of our hobby is finding something totally unexpected. Locating the Green Hairstreak is one of my annual highlights.

Great stuff, stay well,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 08-May-20 07:14 PM GMT

Great find with you local Green Hairstreak 🍷 😊

I look for them around my patch every year but no luck so far. I live in hope that being such an overlooked species that I will strike lucky one day but they are quite localised in Warwickshire with all the colonies that I know of currently out of range for me.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 08-May-20 08:23 PM GMT

That is a fantastic find Bugboy 😊 I wish my local patch had some Greenstreaks 🍷 Where did it come from I wonder? 😊 Love the action shot of the interacting Whites 😊 🍷

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Janet Turnbull, 08-May-20 11:39 PM GMT

Been catching up with your diary, Bugboy – going back to those first gorgeous Orange tips. I admit to spending quite some time looking for the camouflaged one but I did find it in the end. The egg-laying sequence is amazing – I'd have felt very privileged to have witnessed that. I'm enjoying the Brimstone saga too. I planted an alder buckthorn last year but Mrs B doesn't seem to have found it yet. And I love the reed warblers! Stay safe. Janet

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-May-20 12:54 PM GMT

Thanks Guys, I do have to be careful not to get too excited with my Green Hairstreak, I can't rule out an unofficial release since my patch does have 'form' in that respect. There was that Brown Hairstreak that randomly appeared 6 years ago with zero evidence of their presence before or since and a small group of Brown Argus appeared in a small corner of one of the meadows, all in mint condition and once again never seen there again. However there is a known colony of GH a few miles east of me so it's not beyond the realms of possibility it is a natural colonisation. I'll just have to wait and see how things develop 😊

Thanks Janet, I was very lucky to be in the right place at the right time with that Peacock and those Brimstones are still going strong with more eggs still appearing on a daily basis from the looks of things 😊

### May 2020

**Tuesday 5th.** My local patch is entering a very quiet spell with regards to butterflies. The adult hibernators are rapidly vanishing and the first generation of the pupal hibernators are starting to look somewhat tired with Speckled Wood becoming particularly thin on the ground too. With no Coppers, Common Blues or Brown Argus on the wing as yet (and they are mostly found in single figures at the best of times here) I'm finding myself paying more attention to the birds, at least until the Skippers and summer Browns begin to emerge.

Today was significantly cooler and windier and I wasn't surprised not to find any sign of the Green Hairstreak, the patch where he was flitting around in yesterday was taking the full brunt of the wind. Even the local Kestrels were taking the easy option! In the usual sheltered spots I found a couple of



Green-veined White but nothing else.



Male kestrel



Apart from the odd White flitting or getting blown past that was pretty much it for a while. Overhead Swifts and Sand martins swooped around, the Swifts being particularly noisy. I've never attempted trying to photograph them, my first efforts aren't brilliant but at least they're recognisable (all heavily cropped mind). The attempts at Sand Martins were a complete failure 😞



Swifts



*Some things about to get eaten!*

I'm having a pretty good run with Warblers this year so I took a wander to where the Sedge Warblers normally hang out to see if they've arrived. They certainly had, I could hear them a mile off! I got lucky finding one that was busy looking for food rather than singing on a swaying reed stem, one of the best views I've ever had and certainly my best set of photos! I've always felt the guide books send to over egg the 'streaking' on the back 😊



*Sedge Warbler*



By late morning a few Peacock started to appear, all licking the ground. I've noticed this in previous years, do they go a bit senile in their twilight days 😊. This one eventually flew up into an overhanging Hawthorn to feed on the blossom.



A few more Whites settled and I found a pair of House Sparrows who obviously had some hungry mouths back at the nest.



*Male House Sparrow*

A slightly worn Orange-tip and a sunbathing Robin finished my stroll for the day





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 10-May-20 04:43 PM GMT

It could be a natural colonisation - I've seen them in the Eastern Clearing before now and the nearest other colony was a mile or two away - fingers crossed 😊 Hopefully you won't have to wait too long for the odd Blue to turn up but in the meantime those are cracking bird shots 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 10-May-20 06:23 PM GMT

Well done with finding your local Green Hairstreak, Buggy. 😊 Despite extensive searching I have failed on my patch (though I know one was seen in 2019). It does make you wonder what is hiding out there waiting to be found. I reckon the Greenies may well be far more widespread than we realise and are there in small numbers all over the place. They are easy to miss and against the light flying along a hedgerow they are almost indistinguishable from Holly Blues.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 11-May-20 04:24 PM GMT

Sorry to hear your local patch is a little bereft at the moment, Paul. However, you now have the opportunity to travel a little further afield should you wish.

Good news regarding the Green Hairstreak though. This species does have a habit of turning up unexpectedly. I've found them in places on the Gower where I wouldn't have anticipated their presence before now.

### Re: Bugboys mission

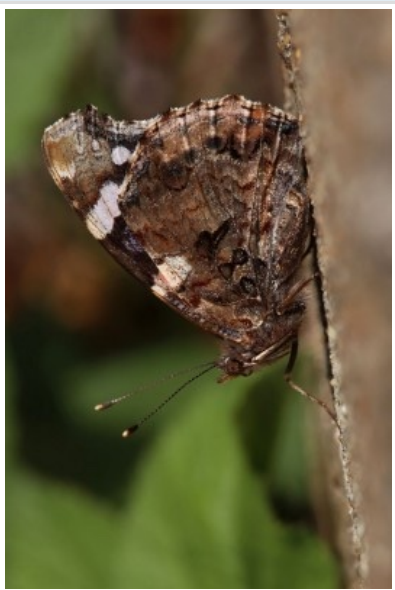
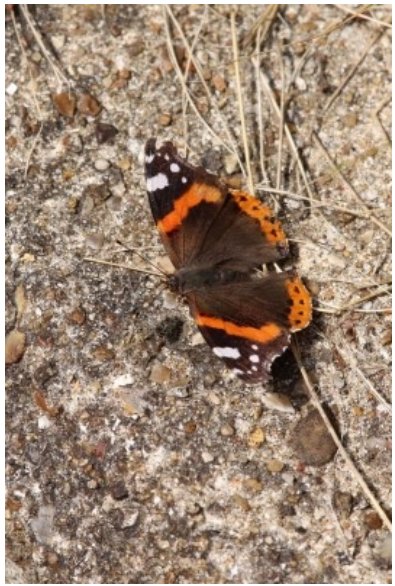
by bugboy, 12-May-20 07:13 PM GMT

Thanks guys I do wonder if they've been there all along. If it's a small colony of less than a dozen adults every year they could have been flying under the radar for years!

It's the way of my Local patch **David**, it dies a death once the first flush of butterflies have gone, even more so these days with stuff like Orange-tips peaking in April rather than the traditional May. It's all over for the year by September too hence why under normal circumstances I tend to ignore it for most the season 😊. Today in glorious sunshine and warm weather I didn't make it into double figures! The new regulations may not be much help to me either, you're forgetting how I get about the country 😊

### May 2020

**Wednesday 6th.** This was a rather quiet day. There was a bit of a chilly breeze blowing and my lunchtime wander at work presented me with just a single, tired looking Red Admiral.



The walk home through the marshes was also rather empty with only a single tatty looking Peacock landing in front of me.



I did have a quick look at the Peacock eggs which must be getting close to hatching being 12 days old, only to find a snail had set up home on them. I know some snails are somewhat omnivorous so I decided to remove it in the hope it hadn't done too much damage. Initially they all still look healthy, certainly no obvious 'grazing' that I could see, I think the brown mass may be snail poo but I would risk damaging the eggs trying to remove that as well.



**Thursday 7th.** Another quiet day at work, this time the single encounter was with my old friend the Brown Argus, looking a little more worn than when I last stumbled across him two weeks previously. I've not seen any others so I think he's going to live a very lonely life 😞



A sunbathing Robin allowed for a close approach.



Due to a Traffic accident on the way home (not involving us I hasten to add) the walk through the marshes didn't happen but I was welcomed home by finding two hatching Brimstones larvae on my window shelf. I'd found a broken twig on the Buckthorn I regular inspect a few days previously which had three eggs on it so I stuck it in some water and now I have two babies to look after (the third egg failed)





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 12-May-20 08:13 PM GMT

Do you reckon we could smuggle you across country in the boot Bugboy 😊 If you sat on the back seat passenger side would that make you 2m away from the driver? If you both had the windows down for ventilation? There has to be a solution somewhere to getting you to somewhere outside of London? 😊 That Red Admiral does look very washed out – normally there are blues and reds and silvers to be seen on their under wings but they looks more brown and grey 😊 It also looks like it's come with a price – 8p or 88p? 😊 Here's hoping the Brown Argus doesn't remain a lonely pony 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-May-20 01:14 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel** [quote]Do you reckon we could smuggle you across country in the boot Bugboy 😊 I am getting to the point where this would be a viable option 😊 [quote] If you sat on the back seat passenger side would that make you 2m away from the driver? If you both had the windows down for ventilation? I have thought that myself actually... There is talk about two households becoming a single 'bubble' which would help, but this is just talk at the moment... fingers crossed 😊

### May 2020

**Friday 8th.** My last day at work before another pre-covid booked break, this time I have 10 days of thumb twiddling rather than PBF and SPBF chasing. Anyway I didn't have a lunchtime wander at work today as we had a mini VE celebration with copious amounts of cake which took priority!

I did find a few bits and pieces on the walk through the marshes at the end of the day, all in the one little sheltered Spot where the Comma's fighting over just a few weeks ago and where the Peacock eggs are discreetly developing. Oddly this is the only spot I ever see Large Whites do anything more than flutter past on my patch. This one (only the third I've seen this year) settled a few times in-between being harassed by other unidentified ones.



A Comma was also still hanging on and A Holly Blue was paying a lot of interest in the Dogwood.



The Peacock eggs are either starting to show developing larvae or are dying (possibly a bit of both), only time will tell what's really going on here 😊.



Actually I already know the outcome of these but you'll just have to be patient 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 13-May-20 08:38 PM GMT

WRT the Peacock eggs you needed to start that last post with 'Not Quite a Spoiler Alert' Bugboy 😊😊 You did well to still see a Comma – round here they seemed to be doing okay to start with and then just disappeared 😊 Fingers crossed we get a bit more easing and clarity with it 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-May-20 03:50 PM GMT

You'll have to wait for the next post for the Peacock eggs update **Wurzel** 😊. Same here with the Peacocks and Commas, I am still stumbling across the odd female, though although butterfly numbers in general have fallen off a cliff on my patch now. I was out for 5 hours today in perfect springtime weather and I may have scraped into double figures assuming all the Whites I saw weren't the same one!

### May 2020

**Saturday 9th.** Although I've said I was going to sit out sunny weekends on my local patch due to it being impossible to social distance from the idiot picnickers etc, I figured there may be a few sore heads from VE celebrations the night before and if I left early I would avoid the rush. Indeed I did and it was a lovely quiet morning. This was my first chance to properly check on the Green Hairstreak situation since my find, having been at work during the intervening days but there was no sign of any first thing, even a wandering Holly Blue failed to flush any out.





The Peacock eggs were in much the same state as yesterday. I've also got a Red Admiral larvae that I'm keeping an eye on but today I couldn't locate him. The stem he was living on looks like it was felled by him but his original tent was empty and there was no other knitted together leaves... hmmm.



Being so early it was rather quiet, but on the other hand what I did find wasn't overly active.





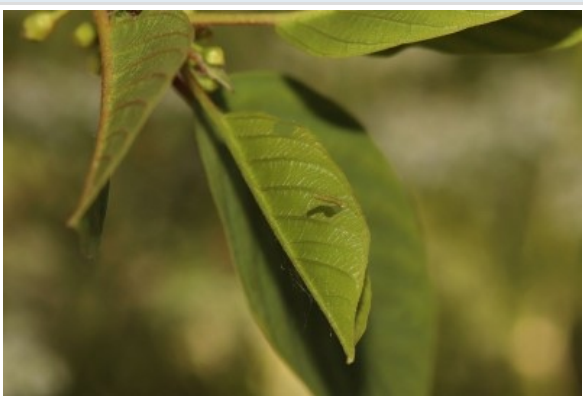
There was still a good amount of Brimstone larvae but my original one was MIA, a couple of freshly laid eggs where all I could find around his original leaf.



*MIA?*



*Freshly moulted 4th? instar*



*1st instar*

Things were starting to get a bit busy by late morning so I made the move to go home, stopping off only to find another Green Hairstreak at Hairstreak Corner, or rather as my earlier photos would later show me, the same individual.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 16-May-20 11:12 AM GMT

Love the GVV shot Bugboy – reminds me of David Bellamy; "Let's peer through the vegetation and see what we can find" 😊 So could your Greenstreak be a female – the abdomen looks quite chunky? 😊 If so fingers crossed you might have some more next year 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 16-May-20 02:37 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy-post\_id=153638-time=1589554200-user\_id=13753]...I figured there may be a few sore heads from VE celebrations the night before and if I left early I would avoid the rush. Indeed I did and it was a lovely quiet morning.

Good philosophy, Paul. I have tended to go out very early at weekends and save weekdays for lunchtime visits. Seems to work very well.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-May-20 11:12 AM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**. I did think that about the Hairstreak myself when I was taking the pictures but the single spot 'streak' and all the wear and tear match up to the first time I saw it and it was definitely behaving male-like then, holding a territory and vigorously chasing away Holly Blues so 😊

Thanks **David**, it's at times like these that I really wished I didn't live in the big smoke 😊

### May 2020

**Monday 11th** was a rather chilly, breezy affair and I wasn't overly expectant of finding a great deal. I did manage to re-find my errant Red Admiral caterpillar, here's his new home which had been constructed on an adjacent Nettle stem to his previous home. The poo on the leaves underneath indicating a rather fat occupant!



The lack of butterflies recently has seen me taking more interest in the summer birdlife and I've picked up a new hobby, trying to get a decent picture of a Swift, it kills the time if nothing else 😊. I actually surprised myself when I got the pictures back on my computer, there's a good bit of definition on some of the results. Only some mind, most were barely recognisable blurs or wingtips vanishing off the edge of the frame.



As I was stood there watching dozens of Swift a largish butterfly swooped over my shoulder and settled on the ground in front of me. My first Painted Lady of the year was quite a fresh example, if not homegrown it must have emerged in northern France fairly recently.



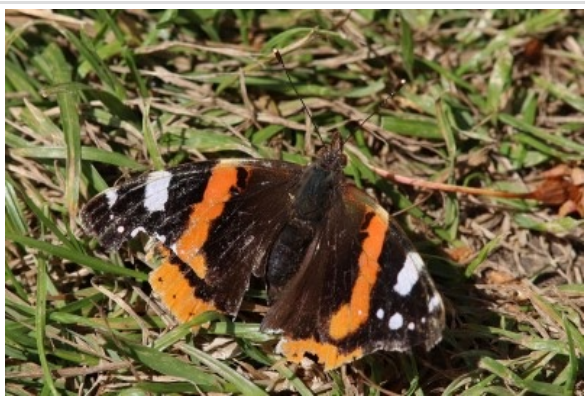
Next stop, Brimstone tree. My original had re-appeared after going MIA a couple of days ago, looking very chunky now, 4th instar I think?



A range of instars and more fresh eggs still littered the lower twigs.



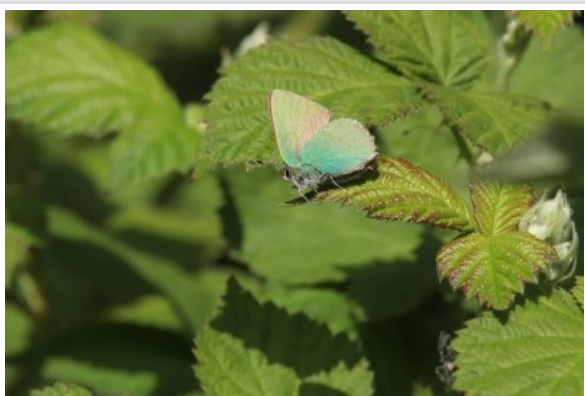
After watching the Dabchicks (and wondering when I'll see the chicks riding around on mum and dads backs) I wandered back finding a Small white and a tatty old Red Admiral willing to sit, I think the Red Admiral was just relieved to be taking a breather to be honest!



Early afternoon and it was still a bit breezy, I'd seen a few more Whites and the occasional Holly Blue but nothing to point my camera at so I spent another 15 minutes pointing it skywards at the Swifts again, remarkably some more in focus!



As I was about to leave to go home, I caught sight of the now familiar jinking flight of my Green Hairstreak (yes, it does seem to be the same individual).



I'll finish on a peacock egg update which I'd checked on first thing. Another (or perhaps the same) snail had parked on them again. Upon removing him I discovered they had been significantly reduced in number, as I suspected the snail had been snacking on them.



Since I've become quite invested in these, having watched them being laid, I decided to take the remaining eggs home. Snails can use their slime trails to re-find good feeding spots so the remaining eggs were far from safe. Time will tell as to how, if any, are still alive. (I already know but you'll just have to wait 😊)

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 17-May-20 08:22 PM GMT

Great find with the Painted Lady Bugboy – quite a dark one and with the blue pupils in the hind wing spots 😊🍴 Last year was brilliant for them so they could be at a premium this year 🍴

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 19-May-20 12:33 PM GMT

Good luck with the Peacock ova, Paul. If I could find any myself I'd probably do likewise – been a while since I reared anything.

Nice Painted Lady too. There haven't been too many around so far this year so hopefully they'll start showing up in greater numbers soon.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 19-May-20 07:37 PM GMT

Great to see a Painted Lady, Buggy. 😊 A really nicely marked one as well. I hope Wurzel is wrong about famine following feast and that the current southerly airstream will waft a few (or even a lot) over from the continent. I don't know if any numbers have been reported over there this year yet.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-May-20 08:01 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, yes it was a rather dusky individual, lets hope its the precursor to a nice influx, the current weather is on our side if nothing else 😊!

Thanks **David**, more about the Peacock eggs below... and some 😊!

Thanks **Dave**, like you say, the weather's conducive for an influx but also like you I've not seen any news as to whether we're in for an invasion like last year 😊

### May 2020

**Tuesday 12th.** If anything there were even fewer butterflies around this morning, just the occasional White. The Red Admiral larvae had moved homes, moving upstairs on his stem.



I did some more Swift watching and then switched to see if my newfound skills would work on the Sand Martins here.



*Sand Martins bottom left*

They tend to fly much lower which makes them a lot more difficult to track with the camera so I switched to trying to get them as they flew around their nest sites. There's no sand bank for them to use, instead they nest in holes along the side of the canal, completely unphased by the people walking along the path above them. This method turned out to be fairly effective although next time I'll try earlier in the day when that side is still in full sun.



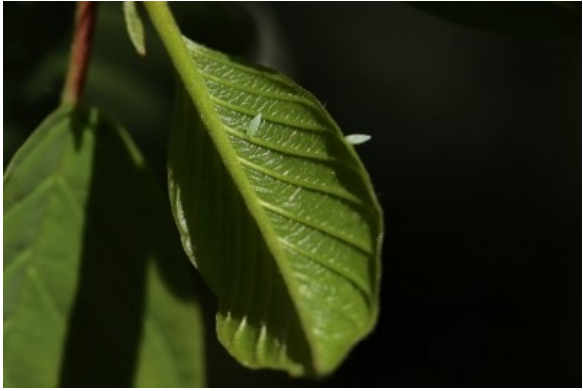
*Sand Martins*





*Sand Martin*

Yet more Brimstone eggs had been laid since yesterday. My original larvae was once again MIA but others are now getting quite fat too.



It was warming up as lunchtime approached but nothing more than a few more Whites were encouraged into activity. I did have one final pleasant surprise which delayed my journey home. Right on the edge of a well-used path I found another female Peacock busy laying her eggs. Her chosen site wasn't really what you would call a nettle bed, just half a dozen stems, precariously leaning out towards the path and any unprotected legs walking past, not the safest place to choose.





After getting some close ups I left her to it with the intention of returning tomorrow to rescue them before the nettles got flayed by another passer-by. That plan however had to be moved forward when I got home, my other batch of eggs had started to hatch. When I got back, I found the batch of eggs rather on the small side but at least it hadn't been destroyed already. Anyway the eggs were carefully snipped off once I got home and my new hatchlings were given a nice fresh stem to munch on.



*New batch*



*Babies!*

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by millerd, 19-May-20 08:23 PM GMT

Amazing to think those tiny little green worms will in a few weeks time have transformed into ravenous black spiny monsters getting on for 5cm long! And that by some minor miracle they will eventually convert a pile of dull green nettles into the extraordinary thing of beauty that is a fresh new Peacock butterfly. It never ceases to fascinate me... 😊 I shall follow them with interest, though you're going to be hard-pushed to name them all! 😊😊

Cheers,

Dave

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by Wurzel, 21-May-20 07:35 PM GMT

Really interesting shots of the Peacock laying Bugboy 😊 As Dave says extraordinary to think that they will show such a rapid and massive increase in size 🤖🤖

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 22-May-20 02:24 PM GMT

Fascinating images of the ovipositing Peacock, Paul. I'll be interested to see how your brood fares these next few weeks.

As for those holes the sand martins are using, are they just for drainage or are they purpose built for the birds?

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-May-20 01:04 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, they're getting big already, 11 days old now and just moulting into third instar (right on time according to a certain book!) Yea, I might forgo the naming thing here, although I seem to have inadvertently adopted a Red Admiral whilst obtaining fresh nettle for them who get named 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, I've been lucky this year to catch two separate females laying, a small silver lining to the lockdown 😊

Thanks **David**, They are growing fast and have obviously read Pete's book since they are keeping up with the stated growth rate exactly! I'm not entirely sure of what the original purpose of the holes are but I suspect not drainage, at least anymore, or the nests would get washed away whenever it rains! If purpose built for the Martins though I would have thought they'd be drilled closer together 😊. Whatever the reason the Martins seem to like them and successfully breed in them every year.

### May 2020

**Wednesday 13th.** I didn't go out today but here's my one-day old Peacocks happily munching on their nettle 😊



**Thursday 14th.** Desperate for a change of scenery I managed to get myself to Epping Forest. It's a bit of a trek to get to the spots I normally frequent but at least most of it is through woodland. The day wasn't predicted to be particularly sunny or overly warm, although a bit of an improvement from the previous day. There were two Small targets for the day, a Copper and a Heath, both of which are significantly more numerous here than on the Marshes. Despite plenty of sunny intervals there was no butterfly life, even checking Garlic Mustard just came up with geometrid moth larvae. The oaks were raining caterpillars too, although not every one I found will make it to adulthood.



Nearing the first spot where both targets occur the sunny spells had pretty much disappeared and nothing showed itself.

At the second spot not much had changed but quartering the area I finally managed to find my first Small Heath of the year. A slight thinning of cloud eventually encouraged another two to reveal themselves but no Coppers appeared.





Back at the first spot on the return journey, things had brightened up again and there were a handful of rather active Small Heath flitting around and getting into occasional scuffles.



*Rubbish gets everywhere but this plastic was probably reflecting more sun than the surrounding grass and so created a little pocket of warmth.*



Still no Coppers but also in attendance were some very fresh-looking Mother Shiptons who were worthy of my attention.



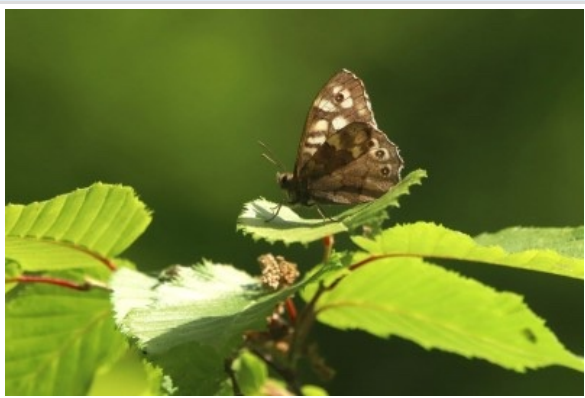
In the absence of much in the way of butterflies (just the occasional Speckled Wood playing hard to get), various other lifeforms caught my attention for the rest of my walk home. I managed to locate four separate Great-spotted Woodpecker nests, the occupants really don't shut up for a second, and I was able to watch one without upsetting the parents as they came to and fro to feed the noisy chicks.



*Jackdaw, Pond Skater & Canada Goose family*



*Coot family*



A good day out at a much quieter spot than the Marshes.



## Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 23-May-20 10:23 PM GMT

A change is as good as a rest Bugboy 😊😁 Lovely Small Heaths but how did you entice that Mother Shipton onto your hand, to be honest how the hell did you even get within spitting distance of the Hag Moff?? 🤔😁👍👍

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-May-20 06:58 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, just a little bit of hag moff whispering (it's more of a cackle tbh) 😊

## May 2020

**Friday 15th.** Back to the Marshes today and the first thing I came across was a particularly magnificent looking Brown Argus which looking at the wings I would say was a female but the abdomen looks distinctly male-like.



As I'm getting used to, that was the highlight for the day as far as butterflies were concerned. Until the summer butterflies kick in, my local patches will continue to be rather barren. I'd started early to have another go with the Sand Martins, this time finding the opposite wall of the canal bathed in morning sunshine. The Martins were once again oblivious to people and still seemed to be sorting who owned what hole. I did get a bit distracted by a passing family of Swans, who wouldn't though 😊!

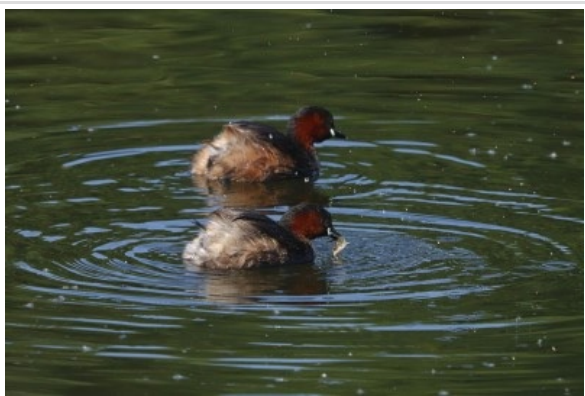


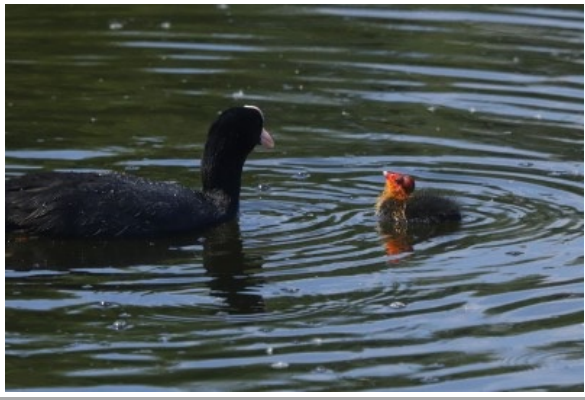


My regular stop off at the Alder Buckthorn found yet more fresh eggs up to what I think are most likely 4th instar larvae.



The birding was interspersed briefly by a Small white before checking on the Dabchicks who were busy eating Sticklebacks, and sharing their pond with a family of Coot, the chicks of which were looking ridiculously cute (emphasise on both words there).





As I was watching them a small flock of Sand Martin appeared and proceeded to bathe. To those not familiar with their bathing method, they do it by dipping in the water as they fly low over the surface. I'm quite pleased at what I managed to capture, particularly the one where it looks like its rising from the water, angelic-like.



*Bathing Sand Martins*

I had another welcome lepidopteran break involving a Small White, a female Comma who was showing a lot of interest in a bed of nettles and finally a Latticed Heath posing very artistically.





The wetlands had some more babies and birdie posers and a final butterfly, a peacock trying to bask in between the joggers who were becoming more numerous by the minute... my cue to leave.



*Greylag Geese, Great-crested Grebe & Cormorant*



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 25-May-20 08:23 PM GMT

Brilliant stuff Bugboy - I love Sand Martins they're one of my Faves 😊 I've not seen any yet this year so I'll have to keep my eyes open if I visit Hengistbury soon 🍷 Love the final shot of the Peacock sunbathing 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe 😊

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-May-20 06:37 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, I have colonies of both Martins on my patch but the Housey version nest within the water treatment works. They are visible but through two sets of security fences and its probably not the best idea in the world to be stood somewhere pointing a big lens on a secured site that feels the need to have two security fences complete with razor wire 😊👁️!

### May 2020

**Monday 18th.** This was going to be a long day, the plan was to do Walthamstow Marshes in the morning then walk along the canal to Tottenham Marshes. First of all though my six day old Peacock larvae were getting quite fat, their 1st instar skins must be getting a little tight 😊.



Being an early start I managed to find a Holly Blue who was willing to pose for me, something of a rare thing so far this year.



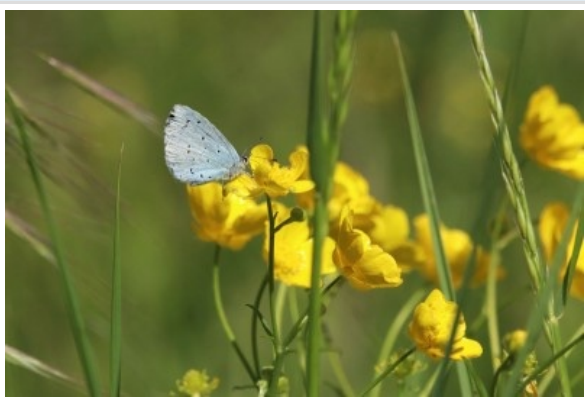
Also a rare thing in general for my site was my next sighting. I chased this little chap for a while to pin it down for the record. Unlikely to be the first record for the marshes but a first for me here.



After that little bit of excitement it was all quiet on the butterfly front. A quick check on the Sand Martins found that they seemed to have sorted out who owns what hole and photo opportunities were at a premium so next stop was the Brimstone larvae. Numbers are dwindling as you would expect but what is left are getting quite fat, at least 4th instar, possibly some 5th.



Next stop was the waterworks nature reserve where I had a welcome distraction from a Small White and a blue fluttering low over the same grassy bank. Having yet to tick off Common Blue for the year my initial excitement was quickly quelled when I got the target on my big lens. Still it made for a pleasing image



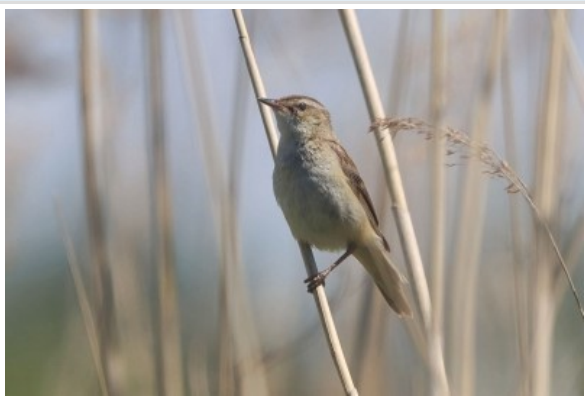
A bit of birding at the reserve was done, nothing new but the Coot chicks, still looking very cute and utterly ridiculous in equal measures, came close whilst the parents went off to pick a fight with another pair who had crossed the invisible line.



I deviated slightly on the return route coming across a batch of first instar nettle feeders, probably Peacock, and then a couple of small butterflies quarreling and bickering in a flowery corner of a patch of waste ground which used to be a golf course. One was blue and one silvery and noticeably smaller. No mistaking the ID's this time. I found myself getting as excited about seeing my first Common Blue as I would normally do when I find my first Large Blue in any other year 😊!



Midday was fast approaching so I made a move to head off to Tottenham Marshes stopping off just long enough to grab a few Sedge Warbler Pictures, posing in a more normal place than my last encounter with one.



An hour later I was at Tottenham Marshes, watching a handful of Whites flitting around the vast swathes of Rape that seems to be freely seeding here. Both Small and Green-veined were present but no Large. Being warm and early afternoon, nothing was going to sit still for more than 5 seconds, until that is an Orange-tip fluttered past and did exactly that. I had assumed I'd already seen my last Orange-tip for the year (which is crazy being mid-May) so that was a welcome encounter.



More wandering only gave me a handful of White flybys plus another Orange-tip (maybe the same one but I was a fair distance from the first one). It was a while before I found another target which turned out to be another Common Blue. 10 Minutes after this one, across the other side of the field I found a third who was far to flighty to sit for me. Sporadic sightings like this are pretty much what I would expect for my local patches.



Nothing else looked to be about and it had been a long day so I made my way back along the canal to find a nice trio awaiting me back at Walthamstow Marshes. A Small Copper (my first of the season) attracted my attention and closer inspection of the area threw up a fourth Common Blue and a couple of Brown Argus.







A good finish to a long day, both sites making me work hard to find something.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 27-May-20 08:40 PM GMT

The hard graft paid off at the end of the day Bugboy 😊 Those Coot Chicks do look ridiculous, like upside down punks 😂 I know that the parents often practice infanticide in bad years but perhaps it's actually out of embarrassment because of their weird looking offspring? 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 28-May-20 07:45 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, I was actually reading up on Coots the other week. Apparently experiments show they know if one of the chicks isn't one of their own. Coots are known to lay in other Coot nests and apparently if an egg hatches out of sync from the rest that's the one that gets the short end of the straw. The experiment was with American Coots but probably applies to them all.

### May 2020

**Tuesday 19th.** I made a return visit to Epping Forest, once again for a change of scenery and also to recce the place for the woodland butterflies I would normally go to Bookham for. I know White Admiral and Purple Emperor are present and think Silver-washed Frits as well but all in lower numbers than Bookham so I planned to explore (get lost) some areas I've never wandered before.

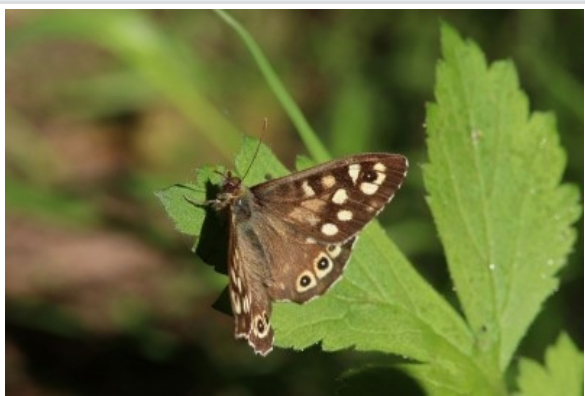
The day was significantly sunnier and warmer than my last visit and the Small Heath numbers had increased significantly, over twenty seen by the end of the day across both the hot spots I'm aware of, likely many more since I didn't feel the need to go quartering the ground looking for them this time.



Amongst them I found a handsome male Common Blue and a somewhat worse for wear Small Copper who didn't stick around for a better picture, but then looking at the state of him I can't really blame him 😊.



In the woodland I searched for Honeysuckle that would be suitable for White Admirals, only finding it growing in sunny clearings, and for clearings and rides with ample fresh bramble growth, a more successful search. A few fresh Speckled Wood were active, probably results of larval hibernators rather than a true second brood.





I managed a single Orange-tip larvae, surprisingly the only one I've found this year, and captured a Bee-fly refuelling.



A large pond/small lake that I'd never visited before was a hive of activity with dragonflies and damselflies, female Hairy Hawkets were busy multitasking, laying eggs whilst avoiding marauding males, and various blue Damselflies skitted low over the water. The only thing that actually sat for me was a broad-bodied Chaser.



Out on some submerged object a Drake Mallard was busy oiling himself up, pulling a variety of shapes in doing so. He did look rather spiffing though 😊.



Another Great-spotted Woodpecker nest was located, making 5 in two visits.



Also seen was what looked like a very fresh female Brimstone, gorging on Red Campion which would have made for a lovely image had I managed one. A second Common Blue did sit though and so did a tatty Peacock



The day finished at the large lake near Chingford, Connaught Water, where amongst all the usual suspects I found a Common Tern having a rest, presumably a recent arrival as it's the first I've seen this year.



An enjoyable day, exploring new areas of a local patch 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 28-May-20 07:52 PM GMT

Great Small Heath Bug Boy, not seen one yet nor the Small Copper 🍷🍷😞 I'm way behind this year, better safe than sorry though, not much round here unless you travel and they're mostly at the Sea side, just feeling sorry for my self. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 29-May-20 12:57 PM GMT

A nice mix of subjects as ever, Paul. You did well with that Small Heath – I find them most frustrating to get a good image of.

The bee-fly and dragonfly are excellent, but that mallard in all its imperious glory tops the lot! You should send that to the RSPB magazine.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 29-May-20 07:20 PM GMT

Interesting report Bugboy with cracking shots – thought the Greater Spotted Woody is being a trifle rude I feel, there's no need for him to be like that 😞  
WRT the Coots – interesting that I remember watching something (might have been Life of Birds) where they showed Redheads laying in other Redheads and even Canvasbacks nests. While they filmed one female out laying in other nests a different female nipped in and laid in hers – if this was to the same extent with Coots then I don't think there would be a population left 😞😞

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-May-20 09:40 PM GMT

Thanks **Goldie**, you're getting some decent pictures from your Bowles Mauve though 😊

Thanks **David**, yea Small Heaths are one of those species where I do end up deleting most the images I take but every now and again you find one who's not camera shy 😊 I was annoyed with myself with the Mallard pic, I was taking a run of shots with the reflection in but with that one I managed to chop the tip of his beak off in the reflection 😞

Thanks **Wurzel**, that GSW is actually a she. I think the call from the kids was louder than the call for her photoshoot 😊

### May 2020

**Wednesday 20th.** Whilst having breakfast I had a look at my Peacock caterpillars, they were in the process of moulting into 2nd instar, just eight days old (The Eeles Bible says 1 week to this stage 😊).



There was nothing to report from work but on the walk home I did find a poser of a Banded Demoiselle and a lovely Brown Argus.



**Thursday 21st.** I had a pleasant surprise at work today, a colleague pointed me in the direction of some Small Tortoiseshell larvae. In all the years I've been recording butterflies at work I've only seen one adult, so I put this patch of nettle under an immediate protection order which was done without question I'm happy to say. They'd reached the stage where they go solitary and each one had made its own little tent.



*Small Tortoiseshell larval tents*



*Small Tortoiseshell larval tents*

Whilst looking through the nettles I also found a half-grown Red Admiral



**Friday 22nd.** Arriving home today I had a couple of surprises waiting for me. That second batch of Peacock eggs had hatched. (The white is the damp tissue I had the eggs on)



And I discovered I'd inadvertently adopted a Red Admiral larvae whilst collecting nettle for the older batch, who as you can see are nearly bursting out of their second instar skins already (The Eeles bible says they moult into 3rd instar 4 days after moulting to 2nd) !



*Red Admiral larvae*





### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 29-May-20 10:38 PM GMT

What a splendid selection of little wrigglers, Buggy! 😊 Interesting that you brought back a Red Admiral cat by mistake – a couple of times when rearing Peacocks in the past I've inadvertently imported a Comma, but never a Red Admiral. Comma cats are very unhappy sharing a cage with an unruly bunch of Peacocks! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 30-May-20 09:50 AM GMT

" that GSW is actually a she." – I think I need to get to Specsavers...oh hang slight problem 😊😞  
That is a cracking Brown Argus 😊🇮🇪

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 31-May-20 09:10 PM GMT

Indeed they are **Dave**, I have no idea how I missed the Red Admiral cat though, its not exactly small 😊!  
Thanks **Wurzel** To be fair you only had her rear end to work with.... now there's a sentence that needs context 😊

### May 2020

**Saturday 23rd.** Back on the Marshes for an early morning wander. It was another outing that was very lean on the butterfly front, partly due to the early start but mostly I suspect because there's very little around here. I did another bought of Swift watching, both House and Sand Martins trying to get in on the fun.



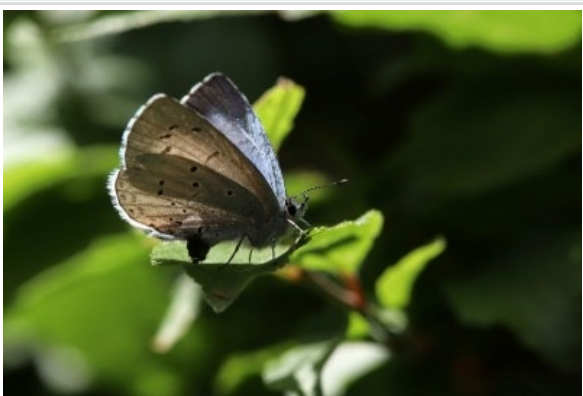
I also stopped off at the Buckthorn to see what was going on, the usual mixture of instars greeted me but the most interesting thing was watching one finishing off its moult, I think from 4th to 5th.



*1st instars*



It was only when I was thinking about heading off as the site started filling up with people that I managed a butterfly, two in fact. I think the female Holly Blue had had some form of accident, looked like the end of her abdomen had got squished 😊. A male Holly Blue was intent on keeping to the shade so didn't provide much in the way of photo opportunities



That evening whilst sorting out the Peacock larvae, one of the older ones fell so I thought it would be interesting to compare 3rd instar with 1st, just 10 days difference in age!

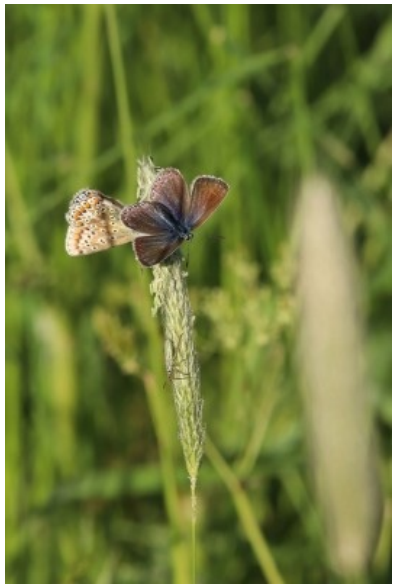


**Sunday 24th.** A day in but I spent a bit of time caterpillar wrangling. My Red Admiral larvae who had moulted to 5th instar had finished off eating his tent had wandered over to where the youngest batch of Peacocks were busy demolishing a leaf so I transferred him to an unoccupied one. A little while later I watched him knitting it together which was quite fascinating 😊.



**Monday 25th.** Back to work with very little to report. On the way home I found a couple of female Common Blue, the first females I've come across this year but clearly they've been around for a day or three.





At home, my oldest batch of Peacocks were getting ready to moult into 4th instar.



**Tuesday 26th.** Work again, just a single butterfly seen but worthy of note, my second Painted Lady of the season and very clearly a recent arrival, it was feeding on the Bowles Mauve like it hadn't eaten for a week! With various other reports of them cropping up we may be in for another half decent year for them.



Stay safe everyone 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-20 06:47 PM GMT

"To be fair you only had her rear end to work with" Fnar! Fnar! 😊😞

I hope you're right about the Painted Ladies Bugboy 😊 they'd make up for Large Blues being off the menu this year as the sites are in a fragile state 😞

Looks like the lesson from millerd are paying off 😊🍴

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 02-Jun-20 01:59 PM GMT

That's a fascinating selection of larval goings-on, Paul. You must be up to your eyes in it right now!

I think Small Tortoiseshells are going to possibly have a record summer judging by how many are currently being seen. It'll be interesting to see whether Peacocks do likewise. Given how many there were this spring, we could be in for an explosion.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Jun-20 09:35 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, my local Holly Blues are just starting to come into their own now with their favourite LHP is out, and no need to whisper them from the treetops, the females at least 😊

Thanks **David**, it's quietened down a bit on the larvae front here now thankfully, it's been many a year since I'd reared some and I'd forgotten what eating machines they are! I'm not sure about Small Torts since they're not common in the south east these days (although I did see a fresh female sniffing around some nettles yesterday) but Peacock larvae are everywhere near me!

### May 2020

**Wednesday 27th.** Today was another butterfly lean day but before doing anything else it was time to put some caterpillars back into the wild. I'd never intended to rear the whole batch of Peacocks through, apart from reaching the stage where they were eating nettles faster than I could supply them, it's also not particularly responsible to rear a whole batch when the whole point of laying so many is to make sure just a small proportion make it to adulthood, navigating the array of parasitoids, fungal and viral enemies. Even so they had now just reached 4th instar so in all likelihood a greater proportion will survive than if I'd left them to be grazed by that snail. I kept 15 to rear on and the 50 or so were put back close to where the eggs were laid.

The first butterfly that caught my eye that wasn't just flying past was a Speckled Wood. From a distance it looked quite faded but I took a quick record shot with my long lens and noted he seemed to be lacking a tad in the eyespot department. They were present, just not very well developed.



A couple of Common Blue were present in what has become a regular spot for them so far this year.



Bird spot of the day goes to a male Reed Bunting who was singing his little heart out. I say singing, Buntings aren't the most tuneful of birds, it's a bit of a pathetic chirp in reality despite the look he has in the picture!



The real dirth of butterflies recently has been noted by others and the lack of any notable rain in my neck of the woods for a good two months has really started to show here, in places it looks like the end of August, not May 😬.



I found another batch of Peacock larvae, they seem to be everywhere at the moment. Also cropping up more often are Red Admiral larval tents, I've found several on my patch in recent weeks, maybe the lack of adult butterflies is making me look harder.



The little flowery corner I'd seen my Common Blue season debut six days ago doing battle with a Brown Argus gave me a repeat performance with two new individuals.



It was beginning to get quite overcast now and even the White flybys were beginning to be thing of the past so time to wander back home. The Goat's-rue is just starting to form flower buds and quite literally the first bud I looked at had a trio of Holly Blue eggs whilst nearby a female was adding to them.





Nearby there was also an unusually placid Burnet Companion



And just before leaving the site I stopped off to check up on my released Peacock larvae, who hadn't wasted any time in settling in 😊.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 03-Jun-20 10:12 PM GMT

Interesting 'partially sighted' Speckle Bugboy 😊 That Brown Argus is in pretty good nick - they seem to age very rapidly what with all the brawling that they do 😊 Buntings are often considered the Milli Vanilli of the bird world 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 04-Jun-20 09:39 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy\_post\_id=154508 time=1591216549 user\_id=13753]...The real dirt of butterflies recently has been noted by others and the lack of any notable rain in my neck of the woods for a good two months has really started to show here, in places it looks like the end of August, not May..

that's quite a sobering image for the month of May, Paul. Clearly, the Met Office weren't lying when they said that this spring has been the driest and sunniest on record.

That's the kind of sight that greets me in eastern Spain in late July. The fact that it's in the UK in spring is actually rather worrying. 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 06-Jun-20 10:04 AM GMT

Some great recent reports Bugboy with an interesting variety of stuff.



I particularly like the Burnet Companion photo, I have never seen one on a bramble flower before 🤔😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Jun-20 01:35 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, Milli Vanilli with the backing track turned off 😊

Is is indeed a bit of a worry **David** and as we know this year isn't an isolated event, things got very parched early on last year too. We had some serious thundery downpours yesterday afternoon but going out this morning you wouldn't know it, just a bit damp in places. I think we have some more rain on its way next week though which will be welcome, not just to water everything but to also keep the muppets inside who are busy trampling over what little grass is left 😊

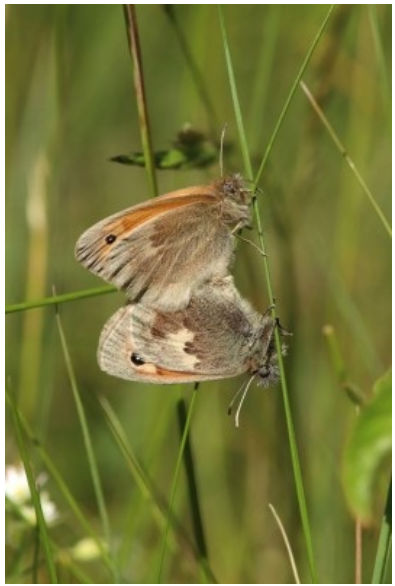
Thanks **Neil**, yes the Burnet companion on Bramble was a new one for me as well 😊

### May 2020

**Thursday 28th.** The night before my Red Admiral was getting ready to pupate. I hoped he would wait but I missed him. Not by much though, he was still a bit wet when I checked on him first thing in the morning, so couldn't have missed him by much more than half an hour, always the way 😊 .



The day was another wander round Epping Forest where once again I explored some new areas. Small Heath were relatively numerous again in the usual open areas with plenty of fresh females around now to keep the frisky males occupied 😊 .





One of the new areas I explored turned out to be a bit of Speckled Wood Nirvana, dozens of hyperactive males flitted around here. Being a bit on the warm side meant that they were generally hiding from the sun when settled.





A few Whites flitted around but the only other butterflies that I saw sitting still were some Blues



In the woodland I also located another three Great-spotted Woodpecker nests. The noisy occupants are getting bigger and braver now.



And on the lake I spent a bit of time watching the Common Tern that seems to have set up home here.



Hopefully some summer species will be out soon to fill the void

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 08-Jun-20 09:13 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy post\_id=154623 time=1591533327 user\_id=13753].Hopefully some summer species will be out soon to fill the void.

Yes, a bit quiet here too, Paul, except for Meadow Browns which suddenly seem to have exploded. They'll soon be joined by Ringlets and it'll be like the 'June Gap' has never happened.

Nice to see your Red Admiral has successfully pupated. With any luck you'll be able to catch it emerging.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-20 06:08 PM GMT

Cracking shots of the Small Heaths Bugboy 😊 especially the tantalizing view of the topside 🍷 – they're right teases those Small Heath 😊 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Jun-20 09:18 PM GMT

More like a May gap round here **David**, the Meadow Browns here have just started to appear over the past week, just in one's and twos though. I might be lucky to catch a Ringlet at work (normally see two or three) but I've never seen one on the marshes. They should in theory be in Epping Forest but again, I've never seen one as yet there 😊.

Thanks **Wurzel**, full on little teasers they are, hiding behind blades of grass, waiting until you line up the shot and then bugging off, flashing the uppers occasionally, they have the full set of moves 😊!

### May 2020

**Friday 29th.** This morning, my remaining fifteen Peacock larvae from the older batch were busy with their final moult.



Today was also the day when my younger batch, who had recently moulted to 2nd instar, were returned to freedom on the marshes.



Also on the marshes the Holly Blues had been busy with the egg laying on the Goat's-rue but there was very little on the wing.



*Drake Pochard*

Out of curiosity (and perhaps a little bit of desperation) I explored the nearby Leyton Jubilee park but despite a fair amount of wildflower seeding that has gone on here, the butterfly life was as barren as the rest of the day had been, a single Small White gaining my full attention.



The afternoon became increasingly cloudy so I didn't expect to see much else but a female Holly Blue provided a welcome distraction on the way home. She was obsessing over some Bedstraw but I think she was just a little confused with all the Goat's-rue that was close by, the air must have been full of the scent of it!





I also caught sight of my first Large Skipper of the year but he proved to be a little tricky to pin down 😊.

I didn't have to wait too long though, on **Saturday 30th** my lunchtime walk at work enabled me to pin down a slightly less frisky Large Skipper, hopefully the first of many 😊.



There was also a freshly emerged Small Tortoiseshell who WAS very frisky.

Meanwhile, my Peacock Larvae at home were chomping through nettle like there was no tomorrow, looking very smart in their new skins. I'm glad I returned most of them back to the wild!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-20 10:12 PM GMT

That's a really interesting shot of the Small White Bugboy 🐛🌿 I love the pose it's throwing 🌿

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 09-Jun-20 10:19 PM GMT

Peacock caterpillars get through phenomenal amounts of nettles. Just rearing a couple of dozen can mean going out for fresh fodder twice a day, and you don't half get funny looks from people as you attack the nettle beds with a pair of scissors and stuff the stalks into a carrier bag! 😊 I'll be interested to see how they do, and how many end up being parasitised.

Cheers,

Dave

## Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 10-Jun-20 06:27 PM GMT

Those Peacock larvae DO look stunning, Paul, replete with their fresh instar clothing! They will get even greedier as they approach pupation so you're going to have your hands full.

Given the good numbers of Small Tortoiseshells that have emerged lately, I'm presuming Peacocks will also be quite plentiful very soon.....including a dozen or more of your own. 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Jun-20 07:40 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, that Small White was busy fluttering up the flower spike and I caught it mid flutter 😊

Haha, yes I've had more than a few odd looks picking nettles **Dave**, although I have seen a good few people doing similar things with Elder flowers recently and they always look a little sheepish when I walk past them 😊. I'm fairly confident none of mine will be parasitised though since I've had them since eggs. I'm pretty sure those that get parasitised as eggs never hatch.

Thanks **David**, there's definitely gonna be a lot round near me, even without my helping hands, they've had an amazing spring! I'm hoping this rain we're now getting will provide nice lush fresh nettles for second brood Small Tortoiseshells too.

## June 2020

**Monday 1st.** Off to Epping Forest again today, leaving my Peacock larvae filling their new skins at a rate of knots.



I found another batch of Peacock larvae at Epping, they really are EVERYWHERE at the moment. I also got scolded by a Lesser Whitethroat as I presumably wandered a little too close to a hidden nest. A Goldfinch had found a prominent perch and was proudly singing away. The hedgerows were alive with fledgling Tits of all types, Blue Tits being the most obvious and, in the woodland, some Great-spotted Woodpecker chicks had finally left the nest and were busy chasing mum and dad noisily through the trees!



Another unseasonably warm day meant that when I caught up with some butterflies, they were already being hyperactive little sods but as befitted the first day of summer, those first butterflies were a couple of Meadow Brown. Also buzzing around the same patch of sunlit Brambles was a single Large Skipper, possibly a female, the forewings are very rounded.





Speckled Wood Nirvana once again lived up to its name and on the other side I found a small meadow covered in Sheeps Sorrel. No Small Coppers around (I think I missed the first brood judging by the condition of the few I have seen here) but there was an aged Comma hiding from the sun.



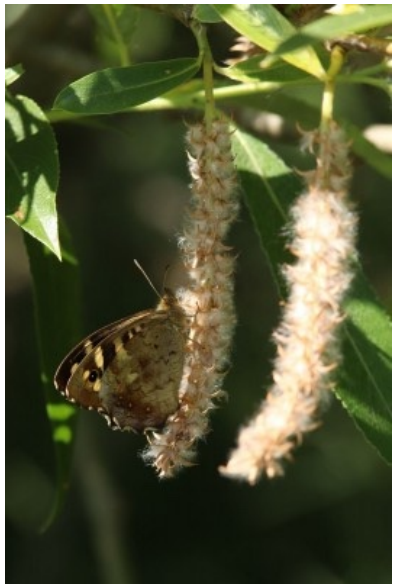
As the day continued to heat up, what butterflies were around became less and less approachable so I contented myself with mostly watching Small Heath and Common Blue scrapping in the grassland and Speckled Wood battling over the prime sunny glades.





Other life that I came across during the days wandering included a family of Mallard having a spruce up, A Black-tailed Skimmer Dragonfly, a family of Canada Geese and a Willow Warbler proudly singing the song of his people





Stay safe 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 11-Jun-20 11:13 AM GMT

Lovely sequence of shots Bugboy, the weather here has been awful so it's great see so many different shots 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 11-Jun-20 08:17 PM GMT

Cracking sequence of shots Bugboy 😊 That Comma is doing really well to have lasted this long – (if it's still around now) managed to cross over with the H.Commas 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 11-Jun-20 10:40 PM GMT

I do like all those Speckled Wood shots! 😊 The ones I see hide in hot weather, or sit edge-on to the sun making those underside shots impossible. You managed to get yours to pose beautifully. 🍷

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Jun-20 02:12 PM GMT

Thanks **Goldie**, it's not been that great down here recently but it been very much needed with no rain to speak of through April and May!

Thanks **Wurzel**, yup a real old lady that Comma, possibly hanging around long enough of see her offspring 😊!

Thanks **Dave**, I got lucky with those few shots. Most of them posed like you say but I managed these moments before they shifted positions to avoid overheating 😊

### June 2020

**Tuesday 2nd.** Another morning walk around the familiar territory of the marshes again today. My first encounter was a rather nice-looking Small Tortoiseshell. They seem to be doing relatively ok this year.



As I was taken its picture, I could hear some avian scolding going on and when the Torty flew off I looked around to find a déjà vu moment. Just like yesterday I'd wandered close to a Lesser Whitethroat nest, the parents clearly having some hungry mouths to feed.



Butterflies were as usual, few and far between, something I'm getting very used to this year. I spent a bit of time with a Holly Blue and found females of Common Blue and Small Heath, the latter doubling the total amount I've ever seen here now.

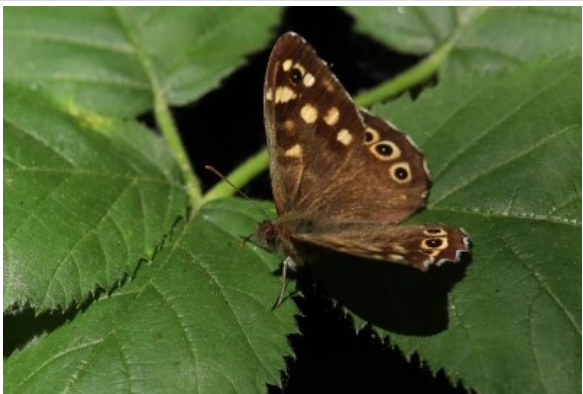




After checking on the Peacock larvae I'd put back on my last visit (happily I found they'd successfully moulted to 3rd instar, and were busy demolishing the nettle bed) I came across another Small Tortoiseshell taking a very keen interest in a nearby nettle bed. We desperately need some rain to get these nettles nice and lush again for her children!



A look on the Buckthorn found a few Brimstone larvae but I still can't locate any pupae (there's a good chance I've looked at a few and not realised it over the past few weeks). In contrast to Epping Forest, just a single Speckled Wood was seen today, a nice fresh male though.



I'm still waiting to see if the local Dabchicks manage to hatch anything (still no sign) but a pair of Grey wagtail who stopped by to pose provided ample compensation.



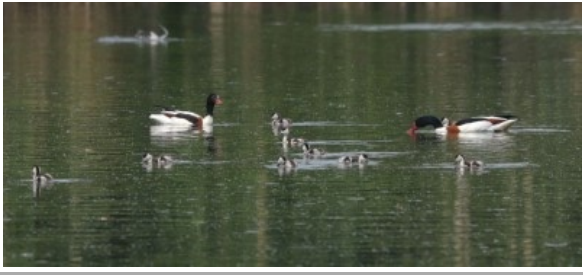
*Grey Wagtail having a shake*

As usual Holly Blues were busy on the Goat's-rue on the way back, they really can't leave this stuff alone!



Before heading home I took a detour around the wetlands where a small flock of Black-headed Gulls were feeding off something floating on the surface (on looking at the pictures on my computer I could see they were peanuts, presumably chucked in by the fishermen dotted along the banks of the reservoirs) and a pair of Shelduck were out with the kids





I finished the outing watching a fresh female Brimstone flitting around a grassy bank who led me to a fresh Meadow Brown and then to a Brown Argus nearing the other end of its life.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 13-Jun-20 07:48 PM GMT

I feel a bit sorry for H.Commas Bugboy – it can be a bit embarrassing when you're hanging out with your mates and your mum rocks up 😊😂 Good news about the Small Torts – hopefully the next brood can put in a good showing 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Jun-20 08:42 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, from various reports it looks like Small Torts are having a decent year across the board, fingers crossed it continues 😊

### June 2020

**Saturday 6th.** Just a couple of hours out on the marshes early today, avoiding the weekend rush. Unfortunately, it was mostly overcast and I saw just a single butterfly, it was a beaut though and made the trip out worthwhile.



When I got home, I noticed my Red Admiral was close to emerging, at only 8 days old it had nearly caught me out 😲.

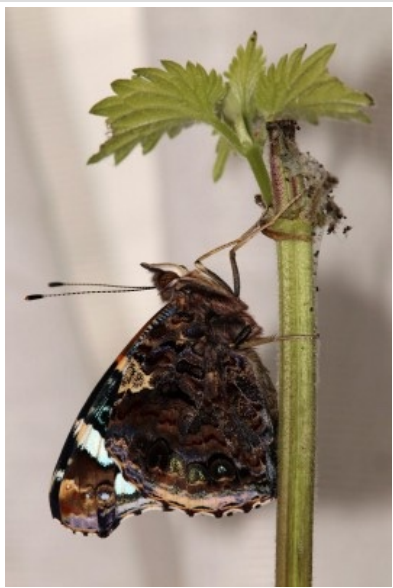


Over the past 48 hours my Peacocks had also been busy metamorphosing and I now had 15 Peacock pupae. Interesting to note the ones that chose to pupate amongst the nettles were all green whereas the ones which pupated on the mesh roof of their current home darkened off brown.





At some point in the afternoon I took my eye off the ball and missed the red Admiral emerging 😊



You'll have to wait until the next post to see its stunning uppers.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 13-Jun-20 09:22 PM GMT



Those Peacock pupae are beautifully marked, especially the green variety. Great shots. 😊 That is very quick for the Red Admiral – only just over a week. I need to keep an eye on the one I have currently on the kitchen windowsill... 😊 That's a lovely Small Tortoiseshell, too – there definitely are quite a few around at the moment. Could be that a fair few more council mowers have been idle this spring and the nettles have been allowed to grow and nurture nests of caterpillars for a change. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 13-Jun-20 09:24 PM GMT

Fantastic pupae – I'm looking forward to seeing the emergence sequences!

Guy

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 14-Jun-20 05:33 PM GMT

Really interesting to see the different colour forms of those pupae Bugboy – especially the shot showing the three in a row 😊 Is it just a coincidence that they show more dark marks/stripes as you look from left to right ( from stem towards the tip of the leaf)? 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Jun-20 09:11 AM GMT

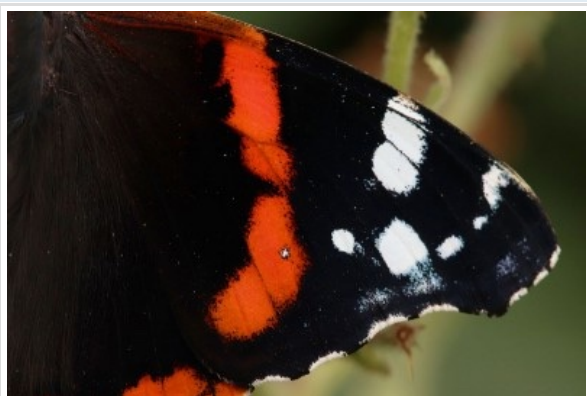
Thanks **Dave**, its been great rearing them, really brought back childhood memories of sunny summers with numb fingers from all the nettles I'd collect. Always worth the pain when you release handfuls of them into the back garden. The Red Admiral was actually 9 days not 8 (Lockdown fever means I no longer know where weeks start and end) but even so, still a fast turnaround, the Eeles bible says 2 to 3 weeks!

Thanks **Guy**, just have to hope they don't all emerge when I'm sleeping or at work, hopefully I'll catch at least one of them. Woke up this morning to find the first two emerged last night (went to bed just after midnight after watching them all evening 😊)

Thanks **Wurzel**, I think the three in a row may just be a combination of the different angles they're all at, different ages and natural variation.

### June 2020

**Sunday 7th.** Time to release yesterdays emergence. It wasn't the sunniest day, much cloudier than most of the spring so far but it was warm enough for the new Red Admiral to bask and what a stunner. The black rim around the white 'bialbata' spot in the red band makes this (according to the literature) *Ab. ocellata*, quite striking even though it is just a tiny spot.



The weather made sure there was little else around, just a juvenile Goldfinch wondering what the strange creature staring at it was.



Nearly an hour later I returned to find the Red Admiral hadn't moved much and some brighter spells encouraged it to finally flutter off to explore its new home.



The bright spells also encouraged a couple of Small whites, a nice Holly blue and just as I was about to leave a small orange blur darted past me, my first (and as I post this still my only) Small Skipper of the year.





On my travels I also decided to try my hand at rearing some Holly Blues and had picked a few heads of Goat's-rue which had eggs on. On arriving home and giving them a closer look I found I was already a dad (yet again, I've been a dad quite a bit recently). The shed skin of an aphid looking monstrous underneath it.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 15-Jun-20 11:04 AM GMT

That's a stunning Red Admiral Bugboy, 🍷🍷 the ones I've seen so far have been well worn 😊 it's great to have your own 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 15-Jun-20 03:49 PM GMT

That Red Admiral is a lovely insect, Buggy, and interesting for it to be an ab. of sorts - I've never seen one with the white spot ringed like that. Extra 🍷 for that I think!

From what I remember of rearing Peacocks, they tend to emerge between dawn and around nine in the morning. Not the best time if you need to get off for work! 😊 As yours are out before midsummer, I wonder if they'll breed again rather than hibernate... Plenty of time to fit in another brood. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 16-Jun-20 08:21 PM GMT

The Red Admiral is gorgeous Bugboy 😊 I totally get what you mean - that tiny little spot is surprisingly eye catching 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Jun-20 10:02 PM GMT

Thanks Guys, it really was a stunning insect and had it's picture taken many dozens of times 😊

So far the Peacocks are emerging (most unhelpfully I might add) between midnight and dawn 😞

### June 2020

**Tuesday 9th.** Cloudy with sunny spells meant I had to grab what I could on my lunchtime wander, Speckled Wood, Meadow Browns and Large Skippers were the only things I saw.



**Thursday 11th** was a bit overcast but still warm enough to venture out for a few hours in the afternoon and I'm glad I did. A few Whites flitted around, from what I could see they were all Small and seemed to be the start of a second brood.



Next came the stars of the afternoon, a cluster of three freshly minted Hutchinsoni Comma's looking resplendent in the bright, overcast lighting.



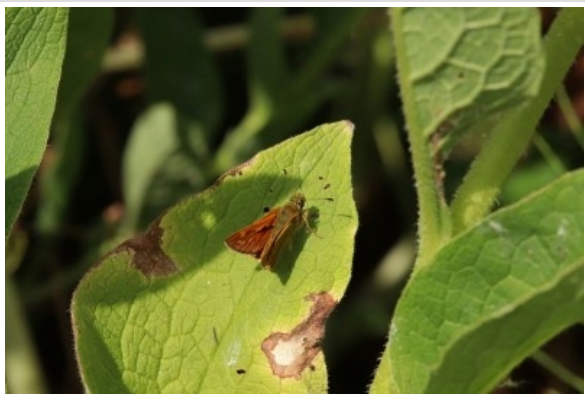


Around the corner I found a fourth whom I spent a bit of time admiring and around another corner, sat right on the edge of the path, I found a mating pair of Large Skipper so that's another species to tick of the 'in-cop'list 😊.



Whites and Meadow Browns flitted around, none of whom had any intention of settling despite the mostly overcast conditions. But a return walk along a Bramble edged path with the accompaniment of some breaks in the cloud cover gave me some more Hutchinsoni, a trio of very active Large Skipper, a Small Tortoiseshell (I can't remember the last time I saw so many Small Torts in a season) and a fresh female Small White.





Looks like the June gap on my patch is coming to an end thankfully 😊

**Friday 12th.** I didn't go out today but did take a few shots of the Holly Blue larvae currently living on my living room window shelf. I wasn't sure how many I had, I just picked a few shoots. Over the days looking closely I reckoned I had four or five but upon taking a few pics I had to increase that estimate to eight or nine. For everyone I focused on there seemed to be a second photo bombing in the background. Spot the larvae, there's two in each picture 😊





Stay safe

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 17-Jun-20 03:48 PM GMT

A really nice selection there Bugboy , I've yet to see the fresh new Comma's Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 18-Jun-20 06:15 PM GMT

Those H.Commas are pretty spectacular Bugboy – gorgeous when in mint condish 😊😁 Good news about the Small Torts as well 😊 I had fun with the cat spotting – I found the trick is to let your eyes unfocus a bit like when you're doing those 'magic eye' 3D pictures – it worked really well, as well as seeing the cats I also found a speedboat and a great white shark 😊😁😁

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Jun-20 08:36 PM GMT

Thank **Goldie**, those Comma's have only just started to appear so they'll be out up north in the coming weeks 😊  
Thanks **Wurzel**, Sounds like you've been on the old vino if you can see all that in my photos 😊

### June 2020

**Saturday 13th.** At work there were just singletons of Small White and Speckled Wood. At home the Holly Blue larvae were quite active and I managed a

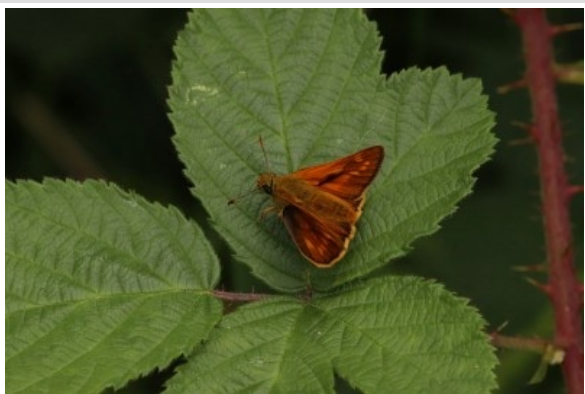
few shots showing the normally hidden head. I've also noticed that to moult they move to the leaves. When you think about it it's an obvious thing to do, the flower heads don't provide much in the way of a safe platform and each individual flower only lasts a couple of days.



Before going to bed I noticed the first of my Peacock pupae was just starting to darken off and you could just make out the wing pattern starting to show through.



**Sunday 14th.** I had better luck at work today, I went over to the car park which always does better and found a few Large Skipper. Some Meadow Brown were also flitting around but would only settle deep in the long grass.







That evening my peacock pupae had darkened up significantly and another couple were catching up. I stayed up till after midnight but they hadn't so much as twitched by the time I eventually went to bed.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 19-Jun-20 08:09 PM GMT

Nah I'm strictly a CAMRA man me 😊😄

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Jun-20 09:23 PM GMT

Well I knew there was something making you see weird stuff in my Pictures Wurzel!

### June 2020

**Monday 15th.** I woke up early this morning and immediately checked my Peacock pupae to find two freshly emerged Peacock waiting for me.



A few more looked close but not close enough, they hadn't twitched by the time I left for a few hours on the marshes, the two emergent's safely stored away for release. The plan was to take a few snaps of the freshly emerged Peacocks but they had other ideas, their little toes didn't even touch the floor

and all I got was a view of two Peacock rear ends fluttering over the hedge 😞😞 . Oh well, still 12 more to go.

It wasn't just my Peacocks that had started to emerge, there were good numbers of SmEssex Skippers around, closer examination seemed to prove that Essex outnumbered Smalls by some margin, perhaps 5-1.



*Small*



*Essex*



*Small's*



*Essex*

All things being equal I would expect the ratio to be a lot closer, especially since I saw my first Small Skipper here only a week ago but I suspect it may be something to do with the LHP preferences for them. Essex prefer Cock's-foot which is a large sturdy grass which looks (at least to me) better able to withstand dry conditions. Small Skippers preference for Yorkshire Fog and Timothy, both smaller grasses (possibly with shallower roots) which look less able to cope with extended dry conditions, might have meant there was a higher fatality rate this spring during the mini drought which seems to have had a particularly harsh effect on my patch.

Apart from the Skippers, some very active Meadow Browns and a good handful of fresh Small white there wasn't a great deal else about. A single Common Blue flyby and a Small Tort who was out of reach stuffing its face in a bramble patch provided a bit of variety.

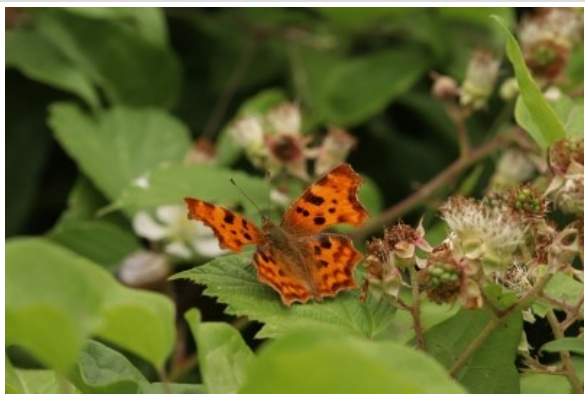


Looking through Goat's-rue (I needed some fresh stuff for the Holly Blue larvae at home and I was trying to find bits that the local Holly Blue's hadn't already sniffed out) I came across a wonderful looking ladybird larvae. This is what a 24-spot Ladybird looks like before it grows up.



Increased cloud cover after lunch helped to calm some targets down and also brought out the colour on this gorgeous Small Tortoiseshell





The day was also notable for finding a further four more Peacock larval webs making a total of eight so far this year without even searching for them. My 15 will be a drop in the ocean I think in a few weeks time!

I got home to find another three Peacocks had emerged whilst I was out. I left releasing them until the early evening when a bit of late sun returned, hoping they'd sit for me but no, exactly the same thing happened as the first two 😞.

I also transferred the Holly Blue larvae over onto fresh Goat's-rue and once again had to adjust the amount I am actually looking after. After going through it with a fine-tooth comb I discovered 19 of them, representing all instars I think. I left the old stuff on some white paper and found another two later in the evening, locating them via poo trails. I knew they liked this stuff but I really didn't imagine I would find that many. It'll be interesting to see how many have fallen victim to the *Listrodomus* Ichneumon.

Stay safe

## Re: Bugboys mission

by Chris L, 20-Jun-20 09:29 PM GMT

Some lovely photos Bugboy but the Small Tortoiseshell is particularly nice.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 20-Jun-20 09:38 PM GMT

I will be very interested to hear about the predation rates with those Holly Blues. When does the wasp lay its egg on the host? I wonder how they locate the host – no good hanging around holly bushes, clearly!

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 21-Jun-20 09:45 AM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, I've not seen one Holly Blue at my local CP this year yet, it's making me wonder why!! I've blamed the weather but I'm not sure it's that. Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 21-Jun-20 06:32 PM GMT

Cracking report Bugboy – it's great when the Smessex are out although visits to the chiropractor often follow their arrival 😊 That Peacock is a lush shot just like a charred wooden block 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 21-Jun-20 06:49 PM GMT

That's a great Ladybird larva Buggy. Never seen one like that before – come to think of it I don't think I've seen a Ladybird with 24 spots. How common are they?

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 21-Jun-20 07:56 PM GMT

So pleased your Peacocks are starting to successfully emerge, Paul. It's always satisfying when you rear early stages to adulthood.

That's some ratio between Essex and Small Skipper. I don't think I've ever been anywhere with even a 50%+1 advantage to Essex, let alone 5:1. Perhaps your theory regarding the larval preferences is correct.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Jun-20 09:52 PM GMT

Thanks **Otep**, its not a butterfly I can ever walk past anymore, if they were as rare as a High Brown Fritillary imagine how far people would travel!

Thanks **Dave**, the eggs are laid in early instar larvae, at least that's what a Mr Eeles says in a certain recent publication 😊. They certainly wouldn't find any on Holly round here, there is no Holly! It's all Dogwood and Goat's-rue on my patch in the spring although I have seen the odd female also sniffing around Bramble flower buds.

I'm sure some will turn up Soon **Goldie** 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, I did some more pilates & Yoga moves to get the shots below, at least that's what my story was gonna be if I was questioned as to what I was up to 😊

Thanks **Pauline**, I've actually never seen that larvae before myself although the adults do turn up pretty regularly. They're quite common but rather small, here's one on a nettle where you can get an idea of its size by comparing it to the stinging hairs on the leaf.



Thanks **David**, yes it's been a few years since I've reared some caterpillars, takes me back to my boyhood summer holidays where I had permanently numb fingers from all the nettle I used to pick 😊. I was reading up on them in Neil and Micheal's butterflies of Sussex and Neil clearly states that Essex have a strong preference for dryer habitats so I guess I shouldn't be so surprised with the ratio I found.

## June 2020

**Tuesday 16th.** Another morning and another load of Peacock's waiting to be released, seven had emerged overnight this time, I got up at 6am today but still missed the emergence of them all 😊. Since I was up early, I thought I'd release them now and hope they'd sit. This time they were a lot more relaxed and I managed a selection of (ahem) carefully posed shots before one by one they all fluttered off 😊.



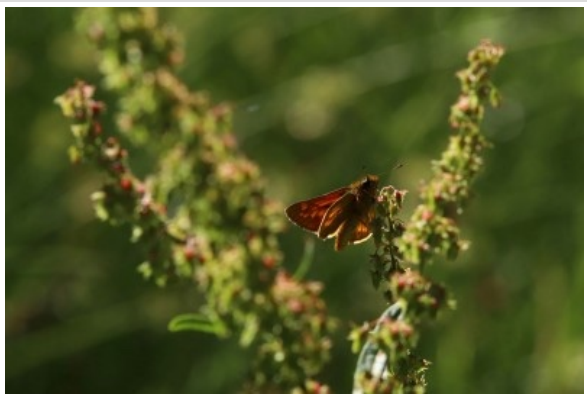
One of them had a slightly aberrant left forewing, almost like a photocopying error where the bottom half of the black spot on the centre front margin didn't connect to the top half giving the impression of an extra spot. Interestingly it wasn't symmetrical.



Once that was all over it was off to Epping Forest again. Small Heath were still numerous and numbers of Large Skipper were also increasing but interestingly, the only Thymelicus was the Small Skipper, but then the grass here is significantly lusher and the Yorkshire Fog doesn't seem to have been too badly affected by the lack of rain.

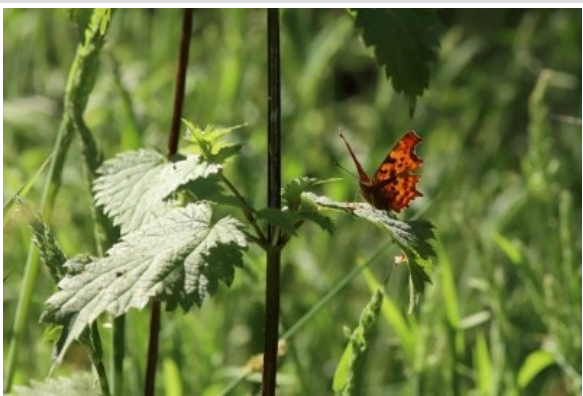


*This one seems to have been out partying the night before...*





Meadow Browns were numerous too, mostly males and mostly fresh so still some way from peak emergence here. Also seen was my first Green-veined White for a few weeks, a couple of frisky Small Tortoiseshell and a handful of fresh Hutchinsoni Comma.



Near the end of my walk I did a spot of birding at the lake with the highlight watching a Great-crested Grebe fishing, popping up quite close to me with a bit of a mouthful! I think it was a Rudd but I'm not too hot on fish id.



*The battle begins.*





*there was little dobt who the winner was ever going to be.*

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 24-Jun-20 06:42 PM GMT

Those are cracking Peacock images Bugboy 😊 - were you a fashion photographer in a previous life? 😊 I was very glad I saw that Small Skipper image as I saw a very similar image on the Wiltshire branch FB page - labelled as an Essex - so I questioned it - and got my wrist slapped as it had been identified as an Essex by the County recorder no less 😊😊 - so seeing yours correctly labelled means I can carry confident in my ability to ID Smessex 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 27-Jun-20 10:56 AM GMT

Lovely to see those three emergent Peacocks lined up like that, Paul. How do they always seem to escape the pupal case when we humans are not looking though?

Commas, Small Tortoiseshells and Red Admirals are all currently about in good numbers, so I expect Peacocks will be about in similar numbers very soon and they will be a welcome addition to the already wide array of insect colour right now.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 27-Jun-20 03:47 PM GMT

Good to see your Peacocks made it through OK bugboy and I love the shot of the three lines up like that 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 28-Jun-20 05:40 PM GMT

Very remiss of me Paul but one of the most memorable shots in your diary for me is the Great Spotted Woodpecker at its nest. I would have liked to have seen more of them. Years ago I took a shot of one of the youngsters being fed and when looking at the image realised the tongue was extended and as I'm sure you know they have incredible tongues.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-Jun-20 08:52 PM GMT

Haha, maybe **Wurzel**, I must have been channeling something to get them to behave for once!

Thanks **David**, from what I've seen locally I reckon Peacocks will eclipse all those if the weather ever calms down a bit.

Thanks **Neil**, with them behaving I just couldn't resist a group shot, contrived as it was 😊

Thanks **Pauline**. It would have been a better image had I not had to increase the ISO to levels I rarely use just to get anything useful. I found a Green Woodpecker chick poking his head out the hole the other day but you'll have to wait a while to see that, only just got them off my camera!

## June 2020

**Saturday 20th.** A day I'd been looking forward too all week, my first chance to escape the confines of the M25 since lockdown started and a welcome change of scenery to the familiarity of Bookham 😊.

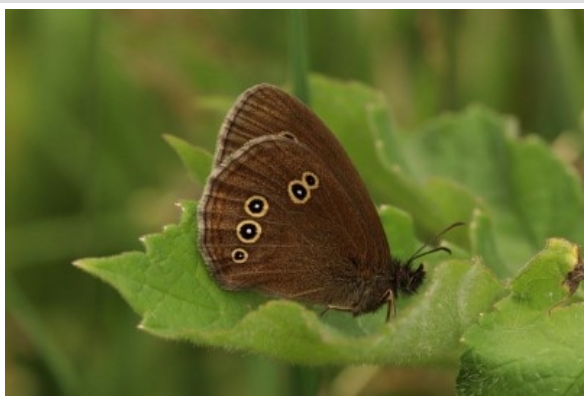
Before that though a quick update on the Holly Blue larvae, they'd begun to pupate, some in the corners of the cage but most were using the leaves.



My final three Peacock pupae had all emerged when I wasn't looking, two overnight and one whilst I was at work 😊

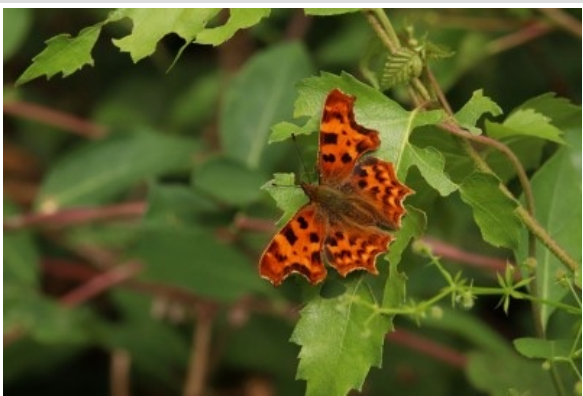
At Bookham I very quickly started adding a few new species to the yearly tally. I'd seen a random Marbled White on my local patch a few days previously but today I managed a few snaps, they are a recent coloniser here and are now breeding in small numbers on the plains.

Ringlets were a new species for the year too and I was pleased to add Silver-washed Fritillary (no pics though) and White Admiral to the list





All the other usual suspects were around, Red Admirals, Commas, Meadow Browns and various brands of Skippers as well as a few glimpses of Purple Hairstreaks.



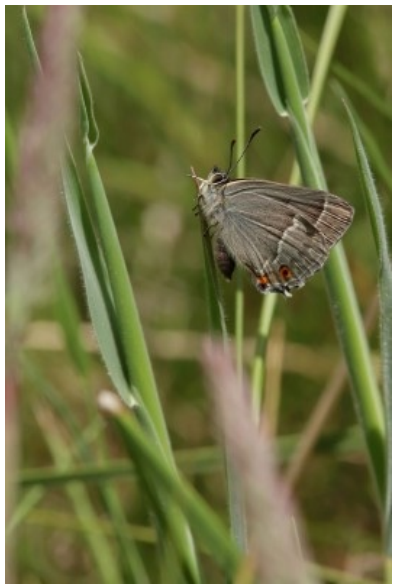
I also spent a bit of time trying to follow one of two Cuckoo who were calling, the best image I got was a distant shot just as it took flight.



I left at noon because I wanted to go and find the Black Hairstreak location at nearby Epsom Common. With more open habitat here, Marbled Whites were more numerous.



After wandering around for a bit, pretty sure I was close to the spot, I bumped into a fellow enthusiast who showed me the area I was after (I wasn't as close as I thought I was). Unsurprisingly no Black Hairstreak were seen, I was long past the peak, but as I scanned the Blackthorn a small silvery butterfly fluttered down to settle down in front of me and later did his best impersonation of a Black Hairstreak, hiding in the Blackthorn.



So good to get out of London 😊!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 29-Jun-20 09:00 PM GMT

I bet you were like a dog off the leash Bugboy 😊😄 A cracking set of photos and some really well deserved stunning shots of the Purple Hairstreak – welcome to the real butterfly world again 😊😄

Have a goodun and stay safe  
Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 29-Jun-20 10:35 PM GMT

A mrgreen for that Purple Hairstreak 🍷  
The prime patch of bracken where most of my sightings have been in past years has had a lorry load of wood chips dumped on it. A certain law at work there!

Take care,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 01-Jul-20 07:23 PM GMT

[quote=trevor\_post\_id=155505\_time=1593466542\_user\_id=13654] A mrgreen for that Purple Hairstreak 🍷

From me too, Paul. 🍷

I can count on the fingers of one hand the number of times I've seen a Purple Hairstreak at head height or below.

Even more envious is any kind of photo of a cuckoo. I hear them regularly round my way but never actually see them.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlng, 01-Jul-20 08:10 PM GMT

Lovely photos to the Purple Hairstreak Bugboy. I haven't seen one down in the grass before. My normal encounters result in a stiff neck looking up.

Kind Regards  
Kev

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Jul-20 07:02 PM GMT

Oh you have no idea how good it felt just to be on the better side of the M25 Wurzel 😊

Thanks Trevor, sorry to hear about your prime spot, I'm sure they're around somewhere though, just have to keep your eye's peeled 😊

Thanks David, that surprises me, the woods I go too in Purple Hairstreak season seem to be teaming with them and there's always plenty coming down, this year is so far no exception... getting pictures of them is of course another matter!

Thanks Kev, the trick with Purple Hairstreaks is to find a sunny glade early in the morning and keep your eye's out for emergents. Off course this now coincides with Purple Emperor season so people have minds of other things.

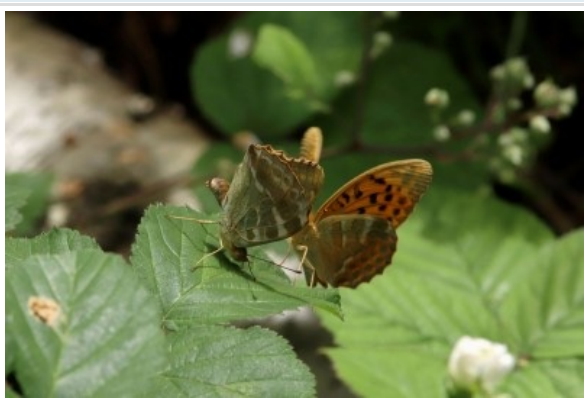
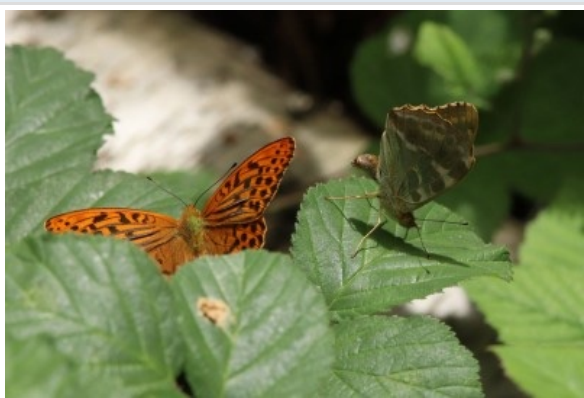
### June 2020

**Sunday 21st.** Excited by my new-found freedom I was back at Bookham the following day 😊. A Purple Emperor sighting was the hopeful prize but like the previous day, they were a no show again. Nevertheless the supporting cast made it another worthwhile trip 😊.



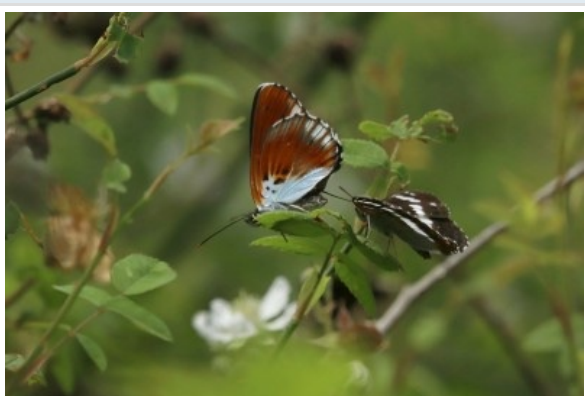
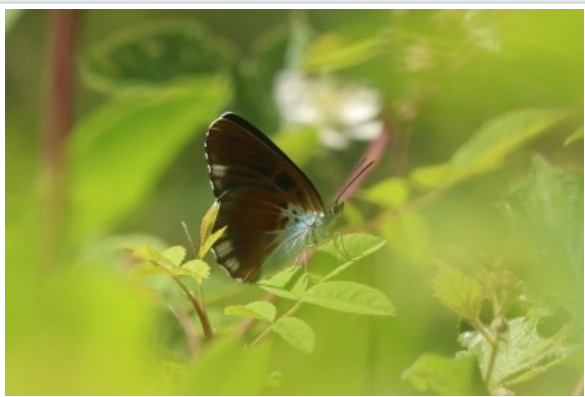


Amongst all the life I found a female SWF earnestly egg laying. I never managed a shot of her in the act but when she was cornered by a rather excitable male, she adopted a very aggressive stance. The male was rather determined though and didn't seem to get the message.





The finale of the day was a Black Admiral, which annoyingly I disturbed from a perfect position of waist height on a bramble patch as I rounded the corner. She spent the rest of the time at the top of said bramble patch which led to me getting several odd looks as I stretched on tiptoe and attempted to get a clear shot of her. Most of my shots ended up with a 'soft focus' effect 😊. I eventually lost her when an amorous male sniffed her out and chased after her.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 03-Jul-20 07:08 PM GMT

Whoa!!!! That's one of the most stunning aberrations I've ever seen posted on here, Paul.

What a spectacular find! 🍷🍷🍷

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by millerd, 03-Jul-20 07:24 PM GMT

That is a terrific Black Admiral, Buggy. 😊 I don't think I've seen one so completely black, nor have I ever seen an underside – which looks quite extraordinary. 🍷🍷🍷

Brilliant.

Cheers,

Dave

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by kevling, 03-Jul-20 08:27 PM GMT

What a fantastic Black Admiral you've found. The underside looks like a tropical butterfly. Brilliant

Kind Regards  
Kev

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by trevor, 03-Jul-20 10:59 PM GMT

Yes, well done from me too. When I found a similar White Admiral ab I was showered with mrgreens. I must return the complement. 🍷🍷🍷  
Seriously some great underside shots, which my example failed to reveal.

Keep well,  
Trevor.

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 04-Jul-20 08:29 PM GMT

Thanks guys 😊, I'm still kicking myself for disturbing her before seeing her, almost as unforgivable for putting up a grounded Emperor! You're right about the underside though, the upperside looks unusual but if you find one of these you do need to try and get a view of the underside 😊

**June 2020**

**Monday 22nd & Tuesday 23rd.** A few more sunny days that allowed me to go for a wander during my work lunch breaks. Nothing out of the ordinary but a rather nice bi-pupiled female Meadow Brown played hide and seek in the long grass.



All three species of common Golden Skippers could be found and one male Large Skipper thought he'd found the love of his life. She didn't reciprocate.







In the shadows there was also a Comma busy laying eggs



At home, the Holly Blue larvae were now mostly pupae, just a few rather large larvae were left. Flower petals of the Goat's-rue were, as far as I could tell, the exclusive diet of these mature larvae.



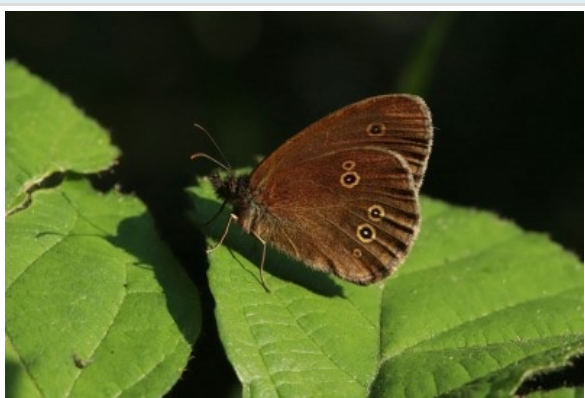


## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Jul-20 07:53 PM GMT

### **June 2020**

On **Wednesday 24th** I went for a morning wander in Epping Forest, arriving around 7.30 to try and beat the heat of the day. Even so the Small Skippers were already active and by 8.30 I was lucky to find anything willing to sit still! Along with the Skippers (Large & Small) Ringlets and Meadow Browns were out in force. One female Meadow Brown had a quirky tri-pupiled eyespot. A Marbled White also wandered past. I've been told by some local enthusiasts that there is a small but growing population here apparently.





Oak Processionary larvae are an ever-increasing problem down here in the south east. It's a notifiable pest species but to be honest it's most likely here to stay now after being accidentally introduced about 15 years ago. I found this lot crossing the path with a secondary group caught in the caterpillar equivalent of an M25 style road to nowhere.





I managed to catch a Cardinal Beetle at the moment of lift off, with a little help from the flash on my camera.



Speckled Wood were thinner on the ground than previous visits here, must be inbetween broods, but a particularly well marked female caught my eye, looking more like an early spring example rather than a mid-summer one.



A fresh Peacock (that I didn't rear) and a Large White (not seen one of them for a while) both obliged as midday approached





And as I was leaving I could hear a young Green Woodpecker practising his yaffling. A nosy Nuthatch pointed me in the direction of the padawan Yaffler.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 05-Jul-20 07:56 PM GMT

Interesting images of the Silver Washed refusing courtship Bugboy and that aberrant is truly magnificent 🍷🍷🍷🍷 Love the Cardinal caught in mid-take off 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 08-Jul-20 05:24 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel 😊

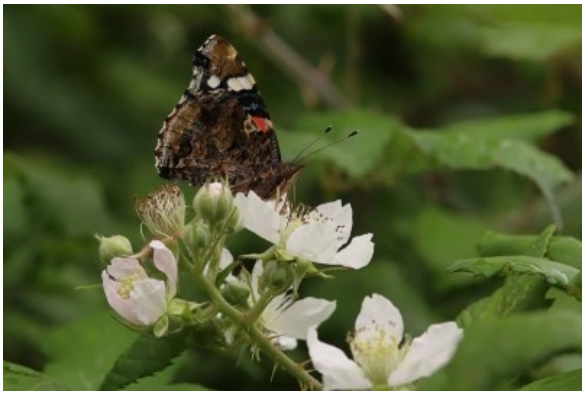
### June 2020

**Saturday 27th June.** Thank god for social bubbles! This time I was able to go east outside the M25 to Leigh-on-sea. The main targets were White-letter Hairstreak and Heath Fritillary, both of which were very much at the tail end of their flight period and the weather wasn't going to help a great deal.

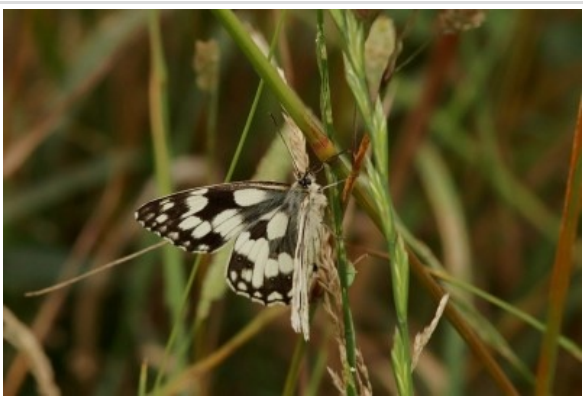
First though an update on the Holly Blues, all of which were now pupae. Most had pupated on the Goat's-rue leaves which had now died and was shedding leaves at a rate of knots, so here's a little flotilla of Holly Blue pupae 😊.



Mid-morning found me perusing a certain bramble patch close to Leigh-on-sea station but the only butterfly on show was a Red Admiral. It was overcast but still warm and given that I was photographing WLH in light drizzle last year, I could only conclude I was late to the party.



I spent the rest of the morning seeing what else was about, finding all the usual suspects lounging around under the cloudy skies.

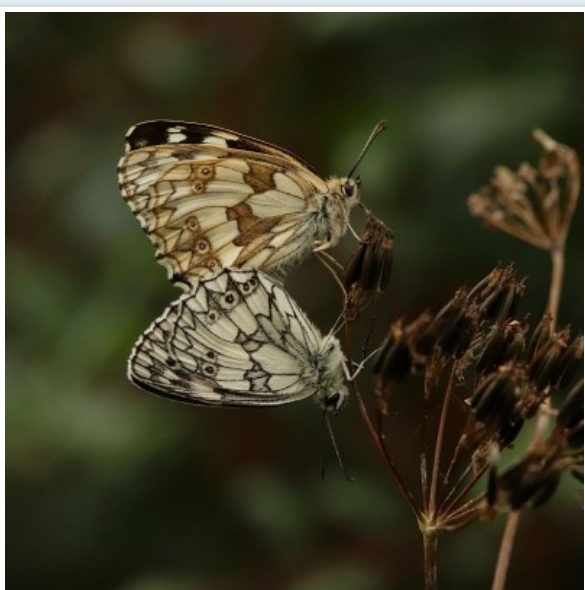
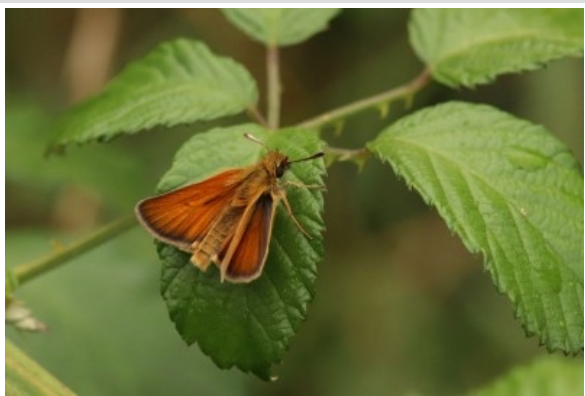




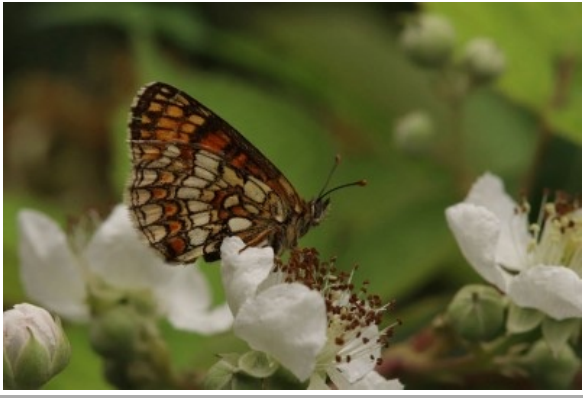
*An Essex with one pale antennae tip*



*Same Essex, no doubt as to it's identity.*



After lunch it was off to explore some of the nearby woods to see if any Heath Fritillary were still clinging on to life. At the first wood some extensive wandering eventually turned up one, the proud owner of three and a half wings!



Not a great deal else was flying here apart from some energetic Ringlets, they never let a cloudy day get in the way of some frolicking, so we moved on to Hockley Wood in the hope a few more were around. Sadly even a few bright spells didn't tempt any out so it would seem that I was once again late for the party. There was enough else out though so it wasn't a complete waste of time 😊.



*Very fresh!*



## Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 09-Jul-20 03:49 PM GMT

Hi Paul

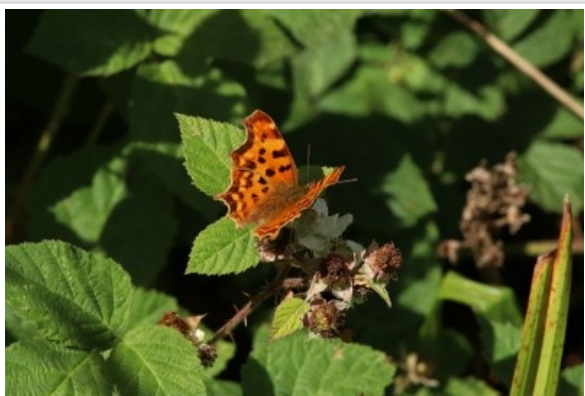
Good to see you're getting out and about again. I was interested to see those Oak Processionary larva. I had read about them but didn't realise they were notifiable. Nice Woodpecker shot again.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Jul-20 04:20 PM GMT

### June 2020

**Sunday 28th** was another day escaping the confines of the M25 (which is becoming a bit of a habit), this time to the public transport black hole that is Chiddingfold. I've never been here during Emperor season (although a female did surprise Millerd and I a couple of years ago by briefly settling in front of us whilst we were counting the hundreds of second brood Wood Whites). The road works of that weekend sent us round to the Tugley Wood entrance. From what I can gather Purple Emperors have been rather thin on the ground this year, not helped by the collapse of the weather no doubt, so the day would probably involve much careful walking along the rides keeping eyes peeled for black and white 'shark fins' up ahead. It was decidedly breezy which did help to break up the cloud cover but sunny spells were still at a premium and vanished as quickly as they appeared. Nevertheless the shelter provided by the trees did allow the supporting cast to keep me entertained whilst hoping for an audience with you know who 😊.





It took a while for an appearance from HIM but eventually persistence and patience paid off, not without a bit of frustration though. Twice my chauffeur disturbed him before I saw him but I finally got my reward after she wandered off leaving me to hang around a few piles of horse dung, as you do at this time of year 😊. He was a bit flighty and my first pictures were through the grassy edge where he'd found something to lick.



Having him all to myself at this stage, after a few snaps, I coaxed him onto my finger to try and get him better positioned but he had other ideas and flew off to sit looking down at me. Clearly, I'd overstepped my place in the scheme of things and he was just letting me know of my minor infringement of the rules 😊.



Another enthusiast appeared at this stage shortly followed by a third and together we waited for him to play ball. He was flying around the edge of the path but I managed to keep eyes on him and was able to creep up on him when he finally settled on the path. No four-wing purple for me today, it was actually starting to spit rain now, but with the way my season was looking a few months ago I wasn't complaining. Zooming in on Miller's final encounter it turns out this was the very same male.



Amongst the various people loitering around with cameras were a couple of familiar faces, the first I've seen this year, so it was good to catch up with Benjamin and Katrina 😊

When I got home that evening I noticed one of the Holly Blue pupae had darkened off...



### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 09-Jul-20 06:56 PM GMT

Well done with that Purple Emperor. Paul.

It was a tricky old year for them at Chiddingfold, most that I saw were skittish.

Plus I spooked one ( something I don't talk about ), I tell myself there's a first time for everything!.

Out of all who attended I think Dave had the best luck, a certain law dictated that I was always in the wrong area when groundings occurred.

Still I'm pleased your visit was successful, great stuff.

Keep well,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-20 07:34 PM GMT

As the yooof say Bugboy "I'm well jelly" of those shots of His Nibbs 🤔🤔🤔 Mind you as I'm on year 2 of my three year cycle I'll give you a run for your money in 2021 😊 Have you been buttering up your chauffeur in preparation for a possible trip to Shipton – not too distant a prospect now 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Jul-20 05:41 PM GMT

Thanks **Pauline**. I didn't notice you'd commented until today. Yes notifiable but I think they're fighting a losing battle to eradicate them. I saw somewhere that they're looking at introducing a bio-control from southern Europe now, fingers crossed that works out ok... 😊

Thanks **Trevor**, my one was rather skittish and didn't really settle properly, still I got him 😊!

Thanks **Wurzel**, we'll just have to hope that we get a good season with HIM next year, these last two have been decidedly mediocre, partly I'm sure down to the weather collapsing at the start of the flight period both last year and this year. Not sure if I'll make it to Shipton this year, not actually broached that destination yet... 😊. It's a funny old season though with Brown Hairstreaks out and about already in places (I had a possible flyby at Bookham the other day), who'd have thought Brown Hairstreaks before Chalkhill Blues 😲!

## June 2020

**Monday 29th.** I was at work today but the weather wasn't much use so I didn't go for a lunch time wander. Arriving home though I had a couple of Holly Blue waiting for me. One I'd seen in the morning having emerged overnight and the second had waited until I was at work. I wouldn't be able to release them until the Wednesday so they were having to make do with a bit of sugar water. It was just as I was about to go to bed that evening I noticed some movement, I'd missed the emergence by seconds but a freshly emerged male was racing across the floor of the cage. Here he is inflating his wings after I'd enticed him onto a bit of dead Goat's-rue.







The little flotilla is now two lighter with three more rapidly darkening off.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 10-Jul-20 06:29 PM GMT

Well done Buggy. To catch the actual emergence can be difficult but you still have a few more chances 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 10-Jul-20 07:30 PM GMT

One aspect of Holly Blues I've yet to see, Buggy – great shots! 📷 Looking forward to some more emergences, hopefully. Also interesting that you came across the same Emperor as I'd seen a few days earlier. Obviously he felt he needed an extra dose of noxiousness from the path to help impress the

ladies... 😊 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 11-Jul-20 06:43 PM GMT

Cracking sequence Bugboy 😊 The colour on the wings in the first shot is unbelievable 😲 😊 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 12-Jul-20 08:39 AM GMT

Wonderful images of the emerging Holly Blues, Paul. With four to go, I hope you will get chance to see at least one breaking the pupal case open. Fingers crossed!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Jul-20 07:29 PM GMT

Thanks **Pauline**, unfortunately it seems I'm either asleep, at work or out chasing butterflies when they emerge 😊

Thanks **Dave** He was only a bit further down the path from where you found him from what I can gather so he definitely had a territory, perhaps it was more to defend the large amount of horse dung on the path there 😊

Thanks **Wurzel** best I could do given the time of night and rushing around to grab the camera and get him set up before his wings expanded 😊

Thanks **David** but there's a lot more than four, they was the first of twenty three I ended up with!

### July 2020

**Wednesday 1st.** In the intervening day another seven Holly Blues had emerged (all when I wasn't looking, at work mostly) so on my day off I left early to release all ten back onto the Marshes. At 7.30am I figured at least one or two would hang around allowing me to grab a few pictures but no, every single one fluttered off without so much as a toe settling on anything, ungrateful little buggers! To be fair it was already quite warm and other butterfly life was already active including my first Gatekeeper of the season.



A trip to Epping Forest was the main event for the day, hoping for another purple experience which as it turned out, I was going to get. As usual Meadow Brown and Ringlets were out in numbers, joined by Large Skippers and the first of the second generation of Green-veined White plus the occasional Large White. I've been taking more of an interest in the more 'mundane' species this year for obvious reasons. Much like Wurzel's mild obsession with Gatekeepers, I've been getting slightly obsessed with looking for extra ocelli on Satyrids 😊. I'm finding the double pupiled ocelli on female Meadow Browns, ab. bioculata, is relatively common, almost to the point where I'd say its within normal variation.



The Ringlets were as far as I could tell all very much normal except for one half of this mating pair which had the beginnings of an extra ocelli on the hindwing growing out of another one.



A few fresh Brimstones were now out to join the summer butterfly bonanza



And the Comma's, who are having an excellent season, were to be found on every patch of flowering Bramble. They provided constant distractions for the few male Silver-washed Fritillary who were zooming around, repeatedly feeling the need to check each one just in case one had miraculously turned into a female SWF. Adding a splash of colour was the odd fresh Peacock and a rather nice Red Admiral doing its best Purple Emperor impression



One Purple Emperor did put in an appearance, a fleeting visitation through the lower canopy by the side of the path but the Purple experience for the day was left to the Hairstreaks, which when the sun shone, seemed to be literally everywhere. Most of them didn't settle (or didn't settle anywhere useful) but with so many raining down from the trees there always going to be enough to train the camera on.







### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 12-Jul-20 08:18 PM GMT

Cracking set of shots Bugboy especially the male down on the deck 🍷😄 This year has been very good for Purple Hairstreaks coming down- I had on the side of a Down on nettles today 🤩😄

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

ps have you broached Shipton yet or are you playing the long game; "softly, softly catchy monkey"? 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 13-Jul-20 05:14 PM GMT

I'd love to be somewhere where it's raining Purple Hairstreaks. Sadly, it's just raining water here in south Wales. 😞

Nice to see a few summer brood Brimstones. I think I've only seen two and that was in mid June. They tend to disappear pretty quickly after feeding up so it's touch and go as to whether I'll come across any more.

Good luck with what's left of the Holly Blues, and how ungrateful for those you released to just zoom off immediately. 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

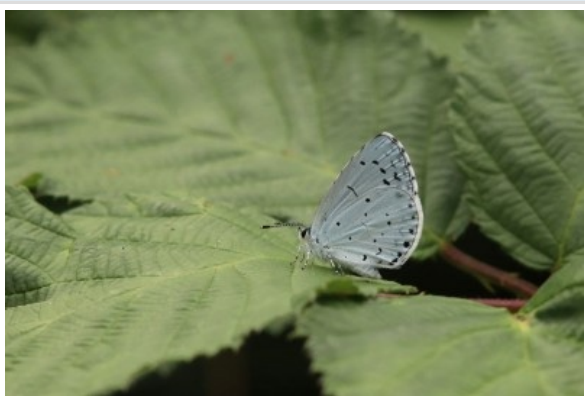
by bugboy, 13-Jul-20 08:14 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, I had several dozen more of those Hairstreaks come down again today, including a corker of a female 😄

Thanks **David**. There was more purple rain today in my part of the world. This is the third year in a row now where the only issue I've had with them is getting one to sit still! As for the Holly Blue's, see below 😊

### July 2020

**Friday 3rd.** Another four Holly Blue had emerged since Wednesday's release. I finished work early today so it wasn't too late to release them and hope they would have more manners than the last lot! It was cool and mostly overcast but despite this two still bugged off but the other two sat, proudly showing off their beautiful undersides 😊. No uppers from them today, maybe next time.



Also around and posing irresistibly during a brief late afternoon sunny spell was a Comma.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 13-Jul-20 09:08 PM GMT

It's becoming quite a Purple Hairstreak year, Buggy, and something is enticing them down from the oak trees of Southern England. Some more great shots there – the one on the ground could at first glance be some kind of Blue! 😊

Splendid fresh shiny and impeccable Holly Blues, immediately enjoying the pink brambles I see. You'd have thought they'd have opened up a wee bit in gratitude... 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 14-Jul-20 05:46 PM GMT

Those undersides are indeed beautiful, Paul. They must lose that brilliant white effect pretty quickly in their lives as it's rare to see it as intense as in your released specimens.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 15-Jul-20 07:51 PM GMT

Great to hear about more Purp shots in the offing 😊 Cracking Holly Blues – they're brilliant when that fresh – almost as if they've been painted in chalk paint 😊😊🍷

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Jul-20 08:48 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, if the sun catches a PH when its on the ground with closed wings it does a pretty decent Holly Blue impression from a distance 😊. Still got a few more Holly Blue pictures waiting in the wings, happy to say no parasitoides have emerged 😊

Thanks **David**, yes you rarely if ever see them looking so snowy unless you've watched them emerge 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, yup, no shortage of Purple Hairstreaks again this year 😊

### July 2020

**Monday 6th.** The start of two weeks off which had initially been booked for some UK travelling, weekends away etc but luckily nothing had been booked before the apocalypse arrived.

My first day out was the short trip over to Epping Forest for a morning stroll. The new generation of Green-veined White were now getting into full swing, here's a particularly fine looking female.



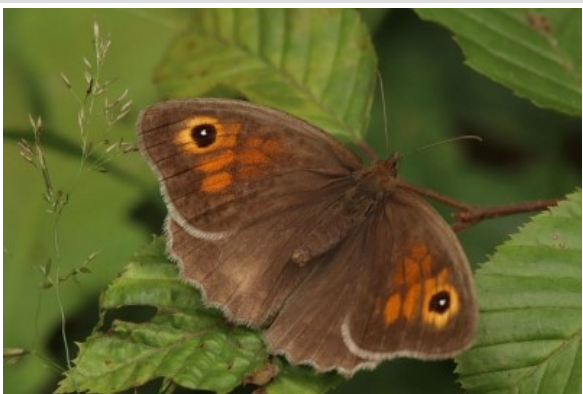
Meadow Brown and Ringlet were also still out in numbers which kept me busy looking for extra or reduced ocelli. Apparently if a female Meadow Brown is lacking black spots on the underside hindwing then that's an ab. *infra-impuncta*, which makes a high proportion of Meadow Brown I've ever seen this aberration, which is a bit of an oxymoron surely 😊.



An extra spot under the upperside forewing ocelli probably qualifies though. Ab. *addenda* perhaps.



Another had some curious faint mottling



This one was just an eye catching deep chocolaty brown



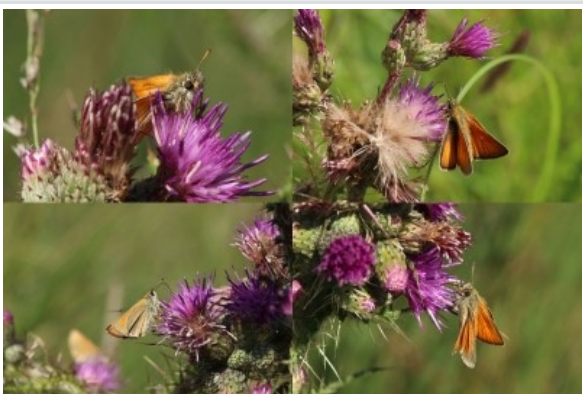
All Ringlet were pretty much normal, just one with an embryonic ocelli on the hindwing



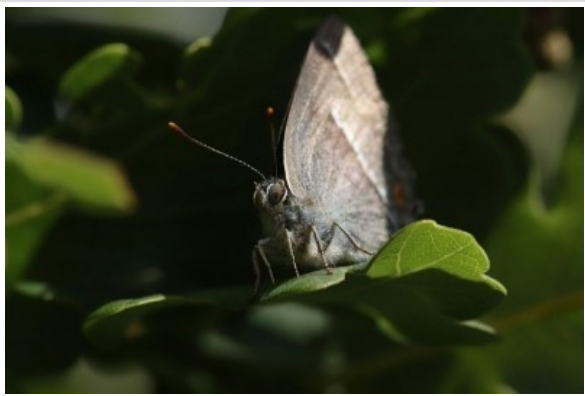
Comma's once again were plentiful and I also stumble across a pupae hanging in plain sight.



For most the morning there was more cloud than sun but reaching one of the open meadows a large opening in the cloud cover appeared and suddenly Small Skippers appeared from everywhere and began using the time to gorge on the plentiful supply of thistle. Not a single Essex Skipper was seen amongst them.



Also coming out with the sun were the now ubiquitous Purple Hairstreak, mostly ovipositing females as far as I could tell.



No SWF were seen today but Large varieties of Skipper and White popped up here and there. The final note worthy sighting was this very attractive Oak Hook-tip Moth



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 15-Jul-20 09:49 PM GMT

That Comma chrysalis was a good find, Buggy. 😊🍷 They are usually well tucked away.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Jul-20 07:05 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, I find them one of the easier pupae to locate, they quite often pupate close to where the larvae last fed. I checked on it today, hoping to find an empty case but sadly it's still in place and going a rather unhealthy shade of black from the abdomen down. 😞

### July 2020

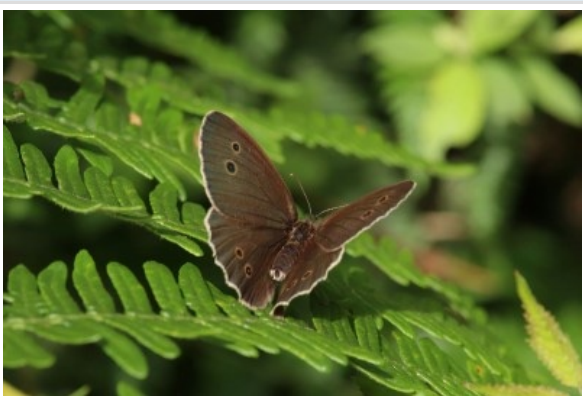
**Tuesday 7th.** I went back to Bookham for the morning, keeping one eye out for a silly early Brown Hairstreak, but mostly looking for extra ocelli on the many Satyrids that flocked around the bramble blossom. This female Meadow Brown was particularly well endowed in the ocelli department, possibly *ab. anticrassipuncta*.



And this ringlets second ocelli had given birth to a new one, still attached by an umbilicus of black scales.



Others were catching the suns rays just right to produce an attractive oily sheen.



White Admirals and Silver-washed Fritillary were looking increasingly worn but fresh Gatekeepers, Commas and Peacocks popped up regularly, often adhering to government approved social distancing 😊 .

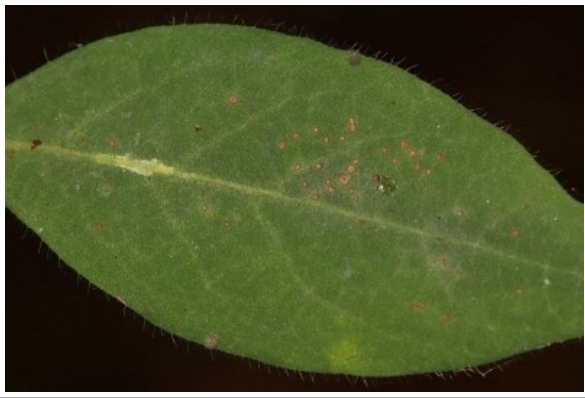




As is now customary, Purple Hairstreaks could be seen flitting along the sunny edges of the rides but very few settled within reach and any that did were rather camera shy today. Green-veined and Large White were equally camera shy but I managed to get a Holly Blue as he homed in on something rather nasty looking, those flies weren't there for the scenery!



Now the White Admirals were starting to look tatty it was time to go looking for eggs and larvae, the usual spots coming up trumps for both. Three eggs were located and a single 1st instar larvae, already decorating itself in poo.



2 eggs



Killing a bit of time waiting for my train I came across a rather nice Small Copper, my first in good condition this year, and a couple of nicely marked Comma





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-20 07:31 PM GMT

Lovely looking WPC Bugboy 😊 There do seem to be plenty of Peacocks around this year – they're all over the place at the moment 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Jul-20 07:43 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, I knew peacocks were in for a good year even before they appeared, having found eight larval masses on my local patch alone without even looking for them 😊. They'll be plenty more before the season is out too, I saw several today holding territories and fighting/courting so get ready for a big second brood 😊

### July 2020

**Tuesday 7th (part 2).** For the afternoon it was my first visit of the year to Box Hill, the main target being the Dark Green Fritillary who were most likely going to be rather worn by now, having been out for a few weeks already. It had become somewhat overcast so hopefully any that were around wouldn't be zooming around like idiots!

I was surprised to see a good few Marbled White still in good shape, they're a species that seem to fall apart after just a few days but perhaps the cooler conditions during June have helped to extend their flight period a bit.

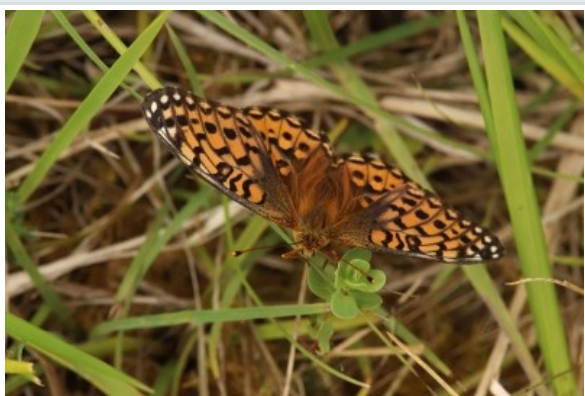




I soon found the Fritillaries, nine times out of ten only seeing them fly up from the short turf in front of me before I saw them, it may have been overcast but they were still rather flighty. They are always easier to approach when feeding though.



As suspected, they were in general somewhat worse for wear but a few males were still in surprisingly good nick. A few females, who tend to look after themselves a bit better as they skulk around avoiding the ginger missiles, were also disturbed but never quite settled right for decent shots. I'm pretty sure at least one I saw was freshly emerged, not the one in the picture though.



I wasn't expecting any Silver-spotted Skipper on the slopes overlooking Zigzag road but I was hopeful for a first sighting of a Chalkhill Blue. In the end I found just a single female Chalkhill. Still early days for them it would seem.



I couldn't resist a few shots of this pretty grass moth, *Oncocera semirubella* before leaving for home 😊

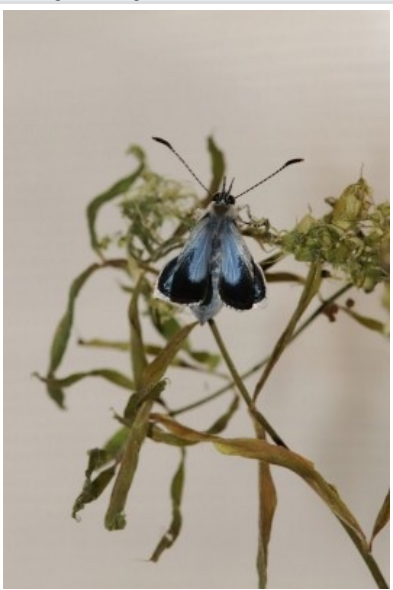


### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Jul-20 06:00 PM GMT

#### July 2020

**Wednesday 8th.** I didn't go out today, a bit on the cloudy side so time to catch up on other more mundane stuff but as luck would have it, one of my remaining Holly Blues decided to emerge. Like last time I missed the initial breakout but was quick enough to see her before she'd got round to inflating her wings.





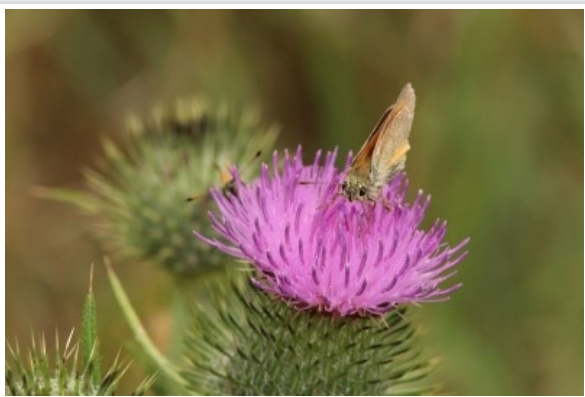
**Thursday 9th.** This was another rather overcast day but with five Holly Blue now awaiting freedom I took the opportunity to see if any would sit for me again. At last I was in luck, a gorgeous female (perhaps the above female) sat and basked in the weak almost nonexistence sun. Many MANY pictures were taken of this dusky beauty 😊 !





There remained still three pupae at home but those all emerged unseen and none of them hung around upon release, but I'm happy to have her as finale of my rearing Holly Blues this year, of which I had a 100% success rate, all twenty three pupae emerged successfully 😊😊.

Although overcast it was still relatively warm and on a nearby patch of Knapweed some Small and Essex Skippers jostled for nectar. Here a Small is getting photo bombed by a sneaky Essex



and a definite Essex Skipper.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 19-Jul-20 08:23 PM GMT

Wow that Holly Blue sequence is stunning Bugboy – such vibrant colours, fantastic! 🤩🤩🤩  
Interesting to see the DGFs are such a mixed bag at the moment – there are still some intact, nice looking ones about but they're getting fewer and further between 😊 No Brostreaks on Friday but I'll try and get there again mid-week 😊...

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 19-Jul-20 09:51 PM GMT

The emerging Holly Blue female sequence is terrific, Buggy. 🤩😊 I'm pleased to see she was prepared to sit for you afterwards as well. They really are a most beautifully marked butterfly, and to see the perfection of a newly-emerged individual is just fantastic. 🤩 For all the hundreds I see, none is ever as new as that... 😊😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 20-Jul-20 09:43 PM GMT

Congratulations, Paul. That's unequivocally the most gorgeous Holly Blue I've ever set eyes on. 🤩

### Re: Bugboys mission

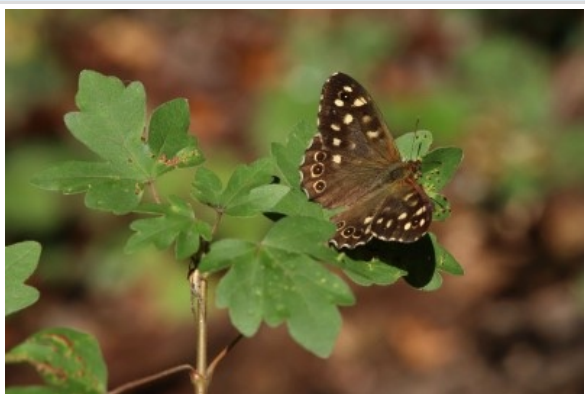
by bugboy, 21-Jul-20 07:34 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments guys 😊 I was very chuffed when she decided not to fly off like nearly all the others and even more so when she opened up those wings 😊

### July 2020

**Friday 10th.** Another wander around Epping Forest with most of the usual suspects in attendance, although Gatekeeper numbers were now starting to build. Less in the way of sun meant the regular Purple Hairstreak show was few and far between and none settled anywhere useful for a picture

A few fresh Speckled Wood did pop up and close examination of many Ringlets found several of what I think can be classified as the minor ab. *marpurgensis* with that small extra ocelli on the hindwing. It seems like a fairly common ab.







All the Gatekeepers looked very normal but being fresh, still irresistible.



A male Meadow Brown was reasonably well endowed with hindwing ocelli,



And I couldn't resist this pose normally reserved for the Essex version 😊.



Fresh *hutchinsoni* Commas could still be found and in the mostly overcast conditions, easy to approach.





My highlight for the day though was one of a couple Large White who was surprisingly approachable and sat at the perfect height on the edge of a bramble patch for quite some time



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 21-Jul-20 08:40 PM GMT

Lovely set of shots as always Bugboy 😊 Interesting info about the minor Ringlet ab, I need to make a few corrections to some of my labelling 😊 Great work with the Large Whites they normally only settled down and pose when they're all worn and tired looking 😊 Quite stunning when fresh 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 22-Jul-20 07:56 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy-post\_id=156401-time=1595356495-user\_id=13753]...My highlight for the day though was one of a couple Large White who was surprisingly approachable and sat at the perfect height on the edge of a bramble patch for quite some time

Perfect height and perfectly captured, Paul. That's a real beauty. 🍷

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Jul-20 06:11 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments guys 😊

## July 2020

**Sunday 12th.** Time for another expedition outside the confines of the M25, this time to see if any Grayling had emerged at Chobham. To be honest I wasn't expecting to come across any since Chobham seems to be a late site for everything that occurs there. The other target was Silver-studded Blues which are always still on the wing when the first Grayling are out there and there's always the chance of a late emerging fresh female.

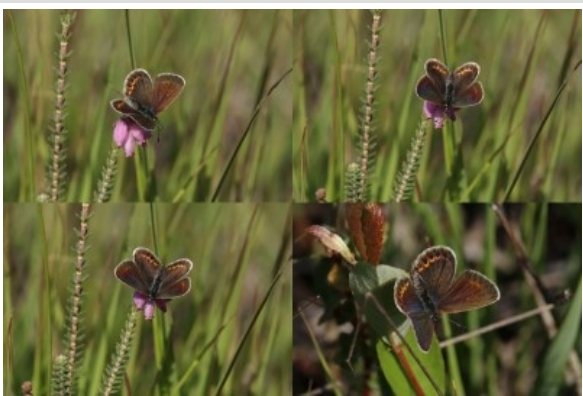
As always, the Large Skippers are late here, almost all that were seen were fresh males and for the first hour or so they were the only butterflies seen.



I made my way to a patch of high ground where the first male Graylings can invariably be found, bouncing around. Unsurprisingly none were around but my searching did turn up a handful of worn male Silver-studded Blue so not a completely wasted trip 😊 .



As I searched further a couple of females were also found lurking, one of whom was in tip top condition and was at the front of the queue when studs were being handed out. When she opened up the oily sheen was a further indication just how recently she had emerged.



Finding a fresh female wasn't overly unexpected, it isn't the first time I've found one in the middle of July here, but I've never found a fresh male so late...



I spent quite a bit of time with this chap, I didn't think I'd be seeing one so fresh until next year!

I was just about to leave this area when something large and dark leapt from some heather in front of me and bounced through the air up and down the path, before settling on a Birch trunk. I managed to creep around the tree and had a perfectly lined up shot when a dog walker burst out from a secluded side path leading to many curse words aimed in his general direction under my breath as I smiled politely at him, how very British. Thankfully the Grayling bounced back onto his tree and I managed a couple of shots before joyously bouncing off over the Heather.





A few other noteworthy finds was a striking Red Poplar Leaf Beetle and an unusual sight of a Water Boatman out of the water. I suspect the water Boatman's life will be cut rather short though since it looks to have a crinkled wing. This means it probably won't be able to trap a bubble of air under them so will never be able to feed.



The bird spot of the day was a Wood Lark, an odd name for a bird that prefers open Heath land sparsely populated with trees.



The day had warmed up considerably by mid afternoon and heath land isn't known for its shade so I tried to leave, only to find myself in clouds of black ants conducting (and probably consummating) their nuptials. I'd bet a fair whack that these are the very ants that help keep the Silver-studded Blues here in healthy numbers, possibly *Lasius psammophilus*.



## Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 24-Jul-20 08:16 PM GMT

Always good when a plan comes to fruition, Paul.

Strange how some sites are traditionally either late or early. I do wonder what causes that. For instance, why do Green Hairstreaks in parts of northern

England emerge before those in south Wales, which is relatively mild during the winter and early spring? 🤔

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 24-Jul-20 10:28 PM GMT

Chobham Common is very open and exposed, especially up on that hill where both the SSB and Grayling are found. That may account for their slightly later emergence, though why the Large Skippers follow suit when most of those live lower down... A mystery. A very nice pair of SSB you saw as well, clearly hanging around till you came along. 😊 And that is such a typical Grayling shot, creeping round a tree trunk (though trouser legs make a good substitute... 😊).

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 25-Jul-20 05:05 PM GMT

That is a surprisingly fresh Silver-stud Bugboy cracking shots one and all 😊 It's great when a plan comes together and picking up two First For the Year on a single trip 😊😊 It's great to see a Woodlark – if I recall they get the Wood bit as they have a habit of using trees a look out posts and song posts (a bit like the Tree Pipit) 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Jul-20 10:55 PM GMT

Thanks **David**, I guess it must be something in the local micro-climate. It's interesting that Grayling up as far north as Arnside Knott are a good few weeks earlier than those 'local' to me. That northern site probably benefits from being coastal and close enough to be getting significant help from the Gulf Stream.

Thanks **Dave**, I agree, it is very exposed on these surrey heaths. I keep meaning to look on UKBMS to see if someone does a transect there to see what else is late there.

Thanks **Wurzel**, yup even more more so in a year like this one where I wasn't sure I'd be able to see either of these two plus several others that have now made it onto my yearly list 😊

### July 2020

**Monday 13th: Aberration day at Bookham.** There was an awful lot to point my camera at today, not least the dozens of Purple Hairstreak that were showering out of the trees in every sunny glade. It started off well whilst browsing Blackthorn for an early Brown Hairstreak, a Small Copper presented himself. I've seen precious few of these so far this year so he did distract me for a while.



Obviously there were no Brown Hairstreaks, I don't think Bookham is as early as some of those Sussex sites. At various points along the way through the open scrubby areas Peacocks showed up, all looking as fresh as the ones I'd reared as well as the odd Hairstreak playing hard to get.





Once in the wood I made my way to one of the best glades for butterflies which as usual was bustling with wings of all colours. Purple Hairstreaks regularly descended to flit low over the grass and bracken, occasionally threatening to settle in the perfect place for a picture before going into the long grass looking for moisture.

A couple of the Silver-washed Fritillary here were minor abs. the first one who was a little light on the black scaling behaved himself but the second who I think qualifies as a *ab. confluens* refused to settle anywhere useful and spent most his time chasing anything orange 😊 .



There was also a rather eye catching Meadow Brown, not only did she have an extra spot under the main ocelli, which in itself was a double pupil, one of the hindwing ocelli was also pupiled, something I've never seen before. Her uppers were completely normal though.



Whilst chasing one of these abs. I managed to (for once) not disturb a perfectly posed female Purple Hairstreak, they give a Purple Emperor a run for his money any day of the week in my book 😊 !

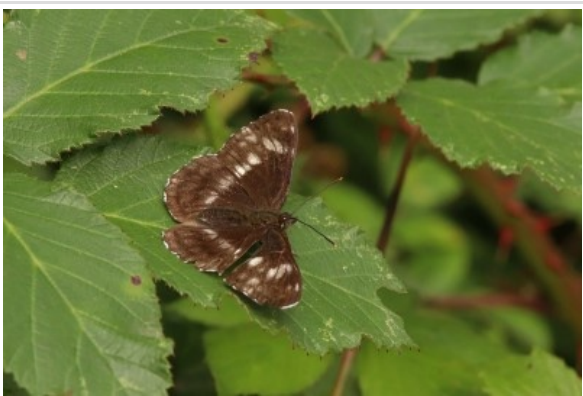
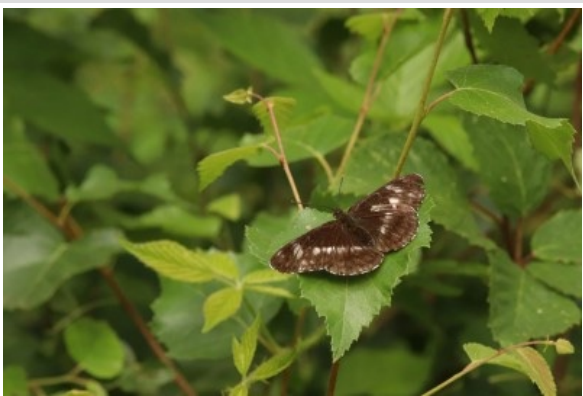




Ab. number four of the day came in the form of this rather dark Speckled Wood, *ab. kulczynskii* if I'm not mistaken.



At another favoured glade much the same collection of species jostled for attention but pick of the bunch was a White Admiral *ab. obliterate*, shame I didn't catch him a week or so earlier.



All the while, there was hardly a break from the Hairstreaks literally cascading from the treetops.



I stopped off to check on a White Admiral larvae I'd found on my last visit. I didn't notice it's days are numbered until I got home and looked at the pictures properly, seeing an egg or newly hatched larvae of what I presume is some sort of parasitoid.



A Ringlet, provided another ab. although she refused to show me her better side but I think *ab. marpurgensis*.



Stopping off at one of the Emperor master trees I got a few bemused looks as I stared upwards but after a few minutes a familiar shape glided gracefully in and settled up high, the only Emperor I'd seen here this year.



The *ab. bonanza* hadn't quite finished though, I found another female Meadow Brown who this time had a much reduced upper forewing ocelli, *ab. antiparvipuncta*. Interesting that the underside seemed normal.



The final find was a first for me, a wild Orange-tip pupae, a good end to an excellent day out 😊



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 28-Jul-20 09:05 AM GMT

My goodness, that was a full day, Buggy. the post was so full of abs that when I read "*ab bonanza*", I really thought it must be yet another one, some new and bizarre variety of Silver-washed Fritillary perhaps... 😊😊 Bookham has really been quite a site (a sight too) this year so far. However, out of all that splendid array of sightings, I would single out the Orange Tip pupa, something I look for every year in likely spots but with a consistent lack of success. Great spot. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 28-Jul-20 08:26 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Bugboy it looks like you had an Aurelian's dream day Bugboy – such variation in such a short space of time is dizzying 😊😊🍷

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 29-Jul-20 09:40 AM GMT

That sure was a productive day, Paul. That female Purple Hairstreak is to die for; I think I'd opt for that rather than a grounded Emperor in all honesty. Dazzling.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 31-Jul-20 09:47 PM GMT

Thanks for all the comments guys, it was a rather good day 😊

### July 2020

**Tuesday 14th.** I went east today hoping to find some Walls. Late last year a random female Wall turned up on Two Tree Island and since they are resident on nearby Canvey Island it's a reasonable presumption that more might be around this year. The south facing coastal paths here have also proved good hunting grounds for Clouded Yellows in the past plus I know of several patches of BLEP so you never know what might turn up 😊 .

I decided to start of at Hadleigh Country Park, secretly hoping for an old tatty WLH to grace me with an appearance but I've very much missed their party this year. Carrying on, sticking to the long path that heads west below the castle ruins, Small Whites were by far the commonest butterfly in the warm, overcast cnditions. SmEssex Skippers, a few new Gatekeepers, aged Meadow Browns and the odd Large White adding a bit of variety but there was a distinct lack of Clouded Yellows. Walking along it dawned on me how Wall friendly the path was, well-trodden, sun-baked, and edged with rough grassy banks with numerous shallow hollows. However I didn't come across any Walls as I walked along, although a Comma did require a second glance when it settled in front of me.



I managed to get as far as the castle before turning round to go and explore Two Tree Island, joined by the same set of butterflies (lets face it, probably the same individuals). Half way back I just caught sight of something settling on the path behind me, the mearest fleeting of glimpses, but I couldn't quite place what it was, perhaps a Small Tortoiseshell but as I approached a perfect male Wall coalesced onto my retina. It would seem that it wasn't just me that thought this path was a suitable home for them. The bright overcast conditions worked in my favour and I was able to get up close and for once the noise of lens focusing and shutter going off didn't seem to bother him too much.



I stayed with him for 10 minutes or so only to come across another a little further down the path. This one equally as fresh but of the female persuasion. Once again close up views were relatively easy to come by and even better, she had decided this path would be a perfect place for her babies. I watched her lay several eggs frustratingly obscured by grasses when she decided a single flimsy isolated blade would be a good spot and she suddenly found herself laying on her side, heroically clutching the grass as she deposited the egg.





I didn't find anymore but it'll be worth searching here in late summer for third brood adults from the looks of things.

On Two Tree Island there was no sign of any Walls but a large Buddleja was being sucked dry by hoards of Peacock, Red Admiral, Commas and various Whites.



Down on the edge of the saltmarsh several Whites were taking up salts



Whilst elsewhere I found my first female Gatekeeper of the year, a tatty female Red Admiral was busy laying eggs like she knew her days were numbered and an exceptionally tame juvenile Robin sat for me, proudly showing off the beginnings of his/her red breast 😊.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 01-Aug-20 07:21 AM GMT

You've earned a mrgreen for that female Wall Brown, Paul. 🍀  
What a beauty!. I managed to find some more 'relaxed' Walls on a warm cloudy morning last week. Sometimes I managed two shots before they were off.

It would be interesting to know what the ratio of males to females is in a colony. Certainly the females are more elusive, and are often found a good distance away from the patrolling males, probably once mated further male attention is not welcome, so they deliberately keep out of their way.

Keep well,  
Trevor

### Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlings, 02-Aug-20 01:26 PM GMT

Hi Buggie,

Just catching up with diaries and I'm green with envy at yours. It's been 'ab' central for you and they are all lovely, especially the Speckled Wood. I was lucky to see a SWF *confluens* last year and they are special. Have visited Hadleigh CP a few times during WLH season and not encountered Walls. I think I may have visited in between broods. Nice to know they are there though. Finally well done on your Orange tip pupa. That must be the Holy Grail of finds.

Kind Regards  
Kev

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 02-Aug-20 06:31 PM GMT

I do enjoy your bird photography Paul (especially those Woodpeckers) but that young Robin is charming – I'm assuming you'll be making your own Christmas cards this year 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-20 07:49 PM GMT

Cracking Walls Bugboy 🤔🍷 The female certainly made ovipositing look like hard work 🤔🍷

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by ernie f, 03-Aug-20 04:38 PM GMT

Ah, just seen your Walls, open wing, closed wing and ajar wing. Most envious since I have only ever seen and pictured a single individual in my entire life and that was so long ago I didn't even know what I was taking a picture of. Way before I had any interest in butterflies.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Aug-20 07:29 PM GMT

Thanks **Trevor**, I find the males at the Sussex sites I visit indulge in hill topping, certainly at High and Over and Mill Hill the males are invariably found lurking along the top and the females spread themselves out to go about laying eggs. As far as I can tell the Walls at Hadleigh seem to be very newly arrived on the scene so it maybe a couple of seasons before some sort of pattern develops whilst numbers build to a plateau of what the site can hold. In theory any colony should have a 50/50 ratio or thereabouts but females of a lot of species tend to be a lot more elusive.

Thanks **Kev**, I hadn't encountered the Walls there until this year so I think they've very recently arrived. Yes I was very chuffed to find that Pupae although it did make it easy by being green and pupating on the stem it had fed on as a larvae 😊!

Thanks **Pauline**, I was with that Robin for a good 10 minutes so I have lots of images to choose from 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, I think she was a gymnast in a past life 😊

Thanks **Ernie**, you'll have to have a word with Pauline, I'm sure she knows where your nearest colony is, try for an overcast day or at least some form of cloud cover, in clear blue skies they're a nightmare to get close to!

### July 2020

**Thursday 16th.** I planned to meet up with a friend for a socially distanced afternoon wander around Walthamstow Marshes today, but that was no reason not to bring my camera along with me and I'm glad I did, there was plenty around worthy of my attention. The first sighting was this *hutchinsoni* Comma who was possibly being eyed up as a potential lunch by a *Pisaura mirabilis*. Whatever was going through the spiders mind the Comma did safely flutter off so no horrific ended here you'll be glad to know 😊.



There wasn't much in the way of sun for most of the afternoon but it was still warm enough for a bit of life to distract me from my (understanding) friend. An attractive Holly Blue payed me a visit, as dusky as the female I'd reared and photographed a couple of weeks previously, but far to well-conditioned to be her or one of the others I reared.





When the sun did poke out the temperature rose noticeably and Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns and the few remaining Skippers suddenly appeared and became super charged but I managed to pin down a few things during the quieter periods.



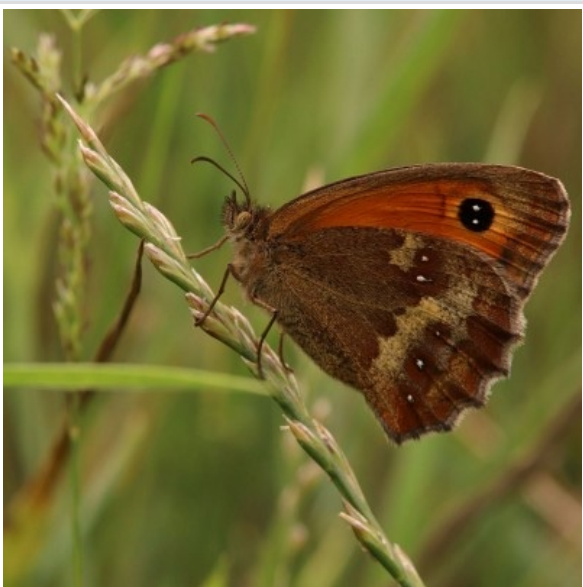
We stopped off at the waterworks nature reserve for a bit of birding. The little Grebes I've been keeping an eye on here still aren't showing off any chicks they may have but on the far side of one of the old water treatment beds a pair of Grey Wagtail were busy catching insects to feed some hidden hungry mouths. I watched this one dart off across the water and acrobatically catch a Damsel fly.



Parting ways with my friend I was able to pay more attention to the many Meadow Browns and found another ab. to add to my burgeoning collection, this one being the 'blind' caeca aberration. Her underside did had a tiny pupil.



Compared to what seems to be an infinite variety within the Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers seem to be very samey this year, not even a hint of excessa yet.





### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 03-Aug-20 10:01 PM GMT

I somehow missed your Essex Walls, Buggy – very nice indeed, and worthy of a 🍷 or two. The Holly Blue in the last post is rather nice too. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 04-Aug-20 10:33 PM GMT

That is a cracking looking Meadow Brown Bugboy – it's strange that the absence of the 'pupil' actually makes it stand out more 🤪😄

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

ps Brostreaks at Shipton on Saturday? 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Aug-20 07:18 PM GMT

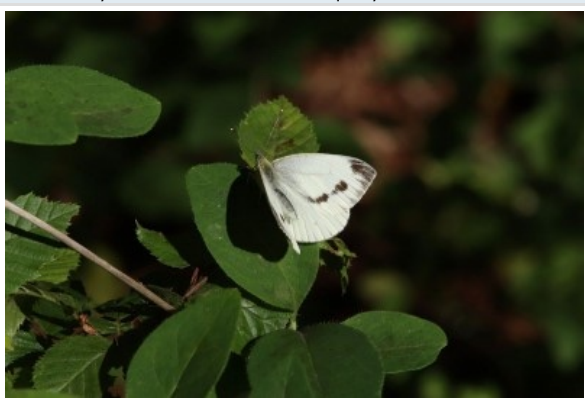
Thanks **Dave**, hopefully a strong third brood awaits me come September/October 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, it looked weird in the flesh too, like someones inked out the pupil. Think I've found a new obsession, another Meadow Brown ab below 😊

### July 2020

**Friday 17th.** I stayed close to home again with another wander round Epping Forest. It was initially meant to just be a few hours but I ended up staying most of the day since I found some new areas to explore, and once again found a few abs.

The first ab was a freshly emerged female Green-veined White with the upperside forewing spots joined making her *ab. confluens* apparently. Compare it to a nearby normal edition who was equally as irrisistable



*ab. confluens*



The new areas were some open scrub and fields where skippers and browns abounded but it was this male Common Blue caught my eye though. Even in flight that black spot on the hindwings was visible, possibly ab. *nigromaculata* although that description states a row rather than a single spot.



Also here I found a 6 Banded Clearwing Moth, which is a new one for me, and the first representatives of the next generation of Brown Argus and Small Heath, the Heath being particularly well marked.





Back into my more usual woodland glades I came across another Meadow Brown aberration, a male *antiparvipuncta* with a tiny speck of a forewing ocelli



Fresh Brimstones and *hutchinsoni* Commas could still be found, the former still gorging for hibernation, and a male Small Copper was busy doing a stalk dance, presumably to attract a lady.



Of course no visit to an Oak Woodland at this time of year would be complete without oodles of Purple Hairstreak, they popped up pretty much everywhere, probably saw in excess of 50 low down 🤩, god knows how many thousands were in the treetops!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-20 07:53 PM GMT

Cricky you're getting as bad with the Meadow Browns as I am with the Gatekeepers 🤩😄😄 That 6-belted Clearwing certainly gives the butterflies a run for their money as the star of the day 🤩😄🇧🇪

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 07-Aug-20 04:15 PM GMT

That's quite a tally of abs, Paul. The Meadow Brown upperside looks more like a pale version of Sooty Ringlet!

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Aug-20 08:08 PM GMT

There's lots out there **Wurzel**, the more I look, the more I see. Gatekeepers by comparison this year have been very samey, barely even an excessa, although I do have a rather striking ab waiting in the wings when I get round to that particular day 😊  
Thanks **David**, I had to look up Sooty Ringlet but I see what you mean 😊

### July 2020

**Saturday 18th** was a two-site day. The morning was spent at Denbies to enjoy the Chalkhill Blues. It started off quite overcast but Chalkhill Blues started appearing not long after arriving, mostly nestled down in the turf. Getting my eye in I soon noticed I was walking through a mass emergence, freshly emerged could be seen all over the place, many taking their maiden flights upon closer inspection and I found one still with an attendant ant.



Females were few and far between but even so I managed to find three pairings



Little else was around, a few Meadow Brown and singletons of Common Blue and Brown Argus.



All the while I was being serenaded by Yellowhammers which were dotted here and there having a singing competition with each other.



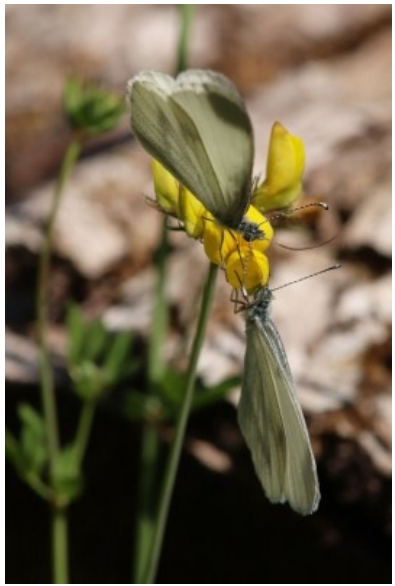
The day was predicted to be a hot one so before it got too hot my chauffeur and I moved on the the afternoon destination, Chiddingfold. The target showed up quite quickly, a single individual taking salts before we'd crossed the bridge over the little stream.



In the now cloudless skies the only other realistic chance of getting some shots was to find some indulging in the courtship they're so famous for. Although numbers were rather modest, it wasn't too difficult to find a few amorous males being given the cold shoulder.









Unlike Denbies there was plenty of other stuff to point the camera at too 😊



*White-legged Damselfly*



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 07-Aug-20 09:28 PM GMT

Good to see the second brood Wood Whites in full swing, Buggy! Great open wing shots too, with those courtship rituals being the perfect opportunity to get them. If they are actually courtship, as I've still to see a pairing following directly on from one. Those females are almost completely white with just a hint of a grey smudge, if that. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 08-Aug-20 10:08 AM GMT

Hi Paul

I would agree with everything Dave says – made me realise that although I have seen many paired Wood Whites I have never actually seen it occur. Has anyone? I have however seen 2 males engage in that sort of activity – still so much to learn!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-20 08:08 PM GMT

Great to see the Wood Whites Bugboy 🐛 – a species I missed out on this year 😞 The second brood certainly look cleaner and whiter (Daz bright some washing detergent execs might say 😊😁) than the first brood 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 08-Aug-20 10:17 PM GMT

Good work with the Wood Whites, Paul. Don't think I've ever seen them accompanying Yellowhammers in a post on here before. Seems like you had an excellent day. 🍷

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Aug-20 10:27 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, I think it's courtship in the minds of the males, not so sure about the poor females (I like to imagine the males saying "Go on, go on, go on, go on, go on...." alla Mrs Doyle from Father Ted 😊)

Thanks **Pauline**, I know there's been loads of studies on this Wood White behaviour, does make you wonder how and why it evolved whatever the reason though.

Thanks **Wurzel**, yes very white. Looks like there'll be plenty next year 😊

Thanks **David**, yup it was a very good day out. I reckon you'd be able to see Wood White down in the south west with Yellowhammers singing away in the background 😊

### July 2020

**Wednesday 22nd.** I went back to Hadleigh Country Park to see if any more Walls had turned up/emerged. It was significantly warmer and sunnier than my previous visit here which meant most things were rather active and open winged shots were at a premium. Whites were once again very numerous, Smalls in particular, Skipper numbers were much declined and Gatekeepers numbered in the hundreds if not the thousands.



*a messy situation!*

Walls turned out to be rather elusive, just a single male found on the path where I found the previous two and a fleeting glance of a second one up on the castle ruins.





*Hadleigh Castle ruins*

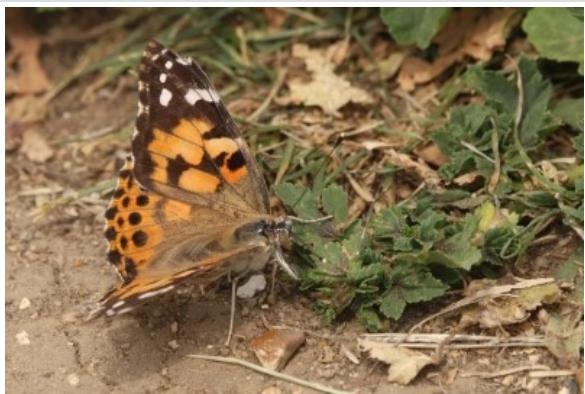
Amongst all the activity I found a few freshly emerged Brown Argus, one of whom was an ab. *snelleni*, channelling its inner Artaxerxes.



Little else was prepared to settle but I managed a Holly Blue peering down on me.



I paid a visit to two Tree Island where not much out of the ordinary was around but I did come across a Painted Lady paying an inordinate amount of attention to some well-trodden Mallow at the edge of the path, her vestigial front legs being put to good use.



The Buddleja had less butterflies today and what there was was rather flighty and a little more worn than before. The bird spot of the day was a Greenshank, something I don't see very often at all. It's snoozing friend never moved so I'm not sure if it was a pair, but it looks darker and could have been a Redshank.



## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Aug-20 06:38 PM GMT

### July 2020

**Saturday 25th** was a grey, cloudy and rather damp day. It wasn't particularly cold though so with nothing else planned I ventured out to see if I could add another species to the years tally, another species who's first brood I was forced to miss. In-between the drizzly showers at Hutchinsons bank it was mostly endless mizzle but I still managed a few roosters.



Very occasionally the cloud cover thinned just enough to put up the odd Small Heath, this one seemed to have problems with its wings, it couldn't help flashing me a bit of uppers 😊.



I did a couple of circuits before I came across the target species, the cloud cover finally starting to thin enough to awaken a few Small Blue 😊.









Despite the less than favourable conditions I managed to rack up ten species over the course of the afternoon, although admittedly some of them were singletons.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 12-Aug-20 07:38 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Small Blues Bugboy 😊 They've had a cracking season in 2020 – back in the first brood they were crawling all over Martin Down 😊  
😊 Very kind of you to offer up a bit of your sweat for them 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 15-Aug-20 08:23 AM GMT

Interesting behaviour from the Small Heath, Paul. I've seen the odd one do this myself occasionally as well as Pearly Heaths on the continent. It's hard to know what causes certain individuals to do it but it's always nice to get a glimpse of the golden uppersides.

Love the 2nd brood Small Blues. I must check out my local sites for them when I emerge from quarantine.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pete Eeles, 15-Aug-20 07:19 PM GMT

{quote=bugboy\_post\_id=156790 time=1596228446 user\_id=13753} Once again close up views were relatively easy to come by and even better, she had decided this path would be a perfect place for her babies. I watched her lay several eggs frustratingly obscured by grasses when she decided a single flimsy isolated blade would be a good spot and she suddenly found herself laying on her side, heroically clutching the grass as she deposited the egg.

I don't know how I missed this, Paul, but your photo of an ovipositing Wall female is the best I've seen, ever 😊 Nice job!

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Aug-20 09:46 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, Small Blues are as eager as HIM when it comes to less savory substances to lick 😊

Thanks **David**, I don't think it was behaviour as such, I just think there was some form of injury that stopped it from holding its wings correctly. It had no problem flying though, even in light mizzle and drizzle.

Thanks **Pete** 😊 but it was very much the luck of being in the right place at the right time and grabbing a series of rushed grab shots and some coming out in focus 😊

### July 2020

**Sunday 26th** was significantly brighter and a day pencilled in for a trip down to Mill Hill, my first trip into Sussex since March. The primary target were Dingy Skippers, another springtime species I missed out on this year, but with second broods popping everywhere from the south coast to Yorkshire I felt I had a good chance of finding a few. (Also I had it on authority that some were about down there.) We parked in the top car park and upon opening the door I immediately decided the best place to go was the bottom sheltered corner on account of the strong wind that was blowing. The signs were good though as I walked down with many butterflies battling bravely against the wind, mostly Blues and Browns, and arriving at the secluded spot I was happy to see it was alive with butterflies, even happier to find the wind wasn't making its presence felt down here. I perused the entirety of the bottom slope a couple of times but the target proved to be rather elusive, nevertheless a large number of photos were taken:

This beautiful creature is either a Red Twin-spot Carpet *Xanthorhoe spadicearia* or the red form of the Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet *Xanthorhoe ferrugata*, I'm erring on the former.



This female Common Blue could easily have been seen in Northern Ireland judging by recent images in IacobnDG's PD.



This female played hard to get but I persevered when I saw she had reduced forewing ocelli, ab. *antiparvipuncta* I believe.



I think this male was gloating over his recent conquest 😊



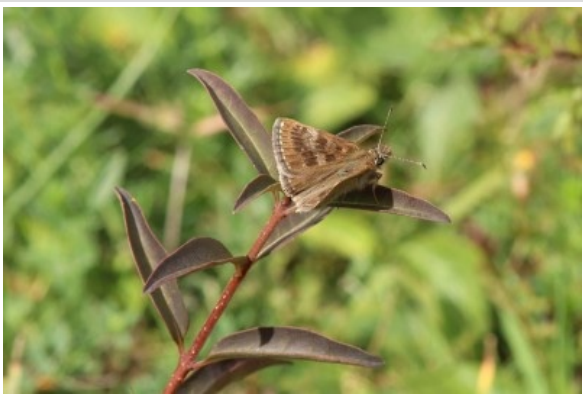
This female rather unhelpfully found a blade of grass to obscure herself behind 😊



The only gatekeeper ab. *excessa* I've seen this year



It was nearly an hour and half after arriving and on the third circuit that I caught sight of something small and dark darting close to the ground and I was able to add the Dingy Skipper to my yearly tally 😊 .





A secondary target for the day was Clouded Yellows, my reliable source had also seen a few of these on his recent visit but today none were seen today so I suggested we drive down to Widewater lagoon. Here there was very little shelter from the wind but one Clouded Yellow was seen, very briefly before the wind caught it and it was swept off into the distance 😊. The main focus of my attention here though was an extraordinarily tame Dunlin.



It was also feeding time for a young family of Herring Gulls (hope you're not eating whilst browsing my diary at the moment...)



### Re: Bugboys mission

by MrSpOck, 15-Aug-20 10:31 PM GMT

`{quote=Wurzel post_id=157236 time=1597257508 user_id=9821}` Lovely shots of the Small Blues Bugboy 😊 They've had a cracking season in 2020 - back in the first brood they were crawling all over Martin Down 😊😊 Very kind of you to offer up a bit of your sweat for them 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Small Blue numbers are down at Hutchinsons from last years massive number from 1500 on transect to about 200, the first brood hatched well before the foodplant was ready for egg laying, and large caterpillar numbers last year probably the major factors, as they are canabalistic. Will be interesting to compare massive sites from last year with normal sites and see if large site numbers last year has caused a drop this year and stable sites have increased or stayed the same this year. the 2019 species data is still not up on UKBMS normlly goes up in March, after the recorders conference. The 2nd Brood has been bigger than normal, but still we should get over 15 weeks constantly recorded with them.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 15-Aug-20 11:15 PM GMT

That Common Blue female is a stunner, Buggy! 😊 I'm a great fan of blue females, and that one is definitely worth a 🍷 or two. Shame the Cloudies didn't behave for you down in Sussex - hopefully there has been enough of an influx for a batch or two of home-grown ones to appear in a few weeks time.

You've done pretty well, playing catch-up with second brooders - one or two more to come perhaps? 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 16-Aug-20 07:36 PM GMT

That was a stonking female Common Blue Bugboy 😊😊🍷 I think I got one of those Gatekeeper with only one eye abs the other day - that's a great one to have in the collection 😊 As Dave says hopefully the Cloudies will get together and ensure a few more to see later in the season - although with this rainy, muggy weather at the moment 😊 it almost feels like the season is drawing to a close early 😊

Have a goodun an stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 17-Aug-20 07:41 PM GMT

`{quote=bugboy post_id=157347 time=1597524418 user_id=13753}`...This female Common Blue could easily have been seen in Northern Ireland judging by recent images in IacobnDG's PD.

Agreed, Paul. I've seen some nice ones myself these last two or three years, but nothing like that one.

An absolute stunner.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Aug-20 09:27 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, yes definitely been playing catch up this summer, still a few on my radar, all depends on the weather though, as always 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, the weather is being pretty weird this year but I think we'll have to start getting used to it, climate change is here now 😊 last week it felt like tropical rain!

Thanks **David**, she was a real stunner 😊

## July 2020

Tuesday 28th. I had a half day at work and with the weather being a little sunnier than the previous visit, I dropped in to see the Small Blues at Hutchinson's Bank again. Unsurprisingly with more sun around there was significantly more to point my camera at, starting at the top of the path that leads down to the site from the tram stop. Peacocks, Speckled Wood, Holly Blue, Whites, Red Admirals & Small Torts all showed up, some more briefly than others.



*Love how the light hits this peacocks wings :)*

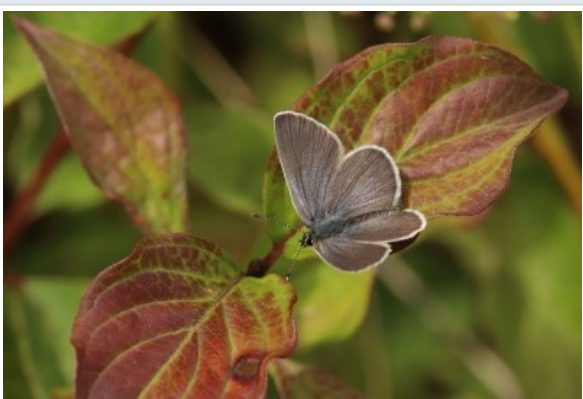
On site the Small Blues were relatively easy to find, but in the sunnier conditions somewhat more difficult to pin down, not helped by a stiff breeze making them even harder to follow as they flitted around.



*Laying*



*the result*





As well as many a Small Blue, the wind caused me to miss a freshly minted Dingy Skipper and then whilst trying to relocate it, I disturbed a Cloudie who also was swept off into the distance. I was also keeping one eye out for Brown Hairstreak who had already been out for a couple of weeks here but none turned up 😞

I had better luck with a female Meadow Brown who was busy depositing eggs all over the place



And a few other posers who had found more sheltered spots for the afternoon



According to the literature the below Meadow Brown is ab. *infra-impuncta* "the underside of the hindwings have NO black spots" which to my mind is a ridiculous qualification for an aberration. At least 50% if not more of meadow Browns I see lack hindwing spots, indeed the ones with spots seem to be in the minority in my experience.





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 20-Aug-20 08:18 PM GMT

Cracking set of Small Blue spots Bugboy 😊 Size apart I like to think that they got their name from the small amount of blue on the wings – obviously not though 😊 thought I think my reasoning is more poetic 😊 The naming of aberrants is an odd thing – especially in the is case – I recall reading a study into the number of spots on the underwings ranging from none to a few so to name a large proportion as an aberrant seems a little extreme – still we humans like to put things into boxes 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 20-Aug-20 08:55 PM GMT

Looks to have been plenty going on during that outing, Paul. Well done for capturing the Small Blue ovum – not sure my camera would be able to pick something up that small.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Aug-20 08:41 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, those over excitable Victorian collectors have a lot to answer for when it comes to what is an isn't a named ab!  
Thanks **David**, not nearly as much as the following day...

### July 2020

**Wednesday 29th** was a long day so I'll split it into three posts. Bookham was the chosen site and being at the tail end of July with Brown Hairstreaks already turning up in droves at all the best sites the target was obvious. I got an early start, it was set to be a nice day and I wanted to make the most of it. I started off along an east facing path where I regularly find Hairstreak eggs but have yet to see an adult. It is however usually teeming with life and being east facing, always a good place to make an early start at. There was plenty about and nearly all various shades of orange and brown, just not the orange and brown target, but those particular chocolate orange butterflies are starting rather late in the morning this year.

This Gatekeeper sported a rather obvious streak and I found another Meadow Brown with a pupiled hindwing ocelli, maybe it's more common than I thought.





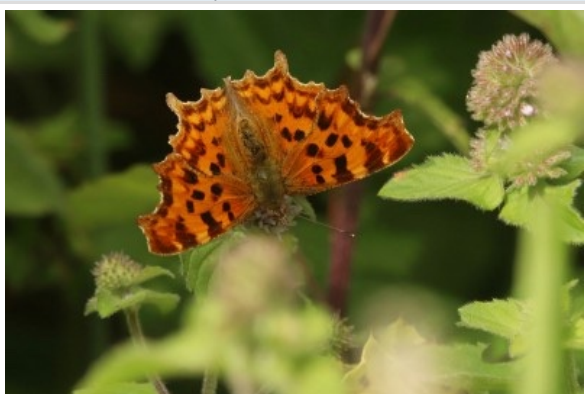
There were also a couple of Small Copper, one of whom was catching the morning sun perfectly, it's a shame the pictures don't show the shimmer it had in life.



Gatekeepers abounded and some so fresh I really couldn't resist, a male with slightly reduced forewing ocelli, perhaps a bit of ab. *antiparvipuncta* about him, and a couple of *excessa* turned up to 😊.



Dragging myself away, I moved on to the hotspot along the edge of Banks Common where I found (for the first time this season) the familiar figure of Millerd, and a rather lovely *hutchinsoni* Comma.



Just to break up the monotony of the autumnal colours we found a Common Blue before moving back up the path to loiter hopefully around the Ash master tree



tbc

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Aug-20 08:47 PM GMT

### July 2020

**Wednesday 29th (part 2).** We had to loiter under the Ash for a while before we started getting sightings, cloud cover had increased and to start with the only activity turned out to be pesky Purple Hairstreaks. Eventually though we started to see slightly larger lycids and finally one landed in a suitable position for ID, albeit half-way up the tree. There was no doubting the identity of this chap when I got my big lens on him!



We continued to watch the activity start and stop as the sun came and went when I noticed a tiny orange spot poking out from behind a leaf. Using my big lens like a monocular I quickly identified her and from the angle we were at she looked pretty fresh but had already lost her tails on one wing.



However I was later to discover when I got home, from photos from a different angle, she did have a full set of tails. It looks like her hind wings were slightly bent, perhaps a twig or leaf had got in the way whilst she was expanding them after emergence.





We stood and watched her for over 15 minutes, she barely moved except to balance when the wind blew, until she left us and fluttered over the hedge, never to be seen again 😊.

After that excitement we separating off and took to working different parts of the hedge. At the far end where it meets Bookham Common proper I happened to see something suspiciously Brown Hairstreaky briefly flutter around some thistle before settling just out of sight. Clambering through a little bit of undergrowth brought the suspect back into sight and yep, my suspicions were correct, a nectaring male. A selection of shots were quickly taken before getting Dave on the phone and within a couple of minutes the engrossed Hairstreak had two fans. They really are bombproof when they get their nose into a flower, nectar must taste like a superfood compared to aphid honeydew to them!



Eventually he did flutter off and with not much else going on with the Hairstreaks we took a wander into the wood. Here it was decidedly quiet, a handful of aged SWF still swooped around and a few Purple Hairstreak taunted us. A few White Admiral feeding platforms and piers were found but only one was occupied. To continue with the constant appearance of abs I seem to be seeing this year, this Ringlet ab. *marpurgensis* had gone full Mickey Mouse on her hindwings.



We parted company not long after, it was gone 1pm and I wanted to move on to my afternoon site but barely 5 minutes after bidding Dave farewell I found myself another nectaring male Hairstreak, they really have thrown the rulebook out the window this year! As with the earlier male he was nearly oblivious to me, on the odd occasion I did disturb him he would quickly returned to the same flower or sit on a leaf looking at me in disdain.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Aug-20 08:54 PM GMT

#### July 2020

**Wednesday 29th (part 3).** I finally made it to my afternoon site somewhat later than planned but the delay, as you saw above, was worth it. I reached the foot of Box Hill at 2.30. (I'm sure the climb up the Hill gets steeper every year! It's most definitely higher than it was five years ago 😊). Anyway the target for the afternoon was Silver-spotted Skippers. I hadn't seen any reports about them being out here yet but they had started turning up at other sites. Happily I discovered they were out here, and in quite significant numbers considering it was still very early in their season.





On the upper slope Chalkhills were about in decent numbers and a mothy Box Hill speciality, the Straw Belle also seemed to be having an exceptional year. I always see at least two or three, today I was well into double figures.





Other notable inhabitants came in the form of this eye-catching male Common Blue ab. *nigromaculata*



And a few what must be quite ancient Dark Green Fritillary.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 23-Aug-20 05:41 PM GMT

Cracking set of shots Bugboy particularly the last Silver-spot - I love that pose when they hold their wings out flattish like that 😊👍 Even more aberrants - I think in the 'down' season I'm going to have another read through your PD and check your images against my own so I can get mine correctly labelled - it'll be easier than trawling through the Aberrations website 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 24-Aug-20 09:04 PM GMT

Great to see you had some Brown Hairstreak action, Paul. Such an exciting time of year when the females emerge and begin to show themselves.

Chalkhills, Silver Spotted Skippers & Dark Green Fritillary make up an enviable supporting cast too. Those last few days in July (and the first handful in August) are to be treasured because things start to wane quickly not long afterwards.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 25-Aug-20 11:18 AM GMT

Lovely shots Bugboy, I'm trying to catch up while the weather's bad 😊 I just missed the Skipper's this year so it's good to see yours 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 26-Aug-20 07:43 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, see below for another small selection of abs 😊, you might like these ones 😊

Thanks **David**, yup I try and make the most of these end of summer days, even more so this year after the frustrating spring I had.

Thanks **Goldies**, it's a shame you missed the Skippers, they've had a phenomenal season, still it should bode well for next year 😊

### August 2020

**Wednesday 5th.** I had to wait a whole week before being able to get out again, but after the last successful visit to Bookham at least the heat was off with catching up with some Brown Hairstreaks, hopefully though some females joining the nectaring males this time. Before getting to the sunny hedgerows I found myself another Orange-tip pupae, this time a brown form, not far from where the green one sat. The trick I've realised to finding them is to look for the seed spikes with obvious feeding damage.





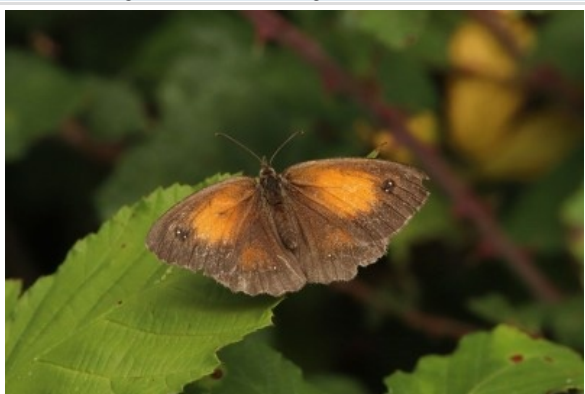
The hedgerows were once again full of Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns and since it was an hour or two early for the Hairstreaks and I seem to be on a bit of a run with abs. as many as possible were chased and given the once over. For once it was the Gatekeepers that came out on top in the abs stakes. An ab. *anticrassipuncta*, the forewing ocelli being noticeably large (doesn't seem to show up so well in the photo but in life it was very noticeable.)



Ab. *postexcessa* is apparently the name given to one with an extra ocelli on the hindwing (or possibly ab. *bimaculata*, there seems to be some overlap looking at specimens making the two names probably synonymous)



But the winner goes to this one, ab. *lugens* 😊



The downside for the day was a particularly strong wind that was coming from such a direction as to make the usual Banks Common hedgerow hotspot virtually unusable as far as photography was concerned. However there are plenty of other places around Bookham that I regularly see Hairstreaks that

provide a modicum of shelter so I concentrated on these this time. The first one of these came up trumps straight away, a fidgety female nectaring away allowed me a few grabbed shots before leaving me wanting more, the little tease!



No more were seen for a good time and it was only whilst killing a bit of time waiting for my train that a second female fluttered over my shoulder and settled nearby at the perfect height. Closing in for a closeup, finger poised over the shutter button, a stupid bee decided to try and land on her. The bee was immediately cursed for the rest of its life but thankfully the Hairstreak didn't flutter far and I managed enough shots in between annoying gusts of wind to keep me satisfied 😊.





As with my previous day out, I planned to go to Box Hill for the afternoon where a few Adonis had recently been reported, another springtime species I'd missed out on this year. I only managed to find a single male but like last time the Silver-spotted Skippers were everywhere, even more so if anything. They were spread far wider than I can ever remember them being and in numbers I've never witnessed here before, easily into three figures based on the numbers I saw walking along the path through the center of the slope. Despite the wind I managed a fair few decent images. A few Common and Chalkhill Blues were also present but pinning any of them down with the gusty wind proved near impossible, as did any of the windswept Meadow Browns who regularly got blown past me.





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 26-Aug-20 08:13 PM GMT

Very interesting that you find orange tip pupae on plants with feeding damage, implying that these cats haven't wandered. Almost all the cats I've followed have wandered when they've reached maturity. Do the situations you find them in have something in common too, in terms of aspect, shade, other vegetation?

Guy

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Aug-20 10:18 AM GMT

[quote=Padfield post\_id=157724 time=1598469198 user\_id=665] Very interesting that you find orange tip pupae on plants with feeding damage, implying that these cats haven't wandered. Almost all the cats I've followed have wandered when they've reached maturity. Do the situations you find them in have something in common too, in terms of aspect, shade, other vegetation?

Guy

Hi Guy. Both these pupae were found along the same shady woodland path that runs roughly east/west. One was found on the north side and one on the south side. I wasn't actively searching for them either time, they just happened to catch my eye, but since then I've not found anymore despite finding more feeding damage. There was plenty of dense vegetation they could have moved into close by. I used to presume they'd always move off to pupate on something more sturdy to survive the winter until Vince posted a picture of 3 he'd found on Garlic Mustard a year or two ago. I can't imagine the survival rate would be particularly high on those which choose to stay put though. I've since taken both pupae home to spend the winter in my fridge since vehicles use the path, particularly in the winter when management is done at Bookham so the chances of either making it through to April were very slim.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 27-Aug-20 12:12 PM GMT

Good to see that you have also had some great experiences with Brown Hairstreaks this year. A couple of 🦋 shots there!.

On another matter, it is good to read that Orange Tip cats wander from the food plant on maturity. Because the old railway, in Hailsham, is regularly flailed every June, right where the Garlic Mustard grows. I did worry that a large number of pupae would be lost to the flail, but it would seem that they pupate away from the edge of the path and danger, as the site is host to a good population each Spring.

Stay well,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 27-Aug-20 08:02 PM GMT

A great set of Brostreak shots Bugboy 🦋 🦋 – glad you didn't miss out on them and that you could get them nearby; " We're local butterflies, for local people" 😊 Mind you for me the highlight would have been the ab.lugens 🦋

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

## Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 28-Aug-20 09:04 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy-post\_id=157723-time=1598467387-user\_id=13753]...But the winner goes to this one, *ab.lugens*

That's amazing, Paul. I actually thought whilst first scrolling through that it was a Brown Hairstreak. Upon letting go of the cursor and seeing the still image though I realised it was a Gatekeeper, although unlike any I've ever seen.

A really notable specimen and well done for finding it. 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-Aug-20 10:45 PM GMT

Thanks **Trevor**, it's pretty much all over now for another year but since my diary is a few weeks behind I still have a few good Hairstreak days to come, stay tuned 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, yes staying local (relatively speaking) worked well this year 😊

Thanks **David**, she really stood out in life too, wasn't sure what I was seeing when I first saw her flutter past 😊😊

## August 2020

**Friday 7th.** After a few successful days over at Bookham I figured a change of scenery would be nice whilst chasing the same target and went to nearby Ashted Common, where I had a bit of luck last year with them. It's close enough to Bookham to probably be part of the same meta-colony of Brown Hairstreak so I figured there should be another bumper crop of sightings to be had here as well. I got there early to recce the site and pinpoint some likely nectaring spots and also to pinpoint some areas of shade for me, the blistering heat looked to be getting rather silly again.

As it turned out I saw very little at all during the morning (I planned to leave by midday to avoid the very worst of the heat). Not a single Brown Hairstreak showed itself and only a few of the usual suspects posed in any way usual, most were trying their best to stay cool whilst breakfasting or attempting to hold territories. I found another of those Meadow Browns with a pupiled hindwing ocelli which, after a bit of trawling, have discovered is known as *ab. infra-pupillata*.



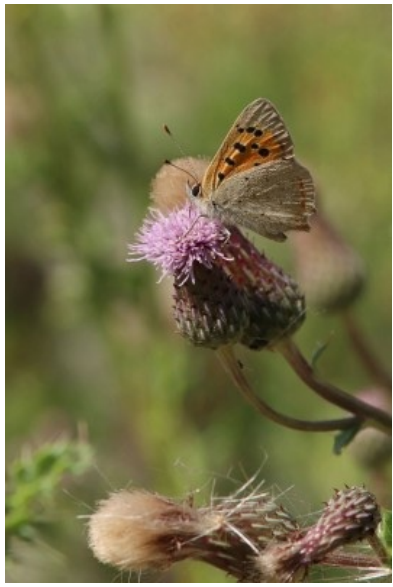
Elsewhere I found a pair doing some synchronised tip-toeing to keep cool



A Roe Deer, probably heaving with Ticks!



The only Lycids I found was a Small Copper and a Brown Argus missing the diagnostic spot on the hindwing.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 30-Aug-20 08:24 PM GMT

That is a cracking shot of the Small Copper Bugboy – would have almost made the trip for me getting that 🍷😄 Another Meadow Brown ab to check back in my collection for, cheers for the doing the research 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

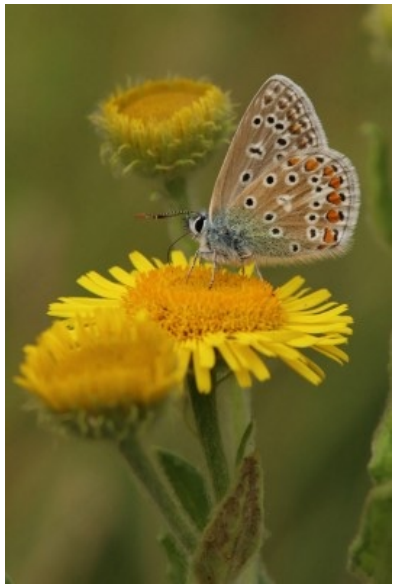
by bugboy, 02-Sep-20 10:38 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, hope you find some Meadow Brown abs in your back catalogue. From what I've seen this year it would seem they're relatively common 😊

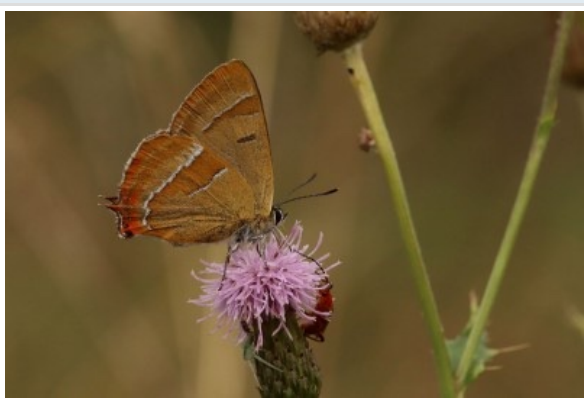
### August 2020

**Saturday 8th.** After the no show at Ashted I decided to return to Bookham for more Brown Hairstreak action. It had even more to live up to today, not only to make up for the poor previous day but also this was the day I'd planned to visit Shipton Bellinger until those plans fell through a few days previously.

There was significantly more cloud cover than the previous day but it was still going to be uncomfortably warm and muggy so I had no plans to stay all day. Arriving at around 9.30 I saw very little save a few Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper, most of which were ignored for once this year. I couldn't resist a Common Blue on some Fleabane though.



An hour after arriving I came across the first of the targets, a male (it would seem to be all males this year). This one seemed so obsessed over the Thistle that he proved to be almost undisturbable (not sure that's actually a word).



5 minutes after finding him, and nearly a hundred pictures of every conceivable angle, I left him to see if I could locate some more, returning an hour later empty handed to find he hadn't moved from his flower, it's almost as if after generations of licking up Aphid bum juice they've suddenly discovered nectar this year!



He was there for at least another 20 minutes when I left him for a second time to go looking for more, this time coming up trumps. Just a short way from him I noticed a sandy shark fin sat on top of some Hogweed. This one was a particularly tatty individual so after a few snaps I moved on a bit more and saw another. A few steps closer and I noticed a second on the same flowerhead then a little closer I saw a third on a neighbouring Hogweed. I wasn't able to get all three in shot at once with my camera but my phone came to the rescue.



The third one fluttered off after a while but the other two were as equally as bomb proof as the first one I'd found, the only disturbance that really seemed to bother them was when a hornet came nosing around, which I think is a fair enough reason to be disturbed.



Looking at the pictures on the way home I noticed one of them was, you've guessed it, an ab! *uncilinea*, where the inner white streak on the hindwing



curls back on itself to form a hook.



Whilst taking these pictures the first female of the day turned up nearby bringing my running total to six. 1pm came and went and gradually the Hairstreaks vanished back to the tree-tops so I began a slow meandering walk back to the station, not getting very far when I noticed a female fluttering around some mint with a few Gatekeepers. Seven in a day is pretty good going by anyone's standards.



Reaching the station I still had a bit of time to kill, enough time to go for another little wander, a Brimstone stopped briefly and nearby I found Hairstreak number eight, another male obsessed with a thistle flowerhead.



There was another male a bit further along sat on Hogweed who didn't really settle for me and then just returning back to the station I found a couple taking a picture of something in the hedge. The lady showed me the picture on her phone, a freshly minted female Hairstreak. All I saw of her in the flesh though was her rear end vanishing over the hedge. Still, a grand total of ten in one day (including an ab) was way more than I was expecting and ample compensation for the cancelled trip to Shipton 😊.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 03-Sep-20 06:26 AM GMT

Some great BH action there Paul. Creeping Thistle does act as a magnet for the males. It would seem that those who have made the effort to see BH this year have been rewarded.

Great stuff, keep well.  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 03-Sep-20 08:54 AM GMT

Extraordinary numbers of Hairstreaks, Buggy! The males this year have been exceptional in their accessibility down low and you managed some great shots there. Nice to find an ab - well spotted too as I think I'd have missed that one... 😊 They certainly seemed to have coped fine with the hot weather as well.

Cheers,  
Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 04-Sep-20 05:59 PM GMT

Cracking set of Brostreaks there Bugboy - it has to be considered a 'good' year when you can get shots of multiple males 😊😊 They certainly do 'lock in' on those Creeping Thistles - I had one last year that didn't move for 45 minutes and this was after another observer had watched it for almost 2 hours prior to that 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe  
Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Katrina, 05-Sep-20 05:43 PM GMT

Great brostreaks and well done for spotting the ab 😊👍😊👍😊👍😊👍😊👍😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 07-Sep-20 07:19 AM GMT

[quote=bugboy\_post\_id=157890 time=1599082706 user\_id=13753] Still, a grand total of ten in one day (including an ab) was way more than I was expecting and ample compensation for the cancelled trip to Shipton

A double figure tally of Brown Hairstreaks is extremely impressive, Paul. Some nice, fresh ones in that selection too which must have been very satisfying to find and watch.

Seeing even two simultaneously is a feat but to get three in your viewfinder is amazing. Sounds like it was an excellent day for you. 🍷

## Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 07-Sep-20 09:20 AM GMT

[quote=bugboy\_post\_id=157890 time=1599082706 user\_id=13753] Still, a grand total of ten in one day (including an ab) was way more than I was expecting and ample compensation for the cancelled trip to Shipton 😊 .

A great result 🍷 😊

That is more than I have seen in the past five years, mind you that is usually because I have been either in Cornwall or Dorset when they have been at their best here in the midlands and so I have not often tried for them. This year I managed to squeeze in a trip to Grafton Wood and just had fleeting views of two females. The week before, when we were in Cornwall, had apparently seen multiple males coming down to nectar but some bands of heavy rain unfortunately put a stop to that.

I must try harder.

Neil.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Sep-20 09:07 PM GMT

Thanks for all the comments guys, it's nice for the season to be finishing on a bit of a flourish after the start that was enforced on all of us 😊

## August 2020

**Sunday 9th.** Well after a ten Hairstreak day there was only one place I was heading for the following day. It was going to be another hot day but that doesn't seem to be bothering the Hairstreaks, it just means me sneaking off before the real heat of the day. As usual this year, the Hairstreaks were having a lay in but it did give me time to inspect some Browns, finding an excess Gatekeeper who wasn't keen on showing me her full splendour 😊 .



At 11 on the dot I came across the first one of the day, very close to where I'd found the first male the previous day, a few snaps later and I discovered it was actually the same male, a few nicks in the hind wings identifying him. Unlike the previous day though, the banks Common path remained rather quiet this time with no more seen despite a couple of slow, careful searches.

The next one appeared an hour later, flitting over my shoulder and landing up in a Blackthorn hedge in the main part of Bookham Common. She looked to be in fine fettle although she didn't move out of the shade and all photos were obtained with my camera at arms-length.

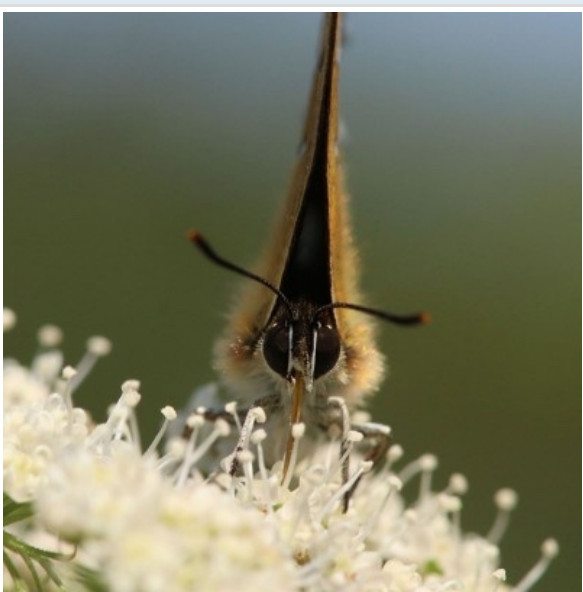




It all went quiet again after she flew off over the hedge so I made my way back to Banks Common where the first male was still gorging himself silly on the thistles nearly 2 hours after first seeing him 😊.

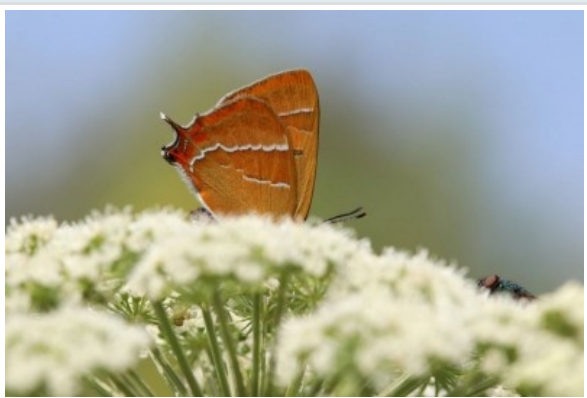


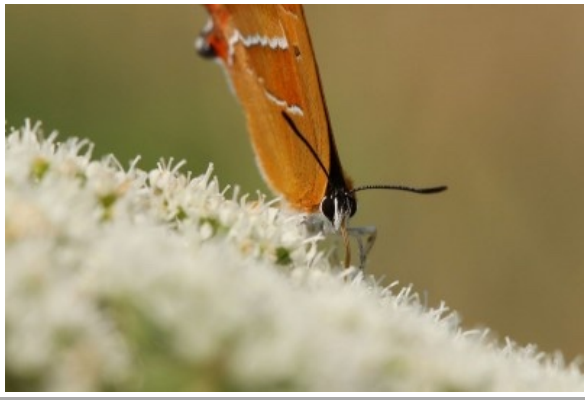
Another look on the Hogweed that had been so popular the previous day proved successful, finding another male who I hadn't seen the day before. He was a little worn around the edges but did allow some nice closeups as he wandered round in circles.





I stayed with him for about 10 minutes, only leaving him because I felt like I needed to find some shade before heading off to the train station, although I have a feeling he would have outlasted me anyway. Being a Sunday the trains were hourly rather than half hourly so I still had a good amount of time to kill. This time was spent rather well (in my humble opinion) because wandering along the same path where the pristine female from the previous day had escaped my lens, I found this rather beautiful lady!





A perfect end to an excellent weekend 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 07-Sep-20 09:44 PM GMT

That last one looks absolutely perfect, Buggy! Worth all the wandering in the heat I'd say. 😊 Probably deserving of a 🍷 or two if I hadn't remembered where I was at the time you were seeing these little beauties... 😊😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 07-Sep-20 10:04 PM GMT

Nice one(s) Paul, very nice! 🍷 😊

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 08-Sep-20 07:51 PM GMT

That definitely was a perfect end to the day 😊🍷 Butterflies do have a tendency to turn up just as you're leaving, sometimes I think it pays to leave an hour earlier than you want and then as you're making your move they'll suddenly arrive and you get a hour with them 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 10-Sep-20 07:37 AM GMT

That last female is immaculate, Paul. It must have been difficult to drag yourself away. What a highlight! 🍷

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Sep-20 09:26 PM GMT

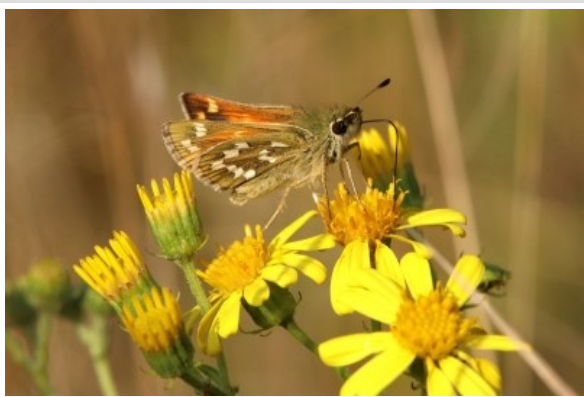
Thanks again for the comments, the Brown Hairstreaks really did bless us this year. Actually saw another one on a hill overlooking Brighton this afternoon who's other occupants will be the star of a future post in a few weeks time 😊

### August 2020

**Wednesday 12th.** After a couple of days filling my boots with all things Brown Hairstreak, I took a break and headed for Denbies, hoping to find some early Adonis, I had after all already found one on nearby Box Hill the week before. It was set to be even hotter than previous days out so the plan was to catch the first train there and be gone before lunch. Leaving at silly o'clock to get the first train meant I arrived at Denbies just after 8am, already under a blazing hot sun, it must have been nudging mid-twenties. A lovely back-lit Small Heath was the only butterfly that tempted my camera on the walk there



But once there it was all Blues and Silver-spotted Skippers. As with Box Hill, numbers of Skippers here were much higher than I've ever seen in previous years and even this early in the day proved difficult to pin down.





However, it was probably the early hour that meant finding these two peacefully sharing a flowerhead possible.



Chalkhill Blues were still around in numbers, mostly keeping wings closed to keep cool but I did spend a fair bit of time following one female around and was rewarded with some lovely open winged shots. The pictures will explain why I took such an interest in her.



A single Dingy Skipper also appeared very briefly.





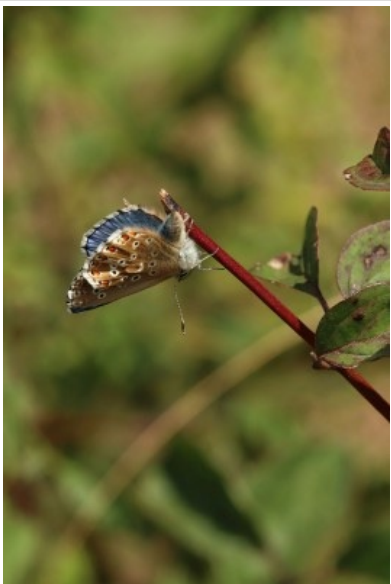
By mid-morning even the sun loving SSS had shut up shop with temperatures probably over 30 degrees and I needed some shade myself so I took a wander in the woodland at the top of the slope.



Here, in a sunny glade I noticed something settle on the path, behaviourally it reminded of a Holly Blue but being orange it was clearly something else 😊. I'm aware of Brown Hairstreaks here but never made any effort to search for them before. This male was clearly parched, desperately searching for moisture and looked to be suffering as much as I was in the heat.



By 11 I decided to make the trip home, having only managed to catch a few flyby glimpses of a handful of Adonis males. However, flying along the top path I finally managed to pin one down. It was far too hot for him to open up, in fact it was so hot he went into the shade in the edge of the wood in the end and I left him there, roosting, at 11.30am 😊! The SSS were still just about coping though.





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 11-Sep-20 07:57 PM GMT

Crickley Bugboy - you found a Northern Brown Chalkill Blue! 🤔👍 Lovely sets of Silver Spots - especially like the 'twofer' 😄😄  
If you're planning any posts of LTBs you better get a move on while the 🤔👍 last! 😄😄

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 12-Sep-20 07:39 PM GMT

That's terrific to track down a Brown Hairstreak at Denbies, Buggy. 😊 I've half-heartedly looked once or twice after Susie mentioned seeing one some years ago, but never struck lucky. It does look a bit out of place where you found it mind... A very nice and unusual female Chalkhill as well. 😊 Some reward for trekking back and forth across that slope in the blazing sun of that heatwave! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Sep-20 07:58 PM GMT

Haha, yea you may have to save a few of those for this diary **Wurzel**, still got a couple of weeks worth of posts before I get to the LTB... 😊  
Thanks **Dave**, that Hairstreak encounter was far more luck than anything but nice to have confirmation with my own eyes about their presence there.

### August 2020

**Thursday 20th.** My first trip of the year to Newhaven Tidemills, just on the off chance of something blue with tails had hopped over the channel and was politely waiting for me. Well on that count a drew a blank, indeed due to a rather dank grey cloud that hung persistently overhead there was very little to be seen bar a few Whites (mostly Small as far as I could tell, one day I'll come across a *mannii* here!), some Small Heath and a couple of Common blue who provided momentary excitement.



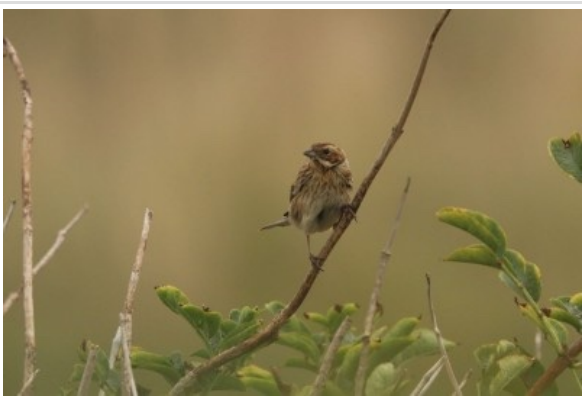
As usual here the birdlife also caught my attention, a flock of Curlew did a few circuits before vanishing into one of the fields nearby. This singleton appeared a few minutes later and seemed to be searching for the rest of the flock, circling and calling.



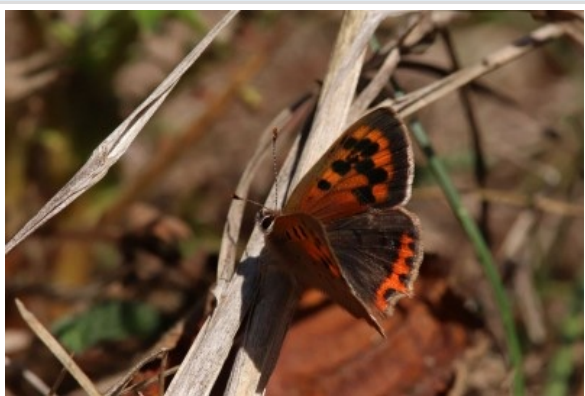
A juvenile Stonechat also posed rather well and I do like this shot I got with a couple of Whitethroat looking on.



A Reed Bunting also sat for me



A couple of hours of walking around willing the cloud cover to break got a little tedious after a while, especially since I could see blue sky not far away both east and west. Newhaven fort on the other side of the estuary seemed to be bathed in sun so I headed over there, knowing the location of a bit of BLEP there adding a bit of incentive to go exploring. The BLEP came up empty but further up the hill I found some Common Blues and Small Coppers. A male of the former posed rather well and one of the latter was particularly eye catching. I'm not sure what named ab it could be, it seems to have elements of several including *extensa*, *kochi* and *juncta* which probably indicates those abs. are just variations on a theme. Still a striking individual nonetheless 😊.



It was still just after noon and I had a few options of where to spend the afternoon, plumping for Malling Down to see if the Adonis were out there.

With the sun out now it was really rather warm. Silver-spotted Skippers seemed to have had a good season here too, most of them looking a bit ropy now but the odd fresh specimen could be found. Overall though it was all a bit lacklustre here and I had to work hard to find some decent looking butterflies. There weren't many Adonis around, and only I discovered a single female who had already been found by a male.



In my rambling I disturbed a Cloudie but only managed a few distant shots at dodgy angles. I did spend a bit of time following a female Meadow Brown around as she laid her eggs, ALWAYS with at least one blade of grass in the way!



Amongst the Chalkhills still flying I found one who looked to have reduced spotting on the underside



Other species present were a few old Brown Argus, one who looked to halfway to *artaxerxes* with the underside spotting, and some more fresh Small Coppers of the standard model.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 15-Sep-20 08:11 PM GMT

Interesting looking Small Copper ab Bugboy 🤔🇩🇪 A lot of the abs, including this one, look like the paint ran 😊😬 There seems to be a flurry of interest in Southern Small White at the moment – Facebook has lots of examples of people hedging their bets on Small Whites which are just that and not *mannii*, still wont be long now I'm sure 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Sep-20 08:26 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, yes that Copper does look like someone sneezed whilst colouring it in or something! I don't doubt that *mannii* is on our shores now, (they are in Calais by all accounts), perhaps for a few years now but picking them out from all the Small Whites will be rather tricky. The second brood females do look very heavily marked from images I've seen though and a favoured foodplant is candytuft apparently so anyone with a garden full of that on the south coast should keep a close eye on any Whites sniffing around.

### August 2020

**Saturday 22nd.** Back to Bookham. With Long-tailed Blues still quietly hiding away in pea pods, just a couple of weeks away from causing a flurry of activity on the south coast (and much crazy theorizing as to where they've come from on social media), Bookham was still a draw and had plenty to keep me entertained. Brown Hairstreaks had reverted to the more usual elusive behaviour but others were still sitting around awaiting my camera. A couple of minor Meadow Brown abs again, both probably just fitting the *addenda* description, started the day off.

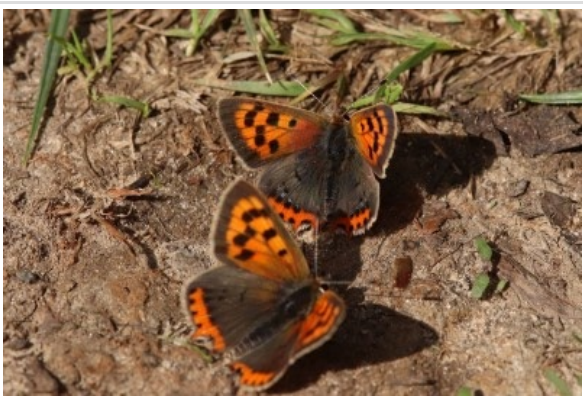




It's always nice when a Small Heath behaves itself too.



The third generation of Small Copper are starting to build here to. Don't be fooled by these two's apparent peacefulness, I managed to capture a very brief lull in what was otherwise a constant battle for dominance.



Next was the third Meadow Brown ab of the day, and my second *ceaca* of the year.



I did find a Brown Hairstreak, a female on egg laying duties who was far less cooperative than the previous posers I'd found here this year.



Speckled Wood were also reasonably numerous but find of the day for me was a Damselfly lifer, this is the first time I've knowingly seen a Willow Emerald, a fairly recent arrival to our shores.







Only one more August report to go then I'm in September and only 5 reports away from the south coast festivities 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 16-Sep-20 09:19 PM GMT

I like that Small Copper ab., Buggy – yet another weird and wonderful variation amongst the many that have cropped up this year. Victorian collectors would have been in copper-coloured heaven and might even have been distracted from naming every last nuance of Chalkhill Blue markings... 😊

Those two *addenda* Meadow Browns are (aside from wear) actually very similarly marked. Maybe closely related...

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 17-Sep-20 08:28 AM GMT

You've certainly got a good eye for anything slightly different to the norm, Paul. The Small Copper in your earlier post is particularly interesting. As you say, it exhibits characteristics of more than one aberrant form.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 17-Sep-20 08:20 PM GMT

Another interesting collection Bugboy – that ab is an easy one to remember thinking about it as 'addenda' sounds remotely like 'add-under'; so another spot has been added under 😊 😊 I've never encountered the Willow Emerald or any other of the green Damselfly Flies 🍷

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Sep-20 02:05 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**. Not sure those two Meadow Browns were related, at least closely. They were photographed a fair distance from each other: one was near Bookham train station and the other was on the path leading up towards Banks Common. Still, not out of the question but given what I've found this year, I think these variations are actually rather common and are just simply overlooked because once the first few have emerged and we've ticked them off our yearly tally, most of us pay them little regard in favour of the more showy butterflies which all start emerging in the weeks after them.

Thanks **David**, I think Lockdown got me focusing on the commoner species since I was unable to travel to see regional specialties earlier this year. I do feel like I've seen more abs this year than any other, albeit many of them minor and in reality probably within natural variations.

Thanks **Wurzel**, keep your eye's peeled on this diary for more Emerald Damselfly stuff in the coming weeks, maybe a fortnight if I can keep up with reports 😊

### August 2020

**Wednesday 26th** was a three site day and with another hot day forecast I set of nice and early again to try and beat the worst of the heat. First stop of the day was Denbies, another attempt at finding some Adonis which once again left me feeling that this year's second brood has been something of a damp squib for them. The horrid wet and windy weather from the previous couple of days probably hadn't helped my cause either. Having said that the other denizens of the slope were out, if now beginning to look a little world weary. Chalkhills and SSS still made up the bulk of the butterflies on site together with decent numbers of Meadow Browns and Small Heath.



Confident that the target wasn't going to make an appearance I made a move to the next site, killing time whilst waiting for my train by wandering down to the River Mole to watch some Banded Demoiselles do their thing, which mostly consisted of sitting around sparkling in the sun 😊 .



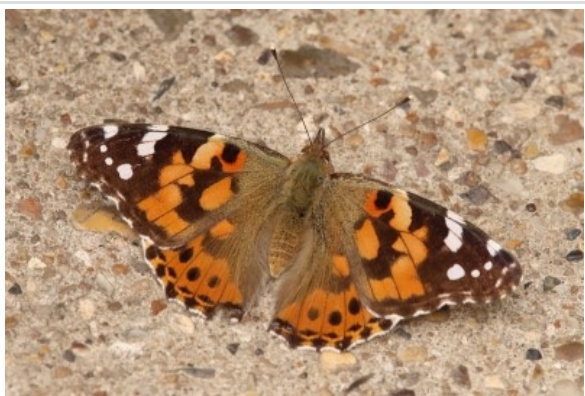
Site two was Ashted Common where Brown Hairstreaks were still on the menu. Small Coppers were a welcome distraction but it didn't take long for a Hairstreak to make an appearance, just not the species I was expecting. The place I saw my very first Purple Hairstreak of the year becoming the place I saw my last.



Meadow Brown, Speckled Wood, Common Blue and Brown Argus all put in an appearance but my patience paid off and I finally had two separate female Brown Hairstreaks make an appearance, the second of which posed beautifully for me before heading off into the Blackthorn to go about her duties, shame she didn't do that for me the day she emerged!



At Ashted station, awaiting the train to Bookham, I couldn't resist getting a few weird glances from fellow passengers as a Painted Lady decided to use the stairs leading to the bridge over the tracks as a basking spot.



At Bookham Small Coppers ruled the roost, not a great deal else was about, just the odd Meadow Brown, Small Heath and Speckled Wood but a passing female Large White did stop by to feed on the Devil's-bit Scabious.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 20-Sep-20 06:31 PM GMT

Quite a tardy Purple Hairstreak there, Buggy – I don't think I've ever seen one so late in the year. And good to track down the Brown ones at another site. 😊

I agree about the worrying lack of Adonis at Denbies. I wonder if it's anything to do with the grazing regime, allowing those Belted Galloway cattle out across the slopes on and off throughout the year (including the spell between the two Adonis broods). Up at Aston Rowant the hillside is grazed with sheep, there is generally a summer gap in the grazing, and Adonis Blues seem to be doing pretty well there (several were still flying today in fact).

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 21-Sep-20 08:51 PM GMT

Great report with cracking accompanying images Bugboy 😊😊 That really was a late Purp 😊  
I remember reading (probably in Neil Hulme's PD) that Adonis and Chalkhills prefer a different sward height as it offers a different developmental temperature but I can't remember which way round it was, possibly that Chalkhills prefer the longer sward? Mind you cattle grazing is often better for species diversity as they pull chunks out meaning you get a greater range of sward heights whereas sheep are like lawnmowers nibbling it to the same height – however if Adonis like a short sward perhaps the cattle aren't producing a wide enough area of short turf? 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 22-Sep-20 11:44 AM GMT

[quote=bugboy post\_id=158360 time=1600607112 user\_id=13753].At Ashtead station, awaiting the train to Bookham, I couldn't resist getting a few weird glances from fellow passengers as a Painted Lady decided to use the stairs leading to the bridge over the tracks as a basking spot.

😊 Yes, been in that situation a few times myself, Paul, e.g. when I was blocking the wooden walkway last year at Port Eynon beach because a Clouded Yellow was feeding on valerian close by.

It's certainly more worthwhile than usual photographing Painted Ladies this year given how scarce they have been.

Unusually late Purple Hairstreak too. I bet you weren't expecting that?

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 22-Sep-20 02:43 PM GMT

Talking of weird looks or rather the possibility of them. When I went to Portland for a hoped for Large Tortoiseshell, the best Buddleia bush at Church Ope Cove was literally opposite the Ladies toilet, so to avoid adverse comments and possible arrest I elected to study the bush from a safe distance.

I am saving my mrgreens for your trip to Whitehawk Hill.

Stay safe and well,  
Trevor.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Sep-20 08:11 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, I don't really have any answers to the lack of Adonis except to say it didn't seem to be just at Denbies. Unless I was just unlucky, there seemed to be low second brood numbers at my other regular sites too 😊. Maybe they didn't cope well with the summers weather patterns? The second generation do need a shorter sword than the spring gen to lay though so summer grazing should in theory be beneficial to them.

Thanks **Wurzel**, yes it's the Adonis that require a shorter sword for their larvae but I'm sure there's other more subtle requirements that may well tip the balance for or against them too (ant populations, parasitoid numbers, the cool June just when the eggs are hatching?). Denbies does possess a range or sword length since there's a couple of rabbit warrens there too.

Thanks **David**, yes sometimes needs must 😊

Haha, a wise decision on your part there **Trevor**! You may have to ration the Mr greens, I've got four visits to Whitehawk waiting in the wings to write up.... 😊

## September 2020

**Tuesday 1st.** I'd managed to wangle a half day using up a few hours owed to me. Not enough time to go anywhere further than my local patch though, which predictably had pretty much come to an end as far as butterflies are concerned. I did manage to grab a Green-veined White and a Small white from the handful of Whites that were flitting around.



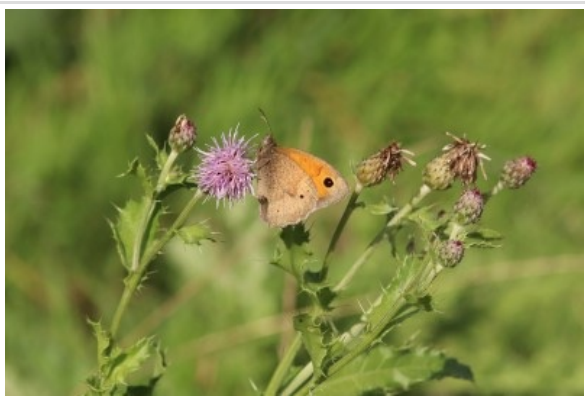
Also around were a pair of something that might just tempt **Pauline** out of hibernation. I'm presuming a pair, certainly looks like a dog fox in the foreground. The vixen seemed to have a wound or something above her left eye. There was no indication she was in any discomfort though.



Some Swans and Little Grebes were out enjoying the afternoon sun



I was pleasantly surprised to find a couple of Meadow Browns active, and looking quite fresh too. (Yes in September a Meadow Brown is something I get excited about on my local patch!)





The stroll ended with more Whites and a worn Holly Blue, which gave me a grand total of four species for the afternoon, probably just nudging into double figures.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 23-Sep-20 10:24 PM GMT

I do like that GVW, Buggy – such a typical pose, plus the back-lighting to highlight the markings and the lemon-yellow on the underside. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-20 10:33 PM GMT

Those Meadow Browns are in good nick Bugboy – the ones I was seeing back then were all looking a bit tatty and now they're just shadows of their former selves 😊 I'm with Dave – lovely GVW they really do 'stained glass' so well 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-Sep-20 06:50 PM GMT

Thanks guys, that GVW was just a lucky grab shot, it just happened to land and pose perfectly for a couple of shots as I was walking along 😊

## September 2020

**Wednesday 2nd.** This was a trip I'd wanted to do for a few weeks but had, for one reason or another not actually managed, it was also a trip I was somewhat apprehensive about taking, Chobham Common. Shortly after my previous visit a large fire broke out during the peak of the summer's heatwave. Frustratingly the main reason it made the news initially was that it disrupted a golfing tournament on nearby golf course, the potential damage it was causing on what is one of the worlds rarest natural habitats becoming just a footnote a week or so after the event. Also frustratingly, despite much internet searching, I couldn't find any information to show the extent of the fire and whether it had reached the areas where I go to find Grayling and Silver-studded Blue most years, I was just pinning my hopes on the local topography. I was fairly sure where the fire had started and the fact that the Common is far from flat, I hoped meant that it hadn't reached as far as I feared. In between its presumed starting point and my Grayling/SSB hotspot is a rather deep, boggy valley rich in sphagnum moss which I was hoping would have acted as a natural fire break. Of course it could off gone around it...

As the train approaches Sunningdale station it passes the Common and looking out the window I saw that what I'd hoped for did look to have happened, the fire looked to have stopped at the top of the valley rather than crossing it 😊.

It had been nearly a month since the fire and there had been significant rainfall in the intervening weeks, much needed and probably welcomed by the local fire services as much as anyone, since it would have helped to put out any hot spots that would otherwise continue to smoulder underground. The fresh green growth had begun to softened the fire damaged areas but it was still very obvious just how extensive it was.



Happily though, what I had hoped for and seen from the train had indeed happened and my usual hunting ground was completely untouched



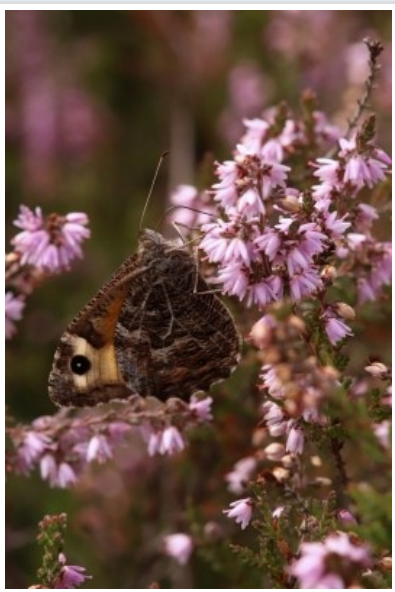
*Looking across the valley you can see where the fire stopped*



*My regular hunting ground, untouched by fire.*

and it didn't take long to come across the first of what turned out to be many Grayling. Non were fresh as a daisy, as I would expect this late in the season, but a good number weren't exactly on their last legs either.







A couple of pics for the annual 'spot the Grayling' competition



And a couple of other species that rely on this kind of habitat to live, a Keeled Skimmer Dragonfly and the wonderful Green Tiger Beetle





The bird spot for the day was a lifer for me but I didn't get a pic. I disturbed a Nightjar roosting on a log right next to a path. I only got a glimpse of it as it vanished into nearby scrub. If you're not familiar with them, they're a nocturnal bird which roost on the ground or logs, often in plain sight and rely on camouflage to remain hidden. They're basically the bird version of the Grayling in camouflage terms!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 26-Sep-20 07:29 PM GMT

Great to see you got your Graylings Bugboy – the season wouldn't be complete without them 😊 and good to see the habitat escaped 8) Even better must have been spooking a Nightjar – cracking birds they are 😊 – did you notice if it had white patches on its wings or tail as this would make it a male?

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 28-Sep-20 09:25 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel** It was a very quick glimpse, one of those moments where your brain has to catch up with what your eyes saw. My first thought was Merlin 😊. Didn't notice any white, I suspect it was a juve.

### September 2020

**Saturday 5th.** A hill overlooking Brighton was on the brink of becoming a late season Mecca for butterflies (indeed when I got home that evening pictures of BLEP were all over social media!) but today I chose Mill Hill. Still trying to get a decent audience with Adonis Blues but once again I was left wanting. Possibly timing as most were a little worn but even so they were few and far between compared to previous years.

I stopped off first at Southwick Harbour, hoping for some Clouded Yellows (none) and also checked out the local BLEP here (mostly gone over and dried out in the sun). All that were seen here were a few Whites and a couple of Common Blues.

On the walk up to Mill Hill from Shoreham station I invariably take a detour around the horse paddocks on the south side of the bypass which have a footpath running around the edge. The paddocks seem to be managed sympathetically for wildlife (not sure if it's on purpose or just a by-product of the owners preferred management style) and there's normally something to tempt my camera out my bag. Today my eye caught sight of a Holly Blue flying around some Ivy. There was something not right about it though that I couldn't put my finger on. It was only when it finally settled at the top of the bush that I got my answer as to why it looked odd.



Once on site it didn't take long to find some Adonis, a few aged males fluttered around and despite the somewhat overcast conditions proved somewhat difficult to approach.



A few females were also about but just to make things more tricky the Chalkhills hadn't quite finished either. I managed a few pics of females which after some very close zoomed in study on my computer, I think are Adonis due to the presence of a few blue scales in the right places.



*Some OAP Chalkhills*

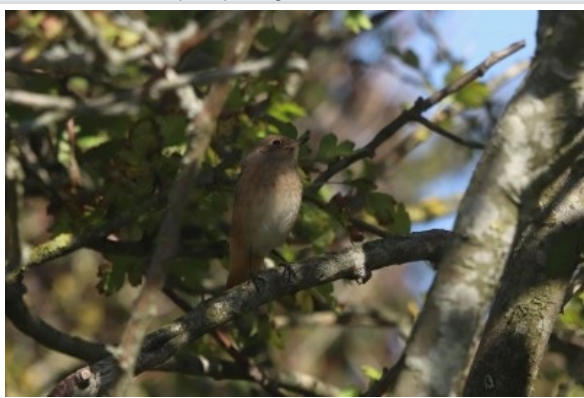


*99% sure Adonis*

Common Blues and Small Coppers were also present and a couple of Cloudies were gallivanting around the slope whenever the sun broke through the clouds but I failed to get very close to them or locate where they settled during the cloudier periods. There was also a particularly fine example of Brown Argus kind 😊



A couple of non-butterfly characters provided a pleasant distraction, both lifers for me. A Redstart who stuck very strictly to the scrub and shade, and our largest species of Robber Fly, *Asilus crabroniformis*. A truly magnificent looking beast and HUGE! I was almost scared to get to close in case it took offence and flew with my arm 😊. As I was watching it rest during a cloudy spell, I disturbed a grasshopper which had a very close escape when the fly made a serious attempt at picking it out of the air.



Redstart



*gargantuan Robber fly*

On the return walk around the horse paddocks I added a few real Holly Blues to the days tally, a very fresh female was singularly very unimpressed with a tatty old male's eager advances



## Re: Bugboys mission

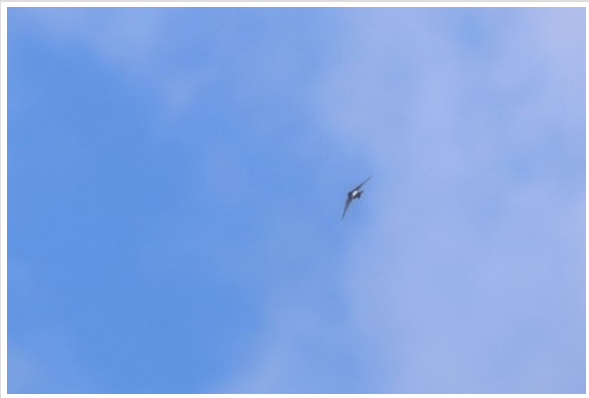
by bugboy, 29-Sep-20 06:15 PM GMT

### September 2020

**Sunday 6th.** Not a great deal to report today, 'the calm before the storm' perhaps in my autumnal butterflying 😊 . I didn't have time to do anything other than a few hours on my local patch which once again only produced a few Whites of which this fresh GV was the best of the bunch.



A few House Martins were swooping around, getting ready for the long journey to Africa.



There was also a terrapin lounging around, quite a chunky chap too.



There might be some BLEP in my next post....

## **Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 30-Sep-20 07:15 PM GMT

### **September 2020**

**Thursday 10th.** After the weekend festivities plastered all over social media, this was the day I finally took the plunge and hopped on the train for a trip to the south coast to tick off species 40 for the year.

I got there early, about 9am, to find just a couple of people mooching around waiting for the action to start which, according to a familiar face and regular to this spot, was expected to start at around 9.30.

The first one appeared almost on the dot, my first image being time stamped at 9.36. 😊



After this the floodgates opened and photo opportunities came thick and fast with several familiar faces popping by as the day progressed.



As is usual it was nearly all males but one female did make an appearance, identified as the female filmed being mated the previous day. She looked to be still in pretty good shape considering the rough treatment she'd endured the day before! (see here if you missed that event <https://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/phpBB/viewtopic.php?f=8&t=10804>)







It was the fresh males that stole the show though.



There were other butterflies around, a tatty old female Brown Hairstreak drew a decent audience for a time and later in the afternoon when things had calmed down a female Large White posed rather well.



The day belonged to these little shimmering violet gems though! A combination of long sunny spells and passing high cloud providing ample variations of poses throughout the day.





I went home extremely happy with over 1000 pictures in the camera to trawl through, making picking the pictures for this post exceedingly difficult! 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 30-Sep-20 07:57 PM GMT

That Large White is a cracker Bugboy – on any other visit it might have stolen the show as its so well marked – not this one obviously 😊🍷🍷 A fantastic array of LTBs 🍷🍷🍷

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 01-Oct-20 09:00 PM GMT

Great to see you got in on the LTB action, Paul. This is almost approaching an annual event. How long will it be before we consider them as 'regulars' in the same way we do with Clouded Yellows?

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 01-Oct-20 09:30 PM GMT

You had real value from your 'Southern' ticket that day Paul!

A good haul of fresh male LTB's, but it's your female that gets a couple of 🍷🍷. The females didn't play ball for me, except one fresh one which sat on a Pea flower for half an hour, and never opened up. But I saw lots of milk coffee brown during a prolonged wing roll. Some great shots there!

All the best, and stay well.  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 02-Oct-20 09:21 AM GMT

A comprehensive selection of excellent LTB shots, Buggy, including a female (something that eluded me this year) 😊 I also like the second shot capturing the particular quality of the blue colour sported by the males – a sort of violet streaked with paler blue. The wing surface is distinctly three-dimensional (if that makes sense.) Their migration does now seem to be an annual occurrence, which puts them on the same footing as Painted Ladies (which I've seen fewer of this year in fact!).

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Oct-20 09:12 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, Your right about those Blues stealing the show, I didn't take too much notice of the Brown Hairstreak either 😊

Thanks **David**. I think it's pretty much a given that LTB's are on the UK list in the same way as Clouded Yellows are now. Whether you see this as a good or a bad thing depends on your viewpoint 😊

Thanks **Trevor**, there's a few more 'southern day tickets' coming in the next few posts, all of which were worth every penny 😊

Thanks **Dave**, you're right about the Painted Ladies, just did a quick count, seen five of them this year!

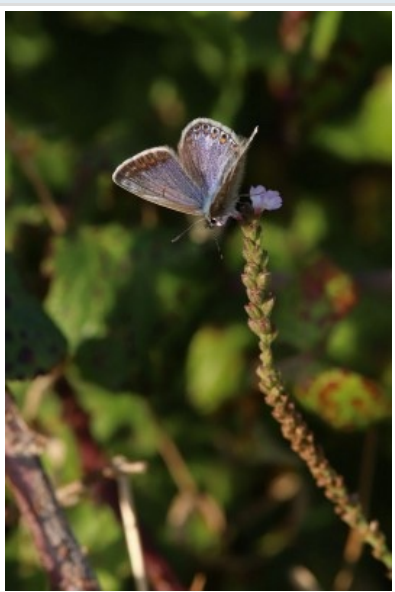
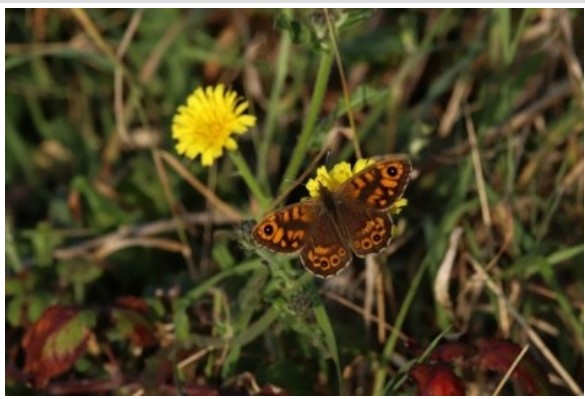
### September 2020

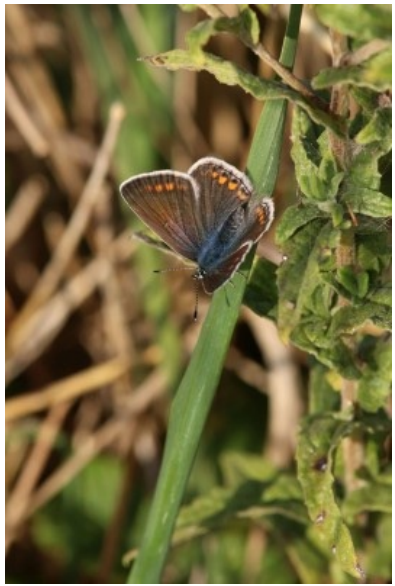
**Tuesday 15th. (part 1)** It was another five days before I was able to get out again. Monday was the start of a two-week break from work and today's payday was the start of my annual stint of day trips to the south coast to extend my butterfly season as far as possible 😊. Since my last trip it would seem that many many people had visited Whitehawk and fearing large crowds I plumped for one of my other regular late season haunts, Newhaven Tidemills. I knew the LTB hadn't been seen here this year but I did hope some Clouded Yellows might put in an appearance. As it turned out a Cloudie, a fresh female, was the first butterfly I saw on site, sadly she was on the wrong side of the fence that still surrounds the building site here.



Three species dominated the morning, Clouded Yellows, Common Blues and Walls with a generous sprinkling of Whites and Small Heath. I'd first seen a few Walls here last year but only up near the ruins, today they were popping up all over the site, along with several patrolling male Cloudies who

weren't stopping for anyone, it was rather warm and cloudless so I didn't make much of an attempt to chase them. The numerous Common Blues (numbers perhaps foreshadowing the plagues that would later swamp sites like Mill Hill) provided a few heart stopping moments but after seeing all those Long-tailed Blues five days previously I was fairly confident of the ID's from just a quick glance. Of the three species I focused mainly on the Walls who were relatively easy to pin down and made the most of a nice-looking mating pair who allowed close approach.

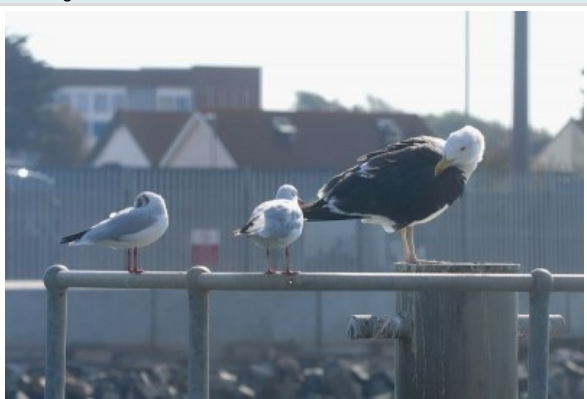




I was still mulling over where to move on for the afternoon but just before leaving a Cloudie settled not far from me and despite the warm sun, sat still whilst I crept up on him to get a few decent shots.



Remembering the Small Copper ab. I found over the estuary at the fort last time I decided to take another wander over there, pausing on the way for this snap. Not the best picture in the world but it shows very well just how huge a Great Black-backed Gull is, dwarfing the Black-headed Gulls here in the foreground.



At the fort there wasn't a great deal about, a few Common Blues, a Small Copper (normal edition this time) a few Whites and a single Wall.



It had only just reached midday and still mulling over options I caved in to temptation to risk the crowds and head over to Brighton. What I found there deserves a post of it's own though... 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 02-Oct-20 11:12 PM GMT

That's a great shot of the mating Wall Browns. I've only seen them in one's or two's at Tide Mills, so your visit is quite a revelation. The day I intended to visit there it was too breezy at home, let alone right by the sea. Some nice Cloudie shots too.

Looking forward to your other 'Southern' excursions!.

Stay well,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 03-Oct-20 10:32 PM GMT

Great find that mating pair of Walls Bugboy 😊😄👍 The Cloudy looked in really good nick as well – the few I saw this year were a little tired 🤔  
Looking forward to part 2 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Oct-20 03:47 PM GMT

Thanks **Trevor**, I was quite surprised just how widespread they were too, they've clearly spent the summer building up numbers 😊  
Thanks **Wurzel**, here's part two 😊

### September 2020

**Tuesday 15th. (part 2)** I was pleasantly surprised at the lack of people at Whitehawk when I arrived, just three were roaming around. I set myself up at one of the main lekking spots and within seconds I was watching sparring males shooting up into the air in tiny, energetic blurs. This happened several times giving little photographic opportunities when I noticed a couple shoot down into the vegetation, sending my spider senses shooting up to maximum settings 😊. Getting closer I could see the action, an eager male trying every trick in his book to woo the newest love of his life. There was an awful lot of wing fluttering and quivering as he curled his abdomen around to try and make contact. In doing so I was able to make out the huge claspers. I can't say I blame the females for making the males life difficult when these things are trying to clamp onto her!



After a while he swapped sides and he finally managed to clamp onto her.





There was much twirling and pirouetting from the pair until finally settling and many pictures were taken 😊 .



They did get lost once when they decided they'd had enough attention but I managed to re-find them in time for the appearance of **Benjamin** who continued to keep an eye on them whilst I browsed the other males, who were all starting to show a little wear and tear.







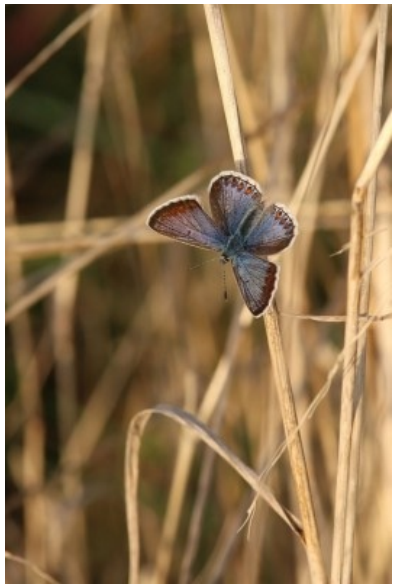
They split after almost exactly 45 minutes, which at the time I thought was a rather short period but after reading Neils diary, it would seem this is normal. From Benjamin's observations it looked like the female instigated the separation. The male vanished but the female hung around for a bit, sadly she refused to open up though.

So after just an hour here, I figured things probably weren't going to get better than that so I decided to return to Newhaven, hoping I'd catch the Cloudies in a quieter mood. Sadly I was for the most part out of luck in that respect, they had either already settled for the night or still rampaging across the site. The only one that did settle was probably the only one with damage to its wings.



The Blues were also starting to settle down and the remaining active Walls had quietened down too, enjoying the rays of the low sun.





The birdlife here was also quite active, Reed Buntings, Linnets, Skylarks and Meadow Pipits all providing willing targets for my camera.



*Female Reed Bunting*



*Exhausted mummy Linnet feeding fledgling*



Skylark



Meadow Pipit

A good end to a great day out squeezing the most out of my train ticket, the overriding memory being the size of those claspers!



'Is that an earwig in your pocket or ar you just pleased to see me' 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 04-Oct-20 04:35 PM GMT

Some rather graphic butterfly pornography there, Buggy! 😊 You're right, that does go some way to explaining the female's reluctance to cooperate. 😊 Seriously though, that's a terrific sequence of images leading to the coupling, not something easily achieved with a common species let alone one as infrequent as this one... 🍷🍷🍷 Brilliant. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 04-Oct-20 06:24 PM GMT

You've already said most of what I was going to say Dave. But that sequence of images leading up to 'the act' is fantastic, and probably unique. 🍷🍷.

No wonder the females head straight for the channel after that!

Excellent stuff,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 05-Oct-20 10:10 PM GMT

A fantastic report Bugboy with brilliant images 📷📷📷 – really interesting to see the mechanics involved – I now have a greater appreciation of why females go to such lengths to reject the males 😏😏

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 06-Oct-20 04:48 PM GMT

That would have made a fabulous day in early July, Paul, let alone mid-September! 📷

Superb observations on the courtship/mating behaviour...and well done for the timing. Always good to know how long you're likely to have with two paired specimens. Even without the Long Tailed Blue performance, those Walls and Clouded Yellows were worthy of the journey. The far south **does** seem to have a little extra later in the season.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by ernie f, 07-Oct-20 07:37 PM GMT

Just catching up with peoples PD's, so started through yours Bugboy.

Love that sequence of LT Blues prior to and in-cop and also the purplier shots of LT Blue uppersides. And the mating Wall Browns. Plus I found both the Grayling in your "Spot the Grayling" competition but have to admit I had to enlarge the second pic to see it.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Oct-20 10:01 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments, very much a case of right time right place 😊, had I gone straight to the main area I would have missed it entirely and 5 minutes later I probably would have disturbed them in the act.

### September 2020

**Thursday 17th.** Another sunny day found me once again on the south coast. After filling my boots on my previous two visits with Long-tailed Blue's I decided to focus on Clouded Yellows this time with a return to Tidemills. The early start this time worked and it didn't take me long to find a compliant Cloudie, a female who allowed several close approaches as she enjoyed the morning rays. Being somewhat breezy she kept to the sheltered paths along the north side of the site and somewhat contained and relatively easy to follow.



Like last time Walls, littered the site. Unlike last time most having signs of wear now, but still mostly looking pretty decent.



Common Blues were active in decent numbers once again in varying degrees of wear...



And Whites were also present in numbers. As always, they were closely studied as best as could be. Many long-range shots on maximum zoom taken for later closer examination but these all ended up in the bin, nothing out of the ordinary was found although the black markings on this males wingtip did make me wonder.... 🤔 Other images of him show the forked vein though



Shortly before lunch a second Cloudie (there had been numerous flybys since the first female) started to settle and feed regularly. He wasn't in as good shape as the first female though, he seemed to have a squify forewing.



Whilst all this was going on a flock of Curlew periodically circled overhead. I looked hard at them but no sign of a Whimbrel lurking amongst them.



I had a new site in mind for the afternoon, Lewes Cemetery. I read on social media about a LTB sighting the previous week and I was curious if it was just passing through or whether there was evidence of a colony. It's only a 10 minute walk from the station and when I arrived I found that a section is being deliberately left to grow wild. Scanning around I couldn't see any sign of BLEP or any other type of suitable Pea so I concluded the LTB was just passing through. There was however plenty to keep me occupied, Common Blues and Walls were numerous. A passing Large White also sat for a while and a Hummingbird Hawkmoth was buzzing around non-stop, I suspect a female on egg laying duties since it was showing avid interest in some of the Bedstraws. A single Small Copper completed the species list here.



Best spot of the afternoon though was a female Wall on egg laying duties and for the second time this year I managed some clear shots of an ovipositing Wall, this time managing to capture the egg coming out! 😊



Gif



*The resulting egg*

There was still plenty of time to squeeze some more out of my ticket so I returned to tidemills to see if any more Cloudies would behave, finding only one, the same male as in the morning with a squiffy wing. An accidental open winged shot indicates something happened on his emergence rather than any real damage had occurred. Only once did he settle to show his good side.



Walls and Common Blues were of course still active.



All in all another entertaining day out 😊

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by trevor, 07-Oct-20 10:30 PM GMT

Squiffy wing or not that's a very fine shot of that Cloudie taking off. With the high number of third brood Walls being reported from Sussex, some away from their normal haunts, it can only be concluded that they have had a fabulous year.



Hope this bodes well for the future.

Take care,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 07-Oct-20 10:35 PM GMT

That was a very full day, Buggy! Great shots of the Wall laying, and of the resultant egg too. The open-wing Cloudie is a corker as well, for all its slightly wonky wing. Very frustrating though to get the shot, only for it to be a less than perfect butterfly. Still definitely worth a 🍷 or two.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 08-Oct-20 08:12 PM GMT

That open wing Cloudy is definitely worth a few 🍷 as well as the female Wall laying for a moment there I couldn't quite work out what was going on as it all seemed a bit back to front and then I did a double take and realised that she had her abdomen so far round 🤔😄

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Oct-20 09:12 PM GMT

Thanks **Trevor**, that pic looks better small, slow shutter setting motion blur unavoidable. Yes I think the same climate change that brings us LTB's is now helping the Walls recover by enabling them to successfully fit in the 3rd brood without any problems now, it's a double edged sword that climate change 😊

Thanks **Dave**, yes a very full day but most enjoyable 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, I've discovered that find a Wall laying eggs and you can get right up close 😊

### September 2020

**Friday 18th.** I took a break from the south coast today and visited Bookham to see how the end of season was going there, it normally has a strong Small Copper third brood. This year they are around but in much lower numbers than in previous years, enough to keep me occupied though.





Common Blues were also present in ones or twos, some of the males looking very fresh indeed.



Only two other species were seen through the course of the day, a couple of very ropey looking Meadow Brown and the perennial Speckled Wood.

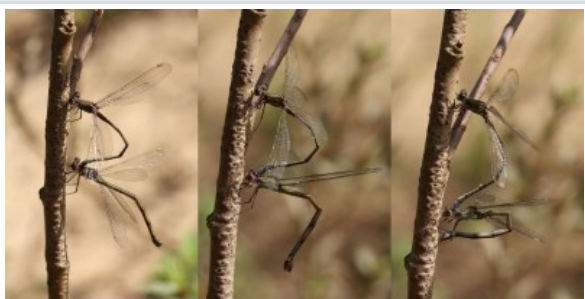


One of the reasons I chose Bookham today was to look for more Willow Emerald Damselflies and see if I could find breeding evidence. They're unusual in that they lay their eggs well above the waterline and according to the literature the marks left are pretty obvious. I quickly found a single one close to the spot where I'd found the first a few weeks ago next to one of the ponds here. This particular pond is quite shallow and the dry summer had caused it to recede by several metres, allowing easy access to search the willows overhanging the edge. Straight away I was greeted with sights I'd seen in my books, very distinctive scars along the willow twigs. I also found that if I worked my way down to older branches, I could find previous years scars. I'd

estimate perhaps going back four or five years.



Searching further along the bank I also disturbed a couple of pairs in tandem and was able to follow one pair to capture the eggs being laid under the bark of a small Sallow sucker who's stems were covered in scars. It was fascinating to watch.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 09-Oct-20 09:56 PM GMT

Good to see there are still some Coppers at Bookham, Buggy. They do seem to have suffered from the disturbance to that field a couple of years ago – the hedge that was grubbed up must have provided shelter for them (as well as those Dingy Skippers I saw in spring 2018 which are no longer there).

Fascinating behaviour from the Damsels too. Their mating mechanics have always baffled me – I'm going to have to go and look it up now! 😊😊

Cheers,

Dave

## Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 10-Oct-20 08:14 PM GMT

Really interesting set of images Bugboy 😊 I still can't quite fathom the how their reproductive organs work like that at opposite ends of the genders body's? 😊 Still it makes for nice photography as sometimes they sit in such a way as to make a love heart 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

## Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 10-Oct-20 09:54 PM GMT

Nice to see your selection of images, as ever, Paul. The Wall Browns and Cloudies in particular make me rather envious.

I'm surprised your Small Coppers are relatively scarce – they've been pretty commonplace round way way through September and into October. Perhaps there are local reasons for this?

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-Oct-20 02:49 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, numbers were lower over the whole site where I usually find many more Coppers, so it wasn't just that hedge grubbing that did for them this year, perhaps the dry conditions dessicated the Sorrel at a critical point in the caterpillars development here? As for the Damselflies (and Dragonflies) mating behaviour, I don't think anyone really knows why they have this unique method. They've been around for a very long time and survived a few mass extinctions though, so it clearly doesn't have any negative impact on them 😊.

Thanks **Wurzel**, yes they can be very photogenic at times 😊

Thanks **David**, these days it seems pretty normal now for Walls, Cloudies, Small Coppers and Common Blues to provide a colourful end to the season down here in the south 😊

## September 2020

**Saturday 19th.** Ok so I had had a break from the south coast for a day, it was time to go back to see what I was missing down there again. First stop Southwick harbour where I found just a few Whites and Common Blues. No Cloudies sadly but one of the female Small Whites did have a very clear broken spot on her forewing, ab. *divisa* apparently.



Next it was off to see what was going on at Whitehawk Hill. The LTB initial emergence was now winding down but of course you never know what might be there.

Anyone who's familiar with the LTB's social media presence this year will probably be aware of much of the fantastical discussions about them, mainly the much talked about but completely mistaken interpretation that if they were here last year and again this year they must have overwintered. Oddly Clouded Yellows also turn up on the same sites every year but the same people don't seem to draw the same conclusions 😊.

Another discussion that became quite widely talked about was how much the site had been destroyed by the trampling of the daily deluge of photographers. In most other cases I would have whole heartedly agreed with this statement. However I'm leaning towards the complete opposite in this case, I think the trampling actually benefitted the LTB's to a certain extent. Part of the worries from people was connected to the mistaken belief that they are resident here, the trampling destroying any immature stages that would 'overwinter'. Also there was worry about it destroying the BLEP but again this is largely mistaken in my opinion, it would take an awful lot more than some trampling for a few weeks to destroy it, it will come back next year and also it was mostly going over now and dying back for the winter anyway.

The trampling itself also wasn't particularly widespread across the hillside, merely focused at the top where the males would congregate. BLEP is found over the whole hillside and the females will naturally gravitate away from these trampled lekking areas to lay the majority of their eggs, so I don't think the trampling would do much if anything to damage this temporary population. Also where the grass did become trampled, it died back and dried out creating hollows which would have a warmer microclimate, slightly protected from any breeze by surrounding taller grass and shrubs and, today in particular, I noticed how vigorously these areas were fought over and defended by the victor. Clearly, despite what people were saying, the butterflies knew better, as so often is the case.

When I arrived today it was a bit overcast, a few enthusiasts were roaming around the main spot next to the allotments and a single LTB had been located here.



As the clouds began to thin and break up though I moved to the secondary lekking area and when the sun finally broke through, I had two or three all to myself. After a little while one male became more dominant and successfully defended this area against all other interlopers, this 'ruined' trampled spot did seem to act like a Mecca to your average LTB.



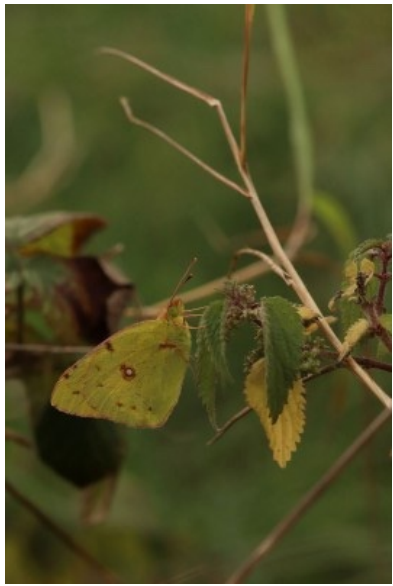
After a couple of hours here I decided to move on once again. I'd heard about the mass emergence of Common Blues over at Mill Hill and wanted to see for myself. Well I wasn't going to be disappointed! Even my usual route around the horse paddocks threw up more Common Blues than I've ever seen here before. Walls were also present and a Cloudie flew past but most notably a fresh Comma appeared, I can't remember the last time I saw one of these!



Reaching the rough grassy areas near the bottom car park the Blues were already out in vast numbers. It had become quite overcast again so most were inactive, either roosting or trying to soak up the weak rays still fighting through the cloud cover. I tried to focus on the females, of which there seemed to be an infinite variety.



A fellow enthusiast was also here and taking a break from the Blues, we both focused on a Clouded Yellow looking for somewhere to roost for a while.



Moving down onto the main slope, Common Blue's remained by far the dominant butterfly, however somehow (I'm not sure how) I picked out something a little different flitting around, I hadn't needed to go to Whitehawk to get my LTB fix today after all 😊 . I later found out this was the first sighting of one here. Presumably just passing through though.



Anyway, back to the Common Blues...there were hundreds!





Here's a male who thought he'd try his luck on a roosting female 😊, he predictably was out of luck 😊!





*Spot the imposter!*







and to finish, some butterflies on a stick 😊😄



I guess this would have been a standard experience for those Victorian collectors.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 14-Oct-20 04:36 PM GMT

An excellent reminder of just how many Common Blues were on Mill Hill this year. 😊 How you managed to find the needle of a single LTB amidst that particular *icarus* haystack I can't begin to imagine – brilliant observational skills. 🍷🍷

Your comments about the trampling are interesting too. I also noticed when I was there that the patches of flattened grass were favoured spots that the males repeatedly returned to (warmer and more sheltered I imagine). I've seen this on my local patch where a small area of grass was worn by my regular visits and became the favourite basking/perching location for Small Coppers. I feel less guilty about this in consequence! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 15-Oct-20 10:02 AM GMT

I would imagine you considered your rail ticket for that day to be excellent value for money! Shame about Southwick on your visit. Mind you there was a lot of Cloudie action on the bank near the steps yesterday when I arrived, then it went quiet, even in sunny periods for a couple of hours with none seen at all. Anyone arriving around lunchtime would also have drawn a blank.

Bob the Egret ( or offspring of Bob ) is doing fine, and was frequently seen. Strange there only ever seems to be one Egret present there.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 16-Oct-20 08:28 PM GMT

A fantastic collection of Blues Bugboy and you did really well to pick the LTB out from among them 🤩🍷 so many Common Blues – not sure I can recall seeing photos showing so many stacked up in the same spot 😊

I too kept having to bite my tongue when people started banging on about LTBs overwintering on Social Media, just shows a little knowledge can easily lead to 2+2=5 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Oct-20 02:54 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, yes as I'm sure you know, the key to any good habitat is a mosaic of micro habitats.

Thanks **Trevor**, yup, very much worth it. You have to get your timing just right to find Cloudies at these sites, they're very transient and each wave of eggs laid by females passing through all hatch around the same time and then move on quite quickly.

Thanks **Wurzel**, I'm still not entirely sure how I managed to find that LTB, apart from saying a huge chunk of luck was involved! 😊

### September 2020

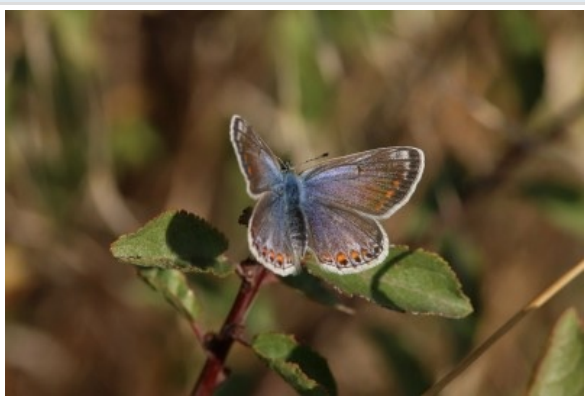
**Sunday 20th.** Another break from the south coast, this time into Essex to see what was going on at Hadleigh Country Park and Two Tree Island, two good late season hunting grounds and this year with the added attraction of some possible third gen Walls. Unfortunately most of the Thames estuary was hiding under a thick blanket of cloud which looked set to hang around for a large portion of the morning so it was with some surprise that the only butterfly I saw in the first hour was a Wall.



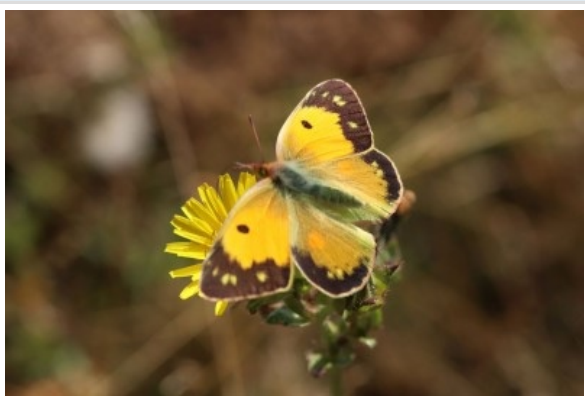
Even so a break in the cloud cover didn't seem likely for still sometime so I took a wander over to one of the Heath Fritillary woods. I'd recently seen that some second brood Heath Frits were out in Blean so I figured it was worth a shot, not least because they tend not to hide away when roosting. Extensive searching though came up fruitless, indeed I found nothing on the wing until a few breaks in the cloud encouraged a handful of Speckled Wood to tumble from the lower canopy above me.



With the sun finally burning away the cloud cover I returned to Hadleigh Country Park to find... not a great deal to be honest 😊. It took a bit of searching to find anything, with somewhat surprisingly after my earlier sighting, not a single Wall. A couple of Brown Argus and Common Blue and a solitary, surprisingly fresh female Meadow Brown along with the obligatory White flybies were all that appeared.



I was all the time hoping for a Clouded Yellow but there didn't seem to be any around, that was until I was about to leave to check out Two Tree Island. I found a nectaring female, quite active but with the only flowers lining the edge of the path, easy to follow and she provided some lovely backlit shots and another accidental upperside shot 😊



Over on Two Tree Island I headed to the sunlit banks of Ivy which are usually covered in late season Nymphalids. Today, nothing, not a single butterfly 😞.

I spent a bit of time birdwatching. It was high tide and the Little Egret had come in from their saltmarsh feeding grounds. The resident Kingfisher was also here but playing hard to get and I only managed a few ropy distant shots.



I finally did come across a butterfly as I was leaving, a male Wall who had seen better days but in the absence of anything else, he had my full attention!



Some bathing Gulls and a hunting Little Egret ended my day in Essex.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 17-Oct-20 03:59 PM GMT

Splendid CY female upperside, Buggy! 😊 Caught at the moment of take-off (you can see the partially-withdrawn proboscis as she disengages from the flower). Shots like this are almost impossible to achieve deliberately, but who cares if you can get such a good one by chance and patient concentration on the species. 🍷 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 17-Oct-20 06:15 PM GMT

A full 10 points for that female Cloudie open wing shot, superbly 'frozen'.  
If only they would display like that when nectaring or at rest.  
Well worth buying a camera with rapid burst shoot feature.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 18-Oct-20 06:24 PM GMT

Really like that backlit sequence Bugboy that culminates in the cracking open wing shot 🤩👍 They are such brilliantly coloured butterflies it's such a shame that they don't open up, particularly when the other whites do so 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 18-Oct-20 09:04 PM GMT

Fair play, Paul, that's a superb image of the open-winged female Cloudie. One of the best I've seen, in fact, irrespective of whether it was intentional or not.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Oct-20 09:31 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, It's a shame the body slipped out of focus but at least the far wing is relatively sharp 🤩

Thanks for the 10 points **Trevor** 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, there's some more backlit butterflies for you below 😊

Thanks **David**, it's always a pleasant surprise when I capture that particular shot with a Cloudie 😊

### September 2020

**Monday 21st.** And back I go to the Sussex Coast, this time starting off at Whitehawk Hill. Another overcast start to the day meant more hard work finding something to point my camera at. Upon arrival were just two other people here, both wandering around the main spot. I decided to look further down the slope, which turned out to be a wise decision, I disturbed a single fresh male LTB who posed for me impeccably, the bright but cloudy conditions meaning uppers and unders were willingly displayed. Not sure if it counts as an ab. but the eye spot on the underside was particularly sparkly, usually they're just edged in sparkles. I think this one is my favourite of all the ones I saw this year, not just because he was a bit of a looker, but also I had him all to myself 😊





I managed to attract the attention of the other two enthusiasts after getting my fill of pictures, neither of whom had seen one before so they were very appreciative 😊.

After 20 minutes or so he managed to give us the slip and the two other enthusiasts decided to leave, had they stayed 10 minutes longer they would have been tripping over LTB's since the cloud cover cleared and suddenly they were everywhere.... well at least nine anyway.



Over the next few hours a few more enthusiasts arrived, including Benjamin. The LTB's, all males, spent the early part of the active spell fighting over the favoured trampled areas until a few dominant males took ownership. The remaining ones could sometimes be found further out on the slope but in a far more transient state, not really holding territories as far as I could tell.



Other butterflies seen were a couple of Small Coppers, several Small White including a mating pair being watched over by a lone male, a few Walls and a Clouded Yellow who wasn't stopping even when it went a bit cloudy.







To finish the day I nipped over to Tidemills again in the hope of some more Cloudie action. Unfortunately it had clouded over quite significantly by the time I got there and only a single Red Admiral flyby was all I had to report on the butterfly front. I was thinking it was a bit of a wasted trip with even the birds not doing much when I nabbed myself an avian lifer. I was just lining up a Redshank on the opposite bank of the channel that runs behind the site when a larger wader flew up on my side. Luckily it landed on the other side and when I got a good view, I saw it was the rarer cousin of the Curlew, a Whimbrel, probably stopping off on its way to Africa for the winter.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 18-Oct-20 09:43 PM GMT

Very satisfying to get a good butterfly to yourself, Buggy, and that LTB is a particular bonus. Some great shots, too. 😊 Those underside spots you mention seem very variable, with and without sparkles in silvery turquoise, and sometimes the orange part is barely there as well. Now we're seeing more and more of this species, we start to notice all these little differences.

Well done with the bird too – I doubt I'd even have spotted it, let alone worked out what it was! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 19-Oct-20 10:19 PM GMT

Fantastic shots again Bugboy 🤩 🍷 – thank you for meeting my request for the back lit ones – I'm a real sucker for them 😊 You did well with the Whimberal they can be tricky to pin down 🙄 my favourite one was at Pulpit Rock on Portland, where it was easy to spot against the monochrome background 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

## Re: Bugboys mission

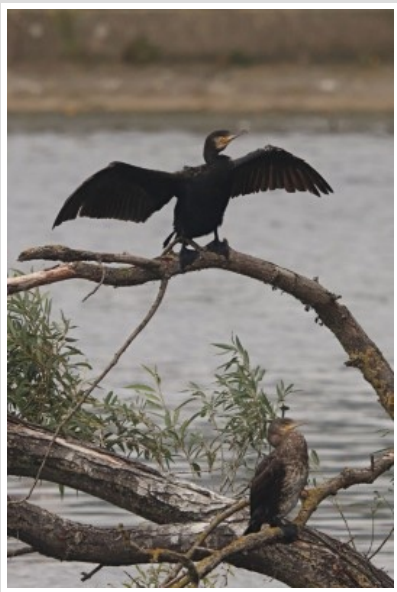
by bugboy, 20-Oct-20 08:05 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, we'll have to keep a look out for the abs. in the coming seasons, we might even get to name a few since this is a species that probably escaped those obsessive Victorians 😊. I probably would've missed that Whimbrel had I not disturbed it in the first place, it was right under my nose initially!

Thanks **Wurzel**, I was lying on my back to get those shots, the things we do for art 😊

## September 2020

**Tuesday 22nd.** A rather severe deterioration in the weather from the previous couple of days meant no hope for any butterflies, the only breaks in the thick grey clouds were black rain clouds! I took a walk locally and despite the weather I had a rather pleasant afternoon watching the local birdlife in the company of a friend 😊. Water birds aren't particularly bothered by rain, obviously, and these city birds aren't to bothered by strange people creeping up on them with cameras either. All the usual suspects were present at Walthamstow Wetlands. Cormorants were either fishing or sitting around looking like prehistoric Pterodactyls.



Mute Swans were either swimming around in families or pairs were chasing of last year's youngsters

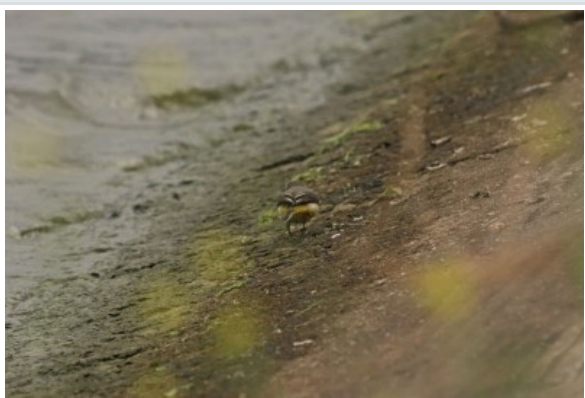




Wagtails were wagging tails



*Pied Wagtail*



*Grey Wagtail*

But most of my attention was on the numerous Great-crested Grebe who still had hungry and very noisy chicks to feed.



Don't worry, I still have a few butterfly posts in the wings, just about! 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Oct-20 02:30 PM GMT

### October 2020

**Wednesday 7th.** Just a local wander today with little much expectation on seeing a great deal, even the warmest of Indian summers do little to bring much out on my local patch. There was however just enough to keep me occupied which started with a freshly minted Red Admiral. Never something to

be sniffed at, I love that bluish sheen on the wingtips when the light hits them right 😊.



It was nearly an hour before the next butterfly appeared, an ovipositing Small White who played hide and seek between bouts of egg laying.



Nearby I disturbed a lone male Small Copper holding a territory



And the final butterfly to sit for me was a lone Speckled Wood (a Peacock did buzz me but decided not to sit anywhere useful).



I feel the south coast beckons if I'm to squeeze much more out of the season 😊!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 25-Oct-20 07:19 PM GMT

Lovely set of shots Bugboy 😊 It's great when the light catches the wings of the Red Admiral like that making them look a velvety chocolate colour 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 26-Oct-20 06:09 PM GMT

If you are planning a further trip to the South Coast, be warned or inspired, take your pick. At Southwick two Cloudies were present today and nothing else. I took a slow walk as far as the fuel tanks, but the only action was the two Cloudies flying around the bank near the steps. That part of the site site has been good in the past for a late, fresh, Common Blue, but not today.

Stay safe and well,  
Trevor.

PS. Your Red Admiral is magnificent!.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 26-Oct-20 09:13 PM GMT

Lovely Red Admiral shots Bugboy, not seen any it seems for ages, no chance now until next year. Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 28-Oct-20 12:11 AM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, it was a corker that Red Admiral 😊  
Thanks **Trevor**, I think my south coast butterfly trips are now ended for the year and I've quite possibly already seen my last butterfly of 2020. I didn't have much luck with Southwick this year, missing the emergents that others had seen. Still, there's always next year 😊  
Thanks **Goldie**, Red Admirals didn't have much of a season I found this year, just ticking along with no real end of season peak we've witnessed in the last few seasons 😊

### October 2020

**Sunday 18th.** Not a great deal to show for my trip to the south coast today. Although there'd been a lot of wind and rain in recent days, it had stayed

reasonably mild so there's still the chance of some action on a sunny day. I started off at Whitehawk Hill, more hopeful than anything else but apart from a single Red Admiral flyby, nothing was seen, which is a shame given there was no shortage of nectar sources!



I spent the rest of the day a few miles east at Newhaven Tidemills but once again little was about. It was a whole hour before a Clouded Yellow flew past. It only settled briefly once and I only managed a couple of distant shots, enough to show it was a female...



5 minutes later I had my third and last butterfly sighting of the day, a female Common Blue squeezing in a bit of egg laying before the end of the season.



Birdwise, Redshanks were doing a decent job of how they got their name, Robins were everywhere, making sure they were heard, a pair of Wrens were making a racket as they kept an eye on a prowling Weasel and Meadow Pipits occasionally settled close enough for a picture.



Hopefully I'll find a bit more on my next visit in this part of the world.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 29-Oct-20 11:11 AM GMT

[quote=bugboy post\_id=159097 time=1603840319 user\_id=13753]...but apart from a single Red Admiral flyby, nothing was seen, which is a shame given there was no shortage of nectar sources!

That's quite an impressive array of asters, Paul. I too am surprised that nothing was taking advantage of them.

This stormy spell looks to have put paid to any chances of seeing November Clouded Yellows, although there appears to be a calm, sunny window in the middle of next week so don't give up yet!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 30-Oct-20 08:31 PM GMT

It's getting to that time of the season when some days are like what you described Bugboy 😊 Mind you a Cloudy at anytime of the year is always a welcome sight 🌧️🌿 Looking forward to finding out what was on offer on your next visit 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 30-Oct-20 08:44 PM GMT

Just catching up on your PD bugboy. Some great reports and a nice selection of birds and butterflies 😊

[quote=bugboy post\_id=159097 time=1603840319 user\_id=13753] which is a shame given there was no shortage of nectar sources!

There are a couple of similar patches at one of my local spots which in previous years have usually played host to a number of vanessids feeding up for the winter...this year nothing at all.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-Oct-20 09:12 PM GMT

Thanks **David** but I fear the weekend stormy weather will put paid to any more butterfly trips even with a calm and sunny midweek window. it's the start of the long wait til Spring now even for us southerners now 😞

Thanks **Wurzel**, still another one in the bag after this...

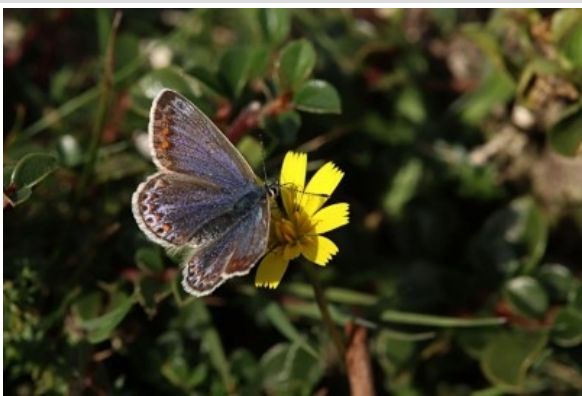
Tanks **Neil** there's vast swathes of Asters on my local patch at this time of year but I'm lucky if I find the odd White, it's pretty much dead as far as butterflies are concerned by September!

### October 2020

**Monday 19th.** The following day it was off to see if there was still any life to be found on the slopes of Mill Hill. Last time I was here the place was alive with plagues of Common Blue so I hoped a few would still be around along with a few other species. Before there though I stopped of to see if anything interesting was flying along the strip of green that is Southwick harbour. It took a little while for anything to show itself but it was hardly worth the wait, a couple of tired looking Cloudies and a solitary Common Blue was all I left with.



An hour later I was at Mill Hill and whilst much of the upper slopes were mostly lifeless due to have being recently mown, the lower slopes still had a bit of life in them. As I'd hoped for, Common Blues were still reasonably easy to come across, albeit in tens rather than the hundreds of a few weeks ago.







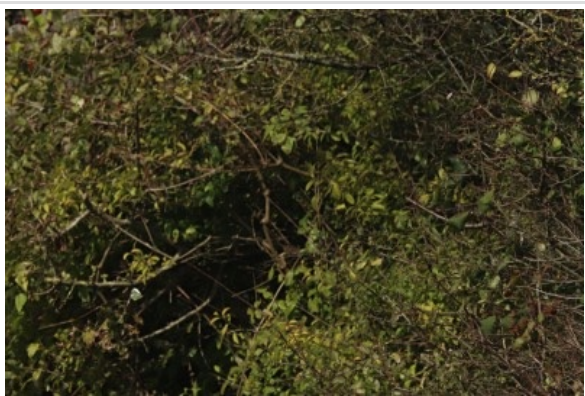
Other species were about but mostly in singletons. A Cloudie, fresher than the earlier examples, spent most of the time rampaging up and down the slope with me only managed a few distant record shots.



A female Wall made a couple of appearances



A lone Small White was seen from a great distance



*Spot the butterfly!*

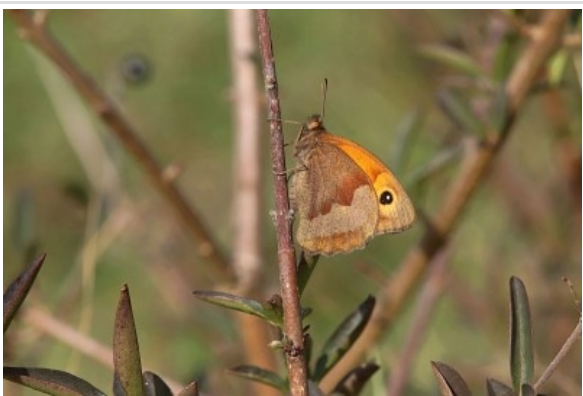
A few Red Admirals were flying around, only one of whom settled



And a rather nice Peacock also appeared, the first I've photographed since the 28th July!



The biggest surprise for me though was near the end of my stay when I came across a freshly emerged female Meadow Brown. She was able to fly but with a weak flight showing her wings were still not fully hardened.





There was quite a bit of action up above as well, the resident families of Kestrels and Buzzards continually passed by overhead, occasionally accompanied by various piratical Corvids.



Mill Hill remains one of the best places to squeeze out the last remnants of the butterfly season.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 01-Nov-20 09:28 AM GMT

A very good day eking out the last of the season's offerings at Mill Hill, Buggy. I do wonder what were the triggers for such an amazing third brood of Common Blues – from your photos some were obviously still fresh in mid-October. 😊 The Meadow Brown is an oddity too – though they do frequently fly this late in the year, seeing one newly-emerged some five months after the first ones appeared does seem a bit strange. If it really is just the one brood, it is an extraordinarily long one. However, referring to Pete's book, it seems there is evidence that the caterpillars can overwinter in various instars (thereby staggering emergence dates for the butterflies) which perhaps explains things somewhat.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Nov-20 06:17 PM GMT

Cricky Bugboy that is a temporally displaced Meadow Brown 🤪 I seem to recall some late ones in the past but never in such splendid condition 🤪🤪 Almost puts the other fabulous species to shame 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Nov-20 08:33 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**. I meant to have a look at Pete's book when I got back home after this expedition. I guess eggs laid by females active right at the end of the flight period (looking back I have photos of females active in November at Mill Hill) would naturally lead to larvae hibernating very young and so the extended flight period becomes self-perpetuating.

Thanks **Wurzel**, yes not a species I expected to see as fresh as a daisy in October! However given that I have come across them in November, October emergence's can't be unprecedented.

### October 2020

**Thursday 22nd.** After a couple of days of not particularly nice weather a small break came and it was off for probably my last chance of the year to see some butterflies. Mill Hill was once again the obvious choice to end my season with a bit of a flourish. The wind had died down a bit from last time, making photography a little easier and the species list was unsurprisingly rather similar to last time as well. A bit of a dull, cloudy morning gave way in time for my arrival with a Clouded Yellow (probably the same one as last time) being the main focus of my attention. His regular circuits of the slope always interspersed at the same few Knapweed/Stemless Thistles flowers so I was able to lay in wait, although he never allowed any close approaches, I managed another accidental upperside.



I got a little bit closer to a Small White today, and had a Brimstone flyby, first one I've seen for ages.



a different Peacock from Mondays one posed for me, one of three seen



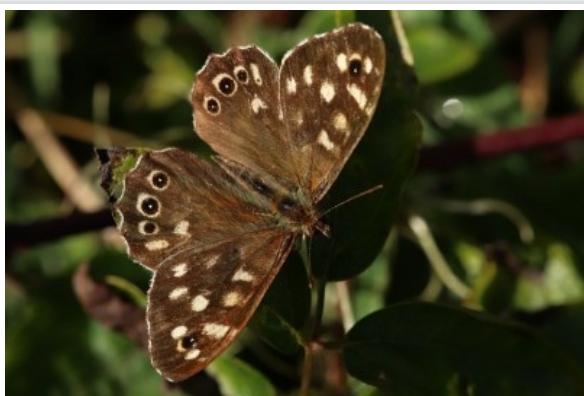
and a single Red Admiral was found, this one a female fussing avidly over some fresh nettle growth.



Common Blues were once again the most numerous butterfly, similar numbers to those seen on Monday, although notably in somewhat more a dishevelled state except for a female who appeared as I was leaving. Sadly, I don't think she timed her emergence too well with today being the last of the warm(ish) sunny days predicted for some time!



Waving the Satyrid flag for the day, replacing the Wall and Meadow Brown last time, were a couple of Specklies.



Before leaving the south coast for the last time of the year I decided to pop down to Widewater Lagoon, always worth a wander if Clouded Yellow are on the menu. No such luck today though, indeed, no butterflies were seen at all but I did get decent views of a Common Sandpiper. They're quite small birds, that's a Swan feather next to it in the second picture!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 02-Nov-20 08:51 PM GMT

Great 'accidental' shot Bugboy and the Peacock is a cracker of a shot 😄🇩🇪 Pretty envious of the Common Sand as well – it's been an age since I've last seen one (though to be fair I haven't been looking 😊😄)

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 03-Nov-20 09:08 PM GMT

Good to see another accidental Cloudy topside shot – that seems to be the theme with them this autumn! 😄 Mill Hill has certainly done us proud again this year.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Nov-20 07:37 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, I don't see them very often either, no mistaking them when you do spot one though with that constant bobbing up and down 😄  
Thanks **Dave**. Yup, plenty of Cloudies around this autumn and always worth gluing your finger to the shutter if you catch one taking a break from their usual hyperactive behaviour 😄

### October 2020

On the 25th I went for a local wander, finding very little to point my camera at. Certainly no butterflies under grey clouds in cool, damp conditions and the birds were also keeping themselves to themselves. To be fair it is that quiet period where the summer migrants have all gone, the winter migrants have mostly yet to arrive and most of the residents are keeping quiet and finishing of their moults. Only the numerous Pied Wagtails on the horse paddocks kept me entertained, one of whom did come very close. Well these guys did grow up on the streets of Hackney and Walthamstow, they know how to look after themselves 😄!



On **Thursday 28th** there was the promise of a bit of sun today so there was the slim chance of a butterfly sighting. Two-tree Island in Essex has been good late season hunting grounds in recent years, but the sun really didn't amount to much in the end and the late season Red Admiral peak of previous seasons hasn't really happened this year. The day was very much bird orientated and unlike the terrestrial winter visitors, the waterfowl had started to arrive. They mostly breed further north, well in the arctic circle so leave earlier and do the trip in one go. The Brent Geese had arrived, the ones that winter on the east coast of the UK are the dark bellied form which breed in Siberia. The Icelandic pale bellied form winters around the west coast and Ireland.



Also in numbers were the Wigeon, a duck which mainly breeds in Iceland, Scandinavia and Siberia, although around 4-5 hundred pairs breed in Scotland and northern England. I disturbed this flock feeding in a channel in the saltmarsh.



Teal were about in numbers too, a species which also breeds in northern Britain but most of these birds have, like the others, probably fly in from Scandinavia and Siberia.



Amongst the residents here were the Curlew, Redshank getting muddy feet and a Little Egret was having a feast, I'm not sure what he was catching but there was certainly a lot of them and they seemed to make easy pickings!



Best spot of the day was a Rock Pipit who allowed quite close approach as he trundled about looking for tasty morsels along the receding tide.







Well that's it for October, the fat lady was definitely warming up but no singing just yet, would there be time to squeeze in one more trip before lockdown 2.0 arrives ?

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 06-Nov-20 08:20 PM GMT

Fingers crossed you made it before Thursday's deadline Bugboy 😊 Great to see the Brent Geese featuring in your post 😊 I was lucky enough once to see almost a thousand dark bellied, 2 pale bellied as well as a Black Brant and a Red Breasted Goose on one memorable visit to Portland so seeing your images took me back there – cheers 😊 I tried to turn your Redshank into a Spotted Redshank but couldn't manage it sorry 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Nov-20 10:54 AM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, just amount made it out (see below). That's a lot of Geese! It would be nice for it to be a Spotted Redshank, would have been a lifer for me, but thanks for trying 😊

### November 2020

**Wednesday 4th.** I'm old enough to remember a time when if you wanted to see a butterfly in the UK in November, you either went to a butterfly house or went rooting around in the darker recesses of the garden shed. These days it's almost standard you'll find something on the wing if you know where to look: adult hibernators squeezing in a few extra weeks nectaring, Red Admirals and Clouded Yellows hanging around far longer than they used to and others squeezing in an extra brood. This year, in that respect was no different. There was however the rather dark cloud of lockdown 2.0 looming ever closer and my local patches had all but given up producing butterflies weeks ago. The day before lockdown started was however a happy coincidence in being my day off from work and the sunniest day of the week, so it was of for one final day down to the south coast.

Mill Hill was the main destination but as I usually do at this time of year, I stopped off at Southwick harbour first, quickly finding a Clouded Yellow. He stopped pretty regularly, it is November after all, but the main problem in getting close without disturbing him was the long November shadows.



After chasing him up and down the slope (he wasn't going anywhere it seemed) I moved on along the path and noticed something silvery low down in the hedge. Not a species I was expecting to see, a female Holly Blue, the first I've ever seen here. Despite the wing damage she looked freshly emerged too 😊.



She fluttered off out of sight high up into the hedge when I tried to do a bit of gardening around her so I trundled on, a Grey Wagtail distracted me for a while, foraging along the litter strewn strandline 😊.



Another Cloudie made a brief appearance without stopping (I'm presuming it was a different one since the first one had shown no sign of wanting to leave the grassy slope at the centre of the site) and after he vanished I spied some movement on some Ivy blossom at the top of the slope. The Red Admiral wasn't showing any sign of coming down to say hello though.



I wandered back and forth a few more times, noting a few more Holly Blues who stayed frustratingly out of reach of the macro lens 😞





Whilst the original Cloudie was still flying back and forth, now also being chased by Dave Cook.



Together we went back to the Holly Blues and (including the original female I'd seen at the start) came to a minimum total of seven, although there was little doubt the real total was significantly higher. The best spot was of a mating pair, the first time I've seen Holly Blues in cop.





A bit further along a second Red Admiral came down and settled at our feet.



After all this, Mill Hill was almost an afterthought and when I finally got round to going there I was glad Southwick had come up trumps, an hours walk on the 'main site' gave me just a single solitary female Common Blue, somewhat past here sell by date!



Still, four species in November is never to be sniffed at 😊 .

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 11-Nov-20 11:29 AM GMT

No sniffing here, Buggy! That really is an unusually abundant emergence of third brood Hollies down there at Southwick: I've never seen one down there either, at any time of year! 😊 had no November sightings of them locally this year, so it's good to see them elsewhere. A mating pair as well – they're optimistic! 😊 However, if the female finds some late-flowering ivy in a sheltered spot close to the sea where frost is a rarity (especially this side of Christmas) there's an outside chance a caterpillar might make it through.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 11-Nov-20 08:13 PM GMT

Four species and loads of Holly Blues 🤪😄🍀🍀 I just hope that some of the progeny make it through 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 14-Nov-20 01:05 PM GMT

[quote=bugboy post\_id=159321 time=1605092086 user\_id=13753]...I'm old enough to remember a time when if you wanted to see a butterfly in the UK in November, you either went to a butterfly house or went rooting around in the darker recesses of the garden shed. These days it's almost standard you'll find something on the wing if you know where to look: adult hibernators squeezing in a few extra weeks nectaring, Red Admirals and Clouded Yellows hanging around far longer than they used to and others squeezing in an extra brood.

Me too, Paul. In fact, when I was growing up I don't ever recall seeing a butterfly after my birthday (which is 9 October). This gradual warming of the climate seems to have its greatest effect round this time of year in the UK. Temperatures in the south are routinely in the 12-16c range into late November and regular frosts seem to have become a thing of the past prior to December these days.

[quote]...four species in November is never to be sniffed at

Even more so when you consider that none of them are resident overwinterers. Remarkable!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 14-Nov-20 02:10 PM GMT

You've done better than me, not seen a Butterfly since the 6th Of October 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 22-Nov-20 07:15 PM GMT

Thanks for all the comments 😊 time to look back on a, shall we say, unusual season!

### 2020 best bits – Spring.

The 'best bits' because I'm going to completely ignore the huge looming shadow that's been hovering over us all since March and doing it's damndest to ruin our fun!

Anyway, by middle of **March** I was up to 5 species, the usual suspects plus an early Small White.



**April** arrived and so did another 7 species, including everyone's favourite, the Orange-tip.

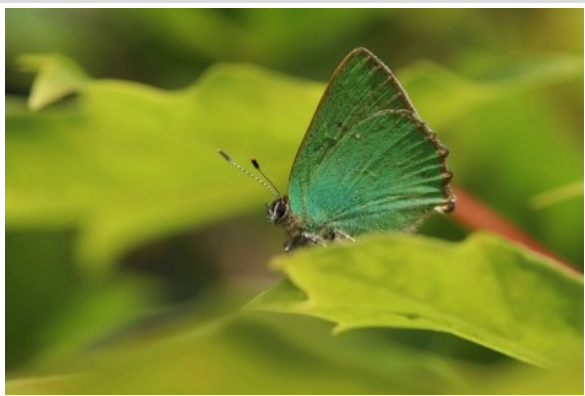


Another memorable moment was watching a female Peacock lay a batch of eggs and managing to get some rather private images of her going about

her business. Fascinating to see the long bristles on her ovipositor, presumably so she can feel the rest of her egg batch as she's laying.



The warm weather continued into May where I added another 6 species to the years tally, the biggest surprise being a Green Hairstreak on my local patch, the first record of one here. Whether it was a naturally occurring vagrant or a release is open to question but it was a pleasant surprise either way, particularly since he was the only one I was going to see this year.



I also came across a second ovipositing Peacock once again managing some interesting closeups



Also this year I decided to rear some larvae at home, the first time I've done this for many a year. On my local patch Peacock eggs were easy to come by this year, having watched two batches being laid and finding several other larval masses during my wanders. In doing so I was able to put Pete's book to the test, comparing their growth rates to those Pete had recorded and found it to be pretty much spot on 😊!



*eggs plus 1st to 5th instar.*

I also inadvertently adopted a Red Admiral larvae whilst collecting fresh food for these guys 😊



by Wurzel, 22-Nov-20 07:51 PM GMT

A great first set of best bits Bugboy 😊 – those shots of the ovipositing Peacocks are fabulous 😊😊 Looking forward to Summer 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Nov-20 08:56 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, here's summer 😊

### 2020 best bits – Summer.

June arrived starting off with a cold snap which would show its effects in the weeks to come with some interesting aberrations. My remaining Peacock larvae pupated successfully and every single one waited until my eyes were averted before emerging!



My lone Red Admiral was equally as sneaky when it came to emerging, but did look gorgeous and since the release was on an overcast morning, he sat around and posed nicely, showing of his ab. credentials with that dark ringed white spot in the forewing red band, ab. *ocellata*



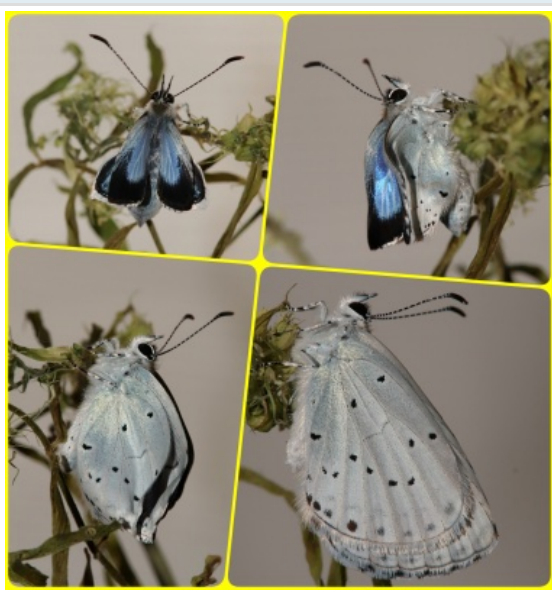
I also collected some Goat's-rue flower heads which as is usual on my patch, were covered in Holly Blue eggs. Initially I thought I had perhaps half a dozen but in the end I found I was rearing around 30! Interestingly the fully grown larvae came in a variety of colours.







Unlike the Peacocks I managed to capture a couple moments after emerging, one of each sex.





A further 9 species were added to the years tally, helped greatly by finally being able to venture further afield. The earlier cool spell resulting in several 'black' White Admirals making an appearance.





I managed to nab 11 more species during July, greater traveling freedoms helping me to catch up with second broods of some springtime species I'd missed.



Purple Hairstreaks had population explosions in all the woodlands I explored this month, at times almost raining down from the canopy in search of moisture



I also became somewhat obsessed with Meadow Brown abs. I suspect they were no more commonplace than normal years, we just tend to spare them scant regard whilst chasing more illustrious species to notice them.



The Adonis Blue was the only species added to the year in **August** (although the second brood was a bit of a damp squib and presented me with very little on the way of decent photo opportunities) bringing my running tally to 39, significantly more than I was expecting to see a few months ago. A couple of species who made their debut at the end of July really came into their own in August, Brown Hairstreak and Silver-spotted Skipper both having impressive population explosions.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 24-Nov-20 09:12 AM GMT

What a splendid selection there, Buggy! 😊 The underside of the Black Admiral is amazing, and that home-grown female Holly Blue on the pink bramble flower is beautifully (and quite unusually) marked. I feel inspired to try rearing a few myself next year – anything that doesn't involve the pain of gathering armfuls of nettles and ends up producing such exquisite butterflies has to be worth it. 😊😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 24-Nov-20 02:16 PM GMT

A great end of season summary Paul. Despite the shaky start to the year with the first lockdown, with a few species missed as a result, the rest of the season went well with a particularly bountiful Autumn.

A mrgreen for your Peacock trio 🦋, and another for the Purple Hairstreaks ( hope my patch of bracken grows back next year! ), and the sequence of that emerging female Holly Blue 🦋.

Stay safe and well,  
Trevor.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Nov-20 09:58 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, definitely worth the effort although I found the Goat's-rue did wither rather quickly. Still being a man of leisure that shouldn't be an issue 😊

Thanks **Trevor**, speaking of bountiful autumns...

### 2020 best bits - Autumn.

The end of the season was fast approaching but **September** still heralded the prospect of making it to 40 species for the year, the now almost regular influx of Long-tailed Blue were getting ready to burst forth from the safety of their pea pods. It wasn't all about the LTB though, Clouded Yellow and third brood Walls were amongst species that also put on a good show but before all them I made a trip to see the damage a huge fire had caused on Chobham Common. I was relieved to find the areas I go for Silver-studded Blues and Grayling had escaped the blaze, and even more relieved to find plenty of Grayling in their usual haunts



Four trips to Whitehawk Hill overlooking Brighton left my camera straining under the weight of LTB images, all trips were more than worthwhile though



Meanwhile the south coast provided good hunting grounds for the other late season species previously mentioned and a mass emergence of a huge third brood of Common Blues.





The same species potted along through **October**, plus a few extras including a surprisingly fresh Meadow Brown



November, a month that as a kid was strictly reserved for winter weather, was still worth a trip out, especially when you find a surprise third brood emergence of Holly Blue 😊



**Re: Bugboys mission**

by MrSp0ck, 24-Nov-20 10:08 PM GMT

lovely upperside shot of the female Clouded Yellow

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-Nov-20 12:56 PM GMT

Thanks MrSp0ck

### 2020 best bits – lifers

Well the main list was done a few years ago now but if you go out looking as often as I do there will always be something to see that you've never seen before and this year was no different. I managed 3 new species to my 'in-cop' list which now stands at 32 species 😊



Not once but twice did I come across ovipositing Walls who posed almost perfectly as they went about their important business 😊



Also on two occasions (although along the same path) I found my first ever wild Orange-tip pupae, one of each colour form. They're both now sleeping in my fridge since I didn't feel they were particularly safe along the edge of the path where potentially farming vehicles could easily destroy them.



There were a few non butterfly lifers too, watching Willow Emerald Damselflies egg laying was fascinating 😊



And bird lifers included a Whimbrel, a Redstart and a fleeting glimpse of a Nightjar that escaped my camera.



Despite 'things' still a successful year 😊

**Re: Bugboys mission**



by Wurzel, 25-Nov-20 08:09 PM GMT

A fantastic collection of shots Bugboy – stunning White Admiral, Purps, LTBs 🐣🐣 but the one that really stands out for me is the female Holly Blue – I've not seen those markings on one before 😊🐣

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 26-Nov-20 10:31 AM GMT

Delightful retrospective, Paul. Considering how much of the season saw quite severe restrictions on movement you've done remarkably well.

Hard to pick a favourite from that spectacular array, but the White Admiral ab. stands out as exceptional, run very close by the emerging Holly Blue. 🐣

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 26-Nov-20 10:35 PM GMT

That splendid array just shows how autumn is capable of providing as much interest as spring and summer these days. November is definitely established as very much part of the season now it seems. A great set of shots. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 28-Nov-20 09:03 AM GMT

Some great memories for you there Bugboy 😊

I particularly like the array of roosting Common Blues. They did much better down your way than around by me, the second brood just sort of faded away here and there was no third brood. The lack of third brood is normal, at best we only ever get a small partial one here, but the second brood didn't really take of at some sites either.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 30-Nov-20 02:24 PM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, I love the three Peacocks, they look like they've been hung out to dry 😊😊 Fantastic shots, keep them coming 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Dec-20 02:47 PM GMT

Thanks for all the comments, despite everything it was still a decent year filled with plenty of memorable moments 😊

### November 2020

Well I've not been out a great deal in recent weeks, a combination of rubbish weather, work and various restrictions on movement hasn't given me many opportunities and when I have, it's been very much bird orientated. The **9th** was a rather dull day but here's a Starling, Linnet, Wren, male Green Woodpecker and a Swans bum.



Later in the month on the **18th** there was a sunnier day but less was about: A Grey Wagtail, Goldfinch and a male Pochard mid-dive.



### December 2020

The **1st** was a chilly but sunny day. Still none of the regular winter avian visitors had arrived locally so just the residents to point the camera at: Great Tit, Mistle Thrush, Carrion Crow, Gadwall pair, Pied Wagtail and a yawning Lesser Black-backed Gull.



Ring-necked Parakeets continue to increase in numbers. The male Chaffinch has that foot infection that's rather common in finches (Chaffinches are by far the most susceptible) which is either caused by *Chaffinch Papillomavirus* or mites of the *Cnemidocoptes* genus. More information can be found here if interested: <https://www.gardenwildlifehealth.org/portfolio/leg-abnormalities-in-finches/>  
 I was also rather surprised to find some Blackthorn blossom. This patch does normally flower earlier than most (January and February) but even so, I

think it's a little bit ahead of itself 😏



### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 11-Dec-20 11:51 AM GMT

{quote=bugboy\_post\_id=159778 time=1607525247 user\_id=13753}...I was also rather surprised to find some Blackthorn blossom. This patch does normally flower earlier than most (January and February) but even so, I think it's a little bit ahead of itself...

Extraordinary! Judging by the buds visible adjacent to the existing flowers there may be more to come, Paul.

Nice selection of birds. We get an excellent variety round my way but no Ring-Necked Parakeets yet. I guess they'll reach south Wales eventually given how mild it is here during winter.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 11-Dec-20 07:10 PM GMT

Great selection of bird shots Bugboy - love the Gadwalls - a much overlooked duck IMO 😊 and a fairly typical view of a Pochard - they can sense when you're looking at them and so then they dive 😊😊 The Parakeets are great to look at but I can't make my mind up about them - are they a welcome addition to the avi-fauna or a damaging release? 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 31-Dec-20 06:50 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments guys. As you can see I've not been out a great deal in recent weeks and it's highly unlikely there'll be any Brown Hairstreak egg hunts down Bookham way this winter, so you'll have to make do with the occasional birding trip on one of my local patches until the hibernators make an appearance again 😊.

### December 2020

I've not been out much this winter, the weather just hasn't played ball on days off and off course the dark Covid shadow looming ever present means if I can it's only local wandering, but on the 27th I managed a wander round Walthamstow Marshes. Being a weekend it was rather busy making social distancing problematic at times and taking the edge of my enjoyment. There wasn't a great deal about, some of the winter visiting ducks were had arrived, in this case a few Teal, but no visiting winter thrushes or finches were seen or heard. The Long-tailed Tit flocks were busy flitting noisily through the hedgerows and the odd Robin (unusual amongst British birds in both sexes singing all year round) perched photogenically proclaiming it's territory.



The fair (but chilly) weather continued through to my next chance for a wander on the **30th**. A week day meaning a much quieter and more enjoyable wander was in the offing with more to point my camera at. Here a Goldfinch busy stuffing its face with thistle seeds allowed close approach, a Cormorant doing a passable impression of a Shag sat nonchalantly atop a dead tree and I captured a Robin poised seconds before making a kill (a worm died moments later).



Elsewhere a Common Gull was making a nuisance of itself amongst a small flock of Black-headed Gulls, I caught a glimpse of my first Winter Thrush of the winter, a solitary Fieldfare (presumably there were more somewhere), a pair of Shelduck were flashing their butts to all and sundry and some Coots were having a 'coot off', the mate of one egging her partner on. Couldn't resist a closeup of another Coot chilling by the side of one of the reservoirs, if I had to choose my favourite bird feet, it would have to be a coot with its funky lobed toes 😊.



