

First of 2020

by Janet Turnbull, 12-Mar-20 03:43 PM GMT

Hello world! I'm out of hibernation and to celebrate, hubby bought me a new camera as my old faithful was beginning to be less reliable, randomly switching itself off and on. So last night I was trying to figure out the basics, used a fair bit of battery and forgot to recharge. The sun was up this morning and it didn't look too windy so I went out to give my new camera a test drive. I struggled a bit with it at first but eventually learned how to make it focus where it should. There's more to learn but I was reasonably happy with my first attempts. Having managed to capture a mallard, thrush and a goldcrest (a first for me) at Dutton's Pond, and just missing an unidentified golden-brown butterfly I then walked up Fly Ash Hill and back along a sunny, sheltered path, and to my joy, a small tort fluttered down to the warmth of the ground. I got a few shots before the battery ran out, indicating it was time to go home.





Re: Janet Turnbull

by trevor, 12-Mar-20 07:53 PM GMT

Congrats on two fronts, Janet. Your Goldcrest image is the best I've seen. They visit my garden but they are always very mobile, and just don't settle!

Also a sighting of a Small Tortoiseshell around here would very welcome, they had a bad year in East Sussex last year. Great shot.

Good luck with your new camera,
Trevor.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 14-Mar-20 05:05 PM GMT

[quote=trevor_post_id=150971_time=1584039209_user_id=13654] Congrats on two fronts, Janet. Trevor.

Thank you Trevor! I struck lucky with the goldcrest but today I've struggled with the focusing. The weather will have sent the newly woken tort back to sleep again I think - no evidence of it today.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 15-Mar-20 08:55 PM GMT

Good to see you back and once more into the fray Janet 😊😄 A cracking way to start, I'm with Trevor that is a fantastic image of the Goldcrest 😊 Yet to see a Small Tort as well so a 🍀

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 15-Mar-20 10:48 PM GMT

Given that you're a 'novice' with that new camera, Janet, you've managed to capture a particularly fine image of that Goldcrest. I see plenty round my way, but I never bother trying to photograph them as they seem to move constantly in short bursts.

Great you're off the mark for 2020 with a Tortoiseshell as well. I hope I will be reacquainted with this species very soon, weather permitting!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 20-Mar-20 11:00 PM GMT

Two more 'firsts' spotted today. It was only 6 degrees when I went out for a wander round by the river, but it must have got up to 12 degrees in the sheltered parts even with a chill wind. I was actually looking for a wren which was skulking in the undergrowth when a Comma flew up from the ground by my feet. What a shame that would have been to survive the winter storms only to be stepped on. It certainly looked like a survivor - very battered. A few yards further on I disturbed a Peacock which flew ahead and settled again on the warm path.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 21-Mar-20 01:32 PM GMT

Well done Janet, you've seen more than me that's for sure 😊 I keep looking in the garden but it's been so cold with the East wind's I've not ventured out 😊 hope fully some will turn up later Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 21-Mar-20 08:55 PM GMT

Great stuff Janet 😊 It looks like the Peacock chose a better hibernating place than the Comma 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 21-Mar-20 10:32 PM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

...Two more 'firsts' spotted today. It was only 6 degrees when I went out for a wander round by the river, but it must have got up to 12 degrees in the sheltered parts even with a chill wind.

That's the secret to it at this time of year, Janet! Find a little microclimate and you can be confident that Peacocks, Commas, etc will be around.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 24-Mar-20 11:17 PM GMT

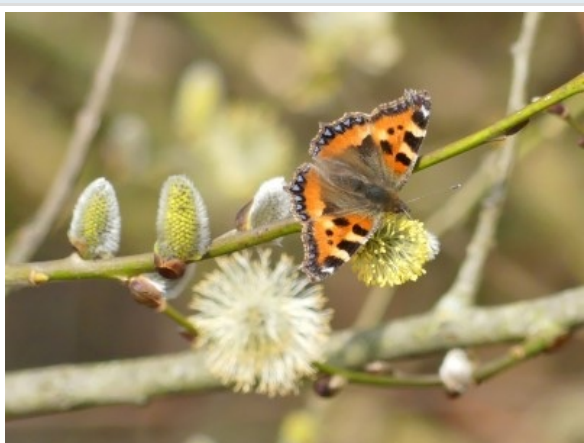
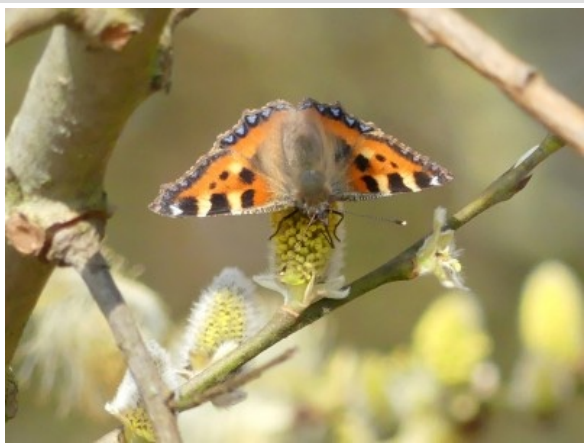
Not to worry Goldie – the weather's picking up now!
Indeed it does, Wurzel – it seems relatively unscathed.
It's surprising how warm it gets, David, once you're out of the wind!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 24-Mar-20 11:41 PM GMT

Well lockdown is here but I managed to escape to Carrington Moss where I saw a total of five people in three hours. (Was I out too long? I didn't notice the time..)

It was gone 10am before I could get out and it was already warm. I was on a mission to photograph a particular fungus but once out I just had to look for butterflies and I was not disappointed. First up was a Brimstone not far from where I'd parked. Then along the road that goes past Man U's training ground (it was pretty crowded on Sunday with cyclists and families out promenading in the sunshine - by contrast, nobody else was there today). There were no butterflies where I expected to see them but along the disused railway I saw 2 Peacocks, another Brimstone and two Small Torts. There was a fight between one Peacock and a Small Tort over a basking spot; The Peacock saw the ST off and settled down but then took off and flew to a better place a few metres away round the bend. The ST immediately came back and took up the spot it had fought for and lost.





The Buzzard circled silently overhead and I just happened to look up as I tracked the Peacock.



And the fungus? A Birch Polypore.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by essexbuzzard, 25-Mar-20 12:27 AM GMT

Good to see you are getting out, and seeing some good stuff in the process. I believe your area, and across to north Wales, was the warmest in the country today. Nice buzzard, too!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 25-Mar-20 09:53 PM GMT

Hi! Janet, the weather's been great here hasn't it 😊 I'm still short of a Brimstone but I saw a Small White today look's like Spring has Sprung 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 25-Mar-20 11:03 PM GMT

Goldie M wrote:

I'm still short of a Brimstone but I saw a Small White today look's like Spring has Sprung 😊 Goldie 😊

Wow - it really has! I haven't seen a Small White yet, according to the timetable they're not supposed to arrive until mid April!

[quote=essexbuzzard-post_id=151340-time=1585092443-user_id=11426] Good to see you are getting out, and seeing some good stuff in the process.

I'm not going out any more, Essexbuzzard - it doesn't feel right. I have to drive almost 3 miles to get to my favourite stamping ground and you could hardly call my style of butterflying 'exercise'! It's more stand still and let them come to you.

Yesterday was the first day of lockdown and already I feel quite guilty about going out. So I stayed at home today and painted the garden fence which I've been meaning to do for the last 5 years. It's so rotten that I'm sure what's left of it after the storms will not stand another winter but it does now look attractively 'shabby chic' and almost all the same colour.

A Small Tortoiseshell was fascinated by the dandelions in the garden but every time I turned round it flew away. A Peacock with half a wing missing sunned itself in between chasing other Peacocks and Small Torts - the air above our garden was thick with aerial warfare! A Comma spent so long on the viburnum I think he got drunk.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 26-Mar-20 11:45 PM GMT

Great stuff Janet 😊 I know what you mean about the 'guilt' I felt it the last couple of times I've been out (still once a day) but then I don't have a garden

and a brisk 10 minute walk observing the 2 metre rule and I'm at Middle Street LNR which the last time I went was frequented by 3 people including myself 😊

Have a goodun

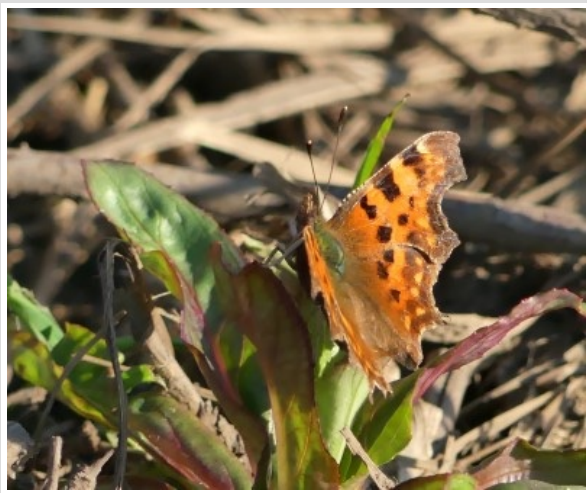
Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 27-Mar-20 12:42 AM GMT

So after saying I wouldn't go out again, I stayed in yesterday and this morning I did some repair/decorating where the winter storms had left us with ceiling paper hanging down (since December 😊) but then cabin fever set in and I just had to get out. So I had a brisk walk to Banky Lane, went into the meadows and back via the village, which made a 4.5 mile round trip. The lane leading back to the village had quite a few people and not all of them seemed to care about the social distancing.

The meadows yielded several Peacocks and a couple of Commas, and I was pleased to get a half decent picture of a Long-tailed tit.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 27-Mar-20 09:43 AM GMT

Hi! Janet, I love the shot of the Long Tailed TIT, they're a cute little bird aren't they 😊 I might have a wander out today to see what's flying, you do feel like you shouldn't be out though even if your taking exercise. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by ernie f, 27-Mar-20 09:49 AM GMT

Janet, Like you I am staying in too now and like you there are plenty of maintenance jobs around the house which would in any other circumstances probably would never get done!

I found your pictures of the Comma that you took on March 25th to have a lovely soft-focus look about them. Very pretty.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Neil Freeman, 27-Mar-20 07:49 PM GMT

Hi Janet,

Great reports with some nice butterflies. I am fortunate that I have a small but decent local spot that I can walk to in five minutes for my daily exercise, I

don't think I will be driving anywhere for a while.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 27-Mar-20 09:18 PM GMT

Really like the Peacock shot Janet – I can't recall one looking as red 😊😄 I feel the same way about the exercise but then its been shown to have a positive effect on the immune system as well as mental health. I'm lucky in that I have a couple of goodish spots in walking distance and I can get to them without seeing that many, if any people. I think the main problems are in the big cities as people don;t seem to have gotten the message 😊 Stay safe.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 27-Mar-20 10:25 PM GMT

Cabin fever is particularly strong at this glorious time of year, Janet. It doesn't help that we've just had one of the wettest, gloomiest winters on record – practically all of us are desperate to get out.

We all need to be sensible about it, but we cannot stay indoors for weeks on end, and I'm not surprised you gave in to your instincts (and saw a few fine butterflies in the process).

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Chris L, 29-Mar-20 08:11 PM GMT

That Peacock is soooo red. What a lovely photo that is Janet (along with all of the others).

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Sij, 29-Mar-20 09:36 PM GMT

Very nice.....

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 29-Mar-20 11:20 PM GMT

Thank you Otep and Sij!
Today's only sighting is a moth



which I strongly suspect is a clothes moth 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Old Wolf, 30-Mar-20 08:34 PM GMT

Hello Janet, I hope you had a good hibernation 😊

Good to see you out and about and with a new camera to play with makes it even more fun 😊 Lovely long tailed tit picture, I have never managed to even get one in the viewfinder as they never sit still when I see them in their little groups.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 31-Mar-20 05:50 PM GMT

Hello Old Wolf! Yes, a good hibernation followed by an enforced one! However, I went out for my government permitted constitutional today – it started dull but then the sun came out and everything looked so much more cheerful. The hedge mustard is not quite in flower but I expect it will be in the next day or so and then hopefully the orange-tips will appear. I didn't see any butterflies today but there was a robin in full song, and on my return home I discovered a green caterpillar on my specially cultivated nettles. I've tried to look it up without success. Perhaps it's a moth.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Chris L, 02-Apr-20 07:36 PM GMT

That robin in song photo is an absolute gem Janet. I bet you were absolutely delighted to capture that. I would be !

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 02-Apr-20 10:12 PM GMT

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to comment over the last few days; DavidM, Wurzel, Ernie F, Niel, Goldie, Otep and Sij. I mentioned you all in a post earlier which didn't go because I must have hit preview instead of submit... put it down to age 😊

Now that it has turned cooler I feel much less inclined to go out, especially as it's a half hour walk to get to Carrington Moss. There are green spaces somewhat closer but the threat of development hanging over the Moss makes it seem all the more important to appreciate and record what is there.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 03-Apr-20 08:18 PM GMT

No worries Janet – been there, done that myself 😊😊 That Robin looks like he was about to burst...either that or shatter any surrounding windows 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 05-Apr-20 10:16 PM GMT

That's a fantastic shot of my favourite bird Janet 😊 I've got one nesting in the Garden , I tend to tip toe when I'm passing there spot. 😊 one comes for some cheese every day. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 05-Apr-20 11:07 PM GMT

{quote=Wurzel-post_id=151693-time=1585941516-user_id=9821} ..either that or shatter any surrounding windows 🤪🤪
Wurzel Luckily there were no nearby windows, Wurzel. But he had to sing up on account of the farmer crunching up some brash with a tractor!

Goldie M wrote:

one comes for some cheese every day. 🤪 Goldie 😊

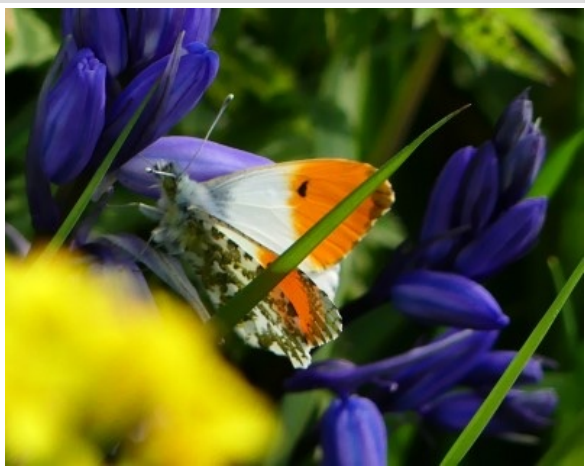
Cheese, Goldie? Clearly has different preferences to Yellowhammers!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 10-Apr-20 11:12 PM GMT

It was Orange-tip day on the riverbank today – we counted at least 15 males and a couple of females. The males looked particularly spruce and bright. I thought I saw a Small White but it never settled, and a Peacock shot up from the grass near my feet; I was so intent on the O-tips I wasn't looking where I was going. A very thirsty Small Tortoiseshell had its tongue deep into a rapeseed flower.

Back home, Alan was buzzed by a Holly Blue. We watched it examine the aquilegias but of course I had left the camera indoors!





Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-20 11:30 PM GMT

Good numbers of Orange-tips there Janet 😊👍 You did well to get those shots as they were particularly turbo charged in the warmth today 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 13-Apr-20 12:03 AM GMT

Good to know Orange Tips are out in decent numbers further north, Janet. Always reassuring to see a Small Tortoiseshell in any report too.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 13-Apr-20 02:53 PM GMT

Thank you, Wurzel and David M! It was certainly a bonanza.

On Saturday I took a walk out to Urmston Meadows where a Comma with LEDs apparently in the tips of its antennae settled down beside me. A couple of Brimstones were far too active for me to catch, and a Small Tortoiseshell allowed a photo but nothing more than a record shot. Then a pair of Peacocks fluttered down together and gave me a long display of courting among last year's dried and broken up balsam, she with her wings mostly closed, he with them open and trailing round behind her, stroking her with his antennae. They hopped from one place to another and eventually flew off together just out of reach beyond some brambles.





My path went through the edge of a small broadleaf woodland area and here I saw my first Speckled Wood of the year, a darkly handsome specimen who appeared to have had a lucky escape from a hungry bird.



Back at home, the garden was bereft of butterflies. The small garden pond also appeared to be bereft of tadpoles too, and I wondered if the newts could possibly have eaten all of them. The newts were very frisky and one of them posed so well I was able to positively identify it as a Palmate. (The tadpoles reappeared today so they must have been hiding)



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 13-Apr-20 08:02 PM GMT

Good job getting the shots of the courting behaviour of the Peacocks and the Palmate Newt Janet 😊👍🌿 Urmston Meadows sounds like a great place

and one which I expect a lot of people end up at:

"Where are we going today?"

"Urm..."

"Okay I know how to get there..." 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 13-Apr-20 10:11 PM GMT

Great shots of the Orange Tips Janet, 🐣 I don't think I'll be lucky enough to get them in the Garden 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 13-Apr-20 10:57 PM GMT

[quote=Wurzel post_id=152148 time=1586804546 user_id=9821] "Where are we going today?"

"Urm..."

"Okay I know how to get there..." 😊

Wurzel

Thanks Wurzel that gave me a laugh - love it! 😊 Janet

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 14-Apr-20 08:51 PM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

...On Saturday I took a walk out to Urmston Meadows...

15 years since I lived round that way, Janet, so good to know they haven't drained it yet. 😊

I see you latched on to a pair of courting Peacocks. That's one task I must follow up - track them in the late afternoon if possible to see if there are any pairings.

Love the shot of the newt. There's clearly plenty of diverse wildlife round that way.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 14-Apr-20 10:17 PM GMT

Goldie M wrote:

I don't think I'll be lucky enough to get them in the Garden 😊 Goldie 😊

You never know, Goldie - you might get a surprise visit! - Janet

David M wrote:

15 years since I lived round that way, Janet, so good to know they haven't drained it yet. 😊

There has been a lot of habitat management work done there, David, for the benefit of water voles, funded by The Veolia Environmental Trust. The Conservation Volunteers and City of Trees got together with the One Trafford Partnership and they've just finished, having worked on it for about 18 months. I did a bit of ditch clearing with them early on but some of the work got a bit too heavy for me. So I don't think the Meadows are about to be drained and in fact is a delightful place to walk. - Janet

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Pauline, 15-Apr-20 01:51 PM GMT

Great shot of the newt Janet - I do enjoy seeing something a bit different and what better opportunity whilst we're all 'grounded'.

Re: Janet Turnbull

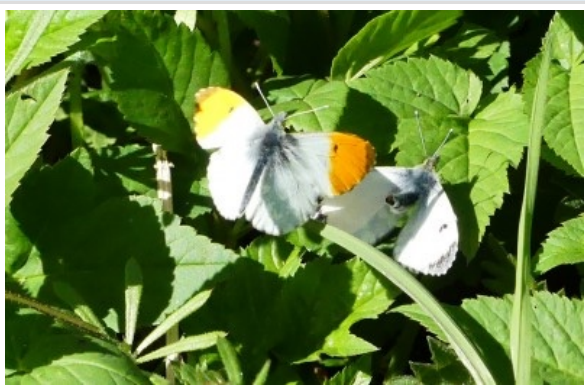
by Goldie M, 15-Apr-20 06:19 PM GMT

Hi! Janet, you were right I got a surprise two days on a trot, 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 15-Apr-20 10:46 PM GMT

Alan and I went for a particularly long walk this morning, starting when the temperature was still only 7 degrees but as it warmed up we were rewarded with Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells, and a couple of dozen Orange tips, including two or three females. Females are evidently still in short supply as we observed two males scrapping over one female, resulting in what appeared to be a gang bang! 😊



A male Brimstone nectared on a patch of dandelions and I caught him with his wings open just as he launched himself off. Not a very good picture, but a rare one for me.



My second Speckled Wood of the season has so far escaped the attentions of hungry birds and was in much better condition than the first.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 15-Apr-20 10:57 PM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

..Females are evidently still in short supply as we observed two males scrapping over one female, resulting in what appeared to be a gang bang!

Sadly for them, those males are all too late, judging by the raised abdomen warning from the female. 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 21-Apr-20 12:00 AM GMT

After that 9 mile walk I didn't fancy going out again next day so I didn't get to look for emerging Orange-tips. Today I went out to the Moss very early to look for wheatears and lesser whitethroats (and drove to avoid the long trek to the start) and saw my first Green-veined white of the season, which I didn't realise until I downloaded the pics off the camera. There were also 15 OTs, 8 Peacocks, 5 small whites, 5 speckled woods, 2 small torts and a comma (in a pear tree?)





Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 21-Apr-20 08:36 AM GMT

Great shots of the two Male Ot's Janet, you must be really fit walking 9miles, my limit is 20 times a round the garden 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 21-Apr-20 09:56 AM GMT

Goldie M wrote:

Great shots of the two Male Ot's Janet, you must be really fit walking 9miles, my limit is 20 times a round the garden 😊 Goldie 😊

Haha - you could always be like Captain Tom and raise sponsorship, Goldie! 😊 I have to say I had to sit down and recover after that particular jaunt and Alan hasn't got over it yet!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 21-Apr-20 04:07 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Janet 😊 As David said even though that female was one of a few around she'd already mated so the males advances were ultimately doomed to failure 😊 Great set of white shots and that Whitear...sorry Wheatear is a lovely shot 😊

Hava goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Neil Freeman, 21-Apr-20 07:59 PM GMT

Nice sequence with the Orange-tips Janet.

I wouldn't have fancied going out again after walking 9 miles, I don't think I am doing that in a week 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 22-Apr-20 08:16 PM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

After that 9 mile walk I didn't fancy going out again next day so I didn't get to look for emerging Orange-tips...

Wow! 😲

That's some hike, Janet. Mind you, I did 28,300 steps myself on Easter Sunday, which translated as 13.3 miles, and I didn't see a single butterfly as it was cloudy!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 23-Apr-20 09:24 AM GMT

David M wrote:

[quote="...13.3 miles, and I didn't see a single butterfly as it was cloudy!

That's a bit disappointing David! Makes the walk seem twice as long if there's not much reward!

Wurzel – you and your whitear...! Or is that just my imagination 😊

Keep safe

Janet

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 23-Apr-20 07:54 PM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

..That's a bit disappointing David! Makes the walk seem twice as long if there's not much reward!

The reward was chipping into the 2.5kg I'd gained since working from home, Janet. 😊

I don't think I could walk that far if butterflies were around. I'd be stopping every few minutes to take photos!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 24-Apr-20 09:40 AM GMT

Somebody worked hard on the website while I was hibernating over the winter; it was great before but now it's much more streamlined. And it works much better on the phone, too. It used to be difficult to get to the PDs but now it works like a dream. Well done!

Re: 22 April

by Janet Turnbull, 26-Apr-20 10:39 PM GMT

Last Sunday on the government approved walk I saw several of the usual suspects, but because I'd persuaded Alan to come out with me, I didn't take photos of every butterfly we saw. However, I took a snap of an unusual yellow fungus which our local expert reckoned was a young Chicken of the woods, *Laetiporus sulphureus*. My photo wasn't very good so I went back on Wednesday to check and it seems the original ID was correct. Sadly, a friend has advertised its presence on Facebook so no doubt its days are numbered now.

But – on opening the front door to go out, a blue butterfly caught my eye as it fluttered round the pyracantha bush, and it stayed long enough for me to get a few snaps. It turned out to be a good day for butterflying and birding and what was going to be a short walk to check out the fungus turned into three happy hours being socially distant from everyone.





Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 27-Apr-20 08:45 PM GMT

Good to see the Small Tort in your days butterfly Janet 😊 They seem to have 'gone'round my way now – hopefully they took care to leave the next generation before they went 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 28-Apr-20 07:33 PM GMT

That's one hell of a fungus, Janet! Why would it be vulnerable having had its whereabouts advertised? It looks distinctly inedible to me. 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by CallumMac, 30-Apr-20 12:15 PM GMT

David M wrote:

That's one hell of a fungus, Janet! Why would it be vulnerable having had its whereabouts advertised? It looks distinctly inedible to me. 😬

The clue's in the name, David – "chicken of the woods". 😊 According to Wikipedia it can be prepared "in most ways that one can prepare chicken meat".

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 30-Apr-20 03:16 PM GMT

I went back today to check on the Chicken of the Woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*). The first photo was taken on March 22, and the length of each (there were two growths) was about a handspan or 8 inches. Today, 8 days later, the width of each is two handspans. I brought a small chunk home to see if I was brave enough to cook it but so far I haven't screwed up the courage. The fungus will get a lot bigger and create a series of huge brackets.



I haven't been so lucky with the butterflies. However, we are having virtual church services at the moment and on the past two Sundays our Children's Pastor introduced her talks with footage of some caterpillars which her young daughter had been given as a birthday present. Apparently the caterpillars were ordered through Argos or Amazon and arrived in a pot containing their food, and eventually climbed to the top of the pot and pupated. The emergent butterflies turned out to be Painted Ladies and they were released earlier this week. I wasn't sure what to feel about this!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 30-Apr-20 08:26 PM GMT

Fungi do have an amazing growth rate Janet 😲😁 Also I've had Chicken in the Woods before and if tasted great – it's one of the few that I will eat as it so obvious as to make ID safe. 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 01-May-20 06:24 PM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

I went back today to check on the Chicken of the Woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*). The first photo was taken on March 22, and the length of each (there were two growths) was about a handspan or 8 inches. Today, 8 days later, the width of each is two handspans. I brought a small chunk home to see if I was brave enough to cook it but so far I haven't screwed up the courage. The fungus will get a lot bigger and create a series of huge

That's one hell of a growth rate, Janet. I'm actually concerned for the tree! 😬

Let us know if/when you pluck up sufficient courage to cook and eat it.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 01-May-20 09:39 PM GMT

David M wrote:

That's one hell of a growth rate, Janet. I'm actually concerned for the tree! 😬

Let us know if/when you pluck up sufficient courage to cook and eat it.

I cooked it, David – sliced up into four thin slivers about 3cm square, which I coated in seasoned flour and fried. So Alan and I had two bits each along with our more conventional stuffed mushrooms (pure coincidence) and chips. That was yesterday and we're still here. I must say I was a bit trepidatious and Alan deserved full marks for bravery! 😊 The mushroom slices didn't particularly taste of chicken and were rather squishy inside so I probably didn't fry them hard enough. You're not supposed to be able to tell the difference from real chicken, and apparently it can be used in any recipe that requires chicken.

As for the tree – it is an aspen, and is dead or at least nearly so. The fungus will make sure of it.
Janet

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 02-May-20 08:04 PM GMT

Thanks for the feedback, Janet. Well done for giving it a go! 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 07-May-20 11:20 PM GMT

A friend invited me to walk with her at Chorlton Water Park – like Sale WP it is part of the Mersey flood defence system. We set out early but the temperature soon rose to butterfly level and I managed to photograph GVW, Small Tort and a courting pair of Speckled Woods. A single male Brimstone flew by but it did not settle. Walking through the streets to get home I brought up sharp by a blue flutter, and all other pedestrians had to keep 2 metres away while I 'captured' my Holly Blue.



Along the riverbank there grows a lot of docks, and I found larvae and adult Green Dock Leaf Beetles.



I also discovered a leaf with a mass of orange powder-like substance on the back - I could not determine if they were eggs but it was an isolated occurrence.



A coot was showing off her chicks



Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 08-May-20 09:33 PM GMT

It's a nice, wild area round there from my memory, Janet. Good to see people continued to observe social distancing advice while you were hard at work with that Holly Blue. 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 13-May-20 06:14 PM GMT

My alder buckthorn still hasn't attracted any Brimstones – they are probably all at the Moss and the Water Park, although I thought I did see one fly by the other day.

On Saturday I had a wander round Carrington Moss and was rewarded with Large White, Small Tort and Peacocks but the Small torts and Peacocks are definitely looking tired. Trespassing through an iron fence where some bars had been removed, I discovered a limestone-ballasted area, now being colonised by young birch trees. Back in the day this would have been a railway depot for the council tip but little evidence now. Cinnabar moths were fluttering among the saplings but I did not notice any ragwort.

I was delighted to see my first dragonfly of the season, a female Broad-bodied chaser, and a chiffchaff.



I went again to the Moss today (8.5 miles round trip on foot this time) and saw a number of white butterflies including three Orange-tips. I suppose I could have taken the car part of the way but I've challenged myself to walk 500 miles this year so every little helps. A little-used track opened out into a sheltered, sunny glade and here I found my second dragonfly of the year, a male four-spotted chaser, basking on last year's dry dead vegetation. A GVW spread its wings on a dandelion, and a lesser Whitethroat appeared from a bush.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 13-May-20 08:47 PM GMT

Cracking shot of the GVW Janet – I just can't seem to find them when they're in the mood to settle this year 😊🇬🇧 The Hibernators are looking a little jaded now – but made up for by the pristine Cinnabar Moths 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 13-May-20 09:09 PM GMT

Some nice shots there Janet, you're two up on me with your Holly Blue and that lovely shot of a Brimstone in a previous post. Let's hope the weather gets warmer I'll pay Brockholes a Visit then 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by trevor, 14-May-20 07:32 PM GMT

Some lovely 'Whites' in your posts, Janet. Hopefully, living where you do, you'll discover some of the species that we never see in the South, ie. Large Heath, Northern Brown Argus etc. They may not be on your doorstep, but you're certainly closer to them than me!

Stay well,
Trevor.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 14-May-20 09:55 PM GMT

[quote=trevor_post_id=153621_time=1589481167_user_id=13654] They may not be on your doorstep, but you're certainly closer to them than me!

That's true, Trevor – and now we have been given permission to drive. However, I'm very conscious of the polluting effect our cars have on this world and subsequently the butterflies. So what's the answer – just be happy in the belief that the butterflies are there? It's a hard one.
Janet

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 16-May-20 01:42 PM GMT

I admire you for challenging yourself to walking 500 miles in a year, Janet. You certainly seem to be making inroads into that total lately.

There is some interesting wildlife close to you, and thanks for opening a window on it for us. Good to see the dragonflies and that's a beautifully marked Green Veined White.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 20-May-20 10:57 PM GMT

This morning I paid a visit to Rixton Clay Pits – 15 minutes drive away – which last year was lushly overgrown and was the best place locally for butterflies. Following the winter flooding I expected it to be still wet underfoot, but instead it was dry as a bone and the vegetation had barely grown. I found three Common Blues, at least one of which was female, struggling to find suitable egg-laying plants. There were quite a few Large Whites which would not settle, and a very lovely female Orange tip.

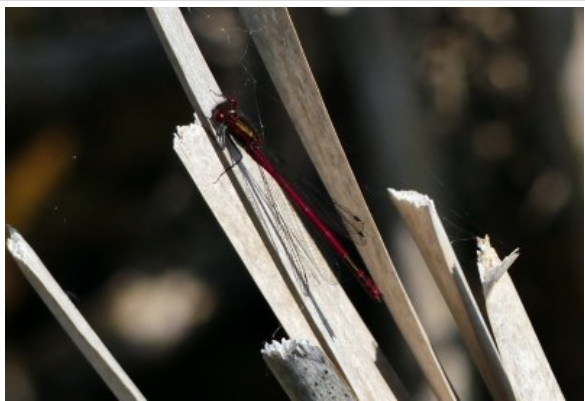




There was also a very small moth which I cannot identify:



The ponds attracted many blue and a few red damselflies, and four-spotted chaser dragonflies. There are Great Crested Newts in the ponds but none of my photos of them (if that's what they were) turned out well enough to see.





And in this photo I'm not sure what I have captured. I don't think the two are attached:



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Allan.W., 21-May-20 08:43 AM GMT

I think your moth is Silver Hook (Deltota Uncula) Allan.W.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Pauline, 21-May-20 12:23 PM GMT

What an interesting and pretty looking moth Janet. I'm glad Allan was able to ID it cos I have never seen anything like it. Well spotted.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by bugboy, 21-May-20 04:09 PM GMT

Hi Janet, that Blue Damselfly looks like an Azure Damselfly. The two red ones (Large Red Damselflies), are indeed attached. The males of many dragonflies and Damselflies stay attached to the female whilst she goes about egg laying to ensure the eggs are his, defending her against rival males. He's clasping her behind her head.

Edit: Also I've just checked (because it rang a bell) I photographed a Silver Hook at Glen Loy when we were there 3 years ago chasing Chequered Skippers 😊!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 21-May-20 07:56 PM GMT

Lovely shots Janet especially the Silver Hook - I've not seen one of those before 🤩👍

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 21-May-20 08:27 PM GMT

Nice range of insect life again, Janet, especially the Silver Hook moth which is a new one on me.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 22-May-20 03:49 PM GMT

Thank you for the moth ID, Allan!

{quote=bugboy-post_id=153886-time=1590073757-user_id=13753} Edit: Also I've just checked (because it rang a bell) I photographed a Silver Hook at Glen Loy when we were there 3 years ago chasing Chequered Skippers 😊!

You're right, Bugboy – it rang a bell with me too when Allan called it a Silver Hook – I also have a photo from then! 😊 BTW have you noticed that since then, there have been some 'Chequered Skipper' holidays at Glen Loy advertised? We must have popularised it. Hard to believe it's 3 years!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Neil Freeman, 22-May-20 07:04 PM GMT

{quote=bugboy-post_id=153886-time=1590073757-user_id=13753} Edit: Also I've just checked (because it rang a bell) I photographed a Silver Hook at Glen Loy when we were there 3 years ago chasing Chequered Skippers 😊!

Snap, I did too when I was there in 2016. Still the only place I have seen this attractive little moth.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 29-May-20 10:44 PM GMT

Wednesday 27th May

A short car journey to Flixton hoping to spot the kingfisher, but the pond was surrounded by fishermen and the kingfisher had made himself scarce so I set off up the lane to the nature reserve. Reed warblers were making a terrific racket and I managed some passable shots.



Wandering by a sunny corner I startled a Red Admiral – my first of the year – but it did not settle again and so no photo.

In the afternoon I went along to Sale Water Park and found crowds of people there, paying scant attention to social distancing. Near the car park is Taylor's Field which for a few years now has been a wild flower meadow, so I went in to see if there were any butterflies, but there were none at all. The path down to the river goes through woodland and then crosses a brook via a wooden footbridge, leading to grassland meadows. A bright male Brimstone flew along the brook and dozens of damselflies helicoptered up from the grass. I searched for the small brown fluttery thing I had glimpsed a few days previously and eventually was rewarded with a Large Skipper nectaring on campion in a secluded sunny glade. It seemed to be a solo and it was another first of the season for me. A battered Large White and a tiny blue lacewing moth were also enjoying the campion.



On my way back along the main path towards the car park I found another Large Skipper and a male Brimstone among the brambles. Nearly every shot caught him in flight!



Yesterday I went along to the river and spotted a Snout moth in the undergrowth but again very few butterflies other than a couple of Whites which did not settle.



Today has been very hot again and everywhere is looking very parched. Could it be that the winter floods and the exceptionally dry spring and early summer have put paid to our butterflies this year?

Re: Janet Turnbull

by trevor, 30-May-20 06:14 AM GMT

Well done for capturing that Large Skipper ' in a classic Butterfly pose '. 🍷
The image is very sharp too, for an action shot.

Stay well,
Trevor.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 30-May-20 09:59 AM GMT

Lovely set of shots Janet especially the second Large Skipper shot – that is a cracking shot – I can't recall seeing a Large Skipper in that pose before 🍷🍷

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 30-May-20 10:18 AM GMT

{quote=trevor_post_id=154297_time=1590815682_user_id=13654}. 🍷
The image is very sharp too, for an action shot.
Trevor.

{quote=Wurzel_post_id=154302_time=1590829166_user_id=9821} I can't recall seeing a Large Skipper in that pose before 🍷🍷🍷
Wurzel

Thank you both, Trevor and Wurzel – it was really a very lucky shot. The critter took off just as I pressed the shutter! 🍷

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 31-May-20 07:35 PM GMT

Hi! Janet , that's a great shot of the Skipper, I've been looking for them but no luck yet 🍷 Goldie 🍷

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 31-May-20 10:56 PM GMT

It was the first for me, Goldie. Hope it won't be too long before they're out your way! 🍷 Janet

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 01-Jun-20 09:32 PM GMT

There really does seem to be a dearth of butterflies here but this afternoon a Red Admiral flew round me a couple of times before zooming away, and

this lovely fresh Small Tortoiseshell enjoyed a long drink on some hogweed.



Chorlton Water Park was crowded this afternoon with mainly younger people gathering to have picnic parties and barbecues. These two damselflies were entering into the spirit of things too.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-20 10:07 PM GMT

Love the Damselflies amid amour making a heart shape Janet – brilliantly caught shot 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 03-Jun-20 12:51 PM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

There really does seem to be a dearth of butterflies here but this afternoon a Red Admiral flew round me a couple of times before zooming away, and this lovely fresh Small Tortoiseshell enjoyed a long drink on some hogweed.

Butterfly numbers seem to have declined almost everywhere, Janet. I'm certainly not seeing the amount I would expect at this time of year in my neck of the woods. That said, a healthy injection of summer brood Small Tortoiseshells has recently bucked that trend, and given the rain we've had today, I hope things will now start to recover.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 03-Jun-20 05:22 PM GMT

Hi! Janet, I chanced to see a Skipper yesterday but no shots, it was seeing yours that encouraged me to go Hall-Lee-Brook 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Chris L, 03-Jun-20 07:29 PM GMT

Brimstone in flight photos. That must be a rarity. I have a much treasured photo of a Brimstone at rest with its wings closed which is the one and only time I have ever got close to one in my short butterfly career. Always busying themselves.

Snout Moth ! That made me laugh. I have never heard of one of them 'I wonder why they are called that' I said that to myself...and then I saw why ! 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 08-Jun-20 11:22 PM GMT

Took my two friends to Fly Ash Hill at Flixton; it was a tip for the old coal-fired power station and is now a pleasant green space which only dog walkers knew about until lockdown forced everyone out for exercise 😊
On the edge of the woodland was a single Speckled Wood. Several Meadow Browns were flying and a single Large Skipper basked on a willowherb. Also seen were two Burnet moths. The photos aren't brilliant – in my haste to get the pictures I didn't notice the camera was set at 800 ISO.. 😊



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-20 06:03 PM GMT

I hate it when you've got the wrong settings and you don't realise until after – though for me that's a case of having 'mountain' or 'running man' instead of 'flower' 😊😊 Yours still came out well though especially the Meadow Brown 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 10-Jun-20 07:18 AM GMT

Not a disaster if you get your camera settings wrong when you're photographing common species, Janet. Mind you, they've turned out okay. The Meadow Brown is posing nicely with the full forewing underside on display, which is probably the most attractive part.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 10-Jun-20 12:07 PM GMT

Hi! Janet, your shots are okay at least your seeing MB's, I've still not seen any yet but I've been out looking, mind you, when you find them their usually hidden in the grass 😊 so well done with the shot. Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 30-Jun-20 11:22 PM GMT

I haven't written anything since 8th June so there's some catching up to do.

13th June: Carrington Moss. After worrying that there were so few butterflies this year, I saw over 50 on my walk round the Moss. 23 of them were Small Tots; the rest were Meadow Browns and a few Large Skippers. There was also the most glorious Banded Demoiselle, and the biggest fungus I have ever seen – a Dryad's Saddle, in which the largest plate was over 20 inches across.





A couple of days later I was pleased to see several Red Admirals – last year I saw only one.
Next up on the 17th it was the day of the Commas and Peacock caterpillars – dozens, maybe hundreds of them. Also the loveliest Small Tort! Speckled Woods along the woodland edges and the occasional Cinnabar moth.





22nd June: More Red Admirals, more Peacock cats, more Commas, more Large Skippers. Also a number of Small Whites settled long enough for me to identify. I remember reading in BC's report that the Whites appeared to have done less well but I would imagine that's due to lack of reporting, with the difficulty of identifying them.





23rd June; a trip on the Metrolink – first since lockdown – to St Werbergh's station where in the past there has been a bounty of Common Blues, but there were none. Nor were Meadow Browns or Skippers in much evidence – a surprisingly poor showing. Did the Blues caterpillars hatch out during the hot dry weather and starve to death? There was very little vegetation growing. The Peacocks, Commas, Small Torts and Red Admirals all hatched just before and after the rain so they have had plenty to eat.

Today I was back on the Moss and found a lovely little moth – and as usual I can't identify it. Possibly a Swift?



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 01-Jul-20 10:20 AM GMT

Lovely set of images Janet 😊 Thanks as well for the fungus ID – I saw one a few years back, bigger than a serving platter and now I can give it its name – cheers 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 01-Jul-20 09:32 PM GMT

What a delightful series of shots to return with, Janet.

This is the time of year when a considerable array of species are at their peak so let's hope the weather improves and we can all get out to see the best of this country's flora and fauna.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Neil Freeman, 02-Jul-20 08:01 AM GMT

Hi Janet,

Just seen your Large Skipper with the spread wings, what a cracking shot 😊

A nice series of catch-ups too.

Your little moth is *Epiblema foenella*.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Pauline, 03-Jul-20 12:41 PM GMT

You do find some interesting fungi Janet and very nice image of the Banded Demoiselle 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 04-Jul-20 01:18 PM GMT

Neil Freeman wrote:

Your little moth is *Epiblema foenella*.

Neil.

Thank you for that ID, Neil. It's not on BC's checklist so I have now recorded it on their moth section.

Wurzel and Pauline, that fungus was amazing! I really thought it was a pile of brown paper when I spotted it through the hedge, and was about to litter-pick it 😊

David M – It's certainly been a case of dodging the showers lately!

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 07-Jul-20 12:32 PM GMT

After a windy and showery morning yesterday I was forced out of the house to collect a parcel in the afternoon and realised the sun was shining. It was still quite blowy but I decided to take a chance and go to Rixton Clay Pits – I had to recce a walk anyway – and was pleasantly surprised how sheltered it was. I wandered round and apart from dozens of nitrous oxide canisters where clearly there had been a 'happening', it was a glorious couple of hours. My first Gatekeepers of the season were flitting by the wayside, and eventually I was able to observe one male which had settled in a sunny corner. Then a different brown shape shot up out of some undergrowth and after much stalking to the point where I wasn't sure where I was, I managed to get a couple of not-too-brilliant shots of it – turned out to be a Shaded Broad-bar.



At one point I emerged into a sunny, sheltered glade with splendid stands of Rosebay Willowherb and tall grasses, and was entranced by several dragonflies chasing back and forth. One was a Southern Hawker, another was a large brown dragonfly, probably the female hawker and a third was possibly a darter of some kind but I didn't get photos of any of them.



This was quite a small party by the looks of it! But I live quite close to where there was an illegal rave and the litter left behind there was incredible.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Neil Freeman, 07-Jul-20 07:08 PM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

- turned out to be a Shaded Broad-bar.

A Shaded Broad-bar in the shade no less 😊😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 07-Jul-20 10:20 PM GMT

20200707 Return to Rixton - in the rain.

The walk I sussed out yesterday and enjoyed so much, had to be done again today with friends. 'Light rain' according to the forecast, and it was, but persistent and wet nevertheless.

I was surprised to see a couple of white butterflies and a Meadow Brown flying in the rain; I also knocked a Green-veined white off its perch and it flew off, disgruntled, but settled again where I could see it properly. One of my friends was really chuffed to spot a Silver Y moth and the other noticed a Meadow brown tightly closed against the weather. I was tickled and very pleased how delighted they were to have seen them before I did, even though they did not know what they were.





A tall Monkshood plant – *aconitum napell* – which apparently is highly poisonous, was growing against the hedge by the footpath, and down in the grass were some very fresh young Blackening Waxcap fungi, sometimes called witches' hats.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 08-Jul-20 08:41 PM GMT

That second Meadow Brown looks thoroughly drenched and peeved, Janet....much like the rest of us!

I see you are still using your alert senses to sniff out those mushrooms though.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-20 07:13 PM GMT

That second Meadow Brown almost looks as blue (well grey) as it must have been feeling Janet 🤔 – lovely shot 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 10-Jul-20 10:37 PM GMT

Thank you, **David M** and **Wurzel** – the butterflies are much happier today with a bit of sunshine!

I called in at Rixton this afternoon and my first Small Skippers of the season were flying. A rather battered Red Admiral was soaking up the sun on the warm path and was very obliging for a snap.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 11-Jul-20 06:50 PM GMT

Love the last shot Janet – brilliant capture with the perfectly formed shadow 😊 – wish I'd taken that one 📷

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 12-Jul-20 09:22 PM GMT

Nice to see you've got Small Skippers round your way, Janet. Have Essex Skippers reached that part of the world yet?

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 12-Jul-20 10:10 PM GMT

[quote=Wurzel post_id=155951 time=1594489823 user_id=9821] Love the last shot Janet – brilliant capture with the perfectly formed shadow 😊 – wish I'd taken that one 📷 Thank you, Wurzel – he seemed to be sitting up to admire his shadow!

David M wrote:

Have Essex Skippers reached that part of the world yet?

I haven't come across an Essex yet David – that's not to say they haven't reached us but I have seen no reports of any.

Today I was out before dawn to see the comet, but I was already too late. However, seeing as I was up I watched the sun rise, and as it warmed up the butterflies woke up. It was Gatekeeper day, and I saw several as I walked round Carrington Moss but the biggest concentration was in the same area as the Orange-tips had been earlier, with 7 fairly close together. Small Skippers were also about.



Later we visited Rixton Clay Pits and there was a scattering of Large Skippers as well. A very handsome Peacock settled himself on the sandy steps and I felt obliged to apologise for disturbing him 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 14-Jul-20 12:10 AM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

...I haven't come across an Essex yet David – that's not to say they haven't reached us but I have seen no reports of any.

Keep searching, Janet. Your area is just like mine – a little bit outside the known zone but ready for infiltration very soon!

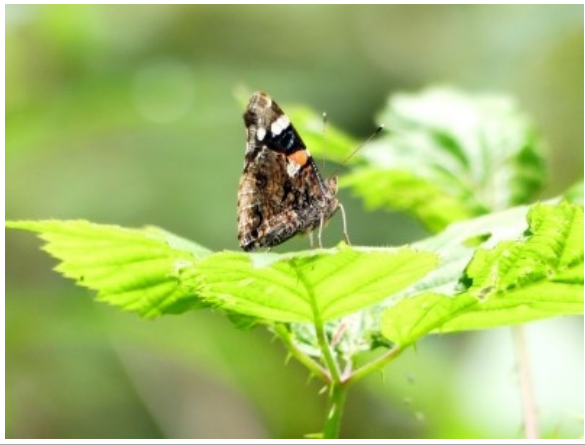
This is a species that seems to be spreading and it's worth an occasional check just to be sure.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 16-Jul-20 11:34 PM GMT

A walk through fields along a stream where the grass and wildflowers were taller than me today. There were many Gatekeepers, Small Skippers and a few Red Admirals, very fresh Peacocks and my first Ringlets of the year. I took **David M's** suggestion to heart and looked closely at the Small Skippers but did not find any stray Essexes.





There was also a very hairy caterpillar (Fox Moth?) and I was quite pleased to capture this Wren which was scolding me for being there!



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-20 07:25 PM GMT

Lovely set of shots Janet 😊 Especially like the 'odd eyed' Ringlet 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

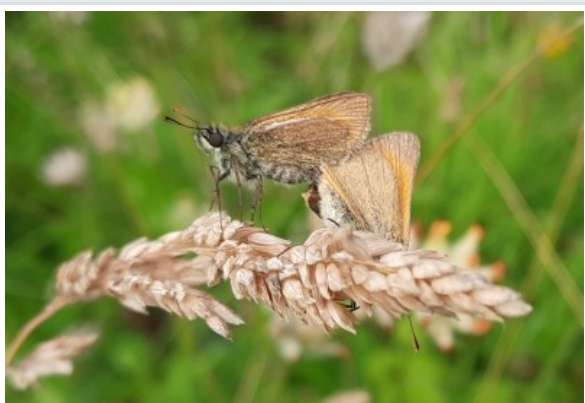
by David M, 17-Jul-20 08:07 PM GMT

Nice Ringlet, Janet, and fairly fresh looking – most of those round my way are looking pretty worn out.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 31-Jul-20 10:33 PM GMT

A rare trip out to see friends yesterday – how lucky was that! Today we cannot meet indoors with another household. But we walked to Jackson's Brickworks in Poynton, a nature reserve which has white-letter hairstreaks. We failed to find those but the wild flower meadows were rich in others. A pair of small skippers were so engrossed in each other I was able to get very close with my phone camera.



And I was pleased to see a common blue – they have been rarities here this year.



At least one of the commas appeared to be a Hutchinsonian



The peacocks looked fresh and the ringlet was the only one I saw yesterday.





A large yellow underwing was disturbed when the garden chairs were moved, but it refused to show its yellow underwings until it decided it had had enough of my camera and flew to safety elsewhere



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 01-Aug-20 10:45 PM GMT

Today a few friends and I attempted an attack on the Himalayan balsam which has taken over a local field. The offending plants were stacked up in heaps. At the end of the afternoon, as we stood beside one of the stacks, a Peacock flew to it, searched for a suitable bed for the night, settled in, closed its wings and vanished – except I saw where it went..



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 01-Aug-20 10:47 PM GMT

Today a few friends and I attempted an attack on the Himalayan balsam which has taken over a local field. The offending plants were stacked up in heaps. At the end of the afternoon, as we stood beside one of the stacks, a Peacock flew to it, searched for a suitable bed for the night, settled in, closed its wings and vanished – except I saw where it went..



Re: Janet Turnbull

by millerd, 02-Aug-20 07:41 AM GMT

An interesting piece of observation, Janet. Let's hope it's just there for the night and not hoping to stay till next March! 😊

Dave

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 02-Aug-20 11:02 AM GMT

[quote=millerd post_id=156822 time=1596350507 user_id=9839] Let's hope it's just there for the night and not hoping to stay till next March! 😊

Dave Not a chance, Dave – we're going back today to create more havoc with that balsam! 😊
Janet

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-20 07:23 PM GMT

Good work with the Balsam 😊 – nightmare stuff that 😞 And god work following the Peacock 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 05-Aug-20 04:05 PM GMT

Interesting observation regarding the roosting Peacock, Janet. Must be the only critter that doesn't detest that awful Himalayan Balsam.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 24-Aug-20 09:28 PM GMT

11th August: a walk along the Mersey. I was pleased to see a Brimstone interested in a patch of common vetch. With the devant jour lighting, it was doing a Lady Diana impression!

Today, passing a field full of thistles which were going to seed, we noticed a great many Small Tortoiseshells among the flowers – at least a couple of dozen. A Speckled Wood sat still long enough for me to get a close-up with my phone before panicking.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by Goldie M, 25-Aug-20 10:55 AM GMT

Hi! Janet, we seem to be getting loads of Small Tort's a round us at present, I thought last year's Painted Ladies were unbeatable but the Small Tort's are here in good numbers, I'd twelve in the front garden and I counted ten in the back Garden and my Neighbours also had loads, what a good year it's been for them 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 25-Aug-20 11:35 AM GMT

Goldie M wrote:

.. I'd twelve in the front garden and I counted ten in the back Garden..

That's amazing, Goldie! It really has been a good year for them, they must have emerged just after the dry spell ended. I've never had more than 3 at any one time in my garden though – I have left a big thistle to go to seed (which I may regret later 😊)
Janet

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 25-Aug-20 08:16 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the female Brimstone Janet – they're even more stunning when back-lit a la Diana 😊😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 25-Aug-20 09:05 PM GMT

Great to hear more reports of sizeable numbers of Small Tortoiseshells, Janet. Seems like they're having a bit of a party this year....especially further north.

Nice to catch up with a Brimstone too. They disappear pretty readily after the 2nd brood emerges in summer.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 09-Sep-20 10:29 PM GMT

Still a good number of Small Torts to be seen around here. Today I came across one in the garden, enjoying a quiet snooze on the Bowles Mauve. Then it started quivering its wings – I haven't seen this behaviour before, so I shall attempt to upload a short video.

<https://photos.google.com/photo/AF1QipOpHePB74JusDgbGIWa-K1BrwoOeKWD20qaQrmU/>[video]

I wonder if it will work...

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 10-Sep-20 06:01 PM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

Still a good number of Small Torts to be seen around here. Today I came across one in the garden, enjoying a quiet snooze on the Bowles Mauve. Then it started quivering its wings – I haven't seen this behaviour before, so I shall attempt to upload a short video.

<https://photos.google.com/photo/AF1QipOpHePB74JusDgbGIWa-K1BrwoOeKWD20qaQrmU/>

video]

I wonder if it will work...

Not working for me, Janet. I'm getting a '404' error.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 10-Sep-20 06:07 PM GMT

David M wrote:

Not working for me, Janet. I'm getting a '404' error.

Oh – is it possible to upload MP4s here?

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 13-Sep-20 11:37 PM GMT

Another go at the video. This time I've uploaded it to YouTube.
video]

<https://youtu.be/4W-pK0BCFKo/>

Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 16-Sep-20 09:00 AM GMT

Working this time, Janet! 😊

I've seen butterflies vibrating their wings when the air temperature is marginal, presumably to maintain sufficient body heat for flight.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Neil Freeman, 20-Sep-20 09:16 AM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

...Then it started quivering its wings – I haven't seen this behaviour before...

I have seen this quite often with some species, usually vanessids, when the temperature is on the cool side. They are generating heat to warm up. A lot of moths also do this before taking flight.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 20-Sep-20 12:28 PM GMT

Thank you both, Dave M and Neil – so they were just warming up! Another sign of autumn's approach.

The Speckled Woods here are doing very well and when I visited Rixton Claypits last week they were happily mating away. I took dozens of photos and not one was in focus 😊

However, there were several Red Admirals sunning themselves on the hemp-agrimony and I also managed some half-decent pic of Common and Black Darters.

Meanwhile, I was prevented from gathering the last of the blackberries on Carrington Moss by a pair of Commas who were also enjoying the bramble fruit!





Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 22-Sep-20 07:25 AM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

...The Speckled Woods here are doing very well and when I visited Rixton Claypits last week they were happily mating away. I took dozens of photos and not one was in focus

Shame about that, Janet, as for a common butterfly it's surprisingly rare to see a mating pair.

Nice that you stumbled across a couple of Commas. I think I've only seen one during September.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Janet Turnbull, 01-Oct-20 10:38 PM GMT

Today I was out walking with a friend at Styal, which is close to Manchester airport. We had watched an Emirates plane take off and then, casually walking through the long grass I kicked up a Small Copper – the only butterfly I had seen on this walk. It settled on a seeding Himalayan Balsam and closed its wings, but eventually our cameras made it nervous enough to open up ready for flight, but gave us plenty of time to photograph it at very close quarters. It is my first sighting this year of a Small Copper.



Re: Janet Turnbull

by David M, 03-Oct-20 11:25 PM GMT

Janet Turnbull wrote:

...It is my first sighting this year of a Small Copper.

Surprised to hear that, Janet. They've been pretty common round my way this year, and especially so since mid-August.

This is encouraging, as there have been some years when they have been quite scarce, so any increase in numbers is reassuring.

Re: Janet Turnbull

by Wurzel, 05-Oct-20 08:50 PM GMT

That was a cracking first Small Copper for the year Janet 😄😄 Well worth waiting for 😄

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel