

## IacobnDG

by IacobnDG, 27-May-20 10:45 PM GMT

My Personal Diary – Insects I find mostly around Belfast, NI and also in my family's meadow beside Strangford.

## Re: IacobnDG

by IacobnDG, 27-May-20 10:55 PM GMT

**The Field** – 27th of May 2020

Today I spotted 2 marshies in the field and managed to get a fairly good close up of one. I have no idea where they came from but hopefully by planting lots of Devil's Bit I can create habitat for a colony to form from whatever local site these ones came from.



I saw around 7 or 8 Small Heaths, which is encouraging as the numbers continue to increase year on year.

I think it may be mostly too early for Small Coppers but I did see this one individual and managed to get stung while photographing it:



The Small Coppers are always a lovely sight and a fair few in our wee colony are *abb. caeruleopunctata* which are very pretty.

Another nice find was this Cinnabar moth:



Unfortunately the ragwort in the field has mostly disappeared this year but it's good to know there are still some Cinnabars about, even if they're in low numbers. I think the ragwort should recover if next year is wetter.

### Re: iacobnDG

by Wurzel, 28-May-20 07:20 PM GMT

Welcome iacobn and a great way to start 😊 Is that a separate race of Marsh Frit in that part of Ireland? 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: iacobnDG

by David M, 28-May-20 08:23 PM GMT

Greetings, iacobn. Nice to see Northern Ireland represented on here again. We used to have a regular poster from that part of the British Isles (Dave McCormick) but he hasn't been active for a while.

Some interesting races in Ireland which are always welcome to see and you've started your PD with probably the second most iconic NI species, after Cryptic Wood White. 😊

### Re: iacobnDG

by iacobnDG, 02-Jun-20 03:06 PM GMT

Yes Wurzel we have subsp. hibernica but I can't personally tell them apart. It seems to be extremely variable, just like the English subspecies.

### Re: iacobnDG

by iacobnDG, 02-Jun-20 03:09 PM GMT

Funnily enough just this week I found Cryptic Wood Whites in our field, which is a new site for them and I believe also a new 10km grid square!



They're likely breeding as I've seen at least 3 and we have plenty of Lotus.

### Re: iacobnDG

by IacobnDG, 02-Jun-20 03:13 PM GMT

I also saw them at another site exhibiting mating behaviour, although I saw three pairs and the females rejected the male every time so I think they had already paired.



I posted a video on youtube here: [https://youtu.be/N\\_0K4bzqarA](https://youtu.be/N_0K4bzqarA)

### Re: IacobnDG

by Wurzel, 03-Jun-20 06:12 PM GMT

Brilliant stuff Iacobn 😊 This species is probably going to be my last UK 'tick' so for now I'll just enjoy your shots 😊🇮🇪

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: IacobnDG

by David M, 03-Jun-20 08:16 PM GMT

Great to see this species on here, IacobnDG. Feel free to post as many images you like of this one!

### Re: IacobnDG

by IacobnDG, 20-Jun-20 01:33 PM GMT

I visited Darragh Island, managed by the National Trust, yesterday.



Kayaking out is always a joy. There were plenty of Common Blues and *Zygaena lonicerae* and I saw one DG Fritillary, but it was far too fast to photograph. This is a new site for this species and the first record within around 10km of here for a very very long time.



I plan to return to collect seeds of some of the plants like Devil's Bit Scabious (I'm building quite the collection of this from various localities around Ireland) and to see if I can find DG Frit caterpillars as hopefully the number of these will give a better indication of the status of this species on the island.

### Re: IacobnDG

by IacobnDG, 20-Jun-20 05:03 PM GMT

I saw this poor caterpillar being eaten by an Araneid today. Maybe a Cryptic Wood White as they are abundant at this site.



### Re: iacobnDG

by Wurzel, 21-Jun-20 06:18 PM GMT

Interesting to read a report from somewhere really different in the UK iacobnDG 😊 Are those Common Blues the same race/subspecies as in Britain or are they 'mariscolore'? 🤔 🌿

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: iacobnDG

by David M, 21-Jun-20 07:16 PM GMT

[quote=iacobnDG\_post\_id=155127\_time=1592669015\_user\_id=19423]...Maybe a Cryptic Wood White as they are abundant at this site...

We inhabitants of Britain can only look on in envy and yearn..... 🌿

### Re: iacobnDG

by iacobnDG, 22-Jun-20 12:01 PM GMT

[quote=Wurzel\_post\_id=155176\_time=1592759923\_user\_id=9821] ...Are those Common Blues the same race/subspecies as in Britain or are they 'mariscolore'?... It's hard to say. Certainly the females here are on average more blue but there are plenty that are indistinguishable to my eye at least from British specimens. The completely blue females which I tend to call var. *ceronus* (like in *P. bellargus*) are not the typical form at any site I've visited, but do seem to be present in most places. There are sites I've read about where they are the dominant form so maybe the name *mariscolore* should be reserved for these populations? In all honesty I am not sure and I have read a paper which suggests that blue suffusion in the females is at least partly caused by environmental rather than genetic factors (Kertész, K., Piszter, G., Horváth, Z.E. et al. Changes in structural and pigmentary colours in response to cold stress in *Polyommatus icarus* butterflies. *Sci Rep* 7, 1118 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-017-01273-7>).

### Re: iacobnDG

by Wurzel, 23-Jun-20 07:49 PM GMT

Cheers for that link iacobnDG – an interesting read tha 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: iacobnDG

by iacobnDG, 25-Jun-20 11:51 PM GMT

Speaking of *mariscolore*, I believe this is arguably one.



In the field today. Lots of males about and 1 or 2 females but they're difficult to spot. I have found what I'd call mariscolore var. cernus at this site several years ago as well – see below.



**Re: IacobnDG**

by David M, 27-Jun-20 07:36 PM GMT

What a pair of beauties, Jake. Those hindwing lunules are stunning. 🍷

**Re: IacobnDG**

by IacobnDG, 28-Jun-20 02:35 PM GMT

They're great, aren't they? We're lucky to have such a great site in our field.

**Re: IacobnDG**

by IacobnDG, 02-Jul-20 11:04 PM GMT

I visited Ballyhornan Coastal Path today. This is a lovely site which I had never been to before, and I discovered it as there are several records for *Hemaris tityus* from here (it seems I was too late today to see these). I was rewarded with a huge number of Common Blue (including some strong *mariscolore* females) and Meadow Browns. There were lots of rare plants here too, with thousands of *Scilla verna* seedheads and also *Jasione montana* which is locally scarce.



Another unusual plant which was abundant was the white form of *Centaurea erythraea*.



I also saw some Rose Chafers which is a first for me.



Lastly I saw this large ichneumonid (or braconid?) which I thought was very pretty.



I'm excited already to return next year and try to find *Hemaris* and later this year maybe the Wall Browns and Graylings (both locally very rare).

Re: **IacobnDG**

by IacobnDG, 02-Jul-20 11:36 PM GMT

Back on the subject of mariscolore, I have just realised that British Common Blue females have highly reduced orange lunules, whereas in our females these are bright and have a much more well-defined boundary. Contrast this with the normally touted distinction with greater coverage of blue scales in mariscolore (while this is true on average there is no way of telling the two apart as any given specimen will be well within the range of either subspecies). Somehow I had never noticed this before but I am pleased with this as I can now be a lot more sure in my identification. To think there was a time when I wasn't convinced it deserved subspecific status!

### Re: IacobnDG

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-20 06:03 PM GMT

A cracking set of 'Not quite as Common' Blues IacobnDG 😊😄 It's really interestinG to read reports from an area that's relatively under-reported on UKB 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: IacobnDG

by David M, 03-Jul-20 08:43 PM GMT

`{quote=IacobnDG post_id=155622 time=1593729363 user_id=19423}` Back on the subject of mariscolore, I have just realised that British Common Blue females have highly reduced orange lunules, whereas in our females these are bright and have a much more well-defined boundary....

That's what caught my eye when you posted those females earlier, Jake. I'm used to 'blue' females but the sheer size of the orange lunules was something I hadn't hitherto seen.

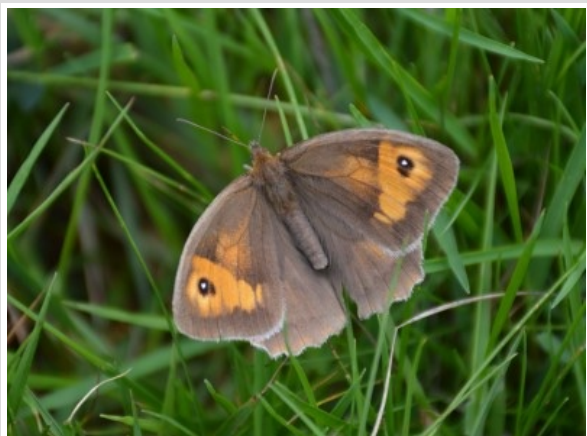
### Re: IacobnDG

by IacobnDG, 06-Jul-20 07:59 PM GMT

I visited a National Trust property (Rowallane) today with a relatively intact meadow to look for butterfly orchids. There was only this rather old individual as I left it a bit too late.



However, there were many butterflies, mostly ringlets and meadow browns.







I also saw this very orange meadow brown which almost looks like a gatekeeper.



Other than satyrinae there were many common blues.



The grassland here is clearly quite old with well established *Dactylorhiza* and *Conopodium* so I suspect there are some gems here in terms of both insects and flora.

### Re: iacobnDG

by Wurzel, 06-Jul-20 08:38 PM GMT

That is a cracking looking Meadow Brown iacobnDG 🤩👍 – they do seem to be becoming slightly more prevalent 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

### Re: iacobnDG

by David M, 07-Jul-20 06:48 AM GMT

`{quote=iacobnDG_post_id=155767_time=1594061998_user_id=19423}`...I also saw this very orange meadow brown which almost looks like a gatekeeper..

That's quite some beast, Jake, reminiscent of the Meadow Browns in the SE of France, where even there they tend not to be quite so well marked as your example.

### Re: iacobnDG

by iacobnDG, 07-Jul-20 12:27 PM GMT

#### David M wrote:

...reminiscent of the Meadow Browns in the SE of France...

I wonder if it's temperature dependent? Given that second gen adults always seem much more orange than first gen and we've had so much sun recently.

### Re: iacobnDG

by David M, 07-Jul-20 06:31 PM GMT

`{quote=iacobnDG_post_id=155790_time=1594121266_user_id=19423}`..I wonder if it's temperature dependent? Given that second gen adults always seem much more orange than first gen and we've had so much sun recently.

Who knows, Jake? A sustained, short term period of high temperatures may well have an effect, although conditions in the south of France between June and August are routinely 30c+ and that level of warmth is a rarity anywhere in the UK and, of course, even more so in NI.

### Re: iacobnDG

by Neil Freeman, 07-Jul-20 07:11 PM GMT

`{quote=iacobnDG_post_id=155767_time=1594061998_user_id=19423}` I also saw this very orange meadow brown which almost looks like a gatekeeper.

I have been seeing more and more female Meadow Browns with extra orange patches over the past few years but that one is a beauty, one of the best examples I have seen 🤩😊

`{quote=iacobnDG_post_id=155767_time=1594061998_user_id=19423}` I wonder if it's temperature dependent? Given that second gen adults always seem much more orange than first gen and we've had so much sun recently.

Meadow Browns only have one generation in the UK, albeit a protracted one. It could still be related to climate change though.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: iacobnDG

by iacobnDG, 08-Jul-20 06:24 PM GMT

Thank you all for your expertise. I wonder have you read that paper on temperature and pigmentation in *P. icarus*? It makes for an interesting read and similar studies could reveal a lot about other species, I think.

### Re: iacobnDG

by iacobnDG, 08-Jul-20 06:42 PM GMT

I was in the field today but it ended up being quite dark and showery so there weren't many butterflies out.



I found a lot of *Noctua pronuba* which is interesting as we didn't use to have this species so it must be a recent colonisation.



I did some scything to open up the sward where some dog violets grow and I also found a ruby tiger caterpillar.



Re: IacobnDG

by IacobnDG, 13-Aug-20 01:51 PM GMT

I was in the field once again yesterday, and the second generation of both *Lycaena phlaeas* and *Polyommatus icarus* is in full swing. It seems this year that all of our females conform more or less to Kane's description of "var. *ceronus* of *icarus*", although in the past there have been browner examples.



Our field now seems to be filled with absolutely exceptional specimens as you can see.





The male below is *ab. nigro-ocellata* which is interesting as I have gotten this form before from eggs collected from this site. Unfortunately I couldn't get a better photo as they were very jumpy in the sun.



The *phlaeas* also were hard to photograph but I got a nice photo of this *ab. caeruleopunctata*.



Overall I'm pretty happy with how the populations of these two species are doing at this site. The foodplants of both continue to spread and with continued careful management both species will continue to increase. One thing to note is that this summer has been quite warm so anecdotally I don't think the blue scales on the females are entirely decided by temperature and length of pupation, which was shown to be a factor in Hungarian *icarus* females which are normally brown (Kertész, K., Piszter, G., Horváth, Z.E. et al. Changes in structural and pigmentary colours in response to cold stress in *Polyommatus icarus* butterflies. *Sci Rep* 7, 1118 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-017-01273-7>). In our population genetics is certainly a factor to some extent, and it would be good to see more research into this in the future.

## Re: *IacobnDG*

by Wurzel, 14-Aug-20 07:50 PM GMT

Interesting sightings *IacobnDG* – there's no trouble differentiating between female Brown Argus and those female Common Blues 🤔😄 Interesting to see the black spotted aberrant – that's reminiscent with the southern form of Common Blue, *P. celina* 😊

Have a goodun and stay safe

Wurzel

**Re: IacobnDG**

by David M, 15-Aug-20 08:29 AM GMT

[quote=IacobnDG post\_id=157259 time=1597323118 user\_id=19423]...Our field now seems to be filled with absolutely exceptional specimens as you can see.

Absolutely. In fact, that first image is possibly the most beautiful example of a female *icarus* I've seen. The orange lunules are amazing. 🍷

**Re: IacobnDG**

by Allan.W., 15-Aug-20 03:28 PM GMT

Totally agree with David's comments .....Stunning ! nice find ,love the female Common Blues ,but that one is quite exceptional ! Regards Allan.W.

**Re: IacobnDG**

by bugboy, 15-Aug-20 04:12 PM GMT

As everyone else has said, that first female is simply stunning. Over here the bluer the female gets the smaller the lunules become but that one seems to have gone the other way!