

Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 10-Jul-11 05:18 AM GMT

Oaken Wood, 9 July 2011

A walk around Oaken Wood this afternoon in search of 2nd generation Wood White produced just a few males. Despite the butterfly being on the wing for several weeks numbers to date seem poor with no females being seen as of yet.

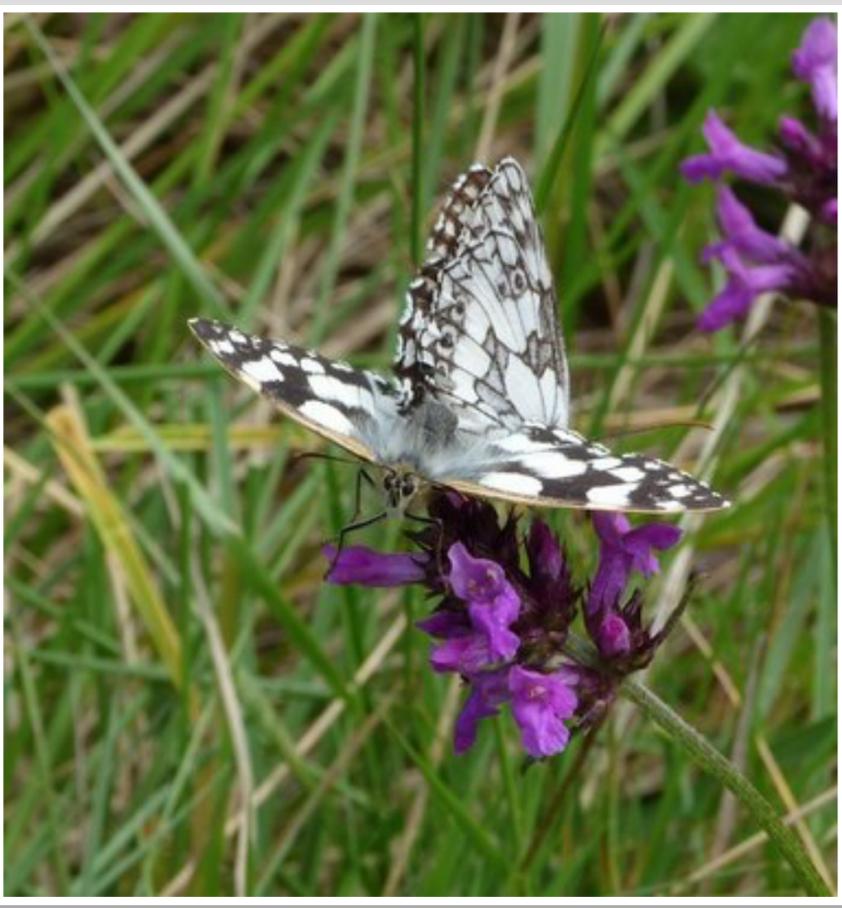


Wood White (male), Oaken Wood (9 July 2011)

The Marbled White on the other hand appear to be doing well with good numbers on the wing. I decided to get a bit "arty" this afternoon and tried several shots from different angles including one (the third image) taken into the sun ... who dares wins and all that!



Copulating Marbled White, Oaken Wood (9 July 2011)



Copulating Marbled White, Oaken Wood (9 July 2011)



Copulating Marbled White, Oaken Wood (9 July 2011)

Ringlets and Meadow Brown were seen in good numbers along with Large and Small Skippers. Silver-washed Fritillaries were seen in several areas along with a single White Admiral and two male Brimstone. At least three Red Admiral were seen along with the following (probable male) who fortunately posed nicely for the camera. All images were taken with my Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ45 fitted with a close up lens (thanks Sussex Kipper!).



Red Admiral (probable male), Oaken Wood (9 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Neil Freeman, 10-Jul-11 06:56 PM GMT

Nice photos Mark,

Tried out my close up lens yesterday, just need to practice a bit now judging the best distance but so far I am pleased with it.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Jul-11 01:14 AM GMT

Hi Neil,

Thanks for your comments and good luck with the new lens. It will certainly make a difference to the way you shoot your pictures but the effort will be well rewarded.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Jul-11 01:43 AM GMT

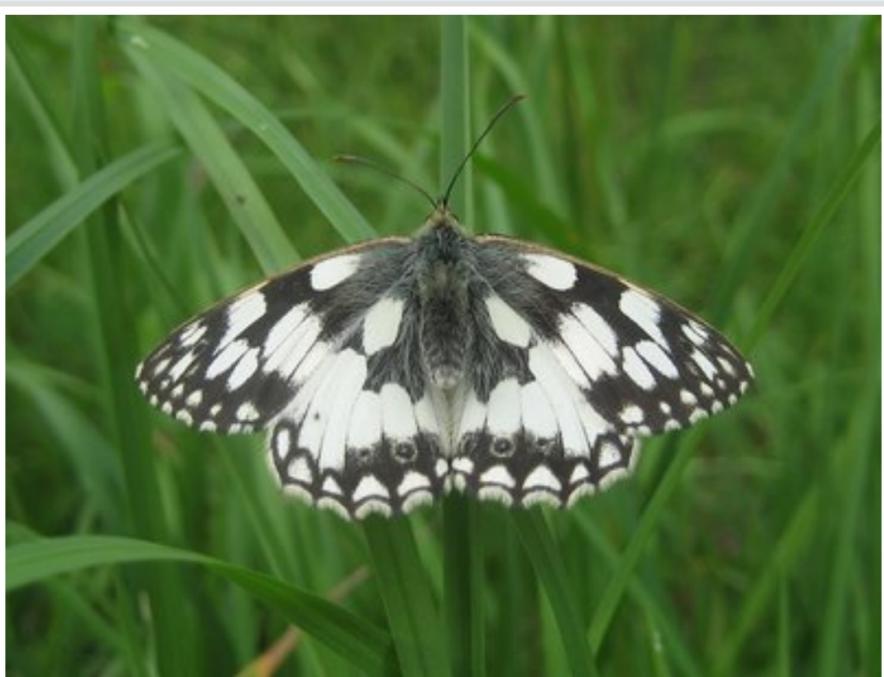
Competition!

Earlier today I took my 13 year old son out for a day of butterfly photography ... I couldn't help feeling at first that he would sooner have stayed in bed or been at home playing on his Xbox 360!

However, armed with my old 6 Megapixel, Canon Digital Ixus 65 he has given me something to seriously worry about!



Marbled White (male), Oaken Wood (10 July 2011)



Marbled White (female), Oaken Wood (10 July 2011)



Small Skipper (female), Oaken Wood (10 July 2011)



Wood White (male), Botany Bay (10 July 2011)



Copulating Ringlets, Oaken Wood (10 July 2011)

Watching his enthusiasm as he was lying down in the long grass taking his photographs really lifted my spirits. God only knows what he could produce with my camera.

All in all we had a great day and I just hope he keeps it up!

Re: Mark Colvin

by Neil Freeman, 11-Jul-11 04:39 AM GMT

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

Hi Neil,

Thanks for your comments and good luck with the new lens. It will certainly make a difference to the way you shoot your pictures but the effort will be well rewarded.

Kind regards. Mark

Hi Mark,

Do you have any tips regarding using the close up lens. I went out this afternoon and got some good shots but found myself missing loads of other opportunities because I spent too long deciding whether to zoom or not 😞

By the way, those are some nice photos your son has taken, up and coming competition indeed 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Jul-11 05:56 AM GMT

Hi Neil,

I tend to keep my camera with the Zoom Lever set towards Wide (W). I then move in on my target and only then, if necessary, zoom in by moving the Zoom Lever towards Tele (T). You will find you can't be more than about 0.5m away from your target so a Ninja like approach is generally required.

Good luck and thanks for your comments about my son's pictures.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Jul-11 07:08 AM GMT

Chiddingfold Forest, 10 July 2011

Following my earlier post, today was spent wandering the tracks of the Chiddingfold Forest complex in anticipation of a female Wood White and more hopefully a pair joined in a moment of passion. Parking at Burntwood and walking down the track into Oaken Wood the resident Marbled White, Meadow Brown and Ringlet along with both Small and Large Skipper were evident in good numbers. In addition, two male Gatekeeper (my first of the season) and a single Holly Blue were both sighted before entering the wood.

Marbled White, Meadow Brown and Ringlet along with Small and Large Skipper were in most areas we looked and photo opportunities were frequent. Silver-washed Fritillary were found in their regular haunts. Though unseen by myself, several Dark Green Fritillary had been seen by other observers. Two White Admiral showed late in the afternoon along with a single male Speckled Wood. Both Green-veined and Small White were also seen in small numbers. I saw seven Wood White though still no females!



Wood White (male), Botany Bay (10 July 2011)



Six-Spot Burnet, Botany Bay (10 July 2011)



Speckled Wood (male), Oaken Wood (10 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 12-Jul-11 06:55 AM GMT

Botany Bay, 11 July 2011

A quick hour's walk into Botany Bay in search of Wood White late this afternoon produced around fifteen individuals including a single egg-laying female (who sadly, with her mind on more pressing matters, would not sit for a photograph in the afternoon heat). Of particular interest were the several male Wood White mud-puddling to obtain nutrients in the damp soil left by the overnight rain. I had not witnessed this activity with this particular species before and was intrigued to see it in action. I also observed a single male Silver-washed Fritillary doing the same (pictured). A single Holly Blue was noted in the clearing by the car park along with Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Small and Large Skipper, a single female Small White and two male Large White.



Silver-washed Fritillary (male), Botany Bay (11 July 2011)

Early evening I went back to Botany Bay and finally struck lucky!



Wood White (female), Botany Bay (11 July 2011)



Wood White (female), Botany Bay (11 July 2011)



Wood White (female), Botany Bay (11 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Susie, 12-Jul-11 07:05 AM GMT

That first wood white photograph is a corker!

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 12-Jul-11 03:45 PM GMT

Thanks Susie.

I appreciate your comments.

Now for an egg-laying female or mating pair!

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

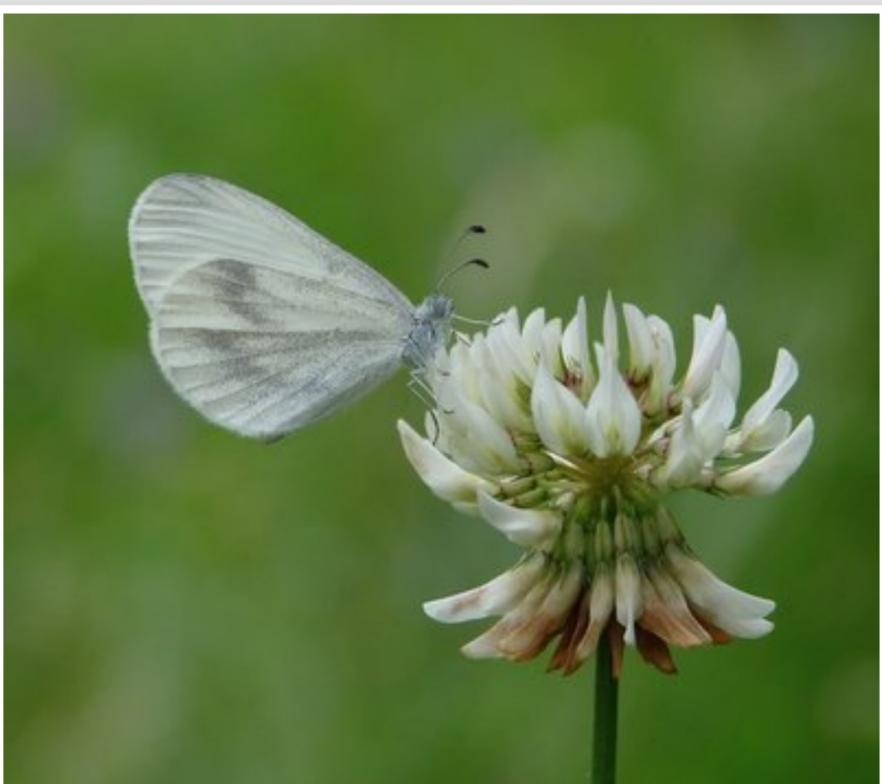
by Mark Colvin, 14-Jul-11 06:44 AM GMT

Withdrawal symptoms ...

Working all day yesterday and sitting in front of a computer doing the same today I was almost (I did say 'almost') wishing for rain in the hope that it would have made my decision to work or play much easier. It got to 6pm and I just had to get out!

The conditions weren't great and my initial plan of going to Kithurst Hill in search of roosting Chalkhill Blues was put on the backburner as time was against me ... so off to Botany Bay once more.

Unsurprisingly very little was about though I did manage to find a single male and single female Wood White, the latter of which having been disturbed from her resting place on a tufted vetch plant settled on cue on the flower head of the white clover (*Trifolium repens*).



Wood White (female), Botany Bay (13 July 2011)

Lying in the hedgerow did however make me a target for other beasts ...



Female culicine mosquito (feeding), Botany Bay (13 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Vince Massimo, 14-Jul-11 09:45 AM GMT

That's a lovely photo of a female Wood White, Mark.

I have just realised that we met at Wrecclesham on 19th May. I was the "Sussex" man helping you look for your elusive first Green Hairstreak. Although we failed to find one there, I believe you "filled your boots" the following weekend in the company of Bob Eade.

Cheers,

Vince

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 15-Jul-11 02:58 AM GMT

Hi Vince.

I'm glad you like the Wood White image (they seem to be my 'thing' at the moment). I got bitten alive getting that one!

I was certainly at Wrecclesham on Thursday, 19 May after seeing the message that had been posted about the Glanville Fritillaries. Your quite correct in that I was also on the trail of Green Hairstreaks though time was not on my side that particular day. I certainly "filled my boots" with Bob during my visit to Frog Firle.

I'm trying to work out from my posts how you realise who I am? I'd like to think my avatar doesn't give you any clues!

You've probably gathered from my posts that I live very close to Botany Bay and the Chiddingfold Forest complex. If you're ever down my way and fancy meeting up please feel free to pm me.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Vince Massimo, 15-Jul-11 03:15 AM GMT

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

I'm trying to work out from my posts how you realise who I am? I'd like to think my avatar doesn't give you any clues!

Hi Mark,

I made the connection after reading Bob Eade's report on the Sussex Branch website.

Cheers,

Vince

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 15-Jul-11 03:29 AM GMT

Bad Taste!

The heat and dehydration got the better of me this afternoon particularly as I had left my water in the car and the paracetamol at home! That said I still managed an hour's walk into Botany Bay (again) and despite a throbbing headache managed to see reasonable numbers of Wood White including two egg-laying females though sadly no couplings.

Of particular interest, as I had never witnessed this activity with Wood White before, was their apparent liking for fresh horse dung – though this doesn't totally surprise me. At one time there were as many as three gorging themselves on one piece of dung. Lovely ...



Male Wood White (feeding on horse dung), Botany Bay (14 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 18-Jul-11 07:18 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill, 17 July 2011

A day spent undertaking administration and typing reports yesterday (not that the weather was suitable for much else) and visiting relatives today left me in desperate need of fresh air by late afternoon! It was 5.45pm when I arrived home and by 6.15pm I was on Kithurst Hill.

In all fairness conditions weren't great. It was windy and overcast and I only had about an hour at most ... but I was out in the place I wanted to be.

I have been hoping to photograph the Lycaenidae for some time and this was to be my first, albeit brief, opportunity. I had made the assumption that I would be photographing Chalkhill Blues and was pleasantly surprised when the first "jewel" to present itself with a photo opportunity was a Brown Argus. I managed several very quick shots before it flew off. It was sadly not seen again. The Chalkhill Blues were already roosting and I managed several underside shots though none presented an upperside opportunity ... the lack of sun I am sure not helping. As first attempts I was quite happy with the results but look forward to the next time when time and weather will hopefully be on my side.



Brown Argus (male), Kithurst Hill (17 July 2011)



Chalkhill Blue (male), Kithurst Hill (17 July 2011)



Chalkhill Blue (male), Kithurst Hill (17 July 2011)



Chalkhill Blue (male), Kithurst Hill (17 July 2011)

As I was leaving the meadow and heading back towards the car I spotted a specimen of the Lesser Stag Beetle (*Dorcus parallelipedus*). I have not seen one for some time and was pleased to have the opportunity to take several shots before she disappeared into the vegetation.



Lesser Stag Beetle (female), Kithurst Hill (17 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 19-Jul-11 07:19 AM GMT

Dawney's Hill, 18 July 2011

Further to Lee Hurrell's recent posting about Dawney's Hill (Pirbright Common) I popped over for an hour or so this afternoon.

The Grayling was my target as it is a butterfly I have not had much contact with. It is a strong and rapid flyer and when it decides to stop it quite literally vanishes. You really have to keep a very close eye on them and when one is seen in flight don't take your eyes off it as it probably won't be seen again. With care some individuals can be approached quite closely though those, which land and show their eyespots have often closed their wings by the time you have got into position to take that all important shot. By judgement of the number of Grayling on the wing this afternoon, Dawney's Hill would appear to hold a flourishing population.

Others butterflies observed included Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, a male Large White, a male Brown Argus and several worn Silver-studded Blue.



Grayling (male), Dawney's Hill (18 July 2011)



Grayling (male), Dawney's Hill (18 July 2011)



Grayling (male), Dawney's Hill (18 July 2011)



Grayling (female), Dawney's Hill (18 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 20-Jul-11 12:48 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill, 19 July 2011

I was in a 'blue mood' today and felt the need to brighten up my personal diary.

Kithurst Hill and its fabulous flower meadow was once again the venue. The sun was out and the air was hot and scented with the sweet aroma of wild thyme and marjoram. Butterflies were everywhere.

Species seen included:

Brown Argus
Small Blue
Chalkhill Blue
Common Blue (single fresh female)
Small Copper
Peacock
Red Admiral
Meadow Brown
Ringlet
Gatekeeper
Marbled White
Small Skipper
Large White
Small White
Silver-washed Fritillary (single female)



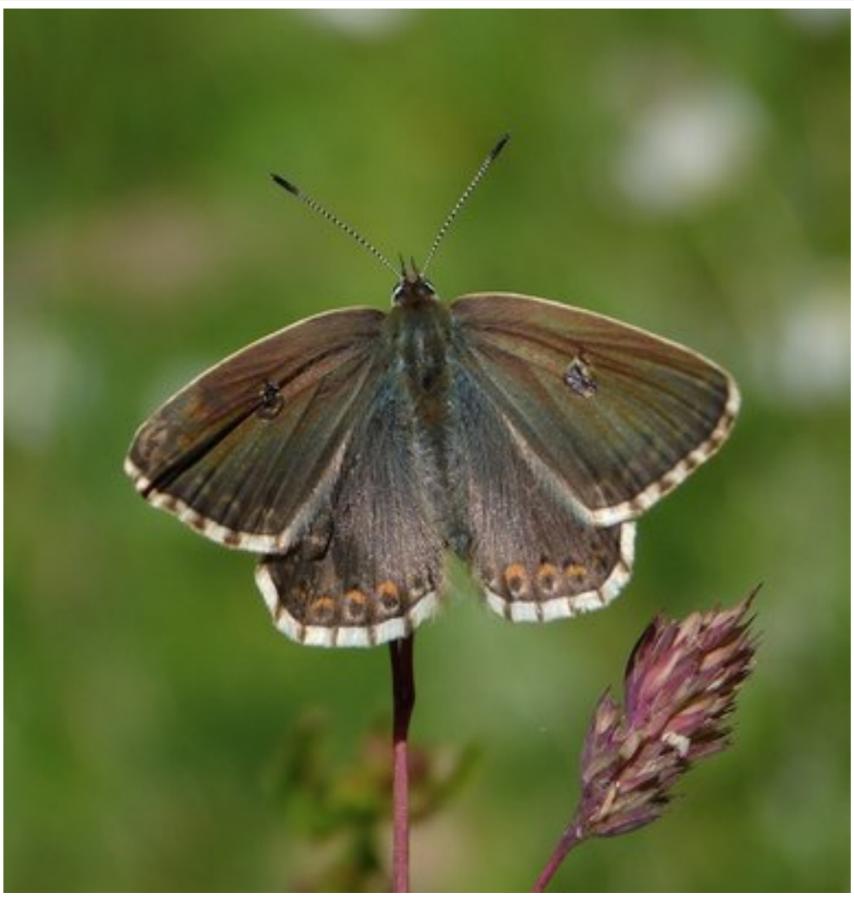
Brown Argus (male), Kithurst Hill (19 July 2011)



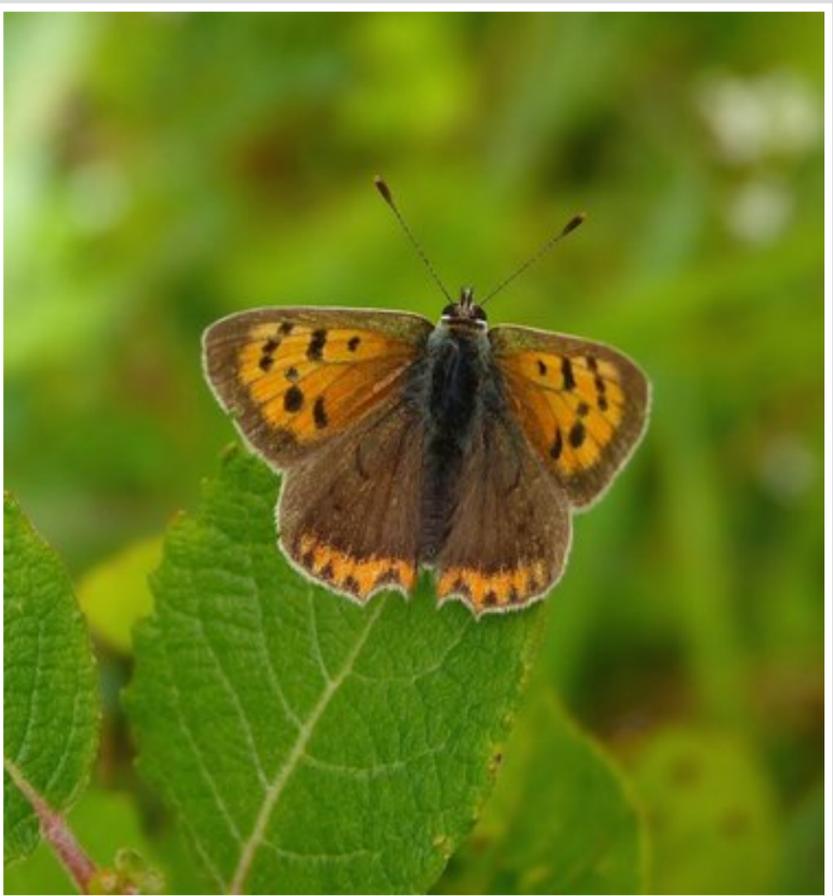
Small Blue (female), Kithurst Hill (19 July 2011)



Chalkhill Blue (male), Kithurst Hill (19 July 2011)



Chalkhill Blue (female), Kithurst Hill (19 July 2011)



Small Copper (male), Kithurst Hill (19 July 2011)



Wild Flower Meadow, Kithurst Hill (19 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 20-Jul-11 03:21 AM GMT

Lovely shots, Mark.

Is that view looking north? If so that's probably the clouds and rain that have been stuck over London this afternoon 🙄

Cheers

Lee

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 20-Jul-11 03:29 AM GMT

Thanks Lee.

Glad you like the shots.

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Is that view looking north? If so that's probably the clouds and rain that have been stuck over London this afternoon.

Probably as that's the direction I sent them. 😊

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 20-Jul-11 03:37 AM GMT

Yeah, thanks 🙄

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 24-Jul-11 07:10 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill and Hog Wood, 23 July 2011

After early rain the sky cleared and the sun came out. By 9am I was walking through the wet flower meadow at Kithurst Hill. The ground was warming quickly and the numerous male Chalkhill Blue were taking in the heat of the early morning sun. I was pleased to see a greater number of females this morning as their presence had previously gone unseen except for a few solitary individuals.

The Marbled White are now very much past their best and nearly every individual seen and inspected was carrying the parasitic red mite (*Trombidium breiei*).

Species seen included:

Brown Argus
Chalkhill Blue
Common Blue (single female)
Red Admiral
Meadow Brown
Ringlelet

Gatekeeper
Small White
Small Skipper
Marbled White



Brown Argus (female), Kithurst Hill (23 July 2011)



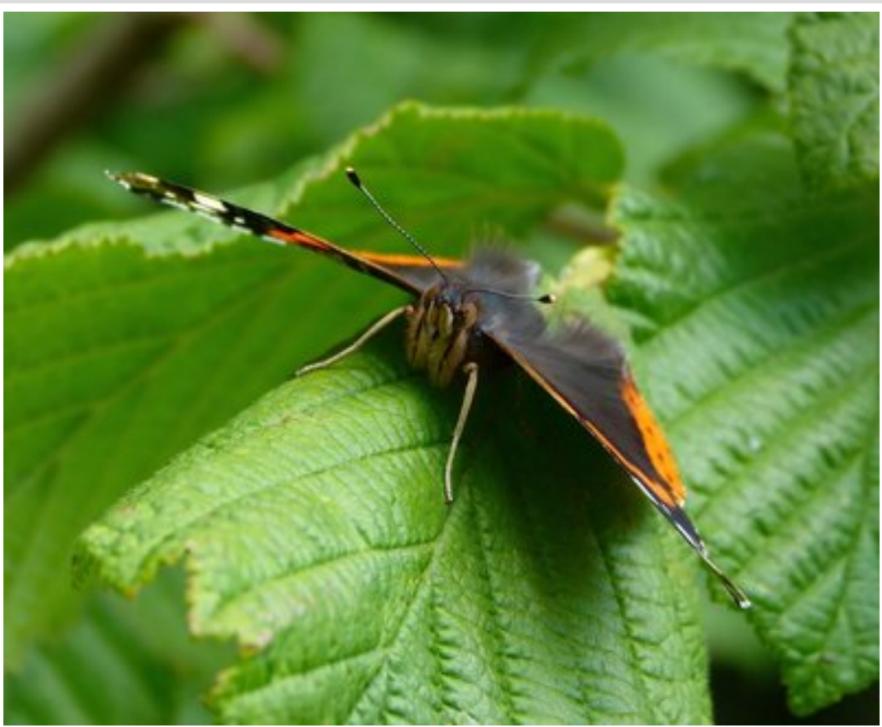
Chalkhill Blue (female), Kithurst Hill (23 July 2011)



Chalkhill Blue (female), Kithurst Hill (23 July 2011)



Common Blue (female), Kithurst Hill (23 July 2011)



Red Admiral (probable male), Kithurst Hill (23 July 2011)

Later in the afternoon I visited Hog Wood and took the opportunity to photograph the numerous Gatekeeper and a selection of damselflies.



Common Blue Damsel (male), Hog Wood (23 July 2011)



Gatekeeper (female), Hog Wood (23 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 25-Jul-11 07:17 AM GMT

Alder Platt Meadow, Plaistow, 24 July 2011

It wasn't until 6.15pm that I managed to get out and take a short walk through the small copse and into the grass meadows close to my home. Armed with my camera I managed just a few record shots (my spirit was lifted). The Small Heath were just not playing ball for a really good shot this evening as on nearly every occasion I saw one flying it would land and quite simply drop into the long grass. Maybe next time ...

Species seen included:

- Small Copper
- Brown Argus
- Small Heath
- Meadow Brown
- Common Blue (female)



Small Copper (male), Plaistow (24 July 2011)



Small Heath (probable male), Plaistow (24 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 26-Jul-11 05:00 AM GMT

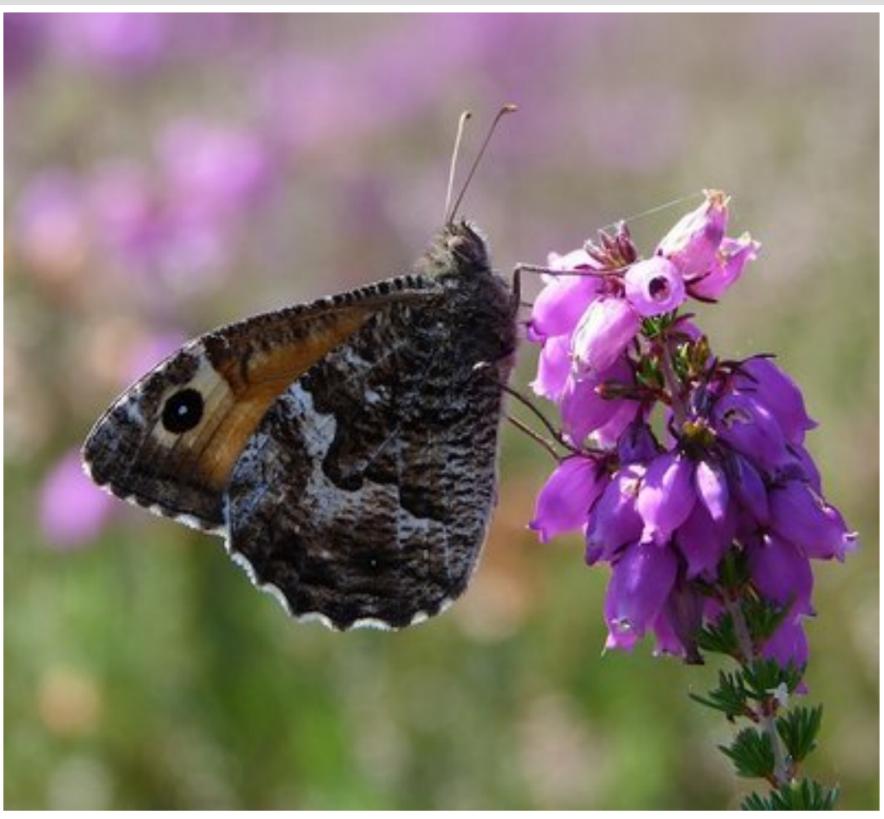
Dawney's Hill, 25 July 2011

Travelling down the M3 early this afternoon led me 'quite by chance' to Junction 3 and even more conveniently I had to pass Dawney's Hill ... and it was time for lunch!

My first visit to Dawney's Hill was on 18 July 2011. Grayling were once again by far the most prolific species seen and were active over most of the heathland with many nectaring on the flower heads of the Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*). Though sometimes difficult to approach, by standing motionless several Grayling actually investigated and landed on me. At first I thought that they might be trying to take nutrients from my sweat (it was hot today) though no evidence of feeding was seen. Maybe I just smelt nice!

Species seen included:

- Silver-studded Blue
- Common Blue
- Brown Argus
- Brimstone
- Large Skipper
- Grayling
- Gatekeeper
- Meadow Brown



Grayling, Dawney's Hill (25 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Jul-11 05:01 AM GMT

Lovely shot Mark – and those from the 18th too.

How many were on the wing today?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 26-Jul-11 05:10 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Glad you like the shot. I was particularly keen to get an image of one nectaring (not sure if its male or female). In the end I managed to get several shots with this, in my opinion, being the best.

There were certainly a lot of Grayling about though difficult to put a number on how many.

I was fairly close to your neck of the woods this morning as I was working in Ashford at the top of the M3. I would have given you a call if I had your number.

We must meet up.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Jul-11 06:00 AM GMT

There's something about the heather in the background that adds to it too.

Yes indeed, it would be great to meet up again.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 28-Jul-11 04:44 AM GMT

Alder Platt Meadow, Plaistow, 27 July 2011

Armed with appropriate nasal spray and irritable eye drops (other products are available) I ventured into the long grass aware of the dangers that lay ahead! The Small Heath were waiting in ambush and this time they played ball and presented themselves with a number of good photo opportunities. Despite seeing considerably more several days ago only two Common Blue were found.

Species seen included:

Common Blue

Small Skipper

Small Heath

Gatekeeper

Meadow Brown



Small Heath, Alder Platt Meadow, Plaistow (27 July 2011)



Small Heath, Alder Platt Meadow, Plaistow (27 July 2011)



Small Heath, Alder Platt Meadow, Plaistow (27 July 2011)



Common Blue (male), Alder Platt Meadow, Plaistow (27 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Neil Freeman, 28-Jul-11 04:52 AM GMT

Nice photos Mark, I particularly like the Small Heath shots.

It was only the other day that I managed to find one that was not deep down amongst grass stems 🙄

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 28-Jul-11 05:21 AM GMT

Thanks Neil, I'm glad you like them.

"nfreem" wrote:

It was only the other day that I managed to find one that was not deep down amongst grass stems.

Exactly my problem the other day.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 30-Jul-11 03:34 AM GMT

Friday, 29 July 2011

After what seemed like a long trek up to Heyshott Escarpment in the hope of finding roosting Dingy Skipper, a long wait ensued before finding a single male Chalkhill Blue on one of the upper slopes (after just over 1 hour of looking!). A single Meadow Brown and single Speckled Wood were all that followed in the main area. No Dingy Skipper were found despite first brood specimens being found here early in the season.

On my way back down, in one of the lower areas off the main track, several male Chalkhill Blue were seen along with a single male Common Blue, a single male Marbled White and possibly the sadest looking Ringlet I have ever seen.

All in all a poor start and I even took a picture of a moth!

Species seen included:

Common Blue

Chalkhill Blue

Ringlet

Marbled White

Meadow Brown

... and what seemed like every horsefly on the hill!



Common Carpet (Epirrhoe alternata), Heyshott (29 July 2011)



Common Carpet (Epirrhoe alternata), Heyshott (29 July 2011)

Kithurst Hill followed and though the rain came after only a short time a productive visit was forthcoming.

Species seen included:

Common Blue

Chalkhill Blue

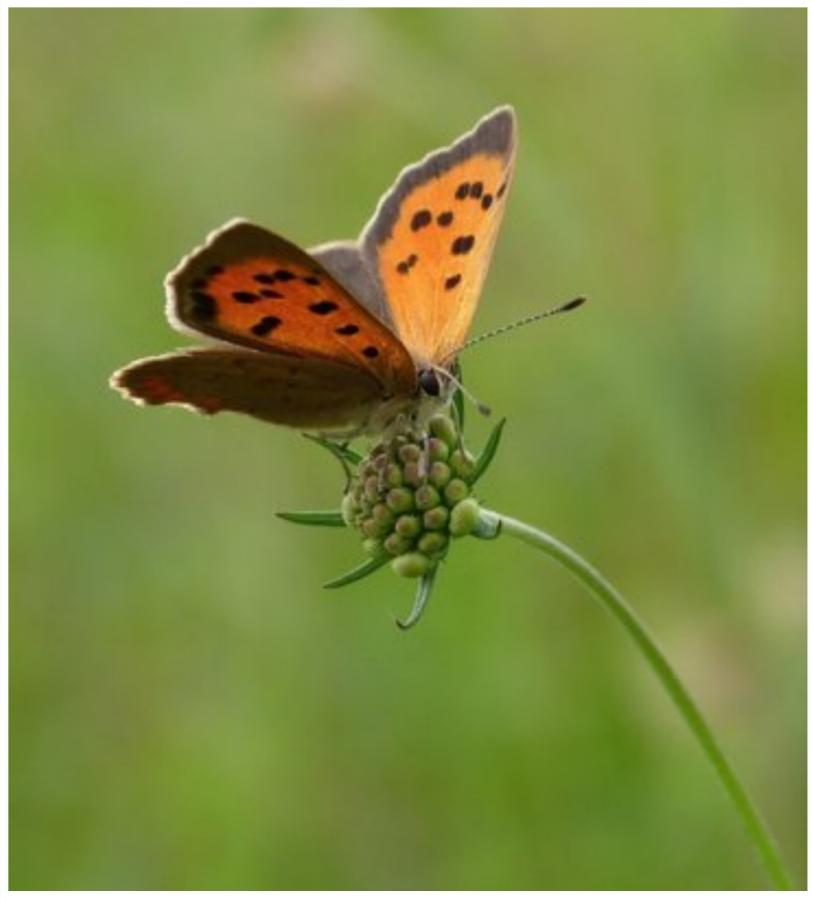
Small Blue (single female)

Brown Argus

Small Copper (at least four)

Small Skipper

Gatekeeper
Marbled White
Meadow Brown



Small Copper, Kithurst Hill (29 July 2011)



Small Copper (female) ab. caeruleo-punctata, Kithurst Hill (29 July 2011)

My final destination was Furnace Meadow at Ebernoe where the sun was shining and all the expected grassland species were found.

Species seen included:

Common Blue
Brown Argus
Small Copper
Small Heath
Gatekeeper
Meadow Brown
Large White
Green-veined White



Large White (female), Ebernoe (29 July 2011)



Furnace Meadow, Ebernoe (29 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Neil Freeman, 30-Jul-11 04:44 AM GMT

Hi Mark,

I particularly like the shot of the Small Copper ab. the blue spots show up a treat.

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jul-11 06:01 AM GMT

Cracking pictures, Mark!

No second brood Dukes at Heyshott either?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 30-Jul-11 11:25 PM GMT

Thanks Guys,

I'm glad you like the pictures. I have to say I'm very pleased with the results I've managed to produce with my camera particularly when you consider I only purchased it on 23rd June 2011 and have never done any insect photography before. I think it proves you don't necessarily need thousands of pounds worth of gear to get a good image (though of course image quality is in the eye of the beholder!). I do feel that having a good eye for a picture is often far more important than the equipment you are using.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 03-Aug-11 01:57 AM GMT

Botany Bay, 2 August 2011

A brief visit to a very hot and humid Botany Bay early this afternoon produced good numbers of 2nd brood Wood White including a pair in copulation on the flower head of the larval foodplant Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*). After a short time observing them they were briefly joined by a second male who tried quite hard, though unsuccessfully, to get in on the action!

Species seen included:

Wood White
Brimstone
Gatekeeper
Meadow Brown
Large Skipper
Red Admiral
Silver-washed Fritillary



Copulating Wood White, Botany Bay (2 August 2011)



Copulating Wood White, Botany Bay (2 August 2011)



Brimstone (male), Botany Bay (2 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Wurzel, 03-Aug-11 02:52 AM GMT

Some great shots of Wood White – I am disgustingly jealous as this is a species I just can't seem to get round to seeing – so jealous in fact I don't even want to use the appropriate smilee!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Mark Colvin

by Neil Freeman, 03-Aug-11 03:23 AM GMT

Lovely photos of the Wood Whites Mark.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 03-Aug-11 03:52 AM GMT

Thanks Guys,

I really appreciate your comments.

"Wurzel" wrote:

Some great shots of Wood White – I am disgustingly jealous as this is a species I just can't seem to get round to seeing.

Do get out and see them Wurzel.

They're around in good numbers in my local woods at the moment. PM me if you're in the Chiddingfold area.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by EricY, 03-Aug-11 04:14 AM GMT

Mark, the first copulating wood white photo is a classic with exceptional symetry, deserves a wider audience. Eric

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 03-Aug-11 04:20 AM GMT

Botany Bay (2 August 2011) continued ...

I don't mind a bit of competition but my 13 year old son is getting a bit too close for comfort! He took these and several others with my old 6 megapixel Canon Ixus 65 whilst with me this afternoon!

My apologies to Wurzel for posting these. 😊



Copulating Wood White, Botany Bay (2 August 2011)



Copulating Wood White, Botany Bay (2 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 03-Aug-11 04:23 AM GMT

"EricY" wrote:

the first copulating wood white photo is a classic with exceptional symmetry, deserves a wider audience.

Thanks Eric,

That's very kind of you.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 05-Aug-11 07:25 AM GMT

Thursday, 4 August 2011

Not being able to get out yesterday and with heavy rain forecast and arriving today, I needed a plan!

It's been many years since I first dabbled with moths. The mid to late seventies and early eighties found me sugaring trees and lampposts, running a Robinson MV trap in the garden, a Heath Portable in more inaccessible locations and even the good old Tilley lamp and a white sheet in the middle of nowhere.

I clearly remember a fabulous evening whilst in the middle of Tilgate Forest (now a public golf course and divided by the M23). My friend and I were sitting watching the various moths and other invertebrates coming to our white sheet and Tilley lamp with the sound of churring nightjars in the background. It was getting late and the temperature was starting to drop when the silence was broken by the sound of a vehicle approaching in the distance (the M23 was in the process of being constructed at this time so vehicle noise was not expected). Lights soon appeared on the horizon. I seem to recall the Police being somewhat amused by what two sixteen year olds could possibly find entertaining about sitting in the middle of heathland on a warm evening catching moths. I recall being left to explain this to the Police whilst my friend continued to catch moths in the vehicle's headlights! We were just asked to be very careful with the Tilley lamp and enjoy our evening.

Anyway, to my plan ... 'Bathroom Entomology' ... or how many different moths can you catch in your bathroom overnight.

It could catch on?

I'm a bit rusty on moth identification so I'm sticking to what I think I know (please correct me if I'm wrong) and leaving the little 'brown jobbies' for later!

Last night's catch as follows ...



Purple Bar (Cosmorhoe ocellata), Plaistow (4 August 2011)



Yellow Shell (Camptogramma bilineata), Plaistow (4 August 2011)



Willow Beauty (Peribatodes rhomboidaria), Plaistow (4 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 06-Aug-11 01:47 AM GMT

Friday, 5 August 2011

Today was spent in the company of my son and Neil Hulme (Sussex Kipper) searching for the illusive Brown Hairstreak at Steyning Rifle Range. Despite ideal habitat and weather conditions and a thorough search of all key areas, only two brief glimpses of fly past males were observed. Photographic opportunities were sadly not forthcoming. My thanks go to Neil for showing us around the site and for passing on those all important tips for success.

Species seen included:

- Brown Hairstreak
- Brown Argus
- Holly Blue
- Common Blue
- Small Copper
- Gatekeeper
- Wall
- Speckled Wood
- Meadow Brown
- Small Heath
- Brimstone
- Large Skipper
- Red Admiral
- Small Tortoiseshell

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 07-Aug-11 03:36 AM GMT

Oaken Wood, 6 August 2011

I arrived at Oaken Wood at around 3.45pm today. It was overcast but warm and a pleasant relief from standing in the burning heat of yesterday's sunshine.

The site appeared quiet at first but after several minutes I found my first Wood White, a male. Further investigation along the main track revealed in the region of 10 males and 2 females resting in the undergrowth to the side of the track. As the sun started to peer through the clouds at around 5.30pm other Wood White began to show, particularly around the main clearing. I found no pairs in copula.

It was a short but welcome visit ... the ticks certainly seemed to appreciate me going!

Species seen included:

- Wood White
- Large Skipper
- Red Admiral
- Gatekeeper
- Speckled Wood



Wood White (female), Oaken Wood (6 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by MikeOxon, 07-Aug-11 05:06 AM GMT

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

Anyway, to my plan ... 'Bathroom Entomology' ... or how many different moths can you catch in your bathroom overnight.

If the pics are in your bathroom, you must have a Swedish sauna!

Mike

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 08-Aug-11 06:59 AM GMT

Very good Mike 😊

I think The Two Ronnies are safe however!

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 09-Aug-11 06:52 AM GMT

Aston Rowant NNR, 8 August 2011

To say today was a struggle is a bit of an understatement. I had one target, the beautiful and localised Silver-spotted Skipper. Weather conditions looked good. The sun was shining, there was intermittent cloud cover and the temperature was just right ... but the wind was just too much! It never stopped blowing. The Skipper's naturally rapid flight is hard enough to follow on a still day but with the added impact of strong wind they were nigh on impossible to follow.

Finding the Skipper settled wasn't too difficult but being able to find one in a photo worthy position was another thing. For those who know the butterfly, they do spend a fair bit of time basking and resting on the ground and images in this position are not too hard to come by, although they are generally not very appealing, at least to my eye. Occasionally, when resting on the ground, they would actually climb onto my finger when it was presented slowly in front of them. I received what felt like a strong feeling of trust ... a nice moment.

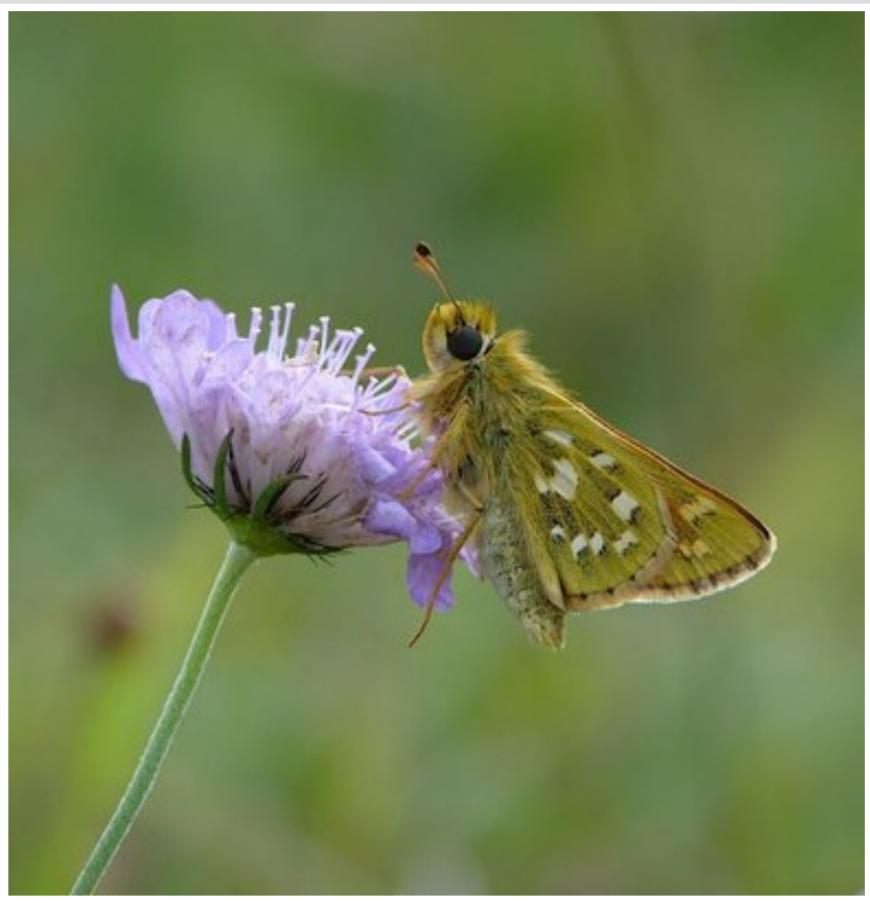
However, perseverance did pay off in the end with several shots I was happy with.

For those who haven't visited Aston Rowant NNR before I recommend a visit but be aware. The ground is very steep and can be difficult underfoot in places. It is also quite noisy with the continual drone of the M40 motorway in the background, though after a while this fades into the general environment. The sheep that graze the site, presumably as part of the overall habitat management plan, leave a trail of what only sheep can leave behind! Being an entomologist and photographer who likes to get down and personal, I soon found this out to my detriment ... I was covered in a fairly short period of time!

My thanks to Lee Hurrell for directions to the site.

Species seen included:

Silver-spotted Skipper
Chalkhill Blue
Common Blue
Brown Argus
Small Copper
Red Admiral
Gatekeeper
Meadow Brown



Silver-spotted Skipper (male), Aston Rowant (8 August 2011)



Silver-spotted Skipper (male), Aston Rowant (8 August 2011)



Silver-spotted Skipper (male), Aston Rowant (8 August 2011)



Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve (8 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 09-Aug-11 05:31 PM GMT

Nice shots, Mark. The first one was worth getting up for – cracking photo!

Glad you found the site ok.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Mark Colvin

by Wurzel, 10-Aug-11 03:07 AM GMT

Some cracking shots there – I like the middle one in particular 😊 Is it just me or do they look much lighter this year than last –really greeny?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 10-Aug-11 03:15 AM GMT

Thanks Guys,

I'm glad you like the shots as they didn't come easy, particularly the first one.

"Wurzel" wrote:

Is it just me or do they look much lighter this year than last – really greeny?

I can't really comment on this as it was my first outing looking for them.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 10-Aug-11 03:24 AM GMT

Stedham Common, 8 August 2011

Whilst on route to Midhurst late yesterday afternoon I had an hour to spare. Not expecting much, I decided to take a brief look around Stedham Common.

After only fifteen minutes or so of looking around, I saw what at first appeared to be a pair of brown butterflies flying whilst joined in copulation. However, on closer inspection and a very quick record shot, it turned out to be a specimen of what I believe to be a female Golden-tabbed Robberfly (*Eutolmus rufibarbis*) carrying away its supper ... a female Gatekeeper!

What a way to go!

Species seen included:

Holly Blue

Gatekeeper
Meadow Brown
Speckled Wood



Robberfly with female Gatekeeper, Stedham Common (8 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 10-Aug-11 03:46 PM GMT

Chantry Hill, 9 August 2011

A very brief and my first ever visit to Chantry Hill this afternoon produced a good variety and number of species. Chalkhill Blue were very abundant but what surprised me most was the number of Meadow Brown, many of which appeared to have just emerged. After a bit of hunting I managed to track down two male Silver-spotted Skipper's, both taking in the heat from the disturbed soil around the numerous rabbit scrapes.

A quick record shot of a Small Tortoiseshell was all I managed.

I will certainly return when time is on my side.

Species seen included:

Silver-spotted Skipper
Chalkhill Blue
Common Blue
Brown Argus
Gatekeeper
Small Heath
Meadow Brown
Small Tortoiseshell



Small Tortoiseshell, Chantry Hill (9 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Michaeljf, 10-Aug-11 09:25 PM GMT

Hi Mark,

the first shot you have of the Silver-Spotted Skipper is an absolute cracker! 😊 I know what you mean about both the weather conditions (wind) and also the sheep pooh, as I was at the site on Saturday 6th, just two days before yourself, and I have a lovely new colour to one of my boots to prove it! 😊

Technical question – for the single SSS shot on the flower, did you use a tripod or monopod, as I presume it wasn't hand-held. Keep up the good work!



Michael

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Aug-11 01:20 AM GMT

Hi Michael,

Thanks for your post and I'm glad you like the shot. It took a while to get and I think I was very lucky in respect that it was a fresh specimen and didn't immediately fly off like most of the others. It was found and photographed at the bottom of the slope just as you enter the site.

"Michaeljf" wrote:

for the single SSS shot on the flower, did you use a tripod or monopod, as I presume it wasn't hand-held?

Hand held all the way ... I don't possess a tripod or monopod!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Aug-11 05:12 AM GMT

Noar Hill, 10 August 2011

Having climbed for what seemed like miles (I'm sure it wasn't really that far and probably more likely to be associated with my level of fitness) I finally emerged from High Wood Hanger and arrived at an entrance gate into High Common and one of the disused pits located on the top of Noar Hill. It was only afterwards that I found out, by speaking to two fellow enthusiasts from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch of Butterfly Conservation, that I had taken the hard route! I'll know better next time ...

Having taken so long getting to the top, I only had around 45 minutes to explore. Needless to say I didn't get very far. However, in the first and only pit I briefly investigated I found a reasonable number of species ... no doubt sheltering from the strong winds which prevailed in the area. Although I didn't see any personally, 2nd brood Dingy Skipper's were reported though no reports of Brown Hairstreak or 2nd brood Duke of Burgundy ... though they may have been there (we have to live in hope).

Having missed out on a photo opportunity of a pristine Comma in the woods, a quick record shot of a Small Copper feeding was all that I managed (not one of my better ones I'm afraid but I do like to post a picture with a report).

Species seen included:

Common Blue
Small Copper
Peacock
Comma
Red Admiral
Brimstone
Small White
Gatekeeper
Speckled Wood
Meadow Brown



Small Copper, Noar Hill (10 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 12-Aug-11 11:09 PM GMT

Heyshott Escarpment, 12 August 2011

It was either Steyning Rifle Range, in the hope of a Brown Hairstreak, or Heyshott Escarpment, in what seemed the more realistic proposition of finding a 2nd brood 'Duke' or Dingy Skipper, especially as the latter had been reported from there last week. With the forecast being rather borderline for the Brown Hairstreak and being only 10 minutes away from Heyshott I decided on the latter.

Both Common and Chalkhill Blue were still around in good numbers and these were the first species encountered under an overcast sky. What struck me most today was the fact that nearly all of the Common Blue I encountered were infested with mite, some very heavily. I can't say I noticed this with the Chalkhill's, though several Gatekeeper I came across also had 'hitchhikers' attached. Sadly the Duke of Burgundy did not show and this was also the same for the Dingy Skipper. Three pristine Red Admiral were on show though getting close enough for a decent shot proved difficult.

On my way back down, having thoroughly checked out the upper slopes, I popped in to one of the lower areas off the main track, which has previously been rewarding. Sadly, with the exception of a few small areas where sources of nectar remained, this part of the site had obviously very recently been cut back and burnt, the remains of a smouldering bonfire filling the air. A quick look around produced several Chalkhill Blue, two Small White and a single male Green-veined White.

Maybe I should have gone to Steyning?

Species seen included:

- Common Blue
- Chalkhill Blue
- Red Admiral
- Small Heath
- Gatekeeper
- Meadow Brown
- Small White
- Green-veined White



Common Blue (male), Heyshott Escarpment (12 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 14-Aug-11 05:14 PM GMT

Rome, 13 August 2011

Whilst sitting drinking a cold beer on the roof garden of my hotel in central Rome I watched a single Geranium Bronze (*Cacyreus marshalli*) nectaring and posing for pictures ... and guess where my camera is – not in Rome!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 21-Aug-11 05:10 AM GMT

Southwater, 20 August 2011

To say I have been 'gagging at the bit' to get out would be a bit of an understatement. Having spent the last week doing the Italian history thing (Rome, Pisa and Venice) and looking at far too many churches, basilicas, temples, palaces, monuments etc I was ready to blow! Now don't get me wrong, I absolutely love history but it has to have the word NATURAL in front of it ... if it doesn't then I'm really not that interested. All I can say is I was glad I had my iPhone with me and could browse the ukbutterflies website, though at times that just made me more frustrated particularly when Neal posted his first set of Brown Hairstreak pictures.

Anyway (grumpy old man bit over), having arrived home last night I finally managed to get out for a brief walk this afternoon, around a rather busy Southwater Country Park meadow, in anticipation of a possible Brown Hairstreak. This sadly produced very little apart from too many dog walkers. I should have known better really ...

Hopefully my next outing will be more productive.

Species seen included:

Red Admiral
Small White
Large White
Small Copper
Gatekeeper
Meadow Brown
Speckled Wood

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 22-Aug-11 03:50 AM GMT

Halnaker Hill, 21 August 2011

After much discussion as to what to do this afternoon we, that is my wife, daughter and son, finally agreed that a walk to Halnaker Windmill would hopefully blow away a few cobwebs left over from our recent overseas holiday. This was certainly a better option than the cinema or bowling as it allowed me to take my camera with the added benefit that I might get a snap or two of some butterflies. Well I certainly got a few snaps but in the very bright and windy conditions little was on the wing and what was proved impossible to photograph.

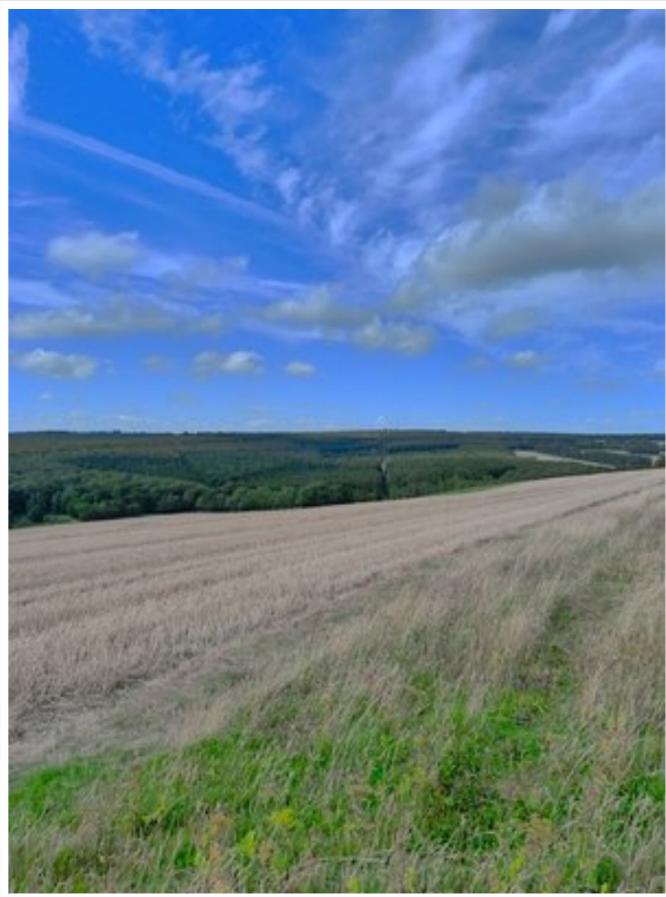
It's been some time since I last went to Halnaker and although a few butterflies were seen, particularly in the enclosed area surrounding the mill, the area immediately adjoining the track leading to the windmill had little to offer. The adjoining agricultural land is also heavily cultivated and provides very little, if anything, in the way of sources of nectar or foodplants. The walk certainly blew away the cobwebs!

Species seen included:

Red Admiral
Small White
Common Blue
Gatekeeper
Meadow Brown
Speckled Wood



Halnaker Windmill (21 August 2011)



View from Halnaker Windmill (21 August 2011)



Halnaker Windmill (21 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 23-Aug-11 05:34 AM GMT

Steyping and Chantry Hill, 22 August 2011

Correctly anticipating a large gathering yesterday (see Sussex Kipper's report) I decided to leave my visit to Steyping Rifle Range, in search of the illusive Brown Hairstreak, until today. Good plan I hear you say ... except the weather didn't play ball. I arrived early to a very warm and humid site with extensive cloud cover. However, the sun was pushing through and I hoped that by 11am the sun would be out in all its glory and I would be surrounded by my quarry. Sadly it didn't go quite like that ...

I did manage to see four Brown Hairstreak's flying around the canopy of one of the master trees in the main reserve area, though sadly they did not descend. Later in the morning, on the more elevated area of the reserve, I am 95% sure I observed a female joined in copula with a male and flying from the upper hedgerow and low over the scrub in front of me and then never to be seen again. Now that would have been a good shot if I'd have managed to find them!

Species seen included:

- Red Admiral
- Small Copper
- Brown Argus
- Common Blue
- Gatekeeper
- Small Heath
- Meadow Brown
- Speckled Wood
- Green-veined White



Green-veined White (female), Steyping (22 August 2011)



Green-veined White (female), Steyning (22 August 2011)



Green-veined White (male), Steyning (22 August 2011)



Myathropa florea (male), Steyning (22 August 2011)



Steyning Rifle Range (22 August 2011)

A later brief visit to a very overcast and windy Chantry Hill produced my target of Silver-spotted Skipper, a female of which was most obliging.

Species seen included:

Chalkhill Blue
Gatekeeper
Small Heath
Meadow Brown
Small Skipper
Silver-spotted Skipper



Silver-spotted Skipper (female), Chantry Hill (22 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by ChrisC, 23-Aug-11 06:28 AM GMT

i do like the texture detail in the skipper. very nice indeed.

Chris

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 23-Aug-11 07:35 AM GMT

Thanks Chris,

"ChrisC" wrote:

i do like the texture detail in the skipper. very nice indeed.

I'm glad you like the shot.

I didn't expect to get anything this afternoon as I had very little time and it was really windy on the hill. I just kept clicking away and kept my fingers crossed!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 24-Aug-11 04:28 AM GMT

Tuesday, 23 August 2011

As my last posting on 'Bathroom Entomology' (or how many different moths can you catch in your bathroom overnight) was on Thursday, 4 August, I thought a brief update was appropriate.

In all fairness things have been very quiet, particularly on the larger moth front. I have had a reasonable number of different microlepidoptera pass through but at this time I am not really planning to photograph them, despite some of them being quite beautiful little gems. That said, one moth that has been regularly turning up is the common grassland species *Agriphila tristella* which has been coming readily to light.



Agriphila tristella, Plaistow (23 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Neil Freeman, 24-Aug-11 05:39 AM GMT

Hi Mark,

I like the series of GV White shots earlier.

I think that this is one species that is often overlooked in our quests for more elusive quarry and yet it has a delicate beauty all of its own.

Cheers,

Neil F.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 25-Aug-11 02:59 AM GMT

Hi Neil,

Thanks for your comments. I'm glad you like the shots.

"nfreem" wrote:

I like the series of GV White shots earlier. I think that this is one species that is often overlooked in our quests for more elusive quarry and yet it has a delicate beauty all of its own.

I couldn't agree more with you and I have to be honest I didn't set out to photograph them.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 25-Aug-11 08:26 AM GMT

Mill Hill, 24 August 2011

An early start saw me setting off in cloud and light drizzle with the ground wet underfoot ... not a good start! However, by the time I'd reached my destination traces of blue were showing through and by 9.30am the sun was out.

My first 45 minutes or so (under a cloud covered sky) was spent looking for roosting Adonis Blue. No matter how hard I looked I didn't find any. As soon as the sun appeared they were suddenly everywhere, the males basking with their wings open like living sapphires glistening in the grass on the lower slopes. The females were slightly harder to find though once located were found in good numbers with many seen ovipositing. The males, visually outnumbering the females, were continuously on the move. Although extensive mating behaviour was observed I failed to find any joined in copulation. With the exception of numerous record shots I failed to get the image I wanted. Small Heath and Meadow Brown were also found in good numbers with a pair of the former found in copulation. A single Treble-bar (*Aplocera plagiata*) was also found.

It seems rather strange, I spend the morning looking at bright blue butterflies and end up posting pictures of two brown butterflies and a grey moth!

I'll have to go back for the Adonis shots ...

Species seen included:

Red Admiral
Adonis Blue
Chalkhill Blue
Small Heath
Meadow Brown



Copulating Small Heath, Mill Hill (24 August 2011)



Treble-bar (Aplocera plagiata), Mill Hill (24 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Nick Broomer, 25-Aug-11 08:29 AM GMT

hi Mark

great pictures of S.S.S., newcomer hideandseek

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 25-Aug-11 03:07 PM GMT

Thanks and welcome to the forum.

"hideandseek" wrote:

Great pictures of S.S.S

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 26-Aug-11 05:07 AM GMT

Mill Hill, 25 August 2011

Low grey cloud and frequent showers was the order of the morning at Mill Hill. I arrived early and finally gave up when the wind and rain didn't at about 10.45am.

I was hoping to find Adonis Blue roosting and sheltering out of reach from the weather. I sadly didn't find any and if anyone knows the site I would appreciate any tips as to where I might find them at Mill Hill. When I visited the site yesterday they suddenly appeared out of thin air the second the sun came out ... maybe I've just got bad eyesight! In the way of butterflies only Meadow Brown and a few Small Heath were occasionally on the wing.

Moths were a little more forthcoming and I saw several Treble-bar (*Aplocera plagiata*), a single specimen of the beautiful little *Pyrausta aurata* and a fabulous final instar larva of the Privet Hawk-moth (*Sphinx ligustri*).

Species seen included:

Small Heath

Meadow Brown



Privet Hawk-moth (*Sphinx ligustri*) Larva, Mill Hill (25 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 26-Aug-11 05:46 AM GMT

Plaistow, 25 August 2011

A single specimen of the Garden Pebble (*Evergestis forficalis*) came to my bathroom light last night.



Garden Pebble (Evergestis forficalis), Plaistow (25 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 26-Aug-11 07:22 AM GMT

Pulborough Brooks, 25 August 2011

After visiting a client nearby, I popped into Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve early this afternoon due to recent reports of a Wryneck and the possibility of a Brown Hairstreak (a fresh female was seen and photographed on the reserve yesterday). The Wryneck didn't show, at least not for me but I did manage to find a single Brown Hairstreak flying around the canopy of one of the master trees. I must wear the wrong aftershave, as I can't seem to find them at ground level. Any tips on a suitable brand would be much appreciated!

An obliging and slightly tired Small Copper and a pair of Meadow Brown in copulation were also observed.

Species seen included:

- Red Admiral
- Holly Blue
- Common Blue
- Small Copper
- Brown Hairstreak
- Small White
- Meadow Brown
- Speckled Wood



Small Copper (male), Pulborough Brooks (25 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by John W, 26-Aug-11 09:24 AM GMT

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

After visiting a client nearby, I popped into Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve early this afternoon due to recent reports of a Wryneck and the possibility of a Brown Hairstreak (a fresh female was seen and photographed on the reserve yesterday). The Wryneck didn't show, at least not for me but I did manage to find a single Brown Hairstreak flying around the canopy of one of the master trees. I must wear the wrong aftershave, as I can't seem to find them at ground level. Any tips on a suitable brand would be much appreciated!

Mark, you just need to be with Sussex Kipper, the Brown Hairstreak whisperer 😊

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 27-Aug-11 01:41 AM GMT

Hi John,

"John W" wrote:

you just need to be with Sussex Kipper, the Brown Hairstreak whisperer

Your not kidding ... I wonder if it could be bottled?

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 27-Aug-11 06:57 AM GMT

Plaistow, 26 August 2011

A single specimen of the Common Wave (*Cabera exanthemata*) came to my bathroom light last night.



Common Wave (Cabera exanthemata), Plaistow (26 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 28-Aug-11 04:24 AM GMT

Wiggonholt, 27 August 2011

With an hour or so to spare this afternoon I decided to pop over to the small hamlet of Wiggonholt, which is conveniently located next to Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve. There is a public footpath, which runs from the reserve car park to Wiggonholt Farm and the beautiful 13th century church. After emerging from the small wooded area a clearing, comprising of bramble, grasses and ragwort, appears to the left of the track before descending down a small hill to a pond and church beyond.

My son and I arrived some thirty minutes or so after a heavy downpour, in which we had earlier got a soaking on a very wet, windy and unproductive

Chantry Hill. The sun was out and after a very short period of time we managed to find a Small Copper drying its wings whilst perched on a stem of grass. The Small Copper is one of my favourite butterflies and we were lucky enough to see at least five, possibly six, separate individuals all jousting for prime territory. Two male Common Blue added to the colour of the afternoon's proceedings.

To obtain a feel for the environment, I have posted this set of pictures un-cropped.

Species seen included:

Small White
Small Copper
Common Blue



Small Copper (female), Wiggonholt (27 August 2011)



Common Blue (male), Wiggonholt (27 August 2011)



Common Blue (male), Wiggonholt (27 August 2011)



Common Blue (male), Wiggonholt (27 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 29-Aug-11 04:29 AM GMT

Wiggonholt, 27 August 2011

Further to my last report, when I visited Wiggonholt with my son James, I have managed to sort through his photographs with him ... which includes one very dodgy looking character in action. He caught me unawares with that one!

I hope you like his pictures and I really hope that getting close and personal with the creatures that I am passionate about gives him the same peace of mind that they give me.



Small Copper (female), Wiggonholt (27 August 2011)



Common Blue (male), Wiggonholt (27 August 2011)



Common Blue (male), Wiggonholt (27 August 2011)



Less said about this photo the better ... though note the good looks!

Re: Mark Colvin

by Gibster, 29-Aug-11 06:29 AM GMT

What's this?!? You mean to say you don't even have compound eyes?!? 😊

Gibster.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Neil Freeman, 29-Aug-11 06:50 AM GMT

Nice reports and photos Mark.

It looks as if your son is developing all the necessary skills required, particularly that of getting the shot without disturbing the subject 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 29-Aug-11 07:13 AM GMT

Hi Gibster,

Sorry to disappoint you.

"Gibster" wrote:

What's this?!? You mean to say you don't even have compound eyes?!?

I have enough trouble seeing with the ones I've got let alone compound eyes!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 29-Aug-11 07:24 AM GMT

Hi Neil,

Thanks for your comments.

"nfreem" wrote:

Nice reports and photos Mark. It looks as if your son is developing all the necessary skills required, particularly that of getting the shot without disturbing the subject.

I really hope my son's interest continues as it gives me great pleasure being out with him and seeing him enthused by the things which mean so much to me.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by ChrisC, 30-Aug-11 03:34 AM GMT

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

I really hope my son's interest continues as it gives me great pleasure being out with him and seeing him enthused by the things which mean so much to me.

from someone who spent 30 years fishing and birdwatching with his Dad, i hope it does too Mark. many many fond memories including seeing our first small copper together at Dungeness.

Chris

Re: Mark Colvin

by Paul Wetton, 30-Aug-11 06:27 AM GMT

Hi Mark

I began bird watching and taking nature walks with my dad at the tender age of 4.

I've been out with my mum and dad today bird and butterfly watching along the Wash near Boston at the not so tender age of 46 but its still great.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 30-Aug-11 04:12 PM GMT

Dear Chris and Paul,

Thanks for your comments.

"ChrisC" wrote:

from someone who spent 30 years fishing and birdwatching with his Dad, i hope it does too Mark. many many fond memories including seeing our first small copper together at Dungeness.

"Paul Wetton" wrote:

I began bird watching and taking nature walks with my dad at the tender age of 4. I've been out with my mum and dad today bird and butterfly watching along the Wash near Boston at the not so tender age of 46 but its still great.

We're definitely out of the same mould, being a fisherman and birdwatcher also. My parents were sadly not into any of the activities I pursue and most of my early years were spent in the company of like-minded friends. I really hope my interests rub off on my children.

I hope we meet in the field one day.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 31-Aug-11 03:44 AM GMT

Plaistow, 29 August 2011

A single specimen of the Angle Shades (*Phlogophora meticulosa*) came to my bathroom light last night.

It was nice to get a 'big' moth for a change and I was particularly pleased with this specimen as I hadn't seen an Angle Shades for a number of years.



Angle Shades (Phlogophora meticulosa), Plaistow (29 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 01-Sep-11 05:09 AM GMT

Wiggonholt and Pulborough Brooks, 31 August 2011

Today started and finished in the same place. An early and very short visit to Wiggonholt on my own, followed by a late afternoon visit with my son to Pulborough Brooks which ended in the rough pasture outside of Wiggonholt church.

My early visit produced just a single male Common Blue.



Common Blue (male), Wiggonholt (31 August 2011)



Common Blue (male), Wiggonholt (31 August 2011)



Common Blue (male), Wiggonholt (31 August 2011)

Our afternoon visit to Pulborough Brooks was far more productive and started with a tip off that a female Marsh Harrier had been seen on the southern brooks earlier in the day ... a scarce spring and autumn passage migrant and very scarce winter visitor to Sussex. Armed with binoculars and cameras we set off in anticipation ... maybe we'd strike lucky and see the Marsh Harrier and get a Brown Hairstreak (well you have to live in hope)!

In reality we saw neither of these but had a very pleasant walk around the reserve clocking up a number of bird and insect species along the way. Though I failed to get a good photograph, several worker hornets were observed stripping bark from an ash sapling for nest building. A single specimen of the hornet mimic hoverfly (*Volucella zonaria*) was also observed along with a male Southern Hawker (*Aeshna cyanea*).

We left the reserve by the public footpath, which leads to Wiggonholt church. The area surrounding the path is comprised of a mixture of rough pasture with numerous beds of bramble and nettle, stands of ragwort and fleabane along with various grasses. Our walk through this area produced a beautiful Small Tortoiseshell, a single Red Admiral and numerous Small Copper.

Species seen included:

Small White
Green-veined White
Small Copper
Common Blue
Meadow Brown
Gatekeeper
Speckled Wood
Red Admiral
Comma
Small Tortoiseshell



Comma, Pulborough Brooks (31 August 2011)



Small Copper, Wiggonholt (31 August 2011)





Southern Hawker (Aeshna cyanea), Pulborough Brooks (31 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-11 06:20 AM GMT

That is a cracking shot of the Small Copper – I already said this on another post but I can't get them to open their wings like that – are you tickling them with a grass blade? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Ps – I don't think that I'm married to your wife... 😊

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 02-Sep-11 03:39 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Thanks for your kind comments.

"Wurzel" wrote:

That is a cracking shot of the Small Copper – I already said this on another post but I can't get them to open their wings like that – are you tickling them with a grass blade?

It is of course an old Sussex trick past down through the generations from father to son ... consequently I am not at liberty to spill the beans!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 02-Sep-11 04:08 AM GMT

Pulborough Brooks, 31 August 2011

Keen to get a better shot of the Comma I'd seen earlier in the day I popped back to Pulborough Brooks later in the afternoon and found what I believe to be the same individual nectaring on Fleabane.



Comma, Pulborough Brooks (31 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 04-Sep-11 05:28 AM GMT

Steyning and Mill Hill, 3 September 2011

Today was always going to be long shot ... finding a Clouded Yellow in Sussex based on the very few records reported so far this season. My first port of call was Steyning Rifle Range as there is a field full of clover, one of the principal larval foodplants, just to the north of the Brown Hairstreak reserve.

Despite the temperature being over 20°C conditions weren't great, particularly for a decent photograph, as it was very windy with the sun fighting its way through a cloudy sky. I spent several hours scanning the reserve from top to bottom. Needless to say I didn't find my target though did find three species of reptile including grass snake, common lizard and several slow worms.

Species seen included:

- Red Admiral
- Small White
- Green-veined White
- Small Heath
- Meadow Brown
- Speckled Wood



Slow Worm (one of several), Steyning Rifle Range (3 September 2011)

Having left my packed lunch in the car I decided enough was enough and headed back down. Replenished, I decided to head across to Mill Hill. By the time I arrived the sun was shining under a clear blue sky with intermittent light cloud. It was hot and humid but still very windy.

No Clouded Yellow but numerous Adonis Blue (many still very fresh) and a scattering of Chalkhill and Common Blue (both past their sell by dates). I was particularly pleased to find at least six pristine Brown Argus on the lower slope and numerous Small Heath. Whilst heading back to the car I found a single female Adonis Blue sheltering in the long grass between the top track and road. Despite having slight wing damage she was a fairly fresh specimen and alighted on my finger for several seconds before flying off not to be seen again.

Species seen included:

- Small White
- Green-veined White
- Common Blue

Adonis Blue
Chalkhill Blue
Brown Argus
Small Heath
Meadow Brown



Brown Argus (male), Mill Hill (3 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by David M, 04-Sep-11 05:31 AM GMT

That's a particularly good Brown Argus shot, Mark. I like the snake too!

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 04-Sep-11 04:58 PM GMT

Hi David,

Thanks for your kind comments.

"David M" wrote:

That's a particularly good Brown Argus shot, Mark. I like the snake too!

Snake?

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 05-Sep-11 03:39 AM GMT

Cracking Brown Argus, Mark.

Shame about the CY, any luck with the BH?

Cheers

LH

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 05-Sep-11 05:34 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Thanks. I'm glad you like the shot.

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:
Cracking Brown Argus, Mark.

To be honest, considering the conditions (bright sunshine and very breezy), I was surprised I managed to pull anything out of the bag yesterday.

Still no Brown Hairstreak!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 06-Sep-11 07:46 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill, 5 September 2011 – Part 1

My plan today was to pay an early morning visit to Cissbury Ring to photograph Adonis Blue. I arrived early, 7.15am, and was faced as forecast with very strong westerly winds blowing straight onto the side of hill I was planning to visit. I quickly decided that the walk up and over the hill to my planned target area was probably foolhardy and probably a waste of time. I sat in my car drinking a hot cappuccino and watched the clouds racing in the sky and the trees dancing in the wind. A few brave souls were already walking their dogs on top of the ring. I needed a new plan ...

I arrived at Kithurst Hill some fifteen minutes later. The ground was wet and it was still windy but its main flower meadow faces north and is generally fairly protected by its wooded perimeter. This is one of my favourite sites on the South Downs and has been very productive in the past. I entered the gate to the meadow and walked west. Almost immediately I came across a stoat quartering the fields in hot pursuit of a rabbit. The chase over and the stoat left hungry it came running back through the wet meadow, stopping every now and again to stand up on its hind legs and smell the air and then move on.

A Red Admiral was the first butterfly of the morning followed by good numbers of Speckled Wood. Though I initially struggled to find a female Speckled Wood I managed a few shots when I finally did. She then flew to a higher level and landed, at which point she was immediately joined by a male. They never came down ...

Species seen included:

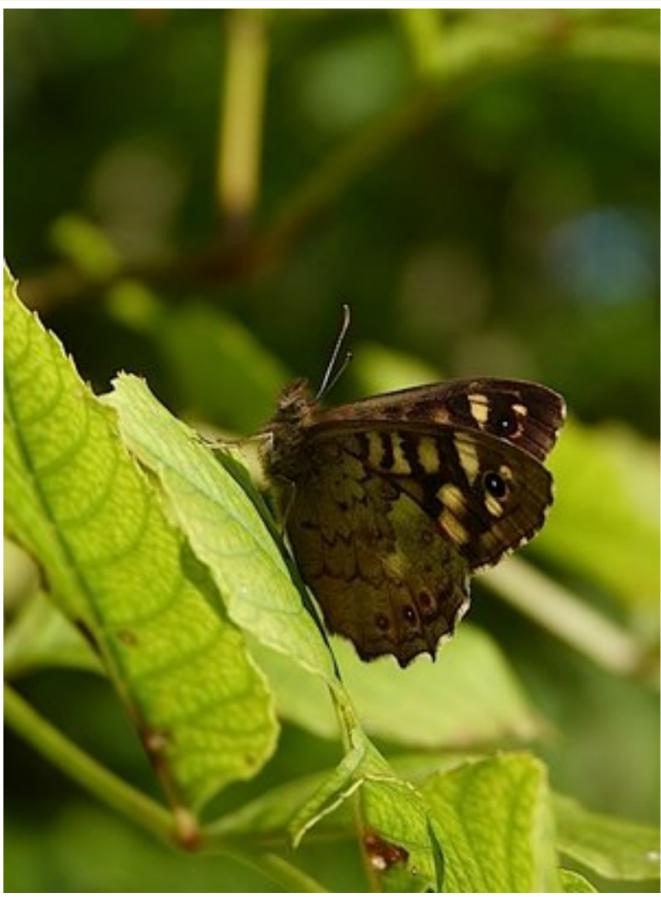
Red Admiral
Small Copper
Small White
Green-veined White
Speckled Wood



Speckled Wood (male), Kithurst Hill (5 September 2011)



Speckled Wood (male), Kithurst Hill (5 September 2011)



Speckled Wood (male), Kithurst Hill (5 September 2011)



Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 07-Sep-11 12:26 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill, 5 September 2011 – Part 2

Before leaving Kithurst Hill I decided to try to get a photograph of the stoat I had seen hunting earlier. I sat down in what seemed like a suitable spot, camera at the ready and started calling. Within just a few seconds the stoat, now with evidence of a kill around its lips, appeared once again from within the thick bush it had disappeared into earlier, its den probably within. I managed four very quick shots of this fabulous small mammal before it vanished once again. At one point it came within two metres of me.

A great start to the day which wasn't yet over ...



Stoat (Mustela erminea), Kithurst Hill (5 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Nick Broomer, 07-Sep-11 01:09 AM GMT

Hi Mark

Great picture of the Stoat.

Do you actually ever work?

hideandseek

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 07-Sep-11 01:59 AM GMT

Hi Hideandseek,

Thanks. I'm glad you like the picture.

"hideandseek" wrote:

Great picture of the Stoat.

Work?

You know you can get chucked off the forum for using bad language! 😊

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 07-Sep-11 05:06 AM GMT

Pulborough Brooks, 5 September 2011 – Part 3

I arrived at Pulborough Brooks late morning in anticipation of a possible Painted Lady (one had been reported and photographed recently) and maybe a Brown Hairstreak ... well you have to get lucky in the end! I started with a bacon butty and a coffee. Replenished I set off in my quest!

A good selection of late season butterflies were seen including two fabulous Comma's feeding on ripe blackberries close to the Brown Hairstreak master trees. Both sat quite happily for photographs, maybe slightly intoxicated by the fermenting fruits as moths do when 'sugaring'. I watched them for probably twenty minutes or so before moving on. Both Small and Green-veined White were around in reasonable numbers though flighty and difficult to photograph in the breezy conditions. A Red Admiral alighted on a metal gate and a single Small Tortoiseshell was nectaring on fleabane nearby.

A little later I decided to head down to Nettley's Hide as it is a good location for getting very close to the reserve's fallow deer population and a possible photo opportunity. A large grass snake crossed my path as I headed down. The deer weren't present in their usual spot.

The Painted Lady and Brown Hairstreak eluded me once again ...

Species seen included:

Small White
Green-veined White
Common Blue
Brown Argus
Small Copper
Comma
Red Admiral
Small Tortoiseshell
Speckled Wood
Meadow Brown



Comma (1), Pulborough Brooks (5 September 2011)



Comma (1), Pulborough Brooks (5 September 2011)



Comma (2), Pulborough Brooks (5 September 2011)



Comma (2), Pulborough Brooks (5 September 2011)



Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Sep-11 06:53 AM GMT

Lovely pictures once again Mark.

I love the stoat picture, it looks typically quizzical and is lovely to see surrounded by flowers like that.

Also, that second Comma image is a stunner!

Good work.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Mark Colvin

by Neil Freeman, 08-Sep-11 03:06 AM GMT

Hi Mark

Good to see you have been getting out and getting some good shots, its not been too good round here lately, either rain or wind or both 😞

I love the photo of the Stoat and the Comma shots have a real Autumnal look to them 😊 .

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 08-Sep-11 04:07 AM GMT

Dear Lee and Neil,

Thanks for your very kind comments. They are genuinely very much appreciated after the hard work and effort that goes into getting the pictures ... though I have to say I do like being out there!

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Lovely pictures once again Mark. I love the stoat picture, it looks typically quizzical and is lovely to see surrounded by flowers like that. Also, that second Comma image is a stunner!

"nfreem" wrote:

Good to see you have been getting out and getting some good shots, its not been too good round here lately, either rain or wind or both. I love the photo of the Stoat and the Comma shots have a real Autumnal look to them.

I was very pleased with the Stoat picture also and certainly agree that the Comma shots have an Autumnal feel about them, though I have to say I am desperately trying to hang onto the Summer!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 08-Sep-11 04:36 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill, 7 September 2011

Visiting a client in Wimbledon first thing meant my arrival at Kithurst Hill was delayed until 11.30am. That said, the weather conditions early on weren't great with extensive cloud cover and the temperature in the region of 13°C. Rain was also in the air. Upon arrival at Kithurst Hill the temperature had fortunately risen and blue sky was visible with the sun peering through the clouds.

I entered the meadow through the main gate and decided to head east for a change and was very pleased that I did, as the distinctive flight of a large Nymphalid turned out to be a female Peacock, only the second I have seen all season. She allowed me to take several shots before moving on. Numerous Small White were busy in the main meadow and most adjoining areas, with the occasional Green-veined White showing for good measure. A single male Small Copper landed briefly near by and then disappeared in a flash. A female Meadow Brown, in surprisingly good condition, was also seen but wouldn't sit for a photograph other than down amongst the grass.

My prize was yet to come ...

I decided to check out the Hemp agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*) for Painted Lady as one had been seen and photographed at the weekend. Sadly, none were to be found. In fact the Hemp agrimony was surprisingly lacking in nectaring butterflies. I carried on nevertheless and suddenly a glint of deep orange-yellow lifted from the grass I was walking through and rose into the air ... a female Clouded Yellow, quite distinctive in flight with her black wing margins broken by yellow spotting and confirmed later when photographed. After her initial flight when disturbed, she appeared quite tired

and somewhat reluctant to fly though in reasonable condition. My thoughts wondered as to whether she might be a recent arrival from across the channel? My photos over she lifted into the air once again and flew across the track landing somewhere amongst the Hemp agrimony. Despite looking several times, I never saw her again.

Species seen included:

Small White
Green-veined White
Clouded Yellow
Red Admiral
Peacock
Small Copper
Meadow Brown
Speckled Wood



Clouded Yellow (female), Kithurst Hill (7 September 2011)



Clouded Yellow (female), Kithurst Hill (7 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 10-Sep-11 06:37 AM GMT

Friday, 9 September 2011

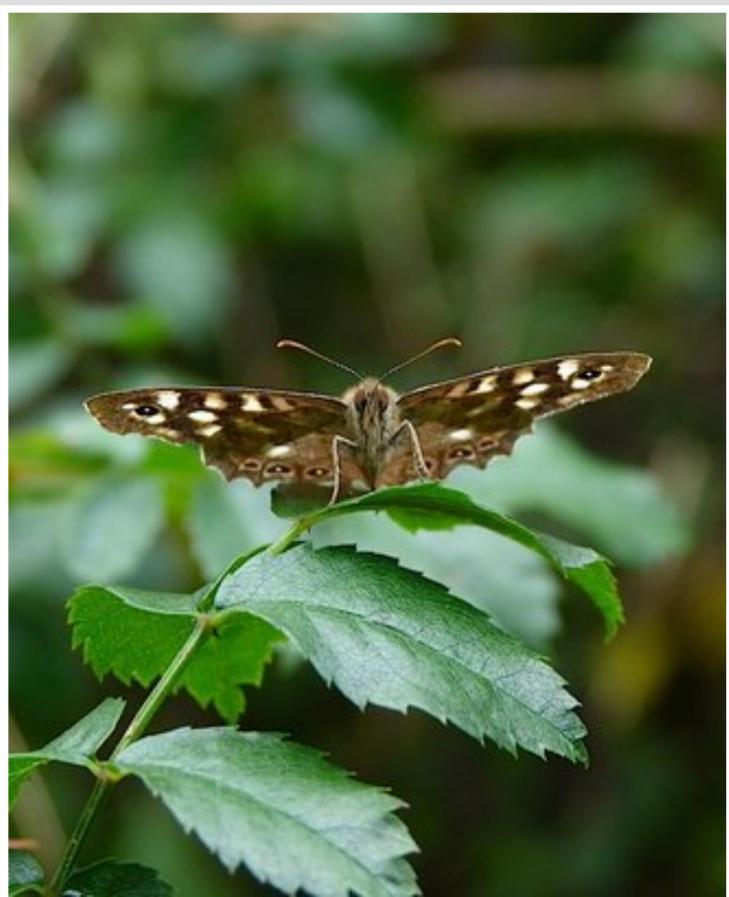
With the weather somewhat overcast I spent much of today undertaking repairs to a rabbit proof fence. By mid afternoon, job completed, I headed south towards Warnham and more specifically the Local Nature Reserve managed by Horsham District Council and its team of Wardens.

The 92 acre site was designated a Local Nature Reserve in 1988. It includes a 17-acre millpond, marshes, grassland, reedbeds, hedges and woodlands. The site provides a haven for a variety of wildlife with over 400 species of plant, 100 species of bird and over 21 species of dragonfly having been recorded. It also boasts its own heronry. I took a brief walk around a small part of the reserve with little in the way of butterflies on the wing, though I

did record several male Speckled Wood staking their claims to the rich harvest of blackberries. A single male Green-veined White was also seen. I was pleased to see a Spotted Flycatcher near to the main hide.

At home, earlier in the day, I recorded a beautiful 2nd generation specimen of The Snout (*Hypena proboscidalis*) and a single and somewhat dishevelled male Red Admiral sitting on my bedroom window frame.

With the weather looking rather inclement for the weekend I'm looking forward to an improvement early next week ... fingers crossed!



Speckled Wood (male), Warnham LNR (9 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by ChrisC, 10-Sep-11 06:47 AM GMT

lovely clouded yellow shots.

Chris

Re: Mark Colvin

by Susie, 10-Sep-11 06:47 PM GMT

Hey, Mark, Warnham is my local reserve and only a mile or so from where I live. 😊 the best spot for butterflies tends to be the woodland ride at the far end of the reserve.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Sep-11 01:10 AM GMT

Hi Chris,

Thanks. I'm glad you like them.

"ChrisC" wrote:

lovely clouded yellow shots

I've been looking for a Clouded Yellow for some time so was really pleased when I found this one.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Sep-11 01:23 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

Thanks for your message.

I had a feeling you lived in the area what with your Southwater Woods and Denbies posts. I really like Warnham LNR as its very compact and has a lot to offer if time is short. My friend is one of the Wardens and my daughter goes to school just outside of Horsham, so its very convenient. I'll certainly keep

an eye out for you in the future, though I have to say if I'd of seen an attractive blond, with a camera AND interested in insects I'm sure we'd have spoken already! 😊

Hope to bump into you soon.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Sep-11 05:03 AM GMT

Plaistow, 10 September 2011

A single specimen of the Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*) found in my bathroom this morning.



Silver Y (Autographa gamma), Plaistow (10 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Susie, 11-Sep-11 05:59 AM GMT

Hi Mark, I used to go to Warnham NR a lot when I first moved here and Sam Bayley was the warden but have only been there a few times in the last year or so. It is a good spot, but there are just so many nice places round here to visit, we are very fortunate. It would be nice to bump into you too. If you don't mind my asking, what age is your daughter?

Oh, and cracking photos, btw. I really enjoy reading your diary. 😊

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 12-Sep-11 06:57 AM GMT

Pulborough Brooks, 11 September 2011

I wasn't sure if I would get out today but when the opportunity arose I took it without question.

I arrived at Pulborough Brooks with my son at around 2pm. To say it was windy would be an understatement! The remains of Hurricane Katia had certainly travelled the Atlantic and reached West Sussex. Storm clouds threatened and fought overhead in a battle of supremacy, the sun occasionally daring to show its face. In the rare but welcomed lulls it was warm with the temperature around 20°C.

Passing a Small Tortoiseshell nectaring on fleabane (or was he just hanging on for his life?), we first headed to West Mead Hide where several Ruff and a solitary Green Sandpiper were feeding in the scrape. Heading towards Winpenny Hide we came across what was probably the largest toadstool I have ever seen. I'm no toadstool expert but believe this was a specimen of the Parasol Mushroom (*Macrolepiota procera*). It was approximately 28cm across the cap and stood at least the same and more in height. I took several pictures in the bright and windy conditions.

By now we had only seen two Small White, both trying to hunker down out of the wind. We walked on and saw three Green-veined White all looking rather tired. By the time we reached the track leading down to Nettle's Hide our spirits were lifted as there is a small sheltered area still containing fleabane and ragwort flowers and the remaining fruits of the blackberries. A male Small Copper was our first find ... a little worn and tatty but nevertheless a welcome prize. In its prime an ab. *caeruleo-punctata*, the blue spotting just showing on the hind wings. Five specimens of the Comma were found feasting on the remaining blackberry fruits along with several Speckled Wood. A single female Meadow Brown was seen nearby.

All in all a very pleasant, though blustery three hour visit during which I was surprised to get any pictures at all ... certainly no prize winners today!

Species seen included:

Small White

Green-veined White

Small Tortoiseshell
Comma
Small Copper
Meadow Brown
Speckled Wood



Parasol Mushroom (Macrolepiota procera), Pulborough Brooks (11 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 12-Sep-11 05:42 PM GMT

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

Storm clouds threatened and fought overhead in a battle of supremacy, the sun occasionally daring to show its face. In the rare but welcomed lulls it was warm...

Very poetic, Mark!

No pixies under the toadstool? 😊

Cheers

Lee

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 12-Sep-11 08:24 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

No pixies under the toadstool?

Along with the fairies they wouldn't keep still for a picture! 😊

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 13-Sep-11 03:58 AM GMT

Pulborough Brooks, 11 September 2011

Up to his armpits in brambles photographing a Comma, covered in flies and with a Common Darter on his arm ... that's my boy!

Proud dad or what ...



Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 14-Sep-11 03:53 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill, 13 September 2011

I blew out my early plan of a trip to Pagham Harbour due to the continuing strong winds and ventured once again to the sheltered seclusion of Kithurst Hill. With the exception of the wind, conditions were good. The sky was blue with frequent cumulus racing through. It was humid and the temperature was around 18°C.

My target, a Painted Lady ...

Today the site was alive. Red Admiral were everywhere, many in pristine condition having undoubtedly recently emerged ... the Hemp agrimony being drained of its nectar. To estimate numbers was difficult, though I don't believe a number between 25 and 30 would be an over exaggeration, there were probably considerably more. They were by far the most abundant species. A single Small Tortoiseshell and several Comma were also seen.

Further investigation revealed my prize ...

As I continued walking above the main bank of Hemp agrimony a large flying Nymphalid caught my eye. Its distinctive tawny-orange upperside marked with black confirmed my prize, a Painted Lady in perfect condition. My first this season. Having lost sight of my prize I rang Neil (Sussex Kipper) to let him know of my find and to see if he wanted to pop over. Whilst in discussion it appeared once again. Hanging up rather rapidly I followed in anticipation. Though mobile, it settled briefly in a couple of areas allowing me to take several photographs. Neil appeared shortly afterwards and within 5 minutes the clouds had opened the blue sky gone ... thanks Neil! Fortunately short lived, the rain passed by on its journey eastwards and blue sky and sunshine lit up the meadow once again. Discussion turned to everything Lepidopterous once more.

Numerous Small White, several Green-veined White along with good numbers of Speckled Wood were generally distributed. A single female Meadow Brown was seen flying nearby. A Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*) and a Hummingbird Hawk-moth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*) were also seen and photographed.

Anyone who thinks the season is over must be staying indoors!

Species seen included:

- Small White
- Green-veined White
- Small Tortoiseshell
- Red Admiral
- Painted Lady
- Comma
- Meadow Brown
- Speckled Wood



Painted Lady, Kithurst Hill (13 September 2011)



Comma, Kithurst Hill (13 September 2011)



Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 15-Sep-11 03:50 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill, 14 September 2011 - Part 1

I revisited Kithurst Hill today after the fabulous time I spent there yesterday ... it didn't disappoint!

I visited earlier than yesterday. Upon arrival a slight chill was in the air, though conditions soon warmed to a repeat of yesterday.

Once again Red Admirals were everywhere. They were still by far the most abundant species. A single Small Tortoiseshell was once again seen nectaring around the bowl and several Comma were seen around the western perimeter. The Painted Lady seen previously did not appear. Yesterday, Neil managed to find and photograph a beautiful Peacock ... today she was mine. I say she though in reality I believe a small male. I was allowed the privilege to take a number of photographs before saying my farewells and thanks.

Small White, Green-veined White along with good numbers of Speckled Wood were also found. Several female Meadow Brown were seen in the meadow along with a surprise, single Small Heath.

However, my real prize was yet to come ...

Species seen included:

Small White
Green-veined White
Small Tortoiseshell
Red Admiral
Peacock
Comma
Small Heath
Meadow Brown
Speckled Wood



Peacock, Kithurst Hill (14 September 2011)



Red Admiral, Kithurst Hill (14 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 16-Sep-11 12:44 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill, 14 September 2011 - Part 2

My real prize was yet to come ...

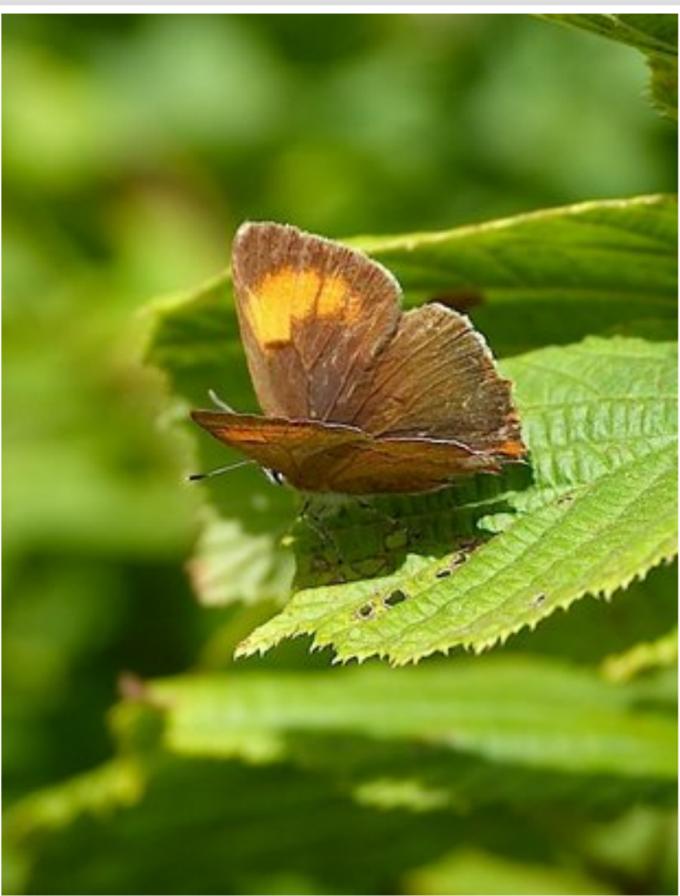
As you approach Kithurst Hill and prior to reaching the main parking area you pass an elevated road bank. It was approaching midday and as I was walking along the top of the bank heading down the hill a small brown butterfly in flight caught my eye, which at first I thought to be another Speckled Wood. How wrong I was as she landed on a nearby tree and opened her wings ... a female Brown Hairstreak!

She was a little tatty but a great sighting for the time of year and venue. I managed a quick shot before she took flight and headed back towards the canopy and her hiding place amongst the trees. Not a prizewinning picture but not bad considering I was holding the camera at arms length above my head!

I immediately rang Neil aka the 'Brown Hairstreak Whisperer' and informed him of my find. He writes:

"Brown Hairstreak adults have only been sighted once at Kithurst, with a battered, late season male being seen on the Hemp agrimony at the top of the road bank a few years ago. I have found eggs nearby in very low numbers. This appears to be a typical pattern within a low-density, metapopulated area and you might wait another five years to see a Brown Hairstreak butterfly there again!"

A great ending to another great session ...



Brown Hairstreak (female), Kithurst Hill (14 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by dilettante, 16-Sep-11 12:50 AM GMT

I'm envious of the Brown Hairstreak, but wanted to say the nymphalid photos are great, especially the comma and the PL – lovely diffuse lighting on pristine specimens.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 16-Sep-11 05:33 AM GMT

Hi Dilettante,

Many thanks for your kind comments. Its always good to get positive feedback particularly after the effort that goes in to getting the shots.

"dilettante" wrote:

I'm envious of the Brown Hairstreak, but wanted to say the nymphalid photos are great, especially the comma and the PL – lovely diffuse lighting on pristine specimens.

Regarding the Brown Hairstreak, I spent most of August being envious of many of the fabulous sightings being recorded and pictures being posted. Although I have seen a reasonable number flying at high level, this was the very first specimen I have seen low enough to photograph. It certainly put a big smile on my face ...

Thanks again.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 16-Sep-11 06:09 AM GMT

Chantry Hill, 15 September 2011

A report of a Clouded Yellow seen yesterday at Chantry Hill was enough to persuade me to deviate off route to take a look for myself.

For those that don't know, Chantry Hill sits due east of Kithurst Hill and to the south of the town of Storrington in West Sussex. It is a popular outdoor recreation area providing fabulous views of the Sussex countryside. On a clear day the Isle of Wight can be seen. The car park at Chantry Hill is situated off the A283 Washington to Storrington road 2 miles from the Washington roundabout and accessed via Chantry Lane on the left. A short way back down the lane from the car park there is a public bridleway heading in a westerly direction. This is north of the South Downs Way, which runs through the car park. Passing through the gate and heading up the track the path turns to the right near the summit and begins its descent close to the Late Bronze Age cross dyke. This whole area is generally good for butterflies and as the path descends more shelter is provided and it improves further.

Today the slopes were the most delicate shade of blue-purple due to their covering of Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Greater Knapweed (*Centaurea scabiosa*) and Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*). The blue sky adding to the overall impact.

Earlier in the year this was the haunt of the Silver-spotted Skipper though none were seen today. Red Admiral were generally scattered in reasonable numbers, though not to the extent of nearby Kithurst Hill. A single male Painted Lady was seen and a record shot taken after a great deal of effort ... those hills are steep! Other species observed included several Small White and a single male Large White along with numerous Meadow Brown, including a pair in copula. A surprise female Gatekeeper was also found.

The Clouded Yellow eluded me ...

Species seen included:

Small White

Large White

Small Copper

Small Tortoiseshell

Red Admiral

Painted Lady

Gatekeeper

Small Heath

Meadow Brown



Chantry Hill - Looking East (15 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Sep-11 09:53 PM GMT

Congrats on your Brown Hairstreak, Mark - at last!

Lovely Nymphalid photos and the Chantry Hill picture is stunning.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Mark Colvin

by Neil Freeman, 17-Sep-11 02:38 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Congrats on your Brown Hairstreak, Mark - at last!

Lovely Nymphalid photos and the Chantry Hill picture is stunning.

Cheers

Lee

Seconded.

Some great shots there Mark.

Nice to see you have been out and about.

Unfortunately, I have been stuck in work this week when the sun was out 😞 Lets see what the weekend brings, the forecast is looking a bit mixed.

Cheers,

Neil F.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 17-Sep-11 09:55 PM GMT

Dear Lee and Neil,

Thank you both once again for your very kind comments. I am away this weekend on 'family business' so am unlikely to get out with the camera ... though you never know! I hope the weather brightens up in your areas and that you both manage to find an opportunity to escape. I did get out on Friday and took a few shots and will hopefully have some pictures to post on my return.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 19-Sep-11 12:34 AM GMT

Friday, 16 September 2011

With the weather looking rather inclement for the weekend, Plan A was to visit the eastern perimeter of Pagham Harbour in search of a possible migrant ... another Clouded Yellow would have been nice and I have seen them at this location in good numbers in previous years! In practice my visit produced very little. A small number of Speckled Wood and Small White, a single Large White, two Green-veined White and two Red Admiral adding a welcome splash of colour. I couldn't help thinking that I should have taken my binoculars and telescope rather than my camera.

So to Plan B, which to be honest I didn't have ...

There was only one place I could think of that wouldn't let me down. You guessed it, Kithurst Hill. I arrived with the cloud building high in the sky and the wind increasing in strength. The sun was out and it was humid. Although there were still reasonable numbers of butterfly on the wing, or building on their reserves for the long winter's sleep ahead, today Kithurst Hill and its butterflies looked sadly tired and in need of rest. It has been very good to me this season and I probably won't visit again this year, wanting to remember it and its occupants in their prime. I managed a couple of reasonable shots though the subjects were sadly not wearing their best attire!

With still some time on my side a quick visit to Pulborough Brooks RSPB reserve produced a nice Comma feasting on the blackberry fruit near to the visitor centre and several male Speckled Wood patrolling their territories nearby. Finally, a brief visit to Southwater Country Park produced a pristine Comma sunning itself on bramble.

The season is not over yet but today left me feeling it won't be long ...



Comma, Kithurst Hill (16 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Wurzel, 19-Sep-11 05:22 AM GMT

Cracking shot there Mark 😊👍 - I know what you mean about everything looking tired, over the last few days I've seen 2 Red Admirals and 5 Whites and that's been it!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 20-Sep-11 03:20 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Many thanks for your kind comments they are genuinely much appreciated.

"Wurzel" wrote:

Cracking shot there Mark

Glad to see you've been photographing other insect Orders recently.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

Ashdown Forest, 18 September 2011

Despite being at a family get together this weekend, I did manage to 'survive' and more importantly get out for a couple of walks, though these were mainly unproductive. The first, on Saturday morning, was spent trying to keep dry as the clouds opened as soon as we set off. Those of us brave or maybe foolhardy enough to continue got wet, though were invigorated after a walk of several miles on Ashdown Forest. With the rain passing by mid afternoon and the sun now shining, another walk of slightly shorter distance was taken. Sadly I could not even muster a Speckled Wood!

Sunday was slightly more productive though not on the lepidopteran front. Whilst walking along a stream edge on the forest a large (45–50 mm) green insect larva was found and photographed feeding on Common Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). I later identified this as the larva of the Large Alder Sawfly (*Cimbex connatus*).

Further research has suggested that up until 1997, *C. connatus* was virtually extinct in Britain having not been recorded for over 90 years, the last record prior to that having been in 1904. During the 19th century, it would appear to have been fairly widespread in southern England, having been found in Suffolk, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Devon and Cornwall. Since July 1997, when the insect was recorded near Salisbury in Wiltshire, it has been recorded with increasing frequency throughout southern and eastern England and as far north as southeast Yorkshire, though is still classed as rare. Many recent records of *C. connatus* would appear to be associated with amenity-planted Italian Alder (*Alnus cordata*) in such places as supermarket car parks. It may therefore be the case that at least some of the recent records are the direct or indirect result of accidental re-introductions.

The larvae feed on alders, including *Alnus glutinosa*, *Alnus incana* and *Alnus cordata*. Fully grown, they are about 50 mm long and have a dark dorsal stripe all the way along the body. They generally feed between July and September but may still be found as late as October. The adult insect is large with a wingspan of around 50 mm and superficially resembling a hornet.

For those who may not know, although superficially similar to lepidopteran larvae, which have three pairs of thoracic legs, five pairs or less of abdominal prolegs and a pair of anal prolegs at the rear, sawfly larvae have six or seven pairs of abdominal prolegs (as clearly shown in the picture below) in addition to the thoracic legs and anal prolegs. The exception to this are the sawfly species whose larvae live inside the leaves, twigs and timber of trees and plants where evolution has reduced the function of the legs to a point where they are virtually absent in these species.



Large Alder Sawfly, Ashdown Forest (18 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 20-Sep-11 06:17 AM GMT

Steyning and Chantry Hill, 19 September 2011

An early phone call with Neil and the possibility of another late season Brown Hairstreak was enough to tempt me to Steyning Rifle Range. I arrived early and took a leisurely stroll around the site. The weather was warm and promising.

A lovely male Speckled Wood was the first butterfly to be encountered near to the gated entrance to the reserve. Shortly after, several Red Admiral were seen along with reasonable numbers of Meadow Brown and a couple of Small Heath. A single Large White and a Green-veined White added to the list. Neil had joined me shortly before the 'witching hour' of Hairstreak activity though his presence on this occasion sadly didn't produce the results. Whilst walking through the upper levels of the reserve Neil spotted a single larva of the Knot Grass (*Acrionicta rumicis*) on Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*). We both took several shots before moving on. As we left the site and headed back down to our vehicles several pristine Speckled Wood were seen along the main footpath.

We then both headed across to Chantry Hill in the hope of a Clouded Yellow ... you have to keep trying!

A nice Painted Lady was seen as we descended from the summit along with good numbers of Meadow Brown, several Red Admiral and a single Small Tortoiseshell. Others species found included Small Heath and Small White. The Clouded Yellow didn't show. Several specimens of the Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*) were also seen. Whilst we absorbed the view looking over the western elevations a Raven flew overhead, its call betraying its presence, whilst a Sparrowhawk hunted in the valley below.

I'll be out again soon ...



Knot Grass (Acronicta rumicis), Steyning (19 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 22-Sep-11 04:23 AM GMT

21 September 2011

On Thursday, 15th September, a local ornithologist took a picture of a Harrier near to The Burgh, northeast of Arundel in West Sussex. Much debate lingered over the identification of the bird, which at first was tentatively identified as a juvenile Montagu's Harrier. With further sightings and pictures coming forth it was later confirmed as a juvenile Pallid Harrier, a first for Sussex. With anything remotely entomological out of the window this morning, due to the cloud covered sky, continuous drizzle and breezy conditions, I set off in anticipation of a new tick! A quick phone call to my 'friend in the know' put me on the spot where he and several others had seen the bird previously ... in the valley that runs northeast of Burpham.

Parking just south of Peppering High Barn, I checked out the fields to the southeast for movement. A beautiful male Hen Harrier appeared from across the field after only 10 minutes of looking, its pale grey body and black primaries clearly visible in the improving light conditions. As the blue sky started to appear and the sun pushed through the clouds, several Buzzards were seen above Perry Hill, one appearing to be mobbed by a Sparrowhawk. Suddenly my wait was over. From above the skyline of Perry Hill another Harrier appeared. As it quartered the fields down towards Coombe Lane it was clear, I had found the fabulous Pallid Harrier. I watched it for probably 10 minutes before it headed northwest and out of sight.

I was only there for just over an hour and in that time recorded six species of raptor including:

- Hen Harrier
- Pallid Harrier
- Sparrowhawk
- Kestrel
- Hobby
- Common Buzzard

Not a bad start to the day ...



Harrier Country - The Burgh (looking southwest towards Arundel)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 23-Sep-11 03:12 AM GMT

Denbies Hillside, 22 September 2011

Despite the numerous reports posted by other forum members, Denbies Hillside near Dorking is one location I have not previously visited. Today, after visiting clients nearby, I found myself travelling down the A24 with time to spare and decided to investigate.

Entering the main gate from the car park I headed southwest down through Steers Field and to the gate, which leads to the lower hillside. A Hobby flew overhead and the sky was full of Swallows and House Martins preparing for the long journey south.

Not surprisingly butterfly numbers were limited. A Small White was the first butterfly seen. Meadow Browns were showing in most areas in reasonable numbers, some nice specimens still to be found though none prepared to have their picture taken. Several Small Heath were seen on the lower slopes along with a single Comma and Red Admiral. My most pleasing find of the afternoon was a beautiful male Common Blue ... I couldn't help feeling sorry for him as I had the distinct impression he was the last of his tribe!

This is a beautiful area providing fabulous views over the surrounding countryside to the south. One can only imagine its beauty and abundance of butterflies earlier in the season. I will pay a visit much earlier next year ...

Species seen included:

Common Blue
Small White
Red Admiral
Comma
Small Heath
Meadow Brown



Common Blue (male), Denbies (22 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 23-Sep-11 02:51 PM GMT

Denbies Hillside, 22 September 2011

Further to my earlier report regarding my visit to Denbies Hillside, several day flying moths were also noted including numerous Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*) and what I believe to be the plume moth *Emmelina monodactyla*. *E. monodactyla* is probably the commonest of the plume moths to be found in Britain and it can generally be found in all months of the year. The reason for any possible doubt I have regarding identification, is that there are a number of additional species of plume moth new to the UK which can only be separated by microscopic examination of their genitalia.



Emmelina monodactyla, Denbies (22 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 25-Sep-11 04:15 AM GMT

24 September 2011 - Part 1

With a weekend of good weather forecast and still chasing another Clouded Yellow, I set off in ideal conditions to Chantry Hill with my son joining me on this occasion. We arrived around midday and with climbing boots tightened and crampons sharpened (well it is rather steep up there) we headed straight to the summit passing a large flock of Meadow Pipits on the way.

Meadow Brown were the first butterflies to be seen followed by several Small White on the western slope, all feeding frantically from one flower to the next. Three, maybe four, Red Admiral were also seen and all appeared to have leapt straight from the pages of Lewis Carroll's book *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in the guise of the White Rabbit, as if late and not stopping for a second! A single male Small Copper was found on the lower northern slope. Though sadly not wearing his best attire, he did sit for a photo or two ...

Whilst heading back up the main slope to the summit I decided to check out several small depressions, as they are sheltered from the wind and are generally warmer than the surrounding area. I'm glad I did, as despite not finding a Clouded Yellow I disturbed a Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*) resting up in the grass. It took flight from just below my feet, calling as it disappeared out of site down into the valley below.

A quick visit to Wiggonholt Common on the way home produced several Small Copper, including two female ab. *caeruleo-punctata* though both were slightly damaged.

With good weather forecast for the coming week ...

Species seen included:

Small Copper
Small White
Red Admiral
Comma
Meadow Brown



Small Copper (female) ab. caeruleo-punctata, Wiggonholt (24 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by ChrisC, 25-Sep-11 04:41 AM GMT

thats an absolute cracker!

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Sep-11 12:07 AM GMT

Agreed!

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 26-Sep-11 02:44 AM GMT

Dear Chris and Lee,

Thank you for your very kind comments.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 26-Sep-11 02:50 AM GMT

24 September 2011 - Part 2

During my last couple of visits to Chantry Hill there have been a very large number of 'swarming' small insects on the wing, particularly along the main footpath leading from the entrance gate to just below the summit and heading north. At first appearance to many they would appear to be some form of fly, they are in fact a species of Dung Beetle.

Today, on approaching the half way point before the track drops to the right, I came across the same insect 'swarming' on dung. There were many hundreds, possibly significantly more.

Aphodius contaminatus is a common UK species and is often found in very large numbers where it occurs. *A. contaminatus* is typical of most Dung Beetles, in that females are typically larger than the males. The ones I found today, ranged from between 5 and 7 mm. They are long legged and with distinctive elytra. The pronotum is fringed with long hairs.

Disturbing dung apparently attracts the adults in swarms, especially on hot days!



Aphodius contaminatus, Chantry Hill (24 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 27-Sep-11 03:20 AM GMT

High and Over, 25 September 2011

And I thought Chantry Hill was steep !!!

This afternoon I met up with Bob Eade across the border in East Sussex at High and Over, which is located just to the south of the beautiful downland village of Alfriston. Our task to hopefully locate 3rd generation Wall, Bob having recently found and photographed some including a pair in copulation.

As we admired the absolutely stunning views across the Cuckmere Valley we noted a pristine Hummingbird Hawk-moth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*) nectaring nearby. Would it come close for a photo ... NO!

On leaving the viewpoint we headed north through the sheltered area of scrub, surrounded by the ripe and abundant seasonal harvest of berries and fruits. Several Speckled Wood, somewhat past their best, were seen patrolling their territories. Numerous galls created by the Gall-wasp (*Diplolepis rosae*) were noted. As we left the area of scrub and emerged on the open hill our first Wall appeared ... a male and very active. Despite looking we lost sight of it very quickly, the strong wind not helping our quest. Bob then suggested we hit the southeast facing slope as it has proven a good area in the past. This was NO slope - sheer drop being a far more accurate description! A chap paragliding leapt off the edge as we headed cautiously down ...

Needless to say, despite managing to get to the bottom and back up again in one piece, we didn't find any Wall though did locate a couple of Meadow Brown and a solitary Small Copper. Shortly before saying farewell to Bob we walked back through the area we had seen the earlier Wall. Another, though probably the same specimen flew past and out of sight once more.

My thanks to Bob ...

Species seen included:

Small White
Small Copper
Red Admiral
Comma
Peacock
Small Heath
Wall
Meadow Brown
Speckled Wood



Gall created by the Gall-wasp (Diplolepis rosae), High and Over (25 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 28-Sep-11 03:32 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill, 27 September 2011

I know I said I wouldn't but I did ...

Finding myself in Amberley early this afternoon and with the sun shining and Kithurst Hill being just a stones throw away, I succumbed to a total lack of willpower and I'm glad that I did! Admittedly the place is not the same as it was a month ago. However, it is still a place of magic and memories, of bright colours and living jewels and the smell of wild marjoram and thyme.

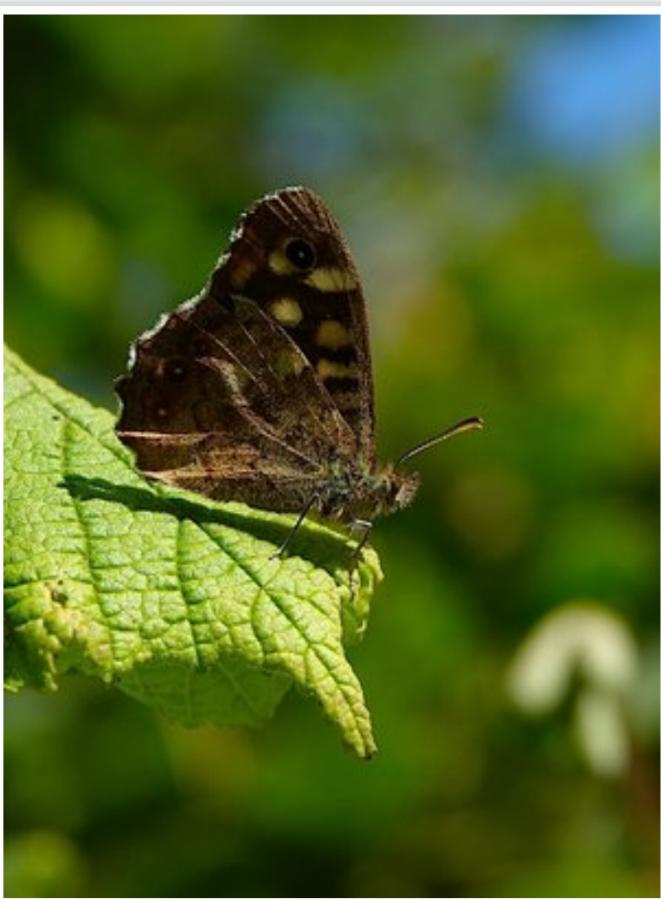
The large numbers of Red Admiral have now all but gone with just a single individual seen today. Two small male Peacock were found nectaring with one in pristine condition. A beautiful Comma was also found and posed for several pictures. The meadow perimeter played host to several Speckled Wood. Two female and a single male Brimstone were also seen.

My memory reflected on the female Clouded Yellow I found here earlier in the month ... I wonder where she is now?

Maybe I'll go back again ...

Species seen included:

Small White
Brimstone
Red Admiral
Comma
Peacock
Speckled Wood



Speckled Wood (male), Kithurst Hill (27 September 2011)



Brimstone (male), Kithurst Hill (27 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Colin Knight, 28-Sep-11 03:59 AM GMT

Mark, I finally got to see your awesome Stoat. I returned to the Tide Mills today in the vague hope of another Weasel sighting, instead we enjoyed great afternoon Autumn light, a sea fret and an Egret. The Clouded Yellow is still eluding me.

Colin

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 28-Sep-11 02:42 PM GMT

Hi Colin,

Thanks for your post. I'm glad you liked the Stoat.

"knightct" wrote:

Mark, I finally got to see your awesome Stoat.

I'm hoping to make a visit to Tide Mills over the next week if time allows – maybe see you there?

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 29-Sep-11 05:30 AM GMT

Plaistow, 28 September 2011

I arrived home last night and the grass needed a cut ...

As I was getting the lawnmower out of the shed I noticed that the small self-seeded Sallow around my pond was in the latter stages of being defoliated. Upon closer investigation I noticed it was covered in Sawfly larvae. A few photographs and a bit of research later would suggest they are the larvae of *Nematus capreae* (*N. miliaris*). This appears to be one of three species known to be found on Sallow. It is also reported to feed on Poplar.

The larvae are quite characteristic. They are green, with a pattern of black dots and stripes running the length of the body and just over 2cm in length. There is a yellowish band behind the head and the rear abdominal segments are also yellowish in colour. The head is black. The larvae of *N. capreae* also assume the well-known S-position when they feel threatened (as shown below). The larvae pupate underground and there are usually two broods each year. The adults are typically on the wing in May and June and again in July and August. The eggs are deposited in the twigs of the foodplant.

I'm going to have to buy a book on Sawflies now ...



Nematus capreae, Plaistow (28 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 01-Oct-11 12:54 AM GMT

Plaistow, 30 September 2011

A single specimen of the Pink-barred Sallow (*Xanthia togata*) came to my bathroom light last night.



Pink-barred Sallow (Xanthia togata), Plaistow (30 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 01-Oct-11 02:49 AM GMT

Frog Firle, 30 September 2011

It was already 21°C when I arrived at Frog Firle shortly after 9am and by the time I left, some three hours later, it was 28°C and very humid ... and boy did it feel like it!

When I visited this site a week ago conditions weren't good, with strong winds not helping my quest to find and photograph 3rd generation Wall. Within about five minutes of my arrival today I had already clocked up five species including Red Admiral (of which I saw many and all appearing to be heading south and towards the sea after nectaring on ivy blossom), Comma, Peacock, Speckled Wood and a pristine female Brown Argus. It wasn't long before my first Wall of the morning presented itself on the path in front of me.

Although I have been an entomologist for many years I have only been photographing insects since the end of June this year ... I am certainly an entomologist first and a photographer second. I have to say that to date, the Wall has been the most frustrating butterfly I have tried to photograph. It's not that I didn't see plenty this morning because I did, but the Wall must have some kind of extrasensory perception when it comes to someone armed with a camera closing in - even when they are operating in 'stealth' mode! In total I probably saw 9 or 10 individuals, all males and all defending their territories against anything that flew past, including a dragonfly. At one point I watched three males spiraling into the air, all appearing to be fighting

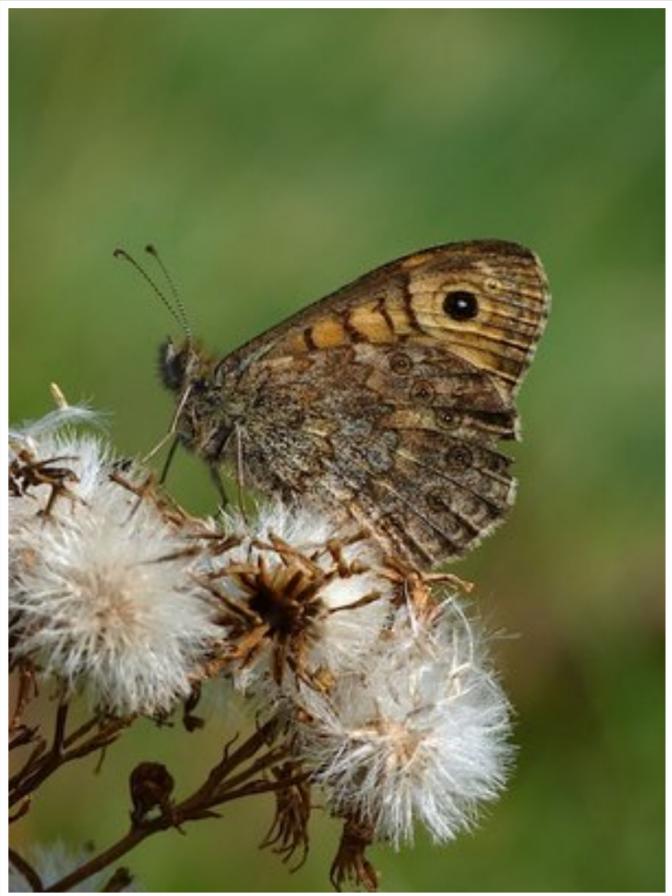
for air supremacy! It was also interesting and very useful watching the same individuals regularly coming back to the same or nearby vantage points and it was only this behaviour that got me my shot in the end. He was not the best of specimens but I was happy nevertheless ...

On leaving Frog Firle I headed southwest and popped into the area of waste ground directly to the west of the Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve, which is located just outside of Newhaven. It is sad to think that despite me finding a number of different butterfly species, including a single female Wall, this whole area is due for imminent development as a retail park.

The heat finally beating me I headed home ...

Species seen included:

Brown Argus
Small Copper
Small White
Large White
Red Admiral
Comma
Peacock
Meadow Brown
Small Heath
Wall
Speckled Wood



Wall (male), Frog Firle (30 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Matsukaze, 01-Oct-11 11:05 PM GMT

Hi Mark,

Do you know of any (online or other) guides to identifying sawfly larvae? I come across a fair few whilst looking for butterfly and moth caterpillars, including the colourful sawfly-feeding one you have photographed. There is also a green sawfly that feeds on sawfly that I find fairly regularly whilst looking for Purple Emperor larvae, that I have never been able to put a name to.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 02-Oct-11 12:52 AM GMT

Hi Matsukaze,

I'm still looking ...

The only publications I currently know of are:

British Sawflies: A Key to the Adults of Genera Occurring in Britain: (Hymenoptera: Symphyta) by Adam Wright. Published by The Field Studies Council. If you speak German (I don't) I am told that *Die Larvalsystematik der Blattwespen (Tenthredinoidea und Megalodontoidea)* by Herbert Lorenz and Manfred Kraus is very good despite not covering every species. I believe this was published in 1957 by Akademie-Verlag in Berlin. I am currently waiting to hear on details of a Finnish publication, written in English.

If you find a good reference for the larvae please let me know.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by ChrisC, 02-Oct-11 01:12 AM GMT

i hope you don't mind me mentioning that there is a sawfly yahoo group with a reasonable selection of larvae in the photos section and also a food plant guide in the files area <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/sawfly/>.

Chris

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 02-Oct-11 01:50 AM GMT

Hi Chris,

Thanks for the information.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 02-Oct-11 04:30 AM GMT

Plaistow, 1 October 2011

A specimen of the Cypress Pug (*Eupithecia phoeniceata*) found in my garden earlier this evening.



Cypress Pug (Eupithecia phoeniceata), Plaistow (1 October 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Susie, 02-Oct-11 05:04 AM GMT

That is a cracking photo of a wall, Mark. 😊

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 02-Oct-11 04:19 PM GMT

Hi Susie,

Thanks for your kind comment.

"Susie" wrote:

That is a cracking photo of a wall, Mark.

I'm glad you like it as it took me almost three hours to get!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Matsukaze, 03-Oct-11 06:10 AM GMT

Thanks folks for the sawfly information.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 04-Oct-11 04:51 AM GMT

Oaken Wood, 3 October 2011

Today I visited an old friend ... one that I have neglected and not visited since early August.

I'm not quite sure what I hoped for when I entered Oaken Wood but I was not expecting much. To reflect on earlier times of abundance and of majestic Emperors, of the delicate Wood White, of Fritillaries and the beautiful Marbled White, would be enough to feed my yearning of earlier times.

Having walked just a short distance along the track and into the wood, a Comma flew past and alighted on a nearby flower – one of few visible nectar sources remaining. As I approached for a photograph, a Red Admiral flew down and gave chase. I waited patiently. The Red Admiral, victorious in its endeavour, returned and settled close by, the Comma nowhere to be seen. The Admiral was in pristine condition and allowed me to approach and take several shots as it rested and then whilst feeding on mineral salts and horse dung. With the current migration south underway, one couldn't help but wonder if this lone individual had missed the boat and was here for the winter ...

A long walk followed which produced just two Speckled Wood and a further Red Admiral.

With the wind gaining strength and recent rumours of a cold spell ahead one feels that time is running out ...

Species seen included:

Red Admiral

Comma

Speckled Wood



Red Admiral, Oaken Wood (3 October 2011)



Red Admiral, Oaken Wood (3 October 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by millerd, 04-Oct-11 05:22 AM GMT

That is one beautiful butterfly. Probably too new to have made up its mind which way to fly.

Dave

Re: Mark Colvin

by Neil Freeman, 04-Oct-11 06:05 AM GMT

That is a lovely shot of the Red Admiral Mark...I can almost feel the freshness.

Cheers,

Neil F.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 04-Oct-11 04:06 PM GMT

Hi Dave,

Thanks for your comment.

"millerd" wrote:

That is one beautiful butterfly. Probably too new to have made up its mind which way to fly.

It was in absolutely pristine condition so very new indeed. I'd like to think it will be around early next season.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 04-Oct-11 04:10 PM GMT

Hi Neil,

Thanks for your kind comment.

"nfreem" wrote:

That is a lovely shot of the Red Admiral Mark...I can almost feel the freshness.

It's certainly getting harder to find really fresh specimens at the moment with many species looking rather sad. That said, there are still things around but choice of location, good weather and the right wind direction is key.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 05-Oct-11 06:45 AM GMT

Thorney Island, 4 October 2011

Cardiovascular entomology ...

I was joined by Colin Knight today on what was to be an exhilarating and enjoyable hike around the perimeter of Thorney Island. Our aim, to search for Clouded Yellow due to a recent report from the western side of the island.

For those that don't know, Thorney Island is a Peninsula in Chichester Harbour, West Sussex. It is connected to the mainland by a causeway of reclaimed land but was a true island up until the 19th century. Access is restricted onto the island and this is controlled by the fact that the southern part of the island is managed by the MOD. There is a single access road leading to the base and this is controlled by a military checkpoint. Public access is permitted around the coastline of the island by means of the Sussex Border Path and two unmanned security check points and an intercom system. No access to the interior of the island is permitted. At the southern most tip of the island lies the small local nature reserve of Pilsey Island. The reserve, together with the adjacent area of Pilsey Sand, forms one of the most important sites for passage and wintering waders in the area.

With an overcast sky and a moderate wind blowing from the southwest, our walk down the western side of the island provided nothing in the way of butterfly activity. The field to the south of the security gate, where on Sunday, 2nd October Clouded Yellow were reported, appeared lacking of any activity when viewed through binoculars (due to public access sadly not being permitted). The field certainly appeared favourable to butterfly activity due to the presence of a good supply of nectaring sources and being sheltered to some degree by the raised flood bank.

A shelterbelt is reached along the southwestern edge of the island as you approach Longmere Point. It was here that our first butterflies of the day appeared, several Speckled Wood and a Red Admiral. A few quick record shots were taken. Now heading north and with the protection of the island to our left, we entered a further area where Red Admiral and several female Speckled Wood were found. Continuing our walk past West Thorney (which for some reason is located on the eastern side of the island) further Red Admiral were seen along with a single Peacock and Meadow Brown.

The lack of butterflies was disappointing though not unexpected. The bonus presence of a Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) in a field at Thorney Deeps close to where we had parked, made a pleasant end to a long and invigorating walk in good company ...

Species seen included:

Red Admiral

Peacock

Meadow Brown

Speckled Wood



Speckled Wood (female), Thorney Island (4 October 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 07-Oct-11 05:44 AM GMT

Cissbury Ring, 6 October 2011

A blustery day ... all I needed was a jar of honey!

Working in Worthing earlier this morning and having a meeting postponed until tomorrow morning, meant I was at a loose end around lunchtime today. With Cissbury Ring being just a short distance away I decided to pay it a visit.

Set on a chalk promontory on the South Downs approximately three miles north of Worthing, Cissbury Ring provides views across to Beachy Head in the east and the Isle of Wight to the west. Cissbury Ring is one of a series of Iron Age hill-forts and with its ditch and ramparts is the largest in Sussex and the second largest in England. Its hill-fort was built in 300BC as a symbol of power and a refuge in times of threat. Archaeological evidence shows that this strategic site was also important for flint production. Some of the strange hollows are the remains of Stone Age flint mines, dating back 5-6,000

years. Over 270 pits have been found.

I know that Neil and others have visited this area quite frequently and its gems have been recorded in detail. Previously, I have only visited Cissbury Ring on bird watching and ringing trips and have never visited with view to exploring its butterflies. With a strong wind blowing from the west I decided to head to the southeasterly corner where there is a large bowl situated at the northern end of Deep Bottom. In its time this area was used as a rifle range with the butts located in the large bowl to the north.

A Red Admiral was the first butterfly seen followed, shortly after, by a Speckled Wood – both on the eastern approach. A single female Brown Argus and two male Common Blue were found in the bowl. I managed one very quick record shot in the difficult windy conditions. Small Copper were around in small numbers with several still in very good condition. Meadow Brown were also observed, a female of which appeared very fresh.

A visit next season in less windy conditions is planned ...

Species seen included:

Red Admiral
Common Blue
Brown Argus
Small Copper
Meadow Brown
Speckled Wood



Common Blue (male), Cissbury Ring (6 October 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Vince Massimo, 07-Oct-11 09:50 AM GMT

Excellent diary-keeping Mark and a great photo in difficult conditions. You seem to be making the most of the few opportunities that remain for this season. I can recommend the Sussex Branch AGM on 29th October to keep the spirits up 😊.

Cheers,
Vince

Re: Mark Colvin

by Susie, 07-Oct-11 09:06 PM GMT

The first time I went to Cissbury ring to see butterflies I was disappointed. Subsequently I learned that they can frequently be found in the trench that encircles the top. Seems you had the sense to seek out a sheltered spot straight away. 😊

I agree with Vince that our AGM is always worth going to. Shame it's right over the far side of the county though.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 08-Oct-11 12:22 AM GMT

Dear Vince,

Many thanks for your kind comments which are genuinely much appreciated.

"Vince Massimo" wrote:

Excellent diary-keeping Mark and a great photo in difficult conditions.

I plan to be at the Sussex Branch AGM ... see you there!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 08-Oct-11 12:27 AM GMT

Dear Susie,

Many thanks for your comments which I'll bear in mind next season.

"Susie" wrote:

The first time I went to Cissbury ring to see butterflies I was disappointed. Subsequently I learned that they can frequently be found in the trench that encircles the top.

See you at the Sussex Branch AGM.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 08-Oct-11 07:05 AM GMT

Hope Gap, 7 October 2011

Time to reflect ...

I arrived at South Hill Barn around midday. The sky was grey and the temperature was around 14°C, though the wind had settled slightly from yesterday. My destination, Hope Gap and Seaford Head Nature Reserve.

Situated in the South Downs National Park, this location has some of the finest views in Sussex and provides panoramic views of the Seven Sisters and Cuckmere Haven. For those unfamiliar with this area the Seven Sisters Country Park is comprised of 280 hectares of chalk cliffs, meandering river valley and open chalk grassland. The Country Park is named after the famous 'Seven Sisters' that form part of the chalk cliffs on the Sussex Heritage Coast, one of Britain's finest unspoilt coastlines.

The short walk to Hope Gap takes you through Hope Bottom, an area of thick scrub providing food and shelter to many species. A single Red Admiral flew past as I walked down the track sheltered by Wild Privet and Blackberry, both heavily laden with their seasonal harvest. A thorough search of Cliff Bottom, down to Coastguard Cottages and Seaford Head Nature Reserve followed and produced just one Red Admiral heading south.

As I sat and looked across the Cuckmere Valley towards the Seven Sisters and the Belle Tout lighthouse in the distance, I reflected on how many Red Admiral and other migrant species may have passed this way both recently and in years gone by and how many had seen this beautiful area of land as their last before heading out across the sea ...





Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 10-Oct-11 03:11 AM GMT

Hog Wood, 9 October 2011

Unwelcome visitors ...

Early this afternoon I received a phone call from a friend of mine who had captured an unusual caterpillar ... "did I want to see it?" ... silly question really!

On arrival I was led to the jam jar which contained my prize, or rather had as my friend had decided not to put the lid on in case it suffocated! We didn't find the caterpillar but later identified it as the larva of the Pale Tussock (*Calliteara pudibunda*), a fabulous looking caterpillar and one I would have loved to of photographed. Anyway, the good news was her brassicas were being eaten ...

On inspection of her 'white sprouting brocolli' both Large White and Small White larvae were found.

There is a God after all ...



Small White larva, Hog Wood (9 October 2011)



Large White larvae and Small White larva, Hog Wood (9 October 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 13-Oct-11 06:38 AM GMT

Heyshott Escarpment, 12 October 2011

Giving something back ...

Earlier today I joined Neil and six volunteers from the Murray Downland Trust. This was to be the start of a long period of hard work, scheduled to be undertaken throughout the winter months, to help further improve one of the best Duke of Burgundy sites in the country – Heyshott Escarpment in West Sussex.

The Murray Downland Trust was founded in 1993 and is named after Dr Elizabeth Murray, former Principal of Bishop Otter College, and her brother, Kenneth Murray. The Murray's were pioneers of Downland conservation. The current objectives of the Trust are to rescue and enhance neglected areas of unimproved Chalk Downland in the counties of Sussex and Hampshire, revealing their richness in terms of the species of flora and fauna present. John Murray, Elizabeth Murray's nephew and current Chairman of the Trust, along with his wife Tricia joined us today.

Currently the Trust manages five reserves in the South Downs, between points south of Petersfield in Hampshire and Midhurst in West Sussex. These are (in order of decreasing size) Heyshott Escarpment, Heyshott Down, Buriton Down, Under Beacon and The Devil's Jumps. As a direct result of the Trust's management of the reserves there is a wealth of flora and fauna to be found, including some species, which are nationally rare. Occupying the site of former chalk quarrying which is thought to go back to the Romans, extraction was last undertaken at Heyshott Escarpment during the 1930s. Its history of intermittent disturbance and colonisation by chalk plants has resulted in a very rich flora and fauna. Heyshott itself is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

A very productive session was had and I look forward to further involvement with this project.

Sightings of several Red Admiral brightened up the day ...





Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 15-Oct-11 04:34 AM GMT

Kithurst Hill, 14 October 2011

With good weather first thing and the temperature forecast to hit 18°C by midday, I popped over to Kithurst Hill earlier this morning to see what was about.

It was a little chilly when I first arrived with much of the meadow shaded by trees, their leaves now subjected to the touch of Autumn. The sun lay low in the sky. A few sunlit pockets on the lower northern edge produced a single Red Admiral stretching its wings and warming itself ready for the day ahead. Although I had seven or eight sightings of Red Admiral whilst I was there, my observations would suggest that this most probably had been five individuals in total. A single Comma, intent on staying high in the canopy of the ash trees and several rather tatty male Speckled Wood were also found.

As part of the regular management programme, the embankments on both sides of the road leading to the main parking area are currently undergoing their annual trim, the main meadow is due to be cut in due course.

I look forward in anticipation to new life this coming spring ...

Species seen included:

Red Admiral

Comma

Speckled Wood



Red Admiral, Kithurst Hill (14 October 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 16-Oct-11 05:18 AM GMT

Frog Firle, 15 October 2011 - Part 1

A downland saunter ...

Early this afternoon I headed west along Cradle Hill under a cloudless pastel blue sky and with a light southeasterly wind blowing. Passing through the first two fields of sheep a single Red Admiral, heading south with intention, was all I found. Upon entering The Comp the sun, low in the sky, had cast a long shadow over much of the first section of track. The air was cool. As the pathway opened up near to the golf course and the shadows shortened, the sun warmed the ground once more. A single male Speckled Wood sat watching as I passed.

As I cut down through the long grass towards Rathfinny Farm, a second Red Admiral flew past. I sat for a while and admired the wonderful downland views, the sun warming my back. Moving on and passing Rathfinny Pumping Station, a small covey of Grey Partridge took flight. It wasn't until I reached the lower slopes of Cradle Hill, where Silver-spotted Skipper are to be found earlier in the year, that three further Red Admiral were seen along with a single Comma found nectaring on the remaining flower heads of Ragwort ... the only 'yellow' I managed to find this afternoon. A text message from Colin Knight had told me he had been successful in finding a single Clouded Yellow at Mill Hill.

Though I had a very relaxing walk in beautiful countryside ... I couldn't help but think that I should of headed to Shoreham!

Species seen included:

Red Admiral
Comma
Speckled Wood



Comma, Frog Firle (15 October 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 16-Oct-11 06:18 AM GMT

Frog Firle, 15 October 2011 - Part 2

Flying high ...

I have always been intrigued by those who throw themselves out of planes, others who leap from high structures with elasticated ropes strapped around their ankles and individuals, such as those below, who upon discovering a high hill feel a need to leap off the edge into thin air!

Madness maybe, though undoubtedly exhilarating.

I'll be keeping my feet firmly on the ground though ...





Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Oct-11 09:42 PM GMT

Hi Mark,

The sky was gorgeous on Saturday wasn't it...the blue in those shots is beautiful.

Is that Wilmington in the distance in the last one?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 18-Oct-11 02:45 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Thanks for your message.

I agree, the sky was an absolutely wonderful colour on Saturday afternoon. When I mentioned in my earlier post that it was a cloudless pastel blue sky, I really meant just that.

Regarding my fourth picture you're very close. What you can actually see is Deep Dean with Windover Hill in the far distance to the right. Wilmington Hill is a little further back and to the right with Wilmington village hidden behind the hill. The small downland village of Litlington can be seen just behind and to the right of the parascender.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Oct-11 03:55 AM GMT

Hi Mark,

Sorry, I meant Windover Hill! I think that is the path I take up from the small car park (the long man is just over the ridge). It looks over Deep Dean as you ascend with wonderful views to the coast. Over the next ridge can be found Sussex Graylings!

Best wishes,

Lee

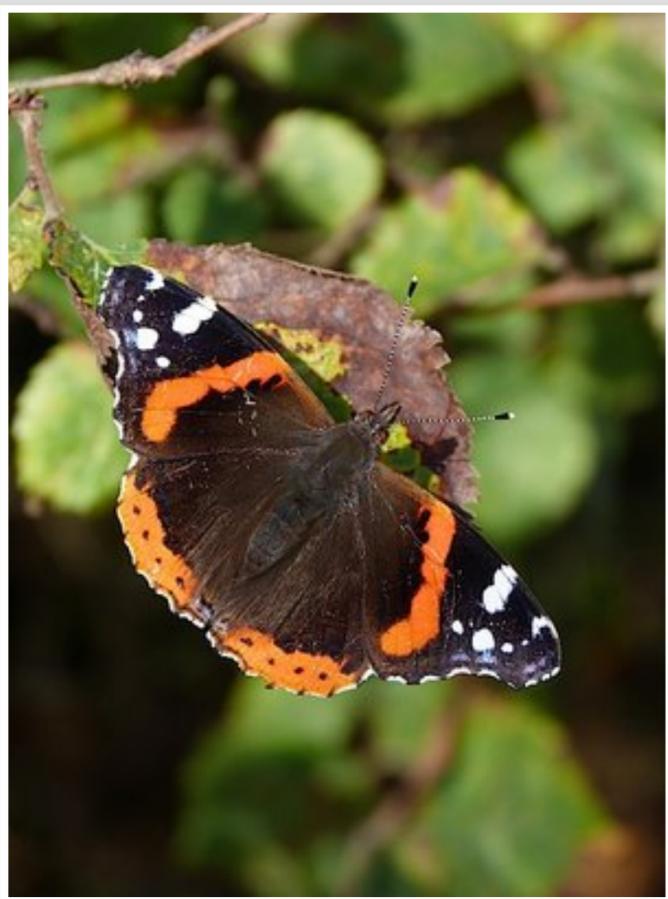
Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 19-Oct-11 02:08 AM GMT

Church Norton, 18 October 2011

A very brief visit to Church Norton, on the western side of Pagham Harbour, produced just five Red Admiral sheltering from the wind – the best pictured below. A Common Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*), flying across the car park by the church, was a nice bonus as I arrived.

It's back to Heyshott Escarpment tomorrow ...



Red Admiral, Church Norton (18 October 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 20-Oct-11 05:25 AM GMT

Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve

Further to my recent visit to Pagham Harbour, I thought I would undertake some research on its history. I have known the area for many years and as far as I can remember it's only ever been a nature reserve ...

Pagham Harbour is an internationally important site for wildlife and is home to numerous plant and animal habitats. It was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1964 and has designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), for its nationally important plant and animal communities and for the geomorphology of the coast, as a Special Protection Area and a Natura 2000 site by the European Commission and as a Ramsar Site as a wetland of international importance. The Reserve covers approximately 1500 acres of which half is made up of saltmarsh and mudflats. The remainder is comprised of farmland, copses, lagoons, reedbeds and shingle beaches. The site is particularly important for waders and wildfowl in the autumn and winter and the Dark-bellied Brent Geese that come here in large numbers between September and January.

The Romans came through Pagham in 46 AD and during Roman times Pagham Harbour was a primary seaport for Southern England. Pagham Harbour was probably also used by the Saxons who called it Uedringmutha. By the Middle Ages the area was known as Wythering or New Haven and was a busy and thriving landing place. However, an attempt in the 1200s to found a new town or port called Wardour, probably near Sidlesham, seems to have been a failure.

Originally there was much waterborne traffic to the quay at Sidlesham, but by the 1870s trade had declined to a few dozen boats visiting the tide-powered mill there. At this time the whole harbour was reclaimed for agriculture by damming the harbour mouth, and the mill – now high and dry – went out of business. The sea broke through the harbour wall in a storm in 1910 flooding the area; since then it has looked much as it does today.

One of my favourite birding sites ...



Pagham Harbour – Looking north from Church Norton (18 October 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 20-Oct-11 05:44 AM GMT

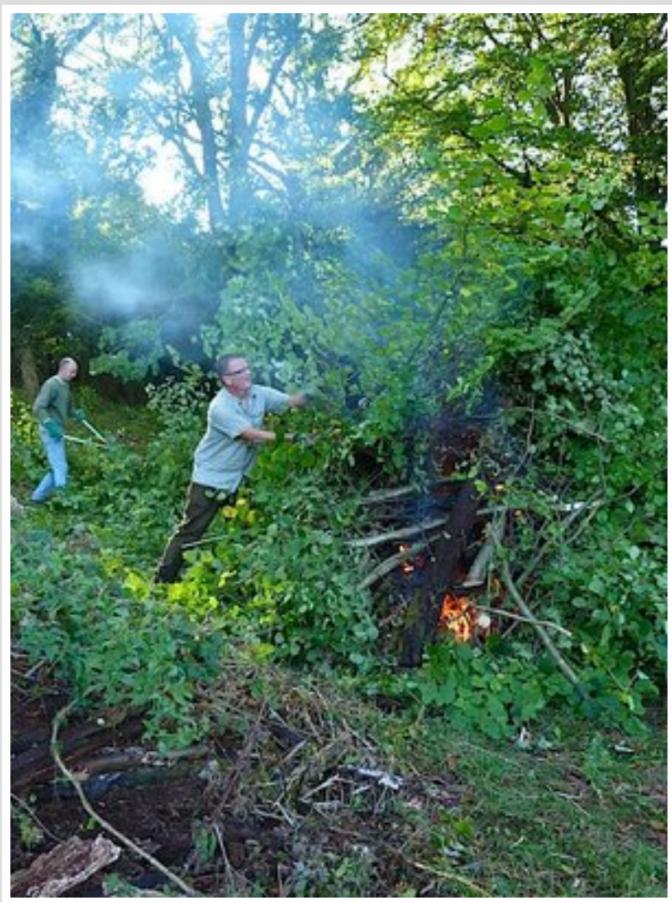
Heyshott Escarpment, 19 October 2011

Conservation in action ...

Today we commenced our second work party of the season at Heyshott Escarpment. It's quite amazing how much important hard work can be completed by just a small group of dedicated volunteers and two chainsaws. Having cleared so much ground we even had to start a second bonfire!

The aim of our work was to create a conservation corridor whereby linking strategically located regions and habitats for the Duke of Burgundy. We certainly went a long way to creating that today.

A hot bath was a welcome end to the day ...





Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 08-Nov-11 07:37 AM GMT

Waltham Brooks, 6 November 2011

A chilly afternoon ...

This afternoon I took a pleasant though rather chilly walk with my son over Waltham Brooks in search of owls.

Heading along the edge of the river the water meadows appeared quiet. A small group of Long-tailed Tit were heard calling whilst a couple of Reed Bunting moved amongst the riverside sedges and rushes. A pair of Stonechat were seen though quickly lost in the tall grass. On the open areas of water Wigeon and Teal were heard; their whistling and far-carrying calls evoking memories of times past. Several Shoveler and Mallard were observed nearby. Upon finding a good vantage point along the riverbank we stopped and scanned the extensive habitat along both sides of the river. A Red Kite flew overhead with several mobbing corvids in tow. A Common Buzzard was found perched on a fence post whilst several Cetti's Warbler could be heard singing from nearby vegetation. Individual Green and Great Spotted Woodpeckers along with good numbers of Fieldfare were also found.

With the chill setting in we headed back. As we arrived at the car park by Greatham Bridge we watched the sun gently slip out of sight behind the South Downs.

We left before the owls arrived ...



Re: Mark Colvin

by Colin Knight, 08-Nov-11 04:22 PM GMT

Great story and pic as usual Mark. Greetings from The Maldives, I'm busy photographing Butterfly fish and everything else that sits or move into range of my lens! story on my blog
cheers, Colin

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 09-Nov-11 03:11 AM GMT

Hi Colin,

Thanks for your kind comments.

"knightct" wrote:

Great story and pic as usual Mark.

I've been following your blog with interest. Some great pictures of some fabulous fish. I trust its warmer there than it is here?!

Conservation work tomorrow.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 13-Nov-11 02:55 AM GMT

Saturday, 12 November 2011

An important day ...

Three months ago my good fishing friend Richard Chandaman sadly passed away unexpectedly. It was a great shock not only to me but also to his family and to others who knew him well. He is greatly missed ...

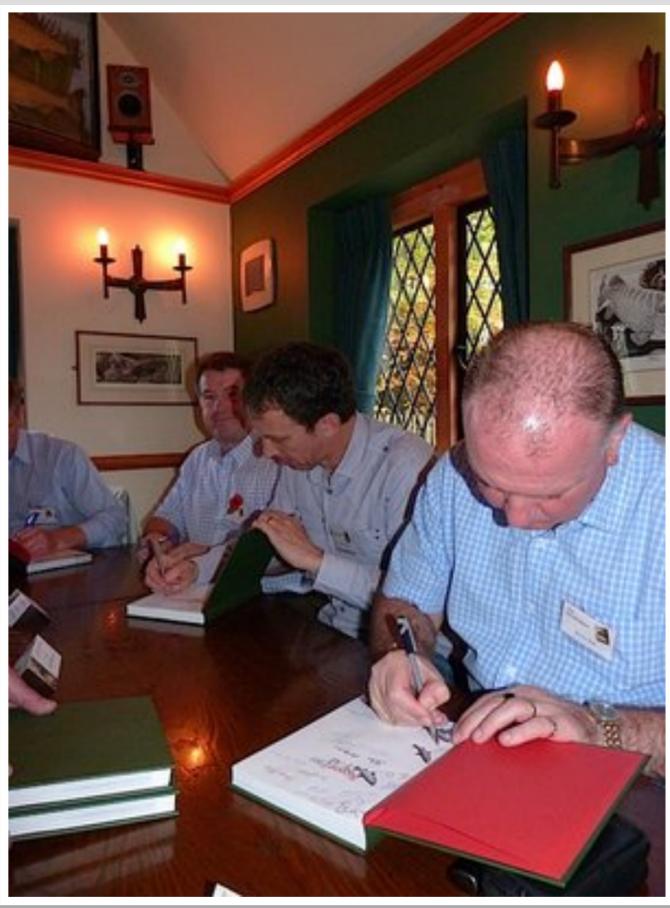
That said, life goes on and so will Richard's memory in "*The Biggest Fish of All*". Though he died tragically just a few hours before the book was cleared to go to press, its publication stands as a testament to his hard work and determination in getting the book completed. I recall, with many pleasant memories, numerous sessions proof reading the text and drinking coffee, whilst reminiscing about past captures and those that got away and planning trips for the coming season ...

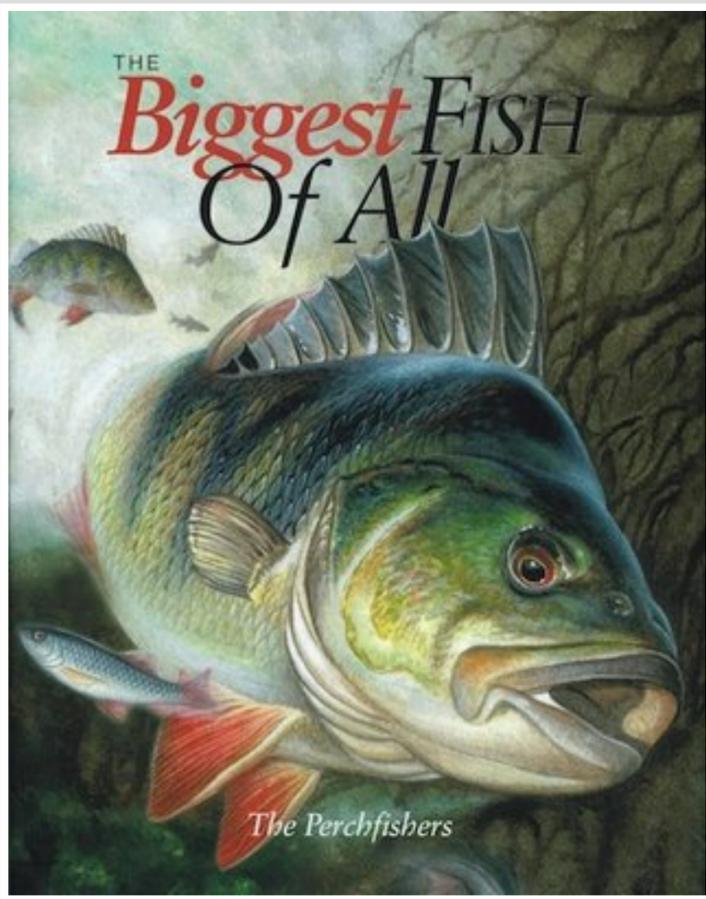
Richard was one of four editors and the main driving force behind the production of this new book. The official launch, which took place today at The Lands End in Twyford, was extremely well attended. Many of the contributors to the publication, which included a number of well-known fishing celebrities, were on hand and armed with pens for the avid autograph hunter. I was particularly interested in talking to a number of the artists present whose works were included in the book.

I know this is not exactly butterflies but there is a good-looking entomologist pictured on page 345!

Richard would have been proud of today ...







Re: Mark Colvin

by Susie, 13-Nov-11 06:12 PM GMT

Please accept my sympathy on the loss of your friend, Mark, but the book looks to be a fitting tribute to his memory and something for his family and friends to be proud of.

Re: Mark Colvin

by ChrisC, 13-Nov-11 08:23 PM GMT

any chance of an ISBN no. i want to add to my christmas list. Perch are one of my favourite fish. after the disease struck many years ago i can remember a haul of 7 perch none over 6inches long being an impressive catch in a local water. have never caught a really big one but a day of 6 2lb'ers freelining under the rod top in 15 minutes with my old man still brings back fond memories. he too was my fishing partner so i know how much of a loss this can really be. my sympathies extended.

Chris

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 13-Nov-11 11:25 PM GMT

Hi Susie,

Many thanks for your kind words, they are genuinely much appreciated.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 13-Nov-11 11:32 PM GMT

Hi Chris,

Thanks for your message and understanding. The book can be obtained at: <http://www.harperanglingbooks.co.uk/thebiggestfishofall.html>

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 22-Nov-11 02:43 AM GMT

Peter Taylor (1926–2011)

Another passing ...

My good friend Peter Taylor, who was perhaps the longest serving member of the Amateur Entomologists' Society (he joined the AES in 1946), died peacefully in his sleep at his home in Kirdford, West Sussex on 20th October 2011, he was 85.

Peter was born in Luton, Bedfordshire. On leaving school, he undertook a five-year apprenticeship as a mechanist and turner in the toolroom of Commer Cars, Luton, taking evening classes to gain a National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering. His spare time was spent plant and butterfly hunting on the Bedfordshire downs and elsewhere as an active member of the AES and of the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI). His knowledge of the British flora was encyclopaedic, a rarity nowadays amongst Kew botanists. He made a considerable and beautifully prepared herbarium of British Plants, now at Kew, as well as a fine collection of butterflies from his extensive breeding programmes.

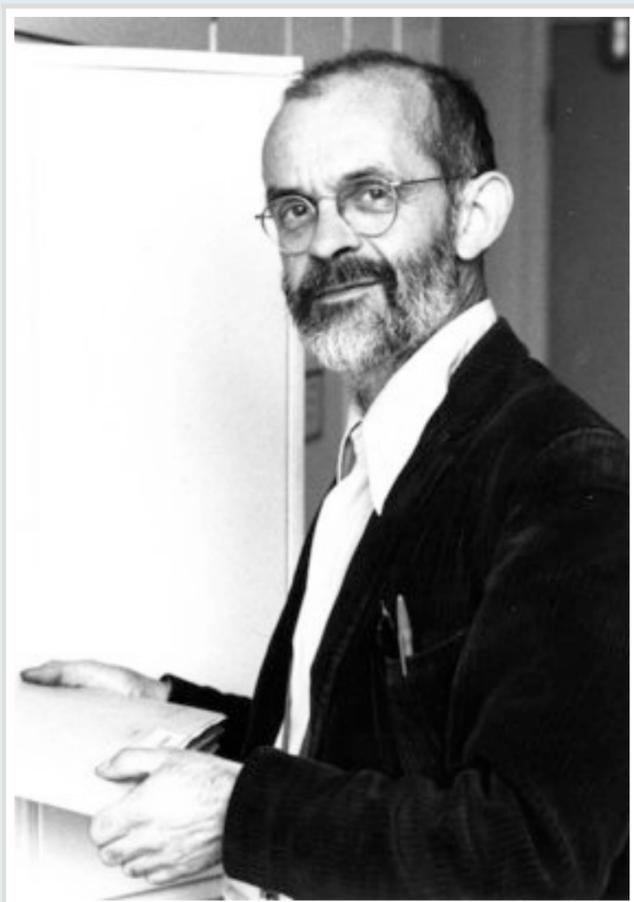
Peter joined Kew, starting as a Temporary Assistant in the Herbarium in 1948. His eye for a plant, craftsmanship and attention to detail made him a stalwart of the Tropical African Section. As an Experimental Officer Peter Taylor was delegated to largely curatorial and technical duties and soon gained a remarkable knowledge, particularly of the herbaceous plants of the region. In late 1955 he married Shirley Patten, a scientific assistant in the Kew Herbarium. Shortly afterwards, he undertook an eleven-month expedition to East Africa with Edgar Milne-Redhead, spending six months during the rainy season in the Songea District of Tanganyika (now Tanzania). They worked very long hours, carefully arranging plants in presses late into the night and up again at dawn mostly seven days a week.

It was not until Sir George Taylor left Kew that he was given long-overdue promotion to Principal Scientific Officer in 1972. George's nose had been put out, so it was said, because he kept being congratulated on Peter's work on *Utricularia*. Unfortunately he had been passed over to head the Fern Section and was assigned the Orchids, which he ran from 1972 until 1984. He published a popular book and many articles on orchids. He discharged his duties conscientiously but was glad when younger members of the section could take over this specialist group and he could devote more time to the *Utricularia*. He made visits to Australia and America and examined vast numbers of specimens with visits and loans. He was awarded the Kew Medal in 1990 for his services to the Royal Botanic Gardens. He continued several years after his retirement in 1986 to hone his outstanding monographic revision of the genus, each of the 214 species illustrated with his own fine drawings. The appearance of his definitive monograph of *Utricularia* coincided with his retirement from Kew in 1986.

Peter fitted well into the tradition of great British naturalists. He was a fine entomologist and had an encyclopaedic knowledge of British Lepidoptera and other groups. He was a great friend of the respected entomologist Peter Cribb and a regular companion on bug-hunting trips from 1956 onwards. They enjoyed each other's company and shared a wacky sense of humour.

In retirement he settled in the West Sussex Weald where he purchased two woods that he restored to good condition through coppicing and cutting rides. In the course of the restoration, he made several new insect and plant records for the Vice-county. He was particularly pleased that the Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*) bred in one of his woods thanks to his careful management of it. Peter was an outstandingly good cabinetmaker and specialised in making harpsichords and clavichords to the most exacting standards of craftsmanship. His instruments have graced concert platforms, played by Margaret Hunt, the wife of his former colleague and old friend David Hunt.

He will be sadly missed ...



Peter Geoffrey Taylor (1926–2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 22-Nov-11 05:07 AM GMT

16 November 2011

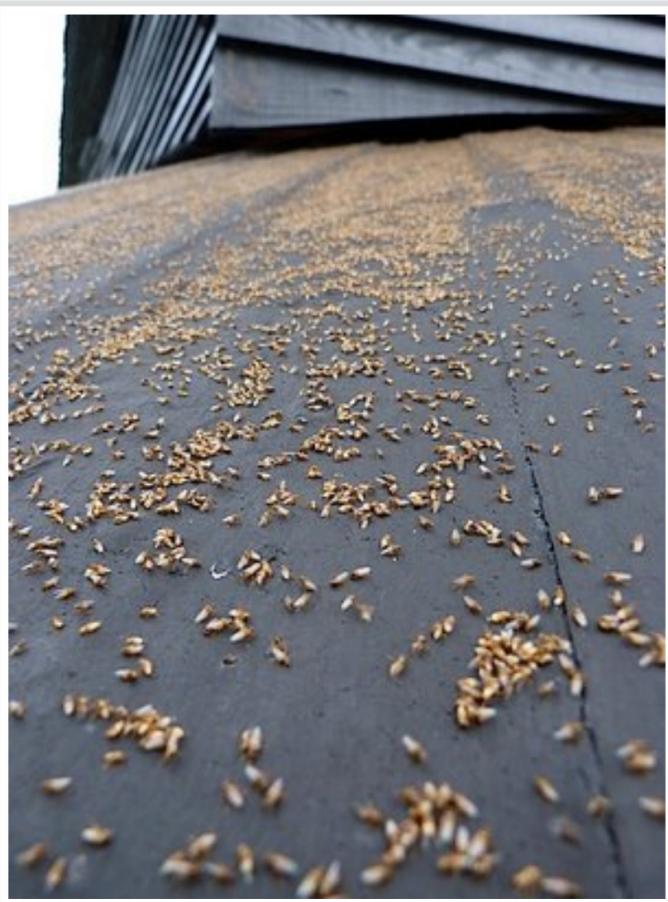
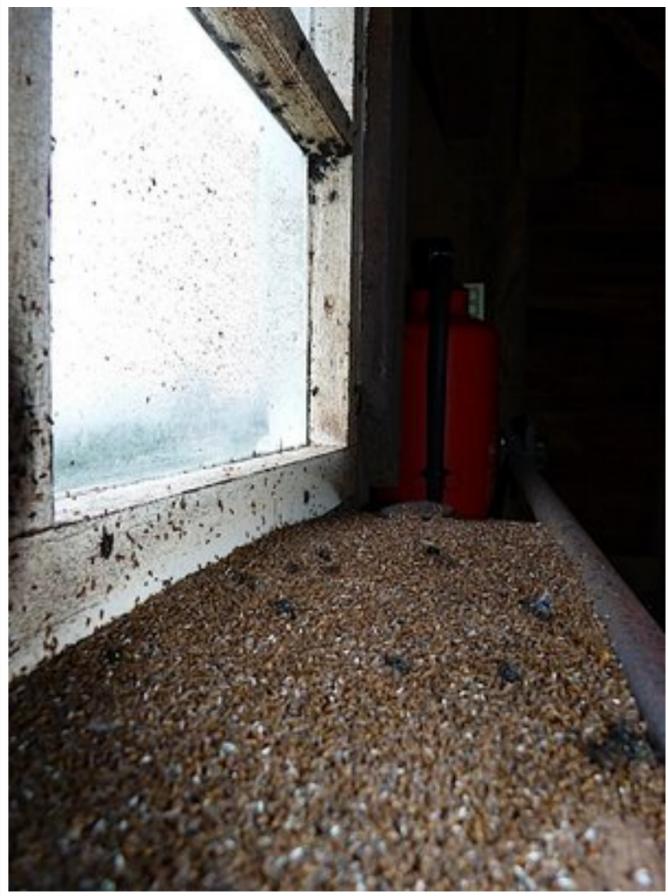
A lighter note ...

On Wednesday, 16 November I was contacted, in my professional capacity, to investigate and help resolve a seasonal problem with flies in a local Sussex windmill. The mill, which I won't name for reasons of client confidentiality, has suffered problems for a number of years particularly during the autumn and winter months.

Thaumatomyia notata which is commonly known as the Yellow Swarming Fly, is a small yellow Chloropid with black markings which breeds in very large numbers in the roots of grass, where its larvae are predatory on root aphids. *T. notata* is generally believed to overwinter as a pupa though a certain number of this generation emerge before the onset of cold weather. During favourable summers and warm autumns the adults may emerge in very large numbers prior to seeking shelter as soon as the nights become cooler. Most of these adults will not survive hibernation.

It is not unusual for vast numbers to occur in buildings where their presence can become a serious nuisance. Though there is generally little that can be done to prevent such problems the application of topical insecticides provides symptomatic relief when problems are experienced.

All in a days work ...



Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 24-Nov-11 03:14 AM GMT

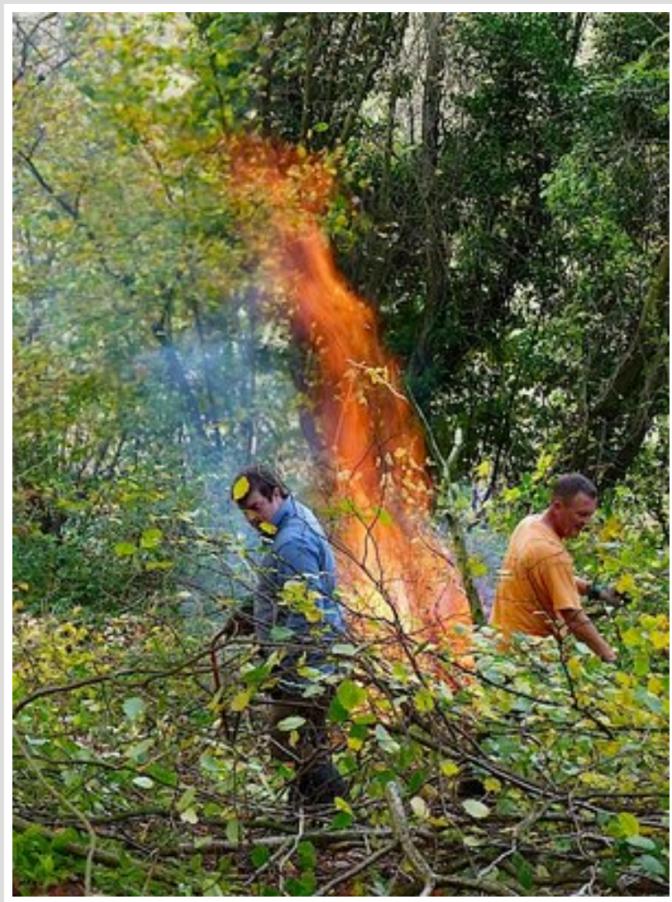
Heyshott Escarpment, 23 November 2011

Cardiovascular conservation ...

Today, along with Colin Knight and Neil Hulme and five members of the Murray Downland Trust, I continued my weekly work party season at Heyshott Escarpment. After a foggy start the sun burnt through leaving a very pleasant autumn day. It was difficult to think of a better place to be ...

This is an extremely exciting project and one where positive management and hard work is continuing to improve the habitat for the Duke of Burgundy whose population appears to be doubling each year. The continued aim of the work, which has been ongoing for several years, is to create conservation corridors whereby linking strategically located habitats for the Duke of Burgundy, namely the exposed chalk workings higher up the reserve, down into the lower wooded areas below.

Roll on next week ...



Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 26-Nov-11 06:40 PM GMT

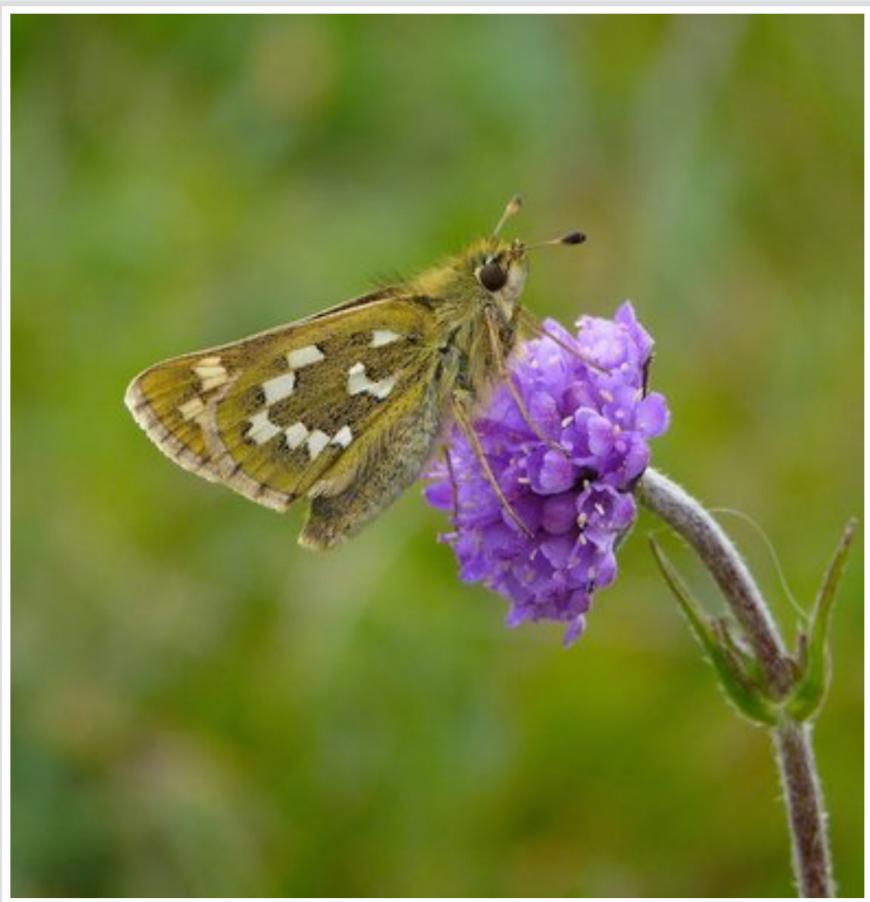
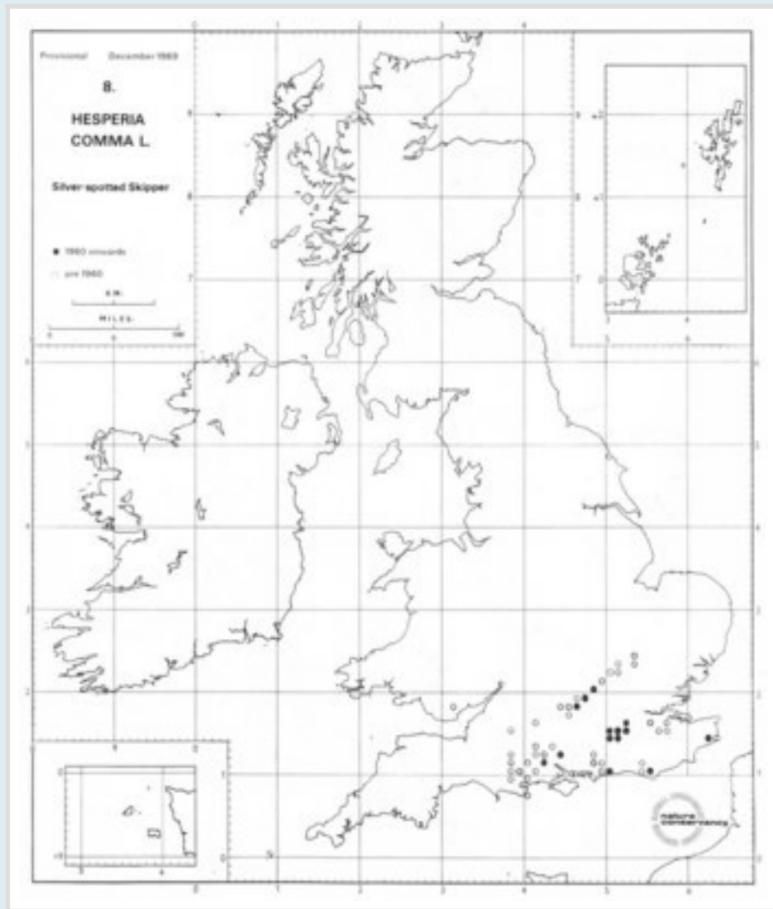
26 November 2011

I have recently been scanning through historic distribution records for a number of Sussex butterflies and comparing the information with current literature. My main points of reference have been the data published by the Biological Records Centre in 1970, in the form of their *Provisional Atlas of the Insects of the British Isles (Part 1) Lepidoptera Rhopalocera* which includes the records received from 620 recorders up to and including 31st December 1969 and *The British Butterflies (Their Origin and Establishment)* by R L H Dennis (1977).

In some species, a data set showing an increase in population as of the current date, may of course imply increased recording due to renewed interest in the species or under recording at the time of earlier data collection and vice versa. A genuine population increase or decrease may of course also be occurring. I am no statistician so have no intention of delving deep into any of the figures I have read though I do find the demographic trends and requirements of different species most interesting.

To take just one example in my own county of Sussex, the Silver-spotted Skipper (*Hesperia comma*), it is interesting to note the trends in populations recorded. *H. comma* was recorded in 53 tetrads throughout the county in 2009. During 2010 the butterfly was recorded in fewer tetrads though this is probably a reflection of a reduction in recording capacity as opposed to any change in the distribution of *H. comma*. Comparing the distribution map

from 1970, to that produced in *The Millenium Atlas of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland* (2001) it would appear that although the species is undoubtedly a rare butterfly with numbers plummeting during the 1960s and 70s, it started to increase its range during the 1980s and 90s and continues to do so slowly with seasonal highs and lows. *H. comma* is a highly colonial species which is confined to the calcareous and more desiccated landscapes of Southern England. 2011 was the first year that I actively looked for and found this beautiful little insect in Sussex.



Silver-spotted Skipper (female), Chantry Hill (22 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 02-Dec-11 11:25 PM GMT

Heyshott Escarpment, 30 November 2011

Extra help ...

The small party of regular conservation volunteers continue to make excellent progress at Heyshott and have almost broken the back of clearing the current work area of scrub. In order to provide a variety of future grazing pressures, rotational mixed grazing (cattle and sheep) will be implemented during 2012. The installation of stock fencing is due to commence shortly.

Today, our regular work party members were joined by my son James and his friend Billy. After an apprehensive start and continued hard work throughout the session they both came away having enjoyed what they had both achieved – or at least that's what they told me ... and they thought they were getting a day of school because of industrial action!

Whilst the fires continue to burn the prospect of what will follow leaves us all excited with anticipation for the coming season ...





Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 05-Dec-11 01:15 AM GMT

Burpham, 4 December 2011

One for the pot or a bird in the bush ...

With several hours to spare late morning I decided to head over to The Burgh and adjoining area to the northeast of Arundel in West Sussex, in search of the juvenile Rough-legged Buzzard (*Buteo lagopus*) which has recently and frequently been seen in the area. Checking the SOS website put me on the spot where others had seen the bird previously, in the valley that runs northeast of Burpham village – a known raptor hotspot!

Parking at the triangle located along Peppering Lane, I checked out the surrounding fields for movement. A number of Common Buzzard were in the area and a Kestrel was seen hovering nearby. Recent reports have mentioned sightings of the bird sitting on top of various game feed stations which are quite numerous and located around the field margins. I decided to check these out and was rewarded with a large buzzard-like bird sitting on a distant feeder.

I watched the bird preening and looking around for probably 10–15 minutes before it finally lifted from its perch. It was only then, when it took to the air, that I was able to see its distinctive white tail with a broad dark band at the tip. I watched the bird for about an hour in total and witnessed it hovering above the fields, though never moving far from where I'd first located it.

As I walked back towards the car I couldn't help but notice a series of rabbit cage traps situated in the distance along the edge of a field with their forlorn looking occupants awaiting their fate!

A picture of the RLB was never going to happen ...



Re: Mark Colvin

by Wurzel, 05-Dec-11 04:47 AM GMT

Alright Mark? I was really glad to see you offering extracurricular activities for your son and his friend on the Strike day! 😊 Even if it does nothing for teachers pensions at least the strike action had provided benefit for the local wildlife.

Rough Legged Buzzards are on my hit-list so I read with envy about your sighting, still I'll be checking the Birdnews a bit more frequently now that it's actually starting to feel like "winter", so who knows?

Have a goodun

WurzeB

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 06-Dec-11 06:17 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

"Wurzel" wrote:

I was really glad to see you offering extracurricular activities for your son and his friend on the Strike day!

Keep them working I say ... 😊

I know it's a bit of a hike for you but the Rough-legged Buzzard seems to be staying put in the valley where it's been for some time. I'm only really free during the week at the moment but if you get a day off and have '**permission to go on a jolly**' I'd happily show you around.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Wurzel, 07-Dec-11 05:20 PM GMT

Cheers for your kind offer Mark 😊 but permission has been denied as we're booked solid for the next couple of weeks because of Christmas 😞. I don't think I'll be able to manage to get out much before the "big one" on New years Day. Oh well I can add it to my list of "missed this year" along with Snow Bunting, Shore Lark, Lapland Bunting and Twite – all species that have been down at Cristchurch Harbour that I haven't gotten to see.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

p.s. wrt your PM – you can go off people you know! 😊 😊

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Dec-11 06:22 AM GMT

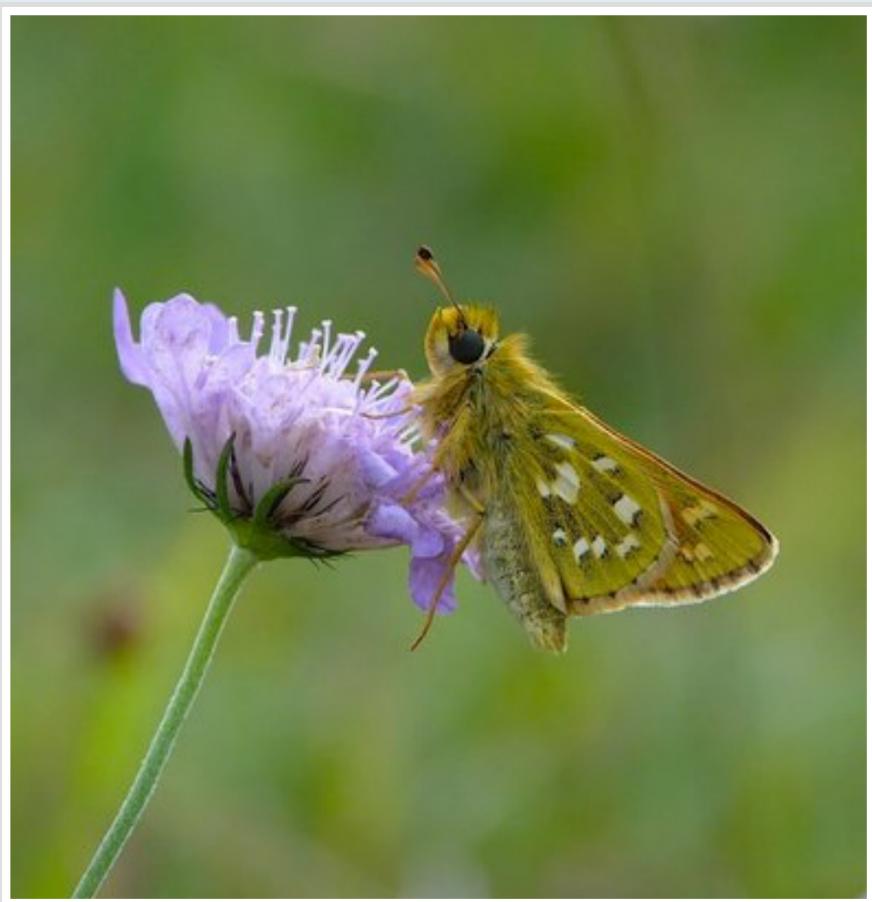
Favourites from 2011 – Part 1

It is very hard to believe that I only purchased my camera, a Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ45, back in late June ... the large number of digital images I have accumulated would suggest I've had it considerably longer! Though I usually try to separate the 'wheat from the chaff' on a regular basis I've recently been having a good sort out.

The following images bring back some very fond memories.

I'll post my favourite shot of 2011 at the end ...

Hesperiidae



Silver-spotted Skipper (male), Oxfordshire (8 August 2011)



Silver-spotted Skipper (female), West Sussex (22 August 2011)



Silver-spotted Skipper (female), West Sussex (22 August 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Nick Broomer, 11-Dec-11 06:39 AM GMT

Hi Mark,

Beautiful memories and beautiful photos.

Nick.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Colin Knight, 11-Dec-11 03:18 PM GMT

excellent shots Mark.

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 11-Dec-11 08:00 PM GMT

Favourites from 2011 - Part 2

Continued ...

Pieridae



Wood White (female), Surrey (11 July 2011)



Clouded Yellow (female), West Sussex (7 September 2011)



Green-veined White (female), West Sussex (22 August 2011)



Large White (female), West Sussex (29 July 2011)



Brimstone (male), Surrey (2 August 2011)

Favourites from 2011 - Part 3

Continued ...

Lycaenidae

One of my favourite groups ...



Chalkhill Blue (male), West Sussex (17 July 2011)



Chalkhill Blue (male), West Sussex (19 July 2011)



Common Blue (male), West Sussex (31 August 2011)



Small Copper (female) ab. caeruleo-punctata, West Sussex (24 September 2011)



Brown Hairstreak (female), West Sussex (14 September 2011)



Brown Argus (male), West Sussex (3 September 2011)



Brown Argus (female), West Sussex (23 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 12-Dec-11 03:11 AM GMT

Favourites from 2011 - Part 4

Continued ...

I have thoroughly enjoyed mixing my passion for entomology with my new found interest of photography. I have tried to keep things simple and am pleased with what I've achieved this year. I'd like to thank Nick for his support and early advice, Neil for leading the Lumix way and all those at UKButterflies who have provided positive comments on my diary.

I have learnt a lot this season and look forward to next year with anticipation ...

Nymphalidae



Comma, West Sussex (5 September 2011)

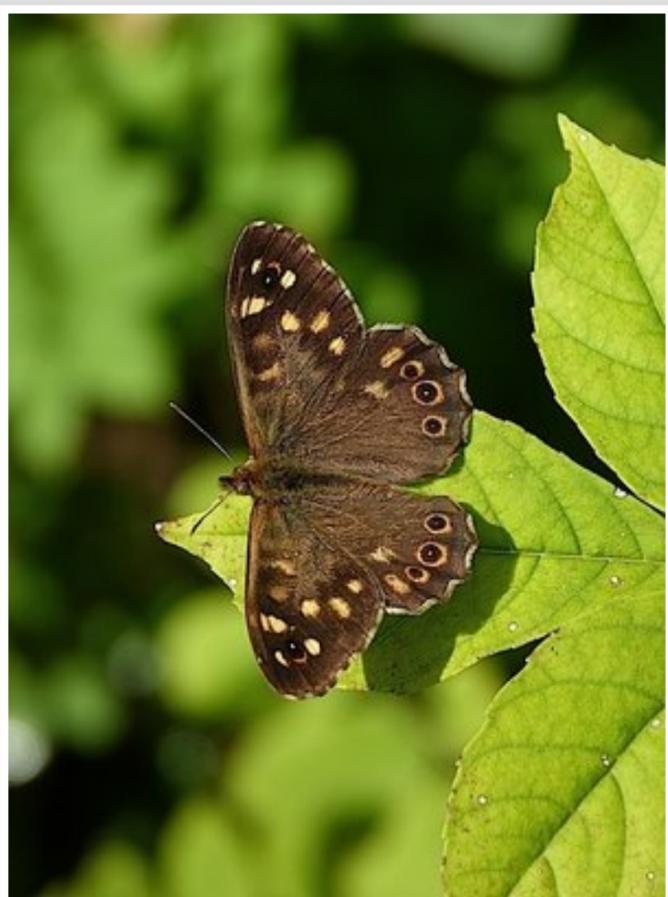


Painted Lady, West Sussex (13 September 2011)





Red Admiral, Surrey (3 October 2011)



Speckled Wood (male), West Sussex (5 September 2011)



Wall (male), East Sussex (30 September 2011)



Grayling, Surrey (25 July 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 12-Dec-11 05:51 AM GMT

Favourites from 2011 - Part 5

And finally to my favourite ...

From my diary of 5 September 2011

I arrived at Kithurst Hill some fifteen minutes later. The ground was wet and it was still windy but its main flower meadow faces north and is generally fairly protected by its wooded perimeter. This is one of my favourite sites on the South Downs and has been very productive in the past. I entered the gate to the meadow and walked west. Almost immediately I came across a stoat quartering the fields in hot pursuit of a rabbit. The chase over and the stoat left hungry it came running back through the wet meadow, stopping every now and again to stand up on its hind legs and smell the air and then move on ...

... Before leaving Kithurst Hill I decided to try to get a photograph of the stoat I had seen hunting earlier. I sat down in what seemed like a suitable spot, camera at the ready and started calling. Within just a few seconds the stoat, now with evidence of a kill around its lips, appeared once again from within the thick bush it had disappeared into earlier, its den probably within. I managed four very quick shots of this fabulous small mammal before it vanished once again. At one point it came within two metres of me.

I'll admit luck played a big part ...



Stoat (Mustela erminea), Kithurst Hill (5 September 2011)

Re: Mark Colvin

by Colin Knight, 12-Dec-11 06:10 AM GMT

Awesome!

Re: Mark Colvin

by ChrisC, 13-Dec-11 04:31 AM GMT

quick question Mark, for the butterfly pics do you have the conversion setting on? that's the one thing i neglected to try doing though it's recommended in the manual.

lovely photo's by the way.

Chris

Re: Mark Colvin

by Susie, 13-Dec-11 05:10 AM GMT

The comma on the blackberries and the stoat are my favourites

Re: Mark Colvin

by Trev Sawyer, 13-Dec-11 05:30 AM GMT

Hi Mark,

Only just noticed your post about the Perchfisher's book – another angler in our midst eh? I have a copy on my bookshelf and would have been at the launch myself if I had not been tied up elsewhere. Didn't realise you were in there, but now I've seen the pic and can put a face to a name. I have a soft spot for perch and managed a few good fish 5 or 6 years ago from one of the quieter areas of river in Buckinghamshire. The snap below shows three fish of 4-3, 3-11 and 3-7 taken in successive casts just on dusk. It is the only one I got of them as I was on my own and wanted to get them back in the water asap.

Trev



Re: Mark Colvin

by Susie, 13-Dec-11 05:39 AM GMT

Is it usual for men to take photos of themselves hugging fish as if they were the proud father of triplets? 😊

Re: Mark Colvin

by Trev Sawyer, 13-Dec-11 05:43 AM GMT

Sad but true Susie.

Trev

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 13-Dec-11 06:21 AM GMT

Hi Colin,

"knightct" wrote:
Awesome!

A very BIG thanks.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 13-Dec-11 06:22 AM GMT

Hi Chris,

"ChrisC" wrote:
for the butterfly pics do you have the conversion setting on?

The simple answer is Yes AND No. I have the option to set Conversion to Off, Telephoto (T) or Close Up (C). All of my butterfly shots are taken with a close up lens, so I set the Conversion to (C). The stoat was shot with the Conversion Off and without the Close Up lens fitted.

I hope this helps?

I'm glad you like the photos.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 13-Dec-11 06:32 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

Thanks.

"Susie" wrote:

The comma on the blackberries and the stoat are my favourites.

I'm glad you like the shots and I really appreciate your comments.

"Susie" wrote:

Is it usual for men to take photos of themselves hugging fish as if they were the proud father of triplets?

100% 😄😄😄

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Susie, 13-Dec-11 06:43 AM GMT

😄😄 There are some things I will never understand! 😄

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 13-Dec-11 06:46 AM GMT

Hi Trev,

Thanks for your message.

"Trev Sawyer" wrote:

The snap below shows three fish of 4-3, 3-11 and 3-7 taken in successive casts just on dusk.

Very nice ... 🎁

I do like my fishing though haven't done any since my friend passed away in August. We had a lot planned and in 2012 I intend to get out and about again. When time allows, I mainly fish the River Thames and lure fish probably 75% of the time. I assume your fabulous trio were not taken on lures? If I'm feeling lazy in the summer I do have some carp gear and will occasional give them a bash at one of my local club waters. I personally prefer the excitement of river fishing, the River Arun being my local.

Tight lines.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by ChrisC, 14-Dec-11 03:29 AM GMT

ok so that's Mark with his stoat photo and now trev off my christmas card list. they are some cracking fish. 🎁 jealousy is a terrible thing 😄

Re: Mark Colvin

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Dec-11 10:05 PM GMT

Superb photos from this year, Mark – very good indeed!

All the best,

Lee

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 15-Dec-11 01:55 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Thanks for your message.

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Superb photos from this year, Mark – very good indeed!

I'm glad you like them and really appreciate your comments.

Now that you've moved I hope to see lots of pics from you next year! 😊😊

Merry Christmas.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 15-Dec-11 04:08 AM GMT

Heyshott Escarpment, 14 December 2011

The bigger picture ...

Today, along with Colin Knight and Neil Hulme and four members of the Murray Downland Trust, I continued my weekly work party season at Heyshott Escarpment. Despite the threat of early rain the sun burnt through leaving a beautiful autumn day.

Chalk grassland is an immensely rich habitat and one of the most important in Western Europe as it supports numerous types of plant and animal (chalk grassland may contain up to 40 different species of plants per square metre). However, very little is left, so it is vitally important to look after what remains. Chalk downland is typically made up of a mosaic or patchwork of habitats including chalk grassland, chalk heath, scrub and dew ponds, all of which provide important habitats for a number of different species.

It gives me an immense feeling of satisfaction and achievement knowing that what we are doing, albeit in a small way, is helping to conserve this wonderful habitat and the rich variety of species it sustains. I thoroughly recommend attendance at conservation work parties and suggest that anyone with spare time on their hands should definitely get involved in a local project.

Roll on next week ...





Re: Mark Colvin

by Mark Colvin, 22-Dec-11 05:40 AM GMT

Heyshott Escarpment, 21 December 2011

Mulled wine and mince pies ...

Today saw the last conservation work party at Heyshott before the Christmas break. We miss just one week and recommence activities on Wednesday, 4 January 2012. Despite a damp start the rain stayed away leaving a pleasant autumn day once more.

Possibly tempted by the spicy aroma of hot mulled wine and mince pies, which added a seasonal touch to proceedings, ten people were on site today including John Murray, Mike Hadley and Sally Morris representing the Murray Downland Trust and James Colvin, Billy Lord, Neil Hulme, Roger Martin, Dan Hoare, Colin Knight and myself flying the flag for Butterfly Conservation at both local and national level.

This was the eleventh scheduled work party at Heyshott Escarpment this winter and it was interesting to take time to stand back and reflect on just how much a small and dedicated team of varying age and ability can achieve.

I hope 'His Grace' appreciates the team's hard work ...

I look forward to 2012 ...

