

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 05-Jan-11 09:21 PM GMT

On arrival in Somerset on New Year's eve, there were a few male Winter Moths on the lights outside my mum's house.

Nothing unusual about her garden birds while we were there apart from 2 Pied Wagtails; one black and one grey, which I think is the European version, or vice versa.

Since then Susie has noticed birds pairing up. I've noticed this too in my garden at home. Our usually fiercely solitary Robin has a mate and there have been a male and female Blackbird too.

I've been given a bird nesting box and am looking forward to hanging it on Saturday. I'm hoping the Blue Tits find it 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-Jan-11 04:27 AM GMT

I hung the nest thingy today. Not sure it's in the best place but we'll see.

Had a short walk around the cemetery today, it was nice to see some sunshine for a change 😊 Too cold and breezy for any sightings of course.

We had some visitors in the garden today....the photos aren't great as all taken at distance and through glass.



Grrrrr!



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 10-Jan-11 05:59 AM GMT

Nice photos, Lee! I haven't had a parakeet or a fox in the garden since I left Hayes.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-Jan-11 05:06 PM GMT

Thanks Susie.

Parakeets have been in the garden before but this one hung around long enough for me to get my camera! I really should have it on standby at the weekends. It also *nearly* flew down to the peanuts but got spooked and flew off. I've seen 3 or 4 on a nut feeder in Acton in the summer so they do visit garden feeders. There are loads near me and some live not 50 feet from my front gate, in a hole in a big tree. Noisy blighters!

The fox comes most days, they live over in the cemetery and the garden seems to be a thoroughfare. They scent mark a lot too, which smells nice 🤔

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 10-Jan-11 06:01 PM GMT

I used to get parakeets eating pyracanthus berries, much to the disgust of the woodpigeons.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 11-Jan-11 05:18 AM GMT

Lee,

Those parakeets are everywhere in these parts. I watched two flocks of 30+birds fly north along the Western Perimeter Road at Heathrow last week, heading away from their overnight roost. Here is a shot taken in March this year of one on a bird-feeder.

Dave



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 12-Jan-11 01:52 AM GMT

Nice one Dave.

I do occasionally see big flocks, even in Acton where I work. There's a lot less green space than there is where I live though which is odd!

At home I've got parks, golf courses, the river and of course the cemetery all nearby so plenty of breeding areas for them.

You're right though, very widespread this way.

All the best,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 12-Jan-11 04:06 AM GMT

They still seem to be spreading. I'd guess they must have started to overlap with the Red Kites from the M40 corridor (having seen both close to Maidenhead recently). I wonder if one would be interested in eating the other? A natural control measure of sorts, perhaps?

Cheers,

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 12-Jan-11 09:46 PM GMT

I seem to remember from Autumnwatch that when they were analysing the contents of a Peregrine's nest (must have been from central London) they found bits of a Parakeet.

I've seen a Red Kite in West Drayton, which can't be far from you? It's entirely feasible, as long as they could catch them I suppose! Although I think Red Kites mainly scavenge so I'm not sure.

I wonder how far they will get around the country. Do you know how long they have been here and how long it's taken for them to get as far as they have?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 12-Jan-11 10:33 PM GMT

I seem to remember from Autumnwatch that when they were analysing the contents of a Peregrine's nest (must have been from central London) they found bits of a Parakeet.

For me that's good news, as i don't think Parakeets should be allowed to spread. We could, in the end lose native tree dwelling birds as a result, (think Red Squirrel)... Bring on more Peregrines, and control these foreign escapees, and the feral pigeons. Peregrines are the way forward. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 13-Jan-11 02:11 AM GMT

Here's a link to some BBC footage about the little chaps...

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Rose-r ... t#p00bgv4c](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Rose-r...t#p00bgv4c)

It looks as if they appeared in the late 1960s. I've read elsewhere that they were to be found originally at various points along the Thames from the Isle of Thanet up to Virginia Water, including a colony on Hampstead Heath (I saw them there not long ago). Apparently they have also colonised other European countries, including Holland and Belgium (Amsterdam has them it seems).

Amazingly, considering their noisy natures and brilliant colouration, many people round here are still not aware of them and express astonishment if you point one out.

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Jan-11 06:27 AM GMT

Many thanks for that Dave, interesting stuff.

The birds were busy in the garden today, I think the warm weather may have spurred them on a bit. We had:

At least 4 Blue Tits,
2 Great Tits
Mrs Blackbird
1 Dunnock
1 Goldcrest
1 Long Tailed Tit
1 Robin
1 Wood Pigeon

Plus Gulls and a lone Parakeet overhead. Nice to see a Long Tailed in the garden again, they haven't been in for a while. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 31-Jan-11 01:52 AM GMT

My big garden bird watch only gave me the usual suspects today – Blue Tit, Great Tit, Robin, Dunnock, Blackbird and Wood Pigeon. You're not supposed to count those that fly over and don't land so I couldn't count the Magpies, Crows and 8 Parakeets.

It was nice and warm in the sun though so I wandered over to the cemetery. It was lovely in the sheltered spots out of the breeze. I added a Long Tailed Tit and a Song Thrush.

There are some allotments bordering the cemetery and there's a guy who keeps pigeons and also now chickens it seems. He was there buiding a coop while they pecked about his plot. Anyway, his pigeons kept flying off and swooping back to his shed, which looked lovely against the (unforecasted) blue sky.



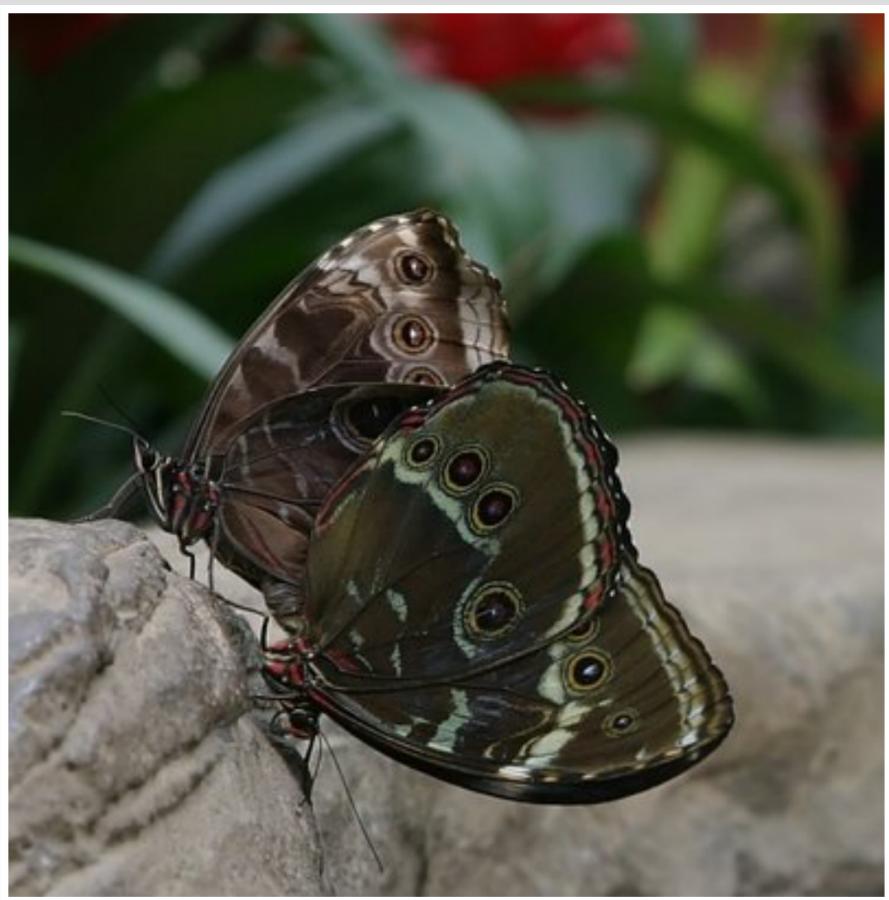


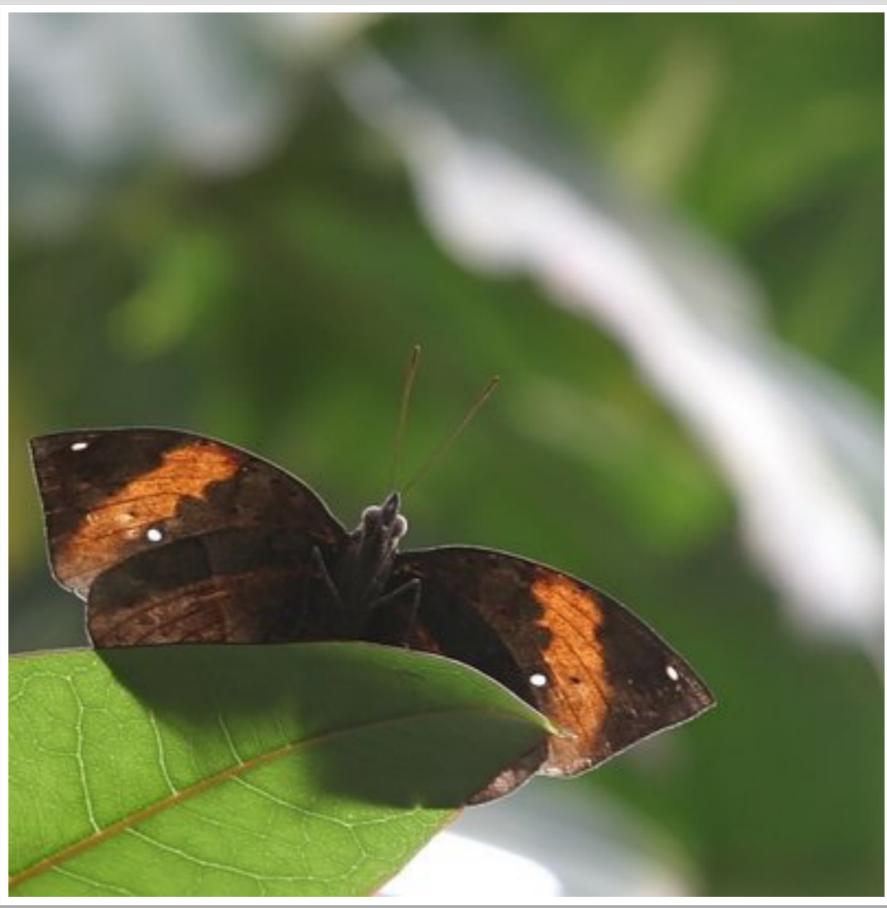
Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Feb-11 01:27 AM GMT

I visited Wisley yesterday and thought it was much better than last year. For a start there butterflies actually flying about this time, which was lovely to see in our out of season months. It was heaving, but it was a delight to see the children there enjoy it so much. The way the butterflies would fly in and around people, seemingly oblivious, was lovely to watch too.

The sun also shone for a little while too. Also, I never knew Swallowtails and Morphos actually drank (I'm assuming they were drinking of course, they might have been doing something else) from water on the wing the way Swallows do. I was mesmerised as they would sweep down to the pond, break the surface and fly off again time and time again.





There were signs of spring in the grounds too:



I was hoping to see the tame Robin I saw in the grounds last year but no luck this time. It seems Kipper may have found it though. Here it is from last year:



As an aside, by looking at the image file names, I can see I've taken 5569 photos between last year's visit to Wisley and this year's. Blimey.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-Feb-11 04:37 AM GMT

Saturday 12th February 2011

We had a rather brazen visitor today. He, (I think it was a young male), stayed for around half an hour sunbathing on the lawn and the patio. He didn't even mind when I slowly opened the patio door, allowing a few photos.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-Feb-11 07:22 AM GMT

We've had a new addition to the household this week. (No baby Hurrell's yet Zonda).

A kitten was outside the front door as we left for work on Tuesday morning and tried to come inside. We didn't let it and went off as normal. It was still there when we got back but our upstairs neighbours had taken it in and fed it. (2 mackerel fillets, 4 slices of ham and 4 bowls of milk).

They were going to leave it outside again overnight and we just couldn't, so we let her (for it is a she) come indoors. Off I went to the shop and she wolfed down a pouch of whiskers and more milk. Poor thing obviously hadn't eaten in a while. Now I'm not too fond of cats (garden birds) and am even allergic to fur but I wasn't going to leave a kitten out overnight.

So she stayed the night and we put her outside in the morning. Sure enough, after work on Wednesday there she was waiting to come in. By this time we'd phoned the local vets and registered on a lost pet website but no-one had lost a kitten. Funny thing is she must be/have been someone's pet as she is fully house trained and knows how to use a litter tray. She miaows when she's hungry and waits by the door when she needs to do her business. So she is either lost or has been dumped I think. She has no collar and we took her to the vets yesterday morning to check for a microchip but she doesn't have one of those either. She has a lovely temperament and sleeps a lot. Perfect pet really!

She did have a face off and a swipe from Panther (a local moggy that I scare away from my bird table – likely not to be it's real name, just what I call it) resulting on a scratch on the nose as you can see below. This resulted in not going out for a couple of days and use of the litter tray but only then for number ones. (She would go out when accompanied 😊).

Her confidence has returned over the weekend though and she was even climbing trees today, although this was after a Goldcrest, so I will have to watch this I think!

I chose Floyd for a name before we knew she was a girl (after the outlaw, Pretty Boy) and my girlfriend after Keith, the chef. Now we know she's a girl Emily, Tilly and even Tigger have been suggested but I'm not sure – any ideas? All suggestions welcome!

Someone said this week that cats choose thier owners and it seems that couldn't be more true in this case.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Feb-11 05:35 AM GMT

Saturday 19th February 2011

We spent a lovely afternoon in Brighton today. One thing I wanted to see was a murmuration of starlings and they didn't disappoint. No photos as I was trying to video using my old compact but they didn't come out very well so I won't post.

I'd never seen them flocking like that to roost and it was quite a sight.

Obligatory tourist photos:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Feb-11 05:43 AM GMT

Monday 21st February 2011

It was unusual to see a Sparrowhawk over the centre of Ealing this morning while I was waiting for a bus. I must have caused a few funny looks as I was staring at the sky.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 22-Feb-11 05:48 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

I must have caused a few funny looks as I was staring at the sky

Hiya Lee,

this works even better when you're with a couple of friends. As long as you're all looking at the same (imaginary) object way up high you'll soon have loads of people also scanning the heavens with you. Point your arm up too for added effect.

Hours of endless fun 😊

Gibster.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 22-Feb-11 06:43 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Monday 21st February 2011

It was unusual to see a Sparrowhawk over the centre of Ealing this morning while I was waiting for a bus. I must have caused a few funny looks as I was staring at the sky.

Next time just mumble "They're coming" with increasing anxiety. Clears the bus queue a treat. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Feb-11 04:31 PM GMT

I must admit, I have done this for comic effect in the past but I didn't mention it in case you thought I was mad. I can see I'm not alone! 😊

If you get enough of you staring and pointing at some imaginary object, silently, for long enough, eventually other people will join in.

The trick then is to slowly withdraw and leave the unsuspecting bystanders staring on their own. The longest unaided stare wins!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Vince Massimo, 23-Feb-11 08:50 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

We've had a new addition to the household this week.

Someone said this week that cats choose thier owners and it seems that couldn't be more true in this case.

Nice cat story Lee. I have one that looks similar, but she is now 15 years old. Be careful, they can take over your life. You need to show them who's boss.....

Vince

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Feb-11 04:35 PM GMT

Hi Vince,

Where'd your photo go?

"Vince Massimo" wrote:

You need to show them who's boss.....

I tried that and as I suspected, it turns out she is indeed the boss.....

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Vince Massimo, 24-Feb-11 06:51 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

My photo was only ever meant to be a temporary inclusion in order to demonstrate the point I was making. I am very careful not to put photos into someone else's Personal Diary unless they relate to an identification issue. She's a lovely looking cat. Keep us advised how you get on.

Vince

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Feb-11 07:30 PM GMT

"Vince Massimo" wrote:

I am very careful not to put photos into someone else's Personal Diary unless they relate to an identification issue.

That's kind of you, but don't worry about my diary, all welcome!

"Vince Massimo" wrote:

She's a lovely looking cat. Keep us advised how you get on.

Will do. She's developed a very funny mad hour in the evenings when she runs around like a rocket and then jumps at the curtains. She then ran into the (closed) patio door last night with a thump, bless her.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Feb-11 10:11 PM GMT

Just been for a stroll around the college grounds in lovely warm sunshine, although it was a bit breezy.

The sun felt the warmest I've felt so far this year. No leps but the signs of spring are there....daffodils *nearly* out, a Robin foraging in the bottom of a bush, (nestbuilding?), a female Blackbird scuttling across some grass, a Long Tailed Tit skipping among plane tree branches and a Goldfinch chirping a lovely song. Oh, plus Feral pigeons, Wood Pigeons, 2 Crows and a Magpie fighting over a bag of chips.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Feb-11 10:30 PM GMT

I'm sure I've just seen 4-5 Skylarks in and above a tree opposite my front door. Starling size, mesmerising song and rising straight up while singing as I've seen on the south downs.

Is that likely in west London?

My book says they gather in loose flocks in winter in farmland. There is a lot of green space near me (cemetery, allotments, golf courses, Brent river park etc) so could be 😊

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 26-Feb-11 10:54 PM GMT

I think I've seen them on (and above) the grassy areas adjacent to the Heathrow runways and taxiways.

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Feb-11 11:12 PM GMT

Thanks Dave.

I guess the grassy areas at the airport are another field to them.

I was hoping you, Susie or Chris C would have had experience!

What a bird to see in your front garden though 😊

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 26-Feb-11 11:54 PM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

I'm sure I've just seen 4-5 Skylarks in and above a tree opposite my front door.

Hiya Lee,

I very much doubt the birds were Skylarks. In all my years birding I don't think I've ever seen a Skylark in a tree, nevermind 4 or 5! Woodlarks often sing from trees and also have an amazing aerial songflight, but open heathland is their usual habitat. I saw several just two days ago on Thursley Common. So I'm a bit puzzled as to what you saw! But not Skylarks. Unless one rose up from *behind* the tree and gave the impression of having flown *from* the tree???

I'll have a ponder 😊

Gibster.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 27-Feb-11 12:58 AM GMT

Earlier today i saw a flock of 40-50 Corn Buntings, maybe that's what you spotted.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 27-Feb-11 01:08 AM GMT

hi Lee,

as others have said, would be unusual for skylarks. what made you think skylarks and not starlings? waxwings maybe if they had a crest. some finches do the flying up and singing though.

Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 27-Feb-11 02:48 AM GMT

I can't comment on the behaviour of skylarks, I don't know enough about them. What I do know is that there are plenty of skylarks in west London, Lee. 😊 The first place I ever saw them was Minet Country Park in Hayes, they were also in Yeading. I imagine there will be some around the Horsenden Hill area in Greenford too although I haven't seen them.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 27-Feb-11 03:57 AM GMT

Thanks all.

I saw one at first and I admit my first thought was Goldfinch but it was the wrong shape. Too big for a start plus it had pointy wings and a longish tail. Then I thought Starling but then I heard the song and I was sure. Well, more sure.

It wasn't in tree for long – I saw it hovering first, then it sort of descending into the tree singing. It was then joined by 3-4 others and then they flew off. And that was it! The tree wasn't a big tree, more like the sort you see from an overgrown hedge. I think it's an Ash if it helps.

Susie, indeed could be at Horsenden Hill, some good habitat for them there. On a separate note, our friend with Twiggy the Greyhound told me last year she had seen a Marbled White up there. I was sceptical at first until I read the Herts/Middlesex sightings page to find they do indeed live up there! Who would have thought that in west London!?

Chris, It was the behaviour (flying up and down) and the song that changed my mind from Starling.

Gibster, I think it has to at least be a possibility if they have been seen in Heathrow (no more than 10 miles) and Hayes (Minet Country Park is no more than 2 or 3 miles as the lark flies)?

Zonda, I don't think I've ever knowingly seen a Corn Bunting, but I'll look them up.

Thanks

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Feb-11 06:09 AM GMT

Zonda, according to my book, the song of the Corn Bunting is wrong for what I heard. It does say they share the same habitat as Skylarks though.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Feb-11 06:14 AM GMT

Sunday 27th February 2011

What a glorious morning. I had to nip to Brighton again today and drove down in lovely warm sunshine. I was hoping it would last until I was back but it wasn't to be. I drove back in torrential rain 😞

So my only sighting was a bumble bee at Pease Pottage services.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 28-Feb-11 06:19 AM GMT

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Re: Lee Hurrell

by Padfield, 28-Feb-11 06:29 AM GMT

That's wonderful news! Well done both of you!

Guy

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 28-Feb-11 06:47 AM GMT

So when are you getting married, or is it too early to say? 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Vince Massimo, 28-Feb-11 07:01 PM GMT

Congratulations Lee, Pease Pottage Services is a romantic place isn't it?

Vince

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Feb-11 09:33 PM GMT

Thanks all, much appreciated. 😊

Too early to say just yet Susie!

I was my own this week Vince, not sure I'd have got away with it at the services 😊

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Neil Hulme, 01-Mar-11 12:31 AM GMT

Congratulations Lee.

Best Wishes, Neil

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 01-Mar-11 01:08 AM GMT

Just be careful Lee, i've noticed that women keep changing their avatars. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 01-Mar-11 01:26 AM GMT

Thank you, Neil and Zonda! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 01-Mar-11 02:54 AM GMT

And hearty congratulations from me as well. I'm glad it wasn't Pease Pottage – a service area without much cachet, I feel.

Beaconsfield, on the other hand... much classier! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 01-Mar-11 03:26 AM GMT

I've always felt a certain affinity with Winchester Services on the M3...lovely Burger King dining hall and the loos are always spotlessly clean 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 01-Mar-11 03:57 AM GMT

Edit

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Matsukaze, 01-Mar-11 04:12 AM GMT

Congratulations Lee!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 01-Mar-11 04:52 AM GMT

it would appear you don't need hand with all the birds Lee 😊 I have pm'ed the address for the invitation 😊 seriously though, congratulations to you both.

Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 01-Mar-11 05:27 AM GMT

Thanks all, Dave, Gibster, Matsukaze and Chris 😊

Well, our favourite service stop is Leigh Delamere on the M4, it's the one we always stop at en route to my mum's in Somerset!

"Gibster" wrote:

Any hints or tips you'd like to divulge, I think my Sami may be awaiting a similar event sometime in the (um, nearish) future.

Gibster, you can't go far wrong by following the advice from Susie's recent signature 😊

"Susie" wrote:

I didn't realise you lot were so romantic! 😊 Who will be the first UKButts wedding! Gibster & Sami?

Well no date set yet, and there's talk of a new bathroom first, so ours won't be for a while yet. Over to you Gibster? 😊

"Susie" wrote:

Oh, and I hope you remember that her engagement ring must be at least worth a month's salary. 😊

Ahem, I know....! 😳

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 01-Mar-11 05:39 AM GMT

Jolly good.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Matsukaze, 01-Mar-11 05:52 AM GMT

The best service station for us butterfly lovers has to be Clacket Lane on the M25, where I took this photo:



No doubt it also has Purple and White-letter Hairstreaks.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Neil Hulme, 01-Mar-11 05:54 AM GMT

Nice one – I can see HIM 😊

Neil

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 01-Mar-11 05:55 AM GMT

Horny little devil, ain't he.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 01-Mar-11 04:52 PM GMT

Well that's brightened up a grey morning 😊

I was at Clackett Lane a couple of weeks ago. We also like that one as we normally stop there too on way/way back from Kent. Plus I'm from Sevenoaks so it was my nearest one. I always make a point of looking at the Sallows now after sightings were reported last year. (Was that you Matsukaze?)

I also love that stretch heading clockwise after Clacket Lane with the downs visible and where the woods sort of scallop, it always makes me want to go walking 😊

See you in July little feller. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 02-Mar-11 06:54 AM GMT

Of course, if the locality is right (and I'm thinking Mountain Ringlet habbo – my last remaining mainland resident species – and in warm sunshine, say in late June...) with enough UK Butterflies members present...naturally there would have to be elves and pixies present, with fairy lights and lots of bling (Sami's tastes are truly impeccable!) then maybe – just maybe – my mind could be swayed. Maybe. 😊

Aaah, farewell sweet freedom, twas good knowing you 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 02-Mar-11 07:03 AM GMT

Um... Sam's just read the above post and...well, um...suffice to say she's kinda excited.

(Naturally so am I – it's not every day you get a chance to see Mountain Ringlets is it?) 😄😄 :l

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 02-Mar-11 05:02 PM GMT

In my great old age I look at young couples such as yourselves and do wonder why women are so keen to get married and men are so resistant. It should be the other way around 😄

Married men have better physical and mental health than single men and they live longer on average too. Once married men might have lost out financially to their single brothers but now with women becoming the greater wage earner in many homes that isn't the case. Conversely married women do far more work in the home than their husbands regardless of whether they work full time or not and their health is poorer than their single sisters.

The price of an engagement ring seems a small payment in return for a lifetime of hard graft from the lady 😄

P.S. Apologies for hijacking your thread, Lee, delete at will.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 02-Mar-11 09:32 PM GMT

"Gibster" wrote:

Um... Sam's just read the above post and...well, um...suffice to say she's kinda excited.

Good luck Lee, this is thin ice we're skating on!!!

Good luck to you and Sami too Gibster. I hope this hasn't forced anyone's hand but do keep us informed! 😄

All the best,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 03-Mar-11 04:08 AM GMT

Ha! It seems that the only one with any idea of what's occurring around here is Susie...guess that her 'great old age' puts her at an advantage, the ol' codger!! 😄

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 03-Mar-11 06:13 AM GMT

I'll have been married 18 years this year, I know what I'm talking about. 😄

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Mar-11 09:26 PM GMT

Thursday 3rd March 2011

Raptors

I was at the Cardington Airship Sheds in Bedfordshire yesterday with work. They are huge, 55m high, 247m long and 83m wide. You get a sense of how big the airships must have been just by looking at the sheds from the outside.

http://transportheritage.com/find-herit..._obi2Id=197

For a change, I wasn't driving so I was enjoying the countryside from the passenger seat.

Alongside the M1 I saw 1 Buzzard, 1 Red Kite and a male Hen Harrier hunting, the first one I've ever knowingly seen 😄

Re: Lee Hurrell

by David M, 05-Mar-11 04:35 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

In my great old age I look at young couples such as yourselves and do wonder why women are so keen to get married and men are so resistant. It should be the other way around 😊

Married men have better physical and mental health than single men and they live longer on average too. Once married men might have lost out financially to their single brothers but now with women becoming the greater wage earner in many homes that isn't the case. Conversely married women do far more work in the home than their husbands regardless of whether they work full time or not and their health is poorer than their single sisters.

The price of an engagement ring seems a small payment in return for a lifetime of hard graft from the lady 😊

P.S. Apologies for hijacking your thread, Lee, delete at will.

That's not a hijack, it's a political manifesto.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 05-Mar-11 05:38 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

That's not a hijack, it's a political manifesto.

😊😊😊 Spot on mate, spot on!!!!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Mar-11 12:54 AM GMT

Sunday 6th March 2011

Save our Forests?

I spent a quick 15 minutes over at the cemetery this afternoon. I was a little dismayed to see the tree I saw my last butterfly of 2010 (Red Admiral, 24th October) flying around had been felled. It was a mature tree, of grand age and covered in ivy. Still, I don't own the ground and I don't know what, if anything, was wrong with the tree. 😞



Just still too chilly for any butterflies but I did see 2 small flocks of unidentified song birds and 5 or 6 Redwings.

While over there there was a loud cracking sound to which I turned to see another massive tree falling to the ground with a huge thud. 😲

This tree was one of a group that stood in a line in front of the cemetery. It seems this felling was natural though, upon closer inspection the tree was damp in the middle. Still, it's lucky no one was walking or driving past at the time.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 12-Mar-11 05:48 PM GMT

First of the Year

And we're off – I was delighted to see a Red Admiral in the garden this morning at 09.12. It was sunny, with a little breeze but no more than 9 degrees.

First sighting of the year 😊

Off to Worcestershire today for a week so will hopefully have a few more sightings.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Mar-11 12:58 AM GMT

Peopleton

We're staying at my aunt and uncle's in Peopleton, near Pershore, looking after their boxer, Alice. My nan lives nearby.

Here's Alice, looking happy:



After a drizzly start the sun broke mid morning and it has been glorious today, the first proper day of T-shirt weather. We were at my nan's for lunch and it was no surprise to see a Peacock fly through the garden at around 2pm. Must have been at least 13, 14 degrees. Plenty of bees about too.

After leaving I was itching to go for a walk and a couple of miles around the fields between 3 and 4pm yielded no butterflies but a few more bees.

Here's one of the views and my attempt at an arty daff shot:



I have notched up 17 species of bird today without really trying though: Rook, Crow, Jackdaw, Magpie, Blackbird, Starling, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Buzzard, House Sparrow, Robin, Dunnock, Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Great Tit, Blue Tit.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Mar-11 02:30 AM GMT

I had a right mission trying to go for a walk today. I'd planned to go to Grafton Wood – I parked in Grafton Flyford church car park and was about to set off only to be told by some woodland types that the wood was closed for forestry works today and tomorrow. 🙄

There's a landranger map in the car park and I saw another wood nearby, Bow Wood and set off to find that instead. I found where the footpath sets off from the road but couldn't find my way through the farmyard and sheep pens so gave up and came back to the village.

So off I set around Peopleton and saw a Small Tortoiseshell circling above the path. There's a small wood nearby and along the side in the sun a bigger nymphalid flew past (either Peacock or Red Admiral) and I found another Small Tortoiseshell sunning itself.



I watched 2 buzzards being mobbed by around 50 Jackdaws and I can also add another 4 species of birds to the list for this week: Green Woodpecker, Pied Wagtail, Wren and Raven (I checked what their call sounds like on the RSPB website [handy, that] and they do indeed 'bark').

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Mar-11 07:10 PM GMT

It was a grey day yesterday but did brighten up in the afternoon so I walked up to the wood where I saw the Small Tortoiseshell on Monday. No butterfly sightings though. Quite a few bees were about and I think I saw my first bee fly. There are plenty of celandines and violets out and a few dandelions too. A few clumps of snowdrops are hanging on. The nearby wood will be a carpet of bluebells soon.



Mallard and Pheasant added to the bird list.

Today is grey again but may brighten later. I'm walking Alice first thing and at teatime and if I go out at butterfly 'prime time', that's 3 walks a day – my legs aren't sure what's hit them after having the winter off 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Mar-11 06:49 AM GMT

It stayed grey today with no sightings.

Long Tailed Tit added to the week's birds though.

Re: Lee Hurrell

Worcestershire Wakes Up

Another glorious afternoon in the midlands. 3 male Brimstones seen before I even got in the car! No need for a jumper today, just a T-Shirt.

I went to Grafton Wood between 13.30 and 15.30. The forestry works mentioned earlier in the week seems to have involved lots of coppicing and ride widening and it looks well worth a visit later in the season. Plenty of willows available too. I wonder if some of the rarer small Fritillaries are found here.

No less than 17 male Brimstones, 4 Commas and 1 Peacock seen. I also thought I saw a Small Copper (I see one has been reported from Norfolk) but perhaps it was an Orange Underwing – the flight was slower and less determined than I would expect from a Small Copper.



A rare moment's rest...





There were a few primroses out and the Brimstones would stop and nectar on these quickly before setting off again. Mute Swan, Mistle Thrush and Chiff Chaff added to the birds seen or heard this week. Buzzards were calling overhead.

On the way out I skirted the woodland edges looking for Brown Hairstreak eggs and someone had helpfully put blue tape round certain branches but I couldn't see any eggs. Might they have hatched by now? Maybe the eggs were *under* the tape.

I left at the right time as it had clouded over a little and the warmth of the sun was on the wane. Walking back towards Church Farm and looking back towards the wood gave a good view of what I assume was once medieval ridge and furrow ploughing.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Padfield, 18-Mar-11 01:25 AM GMT

The eggs won't hatch until the leaves start unfurling, which I presume isn't happening yet (it certainly isn't here).

Guy



(Last year, at hatching time - I found the first hatched eggs on this bush the next day)

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 18-Mar-11 02:40 AM GMT

In Dorset the Blackthorn is in full flower in some places, no leaves as yet. Hawthorn is budding freely. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Mar-11 05:39 AM GMT

Thanks Guy and Zonda.

Certainly not at that stage yet up here - not a whiff of a leaf on the bushes I was looking at.

Grafton Wood holds the only colony of Brown Hairstreaks in the midlands (according to the BC sign as I entered) but I think they have been discovered in other nearby woods now. It also states that they lay eggs in hedgerows in up to a 4k radius of the wood.

Also, I forgot to mention earlier that a Jay can be added to the week's birds.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 18-Mar-11 05:52 AM GMT

Lee,

I've drawn up a list of your 'Missing Magnificent Seven'....Black-headed Gull, Grey Heron, Canada Goose, Feral Pigeon, Coot, Moorhen and Tufted Duck. To complete the 'Dirty Dozen' you'll need to see Kestrel, Skylark, Redwing, Herring Gull and Lapwing. Good luck in your mission... 😊😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Mar-11 06:04 AM GMT

Blimey, thanks Gibster.

Not much chance of a feral pigeon round this way...does a kestrel on saturday driving up the M40 count?

Actually I have seen gulls, quite a lot, but not identified them. I'm fairly sure they are not herring, so would black backed or lesser black backed more likely do you think?

I'm only here until the weekend so I may not complete the challenge, just to warn you....

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 18-Mar-11 06:32 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Grafton Wood holds the only colony of Brown Hairstreaks in the midlands (according to the BC sign as I entered) but I think they have been discovered in other nearby woods now.

The Warwickshire BC Branch website has solid evidence of Brown Hairstreak in Ryton Woods/Meadows near Coventry. Quite a productive spot, this one, if you're in the area.

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Mar-11 06:57 PM GMT

Thanks Dave. I haven't been there but certainly a possibility for another time.

My aunt keeps me informed via local newspaper cuttings sent through the post – I've had cuttings about BH locally and PBF/SPBF in the Wyre Forest, about 20 minutes from here.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Mar-11 12:59 AM GMT

A shopping trip into Worcester city centre today.

Feral Pigeon? Check. Herring Gull? Check. Black Headed Gull? Check.

Lapwing? Ch...only joking!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-Mar-11 12:41 AM GMT

Yesterday (Saturday 19th March) was another lovely day with blue skies all day. My aunt and uncle were due back, so just had time for a short walk. I opted for the nearby wood with the Small Tortoiseshells.

Having seen one in the garden earlier, another male Brimstone flew past as I left the house. At the woodland edge were 3 Small Tortoiseshells, 2 Commas and another male Brimstone.



A further male Brimstone and a Small Tortoiseshell whilst at my nan's for lunch rounded off a good week of sightings. I'd opted for this week (they were away for 3 weeks, with other relatives taking turns to look after Alice), hoping it would be the first good week of Spring weather and was really pleased to see so many butterflies.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Mar-11 06:55 AM GMT

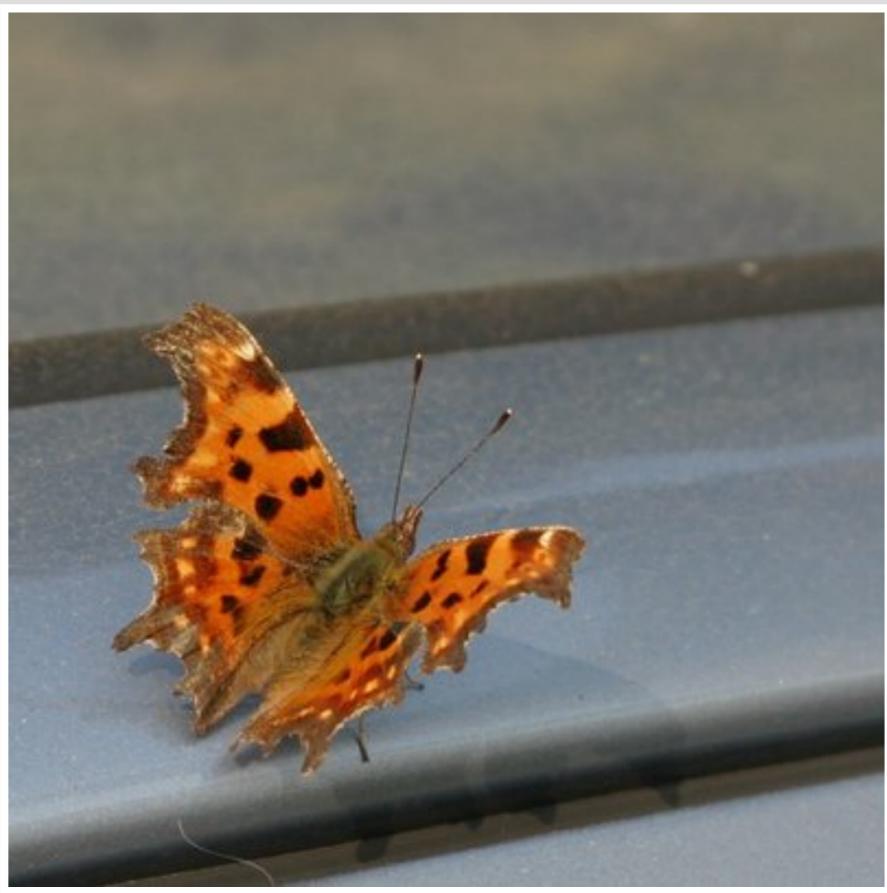
I forgot to mention last Saturday I saw 2 Goldcrests in the garden, the first time I've seen more than 1 here. They spent ages in the trees flitting about.

Back to today. Spring seems to continue in Middlesex with another lovely day of warm sunshine.

I had two sorties to the cemetery this afternoon and saw 3 different Commas, I think 2 females and 1 deeply dark orange male with a deformed hindwing. The shape was right but was half the size it should be and light tan in colour. I made chase but alas no photos. Here's one of the females, I think:



At home, another male had set up residence in the front garden in exactly the same spot as last year's first garden Comma. He made good use of the car too! A Peacock flew in and they had a dogfight before returning to his post.





Meanwhile, in kitten news, Tilly (as we have named her) has been in season since we were in Worcesterstershire. She has developed a fan club, 2 males that would follow her everywhere. One was a nice looking tabby that lives up the road. The other one was a ragged looking old grey thing with white feet and a dodgy leg. I know which I would have preferred her to bring home!

Anyway, our sleep has been at a premium. Her behaviour has changed, she sleeps less and has worked out how to open the bedroom door. Plus old Grey has been howling for her non stop, ALL NIGHT. 😳

We went to the vets yesterday and Tilly is going back there tomorrow, so we won't have a repeat of the last week. When we came back, the two males weren't to be found and everything seemed to have returned to normal. I presume Tilly's season has passed.

Today, while stalking the Comma in the garden, I came across old Grey, down by the side of the car, stiff as a board. Put a bit of a downer on the day to be honest, as much of a pain in the arse as he was. I guess the excitement of chasing young Tilly for over a week has done him in.

So I knocked on a few doors but with no joy. We'd never seen him before last week and have no idea who, if anyone, he belonged to. We buried him in the garden and made a little cross out of bamboo, upon which a Robin came and sat, admiring the freshly dug soil. And that was that.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Apr-11 01:26 AM GMT

Spring Emerges

Despite sunshine being at a premium today, while mowing the lawn this morning I was chuffed to bits to see my first non hibernator of the year – a male Holly Blue. He stayed too high for a photo but was fluttering about for a while.

Around 4pm and equally chuffing (?) was the sight of a Speckled Wood in the same spot.

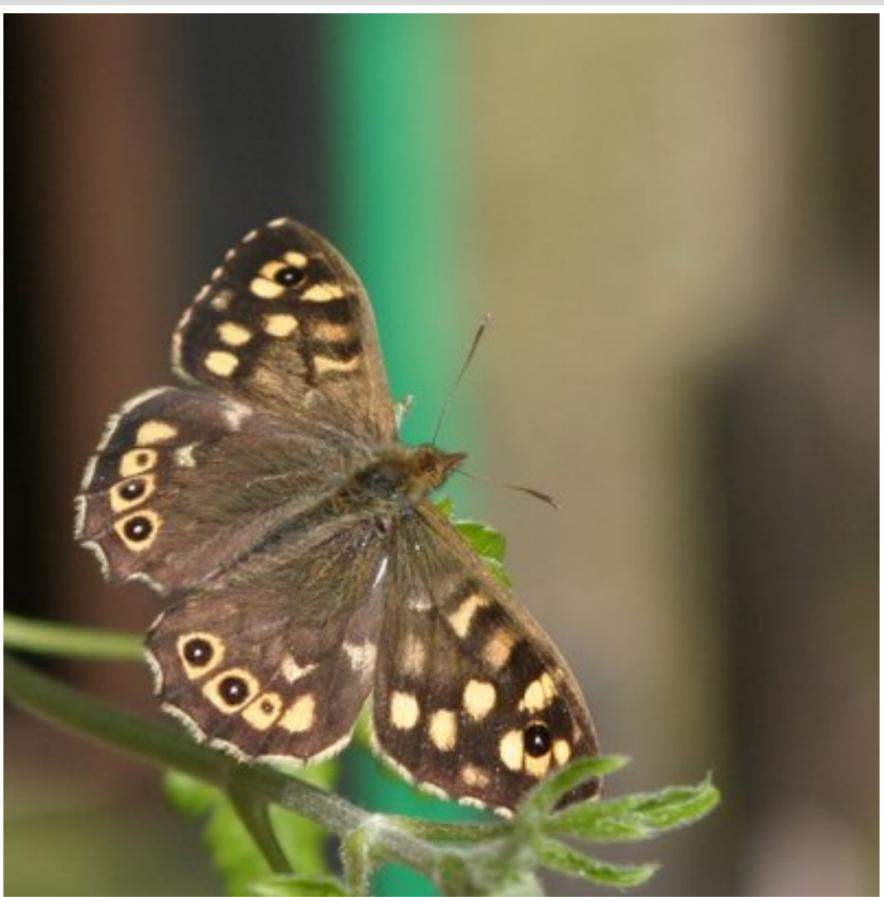
I nipped over to the cemetery at 4.30 but by then the sun had given up any hope of returning and I saw nothing. There was a tatty male Comma in the front garden on the way out though (he was on butch).

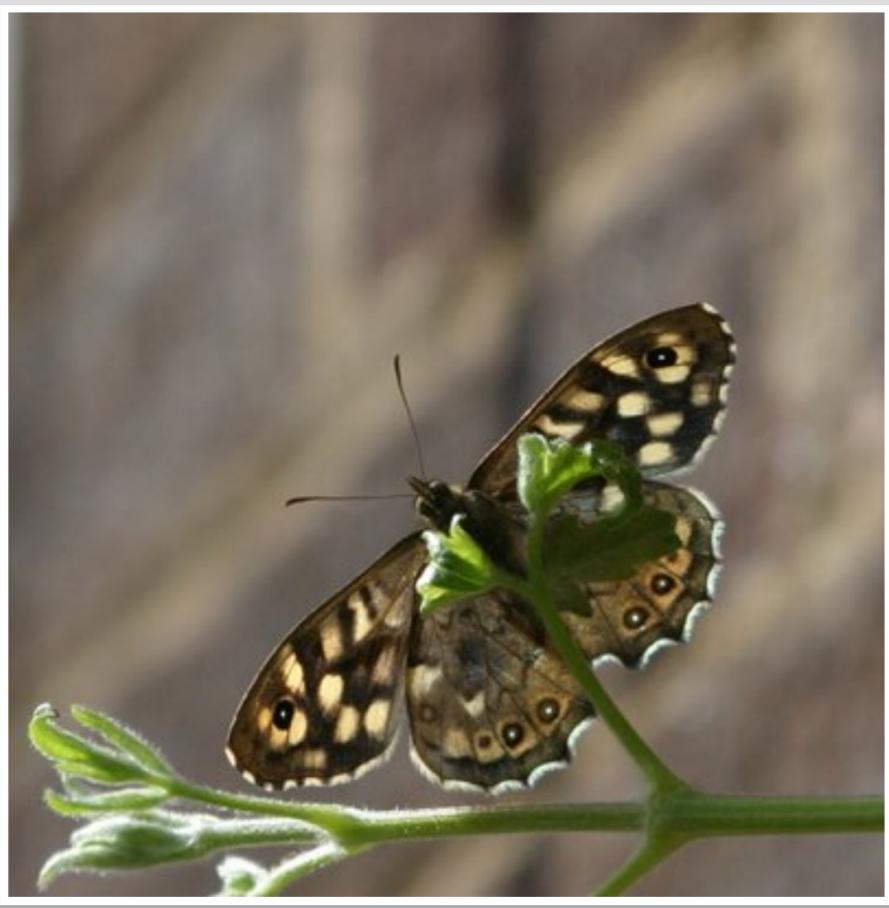
Lastly, the two Goldcrests were about this morning, I hope this means they are or will be breeding nearby 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Apr-11 02:56 AM GMT

It was warm and sunny in the garden this morning and our resident Speckled Wood was enjoying the rays:





We had a lovely lunch down by the river in Richmond but no further sightings.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Vince Massimo, 04-Apr-11 07:24 AM GMT

Cracking underside shot, Lee. I would love to get one like that 🍷 .

Vince

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Apr-11 05:38 PM GMT

Thanks Vince, that's high praise coming from you 😊

He was just high enough for me to go underneath. The last two shots show the butterfly in exactly the same position from above and below.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-Apr-11 08:30 PM GMT

What a lovely day.

A Comma and a Holly Blue in Gunnersbury Lane, Acton. (Oh for a camera!)

I have another visit this afternoon and I'm hopeful of my first Orange Tip 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Apr-11 12:32 AM GMT

Sadly no Orange Tip. My appointment was at Heathrow and the temperature reading (for outside) in the car way back to the tube station read 25 degrees 🤔

I had an unidentified Nymphalid flypast outside Hatton Cross tube station and my first Small or Green Veined White of the year near Osterley tube station on the way back to Acton.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 08-Apr-11 10:18 PM GMT

Thursday 7th April 2011

I had the day off yesterday and after an appointment in town had the sunny afternoon to myself 😊

I did get my first Orange Tips, but all at a distance. The first two males and a Small or GV White were on my way home at Ealing Broadway station.

On arrival home there was a Peacock and my first confirmed Green Veined White in the garden.

I opted for Horsenden Hill, still after a close up Orange Tip sighting and was there between 15.00 and 16.00. I didn't see one in the end (they have been recorded up there this year though) but did see 6 Peacock, 4 Comma and 3 Speckled Wood. I did see a male Orange Tip driving back through Perivale.

Back at home the Peacock was still there along with a Holly Blue and a Speckled Wood.

I went straight over to the cemetery between 16.50 and 17.30. 1 Peacock, 4 Speckled Wood and best of all 2 male Holly Blues. I say that as I had my best ever photo opportunity for them 😊 I followed one male up and down the verge and he kept settling. The evening sun looked gorgeous too.





I got so engrossed at one point that I tripped over backwards over a displaced grave stone/cover. My field bag went one way, my camera went another and I ended up on my back. As I lay there for a few seconds wondering if I had hurt anything I realised the camera hadn't landed lens down, luckily.

Back at home my first confirmed Small White, a male, was basking in the garden (on Butch) in the evening sun.



Quite an afternoon; my first Orange Tips, Small White and Green Veined White. If this weather continues I may go looking for Green Hairstreak at the weekend!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Apr-11 05:25 AM GMT

Saturday 9th April 2011

I had to nip into town this morning but still managed some sightings:

York Rise, Tufnell Park, NW5
1 Small or Green Veined White

Primrose Hill Road, Primrose Hill, NW3
1 Comma
1 Holly Blue
1 Small or Green Veined White

In the garden as we returned:

2 Holly Blue
1 male Orange Tip
1 Peacock
1 Green Veined White

After that I was free for the afternoon and I wanted to see if I could find any Green Hairstreaks, so I set off for Swyncombe Downs in Oxfordshire (SU678915). Driving through the nearby village of Ewelme I saw 3 male Orange Tips, 2 male Brimstones and a Speckled Wood.

I didn't find any Hairstreaks despite a thorough search but I'll go back in a couple of weeks. (EDIT – it seems from reports from most everyone else I was unlucky!). There were loads of violets everywhere, a few bluebells and cowslips and the odd honesty plant. I was there between 15.00 and 17.00 and my entire visit was sound-tracked by the constant song of Skylarks. Occasionally one would rise up in front of me singing away – quite beautiful. Red Kites were flying overhead too.

Other sightings:

1 Small Tortoiseshell

1 Peacock

5 male Orange Tip, 1 female

6 male Brimstone, 1 female

1 female Green Veined White

Plus this lovely moth:



Lastly, I came across two eggs on the ground, this one intact and another that had been cracked but was otherwise intact. Any ideas on what they may be? Size was perhaps 5 or 6cm long by 4cm wide.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Apr-11 05:52 AM GMT

Sunday 10th April 2011

Rather than go out for the day today I opted for several trips to the cemetery while also having the camera to hand at home.

Throughout the day at home, 3 Holly Blues (2 different females), 4 Speckled Wood and a male Orange Tip were seen in the garden. A Sparrowhawk was

also flying overhead for a while, circling above Brent River Park. The two female Holly Blues were noticeably different, one looked like spring brood and the other was much darker, more like summer brood.

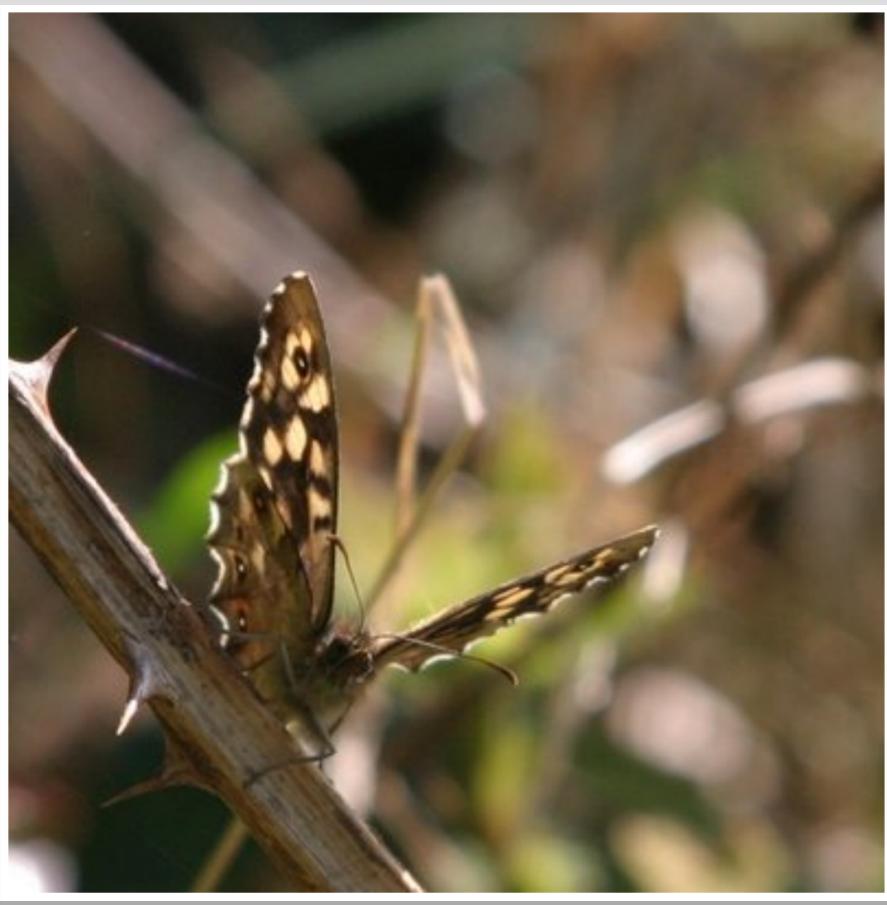


Cemetery trip 1; 10.00 - 10.30

I wanted to see if I catch any butterflies waking up and basking, but it was already warm in the sun. Sightings:

4 Speckled Wood

1 male Small White



Cemetery trip 2; 12.00 - 13.00

Things had really woken up by now and the sun was pretty hot. Sightings:

12+ Holly Blue

1 male Green Veined White

7 male Orange Tip

3 Small or Green Veined Whites

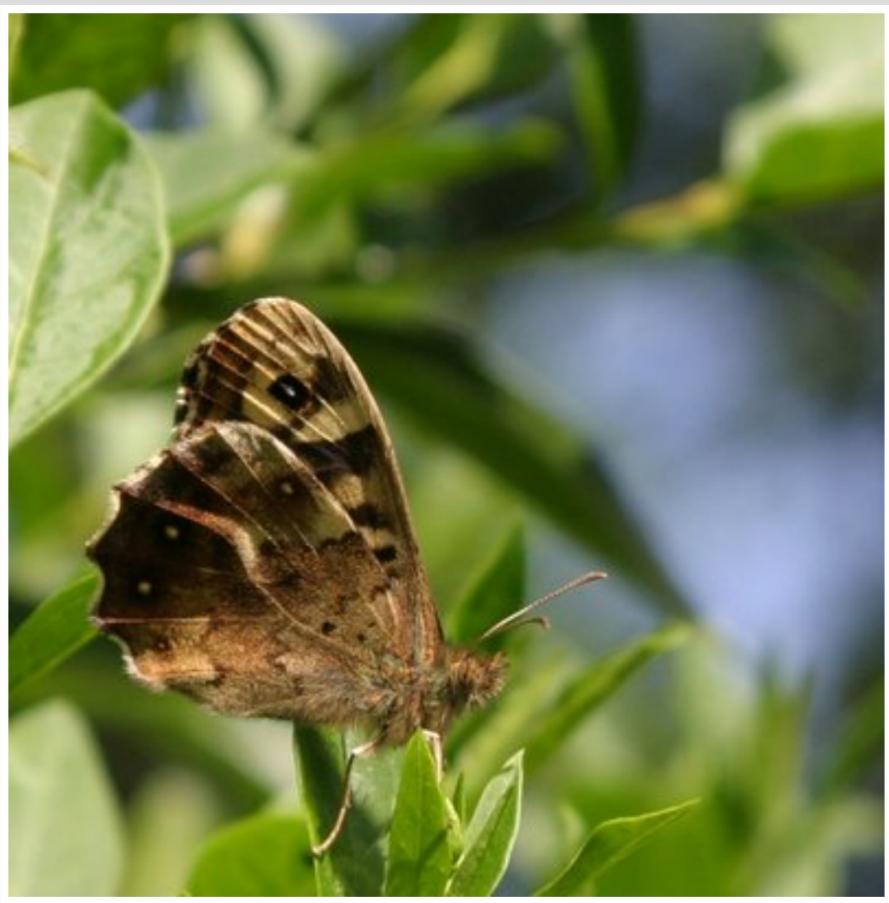
15 Speckled Wood

I observed some behaviour I'd never seen before in Holly Blues. Firstly a courting couple where the male was flying behind a perched female with the male flying side to side behind her; almost fanning her. She took off and he followed up into a tree where I lost them, perhaps to pair.

Secondly, a male flying so low to the ground I thought it was a very early Common Blue. It was a male Holly Blue - who then started nectaring on a daisy! This may be common but I'd never seen it before.







A bit quieter by now but further odd Holly Blue behaviour – this male was wandering around on the ground:



Sightings:
4 Holly Blue
3 male Orange Tip
3 Small or Green Veined Whites
6 Specked Wood

Cemetery Trip 4; 16.45 – 17.15

I was after the lovely evening sunlight, which didn't disappoint.

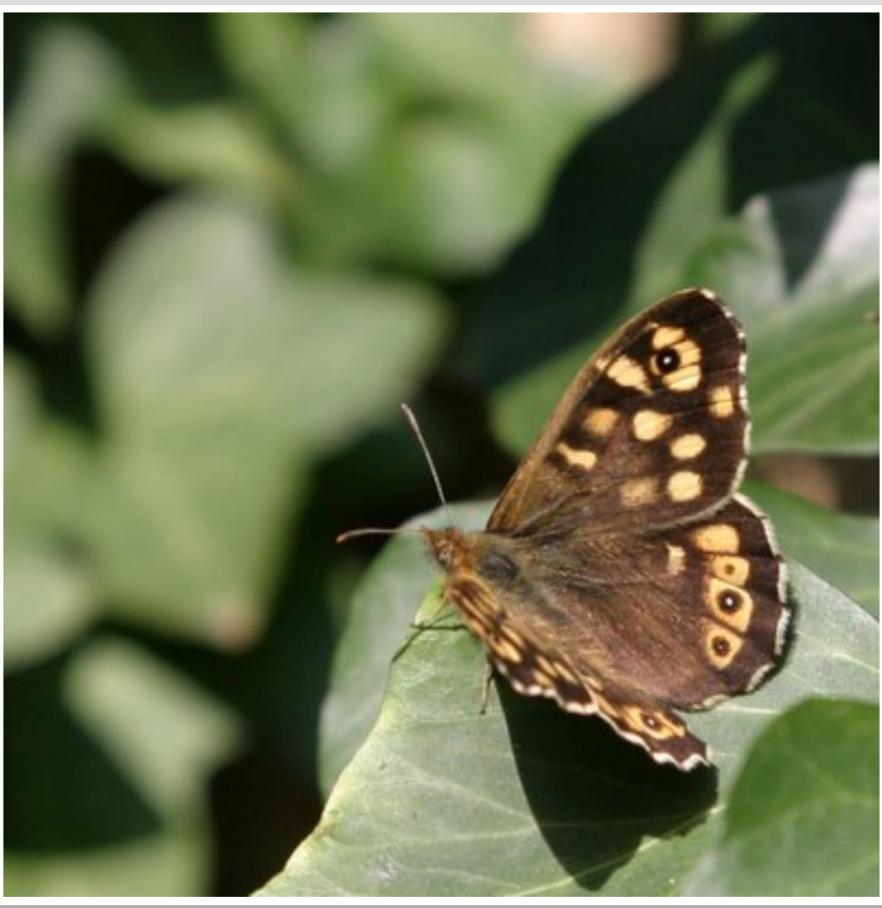
Sightings:
4 Holly Blue
4 male Orange Tip, 2 female
1 Small or Green Veined White
6 Specked Wood





It was lovely to see so many butterflies so close to home today. Apart from the Holly Blue behaviour already noted, it was strange not to see a single hibernator today.

One last point, most of the Speckled Woods I saw today looked rather more orange, than yellow...



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Padfield, 14-Apr-11 06:14 AM GMT

You are taking some really lovely pictures, Lee.

I think fresh spring *tircis* does often look quite deep and 'orange', but it is never the bright orange of *aegeria*, which is more the colour of a wall. Funnily enough, I was noticing the depth of colour in our speckled woods last weekend (Switzerland is more or less on the cusp, but nominally *tircis*).

Guy

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Apr-11 04:44 PM GMT

Thanks Guy 😊 I was particularly happy with the 2 female Orange Tip at rest pictures.

I agree, I had my first *aegeria* experience in France last year and they are quite different. You're right, the spring brood does seem to be a deeper shade though, especially compared to the last brood of last year, which seem quite pale by comparison.

So do you see both ssp in Switzerland, as in they overlap and fly together, or is it dependant on locality and where you get one you don't get the other? I guess there is an intermediate form too – isn't the Isles of Scilly race inbetween the two?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Padfield, 14-Apr-11 05:54 PM GMT

In intermediate areas you sometimes see what seem to be mixed individuals, though they still lack the real brightness of *aegeria*. Here is one from Switzerland:



I've seen similar things in the Channel Islands and even on the south coast of England (Sussex).

I have no idea if that is really some kind of hybrid form, but I've only seen it relatively near the overlap area. The boundary line doesn't run West/East (dividing North from South) but North-West/South-East (dividing North-East from South-West), so as you go eastwards you find *tircis* relatively far south.

Guy

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Apr-11 09:26 PM GMT

Thanks Guy.

It's a funny split isn't it – I imagined it may be climatic but it can't be as there would be some very warm areas south east of that line. Incidentally, that line is pictured in Tolman as a (quite wide) shaded area.

Your picture looks exactly like the female ssp *insula* pictured on this very site:

<http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/species...es=aegeria>

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Apr-11 01:44 AM GMT

A trip to the cemetery when the sun broke at lunchtime yielded this female Orange Tip laying eggs and another looking for egg laying sites. I'll try and keep an eye on the eggs.



Other sightings:

- 8 male Orange Tip
- 2 Green Veined White
- 2 Small White
- 1 could have been either
- 6 Speckled Wood
- 1 Peacock
- 1 Holly Blue

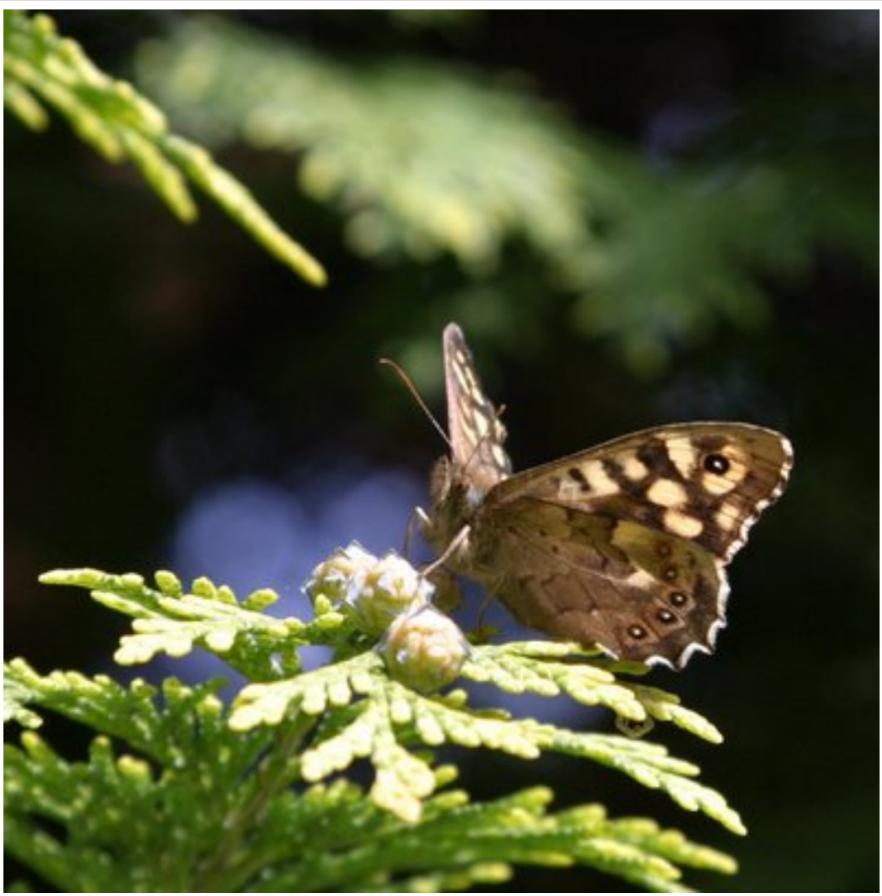


Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Apr-11 01:50 AM GMT

Meanwhile at home, there were 3 Speckled Wood in the garden. 1 female and 2 males. The 2 males had a dogfight for ages and then after one had flown off the female appeared. The remaining male flew over ready for a fight but then his behaviour instantly changed as he flew round and above her. She settled, he followed. She seemed to lay on one side, then the other while he faced her, presumably showering her with his scent scales. She then flew up with him in pursuit and I think they settled on an upstairs window, where I lost them. Hadn't seen that before!

A Holly Blue also fluttered about.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Apr-11 02:46 AM GMT

This afternoon I gambled on the weather (and lost 😞) and set off for Yoesden Bank in Buckinghamshire, still in search of Green Hairstreaks with the added possibility of Grizzled and Dingy Skippers.

I didn't see a single butterfly – the closest I came was an Orange Tip egg on a garlic mustard plant. (Does that count as a sighting? I mean, should I report immature life stages with my adult sightings?)

Still, I did see 2 Jays, heard a Chiff Chaff and the distant drumming of a woodpecker. With no sun and no leps I focussed on what else I could see. The chalk bank was covered in Cowslips in bloom, violets and I think Wood Anemones were also frequent:



No idea on this one but it is pretty:



Lastly, I'd never seen a jet black woodlouse before and this strange fly (wasp?) was sitting where a Green Hairstreak may have sat when the sun was out.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 17-Apr-11 02:52 AM GMT

That looks like a St Mark's fly to me, Lee. I tend to see these flying in groups a little later in the year (St Mark's day is 25th May). They are quite obvious because of their long dangly legs.

The first flower is wild stawberry (I think) and the second reminds me of bugle but may be something else.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Apr-11 02:56 AM GMT

Thanks Susie.

Must be a good site for them in that case as there were loads of flies with dangly bits chasing me all the time I was there!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 17-Apr-11 03:03 AM GMT

They are completely harmless. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Apr-11 06:32 PM GMT

Phew! Thanks for the flowers too.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 18-Apr-11 02:15 AM GMT

Looks like a Pill woodlouse (I could be wrong) and i agree with Sue with it being one of the bibio fly species.

Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Apr-11 02:19 AM GMT

Thanks Chris

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 18-Apr-11 02:32 AM GMT

Some years ago, i was racing down a hill on me bike, when i hit a swarm of St Mark's Flies. I managed to swallow one, and ever since i've felt sorry for Hirundines. 🤔

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Apr-11 03:37 AM GMT

Nasty!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Apr-11 04:02 AM GMT

The weather looked more promising today and there were 2 Speckled Wood and a Holly Blue in the garden by 09.30.

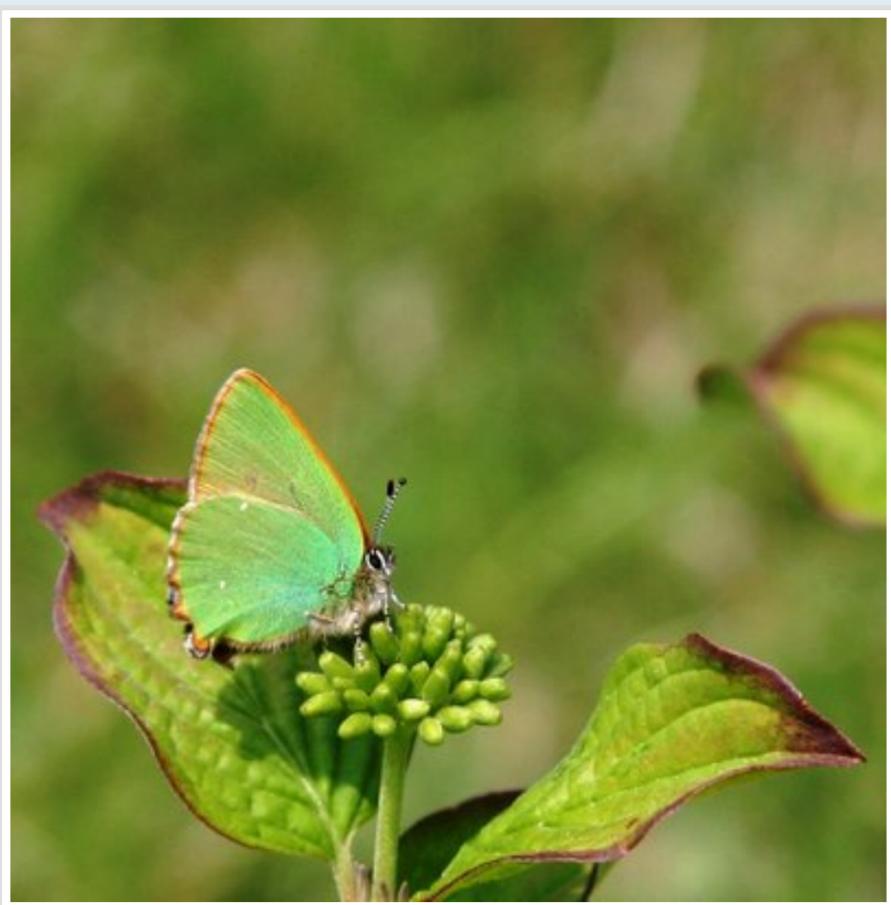
Between 12.30 and 15.30 I went to Denbies Hillside in Surrey (TQ141503), still in search of Green Hairstreaks.

As it was, I had to work hard today; inbetween the lengthy cloudy spells I trudged all over the hill, up the edges and around all the scrub. After about an hour I eventually found this Dingy Skipper 😊 . My first of the year and really *not* living up to its name.



I explored areas at the site I hadn't before and went further along the valley path to the right. Eventually the sun came out and suddenly there it was,

low to the ground and looking magnificent.



It soon clouded over again and although I could see another sunny spell coming, with little wind it took ages to arrive.

But it was worth the wait – the day then got even better 😊



At one point I was sitting on the slope taking it all in when a Bee Fly buzzed up next to me and nectared on one of these, not 6 inches away.



Denbies sightings:

1 Green Hairstreak
1 Dingy Skipper
4 Grizzled Skipper
1 Peacock
2 Speckled Wood
4 male Orange Tip
4 male Brimstone, 3 female
2 Small or Green Veined White

I also had a possible Large White but I wasn't sure so am not recording it.

Back at home, a Small or Green Veined White and a male Orange Tip rounded off the day nicely. Superb! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 18-Apr-11 04:11 AM GMT

possibly common milkwort for your plant Lee.
Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Apr-11 04:19 AM GMT

Thanks Chris. A quick google * search seems to agree, although there are purple and blue forms?

Cheers

Lee

* other search engines are available (thanks Felix!)

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 18-Apr-11 04:21 AM GMT

Its polygala calcarea, or chalk milkwort, boys

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 18-Apr-11 04:41 AM GMT

I did say possibly 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 18-Apr-11 04:46 AM GMT

It's up there with dogwood and oak trees 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 18-Apr-11 02:22 PM GMT

Lee:

1 Green Hairstreak
1 Dingy Skipper
4 Grizzled Skipper
1 Peacock
2 Speckled Wood
4 male Orange Tip
4 male Brimstone, 3 female
2 Small or Green Veined White

That's a great day Lee, after my GH success, i'm now free to think about Grizzlies. What a twitcher i am. 😄

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Apr-11 04:48 PM GMT

I was quietly chuffed to be honest Zonda, especially as by the 17th April last year I was still on only about my 4th butterfly of the year, a Peacock!

Well done on your GH success, good luck with your Grizzlies.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Apr-11 04:48 PM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

Its polygala calcarea, or chalk milkwort, boys

Thanks Susie 😊

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Apr-11 06:49 AM GMT

A beautifully fresh Brimstone moth flew in the patio doors this evening. I was in the kitchen and I heard screaming 'turn the light off, turn the light off!'

We've seen too many moths fly in and fatally burn themselves on the light bulbs. Mind you since last year we've switched to energy saving bulbs so perhaps they don't illuminate with such heat. I'll have to touch one and find out. Hmm...

Anyway, the Brimstone moth was safely liberated outside to fly another night.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-Apr-11 04:57 AM GMT

Seeing as it was going to be a nice day I arranged some visits for this morning 😊 My day went like this:

Left home at 07.30, drove to Alpterton (car service)

Alpterton to Isleworth (visit 1)

Isleworth to Twickenham

Twickenham to Wraysbury

Wraysbury to Colnbrook (visit 2)

Colnbrook to Staines

Staines to Putney

Putney to Southfields (visit 3)

Southfields to Acton

At my desk by 13.30. Phew. And boy was it hot. I think I burned my head...

Anyway, I saw some butterflies on my travels:

1 Comma

1 male Brimstone
1 Green Veined White
17 Small or Green Veined White
24 Orange Tip (22 male, 2 female)
11 Holly Blue

A couple of observations – Staines station seems to have a very healthy population of Holly Blue; the most in view at any one point – no less than 9 individuals!

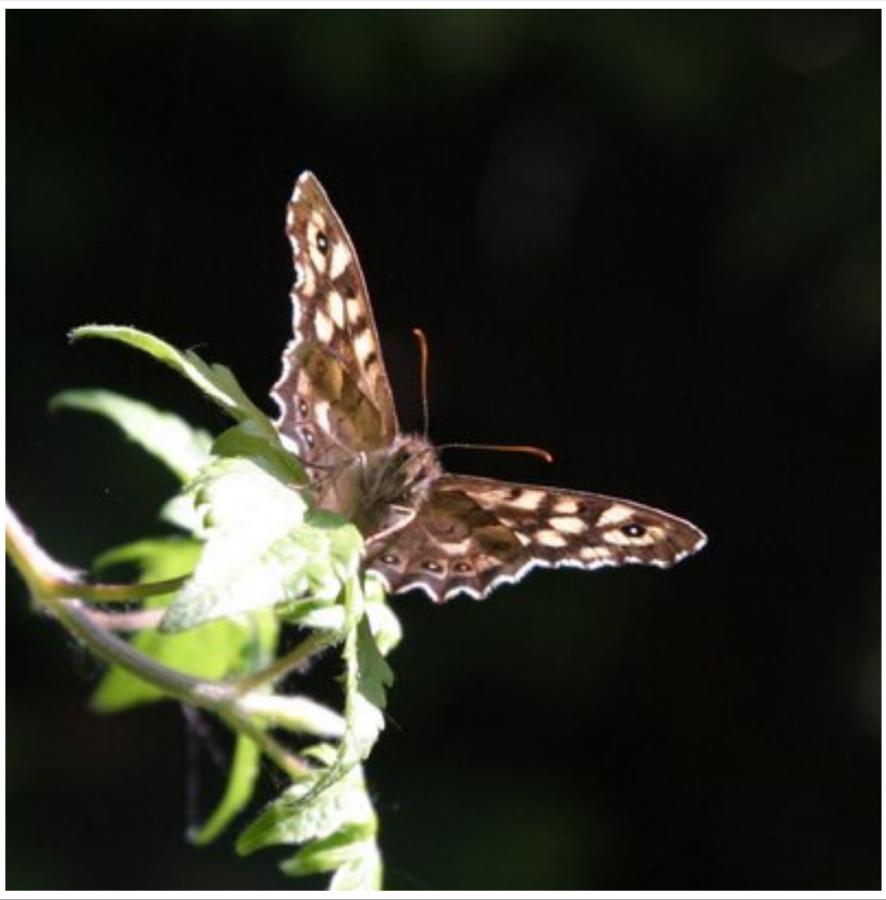
The Colnbrook visit was a construction site for the new Hilton hotel. Within the site was large colony of Sand Martins, I saw at least 50. I hope the sand bank they were using remains after all the building.

Finally Acton to Alperton and home, £350 lighter. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

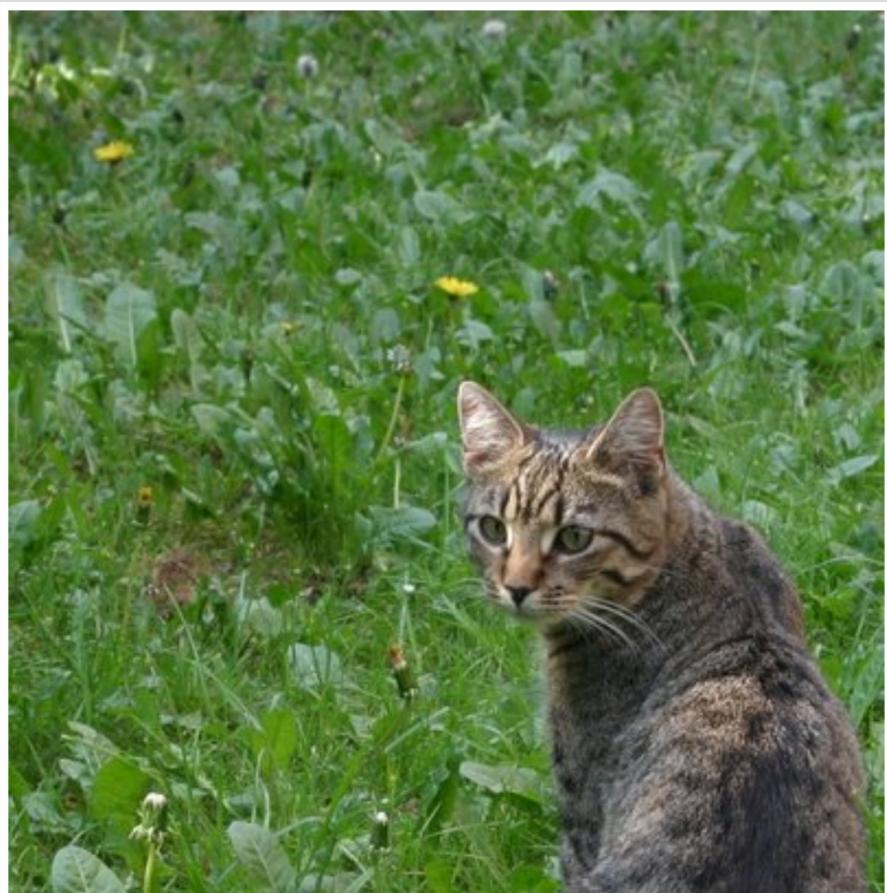
by Lee Hurrell, 22-Apr-11 11:41 PM GMT

Our resident Speckled Wood was flying by 08.30 this morning. I had some fun with him a little while later:





Tilly keeps chasing him on his forays over the lawn. I've told her that if she catches him, she is no cat of mine.



I went to the cemetery between 11.30 and 12.45 and saw:

1 Comma
1 Peacock
10+ male Orange Tips, 3 female
2 male Small Whites
15+ Small or Green Veined Whites
3 Holly Blue
5 Speckled Wood
Plus another *possible* Large White, which again I won't record just yet.

This male was very dainty though:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 23-Apr-11 02:47 AM GMT

Total garden sightings for today:

2 Speckled Wood – with 1 flying by 08.30
1 Holly Blue – possibly more but only 1 in view at any one time
3 male Orange Tip
3 Small or Green Veined White

It's been lovely having butterflies in constant view today. As I write this the Holly Blue and Speckled Wood are still dancing around the tops of the trees still in the sun. One highlight was seeing 2 male Orange Tips and a Speckled Wood having an aerial tussle this afternoon.

Further afield tomorrow....

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Apr-11 01:16 AM GMT

Saturday 23rd April

Commitments at home have delayed my trips further afield until tomorrow. So at home, once again the Speckled Wood was flying early at 09.00. I also thought I saw one of the Longhorn moths! I was thrilled to see a Red Admiral this afternoon and my first Large White (a male) of the year at lunchtime.

Garden sightings for today:

1 Red Admiral
1 Peacock
1 Holly Blue
1 male Large White
2 male Orange Tips
2 Small or Green Veined White
2 Speckled Wood

In two trips to the cemetery, I saw;

12.30 – 13.15
1 Peacock –seemingly seeking out shade
1 Holly Blue
5 Speckled Wood
5 male Orange Tip
4 Small or Green Veined White



15.45 – 16.30

1 Peacock – likely the same individual, it was in the same location

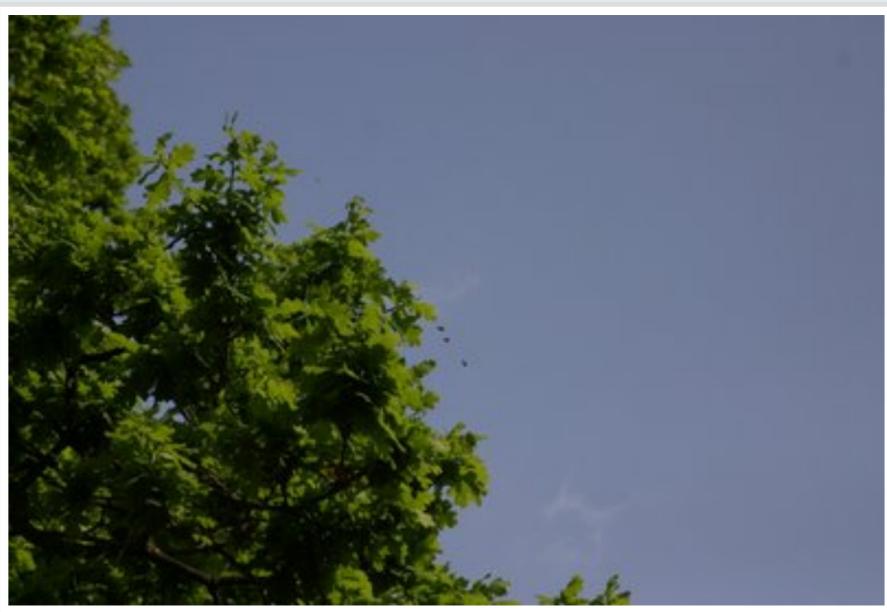
3 Holly Blue

4 male Orange tip

3 Small or Green Veined White

5 Speckled Wood

I also found some more Longhorns! Ok, not in the numbers that Chris and Neil had reported but it was nice to see that they are over there. It was a mini swarm (I saw around 6) around a big mature oak.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Apr-11 03:01 AM GMT

The Large White today brought me to 14 species for the year:

- 1 Red Admiral, 12th March, Greenford
- 2 Peacock, 13th March, Peopleton
- 3 Small Tortoiseshell, 14th March, Peopleton
- 4 Brimstone, 17th March, Peopleton
- 5 Comma 17th March, Grafton Wood
- 6 Holly Blue, 2nd April, Greenford
- 7 Speckled Wood, 2nd April, Greenford
- 8 Orange Tip, 7th April, Ealing Broadway Station
- 9 Green Veined White, 7th April, Greenford
- 10 Small White, 7th April, Greenford
- 11 Green Hairstreak, 17th April, Denbies Hillside
- 12 Dingy Skipper, 17th April, Denbies Hillside
- 13 Grizzled Skipper, 17th April, Denbies Hillside
- 14 Large White, 23rd April, Greenford

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Pawpawsaurus, 24-Apr-11 06:04 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

Its polygala calcarea, or chalk milkwort, boys

The Chalk and Common Milkworts are generally pretty tricky to distinguish. It takes a brave person to make a positive ID from a photo. 🤔

Just sayin'.

Paul

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 24-Apr-11 03:54 PM GMT

I've been to Denbies so many times I know the plant in the photo well.

Edit: In hindsight my comment above looks a bit terse! Apologies, Paul, I am sure the plant in question could be common milkwort and I do not know 100% that it isn't. I certainly am not an expert.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Apr-11 07:46 PM GMT

Sunday 23rd April (Part 1) - Rewell Wood

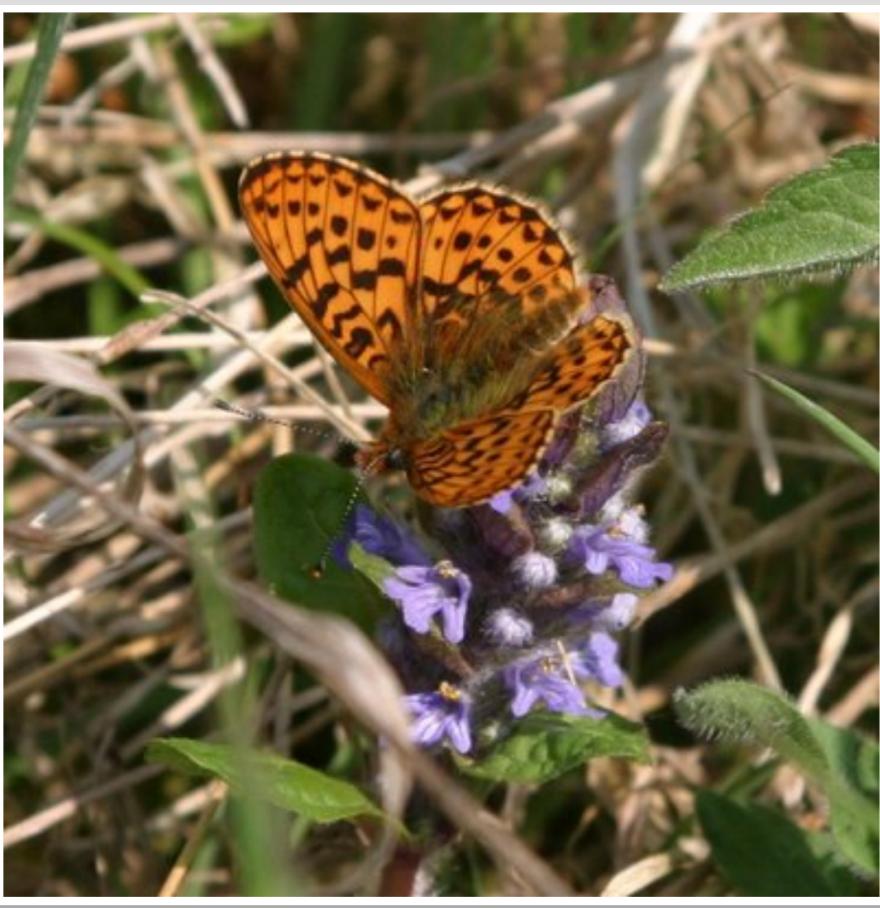
I met up with Neil (Sussex Kipper), Sussex BC Biodiversity Officer Dan Danahar and Sussex BC branch member, Colin Knaggs in West Sussex. On route to meeting them I saw my first Swallow of the year sitting on a telephone wire in the village of Amberley.

We set off for Rewell Wood in search of Dukes and Pearl Bordered Fritillary (I was particularly excited as I had never seen a PBF).

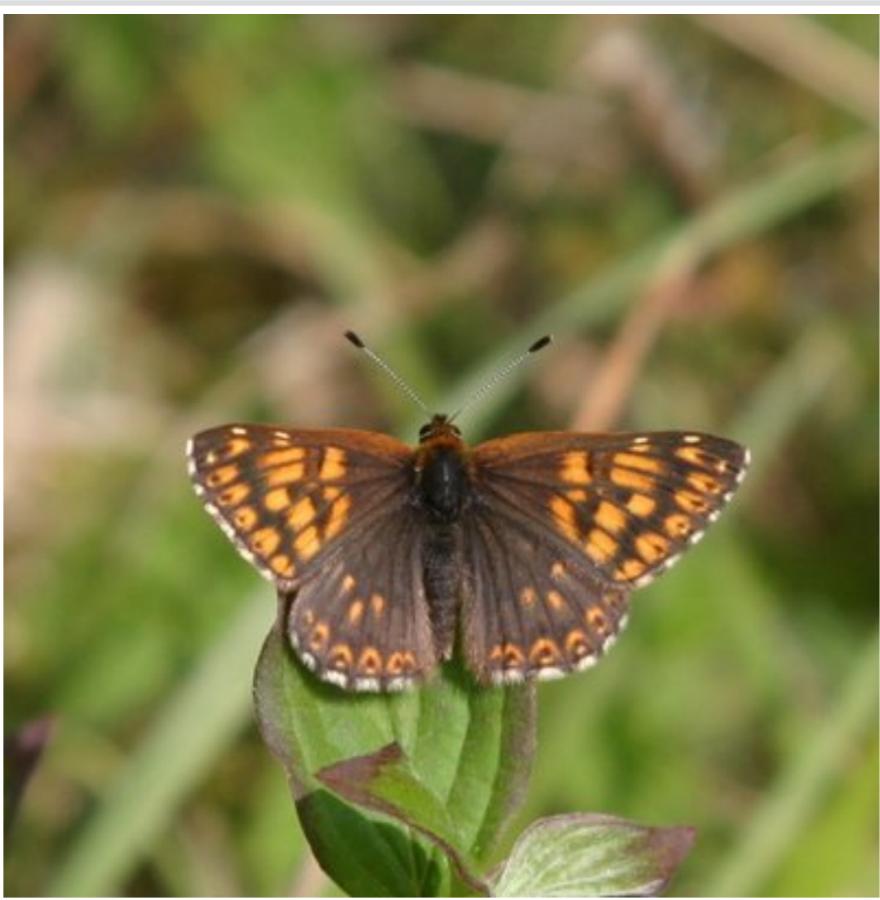
Neil showed us the amazing results of much hard work put in over the last few winters to restore Duke habitat. I hadn't seen the forest before but with lovely wide rides and cleared areas of scrub it looked fantastic.

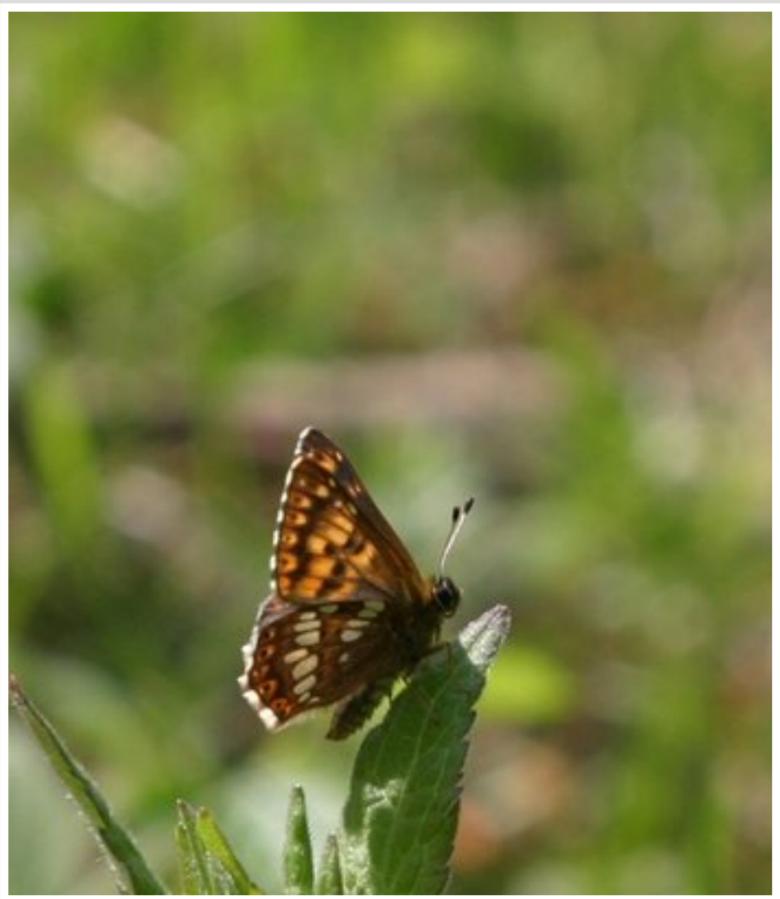
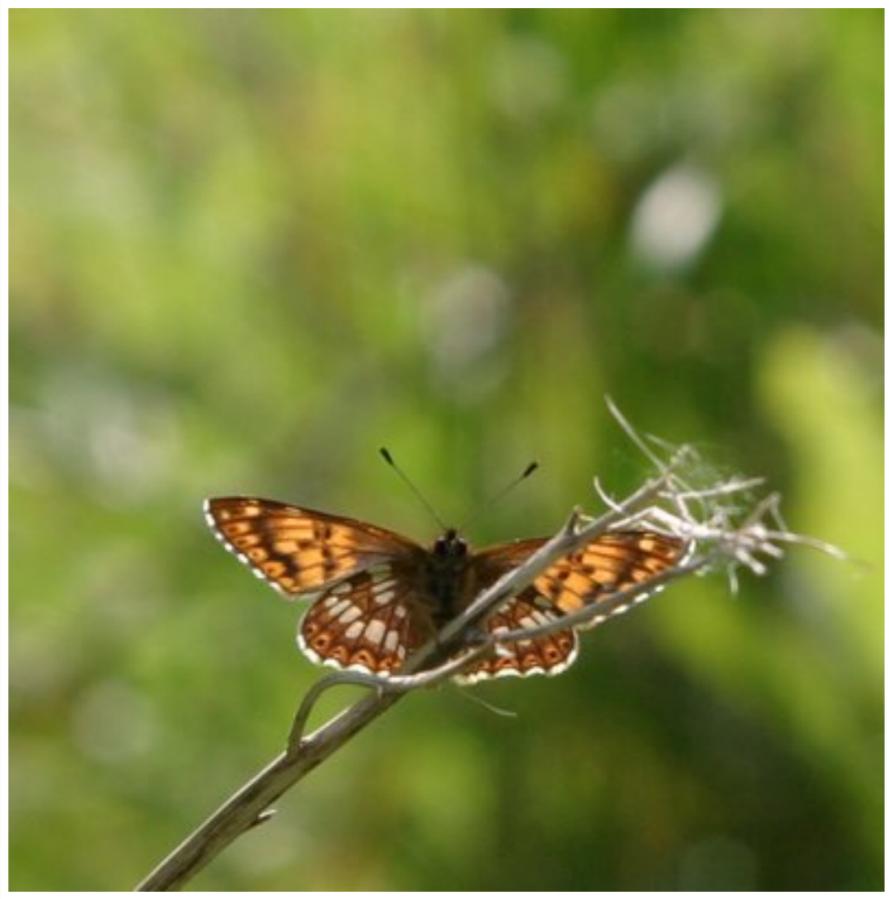
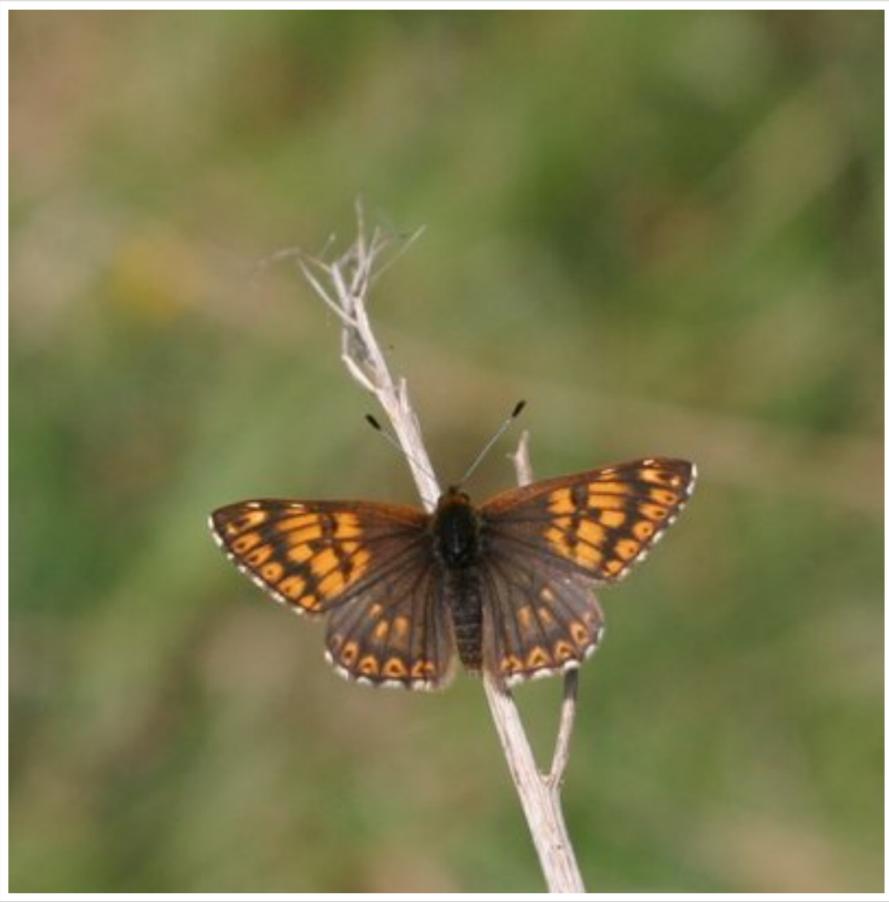
It wasn't long before we found Grizzled Skippers, Dukes and my first ever Pearl Bordered Fritillary!

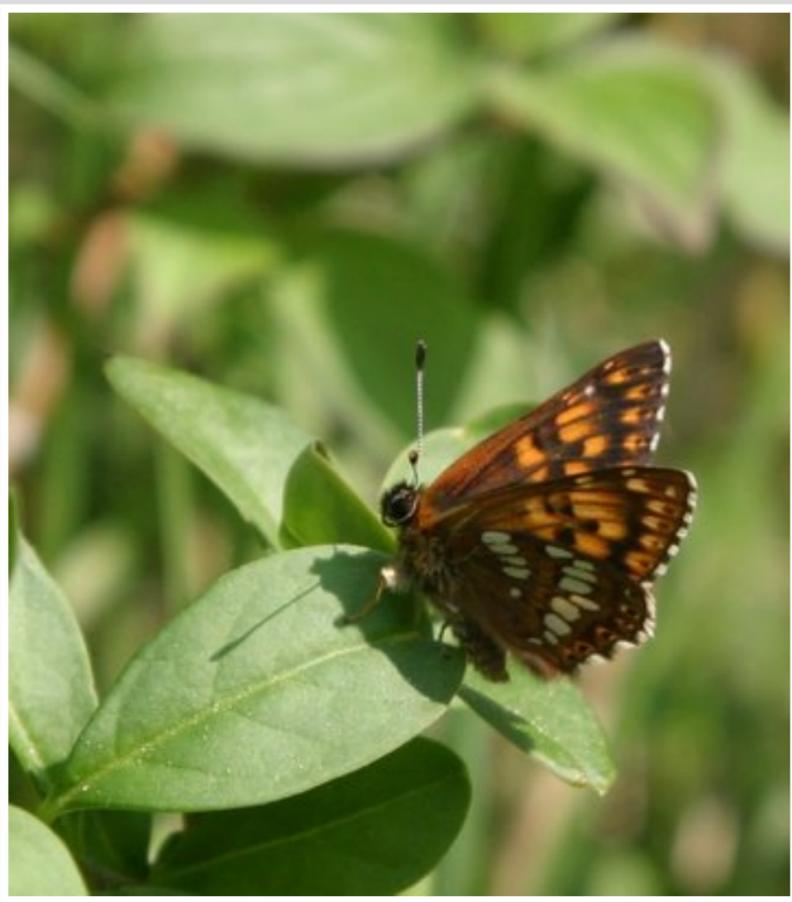




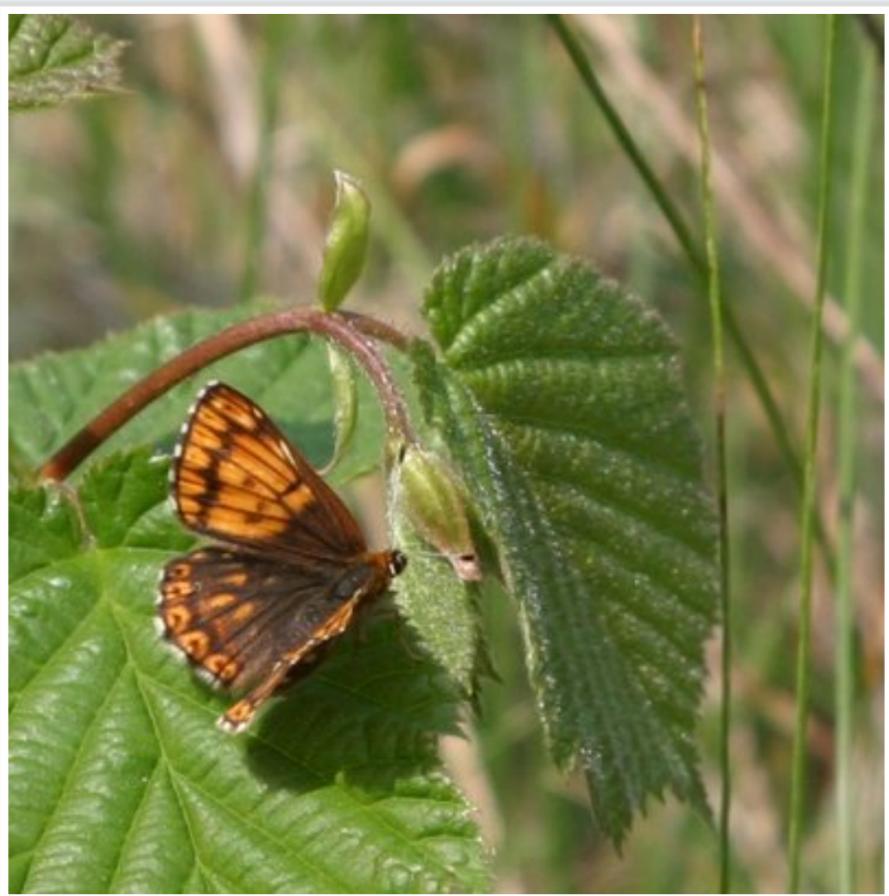
After nearing extinction a few years ago and due to the amazing restoration work carried out, the Dukes were showing well and we saw a handful of PBF. We even saw the two sparring, an amazing sight.







Neil even spotted an aberrant female, which after chasing and some shadowing eventually sat still with open wings:



Species seen:

Pearl Bordered Fritillary
Duke of Burgundy
Grizzled Skipper
Speckled Wood
Brimstone
Orange Tip
Large White
Green Veined White
Holly Blue
Oh, and a dead slow worm

Neil in action (Duke bottom left):



A heart warming morning full of lovely surprises and success stories.
Almost impossibly, the day continued to get better – more to follow.....!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 27-Apr-11 06:31 AM GMT

Sunday 23rd April (Part 2) – Heyshott Escarpment

Leaving Rewell behind we headed further west towards the Heyshott Escarpment, another site where much hard work had been undertaken for the conservation of the Duke of Burgundy. As we walked up to the site, passing potential Duke habitat, Neil told us his plans to bring them further the hill and extend the colony.

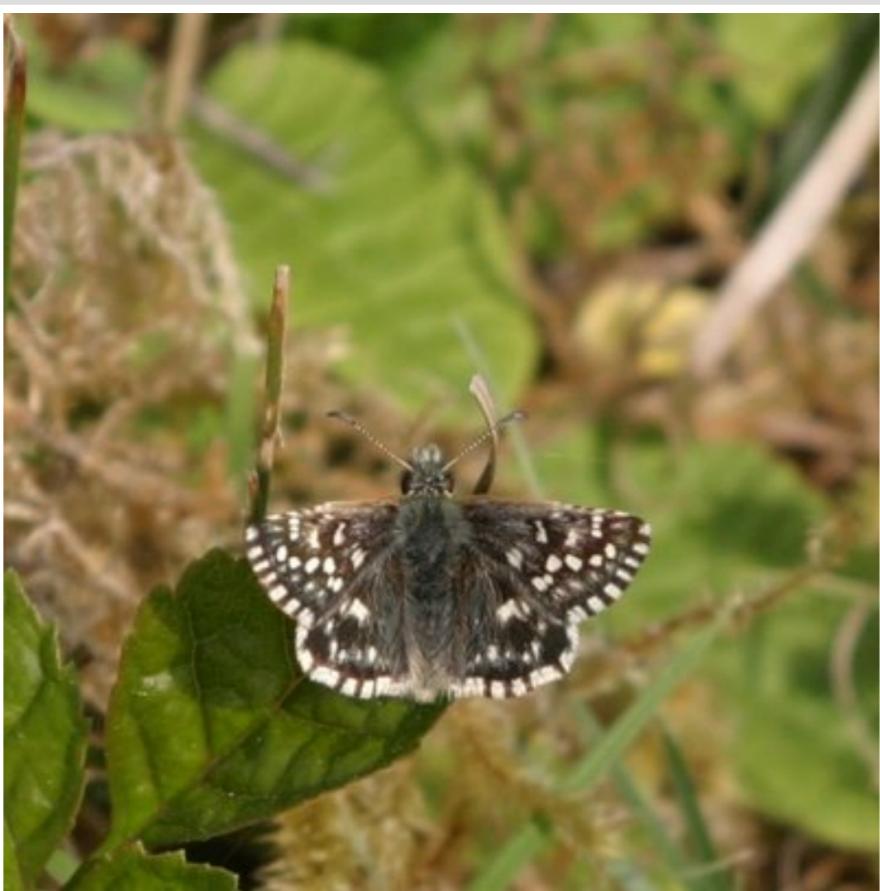
It is a steep escarpment but the view from the top was worth it, just a little shame it was hazy on the horizon.

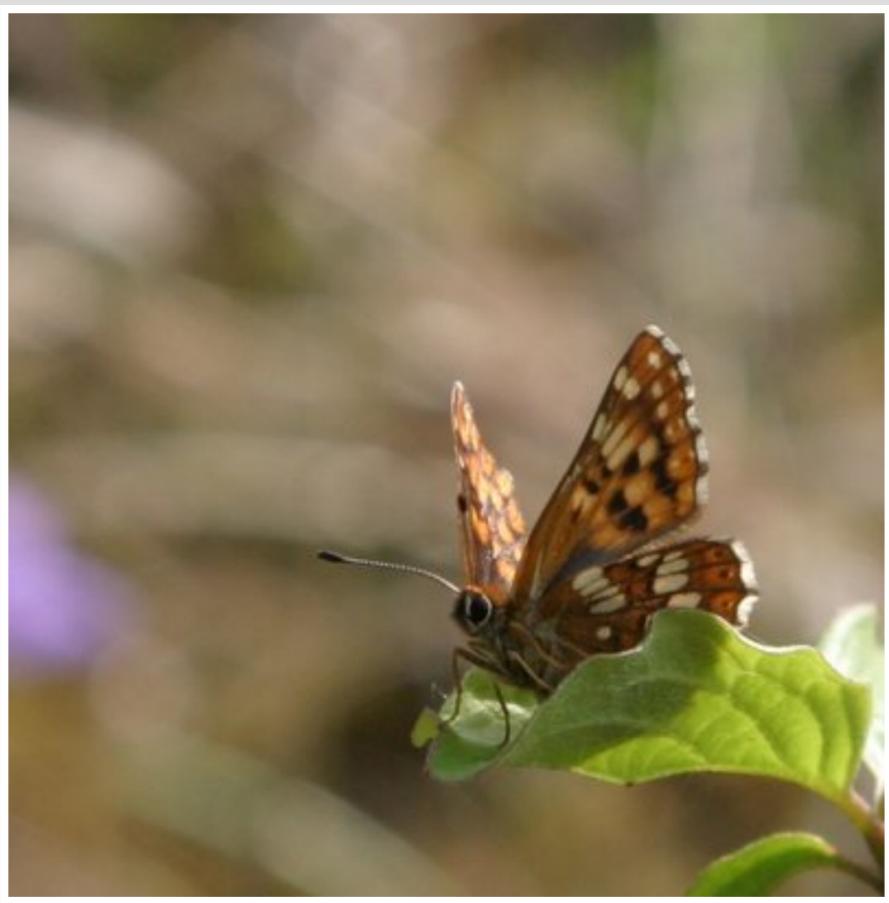
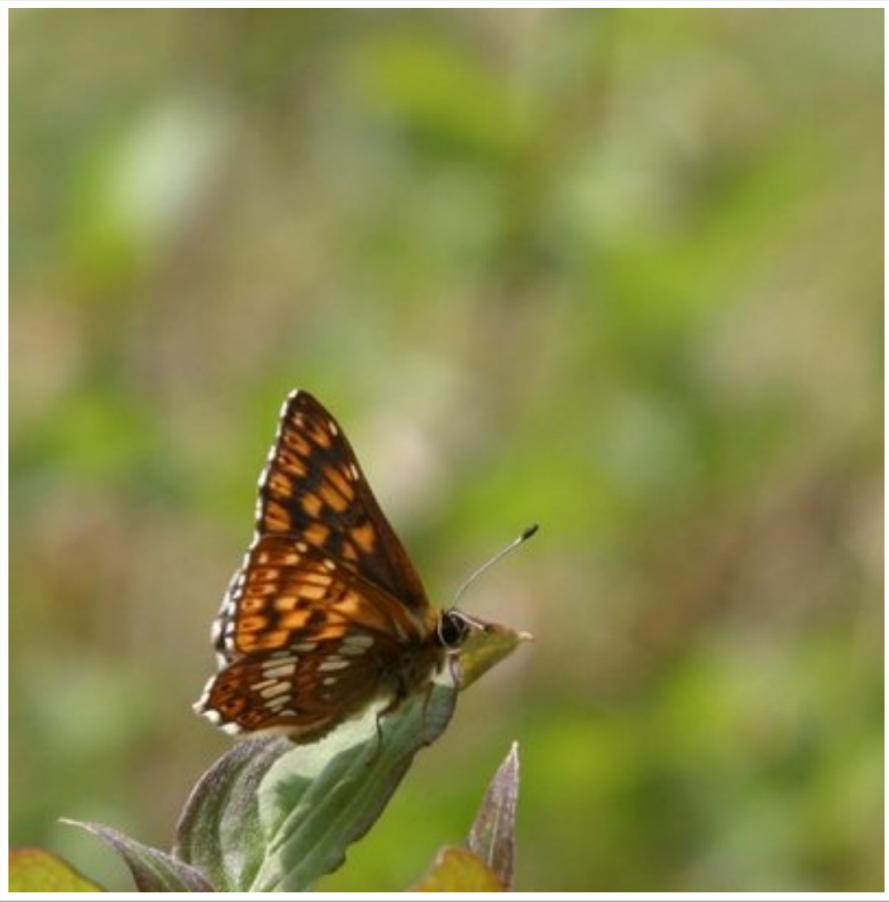
We started with a rough count of Dukes between the 4 of us and made over 30. They were by far the commonest species seen and my own personal count was 25+ for the rest of the time we were there so it's very likely there were more on site. Watch Neil's diary for more news/counts.

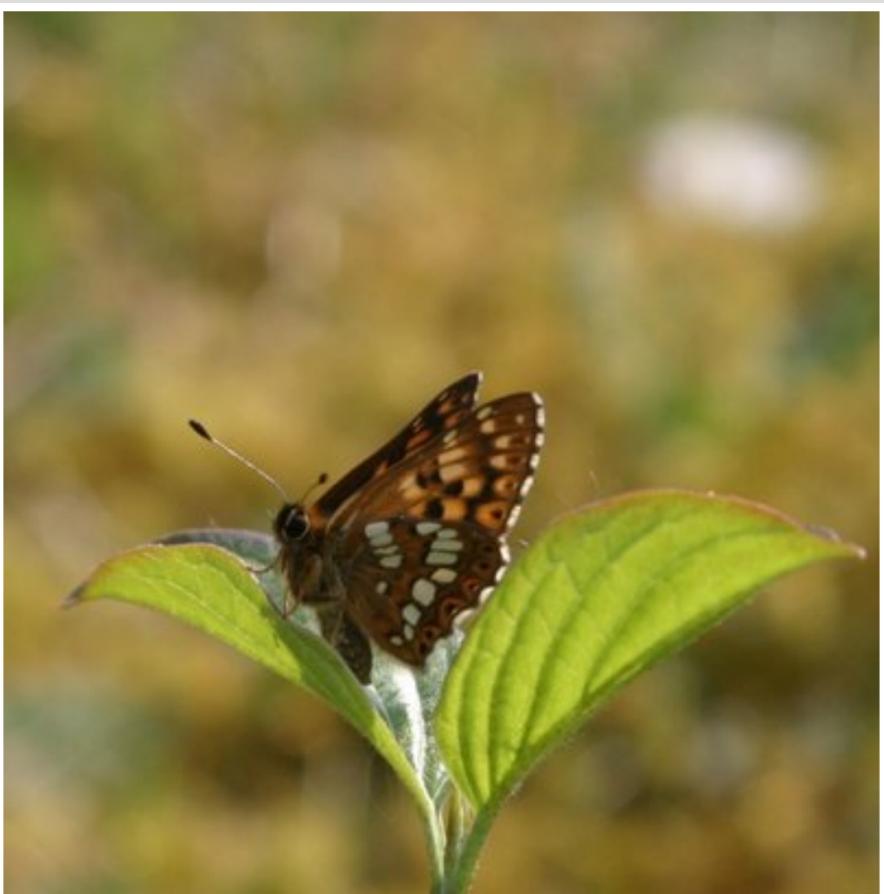
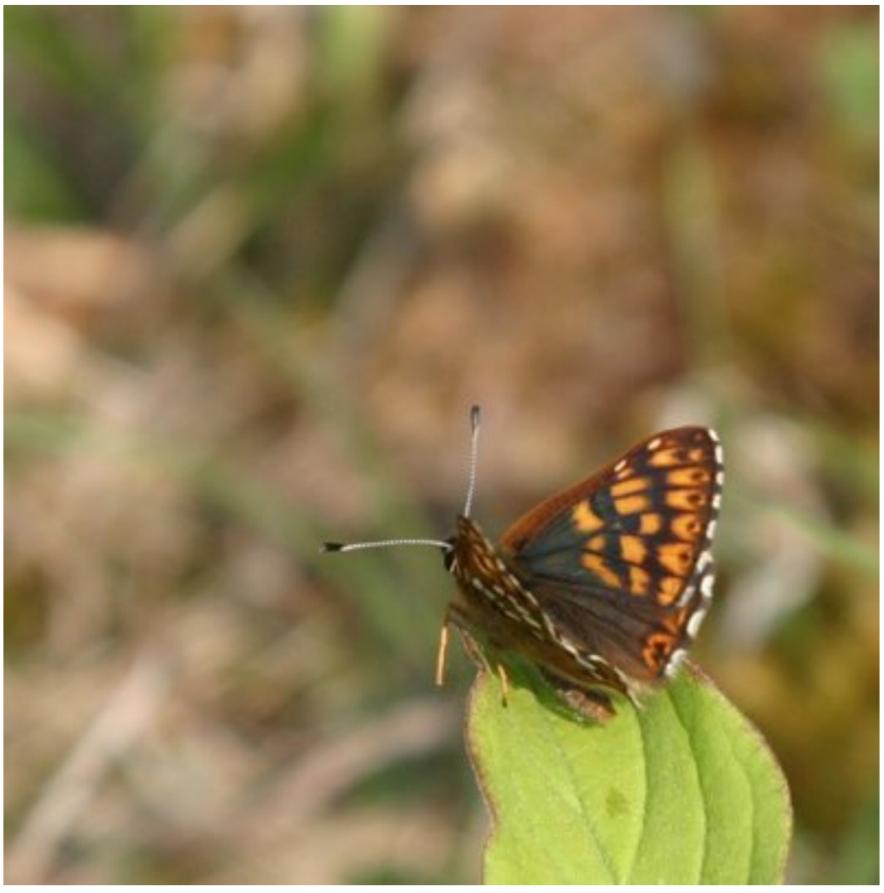
Also seen in good numbers were Grizzled Skipper and Dingy Skipper and a couple of Green Hairsteaks at the very top. Also noticed were 3 female Holly Blues seeking egg laying sites on Dogwood.

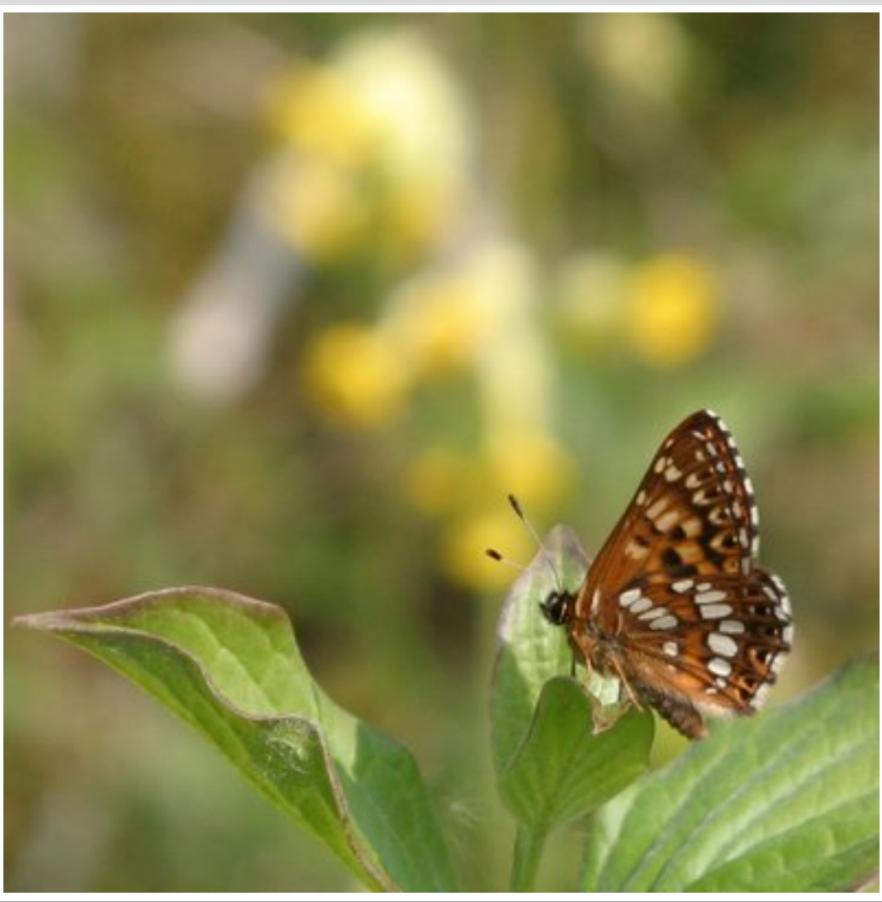
Species seen:

- Duke of Burgundy
- Grizzled Skipper
- Dingy Skipper
- Green Hairstreak
- Holly Blue
- Brimstone
- Orange Tip
- Speckled Wood
- Red Admiral









With cowslips in the background



Heyshott is HOW high?



Anyone seen Dan?



I can see a Duke up there!



The view from the top showing some of the chalk pits where Dukes abound



Colin and his home made macro lens



Admiring the view

The final part to follow...

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 27-Apr-11 10:37 PM GMT

An addition to part 2 – perhaps my luckiest in flight shot yet...



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 27-Apr-11 11:35 PM GMT

Sunday 23rd April (Part 3) – Rewell Wood

We wanted to see a few Pearl Bordered Fritillaries go to roost and so headed back to Rewell Wood.

They were active in good numbers and as bedtime approached I found this pair:



We watched them for a while and eventually they separated. Here's the female post cop:





Showing remarkable camouflage against last year's bracken



A Holly Blue and hundreds of Neil's favourite exotic dancers, the Long Horn moths ended the day.

My thanks to Neil, Dan and Colin for great company and a wonderful day in lovely locations in West Sussex and especially to Neil for showing us some of his favourite places.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Apr-11 12:43 AM GMT

Monday 25th April 2011 - Botany Bay

Between 11.30 and 14.00 I went in search of Wood Whites and they were out in abundance.

I counted 66 🤪 I was careful not to over count and as I made my way back stopped counting so the total seen may even be higher. They would not stop for photos though...best I could manage:



Surprisingly the other Pierids were much more obliging:



Sightings:

66 Wood White (including an egg laying female)
40+ Brimstone (at one point 3 males chasing a Wood White)
1 Large White
3 Green Veined White
9 male Orange Tip, 1 female
9 Speckled Wood
1 Red Admiral
Hundreds of Long Horn moths
Plus only my second ever Adder, although this one was squished in the road.

I think the highlight was 2 male Orange Tips and 2 Wood Whites circling around my legs at one point. Magical.

Gibster later saw Grizzled Skipper too but I didn't find these.

As attested to by Susie, the bird song was amazing – I heard my first Cuckoo and Nightingales while other Warblers filled the air with song.

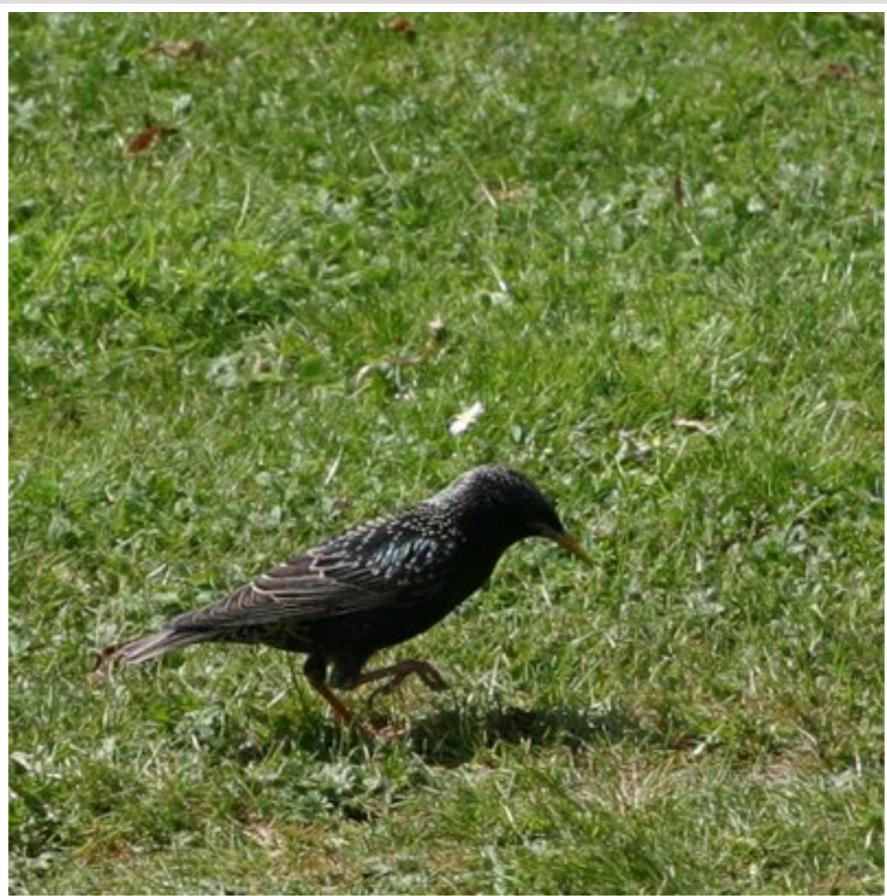
Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Apr-11 01:46 AM GMT

A quick half an hour in the cemetery today and I got as close as I've ever been allowed to a Green Woodpecker...

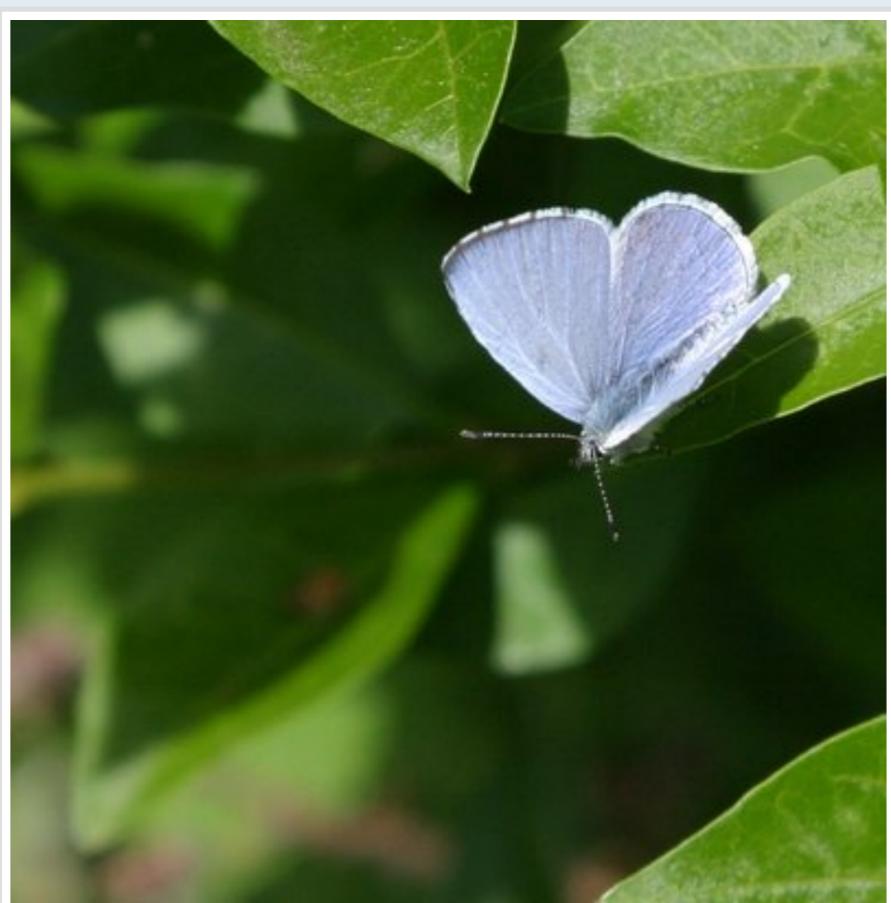
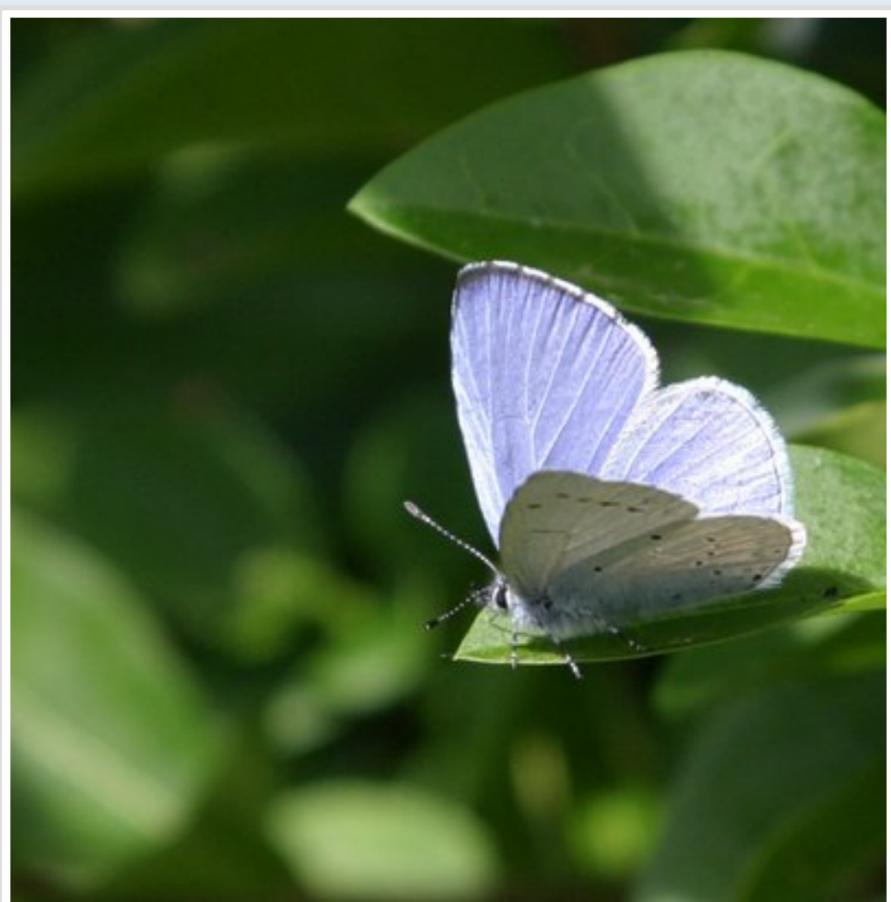


While the Starlings were a little more allowing...



I wanted to see if the Common Blues or Small Coppers had put in an appearance but despite 2 male Holly Blues behaving rather like Common Blues, not yet. Over the last 2 years they have been slightly behind the mass emergence time at this site (mid to late May I think last year) so it probably is too early. It did look extremely dry though and the wild plants were wilting in places.

Holly Blues are still emerging though:



And the Orange Tips are still in good numbers.



Best of all, my first (and possibly second) Greenford Small Tortoiseshell 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Apr-11 03:56 AM GMT

We are in Somerset for the weekend and I'm pleased to report my first Common Blue and Small Copper of the year this afternoon in Brompton Ralph.

Species seen in one hour this afternoon:

- Common Blue
- Small Copper
- Red Admiral
- Comma
- Peacock
- Speckled Wood
- Orange Tips in silly numbers
- Large White
- Small White
- Green Veined White

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 02-May-11 11:17 PM GMT

A few photos from Somerset. I managed to find two colonies of Common Blue that I hadn't previously as well as seeing my first of the year along with my first Small Coppers for 2011.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 02-May-11 11:59 PM GMT

Saturday 30th April – UKB Photo Workshop

My second workshop and another enjoyable day. It was lovely to meet a few new people from the website as well as catch up with some familiar faces. Hopefully I've picked up a few more tips too.

The field trip to Magdalen Hill Down was spectacular, the weather being with us, against forecast. A lovely reserve, stock full of butterflies.

Most unusually I found this Marsh Fritillary, my first ever. 😊 Luckily I was with Pete and Susie, who also saw it. The nearest known colonies seem to be some 20 miles to the west.



I also saw my first Brown Argus and Small Heath of the year. Green Hairstreak were everywhere, with Grizzled and Dingy Skippers and Common Blue putting in a good show.

Sightings:

- 1 Marsh Fritillary
- 15+ Small Heath
- 30+ Brown Argus
- 30+ Green Hairstreak
- 30+ male Common Blue, 1 female
- 25+ Grizzled Skipper
- 3 Dingy Skipper
- 10+ Brimstone
- 2 male Orange Tip, 1 female
- 2 Large White
- 3 Green Veined White

Also seen, but not by me, were Small Blue and Small Copper.

A lovely day, my thanks to all involved.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 03-May-11 12:06 AM GMT

That's butterflies Lee,,, beautiful creatures, and beautiful people.... Crikey,,,,, i sound like a hippy,,, shoot me. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Pete Eeles, 03-May-11 01:19 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Most unusually I came found this Marsh Fritillary, my first ever. 😊 Luckily I was with Pete and Susie, who also saw it. The nearest known colonies seem to be some 20 miles to the west.

Apols again for my cynicism Lee! When someone asks me "is that a Marsh Fritillary?" (on a site where they've never occurred, with the nearest colonies miles away) and "I've never seen one before" ... then I tend to play safe! Anyway – nice find! I suspect that considered opinion will be that this is a captive release.

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-May-11 09:45 PM GMT

"Pete Eeles" wrote:

Apols again for my cynicism Lee! When someone asks me "is that a Marsh Fritillary?" (on a site where they've never occurred, with the nearest colonies miles away) and "I've never seen one before" ... then I tend to play safe! Anyway – nice find! I suspect that considered opinion will be that this is a captive release.

Not to worry Pete, I'd be the same! Although I don't recall you being that cynical. I'm just glad you were there to see it!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 08-May-11 02:21 AM GMT

Friday 6th May 2011

I've been over to my local cemetery a couple of times after work this week looking for Common Blues and Small Coppers but with no joy. Some of the wild plants are started to dry up completely now.

Tonight I saw what *could have been* 2 Small Coppers but as they disappeared over a hedge I won't know.

I did see my first Swift of the year though! 😊

Later on, (at 19.47 😊) a Speckled Wood flew through the garden. I presume it had been disturbed from its roost as it went into a tree and I didn't see it again.

Today (Saturday) we popped into a friends and in the space of 15 minutes a Holly Blue, a male Orange Tip and a Red Admiral entertained us.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 10-May-11 02:33 PM GMT

Happy Birthday, two days late sorry. 😞 Hope you had a good one Lee. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-May-11 04:36 PM GMT

Thanks Zonda 😊

I had a lovely day, which included some butterflies of course!

Report and photos to follow.

Cheers

Lee

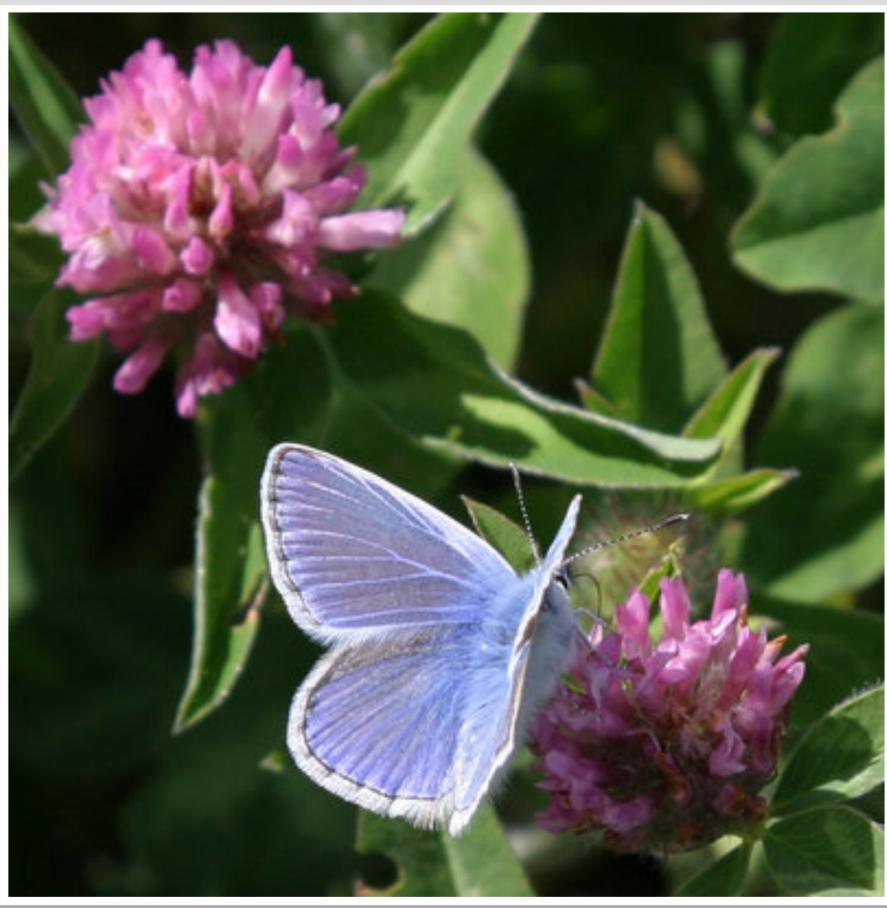
Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-May-11 06:14 AM GMT

Birthday Blues (and Coppers)

Sunday (8th May) was my birthday and I had a lovely day. After a splendid Sunday roast in a pub I had a hour in the cemetery. We'd finally had some substantial rain over a couple of nights and I wondered if it would tempt the blues and coppers out. Not sure if it was the rain but they were there!

I found the Small Coppers first, seeing 4 in all, of which 2 were a courting couple. After a good search I was about to give up on the blues when I found a male Common Blue and then another. It was almost as if they knew it was my birthday. The one below seems to have symmetrical spots in S6 of the hind wing.



I also saw a Large White and 2 male Small Whites.



After a while of patchy cloud the sun broke and stayed out. We went for a walk, specifically as it was my birthday. I'm not normally accompanied on my field trips (she's a self confessed 'butterfly widow'), but as the sun was out we set off for Horsenden Hill. I packed a small wine and a beer for me. And so we sat in one of the meadows (packed with vetch) in the sun having a natter and a drink while all around Burnet Companion moths fluttered by. I walked about a bit and with every step hundreds of these tiny grasshoppers/crickets would scatter. They were no more than 8-10mm long!



Not sure what this beetley looking critter is, never seen one before.



Otherwise we saw 4 male Orange Tips, 2 Speckled Wood, 1 Large White and a Red Admiral.

I really enjoyed today 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Padfield, 11-May-11 06:16 AM GMT

It's a black and red froghopper, Lee!

<http://www.plantpress.com/wildlife/o116-blackampredfroghopper.php>

Nothing like relaxing with a beer, watching life...

Guy

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 11-May-11 06:18 AM GMT

I think it's a type of Froghopper: *Cercopis vulnerata*.

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-May-11 06:25 AM GMT

Thanks Guy and Dave. It was so unusual, more like something I'd see in France or Spain!

I completely agree Guy, it was a lovely afternoon 😊 I don't normally take beer (or someone else) into the field but she agreed on account of how nice it was that she would come out with me more as long as she has the sun and a glass of wine 🍷

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 11-May-11 06:27 AM GMT

And the weeny fella is a young Field Grasshopper 😊

PS Happy belated Birthday matey!!! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-May-11 04:33 PM GMT

Thanks Seth.

Do they grow bigger then?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-May-11 09:28 PM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

[[on 17th March 2011](#)] I went to Grafton Wood between 13.30 and 15.30. The forestry works mentioned earlier in the week seems to have involved lots of coppicing and ride widening and it looks well worth a visit later in the season. Plenty of willows available too. I wonder if some of the rarer small Fritillaries are found here.

As 'tweeted' on UKB and already sent to me in newspaper cutting form, it would seem the answer to rarer Fritillaries being found in Grafton Wood is yes! 😊

[http://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/900 ... _30_years/](http://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/900..._30_years/)

I hope they do well.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-May-11 06:44 AM GMT

Saturday 14th May – Denbies

I went to Denbies on Saturday – not just for the Adonis abs, I haven't seen one so far this year, and I missed the spring brood last year.

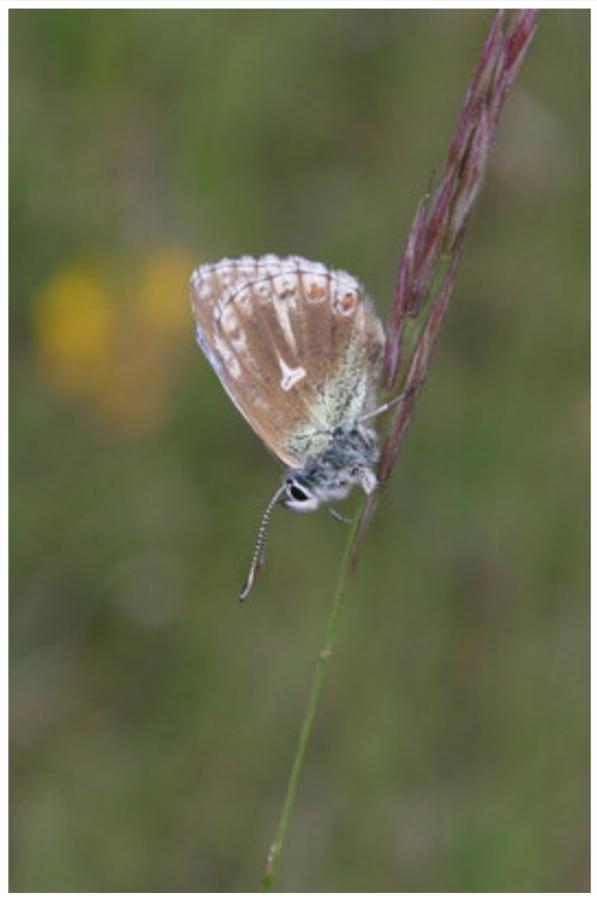
I did find some unusual specimens though. Of the 25/30 that I counted, I would say about 1 in 4 were aberrant or/and deformed.

Abberant Adonis:



Normal on the upperside though





The more I look at this one, it seems wrong. Could it be *polonus*?



Normal Adonis:



Adonis Blues weren't the only species looking different to normal though:



While these two female Common Blues were noticeably different in flight – excuse the poor photo, but the first one looked more like a male Silver

Studded!



Sightings:

25 male Adonis Blue, 5 female

20 male Common Blue, 3 female

1 Green Hairstreak

3 Small Copper

1 Brown Argus

30+ Small Heath

3 Grizzled Skipper

15+ Dingy Skipper

5 Mother Shipton

5 Burnet Companion

Hundreds of Burnets, mostly 5 spot I think

Plus.....7 of these beauties, Clouded Buff. I'd never seen these before 😊



The Small Heaths were particularly pugnacious, dueling with anything; Grizzled Skippers, Dingy Skippers, Adonis and Common Blues. The Dingy Skippers were past their best, pretty faded and a couple a light tan in colour.

Finally, on the way back to the car I spotted this basking Common Blue 😊



One for Gibster:



I even had a fly past at one point!



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 17-May-11 06:54 AM GMT

Well done you for getting a photo of the clouded buff! I have chased these around so many times but without even getting a snap of the shutter.

Lovely photos, Lee, I am glad you had a good time there.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-May-11 04:03 PM GMT

Thanks Susie 😊

They were particularly difficult I have to say! I'd flush one, watch it land, then get within 6 feet and it was off again.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-May-11 04:04 PM GMT

Oh I forgot to mention - I met a chap at Denbies who thought that the Adonis abs were 'normal and usually occur'. 🙄

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-May-11 06:33 AM GMT

Sunday 15th May

I picked my friend Mike up in Tunbridge Wells and headed for an early in the year jaunt to Windover Hill, East Sussex. Having to drive past it to get there (why haven't we been in before!?), we stopped at Abbots Wood to see if we could find any Pearl Bordered Fritillaries.

We found 6, but as expected they were past their best.



There were quite a few butterflies about:

- 6 Pearl Bordered Fritillary
- 1 Common Blue
- 2 Green Hairstreak
- 1 Small Copper
- 7 Small Heath
- 1 Large White
- 1 Peacock

We also heard a Cuckoo and saw loads of Speckled Yellow moths. I eventually found one that stayed still long enough for a photo....oh dear.

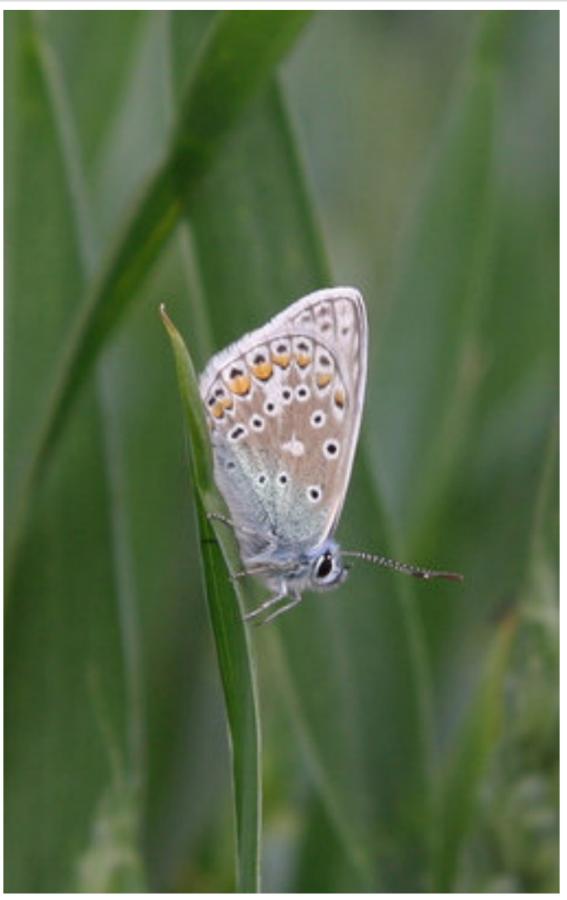


We then drove the short distance to Windover Hill and the most bio-diverse car park in the world (probably not, but it does hold a staggering array of butterflies).

Sadly, by this time the sun was nearly giving up and we only found two roosting male Common Blues. Mike saw a Small Heath and then I noticed a hoped for Small Blue, my first of the year, but only the one. We investigated the edges of an adjacent corn field and found 6 more bouncing around the long grass. They are quite lovely to watch.



The sun went in and they all dropped onto a trefoil plant. We then noticed a few roosting male Common Blues on the crop itself:

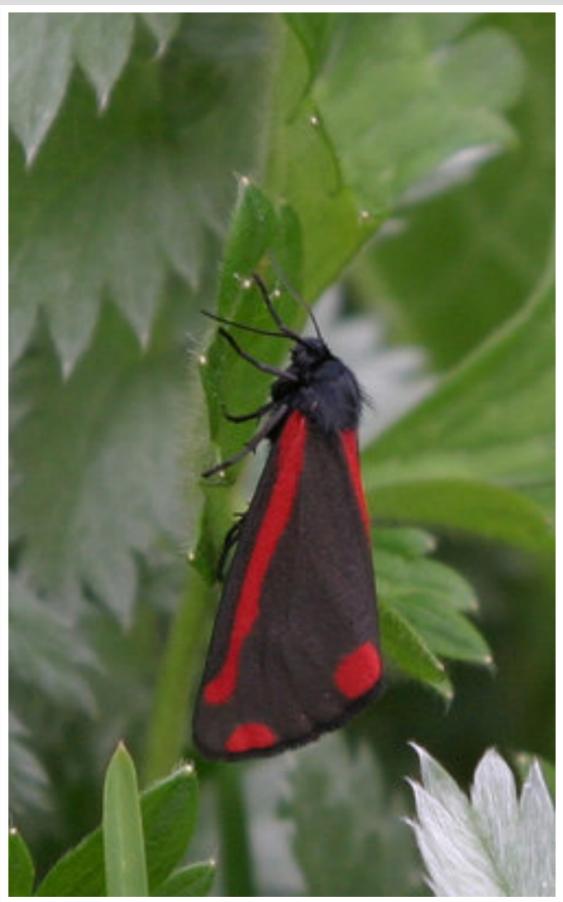


I attempted a Guy type shot to include the area (it was a *big* field!) and I'm not sure if it worked, but hopefully you get the idea.



We then climbed the hill but by now the sun was long gone and it was pretty chilly with a stiff wind. We only saw a roosting female Brown Argus and a Small Heath.

We came back down and discovered Wilmington Chalk Pit opposite the car park. It looks ideal for Green Hairstreaks but the only sighting was this Cinnabar:



We had one last look next to the car park but no sign of the Small Blues, just the roosting male Common Blues we saw when we first arrived.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-May-11 06:44 AM GMT

I was home earlier than I have been all week today and it was still warm and sunny at just after 6pm.

So I headed over to the cemetery and found this stunning female Common Blue. She was roosting when I found her as a cloud had come over but the evening sun tempted her out when it returned. What a beauty! Quite unusually marked too.



I also had a look around the bigger oak trees for any Purple Hairstreaks but I didn't see any. I don't know if they are found here, the nearest colony I know of is 10 minutes up the road at a golf course. I'll keep an eye out.

The strangest thing was the Starlings though – the cemetery was full of them – there must have been hundreds. They were making a right racket too. I thought at first they were getting ready to roost but it actually seemed like it was mainly parents feeding youngsters, which I watched for a while.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-May-11 07:43 AM GMT

Saturday 21st May

With the weather looking worse for Sunday, but sunny all day today, I'd planned a big day out.

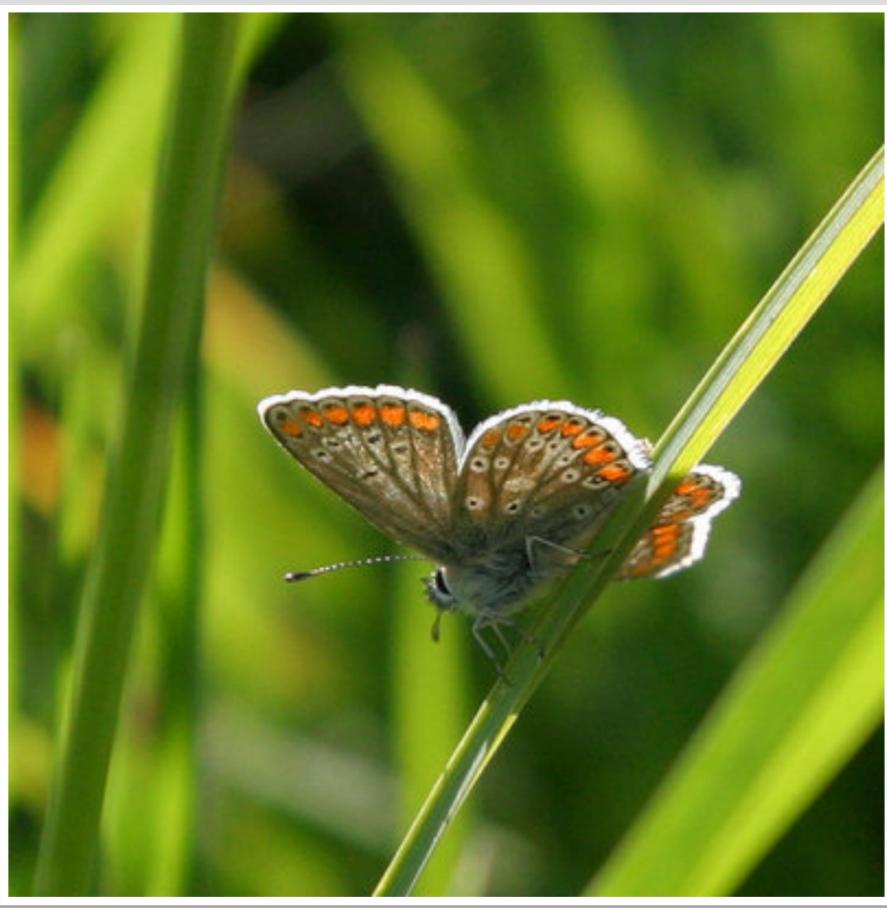
Wrecclesham, Surrey

I got up early and headed to Wrecclesham. Having never seen them before, I had to go and see the Glanville Fritillaries. A few were already active at 08.00 but the first beast I came across was this Drinker moth caterpillar.

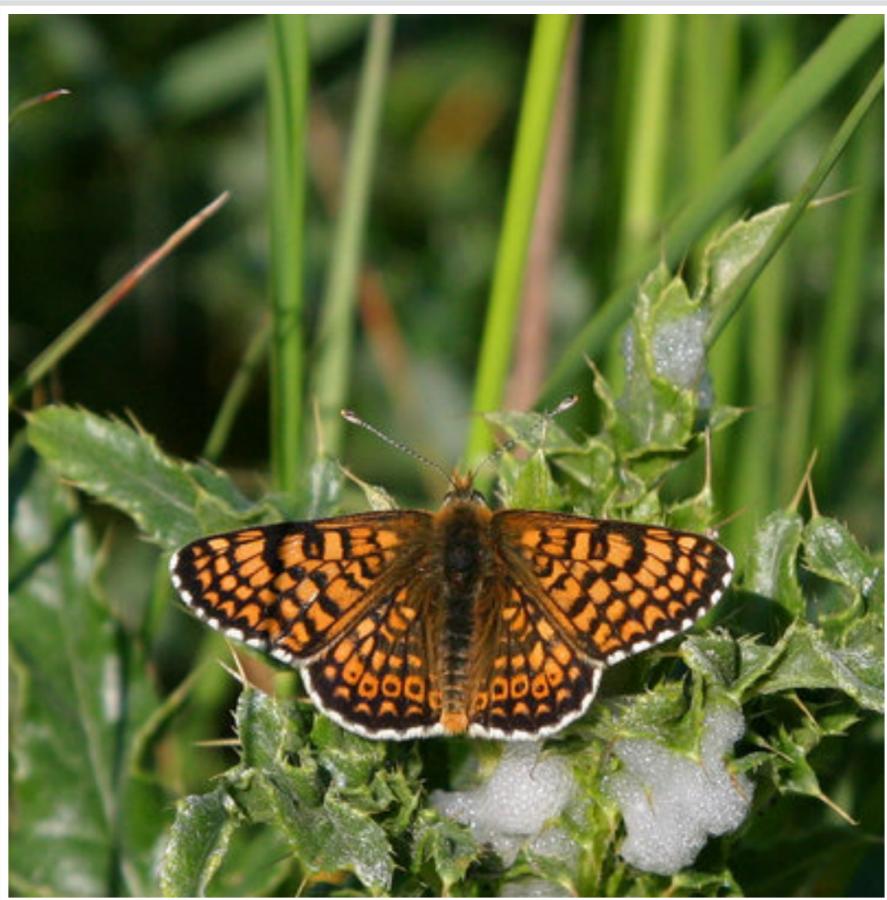
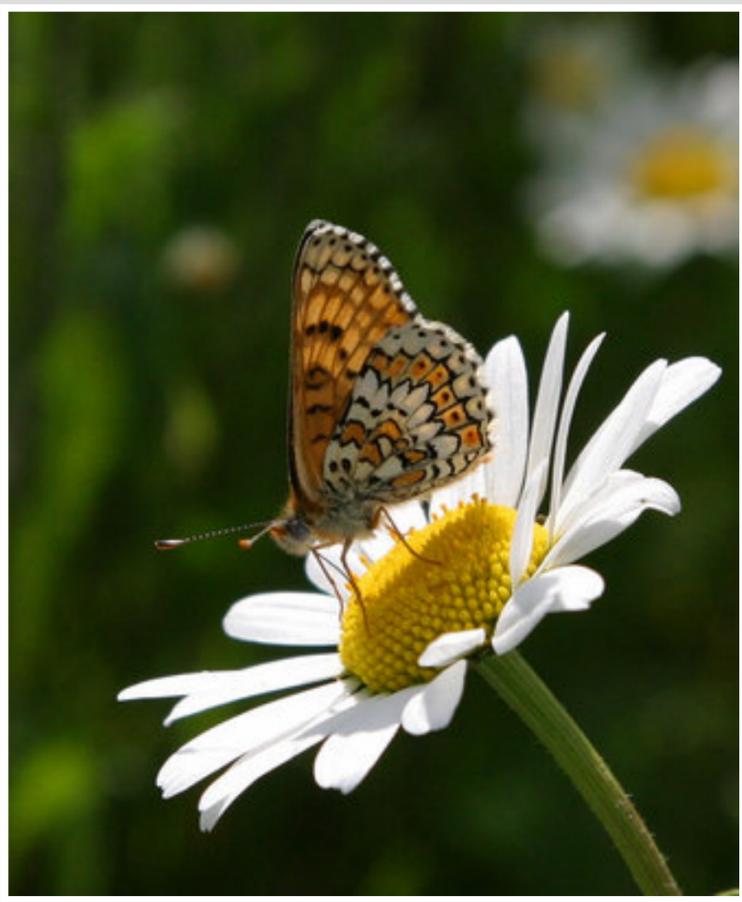


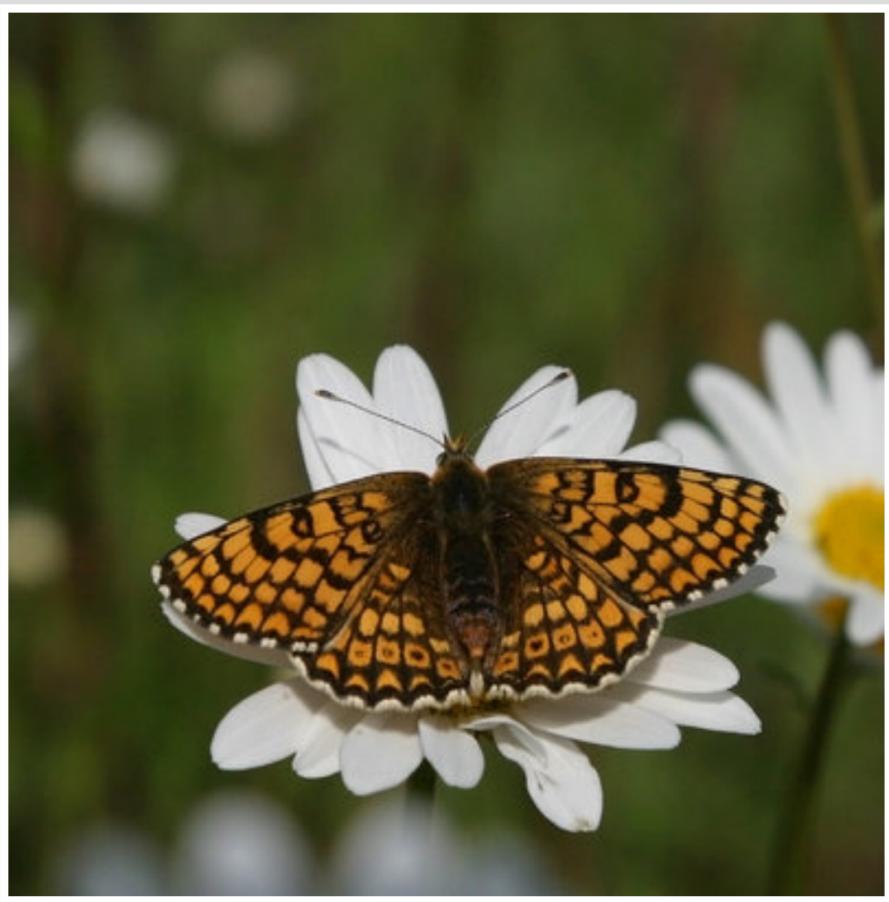
I caught several Common Blue and Brown Argus waking up and basking in the morning sun.





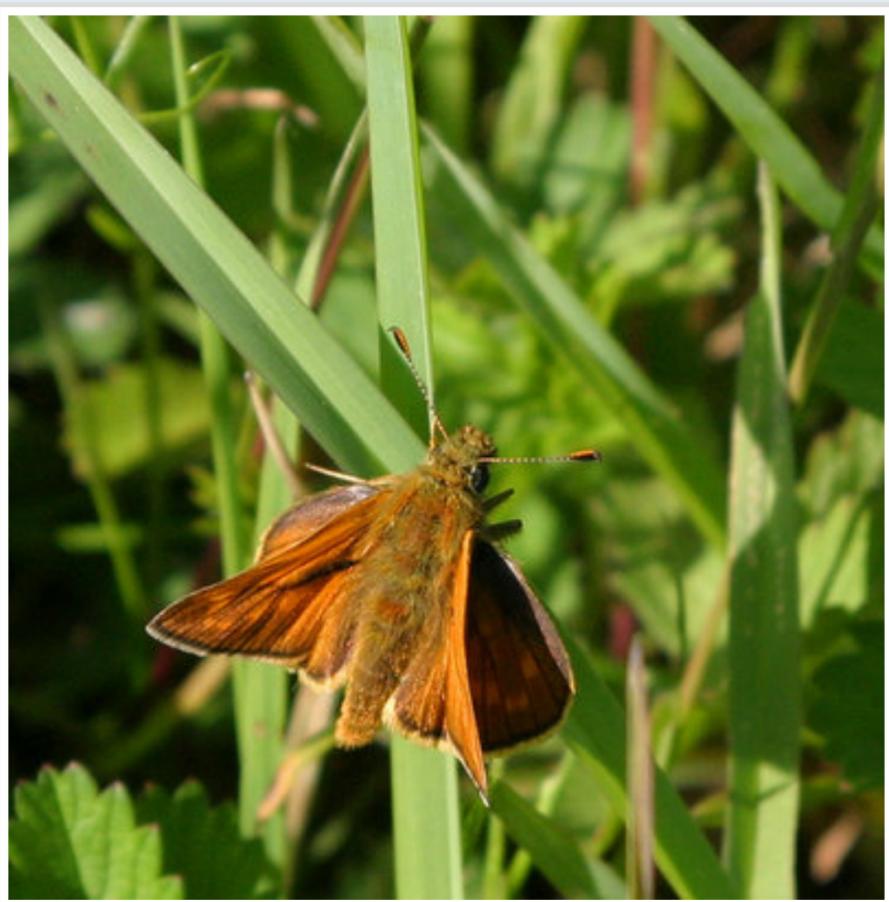
By 09.30 there were Glanvilles everywhere; they were nectaring now and much more approachable. I can see what it is about the underside of these butterflies, they are *beautiful!*





A Glanville's eye view - including David M's flower!

I also saw my first Large Skippers of the year but it seems I just missed David M, which is a shame.



Sightings:

50+ Glanville Fritillary

15+ Common Blue

8 Brown Argus

- 6 Large Skipper
- 1 Small Heath
- 2 Cinnabar
- 3 Burnet Companion
- 1 Drinker (larvae)

Fairmile Heath, Surrey

I'd arranged to meet Seth (Gibster) and Sami at Fairmile, which was local to them and I was driving that way next. It was lovely to meet them and wander around the heath. We were checking for early Silver Studded Blue, but with no joy. The heather is just coming out but it was bone dry.

We saw:

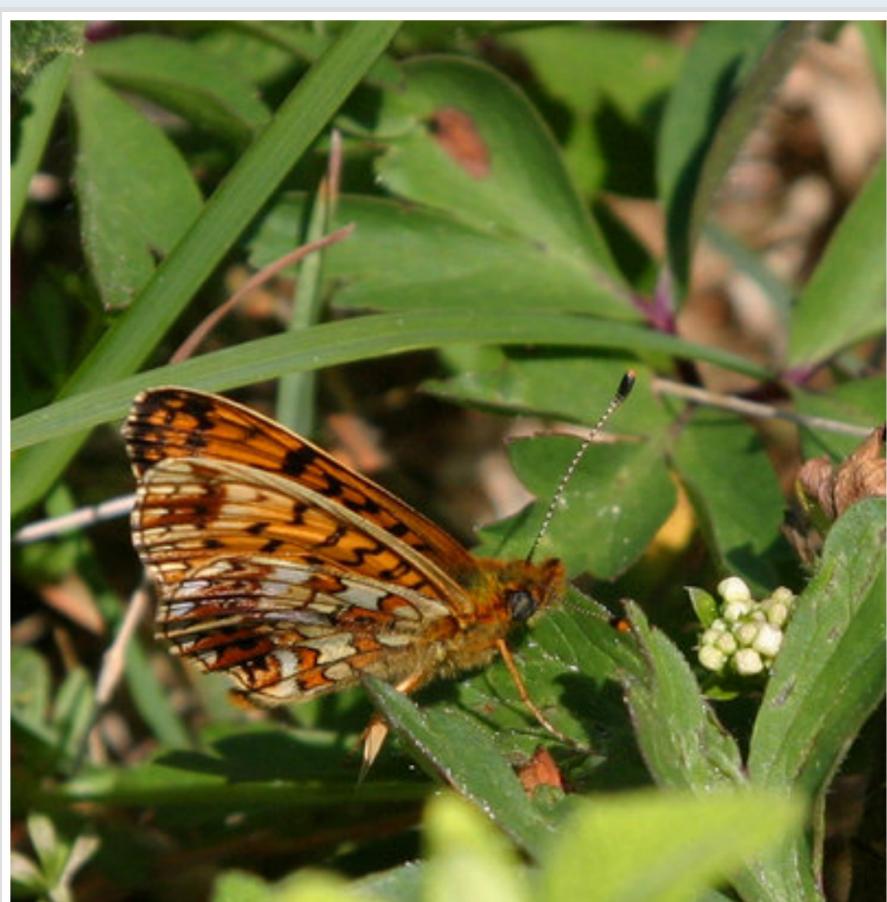
- 3 Green Hairstreak
- 1 Large White
- 2 Common Heath moths
- 2 Downy Emerald dragonflies

With not much happening here we decided to move on.

Park Corner Heath, Sussex

With one life tick not enough, we went off in search of Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries. These would also be my first ever. Park Corner Heath is a lovely BC reserve, very well managed and luckily, stuffed full of insects.

It wasn't long before we saw them – and what a sight, charming little butterflies. They were smaller than I'd imagined, but just as vivid in colour.



This second individual was I think freshly emerged – we watched an Emperor Dragonfly attack it in flight and then it dropped to the ground where it is shown here.

Seth and Sam found this Grizzled Skipper ab *taras*, which luckily came back to the same area for more photos. You could really notice the extra white when in flight, but it was just as tricky to follow...



Sightings:

- 25+ Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary
- 1 Green Hairstreak
- 2 Small Heath
- 8 Specked Wood, some of which were very fresh -second brood perhaps?
- 1 Grizzled Skipper ab *taras*
- 1 male Brimstone, 1 female, plus Seth found 1 larvae
- 1 Emperor dragonfly
- 1 Broad Bodied Chaser



We weren't that far from the most bio-diverse car park in the world.....so off we set.

Windover Hill, Sussex

Just in the car park area we found:

- 1 Red Admiral
- 6 Small Blue
- 5 male Common Blue, 1 female
- 2 Small Heath
- 2 Large White
- 1 Green Veined White

And just to add to species tally for this lovely place...

- 1 Green Hairstreak
- 1 Dingy Skipper

Two species I hadn't seen there before.





We climbed the hill and were entertained by Small Blue, Adonis Blue and Dingy Skippers.

It was great for me being with some birders. Along with the Skylarks we could hear, Seth pointed out Whitethroat, Yellowhammer, Black Cap, Meadow Pipit and then Sam saw a Honey Buzzard as it flew over us! Just fantastic.

Sightings:

20+ Small Blue

10+ male Adonis Blue, 1 female

15+ Common Blue

5 Small Heath

5 Dingy Skipper

What a fantastic day; 2 life ticks, 1 first for the year, a Grizzly ab, loads of birds and dragonflies and some fellow UKB'ers for company. I have to say, Seth's knowledge of the flora and fauna of our countryside is mightily impressive! I've him to thank for the bird and dragonfly ID's. A most enjoyable day in the countryside 😊



Seth (Gibster) and Sami with the Sussex Weald behind them, leading north to the Surrey Hills

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-May-11 04:46 PM GMT

I forgot to add that while we were having a well earned pint at The Giant's Rest in Wilmington I saw my first House Martin of the year (they were nesting in the eaves of the pub).

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 24-May-11 04:52 PM GMT

Wow, Lee, what an incredible day and some great photos to show for it! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Padfield, 24-May-11 05:01 PM GMT

A pleasure to share your excitement from over here, Lee! Lovely photos of good times.

Guy

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-May-11 05:15 PM GMT

Thank you, Susie and Guy. It was quite a day! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 24-May-11 11:12 PM GMT

Aw shucks Lee, you can probably see my blushes from Greenford, "mightily impressive knowledge" my hairy @\$e!!! 😬

We've just gotta sort out a proper "UKButterfly South East Members' Field Meeting" someday, huh? Be great to get a whole bunch of us together, wouldn't it? So if anybody knows of a decent village pub (hint hint, Susie...) 😊

Catchya soon, I hope mate,

Gibster.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 24-May-11 11:36 PM GMT

No shortage of good pubs round here. If anyone wants to come and hunt for purple emperors at Southwater or brown hairstreaks nearer to home then give me a shout and we can all meet up.

Apologies for hijacking your thread, Lee.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-May-11 03:57 AM GMT

Not a problem, all are welcome in here 😊

I fear I may miss prime *iris* action this year, we're off to Rhone Alpes, southern France on 10th June for 2 weeks. Going by Captain Oates' predictions on the Purple Empire (<http://apaturairis.blogspot.com/>) they'll be about the week after that! Still I could always search for them down there 😊

I see Grayling has been reported – madness. I walked along the river Brent again tonight and found myself looking for Gatekeepers on the expanse of bramble flowers! Didn't see any mind but a small orangey brown job in the distance made me think Small Skipper until I saw it flying a little too slowly, and actually flapping – not something I've ever seen with Skippers. Small Copper I think, but not sure.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by sami, 26-May-11 01:54 AM GMT

Was a pleasure to meet you! what a day. It was great to see more than double the number of Small Bues I've seen in my life, in one day! Plus life-ticking Honey Buzzard at such short range and in good company was brilliant. Thanks for the great photo, I'll post the one of you and Gibster ASAP. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-May-11 03:53 AM GMT

Likewise Sami, it was a fantastic day wasn't it.

We should certainly have another get together soon!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 26-May-11 05:31 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

great report, great photos – I especially like the Broad-Bodied Chaser (a really nice shot). it's great to see everyone getting a chance to meet up, albeit in two's and three's. Given your itinerary for the day I think there's plenty on this board who are quite near to being certifiable 😊! Myself, I've just got back from the Norfolk Broads where we spent a couple of days (at very short notice once we'd seen the forecast), trying to catch the good weather – as it's expected to go a bit grotty this weekend. I hope we'll be able to meet up soon.

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-May-11 07:00 AM GMT

Thanks Michael 😊 Looking forward to your Swallowtails. It was a long day, but a good one 😊

It seems Black Hairstreak have already started! Not sure I will get to Bernwood before we go away but if I do I'll let you know.

It might be a Brown Hairstreak meet up at this rate (but then they'll probably be out next month 😊)

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 26-May-11 03:47 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

yes – re the Black Hairstreaks – one of the area contacts has already confirmed 3 sightings in Oxfordshire. I'm doing other family commitments this weekend but as long as the weather is OK I may venture up to Bernwood / Whitecross Green Wood the weekend after (i.e. the 4th or 5th June). I'll keep an eye on the reports and weather until then 😊! And we love the area anyway so I'm sure if all else fails it could be a Brown Hairstreak or Purple

Emperor meet-up after I've come back from Bulgaria. Presuming I still have any energy left by that point! 😊😊

Best wishes, Michael

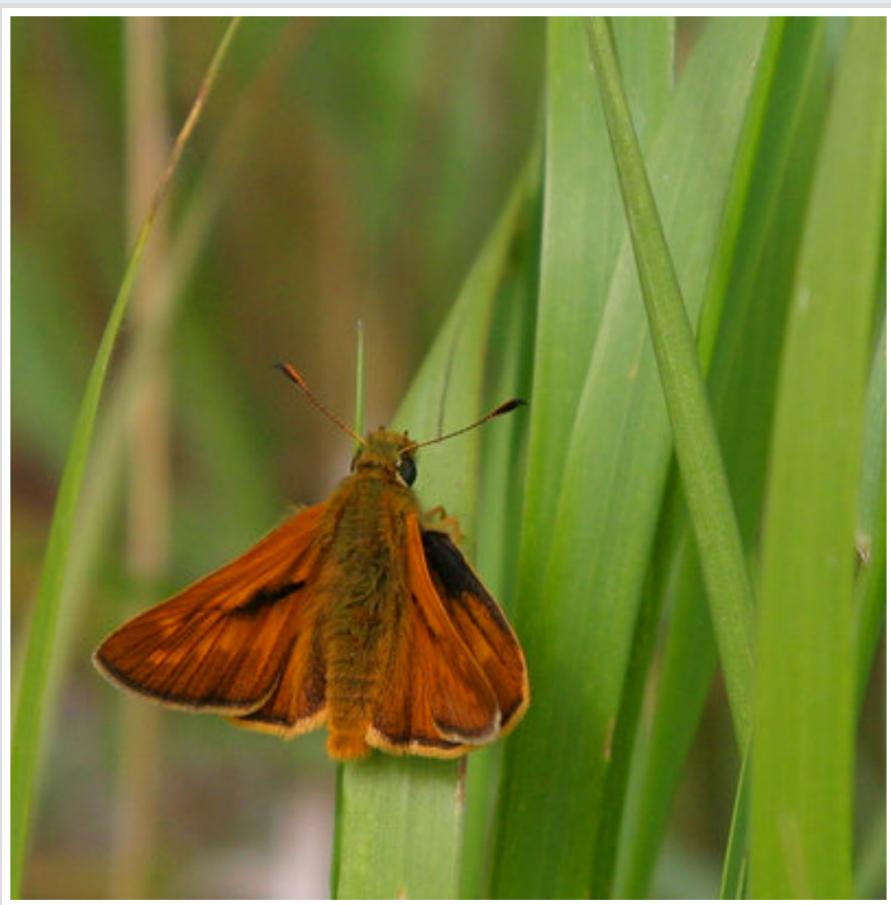
Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-May-11 03:48 AM GMT

Sunday 29th May

My sister has been down this weekend, with Henry of course. It's their first visit since we've had Tilly and let's just say she and Henry are not going to be the best of friends. Shame – we tried, but we are covered in scratches 😊

Against forecast it was a glorious morning in west London, so I had a quick half an hour in the cemetery. I was delighted to see 2 male Large Skippers, the first I've ever seen there. I also saw 1 worn male Common Blue and a Burnet Companion, again, the first I've seen there I think.



We went for lunch today and had a walk in Osterley Park, the first time I'd visited. It's a nice place, big areas of wild grasses. It had clouded over by now and a chilly breeze was blowing, so I was a little surprised to see my first Meadow Brown of the year, a male, battling against the wind. Also saw 1 male and 1 female Common Blue and a Mother Shipton.

Here's Henry by one of the lakes near Osterley House:



On another lake, Swans had cygnets, Canada Geese had goslings and this odd looking goose had more of its own. I think it's an Egyptian Goose.



Of course by tea time the sun was back and it's been a lovely evening.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 30-May-11 04:06 AM GMT

ahhhh Osterley.... many a day spent over there. some go there to feed the ducks.... i used to go over to feed the fish during the summer. a couple of years back i was watching a cormorant in the lake that Henry is sitting by. it's not the deepest so you could see the bird swimming in a figure of 8. also when i was about 12 i saw and marvelled at my first Mandarin duck with it's head poking out of a hole in a tree. the only let down for me is the plane noise. Anyway i shall stop reminiscing and taking up room in your diary. glad you enjoyed the place.

Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-May-11 04:47 AM GMT

Hi Chris,

Don't worry mate. It's always nice to hear of other's experiences from places I go!

Funnily enough I commented on both the shallowness of that lake and the plane noise today....

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 30-May-11 04:57 AM GMT

I used to go there with my girls when they were little and feed the ducks.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Jun-11 06:40 AM GMT

A Large Skipper, a Green Veined White and 15+ Burnet Companion moths in my local cemetery after 18.00 this evening.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Jun-11 05:51 PM GMT

Very excitingly, we had a fledgling Goldcrest in the garden this morning. I hope this means they have bred! I did see two adults at once earlier in the year so there has been a pair about.

Also, I rescued at least 4 Bee moths from the lounge last night. Around 15 have now flown in and been liberated over the last week. I was interested as to how they got their name and was amazed to discover that it is due to the caterpillar never eating any plant matter. Instead they only eat bee and wasp larvae! That does explain why the adults don't look much like bees...

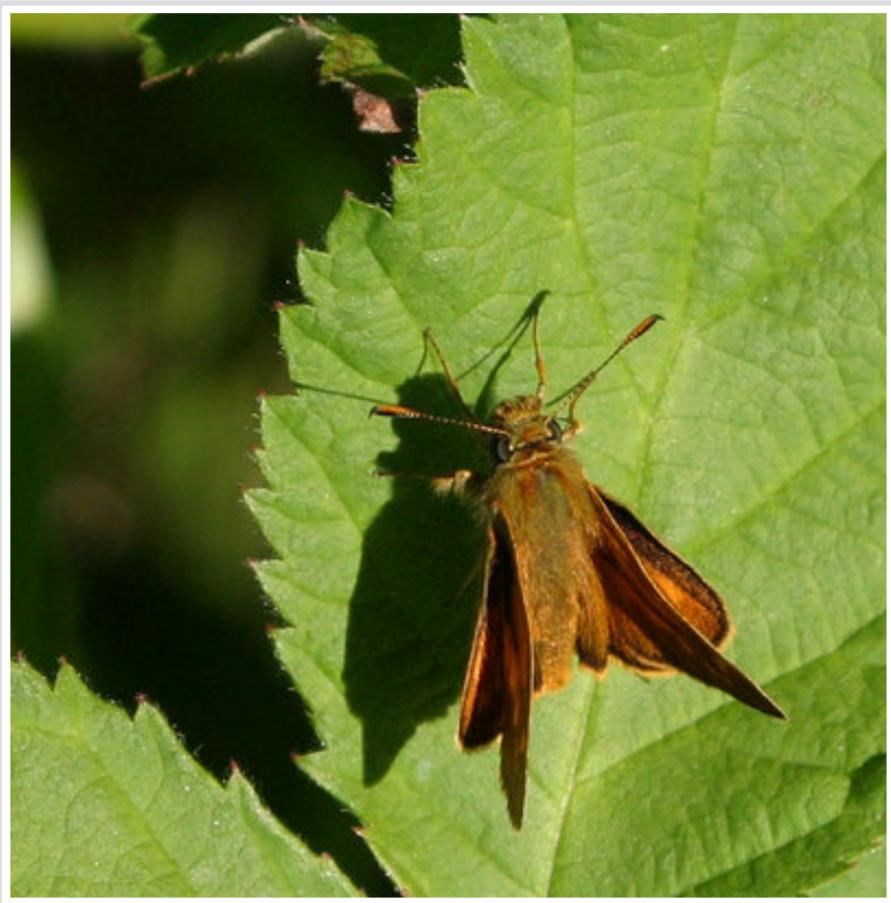
This of course means we must have a wasp or bee nest nearby – actually I think there is one in the eaves of the house.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Jun-11 10:34 PM GMT

Friday 3rd June 2011

Home a little early and so the cemetery beckoned. 30 minutes yielded 5 Large Skipper, 3 male and 1 female Common Blue, 1 Green Veined White and more than 30 very distracting Burnet Companions.



Most surprising though (for both parties) was a Sparrowhawk which must have been on the ground; I disturbed it and it flew up within a few feet of my head 😲 The closest view I've ever had of one.

The other night this quite large beauty flew in the lounge. Any ideas on what it is?



Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 04-Jun-11 11:54 PM GMT

you weren't far of with large beauty, it is actually a willow beauty

Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 05-Jun-11 12:37 AM GMT

Thanks Chris 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-Jun-11 01:08 AM GMT

Saturday 4th June 2011

Staying local today, I had a walk round the cemetery in the morning and saw:

- 1 male Meadow Brown
- 4 male Common Blue, looking quite worn now
- 1 female Small White, 2 other Small Whites
- 1 male Large White
- 1 Large Skipper
- 15+ Burnet Companion moths

Later in the afternoon I went in search of local Hairstreaks. I was out for over 2 hours and had a good look around Brent River Park and the golf course on that side of the road. Lots of mature oaks and grassy areas but no PH or WLH seen. There were a couple of 'could have beens' though. One area looked ideal for GH, I'll have to check that next year.

Apart from (I think) either a Hummingbird or Bee Hawk moth, I saw 2 Small Whites and 5 Large Skippers, including a courting couple on a patch of Ox Eye Daisies. She was surprising worn given how fresh all the males look at the moment but she wasn't interested in his advances anyway.

But the highlight of this part of my walk were 2 stunningly fresh summer brood Commas, which were an absolute joy to watch. For such a common butterfly there really is something about them. I love they way they zoom off their perch, check you out by circling round you, dash off up the path and then settle back exactly where you first saw them. This one was a beauty.



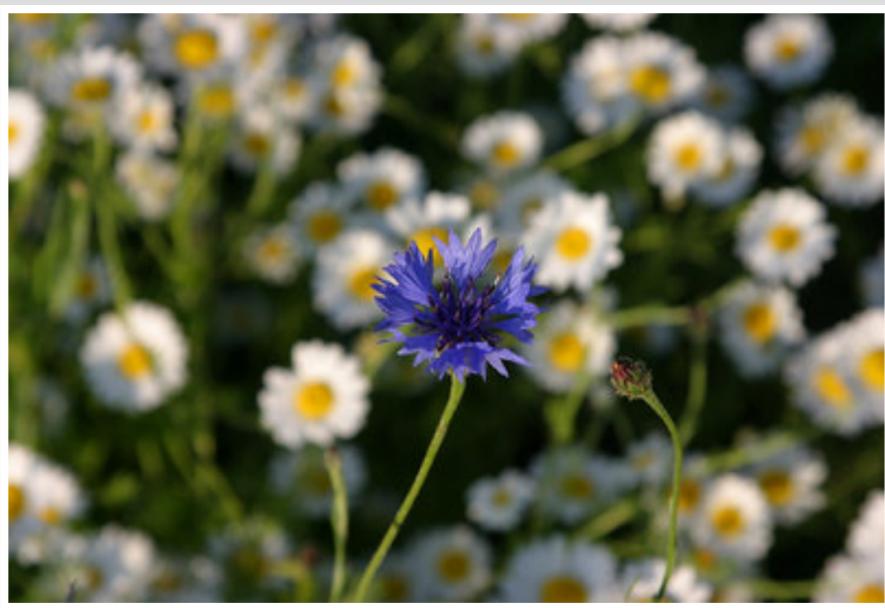
I crossed over the road into West Middlesex Golf Course. Still no Hairstreaks despite a thorough search of all the places I have seen them and plenty where I haven't. Again there were a few 'could have beens'. I did find a lot of elm trees I hadn't before though and so will be back later to see if I can find WLH on or near these.

The only sighting here was 1 Speckled Wood until I found my other highlight of the day – 2 Peacock caterpillar nests! They were quite close to each other and so could have started off as 1 one I guess. There were about 50 caterpillars in each and I could see where other neighbouring nettle plants had been fed upon and silk nests spun. There were also old instar skins at the top of one plant.

I will keep an eye on these. I was sorely tempted to bring a few back with me but I only have a couple of small nettle plants at home. If I wasn't going away next week I would have been straight down the shops to get materials to build a breeding cage, something I last did when I was about 12. I fear I may be too late in 2 or 3 weeks to but it's good to know they're there! It really made my day.



I walked back through Brent River Park and I rediscovered my favourite shade of blue, in a field of white and yellow.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-Jun-11 06:29 AM GMT

Off to France tomorrow 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 10-Jun-11 03:32 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

Hope you have a nice trip (if you haven't already gone). I look forward to your report, even though I'll be in Bulgaria when you come back. 😊

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by David M, 11-Jun-11 05:26 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Off to France tomorrow 😊

Bon voyage!!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Jun-11 01:32 AM GMT

Thanks Michael and David. Report to follow!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Jun-11 01:57 AM GMT

I've started my trip report from the French Alps:

viewtopic.php?f=20&t=5350

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Jun-11 07:51 AM GMT

Saturday 25th June 2011

My first (UK) second brood Holly Blues, at least 2, in the garden today, along with 2 Small Whites.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Jun-11 05:27 AM GMT

Sunday 26th June 2011 - or, 10 and a half hours in search of Him.

I was up at silly o'clock and at Southwater Woods by 08.30. Apart from a little bit of clear blue over the Surrey hills there was no sign of the clear blue sky forecast, only mist and cloud. But it had to get better.

Seeing Neil Kipper's car parked at the usual spot was a good sign.

I walked the rides which were damp and muddy and I only saw an out of bed early Meadow Brown and a deer. About 9am I met up with Susie. We saw a White Admiral and a few more browns and then walked to the meadows where we bumped into Neil. The sky was beginning to brighten and another White Admiral, Meadow Browns, Ringlets, the odd Marbled White, 1 Small Copper and 1 Small Skipper were just coming to life. We spent a while admiring the fresh female Meadow Browns before Susie had to dash off for family matters.





Neil said that there was a BC walk planned for later that morning, which I hadn't known about but which I tagged along with.

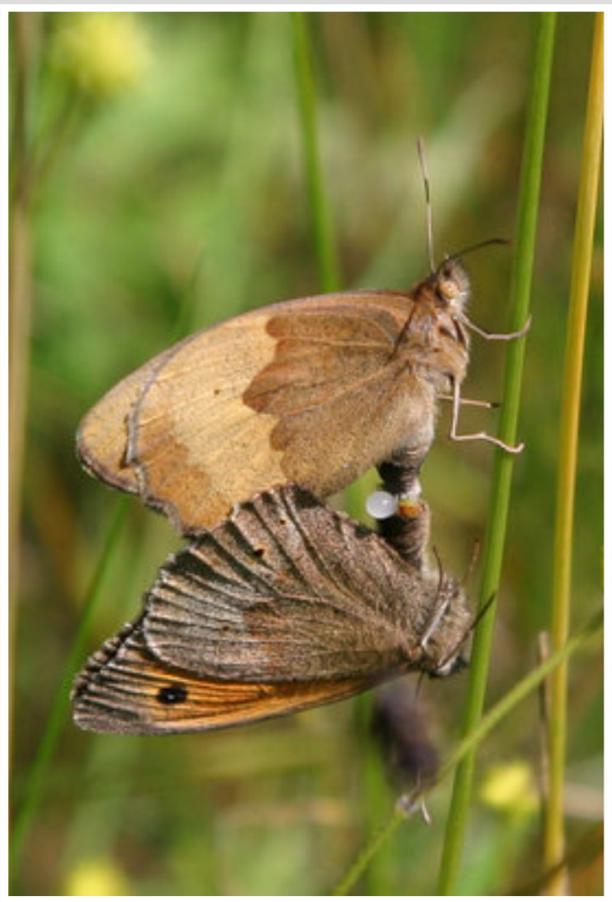
The walk started at 10.30 and we walked the rides seeing 10+ Silver Washed Fritillary, 10+ White Admiral, 1 Red Admiral, a few Meadow Browns, Ringlets, several Comma, 1 Holly Blue, 3 Purple Hairstreak, Large Skipper and Small Skipper.

By 12ish the sky had finally cleared and blue prevailed. Neil had billed the walk for Silver Washed and White Admiral with no deliberately no mention of Iris - but we saw HIM! We had a brief glimpse of Him at height above the Madgland master trees but He bombed down the ride not to return.

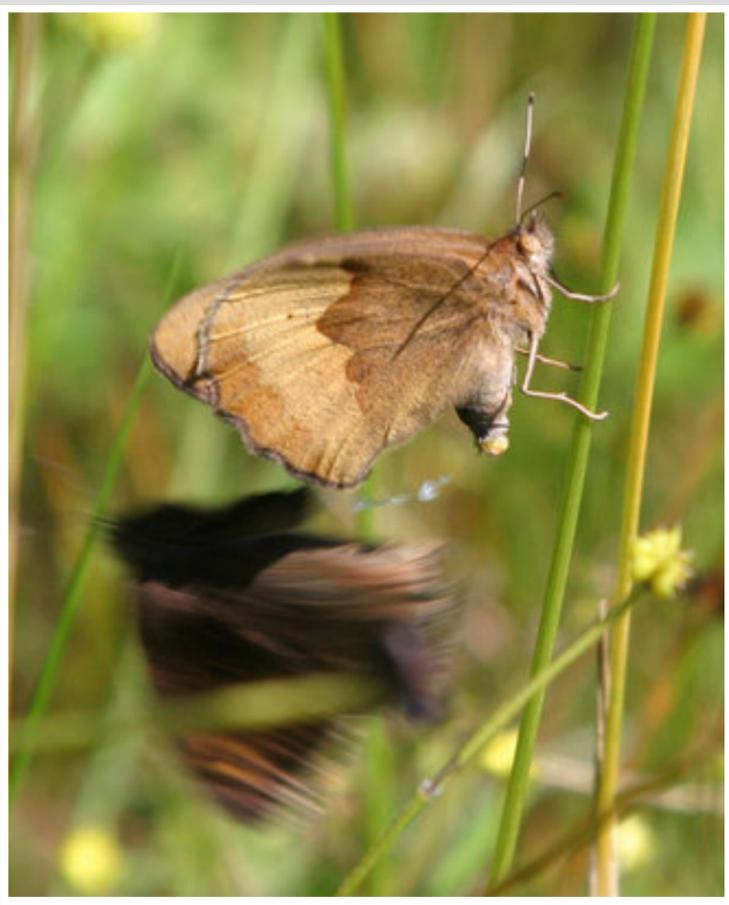
We walked round to the meadows which by now were alive with hundreds and hundreds of Meadow Browns, 25+ Ringlets, 50+ Marbled Whites, 2 Small Copper, Large Skipper, Small Skipper and 1 Small Tortoiseshell. I also found several of these charming little red damselflies, flying with some blue ones:



I also found a mating pair of Marbled Whites and a mating pair of Meadow Browns. Look at this though - I thought it may be the sperm but Neil thought it was more likely the meconium ejected after emergence from a fresh female which had started mating before ejecting it all.



And then they separated:



To top it off, at the end of the walk there were 2 sparring male Purple Emperors above the car park area which we all watched for a while.

I met and chatted to quite a few Sussex members during the walk, a lovely bunch they are too.

Later I had planned to go to Botany Bay and Oaken Wood, where it turned out Neil was also headed. By the time we got there it was seriously roasting and Neil thought it likely due to the cool morning any emerging Emperors might make themselves known this afternoon. But it wasn't to be. We met several people who had seen one or two, or heard of one on the ground an hour or so before we got there but despite 4 hours of traversing the main rides between Botany and Oaken and thorough searching, we didn't see one. Neil had his special sauce with him and that didn't work either. Just a little too early it seems for the few that are out.

However, we did see: 1 fresh second brood Wood White, 4 Green Veined White, 8 White Admiral, 15+ Silver Washed Fritillary, 1 Dark Green Fritillary, 2 Red Admiral, 2 Comma, 10+ Meadow Brown, 10+ Ringlet, 6 Marbled White, 1 male and 2 female Common Blue, 20+ Large Skipper and 4 Small Skipper.

Neil even had his magic bike (as seen on the telly) which was handy for speeding off to check the baits.



Numbers at both Southwater and Oaken seemed quite low of everything and Oaken particularly seemed pretty quiet.

I got back to my car at 19.00, hot, tired and weary but happy to have seen Him this morning.

Thanks first to Susie and then Neil for another fantastic Sussex day out. Special mention also to all the lovely Sussex BC members I met this morning, a really lovely bunch.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Jun-11 05:43 AM GMT

Monday 27th June

Back to work today (nice) but I came home via West Middlesex Golf course for two reasons. I wanted to see if the hairstreaks were out and they were, I saw at least 10 Purple and going by size and colour, at least 1 White Letter.

I was hopeful of a Purple on the ground but the closest I came was 2 occasions of sparring males descending to head height going round and round each other oblivious to all else. Then then went straight back up high.

2 Commas were waiting for the sun to come back out too.

I also wanted to see the status of the Peacock caterpillar nests I had found before I went away but they were long gone, hopefully pupating safely somewhere nearby.

Mindful that I had tonight's tea in my bag I carried on home after about half an hour but I'll be back!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jun-11 05:12 AM GMT

Wednesday 29th June

I walked home along the river Brent for a short distance and saw 4 very fresh Green Veined Whites.

A quick half and hour in the cemetery when I got home and what a change from when I was last there! Last time the wild areas were crunchy underfoot and plants were dry or dying. I know there's been a lot of rain while I was away and it shows; green, lush (small) flower meadows greeted me. I saw another 3 Green Veined Whites and 4 Meadow Browns, 3 male, 1 female.

I had a look at a mature oak for Purple Hairstreak but didn't see any. The colony is perhaps half a mile away and I keep wondering if they have made the journey.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by di75di, 02-Jul-11 05:16 AM GMT

Hello Lee Love

I have just been reading your posts. It's really nice to see what you are up to 😊 Keep up the good work.

Love Me

xx

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 02-Jul-11 11:48 PM GMT

Hello Sis!

I didn't know you were a member on here!

Just wait for today's report then 😊

xx

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Jul-11 08:00 AM GMT

Some interesting moths have come to light at home this week; Scalloped Oak and Dark Arches. Not seen either before!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Jul-11 08:38 AM GMT

Saturday 2nd July

I was still deciding whether to go Botany Bay/Oaken Wood or Bernwood Forest as I approached the M25 turn off from the A40. I opted for Oaken Wood.

I arrived at 08.15ish at bumped into John Bogle (Fishiee from the forums) at the Tugley Wood entrance. I parked here and wandered into the complex. A few Silver Washed Fritillary and a Large Skipper were already active, but warming up.

I met a chap called Nick and then PJ Underwood and his wife (also from the forums) and chatted for a bit.

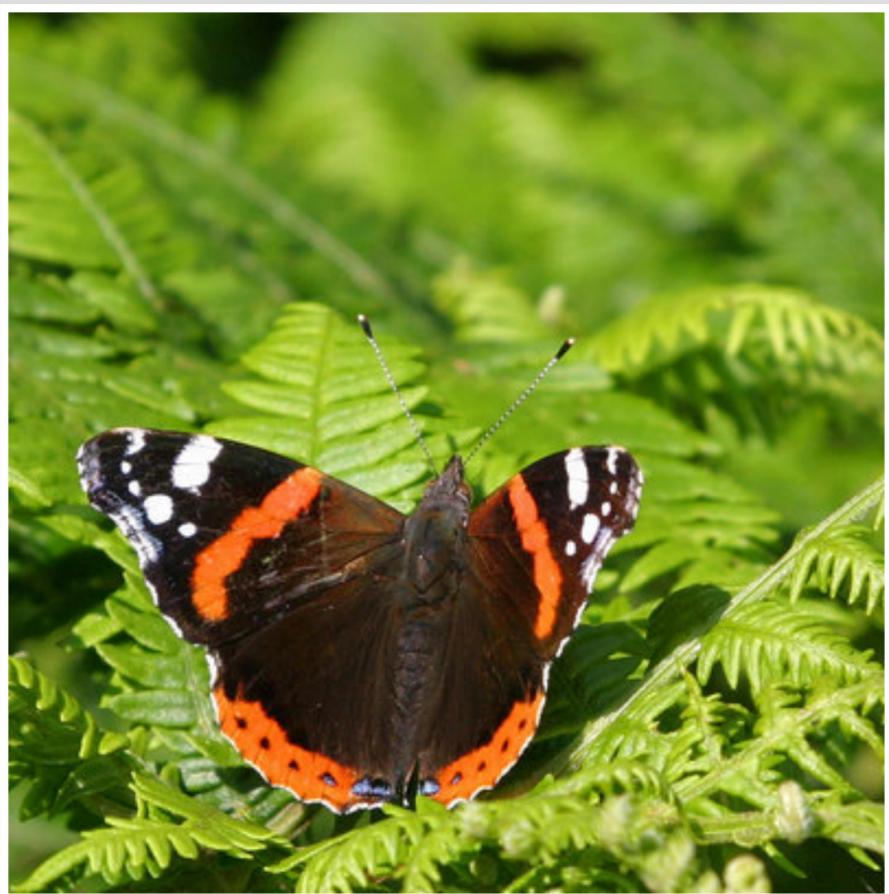
At the Oaken Wood entrance a male Silver Washed Fritillary was making himself at home on the BC sign.



Here he is in close up, quite a dark individual.

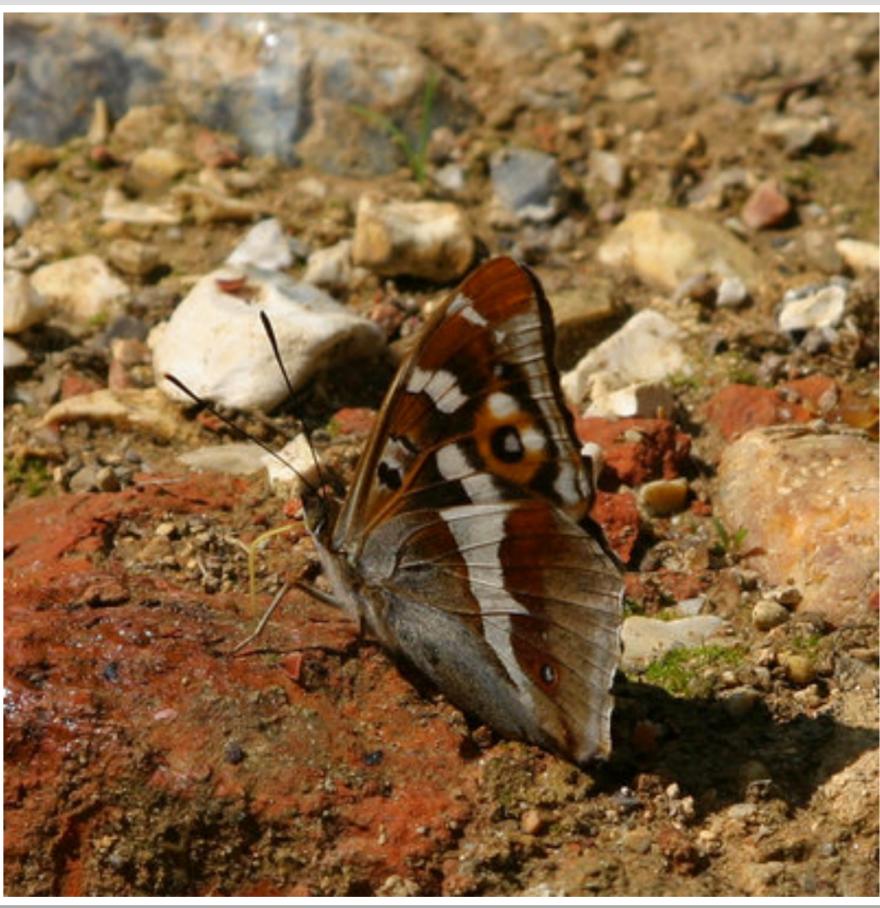


A Red Admiral was also posing nicely.

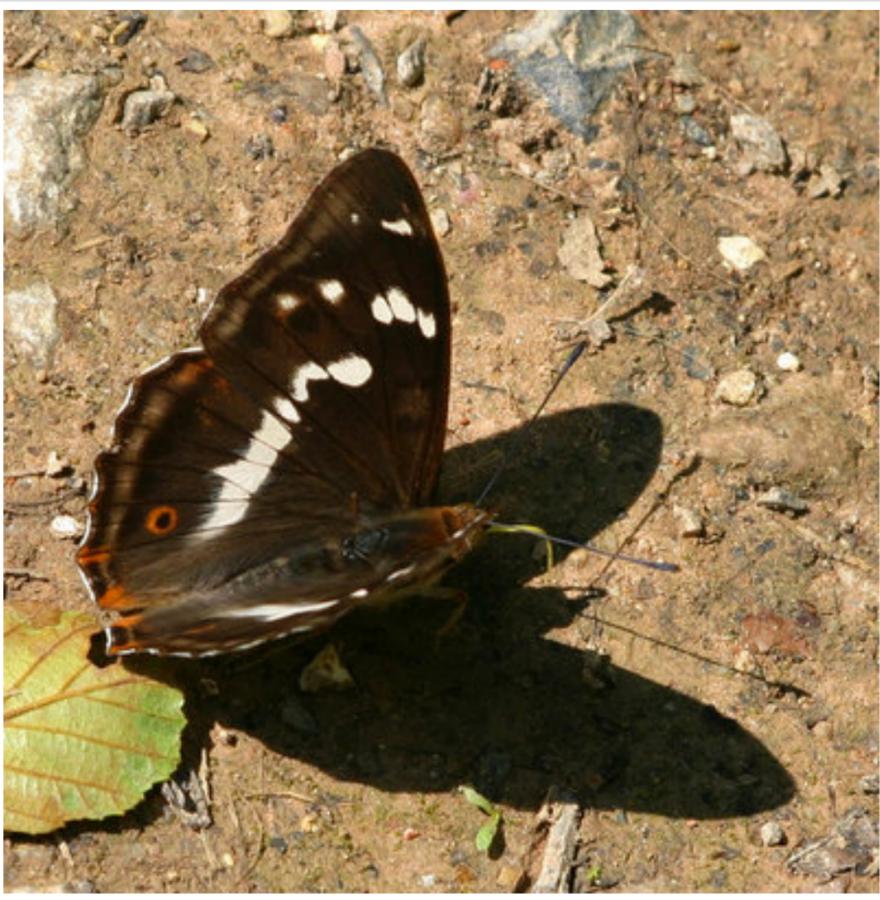


I then met Dave Miller (Millerd from the forums, lovely to meet you at last Dave) and Dave, Nick and I had a wonderful time with this male Emperor, which must have been on the ground for well over half an hour.





I walked to Botany Bay with Dave, to where he had parked, and then back toward the triangle and came across another Emperor just before the bridge.



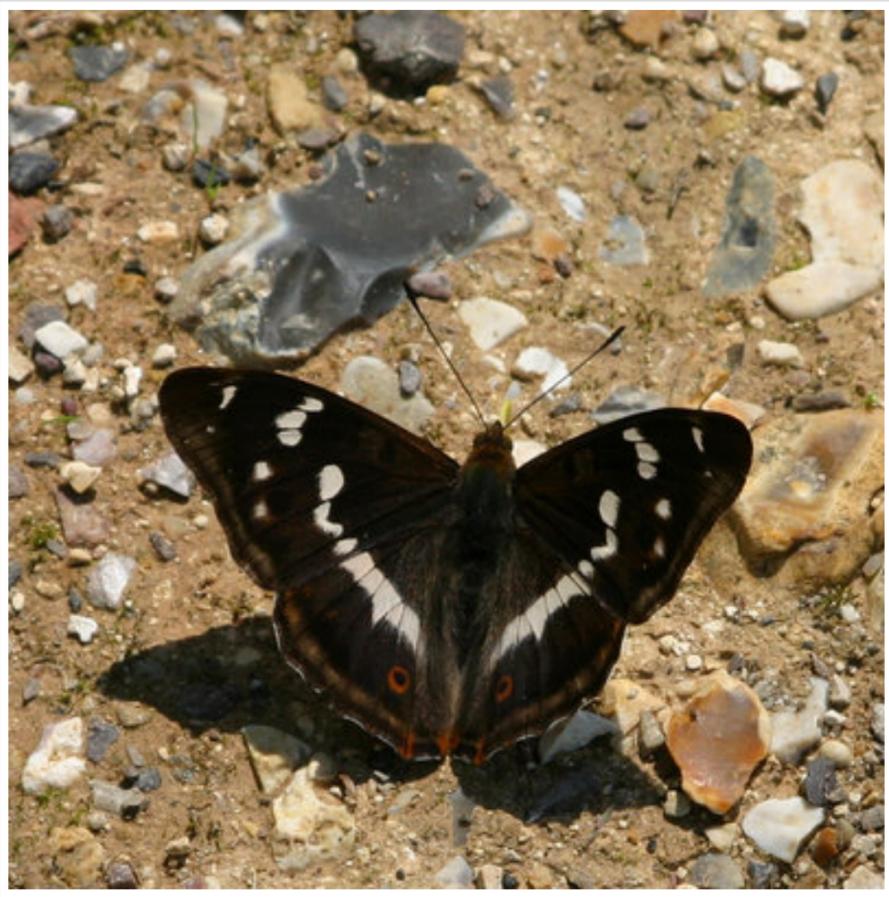
He stayed with me all the way to the triangle and I must have been kneeling in some bait at some point (it did smell a bit fishy) as at one point he would circle round me and eventually landed on me! I somehow took this one handed.



Here he is in close up.



He didn't stay for long and went back to his business, the delights of the forest ride perhaps more palatable than me.



I did walk back to the bridge but his spot was now taken by a Red Admiral.



Sightings for Botany Bay/Oaken Wood:

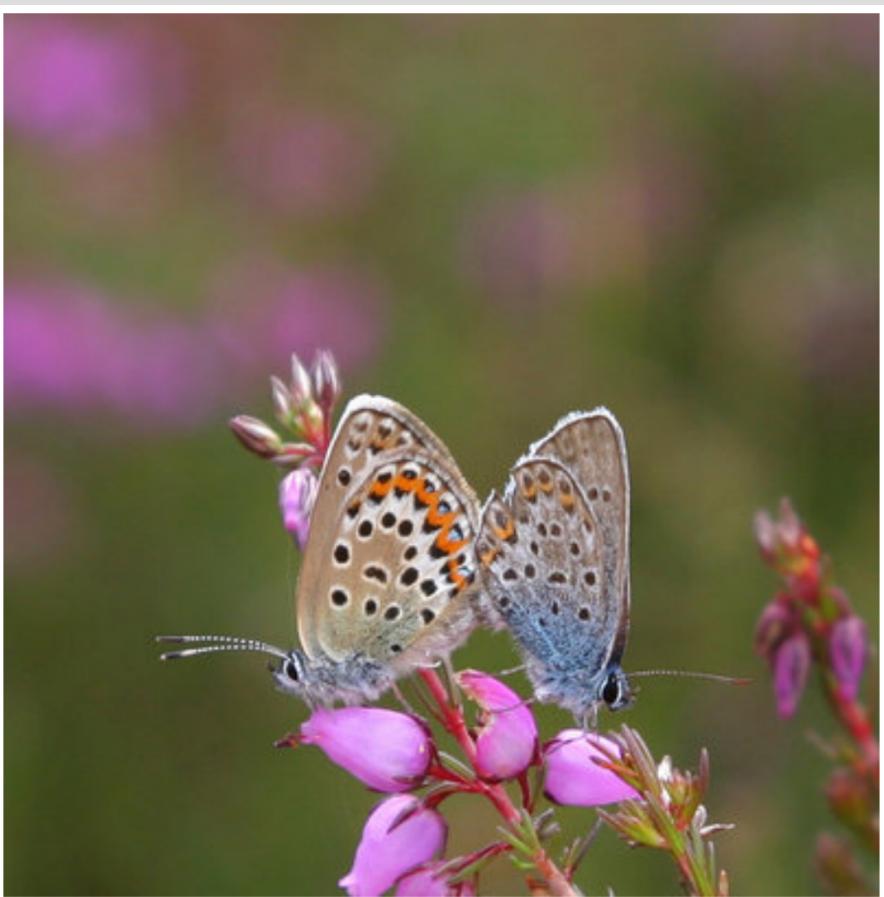
- 2 male Purple Emperor
- 3 White Admiral
- 3 Red Admiral
- 20+ Silver Washed Fritillary
- 20+ Ringlet
- 30+ Meadow Brown
- 2 Marbled White
- 10+ Large Skipper
- 5+ Small Skipper
- 2 Wood White
- 1 Large White
- 1 Small White
- 3 Green Veined White

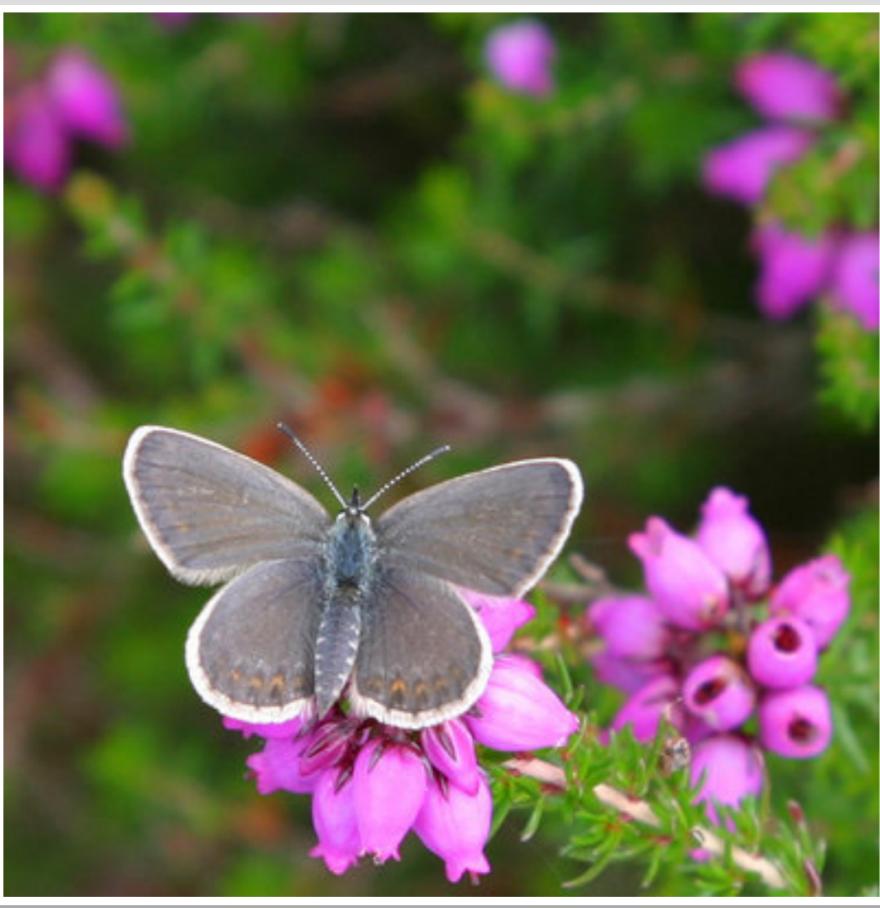
Dave was going to Denbies and I opted for Fairmile as I was headed that way.

Just into the heath and my first Gatekeeper of the year.



I wondered if I would be too late as the Silver Studded Blues have been out for a few weeks but there were some latecomers to the party, including some minty fresh ones.





Sightings for Fairmile Common:

- 25+ Silver Studded Blue (15 female, 10 male)
- 3 Small Copper (unsurprisingly, as there were carpets of sorrel)
- 2 Small Skipper
- 1 Meadow Brown
- 1 Gatekeeper
- 4 Ringlet
- 1 Large White
- 2 Green Veined White

Not a day I will forget for a while 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 03-Jul-11 05:20 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

I see you haven't wasted any time getting back to the British Butterflies after your French trip! Lovely recent pics, especially of course of the Purple Emperor.

After seeing the pic of Neil on his bike I don't think the reputation of butterfly enthusiasts becomes any less quirky! 🇬🇧

I'm just catching up with your French posts plus everything else. I see the weather has finally turned good again after the slightly dull June. 😊

Best wishes,

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Jul-11 07:23 PM GMT

Thanks Michael 😊

He was good to me yesterday I have to say – and I wasn't expecting to find such nice SSB.

There are plenty more French posts to come – I just need to find the time to go through the rest of the photos and get some ID'd too.

Shall we meet up at Bernwood last weekend of July or first weekend of August for BH?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 03-Jul-11 07:53 PM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Shall we meet up at Bernwood last weekend of July or first weekend of August for BH? Lee

Probably best to see how the flight period goes. I might go down to Bernwood next weekend (Saturday if the weather's good) as there are supposed to be Purple Emperors there again. I'm off to watch the British Open (Sandwich) for a couple of days next week so Sunday might be a travelling day. 😞

I only got back from Bulgaria last night, so like you I have some photos to go through. It was a curate's egg of a holiday – we only had about 4 days from the week to get out, and when we did it was great, but it left me with bags of joy and frustration in equal measure. 😞 We may have to go back next year to complete what I wanted to do 😞

I'll look forward to the rest of your French trip photos. No doubt we'll both be uploading over the next week. 😊🎁

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Jul-11 04:36 AM GMT

"Michaeljf" wrote:

Probably best to see how the flight period goes.

Yes, probably the best idea!

"Michaeljf" wrote:

I only got back from Bulgaria last night, so like you I have some photos to go through. It was a curate's egg of a holiday – we only had about 4 days from the week to get out, and when we did it was great, but it left me with bags of joy and frustration in equal measure. 😞 We may have to go back next year to complete what I wanted to do 😞

I'll look forward to the rest of your French trip photos. No doubt we'll both be uploading over the next week. 😊🎁

Looking forward to your photos!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Jul-11 04:50 AM GMT

Saturday 9th July – or, what a gray day

With a 'girls only' BBQ at home (evicted, from my own home!) and an evening do in Tunbridge Wells for me I was free to spend today at several locations on the way (sort of) round the M25. Thanks to Dave Miller for a couple of suggestions and directions.

First up was Chobham Common in search of Grayling. I hadn't been before and was impressed, what a huge place. It started to rain a bit as I got out of the car so I went back for a sandwich while it passed.

I walked the path Dave had suggested and up to the top of a small hill. As I sat on a bench admiring the view and listening to the M3 it started to brighten up so I carried on further.

I didn't see that much though and unfortunately, no Grayling:

12 Small Heath, living up to their name
3 Ringlet
8 Small Skipper
2 Essex Skipper
1 Green Veined White

Next up was Dawney's Hill, near Pirbright, a short distance away.

This also a good site for Silver Studded Blue and just inside the gate butterflies were more plentiful. I saw a fresh Gatekeeper and then this handsome chap appeared.



I also found a lovely Brown Argus.



Silver Studded Blues were frequent but apart from the male pictured, well past their best. There were browns everywhere and the stars of the show were Graylings, the commonest species on site.

I hadn't had such detailed examination of behaviour and close inspection of this species before but I got both here. I'd read that they can be quite tame when resting and so it proved; I got within 10cm of some allowing very detailed inspection.



They really are a beautiful insect; nearly each one I saw was marked differently. Some dark, some pale, some large, some small.



They are particularly strong fliers, unlike their Satyrid cousins, full of swoops and glides with wings held in a V shape, more like a Vanessa really.

I even got see a pair courting, with the male stroking the antennae of the female, drawing hers over his scent patches. I didn't see the pairing though, they flew off and are near enough impossible to find if you don't see where they land.





Seen at Dawney's Hill:

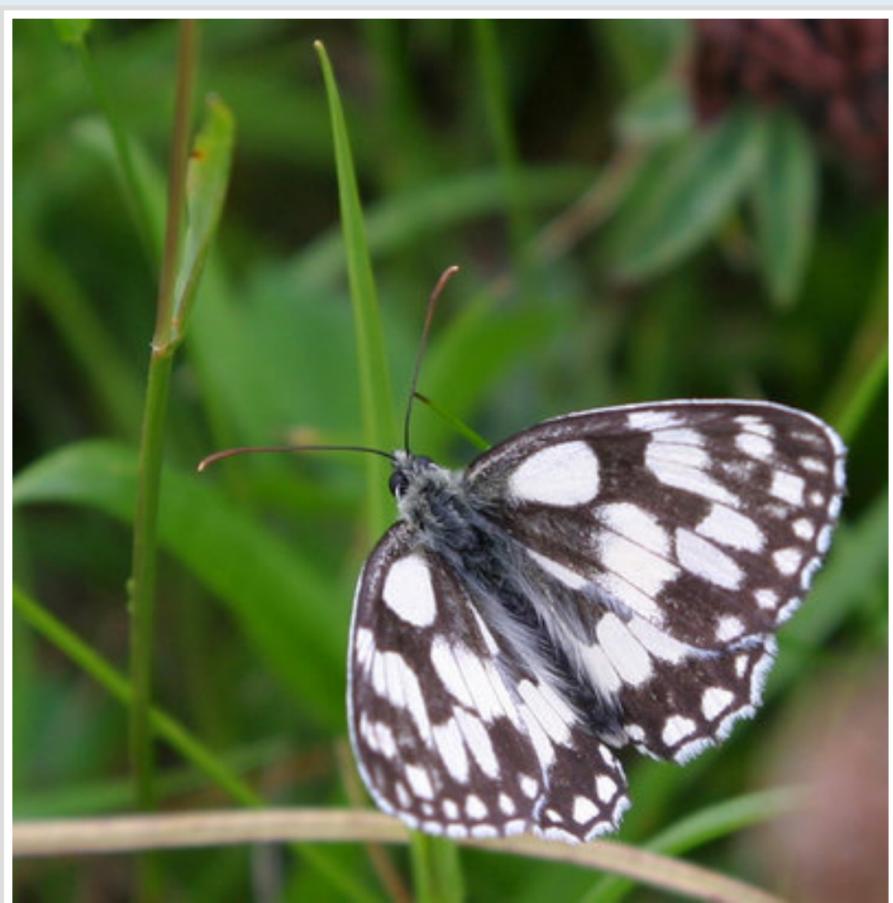
- 30+ Grayling
- 20+ Meadow Brown
- 4 Ringlet
- 1 Gatekeeper
- 25+ Silver Studded Blue
- 2 Brown Argus
- 3 Small Copper
- 1 Large Skipper
- 3 Small Skipper

Grayling habitat:

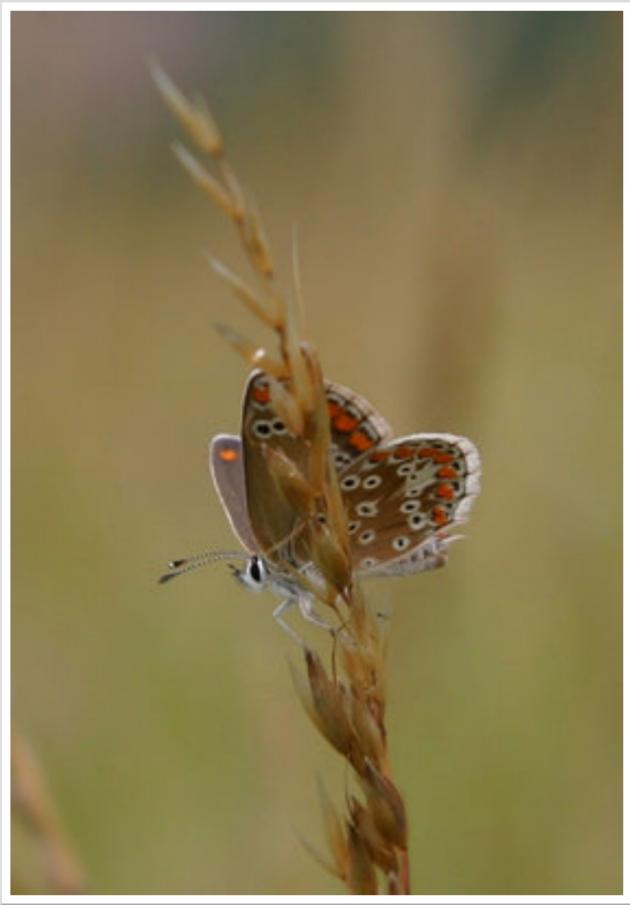


Last stop was Denbies for Chalk Hill Blue. However, by this time it had greyed over again and it was raining again as I parked up. I waited for it to pass and wandered over.

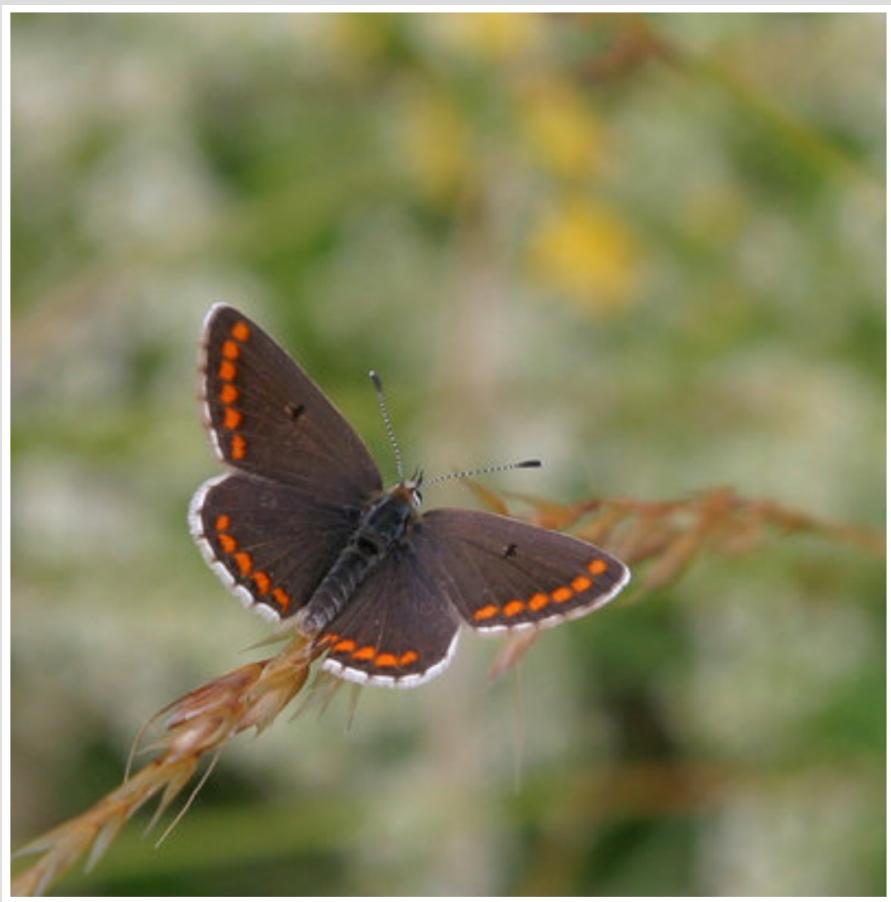
First up was the smallest Marbled White I have ever seen. Not quite half size but not far off.



I found a Brown Argus seemingly hopeful the sun would come again and at last managed a photo of this species I am happy with.



Here's the upper side and the individual in context.



I found a few roosting male Chalk Hill Blues, Small Skippers and Marbled Whites but as I was watching the Blues it started to rain again. After standing under the trees at the bottom of Steers Field waiting for the rain to pass for a while, I gave up and trudged back to the car and on to Tunbridge Wells, where, of course, the sun was out.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 13-Jul-11 05:42 AM GMT

Hiya Lee!

I was at Denbies with Sam today, we quit before the rain arrived though – shame to have missed you. Lovely shots of the Graylings! Any chance you could PM me access details/directions please? It's a site I've never been to and I'd like to see some of that courtship behaviour for myself.

We must all catch up again soon. I'm hopefully putting together a Dorset trip for Lulworth Skippers in the coming weeks if you're interested?

Cheers mate,

Seth.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 13-Jul-11 05:57 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Great report and I particularly like your Brown Argus pictures especially the 'Padfield' shot.

Keep up the good work and give me a shout if your down my way.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Jul-11 07:05 AM GMT

Thanks Mark 😊

Will do indeed.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 13-Jul-11 07:06 AM GMT

Lovely brown argus shots, Lee.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Jul-11 07:08 AM GMT

"Gibster" wrote:

Hiya Lee!

I was at Denbies with Sam today, we quit before the rain arrived though – shame to have missed you. Lovely shots of the Graylings! Any chance you could PM me access details/directions please? It's a site I've never been to and I'd like to see some of that courtship behaviour for myself.

We must all catch up again soon. I'm hopefully putting together a Dorset trip for Lulworth Skippers in the coming weeks if you're interested?

Cheers mate,

Seth.

Hi Seth,

I was there (briefly) on Saturday not today! But yes we must catch up soon.

For anyone wishing to try Dawney's Hill, the grid ref is SU945565.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Jul-11 07:10 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

Lovely brown argus shots, Lee.

Thanks Susie 😊

Will be going back to Denbies soon, will give you and Seth a shout.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 13-Jul-11 07:29 AM GMT

Excellent. I hope to go back there briefly tomorrow and then next week, weather permitting.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 13-Jul-11 07:50 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

For anyone wishing to try Dawney's Hill, the grid ref is SU945565.

Cheers

Lee

Glad at least one of the sites I recommended turned out OK! I must get down to Dawney's Hill later in the week if I can. Those Graylings are splendid.

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Jul-11 04:39 PM GMT

Thanks Dave.

I think it was more the weather at Chobham, plus the size of the place, Dawney's Hill is tiny in comparison! It had brightened up considerably when I was there compared to Chobham.

Thanks again,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by MikeOxon, 13-Jul-11 07:50 PM GMT

I think the Grayling shots are splendid, too. You did well to get the eyespots showing – in my experience, they flick their wings down very soon after landing, so you must have been quick off the mark. Once the forewing is down, they're almost invisible – I didn't realise, at first, that there were two in your fourth pic!

Mike

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Jul-11 08:56 PM GMT

Thanks Mike, it's kind of you to say.

Most did exactly that, closing the wings down soon after landing. However, I found a few that I noticed did not, but rather sat like those depicted for a bit longer. I simply followed those individuals and then crept up very slowly.

Of course, with some, if they sensed a hulking great presence they would be quick to close up after a warning shot of the eye spot!

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Jul-11 11:46 PM GMT

Thursday 14th July

Driving to work I saw a Red Admiral at the Iron Bridge at the end of Greenford Road at 07.40.

At work I saw a Large White.

I was greeted home by a Comma in the front garden – pretty sure it was the same male acting territorial that greeted me home last night.

I was home a little early and spent 45 minutes in my local cemetery. I hadn't been over for ages what with being away and off in search of Him. How things had changed!

There was much more lush vegetation, even more than last year it seems and summer and second broods are well underway.

Seen at the cemetery:

4 Holly Blue
3 Small Copper
3 Small Skipper
6 Speckled Wood
8 Meadow Brown
3 Gatekeeper
10 Small White

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Jul-11 11:50 PM GMT

Saturday 16th July

Inbetween the rain I had 3 Red Admirals in less than 5 minutes today! In a brief spell of sunshine one was my buddliea in the back garden. A couple of minutes later I looked out the front and 2 more were on the window sill.

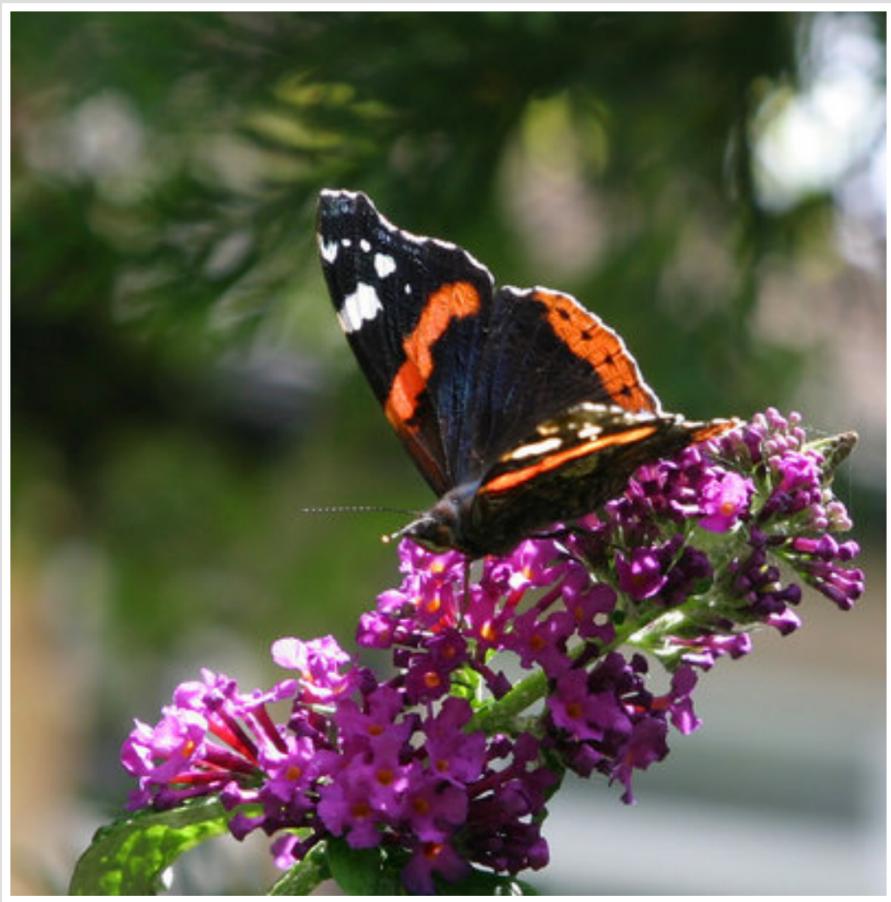
Later, another, or possibly the same one as before, was in the back garden.

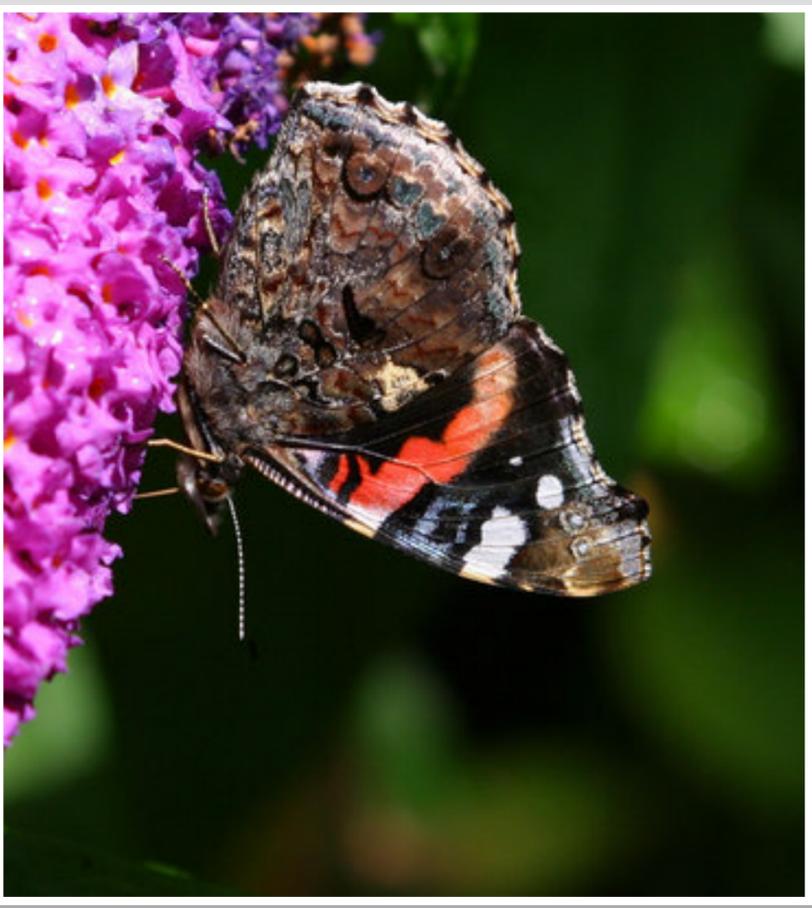
Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Jul-11 12:00 AM GMT

Sunday 17th July – sunshine and showers

In the short spells of sunshine, the garden has been quite busy today. A Speckled Wood and Holly Blue were about along with 2 Red Admirals. One of these was the same one from yesterday as it had a missing club from one antenna.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 27-Jul-11 03:54 AM GMT

Saturday 23rd July

My Dad and Spanish resident family were at my sister's in Leicester for the weekend and I went up for the day.

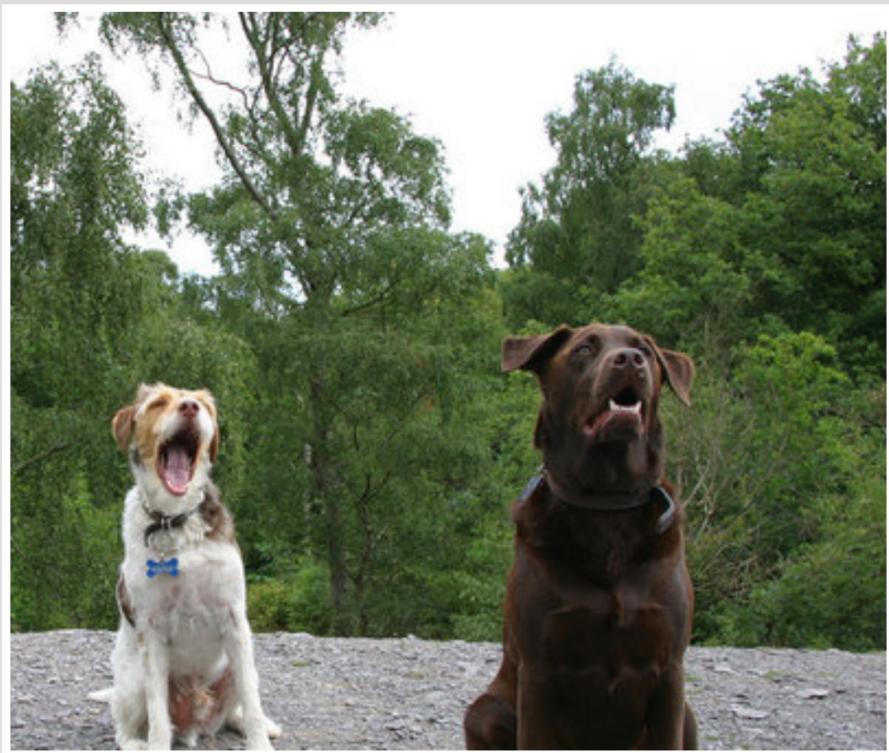
Henry and Spanish Mickey got on like old friends, despite never having met.



Later, we took the dogs for a walk in Swithland Wood and saw:

- 2 Red Admiral
- 1 Gatekeeper
- 2 Meadow Brown
- 5 Speckled Wood
- 2 Large White
- 4 Small White
- 1 Green Veined White

There was a disused quarry there which is known for very expensive slate apparently!



Re: Lee Hurrell

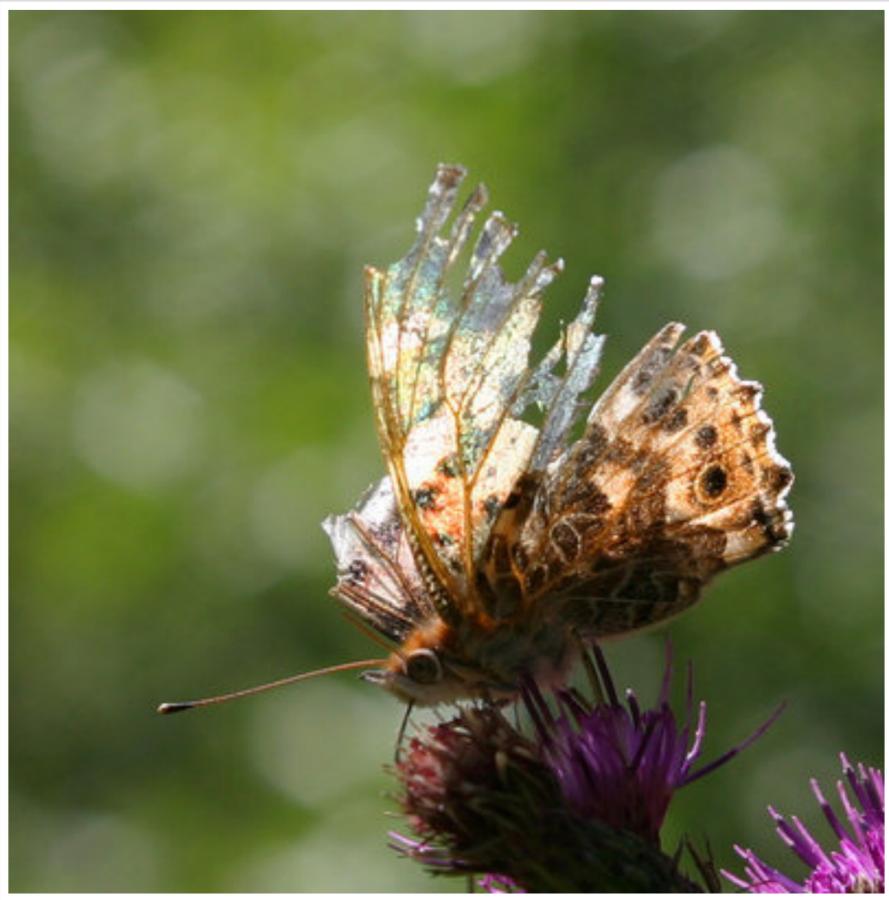
by Lee Hurrell, 29-Jul-11 05:49 AM GMT

Sunday 24th July - Bernwood Forest, Meadows and Field(s)

I'd arranged to meet up with Michael and Karen Field at Bernwood today. On arrival, I walked along the main ride from the forest car park and saw my first UK (half of a) Painted Lady, sharing a thistle with a Peacock.



I'm not quite sure how it was still flying...



There were quite a few fresh Peacocks, which was lovely to see. Sightings for the forest, between the car park and the meadows:

- 8 Silver Washed Fritillary
- 6 Peacock
- 1 Painted Lady
- 2 Red Admiral
- 5 Comma
- 6 Speckled Wood
- 5 Meadow Brown
- 2 Ringlet
- 5 Gatekeeper
- 4 Large White
- 2 Green Veined White
- 3 Small White
- 5 Large Skipper

I arrived at the meadows and headed for the long thin meadow near the car park, where I had seen Brown Hairstreak last year. Just along from the car park Common Blues, Small Coppers and a lovely fresh Brown Argus were zipping about.



Gatekeepers were frequent along the hedge.



On a thistle patch a fresh Brimstone was stocking up.



While the meadow was alive with whites and browns.



In what was one of those unforgettable encounters, I then met my first ever Empress. She glided through the meadow, at head height, with wings held flat open. The occasional flick of the wings and then she went back to gliding. Stunning. I met Michael and Karen shortly after and we all hoped she would return.

We had a good natter as we walked up to the end of the thin meadow, spotting the odd Purple Hairstreak in the hedge. Right at the end a straggly Hawthorn tree played host to at least 10 Purple Hairstreaks, flitting about and occasionally coming down to play. This was lovely and we watched them for ages, also seeing the duelling male behaviour as photographed by Zonda.



The shoes in the background have been touched by Poplar Admirals....



Suddenly an Empress appeared and did the same as before, so we all did get to see Her in the end.

Walking back through the meadows toward the forest Michael spotted our only Brown Hairstreak of the day, a male looking very fresh. We managed a few shots each before he ascended to the canopy. Still, what a sight!



There were loads of dragonflies in the meadows, including some I'd never seen before; about half size of a larger one.



Sightings for Bernwood Meadows:

- 2 female Purple Emperor (could have been the same one to be fair)
- 5 Silver Washed Fritillary
- 2 Red Admiral
- 15+ Marbled White
- 50+ Meadow Brown
- 10+ Ringlet
- 25+ Gatekeeper
- 2 male Brimstone, 1 female
- 5 Large White
- 5 Green Veined White
- 3 Small White
- 5 Large Skipper
- 1 male Brown Hairstreak
- 15+ Purple Hairstreak
- 1 Brown Argus
- 10+ Common Blue
- 4 Small Copper

Walking back through the forest ride we came across several photogenic Brimstones who were much more interested in nectaring than in us!



Here's Michael in action!



Nearby were several Peacocks and a courting pair of Silver Washed flew past.



They really are a stunning butterfly up close when fresh – I think I could look at one all day...

We decided to go to Whitecross Green Wood, partly as I'd never been before. It is also a lovely place. Brimstones and Peacocks were stars here although we did see a couple of Purple Hairstreaks and a White Admiral. We had a good look but no more Brown Hairstreaks to be found.



The rides had been mown in places but I'd love to come back here another time.

Sightings for Whitecross Green Wood:

- 1 White Admiral
- 2 Red Admiral
- 10+ Peacock
- 3 Comma
- 6 Silver Washed Fritillary
- 6 Gatekeeper
- 15+ Meadow Brown
- 5+ Ringlet
- 5 Marbled White
- 6 Small Skipper
- 5 Large Skipper
- 3 Large White
- 5 Green Veined White
- 3 Small White
- 15+ Brimstone
- 2 Purple Hairstreak
- 10+ Common Blue

Here's Michael and Karen, as we were nearly back to the cars. It seemed like we'd walked for miles today.



It really was a lovely day spent in lovely company and I look forward to the next one 😊

PS – thanks for the fig rolls – I love them...

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 29-Jul-11 03:48 PM GMT

Hi Lee,
a lovely report and a collection of really good photos from Sunday. I really enjoyed reading it and having a look at your images – it's a lot nice reading someone else's report (a bit like eating a meal someone else has produced, much better than one you've spent hours on making yourself). 😊

I always like your square cropping for the butterfly photographs. It helps to give your photographs a signature but it's a great format that I should nick more often! 😊😂

Good to see you got a nice photograph of the Male Brown Hairstreak. I think yours is better for showing the inside pattern of the male. It's much better to have that lovely summer light for the photographs (I think we may be back for dull light this weekend). 😊

It was a lovely day and Karen and I really enjoyed your company. This comes as no surprise as you've always been so helpful to me as soon as I came on this site. 😊 I see you've left out a picture of yourself though – such a shame I'm not fast enough to get one of you! 😂

Fig rolls are great. They don't go too mushy in the heat and they fit in Karen's bag very easily! 😊

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 29-Jul-11 03:51 PM GMT

p.s.I think we did walk for miles as can be seen from my sunburn for the day 😊🥰

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Jul-11 05:08 PM GMT

Hi Michael,

Thanks for your comments, that's nice of you to say 😊

I should probably vary the cropping a bit to be honest, but I do aim for the rule of thirds normally. You know I was saying I need to remember to step back a bit sometimes, when you find one that isn't moving it is very easy for me to fill the frame!

The weather looked pretty good for the weekend I thought, well so it was yesterday? Will check it again in a moment.

A very enjoyable day indeed! I shall bear that in mind about fig rolls in the heat – my cheese and pickle sandwiches are always a bit sweaty buy the time I get back to the car 😊

I may put one of me on later then...

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Paul Wetton, 29-Jul-11 05:31 PM GMT

Hi Lee

I think the smaller dragonfly is probably a female or teneral Ruddy Darter. I've seen them at both Bernwood and Whitecross Green Wood before. Very similar to Common Darter but with a more waisted appearance.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Neil Freeman, 29-Jul-11 06:12 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

Good write up and photos, very enjoyable read, as was Michaels in the sightings thread.

In fact it was reading Michaels that tempted me to call in to Bernwood on my way back from Aston Rowant yesterday.

There is a photo of what I think is a female Ruddy Darter on the first page of my diary, looks very similar to your smaller dragonfly.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 29-Jul-11 07:12 PM GMT

Lee,

the weather forecast keeps changing for the weekend. It may yet turn out to be nice...I'm still hoping for a good Purple Hairstreak photo somewhere! 🙄

Neil – glad my report was of some use and encouraged you to visit. Bernwood and Whitecross Green Wood are great places to go – especially in the sun – although WGW isn't quite as nice with a lot of the wildflowers cut down on the main ride at the moment.

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Jul-11 09:32 PM GMT

Thanks Paul and Neil for your comments and IDs – that does indeed look like yours, Neil.

Michael, you're right about the weather – white cloud now for Saturday!

Fingers crossed...

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 30-Jul-11 12:41 AM GMT

Hiya chaps,

I'm not sure the darter isn't actually a Common. Round here the Ruddies have emerged quite a few weeks ago and mature males are deeply reddish on the abdomen with heavier black markings than shown in the pic. It's getting on a bit for teneral Ruddies. The one in the (remarkably sharp!) photo shows lots of paleness on the sides of the thorax and there's quite a lot of paleness in the legs too, plus the shape of the brownish patch in the upper eye (Ruddy seems more evenly half-and half) all points towards Common.

But I could be wrong! 😊

Cheers,

Gibster.

EDIT – Neil, just had a look at your mystery dragonfly too. Starting at the head-end, the sides of the thorax are banded brown, yellow, brown, yellow. That's way too patterned for a Ruddy, so you've got yourself a Common Darter. Looks even more teneral than Lee's individual, the leg pigmentation hasn't properly developed yet, but I think I can see hints of narrow pale stripes. Despite the young age, it's obviously taken a bit of a wing-bashing somewhere along the way! Cheers, Gibster.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jul-11 06:13 AM GMT

Thanks Seth.

It always makes me happy to be able to get close to dragonflies for some reason!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gibster, 30-Jul-11 06:28 AM GMT

Little hint re getting close to dragonflies...works really well with darters.

Try and put yourself in the middle of a territory, close to a favourite perch. Let it come and go a couple of times then put your hand out, palm upwards and open. With luck it'll soon adopt you as the new favourite perch. It gets better...when you've been adopted the dragonfly will allow you to touch it with your other hand. I've spun one in circles by gently pushing its wing, they really don't seem to mind!!! But try and do that to one perched on a reed/twig and you'll be lucky to get closer than a few feet.

Some of the larger species are pretty approachable when they're busily eating large prey. I filmed a Golden-ringed devouring a wasp from 12" distance and it wasn't at all phased by me. Sweet 😊

Catch up sometime mate?

Gibster.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jul-11 06:42 AM GMT

Wow! That's quite a trick – must try it....perhaps tomorrow!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Aug-11 05:52 AM GMT

Saturday 30th July

I got a new camera in the week (Panasonic Lumix FZ45) and took it out to play today, along with the Canon, just in case. I'm quite happy with the results so far; a few questions around image size and reducing this for the interweb but otherwise all good. I need to get used to shooting distance mainly I think as I have quite a few **extreme** close up shots...however, it seems I can get **very** close to a subject, should I want to!

The landscape shots are with the Canon, the butterflies with the FZ45.

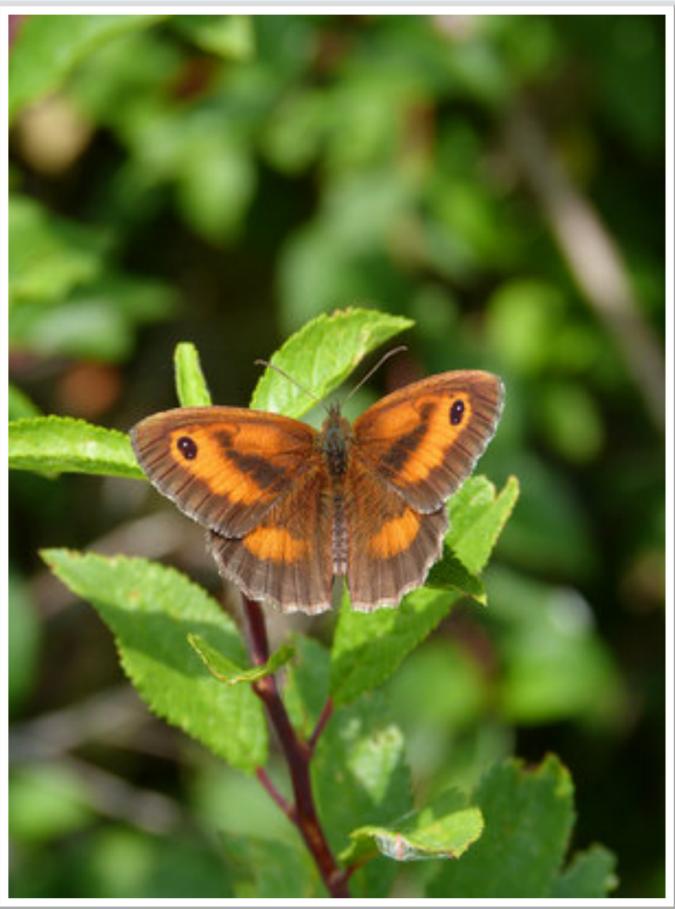
I'm not ruling out a dedicated macro lens one day, I just wanted an update and decided based on the costs involved at this stage! I went back to Bernwood today, arriving at lunchtime. The meadow looked completely different to a week ago – the entire meadow had been mowed and looked ominously devoid of butterflies.



However, having read the notice board it does say they mow in July or August and there were plenty of butterflies around the edges, just not the clouds of browns and whites there were last week.



Gatekeepers were again numerous in the hedgerow.





I walked along the thin meadow with fresh Common Blues and Small Skippers buzzing around.



I found 2 Brown Hairstreaks in the first Ash on the left and watched them for a while but they were not coming down to play. I walked up to the end and found the wasp nest mentioned in Neil's (nfreem) diary in exactly the same fashion - ('where are all these wasps coming from? Ah, I see....')

I did find more Common (?) Darters and managed to get face to face with this beauty.

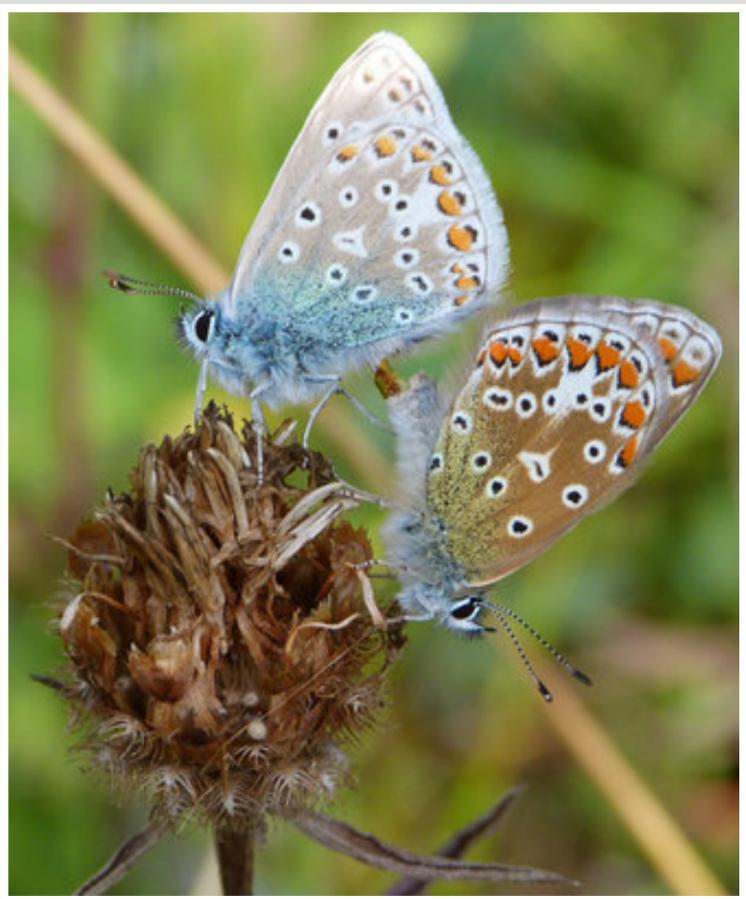




The Purple Hairstreaks were still on the same Hawthorn and after watching them for a short while I had a most unexpected surprise 😊



I walked all the way round to the Black Hairstreak gate but didn't spot any more Brown Hairstreaks. Love was certainly in the air today though with 2 mating pairs of Meadow Browns, 1 pair of Gatekeepers and 2 pairs of Common Blues.



And I thought the colours on this female Common Blue were stunning!



Sightings for Bernwood Meadows:

2 Brown Hairstreak

8 Purple Hairstreak

20+ Common Blue

1 Small Copper

1 Brown Argus

3 Silver Washed Fritillary

1 Comma

50+ Meadow Brown

50+ Gatekeeper

1 Marbled White

4 Speckled Wood

5 Large Skipper

8 Small Skipper

3 Large White

15+ Small White

15+ Green Veined White

I called into Aston Rowant on the way home to see some Silver Spotted Skippers. They were there in good numbers along with Chalk Hill Blues and Brown Argus.





The Silver Spotted Skippers were really looking for a fight, buzzing anything that dared to fly nearby; blues; browns and even a dandelion seed head that had the audacity to stray too close!
I found an ovipositing female too. I think posturing as opposed to positing as I didn't find any eggs.



I also found one of those Brown Argus trees!



It was lovely see fresh Chalk Hills too.





Fresh Small Coppers were lovely to see.



Sightings for Aston Rowant:

25+ Silver Spotted Skipper

6 Small Skipper

50+ Chalk Hill Blue

3 Common Blue

20+ Brown Argus

5 Small Copper

2 Peacock

1 Small Tortoiseshell

3 Ringlet

30+ Meadow Brown

1 Marbled White

2 Speckled Wood

3 Small Heath

5 Large White

5 Small White

4 Green Veined White

1 Millerd

I bumped into Dave Miller (good to see you again, Dave!) by chance on my way back to the car and we sat on the slope having a chat with Silver Spotted Skippers and Chalkhill Blues at our feet and Red Kites overhead – a lovely end to the day.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 04-Aug-11 06:02 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

I hope all the processing was worth it 😊! Nice pictures still (regardless of the camera used!) I especially like the Purple Hairstreak (why not? you know how I love those critters, even if they won't pose for me 😞) and also the Brown Argus tree and Ovipositing Silver-Spotted Skipper – and always nice to see the Small Coppers returning!

Shame to see the meadow mown, but I suppose it's for it's own good – it obviously works every year... 😊😊

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 04-Aug-11 06:16 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Glad to see you've been out practising with the new camera. I particularly liked your 2nd Gatekeeper shot and the fabulous female Common Blue. I had one identical at Kithurst Hill on 23rd July.

Keep up the good work.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Aug-11 06:16 AM GMT

Thanks Michael!

Of course, perhaps next time the original images won't start out the size of playing fields 😊

I can see some limitations compared to the Canon and lens I was using; (light subject against dark background for one, some noise, some sort of blurring about some edges) but lots of plus points too (better focus, sharper, brighter colours, more of the subject in focus). I'll keep practising though!

I took several of the shots above with both cameras so may post direct comparisons in due course.

That's true about the meadow, it was such a contrast to only a week before....

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Aug-11 06:22 AM GMT

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

Hi Lee,

Glad to see you've been out practising with the new camera. I particularly liked your 2nd Gatekeeper shot and the fabulous female Common Blue. I had one identical at Kithurst Hill on 23rd July.

Keep up the good work.

Good hunting.

Thanks Mark 😊

Also for your advice and help last week too.

The lady blue was a stunner, I have to say!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Neil Freeman, 04-Aug-11 06:36 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Nice reports and some lovely photos.

Interesting to read your comments on the Lumix using a FZ38 myself. I recently fitted a Panasonic close up lens as used by Mark and Sussex Kipper and am pleased with the results. Adds a little bit of weight and size to the camera but is still nice and manageable.

The meadows at Bernwood look totally different, necessary management I suppose but what a contrast to last week.

I wonder if the mower found the wasps 😬😡

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Aug-11 04:44 PM GMT

Thanks Neil 😊

Having not used a macro type lens before I was amazed at how close you can get! You get some lovely pictures from yours too.

Be good to meet up some time?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 05-Aug-11 07:12 AM GMT

Sunday 31st July

I nearly didn't go out today but the sun was out. So I did, but soon wished I hadn't when I hit the M25. When I finally arrived at my favourite car park at Windover Hill, East Sussex, some 3 hours later, (😱😞😡), I'd had enough and was fit to burst. (Two traffic jams, 1 set of road works, slow and busy A roads, some village event and a tractor, in case you're wondering). Perhaps in hindsight, the coast, from London, on a sunny day wasn't such a good idea. 😞

Luckily the Chalkhill Blues fluttering in front of the car soon calmed me down.



There wasn't much to see in the car park compared to this time last year though although I did find this Burnet with some extra red.



Sightings for Windover Hill car park:

10+ male, 3 female Chalkhill Blue, including a mating pair
3 Gatekeeper
2 Meadow Brown
2 Speckled Wood
3 Small Heath
2 Small Skipper
1 Large White
2 Green Veined White

I set off to the summit and was really pleased to see lots of Walls on the path up the hill. I was hoping to see some today although any photos proved impossible. Equally thrilling was a second brood Dingy Skipper.

Chalkhill Blues were in very good numbers, with well over 100 seen. At one point there were so many in view at one point I didn't know where to look. They seemed to be centered around some mineral taking on a bare patch of chalk, not something I've seen before. They kept barging into each other and fluttering about but I did manage to capture some shots, this one showing a lovely variation in underside hind wing ground colour.



I was perhaps too early for the hoped for Small Blues and Common Blues don't seem to have hit high numbers yet but then the dry spring could have hit these two species. A couple of tired female Dark Green Fritillaries and a single Marbled White still hung on.

I made a slow ascent up the hill, trying and failing to corner the Walls. As I walked over the Long Man of Wilmington there were some sort of druidy thing going on at his base with medieval costumed people and a film crew.



Finally reaching the summit I walked down into the Grayling valley and found them nearer the top of the slope in good numbers. I managed to get very close to some!



Grayling country:



On the way back down it had all gone a bit Wicker Man as there were now tribal drummers doing their best Burundi, along with some strange chanting. The sound was crystal clear up where I was, having carried up the slopes – I'm sure the locals were scared stiff.



Sightings for Windover Hill:

- 100+ Chalkhill Blue
- 4 Common Blue
- 3 Small Copper
- 1 Dingy Skipper
- 6 Small Skipper
- 15+ Grayling
- 15+ Wall
- 1 Marbled White
- 40+ Gatekeeper
- 30+ Meadow Brown
- 5 Small Heath
- 2 Peacock
- 2 Dark Green Fritillary
- 1 Large White

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 05-Aug-11 08:20 PM GMT

Hi Lee,
lovely shots of the Chalkhill Blues, and interesting to see the 'wickerman' ceremony. You're lucky to escape with your life! 😊
Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 05-Aug-11 09:04 PM GMT

Thanks Michael 😊

Indeed – I was half expecting to see Edward Woodward trapped inside a giant straw man on the way back down 😲

By the way, do you know why he had so many letter d's in his name?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 06-Aug-11 03:26 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Glad you got close to some Sussex Grayling ... a rare sight indeed!

I just love those Chalkhill Blues. I don't think I'll ever get bored at looking at photos of them.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 06-Aug-11 03:58 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

By the way, do you know why he had so many letter d's in his name?

I don't know, Lee, why did he have so many letter d's in his name?

(expectant pause for punchline...)

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-Aug-11 07:52 PM GMT

Thanks for picking it up, Dave...

Because if he didn't, he would be called Ewar Woowar.

I'll get me coat....

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-Aug-11 07:54 PM GMT

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

Hi Lee,

Glad you got close to some Sussex Grayling ... a rare sight indeed!

I just love those Chalkhill Blues. I don't think I'll ever get bored at looking at photos of them.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Thanks Mark. I know what you mean – certainly one of my favourites.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Aug-11 09:38 PM GMT

Some late reports from last week...

Tuesday 2nd August

A visit to my local cemetery after work in warm sunshine yielded 2 Gatekeeper, 3 Meadow Brown, 1 Speckled Wood, 3 Green Veined White, 2 Small White, 3 male Common Blue, 1 Small Copper and most excitingly a male Essex Skipper, the first one I have ever seen there.



This brings the species seen within the cemetery to 20 – not bad for a small site in West London! I'll let my local BC branch know too.

Wednesday 3rd August

Another after work visit, this time to West Middlesex Golf Course, in a last ditch attempt for local Hairstreaks.

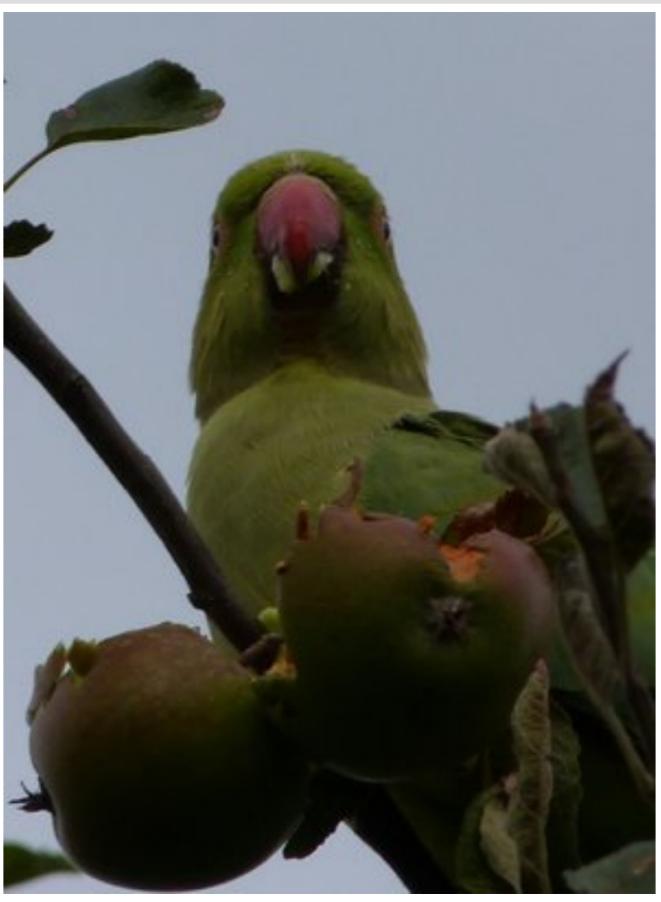
I saw 3 Purple, all out of reach along with 1 Holly Blue, 1 Green Veined White, 2 Gatekeeper, 2 Speckled Wood, 2 Comma and 1 Red Admiral.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Aug-11 06:30 AM GMT

One evening a couple of weeks ago we had some visitors in the apple tree.





These were taken with the FZ45 on full zoom from a distance of about 20–25 feet. I was quite impressed!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-Aug-11 04:55 AM GMT

Sunday 21st August - Betulae at Bernwood

I returned to Bernwood Meadows today as Brown Hairstreaks should be at about their peak. There was a small herd of cows in the meadow near the car park who obviously thought I was going to feed them as they followed me initially as I walked in. I watched them eat some of the young blackthorn shoots so I hope they don't eat all the eggs....

The forecast had been for a sunny day and I left home to a glorious morning but as I arrived at around 11am it had clouded over. I met a lovely couple, Alan and Kerry, who were armed with a video camera. They left for Whitecross Green Wood and I walked the entire circumference of the meadows and saw a few browns and blues but no Brown Hairstreaks. I went back to the car for an early lunch just as the sun was beginning to come out properly.

I then met some fellow Hairstreak hunters, Kevin and Ian, both from Cambridgeshire and a couple from Bristol, and we searched the thin meadow. Kevin had seen 2 in an oak tree over the road from the meadow and we watched these for a while. I walked on toward the end and at exactly 1pm this lady literally landed at my feet!



I called the others over and hopefully we all got some photos, we certainly all saw her. She flew up into the hedge and I watched her ovi-posturing - I didn't find any eggs subsequently. We also found a tatty male that stayed on a thistle for a most of our time there.

As it was now proper Hairstreak weather Kevin, Ian and I split up and I had another 2 females down low, both in lovely fresh condition.





They were stunning!

A couple of Red Admirals were in the meadow.



While some third brood Speckled Woods were fresh out.



This female Meadow Brown seemed pretty fresh but very pale; I think she had no orange pigment in her scales.



Common Blues were present in small numbers while the second picture is I think a strangely marked Brown Argus.



Sightings for Bernwood Meadows:

- 6 Brown Hairstreak (at least 3 females, 1 male)
- 15+ Common Blue
- 5 Brown Argus
- 2 Red Admiral
- 6 Speckled Wood
- 20+ Gatekeeper
- 15+ Meadow Brown
- 10+ Green Veined White

I was debating whether to stay on at Bernwood (it's not every day you have several Brown Hairstreaks land at your feet) but the lure of *coridon* was strong. So I called into Aston Rowant on the way home but Chalkhill Blue were surprisingly few. I didn't see one until I reached the bottom of the slope.



I'd met Ian from earlier here and showed him where to look for Silver Spotted Skippers – they were in good numbers still, with some fresh individuals. I also saw two courting pairs, with (presumably) the male vibrating his wings near the female, although I didn't get a good photo of this.





At the bottom of the slope near the gate there are huge patches of wild thyme and this was covered in butterflies. Some stunningly fresh Brown Argus were beautiful:



While this female was superbly attired!



Also on the thyme were the most Small Tortoiseshells I have seen in one place in many years - I counted 8. That topped off a terrific day 😊



Sightings for Aston Rowant:

- 25+ Silver Spotted Skipper
- 10+ Chalk Hill Blue
- 10+ Common Blue+
- 8 Brown Argus
- 6 Small Copper
- 8 Small Tortoiseshell
- 30+ Meadow Brown

15+ Small Heath
2 Green Veined White

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Pawpawsaurus, 25-Aug-11 07:05 AM GMT

A very nice set of shots, Lee – I'm jealous of the Brown Hairstreaks especially. 🍷

I've not yet made it to Aston Rowant. I keep intending to stop off there on the way home (or at Yoesden Bank for Adonis), but there's never enough time left.

Paul

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 25-Aug-11 03:37 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

Nice report and pictures. I particularly like the first Brown Hairstreak shot and the Aston Rowant shots of Brown Argus where a lovely blue hue is picked up (or is that just my eyes). Did you take these with the Panasonic?

By the way you get some strange 'sparrows' in Greenford!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 25-Aug-11 03:55 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

great report as ever – with some lovely pictures – and good to see you are still 'pulling the ladies' with ease 😊 I would have loved to have popped back to Bernwood on Sunday but we'd travelled too far on Saturday to even think about it. It must be quite a reasonable year for Brown Hairstreaks there apart from those unlucky folks that haven't seen them properly (sorry Paul! 😞 😊). Who knows, I may yet venture up to Oxford again before this year is out! 😊

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Willow, 25-Aug-11 11:43 PM GMT

Hello Lee,

I must say that your Bernwood and Aston Rowant picture sets are first rate and that trip report is more than good too, and it seemed to be spent in good company as a bonus 😊 Reports such yours get me all fired up for yet another trip south...I could have migrated by now 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Aug-11 05:01 PM GMT

Thank you all for your kind comments, very nice of you and much appreciated! 😊

"Pawpawsaurus" wrote:

I keep intending to stop off there on the way home (or at Yoesden Bank for Adonis), but there's never enough time left.

I've been to Yoesden Bank several times but always in spring, it's a lovely site!

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

I particularly like the first Brown Hairstreak shot and the Aston Rowant shots of Brown Argus where a lovely blue hue is picked up (or is that just my eyes). Did you take these with the Panasonic?

They were taken with the Panasonic. There *is* a blue hue; that individual had that wonderful rainbow effect you see on a freshly emerged Brown Argus with different colours visible depending on the light.

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

By the way you get some strange 'sparrows' in Greenford!

Yes indeed, quite noisy they are too! But charming in their own way.

"Michaeljf" wrote:

good to see you are still 'pulling the ladies' with ease 😊

Ahem, best not tell someone then...although I was quite impressed with the photo 😊

"Willrow" wrote:

I must say that your Bernwood and Aston Rowant picture sets are first rate and that trip report is more than good too

High praise from you, Bill! 😊

Thanks all once again.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 05-Sep-11 04:40 AM GMT

I've been pretty busy recently and haven't been out in what seems like ages.

I've seen a few whites and Speckled Woods at home and at work although we did have an Old Lady (HUGE), a Mottled Beauty and one of the smaller Yellow Underwings to light at home last week.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 05-Sep-11 06:14 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

I knew I'd start a trend!

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

although we did have an Old Lady (HUGE), a Mottled Beauty and one of the smaller Yellow Underwings to light at home last week.

At least with 'Bathroom Entomology' you can do it all year round. 😊

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-Sep-11 10:27 PM GMT

I must admit I do like seeing what moths I get at home although I don't record them – I should really.

I'm looking forward to my first Angle Shades of the year – another reminder of childhood.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-Sep-11 04:13 AM GMT

The 'front room entomology' continues with a first for the house this week – a Willow Beauty!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 12-Sep-11 12:29 AM GMT

After what seems like an age, I had an hour to myself today and had a very enjoyable hour over in the cemetery.

I only saw 20+ Speckled Woods and 8 Small Whites but it was lovely to be surrounded by butterflies again.

This female had a lovely indigo hue, not something I've seen before.



Her underside also had a lovely sage green and violet colouration. She was taking minerals, again, not something I've seen Speckled Woods doing.



Another female.



Males were fighting over sheltered, sunny spots and many aerial dogfights ensued. At one point I could see 5 or 6 all fighting over one section of hedge!



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 12-Sep-11 04:32 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

I'm really glad you managed to get out at last.

Great composition in the last shot. Really nice.

Keep up the good work and remember, despite some comments on the forum, the season's NOT over yet!

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 12-Sep-11 05:30 PM GMT

Thanks Mark, really nice of you to say – that means a lot 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Sep-11 01:05 AM GMT

In bird news, I saw 3 or 4 Swallows from my office window yesterday, battling against the wind – presumably on their southerly migration.

This afternoon, outside the college, I noticed a Sparrowhawk in the sky and a flock of around 30 starlings initially flying at a different altitude and in another direction *actually change direction* to go and mob it!

Something else I've never seen before.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Nick Broomer, 16-Sep-11 04:07 AM GMT

Hi Lee

I love your two photo`s of speckled wood`s on the ground. I think the background really compliments the butterflies and vice versa. Two truly wonderful pictures, my opinion, much better than a green background.

hideandseek

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Sep-11 09:43 PM GMT

Thanks hideandseek, that's nice of you to say!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Sep-11 09:39 PM GMT

I watched a brand new freshly emerged, presumably 3rd brood, female Small White in Teddington, Middlesex this morning 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 02-Oct-11 02:38 AM GMT

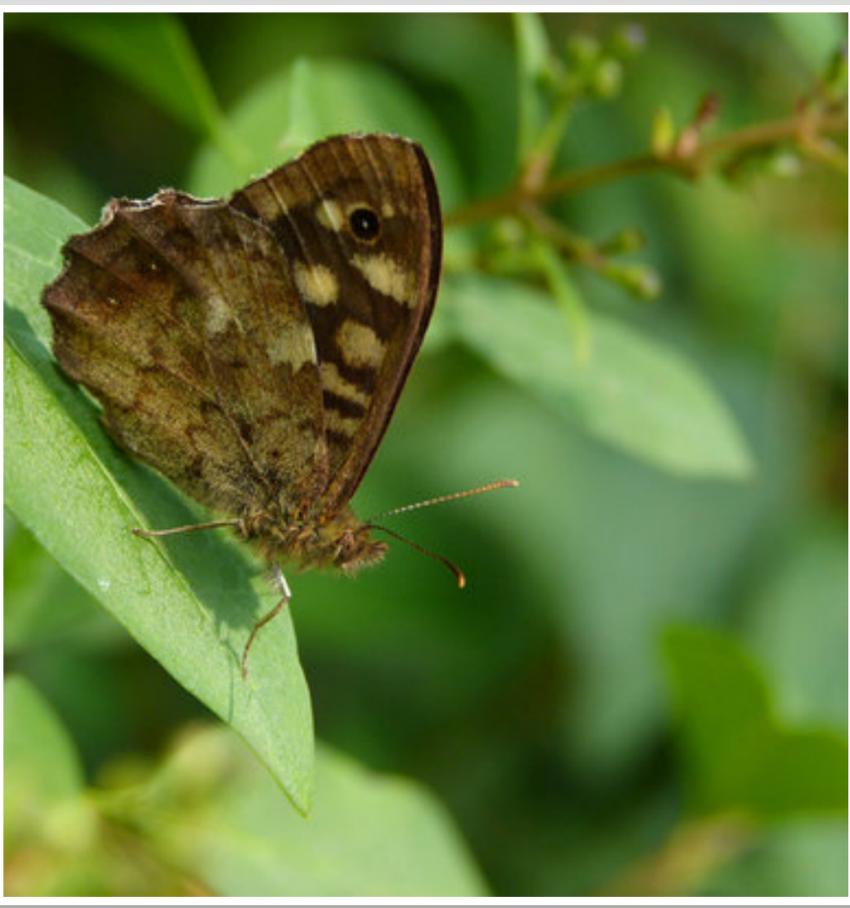
Saturday 1st October

It felt as hot today as it was in the south of France in late June! It has all week actually.

One for Chris C to start with – presumably a female garden spider on my way out today – she was huge.



A fresh looking male Large White, a Small White over the neighbouring allotments and 5 Speckled Wood in my local cemetery this lunchtime. The Speckled Woods were showing less yellow markings on the upperside, characteristic of latter broods.



It was strange being summer and autumnal at the same time.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 02-Oct-11 03:04 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Glad to see you've managed to get out and get some pictures ... AT LAST!

I love the first Speckled Wood shot. Did you take these pictures with the Lumix?

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 02-Oct-11 05:26 AM GMT

Thanks Mark 😊

Yes, with the Lumix.

I was hoping for a Red Admiral but it wasn't to be. Still, there's always tomorrow!

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 02-Oct-11 06:50 AM GMT

i agree with your garden spider 😊

Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 02-Oct-11 06:10 PM GMT

Thanks Chris.

I remember last year we didn't see that many spiders, I think due to an early frost, while there are loads this year.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Oct-11 05:23 AM GMT

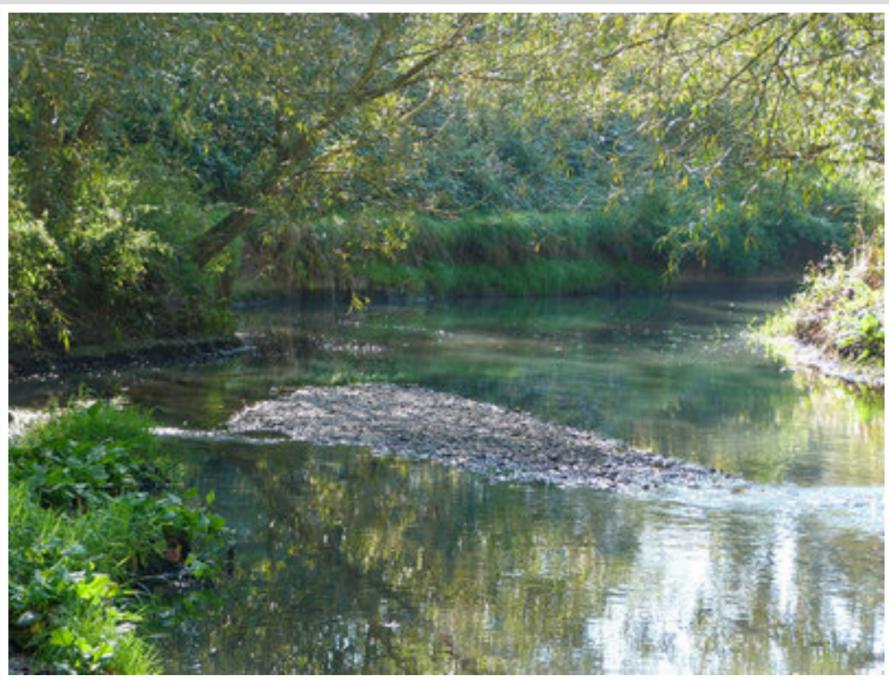
Sunday 2nd October

Another lunchtime walk in blistering 30 degree heat, this time around Brent River Park.

2 Small Whites and 4 Speckled Woods the only sightings, this one looking particularly autumnal.



I found a stretch of the river I hadn't explored before and I was really taken with this little bit, it was so serene and I had it all to myself.



Still missing a Red Admiral I popped into the cemetery on the way home to be greeted by one on a fly past 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Oct-11 04:13 AM GMT

Saturday 15th October

A gloriously sunny day today, it even made Greenford seem nice.

I was busy again but at lunchtime a Red Admiral flew purposefully through the front garden, direction: due south.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Nov-11 11:36 PM GMT

I've been pretty quiet recently as I've been really busy – but it's all over now and we have finally moved home!

Goodbye Greenford, hello rural Kent 😊

We're in a small village not far from Sevenoaks at the foot of the North Downs in the general area in which I grew up.

I'm very much looking forward to exploring the downs and surrounding area in more detail than my childhood and to see what else I can find. I should have species I've travelled far to see over the last two years within walking distance now.

To the next chapter.

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 30-Nov-11 11:39 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

Great to hear from you and I'm glad the move has finally happened. I hope it wasn't too stressful ...

Good luck in your new home.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Dec-11 05:17 PM GMT

Travelling to and from work, I've seen quite a few moths along the lanes near me over the last week, presumably either December or Winter ones.

This morning gave an even better sight though. We had an early start, (left home at 05.40), and the lanes were even quieter than usual. Under a narrow, but wooded section where the trees hang over so much it's a bit like driving through a tunnel, we saw a Tawny Owl chasing a small songbird.

Not a bird you often see, but more likely hear, I think it's probably the first one I have ever actually seen!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 23-Dec-11 03:29 AM GMT

Wrotham Mists

After the move in November, in driving to the station I was treated to some wonderful early morning, misty views. The first two were taken between Wrotham and Kemsing, looking south towards Sevenoaks.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mark Colvin, 23-Dec-11 04:15 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Nice landscapes 😊

Merry Christmas.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 23-Dec-11 06:15 PM GMT

Thanks Mark!

Merry Christmas to you and yours too.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Nick Broomer, 24-Dec-11 03:27 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

I`m glad you have just seen your first Tawny Owl. They are such beautiful birds.

I saw two this year, midday, in Chiddingfold Wood, no 5.40am start for me to see one. 😊

I hope you and your good lady have a lovely Christmas, and a happy new year.

Nick.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by David M, 24-Dec-11 04:52 AM GMT

Lovely atmospheric pics there, Lee.

Have a great Christmas.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Dec-11 10:30 PM GMT

Thanks Nick and David.

Best wishes for the new year!

Lee