

Re: Rogerdodge

by Rogerdodge, 01-May-12 08:53 PM GMT

Well – I seem to have neglected my "Diary" since I set it up.

I hope to do better this season!

I am sitting at my desk in a windowless office having just been outside to visit another area of the factory.

The sun is shining.

It took all my willpower to get back inside – I nearly pulled a sickie.

On the strength of a reasonable forecast for tomorrow I have just booked Wednesday off.

Due to the appalling weather over the last 6 weeks, I have seen very few butterflies this year.

So, I have a tricky decision for tomorrow – Marsland for PBs or Buckland Wood for Dukes and Dingies and Grizzleds and Green Hairstreak?

Tune in tomorrow to see the results.

(assuming the forecast isn't too wrong!)

Re: Rogerdodge

by NickB, 01-May-12 11:18 PM GMT

Good luck mate....

(Just caught-up with your Photostream...Fantastic stuff – and some truly *stunning* images...)

Re: Rogerdodge

by David M, 02-May-12 12:26 AM GMT

"Rogerdodge" wrote:

On the strength of a reasonable forecast for tomorrow I have just booked Wednesday off.

You're not the only one, Roger. I have booked a half day to give me chance to reacquaint myself with butterflies after an absence of 6 weeks. It brightened and warmed up considerably after 2pm here in Swansea and tomorrow's forecast suggests some sunshine and temps up to 16c.

Like you, I sincerely hope it is correct, as there are more deluges to come over the subsequent few days.

Re: Rogerdodge

by essexbuzzard, 02-May-12 05:30 AM GMT

Yes,good luck guys-it seems like SW England and S. Wales should get the best of the sun tomorrow,as well as,again,W.Scotland. I'm off tomorrow as well,but it looks like it will stay cloudy in south East Anglia.

Re: Rogerdodge

by Rogerdodge, 03-May-12 02:40 PM GMT

After seemingly weeks of endless rain, the forecast for Wednesday looked good. I agreed at work that, if I didn't turn up for work, it would be a day holiday for me, if the weather was no good, then I would just turn up for work as per.

Here, in the west country, the day was glorious.

I decided to head for Marsland, which is about 30 miles away. Marsland is a real gem of a place. A substantial chunk of ancient woodland cloaking the steep sides of a stream cut valley and running down to a beautiful area of coastline. There are a number of cleared areas in the woodland which are alive with butterflies. Although the Pearl-bordered is the star of the show, Small Pearls are abundant, Silver-washed are found in great numbers, and Dark Green, also fairly abundant. There is a tiny and fluctuating colony of Marsh Fritillary and High Brown is also (rarely) seen.

The wood is set well away from major conurbations and roads, and is one of the few places I know where you can find real peace. If you sit and close your eyes, it is possible to hear nothing but natural noises – insects, birds and the rustle of the wind through leaves, or the rush of the rocky stream. A truly magical place.

I know of four good areas in the wood for PBs. To access the best you need to cross a stream twice. After the recent rain I felt it wise to take willies. So I threw a pair in the boot just before I headed off.

I got to Marsland at around 08:00 after a delightful drive with the "soft top down and the radio on".

I opened the boot to discover that the pair of willies were actually two half pairs – one a size 10, and the other a size 7. I hoped the stream would not be too full.

My planned route would take me through my second favourite area shortly after leaving the car. I knew I would be far too early to find any flying butterflies here, but planned to visit here on my way back up to the car.

I walked through the woods – just beautiful with the early morning sun and the birds still belting out the last few bars of the dawn chorus. I encountered my first two butterflies at 08:30 – a Green-veined white and a Holly Blue. The delight at encountering these two was tempered a bit as I stood at the normal stream crossing point. It was running so fast and deep that it would have challenged even my wellies (had I got them). I did think about taking boots and socks off and wding – but soon put that sort of heroics out of my head.

Ho hum – it would have to be concentrating on the other three sites then. I retraced my (very muddy) steps and soon came to a small meadow area where I regularly see PBs. It was still fairly early, and a few male Orange Tips patrolled the meadow. A couple of Holly Blues jostled around an ivy covered tree, and a Roe Deer watched me with curiosity from only 50 yards as I wandered about looking for PBs roosting. I found no roosters, but at 09:30 I had my first PB fly past. It looked very fresh in flight, and closer investigation turned out to be a very freshly emerged Small Pearl. Eventually the PBs arose, and I had no less than eight in sight at any one time. I moved on to the next area. Carpeted with bluebells, this was the most butterfly rich area I encountered. Lower counts of both the fritillaries, but lots of Peacock, Brimstone, GVand Small White a single Small Tort and more Holly Blue along with some Speckled wood. At around mid-day I decided to head up to my second favourite spot. There I met my first human of the day. A delightful chap, a fellow enthusiast, and a "UKB lurker" Pearls and Small Pearls were in about equal number here. I spent an hour or so here, and then off to a nearby pub

for a well-earned pie and pint.

I arrived home tired and sunburnt and happy. As I write this it is early Thursday and it is raining. What a great window in the weather yesterday was. I am so glad I managed to take it off.

In its pre-extinction days Large Blue were found on the south facing slopes near the sea here. It looks like the published management plans will remove scrub and create a low turf with many bare patches. 😊



Re: Rogerdodge

by Neil Hulme, 03-May-12 04:25 PM GMT

Ahh, that's better! Nice one Roger. Magical days like that are going to seem even more magical this spring. Best Wishes, Neil

Re: Rogerdodge

by Lee Hurrell, 03-May-12 09:38 PM GMT

Lovely report Roger, it's good to see butterflies emerging again. Marsland sounds like a truly magical place – I hope to visit one day.

"Rogerdodge" wrote:

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"Rogerdodge" wrote:

I opened the boot to discover that the pair of willies were actually two half pairs – one a size 10, and the other a size 7.



Haven't heard Don for a while, The End of the Innocence was my entry album, apart from the LPs from his old group my Dad had.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Rogerdodge

by Rogerdodge, 04-May-12 12:39 AM GMT

Lee

Marsland is superb. Well worth the trouble it takes to get there (assuming you don't live in N. Devon/Cornwall of course).

Thanks for pointing out my phallic mitype.

I can only blame automatic spell checking, not some Freudian disfunction.

My song reference was actually to "Scenes from an Italian Restaurant" by Billy Joel. However the line(s) from "The Boys of Summer" are very similar I agree.

"The End of the Innocence" is a great favourite of mine, not least because Bruce Hornsby is one of the greatest living singer/songwriter/musicians. (IMHO of course)

Perhaps I shall slip song lyrics into my Diary postings in future – see who spots them.....

Re: Rogerdodge

by David M, 04-May-12 04:03 AM GMT

I can certainly empathise with your stored-up angst, Roger. I think I risked becoming suicidal had I not got out yesterday.

Often, days like the one you've just experienced are particularly memorable just because of the gap between drinks.

Re: Rogerdodge

by essexbuzzard, 04-May-12 05:45 AM GMT

Yes,well done Roger! Here in East Anglia,it stayed overcast and cold,for May at least,and very little was about. Nice to see the sun still exists-on the Cornwall-Devon border at least.

Re: Rogerdodge

by Neil Freeman, 04-May-12 06:10 AM GMT

Hi Roger,

Nice report, I enjoyed reading it and am glad that you managed to make the most of a break in the weather.

Cheers,

Neil F.

Re: Rogerdodge

by Wurzel, 04-May-12 06:57 AM GMT

I don't know what I'm more envious of: the butterflies you've seen and photographed or that you had it warm enough to drive with the top down?!

Have a goodun

Wurzel