

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 03-Jan-16 12:49 PM GMT

A BELATED HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL ON UKB 😊

Thanks for all the advice regarding my loss of data.

My new year was made especially happy by good news I received from my brother. A simple 'BTW your laptop is all sorted' casually dropped into an exchange of messages over New Year. After leaving him the offending laptop on Boxing Day, he was able to retrieve all missing data 😊. A corrupted partition table was the problem apparently. A lesson learned, I will now always back up my data 😊. Thanks Bruv.

It seems to have been gloomy and mild for weeks. There have been some sunny periods over the holiday period, but I have not seen a butterfly since 21.11.2015. I have also had some disappointing searches for eggs and larvae. However, it is sometimes surprising what can be found when you start closely examining a grass tussock.



A recent search was disappointing. This freshly moulted moth larva was all I could find in a clump of Cocks Foot. Hedge End 28.12.2015



In the same Clump of Cocks Foot it was mild enough to give this pair of flies an amorous feeling. There were also spiders and a myriad of other minute unidentified insects. Hedge End 28.12.2015

As others have noted the prolonged nondescript mild weather has resulted in some curious mixtures of plants sporting out of season flowers locally. In the garden my Hebe still has a good covering of flowers whilst just up the path Primroses and Daffodils are in flower. There is also quite a lot of late Bramble flowers locally and all the local Holly bushes have a smattering of flowers (not really sure if they are late or early). Hopefully the freeze will come, but if the mildness continues for too much longer I hope not be too many butterflies are lulled into early emergence.



This Primrose was an early sign of Spring a short walk from home 28.12.2015 Close by Bramble and Holly also in flower. Looking forward to the coming season in 2016 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 03-Jan-16 10:07 PM GMT

Glad to hear that it all worked out, those partition tables eh 😊😄 Nice picture of Picture Wings. Have a cracking new year!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 09-Jan-16 08:40 PM GMT

Favourite Butterfly Days & Places 2015

Knowle Village 8.8.2015 & 3.9.2015

This site is one of my favourites and has provided many of my butterfly highlights. It is not a nature reserve or SSSI, but it is probably the site I have visited most regularly over the last couple of years. The location is a disused, former Mental Hospital sitting in a quietly pleasant area of woods and farmland. My main butterfly 'hotspot' is a narrow strip of land where farmland meets ancient woodland. Also, a short stretch of the former Hospital Perimeter road which is now overgrown with Buddleia and an Ivy covered brick wall, I call it 'Buddleia Lane'. These two days were in perhaps the busiest part of my butterfly year and managed to escape my diary at the time.



The location of many of my recent butterfly highlights



'Buddleia Lane'

The 8.8.2015 was a particularly special day for me at this site. My brother was in the UK and we met up for a brief early evening walk not specifically for butterflies but I hoped to incorporate some of the hotspots en route.

Despite the fact that I have been a regular visitor here for the last couple of years, I had already notched up 3 new species earlier in the year (Common Blue, Small Heath and Painted Lady). On this occasion, surprisingly, I would add four more. As we walked along the wide grassy track next to the Oak trees a silvery butterfly flew up from a clump of Vetch right in front of us and settled out of reach in an Oak tree. This confirmed my long held suspicions that there were Purple Hairstreak here. We only saw the one and I was unable to get a photo but I will be looking more intently here next season. In fact this was my first ever Purple Hairstreak that was not way up in the canopy. On the return journey we passed almost the same spot and on the other side of the track I saw what I initially thought was a Comma fluttering around some Bramble flowers. As I got closer I could see it was not a Comma at all. It was a very ragged Fritillary of some kind, so ragged in fact that I could not be 100% sure but I suspected it was a Silver Washed Fritillary. Again this was a pleasantly unsurprising sighting as the habitat is just right. It was also one of those moments where my camera was not set up and before I could get organised the butterfly had gone 😞.



By now I was already feeling quite pleased with myself as we made our way back to my brothers for tea. There is an area of longer grass at one end of the wide track. At the moment we passed this area it was bathed in the last rays of sunshine. It did not take long to find some Common Blues making the most of things, but what really caught my eye was a lovely Small Copper posing beautifully on a head of grass. Unfortunately I fluffed my photographic opportunity again and spooked the butterfly 😞, but it did increase my Small Copper tally (to a grand total of 2 for the year 😊). If that was not enough, amongst the Common Blues I spotted my fourth new species of the evening, a single shimmering Brown Argus. Thankfully I was able to get at least some reasonable photos from such a memorable evening.



Painted Ladies in Buddleia Lane



The 3.9.2015 was the first opportunity I had had to return to this site since the 8.8.2015. I started with a quick look along 'Buddleia Lane' it was a bit cloudy but first up was a couple of Red Admiral which proved quite difficult to approach and photograph. Thankfully I had got my act together by the time 2 fresh looking Painted Ladies appeared 😊. I then headed over to the area I had last visited a month ago by which time it was much more sunny. The first thing I spotted was a single very ragged Fritillary nectaring on Knapweed. It could not have been the same one, but with more time to spend I was quickly able to identify it as a female Silver Washed Fritillary confirming what I had suspected at my previous visit. I was also able to find more Common Blues and Brown Argus in a different location than previously.



Brown Argus another first for this site in 2015



It is a pity this female Common Blue was not pristine



An elderly Male Common blue trying his luck



I was pleased to find this female Silver Washed Fritillary on 2.9.2015 confirming this species exists here

Sadly, there is further major development planned for this area, a new village in fact. The council have given the go ahead, after years of discussion, for the village of Welborne to be created over the next 20 years. Only time will tell if the butterfly populations will be adversely affected by the development, I suspect the end result will not benefit the Butterflies. I am up to 27 species at this location, but I feel there is room for at least one more (lots of Oak and Sallow! 😊). I should get a few more visits during 2016 before the developers take over 😊

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 09-Jan-16 09:16 PM GMT

I know just what you mean regarding favourite butterfly spots that aren't part of the recognised inventory of regular sites. I have several that I think I have to myself and if any of them were lost to 'development', I'd be bereft.

Local eyes on the ground can often be invaluable, and only by living in a place can you do the reconnaissance necessary to build a profile of the species on your doorstep.

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 17-Jan-16 11:02 PM GMT

Without much current goings on to post about, I have returned to **3.9.2015** and **Knowle Village**

Following on from my previous post, the following is part of a sequence I took whilst observing Brown Argus. My assumption here is that this is classic rejection of the male by the female during courtship  Or am I completely mistaken. Is the raised female abdomen a universal sign of rejection in the butterfly world  or just in certain species  Expert help with that please.

This male seems to be trying his absolute hardest, bending his abdomen towards the female in a very persistent and hopeful manner. From a human perspective he seems to be giving a very unsubtle display of maleness. The females response being to lift her abdomen and expose her genitalia and commence short bursts of rapid wing beating (whilst still feeding in most of the images). Is this to waft some sort of substance towards the male as a sign? This behaviour continued in several locations within a fairly confined area. Eventually the female flew off and I lost sight as they disappeared over the fields into the distance, the male in hot pursuit.







by Goldie M, 18-Jan-16 11:47 AM GMT

Super photos jack, I'm no expert so i can't help you with that, I just love your photos Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by bugboy, 19-Jan-16 07:04 PM GMT

Hi, I know the raised abdomen in Pierids is a most definite 'bugger off' sign but I'm not sure about other families. I did witness similar events to your Brown Argus myself last year. I watched Holly and Silver-studded Blue couples where the male was sent packing by the females frantic flapping of wings. I couldn't tell whether there was any raised abdomen though. An alternative could be she's emitting a pheromone to tell him she's receptive but he has to work to get the goods, so weeding out the weaker individuals 🤔

Re: jackz432r

by Padfield, 19-Jan-16 07:29 PM GMT

Hi Jack. I don't know if it's universal, but I've certainly seen the bottoms-up rejection in several species of Nymphalidae too. Just the other day I took this video of a female Heliconid (*Heliconius melpomene*) rejecting a male in the Papiliorama. The screaming children in the audio are, I hope, the next generation of keen lepsters ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHZXmNUqhCA>

Guy

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 01-Feb-16 11:34 PM GMT

Thanks Guy, Bugboy & Goldie for your comments and suggestions 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 02-Feb-16 11:09 AM GMT

That sequence of BA action shots is stunning Paul. I had to check which camera you were using as I've never managed to achieve anywhere near as good as that. Well done 🍷

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 02-Feb-16 10:43 PM GMT

Alright Paul? I've observed a similar thing with Brown Argus a year or so back and I've seen it in a number of species including Common Crow in the Bristol Zoo Butterfly house so I couldn't say universal for sure but definitely a widespread behavioural signal.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 07-Feb-16 11:48 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline & Wurzel for your comments 😊😊

Favourite Butterfly Days & Places 2015

It seems to have been gloomy for weeks and right now it sounds like the end of the world outside, high winds, torrential rain and thunder. In the hope of lifting the spirits I thought I would revisit another of my favourite butterfly places.....

May 2015 Stephens Castle Down

This is my local downland site, 20 minutes up the road. It is the most likely place you will find me during May, that most magical time of year 😊😊 . Its many resident butterfly species include (what I refer to as) The classic 'spring downland quartet' of Duke of Burgundy, Green Hairstreak, Dingy & Grizzled Skipper. A sheltered expanse of Ladys Bedstraw seems to be the focal point of butterfly activity at this time of year.



Just beyond the three shrubs in the centre of this frame is the expanse of Ladys Bedstraw below



Green Hairstreaks enjoyed this area of Hawthorn during 2015



Duke of Burgundy on Ladys Bedstraw 10.5.2015



Grizzled Skipper 10.5.2015





The Dukes are pretty reliable little creatures. Although I have seen them all over the site, they tend to congregate in the gully area and particularly enjoy the Ladys Bedstraw there. They are later here than some sites but during May they are a joy to watch cavorting over the expanse of tiny yellow flowers. Dingy and Grizzled Skippers are also drawn to this area but do not get much of a look in before the Dukes chase them off. Thankfully they are also generally scattered all over the site. The Green Hairstreaks seem to move their favoured area from season to season. Occasionally visiting the Ladys Bedstraw, but always drawn to the many Hawthorns here.



Dingy Skipper 10.5.2015



An 8 legged resident of Stephens Castle Down also drawn to the Ladys Bedstraw.



Green Hairstreak enjoying Ladys Bedstraw 10.5.2015



....and on Hawthorn 25.5.2015

Not long to wait before I can return for my 2016 spring butterfly fix.

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 08-Feb-16 11:02 AM GMT

Hi! Jack, your so lucky to have this site so near to you ,love the Grizzle shot, I've to travel up to the lake District to find Dukes, has for Grizzled Skipper ,not seen one yet round here at all, hope fully I'll find some this Year, it won't be a round here though, like you, I can't wait for Spring. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 08-Feb-16 09:13 PM GMT

That sure looks prime habitat. No wonder your quartet thrive there.

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 10-Feb-16 10:40 PM GMT

That looks like a cracking site Paul with some lush shots, I might try and shoe horn in a visit this year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 10-Feb-16 11:15 PM GMT

Thanks Goldie, David & Wurzel for your comments 😊😊😊

Sunday 7.2.2016 West Meon (searching for Hairstreak eggs)

Back in August 2015 I had one of my most memorable butterfly days of the year. The highlight being the discovery of a White Letter Hairstreak colony (hitherto unknown as far as I know) at West Meon in Hampshire. One of my ambitions for 2015 had been to make a discovery, so this saw that small

ambition coming to fruition. I had also been on a dedicated quest to locate new White Letter Hairstreak colonies, so this success was doubly pleasing 😊



The location in Summer 2.8.2015 (Elm tree in the centre of each frame)



.....and Winter 5 months on 29.12.2015

I was determined to return in the winter to confirm this as an active colony. My initial visit on 30.12.2015 to search for eggs was fruitless. I set off quietly confident, but after an hour of searching I found none. This species is reported to lay eggs at all heights, but I guess that the lower branches (the ones I could reach) are the least likely areas that eggs would be laid 😞 I left disappointed although it was a beautiful day and I am sure at one point a butterfly flew over my head 😊.



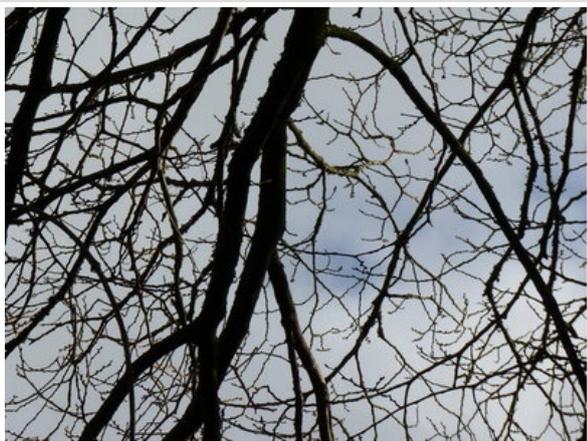
White Letter Hairstreak ovum



After the high winds here this Saturday I thought it would be a good opportunity to return for another look. The hope of some wind blown debris from higher up the tree might prove a more likely place to find some eggs. On arrival there was plenty of 'chaff' below the tree most of which looked like twigs which were already dead. However, of the few healthy twigs strewn on the ground I was able to find just one that was home to a healthy looking White Letter Hairstreak egg 🐛🐛. This egg has been 'saved' and is currently in my fridge.



I am not sure sure what type of Elm this is?



The Elm tree here is a fairly large mature one, but I don't know what type of Elm it is. I initially thought it was Wych Elm but the books say Wych Elm has hairy twigs and buds which this has not. Twigs are smooth and buds are dark brown plump rounded ones which I assume are flower buds and pointed ones which I assume are the leaf buds. I have included a couple of Pictures. If anybody can identify this Elm species please let me know.

After further windy conditions on Monday I might return for another look at the weekend.

Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 11-Feb-16 12:07 PM GMT

Excellent find, Paul!

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 14-Feb-16 10:37 PM GMT

Good luck with the Whitter Paul - looking forward to the photos later in the season hopefully 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 24-Feb-16 11:30 PM GMT

Thanks Pete & Wurzel for your comments 😊😊

Sunday 14.2.2016 West Meon

No sign of any butterflies on the wing yet around here, but after further high winds I made another visit to West Meon. This time I was able to find a further 3 White Letter Hairstreak eggs all on fallen twigs. The thing that surprised me most though was seeing the flower buds on this Elm Tree beginning to open. I am not sure if this is normal timing or if things are early 🤔 but the eggs are sure to be hatching soon.



Elm flower buds beginning to burst 14.2.2016



More hairstreak eggs

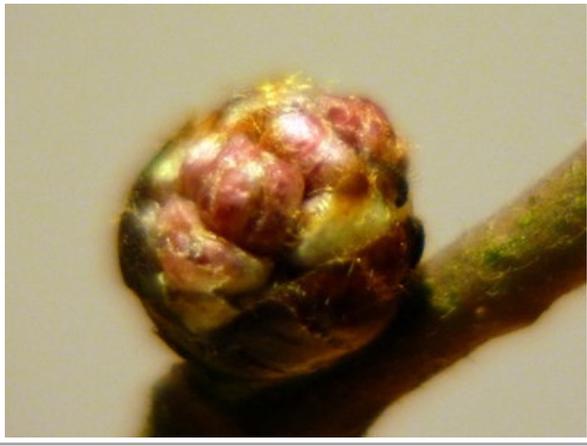


Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 03-Mar-16 12:07 AM GMT

There is disappointingly little to report around here at the moment.

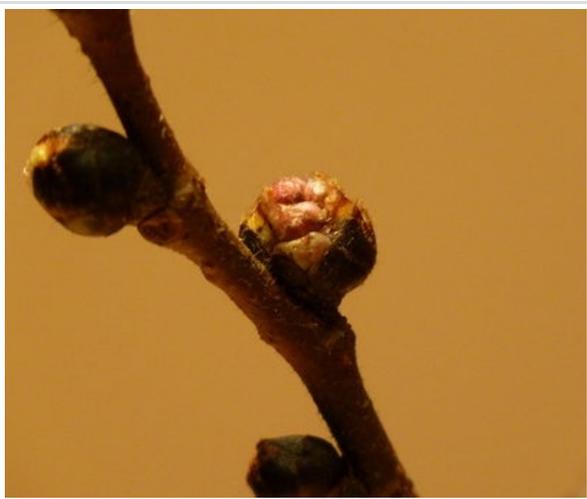
The 4 White Letter Hairstreak eggs have all been in my fridge since they were found. After hearing of Paulines eggs hatching and seeing Elms out in flower locally, I had planned to remove the eggs from the fridge at the weekend. However, on Friday when I checked them I was surprised to find one had hatched already (in the fridge). It took a surprising amount of time to locate the larva as it is so small and camouflaged. Once it was transferred to a fresh Elm twig it promptly entered a bud and has not been seen since. The remaining 3 eggs are all now outside unprotected but show no sign of hatching. I have also spent some time looking for further promising locations for White Letter Hairstreak, time will tell 😊 .



Freshly hatched White Letter Hairstreak larva (I am slightly embarrassed to post this poor image after seeing Paulines superb pictures)



Vacated White Letter Hairstreak ovum



Hopefully the larva is tucked away inside this Elm flower bud but I have not seen it for several days

Last night my son called me upstairs, he had found a brand new Angel Shades moth flying around the bedroom. I grabbed a couple of shots before setting it free. This was a welcome sight and my first adult lep of the year 😊. Hopefully not much longer to wait for some proper butterfly action.





Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 03-Mar-16 11:55 PM GMT

Wednesday 3.3.2016 White Letter Hairstreak

Immediately after posting last night my White Letter Hairstreak larva made a brief appearance at the surface 😊. It is still incredibly small, but is obviously quite happy in this as yet unopened flower bud. The other eggs remain unhatched.



Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 06-Mar-16 10:19 PM GMT

Cricky that is tiny – I almost didn't see it! 😊 Great Angle Shades as well 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 12-Mar-16 11:24 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel 😊

Sightings from the UAE

My Brother is NOT a butterfly watcher, but maybe some of my interest rubbed off on him when we were younger. He now lives in Dubai and has sent me some pictures of some sightings from this week.



10.3.2016 We think this is an Oriental Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*)?



White Letter Hairstreak

Meanwhile I have had a second White Letter Hairstreak egg hatch on the 4.3.2016 though to date I have not seen the larva. The larva that hatched on 26.2.2016 is still very small when compared to Paulines largest larva. It is currently living outside totally unprotected.



10.3.2016 13 day old White Letter hairstreak larva

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 13-Mar-16 06:17 PM GMT

That's a smashing shot of No 2 Paul, especially given how tiny it is, and trust me, I know just how hard it is to get any sort of shot at that size, but that image shows it off well and puts it in context size-wise 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 14-Mar-16 12:46 AM GMT

Thanks Pauline 😊 This is actually No.1. No.2 is still unfound.

Sunday 13.3.2016 Knowle Village

My butterfly season started today 😊😊.

It always feels like such a relief when I see my first butterflies of the year. I went out yesterday and saw nothing although there was a good vibe 😊. I thought I had left things a bit too late today at 1pm, but I need not have worried. An hour at one of my local spots provided 4 Small Tortoiseshells 😊.





Re: jackz432r

by trevor, 14-Mar-16 08:26 AM GMT

Congratulations Paul, and well found. It looks like the new season has started.

Keep up the good work,
Trevor.

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 18-Mar-16 12:24 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Lets hope the sunny weather continues.

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 18-Mar-16 11:22 AM GMT

Glad you saw your First Tortoiseshell Paul, isn't it great 😊 I've tended to wait until after 1pm because it seemed too cold for them to come out earlier.
Cheer's Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 19-Mar-16 11:37 PM GMT

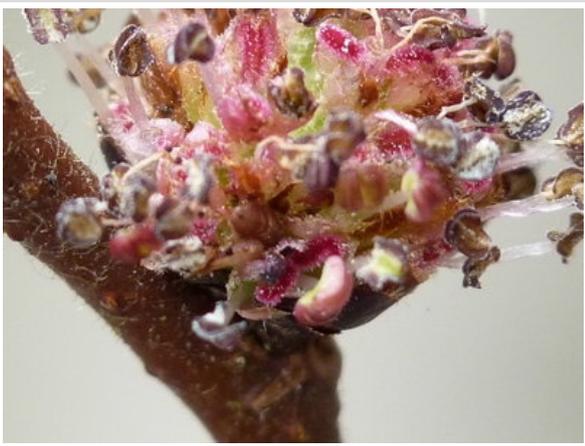
Thanks Goldie 😊 you are right about the timing. Those Small Tortoiseshells were seen between 1.45 and 3pm.

19.3.2016 White Letter Hairstreak Larvae

The larvae are proving elusive and very difficult to photograph (I don't know how Pauline does it) They are very small and spend most of the time tucked well away in amongst the flowers head first.



(not a great photo) The largest of my larvae (21 days old) tucked in head first 19.3.2016



5 day old larva well hidden 19.3.2016



Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 20-Mar-16 08:43 PM GMT

Great stuff there Paul – plenty of Small Tort and cat action and your brother is a pretty jammy non-butterflier 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 21-Mar-16 06:43 PM GMT

It's great to see your photos Paul which demonstrate perfectly how illusive these cats are. I am lucky in that I have the flexibility to be around when the sun puts in a brief appearance as it doesn't take long for the cats to then become active and begin to eat. You are clearly doing well with them and they would seem to be far better aligned to those in the wild than my ones – you seem to have the timing spot on 😊. Well done!

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 26-Mar-16 01:05 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel & Pauline 😊😊

Friday 25.3.2016 Knowle Village

I spent a couple of hours out and about today making the most of the sunshine before the bad weather moves in. Plenty of Commas, Peacock and Brimstone today to add to the Small Tortoiseshells at the same location a few posts ago. I was also pleased to see a couple of Small Whites today, my first non hibernators of the year 😊. First a male flew continuously back and forth along the track eventually settling during a cloudy period. Later I spotted a 'brand new' female on a gorse bush. I am not sure if they were destined to bump into each other, but there was no sign of the male when the female eventually took to the wing. Unusually it was the Small Whites that received most of my attention today 😊😊



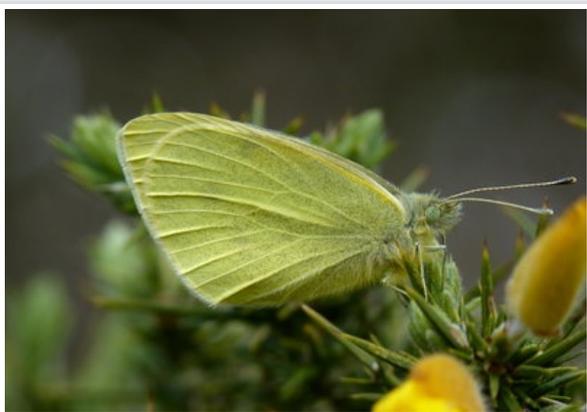
I was lucky today with this Brimstone spending longer than usual on this Gorse bush



This Comma posed nicely



Male Small White resting during a cloudy spell



Female Small White today also enjoying the Gorse



Plenty of Peacock action today



Re: jackz432r

by trevor, 26-Mar-16 08:37 AM GMT

It looks as though you had a brilliant day as well Paul.

Good numbers of Small Tortoiseshells are being reported in these diaries, so hopefully they will be as common this year as they were when I was a boy. Well done with the Small Whites.

Have a great season,
Trevor.

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 26-Mar-16 10:50 PM GMT

Congrats on the Small Whites Paul – are those firsts for the year? Good Friday was definitely 'good' compared to the weather today – at one point the rain was horizontal! 🤪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 29-Mar-16 11:01 PM GMT

Hi Trevor & Wurzel

Thanks for your comments 😊. Definitely a 'good' Friday and yes I was particularly pleased with those Whites. I am hoping for Orange Tips next time 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 10-Apr-16 11:19 PM GMT

I have got my laptop back today after being without for almost 2 weeks so just getting up to speed. Not much in the way of butterflies to speak of, but did spot my first Speckled Wood of the year yesterday. Luckily I had my camera with me 😊



First Speckled Wood of the year already showing some damage – Hedge End – 9.4.2016



Spiders seem to be a constant threat to my White Letter Hairstreak larvae! - 25.3.2016



No.2 seems to be my only remaining larva but I have not even seen this one for almost a week. Hopefully it still around somewhere

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 18-Apr-16 11:54 PM GMT

Sunday 17.4.2016 Hatch Farm - Looking For Orange Tips

I thought I would check out a couple of local spots in the hope of some Orange Tips this weekend. It would seem, at least around my patch, that it is a bit early for them. I was not disappointed though. Plenty of Peacocks, a Comma, a Small Tortoiseshell looking for somewhere to lay her eggs and a just emerged Speckled Wood.

No Orange Tips and curiously no Brimstones at all, in fact I did not think I would see any whites, but a male Small White appeared briefly as I made my way back to the car.





This female Small Tortoiseshell was very thoroughly checking all the new Nettle growth for a suitable egg laying spot. Gently touching the leaves with her antennae.



Just the one Comma today

The M27 motorway runs within a few metres of this site. The visually picturesque image of a woodland carpeted with Bluebells was somewhat ruined by the incongruous loud roar of traffic on the famously noisy concrete motorway surface.



Re: jackz432r

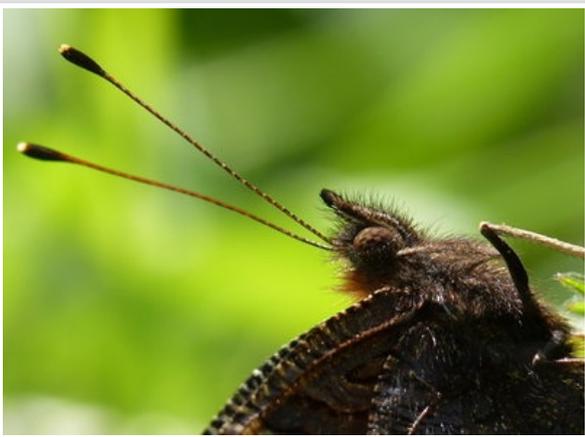
by Paul Harfield, 28-Apr-16 11:40 PM GMT

Sunday 24.4.2016 Stephens Castle Down

Initially the weather did not look very appealing today, but it did brighten up 😊 . I thought I would check out my local Duke site. I was not expecting to see any Duke of Burgundy as this is a much later site than some, but I thought there might be a chance of an Orange Tip or Grizzled Skipper. Butterflies were actually very thin on the ground, not even a Brimstone which are normally very numerous here at this time of the year. A single male Small White and a handful of Peacocks was all I saw 😞 .



This female was busy laying eggs in almost exactly the same spot as I recorded almost exactly a year ago.





One Peacock busy laying her eggs in almost exactly the same position as I recorded in my diary last year.



The resulting egg mass



I have still only seen 6 species this year, hopefully the season will get moving soon.

Back at home I was suddenly aware of a Small White feebly fluttering in the garden. I did not see this freshly emerged individual arrive so, in my head, I would like to think this was derived from one of the larvae that were living in my garden at the end of last year 😊.



Perhaps this Small White was derived from one of the larvae present in my garden last Autumn.

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 29-Apr-16 11:28 AM GMT

I think they knew this weather was on the way 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-16 10:15 PM GMT

Great sequence of shots Paul 😊 Any chance you can send a few Specklies this way – there have only been ne or two records in the whole of Wiltshire so far this year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Jamie Burston, 29-Apr-16 11:59 PM GMT

Brilliant sheen on them eggs! Great Speckled Wood underside. I hope your White-letter Hairstreak Larva is ok? All the best, Jamie

Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 01-May-16 09:16 PM GMT

Excellent ovipositing sequence, Paul! You're giving Vince a run for his money 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: jackz432r

by Gary.N, 02-May-16 10:43 PM GMT

Love the shots of the Peacock eggs. 😊

Gary

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 02-May-16 11:06 PM GMT

Hi Goldie, Wurzel, Jamie, Pete & Gary

Thanks for all your comments 😊😊😊😊

Sunday 1.5.2016 Hatch Farm

Being without car today meant I was confined to sites close to home. The weather was acceptable so I thought I would have another try for my first Orange Tips of 2016.



There were literally thousands of these beetles destroying the young Alder saplings here. Does anybody know what they are?



First butterfly of the day was a Comma followed by Peacocks all looking rather aged now. There were also a couple of Speckled Wood and thankfully a few Brimstones around, the Brimstone seems to have been notable by its absence during recent outings.



The hibernators are starting to look weary now



Speckled Wood male....and female.



I headed over to the boggy area where the Cuckoo Flower grows expecting to see at least some evidence of Orange Tip activity. However, although I spent some time here there was no sign 😊. A little later on in a different area I spotted a small white butterfly fluttering. It eventually settled briefly on some Nettles enabling me to identify it as my first Orange Tip of the year, a fresh female. I followed it as it fluttered along the sunny edge of the field completely ignoring the patch of Cuckoo Flower. I eventually caught up with it for long enough to get a photo before it disappeared into the neighbouring gardens.



First Orange Tip of 2016 was unusually a female which totally avoided a large expanse of Cuckoo Flower



This male Holly Blue was clearly enjoying his tasty meal!



As I made my way back I passed a large clump of Brambles. One particular clump of Bramble leaves had a generous coating of bird excrement which proved irresistible for my first Holly Blue of the year. This male returned several times to the same location to feast upon its delights 😊.

Hopefully next time with transport I will be able to enjoy some Duke of Burgundy action.

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 03-May-16 10:10 PM GMT

Lovely Specklies Paul and that close up of the HB is a cracking shot. 🍷😊 Is your female OT and aberrant as the forewing spot seems much larger than usual?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 09-May-16 11:21 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments Wurzel 😊

Sunday 8.5.2016 Stephens Castle Down

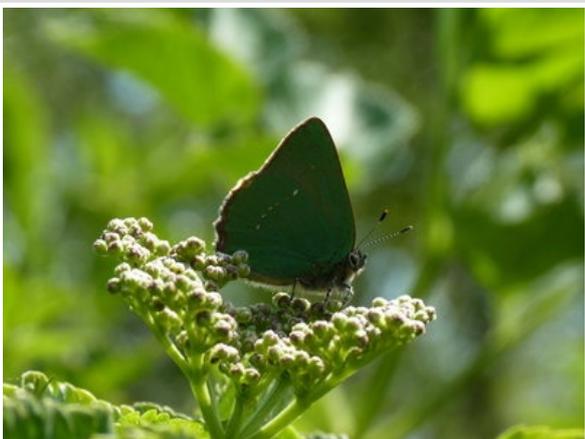
Today I was hoping for my first encounter of 2016 with the 'spring downland quartet', namely Green Hairstreak, Duke of Burgundy, Grizzled & Dingy Skipper. The weather looked to be pretty much perfect. Unfortunately I was tied up first thing, by the time I left home at 9.50am the temperature was already saying 25 degrees 😊. I had already notched up 5 species walking from the car to the entrance gate including my first Red Admiral of the year. I arrived on site to find everything in full swing and it was only a few moments before I had already ticked three of my four boxes, that just left Green Hairstreaks to find.



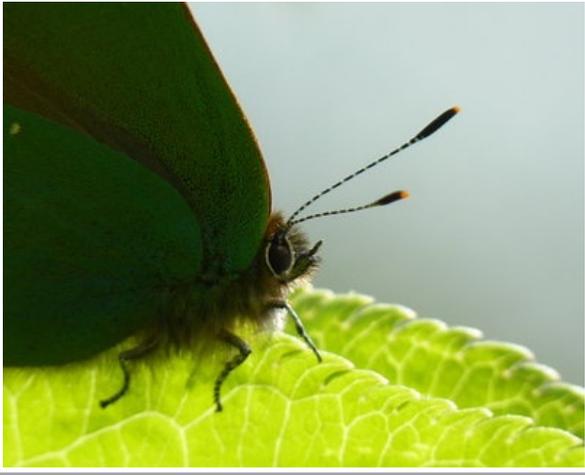
Grizzled Skipper



Duke of Burgundy



Green Hairstreak



Duke of Burgundy do not normally occur here in massive numbers, I counted four today which all appeared to be males. I counted a dozen Dingy Skippers and half that number of Grizzled Skippers. Once I had located the Hairstreaks in their usual haunts I counted five including an egg laying female. There were also plenty of egg laying Brimstones. After my first Red Admiral of 2016 earlier I saw a further two including one egg laying female.



One of many egg laying Brimstones and the resulting egg



Peacock, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell, Orange Tip, Small White and a mudpuddling Holly Blue made up the rest of the days sightings. A quick check of

the Peacock eggs laid 2 weeks ago revealed that they are yet to hatch. This was one of those days where I could have stayed all day until the evening had I not had other things things to attend to 😊 .



Mudpuddling Holly Blue



Small White

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 10-May-16 08:36 AM GMT

Lovely Butterflies Paul, 😊 No Dukes here yet. Goldie 😞

Re: jackz432r

by trevor, 10-May-16 09:11 AM GMT

Hi Paul,
That last image of the Green Hairstreak is a cracker, just the sort of image I find very difficult to obtain. Lovely Dukes too.

Re: jackz432r

by bugboy, 10-May-16 02:31 PM GMT

Very 🍷 of the egg laying Greenie, she looks stunning in that second sunlit shot! Looks like a great site.

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 10-May-16 09:51 PM GMT

An absolutely cracking sequence of shots Paul 🍷🍷 You must of had a brill day 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 17-May-16 11:21 PM GMT

Hi Goldie, Bugboy, Trevor & Wurzel Thanks for your kind comments 😊😊

Sunday 15.5.2016 Knowle Village

Unfortunately I had little time to get out this weekend 😞 . I had to be satisfied with a flying visit in less than perfect conditions on Sunday afternoon to one of my favourite spots. The sun made only brief appearances and when it disappeared the wind was pretty brisk.



Better late than never, my first Green Veined & Large Whites of the year



First up were my first Green Veined Whites of the season, one male and one female. As always plenty of Small Whites here mostly hunkered down in the vegetation today, taking to the air as soon as the sun came out. I also found my first Large Whites of the year, several males.



Plenty of Small Whites but this was the only female seen



One of many male Small Whites typically in this pose sheltering out of the wind



I was starting to think that today would be an all white affair, but eventually a Red Admiral flew past. It spent some time bobbing around the Nettle patches in a very nervous a jittery way sometimes disappearing deep into the undergrowth before reappearing in a different position. On the way back to the car an aged Peacock put in an appearance. I also spotted a male Orange Tip roosting upon a Nettle plant. This individual had found itself in a cool shaded spot and gone into roosting mode despite the fact that a couple of meters in any direction there was full sunshine.

I am now up to 14 species this season, but hopefully there will be more to report next time.





Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 26-May-16 12:29 AM GMT

Friday 20.5.2016 Pitt Down & West Wood, Farley Mount Country Park - Part 1

Today was an unexpected butterfly day. My wife had a hospital appointment in Winchester. I had intended to stay with her, but that was not allowed so I ended up with a couple of hours to kill 😊. Farley mount Country Park is only 10 minutes up the road so I headed for Pitt Down. Unfortunately the weather was not ideal cool overcast and breezy. Not a sign of any butterflies until it was time to leave and the sun appeared (isn't that always the way 😊). I hung around a few more minutes just in time to catch a few Dingy and Grizzled Skippers 😊. On arrival back at the hospital I was told I was too early and to come back in another hour, so I whizzed back down the road and stopped at West Wood which is immediately adjacent to Pitt Down. By then it was fully sunny and warm and in the short time I was there Brimstone, Large White, Green Veined White and Speckled Wood were on the wing.



Grizzled Skipper Pitt Down 20.5.2016



Dingy Skipper Pitt Down 20.5.2016



Plenty of Bugle at West Wood, just missing some Pearls

There appeared to be areas of recently cleared woodland that were starting to regenerate. There was plenty of Bugle around, in fact all that was missing was some Pearl Bordered Fritillaries. As I arrived back at the car a small orangey butterfly paused briefly at the fence and then disappeared across the road before I could get a positive id. It certainly looked as if it could have been a Pearl Bordered Fritillary but I was sure they had not been seen here for many years. I convinced myself it could not have been. Later at home I discovered that Pearl Bordered Fritillaries had indeed been reported from this site last year for the first time in many years. I decided to return for a second try.....



Large White male West Wood 20.5.2016



Brimstone female West Wood 20.5.2016



Green Veined White male West Wood 20.5.2016

Later at home I discovered that Pearl Bordered Fritillaries had indeed been reported from this site last year for the first time in many years. I decided to return for a second visit and more surprises.....TO BE CONTINUED

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 30-May-16 10:12 AM GMT

Sunday 22.5.2016 West Wood, Farley Mount Country Park - Part 2

Today was something of a first for me, the first time I have ever managed to productively visit three sites in one day. After visiting the other two sites earlier (more of those later) West Wood was to be my final destination for the day. My possible Pearl Bordered Fritillary at this site 2 days before meant I just had to make a return visit to try and confirm what I had seen. It was cloudy and overcast as I arrived but this soon started to clear and the sun gradually appeared.

As I set off down the main track my first butterfly was a Speckled Wood fluttering up in the branches taking its time to come to ground level. I then took a little used side track which looked promising. By pure chance (I could easily have walked past without noticing) I noticed some movement down in the grass out of the corner of my eye. To my complete astonishment there was a Duke of Burgundy there crawling up a grass stem 😲😄. Now to my knowledge Dukes have not been recorded from this site in recent years and I have since had it confirmed on good authority that that they have not been seen here since the 1970's. This butterfly fluttered around this area and then disappeared into the depths of the wood out of site. By this time I had only seen a total of 2 butterflies but was feeling pretty good 😊



I nearly missed this surprising Duke of Burgundy crawling around in the grass



Surprisingly both Primroses and Cowslips are present at West Wood, but Primroses are much more abundant

I made my way to an area of recently cleared woodland, again off the main track. Still on a high after that Duke of Burgundy I set off looking for my main goal for the day. Fairly soon what looked like my quarry flew into this small cleared area low to the ground, investigating every nook and cranny and flew on out of sight without stopping. As it flew it sent up another smaller butterfly from the surrounding vegetation which chased it off with some vigour. I waited and watched the smaller butterfly return to what turned out to be a favoured perch. Yes it was a second Duke of Burgundy 😊😊. This one stayed in this fairly small area with 3 or 4 favoured perches. I stayed close by for the next hour or so as it defended its territory for all it was worth.



Confirmation! Pearl Bordered Fritillaries at West Wood



Duke/Pearl action in this area of West Wood

A few metres away I found some significant clumps of Bugle and decided that here would be my best chance of confirming Pearl Bordered Fritillary. I did not have to wait for very long when a slightly worn Pearl stopped to nectar. Well that was mission accomplished 😊, but I hung around here for more Pearl/ Duke action. The Pearls were very active and I struggled to get any decent shots of them, but I had seen at least 4 and probably more all chased away by the resident Duke. There were also Grizzled Skipper and a Brimstone in the area.



Several Grizzled Skippers were present here



This second Duke vigorously defended his territory against the Pearls



No sooner had there been longer interludes of sunshine then it started to cloud over again and the sky gradually darkened. Rain was forecast and by the look of the sky it would not be long. I stayed to see what the Duke did and where it went for cover. It sat open winged on a Bramble leaf for an age until the sky was almost black and the wind increased. To be honest I expected it to crawl under the leaf when the rain came but all of a sudden it flew off into the top of a small Hazel tree. It paused there for a while before flying off into the trees out of sight. Then it started to rain, buy the time I got back to the car it was torrential and there seemed to be a mass exodus from the country park 🤪



Pausing briefly before the downpour arrived

It was quality rather than quantity today as I only just managed double figures, but what a fantastic day 😊😊

Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 31-May-16 12:57 AM GMT

jackz432r wrote:

To my complete astonishment there was a Duke of Burgundy there crawling up a grass stem

Hi Paul – nice find! Can you please report this to Hants BC? This is pretty significant, as you rightly observed!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: jackz432r

by trevor, 31-May-16 07:29 AM GMT

That's Butterflying at it's best, finding the unexpected.
Both PBF and Duke are having a brilliant year, and spreading it would seem.
Lovely images as always.

Trevor.

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 31-May-16 02:20 PM GMT

That's a great find Paul. Where do you think they might have spread from? I don't know that area too well or where the closest colonies are?

Re: jackz432r

by Neil Freeman, 31-May-16 09:16 PM GMT

Great report and photos 😊

Well done on finding the Dukes, it is always so much more satisfying to find something for yourself than seeing things at the well known sites.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 01-Jun-16 10:23 AM GMT

Great find those Dukes and lovely shots too, it seems the Dukes are doing well down in the South but they're not doing too well in the North 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-16 10:40 PM GMT

Two great finds Paul, definite rewards for taking the time and doing the leg work 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 02-Jun-16 10:22 PM GMT

Thanks All for your comments 😊😊

Pete – I have made Ashley Whitlock aware of these findings and of course all my sightings are submitted via Living Record 😊

Pauline – I am certainly not an expert, but as far as I am aware the nearest Duke colonies are Stockbridge Down to the West and Deacon Hill to the east. It has been suggested to me that they could originate from Stockbridge Down which is closer but still some distance away. Of course they could have been there all the time in some hidden away area surviving in low numbers and the population reacted to newly created habitat. Or it could have been unofficial human intervention of course. 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 12-Jun-16 09:30 PM GMT

Here are few brief bits from the last couple of weeks relating to larvae finds:-

West Meon – Inspired by Guy Padfields recent images of wild White Letter Hairstreak larvae I spent some time recently looking for my own. I did not find any, maybe I left it a bit late to look for larvae, but I am pretty sure I found evidence of feeding?



Stephens Castle Down – I have been monitoring a group of Peacock larvae since eggs were laid on 24th April. Yesterday in the early drizzle I found they have now split into 2 separate groups and most are going through a moult. I also found 9 Brimstone larvae close by on one knee high Buckthorn plant. These varied in size from quite small to almost fully grown.



11.6.2016 The same Peacock larval group. Most in the premoult stage with one freshly moulted.



11.6.2016 This final instar larva was the largest of 9 Brimstone larvae on this small knee high Buckthorn approx. 35mm in length



11.6.2016 On the same plant this was the smallest Brimstone larva just 5mm in length. 2nd instar?

Bramshott Common – Today I went to Bramshott Common in more persistent rain primarily looking for Silver Studded Blues. Whilst there I spotted some well developed Small Tortoiseshell larvae. I also found a newly hatched group of larvae which I guess must be Peacock, but they would seem to be very late.



12.6.2016 Final instar Small Tortoiseshell larva



12.6.2016 Recently hatched Peacock? larval group today

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 15-Jun-16 11:24 PM GMT

A few recent Highlights



First Small Heath of the year – Stephens Castle Down – 22.5.2016



First Common Blue of the year - Stephens Castle Down - 22.5.2016



Female Orange Tip - Kings Copse - 29.5.2016



A nicely marked Green Veined White - Kings Copse - 29.5.2016



Mother Shipton - Sherfield English - 5.6.2016



First Meadow Brown of the year – Sherfield English – 5.6.2016



First Small Copper of the year – Sherfield English – 5.6.2016



First female Common Blue of the year – Stephens Castle Down – 11.6.2016

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 17-Jun-16 10:28 PM GMT

Some real gems there Paul – definite highlights as you say, especially the female Common Blue 😊🇬🇧

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 21-Jun-16 12:26 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel 😊 Yes that Common Blue was a beauty 😊

Sunday 12.6.2016 Bramshott Common

Last year my visit to this site for Silver Studded Blues was one of my highlights, so I had been looking forward to visiting again. The forecast today was for pretty persistent light rain, but I have learned not to pay too much attention to the weather. As I arrived the rain seem to become heavier so I set off

under an umbrella and pretty soon I had located a dozen or so with a couple of Common Blues as well. As soon as the rain died off a little I grabbed the camera and got a few shots. Today, however, I knew there was no chance of any open winged shots 😞.



Silver Studded Blues – Bramshott Common – 12.6.2016





Sunday 19.6.2016 Stephens Castle Down

This, one of my favourite sites, is normally a late site for every species. Today during a fairly brief stop off I notched up my first Marbled Whites of the year and more surprisingly a single Ringlet. Meadow brown and Large Skipper numbers are building as Grizzled Skippers and Common Blues start to dwindle away. The most surprising sight happened just as I was leaving when a newly emerged male Dark Green Fritillary settled open winged in front of me 😊. I think this is the first time ever that I have had this with this species but it was one of those moments when I went to take the 'perfect' shot I had that unwanted message 'memory card full' 😞. By the time I had deleted a couple to make space I was just in time to see it take to the air and disappear out of sight. I searched a while, but the moment had gone 😞



Male Marbled White – Stephens Castle Down – 19.6.2016



Female Common Blue – Stephens Castle Down – 19.6.2016



I was surprised to see this Ringlet



Male Large Skipper - Stephens Castle Down - 19.6.2016

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 21-Jun-16 09:45 AM GMT

Great shot of the Ringlet Paul and very reassuring to see given that mine has just pupated!

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 21-Jun-16 11:45 PM GMT

Ignoring the weather reports is good advice Paul, too often I've decided not to go somewhere because of the Met only for it to turn out great - I've noticed they've had a tendency to be slightly more pessimistic with their forecasts recently 😊 Cracking Silver Studs and Marbled White - it seems that summer is here despite the weather 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 27-Jun-16 12:09 AM GMT

Thanks Pauline & Wurzel for your comments 😊

Saturday 25.6.2016 Stephens Castle Down

Back to Stephens Castle Down again to try and get a shot that Dark Green Fritillary from last week. Plenty of Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Ringlet and Large Skipper as one would expect, but no Dark Green Fritillaries at all. Small Heath numbers have started to increase thankfully but I have not seen any Brown Argus at this site this year which is a little worrying 😞.



Female Meadow Brown



Ringless or Ringlet?



A pair of Marbled Whites

I was pleased to find my first summer brood Small Tortoiseshell and first Small Skipper of the year today 😊. After unsuccessfully searching for Green Hairstreak larvae last time I managed to find a couple today on Dogwood. Before the weather deteriorated too much I left site in search of White Letter Hairstreak, but I had cut things too fine. On my way to Cosham the heavens opened and by the time I arrived there it was torrential with some thunder and lightning for good measure 🤩. Needless to say I did not get out of the car. White Letter Hairstreaks would have to wait for another day.



First summer Small Tortoiseshell of the year



Green Hairstreak larvae



Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 01-Jul-16 03:15 PM GMT

jackz432r wrote:

After unsuccessfully searching for Green Hairstreak larvae last time I managed to find a couple today on Dogwood.

Oooh – very well done, sir! What a great find!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 01-Jul-16 10:03 PM GMT

Great shots Paul 😊 Is your Ringlet an ab. arete – with the reduced eyes? 😊 It's great find whatever 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 01-Jul-16 10:33 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Small Skipper Paul, not seen one here yet, too wet. Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 09-Jul-16 09:09 AM GMT

Thanks all for your comments 😊😊😊

Saturday 2.7.2016 West Meon

I am devoting much, mostly unproductive, time to White Letter Hairstreak at the moment. Hopefully I will have more to report on this later in the season. However, it has to be said that the weather conditions have been far from ideal when I have had available time. It has been mostly windy, dull and wet 😞. I have been regularly checking on a colony I discovered at the end of last years flight season. Today the site finally produced the goods with perhaps half a dozen individuals mostly high up. The one and only photo opportunity though was whilst I was armed with binoculars rather than camera, so I missed it 😞. Other butterflies were in short supply, but there were other things of interest including a good haul of larvae 😊.



.....and just 4 Meadow Browns!



One of several stunning Mullein Moth larvae



Plenty of Cinnabar Moth larvae



Red Admiral larvae at various stages. This one perhaps 2nd or 3rd instar.....



...and this contained a fully grown larva ready to pupate

Re: jackz432r

by Pete Eeles, 09-Jul-16 09:10 PM GMT

jackz432r wrote:

...and this contained a fully grown larva ready to pupate

Great shots, Paul! In my experience, Red Admiral pupate in a more substantial structure, comprised of several leaves loosely silken together, that often result from the top of a nettle being "felled". In fact, of all our species, I think it is the Red Admiral that is the easiest to find in its pupal state because of this (since the pupal tent is so easy to locate, in good years).

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 10-Jul-16 11:51 PM GMT

Pete Eeles wrote:

jackz432r wrote:

...and this contained a fully grown larva ready to pupate

Great shots, Paul! In my experience, Red Admiral pupate in a more substantial structure, comprised of several leaves loosely silken together, that often result from the top of a nettle being "felled". In fact, of all our species, I think it is the Red Admiral that is the easiest to find in its pupal state because of this (since the pupal tent is so easy to locate, in good years).

Cheers,

- Pete

Thanks Pete 😊. I was back at this site yesterday. The larval tent pictured is now empty, so I guess the larva has gone elsewhere to pupate in more appropriate accommodation.

Re: jackz432r

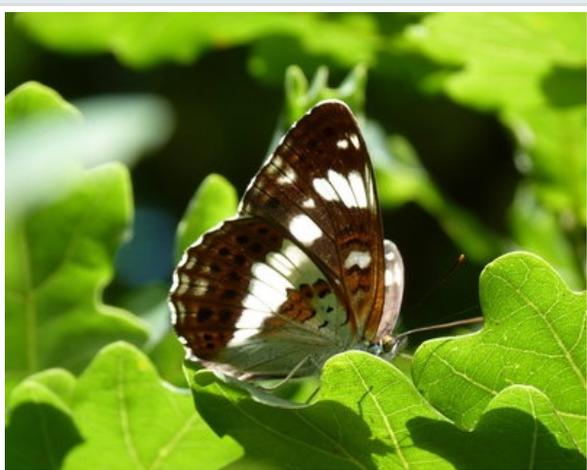
by Paul Harfield, 12-Jul-16 11:48 PM GMT

Saturday/Sunday 9/10.7.2016 Local Sites

This weekend was yet another characterised by uncooperative weather 😞. I do hope things start to improve soon. In spite of the less than ideal conditions I was able to find my first White Admirals, Essex Skipper, Gatekeeper and Silver Washed Fritillaries of the year locally as well as a few of the usual suspects 😊. However, photography proved to be challenging.



Female Ringlet - Whiteley - 10.7.2016



White Admiral - Botley Wood - 9.7.2016



Small Tortoiseshell - Knowle - 10.7.2016



Male Essex Skipper - Knowle - 10.7.2016



Silver Washed Fritillary - Whiteley - 10.7.2016

At one point on Sunday evening I thought I had found my first grounded Purple Emperor when I spotted a large butterfly in the distance on the main track at Whitely. As I approached I could see it occasionally flicking its wings. Approaching yet closer it proved to be a Red Admiral 😊. Hopefully I can find myself a Purple Emperor next weekend 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-16 10:33 PM GMT

Great close up of the SWF Paul - they're tricky to get close too at teh best of times so a close up takes some stalking! 😊 Is your 'ringless Ringlet' the ab. arete?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 19-Jul-16 12:45 AM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

Great close up of the SWF Paul – they're tricky to get close too at teh best of times so a close up takes some stalking! 😊 Is your 'ringless Ringlet' the ab. arete?

Hi Wurzel, Thanks for the comments 😊 Yes I think this Ringlet is ab. *arete* it is the second one I have seen this year 😊

Saturday 16.7.2016 Emperors & Admirals At Whiteley

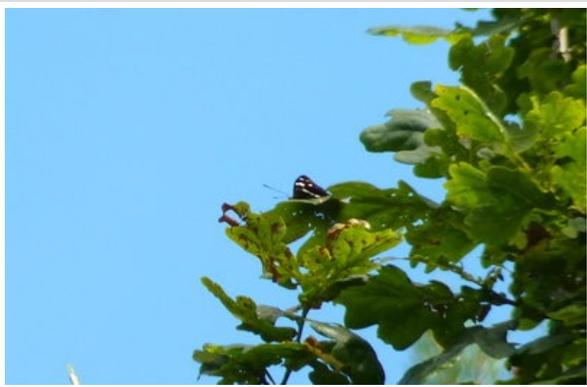
At last some decent butterfly weather at the weekend 😊. On Saturday I headed off for my nearest Purple Emperor site with my fingers crossed 😊 The Whiteley/Botley Wood complex is not the most reliable site for Purple Emperor, but I am always optimistic 😊 My own limited personal experience tells me that that early morning is good for Emperor watching so I arrived at 8am. By 8.15 I had seen my first Purple Emperor of the day flying at high speed along the wooded edge of the main ride. At 8.30 I had another (or perhaps the same one) flying in the same direction along the same section of ride 😊. I had also had my first ever close up encounter with Purple Hairstreak when one settled on a low oak branch right in front of me 😊 Unfortunately I was not able to get photos of any of these purple butterflies. Later at around 9.30 I watched an Emperor settle in an Oak tree in a different area of Whiteley. It stayed here for at least 15 minutes and I managed some rather poor long range photos.



One of many Red Admirals seen. This one with an extra white spot (*bialbata*)



This one was trying hard to be a Purple Emperor by snacking on something unpleasant!



A rather poor long distance highly cropped Purple Emperor just for the record



Judging by the plump body I guess this Red Admiral is a female

The other butterflies playing a support role included plenty of Silver Washed Fritillary, Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Marbled White, Gatekeeper, Small Skipper, Large Skipper, Large White, Green Veined White, Small White, my first Summer Peacock of the year and very worryingly just one White Admiral despite being on site for 4 hours. However, perhaps the stars of the day were Red Admirals well into double figures and mostly very fresh. My final Emperor encounter came as I searched for the single Wych Elm at Whiteley that has supported a colony of White Letter Hairstreak until recently. After a long search I eventually found it, but no White Letter Hairstreaks were seen. As I walked back to the car at around 11.30 I was aware of something above my head 😲 an extra large Purple Emperor (I assume a female) fluttered around in and out of a large Sallow along the track 😊. There were plenty of other hopeful Purple Emperor hunters at Whiteley today, of the ones I spoke to I was the only one who had actually seen one so I guess it was my lucky day 😊 .

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 28-Jul-16 12:35 AM GMT

A few recent highlights

Thursday 7.7.2016 Otterlo, Netherlands

My brother is not a butterfly watcher but is gradually coming over to the dark side. He regularly sends me pictures butterflies he has seen on his travels. I particularly liked this one (with a Dutch feel). Small Coppers seem to have been very thin on the ground around my neck of the woods for the last couple of years (Maybe they have all gone on holiday to Dungeness 😊).



Things have now got so bad here for Small Coppers I have had to start importing them from abroad!

Saturday 23.7.2016 Broadmarsh

I have visited this coastal location a few times recently on the hunt for White Letter Hairstreaks. There was no more than a vague possibility on the Hairstreak front, but I did find a very special Brown Argus. It was a bit windy near the sea but I managed to get a few reasonable shots.



A very special Brown Argus, my first of 2016!



Sunday 24.7.2016 West Meon

As seen at several sites recently and as noted by others, Red Admirals seem to be everywhere. At this site in west Meon, whilst looking for Hairstreaks again, I was surrounded by about a dozen of them. There were a few fresh Peacocks as well, but no White Letter Hairstreaks 😊



Red Admiral 'bialbata'





Red Admirals did not have the place all to themselves

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 09-Aug-16 12:34 AM GMT

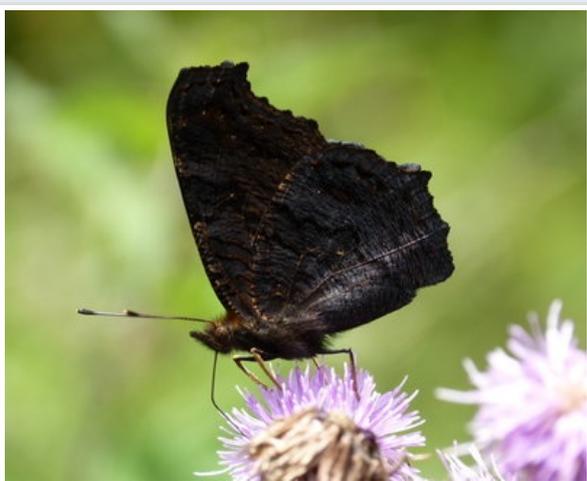
A busy couple of weeks has meant I have not had time to post much, so here are a few recent bits:

Saturday 30.7.2016 Sherfield English

This year I have been lucky enough to have been given access to a private estate in Sherfield English. My access is unfortunately restricted to certain dates so I have missed out on most of June and all of July here, bar one day. This was my second visit of the year, the first on 5th June. There has not been anything out of the ordinary to report so far, but it is the only place where I have seen Small Copper this year. I also found my first Painted Lady of the year 😊 .



Painted Lady - Sherfield English - 30.7.2016



Peacock - Sherfield English - 30.7.2016



Female Gatekeeper - Sherfield English - 30.7.2016



Female Small Skipper - Sherfield English- 30.7.2016

Sunday 31.7.2016 Beechens Copse

This was my first visit to this site, recommended to me by my brother. It is a small area of chalk downland, hidden away off the beaten track. There were plenty of butterflies around, lots of fresh Red Admirals, Peacocks and Brimstone. It will be interesting to see what lurks at this site in the spring 😊



Brimstone - Beechens Copse - 31.7.2016



Beechens Copse

Sunday 31.7.2016 West Meon

This site (as mentioned previously) is a site I have been visiting primarily for White Letter Hairstreak. However, on the Hairstreak front it has been a fairly disappointing season here. Thankfully there have been other highlights. Continuing on from last week the Vanessids have been putting on a pretty spectacular display. Last week it was the Red Admirals, this week the Peacocks seem to have taken control. Comma, Brimstone, Holly Blue, Meadow Brown and a full compliment of Whites complete the species list for the day, well almost. I had an unexpected surprise today when a female Purple Emperor glided down from the higher surrounding trees into a Sallow 😊. I did not see it depart, but hopefully it found the Sallow here to be of the right type and left a few eggs behind.



This Peacock stood out from the rest with its extra blue spots – West Meon – 31.7.2016



Comma – West Meon – 31.7.2016



Holly Blue - West Meon - 31.7.2016



In The Garden

A long overdue few hours spent tidying the garden revealed quite a few eggs/larvae on my Nettles. 9 eggs on one Nettle tip as well as at least one 1st instar Comma larva. I was kindly given a potted Wych Elm earlier in the year, thanks again Pauline. I noticed this week that it has become home to 4 second instar Comma larvae. Unfortunately those 4 larvae are now down to 3 after my youngest son allowed a stray football to collide with the branch knocking 2 off 😞. Luckily I was able to retrieve of them after a short search and relocate it on the Elm.



One of many eggs found in the Garden 31.7.2016. Comma or Red Admiral?



1st Instar Comma larva in the Garden 5.8.2016



Four 2nd instar Comma larvae on Wych Elm in the garden 5.8.2016. Just before they were hit by a stray football!

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 13-Aug-16 06:51 PM GMT

Glad to see the Wych Elm is being put to good use whilst it waits for the next generation of WLH 😊. BTW, you might be interested to know Paul that there are more WLH eggs on my Elm than I originally thought 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 18-Aug-16 04:56 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline 😊 All four of these larvae disappeared overnight a few days ago. But I have now located several more on Nettle in the Garden.

Saturday 13.8.2016 & Monday 15.8.2016 Shipton Bellinger

I left home under a clear blue sky for my planned visit, but as I approached Shipton Bellinger the sky became increasingly overcast. The forecast had not been brilliant but I thought I would chance it although I nearly turned back. By the time I arrived at 9.00 there was thick cloud cover together with a gusty wind and no sunshine at all. Later on there were even several light rain showers. I was not surprised to find that I seemed to be the only person looking for Brown Hairstreaks and butterflies were initially in very short supply.



Meadow Brown - Shipton Bellinger - 13.8.2016

I have been told in the past that Brown Hairstreaks only fly in sunshine. Well that certainly was not the case today, there seemed to be plenty of male activity in the less than perfect conditions. At 9.30 a tussle between 2 males around a Maple tree resulted in one party settling low down at eye level. I could not quite get myself high enough for a good open winged shot, even standing on tiptoe, but I managed some close ups 😊.



Male Brown Hairstreak – Shipton Bellinger – 13.8.2016



Later the occasional brief sunny interlude brought out a few more species to add to the 8 or so Brown Hairstreaks. However, there were many absentees compared to previous visits and most species were in very low numbers 😞. No Brown Argus, Small Copper or Silver Washed Fritillary seen on either day and only singles of Red Admiral, Peacock, Comma, Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell and Small Heath seen over the 2 days. Thankfully Meadow Brown, Speckled Wood and Holly Blue seemed to be doing well here as always with reasonable numbers seen on both days.

As my visit had been fairly disappointing I decided to return 2 days later when conditions were 'better' 😊. Lots of sunshine but still with a windy gust every now and again. I had less time available but again butterflies seemed in very short supply. About 5 or so male Brown Hairstreaks and plenty of other Hairstreak watchers including a group from Cambridge. I again had a male come down in the same location as previously, but only briefly. I had hoped to find a female but that was not to be, but I believe the Cambridge group had earlier located a female in the field next to the main track.



Male Common Blue – Shipton Bellinger – 13.8.2016



Small Tortoiseshell – Shipton Bellinger – 13.8.2016

So 2 days in contrasting conditions with neither day particularly encouraging at this site which normally gives a good count, both of individual butterflies and of different species. The dull, windy and showery day seemed to give me more success where Brown Hairstreaks were concerned 😊.

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 18-Aug-16 10:10 PM GMT

Your efforts deserve a better reward! I think we're all experiencing the same thing – far fewer butterflies than is normal for this time of year.

Re: jackz432r

by bugboy, 18-Aug-16 10:25 PM GMT

Nice close ups of that male Brown Hairstreak. I was there on Monday as well and got some decent results, not sure how we missed bumping into each other...

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 18-Aug-16 11:04 PM GMT

Great close up view Paul 😊👍 The lack of numbers be due to a contracted emergence as I saw 6 males at Shipton a week and a half ago and today 2 males and a very fresh female – so hopefully they'll be around for some time – it just makes finding them hard work/fun! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by bugboy, 19-Aug-16 12:08 PM GMT

I think you may have bumped into Roselyn at Shipton. She said she spoke to some guy who was after female brown hairstreaks but had very limited time on Monday.

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 21-Aug-16 10:05 PM GMT

Hi David, Wurzel & Bugboy thanks for your comments 😊😊😊

bugboy wrote:

I think you may have bumped into Roselyn at Shipton. She said she spoke to some guy who was after female brown hairstreaks but had very limited time on Monday.

Yes that would be me 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 30-Aug-16 11:11 PM GMT

A few recent bits and bobs:



Male Common Darter - Wootton Coppice - 21.8.2016



Female Common Blue - Stephens Castle Down - 28.8.2016



Male Common Blue - Stephens Castle Down - 28.8.2016
Monday 29.8.2016 Haslar, Gosport

Yesterday afternoon I popped in briefly to a favourite Clouded Yellow spot hoping for some action. This is a partially overgrown carpark near Haslar sea wall that has been reliable for clouded yellows over the last few years. On arrival it did not look too promising with just a few whites about. However, upon closer inspection one of these whites turned out to be a *helice* Clouded Yellow 😊. It looked pristine but was very flighty and I only managed one very poor shot before it disappeared over the wall. I was also pleased to find a single Small Copper (No.5 for 2016!) , a couple of Common Blues and a Meadow Brown. One last circuit of the area then threw up another 'normal' female Clouded Yellow 😊. This one was much more feeble looking like it had just arrived, weakly fluttering and settling. Hopefully there will be a few more around before the season is out.



Female helice Clouded Yellow - Haslar - 29.8.2016



Small Copper - Haslar - 29.8.2016



Female Clouded Yellow - Haslar - 29.8.2016

Re: jackz432r

by Jamie Burston, 30-Aug-16 11:19 PM GMT

Stunning shot of the backlit Small Copper! 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Katrina, 30-Aug-16 11:44 PM GMT

I agree, lovely warm colours. 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-16 09:20 PM GMT

Great Small Copper Paul 😊 And I'm especially envious of your *Helice* a form I've yet to catch up with 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by bugboy, 01-Sep-16 10:07 PM GMT

Yup, there's been a few *Helice* spotted in recent weeks, still never seen one myself though so here's a 🍷 for that one! The Red Admiral underside is also rather stunning as well!

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 01-Sep-16 10:23 PM GMT

Well done on the *helice*. I'm still waiting to see this form in the UK. 😞

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 03-Sep-16 03:17 PM GMT

Hi Jamie, Katrina, Wurzel, Bugboy and David Thanks for the comments 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊

Wednesday 31.8.2016 & Thursday 1.9.2016 More Clouded Yellows at Haslar

After failing to capture a decent photo of the Clouded Yellows on Monday I decided to return for another try. Almost as soon as I left the house on Wednesday the sky clouded over and by the time I arrived at Haslar it was breezy and cool. After a little searching a Clouded Yellow did appear flying briskly back and forth, but it soon disappeared. The conditions were now such that any butterfly action was unlikely. There was certainly no sign of the *helice* or any other Clouded Yellows 😞. One consolation though was a single Brown Argus (only my 2nd of the year 😊), a couple of Small Coppers and a Green Veined White.





I jumped at the opportunity to go back the following day, particularly as the weather looked pretty good. I think I arrived at just the right time. No sign of the *helice*, but after a few minutes and a quick look round a lovely female Clouded Yellow showed herself. Fluttering from flower to flower in a relaxed enough state for me to get plenty of shots. This appeared to be the only clouded yellow here today and I spent the next hour following her around. I even had time to try for an open winged shot but I soon gave up on that idea 😊. I just took the occasional break for some Small Copper action.







The best open wing shot I could manage after many attempts!

Once I had pursued this Clouded Yellow enough I turned to leave just as a male flew up from the ground which I had not previously seen. Unfortunately it flew straight into a spiders web 😞. The plump female Garden spider was lightning quick in despatching this insect and gift wrapping it to enjoy later. The whole process was completed in a couple of minutes. This was not the way I had hoped to get my open winged shot.



The fatal bite! Still flapping at this point. Not really the open winged shot I was looking for







She seemed to be looking at me rather smugly at this point!

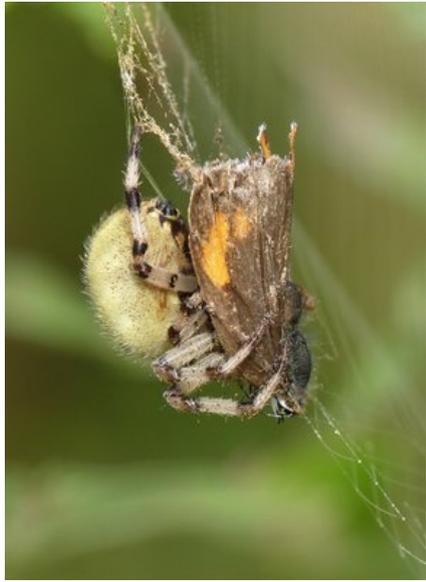


Job done!

Re: jackz432r

by Pauline, 03-Sep-16 03:41 PM GMT

Some interesting shots there Paul. A couple of years ago I was in a similar situation with a female Brown Hairstreak egg-laying. I managed to get a sequence similar to yours but I received some criticism I seem to recall for not 'rescuing' the butterfly – but as you are aware it happens in a flash and it is often too late to react unfortunately:



Re: jackz432r

by bugboy, 03-Sep-16 06:52 PM GMT

Fantastic Cloudie images, including the ones of the unfortunate spider meal. Every now and again its good to be reminded its not all sweetness and light in the natural world and we are merely (and should remain) observers to it's goings on.

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 03-Sep-16 10:18 PM GMT

Pauline wrote:

Some interesting shots there Paul. A couple of years ago I was in a similar situation with a female Brown Hairstreak egg-laying. I managed to get a sequence similar to yours but I received some criticism I seem to recall for not 'rescuing' the butterfly - but as you are aware it happens in a flash and it is often too late to react unfortunately:

I know what you mean Pauline. This is the second time I have experienced this scenario. The last time a couple of years ago at Noar Hill, also with a Clouded Yellow curiously. On that occasion whilst I wrestled with my conscience (dithered is probably more apt 😊) the butterfly managed to free itself 😊. On this most recent occasion the spider was so quick I did not have time to intervene.

Bugboy, I would like to think that if I had the opportunity I would still choose to leave things to nature. However, if I had not been there would the butterfly still have flown into the web 🤔 that disturbs my conscience even more 😞

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 04-Sep-16 10:01 PM GMT

A cracking, if gruesome series of shots Paul 😊 It is a hard thing to reason - but it seemed in this case the decision was made for you - you're right the Spider does look smug but also beautifully marked 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 06-Sep-16 11:28 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel 😊

Sunday 4.9.2016 Knowle

An afternoon visit to one of my favourite local butterfly spots was an almost completely white affair. I was hoping Clouded Yellows might have reached this location, but none were to be seen. In all I counted 26 Small Whites here, 12 Green Veined Whites including a couple of nicely marked individuals and singles of Large White, Speckled Wood, Common Blue and an egg laying Holly Blue. Most were taking advantage of the Fleabane which seems particularly abundant this year.



Female Small White



Male Small White



Small White Pair



Female Green Veined White



Unusual looking male Green Veined White



Re: jackz432r

by Katrina, 07-Sep-16 07:37 AM GMT

That first photo is lovely, well captured!

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 13-Sep-16 10:29 PM GMT

Thanks Katrina 😊

Sunday 11.9.2016 Southwick

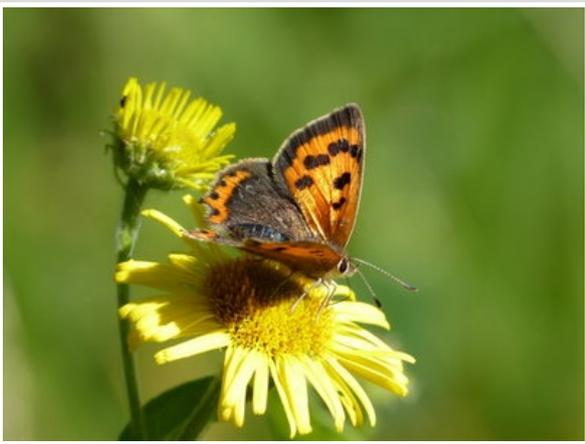
After Saturdays miserable autumnal dampness, it was nice to see the sun again on Sunday. I went to a couple of locations at Southwick to the north of Portsdown Hill. At the first location one corner of a field has been left wild with plenty of Fleabane on show. Plenty of Whites here Small, Green Veined, Large and a single male Brimstone. The stars though were a couple of Small Coppers, male and female I think. The male having slightly unusual markings. Later in the same location Holly Blue, Red Admiral and Comma had joined the fun.



Male Green Veined White - Southwick - 11.9.2016



Female Green Veined White – Southwick – 11.9.2016



Female? Small Copper – Southwick – 11.9.2016



Male? Small Copper with unusual markings – Southwick – 11.9.2016

I then moved on to a new location close by where again a large area has been left wild with plenty of Fleabane and Ragwort. First up another Small Copper 😊 . Up to the end of August I had only seen 4 Small Coppers all year so it is quite pleasing that they now seem to be turning up wherever I go 😊 . There were plenty of whites bobbing around amongst the yellow flowers, but what I really wanted to find was a Clouded Yellow. I soon spotted one energetically zooming around, a male which eventually stopped long enough for a photo. Later I spotted what I thought was the same male, but later examination of photos revealed them to be different individuals. Meadow Brown and Speckled Wood brought the total number of species for the day to 11 😊



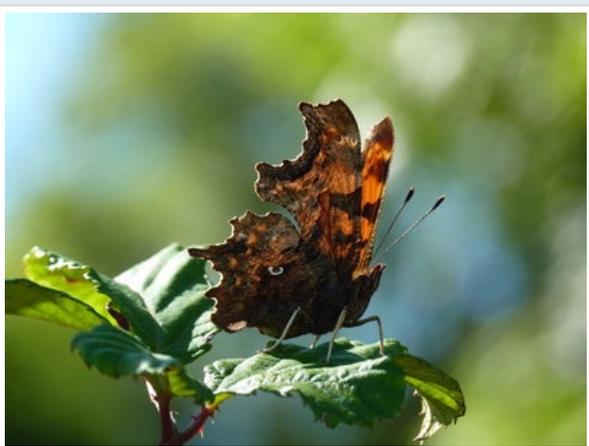
Male Clouded Yellow - Southwick - 11.9.2016



Female Meadow Brown - Southwick - 11.9.2016



Male Clouded Yellow - Southwick - 11.9.2016



Comma - Southwick - 11.9.2016

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 21-Sep-16 11:37 PM GMT

Sunday 18.9.2016 Southwick

Not so many butterflies at Southwick this weekend, but just enough to keep me sane 😊 Small Coppers continue to put on a good show in small numbers and a single Clouded Yellow brought a smile to my face 😊. There were plenty of Speckled Woods along the lane, lots of Small Whites and a couple of Red Admirals.



Small Copper



Female Small Copper



Male Clouded Yellow. A different one to last week

Early on a Small Copper had disturbed something small from a Fleabane flower. I lost sight of this small fluttery thing and had assumed it was a small moth of some description. Later on I re encountered this individual and managed to keep it in view whereupon it became apparent that it was actually a very small butterfly. My initial thought was that it was a very late Small Blue. It eventually settled and revealed itself as a tiny Brown Argus 😊 Smaller in fact than a Small Blue and also showing some unusual underwing spots. The abnormally small size would seem to be called ab. *lilliputana*. I was unable to get a shot with some size reference in it so my photos do not demonstrate how incredibly tiny this butterfly was.



Tiny male Brown Argus ab lilliputana



Nothing for reference here but this butterfly was tiny and also has unusual underwing spots.



Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-16 10:28 PM GMT

Cracking aberrants Paul in amongst the Cloudies, you're having a great run at the moment 🍀 – long may it continue 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 23-Sep-16 11:18 PM GMT

Love the second shot of the Copper Paul, it seems to be posing for you. It's good your still seeing Clouded Yellow, wish we were here. 😊 Goldie 😊

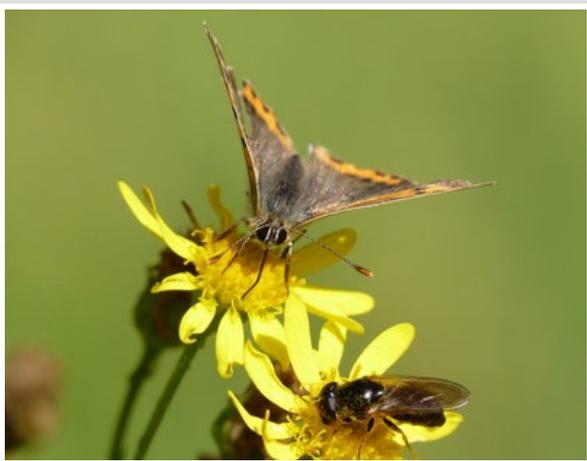
Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 29-Sep-16 10:48 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel & Goldie for your comments 😊😊. Hopefully things will continue for a while yet 😊.

Sunday 25.9.2016 Knowle & Southwick

Typical autumnal fare presented itself when I visited 2 local sites over the weekend. I visited Knowle first, a site I have not visited for a while. Today I was pleased to find a single Small Copper amongst the other more regular inhabitants. Comma, Red Admiral, Speckled Wood and Small White all present in small numbers.



Small Copper sharing his space – Knowle – 25.9.2016



This rather battered Small White is from Knowle



Red Admiral ab.bialbata - Knowle - 25.9.2016

Southwick has been a more regular haunt for me over the last few weeks, hoping for migrants. Today the Clouded Yellows were absent but I did manage to find one Humming Bird Hawk moth. Unusually it settled as I approached allowing me one shot before it sped off over the Ivy clad wall here. I saw similar species to those at the previous site, but in higher numbers. I was pleased to find a couple of aged Common Blues here, a species I had not seen here at previous visits. Hopefully the Clouded Yellows from previous weeks have left a few offspring here to keep things going into October 😊.



Male Common Blue still holding on - Southwick - 25.9.2016



Red Admirals were plentiful at Southwick including another pristine *ab.bialbata*



Speckled Wood were present at both sites. This female is from Southwick.

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 30-Sep-16 09:48 AM GMT

Hi! Paul, nice colour contrast with the Copper on yellow flowers, I think the Copper's have finished here now. Goldie 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 03-Oct-16 10:00 PM GMT

Nice series of shots Paul, especially the Small Copper 😊 – good to see a range of species this late in the year 😊 Fingers crossed for those Cloudies 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

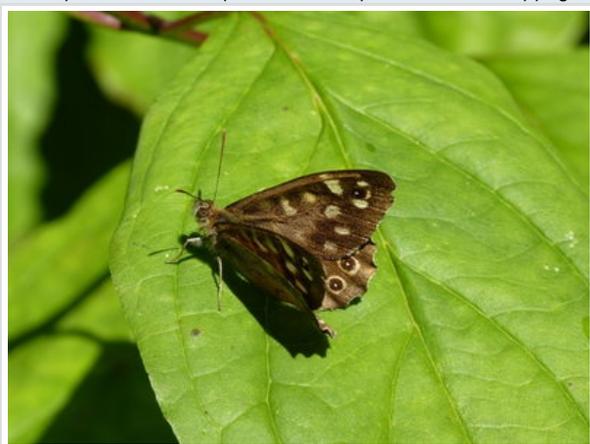
Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 09-Oct-16 12:22 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel & Goldie 😊

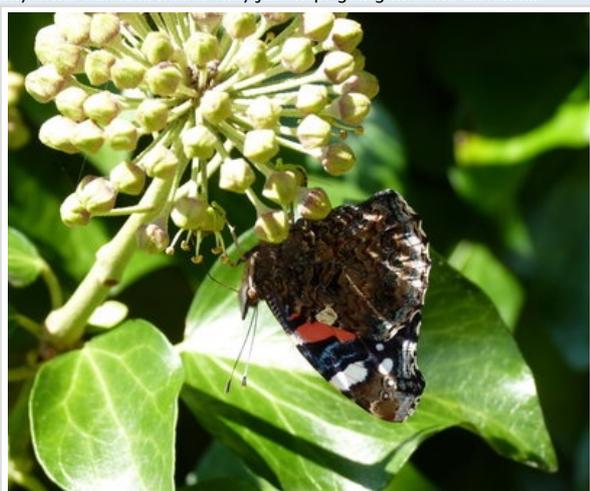
1st & 2nd of October Out and About in Southwick & Hedge End

It has come to the time of year when one has to work harder for smaller butterfly rewards, trying to stretch the butterfly season just a little further. On Saturday a walk to the shops had several Speckled Wood occupying the usual spots.



Speckled Wood – Hedge End – 1.10.2016

In what I call the 'lower field' at Southwick on Sunday I could find no Small Coppers. There is not much in the way of nectar sources left here apart from the long south facing Ivy covered wall that bounds Southwick Park, this was awash with Red Admirals and a few Commas. However, I struggled to get any decent pictures. There were still a few Small Whites and at least 2 determined Clouded Yellows flew past. These don't seem keen on Ivy so without any other suitable nectar they just kept going into the distance.



Red Admiral – Southwick – 2.10.2016

The 'middle field' at Southwick is where I have seen most butterfly activity over recent weeks, but there is almost no nectar at all now and today no butterflies either. No Small Coppers, Common Blues, Whites or Clouded Yellows. As this is the area here where I have seen most Clouded Yellow activity over the last few weeks, I had a tentative look for larvae I found none 😊 .



Male Large White – Southwick – 2.10.2016



Male Small White – Southwick – 2.10.2016

In the 'Upper field' at Southwick there still seems to be plenty of Nectar but not too many butterflies. Today a male Clouded yellow darted back and forth across in front of me not stopping once for photos. I saw a few Red Admirals here together with Small and Large White, some looking quite fresh amongst other more faded examples. Hopefully there is at least a couple more weeks of butterfly activity before things dwindle away 😊.



No Clouded Yellow larvae. However I did find this which I guess is some sort of Sawfly larva as it has 7 sets of prolegs

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 09-Oct-16 06:35 PM GMT

Great images Paul especially the Small White – really well captured, it shows all the details, mint 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 10-Oct-16 11:08 PM GMT

jackz432r wrote:

It has come to the time of year when one has to work harder for smaller butterfly rewards...

Absolutely agree, though you are doing far better than me at this time! 😊

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 16-Oct-16 10:35 AM GMT

Hi David & Wurzel Thanks for your comments 😊

Sunday 9.10.2016 More From Southwick (last weekend)

After a totally unproductive visit to my local downland site hoping for a late Common Blue 😊, I returned to Southwick. Reliably there was still plenty of Red Admirals here along the old Ivy covered wall together with a single Painted Lady 😊. There were no Commas or Clouded Yellows this week, but Small Whites were very (too) active together with a few Speckled Wood.



Still plenty of Red Admiral activity here today





It was pleasing to see a single Painted Lady amongst the Red Admirals. Refuelling before a long trip to Morrocco perhaps?



Speckled Wood

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 22-Oct-16 09:42 PM GMT

Great to see the Red Admirals and Painted Lady Paul – especially as yours shows the blue markings in the hind wing spots – something I've not seen yet 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 25-Oct-16 11:46 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel 😊

Sunday 23.10.2016 Knowle

Last Sunday I did not see a single butterfly when I went out. I needed to put that right so this weekend I visited a more reliable spot, one of my favourites. I woke to a cloudless sky on Sunday morning which put me in a confident mood. By the time I went out things were warm but hazy.



This Red Admiral stood out because it was small, about the size of Small Tortoiseshell



One of the few fresh looking Red Admirals seen



As with everywhere else Red Admirals were here in good numbers. Many now looking a little weary and ragged but still a few fresh ones. The fresh ones were more likely to be found nectaring on the small amount of Ivy at this location whereas the ragged individuals were generally found basking. The surprise was that amongst these were several females actively egg laying.





I have seen Red Admirals laying late eggs at this location before but not in exactly the same spots. I watched at least 3 females laying eggs and there were probably more. Eggs were all being laid on low Nettles at the edge of recently worked agricultural land. The eggs were laid singly on healthy lush growth but also on leaves that were shrivelled and very much past their best.



Several male Small Whites were on the wing, this one was the freshest.



Speckled Wood

After observing the egg-laying I went off to see what else I could find. Several Small Whites (all male) flew incessantly back and forth across the field with

only very occasional brief pauses to nectar. Later on a few Speckled Wood appeared briefly before all butterfly activity stopped at around 2.30pm when it clouded over. On my way back to the car I stopped off where the Red Admirals had been egg laying. The eggs were easy to find sometimes up to 4 on the same leaf I also noted several of what looked like small parasitic wasps walking around the Nettles. Hopefully some of these offspring will survive the winter though they are not in a particularly safe location.

Re: jackz432r

by David M, 26-Oct-16 07:23 PM GMT

Amazing how things can seem so alive in southern England when we're currently on shutdown in south Wales.

Keep on persevering, Jack. The forecast is for mild weather for at least a week to come, meaning that November sightings (for you at least) ought to be relatively straightforward.

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 01-Nov-16 10:41 PM GMT

There seems to be good numbers of Red Admirals around this year Paul and you're certainly getting better value for money than I am 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Paul Harfield, 06-Nov-16 11:51 PM GMT

Thanks David & Wurzel 😊 I suppose I should count myself lucky living on the South Coast. You can never have too many Red Admirals especially at this time of year 😊

Sunday 6.11.2016 Southwick (Searching for a November butterfly)

Despite there having been frost here for the last few nights, a bit of sunshine prompted me to head out yesterday looking for a November butterfly. I had been encouraged by Trevors recent antics down at Shoreham and I secretly hoped for a Clouded Yellow 😊. No sooner had left the house than the sun disappeared (don't you just hate it when that happens). Ever the optimist I headed on anyway, but by the time I reached my destination the sky was positively overcast, the sun had completely disappeared and the temperature had dropped to the point that I knew there would be no chance of a butterfly 😞. Even worse was to follow! As I made my way through the trees from the road into the field beyond I was devastated to find that since my last visit all the foliage along the path had been cut down to the ground and even the Ivy had all been hacked away leaving the area looking desolate. The only encouraging thing was that the old brick wall was still warm, 18 degrees in fact. Maybe if I had been an hour earlier I would have found my November butterfly 😊. I left disappointed 😞.



My Southwick Red Admiral hotspot last time I visited.....



....and today a scene of desolation!



The first of 4 Red Admirals at Southwick today

Today I woke to a clear blue sky, better than yesterday in fact so I decided to have a second try for that November butterfly. I am really glad I did. I arrived at the same location just after midday (an hour earlier than yesterday) and within a few minutes there was the first of four Red Admirals. Just one would have been enough, anything more was a bonus. Despite the devastation here the Red Admirals seemed happy enough basking on the wall and what remains of the ivy. The frosts of the last few nights around here does not seem to have affected them too much. Air temperature today was 10 degrees but the wall surface was 25 degrees plus!

For me Red Admirals have been the star of the show this year 😊 . Hopefully some of these will survive the winter.





This one was in perhaps the best condition. It also has an unusual pale patch on one hindwing

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 08-Nov-16 10:23 PM GMT

I blame Alan Titchmarsh for all this 'let's tidy everything up' nonsense – oh well hopefully the Red Admirals will be safely tucked up during this cold snap. The one with the pale patch could that be classed as 'pathological' – I'm sure I've seen that term used to describe paler patches before? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: jackz432r

by Goldie M, 11-Nov-16 01:13 PM GMT

Glad you found your Butterfly jack and great shots as well, I know what you mean about things being cut down, they do it a lot at Hall-Lee-Brook and it's that I blame for the loss of many Butterflies there. Goldie 😊

Re: Paul Harfield

by Paul Harfield, 10-Dec-16 09:40 PM GMT

At the recent Winter Social Pete asked me 'so how was your butterfly year?'

This caught me rather unawares as I had only just arrived and I probably gave a very uncomprehensive answer to his question 😊. Perhaps this is a convenient point for me to start looking back at 2016 and post a few items that were missed out during the year. Despite the consensus of doom and gloom portrayed by most I still have good memories from 2016 albeit in my own little inexperienced butterfly world.

To start off with a look at what was going on in the garden during 2016. My garden has not been overrun with butterflies this year which perhaps echoes the season generally. Here are just a few which although not the best photos I have taken this year, they were all notable for one reason or another.



Brimstone 7.8.2016 – Whilst playing football in the garden with my youngest son one sunny afternoon, a fresh Brimstone appeared in the Garden. On any other day my Crocosmia clump is completely uninteresting to any butterfly species. Unusually today this Brimstone found it irresistible and returned several times to feed. This gave me plenty of time to fetch my camera.



Red Admiral 24.9.2016 – Red Admirals have been regular visitors this year particularly later in the year. I have even had them laying eggs in the garden for the first time. This Red Admiral was the only butterfly I saw in the garden on this particular day, but I unusually had the opportunity to keep my eye on it. This easily identifiable individual made at least 8 separate visits during the day between 9.50 and 1.50. During this time it nectared on my Hebe and basked in various parts of the garden.



Small White 9.9.2016 – During a day of sun and cloud this Small White stayed quite well camouflaged on this Hydrangea flower head during a period of cloud.



Small White 18.9.2016 – During a day of mainly sunshine a sudden change to cool and cloudy conditions late in the afternoon left another Small White stranded for the whole night. It was still there in the morning allowing me to photograph her before she became active.



Gatekeeper 29.8.2016 – Gatekeepers are regulars in the garden. This female was actually the very last one of the year for me.



Comma 9.9.2016 – Commas had a very good year in the garden for me this year. It was the first time I have had Comma larvae on my Nettles and there were lots of them (more of those later) there were also Comma larvae on a potted Wych Elm in the garden. One of my garden Comma had emerged and flown the previous day. This fresh looking individual briefly settled on the Wych Elm that had supported larvae a few weeks earlier. I would like to think this was my day old emergee.



Speckled Wood 29.9.2016 – Over the last few years Speckled Wood have become resident in the garden. But this year they were more notable by their absence, having not found any evidence of early stages. This female looks to be fully laden with eggs, I hope she left some.

Re: jackz432r

by Wurzel, 11-Dec-16 06:28 PM GMT

Nice look back Paul with some great shots– that first Brimstone is beautifully caught 😊 I too hope the Speckle found somewhere to lay.

Have a goodun

Wurzel