

Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Mar-10 05:49 AM GMT

Saturday 6th March 2010

The warm sunshine (around 10 degrees) prompted a good walk around West Middlesex Golf Course but nothing on the wing. I also had a look at head height branches on a small oak where last year I had seen around 30 Purple Hairstreaks but couldn't see any eggs.

Sunday 7th March 2010

Another warmish day and I had a good look around Horsenden Hill. Still nothing on the wing. I found another oak with branches at head height but again didn't find any eggs. We also didn't find any snow drops or nectar sources of any sort. There was a little fresh growth at ground level (looked a bit like flat leaf parsley) but in the areas where I was seeing Commas and Peacocks at this time last year the ground still looks like winter. I think the cold spell may have put spring back a bit!

Lets see what next weekend brings!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Mar-10 06:24 PM GMT

Sunday 7th March 2010

It was on the drive back from Horsenden Hill that we decided that a holiday was in order. As we both love France some research at home led us to the Loire Valley near Varennes sur Loire between Angers and Tours. We arrive on 7th June and come back on the 18th. Can't wait! I've been through Tolman and Lewington and am very excited about the butterflies that might be about.

The reason for the holiday urge was because I had some good news on Friday – after being told I was to be made redundant back in December, I had secured a job I had applied for where I work. 😊

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Mar-10 12:00 AM GMT

After finding a Double Striped Pug moth in the hallway above my front door last weekend, I've found another two today. One on the outside of my front door and one on the inside of the bathroom window. Weird.

I've liberated the one inside.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Mar-10 12:34 AM GMT

A warm and mainly sunny day, around 12 degrees. A 2 hour walk around Brent River Park between Greenford and Hanwell was warm and I didn't need a coat.

No butterflies but I did see:

Green Woodpecker x 2

Blue Tits

Robin x 3

Wren

Blackbirds

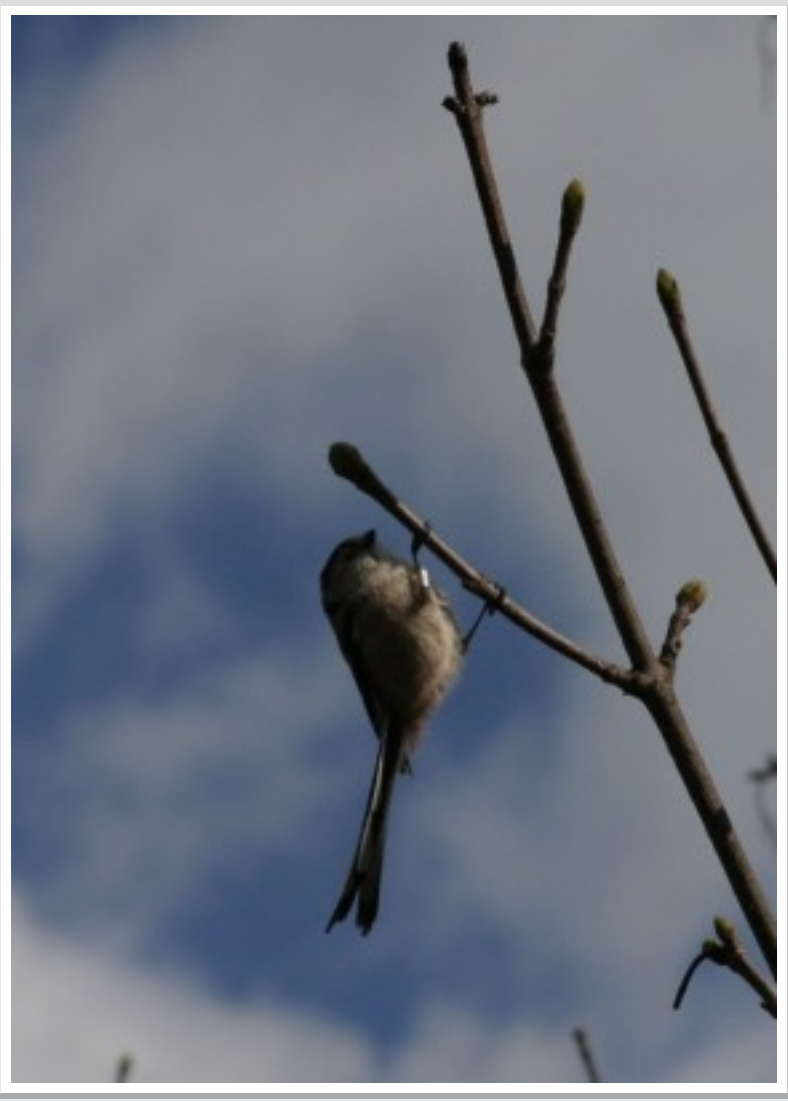
Magpies

Crows

Pigeons

Starlings

Long Tailed Tit x 4, at least one of which was ringed:



Plenty of bumblebees, this was one of 5 on my neighbours heather as I got home:



There were a few more signs of spring this week:





The weather forecast looks good for this week with 14 degrees likely. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Mar-10 01:09 AM GMT

Monday 15th March

I'm on holiday this week (hooray!) and the spring sunshine is out. A brief walk around Greenford Park Cemetery and a longer walk around West Middlesex Golf Club in warm sunshine but no butterflies (boo!). There was quite a chilly breeze though.

I did see a Kestrel (thanks Trev & Denise), a pair of Green Woodpeckers and some Long Tailed Tits though.

I also found what *I think* were 3 Purple Hairstreak eggs but they seemed much more rounded and less patterned than Guy's photos so probably not. And don't even get me started on the photo I tried to take!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Mar-10 01:21 AM GMT

My first butterflies of the year today! 😊

A trip to Horsenden Hill and I saw 2 Red Admirals and a Comma.

Red Admiral 1:



I then saw a Comma who wasn't hanging about and as I made my way back this second Red Admiral was in the same location as the first, of which there was no sign. Going by the markings (even if the wing tear had happened while I'd been off walking) they were different individuals.

Red Admiral 2:



I also saw (I think) a Kestrel and a Sparrowhawk, a Nuthatch, a pair of Mistle Thrushes and a Robin singing its heart out.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 17-Mar-10 02:42 AM GMT

Gosh that is a lot Lee. Spring is coming, and maybe some little Hurrells will be on the way soon. good luck in whatever you do in 2010. Your enthusiasm is inspiring.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 17-Mar-10 03:49 AM GMT

i used to bunk off school and walk along the Brent. Also used to be my journey up to Perivale wood. Is the giant hogweed still abundant down there?

Chris
(lived in Greenford for 27 years)

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Mar-10 04:06 AM GMT

Thanks Zonda, the season is finally off to a start! No little Hurrells, well not yet anyway.

Chris, I seem to remember some from last year that way but there is certainly some in the cemetery. Scary looking plant it is too as it's essentially last years skeleton. I definitely won't be touching any either after what Guy and Dave have said it does to your skin. Are you not in Greenford any more?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 18-Mar-10 05:35 AM GMT

Hi Lee,
No not in Greenford any longer. from there i went to Hayes and now living down in Verwood, Dorset. I do still come up that way for the annual Perivale Wood open day or try to. I recommend it if you can get over there.

Best Wishes
Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Mar-10 02:04 AM GMT

I used to work in Hayes... but I would rather be in Dorset! I looked up the Perivale Wood open day thing, Sunday April 25th this year. I will try and go, maybe see you there Chris!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Mar-10 02:13 AM GMT

No butterflying yesterday as I was off to Cambridge for a job interview.

It was another lovely day today, warm but with a little more breeze. By the time I went for a walk around 2.30pm the sun had become more hazy through a thin veil of cloud and the wind had got up a bit.

Went for a brief walk around Greenford Park Cemetery and a longer walk around West Middlesex Golf Course but didn't see anything on the wing. There are resident Canada Geese, Moorhens and Coots around the lake and I snapped a few of them until they waddled off, squawking. Probably in disgust.

I also saw a Kestrel. I saw another (or probably the same one to be honest) earlier over my garden. However, seeing as I seem to have lost the ability to differentiate between the two in flight from distance, I maintain it was the new species I've discovered – the KestroSparrowHawk.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 20-Mar-10 04:41 AM GMT

I'm enjoying your reports too, Lee. It's nice to hear what's going on in that area. I did 21 years in Greenford before moving on. I knew Horsenden Hill and the surrounding fields to the Grand Union Canal well. I remember when all the huge Elm trees got dutch elm disease and were cut down, it looked very different after that. As a kid we used to dig up Victorian glass bottles from the fields canalside as it used to be a dumping ground for the barges when they came down from London. I've got many fond memories of days spent there with my parents, youngest brother Chris and our dog, covered in mud and nettle stings from exploring when I should have been behaving! 😊

Edit:And sorry, with my first post in the diaries section I have already broken a rule and gone off topic! Apologies and I am sure that with all those stingers, as we used to call them, I chased plenty of butterflies over the Hill. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 20-Mar-10 06:16 PM GMT

Fine with me Susie, don't worry. If we start a conversation about White Letter Hairstreaks or something I'll re-post in the appropriate place! So is Chris C your brother?

Friday 19th March

The weather today didn't really lend itself to spring sightings being grey and drizzly. Plus I was very busy getting ready for a family weekend, my Dad is over from Spain and is getting re-married tomorrow and we are going to have a house full...

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 20-Mar-10 06:26 PM GMT

It was really warm overnight, must have been around 11 degrees – very pleasant, no heating needed for a change!

I think this fresh rain will help the spring growth and nectar sources 😊 I read something yesterday that confirmed what I thought last week, spring is behind due to the cold. I think it was on the RSPB love nature forum.

I have a family day today and my sister is staying with us and she's bringing Henry, her brown labrador puppy. He'll need a good walk at some point so good excuse to get out for a good walk, probably tomorrow, which looks like a better day weather wise.

Here's Henry at Christmas in Somerset, feeling festive:



Ho Ho Henry

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Mar-10 07:05 AM GMT

Saturday 20th March 2010

Before we all headed off for the day I took Henry for a walk around Brent River Park to Hanwell and back. It was grey and drizzly so nothing on the wing apart from a couple of parakeets.

Just after Henry spotted a rabbit and slipped his collar, (he came back, don't worry), I found this Ruby Tiger caterpillar (thanks Pete!) trundling toward certain doom on the road:



I was sorely tempted to take it home, as I figured it was on the move away from the verge and must be looking to pupate. But seeing as I didn't know what species it was at the time I then thought it may have just come out of hibernation and was looking for spring breakfast. So I did carry it a little way and then thought I had better let it go. Here it is mid rescue:



However, Pete has ID'd it as a Ruby Tiger, which hibernates as a fully grown caterpillar, so chances are it was looking to pupate after all. I placed it at the base of a tree with some undergrowth so hopefully all will be well.

Re: Lee Hurrell

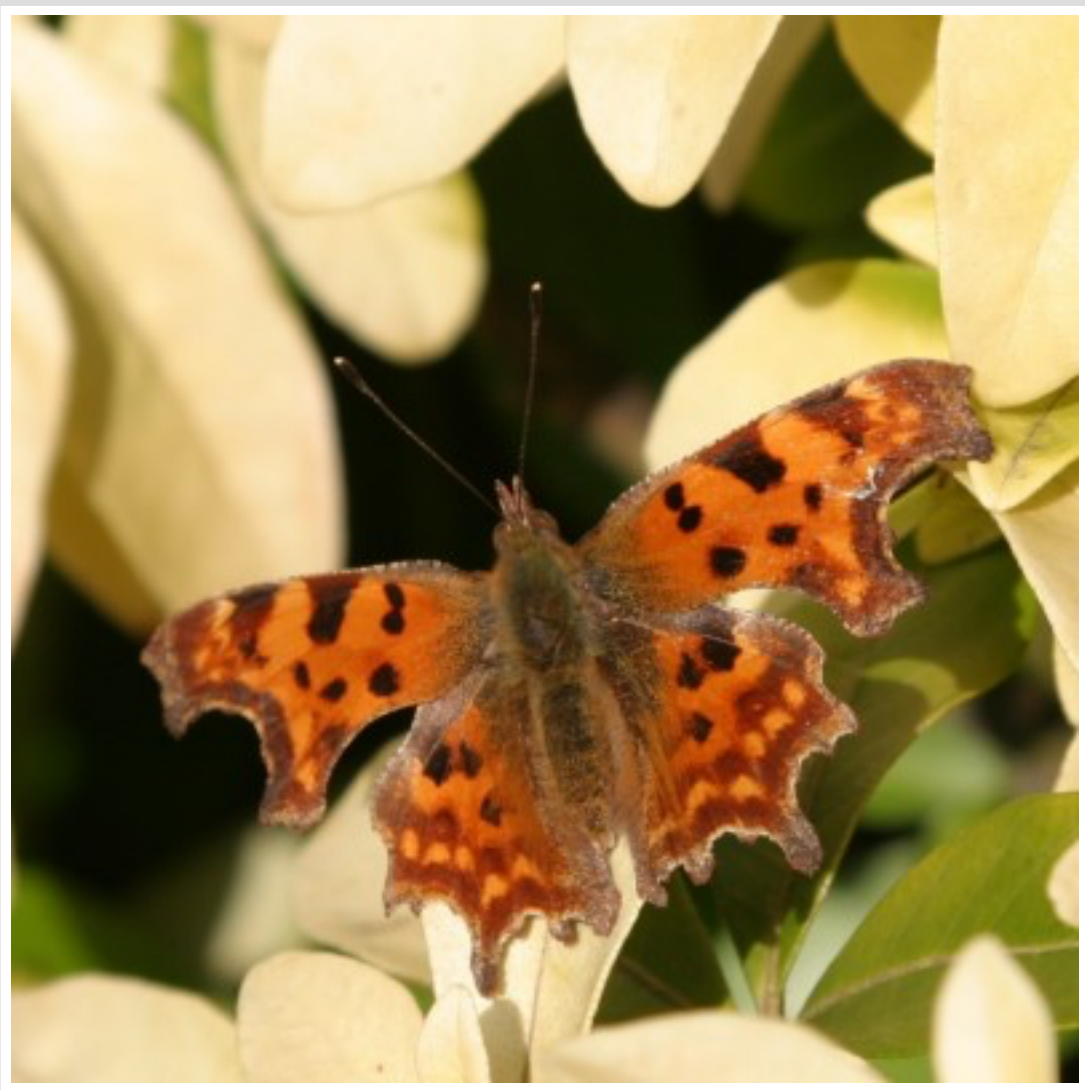
by Lee Hurrell, 22-Mar-10 07:25 AM GMT

A much nicer day today weather wise.

There was a Goldcrest in the garden this morning. I love the way they seem to fly off but then hover around as if they can't decide where to land. Charming little birds.

Had a brief walk around the cemetery around 11am. The sun hadn't quite burnt through the clouds yet and it was a little chilly. No sightings, but there does appear to be some building or landscaping going in one of the two wild areas. All the top soil has been scraped away and there are portacabins there so it doesn't look good for the Common Blues and Small Coppers this year 😞

A hearty pub lunch later and pulling into the drive I saw this Comma on (no idea what the bush is actually) from the road – it stood out so much against the light yellow leaves:



We were taking Henry to Horsenden Hill for a run and my hopes were high being warm and sunny. Unfortunately our trip coincided with the only cloudy spell of the afternoon and so no sightings. Henry loved it though.

I did see a Green Woodpecker and a Goldfinch.

Back home and there was a family of Long Tailed Tits out front and a female Chaffinch in the back garden, only the second time I've seen one at home, after a male last year. We also used to get Greenfinches regularly when we moved in but only very occasionally now. I think it may stem from when a couple of years ago I found a dead one in the garden and assumed it had flown into the patio doors. I don't suppose you can blame them for staying away...

Anyway, it's been a lovely week off but back to work tomorrow (boo...)

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 22-Mar-10 03:34 PM GMT

Your plant looks as if it could be *Choisya ternata* sundance but there isn't much in the picture to go on so don't blame me if I'm wrong! Greenfinches were affected by a virus a few years back which killed a lot so that may be the answer as to why you don't see many now.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Vince Massimo, 22-Mar-10 07:09 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

Just to say that I like your installments. They contain a good mix of subjects and photos. I can confirm Susie's identification of the garden shrub. Anyone who has one in their garden will recognise it instantly. However, there will always be some discussion as to what it is meant to smell like. The leaves are more aromatic than the flowers and some will say they smell like spicy oranges, but others may detect fried onions or cats pee 😊

Cheers,

Vince

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 22-Mar-10 08:50 PM GMT

They smell like cat pee to me but the flowers are attractive to insects and you will often find bees (and in this instance a butterfly) sunning themselves on the leaves (I assume they reflect heat?) so they are a good shrub to have in the garden as well as providing year round colour. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Mar-10 10:10 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments Vince and Susie.

I'm glad people are enjoying my ramblings. This is the first time I've done anything like this and I'm enjoying it! I already keep a written nature diary which is more location, date and sightings only without the added human element I suppose so it's nice to add a bit of flavour to my observations.

Things will quieten down a bit now I'm back at work but will endeavour to update as much as I can.

Thanks also for the shrub ID. I have some other shots of the Comma which should show the foliage a bit more and will post later. Can't say I've ever smelt the leaves so will try that later....and if it smells like cat pee thanks in advance 😊

Sad about the Greenfinches, I used to love seeing them in the garden.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Mar-10 02:28 AM GMT

Returning to work yesterday I was office bound all day but today I was out on visits.

Lovely sunny morning after the frost wore off and it went like this:

Hounslow TW3, 9am – sunny, fairly warm

Earls Court SW5, 11am – clouding over, breeze getting up

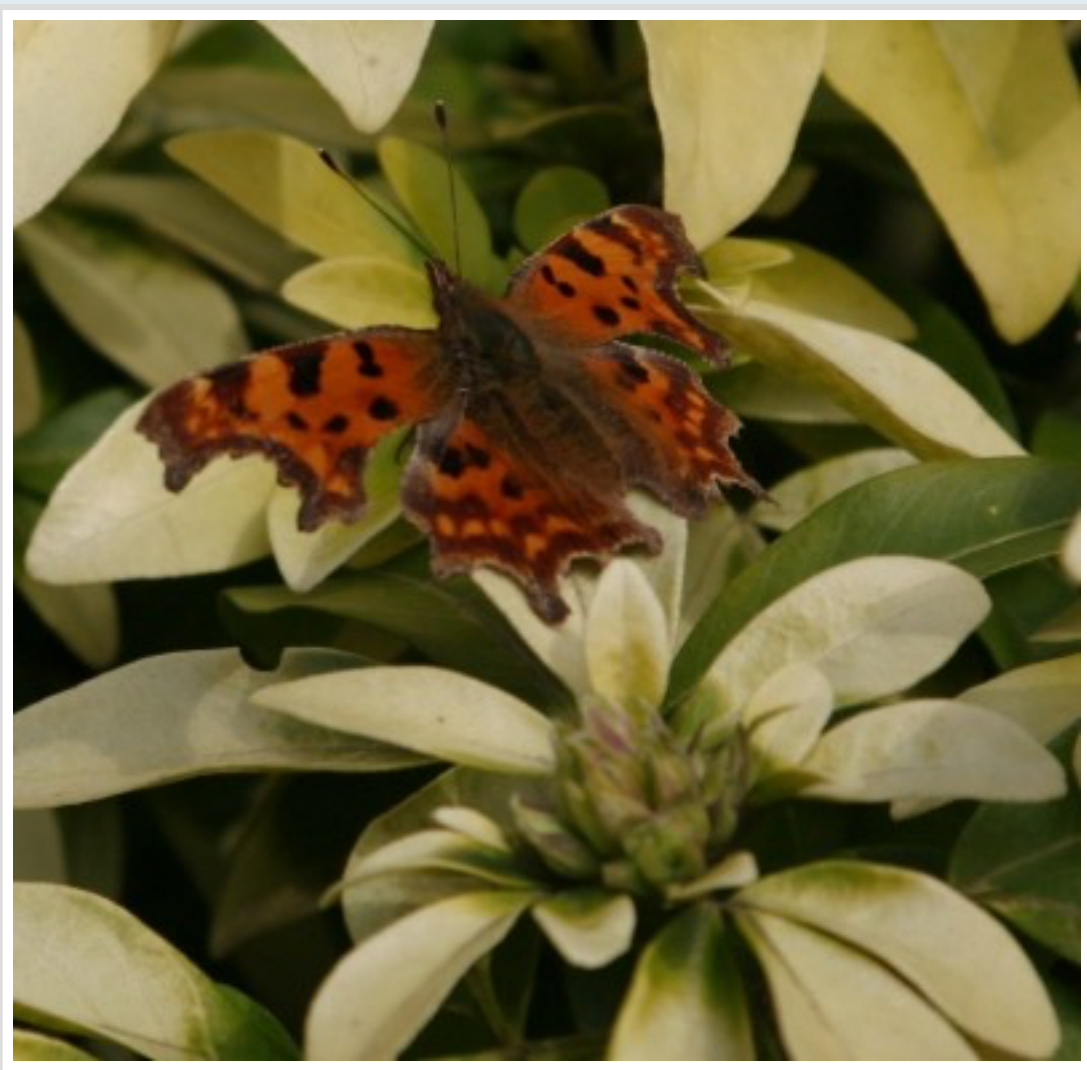
Bow E3, 2pm, – drizzly and quite chilly

However! There are noticeably many more shoots and buds coming out, the trees seem to be waking up and I have even seen some blossom (pink and white, so cherry and apple maybe) and more new spring growth on the ground.

I didn't get the job in Cambridge, but on the plus side I don't have to commute to Cambridge and I still have a job...

I did the scratch and sniff test on the *Choisya ternata* sundance kid bush as I got home and while it may have a very faint smell of cat pee it smelt more like Basil to me!

Here's another shot of Sunday's Comma showing a little more of the foliage:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Mar-10 06:18 AM GMT

We are off to visit some of my girlfriends relatives in Yorkshire tomorrow for the weekend and while I'm always excited to explore new areas the weather looks like it will be a washout 😞

Shame, but I'm sure I'll get out somewhere over the weekend. I had a look on the sites pages on UKB and (for later in the year) they are not too far from a Large Heath site so if we go back later in the year that would be good!

Been a bit of a damp squib this week, hope it gets better! Our lodger reckons we are in for a scorcher this August breaking the temperature record from a few years ago. I asked where she got this information and she read it in The Sun so I wouldn't hold your breath 😄

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Mar-10 09:23 PM GMT

The Goldcrest was back this morning, that twice I've seen one in the garden this week. It's strange I only ever see them early in the morning – I wonder if they have routines like we do, visiting various places as they do their rounds and my garden is near the top of the list. It was picking bits from the *leylandii* trees today.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Mar-10 04:43 AM GMT

Saturday 27th March 2010

We were staying in Middlestown, near Wakefield and didn't get the deluge that was forecasted. The weather was intermittent sun and cloud for both Saturday and Sunday but quite windy. It was noticeably a few degrees cooler than Middlesex though.

A good walk around Stony Cliffe Wood and Perkin Wood on Saturday was lovely. The woods were what I would call damp woodland, full of birch with a stream meandering through them. There lots of boggy patches and water running off the hills. The ground was pretty open with plenty of greenery just starting to come through. Saw some frogspawn in a large boggy puddle which was apparently a mass of spawning amphibians last week. A few flowers were out but not much in the way of wildlife. Some Mallard and Canada Geese on a small lake and one each Blue Tit and Great Tit but that was about it.

I bet it would be lovely a bit later in the season though.



Didn't see a lot of wildlife at all really but we did go and see a South African Elvis impersonator on Saturday night who was hilarious....



Sunday 28th March 2010

My girlfriend's cousin we were staying with is a veterinary nurse and was nursing 3 orphaned baby rabbits that sadly won't be able to return to the wild. They were too cute and would sit in the palm of your hand. Here they are:



After a hearty Sunday roast we set off south and stopped off at my sister's in Leicester and saw Henry again.

Saw 2 Grey Herons, 2 Buzzards, 1 Kestrel and a Sparrowhawk from the motorway.

Our lodger reported a Comma from our garden today too.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Apr-10 04:21 AM GMT

We're at my Mum's in Somerset for the weekend. It was a hideous drive down (5 hours) with plenty of rain. There was a lovely spell of sunshine once in the county and since we arrived it has been sunshine and showers. Sunday and Monday look promising at this stage.

Quite unlike me I fell asleep on the sofa for an hour this afternoon so I didn't go for a walk today. I will do tomorrow though.

My mum has a great bird station in the garden and living sort of in the middle nowhere the birds down here are something else, well compared to Greenford anyway. Within 2 hours of arriving, had seen the following:

Blue Tit (lots)
Great Tit (lots)
Coal Tit x 1
Long Tailed Tit x 2
Chaffinch x 2
Goldfinch x 1
Greenfinch x 1
House Sparrow (lots)
Dunnock x 1
Robin x 2
Blackbird x 1

These were all in the garden. Seen nearby:

Buzzard
Crows
Magpies

Also saw a Grey Heron on the way down.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Apr-10 04:20 AM GMT

It was raining this morning so we went to the garden centre for this years potatoes, onion sets and others seeds. My girlfriend has the allotment, I'm normally too busy out butterflying!

I was a little surprised to see my first 2 House Martins of the year. Only surprised a little as I normally see Swallows first and they were quite early. After checking dates from previous years they aren't *that* early and I expect where they've travelled from wasn't as cold as we've been this winter. I normally see Swallows over Easter in Somerset so maybe I will over the weekend.

Garden birds today were much the same as yesterday minus the Goldfinch but with the addition of:

Greater Spotted Woodpecker

Nuthatch

Marsh Tit

Here's a House Sparrow from today:



My girlfriend has a thing for lambs and there are always loads when we come down over Easter:



I went for a walk this afternoon but only a little sunshine was on offer. Loads of primroses and celandines are out and a few snowdrops still hanging on.



There is a lovely damp field nearby that I discovered late last year with a stream running through it and bordered by mixed deciduous/coniferous woodland on one side and deciduous on the other. I have a feeling that Silver Washed Fritillaries are in the woods as my first ever sighting of one was on buddleia outside my mum's back door a few years ago. I'm looking forward to exploring the area and the rest of the woods later in the year. There are disused quarries in there too.

Hope the sun comes out tomorrow!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 05-Apr-10 06:24 AM GMT

Glorious. The sun arrived in Somerset today at last 😊

Went for a long walk today in the woods and lanes around the village. No butterflies (and no swallows either) but there was some lovely sunny views.

Forgot to mention yesterday about 6 buzzards circling above a field next to the house and a pair of (I think) Chiff Chaffs just down the lane. I went by the song at first, which is literally is just 'chiff chaff'. I've seen them down here before and they look like a Garden Warbler. Since that first time I realised recently that I've mis-identified Great Tits by song as Chiff Chaffs. Great Tits seem to have a large variety of song but can also do a 'chiff chaff'. The Chiff Chaff is not quite as loud though and more melodic.

So no butterflies today despite the warm sunshine but I did see:

- Tree Creeper
- Buzzards
- Long Tailed Tits
- Crows
- Rooks
- Magpies
- Wood Pigeons

Garden Birds all present and correct as yesterday minus the Nuthatch.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-Apr-10 05:15 AM GMT

Back from Somerset in not bad time considering the end of the bank holiday. We usually steel ourselves for a 5 hour marathon but was nearer 4 today.

It was cloudy this morning but we seemed to catch up with the sunshine along the M4, a really nice evening.

Saw 8 buzzards on the way, a single, 2 pairs and a group of 3. Considering they must have large breeding areas I wonder why you see so many together sometimes. I saw 6 together over the weekend. Maybe there are some of last year's youngsters still with their parents.

Somerset seemed a bit behind Middlesex in spring growth and temperatures and this is the first Easter in 5 years I have not seen either my first Swallows or any butterflies at all.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 06-Apr-10 05:28 AM GMT

I've been wondering about buzzards too lately as I saw a group of five or six over my garden last week. A pair is a common sight but this was quite unusual as they circled on the thermals.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Gruditch, 07-Apr-10 03:48 PM GMT

Hi Lee, The buzzards coming together is a social thing, I've seen up to 21 together over my own village. Watch when they disperse, they just fold back their wings and effortlessly gild off in their separate directions.

Sorry to butt in, Regards Gruditch

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Apr-10 04:44 PM GMT

That's fine Gary, feel free! Always good to know.

Thanks (and to Susie too).

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 09-Apr-10 12:32 AM GMT

What a glorious day and I'm stuck in the office. I was in central London this morning but too early and it was a bit cold.

I had to go to the shops at lunch time and saw an unidentified Nymphalid in Acton High Street, London, W3 but I was looking up at it with the sun coming down and I just didn't get a good enough look at it before it scooted over a roof. It looked most like a Small Tortoiseshell.....but in Acton? I ask you... So anyway I can't record it or report it. And it's STILL only my 5th butterfly of the year!

Talking of Small Torts, I hadn't seen any for a long long time until the year before last and after their drastic decline (they seemed so much more common when I was a lad) to me they seem to be picking up a bit with the all the sightings listed on UKB and my sightings from last year. I saw many more in the South West than the South East though. Let's see what this year brings.

The missus is busy all day on Saturday and the weather is looking good so I'm planning a field trip....watch this space.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 09-Apr-10 10:32 PM GMT

I was in Fulham this morning in lovely warm sunshine but didn't see any urban Leps. I had to walk past Stamford Bridge so maybe the Blues were away (sorry).

Anyway, a friend I used to work with (she did not survive the redundancy cull) and who I must have bored silly with butterflies last year rang me to report sightings in Hanwell, West London W7 yesterday of a white (so could be a female Brimstone but probably not as I tend to see them associated with woodland where I am, not really in urban areas), something dark (more than likely a Peacock) and then today a small blue butterfly on a holly bush – so safe to assume a Holly Blue!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-Apr-10 02:39 AM GMT

It's funny what a new day brings – I've just watched a Small Tortoiseshell bed down for the night. *In Greenford!* More of that in a bit.

Finished early today (well it is Friday) and was in Greenford Park Cemetery by 5pm. I'd seen 1 unidentified Nymphalid on the way home (butterfly #6 of the year). Once in the cemetery I saw another 2 unidentified Nymphalids. They were just too quick and I was too far away (or maybe I've lost my chops since last year 😂)

Anyway, a slow meander around the edges and I was rewarded with my first Peacock of the year 😊

I then saw what I thought looked like a Small Tort. I've never seen one in West London and with their decline I wouldn't expect to really. As I mentioned yesterday they still seem common in the south and south west. Maybe I'd just never seen them here. I certainly didn't see any in the cemetery last year and I was over there a lot, most weekends and summer evenings. I watched it settle and it was indeed a Small Tort!

Here she (I think) is:



Then I saw another. This one was fluttering around at ground level and then disappeared into some undergrowth. For a moment I feared the worse but I watched as it fussily chose its spot and then crawled up underneath a dock leaf, hanging upside down. Not only had I just seen a butterfly I wasn't expecting to but I'd just witnessed something I may not again for a long time and I would imagine not many people get to see. Fascinating.

This was at 5.30 on the dot. The sun was still warm but getting lower in the sky and the temperature was still at 18 degrees (there was a billboard with it displayed on the way home). This could suggest its the height of the sun that prompts bedtime as opposed to the warmth.

The cemetery is bordered by houses, sheds and a big allotment patch so they may have been in there last year maybe. Or just maybe as I pondered yesterday, are they making a comeback??? Let's hope so. They really are one of my favourite species and I have fond memories of building cages to breed them in when I was younger.

Also, that does make it likely it was a Small Tort I saw in Acton yesterday. It's not that far up the road, but I'll never know.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by thepostieles, 10-Apr-10 04:19 AM GMT

thats great lee 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Apr-10 06:16 AM GMT

First Orange Tip and Small Whites today 😊

Rather than a big field trip I opted for several smaller ones today instead. Our friend Helen has a lovely greyhound called Twiggy. Here she is:



The 3 of us went to Horsenden Hill between 12 noon and 1.30pm in lovely warm sunshine. The Middlesex Peacock branch really returned from winter manoeuvres today, we saw 12 along with my first Orange Tip and Small White of the year. There were a few early bluebells too. We also watched a bumblebee crawl into a tunnel in the earth – we'd found its home! Such a difference from a few weeks ago.

Total for Horsenden Hill:

Orange Tip (male) x 1

Small White (male) x 1

Peacock x 12

Comma x 3

Small Tortoiseshell x 1 (another one, and the first one I've seen there)

Brimstone (male) x 1 (my first of the year)

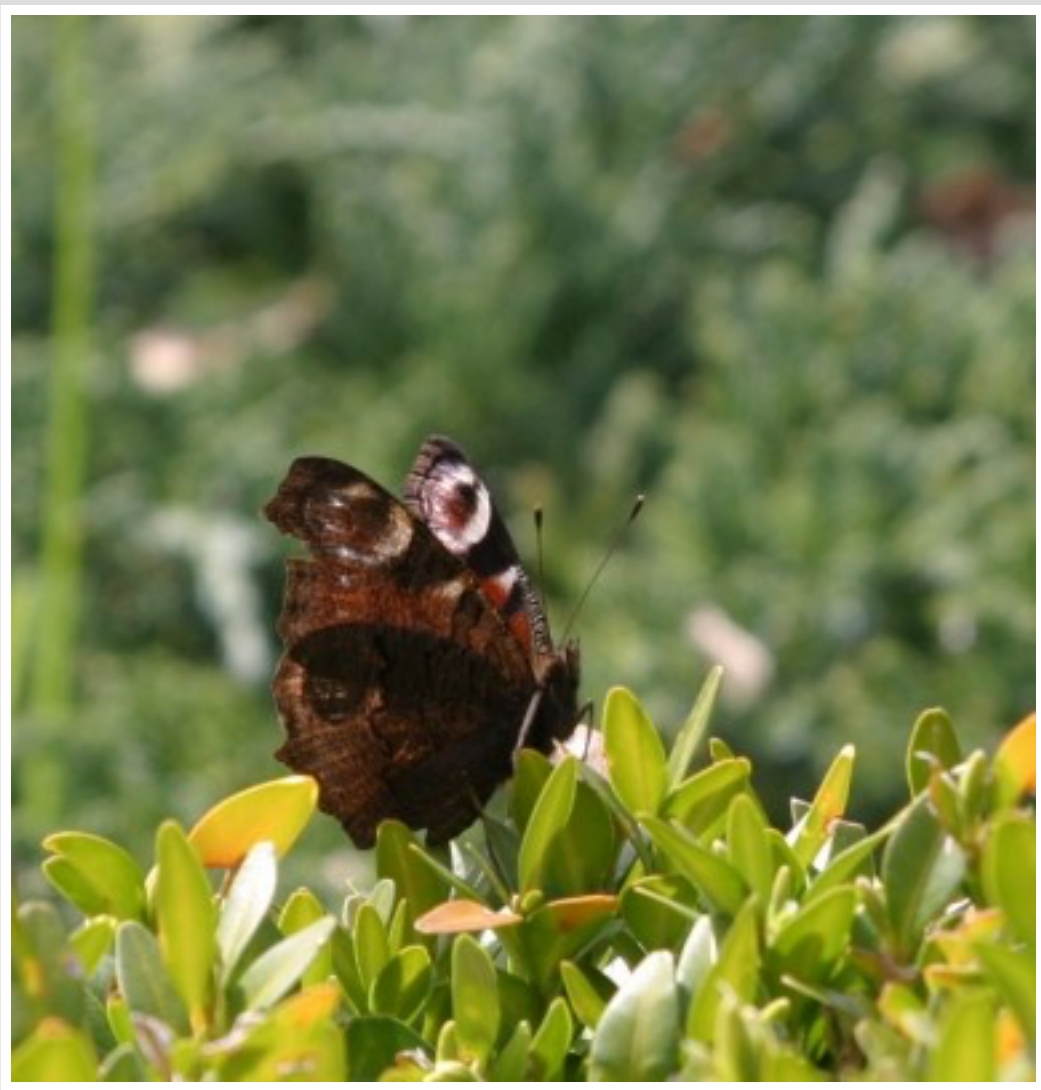
Here are some photos from the Hill (not sure what the blue flower the Orange Tip was on but he was nectaring from it – Susie, one for you?) Best photo I could do with him at the time – I must have watched him for 15 minutes and he didn't stay in one place long enough! In this photo he had just taken off 😊







On return there was a Peacock in the front garden, one of three I saw there today. This one stayed all afternoon and posed quite readily, bless him. Or her.





It also liked the *Choisya ternata* sundance bush, or Butch as I've now named it.

It was still hot and sunny and a trip to Greenford Park cemetery yielded:

Peacock x 4

Small Tortioseshell x 2

Small White (male) x 1

Green Woodpecker

Had a last walk around Brent River Park and saw 4 more Peacocks.

Quite a day! 23 Peacocks, 3 Small Torts, 1 Orange Tip, 2 Small Whites and a Brimstone. Phew 😎

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 11-Apr-10 04:22 PM GMT

Hi Lee, it's a Speedwell.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Apr-10 06:24 PM GMT

Thanks Susie!

I knew you'd know...

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 11-Apr-10 11:37 PM GMT

Lol. I know it's a speedwell and I assume germander (there are a few different types) but I am not absolutely sure, my plant IDs can be a bit ropey at times. So never take it for definite until someone else has confirmed it! 😂

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Apr-10 05:17 PM GMT

Sunday 11th April 2010

We were busy all day on Sunday and didn't get home until 5pm. The sun was just about hanging on so I nipped over to the cemetery for 10 mins to see what if anything was about.

No butterflies but on the way out I walked into this juvenile Blackbird trying to take its first flight. It wasn't doing particularly well and seemed to have trouble landing. It tried the wall and then a bush but was quite clumsy.



Here is a rather skinny looking and worried dad looking on with concern. He looks worn out.



I fired off a few shots as they were right in my path but then left them to it as I didn't want to impose any longer.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Apr-10 05:19 PM GMT

Sunday 11th April 2010

Also on Sunday I saw my first ever House Sparrow in the back garden. They do live locally and I've seen them up the road and in the cemetery but never in the garden until now.

And the Greenfinches returned, albeit briefly. A pair landed in the apple tree and then flew off 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Apr-10 05:23 PM GMT

Monday 12th April 2010

Whilst on my travels at work I saw either a Small or Green Veined White at Northolt tube station.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Apr-10 05:25 PM GMT

Tuesday 13th April 2010

The Goldcrest was back but this time at 7pm! So that blows my early morning theory out the window. I guess I'm just not there when it turns up...

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Apr-10 07:15 PM GMT

Wednesday 14th April 2010

I have to do a lot of travelling with my job which means a lot of trains, tubes and buses. When I'm waiting for a train I always like to walk along the platform just in case there are any wild areas of ground to look at and invariably there will be a buddleia bush somewhere. (Beaconsfield station in Buckinghamshire is great for buddleia, last summer there was about 30 metres of solid buddleia action on the platform and in the 20 minutes I was waiting I saw lots of Painted Ladies, Red Admirals and Commas).

So I was out and about yesterday and it was pretty cold. I was at Whitton train station, near Twickenham and there was a very noticeable cacophony of bird song. I saw a Jay gathering nest building material, a Blackbird, several Blue Tits, Great Tits, a family of Sparrows, 3 Parakeets and a Wren. All in 5 minutes.

The London bound platform that I was on had a grassy bank running the length of it full of spring growth; grasses, plantains, dead nettles, white nettles, bluebells, white bluebells (which seem even more magical than blue bluebells) and dandelions (which were all closed as it was cold and grey). Lovely.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Apr-10 05:22 AM GMT

We received some sad news from Yorkshire tonight.

2 of the baby rabbits didn't make it through last night and passed away. 😞

Re: Lee Hurrell

by traplican, 16-Apr-10 02:33 PM GMT

Sympathy!

Feed your rabbits only by dry fodder and from soiling crop only by fresh stinging nettle. Other soiling crop causes usually diarrhoea but not so stinging nettles – they are admirable fodder and dietetically healthy! Stinging can be reduced by crease them in a piece of linen or let them wilt:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtQkooFJDUU>

P.S.: It is possible to make a food from stinging nettles a la spinach (but more dainty and tasty than spinach).

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Apr-10 04:55 PM GMT

Thanks Traplican.

What a lovely video. I reckon at 1 minute in you can see the rabbit on the right getting a nettle sting in its mouth...

I will pass on your comments about feeding them nettles though as they certainly do seem to love them!

Thanks again,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Apr-10 09:26 PM GMT

I've just seen my first Swallow of the year! 😊

At Hounslow Central tube station, of all places 😊

Bit of a difference to Somerset but there you go.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by traplican, 17-Apr-10 02:55 AM GMT

But bee careful, Lee, and give them only dry (hay or granules, dry bread, oats) and water for several days and then carefully add stinging nettles.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Apr-10 03:53 AM GMT

Thanks again for the advice Traplican.

Saw my second Swallow of the year on the way home at Greenford Broadway.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Apr-10 06:33 AM GMT

What a glorious weekend. I feel a bit sun scorched!

Saturday 17th April 2010

My Dad's over from Spain this week and I wanted to show him Horsenden Hill and he loved it. Noticed a few violets in the woods which I hadn't seen before. We also saw 3 Jays flying together over the summit which was unusual as I've only ever seen single birds before. Maybe a family with a youngster but if so it was in adult plumage.

Between 12 noon and 1.15pm we saw:

Peacock x 17

Comma x 2

Orange Tip (male) x 1

Brimstone (male) x 2

Small or Green Veined White x 3

It seemed nothing was feeling photogenic and I only managed one record shot of a Peacock for the whole trip. Got some nice views though.

On return home there was I expected there would be, a Peacock in residency in the front garden. A different individual from last weekend, and I saw 4 in total here today. Another quite worn individual was in residency a bit later on – I wonder if the territories they defend change or they move on. They were quite flighty today, especially at Horsenden Hill. One of the Peacocks in the garden kept buzzing us as we moved about and even, somewhat bravely I thought, chased after a Robin!

Highlight in the garden today though was my first Speckled Wood of the year, a male:





Also saw one male Small White (on Butch) and 2 other Small or Green Veined Whites.

I was off to see friends in Tunbridge Wells overnight and I always like to stop off on the North Downs on the way if I have time. I was above Kemsing, near Sevenoaks between 5 and 5.45pm and was looking for Grizzled Skippers as I've only ever seen them once, here, about 20 years ago. I walked from Green Hill though to Whiteleaf Down but didn't see any. However Green Hill was carpeted with Cowslips and Violets, quite something to see.





Butterfly wise, I saw:

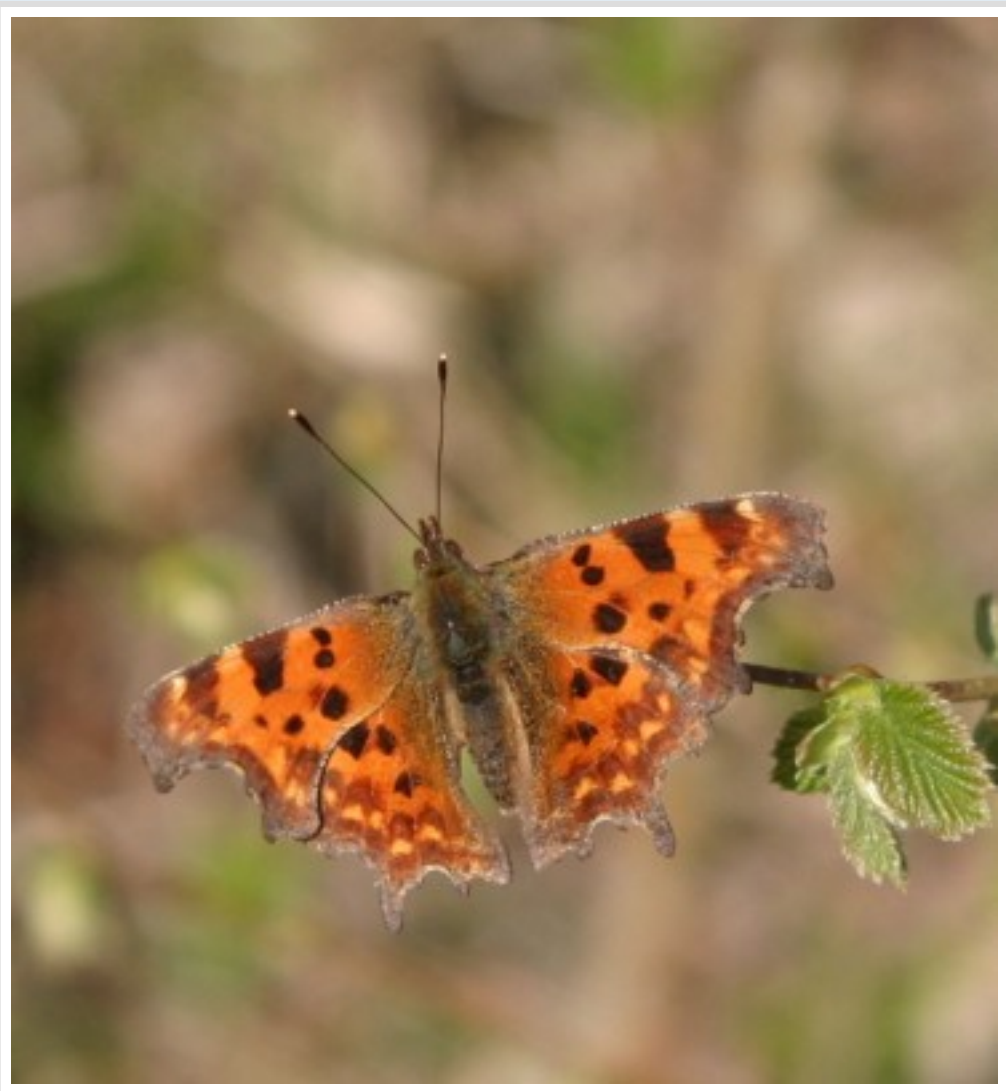
Orange Tip (male) x 1

Large White (male) x 1 – my first of the year

Peacock x 7

Comma x 2





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Apr-10 06:59 AM GMT

It's nice to visit somewhere on consecutive days and at different times. I stopped at Kemsing again on the way back today and did the same walk and a little further.

Still no Grizzled Skippers though. However, I watched a female Brimstone laying eggs so it can't be all bad. I also saw both male and female Brimstones nectaring on Primrose and Violet. I've never seen this so I'm not sure if this is normal or not!



I also found this, a red Cowslip? Susie....



The Brimstones were out in force today, sightings between 12 noon and 1.30pm:

Brimstone (male) x 14

Brimstone (female) x 6

Peacock x 11

Small Tortoiseshell x 1

The field on the way back to the car were full of these little flowers which I think are forget me nots...



Saw a buzzard on the M25 somewhere in Surrey, first one I've seen in the South East.

On arrival back in Greenford, Dad and my girlfriend were at the allotment so I stopped by and put in a hours digging and helped Dad with his rows of seed potatoes. One confirmed male Small White and 2 other Small or Green Veined at the allotment and one further Small or Green Veined seen from the car on the way home.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 19-Apr-10 05:59 PM GMT

Sorry Lee but I think your forgetmenots are speedwell again.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Apr-10 09:22 PM GMT

Thanks Susie. How about the other one, is the red Cowslip actually a red Cowslip?

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 19-Apr-10 10:53 PM GMT

TBH I've never seen anything like it, Lee. I've seen pink wild primroses but never a red cowslip. I guess it must be as there are variations in nature, which is where we get our cultivars from. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 20-Apr-10 12:30 AM GMT

Thanks Susie. There were quite a few red ones. But the carpet of yellow ones, a sight to behold!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Vince Massimo, 22-Apr-10 01:22 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

While out walking at one of my sites yesterday I also came across a "Red Cowslip", but the flowers were arranged differently and it was much larger than the one in your photo. There was also a yellow one which was paler and much larger than the surrounding Cowslips. This prompted me to do some research.

There is a natural hybrid between the Cowslip and Primrose which is an Oxlip. This is a bit larger than the Cowslip but has paler flowers, which are arranged on one side of the stem. There are a number of other natural hybrids which are classed as False Oxlips and these are the basis of the many Polyanthus variants that we have in the garden. These are much more vigorous and also have the flowers arranged around the top of the stem. The ones I found were of this variant, but yours seems to have flowers hanging on one side of the stem, rather like an Oxlip (but not a true one). I will stop now before I confuse myself and anyone else any further.

Hope this helps.

Edit: Jack has a photo of an Oxlip on page 4 of the April 2010 Sightings forum.

Vince

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Apr-10 05:36 AM GMT

Thanks Vince.

Jack's photo has a hint of Primrose from the hybridisation. Studying my shots of the yellow and red flowers they do look more similar in design although the red flower seems to be taller than the yellow flowers but they weren't in the field. Weird! Maybe there was another red flower nearby they were cross breeding with...!

Thanks again,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Apr-10 06:06 AM GMT

2 Small or Green Veined Whites at Boston Manor tube station today around 11.30am. I was a little surprised as though sunny it was quite chilly with a breeze and was probably only around 12 degrees.

When I got home romance was in the air as there was a pair of Dunnocks in the garden. They were here yesterday too. I reckon one must be the one that's here all year round with his/her mate. It's nice to see as you normally only see one! There were a pair of Robins too at the weekend.

Both my Dunnocks and Robins have learnt to fly up to the fat balls and seed dispenser, maybe by watching the Tits, which is nice to see for ground feeding species.

I love my garden birds, it really makes me feel happy to see them.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Apr-10 05:08 AM GMT

Not the best day to be stuck indoors 😞 I did have a visit at 9am at Westfield in White City and although warmer at that time of the day than the rest of this week that area (apart from Bus Stop C at Shepherd's Bush tube station 😊) is not known for its wildlife!

Later in the day whilst yearning to be in the sunshine I saw a Swallow whizz past the window and then around 2pm my first Holly Blue of the year scooted across the college car park.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Apr-10 06:05 AM GMT

Saturday 24th April 2010

Spent the day at the UKB Photography Workshop in Hampshire and it was lovely to meet some of the members on these forums. Pete, Gary and Lisa did a great job in organising the day. Matthew Oates was very entertaining too.

Not sure I'll put photos in for critique next time but then I do have a year to practice!

Highlight of the field trip to Danebury Hill was seeing 2 Green Hairstreaks Neil (Sussex Kipper) found and seeing a Dingy Skipper with Susie and Chris C. Susie also kindly gave me some Buddleia cuttings with which I have plans to brighten up the front garden.

There were plenty of Brimstones and Orange Tips, (30+ and 20+), a few Small or GV Whites and my first definite Green Veined of the year, a female. 4 Peacocks, a Green Woodpecker, 4 Swallows and (I presume) a common lizard. It had a yellow stripe above its eye.

There were Grizzled Skippers about which others saw but I missed those 😞

A great day out though.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Apr-10 06:14 AM GMT

Someone commented on the Herts & Middx BC sightings page the other day about seeing a suburban Orange Tip along the A40 near Northolt. I was delighted to see one in the front garden this afternoon, the first one I've ever seen in the garden, along with 4 Speckled Woods and 2 Small or GV Whites, when the sun finally came out.

My Dad, my girlfriend and I spent the morning at the garden centre (love the tropical fish) and after a pub lunch came back and did a bit of gardening. Dad moved my 3 Buddleia bushes into a hole in the treeline and I made 3 new cuttings from one growing out of a crack between the wall and the path.

Nipped over to the cemetery in another sunny spell and saw 1 further Speckled Wood.

Susie gave me a white buddleia bush yesterday and that's sitting out the front waiting for tomorrow's sun. Need to do a bit of work with the borders and will plant it out. Butch is in flower too:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 27-Apr-10 03:59 AM GMT

hi Lee, was good to meet you saturday.

Orange tips do visit suburban gardens, i was about a 2/3 minute walk from the uxbridge Road, i even had the caterpillar on Garlic mustard in my Hayes garden. in all in Hayes i think i ended up with 21/22 species of butterfly (largest count was 21 of 6 species at once) and over 200 species of macro moth. With out a pond i ended up with at least 5 dragon/ damselfly species. mind you i do live in the garden from April onwards normally. the more time you spend out there the more you'll see. my patch was was 2 borders approximately 15ft x 5 each quite heavily planted mind you. here's a pic.



i'm still working on my current one 😊 all the best.
Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 27-Apr-10 04:43 AM GMT

Hi Chris,

Was great to meet you too!

Blimey, now that's what I call flower garden....If the new one's anything like that you'll be inundated with Leps.

The Orange Tip yesterday takes my Greenford garden tally to 12 species 😊

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by ChrisC, 28-Apr-10 03:27 AM GMT

to be totally honest though Lee, for the butterflies the main plants that attracted for nectaring were the buddliea, lavender, marjoram (the day i had 21 butterflies i think 12 or 13 of them were gatekeepers on this) scabious and knapweed. My Hayes garden record got smashed here in Verwood last year with 33. but even discounting the painted Ladies it was still in the 20's. It was a fantastic year for Pecoaks here. I can't compare Greenford Gardens unfortunately as i didn't have a garden (lived above the shops on Greenford Broadway) and i was mainly fishing and birding back then. But thankfully now i have seen the light. 😊 Keep up the good work mate.

Chris

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Apr-10 04:47 AM GMT

Hi Chris,

We have Buddleia and Lavender (although I think Henry ate that...) but will have to get some Scabious and Knapweed.

I think I'm lucky living near a cemetery and not far from some allotments, it must help with my home sightings!

Peacocks have been in good numbers here too, when they woke up.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Apr-10 05:19 AM GMT

I was outside work in Acton, London, W3 at lunchtime as a Peacock sped past.

I had to arrange some visits as I didn't want to be stuck indoors this afternoon and saw a Holly Blue at Boston Manor tube station.

I finished a little early but by the time I got home the sun had gone all hazy behind a thin layer of cloud that covered the whole sky so wasn't expecting much from a walk. However, despite the haze, the sight of another Holly Blue bouncing along a wall covered in Ivy at the edge of the cemetery as I walked past on the way home prompted me to go over there.

Not far in and a Squirrel shot across my path like a bat out of hell (well more like a Squirrel really), and startled a Speckled Wood into flight. I watched it but didn't see it settle. I saw another 3 flying though.

I noticed this Jay in a tree and it didn't seem to mind me edging closer to get a few shots as it flew down to the ground. Notice its friend in the second one!

I quite like Jays, they don't seem so mean looking as the rest of the Crow family.





2 further Speckled Woods were in the front garden as I got home. By now of course the sun was back out.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 01-May-10 01:21 AM GMT

Thursday 29th April 2010

You may remember me mentioning the London bound platform at Whitton train station near Twickenham a while back and its lovely bank of wild flowers. I passed through Whitton station on the way to Datchet this morning and the whole bank had been mown down 😞 Unbelievable.

So after my visit in Datchet the sun was fighting to come out and as I was waiting for the train back to Richmond I saw my first Swifts of the year, at least 3, along with 2 Swallows and 5 House Martins. I don't often see all 3 at once and it certainly made waiting for the train a pleasant experience for a change watching them swoop and soar. Magical birds at the best of times, they are truly a pleasure to watch 😊

So once on the train I found a new hobby – butterfly watching from a moving train...be careful though, it may give you a headache. There was plenty of neck straining and 'ooh, what was that', (in my head of course otherwise the other passengers would have just given me *that* stare).

However, between Datchet and Richmond (30 mins) I can confirm:

Small or Green Veined Whites x 13 (some of these may been female OT's of course)
Orange Tip male x 5
Brimstone male x 2
Brimstone female x 2
Speckled Wood x 1

Later on at West Drayton train station (again, Middlesex, near Heathrow) I was somewhat taken aback to see a Red Kite tussling with a Crow, quite high in the sky. This is the furthest south east I've ever seen a Red Kite, I normally don't see them until The Chilterns on the M40. Still, nice to see though and I suppose it's not that far away.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 02-May-10 11:09 PM GMT

Saturday 1st May 2010

The female Greenfinch was back this morning on the peanuts.

A couple of Speckled Woods were in the garden spiralling around each other before settling in a sunny perch.



I headed off to Park Wood in Ruislip Woods for a mooch in the afternoon as the sun was out but it had disappeared by the time I got there. It did come out for a while though and I saw:

Peacock x 4
Speckled Wood x 2
Small of Green Veined White x 1
OrangeTip x 2, 1 male and 1 female.

One of the Speckled Woods was a female ovipositing. I watched her for a while and after she flew off tried to find an egg but in a patch of grass stood no chance!



The Orange Tips were a great find. The sun was in at this point and I noticed him first as he was flying around a seeded dandelion head on which she was perched. Her abdomen was raised implying she had mated. He soon lost interest and flew off but she was settled there waiting for more sun and I spent a good half an hour watching her and taking a few photos.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 02-May-10 11:13 PM GMT

I've just seen a juvenile Robin. The pair are still in residence in the garden and are regular feeders from the fat balls and seeds. The juvenile suddenly appeared and they were feeding it, taking food from the bird table to its waiting open mouth. The youngster didn't yet have a tail and had speckled plumage.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-May-10 06:30 PM GMT

Bank Holiday Monday 3rd May 2010

With typical bank holiday weather a longer trip out was curtailed with 'inside type jobs' around the house.

The afternoon was very much sunshine and showers and during one of the brief spells of sunshine the sight of 2 Speckled Woods in the front garden prompted a trip over to the cemetery. Not much happening and it was still pretty cold. A full 10 degrees colder than last Monday so the BBC weather forecaster told us. Thanks for that.

As I was ending my walk I saw the only butterfly, a Speckled Wood just taking shelter as the sun had gone in (again). I watched as it went into a bush and then settled on a fence post and took a few photos.



Still this is something I haven't seen in detail before and I saw 2 of them do it today, the other going deep into a fir tree in the front garden.

Still waiting for the first cemetery Small Copper!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-May-10 07:23 PM GMT

Wednesday 5th May 2010

One good thing about my job is getting out and about a fair bit although mostly in London.

Had a visit in Tottenham Hale, N17 this morning right next to the River Lee. The Lee Valley Park ran along where I was and I walked along the river on the way back to the tube station.

Another suburban male Orange Tip, 2 Small or GV Whites and a possible Large White, which would still only be my third of the year.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-May-10 06:24 AM GMT

It's amazing what a sunny afternoon can do...

Some more 'drive by spotting' (thanks Susie!) but on the tube and bus this time rather than the train:

Trackside at Ealing Broadway station;
Orange Tip male x 2
Small or Green Veined White x 3
Possible Large White

Castlebar Road, just off Haven Green, Ealing;
A surprisingly urban male Brimstone

Longfield Road, Ealing;
Holly Blue

On arrival at home as expected there was a Speckled Wood in residence in the front garden.

I was home in time for a hour in the sun over at the cemetery and saw the following:

Peacock x 1

Orange Tip male x 1

Orange Tip female x 1

Small or Green Veined White x 1

Speckled Wood x 13

Oh, and a dead fox 😊 Did see 2 alive though, wonder if they killed it?

Orange Tips seem to be having a really good year near me. I'm not sure I have seen them in the cemetery before but that's 3 so far this year (the one in my front garden the other day then flew over there). There is plenty of Garlic Mustard over there, I'll search for eggs in due course.





On the way in I came across these mating Green Shield Bugs. Fair enough you might say.



They were still at it on the way out but I hadn't seen the bigger picture. Here's the whole scene from a distance:



On the right is a fly that appears to be a bit the worse for wear:



So what happened to him? I reckon one of the following:

- 1) He came across the Shield Bugs and keeled over in shock
- 2) He came across the Shield Bugs and died laughing
- 3) He is asleep
- 4) He is pretending to be asleep as he came across the Shield Bugs and doesn't want to disturb them...

Who knows. Anyway, at the top of the whole scene picture you can just make out this little spider:



What a strange little scenario.

Also, as I type there was a cry from the bathroom and I've just rescued a beautifully fresh Angle Shades moth by placing it outside.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 07-May-10 03:28 PM GMT

the chances are your little crab spider, *misumena vatia*, happened to that fly. I found loads of dead bees last year that these critters had caught.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-May-10 05:03 PM GMT

Thanks Susie. I think they will catch butterflies too won't they? And it's obviously waiting for the those flower buds to come out by which time its camouflage will be spot on!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 15-May-10 06:05 AM GMT

What with the colder weather and being pretty much desk bound, I haven't seen a butterfly in over a week 😞

Still, plans for a long trip out tomorrow are afoot, the weather looks promising and I'm hopeful of a good day over a couple of locations.

Had a quick look in the cemetery when I got home tonight. No sun and no leps – I had a good look in the areas I saw Common Blue and Small Copper last year for any roosting but still nothing. The vetch is only just coming out so maybe soon.

Crabby was still there in the same place as last week though, waiting for those buds to open:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-May-10 05:59 AM GMT

Saturday 15th May 2010

Noar Hill, Hampshire, 10.00 – 12.00

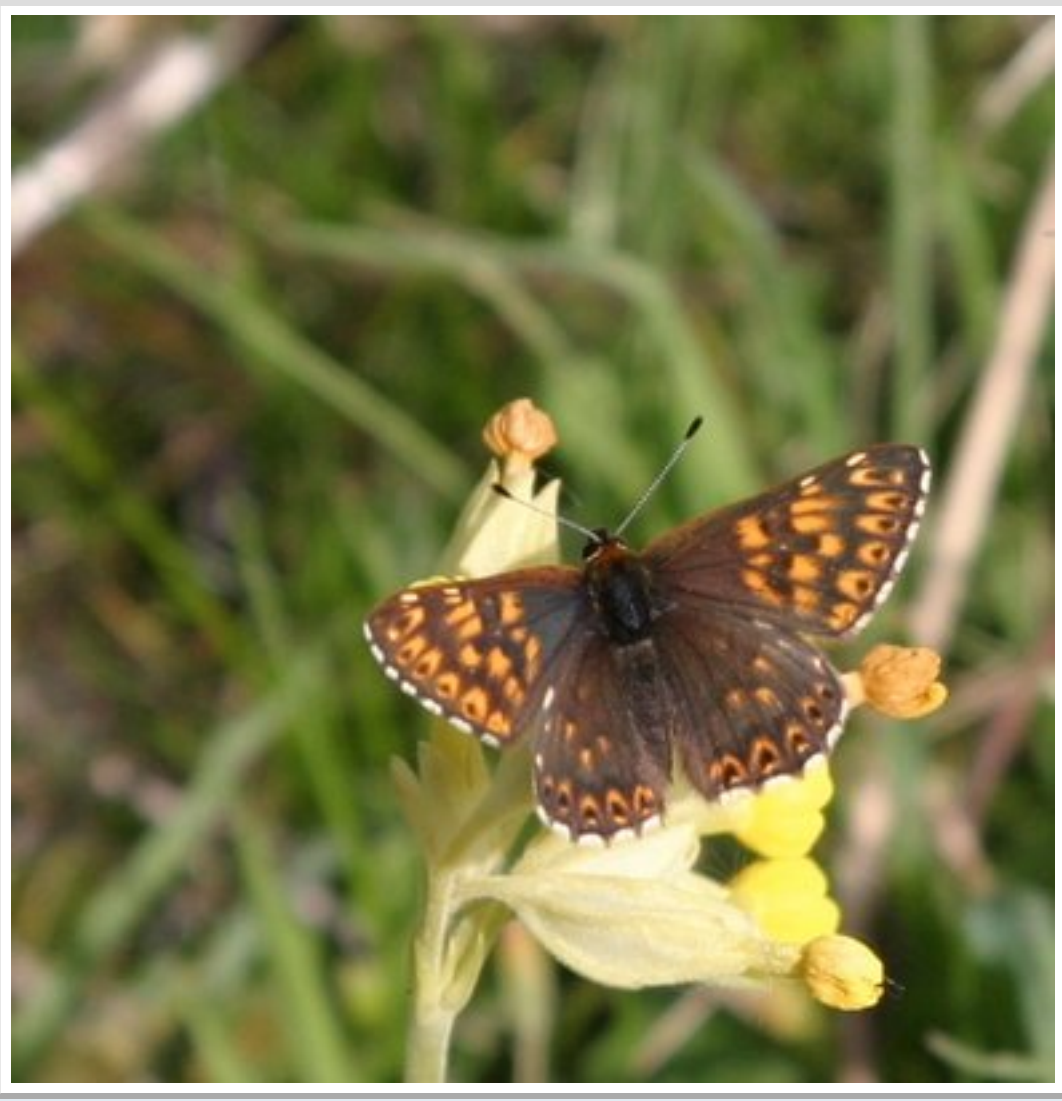
I had the whole day to myself today and so planned a longer trip out to take in a couple of locations. First up was Noar Hill in search of The Duke.

Going to a new site for the first time on your own is always a little worrying when not knowing necessarily where to go when you get there or even where to park! Helpfully the site warden had left a note at the end of the first bridleway politely asking you not to park there (on behalf of the farm traffic) and telling you where to park, a short walk away.

I arrived at 10.00 and walked up the bridleway. It was a glorious morning and quite warm. Swallows were flying and a female Brimstone was winding her way up the path.

I needn't have worried about where to look on the site, no more than 10 feet into the gate and I'd seen 3 Duke of Burgundy, the first of 14 I saw and my first ever sightings. I can see why The Kipper likes them so much, they are lovely to watch. I saw plenty of males tussling with each other and I think a few females too. They spend a lot of time basking with wings open and when disturbed don't fly too far, unlike the Grizzled Skipper...







I spent a couple of hours there wandering around the scrub and chalk pits and saw:
14 Duke of Burgundy (my first ever!)
1 female Brimstone
3 male Orange Tip
3 Small Heath (first of the year)
2 Grizzled Skipper (first of the year - I missed them at Danebury Hill...)

I met a couple of people and one chap I met identified the orchids I'd seen as early purple. I thought they were common spotted but they're not out yet apparently, although the leaves look the same.



By midday the incessant flies had got too much and I decided to move on. This male Orange Tip settled down right in front of me on the way back down the bridleway allowing some photos.



Although some clouds had come and gone over the morning I hadn't noticed the big, dark grey and ominous clouds that were now threatening. It even started to drizzle as I sat in the car having my lunch watching a kestrel search for his.

Oaken Wood, Surrey, 14.00 – 17.00

I'd already planned to go to Oaken Wood in search of my first ever Wood White and Pete's diary post on Friday helpfully told me where to look. The Oaken Wood complex covers a wide area, over 5 miles wide in total so I was grateful for Pete's suggestion of where to look, especially given my earlier comments about visiting a site for the first time.

I arrived at Botany Bay after a bit of a mission. It was only 18 miles and half an hour from Noar Hill according to the AA route planner (I don't have a Sat Nav and I like map reading) but what are they doing to the A3!? It messed with my directions but I got to Chiddingfold in the end. Then for some reason finding Botany Bay was a bit of a challenge 😬

So off in search of the Wood White...

Not far into Botany Bay and I saw my first and instantly recognised the dainty flight I'd read so much about. I'd seen about 20 by the time I got to where Pete had suggested and as he said there were plenty there.





I think I must have been there on an emergence day there were so many. I actually saw the whole reason for a butterfly's being during my visit, plenty of courting (now that is a sight to watch), copulating and even egg laying. I watched one male trying to woo a female for a few minutes only to be rebuffed as she flew off, seemingly uninterested. I managed to get a sequence of a couple courting (you can even see his proboscis) and then a different couple mating. I then found a female egg laying but alas no photo.







15.07 hours



16.44 hours – still at it on my way back

One even landed on my jeans at one point and when the sun was in it was easy to spot them on pretty much every flower head:



Three's a crowd...



I saw a male Orange Tip and even a male Brimstone trying to get in on some Wood White action only to be promptly seen off by 3 Wood Whites. At one point a Small or Green Veined White flew by and its flight was clearly much stronger than the Wood White's.

I also saw male Orange Tips and Brimstones nectaring on Bluebells which made for a lovely colour combination:



I met a couple who had also been to Noar Hill in the morning. He kindly told me about a Nightingale he had just heard and I did go and listen for it. Simply stunning. I heard 3 or 4 in total and saw a Greater Spotted Woodpecker.

In total I saw:

- 59 Wood White 🤩 (my first ever)
- 4 male Orange Tip
- 7 male Brimstone
- 1 Small or Green Veined White
- 2 Speckled Wood
- 10 Peacock
- 1 Comma

2 life ticks for me today and to top it off on my arrival home my signed copy of Thomas Lewington had arrived! Honestly, days don't get much better 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Neil Hulme, 17-May-10 06:21 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Congratulations on your first Dukes and Wood Whites – sounds like an awesome day out! That's a LOT of Wood Whites, particularly for the spring brood at Botany Bay (contrary to the literature, the summer brood is larger here). I'll onpass your count to some BC Surrey bods!

Neil

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-May-10 06:33 AM GMT

Thanks Neil, it was an awesome day! 😊

They will get them for the annual list when I submit my Herts & Middlesex sightings later in the year too.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-May-10 07:10 PM GMT

Monday 17th May 2010

A sunny day and a few visits meant I saw 2 Small or Green Veined Whites in Hounslow, a male Orange Tip on Piccadilly Line between Osterley and Boston Manor (I was, he was outside) and then a male Small White near Acton Town tube station (nectaring on a butch!).

I took the 207 along Uxbridge Road and walked through West Middlesex Golf Course on the way home and saw a Peacock basking in the late sun.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-May-10 07:19 PM GMT

Thursday 20th May 2010

I was home in time for half an hour in the cemetery from 5pm and had another good look for Common Blues and Small Coppers but with no joy. The clover, trefoils and vetch is really starting to flower now so it can't be toooo long.

I did see 1 male Green Veined White, 1 male Small White and 3 Peacocks – one of which was so large it looked like a small bat in flight!

Whilst looking for Blues and Coppers I noticed a commotion on a dandelion head. It was these shield bugs, different to the previous ones and with much more striking markings. I presume it was 2 males fighting over a female as they dislodged all the dandelion seeds.

Photos of the shield bugs to follow.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Padfield, 21-May-10 07:23 PM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

... (nectaring on a butch!).

Brilliant visual! Thanks, Lee! 😊

Guy

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-May-10 08:07 PM GMT

Ah...perhaps I should explain!

For those who may not have read the previous posts...Butch is my nickname for a *Choisya ternata* sundance bush.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-May-10 06:47 PM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Thursday 20th May 2010

Whilst looking for Blues and Coppers I noticed a commotion on a dandelion head. It was these shield bugs, different to the previous ones and with much more striking markings. I presume it was 2 males fighting over a female as they dislodged all the dandelion seeds.

Here are the photos of the shield bugs which I think I have identified as the sloe bug, *dolycoris baccarum* and a little friend.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-May-10 11:05 PM GMT

Saturday 22nd May 2010 (Lycaenid Heaven!)

What a glorious day. Another life tick for me and more Blues, Coppers and Hairstreaks than you could shake a stick at!

Today was really all about the blues. My target was the Small Blue which I'd never seen. I picked three locations, Swyncombe Downs, Oxfordshire (SU666914), Aston Rowant NNR, Oxfordshire (SU730966) and Yoesden Bank, Buckinghamshire (SU789980) because they all supposedly had Small Blue, they weren't too far from home and I could do all three in one day. Yoesden Bank also had the possibility of Adonis but I didn't see any. I only saw the one Small Blue in the end but at least I did see one!

Driving up the M40 I noticed 2 pairs of Buzzards and as I got to the Chilterns, as usual, Red Kites were soaring above the motorway cutting.

I drove through Watlington and there must have been a Red Kite feeding station as there were about 25 circling and swooping down behind the houses. Must be quite a sight for people living there! More Red Kites later.

Swyncombe Downs 10.30 - 13.00 (SU666914)

What a fantastic location, wonderful views and a good mix of downland, scrub and woodland. It was baking hot too.

Just through the gate and I could see Common Blues and Brown Argus in abundance. I spent a good while walking the downland and investigated every Brown Argus I could just to make sure until after about 2 hours I found a Small Blue! As it turns out, the Brown Argus is quite silvery in flight while the Small Blue was noticeably more violet in hue, so I presume it was a male. I only saw this one in the end during the whole day.

Here he is in a rather poor photo to prove I saw him:



The Common Blues and Brown Argus were my first of the year and I also saw my first Small Coppers.

At the end of downland footpath there is some scrub in a cutting and I noticed a Green Hairstreak which I observed for about 20 minutes going back and forth between about 4 perches. I was particularly pleased to find this one as I hadn't found one myself in the past but it turned out to be 1 of 8 I saw.

The Green Hairstreaks were in good numbers and on the walk back I edged the scrub and found a few more. They were also to be found on the ground too. At one point I was taking Captain Oates' advice and sitting down taking the location in as another Green Hairstreak, several Common Blues, several Brown Argus, a Small Copper and a Small Heath were dancing around my feet! Magical.

The Common Blues were mainly male (100+) and were very flighty and not easy to photograph. (The two shots on today's post were the best I could do with the hundreds of males I saw today 😊). I only saw 2 females at Swyncombe and I would imagine as the males are pretty fresh out they only have one thing on their mind.

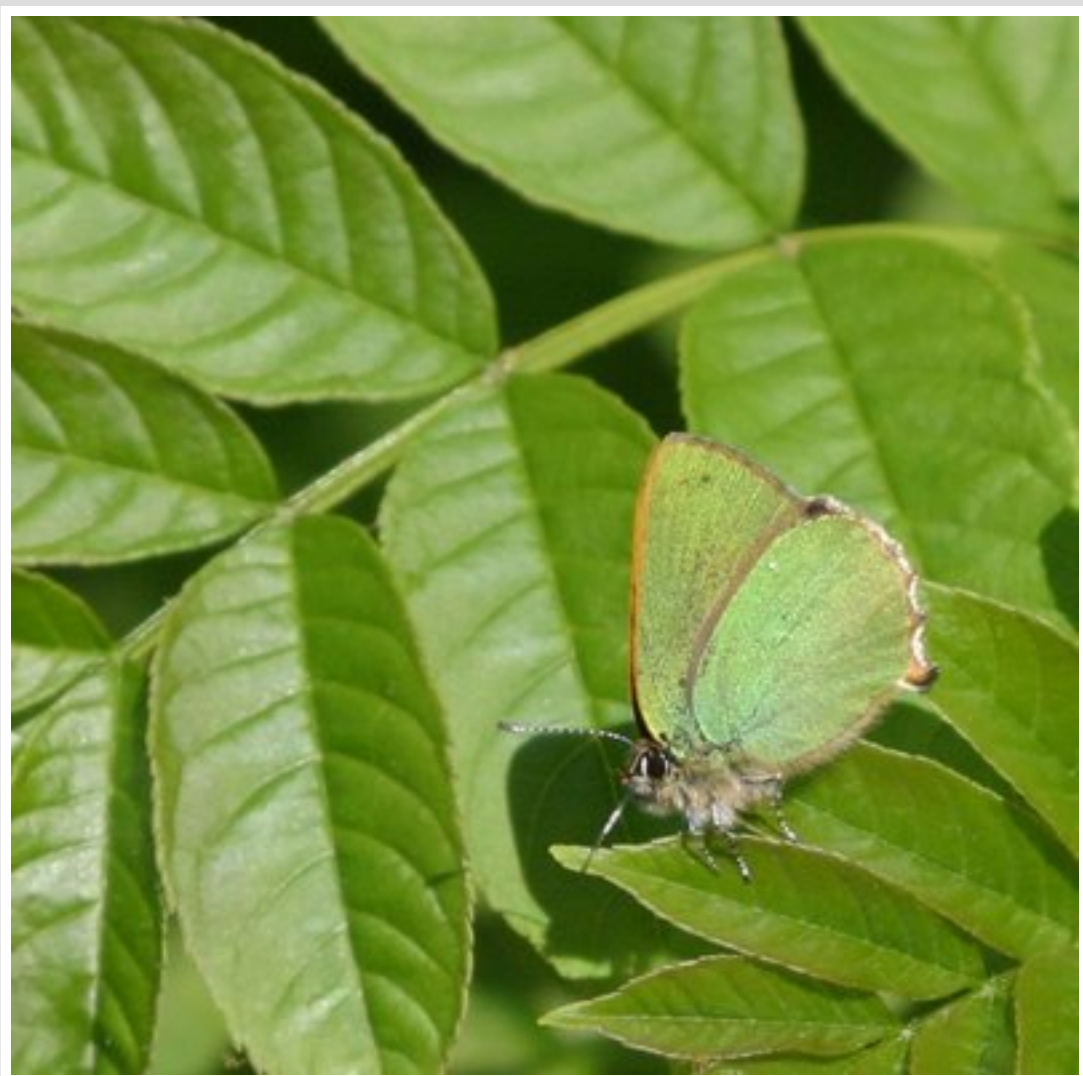
One of the two females I did see here seemed to have orange lunules on one forewing and white lunules on the other, which looked a bit odd:



Sightings for Swyncombe Downs:

- Small Blue (male) x1 (my first ever!)
- Common Blue (male) x 100+, (female) x 2 (first of the year)
- Brown Argus x 100+ (first of the year)
- Small Copper x 20+ (first of the year)
- Green Hairstreak x 8
- Small Heath x 10+
- Speckled Wood x 3
- Orange Tip (male) x 1
- Brimstone (male) x 5, (female) x 13
- Large White x 2
- Small or Green Veined White x 6
- Dingy Skipper x 1
- Cinnabar x 2
- Mother Shipton x 4
- Red Kites over head







I also saw these charming little green beetles and this fearsome looking hornet which was a good 2 inches long 😲





Aston Rowant NNR 14.00 - 15.30 (SU730966)

I didn't realise but it was here that the Red Kite was re-introduced with 93 birds released and now numbering over 300. Certainly explains why it's here I always see them on the M40! Aston Rowant is perhaps understandably one of the best places to see them up close. I switched lenses to a 300mm zoom because of the kites and I'm quite glad I did:





It took a while to see any butterflies at Aston Rowant but there are sheep there keeping the turf very short. I did find some further down the bank eventually.

Sightings for Aston Rowant NNR:

Common Blue (male) x 30+, (female) x 1
Brown Argus x 30+
Small Copper x 1
Small Tortoiseshell x 1
Comma x 1
Small Heath x 7
Brimstone (male) x 2, (female) x 1
Small or Green Veined White x 4
Dingy Skipper x 2
Mother Shipton x 1





Yoesden Bank 16.00 – 17.30 (SU789980)

Parking at St Mary's Church I made my way across the fields and up towards the wood. To the right of the wood is a small clearing and area of scrub which had Common Blues and a good colony of Dingy Skipper. Through the wood I saw a fresh looking Red Admiral, Speckled Wood and a Holly Blue.

The bank to the left and below the wood though is a lovely area of fairly long sward. Lots to see in both locations:

Common Blue (male) x 50+, (female) x 2
 Holly Blue x 3
 Green Hairstreak x 2
 Red Admiral x 1
 Comma x 1
 Peacock x 5
 Small Heath x 1
 Speckled Wood x 1
 Orange Tip (male) x 7, (female) x 1
 Large White x 5
 Small or Green Veined White x 8
 Brimstone (male) x 2, (female) x 1
 Dingy Skipper x 25+
 Cinnabar x 1
 Burnet Companion x 5
 Brimstone (moth) x 1



So assuming I saw both Small and Green Veined Whites, I had a quite a day today – 17 species, 1 life tick, 3 firsts for the year and a full house of post hibernators!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 27-May-10 04:49 PM GMT

Sunday 23rd May

Park Wood, Ruislip 13.30 –15.30

Maybe in hindsight 2 hours in near 30 degrees wasn't such a good idea. The butterflies seemed to think so as there wasn't much to be seen today. I think for this location though it was just inbetween the end of spring and beginning of summer and I'll be back for the woodland species later!

2 Small or Green Veined White
1 female Orange Tip
1 male Brimstone
2 fresh looking Large White, 1 male, 1 female
1 Holly Blue

Whilst sitting in a shady spot for a moment I also watched a bee fly hover around my foot like a mini helicopter and then vibrate its body, clearing the dust on the ground as it went – quite funny to watch.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 27-May-10 05:01 PM GMT

Monday 24th May 2010

I did mean to go to work today and even set off as normal only to be called back for washing machine related delivery issues. In that I had to be at home...

Anyway, at 07.40 it was warm enough (17 degrees) to see a male Small White nectaring on dandelions not far from home.

While stuck at home on the warmest day of the year I noticed 2 Small or Green Veined Whites over the road.

Later on, old washing mahine removed, new washing machine installed and working, B&Q supplies purchased and a new plug fitted to the kitchen sink, I ventured over to the cemetery.

Greenford Park Cemetery 17.00 – 17.40

At last! Some 'home grown' blues. Saw about 5, hard to say if any were repeats. 2 were nectaring on trefoil and vetch.

5 male Common Blue
1 male Large White



Call me hairy...

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Jun-10 05:20 AM GMT

Sunday 30th May 2010

We were in Worcestershire staying with my Nan for the weekend and I nipped out to Grafton Wood (SO973562) for a couple of hours on Sunday, some 4 or 5 miles from the village.

It's a nice site, and looks well managed. It's jointly so by Butterfly Conservation and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust according to the sign. This sign also says it holds the only colony of Brown Hairstreak in the West Midlands, something I might be popping back to see! It also mentions Purple Hairstreak and White Admiral. I wouldn't be surprised if Silver Washed are there too.

In a lovely narrow meadow, bordered by trees on all sides, to the east of the main wood there were loads of dragonflies about; red and orange, one bluey green and even some of those broad bodied ones. I hadn't seen those before. I also saw my first Large Skippers of the year although I mistook them for Essex at first as they were quite small and seemed to lack underside markings. Thanks to Neil for the correct ID.



Along the woodland rides were a few whites about and the Ragged Robin seemed very attractive:





Sightings for Grafton Wood:

- 1 male Brimstone
- 5 male Orange Tips
- 2 male Green Veined Whites
- 3 Large Whites, 2 were definite males
- 4 Small or Green Veined Whites
- 5 Large Skippers

Perhaps the highlight though for me was hearing my first Cuckoo of the year, who was calling for my entire visit. That was nice enough but then I heard another one and was lucky enough to see it! I don't think I've ever seen one before.

I have an aunt, uncle and cousin in the same village and I walked Alice, their boxer, with my cousin later on. Here's Alice:



Around the fields near the village we saw 2 Small or Green Veined Whites and 2 male Common Blues.

The first one closed his wings for the night a second after the shutter clicked.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 03-Jun-10 05:53 AM GMT

Here's another couple of shots of the Large Skippers.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Jun-10 09:00 PM GMT

The bus I get to work (E3) takes me past Barnes Pond, on Popes Lane in Ealing just before the north circular.

It was recently cleared up and all the vegetation stripped back and it does look much healthier. Before this it was stagnant and unattractive although I did used to see 1 sometimes 2 turtles basking in the morning sun on some days, no doubt ex-pets someone has released. Haven't seen them since the clear up though...

Anyway, since the clean up it has looked much nicer but as is the way, some idiots have started chucking things in there again, traffic cones and (twice) the complete rubbish bin that was by the bus stop. I note the council have not yet replaced the bin for the second time but both are still in the pond, poking out the water.

Each day I tut to myself on the bus in a grumpy old man sort of way but this morning I had reason to cheer instead!

A pair of Moorhens with at least 2 chicks were nest building on the part of the bin sticking out the water. Brilliant - what we see as unsightly nature may still take full advantage of.

Oh, and there was a pair of very tame Mallard in the College garden yesterday taking food from people too.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 05-Jun-10 03:14 AM GMT

That's it I'm officially on holiday 😊 We're staying with friends on Sunday night and have a whole world of getting ready to do before then. Monday will be Au revoir Angleterre, bonjour République Française. Tres bien!

Even if I do manage to pop out over the weekend I probably won't be able to post before I go, so the next installment may well be a trip report from

France.

Keep your fingers crossed for good weather, I'll be back in a couple of weeks!

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 05-Jun-10 05:53 AM GMT

Have a great time, Lee. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-Jun-10 05:14 PM GMT

Thanks Susie! 😊

In the end I did have time yesterday for 2 and half hours at Park Wood, Ruislip and a 2 hour snooze in the afternoon. Unheard of for me, I never sleep during the day!

Not much action at Park Wood, although once again I missed the best of the sunshine arriving at 13.30.

3 Small or Green Veined Whites and 2 pristine Speckled Woods (2nd brood I guess, although could these be individuals that hibernated as larvae rather than pupae?)



A few interesting looking other insects too, one large dragonfly and hundreds of gossamer winged damselflies.



One male Large White was in the garden when I got back and later at dusk what I think was a Stag Beetle flew through! It had huge jaws anyway. That really is it for now, be back in a couple of weeks. Au revoir!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-Jun-10 04:58 PM GMT

I've started my French trip report, which can be found at:

viewtopic.php?f=20&t=4269&p=33488#p33488

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Jun-10 05:07 AM GMT

Sunday 20th June 2010

I nipped up the M40 to Bernwood Forest and Meadows this afternoon to search for another new species to me, the Black Hairstreak. They were right were Adrian Riley said they would be and I spent a lovely couple of hours in their presence. I saw about 20.

They were not easy to photograph and I didn't have the sugary treats tried by Nick et al! This is about the best I could do...



I tried switching lenses but in the end just watched them until the biting flies became too much.

The rest of the forest seemed well, a bit empty really compared to the first week in July from last year.

Also seen, 1 Red Admiral, 2 Hutch Commas, my first British Meadow Browns of the year (10+), 10+ Speckled Woods, 10+ Common Blues, 1 Small Copper, 15+ Large Skippers, 1 Large White and 4 Small or Green Veined.

The Commas were much more obliging:



I was hopeful of an early Silver Washed or White Admiral but it wasn't to be. I'll be back of course!

After an hour traffic jam on the M40 – one of those where you just have to turn the engine off and wait – I stopped off at Park Wood, Ruislip but not until about 1800 and saw 3 Speckled Woods and 1 Comma, which looked like a Hutch but was quite worn:





I'll be back with some sugar next year!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Jun-10 06:33 AM GMT

Saturday 26th June 2010

I had the whole day out today and planned on 3 locations.

Fairmile Common (TQ0124616) 09.45 - 11.00.

Based on Jack's and Vince's posts I went to Fairmile in search of a new species to me, the Silver Studded Blue. I parked the car, crossed the road and entered the heath and saw one within 5 feet. They were very abundant, easily 150+ males and 20+ females. There were many in view at any one point and seemed to be around every clump of heather. Lovely butterflies. I saw some courting, some mating too and one poor male that had reached his end in a spider's web.

Having never seen them in the wild it was interesting to compare them to Common Blues. SSB's in flight behaviour seemed much different, they of course checked out other blues they come across but very rarely seem to leave ground level.

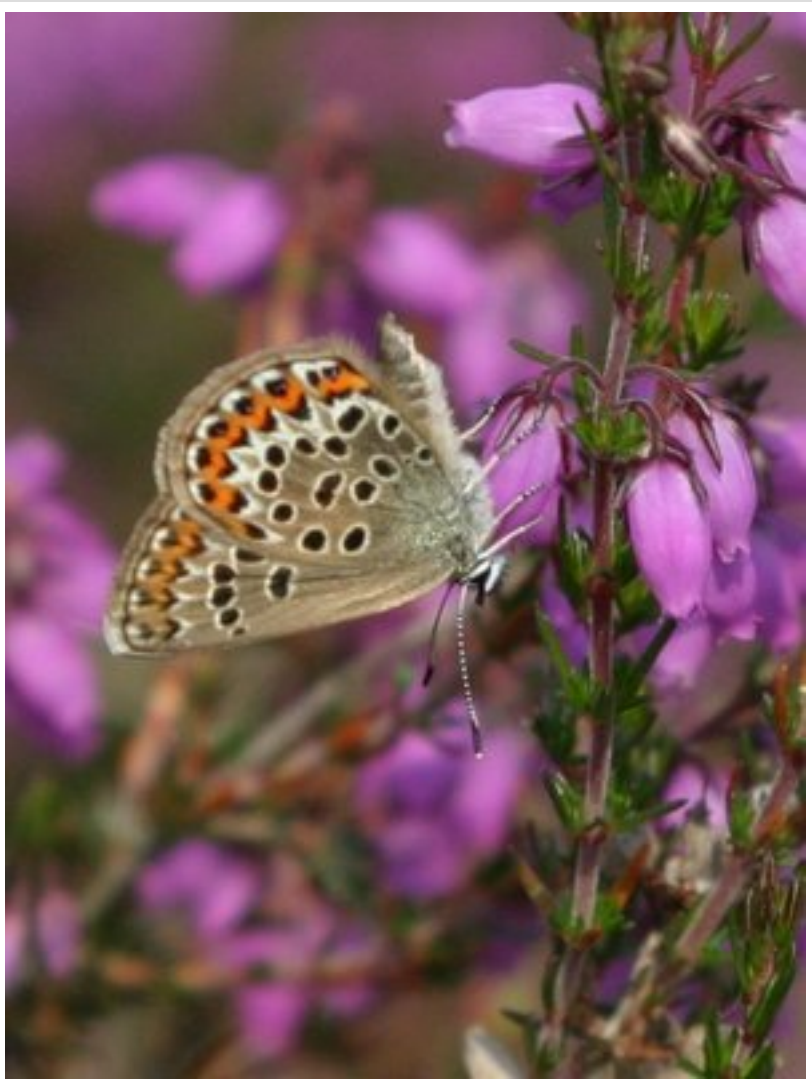
By the time I got back to the car they were even in the car park and about to fly in my open windows! Also seen, 1 Meadow Brown, 2 Large Skippers, 1 Small Skipper and a few dragonflies - one lime green and one pale blue one.



check out the female in the bottom right



here she is again



His charms obviously didn't work!





Juniper Bottom (TQ179525) through to Box Hill (TQ179513) 11.30 – 15.00

I wanted to see if I could find any Dark Green Fritillaries at Juniper Bottom and they didn't disappoint. There was even one in the car park as I pulled in! This was all too easy....

As it turned out I saw 7, and 5 Silver Washed Fritillaries too. I even saw the two sparring.



Seen at Juniper Bottom:

- 7 Dark Green Fritillary
- 5 Silver Washed Fritillary
- 2 Red Admiral
- 4 male and 3 female Brimstone 🤪 still going at the end of June...
- 4 Marbled White
- 20+ Ringlet
- 50+ Meadow Brown
- 7 Speckled Wood
- 2 Common Blue
- 5 Large Skipper
- Speckled Yellow moth

Seen at Box Hill:

- 50+ Marbled White
- 50+ Meadow Brown
- 25+ Ringlet
- 1 Speckled Wood
- 1 Small Heath
- 1 Comma
- 1 Small Tortoiseshell
- 3 Common Blue
- 1 Brown Argus
- 1 male Brimstone
- 1 Small or Green Veined White
- 6 Large Skipper
- lots of Burnets



Denbies Hillside (TQ141503) 15.30 – 16.30

I'd never been but heard a lot about Denbies from Susie and others. It is a stunning place too and the views are even better than Box Hill as you can see right along the valley. I did try and get to Denbies once before, the day I went to Box Hill last year. Then, I'd parked at Juniper Bottom again and walked through to Box Hill. I'd anticipated walking on to Denbies but, man that's a long walk. I got as far as the A24, gave up and turned around and then had to climb Box Hill on those steep steps 😓 So this time I drove 😊

Seen at Denbies:

- 1 Marbled White
- 5 Small Heath
- 25+ Meadow Brown
- 5 Common Blue
- 1 Brown Argus
- lots of Burnets
- 2 Burnet Companion moths
- 5 Large Skipper
- 3 Small Skipper
- 1 Small or Green Veined White

This Common Blue had upperside markings a bit like a Holly Blue. I caught sight of the other forewing and it was symmetrically marked.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 28-Jun-10 07:17 AM GMT

I think I saw 31 species at Denbies last year – which does not include the woods of Ranmore Common on the other side of the road.

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 28-Jun-10 08:44 PM GMT

That's a good tally Dave, anything unusual?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 29-Jun-10 01:40 AM GMT

Not really! Clouded Yellow was the notable species around in 2009 that I'd not seen there in previous years.

Denbies has a splendidly long season, kicking off in April with Grizzled Skippers, Dingy Skippers and Green Hairstreaks, and winding down in October with the last Common Blues and Small Coppers. The stars are the Adonis Blues, which are generally pretty numerous, and the Silver-spotted Skippers, which aren't. They are easier to find at Box Hill. I have also seen second brood Dingy Skippers at Denbies in both 2008 and 2009, so shall be looking for them again this year.

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by traplican, 29-Jun-10 03:17 AM GMT

I am interested by the picture of the butterfly taken on Saturday 22nd May 2010 bellow the photos of the Red Kite. The butterfly looks like the Common Blue but the root spot(s) on the forewing are missing.

Chapman's Blue – *Agrodiaetus thersites* lives in the UK?

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Jun-10 05:59 AM GMT

Hi Traplican,

I don't think so....I hadn't noticed anything different about it until you said! Here it is again for ease of conversation:



I had it down as a Brown Argus due to lack of cell spot and flight but now you mention it the cell spots do all seem rather small and it looks more like a Common Blue. Guy/Felix – any thoughts?

I would imagine a slight variation in the underside of a Brown Argus or Common Blue??

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Jun-10 06:02 AM GMT

"millerd" wrote:

Not really! Clouded Yellow was the notable species around in 2009 that I'd not seen there in previous years.

Denbies has a splendidly long season, kicking off in April with Grizzled Skippers, Dingy Skippers and Green Hairstreaks, and winding down in October with the last Common Blues and Small Coppers. The stars are the Adonis Blues, which are generally pretty numerous, and the Silver-spotted Skippers, which aren't. They are easier to find at Box Hill. I have also seen second brood Dingy Skippers at Denbies in both 2008 and 2009, so shall be looking for them again this year.

Dave

Hi Dave,

I will try and go earlier next year to see the spring species. I've yet to see Adonis there but will go for the second brood! You're right about Silver Spotted Skippers at Box Hill, I saw quite a few there last August. Maybe see you there later in the year!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Padfield, 29-Jun-10 06:25 AM GMT

That's a common blue, Lee, even though it is missing the cell spot. There is a named form, *icarinus*, which lacks the spot and occurs frequently enough to cause some confusion on the continent, where Chapman's blue flies. It shouldn't cause confusion in the UK, where Chapman's has never been recorded, to the best of my knowledge.

Guy

EDIT – but that is definitely a common blue, and could be identified as that from the submarginal spots even if the photo had been taken abroad!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Jun-10 05:10 PM GMT

Many thanks Guy.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Piers, 29-Jun-10 09:17 PM GMT

The cell spots are frequently absent in UK Common Blues, to the extent that it is not a reliable means of determining the species.

Felix.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Jun-10 10:32 PM GMT

Thanks Felix.

That's the first one I've ever seen with a missing cell spot!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 29-Jun-10 11:42 PM GMT

I'm quite surprised you didn't see a great deal at Denbies, Mike, but I suppose this is a bit of a lull. The best species for me is the chalkhill blues and they are usually there in abundance in mid to late July. Looks like you had an amazing day anyway. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jun-10 12:18 AM GMT

Hi Susie,

Did you mean me or Dave (Millerd)?

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 30-Jun-10 03:32 AM GMT

Sorry for not being clearer, I meant you.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by millerd, 30-Jun-10 03:48 AM GMT

Yes, I did overlook the Chalkhill Blues – unforgiveable, as there are perhaps more of those than anything else from mid-July to the end of August. They *were* one of the 31, of course... A recommended time to go is early in the day, when they are all waking up and stretching their wings. Early evening is also good, as all the Blues (including the Brown Argus) roost on every available grass stem, and with luck you could see three different species on the same stalk, all lit by that magical atmospheric low sunlight.

Every chance of seeing me there – I try to visit once a week from about now onwards.

Dave

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jun-10 08:37 PM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

Sorry for not being clearer, I meant you.

Don't worry Susie, you were clear but had called me Mike!

Well I was there only for an hour I guess and I was hoping to see a late Adonis, having not seen one this year yet and was too early for the Chalkhills. It does sound magical though in a few week's time and I will be back!

It was an amazing day, another new species, the Silver Studded Blues were great and to be that close to a Dark Green Frit is not something I've done since childhood 😊

"millerd" wrote:

Every chance of seeing me there – I try to visit once a week from about now onwards. Dave

I'll let you know as and when I go Dave.

Cheers both,

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jun-10 08:43 PM GMT

Tuesday 29th June 2010 18.15

I walked home through West Middlesex Golf Course on the way home to search for Purple and White Letter Hairstreaks but none were to be found (yet, I hope) where I saw them last year.

I wonder if many golfers see people staring up at trees and think there are some odd people about...I was thinking of this time last year when a golfer came up to a tee only to find me crawling around on my hands and knees looking at both species 😊

Anyway, there does seem to be a big carpet of trefoil on the course where there wasn't last year. Plenty of squirrels and rabbits gamboling about too.

And I did see a nice fresh Comma on the way out, which as I stopped to look and then moved, came to check me out and went back its perch.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 01-Jul-10 04:06 AM GMT

Sorry, Lee! Don't know where I got "Mike" from, I didn't even realise I had put it, I worry about me sometimes! 😊

I try to go to Denbies once a week or thereabouts between April and August too but have skipped a week this week as I'm concentrating on Southwater. I'll let you know when I see Chalkhills at Denbies.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 01-Jul-10 04:53 PM GMT



Thanks Susie, I could come down and meet you one week.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Jul-10 06:27 AM GMT

Friday 2nd July 2010

I took today off specifically to seek an audience with His Majesty. I opted for Southwater Woods, West Sussex (TQ141255) after reports from Susie, Neil and others and was not disappointed. What a lovely place 😊

Friday morning rush hour traffic on the M25 was not kind to me and I arrived later than planned at about 10.00.

I wandered for a while and bumped into UKB member Mark Senior, with whom I spent the very enjoyable rest of the morning, sharing stories as we walked.

There were silly numbers of White Admiral and Silver Washed Fritillary – they were everywhere. We even saw a f. *valesina* female!

Mark and I saw a fleeting glimpse of purple and He was there. One of us said 'I wonder if Neil is here today' and lo and behold, round the next corner there he was...typically with another Purple Emperor at his feet! It was great to meet Mark today and to bump into Neil.

There was a strange and pungent smell in the air which turned out to be Neil's bait – some kind of shrimp paste. Truly awful but it worked. Here's Neil in what we all must look like in early July:



Sightings for Southwater:

2 Purple Emperor

75+ Silver Washed Fritillary, including 1 female f. *valesina* and another that looked intermediate

50+ White Admiral

1 Dark Green Fritillary

4 Comma

2 Small Tortoiseshell (including Vince's ab. *nigrita*)

1 Marbled White

100+ Meadow Brown (including a dwarf male)

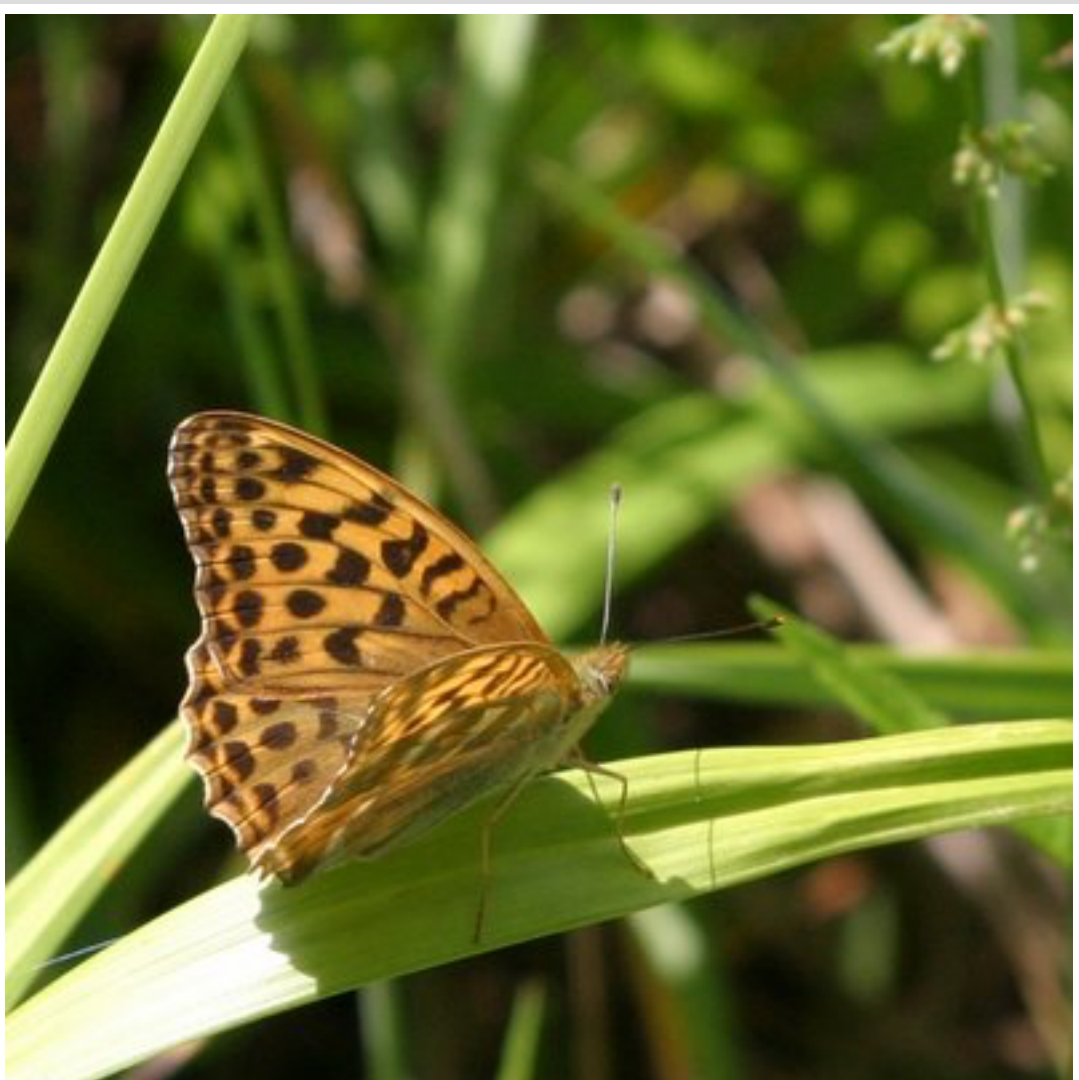
50+ Ringlet

25+ Speckled Wood

1 Large White

15+ Large Skipper

5 Small Skipper





I have come to the conclusion that White Admirals are the hardest butterfly I have come across to photograph...

I dropped Mark off in Southwater where we had a swift half and he told me an interesting story about a Mazarine Blue...

I then headed to Botany Bay, Oaken Wood in Surrey (SU995338) for the afternoon where I saw:

2 Purple Emperor (one on the ground on horse dung at 16.25 – I disturbed him and he flew up to the trees 🤪)

30+ Silver Washed Fritillary

30+ White Admiral

2 Wood White

1 Comma

10+ Large Skipper

5 Small Skipper

50+ Ringlet

30+ Meadow Brown

25+ Speckled Wood





Once again the M25 was evil on my return home but I had had a fantastic day nonetheless 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Pete Eeles, 07-Jul-10 06:39 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

I took today off specifically to seek an audience with His Majesty.

Good move – that'll be Neil then 😊

This guy is a magnet for *iris* and aberrations 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Jul-10 05:30 PM GMT

He certainly is! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 08-Jul-10 06:12 AM GMT

Saturday 3rd July 2010

We were off to Enfield overnight. Just before we left I saw a Comma, a Large White and a female Small White in the garden laying a couple of eggs on one of our lettuce plants that looked a bit like rocket that had gone to seed 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 08-Jul-10 06:26 AM GMT

Sunday 4th July 2010

On return from Enfield another Large White was in the garden and another/the same (?) female Small White laying more eggs! The plants now held quite a few eggs and I will endeavour to breed them through. Does anyone know if the cats will accept other cabbage family plants after starting on one type?

I decided on the spur of the moment to shoot up the M40 to Bernwood, still after my iris photo for this year. It was sunny in London but not so in North Bucks.

Under cloud cover and quite breezy, no Emperors were seen but I still notched up:

30+ White Admiral, including a couple courting
4 Silver Washed Fritillary
8 Comma
200+ Ringlet
15+ Meadow Brown
25+ Marbled White
25+ Speckled Wood
40+ Large Skipper
15+ Small Skipper
at least 2 Essex Skipper
1 female Common Blue



And with much patience and neck straining (they have an uncanny ability to just disappear don't they...) I got closer to the shot I was after and that I didn't manage at Southwater on Friday:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Jul-10 06:11 AM GMT

Saturday 10th July 2010

I took my friend 'Silver Spotted Fingers' Michael out for the day today. We had a lovely day out last August and with him not having seen one since he was 7, I had promised him a Purple Emperor this year....

He lives in Tunbridge Wells which meant getting up at silly o'clock for me. I arrived at his at 08.00. However, with Mike cooking the biggest breakfast known to man and me taking the wrong road out of Tunbridge Wells we didn't arrive to our first stop - Southwater Woods, West Sussex (TQ141255) until after 10.00.

Mike did get his iris, but unfortunately not on the ground. White Admiral and Silver Washed still in good numbers, although slightly down on last week.

Southwater sightings:

4 Purple Emperor

25+ White Admiral

50+ Silver Washed Fritillary, including a mating pair

3 Comma

2 Marbled White

50+ Meadow Brown

25+ Ringlet

25+ Speckled Wood

1 Small Heath

2 Gatekeeper (first of the year)

4 Large Skipper

10+ Essex/Small Skipper (we saw both)
5 Large White
5 Small White
5 Green Veined White



Excuse the frame filling but this White Admiral landed right in front of my face and I didn't want to move too much in case I scared it off..





We didn't see any abs but this very worn male did hint at streaks rather than spots



Second stop was Mill Hill, near Shoreham, West Sussex (TQ212067). I hadn't been here before and it was lovely. Didn't actually take any butterfly pics but plenty of views. We walked from the top car park down through the woods and onto the slopes. There was a sea mist rolling in off the coast which looked very odd from our elevated view point. Anyone on the south coast in Sussex on Saturday must have been under a blanket!

Mill Hill sightings:

- 1 Red Admiral
- 6 Peacock
- 1 Comma
- 3 Small Tortoiseshell
- 1 Brimstone
- 2 Large White
- 10+ Marbled White
- 3 Speckled Wood
- 6 Gatekeeper
- 15+ Meadow Brown
- 1 Small or Essex Skipper
- Lots of Burnets

We moved east for our last stop – Wilmington Hill, East Sussex (TQ544033) above the long man, which for the second year in a row had been adorned with (ahem) extra appendages 🤪 or 🤪 I couldn't quite decide which...

Mike and I came here on 17th August last year and it was so nice I wanted to come back this year earlier. And I'll be back this year too. We were off to a good start with a Hummingbird Hawk moth and a Holly Blue in the car park. Our target was one of my favourite butterflies, the Chalkhill Blue. We were in luck 😊





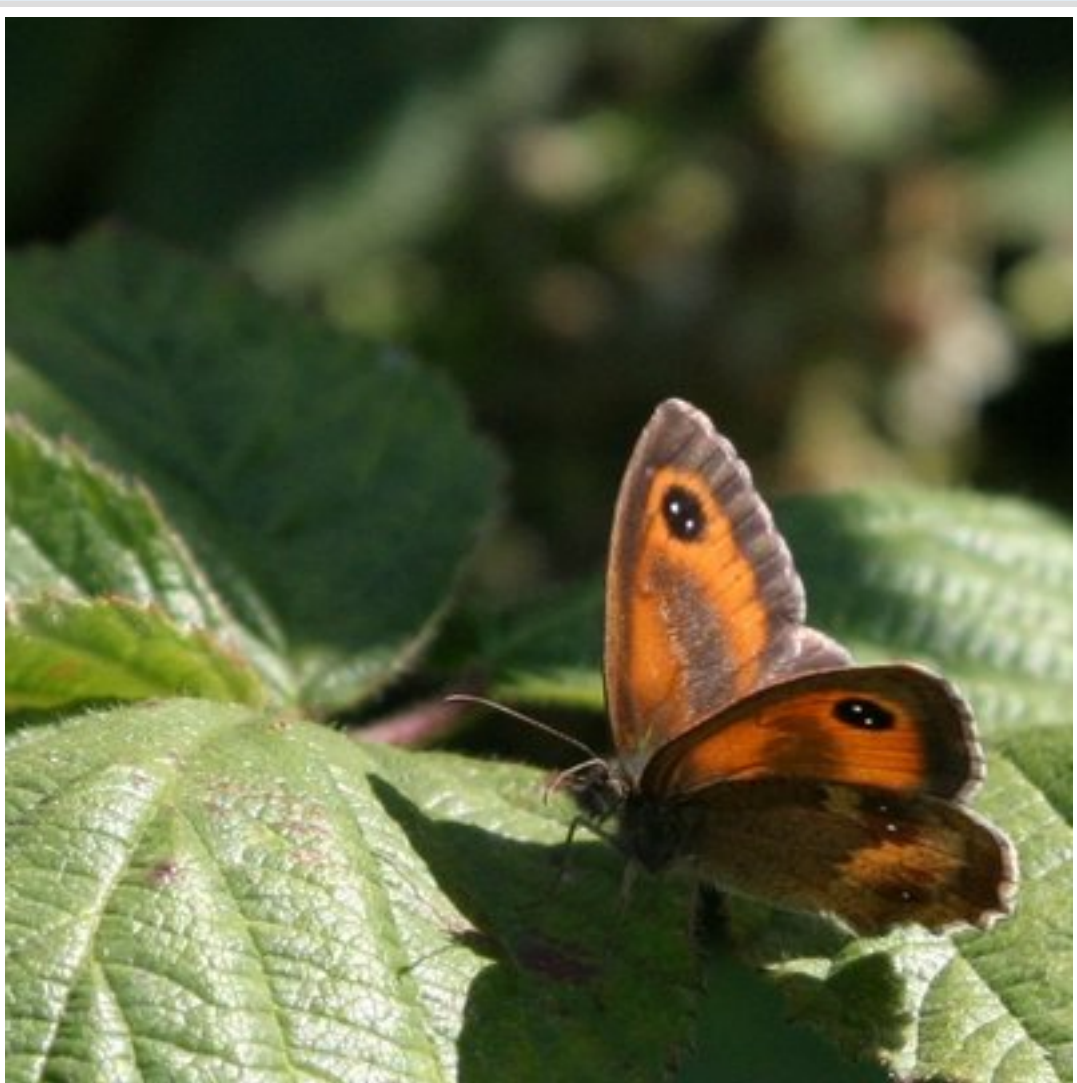


Play nicely, now...

Marbled Whites, Small Heaths and Dark Green Fritillaries zooming up and down the slopes were abundant. This one stopped long enough for a photo.



Gatekeepers were over the road from the car park:



The views from the summit were breathtaking and we stopped, sat and took it all in. The sea mist could still be seen on the coast and a battered immigrant Painted Lady was arguing and being chased by a skipper in front of us. The butterflies had been lovely today but what made the whole day

even more special was my first real (knowing) encounter with Skylarks. The meadows were alive with their song and we watched several fly up, singing and then hover before falling back down to the ground. It was so beautiful and entrancing I think it will stay with me forever. I would go back just to see and hear them again. I'm not that good with bird song but Mike knew what they were. I then realised that I had heard them at Mill Hill also. I'm hooked!

Wilmington Hill sightings:

25+ Dark Green Fritillary

1 Red Admiral

1 Painted Lady

2 Small Tortoiseshell

25+ Chalkhill Blue (all male)

1 Common Blue (male)

1 Holly Blue

6 Small Copper

50+ Marbled White

150+ Meadow Brown

100+ Small Heath

5 Gatekeeper

2 Large White

1 Small White

1 Hummingbird Hawkmoth

2 Silver Y

Plenty of Burnets

1 Cinnabar

1 Forester

We stopped for a well earned pint in Wilmington before heading back to Tunbridge Wells. On the way we drove past Abbots Wood and just near the entrance I noticed a long line of mature oaks with the tops in evening sunlight. I stopped the car and sure enough there were 10+ Purple Hairstreak dancing around, my first of the year.

I make that 27 species, easily my best one day tally for butterflies 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 13-Jul-10 06:51 AM GMT

Where were you hiding then? I was at Southwater between 10 and 11 on Saturday and I didn't see you! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Jul-10 06:20 PM GMT

Hi Susie,

That's a shame to have missed you! We started off in Marlpost Wood and then walked along the road to the main east west ride, went to the end, spent some time with 2 fuzzy haired gentlemen at the Madgeland master trees and then came back via the meadows.

And I still haven't got a photo this year! I might give it one last try this weekend....

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Jul-10 06:52 PM GMT

Monday 12th July 2010

I walked home through West Middlesex Golf Course and the Purple Hairstreaks are out at last, I saw 5 plus a Comma.

While watering the tomatoes and buddleia at home at around 18.30 in the garden I saw 3 Holly Blues, 1 Small White, 1 Peacock and a Comma! All in 10 minutes!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 13-Jul-10 07:01 PM GMT

Lol, don't diss us fuzzy headed people! 😊 I met the brothers from Brighton too, one had seen a valezina female at the far end of the east west ride but I didn't get to see it. Shame I missed you.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Jul-10 06:51 AM GMT

Having a free afternoon I decided on the spur of the moment (otherwise I'd have messaged you Susie) to head to Denbies Hillside for some more Chalkhill action.

I was there from 15.00 to 17.00 and *coridon* was in profusion. And in some variety too. The biggest variation was in size; some were Common Blue size, quite a few the size of Gatekeepers. I know they are a variable species – I remember some wonderfully streaked underside specimens from the North Downs above Kemsing when I was a lad – but I'd never seen one like this (ID'd as *ab. postobsoleta* by Felix, thanks again), missing most rear wing

underside cell spots and having silver studs!



No hind wing cell spots and with silver studs



Rather helpfully posing with a normal CHB for comparison



And then with a Brown Argus



Upper side was normal though

Also seen were a couple with orange spots, or a hint of, on the upperside hind wings:



Then some with white lunules on the upperside forewings:





Nice to see a couple of females too.

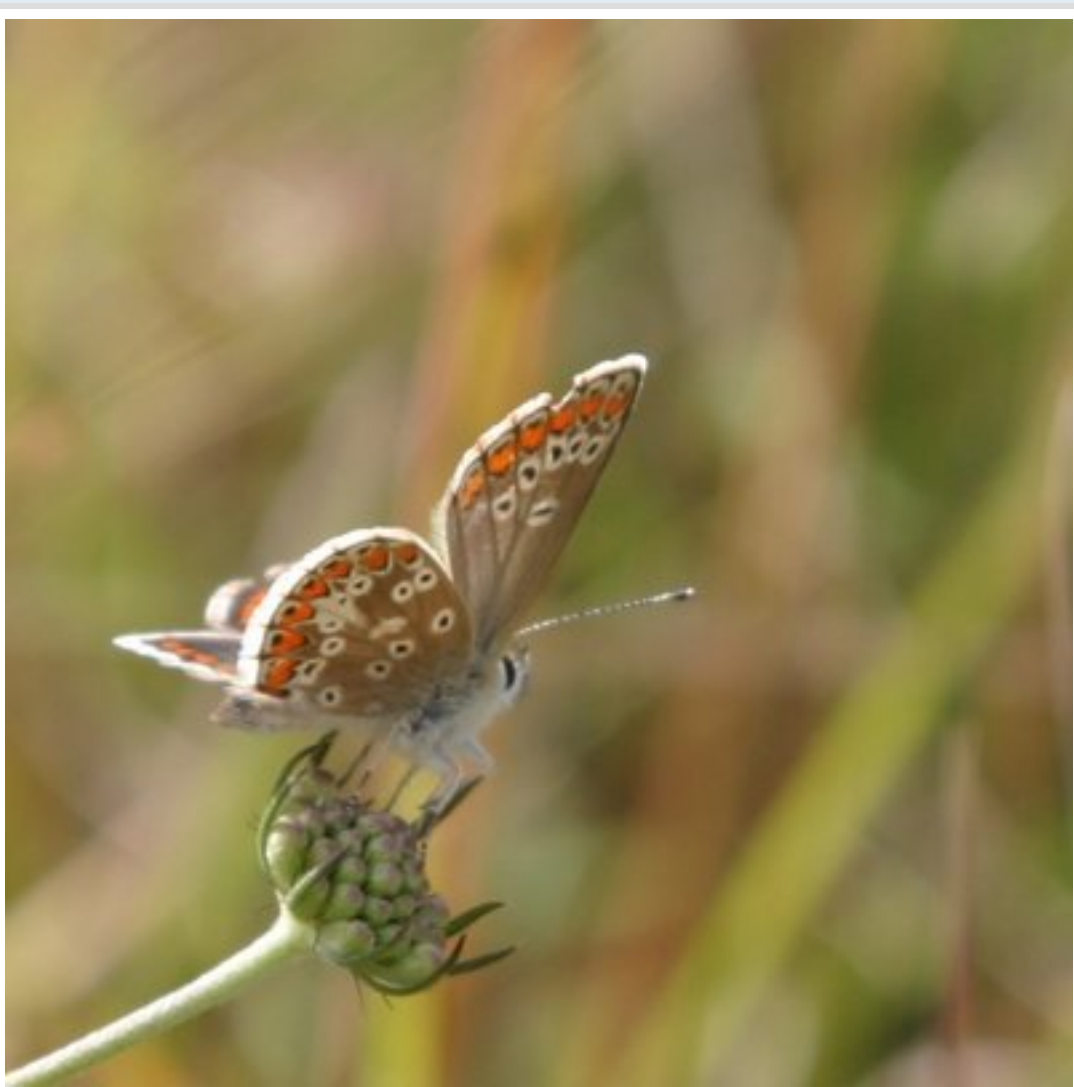


Finally, as I will never tire of seeing them, some other Chalkhills:





Also a female Common Blue and I know not a great photo of a Brown Argus but I do like it!



Totals for Denbies:

100+ Chalkhill Blue – male, including 2 female
15+ Common Blue
25+ Brown Argus
6 Small Copper
1 Silver Washed Fritillary – flew across the hillside from west to east near the trees
8 Marbled White
50+ Meadow Brown
1 Ringlet – at the bottom near the tree line
2 Small Heath
25+ Gatekeeper
1 Large White
2 Small White
1 Large Skipper
3 Small Skipper
1 Essex Skipper

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-Jul-10 06:09 AM GMT

Saturday 17th July 2010

Garden sightings for today:

1 Speckled Wood
1 Gatekeeper
1 Large White
2 Small White
1 Red Admiral
1 Comma

Re: Lee Hurrell

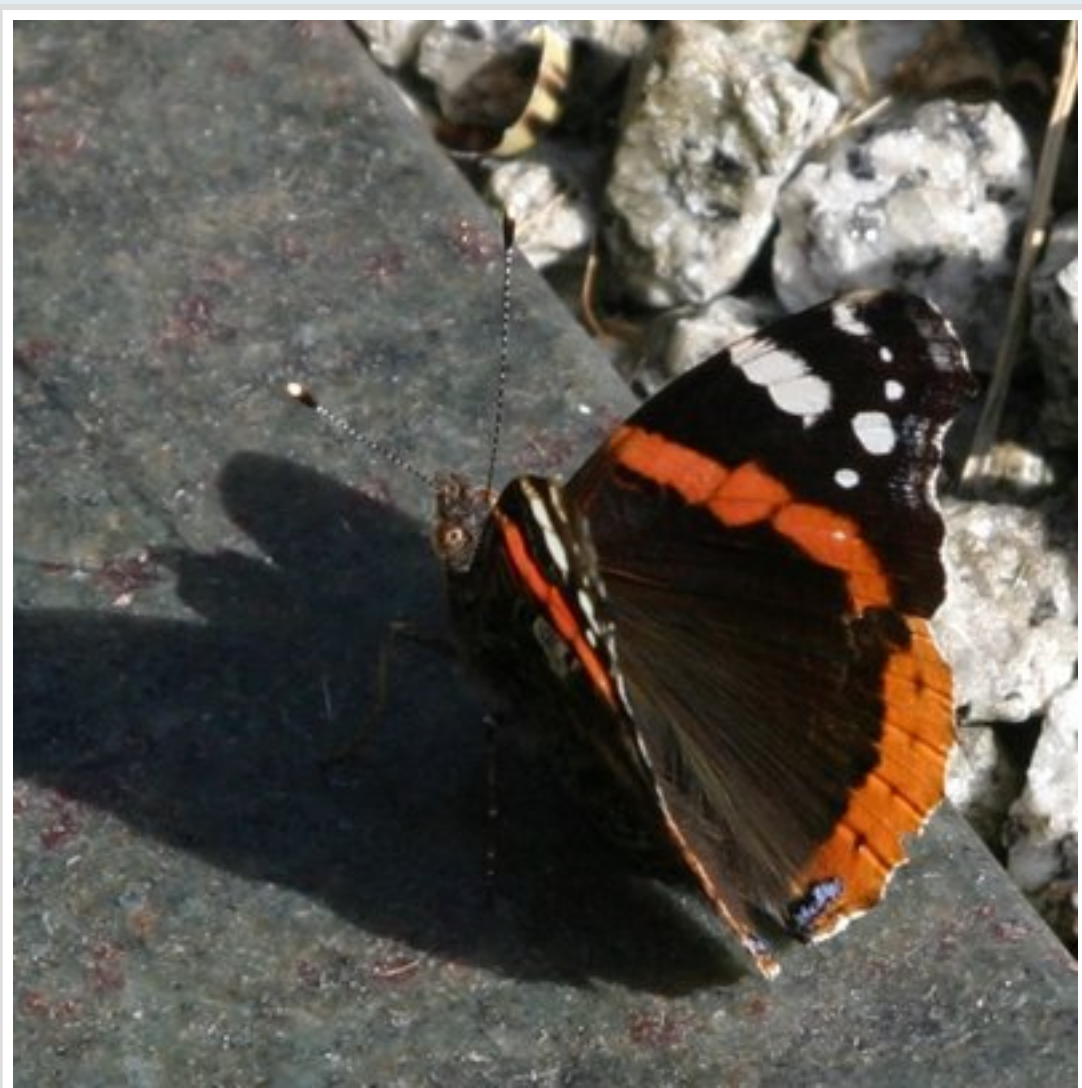
by Lee Hurrell, 21-Jul-10 06:18 AM GMT

Sunday 18th July

Garden sightings for today:

2 Red Admiral
1 Comma
2 Speckled Wood
2 Holly Blue
2 Large White
4 Small White
1 Green Veined White

With the season in full flow, I hadn't been over to the cemetery in what seems like ages. I popped over for 45 minutes this afternoon and was greeted by a Red Admiral just inside. This one kept flying over to me, circling my head and then back to its perch. This went on for a while until it started landing on my head and T Shirt! It was feeling quite photogenic too.



Also seen were:

4 Red Admiral (including what seemed like a couple courting)
6 Common Blue, all male
2 Small Copper (the first ones this year I've seen over there)
2 Holly Blue
2 Speckled Wood
6 Meadow Brown

5 Gatekeeper
3 Large White
5 Small White
2 Green Veined White
1 Small Skipper – the first time I've seen one in the cemetery I think!

On the way back the location where the first Red Admiral was seen was occupied by another individual:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-Jul-10 06:33 AM GMT

Monday 19th July 2010

A Small Tortoiseshell and 2 Holly Blues in the college grounds today.

I walked home though West Middlesex Golf Course looking for Purple Hairstreaks. I did see 4, one flying tantalisingly at head height before settling in a Willow. Unless a mass emergence is yet to happen, numbers seem down on last year.

I also saw what I think was a White Letter Hairstreak, 1 Small White and 1 Green Veined White.

On arrival home, 3 Commas, 1 Holly Blue and 2 Small Whites were in the garden.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 21-Jul-10 06:43 AM GMT

Tuesday 20th July 2010

The bus from Ealing to Greenford was going nowhere fast on the way home tonight so I gave up, got off and walked along the river Brent towards Greenford.

I wish I had my camera as I came across a Holly Blue nectaring on Ragwort – the only time I have ever had a photo opportunity for one, with no camera!

Also seen:

1 Gatekeeper
9 Small or Green Veined White

I might just take my camera to work tomorrow....

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Jul-10 05:48 AM GMT

Another Holly Blue in the college grounds today.

Not wanting to miss another Holly Blue on the way home should I see one, I took my camera to work today and walked home through West Middlesex Golf Course. I'd like to thank Jonathan Evans for mentioning Rosebay Willow Herb in his post on Monday about White Letter Hairstreaks for there is a patch of it on the course in front of mature oaks that I hadn't previously paid much attention to, thinking it wasn't used by Leps that much, apart from Elephant Hawk Moths. Jon's sighting of WLH nectaring on it prompted a closer look tonight.

I think I saw one WLH, but not conclusively. However, following the apparent scarcity of Purple Hairstreaks there this year (only a handful seen on two or three visits so far where I was seeing 25+ last year), I found them tonight! There were 15+, all at ground level (I saw none in tree tops at all tonight anywhere on the course 😊) mostly behind the Willowherb. They would occasionally fly forward and perch briefly before zooming back or off across the golf course. They were kind enough to allow me my first, albeit rather snatched, photos of them 😊 (I'm not counting the mobile phone shots from last year!)

I had assumed they use the same trees each year but maybe not? I haven't seen any at all on the trees I saw them last year and I hope this patch of

Willowherb is the hotspot for each year. It will certainly be where I look first tomorrow!

Sightings were:

15+ Purple Hairstreak

1 possible White Letter Hairstreak

2 Red Admiral

1 Comma

5 Gatekeeper

1 Speckled Wood

1 Green Veined White



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 22-Jul-10 06:19 AM GMT

Well done. Nice find! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 22-Jul-10 05:10 PM GMT

Thanks Susie 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

Saturday 24th July

Garden sightings for today:

- 1 Large White
- 2 Small White
- 2 Green Veined White

Another trip over in Greenford Park Cemetery led to sightings of:

- 8 male & 2 female Common Blue
 - 4 Small Copper
 - 5 Gatekeeper
 - 10+ Meadow Brown
 - 1 Small Skipper
 - 3 Large White
 - 1 Small White
 - 10+ Small or Green Veined White
 - 1 Blood Vein moth
- plus a lovely male red tailed bumble bee.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jul-10 05:06 AM GMT

Sunday 25th July 2010

I'm not great with dragonfly ID's but there was a green and black one in the garden at dusk looking for somewhere to sleep it seemed. It hawked over the lawn for a while. Never seen one at home before!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Jul-10 05:28 AM GMT

On arrival home tonight, I found this little fellow on the front door, positioned as photographed. Funny how it knew to come to my house!





I'm pretty sure it's Small White but it could be Green Veined. I had to carefully move it, as it was right by where the door opens and it would have got squashed or even predated. There was a small amount of silk under the rear legs so I am assuming it was about to pupate. I brought it indoors and placed it in an open tub and gave it some twigs, some cabbagy things and some kitchen roll to walk about on. It hasn't tried to escape yet and hasn't eaten either. It has walked about a lot in the tub and seems happy enough tucked away under some tissue at the moment, although it is head down currently so maybe not pupating just yet.

One thing it has done it shake its head a lot in an aimless manner. I hope it isn't full of parasites 😞

We've named it Cedric. I'm hoping he does pupate and then I can release him in the garden!

You may remember a while ago I mentioned that we had some Small White eggs in the garden. Well, the plant they are/were seems to have died back despite daily watering. It is also now covered in aphids too. On closer inspection tonight I found one empty egg case and two unhatched ones. No sign of any caterpillars though.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 31-Jul-10 03:11 AM GMT

By the time I went to bed last night Cedric had secreted himself in a fold in the tissue, head up and let one mini hand grenade go.

On return home tonight he was in exactly the same place, seemingly having re-assumed pupating position and now looks like this:



He is definitely in the process (despite his obvious change in shape), as, unfortunately not visible in the photo, there is a very fine silk girdle around him.

I'm glad that he seems ok after moving him last night.

Exciting!

Re: Lee Hurrell

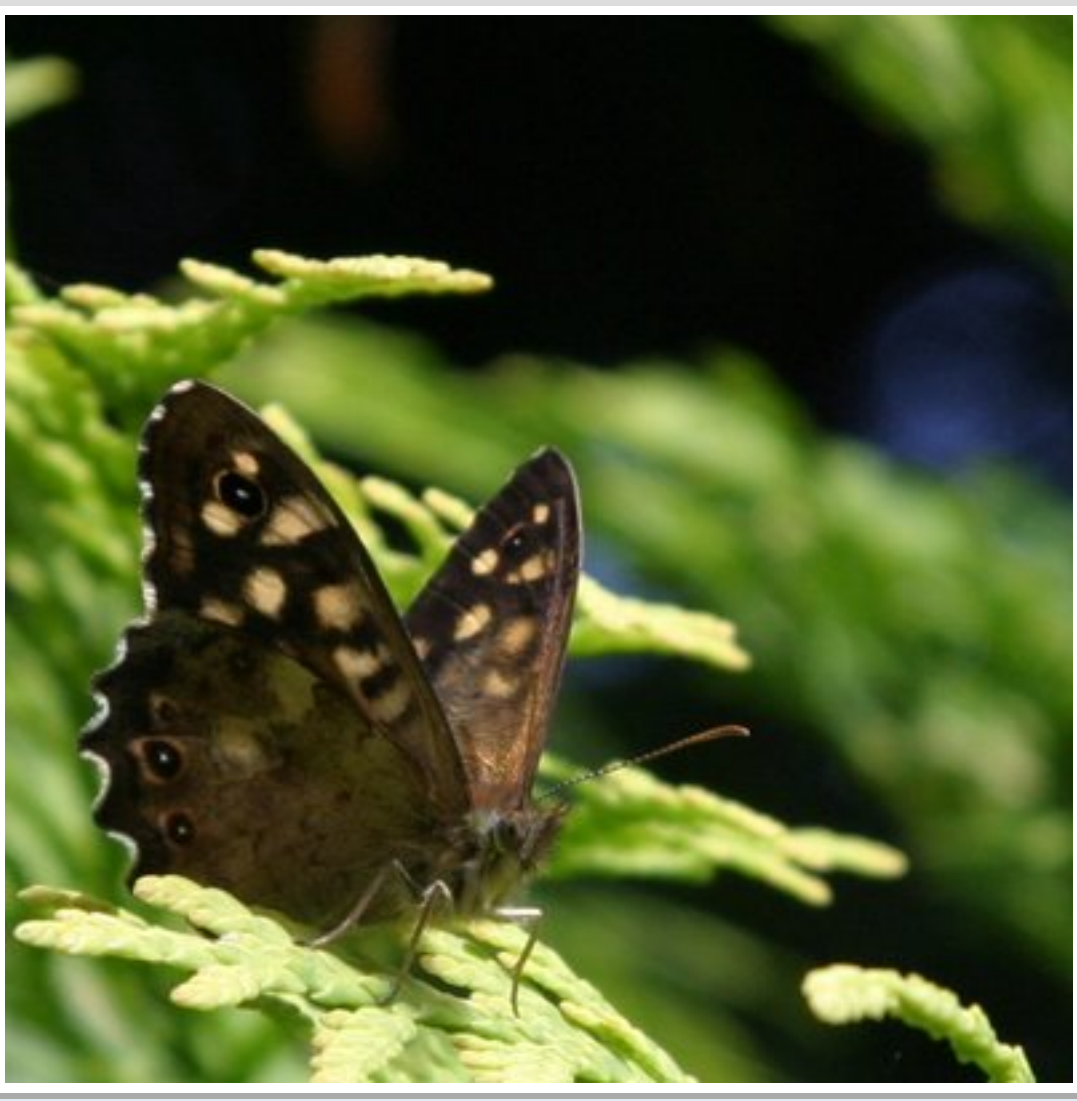
by Lee Hurrell, 31-Jul-10 10:55 PM GMT

By the time I went to bed last night Cedric had pupated 😊 He was still very green so I left him alone and this morning he looks like this:



There have been a few Small and Large Whites in the garden today along with this lovely dark fresh Speckled Wood:





I've just seen a Green Veined and Large White fighting over my buddleia too! 😊 Of course they flew off when I dashed out with the camera 😞

Off to Tunbridge Wells tonight to see The Wonderstuff and then to the south downs tomorrow.

Hup!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Aug-10 04:52 AM GMT

Sunday 1st August 2010

Michael and I went back to Wilmington and Windover Hill in East Sussex today (TQ544033). We were after Graylings and were going to move along to the Cuckmere Haven later for Silver Spotted Skippers.

There is a small area of scrub, grassland and flowers, about the size of an average back garden I'd say, which is adjacent to the car park at TQ531032. We always stop for a look but this time we saw so much there we spent well over an hour here before going up the hill!

Car park sightings:

50+ Chalk Hill Blue

30+ Common Blue

20+ Small Blue 😊 (lovely to see these up close and watch their behaviour having only seen one before)

8 Holly Blue

1 Brown Argus

1 Dark Green Fritillary

15+ Wall

15+ Meadow Brown

40+ Gatekeeper (including one very yellow female, alas no photo and one with some extra spots)

1 Essex Skipper

6 Large White

5 Small White

1 Green Veined White

15+ Small or Green Veined White







A few extra spots on this male



Car Park observations:

Holly Blues are noticeably larger and a brighter blue than Common Blues when you see them flying together. *Nearly* got a Holly Blue photo.

Walls are very hard to photograph. They seem to hear the shutter sound, or so it seemed to me. For each shot like the one above (and that was taken from distance as I gave up trying to edge closer in the end) I have about 10 like this:



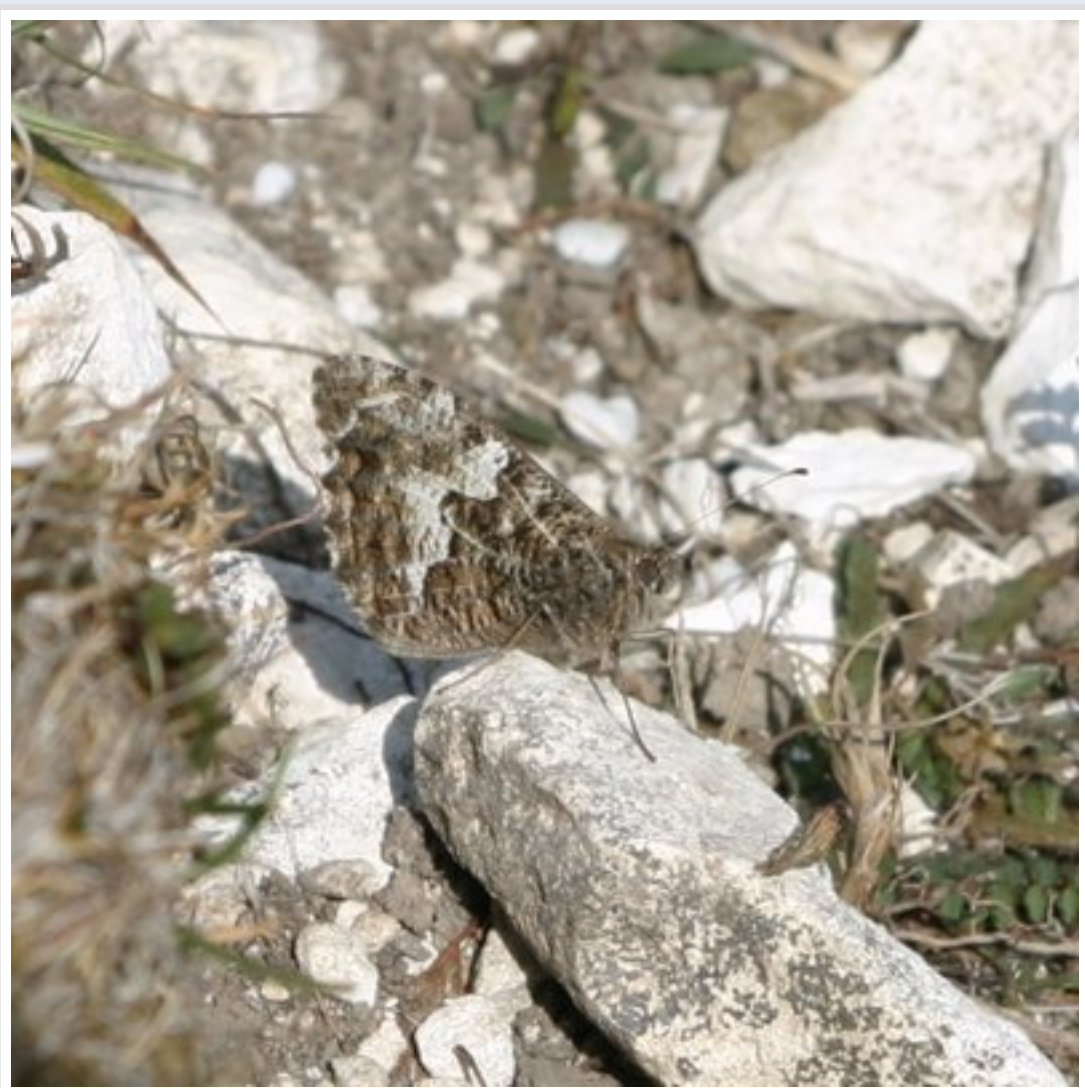
We eventually tore ourselves away from the car park to walk up the hill. We found more Small Blues over the road near the bottom of the track and more Chalk Hill Blues than you could shake a stick at; they were everywhere. We also saw Silver Spotted Skipper further up, a species I wasn't expecting to see here, unfortunately also finding one very fresh, but very dead male.



We reached Grayling country (thanks Neil) and looked for them for a while. Eventually one landed at our feet! In the end we saw 6, both male and female. We observed the shuffle documented by Pete too. I think the female looks a little like a worn Painted Lady in flight.

Windover Hill Sightings:

250+ Chalk Hill Blue (including a fair few females)
 75+ Common Blue
 10+ Small Blue
 20+ Brown Argus
 2 Small Copper
 10+ Dark Green Fritillary
 6 Grayling
 1 Wall
 5 Marbled White
 4 Small Heath
 75+ Gatekeeper
 75+ Meadow Brown (including 1 very dark male, more fresh Ringlet colour)
 5+ Large White
 3 Small Skipper
 5 Silver Spotted Skipper, all very dark and 1 very dead
 Lots of Burnets
 1 Cinnabar
 1 Silver Y





Very tatty but still capable of strong flight

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-Aug-10 04:25 AM GMT

Sunday 8th August 2010

Woke up this morning to find Cedric had started to colour up 😊

Does anyone have an idea how long now?



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Vince Massimo, 10-Aug-10 09:34 AM GMT

Hi Lee,

Looking at the early photos of Cedric, I would say that he is a Green Veined White, because I could not see a yellow stripe on his back. Now he has started to colour-up, I would estimate that he should emerge on Wednesday. The pupal case will go fully transparent at about 10 hours before hatching. Judging by the latest photo, I would also stick my neck out and say that he is a male.

Looking forward to seeing how things turn out.

Cheers,
Uncle Vince

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 10-Aug-10 08:32 PM GMT

Hi Uncle Vince,

Last night Cedric had gotten darker and this morning was even more so, seeming quite transparent too. I can see eyes and body hairs too. Photos to follow when I get home.

I also now think male as I can see one black dot on the forewing, which does look like a Green Veined White, through the pupal case.

I'm thinking I might get home to a new born...

Thanks,
Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Aug-10 05:44 AM GMT

Sunday 8th August 2010

I went to Bernwood Meadows today in search of Brown Hairstreaks...and I found them!

3 definite sightings plus a couple of possibles. Brown Hairstreaks seem to be remarkably docile when nectaring, allowing close inspection. I stayed with this female for over half an hour!







The meadow seemed quite parched compared to when I was there looking at Black Hairstreaks but the numbers of Common Blue were impressive. Also seen were a few Marbled White in surprisingly good nick along with the usual suspects.



Common Blue and Brown Argus were readily nectaring on bramble, and at heights taller than me too.

Bernwood Meadows sightings:

- 3 Brown Hairstreak
- 3 Purple Hairstreak
- 2 Red Admiral
- 2 Comma
- 1 Silver Washed Fritillary
- 2 Large Skipper
- 1 Small/Essex Skipper
- 150+ Common Blue
- 2 Brown Argus
- 2 Small Copper
- 3 Marbled White
- 50+ Meadow Brown
- 25+ Ringlet
- 3 Speckled Wood
- 75+ Gatekeeper
- 2 Large White
- 5 Green Veined White
- 25+ Small or Green Veined White

I also met a chap called Peter Law hunting hairstreaks and watched a Sparrowhawk hunting across the meadow.

I ventured into Bernwood Forest by the Black Hairstreak gate and turned right heading for Water Perry Wood. There was a long patch of Hemp Agrimony I found last year which was covered in butterflies, including fresh Peacocks.

The Hemp Agrimony was surprisingly quiet this time as not far before it was a long ride full of the yellow flower pictured below which was COVERED in butterflies. Almost unbelievably so; Silver Washed Fritillaries, Peacocks, Common Blues, Brown Arguses, Skippers, Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers,

Ringlets, Small Whites, Green Veined Whites and a Brimstone!
This doesn't really do it justice, but you get the idea:

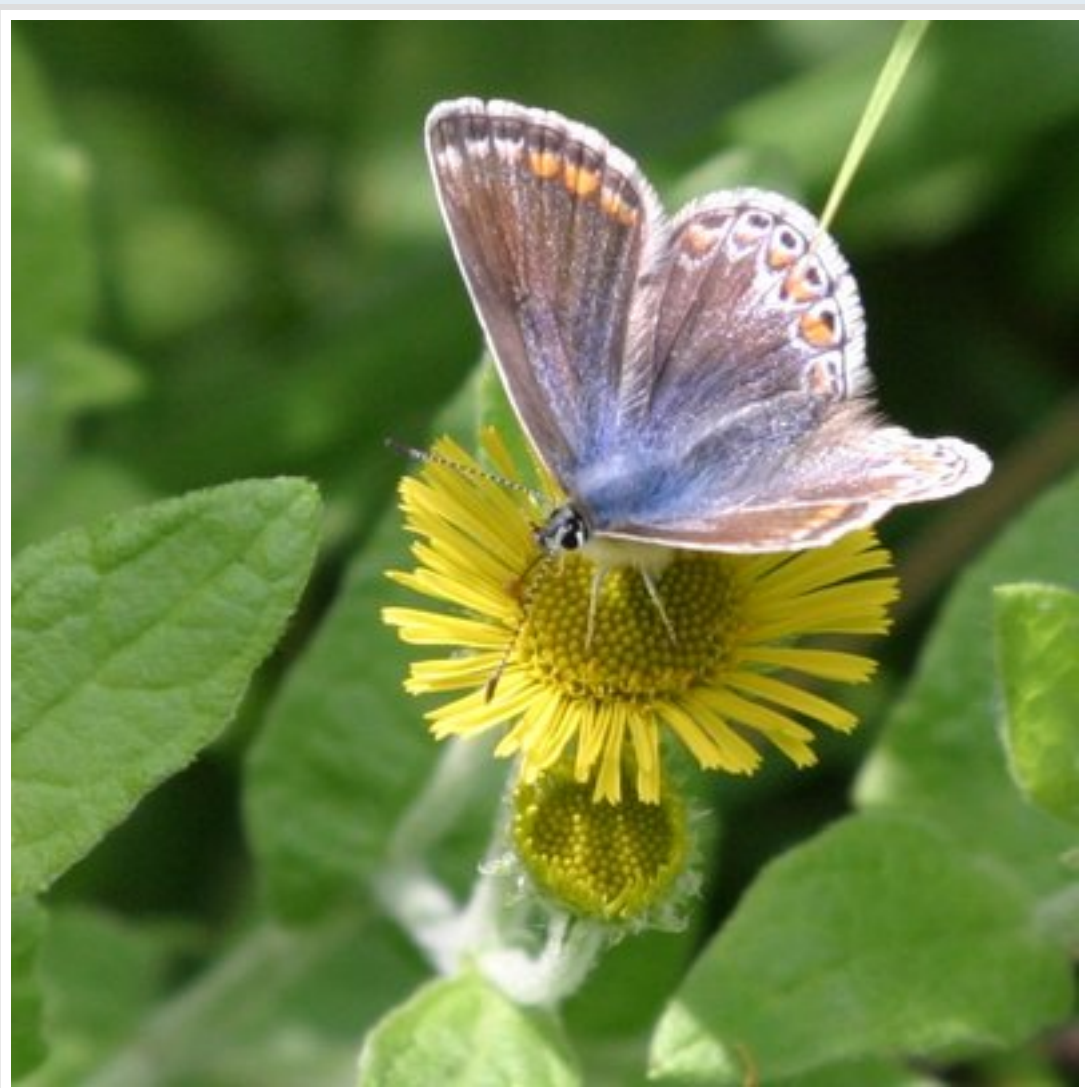


I'm not sure what it is, some sort of daisy I guess (Susie?) but I'd recommend getting some in the garden for next year if you can ID it. (Incidentally, it is one of the wild flowers I have growing by my front door that has kept the knotweed at bay - and this patch has been covered in bees and hoverflies for weeks now, so it works!)

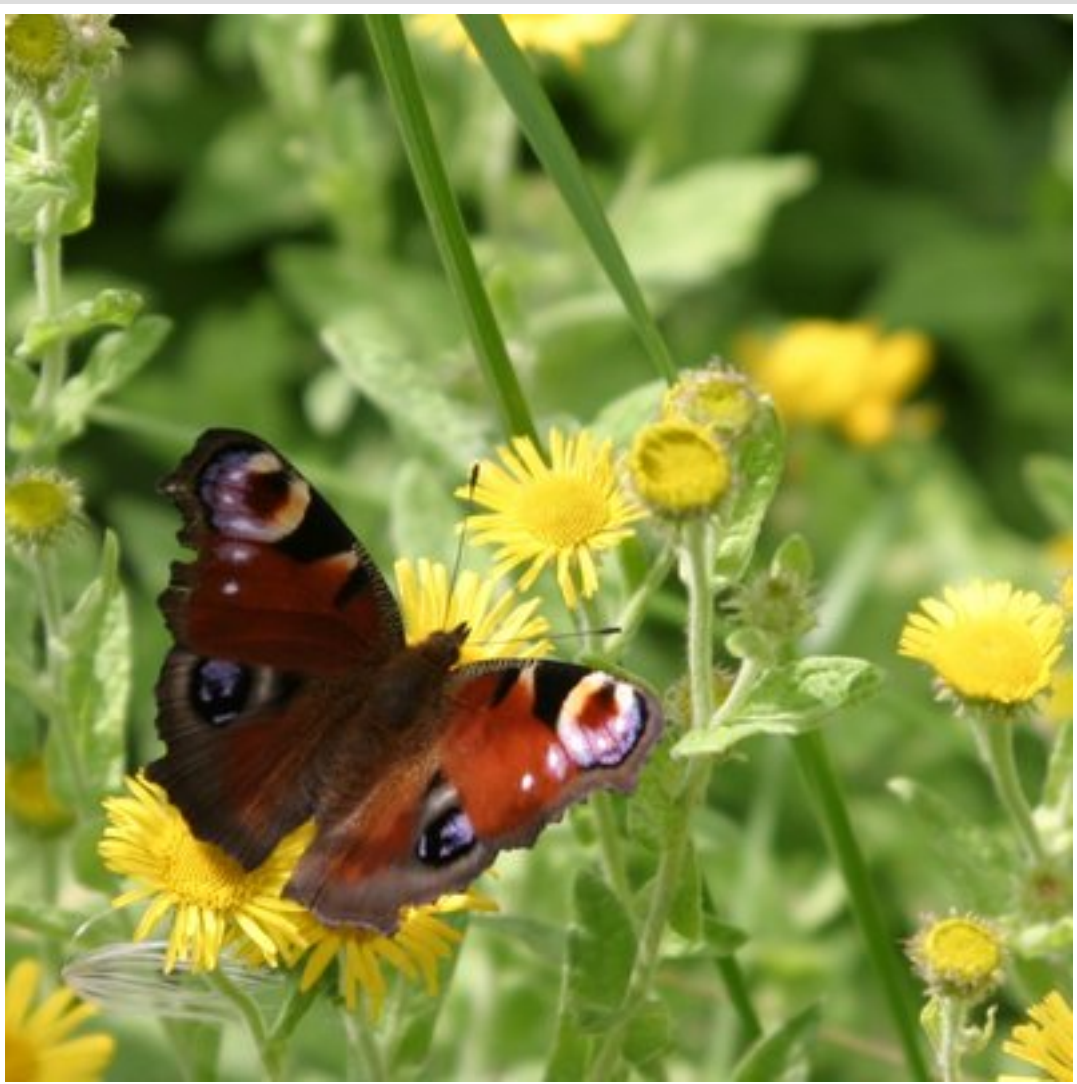
Bernwood Forest sightings:

- 8 Peacock (including one with very odd shaped hind wings)
- 3 Brimstone (all male)
- 1 Comma
- 10 Silver Washed Fritillary (all pretty tatty now, although I did see one female still laying eggs quite high up a tree)
- 100+ Common Blue (including some nice blue females)
- 25+ Brown Argus (including one with a white dot on one forewing)
- 2 Small Copper
- 15+ Speckled Wood
- 15+ Meadow Brown
- 75+ Ringlet
- 100+ Gatekeeper
- 3 Large White
- 2 Small White
- 15+ Green Veined White
- 20+ Small or Green Veined White
- 4 Large Skipper
- 15+ Small Skipper (no Essex seen)









look at the matching hind wing outlines on this individual...very odd!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Aug-10 06:10 AM GMT

Monday 9th August 2010

Cedric at 21.51:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Aug-10 06:11 AM GMT

Tuesday 10th August 2010

Cedric at 07.33 this morning:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Aug-10 06:23 AM GMT

Tuesday 10th August 2010

It's a boy!

On my arrival home, Cedric had emerged into a beautiful male Small White 😊



I could see from this morning he was likely to emerge today and with the weather due to be rain all day I didn't want to leave him outside as I had nowhere sheltered to leave him. So I placed him facing the patio doors with some climbing material to dry off on and the light to go towards when emerged. I found him on the glass as hoped, took a few photos and let him fly free.

I tried to place him on my buddleia but despite the dark grey sky he flew straight up and over the trees in to next door's garden. I thought that was it but then he re-appeared, circled a bit and came to rest in the apple tree. I guess that was his first proper flight. At least it should be sunny for him tomorrow.

A happy ending 😊

One thing that did strike me was just how small the pupa was. It was at about half the size of the fully grown caterpillar.

This has stirred me into wanting to do some more breeding again, maybe something for the future!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Vince Massimo, 11-Aug-10 07:30 AM GMT

Congratulations Lee and good luck to Cedric (even though he was not the Green Veined White I predicted) 🤔. I really like the first photo, but it took me a few seconds to realise the reason why.

Lee, the yellow flowers in your earlier post are Common Fleabane.

Vince

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 11-Aug-10 04:16 PM GMT

Lee,
lovely photos – particularly of the Brown Hairstreak. Great to see them when they're so fresh. Was the Brown Hairstreak at the (usual) Black Hairstreak end of Bernwood Meadows?

Don't think I can get up there this weekend, but I'd love to see a few specimens as good as that... 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 11-Aug-10 05:18 PM GMT

Thanks Vince, I like the effect against the glass!

It was a little tricky given the very dull light, I had to use a monopod for horizontal stability while resting the camera against the glass for vertical stability. The shutter speed was pretty slow, I tried flash but that just bleached everything. Plus I didn't want to keep him from his maiden flight any longer. Thanks for the Fleabane ID too.

Michael, thanks, you're too kind.

These Brown Hairstreak were at the other end, near the official car park at SP606111. Search the hedges and trees the same side of the meadow as the car park, bordering the road, I saw them both left and right of the car park. Left of the car park as you drive in takes you into a long thin meadow where I spent time with the female pictured. The chap I met had seen one on the corner opposite the car park as you walk round to the Black Hairstreak end, and another couple had seen a few males high up earlier in the day. Also, another couple reported one down low at 1030 at Whitecross Green Wood, just up the road.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Aug-10 06:05 AM GMT

Sunday 15th August 2010

I braved the M25 this afternoon for a couple of hours at Denbies, in search of Adonis Blues. It was sunny all the way there and then clouded over when I got there. The sun popped in and out and then stayed out for longer after about an hour. The numbers of Chalkhill Blues were still impressive, with a lot of fresh males and females out. I think all the females I saw were Chalkhill though. I would imagine Adonis numbers still has to peak and if they are like Chalkhills, perhaps the females aren't out yet. I also saw my first ever Adder! It wasn't hanging about for a photo though once disturbed from its basking spot.

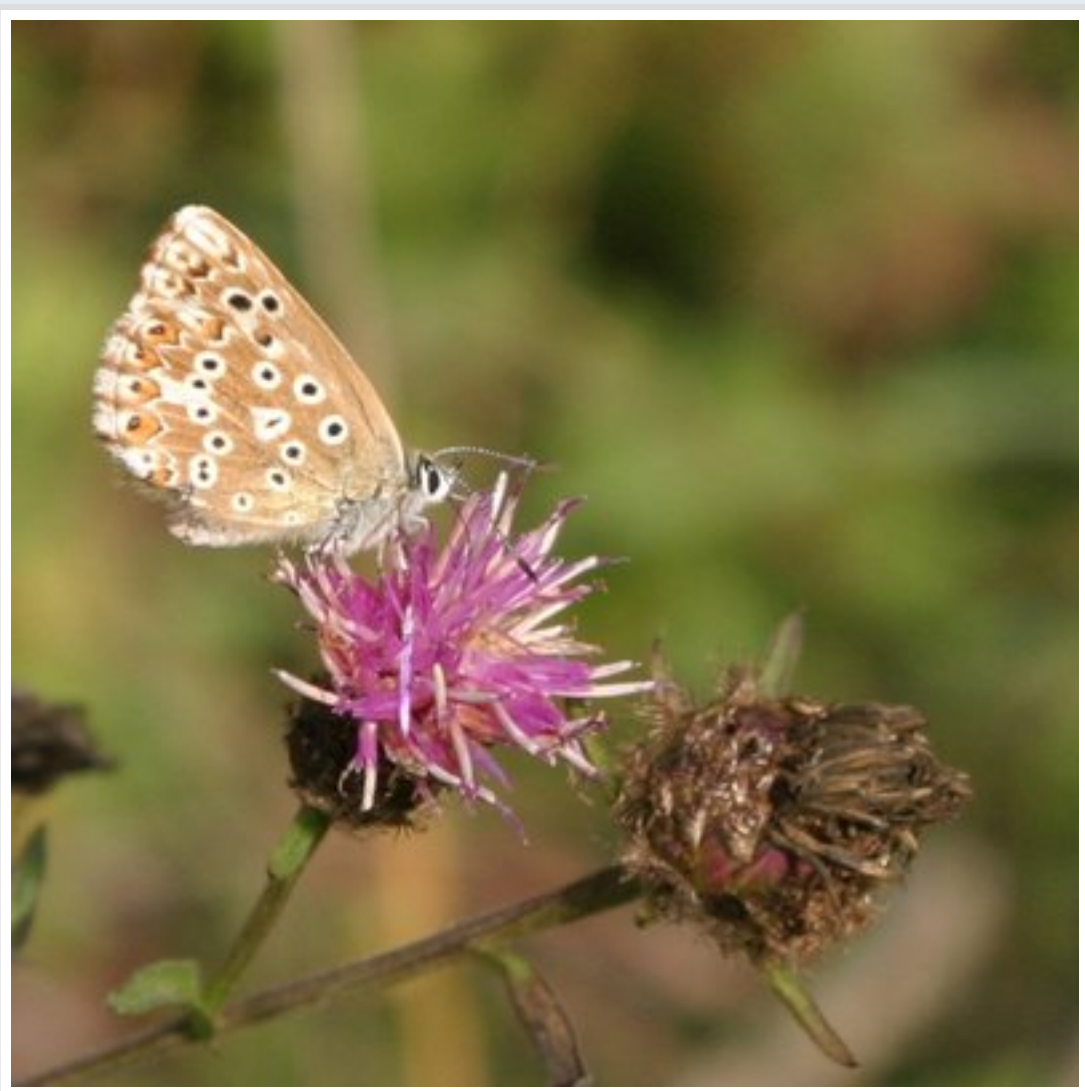
Denbies sightings:

20+ Adonis Blue
150+ Chalkhill Blue
15+ Common Blue
8 Brown Argus
4 Small Copper
5 Small Heath
25+ Meadow Brown
15+ Gatekeeper
2 Small or Green Veined White













another slight underside aberration





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 23-Aug-10 02:24 AM GMT

Friday 20th August 2010

While watering my buddleias this evening I didn't notice this Large White! (That's yours it's on Susie 😊).

I dashed in to get the camera:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 23-Aug-10 02:28 AM GMT

Saturday 21st August 2010

My quest for a Holly Blue photo continues. I was actually on the phone when I watched this one settle on our Holly tree.

A quick 'I'll call you back in 5 minutes', a dash to get the camera and a precarious balancing act on the garden bench led to...



Now I just need to get one in focus... 🙄

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 23-Aug-10 03:40 AM GMT

A planned trip to the south downs was curtailed today with the forecast of heavy rain.

Garden sightings today:

- 1 Holly Blue
- 3 Speckled Wood
- 1 Large White
- 2 Small or Green Veined White

Having bored myself catching up on paperwork, I ventured over to Greenford Park Cemetery this afternoon.

I found an as yet unidentified caterpillar on the way in (also posted in ID thread):





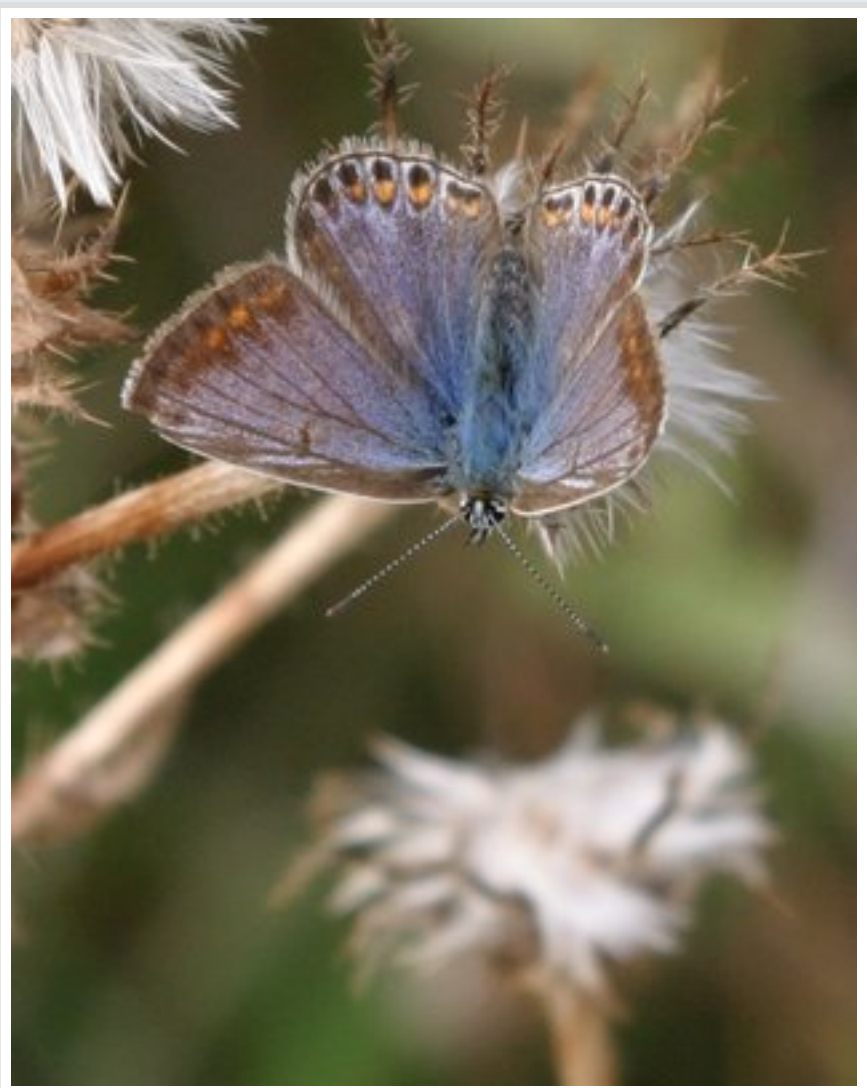
I also found a species I hadn't seen over there before, the Small Heath. That's the third new species over there I've seen this year (the other two being Small Skipper and Small Tortoiseshell), so certainly worth going!

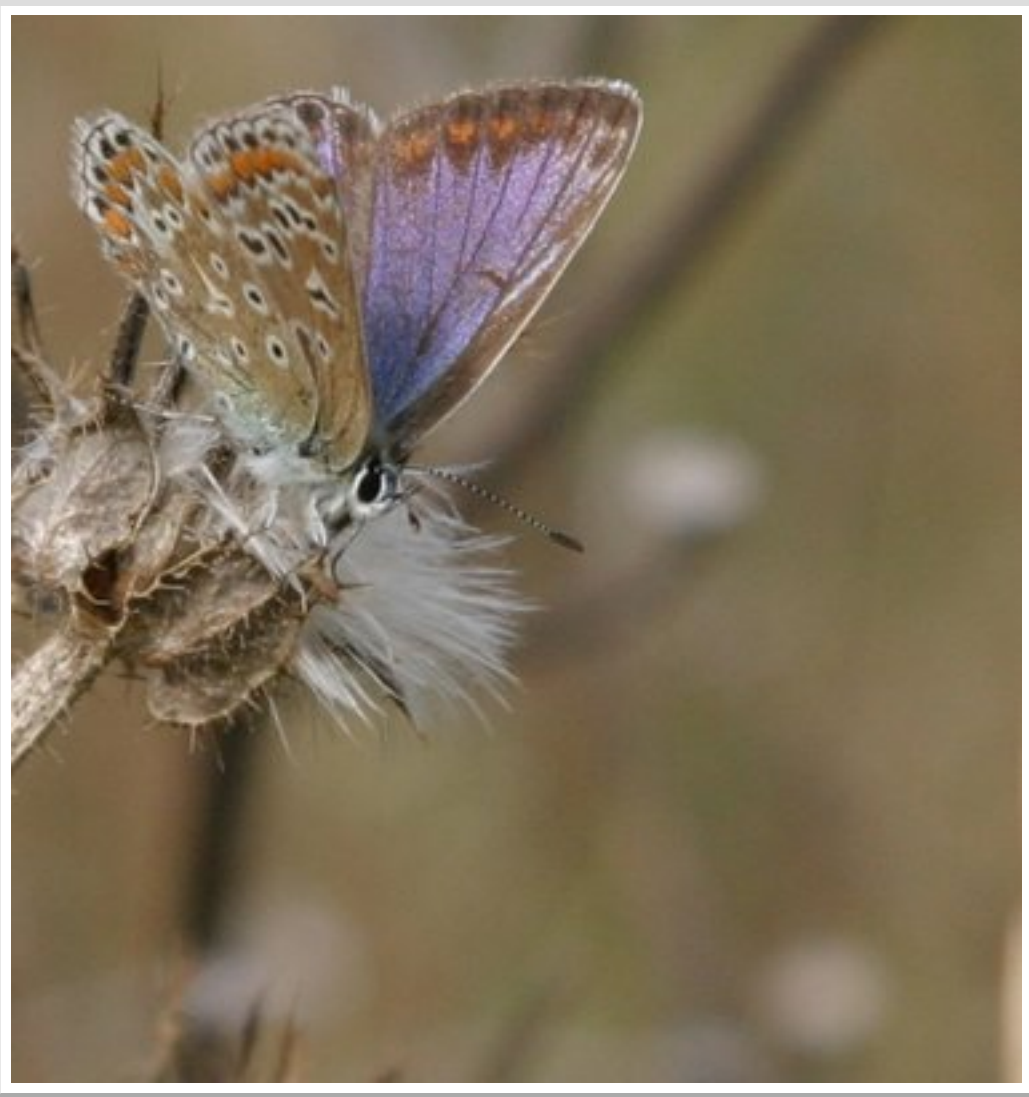
All the other small titular species are to be found over there apart from blue and pearl bordered and unfortunately they are both unlikely.

Cemetery sightings:

- 1 Small Heath
- 10 Common Blue (male and female, including a nice blue one below)
- 2 Small Copper (one missing part of an antenna)
- 1 Speckled Wood
- 13 Small or Green Veined White







I also found this beautiful hoverfly:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 31-Aug-10 06:02 AM GMT

Saturday 28th August 2010

My friend Michael and I headed to the South Downs for the afternoon today, looking for Adonis Blues. I wondered what the incessant bad weather over the last few weeks would have done to butterfly numbers. With today being the first decent sun I'd seen for what seemed like ages my fears were somewhat alleviated with the sight of a Red Admiral, a Meadow Brown and several whites as I pulled up at his in the car.

We were heading for the Cuckmere Haven at Seven Sisters Country Park but drove past the car park for Wilmington Hill and couldn't resist a quick stop. Numbers were not surprisingly down on a month ago but I did get my first decent ish shot of a Holly Blue with some worn females and males nectaring on brambles 😊

Otherwise, we saw:

- 1 Chalk Hill Blue
- 1 Brown Argus
- 10+ Common Blue
- 6 Holly Blue
- 3 Meadow Brown
- 1 Small Heath
- 2 Small White



female



female



male



We drove on to Cuckmere. Not far into the park I'm fairly sure I saw a female Adonis and then came across this odd looking Meadow Brown with white patches on both underside fore and hind wings:



The side of the hill we saw Adonis on last year had been grazed by cattle (they were still there, with pats everywhere) and all of the long grass and thistles had gone. This didn't look good. There were a few nectar sources hidden low down in the turf though and as the sun came out for a lovely end to the afternoon the Chalkhills and Adonis made themselves known. We saw two mating pairs of Chalkhills and some of the male Chalkhills were fresh too. I'm still not sure I photographed a female Adonis but most the females we saw were very fresh so there must have been a few in there.



Adonis?



A pretty fresh male



We also found a male Adonis who at first I thought was fresh out and drying its wings but due the thorassic hair loss I think it must have been deformed, around for a while and was unable to fly. We placed him in a safe spot.



We walked to the sea and along the beach until we could see the Seven Sisters, with Birling Gap in the distance, looking for fossils.



The Seven Sisters



The walk back along the Cuckmere Valley from the sea

We skirted the bottom of the slopes on the way back where there was more long grass cover and as hoped for, found some evening blues basking:



Cuckmere Haven sightings:

40+ Adonis Blue

25+ Chalkhill Blue (including 2 mating pairs)

15+ Common Blue

2 Brown Argus

2 Small Copper

1 Speckled Wood

30+ Small Heath
75+ Meadow Brown
2 Small White

1 Silver Y

And then as we got back to the car there were 2 Hummingbird Hawk Moths on buddleia in the car park! All in all, a lovely day.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 04-Sep-10 04:33 AM GMT

Bank Holiday Monday 30th August 2010

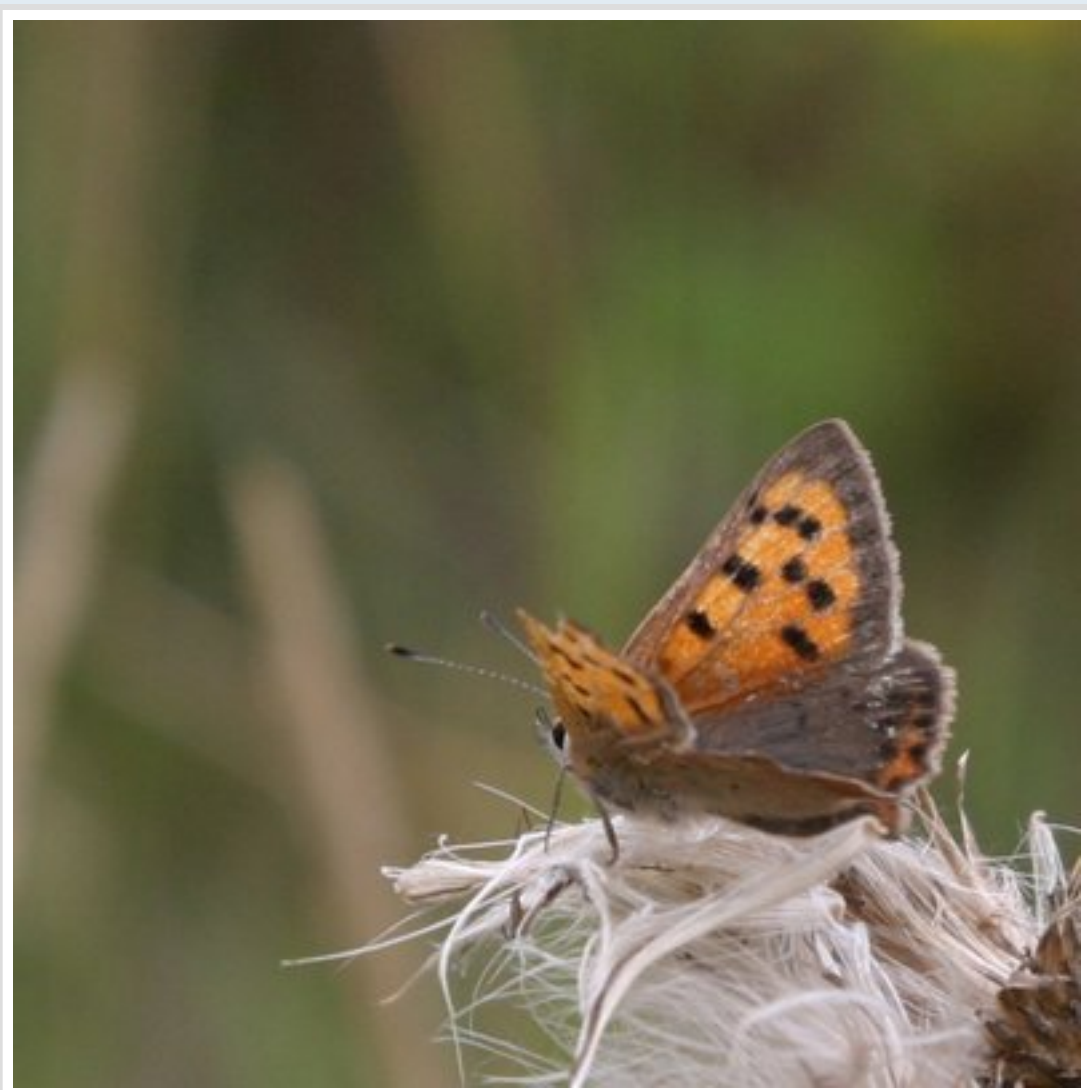
Bit tardy this one, but a few sightings from Greenford Park Cemetery on Monday:

1 Holly Blue
4 Common Blue (3 male, 1 female)
2 Small Copper
1 Meadow Brown
3 Small White
2 Small or Green Veined White
1 Brimstone, female – another first for the cemetery!

Also 1 female Holly Blue my back garden.

Where have all the Vanessids gone? Early doors due to the cold and wet perhaps.

The cemetery coppers were looking a bit tatty:



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 05-Sep-10 02:51 AM GMT

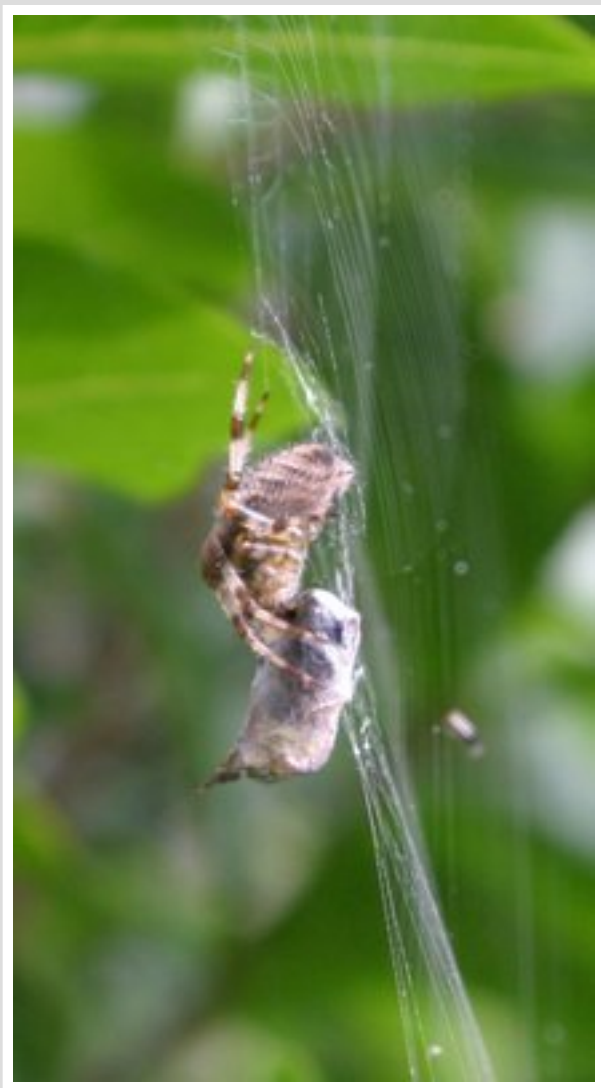
Saturday 4th September 2010

What a difference a week makes

I had a prolonged walk around my cemetery this afternoon. Upon leaving the house, this charming little beauty was in the wildflower patch:



Not far in to the cemetery on my usual route, I was looking at this spider and its lunch on a privet bush:

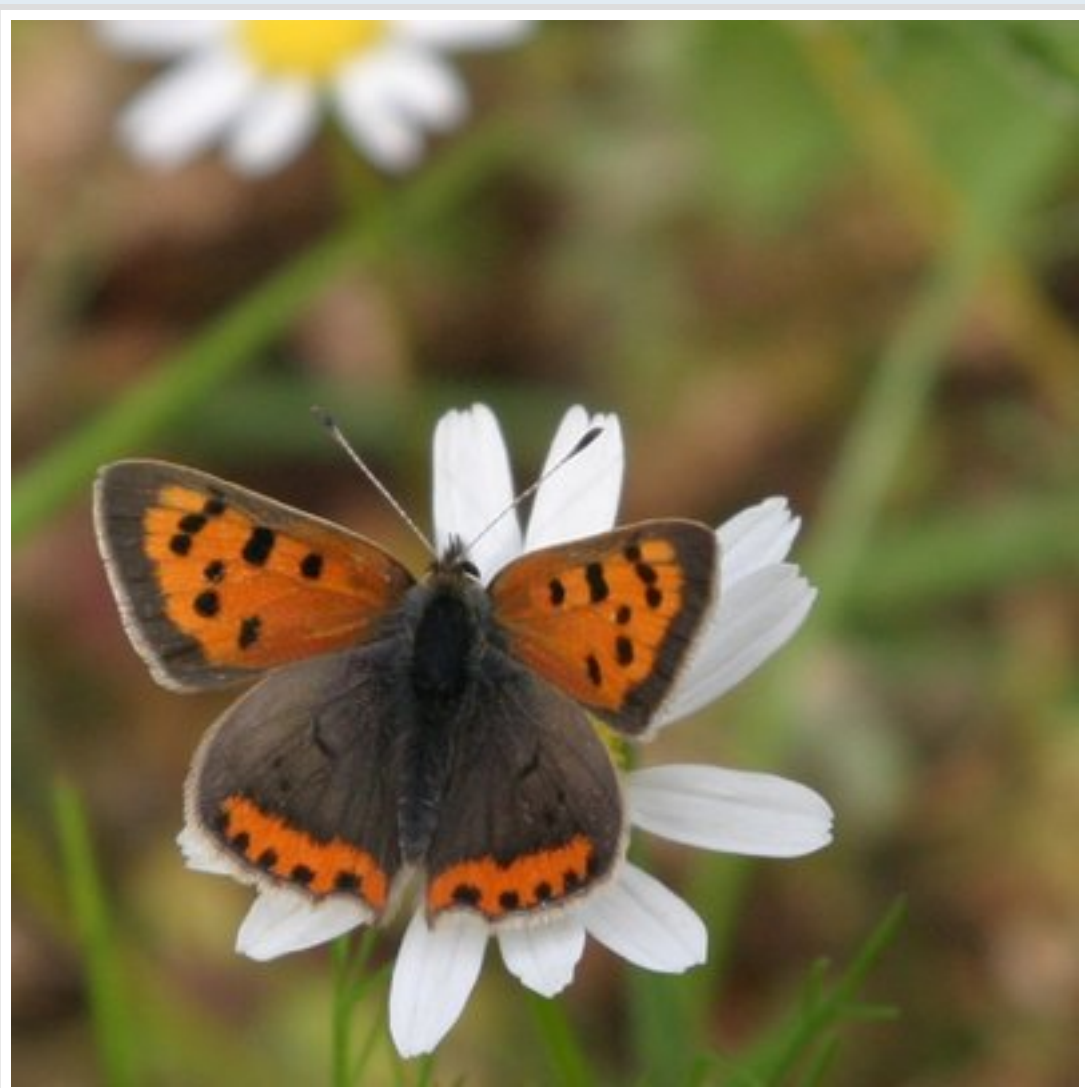


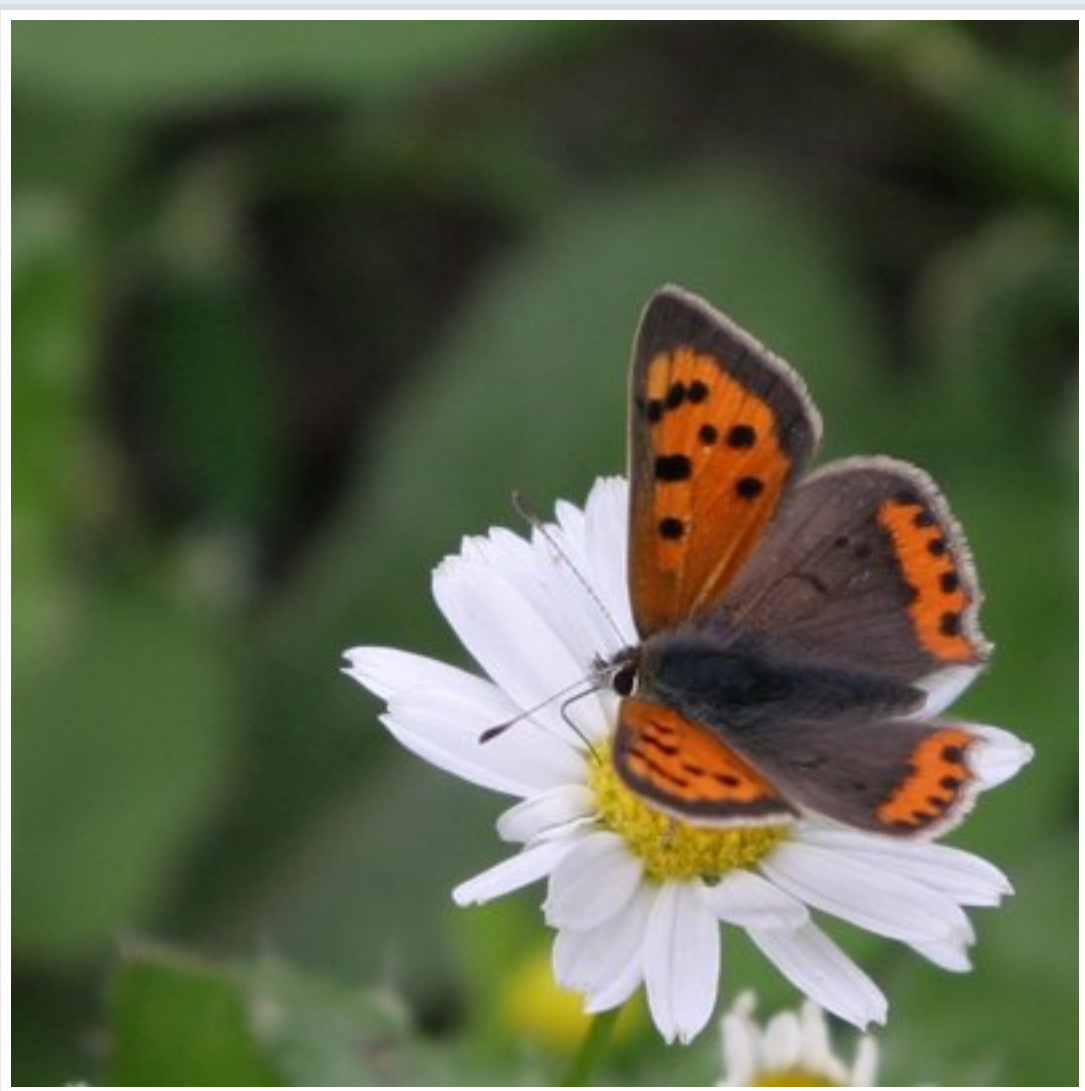


When out of nowhere this Holly Blue landed in front of my face to nectar briefly, allowing me this one frame before it sped off. That normally never happens and takes my Holly Blue photo ops to about 5!



The weekly difference I alluded to is that there were some lovely fresh Small Coppers out today, I saw at least 10, the most I have seen over there in one visit.

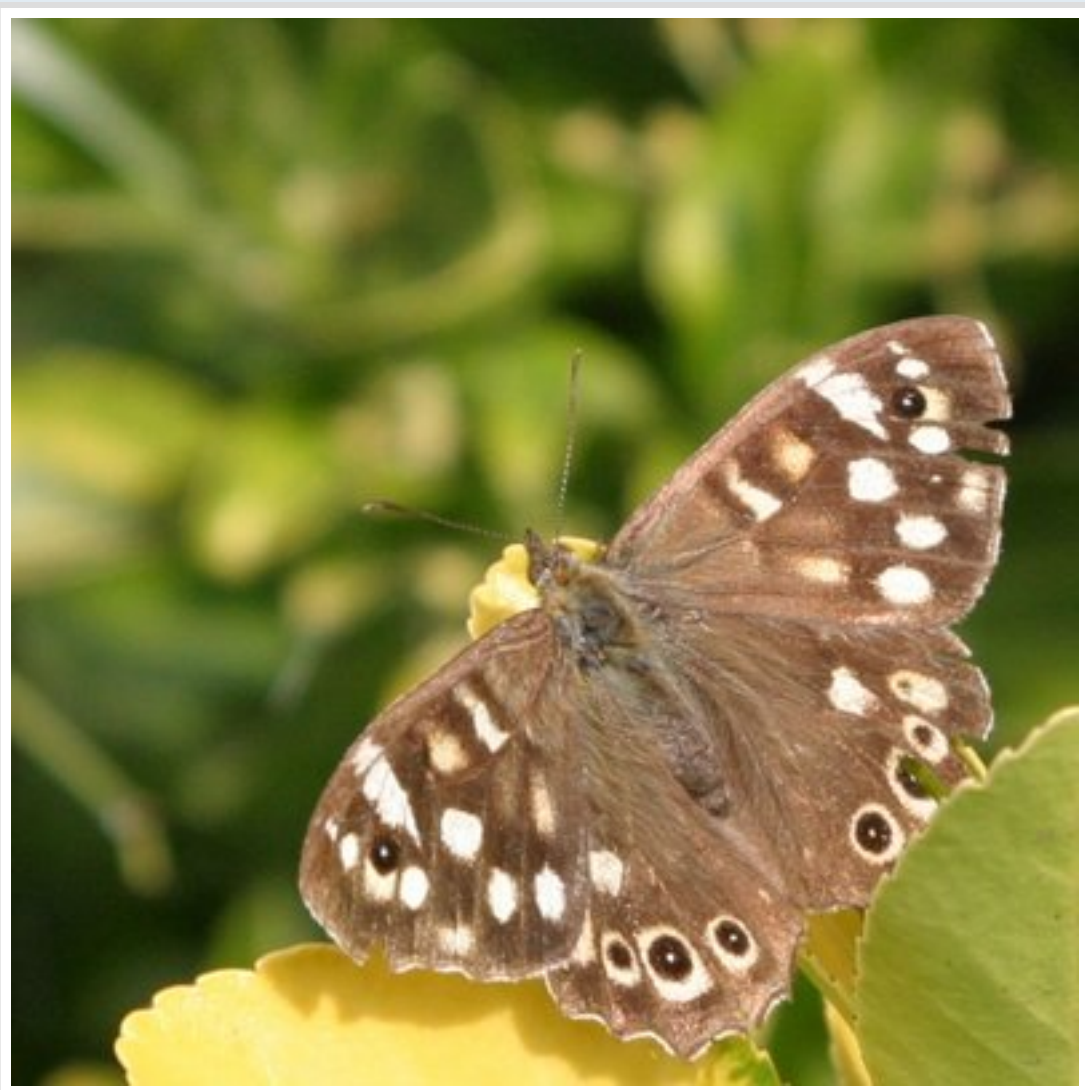




I also saw 1 fresh Speckled Wood:



and another that, although older, appeared to have both yellow and white spots:



Cemetery sightings:

- 1 Holly Blue
- 4 Common Blue, all male
- 10+ Small Copper
- 3 Speckled Wood
- 3 Large White
- 1 Small White
- 2 Small or Green Veined White

Still no Vanessa's though.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 06-Sep-10 02:09 AM GMT

I went over for another visit to Greenford Park Cemetery once the afternoon sun popped out for a short time.

I learnt some Holly Blue field craft today. I normally see them over there but today I saw 3 in 5 minutes. There is a long line of trees with shrubs in front of them as I walk in, including holly, ivy and I hadn't really noticed it until yesterday, but also (late?) flowering privet bushes.

It was on here that the Holly Blue I saw yesterday was found. There's quite a lot of this privet and above all of it are mature holly and ivy trees.

Today I just *waited* and sure enough up popped a Holly Blue onto the privet flowers. That one sped off across the gravestones but a couple of minutes later another appeared to nectar, allowing a few shots. I thought it was a male and sure enough an older female appeared and he chased her up and over the trees. This must be a hot spot for them with foodplants and nectar so close together and will be where I have a good look next year.

Sometimes when I am off on my travels I am normally moving *through* a landscape always walking, stopping only to look when I see something interesting. But as His Majesty, Black and Brown Hairstreaks and of course as Mr Oates mentioned at the workshop, sometimes you just need to stop, wait and take your surroundings in. As has been the case this season, sometimes you see *more*. I have followed this advice this year and will continue to do so next season. When I hope for a nice picture of a Holly Blue 🤔



Also enjoying the brief late afternoon sun were 2 Speckled Wood and 3 Small Coppers.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Sep-10 05:59 AM GMT

Today started with a lovely fresh Brimstone moth on the patio doors as I opened them this morning:



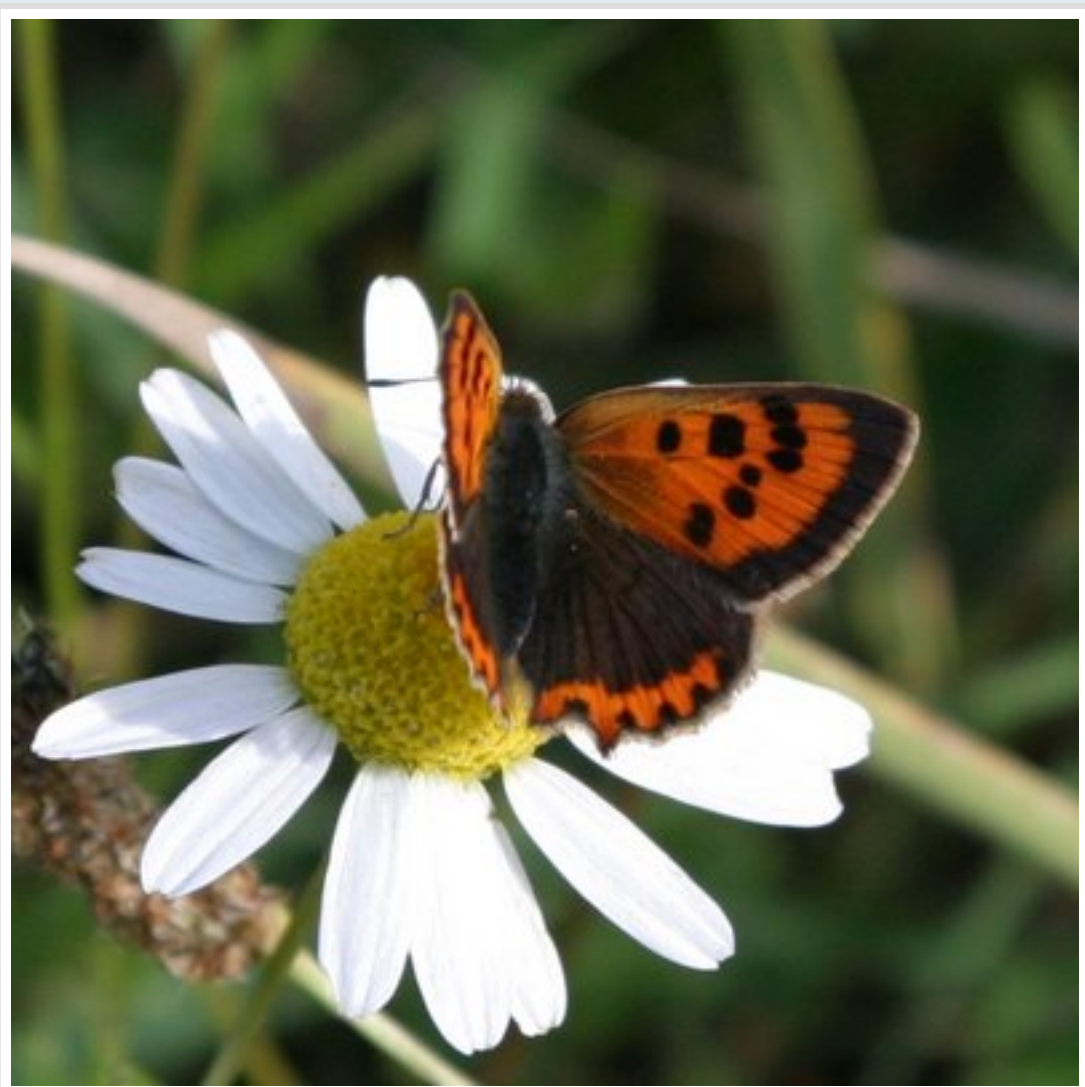
It was a lovely sunny day in Greenford today and I had an hour or so in my local cemetery this afternoon.

More third brood Speckled Woods are out and I saw one nectaring on sedum, which I hadn't seen before. I couldn't photograph any of them though, they were 'doing a Wall' and flew each time the shutter clicked.

Apart from a few Whites the only other species I saw was Small Copper, which are still putting on a good show. I counted 8 and photographed at least 4 so some may have been repeat sightings.



I also found a very fresh and very dark individual with teardrops instead of squares on the outer forewing markings. Quite beautiful.





Cemetery sightings:

8 Small Copper

7 Speckled Wood

8 Small or Green Veined Whites

Other than that we did a little gardening and picked another bowl of home grown tomatoes which my girlfriend has made into a pasta sauce for tomorrow. Yum!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Sep-10 06:08 AM GMT

Here's one of the hot spots for Small Coppers in one of the wild areas at Greenford Park Cemetery. The white flowers are (I think) Ox Eye Daisy and they prove be good perching sites for launching battles with intruders as well as a nectar source.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Sep-10 01:09 AM GMT

I'm in Somerset for the weekend. 1 Red Kite, 4 Buzzards and a Kestrel seen on the way down. Oh and there was a Large White as I left home.

I was hopeful for some Vanessids, not having seen one for weeks now and in my mum's garden a Red Admiral feeding on blackberries this afternoon was a welcome sight.

An hour in the nearby fields and woodland paths led to another 2 Red Admirals, 2 Small Coppers, 7 Speckled Wood and 2 House Martins.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Sep-10 01:23 AM GMT

Despite being on holiday this week I have had to nip into work as my internet connection isn't working at home today 🙄

I have posts ready from Somerset and of course that means I can't post them.

So unless my internet comes back before tomorrow night, that's it for a week as I'm off to Spain on Saturday morning!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 24-Sep-10 01:38 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

So unless my internet comes back before tomorrow night, that's it for a week as I'm off to Spain on Saturday morning!

Lee,

it seems your Spain Holiday has been on the cards forever 😊 have a nice time. I'm sure the Small Coppers in the Cemetery will notice you've gone too 🍷

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Sep-10 02:40 AM GMT

Thanks Michael. (Internet cafe in Greenford now to check in online as I didn't take my passport to work) 😊

I have a series of a mating pair I watched copulate yesterday, (which I probably won't be able to post until I'm back now), and that's it, no more Small Coppers until next year, promise. 😊

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Oct-10 04:23 AM GMT

Monday 20th September 2010

Brompton Ralph sunshine

What a glorious day in Somerset. The sun shone all day and I spent a long time in my favourite field, the paths through the forest next to it and walking

around the village.

In the garden there were 2 Small Tortoiseshells present all day, feeding up, a few Speckled Woods, a Comma and several Red Admirals on the blackberries, plus Small and Large Whites.







Elsewhere in the village another 2 Small Torts, Speckled Woods and Whites were enjoying the sunshine.

The Small Coppers I saw yesterday were in a particular field nearby. I first found that colony last year and it was good to see it was still there, although I think it must be a small one as I saw 1 last year and only 2 were seen this year.

However, my favourite field is in the other direction. It's very long, has a stream through it and is pretty much bordered by forest on all sides. At the far end is a derelict cottage too. Here it is:



There are patches of hemp agrimony by the stream and also in the forest path that leads to the field along with a few buddleias. On one there were 4 Red Admirals!



Given the dearth of Vanessids in Middlesex recently it was lovely to see so many.

I saw a few Speckled Woods and Whites in the field although no Commas this year. However, I did find another colony of Small Coppers, and larger than yesterday's. I saw about 10 zipping about.



Later on, while stalking the Small Torts in the garden I inadvertently trod on this Knot Grass moth caterpillar (thanks for the ID Pete). I feared the worse and placed it in a sheltered place. I checked the following morning and all seemed to be ok as it had moved and was stretched out on a blade of grass.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Susie, 07-Oct-10 05:02 AM GMT

Welcome back, Lee. Lovely photos.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Oct-10 06:13 AM GMT

Thanks Susie! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 07-Oct-10 03:42 PM GMT

Lee,
how successful was your trip to Spain? I presume I haven't missed some of your photos from the holiday. P.S. Welcome back. I think you missed the really bad weather over here while you were gone!! 🇬🇧
Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Oct-10 05:25 PM GMT

Hi Michael,

Thanks! Spain was pretty good, more butterflies than I thought. My Dad had said he hadn't seen many this year but I found quite a few. Now I've got my IDs sorted out (thanks Guy and Matt), I had 12 species in total, 9 firsts for the year and 3 life ticks 😊 Also 30 degrees and constant sun was a bit better than you guys had 😊

You haven't missed the photos, I'm still sorting them! I had to catch up with posts from Somerset and next will be the mating Small Coppers from Greenford now my internet is back at home though.

It seems quite a few members have been to Spain recently and all seen different things, so that's good.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 07-Oct-10 08:56 PM GMT

Hi Lee,

look forward to seeing the best photos when they're ready. In the meantime, get back to those mating Small Coppers as they definitely need you! 🇬🇧
Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

Wednesday 22nd September 2010

Still More Fresh Coppers

In height of summer temperatures I ventured over to Greenford Park Cemetery today. Just inside the wild patch pictured above, a pair of courting Small Coppers buzzed passed me. I watched them settle just inches away and immediately copulate. I don't think I've ever seen the actual act start, and was fascinating to watch. They seemed oblivious to me and I spent a long while watching. In fact a gent came over and commented on how nice it was to see such a large wild area in suburbia. I agreed and pointed out the coppers. Suitably impressed he wandered off searching the hedgerow bordering the allotments, just as I do.

There were plenty more very fresh Small Coppers, the mating pair were 2 of 11 individuals I saw. They really are having a strong year over there. I must have seen in excess of 30 different individuals in this brood. Cemetery sightings:

Small Copper x 11
Brimstone x 1 (male)
Speckled Wood x 1
Large White x 1
Small or Green Veined White x 2

The mating coppers had quite a story. There was (ahem) plenty of to-ing and fro-ing and jostling for position initially on their perch. Both partners were kicking the other with their hind legs while the resting position was sorted out. After some changing of position the female then started sunbathing! Then they swapped again and the male did the same. I took some photos and left them too it. I checked back on the way out, a good 40 minutes after copulation and they were still there but were being harassed by a shield bug. I was tempted to intervene but the bug couldn't do anything to butt in and retreated back its colleagues nearby.



Just seconds after copulation, notice the still bent abdomen



The jostling begins



Kicking from one partner



Then the other



Stop pushing!



The inevitable happens



Phew...



A beautiful f caeruleopunctata is revealed!



Wait...danger lurks



All seemed well as I left them

See your children next year.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Oct-10 04:12 AM GMT

Cuidad Quesada, Spain 25th September – 2nd October

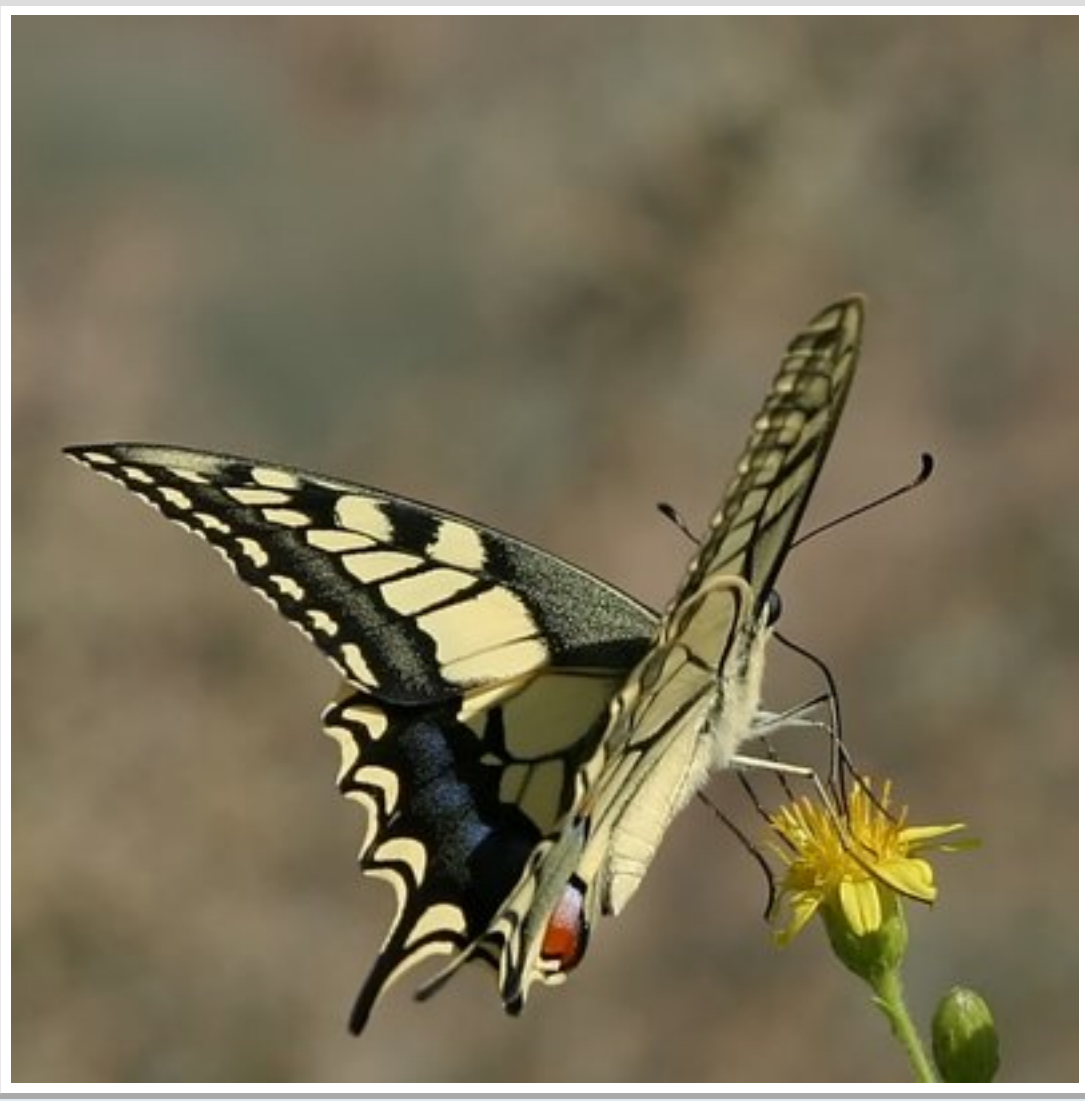
Part 1

My Dad lives in a fairly built up area but there are still loads of wild places. The only trouble is it is so hot and arid they are practically desert. The 2 flowers pictured below are pretty much the only nectar sources available, apart from the odd garden. At least the yellow flower seems to be loved by everything! It grows like a weed and can be found anywhere. And it's always worth stopping to see what's on top of it too.

Machaon

Swallowtails seemed more common than last year. They were seen everywhere and anywhere the yellow flowers were found. I discovered they nectar by starting at the bottom of a bush, moving up the stems to the highest one and then moving on to the next plant. Where there was a long line of the yellow flowers I followed one individual about 20 metres and 8 bushes once I'd worked this out, allowing easy photos. I had two wonderful trips to the banks of Rio Segura (another big patch of yellow flowers) and here there were loads of Swallowtails amongst other species, with at least two in view at any one time and sometimes up to 5! I counted 40+ the second day.





White and Yellows

Bath Whites were an occasional sighting, mostly seeming to prefer the white flower below rather than the yellow, despite the first photos.



female



female



female



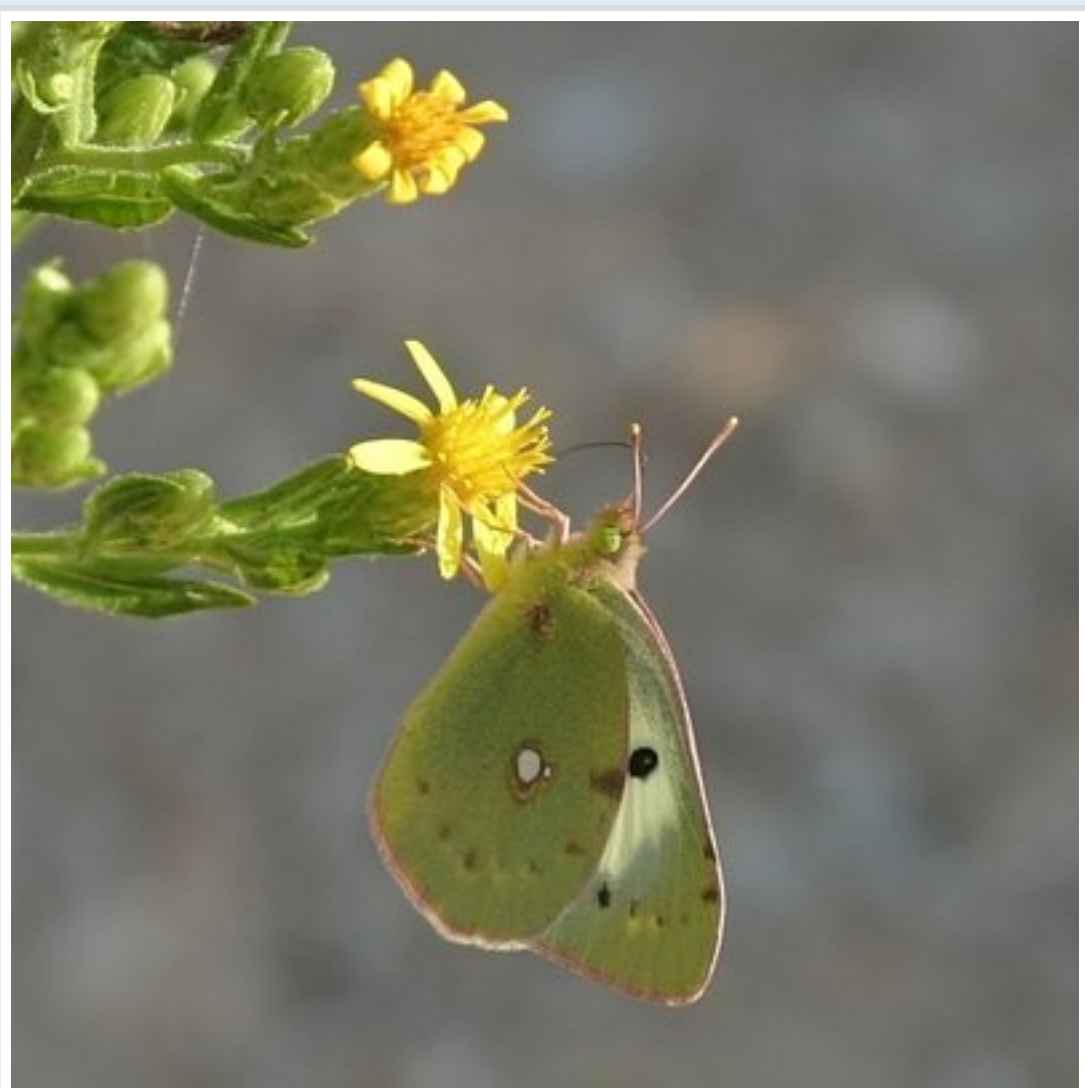
male

Small Whites were only seen along the banks of the river between Quesada and Guardamar. There were a lot of them, in excess of 75 on the second Segura trip, where I cycled along a track by the river between the two towns .





It took a few days to see a Clouded Yellow but I did see a few, including a lovely *f helice*. I also watched a male go to roost for the evening but couldn't get the settings right in the diminished light to get a decent shot that time.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Padfield, 13-Oct-10 05:43 AM GMT

Wonderful photos, Lee! What a good idea to go south in the evening of the year – it lifts the heart!

Guy

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 13-Oct-10 05:44 AM GMT

Lovely photos Lee, looking forward to seeing the rest over the next week or so! 😊

I guess those Swallowtails must be about the 3rd brood for the year (unless you just admit they are continuously brooded). Makes me wonder where all the caterpillars were when I went to Spain at the start of August, especially as there was fennel everywhere though looking slightly past it's best. Nice to see the Bath whites too. I noticed that when I saw Swallowtails in August in Cyprus a couple of years back they too were feeding on the same nectar plant (the white one) when the rest of the ground was pretty parched of other flowers and vegetation.

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 13-Oct-10 05:20 PM GMT

Thanks Guy & Michael 😊😊

It certainly did lift the heart and it was lovely to see so many leps, given the heat and dryness out there. Quite a contrast to the evening landing in the dark at Gatwick on 2nd Oct when it was *lashing* down. That was quite a landing 😬

I would imagine they are 3rd brood. Dad did report seeing Plain Tigers in December last year but didn't mention Swallowtails so I don't really know if they are continuously brooded. I do wonder how the hibernating life stages of any species differs in the heat of the south Med when daytime temperatures are still in the mid 20s 😊 In the UK you'd expect to see a Red Admiral or two! Caterpillars or chrysalises hibernating wouldn't be torpid for very long, assuming that it's the temperature that drives these things and not genetics.

There was plenty of Fennel about too and I did see a few females hovering around it but didn't find any eggs or larvae. If they are continuously brooded would you expect to see the early life stages as well as the adults now for instance or would they still follow a pattern of breeding and emergence as it were?

More tonight if I have time!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

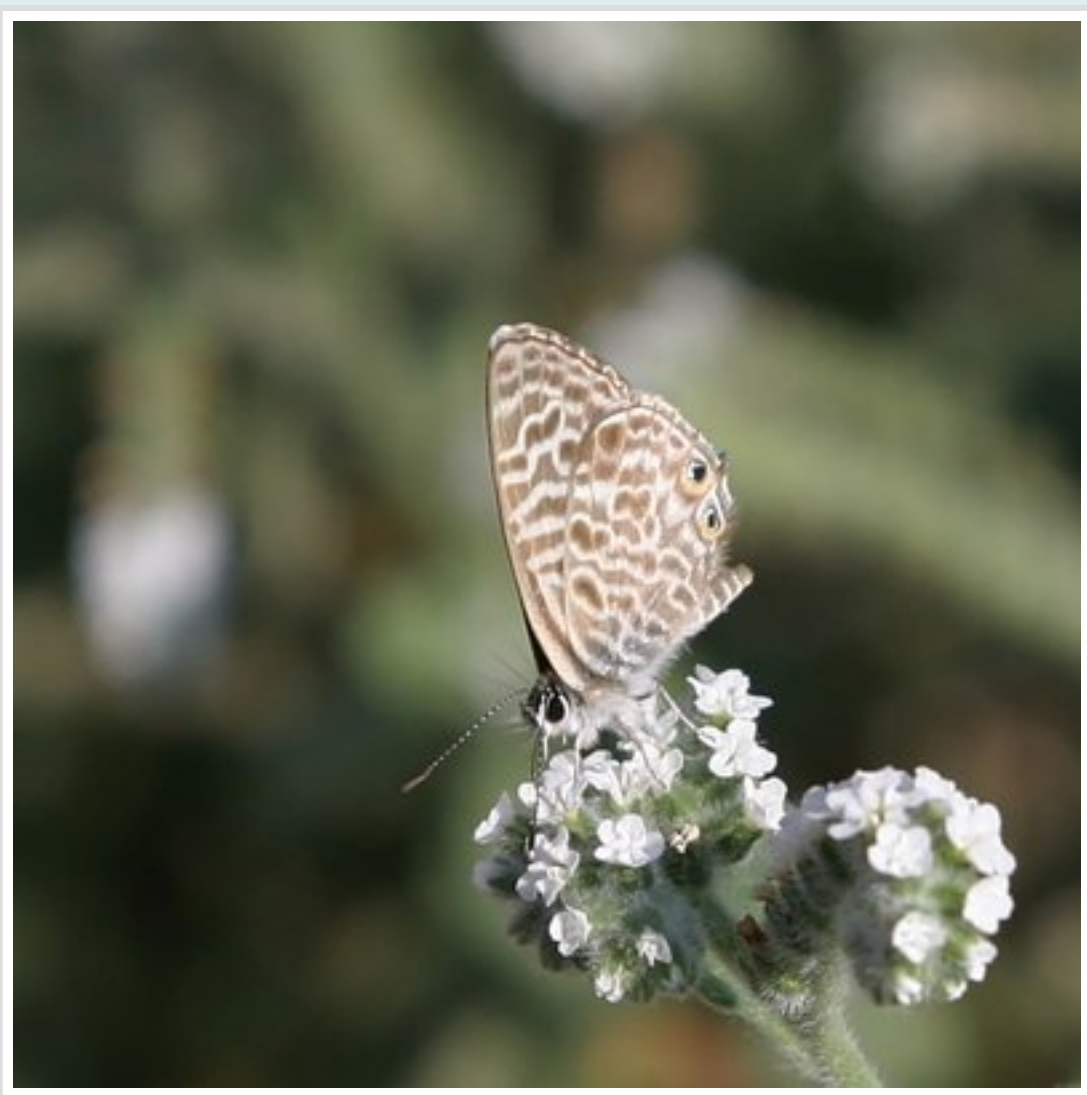
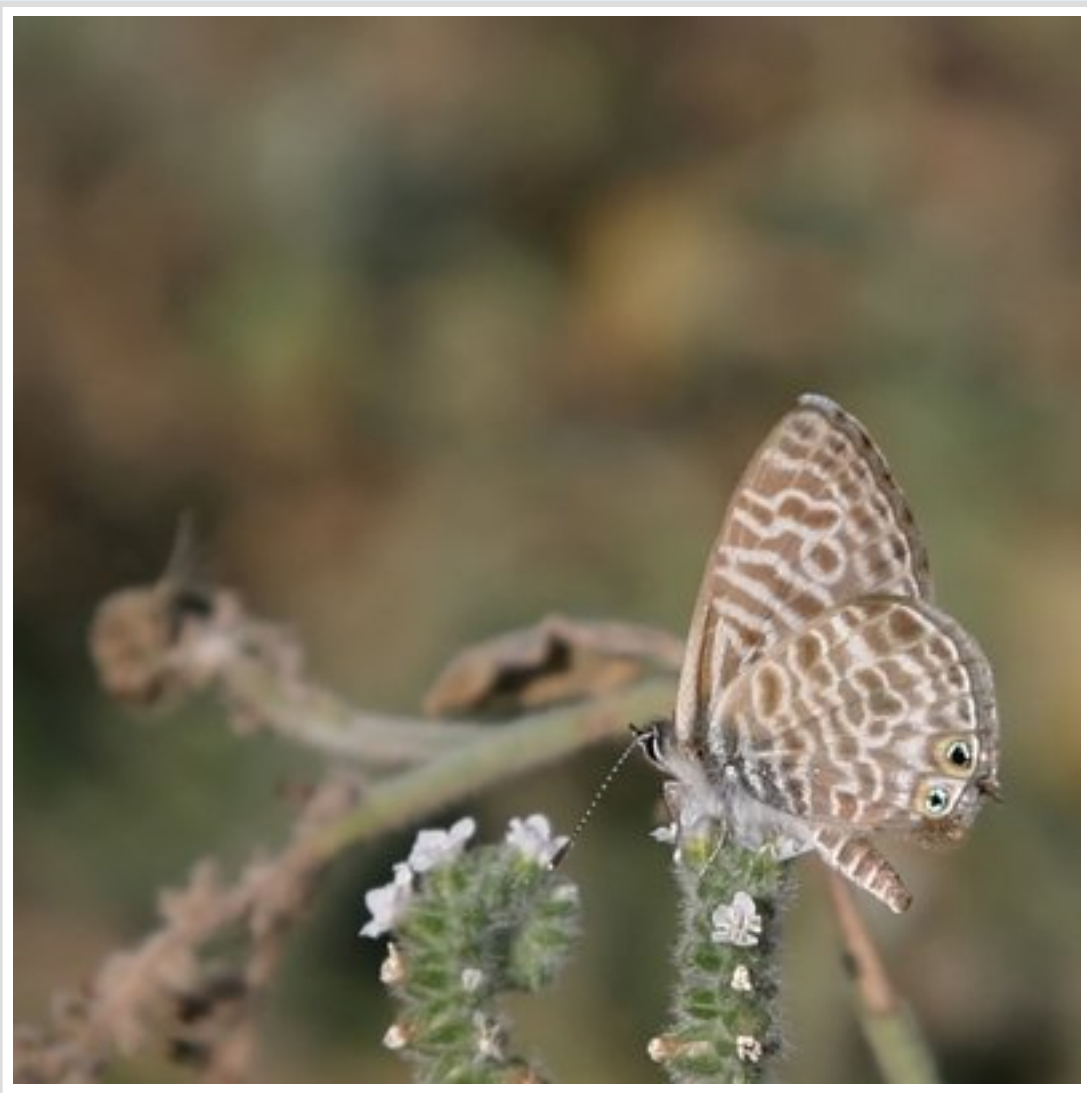
by Lee Hurrell, 14-Oct-10 05:09 AM GMT

Cuidad Quesada, Spain, 25th September – 2nd October 2010 – Part 2

Blues and Browns

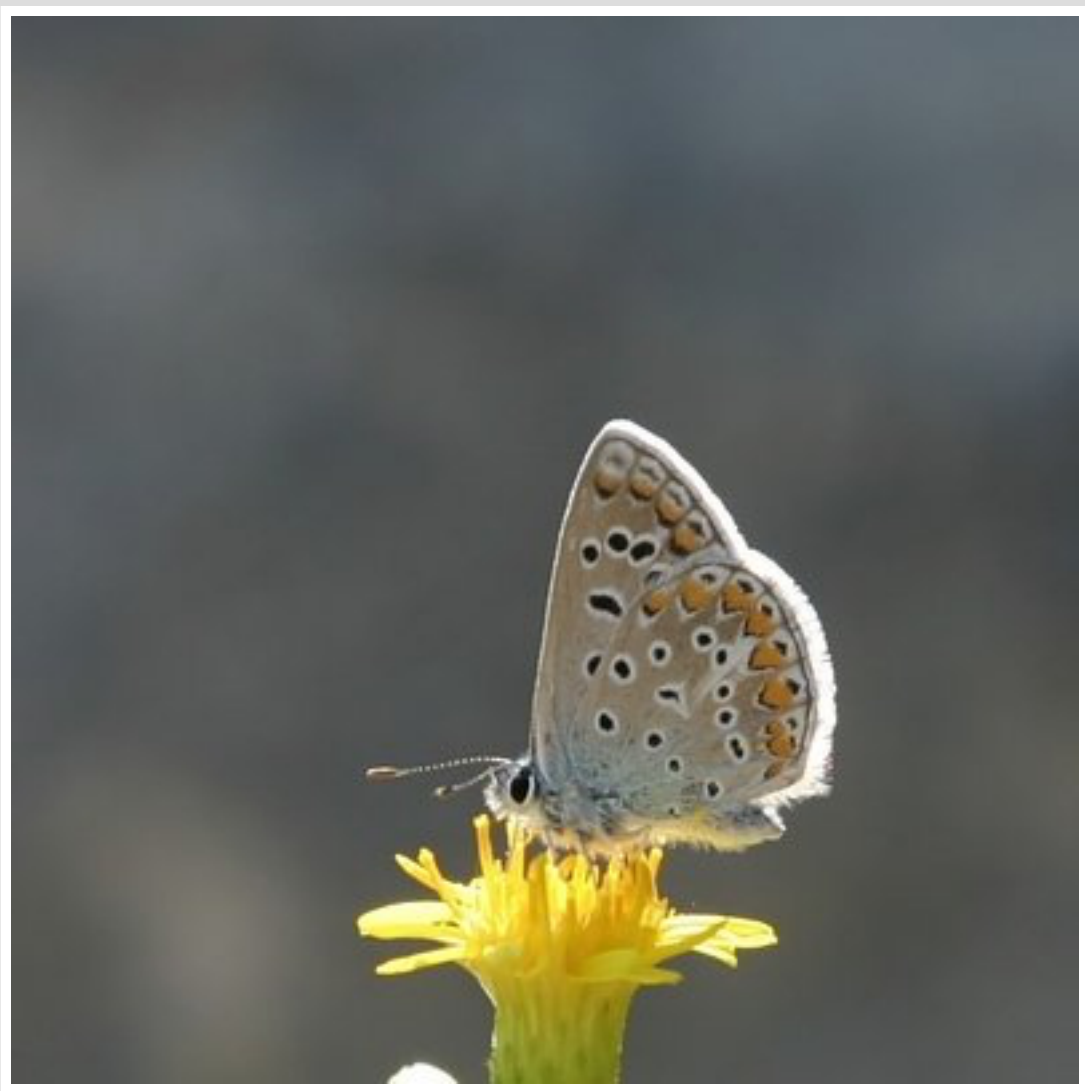
Lang's Short Tailed Blue was a fairly common sight on waste ground in and around the town, near a market we went to one day and also along the river.

They preferred the white flowers on the whole.





I was a little surprised to see what turned out to be a Common Blue (thanks Guy) but in a Spanish form. It was quite stunning, with extra orange on the underside, a wider black border on the upperside extending into the blue and black hindwing spots. It was also a different shade of blue, being quite vivid. He was on top of a yellow flower shrub as I cycled out of Quesada on way to the river and the only one I saw.





I thought I'd seen Geranium Bronze before but I don't think I had now. I found them twice, once on some waste ground near a cafe after Sunday lunch and then on a flower bed of geraniums in the middle of Torre Vieja. Life tick for me!



That left one blue quarry for my trip. It proved elusive this time, being much more frequent last year. A couple of *possible* sightings here or there but nothing definite. I checked each blue I saw but no, another Lang's Short Tailed. I was getting worried. You know you're desperate when you list *possible* in your field note book! And then on the Friday, (I flew back on the Saturday), on the second trip along the river, there she was! A quite pale female Long Tailed Blue and the only one I saw, definitively.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Matsukaze, 14-Oct-10 07:03 AM GMT

Bumblebees quite commonly do this, including in gardens on foxglove or viper's bugloss. They learn that the flowers at the bottom of the plant have the most nectar, and work their way up until it no longer becomes worthwhile to nectar, then descend to the next plant. I've never heard of or seen butterflies do this before, although it must make sense for them to do the same thing.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Oct-10 05:17 PM GMT

Thanks Matsukaze.

The plants used were in a very straight line, being at the edge of a new but unused road and so particularly noticeable in this instance. I guess with the Swallowtail, such a wide ranging large butterfly, they must need an awful lot of nectar too.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Oct-10 05:12 AM GMT

Cuidad Quesada, Spain, 25th September – 2nd October 2010 – Part 3

Skippers

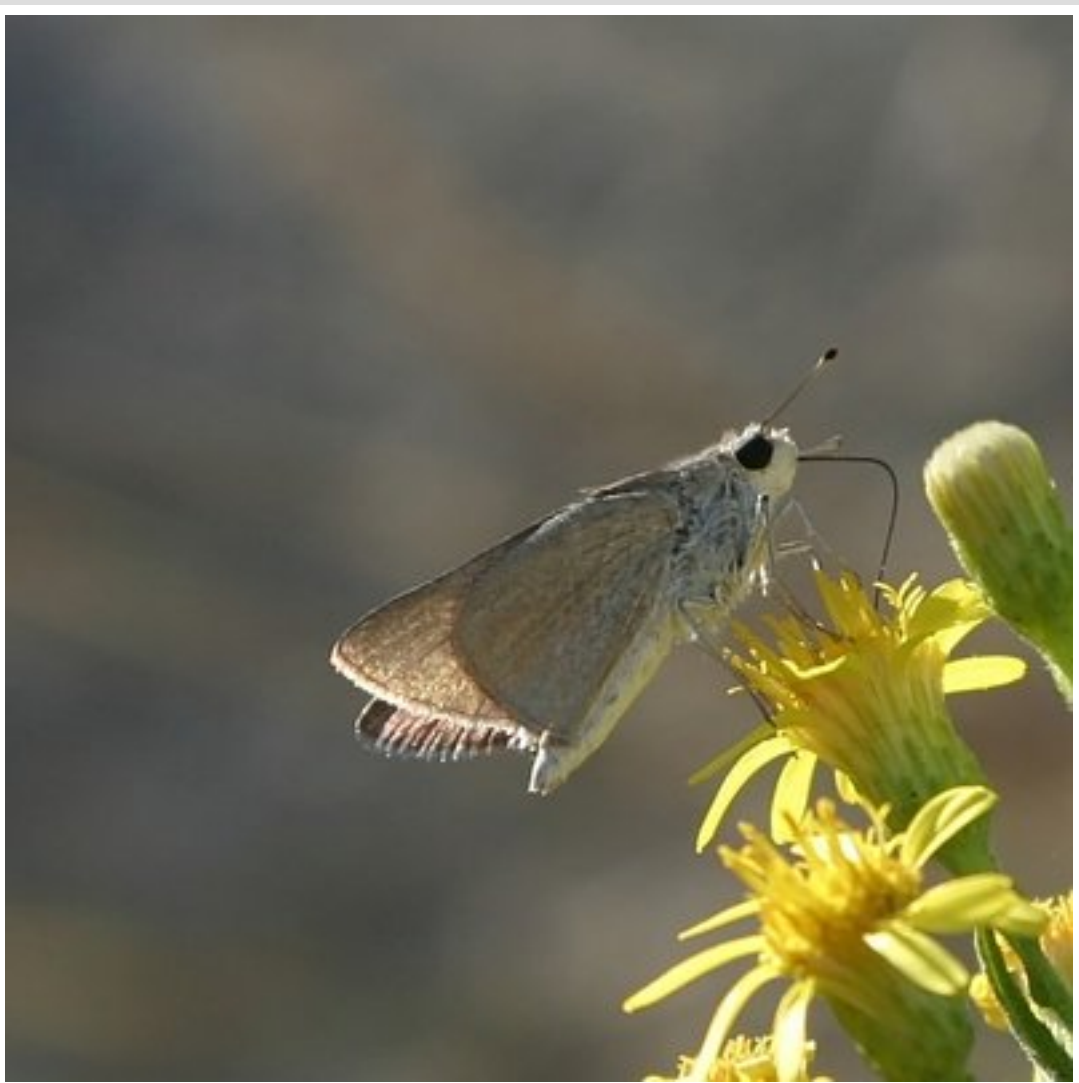
My second and third life ticks came from the Skipper family. Mediterranean Skippers (thanks Guy and Matt) were found along the river and a hot dusty track leading off it, but nearly always on the yellow flowers.



male



male



male



female



female



female

I saw about 4 Mallow Skippers too but only along the track. It was at the base of a rocky outcrop and I didn't see any nectaring. They were displaying the sort of Skipper behaviour you see in the UK; perching and buzzing anything that flew past. One looked very olive in colour and reminded me of the colour of an Lime Hawk moth.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 15-Oct-10 03:35 PM GMT

So that's what a decent LTB shot is like. All great pics Lee. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 15-Oct-10 04:53 PM GMT

Thanks Zonda! 😊

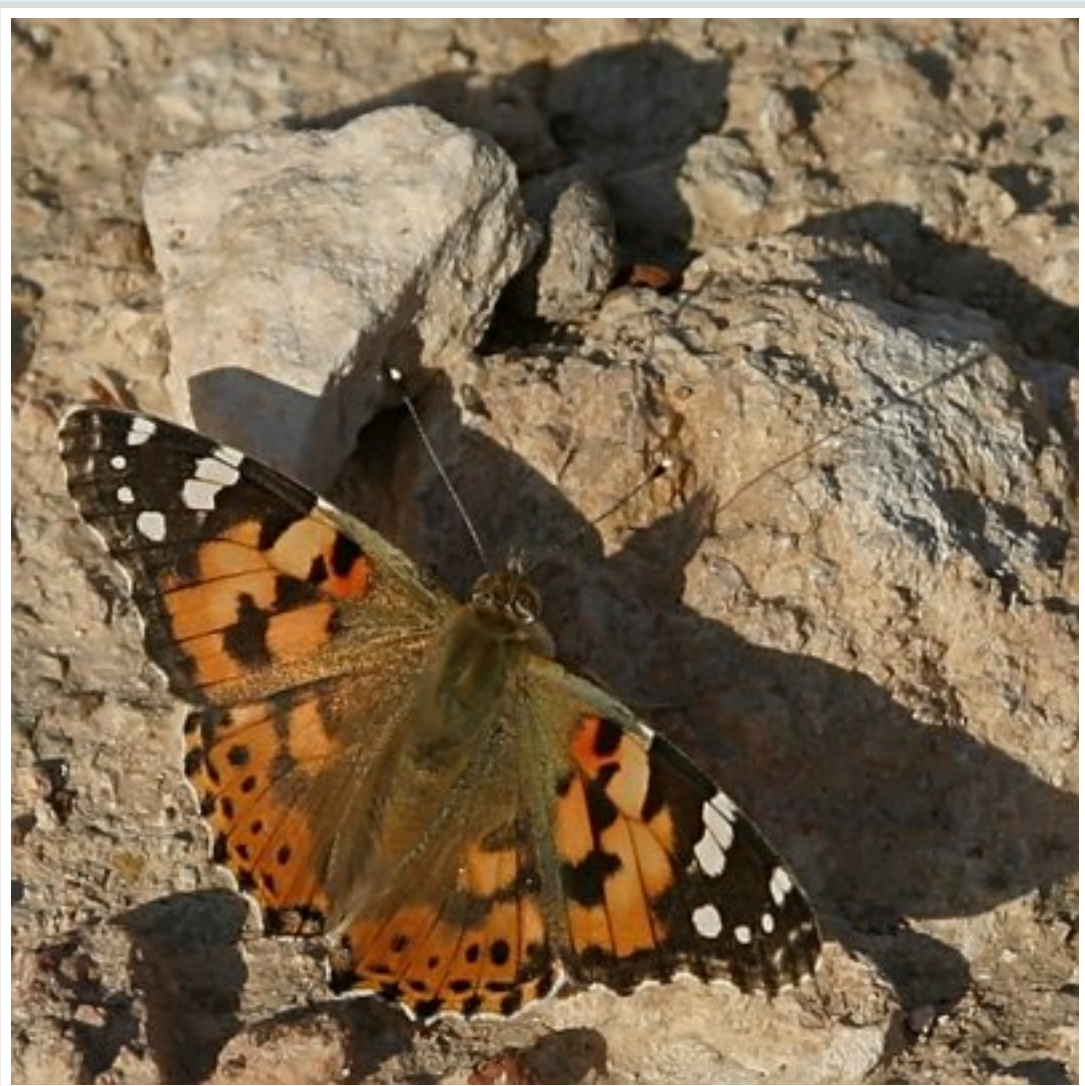
Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Oct-10 05:41 AM GMT

Cuidad Quesada, Spain, 25th September – 2nd October 2010 – Part 4

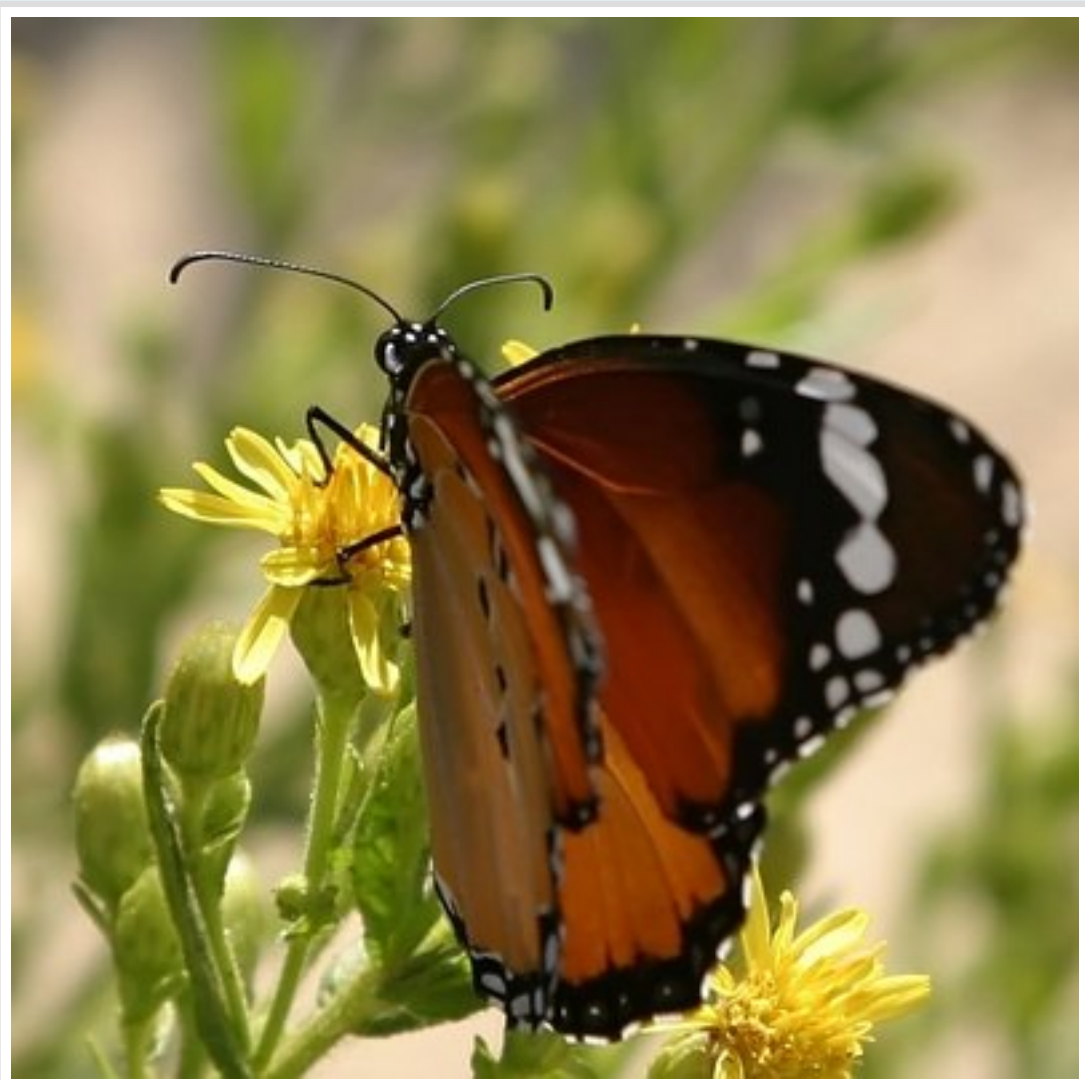
African Migrants

After last year's Painted Lady bonanza (hundreds) this year they were probably back to normal levels. I saw two or three most days, with the highest daily count being six.





Also in lesser numbers (I only saw this one female!), was the Plain Tiger. She was along the track off the river with the Mallow Skippers. Still breathtaking though.





I'll include this as a migrant, the only one I saw.



Moths

Crimson Speckled were very common this year. Seen everywhere and in good numbers, even right by the sea. I only saw one last year!



A sort of Lappet?



A pretty Burnet

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Vince Massimo, 16-Oct-10 11:25 PM GMT

Great images Lee, particularly the Plain Tiger. Also some interesting observations. That's a good way to end a season.

Vince

Re: Lee Hurrell

by traplican, 17-Oct-10 02:49 AM GMT

The burnet on the last picture is *Zygaena carniolica*. Guy has it determined somewhere, I think (but I may be mistaken). It is interesting that the size of the white margins is dependent on the temperature. While in Spain are the wings nearly white, near me look so:



... and along to the north (in the Poland, for example) the white margins are missing. It evidently hangs together with the thermoregulation.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Oct-10 05:02 AM GMT

"Vince Massimo" wrote:

Great images Lee, particularly the Plain Tiger. Also some interesting observations. That's a good way to end a season.

Vince

Thanks Vince! It sure is. 😊

"traplican" wrote:

The burnet on the last picture is *Zygaena carniolica*. Guy has it determined somewhere, I think (but I may be mistaken). It is interesting that the size of the white margins is dependent on the temperature. While in Spain are the wings nearly white, near me look so:

[attachment=0:2fk9g3k6]10710_138.jpg[/attachment:2fk9g3k6]

... and along to the north (in the Poland, for example) the white margins are missing. It evidently hangs together with the thermoregulation.

Thanks Traplican. You're right, as is Paul Wetton who ID'd it previously. (sorry Paul). I found this page showing the different forms:

http://www.hlasek.com/zygaena_carniolica_d1791.html

It's interesting, it looks like two different species! I took the white as the ground colour but it isn't, is it. I can see now it's the expanse of the white borders to the spots. Remarkable.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 17-Oct-10 05:24 AM GMT

Lee,
enjoying all the photos...but the Plain Tiger, absolutely beautiful. Lovely crisp light as well. 😊
Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Oct-10 05:59 AM GMT

Cuidad Quesada, Spain, 25th September – 2nd October 2010 – Part 5

Last part – other creatures

As ever when you go overseas there are some wonderful creatures other than butterflies to see and this time was no different.

Dragonflies were very common and were to be found everywhere. They seemed to follow me and then as I stopped moving, they perched, only to move as I did and then follow me again. There were two types seen most commonly, a bright red variety and these beauties. Just look at the colours!





I found a wasp spider in my local cemetery last year but this beast literally stopped me in my tracks. It was HUGE, with a leg-span of around 3 inches. The body was bigger than my thumb (😱 shudder 😱).



While the dragonflies followed me wherever I went like the pied piper of insects, a myriad of different grasshoppers (and there were thousands) hopped, skipped or flew away from me with every step I took. They would occasionally get the direction wrong and jump straight into me with a thud. Most off putting when you're stalking butterflies, especially when they disturbed the butterfly 😱 These monsters were the size of a sparrow when they flew away 😱



I saw a few different species of hoverfly. These ones were a lovely pale blue.



I found a few beetles too.



I saw this species in France in June



I was a little worried when I found this wasp's nest but they weren't interested in me at all, allowing close inspection. Quite fascinating.



This lovely long tailed lizard (more than likely not its name, just my observation) was along the track with the Mallow Skippers and Plain Tiger.



So that's it, Spain over for another year.

Finally, as regular readers might have noticed, I have a had a few canine companions this year. So I thought I should end with a photo of Dad's dog, Mickey. Here he is, the little bundle of fun.



Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Oct-10 06:04 AM GMT

"Michaeljf" wrote:

Lee,
enjoying all the photos...but the Plain Tiger, absolutely beautiful. Lovely crisp light as well. 😊
Michael

Thanks Michael! 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Oct-10 10:08 PM GMT

I know I still have some way to go with a camera and that last year I spent the entire trip with the camera set to too much underexposure but it was still interesting comparing this year's photos to last. 😊

viewtopic.php?f=20&t=3690

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 18-Oct-10 01:33 AM GMT

Hi Lee,
a definite improvement on last year, though it's interesting that obviously the underexposure was bad for the Swallowtails and Whites but not bad at all for the Plain Tiger from last year. Given that the Swallowtail and the Whites are indeed 'lighter' butterflies this shouldn't come as a surprise! With butterflies such as the Purple Emperor, Ringlets and Red Admirals (i.e. darker butterflies), I would normally underexpose by a stop anyway, unless they are resting against a really light background. After a while you learn from experience what works well and what doesn't. If there are shortcuts with photography I don't usually find them 😊
Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Oct-10 04:54 AM GMT

Thanks again Michael.

When I got the camera last July, upon advice I started by under exposing by 2/3 stop. As you say though, you learn what works for you and I started to find that slightly too dark. I've changed to minus 1/3 stop now for most of the time.

The Spain trip last year was set for 1 and 2/3 under exposure.

That's a good point about darker butterflies though and I will have to play around a bit more next season I think!

Thanks,

Lee

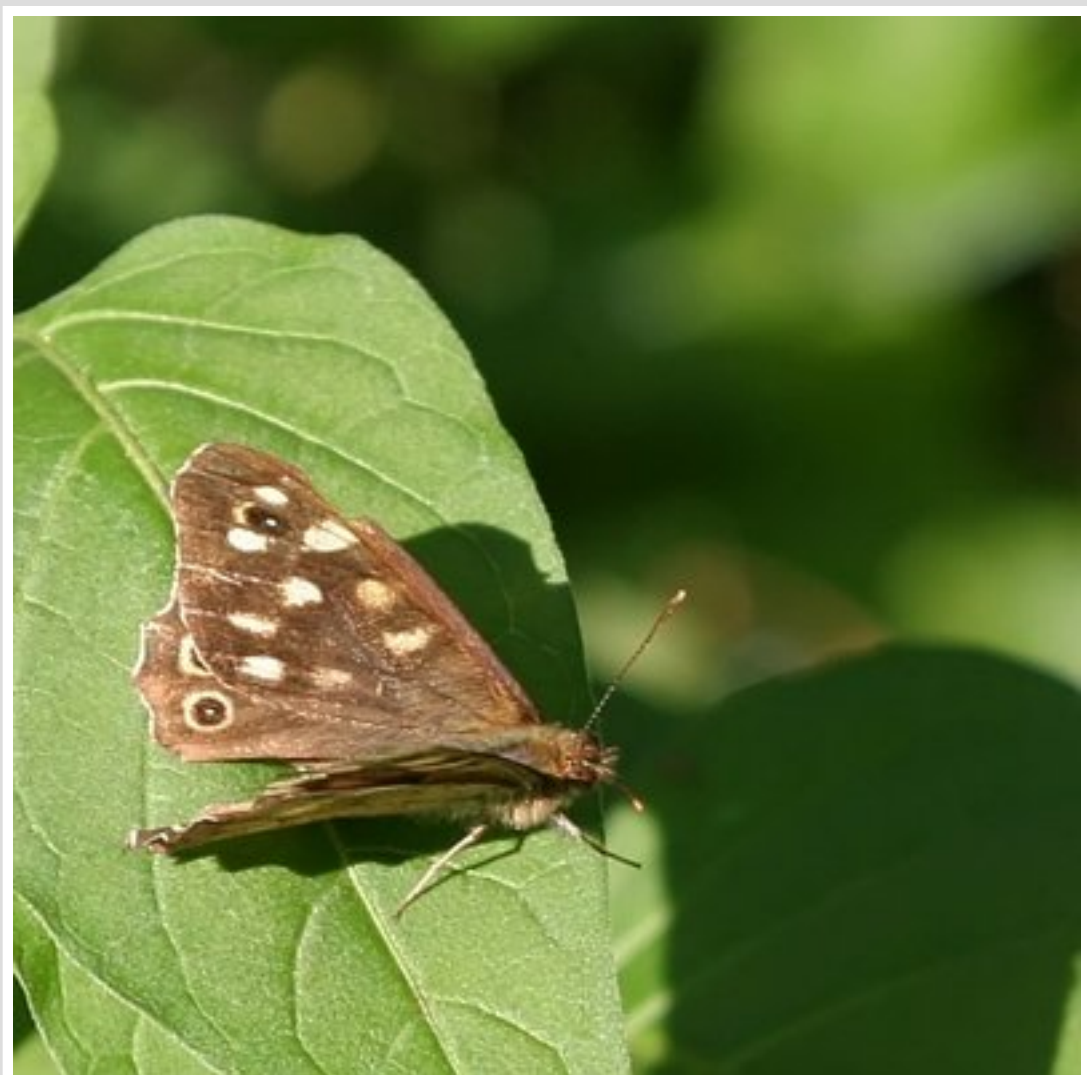
Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Oct-10 05:05 AM GMT

Sunday 10th October 2010

It what may well turn out to be our last decent weekend I took our friend's 4 year old twins over to the cemetery for a brief look.

We saw 2 Speckled Woods, a brief glimpse of a Comma and a family of 10 Long Tailed Tits. The girls picked a few dandelions for mum too.





Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 18-Oct-10 05:11 AM GMT

Sunday 17th October 2010

Although forecast for only 13 degrees today, in the sheltered spots of the cemetery, the sun felt warm. No butterflies but there were some lovely autumn colours. I have also noticed some sycamore trees affected by leaf miners as reported on Autumnwatch this week. There are a row of them on Scotch Common in Ealing and there's one in the cemetery.



My wild patch is to the right in this picture



And to the left in this one

EDIT - Forget to mention the hovering kestrel I saw.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Oct-10 06:08 AM GMT

Inspired by Guy's website, here's my year list for 2010. Those in bold were new to me this year.

- 1 Red Admiral – 15-Mar – Horsenden Hill
- 2 Comma – 15-Mar – Horsenden Hill
- 3 Peacock – 09-Apr – Greenford Park Cemetery
- 4 Small Tortoiseshell – 09-Apr – Greenford Park Cemetery
- 5 Orange Tip – 10-Apr – Horsenden Hill
- 6 Small White – 10-Apr – Horsenden Hill
- 7 Brimstone – 10-Apr – Horsenden Hill
- 8 Speckled Wood – 17-Apr – Greenford
- 9 Large White – 17-Apr – Kemsing Downs
- 10 Holly Blue – 23-Apr – Acton
- 11 Green Hairstreak – 24-Apr – Danebury Hill
- 12 Dingy Skipper – 24-Apr – Danebury Hill
- 13 Green Veined White – 24-Apr – Danebury Hill
- 14 **Duke of Burgundy** – 15-May – Noah Hill
- 15 Grizzled Skipper – 15-May – Noah Hill
- 16 Small Heath – 15-May – Noah Hill
- 17 **Wood White** – 15-May – Botany Bay, Oaken Wood
- 18 **Small Blue** – 22-May – Swyncombe Downs
- 19 Common Blue – 22-May – Swyncombe Downs
- 20 Brown Argus – 22-May – Swyncombe Downs
- 21 Small Copper – 22-May – Swyncombe Downs
- 22 Large Skipper – 30-May – Grafton Wood
- 23 **Meadow Fritillary** – 08-Jun – L'Etang De La Breche, Varennes Sur Loire
- 24 Painted Lady – 08-Jun – La Loire, L'Etang De La Breche
- 25 Marbled White – 08-Jun – La Loire, L'Etang De La Breche
- 26 Meadow Brown – 08-Jun – La Loire, L'Etang De La Breche
- 27 **Marbled Fritillary** – 11-Jun – Fields and woods near L'Etang De La Breche
- 28 **Sooty Copper** – 11-Jun – Fields and woods near L'Etang De La Breche
- 29 **Lesser Marbled Fritillary** – 12-Jun – Fields and woods near L'Etang De La Breche
- 30 **Heath Fritillary** – 13-Jun – La Breille-Les-Pins
- 31 Small Skipper – 13-Jun – La Breille-Les-Pins
- 32 Essex Skipper – 13-Jun – La Breille-Les-Pins
- 33 **Black Hairstreak** – 20-Jun – Bernwood Meadows
- 34 **Silver Studded Blue** – 26-Jun – Fairmile Common
- 35 Dark Green Fritillary – 26-Jun – Juniper Bottom
- 36 Silver Washed Fritillary – 26-Jun – Juniper Bottom
- 37 Ringlet – 26-Jun – Juniper Bottom
- 38 Purple Emperor – 02-Jul – Southwater Woods
- 39 White Admiral – 02-Jul – Southwater Woods
- 40 Gatekeeper – 10-Jul – Southwater Woods
- 41 Chalkhill Blue – 10-Jul – Windover Hill
- 42 Purple Hairstreak – 12-Jul – West Middlesex Golf Course
- 43 White Letter Hairstreak – 19-Jul – West Middlesex Golf Course
- 44 Wall – 31-Jul – Windover Hill Car Park
- 45 Grayling – 31-Jul – Windover Hill
- 46 Silver Spotted Skipper – 31-Jul – Windover Hill
- 47 Brown Hairstreak – 08-Aug – Bernwood Meadows
- 48 Adonis Blue – 15-Aug – Denbies Hillside
- 49 Swallowtail – 25-Sep – Urb. La Marina, San Fulgencio
- 50 Lang's Short Tailed Blue – 26-Sep – Campo De Guardamar
- 51 **Geranium Bronze** – 26-Sep – Urb. El Raso, Campo De Guardamar
- 52 Bath White – 26-Sep – Urb. Dona Pepa II, Ciudad Quesada
- 53 **Mediterranean Skipper** – 27-Sep – Rio Segura near Quesada
- 54 Clouded Yellow – 28-Sep – Urb. Dona Pepa II, Ciudad Quesada
- 55 Long Tailed Blue – 01-Oct – Rio Segura near Quesada
- 56 Plain Tiger – 01-Oct – Rio Segura near Quesada
- 57 **Mallow Skipper** – 01-Oct – Rio Segura near Quesada

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Padfield, 24-Oct-10 05:05 PM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

Inspired by Guy's website, here's my year list for 2010.

I'm honoured! It's been a real pleasure reading your notes and looking at your pictures this year, Lee. I think the new mechanism for personal diaries is a great success.

Guy

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Oct-10 08:01 PM GMT

"padfield" wrote:

I'm honoured! It's been a real pleasure reading your notes and looking at your pictures this year, Lee. I think the new mechanism for personal diaries is a great success.

Thank you Guy, I'm also honoured!

I'm glad you've enjoyed it, It has been a real pleasure in being out in the field and then sharing my experiences. I also keep a written diary which is more location and sightings, but the online personal diary format allows much more flesh on the bones as it were, with photos and extra observations. So I completely concur on the success of the format.

With the butterfly season all but over in the UK (I note you still have some flying!) I've been admiring my garden birds this weekend. Yesterday gave Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Robin, Dunnock, Wood Pigeon and Wren. I had a pair of Collared Doves last week too.

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-Oct-10 12:32 AM GMT

Well maybe I spoke too soon...

Although chilly, it was still warm in the sun if you got out of the breeze. On a walk around my cemetery this afternoon there was a Red Admiral flying in and around an ivy covered branch. A very pleasant surprise.

There are still loads of wasps and flies on the ivy flowers too.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Mikhail, 25-Oct-10 06:43 PM GMT

Not sure if you wanted names for any of your "other creatures" from your Spanish trip, but here goes with some:

The dragons are Red-veined Darter (lower part of eye bluish)

The grasshopper is the Egyptian Grasshopper (common all round the Med.)

Your hoverfly is a bee (?Megachilidae)

Your first beetle is a bug – the Fire Bug.

I pass on the beetles.

The lizard is the Large Psammodromus.

You were lucky not to be attacked by the Paper Wasps. They can be aggressive if their nests are approached too closely, as I discovered to my cost once.

Excellent pictures.

Misha

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Michaeljf, 25-Oct-10 09:36 PM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

I've been admiring my garden birds this weekend. Yesterday gave Great Tit, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Robin, Dunnock, Wood Pigeon and Wren. I had a pair of Collared Doves last week too. Lee

Lee,
Sounds a bit like my garden, except without the Dunnocks (we'll get them later in the year). We also have mushrooms growing in the grass at the moment! And yesterday, I was shocked (in a good way) because we had a Sparrowhawk only a couple of feet from the back window. Unfortunately I was half way across the room when I realised it wasn't a dark pigeon..and by then the Sparrowhawk had seen me and it was off. 😞😞

Interesting to see your sightings at West Middlesex Golf Course. It just shows all Golf Courses aren't completely bad 😊 I hope to bump into you sometime next year as I'm sure I'll re-visit Bernwood Meadows /Bernwood Forest next year, especially as I've now been told from reliable sources that the Purple Emperors are doing quite well again there. And I still want to get better photos of the Black Hairstreaks, at least now I know where they are in the Meadows (and at Whitecross Green Wood)! 😊

Michael

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-Oct-10 10:09 PM GMT

Hi Michael,

I love my garden birds. I'm fairly sure that we've helped raise broods of Blue Tit, Great Tit and Robin this year as they are all daily sightings and the young were in the garden too. They must nest in the trees between my house and the neighbours. In fact, we even had adult Blue Tits and Robins feeding the young in the garden, simply beautiful to watch 😊

Greenford has a resident Sparrowhawk or two. I've seen them over the town centre but then there is the cemetery, 2 golf courses and a country park so although suburban there is a lot of green space. The best view I had was one morning on the way to work about 07.30. I'd just left home and was walking up the road when I noticed two pigeons sitting in a tree to my left. Suddenly, out of nowhere a Sparrowhawk swooped in made a grab for one of

them from behind. It missed but feathers went flying and woke me up that's for sure...

The golf courses near me have a lot of wild space so aren't too bad. I've let Herts & Middlesex BC know about the hairstreaks as I don't think they had been recorded before. Best thing is I can take a different bus after work and walk through there on my way home!

It would be great to meet up next year, let me know if and when you go to either Michael as I'm no more than an hour away from Bernwood.

PS – my first ever PE was at Bernwood Forest last year, that's a moment I won't forget.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 25-Oct-10 10:11 PM GMT

"Mikhail" wrote:

The dragons are Red-veined Darter (lower part of eye bluish)

The grasshopper is the Egyptian Grasshopper (common all round the Med.)

Your hoverfly is a bee (?Megachilidae)

Your first beetle is a bug – the Fire Bug.

I pass on the beetles.

The lizard is the Large Psammodromus.

You were lucky not to be attacked by the Paper Wasps. They can be aggressive if their nests are approached too closely, as I discovered to my cost once.

Excellent pictures.

Misha

Thanks Misha, that's brilliant. Well, apart from your wasp stings....ouch. Thanks for your kind comment too.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by traplican, 26-Oct-10 12:37 AM GMT

"Lee Hurrell" wrote:

I found a few beetles too.

[attachment=5:huqlx3q8]IMG_7306.jpg[/attachment:huqlx3q8]

This is [url=http://www.biolib.cz/en/taxon/id71942/:huqlx3q8]Pyrrhocoris apterus[/url:huqlx3q8]. It is not a beetle but a red bug (*Hemiptera*). Yesterday I have snapped [url=http://traplican.rajce.idnes.cz/Motyli_2010-10-24/#10A24_013.jpg:huqlx3q8]one of them together with the Comma[/url:huqlx3q8] in our garden.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 26-Oct-10 03:15 AM GMT

Thanks Traplican, that's it. I just assumed it was a beetle!

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

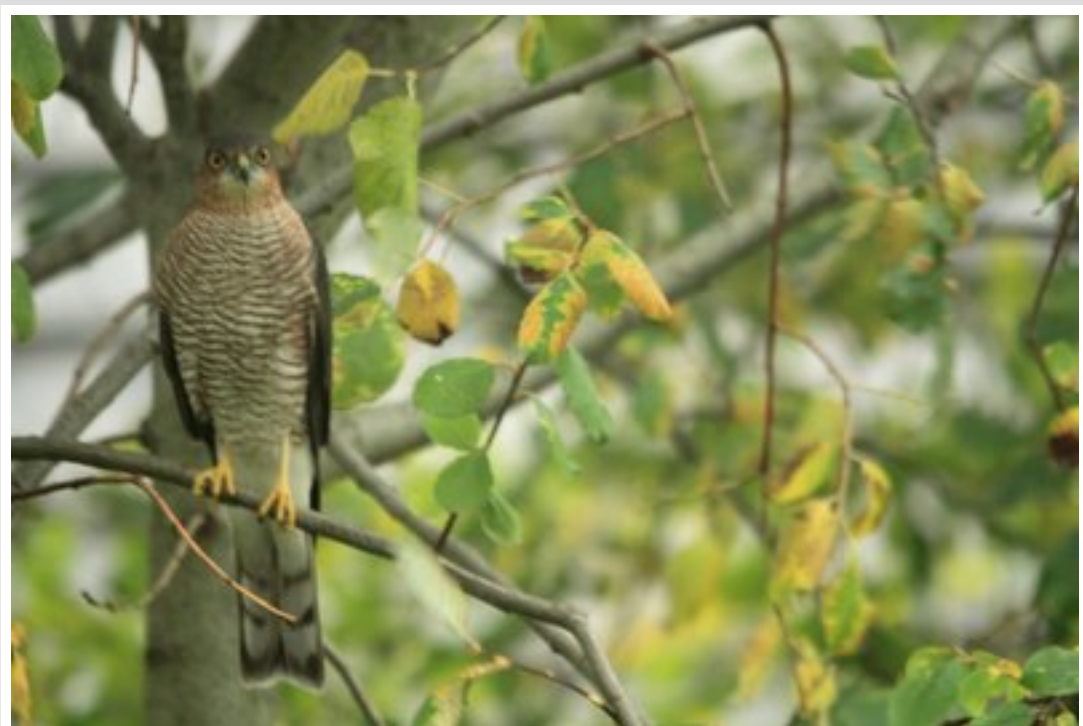
by Michaeljf, 30-Oct-10 06:47 AM GMT

"Michaeljf" wrote:

And yesterday, I was shocked (in a good way) because we had a Sparrowhawk only a couple of feet from the back window.

Unfortunately I was half way across the room when I realised it wasn't a dark pigeon..and by then the Sparrowhawk had seen me and it was off. 😊😬

Hi Lee,
I was at home today and the Sparrowhawk in our garden was back again, albeit briefly, sitting in a goat willow at the back of our garden. I managed to get one shot (not a very good one, as the light was dull and I didn't have time to re-adjust the camera settings). Anyway, from his stare you can see he spotted me even though I was sneaking up behind our interior Kitchen door 😊😊 . As soon as I took a photo he was off onto our house roof. At least it's an ID shot!!
Michael



The Garden Sparrowhawk sees me, as much as I try not to be seen!!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 30-Oct-10 09:34 PM GMT

Great to see so close up Michael. They are a stunning bird aren't they?

If looks could kill though..... 😊

It may be of interest but I saw a trailer today for a new programme on BBC4 this Wednesday called Birds Britannia.

Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 07-Nov-10 01:55 AM GMT

I enjoyed Birds Britannia. I'd never seen a Robin being so vicious and had no idea of the debauchery that goes on in the lives of the humble Dunnock. I'll be raising an eyebrow at the ones in my garden from now on...

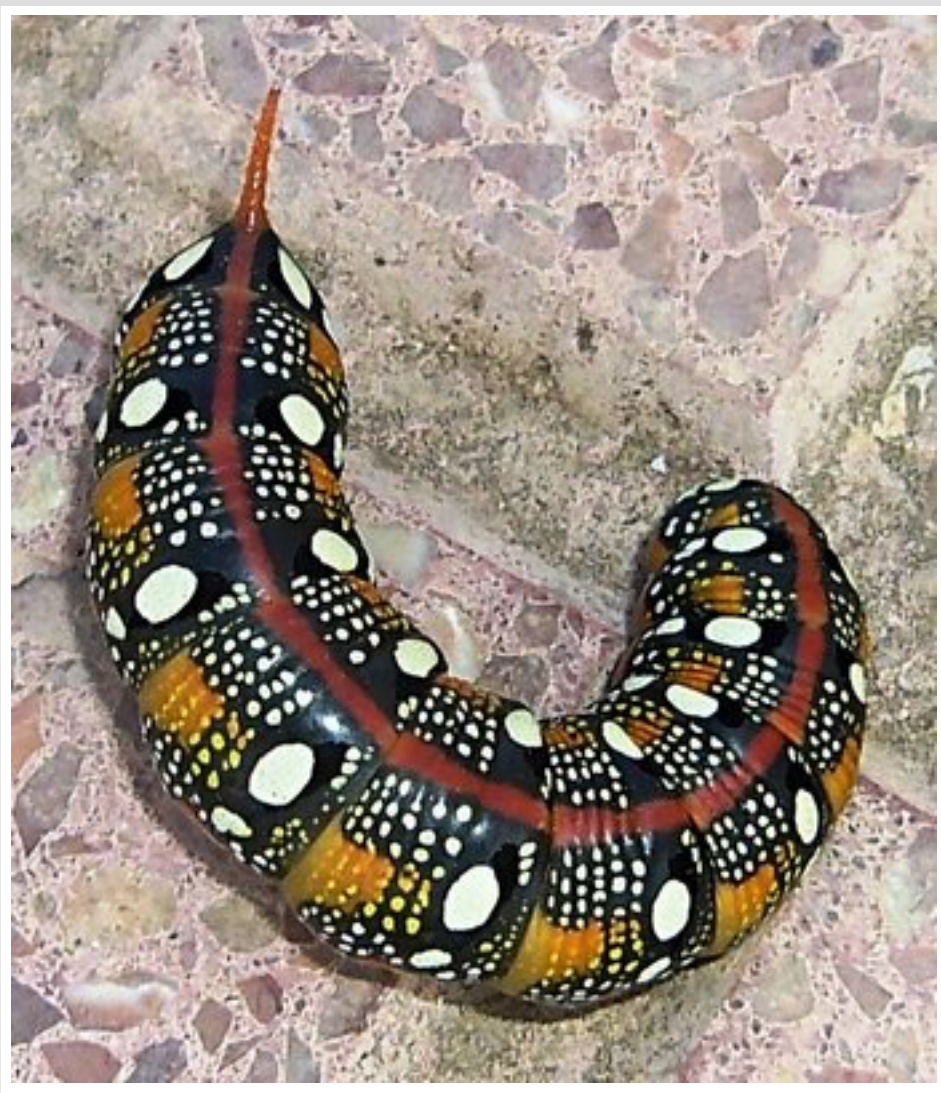
I'd heard about Magpies and their love of shiny objects but never seen it in action until today. I watched one steal a tealight candle from the cemetery and peck at it in a tree before flying off with its bounty.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Nov-10 12:40 AM GMT

My Dad has been over from Spain this week and showed me a Spurge Hawk moth caterpillar he found outside his front gate a few weeks ago. It seems fully grown and must have been on its way to pupate.





I was clearing a passion flower vine this morning which hadn't been pruned for a number of years. Deep within, near the wall I found a bird's nest and then found another newer looking one nearby on the top of an arch. This one had remnants of pale blue eggshells in it and so hopefully proves that we have had successful breeding in the garden. I think the eggs may have been from a Robin.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 14-Nov-10 08:45 PM GMT

Sitting at the computer looking at the drizzle, I was chuffed to bits to see the return of a Goldcrest this morning. From what I gather they migrate in this time each year and so this one may have come over from Scandinavia.

As do tits both Blue and Great and there have been plenty of both this weekend. Also noted have been a very territorial Robin, chasing all other species away, Dunnock, Wren, Blackbird and Magpie.

I'm having an ongoing battle with a squirrel who keeps nicking my fat balls and sabotaging the nut feeder. It has learnt how to open the bottom of the latter thus spilling the entire contents. I've foxed it this week by using those little cable ties you get with freezer bags to tie it on but it can also open the fat ball feeder. I'm going to have to invest in a squirrel proof one I think.

My grandad used an ingenious method to deter squirrels from a bird feeder that hung from a washing line. An empty fizzy pop bottle with a hole drilled in the bottom threaded on the line either side of the feeder meant that the squirrel couldn't get past the spinning bottle and onto the feeder! I might have to try that too 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Nov-10 06:41 AM GMT

I've had this moth seen in Spain this year identified by a contact in Spain as a Spanish/African species, *Lasiocampa serrula*.



Cheers

Lee

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 29-Nov-10 05:21 PM GMT

Sunday 28th November 2010

Quite a bumper weekend for garden wildlife watching today.

In the garden I saw Britain's two smallest birds – Goldcrest and Wren along with Dunnock, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Wood Pigeon, Collared Dove, Magpie and both male and female Blackbird.

Given how territorial one of them has been recently I was surprided to see two Robins. Starling and Gulls (I think it's Herring Gull and Lesser Black Backed Gull that live inland?) were also seen overhead.

Could the Blackbirds and Robins be pairing up ready for Spring? I know some birds do so this side of Christmas and start breeding early next year.

Also putting in an appearance were Panther (don't worry, not a real one, just our nickname for a neighbour's black cat), who strolled through with a dead mouse in its mouth, my arch nemesis the Squirrel (grrrr) and a male fox who scent marked on my bird table. Nice.

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 12-Dec-10 12:02 AM GMT

I'm pleased to report my first sighting since a Red Admiral on 24th October – a Winter Moth had flown in last night and was waiting to be liberated on the patio doors this morning.

I've invested in a 'squirrel proof' fat ball feeder but the birds don't seem sure about it. There were Great Tits, Blue Tits and Coal Tits investigating it within ten minutes of me hanging it last weekend but I haven't seen any feeding since and the balls still seem quite intact. Of course, that could just be because the squirrel can't get at them...!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Zonda, 15-Dec-10 11:54 PM GMT

Happy Chrimbo Lee, to you and family. 😊

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 16-Dec-10 08:27 PM GMT

And to you Zonda, hope you have a jolly good Christmas in Zonda towers!

Re: Lee Hurrell

by Lee Hurrell, 19-Dec-10 04:41 AM GMT

The most snow I've seen my way for a while prompted a walk over to the cemetery today, once it had stopped.

This happened in just 2 hours this morning:







While over there I saw a family of Long Tailed Tits, Blue Tits, Great Tits, Green Woodpecker, Greater Spotted Woodpecker and a Jay along with the usual Crows, Magpies, Gulls, Pigeons and squirrels.