

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-May-13 06:38 AM GMT

It has been the worst winter imaginable. Shortly after closing my diary for the season the birds in my aviaries contracted a virus from a flock of Doves living at a local pub. This virus turned out to be PMV1, i.e. Newcastle's Disease, which is notifiable. Like many others in the neighbourhood I also keep poultry so the authorities were very concerned. I was quickly 'closed down' by Defra for a period which was to amount to almost 5 months. The disease can take 8 weeks to run its course and the restrictions are held in place for a further 8 weeks minimum as this is also the incubation period. I was issued with a license allowing me to leave and enter my property but the gate was kept chained and not even the postman was allowed entry. I felt completely isolated. A ministry vet visited for 2.5 hours to complete paperwork and inspect my bio security arrangements to ensure that they met requirements. 8 bowls of a specific disinfectant guarded each entry point and clothes had to be disinfected or discarded. Over the period, some 40 of my birds died. Some quickly, others not so quickly and bodies had to be incinerated in accordance with procedures. The experience has left me emotionally drained but with a better understanding of the difficulties farmers can be faced with.

Given these restrictions and the extra work they entailed I was unable to get out with my camera as intended. I had hoped to consolidate all I had learned over the season and hone my skills but it was not to be which will be apparent from later photo postings. Instead I had to be content with what I could see from my windows – being an old property the windows are small and leaded and much of the glass is beveled making cleaning them difficult and photography even more so. So, before I get to this season's butterflies a small selection of the many winter visitors.

I have been pleased to host a small gathering – 3 male, 2 female – of Blackcaps which have stayed around far longer than usual this year:



One morning I woke up to find this handsome chap looking at me, only a few feet away on the other side of the glass where he stayed until a Magpie jabbed at him with its beak.



and this charming little chap:



Last but not least, the badgers:



**Re: Pauline**

by Neil Hulme, 09-May-13 07:44 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Welcome back. Sounds like you've had a dreadful time of late. Hopefully you can put all this behind you now and immerse yourself in a wonderful summer.

Best Wishes, Neil

**Re: Pauline**

by Colin Knight, 09-May-13 08:43 AM GMT

Pauline, Sorry to hear about your avian problem, hope to see you out enjoying the butterflies now that season is starting to look good.  
best wishes  
Colin

### **Re: Pauline**

by Mark Colvin, 09-May-13 08:47 AM GMT

Hi Pauline.

Really sorry to hear about the Newcastle's virus; fingers crossed you never get a repeat episode.

Hope you have a great butterfly season.

Kind regards. Mark

### **Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 09-May-13 05:08 PM GMT

Good to see you're back, Pauline, though sorry to read about your dreadful experience over the Winter.

Blackcaps have been late-stayers in our Oxon garden, too, but a pair of Sparrowhawks are making a nuisance of themselves by using our bird-feeders as a fast-food outlet and leaving sad remains lying around by our pond. Perhaps we should encourage Magpies to see them off!

We are very pleased that the leucistic (pure white plumage) Starling has just returned to our garden, for the sixth successive year. Let's hope she has another successful breeding season.

Mike

### **Re: Pauline**

by Neil Freeman, 09-May-13 05:15 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Good to see you posting again and very sorry to hear about your problems over the winter.

Looking forward to your posts through the coming season.

All the best,

Neil F.

### **Re: Pauline**

by philm63, 09-May-13 08:29 PM GMT

Pauline

Just to add my own welcome back and sorry to hear about your problems during the past winter - here's hoping you have a season to remember!

Phil

### **Re: Pauline**

by David M, 09-May-13 09:07 PM GMT

So sad to hear of your traumas, Pauline. Our own chickens were on borrowed time a few years ago when the avian flu outbreak was at its peak, to the point where I agreed with my friend that any edict to have them destroyed would see me take them up north and give them away rather than cull them.

Oddly enough, we too had a dove with Newcastle's disease. Poor thing was unable to fly and brain damaged but it had a happy enough life living amongst our chickens for a few years. It's head was permanently twisted by 90 degrees and it was badly unco-ordinated but it was just about able to feed itself so we simply left it as none of us like to 'cull' creatures unless it's absolutely necessary.

Crazy thing is that our cats never went near the bird even though it was a sitting duck. It was as if they could sense something was badly wrong so they gave it a wide berth at all times.

### **Re: Pauline**

by Susie, 09-May-13 09:27 PM GMT

Sorry to read you've had such a traumatic winter, Pauline. I hope the coming summer is better for you.

### **Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 09-May-13 09:44 PM GMT

Good to see you back Pauline, here's hoping for happier times ahead 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Nick Broomer, 09-May-13 10:12 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,  
i am really sorry to hear of all your heart ache as i know how much you care for your animals. I just hope that everything in the future brings you happiness.

All the best, Nick.

### Re: Pauline

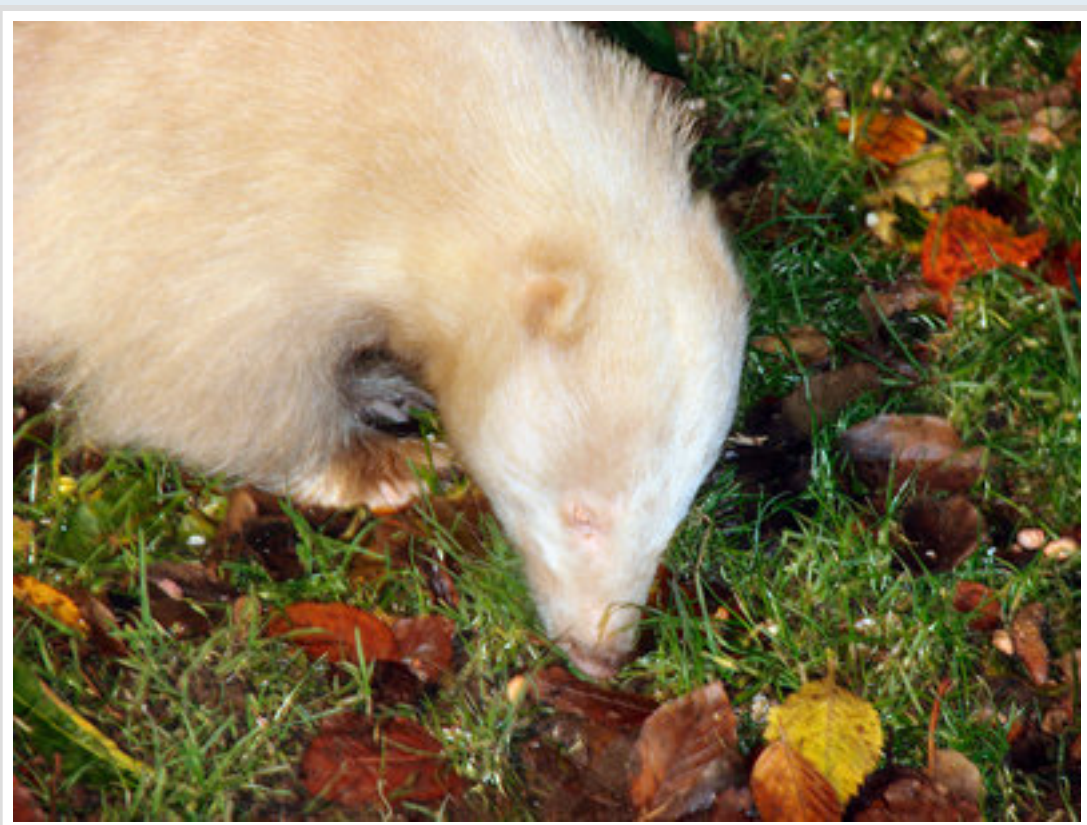
by Pauline, 10-May-13 07:21 AM GMT

Thank you all for such a warm welcome back and your messages of sympathy and condolences. You really do not know just how much your kind words have meant to me and it is good to feel I am back amongst friends once again.

It is certainly a worry Mark that this virus could return as apparently it is endemic in the wild bird population and 'flares up' every few years in a similar fashion to myxomatosis. The Department of Environment were already aware of the situation at the pub where the infected birds are living in a barn used to store pub furniture. A cull has been attempted but has only been partially successful. They consider the birds to be far enough away from any area preparing food from the public – about 10 paces by my reckoning. The barn had dead and sick birds littering the floor and the RSPCA were also involved but their resources were limited. Naturally the birds come into my garden which is only a couple of miles away because of the food availability.

Quite a few of the remaining birds have been left with the symptoms you describe David – classical text book neurological problems. I find myself recently questioning their quality of life but like you I am reluctant to do anything too hasty.

I would love to see some photos of your white Starling Mike. In my garden I have seen a white Crow and a white badger and a white squirrel over the years. A photo of the badger:



Update on Wrecclesham – I had a brief look at this site whilst passing the other day. I was disappointed to see that all the bushes along the bank by the bridge had been chopped down. Last year these could be relied upon for Green Hairstreaks. The area is obviously being managed for other creatures as sheets of corrugated metal can now be found along the length of the bank. The fence has been completely broken down in a couple of places so no need to climb if you approach from the back of the allotments. Heavy plant and machinery on site doing some work but more evidence of night time activity – beer cans, hold-alls, broken dog harnesses etc. Only 2 foxes seen in the 10 minutes I was there and a few Orange Tips.

Thank you all again for your understanding and support – reading your diaries and seeing your smashing photos has just about kept me sane over the winter. Tomorrow I shall begin with the Dukes.

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 10-May-13 11:02 AM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

I would love to see some photos of your white Starling Mike. In my garden I have seen a white Crow and a white badger and a white squirrel over the years. A photo of the badger:

Interesting photo! Your Badger is an albino, which results from a defect that prevents the production of the pigment melanin. This is indicated by the pink eyes and residual colour from other pigments. Leucism is different, in that there is a **total** absence of pigment in the skin, resulting in the pure white colour, but the eyes and other parts are normally coloured.



*leucistic Starling, Abingdon, Oxon - 4th May 2013 Nikon D300s with 70-300VR lens - 1/180@f/6.7 ISO400*

There are more photos of the same bird, taken in previous years, on my website at <http://home.btconnect.com/mike.flemming/birds2.htm>

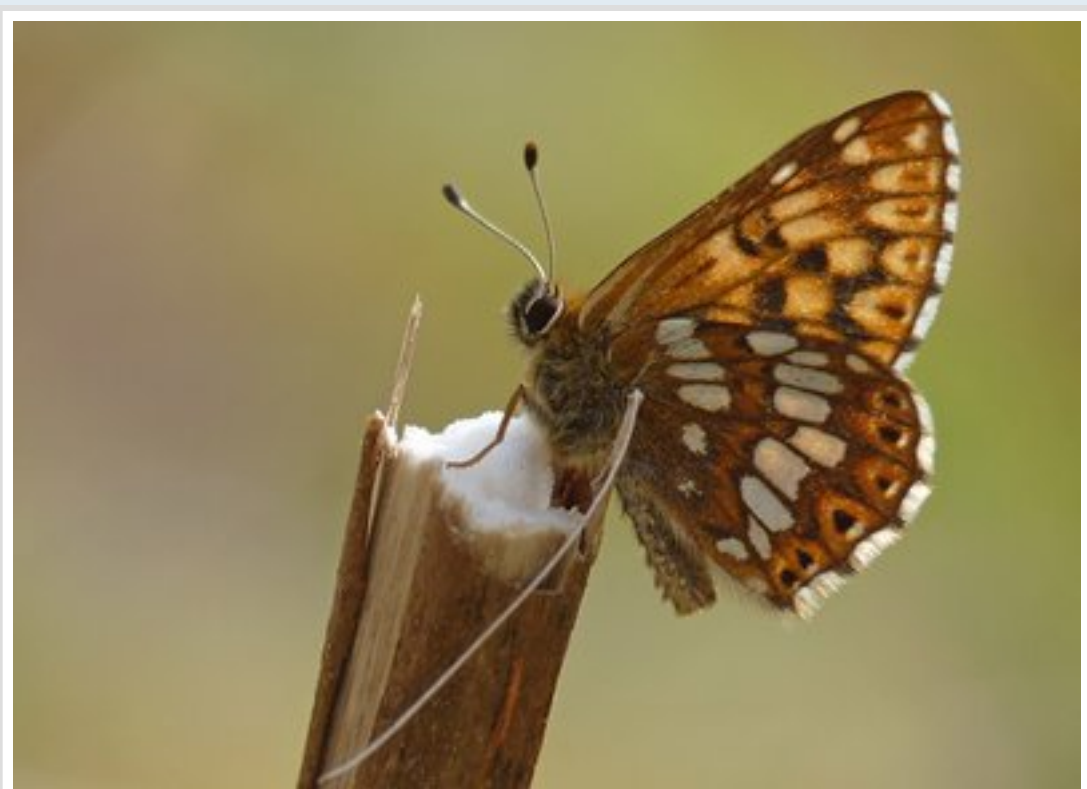
Mike

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 11-May-13 07:55 AM GMT

That's a cracking photo Mike - I shall look at the others later. It's a good job you're not any closer to me else I'd be camped out in your garden! Would just love to see it.

Now to add to my catalogue of disasters on Christmas Eve the drains blocked and flooded the fox compound. The following month the central heating boiler broke down leaving me without any form of heat for 3 days. Problem seemed to follow problem and my energy levels and motivation were low. Nevertheless, I felt it was high time I made the effort to get out there again and as Noar Hill is only 10 minutes away and the Dukes had been spotted I decided it was now or never. I had forgotten how much pleasure there is to be gained just from the sight of butterflies and my mood lifted instantly. It was hardly a surprise to find a fair few others on a similar mission and nice to see familiar faces including Mark and Phil. Phil had already photographed a Duke and pointed me in the direction where it was last seen. Sure enough, it was still around. I had also forgotten just how difficult this photography lark is and tried to remember everything I had been told last year although I still have not practiced with my tripod - Sorry Maurice if you're reading this but I shall get round to it. Whilst I was watching this singleton a mating pair flew past my face and landed in the grass beside me. I snatched a quick photo before they decided to set off again and as they did so they separated. Shame! The photo I took is certainly not worthy of this site but a few I consider acceptable below:





I struggled to take an open winged shot that I was happy with. I had achieved it last year with a Chalkhill Blue when every bit of white fringe was sharp and crisp. I recalled Maurice's advice, echoed by Nick, that you need to be square on to the subject. This would have involved standing almost directly over the subject and the shadow cast would have caused the butterfly to move. Nevertheless, I am enclosing this shot as the Duke seemed relatively dark compared to his cohorts. However, I resolved to return soon for another bite of the cherry.



## Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 11-May-13 10:38 AM GMT

### "Pauline" wrote:

a few I consider acceptable below:

I envy your being only 10 mins from Noar Hill. It's a wonderful place, not just for butterflies, but with a good selection of Orchid species, too.

I looked at the EXIF data on your last photo:

Focal Length: 85.9mm (35mm equivalent: 483mm)

Aperture: f/4.4

Exposure Time: 0.0020 s (1/500)

ISO equiv: 160

Exposure Bias: -1.00 EV

Metering Mode: Matrix

Exposure: aperture priority (semi-auto)

You were using a very long focal length (equiv. to nearly 500mm in 35mm terms) with a wide aperture of f/4.4, which is a recipe for very shallow depth-of-field. This shows in your last photo, where one wing tip is going out of focus. I would try to get a bit closer (easy to say from my armchair) or not fill the frame so fully and zoom back a little. You were using aperture priority mode, so could have selected a smaller aperture; around f/8 should be better. Of course, that would slow your shutter speed but, with some sort of support (I used a monopod), that should not be a problem down to 1/125s or so. I notice you also used -1 stop exposure bias, which is good for strong colour and no blown-out highlights, but -2/3 stop is usually sufficient and would claw back a bit of shutter speed. In dull light, I would not apply exposure compensation, as you need all the light you can get!

Mike

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-May-13 07:36 AM GMT

Thank you Mike for taking the time and trouble to look at my settings and make recommendations. I have just had an email from an excellent photographer whom I admire and respect. He has read your comments and tells me I would do well to heed your advice as it is always spot on. As you already know I am very keen to learn and improve but sometimes wonder if it is too late to teach an old dog new tricks 😊😊. Whilst I was at Noar Hill the other day I was told that a Frog orchid could be seen there and the general vicinity described. Having only ever seen these on TV I would love to see it for real so if anyone knows the location and feel that I can be trusted with this precious information, a pm would be appreciated.

Now, my next outing was to be in search of the Grizzled Skipper and I decided that Rake Bottom was the place to go. Even the 'easy' path to this venue is incredibly steep, and with hindsight, going so early in the season when I am still relatively unfit, was probably a mistake. My legs are still aching! The first butterfly I saw was in fact a Duke and I spent a few pleasurable minutes watching him before several Grizzlies caught my attention. It was warming up fast so I took a couple of shots before my attention was caught by what I initially thought was a pair of Grizzlies dog-fighting. I quickly realised that one of them was a Green Hairstreak, my first sighting of the season. Despite seeing at least 2 others, I failed to get a photo. And again, with what I am fairly certain was a Dingy Skipper but which also disappeared quickly. I decided the butterflies were now too active and resolved to return later in the day when the temperature was cooler. On reaching the top of the hill a gorgeous Holly Blue flew past without stopping – also a first for this year. Not many photo opportunities but a good visit none-the-less.



Returning to the same venue later the same day found the temperature cooler but a very strong breeze blowing up the valley presenting its own problems concerning photography. Nevertheless, I counted about 18 Grizzlies on a variety of plants – in fact, a couple of plants held 2 butterflies. After taking some shots I began yet again the long, arduous, uphill climb, consoling myself with the thought that at least my thighs would be beautifully toned by the end of this season!!!







### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 12-May-13 11:09 AM GMT

Super Grizzlie undersides 😊 I especially like the last two 😊 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-May-13 05:09 PM GMT

Thank you Mike. I shall keep trying to improve, spurred on by seeing some of the super photos on this site.

Late yesterday afternoon I set off in search of Green Hairstreaks. Before I even got to the bottom of my lane it was raining. I considered turning back but remembered last years experiences and decided to continue in the hope that either a. the rain would stop, or b. I would find the butterfly anyway. By the time I arrived on site the sky was black and the cricket match in progress was just being called off. I realised that nothing would be flying in these conditions and that I would have to search quite hard. I found a sheltered corner and gently shook a Hawthorn bush. To my surprise, a Green Hairstreak flew out and landed about 8 foot away at the other side of a ditch. To my frustration, by the time I had gotten over the ditch I had lost him and no amount of subsequent searching produced results. Soaked to the skin (no coat) and squelching shoes I wondered if this was to be a repeat of last summer.

This morning was brighter so I returned to the same spot and to my delight was rewarded with no less than 6 GH. 2 specimens had considerable damage to their wings, a couple were showing signs of wear and tear but there were at least 2 in quite good condition. As the warmth increased I was interested to note that the GH behaved in much the same way as the WLH last year (D'you remember Mark?). When warming up they actually lay on their side on a leaf to absorb the maximum heat.



I have always hoped to see or take a photo of a mating pair (has anyone managed that?) but today was not going to be the day. Nevertheless, I spent a

happy hour or so watching these amazing butterflies.





I couldn't help but recall Wurzel's attempt to find these butterflies last year. If you are ever around this area Wurzel please let me know and I can take you to this exact spot.

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Hulme, 12-May-13 05:58 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Some lovely Green Hair shots there. The progress you've made over the last few years is impressive. 😊

Best Wishes, Neil

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 12-May-13 07:49 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Welcome back, great to be reading your diary again. Sorry you have had such a tough time over the winter. Just admiring your Grizzled Skipper and Green Hairstreak photos 😊. I have not yet made it to Rake Bottom but hopefully in the next couple of weeks.

Where did you find your Green Hairstreaks? I have not seen any since I was a child and would like to try and see some this year before they have gone.

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 12-May-13 09:27 PM GMT

#### "Sussex Kipper" wrote:

Hi Pauline,

Some lovely Green Hair shots there. The progress you've made over the last few years is impressive. 😊

Agreed. All of those images are of excellent quality (especially considering how Green Hairstreaks are not the easiest of subjects).

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 12-May-13 10:27 PM GMT

Agreed as well, cracking shots 🍷 – I might take you up on your offer Pauline but first I'm going to try ignoring Green Hairstreak to see if they'll come to me 😊😂

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-May-13 07:32 AM GMT

Thank you Neil – I appreciate your comments, but you know, you have given me a fair bit of help and advice over the last couple of years, along with a few others, so hopefully it is beginning to pay off. Don't think I could have done it on my own.

Thank you also David but has there ever been a butterfly that is easy to photograph 😊😊 They all seem to have a particular problem – white fringe, too fast, too high up, wrong colour etc. etc. (always blame the butterfly, never the photographer, that should be my motto 😊).

Hi Paul (please tell me I have your name right as I couldn't even remember my own password 😊). Thank you for your remarks. You should find Green Hairstreaks at Rake Bottom as I have seen several there but the recent pics were taken at Wrecclesham – I think it's known as the Sand Pit. Green Hairstreaks are widespread across this site and if you visit in a few weeks or so you will hopefully see Glanvilles also.

Thank you Wurzel and good luck – the offer is always there.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-May-13 07:54 PM GMT

No car for the next couple of days so a few photos from that return visit to Noar Hill:





### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 13-May-13 08:28 PM GMT

Cracking shots 😊 they've given me itchy feet, I want to get out and find some Dukes 🍷 but unfortunately the weather isn't playing ball 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 13-May-13 09:01 PM GMT

"Pauline" wrote:

Thank you also David but has there ever been a butterfly that is easy to photograph

Brown Hairstreak.

They don't mind how close you get (they'll even hitch a ride on your finger if they're in the mood) 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 13-May-13 11:55 PM GMT

**"Pauline" wrote:**

Hi Paul (please tell me I have your name right as I couldn't even remember my own password 😊). Thank you for your remarks. You should find Green Hairstreaks at Rake Bottom as I have seen several there but the recent pics were taken at Wrecclisham – I think it's known as the Sand Pit. Green Hairstreaks are widespread across this site and if you visit in a few weeks or so you will hopefully see Glanvilles also.

Hi Pauline

Yes well remembered and thanks for the info 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 14-May-13 08:18 PM GMT

Good luck Paul – let me know how you get on.

David, you make it sound so easy but how d'you get them down from the trees in the first place 😊 The last few years it has been quite difficult here at local sites possibly due to a certain amount of management.

Wurzel, please don't talk to me about the weather 😊😊 . I can't believe it is nearly June!!! Here in Hants we have had hail again today (7 degrees and it is currently tipping it down) and the forecast is not good. Not sure I can stand another Summer of soakings 😊 I have just put the heating back on 😊

Good news is the car has passed MOT so if the rain ever stops .....

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 14-May-13 08:58 PM GMT

**"Pauline" wrote:**

David, you make it sound so easy but how d'you get them down from the trees in the first place 😊

Patience.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 15-May-13 09:55 AM GMT

The storm raged throughout the night and the wind was fierce. The trees creaked and groaned as the branches lashed the outbuildings. At 2.30 am I could hear Saffron whimpering in fear. I would need to reassure her. As I crossed the garden I could see a smallish badger snuffling around, disturbing the grass seed which is just starting to come through. One of the badgers seems to be trying to dig a sett behind the potting shed at the base of an old tree. I have always wanted a sett in the garden but I am now a little undecided. It is making a dreadful mess and I have recently had a considerable amount of work done on the garden. As I entered the fox compound I could see Foxy sleeping soundly in one of the kennels. Saffron immediately ran to me so I picked her up and carried her to another kennel where I spent a fair bit of time calming her down, reassuring her and giving her a good groom. Chance as usual was completely unperturbed and potted around hoping to find a morsel of food. It was soon after 4.00am that I got back to my bed so although the weather has now brightened I do not think I have a great deal of energy left to get out with my camera. We shall see – a strong coffee might do wonders 😊😊

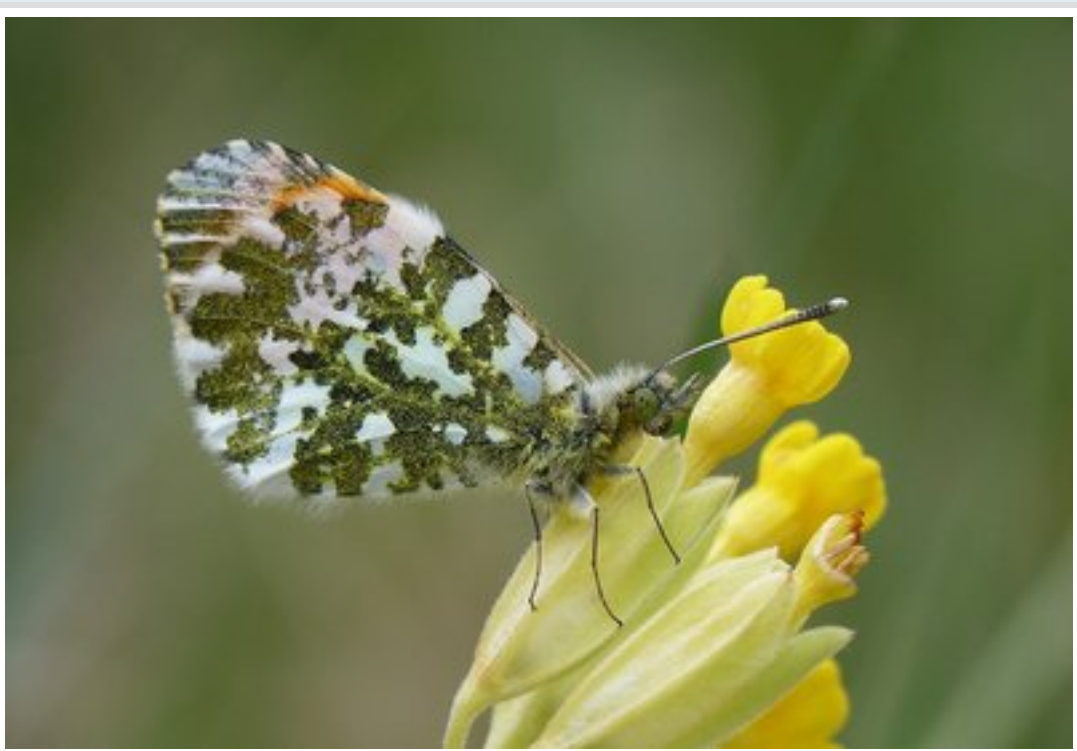




### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-May-13 07:31 PM GMT

Not quite the pose I had hoped for but beggars can't be choosers - perhaps there will be time yet for that lovely flash of orange:



### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 15-May-13 09:05 PM GMT

Pauline your Pic's are fantastic, if mine turn out half as good in a couple of years I'll be really happy 😊

Love your Animal's that's just me , I've sat up in the night as well when my dog was sick, just had to make sure she was ok 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 15-May-13 09:24 PM GMT

Some lovely photos in the past few posts Pauline 😊

Good to see you got your Orange Tip. I am sure they will be around for a little while still, I am still seeing very fresh ones around, the fresher they are,

the darker the black tips on the forewings are.

Cheers,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by essexbuzzard, 16-May-13 12:05 AM GMT

Agreed,i think your photos are great.Love the Green Hairstreaks. I've yet to see one this year,and i'm desperate. If this cold,dull,windy weather ever improves,i will try some of my local colonies,but may be pushed further afield!

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 16-May-13 09:31 AM GMT

Hi Pauline, agreed, your photos have always been excellent, before I joined this forum I always enjoyed your diary. Cathy and I met you a couple of times in the field, Shipton Bellinger was one place. The foxes you care for are amazing, we saw a gorgeous, easy going fox at Wrecclisham recently, he just sat up on the path in front of us with his head turned watching us, watching him.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 16-May-13 06:04 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie. Pity you're so far away cos I think you and me would get on just great.

Thank you too Neil. Orange Tips are definitely thin on the ground here and I still haven't managed an open wing shot. I am now getting so obsessed that I am even scanning the verges as I drive along, so if you see a small yellow car weaving from side to side then it's likely to be me 😊

Hi Mike. I appreciate your comments regarding both photos and foxes. When I read your diary I wondered how we had never bumped into each other as we visit all the same places – then I realised that we had! I think the very first time I met yourself and Cathy was at the Straits.

Thank you Essexbuzzard. I hope you manage to find some without having to go too far.

Seeing a massive improvement in the weather I decided this afternoon to visit Chiddingfold briefly to see if the Wood Whites had emerged. On arriving at Botany Bay I immediately saw Philip looking at the gathering clouds. The sun had disappeared and the temperature had dropped noticeably. Philip was considering whether to even bother to look for the butterfly but it didn't take much persuasion before he was pulling on his boots and together we set off. By the time we reached the usual spot the sun had returned and before long we spotted our first Wood White. I had completely forgotten what lovely little insects these are – smaller than I remembered but every bit as delightful; so delicate and ethereal. As we progressed along the track we began to lose count and the changeable weather conditions meant there were plenty of photo opportunities. My time was limited so I could not hang around for photogenic poses but a few shots to hopefully whet the appetite:









### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 16-May-13 10:23 PM GMT

Cracking shots Pauline 🍷 I only found my first Wood Whites last year and it's one species I'm desperate to catch up with again.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-May-13 07:24 AM GMT

Thank you Wurzel. I feel that for me, at last, the season has started. Yesterday I saw a total of 11 species, 5 of those being a first for the season. Early morning I nipped up to Wrecchlesham as last time I had failed to get past the Hairstreaks. I was pleased to see that they were still there and one came onto my hand (no mating pair tho' 😞) Time was at a premium so I pressed on and was able to get a shot of my first Small Heath of the year. I was entertained by 2 Speckled Woods dog-fighting for a whole ten minutes after which they both collapsed in a heap, sprawled out on some gravel. However, it was the whites which captivated me yesterday so today's pics are of the Green-Veined, another seasonal first:





**Re: Pauline**

by Neil Hulme, 17-May-13 08:00 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Some exceptionally good images there, particularly the second. Not only is that a very good study of a GVW, but it also has considerable artistic merit too. Good shooting.

Best Wishes, Neil

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Colvin, 17-May-13 08:07 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Great work.

White's are not easy, so well done. It proves what can be done with a simple and inexpensive camera.

Kind regards. Mark

### Re: Pauline

by Nick Broomer, 17-May-13 05:08 PM GMT

Lovely photos of the G.V.W. Pauline, the second picture is just superb.

All the best, Nick.

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 17-May-13 09:05 PM GMT

**"hideandseek" wrote:**  
the second picture is just superb.

Agreed. That's the pick of a very impressive series.

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 17-May-13 09:39 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I can only echo the previous comments, beautiful photos 😊

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-May-13 05:40 PM GMT

Thank you so much for your comments Neil, Mark, Nick, David, Neil. I am still feeling quite overwhelmed by all the praise. Part of me feels amazingly motivated but another part of me is scared to pick up my camera, fearful that I won't be able to live up to the standard of those photos; and the truth is, that of course I won't. I am not consistent enough yet to produce image after image of a high quality but I can promise you I will keep trying especially when you provide such help and encouragement.

I would also like to thank another Mark (Tuts) for his directions to Rake Bottom. I am more than happy to sacrifice the possibility of beautifully toned thighs for an easy route into that site 😊😊 I followed those directions today and was pleased to be able to take some shots of a very obliging Dingy Skipper, unlike the flighty creature I encountered there last time.





## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-May-13 06:46 AM GMT

I wanted to try a different sort of photo. I wanted to capture some activity, movement, natural behaviour. In my haste I used a shutter speed faster than was necessary and the resulting large aperture gave me a smaller depth of field creating some blurring of the butterfly. Despite adjusting the exposure compensation to the maximum the camera would allow (very bright sunshine) there seems to be some bleaching of the pale flowers. It is tempting only to include the best photos in this diary but it is a record of my progress rather than a record of my achievements. Nevertheless, it would seem that I have gone some way towards my goal. It appears that this female is multi-tasking – nectaring and egg-laying?



### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 19-May-13 09:11 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Nice female Orange Tips, especially the backlit second one. The Dingys are good too, I still haven't seen one yet, there has only been a couple reported in Warwickshire so far, we are well behind this year.

I also like to try different styles of photo, whilst I appreciate the 'butterfly on a stick against a soft pastel background' style, and indeed sometimes try for this myself, I find too many of these can look like posed studio shots and after a while I get a bit bored of them.

If done right they can make for a beautiful photograph but sometimes for me the natural element is lost. I know that there is differing opinion on this and I am certainly not saying there is a right or wrong way, just waffling a bit with my views.

Take care and keep taking the photos, your past few posts all been good with some 'stunners' amongst them 😊

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-May-13 08:03 AM GMT

Thank you Neil – I appreciate your comments. Yes, it's good to try something new from time to time isn't it. I think trying something different presents new challenges which force me to think more about what I'm actually doing. The chap below is also very much in his natural environment and although not a species I am particularly drawn to, as it was my first sighting of the season he is included for 'completeness'.



I paid a brief visit to a site near Fernhurst yesterday afternoon to see if there was any evidence of the PBF's having emerged. The fact that I couldn't find any was not too much of a surprise as this tends to be a 'late' site with relatively few butterflies, although I am hoping that the work that has been done there will encourage them to expand their territory. What does surprise me however, is that there are no Wood Whites at this site – it looks perfect for them and not dissimilar from Chiddingfold Forest where Wood Whites thrive. Perhaps they used to exist here at some time in the past in the same way that PBF used to exist at Chiddingfold before they became extinct there (apart from the recent unauthorised release).

### Re: Pauline

by P.J.Underwood, 20-May-13 12:42 PM GMT

Pauline,  
It comes to something when the Master changes his camera to that of the pupil. It shows what good quality your photo's are!  
Philip

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 20-May-13 04:36 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

not a species I am particularly drawn to, as it was my first sighting of the season he is included for 'completeness'.

Poor chap – just making up the numbers!

I think they have a charm of their own – perky things, with subtly-toned soft undersides that are very difficult to photograph well.

Your pic is good and so are the female Orange Tips that you-posted earlier. I consider it to be quite a triumph to get good photos of 'whites' in bright sunlight. I once joked that whites should be avoided in competitions, because they are so hard to represent well, but yours would be fine 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 20-May-13 10:41 PM GMT

Cracking shots Pauline 🎉 I'll have to PM you about the depth of field thing – I find I have to get the butterfly at just the right angle to try and get all of it in focus. That being said I really like the shots from different angles as they often give the image a little something extra, they tell the story more almost. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-May-13 11:33 AM GMT

'Fraid so Mike 😊😊 Here's another chap who is just 'making up the numbers' until something else comes along (altho' anything is welcome given this awful weather). Actually, I have a bit more respect for this little chap as he was the victor in the previously mentioned dog-fight 😊 :



Thank you Mike for your comments re the Whites – you have been a constant source of knowledge, support and encouragement and to that end perhaps you might be kind enough to comment on depth of field?

Dear Wurzel, when I read your post this morning I almost choked on my coffee! I never thought I'd see the day when someone asked me about photography – definitely a first 😊 . I'm afraid I really have only grasped the basics but I believe that a large aperture (small f number) produces a small depth of field. Whilst this can give a nice blurred background, it is not much good for getting both wings in focus if they are partially open. There are many knowledgeable photographers on this site and perhaps one of them would be kind enough to advise the both of us on the best way to achieve this.

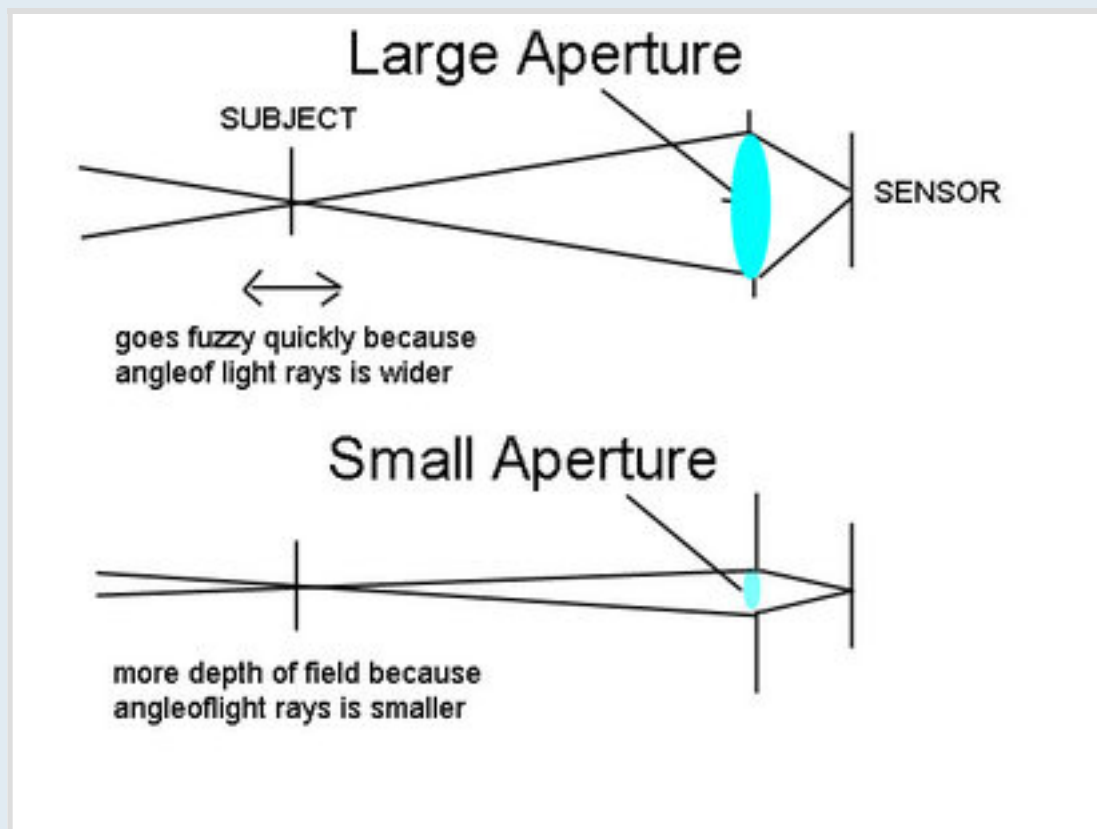
## Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 21-May-13 11:29 PM GMT

"Pauline" wrote:

perhaps you might be kind enough to comment on depth of field?

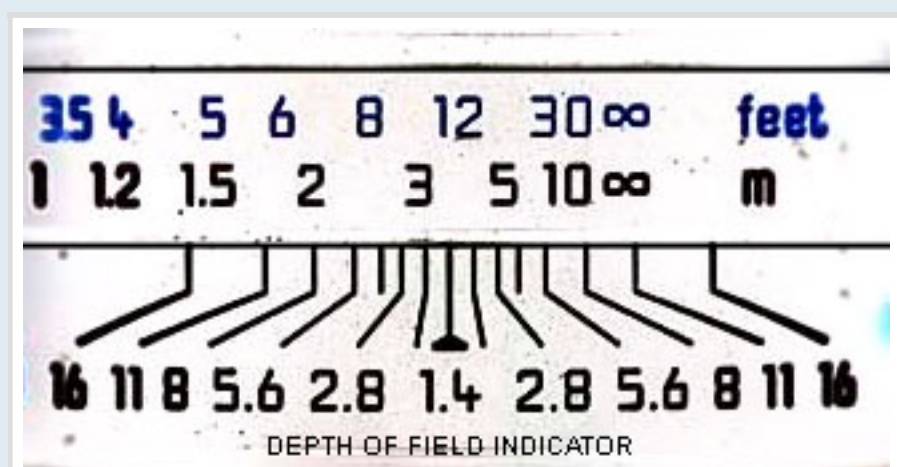
I'll have a go, hopefully without getting too technical. A lens is only perfectly in focus at one spot but there is a distance, in front and behind, where the amount of fuzziness is not usually noticeable. This distance is called the 'depth of field' but it's not a 'hard and fast' distance. I've made a diagram which, I hope, shows how a big lens (wide aperture) allows less leeway in front and behind the subject than a small one does.



When you select a small aperture (large f-number) in aperture priority mode, only a small hole, in the middle of the lens, is used, so the depth of field is greater. Try f/8 on your Lumix for more depth of field.

An important point is that there tends to be **more** depth of field **beyond** the focus point than in front of it, so it is usually better to focus on a nearer bit of the subject than further away. Don't overdo it though, as a golden rule is that the eyes must be in focus!

Old manual-focus cameras used to have scales so that you could see the range of distances that would be in focus for a given aperture setting.





With this particular lens then, if you set the focus at 12 ft, everything between 6 ft and infinity would be within the depth of field at an aperture of f/11 whereas, at f/2.8, the depth would only stretch from 10 ft to 15 ft.

It's harder with an AF camera but you can try to persuade it to focus on, say, the nearer wing, in the hope that the farther wing will still be in focus.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-May-13 09:39 AM GMT

Thanks for this clear and comprehensive explanation Mike. I am sure it will be useful to others also. I certainly didn't know that there is more depth of field beyond the focus point than in front. Certainly something that is worth bearing in mind for next time. Well, the sun has just started to appear here for the first time in ages and I have an appointment with my osteopath 😞

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-May-13 05:07 PM GMT

To pose, or not to pose, that is the question??? I set out today to capture the butterfly busy about it's business, doing all the important stuff that butterflies have to do, but the changeable weather conditions meant I returned with some 'posed' shots quite by accident!





Having spent some time chatting to the ranger on this fragile site it seems there is some growing concern about the species here, the 4 males that we counted being the maximum recorded to date. Fingers crossed it is just a late emergence and not a decimation due to last year's dreadful weather.

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 22-May-13 07:51 PM GMT

Those are unusually heavy topside marking on your PB, Pauline. It looks rather similar to one of **Vince's** photos on the species' pages – listed as an 'unclassified aberration'

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 22-May-13 08:16 PM GMT

Yes, that's a wonderful individual.

Melanism is quite characteristic of the genus (and indeed of small fritillaries in general) and in double-brooded species I have often found it in the first brood, emerging early in the season. I have also seen it at high altitudes. It is almost standard in first broods of violet fritillaries (*Boloria dia*, a close relative of pearl-bordered).

I don't know if it's genetic or can be triggered by environmental conditions (or both) but it is an appropriate response to a cold season, where the butterfly who can heat up the quickest between clouds and rain might be the one who gets all the fun!

Guy

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 22-May-13 10:17 PM GMT

What a find!

Excellent images and an aberrant to boot!

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-May-13 07:06 AM GMT

I have looked at the gallery Mike and can see the similarity that you quite rightly point out. Thank you for your comments David. Yes, it was a good find especially in view of the very low numbers. Good to hear from you Guy – I always enjoy your diary. Those are very interesting points you make and

make a lot of sense. However, with 4 males patrolling up and down I think the first female to emerge is the one that is going to have all the fun!! Lucky girl 😄😄

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 23-May-13 07:22 PM GMT

That is certainly a striking PBF Pauline 😄

I saw a similar dark one in the Wyre Forest last year but he had seen better days and nowhere near as nice looking as yours.

Neil F.

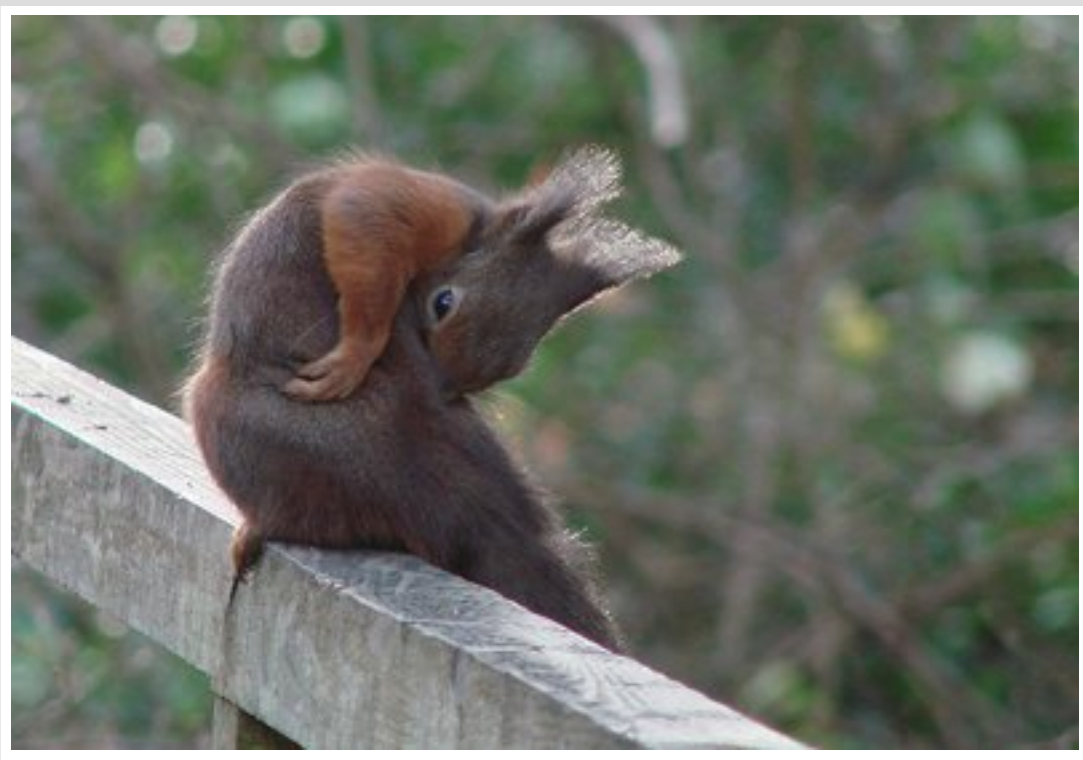
### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-May-13 07:59 AM GMT

Thank you Neil. Being so close to them I am tempted to make a return visit to establish how/if the females are faring but in these conditions I fear it would not be very fruitful. I am tempted today to look for a local Small Blue colony – at least they don't roost up trees 🙄

Until I can find something with wings I thought I would include these, from recent visits to IOW:





## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-May-13 02:17 PM GMT

As I drove south on the A3 the wind buffeted the car about and the rain lashed the windscreen and I asked myself for the umpteenth time what on earth I was doing. The weather aside, I was heading for a site where I always feel extremely uneasy especially when unaccompanied. I consoled myself with the thought that any trouble makers would be indoors in such inclement weather and that only the genuine dog walkers would be around. However, unfairly as it may be, I also find them intimidating. Not for them the poodles, spaniels or labradors. In my experience it is the pit bull types, Rotties and even the odd Mastiff that are most commonly found around here and I question why that should be. Last visit, a year ago, I lost my car keys so I took care to make sure they were carefully secured today. 2012 saw me out in the rain a great deal looking for butterflies. The difference being it was warm then. Today, despite shirt, jumper, coat and wellies I was freezing. I could have done with some gloves. Undeterred, I pressed on. This site can usually be relied upon for Small Blues and they don't roost in trees! It was just a matter of finding them – if they had emerged! On entering the site my spirits soared as I immediately saw:



Unfortunately, a female and a closed wing shot (never satisfied!).

It took another 10–15 minutes to locate a Small Blue and in total I only found 2. To be fair, I stopped looking as I was cold and wet and needed to get back for the animals. However, 2 was one more than I needed and despite the strong wind I managed to get some reasonable shots. At one point the sun emerged for about 20 seconds and I was pleased to be able to grab some partially open wing shots of this pristine male. It was tempting to survey the site as it certainly has a lot to offer and I felt sure the Green Hairstreaks would be in their usual location. The Peregrines were circling above me but today I could not be persuaded to stay. Time and the weather was against me so, under leaden skies, I drove back home with the rain battering the windscreen yet again. Lots of shots included as I am just so pleased to have seen them.





I tried to implement everything I have been told about focus and depth of field but the window of opportunity was just so brief that I barely had time to take the photos.

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 24-May-13 03:18 PM GMT

P1140337 is fabulous 😊 Lovely deep blue scales on upperside, sharp eyes, and the underwing too!

A just reward for braving such horrible conditions. We're keeping an eye on a young Starling at the moment, which flew into a window and knocked itself out. It's resting on polystyrene packing in a warm box at the moment. Only time will tell if any real damage was done.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 24-May-13 06:13 PM GMT

Glad to see determination paid off and that you got your reward, Pauline.

Some lovely shots there.

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 24-May-13 11:29 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

Being so close to them I am tempted to make a return visit to establish how/if the females are faring but in these conditions I fear it would not be very fruitful. I am tempted today to look for a local Small Blue colony

Hi Pauline

Your Small Blues are great 😊 I think that any butterfly action obtained during conditions such as today's are all the more pleasurable. After reading the post above I was encouraged to rethink my plans this morning, in spite of the weather, thank you 😊 I popped over to Beacon Hill at Warnford to see what was about, not much to be said. I did not manage to find any Small Blues, though I believe they do reside here. I did find a couple of fresh Small Heaths roosting 😊 my first of the year 😊 I managed nearly an hour there before the heavens opened 😞

I still have not made it to your Small Blue site but will hopefully make it up there soon. I have still yet to see a Small Blue

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 24-May-13 11:33 PM GMT

Nice shots Pauline. Your Small Blue seems to have unusually-extensive patches of light blue scales!

Cheers,

- Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-May-13 07:01 PM GMT

Thank you Mike. In terms of sharpness I think that is my favourite too. I do hope your Starling has recovered. I have lost count of the number of birds that has happened to here. The most notable was a Woodpecker who was out cold for about 10 hours in my hospital cage. I was concerned as he was feeding a youngster but as I checked him yet again he took me by surprise, flew out of the cage and thankfully out of the bedroom window.

I appreciate your comments David - thank you. And thank you too Pete. This male did have a lot of silvery blue scales Pete but I don't believe I have ever seen one which was so fresh and I assumed that was the reason. In the very short time the sun appeared he sparkled like a little jewel and for that brief

moment all troubles and worries are forgotten. That is why I do it!

I am glad if my decision to brave the elements inspired you Paul. The novelty of butterflying in such extreme conditions is starting to wear off a little having had to do it most of last year 😞 I have to agree tho' that it does bring a great deal of satisfaction and sense of achievement and success that you just don't get at other times. 😊 . If you go to Paulsgrove for the Small Blues you will find them mainly in the long grass by the ditch along the back of the houses mostly at the far end.

The ground was so slippery yesterday that I fell down that ditch taking the Orange Tip photo and pulled a muscle near my hip. I was in quite a bit of pain today and thought I would be grounded as I was only able to hobble a few yards. Happily the Ibuprofen has kicked in so I was able to get out briefly. 5 minutes from home (Broxfield Common) I came across about 50 cars and photographers. I just had to stop and ask. They had come from all over the country to see a Roller which has been there for 3 days. They showed me some photos and a mighty fine bird it is too. Beautiful shades of blue and lilac. Sadly, it had just flown out of site but I am very tempted to pop back up there this evening.

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 25-May-13 09:35 PM GMT

Blooming Roller!! I've always wanted to see one of those – good luck finding it tonight 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 25-May-13 09:57 PM GMT

Hmmm, a Roller?... I'm afraid that one is going over my head a bit (reckon I must be showing my ignorance 😊😊)

Lovely Small Blue photos Pauline, I am hoping to get out tomorrow and look for some of our Warwickshire ones. I will be very happy if I get any shots even half as good as yours.

All the best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-May-13 10:00 PM GMT

Evening Wurzel. Found it!!!! Left it in the safe watch of the guys who are sleeping in their cars tonight, ready for first light. Really is a cracking little bird when seen thru scope and with naked eye. Last photos taken at 9.15pm and all at about 150yds (their estimate not mine) and with my little lumix too!! Not the best photos I've ever posted but I'm chuffed to have seen it. Might even go back tomorrow! Oh, and a Woodlark thrown in for good measure!! Think I'm becoming a twitcher 😊😊😊





BTW, the Glanvilles aren't out yet at Wrecchlesham tho they were this time last year.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-May-13 10:14 PM GMT

Not at all Neil – I hadn't heard of them either. I'm told they've only ever been in this country twice before but they really are stunning and my photos don't do it justice to say the least (even forgot to ask whether it was male or female, damn!). Anyway Neil, thank you for your kind words. I hope you find your Small Blues tomorrow. The forecast is good so have a smashing day.

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 25-May-13 10:54 PM GMT

The first image makes the bird look a little like a kookaburra.

Must admit, the only 'rollers' I've ever heard of are canaries.

I guess it must be rare if people are sleeping in their cars!! I don't think I'd do that even for a Monarch.

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 25-May-13 11:07 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

I'm told they've only ever been in this country twice before

It's rare in UK but not that rare – Birdguides (<http://www.birdguides.com/species/species.asp?sp=088001>) lists 336 accepted historical records. It's a stunning bird that breeds in Southern Europe and Eastwards towards Russia.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by walpolec, 26-May-13 07:50 AM GMT



"Pauline" wrote:

I tried to implement everything I have been told about focus and depth of field.....

I'd say you've nailed the depth of field thing. Lovely Small Blue shots, Pauline! Great how you got the background completely blurred.

Chris

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-May-13 08:03 PM GMT

I must have been misinformed Mike but you are certainly right about it being stunning and my photo just doesn't show the true colours. Sadly, the bird has now departed David otherwise I might have been tempted to try to get closer for a more representative photo – trouble is, I didn't dare as if it had been me who scared it I would likely be facing a lynch mob now 😂😂

Great to hear from you Chris – thank you for the compliment. I went back there today to try to get some better open-winged shot but they were so active I'm not sure I succeeded. I have just got too used to taking photos in the rain and this strange bright light in the sky has completely thrown me 😞

I felt a great deal more relaxed at this site today as the place was initially crawling with police. I parked my car behind one of the police cars and felt it would be quite safe there. The site is looking lovely but despite notices warning of the danger of rock fall I was quite alarmed to see a man with a boy of about 10 years climbing quite high up the chalky face near the Peregrines. The place was teeming with butterflies today and it is no co-incidence that the street next to the site is called 'Butterfly Drive'. There is also a 'Lime Grove' and I think it was these trees which were responsible for the heavenly smell when I arrived this morning.



There were a number of shiny green beetles – I wonder if anyone can tell me what they are?



Before I left I took a couple of photos of the site looking in different directions. In one, the Spinnaker Tower at Gunwharf can be seen along with clear views to the IOW and the other shows a section of the site itself.



### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 26-May-13 10:35 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Small Blues and congrats on the Roller 🎉🎉🎉😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-May-13 07:13 AM GMT

Thank you Wurzel – much appreciated.

Now it's coming to something when I go out and see more deer than I do butterflies



but it was very quiet at Wrecclisham. The Green Hairstreaks were still in the hawthorn but had moved higher up, out of reach, following the sun's rays. The only other butterflies were, would you believe it, Orange Tips! There must have been about 6 of them, more than I have seen all year, and they were definitely looking past their best. I was happy to witness the same sequence of events as Neil, with the female rejecting the male, but however hard I tried I just could not capture that sequence. I take my hat off to you Neil as you did a really good job to get them. The butterflies were very active but I so wanted that open-winged shot of the male. The first one I managed was a female:



I then managed to snatch a quick shot of a male nectaring



before seeing another male that had come to rest, teasing me with a dart shaped pose



before finally opening his wings for a brief second 😊



### **Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 27-May-13 02:04 PM GMT

Today I met up with a good friend, Dave Griffiths (also a member and keen butterflyer) to spend an hour at a site close to both of us. The area we walked through today was quite remote – I certainly hadn't been to that part of the site previously and Dave agreed that he has rarely seen anyone there. We were discussing his recent butterfly trip to India and comparing the lack of butterflies here when we were both gobsmacked as a PBF flew past us. We set off in hot pursuit and managed to get a photo of this very tatty, worn individual.



I began to tell Dave about Kipper's recent experience at Heyshot but suggested in this case it was probably a release. I had hardly finished the sentence when another individual flew past. I didn't bother to take a photo of this one but got a good look and could see it had a very damaged wing – definitely a second individual. We were now more alert and when we stumbled on a third individual I took another photo. It was complete but worn and pale looking.



The next individual was obviously different as it was very much fresher but had a small tear in the fore wing



Individual number 5 was lovely – fresh and undamaged:



We went on to see several more fresh individuals. I suppose it could have been the same one over again but as we were moving along into different areas I thought this unlikely. My guess would have been that we saw between 6–8 and that was without even looking.

I would like advice on 2 issues: firstly, are these likely to be an unauthorised release? secondly, is it OK to name the site publicly? I am quite happy to do this so that others can have the pleasure of seeing them.

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 27-May-13 06:14 PM GMT

Hi Pauline – PBF in strange locations seem to be the in thing at the moment – Ashley Whitlock has seen a number on the downs around East Meon in Hampshire many miles from any known sites. Mark 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Hulme, 27-May-13 06:31 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

The site I believe you are almost certainly referring to is a natural one, dating well back into the last century. It has been brought back from the brink by the hard work of Dr Dan Hoare (BC) and Graham West (SDNPA). For various reasons, not least the limited 'working space' when clearance/regeneration is essential, it is considered sensitive. Feel free to PM or ring me if you wish to confirm this location north of Midhurst.

Best Wishes, Neil

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-May-13 06:38 PM GMT

That wasn't the site Neil – as you know I am already aware of that one. This was directly south from me down the A3. So, what do you think? I'd be really interested to know.

BW

P.

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Hulme, 27-May-13 06:42 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

There is another part to this site which you might not be aware of, but it sounds like you are elsewhere. I'll PM you.

BWs, Neil

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 28-May-13 12:03 AM GMT

#### "Tuts" wrote:

Hi Pauline – PBF in strange locations seem to be the in thing at the moment – Ashley Whitlock has seen a number on the downs around East Meon in Hampshire many miles from any known sites. Mark 😊

Hi Mark/Pauline

I saw Ashley Whitlocks sightings reports (specific site not given) on Hants BC mentioning Pearl Bordered Fritillary. I would be interested to know the location if you are happy to divulge 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-May-13 06:03 PM GMT

Hi Paul

As you might imagine there is a bit of discussion going on 'behind the scenes' about this and other sites and the advice I am getting is to be cautious about naming this recent site. I shall pm you with further explanation.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-May-13 06:20 PM GMT

The week seems to have been bathed in a golden glow, what with the sun shining and the number of PBF's seen. I returned a week later to the original PBF site and my mate, the dark male, was still very much in evidence. Worryingly, I counted only 3 males on this visit and still no evidence of females.





### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 29-May-13 09:13 PM GMT

Pauline, Pauline, what can I say , your Orange Tip is fantastic, I which we did live near to one another, what with Animals, Birds, Butterflies we would certainly pass the time of day well 😊😊 Goldie

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-May-13 04:12 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie – I'm so glad you like my pictures. The next posting is especially for you.

I cannot remember a time when I went out looking for butterflies and failed to find a single one, so today was a first. However, the trip was so worthwhile as I was able to spend a little time watching these – another first 😊😊 . I reckon it's going to be a great year for ticks if the number of deer out there are anything to judge by 😊







### Re: Pauline

by NickMorgan, 30-May-13 07:09 PM GMT

Great pictures Pauline. I particularly like that dark Pearl Bordered Fritillary. Is that an aberration? Amazing pictures of the deer and fawn. Yes, the ticks are out. I have already had one and suspected Lymes Disease!! I am pleased to hear that there has been sun in your part of the country. It has been grey all week here.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 31-May-13 10:11 PM GMT

Evening Nick, good to hear from you. I am sorry to hear about the suspected Lymes disease – something I am beginning to worry about given recent tick bites. I have been told the PBF is an aberration but not sure if it has a name. Yes, the deer experience was amazing – haven't seen it before and not sure I shall again, so I am still feeling very privileged. Glad you liked it.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 02-Jun-13 02:58 PM GMT

Fantastic photo's Pauline, we have deer at Gaits Barrow but you very rarely see them. Their very small and very skittish, I caught sight of the tail end of one last year and that was that 😊

I've been busy in the garden trying to get sorted out before we go a way on holiday, only a fortnight off now, roll on. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Jun-13 04:01 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie – have a great holiday.

This morning I received an offer I could not refuse – an offer to animal-mind for a few hours. I have not had a great week animal wise. One problem has been my Norfolk Black. She has prolapsed which has necessitated 4 visits to the vet, the latest requiring stitches of a kind that would allow egg-laying, whilst at the same time adjusting the diet to throw her into moult and give the egg producing mechanism a rest. She is not very happy about this so I hope that the issue will be resolved satisfactorily next week.

Anyway, my first port of call was Wrecclesham where I felt sure I would see some Glanvilles. Not so 😞. The only butterfly I saw was this bruised and battered Peacock:



The sound of the frogs reverberated around the site, competing with the bird song, although not quite as harmonious. However, not a butterfly to be seen. I appreciate it has been the coldest Spring for 50 years and last year was the wettest summer for goodness knows how long, but I am now quite concerned about this site. Two years ago there were hundreds and hundreds of Glanvilles, last year only a couple of dozen, and to date none at all. Last year I was taking photos of Glanvilles here on 25 May and the year before that even earlier. I hope that they are just late this year like so many other species have been – it would be so sad if this is the end after so many successful years.

I moved on to Chalton Down which by comparison was teeming with butterflies. Brimstones flew by regularly along with Small Whites and a Holly Blue was glimpsed, but the biggest success here seems to be the Small Heath and especially the Dingy Skipper which seemed to be everywhere. The other successful residents of this site were swarms of biting flies and rather than provide them with a meal I hastily took a few shots and left.



Didn't get that wing in focus which I'll put down to the fly distraction 😊





## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-Jun-13 04:29 PM GMT

Spice (the hen) had her stitches out last night and so far so good. I decided to relax for an hour and catch up with the Wood Whites at Chiddingfold. It is comparatively easy to photograph these butterflies in the cool of the morning or at dusk when they are still 'asleep', but in the heat of the midday sun these little butterflies are frustratingly active. I decided to focus on behaviour and was delighted to see quite a few females egg-laying. I attempted a photo of an egg for the very first time:



I watched the 'courtship' behaviour of males and females – if indeed that is what it is – and was surprised to see that the male was lashing the female with both his antennae and his proboscis:



Eventually the female was left in relative peace:



On leaving the site I was surprised by the number of ants and the speed at which they were carrying away their next meal:



I was sad to see this little chap on my way back. He hadn't been there an hour before so goodness knows what had happened to him.



### Re: Pauline

by David M, 05-Jun-13 05:24 PM GMT

You really capture images that put a different perspective on things, Pauline (like Guy Padfield often does).

Wonderful stuff.

PS - Best wishes to Spice the hen! (hate it when any of ours get ill). 😞

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Jun-13 12:56 PM GMT

That is a massive compliment David - thank you; I try to keep things interesting. I am a huge fan of Guy's diary and openly tried to copy his photography style in my diary last year with only very limited success. Funnily enough, I think quite a few of your photos are in a similar style to his especially the Wall Brown with the bay in the background.

I appreciate your comments about Spice. Thankfully, again today, everything that should be inside is still inside although she is still on lots of medication. In case you are interested I am posting a few pics of her with her cockerel Pickle taken earlier today. Butterfly photos later.





When she starts laying again they'd better be golden eggs to pay for all the vets bills 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Debbie, 06-Jun-13 01:26 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I have been busy working this year to do to much with the forumn, but I am getting out and about and taking pictures too when I get the chance.

Your pictures are interesting & inspiring.

Best Wishes Debbie

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 06-Jun-13 05:52 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

Thankfully, again today, everything that should be inside is still inside although she is still on lots of medication. In case you are interested I am posting a few pics of her with her cockerel Pickle taken earlier today.

They both look resplendent. What breed is Spice? I thought maybe a Magpie at first but her tail looks too big.

We're lucky as our chicken supplier acts as our *de facto* vet. She knows much more than general veterinary practitioners and can treat pretty much anything (except, sadly, latter stage egg bound hens) 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Jun-13 08:18 PM GMT

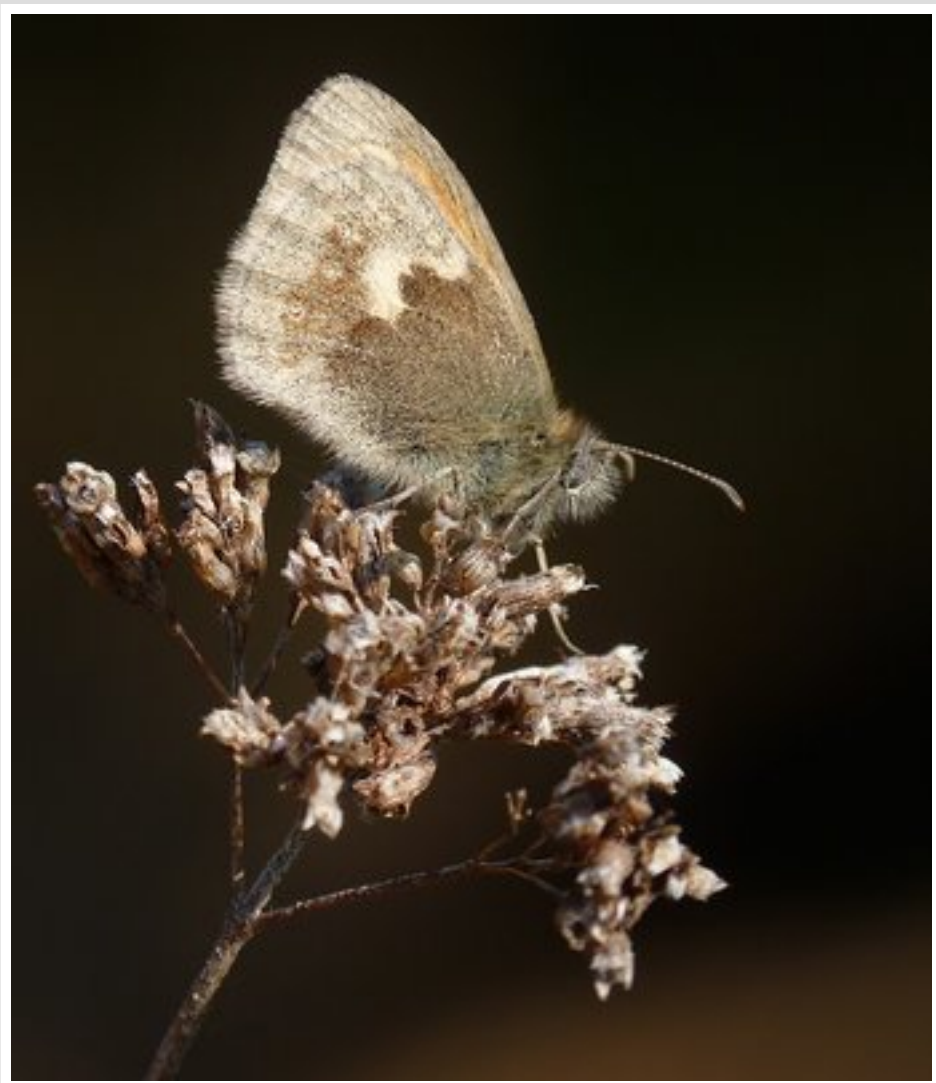
It's great to hear from you again Debbie and it's good to know you're getting out there with your camera. I hope all is going well for you and thank you for your kind comments.

Hi David – Spice is a Norfolk Black (rare breed). I have another pair (Welsummers) and they too are very pretty. The 2 cockerels had been abandoned and hit by a car and one of them lost an eye. I got the girls to keep them company and I really appreciate your comments on their condition.

I returned to the 'new' PBF site a couple of hours ago and the PBF's are indeed still there but photos were impossible as they were way too active. I felt the same excitement and elation as I did the first time I saw them – wouldn't it be wonderful if they became much more common and widespread and all without any assistance. 😊 It is certainly a very remote area and the birdsong was only punctuated by the mewing of the Buzzards and the harsh bark of the Muntjac. I knew they were there but they can still make me jump. I was also very pleased to see my first Common Blue of the year:



There was an abundance of Small Heath around today and I am still surprised at the difference a different background can make to a photo – at one side there were hedges but at the other dense woodland







However, the butterfly I found to be most common today at this site were the Dingy Skippers. I can honestly say I have never seen so many in one place before - there must have been dozens and dozens of them.



Sadly, I didn't find my Small Copper with blue spots but I did see my first of the season:



### Re: Pauline

by David M, 06-Jun-13 09:41 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

Hi David – Spice is a Norfolk Black (rare breed). I have another pair (Welsummers) and they too are very pretty. The 2 cockerels had been abandoned and hit by a car and one of them lost an eye.

We don't have a Norfolk Black but we **do** have a Welsummer. She's not terribly friendly but she's a decent layer.

I hope Spice is back to her best before long. We all hate to see our chickens suffering (usually from mites or scaly leg, but that can be treated pretty quickly).

We'd love to have a cockerel but being in a residential area it's too risky as neighbours would doubtless complain. We DID have a bantam cockerel a couple of years ago, but even he went down like a lead balloon so we swapped him for a hen with our regular supplier.

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 06-Jun-13 11:32 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Blues Pauline 😊 My folks keep Bantams mainly so my girls can collect the eggs when we visit

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-Jun-13 08:34 AM GMT

Thank you David – I shall continue to keep my fingers crossed.

I appreciate your comments Wurzel - it is nice to be seeing some different species at last. Still no Glanvilles at Wrecclesham yet but checking through my photos from yesterday, I was just about to bin this one when I noticed it seems to have a lot of white markings. Is this usual or just because it is worn. In flight it looked a lot more greyish than the others.



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-Jun-13 09:43 PM GMT

It was a very BLUE day at Wrecclesham today - for 2 reasons. The first is that there are still no Glanvilles to be found 😞 . The second was the explosion of Common Blues that have emerged 😊 . A record number of pics below which I think demonstrates just how photogenic this butterfly can be:









### Re: Pauline

by David M, 07-Jun-13 09:47 PM GMT

Lovely shots again, Pauline, but worrying that Glanvilles are still to emerge at this site.

Have they become extinct? I find it hard to believe that given the weather over the past week that they haven't yet emerged.

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 07-Jun-13 10:01 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

I was just about to bin this one when I noticed it seems to have a lot of white markings. Is this usual or just because it is worn. In flight it looked a lot more greyish than the others.

Definitely an aberration, Pauline, but not sure which! Perhaps it's unnamed. The band on the hindwings is striking! See:

<http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/aberrations/ies=malvae>

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 07-Jun-13 10:47 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

I noticed it seems to have a lot of white markings.

It does seem very unusual for there to be so much white on the hind wings.

I looked through my books and, while they all refer to aberrations on the fore wings, none mentions the sort of pattern on your example. I also had a look at European species and saw that the Sandy Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus cinarae*) has a white band on the hind wing but it belongs in the Balkans and Greece.

It looks as though yours is an aberrant that happens to show some features of this Southern form. Perhaps we could call it ab. *cinaraeoides*?

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Jun-13 08:11 AM GMT

Morning David and thank you for the compliment. I am seriously concerned about the future of the Glanvilles at Wrecclesham and if they are not seen this weekend my rapidly fading hopes will be dashed. What I can't explain is their rapid decline which I am not sure can be totally explained by the weather. Yes, we had a rubbish summer last year but the year before that there were hundreds and I don't recall too many climatic extremes in that

period. However, the following year, numbers were down to a few handfuls 😞😞

Wow! An unnamed aberration. Should I be excited? It's a pity the photo isn't better but I honestly couldn't get anywhere near this butterfly. I took off the close-up lens, had to use full zoom and even then the photo has been tightly cropped. Perhaps I shall try to find it again today. Thank you for the information Pete and Mike. What is the protocol for naming a butterfly? I seem to remember Adrian Hoskins finding an unnamed aberration in Stanstead Forest a couple of years ago and had it named after him! More from Wrecclesham later.

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 08-Jun-13 09:20 AM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

What is the protocol for naming a butterfly?

You publish your finding somewhere (e.g. a journal, although Adrian Hoskins used his website) and suggest a name. Of course, having done your homework to ensure that it really is unique!

#### "Pauline" wrote:

I seem to remember Adrian Hoskins finding an unnamed aberration in Stanstead Forest a couple of years ago and had it named after him!

Look at Sunday 1th July here: <http://www.learnaboutbutterflies.com/Butterfly%20Diary%202010%20July.htm>. The location is Crab Wood, and he named the Dark Green Fritillary aberration *obsoleta*, not after himself!

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Jun-13 12:52 PM GMT

Cheers Pete – you've got a better memory than me. I really think I'd like to explore this further but if it comes to names I don't really think ab.Paulinus has the right ring to it 😄😄 However, I think Mike's suggested name was splendid based on research, reason and rational. The photo is small but [i]reasonably [i]clear so who knows?

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 08-Jun-13 01:38 PM GMT

I had another look at the Cockayne database this morning. See <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/research-curation/... ecLimit=20>

There is one called ab. *fasciata* Tutt 1896 that has some features like yours (especially allowing for over-exposure of your pic) – white band on hindwing – but I don't know how to find the full description. perhaps one of our professional entomologists could help 🤔

I think ab *Paulinus* sounds splendid 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 08-Jun-13 04:48 PM GMT

ab. *fasciata* it is – well done Mike! I misread the description, which can be found at:

<http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/aberrati... ies=malvae>

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Jun-13 06:17 PM GMT

Thank you so much Mike/Pete. That has certainly saved me some ground work and it is good to know what aberration the butterfly is. As Mike rightly pointed out the photo was over exposed (in fact I have just realised I have had my camera on the 'wrong' settings for days 😞😞). I did nothing but crop the original version but just to round off this little episode I am enclosing an adjusted photo of how I remember the butterfly to be purely for my own pleasure:



Thank you again for your interest and help.

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 08-Jun-13 07:36 PM GMT

That is a cracking Grizzled Skipper ab. Pauline, well done for finding it.

Just been catching up on your diary, some lovely photos, I particularly like the Common Blue topside looking down 😊

I hope Spice the Hen is getting better.

Cheers,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 08-Jun-13 08:31 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

I have just realised I have had my camera on the 'wrong' settings for days

If this foray into abs. got your camera settings sorted, then it was well worthwhile 😊 I think your corrected photo is a candidate for the Species album – it's a beautiful specimen.

You've been taking lots of splendid pics recently. I liked that Small Heath on the dark background, which would make a fine framed print on the wall.

I would not be too worried about Glanvilles at Wrecclesham yet, as the first sighting at Sand Point was as recent as 6th June. On the other hand, introductions do have a habit of failing suddenly after seeming to have 'taken'.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Jun-13 06:37 PM GMT

Thank you Mike for your help and kind words. I shall keep an eye on the Glanvilles and report any progress.

I am getting a bit behind with my postings – lots of images I want to record, but never enough time. Today I got the opportunity to have a few hours off so I was determined to make the most of it. I set off for Bentley to look for Small Pearls and although it was quite windy, conditions were otherwise perfect – a mixture of sun and cloud. It was good to meet up with Wurzel again (your girls are a credit to you Rich) and lots of butterflies kept me very happy for an hour or two. A few images below but more to follow:







**Re: Pauline**

by Maximus, 09-Jun-13 07:05 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, all your latest images are lovely, the Small Pearls in particular. Will try to visit Wrecclesham during the week, to see if any Glanvilles have emerged yet!

Mike

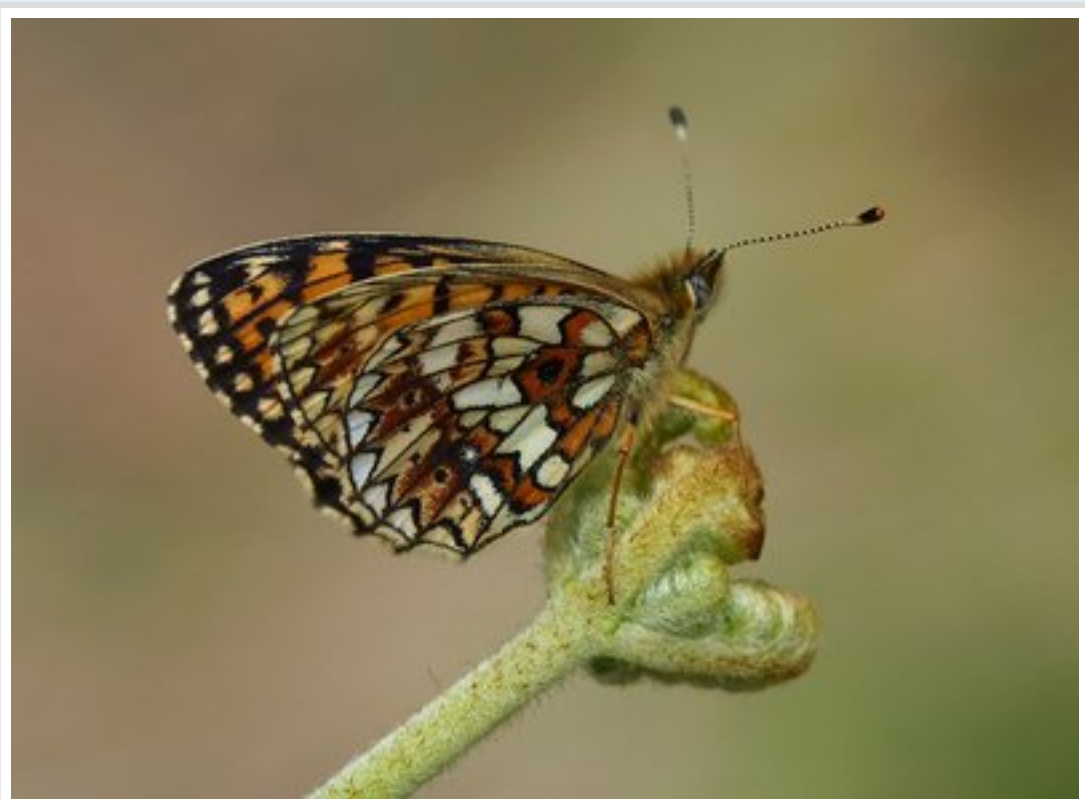
**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 09-Jun-13 09:55 PM GMT

Thank you for the compliment Neil but more importantly thank you for asking after Spice. She has laid 2 eggs this weekend which is a bit of a worry but touch wood she hasn't prolapsed again. Medication ends tomorrow.

I appreciate your comments Mike and I am keeping everything crossed that you come up trumps next week at Wrecclesham,

Just a few more shots from Bentley to round off the day. Not sure they are they best of the bunch but if I look through them all I'll be here til next week





## Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-13 10:47 PM GMT

Cracking shots Pauline – good catching up with you today. 😊 I know what you mean about sorting through them – it's the only draw back to having such a good day- having to sort through so many photos. I had a go at mine tonight and now my eyes feel like they've been sandpapered 🙄 – perhaps I could train my girls to do it for me... 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Pauline

Thanks Wurzel. Looking forward to seeing yours – and could you train your girls to do mine at the same time? 😊😊

Without the Glanvilles, Wrecclesham has few visitors so a visit there early on Friday was like entering into a secret world. Moving quietly and slowly around the site, the inhabitants seemed quite unperturbed and were content to go about their business, providing no threat was perceived. It was just a brief glimpse into their daily lives but felt such a privilege. The first inhabitant to be glimpsed was a large dog Fox. It is rare that I visit this site without such an encounter but photos are impossible with my 'squeaky' lens. I then chanced upon a deer resting in the grass but not wishing to disturb her I changed direction:



The wild flowers are looking lovely now and would provide a ready source of nectar for the Glanvilles if they ever emerge. There is one flower I always admire – it is so striking with really vibrant colours and can be relied upon to bloom in the same place every year. I wish I knew what it was :



As I approached one of the hot spots for the Glanvilles, a place I have previously seen many roosting and mating, my attention was drawn to a family of Whitethroats (At least I think that's what they were). The youngsters were quite advanced and very adept at catching insects at regular intervals but were also very vocal. I amused myself with thoughts that they were informing their parents how smart they were.





It was still a little cool for butterflies to be on the wing but I came across several Dingy Skippers still roosting:



My eye was caught by a small blue insect – a Lacewing I think. I recalled that about this time last year I had taken a photo of a similar insect to try to hone my focusing skills and I decided to take another one by way of comparison. I would like to think I am improving but have not had the nerve to compare the 2 images yet 😊



Given the lack of butterflies my attention turned to moths. Whenever I see this moth, I think of my visits, many years ago, to Mother Shipton's grotto near Harrogate (if I recall correctly) and my fascination at all the calcified objects hanging up there.



By now the Common Blues had started to stir but the sky was looking ominous and there was definitely no sign of Glanvilles. Shortly after taking a few shots of the Blues a massive downpour sent me rushing home to rescue my garden cushions which had been left out overnight. Although only 10 minutes away, when I arrived home the sun was shining and there were no signs that it had even rained!!!



**"Pauline" wrote:**

The wild flowers are looking lovely now and would provide a ready source of nectar for the Glanvilles if they ever emerge. There is one flower I always admire – it is so striking with really vibrant colours and can be relied upon to bloom in the same place every year. I wish I knew what it was

Exactly the same thing happened to me when I was at Wrecclesham two years ago.

I put out an ID request and found out that the plant is called Salsify, or Oyster Plant:

[viewtopic.php?f=16&t=5194](http://viewtopic.php?f=16&t=5194)

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 11-Jun-13 06:56 AM GMT

Thank you for that David. I shall do a bit of research to see if it could thrive in my garden.

Reading Wurzel's diary and feeling a little bit envious (actually Wurzel I am green with envy 🍋🍋😄), I realised that it is quite some time since I have seen Marsh Frits – before I started my diary in fact. It is likely to be even longer before I see them again so, I hope it isn't considered 'cheating', but I am including a few photos I took way back then. They were taken at Hod Hill with a different camera to the one I use now but I'd like to include them here as a record of yet another beautiful species I was lucky enough to see.





## Re: Pauline

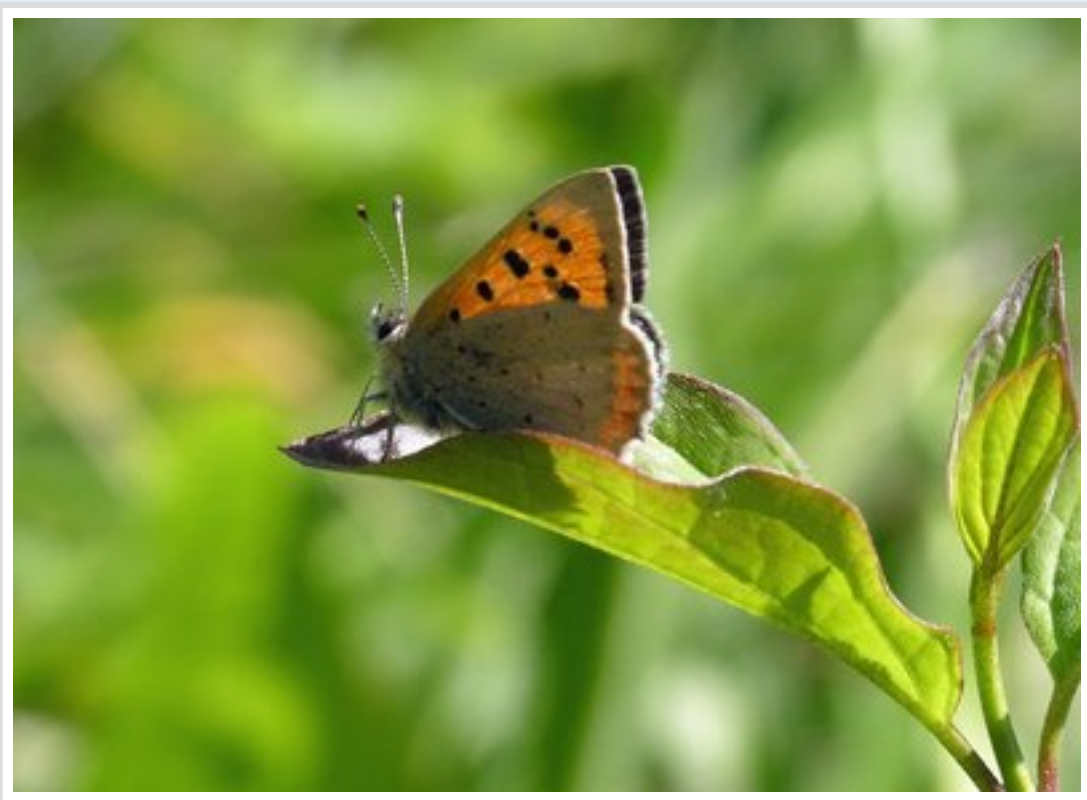
by Pauline, 12-Jun-13 09:38 AM GMT

Some beautiful photos and exciting butterflies have been posted in other diaries recently. I cannot compete with these images and have nothing to compare with some of the more exotic species. However, I'm sure we all share the same sense of pleasure in seeing these gorgeous insects and a satisfaction in learning a little more about them as well as being able to take away a permanent reminder – our photos.

I was pleased to be able to make 3 short visits on Saturday to local sites but disappointed to note that generally, and in relation to last year, butterflies are pretty thin on the ground. I did see a very worn Duke of Burgundy at Oxenbourne and managed a really dreadful photo for ID only. At a second site I can confirm that Pearls are still flying but looking quite worn now and only 3 definite individuals recorded. There are still no Glanvilles at Wrecclesham. At each of these sites I encountered a single Small Copper. One in particular was very fresh and looked like a little flame so vibrant were the colours.



Sadly, I have yet to encounter my Small Copper with blue spots but I shall continue to have fun trying.





## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Jun-13 06:05 PM GMT

Well, gales are so bad I can't even watch TV as there is no signal! Still trying to sort through last years photos and came across some I took of my bird feeders (I have lots so that I can see at least one whichever window I look out of 😊). The photos are mostly very poor quality as taken through glass and at a great distance but I thought those interested in birds might like to see. I really must try to get my bird photography sorted – I am not sure my camera is capable of a fast enough shutter speed whilst still allowing enough light in.



### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 12-Jun-13 09:20 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, Nice Marshie and small copper photos, if any Glanvilles do remain at Wrecclisham they have got to make a showing now, as I have seen the reports of the many sightings from Wurzels, 'Isle of Black'. Your bird feeder is great, I am no expert but it seems to have many Siskins and at least a couple of Linnets on board? You are not missing much on the TV by the way, have a good evening.

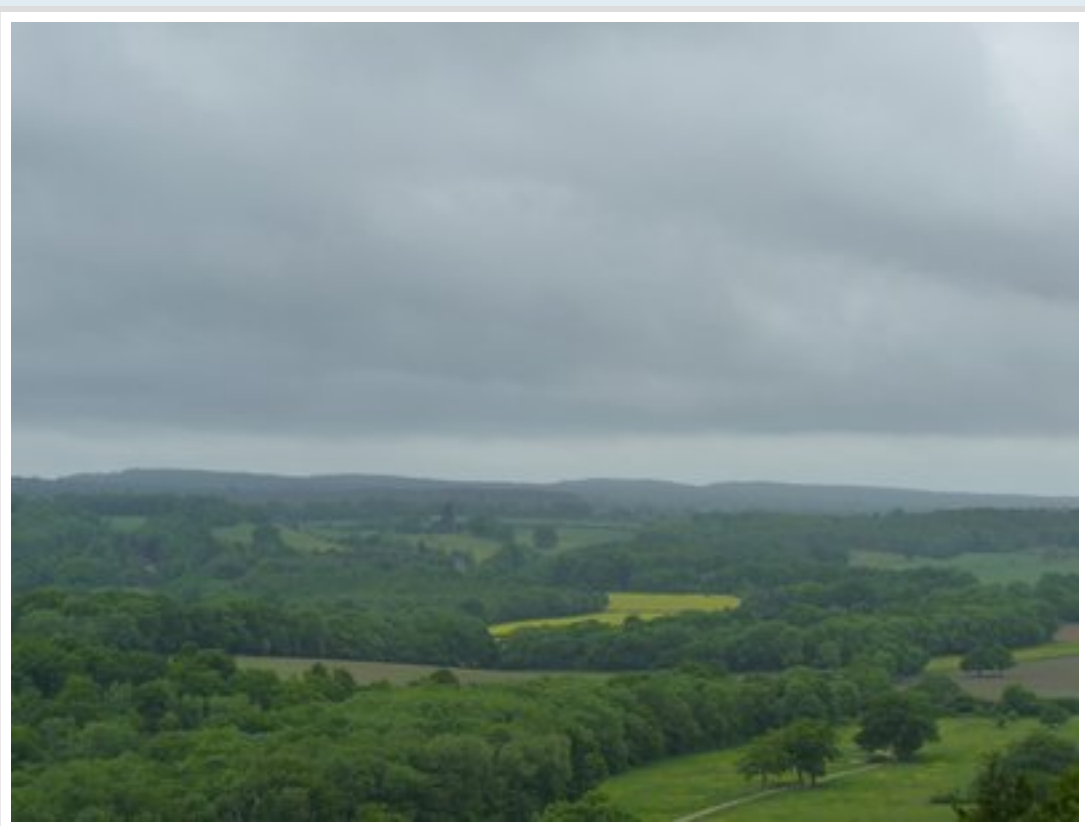
Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Jun-13 04:50 PM GMT

Thank you Mike – for both your comments and the TV update 😊 . I hope this gale subsides soon as I still have no signal and want to watch Paul O'Grady tonight!

I needed to get out today and I wanted a photo of an Adonis (butterfly or human, either would have done 😄😄). The closest site is Denbies and I have only ever been there in the wind and rain so I thought I'd give it a try. When I arrived it was still raining but I had looked at the hourly forecast for this area and between 12.00 and 13.00 there was supposed to be some sunshine.



I was surprised at the number of insects flying, various moths and bees and it wasn't long before I spotted a Brown Argus – my first of the year.



Almost on cue the sun appeared briefly and I watched as the Brown Argus warmed up and flitted from plant to plant:



The wind was causing both myself and the butterfly some problems but we both managed the best we could in the windy conditions:



In the short time the sun was shining I had a quick look round for a glimpse of blue but without success. The wind was so strong it was flattening the grass and if the Adonis had any sense they would be hunkered down in the grass rather than roosting on these precarious stems. I drove home with the rain lashing against the car as I have done so many times previously, pleased to have had the cobwebs blown away!

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 13-Jun-13 05:27 PM GMT

Nice pics of the Brown Argus on Quaking Grass - we used to call it 'wobble-wobble grass' as kids, because of the way the seed-heads move. It must have been spectacular in the wind and very difficult for you to get such good photos.

The reddish birds on your feeder are Lesser Redpolls. Nice to have both these and Siskins as Winter visitors to a garden feeder 😊 .

Mike

## Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 13-Jun-13 10:47 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Just catching up on your diary, some lovely images, I particularly like the third Brown Argus photo.

I would have been more impressed with the bird feeder photo if you could have got them to line up symmetrically in pairs 😊 ...oh well, maybe next time 😊

All the best ,

Neil F.

## Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 13-Jun-13 11:53 PM GMT

Lovely shots Pauline 😊 Brown Argus are one of my faves – they were the first butterfly I really wanted to photograph and so one of the first I actively went looking for.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Jun-13 05:25 PM GMT

Wiggle-wobble grass! What a wonderful name Mike 😊 I shall think of you now whenever I see it! As you can see from the pics I struggled to get the butterfly in focus let alone the seed heads!! I had to take many more shots than usual because of the wind so it was just a matter of luck. Trying to move quickly round the butterfly for a different angle was quite tricky too as those slopes are treacherous when the grass is wet and I nearly went head over heels a couple of times 😊

I appreciate your comments on the Brown Argus Neil and you have given me a fresh challenge with my bird feeders. I have listed 57 species in the garden so far and I have been trying to get them to feed in alphabetical order but only limited success so far 😊😊 . Actually, make that 58 as this morning I had a family of 4 of these:



Thank you for taking the time to read my diary Wurzel. I'm glad you like the Brown Argus – I was certainly pleased to find him during a gap in the storm.

Today I took what may well be my last visit to Wrecclesham this season. Several folk were searching for Glanvilles but without any success. One hypothesis for their decline was said to be the lack of a particular parasitic wasp which exists on the IOW. Apparently it predated the butterflies and in doing so keeps the numbers to a level where there is enough food plant to go round. Apparently in a successful year the butterfly can be a victim of its own success, eating all the food plant and effectively starving itself to death. I'm sure there will be other theories but I had not heard that one before.

Anyway, I was very pleased to see my first Large Skippers of the season. Two were dog-fighting which initially drew my attention to them and when one returned to a patch of kidney vetch I quickly took a record shot:



I quickly followed this with a couple more close ups (as I am typing this I have just picked the 4th tick off my arm!!! 😡)



I was hoping for a closed wing shot but the temperature had soared and the Skipper was challenging everything that moved including several Green Hairstreaks all worn and all wanting to nectar in the same place.



It was time to make tracks and as I made my way back I came across my first pair of Blues this year 😊



..... but still no Small Spotted Copper 😞 !

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Jun-13 09:25 AM GMT

Small Heath have never been one of my favourite butterflies but they are gaining a grudging respect from me for their tenacity. Not only have they managed to survive the dreadful weather of recent years, they are actually thriving, and just for their sheer abundance everywhere they definitely deserve a mention here. I had always considered them a sedentary and boring species but a recent early evening visit to Wrecclesham surprised me. There were many fast flying butterflies, zooming backwards and forwards, so active and numerous I thought at first they were moths, especially given the time of day. Not so. They were definitely Small Heath displaying behaviour I had not seen before. As dusk was rapidly approaching I had expected them to be preparing to roost – perhaps there is more to this little butterfly than meets the eye!



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Jun-13 10:04 PM GMT

A few Blues which brightened a wet and windy day:





**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 15-Jun-13 10:34 PM GMT

That last shot is simply lush - it should be on greetings cards and the cover of magazines 😊🌿🌿🌿

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-Jun-13 08:48 PM GMT

That's a really lovely thing to say Wurzel - I've been made up for the last couple of days. Thank you.

I've been getting impatient for something new to come on the scene and itching to see Adonis. I decided it would be a real novelty to see Denbies in the sunshine and WOW, what a difference. It was teeming with colour and butterflies and I can see why so many people recommend it. My focus however was Adonis and I was surprised at how many fresh females were around, especially at the bottom of the slopes. I got a little carried away with the number of photos I took so I will deal with the females in this post. I actually like some of the photos I have taken (something I never thought I'd say), even though they have (minor 😊) imperfections, but I could certainly do with advice when it comes to cropping. Nevertheless, I shall just whack a selection of females into the diary as time is getting on:



(Not one wing in focus but I like the probiscus 😊😊)









The colours of the females seemed to vary enormously and I put this down to how fresh they were but I managed to grab a shot of one individual who seemed to have a lot more blue on her than the others but was moving much more quickly:



## Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 17-Jun-13 09:36 PM GMT

### "Pauline" wrote:

I could certainly do with advice when it comes to cropping.

As usual, I will rise to the bait but I do think that cropping is a very subjective topic.

There are all sorts of compositional "rules" (rule of thirds, golden rectangles, and so on) but in the end, it comes down to what you feel is right. You can educate your 'feeling' by looking at paintings by great artists and observing how they place their material.

Having said that, most of your crops look good to me, with the possible exception of P1150838. To my eyes, this is unbalanced, with too much empty space at the top. Often a picture seems to need more base than top. You may need to cheat, if the original has no more available at the bottom but Photoshop can come to the rescue. I took your picture and re-positioned it in the frame, with some extra fill along the bottom. I think it's better but what do you think?



Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-Jun-13 08:49 AM GMT

I think that looks loads better Mike and I appreciate you taking the time and trouble to demonstrate on my photo.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-Jun-13 09:25 AM GMT

A few shots of male Adonis from yesterday. I am not really satisfied with any of these. I did not manage a fully open wing shot, I did not manage to capture the stunningly beautiful iridescence on the wings and some bits are not in focus – added to that, the cropping, especially on the last one, is not good (I really shall have to look up these compositional rules). Why include them? My diary has always been intended as a record of progress and improvement (or lack of it 😊) and this is the best I could manage on the day. Better luck with the second brood perhaps!

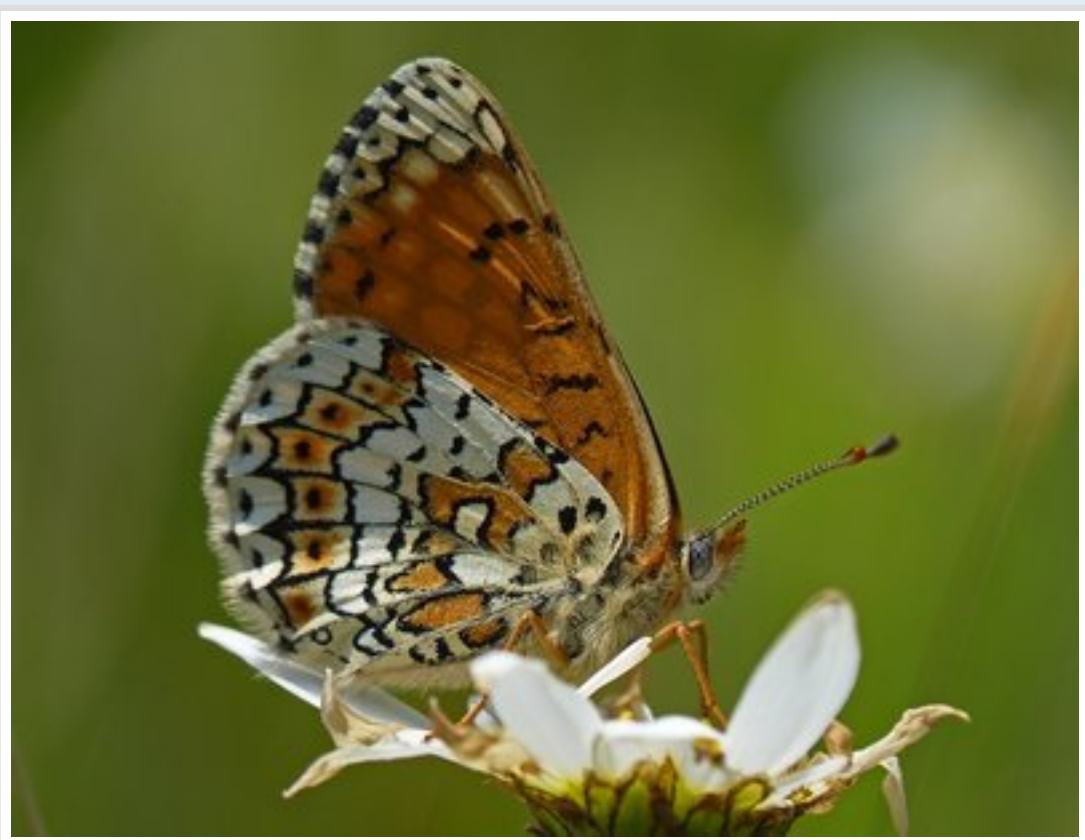




**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 19-Jun-13 08:26 PM GMT

The good news is .....





The bad news is .... full report to follow shortly 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 19-Jun-13 09:15 PM GMT

I presume this is Wrecclesham related, Pauline?

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 19-Jun-13 11:20 PM GMT

I'm hoping this is a Wrecclesham Glannie – cos I could do with that. Though I have me suspicions that you've possibly taken a ferry journey to get these cracking shots 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 20-Jun-13 05:48 AM GMT

Sorry David, I only wish it were. You are spot on Wurzel – it certainly involved a boat trip. More details later when time permits.

**Re: Pauline**

by Maximus, 20-Jun-13 12:19 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, some lovely shots of the Glanville there! We did something similar ourselves yesterday and took off to the I.O.W. to find some as we'd also drawn a blank at Wrecclesham. Wont give up on Wrecc but maybe take a look a little later on and see if any emerge 😊

Mike and Cathy.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 20-Jun-13 01:33 PM GMT



Thank you Mike – That was a great Clouded Yellow shot you got 🍷🍷😊

My carefully planned day out yesterday to find Glanvilles was in serious danger of being scuppered due to a small fledgling Magpie falling out of its nest in the garden a couple of days earlier. I have hand reared a huge number of birds – Nuthatch, Woodpecker, Dove, Blue Tit etc and it is incredibly hard work so I was reluctant to take on the task especially as the parents were present. However, they could not protect it from the numerous cats and the swooping crows despite their on-going attempts. More importantly they were not feeding their offspring. I began by feeding the little'un, ignoring the protests of the parents and then putting him back outside, guarding him from the kitchen window, and placing him in an aviary overnight. After 36 hours of this it was clear I was his sole source of nourishment and I could not stand guard all day. He would have to stay in the aviary. Unfortunately, this little bird was the most difficult I have ever had to feed. Despite trying a wide variety of suitable foods, he would immediately regurgitate them. I was managing to get enough nourishment to stay down to keep him alive but I could not expect a stand-in carer to take on such a difficult task. So, should I cancel my precious day out? In the end I decided on a compromise – I would go late, miss out on my planned pub lunch, and come back early; a bit rushed but better than the alternative.

I arrived at \*\*\*\*\* about 11.00 am and the first butterflies I saw were a trio of lovely fresh Painted Lady:



A quick look round provided no sightings of Glanvilles and given the experience at Wrecclesham I was worried that they had not emerged here either. However, several other folk were looking for the butterfly and one of them assured me that local knowledge had informed him that they had emerged here just 2 days earlier. It was very warm and humid but the sunshine was mostly hazy. Other species were on the wing including Small Blues, Large White, Common Blue, Small Heath but there was no sign of a Glanville. I only had 4 hours and one of them had already gone! I was dismayed that the next thing I was to stumble upon was :

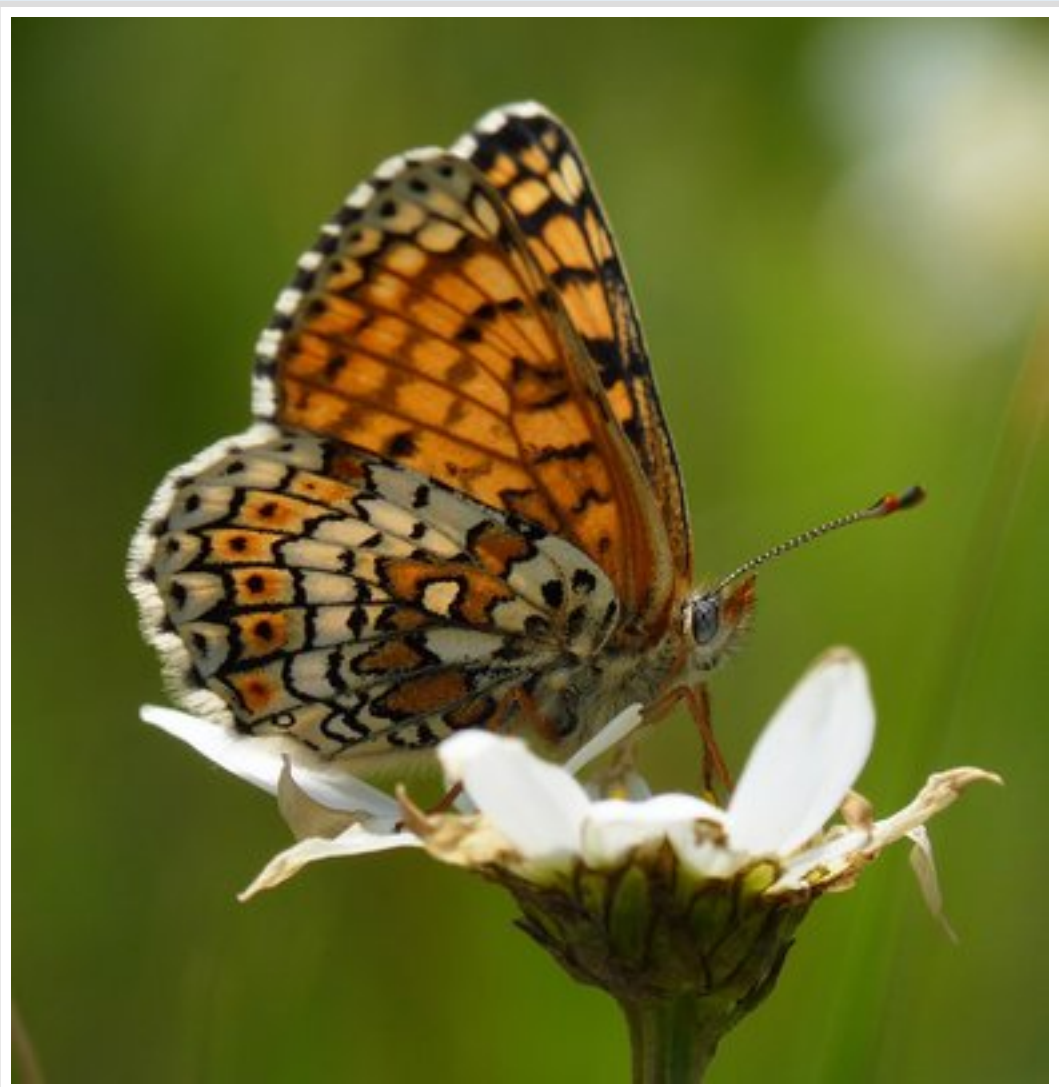


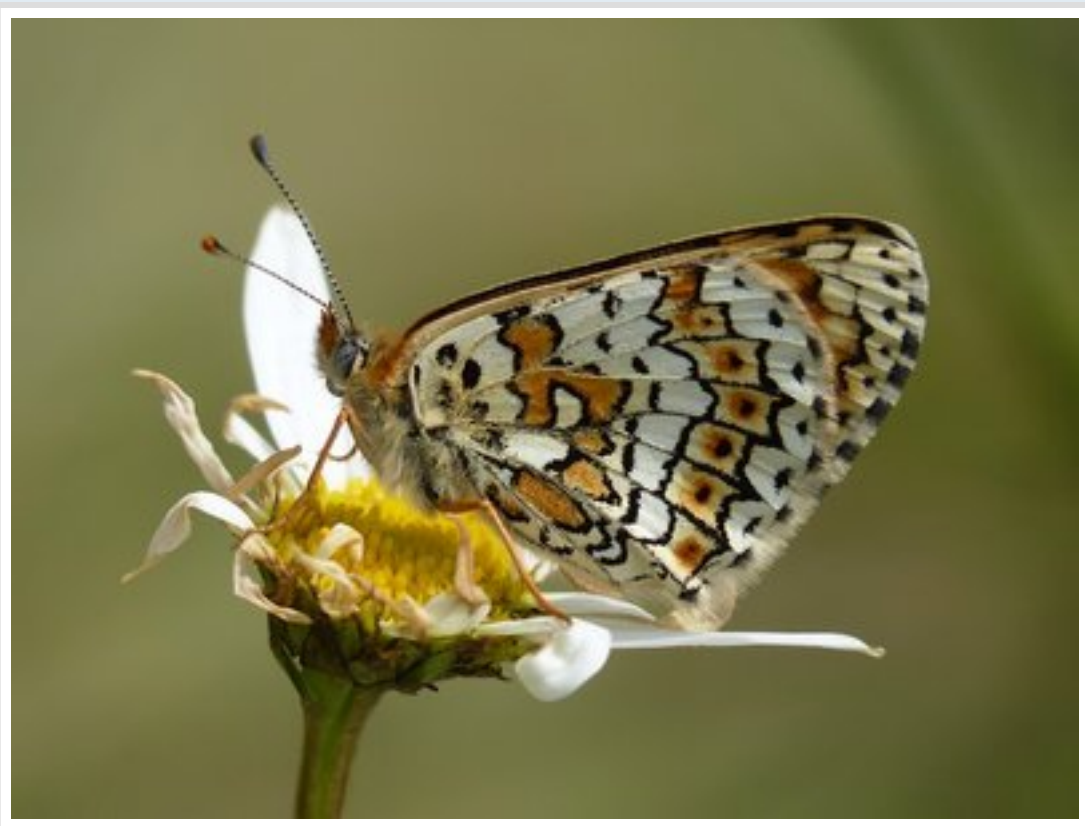
Suddenly, a Glanville was spotted and just as quickly it was gone again. In total we must have seen a maximum of 4 Glanvilles, possibly only 3 and thanks to a very docile, accommodating individual, everyone at last got a photo opportunity. I was concerned that there seemed to be little regard or respect shown for the site or for the butterflies by some, with butterflies being somewhat persecuted and harassed. I also worried that nesting birds

might be disturbed (there were a lot of youngsters around) and this tended to spoil the experience for me. I don't know what these birds were but they were really cute:



I spoke to a couple who were interested in wildlife but knew nothing about butterflies. After telling him a little bit about butterflies his enthusiasm and interest were apparent and whilst we were chatting about a Small Heath that was flitting about, a Glanville actually landed on the path at his feet!! This happened twice more during the morning – he was like a butterfly magnet! I'd like to know what aftershave he was wearing 😂😂





All too soon it was time to go. I had left myself an hour to spare to see if I could locate any Wall Browns and because time was short the boat was the only option:

Once back on dry land I started to walk along the usual path. I have never before seen a Lapwing so spent a good 10 minutes watching when I came across one. It allowed me to get remarkably close:



As I continued I came across a group of birders (is that the correct term? apologies if not), obviously intent on something. What nice folk these guys (and gals) are. They explained that there was a couple of Spoonbills out there and let me view through their scopes. Sadly, they were roosting but the photos the birders showed me were just magnificent. I would have loved to have had more time to spend here:



The birders confirmed that there had been several Walls along their patch a few hours ago but the cloud had now come over and there were none to be seen. This was a bit of a relief as my camera battery had started flashing red and the frustration I would have experienced had I seen a Wall might possibly have outweighed the joy at seeing it. As I returned to the car park I used the last of the battery on this Common Blue. Is it my imagination or is it paler than normal – perhaps just worn?



On returning to my car I was dismayed to find a parking ticket slapped on the windscreen. I had paid using my mobile phone as instructed and had been told there was no need to display a ticket. It took me another 20 minutes to sort it out and get the ticket cancelled when all I really wanted to be doing was getting back. Thankfully, the little Magpie was OK but more about him another time 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 20-Jun-13 01:45 PM GMT

Great report Pauline and fantastic shots 😊 I didn't think that you were allowed to post about this site as it is too sensitive? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Jun-13 02:04 PM GMT

Oops! I hope I haven't slipped up there Wurzel – I thought it was common knowledge and you know I never knowingly reveal sensitive sites. If that is the case I am happy to have the post removed by myself or an administrator?

After a hospital appointment today I had to pass a SSB site (the one where the Roller was recently seen) and well, it would have been daft not to stop. Not much time right now – have to feed the Magpie – but lots of shots to follow. Just a taster – is this butterfly actually stroking the ant with his proboscis?



... and is this ant actually stroking the butterfly?

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 20-Jun-13 02:14 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, once again some really superb photos of butterflies, and birds. We also worry about the way a minority of people show a lack of respect for sites and their wildlife! Glad the young Magpie is ok

Mike

PS: Have just seen your SS Blue photos with the ant in attendance. Brilliant!

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 20-Jun-13 06:43 PM GMT

Splendid pics of the SSBlue attended by an ant 😊 I believe the bird in an earlier post is a Skylark (not sure) and you were fortunate to see Spoonbills as well. Spoonbills do seem to be visiting Britain more regularly and I have seen them in Oxon. Perhaps they will be the next to move in, like the Little Egret.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 20-Jun-13 08:06 PM GMT

Hi Pauline. I always feel reassured by your posts because you seem to care so much for all the creatures you come across, wild or domestic.

I must say, I had your bird down as a meadow pipit (if I'm talking about the same one as Mike). This is a ground nester and so, I imagine, vulnerable to lots of people and children running around with other things on their minds.

I also love the SSB plus ant pictures – there's something very touching about the second one in particular. I've seen (and filmed) ants showing great interest in silver-studs and idas blues but not noticed the affection being reciprocated before. You say it looked as if the butterfly was probing the ant with its proboscis? Very interesting.

Guy

## Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 20-Jun-13 09:24 PM GMT

### "padfield" wrote:

I had your bird down as a meadow pipit

You are probably right, Guy! I dithered because I wasn't sure of the size and the eye-stripe seemed rather prominent. It's probably the second bad i.d. that I've made today 😞 It's a good job I live in UK as I can just about cope with i.d. of our butterfly species.

Mike

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Jun-13 07:26 AM GMT

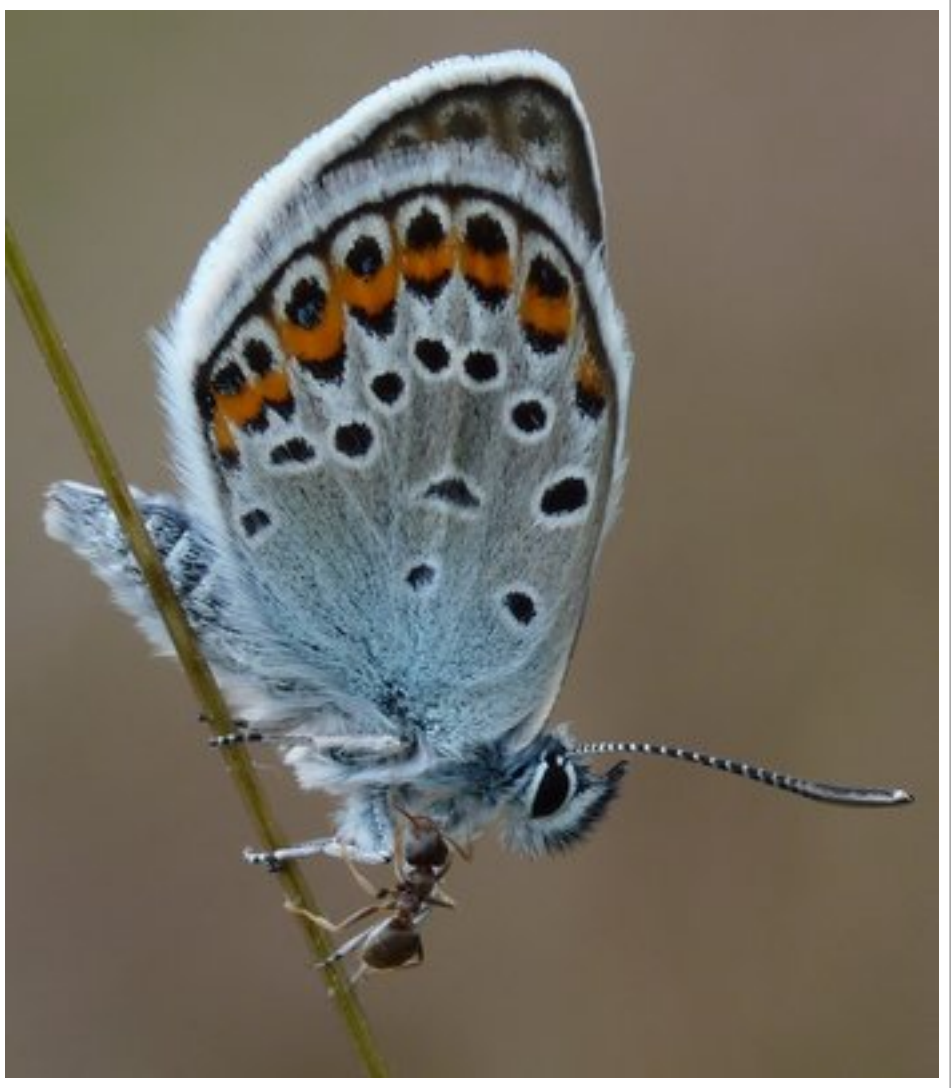
Thank you for the compliment Rich. I was so concerned about my blunder I was forgetting my manners 😞😞

I appreciate your concern Mike (Maximus). Yesterday was a huge leap forward as Maggie has now started to beg for food instead of being 'force fed'. This is a massive step forward and makes meal times so much easier. I am fairly confident he/she will survive now but my next worry is imprinting. I once reared a Blue Tit and for 3 months I could whistle him down from the trees onto my hand but he was eventually successfully integrated 😊

I'm glad you like the photos Guy. I always try to help any creature in need without interfering of course. The human species causes so much damage I think it is incumbent upon us to put a little bit back. Thank you for the bird ID.

Thank you for your kind words Mike and for the suggestions/advice re sharpening. I have found the settings on my camera and it was indeed set high (tho' I can't remember doing it – I did buy it 2nd hand). The following photos have had no sharpening applied whatsoever tho' I have cropped them tightly to show the ant rather than the butterfly. The ant was moving quite quickly so not as clear as I would have liked but as I have never seen this before a fair few shots included.









**Re: Pauline**

by Pete Eeles, 21-Jun-13 08:16 AM GMT

Great photos Pauline! Love the 2nd detailed shot!

Cheers,

- Pete

**Re: Pauline**

by Debbie, 21-Jun-13 01:43 PM GMT

Pauline,  
I love the pictures with the ants.

Debbie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 21-Jun-13 02:53 PM GMT

You found your Glanville's at last, love your Photo's Pauline 🍷 Goldie 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Jun-13 07:30 PM GMT

Pete, Debbie, Goldie, hope you're all having a good evening. Thank you for your kind words. Tonight I was going to post some lovely shots of male and female SSB but they will have to wait as I am just toooo excited. Short of time again so story and snaps will follow but thought you might like a glimpse .....



Now I've just got to find that Monarch that was spotted in Gosport 😄😄😄

## Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 21-Jun-13 09:50 PM GMT

Excellent series of SSB photos Pauline 😊

And a Clouded Yellow, I noticed there had been a few sightings recently, here's hoping some make it to the midlands 😊

All the best,

Neil F.

## Re: Pauline

by David M, 21-Jun-13 10:25 PM GMT

No wonder you're excited, Pauline. SSBs and Clouded Yellows!!!

Heaven.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-Jun-13 08:13 AM GMT

Thank you Neil for your comment and for taking the time to comment. I know how difficult it is as I read lots of diaries but only have time to comment on a few when many more deserve it. I sure hope these butts make it to the Midlands for you.

I appreciate your comment David. Even after a good nights sleep I am still excited as I have only ever seen one before, many years ago. Perhaps we're due a 'Clouded Yellow year'.

I wanted some shots of SSB with wings open but the weather was quite cloudy and overcast so I didn't think I'd have much luck. However, there is a site, literally on my doorstep which I have never even visited, and truth be told, wasn't even sure how to get there 😬 I thought it was high time I found out especially as a couple of days previously a Clouded Yellow had been seen there together with many SSB's. I got out a map which is rare for me as I can't read maps 😄 To cut a long story short I eventually found the place and there were many SSB (male and fresh females) on the wing – but no sign of a Clouded Yellow. I was not altogether surprised as I know they can travel many miles but the weather hadn't been great for a few days and I had harboured hopes it might still be around. Nevertheless, I left quite satisfied with the shots I had taken.

Later in the day, much later, I had to pick up a supply of Waxworms that had arrived for the Magpie. For some reason the centre of Liphook was grid locked so on the spur of the moment I decided I might as well spend 30 mins at this newly discovered site which was just 2 minutes away, rather than sit in a traffic jam. As it turned out it was a good decision. Not only did I see deer and butterflies but I also saw a stoat. Initially I thought it was a Red Squirrel scampering towards me 😬 (must need new specs 😄) and I only missed a good shot thanks to uncontrolled dogs 😡 Time was up and I had to get to the shop before it closed but just as I was leaving a flash of orange caught my eye and I saw the butterfly settle:



I cautiously approached, my heart thudding and my hand shaking, as the butterfly flitted from flower to flower taking nectar :



Once energy levels had been restored it would zoom round the area at great speed but only in short bursts between resting and taking nectar. I began to relax a little realising it was going nowhere very far. It usually stayed low, resting on small plants and even the path but at one point rested about 4 feet up on a gorse bush. I couldn't believe that this was happening and right on my own doorstep. I would have traveled miles to see this spectacle.



By now I realised that the shop would be shut before I could get there so Maggie would just have to eat mealworms for another day, not quite as sweet and juicy as waxworms but perfectly adequate. I have only ever seen this butterfly once before and this was a particularly beautiful specimen. I tried to get open wing shots as it flew past but it was so fast they were all blurred which is a pity as the colours were stunning. I also noticed that, just like the hairstreaks, when it wanted to make the most of the intermittent sun, it would lie on its side on a leaf, almost flat. I shall not apologise for the number of photos, even if some are not as good as I would have liked, but it was quite windy and I took what I could get. I am delighted at having seen it and stayed with it until it went to roost. Given the weather today I expect it is still there.



**Re: Pauline**

by ChrisC, 22-Jun-13 09:59 AM GMT

what a great collection of shots and memories never to be forgotten.

Chris

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 22-Jun-13 12:14 PM GMT

It's a shame they don't rest wings open, Pauline, as their upperwings are a truly beautiful shade of deep yellow/pale orange. What's more, judging by the first photo I'd say this individual is a female with the more attractive wing margins.

You did well to get those photos as Clouded Yellows are like Brimstones on heat; always purposefully on the move. Even when I'm surrounded by them in France I can never get near them!

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 22-Jun-13 01:39 PM GMT

You bring back memories of the excitement of my own first photo-encounter with Clouded Yellow. It was, of all places, in Smardale, Cumbria, where I was photographing Scotch Argus. That was during the great influx of 1992. Let's hope for another good year 😊 .

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 22-Jun-13 10:45 PM GMT

👍👍👍 Says it all 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 22-Jun-13 11:43 PM GMT

Great stuff Pauline 😊

I saw my first Clouded Yellows for years in Dorset last year, two of them but neither of mine settled. Even so I remember the excitement that I felt so can appreciate what you must have felt.

All the Best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Jun-13 07:45 AM GMT

You're so right Chris - I'll never forget that experience. It's great when you see something that you plan to see but even better when it's totally unexpected like this.

Thank you David. I was able to spend enough time watching to see the really beautiful colours. I have just been informed that you are right about it being a female.

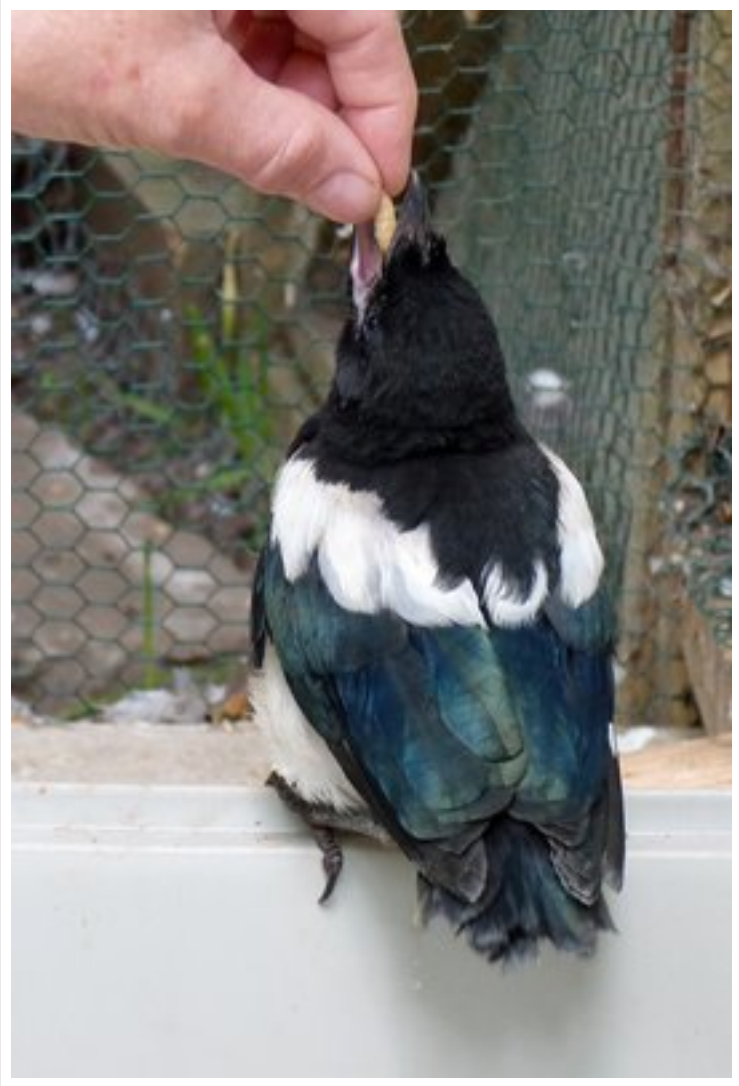
Morning Mike. I'm still buzzing from the encounter and pleased that others can understand and share the excitement.

Hopefully your turn will come Wurzel if we do indeed get an influx 😊

Thank you Neil - if I don't see another thing all Summer I shall still be quite satisfied. I reckon I got lucky as they are quite difficult to photograph.

A quick Maggie update for anyone interested (more butterflies a little later). She is doing well and she thinks she is now good to go but I know better. Until she is feeding herself and can fly a bit better she must stay a little while longer:





### **Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 23-Jun-13 04:27 PM GMT

I had to go up to Tesco earlier for fruit and veg for the parrots. I was halfway to Wrecclesham so I thought I might as well do the other half. I am concerned about that site as I don't understand what is happening there. It seems as if huge areas are dying off. It can't be due to the persistent sun or scorching ..... and surely it's not a lack of rain!!!



An area where I stood only a week ago, watching 2 Large Skippers and chatting to another UK butts member, has changed colour 😞 The large patch of vetch is dead 😞 Large clumps of brambles and nettles around the site look like they are dying 😞







(The area where we were chatting Alan, by the cliff)

This place used to be teeming with all sorts of butterflies, including Small Blues which I haven't seen for a couple of years. I am wondering if it is some sort of spraying that is killing off the food plants and hence the butterflies 😡? Today I only saw 3 species, all singletons but I did see these beautiful creatures. How awful if they were all to disappear 😞



I thought Damselfly nymphs ate insects but this one was repeatedly pulling something off the seed heads (actually, perhaps there were tiny insects there that I couldn't see).

I still needed my butterfly 'fix' so stopped off at Broxhead Common on the way back just for 10 minutes. As it was very windy I only took a few shots. I have not seen any females at this site yet.



## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Jun-13 07:01 AM GMT

I'm getting a bit behind with my postings so here is a few shots of the SSB's that I took last week at my 'new' local site. The environment differs greatly from that of my other local site which is largely heather. Here there is much bracken bordering open spaces with a variety of wild flowers – I have yet to find the heather but the bracken makes for some picturesque shots.





Several males were competing for the attention of this brown female which was disguised as a leaf 😂



One of these males was half the size of the others but he was so fresh and absolutely stunning:





### Re: Pauline

by NickMorgan, 24-Jun-13 03:10 PM GMT

What beautiful butterflies and great pictures.

The vegetation you show does look a little as though it has been sprayed. After they have been sprayed, often the plants will grow rapidly and then curl and turn yellow. I have noticed the plants here have been wilting, but that is because of the lack of rain and the strong winds. Certainly a field margin I walked around this morning that was sprayed last week had no insects flying in it at all, but the neighbouring field had all sorts of insects (but only one butterfly!).

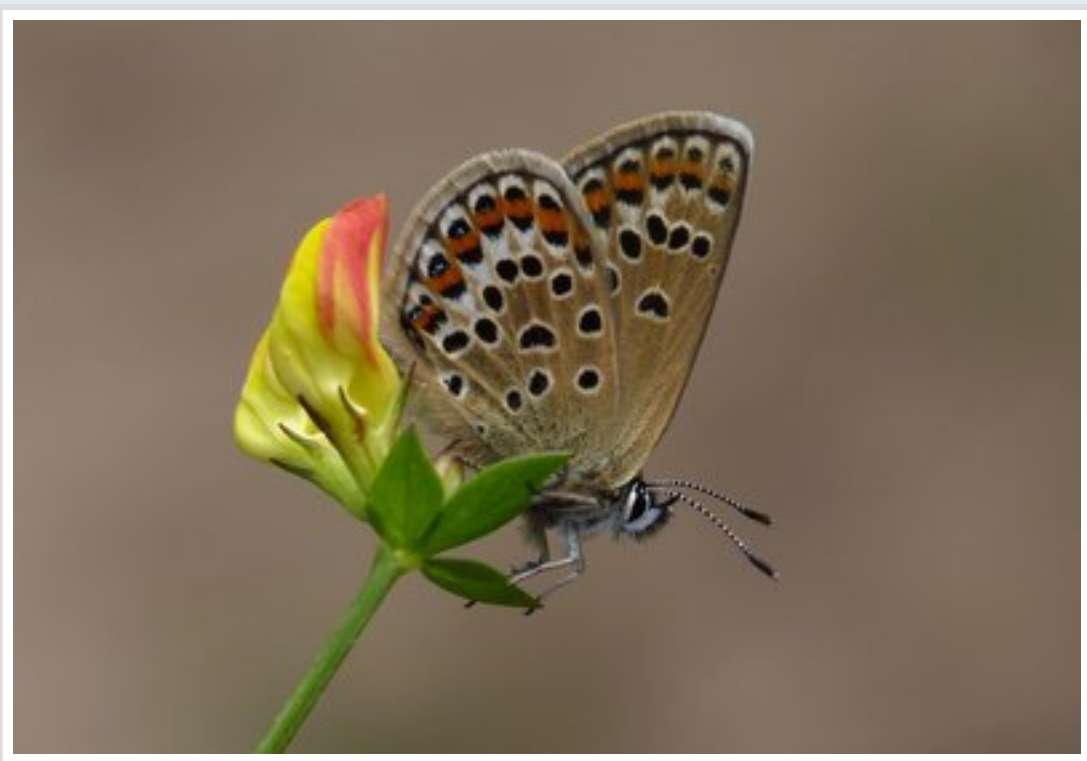
### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Jun-13 06:58 PM GMT

That's very kind of you to say so Nick and thank you for your comment about the spraying. The more I think about it the more I think that has to be the reason as it is quite patchy and surely if it was due to the weather it would be all over?

I seem to be surrounded by Blues at the moment and can't resist posting more photos as I am enjoying my camera more this year even if I am still making basic mistakes - I am sure I shall improve with the help I am getting from the folk who read this diary.









### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 24-Jun-13 07:02 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, I am a bit behind as our internet has been down again! 😞 You have some amazing photos of the Clouded Yellow, what an encounter, I know how you felt! 😊 Glad to see the young Magpie is looking so good they are intelligent birds, we had an encounter with an injured one once and for a wild bird he was so laid back. Wrecclisham is worrying, I believe someone vandalised the earth moving machine so they removed it from the site, I guessed there would be some repercussions! You have some lovely SS Blue photos of really fresh looking individuals in your last posting.

Regards,  
Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 24-Jun-13 07:40 PM GMT

Some beautiful SSB images there Pauline 😊

You have got me thinking about getting up to Prees Heath again this year to see some.

Cheers,  
Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 24-Jun-13 10:31 PM GMT

Absolutely lovely shots of the Silver Studs 🇮🇪 I'll have to try Slop Bog this weekend and hopefully they'll be out there...

Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-Jun-13 07:41 AM GMT

Morning Mike – I'm glad you like my latest shots. I am lucky to have several SSB sites quite close to me, Broxhead being one. However. it is Bramshott where they seem to be most prolific this year and most advanced. I noticed the equipment had gone from Wrecclisham but didn't know about the damage – interesting! Maggie is now starting to find her own food and is flying better but I'm struggling to get good photos of a black and white bird. Have tried various settings but .....





I appreciate the compliment Neil and I am enjoying your diary too.

Thank you Wurzel. Inspired by your wonderful insect shots and Paul's reports on larva I decided to take a closer look at some of the other insects around. Trouble is, I don't know what any of them are 😊😞 The first patch of nettles I looked at was covered in a variety of Ladybirds. I assume that these are different species and not just male and female?



My next find amongst the nettles was a number of pupae, too small to be a butterfly I would think. The case had 2/3 golden rings at the top end which are not visible in the photo. I would have had to destroy its nettle cocoon to capture those and I was not prepared to.



I soon spotted a very red beetle, noticeable because of the vivid colour. It was not fast moving so I am thinking the colour, as it is not camouflage, must be a warning of a kind – sour taste perhaps? These cannot be rare as I went on to see several more but I can't remember seeing them previously.



Both this year and last I have seen several different spiders all with this sort of moth. I am wondering if this species tastes particularly good or whether they are just one of the easier ones to catch, or perhaps just very prolific.



... and last but not least, this beautiful moth. Dozens and dozens of them around.



## Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 25-Jun-13 08:53 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

I think you're ladybirds are the Harlequin Ladybird which is a very variable species and one that has been spread into this country from Asia I think and unfortunately its larvae eat the larvae of our native ladybird species (boo).

The red beetle is a fairly rare Red Longhorn Beetle *Stictoleptura rubra*.

The moths look like the Yellow-barred Longhorn Moth *Nemophora degeerella*.

I'm not sure about the Pupa.

All great photos.

## Re: Pauline

by Vince Massimo, 25-Jun-13 09:34 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Lovely images as always 😊

I think your pupa is most likely the Mother of Pearl moth <http://www.ukmoths.org.uk/show.php?id=1700>

Regards,  
Vince

## Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 25-Jun-13 01:45 PM GMT

### "Pauline" wrote:

I soon spotted a very red beetle, noticeable because of the vivid colour.

From your description of the very vivid colour and the fact that there were several about, I assumed that this was a Cardinal beetle (*pyrochroa coccinea*). This variety has a black head, while the rather similar *pyrochroa serricornis* has a red head. I'm no expert and tend to go wrong with IDs 😞 but I'd be interested to know why Paul went for a rarer and less vividly coloured species.

Pleased that your Magpie is doing well. They are difficult to photograph because of their strong contrast. I have some tips on my website at <http://home.btconnect.com/mike.flemming...odging.htm> that you could try. Alternatively, take a burst of bracketed exposures and combine them with an HDR (high dynamic range) program. I think recent versions of Photoshop Elements can do this or there's a good free program from <http://qtpfsgui.sourceforge.net/>

Mike

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-Jun-13 08:34 PM GMT

A very big THANK YOU to Paul, Vince and Mike for your ID's. The breadth and depth of knowledge on this site never fails to amaze me. I think to myself 'how do they know that????!!' It has certainly motivated me to look more closely at insects and I reckon I'm going to have to get a book for ID's. That was definitely the pupae Vince – and what a cracking moth (I'm tempted to go back there once they emerge to try to see them. I keep telling folk I'm not interested in moths but I think it's because the sheer numbers overwhelm me a bit.

Thank you also for the on-going help with the photography Mike. It is really appreciated and I shall certainly be looking at your website and trying out your recommendations. I am not sure how much longer I shall have Maggie as she is getting stronger and more able every day.

I have heard folk bemoan the fact that their butterflying is restricted to weekends and that they are dependent on the weather even then. I can totally sympathize as, until a few years ago, I was in the same position. I am now fortunate enough to have the flexibility to get out for an hour or so whenever I choose and am lucky enough to have a dozen or more sites within 10–15 minutes with a fair diversity of butterflies. However, I find myself envying those folk who can spend leisurely whole days at weekends enjoying the butterflies and the camaraderie of like-minded folk. Ah well, the grass is always greener ..... 😊😊

Today I fancied a change of scene and decided on the Straits. Although White Admirals have already been reported from here I saw only 4 species of butterflies – Large White, Speckled Wood, Large Skipper and Comma – but what captivated me were these lovely Dragonflies. There were 2 of them and I was surprised that the Comma persisted in chasing them – I thought it was supposed to be the other way round?





The Comma who was displaying such bravery/stupidity:





I took a fair few photos of insects but the strangest one was moving from side to side on a leaf seemingly 'tasting' it. A larger individual was on the leaf below doing a similar thing. They were most peculiar with long legs and odd looking feet. Quite evil looking in fact and I am wondering if they were some type of Horse Fly. The photos are not as clear as I would have liked but I am determined to find out what they are and perhaps what the weird behaviour indicated:



I was taking a photo of a very fresh Skipper and almost stood on this. I did not get to see its head but would be very interested if anyone knows what kind of snake it is. I have only ever seen one snake in my entire life 🤪 (That was the one you showed me last year Tuts).



## Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 25-Jun-13 08:55 PM GMT

Hi Pauline. Your snake is a grass snake. They generally keep quite a low profile, which is why you rarely come across them, but if you discover where they hang out to warm up in the mornings you can see them regularly and on demand (at one place I lived near Oxford they gathered in numbers on some corrugated iron left in a grassy patch in the garden). They are also quite good swimmers and you will often see them dropping into water when you disturb them along the bank of a stream.

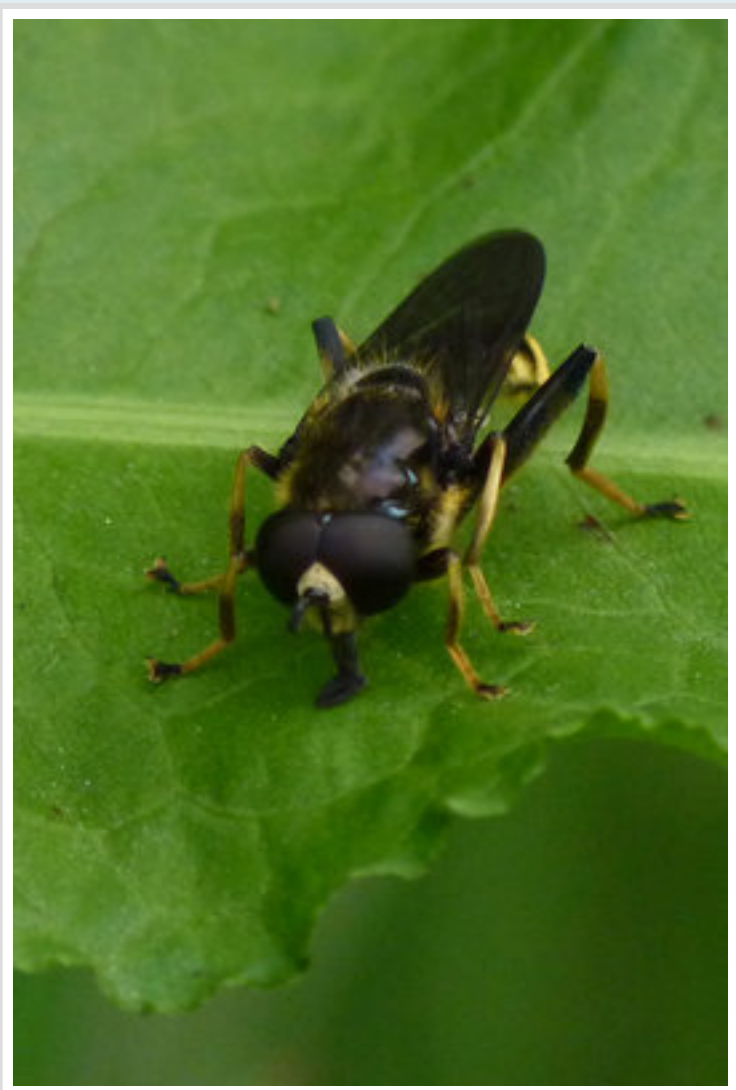
The dragonfly is a female broad-bodied chaser, *Libellula depressa*. You might have noticed the males at the same site – with a similar broad, flattened shape but a lovely blue colour. It's interesting that your comma was chasing them. Male butterflies can be quite indiscriminate in their aggressive tendencies!

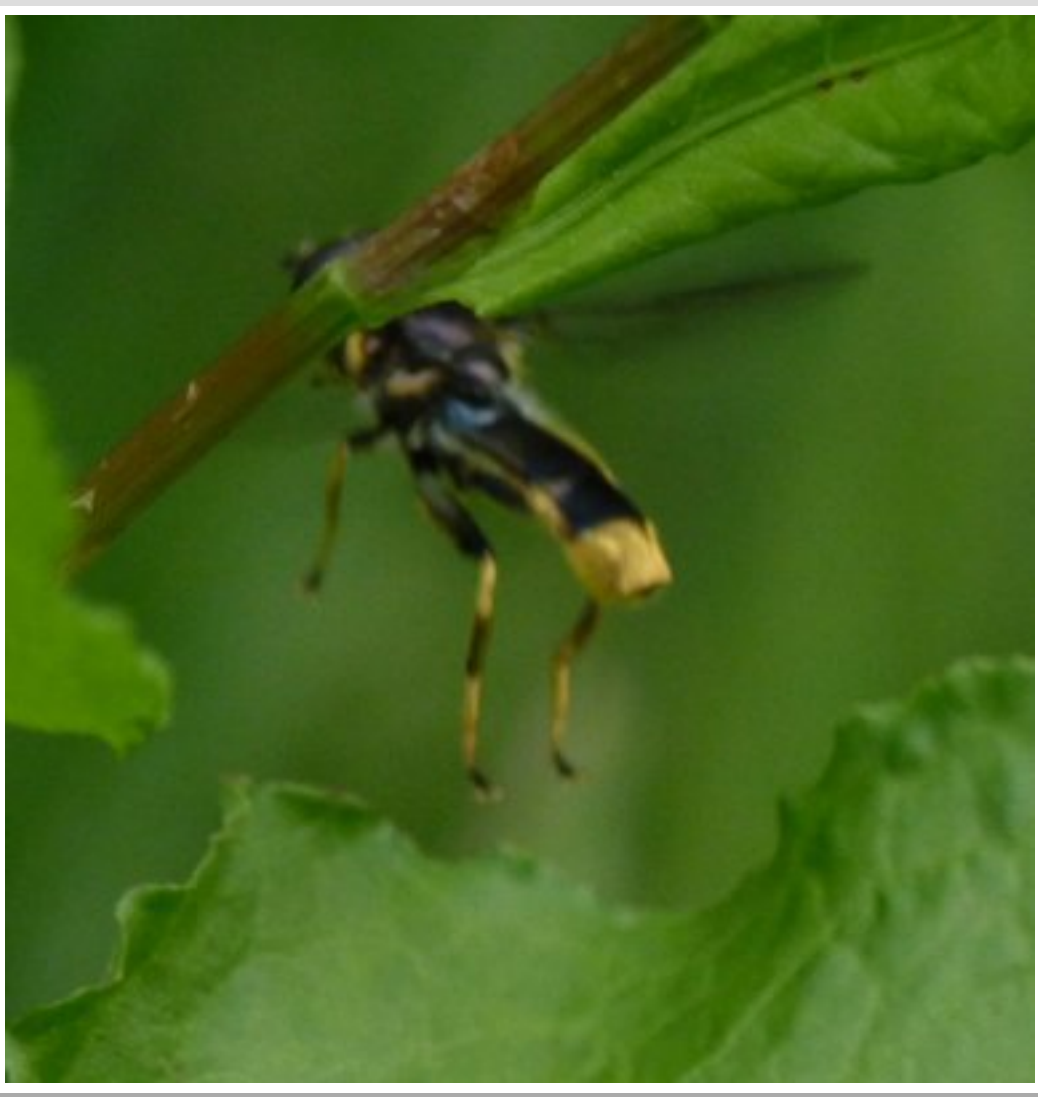
Guy

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Jun-13 07:14 AM GMT

Thank you for this Guy. The snake did eventually slither away and dropped into a ditch full of water without me ever seeing the head so I shall check out that place next time I am in the area. I certainly didn't see any blue Dragonflies which led me to wonder if the females emerge before the males, unlike most butterflies. I have been looking on the internet at the immature stages – fascinating. My interest is primarily butterflies but I feel there is a whole new world opening up here. I found that I already have an insect book – a Collins guide – and I have tried to identify my fly. It is certainly not a Horse Fly or a Stilt-legged fly but I am wondering if it is a Snipefly. I think more likely it is a type of Hover fly (*Milesa crabroniformis*) but I am not familiar enough with the anatomy to be sure. The creature seemed to be stroking the leaf with an odd looking proboscis as it weaved from side to side and had the two of them been on the same leaf I would have thought it was a courtship ritual. I don't know if these photos help with identification:





### Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 26-Jun-13 10:49 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

That's definitely a hoverfly but I'm not sure of the species as I'm at work and don't have access to my ID books. These can be tricky to ID down to species level in certain cases. I'll try and find a name for it when I get home unless someone has already got an ID for you.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Jun-13 07:30 AM GMT

Thank you for your efforts Paul. I have just read that there are 6000 species so you would have your work cut out pinning it down. Collin's isn't a bad little book for identification but it doesn't tell you anything much about the behaviour of the insect.

Yesterday I was pleased to see my first Meadow Brown of the season and also some wonderfully fresh Common Blues – brand spanking new they were, both male and female 😊





There really wasn't anything common about these butterflies at all – they were beautiful.







I found several orchids which were very pretty but my level of ignorance is starting to embarrass me. I have no idea what they are.



There are some really lovely grasses about at the moment – not just wiggle-wobble grass 🤪 – with different shades of pink, beige, green, grey. They provide a great soft, subtle backdrop for photos and look fantastic in the breeze.

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 27-Jun-13 01:07 PM GMT

Really lovely shots Pauline and apologies as I totally forgot about the hoverfly ID but there's always tonight.

All the best.

## Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 27-Jun-13 02:41 PM GMT

Hi Pauline. Those are bee orchids – *Ophrys apifera*, I believe, but there are dozens of species in this genus and I'm not an expert. They are beautiful and fascinating flowers and make lovely photographs, as you have shown!

Guy

## Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 27-Jun-13 04:27 PM GMT

Guy is correct to say that there are lots of *Ophrys* orchids but, here in Britain, the Bee Orchid is the only one that is widespread and certainly what yours is! It's a lovely plant of chalk grassland, not uncommon in Southern Britain but always a delight to find. 😊 Those are nice photos of *icarus* too, to avoid using its 'common' name, which does seem a bit of an insult!

Of course, in Switzerland, as in the case of butterflies, there are loads more orchid species to be found, including the Ghost Orchid, which causes a great stir here, when the odd one is found in England – usually just after it has been declared extinct!

Mike

## Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 27-Jun-13 05:19 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

As promised I've identified the hoverfly which is *Xylota sylvarum* which has a golden patch of hairs on the end of the abdomen as shown well in your flight shot. It is very similar to the much rarer *Xylota xanthocnema* but your hoverfly has dark patches on the apical half of the hind tibia i.e. the back half of the mid section of its hind leg is almost black. In the rarer species this section of the hind leg is all yellow.

Your hoverfly is common in England and Wales and often feeds on the surface of leaves as in some of your photos.

All the best.

## Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 27-Jun-13 07:59 PM GMT

A quick apology for misidentifying the red beetle which Mike correctly identified as the Black Headed Cardinal Beetle.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Jun-13 07:15 AM GMT

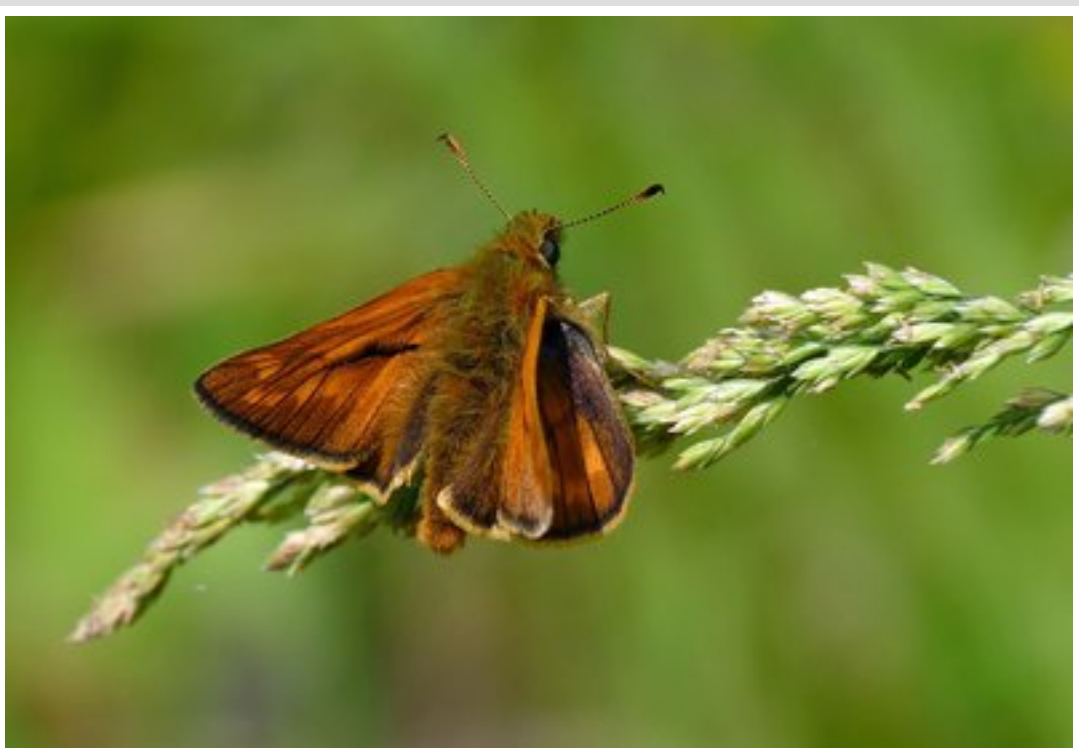
Thank you for the compliments Paul and also for your efforts. I appreciate you taking the trouble over something quite so common and widespread – and with so many species I am surprised that more are not misidentified. I am wondering if we have previously met on perhaps 2 occasions, the last being Chiddingfold perhaps 1-2 years ago when you were planning a holiday? I suppose it could easily have been a different Paul.

Thank you again Guy for your comments and identification. I just had to check out 'my' snake again after the information you provided and sure enough he was in exactly the same spot – and this time I got a much better look at him. He is huge!

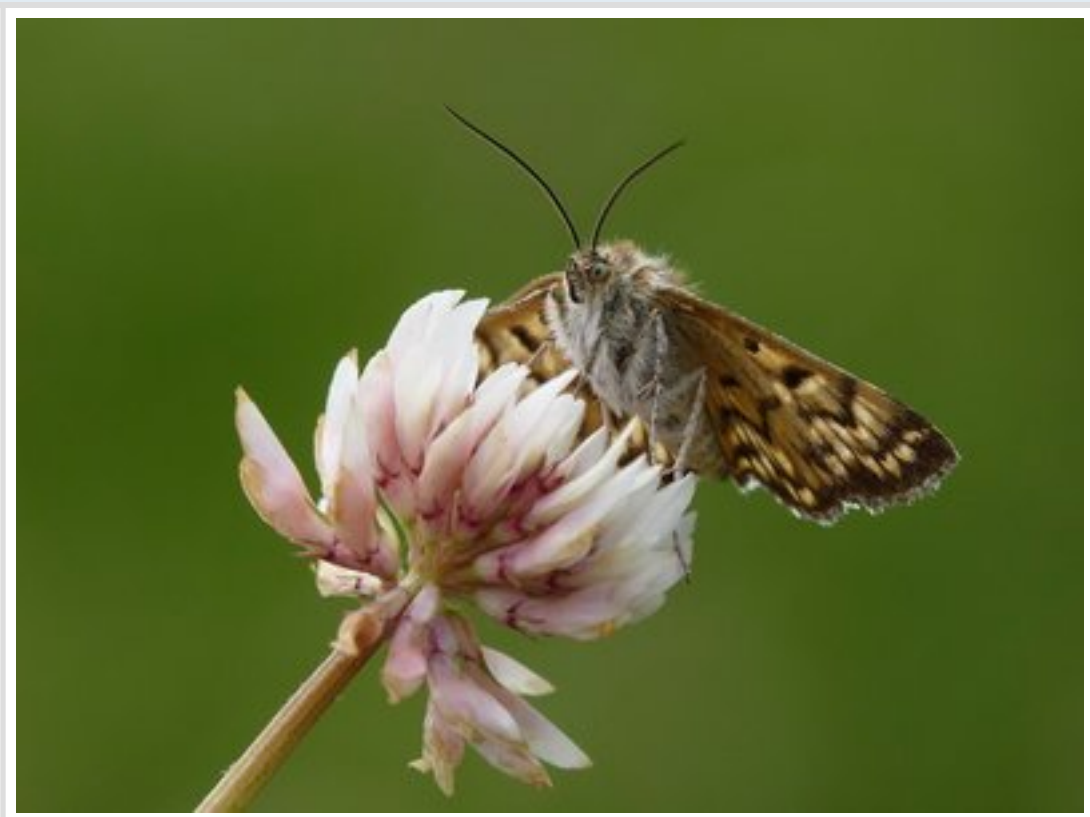


Thank you for the comment on my photos Mike and the ID. I can see that I shall have to get a book on plants – tho' I suspect I may already have one amongst the hundreds and hundreds of books I never seem to have time to look at!

Yesterday I caught a glimpse of my first Small Skipper bringing my species total for the year to a respectable 30 given the weather we have had. Unfortunately he was off before I could grab a shot and he was the only one I saw. I was at a local site that I haven't visited since I took the photos of the PE on Mark's toe last year and although the Essex Skippers haven't emerged here yet there were plenty of Large ones to keep me amused:



The Large Skippers were competing with bees for some space on thistle and I watched amazed as a Large Skipper repeatedly landed on top of the bee as though trying to dislodge it. I could easily have gotten a photo if it had not been for dog walkers at this inopportune moment. There was also a rather lovely Mother Shipton's moth making the most of the sunshine although this angle seems to show a very angry subject:



### Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 28-Jun-13 08:27 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

Not sure if I've visited Chiddingfold. Is it a place for Wood Whites or close to Botany Bay I think it is known as? where Purple Emperors fly. If so then yes I think we may have met.

If you saw someone with a rather large video camera over their shoulder then that would be me. I remember talking to someone whilst watching a Wood White beside the path that had a damaged wing showing a bit of its upper side.

Keep up with the great photos, enjoyed the Mother Shipton and the Skippers.

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 28-Jun-13 02:41 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, some lovely photos, the blues are gorgeous, not common and I like your Grass Snake. I nearly trod on an Adder the other day on some heathland near us, while looking for SSB's. I should have been more stealthy and got a photo, next time...

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 28-Jun-13 04:14 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

I just had to check out 'my' snake again after the information you provided and sure enough he was in exactly the same spot – and this time I got a much better look at him. He is huge!

The Grass Snake is our longest snake and not poisonous. The Adder, which does have poison fangs, is shorter and fatter, with a characteristic zig-zag dark line down its back – be careful not to step on one of these 🤪.

#### "Pauline" wrote:

I suspect I may already have one amongst the hundreds and hundreds of books I never seem to have time to look at!

I have that problem too 😊 Unfortunately, it's one thing to have the info in a book on the bookshelf and quite another to have it in one's head 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 29-Jun-13 07:25 AM GMT

Botany Bay is indeed the place I was referring to Paul. Perhaps we may meet again this year but apologies in advance if I don't recognise you. I still maintain we should all wear name badges in the field 😊 Thank you for your help and kind comments.

I appreciate the warning Mike. There are supposed to be a lot of adders around here but I have been lucky/unlucky enough to encounter only one in all

the years I've been here.

Thank you Mike - I'm glad you like the photos. Did you note there's been a Swallowtail spotted at Hayling? But then you've already got your gorgeous shots of them 🍷🍷😊

As I sit here having my coffee break the garden is teeming with birds - mostly Woodpeckers it seems. Over recent weeks I have counted 8 adults in the garden at any one time (4 in the back and 4 in the front) and now the young have arrived it is chaos. There are 4 youngsters that I can see and I have been trying in vain to get a photo of all 4 together on the feeder without much success so far:



I am looking out at patches of lawn that I will need to repair later as the badgers have dug it up. Several come each evening and once I get my photography sorted out I hope to do better than this:



I am feeling quite pleased with myself as my insect book is now sat by the pc and this morning I have made 3 identifications - nothing rare but it's a start: Garden carpet moth, Clouded Buff and Blue-tailed damselfly. Butterfly photos later but for now just one of my 'favourite' butterflies 😊



Mike's photography hints on his website relating to dodging and burning will no doubt be just as applicable and useful to a dark butterfly on a white flower as indeed they are to a Magpie so the sooner I try them out the better.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-Jun-13 02:41 PM GMT

I saw the first one on Thursday. Just one. Well, I think it was one. I wanted to be sure and take a photo. I returned on Saturday and this time there were 3, possibly 4. With some difficulty I managed some photos and on my return accidentally deleted them all from my camera 😞😞 I could have sobbed but that wouldn't have done any good so I returned today. Today there were at least 6/7, more likely 10/12 and a couple of females by the look of it. More details and photos to follow when time permits.



Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-Jun-13 11:18 PM GMT

The first hour was hard. I'd left Liphook bathed in sunshine and arrived at a site with overcast skies and a cool breeze. No sign of WLH for the next 45 minutes when the sun eventually managed to break through. Within seconds, the first WLH appeared. I remembered from last year that these butterflies warm up by lying on their side on a leaf facing the sun. What I hadn't realised was that they frequently turn over, warming one side then the other, doing this as many as 4-5 times before they exploded into action. So, the only photos I got for the next 20 minutes were butterflies in a prone position.



Once they were sufficiently warm they would immediately take off and a chance meeting with another male resulted in a predictable dog fight. That seemed to set the pattern of activity – flat butterfly followed by dog-fight. All this was taking place way up high on the upper branches of the Elm and I felt I was pushing my little Lumix to the limit of its capabilities as I zoomed in on the maximum setting. What a difficult butterfly to photograph. This photograph, unlike the others, has not been cropped.



There was no incentive as yet for the butterflies to come lower. Nectar sources on the ground were scarce and I noticed that as they lay on their sides the butterflies were obviously taking in something that gave them incredible energy (perhaps I should start licking leaves 😄😄)



I have never seen WLH as fresh as these. Some of them actually glowed and glistened in the sun and looked as if they had been sprinkled with gold dust. Those which were clearly a few days old had lost that sparkle and were of a more uniform 'flat' colour. It was frustrating to be able to observe this and not be able to record it as they were constantly moving and still at a great distance. I am including some photos which I hope illustrates these details despite some lack of focus.



A further difficulty in photographing the WLH is its tendency to stand sideways so that only profile shots are possible – at least in this instance given the positioning of the branches and the layout of the land, but this still didn't disguise the wonderful gold sheen.



At one point I thought I was about to encounter a mating pair as the two butterflies sidled up to each other but on realising they were both male decided to occupy different branches. In attempting to get both in focus I managed neither.





As the morning became hotter, rather than getting livelier these butterflies slowed down and began to seek shade from the sun on lower branches, under leaves – generally they were less inclined to fly and fight. This provided a few opportunities for closer shots.



I sadly realised that my time was up and I needed to return home but hopefully more opportunities to see and photograph this very special butterfly will be available soon.

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 30-Jun-13 11:25 PM GMT

Lovely report Pauline 😊 I have to be "lucky" to see White Letter Hairstreaks and so never get the really cracking shots others, including yourself, seem to get. Are you allowed to reveal where you saw these brill little beauties?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 01-Jul-13 09:05 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

Love the WLH shots and descriptions.

I definitely remember meeting up with you at Chiddingfold. Did you have a couple of dogs and a husband or partner in tow when we met up?

Keep up with the diary, I'm really enjoying it. I love the badgers, what I wouldn't do to have a garden that attracted them. Nothing but cats in ours I'm afraid and the occasional fox.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Jul-13 10:33 AM GMT

Thank you Wurzel. I should have said that as well as being fragile this site is also on private land. Sorry.

Thank you for the compliment Paul. The person you are referring to is my friend Barbara and her husband Paul who live on the edge of the woods. I do not have dogs and would not have a husband or partner in tow – tho we do have the same coloured hair. I do not have many photos of myself and the last one was taken about 4 years ago. Folk would possibly say this looks nothing like me and when I am in my old clothes, bitten and scratched and looking like I've been dragged through a hedge backwards, they are probably right 😊😊



Butterflies later when I have tried to capture a poorly squirrel.

### **Re: Pauline**

by Debbie, 01-Jul-13 11:13 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Firstly what a lovely picture of yourself.

Great to catch up on your diary and to see your superb pictures.

Debbie 😊

### **Re: Pauline**

by Paul Wetton, 01-Jul-13 12:39 PM GMT

I agree it is a lovely photo. Nothing wrong with the real you being bitten and dragged through a hedge backwards. I'm sure we all look like that when out in the field.

Now you've straightened that out I'll keep my eye out for you when in your neck of the woods but unfortunately that may not be for some time as we're heading north this year with a trip to the Outer Hebrides later this month. Hoping for some interesting birds and bees.

Hope we will meet up some time though.

Good luck with catching the squirrel.

### **Re: Pauline**

by Paul Wetton, 01-Jul-13 12:47 PM GMT

Here's one of me in the more traditional "Dragged through a hedge" type pose with a Purple Emperor on my shoulder.



*Me and my PE in Bulgaria*

I prefer to be the other side of the camera.

## Re: Pauline

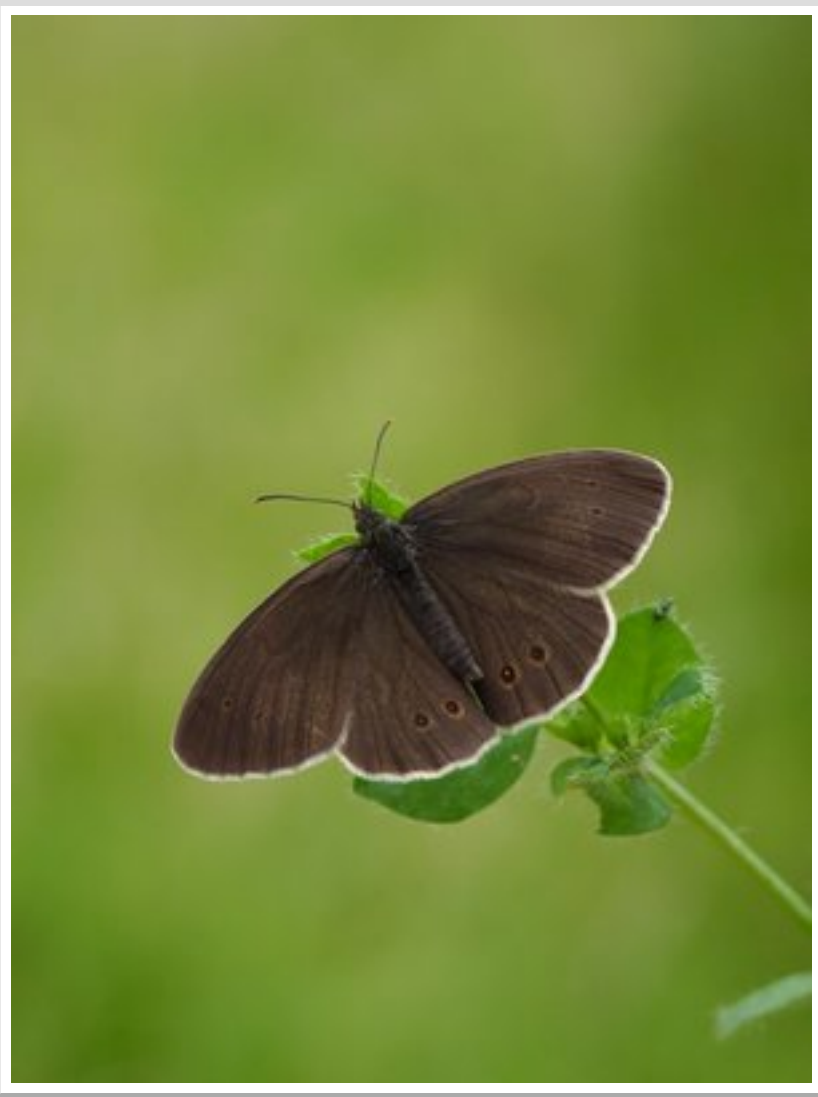
by Pauline, 01-Jul-13 05:49 PM GMT

That's really sweet of you to say so Debbie. I hate my photo being taken so it's something that only happens about once each decade 😊

Thank you Paul. Hope we meet up sometime, some place but the Outer Hebrides sounds perfect to me (can I come? 😄😄😄). Let us know how you get on.

Richard Fox has just informed me that my WLH are the first he has heard of this year so that is just the icing on the cake for me 😊😊. I am looking forward to future visits but other commitments take priority. A very (very) short trip out today as my old cat is a bit poorly but I saw 2 Ringlets, my first sighting this season. First sightings seem to be coming thick and fast at the moment. Yesterday I saw my first SWF but no photo opportunity. A selection of Ringlet photos below:





**Re: Pauline**

by Paul Harfield, 01-Jul-13 10:10 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Your report on the White Letter Hairstreaks is superb 😊, it gives quite a different insight into the elusive nature of this species, very helpful. It is

another species I have yet to see, but hopefully this year I can tick it off so to speak. I have spent the last year noting down areas of Elm that look to be worth investigation, which is perhaps a little obsessive I know 😊 There is one particular area in Portsmouth that I have my eye on, not too far from a known colony on private land. I will let you know how I get on. I am aware of a few colonies locally, but am keen to find my own site. Good to see they are out at least, the next couple of weeks will hopefully be quite fruitful 😊 I also found my first Ringlet of the year yesterday though my pic is nothing compared to your beautiful images 😊

Could you tell me what time of day were your sightings 🤔 As much detail of times as you feel important 🤔

## Re: Pauline

by David M, 01-Jul-13 10:42 PM GMT

### "Pauline" wrote:

The first hour was hard. I'd left Liphook bathed in sunshine and arrived at a site with overcast skies and a cool breeze. No sign of WLH for the next 45 minutes when the sun eventually managed to break through. Within seconds, the first WLH appeared. I remembered from last year that these butterflies warm up by lying on their side on a leaf facing the sun. What I hadn't realised was that they frequently turn over, warming one side then the other, doing this as many as 4-5 times before they exploded into action. So, the only photos I got for the next 20 minutes were butterflies in a prone position....

Just shows that patience is a virtue, Pauline.

Excellent images of a very elusive butterfly. I particularly like the third one showing the insect taking fluid from the leaf surface.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Jul-13 08:46 AM GMT

I admire your persistence and determination to find your own local butterflies Paul. There have to be loads of butterflies out there waiting to be found, in areas not usually looked at, just like your Duke. You might have noticed that Sussex seem to make a concerted ongoing effort to explore areas in an endeavour to locate and 'map' previously unrecorded colonies so yes, I would be very interested to know how you get on and wish you the best of luck. The WLH is an intriguing butterfly and your question made me consider carefully. I think their activity is purely related to weather conditions and availability of nectar sources and their drive to mate, rather than any 'routine'. At various sites I have seen them come down to nectar quite readily throughout the day whilst at another I stood below trees for 5 hours and not one came down! To see them flitting around 10.30 - 12.30 on a bright warm morning is a good bet but if you want a closer view then wait until the brambles and thistle in particular are fully out and after a shower (which washes the honeydew off the leaves) and choose a day which isn't too hot else you might find them too recumbent. Close-up views are likely to be more successful a bit later in their season when the butterflies seem to be more relaxed and less driven.

Thank you for the complement David. If you look carefully at the first photo you will see the butterfly taking in nutrients whilst lying flat - several were doing this. They reminded me of a Spaniel I used to have (Orion) - a cracking little gundog, very fast but when he got home he would eat his dinner lying down, then he'd be ready to go again!

A few shots taken of anything that moved whilst waiting for the WLH to make an appearance:





**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 02-Jul-13 09:51 AM GMT

"Pauline" wrote:

accidentally deleted them all from my camera

Look for a program called Zero Assumption Recovery (ZAR), which can rescue you from this situation 😊 Photo recovery is free. It relies on the fact that when you 'delete' something, the operating system actually only marks the space as being free for further use. So, providing you catch it before the pics are over-written, then they can be recovered. It even works if you have formatted the card. It's an essential part of my toolkit!

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 02-Jul-13 10:38 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

I'm looking forward to the Outer Hebrides but it'll all depend on the weather and knowing my luck it may just be raining and blowing a gale. I'll keep my fingers crossed and post some photos if we get any.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Jul-13 03:47 PM GMT

Mike, oh Mike, ..... if only I'd known that on Saturday! In despair I even got out my camera manual – a rarity for me – but it confirmed that once they were gone, they were gone. Next time I get in a pickle my first port of call will be an email to you 😊 I've only done something similar once before and that was to run out of battery just I was about to take some shots of a Queen of Spain Frit at a site near Chichester. Richard Roebuck from the Sussex group saved my sanity by giving me new batteries and trusting that I would post him the cost even tho we'd never met before. Richard has probably even forgotten this incident but I shall be eternally grateful.

I think I would enjoy the Outer Hebrides even if it was blowing a gale Paul and look forward to hearing how you get on.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 04-Jul-13 06:50 PM GMT

Animal problems have prevented me from getting out and taking photos recently but I needed an hour off before I start the evening chores. I was pleased to photograph my first Small Skippers of the year and I am fairly certain I saw an Essex Skipper but no photographic evidence – yet! These photos came at a high price. As I bent down to get level with the Small Skipper on the grass, my attention was focused on trying to work out the best composition, checking the background etc. I was suddenly being bitten all over and I became aware that I was teeming with ants from top to toe. Well, I almost stripped off there and then but several dog walkers were in the vicinity so I settled for a crazy kind of jig whilst flapping my clothes around wildly and trying to brush the damn things off, which started several dogs barking. The owners must have thought it was me who was barking mad but I have been bitten on my neck downwards. When will I ever learn 😞😞 I hope the shots are worth it.









### Re: Pauline

by Willrow, 04-Jul-13 08:55 PM GMT

You make that sound so funny Pauline... 😂😂😂 I'm sure it was rather painful, but those shots are spiffin 😊

Bill 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 04-Jul-13 11:06 PM GMT

The shots are certainly worth the suffering – cracking 😊😊 I've still got to find some Smessex but hopefully my stop-offs will yield one soon...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-Jul-13 04:06 PM GMT

I'm glad you saw the funny side Bill and thank you for the compliment. I am just about getting there and can almost smile at my stupidity 😞. I learned that particular jig a few years ago when I accidentally disturbed a wasps nest in the garden and was badly stung. I danced my way across the garden to get indoors and when I phoned a pest controller (sorry Mark, didn't know about you then) I was told they were German wasps and much more aggressive than the usual sort! Was he having me on 🤔😬

The jury's still out on that one Wurzel but I am impressed by your multi-tasking and time management and I am sure you will see your Skippers soon.

I am feeling frustrated today. It is perfect summer weather and just right to see all these lovely butterflies that are emerging right now, but Maggie has problems and I need to stay close. I did get out briefly in the mid-day heat and managed some record shots of the first Marbled Whites I have seen this season.





Still not sure about cropping and haven't had time to look up the 'rules' or guidance so I have tried this 2 different ways.





**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 05-Jul-13 05:45 PM GMT

Just in case anyone out there is intending to look for WLH this weekend (rather than PE which I imagine will be out any day) they are coming down to nectar now - I disturbed 4 today in the same area within a hedge, as I was not expecting to find them there and only managed one poor photo.



**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 05-Jul-13 08:45 PM GMT

**"Pauline" wrote:**

Just in case anyone out there is intending to look for WLH this weekend (rather than PE which I imagine will be out any day) they are coming down to nectar now

That's useful to know, Pauline.

I intend to be spending Sunday in a WLH environment and will keep my eyes peeled.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 06-Jul-13 06:53 AM GMT

Good luck David and others - looking forward to seeing the results of this weekends outings.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 07-Jul-13 04:40 PM GMT

With the weather set to be blisteringly hot, and with the lure of DGF, time out today had to be on Old Winchester Hill. Whenever I have been there before there has been a refreshing breeze at the very least, but today, even at 9.45am, the air was still and hot – very hot!



13 species were seen in a fairly short time frame including a lovely fresh Brimstone and a Small Blue which I don't often see here. I also saw the DGF but the only 2 that I saw grounded were out of reach – one way up high on Elderflower and the other with wings folded in the grass on the wrong side of a fence 😞

However, the butterflies that stole the show for me today were the Small Tortoiseshells. In the past I have struggled to see this species but today I saw more than I have seen in the last 5 years. They ranged from well worn



(in fact this poor old butterfly even landed on me), to very, very fresh, and some in between:







After so many years of not seeing this beauty I just couldn't get enough of it. To avoid the heat which by now was quite oppressive the Small Tortoiseshells were spending a lot of time with wings closed, body aligned with the direction of the sun, so that the least possible part of their body was exposed. They started to look for shade under leaves resulting in some unusual poses:



I also witnessed some unusual behaviour but more of that later.

On my return I met a fellow enthusiast who introduced me to the delights of the Fragrant Orchid and a flower which is apparently rare in some areas but

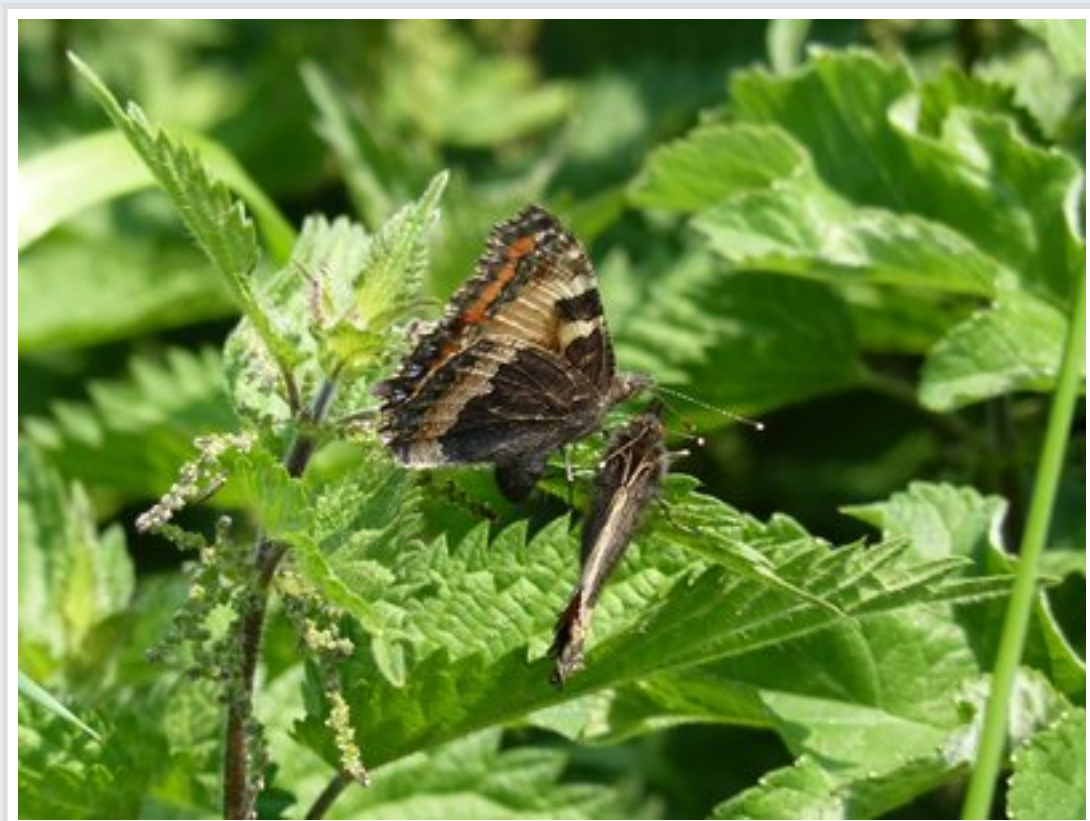
not here, the Round Headed Rampian (although that might not be the correct spelling). A gorgeous shade of blue and just asking to be photographed:



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-Jul-13 09:00 PM GMT

Having seen so few Small Tortoiseshell over the last 5 years I am not sure how to interpret this behaviour. The fact that I do not know whether these butterflies are male or female makes it even more difficult. Perhaps it is possible to tell from the shape of the abdomen but rarely have I used this as a means to identify gender.



The butterfly on the right was sitting, wings closed, in the centre of a nettle patch when approached by the butterfly on the left, who was showing a strong interest. A couple of times this butterfly had made brief approaches before flying off but always staying fairly close. I initially wondered if this was a courtship ritual of kinds and whether I was about to witness a mating. However, the butterfly appeared to be quite aggressive, nudging the other one who was totally passive and unresponsive. I wondered if this was a female 'rejecting' the male, but where were the signs of rejection – I could see no movement from 'her'. The 'male' came round to face her so in this photo 'he' is now on the right side:



The aggressive stance continued with a repeated thrusting of himself towards her whilst quickly opening and closing his wings. 'Her' only response was to draw back ever so slightly and position her antennae over her back which looked like a submissive gesture. In contrast 'his' antennae were thrust forward and his front legs were thrashing about.



Every few minutes there would be complete stillness when both remained motionless before the pattern started again.





I watched for about 15 minutes but could not wait to see the outcome so I am wondering was it

- a. Prelude to mating;
- b. Rejection of male by female;
- c. Males behaving in a territorial fashion, each wanting the same space;
- d. Something else.

If anyone has any experience of similar behaviour in this species, a different interpretation or the ability to distinguish male from female I would be very interested.

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 07-Jul-13 09:25 PM GMT

Tortoiseshells do this to the point of distraction in Spring, Pauline. Goodness knows how long I've watched this kind of courtship behaviour but it never seems to lead to anything.

From what I've seen, it's the male following the female, dipping his antennae onto her at regular intervals. She, in turn, never seems to reject him absolutely and even flicks her wings open occasionally, but where they actually go to pair I don't know. This is the case with all UK vanessids. I've seen a relatively recent image of mating Commas, but I've never seen Peacocks, Tortoiseshells or Red Admirals photographed similarly. In fact, the first person who provides pictures of a copulating pair of Red Admirals will probably receive some kind of international award!

### Re: Pauline

by Vince Massimo, 07-Jul-13 09:32 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

This looks like classic egg laying behaviour for this species. Both are females vying to lay on the same favoured leaf and their interaction in this case is mainly due to the lack of space on the leaf. I believe that the last image in your earlier post could also be a an egg laying individual rather than one looking for shade or rest. Badgerbob described similar behaviour in his sightings report yesterday.

Vince

EDIT: Looks like we all decided to reply at the same time 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 07-Jul-13 09:33 PM GMT

This is very interesting behaviour, Pauline!

Sexing Vanessids is difficult but I have to say they both look like females to me ... In the first picture, the one on the left has a very female abdomen and when you can see it (now on the right) in a later picture it also looks female. The other one doesn't show its abdomen but it seems to have eyes of the same size, or perhaps smaller.

I'm really not sure about this, and am happy to be corrected by an expert. It also strikes me that the positions they are in more resemble ovipositing/ovipositing than pre-mating. I've seen males chase or push females around with bent abdomen but this doesn't look like that at all. The fact it is happening in a nettle patch suggests at least one of them is a female preparing to lay.

We all know what happens when male butterflies clash over a sunspot, but does anyone know what happens when females both eye up the same, tender foodplant?

Just a thought – I'm sure someone else will be able to sex them for sure and smash this theory!

Guy

EDIT: Just seen David's post. I must say, I've never seen this, or at least not like this. I have seen pairs of other species face off in this way, so David's probably right.

EDIT: Now I've seen Vince's post!

## Re: Pauline

by David M, 07-Jul-13 09:39 PM GMT

Must confess, I've never heard of female butterflies 'clashing' over a favoured egg-laying spot, but why not? We all know how fussy and particular they can be, and I guess species that lay in clutches would be more defensive of their 'patch' than would single egg-laying species.

Trying to apply human logic to butterfly behaviour is almost impossible at times.

## Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 07-Jul-13 10:47 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

I quite agree with your comments re the lack of Small Tortoiseshells in the recent past. I too have seen hardly any over the last few years in our area. I am sure this will be a bumper summer for them, judging by the number of larvae I have seen. Yet when I was young they were perhaps one of the most numerous of all species during the summer. Others from further north probably wonder what we are going on about when we enthuse so much about them. Your beautiful pictures certainly do them justice.

I went for a longer than normal walk around my local patch yesterday evening, covering quite a large area (5.15 till 7.45) I have to say I saw so many I lost count, probably in excess of 35 covering several hotspots. There were still a few Small Tortoiseshells flying at gone 7.30pm 😊

I am running a little behind with my own diary, but I will cover the Small Torts as soon as I can.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Jul-13 07:03 AM GMT

Thank you all for your input which arrived way after my bedtime 😊 I believe you have hit the nail on the head Vince. I was not happy with any of my other theories and having seen Wood Whites' courtship antics, there seemed to be something subtly different about this behaviour. Your conclusion (the same one Guy came to) certainly fits well with my observations and because one female was so stubborn and resolute about not leaving that leaf I am wondering if she had already laid her eggs there and was 'protecting' them and their leaf. She certainly seemed tired enough to have done some egg-laying. I also now realise that I had misinterpreted the behaviour of the females disappearing under a leaf, not for shade as I had imagined, but to lay eggs! This had not occurred to me as they were so close to the ground (just a couple of inches tall) that I thought the location was too risky. However, having now read BadgerBob's report I am a little bit wiser. It is tempting to go back and check those nettles again as I watched the butterflies long enough to be able to identify that leaf easily. Well, I have learned something new again and had a fascinating insight into a small part of their daily lives.

## Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 08-Jul-13 09:39 AM GMT

Hi Pauline, some very interesting observations of Small Tortiseshell behaviour and some nice photos too. When we were at OW Hill on Friday we saw good numbers and made a very conservative estimate of 30 plus, but during our visit they seemed to spend all their time nectaring. There is not much shade up there and there was not much breeze, so we ended up a bit dehydrated! The Dark Green Fritillaries were certainly very lively, and even when we saw them nectaring they did not spend much time on each flower.

Regards

Mike

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Jul-13 12:43 PM GMT

I grew up in the North east Paul and I agree that during those years ST were indeed a very common sight and one which we sadly took for granted. Let's hope your prediction is correct and we are in for a bumper crop – certainly looks that way 😊

You have impressed me yet again Guy by your careful observation, previous experience and considerable knowledge which enabled you to deduce the gender and behaviour patterns of the butterflies.

Thank you Mike – I appreciate your comments. It certainly was hot up there and I think you did amazingly well to get those DGF photos. As you know, the Hill is covered with Small Heath, including several mating pairs of which these are one:



... and something which I have never seen before and that is a Small Heath up a tree! (although it isn't entirely obvious from this shot). Perhaps there wasn't enough room on the ground for yet another one 😂😂



Another view from OWH:



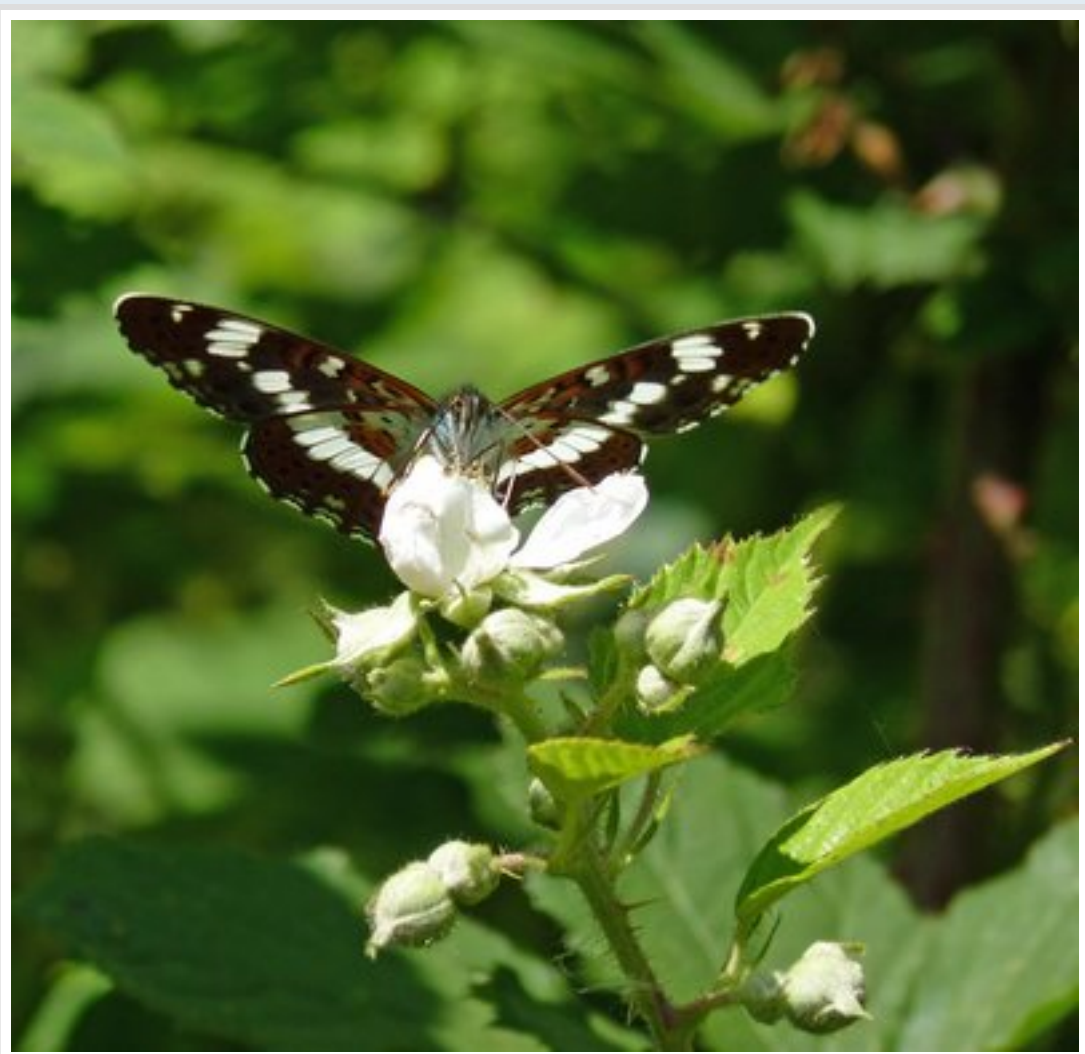
PS. There is quite a reasonable pub at the bottom of the hill which can help with the dehydration factor 😊😂

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Jul-13 04:22 PM GMT

There has been an explosion of colour in the woods today and the gold, silver, red and orange hues, that both glide and adorn the flowers and foliage, add a richness that was previously lacking. It was a pleasure to be there with a sense of relief that Summer has finally arrived. A few photos to be going on with.







### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Jul-13 08:39 PM GMT

Butterflies were still very active at 6.30pm this evening at the Straits and I was lucky enough to see this beautifully fresh female whose colours could only be described as emerald and silver with a shimmer of gold as the sun glinted on her wings whilst she twisted and turned. She was a very active individual so it wasn't easy to get many shots but I was so impressed by this lady she deserves a post all to herself.





### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 10-Jul-13 06:40 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Some lovely photos in your past few posts, I am not going to pick any favourites as they are all good in their own way 😊

Glad to see that you caught up with your Small Tortoiseshells 😊

All the best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-Jul-13 08:27 PM GMT

It's really kind of you to say so Neil but they're not as exciting as the shots you have been getting recently. I'm really enjoying your photos along with quite a few other diaries.

Amidst all the recently emerged butterflies that are being sighted just lately I have encountered lots of other interesting insects. I watched a Golden-ringed dragonfly almost catch a White Admiral and took a photo of this dragonfly which I found very well camouflaged in the grass:



This moth caught my attention and I believe I may have seen it once before. In flight it looks incredibly similar to a Wood White:

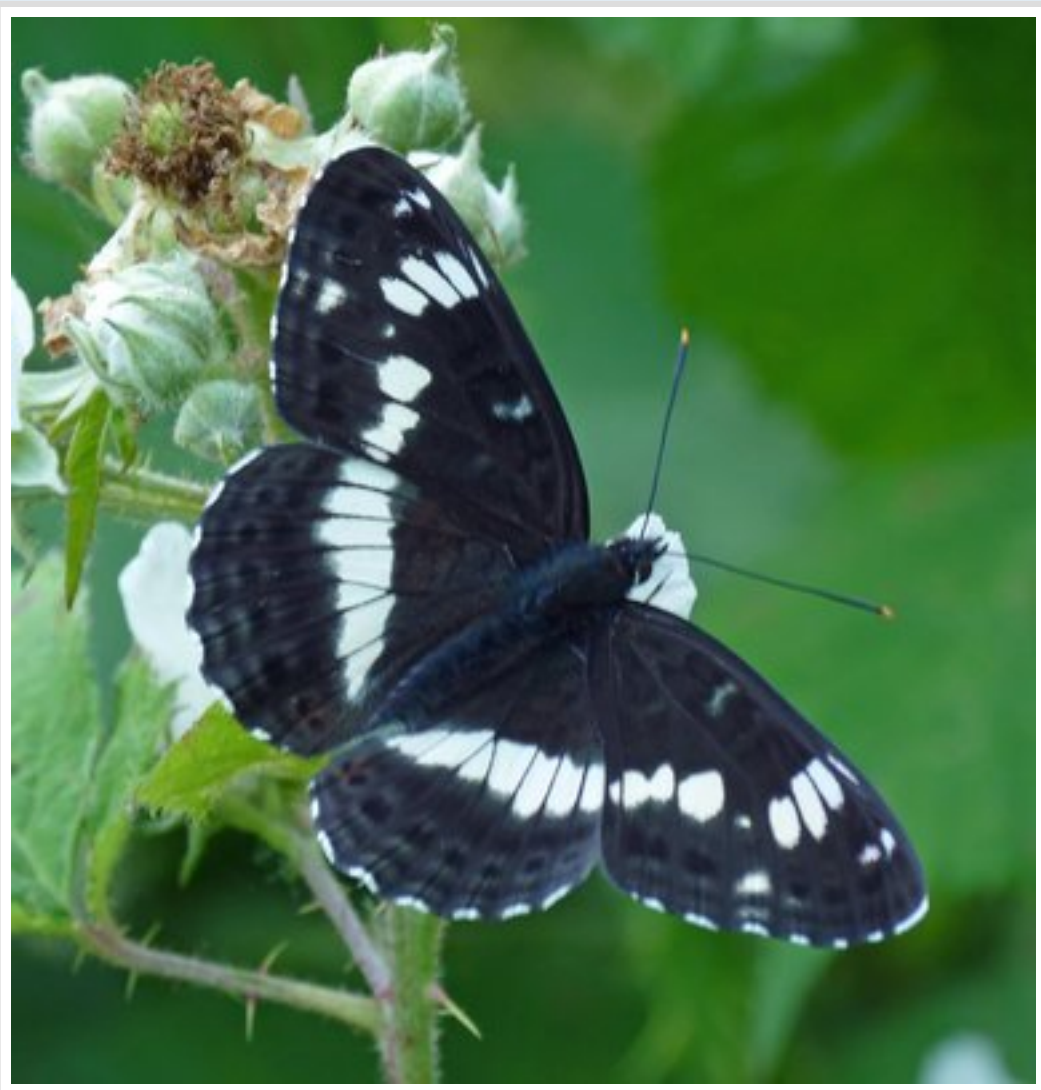


Tonight I rescued several of these caterpillars from the centre of a path. I shall need to find out what they are. They are very attractive and the camera certainly lies as they did not have white spots – rather they had shiny, gleaming raised BLACK nodules which I imagine the sunlight bounced off and caused this effect:





Oh, and I did eventually get what I went for which was an open winged shot of a White Admiral:



## Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 10-Jul-13 08:42 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

I think your cats are peacock which I also noted at straits today. Interestingly there were whole webs of caterpillars that looked second or third instar that were all dead – any thoughts anyone?

## Re: Pauline

by Willow, 10-Jul-13 08:43 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Great report (as usual), your dragonfly is an Emperor and your caterpillars are Peacock!

Regards,

Bill 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 10-Jul-13 11:37 PM GMT

Cracking shots of the SWFs and those White Admirals are lush – I still need to get on of those really good closed wing shots 📷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Pauline

by Vince Massimo, 11-Jul-13 12:09 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

The fact that your Peacock caterpillars were away from their food plant and that their heads now look to small for their bodies indicates that they are fully grown, have finished feeding and are looking for a place to pupate. If you still have them they will need to be provided with twigs or stems in order to continue their development safely.

See [viewtopic.php?f=37&t=6485](http://viewtopic.php?f=37&t=6485) for more information.

Tuts – Could your webs of "dead caterpillars" have just been moulted skins?

Vince

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 11-Jul-13 07:20 PM GMT

Thank you Mark and Bill. I have never knowingly seen a Peacock larva before so I am pleased that I was able to help them on their way. I actually just moved them off the middle of the path to the relative safety of the verge Vince but thank you for the information. It may well be useful in the future as I think it would be fascinating to rear some butterflies and watch their development but right now I probably have enough critters to care for.

Thank you Wurzel. You should know that I have friends who are fans of yours and read your diary even tho' they are not interested in butterflies – yet!



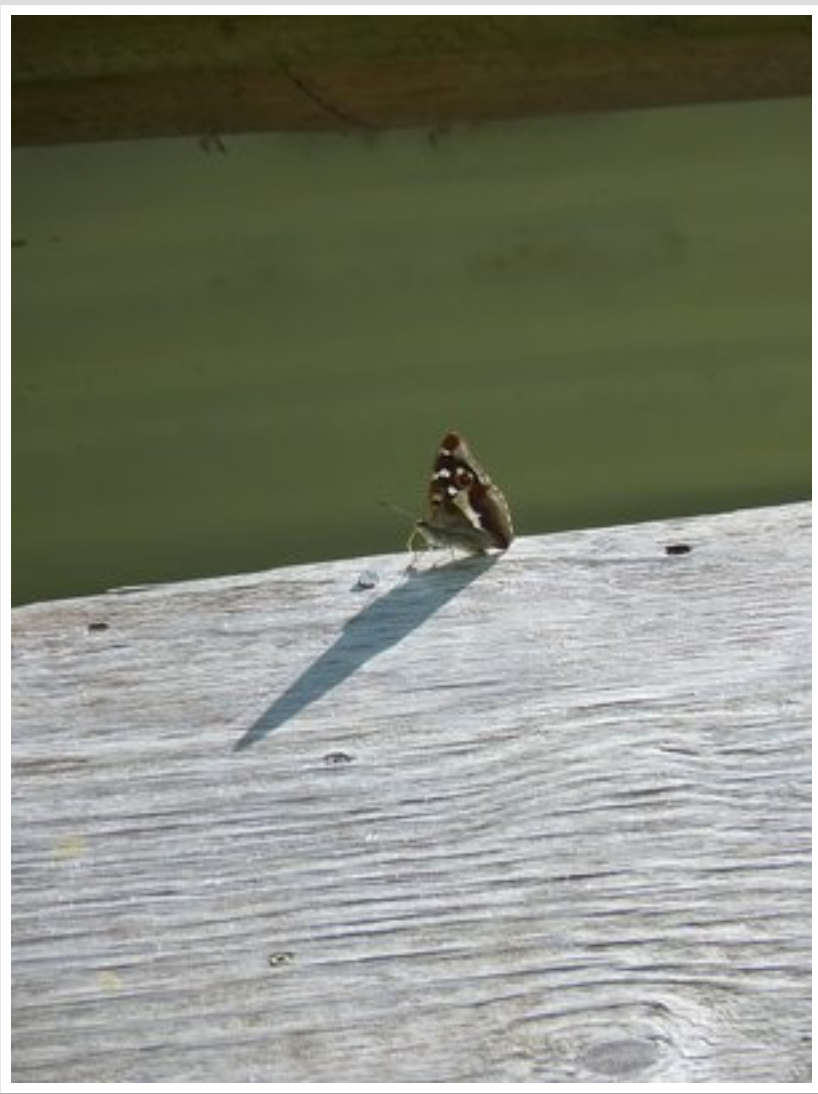
Today I arrived at the Straits around midday and I had only been at the 'hotspot' for a couple of minutes when Neil arrived on his bike. Just as he dismounted I spotted the first Purple Emperor of the day. He did quite a few circuits of the area coming down lower each time before landing on the of back Neil's trousers. I am willing to bet that Neil has never had his backside photographed by so many folk in such a short space of time 😊



I don't think I have ever noticed quite how blue the antennae are. The PE finally had his fill of whatever was on Neil's trousers and after circling the tower several times decided it preferred the resin to be found there. I continued to get some unusual, albeit distant, shots of the butterfly:



'Under lock and key' is the best slogan I can think of, but if you can do better? .....



Casting a wonderful shadow.

The butterfly repeatedly took to the air only to return to the upper levels of the watch tower. Undeterred, Neil decided that a mere watch tower was not going to get in the way of him getting a close-up shot:



Unfortunately, the PE was disturbed by the movement of the ladder but obligingly returned to Neil's boot (just about visible on the left one) so he tried his best to descend slowly in an attempt to bring it down to the rest of us:



By now, something of a party atmosphere had developed and a group of photographers were busy in one corner recording a veritable butterfly fest, the likes of which has probably never been seen before 😊. It was difficult to know what to photograph first 😊



At one point there were 6 butterflies of various species on a single leaf but I, personally, was only able to record 5 – 2 SWF, 2 WA and a Comma.



.... and why was all this happening??? Well, here's the clue:



### Re: Pauline

by David M, 11-Jul-13 07:44 PM GMT

Wow. That sequence of events is beyond surreal.

Wherever the Kipper goes, it seems, bizarre things happen (possibly because of what he brings with him!!!)

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 11-Jul-13 08:49 PM GMT

Great report Pauline- where can I pick up some of that Kipper Spray? 😊 Great shots of His Nibbs - but spare a thought for those of us stuck at work 🙄 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Jul-13 05:51 AM GMT

Hi David, Wurzel, yes, it was a terrific couple of hours but I am still looking forward to seeing His Majesty on the ground once calm, tranquility and normality have again returned to the Straits 😊 😊

Another photo from yesterday that was accidentally omitted:



### Re: Pauline

by badgerbob, 12-Jul-13 01:41 PM GMT

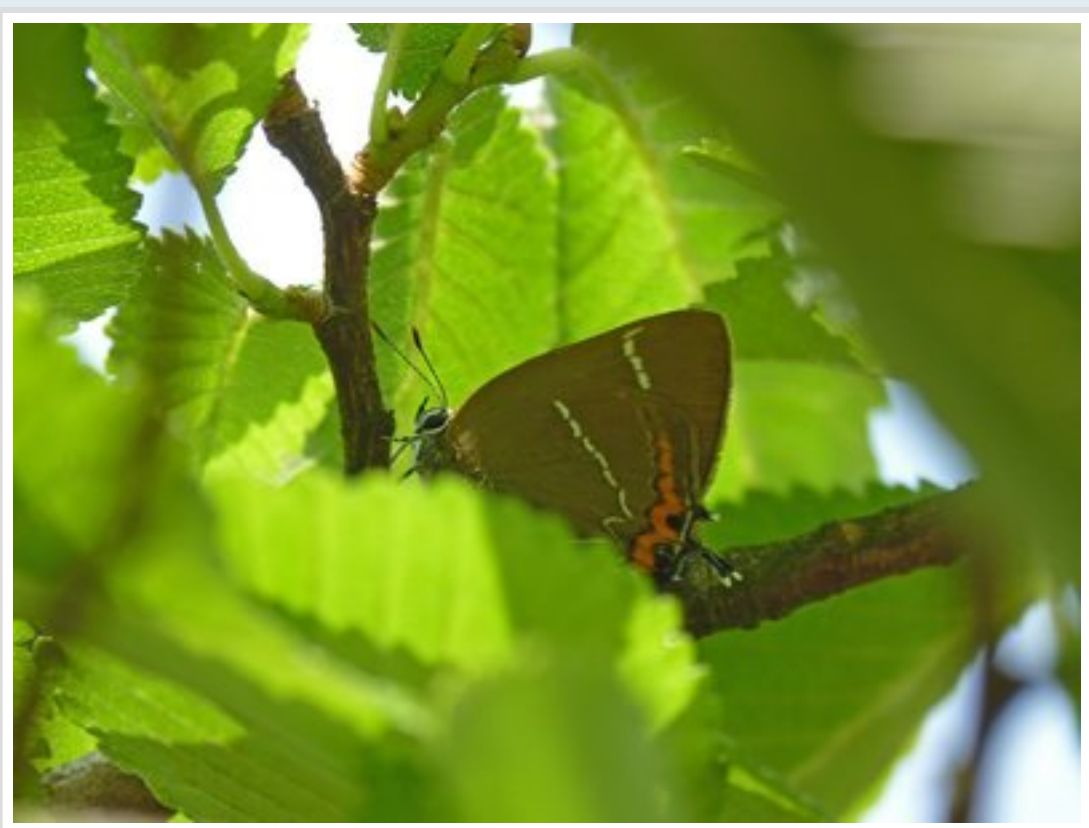
Hi Pauline. I think Vince will agree with me that your Comma should qualify as an 'O' album ab. Fab picture as well!!! Bob.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Jul-13 08:42 PM GMT

With everything that was happening yesterday I didn't even notice that the comma was as near as dammit a circle until I returned home Bob. I shall wait to hear from Vince as to whether he wants me to post it in the gallery but it is very kind of you to suggest it.

Having bemoaned to all and sundry yesterday that I wouldn't be able to get out today to see PE as I was meeting friends for lunch, I then checked and discovered it was a late afternoon event, so early afternoon became free. Perversely, instead of looking for His Majesty, I decided to check up on the WLH. I am so glad I did. I have watched mating pairs in the past but have never been fortunate enough to see the female egg-laying. These are not particularly great shots (they were taken with one hand 🙄) but I think they show well the secretive nature of the butterfly when oviposting. I watched for at least 30 minutes as she repeated the process of laying, resting, fluttering to a new place and then delving around to find a suitable place to lay. I was fascinated. Just the size of her abdomen was amazing. I have no idea how many eggs they lay or over what period this process happens. It would have been tempting to look for an egg and try to take a photo but that would have meant disturbing her. As usual, my time had run out so I just had to leave her to finish the job. A few record shots:









## Re: Pauline

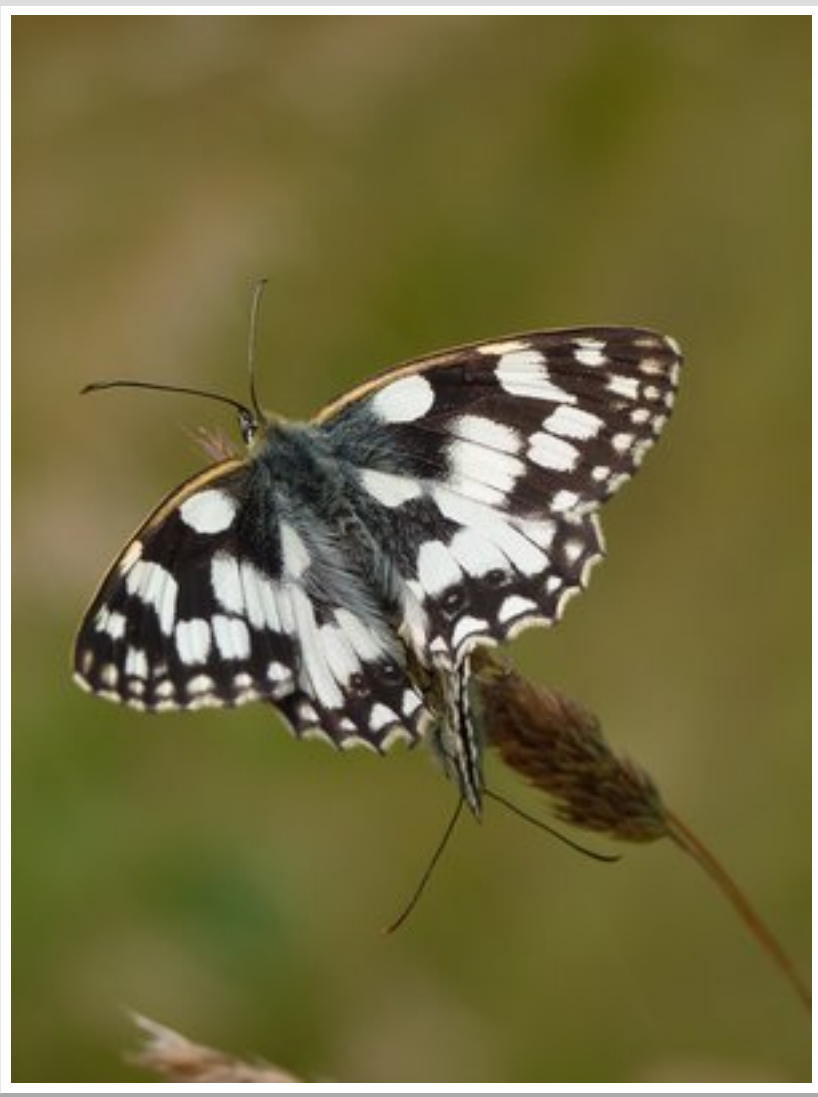
by Pauline, 13-Jul-13 05:49 AM GMT

It is never too much of a chore waiting for a 'target' butterfly to show when one is in lovely surroundings with lots of other butterflies to watch. Such was the case yesterday when I was able to chalk up another 2 firsts for the season – the Essex Skipper and the Gatekeeper.





A mating pair of Marbled White flew over my head before landing on some grass enabling me to get a couple of quick shots before they went on their way.



.... and a very pretty Meadow Brown:



### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 13-Jul-13 11:58 PM GMT

Excellent to see the great shots of Gatekeepers and great to know that they are out and about – looks like I can start counting spots and abs again 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Jul-13 06:35 AM GMT

Thank you Wurzel. I know you will enjoy counting the spots as much as I enjoyed watching this obliging Small Skipper which I found whilst I was looking for something else. The shots are all of the same butterfly from different angles:





Yesterday I could not resist the temptation to return to the WLH for a short while to see if I could find one of their eggs. However, I made a basic mistake. I did not do my research. I had assumed I would remember exactly where it was which I didn't so I didn't know where, precisely, on the branches to look. I had also assumed (having looked briefly at pictures) that the eggs were white; I now know that they are green and then turn brown, but I do not know how long this takes. I do not even know how big the eggs are. I assumed the size would be comparable to the Brown Hairstreak. Perhaps they are easier to see when the leaves fall off so perhaps my timing was all wrong. What is it they say, fail to prepare, prepare to fail 😊 .

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Jul-13 07:29 PM GMT

I must have seen every colour of the rainbow today except purple. Actually, that is not strictly true as I did see purple several times but just not for long enough to get 'that' photo. A couple of colours I did see:





## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Jul-13 03:53 PM GMT

Maggie update – I appreciate the concern of those of you who have asked about Maggie. She was on the point of release when I found her early one morning on the floor of the aviary in a pool of blood. She was weak and shocked and had to be moved to a hospital cage indoors. I believe she had been spooked by a cat during the night causing her to catch her nail and rip it off. Happily, Maggie is now back out in the aviary and eating live food providing it is supplied at regular intervals (if it doesn't move she won't eat it). The extra care and time in captivity has left her fairly tame and as she is not yet back to full strength it is difficult to predict whether /when she will be released. The upshot is, because I am no longer hand-feeding her I can get out for slightly longer periods with my camera 😊 .

As I have not been having much luck with Purple, I thought I'd try a different colour – Dark Green. I have only once before managed to get a photo of this butterfly. Although I tend to say this about them all, this one really IS difficult, just because they never seem to stay still – they always seem to be busy. They are such strong, powerful fliers and don't they just cover the ground. The site was a bit further than I would normally go but what a lovely place, teeming with all shapes, sizes and colours of butterflies. There was masses of photo opportunities. Marbled Whites were mating in several places, Small Tortoiseshells, beautifully fresh, adorned many of the thistle heads. Skippers (Large, Small and Essex) zipped back and forth, or just sat, so photogenically on grass heads. There were Ringlets, Meadow Brown, Gatekeepers at every step, Large and Small Whites and just the odd Small Heath. I am sure I have left some out but with such opportunity at every turn I had to be really disciplined. My time was still limited and I had come for DGF after all. The first one I saw was a beautiful specimen but like me was clearly camera shy. Nevertheless, it was my first 'record' shot:



Shortly after, I managed to get an open winged shot and at this point I thought 'well at least I managed to get something'



I had hoped for more of this species at this site as I understand they are having a good year but I could only see 4 and one of those had most of his back wings missing and as a result tended to be the one which rested most. I had seen more than this at Old Winchester Hill. Furthermore, the DGF seemed to be shunning the thistles in favour of lower resting places sometimes right down in the grass. I was getting concerned about the time and decided to take a chance and move on to another site close by. Result! There were at least 6 butterflies here and they seemed slightly more accessible, taking time to nectar regularly but also fighting with anything getting too close:



I have always thought that the underside of this butterfly is prettier and so I took a little time to get a variety of shots, some 'posed' with the blurred background I generally prefer, but others which show the butterfly in its environment, doing what butterflies do. A selection below but I do have a particular favourite:









### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 15-Jul-13 04:23 PM GMT

A wonderful series of DGF shots, Pauline 😊. As you say, these are very challenging subjects for photography but you have triumphed over the difficulties!

The upperside shot is beautiful with unusually warm, rich colouring. I also like the first shot with the green scales shining in the sunlight. I have noticed myself that the silver spots sometimes look quite dark in photos – I suppose it is down to the angle of the light. I must look more closely at these scales, when I get a chance, as it is hard to understand how the metallic sheen is achieved. It's as though little pieces of aluminium foil are stuck on the wings 😊

Your others are all nice 'classic' underside portraits. I think that I like the last one best, as it sets the butterfly in context without too much clutter and the angle of the light has brought out the surface detail, especially the veining. The bee is a bit of a distraction and could be 'Photoshopped' out.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

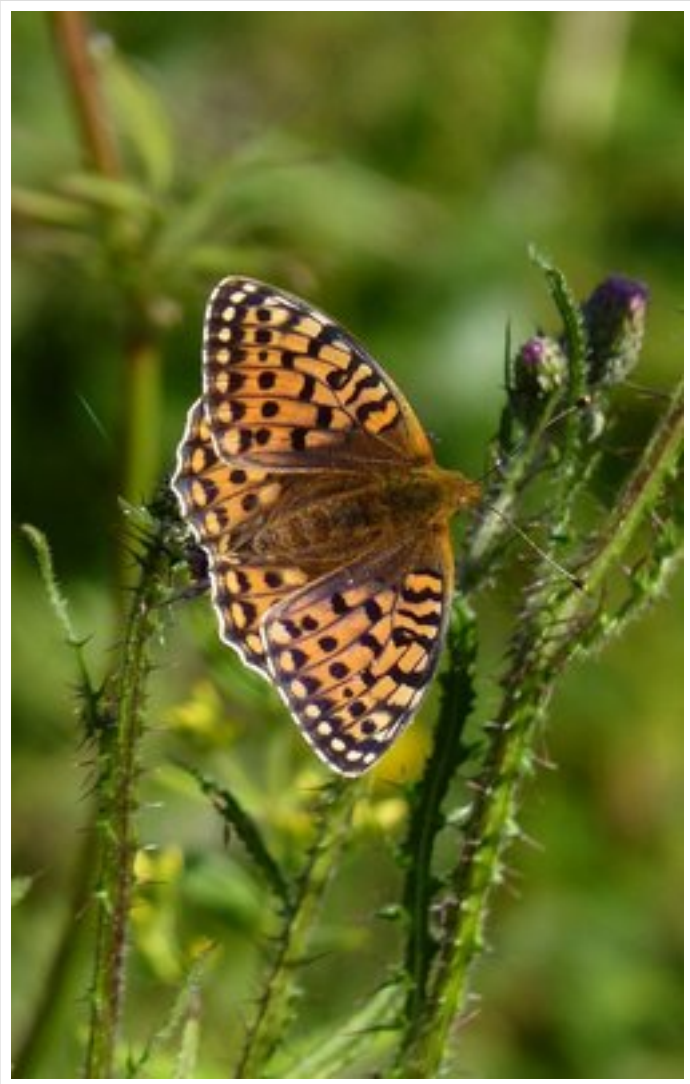
by Pauline, 16-Jul-13 07:15 AM GMT

I appreciate your comments Mike – thank you – it certainly wasn't easy. I agree with you about the bee but it is still way beyond my capabilities to remove it using photoshop. I am frustrated about the first shot as it is the only time I have ever seen the spots looking silver and I was hoping that she(?) might turn before she flew. I have to confess to being ignorant as to whether they are male or female and having looked both in a book and on this site, it seems the only difference is the size? Given your remarks about the spots I tried to blow up a couple of my shots. Instead of the silver scales I expected to see it looked rather like scales were missing exposing a translucent opal coloured structure or membrane:





The other thing that surprised me was what long back legs they have. I have never noticed this on a butterfly before so must be more observant. On several of the butterflies there was almost a purple sheen, complementing the purple thistles:



However, I noticed one which had quite a bit of white on it although it didn't look worn in other areas:



..... and just to end the DGF for this season



### Re: Pauline

by David M, 16-Jul-13 09:01 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Female DGFs usually have 'silvery' edges and are much more strongly marked with black than the males (particularly around the forewing tips, as is the case with Small Pearl Bordered).

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 16-Jul-13 08:06 PM GMT

Some cracking DGF images there Pauline 😊

That's the kind of photo that I was after the other weekend to go with my High Browns but didn't quite manage.

At the best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-Jul-13 10:29 AM GMT

Thank you Neil but I'll happily swap you for a High Brown (any one of your choice) and the mating SWF 😄😄🍷

Thank you David - I think you have also answered another of my queries inadvertently. Presumably then, the second but last shot is a female - hence the white edges whilst still looking fresh. Wish I'd known that on Monday - really must do my research on butts I'm not very familiar with 😞

I don't tend to take many photos of Whites. Not sure why - perhaps it's because I have to adjust the settings on my camera 😊 but I did take one the other day:



**Re: Pauline**

by Paul Wetton, 17-Jul-13 12:23 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

You've posted some excellent shots over the last few days which I've enjoyed looking at. The DGFs are fab.

Your remark about the long back legs made me think of a mating pair I filmed at Linn Dean in Scotland when the pair seemed to contact each other with backwards leg movements, almost tickling each others back legs and abdomen. Not sure what the purpose was. The female of this pair was also very dark coloured with almost a metallic green sheen to the upper wings with much dark colouration around the wing edges. I think I included these on my DVD, can't remember now.

There is a slight difference in body shape and length with Dark Green Fritillary sexes with the female being slightly more rounded and shorter in the body but quite difficult to tell them apart using this method.

Keep the photos coming.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 18-Jul-13 08:09 AM GMT

Thank you Paul. It's good to hear from you again. I thought you'd be long gone by now, away to more exotic parts. The trip can't be far away now so you must be getting excited. Interesting to hear about your mating pair. What drew my attention initially to the long back legs was my squabbling pair, with one using his back legs to try to push the other (who was still nectaring) off the thistle. I do have another photo where the back legs are just hanging really long and low and were reminiscent of the back legs of a frog if you can imagine the shape. I'm glad you like the photos but my activities might be slowed down for a few days as one of my doves returned yesterday with a mangled foot and needs an op. He was one of the few who managed to survive the virus and now this 😞

**Re: Pauline**

by Paul Wetton, 18-Jul-13 08:42 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

Firstly sorry to hear about your dove. I hope he has a speedy recovery. He's in the best hands living with you.

Yes we're off to less exotic parts on Friday night. We'll be leaving around 10 in the evening with a night drive up to Oban to catch the ferry about 8 in the morning. Hope the Black Guillemots are on show in the harbour whilst we're waiting.

I've not planned this trip very well so it'll be pot luck as to what we find.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed for the weather which is currently overcast and windy compared to the rest of the country that is bathed in glorious sunshine.

I'll post a few photos when we return.  
Take care.

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 18-Jul-13 08:48 AM GMT

**"Pauline" wrote:**

Presumably then, the second but last shot is a female – hence the white edges whilst still looking fresh.

It sure is. The difference between the male and female of this species is very noticeable.

**Re: Pauline**

by Maximus, 18-Jul-13 04:56 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, very nice photos of the DG Fritillaries. Cath and me hope that your dove gets better too.

Mike

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 18-Jul-13 09:39 PM GMT

Thank you Paul – you and me both. I'll keep my fingers crossed too and look forward to your photos. Bon Voyage!

Thanks for getting back to me on that David – confirmation much appreciated.

Great seeing you again today Cathy/Mike. Really hope you got lucky too and thanks re Dove. I'm afraid I spoke too soon about being able to get out more with my camera. Tonight my neighbour has brought me a very young Robin that one of the (39) cats round here had caught 😞 How we have any wildlife left at all is beyond me 😞 . It has lost a lot of feathers and has bruising to the skin though doesn't look punctured. Whether it will survive the night is questionable as it is very shocked and may have internal injuries. And why did I take it on???? She was going to leave it in the garden!

Better news is that my vixen, Saffron has found herself a toy boy 😊 He comes round about 7.00pm to join her for supper and she tries to push her toys through the wire to him. She has always been more interested in the wild boys but perhaps that is because her current companions have been castrated 🤔 . A few shots of the new boy on the block but back to butterflies tomorrow





Today I did try to tempt the butterflies with a lovely potion made largely of fox scat – I shall post the results tomorrow.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-Jul-13 06:56 AM GMT

The fox potion was attractive to the Red Admirals and Commas but strangely, it was ignored by both White Admiral and PE. My foxes clearly have some vital ingredient missing from their diet 😊. A few folk were already at The Straits when I arrived and Nick had already spotted a couple of Emperors around the watch tower area. One had touched down briefly a couple of times but there had been no photo opportunities. I decided to walk back along the track and about half way along I watched a PE descend and settle – my first of the season on the ground 😊😊. As I took a few shots I noticed a young chap coming towards me. He had traveled by public transport from Fleet in the hope of seeing this, his first 'close-up and personal' experience. Whilst he was getting a few more shots, another couple arrived and they were overjoyed to see this butterfly at close quarters – a first for them also.



It is lovely to see the pleasure that this butterfly gives so many people, especially those seeing it for the first time. It is not that long ago I was in that position and I remember it well, but actually, I get the same 'buzz' the first time I see it each season. We waited patiently for the butterfly to open its wings but it persisted in giving us the very briefest glimpse of blue as it flicked the wings open and closed.



We were just about to try to give the butterfly a little shade when it flew back up to the trees. Watching it, it was apparent that there were 3, possibly 4 Emperors up there. I watched 2 fly together amicably and against the blue sky one looked only about half the size of the other. They both landed on the same branch about half way up the tree and then disappeared from sight whilst a third PE continued to fly before also landing, quite a bit higher than the other couple:



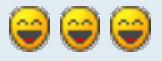
At this point, Nick arrived from the watch tower stating 'his' 2 butterflies refused to come down although he had managed a photo of a Tawny Owl. At the same time, Cathy and Mike arrived having also seen 2 PE's along by the gate. So, that was a total of possibly 8 PE's viewed simultaneously along one small stretch of track, although the true figure is probably much higher. Well, I didn't get my 2 blue wings but I am getting closer and there is still time yet 😊 . More later.



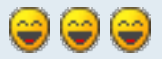
## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Jul-13 08:04 PM GMT

I guessed that the total number of PE along this relatively short stretch of the Straits Inclosure would be much higher than the 8 seen recently but I was quite overwhelmed to be reliably informed that over 50 had been counted today – possibly the highest number recorded since the sallow was cut back a few years ago. As I parked the car a male was flying round it although it was about 5.00pm. I took this as a good sign. I saw 5 along the track on the way in and 3 on the way out at 6.15pm, 2 of which were sat in the same tree. I am assuming they were males but I found it puzzling that they were so close together and didn't move. I tried to get them both in one photo but they were just a little too far apart. This is the photo with the camera on full zoom:



The same photo tightly cropped:



There were several pristine Peacocks which I assume are the result of the larva which Vince and Mark kindly identified for me. The colours were stunning but I couldn't get anywhere near them:



I haven't been able to get out for a couple of days which gave me a chance to see what is happening in the garden. I was pleased to be able to record 6 species in a couple of hours but didn't even have time to take any photos 😞 – apart from this lovely Meadow Brown:





### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 20-Jul-13 10:55 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, that Meadow Brown is a cracker, love the way the background colour compliments the butterfly 😊

All the best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 20-Jul-13 11:14 PM GMT

Great shots Pauline. I like the Peacock it's almost as if it's trying to be Julia 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

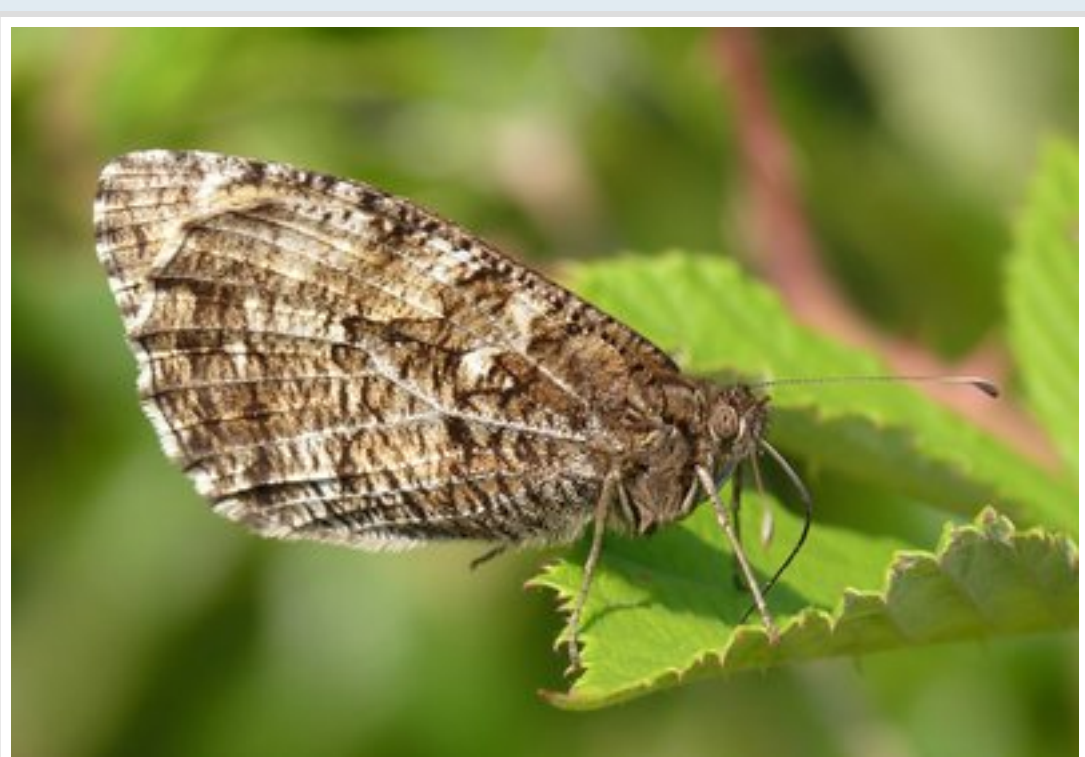
by Pauline, 21-Jul-13 08:59 PM GMT

Thank you Neil; I appreciate your comment. I think that they are often overlooked or taken for granted as there are so many of them but they are pretty little butts.

Thank you Wurzel. I fear I'm going to seem a bit stupid here but you're going to have to enlighten me. Who or what is Julia? (I should have asked someone privately today instead of exposing my ignorance in public 😞).

Today I was teased and tormented by Purple Hairstreak, Purple Emperor and mating SWF. It is rare for a day to be so frustrating, repeatedly frustrating, and all the hopes and expectations, the anticipation and excitement – all this to end in exhaustion, despair and a single blurred photo of a Purple Hairstreak 😞 OK, so I exaggerate but not much!).

I needed a change of scene and with the heat becoming ever more oppressive I decided the seaside would be a good place to start. A few shots below:





### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 21-Jul-13 09:12 PM GMT

No worries Pauline a Julia is an exotic, one of the usual ones you see in Butterfly Houses. It's a long wing butterfly. The only reason I know is because I did some research on a range of exotics after visiting Bristol Zoo - it got me through the winter 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 21-Jul-13 10:22 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

Thank you Wurzel. I fear I'm going to seem a bit stupid here but you're going to have to enlighten me. Who or what is Julia? (I should have asked someone privately today instead of exposing my ignorance in public 😞).

Glad you asked Pauline, I was wondering as well 😊😄

Cheers,

Neil F.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-Jul-13 08:11 AM GMT

Phew! Glad I wasn't the only one Neil 😊 . Thanks for that Wurzel. The butterfly was so fresh and such a strange shape I was wondering if the wings perhaps hadn't yet fully 'pumped up'.

More details from yesterday .....

I arrived at Browndown at 5.00pm but the sun was still hot and strong:



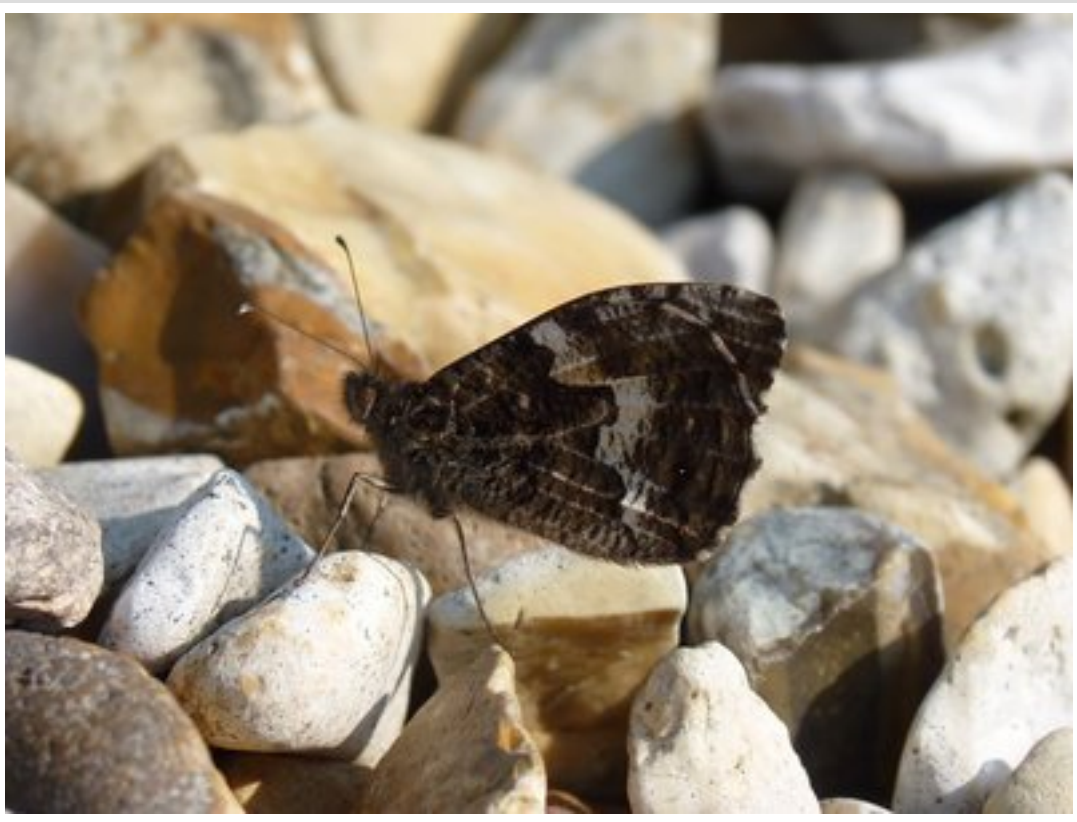
Having gotten lost twice on the way there and ending up in a different car park to last time, I gingerly made my way towards the Grayling colony trying to steer clear of the nudist colony. Typically, the area where Grayling are found looks like this:



I have always admired this butterfly not least because it is a master of camouflage. The first butterfly I spotted was well hidden on the bark of a tree. I have not cropped or altered these shots in order to illustrate the context and environment of the Grayling and its amazing capacity to blend into its surroundings.



It was even more difficult to spot the butterflies on the multi-coloured pebbles. The way in which the butterfly positions itself in relation to the sun makes it very difficult to see and it casts no shadow, as in this shot where only the shadow of the front legs can be seen:



Even when nectaring amongst the heather the butterfly blends in amazingly well and the way it twists and turns sometimes renders it near invisible:

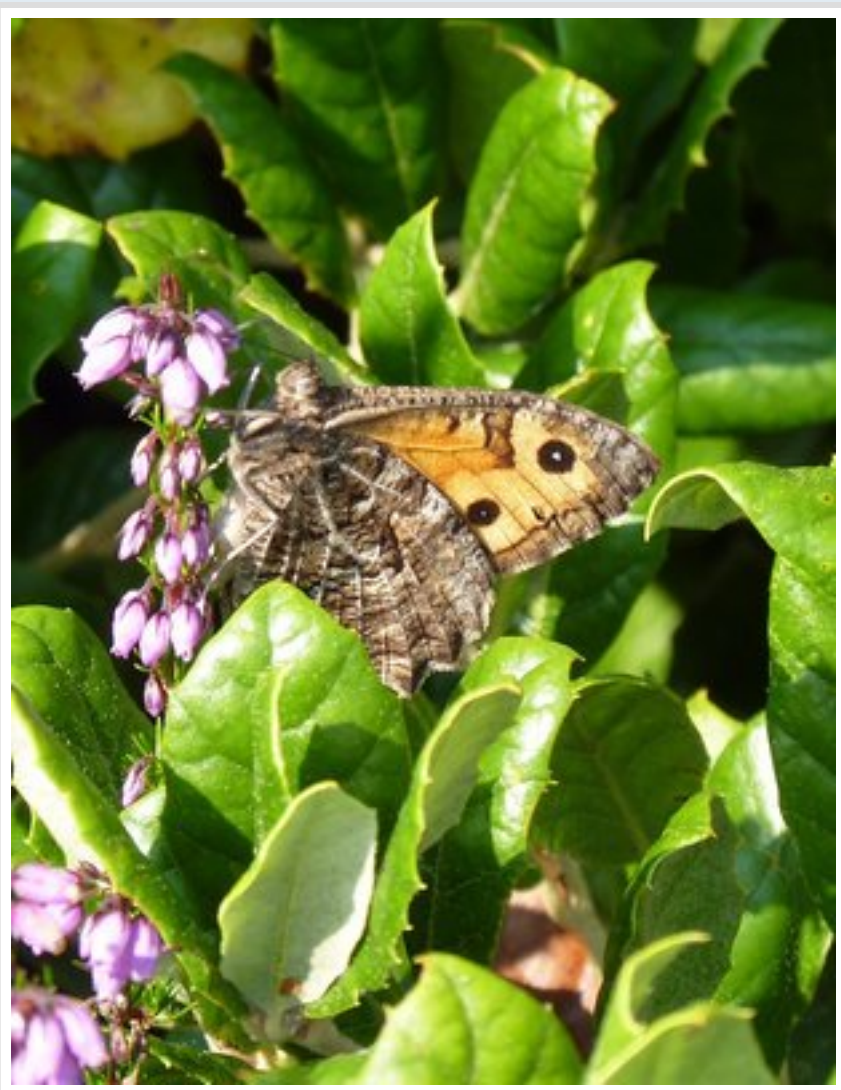




Although the Grayling is a most attractive butterfly it also successfully camouflages its true beauty given that it rarely opens its wings. Furthermore, when it feels at all threatened it will close the fore wings down, concealing the eyes, to become almost invisible. However, if it is approached closely when in this position by another insect they will flick the wings up to expose the 'eyes' which I assume is a defence mechanism to divert any potential predator to the back end of the butterfly:



I was surprised to notice that several of these butterflies were already damaged although I thought their emergence was fairly recent.



The Grayling were nectaring on a variety of flowers despite a good supply of Heather. I have not seen them on this before (not sure what it is called)



before I left the Grayling for another year I took a last shot at the beautiful views looking very hazy in the evening sunshine:



**Re: Pauline**

by Maximus, 22-Jul-13 08:13 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, lovely Grayling photos, the trip to the coast certainly paid off well, after all that frustration! 😊

Mike

**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 22-Jul-13 08:32 PM GMT

yes, nice Grayling pics. I can only assume that the sloping horizon in your last pic is the result of an unexpected encounter with the nudist beach 😂

Mike

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 22-Jul-13 09:04 PM GMT

Thanks Mike, lovely to see Cathy and yourself again. Looking forward to seeing your next post.

Well Mike, I can't blame the G&T as I was driving so looks like you've got me sussed 😂 Didn't know which way to point the camera 😞😞

Whilst I was waiting for PE (doing a lot of that just recently 😊) I can't resist snapping anything that comes into view so a couple of shots below:





### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Jul-13 07:11 AM GMT

In view of the impending thunderstorms which have been forecast for today (?) I thought it would be prudent to nip down to Chalton and get a few record shots of the Chalkhills before they get flooded out! Despite it being early evening when I arrived there was a lot of butterfly activity including DGF, a fair number of Marbled White, lots of Skippers, Browns, a few Commas etc. I didn't see any female Chalkhills but the males were easy to locate. Several shots below:









Just before I left I took a photo of this butterfly-rich downland and now I notice there is a bird in the background, just above the grass below the central bush, which I didn't even spot when I took the shot – a Kestrel perhaps, hovering? Just for the record I have now seen a Red Kite 3 times at the Straits, which isn't far from Bentley where I saw them previously and Wrecclisham before that. If they keep moving south it won't be long before I have another bird 'tick' for my garden 😊



Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 23-Jul-13 07:52 PM GMT

Lovely Chalkhill Blue photos there Pauline 😊

My turn to be 🤔 😊 , no butterfly rich downlands in the midlands for me 😞

If I want to see any Blues other than Common or Holly I have to plan a day out somewhere or try and fit them around family breaks.

All the best,

Neil F.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Jul-13 11:34 AM GMT

Thank you Neil – I'm glad you like them. It is so easy to take the local beauties for granted whilst hankering after those species less easily available and much further afield, which somehow become more desirable. I'm sure the economists would remind me of the Laws of Supply and Demand but we must protect the treasures on our doorstep as 'you don't know what you've got til it's gone!!!' (showing my age again there 😊).

As I wrote my diary yesterday morning I could hear what I thought was the low, distant rumble of thunder but as it quickly ceased and the sky was bright I thought perhaps it had been some aircraft. Having an early afternoon appointment meant I just had time for a quick walk along the Straits after the animal chores. For once there was not a soul in sight but no PE either until I reached the watch tower. I was immediately buzzed by a flash of blue which then settled further along the path – but not for long. There was an almighty crack of thunder directly overhead which was a bit scary and whether it was the noise, vibration or something else, the Emperor took flight. Another crash quickly followed although it was still dry. What surprised me most was the behaviour of the various butterflies which began to, well, I can only describe as 'swarm'. They became incredibly active, almost manic, and I wondered if it was anything to do with the air pressure. The White Admirals were noticeable by their absence at this point. I have watched butterflies in some quite inclement weather but never in the middle of a thunderstorm. The rain fell suddenly and heavily and with the first large drops the 'swarm' of SWF were the first to retire to the trees. There must have been over a dozen in one bush but six is the best I could manage:



The 'swarm' of Whites were the next to retire to the trees. They reminded me of one of those flocks of Starlings – I tried to count them but because of the constant movement can only say there were in excess of 16. Again, I tried to capture this but failed dismally:



At some point all the Skippers had disappeared but the Browns, Commas, Red Admiral and of course PE continued to fly for quite some time. The last to retire were the Emperor and Red Admirals:



It was nice to see that Bernie, the RA, was guarding his post and flying round it every few minutes to inspect it 😄😄

During this intense and violent storm (which didn't last long), 2 Emperors continued to fly, landing periodically on top of the watch tower and taking moisture (the rain?) from up there. I could only get a distant view:



As the rain ceased and the sun appeared, the butterfly behaviour returned to normal and the PE circled me again and began to fly low along the path. It was time for me to go. It is not the first time I have had to walk away from a PE. In Tugley Wood I once had to take 2 PE's off me and place them on bracken because my time was up. It would be sooo easy to allow this passion to turn into an obsession but like everyone else I have other commitments and priorities so with regret I had to leave.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Jul-13 02:16 PM GMT

It is not often I post without a photo but I know someone out there will know how I'm feeling right now. The foxes are moulting heavily so I had just brushed vast quantities of hair from Saffron and was carrying it across the lawn for disposal. The garden has lots of butterflies in it today including SWF, Comma, Large and Small White, Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper so when I nearly stood on a butterfly and it flew up from the lawn into a small Acer I thought it was the latter. I took a quick look anyway and was delighted to see it was a fresh Purple Hairstreak, sitting only about 4' up. I dropped the hair and raced indoors for the camera which didn't take very many seconds but when I got back it had disappeared! I have searched surrounding bushes and trees but I suspect it has now gone up into the oaks 🙄🙄🙄. (If you're reading this Mark, don't you think I've been punished enough now? 😊😄).

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 24-Jul-13 03:34 PM GMT

Aaaaarghhh!! It's no consolation, I know, but I suspect most of us have been there! If not that, then it's the flat battery or missing memory card 😡

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 24-Jul-13 11:15 PM GMT

I know the feeling Pauline which is why my camera goes everywhere with me from early March until mid November 😊 When I had a garden I used to take my camera with me to water the greenhouse just in case 🙄 It paid off numerous times. 😊 Lovely Chalkhills by the way 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by millerd, 24-Jul-13 11:45 PM GMT

The tale of thunderstorm behaviour was fascinating, Pauline. Not commonly observed! I wonder if it was the changes in electrical potential in the atmosphere that they could sense and found disturbing or as you suggested, changes in atmospheric pressure. Both occur in and around thunderstorms.

Dave

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 25-Jul-13 07:12 AM GMT

Hi Pauline  
I agree you have been thoroughly 'purpled' this year both hairstreaks and his highness driving you to distraction. Your time will come – probably when you are least suspecting it 😊 I witnessed several thunderstorms at straits last year – you will remember me emerging from the bushes at abbotts in my camouflage waterproof after a particularly savage – if brief – storm? SWF in particular seem to rest in numbers on the hazel with wings open in these hot storms – just like your shot – and emperors can become very active after a summer shower especially after a long hot spell.

Good luck 😊 Mark

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-Jul-13 10:33 AM GMT

Thank you all for your sympathy and empathy. I hope you are right Mark. I was feeling sorry for myself yesterday as the Purple Hairstreak incident was the most recent in a number of 'near misses'. I have found 2 grounded Purple Emperors this week which I duly pointed out to others, only to have them spooked by photographers who were too keen before I could even get a shot. With hindsight, it is just as well it was me who spooked the Hairstreak – if it had been any of the poultry the outcome would most certainly have been very different. I am sure the pain will ease with time 😊😊

The butterfly behaviour immediately before the storm was certainly markedly different Dave, with activity bordering on frenetic, before gathering together within their own species which is something I have never seen before. Is it negative ions which charge the air during a thunderstorm? I can't really remember but some aspect of the atmosphere was influencing their behaviour. I am not sure why I should be surprised at this as other animals can be similarly affected and are able to detect impending severe weather.

I had another brief look at the Chalkhills and although I haven't yet managed a decent open-winged shot, here come the girls ....





## Re: Pauline

by Neil Hulme, 25-Jul-13 10:46 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

That first image is fantastic ... perhaps your best since that superb Green-veined White earlier in the year.  
BWs, Neil

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Jul-13 07:26 AM GMT

Well thank you Neil; I'm pleased you think so. I have tried not to agonise too much about my photographs this year (at least not publicly) and just keep practicing and learning, mainly by listening. 'Behind the scenes' however, I am just as indecisive about which is the best background, the best crop, the best angle etc. It would help if I could tell the difference between a good photo and a really great photo 😊 .

It would seem that Mark was spot on and I have indeed got my 2 blue winged PE when I least expected it 😊 :



The photo is courtesy of Mike who has taken my original one blue-winged shot and 'photoshopped' it. Not quite as satisfying as the real thing perhaps but it cheered me up none the less. The DGF is also much improved by the removal of the bee:



I am amazed at what can be achieved with this package. Having bought the manual I never seem to have time to read it or 'play' with it so a big thank you Mike.

## Re: Pauline

by Debbie, 26-Jul-13 01:59 PM GMT

Just catching up with your diary whilst i have a late lunch at work. Great pictures – it is hard been chained to my desk.

Debbie 😊😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Jul-13 04:07 PM GMT

Thank you Debbie, I appreciate that. Hang on in there – it's nearly the weekend 😊😊 .

I needed a change of scene and a change of focus so yesterday afternoon I decided to see if there were any Silver Spotted Skippers on Oxenbourne. I wasn't very hopeful as I have never seen them there this early and in recent years numbers have definitely been dwindling. Last year I saw only a maximum of 4, 3 M, 1 F. After 90 minutes of searching proved fruitless it would be fair to say I was dismayed but it was no more than I expected really.

However, the other species certainly made up for this loss. 21 species in 90 minutes is about the best I have had in one area. Some were so fresh and so vibrant they were a joy to behold – Peacocks (which were so perfect they looked like a rich claret-coloured velvet), Red Admiral, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell, Small Heath, Small Copper for example, whilst others were quite worn – Meadow Brown, Small White, DGF (although a few of these were still quite fresh which made me wonder why I traveled all the way to Winchester to see them 😊). I don't usually list all the species but as it was an exceptional number I shall complete the list: Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Large White, Green-veined White, Gatekeeper, Marbled White, Chalkhill Blues in the hundreds, Brimstone, Ringlet and a beautifully marked Common Blue. I was quite surprised to see her as there didn't appear to be any males around. Several pairs of mating Chalkhills were seen and the Small Skippers appeared to be egg-laying all over the place which is something I have never witnessed before. And then ..... just as I was leaving, a Silver-spotted Skipper landed a few feet away. I was not going to risk a close up shot but by the time I had unscrewed the lens he was gone! Still, it made my day. A variety of shots today, in no particular order, to reflect the large number of species seen. Sadly, I was unable to get the vibrant and very active Small Tortoiseshells but it was lovely to see them.













I think that's enough for now 😊😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Jul-13 06:11 PM GMT

I've just found these eggs about an hour ago on one of my hanging baskets. I am assuming they are Large White eggs although I didn't see them laid. My question concerns what the critter is next to them and does it pose a threat? As I watched it moved from the middle of the leaf to show an (unhealthy?) interest in the eggs. I guess I shall find out sooner or later. The best shot I could manage to get:



## Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 26-Jul-13 07:58 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, it certainly sounds like a cracking afternoon yesterday, it is great to see so many butterflies about this past week or so 😊

Sorry, I can't help with your little critter by the eggs.

All the best,

Neil F.

## Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 26-Jul-13 10:28 PM GMT

Hi Pauline  
Your Peacocks are incredible. The pictures definitely convey the vibrancy you describe. Glad to hear the Silver Spotted Skippers are out at Oxenbourne, I was thinking of maybe popping myself over the weekend, armed with some optimism 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Jul-13 07:02 AM GMT

Yes, it's a great little site Neil with so much diversity. I didn't even touch on all the moths and other insects I saw including one distinctly pink coloured grasshopper which I would have followed except I was watching Small Torts. The best thing is it's only 10 mins away 😊.

Morning Paul, I really haven't got the words to accurately convey how these beautiful and unblemished butterflies really looked. It was the sheer numbers which blew me away. Good luck with SSS. Me thinks as well as optimism you will need bucket loads of patience, tenacity, determination, energy and good eye-sight 😊😊. Naturally, having seen one I had to return yesterday and spent another 90 minutes focusing purely on trying to find this species. After an hour I caught a glimpse of a beautiful female and then she was gone, never to be seen again. In the following half hour I espied two males and managed to get a few blurred photos.



Neither wing in focus 😬 Must do better than this but not bad for a record shot.

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 27-Jul-13 12:25 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, lovely photos of lovely butterflies. Glad you found the SS Skipper eventually. Perhaps your patience etc was aquired during the quest for HIM? 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Jul-13 04:09 PM GMT

Thank you Mike, I really appreciate that but patience???? I'm afraid I haven't got any (except when it comes to animals) 😊😊 It has all been used up on folk who spook PE's 😊😊 . More about SSS later but came home to this – I know they are only Large Whites but I am fascinated. I am wondering if I should put the hanging basket under some shelter in the event of heavy storms?





### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 27-Jul-13 05:17 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

It has all been used up on folk who spook PE's

It's not just PE's. it's partly why I now use a long lens until I'm sure the butterfly is fairly bomb-proof but, all too often, someone else proves it isn't 😞

I do not believe you re. patience 😊 - you could not have got most of your photos without a fair measure. On a couple of recent trips for Large Heath, I had virtually given up when one came and posed for me. Even SSS have to stop eventually but it's very hard to follow them until they do.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Jul-13 07:42 AM GMT

I don't seem to need any patience with butterflies Mike as I become so absorbed watching them that an hour can seem like 5 minutes. The person I am most impatient with however tends to be myself especially when I don't do as well as I should with the camera 😞 . As you point out, SSS are definitely one of the more difficult species to photograph and when there are only 3 in quite a large area it is like looking for a needle in a haystack. With such low numbers and so much space the males have huge territories and are therefore less inclined to engage in the aerial squabbles which often attracts attention. Likewise, with few females, the males are often content to sit in a favourite spot until a desire for nectar prompts some movement. It can take a while to locate an individual in these circumstances and if they elect to subsequently zoom off to a different area, the search must start all over again.

Yesterday I returned to Oxenbourne for 'Take 2'. I had remembered from last year that in hot, still weather the biting insects can be a problem at this site and so I went prepared, slathered from head to toe in the strongest jungle formula. I was not prepared for the clouds of midges which descended upon me if I stopped walking for even 5 seconds. The jungle formula was totally ignored and my arms and face were covered with small, black, biting insects which I assume were midges. It was impossible just to stand and look at the butterflies. I would estimate many hundreds of these midges and 3 times they prevented me from getting a very good shot as I could feel them biting my face. One of these was the female SSS on a dandelion but these pests were all over my camera too. After 40 minutes of this torture I had to admit defeat having only achieved a couple of mediocre shots. I'd really like a photo of that female so if anyone has any tips on insect repellent .....



## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Jul-13 05:09 PM GMT

SSS - Take 3!!! Well, it certainly wasn't 3rd time lucky! I swapped a swarm of midges for quite a strong wind and very changeable weather. More than once I lost sight of the target as the wind whipped my hair across my eyes and the constant change in the light from bright sun to cloud every few minutes would have challenged anyone's eyesight. I spent a considerable amount of time today at this location and the good news is that the numbers seem to be slowly rising. I saw a very, very fresh male. He was very small but fast and although I saw him a couple of times I never did get a photo. I also saw 2 different females which was great - so, 2 females and possibly 4/5 males. I am tempted to post the photo that I almost got - the one that I really, really, wanted. A male SSS nectaring on Devil's Bit Scabious and just as I took the photo the wind blew him half out of the frame. I don't think that even Mike's amazing skills with photoshop could have salvaged it so I shall have to be content with these .... for now 😊







I also caught up with my 'pink' grasshopper that I mentioned earlier. I can see now why he looked pink – he looks like he has half his head missing 🤪 . Nevertheless, an attractive creature:





## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Jul-13 05:49 PM GMT

Next week is likely to be a busy one so I shall use this time to post to my diary the other photos from Oxenbourne taken in the last couple of days.



I don't think I have posted a female Meadow Brown previously so she is well overdue.



A lovely fresh male Meadow Brown sat beside a mating pair. I could stand the midges no longer so missed out on the latter. Likewise, I could not stand and wait until these Gatekeepers moved to a more photogenic pose so had to shoot and move on:



I spotted a Brimstone masquerading as a leaf – another butterfly that despite its size has amazing camouflage:



... and a closer view serves to demonstrate this further:



Butterflies were mating and egg-laying all over the place including a couple of pairs of Large White:



I also saw a Silver-washed Fritillary at this site which I don't recall seeing before and brings the total up to 22 for 2 days – not bad to see this many in such a short space of time – almost half the total recorded for Hampshire on one site in a couple of hours.

Today I also saw some lovely Common Blues – one female was doing a great impersonation of a pole dancer as the wind buffeted her around on her grass stem:



and the male was just doing what males do ....



### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 28-Jul-13 06:43 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, some lovely photos in your last postings. The first photo of the SS Skipper is very nice, how did you manage to get it at all, its been very windy all day? Glad you have found some more SSS emerging. Cathy and I didn't go out today, as it was more than frustrating in the wind at OW Hill last week.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Jul-13 07:20 PM GMT

Evening Mike

Thank you for your kind words. Yes, the wind drove me to distraction at times and you wouldn't believe how many potentially good shots I missed ... but, c'est la vie, I shall return, no doubt to meet other challenges, at least until BH emerge 😊😊😊

### Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 28-Jul-13 08:50 PM GMT

Hi Pauline. I'm not sure quite how literally you meant the bit about the grasshopper having half his head missing, but I think (unless I'm missing something obvious) he is in perfect health. He looks like a common field grasshopper, *Chorthippus brunneus*, with lovely bright colours.

Just saying this to put your mind at rest – I think you're a bit like me and you don't like finding injured or malformed creatures, even insects. 😊

Guy

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Jul-13 09:16 PM GMT

Evening Guy

Thank you for the reassurance. Having been brought up in the North East amongst mining and ship building I was never exposed to any wildlife – didn't see a sheep 'til I was 9 and I was 21 before I saw a squirrel after I'd moved South – unbelievable I know, so what everyone is seeing now, quite publicly, is my astonishment at the discoveries (better late than never!) of all these creatures that I haven't had the time or opportunity to explore before. It is largely due to members on this site and their knowledge that they make freely available that my interest has expanded.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 29-Jul-13 07:19 AM GMT

Quick update on the little'uns. All 15 hatched and all still present and correct. 2 days old now, eating well and growing quite quickly.





Although the garden is teeming with hungry birds and these cats are very exposed on the upper side of the leaf I am hoping that because they are very close to the house they may escape the inevitable. The alternative may be to keep them inside the aviary permanently which would also protect from downpours when I am not there – but not so easy to photograph as the last shot demonstrates. Given Vince's comment that this is a remarkably small batch I have searched the other nasturtiums in case the female was interrupted and laid somewhere else but without success.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 31-Jul-13 07:02 AM GMT

With the emergence of Brown Hairstreak just round the corner I was pleased to have several new sites for this species brought to my attention recently. One of these is very close, but eggs were only there found for the first time this year after 12 years of looking! It is assumed that the Hairstreaks have dispersed from Botany Bay/Oaken Wood and have also taken up residence at Alder Platt near Chiddingfold, another reasonably close site. Apparently, the females are far more mobile than I had imagined but it is exciting that they seem to be expanding their territories. I am looking forward to visiting all of these sites very soon as Hairstreaks are certainly one of my favourites 😊 . Just need the weather to pick up again now.

### Re: Pauline

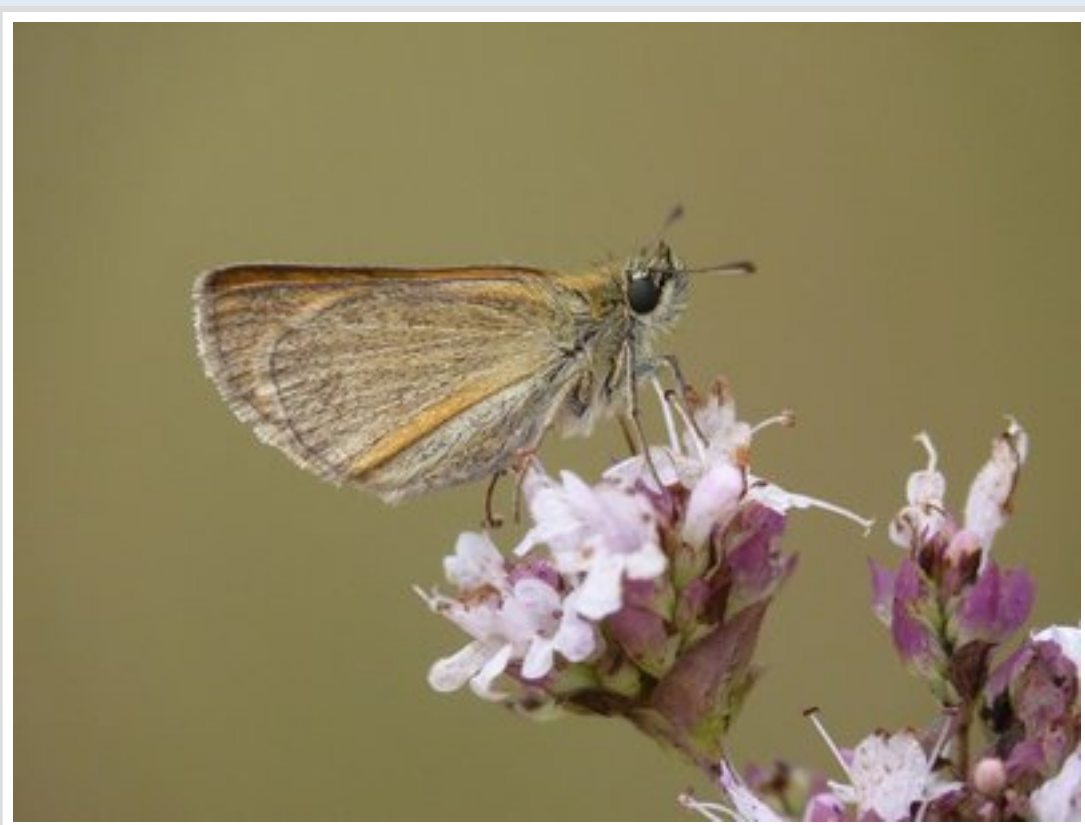
by Pauline, 31-Jul-13 06:17 PM GMT

Despite the strong wind and the odd spot of rain I was not about to pass up the opportunity to get out this afternoon for a short spell. I was tempted to go to Denbies where this time last year the place was alive with Silver-spotted Skippers which would have provided more photographic opportunities. However, time was against me so I decided to return to Oxenbourne and despite the adverse weather conditions I was pleased to see 3 SSS, albeit briefly before they were whipped away by the breeze





There was a heavy mist but despite the damp, showery weather I was surprised at the number of butterflies that were active:



I also came across a massive spider's web which was about 15" across





And more Silver y moths than I have seen in a long time. The difference in their appearance was marked but whether this was due to age or gender I am unsure:



**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-13 09:51 PM GMT

Been away for a few days so doing some reading...Cracking shots of Silver Spotted Skipper 😊 and that first Silver Y looks like an aberrant to me if they get those in the Moth world 😊 .

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 04-Aug-13 09:08 AM GMT

Thank you Wurzel. I shall have to get my reference books out again to identify the moths. The 2 above did look very different but I'm not sure if there

are aberrant forms of moths. I also saw this lovely creature yesterday – some sort of Ermine perhaps?



There was also an explosion of Ladybirds with many covering each plant so I hope these are not the Harlequin variety – I don't think so.



Morning Mike, it is perceptive of you to notice that I haven't been posting recently and yes, it is mostly because I have been quite busy, not least repairing the garden. I have been hosting midnight feasts for up to 8 badgers and although I love watching them (and actively encourage them) the mess they can make, especially the youngsters, would have to be seen to be believed.



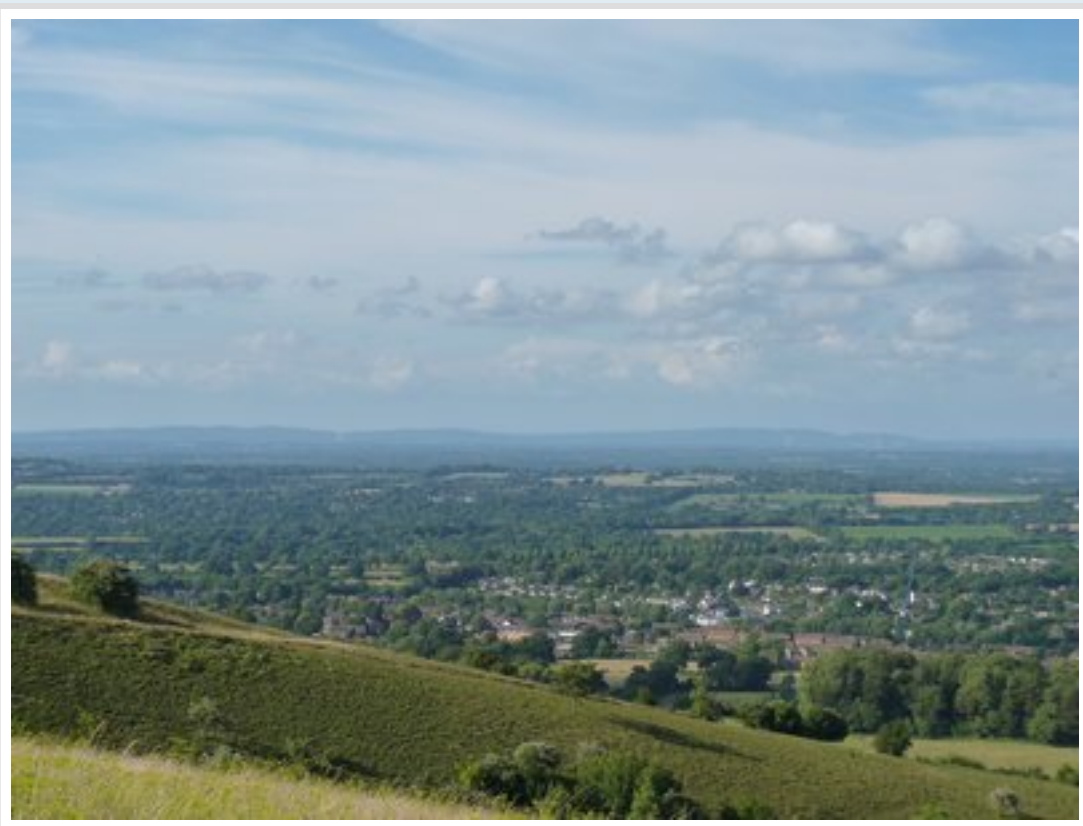
I am also a little demotivated at the moment, tired of battling against exhausting heat or continual winds to try to get a half decent photo. Such was the case yesterday when I found myself in the vicinity of Chantry Hill. I have never visited the site before but pulled into a local garage and received directions. A quick call to Kipper established the precise vicinity of the SSS and although it was late in the day and blowing a gale up there, I saw one immediately. Just as quickly he was whipped off in the wind never to be seen again. There were some lovely Painted Ladies at this site though



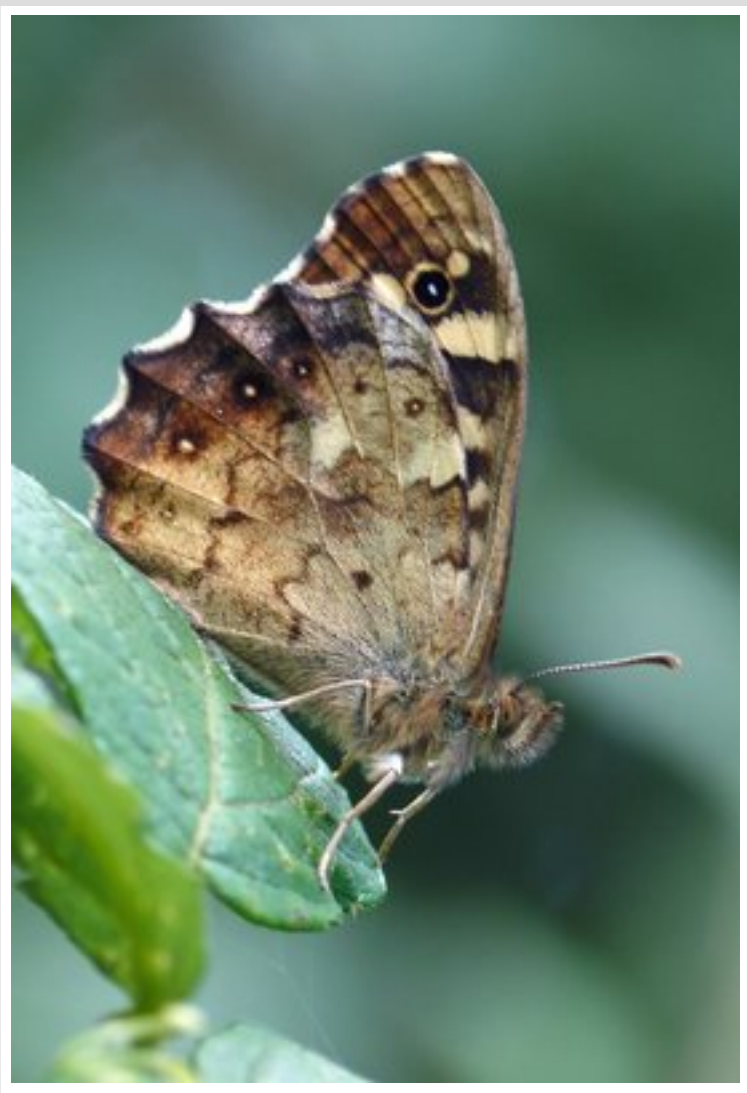
and a beautifully fresh Brown Argus. Frustratingly, I thought I had some reasonable shots but found that the open winged ones were blurred and the closed wings not much better:



I'd only been on site 30 minutes but the light was fading fast so I took a couple of viewshots and made my way back to the car:



A lovely fresh Speckled Wood rounded off the visit:



### Re: Pauline

by badgerbob, 04-Aug-13 09:14 AM GMT

Hi Pauline. Good to see you got 'The Shot' of the SS Skipper. The moth is a Dusky Sallow.

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 04-Aug-13 09:55 AM GMT

Hi Pauline, some great photos in your recent posts 😊

Don't be too hard on yourself, they don't all have to be perfectly posed 'on a stick with a blurred pastel background'. You post a good variety of photos which makes it more interesting 😊

All the best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 04-Aug-13 07:55 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, love the Badgers, the butterflies are not bad either 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

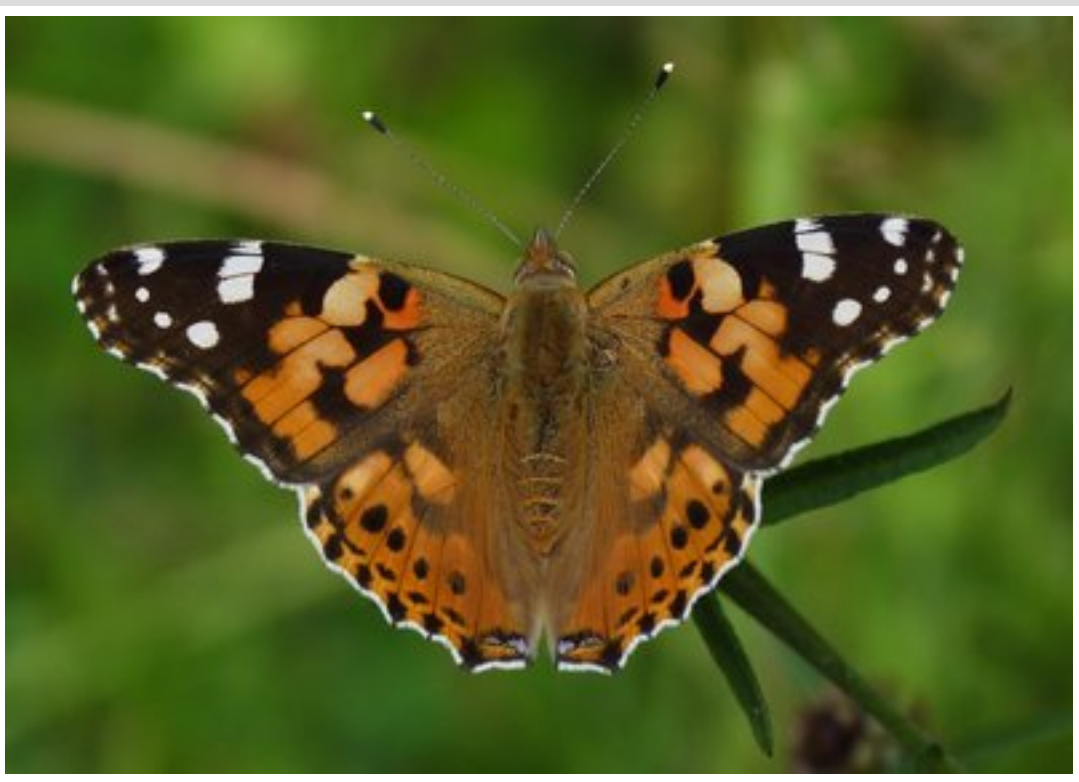
by Pauline, 04-Aug-13 08:38 PM GMT

Thank you for the ID Bob. The shot of the SSS isn't exactly what I wanted but it'll do for now and there's always next year 😊. What I want next is a shot of a Wall Brown just like the one you took some time ago – wings closed perched on a leaf – which made me go 'wow!' Fat chance!!!!

Thank you for your comments Mike. I'm glad you like the badgers but do you also like gardening? 😊😊😊 I'm losing track of how many times I've reseeded that patch of ground (to call it lawn would be stretching things a bit too far 😊).

I appreciate your comments Neil and thank you for the confidence boost. You are absolutely right of course so instead of sitting moaning to myself about the weather I decided to get out there and take some photos of Wood Whites (even if they were all blurred 😊) and it turned out to be very enjoyable despite the wind. I met 2 members from Sussex (nice meeting you Andy, Mark) who had photographed Chalkhill Blue at Oaken Wood 🤔 ..... and I heard a rumour that Glanvilles may have been photographed at Wrecclesham this year 🤔🤔

My intention to photograph the Wood Whites was, however, interrupted by several stunning Painted Ladies and so captivated was I by the sheer colours and patterns that I couldn't stop photographing them. They were really gorgeous:





The Wood Whites can wait 'til later.

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 04-Aug-13 08:54 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, some lovely Painted Lady photos and perhaps, given the signs, we may for a 'Painted Lady' end of year? Glanvilles photographed at Wrecclesham!!!! 😊

Regards,

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 04-Aug-13 09:47 PM GMT

Great stuff Pauline those Painted Ladies are stunning 😊

I'm sure the Wrecclesham Glannies are fallicitous after all the hours you put in checking it for them 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 04-Aug-13 10:13 PM GMT

Smashing Painted Ladies Pauline 🍷 😊

I see there are quite a few down south recently and some Clouded Yellows.....and I am heading north tomorrow. Hopefully I will have Scotch Argus to make up 😊

All the best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-Aug-13 10:09 AM GMT

Thank you Neil. Have a great time up North – it is many, many years since I have been back up there – and bring some great shots back with you to share with us 😊

Hi Mike, Wurzel – I appreciate your remarks and thank you for taking the time to comment. Re Wrecclesham Glanvilles – I was told the photographer was in his mid thirties, wearing shorts and from Surrey. He was apparently talking to Hideandseek in the last couple of days at Chiddingfold but Nick has no recollection of this individual. So, on the off chance that he might be reading this and would like to solve the mystery ..... Yes Rich, both myself and Mike spent some considerable time looking (as did others I imagine) but we might all have just been in the wrong place at the wrong time (and you did say Mike that a couple of times you THOUGHT you had seen one). If they were there it would be interesting to know in what numbers and when they actually emerged otherwise, we shall just have to wait until next year!

Well, back to Chiddingfold. Those Wood Whites might look fragile and flimsy but in that strong wind yesterday they were very active indeed. When it got a bit too strong they would take refuge lower down and either way photos weren't easy (but I'm not going to start moaning about that again 😊 😊). A few shots I managed to salvage:









### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 05-Aug-13 11:48 AM GMT

**"Pauline" wrote:**  
photos weren't easy

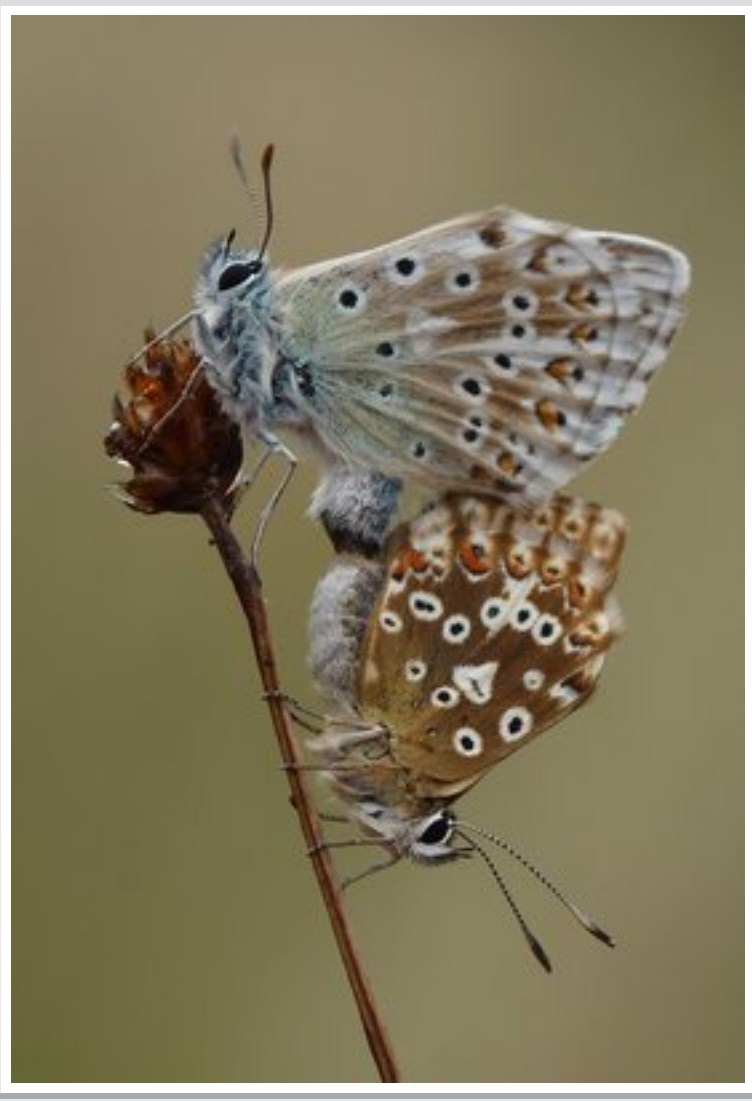
As Kennedy said: ""We do these things not because they are easy, but because they are hard"

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-Aug-13 03:46 PM GMT

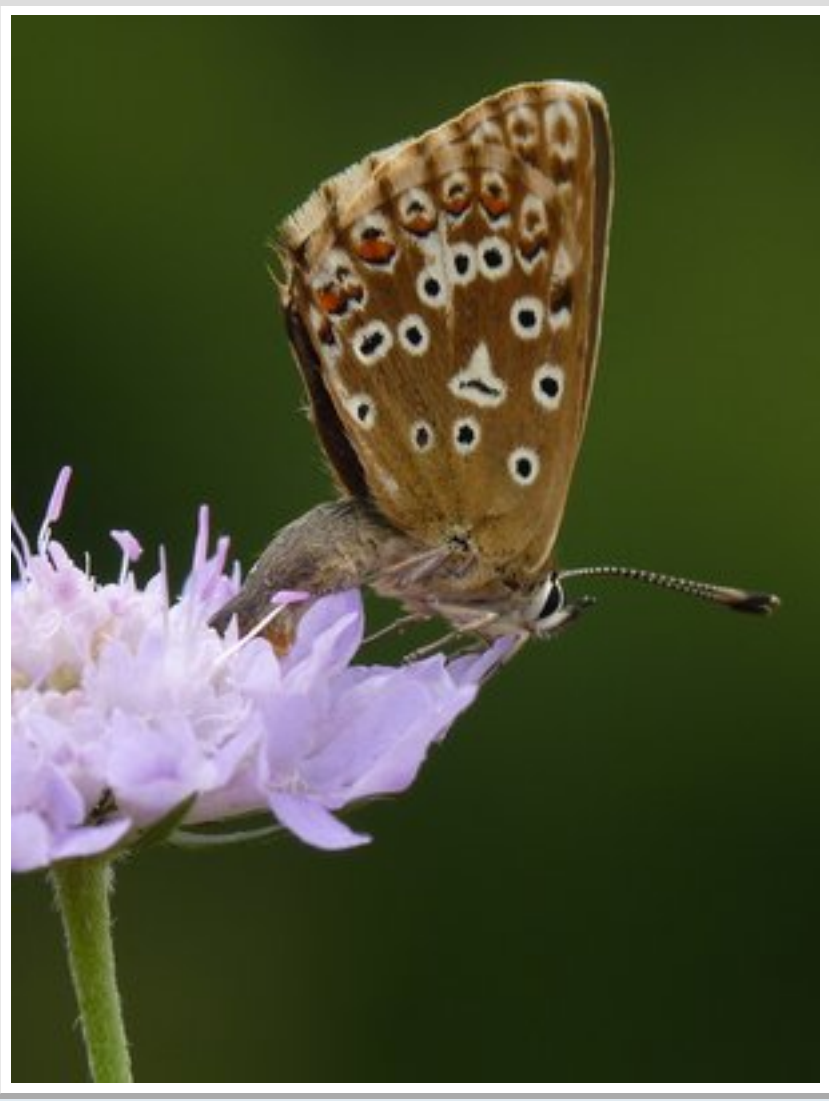
Too right Mike! It's the challenge that brings us back time and again. Such was the case today when I had a little time to spare. I debated whether to go to Noar Hill (Brown Hairstreaks) or Oxenbourne (SSS). Both about 10 mins away. I set off down the A3, still partially undecided, but when the heavens suddenly opened I decided against Noar Hill. I hoped that by the time I reached Oxenbourne it would have stopped but no such luck. I considered going back home but reminded myself I had been out in worse conditions. In the end I made a deal with myself - if the rain hadn't stopped by the time my Eric Clapton CD had finished playing then I would give it a miss - but it had 😊 . I had to tread carefully as Chalkhills were all over the ground and one of the first I found were a mating pair:



I then came across a lovely female looking very picturesque on Devil's Bit Scabious:



To my astonishment she started to move around and looked as if she was egg-laying. Now my eyes aren't as good as they used to be and my camera skills are definitely not as great as I'd like them to be, but I'm not really sure what I was seeing here, or even whether it was 'normal'. I know I'm a bit old for this but perhaps someone could explain the process for me 😊😊 . I just kept clicking away so here are some of the images, some enlarged as much as I dared:







Being a female, it's clear she could multi-task – egg-laying and nectaring at the same time 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 05-Aug-13 09:00 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

To my astonishment she started to move around and looked as if she was egg-laying ... I'm not really sure what I was seeing here, or even whether it was 'normal'. I know I'm a bit old for this but perhaps someone could explain the process for me

Definitely not normal, since the larval foodplant is Horseshoe Vetch, definitely not Devil's-bit Scabious, with eggs laid either on a leaf or stem of the foodplant, or on nearby vegetation, and always close to the ground.

Might be an example of "oviposturing", as Guy put it: "*Going through the apparent motions of ovipositing without actually laying any eggs*".

Cheers,

– Pete

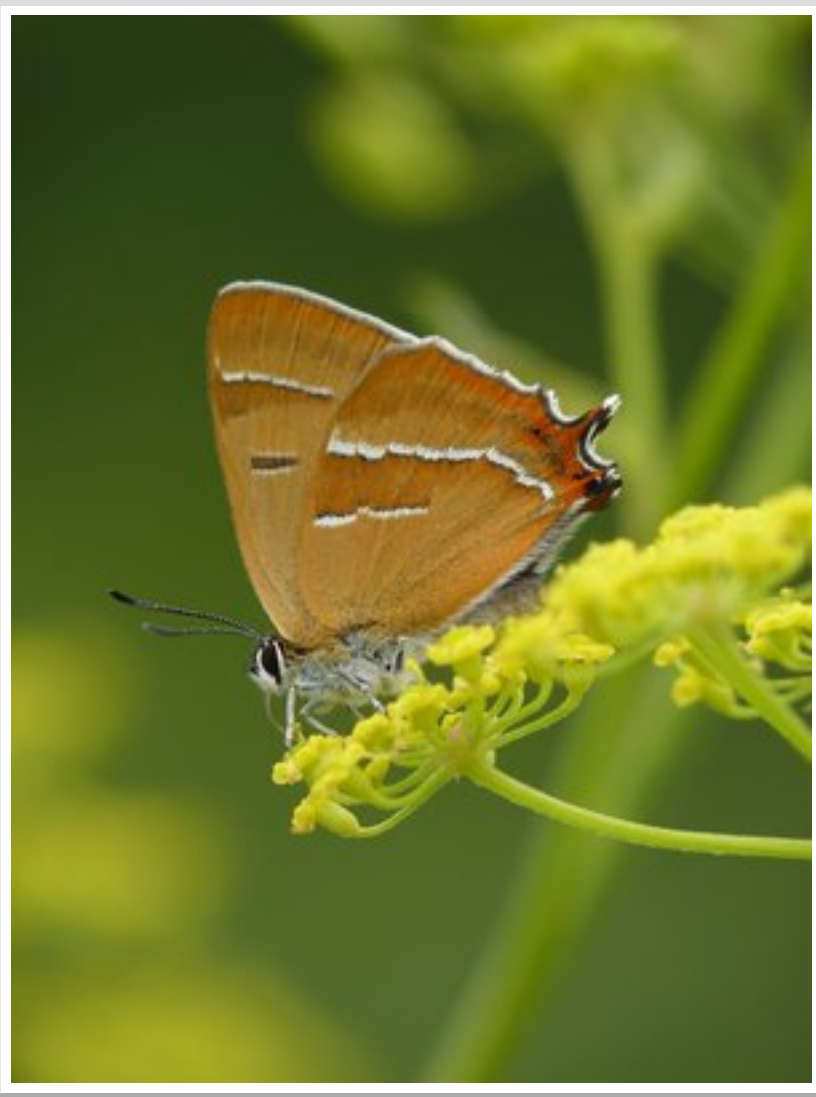
### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Aug-13 06:30 PM GMT

Thanks Pete for explanation and PM. When I return I shall take a magnifying glass.

I think this is going to be a great year for Brown Hairstreaks – 7 seen today (plus ANOTHER Clouded Yellow). Lots of photos to sort through but a few to be going on with:





**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-13 07:05 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Pauline 🍷 We're they taken at Shipton?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 07-Aug-13 07:47 AM GMT

Thank you Wurzel. These particular shots were indeed taken at Shipton but I have also taken some at Noar Hill. For anyone planning a Shipton visit I would like to point out that all the butterflies I found nectaring were on the plant in the photos (don't know what it is) so be sure to check these and please do not trample as they are right in front of the blackthorn. Vet visit this morning so only a few more shots:





## Re: Pauline

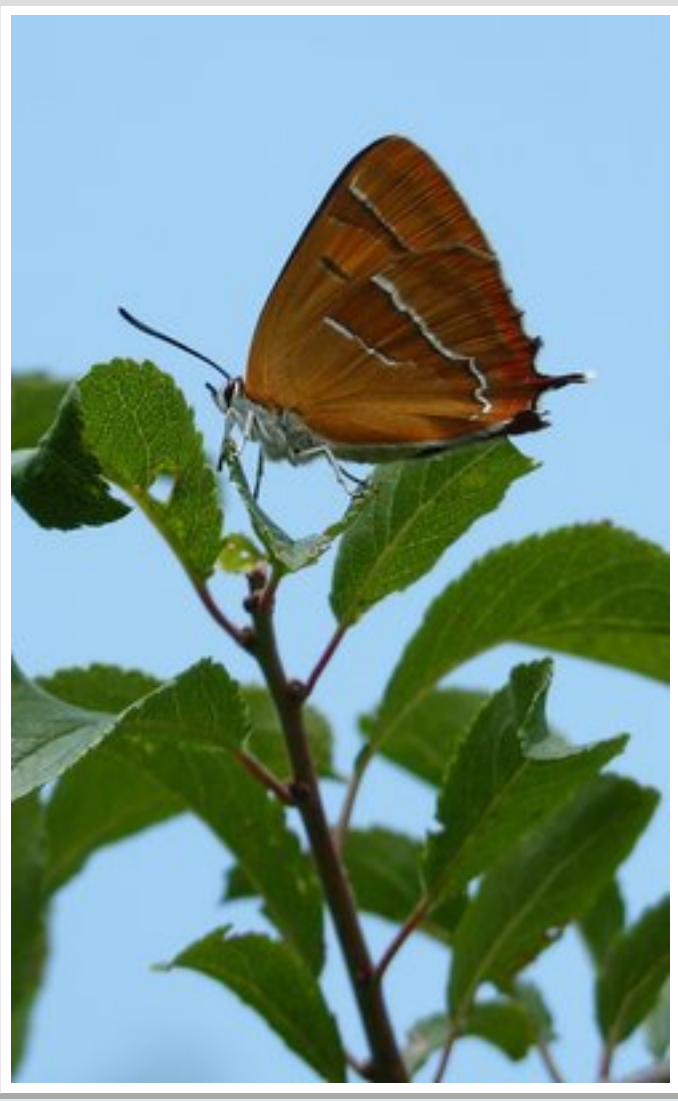
by Pauline, 07-Aug-13 11:45 AM GMT

The good news is, Smudge (Dove with mangled foot) does not need an op and no longer needs antibiotics or anti-inflammatories. The Collared Dove I released a week ago has found a friend and is coping well and the Robin has also been released into a safer, cat free environment. All this frees up more time so I can spend time with the butterflies 😊.

Yesterday, I had my second day out this year and I was determined to make the most of it. It had been planned well in advance with Brown Hairstreaks in mind so regardless of the weather or the state of emergence I was always going to go to Shipton. I arrived about 10.15 to find it cool, cloudy and generally overcast and as I walked up the lane my expectations were low. As I was scanning the first hedge I was already formulating my contingency plan which was to call in at Stockbridge and take some photos of something – anything! I arrived at the first hotspot and by now it was warmer, albeit still cloudy but I was heartened to see 4 BH flying around the Ash. They were out and they were active – and that was all I needed to know. I moved on to the meadow .....

The area was incredibly quiet and peaceful and as I worked my way down the hedge (where you found them all last year Wurzel) I saw a female fly up from the grass and onto those yellow plants. At the same time a car drew up and the driver opened the back to release 2 VERY lively boisterous Staffies who immediately bounded up to me, jumping up, knocking my camera and generally causing chaos. I did not dare take my eyes off the butterfly or move towards it as the dogs were focused on me. I called to the chap to get his dogs under control and his response was 'come on boys – she doesn't want to play today'. They were friendly dogs and I really don't usually mind dogs jumping up at me but I had driven an hour to see this butterfly! Staffies have quite a bit of muscle and anyone smaller would no doubt have been knocked over. The dogs were not at all dangerous but it was just a matter of courtesy. Dogs safely at a distance left me free to take many photos and I certainly took a lot. I thought it would likely be my only chance ..... but I was wrong. Twice more I had the pleasure of photo opportunities with one of my favourite butterflies all on that yellow plant. I have never seen them nectaring on this before. It reminded me of last year when I visited the same area with Alan. He had just said to me 'they never come down onto Thistle' and as we rounded a corner there were 2 BH on the same thistle! Anyway, a few more photos for my diary as I sift through all those I have taken recently – and that's before I even get to the Clouded Yellow and the SSS 😊







### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 07-Aug-13 07:50 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, absolutely stunning shots of stunning butterflies, you've got it all, male, female, closed wings, open wings, everything!! Cath and me are really pleased for you, superb.

Regards,

Mike.

### Re: Pauline

by Willow, 07-Aug-13 08:44 PM GMT

**Brown Hairstreak** images simply don't come much better than yours Pauline, very well done...inspirational stuff!!!

Kind Regards,

Bill 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Aug-13 02:22 PM GMT

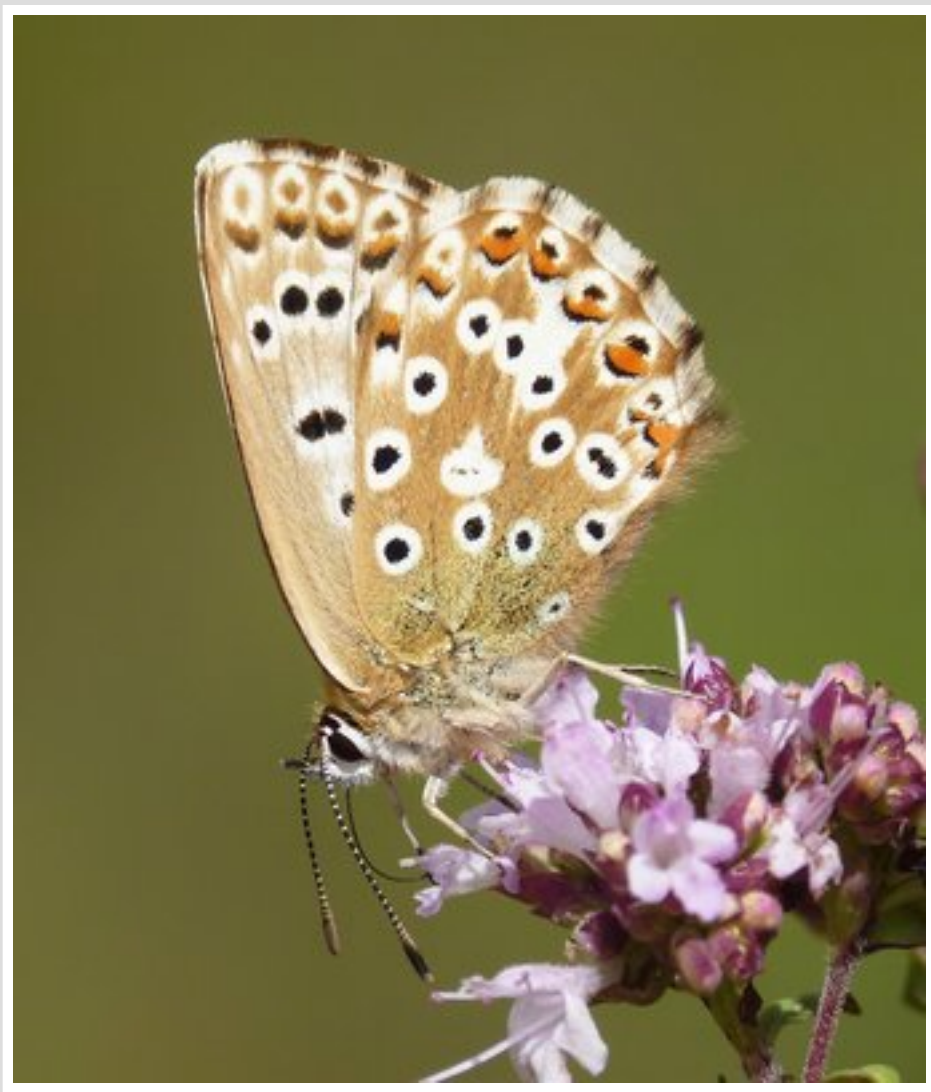
Hi Mike – thank you both for your kind words as I know they are sincerely meant. As you know I have little confidence in my photography skills but I am not one for false modesty and I have to say that I am pleased with these images (even if they are not technically perfect), especially as it is a butterfly that I am very fond of. It was a really great day out – at this rate I'll be wanting a day off every week! 😄😄😄

I really appreciate your comments Bill. I never, ever thought I would hear the term 'inspirational' applied to any of my photos and you just don't know how your short comment really made my day. Thank you.

It is tempting to carry on posting BH images as I have loads but it is time to move on to the rest of that very enjoyable day. After a couple of hours I made my way back to the car passing some very blue, if worn, females as I left:



Some very nice Brown Argus caught my attention too but I failed to capture that lovely metallic sheen. It was still early so I decided to break the journey home with a stop at Stockbridge Down. As Pete has already mentioned there were some lovely fresh Chalkhills and it was a pleasure just to stand and watch and not to have to rush:





To be honest, I was so elated after the morning with the BH that I just snapped away, recording these lovely creatures, with little regard for composition or camera settings, so many have been heavily cropped:



However, just as I was leaving the unmistakable Clouded Yellow flew past – a beautiful orange shade in flight. I didn't manage to capture it in a picturesque pose on a pretty flower but nevertheless it was a real bonus and a perfect end to the day.





### Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 08-Aug-13 03:54 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Your Brown Hairstreak shots are fabulous, especially the ones with their wings fully open, not always easy to find BH in this pose. I don't think I've ever seen them with wings open that wide. Well done.

Pleased to hear you Dove is doing well.

Keep up the good work and I'll try and post some photos from the Outer Hebrides as promised. No butterflies though I'm afraid. We saw large Heath and I managed to film one but saw no Small Heaths at all so I couldn't make any judgements on their race unfortunately.

We did manage two species of eagles and Red-necked Phalarope plus various porpoise and dolphins. Most of our photos were of sunsets and bumblebees.

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-13 06:08 PM GMT

Brill stuff Pauline – and now know exactly where to head to at Shipton 😊 I'm also hoping that the CY will hang around 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 08-Aug-13 09:26 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

..... I just snapped away, recording these lovely creatures, with little regard for composition or camera settings, so many have been heavily cropped

Welcome to my world Pauline 😊 😊

To be honest I have my camera set to centre spot focusing so I always aim to put the subject in the middle of the frame and usually crop to suit afterwards. I am usually fairly limited in the times that I can get out, which is often late morning to afternoon when butterflies are often most active. This means that a lot of my photos are effectively snap-shots with not much time to spend getting them artistically composed. On the occasions when I can spend more time with roosting or feeding butterflies I will make more of an effort and this is often the only times I will use my close up lens. I do appreciate some of the more arty and technically impressive photos that some post but for me I am happy with getting good records of sightings.

And by the way, that is a fantastic series of Brown Hairstreak photos 🍷 😊

All the best,

Neil F.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Aug-13 07:03 PM GMT

Chris, I have just sent you a PM but it doesn't seem to want to leave my outbox. Probably too late but eggfood blended with water (from petshop) or better, look online for local expert help – wildlife hospitals. Don't know how else to get a message to you quickly. Sorry, just picked up your pm.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Aug-13 07:09 PM GMT

Great to have you back Paul and I'm delighted you like the BH shots. Looking forward to seeing your photos – dolphins, eagles and sunsets will definitely do it for me 😊😊

Thank you Wurzel and good luck at Shipton. I am sure you will see Clouded Yellow at some point – they seem to be everywhere I go. I saw another one today – in fact, I have seen more in the last 2 weeks than I have in the rest of my entire life!

Your world is not so bad Neil 😊😊 . I spent an hour today happily snapping away at anything that came into view and thoroughly enjoyed it. Results to be posted later.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-Aug-13 07:33 AM GMT

It is time to skip back to the 5th August and Oxenbourne Down which has been omitted due to my excitement over the Brown Hairstreaks. Having watched the Chalkhill Blue uncharacteristically ovi-posting on Devils-bit Scabious I continued my search for the Silver spotted Skippers. I thought I was going to be lucky enough to see a mating pair as a male and female were behaving in courtship fashion. I sat very still and very close, hardly daring to breathe but just as things started to get really interesting two more males gatecrashed, and this being more than the female could cope with, she took off with the 3 males in pursuit – I guess one of them got lucky but I never found my mating pair.





I had to be satisfied with other opportunities which presented themselves and these are posted below:





## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 11-Aug-13 06:32 AM GMT

On Friday I only had time for 90 minutes at Noar Hill but despite only intermittent sun I was still able to count 22 species – over half the Hampshire species in one go. I had to write a list when I returned home just to be absolutely sure. I didn't see the Swallowtail that had been reported from there a couple of days earlier but as I was leaving another lovely Clouded Yellow flew round a few times before disappearing – a male I think. Peacocks in particular were everywhere – covering Hemp Agrimony, littering pathways, adorning ant hills. I really cannot recall a Summer like this for butterflies.



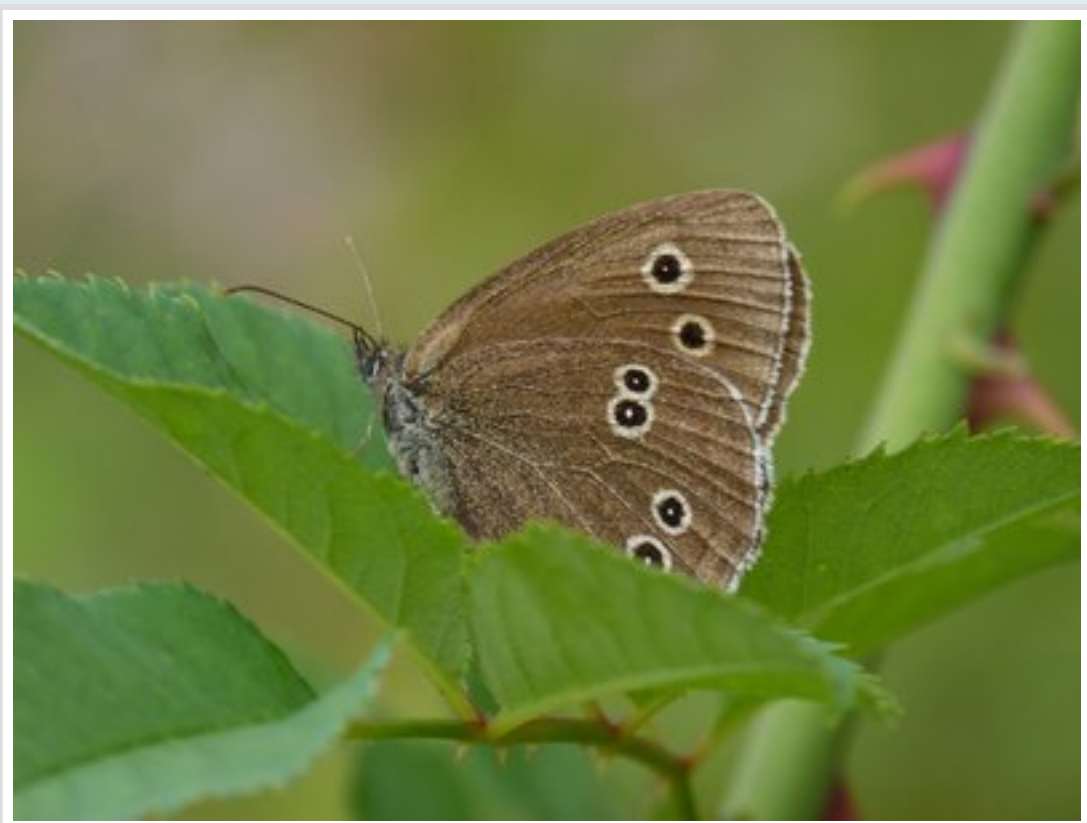
Having started my list I had to continue and was surprised that my tally for the year so far is 45 – the Wall Brown, the last remaining butterfly I am hoping to see this season, will bring the total to 46. It is the first and last time I shall do this but for my own record the species seen this year to date are (in no particular order):

Peacock  
Comma  
Red Admiral  
Small Tortoiseshell  
Painted Lady  
Clouded Yellow  
Brimstone  
Large White  
Small White  
Green-veined White  
Marbled White  
Small Skipper  
Large Skipper  
Meadow Brown  
Gatekeeper  
Ringlet  
Brown Argus  
Common Blue  
Holly Blue  
Small Heath  
Silver washed Fritillary  
Pearl-bordered Fritillary  
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary  
Duke of Burgundy  
Green Hairstreak  
White letter Hairstreak  
Purple Hairstreak  
Brown Hairstreak  
Adonis Blue  
Small Blue  
Speckled Wood  
Chalkhill Blue  
Silver spotted Skipper  
Essex Skipper  
Dingy Skipper  
Grizzled Skipper  
Purple Emperor  
Dark Green Fritillary  
Small Copper  
Grayling  
Glanville  
White Admiral  
Wood White  
Orange Tip  
Silver-studded Blue

With the exception of the Purple Hairstreak I have managed to photo all of these. When I add to the list the species I have seen in previous years I am surprised at the total:

Lulworth Skipper  
Heath Fritillary  
Marsh Fritillary  
Large Blue

A photo to finish with – a Ringlet nestled on a leaf:



**Re: Pauline**

by Maximus, 11-Aug-13 09:25 AM GMT

Hi Pauline, lovely SS Skipper shots and thats an amazing total of species at Noar. I agree with you about this summer having been amazing for our butterflies. In view of this, If the weather behaves itself, what will next year bring? Thats a brilliant total for the year for you too, i just know you will get to see the Wall.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by badgerbob, 11-Aug-13 10:19 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,  
Wall Brown are very numerous this year. I had 81 on my annual count yesterday on a walk from home yesterday plus another 2 fighting over the garden!! Hope you get yours.  
Bob.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 11-Aug-13 03:54 PM GMT

Thank you for your comments Mike – I surprised myself with how much I'd seen this year. I'm afraid there are not many Wall Brown in my neck of the woods Bob but your photos of them in the past have inspired me. So, yes Mike, you were right, I just had to go for it. Just the one photo for starters as I'm short of time as usual but I will add that Wall Brown wasn't all I saw today ..... 😊



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Aug-13 08:07 AM GMT

I had exactly an hour at Lymington. Not much time to spend in such a beautiful location but it meant there wasn't a minute to spare. I walked briskly towards the area where I had last seen Wall Brown a few years ago keeping my eyes peeled whilst taking in those superb views. When I left Liphook it was raining quite heavily but I had checked 3 different weather web sites and they all stated that the sun would be shining at Lymington from mid-day – and so it was. There was a strong breeze and a little cloud but I felt it was definitely warm and sunny enough for Wall Brown to put in an appearance. I stopped briefly to take a photo of some poor moth – don't know what sort:



As I reached the Wall Brown area some 30 minutes later I was greeted by a herd of cows. For some reason I am always a bit nervous of these large animals and tend to give them a wide berth but they were exactly where I wanted to be so I just had to try to ignore them and carry on. I was delighted when the first Wall Brown sighting was of a mating pair, camouflaged almost as well as Grayling down amongst the ants (🐜), rabbit droppings, dried

grass and other unmentionables:

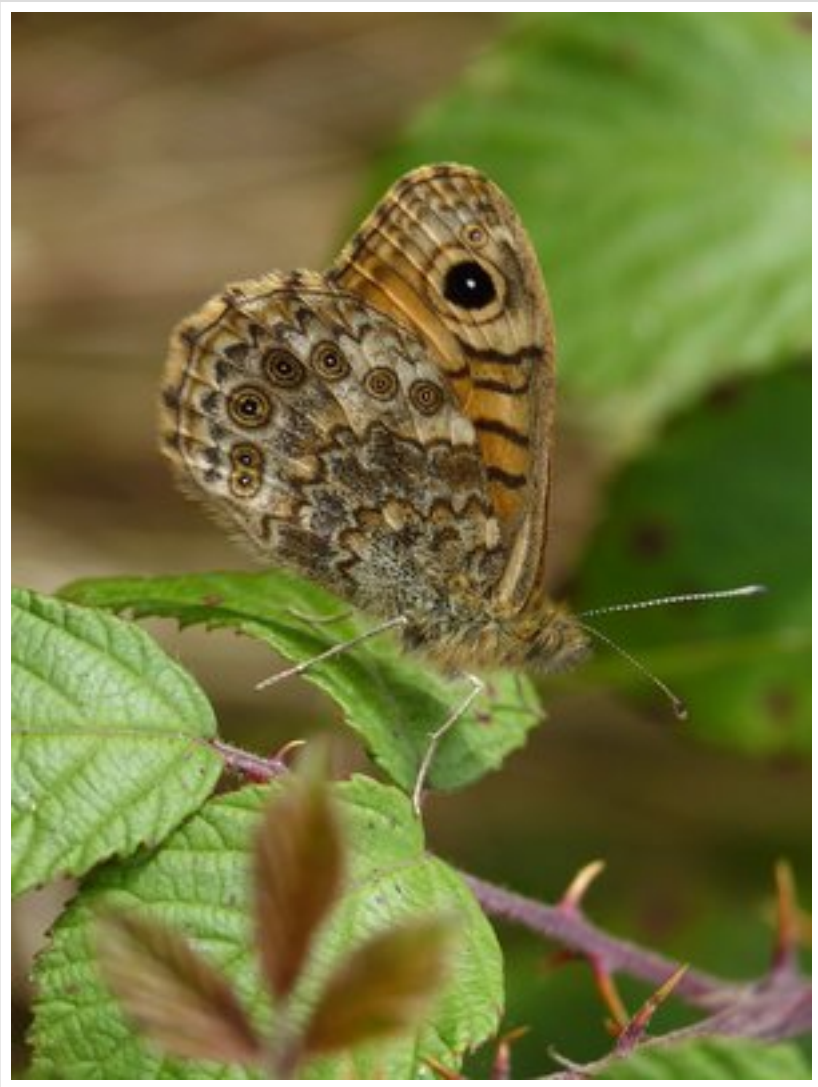


However, as the sun broke through it wasn't long before the female opened her wings:



There were a few other individuals in the same area but I could only spend 10 minutes enjoying them before it was time to start the long trek back. It was very busy along the sea front – walkers, cyclists, bird-spotters, dog-walkers etc but the butterflies seemed unperturbed and just carried on about their business.







I had almost reached the place where I had parked my car, feeling well pleased with the shots I had got in such a short time (after a ridiculously long drive) when I saw something a bit different out of the corner of my eye .....

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 12-Aug-13 11:43 AM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

when I saw something a bit different out of the corner of my eye .....

The suspense... 😬 ... you should write cliff-hanger thrillers!

Splendid series of Wall Brown photos – I know how difficult they can be.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 12-Aug-13 08:18 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

I had almost reached the place where I had parked my car, feeling well pleased with the shots I had got in such a short time (after a ridiculously long drive) when I saw something a bit different out of the corner of my eye .....

Hi Pauline

Please do tell..... I can hardly wait 😊

Your Wall Browns are fabulous. I am going to check on a site for these this week which is much closer to you than Lymington. I will let you know how get on once I have been there, hopefully Wednesday fingers crossed. Hopefully a few exotic migrants will also cross my path 😊 I will not hold my breath though.

Well done on your species total this year. I am quite a way off yet, maybe next year. I was at Noar Hill on Sunday and it was positively heaving with butterflies compared to this time last year. I did not see Brown Argus though or the Swallowtail. I was happy to find a few Clouded Yellows 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 12-Aug-13 09:58 PM GMT

Great shots Pauline when you say Lymington did you go the Pennington Marsh – that's a great little site for waders in particular? I reckon your something different is either the Monarch or Swallowtail that have been reported. Oh and there was something about Long-tailed Blue? I look forward to being proved right/wrong 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Aug-13 07:52 AM GMT

..... a butterfly I did not recognise initially and have not seen before. It was being buffeted about by the strong breeze but I was able to see that it was mostly white with black markings, about the size of a GVW. When it started to flit from flower to flower it was clear it was a Clouded Yellow but nothing like the ones I have been seeing over the last few weeks. For a start it was much, much smaller and very much paler, almost white. I am not as adept with the camera as some, otherwise I might have been able to catch the upperside. The butterfly didn't stay still for many seconds but worked its way across a steep slope which was a little treacherous – keeping up with it required some balance and agility and the long grass got in the way of clear shots. I am not sure what the difference is between Helice and Pale Clouded but it is clearly one or the other, neither of which I have seen before.





Apologies Wurzel and others who thought/hoped it might have been something more exotic but to me it was just as exciting as it was very different to any butterfly I have seen before – so might just as well have been a Swallowtail etc. Thank you all for your kind words on my Wall photos and I would be very interested if you discover any closer to home Paul. Good luck.

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 13-Aug-13 10:22 AM GMT

Those shots look pretty exciting to me 😊 While your 'cliff-hanger' was keeping me awake, I saw several Perseid meteors, which I found exciting, too. You'll need our Continental experts to identify the species accurately but the pale lemon colour looks good for Pale Clouded Yellow to me. I've only seen *helice* once and it was more a pale sand colour. I expect there are other factors which **Padfield et al** will explain. Whichever it is, it's a splendid find 🍷

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 13-Aug-13 10:41 AM GMT

I believe this to be Clouded Yellow *f. helice*, and here's why. The edge of the dark markings on the forewings, when visible on the underside (which is normally all you get to see), when running from the leading edge of the forewing and down the wing, heads toward the outer edge of the wing but, in Clouded Yellow, either runs parallel with the edge of the wing or comes back on itself. In both Pale Clouded Yellow and Berger's Clouded Yellow the edge of the dark markings continues to the edge of the wing. To be honest, this is only partly true because both Pale and Berger's Clouded Yellows do the same to a small degree, but the dark markings are nowhere near as prominent as in the Clouded Yellow.

Sorry to scribble on your beautiful photo, Pauline 😊



Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Hoggers, 13-Aug-13 04:57 PM GMT

Wonderful discovery, Pauline. Congratulations!

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 13-Aug-13 06:57 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

I have seen three Helice this year and what I have noted, as Guy has mentioned elsewhere, is that the dark wing edges and generally greyer wings, particularly the hindwings, are quite noticeable and distinctive in flight.

The trick is to photograph against the light where the broad dark borders show up quite well..... 😊

Easier to say than do, I know. Especially when you have a potentially very rare migrant that you just want to get a good shot of!

In particular you don't want to flush it, in order to see it in flight, only for it to disappear over a hedge without a photograph – as my first ever Helice did!

Mark 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 13-Aug-13 07:39 PM GMT

Great stuff Pauline, congratulations 😊

Also loving the Wall Brown photos 😊

All the best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 13-Aug-13 08:09 PM GMT

Great sighting, Pauline!

I agree completely with the other commentators that this is *helice*. Your third picture, that Pete has so rudely scribbled on, shows that the dark border is still broad even right down towards the inner margin. Another feature is the cream shading in part of the underside forewing. This is very typical for helice. Sometimes the undersides of the forewing look pure white – or grey-white – but often they are half shaded in a very pale, buttery colour. So as not to stick my pictures in your diary, here are links to two *helice* showing this (the second one looking really quite yellow underneath the forewing): <http://www.guypadfield.com/images2012/helice1stdec2012b.jpg>, <http://www.guypadfield.com/images2012/helice1stdec2012a.jpg>

Guy

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 13-Aug-13 09:59 PM GMT

Huge congrats Pauline 😊 I hadn't figured on a Helice as an option so I was chuffed to be proved wrong by this equally great find.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Aug-13 07:02 AM GMT

Thank you all for your comments and compliments. I totally forgot about the meteors Mike 😊 which is a pity as I could have done with a few wishes 😊 . Special thanks must go to Pete and Guy for their expert identification and explanation (you can scribble on my pics any time Pete 😊 ). It's good to be able to put a name to her but in any event she was lovely and unusual. I had always wondered if I would even recognise one of these butterflies, perhaps mistaking it for a more common white, but it is such a distinctive butterfly that that would be difficult to do. Thanks for the tips Mark. I shall remember about the backlighting if I ever get another opportunity. Thanks also for noting the sightings of the Small Copper abs – I assume these are the ones with the blue spots which I have been looking for for about 2 years now! In fact, I set off yesterday to check them out but didn't get any further than the Hayling Billy Line where I got distracted by another few of these (all female I believe):









If I don't see a Clouded Yellow for another 9 years I shall have enough photos to sustain me and serve as a reminder of what a splendid butterfly this is 😊 but time is short and it is now time to move on.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 14-Aug-13 08:23 AM GMT

Oops! Forgot to say - Good luck today Paul wherever you are. There used to be Wall Browns around the forts, particularly Fort Widley but I believe they

have been gone for quite a few years now (I have certainly never seen any there in recent times). Anyway, let me know how you get on, whatever!

### Re: Pauline

by Hoggers, 14-Aug-13 05:09 PM GMT

You've really started something now, Pauline! Every time I see a White I have to check to see if it's one of your amazing Helice Clouded Yellows! Certainly keeping me busy!

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 14-Aug-13 06:54 PM GMT

Hi Pauline - yes the small coppers are the ones with blue on the hind wings.

It is worth continuing past the billy trail, if you can resist, and on to sandy point- always a chance of migrants here as its the first landfall for them after crossing the channel with good nectar sources and there is also a Grayling colony here - Wall have been noted in the Hants annual report too.

Interestingly I note on the Sussex BC website that a 140 clouded yellows were recorded on a Lucerne field at Thorney Island which is only a couple of miles from Hayling, so with such an influx there could well be some rarer species mixed in 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Aug-13 08:30 PM GMT

Evening Hoggers, at the moment I think it's a good idea to scrutinise ANY butterfly as you just don't know what you might find with all these migrants being spotted. I even look in gardens as I walk past these day - so exciting, isn't it? 😊

Thanks for that info Mark. I hadn't spotted it on the Sussex site and I will certainly give Sandy Point a visit soon.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Aug-13 11:49 AM GMT

I made a brief stop at Paulsgrove yesterday to check on second brood Small Blue. Lots of Common Blue (and Chalkhills) around but what surprised me was how tiny and dark the female Common Blues were - they could so easily have been confused with Small Blues certainly when in flight



I don't think I've been to this site at this time of year - it was teeming with butterflies and the very many Buddleia bushes were covered in a variety of butterflies including masses of fresh Small Tortoiseshell. I recalled last year when I had so many problems locating a single individual:





First brood Small Blues were plentiful but I struggled to find half a dozen yesterday and these were all very worn; with a single exception they were all male. Their condition was so poor I didn't take a single photo. However, there were a lot of very fresh butterflies around including Painted Lady and these Meadow Brown:



I have struggled to get away from those pesky Clouded Yellow (😂😂) but it was not to be. In the short time I was there I saw 4 - the numbers seem to be building up. At one point there were 2 on a Buddleia which I had overlooked until a 3rd chased them both off and they all went spiraling out of sight together.





I am wondering if this is another 'pale' version but unlike my earlier Helice, this one was pale yellow/orange on the upper wings rather than the distinctive black and white of the Helice form.

I decided to change tack and try to capture these butterflies in flight. I failed miserably 😞



At one point 2 Clouded Yellows were 'dancing' round each other in a similar manner to SWF and I thought perhaps I was going to see a mating pair - I tried to take a photo. This is quite possibly the worst photo I have ever taken and definitely the worst I have ever posted. It is a case of spot the 2 Clouded Yellow 😞😞



### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 15-Aug-13 06:07 PM GMT

Hi Pauline  
I too have noticed both male and female common blues recently that are no bigger than a small blue, also quite a few gatekeepers seem very small. My guess would be that environmental conditions might have caused this?  
Mark 😊

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 15-Aug-13 07:35 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

At one point 2 Clouded Yellows were 'dancing' round each other in a similar manner to SWF and I thought perhaps I was going to see a mating pair – I tried to take a photo. This is quite possibly the worst photo I have ever taken and definitely the worst I have ever posted.

Doesn't matter, Pauline. Even Nigel Kiteley would be hard pressed to present an open-winged shot of a Clouded Yellow.

On those occasions where you're capturing views that are normally 'off the radar' then I think any kind of image is welcome. I posted a shot of a female Grayling wings-open yesterday which was appalling from an aesthetic perspective, but at the very least it showed a Grayling's uppersides, which are seldom seen, so you have to err towards the functional sometimes, which is precisely what you've done.

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 15-Aug-13 11:56 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

Oops! Forgot to say – Good luck today Paul wherever you are. There used to be Wall Browns around the forts, particularly Fort Widley but I believe they have been gone for quite a few years now (I have certainly never seen any there in recent times).  
Anyway, let me know how you get on, whatever!

Hi Pauline  
Nothing to report yet on Wall Browns. I visited the area today after work as the weather was a bit better than yesterday, but to be honest it was probably too late in the day. I need to spend some time there earlier in the day. Your not too far off when you say 'forts' but it is probably not the ones your thinking of 😊 This is just a hunch/feeling really backed up by a little knowledge, that seems to have worked for me so far this year. I might be way off, but I will keep on looking. Wall have certainly been reported from the area in the past, but like you say not for a few years. I do not know what Wall Brown have against Hampshire 😊, they seem to be widespread in Dorset, Sussex and IOW. I just have a feeling that there must be some in the general area of North/East Portsmouth.

Your *helice* was a great find 😊 You should not be worried that it was not exotic enough. Hopefully a few more will turn up 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 16-Aug-13 06:58 AM GMT

Hi Pauline  
Out of interest Wall was very common all along Portsdown hill in the seventies barely raising a second glance except to see if was an aberration. There

has been the odd report over the past couple of years and the habitat looks good so who knows?  
Mark

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 16-Aug-13 10:37 AM GMT

Hi Pauline, I know I'm a bit late here 😊 but you have certainly been among the Clouded Yellows recently, lovely photos. Congrats on the Helice 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 16-Aug-13 02:22 PM GMT

Hi Mark, yes I noticed some very, very small Gatekeepers also but these tended to be variable with some of normal size. As to what might have caused these anomalies, well, you'd have to ask someone who knows what they are talking about 😊 but you're very probably right that it is linked to environmental factors. I had heard from a work colleague that the Wall Brown used to be very common in that area but the closest to home I have seen it was a couple at Fort Gilkicker some years ago now 😊 . I hope you are more successful Paul. Many already know I have no sense of direction so I haven't a clue which way is North of Portsmouth. I am guessing it could be round Gosport or perhaps Fort Cumberland which Mark mentions. These old military bases seem to be a good bet for butterflies. Put me out of my misery eh? and tell me where you're hunting?

Thanks for your kind words David, I appreciate them. I was just trying something different which didn't work out as I'd hoped. I didn't know whether to publish that photo as it is just sooo bad but I have always maintained that this is a journey for me and both good and bad will be recorded. What really amazes me is that well over 100 readers have looked at that photo – I wonder how many of them could spot the 2 butterflies 😊😊😊 . Guy has recently given a great description relating to SWF which sums up exactly what this pair were doing.

Hi Mike – thank you – the Helice was a total surprise and very exciting (actually the mating Wall Brown was very exciting so that was the icing on the cake for me). Just about everywhere I go I am being surrounded by Clouded yellows and I am having a whale of a time. I am trying to arrange outings which are in likely places for migrants as you just never know at the moment what is round the corner. Even if there is nothing round the corner the anticipation, the unpredictability, the possibility and potential all add to the excitement – what a great summer! Hope we meet up again some time soon.

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 16-Aug-13 03:01 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, just doing some catching up, some great photos and reports 😊

I know what you mean about trying different things, sometime they work and sometimes they don't but they all capture memories of great sightings in some way so from that perspective they are all worth seeing.

I noticed up in Arnside that some of the Gatekeepers, especially males, were very small. On the other hand some of the females were a good size. Interestingly there were also some very small (and brown)female Common Blues whereas the males CBs were all normal size. I posted some of the CBs in my diary but the size difference doesn't really come across in the photos.

I am going to be down in Dorset in a couple of weeks, save some of those Clouded Yellows for me please 😊

All the best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 16-Aug-13 08:52 PM GMT

Hi pauline

You were close Gosport is west of Portsmouth – the chalk pit at Paulsgrove is the north 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-Aug-13 07:33 AM GMT

Thanks for that clarification Mark 😊😊 As a business analyst it's astonishing that I somehow managed to find my way all over the country!

Morning Neil, Dorset is a lovely county and the weather is forecast to be good until the end of August at least so I'll be very surprised if you don't see Clouded yellow and lots more too.

I am very aware that for me the season is almost at an end so I have been sorting through my photos and have decided to post a few that somehow got 'left behind' in the frenzy of the less common species. A male and female Common Blue whilst looking for Brown Hairstreaks at Noar Hill:





The deer that watched me scrutinise the Blackthorn and one of those responsible no doubt for all the ticks this year.



The Meadow Brown who fiercely defended his patch as I searched for PE at the Straits:



and the Brown Argos being buffeted by the wind



Not forgetting the delightful family of Wrens which kept me amused whilst watching WLH at Cosham



and one of the many unfortunates I stumbled across on my travels:



I am looking forward to the rest of the season but in a more relaxed way – having seen a fair selection of butterflies this year and an amazing quantity at that, and with the last of the UK species having emerged, it is now a case of just waiting to see what else turns up .....

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-Aug-13 03:42 PM GMT

'It is now just a case of waiting until something else turns up .....' – Well, I didn't have long to wait! I am very grateful to Mark for bringing to my attention the Long-tailed blue he discovered yesterday and also for the VERY precise directions he gave me (when I find the Swallowtail you shall be the first to know Mark 😊). I was aware that the butterfly was not in perfect condition but that didn't dull my excitement and I have to confess I didn't get very many hours sleep last night. Mark had explained that the site faced East so any early sun would cause the butterflies to stir. Having hastily arranged an animal sitter I was at Sandy Point just before 7.30am. This is the gravel car park where the butterflies can be found:



– the sun was already warming up the area and a few butterflies were on the wing. I was concerned that either the previous night's storms or the very many birds would have seen the end of the little butterfly but shortly after 8.00am, there it was, right in front of me on a leaf. It was fidgety but still warming up so I managed to get a few open and closed wing shots. I would have liked longer and more opportunity – the photos are not great – but after 2–3 minutes it suddenly took off and I lost it amongst the gravel. I called Mark who came straight over and we searched for another couple of hours before spotting it again. I got close enough for a positive ID but then it did its disappearing trick again, flying low against the ground, very fast and well camouflaged and we both lost sight of it again. Unfortunately Mark had to leave and shortly afterwards I was rewarded with one more encounter but no photo opportunity – it confronted a female Common Blue which enabled a direct side-by-side comparison demonstrating how different the 2 actually are. Eventually hunger and thirst got the better of me but a great morning out and lots of other butterflies including Clouded yellow of course – later.



...and the stunning views in the other direction:



### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 18-Aug-13 05:14 PM GMT

Very nice find Pauline, I can imagine how hard it would be to follow flying low in a gravel car park. Cathy and I were at Sandy Point a few days ago and would you believe were in that very car park but saw only Common Blues some of which were tiny! The Nature Reserve itself was closed due to some coastal defence work going on, but we did see a Clouded Yellow fly past at 100 mph.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 18-Aug-13 06:11 PM GMT

Congrats on the Long Tails Pauline 😊🍷 Are those the Kent ones just out of interest as I've cashed in all my Brownie points for this year 😊 Might be able to wangle something closer to home though 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 18-Aug-13 08:09 PM GMT

Nice one Pauline, congratulations 🍷😊

I find it amazing that people can give directions to these butterflies and they will still be there the following day, or even longer sometimes.

All the best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 18-Aug-13 08:22 PM GMT

Nice to see an image. Well done, Pauline.

Long Tailed Blue, Clouded Yellow (including *helice*), continental Swallowtail, Queen of Spain Fritillary and Geranium Bronze.

What's due to turn up next? Monarch, anyone?

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 18-Aug-13 09:13 PM GMT

Yep – there have been at least 2 Monarch sightings I'm aware of. One in Kent (although this doesn't feel "right" given the location) and another in Hampshire in Lee on the Solent. However, I'm not sure if either have been validated, and I've see no photos.

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 18-Aug-13 09:16 PM GMT

I think Pale or Bergers clouded yellow are highly likely and Monarch have been seen at least five times this year only three miles from where Pauline and

I saw the LTB.

Fingers crossed for scarce swallowtail bath white lol 😊 Pauline you promised 😊

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 18-Aug-13 09:20 PM GMT

#### "Pete Eeles" wrote:

Yep – there have been at least 2 Monarch sightings I'm aware of.

Interesting stuff. Given the southerly wind direction could these be from the Canary Islands rather than America?

With more southerly airflow and ideal conditions forecast for this week, it could well be that even more exotic species will find their way to our islands. Fingers crossed.

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 18-Aug-13 09:33 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, to answer David, Cathy saw a Monarch at Compton Bay on the Isle of Wight on 19th June. She was so devastated at not getting a photo, although she did had a chance, she asked me never to mention it in my personal diary, which, I have not. We don't know if it was a genuine migrant or a release, but it was definitely a Monarch! We've been over this time and time again, she will never forget it!

Sorry Pauline, you can delete this from your diary.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 18-Aug-13 09:38 PM GMT

#### "Pauline" wrote:

...and the stunning views in the other direction:

Hi Pauline

Unfortunately I was in the 'other direction' 😞 Perhaps I should have tried to get in on the Long Tailed Blue action 😊 I scrutinised every Blue I saw today , but mine were all Common. Lots of them though 😊

This was a great find, I wonder how long it will hang around or if it will find any friends. Lets hope so 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-Aug-13 06:47 AM GMT

Thank you everyone for your kind words – the discussion that this has generated is very interesting and I shall try to pick up on it. Morning Wurzel – this was indeed a Hampshire sighting quite close to home at Hayling Island near Portsmouth. I think it might be around for a little while yet Paul. The reason I say that Neil is because the weather has not been that great down here (quite a bit of rain and cloud) so I was hoping (rightly as it turned out) that it hadn't gone far, just like my first Clouded Yellow at Bramshott. I understand that the Kent LTB's have bred and there are now some pristine examples if anyone cares to go further afield.

I, too, have heard of several Monarchs round here Mark, two in the same garden in fact (although not at the same time), a male and female. So, I promise you that I shall keep trying 😊 and you have directed me to some very promising sites 😊😊 .

Cathy I am so sorry you missed the opportunity (oops, perhaps I shouldn't have mentioned that!) but believe me we can all understand your dismay and frustration. It is also an incredible co-incidence that you were in that very same space Mike where we found the LTB. If you had known it was there you would probably have spent more time looking.

I couldn't agree more re the tiny CB's Mike. Mark and I have both previously commented on the very tiny Common Blues that are around at the moment at many of the sites we have visited. Sandy Point was no different and we came upon a tiny blue, so tiny it was astonishing. Mark took the flower head it was on to measure it to try to get an idea of wingspan. I was content to take a few photos with both butterflies on the same flower by way of comparison. The larger of the 2 butterflies is the 'normal' size for Common Blue. (No trick photography involved 😊). Not great photos but ones which David would kindly describe as 'functional' – ie to demonstrate a point:





### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 19-Aug-13 07:08 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

Great shot getting those Two blues together. The flower head measured just 14mm across so I would estimate the wingspan of the "small" blue to be between 12&14mm and I think we both agreed that it was at least half the size of the normal common blue if not smaller. As we commented butterfly wingspans are extremely variable but this was quite extreme – smaller than most small blues and the only reference to wingspans I can find is in " Butterflies of Britain and Ireland" by Michael Easterbrook. He gives sizes for Small Blues between 18&27mm and Common Blues between 29&36mm which would equate with what we saw.

Interestingly in the Cockayne database there is a named abberation ab. minor Cockerell, 1889, that looks to be "dwarf" but I can't find a description. Glad you saw LTB.

Kind Regards

Mark 😊

### Re: Pauline

by badgerbob, 19-Aug-13 01:05 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Sorry to put a poor pic on your pages but here is a mating pair of C. Blue with the female being really small, so I thought it might link in with your discussions!! This was just a couple of weeks ago. Incidentally I had a very small Wall Brown yesterday (male) and this morning a very small Holly Blue (female). I thought these mating blues was a Brown Argus mating with a Common Blue going by the size when I first saw them.

Bob.



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-Aug-13 06:30 PM GMT

Welcome to the discussion Bob. That is a great photo and further demonstrates this strange phenomenon. You'll probably recall Mark that when the 'small' blue opened its wings they didn't extend to the edges of the flower head so your measurements tie in well with your wing span estimate. I wish I'd taken an open-winged photo but I was too fascinated by this diminutive butterfly and dazzled by its vibrant colour. The reference to ab minor is very interesting and any further details or references would be gratefully received.



## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Aug-13 05:40 PM GMT

So, apart from *Long-tailed Blue* and *tiny Common Blue* what else can be found at Sandy Point? Well, the answer is lots! Too much to include in one posting so a few photos of Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady to be going on with – both of which are fast becoming part of 'the usual suspects'.





For quite a small gravel car park there was a whole lot more going on at this site largely due to all the nectar sources around the perimeter. Other species will be recorded later.

**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 20-Aug-13 06:08 PM GMT

Wot 😊 No Monarchs yet 😊

You see how you have raised expectations. You've been providing a whole series of super photos recently 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Aug-13 06:32 PM GMT

Thank you Mike – I appreciate your views as always. Re Monarch --- just give me a few more days 😊😊😊 I'm currently trying to track down a Swallowtail for Mark 😊😊

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 20-Aug-13 06:54 PM GMT

Swallowtail and Monarch noted just over the border in Sussex in the last couple of days and a nice warm southerly wind forecast ..... Keep your eyes peeled 😊 Mark

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 20-Aug-13 07:42 PM GMT

#### "Tuts" wrote:

Swallowtail and Monarch noted just over the border in Sussex in the last couple of days and a nice warm southerly wind forecast ..... Keep your eyes peeled 😊 Mark

Tuts, that's just cruel! 😡

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 20-Aug-13 09:03 PM GMT

May a little bit of a tease but as Pauline knows I believe we are in the middle of one of those ' migrant years'.' No 1947 perhaps, when 38 Bath Whites were captured in a single Cornwall field, but both swallowtail and monarch are being recorded weekly on the south coast at the moment so we are in the fortunate position of being able to specifically look out for migrants where we live – anyway Pauline owes me one 😊 Mark

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 20-Aug-13 09:15 PM GMT

#### "Tuts" wrote:

May a little bit of a tease but as Pauline knows I believe we are in the middle of one of those ' migrant years'.' No 1947 perhaps, when 38 Bath Whites were captured in a single Cornwall field, but both swallowtail and monarch are being recorded weekly on the south coast at the moment so we are in the fortunate position of being able to specifically look out for migrants where we live – anyway Pauline owes me one 😊 Mark

Fair points, and I concur with your statement regarding the southern strip of England being well placed for immigrants right now – God knows, it's been long enough since we could all last say that.

I just hope the weather stays decent over the next four weeks, as if we aren't subjected to any unseasonably cold conditions then I believe we could be in for a real (and rare) late season treat.

Fingers crossed.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Aug-13 08:55 AM GMT

😊😊😊 loving the banter! Hope you're right David.

Sandy Point – part 3.

As previously mentioned I had feared that the LTB had succumbed to the previous night's storms as some butterflies appeared to have done. Many Whites in particular looked like they had had a good battering:



There were several weary looking Holly Blues and some very autumnal looking Small Coppers (but no blue spots 😞)



Interestingly, one of the coppers was even smaller than the 'small' Common Blue but his size didn't stop him from being one of the feistiest butterflies on his patch attacking everything that entered his space. Despite his worn and tatty appearance there was still quite a bit of fight left in him.

The weather was changeable and sunny periods were interspersed by cloud cover and heavy rain and it was during one of the showers that this Common Blue allowed its photo to be taken:



Close to the car park the shingle led down to the water front and it was here that I found a couple of Grayling. Another 'spot the Grayling' shot and then from one extreme to another:



There were lots of other butterflies in this relatively small area as well as many other insects – dragonflies, grasshoppers, moths etc and with so much to watch the time just flew. What a cracking little site – I can't wait to go back.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-Aug-13 01:48 PM GMT

Not a lot to report today. My quest for migrants took me recently to Thorney Island – a first visit for me based largely on the (fairly) recent report regarding the many Clouded Yellow spotted there. I had looked the venue up online and it has quite an interesting and chequered history which is easily accessible so will not be replicated here. However, I was not prepared to be informed by the military that there were cameras all over the island so my presence would be monitored 😬. I had an enjoyable walk, chatted with friendly locals, admired the bird life, but ..... the only butterfly I saw the whole

time I was there was a single female Common Blue, despite glorious weather 😊 . So, a few shots of what I believe to be an Egret of sorts:





.... and tomorrow the search is back on 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 22-Aug-13 03:52 PM GMT

Nice shots of a Little Egret Pauline.

Identified by the black legs and yellow feet captured nicely in the second photo.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Aug-13 07:30 AM GMT

Thank you Paul. It's very kind of you to say so and lovely to hear from you.

A couple of nights ago I paid an early evening visit to Noar Hill and was just in time to bump into Mike and Cathy who were just leaving. We stopped for a chat about recent encounters and future aspirations and were soon joined by Nick – great to see you all. Despite it approaching 7.00pm there were still lots of butterflies on the wing. The very many Peacocks which could be seen a short time ago have now been replaced by Small Tortoiseshell which are everywhere. I can't remember seeing so many in one place – in fact, I don't think I have seen this many in my entire life. Some of the butterflies were worn but many were very fresh. A few photos from Noar Hill:







Today I have a poorly tortoise who will need some professional help. I use different vets for different creatures depending on their specialism, despite the fact that some might be many miles away. My tortoise vet is quite close to Shipton B. – a journey of approx 1 hour. It is going to be very hard, having gone that far, to drive past that vicinity without stopping to look for BH 😞 but the animals always take priority.

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 23-Aug-13 09:49 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

I always keep an eye on your progress and enjoy your photos. I hope the tortoise gets on ok and maybe you could leave for a while at the vets for a couple of hours at Shipton B.

Take care.

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 23-Aug-13 04:23 PM GMT

Re. Shipton Bellinger, I hope you have seen the post by **Nomad** [viewtopic.php?f=8&t=7145&sid=47d014fad765da377cbe535c21ab4612#p75712](http://viewtopic.php?f=8&t=7145&sid=47d014fad765da377cbe535c21ab4612#p75712) warning of access difficulties this weekend. I also hope that the tortoise responds to treatment – for obvious reasons, they are difficult animals to treat!

I am slightly puzzled by the lighting on your most recent CY pics, which seems to be coming from below in the first pic. I guess it was late in the day, as the butterflies are not that well lit and rather lacking in contrast. This is a situation where I would turn to a touch of fill-in flash, to add the needed contrast, though it is difficult to do well and you need off-camera flash. Another topic to add to your list for study over the Winter 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Aug-13 09:09 AM GMT

Thank you Paul but the big question is, am I making any progress???? 😊😊😊 I appreciate you asking after Houdini and the suggestion to leave him at the vet was exactly what happened.

Would you believe me Mike if I said that was exactly the effect I was trying to create??? No, I didn't think so 😊😊 My 'to do' list for the winter is getting ever longer 😊😊 Tortoises are indeed difficult to treat as you rightly comment which is why I use a specialist vet so I am confident that he is in the best (and most expensive 😊) hands. What I wasn't expecting was for him to be admitted for chest x-rays and other treatment. I will know more over the weekend but his hospitalisation left me free to explore Shipton B. I had already been warned about the dogs but hadn't realised that they would use the boundary hedge as a natural barrier for the dogs making it impossible to get anywhere close to the main hotspots. So, from Egrets to Malamutes, these were typical scenes from Shipton:



**Re: Pauline**

by Neil Freeman, 24-Aug-13 10:14 AM GMT

Hi Pauline, some great photos in the last few posts. I particularly like the Painted Ladies and Clouded Yellows with the blurred yet obviously natural backgrounds 😊

All the best,

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Aug-13 02:40 PM GMT

Thank you Neil – not sure you are going to like this one but personally I quite like the effect with the complementary colour scheme:



### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 25-Aug-13 09:54 AM GMT

Yes, I do like it 😊

I don't dislike the 'butterfly on a stick against a pastel background' type of photo. It is just that there does seem a tendency for a lot of photos to end up looking the same when you keep seeing the same pose against the same background.

There is sometimes a fine line between a photo looking like it was taken in the natural world and one that looks like it was taken in a studio. In my opinion Pauline, your photos always have the natural look to them.

Just my humble opinion of course and I am well aware that others tastes are totally different to mine. Its the differences that keeps things interesting 😊

All the best,

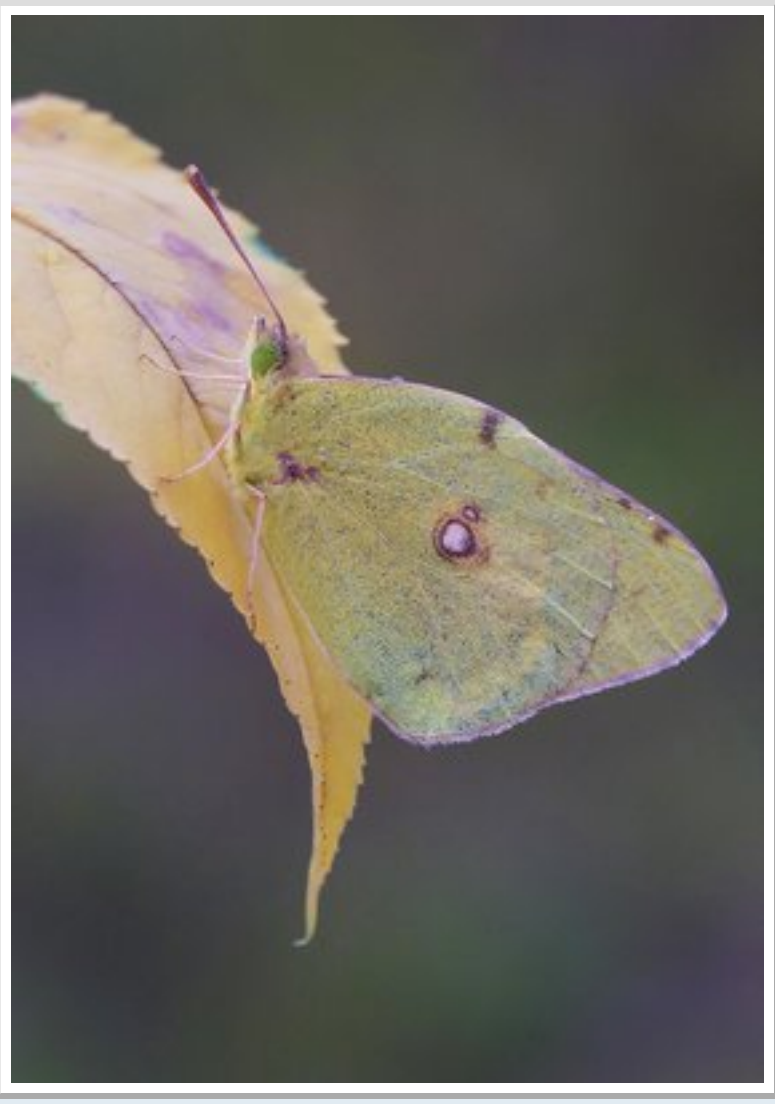
Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-Aug-13 02:25 PM GMT

Bless you Neil, I appreciate your comments. I really needed cheering up today and you have done it. My tortoise (Houdini) whom I have had for 30 years has been diagnosed with a diffuse pneumonia. He is currently on antibiotics and come Tuesday will have blood tests and a lung wash 🤔🤔 to try to determine the underlying cause which will in turn inform the prognosis.

The end of August is upon us and as such it is time for me to take my leave for another season. I had hoped to bow out in a blaze of Brown Hairstreak shots but it wasn't to be so instead I shall leave with some washed out clouded yellows. I shall still be out and about, eyes open for migrants (honestly Mark, I shall find one and pay my dues 😊😊). I will be watching your diaries keenly and checking PM periodically – some of you locals have my email and phone no so please don't hesitate to use it and if you are in the Liphook area call in for a cuppa or something a little stronger 😊. Back again in May.





### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 25-Aug-13 04:58 PM GMT

Cheerio Pauline and I look forward to picking up the thread again in May 😊 I hope that if you are fortunate to see more rare migrants in the coming few weeks, you will break silence to let us know.

All the best and I hope you get a good prognosis for Houdini. His name suggests he is good at getting out of trouble.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 25-Aug-13 09:51 PM GMT

Hi Pauline – hope the tortoise pulls through.

I will still be looking hard for those migrants for the next six weeks and still lots of Clouded Yellows are showing everywhere i look, I have been touring the local lanes looking for Lucerne fields 😊

You know I will keep you posted when Pale Clouded Yellow shows up – i'll leave the swallowtail for you.

Best Wishes

Mark 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 25-Aug-13 10:16 PM GMT

Blimey Pauline, I can't believe that this year is passing so quickly, it only seems like yesterday that I read your first post of this year.

All the best for the coming months and I hope Houdini pulls through ok.

Neil F.

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 25-Aug-13 10:16 PM GMT

The way things are developing, I think all of us will have to stick around for longer than usual this year.

Normally, my butterfly instinct dissipates quite rapidly during September, but right now I have primed it to remain alert till October at least, as I feel there are exciting things round the corner!

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 26-Aug-13 06:28 PM GMT

See you next season Pauline, probably in Bentley for Pearls? I'm sure you'll have to come out of "hibernation" when you get one of those migrants 😊 All the best to Houdini.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 28-Aug-13 10:48 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Thanks for all your help and encouragement this year, particularly with getting out in bad weather. Perhaps next year we will actually bump into each

other at some point. I look forward to reading your diary again in May. I have always seemed one step behind you this year, hopefully I will have caught up a bit by next year.

## Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 29-Aug-13 12:13 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, some great Clouded Yellow shots to 'finish' up with. I've noticed that some out there are beginning to fade, but they have been around a while now 😊 It only seems five minutes ago you posted your first 'Dukes' of the year, time moves along so fast 😞 but its been fun 😊 Hope Houdini is OK?

Mike and Cathy

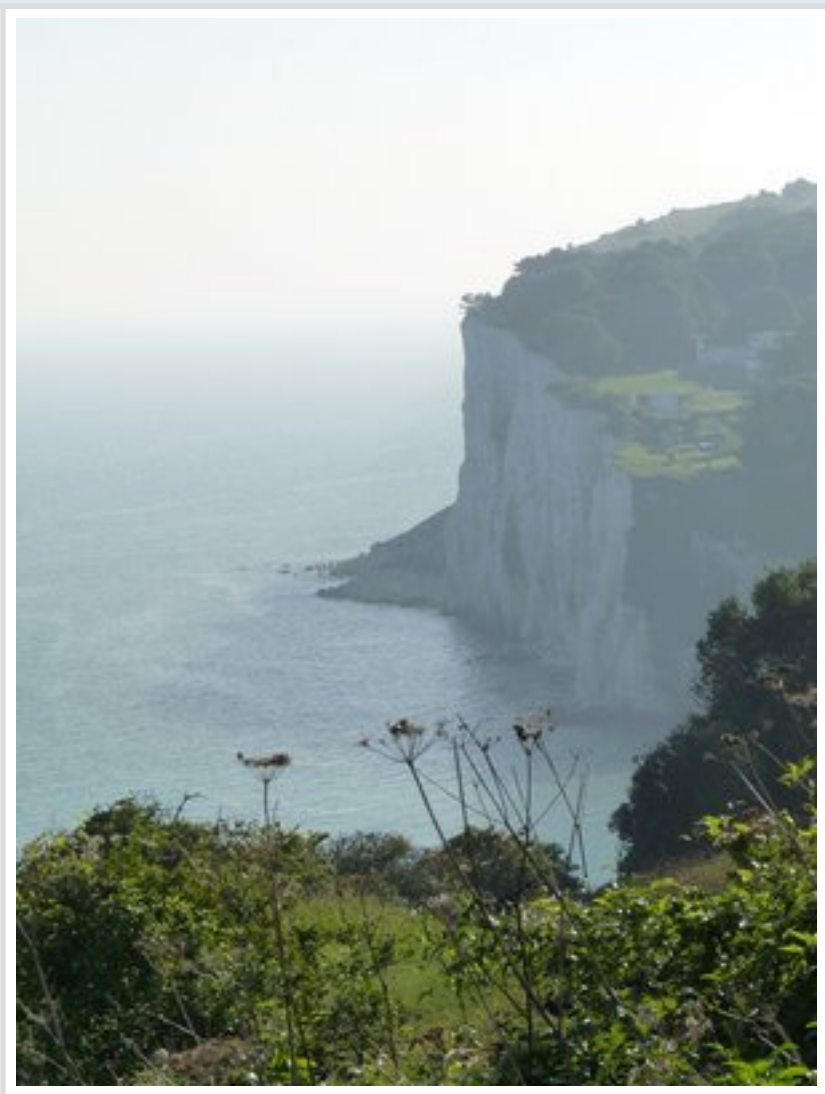
## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Oct-13 06:08 PM GMT

Wow! I hadn't seen all of these replies. Thank you so much guys and I am pleased to report that Houdini is still with us 😊. Now, I have heard it said that it is a female's prerogative to change her mind so on that basis (and the fact that I now have a bit of spare time) I have decided to continue with my diary for a while at least.

24 September .....

It was such a fantastic summer and the excitement of so many rare migrants in the South East later in the season really took hold. I could not help but to be caught up in it and although I was not able to see the original LTB migrants sighted at St Margaret's, I could not resist the lure of a subsequent generation emerging. The journey there should have taken a little over 2 hours but due to heavy fog, road accidents, traffic jams and diversion signs, it was actually some 3.5 hours later that I arrived in the car park. Thanks to excellent directions from Mark Joy I was able to reach the vicinity much more easily than I would otherwise have been able to, and as I set off on the walk along the cliff tops I was joined by 2 locals who were making a second visit to view these migrants.



As we reached Kingsdown Leas one of them pointed to a particular spot and said 'that's where we saw the original butterflies' and lo and behold, there was a male LTB nectaring on one of the few everlasting pea plants that was still flowering. Well, I thought this was going to be easy and wondered what all the fuss was about, with so many folk not being able to find them. However, I only managed a couple of record shots from a distance before the butterfly took off.



I was to learn later from Kipper that the males of this species are particularly skittish and with the temperature now quite warm (11.30am) they were certainly very active. As I looked up I could see Matthew (Oates) approaching, notebook in hand, keeping meticulous records of the LTB's which were seen on the day. As I explored the site more widely I bumped into Kipper who introduced me to Dave Brown and Trev Sawyer (nice to meet you guys). I returned to where I saw the initial LTB and my attention was immediately caught by a further sighting of a LTB, also nectaring on Everlasting Pea flowers. Until Matthew shouted over to me for confirmation that the butterfly I was looking at was indeed a LTB, I was unaware that there was now a second individual a short distance away - 2 different males being photographed simultaneously only yards apart!



By now there were about 15 enthusiasts scouring the site for this elusive butterfly but subsequent sightings were few and far between, despite the ideal weather conditions. Matthew commented that he had recorded 6 individuals the previous day and expressed some concern that they might have dispersed. However, there were plenty of other butterflies to admire , in particular some very fresh Adonis – and the scenery was simply stunning. At around 2.15pm another male put in an appearance, albeit briefly.





Although this male did not settle for many seconds he repeatedly returned to the same area, on and around a Blackberry bush, giving everyone the chance of some record shots and the opportunity to see just how strong and fast this butterfly is in flight. As far as I am aware there were no females seen whilst I was at this site. However, my other commitments together with a long drive back, meant that I had to start my return journey at 3.15 so it is possible that it may have been recorded later as the weather had become increasingly hot. I had left a bottle of Coke in my car and it was almost too hot to drink so I stopped briefly at the delightful little Tea Rooms at the top of the cliffs for a nice cold drink before starting the long journey back. What a great way to end the season, or so I thought, but there was more to come .....

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 29-Oct-13 08:38 AM GMT

4 October 2013

Made my first ever visit to Fort Cumberland today for a couple of hours to check out the wild fennel for possible Swallowtail larva. Mark (Tuts) had given me excellent directions to this tiny, tucked away place labelled as a nature reserve and indeed it seemed like a little haven amongst a very built up area. I had a little chuckle to myself as I remembered that I'd asked Mark whether he had checked the fennel there for eggs - there was loads of it!!!! I Had a good look for larva but all the plants seemed to be covered in anything but - snails, earwigs, spiders etc etc. With so many potential predators I decided that the possibility of finding anything interesting was quite slim. I searched next for the Everlasting Pea that I'm told was there (somewhere) but I'm not much good with plants when they're alive let alone brown and dying off! Starving by now so got some fish and chips at a little chip shop at the end of the lane (surprisingly good actually) and walked down to the waters edge to share some with the gulls. My heart skipped a beat as a blue butterfly flew past me and landed a couple of feet in front on a yellow flower. It opened its wings to show the pristine upperside of a male Common Blue, presumably a third brood ! The only butterfly I saw all day and I couldn't even take a photo as my hands were full of fish and chips 😊 .

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 29-Oct-13 08:47 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Great LTB report and photos, good to see you managed to join the ranks of those that caught up with them 😊

All the best,

Neil F.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-Oct-13 10:31 AM GMT

Really appreciate your comment Neil – great to hear from you again.

Whilst waiting in for a delivery, what better way to pass the time than to update my diary.

### 6 October 2013

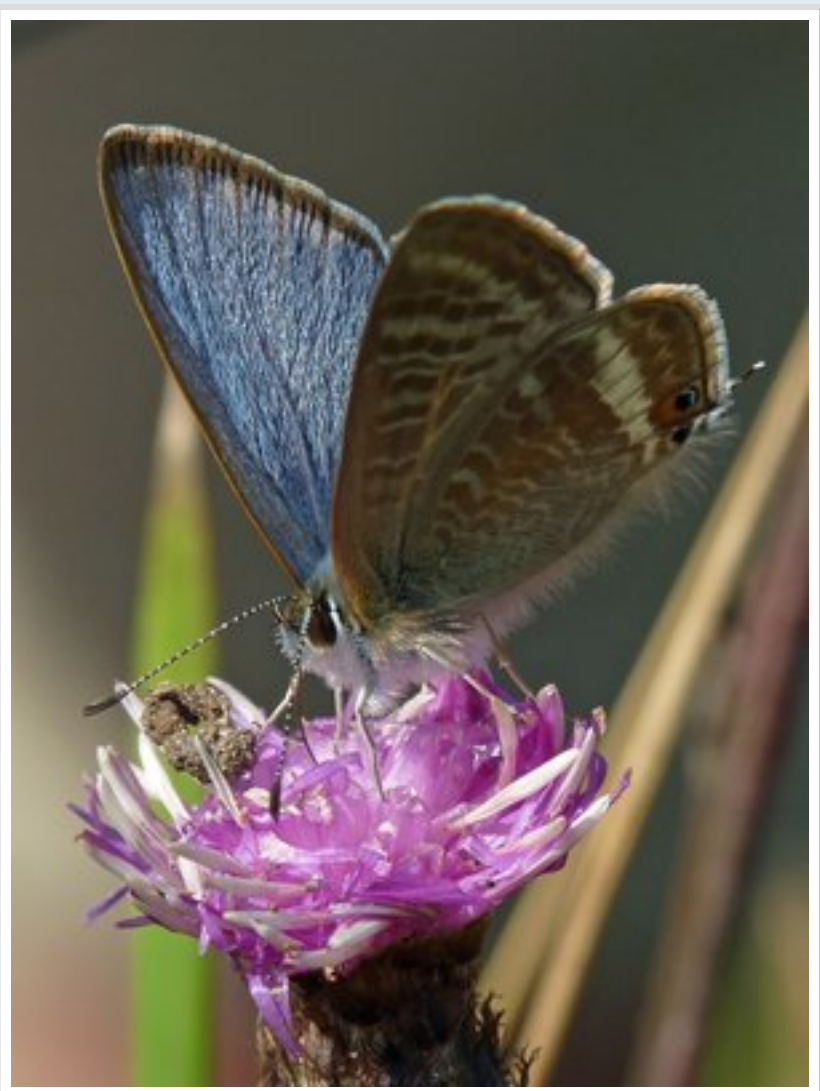
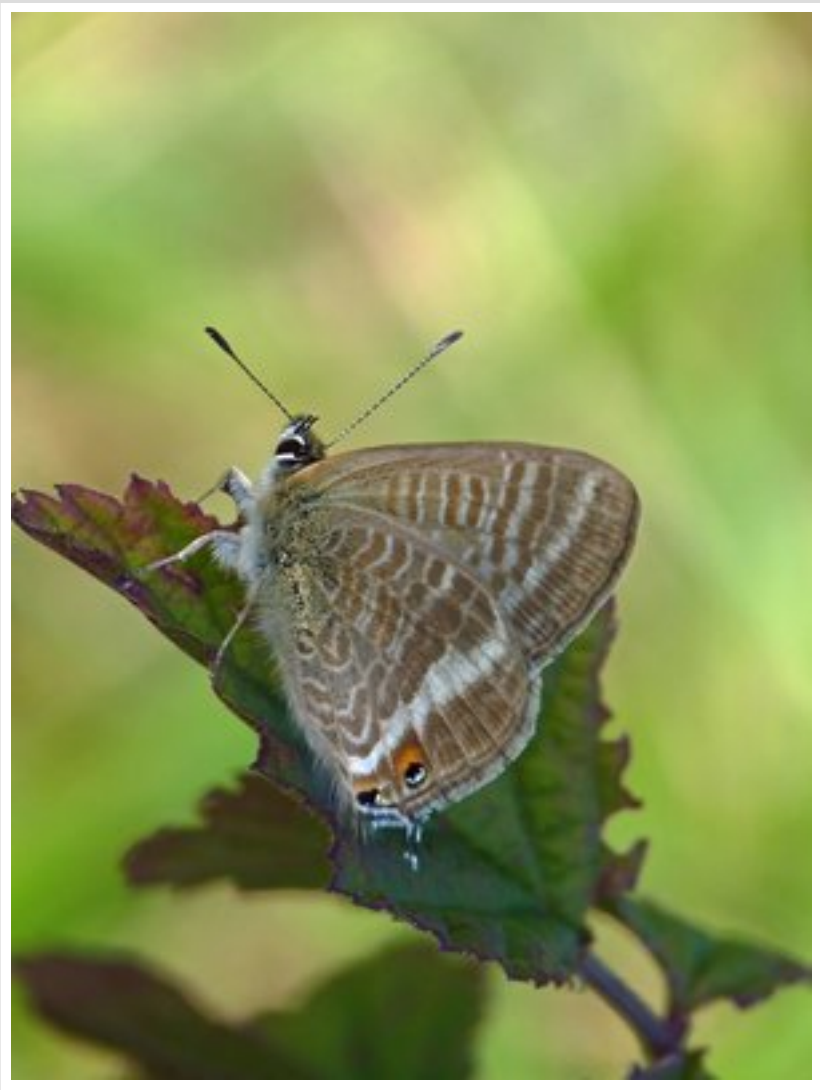
This morning I made a snap decision to risk a second and final trip to Kingsdown Leas in the hope of seeing a female LTB. Despite setting off over an hour later than my initial visit, I arrived 30 minutes sooner than before, thanks to little traffic and good driving conditions. The sun was shining as I arrived just after 10.00a.m. and as I made my way down to the Leas from the Bokhill monument a small beetle caught my eye as it shone a golden colour in the early sun. Closer inspection revealed the attractive green, red and gold stripes, reminding me of a Christmas decoration. I now know that this is a Rosemary beetle and it is considered a pest.

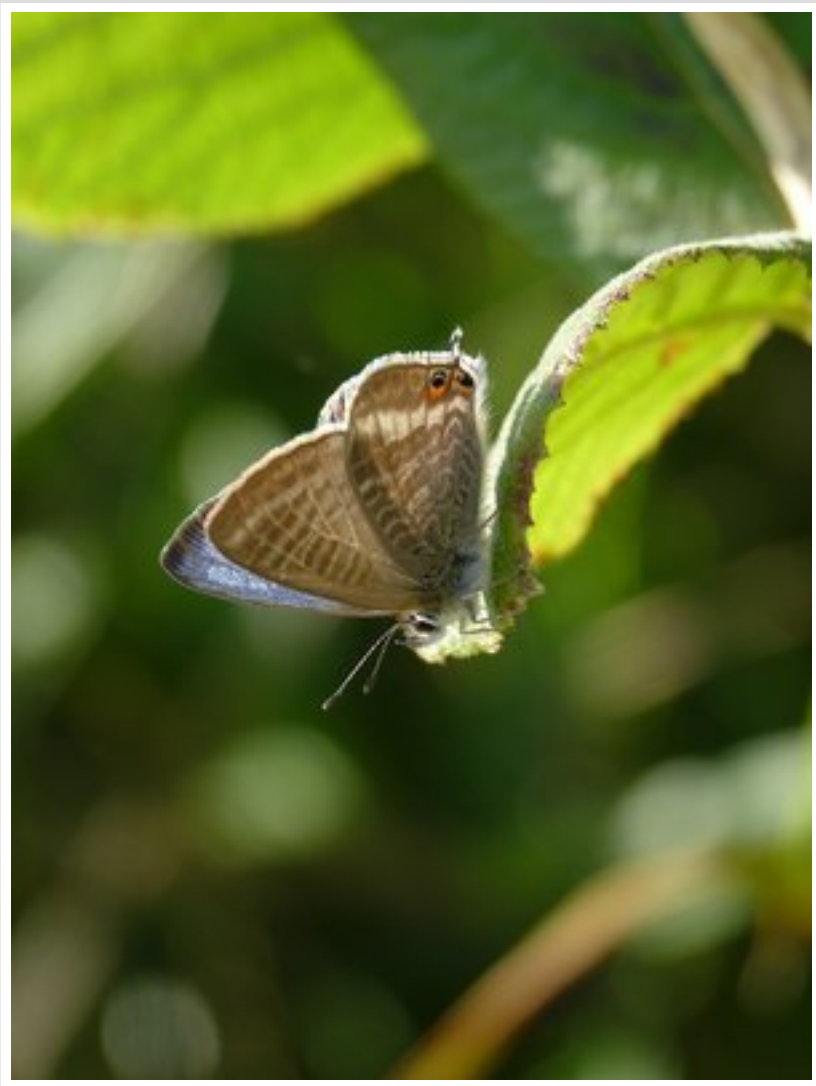


I continued along the track and noticed huge numbers of birds on the fence and in the fields to my left. I am fairly certain that these were Goldfinches but what astonished me was the size of the flock(s). There must have been about 300–500 birds in the air as they circled around before landing again, something they did each time they were disturbed. I tried to take a photo from a distance to capture this phenomenon but could only manage to get a small section of the flock in the viewfinder:



I arrived on site to find that there were 2 LTB being photographed within yards of each other – a somewhat tatty female and a male in very good condition indeed. I was able to get some shots of the male before turning my attention to the female, which had flown, unnoticed by all, as we waited for some open-winged shots.



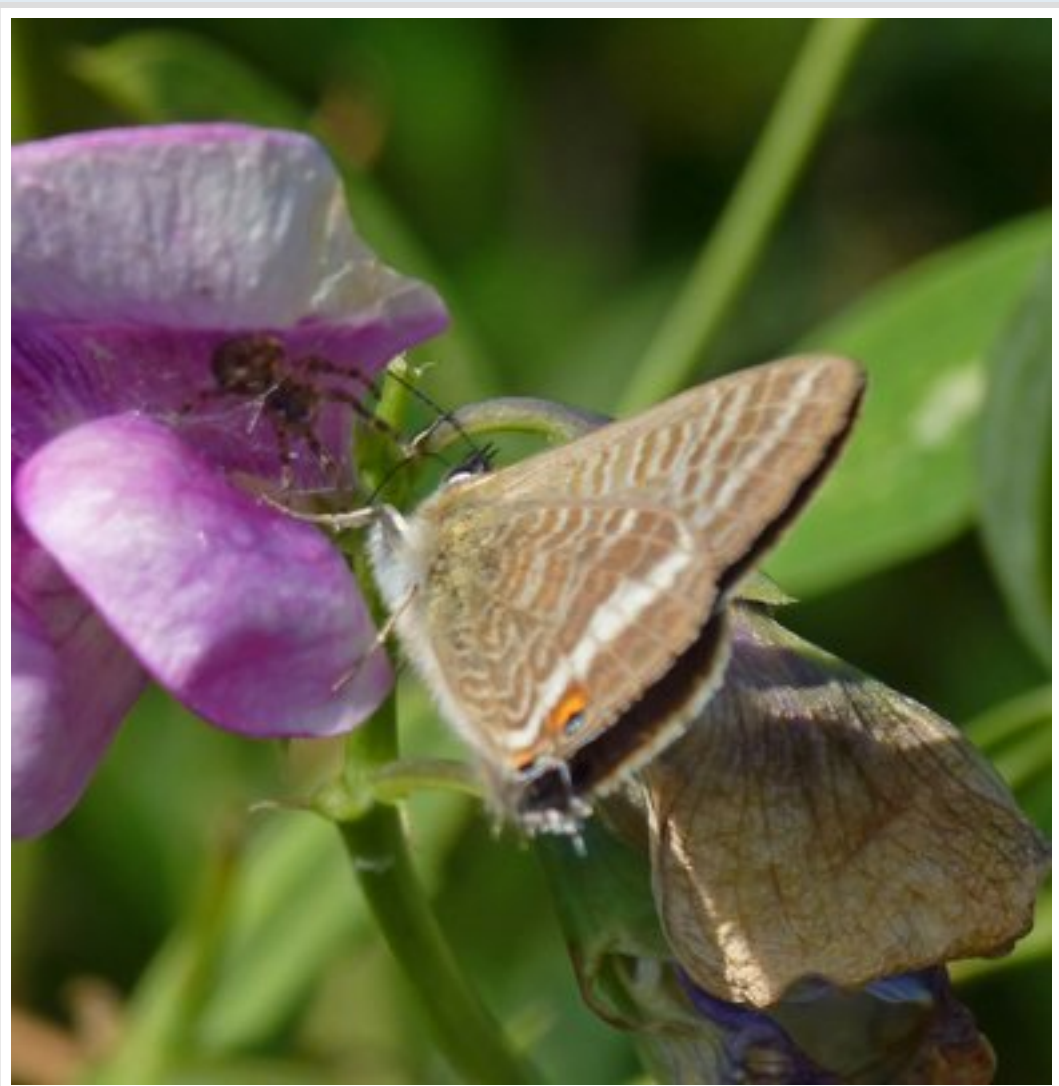


I made my way back the way I had come and met Phil Smith who had found a very co-operative pristine male LTB. (Nice to meet you Phil if you happen to read this). Phil generously allowed me to get in close for some shots and we took turns to photograph the butterfly in different positions and on different plants. It frequently moved around but didn't go far and continued to return to a few favourite places. Consequently, the photos Phil has posted on his web-site are almost identical to mine.





By now we had been joined by several other enthusiasts and the butterfly was becoming restless, flying over the hedge into a private garden before returning a short while later. At one point it flew up onto the only flowering pea plant but stayed only for about a nanosecond as a spider shot out from amongst the petals. The butterfly made his escape but I only had a split second to capture the drama. It is not a good photo but it serves to illustrate well the very good camouflage of both the spider and the butterfly whose wing mimics the dead petal.



The temperature was quite hot by now and folk were joking about the temperatures being good for the end of July! However, the butterflies were now becoming very active and at one point 2 male LTB's which were involved in a tussle appeared to be joined by a third, but this turned out to be a pristine Adonis.



There were a lot of butterflies around including 2 lovely fresh Clouded Yellow, neither of which stopped and still the LTB continued to chase, this time a Small Copper. I decided to walk to the other end of the site and on the way saw some lovely autumnal Commas and Speckled Wood as well as a few more Adonis:



I walked further along than I had done on the previous occasion and came across a very nice gentleman and his son who had found a pristine female LTB in the grass and although it wasn't a very photogenic pose I was pleased to get some close-up shots as she sat patiently for perhaps 15 minutes whilst we clicked away. This was a particularly beautiful specimen – she looked like she had just been sprinkled with gold dust.



In an endeavour to coax her to open her wings we agreed to put some shadow over her but this didn't persuade her to show her upper side. Quite suddenly she flew but I was convinced she hadn't gone far and I was able to locate her again. As before, she allowed us to take numerous shots but ..... there is always a bit of grass in the way, whichever direction the camera is angled.





At last, in frustration and impatience, some of those present used scissors to snip away some of the grass stems. The butterfly decided enough was enough. She opened her wings for a split second allowing me a glimpse of her immaculate upper side and then flew over a bramble bush so it was impossible to see where she had landed. I did not think she had gone far so the search continued. As we were looking for the LTB I came across several spiders and felt sorry for the creature parceled up in this web.



Scrutinising every blade of grass in an attempt to once again locate the LTB I managed to find and photograph several of these moths which I was informed was a migrant, a Vestral moth, and so attractive with the red stripe.



Whilst waiting for the female LTB to open her wings I chatted to a really nice couple who I now know to be Paul Wetton and Helen. I hope your cat made a speedy recovery Helen - I can certainly empathise as my old cat has had numerous problems including a broken pelvis. I am so pleased that after all the mileage you did you eventually managed to film the LTB Paul.

I had been on site for just over 4 hours by now and regrettably my time was up so I started to make my way slowly towards the monument, keeping my eyes peeled, just in case! I did not see another LTB but I did see this cricket and an interesting caterpillar, neither of which I have been able to identify.



As I took my leave, for what would probably be the last time, I said a reluctant farewell to a site which has provided many folk with great deal of pleasure.



### Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 30-Oct-13 05:34 PM GMT

Some fabulous photos of the LTBs Pauline. I'm quite jealous of them.

Shame I didn't recognise you as I think I was standing directly behind you when the shadow was put on the female LTB. I guess I was too transfixed by the LTBs. Shame she didn't open her wings as I didn't get a shot of an open winged female. Didn't get any real decent video of any to be honest.

I was just glad to see the LTBs after several attempts.

Nice to see some more of your diary.

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 31-Oct-13 12:23 AM GMT

I'm very pleased that you decided to 'break silence' to share these splendid photos. That shot of the spider attack is really quite remarkable!

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 31-Oct-13 09:35 AM GMT

Hi again Pauline

Just to let you know I think your Cricket is probably a female Long-winged Conehead. Cone shaped head and long wings surprisingly. The ovipositor is also fairly straight. This is much more scimitar shaped in the Short-winged Conehead.

Flossie (the cat) is doing quite well at the moment, thanks for asking, she may need a hip replacement in the future though, so time to start saving up I guess.

Hope to hear some more from you if you have any more photos to show us.

All the best.

### Re: Pauline

by mud-puddling, 31-Oct-13 10:51 PM GMT

Some excellent LTB shots here Pauline. Looks like you found some in pristine condition. I think we met briefly at Southwick? Regards, Leigh

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Nov-13 12:56 PM GMT

I'm really pleased to hear that Flossie is making good progress Paul and thank you very much for the id – much appreciated. I'm pleased you like my photos too but sorry to hear you didn't get the footage you had hoped for. It was great seeing them tho' wasn't it and just being part of the atmosphere and excitement made it a very special day. Now that I know who you are Paul, when our paths next cross (perhaps Chiddingfold?) we shall be able to have a proper chat 😊 .

Great to hear from you Mike and pleased you liked that particular photo. It is a pity it is not all in focus but I was really lucky to get anything at all as it was over in a split second so I am well pleased.

I was astonished to read your comment Leigh as only minutes before I was admiring your LTB photos in the gallery and wondering who 'mud-puddling' was! The open-winged shot with the black berries complimenting the butterfly's markings has to be one of my favourites – so beautifully composed, but I also like the shot with the twirly bit of pea in the background. This idea of name badges is really beginning to grow on me as I would have loved to have chatted with you at Southwick (there were several folk there I didn't recognise). I noticed MO was wearing a badge at Kingsdown but perhaps that was because it was NT land and he was there in an official capacity. Anyway Leigh, thank you so much for the compliment and if you should see me

again please let me know who you are. Report from Southwick a bit later.

## Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 01-Nov-13 01:36 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Yes, Flossie is as mischievous as any cat and you wouldn't realise she'd been in an accident. I guess she wouldn't be around today if Helen Hadn't brought her home.

I can't complain too much as we eventually photographed and filmed several LTBs, making my 59th species filmed in Britain. Maybe next time we meet up I won't be quite so engrossed in the butterflies and will take more note of the people around me and we will definitely have more of a natter.

Keep up with the great photos.

## Re: Pauline

by mud-puddling, 02-Nov-13 10:21 AM GMT

Hi Pauline, it was only a fleeting acquaintance as we were both busy trying to pin down a Long-tailed Blue and I only had 20 mins or so in my lunch break. Neil Hulme was there at the time. I think it was the Wednesday or Friday. I'm youngish (!?) with dark hair and big sideburns!

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Nov-13 07:34 PM GMT

Know who you are now Leigh and just love your Puffin shots 😊

### 17 October

I must digress briefly to record what was, for me, another memorable October event, and it was my interest in butterflies that was the catalyst. Way back in the Spring (which seems a long way off now) a friend called to say that she had read in the local paper that Brown Hairstreak eggs had been found for the very first time at a site very close to me. In fact, this site was about 200 yards from the vet which I regularly use, so on my next visit to collect medication I decided to have a look. As I was searching I was approached by the senior ranger who showed me where he had found the eggs – in a hedge which he had planted himself some 12 years ago. He had checked for eggs every year since without success until this year. During our conversation he mentioned that it had been a similar story with dormice which had initially been quite elusive but they had now put up 50 boxes which were regularly monitored. Now, I have wanted to see a dormouse for as long as I can remember so I was very excited when the ranger invited me to join them when they conducted their dormouse survey in October.

The hazel dormouse is a distinctive native British mammal that is infrequently seen owing to its rarity and nocturnal habits so it is easily overlooked even where present. Moreover, it spends most of its active time high off the ground and passes at least a third of the year in hibernation, again making it unlikely to be seen by the casual observer. Hazel dormice are sensitive to weather and climate, both directly and indirectly, through their specialised feeding requirements. They are particularly affected by habitat deterioration and fragmentation and also by inappropriate habitat management. For these reasons, they are highly vulnerable to local extinction. They are consequently good bio-indicators of animal and plant diversity: where dormice are present, so are many other less sensitive species. The successful maintenance of viable dormouse populations is a significant indicator of an integrated and well-managed countryside. Their continued presence is therefore highly desirable.

One of the most reliable means of collecting data on this species is monthly monitoring of the boxes and guidelines exist to detail how this should be carried out. A licence is required to conduct this activity which includes weighing and sexing any dormice which are found. Data from regular surveys of the boxes is submitted to the National Data Monitoring programme which is administered by the People's Trust for Endangered Species and is used to inform and plan activities to encourage the survival and growth of this species, including the habitat management – in much the same way as butterfly recording. I felt very privileged to be part of this process and some photos of the activities on the day are shown below.



*Checking boxes*



*Dormouse located*



*...weighed*



*... and sexed*



*before being carefully returned.*

.... and the added bonus is that I now have a new site close by to look for Brown Hairstreaks next year 😊

### **Re: Pauline**

by mud-puddling, 02-Nov-13 08:39 PM GMT

An interesting report Pauline and what a privilege. Never seen one myself.

### **Re: Pauline**

by David M, 02-Nov-13 09:59 PM GMT

Is there any native British mammal as cute as that?

### **Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 04-Nov-13 08:23 AM GMT

Nope! They look adorable, they don't do any damage, they don't even bite – what's not to like 😊 . BTW this particular individual was a young female weighing in at 14 g. In other boxes we found a Yellow-necked mouse which apparently aren't as rare as they used to be and a Pygmy shrew which promptly did a runner. After I left they even found a very contented toad in one of the boxes!!! Certainly a day I won't forget!

Thank you for the comment Leigh. I am fascinated by these little creatures along with a large percentage of the British public apparently.

### **Re: Pauline**

by essexbuzzard, 04-Nov-13 09:46 PM GMT

Wow, what a privilege, Pauline!

Doormice are found in several Essex woods but like most people, I have never seen one and would love to. Would love to have swapped places with you that day, though you may have had something to say about that!

Great pictures, thanks for posting them – and making the rest of us rather green with envy! 🍋

### **Re: Pauline**

by Maximus, 05-Nov-13 05:46 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, stunning Long-tailed Blue Photos in your diary 😊 bet you're glad you came 'out of retirement' to share them with us 😊😊 The Dormouse entry is very interesting too, what gorgeous little creatures they are.

Mike

### **Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 05-Nov-13 06:04 PM GMT

You've done a great job with Flossie Helen. I know she had to be on cage rest which meant an awful lot more traveling back and forth for you both

whilst trying to see LTB but it has clearly paid off – wish there were more folk like you two.

Lovely to hear from you Essexbuzzard. There is no way I would have swopped that day 😊 but I hope some time some place you will get to see one as I promise you it will be worth it.

### 10 October 2013

I can't believe that I actually went looking for butterflies today. Overnight the weather had changed from warm sunny days and mild nights to a biting cold wind interspersed with some sunshine. I took a chance and went to Shoreham for what was probably my last excursion of the season and met up with several other enthusiasts, including Neil, Colin, Peter and several individuals who had never before seen LTB (one of which I now know to be Leigh). I felt out of place. I was wearing a thin, short-sleeved top, whereas they had come wisely attired in overcoats, boots and hats. It really was cold but gradually the temperatures started to creep up and the first butterfly I spotted was a Small Copper, a little worn, but nevertheless active – a good sign, but where were the LTB's sighted the day before? ..... and then Neil accidentally flushed a male from a path I had walked along 3 times previously without any joy, indicating that they were also warming up and on the move. It wasn't long before the male LTB returned and this time he settled briefly on a discarded sandwich wrapper before flying off across the road. Whilst we waited for his return visits we were entertained by a lovely fresh 3rd brood Common Blue which Peter had spotted and an helice Clouded Yellow. Neil confirmed he had seen her egg-laying a couple of days previously but in the still cold temperatures she was very inactive.





I managed to coax the Clouded Yellow from the path, out of danger and onto a yellow flower. I was concerned that in the excitement of watching the LTB she might have inadvertently been trodden on. Neil subsequently transferred her to a safer and more sheltered location, manoeuvring her gently and carefully, and here she remained until the sun emerged from the passing clouds.







As the temperatures rose she became active and Colin managed to get some cracking open-winged shots of this aberrant female. He has very kindly allowed me to include one of them here.



Yet again we were distracted by the briefest sighting of the LTB before he flew, yet again, across the busy road. It seemed a somewhat incongruous setting for such a lovely butterfly, a small strip of green sandwiched between a dockyard and a busy road.



I continued to be surprised at how active these butterflies were given the low temperatures and strong wind. The male LTB in particular was very skittish making close-up shots difficult. When he did settle it seemed only right to let those who had not seen this little beauty have a first shot at it. I did manage a couple of distant shots but having photographed it elsewhere I was just content to have seen it yet again.



All too soon it was time for me to go. On the drive home there was time to reflect and I realised that I had now seen and photographed LTB at 4 different sites in 3 different counties (Hampshire, Kent and Sussex). I cannot match Neil's amazing total of individuals seen but I can claim a minimum of 12 different individuals plus many, many more sightings and I am well happy with that. A summer that I shall certainly not forget.

### **Re: Pauline**

by David M, 05-Nov-13 10:24 PM GMT

Colin's image is remarkable. That's surely one for the species-specific albums.

### **Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 06-Nov-13 07:33 AM GMT

I couldn't agree more David. Colin has taken some great open-winged shots and he is way too modest about them. I was pleased to be able to include one of them in my diary as this was a gorgeous specimen and I wasn't able to get such a spectacular result myself.

Thank you so much for the compliment Mike. Yes, my resolve weakened as the fine weather continued along with the butterfly sightings. I was convinced that each outing would be my last but the butterflies just kept coming and I was concerned that by next Spring I might have forgotten some of the detail. I hope you and Cathy are both well and look forward to seeing you out and about at some point.

### **Re: Pauline**

by Pete Eeles, 06-Nov-13 07:36 AM GMT

**"David M" wrote:**

Colin's image is remarkable. That's surely one for the species-specific albums.

Already there – in the aberrations album. I believe it to be ab. *aubuissoni*: "The ground colour yellowish-orange, intermediate between the type and *helice*. The hindwings dark dusted, with a large orange discoidal."

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pauline**

by Paul Wetton, 06-Nov-13 10:29 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

I love the Dormice photos and please please please if you ever go again and are allowed to take a friend I would love to see these beautiful little animals.

Flossie is well worth the effort. Just glad she's still around.

All the best.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 07-Nov-13 11:58 AM GMT

Thanks for that information Pete. It was clear to all who saw her that she was no ordinary helice and a little bit special so it is good to have that confirmation.

Get in the queue Paul 😊. Seriously, there has been quite a bit of interest shown so I thought it worth mentioning that the PTES run 'Wildlife Encounter' days around the country for a small fee. I happen to know that several of these events (including one at Blean Woods) involve Dormice. I have never attended the Dormice event but I have attended 'walking with wolves'. A few shots below before I return once more to the main topic.





## Re: Pauline

by Paul Wetton, 07-Nov-13 01:32 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Great wolf shots, Helen would love them.

Thanks for information. I'll look into this for a trip next year.

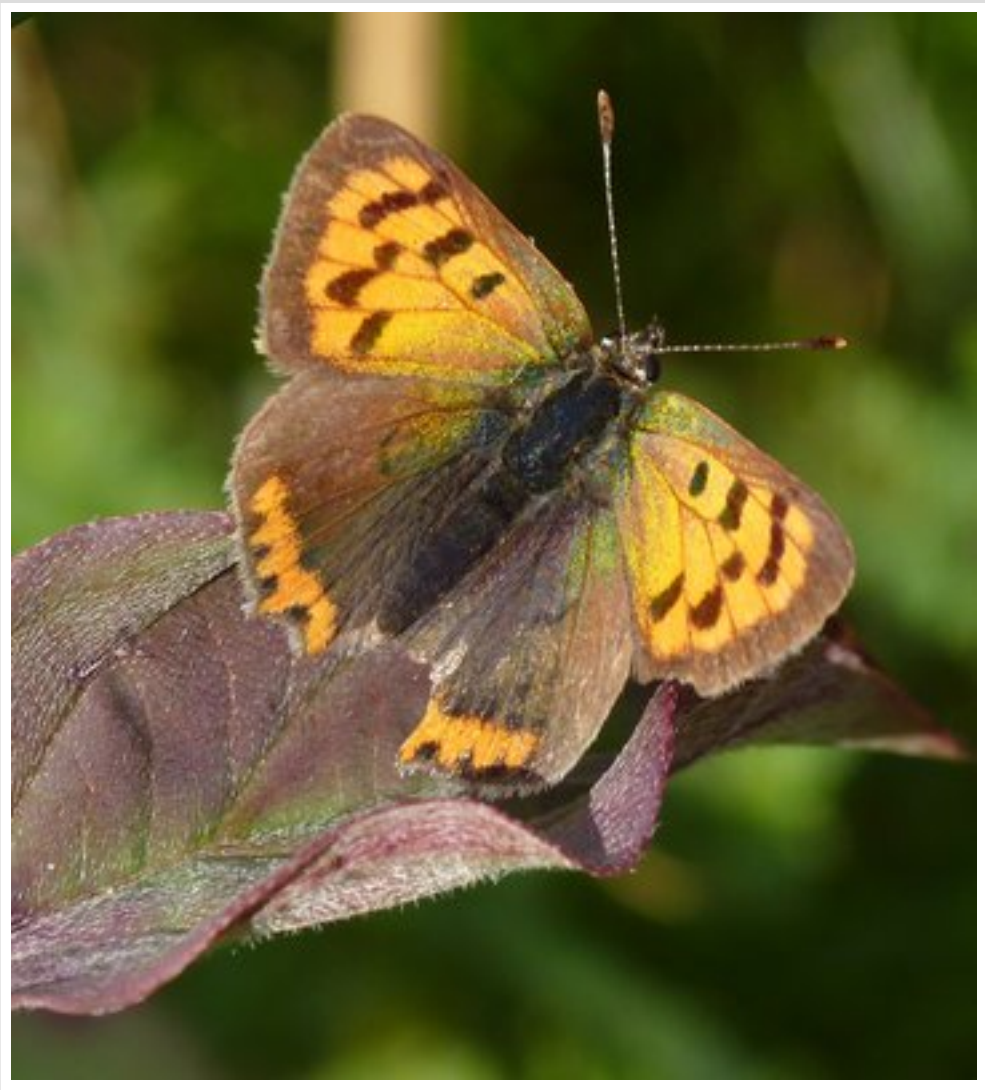
## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Nov-13 09:32 PM GMT

Thank you Paul – well worth looking into.

**15th October** – I can't even remember now what day of the week that was but I do remember it was windy with the threat of rain. After the LTB sightings I was finding it hard to accept that the season was over and tho' I don't think I have ever looked for butterflies at this time of year I decided to have a walk round a local site, Oxenbourne Down, to see what it had to offer. I was not disappointed. In a short space of time I saw 6 Small Coppers in varying states of wear. This one would seem to be the one I have been looking for for 3 years now – the one with blue spots. What a pity I had not found it earlier but pleased to see it anyway.





There were a few very autumnal Commas decorating the foliage and grabbing what nectar they could find,



but the big surprise of the day for me was seeing 2 Meadow Brown in remarkable condition. I really wasn't expecting that as I thought their flight period was long over but then again it has been a strange year where it seems anything is possible, and still the sightings keep coming.





### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 10-Nov-13 09:23 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

really good to see you still posting your later visits this year, great stuff 😊

There is some interesting information in Thomas & Lewington *The Butterflies of Britain and Ireland* on page 265 where Jeremy Thomas speaks of Meadow Browns having a protracted emergence into mid-October on some of the southern downs.

All the best,

Neil

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 11-Nov-13 08:09 PM GMT

Glad you came out of hibernation – great Wolves ( I was going to call my son Wulf if we'd had a boy 😎 ) and really chuffed about the blue spot copper – now you've seen one you'll be falling over them next season 😊 See you at the meet up



Have a goodun




Wurzel



## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Nov-13 09:28 AM GMT

Thank you Neil. I must have a different version of that book cos mine doesn't even go up to that page number (finishes about page 220)  but you are absolutely right and on page 187 it states that mid-October emergence is not at all unusual. I really must start reading these books instead of just looking at the pretty pictures 

Thank you too Wurzel – I used to have a hairdresser called Wolf. He was gorgeous, with thick dark hair, high cheek bones and eyelashes any female would kill for. Could have been a male model – pity he was gay! Anyway, I hope your prediction is correct Wurzel as I shall now hold you personally responsible for all 2014 SC sightings and take every opportunity to remind you   

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Nov-13 10:43 AM GMT

### 4 November

With butterfly sightings few and far between now, I find myself taking shots of anything that moves – and quite a lot that doesn't! The day was cold but bright and with some time to spare I decided to visit Petworth Park to catch the end of the rut and possibly the odd butterfly. There are some remarkably ancient trees in the park and the policy is now not to remove any dead trees but to cut them to a safe height and leave them for insect and fungi habitat. The park has been home to this magnificent herd of fallow deer for over 500 years. They were reportedly hunted by Henry VIII on his visit to Petworth in the 1500s. Today around 900 of them grace the parkland. Agile and fast in case of danger, fallow deer can run up to a maximum speed of 30 mph over short distances and can also make jumps up to 1.75 metres high and up to 5 metres in length.

There are four main variations in coat colour. The common variety is the familiar tan/fawn colour with white spotting (becoming long and grey with indistinct spots in winter) on the flanks and white rump patch outlined with the characteristic black horse-shoe. The Menil variety is paler, lacks the black bordered rump and keeps its white spots all year. The black variety is almost entirely black with no white coloration anywhere. Finally, the white variety can be white to sandy coloured and becomes more white at adulthood. This is a true colour variety and not albinism, which is rare. The fallow is the only British deer with palmate antlers which makes them particularly photogenic.

Being particularly interested in behaviour it was touching to see how protective the bucks were, shepherding their flock (herd) away from any perceived threat and their tenderness towards the young. Their posturing and bellowing was amusing but with the youngsters growing fast the aggression was a bit half-hearted compared to what I have witnessed in previous years. There were numerous birds landing on the deer – removing lice, ticks? I can't recall having seen that before. Naturally, I took a massive amount of photos so I shall post some below – make of them what you will:



*Locking horns*



*Seeing double!*



*Watch the birdie*







*Two heads are better than one!*



Sadly, I didn't see a single butterfly on this occasion, despite the sunshine, as the temperature just didn't get high enough.

### **Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 19-Nov-13 10:27 AM GMT

I seem to recall having some comments on my last post but as they have disappeared I must apologise for not being able to respond to them.

Some time ago, way back in October, having read Mark's post about the cutting back of the blackthorn at Noar Hill, I decided to take a look. I was a bit shocked at the extent of it, especially given the number of BH eggs Mark had counted previously. I decided to follow Mark's example and take a close look at some of the chopped off branches which resulted in my eventually finding 3 BH eggs – at least I assume that's what they are as I have never seen one 'in the flesh' before.

This presented me with a dilemma. I have mentioned before on this site that I do not want any more responsibility – I have enough critters to look after and worry about so I started to consider my options. The first one that came to mind was to ask Mark if they could join his collection. I also considered taking them back to the site and tying them to a living bush. I thought about rearing them myself but I am not sure I have the skills or the knowledge. The advantage of the latter option is that should I succeed it will be a great learning experience and the bonus of having ready made photographic subjects close to hand. The disadvantage would be the guilt and sense of failure if I don't get it right. So, I have been mulling over these options over recent weeks assuming that I had loads of time to make a decision.

Today I decided to look online to see precisely what it would entail if I were to attempt to take on this task myself. I was quite taken aback. It would seem that even the egg needs careful management – too wet and they rot, too dry and they desiccate, spray them regularly but not too much, keep safe from all predators including mice! (I had left them in the garage when the weather turned bad). Perhaps I am already too late 😞. Furthermore, there is a bewildering array of equipment out there – sleeves, pop-up cages, mesh, plastic, tubs. I am beginning to think that trying to rear these eggs would be an interesting challenge if I could find the right guidance, advice and information though I have not yet made a final decision. I had been assuming that the eggs of all species would need to be treated in the same way but perhaps that is not so.

I would appreciate any thoughts on this and if anyone has any advice based on previous experience (successes and failures) I am sure it will help me make up my mind.

## Re: Pauline

by Vince Massimo, 19-Nov-13 01:57 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Rearing Brown Hairstreaks is not difficult. Firstly the eggs are very tough (they need to be in order to survive the winter on an exposed Blackthorn stem). All you need to do is to keep them in a cool and well ventilated environment where they will get enough natural humidity. By all means keep them under cover (I use a draughty shed) and protect them from mice and birds. If they fail to hatch under these conditions, it will not be due to anything you have done. There are always some that are not viable for some reason.

You will need to be thinking about acquiring some food plants. Now is the time to start potting-up some small Blackthorn suckers. These will be established and ready to leaf when the eggs start hatching. For starters, I have a spare plant which I can let you have and can also lend you a rearing enclosure when we meet at the winter social. Once the larvae are established on an enclosed plant, they basically look after themselves. You can even go on holiday for a week and they will be fine.

There is more information on my species report here [viewtopic.php?f=37&t=6598](http://viewtopic.php?f=37&t=6598) and I can guide you through the various stages with PM's.

Vince

## Re: Pauline

by False Apollo, 19-Nov-13 05:45 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Yes I can agree with Vince. Many years ago in the early eighties I reared 2 Brown Hairstreaks from eggs whilst I was living in Southampton. A male and a female emerged after leaving the eggs in a cool place in the winter and the larvae hatching out in the spring. They were tough, because at one point I lost one, but then refound it in another part of the conservatory.

I too have voiced my dismay at what has happened at Noarhill along with Adrian Hoskins a few years ago. We both knew eggs had gone missing due to over zealous trimming. Many people remember the really good times there when Brown Hairstreaks were not that difficult to find. I hope things will improve.

Regards  
Mike Gibbons

## Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 19-Nov-13 10:47 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

I am no expert and have not reared Brown Hairstreak before, but I very much enjoy rearing a few early stages as you will be aware. I definitely think you should give it a go, I am sure there will be plenty of advice at hand 😊 It is also very rewarding and would give you plenty of photographic opportunity of early stages and hopefully adults as well. In a sensitive species such as this there is also the aspect of releasing the adults back in to the wild and giving nature a helping hand. The eggs would have otherwise been lost. Good luck whatever you decide to do 😊

Good to see you have come out of your winter retirement 😊

With regard to Noar Hill, I thought that there was some arrangement with the local farms to manage the cutting of the hedgerows in a manner that was sensitive to the Brown Hairstreak. Am I mistaken or has this just lapsed or has someone messed up 🤔

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Nov-13 07:43 AM GMT

Thank you very much for your support and encouragement Paul. I really don't understand why they are so aggressive with the trimming at Noar Hill. I discussed it with a ranger when the same thing happened a few years ago but she was quite dismissive and assured me there were plenty of eggs elsewhere on the site. However, it is clear that it **has** had a negative impact on the BH as since then they have been very hard to find and were just beginning to recover .....now this!

Thank you for your support and the benefit of your experience Mike –it has given my confidence a boost. If they really are that hardy then perhaps I should give it a go.

Thank you so much Vince. The plant and loan of equipment is a very generous offer and having read your account of your experience I am now really excited. What amazing photos you took of them at the different stages. I would be daft to miss out on such an opportunity and as you have so generously offered to provide advice if necessary I have decided to give it a try. I thought I would start by posting a couple of shots of the eggs:



### Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 20-Nov-13 08:47 AM GMT

Sorry to butt into your diary Pauline – but nice to have you out of hibernation!

Given then fluctuating fortunes of BH at Noar Hill I am very surprised at the reaction of the Ranger – especially that this reserve is at the centre of one of only two populations in Hampshire!

I have done some unscientific egg counts at this site for three or four years now and last year was appalling – not finding any at all. But as with Black Hairstreak this year it seems they have had a remarkable recovery, and whilst I am know that the ranger is right about good numbers of eggs on other parts of the reserve [i found 42 in a couple of hours in October] the significant flailing of the lane leading to the reserve cannot have helped the situation.

It may have mitigated the consequences if only one side was flailed each year? Still the nice thing to know is thah the butterfly is spreading out of the reserve and along adjoining hedgerows so fingers crossed for next year. We will be able to compare notes about the offspring – I rescued a dozen eggs from the debris myself – perahps we can meet up for a joint release in July if all goes well – Mark 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Nov-13 09:50 AM GMT

You are very welcome to butt in as much as you like Mark 😊. Yes, I'm sure you are right that there is scope for improved management of Noar Hill. I believe Ashley had a similar experience to yourself and failed to find any eggs (or butterflies) the year after the last chop of the blackthorn. In fact, since that time (until this year) I understand that relatively few adults have been seen – as Mike states there was a time when a BH sighting at Noar Hill could almost be guaranteed and it was one of the first butterflies I ever photographed – and where I first met Mike (tho' I doubt he remembers 😊).

Anyway, I think a joint release is a great idea Mark (tho' I fear I'm getting a bit ahead of myself now) but I'm thinking it would be a nice idea to publish the time and place on this site to give others (who might not otherwise have the opportunity) the chance to get a few photos of this stunning and hard to find butterfly in a natural setting?

## Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 20-Nov-13 10:55 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

I hope that both Mark and yourself will keep us all updated on your progress with these eggs 😊 Assuming all goes well, please count me in for any release date next year 😊 I have yet to have a positive sighting of Brown Hairstreak at any stage 😊

## Re: Pauline

by False Apollo, 20-Nov-13 02:46 PM GMT

Yes I do remember our first meeting at Noarhill Pauline, I think after that I seemed to bump into you at all the butterfly 'hotspots'. One thing about rearing Brown Hairstreaks that I remember was that the captive bred ones emerged a week or so earlier than the wild ones, presumably because they did not have to cope with bad weather conditions. This was my only concern when I released them. I'm sure you will do a sterling job as 'foster mum' and you will be rewarded with some stunning photos next year.

Mike

## Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 20-Nov-13 05:30 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

In view of all the latest posts, I hope you don't mind if I butt in on your diary. I thought you all might be interested in the e-mail exchanges between myself and Clive Wood (who is monitoring/coordinating hedge cutting to help conserve Brown Hairstreaks in the Noar Hill –Selborne areas) starting in February 2013 when I first noticed the hedges had been flailed. Sorry its a bit jumbled but I have cut and pasted them directly from my e-mails. If you start at the bottom and work up it should be in date order. Sorry to clutter your diary but please get this deleted after it have been read.

mike skittrall27/09/2013 PhotosTo: Clive Wood

From: mike skittrall ([mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk))

Sent: 27 September 2013 18:00:29

To: Clive Wood ([clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com))

Outlook Active View1 attachment (665.4 KB)

Download

View slide show (1)Download as zip

Hi Clive, thanks for the feedback, its great news and sounds like this issue will now continue to move in the right direction. How does one get involved in the winter egg count? Attached for your interest is a photo of the female we saw at Noar Hill on 30th August.

Regards,

Mike

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From: [clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com) To: [mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk) Subject: Fw: Brown Hairstreaks at Noar Hill

Date: Wed, 25 Sep 2013 09:42:51 +0100

Mike, I have discussed Mark T's report with Rob Nicholls of the SDNPA and Dan Hoare of BC and attach Rob's reply. The lease on Charity Farm was terminated (I believe) a year or so ago and it seems as if the interim managers may have trimmed the hedge in the way reported by Mark. The good news is that the new manager is a GWCT ecologist with an understanding of Brown Hairstreak requirements and the hedge will be better managed in future.

I'll meet Francis and Rob soon and take a look at the hedgerow myself.

regards

Clive

From: Rob Nicholls

Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2013 12:23 PM

To: 'Clive Wood' ; 'Francis Buner'

Cc: 'Dan Hoare'

Subject: RE: Brown Hairstreaks at Noar Hill

Hi Clive,

Good to hear from you, I'm fine thanks, hope you are too.

This was a well timed email. I met up with Francis Buner (the on-site Ecologist from GWCT who is doing the Grey Partridge reintroduction project on the Rotherfield Estate) the week before last to look at Charity Farm to talk about the direction of management for the next 10 year period. I told him about you and your work, he is keen to meet up with you and have a chat about the monitoring work you have been doing.

It sounds like this hedge might be owned by Charity Farm, and will in the future be cut on rotation (Francis is aware of the Brown Hairstreak requirements)

Perhaps the three of us could meet up at some point?

Francis, just a thought, have you met Mike Morton the Noar Hill site manager before, I'm sure he would like to meet you. Also Chris Webb the National Trust Warden at Selborne Common, he has a very good idea of how far North within Selborne species including Brown Hairstreak and Duke of Burgundy have spread. Is it ok with you if I invite them along too and have a jolly nice meeting.

Many thanks,

Rob.

mike skittrall16/09/2013 To: [clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com)

From: mike skittrall ([mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk))

Sent: 16 September 2013 13:09:50

To: [clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com) ([clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com))

Hi Clive, hope you are well. I don't know if you are aware of Mark Tutton's report for Sunday 15th September from Noar Hill in the sightings page of Hants and IOW branch of Butterfly Conservation. He has made a great egg count, but the downside is the hedge cutting he mentions. Just thought I would bring it to your attention. This year has seen much better numbers of Brown Hairstreaks at Noar and it would be fantastic if their recovery could continue.

Regards,

Mike

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From: [mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk) To: [clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com) Subject: RE: Brown Hairstreak Noar Hill

Date: Fri, 15 Mar 2013 12:44:07 +0000

Hi Clive, I am glad that your visit to Selborne revealed that the hedge trimming carried out in the Noar Hill area, mainly fitted the criteria required for rotational management of these hedgerows, and that there had not been too much hard cutting carried out.

Thank you for letting me know the outcome and hopefully because of this management and awareness the Brown Hairstreak will become more common in this area of Hampshire. I had to travel to Shipton Bellinger in order to see this beautiful butterfly in 2012 although I am 90 percent sure that a Brown Hairstreak flew past me at Noar Hill in Aug. 2012 and I know that other BC members saw them here in 2012.

Perhaps farmers and landowners cut hedgerows aggressively because they always have, and are unaware of the damage caused as in this case to a fragile population of Brown Hairstreak butterflies.

Thanks and Regards,

Mike

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From: [clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com) To: [mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk) Subject: Re: Brown Hairstreak Noar Hill

Date: Wed, 13 Mar 2013 15:07:14 +0000

Hi Mike. Just to let you know that I visited Selborne this morning and had a good walk along the tracks and lanes around Charity Farm with Rob Nicholls, the local SDNPA Ranger.

The hedgerows adjacent to the lanes in the area have certainly had a hard cut and the machinery has also damaged the verges in several areas. Overall however I was pleased to note that most sides facing into the fields had either been left untrimmed or only lightly trimmed. Most of the internal field hedgerows had also been left untrimmed. This pattern is consistent with the necessary rotational management of blackthorn-rich hedgerows and on a wider landscape scale there is still an abundance of good quality blackthorn in the area.

I also noted some evidence of good scrub management along some of the rougher tracks around Charity Farm including the cutting back of old blackthorn. This is important since female Brown Hairstreaks tend to favour young, fresh suckering growth over old growth. Less encouragingly someone had driven a farm vehicle over newly planted blackthorn-rich hedgerow whips whilst other plants had been suffocated by competitive grasses that hadn't been cut back. A job for another work party.

Rob has spoken with the relevant estate manager and another organisation who are helping out with some farm planning work. Both were aware of the importance of the area for the Brown Hairstreak and the need to manage hedgerows on rotation.

I hope this has helped put both our minds at ease. Thank you very much for your interest and for alerting me to the trimming. I still don't quite understand why so many farmers and landowners put so much time, money and labour into aggressive hedgerow management and I'm not sure I ever will.

Thanks again

regards

Clive

From: mike skittrall

Sent: Friday, March 01, 2013 5:55 PM

To: [clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com)

Subject: RE: Brown Hairstreak Noar Hill

Clive,

I will be very interested in the outcome and hope that all will be ok.

Regards,

Mike

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From: [clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com) To: [mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk) Subject: Re: Brown Hairstreak Noar Hill

Date: Fri, 1 Mar 2013 10:42:30 +0000

Mike, just to let you know that I have alerted the SDNPA Ranger to the hedgerow work and my National Trust contact in the village. We will be speaking with the local land manager shortly and paying a site visit on the 13 March.

I'll let you know more after the 13th but thanks again for raising the matter.

regards

Clive

From: mike skittrall

Sent: Sunday, February 17, 2013 8:50 PM

To: [clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com)

Subject: RE: Brown Hairstreak Noar Hill

Clive,

It was in the lane that runs between Homestead Farm and Charity Farm, both sides of the RH hedge up to the verge on RH side where you can park when it is dry. The tracks from the lane up to the Reserve were untouched.

Hope all important areas as shown on the map are unaffected, but I just felt this should be flagged up.

Regards,

Mike



From: [clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com) To: [mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mikeskittrall@hotmail.co.uk) Subject: Re: Brown Hairstreak Noar Hill  
Date: Sun, 17 Feb 2013 19:52:44 +0000

Mike, many thanks for reporting this, much appreciated. I was not previously aware. I will raise the issue with Rob Nicholls who is the South Downs NPA Ranger for the area. I'm also hoping to visit the area later this month or next with Dan Hoare of Butterfly Conservation.

It would be helpful to pin down exactly where you saw the severe hedge trim. I attach a map of the area: is it the lane between Homestead Farm and Charity Farm or the track that leads into the Reserve from that lane? If so, can you recall which side of the lane/track was cut etc?

Many thanks  
Clive

From: mike skittrall

Sent: Sunday, February 17, 2013 6:02 PM

To: [clivepwood@btinternet.com](mailto:clivepwood@btinternet.com)

Subject: Brown Hairstreak Noar Hill

Hi Clive,

I recently visited Noar Hill and could not help but notice that some of the hedgerows along the lane adjacent to the Noar Hill reserve have been cut severely.

I recently noticed in the species conservation section of butterfly conservation that it says that this practice was to be reduced and be carried out less severely with the cooperation of local farmers in order to assist the Brown Hairstreak to regain its footing in the Noar Hill area.

I am not sure if anyone else has reported this and wonder what the knock on effect will be for the Brown Hairstreak and the 2014 egg survey.

Regards,  
Michael Skittrall

Once again sorry to clutter your diary, I will probably get a ticking-off for this, but think its best recorded,

Regards,

Mike

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Nov-13 06:02 PM GMT

Hats off to you Mike and Mark and others for raising this issue with the appropriate authorities. It certainly seems that notice is being taken by those concerned but I suppose that time will tell. I have no intention of deleting this thread so if anyone has any views please feel free to chip in.

I will certainly keep you informed of any progress Paul but it seems that Mike (Apollo) has more confidence in my abilities than I do- thank you Mike for the vote of confidence 😊 .

## Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 20-Nov-13 06:46 PM GMT

By the way Pauline, well done to you and Mark for saving the Brown Hairstreak eggs 😊 I'm sure you will both be well rewarded when you get to see the adults emerge.

Mike

## Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 20-Nov-13 07:22 PM GMT

More butting!

Thanks for that email conversation Mike it was very interesting and reassuring that the relevant people are being informed, and most of all conscious of the issues. It did occur to me that the saving grace is that the sides of all the hedgerows facing into the fields had been left untouched. I will be going back in the next couple of months to do some more egg counting and hope to find some further away from the reserve this time and hopefully on Selborne common itself too.

Sorry Pauline I hope I am forgiven 😊

Kind Regards

Mark 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-Nov-13 03:12 PM GMT

I really don't mind at all Mark and I am grateful to Mike for sharing this with us - as you say, it is quite reassuring and leaves me feeling a bit more hopeful and optimistic that this won't happen again. I appreciate your comment Mike - even if I don't succeed I am sure that Mark will, but I feel a bit more confident with Vince 'holding my hand' so to speak 😊 .

As I type this at just after 3.00pm I would just like to record that there is a Red Admiral being quite persistent in trying to get into the conservatory, trying pane after pane, almost frantic in his efforts. I wonder where he has come from. I can't imagine it being too far away as it's freezing out there. I live in a very old wooden house so it occurs to me that perhaps he has been taking shelter in one of the many nooks and crannies and I expect the wood retains the heat.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-Nov-13 04:22 PM GMT

Poultry safely shut away now so just want to record what a smashing afternoon I have had at the Old Forge, Otterbourne. It was great to meet up with

old friends and be introduced to many new faces – always nice to know who the writers' of the various diaries are. Just wish I'd had more time to chat with everyone. A big thank you must go to Susie for finding such a cracking venue and organising us all – wild horses won't keep me away next year 😊

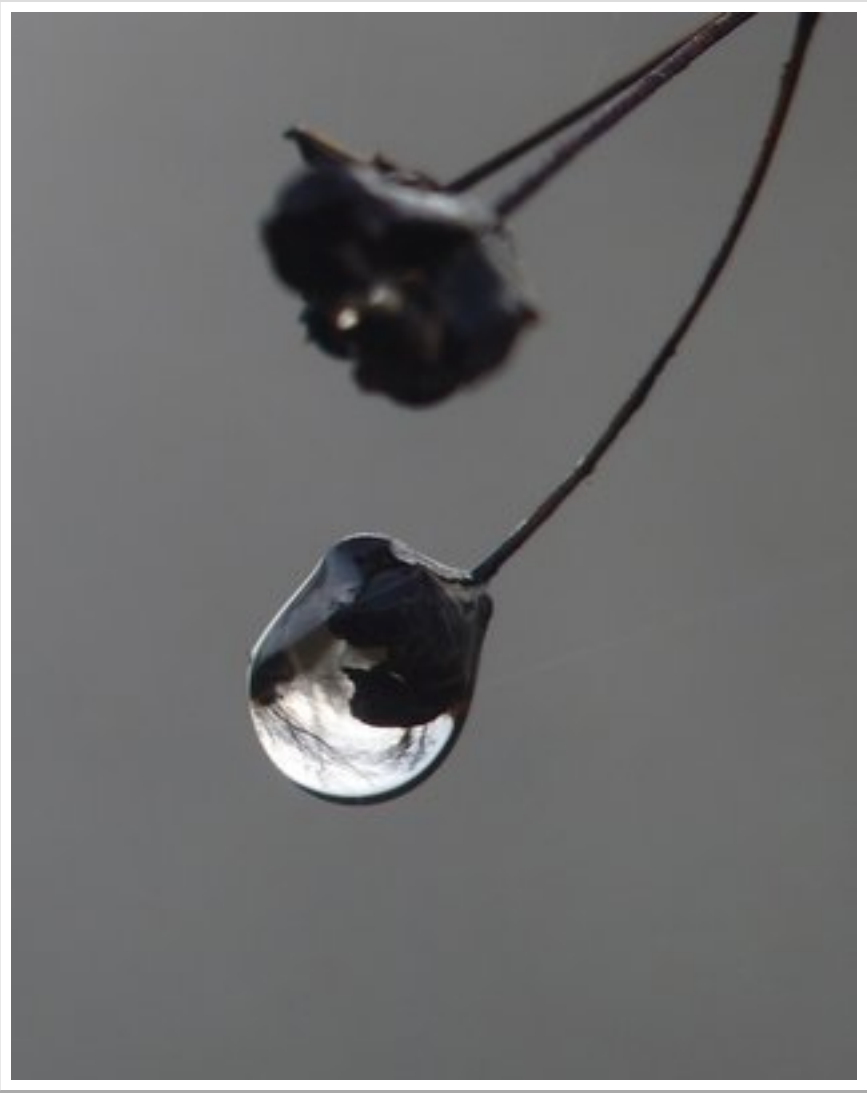
## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-Dec-13 02:23 PM GMT

I have not posted for a while as I have been busy dealing with other problems and not much to report anyway but have certainly been enjoying other posts. As many will know I hate killing any creature and when, during the Summer, it became apparent that wasps were coming and going under the eaves of my house I decided to take no action. They were not doing any harm and I assumed they would die off naturally in the Autumn. However, I was cleaning the bathroom floor recently and began to smell smoke. The smell got stronger and I was horrified to see the bathroom filling up with smoke which was pouring from several of the little halogen lights in the ceiling. You might remember it is an old wooden house so I rushed outside half expecting to see flames licking around the roof, but thankfully not. To cut a long story short, I climbed up into the loft and this is what I found:



It was beautiful, exquisite, and almost 2 foot long!!! Hundreds and hundreds of dead wasps littered the floor, many wedged around all the light sockets, so hot the fittings had melted and a couple of lights fell through into the bathroom along with the burnt debris and bodies. I decided to call my electrician instead of the fire brigade as I had other electrical issues to sort. These have involved him ransacking 3 rooms and taking up many floor boards in an attempt to find an elusive junction box. Stir crazy with the mess, noise and plaster dust I had to get out with my camera today and thought I would see if I could find a WLH egg at Cosham but without success. There wasn't much at all to take photos of and after the recent storms it was damp and dreary. The only thing that caught my eye was the raindrops still clinging to many branches and I thought it would be fun to try to get a photo of one with the bleak landscape reflected in it – or even a Christmassy scene of a Robin or Christmas tree 😊 Failed miserably on both counts but here are a few of the results:





Must try harder!

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 23-Dec-13 07:10 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, beautiful wasp's nest even if its a fire hazzard. Last year we had one in the roof so did our neighbours. They called out the councils 'terminator' who asked us if we wanted him to destroy ours (there were so many going in and out they were obvious), we said no thanks. They did us no harm and we let them be(e)! I guess they all died off up in the roof like yours did. Like your arty water droplet shots, like you I feel the need to photograph something but with the weather at the moment there's not much chance to do so. Hope your BH eggs are OK, our Orange Tip pupae seem to be doing fine, fingers crossed.

Anyway we hope you have a great Christmas and are looking forward to a butterfly filled 2014.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-Dec-13 05:30 PM GMT

Thank you Mike. Hope you and Cathy had a great time too. One of my pressies was a book by MO. I was surprised at how he managed to take such broad topics and make them refreshingly informative in his unique style - I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and couldn't help but recall his advice "never underestimate a caterpillar" when friends sent me this photo from Crete on Boxing Day. Perhaps one should never underestimate a butterfly either 😊

