

## Re: David M

by David M, 06-Jan-13 02:56 PM GMT

I've had a stinking, filthy cold since prior to New Year, so given that staying indoors wasn't shifting it, I thought it'd be good to see if a spell outdoors might do so.

Scrub clearance was taking place at the Welsh High Brown site near Ewenny and it was practically T shirt weather once you'd worked up a sweat:



All the rain we've had has effectively made the road into a cul-de-sac, as the ford (which 2 years ago was barely a trickle) is now passable only by brave souls in 4x4s:



Worryingly, the Fritillary 'meadow' has also been flooded recently, so we could really do with a dryish month or two to get the water level down a bit. Last year, the vegetation had started to change as the water-loving plants were starting to encroach on the precious marsh thistles so beloved by Dark Greens and High Browns.

## Re: David M

by David M, 02-Feb-13 05:16 PM GMT

At last! A cloudless day with light winds.

I walked around the area at the back of my workplace early this afternoon, and could certainly detect portents of spring in the air. Some of the daffodils have their bulbous flower sheaths forming, whilst there were daisies all over the place and even a few dandelions in bloom.

I walked by the river at the far end of the pond in the image, where during April many Orange Tips and Green Veined Whites can be encountered, thinking to myself "only a few more weeks to go.."



## Re: David M

by David M, 17-Feb-13 02:44 PM GMT

I fancied my chances of seeing my first butterfly today, since I spent the morning helping to cut and clear encroaching hazel growth at the High Brown Fritillary site near Ewenny, south Wales.

It started off cloudy but when the sun came out it was most pleasant, and definitely T-shirt weather if you were busy lugging fallen timber away.

This is the 'meadow' at the lowest point of the site, and is probably the best single place in the whole of Wales to see High Browns:



I finished shortly after midday; it was 9c and sunny on the way back to Swansea so I thought I'd have an hour at my local patch.

Irritatingly, it suddenly went cloudy and the wind noticeably picked up. However, as is typical of this part of Wales, when you looked out to sea it was blue sky all the way! Grr.

So, too cloudy and cool for any butterflies, but I did see a small flock of Bullfinches eating seed that someone had obviously put out for the wild birds. There were a couple of Nuthatches too but I only had my cheap camera with me and I couldn't get close enough for a shot. Thankfully, the Bullfinches were a little more approachable:



## Re: David M

by David M, 02-Mar-13 02:51 PM GMT

Dates of first UK sightings 2013:

1. **Small Tortoiseshell** - 2 March, Swansea Vale

2. **Brimstone** – 5 March, Swansea Vale
3. **Comma** – 5 March, Swansea Vale
4. **Peacock** – 6 April, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
5. **Green Veined White** – 20 April, Kenfig Dunes, Glamorgan
6. **Large White** – 20 April, South Cornelly, Glamorgan
7. **Speckled Wood** – 26 April, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
8. **Holly Blue** – 26 April, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
9. **Small White** – 26 April, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
10. **Orange Tip** – 2 May, Castle Meadows, Abergavenny
11. **Small Copper** – 4 May, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
12. **Painted Lady** – 5 May, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
13. **Grizzled Skipper** – 6 May, Merthyr Mawr, nr. Porthcawl
14. **Small Blue** – 6 May, Kenfig Dunes, Glamorgan
15. **Dingy Skipper** – 18 May, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
16. **Green Hairstreak** – 18 May, Welshmoor, Swansea
17. **Common Blue** – 22 May, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
18. **Brown Argus** – 22 May, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
19. **Wall Brown** – 22 May, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
20. **Small Heath** – 22 May, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
21. **Pearl Bordered Fritillary** – 25 May, Haugh Wood, nr. Hereford
22. **Wood White** – 25 May, Haugh Wood, nr. Hereford
23. **Marsh Fritillary** – 3 June, Welshmoor, Swansea
24. **Adonis Blue** – 4 June, Swells Hill Bank, nr. Stroud, Gloucestershire
25. **Duke of Burgundy** – 4 June, Rodborough Common, nr. Stroud, Gloucestershire
26. **Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary** – 6 June, Old Castle Down, nr. Ewenny, Glamorgan
27. **Large Skipper** – 10 June, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
28. **Dark Green Fritillary** – 19 June, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
29. **Meadow Brown** – 19 June, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
30. **Red Admiral** – 25 June, nr. Collard Hill, Somerset
31. **Large Blue** – 25 June, Collard Hill, Somerset
32. **High Brown Fritillary** – 25 June, Alun Valley, nr. Ewenny, Glamorgan
33. **Small Skipper** – 29 June, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
34. **Ringlet** – 29 June, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
35. **Black Hairstreak** – 30 June, Whitecross Green Wood, nr. Oxford
36. **Large Heath** – 5 July, Cors Caron, nr. Tregaron, Ceredigion
37. **Lulworth Skipper** – 6 July, Lulworth Cove, Dorset
38. **Silver Studded Blue** – 6 July, Studland Heath, Dorset
39. **Marbled White** – 6 July, West Yatton Down, nr. Chippenham, Wilts
40. **Grayling** – 11 July, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
41. **Silver Washed Fritillary** – 13 July, Bentley Wood, nr. Salisbury
42. **White Admiral** – 13 July, Bentley Wood, nr. Salisbury
43. **Purple Emperor** – 13 July, Bentley Wood, nr. Salisbury
44. **Hedge Brown** – 13 July, Bentley Wood, nr. Salisbury
45. **White Letter Hairstreak** – 13 July, Bentley Wood, nr. Salisbury
46. **Purple Hairstreak** – 17 July, Botany Bay, nr. Chiddingfold, Surrey
47. **Chalkhill Blue** – 24 July, West Yatton Down, nr. Chippenham, Wilts
48. **Scotch Argus** – 4 August, Arnside Knott, nr. Morecambe
49. **Silver Spotted Skipper** – 8 August, Aston Rowant, nr. Oxford
50. **Essex Skipper** – 8 August, Aston Rowant, nr. Oxford
51. **Clouded Yellow** – 11 August, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire
52. **Brown Hairstreak** – 22 August, West Williamston, Pembrokeshire

**UK species seen in Austria but NOT seen in UK in 2013:**

1. **Swallowtail**
2. **Mountain Ringlet**
3. **Heath Fritillary**

**Non-UK species seen 20th–23rd July in Austria:**

1. **Blind Ringlet**
2. **False Heath Fritillary**
3. **Alpine Heath**
4. **Mazarine Blue**
5. **Large Grizzled Skipper**
6. **Moorland Clouded Yellow**
7. **Sooty Copper**
8. **Arran Brown**
9. **Large Ringlet**
10. **Lesser Mountain Ringlet**
11. **Large Wall Brown**
12. **Olive Skipper**
13. **Black Veined White**
14. **Pearly Heath**
15. **Titania's Fritillary**
16. **Woodland Brown**
17. **Large Tortoiseshell**
18. **Shepherd's Fritillary**
19. **Mountain Argus**
20. **Bright-Eyed Ringlet**
21. **Mountain Clouded Yellow**
22. **Geranium Argus**
23. **Turquoise Blue**
24. **Map Butterfly**

Last butterfly seen:

**Red Admiral** – 14th November, Forge Fach, Clydach, nr. Swansea

Total species seen in 2013: 79

## Re: David M

by Padfield, 02-Mar-13 06:16 PM GMT

Well done, David! The first small tortoiseshell of the year is magical, isn't it? After the long winter, suddenly to see a tortie on the wing – it brings back childhood memories, fills you with new hope ... A very special moment that I never tire of being repeated year after year.

Guy

## Re: David M

by David M, 02-Mar-13 08:07 PM GMT

### Saturday 2nd March 2013 – uplifting moment

Thanks, Guy and Neil, for your kind comments. Yes, the first sighting of the year is always a cathartic experience. It also arrives at a time when you can take things leisurely rather than zooming around the country trying to visit places in a narrow window before the flight season for your target species is over (and having to factor in working commitments as well as unpredictable weather).

Well, I fancied there might be a butterfly or two out on the wing today in Swansea. It was only 7c but it was gloriously sunny and things just had that 'feel' about them.

I popped down to Cwm Clydach just after midday, and felt rather disappointed that no butterflies were about in this most sheltered and protected spot. I immediately moved on to Swansea Vale, as there is a double-banked river's edge where lush nettles grow in spring and celandines bloom in profusion to provide an early nectar source for any butterflies that wake up a week or two early.

Sure enough, it was here where I saw my first butterfly of 2013. I'd just spotted a bumble bee and was asking myself whether it was worth jumping down to the lower, more protected, level of the river when I became aware of a familiar flight pattern....

...a Small Tortoiseshell, doing what they always seem to do in early spring – fluttering about and coming to rest on dead growth from the previous year.

This was the stretch of riverbank where I spotted it:



I moved in slowly and got several shots, this one being the best:



The satisfaction derived from watching one's first butterfly of the year go about its business is something that is hard to explain. I could have stayed with it for an hour or more. However, after 5 minutes I moved on and within 200 yards I saw another Tortoiseshell on the opposite side of the bridge. This one, sadly, alighted in a dip which was obscured from me, but I continued on my walk imbued with a real lift in spirits.

The season is underway! 😊

## Re: David M

by David M, 03-Mar-13 02:02 PM GMT

### Sunday 3rd March 2013 - Former High Brown site...

Mynydd Ruthin used to have a High Brown Fritillary population...that is, until 2000 when they disappeared never to be seen subsequently (along with Dark Green Fritillary too, sadly).

The site is on the east side of Bridgend and is only about 3-4 miles from the Alun Valley site to the south of the town. It wouldn't be impossible for a natural recolonisation to occur but before that can happen, much of the site needs to be cleared of invasive scrub.

20 years ago this spot was host to colonies of High Brown, Dark Green and Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries, along with Grizzled Skipper. However, it has become rather overgrown as no livestock currently graze on the site; indeed, it is only barely passable to dog walkers.

The purpose of this morning's work was to clear the entrance to the site of mainly hawthorn scrub, providing a more open landscape as well as allowing easier access to walkers.

The image below is AFTER the morning's work (I wish I'd taken one prior to it as it was badly overgrown). A good workout on a cold morning that made yesterday's sightings of 2 Small Tortoiseshells seem quite unbelievable!!



## Re: David M

by David M, 05-Mar-13 08:58 PM GMT

### Tuesday 5th March 2013 - Glorious lunch hour...

I arrived at work this morning armed with my 'cheap' camera (and how I wish I'd taken along my £350 Panasonic) as the forecast had predicted clear blue skies, light winds and maximum temperatures of 12c.

Yesterday had been clear and sunny, though only 9c at best, so I didn't want to waste a rare opportunity to walk around the wild areas next to my workplace in such balmy conditions for the time of year.

I felt certain that I'd see a few Tortoiseshells at the very least given that I'd seen two on Saturday when temperatures were no better than 7c.

I took a rare extended lunch break and headed for the same stretch of riverbank that I'd visited last weekend and the first butterfly I saw was a male Brimstone, flying purposefully up and down the river's edge no doubt in search of females.

A Small Tortoiseshell shot up to intercept it at one point, and the Brimstone flew all the way down the river towards the bridge, but remained in a scrubby area 100 metres or so away from me.

I followed it and was delighted to see another male Brimstone join it, the pair of them jousting briefly in mid-air before they went their separate ways.

I kept taking shots as the butterflies were airborne, mindful of the fact that male Brimstones are exceedingly prone not to settle at this time of year as they go about their business of inspecting every piece of foliage that remotely resembles the colours of a female.

This was the scene where I saw the two males encounter one another:



I managed to get one in range in this shot:



Having seen 2 Brimstones and 2 Small Tortoiseshells in this area I moved on to the railway embankment half a mile away. Two more male Brimstones were spotted here along with two warring Commas. I ignored the latter for a while as I assumed, given the territorial nature of this species, that I'd probably encounter at least one of them on my way back.

So it proved – one Comma had disappeared without trace but the other was basking invitingly on the south facing cutting:



So, a wonderful hour or so had seen three different species encountered: 4 male Brimstones, 2 Small Tortoiseshells and 2 Commas.

'Firsts' are few and far between these days, but I can honestly say that I've never seen THREE different species of butterfly on the same day at this time of year. I think if a Peacock or Red Admiral had appeared as well I might have had to ask for the rest of the day off for health reasons!!

A memorable day, and a definite sign that spring is now here.

**Re: David M**

by David M, 06-Apr-13 04:26 PM GMT

**Saturday 6th April 2013 – some overdue respite....**

Finally, the biting wind decided to ease. It still was no warmer than 7c today but in sunny and becalmed conditions it felt pretty pleasant.

I trekked up to the summit of Kilvey Hill before noon and the views were lovely. Looking south west over Swansea Bay:



This is looking north towards the Black Mountains beyond Ystradgynlais (some of which are still snow clad):



I saw two hill-topping Tortoiseshells whilst up at the summit, but on my way back down I spotted my first Peacock of the year on the pathway at the back of the cemetery. Sadly, it was away before I could get a photo, but there were three Small Tortoiseshells zooming up and down this little patch, no doubt interested by the nettle growth and the dandelion blooms:



I then saw another Tortoiseshell a little further on basking on dead bracken.

It seems this cold snap is set to end on Tuesday as rain sweeps in from the Atlantic. I guess it'll take a few days for things to get properly moving again. I don't expect to see a White/Orange Tip before 20th April.

## Re: David M

by David M, 19-Apr-13 04:00 PM GMT

### Friday 19th April - still no Whites....

Needed to take my car in to have some minor repairs, so I took the opportunity to walk down Cwm Clydach, a favourite haunt for Green Veined Whites.

Sadly, there were none, nor were there any Large or Small Whites. Apart from daffodils, daisies, dandelions, celandines and wood anemone, there's practically nothing in flower either, and the cuckoo flower still looks at least a fortnight away from blooming.

Still, there WERE a few butterflies about – 7 Small Tortoiseshells, 4 Brimstones and 2 Peacocks were seen, and some interesting Brimstone behaviour observed.

The lower section of Cwm Clydach is always a popular spot for butterflies, and indeed all bar 3 of the 13 seen today were found in this area.



At one point, two male Brimstones clashed, but although one soon sped away, the other remained in the clearing and I wondered what it would do when the sun went behind the fast advancing bank of cloud above me.

I soon got my answer. Given that the air temperature was just 11c, barely had the sun gone in than the Brimstone plummeted to the ground. I quietly walked over to where I had seen it drop, and to my surprise it was lying almost horizontally on the leaf litter. For once, I was grateful that the cloud obscuring the sun was a large one, because I ended up being able to quietly kneel down next to the Brimstone and get my camera right over it without disturbing it in the least. It had clearly visited a few dandelions as its lower wings were covered in yellow pollen:



Interestingly, as the sun made its reappearance, the Brimstone started vibrating its antennae, then its upper body. Within 30 seconds it was off on its merry way once more.

I also saw my first female Brimstone of the year but she was found further down towards the entrance to the clearing, which was a shame, as I'd have loved to have witnessed what happened if the two patrolling males had spotted her.

I came out of Cwm Clydach and briefly walked around Vardre Rugby Club's ground, which was a good idea, since I spotted two different Peacocks and managed to get my first shot of this species in 2013:



by David M, 20-Apr-13 05:22 PM GMT

### Saturday 20th April 2013 - Pierids finally emerge...

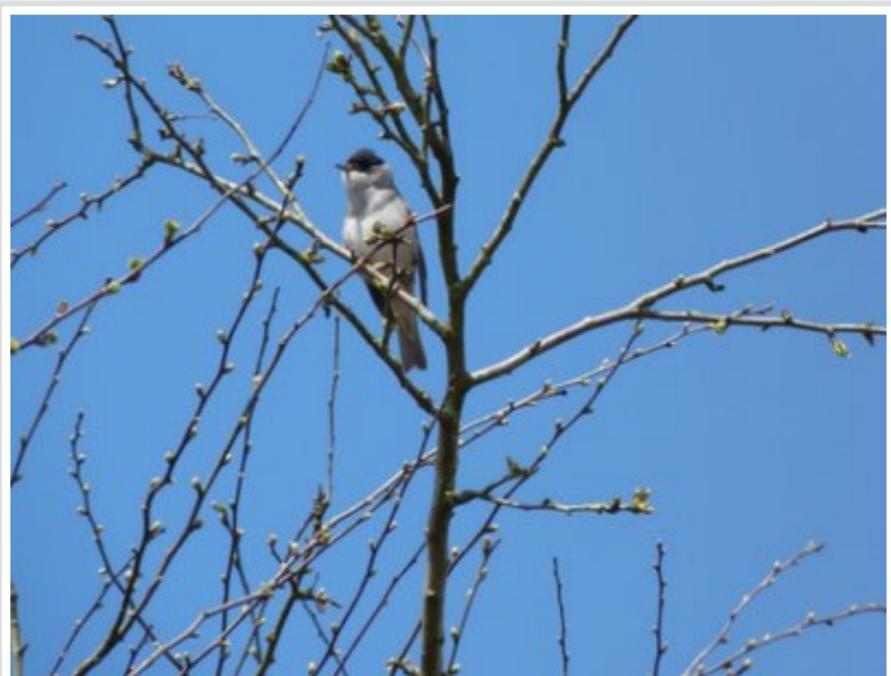
What a relief! Finally, at Kenfig dunes I saw my first Green Veined White of the year. It was a male and flew right by me allowing me to see clearly that it was GV rather than Small White.

The only other butterflies I saw were 3 Small Tortoiseshells and 3 Brimstones (including another female).

Rather irritatingly, as I was driving along the narrow lane that links Kenfig to the nearby A4229, I saw three different Whites fluttering along the roadside hedges. Two could have been either Small OR Green Veined, as they were medium sized, but the other was a definite Large White, as it briefly settled on a leaf just before my car passed it. Had it not been a single track lane, I'd have parked my car, opened my boot and taken my camera out.

Incredible to think that today was the first day fit for wearing a T shirt. It was about 13c (although my car thermometer did touch the balmy heights of 14c for a couple of minutes near Pyle on the way home!!)

I also saw what I think was a Blackcap. It was making a lovely noise in one of the trees nearby and actually remained there long enough for me to get an image:



### Re: David M

by David M, 03-May-13 02:59 PM GMT

### Thursday 2nd May 2013 - Butterfly bonanza...

Although vanessids have all but disappeared in Swansea, they're still going strong further inland at Abergavenny. They have now been joined by Pierids, making today easily the most enjoyable one yet in 2013.

The entrance to Castle Meadows is probably the best spot to see Orange Tips, as the water table is quite high here, so the vegetation is lush and the area well sheltered from the elements:



After a brief appearance from a Holly Blue, along came my first of a dozen or so Orange Tips seen:



The nettles grow densely here which is what makes it a hotspot for vanessids – Small Tortoiseshells were all over the place, with a few still engaging in courtship activities:



Peacocks were pretty common too, their aerial jousts with both their own and other species making addictive viewing. It's rare to see so many in spring (I reckon about 2 dozen in total), so the bad winter certainly doesn't seem to have had an impact on numbers:



There were plenty of Whites on the wing too – I positively identified 4 Large and 3 Green Veined, but as usual, few actually came to rest, even in nearby Linda Vista Gardens which has a rich array of nectar sources. It was here I saw a second Holly Blue as well as a Comma feeding from grape hyacinth:



Given that it was the first time I've seen Orange Tips in 2013, I wasn't expecting to see a female, yet here she is:



Odd though that there were no Speckled Woods observed; still, given the atrocious conditions thus far in 2013 it was highly encouraging to see a decent range of species with many flying in considerable numbers. Hopefully the same will be true for Small Coppers and Common Blues which should be emerging soon. With a reasonably dry and benign weather forecast for the next week, things look promising!

## Re: David M

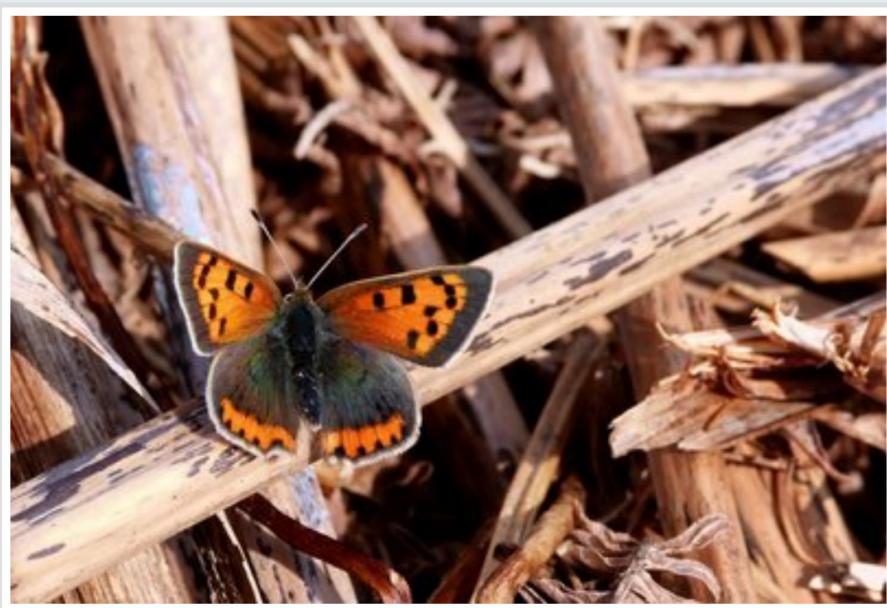
by David M, 04-May-13 05:44 PM GMT

### Saturday 4th May 2013 - Small Coppers have survived.....

I felt sorry for all butterflies last year, but Small Coppers were possibly worst hit by the appallingly wet and cool conditions that prevailed throughout April and into early May.

It was therefore a great delight to see TWO of this tenacious species this afternoon, and on a day not really conducive to butterfly activity - 12c at best and blustery throughout.

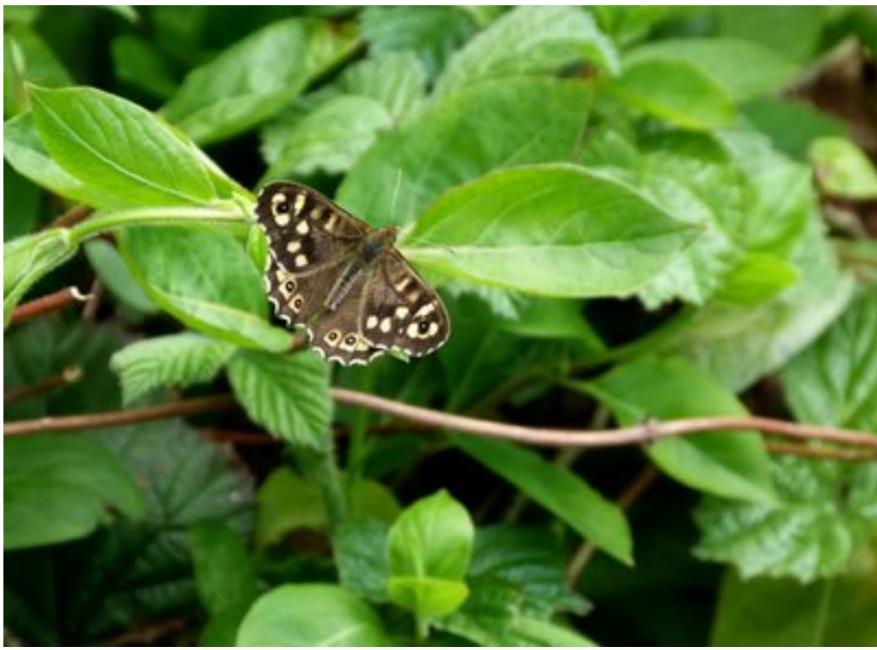
The first was encountered patrolling by the cemetery wall on the lowest of the three paths along the south side of Kilvey Hill:



A couple of hundred yards further down, a second was seen nectaring on a dandelion in a clearing:



Apart from that, not much to report except that Speckled Wood numbers continue to swell with about 30 seen in an hour and a half:



The only other butterflies seen were 2 Small Whites and 6 Large Whites, this beautifully marked female obliging me by settling to have her photo taken:



Now, I figure if Small Coppers are out, then Common Blues could well be about very soon. Bank Holiday Monday is set fair weatherwise, so a trip to the local dunes should test that theory!

## Re: David M

by David M, 06-May-13 05:06 PM GMT

### Monday 6th May 2013 - Day in the dunes...

After the excitement of seeing 4 Painted Ladies yesterday on Crymlyn Burrows, I was eager to see if there would be any more today in almost perfect conditions at Merthyr Mawr dunes, near Porthcawl.

Of course, this is a cast-iron site for Grizzled Skippers, and I'm pleased to say that I saw 17 of them, buzzing around as they do in the more sheltered areas such as this:



That far bank is probably the best hotspot for them on this vast site, and I duly found several there:



Not much else was flying, however – 2 Peacocks, 2 Orange Tips, 2 Speckled Woods and a male Brimstone isn't a great return on such a glorious May morning.

I decided to head for Kenfig which is on the way home to see if there were any Common Blues about. There weren't, but I did see a solitary SMALL Blue, again in the precise area I deem the best spot for them on this site:



I hung around here for about 20 minutes, trying to see if there were any more on the wing. Sadly, I drew a blank so the little critter looks to have the whole place to himself right now!

I had hoped maybe to see Small Copper and Small Heath here too, but alas the only other butterflies were a few Whites, a Peacock, a Small Tortoiseshell.....oh yes, and ANOTHER Painted Lady, which like the 4 yesterday at Crymlyn simply zoomed right on by without stopping 😞

Still, it was lovely to go butterflying in a T shirt for a change; the highs of 17c were most welcome

**Re: David M**

by David M, 06-May-13 10:25 PM GMT

"millerd" wrote:

Well done with that Small Blue – could be the first UK sighting this year. It's worth letting Butterfly Conservation know; here's the e-mail address in case you don't have it:

[rfox@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:rfox@butterfly-conservation.org)

You had rather a good day! 🍷

Dave

Thanks, Dave.

Yes, I notice that there isn't an entry for Small Blue on the BC website so I have done what you suggested.

I suspect that this coastal site is early this year simply because it was unaffected by the snowfall and subsequent cold nights in March.

By day, it is cooler than the majority of southern England, but the micro-climate in 2013 may well have seen this species emerge earlier than elsewhere.

## Re: David M

by David M, 18-May-13 05:37 PM GMT

### Saturday 18th May – Small is beautiful....

Today just goes to show how weather forecasters, even 48 hours ahead, can get things wrong.

All week Saturday had been predicted to be cool and cloudy, and only last night did it change to suggest a sunny morning. Well, it's now half past five and the sun has barely been behind a cloud all day! What's more, it's been about 3 degrees warmer than anticipated too. 😊

I was out by 9.45am to visit Crymlyn Burrows again, to see if there were any Common Blues out yet. Although the bird's foot trefoil is now starting to flower, the butterfly itself is yet to show itself, although I was delighted by the presence of 3 other small butterfly species; namely Small Copper, Dingy Skipper and Small Blue (the latter of which I didn't know could be found here).

This image is taken from Crymlyn Burrows looking towards Kilvey Hill (at the foot of which I live):



I saw SEVEN Small Coppers (which is, I think, more than I saw in the whole of 2012!!):



Whilst searching for Common Blue didn't produce a result, scrutinising their larval foodplant threw up another species which shares it – my first Dingy Skipper of the year:



Whilst standing on the crest of the dune, I noticed heaps of kidney vetch sprouting along the steep face, and was just saying to myself how much Small Blues would feel at home when I spotted one:



There was another seen about 150 yards further down the dune so one could conclude that there is more than a single colony here.

Apart from all that, it was wonderful to see the hedgerows alive with Pierids. Orange Tips were everywhere, with Green Veined Whites not far behind. I saw plenty of female OTs too.



Other species seen were 3 Brimstones (2 of which were females), 2 Peacocks, 2 Speckled Woods and a solitary Large White.

## Re: David M

by David M, 18-May-13 09:59 PM GMT

### Saturday 18th May - Grrrrrr.....een Hairstreaks

I left Crymlyn Burrows at 12.30pm, and feeling rather short changed at having not seen any Common Blues, I decided to decamp 10 miles to Welshmoor, on the Gower peninsula, to check out the substantial Green Hairstreak populations there.

Thankfully, there were plenty about (2 dozen or so).

Welshmoor is also a strong Marsh Fritillary site, but this species is yet to emerge, which wasn't a bad thing, as concentrating on Green Hairstreaks is rather difficult when you have Marsh Frits interfering with your photographs!!

I've always found Green Hairstreaks difficult to photograph for much the same reason as Whites. Their reflective scales seem to make the image you've taken far removed from what your eyes see when you kneel down to 'snap' the specimen.

Others on this site have provided wonderful snapshots of Greenstreaks lately, and although my photography skills are Championship 2 compared to the many 'Premier League' members on here, I had the perfect opportunity to try to at least improve my own images of this highly entertaining butterfly.

The shrub line in the distance is where they can be easily found:



This one was irresistible simply due to its array of white underside spots:



Bright conditions interfere with the 'greenness' of this species, so when I found a docile specimen I tried to gently cast my shadow over it before taking a pic:



Finally, I attempted to get the sunlight BEHIND the butterfly so as not to over-expose:



Although an improvement on the images I've taken previously, I'm still light years behind many of the images other members are producing. So, what are people doing when they photograph Green Hairstreaks that I am not?

As an aside, other than the 20–25 GH's I saw here, there were also a dozen or so Orange Tips, half a dozen Green Veined Whites, a Large White and a Small Copper (I daresay this time next week there'll be a Marsh Fritillary or two as well).

### Re: David M

by Neil Freeman, 19-May-13 09:20 AM GMT

Hi David,

Unfortunately the forecast yesterday for me was bang on, a cool cloudy day all day with no hint of sun or warmth 😞  
Your emergences are well ahead of our in the midlands, just a couple of Grizzled and Dingy Skippers and Green Hairstreaks reported last week before the heavy rain and hail we had.

I may be trying to teach my granny to suck eggs but I always use exposure of at least  $-2/3$  for whites even on a dull day, sometimes  $-1$  in sun. In fact I use  $-2/3$  most of the time, going to  $-1/3$  for darker butterflies sometimes.

Cheers,

Neil F.

### Re: David M

by David M, 22-May-13 04:25 PM GMT

Thanks for that advice, Neil. I've filed it in my memory bank!

#### Wednesday 22nd May 2013 – Things getting moving.....

At last, emergences appear to be gathering pace.

I had a half day today and was at Crymlyn Burrows by 12.45pm. A Small White was first to greet me but soon after I saw a flash of blue....my first Common Blue of 2013:



I soon spotted a second male and they, a Dingy Skipper and a nearby Small Copper provided me with several minutes of entertainment as they kept irritating one another and jousting in mid air. It was fairly cloudy so the open wing shots were easier than normal:



I then spotted what I first thought was a female Common Blue. However, upon settling it was unmistakably a Brown Argus:



It was quite blustery this afternoon, so most of the Pierids were not airborne as they were last Saturday. There were a few Orange Tips knocking about as well as a couple of Brimstones (a male and a female). However, whilst walking along the top of one of the dunes I got a surprise:



I'd kind of hoped to see a Wall Brown here, but I certainly wasn't expecting to see a female.

I then headed towards the more open dunes where I saw half a dozen Small Blues, including this one which I found lying on its side in the grass. I thought it was dead but when I put my finger under it the butterfly happily climbed aboard and wouldn't let go (it probably appreciated the warmth in my hand as in the moderate sea breeze it probably felt no better than 10c!!). I carried it over towards a patch of sheltered kidney vetch and put it there.



This was the area where I left it – perfect habitat for this delightful species:



There weren't too many individual butterflies seen but the species range was up to 12 before I found this little fellow lurking amongst the grass:



The grass blades were preventing a clear photograph, so I gently tried to remove a few, however the butterfly dropped right down onto my finger, and like the Small Blue earlier, was quite content to stay there.

So, apart from a handful of Whites I couldn't definitively identify, here are the numbers on the wing in a 2 hour visit:

- Orange Tip 8
- Dingy Skipper 7
- Green Veined White 6
- Small Blue 6
- Small Copper 6
- Small White 5
- Common Blue 3
- Brimstone 2
- Speckled Wood 2
- Brown Argus 1
- Large White 1
- Wall Brown 1
- Small Heath 1

## Re: David M

by David M, 23-May-13 09:49 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments, guys. Yes, this coastal strip seems to be quite advanced right now. This is unusual though, as daytime temperatures are suppressed compared to most parts of central and southern England.

However, two months ago when much of the south was seriously sub-zero and snow was lying in heaps, this area was several degrees warmer due to its proximity to the sea (about 300m away).

I think this explains why spring species have emerged earlier around here. Not so much a case of 'we're warmer than you' but instead one of 'we've been LESS cold'.

## Re: David M

by David M, 25-May-13 04:40 PM GMT

**Saturday 25th May 2013 - thank God for rare species....**

Only one chance for me to see Pearl Bordered Fritillaries this year, so given the decent forecast I ensured I was out early so I could get to Haugh Wood near Hereford before 10am.

I was quite glad it was cool and a bit overcast when I arrived, as this makes studying PBFs much easier.

It wasn't long before I saw my first, fluttering around the usual hotspot on this site:



There were several others flying in and around the gullies by the side of this track:



I spotted two at rest within 10 feet of one another during a cloudy period and thankfully one of them snapped its wings shut for a minute or two:



I was a bit concerned as there wasn't a Wood White to be seen, which is unusual on this southern stretch, and I had to take a diversion onto one of the other rides in order to locate one:



I saw 13 Pearl Bordered Frits in total and 2 Wood Whites, but apart from that I encountered just 9 Green Veined Whites, 1 Speckled Wood and 1 Large White, which was pretty alarming on a sunny day in late May in a natural environment which is regularly coppiced. In fact, the only abundant insects were those bloody biting flies again – I'm glad I took my Deet Jungle Formula with me because they were everywhere.

## Re: David M

by Padfield, 25-May-13 07:18 PM GMT

### "David M" wrote:

So, what are people doing when they photograph Green Hairstreaks that I am not?

I'm a total beginner when it comes to processing pictures but in the interests of fun, and because there's no chance of my photographing any butterflies for myself, I tried to adjust one of your pictures to emphasise the copper glow and iridescence. Admittedly, my efforts make the background look garishly fluorescent, but I think it shows that post-processing can make a difference, as Mike says – and I'm sure someone more skilled could do it less crudely.



Guy

**Re: David M**

by Pauline, 26-May-13 09:31 PM GMT

Just seen your GH photo David (mating pair). Great find. Have wanted to get that photo for 3 years now 🎉 Well done!

**Re: David M**

by David M, 30-May-13 03:12 PM GMT

**"Pauline" wrote:**

Just seen your GH photo David (mating pair). Great find. Have wanted to get that photo for 3 years now 🎉 Well done!

Thanks, Pauline. I'd never have spotted them had my eyes not been fixed close to the ground searching for Marsh Fritillaries. I never knew Green Hairstreaks mated so low down, I'd always thought they'd do it in the cover of the shrubbery where they're better camouflaged.

**Thursday 30th May 2013 - staggering numbers.....**

I'm off work at present studying for an important accountancy exam next Monday. After a couple of hours' revision this morning it was so nice I decided to nip over to Crymlyn Burrows, which is only a 5 minute drive away for me.

Well, I certainly got some good maths practice in, as Small Blues were present all over the site today in phenomenal numbers.

Having seen about a dozen in the first 5 minutes, I made an attempt to keep count. By the end of my 2 hour visit that count had hit 134!!



On my previous couple of visits, this species had been very much confined to the steep dunes at the eastern end of the site. This time they were practically everywhere, to the point where I had to resolve to watch my footing for fear of treading on them.

The highest concentrations were to be found on the sheltered, steeper dunes, which are currently carpeted in their foodplant:



Small Heaths are now around in numbers too – 60 to 80 seen today, with Common Blues still a little underwhelming; I only saw 15–20, although one of those was my first female of the year:



Other species seen were a dozen or so Dingies, 8 Orange Tips, 6 Large Whites, 5 Small Coppers, a couple of Brown Argus and a solitary female Brimstone who I suspect will be close to celebrating her 1st birthday shortly!!

Plenty of medium sized Whites about too, though most seemed to be Green Veined. However, I did see a mating pair of Small Whites and managed to get a decent shot. Both male and female seem in mint condition:



I spotted my first Cinnabar moths of the year too, along with a Silver Y. Once again, there were a handful of white-spotted sable moths but I couldn't get an image as they kept settling underneath leaves. 😞

## Re: David M

by David M, 02-Jun-13 02:35 PM GMT

Sunday 2nd June 2013 -

"Wurzel" wrote:  
study breaks are a necessity 😊....

Wurzel is right. There's only so much you can do and given that this morning was sunny and warm I reckoned an hour walking up and down Kilvey Hill would actually benefit me.

I was already in butterfly mode, since when I was making myself coffee at about 9am I had a visitor in my garden. Two days ago a female Wall Brown was inspecting the grasses; this time it was a male, happily feeding on dandelion. What a delight to have such a species right outside your back door!



The first thing I noticed on my way up the lower path was the absence of Pierids, except for Large Whites which were numerous. Similarly, I only saw 2 Speckled Woods, although I daresay the latter's numbers will increase once the larval stage hibernators have emerged from pupation.

A couple of Small Heaths popped up amongst the Large Whites, whilst there was a female Common Blue at the summit, along with a *caeruleopunctata* Small Copper:



Two male Wall Browns were encountered at the summit, the second of which basked happily on the ruins of the old windmill:



There were two more males in the grassy ride on the way back down. The sun went in at this point so the second one was content to display his uppersides:



Two male Common Blues completed proceedings, the second one being encountered in the cemetery at the base of the hill:



Looks like fine weather is here to stay for a few days yet.....just got to get this b\*\*\*\*y exam out of the way now!

## Re: David M

by David M, 03-Jun-13 06:02 PM GMT

Thanks everyone for the comments/wishes.

Exam was pretty tough but it's over now so I can relax a bit....

### Monday 3rd June 2013 - just the tonic....

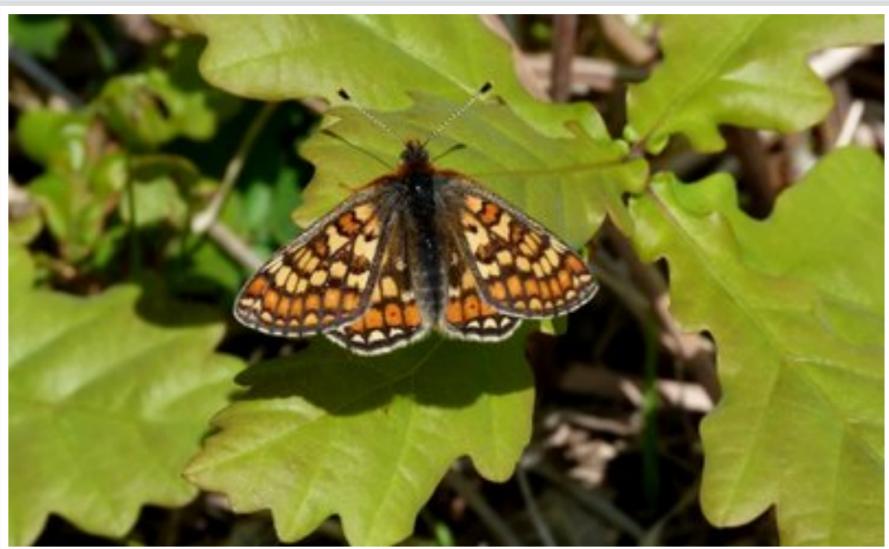
Never one to waste a glorious day, I packed my camera and boots into my car so I could be ready to zoom off from Swansea's Guild Hall straight after my exam this morning and head directly for Welshmoor on the Gower peninsula.

I was certain Marsh Fritillaries would be out having read about Willow's earlier sightings at Aberbargoed Grasslands, which is much further inland (and considerably higher in altitude).

I didn't have to wait long before I saw my first:



Interesting how they have a habit of pushing their forewings back over the hindwings a little like Dingy Skippers:



I rarely walked more than 20 yards without disturbing one. They all seemed to be males and there were several low altitude dogfights with the occasional brief upward spiral. With it being 100% cloud free though, underside shots were nigh on impossible:



All down by the shrub line was where most of them were:



I spotted one flying rather pathetically as if something was wrong with it. The butterfly came down in the longer grasses so I offered it my hand and out came this unusually marked female with one hell of a cargo:



No wonder she could barely get off the runway! She was the only definite female out of the 60 or so I counted.

Other species seen were a handful of whites, 7 Green Hairstreaks, 3 Small Heaths and a Common Blue.

## Re: David M

by David M, 05-Jun-13 11:58 AM GMT

**Tuesday 4th June 2013 - magnifique!....**

Before I even headed out this morning to Gloucestershire, I encountered a beautiful female Common Blue in the cemetery opposite my house:



Feeling inspired, I couldn't wait to get to Swells Hill Bank to see Adonis Blues and I duly arrived there at exactly 11am. I saw 5 Adonis Blues at the lower end of the bank. This area was teeming with Dingy Skippers, and I noticed a few Green Hairstreaks and Brown Arguses, and plenty of Small Blues. Small Heaths were present in numbers but no Dukes here (unlike last year when I saw a single male), so I moved on to nearby Rodborough Common, passing a Small Tortoiseshell on my way back to my car.

Well, it was tough on the old feet getting to the bottom of the steep hill at Rodborough, but this spot is undeniably superb for Dukes:



This warm, sheltered spot was heaving with butterflies, and suddenly I saw a familiar darting flight pattern. However, it was too pale to be a Duke; in fact, my first thought was that it was a Mother Shipton moth, that is until it settled:



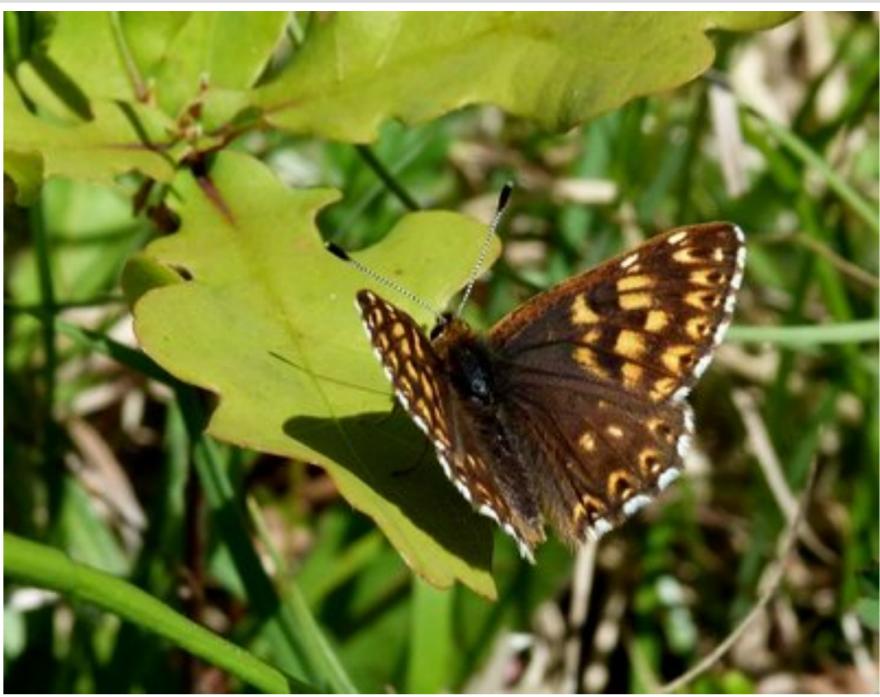
The markings were indicative of DOB, but the coloration was totally wrong, to the point where there was no way it could simply be a faded specimen. I watched as it battled with all intruders, including a normally marked Duke which clearly had his own lek next door:



I stayed in this area for over half an hour, constantly tracking the butterfly. Eventually, I managed to get a few underside shots that were equally as pallid as the uppersides:



It was happy to pose with its wings fully open rather than the normal part-open position the darker coloured individuals seem to prefer to adopt. I saw four Dukes in total, all males.



On my way back up the hill I encountered two more Adonis Blues, one of which was pristine:



Given the favourable conditions which are set to persist, one hopes that both of these species will put down a healthy number of eggs towards the next generation.

## Re: David M

by Pete Eeles, 05-Jun-13 03:37 PM GMT

The Duke is *ab.leucodes* ("The ground colour whitish instead of the usual fulvous."), as shown on the species page:

<http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/species. ... ies=lucina>

Cheers,

– Pete

## Re: David M

by Padfield, 05-Jun-13 10:27 PM GMT

... not to mention that gorgeous female common blue! 😊

Guy

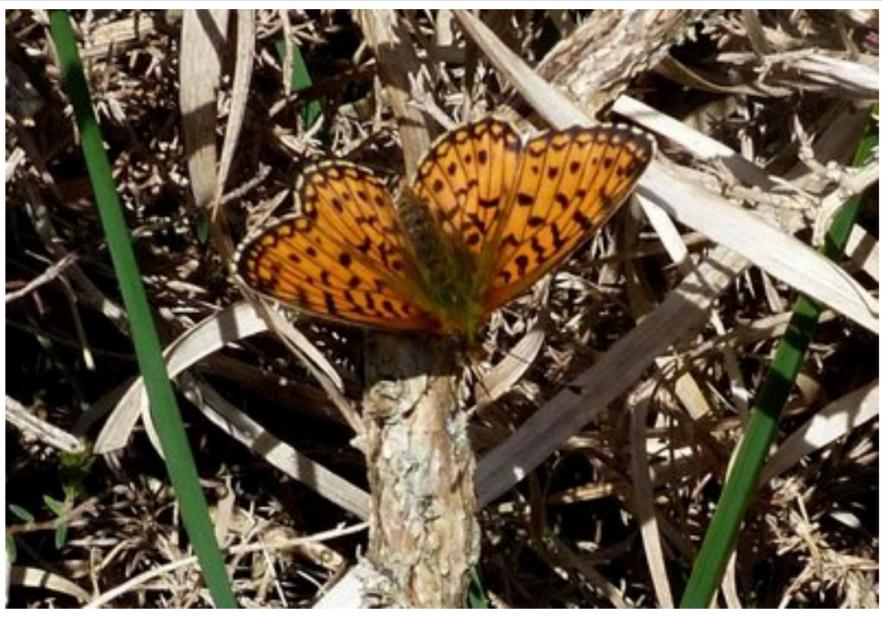
## Re: David M

by David M, 06-Jun-13 06:21 PM GMT

**Thursday 6th June 2013 – sunshine overdose....**

Well, how much longer can it go on? I broke up on study leave a week last Wednesday and since then, every day has been beautiful down here in Swansea, with daytime highs consistently between 17–21c, blue skies and at worst, moderate winds.

I chanced a couple of hours at the High Brown Fritillary site near Bridgend and saw 9 Small Pearl Borderededs in total, all of them looking immaculate (though they were frisky so photographing them wasn't easy, hence the poorish shots):



The most sheltered hotspot on Old Castle Down has been opened up a fair bit by conservation volunteers. Although this makes it more exposed, the cleared areas ought to allow further violet growth and will hopefully be attractive to all four fritillaries present on this site:



The High Browns often favour the Down for egg laying so it'll be interesting to see what they make of this spot.

Plenty of Small Heaths about again, and Dingies and Brown Arguses were seen in decent numbers in the better protected areas. Speckled Wood, Common Blue, Green Veined White and Wall Brown also seen.

Wonder how long it'll be before Dark Greens emerge to grace this site?

## Re: David M

by David M, 08-Jun-13 01:35 PM GMT

### Saturday 8th June 2013 – Rhos pasture trek...

Rhos pasture isn't the easiest terrain to negotiate, but Caeau Ffos Fach near Cross Hands in Carmarthenshire is a classic example of this landscape, which is why Marsh Fritillaries are found in such numbers here.

I spent 2 hours between 9 and 11 this morning and saw approximately 60 of this lovely species, including several females.

Getting to the main fields where they fly is a bit of a slog though. Perhaps they should put a warning on the entrance sign:



Here's the general terrain:



I did some conservation work here last January, but had never visited the site 'in season' so didn't know where the hotspots were. Despite that, it wasn't long before I saw my first:



Once I'd moved into the next field though, the numbers started picking up, and I spotted a lovely, docile female who didn't mind having her photo taken:



Managed to sneak an underside shot in too:



On my way out, I disturbed several more individuals, and watched two males pursue a female with great excitement. I managed to get a shot of two of them, though I think by this time the female had 'ducked' out:



The only other butterflies seen were a couple of dozen Green Veined Whites and, surprisingly, four Dingy Skippers.

### Re: David M

by Padfield, 08-Jun-13 07:42 PM GMT

#### "nfreem" wrote:

Some nice Marsh Fritillary shots there David but that last one of them flying over the meadow is an absolute belter, I love it 😊.

It's amazing! Have you got a higher res. version we can see, David?

Guy

### Re: David M

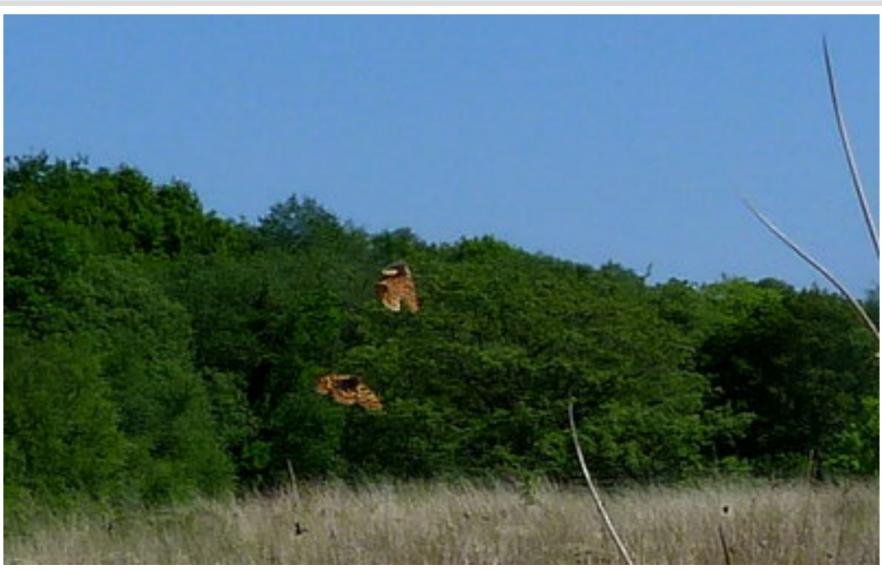
by David M, 08-Jun-13 09:27 PM GMT

#### "padfield" wrote:

Have you got a higher res. version we can see, David?

I **have**, but one needs to consider at what point higher res leads to breakdown in clarity of detail.

I don't think I dare go any further than this. It shows 'reasonable' detail but is simultaneously entering the realms of digital zoom pixellation overdose:



### Re: David M

by David M, 10-Jun-13 05:48 PM GMT

#### Monday 10th June 2013 - Surprise....

After finishing my accountancy exam at 1.15pm today, I dashed back home, got changed and was on Crymlyn Dunes by 2 o'clock eager to catch the back end of what might be the last warm, sunny day here for a while.

A fair bit of useful coppicing has been done in the woodland here, and there are some lush clumps of violets which might attract Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries. So, whilst it wouldn't surprise me totally to see this species on this site, it certainly DID surprise me when just about the first butterfly I saw was a Marsh Fritillary!! Crymlyn doesn't strike me as the right habitat for this species, and despite a good half hour searching the immediate area there weren't any more to be found. These are colony butterflies so if you find one you will probably find lots.



Bit irresponsible if someone has been releasing them here, but I took a photo of it in its habitat context just to prove it was actually seen at Crymlyn:



No SPBFs (I know they've been recorded on nearby Kilvey Hill in the past, so I live in hope), but I did at least get to see my first Large Skippers of the year, looking absolutely stunning, fresh out of the pupa!



Other than that it was the usual suspects: abundant Small and Common Blues, plenty of Small Heaths, a dozen or so GV Whites and Dingies, 3 Orange Tip males, 2 Large Whites and singleton Brown Argus, Speckled Wood, Small Copper and Small White.

Rain on its way tomorrow for the first time in nearly a fortnight, and for once, I'm perfectly happy about it – the ground needs a soaking.

## Re: David M

by David M, 19-Jun-13 06:46 PM GMT

### Wednesday 19th June 2013 – Itchy feet....

Having not been out butterflying for 9 days, I was itching to take today off work given the forecast, but the best I could negotiate was a half day, meaning only a local visit was possible.

I headed for Crymlyn Burrows again and spent 3 hours there from 12.30pm.

Small Blues were again ubiquitous, with a few looking very fresh. For the first time, I realised what beautiful legs they have:



Small Heaths and Common Blues were plentiful, whilst I saw 20-ish GV Whites and 8 Large Skippers, including my first female of the year:



Last time I was here, I had the shock of seeing a Marsh Fritillary. This time round, the Frit I saw was one I expected would inhabit this coastal dune habitat:



I saw 4 in total, all were gleaming and full of energy:



By contrast, Large Whites must have been having a lazy day. All four encountered were avidly nectaring rather than racing around the hedgerows:



I was delighted to bump into this immaculate male Speckled Wood:



A Small Tortoiseshell had just whizzed by me, so I went looking for it down a bank. I saw another medium sized butterfly though which proved to be my first Meadow Brown of the year (obviously he'd had a very close shave with a predator):



Incredibly, given that it's almost midsummer's day, I also saw two male Orange Tips. Do the males live significantly longer than the females because I haven't seen the latter for nearly a fortnight?

Other butterflies seen were Brown Argus, Dingy Skipper, Small White and a male Brimstone which was as big a surprise as the Orange Tips.

No rarities, but 16 species ain't bad, and I got an audience with a lovely Stonechat:



## Re: David M

by David M, 25-Jun-13 07:21 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments, guys.

### Tuesday 25th June 2013 – Busy, busy day (Part 1)...

Not quite a day of 'kipperesque' proportions, but a busy and rewarding one nonetheless.

I'll not be able to take another day off work for a fortnight, so at this critical time of year I don't want to be relying on the whims of the weather at the weekend and duly decided to make a day of it today.

First stop was Sand Point in Somerset to see if Bill's (Willow) fears that Glanville Fritillaries had vanished were correct.

Well, I arrived at 7.50am, stayed till 9.15 and didn't see a single one 😞

I checked all their favourite areas from last year but not a sniff. The only species flying were Large Skipper, Common Blue, Speckled Wood and Meadow Brown.

I guess that's what happens when an artificial, isolated colony suffers one cataclysmic year.

Undeterred, I pressed on to my next stop, Collard Hill, which was only a 40 minute drive from Sand Point. My theory was that with Glastonbury starting tomorrow, most people would be reluctant to visit today. Sadly, I was wrong, as when I arrived at 10am there were already twenty or so folk congregated in the eastern glade.

I guess more pairs of eyes makes sightings easier, and two different individuals were duly seen (though I only managed to photograph one):



The Large Blue is not an easy subject to work with at the best of times; reluctance to open wings, settling low amongst grass stems and bombing up and down steep hills like a Porsche being just three issues. Factor in a scrum of 20 or so others and it just gets even harder. Still, I managed to observe a couple of specimens relatively unobstructed merely by exercising a bit of patience.

Prior to entering the reserve, I had already had a bit of a treat – my first Red Admiral of the year on 25th June!!! In the same field I also saw a Painted Lady (there was another on the hill itself):



Meadow Browns were present in numbers, as were fresh brood Small Tortoiseshells (20+ seen). Other species encountered were Small Heath, Speckled Wood, Large Skipper and a very faded Dingy.

I had intended to stay till mid afternoon but there were too many people about so I ducked out just after midday, reckoning there'd still be time to do another site visit...

## Re: David M

by David M, 25-Jun-13 10:04 PM GMT

### Tuesday 25th June 2013 – Busy, busy day (Part 2)...

Struggling for breath due to the sheer numbers of fellow Large Blue spotters, I absconded just after midday, drove back over the border into Wales, and dropped in on the Alun Valley side of the High Brown Fritillary site near Bridgend.

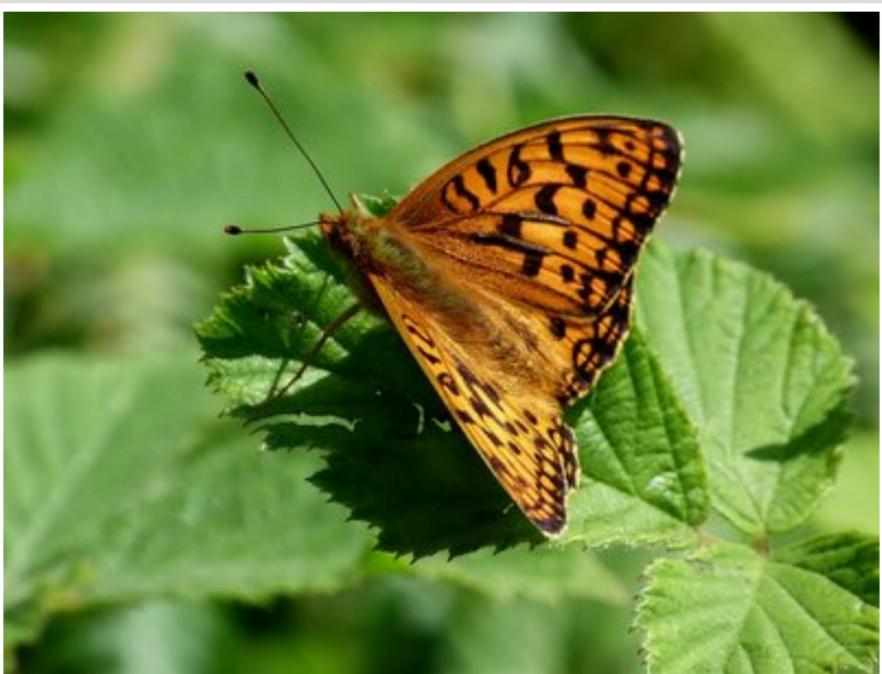
The contrast was tangible – not a single soul around between 2.15pm and 4pm. Bliss!

The route I took was (as ever) tough going – don't ever come here in shorts!!!

Not much happened until I was in touching distance of the path down to the 'meadow'. I saw two Dark Greens and an unidentified Frit, but just before I got to the final path another golden brown bundle of energy whizzed by. It settled fairly readily too and gave me a 20 minute audience:



There's a strong possibility that this butterfly emerged today such was its lustre. The defining characteristics of High Brown are clearly visible in the following shot – raised sex brands and a virtually invisible 3rd apical wing margin spot:



Of the seven medium sized Frits I saw only one I positively identified was a High Brown.

There were a couple of Small Pearl Bordereds, including this nicely marked female:



On my way back out, I encountered this disabled Dark Green Frit, which I picked up given that it was fluttering aimlessly in the undergrowth:



I felt SO sorry for it. Any butterfly that emerges from the pupa has beaten overwhelming odds. How sad that whilst emerging this one seemingly got liquid attached to its inflating wings, meaning that the right rear-wings didn't inflate properly. It couldn't fly, and I'm glad I was able to allow it to bask on my hand for a while and consume a few minerals from my perspiration (which it readily did):



Poor thing. All he wants to do is join his mates and fly eagerly around this site doing what butterflies are programmed to do.

Eventually, I placed him on a sheltered Marsh Thistle. I doubt he'll survive for long, but what a pleasure for me to have a Dark Green Fritillary happily basking on my hand for ten minutes. At least he got further in the development stages than 95% of his peers.

So, in summary, High Browns are now out at the Welsh site. I daresay they'll pick up to a peak within the next fortnight. Even better news is that the dry spell has evaporated the stream that runs through the fritillary 'meadow', meaning that this area shouldn't be strangled by water-loving grasses and umbellifers like it was last year.

I got a few other surprises – I saw a Peacock in the meadow as well as a battered Comma, which I assume is a survivor from spring!!!

I also saw a female Brimstone. This species is a rare sight here (only the second I've encountered). How much longer can they hold on?

## Re: David M

by David M, 29-Jun-13 02:44 PM GMT

**Saturday 29th June 2013 – Dark Green Day.....**

Crymlyn Burrows on the Swansea coast is a spot I'd never been to till 2 months ago. However, it throws up pleasant surprises every time I visit, and

today's surprise was the huge numbers of Dark Green Fritillaries flying.

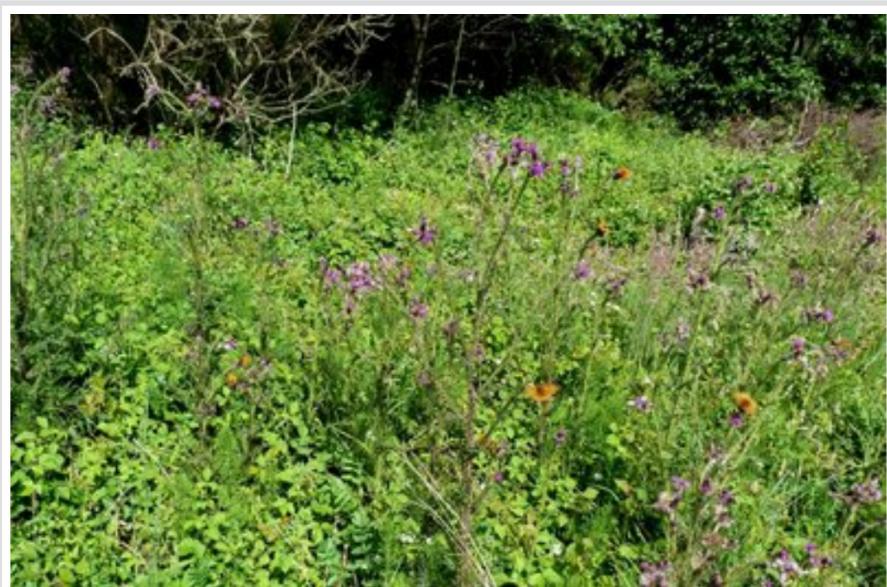
I certainly racked up over 60 in barely an hour on the south side of the woodland:



There weren't enough Marsh Thistles to go round:



I counted ten in a 5m square area at one point and I think eight of them are visible in this image:



Meadow Browns were even more numerous, with approaching 100 seen, but Ringlets will soon challenge them no doubt; I saw my first, second and third of the year but couldn't manage much of a photo:



I did slightly better with my other 'first' for the year, a male Small Skipper:



I went back round the woodland to the more open part of the site and Dark Greens pretty much vanished. I only saw three, but interestingly two of those were the only females observed. Seems they're reluctant to join the nectar party that the males are indulging in!

Small Heaths & Common Blues still fairly numerous, although most are tatty and faded now, as are the few Small Blues still hanging on. A dozen or so Large Skippers seen along with 2 Green Veined Whites and singleton Small Tortoiseshell, Small White, Brown Argus, Speckled Wood, Large White and this Small Copper which proved irresistible:



## Re: David M

by David M, 01-Jul-13 12:06 AM GMT

**Sunday 30th June 2013 - 14 hour day....**

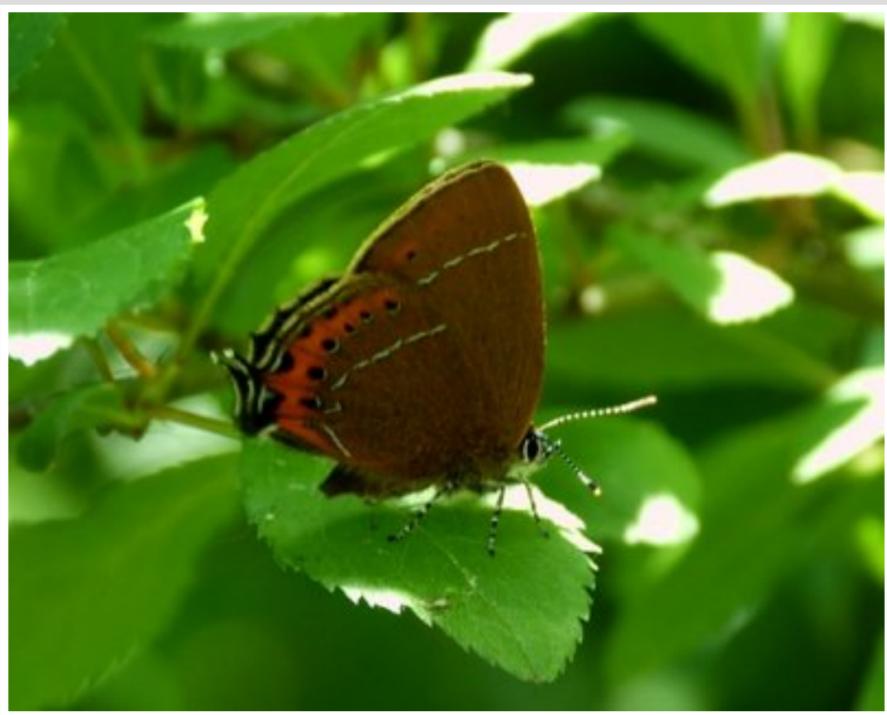
Spent the day in the illuminating company of Willow (Bill) today, searching for the elusive Black Hairstreak in both Whitecross Green Wood and then Bernwood Forest.

I'm delighted to say we saw about a dozen of these striking insects, most notably in the much frequented pond area of Whitecross, where a minimum of 5 were seen in the scrubby area by the water, and another absolute minimum of 3 in the main ride by the entrance to the pond.

They were frustrating subjects at first, and it was only when Bill and I decided to come away from the pond area that I got lucky and saw one at chest level on some blackthorn:



It was only when an egg-laying female was spotted that we all got a reasonably close audience:



I think she may have actually just laid an egg in this image, but she flew out at this point and in my determination to track her I obviously lost sight of the original spot where she'd been twisting her abdomen round the fresh growth:



I wasn't the only UKB'er seeing this species for the first time – Rob S was also present and managed to get a few decent shots in – we also traded insect repellent!

Bill and I moved on to Bernwood Forest down the lane, but although we didn't see any Marbled Whites, we DID find another two Black Hairstreaks in the compensation area right next to the M40 motorway. This was between 4.15 and 5pm, so this species will fly quite late into the afternoon.

Not too many other species about to be honest. I had half hoped to see a Silver Washed Fritillary but no doubt in a week's time these will be around in decent numbers. Ringlets were around in decent numbers but that will become a 'given' in a week or so.

All in all, a marathon day (I left a grey and drizzly Swansea at 7am and returned to a grey and drizzly Swansea at 9.30pm), but a highly rewarding one.

## Re: David M

by David M, 05-Jul-13 10:13 PM GMT

### Friday 5th July 2013 – An audience with...Large Heath....

I've only ever seen Large Heaths twice, and on both occasions I was unable to do them justice.

In 2011, I saw a dozen or so in a brief hour at Bettisfield Moss in Shropshire, but given that I wanted to see Silver Studded Blues at nearby Prees Heath, I'm afraid this species was merely a convenient *hors d'oeuvre*.

Last year, I made a first visit to Cors Caron, near Tregaron in mid-Wales, which is the most southerly UK site at which Large Heaths can be found. Unfortunately, it was in the middle of an appalling spell of cool and wet weather, meaning that I only saw three, and had no idea as to how prevalent this species was at this site.

Well, today I got my answer, and the good news is that it's a cast iron site for them, with 60 or so seen in a 4 hour stay. What's more, Cors Caron is impenetrable but for the area around the boardwalk, so I suspect that the reality is that this butterfly is present in the hundreds here in peak flight season.

I confess I'm not a fan of raised peat bogs, but it was a Friday afternoon, so having arrived at 1.05pm, there was no point in me leaving before 4.30, as I'd simply have got snarled up in the pre-weekend rush.

This gave me time to sit, relax, observe and enjoy, and I'm pleased to say that there were plenty of Large Heaths to be seen, albeit that most were highly active in the warm, sunny conditions and not in the mood to settle.

I found a patch of fairly bare ground with several cross-leaved heath flowers in bloom, and eventually I was rewarded with three or four individuals settling for a dose of nectar.

These were the best images I could manage:



It seemed strange visiting a site in July where there were no Meadow Browns present – the only other butterflies I saw were 3 Green Veined Whites and a tatty Peacock. However, if you get bored, there's always the Red Kites overhead to keep you entertained, as well as the huge numbers of dragonflies which can be found near the ponds.

The site was much drier than when I visited last year, and looked in fine fettle set against the backdrop of the nearby hills:



## Re: David M

by David M, 06-Jul-13 10:44 PM GMT

Thanks for the input, folks. Much appreciated.

### Saturday 6th July 2013 - Make the most of it while it lasts....

I wasn't really in the mood to get up at 5.30 this morning, but then I thought of those awful winter days when the butterfly season seems so far away....

...so, by 9.40am I had arrived at Lulworth Cove, ready to track down a species I haven't seen since I was a teenager. It was still slightly misty when I arrived but there were already plenty of people about:



Thankfully I managed to locate a few of my target species - 10 in total - all of them being found on the lower part of the slope as soon as the track up the hill had been negotiated. Here's a male:



...and a female:



I watched with interest as a male and female encountered one another. The female kept vibrating her wings while the male looked on. They went their separate ways so I assume this behaviour was the equivalent of the abdomen raised signal used by Whites:



Of all the four Skippers I saw today (Large, Small and Dingy being the others), the Lulworths were easily the most accommodating; happy to bask for long periods whilst generally refraining from dithering in the air for an eternity...the only major problem was tracking them in flight due to their tiny size.

I was staggered that there were no Marbled Whites about on this coastal site, but there were plenty of other species flying: Small Heath, Meadow Brown, Ringlet and faded Adonis Blues were all encountered in double figures, whilst there were a handful of Common Blues, Brown Argus and Small Tortoiseshell. I also saw singleton Wall Brown and, surprisingly, Green Hairstreak.

I decided to move on at about 12.30pm to Studland Heath which is about half an hour away. To avoid the traffic, I parked in a lay by well before the ferry terminal and just walked into the fields more in hope than anything.

In the hour I spent in these fields, I managed to find a total of 14 Silver Studded Blues, all males:



I decided to head back up the A350 at about 3pm, but the absence of Marbled Whites was still rankling with me. Given that I was driving past Chippenham, it was no diversion at all really to pull into West Yatton Down, a site I've visited several times before.

Sure enough, there were two dozen or so Marbled Whites on the wing (skittish as ever, so this was little more than a routine record shot:



I also saw four other species that I hadn't encountered earlier in the day: Brimstone (3 males), Small Blue, Large White and Speckled Wood.

## Re: David M

by David M, 07-Jul-13 04:25 PM GMT

Wurzel, I parked in the Heritage Centre and made my way up the hill from the path next to the beach. It was at the lower level of this hill that I found the Lulworths.

### Sunday 7th July 2013 - Fritillary frenzy...

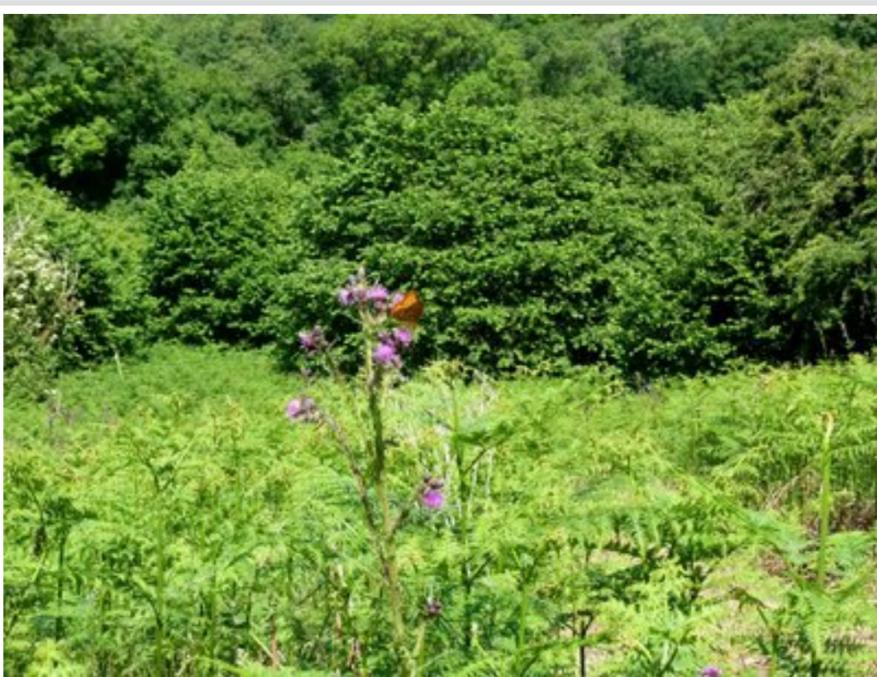
I visited 3 sites yesterday and didn't see a single Fritillary. Today, however, I saw nigh on 200.

First up was Old Castle Down/Alun Valley to see how High Browns were getting on. A good omen was 2 unidentified Frits on the steep bank whilst climbing the Down. Near the top was a Small pearl Bordered, one of 7 seen in just over two hours.

I positively identified 2 High Browns along the gully area, with about 10 other Frits spotted. This HBF was feeding on Cross-Leaved Heath; not seen that before:



The 'meadow' was where the highest concentration of activity was to be found. There were Fritillaries flying all over the place. The river has dried up and the vegetation is more patchy, which is how these species like it:



I got a definite ID on 9 High Browns and 6 Dark Greens, but I saw at least 30 others which didn't come close enough for me to distinguish between the two.

It was getting very hot down in that meadow so I left for the coastal site at Crymlyn Burrows at 12.30pm.

A month or so ago, I was so amazed by Small Blue numbers that I decided to count them. Today, I did likewise for Dark Green Fritillaries. Starting at the

woodland edge before crossing over to return via the crest of the main dune, the 'transect' took me just less than 50 minutes. Astonishingly, the DGF count was 132. I don't quite know what attracts them in such numbers to this site, but this afternoon they were everywhere – on the thistles, fluttering low amongst the grasses, zooming purposefully in the air, jousting...and indulging in other activities too:



These two were so engrossed I was able to gently take the top of the plant and bend it ever so gently to get a clearer view:



Quite a few females have joined the party now, and most of the males still seemed in peak condition so these numbers could last till the end of this month.

Small Blues have now gone and I saw just 1 Common Blue. A handful of Small Heaths still about, but Large Skippers, Meadow Browns and Ringlets are the predominate species now...along with Dark Green Fritillaries of course!!

## Re: David M

by Willow, 07-Jul-13 10:02 PM GMT

Excellent reports from the past three days David, your getting your just rewards for your efforts, and your certainly clocking up the miles 😊 Great summer days 😊 glad to see your making the very most of them.

Your Lulworth Cove image reminds me very much of a day I spent there last year, azure skies and lovely and hot...it's a very beautiful area, and they have their very own brand of skipper too 😊

Regards,  
Bill 😊

## Re: David M

by David M, 08-Jul-13 09:38 PM GMT

### "jenks" wrote:

And Sunday 7th I headed up to Cors Caron (Tregaron Bog ) where I saw Small and Large Skippers, Dark Green Frits, Ringlet, Meadow Browns in profusion and NO LARGE HEATH !. Which is why I`m annoyed. I assumed that with this late year for butterflies they had still not emerged but 2 days before you had seen 40 or more ! Where did I go wrong ? Looking at your photos I certainly walked along the same boardwalk.

Hi Jenks, good to see you back on here.

It's surely impossible to miss Large Heaths at Tregaron Bog, and given that you saw several species I didn't, then I can only assume you took the circuitous walk around the fields.

Let me tell you what I did – I walked all the way down the boardwalk from the main entrance until the T-junction where you are forced to go **right**

towards the bird hide. However, if you look **left**, there's a 25 yard stretch of boardwalk that is effectively a cul-de-sac. Beyond this point is open heath and you daren't really step onto it for fear of sinking! Importantly though, there's a bench situated here. Seeing as I had time on my hands, I put my belongings down and simply sat there and watched things go by. Not only did I see a Large Heath every few minutes (sometimes two or three simultaneously), I also had a number of cross-leaved heath flowers unobstructed by long grasses nearby. Over a period of 60-90 minutes spent there, several Large Heaths came to investigate and a handful settled. Both the images I took were on the same clump of flowers. In fact, the photo I posted giving an overview of the site was taken from that very spot!!

Don't go beyond the first pond on the walk towards the hide, as Large Heaths seem to disappear at this point. Dragonflies abound here and I guess the butterflies don't fancy being chased down by these monsters.

## Re: David M

by David M, 11-Jul-13 07:54 PM GMT

### Thursday 11th July 2013 - cooler conditions...

I haven't bothered going out after work this week as it's been too hot even for butterflies. Swansea doesn't normally get above 25c in summer but it's been as hot as 28c in the late afternoon recently, however today it was a more pleasant 21c, meaning that I chanced an hour's hike up and down Kilvey Hill opposite my house.

Nothing terribly exciting to report; just the usual stuff - Speckled Woods, Ringlets, Meadow Browns, Large Skippers, a Large White....however I also spotted my first Graylings of the year, only two, and neither allowed me to get too close.

You sure know you're on the wrong side of mid-summer when these critters appear!



## Re: David M

by David M, 15-Jul-13 02:35 PM GMT

### Saturday 13th July 2013 - Oh, to be 50 feet tall.....

Sweltering day, much of which was spent at Bentley Wood, where I arrived at 8am to a car park already half full!

Most of the others were content to stay in this area, but the sun was insufficiently high to light up this spot, so myself and two others decamped to the ride just prior to the car park, which was well lit by the morning sun and pleasantly warm.

Two Emperors were seen flying purposefully overhead, but neither was interested in descending; in fact, nobody I spoke to saw one on the ground all day, which was a surprise to me as I'd have thought the baking hot conditions would see them MORE likely to seek ground-based minerals.

I mustn't complain, because I saw a grounded Emperor last year at Bernwood in 15c and damp conditions, but it's obviously disappointing for all not to see this noble beast at close quarters. I'm off to the Tyrolean Alps on Wednesday too, so my chances of an audience with H.I.M in 2013 now seem remote...still, there's always next year.

The same was true of White Letter Hairstreaks. There are three lovely elms further on into Bentley, and there was much activity going on at the tops of these trees, however that's where they all stayed much to everybody's chagrin - I'd love it if a site had a raised platform where you could get up near canopy level (it'd improve our understanding of this elusive species as well).

Of course, there were hundreds of other butterflies about on a hot, sunny day like this, but by 10am most of these had hit hyperdrive, so I was glad I got a few early shots in before they'd fully warmed up:

Dozens and dozens of Silver Washed Fritillaries about, but all were males. Those emerging females are going to be MUCH in demand:



White Admirals were about in fair numbers. I reckon I saw at least two dozen:



Other species seen were all three of the Whites, Small and Large Skipper, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Speckled Wood, Marbled White, Comma, Red Admiral and two Hedge Browns, my first of the year:



By 2pm I was shattered as it was 30c by then (and rose to 31.5c on my car thermometer on the way back home near Gloucester). These temperatures look set to remain for a while, meaning that I'm going to be in the rather unusual position of going somewhere COOLER for my summer holiday! Still, at least we're **finally** having a good summer, and let's all hope that butterflies will make the most of it and bounce back after a few appalling years lately.

## Re: David M

by David M, 16-Jul-13 05:11 PM GMT

### Tuesday 16th July 2013 - High Browns outnumbering Dark Greens...

Visited the Alun Valley site between 9.45am and midday, and can report that High Brown numbers have definitely exceeded those of Dark Green.

The Dark Green males are also beginning to fade noticeably now, meaning that practically any fresh looking Fritillary heading your way is likely to be a High Brown.

There were plenty of both racing round the meadow this morning, although I chanced upon a sleepy male in a different part of the site:



Before the cloud burned off, I spotted a female Meadow Brown basking wings open. I noticed she had a second eye-spot on each forewing. I don't know how common this is:



The Frits in the meadow were understandably supercharged given the hot conditions. That said, one very fresh looking female perched for a while:





## Re: David M

by David M, 17-Jul-13 08:20 PM GMT

### Wednesday 17th July 2013 - missed my flight but caught His Majesty...

I missed my check in time by 2 minutes at Gatwick airport this morning, meaning that I had a long and sad journey back home in front of me. So, in an attempt to ward off depression, I called in at relatively near Botany Bay and sure enough, the depression lifted almost immediately as I finally stumbled upon a grounded Emperor on the main track and I had him all to myself 😊



This specimen was in full shade even at 9.30 in the morning! I spent a few minutes with him until I heard a cyclist approaching. I was about to raise my hand in an attempt to prevent him from disturbing the butterfly, but as he approached I recognised the face - UKB's Emperor-smeller pursuivant, Neil Hulme.

I learned a fair bit from Neil today and am extremely grateful for it. I spotted another Emperor near a stagnant pool further along, and Neil arrived soon afterwards and shared all his tips on eliciting a 'performance' from these magnificent beasts (I was also witness to Neil's 8th 'trousering' of the PE season):





Passers by soon spotted us and before long there was a small crowd:



Other butterflies to note were Purple Hairstreak (too far up the tree for an image), female Silver Washed Fritillary and a 2nd brood male Brimstone.

I'd like to say it was a wonderful day, but of course, it wasn't. Still, nothing I can do about the flight now but it's amazing what a Purple Emperor can do to lift the spirits!

## Re: David M

by David M, 18-Jul-13 02:25 PM GMT

Yes, you're right, Wurzel, the two things are mutually incompatible really, aren't they? I believe it's persisting it down right now in the Tyrolean Alps so perhaps I wouldn't have been able to get out and do much anyway.

### Thursday 18th July 2013 - The ground is moving with butterflies...

Time for a bit of a pause today, so just a quick 100 minute visit to Crymlyn Burrows near my home.

The sheer numbers of butterflies here right now are a real sight to behold. I was disturbing Meadow Browns every other step and Dark Green Frits every third!!

People have been complaining about getting underside shots of these butterflies yet the incredible abundance of them here means that it's almost impossible not to come across one in a decent wings-closed pose:



The above female was starting to fade, and many of the males are exceedingly pale now. That said, once again I saw 100+ and watched fascinated as they interacted with the copious numbers of Meadow and Hedge Browns present.

Talking of huge numbers, the second brood Small Blues have emerged here:



Given that the first brood was about in stratospheric numbers, I dread to think what's going to develop over the next couple of weeks. We shall see. It was nice to see second brood Small Coppers about too. This one was abnormally dark in colour, rather like the ones you encounter in France:



## Re: David M

by David M, 25-Jul-13 09:47 AM GMT

### Wednesday 24th July 2013 - killing a couple of hours...

I didn't much fancy going through the M4 roadworks near Bristol at rush hour during my return trip from Gatwick airport, so I took junction 17 and headed for West Yatton Down where I stayed until gone 5pm.

The site was fair teeming with butterflies, but I only saw four Chalkhill Blues, though all had clearly only recently emerged as they were in mint condition:



Marbled Whites were probably the commonest species - well over 100 flying around the site:



Other species seen were Large, Small and Green Veined White, Brimstone, Large & Small Skipper, Meadow and Hedge Brown, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Ringlet, Dark Green Fritillary, Peacock, Comma, Small Heath and a couple of Purple Hairstreaks high up in an oak.

## Re: David M

by David M, 25-Jul-13 11:26 PM GMT

### "Pauline" wrote:

Just caught up with your diary David. Shame about the missed flight but those PE shots have to be worth it 😊

Sure was, Pauline, and I was able to book onto another flight so no major damage done!!

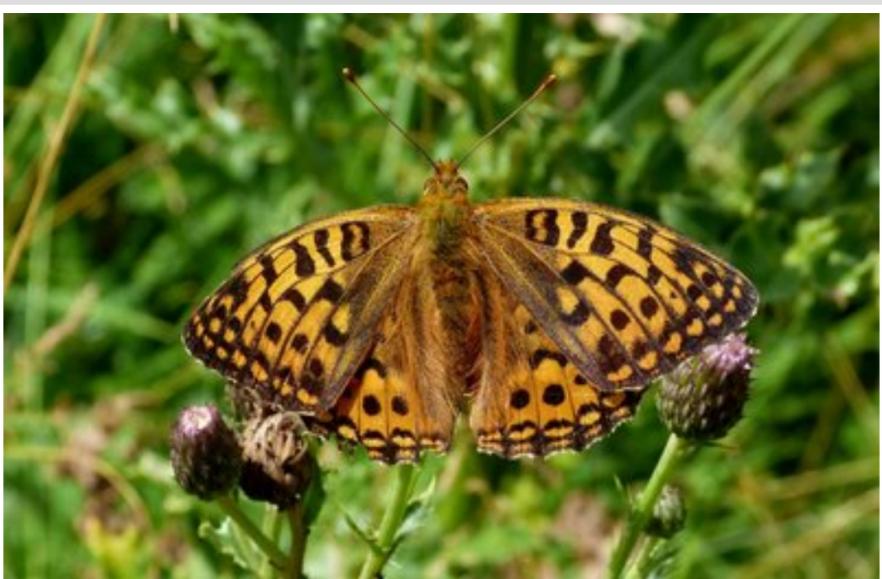
### Thursday 25th July 2013 - High Browns rule at Alun Valley...

I spent between 10.45am and 1.55pm at Alun Valley in Glamorgan today and it would appear that Dark Green Frits are now **spent** and that any medium sized Fritillary seen will be a High Brown (Silver Washed not yet out here).

I positively identified 17 HBFs and I reckon there were at least 30 more that didn't settle so they've still got a week or two of life yet. Obviously, many are now looking fairly battered but some are still in decent condition:



This female was just about the 'freshest' I encountered.



Still, as some species fade, others emerge pristine and Green Veined Whites seem to be fair exploding forth! This female was unusually heavily suffused:



The cloud cover made photography a lot easier today; this fresh Peacock was irresistible:



The gun club meadow was overrun with butterflies. I'm not sure if I can remember seeing so many Whites in a single location in the last few years. Hedge Browns and Small Skippers are still fairly numerous and fresh, whilst Meadow Brown and Ringlet numbers are showing no real signs of easing. Large Skippers are looking tatty and the solitary Small Heath I saw was positively geriatric!

Two Red Admirals seen, along with a dozen or so Small Tortoiseshells and 3 Commas; a Brown Argus popped up too. However, I'd really come to track down White Letter Hairstreaks and I'm pleased to say I **did** find one in an elm tree not far from the gun club meadow. It frustrated me at first by refusing to come down below 15 feet:



Eventually, it got down to chest level but just as it came out of the shade a strong gust of wind rocked the branch it was perching on and it was off to the canopy leaving me with this last, unsatisfactory image:



Even that was a massive improvement on the Purple Hairstreak image I took. This irritating little blighter played cat and mouse with me for half an hour, persistently landing on the upperside of an oak leaf out of my view. I took a few pot shots with my camera and managed to get a silhouette at least 😡



I'm determined to get a half decent shot of this species before I die....watch this space!

## Re: David M

by David M, 28-Jul-13 06:16 PM GMT

### Sunday 28th July 2013 - close encounter of the White Letter kind...

At last! A female White Letter Hairstreak on an egg laying run decided to give me an audience this afternoon (after I'd patiently spent at least 2 hours underneath her elm). I'd seen a male earlier but he remained firmly out of zoomable reach:



Last Thursday, the wind stymied my attempts to photograph a male, so this time I grabbed tight hold of the end of her branch and held it steady while I worked my camera with my right:



It was interesting to watch her behaviour higher up the tree when the heavy rain showers arrived. She'd sit it out for a couple of minutes on the upperside of a leaf before waving the white flag and crawling under it to take cover.

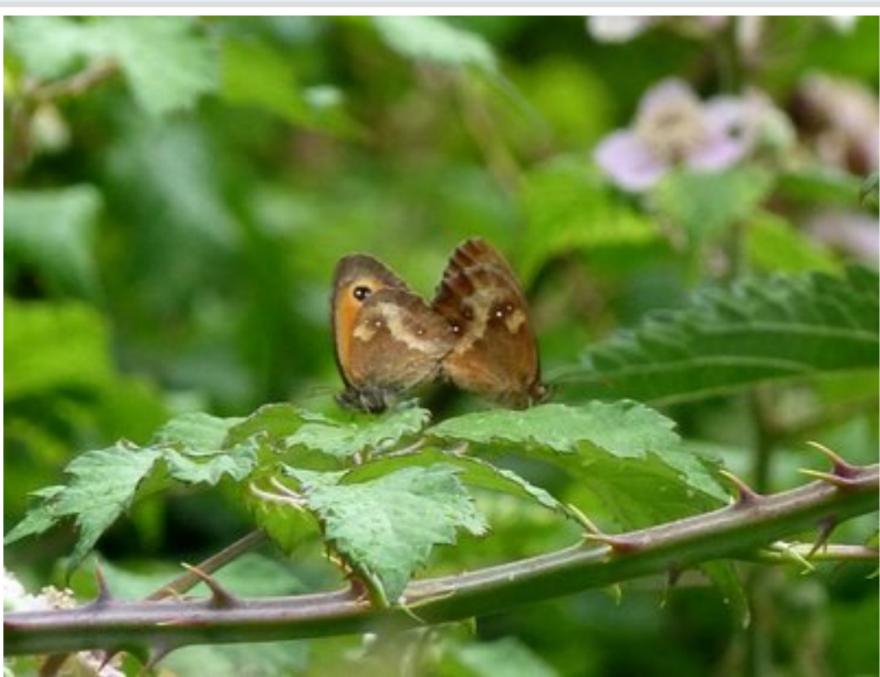
Still plenty of High Browns (particularly in the gun club meadow). This female is surely a borderline aberrant:



There are now quite a few female Hedge Browns about:



They're all in great demand!:



Saw my first Silver Washed Frits on this site today too, as well as a soon-to-be-departed Dark Green, who didn't care about the rain pouring down and just carried on resting wings open:



I hung on in till mid afternoon, but the Purple Hairstreak I'd seen in the morning didn't make a further appearance. I'm glad I left when I did though, as by the time I got home it was lashing it down. Still, won't do the plant life any harm.

## Re: David M

by David M, 28-Jul-13 11:28 PM GMT

### "nfreem" wrote:

I don't know about borderline David, surely that is a definite, very nicely marked too

Would seem so, Neil. It's now in the species-specific album!

### "Wurzel" wrote:

Congrats on the White Letter your patience paid off

Indeed. 2hrs + standing by an elm tree would normally arouse the suspicions of the local constabulary.

Given the regular heavy showers though, I'd say a third of that time was protecting myself from a drenching rather than scanning for Hairstreaks.

## Re: David M

by David M, 03-Aug-13 11:35 PM GMT

### Saturday 3rd August 2013 - it'll be a long time before this record is broken....

At 9.51 this morning, I hit a major traffic jam on the M4 just 3 miles from the Bridgend junction. What's more, it was pelting it down and 16.5c was showing on my car thermometer. If I'd been offered an escape route back home right then I'd have taken it.

Fast forward to 1430hrs and I was still shaking my head at how I'd seen TWENTY FOUR different species of butterfly in WALES at a single site on the same day.

The clouds evaporated, the sun came out and stayed out and the wind dropped too. In spite of that, I still spent far too much time underneath the elm that had yielded the egg laying White Letter Hairstreak last weekend. I **did** see another of this species here but I'm pretty sure it was a male:



I then snapped this female Hedge Brown which looked to have an extra forewing spot:



A Comma basked invitingly:



Is it just me or do Meadow Browns seem to rest wings open far more regularly late in the season?



I moved into the gun club meadow which was again replete with butterflies. Whites weren't quite as ubiquitous as they were a week ago, but they were still about in serious numbers. Common Blues have suddenly hit their straps, and they proved quite irritating as they interfered with many of the other species nectaring on the thistle heads, in particular three different White Letter Hairstreaks which I was trying to photograph. Even High Brown Fritillaries were constantly challenged, although I did get a few shots, including this individual who was still in reasonable nick:



Fellow UKBer Willow told me a few weeks ago that Graylings were present in the quarry on this site. For only the second time in my life, I went into this

quarry today and sure enough there were a small number gliding about, coming to rest on the sheer rock faces:



This quarry is used by the gun club and there is debris everywhere. By 1pm though it was deserted and I revelled in the peaceful conditions here. I spotted a few buddleia bushes growing at the bottom of the sheer faces, so I thought I'd go and check them out and treat myself to a few vanessids. What ACTUALLY happened shocked me considerably.

Amongst the numerous Whites, several Peacocks, the odd Tortoiseshell and a single Red Admiral, were double figure numbers of High Brown Fritillaries avidly nectaring from these buddleia blooms:



I had no idea this species had such a weakness for buddleia. It seemed quite incongruous to see them in such a setting, but they clearly loved it. On a couple of occasions, I spotted one sharing a flowerhead with a Peacock. I really wish I'd been able to capture that on camera but it wasn't to be, sadly, as on both occasions the HBF fluttered off to another floret before I could get my camera ready.

I emerged back onto Old Castle Down and was about to head back to my car, but something told me to spend a few minutes in the steep dip by the top of the path that leads down to the gun club meadow. Within seconds, I saw what I thought was a Holly Blue settle amongst some leaves, but when, after a minute, it still remained hidden I thought I'd creep over and see what was going on.

I'd seen where it had come down, but there was nothing obvious visible, so I gently took hold of the branch and slowly turned it over to reveal this little stowaway:



Off he/she went after thirty seconds or so, but the butterfly remained within camera reach for the next 5 minutes:



I genuinely don't know whether it was a male or a female as the purple reflections weren't terribly visible with me being below the butterfly:



Still, it was nice to get relatively close to this species and it topped the day off in grand style.

### Re: David M

by Willow, 04-Aug-13 10:57 AM GMT

I honestly cannot remember seeing or hearing of more butterfly species seen at a single location in Wales before, 24 is a very significant record, your perseverance certainly paid off. The quarry is a rather dangerous environment but it can act as a heat trap, just add Buddleia and its surprising what can turn up 😊😄 Super day and great report David.

Kindest Regards,

Bill 😊

### Re: David M

by David M, 11-Aug-13 06:44 PM GMT

#### Sunday 4th August 2013 - no right to be seeing anything...

Needing to visit the Isle of Man, I deliberately booked the overnight ferry from Heysham with the intention of spending three hours or so at Arnside Knott prior to my sailing.

Unfortunately, I chose to travel north on the Sunday. The rain was lashing down from Abergavenny all the way to Stafford. It then cleared up a little, but I got snarled up in a horrific traffic jam just south of Knutsford Services which was attributable to a very serious accident.

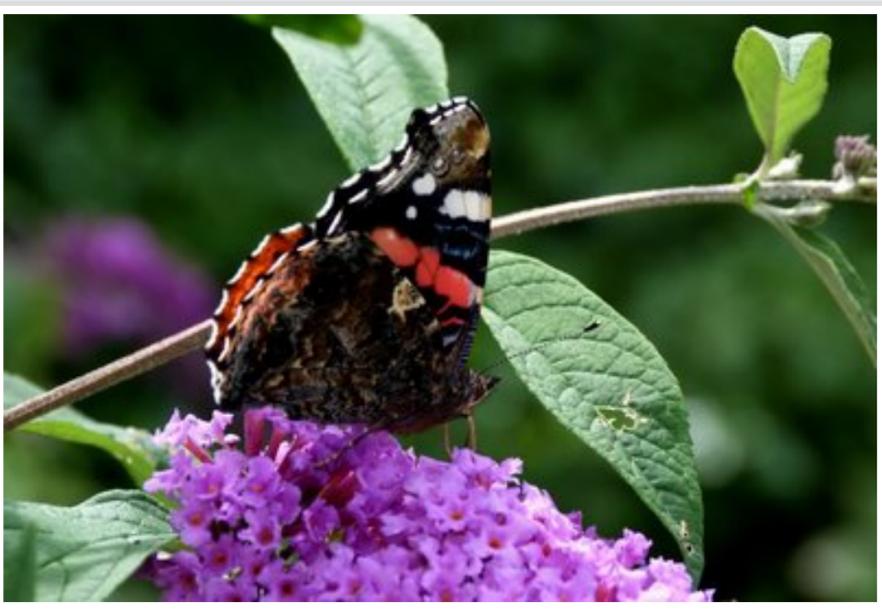
The result was that I arrived at Arnside at 6pm instead of 4pm and conditions were pretty grim - dull, cloudy, cool and spots of rain too.

Having made the effort though, I climbed up the hill and walked through the long grasses. I disturbed a couple of Meadow Browns and a Fritillary, but no Scotch Argus. However, walking through the ferns was a different matter, as four individuals took flight and came back down to earth fairly promptly. Obviously, there was no way they were going to open their wings under these conditions, but I was mightily pleased not to have completely wasted my time coming here:



I really must make an effort to justice to this site next year; preferably in decent weather.

By the following day, the weather had brightened up and my mum's buddleia in the Isle of Man once again proved a magnet for vanessids. I managed to get my best images of Red Admiral this year:



There was also a Painted Lady spending time in the garden:



**Re: David M**

by David M, 11-Aug-13 10:24 PM GMT

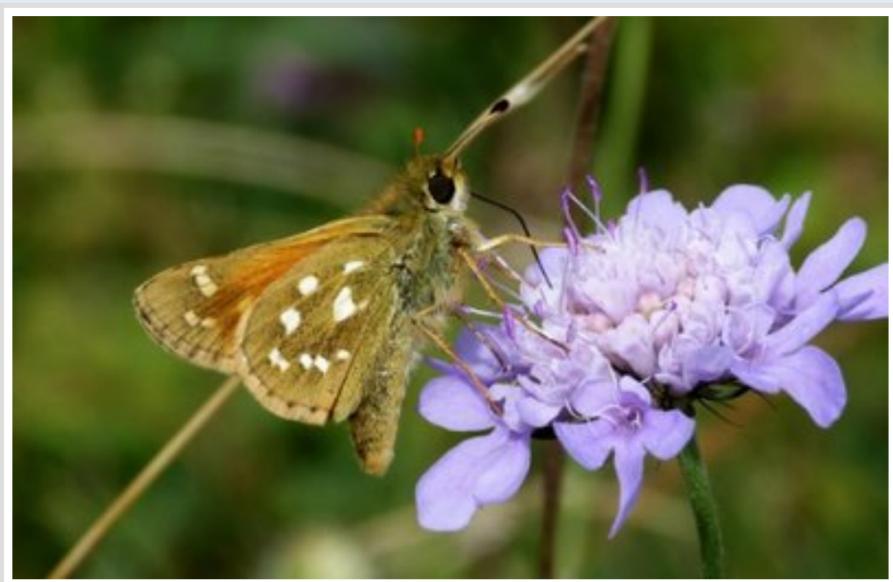
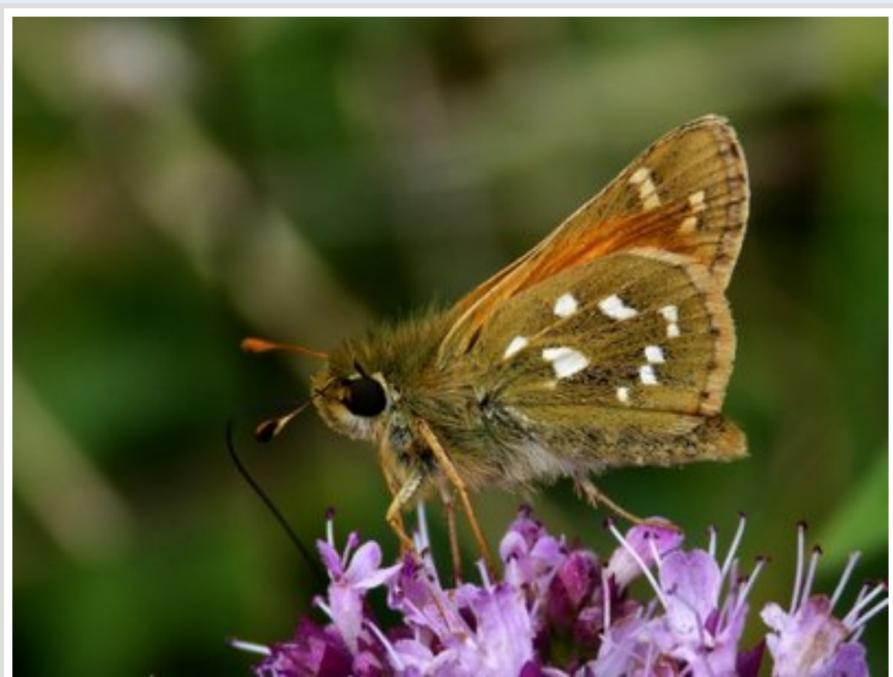
#### Thursday 8th August 2013 – Aston Rowant (Part 1)...

So much happened on this visit that it would be impossible to deal with it all in one post. Butterflies were about in the sort of numbers you normally only see on the continent.

It was a beautiful morning and I actually arrived at the site much earlier than anticipated. I left Abergavenny at 5.30am expecting to be there between 8.30 and 9am, but traffic was light and by 8am I was in the car park. A quick walk to the entrance and I soon realised I was the only soul present:



Of course, Silver Spotted Skippers are the main attraction here and within 5 minutes I'd seen my first. More soon followed and in all I reckon I spotted approaching 100 of these engaging little insects.





The majority seen were males, but there **were** a few females if you looked hard enough.



This species must have a proboscis longer than its body!!



I went to the meadow over the fence at the top of the site and even found half a dozen or so through there!

I spent from 8am to 1pm on site and that gave me sufficient time to concentrate on many of the other butterfly species found here.

### Re: David M

by David M, 12-Aug-13 08:13 PM GMT

"CJB" wrote:

Hi David,

I would love to know how many species you clocked.

CJB

21 is the answer to your question, CJB. Had I seen the Clouded Yellow reported that day along with Speckled Wood, Red Admiral and Large Skipper (individuals of which I'm SURE must have been on site that day) then I'd have beaten my record of 24 at a single site set only the previous weekend!! What made it special though was the sheer numbers of butterflies. I must have seen 2,000+ which is noteworthy in this country.

**Thursday 8th August 2013 – Aston Rowant (Part 2)...**

Silver Spotted Skippers had been seen, photographed and conquered well before 9am (although I kept adding to my memory card afterwards on those occasions I saw fit), so I was finally able to concentrate on the UK species I've probably ignored more than any over the past 4 years – Essex Skipper.

The first 3 or 4 I checked were Small Skippers, but I then struck gold with my first Essex and plenty more followed. Here's a male:



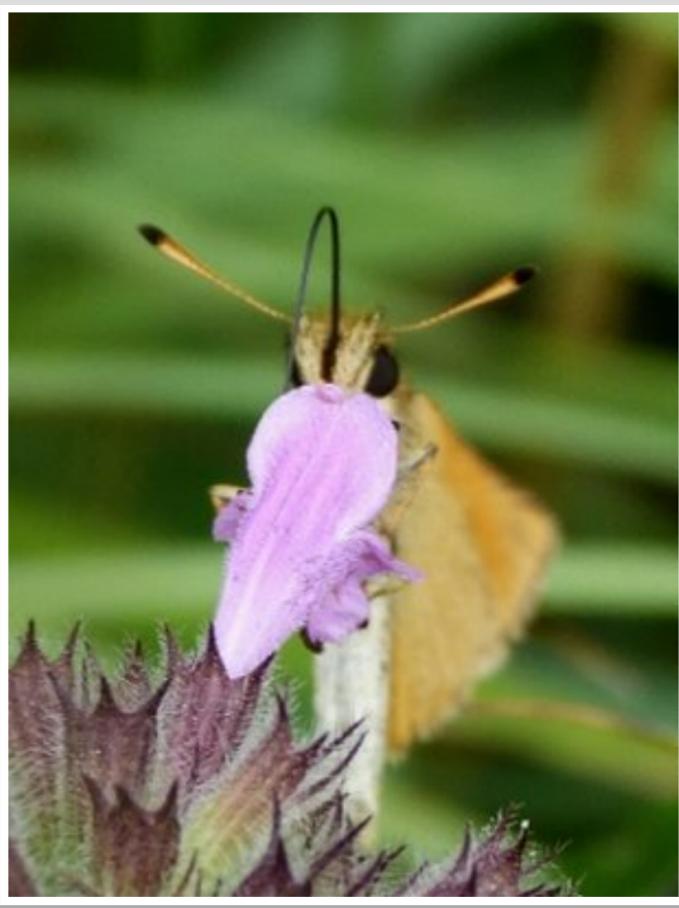
Females were encountered too....



...along with their undersides:



And finally, a little bit of cheeky self-indulgence:



Once you get a proper underview of *lineola* there can be absolutely no doubt. The antennal tips are glaringly black, and the "dipped in inkpads" description is as apt as any I've seen. In short, if you position yourself to see the butterfly from this angle and you're still not sure, then it's NOT Essex.

## Re: David M

by David M, 13-Aug-13 06:41 PM GMT

Cheers, Wurzel. Males are easier than females because you've got the sex brands, but as you say, the knees often must be employed to get the antennae shots!

### Thursday 8th August 2013 - Aston Rowant (Part 3)...

If it were possible to know how many Chalkhill Blues were present on this site last Thursday then I guess we'd be looking at 4,000+. You couldn't walk 5 yards without disturbing them, and a glance at practically any conglomeration of flowers would furnish several more. They looked particularly beautiful in the weak morning sun:



Same individual's underside:



Females were also extremely conspicuous:



There were quite a few Common Blues flying, and just as many Brown Argus, including this 'mint' specimen:



The shrub line at the bottom of the bank yielded about two dozen Brimstones, both males and females, which were strongly drawn to this dead-nettle type plant:



Along with the butterflies, I was also treated to the sight of two soaring Red Kites (although these are commonplace in the Swansea area so I didn't get too excited!)

Quite a few enthusiasts visited in the 5 hours I was there and I'm sure they all had as great a time as I did. This is now probably an annual 'must visit' place for me.



## Re: David M

by David M, 13-Aug-13 09:56 PM GMT

Thanks, Neil. The weak sunshine of early morning certainly helps photography. I must endeavour to make better use of these conditions next year, even if that means 4am starts!!

### Tuesday 13th August 2013 - Plenty of butterflies wherever you go....

With a poor weather forecast for most of the remainder of the week, I finished work early at 3.15pm and was on my way up Kilvey Hill by quarter to four.

Graylings were the most common species (about 50 seen), with the first one encountered just beyond the cemetery wall:



Interestingly, female Wall Browns were encountered in the cemetery whereas males were not. I saw 7 in all, 4 females (all in the cemetery) and 3 males on Kilvey Hill itself, leading me to conclude that the females use the cemetery's long grasses to lay their eggs in. They also like to bask on the stonework of the graves:



There are quite a few buddleia bushes growing in the quarry area on the south facing slopes. It was here that I encountered two Painted Ladies:



On the way back down, I saw a Grayling become temporarily entangled in a spider's web. I prepared myself to free her, but she was strong enough to escape without any assistance. As soon as she'd done so, she was courted by a male, and once again I observed the wing-flicking between the two. At one point, both had their wings open, but for reasons unknown the male lost interest and flew away. However, I **did** have the foresight to set my camera to sport mode and managed to capture the female with her wings spread:



Given the events of the last few days, I was astonished not to see a single Peacock. However, the species tally was still respectable even without them:

Grayling 40-60

Meadow Brown 30-40

Common Blue 20–30  
Small White 10–20  
Green Veined White 10–20  
Large White 10–20  
Hedge Brown 10–20  
Speckled Wood 10–15  
Wall Brown 7  
Red Admiral 6  
Painted Lady 3  
Small Tortoiseshell 2  
Small Heath 2  
Brown Argus 2  
Comma 1

## Re: David M

by David M, 18-Aug-13 05:48 PM GMT

### Sunday 18th August 2013 - Typical!.....

Two weeks ago I visited the Alun Valley site in Glamorgan and saw a staggering 24 different butterfly species. I commented back then that the only ones I could possibly have added that day were Brimstone, Wall Brown and Painted Lady.

Guess what? All three of those were seen today, but sadly 6 species I saw a fortnight ago were NOT spotted, leaving the overall tally at 21 (still very pleasing, though):

Meadow Brown 100–150  
Common Blue 50–70  
Green Veined White 40–60  
Hedge Brown 30–40  
Speckled Wood 20–30  
Small Heath 20–30  
Large White 15–25  
Small White 10–20  
Brown Argus 10–20  
Wall Brown 9  
Grayling 8  
Red Admiral 6  
High Brown Fritillary 6  
Small Tortoiseshell 4  
Painted Lady 3  
Silver Washed Fritillary 3  
Peacock 2  
Small Copper 2  
Comma 2  
Brimstone 1  
White Letter Hairstreak 1

It was a blustery morning, and I think most butterflies had decamped to the quarry to take shelter. It was quite cloudy when I got down there but much more becalmed than on the exposed down.

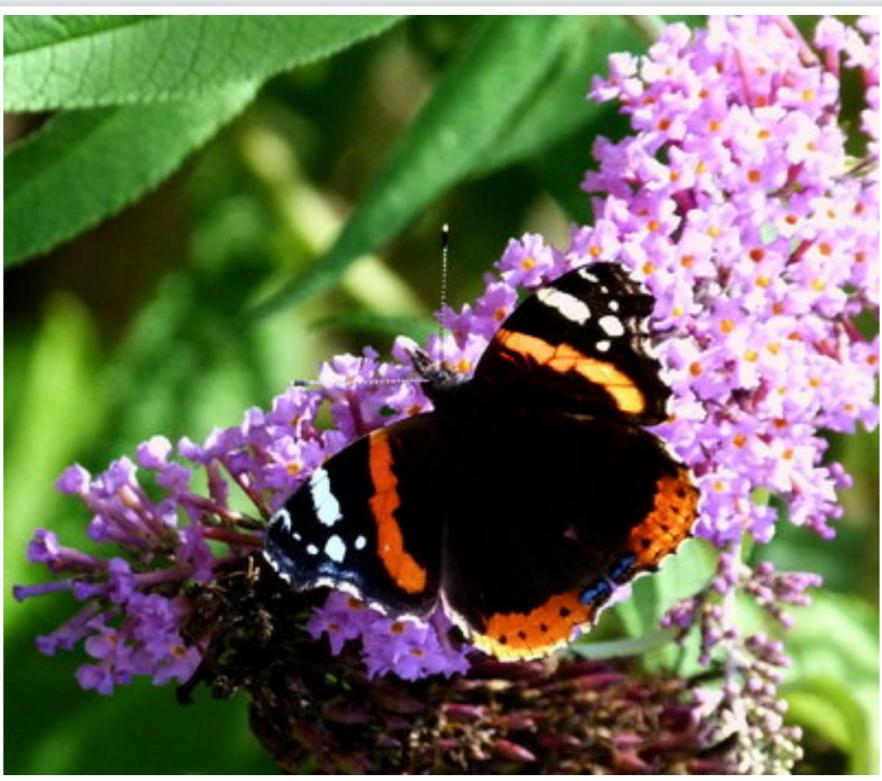


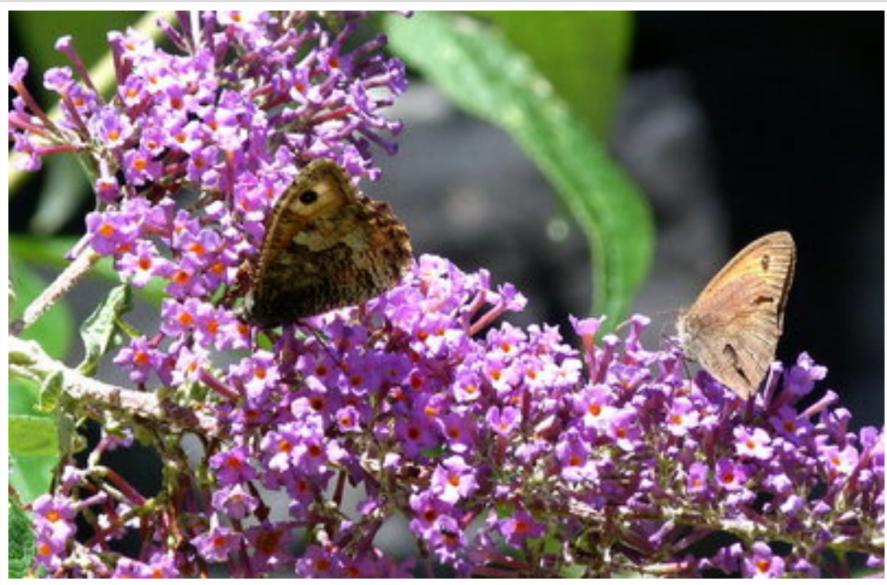
As forecast though, the sun came out and the ground started to shimmer with Blues and Meadow Browns. Before long, it was a game of "who's up for buddleia then?"

All three Whites along with Meadow Browns were quick to get in, along with Red Admirals, Painted Ladies, Small Tortoiseshells, Commas and Peacocks.

Five High Brown Fritillaries were still at the table too, and two Silver Washed popped in for a feed as well.

A couple of Graylings were keen to try their luck, and I even saw Hedge Brown, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Wall Brown and a male Brimstone nectaring on the copious blooms in this incredibly protected location. In fact, the only species I saw today that didn't partake (even briefly) of the buddleias were Small Copper, Speckled Wood, Small Heath and White Letter Hairstreak.







As I went to leave the quarry I saw this bedraggled High Brown Fritillary which is the most ragged I've ever observed (could still fly though!)



In the gun club meadow, this White Letter Hairstreak was almost unrecognisable



9 Wall Browns is the most I've ever seen on this site. It took a while before I saw my first, but there were 7 spotted in the quarry, a further one on the way back out up the hill to the down itself (which is where I've seen odd ones turn up quite regularly), but of most interest was finding a female some distance away near the actual gated entrance to the site. She was happily feeding away on the brambles without a care.



This will be my last visit to this glorious site this year, and if we add the Orange Tips, Dingy Skippers and Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries seen here in spring, that means I've notched up 30 species at one site in a single year, which is certainly good going and a sign of how important this place is to butterfly conservation.

## Re: David M

by David M, 22-Aug-13 08:09 PM GMT

### "nfreem" wrote:

Those High Browns seem to hanging in there for a long time, are they normally around until now or is this unusual for them?

Have to confess, Neil, that I've never visited so late in August so I can't commit to a definitive answer. I was certainly surprised to see them though, and I daresay one or two may linger into September this year!

### "Wurzel" wrote:

I'll have to PM you next year for some inside information and then try to coincide a trip there with one to the Outlaws

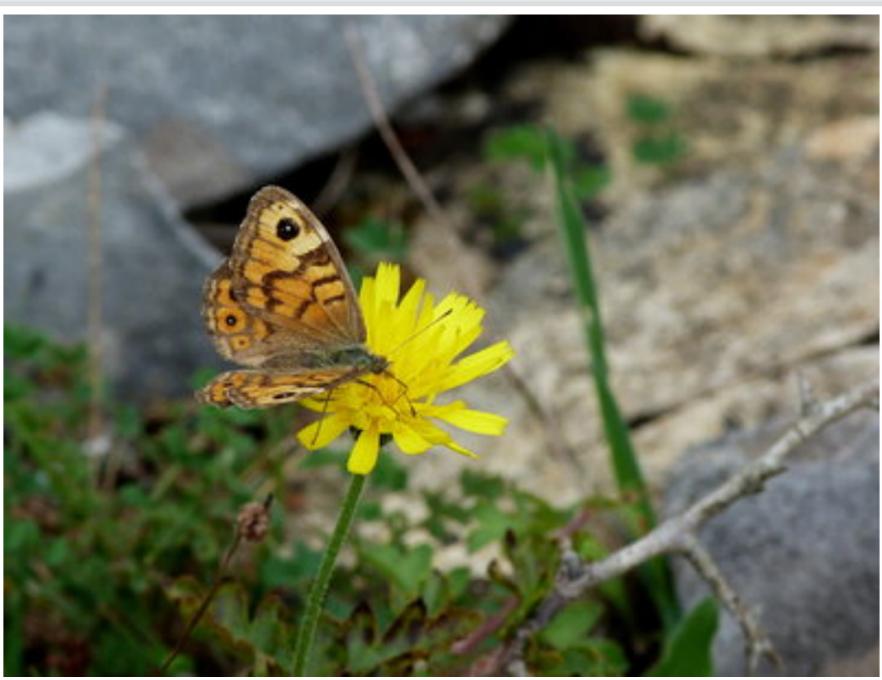
You won't regret it, Wurzel. 24 species in a day would be notable even in YOUR part of the UK.

### Thursday 22nd August 2013 - Crazy 45 minutes....

I arrived at West Williamston in Pembrokeshire at 1040 this morning given that the forecast from noon onwards was remarkably favourable - 22c, cloudless skies and barely a breath of wind.

The forecast was worryingly inaccurate though. When I first arrived there were breaks in the cloud but it got considerably more overcast and at 12.30pm I was sat in the 'glade' wondering whether I'd had a wasted journey.

During this inclement period I visited the limestone ridge near the western end of the site and saw 2 male and 1 female Wall Brown, along with a handful of Common Blues:



Conditions weren't good on the way back though:



At 12.40pm however, the skies (as forecast) started to clear, and by 1pm the clouds had virtually evaporated. There was no Brown Hairstreak activity in the 'glade', so I ventured immediately outside onto the foreshore as it was here last year that I counted eight eggs on a single sucker; what's more, I could remember where that sucker was located.

Within 2 minutes I saw my first BH:



As I was tracking her, another BH entered my field of vision. This one was undoubtedly the largest *betulae* I've ever seen:



She had some wing damage though; not torn, but some kind of fluid has come into contact with her wings at some point:



Amazingly, within this 20m square area I saw 2 more different individuals, meaning that 4 female Brown Hairstreaks were within relatively close proximity to one another and I had to decide which one to pursue. What a dilemma!! Here's the 'hotspot' for those that know this site:



I snatched a quick upperside image of one of the first two I'd seen before going after the others:



This specimen was the most attractive of the four I saw:



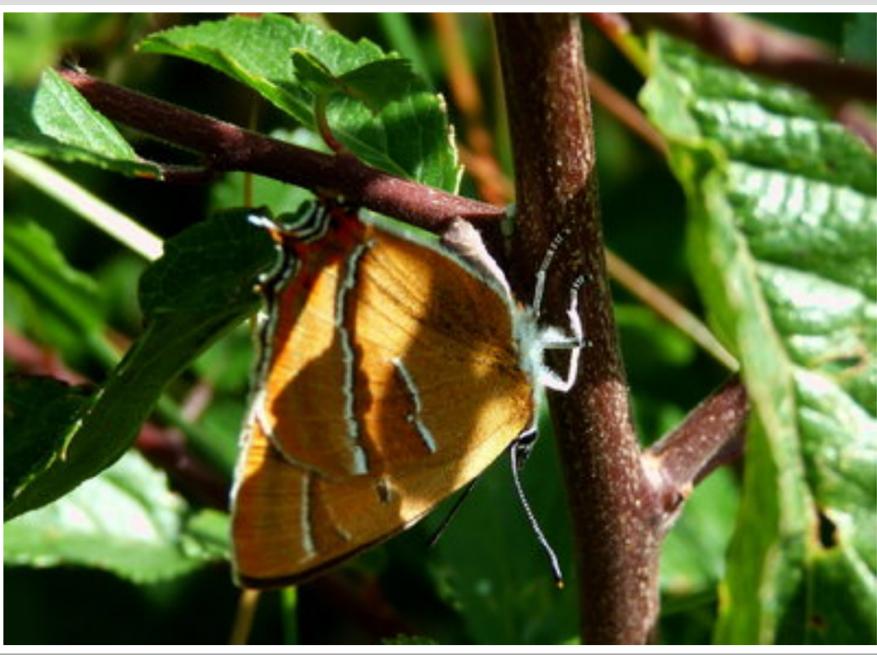
Practically pristine uppers as well:



Off she went to lay some eggs:



I could see her bending her abdomen, but it wasn't until she moved away that I could see that the egg she'd just laid was right next to an existing egg presumably laid by another female. There's a noticeable difference in appearance between the earlier egg and the one freshly deposited:



So, all this activity occurred between 1pm and 1.45pm, after which I thought I'd better stake out a few other areas further along the shoreline. This realised nothing though, and by the time I got back, the four Hairstreaks active just half an hour earlier had seemingly disappeared.

I spent a further hour on site but there were no more BHs. However, I did see 14 other species:

Large, Small, Green Veined White, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Comma, Holly Blue, Common Blue, Meadow Brown, Hedge Brown, Speckled Wood, Wall Brown and Silver Washed Fritillary.

The temperature hit 25c at Cross Hands on the way back. This is quite unusual for this part of Wales, and with a decent few days ahead weatherwise, one hopes that plenty of eggs will be laid for the next generations.

## Re: David M

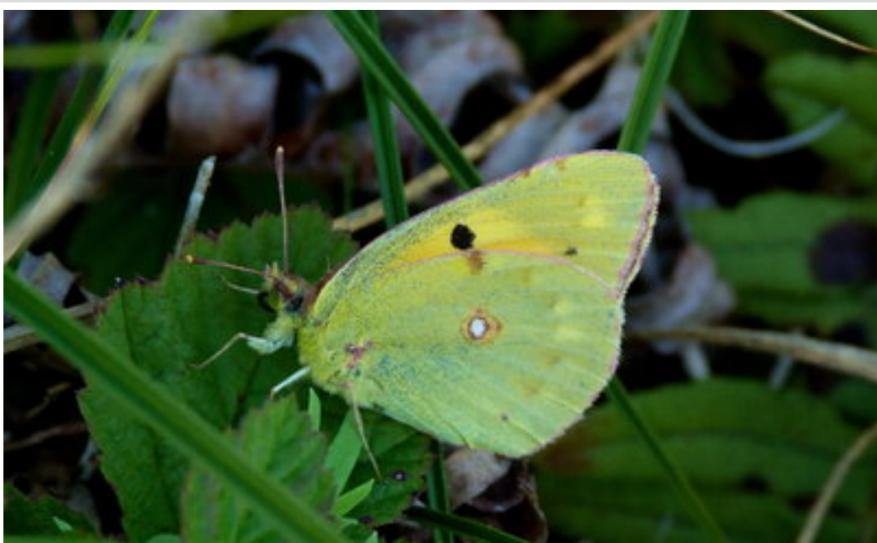
by David M, 24-Aug-13 02:52 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments, all. Much appreciated.

### Saturday 24th August 2013 – Clouded Yellow reaches Swansea....

I suppose it HAD to happen eventually. This morning, just prior to midday, I was patrolling my 'patch' at Crymlyn Burrows when I noticed the unmistakable hue of a Clouded Yellow fluttering low in the grassy dunes.

She was very flighty and I had to put quite a bit of effort in to keep up with her and get any satisfactory images.



She led me about 200 metres from where I'd first seen her, seemingly happy to allow the wind to dictate her direction. She DID settle for 3 or 4 minutes eventually, long enough for her to attract an admirer:



At one point she looked to be laying an egg on vetch. This was the plant in question:



Coincidentally, there's a larva on the above photo. Here's a closer view (and if anyone knows what species it is I'd be most grateful):



Meadow Browns are still about in huge numbers, but Hedge Browns are very thin on the ground. Common Blues and Small Heaths aplenty, but Whites seem to be on the wane (although I still saw double figure numbers of Small and GV). Speckled Woods, Brown Arguses and Small Coppers seen, but no vanessids at all, strangely.

I don't normally bother photographing Small Heaths, but this one was nice and fresh and had a lovely array of underside hindwing spots:



## Re: David M

by David M, 28-Aug-13 04:04 PM GMT

### Monday 26th August 2013 – Best day ever? Probably.....

It's hard to imagine better conditions during late August in coastal Pembrokeshire. Sunny, blue skies, 22c temperatures and practically no wind. Almost unheard of!

Fellow UKBer Willrow (Bill) picked me up in Swansea at 7.45am and by five to nine we were in the car park at West Williamston.

An early pleasant surprise was the arrival of another UKBer, Michaeljf, who I hadn't seen for a couple of years.

A not to be missed opportunity to explore the east facing horse's field was duly grabbed. Usually, the fence is electrified to keep the horse in, but it is currently grazing in the fields leading to the foreshore, and the area is replete with young blackthorn as well as mature Ash trees. What's more, the field was bathed in the morning sunlight.

Bill and I were scrutinising the higher reaches of these Ash trees when we saw what we first thought were Brown Hairstreaks. They appeared very pale though, and I tried to keep track of where they were settling in the canopy so I could attempt to get one on film and zoom in.

Eventually, I managed to do this and was thrilled to see that it was a Purple Hairstreak, a species not associated with this site (there are hardly any Oaks). I'd been told that one or two had been seen in the preceding few days; in fact, I'm confident I saw one myself the previous Wednesday, but when it's a question of making a bold statement about a new species on a site, you really need evidence. Thankfully, although shockingly poor given I was 50 feet from the butterfly, the image below provides just that:



At this point, the lady who undertakes much of the recording work on the site came along, and the three of us moved further down to the Ash trees in the most sheltered spot. More Hairstreak activity was observed, though I'd become wary of making ID decisions without photographic evidence. I managed to get another fairly blurred shot which was notable for me, since it's the first time I've ever undeniably seen a male Brown Hairstreak at this site (and I've been coming here for 4 years!)



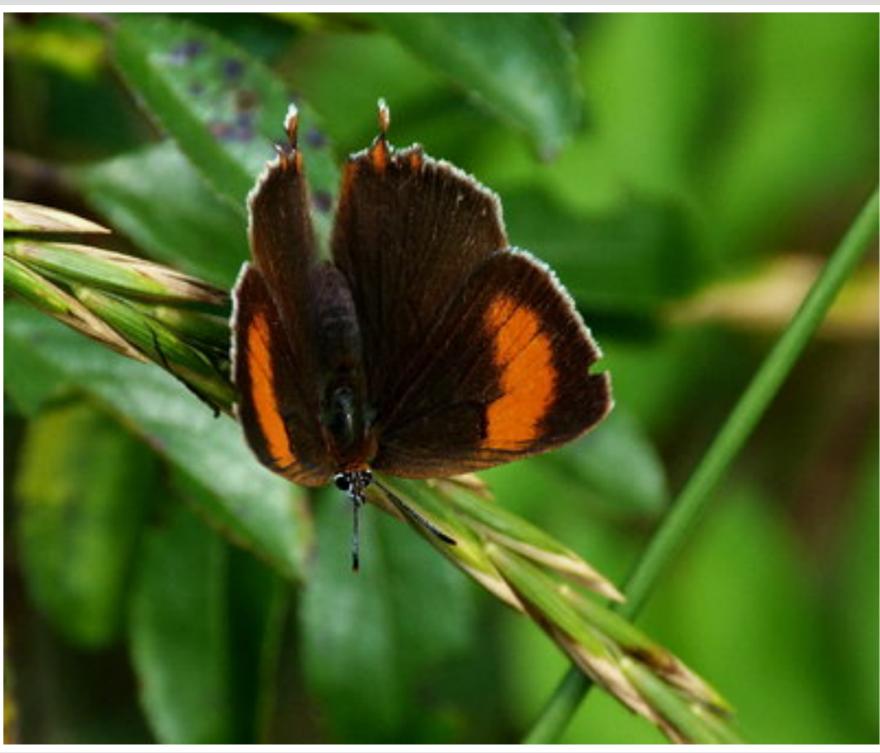
After about an hour in this area (and a sighting of a pair of Peregrine Falcons overhead), Bill and I moved on to the first field leading down to the foreshore, where all 3 Whites, Hedge Browns, a Comma and a Silver Washed Fritillary were spotted:



Once we'd arrived at the 'glade', which has historically been a hotspot for laying females, we waited about an hour without any further sightings. I even spent time just outside the glade where I'd seen 4 females simultaneously a few days earlier. Eventually, I moved on and managed to spot one about 150m further up the shoreline:



Posing upside down:



Shame about the 'nick' along the forewing edges, as she was in nice condition otherwise:



By now it was about midday, and Bill and I walked back towards the glade. Suddenly, there was a flurry of activity, with 5 different female *betulae* seen in just 12 minutes! Once again, there was a preference for the suckers immediately to the left and right of the glade:



Such were the numbers, I only got the chance to photograph one of the individuals:



Bill then found another in the glade itself and Michael spotted one as we made our way west again along the foreshore. By this time our tally was 8 females, but as is common with them, the activity suddenly stopped and no more were seen after about 1pm.

As Bill and I moved towards the limestone ridge at the western edge of the site, a Clouded Yellow fluttered by us in the opposite direction, whilst a Painted Lady was observed on the copious Sea Aster blooms. The limestone ridge yielded a few male Wall Browns and a couple of Holly Blues were seen on bramble.

We stayed till 3pm, although by this time there were hardly any butterflies active at all; Speckled Woods were the only ones with any energy left after an abnormally hot day in this part of Wales!

Amazingly, we didn't see a single Meadow Brown, but in spite of that 18 species were recorded, which would be noteworthy practically anywhere in the UK at this time of year.

This is my favourite British butterfly and West Williamston is probably my favourite site. The day itself was also almost perfect. I'm left wondering whether the zenith has now been attained! 😊

## Re: David M

by David M, 14-Sep-13 03:54 PM GMT

### Saturday 14th September 2013 - Clouded Yellow reaches Pontardawe!!

Whatever next? Big shock early this afternoon whilst out walking along the banks of the river in Pontardawe when I suddenly spotted a male Clouded Yellow fluttering along the path. Thankfully, he settled fairly readily on some ragwort and I was able to spend a delightful couple of minutes observing him before he flew across to the other side of the river:



He was one of ten different species seen on a mild, generally sunny afternoon where temperatures reached about 15c.

There are numerous buddleia bushes growing along the banks of both the river Tawe and the local canal. This stretch was extremely popular with our winged friends:

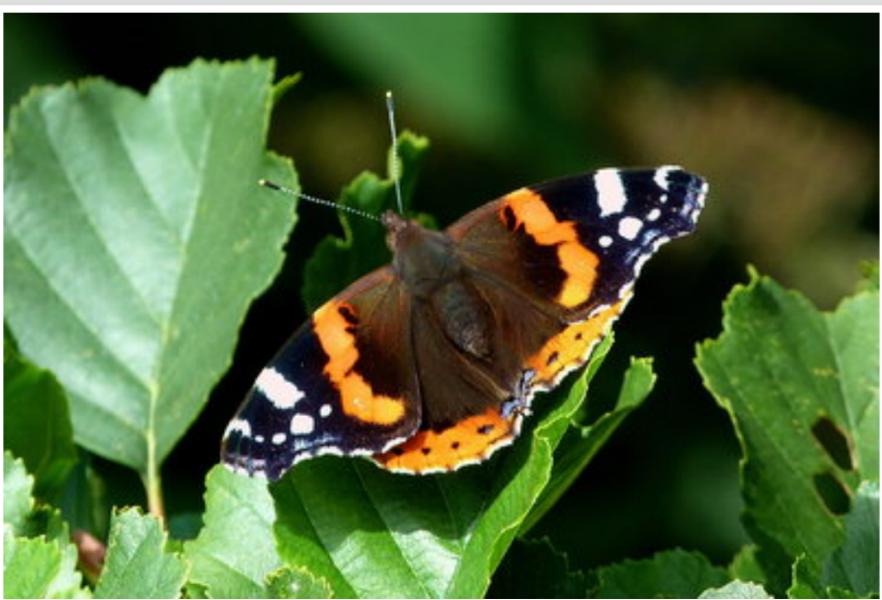


Small Tortoiseshells continue to be the commonest species. I saw about 60 in the two and a half hours I was out:



Small Whites weren't far behind (about 50 seen), though I didn't see any Green Veined Whites. Only two Large Whites were spotted which was surprising, but I did see two male Brimstones.

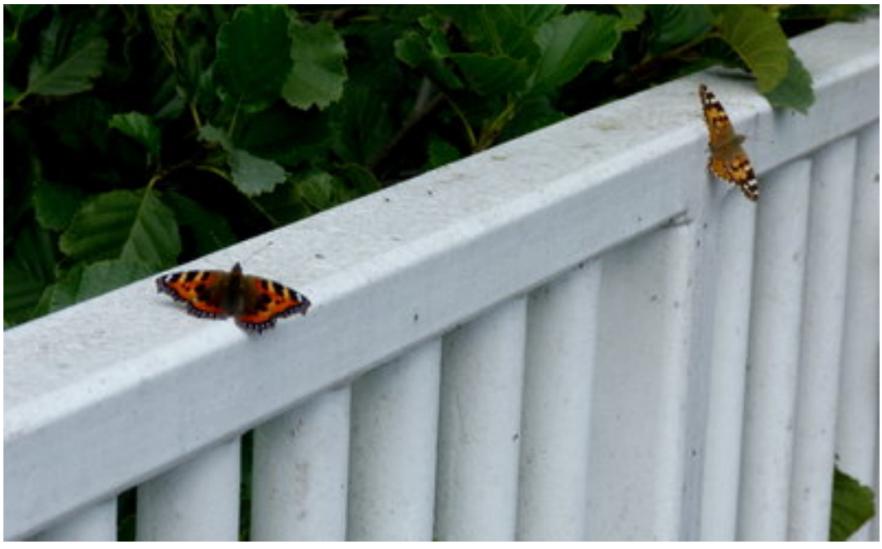
Peacocks all gone to sleep it seems, and no Commas today either. However, Speckled Woods were about in decent numbers along with Red Admirals, with about 15 of each seen:



The other three species seen were Painted Lady (2), a Common Blue (tatty male) and a Small Copper (in excellent condition):



The bridge over the Tawe by Tesco is an excellent vantage point, because you're high up looking down on all these buddleia bushes. There was lots of activity in this sheltered spot, with the white railings being frequently used when the sun went behind the clouds:



This smallish dragonfly also basked on the rail. Anyone got an ID?:



This Painted Lady looks full of eggs. Shame that laying them will be to no avail:



## Re: David M

by David M, 24-Sep-13 05:33 PM GMT

### Tuesday 24th September 2013 - Busy *betulae*...

The problem with the Brown Hairstreak site in West Williamston, Pembrokeshire, is that you can scarcely ever rely on the weather. It was lovely when I left Swansea at 10am today but the clouds descended by the time I hit Carmarthen and at WW itself conditions were heavily overcast.

So, no chance of seeing any adult BHs, but given the healthy numbers a few weeks ago, I felt certain I'd find a few eggs.

Find them I did. **94 of them** in just over an hour!

Didn't quite equal last year's record of 7 on a single blackthorn sucker, but I found one with 6 on it and three more hosting 5.

I also found two batches of three laid next to one another:



Surprisingly, there WERE a handful of butterflies seen: 5 Speckled Woods, 2 Green Veined Whites, a Small White and a Red Admiral.



The sky brightened up again once I reached Carmarthen on my way back, so I did a little detour to the Botanic Gardens near Cross Hands. Brown Hairstreaks have been recorded here too but I don't know where exactly, and although I found plenty of blackthorn I didn't find a single egg.

Within the gardens there were butterflies in considerable numbers for the time of year, no doubt attracted by the amazing variety of cultivated, exotic flowers. I must have seen 30+ Small Tortoiseshells, along with approaching double figure Red Admirals:



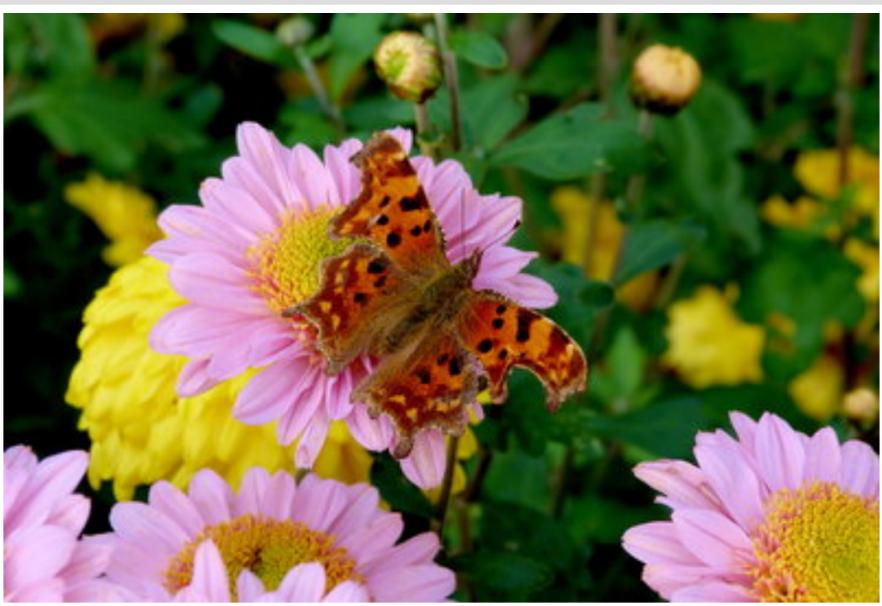
There were plenty of Small Whites too:



Another couple of Green Veined were seen:



Even a Comma, looking quite content on this spectacular flower:



Re: David M

**Saturday 5th October 2013 - Frustration...then expectations exceeded...**

All weather forecasts promised sunshine in Pembroke for today. Swansea was glorious at 8 o'clock this morning, and I even checked the live Tenby webcam and it was sunny there too!

Imagine my frustration then at 10am when, just 4 miles from my destination, the blue skies were abruptly replaced by a high blanket of stubborn cloud.

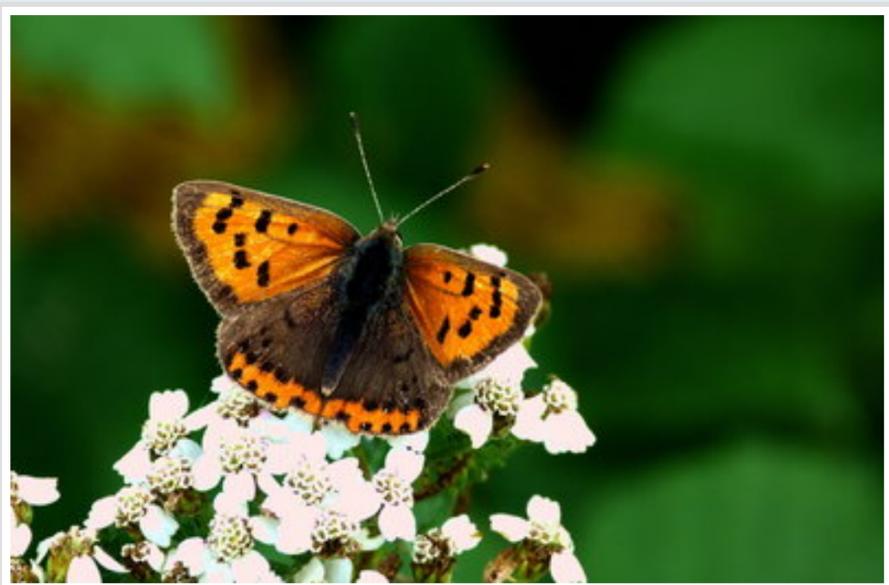
Nonetheless, I spent a very enjoyable three and a half hours at the West Williamston site even though there were no more than 20 minutes of sunshine in that entire period.

I eclipsed the 94 Brown Hairstreak eggs found last time I visited - 113 located today as I made my way along the foreshore, so the females have certainly been busy this year. Something new for me was finding **four** eggs laid next to one another:

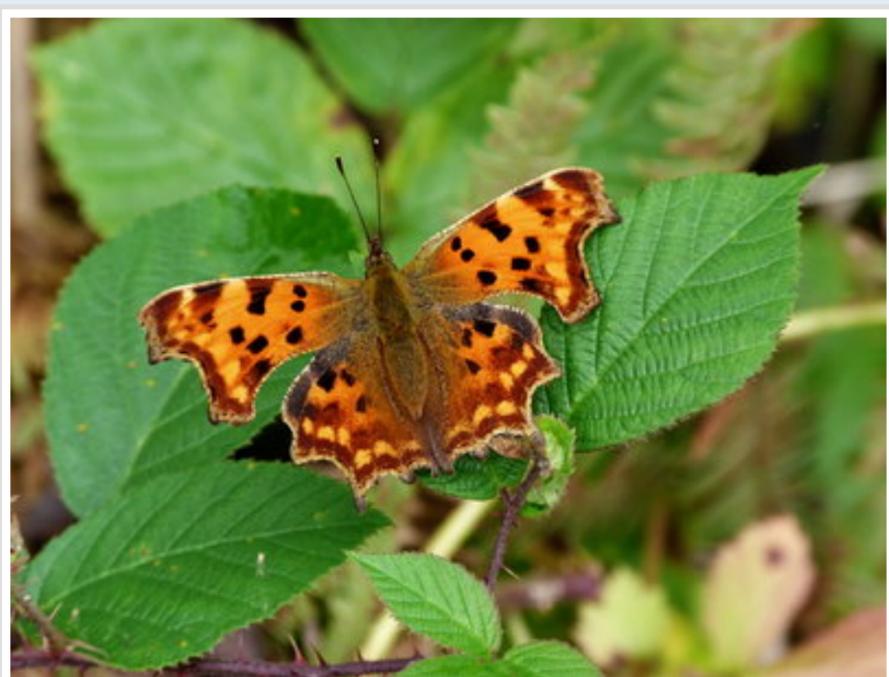


Butterflies still about, though numbers have declined markedly in the last week or so in spite of continued mild temperatures for the time of year.

This Small Copper was on this flower when I arrived at the site and was on the same bloom when I left!



There were two Commas in the 'glade'. One flew onto the blackberries above my head but the other remained in situ low to the ground and was very approachable:



Lots of other critters about. This spider was particularly resplendent:



I spent a fair while marvelling at a pair of Red Kites as well as a pair of Buzzards circling overhead:



However, the clouds were starting to thicken so at 1pm I headed back to exit the foreshore:



I walked close to the shrub line and as I was approaching the entrance to the new 'glade' something caught my eye – a Brown Hairstreak.



She crawled down the blackthorn branch for about 30 seconds before taking to the air and alighting nearby on a convolvulus leaf:



Rather frustratingly, she was just above head height, so I couldn't get into a proper position to take a photo worthy of the name, but I was absolutely delighted to see her. I suspected there'd still be a few about but I was **really** surprised to see one active in overcast conditions and 15c temperatures.



I also saw a few other species (keeping tally was easy given the low numbers). Totals seen:

Speckled Wood 8  
Red Admiral 6  
Small Copper 5  
Comma 3  
Small White 2  
Small Tortoiseshell 1  
Brown Hairstreak 1

I'm pretty sure I've never seen 7 species at a single site in October before, so overall it was a better than expected day.

## Re: David M

by David M, 06-Oct-13 05:17 PM GMT

Indeed, Wurzel. That same literature also states that sunshine is a critical factor too. Trust me, that Brown Hairstreak saw practically no sunshine at all.

Anyway, today was meant to be cloudy but turned out sunny! 😊

I duly went for an hour and a half's walk around the canal and was delighted to see plenty of butterflies still about.

The buddleia blooms are starting to seriously diminish, although certain bushes are still ridiculously purple for the time of year:



Small Tortoiseshells were the commonest species, with 20 seen, including these three on ragwort:



Red Admirals looked to be just shading Commas, with 11 seen, but on my way back I passed a flowering ivy and there were FIVE Commas within 3 metres of one another (meaning they took 2nd place with 13). The best I could do was to get two in shot:



10 Small Whites observed, whilst two of each of Speckled Wood & Small Copper were encountered, including this very fresh looking specimen:



I notice much colder weather is forecast from Thursday, so seeing 50+ butterflies in 90 minutes ain't going to happen again till April 2014 at the earliest!

### Re: David M

by Maximus, 06-Oct-13 06:09 PM GMT

Nice numbers of butterflies seen David especially the Small Tortoiseshells, the Brown Hairstreak was quite a find too. The number of Brown Hairstreak eggs you counted bodes well for next year 😊

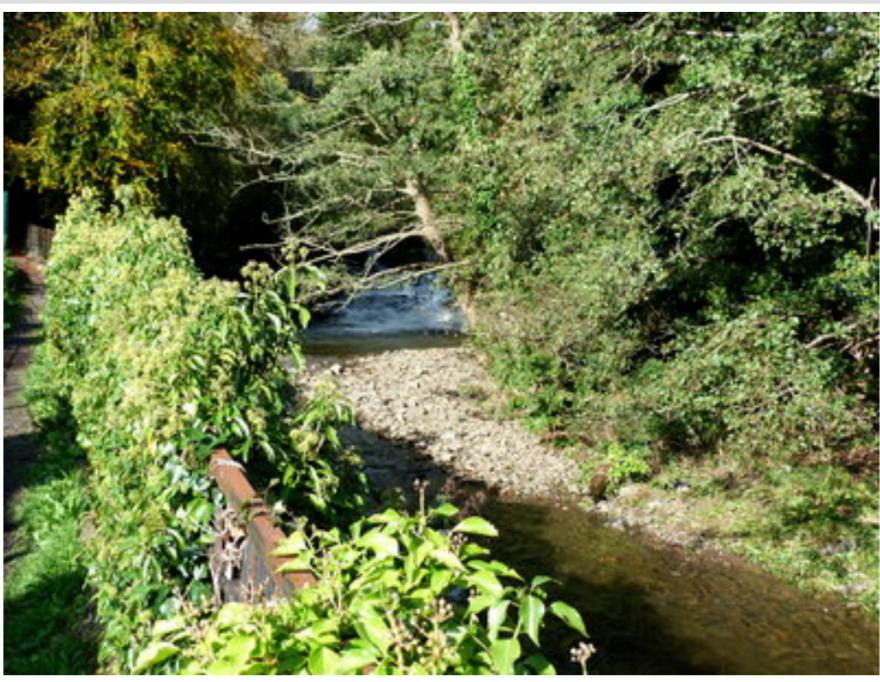
Mike

### Re: David M

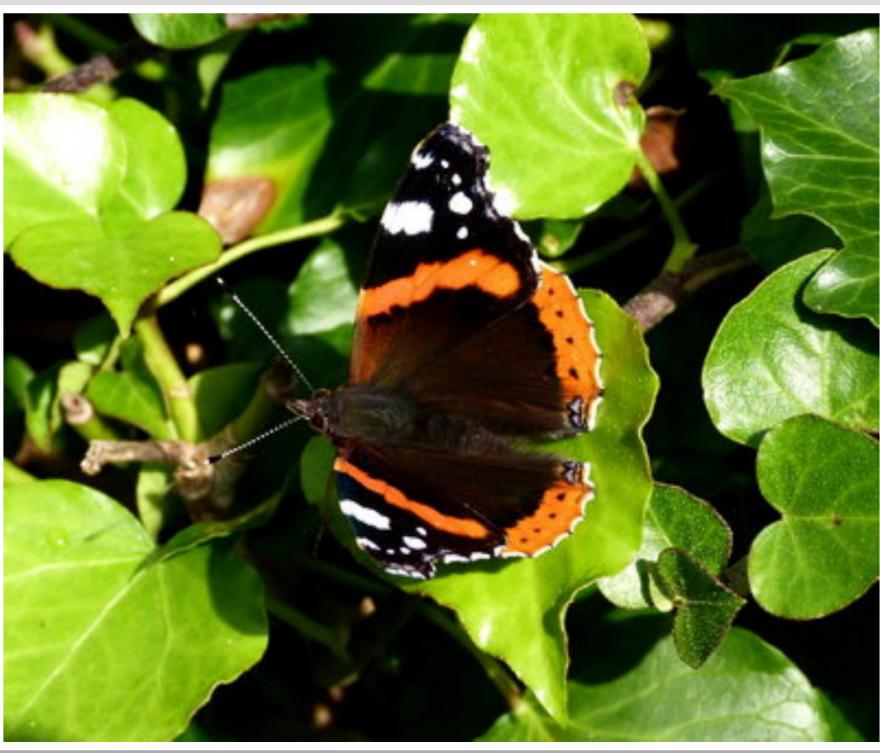
by David M, 24-Oct-13 02:22 PM GMT

#### Thursday 24th October - Plenty of activity in the right places....

The sheltered footpath which leads from the High Street to Cwm Clydach is the best late season butterfly spot I know of. It's south facing, well sheltered by mature trees and has flowering ivy growing over much of the railings:



By 11.10am, the temperature had risen to 13c and these ivy flowers must have attracted most of the butterflies still in the area. I counted 7 Red Admirals and 1 Comma in my field of vision at one point. I saw 3 more RAs in the clearing further up the path and when I returned I counted 9 Red Admirals on the ivy, making at least 12 seen.



There are 4 RAs along with the Comma in this image:



The ivy flowers had pretty much withered away by the end of October last year, but this year they look to be in their prime at the current time, meaning that this little spot could well throw up the odd butterfly until mid-November!

I'll be back to check.

## Re: David M

by David M, 03-Nov-13 12:34 PM GMT

### Sunday 3rd November 2013 - Last butterfly?.....

9.40 on the morning of 3rd November doesn't immediately appear conducive to butterfly spotting, yet spot one I did down at Forge Fach, the southernmost part of Cwm Clydach.

I'd been watching the flies and wasps buzzing about the flowering ivy for 5 minutes or so when a single Red Admiral suddenly appeared:



It was remarkably skittish; failing to settle for anything more than a handful of seconds at a time, making an upperside photograph near impossible:



I remain confident that there may be a few more sightings still to come as the week's weather, although blustery and often wet, won't see any night frosts round my neck of the woods, meaning that if the sun comes out the butterflies might be tempted to reappear.

**Re: David M**

by Butterfliesaurus rex, 03-Nov-13 01:08 PM GMT

This is the season that just keeps on giving, it's so nice to be seeing some Butterflies into November. Keep em coming David 😊  
If the weather in March is good we'll only have 5 months to wait.

BW's

B'saurus

**Re: David M**

by David M, 03-Nov-13 08:48 PM GMT

**"Hoggers" wrote:**

Congratulations on your November Red Admiral, David.

I spent some time yesterday watching flies and wasps on my Ivy when a Speckled Wood appeared. I was thrilled. Seeing it in that company just emphasised how special Butterflies are!

Best wishes

Hoggers.

A Speckled Wood in November is an amazing sighting, Hoggers. I suspect Small Coppers might also still be on the wing down your way.

**Re: David M**

by Neil Freeman, 03-Nov-13 09:22 PM GMT

Hi David,

Congratulations on your November Red Admiral, still none for me although I believe a couple were seen not far away last week.

Already had a couple of frosts here last week, just light and patchy so far but another couple of cold nights ahead forecast for us. It has been very blustery here lately and the only things I have seen flying lately are the leaves off the trees.

Speckled Woods are often amongst the last butterflies that I see, usually hanging on in my garden until late October. I am not surprised to see the odd one still being seen into November.

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: David M

by David M, 10-Nov-13 07:11 PM GMT

### Sunday 10th November 2013 - Curtain finally coming down...

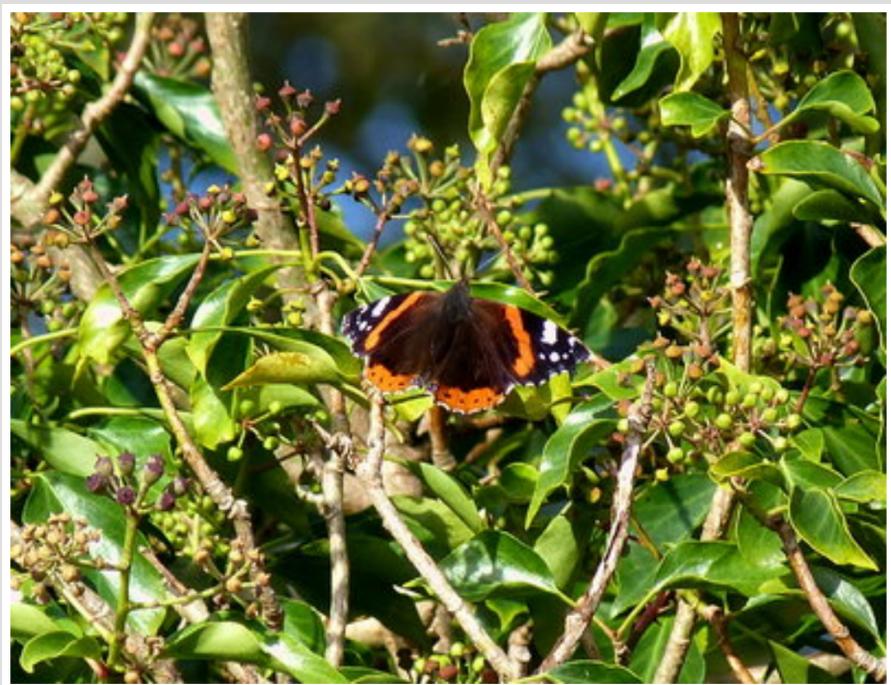
At last! A sunny day with no wind.

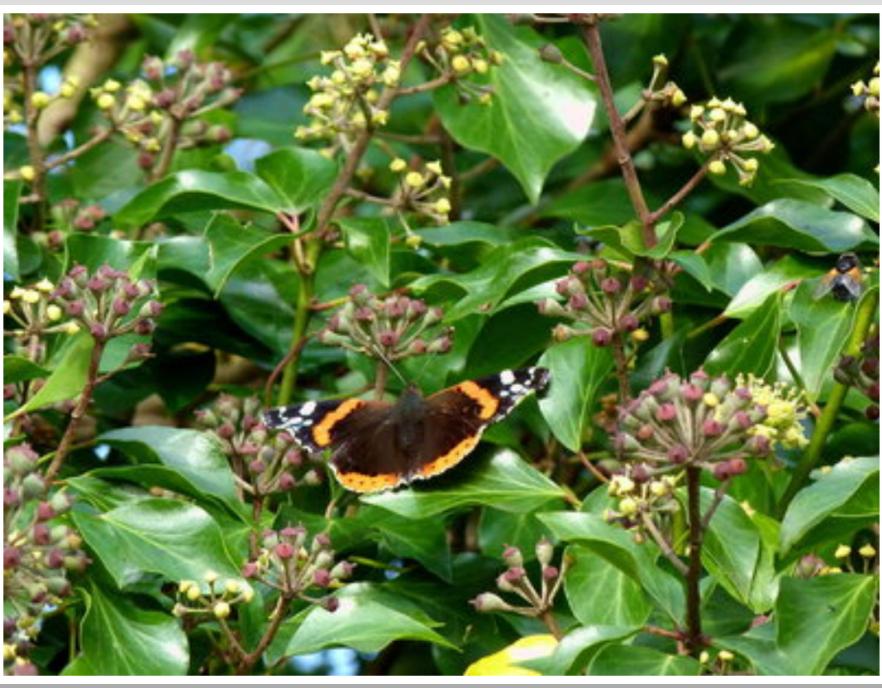
The temperature was 9c at best but I thought I'd make the most of conditions and visit the National Botanic Gardens near Cross Hands.

I figured there'd be far more nectar sources here than anywhere else, giving me a decent chance of a butterfly or two.

Well, I actually saw **four**, all Red Admirals, but they were feeding from one of our native plants - ivy.

After checking out the walled gardens I went onto the pathway directly behind which has a view towards the glass dome housing exotic flora from around the world:





There are very few flowers still in bloom even at this unique location, and I expect the ivy too will have all but finished by next weekend, so I reckon today's quartet will be my final butterfly sightings of 2013 (though given the way things have panned out this year I wouldn't be surprised to be proved wrong).

## Re: David M

by David M, 13-Nov-13 05:57 PM GMT

### "nfreem" wrote:

You have certainly done well with the Red Admirals this Autumn 😊

I have been checking back through my notes and I reckon that I have only seen 10 all year, the last one for me was early September. I mustn't grumble though I saw hundreds last year and have seen plenty of other species this year

Yes, it's odd isn't it?

Red Admirals were conspicuous by their complete absence until well into July round here, but certainly since mid-August they've been pretty common (although far less so than last year when there were serious numbers of them).

\*Footnote: I saw another Red Admiral this morning on my way to have my hair cut. This one was fluttering around a large clump of nettles by the river at Forge Fach in Clydach.