

Kev Ling

by kevlng, 04-Aug-14 09:06 PM GMT

Hi Everyone,

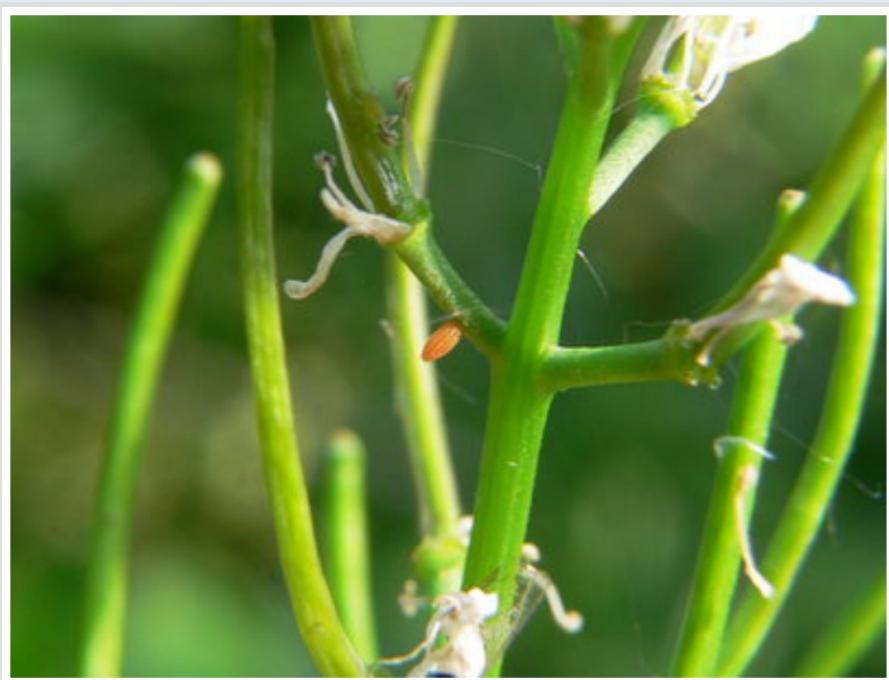
I have decided to set up a diary, not only to act as a personal account of my sightings, but also to share some of my favourite moments. Hopefully this will stimulate discussion with you all and improve my knowledge of butterflies. Keen to learn much more, I would welcome all comments (especially those that correct any lepidoptery faux pas' on my account).

To get myself started, I thought I might post a few highlights of my Butterflying year so far.

The first selection is the early stages of my favourite butterfly of all, the Orange Tip. Having only seen the adults before, I was delighted to encounter both the ovum and larva stage.

Kind Regards

Kev





Re: Kev Ling

by kevlng, 04-Aug-14 09:13 PM GMT

A 'lifer' for me this year was the Glanville Fritillary. Beautiful butterfly.





Re: Kev Ling

by Pete Eeles, 04-Aug-14 09:18 PM GMT

"kevling" wrote:

I have decided to set up a diary, not only to act as a personal account of my sightings, but also to share some of my favourite moments. Hopefully this will stimulate discussion with you all and improve my knowledge of butterflies.

Welcome to the club, Kev! I think the personal diaries are possibly the most valuable element of the website! Not only do they consolidate information into a logical sequence, but they're a fantastic resource to look back at during the long winter months! Look forward to seeing more!

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Kev Ling

by millerd, 04-Aug-14 09:29 PM GMT

Welcome indeed, Kev!

Do I recognise that individual butterfly as being a Surrey Glanville? Good pics of the Orange Tip caterpillars: I love the way they bend at an angle to pretend to be part of the plant 😊

Looking forward to how your year has unfolded since...

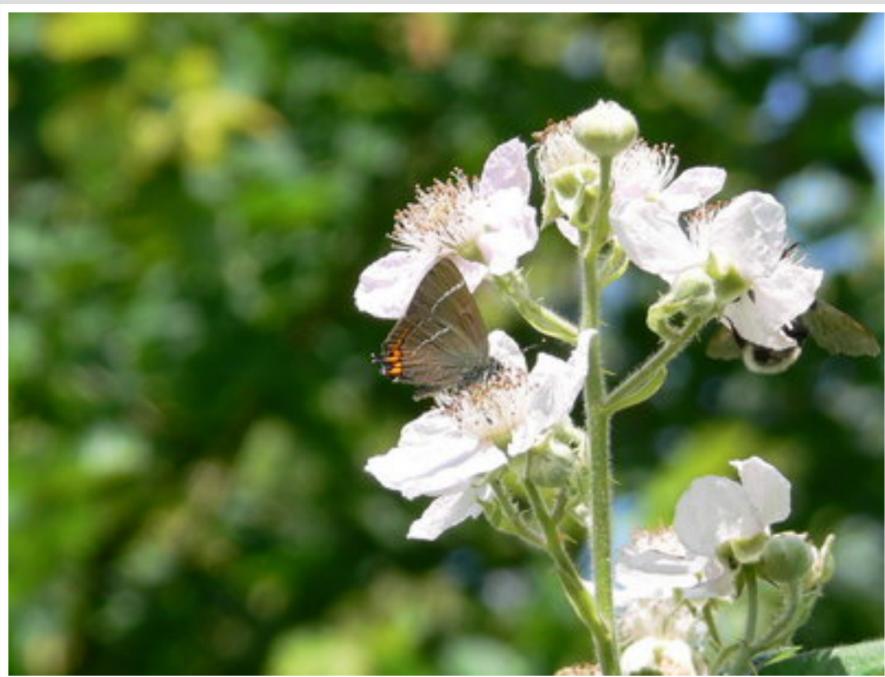
Cheers,

Dave

Re: Kev Ling

by kevling, 04-Aug-14 09:30 PM GMT

Having only ever seen a couple of tantalising glimpses of White Letter Hairstreak high up in the Elms, I was keen to see them at closer quarters this summer. A trip to a reliable site at Benfleet Downs in June paid off and gave me one of my highlights of the summer to date.



Re: Kev Ling

by kevlng, 04-Aug-14 09:35 PM GMT

Dave,

Yes, it is one of the Surrey Glanvilles. The night before I was all set for a trip to Bedfordshire to see Duke of Burgundys (which would have also been a 'lifer' for me). But then I heard about this introduction and just had to see them. No sea sickness required also 😊
I still intend to see them on IOW if I can though. As for the Dukes, there's always 2015!!

Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by millerd, 04-Aug-14 09:48 PM GMT

Thought I recognised it, Kev - it's the same one I saw on a similar day out to avoid the long trek to Ventnor! It was a lovely example too.

Dave

Re: Kev Ling

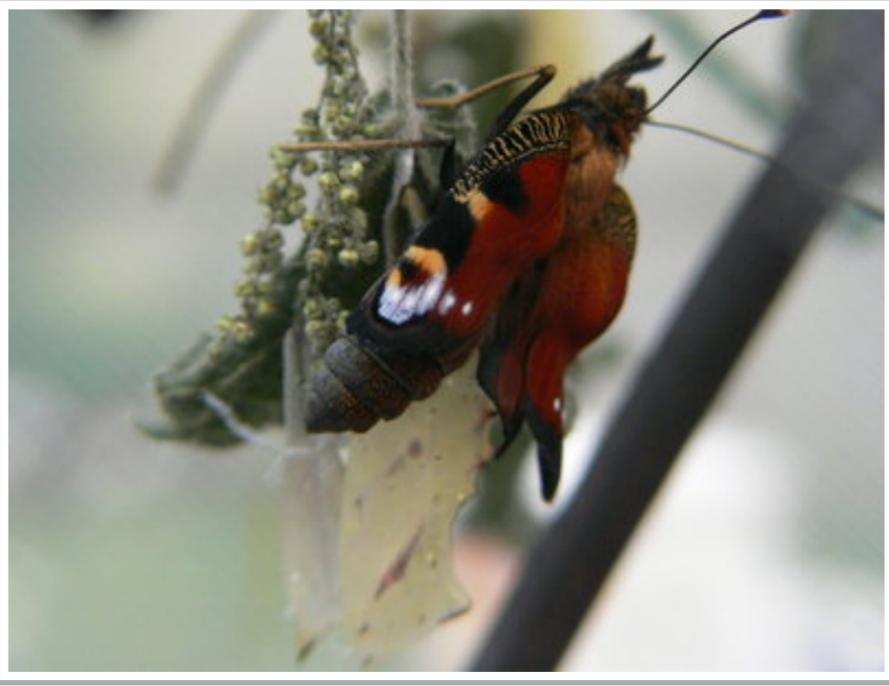
by kevlings, 04-Aug-14 10:07 PM GMT

Working in Ipswich town centre, I often take a walk through a local nature reserve at lunchtimes. Having swotted up on larval foodplant ID over the winter, I set out to catch some early stage action. Following success with Orange Tip and Small Tortioseshell caterpillars, I soon spotted some 1st instar peacocks. When I returned a couple of days later, to my abhorrance the council had cut back the nettles close to the boardwalk, with subsequent casualties no doubt. But with wife and daughter to hand, we found some caterpillars lying on top of a heap about to be disposed. Keen to observe the life cycle of this species, we took them home and transferred them to some potted nettles in our garden. We learned a lot about their behaviour during the next few weeks and the photographs below are a record of one of those little fellows from almost start to finish.











Re: Kev Ling

by MikeOxon, 04-Aug-14 11:10 PM GMT

A great start to your diary, Kev., and I see you are into early stages as well. It's a splendid Peacock sequence 😊

Mike

Re: Kev Ling

by Wurzel, 04-Aug-14 11:30 PM GMT

I agree with Mike – a great start to the PD – looking forward to reading more. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Kev Ling

by kevlings, 05-Aug-14 12:22 PM GMT

Thanks for the early compliments gentleman.

The Peacock cycle was amazing to watch. We had a number of caterpillars, which did give us the runaround at times, crawling away from the potted nettles into the glare of our resident blackbird. Having a dog might have been less work. Our young daughter and us discovered some interesting things along the way, like how they ejected green fluid when challenged. There were a couple of larva that hung themselves ready to pupate, but never actually did (I guess this is a normal rate that you otherwise don't see). But all of those that emerged as adults did so with no damage, albeit slightly smaller than the resident Peacocks already inhabiting our buddleia. Once again, I have never noticed a variation in size before, but this must be so.

Regards
Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by kevlings, 06-Aug-14 08:58 PM GMT

The East coast of Suffolk is alive and kicking with Clouded Yellows. Along the coastline at Bawdsey, the numbers have been reaching 40+. Not such high numbers on a breezy day for me, but still some good sightings though. Now I just need a few Painted Ladys to join the party.

Kev



Re: Kev Ling

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-14 10:32 PM GMT

It's great to read about such high numbers of Clouded Yellows Kev – if slightly frustrating as I'm in West Wales where there are none 🇬🇧 It's not been a vintage year for Painted Ladies for me either this year but hang in there one usually turn up 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Kev Ling

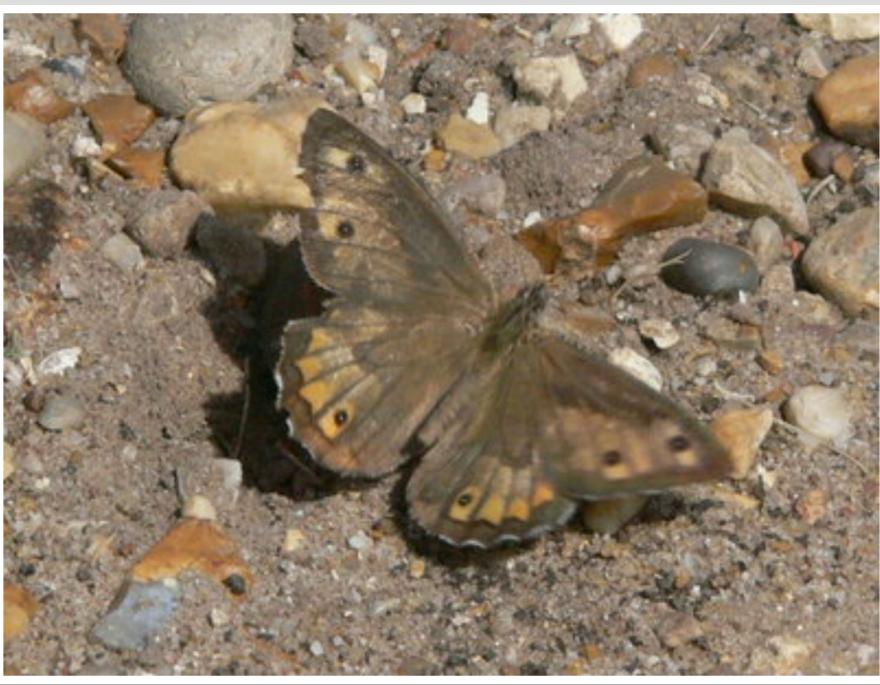
by keving, 09-Aug-14 10:10 AM GMT

A visit was paid to Rushmere Heath in Ipswich to see Grayling, which are now showing in good numbers. The golf club shares this important habitat, so my pursuit of Grayling was coupled with the desire not to be hit by low flying missiles.

I had in previous summers tried to get that all but elusive wing open shot. This time I was succesful. I also managed to see a couple partaking in an aerial ballet with each other. The resulting photo isn't great, but for a quick point and hope, it will do fine.

Away from the open heathland and into the wooded rides, we also saw 6 Purple Hairstreak, 6 Common Blue and an assortment of whites.

Regards Kev



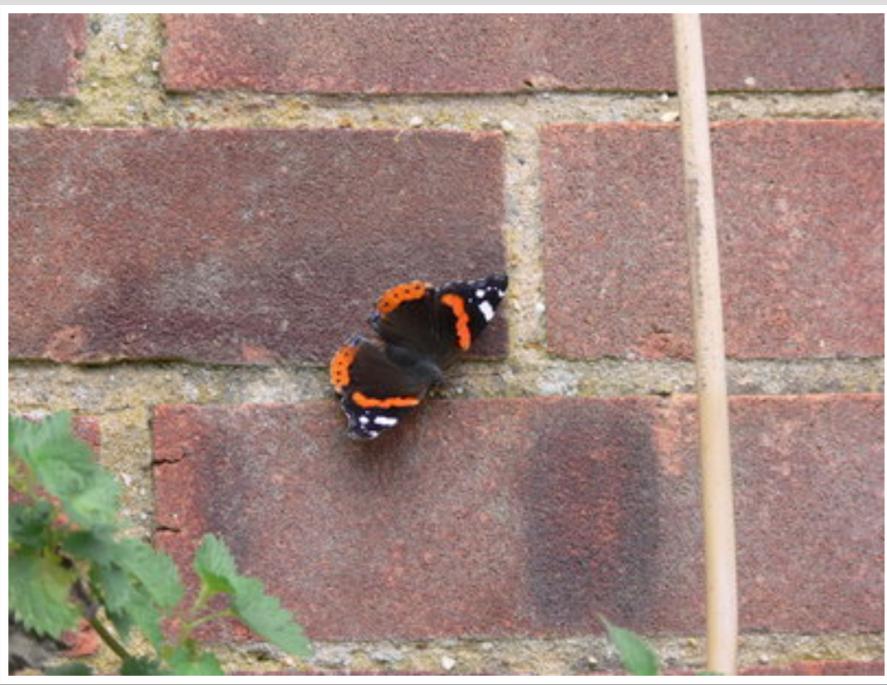
Re: Kev Ling

by kevlng, 10-Aug-14 08:32 PM GMT

Not having a large garden, we had given some thought to our planting this year in the hope of attracting adult butterflies and if fortunate enough some early stage action too.

We added a couple of pots of nettles in order to sustain the Peacock larva that we rescued (see earlier post). Now that they had hatched and flown, we were not expecting anything else. But a female Red Admiral took a liking to them and has laid over a dozen eggs. These were laid 2 or 3 at a time, in between bouts of nectaring elsewhere.

Eyeing up the nettles



Ovipositing



Job done





There was also a slightly earlier batch of eggs laid on a separate pot of nettles, of which I just spotted three larva. No photos of these as yet, as they are all snug in their larval tents.

An extra bonus on our Nasturtiums are Small & Large White larva.



Regards Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by kevlng, 14-Aug-14 07:52 PM GMT

My experiences with early stage activity do not seem to be over yet, with some more developments at home. The Red Admiral caterpillars on my potted nettles are starting to make themselves visible, although with the weather turning cooler, they do seem to spend most of their time in their larval tents.



My Large White caterpillars are now on the move to pupate, as are the Small Whites which disappeared a day or two ago. However whilst opening an upstairs window, I noticed this little fellow underneath the fascia boards of my roof. Not sure if it is Large or Small white (but I'm favouring Small???)



Now off to Yorkshire on holiday, where the temperatures would seem to suit pengiuns more than Butterflies for the next few days. Still hoping for a Dark Green Frit though.

Regards Kev

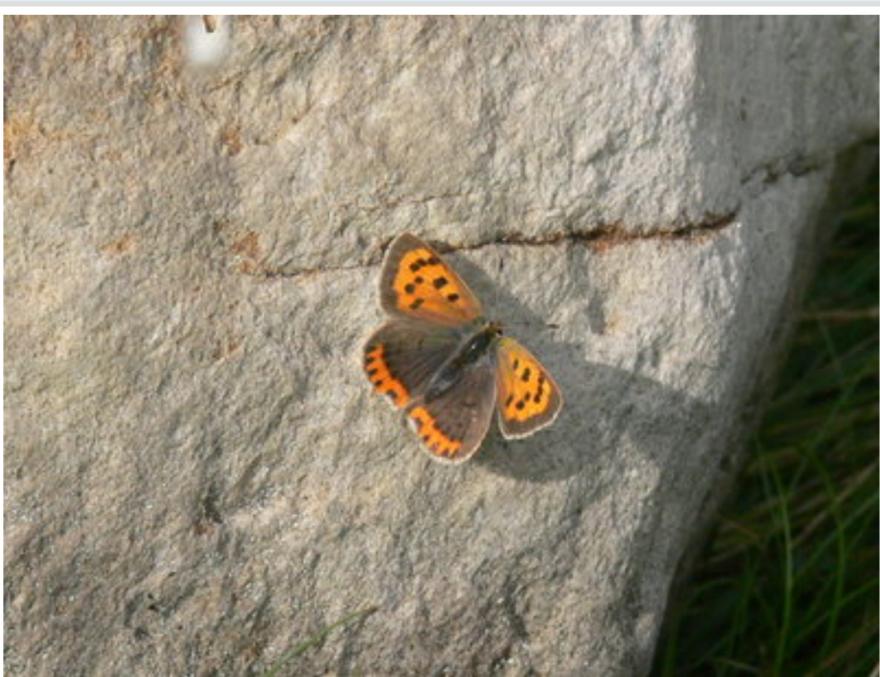
Re: Kev Ling

by kevlng, 03-Sep-14 08:04 PM GMT

Just returned from a holiday to the Yorkshire Moors and Dales. A slightly autumnal feel to August on some days made the Butterflies think twice about putting in an appearance. But when the sun came out, things improved. The biggest surprise was a close encounter with a Purple Hairstreak at the Hole of Horcum. Although a little worn, it seemed happy to see us too, flying on to my daughters hand.



There were good numbers of Peacock on the heather moors and we had regular sightings of Red Admiral and Small Cooper throughout the holiday too.



Also came across this little fellow too, which I believe is an Alder Moth.



Kind Regards
Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by Wurzel, 03-Sep-14 10:38 PM GMT

Love the Small Copper shot Kev and that Purp encounter 🍷 Purple Hairstreaks for me are one of those butterflies that you just can't plan to photograph – all of my shots are just pure lucky flukes 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Kev Ling

by David M, 03-Sep-14 11:00 PM GMT

Purple Hairstreak on your hand!! How much better can it get?

Re: Kev Ling

by kevlng, 04-Sep-14 11:55 AM GMT

Wurzel/Dave: Thanks for comments. It certainly was a surprise to have a Close Encounter of the Purple Kind. Only managed a couple of brief low level sightings before. The Small Copper just happened to land in in the right position with the early evening sun casting a shadow.

Regards Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by kevlng, 10-Sep-14 09:03 PM GMT

With September well and truly upon us, I'm trying to get my butterfly fix as often as possible and what better place to look than the trusty Buddleia, providing some much needed nectar for all.

The most surprising species to be found was this Grayling. I have never seen one on Buddleia before.



The more usual suspects were making good use of the buddleias in my garden too.



Regards Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by David M, 10-Sep-14 09:59 PM GMT

"kevling" wrote:

The most surprising species to be found was this Grayling. I have never seen one on Buddleia before.

They love it, Kev. Probably more than any other UK satyrid. There are always plenty knocking about the copious buddleia blooms at Mumbles Head in Swansea.

Re: Kev Ling

by keving, 15-Sep-14 11:35 AM GMT

Having had a Red Admiral lay several eggs on a pot of nettles in my garden, I was rather dissapointed to return from holiday with no evidence of any larvae or even pupa. I had seen a couple of caterpillars before I left (rather fortuitous given the amount of time they seemed to spend in their larval tent), but there were still a number of unhatched eggs.

I'm aware that predation by birds is a likely cause, but what I did find when examining the larval tents were a number of earwigs. Could thye have been responsible too? They do feed on other insects, but I have'nt heard about them attacking eggs/larvae. I would be interested to know if they are the likely villains.

Kind Regards Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by peterc, 16-Sep-14 09:19 AM GMT

Hi Kev,

Possibly as I read somewhere that earwigs eat Brown Hairstreak eggs.

All the best

Peter

Re: Kev Ling

by keving, 22-Oct-14 08:35 PM GMT

I am watching with interest, the Large White larvae on my Nasturtiums. They are situated at the front of my house and slowly, one by one the caterpillars are scaling the front wall and heading for the fascia boards to pupate.

However the first two or three seem to have perished before getting a chance to pupate. They do not look as though they have parasites, but have turned a dark brown colour and died.

My question is, what is happening to them?

I am concious that it is late in the season and the temperature has dropped somewhat this week, but does that effect their ability to pupate? I don't neccesarly believe in trying to change the cause of nature and whilst seeing them perish isn't pleasant, that is the way of things. But I was considering getting my rearing cage out and giving them a sporting chance away from the rigours of the Great British weather (particularly as I still have some 2nd instars). It would be interesting to hear if I am being to hasty.

Regards Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by David M, 22-Oct-14 09:06 PM GMT

I noticed a similar phenomenon with the Large White larvae on my neighbour's cabbages a few weeks ago. Several ended up on my wall (and two chose the outside of my kitchen window to become static). Sadly, both these latter two had been beset by parasites and I still have a 'smudge' which represents what's left of their corpses after the parasitoids had emerged.

Re: Kev Ling

by keving, 23-Oct-14 12:25 PM GMT

Thanks David, I'll examine my corpses and see if anything has emerged. Hopefully a few will make it unscathed.

Regards Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by keving, 01-Nov-14 05:20 PM GMT

My Large White larvae continue to make good progress, despite November arriving. They have been feasting on Nasturtiums at the front of my house. I planted them against the wall, so when ready, the caterpillars might scale the front of the house in order to find a suitable place to pupate. I have not been dissapointed, with a number having already pupated. Unfortunately, not many within easy photographic position.

Firstly I'll share a montage of them from eggs to final instar larvae.



Early and later instar together





Preparing it's journey to pupate, this individual spent the day looking in through the landing window. An interesting angle to photograph.



Safety harness attached. Just a matter of time now.



Directly outside my bedroom window, this second chrysalis was found, blending in well with the brickwork.



An added bonus was a Small White chrysalis. This one pupated within the window mechanism. Thankfully, it is perfectly located. As you can see, it's based is perilously close to the cut off point of the window hinge. I just hope he doesn't want to hatch when the window is closed.



Regards Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by Maximus, 14-Nov-14 12:21 AM GMT

Nice shots of Large White early instar larvae kev, how many made it to the pupal stage? Not many of 'ours' did 😞

Re: Kev Ling

by keving, 06-Dec-14 02:15 PM GMT

Amazingly in early December there is still a Large White caterpillar slowly munching on what remains of my Nasturtiums. I have to say he has been at it for weeks now but is still alive. His only other companion has now scaled the front of the house in the last week to try and pupate, but as yet unable to do so.



Here is the last one to successfully tuck itself away for the winter.



There are now several chrysalis outside my upstairs windows. It will be nice to observe them over the winter months, dreaming of the spring when we will once more see the skies full of Butterflies.

Regards Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by trevor, 10-Dec-14 04:11 PM GMT

Hi Kev,

The coincidence of Purple Emperor and Wood White is a tricky one!. If the Emperor is early it is possible to catch the tail end of the spring brood Wood Whites. This year as the Emperor took to the trees into July, the first summer brood Wood Whites began to appear. Two trips would add more certainty and more chance of success. Hope this is of help!.

TREVOR.

Re: Kev Ling

by keving, 12-Dec-14 06:39 PM GMT

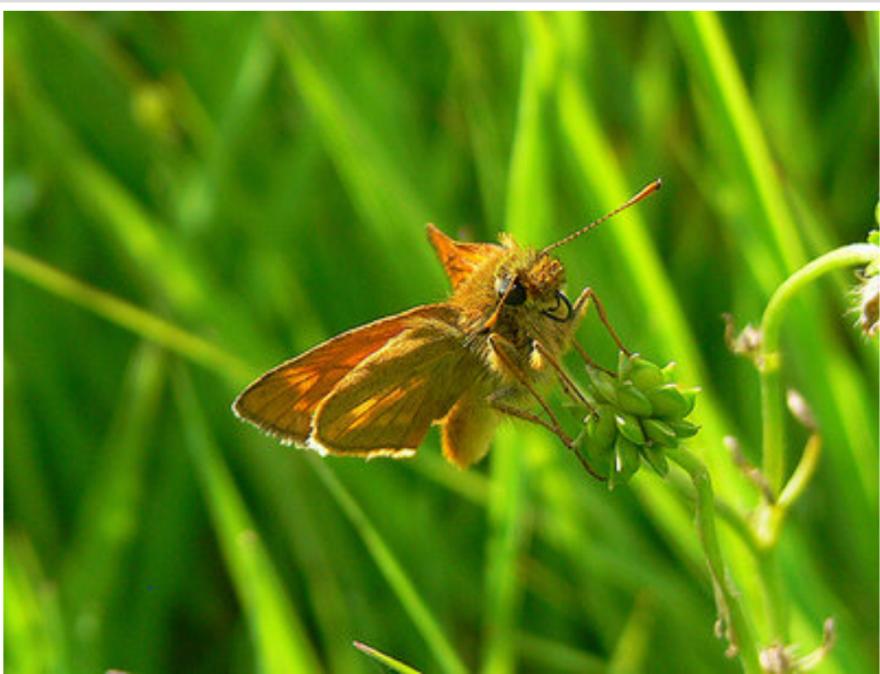
Well 2014 is drawing to a close and it's time for a few personal highlights.

My planned trips from Suffolk to the west of England coincided with poor weather during spring and early summer. As a result, a number of personal firsts failed to materialize, namely Marsh Fritillary and Duke Of Burgundy.

However my first sighting of Glanville Fritillary and White Letter Hairstreak more than made up for that.



But 2014 brought me much closer to Hesperiiidae. A success story being the councils management of our local park. Large percentages of grass have been allowed to grow with footpaths cut through for access. As a result numbers of Small/Essex and Large Skipper have increased dramatically. This photo of a large skipper was one of my favorites of the year.



My mission this year was to 'Garden for Butterflies'. I do not have a large garden, but with careful plant selection, we encouraged them in. Another favorite of mine was this Comma.



Previous postings in my diary document the success I had with early stage observations at home, but I was particularly excited to see my first skipper in the garden. Being an urban garden, we haven't had any before, but I allowed a 2 metre diameter of grass to grow to knee height in the hope of encouraging insects in general. To my surprise one day, a Small Skipper arrived and was seen regularly after that. One day he even investigated my butterfly feeder (see below)



As for 2015, I have a number of species on my 'first' list. These being Marsh Frit, Duke Of Burgundy & Wood White. An audience with his Imperial Majesty will also be a priority too.

So for 2014, a Merry Christmas to all UK Butterfly members and fingers crossed for a great year ahead.

Regards Kev

Re: Kev Ling

by bugboy, 12-Dec-14 06:46 PM GMT

Good luck with your 2015 targets, looks like you and me have similar plans for the new year! Fingers crossed for good weather.

Re: Kev Ling

by Wurzel, 12-Dec-14 08:54 PM GMT

Some great highlights Kev especially the Comma – it really stands out from the florets. Good luck with your 2015 targets. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Kev Ling

by bugboy, 18-Dec-14 10:54 PM GMT

Great pics kev, very jealous of your Glanville and White Letter pics. Interesting that both yours and mine Purple hairstreak open wing pics are old looking females, maybe at that age they just can't be arsed to keep their wings closed lol!

Re: Kev Ling

by kevlings, 19-Dec-14 01:12 PM GMT

Thanks Bugboy. Yes the Purple Hairstreak did seem set on relaxing. Perhaps it had been a long summer for it. 😊

