

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggars, 25-Jan-14 02:28 PM GMT

I haven't been luck enough to see a butterfly just yet although I'm keeping my eyes peeled as we're enjoying a mild January (with even some glimpses of the sun today!)

No butterflies and as yet no bumblebees either, but over the last couple of weeks we've noticed Blue Tits back at our nesting box. At first the pair would visit only briefly but now they are spending much more time at or around the box and even popping inside as well



I guess it's the same pair that nested here last year



I didn't clean the box out after they'd left and I'm not sure whether this was a mistake (I'm thinking of disease or infestation maybe) or whether I've done them a favour



I'll have to wait and see, but it's good to have them back.

As for my garden, I've got plenty of Crocus sprouting up



Although I'm most pleased about my Lesser Celandines



I "rescued" a clump last year from what is now a huge building site and planted it by my pond. I'd no idea how they'd do and when the whole lot died off I gave up hope. But here they are once, so I'm looking forward to seeing some flowers soon.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 02-Feb-14 01:03 PM GMT

Sunshine today and some signs of Spring.

I saw these Snow Drops this morning when out with the dogs



And in my garden a few Crocus just beginning to flower



The Blue Tits continue to visit the box every day so I've got my hopes up that they'll raise another brood this year. Still no butterflies for me so far but lots of near invisible gnats dancing in the sunlight.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 09-Feb-14 05:34 PM GMT

Walking the dogs I came across a very fine display of flowers for this bleak time of year. I didn't have my camera with me so took a few snaps with my mobile phone



Winter Aconites



And some Snow Drops too



Such a pleasant and welcome splash of vivid colour on the woodland floor.

I haven't seen a butterfly since November but the time's getting ever closer when I'll see my first of 2014.

Can't wait!

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 09-Feb-14 10:50 PM GMT

Nice report Hoggers – not long now then 😊 I too was out looking for signs of spring today but all I found were some Snowdrops braving the floods – the road at my folks house is now a fast flowing stream up to a foot deep in places 😱

Still if we're having all this rain now I expect we'll have a hosepipe ban in June/July 😬

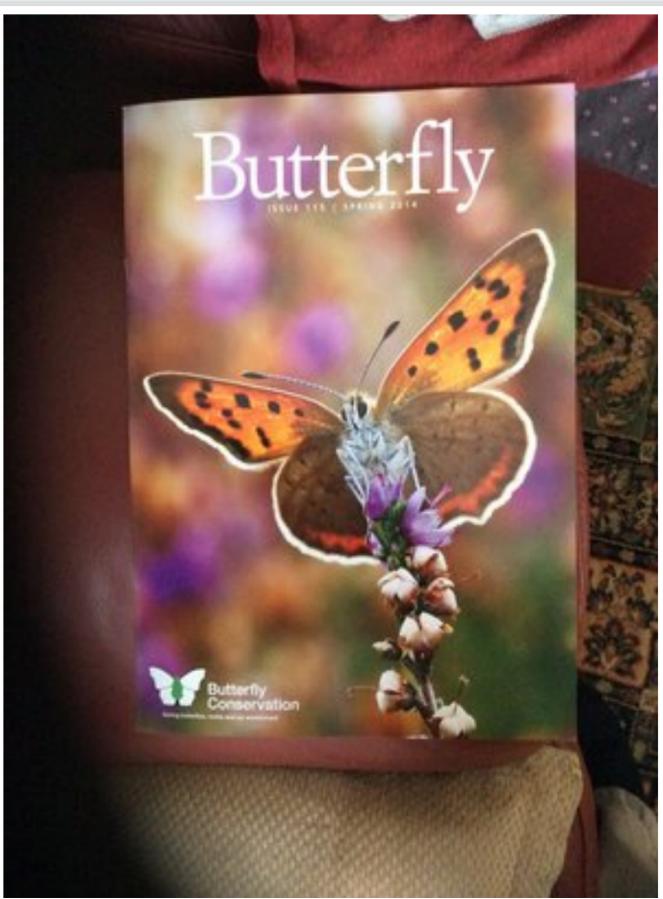
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 16-Feb-14 03:54 PM GMT

My copy of "Butterfly Magazine" arrived this week



The cover photo is just stunning. I've mentioned before that the Small Copper is my favourite butterfly. I try to see as many of them as I can during the season



Today with the sun out and the gales having moved on I thought I'd go down to Dungeness and visit my favourite Small Copper "Hot Spot". Last Summer it was easy to see 70 or more during a short visit



Dungeness looked glorious



The sea was as high as I can remember seeing it, with the fishermen sitting within a few feet of the waves



The best place for Small Coppers is around the Bird Observatory. There's what they call The Moat, a shingle ditch full of brambles, Hawthorn and Sorrel. I've always understood why they call it a moat of course, but I've rarely ever seen any water in it..until today!





As you say Wurzel, there's so much flooding about, with often tragic consequences. Seeing it like this made me worry about the over-wintering Small Copper larvae



Surely any beneath the water will perish? But even so, I'm sure enough will survive to enrich the Summer months



Back at the ranch, I'm getting good numbers of Crocus



They are so good to see and help me keep my spirits up through the (hopefully!) last days of Winter.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 18-Feb-14 10:50 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the Small Coppers Hoggers – they really brightened up my day 😊 But then seeing the flooded habitat literally out a bit of a dampener on it 😞 Mind you nature has a way of bouncing back so hopefully enough will make it and then they'll have less competition 😊 By the way that it the biggest blue spots I've seen on a *caerlopunctata* 🍷
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 23-Feb-14 01:05 PM GMT

It's all cloudy and cold today but yesterday was beautiful. I went for a long walk hoping for a Peacock or Comma out of hibernation. No luck with that but I did find my first Primrose of 2014 and here's a snap of it taken on my mobile phone



Just when I'd thought a mild Winter could only be a good thing I read in yesterday's *Times* that "Butterflies have also suffered and not just from the winds and rain. The mild Winter has increased the diseases that attack eggs or caterpillars and warm days have also brought out butterflies too early, when there are few plants on which to feed".

Butterflies seem to come off the worst no matter what happens!

Re: Hoggers

by ChrisC, 23-Feb-14 03:14 PM GMT

Don't believe everything you read Hoggers

From Butterfly conservation Website "Washout 2012 was the worst year for UK butterflies on record with 52 out of the 56 species monitored suffering declines, a scientific study today revealed."

and yet the progeny from last years "washout" again from Butterfly conservation website about farmland butterflies "For the fifth year in succession the Meadow Brown was the most widespread and abundant species. The butterfly was recorded in more than 90% of squares with 8,000 more butterflies counted in 2013 than 2012." don't you just love statistics 😊

Wildlife charities have a most difficult job with regards to press releases. they need the funds, the membership, the volunteers and the support etc so if they say everything is fine then the chances are they would lose some of it.

Re: Hoggers

by Butterflysaurus rex, 23-Feb-14 07:38 PM GMT

Goodness me Hoggers! Primroses out already! I'm hoping that the really good numbers of a lot of the species that did so well last year will make up for the losses.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 26-Feb-14 03:09 PM GMT

I've had a very exciting day! It's been so warm and sunny you'd think Spring had arrived but I wasn't expecting anything more than a Crocus or two. However, when I wandered up the garden this morning I discovered my first batch of frogspawn



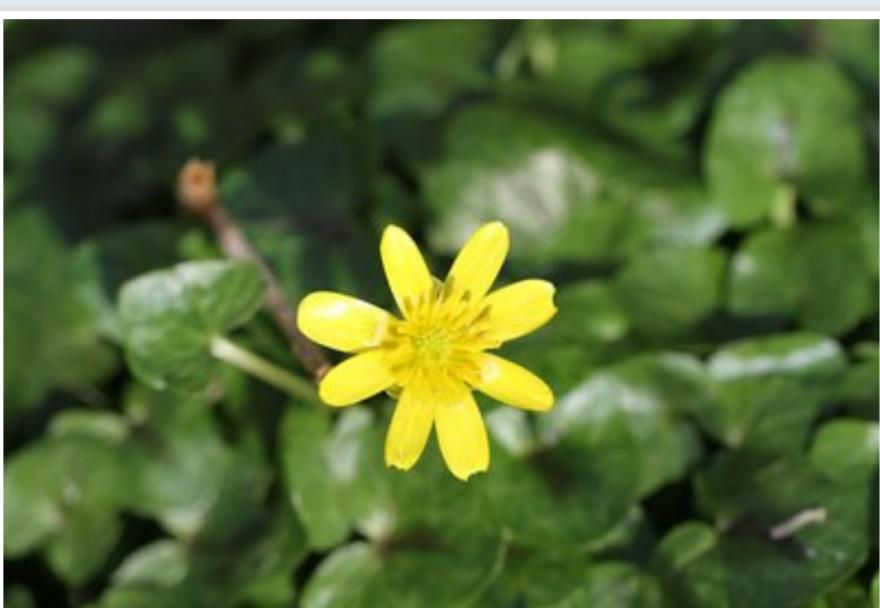
I usually have to wait until around 10th March

But here it is and looking very healthy indeed



What pleased me most though is that it is in the pond I installed only last year, so it has very quickly become established as a wildlife pond (and a Goldfish Free Zone!)

I was also delighted to see the Lesser Celandine that I rescued from a building site and planted in the garden is just coming into flower



But best of all, I've seen my first butterfly of 2014



I came across this Peacock while strolling around Orlestone Forest at around mid-day.

It was basking on a woodpile but went for a flutter



The afternoon had become pleasantly warm and I started to think I was in with a chance of more butterflies, I could so easily imagine a Brimstone flying along the woodland rides!

Little in the way of flowers to nectar from but I did see a few of these Colt'sfoot



However, the Peacock was the only butterfly that I saw



Still, I was delighted to see it. My 2014 Butterfly Year has begun!

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 26-Feb-14 11:32 PM GMT

Happy New (butterfly) Year Hoggers 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 02-Mar-14 04:44 PM GMT

There's been a cold, strong wind blowing down here in Kent today. The sun did peep through now and again, and in sheltered spots it got quite warm. I went for a walk in the woods seeing Blackthorn in flower and hearing several birds singing including Blackbird, Mistle Thrush, Chaffinch and from just over the fields a lone Skylark.

I came across some Snowdrops still looking very healthy



But the Winter Aconites are almost over



Walking home I found this Queen Red-Tailed Bumblebee in rather a sorry state



She was in the middle of the field and in the full force of the cold wind. I popped her in my coat pocket and went looking for somewhere sheltered to put her. Luckily I found a patch of Dandelions out of the wind and she seemed to buck up quite quickly



I've seen a Common Carder Bumblebee in the last week and a White-Tailed Bumblebee too, as well as a few Ladybirds



Things seem to be moving in the right direction!

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggars, 04-Mar-14 12:37 PM GMT

A lovely sunny morning. I took a walk along the river in the hope of seeing a Small Tortoiseshell. There are a number of good spots where at this time of year there's a chance of finding one basking in the sun. I did see a Kingfisher but no butterflies and I noticed that although the sun was out, the air felt a little cool. I saw no insects at all, not even a Bumblebee.

Walking home across the fields a bright yellow patch of Colt's Foot caught my eye amongst all the dead grass stalks and I thought it worth investigating. I could hardly believe my eyes when as I drew nearer I saw a Small Tortoiseshell on one of the flowers



Sometimes it pays to think like a butterfly!



I spend about 10 minutes in its company, marvelling at its lucky survival through the Winter and feeling very happy to be in the presence of a living thing that is more at home in Summertime



It eventually took off towards the river and made for a most unusual sight, an unmistakable flying black silhouette against the deep blue of the empty March sky.

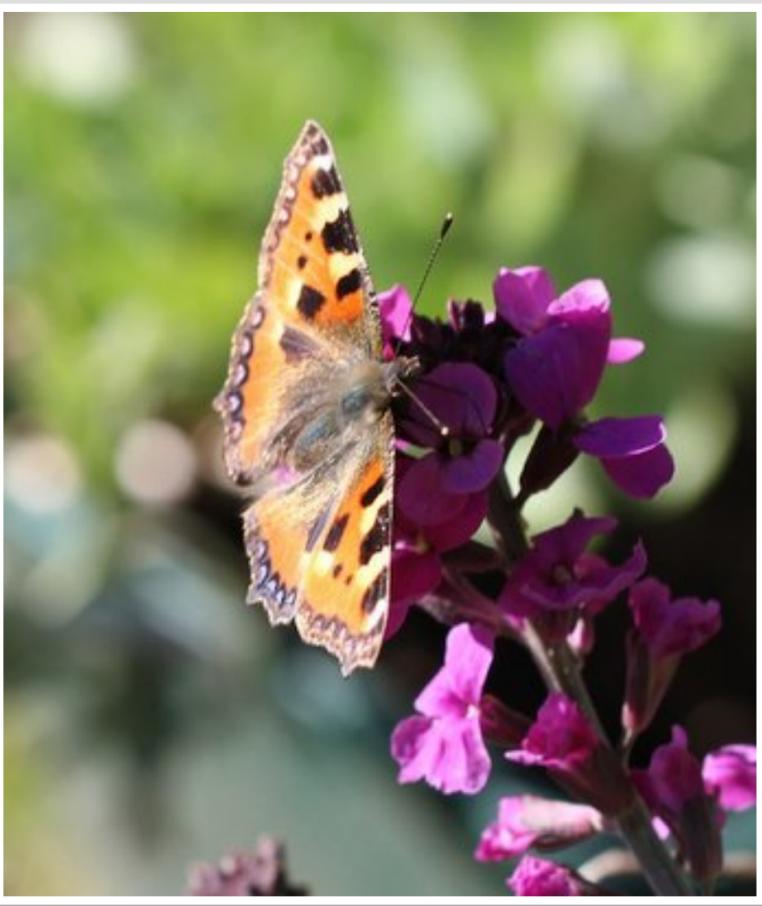
When I got home to look at the photographs I could also rather enjoy its weather-worn appearance and admire the battle scars of this brave little survivor



Re: Hoggers

by Hoggars, 05-Mar-14 06:17 PM GMT

A gorgeous day and I had my first butterfly visitor to the garden





Just managed to run indoors to get my camera before it was joined by a second Tortoiseshell and they both flew off at speed!

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 05-Mar-14 11:42 PM GMT

Lovely shots Hoggers 😊 Let's hope it's a taste of things to come and Small Torts have another great year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 06-Mar-14 04:08 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel - I saw three Tortoiseshells this lunchtime in Canterbury so they seem to be around in noticeable numbers already.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 08-Mar-14 03:53 PM GMT

Warm, sunny and at the weekend too! What a treat!

I went for a walk in Orlestone Forest this afternoon and saw four species of butterfly in just over an hour.

The first was the butterfly I most wanted to see, a Brimstone. I guess it was top of my list because I wanted confirmation that Spring really has arrived. It made for a wonderful sight flying through the bare trees and bushes, a jaunty, energetic flash of vivid colour. It was far too busy to settle and so this was the best of my efforts at taking its photograph



Doesn't do it justice! But I felt enormously happy to see it.

Next came a fine Peacock



There's a particular open ride through the forest where I'm always lucky with Commas at this time of year and it didn't disappoint today



I so admire the way they blend in with the surroundings.

I also saw a single Red Admiral there but it eluded my every effort at taking its picture!

So that was butterfly number four. Most satisfying.

Quite a few Bumblebees about, including this one which I think is a Common Carder



I also saw an orgy of frogs and mounds of frogspawn in one of the forest ponds. There'll be plenty of Mozzies for the froglets to eat if Orlestone lives up to its reputation!

It's still warm and sunny as I write and it's set to stay awhile yet: Marvellous!

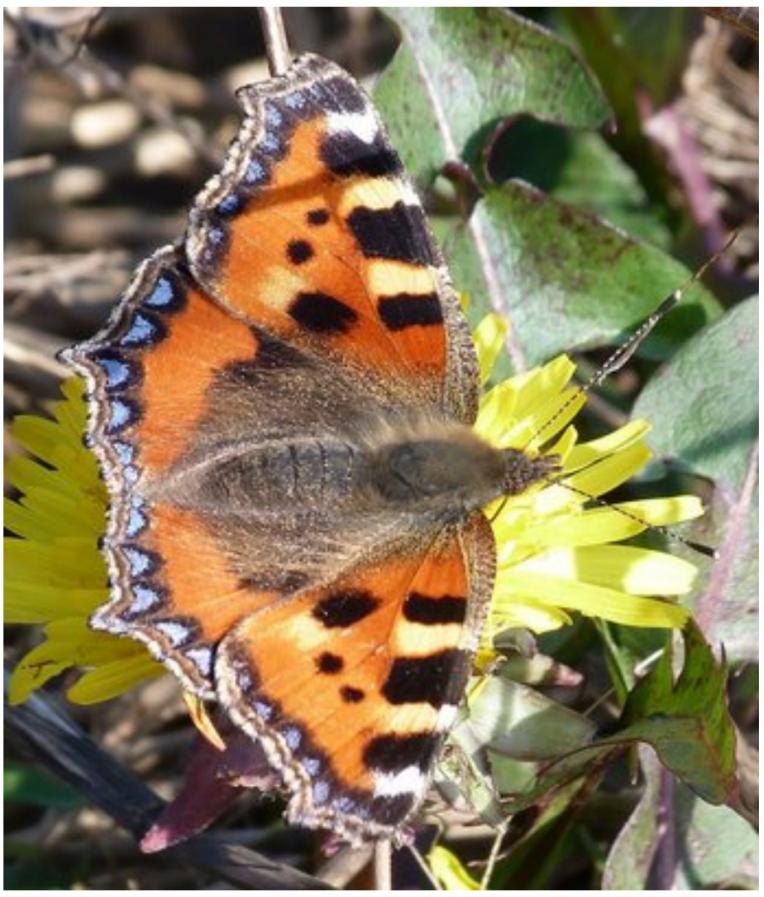
Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 09-Mar-14 03:49 PM GMT

Today was all that the weather forecasters promised it would be: warm and sunny. The butterflies are obviously making the most of it. In total I've seen six whilst in the garden and on my walk with the dogs. At home I had fly-pasts from a Peacock and a Small Tortoiseshell. On the walk I saw another Peacock, a gorgeous Brimstone and two Small Tortoiseshells.

This photo gives a flavour of what it's like along the riverbank with small islands of Dandelions in a sea of dead brown grass but now that the sun is out these islands are brightened even further with hungry butterflies







It's grand to see the hibernating butterflies up and at it again after so long, but so warm and Spring-like was it today I half expected to see an Orange Tip come fluttering along the riverbank. Not long now!

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 09-Mar-14 05:48 PM GMT

"Hoggers" wrote:

...but so warm and Spring-like was it today I half expected to see an Orange Tip come fluttering along the riverbank. Not long now!

Too right. I can see the first Orange Tips emerging before the spring equinox. Like you, I had them in mind today whilst I was out in Abergavenny.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 09-Mar-14 11:21 PM GMT

Great reports Hoggers and great shots of the Small Torts 😊 There have a been a few Small Whites reported so I'm keeping my eye open for the OT's and keep expecting to see them even though I know it's still to early.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

ps - just looked back at the Bee - it looks like a Tree Bee more than a Carder 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 10-Mar-14 04:47 PM GMT

Thanks for the bumblebee ID Wurzel. I'm a member of Bumblebee Conservation but am sorry to say I can only identify a Red-Tailed Bumblebee! I'd never even heard of a Tree Bee but now you've pointed it out I think you're absolutely right.

I'm keeping an eye open for Small Whites and (hopefully!) an Orange Tip if this weather continues.

Cheers

Re: Hoggers

by Paul Wetton, 10-Mar-14 05:27 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers

Your Bumblebee shot is interesting and unlikely to be a Common Carder Bee as they normally have a ginger head and pale brown banding over the entire abdomen. It is possibly a dark form of the Tree Bee *Bombus hypnorum* which is a recent colonist in the UK from the continent.

I'm no expert and could be incorrect but it is an unusual specimen nonetheless.

Thanks for sharing.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 10-Mar-14 05:51 PM GMT

Fascinating, Paul, I had no idea.

I took the photo because I'm trying to make an effort to learn how to identify bumblebees. It's not as easy as I'd hoped!

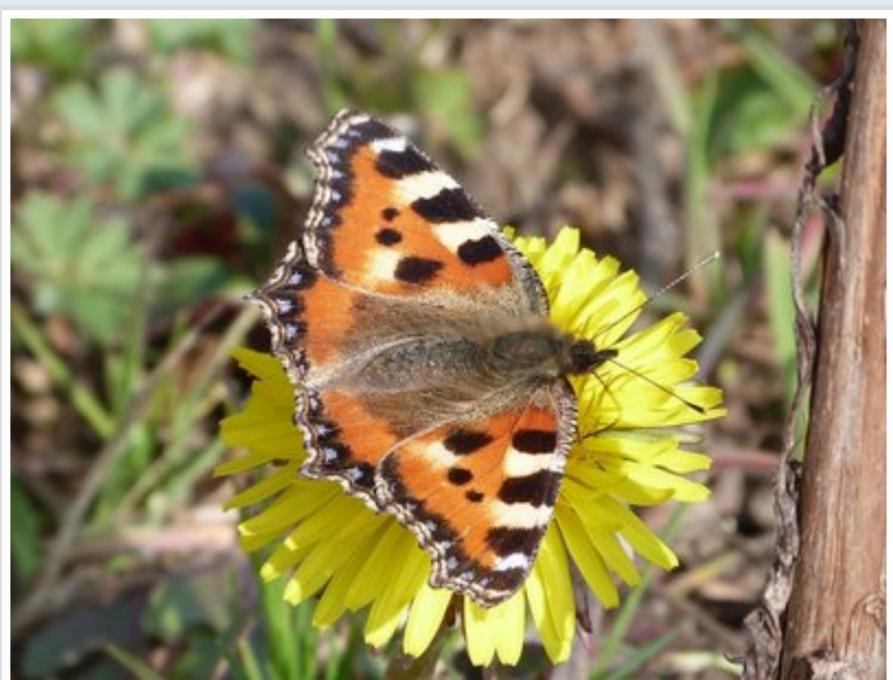
Best wishes

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 12-Mar-14 07:59 PM GMT

I was lucky to finish work early on this beautiful, warm and sunny day and by 1pm I'd collected my spaniel and we were walking along the riverbank. It was absolutely gorgeous and the butterflies were out. I saw 12 Small Tortoiseshells along the river either feeding on Dandelions or chasing around after each other





It's marvellous that so many have survived the winter.

Just as I walked back home I came across two Small Tortoiseshells and a Peacock dog fighting and took a couple of snaps



They were really going for it, fast and close, up high and down low. Good to see.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggars, 13-Mar-14 04:36 PM GMT

More Tortoiseshells!



A short stroll along the river this afternoon produced 11 of them

This time, unlike yesterday, not nectaring but patrolling up and down the riverbank and giving chase whenever they came across each other. At one point I sat watching 4 together. One would generally peel off from the game and continue searching low over the growing nettles, suddenly nose diving then immediately flying back up again.

I came across these two involved in courtship activity



During my walk I also saw 2 Peacocks and 2 Brimstones as well as many bumblebees.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 15-Mar-14 04:30 PM GMT

When I went out with the hounds this morning it wasn't quite as warm as it has been these last few days but I did see two Small Tortoiseshells



As well as good numbers of bumblebees.

In the garden the Borage I planted has now begun to sprout up so I should have lots of happy bees come summer.

And there's plenty still going on in the ponds. I saw this chap sitting on a mound of spawn



(If he's a she I extend my apologies!)



A mighty fine looking beast.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 16-Mar-14 12:47 AM GMT

It looks like another bumper year for Small Torts – I've seen more this year at Five Rivers than last so here's hoping 😊 Great shots of the Small Torts and the final shot of the he/she frog is fantastic and enters the 'I wish I'd taken that' category 🐸

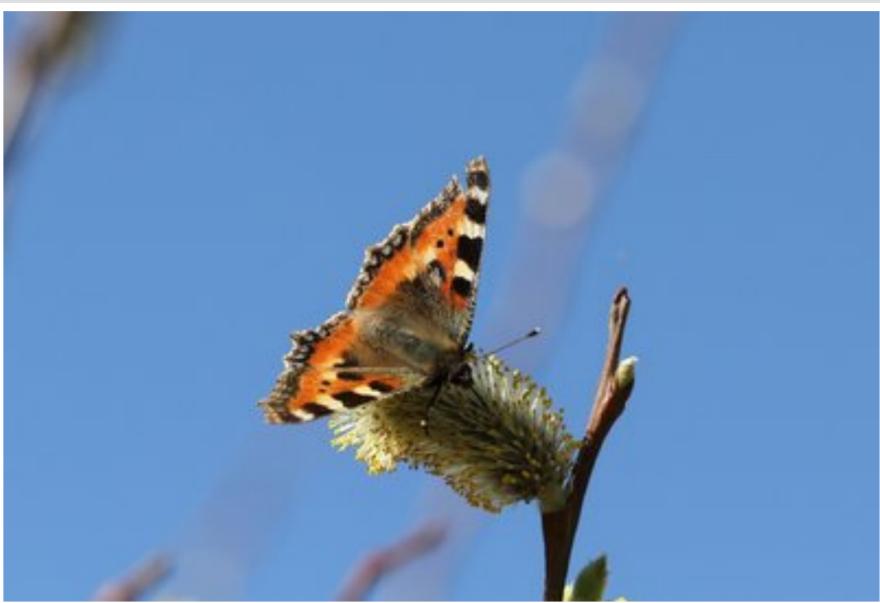
Have a goodun

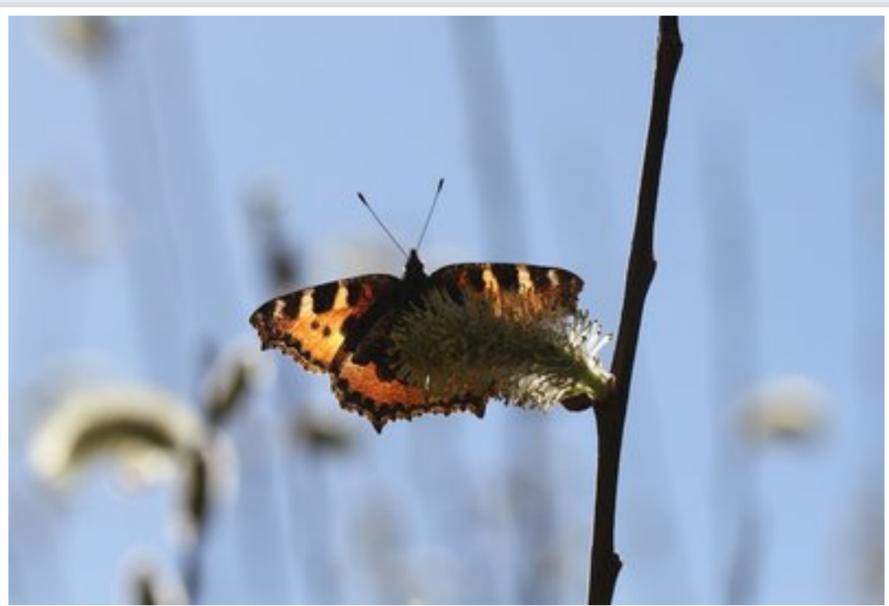
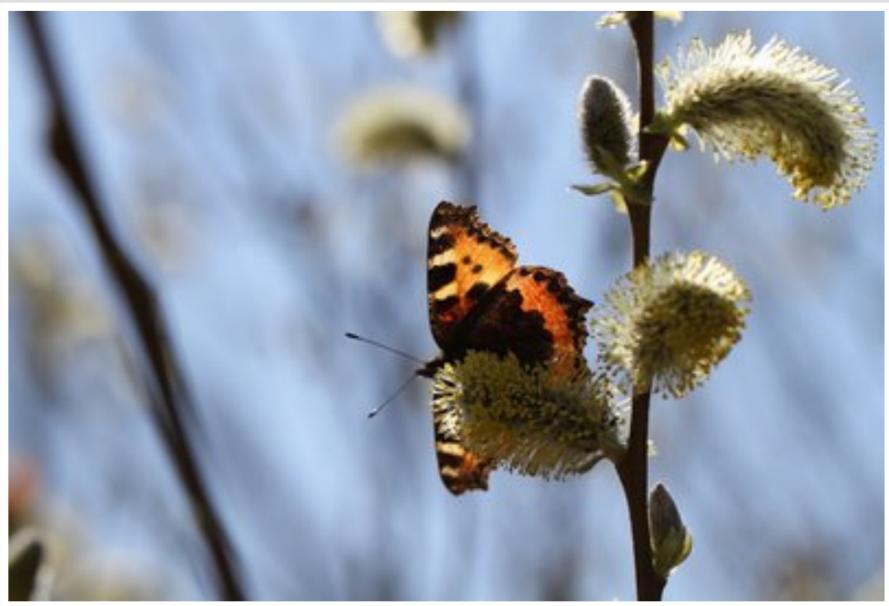
Wurzel

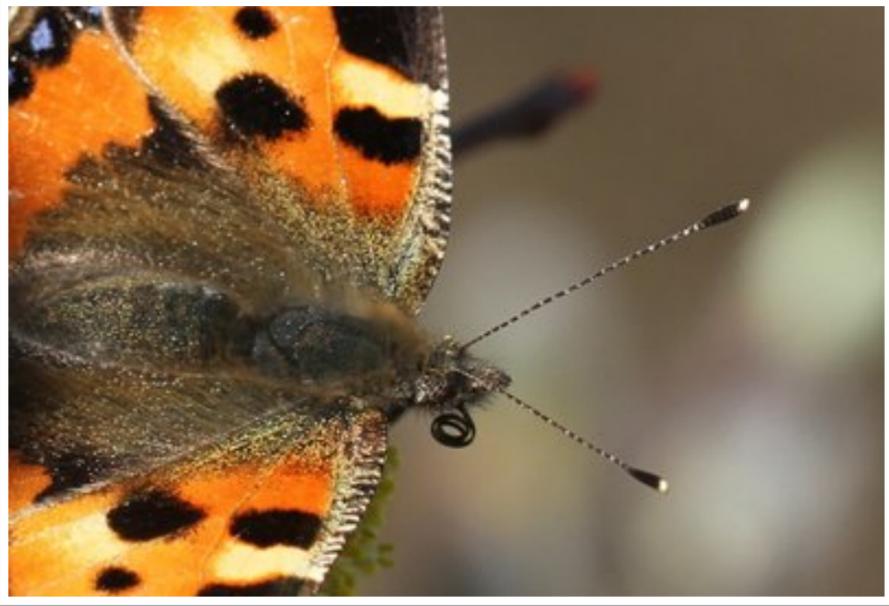
Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 16-Mar-14 05:50 PM GMT

A bumper year indeed, Wurzel: I counted 28 Small Tortoiseshells at Dungeness today (and there were certainly many more)!







On a beautiful, sunny warm day



I saw only one other butterfly, a Peacock



It was certainly a Small Tortoiseshell Day



Re: Hoggers

by Paul Harfield, 18-Mar-14 01:08 AM GMT

Hi Hoggers

Great to see so many Small Tortoiseshells in your patch. That last one is fantastic 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 18-Mar-14 05:35 PM GMT

Thanks Jack much appreciated. I can't remember seeing so many Small Tortoiseshells in March before. It's very promising. Let's hope the weather holds!

Best wishes

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 23-Mar-14 04:34 PM GMT

I managed to get out over the fields today. The sight of my first Cuckoo Flower of the year got my hopes up for an Orange Tip and now and again it was certainly warm enough for a butterfly but unfortunately there was so much cloud around that most of the time it was cold with some heavy showers of hail.

Still, I had some luck during a sunny spell finding a lone Small Tortoiseshell by the river



It was the only butterfly that I saw today. There were quite a few bumblebees despite the cool conditions. This one might be a White-tailed but possibly a Garden Bumblebee



(I'm trying to learn how to identify bumblebees but seem to end up by just confusing myself!)

I've noticed that a good deal of my Borage has started to sprout up in the garden. It's the bumblebee's firm favourite so hopefully by the end of the year I'll have got in more practice identifying them!

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 24-Mar-14 12:17 AM GMT

I love the proboscis shot Hoggers 🍷 If you have an iPod or similar device you can get some pretty useful Apps or free downloads to help with Bee ID, check out BWARS as well as that covers pretty much everything Bee wise 😊

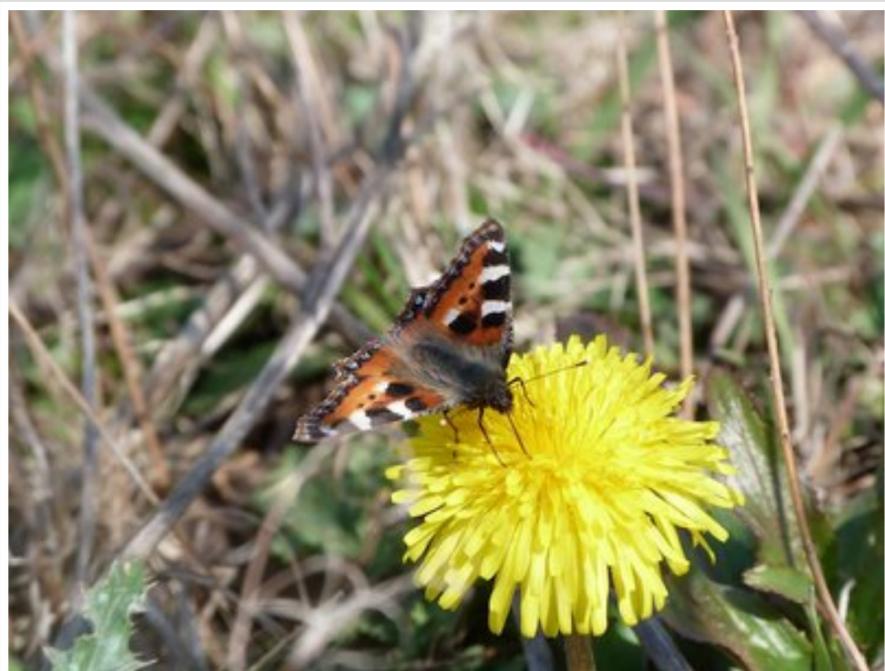
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 29-Mar-14 04:00 PM GMT

The weather has been absolutely fabulous today. I did a bit of gardening and then thought I'd take a stroll along the river and up to the wood. It was so warm I felt perfectly comfortable wearing just a T-Shirt. I was very quickly seeing Small Tortoiseshells





And Peacocks



The woodland floor was white with Wood Anemones



The Bluebells have yet to flower but there were lots of Primroses, Celandines, Ground Ivy and Dog Violets



Chiffchaffs were loudly ringing the changes in the still bare tree-tops and three Brimstones restlessly patrolled along the glades. In total I saw 24 Small Tortoiseshells (far more than I'm used to finding here at any time of year!), 4 Peacocks and 3 Brimstones.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 29-Mar-14 11:58 PM GMT

I was a great day indeed Hoggers – great shots especially the Peacocks, and the rise and rise of the Small Tort continues 😊

Have a goodun

Wurezl

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 30-Mar-14 02:52 PM GMT

A second very warm and sunny morning in a row: we're being spoilt!

Spoilt for butterflies too: a walk along the riverbank again produced high numbers of Small Tortoiseshells (long may this bonanza continue, Wurzel!), but in addition I came across this Comma too





I also saw another Brimstone and this time I had fun trying to get a fly-past photo



There he goes!

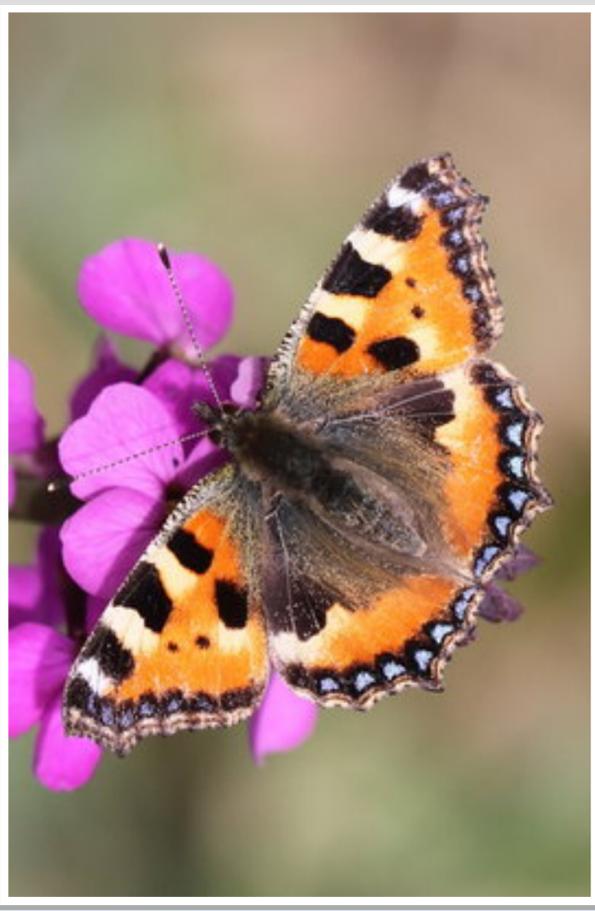


Not a very successful effort on my part I'm afraid!

I had my eyes peeled for a White, but no luck.

But there was more in store for me when I got home: not only this Small Tortoiseshell on the Wallflowers





And a gorgeous Peacock on the Celandines



But then as luck would have it, a Small White, my first of the year, flew into the garden and away.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 05-Apr-14 06:25 PM GMT

What a day in the garden!

All of a sudden I had my first Holly Blue of the year



And my first Orange Tip





Marvellous!

Re: Hoppers

by William, 05-Apr-14 07:44 PM GMT

Lovely Holly Blues Hoppers, the striking contrast between the pearly blue and yellow/green of the leaves is fantastic 😊😊

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 05-Apr-14 09:53 PM GMT

Wonderful garden 'ticks' for early April, Hoppers. You really are a fortunate fellow!

Re: Hoppers

by jasonbirder, 06-Apr-14 12:29 PM GMT

Very jealous of the Holly Blue! Great pics...of quite a mobile and tricky target!

Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 06-Apr-14 02:57 PM GMT

Jealous, of your OT's abd HB Hoggers, 🍷 nothing like them here yet Goldie 😞

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 06-Apr-14 06:09 PM GMT

What a stroke of luck it was and thanks for your comments guys!

There I was, mooching about in the garden when all of a sudden I had my first Orange Tip AND Holly Blue all at the same time! Being only too aware of what HBs are like (they lead me a merry dance every year) I was amazed to see it settle on the lovely golden yellow bush (I can't remember what it's called I'm afraid) within easy reach so I went running indoors to fetch my camera.

I was more astounded when I got back in the garden and BOTH butterflies were still there!

I managed to get a few snaps of the HB before it went bustling off. The OT was flitting up and down the flower bed where I've got Wallflowers, Honesty and Garlic Mustard but then the sun went behind a cloud and it went to roost on top of my pear tree and well out of my reach!

So I went and got my ladder and all of the photos of the Orange Tip were taken with me perched on top of it!

Great fun!!

No sign of any butterflies today as it's been cloudy and wet but here's hoping for some sunshine during the coming week.

Best wishes

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-14 09:57 PM GMT

Great shots Hoggers, I've still to see both of those species this year 🍷 So now I need to invest in a step ladder as well as a camera, expensive lens etc etc 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 12-Apr-14 04:48 PM GMT

Plenty of cloud about today but nonetheless warm and with some sunshine at times. I took a walk along the river and found myself in good company



I saw four Orange Tips, all males, and it was great fun to watch them patrolling up and down and chasing about after one another



In amongst the OTs were several Green-veined Whites (my first of the year)



Such delicate flyers



very dainty.

Still a few Small Tortoiseshells about



And Peacocks too



I also saw a Comma.

Walking along the riverbank I heard my first Nightingale of Spring and talking of birds, on the walk back as I crossed a field I nearly stood on this egg (I put my car key there to give you an idea of its size)



On its own, a very pale blue, not in a nest of any kind, warm to the touch and no bird anywhere near it! Any idea what bird it is?

But my abiding memory of today will be the Orange Tips





Welcome back!



Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 12-Apr-14 10:11 PM GMT

Welcome back indeed 😊 I'm starting to regret house renovation now as it's taking me away from my butterflying so seeing those cracking shots of your OT's has cheered me up, I need to get me some of those bad boys 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 12-Apr-14 11:51 PM GMT

You've excelled yourself today, Hoggers.

How I wish conditions in S. Wales had been similar (cloudy and cool all day here).

Re: Hoggers

by maverick, 13-Apr-14 09:43 AM GMT

Just seen the pictures of your mistary egg, I wouldn't like to say how it got there but if it pale blue and looking at its size I would guess at the thrush family

So depending on the size if its small it could be a robin, but looking at the picture again my money is on a black bird
Hope this helps

Re: Hoggers

by Maximus, 13-Apr-14 12:03 PM GMT

Great Orange-tip photos Hoggers. I thought at first that your mystery egg could be a Dunnock's, but using your car key as a size guide it looks too big, so I think it could well be a Starling's egg.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 13-Apr-14 03:40 PM GMT

Many thanks for all your comments and for the help identifying Hoggers' Mystery Easter Egg!!

We had glorious warm and sunny weather today. I decided to go looking for Specklies and so headed for the woods.

I was greeted by the sight of a million Bluebells



Absolutely stunning, with Celandines, Primroses, Dog Violets, Wood Anemones and Stitchworts thrown in too.

The wood echoed with the songs of Chiffchaffs, Black Caps and Nightingales. What a fabulous time of year this is!

And then I came across my first Speckled Woods of 2014



Six in all



Marvellous!

I also found two Commas



And a few Green-veined Whites



There were plenty of Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks on my walk back but today I saw only two Orange Tips, both in too much of a rush to pose for any photographs.

At home I was delighted to see these courting Peacocks



And a beautiful Holly Blue



Dare I say that this is looking like it's going to be a cracking year for butterflies and for those of us who love them?!

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 13-Apr-14 09:50 PM GMT

Great Specklies and and I really like the Holly Blue shots – they really put the sighting into perspective 😊🎁 Here's hoping the year meets up to expectations 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Butterflysaurus rex, 13-Apr-14 09:56 PM GMT

I agree some great Speckie shots there Hoggers 😊 And you got some Holly Blues, it's about the only butterfly that's out that I've yet to see – other than some Dukes.

B'saurus

Re: Hoggers

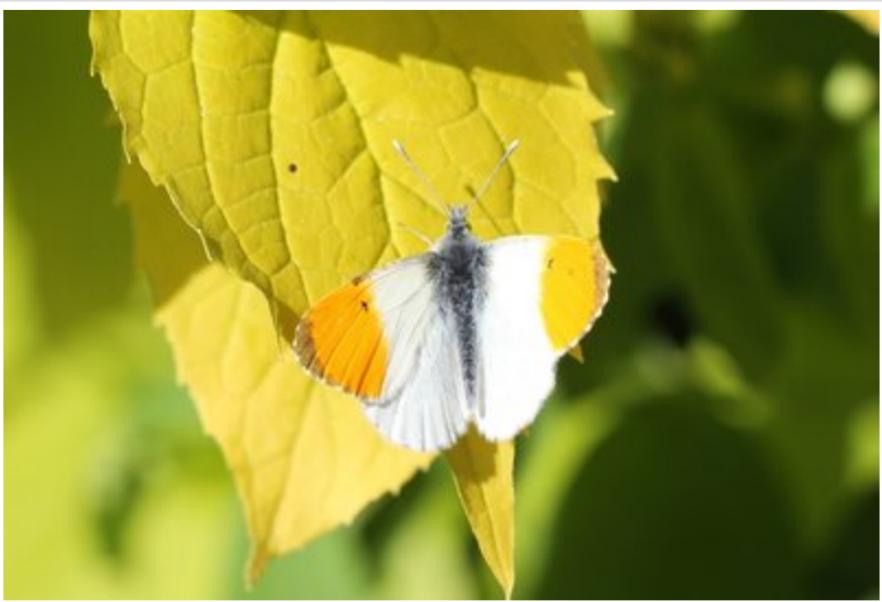
by Hoggers, 14-Apr-14 04:09 PM GMT

Many thanks for the comments Wurzel and B'Saurus, much appreciated.

I got home around 2pm on this bright and breezy day, went into the garden and bumped into an Orange Tip



He took off from the Wallflower but instead of flying away he settled on a near-by bush and began to open his wings, so I was able to get a few photos before he finally went on his way





While out in the garden I also saw a Speckled Wood and a Holly Blue.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 15-Apr-14 03:46 PM GMT

Over the last few weeks I've been clearing a border in the garden with a view to planting a flower bed. I made sufficient progress this afternoon to at last be able to put in the first Wallflowers, three in all. Once they were in the ground I gave them some water then I sat back to admire my efforts (I find the "sitting back and admiring" bit to be the part of gardening I do the best..)

Literally within minutes a Holly Blue appeared and began mudpuddling on the wet soil!

I ran indoors to fetch my camera and the butterfly was there still by the time I got outside again



But not for long: it took off, flew up the garden and just when I thought it had gone it came back and landed within my reach on a bush





Nor did it stay there for very long either so I had fun trying to get some "in flight" pictures



They are such fidgets!

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 15-Apr-14 05:30 PM GMT

Even though they're not rare at all, the sight of a Holly Blue is always exciting. Their behaviour is just SO much different to all the other UK Blues.

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 15-Apr-14 06:51 PM GMT

"Hoggers" wrote:

... find the "sitting back and admiring" bit to be the part of gardening I do the best...

I can relate to that 😊

Love the photos of the Holly Blue in flight Hoggers.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 15-Apr-14 11:03 PM GMT

Great stuff Hoggers 😊 I saw my first of the year today and I totally agree with David – they're a welcome sight like nothing else 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 17-Apr-14 03:26 PM GMT

Today I teamed up with Brother Hoggles for a Green Hairstreak Hunt on Wye Downs. It wasn't long before we found one



Over the course of a couple of hours we saw 7 of them, some fidgety but others more approachable



It's fun to see how the light plays on their wings



I'd never noticed the bluey tracery on the hindwing veins before



Looking at a close up I could see what appear to be coloured squiggle-like structures on the wings



If they really do exist and are not aberrations of my camera I'd guess they're responsible for the iridescent effect.

Anyway, I know nothing whatsoever about science so to quickly change the subject, here's a photograph showing how the presence of a tiny little coloured butterfly can floor a fully grown man



Brother Hoggles at work!

Whilst up on the Downs we also saw our first Dingy Skippers of the year





Two in all.

Other butterflies seen were two Peacocks and this female Brimstone



All in all a very successful visit.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 18-Apr-14 04:30 PM GMT

On my dog walk this morning I managed to find a single Green-veined White despite the chilly wind



I guessed it would be even colder by the coast but decided to visit Dungeness today with my fingers crossed that the Small Coppers would be out. I need not have worried: I came across my first of the year within feet of where I'd parked



I was there for about two hours and stopped counting at 30



Bearing in mind that more than half of the site was submerged for a considerable period during this year's flooding, such a strong Spring emergence is heartening



They were doing what Small Coppers do best, bustling about after one another in feisty little dogfights then heading for the next available flower

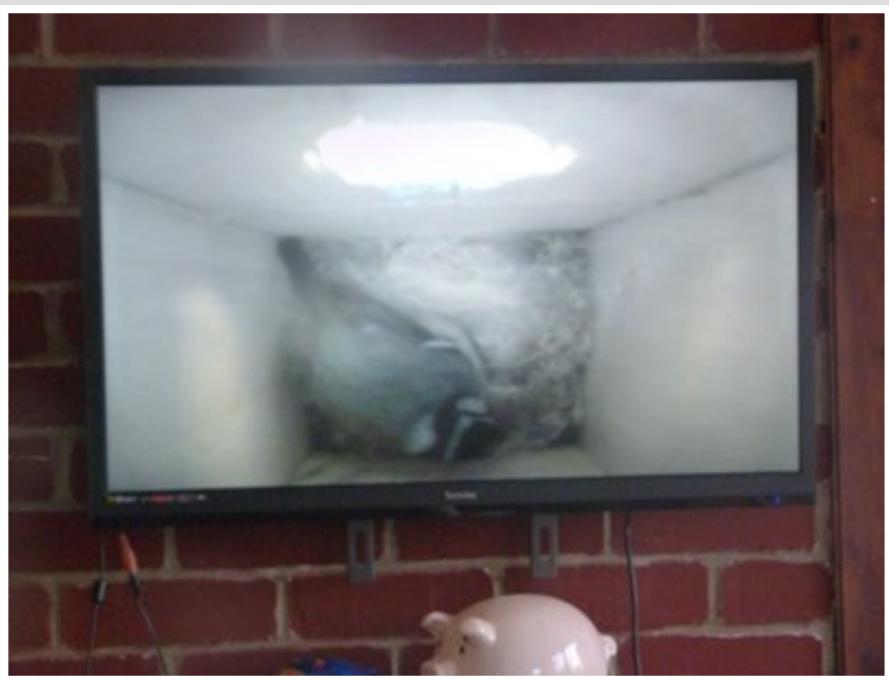


In spite of their war-like nature I like to think they have an essentially sunny disposition.

I also saw two Peacocks and several Small Tortoiseshells



On a different note, when I checked my "Blue Tit Cam" this morning I discovered that she's laid 6 eggs



I'll be keeping a close eye on her. Last year was pretty awful, only one chick out of the eight survived. Signs are that this year will be better: I've already seen good numbers of the little green caterpillars that they feed on.

Returning to butterflies for a moment, I'm delighted that the Small Coppers are back; they're my favourite butterfly and I've missed them



Re: Hoggers

by David M, 18-Apr-14 04:38 PM GMT

I love Small Coppers too, Hoggers, and hope to see my first of the year anytime now.

Great images.

Re: Hoggers

by William, 18-Apr-14 06:01 PM GMT

Great stuff Hoggers - I too saw my first Small Coppers today, always a wonderful surprise 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Butterflysaurus rex, 18-Apr-14 08:37 PM GMT

A fantastic run of reports and photos Hoggers, Spring really has sprung down in these parts. Can't wait to see what you post up next 😊

B'saurus

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 18-Apr-14 11:23 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff with the Small Coppers Hoggers 🍷 - I missed your previous posting 😞 or was it because it featured a Green thingy quite heavily 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 21-Apr-14 03:41 PM GMT

It rained yesterday and I was holed up indoors all day (not even the garden centres were open!) so when I woke this morning to see the sun shining

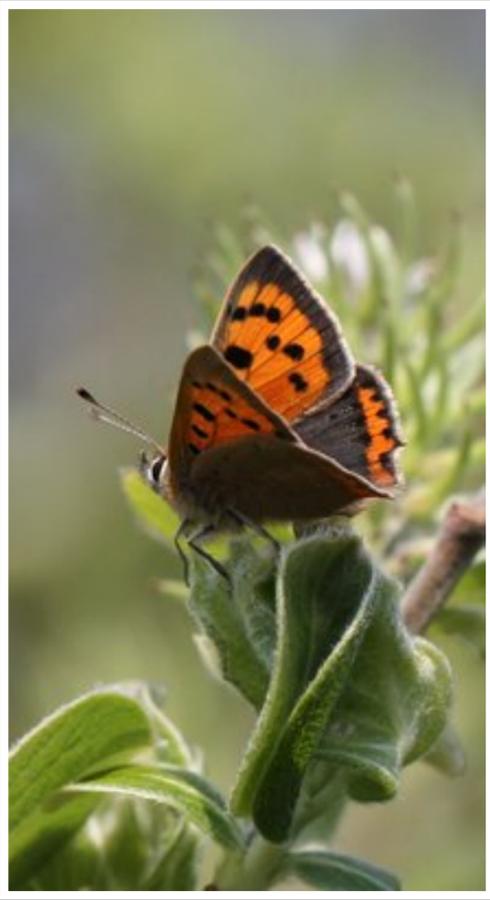
bright I decided a butterfly expedition was in order. I headed down to Dungeness to see the Small Coppers and to have a look for Grizzled Skippers.

Well, I had a long search for Grizzlies and didn't find a single one but there were compensations!



Gorgeous fresh Small Coppers almost everywhere I looked





And I was delighted to find a mating pair





Which bodes well.

There were Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells and Small Whites too



On the way home I stopped off at Orlestone Forest where I saw Speckled Woods, Orange Tips and about 12 Brimstones





Love clearly is in the air at the moment!

A memorable day's butterflying



Re: Hoggers

by David M, 21-Apr-14 03:57 PM GMT

Nice spring images, Hoggers, especially the vivid *caeruleopunctata*.

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 21-Apr-14 07:35 PM GMT

A smashing selection of Small Copper Images and I love the Brimstone sequence, great stuff 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Hoggers

by Paul Harfield, 21-Apr-14 11:08 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers

Absolutely lovely Small Coppers especially the one with blue spots and the mating pair 😊 I have not seen any of my local population yet 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 21-Apr-14 11:12 PM GMT

Fantastic Copper shots 😊 Like many others I'm still Copperless so far this year, it seems that my region is about a week behind counties further east.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

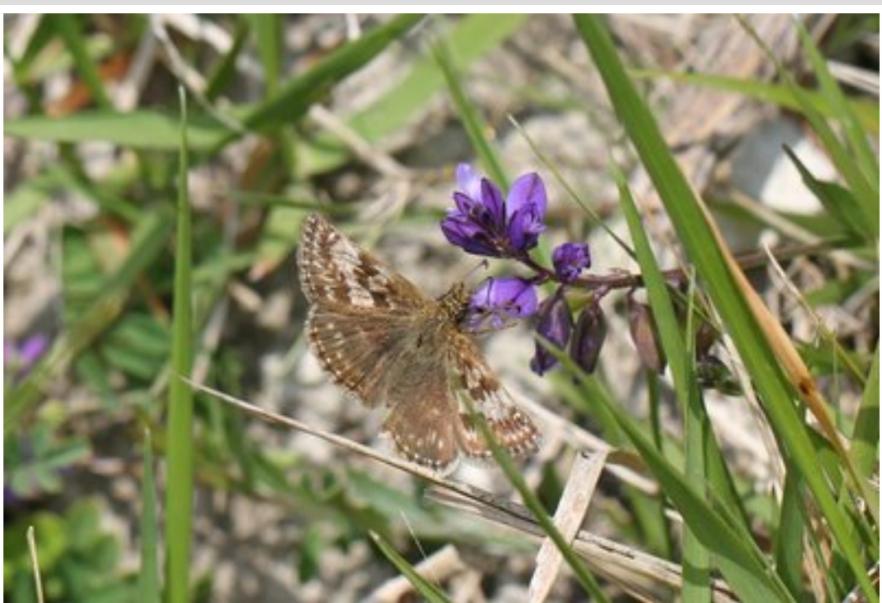
Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 23-Apr-14 03:02 PM GMT

Many thanks for the kind comments, Small Coppers are cracking little butterflies. Thank goodness they have such a long season!

I finished work early today so stopped off at Folkestone Warren on my way home. It was very warm and calm along the base of the cliffs, the only sound to be heard was the lapping of the waves and the rather bovine-sounding complaint of nesting Fulmars who clearly didn't like the look of me.

Lots of Small Whites and plenty of Dingy Skippers whizzing about



Two Orange Tips (both males), a Speckled Wood and four Green Hairstreaks



The best surprise came with this Wall



I didn't know they were out



I saw two in all



So well worth my stopping off for a wander.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 24-Apr-14 04:15 PM GMT

Back to Dungeness today for more Small Coppers



There's such a marvellous show of them at the moment



It's not to be missed



Dungeness itself is coming into bloom and when the flowers and the Small Coppers get together they put on quite a show



What a bouquet!



Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 03-May-14 04:21 PM GMT

Plenty of sunshine today although I didn't see that many butterflies on my walk with the dog, it was rather quiet. But I did see a Small Tortoiseshell, a Red Admiral, a Green-veined White and two Orange Tips, a male and this female



It's the first female Orange Tip I've seen this year



So I was lucky to find it feeding on this flower where I could take some pictures before it set off again on its travels



Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 04-May-14 04:31 PM GMT

I took myself down to Dungeness this fine morning.

The beach was lined with birdwatchers on look out for the squadrons of Pomarine Skuas that pass by The Point every May (a thrilling sight).

The shingle which is so barren and bleak in Winter is now a carpet of flowers with Small Coppers vying for the best of them



I counted 58 Small Coppers during the course of my walk



But I had another butterfly in mind when I decided to visit Dungeness today: the Grizzled Skipper.

I've been looking for them here ever since April turned out to be so warm, but had no luck. If I saw one today it'd be on the fourth time of trying!

And it didn't look as if I would be successful today either. After an hour of searching I had about given up when I just happened to see one sunning itself on a leaf





Like something out of Star Wars



It was the only one I saw



I guess it's still early for this site.

So I added a new butterfly to my 2014 tally and what with there being such a show of flowers and Small Coppers I was very pleased I'd visited Dungeness today



Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 04-May-14 10:15 PM GMT

General Greivous is the baddy from Star Wars (the not so good new ones) that I think Grizzlies look like Hoggers! 😊 Just been doing some catching up – great reports and shots especially the lushious Coppers 🍷 I wasn't too sure but your Dingy looked paler and greyer than what I'm used to?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

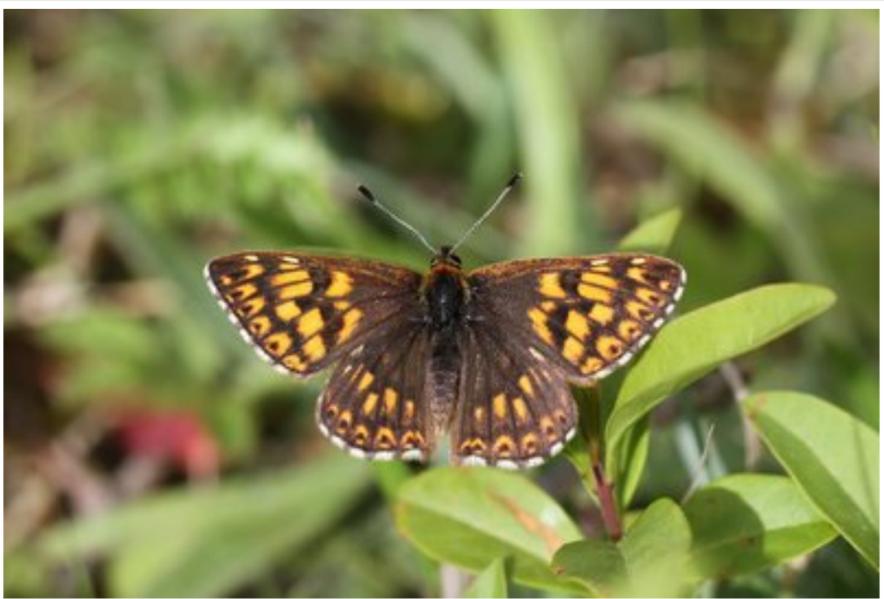
Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 07-May-14 03:49 PM GMT

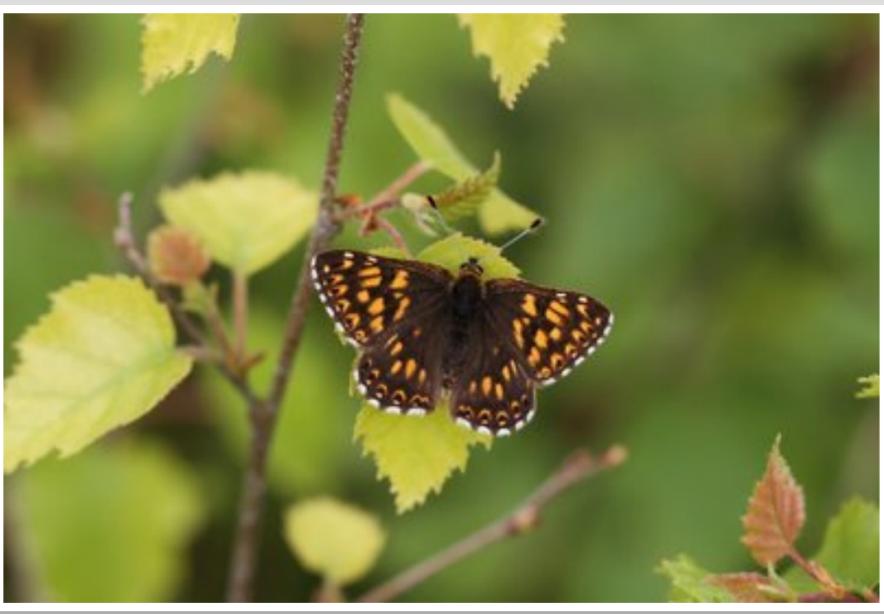
Sunshine and showers today. Rather breezy too. I thought I'd chance a visit to Denge Wood between showers to see the Duke.

I arrived at 10am and on the walk to Bonsai Bank saw not a single butterfly which is unusual because you're almost guaranteed a few Orange Tips patrolling up and down at this time of year.

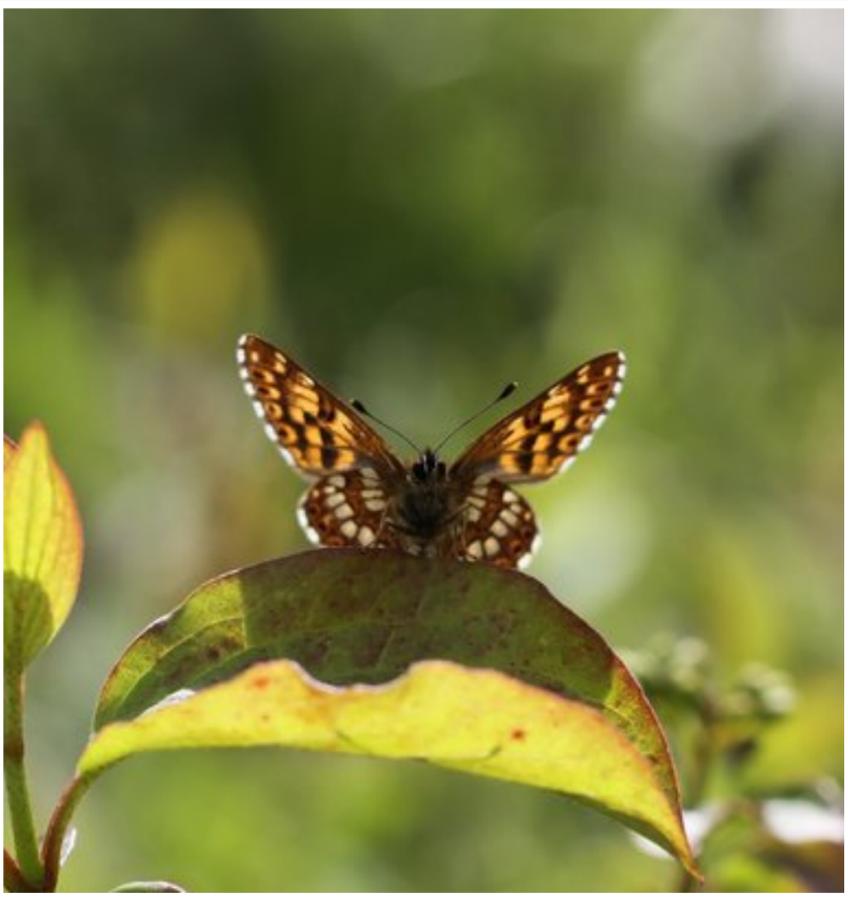
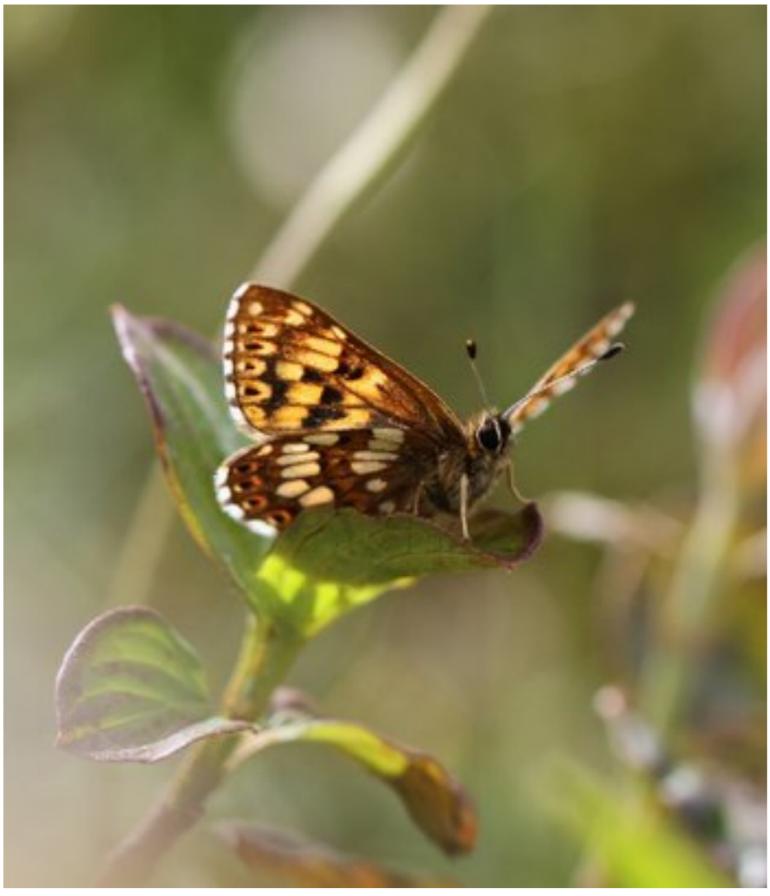
However, despite there not being a great deal of sunshine I very quickly came upon a Duke once I'd reached Bonsai Bank



And then another one



And when it brightened up for a spell it brought the Dukes out to play



At one point I watched 6 of them whizzing about together



I'm pretty confident that I saw at least 10, probably more, including this striking individual



When I first glimpsed it I thought it was a mini Marsh Fritillary!

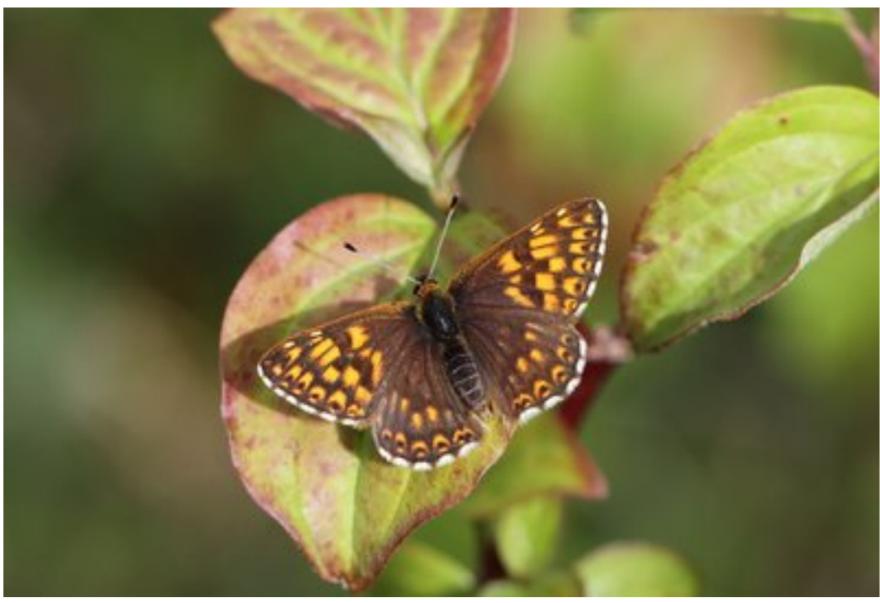


I don't think it has lost its colour through being worn as it looks pretty fresh to me





It's good to see this rare butterfly doing so well in Kent. I must go back later in the season to see how they're doing



Re: Hoggers

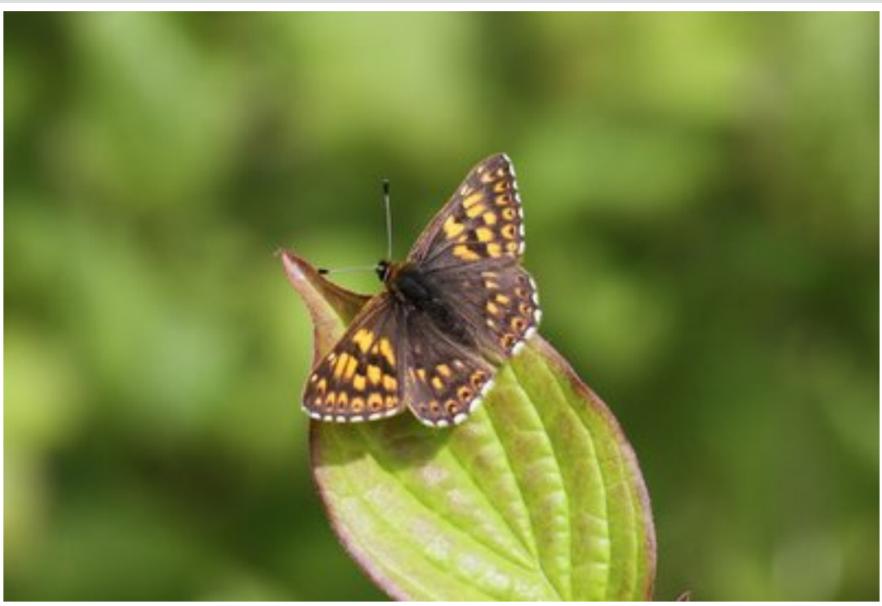
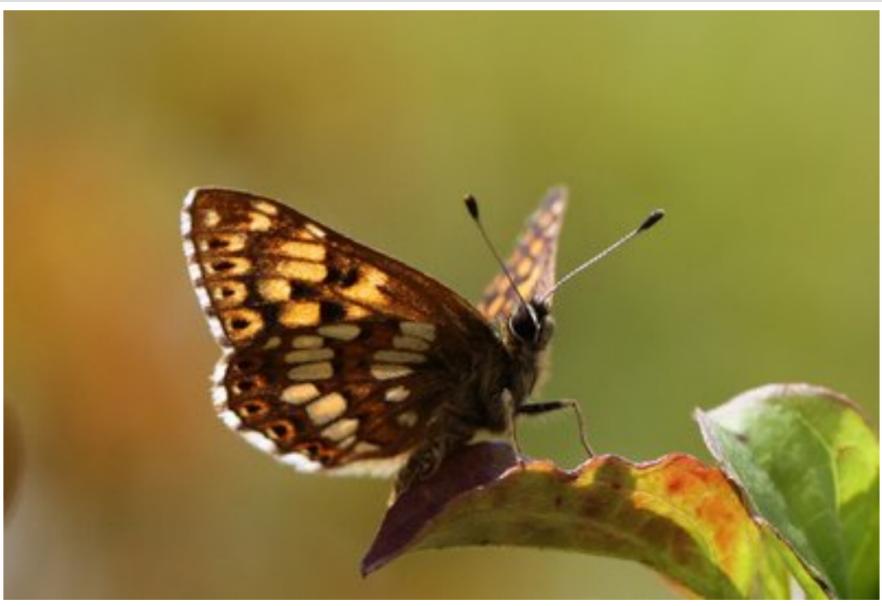
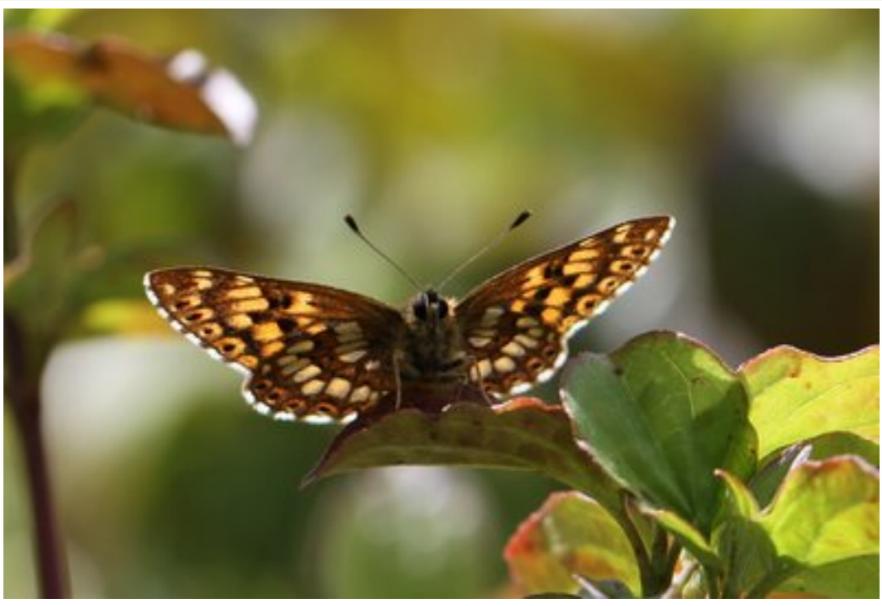
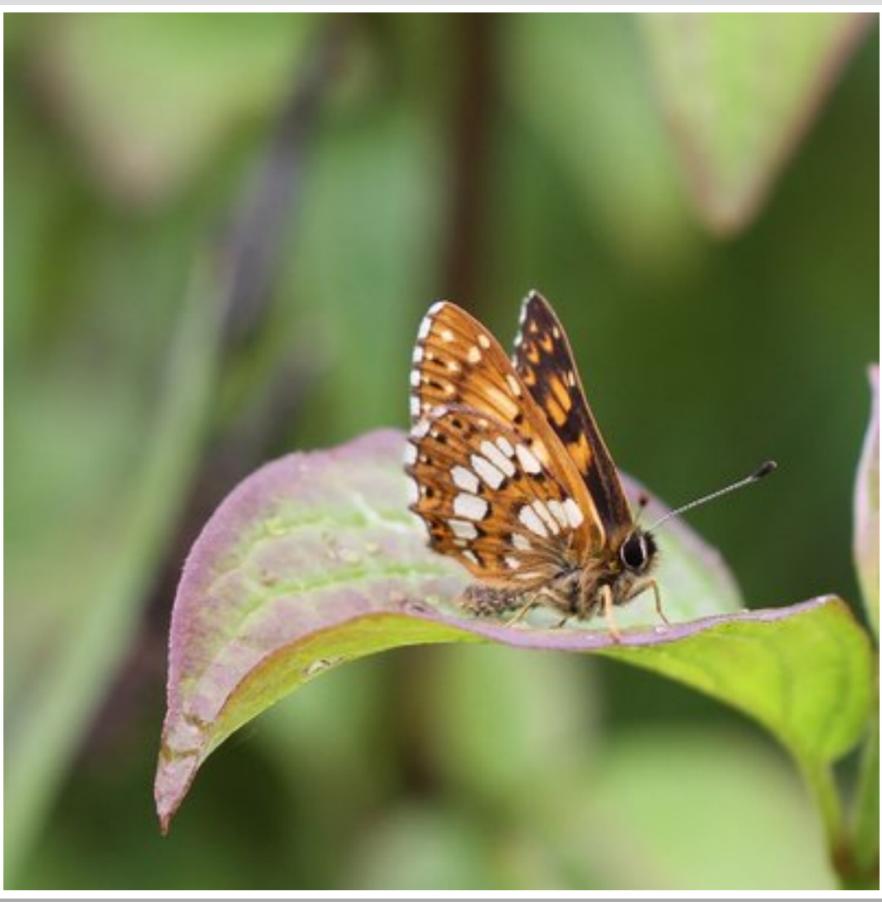
by Hoggers, 09-May-14 04:51 PM GMT

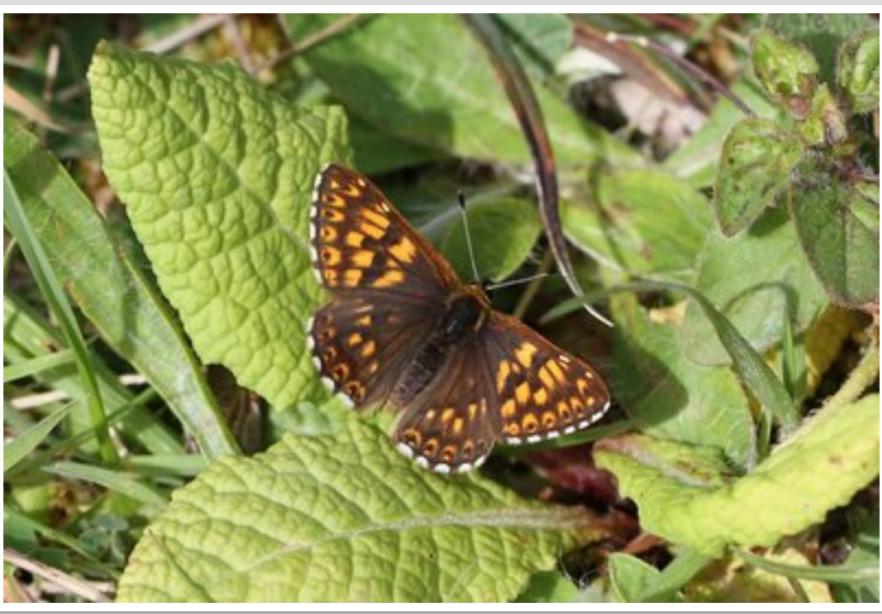
I couldn't resist going back to Denge Wood today for another look at the Dukes. Denge Wood is only 20 minutes from where I work so when I finished early I headed straight there arriving around 1130, timing it perfectly to get caught in a heavy downpour!

As the rain splattered down I watched a Dingy Skipper go to roost and then battern down the hatches



I scurried under a tree until the squall had blown through. The sun came out strongly and almost immediately the Dukes popped out all over the place





I saw around 8 Dukes today and putting aside my camera for a moment I enjoyed watching them chasing around, spiralling high as if inside an invisible chimney and then parachuting back down to their watching posts



The Dingy Skippers looked happier in the sunshine



And seeing them here reminded me of your comment, Wurzel about the Dingies I see at Folkestone: they certainly do appear to be more sandy coloured than the inland ones.

Whilst watching the Dukes I saw a Green Hairstreak which just before I took this photo was apparently egg-laying



I also saw Speckled Woods, several Green-veined Whites and a Small White.

It was a very rewarding visit to Denge Wood. The Duke is a rare butterfly and I'm fortunate to have one of its strongholds more or less on my doorstep, so I try to make the most of it



Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 09-May-14 07:58 PM GMT

Lovely series of Duke photos in your last couple of posts Hoggers.

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 10-May-14 02:09 PM GMT

Love your Duke photo's, Hogger's, I can't wait to go to Gaits Barrow to look for them, it's about an hour's drive and when the weather is bad it certainly is in the Lakes. Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 11-May-14 08:28 AM GMT

Great Dukes Hoggers and that roosting Dingy is a cracker, I've only ever seen them do that once before myself but I love that pose. 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

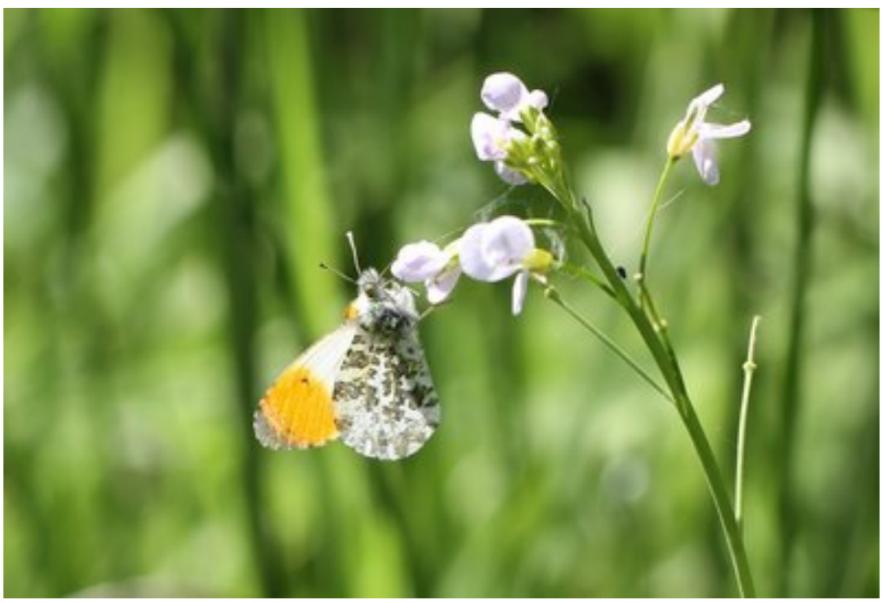
by Hoggers, 12-May-14 03:28 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments guys : Dukes are great fun to see and photograph. I'm very lucky to live within 30 minutes' drive of Denge Wood.

Some nice sunny spells today and unlike over the weekend, it was pleasantly warm. I went for a walk in Orlestone Forest where I saw 6 Brimstones



And 2 Orange Tips



A Speckled Wood and this bashed and battered Peacock



When I got home I saw a Holly Blue and a Large White in the garden.

I've had my eyes peeled for Common Blues and Brown Argus but no luck so far.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 13-May-14 02:20 PM GMT

I visited Alex Farm Pastures in Shadoxhurst, Kent this morning, just a 15 minute drive from home. There was a great deal of cloud about but in the breaks it grew pleasantly warm.

Alex Farm Pastures is a designated SSI and once was home to Pearl bordered and Small Pearl bordered Fritillaries. Now it's known for its Grizzled Skippers.

The sun was shining when I arrived and I soon found a Grizzlie



But then a flash of white caught my eye and when I looked more closely I saw it was another Grizzled Skipper but this time one that I believe is a *taras*



I was over-the moon!

It's a very striking butterfly indeed





Another Grizzled Skipper, this time of the more usual kind, suddenly appeared and paid court to the *taras* so looks like it was a female



I'd seen 5 Grizzlies by the time that the cloud clumped over completely



Then it started to rain so I headed back home.

A brief visit but rewarding



Re: Hoggers

by Buchan Boy, 13-May-14 02:35 PM GMT

Nice one on the *taras* Grizzled, Hoggers, bit jealous here! 🍷

Dave

Re: Hoggers

by Padfield, 13-May-14 08:51 PM GMT

Brilliant *taras*. Your first grizzlie has a lot of ab. *intermedia* about it. From the right hand side alone I would have said it was *intermedia*, but the left hand side is not so clear cut ...

Guy

Re: Hoggers

by Pauline, 13-May-14 08:59 PM GMT

"Buchan Boy" wrote:

Nice one on the *taras* Grizzled, Hoggers, bit jealous here! 🍷

Dave

Great find Hoggers – massively jealous here 🍷🍷

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 13-May-14 09:07 PM GMT

Hi guys, many thanks for your kind comments! I've never seen a *taras* before so you could have knocked me down with a feather when it appeared right in front of me!

Happy Hunting,

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by Lee Hurrell, 13-May-14 10:44 PM GMT

Lovely *taras*, Hoggers!

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 14-May-14 10:27 AM GMT

I concur, stunning little butterfly that Taras 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

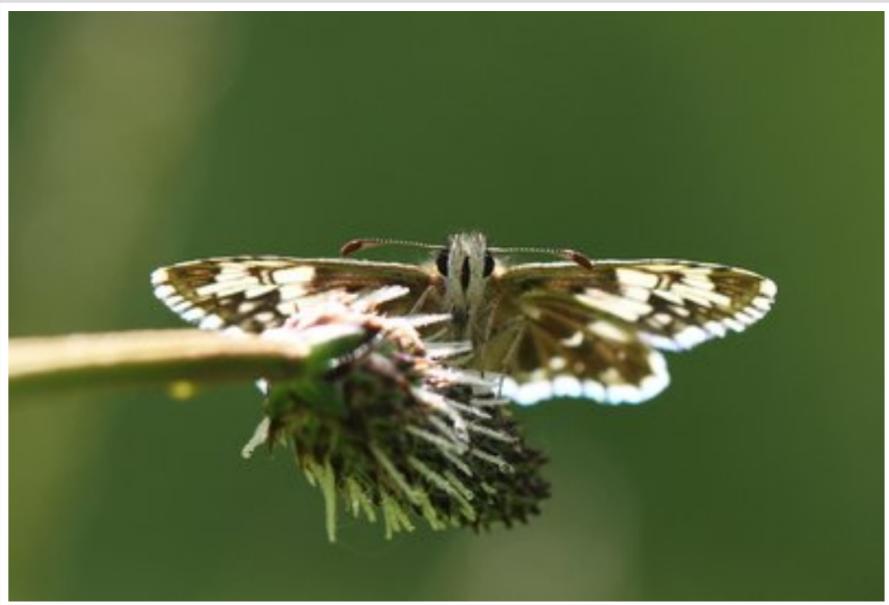
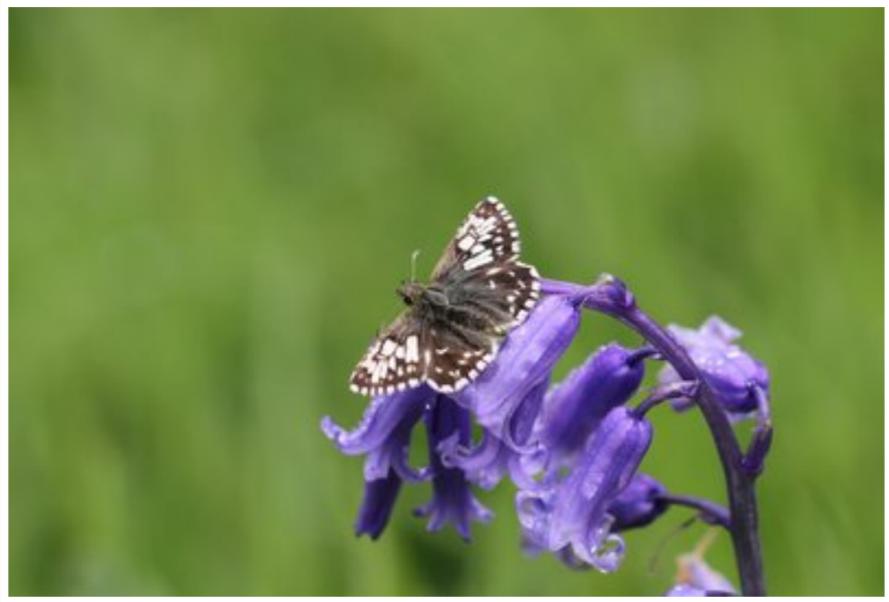
by Hoggers, 14-May-14 03:00 PM GMT

The *taras* was a real cracker, Wurzel, I'd no idea what a stunning little butterfly it is until I bumped into it yesterday.

So you can easily imagine what my first thought was today when I finished work early!



Yes, I went back to Alex Farm Pastures and relocated the *taras* which wasn't difficult because it was in exactly the same place as yesterday and it's such a dazzling creature it stands out a mile



And just like yesterday it drew not only my attention but that of another Grizzlie



There was a bit of a chase and the *taras* did a lot of wing fluttering but the end result was the two went their separate ways.

I managed to get some more underwing shots of the *taras* today





I also saw a Peacock, several Speckled Woods, a Green-veined White and an Orange Tip



More sunshine today than yesterday but still plenty of cloud about and so after an hour in the company of the *taras* when the sky had clouded over again I decided to head for home but I'd some very fond memories to take with me



Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 15-May-14 04:44 PM GMT

I paid my annual visit to the Pearl Bordered Fritillaries of Abbot's Wood today



As usual, I arrived when the sun was at its strongest and the butterflies were whizzing about like greased lightning, but I enjoy the chase and also seeing them do what butterflies do best on a sunny day



This was the closest I got to an underwing shot!



Lots of those Yellow Speckled moths about (I couldn't help wishing the PbFs were as numerous!)

But then a large cloud positioned itself overhead and although it remained warm, conditions suddenly became a lot duller. This had a calming effect on the butterflies which settled on bushes and on the ground with wings wide open



At one point I found 4 PbFs all quietly resting within a few feet of each other



I saw 14 PbFs in all



And when the cloud had passed it was "Chocks Away" once more!



I also saw Speckled Woods, Large and Green veined Whites and Brimstones.

Sadly, the Ice Cream Van wasn't there today (I usually have a celebratory "99") so I had to settle for one of my Marmite and Banana sandwiches instead



Still, mustn't complain....!

Re: Hoggers

by Lee Hurrell, 15-May-14 08:49 PM GMT

"Hoggers" wrote:

Sadly, the Ice Cream Van wasn't there today (I usually have a celebratory "99") so I had to settle for one of my Marmite and Banana sandwiches instead

😄 It's the small details that make these reports! 😄 I too have been known to partake in a celebratory "99", particularly at Denbies.

That dark, dusky PBF is a beauty, Hoggers. I only saw the one when I visited Abbots Wood on Tuesday 6th May.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 15-May-14 11:34 PM GMT

Marmite and Banana sandwich – sounds intriguing 😄 Cracking shots Hoggers especially the heavily marked PBFs 😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 16-May-14 11:48 AM GMT

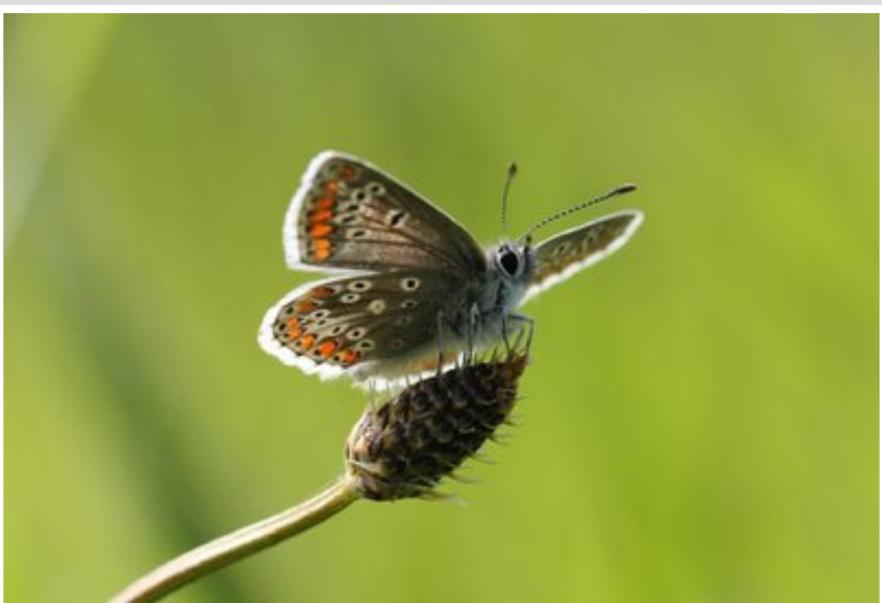
I remember an Ice Cream van parked at Durdle Door with particular fondness: It was several years ago and I'd just seen my first ever Lulworth Skipper so I treated myself to a "Jumbo 99" with lots of red sauce to mark the occasion!

I wondered if that boldly marked Pearl was a female?

Glorious weather today down here in Kent. On my dog walk I found two new butterflies, a Small Heath



And a Brown Argus





Just one of each.

I had a good look for Common Blues but no luck yet (Hopefully some will appear over the warm weekend to come.)

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 18-May-14 03:11 PM GMT

Fabulous weather down here in Kent but I haven't been able to get out chasing butterflies. Yesterday I went to a wedding, although I did spot a male Orange Tip crossing the garden of the reception venue (a butterfly hunter is never off-duty) and today I appear to have been drafted in to redecorate the bedrooms... But I asked for (and eventually was given) permission to walk the dogs.

And so with the Bosses parting words "And don't be gone all day!" ringing in my ears, I set off for my Patch.

It was already hot by 10am when I got to the fields. I thought that in the time available to me I'd try to find a Common Blue. They're plentiful here in season but today, despite checking the hot spots, I didn't see a single one. So they've yet to emerge on my Patch.

However, I didn't return home to resume my duties empty handed. While searching for Blues on the Birds-foot-trefoil I was astonished to find a single Green Hairstreak



In the thirty years that I've walked this Patch I've never seen one here before!

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 20-May-14 03:35 PM GMT

BLUE TUESDAY

Out with the dogs at 6 this morning I came across my first Common Blue of the year. Just the one, warming itself in the sun. I didn't have my camera on me but I took this encounter as my inspiration for the day and decided to visit a couple of sites where I hoped I'd be in with a good chance of finding more Blues.

First stop was Kingsdown, along the Warmer Road, for Small Blues. I'd teamed up with Brother Hoggles by this stage. We visit this area of shingle waste ground every year as it is home to a thriving Small Blue population.

Sure enough they were present in numbers



I saw around 30





Lovely to see



Full of vim and verve





Delightful little creatures



We also saw there, Small and Large Whites, Brown Argus, an Orange Tip, Small Copper and a Common Blue



I wish I could have taken a photograph of a Small Blue alongside the Small Copper because seeing them together at the same time really emphasised just how small Small Blues are!



After an hour with the Small Blues, Brother Hoggles and I set out for Lydden Nature Reserve at Temple Ewell, a fantastic butterfly site.

Within moments of stepping on to the hillside we saw our first Adonis Blue of the season



What a delight it is to see



We counted 12



Here we also saw Common Blues, Brown Argus, Brimstone, Speckled Woods , Dingy Skipper, Small Tortoiseshell and Large White

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 20-May-14 05:29 PM GMT

Great photo's Hogger's, they make me want to move South 😊 All these Butterflies people are seeing and nothing up here in the Blue shall we say, yet!
👍👍 Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 21-May-14 02:09 PM GMT

A great set of Blue shots 📷 and interestingly they show quite a range in wear so there's hope that I'll be able to get out and see a few more fresh Small Blues 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 22-May-14 03:05 PM GMT

Hi Goldie, you won't be wanting to move South when all your High Browns start to emerge in July!

Cheers Wurzel, yes you're quite right some were worn, some fresh and some in between. It's a great site for them. I wish I could have got a photo of a Small Blue alongside a Small Copper: I thought Small Coppers were small!

It's been mild down here in Kent but wet and windy. The sky cleared this afternoon so hopefully tomorrow will be more like Butterfly Weather.

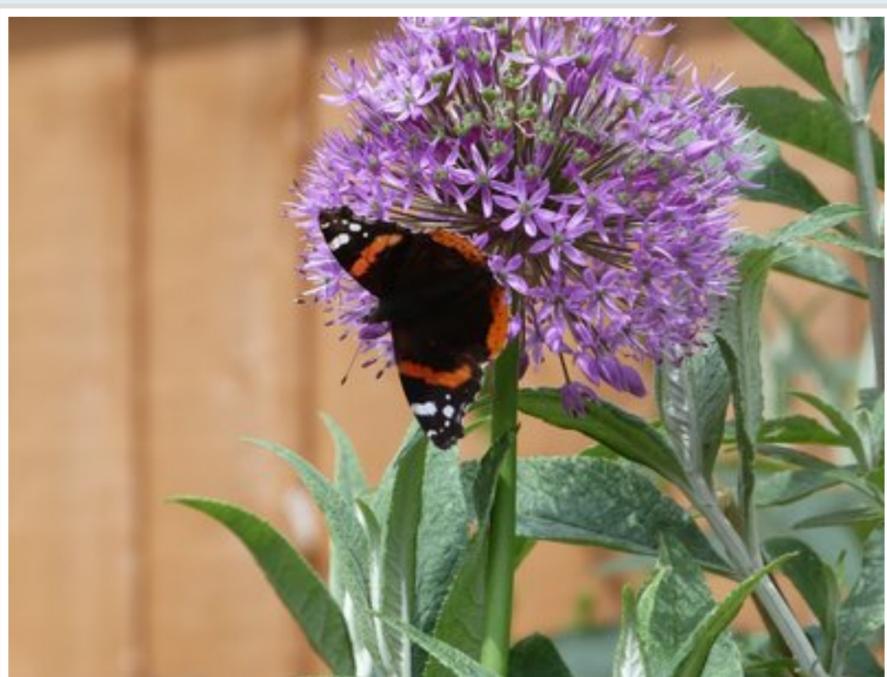
Gloomy though it was when I took the hounds out this morning I did bump into a Common Blue





They're just starting to show at this site.

And I was delighted to spot an all too rare Red Admiral in the garden



A welcome sight.

While I was up the garden I took a picture to show how it looks today



Quite a transformation on how it was before I began gardening for wildlife in 2012. I'm particularly proud of the Yellow Flags that you will see to the left of the picture: I "rescued" a clump from what is now a wilderness of concrete, brought it home and popped it in one of the new ponds that I installed last year. It has thrived and produced about 25 magnificent flowers.

(You'll see at the top of the photo that I also managed to snap the first Purple Emperor of the season...!)

And while I'm in "Catch Up" mode, of the 10 Blue Tit Chicks that hatched out in my nest box, sadly (and somewhat surprisingly given how mild it's been) only 2 have survived but both look in fine fettle and close to flying the nest





Ahhh!

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 22-May-14 05:03 PM GMT

What's the name of the plant your Red Admiral is nectaring from, Hoggers?

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 22-May-14 05:46 PM GMT

Hi David, it's Allium - I bought a bag of bulbs in the Winter, planted them and they've flowered this year, beautiful purple scented globes that are highly attractive to butterflies, bees and humans!

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 22-May-14 10:00 PM GMT

Thanks for the ID, Hoggers. Yes, I see how the flowers resemble wild garlic but the leaves look very buddleia-like.

You've certainly done your homework regarding plants that attract butterflies and you got your reward with that RA.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 25-May-14 04:17 PM GMT

Walking the dogs this morning I came upon a curious little bird that was racing up and down the muddy edge of a pond and abruptly stopping to have a look at me



I'd no idea what it was and so took a few long-range snaps



I hadn't noticed its bright yellow spectacles until I looked at the photographs



My Observer's Book of Birds tells me it's a Little Ringed Plover "a rare vagrant now become a Summer visitor".

Not far from this chap I found several Common Blues which have now fully emerged here



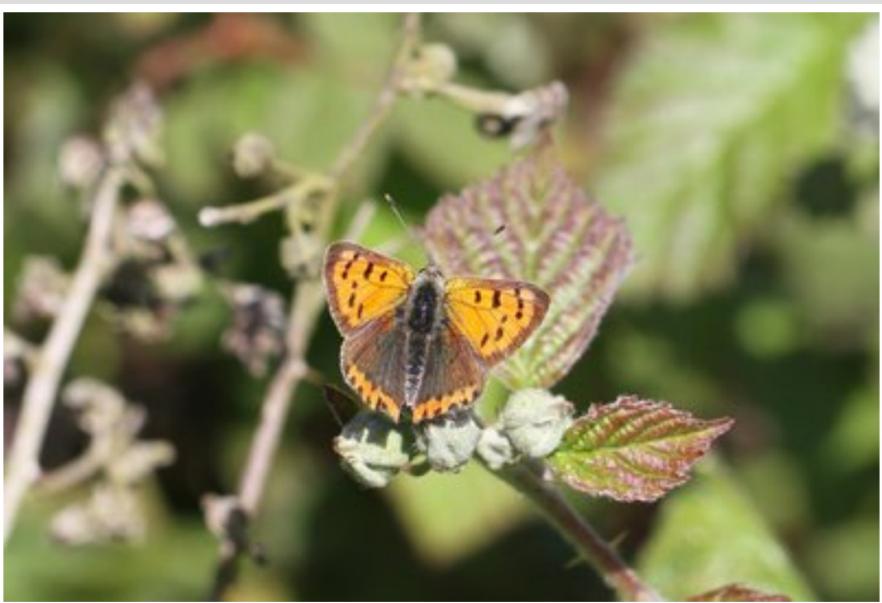
Whilst watching the Blues I heard a Cuckoo and a Turtle Dove calling, so all in all a very pleasant start to my day!

Perhaps it was finding a Little Ringed Plover that prompted me to go down to Dungeness, although it wasn't rare birds that I was interested in but rather butterflies and in particular the Small Coppers.

I found the place in full bloom



And certainly there are Small Coppers to be found amongst the flowers as you can see, but those still present are rather worn and fewer in number



But those left still ornament the flowers





Nonetheless, there has been a "changing of the guard" at Dungeness for just as this first generation of Small Coppers is now in its dog days, so the Common Blues have taken over and are now plentiful



I also found this poor one which although able to fly had deformed wings



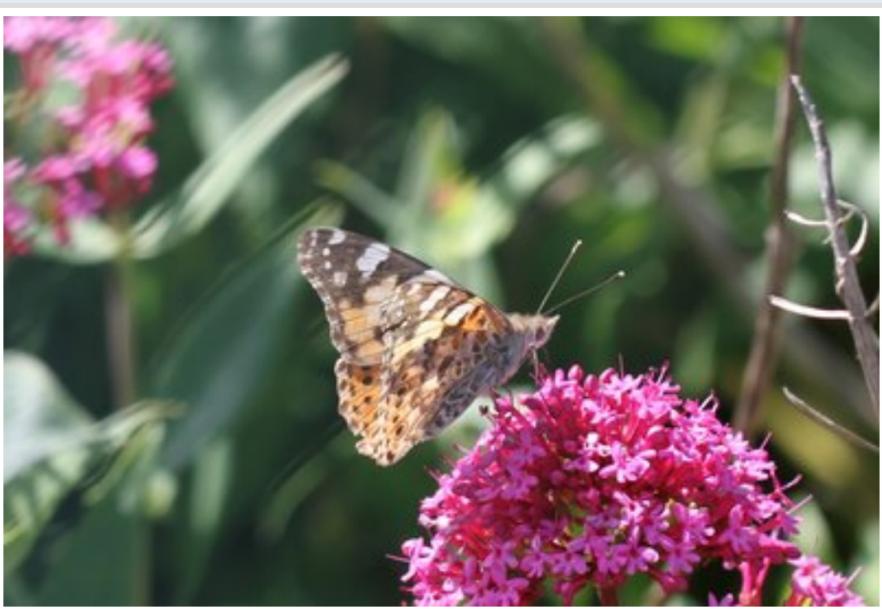
In addition to the numerous Common Blues I saw several Small Heaths



A Small Whites, 2 pristine Small Tortoiseshells, a Peacock

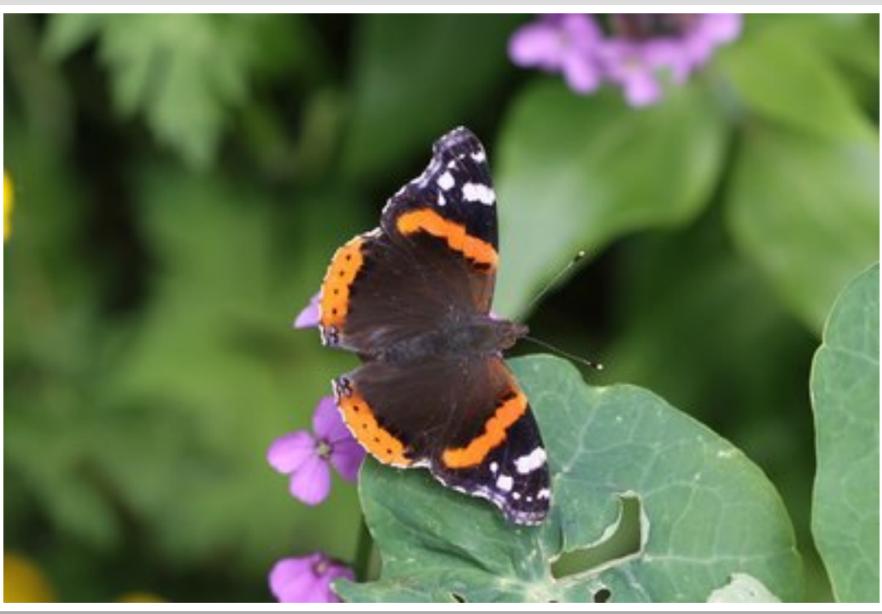


(which despite its condition was flying strongly!) 2 Red Admirals and, best surprise of all, 4 Painted Ladies



It seems there's some migration going on.

Back home I found 2 Red Admirals in the garden



So the day started with a Little Ringed Plover then went on to include Common Blues in profusion, my first Painted Ladies of the year and encouraging numbers of Red Admirals compared with last year: very nice!

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 25-May-14 05:09 PM GMT

Nice report and photos Hoggers 😊

Looks like you had better weather down there than we have had this weekend, rain nearly all day yesterday and a dull overcast most of the day today.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 25-May-14 10:15 PM GMT

Lovely Red Admiral shots Hoggers and great LRP – the yellow specks are diagnostic in separating this from Ringer Plovers (there are other ways but this is the most obvious) 😊🇮🇪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 01-Jun-14 03:51 PM GMT

Last friday I stopped in at East Blean Wood on my way home from work. It was cool and cloudy. I did find a Heath Fritillary but it was still wrapped up in its caterpillar stage!

Yesterday morning was warm and sunny. I took a walk around Orlestone Forest, eyes peeled for a White Admiral: no luck. But I did see a Red Admiral, Brimstones, Speckled Woods and an Orange Tip.

This morning on the dog walk I saw 4 fresh Small Tortoiseshells



And three Brown Argus



The Common Blue population has swollen to around 20, mostly males, with a mix of the worn



and the fresh





Good to see them on a rather gloomy day



Whilst there a Painted Lady came skimming through. I saw 4 last Sunday at Dungeness, so looks like they're on the move again.

I've got quite a large number of bees visiting the garden these days, the most common of which seem to be Tree Bees. Now and again I find a bumblebee in distress: they'll sit there looking unhappy, unable to fly, waving a plaintive leg at me. A few days ago it crossed my mind that I might be of some help to them. I wondered if they might have run out of fuel so I put a pinch of sugar on a plate, dissolved it in a drop or two of water and put the bee on the plate to see what would happen. Sure enough, the bumblebee would get a twinkle in its eye when it detected the sugar, extend its drinking straw and take on fuel. Its wings then begin to flutter ever more quickly and soon there was lift off.

Not a terribly practicable method of rescue in the field, but for use in the garden it's quite effective.

Re: Hoggers

by Willow, 02-Jun-14 03:05 PM GMT

Nice report Hoggers, surprising what you can see on a 'dog walk' and keep yourself fit as a bonus!!!

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 03-Jun-14 03:01 PM GMT

Hi Bill, yes, it's certainly nice to combine the two and "I'm just taking the dogs for a walk" is my perfect cover for a bit of butterflying!

Using just that excuse I went for a rummage around in a large Stinging Nettle patch by the river where I take the hounds. I see plenty of Small

Tortoiseshells and Peacocks here so guessed there might be caterpillars by now and as you can see I wasn't disappointed



I found large clumps of both Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars



I counted eight separate colonies of them in all.

Nearby there were two Brown Argus and a handful of Common Blues including the second female I've seen this year



I followed this couple for a while: the male was paying her court and tried on a bit of "abdomen curling" but she was having none of it.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 03-Jun-14 11:18 PM GMT

Great reports Hoggers 😊 That Small Tortoiseshell really stands out, really contrasting colours. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggars, 05-Jun-14 04:37 PM GMT

The butterfly that I most set my heart on seeing this year is the Marsh Fritillary. I've seen it only once before, some years ago, and I didn't see it well: just a single bedraggled specimen one cold day on Hod Hill. Since then I've intended to try to see them again but things never worked out, either when I

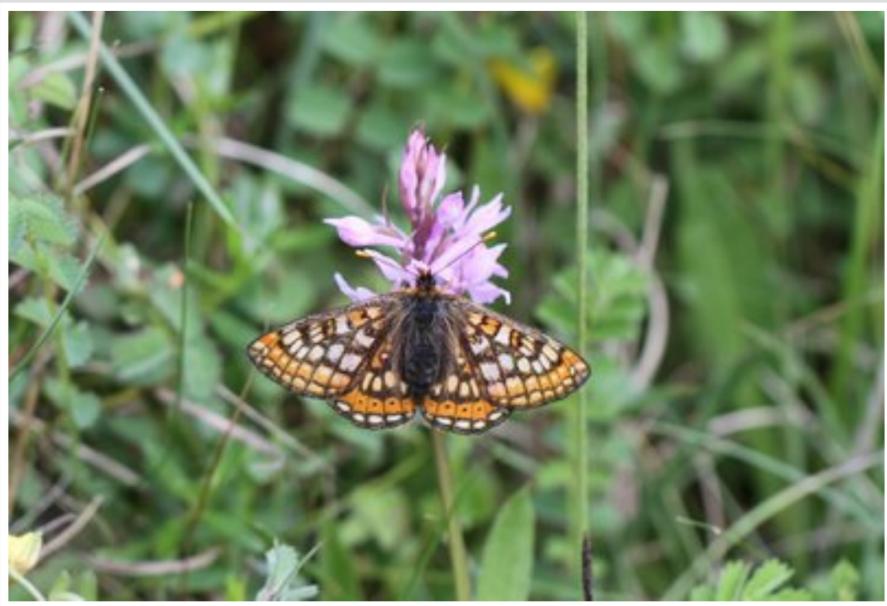
was free to make the trip West the weather was against me or if the weather was favourable I couldn't go. I just wanted to see them in numbers on a sunny day, flapping around having fun.

Well, I have at last succeeded in doing just that



I went West with my Dad and Brother Hoggles yesterday. We got to Cotley Hill near Warminster just as the rain had stopped and as the sun came out and my goodness did we see some Marsh Fritillaries





We stayed in the area overnight so returned to the hill again this morning



It's a marvellous site for butterflies (but wear wellies if you're going now as the track up the hill is a river of mud)

As well as the Marsh Fritillaries we saw Dingy, Grizzled and Large Skippers (my first of the season)



And a Small Blue



But it was the Marsh Fritillaries that really made it for us



After filling our (Wellie) Boots on Cotley Hill we drove to Bentley Wood for our first ever visit there. Wurzel had kindly sent me some guidance on how to find the place (and most importantly the Eastern Clearing): thanks Wurzel, much appreciated.

So within an hour or so of watching Marsh Fritillaries on Cotley Hill we were soon watching Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries as well!



Several fresh ones



and we watched a female depositing eggs amongst the leaf litter.

It was so good to see them



(and we also saw a tired looking Pearl bordered Fritillary there amongst the Small pbfs)

It was a wonderful trip, one we had long planned for and one we will never forget



Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 06-Jun-14 11:18 AM GMT

Cracking shots Hoppers 😊 - glad to help out with directions anytime 😊

Have a goodun

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 06-Jun-14 04:16 PM GMT

When I finished work this morning there was only one place I wanted to go: East Blean Wood. I'd seen Marc's posting in Sightings that the Heath Fritillaries were out, the sun was shining and the wood is only 15 minutes away from where I work: perfect!

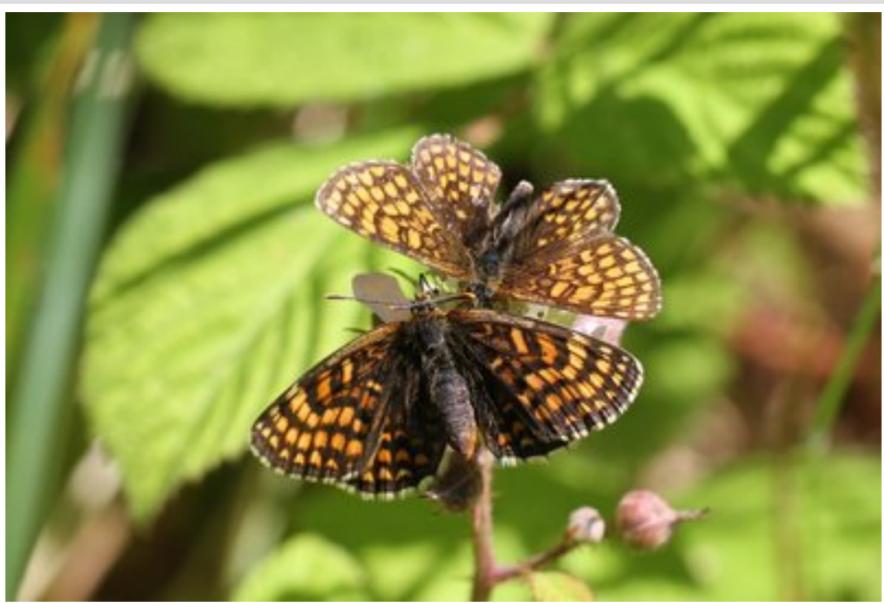
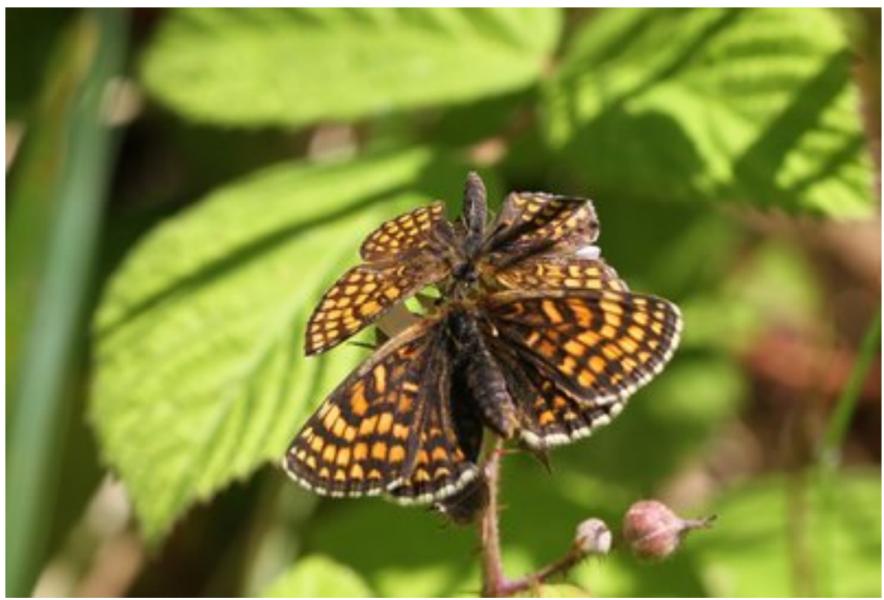
But when I got to the car park I was rather disappointed because after a good search around the car park area I only saw two Heath Fritillaries



The place seemed empty without them. In past years I've stepped out of my car and been surrounded by the butterflies but that certainly wasn't the case today. So I was feeling rather downcast at the near absence of fritillaries when I had the good fortune to bump into the Kent Wildlife Trust Warden who was there to walk his butterfly transect.

He said that numbers of Heaths at East Blean have fallen and that the best population is now to be found in West Blean Wood (accessed via Braggs Lane I think he said) where they've been on the wing since 20th May.

I asked if there are any good spots for them at East Blean as the car park area was, today at least, all but bereft of butterflies. He kindly showed me to a clearing a little way into the wood where I saw Heath Fritillaries but not in any great numbers (I'd say around 12-14 of them)



It may be that East Blean is a late site for this butterfly and that many more are on their way but just in case anyone-else finds the car park area as quiet as I did today here's some directions on how to find the clearing:

Take the path from the car park that is accessed by stepping over a tree trunk. This path then leads to another where you turn right and walk along a short distance until you see on your left that trees have been cleared. This is the clearing where the butterflies are



It's not much of a clearing though! The large trees are gone but since then a good deal of Sweet Chestnut bushes and brambles have appeared



But you can move about in there easily enough



I enjoyed watching the fritillaries. It was hot and they were active. I especially like to watch them glide, they look so dainty.

Fortunately now and again one would take a break and let me get close enough to take a photograph



I'll have to go back in a few weeks' time to see how they're getting on.

Re: Hoppers

by nomad, 07-Jun-14 07:48 AM GMT

Hi Hodggers

I went to East Blean last year without prior knowledge where to look, I believe I found your second site first, the newly cleared clearing where there was a mass of cowwheat, I only saw one Heath Fritillary. later, I came to the car park area and saw many heath fritillaries towards the End of June. Many were still fresh. Surely, one of the more easy butterflies to see if you do not mind travelling far, for those that do not live in Kent. You step from your car and there they are. I went by train and bus.

Regards Peter.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 07-Jun-14 11:37 AM GMT

Hi Peter, yes it's very nice to park up, open the door and see the butterflies!

There's a large patch of Cow Wheat close to the car park but when I arrived yesterday it was in heavy shade. I did find a Heath caterpillar there last week though.

The "clearing" I was shown to by the KWT Warden and where I found a dozen Heaths yesterday had very little in the way of Cow Wheat. The Warden said that the area had been cleared two years ago and both Cow Wheat and Heath Fritillaries thrived there but now unfortunately the "clearing" is rather overgrown with a consequent loss of Cow Wheat.

I had a pleasant surprise when walking the dogs this morning. In amongst the Common Blues and Brown Argus I not only saw my first Meadow Brown of the year but came across this Small Blue



I've walked this area for 30 years or so and never before have I seen a Small Blue!

I don't know of any Small Blue colony near by



Interestingly it was only a few weeks ago that I came across the first Green Hairstreak that I have ever seen on my Patch.

Who knows, maybe tomorrow I'll see a Swallowtail!

Re: Hoggers

by Willow, 07-Jun-14 03:20 PM GMT

It must be great to just park up and see **Heath Fritillary**, where I venture out for the species on Exmoor its been described as 'extreme butterflying' owing to the rough terrain 😬 but I guess that's butterflying...taking the rough with the smooth and these days I like smooth 😄

Great report and photo's Hoggers 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 07-Jun-14 11:07 PM GMT

Cracking shots of a butterfly I would love to see Hoggers 😊🍷 I have had Heath Frits as a Target for the last three years but I just can't bring myself to make the long journey to get them...I might have to bite the bullet this year.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by millerd, 07-Jun-14 11:21 PM GMT

Lovely Heath Fritillaries! The first time I saw them at East Blean, in one of my photos you can make out my car in the background – they were that close to the car park.

Dave

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 08-Jun-14 03:48 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments,guys. I'm very lucky to work so close to where the Heaths live. The car park at East Blean is always the place to see them and I hope numbers pick up there soon, but the "clearing" where I found a dozen or so is quite close to the car park in any event.

Today I went down to Dungeness. Lots of Small Tortoiseshells



And Small Heaths





Also saw a Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Large White, a Meadow Brown and Common Blues.

The biggest surprise came with this splendid female Clouded Yellow that was busily taking on nectar



It was the only one that I saw and I was delighted to see it





As always, I had fun trying to get a "Fly By" shot!



But it was nice just to sit back and enjoy being with such a beautiful butterfly





Re: Hoggers

by David M, 08-Jun-14 04:35 PM GMT

Majestic open-winged shot, Hoggers. 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 08-Jun-14 11:33 PM GMT

Cracking Clouded Yellow Hoggers 😊 I love the backlit shots, they always look great when in that pose 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 10-Jun-14 06:31 PM GMT

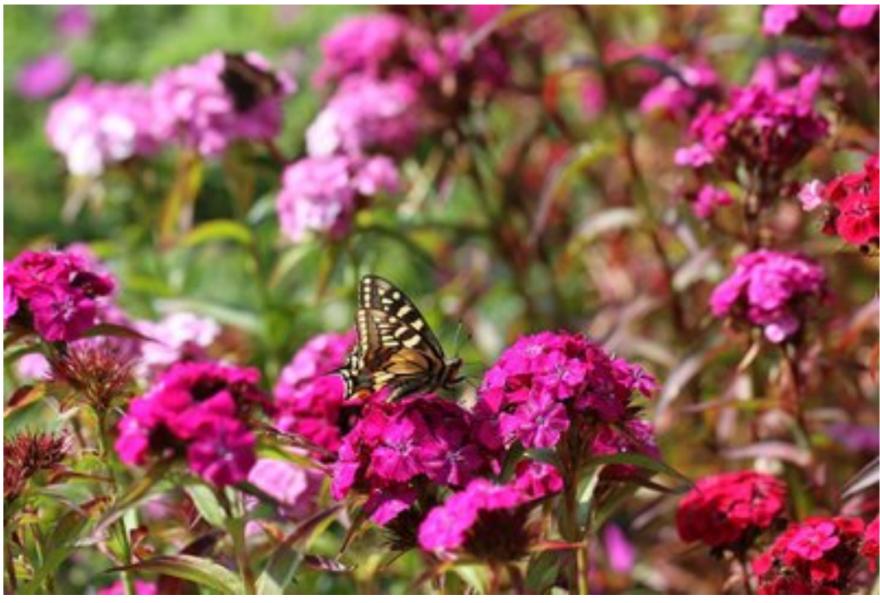
I paid my annual visit to the Doctor yesterday



What a generous man/woman the Doctor is to welcome Swallowtails AND their admirers!



My Dad, brother and I watched two Swallowtails in the garden, chasing each other and then visiting the flowers



How wonderful it must be to have Swallowtails just outside your front door!



We spent most of our time here



but did venture onto the reserve where we saw 3 Swallowtails flying over the reeds

On our way home we stopped off at Westleton Common where the Silver Studded Blues were out and about



And doing what they do best



We visited only a small part of the Common and our time there was limited but we managed to see about 8 of them



Another memorable trip!

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 10-Jun-14 09:02 PM GMT

Wow! You've really put some effort in lately, Hoggers.

Nice to see these species in image form. Excellent stuff.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 11-Jun-14 09:26 AM GMT

Swallowtails 🍷🍷 Silver Studs 🍷 I need to get out more 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggars, 12-Jun-14 01:31 PM GMT

Hi David, I've put in some effort but my mileage must pale into insignificance compared with your epic journey in search of Chequered Skippers! A Butterfly Too Far for me, I fear!

Hi Wurzel, I'm sure you've got some exciting butterfly trips planned and I look forward to reading about them!

My day got off to a good start with a Clouded Yellow on my morning walk with the hounds

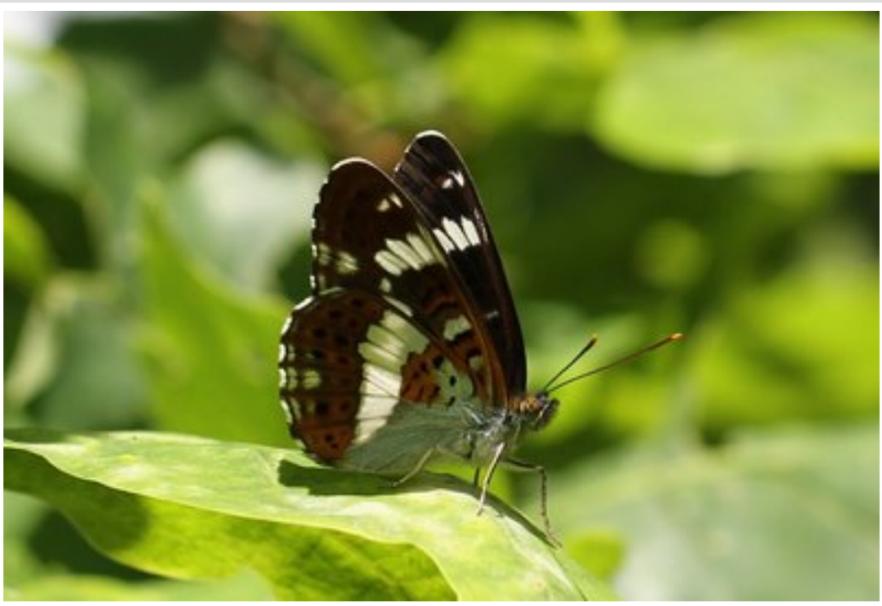


I also saw 14 Small Tortoiseshells!

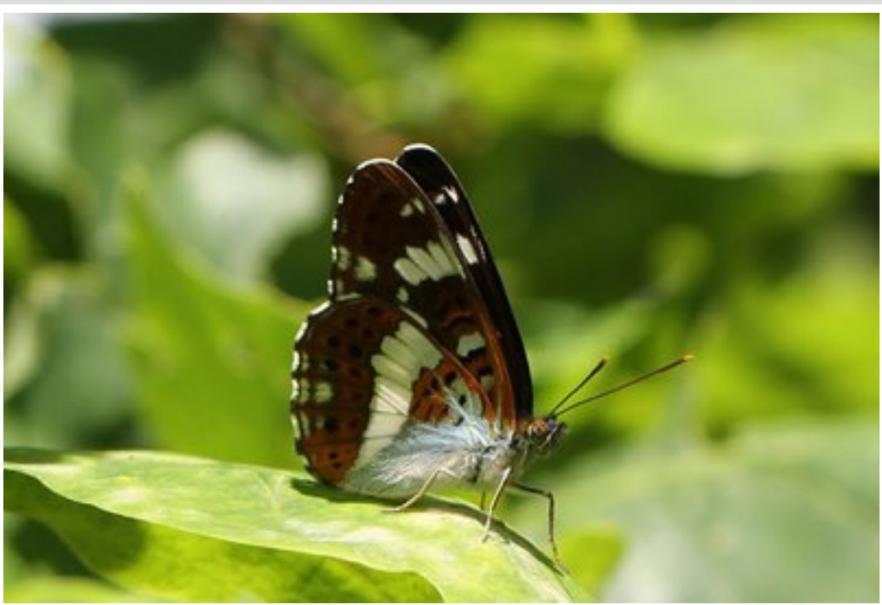
With the sun still shining I decided to take a stroll around Orlestone Forest on the look out for White Admirals. Well, after about an hour I finally came across one



I was over the moon to see it



There was a ditch between us so I couldn't get close but nonetheless had the opportunity to take a few photos and to watch it flying in its green and leafy world





Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 12-Jun-14 11:36 PM GMT

I just can't keep up with this Hoggers 🤪😄 White Admirals – I'm still waiting for my local Silver Studs to emerge! Still no Large Blues though, at least there's that. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Mike Robinson, 13-Jun-14 05:05 PM GMT

Some stunning pictures.

I think these Diaries are very good; I'm gonna learn a lot about Butterflies &c. And enjoy doing it!

Re: Hoggers

by Pauline, 13-Jun-14 06:58 PM GMT

Lovely White Admiral Hoggers, both the butterfly and your photos. Oh, and I mustn't forget your Swallowtails which I gazed at longingly and with envy 🍷🍷

Re: Hoggers

by Paul Harfield, 14-Jun-14 12:03 AM GMT

Hi Hoggers

Great to see you have found some Clouded Yellows on your patch 😊 Hopefully there will be plenty more around again this year and maybe some more Long Tailed Blues as well 😊 Your Swallowtails are also lovely, that is one I have not seen. If things keep going the way they seem to be maybe we wont have to travel very far to see those either 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 15-Jun-14 03:47 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments,guys. Much appreciated.

I needed a blood transfusion after my visit to Orlestone in search of White Admirals. The Mozzies had at least an arm-full off me.

Note to Self : Buy some "Jungle Formula"!!

Seeing Swallowtails in the Doctor's garden is a wonderful experience. They fly in from the RSPB Reserve to nectar and you can get up close to them, they know no fear of us and it's just a magical thing to have them around you. When we visited there was only one other observer present so it was quiet and peaceful.

This weekend has been pretty grotty down here in Kent, very cloudy during the day (the cloud maddeningly disappears early evening!) and cool. Not much chance of seeing any Clouded Yellows on my Patch today. I took this photo of Monty on our mid-morning stroll and you can see the sky



Notwithstanding the weather, I did come across a few Meadow Browns, a Common Blue and four Small Tortoiseshells



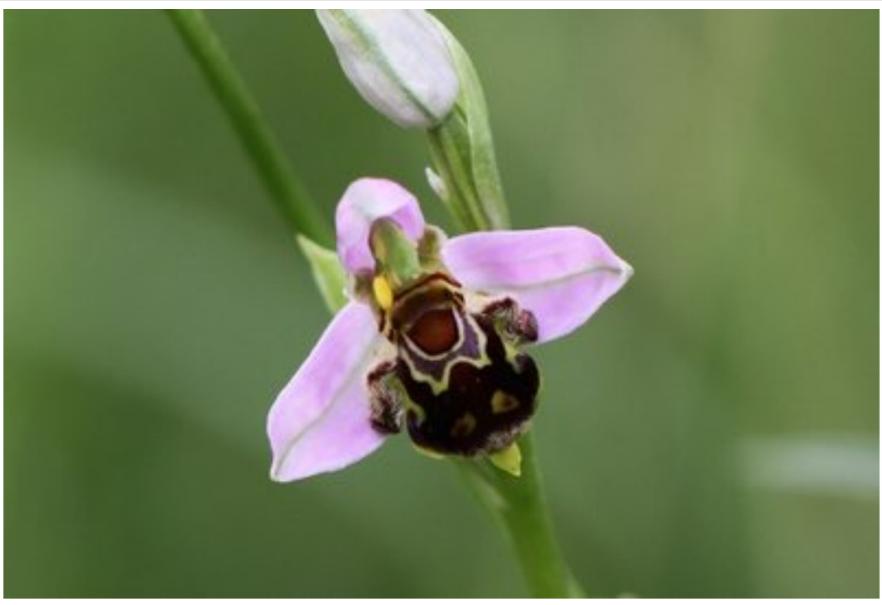
I flushed a Red Admiral which quickly settled down out of the wind



Then came across two Brown Argus in a more sheltered spot (where I glimpsed a Large Skipper before it vanished)



A bit further on I found a few Bee Orchids



And a beautiful cluster of Pyramidal Orchids which glowed in the dull conditions





I hope the weather brightens up soon : after the last couple of weeks of lovely sunshine I'm not used to such cool conditions!

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 15-Jun-14 09:47 PM GMT

Lovely Brown Argus Hoggers 😊 I know what you mean about the weather – as soon as the news channels or papers report "a heatwave fortnight" you know it's time to dig out the Wellies and the brolley 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

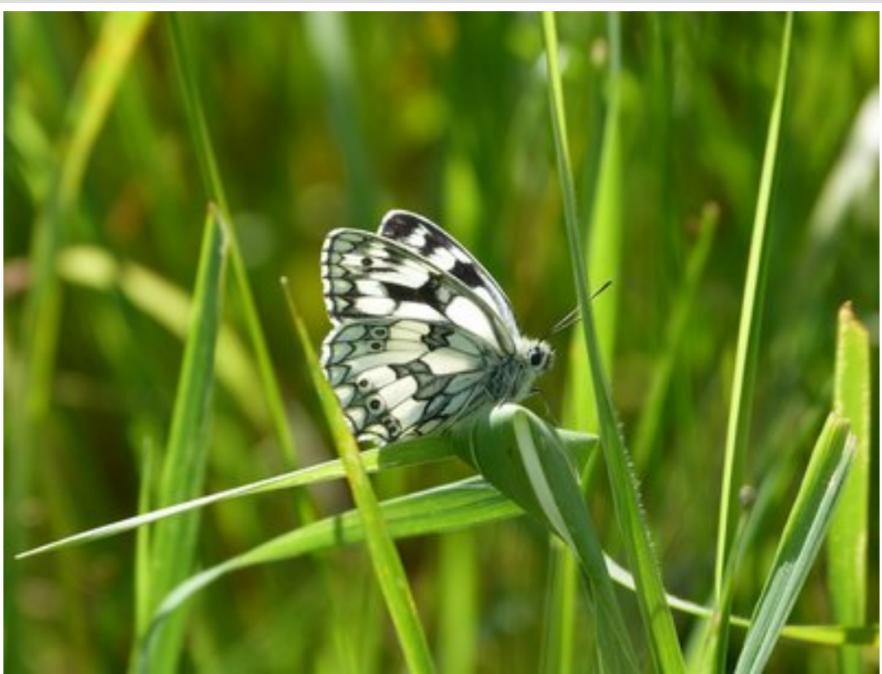
Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 19-Jun-14 04:40 PM GMT

On my morning walk with the dogs I was delighted to come across a Marbled White



It's the first I've seen this year



And a good two weeks earlier than I'd expect at this location



I'd just got over my surprise at seeing the Marbled White when a busy little streak in the grass revealed itself to be a Small Skipper



Another first for me



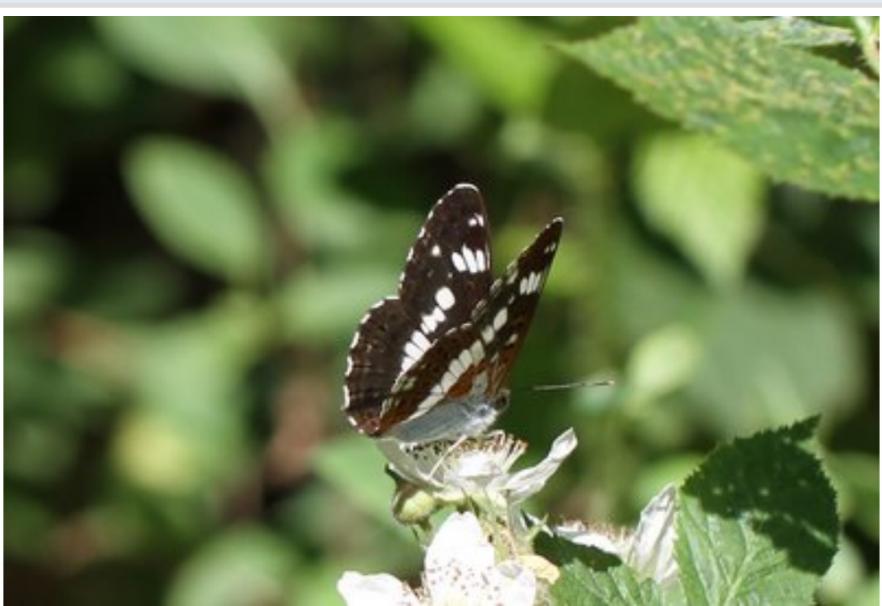
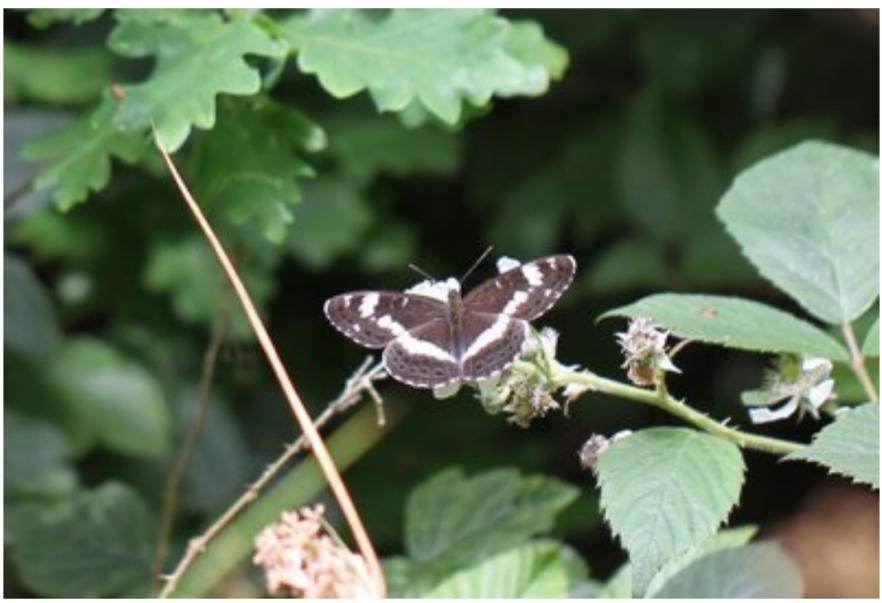


And again at least two or three weeks earlier than I would expect here



By 11am I was walking around Orlestone Forest. It was very warm indeed by now and the Mozzies (together with some very formidable looking Biting Flies) were having a field day with me. I really must get some "Jungle Formula"!! I keep forgetting..!

Anyway, I saw 12 White Admirals, all highly active





Five Brimstones, many Meadow Browns, and a few Large Skippers



I then came upon the butterfly I'd hoped to see. It was hunkering low down in the cool grass



A Ringlet



Of the five Ringlets I saw, most were bobbing up and down the rides but I managed to get a few photographs of a resting individual



Loss of blood aside, it was a very rewarding visit.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 19-Jun-14 11:07 PM GMT

Glad to see the loss of blood didn't cause camera shake Hoggers 😊😄 Lovely set of White Admiral shots, I especially like the way the light has shown up the black on black markings on the first one 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 20-Jun-14 03:29 PM GMT

After an early finish at work I paid a visit to Lullingstone Country Park in North Kent. I go there most years to see the Dark Green Fritillaries. I'd no idea whether they were out yet at this site but decided to give it a go and I'm glad I did



No need for "Jungle Formula" here!!



How many did I see? Well, it's difficult to say as sometimes I seemed to be surrounded by them



And then just as suddenly they all seemed to disappear!

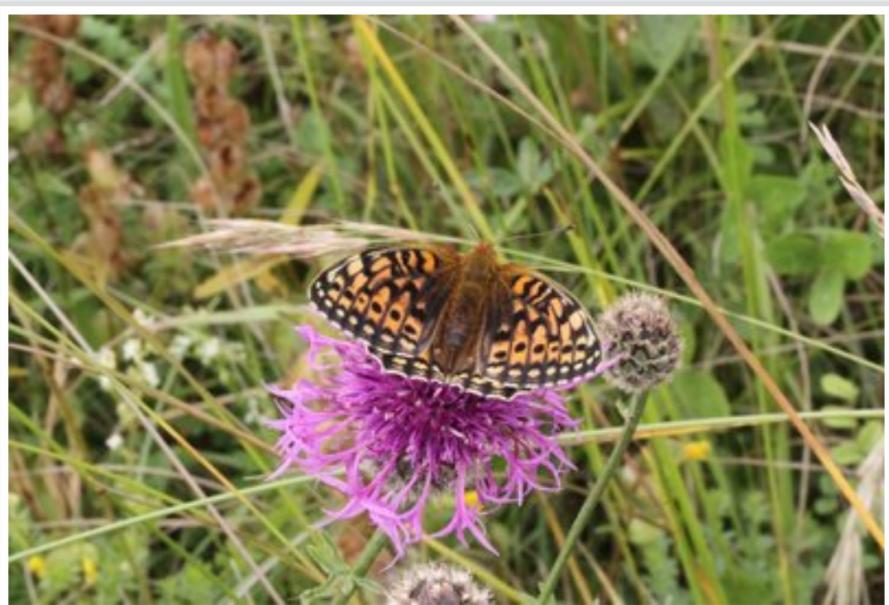
But not for long



I'd say there were between 20 and 30



I saw this heavily marked individual



Then I happened upon this group of three



They'd found a disgusting porridge of poo at the mouth of a burrow and were so happy with it that they were totally oblivious to me



They look better on flowers though!



Any one who doesn't know where to find them at Lullingstone: from the visitor centre car park walk up the meadow to the wood. Don't go in the wood, turn right and you'll come to the golf course. When the fairway is clear of golfers, cross to the flower-rich bank that you'll see ahead. That's where the DGFs are



Well worth a visit



Such a beautiful butterfly



(Lots of other butterflies there too, many Ringlets, Meadow Browns, Common Blues, Brown Argus, Marbled Whites, Small and Large Skippers and a Small Tortoiseshell)

Re: Hoggers

by Lee Hurrell, 20-Jun-14 04:29 PM GMT

Wonderful stuff, Hoggers.

Lullingstone is not far from where I grew up in Sevenoaks. I've visited the nearby Roman ruins but not for DGF – something I will have to put right.

When I lived in Kent recently, I saw it written (by BC Kent branch) that this could be the best site for DGF in the country.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 21-Jun-14 04:27 PM GMT

Cheers Lee, it's the only site for DGFs in Kent that I know of (good for orchids too, I'm told). It's rather odd, being bang in the middle of a golf course, but you're welcome to visit the butterflies just so long as you don't get on the fairway when the golfers are playing thorough!

On my patch today I saw many Meadow Browns, four Large Skippers



A Small Skipper cooling off down in the long grass (it was hot this morning!)



And a single Marbled White. There were 12 Small Tortoiseshells



Including this one which was a little worn but had eye-catching large white flashes



Along the river I found this batch of Peacock caterpillars



And a splendid Comma



Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 21-Jun-14 11:22 PM GMT

Great reports Hoggers with greta photos 😊 I especiALLY like the Large Skipper as it looks like a right cheeky choppy in that posture 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 22-Jun-14 03:02 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel, Skippers are just bursting with character and as for being able to suddenly fly off backwards! A tad frustrating when you're hoping to take a photo but you've got to admire them!

Very hot on my dog walk today. Marbled White numbers are building and the same goes for Small Skippers



Numerous Meadow Browns, just a couple of worn Common Blues left, about 12 Small Tortoiseshells and as a bonus today, this Clouded Yellow



I followed her about



it was clear that she was egg laying, so hopefully there'll be more to come in late Summer



Re: Hoggers

by NickMorgan, 23-Jun-14 12:28 PM GMT

Hoggers,
You have just answered a question I just asked someone here! I was thinking that last year there were a lot of Clouded Yellows seen in southern England and even one here. The ones down south were seen to be laying eggs and given the mild winter I was wondering if any had made it through. Maybe

there is hope that we will have some more Clouded Yellows up here this year.
Great pictures of the Dark Green Fritillaries, too.
Nick

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 23-Jun-14 07:07 PM GMT

"NickMorgan" wrote:

I was thinking that last year there were a lot of Clouded Yellows seen in southern England and even one here. The ones down south were seen to be laying eggs and given the mild winter I was wondering if any had made it through. Maybe there is hope that we will have some more Clouded Yellows up here this year.

Nick, we even had spring emergees in south Wales that had obviously successfully overwintered, and given that conditions haven't been particularly poor at any time thus far, I'd expect an even bigger number than last year by the end of the summer.

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 23-Jun-14 09:49 PM GMT

Some great reports and photos Hoggers, I particularly like the sequences of Dark Green Fritillaries and Clouded Yellow 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 24-Jun-14 04:19 PM GMT

The Clouded Yellow was in the same field where I saw them for the first time last year. Lots of Clover, Bird's Foot Trefoil and Co there. I will keep my eyes peeled for more!

This morning I visited Reculver Country Park hoping that the White Letter Hairstreaks would be out. I arrived at 10am, rather later than I'd hoped, and it was already very warm indeed.

As luck would have it I came across my first WLH almost immediately upon arrival at the spot that I visited last year (although then it was early August)





Over the next 90 minutes I was able to easily spot them, mostly as brief "fly pasts" but also when they were on the plentiful Bramble and Privet flowers



During the course of my visit I'd say I saw 9 WLHs



By about 1130am it was very hot and I could no longer find any of the butterflies. I saw one fly off from the Brambles to roost high in a tree so perhaps that's where the others were too.

I also saw Commas, Red Admirals, Small Tortoiseshells, Small Skippers, Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns, Speckled Woods and a Large White



Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 24-Jun-14 11:27 PM GMT

Great to see someone else has been able to get some shots of Whitters Hoggers 📷 😊 I saw my first at Bentley this weekend but they did 't come down

for any photo ops 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 25-Jun-14 02:29 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, I had a bit more luck with Hairstreaks today as well!

My day started off with the usual dog walk. It was rather cool and breezy. As my spaniel thrashed his tail in the long grass he sent up Meadow Browns and Marbled Whites left, right and centre but I managed to creep up on one roosting Marbled White before he came along and knocked it flying



I then decided to have a stroll around Orlestone Forest. Before going I spray painted myself with "Jungle Formula". I still got bitten but not quite so much. I'm sure I saw a Mozzie wearing a gas mask (although to be fair I think the "Jungle Formula" fumes had got to me by that stage..)

I soon came across White Admirals





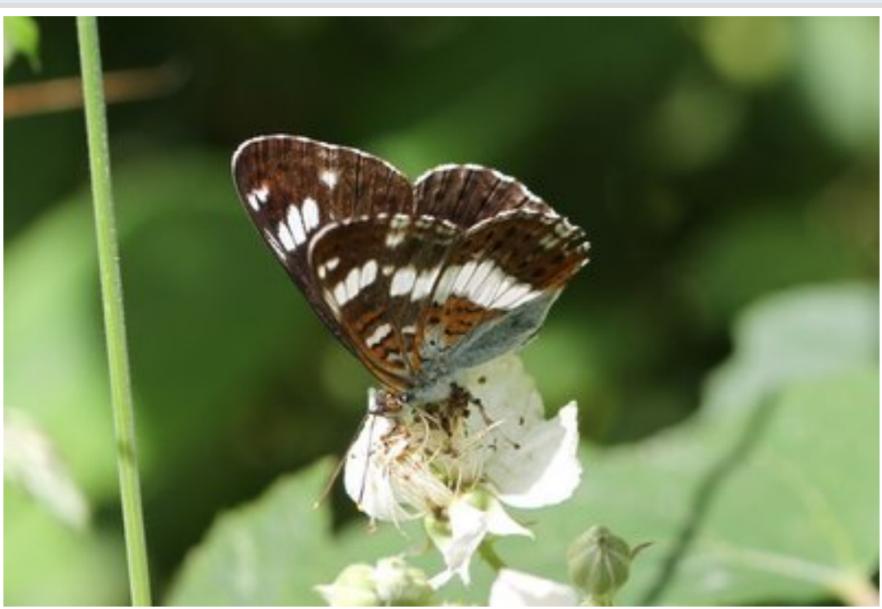
I saw 25 in total



There's something child-like and playful about them

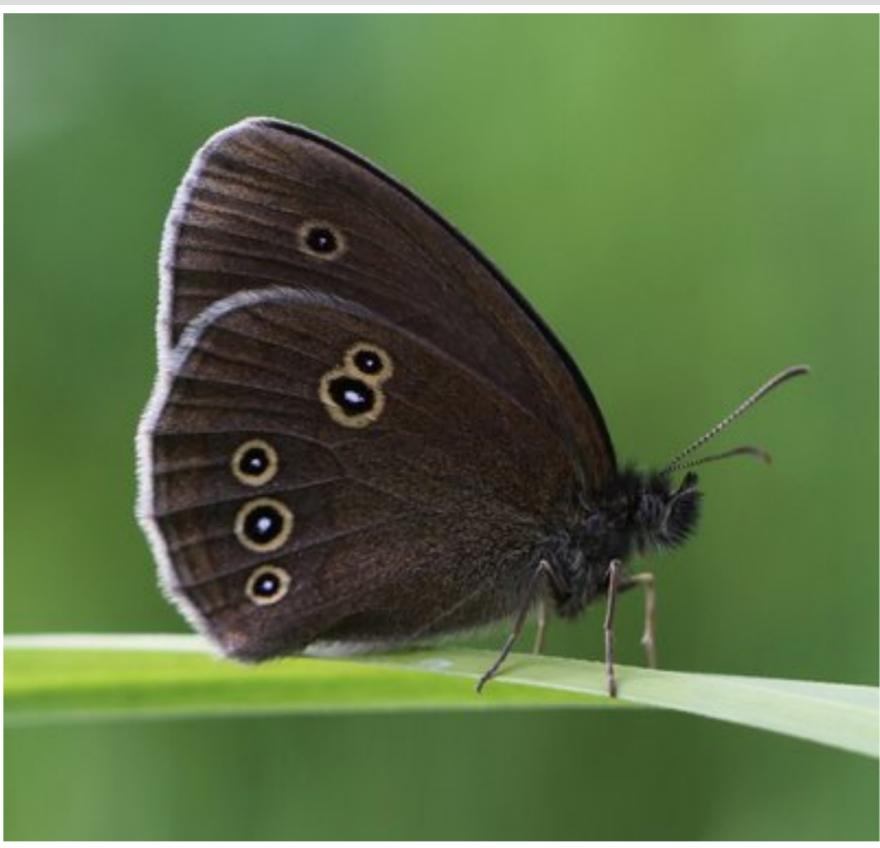


I spent a long time just watching them



Beautiful butterflies!

There were also numerous Ringlets



And many Meadow Browns, a few Small and Large Skippers, Red Admiral, Speckled Wood and one Marbled White.

After watching the White Admirals I set off for home, just ambling along, not looking for anything in particular, when purely by chance (and just before I would have trodden on it) I saw a little butterfly on the path. I moved him onto a grass stalk



A Purple Hairstreak



Poor chap looked in a sorry state but nonetheless, still beautiful



He was on the path and in deep shadow so it was rather cold. I couldn't leave him there so enticed him onto my finger



And walked him a little way from where I'd found him into the sunshine. He responded quickly to the warmth by opening his wings.



I set him down and after a minute or so to my delight he took off on those deformed wings of his and flew up into an Oak tree!



It was certainly an unexpected way for me to see my first Purple Hairstreak of the year!



Re: Hoggers

by David M, 25-Jun-14 09:34 PM GMT

What an unexpected find, Hoggers!

Purple Hairstreak at such close quarters is a real bonus.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 25-Jun-14 11:28 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Hoggers – you really did strike lucky with Hairstreaks 😊 Brill White Admirals too 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 26-Jun-14 10:11 AM GMT

It was exciting to find a Purple Hairstreak and to see it at such close quarters. Thank goodness it could still fly.

I saw my first second brood Small Copper this morning



And when I saw this butterfly I thought I'd found an Essex Skipper but looking at the photograph I now believe it's a female Small Skipper



If anyone thinks differently I'd appreciate it if you could let me know.

Cheers,

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 26-Jun-14 02:24 PM GMT

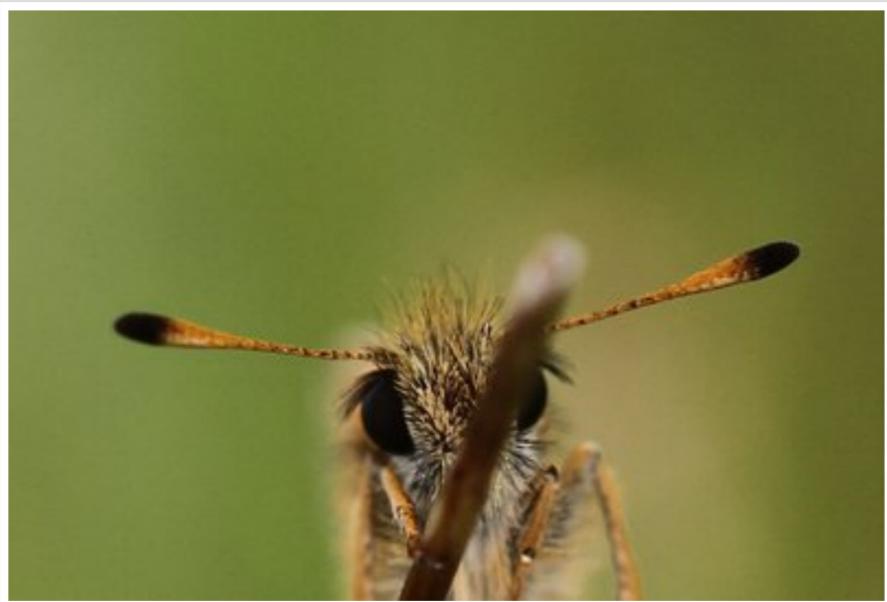
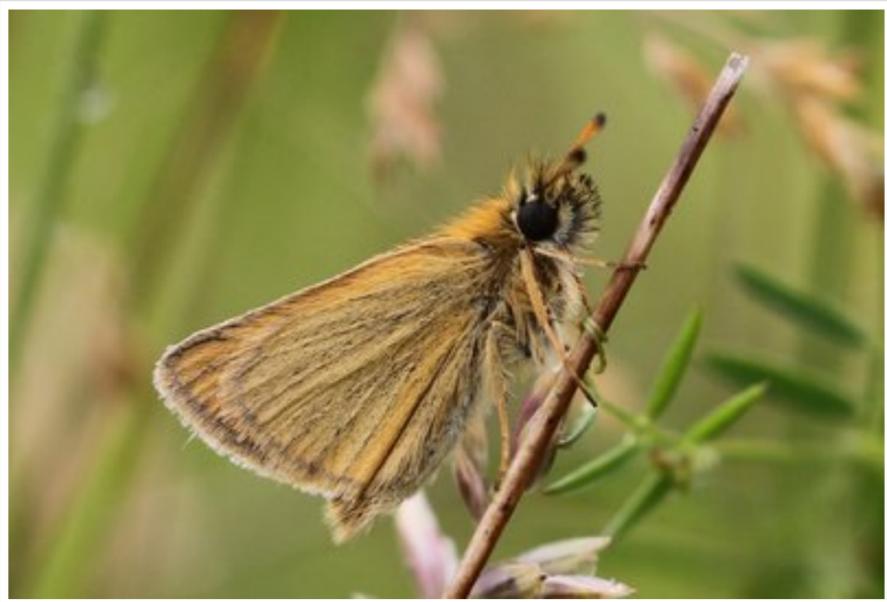
I love that type of backlit Small Copper shot Hoggers 😊 I reckon it could be a Small as the tips of the antennae seem slightly 'tipped' and not as rounded as Essex, mind you I could be wrong – I get the hang of Smessex each year by the end of their flight but by the time I next encounter them I've forgotten all that I learnt the previous year 😊

Have a goodun

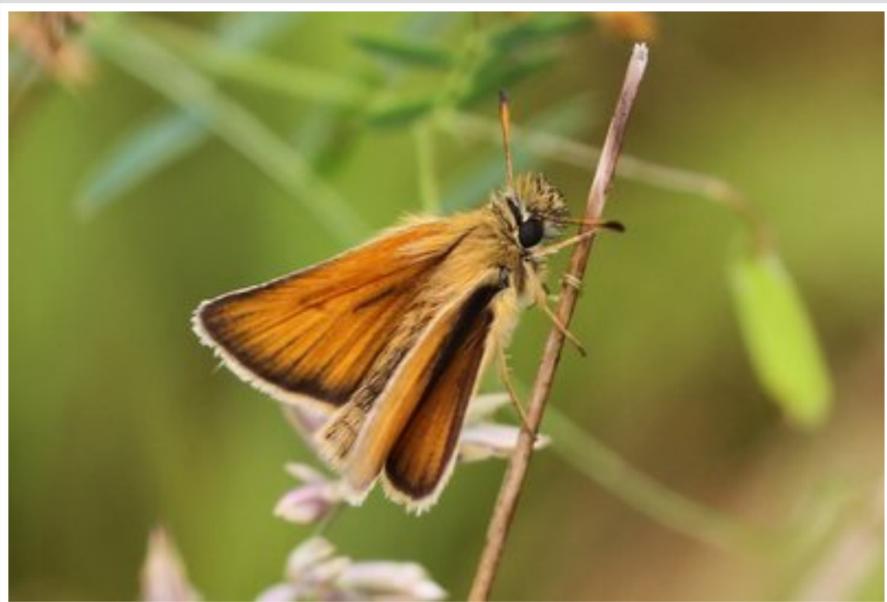
Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 28-Jun-14 04:06 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, I think it was a female Small Skipper too, particularly as I came across an Essex Skipper this morning and had a chance to refresh my memory of what they look like

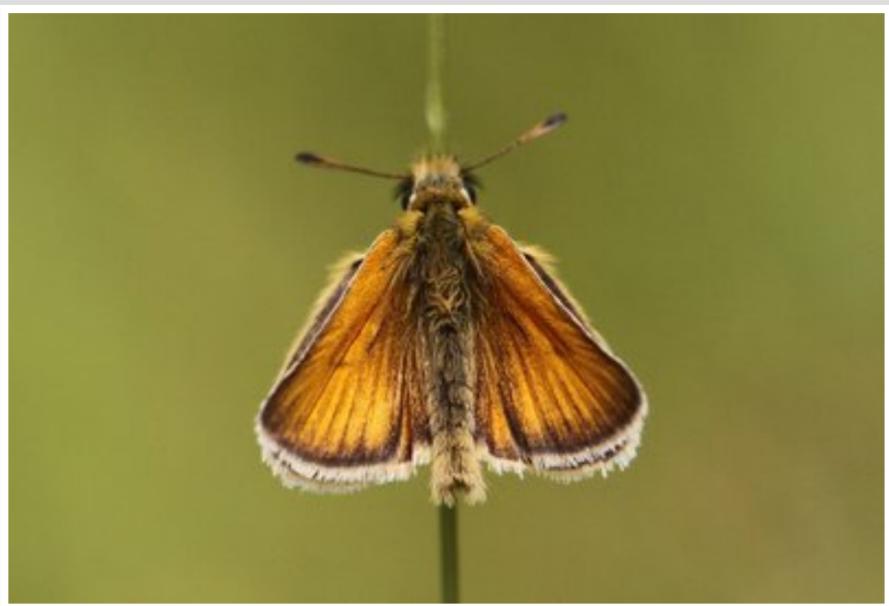


I only found two amongst the Small Skippers on my patch





They appeared last year on 27th June, so they're bang on time





Many Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns and Small Skippers too



Summer days!



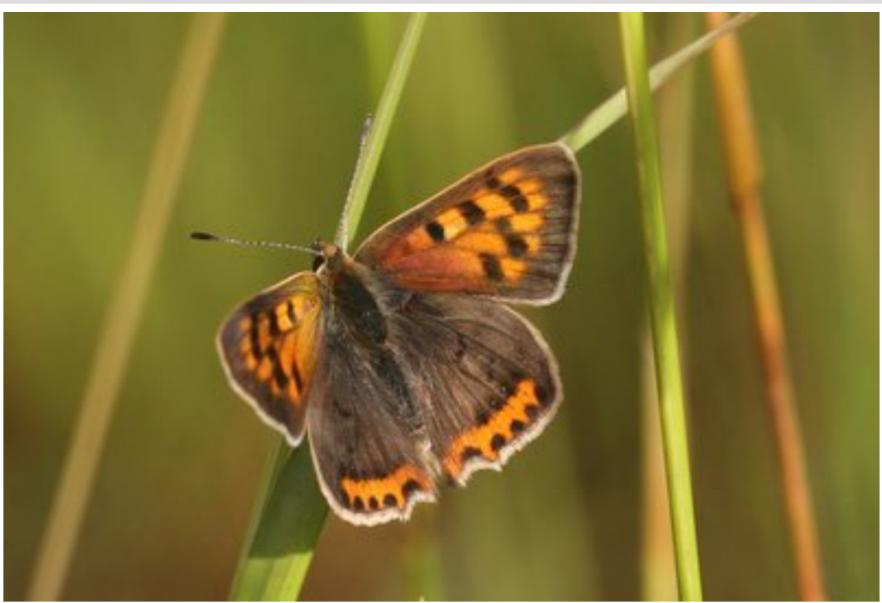
Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 29-Jun-14 03:52 PM GMT

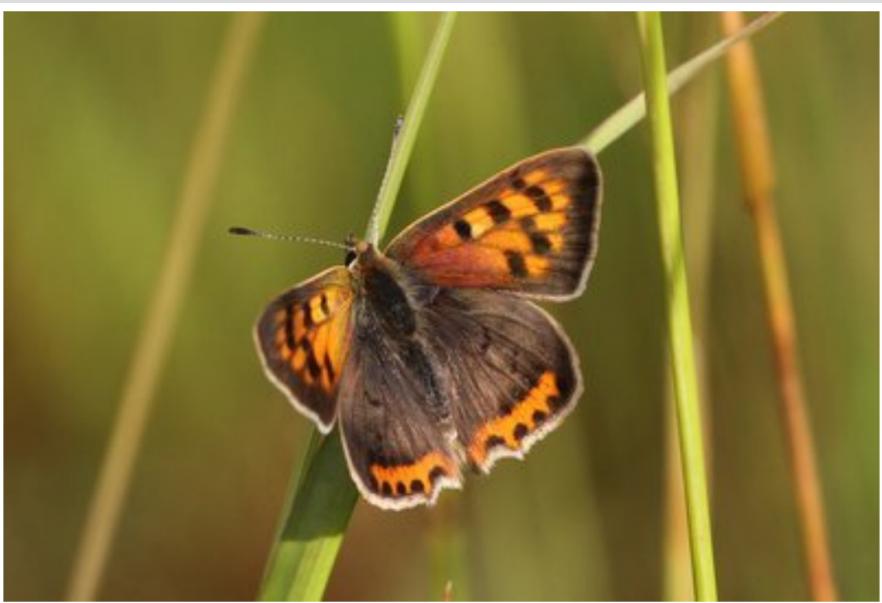
Early morning out with the dogs and Skippers



Just 7am yet the Marbled Whites and Meadow Browns were active too and I came across this gorgeous Small Copper which to my eye appeared very brown

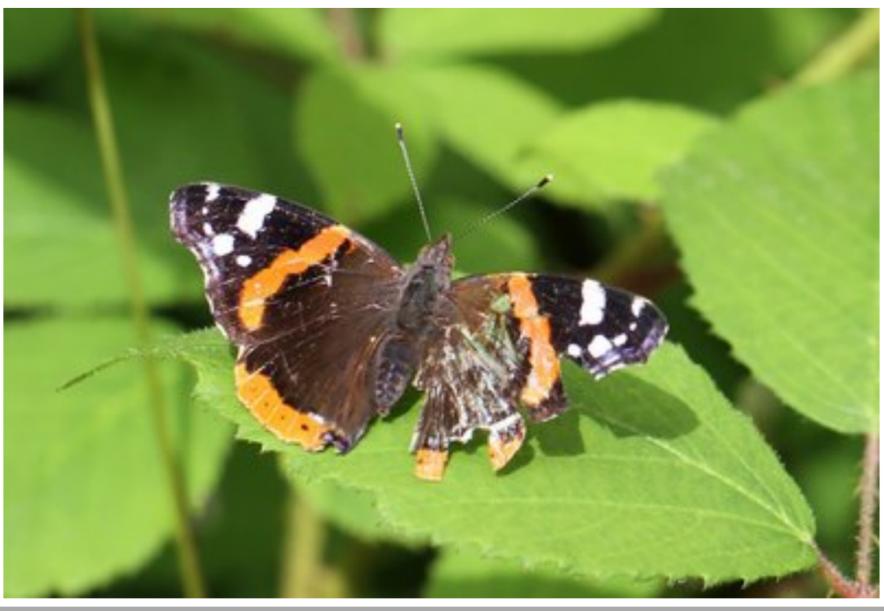


When I looked at the photos I could see it had a beautiful smokey burnish to it

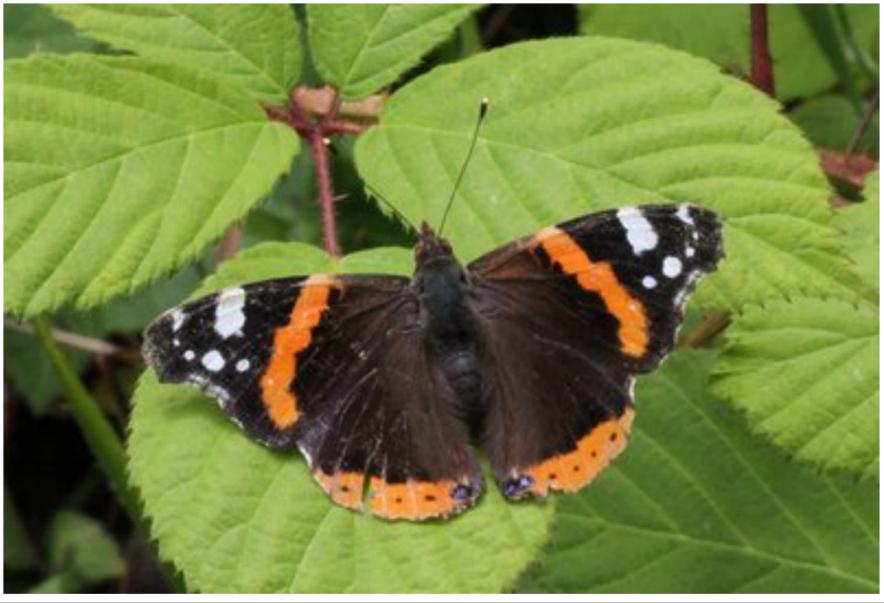


I had to go to Canterbury to do some shopping this morning but managed to combine drudgery with pleasure by popping in to East Blean Wood on my way home. Rather than search the car park area I walked directly to the clearing where earlier this month I'd found Heath Fritillaries.

Not much in the way of Cow Wheat though I did see a few clumps of it. The first butterflies that I came upon were Red Admirals and White Admirals sharing the brambles



He's obviously been about a bit! But this one has fared better



And something had had a go at the White Admiral



A Large White flew overhead and then I saw my first Heath Fritillary lazily flapping towards me



There were quite a few about, most rather tired-looking but some comparatively fresh, either sunbathing or nectaring



I enjoyed watching them fly, they seem so dainty and sedate



Within seconds of this fritillary settling down to bask in the sunshine he was seen off the premises by the "no nonsense" Large Skipper



Leaving him in no doubt just whose patch it was!

Whilst following the fritillaries about, a fast fluttering motion low in the undergrowth caught my eye. I bent down and found myself confronted by a BeheMOTH!



An Elephant Hawk Moth. What a splendid animal it is. It was constantly fluttering its wings as if to warn me off. I took the hint and moved away to spend more time watching the Heath Fritillaries



A pleasant way to spend a late June sunny Sunday morning.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 29-Jun-14 11:19 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Hoggers - those Essex Skippers are fabulous - I need to find me some of those 🍷 Love the Heaths too and the Small Copper certainly does look smoky 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 02-Jul-14 04:02 PM GMT

I went for a wander around Dungeness this morning as I wanted to see some Small Coppers. The whole place is in bloom and there are hundreds of butterflies to be found. Meadow Browns and Small Skippers were numerous



There were several Small and Large Whites and I saw my first Gatekeepers (5) of the year



I saw good numbers of Small Heaths and particularly enjoyed watching them chasing around. Here's a picture of Small Heaths and their shadows!



My target for the day, the Small Copper, was present in high numbers

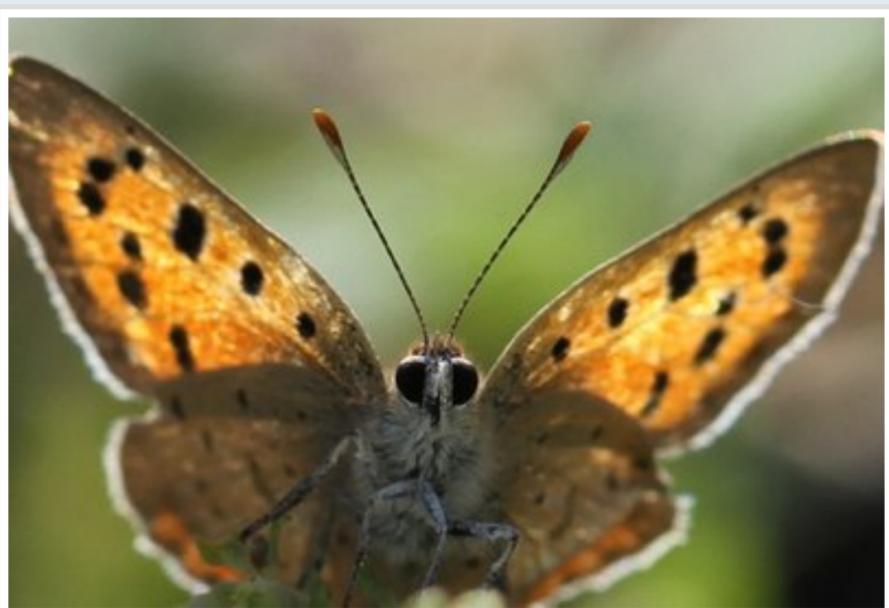




Little Crackers



Some quite worn but always full of character



Ever vigilant and ready for a punch-up!

Such a delight to find them so plentiful here



Although the first Common Blues appear to be over I did see 5 fresh Brown Argus





Content in their own little flowery world



What with Coppers and Skippers and Small Heaths and Brown Arguses all whizzing about in the long grass I had quite a frenetic time trying to take photographs but fortunately even Small Coppers need to take a break now and again



Then you can sit down and just enjoy being with them



Re: Hoppers

by David M, 02-Jul-14 10:34 PM GMT

You **really** have an affinity with Small Coppers, don't you, Hoppers?

I haven't seen one personally for a few weeks now and I hope they will burst forth over the coming few weeks so that we can delight in their presence.

Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-14 07:54 AM GMT

Fantastic shots of a brill butterfly Hoppers, the little cracker is certainly that 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 03-Jul-14 04:09 PM GMT

Warm thanks for your kind comments, Gents: I wonder if there are any other locations in the UK with Small Copper populations as large as at Dungeness?

I had an early finish at work so I thought I'd drop in to Lydden Nature Reserve on my way home to see if there were any Chalkhill Blues yet. I usually only start to think about Chalkies in late July but everything seems to be running so fast this year and I'd read a report in "Sightings" of them being out in Sussex, so I thought it was worth a try.

Well, out they most certainly are



On the hillside I immediately came across three chasing around



I'd arrived at the hottest part of the day so others were just sitting quietly



Several more appeared



In total I saw around 15



It won't be long before there are thousands here



I found one female





As for other butterflies, I've never seen so many Marbled Whites, they were everywhere, Ringlets, Meadow Browns, Small Heaths, Large Skippers too. It was now too hot for me out on the hill so I headed back to the car feeling very pleased at having seen the Chalkhill Blues right at the start of their season.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-14 11:11 PM GMT

Cracking shots Hoggers 😊👍 I keep checking my local Chalkhill site but none emerging yet but they can't be far off now.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Willrow, 04-Jul-14 08:43 PM GMT

Yes indeed Hoggers, most of us are chasing our tails just trying to keep up with the species emerging so quickly one on top of tother' 😊

Your Chalkies are a delight 😊 among my many favourite species, at last count there were another 58 or so 😊

Enjoyed!

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

Re: Hoggers

by Maximus, 05-Jul-14 11:40 PM GMT

Great to see that the Chalkhill Blues are out in Kent, Hoggers, your PD represents Kent at its best 😊

My sister lives in Hythe and Lydden is one of her favourite sites, which she plans to visit next week. I guess that the Chalkhill Blue numbers will have increased by then.

Mike

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 07-Jul-14 03:25 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments Gents, there'll be hundreds of Chalkies out at Lydden very soon, a spectacular sight.

Today I visited Beckley Wood in East Sussex just up the road from Rye. It's the first time I've been there but it's been on my radar since reading about it in Dave Brown's PD last year. It's a site that Dave recommended for seeing Silver-washed Fritillaries. They're scarce in Kent. I've seen the odd one at Hamstreet Woods and rather more at High Elms in North Kent so another site close to where I live was of interest, even if it meant crossing the border into Sussex..!

I arrived there at about 1030 and it was already very warm and sunny. Using the entrance on the charmingly named Starvecrow Road I was immediately on a wide flower-lined bright ride and Silver-washed Fritillaries were zipping up and down at speed but occasionally settling



And I was delighted to witness for the first time the Silver-washed Fritillary courtship flight, something I'd only read about in Thomas and Lewington, in which the female flies a steady level course while the male repeatedly swoops under her, then up in front of her again.

I followed one such pair when they settled on Brambles. A flurry of wing flapping ensued but the lady obviously wasn't impressed and gave him the cold shoulder



Lots of other butterflies about including White Admiral, Red Admiral, Comma, a Peacock, Essex and Small Skippers



Meadow Browns



and Ringlets, Speckled Wood, Large and Small Whites and a Holly Blue.

I really enjoyed my visit to this beautiful wood and its butterflies





Re: Hoggers

by dave brown, 07-Jul-14 03:51 PM GMT

Pleased you caught up with them at Beckley. Now consider Bourne Wood at Hamstreet (nearer home). We saw 11 there the other day by taking the path up the small hill from the main entrance and following the main track with the coppiced area on your left. Stay on the main track and walk to the second crossroads with a seat.

Keep your eyes peeled for Purple Emperor as one was reported last year, but subsequent searches by us has failed to repeat the sighting.
Dave

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 07-Jul-14 04:12 PM GMT

Cheers Dave – I will give it a try!

Best Wishes,

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 08-Jul-14 10:20 PM GMT

Cracking shots of the female Silver Washed Hoggers 🍷 . I managed to catch up with some this weekend but we're still behind down here on the Chalk

Hills 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 12-Jul-14 03:21 PM GMT

I was able to get away for a couple of days this week and head west to Heddon's Mouth in Devon. My target was the High Brown Fritillary the rarest inhabitant of this gorgeous hidden location. It's about 280 miles from home, the longest trip I ever make to see a butterfly in any one year, but every mile spent travelling there is repaid in full by the beauty of the countryside and the excitement of seeing such a rare and dashing butterfly.

Neil Hume saw High Browns here in good numbers about three weeks ago and was good enough to send me some advice on where best to find the butterfly. Armed with this information, enthusiasm and a good dose of "Jungle Formula" I spent the whole of 10th July at Heddon's Mouth enjoying perfect weather and High Brown Fritillaries

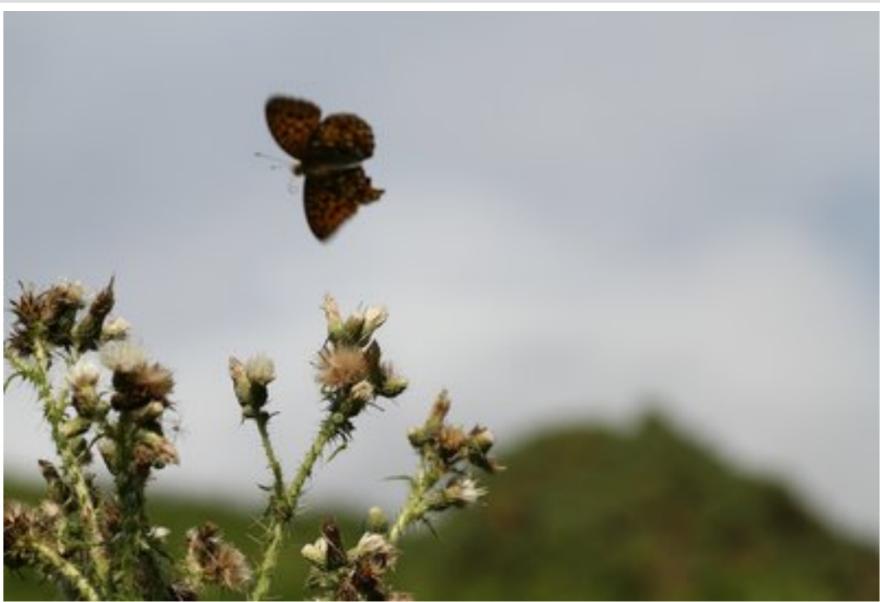




I guess I'd arrived towards the tail end of their 2014 season here because although there were plenty of them about numbers had dwindled since Neil visited and most were worn to a greater or lesser extent



At first I attempted to chase after these highly mobile creatures in order to get a photograph but invariably ended up falling on my backside: here's my typical viewpoint



and so I altered my tactics by sitting down next to a thistle or bramble patch and waiting for them to come to me





Like something out of a comedy I'd still manage to fluff the job even when employing this stealthy tactic. I will never forget the magnificent High Brown that landed right next to me but which flew away never to be seen again, un-photographed by me because as I raised my camera a single drop of sweat infused with "Jungle Formula" rolled down into my left eye and temporarily blinded me..!

The perils of chasing butterflies!

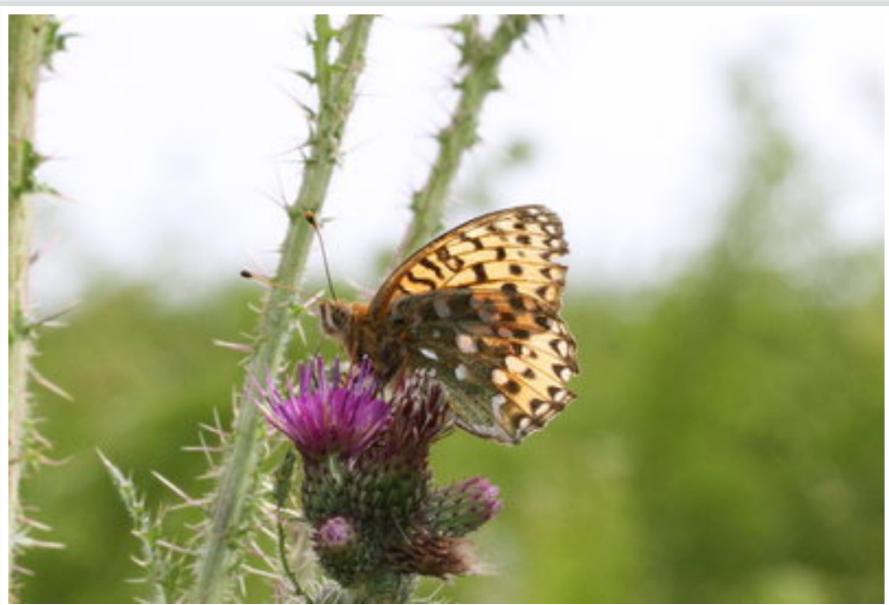
But I managed to get some pictures to take home with me nonetheless



As for other butterflies I saw many Silver-washed Fritillaries



Only one Dark-green Fritillary, faded and rather like a ghost



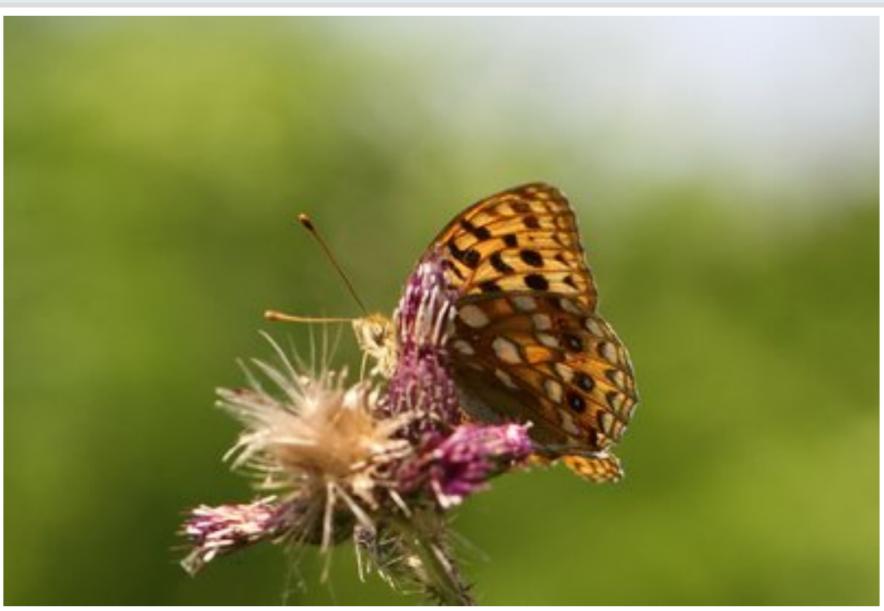
Small Coppers, Ringlets, Meadow Browns, Large Whites and Red Admirals.

But it was the High Browns that I'd made this long journey to see and thanks to Neil's advice I was able to see them better than I've ever been able to see

them before

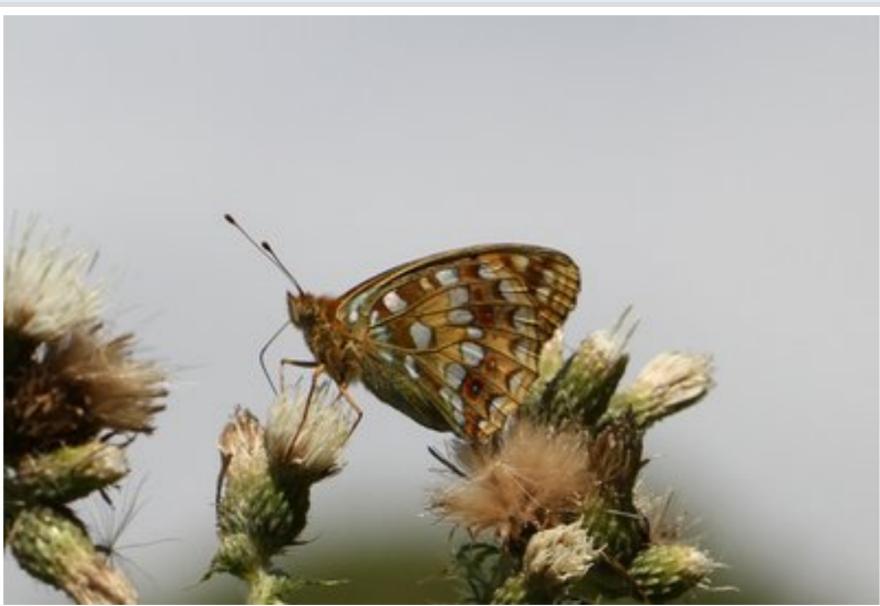


They have the same effect on me as Purple Emperors do on others





So all the bumps, bruises, bramble scratches and flies were worth it for a brief audience!



A magnificent butterfly



I can't wait to see them again next year!

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Hulme, 12-Jul-14 03:39 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Great report and some nice pics. Glad you found plenty as I was slightly worried there would be very few left. Next year I'll treat myself to a stay in the

hotel.
BWs, Neil

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 14-Jul-14 05:11 PM GMT

Cheers Neil, I can highly recommend the Hunter's Inn. Staying in a pub has its benefits!

Thanks for the advice, much appreciated,

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 14-Jul-14 06:15 PM GMT

Great stuff, Hoggers. So glad you managed to enjoy an audience with one of the UK's most precious species.

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 14-Jul-14 08:04 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers, great report and photos from the Heddon Valley 😊

I can also thoroughly recommend the Hunters Inn, we stayed there for three nights last year as reported in my diary at the time.

Your report brings back some great memories 😊 Definitely somewhere that I would like to return to sometime in the next few years.

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Hoggers

by Mike Robinson, 16-Jul-14 08:46 PM GMT

Some really super pictures.

The thing I really like about photographing Butterflies is that flowers, vegetation &c. can add immensely to the overall picture.

As we can see here.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 16-Jul-14 10:17 PM GMT

Great stuff Hoggers 😊🍷 The under wing shots really show of the colouration compared to the greenish tinge of the Dark Greens 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 17-Jul-14 12:12 PM GMT

Many thanks for you kind comments, they are much appreciated.

Over the years I've managed to see High Browns in North and South Devon and in the Morecambe Bay area. Wonderful butterflies in outstanding countryside. I'd like to see them in the Arun Valley one year too.

I finished work early today but haven't gone butterflying: It's too hot!!!!!!

(And that's something I never though I'd hear myself say!)

Re: Hoggers

by Maximus, 17-Jul-14 01:00 PM GMT

Great report and photos from Heddon Hoggers 😊 We camped near Heddon for several days from 7th July and managed to find some HB Fritillaries, eventually!

Mike

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 18-Jul-14 06:44 PM GMT

Hi Mike, I've seen your report – great stuff as usual. High Browns at Heddon Valley: magic!

I counted 24 Peacocks in my garden today!



Often 5 or 6 on one flower



One even landed on my camera as I stood watching them



A Peacock Bonanza!



Also a Comma and 4 Red Admirals but no Small Tortoiseshells (or Yellow-legged ones either – yes, I'm looking!)

Ever hopeful

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 20-Jul-14 05:26 PM GMT

A rather gloomy day to visit Dungeness but with the lighthouse fog horn sounding its warning through the mist to the ships at sea and ghostly flocks of bickering gulls swirling overhead it was as atmospheric as ever.

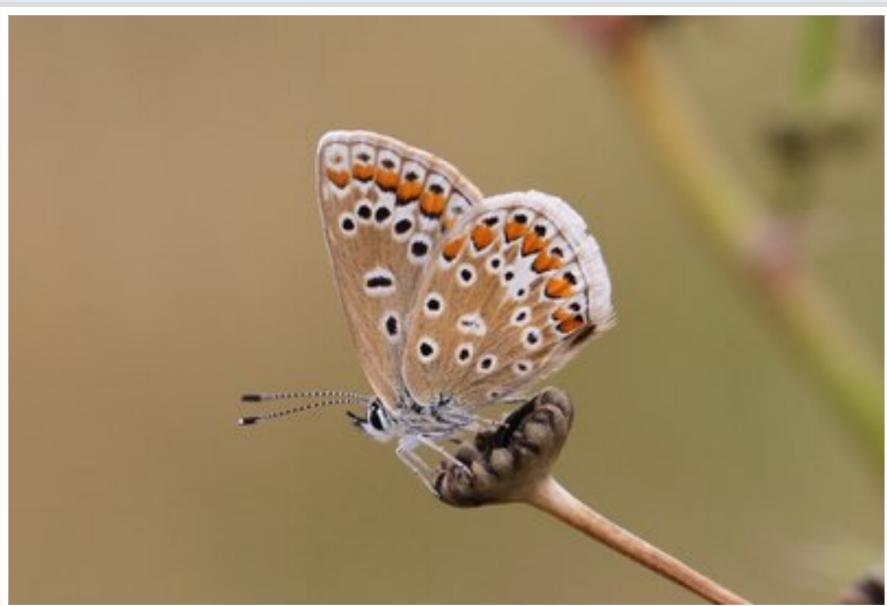
Warm too, despite the mist and very calm. As for butterflies most were sitting quietly. I came across good numbers of Common Blues



The odd one or two visiting flowers and opening their wings despite the mist



And this beautiful female



When she tentatively opened her wings I could see she had a light powdering of blue which was very eye-catching





I saw a few Brown Argus



Tired Small Skippers



Lots of Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers



A Small Tortoiseshell, Marbled Whites, Large Whites and Small Coppers in good numbers



So quite a good bag of butterflies on a misty July morning at Dungeness



Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 22-Jul-14 05:07 PM GMT

In between jobs this morning I popped in to Lydden Nature Reserve to catch up with the Chalkhill Blues. The sky was overcast but it was warm nonetheless. Not much was on the wing but when I slowly walked through the meadow I put up Chalkhill Blues with every step



There are thousands here and when the sun briefly came out Chalkhill Blues were everywhere I looked



But the weather was fickle and soon more thick grey cloud had covered the sky.

A Gatekeeper fluttered in, settled down then shut up shop when the clouds returned



Suddenly it was gloomy once again and the butterflies went to roost



Time for me to go but before I returned to my working day (during which all the clouds disappeared and the sun shone brightly!!) I had time to enjoy more of the Chalkhill Blues



Shining brightly like silver coins in the grass



Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 26-Jul-14 02:39 PM GMT

On these hot days I don't know if the butterflies get faster or if I get slower but I can't get near any of them.

The fields where I walk the dogs are a blur of butterflies and I get my satisfaction just seeing that they are having a good year.

I did however stumble across and manage to photograph a mating pair of Gatekeepers (sounds funny now that I write it...I've always resisted using their scientific but dull name "Hedge Brown" but perhaps on this occasion I'm best advised to do so in order to clear up any potential misunderstanding.)

So yes, a mating pair of Hedge Browns





I'm not surprised that I've had a bonanza of Peacocks in my garden over the last week (daily counts of up to 30) because I found heaps of their caterpillars on the nettles, but numbers of Small Tortoiseshells remain low with just 2 or 3 seen daily.

Hopefully that will increase while the sun continues to shine and while I continue to slowly melt.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 26-Jul-14 11:28 PM GMT

Really jealous Hoggers – a mating pair of one of my fave butterflies and to top it all one is unusually marked 😊🍷

Have a goodun

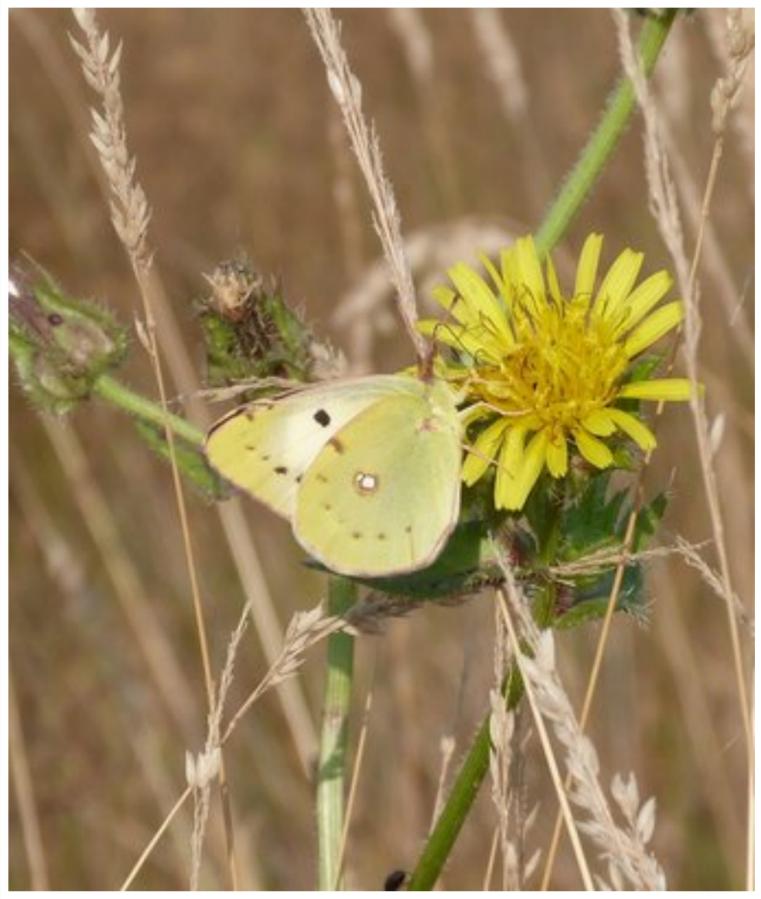
Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 27-Jul-14 06:22 PM GMT

I noticed those markings, Wurzel. I'd guess that one is the female as she looks so fresh.

Exactly five weeks ago today I watched a female Clouded Yellow laying her eggs in the field where I take my dogs for a walk. I haven't seen a Clouded Yellow since then, until this morning when at around 730 I was thrilled to come across a beautiful *helice*





Absolutely gorgeous



And within a few minutes of seeing her I found a fresh male



I wonder if they could be the offspring of the butterfly I saw on 22nd June? Are Clouded Yellows able to go through their life-cycle in just five weeks?

Whatever the origin of these butterflies might be I was delighted to see them and I hope they managed to find each other after I'd left for home!

I decided to visit Dungeness this morning. Lots of Gatekeepers, Large Whites and Common Blues



Brown Argus, too



A slight movement caught my eye which when I looked more closely revealed itself to be the ghost of a second generation Small Copper. You can just about make him out



Here's a closer look at this tiny spectre



He's clearly lived a very full life. Amazingly, he was still able to fly and up for a brawl with any butterfly that came near.

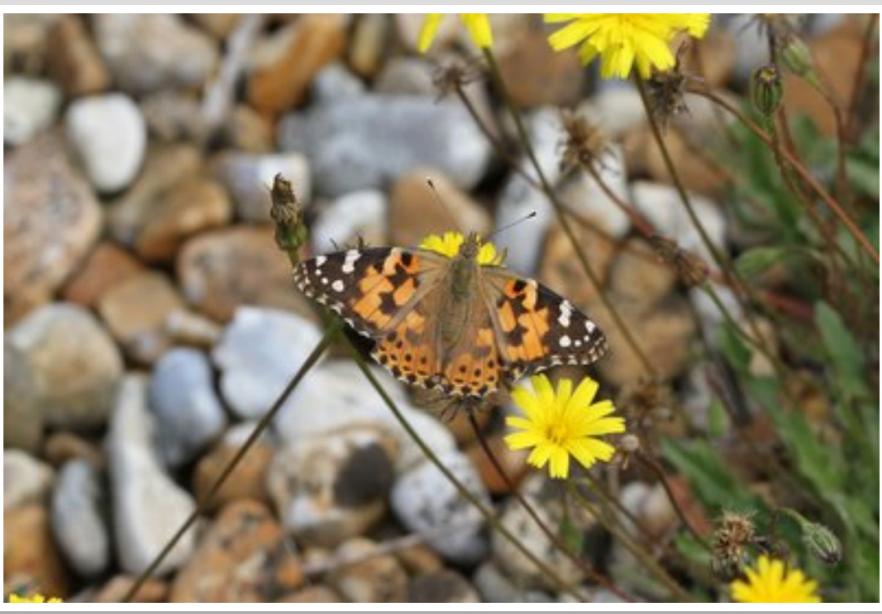
Lots of Small Tortoiseshells



And Peacocks



A male Clouded Yellow skimmed past without stopping and then I saw my second Star Butterfly of the day: a Painted Lady



Perhaps my visit to Dungeness helps answer my questions about the Clouded Yellows that I saw this morning on my Patch because on the coast I saw both a Clouded Yellow and a Painted Lady, suggesting that the butterflies are on the move.

I hope they keep coming!



Re: Hoggers

by David M, 27-Jul-14 08:11 PM GMT

Excellent sequence, Hoggers.

Coastal locations are where the surprises are most likely to be seen. Well done.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 29-Jul-14 12:14 PM GMT

Thanks David, I tend to naturally gravitate towards the coast on my days off. Maybe I share a migratory gene with some of the butterflies? If I find myself floating across the channel this Autumn in a cloud of Painted Ladies I'll know for sure.

Rather cloudy on my morning walk with the dogs but pleasant enough for this Clouded Yellow to put in an appearance



I found him in my "Clouded Yellow" Field. If he's not home grown then there's something about this piece of waste ground that they find irresistible!

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 29-Jul-14 06:52 PM GMT

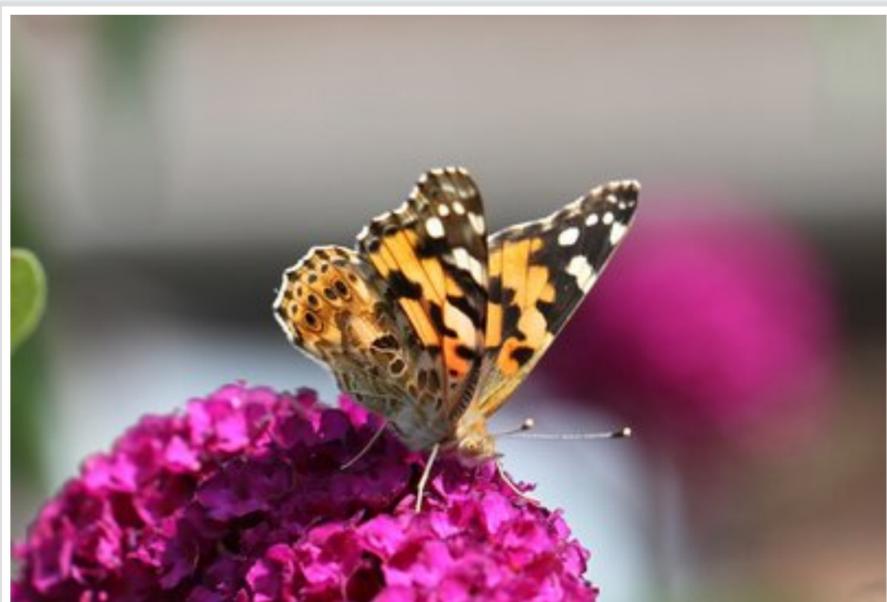
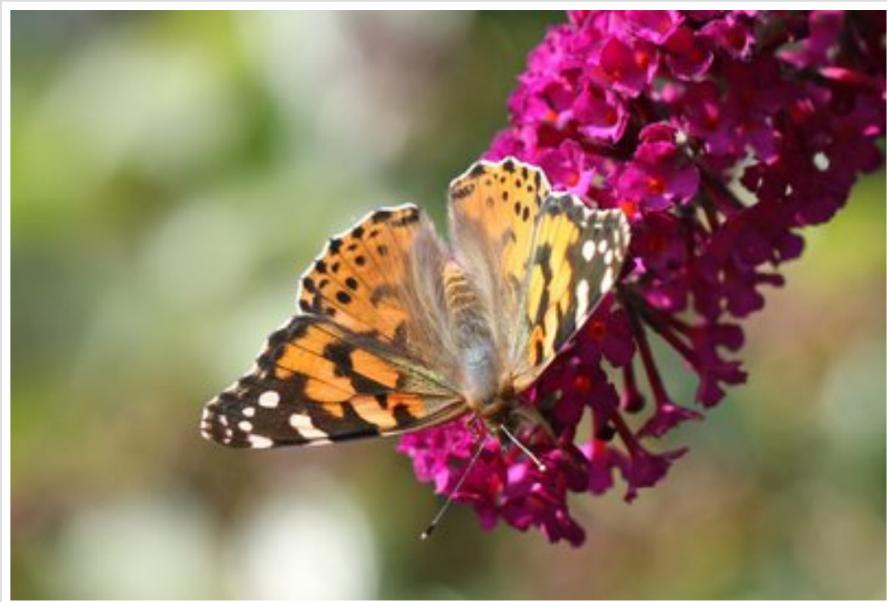
This afternoon it brightened up considerably on the morning.

Numbers of Small Tortoiseshells in my garden reached a high today when I counted 18



Peacock numbers are down on last week (when I had 24 in the garden) as today I saw only 9. They have a tendency to fly into my shed and I find them fluttering in the window to get out.

And there was a sign of butterfly migration too with a visit by this Painted Lady





Re: Hoggers

by Pauline, 29-Jul-14 08:34 PM GMT

Love your Clouded Yellow and Painted Lady shots H. I just can't get enough of those butterflies so keep posting your lovely images 😊

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 29-Jul-14 09:57 PM GMT

Still only seen two Painted Ladies in the UK so far in 2014, so well done on getting your shots!

Re: Hoggers

by Paul Harfield, 30-Jul-14 10:54 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers

Just catching up with your diary. Nice to see a few Clouded Yellows and Painted Ladies about on your patch 😊 I have not seen a Clouded Yellow yet round my way. I can not believe your Small Copper was still going 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 31-Jul-14 03:24 PM GMT

Hi David and Pauline, thanks for your comments. I saw a Painted Lady in my garden again this morning but I'd guess it was the same individual as before. I've noticed in past years that they'll often hang around for a few days re-fueling on the Buddleia, before moving off.

Hi Jack, good to hear from you, and yes, I couldn't believe how that Small Copper was carrying on just as if it were in tip top condition! I expect we've all come across battered butterflies and been amazed that they can still fly!

The sun is still shining on us down here in Kent. I took the dogs out at 830 and it was already very warm indeed. Without my really looking for anything in particular I managed to come across three female Common Blues on my walk, all very different





In my "Clouded Yellow" field I saw two males, both busily quartering the terrain



And also a female. She was behaving very differently, keeping low in the vegetation (perhaps egg-laying)



Having Clouded Yellows near to home really makes the Summer



Back home, Small Tortoiseshell numbers in the garden reached 24 today!

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-14 10:20 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Hoggers 😊 Oh to have Clouded Yellows so close to home, and a Helice among them 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 31-Jul-14 10:40 PM GMT

Excellent stuff, Hoggers. Clouded Yellows seem to be almost regular in southerly locations this year.

I've still only seen three so far in 2014, but I'll keep an eye out for them in south Wales, because if they're turning up here, then they MUST be present in greater numbers in your neck of the woods.

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 01-Aug-14 10:11 AM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Great reports and photos, you certainly seem to be doing well for immigrants 😊

I have surprisingly seen more Clouded Yellows(6) this year than Painted Ladies(2), including my first ever local ones.

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 02-Aug-14 02:44 PM GMT

Thanks guys, at the moment I'm almost guaranteed to find Clouded Yellows when I walk my dogs. Today I saw three, all males, and they were highly active so it was a stroke of luck for me that this one settled briefly for a rest



They really do make a Summer



There were many Small Tortoiseshells in the fields and when I got home I counted 22 of them in the garden.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-14 10:45 PM GMT

Fantastic close-up Hoggers 🤩🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

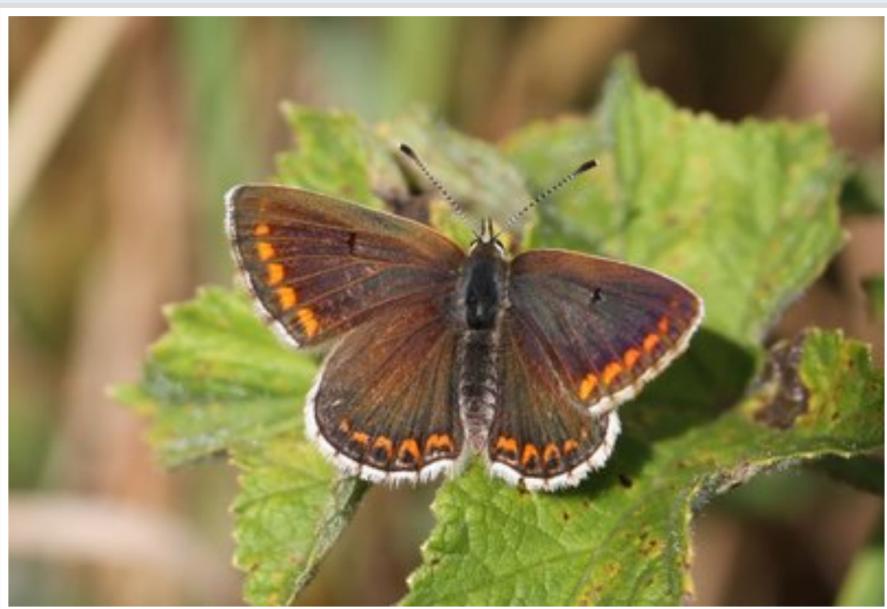
by Hoggars, 09-Aug-14 04:31 PM GMT

It's been a week since I visited my "Clouded Yellow Field" and I've been wondering if any were still there. This morning I went along and quickly found one, a tired looking male, flying fast and low through the long grass. He was joined by a second male, this one a lot fresher looking, behaving in the same manner. Neither would settle and so I took pot luck with trying to get some "in flight" snaps





I also found two Brown Argus



And eight Common Blues



Just a few Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns left, they've almost gone over now.

In my garden the Peacocks are notable by their absence and the numbers of Small Tortoiseshells has diminished to about 6 or so a day but I'm getting a couple of Red Admirals most days now.

Good to see that my Clouded Yellows are still around though



Re: Hoggers

by Hoggars, 16-Aug-14 07:08 PM GMT

I haven't been able to get out to do any butterflying since last weekend. At least there's "UK Butterflies" to look at when you're stuck at work!

But today I managed to get back to my "Clouded Yellow Field" when I took the hounds for their walk and there I saw some butterflies.

When I'm looking at butterflies I don't think about anything-else, my mind completely clears. The rest of the world just falls away and it's just me and the butterfly. Perhaps we should call it Lepi-Yoga?! (Although seeing me scampering after a Clouded Yellow probably doesn't look very calming!)

Small Tortoiseshells are out in numbers



(And I get about 6 or 8 every day in my garden.)

Some Meadow Browns, a few Small Whites and several Brown Argus today





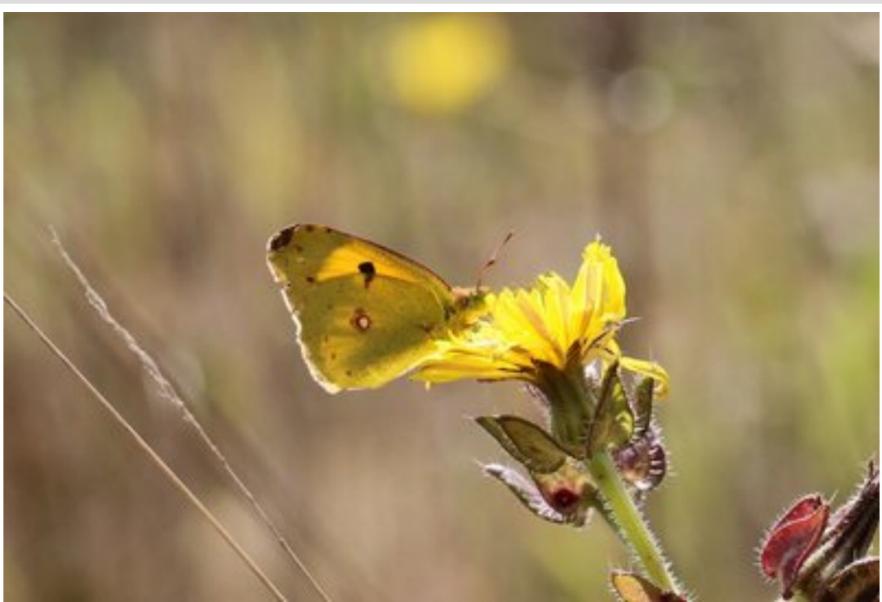
As for Clouded Yellows, I saw two



Both were males and highly mobile



But I managed to snatch a quick photograph when this one stopped off to re-fuel



And there are still plenty of Common Blues



I watched five of these beautiful butterflies chasing after a female, swirling fast in a little blue flashing cloud just over the top of the grass.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 17-Aug-14 03:47 PM GMT

This morning I went to Dungeness for a Small Copper Hunt. I was keen to see if any of the third generation were out.

When I arrived it was cloudy and the wind was blowing but fairly soon the sky cleared and it felt warm.

The first Copper I found was this one



Which by its condition seemed to suggest that they've been out a little while



But apart from seeing another one or two that looked frayed round the edges most were fresher



I saw 23 in all



I had only a quick glimpse of this unusual looking chap before he flew up and disappeared on the wind



But my favourite of the day was this gorgeous specimen with its splendidly vivid hind-wing bar and tails



It put me in mind of the opening titles of some wonderfully sensational old Hammer Horror movie with the blood trickling down the screen



Before Count Dracula appears!



Re: Hoggers

by Maximus, 17-Aug-14 04:40 PM GMT

Great Small Copperer shots, Hoggers 😊 and the last one is a real stunner 😊

Mike

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 17-Aug-14 09:53 PM GMT

Lovely shots. Wish I could see one – they seem to have gone missing from my neck of the woods. 😞

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-14 10:34 PM GMT

Brill Coppers Hoggers 😊 23 in one sitting is a massive number of them 😲🍀 The tailed last specimen is a cracker 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 18-Aug-14 08:04 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers, some cracking Small Coppers there, particularly that last one. Yours are well in front of those I am seeing here in the midlands, still on second brood here although they are past their best now.

"Hoggers" wrote:

...I had only a quick glimpse of this unusual looking chap before he flew up and disappeared on the wind...

I reckon that chap is a girlie which is why she looks a bit different 😊 the females tend to be a bit larger and paler.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Hoggers

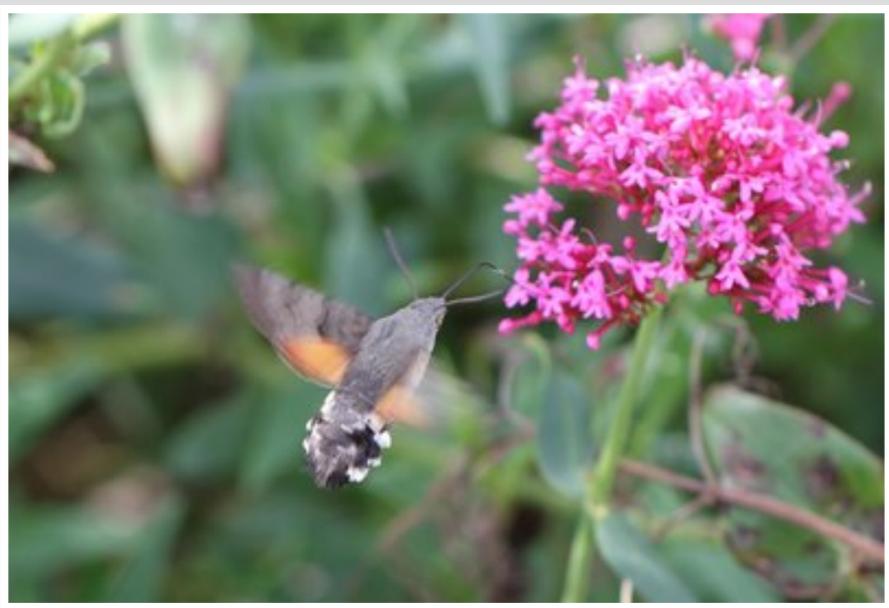
by Hoggers, 24-Aug-14 04:28 PM GMT

Many thanks for the kind comments and also for the ID on that Copper, Neil. Until you pointed that out I'd thought the sexes were indistinguishable!

The weather forecast for tomorrow is pretty grim so it looked like I'd better make the most of today if I was going to see any butterflies at all this holiday weekend.

I've yet to see any Silver-spotted Skippers this year so I naturally thought of a visit to Lydden but yet again I felt Dungeness calling to me with the prospect of seeing Small Coppers in good numbers, so that's where I went!

I was met by a lovely Humming-bird Hawk Moth



And very soon after I came across my first Small Copper of the day



Last week I counted 23



And this week I counted 23 !





My favourite of the day was this chap with his bold black markings



Very handsome indeed





There were several Small Tortoiseshells and Red Admirals about and many worn Common Blues



Along the beach I counted 7 Clouded Yellows



Here's one flying past





I was also delighted to find a Painted Lady



Those eye-spots on the forewings give it a particularly Owl-like stare

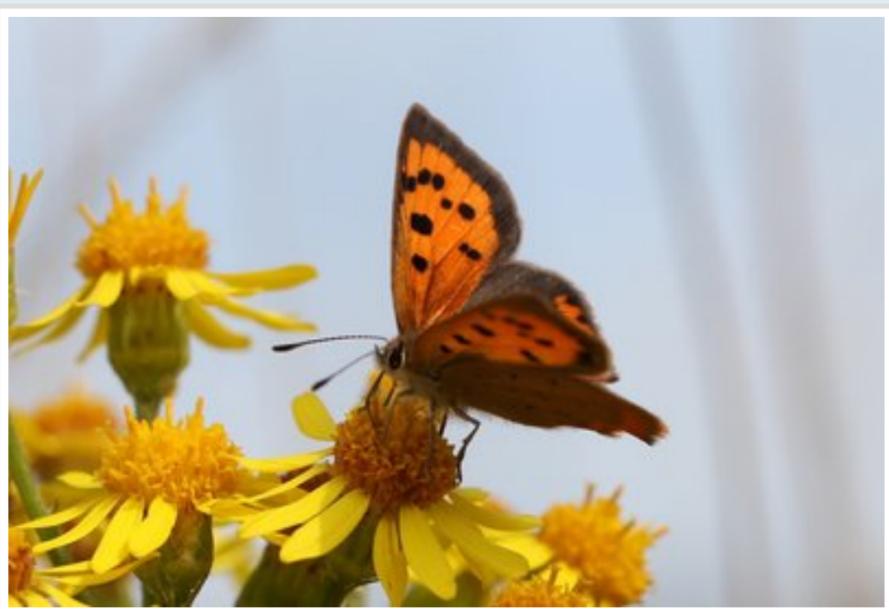
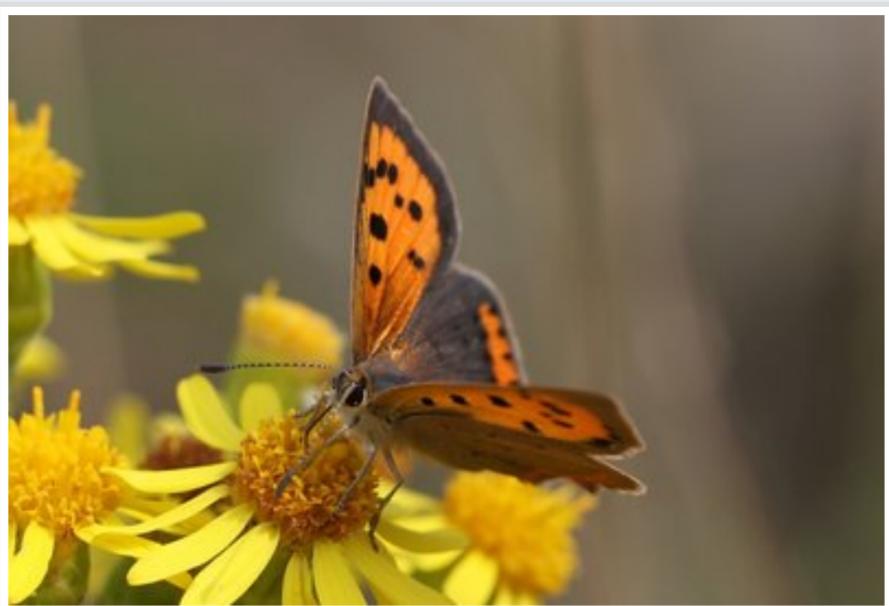
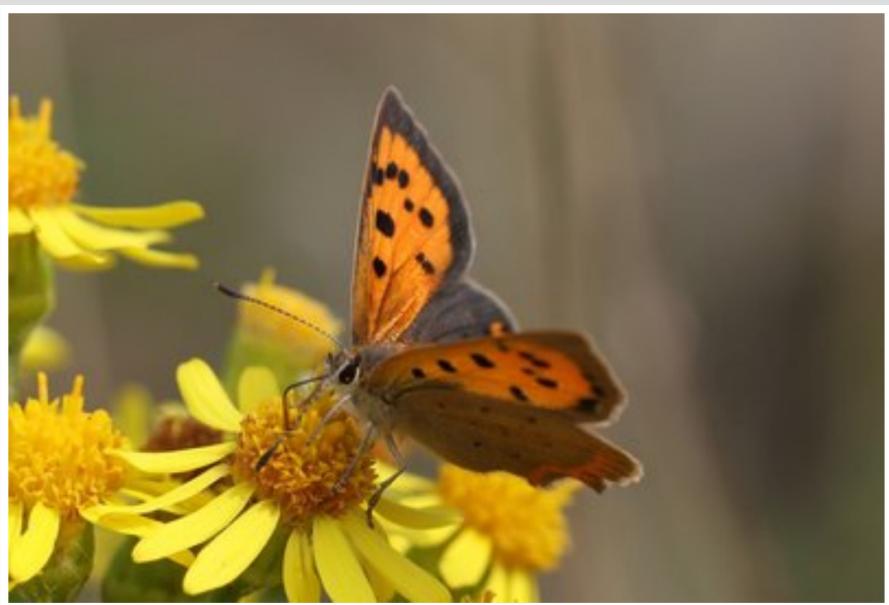


(It put me in mind of Alan Garner's "The Owl Service"!)

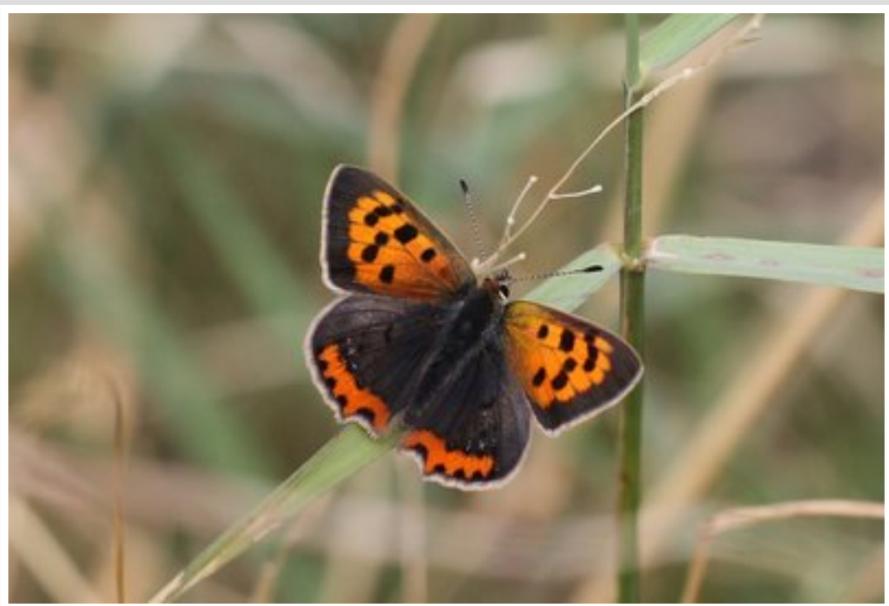
It was good to see Clouded Yellows



I saw lots of Small Coppers in their last generation of the year



And I tried to make the most of them





I'm not looking forward to all that rain tomorrow!

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 25-Aug-14 09:52 PM GMT

Some absolutely fantastic Small Copper photos there Hoggers, that boldly marked individual is a stunner 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

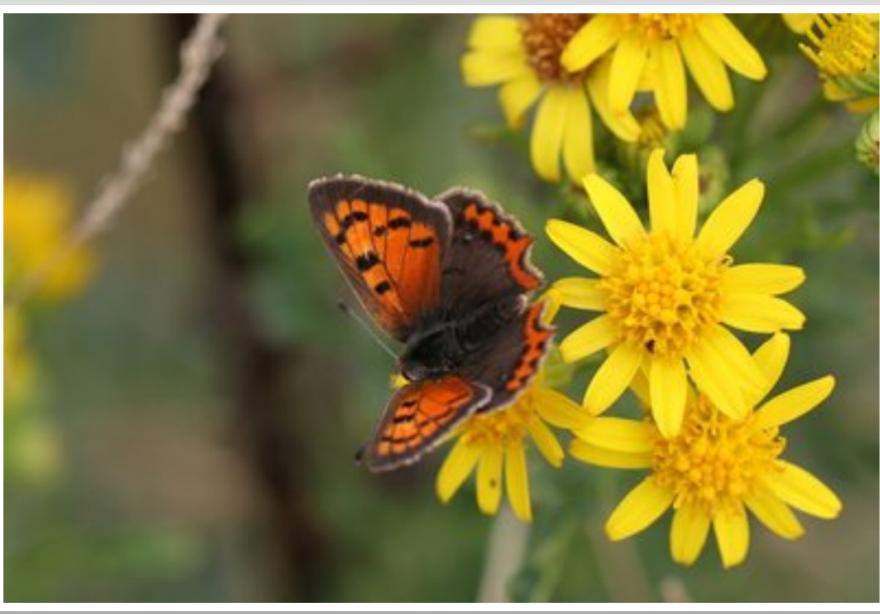
by Hoggers, 27-Aug-14 04:46 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, that Small Copper really stood out.

I had the chance to go back to Dungeness today to see the Small Coppers



It was breezy there but warm at first



During my walk I counted no less 32 Small Coppers



This one, a female I believe, really caught my eye



Not only because of the colouring on the forewings but because the band on her hindwing is striking and unusual.

I was lucky to find two members of the SCBBC (Small Copper Blue Badge Club)





Always a bonus





As for other butterflies I saw Small Tortoiseshells, Red Admirals, Meadow Browns, Small Whites, Common Blues and a Clouded Yellow



(Also the Humming-bird Hawk Moth that I saw on Sunday was still there.)

It started to cloud over and fell cold surprisingly quickly so I headed for home but at least I'd managed to see some beautiful butterflies



Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 27-Aug-14 09:19 PM GMT

More stunning Coppers Hoppers 😊🍷 Those blue spots are great – is the one with the unusual margin band is a bit like a "radiata" only not, if that makes sense 😊😏😏 Definitely something not usual 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by Pauline, 27-Aug-14 09:23 PM GMT

Fantastic Coppers with gorgeous blue spots and that female is stunning and unusual 🍷

Re: Hoppers

by David M, 27-Aug-14 10:54 PM GMT

Wow! This species is clearly thriving at that location. Lovely shots once again, which are a continual reminder of how FEW I've seen in 2014. 😞

Re: Hoggers

by essexbuzzard, 27-Aug-14 11:21 PM GMT

Cracking Coppers there Hoggers! Did you see these at the RSPB site or near the power station?

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 28-Aug-14 03:43 PM GMT

Hi All, many thanks for your comments. I'm glad you liked the "Blue Badgers" Pauline, it really makes my day when I find one.

The female was a stunner



It was a bit like a *radiata* wasn't it, Wurzel? Here's a close-up of the hindwing



Very nice indeed.

They clearly thrive at Dungeness, David. I will easily count 70+ on a walk at the height of the season, there must be hundreds. I don't know if a formal count is ever made but I wonder if there are any other locations that support such a larger population of Small Coppers.

Hi EssexB, thanks for your comments. I find all my Coppers around the power station, the black lighthouse, the bird observatory and the trapping area. As you probably know, Dungeness is a fantastic place to visit



Happy Hunting!

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 28-Aug-14 06:37 PM GMT

70 Small Coppers is quite astonishing. What is it that attracts them in such numbers?

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 28-Aug-14 09:29 PM GMT

I'm not sure David. I know there's plenty of Sorrel for the caterpillars and lots of sources of nectar for the adults. It's a large area, rather bare (which they seem to favour) and protected as a nature reserve. All that must help. I've never visited a site that has such a large population. There must be some experts out there who know: I'm just glad the Coppers like it!

Best wishes,

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 28-Aug-14 10:57 PM GMT

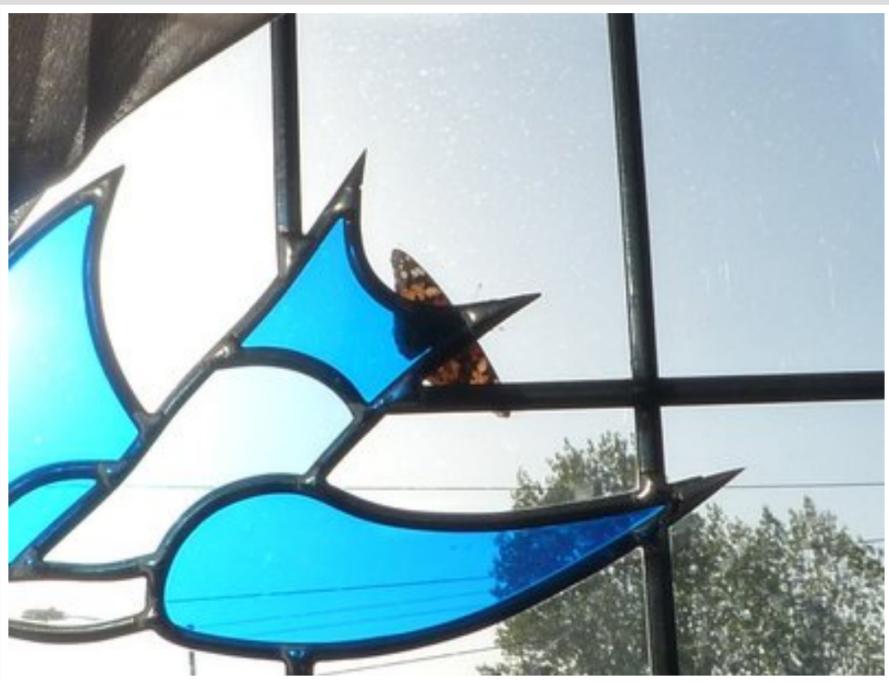
Me too, Hoggers. This species has been conspicuous by its absence this year. I reckon I've seen fewer than two dozen in spite of the mild spring and warm summer.

I'm almost praying for another abnormally cold winter as the last one seemed to do no harm at all to subsequent butterfly numbers.

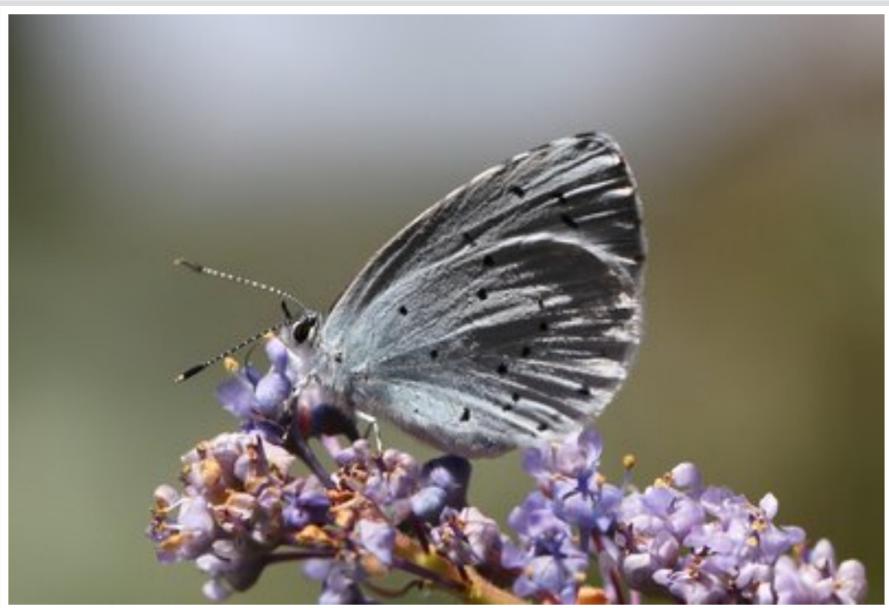
Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 29-Aug-14 02:01 PM GMT

A Painted Lady was fluttering at my bedroom window this morning



And a Holly Blue appeared in the garden for the second day in a row



Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 29-Aug-14 03:24 PM GMT

Lovely photo's Hoggers, I've seen quite a lot more Small Coppers here in the North than I've seen in previous years, unfortunately they've not been in the condition yours were in.

I've only seen one Holly Blue this year and that was in the Spring, your lucky to have one visit your Garden Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 29-Aug-14 10:29 PM GMT

That's a great double for late August, Hoggers!

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 31-Aug-14 04:47 PM GMT

Brother Hoggles and I set out for Dungeness this morning, arriving there at 10 am. Immediately on getting out of the car we saw a Painted Lady



It was in the company of Large and Small Whites, a Small Tortoiseshell, three Red Admirals, Meadow Browns, Common Blues, Brown Argus and a Clouded Yellow



So we got off to a very good start indeed!

Next we saw a Small Heath (which neither of us could get close enough to photograph it was so flighty) followed by the butterfly both of us most wanted to see



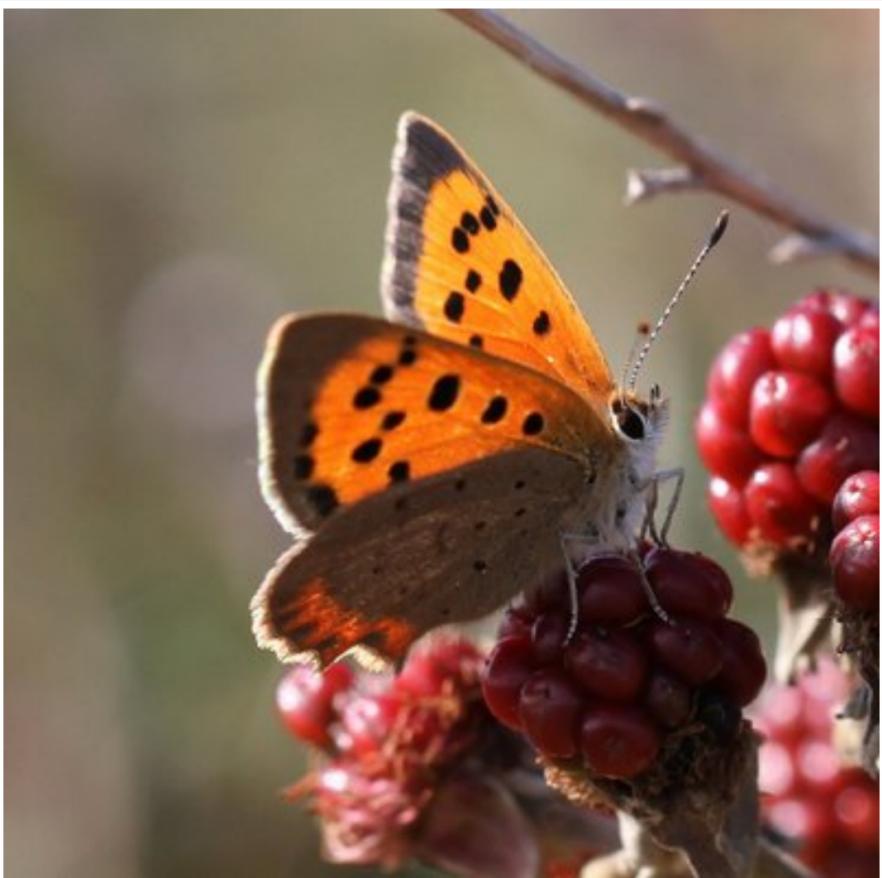
During our walk we saw Small Coppers on almost every clump of ragwort



We saw courtship behaviour on a couple of occasions



And a great deal of feisty aerial combat from this most pugilistic of butterflies



(Although they look as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths!)



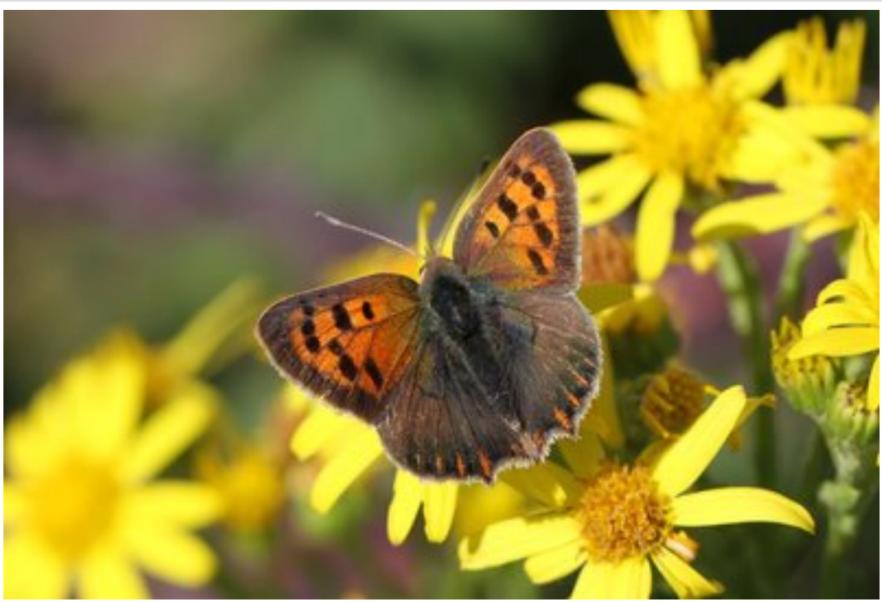
We came across just one member of the Blue Badge Club



One with hardly any markings

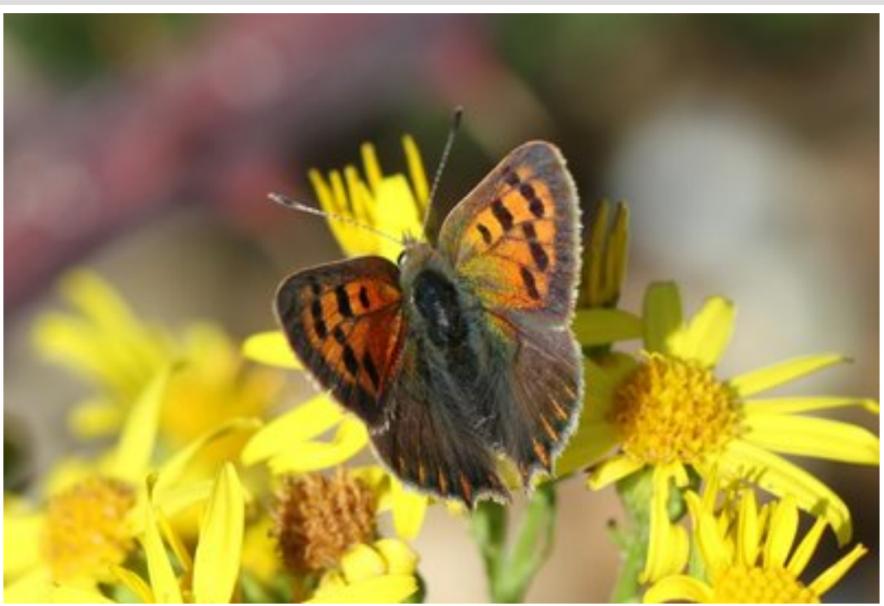


And then I found this





A radiata!





We were over the moon!

The Small Copper is such a rewarding butterfly to study



It really does pay to look closely at every one of them you see



What beautiful butterflies they are



Happy days!



Re: Hoggers

by David M, 31-Aug-14 06:18 PM GMT

Wow! That's a really interesting aberration, Hoggers.

You really are responsible for 90% of UK Small Copper sightings this year! 😊

Re: Hoggers

by nomad, 31-Aug-14 06:26 PM GMT

Nice find and images of a Small Copper aberration.

Re: Hoggers

by Paul Harfield, 31-Aug-14 09:58 PM GMT

"Hoggers" wrote:

They clearly thrive at Dungeness, David. I will easily count 70+ on a walk at the height of the season, there must be hundreds. I don't know if a formal count is ever made but I wonder if there are any other locations that support such a larger population of Small Coppers.

Hi Hoggers

Just admiring your Small Coppers again. Those aberrations are superb 😊😊

'70+ on a walk' 😲 I was pleased to see just one on my local patch this afternoon, but it did have blue spots 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Pauline, 01-Sep-14 07:43 AM GMT

A magnificent selection of Small Coppers Hoggers and your abs are stunning 🍷🍷 I have only seen 4 SC all season 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 01-Sep-14 04:27 PM GMT

Hi guys, many thanks for your comments. Finding a *radiata* was a real thrill



I think if I found one of the silvery-white forms it would be too much and I'd drop down dead with shock!

Best wishes,

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by William, 01-Sep-14 06:40 PM GMT

"Hoggers" wrote:

I think if I found one of the silvery-white forms it would be too much and I'd drop down dead with shock!

One of my local Small Copper colonies sees similar numbers of butterflies, and I found a pale form approaching ab. Culprinus – it could happen 😊 – superb photos of radiata!

BWs,

William

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-14 11:09 PM GMT

That is a cracking aberrant find Hoggers 🍀🍀 – mind you with so many Small Coppers there it was bound to turn up sooner rather than later – I reckon a schmidtii won't be far behind 😊 Finger crossed for you...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Maximus, 01-Sep-14 11:55 PM GMT

Great SC's Hoggers 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 07-Sep-14 04:33 PM GMT

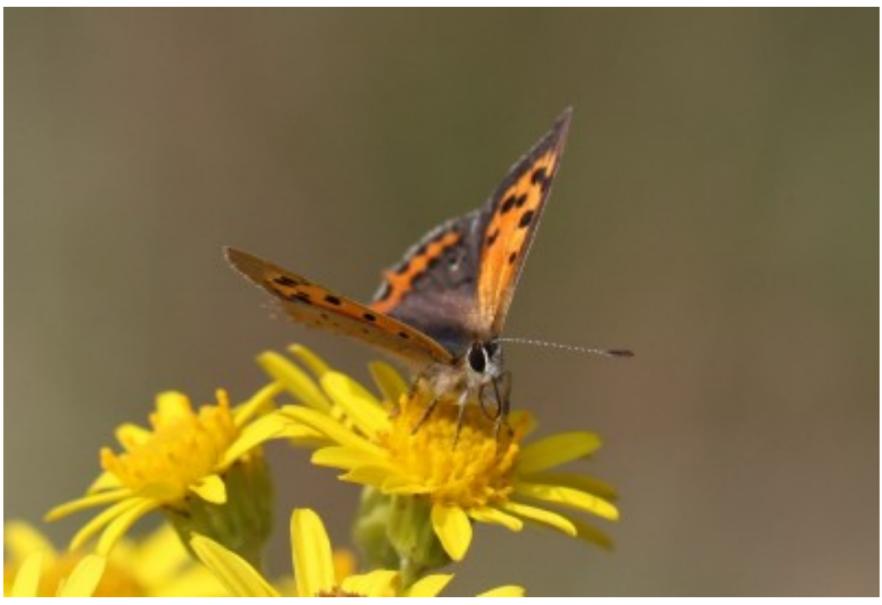
Last sunday at Dungeness I saw only one Small Heath but today they seemed to be everywhere



I also noticed that there's been an increase in the number of Brown Argus



All of which were having to do battle with the resident Tough Guys





I saw more than thirty



Ever ready for a brawl





However this one, which I believe is a female, was behaving in a far more decorous manner



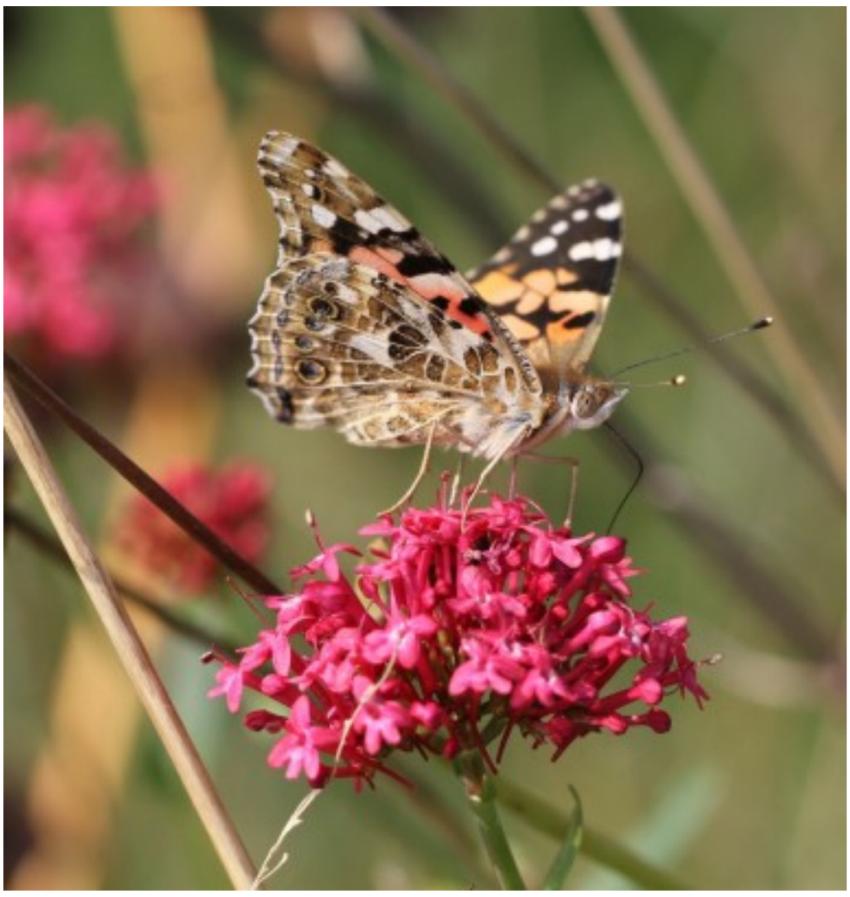
I saw a Hummingbird Hawk Moth at rest



and at play



Two Painted Ladies



And two Red Admirals with good numbers of Common Blues.

A Clouded Yellow flew by



While I stood talking to the Observatory Warden (who told me he's seen two *schmidtis* in the past!! Grrr!!) a pair of Ravens went "Kronk Kronking" overhead and then a birdwatcher flew in with news of a Red Backed Shrike which set feathers flying.

Letting them flap away to see the Shrike I sat down by a clump of Ragwort and watched the Small Coppers



Re: Hoppers

by Neil Freeman, 07-Sep-14 06:22 PM GMT

Hi Hoppers, just catching up with you diary, loving all the Small Coppers and congratulations on the *radiata*. I saw one of these at Aston Rowant a couple of years back but your photos are much better than I managed.

Well done,

Neil.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 08-Sep-14 05:12 PM GMT

Thanks Neil but I think you're being too modest as I've been ogling your *radiata* in the species specific section for many months (and that knock- out blue badger too!)

If I take a nice photo it's down to the camera, all I know about photography is how to press the button!

I'm trying to pack my diary with little, feisty, bright Small Coppers to cheer me up through the Winter!

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 10-Sep-14 03:33 PM GMT

I got to Dungeness around 10 this morning. Although it was comfortably warm there wasn't much sun about.

First up I saw a couple of Painted Ladies and then as I walked further a Red Admiral, a Small Tortoiseshell and Large and Small Whites, Small Heaths and Common Blues.

But it wasn't long before I found my first Small Copper

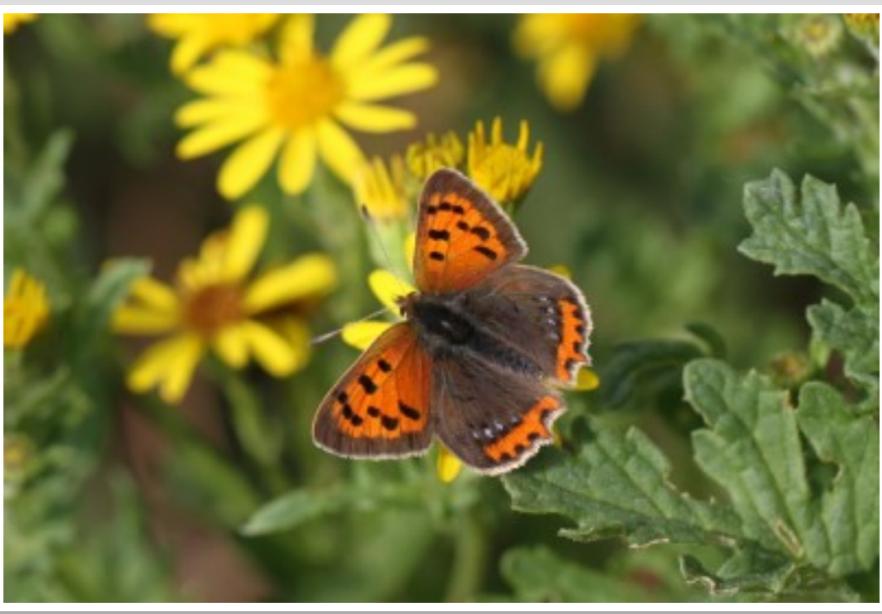


Sitting quietly waiting for the sun



Eventually a shift in the cloud let through some sunshine and the Small Coppers came out to play





For a change, today I ventured out into "The Desert" which isn't quiet as forbidding as it sounds but it's rough pebble terrain with brambles and gorse. There I came across Small Coppers

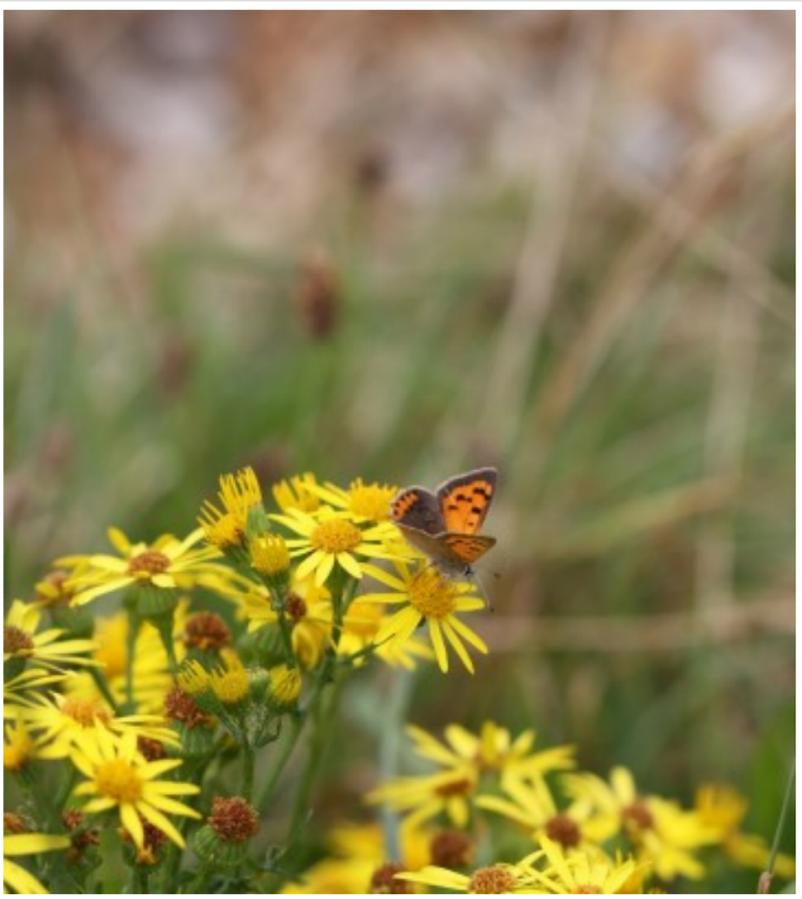




Although far more widely spread



My total for today was 37



Re: Hoppers

by keving, 10-Sep-14 09:17 PM GMT

Hoppers,

Great shots of the Small Coppers. Some recent posts suggest numbers are down this year, it looks as though they have all set up camp at Dungeness. I have just returned from Yorkshire, where they were one of the most numerous species I saw. Let's hope they are still holding up, as they are a stunning butterfly.

Regards Kev

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 11-Sep-14 04:02 PM GMT

Cheers Kev, I think you're right: Neil had success with them in Cornwall, you in Yorkshire and me at Dungeness, while most other contributors to UK

Butterflies have commented on the low numbers they've seen this year.

It's a situation that's worth us keeping our eyes on next year.

All the best,

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 13-Sep-14 06:58 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Just thought I,d let you know how I got on at Dungeness today ,well it was pretty windy! plenty of sun ,and in the more sheltered areas plenty of Small Coppers

I suppose I saw 30+ .I found that the "Hotspot" today seemed to be around the moat ,feeding on the plentiful ragwort, also good numbers of Brown Argus, Small Heath

Common Blue, and even two Meadow brown, as you know I fluked a "Radiata" (second Copper seen on leaving the car) ,and somehow the luck has stayed with me, on looking through the Coppers by the moat ,one caught my eye,I managed to follow it and see it settle,i couldn,t believe it! the two forewings are standard Copper ,but the full left hand hindwing is "Schmidtii" with the right hindwing normal,i managed one slightly blurred shot ,and spent the next hour trying to re find it ,no joy ,soon as I can figure out how to get pictures up ,I,ll post this odd one ,and the "Radiata". " Best wishes to all Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 14-Sep-14 04:15 PM GMT

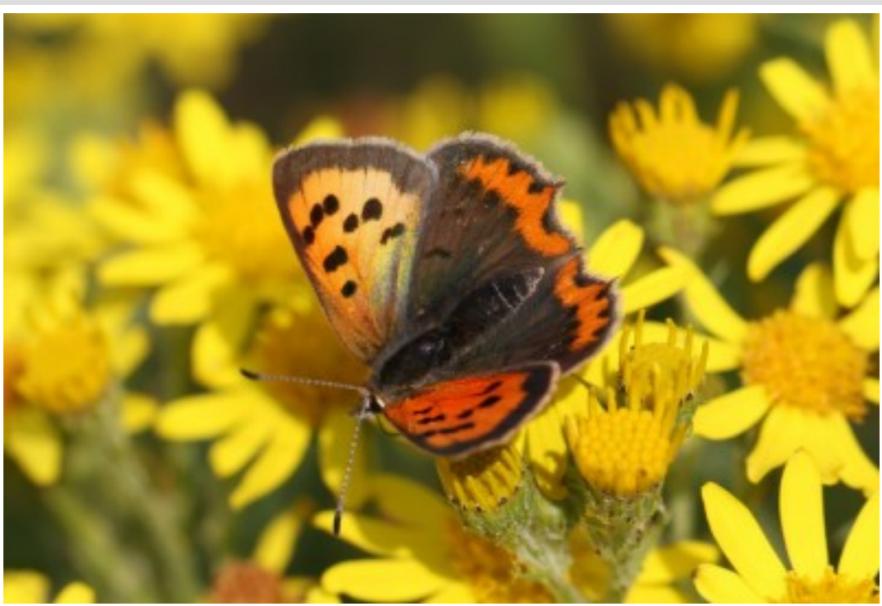
Hi Allan, good to hear from you again (I hope you received my reply to you message last week?)

I returned to Dungeness today. It was sunny, warm but very blowy. I couldn't find either the *radiata* or your "Quarter Schmidtii"(!!) but I did chance upon something rather curious





What do you make of this one?



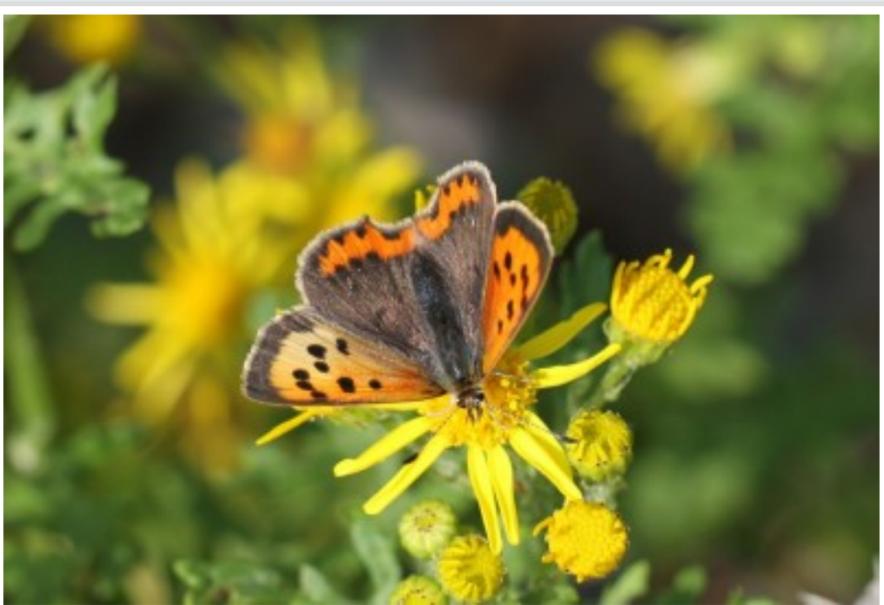
Left side with wings closed



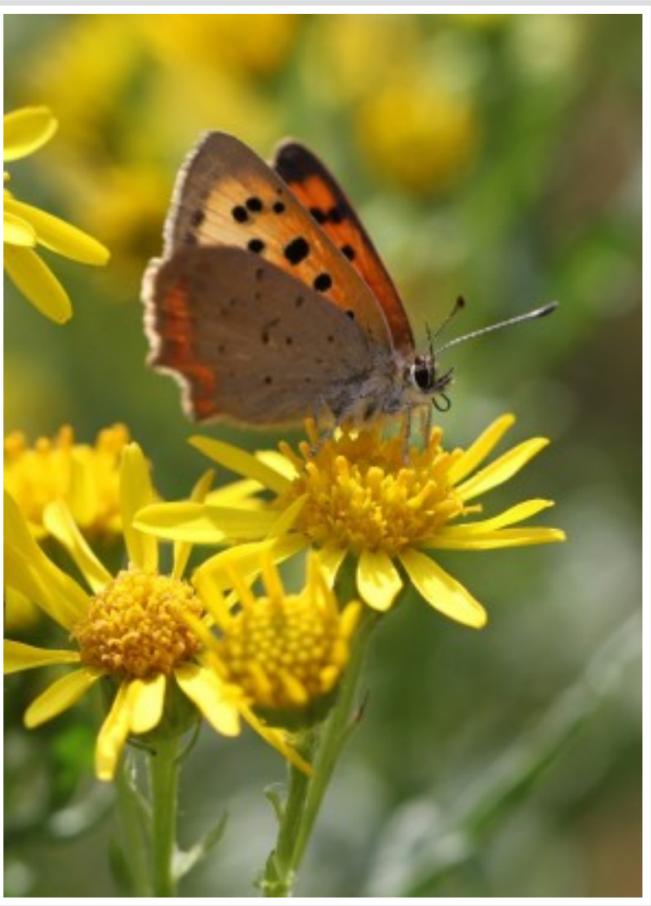
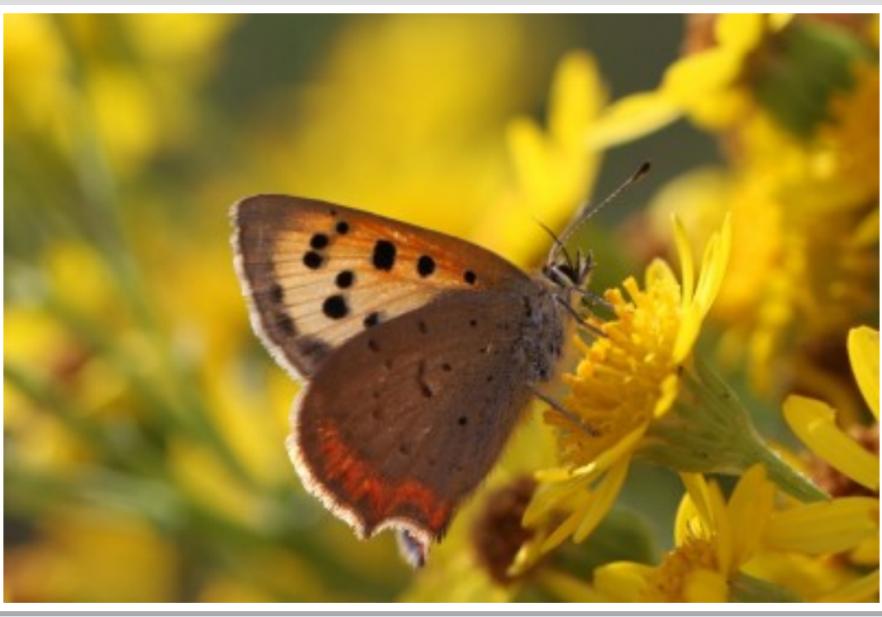
Right side with wings closed



From the shape of the abdomen I'd guess it was a female?



But except for the washed-out colouring of the front right wing it has the vivid strong copper colouring of a male.
That pale forewing looked very white at certain angles and during flight



It settled on a pebble for awhile and you can see the contrast

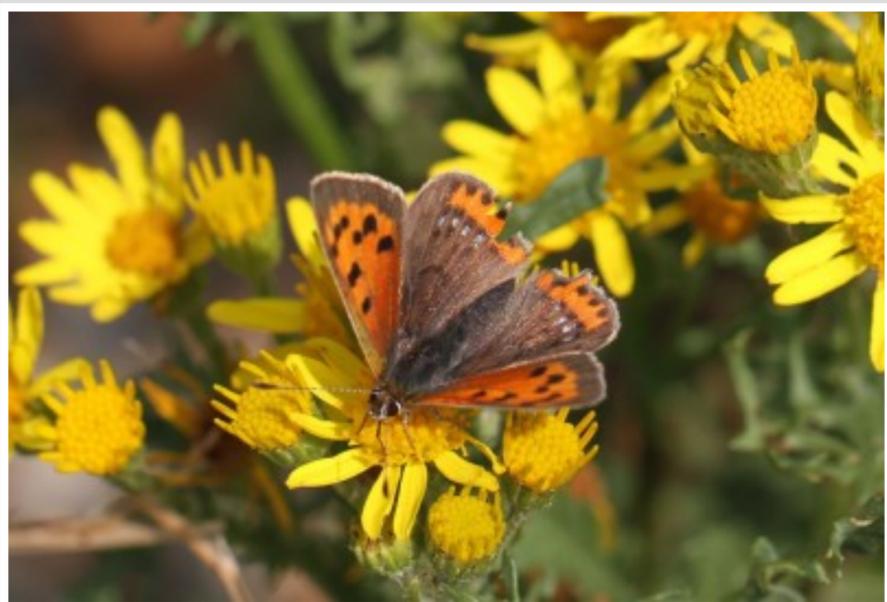
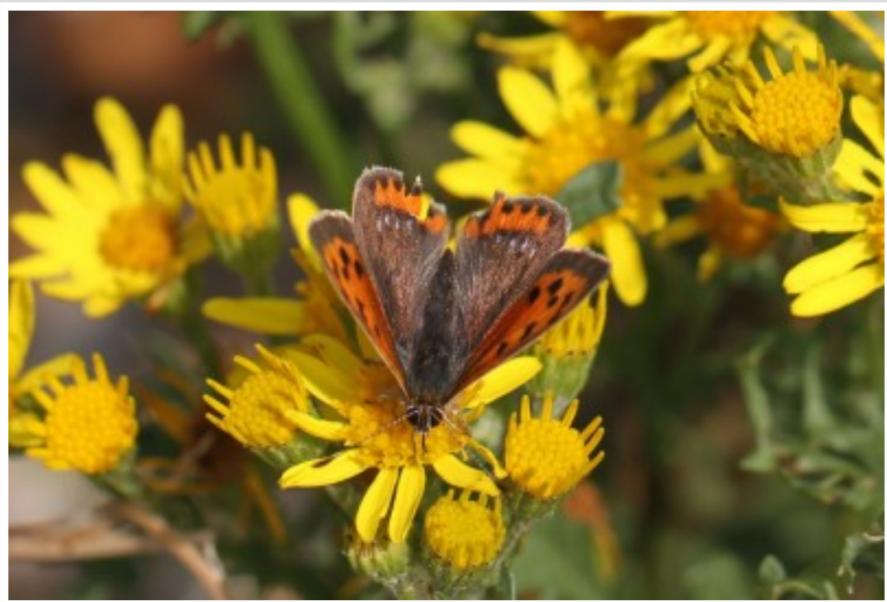


Another Small Copper Curiosity!

Plenty of other Small Coppers about, many battered but some still in good nick



And a nice member of the SCBBC





I also saw several amorous scenes



Female running along in front fluttering her wings and the male quickly toddling after her.

Promise for the future!

Re: Hoggers

by dave brown, 14-Sep-14 04:30 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers,

Passed you today looking intently downwards along the Power Station boundary fence. We must have checked the same areas as we also failed to find *radiata* Nice to see good numbers of Small Copper and Small Heath still at Dungeness. A Clouded Yellow was near the Old Lighthouse where you parked.

Dave

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 14-Sep-14 04:37 PM GMT

Hi! Hoggers, Love your Small Copper photo's, so many SC as well, 🍷 they've finished round here now , your Pic's are great Goldie . 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 14-Sep-14 04:52 PM GMT

Hi,Hoggers,

I did get your reply,thanks I,m still getting to grips with the do,s and don,ts of the forum,where to post what and how to go about it ,but with help from Vince Massimo,I managed to put a couple of Radiata shots and the other oddity that I found yesterday, they are on the September sightings page.Well done with the oddity you found today,very unusual! As a matter of interest were you anywhere near the moat,I found it the hotspot yesterday ,was thinking about going back today,but the wind and cloud put me off,well done again for todays beauty!

Regards Allan W

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 14-Sep-14 05:35 PM GMT

Hi Dave, sorry to have missed you (and the Clouded Yellow!) Next time toot your hooter at me! I think I was trying to follow a pair of Small Coppers involved in a high speed chase.

Thanks Goldie – I'm trying to stock up on Small Copper photos to help get me through the winter!

Cheers Allan, yes I found good numbers in the Observatory moat (I walk the full circuit) and today's oddity was there (I found my *radiata* there too, a couple of weeks ago).

The moat is great in Spring when all the Blackthorn is in flower and there are Small Coppers everywhere, but there are plenty out in the Desert too.

Best Wishes,

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 15-Sep-14 10:14 PM GMT

Fantastic Coppers again Hoggers 😊 Others have commented on the lower numbers of this species this year but I reckon it's because you're not playing fair and sharing them 😊😂 Interesting variation in the pale winged Copper – could that be pathological rather than genetic? 😬

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 17-Sep-14 09:03 PM GMT

Hi ,Hoggers,

Just browsing the internet,and came across,a site you may be interested in,its the "Natural history museum"["The Cockayne Collection"](#) and go on specimen search,it shows the majority of Small Copper abberations (named and some unnamed), it,s pretty good!

regards Allan.W.

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 17-Sep-14 09:08 PM GMT

That's very kind of you Allan, I will take a look,

Much appreciated,

Hoggers

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 21-Sep-14 03:09 PM GMT

Dungeness this morning was very sunny but very windy too which made butterflying rather difficult. Unsurprisingly my first find of the day wasn't a butterfly at all



A handsome Wheatear passing through on its journey south.

And nor was my second sighting a butterfly



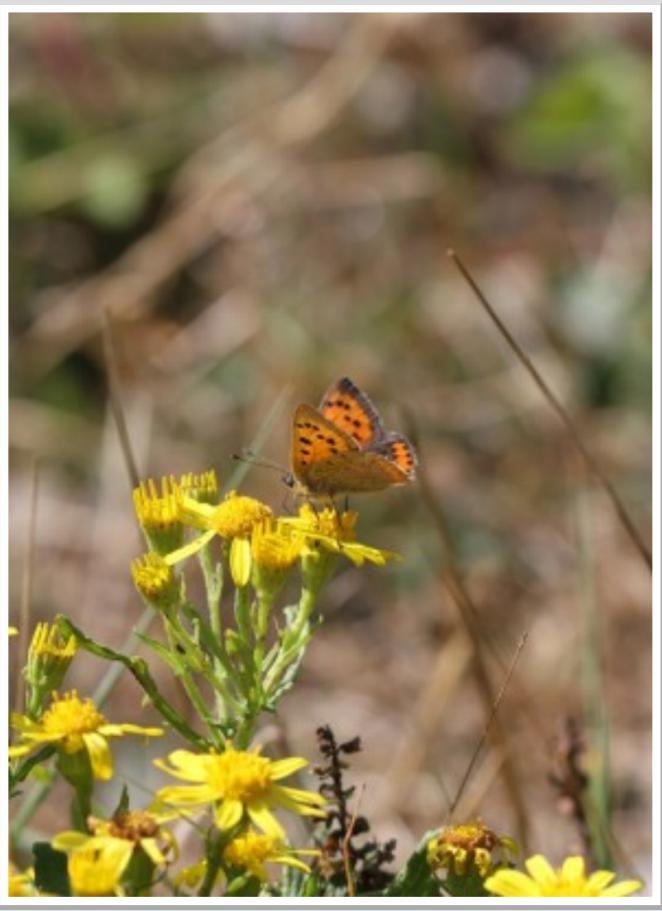
Dodder.

Good numbers still of Common Blues



and Small Heaths too.

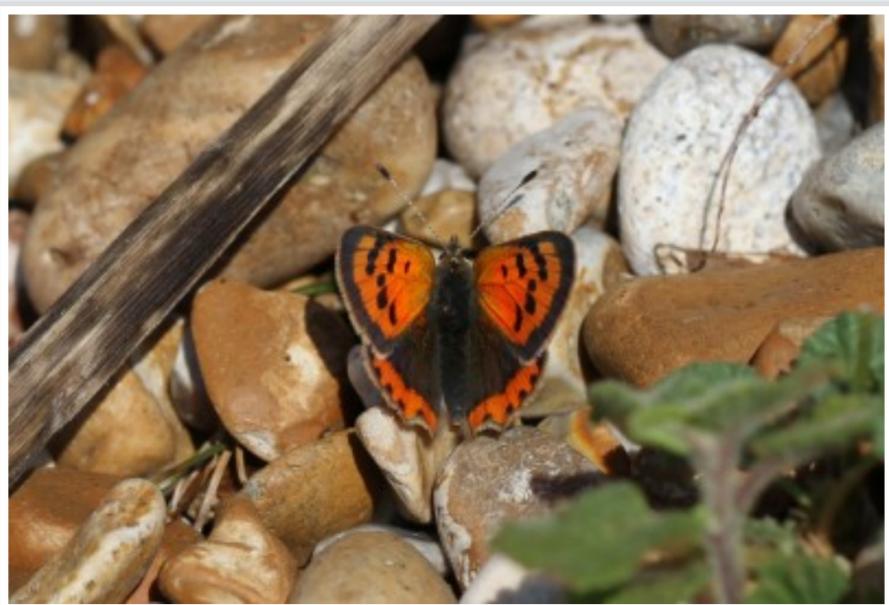
But at last I saw what I'd come for



Most are now rather knocked about

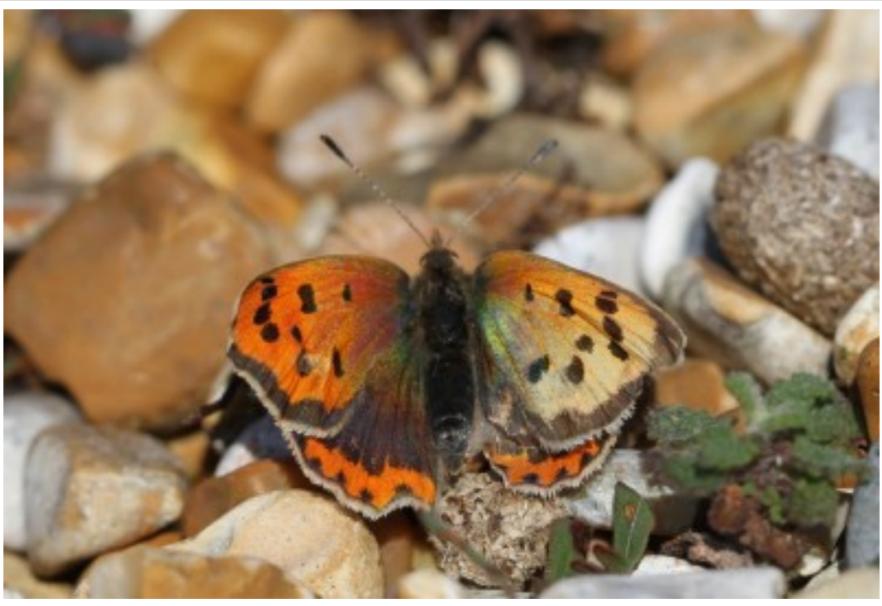


Not all so badly





But I found this poor one



It was still able to fly but clearly had suffered some trauma when emerging.

My Copper of the Day was this chap



It looks like the one found by Allan a week or so ago



Latin Name : *Quarter Schmidtii*



I counted fewer Coppers here today than previously. Most, like this one, keeping low out of the wind



But I saw around 20 nonetheless



Re: Hoppers

by Allan.W., 21-Sep-14 08:43 PM GMT

Hi,Hoppers,

Nice one! I,m chuffed that you managed to re find ,my white hindwing beastie! I had a quick look yesterday ,but didn,t see any ,particularly unusual Coppers, mind you I did manage an even more tatty Copper than yours,not a great shot ,but it,s on the September sightings page,how it managed to fly I don,t know? You don,t reckon that worn specimen you took ,this time, is the same insect you took a while back with the pale right hand forewing do you,did you see the whitewing in the moat? The only thing I saw of interest was the Red ad with extra spots. regards Allan.

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 28-Sep-14 03:55 PM GMT

Hi Allan, that Copper could very well have been the same insect that I saw a week beforehand as they look so alike (although clearly a lot had happened in between!)

Conditions were glorious at Dungeness today, warm, sunny and calm. Copper numbers were down on last week, however; I saw only 11. Nevertheless, there was plenty to see!

Many showed signs of the rough and tumble lives they lead



Old Soldiers never die



But one of the first that I found was this beauty



A glorious Blue Badge Holder





And others too were in fine form



My Copper of the Day was this chap



He'd set up his patch by a ragwort and when this Peacock flew in to re-fuel he wasn't having it



He harassed the much bigger Nymphalid following it closely where ever it went



And when these polite requests to leave went ignored he got physical



The Winner!

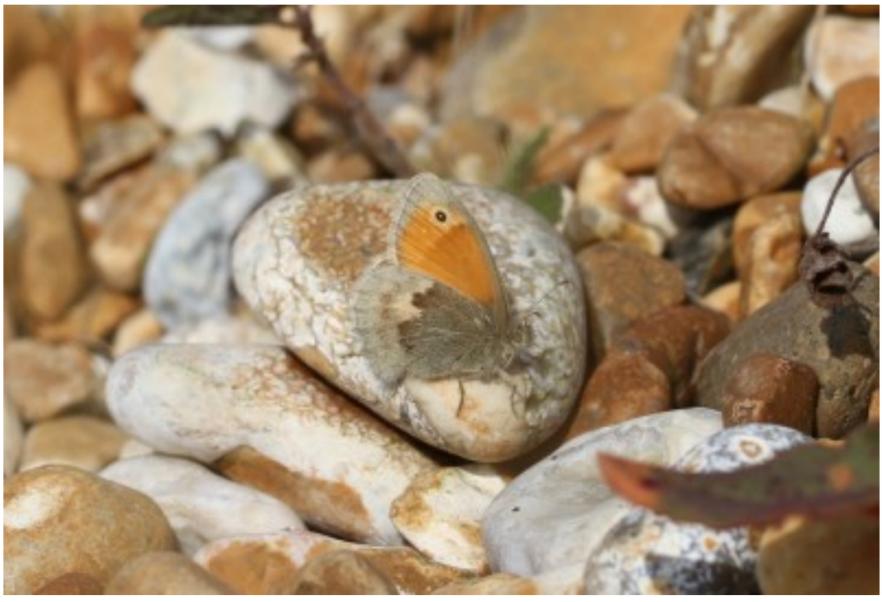
And before today I had no idea that Small Coppers do the Hokey Cokey





"Knees bent, arms stretched, ra ra ra!"

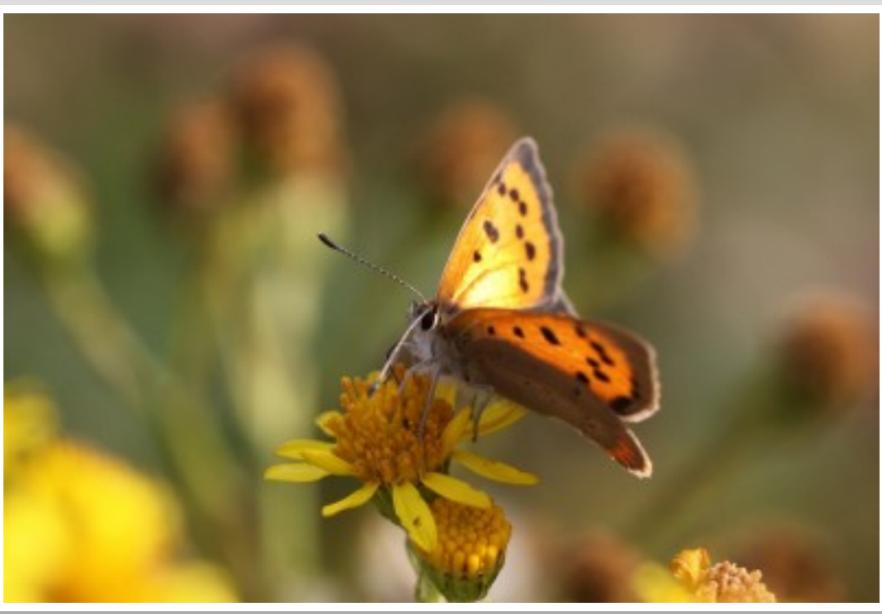
I also saw Small Heaths



Common Blues, Large and Small Whites, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral and five Clouded Yellows



A warm day in September and Small Coppers glowing in the sun



Marvellous!



Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 28-Sep-14 07:15 PM GMT

Hi ,Hoggers,

Like yourself we had a quick look at Dungeness today ,and we found them well down in numbers as well,I only managed 5,as you say most are pretty battle worn now , no fresh looking specimens amongst the 5 we did see. Also visited another ,Small Copper site near Brookland ,judging by the beautiful condition of some of them , (8 in all) I would think that they are still emerging on this site ,also at least 3 possibly up to 5, Clouded yellow. We had to pass by the Orlestone Forest on the way home ,tried in hope more than anything else ,for a 2nd brood White Admiral ,which seem to be turning up all over,but no joy ,just a single Comma,and one of our old friends!(a Small Copper)

Regards Allan.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 29-Sep-14 11:06 PM GMT

Some particularly fine looking Coppers there Hoggers and I especially love the Copper Hokey Cokey 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 30-Sep-14 04:59 PM GMT

I agree with Wurzal, photo's at last that made me laugh, Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 03-Oct-14 03:25 PM GMT

Hi guys, thanks for your comments: there's certainly something comical about Small Coppers toddling along in a line after a female!

Allan, if that site near Brookland is open to the public could you let me know how to find it please?

I had the day off work today and a free morning before having to attend to household chores, so I teamed up with Brother Hoggles and went down to see what's about at Dungeness.

Glorious day : sunny, hot and calm. We started finding Small Coppers right from getting out of the car



Certainly not in the same numbers as in early September



And more widely distributed



We counted 14 today



And there are still several fresh-looking individuals



A few Common Blues



Small Heaths too, 6 Red Admirals, 2 Small Tortoiseshells and 3 Clouded Yellows



We had only a couple of hours to spend there but on such a glorious day it was well worth it



Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 03-Oct-14 06:54 PM GMT

Hi,Hoggers,

Nice pics,from Dunge:! The Brookland site is opposite the"Woolpack" car park,adjacent to the corner off of the main drag, walk along to the chained gate,which lifts up ,and to your left you'll see a raised bund, it carries on for 3-400 m then turns sharp right,and on through another gate,I've found fair numbers of Coppers either side of the bund,+ small heath,small tort,Clouded yellow,as I said previously,I wonder if they're still emerging here? You'll notice the reedbeds as well,excellent roosting sites for numbers of Marsh Harrier,and later Hen Harrier,saw good numbers of Bearded tits when we were there last week,and heard several song snatches from Cetti,s Warbler, good hunting ,you'll need it this weekend!! Regards Allan.

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 03-Oct-14 07:20 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Great Small Coppers again, particularly the Hokey Kokey shots 😊 , although I am not sure if it shouldn't be a 'Copper Conga' 😊😄

Great stuff,

Neil.

Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 04-Oct-14 01:27 PM GMT

Another series of great shots, i'm still laughing at the previous Copper shots Goldie 😊

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 05-Oct-14 04:54 PM GMT

Neil, I think we may both be wrong: I hear that Line Dancing is pretty popular these days....!

Cheers Goldie. Small Coppers are great fun to watch, they always seem to be up to something!

Allan, the moment you mentioned Hen Harriers I knew exactly where you mean. Many years ago a friend took me there to watch Hen Harriers fly in to roost on a Winter's evening just before sun set. An unforgettable sight.

I woke this morning to the first frost of the Autumn. As the morning progressed it grew steadily warmer with wall to wall sunshine, although the air remained cooler than of late.

I got to the Brookland site at around 930 when it was perhaps still rather too cool to see a great deal of butterfly activity but I quickly came upon a few Small Coppers



What surprised me most was to see no less than 6 Clouded Yellows



They were flying up and down the embankment



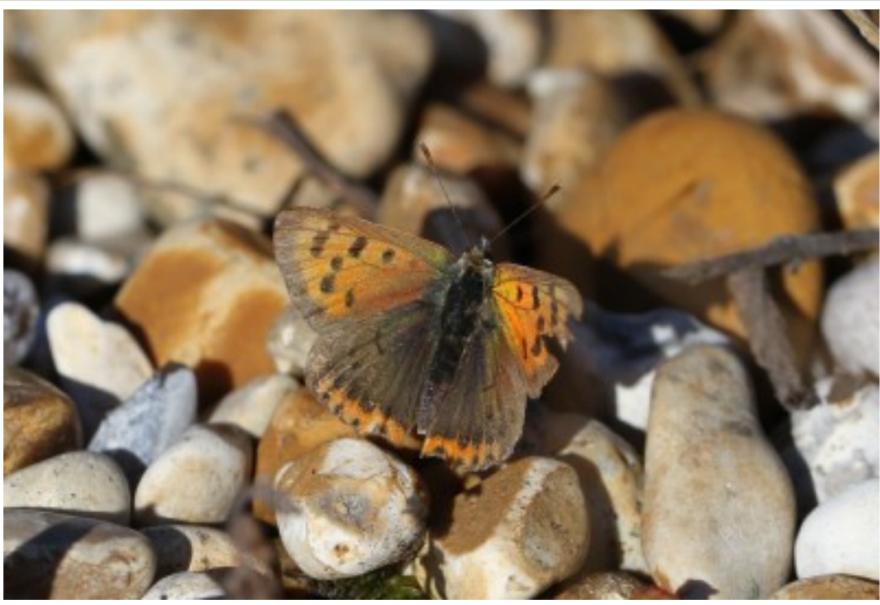
and settling occasionally



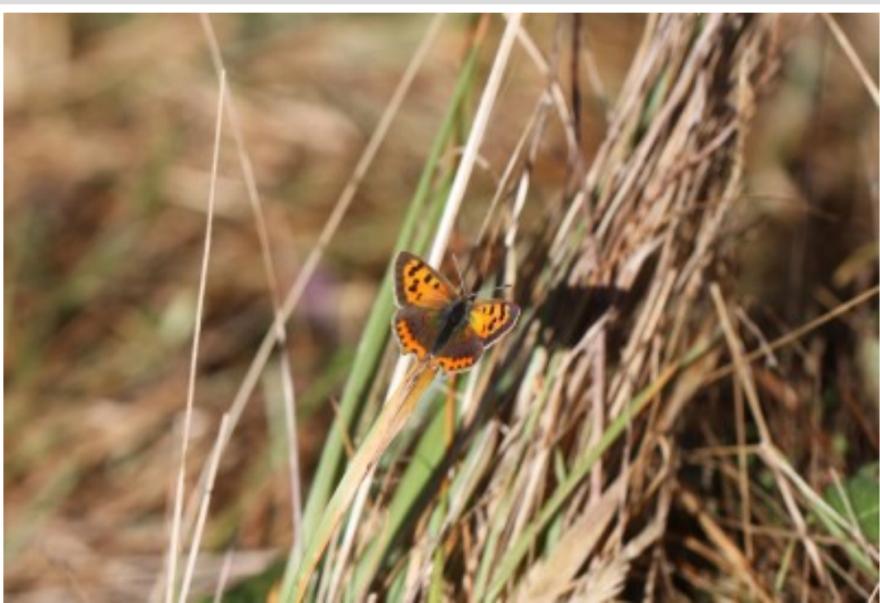
Not bad for October! I will certainly be going back there



Then on to Dungeness where instead of following my usual route to the Observatory I ventured across "The Desert". Here I saw more Small Coppers. Some looking like discarded fag butts



Others in finer trim





I saw another Clouded Yellow, a Red Admiral and a Small Tortoiseshell



My star butterfly of the day was this Common Blue



I couldn't believe the condition it was in



It must have emerged this morning! What a lovely surprise.

So there's still plenty to see out there



Best wishes,

Hoggers.

Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 05-Oct-14 06:27 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

great little site eh ,Hoggers ,we were at Brookland just after 1pm,almost the first butterfly we saw ,at distance was what appeared to be a "pale"(in colour)looking cy, it soon disappeared,and we thought no more of it ,incredibly we counted 30 cys, my best ever count by far,I think there were probably nearer 50 about ,including a freshly emerged female which was continually hassled by two males! we actually had 6 in view on a couple of occasions,also 4or 5 Small copper,5 Small heath ,a couple of male Common blue,+Small tort,peacock,red ad,+ = small white, we headed back to the car,seeing many cys,as we went, as we approached the reservoir ,I spotted our"pale" cy again,it allowed fairly close approach,but I could have done with your photographic skills, time I,d got it in the viewfinder it had gone,a cracking "Helice" cy,a quick look at Dunge, not to much happening.(apart from nice views of the Cattle Egret,at Boulderwall. regards Allan W.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 05-Oct-14 08:38 PM GMT

More great Coppers Hoggers 😊 And the Common Blue is a great find – is that a really late 3rd brood or has there not been one yet? I've been finding it a bit difficult to keep up 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 05-Oct-14 10:05 PM GMT

Looks like things are still going strong down there Hoggers, much better than here in the midlands, great report and photos 😊🇬🇧

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 06-Oct-14 03:49 PM GMT

I love the Clouded Yellow in flight Hogger's, nothing up here these last few days Goldie 😊

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 12-Oct-14 03:34 PM GMT

Last year I saw a Small Copper on 17th November and so I thought I'd be in with a chance of seeing some today.

Brother Hoggles and I got to Dungeness at around 1030. It was overcast and damp with a rather cool breeze coming in off the sea. We found no butterflies at all for about 45 minutes when by chance I came upon a roosting female Common Blue



We continued searching all the usual haunts but with no result. Conditions were just too cool, damp and dull for butterflies.

At around 1130 the sun made an effort for us and managed to weakly filter through the clouds. It warmed up rapidly. I felt that if any Small Coppers were still about we should see one.

"There's one!" called out Brother Hoggles



Thank Heavens! A Small Copper at last!

The temperature remained pleasantly warm for a precious 10 - 15 minutes and in that time we saw two more Small Coppers



But after those few minutes the cloud had grown thicker, blocking out the sun once more.

So not a high count today but after a week without butterflies (for me at least) it was a heartwarming thrill to see any at all



Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 12-Oct-14 07:02 PM GMT

Lovely shots Hoggers and the Common Blue is very fresh looking 😊🍀 I've only seen the odd fly-by white over the last week so I know how you would have felt at the start of the day 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 18-Oct-14 04:26 PM GMT

I just saw a Holly Blue in my garden!!!

Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 19-Oct-14 03:45 PM GMT

I arrived at Dungeness this morning just after the rain had stopped. It was cloudy and breezy but also very warm and we even saw some sunshine too. Unfortunately I failed to spot a single Small Copper. I had a good look in all their usual haunts but with no luck.

Nonetheless, I get the feeling that they're still around. Certainly this time last year I was still able to find them albeit in low numbers (although this time last year I was also finding Long-tailed Blues!!)

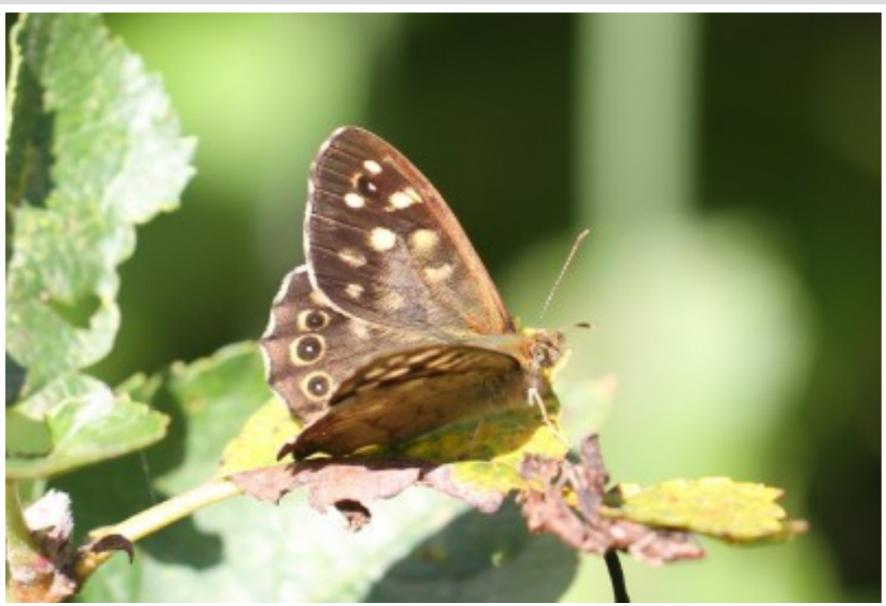
Maybe any that are still out today were keeping their heads down out of the wind.

But I did have some luck today: this Clouded Yellow was sheltering in the grass when I accidentally disturbed it



It flew a little way then settled to roost out of the wind.

Back at the ranch there was no sign of yesterday's Holly Blue but we had two Red Admirals on the Wallflowers and a Speckled Wood was enjoying the sunshine



Re: Hoggers

by David M, 19-Oct-14 08:11 PM GMT

Well done, Hoggers. I contemplated a little butterfly hunt myself today but the winds were practically gale force.

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 19-Oct-14 08:44 PM GMT

Cracking shots of the Specklies Hoggers – the first almost has a purple sheen to the wing edges. I could only manage a single Brimstone today on the drive back from Cardiff.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 13-Nov-14 07:38 PM GMT

A friend sent me this photo today



He's just moved into an old house in the west of Norfolk and tells me that thus far he's come across approximately 15 hibernating butterflies.

Re: Hoggers

by David M, 13-Nov-14 10:09 PM GMT

They all look like Tortoiseshells to me, Hoggers. I hope the room they're in isn't heated?

Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 13-Nov-14 11:45 PM GMT

That's great Hoggers, I moved Bob outside last year to my brother in-laws woodpile once the heating actually started working but they should be alright there for a while – especially with all of the Atlantic weather systems pouring in 😬

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 09-Dec-14 04:52 PM GMT

My buddy in Norfolk has just sent me this photo taken in his new house



It must be one of the hibernating Small Tortoiseshells that he photographed when he moved in.
I guess if he puts it outside in an unheated shed (for example) it will go back into hibernation?