

PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 18-Apr-14 09:00 PM GMT

Good Friday 18th April 2014

A Walk along the Wey Navigation Canal from Old Parvis Road, Dartnell Park, **West Byfleet** heading South for approx. 6miles (upstream) to High Bridge **Send, Surrey.**

Started off in West Byfleet at 9:30am. I spent the first ten minutes faffing about with my iphone trying to get my notes voice recorded.

Weather sunny but quite cool (9-14 degrees C). Forecast to cloud over by 2:00pm so I wanted to make the most of the morning.

Ideal weather for walking and if I ended up somewhere nice by lunchtime, should be good conditions for taking pictures of butterflies as well.

What more could I ask for? 😊

The first part of my walk was along part of the Wey Navigation Canal lined with mature trees. By 9:55am I had seen my first butterfly of the day, in fact, two Speckled Woods in a sunny spot. I don't want to bore you so here is a picture:



9:58am Speckled Wood, West Byfleet, Surrey

I continued on past **Pyrford** and by 10:48am, I found a patch of nettles by Walsham Weir with 4 Peacocks and a Comma warming up in the morning sunshine.



10:36am Walsham Weir, River Wey, Surrey.

By 11:00am I had seen my first Orange Tip of the day and soon several more. Near Ripley, the landscape changes with grazed fields bordering the navigation.

Approaching Newark Lock there is a nice view of Newark Priory:



11:00am Newark Priory as seen from the Tow Path

I saw Green Veined Whites, Peacocks & Orange Tips between Newark Lock & Papercourt Lock:

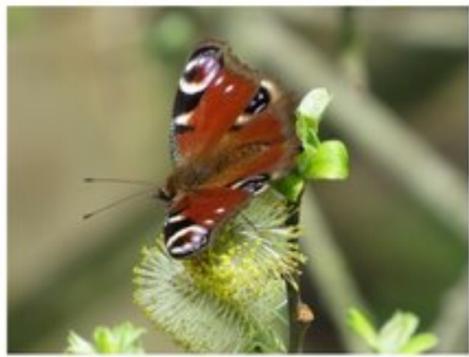


11:31am Green Veined White near Papercourt Lock



11:24am Papercourt Lock

By Lunch Time I found a very good stretch of the tow path for butterflies near "High Bridge". I saw every species I had encountered along the way here plus a Small Tortoiseshell, Small White and my first Holly Blue of 2014 ! 😊 . Once I got "my eye in" I spotted another 8 Holly Blues with individuals chasing each other near to the nettles and Willow Trees. I have made a couple of compilations to save space:



"Butterfly Hotspot"
 Butterflies Feeding on Willow
 Good Friday 18th 2014
 between 12:00 & 1:30pm
 Tow Path
 Wey Navigation Canal
 Near High Bridge, Wharf Lane
 Send, Woking, Surrey.

12:00 - 13:30pm Various Butterflies feeding on Willow next to tow path near "High Bridge"



12:14pm Small White near "High Bridge"



12:00pm - 13:30pm (Landscape photo 12:52pm near "High Bridge")



13:19pm Holly Blue near "High Bridge"

Special notes- I was expecting to see at least one Brimstone, I probably would have seen several more last month along this same stretch but I didn't see any.

I only saw 1 Small Tortoiseshell (They were still outnumbered by Commas and Peacocks).



13:39 Orange Tip near "High Bridge"



13:40 Comma near "High Bridge"

I will be recording my sightings near "high bridge" with the Surrey Branch of Butterfly Conservation along with the grid reference,

Happy Easter Egg Hunting,

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 20-Apr-14 09:30 PM GMT

20.4.14
I joined youtube today and uploaded an edited video to UK butterflies which I took with the P mode setting on my camera on 18.4.14
As I am new to doing this and might have overlooked some guidelines or rules, I would appreciate any constructive criticism here.
Camera was hand held with the image stabilisation button pressed for most of the time. The video title is "Peacock Nectaring on Willow"
best wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Pete Eeles, 20-Apr-14 10:54 PM GMT

"PhilBWright" wrote:

As I am new to doing this and might have overlooked some guidelines or rules, I would appreciate any constructive criticism here.

Hi Philip – and welcome to UKB! We have minimal "rules" regarding videos, since only a few people shoot video at the moment. When we're overwhelmed with video footage, we'll probably need to be selective but, as things stand, any uploaded video is automatically added to the species page. The only request is that the video shows something of interest and doesn't duplicate something we already have – and I think yours is fine on both counts!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 21-Apr-14 05:23 AM GMT

Thanks Pete, I will bear that in mind.

Where I was on Friday, there must have been at least half a dozen different butterfly species (adults) using willow as a food source. I caught a Speckled Wood feeding (which I don't normally see).

I know it must be quite seasonal but I have never really seen for myself, adult butterflies using willow like this before. I was looking out for this behaviour after noticing pictures posted by others. There is certainly not much flowering buddleia around at this time of year 😊



Pictured above is a speckled wood that looked quite a pale colour in flight and kept wanting to land on the tow path:

best wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 21-Apr-14 10:42 PM GMT

😊 21st April 2014

Went for a walk around the **Bookham Commons, Surrey** today from approx. 12:00 – 3:00pm. Temperature 14–17 degrees C. Some cloud but not blocking the sun all of the time.

I saw lots of Speckled Woods, Orange Tips, Peacocks and Brimstones, a couple of Commas, Green-veined Whites and Small Whites. Probably, just about everything I was expecting to see. Maybe I saw two Holly Blues but if they were, they were seen fleetingly from a distance so I couldn't positively id them.

I took what I thought was a very ordinary picture of a Speckled Wood perching near the Purple Emperor "master tree" but found something else to make it a little more interesting:



Speckled Wood "Keeping an eye on things"

There were some nice, pleasant patches of Bluebells out in the woods.

Just before I left the Commons I found a Male Brimstone settling down under a leaf of what I think was a Pear Tree:



Resting camouflaged under Pear Tree Leaf

Best wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 22-Apr-14 10:08 PM GMT

22.4.14 Looking back at Purple Emperors in 2013.

Just uploaded my video of Purple Emperors in Aerial Combat from last year. Not very well focused, just a few black dots whizzing around for a couple of seconds so I repeated the footage 😊. It was shot in real time showing just how fast they are. I am quite happy to have this video removed when something better is uploaded of this behaviour. I think it is quite hard to follow them filming. I soon got lost trying to second guess where they were going to go !

Last year I also noticed the Purple Emperors were quite happy chasing birds across the tree canopy such as pigeons and crows. I would have loved to have captured that on video as they often came back to the same perch after checking them out.

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Maximus, 24-Apr-14 12:28 AM GMT

Very nice photos, nice start to your diary Philip 😊

Mike

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 24-Apr-14 05:16 AM GMT

24.4.14

Thanks Mike for your feedback, much appreciated.

About 15 years ago, I studied Landscape Architecture at Uni. so I do have a bit of an eye for what makes a nice composition.

With digital photography, the best tip I can give **anyone** is to take lots of pictures and not show or delete the average or worst pictures (I know this sounds obvious). I also spend some time cropping my best pictures but that's just my personal preference. To give you an idea, with my 6 mile walk along the canal, I took approx. 200 pictures that day. Many of those pictures I wouldn't dream of showing !

With regard to taking photos of butterflies and reading some of the personal diaries, my main aim of 2014 is to become more like Neil Hulme ! 😊😊😊
I'm off to work now. I have to get up early to beat the morning rush as I am working in London. I will catch up later,

Best Wishes,

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Pauline, 24-Apr-14 06:49 AM GMT

Morning Phil – great time of the day in Summer isn't it? Not so great in Winter. I see you mentioned Neil's photos – there are many of us who aspire to take such shots. One of the earliest lessons I had from Neil was about exposure compensation after he quite rightly told me my photos of whites were bleached (I didn't even know what that meant back then but basically lacking the finer details). He suggested that I alter this setting on my camera to MINUS 0.66 for such situations. (I note several of yours are set to a POSITIVE value.) Hope you don't mind me mentioning this Phil but I wish someone had told me a lot earlier. Enjoying reading your diary and as I used to live in Addlestone some of the landscape shots are nostalgic.

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 24-Apr-14 07:41 AM GMT

Thanks Pauline,

When I was at uni, one of the teaching methods was for all of us to pin our work up on the wall and let it be criticised by others in the group for the greater good. Not too many fights took place !
It should be brightening up later in Lewisham,

BWs (😊)

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Pete Eeles, 24-Apr-14 12:15 PM GMT

"Pauline" wrote:

One of the earliest lessons I had from Neil was about exposure compensation after he quite rightly told me my photos of whites were bleached (I didn't even know what that meant back then but basically lacking the finer details). He suggested that I alter this setting on my camera to MINUS 0.66 for such situations.

Perhaps we should start a "photography secrets" thread (i.e. things you wish you'd known then, but know now!).

I've got several views on tripods, backgrounds, composure etc. etc. and know others do too. For example, I believe that you can only get a clean background if there's a clean background (as it were)! There is no magic. Options to achieve this include moving the butterfly, doing some gardening or changing the background in some way (and I know folks on this forum that do these, so this isn't a "made up" list!). A green jacket I bought while in Switzerland with Guy has been incredibly useful for the latter 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: PhilBWright

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Apr-14 02:00 PM GMT

Now THERE are some good ideas on things to add to my field bag! I am already aware of "judicious pruning" and a small pair of scissors in your kit can be helpful. But a green screen – genius!

I also under expose in the field (-0.33 to -0.66) and then re-saturate at home.

I think a secrets thread, perhaps contain good/best practice, or even a new ideas to try is a great idea. How about a "critique" thread too?

NB – Sorry to hijack your diary, Phil.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 25-Apr-14 05:56 AM GMT

That's cool guys, thanks.

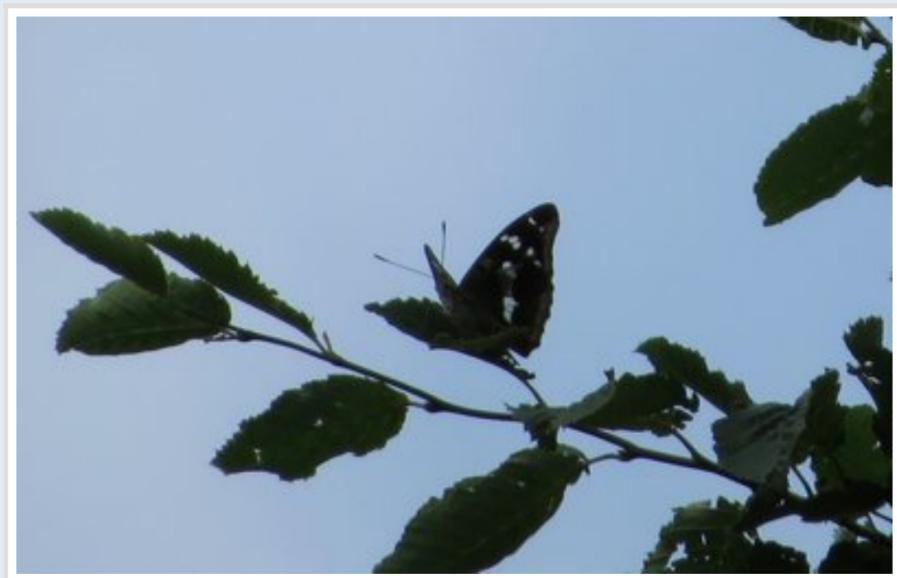
25.4.14 Exposure Settings and image brightness

After reading some of my camera manual, it turns out that it is actually quite easy to change the exposure settings in the field.

It was raining this evening so I took several shots in quick succession aimed at the detail on my cream curtains backlit from outside just to give an idea of what we are talking about:



Instead of a Cabbage White example, here is another tree canopy picture I took last year which was quite badly silhouetted:



Exposure Bias of 0 step

Do you have any ideas on how I might have improved on this, apart from changing camera angle?

Best Wishes

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 26-Apr-14 05:58 AM GMT

26.4.14

Checking Out the Exposure Bias of my recently uploaded pictures

By right clicking some of my pictures on my lap top and selecting "properties" I have been looking at the exposure bias of some of my recently uploaded pictures.

For example this picture of a female Orange Tip, I thought picked out the detail quite well, still only had an exposure bias of 0 step:



It seems that most of my shots have been like this apart from a few where I may have changed the settings inadvertently by mistake.

Thanks to Pauline's original comment and follow up comments I will probably save quite a bit of wasted time and energy in the future,

best wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Wurzel, 26-Apr-14 08:29 AM GMT

Intersting ideas and information Phil – I might need to have a look into actually working out how to use my camera as I'm still in 'point and shoot' mode 😞 With regards to the Purple Emperor shot all I can really suggest is invest in a step ladder so you can get closer 😊 Although I like shots like that of His Nibbs as it sets the scence and is quite an accurate representation of how we often see Him 😊 Looking forward to some more reports soon.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 26-Apr-14 09:59 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel,

26.4.14 Bushy Park Woodland Garden TQ148695

Temperature 12–14 degrees C around lunchtime, warm enough for butterflies on the wing when the sun came out.

According to Chris Evans on BBC Radio 2, this was the weekend to go and visit a "Bluebell Wood"

Basically the woodland gardens are the parts of Bushy Park gated and fenced off from the resident Red and Fallow Deer.

Excellent time of year to visit with Rhododendrons & Azaleas in bloom among the Bluebells and butterflies with an exotic taste!.



Woodland Gardens, Bushy Park near Hampton Court

I soon saw lots of Orange Tips, Brimstones, Speckled Woods, Small, Large & Green-veined Whites



Male Brimstone in flight and feeding (inset).



Large White on Bluebells



Green-veined White



Orange Tip



I had a nice coffee and cake in the café afterwards with my cousins

I hope I have "done the place justice".

I will upload some pictures to my photo album when I don't feel so guilty about hogging the home page! 😊

best wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by David M, 26-Apr-14 10:17 PM GMT

Imaginative stuff, Phil.

I really like it.

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilJohnson, 28-Apr-14 06:07 PM GMT

I'm going to spend some time this evening sorting out data stored on my phone of a few butterfly counts that I did and submit them to the Surrey & South West London branch of Butterfly Conservation (which I am not a member of).

I haven't seen any Meadow Browns or Purple Emperor butterflies yet in 2014 ! 😊

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Neil Freeman, 28-Apr-14 07:38 PM GMT

Hi Phil,

An interesting diary, I love the photos with the butterflies set against the habitat, great stuff 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: PhilBWright

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-14 09:48 AM GMT

It's great to see things being done differently and I really like the way the images are backed up by their habitat – it helps put the image in context, great stuff Phil 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: PhilBWright

by Pauline, 29-Apr-14 03:50 PM GMT

I have to agree with the others Phil – it is a refreshing and innovative approach no doubt helped by your landscape background. Lovely!

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilJohnson, 05-May-14 10:31 AM GMT

Thank you very much David, Neil, Wurzel and Pauline,

Regarding BBC Breakfast report 06:50 on 4.5.14 The River Mole Survey of Flood Damage to the main flood channel.

This stretch of the River Mole is local to me. I grew up around here.

Basically, the part of the River Mole (lower reaches) filmed on the BBC Breakfast report did its job quite well in regard to carrying the water away quickly after the winter floods further upstream. The main flood channel is generally, not good for fish. It is too uniform in low water conditions to stop cormorants rampaging through fish stocks. The cormorants might otherwise keep to the local reservoirs as was the case many years ago or so I was told.

When the river is in spate, many of fish left for example, Roach, Bream, Perch, Pike, Chub & Dace along this stretch of the Flood Relief Channel literally get washed into the River Thames and can be found on an average year when the Thames hasn't flooded as well, near the Molesey Weir on the Thames in the Summer.

When designing these "flood channels", there needs to be more of a fish friendly approach including more areas where the fish can shelter when the river is in spate and more attempts to slow the water a little to reduce bank erosion but still keeping the potential to carry water away quickly. A good test for a newly designed flood channel is to wait 5 or 10 years and then see if there are many or any Roach and Bream present as these species suffer most from a "forced migration downstream" during floods.

It looked to me like most of the bank erosion took place a short distance downstream of the weir at Esher.

The lower stretch of the River Mole flooded more frequently 35 years ago, despite the ever changing river course. Back then it was a wildlife haven and the weirs were fully automatic. I think the Environment Agency must do better in the future when designing similar flood channels.

Turning my attention to Butterflies. Regarding the picture below taken on 4.5.14. I know it looks pretty but Oil Seed Rape on the river banks? Is this a good plant to have here? I would suggest that it might not be the best apart from its aesthetic appeal. Any more information on this would be much appreciated.



4/5/2014 River Mole, Esher, Surrey. Some of the insects found there today



Grid Ref. TQ130660 River Mole Flood Channel



At least 3 butterflies & a
Mayfly if one looks closely
4.5.2014 River Mole
Esher, Surrey
Grid Ref. TQ130660

Plenty of Butterflies on the "Man made" river bank



Downstream of the main weir at Esher



"Flow Measuring Station"

In all I saw, Small Whites, Large White, Brimstones, Peacocks, Green-veined Whites, Holly Blue and Orange Tip butterflies,

Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 06-Jun-14 03:38 AM GMT

5/6/2014 Red Admiral. Mid-Canopy & Ground Level, Surrey Woodland.

I went for a walk in the woods after work and enjoyed a ten minute "relationship" with this Red Admiral. It was very inquisitive and even landed on my T-Shirt.

I thought about trying to get a "selfie" but the butterfly flew off when I moved 😊 Below is a link to a short video clip which I have edited. Any "improvement comments" are most welcome.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niiJKoO ... e=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=niiJKoO...e=youtu.be)

best wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 07-Jun-14 08:20 PM GMT

Just looking at my new, free butterfly recording app for "smart phone". Looks great. I can see some benefits in using this already.

Also, I have just invested £15 in a tripod for my camera which should help reduce camera shake when taking video clips when zoomed in from a distance (it might not always be easy or appropriate to use it).

Re: PhilBWright

by Willrow, 08-Jun-14 02:54 PM GMT

Nice way to illustrate your reports Phil, lots of good info included 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 08-Jun-14 05:26 PM GMT

8/6/2014

Thank you very much, Bill.

I know some of you might yawn when you read this because I am a few months late 😊 but

today was a very special day for me. I went looking for Silver Studded Blues on Fairmile Common in Surrey but instead saw my first ever Green Hairstreak and recorded 5 different

Green Hairstreaks

Here is one of my pictures. I think it could have been better but still quite a nice composition with contrasting colours of the heather:



8/6/2014 Green Hairstreak, Fairmile Common, near Esher, Surrey

Another picture of a different individual:



8/6/2014 "location" is key to finding these butterflies.

I'm just not good with "Blues". There is "always" a bit of grass that gets in the way!

I think this one is a Common Blue (please correct me if I am wrong and I will edit my post again!)



"Head buried in flower"

Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Maximus, 09-Jun-14 02:06 PM GMT

I don't think there will be too many yawns Philip 😊 it's great that you saw your first ever Green Hairstreak(s) 😊 must have really made your day 😊
Great PD – keep posting.

Mike

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 13-Jun-14 09:25 PM GMT

😊 13/6/2014

I spent some time at Bookham Common in Surrey. It was great to see my first Silver Washed Fritillary of the year as well as lots of newly emerged *Limenitis camilla*. They are out about half a month earlier compared to last year which probably means the Purple Emperors will be out earlier too. Here is a "space saver" compilation...



13.6.2014 Bookham Common, Surrey

I was practicing using my new lightweight tripod that I bought on ebay for £15. It is hard work. I prefer to use the viewfinder for a "quick snap" rather than the LCD screen which I find takes longer to find the subject. I managed OK with the LCD screen at mid canopy level with the *Limenitis camilla* & SWF but I would have been on my knees using the viewfinder as the tripod is only 1.25m high.

I am almost 2m tall & the Purple Emperor I want to photograph lives near the top of 20m high Oak trees. Zooming in to something about the size of a single oak leaf approx. 30m away creates image stabilisation issues so I think I really need a tripod which I can set up at about 1.8m high. Here is another compilation of butterflies I saw today...



Practicing using a tripod on Meadow Browns !

Here is my youtube video link. I have assumed that the Limenitis Camilla showing territorial behaviour are male (otherwise I can't tell the difference between male & female). Please correct me if I am wrong:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46IWGd-xISs>

Best Wishes

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 16-Jun-14 08:24 PM GMT

16th June 2014

If you haven't done so, **[b]please do look at my White Admiral video [/b]**from 13th June. To merge the video clips, prune out the worst bits and add some text and moving still images, for me this takes about as long at home as it does in the field taking the footage, just to get it up to what I consider to be a reasonable standard. I have edited it again and reposted it.

I had another day off work today and went back to Bookham Common in Surrey just to see how hard it would be to find the butterflies with cloud cover (in fact, the sun did not "come out" at all for the whole time I was there). It was half an hour before I saw my first butterfly. I stood in a woodland clearing for 15 minutes and just waited. A Red Admiral eventually fluttered down from the mid-canopy and briefly landed on my shoulder before it returned from where it came from. I smiled and said "thank you". Fortunately there was no one else around to hear me talking to the butterfly! 😊

I decided it was best to move on and head to some of the more slightly more open areas of the common on the woodland edge. I found a couple of "dopey" Meadow Browns, Ringlets and large skipper. On Friday I was distracted by the White Admirals when following a Ringlet so today I relaxed and spent some time taking pictures.

It is nice to catch the Ringlets when fresh, they just look so much better. This one had quite big eye spots:



16.6.2014 Ringlet with quite big eye spots

The White Admirals were not posing for photos near the ground but I did get some footage of a shy Roe Deer.

Kind Regards

Re: PhilBWright

by Lee Hurrell, 17-Jun-14 02:01 PM GMT

"PhilBWright" wrote:

It was half an hour before I saw my first butterfly. I stood in a woodland clearing for 15 minutes and just waited. A Red Admiral eventually fluttered down from the mid-canopy and briefly landed on my shoulder before it returned from where it came from. I smiled and said "thank you".

What a magical moment that must have been. I love doing that, stopping still, I've been "checked out" by Peacocks, Commas and Small Tortoiseshells this year. Silver Washed Frits and Purple Emperors do it too.

Lovely reports, Phil.

Best wishes,

Lee

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 18-Jun-14 04:42 AM GMT

Thank you very much Lee, it was magical.

"I can't have my cake and eat it" !

17/6/2014 was my birthday and the first sightings of Purple Emperor came on this day in 2014 at Bookham Common (my local patch) with thanks to Rob Hill.

I still don't think I am quite ready for the Purple Emperors this year if I want to improve on my pictures & video footage from last year.

I was kind of hoping that the first sightings of the Purple Emperor would come from somewhere else other than Bookham Common, now I will probably have to put up with the descending hoards of "butterfly tourists" in even greater quantity than last year. I might pop down to Bookham at the weekend and take pictures of some of them! 😊😳

I am cheering for Pauline & Wurzel to take some good pictures of the Purple Emperor and "wave the flag" elsewhere 😊



17/6/2014 A birthday *Limenitis camilla*

Best Wishes

Re: PhilBWright

by MikeOxon, 18-Jun-14 03:22 PM GMT

"PhilBWright" wrote:

I think I really need a tripod which I can set up at about 1.8m high.

You could try a monopod or a combined monopod/walking pole. I find that they give just enough stability to make using longer lenses feasible and they are a lot less hassle than a tripod! You can, for example follow a moving butterfly from a monopod.

Mike

Re: PhilBWright

by Pauline, 18-Jun-14 05:22 PM GMT

Belated Happy Birthday Phil. Cheers for the vote of confidence – I shall try my best but don't hold your breath!! 😊 Actually, my local site for PE's is one of the later ones usually but what I can do for you is promote Chiddingfold Forest (both Botany Bay and Oaken Wood, both of which are usually early for PE and relatively prolific. Of course, you might just find me amongst the hoards of 'butterfly tourists' at Bookham 😊😊

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 18-Jun-14 09:28 PM GMT

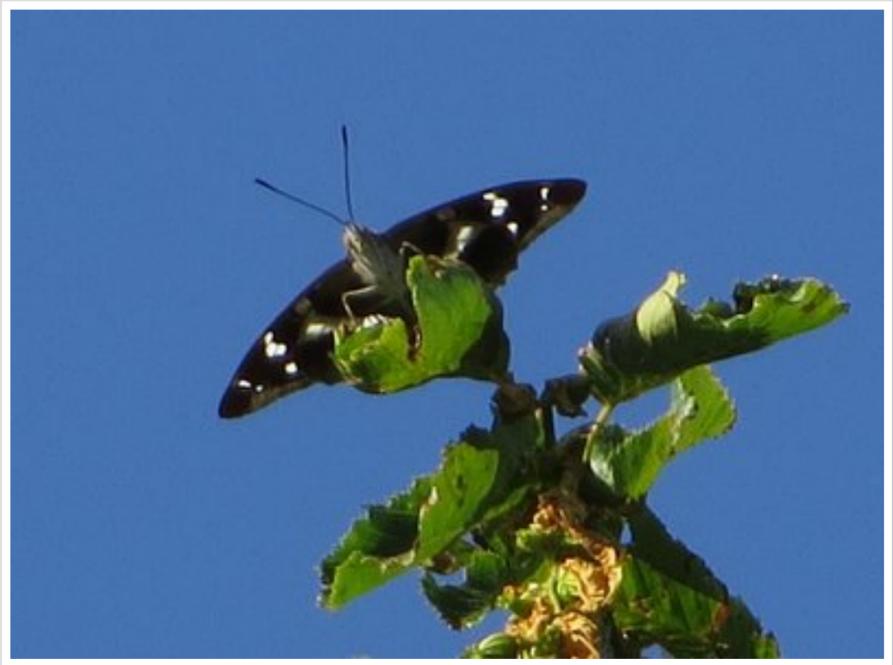
18.6.2014

Hi,

Thanks for the contribution Mike, a monopod, I had not thought of that. A very interesting idea.

Thanks Pauline. I managed to sneak down to Bookham Common this evening after work and can confirm the early emergence of Purple Emperors (not that the early sightings were in doubt, anyway). I had the ride to myself apart from one dog walker and two cyclists. With all due respect to Rob Hill, (he took some amazing "in flight" pictures with his hand held camera and special lens) I knew where Rob Hill took his pictures from and I set my tripod up in the same place where the grass was slightly trodden down 😊. I also swatted a few mosquitoes that I think Rob might have missed ! 😊

The clouds fizzled out and I was still taking pictures of a Purple Emperor after 7.00pm in the canopy before I gave up. I have loads of video clips to sift through, edit and sort. I will probably compile a new Purple Emperor video in the autumn when I have more time. I have not replayed all the footage yet, if I did try and sort it all now, I would just end up very tired for work. Just to encourage you a little, this was about as good as it got picture wise. My camera only has a 50x optical zoom but a 200x digital zoom and this is about as close as I can get at 200x from approx. 30 meters away from the butterfly (allowing for a bit of cropping of the image):



18.6.2014 Bookham Common, Surrey

Best Wishes

Re: PhilBWright

by Wurzel, 18-Jun-14 10:05 PM GMT

That's still an impressive shot from that distance Phil 😊, you're whetting our appetites for your video 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 19-Jun-14 06:13 AM GMT

Thank Wurzel,

19.6.2014 "If anyone can, Philip can" !

I have ordered a new camera. Seeing my first Purple Emperor of the year can have that effect/affect on me 😊

I will probably let my son, Alex use my old camera if I can trust him not to scratch the lens too quickly! I don't like flashing new bits of kit around and am not interested in advertising brand names (my personal preference) but I am sure that those interested will study the "picture properties" of my photos.

I just hope that I am smart enough to get the most out of my new camera 😊 It should arrive in a week or so.

Best Wishes

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 21-Jun-14 03:20 PM GMT

21.6.2014 Bookham Common, Surrey.

Mine was the first car in the common car park just before 8.00am and parked next to the sign saying "no parking between dusk and dawn".

The Common is very beautiful at this time in the morning. hardly anyone around and I still want to beat my personal record of seeing a Purple Emperor before 8.00am.

It was just a little bit "nippy".

The plan was to start off walking some of the slightly lower woodland rides in the morning where there are a few more willow trees & try and spot any newly emerging Purple Emperor's before they fly up the hill. Also I have the added interest of seeing other butterflies away from the "Master Tree". I had however stopped at my parents house for breakfast for a cup of tea so was a little late.

8:02am -White Admiral, 8:04am -Silver Washed Fritillary. Soon I saw loads of Limenitis camilla in the Oak Trees. When the sun is low in the sky in the morning, the butterflies start off in the canopy warming up. I even saw a meadow brown at approx. 8 meters above ground level in a tree! I saw my first confirmed sighting this year of a Purple Hairstreak. This was not photographed but I have a feeling there are many around. I took some interesting (for me) video footage of a Red Admiral taking minerals from the gravel track at the high point of the common & some Speckled Woods "harassing" each other. This ended in nothing and they both looked rather tired at the end of it. One Limenitis Camilla showed some interest in the horse manure but I don't think it was really fresh enough!

In all I saw 26 White Admiral & 8 Silver Washed Fritillaries (all male) among other butterflies. I was practicing sneaking up on WA's & SWF's just using the optical zoom on my old camera (50x max) and not using the "lazy" digital zoom (200x). I was reasonably happy not to have seen any Purple Emperors.

I left the common late morning after spotting my first "butterfly tourist" 😊 Best Wishes



Red Admiral taking minerals from gravel track at high point of Bookham Common

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 23-Jun-14 05:17 AM GMT

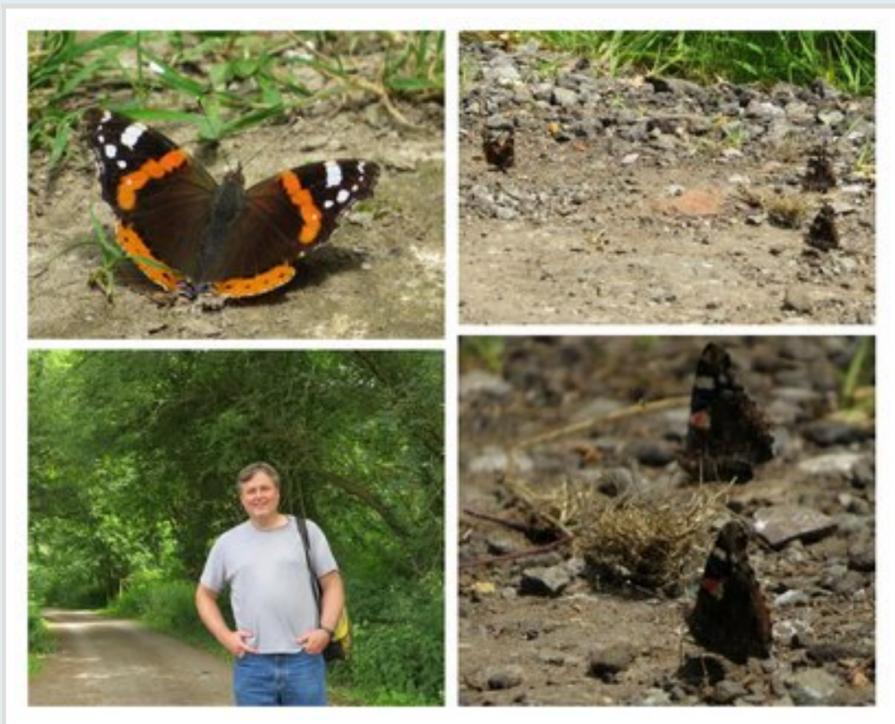
22/6/2014

I spent some time at (yes, you guessed it) Bookham Common yesterday with my son, Alex.

We saw 4 or 5 Purple Emperor in a couple of different locations. This doesn't mean that there are loads around but I have learnt (mainly from last year), where to park my car & look 😊. I would guess a slightly staggered emergence this year is quite likely. I thought I saw a female Purple Emperor last year as late as 18th August, quite along time after the last properly recorded sighting.

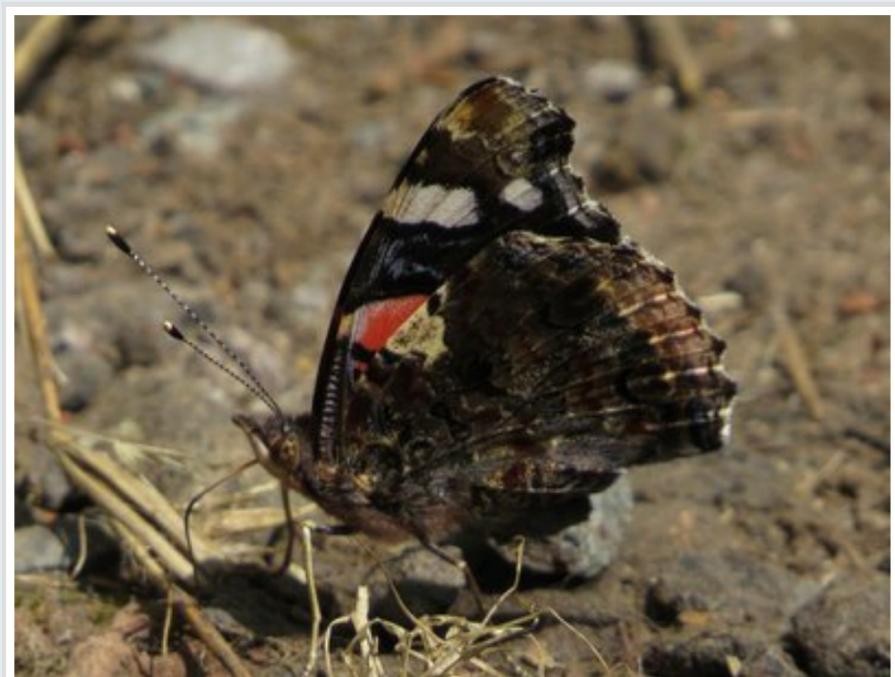
I was helping Alex use my old camera which unfortunately I never fully understood myself! We arrived on the common, late Sunday morning at around 11:30am and fitted in quite nicely with all the other "butterfly tourists". I was still interested in Red Admirals taking minerals from the gravel track. Up to 3 individuals at once at one location in-between the dog walkers and cyclists thundering past on one of the main rides.

Here are some of Alex's pictures (that's me, holding my stomach in !):



Red Admirals taking minerals. 22.6.2014

Best Wishes



22/6/2014 Red Admiral on gravel track

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 26-Jun-14 05:21 AM GMT

26/6/2014

Good morning. I was hoping to get some time off work today to look for Purple Emperors but my request to change my holiday leave at short notice was declined 😞

Instead can I play "spot the purple hairstreak" with you?

This picture was taken on **21st June at Bookham Common**. At first I thought that I had not captured anything but I do have a "record shot"
There are actually lots of these butterflies around now but mostly under-recorded in the oak canopy.



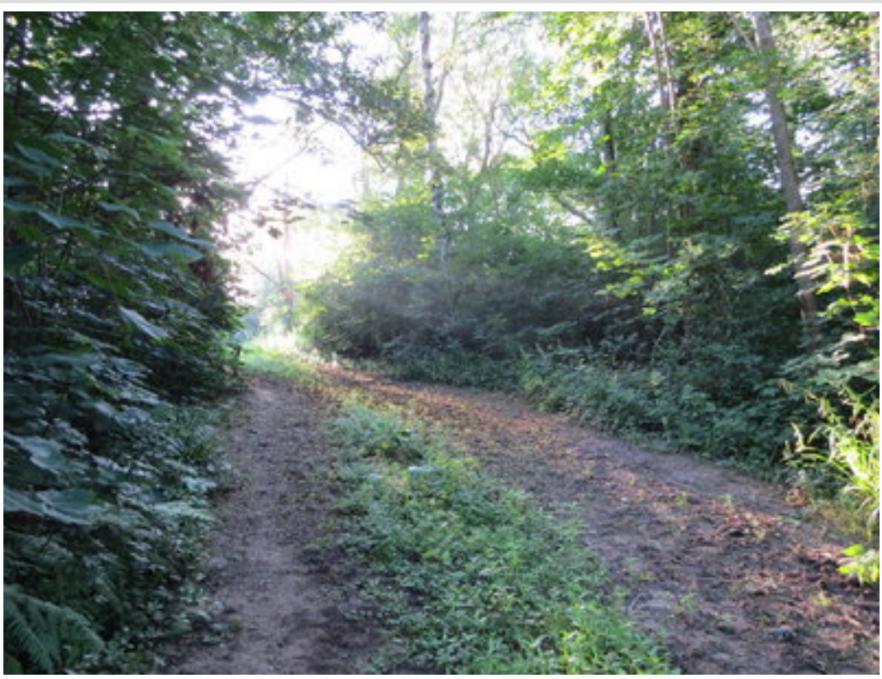
Can you spot the Purple Hairstreak?

Best Wishes

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 29-Jun-14 09:31 AM GMT

Having a lie in this morning as the weather is quite cool (only 15°C by 10.00am) and I need a rest! I did however pop out yesterday (Saturday 28th) for an hour and a half in the morning to see if I could see much before the cloud and rain arrived by 9:00am. Headed for some early morning sun traps:
6:42am



06:42am Surrey Woodland.

07:41am



28/6/2014 07:41am Silver Washed Fritillary (Male)

BW's

Re: PhilBWright

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

Love the spot the Purple Hairstreak – I had to tilt the screen for it to appear 😊 I'll be doing my best to locate His Nibbs elsewhere there was one recorded at Bentley last weekend and I tried a new wood today where they have been recorded in the past but no luck yet, although I have got my hands on some pretty foul/great fish oil 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 02-Jul-14 04:41 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, I hope you have a good one too! 😊

[Creating still images from videos](#)

I have been creating some still images from video clips (my camera can do this). As this is my first attempt at this, any more thoughts on this would be much appreciated here. The following pictures I have created from video footage I have taken:



Red Admiral (not a Purple Emperor) :)



Still image from video clip (SWF)



SWF from video clip

Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 03-Jul-14 08:51 PM GMT

Wednesday 2nd July

I spent an excellent afternoon with Rob Hill at Bookham Common, Surrey taking pictures of Purple Emperors in and around the Oak Canopies. The maximum we saw were three Emperors at once which (of course), Rob managed to capture on camera. It was a good learning day for me, increasing my camera minimum shutter speed to help reduce image blur. Rob was very kind and quick also to help passers by who were interested. One funny moment came when a chap was looking for White Admirals and just about as soon as he left, one landed on the path in front of us! 😊

I am going to do a bit more analysis as to why my new camera was taking a poorer quality picture at a similar distance compared with my other camera. I think it was probably to do with my camera settings but I am not sure yet.



Purple Emperor in Oak Canopy



Emperor with Oak Canopy Territory

Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Willrow, 04-Jul-14 08:47 PM GMT

Looks like a bout of PE neckache might be on the cards Phil 😊 probably worth it though 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

Re: PhilBWright

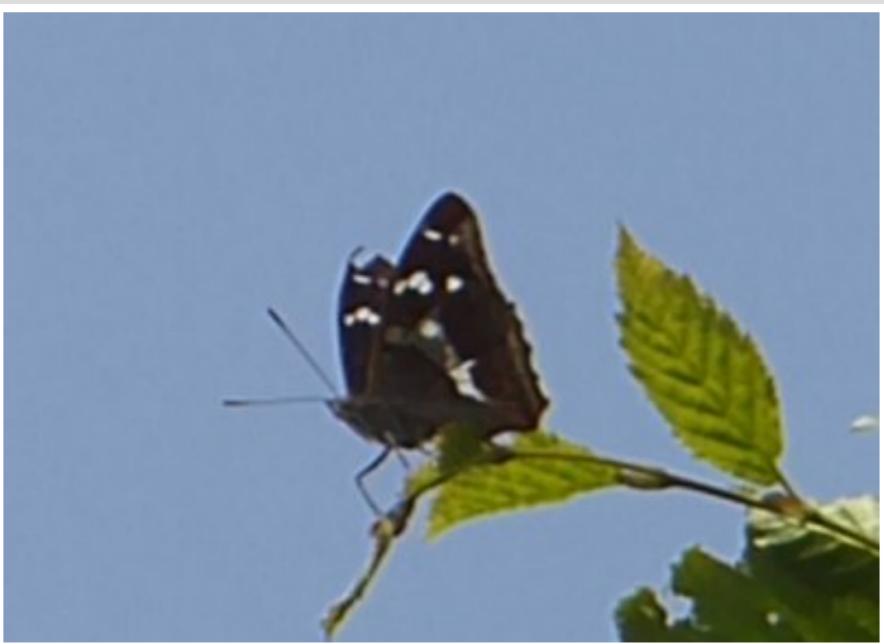
by PhilBJohnson, 05-Jul-14 05:51 PM GMT

Thanks Bill,

Yes I did get a "Purple Emperor Neck" on Wednesday 😊 . It has been raining today so I have been sorting through some of my pictures and video clips and trying to work out how to improve in the future on the clarity of my pictures taken from distance.

Max optical zoom, with no digital zoom, using a tripod set up quite high, fast shutter speed and slightly under exposing pictures then later compensating with more colour saturation and increased brightness with the editing package on the PC at home looks like the way forward.

This PE was recognisable because of a small nick in the top of its wing:



Purple Emperor in Hornbeam Canopy approx. 30m away.

For top quality pictures of PE one needs to look at Neil Hulme's diary.

Best Wishes,

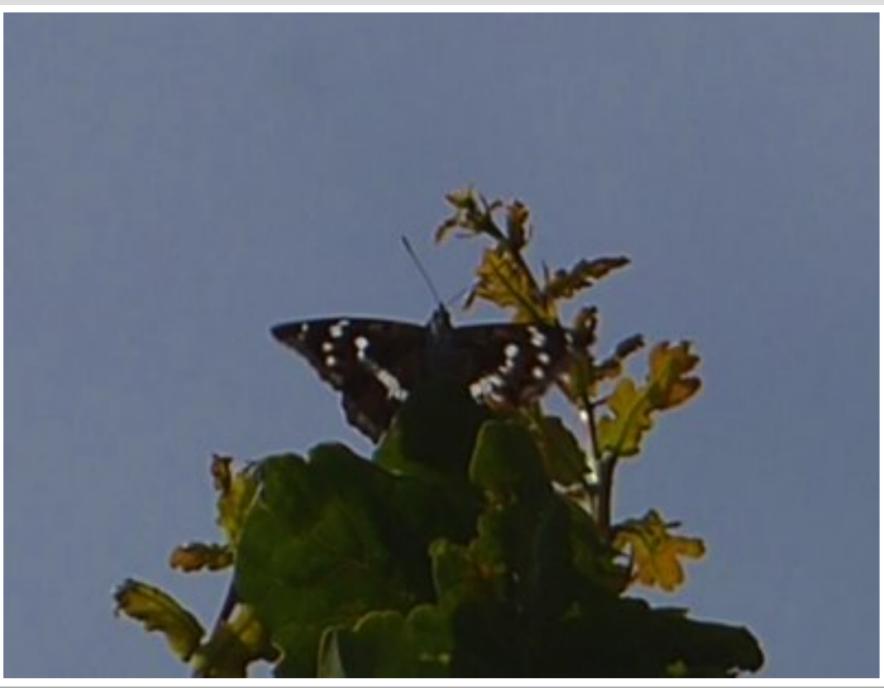
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

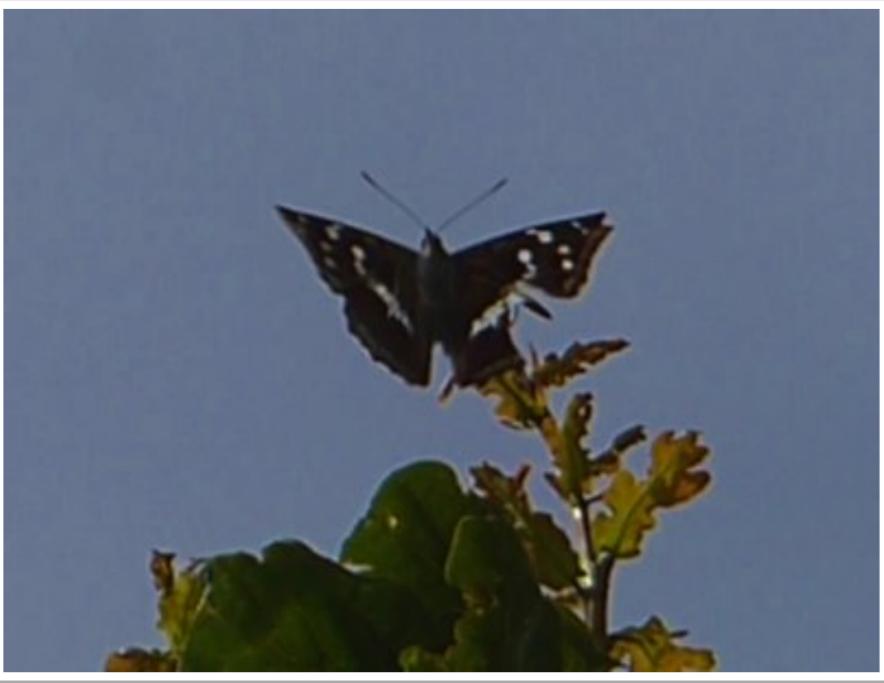
by PhilBJohnson, 06-Jul-14 08:54 PM GMT

The following pictures of a Purple Emperor are "video stills" searched for frame by frame on my camera and then recorded as pictures. They have been taken from a couple of "not very good" (if I am honest) movie clips. Or at least the movie clips need a lot of editing to make them look reasonable. I

hope I am not "cheating" too much! 😊 😊



Introducing.....



"Mr Tatty"



On patrol....



and



Defending Territory.

and here is a picture to try and prove to you that I don't have "Purple Emperor Fever" 😊



Meadow Brown

Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Willrow, 07-Jul-14 08:46 PM GMT

I've no experience of video Phil, would probably suffer from too much camera shake 🤖 but like most other things in life 'practice makes master', I'm sure you'll only get better and enjoy the process, **Purple Emperor** are not the easiest species to hone your skills on, but you have to start somewhere. I'll pop in to read your posts occasionally to see how your getting on 😊 good luck.

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

Re: PhilBWright

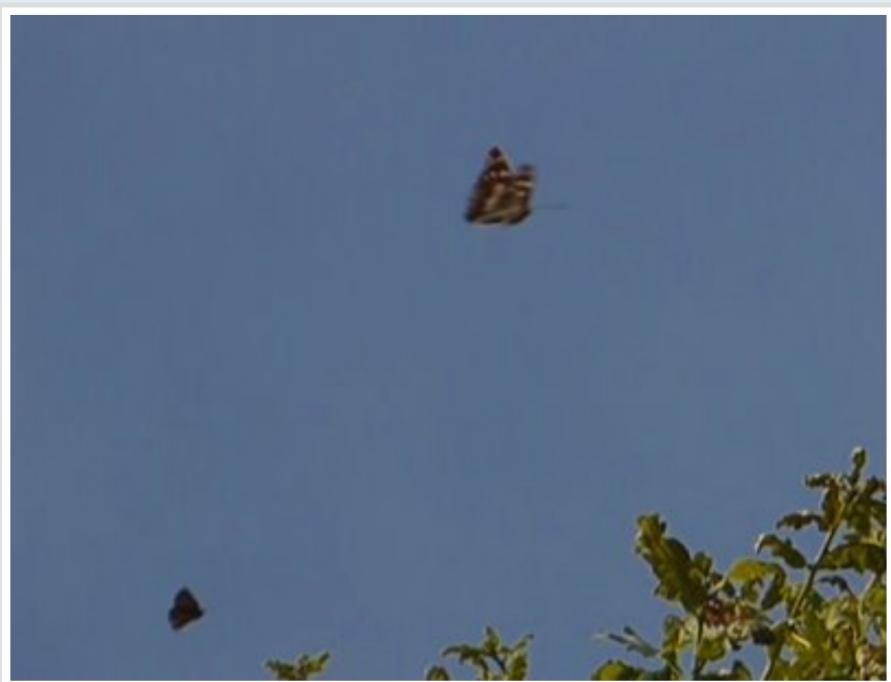
by PhilBJohnson, 10-Jul-14 11:55 PM GMT

Thanks Bill, I had a really good day today, (10th July) 😊

At least the Purple Emperor is big and often sits proudly on a top leaf. Purple Hairstreaks on the other hand, I think are even more challenging, much smaller and tend not to perch right at the very top and are easily lost. Here is a sample of some of my video stills (video will follow, not top quality but hopefully showing a few things many others don't see).



Four Purple Hairstreaks



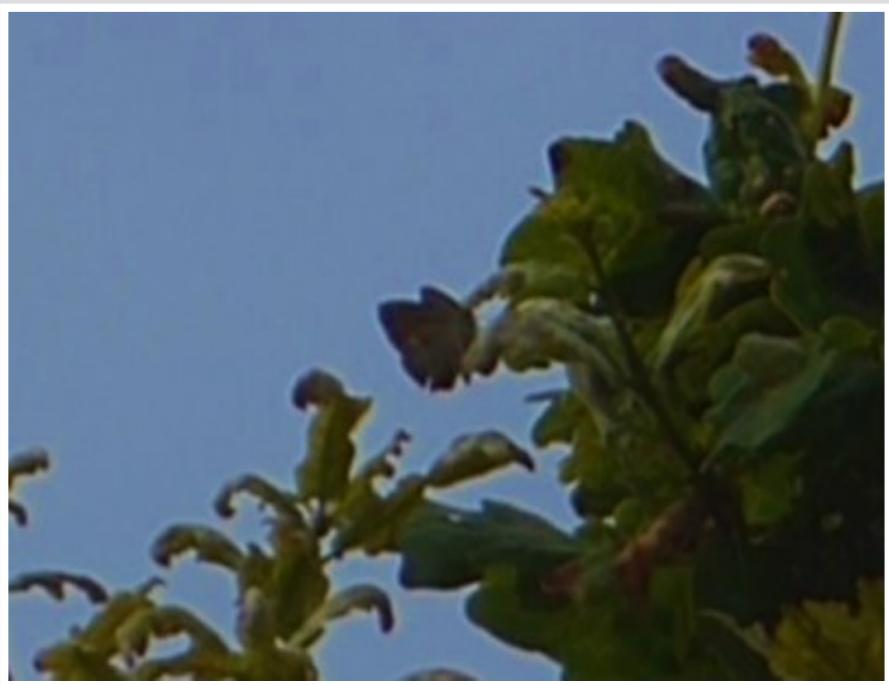
Purple Hairstreak & Purple Emperor



Purple Hairstreaks



Purple Emperor Vs Purple Hairstreak



Purple Hairstreak Perching near top of Oak Canopy

Re: PhilBWright

by Neil Hulme, 11-Jul-14 12:02 AM GMT

Good effort! I love the Emperor vs. Hairstreak frames. These two really hate each other.
BWs, Neil

Re: PhilBWright

by Wurzel, 12-Jul-14 07:42 AM GMT

Great action stuff Phil 😊 When I first got into butterflying I found Purple Hairstreaks on Bracken – but none since then – they're one of those species which you often see and only get a photo of if luck is on your side. Be lucky 😊 .

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 13-Jul-14 08:40 AM GMT

12/7/2014... part 1

Thanks for the encouragement Neil, it is much appreciated. Thanks Wurzel, this is amazing. I took this picture before I read your post. Yesterday (12/7/2014) was for some reason the best ever day I have had for spotting hairstreaks low down at Bookham Common. I simply lost count of the numbers I saw. No good open wing shots though. I was distracted by Purple Emperors (that is my excuse, anyway 😊). Several different individuals on Bracken, some on the path and grass. This was very unusual I think. Here is a picture..... 😊



Purple Hairstreak on Bracken 12/7/2014

Here is another picture:



Purple Hairstreak on Gravel Path

and just to show that I look down as well as up, a Holly Blue on Horse droppings was a first for me....



Holly Blue 12/7/2014

Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 13-Jul-14 09:46 AM GMT

😊 12/7/2014... Part 2

Yesterday I was trying to be a bit more like **Rob Hill** who takes great "inflight" Purple Emperor pictures. 😊

The method is to lock the focus on a leaf at a distance where the butterflies are expected to be seen and then set a very fast shutter speed on the camera to eliminate much of the blurring caused by the Purple Emperors moving quickly and camera shake. It is then just a case of point and shoot adjusting the zoom to suit if the lens is not fixed.

There is a balance to be had. If one is zoomed in close, one is likely to miss the shot completely but there is a better chance of capturing a good picture without the need for much cropping on the PC. If one is zoomed out there is a much better chance of capturing the scene but the butterflies may appear small.

My camera has a shutter speed priority mode where one can set the shutter speed and the ISO and aperture are automatically adjusted to suit. This works well as long as it is not too dark !

Here was my first attempt with the camera set on P mode by mistake with the focus locked but the shutter speed was not really fast enough:



Picture taken in "P" mode by mistake.

Here is another attempt with the camera set to "shutter speed priority mode". A much clearer shot but not a good composition. More practice needed !



Shutter Speed Priority mode

I practiced on a couple of Speckled Woods but I think it was too dark for a really fast shutter speed:



Speckled Woods with slightly slower Shutter Speed

Changing the subject, it was nice to see the Peacocks which have been out for about a week now at Bookham Common 😊 :



"In Your Face" Peacock on Thistle 12/7/2014

Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 14-Jul-14 09:42 PM GMT

13/7/2014

I have been learning some techniques from Rob Hill with my "humble SLR Camera" 😊

I have massively cropped a few of these pictures so can't really enlarge them much more without a lot more "noise". In bright conditions I have been using shutter speeds of up to 1/2000 sec and the camera automatically compensates with a high ISO



I think leaves in the foreground make the butterflies look small



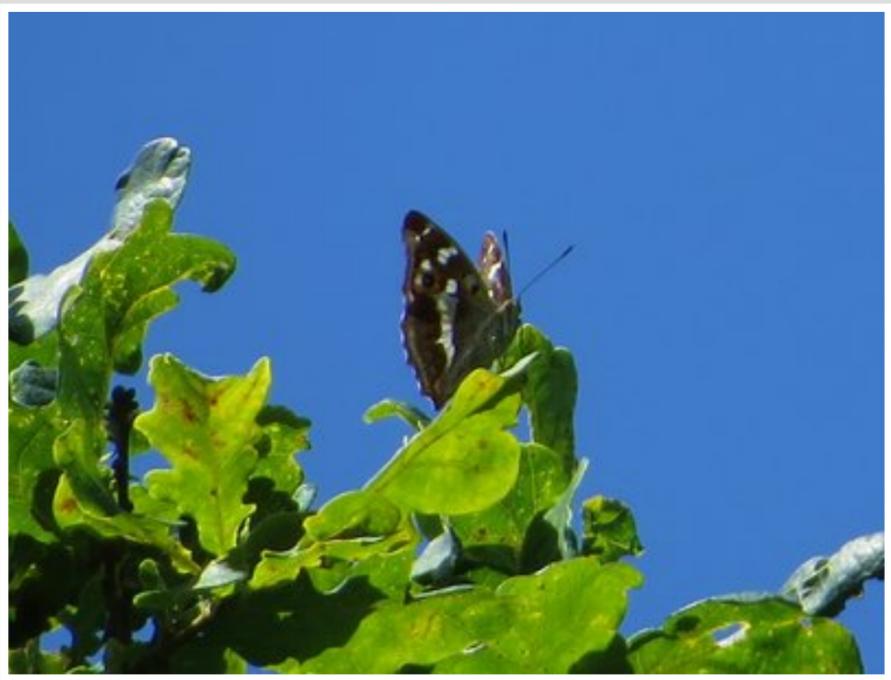
massively cropped



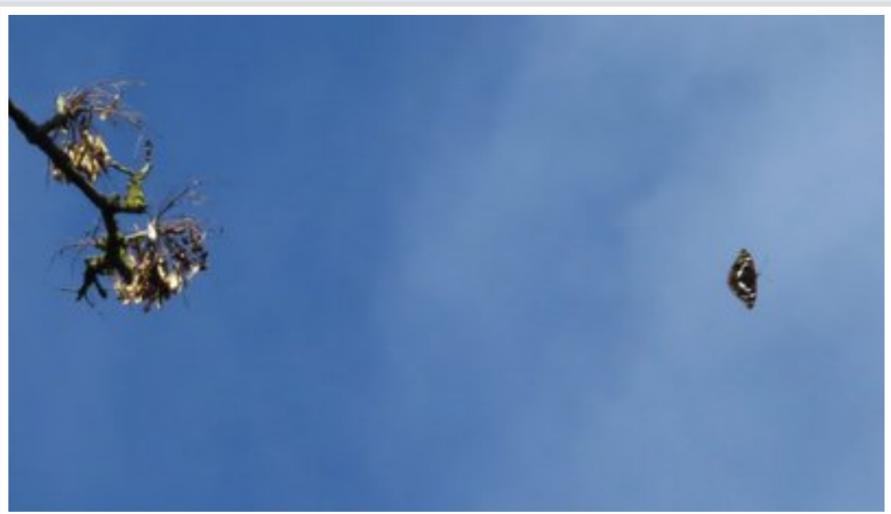
I like this one !

14/7/2014

I spent another really good afternoon with Rob Hill. We met by chance in the same location! 😊



Some Purple! I think (if one looks closely).



"My Desktop Background!"



lol open wings Brimstone (by mistake with slow shutter speed)

BW,
Phil

Re: PhilBWright

by Wurzel, 14-Jul-14 11:06 PM GMT

Pretty jammy Phil that Purp Hairstreak 😊 In teresting reading about the techniques used for flight shots of His Nibbs, do they work for other subjects too?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 15-Jul-14 05:29 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, I am looking to continue improving my camera skills.

I was off work Monday so I had a long weekend. Back to work today (in the office) so I will probably stop hogging the diary updates for the next couple of days at least 😊

Here are a few more pictures from my long weekend. Holly Blues and Purple Hairstreaks mainly:







Please could someone let me know what is going on with this hairstreaks wings? Are they slightly deformed? Unfortunately I didn't get many good pictures before the butterfly moved off



Over the weekend, one of my aims was to video the courtship ritual of the Silver Washed Fritillary (where the female flies in a straight line and the male circles around her) so that I could edit and update my SWF video submitted last year. I was however quite frustrated. When this happened I was fumbling around with my camera and by the time I was ready the butterflies were almost out of sight! Then while I was eating my lunch in the car, two past by no more than 5 meters from the car. This happened twice in the space of ten minutes!

Another day perhaps,

Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Wurzel, 16-Jul-14 09:41 PM GMT

Fantastic Holly Blue and Purp shots Phil 😊👍 I reckon the deformed wings Purp were because they didn't dry properly when it emerged from the chrysalis but as it 'moved' off it sounds like they haven't held it back. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 22-Jul-14 09:58 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel,

I have been spending much time recently sorting through literally hours of video footage taken of nothing much and Purple Emperors in the tree canopy. I will eventually compress the video clips into something that is about four minutes long and upload it to youtube. The last action I recorded was on 18th July and I don't think I will have anything to add after this unless I manage to find a female egg laying (which is doubtful).

I have also been keeping an eye out for Brown Hairstreaks at Bookham Common. I have never seen one. Rob Hill kindly showed me where to look next to the banks of Blackthorn. They are meant to be quite difficult to find so I am hoping to get lucky. If not, there are plenty of Gatekeepers to photograph



Here are a few of my pictures from last weekend:



Best Wishes.
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 25-Jul-14 06:48 PM GMT

24/7/2014

Yesterday I went looking after work for my first Brown Hairstreak at Bookham Common, Surrey. The closest thing I found was this Small Copper:



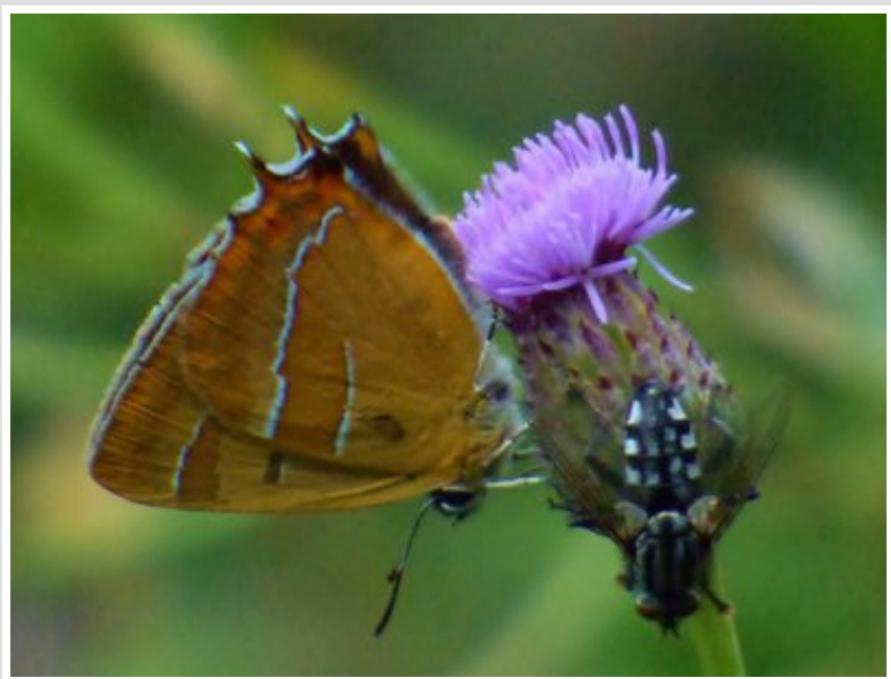
24.7.2014 Small Copper, Bookham Common, Surrey

25.7.2014

Today I found a bee, flesh fly, bright orange beetle and a Meadow Brown ! 😊



a bee



a flesh fly



bright orange beetle



Meadow Brown

Also my first ever Brown Hairstreak..... 😊



Brown Hairstreak

I have been experimenting a bit with my camera settings as you might well be able to see from these pics. Some of these are quite "noisy" with a big ISO.

Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Maximus, 25-Jul-14 08:55 PM GMT

Great stuff Phil in seeing your first ever Brown Hairstreak 😊

Mike

Re: PhilBWright

by Wurzel, 26-Jul-14 04:48 PM GMT

Congrats on your first Bro'streak Phil, you'll have to head back in a week or two for a female (I take it that that's a female this 'early') 😊 I just hope things slow down slightly so the butterflies last into September...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: PhilBWright

by Pauline, 30-Jul-14 07:21 AM GMT

Just catching up Phil and very envious of your experience with all those Purple Hairstreak. Treasure the memory as it doesn't happen very often. Congratulations too on your first ever Brown Hairstreak – well done!

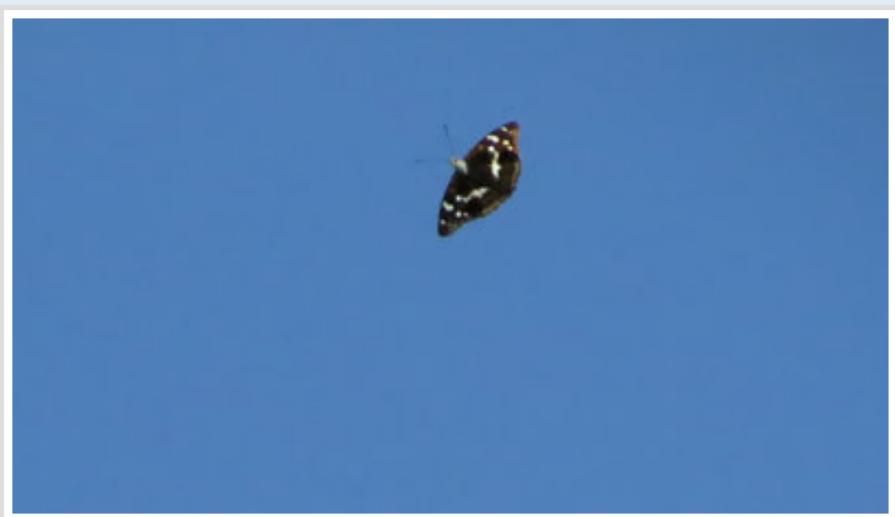
Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 31-Aug-14 06:11 PM GMT

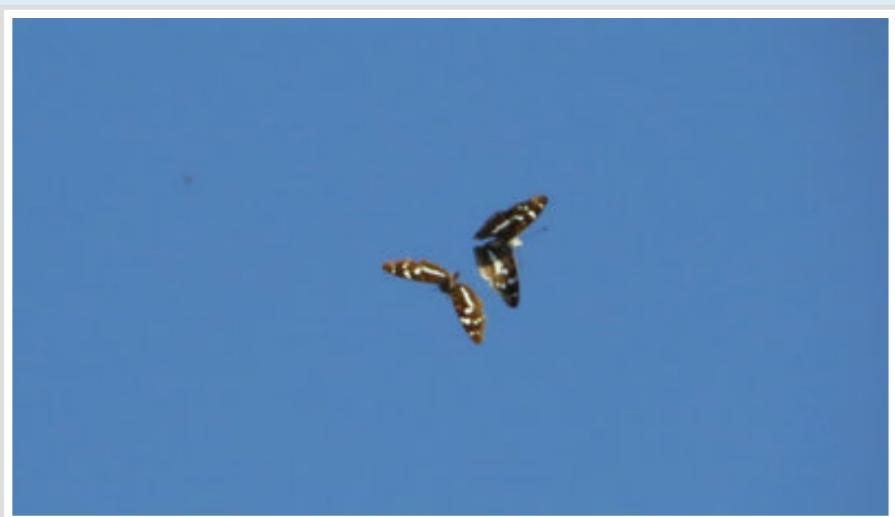
Thank you very much Mike, Wurzel and Pauline.

I have been spending some time improving some of my pictures, cropping, re-cropping, reducing noise etc thanks to some tips from Mike Oxon. I probably have been missing out but I don't think I took a single picture of a butterfly during August!

I have loads of photos to work with and I still need to do much work editing my video clips to produce something worth posting. Here are a couple more pictures I took during July with Rob Hill "egging me on" 😊



Purple Emperor



Purple Emperors

Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

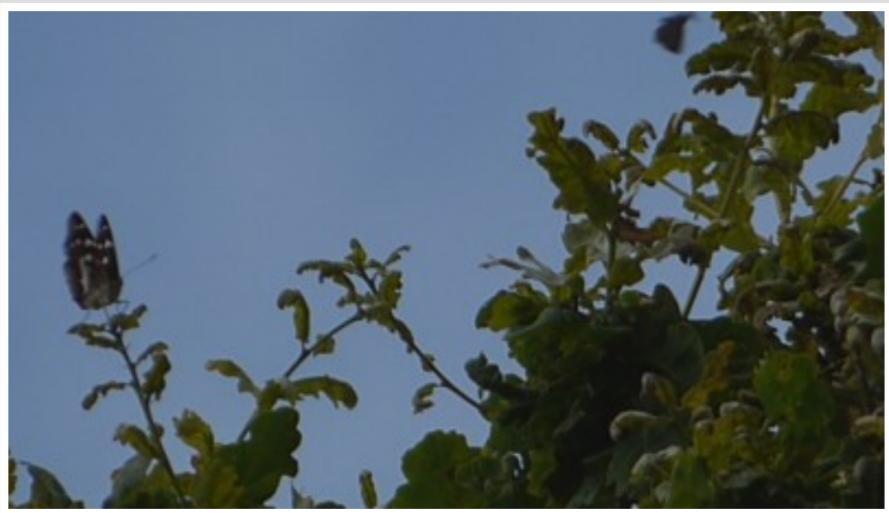
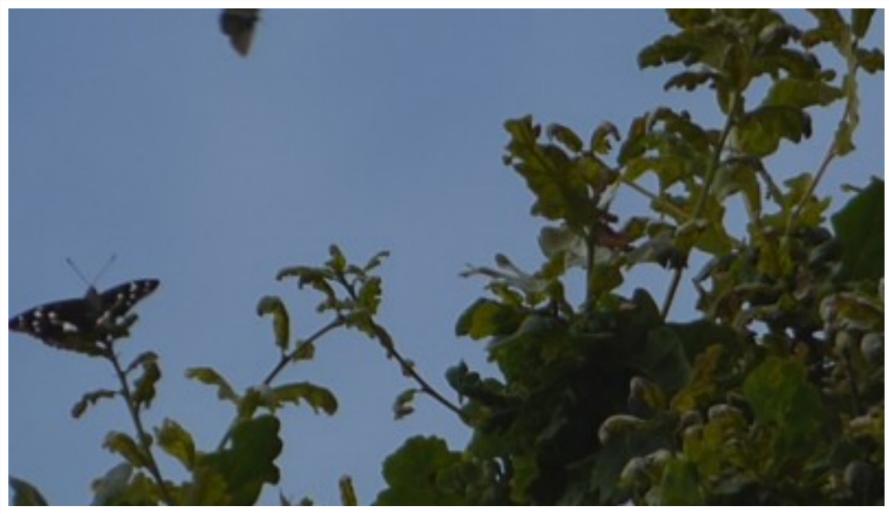
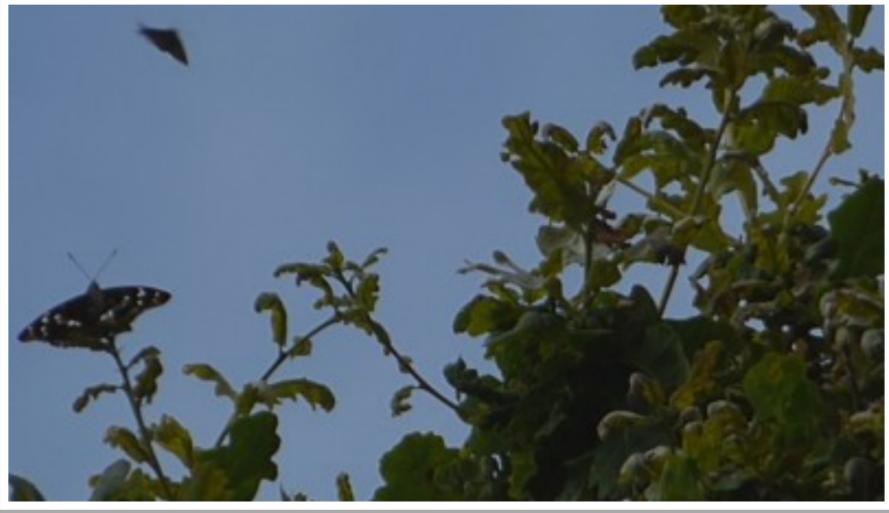
by PhilBJohnson, 30-Sep-14 11:26 PM GMT

26.9.2014 Hibernating Peacock Butterfly

Last Friday (26.9.2014) I came across a hibernating Peacock Butterfly in the top corner of a concrete garage I was surveying and was still in the same position on Monday (yesterday). What was interesting about this, and might be a talking point was that it was approx. 20°C outside and sunny with Cabbage White butterflies still on the wing! So Peacocks prefer to come out in March when the temperature is 15°C! It just shows what a "strong body clock" Peacocks have and are well suited to hibernating with the English climate, unlike for example, the Camberwell Beauty which appears to respond completely differently. Maybe the Peacock was depressed after the buddleia stopped flowering? 😊

On a different note, I am still editing butterfly video clips which are going to keep me going through the autumn & winter. I don't want to quickly post something if I think I can do a better job taking my time editing the footage.

Here is a short sequence of video stills of a Purple Emperor chasing after a Purple Hairstreak taken at a distance of approx. 30 meters away, similar but not the same as what I have posted previously taken on or around 9th–14th July, late afternoon or evening. What I did find interesting was that the Purple Hairstreaks (outnumbering the Purple Emperors) often provoked the Purple Emperors first before a chase took place :



best wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 04-Oct-14 11:02 AM GMT

Purple Hairstreak

I have just created a short Purple Hairstreak video consisting of small video clips and photo montages uploaded to youtube including dates, times and location etc.

Any comments are most welcome. Some tree canopy footage will follow in a separate video, I hope you enjoy.

Here is the uploaded youtube link:

<http://youtu.be/8A3DMB2w814>

best wishes,

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Goldie M, 04-Oct-14 02:31 PM GMT

Hi! Phil, first time I've seen a Purple Hair Streak, I liked the Video but it was a bit short Goldie 😊

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 05-Oct-14 03:11 AM GMT

Hi Goldie M

Thank you very much for your feedback comment. My raw video clips were originally quite a bit longer than shown in the submitted edited video. I did not want to make the viewer too "seasick" as my hands were shaking a bit when taking the footage, partly due to being a bit nervous in trying to capture an infrequent event. 😊 My digital camera does have some inbuilt image stabilisation which does help a bit. Purple Hairstreaks might not stay on the ground for very long unless there is something wrong with them so running around with a tripod was out of the question for me at that time. I think Purple Hairstreaks can be quite common but usually congregate in Oak Tree Canopies so are often not seen by most people.

Here is a link to part 2 (My second Purple Hairstreak video) http://youtu.be/DLn_qT2qpv0 The aim of this second video is to give some people a better understanding of this butterfly's behaviour up in the tree canopy rather than to provide people with lots of pretty pictures (which is very difficult anyway when filming at such a distance with a digital SLR camera).

I hope you find it interesting. One should also understand that the original video footage was hours long and has been compressed into about 2 minutes to try and keep one's attention.

On a hot clear sunny day in July as the sun goes down, canopy butterflies such as Purple Emperors and Purple Hairstreaks find themselves competing for the last sunny spot on the south west side of the tree canopy near the highest point on the hill. So at that time there is quite often conflict between the two species.

I have even more video footage of the Purple Emperors which once uploaded to youtube will eventually replace the 5 second long clip 😊 clip I submitted in 2013.

I have saved some of my best Purple Emperor Vs Purple Hairstreak footage for that video (not wanting to repeat too much)

Best Wishes,

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by David M, 05-Oct-14 01:26 PM GMT

That footage is really fascinating, Phil. I especially like the early part where the Purple Emperor loses patience with those pesky Hairstreaks.

I've always wanted to find an area where there is raised ground by an oak so you can get close to all this activity and observe it from relatively close quarters. There's certainly a hell of a lot going on in your sequences.

Thanks for sharing.

Re: PhilBWright

by Goldie M, 06-Oct-14 03:07 PM GMT

Hi! Phil, loved the second Video, it must have been a great feeling getting this footage, I'm really green 🍀🍀 Goldie 😊

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 07-Oct-14 12:39 AM GMT

Thank you very much David M & Goldie M,

New Purple Emperor Part 3

I have just uploaded a short Purple Emperor Video I have been working on.

It represents about one third to one half of what I want to present. I have called it part 3 for the time being. It would probably be easier for me to submit it as 3 separate videos but I am not sure yet, I might just replace the existing uploaded video as I continue working on the raw footage. It is nice

just to "get something out there" .

The aim of these videos is not to enlighten the experts but to present something to help the average person get a better understanding of this

butterflies behaviour in the tree canopy after about 12:30pm 😊 I intend to remove the 2013 clip I uploaded unless anyone objects.

The 18th July was the last day I recorded this butterfly at Bookham Common this year. Although it was seen for several days or even weeks after, I decided I had enough good footage. I filled about four 16GB SDHC cards with video clips, some of which were over 20 minutes long. I then used my camera to divide the raw clips (I am still doing this), saving the best bits and deleting the bits with nothing on before downloading to PC and using simple editing software to produce a finished version,

PLEASE ENJOY !

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Pauline, 07-Oct-14 03:37 PM GMT

Fantastic video footage Phil, especially PE with PH. Amazing – really enjoyed it 😊

Re: PhilBWright

by Paul Wetton, 07-Oct-14 04:17 PM GMT

Excellent and different footage Phil. Enjoyed watching.

Re: PhilBWright

by MikeOxon, 08-Oct-14 11:25 PM GMT

I was also very interested to see your video of the PE vs PH confrontations. I remember watching similar behaviour in Bentley Wood many years ago. The PH seemed to rise up, like fighter aircraft, to intercept an over-flying PE. It seems that it's a competitive world up there in the tree-tops!

Mike

Re: PhilBWright

by Goldie M, 10-Oct-14 01:10 PM GMT

Phil, your video was fantastic, you lucky thing seeing the PE and filming them like that (Fantastic)Goldie 😊

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 13-Oct-14 10:29 PM GMT

Thank you very much MikeOxon & Goldie M for your positive responses.

I have just uploaded to youtube my second Purple Emperor video.

Part 2 contains most of my Purple Emperor Vs Purple Hairstreak footage which wasn't shown in the Purple Hairstreak video.

The Purple Emperor involved was mostly the same individual on the 10th July, recognisable with a tiny nick out of its wing.

From my observations I noticed a good rotation of male butterflies from day to day holding territory in the canopy (pm).

In 2014 I didn't see more than 3 male Emperors at once chasing each other and there appeared to be no more than approx. half a dozen at once in a reasonably small area. My biggest regret has been not managing to film a dragonfly chase or more bird chases. These tend to happen at "break neck" speed. I was often left fumbling around with my camera while this happened.

I have been experimenting adding music but not included it yet when publishing it to the public. Some of the clips have the volume turned off as the listener probably doesn't want to hear the sound of me chewing gum the whole time ! 😊

As with all of my videos, if you spot something that is factually incorrect or needs editing please feel free to let me know and wipe the smile off my face ! I am a bit of a "one man band" with these videos and so am a bit prone to making mistakes and posting the publically. I will then of course do the necessary edits and replace the older video.

I have removed the link to my very short 2013 Purple Emperor video. I don't think many people will miss it ! 😊

I really hope you enjoy some of my humour at the end (with the volume turned up).

Part one is to follow with some big zooms starting on 18th June. The Purple Emperor was first seen at Bookham on 17th June in 2014 (my birthday) as recorded by Rob Hill.

best wishes,

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by David M, 13-Oct-14 11:28 PM GMT

Great footage, Phil. Sharp and highly professional.

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 14-Oct-14 04:44 AM GMT

Thanks David.

I am going to "chill out" for a bit now as Part One is going to take a while putting together properly anyway because of some of my naive mistakes and for technical reasons.

Thanks Paul Wetton.

I visited your website and bought your butterfly DVDs. I am sure I will learn a lot from them. I think it always helps having a nice picture of a Purple Emperor next to the "Buy Button", doesn't it? 😊

Thanks Pauline.

It's been a while since we communicated much online. It all got a bit hectic in the summer with not much of a "June butterfly gap" this year compared to last. Keep up your butterfly diary, please, even if you post less frequently.

Thanks Mike Flemming

I also loved browsing your website. Superb pictures & I always get a sense of generosity coming from you.

Cheers,

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Paul Wetton, 14-Oct-14 10:16 AM GMT

Hi Philip

I noticed you'd purchased a copy and thanks for that. It will be winging its way to you in a couple of days.

If you ever have any questions regarding filming please feel free to contact me on email. Always happy to answer any questions if I can.

Keep up the good work.

Re: PhilBWright

by Maximus, 15-Oct-14 08:59 PM GMT

Great videos Philip, I have really enjoyed watching them 😊

Mike

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 16-Oct-14 02:03 AM GMT

Thank you Mike, Paul and everyone else for all of your kind comments.

With the video footage I ended up having two SLR Cameras with me.

One was set up on a tripod second guessing where the Emperors were going to appear, just letting it run, adjusting the zoom occasionally to try and get some better action. The second was hand held, trying to get some decent pictures.

I think that probably the most interesting thing about my videos is the way I have combined the fixed pictures & video stills with the moving footage. I also think that my work is probably a good example of what can be achieved with an SLR Camera set on maybe not quite the best settings! I am sure there are several experts out there looking at my footage and smiling realising they can do quite a bit better with even more specialised equipment and software. And I am pleased if I can inspire others to do better. 😊

Getting the footage was quite time consuming and as I am quite tall, trying to avoid "Purple Emperor Neck" was a problem. One thing that I tried which worked quite well was putting some homemade leg extensions on my tripod giving me the ability to set it up at about 1.7-1.9m high. Anything less would have given me "Purple Emperor Back" as well!

Best wishes,

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Maximus, 17-Oct-14 12:29 AM GMT

You have done brilliantly well with the camera equipment and video editing software at your disposal Philip, in capturing the great footage of the PE and PH 😊 producing something refreshingly different, miles away from the norm, great stuff 😊

Mike

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 18-Oct-14 01:47 AM GMT

Thanks Maximus,

I have just linked a Speckled Wood video.

(the Speckled Wood Duelling video received 120 views on youtube and was removed by me from UK Butterflies & Youtube in April 2017 as I am now working on a video update that I think will be much better).

I have watched Pete Eeles' excellent Speckled Wood video and I think mine didn't compete but showed something slightly different, Best Wishes.

Re: PhilBWright

by David M, 18-Oct-14 11:56 AM GMT

All these moving images are making me yearn for spring!

Good effort once again, Phil.

Re: PhilBWright

by Goldie M, 18-Oct-14 12:50 PM GMT

Just seen your last video Phil it was great, I can't wait for next year, hope fully I'll get to see my first PE Goldie 😊

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 18-Oct-14 08:07 PM GMT

Thanks David M & Goldie M,

There is hope. Only two years ago I would have thought that an *Apatura iris* was a plant growing in the margins of a fish pond ! 😊

19.10.2014

Surrey and SW London branch of Butterfly Conservation placed some trust in me by providing a link to my youtube channel on their home page. Apart from getting very excited my first reaction was to do some "pruning" of old videos and add a few comments under existing uploaded videos. I think I can do some more work improving the quality of some existing video footage, not wanting to be laughed at too much 😊

best wishes,

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 25-Oct-14 08:42 PM GMT

Hill Farm Territory, Bookham Common

I have started compiling several images of individual Purple Emperor Butterflies from 2014 which can be identified by wing damage to try and get a better understanding of the rotation of individuals holding territory on a daily or weekly basis. My guess and analysis from observations is that there is quite a good rotation of individuals holding territory on a daily basis and just because one male has a territory in a particular tree one afternoon, does not necessarily mean that it will return to the same tree the following afternoon. The first butterfly I saw with wing damage was on 2nd July and there were still some fairly "clean looking" individuals around on 18th July.

The 6th July was noted as being quite windy in the canopy.

Here are a few pictures to give one an idea of what I have been doing but more help is needed to be sure:



A



B



B



B & C

For all those interested, here is my link to my Part One Purple Emperor video. Don't worry, this is not the "broken wings" version 😊 .
Here is possibly the final edited version of Part 1.
Part 2 and 3 are still subject to edits.
Please Enjoy :

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_flgSiZ7J4

best wishes,

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 04-Nov-14 05:56 AM GMT

Here are the links to Part 2 and Part 3 of my Purple Emperor videos: <http://youtu.be/H7GwFLi3d1g> <http://youtu.be/exhazHZ1lvw> I think these are now final updated versions and older versions will be removed from youtube shortly.
Here also is a link to all 3 videos combined into One which is over 10 minutes long and I only recommend viewing this with a fast broadband connection so that "streaming difficulties" are not encountered: <http://youtu.be/ixyb5Jkf9TQ>

Thank you all very much for bearing with me through this process.

best wishes,

Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Goldie M, 04-Nov-14 01:04 PM GMT

Hi! Phil, I will have to catch up with your video's shortly if there has good as the other ones they'll be great. I like to take my time and have some thing to look forward too so I'll let you know 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 07-Nov-14 06:22 AM GMT

Thanks Goldie M,

I am working on updating some of my video clips. Here is a Green Hairstreak clip. **In fact, this was the first time I had ever seen a Green Hairstreak so I was delighted.**

I know the video is a little "thin" on behaviour content but I fully intend to do better next year, also hoping to see the butterflies when they are a bit fresher. I have watched Pete's Green Hairstreak videos and have linked mine also. As there are not too many GH videos yet, I think I can just about justify adding it on basking behaviour and location content.

Please Enjoy. 😊

<http://youtu.be/2KhUlae8PHk>

Re: PhilBWright

by Goldie M, 08-Nov-14 12:48 PM GMT

Hi! Phil, I've looked at all the Video's now and can't wait for next year 😊
I've yet to see a PHS so if I could catch sight of both that would be a bonus 😊
Your last video showed the PE in flight that was great, I didn't realize they were so big Goldie 😊

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 08-Nov-14 06:53 PM GMT

Thanks Goldie M, I think the PEs are only second to the Swallowtail in size. I have never seen the English Swallowtail in the wild. I did research their flight times and where to look once when my parents were in Norfolk. They came back with very big smiles on their faces turning me 🍷

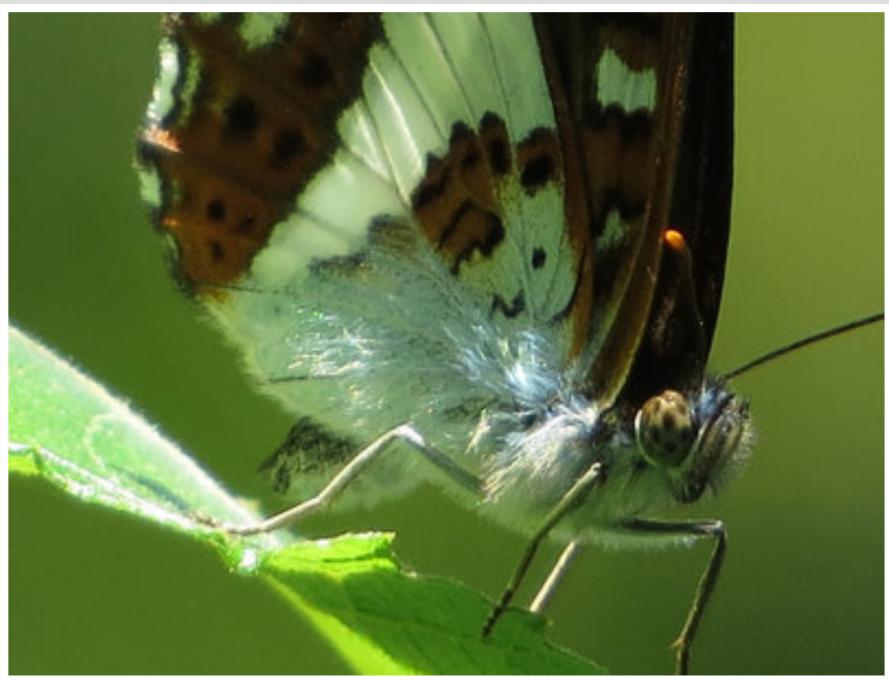
I was just uploading a large skipper image (cropped widescreen) to my personal album but before submitting it I had second thoughts so I clicked the reset button, then uploaded the same image (cropped 4X3) and ended up with two identical images (only cropped differently) on the home page 😞 so I have removed the 4X3 image so not to prolong the 😞 but still can't find the widescreen image. It was probably an obvious error with a simple solution so I am still trying to work out exactly what I did.....

I have just checked, all is good now but I think I will leave the 4x3 skipper image upload again for later 😊 The next thing I want to do is update my Silver Washed Fritillary video. I have lots of new footage, not much really interesting behaviour but I should be able to improve the quality of my video somewhat, cutting out some of the more "cheesy bits"
best wishes.

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 18-Nov-14 06:41 AM GMT

I have been having a look at some of my big digital zoom images. This White Admiral picture had a whopping digital zoom X4. As it was perched up in a tree, getting close was not an option and the digital zoom helped give me a large target area to focus on. I do realise however that the best results are not achieved with digital zoom as any blurring is exaggerated. This picture was taken on **13th June 2014** when the butterfly was probably on the wing for no more than a day or two. Some people did go looking for White Admirals at the Bookham Commons near the end of July and were surprised not to see very many and the ones they did see were quite worn & scruffy looking individuals. In 2013 White Admirals did emerge several weeks later after a cold February and early Spring.



Best Wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by trevor, 18-Nov-14 09:23 AM GMT

Hi Phil,
I only have a cheap camera,so I only use zoom in desperation,ie.a rare butterfly that is not likely to come close enough for a normal shot. Invariably these shots are deleted because of poor quality.But this year i got one shot that worked, I saw a Purple Emperor, some distance away, fly up from the ground to near the top of a tall Oak.Zoom was the only answer, the Butterfly was hardly visible from the ground,the result is a hand held shot that didn't blur!.
That shot is on page two of my diary.
All the best,
, TREVOR

Re: PhilBWright

by Goldie M, 18-Nov-14 07:57 PM GMT

Hi! Phil I like the close up shot of the Admiral and how it shows the lovely creamy colouring of the butterfly Goldie 😊

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 18-Nov-14 11:43 PM GMT

Thanks Trevor and Goldie M.

To be honest Trevor, I was helped a bit with a cheap tripod when taking this shot. When using a big zoom, it is nice to have a large target to focus on but if the target appears to be moving all over the place, exaggerated by wobble and hand shake, that doesn't help image quality. One can try using a faster shutter speed in such situations to get a better result.

My Canon PowerShot SX50 HS has 12.1 Mega Pixels. I think with this image, an optical zoom X50 was used plus a digital zoom X4 making the image 200x and just over 3 Mega Pixels (12.1 divided by 4, correct me if I am wrong). I don't think I cropped this image at all.

I am told not to enlarge pictures too much when using digital zoom. (I am not sure people really want to see the individual pixels, anyway 😊, 😊)

This is the same picture but I have reduced it in size by 25% to compensate for the big digital zoom.

Hopefully one should notice the difference when clicking on the picture to enlarge it.



File reduced in size. 25%

best wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by dilettante, 19-Nov-14 09:26 AM GMT

"PhilBWright" wrote:

I think with this image, an optical zoom X50 was used plus a digital zoom X4 making the image 200x and just over 3 Mega Pixels (12.1 divided by 4, correct me if I am wrong).

Hi Phil,

I would imagine that 4x zoom means 4x magnification of length (width and height) not area, so in fact it's 12.1 divided by 16 = 0.75 Megapixels. The image still looks perfectly usable at the size you've presented it here, but you're right that when enlarged the limitations are more visible.

Digital zoom is generally no better than taking an unzoomed image and cropping it later, but as you've explained, if it makes the target bigger in the viewfinder it can still be useful.

Re: PhilBWright

by trevor, 19-Nov-14 11:03 AM GMT

Hi Phil,

Although we went to Alice Holt for HIM. the trip was made very worthwhile by the abundance of WA and male SWF, we only saw one female all day. I have never seen so many of each species in one place.

I went to Bookham common a couple of years ago for HIM. but luck was not on my side, and not having a mobile phone at the time I had fun trying to pay for parking at the tunnel car park.

All the best,
TREVOR

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 20-Nov-14 03:01 AM GMT

Thank you very much Dilettante. That comment might make me look a bit silly but your comment is valuable information for me that I haven't properly researched. I am going to try and be careful not to over use the digital zoom in the future (fun that it is 😊).

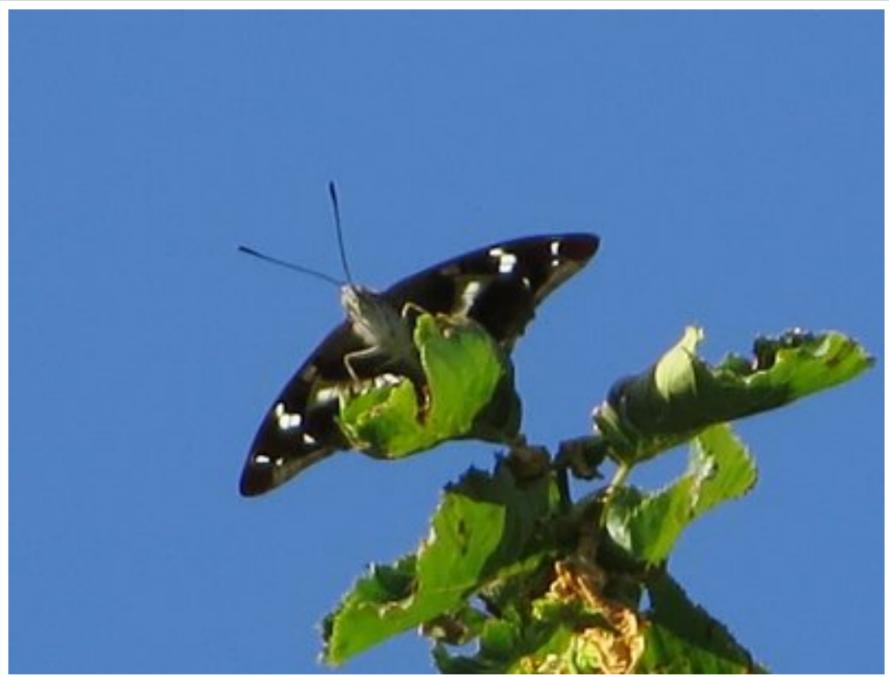
Thank you, Trevor.

The Tunnel Car Park at the Bookham Commons does happen to be close to the station so I **guess** that a decision was made a while ago by the National Trust to charge maybe to stop commuters parking there all day. I think the first time I went to Bookham, I ended up paying & parking in the station car

park having similar problems to yourself. I might be wrong but I think the good old National Trust Sticker can also be displayed in the Tunnel Car Park instead of paying by phone on the spot. There is a free car park nearer the high points of the Commons but those supporting the National Trust understandably may not wish to direct newcomers there hence all the online info about the Tunnel Car Park.

I think it's all a bit of a "tongue in cheek smiley" (😊) but I don't want to make a fuss about it in case the National Trust start charging in the other car parks (one of which I frequently use).

I think I have shown this image before but will show it again as it also used a 4 X digital zoom as well as "maxing out" the optical zoom. I have this time reduced the image in size by 25% to prevent one checking on the number of pixels by physically counting them 😊



Purple Emperor

best wishes,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 23-Nov-14 05:20 PM GMT

I am currently sifting through lots of pictures and video clips of Silver Washed Fritillaries (SWFs) taken at Bookham Common this year in order to hopefully produce something that is visually informative regarding **flight times and nectaring habits**. Hopefully I will get some spare time at Christmas to finish this off.

My plan is to compliment my video with some recording data available from **Butterfly Conservation**, Surrey. I am not sure yet exactly how much work is involved. The process goes something like this:

Rename video clips and photos putting them in date order

Convert all video clips to MP4 format.

Split MP4 video clips into usable chunks using free software available online.

Compile video using editing software and insert edited photos.

Keep replaying the video, editing as necessary until I am reasonably sure all data included is correct and any "free" music added is properly credited

Post to youtube and then link to UK Butterflies if I feel it is appropriate to do so.

Here is a picture in which I got too close to crop widescreen, keeping all of the butterfly in the picture.

I have put a frame around it to try and give the feeling of more space (and for my own vanity 😊)



29.6.2014 SWF (Male) Bookham Commons, Surrey

kind regards,
Philip

Re: PhilBWright

by Wurzel, 25-Nov-14 11:22 PM GMT

Looking forward to the Silver Washed footage 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 06-Dec-14 10:55 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel.

I just ordered almost £50 worth of Christmas goodies from Butterfly Conservation. <http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/shop> some items are now out of stock.

(oh look, now I am back on the home page of UK Butterflies) 😊

Re: PhilBWright

by trevor, 06-Dec-14 02:07 PM GMT

Hi Phil,

Love the SWF shot, and your videos of HIM on the Purple Empire. You obviously have a talent for spotting high up Emperors .I can't wait for next June/July,the optimist in me tells me that December is half way there.

Here's to 2015!

All the best

TREVOR.

Re: PhilBWright

by trevor, 27-Dec-14 06:02 PM GMT

Hi Phil,

Take your point about ' shooting ' especially from car windows.Hope the Police realize we're only talking about cameras and Butterflies , if they read UKB. 😊

Happy New Year ,

TREVOR

Re: PhilBWright

by PhilBJohnson, 31-Dec-14 11:07 AM GMT

Thanks Trevor,

Best Wishes to you also for the New Year.

I live in Surrey. It is not close to the sea and I didn't have a confirmed sighting of single Painted Lady Butterfly this year.

I thought that maybe I just didn't have my eyes trained enough on the "butterfly bush" but looking at other comments I now realise that there were not that many to be seen in several areas. This is the best I can do:



Painted Lady?

Apparently it does flap it's wings and maybe Butterfly Conservation need some ideas for next years Christmas Catalogue ! 😊

Re: PhilBWright

by trevor, 31-Dec-14 04:10 PM GMT

Hi Phil,

Talking of Painted Ladies ,maybe 2015 will bring another invasion of this species. I can recall two occasions when they have arrived in vast numbers. Once at Ventnor Botanical Gardens , several years ago ,there were swarms of them.

I have an image, on film unfortunately, with eleven Painted Ladies in one picture!

All the best for 2015

TREVOR.

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