

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 07-Mar-15 05:47 AM GMT

Following on from a few entries on the thread 'Decline of the Wall' I had another short search for Wall Brown larva today. Only 2 found today, near to each other, and they have now grown to around 75% of being fully grown.



Wall Brown larva 6/3/2015.

Yesterday I went for a stroll around the Sussex BC reserve Rowland Wood where straight away I found an excellent male Brimstone. Later I came across a somewhat tatty Peacock.



Male Brimstone. 5/3/2015.



Male Brimstone 5/3/2015.

I have now loaded some of my better pictures from the last few years on Flickr. You can hopefully find my photostream on [flickr.com/photos/128888346@N02/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/128888346@N02/) as well as my blog <http://bobsbutterflies.blogspot.co.uk>

Re: Badgerbob

by David M, 07-Mar-15 06:27 AM GMT

Love that last Brimstone image, Bob.

Excellent stuff!

Re: Badgerbob

by Neil Hulme, 07-Mar-15 08:40 AM GMT

Hi Bob,

Ditto. That last shot is a cracker. Winter is now on the run. 😊

BWs, Neil

Re: Badgerbob

by William, 07-Mar-15 06:15 PM GMT

Superb Brimstones Bob! 😊

BWs,

William

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 07-Mar-15 07:34 PM GMT

Thankyou David, Neil and William. It's good to get back into the butterfly mode!!

I've just returned from another look for Wall larva. I was pleased to find 2, one was the same as yesterdays but the other one was tiny, only around 1.2cm, which is the size I was finding at the end of January. The other one was over 3cm, so 3 times as large. This one I found feeding on the grass and I will post images later when I have loaded them on the computer.

Re: Badgerbob

by Goldie M, 07-Mar-15 11:50 PM GMT

Lovely Brimstone shots Bob, 🍷 I'm still looking Goldie 😊

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 08-Mar-15 02:18 AM GMT

Hi Goldie. You will get them very soon now!!

As mentioned in my earlier post today I found the larger Wall Brown larva on the grass feeding. This is the picture, which also shows the eating pattern on the grass. This is often what you see first when looking for these larva.



Wall Brown larva feeding. 7/3/2015.

This afternoon I was out again and in the warmer weather I saw at least 6 Small Tortoiseshell, of which I got this record shot.



Small Tortoiseshell. 7/3/2015

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 21-Mar-15 02:03 AM GMT

There have been very good numbers of Small Tortoiseshell showing this year. On the bank where I look for the Wall Brown larva I have seen at least 6 flying together. Mind you, the Great Grey Shrike that has been in the area may have reduced some of them. I was there again today hoping to improve on my shot of the Shrike, failing again, however, I did have a quick larva hunt and found 4 in total. At least 2 were new ones well away from my other finds. One was in the middle of his breakfast and it was interesting watching his mouth parts munching merrily on the grass.



Wall larva feeding.

Re: Badgerbob

by Pete Eeles, 21-Mar-15 04:18 AM GMT

Superb observations and dedication, Bob! I may not always comment, but am utterly absorbed in your Wall observations and keep a close eye on them!

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 21-Mar-15 06:20 AM GMT

Thanks Pete. A lot of the inspiration has come from yourself!!

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 29-Mar-15 01:55 AM GMT

27/3/2015.

A 45 minute search this morning resulted in 9 Wall larvae. The most I have found in one session. I started in an area away from my main search area

and in the first 2 tussocks I found one in each. 2 larvae found in probably less than 1 minute!! After that it did get a little harder and some tussocks back in my main search area drew a blank where I had seen them only a week ago. Whilst searching 2 Brimstone and up to 6 Small Tortoiseshell seen along with a couple of moth larvae. Great views as well of the Great Grey Shrike that is still munching away on the odd Tortoiseshell and Bumble Bee!!

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 02-Apr-15 01:58 AM GMT

I had the pleasure of showing the good old 'Downland Boy' around my Wall larvae site today. This allowed a bit more search time whilst he was photographing some. Due to this and the fact that there seems to be a few about I hit my all time record of finding 14. One was still very small, only about 1.5cm but all the rest were getting towards 3-3.5cm which is just about fully grown. It won't be long now before the painful pupa hunt gets going.

Re: Badgerbob

by Goldie M, 03-Apr-15 06:30 PM GMT

Smashing Moth Bob, not seen that one yet it's really impressive Goldie 😊

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 14-Apr-15 02:15 AM GMT

Following my count of 14 Wall larvae last week I've had a couple more searches with less seen each time. Does this mean that they have started to pupate? Almost certainly some have and although I have had a couple of tentative pupa hunts I normally wait until an adult has been seen on site before I really get going, and get very frustrated!! A couple of days ago I found this fully grown larva resting in the early morning. I couldn't find it yesterday so it may also have pupated. I was pleased yesterday to find my first Marbled White larva of the year. Very small at just over 1 cm. long. I didn't photograph this one as I do have a selection of images from last year of larger larvae.



Fully grown Wall Brown larva.

Re: Badgerbob

by Goldie M, 14-Apr-15 02:41 AM GMT

Hi! Bob I'm following your postings about the Wall larvae with interest but I seem to have got my postings mixed up, 😞 I mentioned a moth, I can't seem to find one 😊 blame it on eyes and age. Goldie 😊

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 14-Apr-15 05:11 PM GMT

Hi Goldie. I was wondering myself about the mystery moth. I thought it may have fluttered off!!! Thanks for your interest and hope the season has started up where you are.

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 18-Apr-15 02:50 AM GMT

At last the butterfly season is picking up. Being near the coast a few species are a little later than the warmer inland sites. The biggest surprise this week was a male Clouded Yellow on Wednesday. My son followed this up with a Painted Lady on Thursday. Yesterday a Speckled Wood was found nectaring on Lesser Celandine and on Wednesday I was with Downland Boy when a Comma was seen ovapositioning on nettles.



Male Speckled Wood.



Comma ova.

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 24-Apr-15 05:03 AM GMT

One small corner of my local patch has been pretty good over the last week for Small Coppers. I haven't seen any in the rest of the patch!! This afternoon I was trying to get the Grizzled Skippers going to roost, although I saw a few I didn't get the result I was hoping for. However, my 2nd Wall Brown of the year was on show on arrival. I then saw a Wall Brown larva and then the main target for the Spring, although not today's target, a Wall Brown pupa. I was walking past the spot where I found one last year and I was tempted to just have a quick look, and there it was!! I didn't even have my glasses on. As I checked this spot a couple of days ago I assume it has pupated in the last 2 days.



Small Copper.



Wall Brown pupa.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/128888346@N02/>

Re: Badgerbob

by David M, 24-Apr-15 05:35 AM GMT

Beautiful images, Bob. That Wall pupa is stunning.

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 24-Apr-15 05:37 AM GMT

Thanks David. What a relief finding it!! I just hope this one makes it through to adult.

Re: Badgerbob

by Nick Broomer, 24-Apr-15 07:24 AM GMT

Well done Bob, i hope this time you manage to capture on film the different changes of the Wall pupa to the end. You deserve it.

All the best Nick.

Re: Badgerbob

by Pauline, 24-Apr-15 01:55 PM GMT

Great find Bob and smashing shot of it – I'd be happy even to see the imago!

Re: Badgerbob

by trevor, 24-Apr-15 04:22 PM GMT

Hi Bob,

Well done, following the lifecycle of the Wall Brown this year.

I know some of your 'local patch' very well, especially the Cowslip covered hillside overlooking the Rathfinny Estate. I remember when we once met that you remarked on the fact that it looked to be a good site for Duke of Burgundy. But I know of no plans to introduce them there.

Extensive conservation work is taking place in West Sussex for this species to extend it's range, but nothing in East Sussex that i am aware of. It does look to be excellent site, are BC aware of its potential ?.

All the best,
TREVOR.

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 25-Apr-15 04:46 AM GMT

Thanks all for your comments. I do hope to follow this one through, and who knows. I might even be able to find some more if I get lucky!!

Trevor, as far as the hillside being suitable for Dukes, I'm not aware of any plans to introduce the butterfly here. I guess there has to be evidence of them being there in the past for it to even be considered. Neil has been to the site a few times in the past and it has been mentioned in passing but it is a long shot that it would ever happen.

Re: Badgerbob

by trevor, 13-May-15 01:32 AM GMT

Thanks Bob,

You might find a visit to the Cuckoo trail worthwhile. there are a lot of Holly Blues at the moment. Other Spring species are also plentiful. The best section to explore is to the north of the old station car park, for about half a mile.

Happy hunting,
TREVOR.

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 13-May-15 02:09 AM GMT

It is with regret that the Wall Brown pupa that I found in April has unfortunately died. Over the last few years I have only found 3 as well as one being eaten by ants, so all 4 have perished. This goes to show how fragile the natural world can be. With this disappointment I decided to spend a little time trying to find another and after quite a look I found one hiding in the edge of a bush on some dead grass. It remains to be seen if this one survives. Fortunately many have and numbers of adults are growing. Today I had a mating pair so the summer brood looks assured!!



Mating Wall Brown.



Male Wall Brown.



The 'reserve' Wall Brown pupa.

I have also started to find more Marbled White larvae. These are about half grown now.

More on my blog <http://bobsbutterflies.blogspot.co.uk/> and my Flickr page www.flickr.com/photos/128888346@N02/

Re: Badgerbob

by Padfield, 13-May-15 02:33 AM GMT

You have an amazing talent for finding Satyrid early stages, Bob!! I am absolutely certain I could never have found that last pupa as it took me a minute of staring before I even found it in your picture.

Of five purple emperor pupae I've found, four have perished, and the one that didn't was only saved because I took it home. Every butterfly you see is a miracle.

Guy

Re: Badgerbob

by kevling, 13-May-15 03:37 AM GMT

Bob,

Great find with that Wall Brown Pupa. It's like a butterfly version of Where's Wally. 😄

Regards Kev

Re: Badgerbob

by Goldie M, 13-May-15 04:29 AM GMT

Lovely Wall Bob, yet to see them here too cold Goldie 😊

Re: Badgerbob

by David M, 13-May-15 05:35 AM GMT

Echo earlier sentiments, Bob. You are the **Daddy** when it comes to finding Wall Brown early stages.

I sincerely hope your latest 'find' completes its cycle!

Re: Badgerbob

by Pauline, 13-May-15 02:26 PM GMT

Wow! Guy took the words out of my mouth Bob. I had to enlarge your shot just to find it, even knowing that it was there! Your persistence, determination and dedication are an inspiration and you surely deserve results with this one if there is any justice.

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 14-May-15 02:21 AM GMT

Thankyou all for your kind words. Especially rewarding from Guy who seems to be able to find anything!! I was very lucky to find the latest pupa. I was looking in the grasses around the bush when my eye was somehow drawn to where the pupa was hanging!!

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 18-May-15 05:35 AM GMT

A walk along the footpath 'The Comp' today I counted 12 Wall Brown, including a mating pair at the far end. This path runs slightly uphill on the way out and is quite popular with walkers, runners and mountain bikers. Sadly, on my return walk I found a dead pair of Wall Brown that I assume were hit by a mountain biker probably riding fast on the downhill way. I assume the Wall were on the path otherwise engaged together!!



Path Traffic Accident. (PTA) Call 999.

Re: Badgerbob

by Pauline, 18-May-15 02:21 PM GMT

How sad 😞

Re: Badgerbob

by Goldie M, 18-May-15 08:12 PM GMT

It must have been awful to come across such a sight! Goldie 😞

Re: Badgerbob

by Wurzel, 19-May-15 06:18 AM GMT

That must be the best spot for Wall Browns in the country Bob 🇬🇧 Pity about the path victims 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 28-May-15 10:49 PM GMT

Thanks Goldie and Wurzel. It is a particularly good spot for Wall Brown. Possibly also for their parasites as both my pupa have succumbed to these!! Very frustrating, but that is nature.

On another note I was surveying private woodland for BC this week when I came across a Grizzled Skipper ab. *intermedia*. This woodland can sometimes throw up a taras but this time I had to make do with half a taras!!



Grizzled Skipper ab. intermedia



Grizzled Skipper ab. intermedia

<http://bobsbutterflies.blogspot.co.uk>

Re: Badgerbob

by Pauline, 01-Jun-15 02:51 AM GMT

I'd settle for half a Taras Bob. Great shots 🍷🍷

Re: Badgerbob

by Goldie M, 01-Jun-15 06:46 PM GMT

I'd settle if I saw one Grizzled Skipper 🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 03-Nov-15 02:28 AM GMT

At last I thought I would post some of my Long-tailed Blue images. I have been doing most of my hunting with James (B. Rex) and Mark Colvin and a few hunts with Neil. As most of the sightings were further West this year than our local site of Tide Mills my total for the year was a minimum of 10. Many hours were put in by all of us although a back problem meant I missed quite a bit of it so the others certainly put in a lot more than I did. I was fortunate that I managed to get to many of the sightings by my colleagues over the season.



Long-tailed Blue ova.



Male Long-tailed Blue. Beeding.



Male Long-tailed Blue. Beeding.



Male Long-tailed Blue. Tide Mills.



Male Long-tailed Blue. Tide Mills.



Male Long-tailed Blue. Tide Mills.

Many more at <http://bobsbutterflies.blogspot.co.uk>

Re: Badgerbob

by David M, 03-Nov-15 02:42 AM GMT

Nice images, Bob. Good to see that quite a few of you managed to get an audience with this insect.

Re: Badgerbob

by Butterflysaurus rex, 03-Nov-15 02:56 AM GMT

Hi Bob, it's been fantastic chasing Long-tailed Blues with you over the past couple of months. The highlight for me has to be when you and Neil managed to join Mark and I 'just in the nick of time' to see the mating pair.

We've had quite a few brilliant days this season, I hope next year is also full of unexpected surprises.

Lovely photos as ever.

Catch you later

James

Re: Badgerbob

by bugboy, 03-Nov-15 03:17 AM GMT

Great stuff Bob. I will almost certainly bump into you again next year if there's a sniff of LTB's in the air!

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 18-Dec-15 09:56 PM GMT

It is so mild out there, and all this mention of bad news lately for the Wall Brown. To stop myself getting too depressed about it all I thought I would head up to my area of Downland to see if I could find any Wall Brown larva!! I have never seen them in December before, although I probably haven't looked too hard before until mid January in the past. As it happens I found 3, one halfway down the slope and 2 together in a tussock near the bottom of the slope. These were both a little larger, which was not surprising as it is more sheltered from the wind down there. What was perhaps even more surprising was the other small creatures found. 7 Moth larvae, baby Froghoppers, several Spiders, a Fly and an *Agonopterix pallorella*, a micro moth that I have found in the Spring here. This moth does hibernate so not necessarily that surprising, although it was sitting up in the grass so was active.



Wall Brown larva



Wall Brown larva



Agonopterix pallorella



Moth larva



Another Moth larva

I now have to decide if this is the start of my butterfly year or the end of it!!
Any suggestions for the moth larvae greatly received.

Re: Badgerbob

by trevor, 18-Dec-15 11:31 PM GMT

Hi Bob,

Well done finding the Wall Brown larvae. I will be up on Windover Hill for the first brood (next week do you think 😊). Seriously, I hope this very mild weather, so far, won't be to the detriment of next year's Butterflies.

Stunning LTB. shots by the way.

All the best,
Trevor.

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Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 19-Dec-15 12:07 AM GMT

Thanks Trevor.

Hard to believe how mild it is out there. Lets hope we still get a proper winter to kill off the nasty things out there!! The Wall larva I found were certainly a little larger than those I found on January 6th. If they survive and the winter keeps mild it is anyones guess as to when they will become adults. 2014 produced the only March record for Sussex so it is possible for an equally early one!!

Re: Badgerbob

by David M, 19-Dec-15 05:59 AM GMT

If anyone can find an early stage Wall Brown, then it's you, Bob! I imagine that the mild conditions are allowing these critters to remain active far longer than is the norm. One wonders what effect a sudden cold snap will have on them.

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 19-Dec-15 06:18 PM GMT

Hi David. Thanks for your comments. I have found early stages in January before a really cold spell and it seems they are able to go deep into the base of the tussocks to protect against the cold. In the past as soon as a milder spell comes back they are visible again pretty quickly. I've even seen them following a frosty night around lunchtime if the day temperature is warm enough!! The beauty of following them in the wild is that until they are ready to pupate they generally stay in or around the same tussocks. It's just that first initial find that can be difficult as well as having the patience of course to look in the first place.

Re: Badgerbob

by badgerbob, 29-Dec-15 05:26 AM GMT

I relocated 2 of the Wall Brown larva yesterday and they had both grown a bit since the 18th December. Both seemed to be healthy and resting a couple of inches above ground on a grass stem.