

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 03-Jan-15 05:54 AM GMT

Hi everyone,

a long time since i posted, but my computer was on the way out. I have now got myself a new one and, have at last managed to install most of my photos.

Last year i spent most of my time learning more about the early stages, and trying to understand them rather than photographing butterflies.

Here is a photo of a Orange-tip larva just finishing eating it's moulted skin. I believe this is the first time this behaviour has ever been recorded, could be wrong.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Pete Eeles, 03-Jan-15 05:57 AM GMT

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

Here is a photo of a Orange-tip larva just finishing eating it's moulted skin. I believe this is the first time this behaviour has ever been recorded, could be wrong.

Hi Nick – it's quite well-known that many larvae eat their old skin after a moult. Although I don't think I've seen a better photo of a larva in the process of doing this!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 03-Jan-15 06:21 AM GMT

Good to see you back, Nick. Excellent image of rarely observed behaviour.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 04-Jan-15 12:09 AM GMT

Great to see you back Nick and looking forward to plenty more of your cracking photos 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 05-Jan-15 12:18 AM GMT

Hi Pete, David and Wurzel,

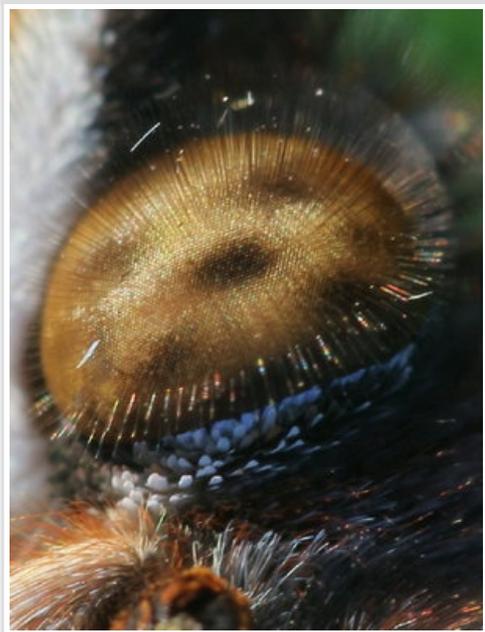
thank you for your kind comments, appreciated as always.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 05-Jan-15 04:32 AM GMT

When i was trying to get a close-up photograph of a Red Admiral's eye i was surprised to find it covered in tiny hairs, [i knew other butterflies had a few hairs, or none at all] that catches any dust particles, debris etc., [to small for the human eye to detect], ensuring protection against damage to the eyes.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 06-Jan-15 07:05 AM GMT

Wow! 🤩 That is a crazy image Nick 😲 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 06-Jan-15 07:48 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

Wow! 🤩 That is a crazy image Nick 😲 😊

It's certainly an eye-opener.

I love these types of image. They give you a different perspective.

Re: Nick Broomer

by kevlng, 06-Jan-15 08:07 PM GMT

Nick,

The Red Admiral eye photo is simply brilliant. I have been doing a lot more macro photography this past year, but my equipment won't allow that sort of detail. Would be interested to learn what lens you use.

Regards Kev

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 07-Jan-15 06:23 AM GMT

Thanks for the comments guys. Appreciated.

David wrote, it's certainly an eye-opener. Nice pun.

Kev, i use a Sigma 150 2.8 APO macro DG HSM lens with a set of Kenko extension tubes, using manual focus. Hope that helps.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 09-Jan-15 03:30 AM GMT

To big to pupate...

The 1st photo below shows a Small White larva at 25mm in length and, 2-3mm wide. This is the normal size of a 4th instar thats ready to pupate.



The 2nd photo depicts another Small White larva that for some reason has grown to the mighty size of 35mm in length and, 5mm wide, far to big to pupate. If this caterpillar had managed to successfully pupate it would have been a Large Small White, but sadly it went a funny colour and died.



In the 3rd photo [just for comparison] it shows a Small White larva preparing to pupate, now only 19 mm in length, the size of the fully pupated pupa, [the bottom left corner] whilst in the top right of the photo you have the overgrown larva at 35mm in length.



Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 09-Jan-15 05:55 AM GMT

You are excelling yourself, Nick. Wonderful images.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 10-Jan-15 06:20 AM GMT

Fantastic shots Nick 😊 Any ideas what caused the increase in size – was it carrying any parasitic larva?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 10-Jan-15 03:42 PM GMT

Hi David and Wurzel,

thanks for the kind comments.

Wurzel, the larva must have been just damned greedy, 😏 😊

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 11-Jan-15 05:53 AM GMT

Sorry Wurzel, i didn't answer your question fully, or properly. You asked, any ideas what caused the increase in size, was it carrying any parasitic larva? Firstly, there must of been something genetically wrong with this particular caterpillar, just to carry on feeding until it died. Secondly if it had been parasited it should not have made any difference to it's size.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by millerd, 11-Jan-15 06:37 AM GMT

Interesting, Nick.

There is a phenomenon called **neotony**, in which an organism persists in its larval form and never metamorphoses. The most well known example is the axolotl, which is the larval stage of a species of salamander that "never grows up". I have never heard of this happening with butterfly larvae, but maybe there are documented examples.

Can anyone out there provide any more information?

Dave

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 11-Jan-15 10:28 PM GMT

Found this on Scientific American.

A gene named Broad [odd name for a gene] is essential for the change from larva to pupa to complete metamorphosis in a caterpillar. If the caterpillar is without this gene it is incapable of developing into a pupa. So fails in it's quest to become a Butterfly, and lives out it's life as a caterpillar where it continues to eat and grow larger until it eventually dies.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 12-Jan-15 02:33 AM GMT

Cheers for the answer Nick. It's really interested me and has sent me trawling back through my memory, particularly when Dave mentioned neotony. It seems that the absence of 'Broad' casues something like neotony but without one of the defining features which is the ability to sexually reproduce – more of an endless childhood than retention of juvenile characteristics in a sexually mature adult. I'll have to have more of look at this and I'm wondering whether this 'broad' gene is a/like a Hox gene? I'll have to dig out my genetics books tomorrow 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 13-Jan-15 06:42 AM GMT

No problem Wurzel.

Changing colour.....

The photo below was taken in overcast conditions and, as you can see the body of this 1st instar Comma larva is mainly brown and grey.



But when you photograph this species of larva in lighter conditions the body changes colour, to green, yellow and red as depicted in the next photo.



And just to prove a point, in the last photo this Comma 1st instar larva was taken half in the shade and, half in sunshine.



And the brighter the light the brighter the colours.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 14-Jan-15 06:15 AM GMT

The Red Admiral larva when it is freshly hatched is very similar to that of the Comma 1st instar, but has shorter strands of hair and less of it.



But over a few days it's body takes quite a transformation. Here is a Red Admiral 1st instar larva just a few hours before it's first moult.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 16-Jan-15 06:07 AM GMT

How long are our butterflies joined when copulating?... half an hour, an hour, an hour and a half, two hours?

What i have found, is that, it depends on what time of day butterflies decide to copulate. Take for instance the Small Tortoiseshell, the courtship starting mid afternoon, before mating late afternoon, early evening. They then stay joined throughout the night, separating the following morning. But how many other species of butterfly mate throughout the night? The Wood White is a strong candidate but, like the Orange-tip normally mate between 40-80 minutes, [which is average for quite a few of our butterflies] but this is not always the case.....



this pair of Orange-tips spent at least fourteen hours copulating overnight [found just before 5pm 29th April and, checked the following morning at 7am 30th April where they were still joined]. A possible two-three hours could quite easily be added to the fourteen hours that i witnessed these two Orange-tips copulating.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Trevor, 16-Jan-15 06:58 AM GMT

Hi Nick,

I note reading some of your postings that you are no stranger to Chiddingfold forest, where the second brood

Wood Whites had a good year in 2014 .We went there especially to photograph them last summer. What we did observe was a change in their routine at about 4.30/5.00pm.,when they started to settle down from non- stop floppy flight to resting, courting and mating. Some of the images from that day are on page 2 of my diary. Whether they stay coupled all evening or not I don't know but the mating pair we saw stayed together for atleast two hours.

All the best,
TREVOR

Re: Nick Broomer

by trevor, 16-Jan-15 07:04 AM GMT

Sorry Nick,the images are on page 3 of my diary 😊
TREVOR.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 17-Jan-15 05:25 AM GMT

Hi Trevor,

many thanks for answering my post, really appreciated.

I have sent you a P.M.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 19-Jan-15 06:42 AM GMT

Changing..... the first six days in the life of a Purple Hairstreak 1st instar larva..



One day old 1st instar larva outside it's new home.



Two days old, still outside it's new home.



Day six, on the move.....

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 20-Jan-15 12:33 AM GMT

I'd be pleased to see the Butterfly just once 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Padfield, 20-Jan-15 12:51 AM GMT

Amazing early stage shots, Nick.

Guy

Re: Nick Broomer

by Jamie Burstson, 20-Jan-15 02:41 AM GMT

Stunning Photos! Your interest, observations and approach makes your photographs and notes truly unique. So far you've managed to highlight something new and different about every species you cover. I cannot wait to see the full series of photos covering Purple Hairstreak! 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Neil Freeman, 20-Jan-15 05:09 AM GMT

Hi Nick, some great images and observations in your recent posts, fascinating stuff 😊

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 20-Jan-15 05:13 AM GMT

Great images, Nick. You've clearly got a well developed sixth sense for early stages.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 21-Jan-15 04:35 AM GMT

Thanks everyone for your very flattering comments for something i really enjoy doing, i very nearly blushed.

Goldie its easy to see a Purple Hairstreak, just go out about 6-6.30 in the evening, and find an Oak Tree and look above the canopy and you should see a one. It will look quite silvery from a distance. Now photographing a Purple Hairstreak is a totally different matter, you need a lot of luck, and just being in the right place at the right time. Good luck for 2015.

Jamie, i haven't managed the full sequence of the P.H. lifecycle as yet, but hopefully i will soon. Good luck with your article on the P.H., i hope to be able to read it when you have finished. Good luck, and welcome to the forum.

Thank you all again.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 21-Jan-15 05:00 AM GMT

I concur with everyone elses comments, these first instar pics are amazing. It's interesting that after only 6 days the purple hairstreak is already developing the distinctive pattering.

Re: Nick Broomer

by trevor, 21-Jan-15 05:30 PM GMT

Hi Nick,

RE. Wood Whites at Botany Bay. Sorry for the delay in answering your question, we left the site at about 6.30 pm.

All the best,
TREVOR.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 22-Jan-15 12:56 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy and Trevor,

thank you for your kind comments, Bugboy, Appreciated.

Trevor, thanks for your reply. Also appreciated.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 22-Jan-15 01:07 AM GMT

Thanks for the advice Nick , I always try to see them if I go to my daughters in Kent (not seen one yet) when I go to Gaits Barrow it's usually morning time then home (we live an hour a way and after trudging round for a few hours we're ready for off 😊 I don't think we have any round here but you never know I'll have to go out later and look Goldie. 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 22-Jan-15 05:54 AM GMT

Silver-washed Fritillary ovum freshly laid.



After two weeks the ovum turns black, and hatches a further week later. Where the newly emerged larva eats the shell.



The final photo depicts another S.W.F. ovum, [found on the same tree as the 1st egg, but laid about a week later, probably by a different female] which has been sucked dry.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Jamie Burston, 23-Jan-15 01:40 AM GMT

You've done it again with the Silver-washed Fritillary ovum – wow! Thanks for the welcome and the comments about my article, once it's complete I will definitely send you a copy or a link to it depending if it's Dispar worthy! I admittedly got confused as with the comment beneath the last Purple Hairstreak larva photo, I assumed their would be another series of photos following the larva development, however I now realise looking at the order of text that it was relating to the above photo. 😞

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 23-Jan-15 05:59 AM GMT

More cracking stuff Nick 🍷😄
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 23-Jan-15 06:17 AM GMT

Like Pete said in another thread, there are pictures in this forum that far exceed many in published work and I see quite a few in this thread! 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 24-Jan-15 01:06 AM GMT

Hi Jamie, Wurzel and Bugboy,

thank you for your really kind comments. Appreciated.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 24-Jan-15 06:14 AM GMT

Freshly laid Orange-tip ovum.



Orange-tip ovum after four days. And notice the excessive amount of glue used to attach this ovum to the stem.



Same ovum after one week, just about to hatch.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 25-Jan-15 12:12 AM GMT

Orange-tip larva emerging from ovum.



To be continued...

Re: Nick Broomer

by Chris Jackson, 25-Jan-15 02:09 AM GMT

A nice series of Orange-tip ovum photos, Nick. This is the quality of photos and subject coverage I would like to strive towards. Great 😊.
Chris

Re: Nick Broomer

by kevlng, 25-Jan-15 02:53 AM GMT

Nick,
Wonderful shots of the Orange Tip ovums. It is my favourite butterfly and I was lucky to see and photograph my first ovums in 2014. Will have to go some to out-trump those shots though. keep em coming!
Regards Kev

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 25-Jan-15 06:01 AM GMT

The way you're going, Nick, I foresee an MBE in 2016!! 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 25-Jan-15 08:16 PM GMT

Well, you have managed to make me blush this time. 😊 Thank you Chris, Kev and David for your very kind comments. Very much appreciated.
Chris and Kev, i hope you achieve all your goals in your photography in the up coming months. As i'm sure you both will.
All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Vince Massimo, 25-Jan-15 10:13 PM GMT

That's an excellent series of images, Nick 😊 and some of the best I have seen on this site.
I'm looking forward to what's coming next.
Vince

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 26-Jan-15 02:01 AM GMT

Hi Vince,
thank you for your thoughtful comments, both on my P.D and, the P.M. Appreciated. I won't keep you waiting any longer for the next batch of photos.
All the best, Nick.
Orange-tip 1st instar larva, just emerged from it's ovum.



Out at last....



A quick look around....



Then back to it's empty egg shell....



Where it takes it's first meal, by eating the shell....



Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 26-Jan-15 02:57 AM GMT

Bloody brilliant photos! 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 26-Jan-15 03:59 AM GMT

If you don't get an official MBE then I already confer my own upon you:

Nick Broomer: **Majestic Butterfly Enthusiast.**

Thanks for sharing but I'm not sure I can cope with many more!! 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by keving, 26-Jan-15 08:00 PM GMT

That's it! I can't take anymore. Who wants to buy my camera?

Absolutely fantastic Nick. If you've got any turning into a pupa, then a knighthood will be more appropriate.

Regards Kev

Re: Nick Broomer

by Chris Jackson, 26-Jan-15 08:19 PM GMT

Excellent pictures, Nick !!!

Chris

Re: Nick Broomer

by Padfield, 26-Jan-15 08:55 PM GMT

Just wanted to add my voice to the general admiration! 😊 Brilliant photos – and observational skills, to be in the right place at the right time to get them.

Guy

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 27-Jan-15 03:44 AM GMT

Fantastic shots Nick your a true Wizard 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 27-Jan-15 03:53 AM GMT

I don't know what to say . 😊 You honour me with your very generous and kind comments. Thank you everyone, i am very flattered, and appreciate your kindness.

David, i was going to post the five instar larva stages of the Orange-tip, but i will adjust my next post. Do not want to push my luck. 😊

Kev, i do have a couple of photos depicting the pupa forming, 😊 but it is one stage i always seem to miss out on capturing the whole sequence.

Guy, i was very fortunate to have quite a few ovum layed on plants i had in the garden, or within a couple of minutes walk of my house; so made it a lot easier to keep an eye on them.

Thank you all again.

All the best, Nick,

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 27-Jan-15 04:19 AM GMT

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

David, i was going to post the five instar larva stages of the Orange-tip, but i will adjust my next post. Do not want to push my luck.

You go ahead, Nick. I'll refrain from posting as I've already exhausted superlatives. 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 28-Jan-15 01:00 AM GMT



Orange-tip in the middle of pupating.



The finished item, found in the garden on some Blackthorn.



This one is such a lovely colour, but has been attacked by a parasite.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 28-Jan-15 04:43 AM GMT

Orange-tip larva, 1st instar.



Orange-tip larva, 1st instar.



Orange-tip larva, 2nd instar.



Orange-tip larva, 3rd instar.



Orange-tip larva, 4th instar.



Orange-tip larva, 5th instar.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Neil Freeman, 28-Jan-15 04:54 AM GMT

Hi Nick, just catching up on your diary. I don't think I can really add anything to what has already been said other than WOW!!

Brilliant stuff 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 28-Jan-15 09:15 PM GMT

Hi Neil,

thank you for your complimentary comments, appreciated.

Female Orange-tip.





Re: Nick Broomer

by Maximus, 28-Jan-15 11:38 PM GMT

Hi Nick, stunning images in your latest series of diary entries 😊

Mike

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 29-Jan-15 03:21 AM GMT

Hi Mike,

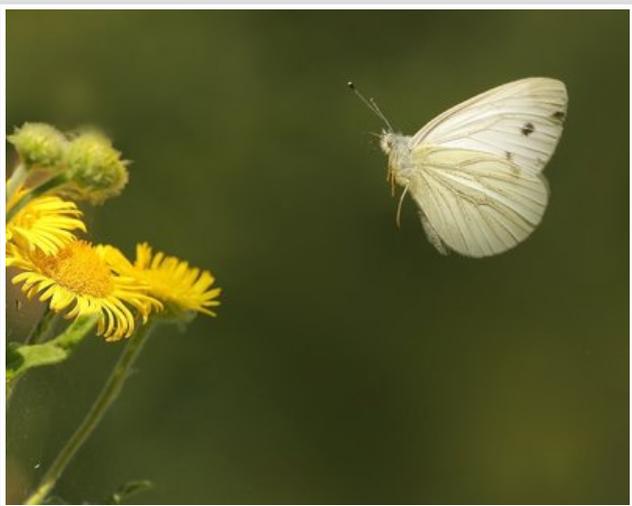
Nice to hear from you again, i hope you and Cath are both well. And thank you for your kind comments. Appreciated.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 29-Jan-15 05:20 AM GMT

Green-veined White...





Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 29-Jan-15 06:27 AM GMT

Stunning shots of the OT Nick and the in flight Green-veined is fabulous 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 29-Jan-15 10:33 PM GMT

I'll second that, love both photographs Nick Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 30-Jan-15 04:14 AM GMT

Thank you Wurzel and Goldie for your generous comments. Appreciated.

As some of you know the Wood White is one of my favourite butterflies and, one that i have been studying over the last few years.

When the ovum is first laid it is white.



Then after five days the ovum turns yellow, [this could be light refraction]



After eight days it reverts to being white [again this could be light refraction],



. I found this particular Wood White's ovum, which after five days has turned orange and stayed that way until the caterpillar hatched.



The resulting larva on hatching is orange as well.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Chris Jackson, 30-Jan-15 05:06 PM GMT

Once again some great photos Nick. 😊

Could the difference in coloring have something to do with the sex of the butterfly?
Chris

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 30-Jan-15 09:35 PM GMT

Hi Chris,

thank you for your comments. Appreciated.

As a particular colour being related to either male or female, is completely unfounded. The orange larva is the offspring of the 2nd brood Wood White, and can be either sex. The white larva i found as far as my research tells me is a fluke of nature, and the only one i have found. The 1st instar Wood White larva, offspring of the 1st brood is totally different as depicted in the photo below.



All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 02-Feb-15 06:13 AM GMT

An insight into the life of Chiddingfold Wood's Wood White.

These are all my own observations, opinions and photographs of the Wood Whites within Chiddingfold Wood.

All photographs are the sole copyright of Nick Broomer, and written permission must be obtained for the use of any of my photographs.

Part one...Getting to know the Wood White

The smallest of our native Whites, this dainty butterfly can be found floating up and down the woodland rides and, with it's awkward unbalanced flight is quite unmistakable. But if you get up close and personal, the Wood White's flying ability is far from unbalanced and awkward. But an extremely capable, agile flyer of the highest level. This butterfly spends most of it's life weaving it's way through/between thick vegetation or just above it, and how often do you see Wood Whites with large chunks missing from their wings?, probably never, or at least i can say i never have, a small tear, yes. Their flying ability totally suiting their way of life. As the following couple of photos depict, with this female flying low through the vegetation, she looks

almost certain to collide with the grass stems, but with only a couple of millimetres between her and the vegetation her wings are stretched to the limit, slowing her speed, then before you can blink an eyelid she going up and over, what flying, brilliant.



There are two broods a year, the 1st brood fly from late April to late June and sometimes [but quite rarely] into early July. The 2nd brood normally fly from the first week July [between 5th–7th] until late August and have been known to fly even in the first few days of September but, this is again a rarity. With both broods the flying dates can vary, all depending on the great English weather, [and we all know how changeable that can be].

The 1st brood differ from the 2nd brood, in that the 1st brood Wood White's wings are what i call dirty,



[Like this 1st brood female in the above photo]

compared to the cleaner and certainly whiter wings of the 2nd brood, as depicted in the following photo of a 2nd brood male,



[nowhere near as many grey spots]. Also with the 2nd brood, the upper part of the legs can be totally naked of hair but,[Next photo]



this does not occur with every summer brood. Another not so obvious difference between the 1st and 2nd broods, is the black markings/spots situated on the top corners of the upper side of the forewings. The markings on the 1st brood male's wings



[as depicted in the next photo] are grey in colour, whilst the females have a slightly lighter spot; [no photo]. 2nd brood males have a black mark, fading

around the edges to grey,[next photo]



whilst the females are very faint or totally absent as seen in the following picture.



The easiest way to distinguish the male from the female is by the antenna, the males having white tips to the antenna, [even though i am lead to believe that the white tips to the antenna appear with age, which i dispute]



This photo depicts a very fresh male with white tips to the antenna



And in this photo the male is quite old and worn, but the tips to the antenna are still white. The female's antenna are black in colour,



As shown in this photo with this very fresh female. the male's eyes are also larger than that of the female. Also the coloration of the male's eyes can vary from a blueish tint to a light purple background colour with black and grey spots. [its possible the purple colouring effect could be caused by light refraction, but i have only found this purple coloration in males and, never in females no matter what light conditions occur on any particular day, time of day etc.]



This photo was taken into the sun.



Whilst this photo was taken in the evening in poor light. The females are normally a light blue, and on the very rare occasion a light green.
To be continued...

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 02-Feb-15 06:29 AM GMT

Stunning shots and fascinating information Nick 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 02-Feb-15 06:30 AM GMT

Some cracking images again there, Nick, and yes, you're quite right, Wood Whites never seem to suffer from torn wings, although that is largely true of Brimstones too, which is another species that spends most of its time in flight and always settles with wings closed.

Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 02-Feb-15 07:07 AM GMT

WOW 🤩 (Officially lost for words now)

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 02-Feb-15 11:09 PM GMT

Many thanks wurzel, David and Buggy for your kind comments. As always, appreciated.

An insight into the life of Chiddingfold Wood's Wood White.

Part two...Getting to know the Wood White continued.

The male spending most of it's life hunting down females in which to mate, [as illustrated in the following photo]



only stopping to nectar, or to chase off any other males he comes across on his travels. As shown in the following pictures.





Males are often found taking in salts and minerals [quick way of replenishing their energy levels] normally before and after copulation as mating depletes a great deal of the males energy, from either damp moss, muddy patches of soil, and even the waste products of animals, [their poo] this behaviour is more commonly observed in the afternoon. Depicted in the next two photos.



The females do not fly about as much as the opposite sex, but once mated and ready to lay her ovum they are continually flying, looking for suitable plants on which to lay her eggs, as shown in the following sequence of a female flying through the vegetation.





Males are found in far greater numbers than females in both the 1st and 2nd broods.

To be continued.....

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 03-Feb-15 12:49 AM GMT

All those Wood White's Nick and I've not seen one yet 🙄🙄🙄

Your photos are lovely, I've heard of the Wood and plan to go there, (hope fully this year) if I get there my photos will have to be pretty good to compare with yours Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 03-Feb-15 04:42 AM GMT

What equipment are you using to take such clear, in flight shots, Nick?

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 03-Feb-15 05:33 AM GMT

Thank you Goldie and David for your comments, as always appreciated.

Goldie i hope you do make it down to Chiddingfold Wood to see the Wood whites, brilliant little butterfly. If you send me a P.M. closer to the time of your visit, i will give you details of all the best sites within the wood.

David, its not the camera that takes the picture but, the person behind it, and his knowledge of the subject. 😊😊😊 I have spent so much time studying this butterfly so that i could write an article worthy of the beautiful Wood White. To capture it's life, then i had to understand the way they flew in order to capture these shots of them in flight. Of course you need a little luck, but most of it is skill and understanding it. 😊 But to answer your Question. The same camera equipment i use for all my butterfly photography, a Canon EOS 700D with a Sigma 150 macro lens attached.

All the best to you both, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 03-Feb-15 06:58 PM GMT

An insight into the life of Chiddingfold Wood's Wood White.

Part three... Roosting Wood Whites

Wood Whites can be found roosting during the day in unsuitable flying conditions, as well as the normal time of early evening on a hot summers day. From a few metres high to as low as just a couple of millimetres off the ground, all depending on the weather, whether its overcast and cold, raining or a warm night. A common flower where they can be found resting is Greater Stitchwort but, otherwise just about any plant will do, like Bluebells,



unopened leaf buds,



grass of any description etc.



These roosting butterflies are easy to find, except when its bitterly cold or raining, when they hide themselves low down in thick vegetation beneath over hanging branches. I have also found them taking shelter a few metres into the woods when raining, the tree canopy helping to keep the rain off, like a giant umbrella. They can normally be found roosting singly, but can be found in small groups of three or four in number, and when in small groups preferring a dead piece of vegetation, i.e. Bracken, or a old Bramble flower from the year before, to nestle down for the night, as seen in the

next photo.



To be continued..

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 04-Feb-15 01:37 AM GMT

Fantastic photos again Nick, I may just take you up on that offer when we've sorted our travel times out. Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 04-Feb-15 07:31 AM GMT

Hi Goldie,

thank you for your kind comments, again. Appreciated. Make sure you do take me up on my offer. Might even see you there.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 06-Feb-15 05:23 AM GMT

An insight into the life of Chiddingfold Wood's Wood White.

Part four...Courtship of the Wood White

I wrote the following text [changed some wording] in my Personal Diary, [on this forum] nearly three years ago on Wednesday, March 7th 2012 about the courtship of the Wood White. [p]

But are they actually courting? I say this because I have seen this behaviour on many occasions with 1st and 2nd brood Wood Whites but, it has never ended with the pair of Wood Whites mating. Whenever I have witnessed this ritual,



with the male whipping the female with his proboscis the male has always flown off without even a sniff, let alone managing to woo the female into mating.

When i wrote the above text i did not believe that the mentioned courtship of the Wood White ever resulted in the male and female joining in the act of copulation. And i have not seen any evidence since in my observations of the Wood White over the last couple of years to change my mind but, only to strengthen my beliefs that the ritual never finishes with the act of mating of this species.

I have witnessed this ritual [courtship] over a hundred times now and, you would think on the law of averages i would have been a witness to this behaviour at least once. In reality with the amount of times i have observed this ritual, i believe i should of had really seen this ritual end with the act of copulation not once, but several times and, have i? No, not once. And why not, is it that this courtship is not a courtship and never ends with the male and female joining in the act of copulation?

On one such occasion whilst observing this behaviour, the male whipping the female on the side of her wings, [i believe this hitting of the side of the wings with his tongue is deliberate and, is actually what the males are trying to achieve, but a lot of the time the males are totally inaccurate with their proboscis and miss, but more of that later] eventually the male flew off after a few minutes of performing this ritual. The female which was sitting on Bitter Vetch at the time the male was performing this ritual, bent her abdomen to one side, only for the female to lay an egg. But it brought a smile to my face. In my observations i have noticed that a very high proportion of females had been mated prior to this ritual.



The female in the photo above has clearly been mated.



As this female has as well, clearly heavily laden with ovum.

Anyone who has studied the Wood White knows the rarity of seeing the joining of a male and female of this species, and i have been privileged to have witnessed this act on a few occasions, the last time i observed this phenomenon was on the afternoon of 27.7.2014 [the afternoon is the only time i have seen Wood Whites mating] when i was watching a lone female sitting on some vegetation late afternoon. I had been sitting underneath an Oak Tree when after about ten minutes a male happened along, [he probably smelt her first] then he flew over to her and they joined. No courtship of any description, none, nothing at all, the male just flew in and they joined, simple as that. And this has been the case on every occasion i have witnessed the joining of a male and female Wood White in the act of copulation, no courtship. The only difference between them all was, the length of time the females sat waiting, [probably intentionally waiting for a male to mate with] any where from a couple of minutes, to 45 minutes in full sunshine as in this particular case. I remember the day well. The wood was popular with walkers that day, and a lot of them stopped and asked what i was doing. So explained that i was watching a female Wood White butterfly, and i pointed her out to one and all, and that i was hoping a male would come by, seek the female out and mate, [i,m sure some of them thought i must have a screw loose] but all the same, they all wished me luck. And after a 45mins wait, a male happened along, [again probably smelling her first, before seeing her] and bingo he was in there in a shot and, they joined. No courtship, not a sniff of one, nothing, just straight in there and joined. That was my first experience of seeing a Male and female join in the act of mating, i was convinced that it would happen, all i had to do was wait, so i did.

Copulation normally lasts anywhere between 40 min. and 100 min. depending on the time of day they mate,



to how long copulation lasts. I have left mating pairs of Wood Whites as late as 7 o'clock in the evening, [and like a pair of Orange-tips i found on 29th April 2014, which had stayed joined all night] i believe these late pairings stay joined all night as well [this is something i will have to investigate further]. The female Wood White always takes total control when joined in the act of copulation, when the female wants to move about the plant they are sitting on, or to fly to another location if disturbed, then he has no option but to follow, as the female will drag the male behind her even in flight.



When the female decides to land again after being disturbed it is quite common to find the male hanging in mid-air. Sometimes when a copulating pair of Wood Whites are disturbed, the female will fly off still joined to the male and, without warning will stop flying and drop like a stone into the vegetation below.

To be continued...

Re: Nick Broomer

by Pete Eeles, 06-Feb-15 03:42 PM GMT

Great observations, Nick, which substantiate statements made by some other authors; this doesn't seem to be a "courtship ritual" – the term typically used to describe this process. It really does make you wonder what the point is! I'm not sure if this is a "bonding ritual", if no bonding actually occurs and the butterflies go their separate ways.

By the way, I don't believe you can copyright text in the way you've outlined; I'm pretty sure it's not breaking any enforceable copyright (no matter what you state) if someone quotes an excerpt with full and clear credit given to you, with a reference to the original content.

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Nick Broomer

by trevor, 06-Feb-15 05:18 PM GMT

Hi Nick,

Excellent observations of this rare little Butterfly .We observed some of the behaviours you describe with the second brood last year. As a lot of this action takes place around ' Tea Time ' most visitors have gone home.

I am glad we went to see them in the latter part of the day.

This year it would be good if Wood White and Purple Emperor coincide for a few days.

Hope to see you at the Triangle this season.

TREVOR.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Padfield, 06-Feb-15 06:08 PM GMT

Hi Nick. From your observations, can you confirm that this interaction always takes place between a male and female and is always asymmetrical, the male whipping the female?

If it *never* leads to mating one could speculate that it only happens after the female has mated. Who is benefiting and what is the benefit? Do males seek out females carrying their own sperm (I don't expect you to be able to answer that!)? Since reading your post, theories have been flying through my mind, but sadly I have to go and teach maths now ... Fascinating stuff.

Guy

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 06-Feb-15 10:14 PM GMT

Hi! Nick, I have a theory but of course that's all it is, 😊

Last year I photographed the male Speckled Wood who wanted to mate with this Female SW, she of course had just mated and refused him, he was very persistent so she played dead , I was really surprised 😊 I thought at first there was some thing wrong with her but as soon as the male flew off she went her own way .

I wonder if the Male Wood White in touching the Female in the way you've described can tell by her stance or the position she's in that she wants to mate, you said in one case the Male flew off, the Female shortly afterwards laid her eggs.

You also described a female that wasn't ready to mate so the male flew off then she changed her mind, too late the male had gone!

In your description of a pair actually mating and the Male just flying straight in, it's surely the way the Female was waiting for a male and the actual male knew this by the way she'd positioned herself, just a thought. you know the saying "Position is every thing" it could be for Butterflies Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 07-Feb-15 03:01 AM GMT

Thank you all for your comments. Appreciated as always.

As for the copyrights on my text, I know there are no rights to the text, but I thought I would still go ahead and write it. I'm not the only person to do this. You see most people can be trusted to do the right thing but, not everyone is honest as I found out a few weeks ago on Dispar. I discovered something about butterflies in my first year of studying these insects. Three years later I see someone on this forum [an old friend, female, blond bleached hair, Pauline Richards] has taken the credit for something I had told/shown her in the field. How to identify a male from a female Large Skipper/ Small Skipper by the antenna. Pauline told me she would check her photos when she got home. And she did, and found I was right. But Pauline decided to take the applause for my discovery on this forum knowing I didn't follow this web site at the time. People on this forum applauded her for her discovery, but it was my discovery. Will I ever get an apology from Pauline. There is not a thing I can do about it now. That's life. But its dishonest and damn right low. I have informed Pete Eeles of this.

Trevor you are quite right the afternoon is the best time to study/see and photograph these brilliant little insects. I'm sure we will bump into each other at some point at Chiddingfold Wood later in the year.

Guy. This ritual takes place between male and female, MALE on MALE, so not asymmetrical, but not female on female or female on male. You wrote, do males seek out females that carry their sperm. That's one of my theories from about 3 years ago, that has gone out the window. I still have more to write on this behaviour, with photos, depicting this act and what I believe they are trying to achieve with this display, but what's the importance of this ritual, I can only surmise [I wish I could converse with them].

Goldie. as you quite rightly say, the position of the female Wood White is probably important to this issue of copulation, and if you add to the equation, the female letting off an odour telling the male that she is ready to mate, then you could very well be right.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Pete Eeles, 07-Feb-15 03:07 AM GMT

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

Pete. I call the tongue lashing between two Wood Whites a bonding ritual, not just a bonding between individuals [male and female] but covering all individuals within this species like a friendship. Humans bond all the time, whether it's a gang of mates [all boys] down the pub having a good time or a group of girls and boys having a good time at a fun fair etc. but bonding all the same. It's all I could come up with, when all my previous theories went flying out the window.

I had a similar thought, but couldn't justify it. And that is – the ritual confirms that the species flying together are, indeed, compatible (not at the level of individual), which must have been a real need when different Wood White species flew together and you wanted to ensure that a potential mate is likely to produce fertile offspring. As is believed, the mainland was swamped with Cryptic Wood White before they all disappeared, with the remnant population being confined to Ireland.

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 07-Feb-15 06:22 AM GMT

"Pete Eeles" wrote:

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

Pete. I call the tongue lashing between two Wood Whites a bonding ritual, not just a bonding between individuals [male and female] but covering all individuals within this species like a friendship. Humans bond all the time, whether it's a gang of mates [all boys] down the pub having a good time or a group of girls and boys having a good time at a fun fair etc. but bonding all the same. It's all I could come up with, when all my previous theories went flying out the window.

I had a similar thought, but couldn't justify it. And that is – the ritual confirms that the species flying together are, indeed, compatible (not at the level of individual), which must have been a real need when different Wood White species flew together and you wanted to ensure that a potential mate is likely to produce fertile offspring. As is believed, the mainland was swamped with Cryptic Wood White before they all disappeared, with the remnant population being confined to Ireland.

Cheers,

– Pete

Thats an interesting theory Pete. I wonder how, if any, this behaviour would differ if it was between a *sinapis* and a *juvernica* for example and if it could be tested somehow 😊

I'm really finding these observations totally engrossing Nick. I think I'm going to have to add seeing my first Wood White to my 2015 bucket list now!

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 07-Feb-15 07:06 AM GMT

Fascinating and detailed information Nick – good luck with the continued observations – I hope they yield an answer 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 07-Feb-15 09:11 PM GMT

Hi Buggy and Wurzel,

Thank you for your comments, as always appreciated.

Buggy you should try and visit Chiddiingfold Wood if you can. I see you visit Boxhilll, another 30 min. drive will see you at this wood. If you do make the trip and need information on where to find the W.W., just ask.

Wurzel, i have all the answers i need about the W.W. and it's life, except the real reason behind their ritual, one can only surmise the true reason behind this ritual, and for now i'm sticking with that it is a form of bonding between the species as a whole.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 07-Feb-15 10:42 PM GMT

Hi! Nick, I think you could be right about the bonding, may be the Wood White's are just different in their approach to it, my Speckled Wood for instance(in my latest diary) pushed and prodded the Female and she didn't want to bond with him and played dead. It could be the way Wood White's by touching the Female find out what mood she's in and if she's willing to bond. If she's not they fly off, like yours did, where as the Speckled Wood persist's in trying to bond.

It could be this approach in the Wood White why their not as successful and why they've declined so much compared to other species. Just a thought!

The other species could be more aggressive in their behaviour compared to the Wood White Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Vince Massimo, 07-Feb-15 11:54 PM GMT

Fascinating and thought provoking stuff Nick, with impressive photos 😊

Looking at Adrian Hoskins' ever-helpful website, he has some interesting thoughts on this ritual <http://www.learnaboutbutterflies.com/Br...inapis.htm> This is based on the observation that, unlike other Whites, mated Wood White females have no rejection signal, so new males continue unsuccessful courtship for lengthy periods before giving up.

Vince

Re: Nick Broomer

by Pete Eeles, 08-Feb-15 01:18 AM GMT

I must admit, I'm confused at the discrepancy between field reports (such as Nick's) from individuals who have seen pairings occur, with no courtship, and what's written in books and on websites (and I can't help thinking that these regurgitate each other's claims and assume that the actions really are a courtship!). Has anyone reading this EVER seen a pairing follow the "courtship" display?

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Nick Broomer

by Padfield, 08-Feb-15 01:43 AM GMT

"Pete Eeles" wrote:

Has anyone reading this EVER seen a pairing follow the "courtship" display?

To me that's a crucial question. Natural selection does not look favourably on energy expended on doomed missions! Also, if male-on male is not merely anomalous, it would seem information is being communicated here that is of general benefit to a colony (as ants and bees communicate information) rather than specifically reproductive information. Confirming the presence of the appropriate species is possible, but to me unlikely, as

more than one of these *Leptidea* species often share the same habitat – so if it takes all this rigmarole to confirm ID, how come they can zoom in and mate with the right species in seconds?

Guy

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 08-Feb-15 02:13 AM GMT

Given that two near identical species of Wood Whites occur in certain places, could it be that some form of additional recognition steps are necessary?

Re: Nick Broomer

by Pete Eeles, 08-Feb-15 03:07 AM GMT

Sorry to clog your diary up, Nick – let me know if you want this discussion moved! In the meantime, the following paper demonstrates that this "courtship" does lead to pairing, at least in captivity:

http://www.zoologi.su.se/research/fribe..._al2008.pdf

EDIT: And this related article:

EDIT: Link amended to work!

http://www.zoologi.su.se/research/leima..._al2013.pdf

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 08-Feb-15 05:04 AM GMT

Hi all,

Pete wrote. Has anyone reading this ever seen a pairing following the "courtship" display? I asked the same question three years ago on this forum. I got two replies, one from Dave Millerd and one from Susie, who both stated that they had not seen this courtship end in mating.

Vince wrote. This is based on the observation that, unlike other Whites, mated W.W. females have no rejection signal. So new males continue unsuccessful courtships for lengthy periods, before giving up.

My observations.

In the wild this courtship never seems to last more than a few minutes. Also it seems that a male cannot distinguish between a mated and unmated female. a Why does a male try courting a female thats been mated but, does not try courting a female that has not been mated? When i have witnessed the joining of a male and female, the female just sits there waiting to mate, having already released a body scent that tells any passing male that she is receptive to mating. The male seems to know this instinctively when a female is ready for copulation, [which i believe the male can smell the female from at least a couple of metres] and will fly in like a bullet and join, no courtship. I have never witnessed the courtship ending in the act of mating in at least five years. After a female has mated i believe that there is a possibility that she loses the ability to continue to produce the body scent, as it is no longer needed. On one particular occasion i was watching a sitting female, a male headed towards the female, got within 30cm of the female and carried on flying past her. Then another male came along, saw her, flew down and around her and then flew away. Then third male happened along, he got closer and closer and then flew straight over her head and away. Then i realised, she has probably lost her body scent, as she no longer requires it as she has probably already been mated, [i have seen this behaviour on many occasion]. A male butterfly is programmed to mate, thats why it exists and, for no other purpose, so for three males to ignore a female in about 15 min. surely must indicate the female had been mated or, that she had not turned her attracter scent on, which i find to be inconceivable that a female can just turn her body scent on whenever she wants.

And then there is this, male on male. So is this still a courtship?



Re: Nick Broomer

by Pete Eeles, 08-Feb-15 05:57 AM GMT

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

Pete wrote. Has anyone reading this ever seen a pairing following the "courtship" display? I asked the same question three years ago on this forum. I got two replies, one from Dave Millerd and one from Susie, who both stated that they had not seen this courtship end in mating.

If you read the papers I've provided links to, you'll see that courtship did precede mating and that this was achieved in both captivity and the wild (with released females). In addition, "many females ... accepted mating after only a few seconds of courtship".

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Nick Broomer

by Neil Hulme, 08-Feb-15 06:00 AM GMT

Yes, this complex behaviour is, without doubt, courtship. My own observations of Wood White behaviour, courtship and mating are entirely consistent with the huge body of research performed on this species, by some of our most respected lepidopterists, and particularly Professor Christer Wiklund. The summary provided by Adrian Hoskins is spot-on.

I have personally watched Wood White interactions result in copulation on four occasions since 2007, all at Chiddingfold. In two of those, the courtship display lasted approximately one minute (+/- 20 seconds), and included wing-clapping, in addition to proboscis and antennal waving. On the other two occasions courtship lasted approximately 10 seconds, without the wing-clapping.

Wiklund himself has witnessed almost instantaneous pairing, and short duration courtship has been well documented (Friberg et al., 2008). These short duration courtships still give the females sufficient time to confirm potential mates as belonging to the same species (of Wood White) as they. It would seem that (almost) instantaneous pairings do occur, but quite rarely. There are exceptions to almost everything in nature. Meadow Browns and Small Tortoiseshells should not be having sex with each other!

Males cannot differentiate between females belonging to different species of Wood White, so the decision-making is entirely the prerogative of the female. Note that more than one species of Wood White occur in some regions today (ex UK), and historically would have done so in others. This probably explains the complexity of the courtship, as the various species are so similar (even to Wood Whites!) that a complex combination of signals is required.

As Adrian points out, the mated females find it very difficult to communicate 'rejection' to the males, and hence the courtship ritual extends far beyond the timeframe necessary for a receptive (virgin) female to respond to a male's advances. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the much lengthier, unsuccessful courtship rituals are far more commonly observed.

It is probably the complexity and duration of these displays which lead some to doubt that this is courtship. However, in my opinion, the ratio of observed 'failures' on the part of males, is no different to that seen in many other species. Given sufficiently good weather on emergence, female butterflies remain virgin for a very short period of time. They then spend the rest of their lives spurning the advances of amorous males. In other species, even persistent individuals will 'get the message' quicker than a male Wood White.

If we consider some hypothetical figures, we see that the rarity of an observed, successful conclusion in Wood White is far from unusual. If we consider that a female butterfly of species X lives for 20 days, she will perhaps be active for 50% of that period for 5 hours per day, once averaged out. Assuming she was mated very quickly (often before her wings are fully hardened), she will then be accosted on numerous occasions, every hour, by amorous males. Even at the very conservative figure of two interactions with males per hour, we arrive at a ratio of 100:1 unsuccessful:successful encounters. The asymmetry of outcomes is probably far greater than this.

We see this all the time in common species such as the Brimstone and Orange Tip, where the courtship behaviour is, by comparison, very basic. How often do we see a successful outcome? But we don't doubt that it is courtship.

It is also worth pointing out that the ratio of male:female Wood Whites is approximately 50:50. However, the females behave differently and are seen less often. This is quite normal, although there are well documented cases where the sex ratio is skewed in some species (in favour of females) by sex-specific parasites.

Also, 'bonding' does not occur in Lepidoptera. Bonding, either social bonding or pair bonding, is a behaviour which has developed in animals because it serves a particular purpose, and confers an evolutionary advantage. There can be no such advantage to butterflies in pursuing this type of behaviour. It doesn't happen.

BWs, Neil

Re: Nick Broomer

by Pete Eeles, 08-Feb-15 06:28 AM GMT

Nice analysis, Neil!

At 100/1, I've got a lot more courtship displays to see before I witness a pairing! From "Heterospecific courtship, minority effects and niche separation between cryptic butterfly species" (where Adrian may have read about the lack of rejection behaviour):

"Females do not perform any rejection behaviours, but on rare occasions, females try to escape an unwanted courtship by taking off in an ascending flight. This behaviour only rarely pays-off, because most often the male has no problem to follow the female. The long-lasting male courtships have been proposed to impose time costs both on males and females, but the alternative female strategy, to accept mating to avoid the long-lasting courtship, would be even more costly, as the average mating lasts for over an hour, and if the male is recently mated, the time in copula can exceed 10 hours."

Cheers,

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 08-Feb-15 06:30 AM GMT

Thanks for the input, appreciated. But female Wood Whites do have a rejection signal, rarely seen, but i have witnessed this behaviour and photographed/captured this on film so maybe you should, rethink your opinions on the mating rituals of this butterfly.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 14-Feb-15 09:07 PM GMT

An insight into the life of Chiddingfold Wood's Wood White..

Part five...Wood Whites egg laying

The females lay their eggs either in full sun or part sun/shade but never full shade, and can be found along the woodland rides and in small open pockets of grassland within the woods. The ovum are laid singly,

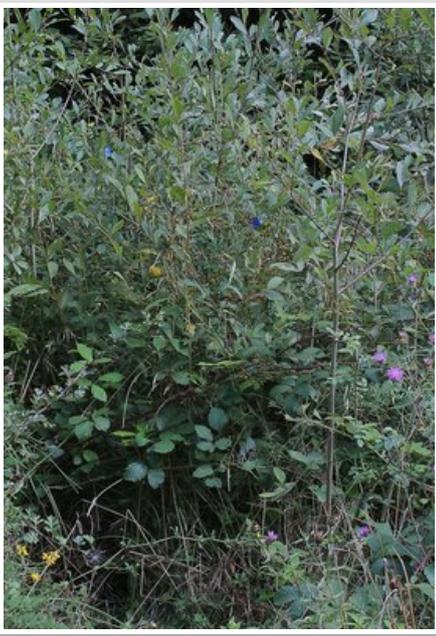


normally one egg per plant, on rare occasions two can be found side by side on the same leaf.



These two ovum are so fresh that they have not yet dried and turned the colour of off white.

The 1st brood females ovum can be laid anywhere from 50mm [2inches] off the ground to about 450mm [18inches]. Whilst the 2nd brood normally lay their ovum from 150mm [6inches] above ground level to over 1.2metres.



There are two small pieces of blue tape attached to the vegetation, just over half way up the centre of the photo, just above these pieces of tape are where two Wood White ovum have been laid, the one on the left is over 1.2 metres high. It looks quite condensed in there, but there is plenty of air space for the sun to penetrate and, to warm the egg.



This female Wood White is just about to oviposit the first of the two ovum laid within the shrub.



And here is the deposited ovum. It was this ovum that turned orange and produced the orange larva. the other egg was lost to predation.

Selected plants for egg laying are always singular, not on vast clumps of the larval food plant like Bird's-foot Trefoil.

The three most commonly chosen plants for egg laying by both broods over all, were, 1st, Bird's-foot Trefoil, 2nd, Bitter Vetch and 3rd, Meadow Vetchling. All eggs were laid in the open, not in amongst thick vegetation. If the ovum were laid where the vegetation was thick, then the selected larval plant would be at least 150mm [6inches] above the surrounding Flora. Some eggs that were found high up [over 900mm, 3feet] were normally on bird's-foot Trefoil, fighting for light in amongst a bush.

The ovum when first laid are an off white in colour, turning yellow after about five days, then reverting to white again before hatching after 10/11 days and producing a white larva. On the very rare occasion the ovum turns orange in colour after about five days and, stays this colour until the larva emerges which is also orange.

To be continued...

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 15-Feb-15 01:05 AM GMT

This is absolutely fascinating stuff, Nick, and superbly photographed too.

Your patience and commitment are admirable.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Maximus, 15-Feb-15 01:51 AM GMT

Hi Nick, the story of the Wood White's life cycle is unfolding nicely and is also beautifully illustrated by your excellent photos.

Mike

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 16-Feb-15 03:02 AM GMT

Fantastic stuff Nick 😊 What is the evolutionary significance of the orange larva I'm wondering?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 16-Feb-15 09:18 PM GMT

Hi David, Mike and Wurzel,

thank you again, for your kind comments. Appreciated as always.

Wurzel, to answer your question. I haven't a clue, as it is the only orange ovum I have seen, could be the only one ever seen. Obviously more research needs to be done involving the Wood White.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 19-Feb-15 04:32 AM GMT

An insight into the life of Chiddingfold Wood's Wood White..

Part six...Studying the courtship ritual of the Wood White

So this is the courtship of the Wood White,



which is very rarely seen with the conclusion of copulation in the field [something i have yet to observe]. So how does this courtship relate to the act of mating or, as in some cases does not appear to have any bearing on the act of copulation. These are my own observations in the field on mating and the courtship ritual. When i have observed the joining of the male and female Wood White, the female has always been sitting on some form of vegetation in the sun, and not well hidden. The females will sit waiting, anywhere from 3/4 of an hour [the longest i've witnessed this] to just a few seconds. Whilst waiting the female [i believe, will release a body scent] indicating to any passing male that she is ready for mating. When eventually a male flies close enough, the male will firstly smell the female, [i believe the male can smell a female from at least two metres] then fly down to investigate and, join without any courtship. This joining of the male and female in copulation, i have observed on half a dozen occasions and not once was there any sign of a courtship.

Now when a courtship does take place it has always been with a female that seems to have always been mated before, [from my own observations and photographs]. A male will seek out a female [high percentage of the time flying, rarely sitting] confronting her, the female will try to escape the males advances by taking flight, and the chase is on. The male in hot pursuit is directly behind her, the male has already got his proboscis out, aiming it in the direction of the female but, without actually touching her. The female eventually lands on the ground [in this instance], where wing flapping by the female takes place,



while the male flies around her throwing his proboscis out in front of him towards the female [you can see the shadow of the males proboscis on the females opened wings].



The female eventually flies off again



[this is the same female and male in these five photos] with the male right behind. The female is forced to land again and,



this time the male lands opposite her and starts what we are familiar with seeing, the domineering male hitting the submissive female on the side of her closed wings with his proboscis, [normally the hindwing] this stimulates the dominate and the submissive to open and close their wings, [the more accurate the dominate male is with the hitting of the submissive's wings the more she opens them, the male can be pretty inaccurate with his proboscis, missing it's target over and over again, so less of the wing flapping by both the dominate male and, the submissive] usually the male will chase the female down, sometimes landing on open vegetation,



[as indicated in this photo] but more often than not, down in thick vegetation where it is difficult to observe the courtship



and, is why it is easily missed.



After the dominate male connects with the side of the submissive female's wings with his proboscis



the submissive female is stimulated into opening her wings and, then the dominate male with an accurate thrust of his proboscis, hits the flat of the opened forewing.



This courtship as seen in the above photos has never ended with mating, as i believe the females have already been mated. These photos also indicate what i believe the dominate males are always trying to achieve with their proboscis, even though some of them are pretty amateurish at this act of using their proboscis correctly and to good affect.

To be continued...

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 19-Feb-15 06:21 AM GMT

Magnificent observations trumped only by your supporting images, Nick.
You **really** have invested a huge amount of time studying this butterfly.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 20-Feb-15 04:36 AM GMT

Hi David,

Thank you very much, for your sincere and generous comments on my observations on the Wood White. Its taken me five years so far [in both poor and good weather] and, i'm sure there is a lot more to be learnt about the Wood White. In my opinion, there needs to be a lot more research done into it's life and the secrets it holds.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 20-Feb-15 07:12 AM GMT

More fascinating stuff Nick – your documentation is brilliant and just what this threatened species needs 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 21-Feb-15 04:16 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

thank you for your very kind comments. Appreciated as always. 😊

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 22-Feb-15 04:57 AM GMT

An insight into the life of Chiddingfold Wood's Wood White..

Part seven...Male on male performing the courtship ritual

We all know that male butterflies spend most of their lives looking for females in which to copulate with, and that, quite a lot of the time get rather confused when it comes to differentiating between a male and a female, whether they are of the same species or one thats similar to themselves but not one of the same species. Freshly emerged males can produce a body scent similar to that of a female,[male Orange-tips, and Chalkhill Blues are two such butterflies that come to mind that produce this body scent] but once the said butterfly has been investigated and, the male has realised his embarrassing mistake, he moves on and goes in pursuit of another butterfly. So why is it, that when two male Wood Whites come together, it is not always a mistake, whoops another male, time to go. But no, for some reason or another they do not always go their separate ways, but start to throw their proboscis at each other like these two males deep down in the vegetation,



until one of them becomes the dominate male, and the other becomes the submissive male. They then go on to produce what looks like to me, the courtship ritual of a male dominate and a female submissive with only the dominate male now using his proboscis.



With the dominate role being won by the male Wood White on the right, the male on the left taking the roll of the submissive. The dominate male proceeds with hitting the submissive male opposite, on the side of the wings with his proboscis,



[or at least is attempting to, but misses a lot, with the odd direct hit] stimulating the submissive male into fully opening his wings and,



then the dominate male brings his proboscis down on the opened wings, [exactly as a dominate male and a submissive female would perform in a failed courtship ritual]. On one weekend, i found four pairs of males performing the courtship ritual, all of which were well hidden amongst vegetation.

This ritual of course can not be a courtship ritual, [not performed by two males anyway]and because males can not obversely mate with each other. Even though this ritual carried out by a dominate male and, a submissive male was the same as the courtship ritual performed by a dominate male and a submissive mated female. And we all know that its not a bonding ritual, as insects do not bond, full stop. But after watching/studying wild life ever since i was a very small child, i have come to the conclusion, that nature is totally unpredictable. Never, ever take nature for granted and say this or that can never happen. Nature is always full of surprises and new discoveries are being made all the time, and i believe there is a lot more to learn about our butterflies. All you have to do is go out and look, and keep looking, as people on this forum know that only to well...

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 23-Feb-15 12:57 AM GMT

An insight into the life of Chiddingfold Wood's Wood White..

Final part... The female rejection signal

The female Wood White is noted for not having a reject signal to ward off any advances from amorous males, hence all the failed courtships but, this is not always the case. Because if you keep looking, you never know what you will find and, on 9.8.2014 i came across a female which was definitely rebuffing a male.

The male chased down the female who fortunately landed in the open on some Fleabane. To start with there was a lot of jumping about and some wing flapping by both male and female,



the male also using his proboscis trying to woo the female, and take control, the female having none of it, this lasting no more than three seconds. After exactly four seconds the female started to rebuff the male,



by pointing her abdomen skywards, giving out a clear signal of not wanting to mate.



The female Wood White held this position with her abdomen pointing upwards for about twenty seconds, [whilst the male was still trying to court her, but to no avail] a couple of seconds later the female then flew off. The male, never one to give up, gave chase. The female then landed again, the male flew down



to try his luck once more.



The female at this point flew up and away, and this time the male did not go in pursuit of the female, but went his separate way. This event lasted from start to finish, 37 seconds.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 23-Feb-15 02:20 AM GMT

More fantastic stuff Nick – the detail in your observations puts me to shame 🙄🇹🇼 I am also so envious of all f the open winged shots that you have, somehtign lacking from my, very small, photo collection for this species 🇹🇼

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 24-Feb-15 09:18 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Thank you for your over the top comments, but they are really appreciated.

I have spent so much time studying the Wood Whites, its become an obsession. Sooner or later you have got to find what your looking for, as long as its there to be found in the first place, and a bit of luck has to play it's part. I have been fortunate to make three new discoveries associated with the Wood White, [so i believe]. But, if you don't put in the time, you don't get results. 😊🙄🙄🙄🙄

All the best Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 26-Feb-15 08:20 AM GMT

Brimstone ovum are usually laid one to a leaf, normally on a very young leaf, but sometimes a female will deposit an egg on a particular leaf, fly away, come back and lay another egg on the same leaf, the female could repeat this procedure several times. Or more than one female could be depositing ovum on the same leaf just because it is situated in the right position, i.e. in sun, so the ovum can dry easily if exposed to rain, in shaded areas, where the ovum is sheltered from exposure to wind and rain, and gets little or no sun.



There are six ovum on this mature leaf, which were laid quite late in the season, 8th June.



Freshly laid Brimstone ovum on young Buckthorn leaf.



Brimstone ovum having turned a dirty yellow after a few days of being laid.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Pete Eeles, 27-Feb-15 12:11 AM GMT

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

There are six ovum on this mature leaf.

More interesting is that they've been laid on the upperside of the leaf!

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 27-Feb-15 03:19 AM GMT

"Pete Eeles" wrote:

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

There are six ovum on this mature leaf.

More interesting is that they've been laid on the upperside of the leaf!

Cheers,

- Pete

The only pics I have of Brimstone eggs are on the upperside as well.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 28-Feb-15 09:55 PM GMT

I thought that the laying of Brimstone ovum on the top of a leaf was common practice, as I have come across this behaviour frequently, [just like Buggy]

All the best, Nick..

Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 01-Mar-15 05:38 AM GMT

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

I thought that the laying of Brimstone ovum on the top of a leaf was common practice, as i have come across this behaviour frequently, [just like Buggy]

All the best, Nick..

I guess one argument would be that eggs laid on the upperside are more obvious and therefore more likely to be seen... ?

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 01-Mar-15 11:53 PM GMT

I would have thought that the question should be. Will the larva survive when they emerge from the ovum? Probably not, as i am lead to believe that most newly hatched larva prefer young, succulent leaves to feed on, not mature leaves. The newly emerged larva i know are supposed to go of and find suitable leaves to feed on, but this is not always the case. I have observed a few species of larva, Wood White, Comma etc. that when hatched they just sit on the mature leaf/plant their ovum was laid on and die, without moving, staying in the same position on the leaf.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Neil Freeman, 02-Mar-15 04:45 AM GMT

Hi Nick,

Just catching up on your diary and your fascinating series of Wood White posts. Am I right in assuming from your posts that the Chiddingfold Wood Whites always have a second brood? The colonies here in the midlands tend to fly a bit later and the second brood is often a partial affair only occurring in favourable years.

I have also found Brimstone eggs on both sides of the leaf and also on newly unfurling buds.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 02-Mar-15 09:03 PM GMT

Hi Neil,

Thanks for the comments.

Yes, the wood Whites are double brooded down here at Chiddingfold Wood. The 2nd brood are quite stunning and, my favourite of the two broods. 😊

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 09-Mar-15 04:09 AM GMT

Yesterday, early afternoon, a male Brimstone payed a visit to my garden. Good job he did, [no photo] as i'm far to busy working to go running around the countryside. So here are a few from last year.



Just hatched from ovum, 1st instar Brimstone larva, with first feed hole in leaf.



2nd instar Brimstone larva in the typical, i've been disturbed posture.



3rd instar Brimstone larva where you would normally find them when not feeding, resting on the rib of the leaf. Even though this one is just passing a lump of frass.



Female Brimstone.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 13-Mar-15 07:09 AM GMT

More stunning photographs recently Nick and good to see that you're off the mark 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 15-Mar-15 11:13 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

thank you for your kind comments, as always appreciated. 😊

I was actually off the mark back in January. I posted on sightings, rather than my diary. 😊

I still haven't managed to get out and, probably will not be able to for at least another two weeks. On the 8th march last year i saw over one hundred butterflies on my local patch. So far this year only two butterflies, one Peacock and one Brimstone.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 16-Mar-15 04:17 AM GMT

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

On the 8th march last year i saw over one hundred butterflies on my local patch.

😲 So your local patch is a butterfly house then..... 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

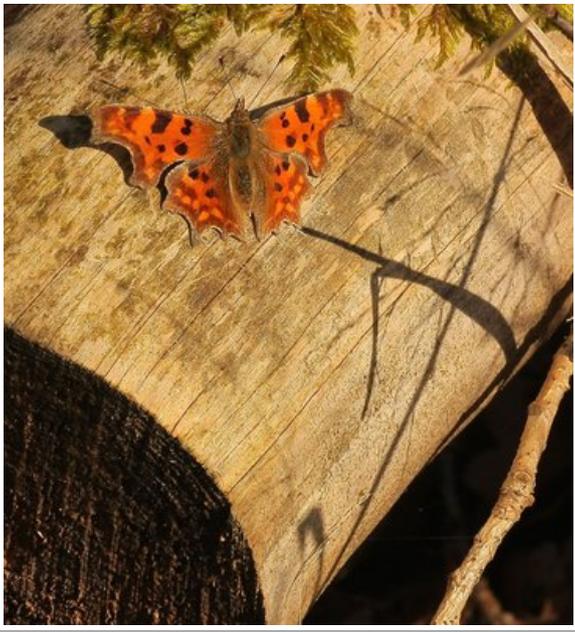
by Nick Broomer, 16-Mar-15 05:50 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

the weather was really hot for that time of year and for the whole of that particular weekend, [8th and 9th March] so it was quite like a hot house, but only out doors. 😊

Here are a few photos from that weekend, all Commas and Brimstones.





All the Comma photos were taken in one small pocket of the wood.





All the Brimstone photos were taken on the banks of ditches.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 17-Mar-15 06:35 AM GMT

More great shots Nick 🍷 We in the West seem to be behind again already this year as my local area keeps missing out on the good weather 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 18-Mar-15 06:17 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

thanks for your kind comments again. Appreciated as always. 😊

I,m sure you will get some good weather sooner or later, and i wish you luck with the butterflies when that day arrives. 😊

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 22-Mar-15 02:45 AM GMT

Continuing with the theme of the Comma.



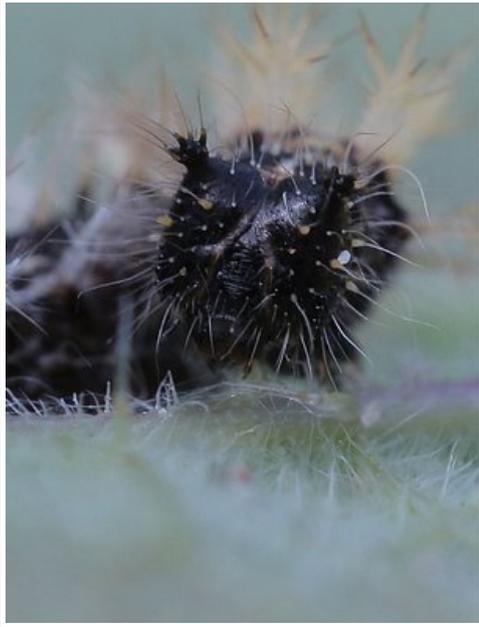
Comma ovum after eight days.



Comma ovum after twelve days. The larva emerged the following day.



3rd instar Comma larva, the photo i needed for the full set of Comma instar photos. Looked for, and found close to home..



3rd instar Comma larva, up close and personal.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 22-Mar-15 06:17 AM GMT

Cheers for the wish of good luck Nick – I was hoping to use it today but instead I was ripping down the last of our lathe and plaster ceiling – I ended up looking not too dissimilar to the close up view of the Comma 😊😄 Cracking shot that is 📷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 22-Mar-15 07:22 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

like you i have been unable to get out and about due to work commitments on the home front, landscaping the garden again, new patios, paths etc.

But i have still managed to see three species of butterfly so far.

Thank you for your kind comments. Appreciated.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 28-Mar-15 11:02 PM GMT

Friday afternoon, 27th March i managed to escape from my landscaping duties at home, and nipped over to Chiddingfold Wood for a couple of hours. But shortly after arriving, the sun which had shone brightly late morning, [seeing one each of, Brimstone and Small Tortoiseshell in the garden]had after half an hour of being there was obscured by a large formation of cloud. So i decided to visit my favourite Comma hotspot in the wood and, maybe get one or two photos, if the sun would reappear. On arrival the sun was trying hard to break through the cloud again, so i sat down on a pile of logs for a bite to eat. I was scanning the habitat around me when i saw what i thought was a Comma roosting in the Bracken to the left of me and, on closer

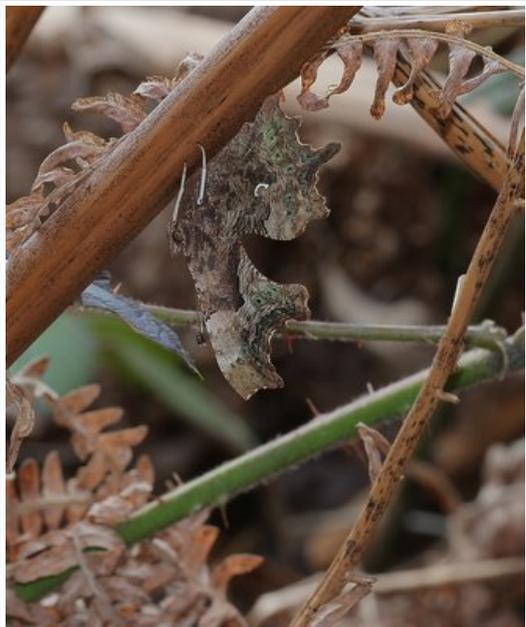
inspection i was right. I have often thought of Commas roosting and how difficult it must be to find one and always thought, one day, and now that day has arrived. Well chuffed.



Roosting Comma.



Of course there is always the obstruction of some vegetation partly hiding the butterfly.



So very carefully i managed to move the obtrusive piece of Bracken without disturbing the Comma to obtain a clear shot of the butterfly.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 09-Apr-15 03:51 AM GMT

Butterflies seen so far this year. Comma, Red Admiral, [both in poor numbers] Brimstone, [in average numbers] Small White [in good numbers so far] Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshell [in very good numbers for this area] Orange-tip one so far.



Re: Nick Broomer

by trevor, 09-Apr-15 04:54 AM GMT

Hi Nick,
Nice Orange Tip image . None round here yet but plenty of Cuckoo Flower.
I spent sometime at a local OT.hotspot today , and all I saw was Commas.

Keep up the good work,
TREVOR.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 09-Apr-15 06:17 AM GMT

Great shot of the OT Nick, I've only seen the one and there doesn't seem to be any Cuckoo flowers out yet so hopefully next week will see the main me emergence.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 10-Apr-15 06:33 AM GMT

Hi Trevor and Wurzel,

thank you for your comments, appreciated as always.

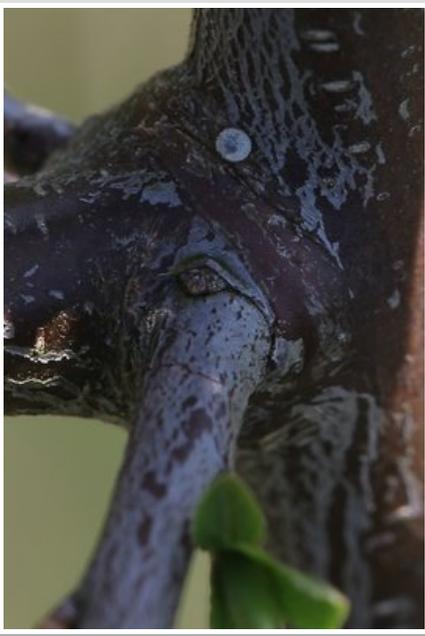
Today i saw my 8th species of butterfly for the year, a very fresh male Holly Blue. A rarity in these parts.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 16-Apr-15 12:33 AM GMT

Took today off work to finish landscaping my garden, which i have, at last.

Butterflies seen in my garden whilst working, 8 Orange-tips, [2 females, 6 males] and 3 Large Whites males. Took a short walk to check on a couple of Brown Hairstreaks ovum that i hope to monitor when the larva have emerged. But still not hatched, they should emerge in the next week.



One of two Brown Hairstreak eggs that have not hatched yet, [facing west].

Butterflies seen on my walk, 3 male Brimstone, 2 Large White males, 5 Small Tortoiseshell, [4 males, one female] 4 Peacock, one Small White male and, half a dozen Orange-tip [5 males, one female].



Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 16-Apr-15 05:21 AM GMT

Thats a stunning Orange Tip image Nick, hugely envious. I got within a hairs breadth of getting one today a few times but he just wouldn't long enough little bugger!

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-15 06:29 AM GMT

Indeed that is a cracking shot of an OT 🐛. All of my one's this year have either been seen from teh car or just don't stop moving 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 16-Apr-15 09:00 PM GMT

Hi Buggy and Wurzel,

thank you for your kind comments. Appreciated as always.

The photo was taken in the garden. I was just raking the soil to get a nice even level ready for seeding, when i was evaded by three Orange-tips and got lucky. The brown background colour is the soil i had just been raking and, what will be my new lawn.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 17-Apr-15 04:16 AM GMT

Hi! Nick, I love your Orange Tip photo's can't wait to see one myself Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Maximus, 17-Apr-15 05:36 AM GMT

Beautiful Orange-tip photo, Nick 😊😊

Mike

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 18-Apr-15 01:14 AM GMT

Hi Goldie and Mike,

thank you both for your kind comments, appreciated as always.

Goldie i'm sure the Orange-tips will be flying in your area soon, they emerged about one week early where i live.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 22-Apr-15 07:34 AM GMT

Fresh water Great Ramshorn Snail.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 23-Apr-15 07:51 AM GMT

On Sunday the 19th April even though cold and overcast i went for a short walk to check on the state of the Brown Hairstreak ovum which i hope to monitor when the larva hatch. One larva had emerged, while the other ovum about 70mm below the hatched egg was still intact, even though rather ravaged by the weather over the last seven months since it was laid. This picture shows an excellent and accurate portrait of the ovum as it looked on the 19th April, [but you will need to click on the photo].



Walking on, i came across a Small Tortoiseshell low down on Common Nettle with her wings fully expanded. I thought its got to be to cold for this butterfly to be laying eggs, but she was, just over one hundred ovum were laid on the back of the Nettle leaf in this single batch, and was a first for me which shows how well this butterfly is doing in my neck of the woods. You would never have come across this a couple of years ago. Orange-tips had also been busy laying eggs, some were very fresh,



some were a few days old since the ovum was laid, having already turned orange.



A couple of Comma were seen, but they were buried deep down in the vegetation, also a Peacock and, when the sun made an appearance my first Speckled Wood of the year also made a showing.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 26-Apr-15 07:11 PM GMT

19th April

Here are some more photos from last weekend.



There is a fence between me and the subject and, couldn't get any distance from the butterfly to get a decent photo.



Went back a few days later to obtain this photo, as i couldn't get a photo on the day.



My first Speckled Wood of the year.



I also found this roosting female Orange-tip.

I have also photographed a male Orange-tip emerging from its pupa to complete the life cycle of photos, which are all on my blog. [bottom left hand corner of this post]

Re: Nick Broomer

by Vince Massimo, 26-Apr-15 07:49 PM GMT

Excellent life cycle photos on your blog, Nick 😊
Thanks for pointing it out.

Vince

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 27-Apr-15 11:57 PM GMT

Great photos Nick you were right about the OT Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 28-Apr-15 07:58 AM GMT

Hi Vince and Goldie,

thank you for your kind comments. Appreciated as always.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 01-May-15 07:28 AM GMT

A walk in Chiddingfold Wood on Sat., 25th April produced very little in the way of butterflies. With a dozen or more Brimstone, a handful of Peacock, the odd Small Tortoiseshell and a few Large and Small Whites. No wood Whites were flying and, to my surprise not a single Comma. On the same walk, in slightly warmer conditions last year in March i counted 22. I have noted a lack of these butterflies locally, compared to previous years, so not looking so good for the Comma in these parts.



This male Brimstone has landed on a bank late afternoon, to bask in the weakening sun, soaking up as much heat as possible [a common habit] before going to roost for the night.



Brimstone ovum, one of many found on one Common Buckthorn plant.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 02-May-15 04:19 AM GMT

Neat photo of the egg Nick and the Brimstone Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 02-May-15 07:53 AM GMT

Hi Goldie,

thank you for the kind comments again, appreciated. Glad you liked the pictures.

I hope your eye is still on its way to making a full recovery.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 03-May-15 08:00 PM GMT

Orange-tip ovum, unusually on the top edge of a garlic Mustard leaf.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 04-May-15 08:31 AM GMT

I revisited the Small Tortoiseshell ovum i found two weeks ago, and something has been helping itself to the contents of the eggs. Hopefully another visit from the hungry little critter will not be imminent.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 04-May-15 06:53 PM GMT

On a short walk yesterday produced, Peacock, Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell, Holly Blue, Large White, Green-veined White, Speckled Wood, Orange-tip and Comma.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 05-May-15 01:49 AM GMT

A couple more photos from yesterday.



Peacock sunbathing on Nettles, just imagine humans doing that. 😊



Close-up of a different Peacock.

Re: Nick Broomer

by trevor, 05-May-15 01:58 AM GMT

Cheers Nick, the PBF's were worth the effort.
How are the Wood Whites doing at BB?. I've never photographed the Spring brood.
Hope to this year.

All the best,
TREVOR.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 05-May-15 08:43 AM GMT

Another photo from the weekend.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 05-May-15 09:18 PM GMT

A visit to Chiddingfold Wood yesterday produced, male and female Wood White, Brimstone, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Peacock and a Broad-bordered Bee HawkMoth.



Male Wood White

Re: Nick Broomer

by kevlng, 05-May-15 11:01 PM GMT

Nick,

Great photo of the Wood White, a species I am yet to see in UK. You've whetted my appetite.

Regards Kev

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 06-May-15 03:03 AM GMT

Hi Kev,

thank you for your kind comment. Appreciated.

I hope you get to see one for yourself soon.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 06-May-15 04:18 AM GMT

Hi! Nick, lovely Wood White, I to have yet to see one, do they have a second brood in August? That's my only chance of seeing them Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 06-May-15 05:21 AM GMT

Excellent image of the Wood White, Nick. It must be great having this species so close to home.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 06-May-15 07:44 AM GMT

Hi Goldie and David,

Thank you both for your kind comments.

Goldie, the Wood Whites will be flying in August, but don't leave it to late.

David, it is great to have Wood Whites so close to home, but its such a shame that both Small and Pearl-bordered fritillaries which used to fly in Chiddingfold Wood, have been lost to Surrey. Beautiful butterflies that are so photogenic.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by trevor, 06-May-15 04:42 PM GMT

Hi Nick,

I think Pearls and Small Pearls have such specific habitat requirements that they are unable to adapt to changing conditions, overgrown sites are one problem, restricting access to Violets. There must be other factors also, but what is certain, if things aren't right they die out.

Best wishes,
TREVOR.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 06-May-15 07:04 PM GMT

Thanks for your comments, trevor.

Not a very good snap shot [but a record photo anyway] of the Broad-bordered Bee Hawkmoth seen at Chiddingfold Wood on Monday 4th May.



Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 07-May-15 12:52 AM GMT

Great photo of the Hawk Moth Nick and is that Flower Bugle 🤔, I saw them at Gait Barrow and I think their a favourite of the Pearl and Pearl BF so hope fully they'll be out shortly at there , I'll have to check them out soon they weren't out when I visited on Monday.

Thanks for the info on the WW I should be there early August with luckGoldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 07-May-15 02:44 AM GMT

Hi Goldie,

thank you for the kind comment. Yes, the flower in the photo is Bugle, a favourite with both the Small and Pearl-bordered Fritillaries.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 07-May-15 09:17 AM GMT

Same Butterfly, different light conditions, over two days.

I found this roosting male Green-veined White on the 4th May,



and here is the same individual on the following day.



Much darker conditions for photography and the wind was playing havoc with the poor butterfly, as it was blown off the Cuckoo Flower and, down into the vegetation below. Safe from the gale force winds, you would think that the butterfly would stay put, but no. This brave, but quite silly individual, climbed up this Sedge stem, and into the wind which continued to batter the poor insect all over the place.



One second the subject was in front of you , the next, virtually the whole of the butterfly had vanished as the butterfly was blown all over the place. Now you see me, now you don't.



This photo was taken an hour and 45min. later on the same day, with the butterfly back on the Cuckoo Flower, slightly better light conditions and, a better photo.

Re: Nick Broomer

by kevling, 07-May-15 11:19 PM GMT

Nick,

Lovely GVW photos. You have captured their markings beautifully despite the breeze. A much underrated species in my opinion.

Regards Kev

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 08-May-15 05:09 AM GMT

Hi Kev,

thank you for your kind comment. Appreciated as always. 😊

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 08-May-15 06:24 AM GMT

Much underrated is the Green Veined White.

I think most of us (myself included) generally pay lip service to them but when conditions are right and you can get close, they take a mighty fine image.

Well done, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 08-May-15 06:56 AM GMT

Cracking Wood Whites and GVW's Nick and that record shot of the Bee Moth is mighty fine too, I've never managed to capture that species though I've seen it a couple of times 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 08-May-15 11:55 PM GMT

Hi David and Wurzel,

thank you both for your kind comments. Appreciated as always. 😊

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 17-May-15 07:41 AM GMT

Both photos were taken at Chiddingfold Wood today. The first photo i worked hard for. The second photo was just a snap shot, sometimes you get lucky. 😊



Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 17-May-15 08:23 AM GMT

Well, Nick, your work was rewarded!

Superb shot of two species whose upperwings are only visible in-flight.

That's a 9.5/10 for sure!

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 17-May-15 06:30 PM GMT

Nice shots Nick, your right some times it just happens when you snap 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Neil Freeman, 17-May-15 07:15 PM GMT

Hi Nick,

Cracking shot of the Brimstone and Wood white, I would give 10/10 if it wasn't for the damaged hindwing on the Brimstone. Must try harder to get a better specimen next time 😊😁

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 18-May-15 02:55 AM GMT

Thank you David, Goldie and Neil for your kind comments. Appreciated as always.

That damn damage to the Brimstones wing will haunt me forever. 😞😞😞

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 19-May-15 05:06 AM GMT

A butterfly's perspective

Cheesed off Painted Lady

I have just flown half way across Europe, across the English Channel. Managed to reach a nice, well known wood in Surrey, and the sun disappears.

I'm cold, hungry and tired. I need to recuperate from my travels, have a sleep in peace.....then all of a sudden this plonker of a photographer, shoves a camera in my face.....can you bloody believe it.....



Re: Nick Broomer

by Willow, 19-May-15 05:25 AM GMT

Nice one Nick... 😊😁

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Nick Broomer

by trevor, 19-May-15 05:48 AM GMT

Hi Nick

I have a gut feeling that wasn't the last Painted Lady you'll see this year.

I think things are shaping up for another invasion of this species. I think it was 2009 when I witnessed thousands on the Isle of Wight. So many that every flower had several competing for it.

At Ventnor Botanical Gardens, some young girls were frightened as the Butterflies flew up when disturbed.

It could be a good year !.

TREVOR.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Wurzel, 19-May-15 06:32 AM GMT

Or was it thinking "hang let me get my make-up on, and that's not my best side either! 😞 " 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 19-May-15 06:34 AM GMT

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

I have just flown half way across Europe, across the English Channel. Managed to reach a nice, well known wood in Surrey, and the sun disappears.

Welcome to the UK!

One wonders why they bother.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 22-May-15 09:20 PM GMT

Thank you everyone for your comments. Appreciated. 😊

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 22-May-15 10:27 PM GMT

Hi! Nick, they've arrived in the North one was seen at Warton Craig, not by me unfortunately Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 23-May-15 02:23 AM GMT

Hi Goldie, lets hope its a painted Lady year and that there is a large influx of them to our shores. I'm sure you will see one soon enough, fingers crossed. 😊

I hope your eye has now completely healed. 😊

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 23-May-15 03:28 AM GMT

Hi! Nick, Eye nearly completely healed I 'm really surprised at the difference it's made, I can't drive just yet another week then I should be okay then it's all systems go 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 23-May-15 05:35 AM GMT

Hi Goldie, thats brilliant news.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 23-May-15 05:49 AM GMT

A few photos from a trip to Northern Turkey. All photos taken between 31st May and 4th June. Help is needed for some of the IDs, thanks.



Wall



Dappled White



male Mallow Skipper



Wall



?



Large White

[more to follow]

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 25-May-15 08:39 AM GMT

Butterflies of Turkey continued



Clouded Yellow, male



?

Re: Nick Broomer

by Padfield, 25-May-15 03:37 PM GMT

Hi Nick.

Your first mystery butterfly is a lattice brown, *Kirinia roxelana*, a species that never ventures into western Europe and so one that I've never seen. But it's very distinctive and this is a good picture. I'm sure the skipper in your last post is another mallow skipper.

I look forward to any more Turkish postings!

Guy

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 25-May-15 10:23 PM GMT

Thank you Guy, thats brilliant and appreciated.

A few more from Turkey.



Illex Hairstreak [false ?] and Bush Cricket



Blue Family



Cleopatra, female ?



Meadow Brown



Goranus Swallowtail

One more post to follow.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Padfield, 25-May-15 11:01 PM GMT

Hi Nick. I agree with ilex hairstreak (false ilex is not found in Turkey). Your 'blue family' butterfly is a female Loew's blue, *Plebejus loewii*. I'd like a description of the upperside of the brimstone species, if you had the opportunity to see it in flight, before committing myself to that! Finally, the meadow brown is not the familiar British species, *Maniola jurtina*, but most probably *Maniola telmessia*, a related Turkish species.

Great stuff – and amazing photos!

Guy

Re: Nick Broomer

by Goldie M, 26-May-15 12:06 AM GMT

Hi! Nick, that's a great Swallow Tail photo, I'm hoping to go to the Broads shortly if my photos turn out to be as good I'll be thrilled Goldie 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 26-May-15 01:53 AM GMT

Thank you again Guy for your IDs and, your comment on the photos. Again, appreciated.

I believe the so called Cleopatra is infact a beautiful male Brimstone. I was just hoping i was wrong as i have never seen a Cleopatra, oh well, can't have

everything.

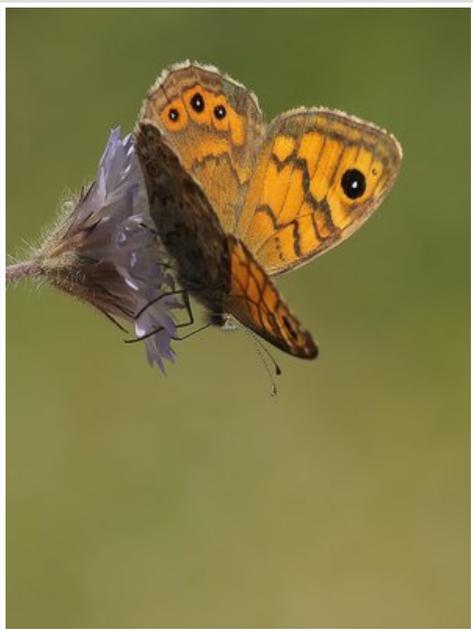
Thank you for your kind comment Goldie. Appreciated as always. I hope your successful with the Swallowtails as i'm sure you will be. 😊



Grounded Swallowtail



Brimstone



Wall



Small Copper



Bath White



Large White



Mallow Skipper



Brimstone



?



Male Clouded Yellow

Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 26-May-15 02:07 AM GMT

Is that unknown one a Large Wall, *Lasiommata maera*? Just trying to sneak in before Guy 😊
All fantastic pictures 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Padfield, 26-May-15 03:22 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:

Is that unknown one a Large Wall, *Lasiommata maera*? Just trying to sneak in before Guy 😊

😊 It does look a little like a large wall but is in fact a female lattice brown, *Kirinia roxelana*. The one in the previous set was a male, with less obvious contrast. What a beautiful butterfly.

Guy

Re: Nick Broomer

by bugboy, 26-May-15 03:28 AM GMT

"Padfield" wrote:

"bugboy" wrote:

Is that unknown one a Large Wall, *Lasiommata maera*? Just trying to sneak in before Guy 😊

😊 It does look a little like a large wall but is in fact a female lattice brown, *Kirinia roxelana*. The one in the previous set was a male, with less obvious contrast. What a beautiful butterfly.

Guy

Dammit! 😊 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by David M, 26-May-15 05:23 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:

"Padfield" wrote:

"bugboy" wrote:

Is that unknown one a Large Wall, *Lasiommata maera*? Just trying to sneak in before Guy 😊

😊 It does look a little like a large wall but is in fact a female lattice brown, *Kirinia roxelana*. The one in the previous set was a male, with less obvious contrast. What a beautiful butterfly.

Guy

Dammit! 😞😞

You'll learn, Bugboy! Over the years I've seen enough to defer to Mr Padfield on every occasion except when I am 100% certain! 😊

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 27-May-15 05:44 AM GMT

Hi Guy,

thank you for the ID, really appreciated. The Lattice Brown is not an easy butterfly to photograph, especially as i didn't even know what species of butterfly i was seeing. But i managed to work it out on how to go about getting a photo and, got lucky with a photo of each sex.

Thanks Buggy for your kind comment on my photos. Appreciated as always.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Neil Freeman, 27-May-15 06:11 AM GMT

Hi Nick,

I don't often comment on non UK posts, mainly because I don't really know that much about the different species, but I do know great photos when I see them and there are some lovely ones in your recent reports from Turkey.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Willow, 27-May-15 10:55 PM GMT

Can only agree with Neil's comments Nick – well done 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt – venture out"

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 28-May-15 05:42 AM GMT

Hi Neil and Willow,

thank you both for your very kind comments. Appreciated as always. 😊

All the best, Nick.

Re: Nick Broomer

by Nick Broomer, 29-May-15 01:04 AM GMT



Painted Lady



Painted Lady



Common Blue