

StMedard

by StMedard, 20-Jun-15 04:06 PM GMT

Hello all, I have just returned from a visit across the south of France, the Var, Bouches-du-Rhone, and the Pyrénées-Orientales, where I managed to see my target species for the year, the Violet Copper (*Lycaena helle*). After two days searching I finally found this little beauty perched on my wife's hiking stick when she returned from a little walk, you couldn't make it up !!! see photos and many others including *L. dispar*, a stunning newly emerged male on my website by clicking on this link. <http://jamesgibbs6929.zenfolio.com/f118467859>

As I live close to Collards Hill in Somerset it is not far to visit and pay respect to the Large Blue colony, this year they seem to be doing fine and I have observed good numbers, photos on website. <http://jamesgibbs6929.zenfolio.com/p577876181#h4b335529>

Re: Out and about

by Padfield, 21-Jun-15 10:29 PM GMT

Hello. I've just had a quick browse through these pictures – and some fantastic ones among them. It sounds a very productive holiday.

A couple of comments on the species themselves. Firstly (and I don't do this just to annoy!) I'm unconvinced by some of the *Pyrgus* (! 😊) – in particular, some of the *carthami* (e.g., no 75 ...). When I've got time I'll give a more detailed critique but today is for exam marking and report-writing. 😞

However, I'm fascinated by your mention of *Melitaea helvetica*. This taxon is presumably that listed in Oorschot and Coutsis (2014) as *Melitaea athalia helvetica* and described there as an invalid subspecific name for hybrids between *M. athalia* and *M. nevadensis* (= *celadussa*). Clearly, I'm particularly interested in anything bearing the name 'helvetica' – and I'd love to know if more recent authorities count it as a valid species in its own right. What is your source?

Guy