

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Jan-15 06:04 PM GMT

Absolutely cracking shot of the BAs in cop 🐞 Have a cracking 2015, looking forward to following your exploits on your mission 😊

Have a goodun (2015)

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Jan-15 04:28 AM GMT

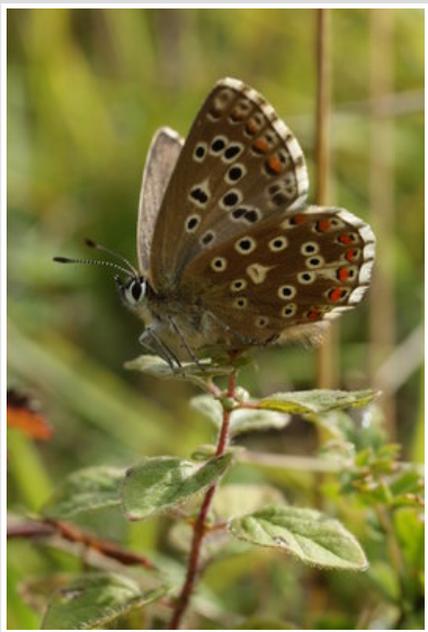
So 2015 already, Happy new year to you all 😊. Well I have a few Photography goals for this year, relatively easy ones being Grizzled and Dingy Skippers, Heath Fritillaries, Small Bues, Wall, White Letter Hairstreaks and Green Hairstreaks. Easy in that they all have sites close enough to me for it not to be too much hassle to get to. Also on the list White Admirals and Purple Emperors. Further afield I might go for Lulworth Skippers, Marsh Fritillaries and Duke Of Burgundy. If the Brown hairstreaks reappear at my local site they are on that list as well!

Thats quite a long list 😊. Theres always the aim to improve on species I already have so yes I think after reading this I am in for a busy season, lets hope the weather is on my side. bring on 2015!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Jan-15 04:55 AM GMT

Although I have been fascinated with butterflies (in fact anything with more than 4 legs or less than 2) since I was a kid, I haven't done much photography in recent years. last summer it was re awakened and I decided to get a picture of every species so I spent quite a few gorgeous (and rather sweaty) days walking around Box Hill in Sussex to get a few I didn't have, and some I haven't even seen before. The last time I saw Adonis Blues was on family holidays in the 80's on the Isle of Wight so I was very happy to get a freshly emerged male and female in August & September who were very obliging to having a camera shoved in their faces!



Box Hill, 3/9/14



Box Hill, 3/9/14



Box Hill, 20/8/14



Box Hill, 20/8/14



Box Hill, 20/8/14

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 05-Jan-15 07:33 AM GMT

Lovely images, bugboy. I don't think I've ever had an Adonis Blue on my hand!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Jan-15 07:39 AM GMT

Thanks David, Found him at 9 am, obviously freshly emerged and was very willing to climb onto my finger when he discovered I was a bit sweaty. Spent a good 30 mins taking various pics of him.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Jan-15 02:15 AM GMT

Another species I added to my photographic list last summer on box hill was the Dark Green Fritillary, like the Adonis I last saw these on the Isle of Wight as a kid. I missed the beginning of the flight season so they were mostly a bit worn.

My first one here was seen in Burford Meadow on the western side of Box Hill. I'd had a late start that morning, only getting there about 10 so they were already full of beans and busy doing Fritillary things, which mainly consisted of keeping their distance from me!



Burford Meadow (Box Hill), 22/7/14

On the other side of box hill is another flower rich meadow where several were flying around, males looking for and harrasing females and females doing their best to avoid males and lay eggs, both sexes again keeping their distance from me!



Box Hill, 22/7/14

So after chasing them around trying to get close for a decent pic I wandered off to see what else was around. Taking a break from butterflies thought I'd take some flower pics. As I focused on this orchid a fritillary settled long enough to get two pics of, shame it didn't settle at a better angle but it was the closest I had got to one the whole day. Next year a proper early start earlier in the season beckons.



Box Hill, 22/7/14

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 06-Jan-15 05:12 AM GMT

Box Hill is a great place for spring and summer species, Bugboy. There are a range of habitats if you include the woodland as well, and I rely on it every year for my best shots of Dark Green Fritillaries and Marbled Whites. While you're there, if you can drag yourself away, Denbies Hillside is only ten or fifteen minutes away and very well worth visiting too. However, I think you visit parts of Box Hill I haven't been to, so I need to explore more...

Keep coming with those photos! 😊

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Jan-15 06:19 AM GMT

"millerd" wrote:

Box Hill is a great place for spring and summer species, Bugboy. There are a range of habitats if you include the woodland as well, and I rely on it every year for my best shots of Dark Green Fritillaries and Marbled Whites. While you're there, if you can drag yourself away, Denbies Hillside is only ten or fifteen minutes away and very well worth visiting too. However, I think you visit parts of Box Hill I haven't been to, so I need to explore more...

Keep coming with those photos! 😊

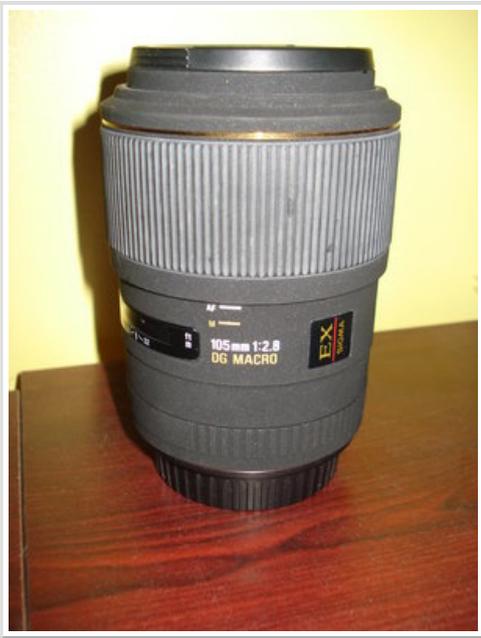
Dave

I did explore the area quite a bit on my trips last summer, getting there 9 or 10 am and leaving a good 7 or 8 hours later. I don't drive so get there via train from Westhumble. I did walk along the north Downs way so I was probably on Denbies hillside as well. Also spent quite a bit of time along the river Mole getting pics of Banded Demoiselles. Never been there before and missed all the springtime fun so it will be visited a few times this year for sure. Maybe I'll bump into you there this year!

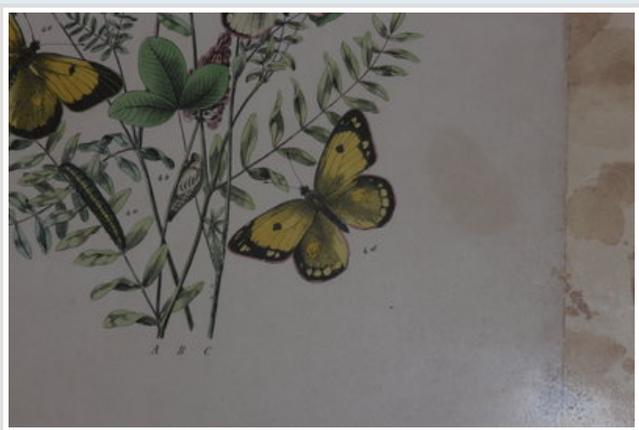
Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Jan-15 04:54 AM GMT

So today this arrived today 😊



And what does any normal man do when he gets a new toy, he plays with it obviously! So I focused on the closest butterflies I could find and I'm rather pleased with the results.....





Very much looking forward to taking it out for a proper test drive on my next day off that isn't raining!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Hulme, 07-Jan-15 05:30 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

That looks like some sort of time-machine to me (a bridge camera user). Make sure you come back with some good images of Mazarine Blue and Black-veined White!

BWs, Neil

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Jan-15 05:45 AM GMT

"Neil Hulme" wrote:

Hi Buggy,

That looks like some sort of time-machine to me (a bridge camera user). Make sure you come back with some good images of Mazarine Blue and Black-veined White!

BWs, Neil

Hahahahaha, if I get them in the UK (no overseas holidays planned) then they will be all over this website I promise!

Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 07-Jan-15 05:31 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

Glad you liked some of my images. Good luck with your quest, who knows what 2015 will bring. A year like 2013 would not go amiss.

All the best for 2015,
TREVOR.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 08-Jan-15 04:43 AM GMT

So my Box Hill trips brought me a hatrick of butterflies I had last seen on the Isle of wight many years ago, the last one I managed to get pics of last year was the Chalkhill Blue:



Box Hill, 22/7/14



Box Hill, 20/8/14



Box Hill, 22/7/14



Box Hill, 13/8/14



Box Hill, 13/8/14

Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlng, 08-Jan-15 08:04 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments of the Silver Spotted Skippers at Box Hill Bugboy.
Yes the skippers were located by the zig zag road, with the Chalkhill blues emerging just a few metres further up from them.
I think the moth you are referring to may be the Straw Belle Moth.
Will certainly look forward to returning there, it was a top location.

Regards Kev

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Jan-15 05:19 AM GMT

Some Silver Spotted Skippers from Box Hill tonight, possibly the same ones Kevling got!



Box Hill, 20/8/14



Box Hill, 20/8/14



Box Hill, 20/8/14



Box Hill, 13/8/14

So how many eggs can you see? I count 10..... edit, seen another one, 11 now.



Box Hill, 20/8/14

Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlng, 09-Jan-15 05:27 PM GMT

Those skipper eggs were a good find, nice photos. I really got an interest in early stages in 2014 and I'm determined to extend that to more species this year. These photos and reports are just the info I need. Thanks

Regards Kev

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 10-Jan-15 06:27 AM GMT

Great Chalkhills Bugboy 🐛 – it's a species I need to spend some more time with next year. Nice Silver Spots too – I can see 10 eggs so I need a bit more practice 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Jan-15 06:58 AM GMT

Some gentle hints for you wurzel. The last one I saw, mostly hidden behind grass blades near the bottom, I only noticed when I supersized the pic.



Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 10-Jan-15 07:27 AM GMT

Yep that was the one I couldn't see 🐛 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Jan-15 12:30 AM GMT

Marbled Whites today: A familiar species from my family holidays to the Isle of Wight (went there seven or eight years in a row as a kid I think) but not

so common in London. last year I discovered what seemed to be a small, isolated population in north london. Further trips this year to see how big this population is, and to get lots of lovely pictures of course.

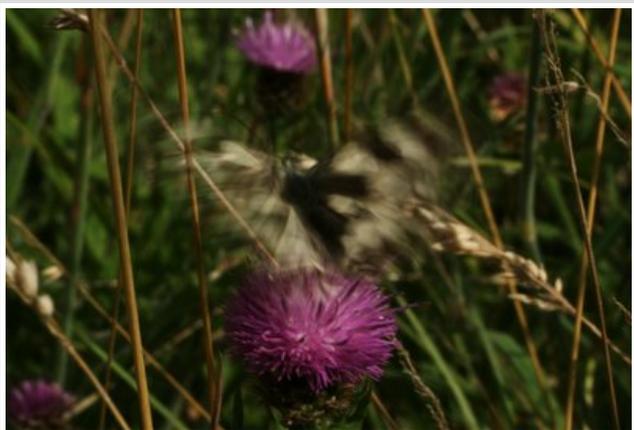


Torquay, 28/6/09



Dollis Valley walk, 24/7/14

I do seem to get pics like these from Marbled Whites more than any other species, but they do have a certain aesthetic appeal:



Dollis Valley walk, 24/7/14



Dollis Valley walk, 24/7/14

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 12-Jan-15 02:43 AM GMT

Good luck with the London Marbled Whites Bugboy 😊 If you can visit early in the morning then you can get less 'asthetic' shots more easily – plus you might be able to get some still covered in dew 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Jan-15 03:00 AM GMT

Thats the same with most butterflies Wurzel but sadly, I'm really not a morning person and with my job starting early I do have to really fight the urge to have a lay in on my days off! I do have plans for lots of early starts this year though.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Jan-15 02:30 AM GMT

Tonight we have one of my 2014 firsts, Silver Studded Blues photographed on Chobham Common, late in their season hence the rather faded appearance.



Chobham Common, 30/7/14



Chobham Common, 30/7/14

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-Jan-15 01:03 AM GMT

Another day, another butterfly. Back to Chobham Common I may have missed the Silver Studded Blues by a few weeks but right on time for the Graylings. Another species I saw regularly on my childhood holidays but not seen since, I'd forgotten how tricky they are to approach but I had all day so managed to get close to a few:



Chobham Common, 30/7/14



Chobham Common, 30/7/14



Chobham Common, 30/7/14

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 14-Jan-15 07:14 AM GMT

Grayling are great value for money butterflies – cryptic colouring, different habitat, interesting behaviour – they've almost got it all, great stuff Bugboy 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Jan-15 02:27 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

Grayling are great value for money butterflies – cryptic colouring, different habitat, interesting behaviour – they've almost got it all, great stuff Bugboy 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

This years challenge with the Grayling will be to get an upperside shot from the little buggers!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 15-Jan-15 02:33 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:

This years challenge with the Grayling will be to get an upperside shot from the little buggers!

Look out for pairs indulging in courtship. These usually present good opportunities for upper wing shots.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Jan-15 03:19 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

"bugboy" wrote:

This years challenge with the Grayling will be to get an upperside shot from the little buggers!

Look out for pairs indulging in courtship. These usually present good opportunities for upper wing shots.

Yup and if that fails I shall resort to a combination of flash, fast shutter speed and pot luck! We should never underestimate the role of pot luck in wildlife photography.

Re: Bugboys mission

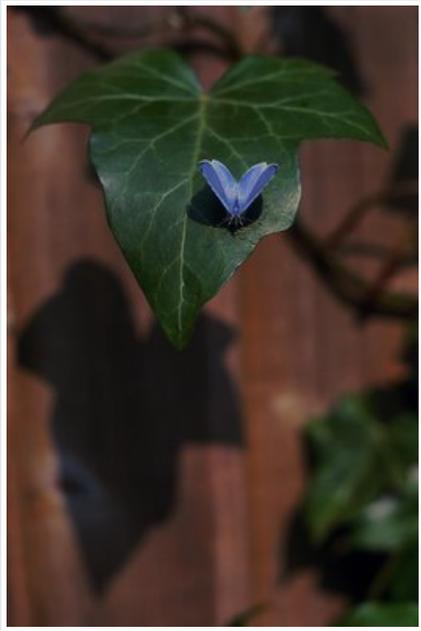
by bugboy, 16-Jan-15 03:30 AM GMT

So yesterday I did a couple of reccies of possible good local sites for the new season. First was Alexandra Park, I quickly located a load of Elms, looked like quite old suckers of English Elm but definately big enough for WL Hairsteaks to breed on. Couldn't get close enough to them, thick undergrowth of bramble around them, so couldn't do an egg hunt but come the summer I will be poised with camera and binoculars. Lots of hedges and open natural woodland as well as the more manacured parkland so this should be another good hunting ground close to home.

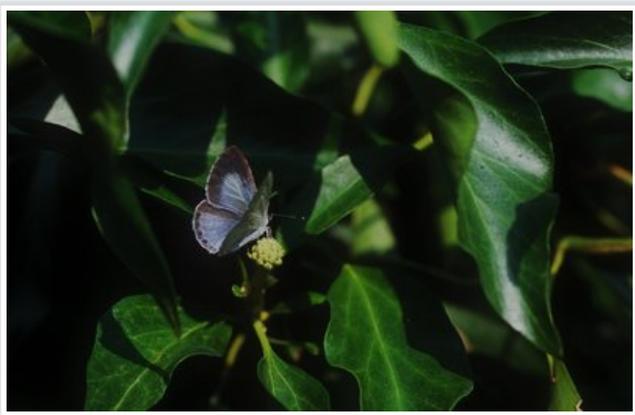
Second was a place a friend told me about last year but never got round to visiting, Gillespie Park near Finsbury Park in Islington. This is a tiny patch of woodland/open grassland, about 2.8 hectares which became a local nature reserve in the 80's. It was nearly sold to developers at the end of the 80's but locals rallied and it was officially saved in 1991. Despite its small size it does have quite a good selection of habitats making this another site well worth a few visits this year. Googling the reserve last night it would also seem to have quite a stunning Lepidopteran claim to fame, which if true I'm sure many people on here may already know, but apparently in 1990 the first recorded breeding in the UK of the Long Tailed Blue was on this very site! Various web pages claim it has between 20 and 24 species, although I suspect the 24 total would be 23 + Long Tailed Blues.

Anyway it was a nice day for a wander.

So tonights butterfly is the Holly Blue.



Dollis Valley walk, 2002



Dollis Valley walk, 2004



Dollis Valley walk, 2004

and here's a pic I got of a larvae and what seems to be the remain of the eggshell.



Dollis Valley walk, 2004

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Jan-15 03:30 AM GMT

Think I'll share some ringlet pictures tonight:

Didn't get any fresh ones this year,



Lea Valley regional Park, 23/7/14

But got some very nice ones back in 2009 down in Torquay,



Torquay, 30/6/09

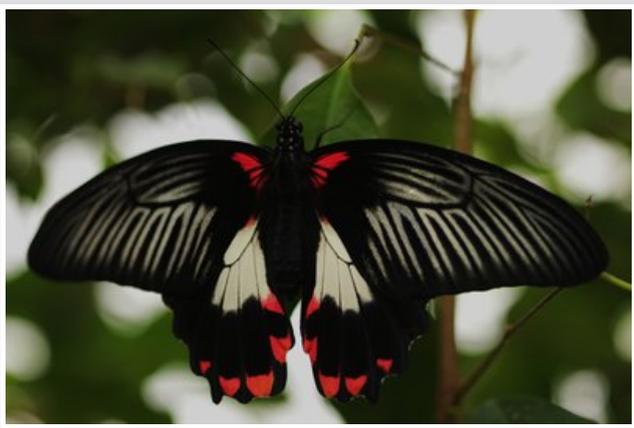


Torquay, 30/6/09

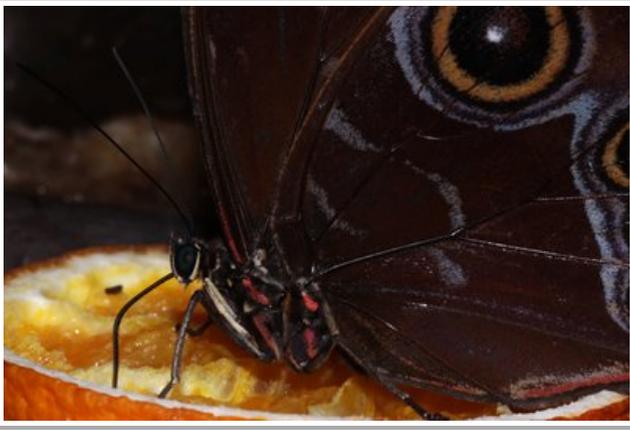
Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Jan-15 06:11 AM GMT

Taking a break from the natives tonight, here's some pics from London Zoo's 'Butterfly Paradise'. It was a very dull day and was struggling with light levels so you may notice I resorted to flash in a few 😞



Papilio rumanzovia



Morpho sp.



Papilio thoas



Siproeta epaphus

Found another Siproeta here who had had some sort of accident, maybe on emergence or just as likely an unfortunate encounter with a member of public 😊



Siproeta epaphus with no sense of smell

Quite a few emerging in the on show 'puparium'



Caligo's emerging



Phoebis sennae freshly emerged



Freshly emerged Papilio rumanzovia

Despite the low light levels this time of year (there is obviously artificial lighting as well) there is still a fair amount of breeding going on:



Greta oto



Papilio larvae

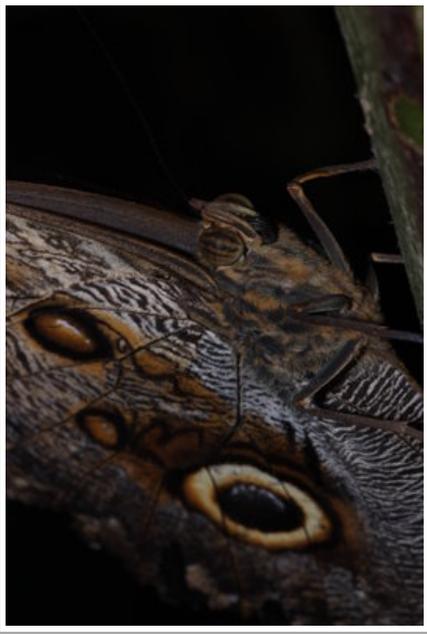


Papilio larvae



Caligo eggs

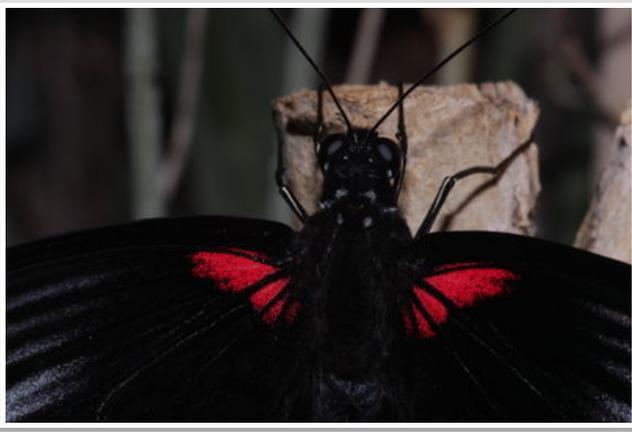
Playing with angles and closeups.....



Caligo sp.



Closeup Morpho eyespot



Papilio rumanzovia

This Comet Moth was definitely showing who's the Boss in the world of silkmoths!



Argema mittrei

One of the dining tables



Feeding table

Although it's only a small poly tunnel, it is very well planted out which does give it a 'tardis' effect once inside. On a cold winters day you can happily spend an hour or two wandering up and down discovering new residents. The Morpho's were all particularly active and I do love the way they take no prisoners when flying from A to B, "out of the way, coming through". I'm always stunned by the amount of people that duck and scream as one flie past.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 20-Jan-15 12:40 AM GMT

I love that Comet Moth Bugboy, I've never seen one before and I've been in a few Butterfly Houses Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Jan-15 01:08 AM GMT

"Goldie M" wrote:

I love that Comet Moth Bugboy, I've never seen one before and I've been in a few Butterfly Houses Goldie 😊

They are quite regular at London Zoo. The cocoons are incredible, they look like a network of liquid mercury!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Jan-15 04:43 AM GMT

A few pictures of the outside of Butterfly Paradise I forgot to post yesterday, as you can see you enter through an inflatable caterpillar head and exit out its exit!



As you can see, the sun had decided to come out later but no time to take more pics.

Anyway, here's a few pics of Large Blues I took quite a few years ago at Collard Hill. All scanned slides and unbelievably I haven't recorded the date on any of them 😞



an egg laying female here



and these phones show just how long ago they were taken!





Re: Bugboys mission

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

I think that Caterpillar Idea for the Butterflies is great Bug boy London Zoo I'll have to visit there.

I've not seen the Large Blue yet so that's another one on my list. Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Jan-15 02:09 AM GMT

a couple of pics of a female Essex Skipper tonight. I only have a few pics of them, despite them generally being as common as Small Skippers on the sites I visit so looks like I need to search them out this year for some one to one moments:



Tottenham Marshes, 21/7/14



Tottenham Marshes, 21/7/14

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 23-Jan-15 06:03 AM GMT

Great Essex Bugboy 😊 Is Tottenham Marshes between Tottenham Hale and Walthamstow? If it is it brings back some memories for me as I got banned from a pub on the edge of it 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Jan-15 06:13 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

Great Essex Bugboy 😊 Is Tottenham Marshes between Tottenham Hale and Walthamstow? If it is it brings back some memories for me as I got banned from a pub on the edge of it 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Hahaha, did you have an Arsenal top on 😄! it's just north of Tottenham Hale, just follow the canal up past Hale and it takes you to a patchwork of meadows and woodland.

Did you live in the area or just passing through?

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 23-Jan-15 06:22 AM GMT

I lived in Tottenham Hale for a couple of years just over the road from what used to be the Lidl's by the tube station. The pub was just on the very edge of the marshes – my mate/Guitarist was slightly worse for drink and so left via the window rather than the door which was enough to get us both banned 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Jan-15 06:51 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

I lived in Tottenham Hale for a couple of years just over the road from what used to be the Lidl's by the tube station. The pub was just on the very edge of the marshes – my mate/Guitarist was slightly worse for drink and so left via the window rather than the door which was enough to get us both banned 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Sounds like an average friday night in this part of the world 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Jan-15 01:22 AM GMT

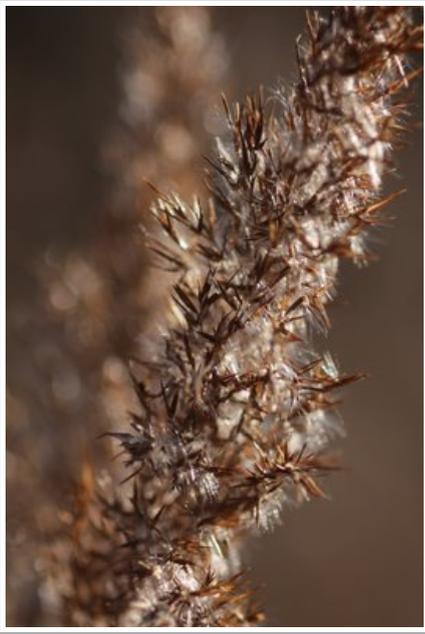
So still awaiting my first butterfly sighting of 2015 I went for a bit of twitching at the London Wetlands Center in Barnes, South London. The regular winter visitors were all putting on a good show in the morning sun, Shoveler, Teal, Wigeon, a couple of Pintail and of course the Bitterns, with a grand total of 40 species seen by the end of the day. I did take some pictures but since I've always preferred macro photography, I've never invested in a lens to do long distance so if you can't see the bittern, just squint 😊. I can confirm that he did look in very fine fettle through my binoculars though.





After forcing my lense to deal with those subjects I figured it was only polite to practice on some closeup stuff and the reed seedheads did look particularly lovely with the sun shining through them...





All in all a very pleasant way to spend a chilly winters friday in London 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 24-Jan-15 06:12 AM GMT

I had no idea bitterns bred in Barnes. Great views of an iconic bird.

Guy

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Jan-15 08:17 AM GMT

"Padfield" wrote:

I had no idea bitterns bred in Barnes. Great views of an iconic bird.

Guy

They don't Guy, they just visit for the winter, four or five turn up every year. I saw two out of the four showing today. I suppose there is always a chance a pair will hang around one year and nest but this has yet to happen.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 26-Jan-15 03:52 AM GMT

Another days twitching yesterday, this time on Walthamstow Marshes. Finally saw a decent flock of Redwing & Fieldfare, the first for this winter and a good sighting of an occasional visitor, a Peregrine being harrassed by a Crow.

Back to Lepidoptera, here's some Speckled Woods 😊 :



Walthamstow Marshes, 23/9/14



Hampstead heath, 1/8/07



Dollis Valley walk, 15/4/07

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 28-Jan-15 02:38 AM GMT

Well I'm getting near the end of my photographic list of species I have pictures off. Tonight is a couple of pics of a Clouded yellow I managed to get in Epping Forest. As is usual with them he took me on a merry dance as I tried to get close enough to get him in frame long enough to focus. Not brilliant but it's another tick on that list. Hopefully another warm summer will bring some more this year.



Hatch Forest, 26/7/14



Hatch Forest, 26/7/14

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 29-Jan-15 06:31 AM GMT

Great shots Bugboy 😊 Hopefully they'll be some Cloudies around this summer – we do seem to be getting them in higher numbers recently 😊

Have a goodun
Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-Jan-15 02:52 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, yes fingers crossed 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-Jan-15 06:18 AM GMT

Some Painted Ladies tonight:

one from nearly 20 years ago!



Mill Hill, North London, July '96 (slide scan)

and 3 of the same animal, flash and no flash.



Hampstead Heath, 8/8/07



Hampstead Heath, 8/8/07



Hampstead Heath, 8/8/07

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 30-Jan-15 11:51 PM GMT

Nice shots Bugboy roll on Spring Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 31-Jan-15 06:24 AM GMT

Cracking Painted Lady Bugboy 😊 I struggled with PLs this year with only a few sightings and a couple of shots 😊 Still hopefully next year will be a good one 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

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

Thanks again Wurzel.

Here's a couple of Large Whites:



Finchley, North London, August 2004



Hampstead Heath, 30/4/07

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 02-Feb-15 06:32 AM GMT

I struggled with Large Whites this year as they were very thin on the ground 😞 Nice shots Bugboy – I'll try and get round to getting you that info some time this wek, I haven't forgotten 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Feb-15 07:00 AM GMT

I've always struggled with Large and Small Whites but it's entirely my fault and my hatred of getting up early enough to get them before they start their daily patrolling! 😞 Must try harder this year!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Feb-15 01:43 AM GMT

A little twitching visit to Hampstead Heath today, loads of Tit flocks with good sprinkling of Nuthatch and Treecreepers and a pair of courting Coal Tits. Goldcrest obviously had a good 2014 and was close enough to sex a pair without the aid of binoculars! Also a very nice flock of Redwings let me get close, at least 100 of them and a total of 35 species in all.

Anyway, butterflies, Small Whites:



Walthamstow Marshes, 27/7/14



Tottenham Marshes, 19/10/14



Box Hill, 20/8/14

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Feb-15 02:41 AM GMT

Tonight is my favourite harbinger of spring, the Orange Tip. I only have slide scans, having been extremely and embarrassingly slack in getting pics since going digital.



25/4/02 Finchley, North London.



25/4/02 Finchley, North London.



May 2004, Finchley, North London.

As you can see I quite liked using flash back then!

Well anyway, for those that are still following my diary that, in 5 pages, is all the species I have photographed in the UK so far. I have caught glimpses of a couple of others, a purple Emperor whizzing over my head last year on Box Hill and Walls were pretty common where I grew up but haven't seen one of those for years, that will change this year 😊

Still awaiting my first lepidopteran encounter for 2015 but that is hopefully only a few weeks away and this year will most definately be a butterfly year for me after dusting of my camera last summer and remembering what I've been missing!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 07-Feb-15 07:17 AM GMT

I've had sightings around the 16th Feb for the last three years now so hopefully the your/our first sighting won't be far away now 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Feb-15 03:20 AM GMT

Well today did seem very springlike in my neck of the woods, still no butterfly sightings but I suspect if this weather stays there may well be a flurry of activity very soon, fingers crossed 😊.

Had a very good day out birdwatching on Saturday, total of 55 species on my local patch (equalling my personal record) and my first wild male Goldeneye who looked stunning swimming on a local resevoir.

So to eek out my catalogue of pictures until I start getting new ones here's some early stages I've managed to get over the years.



Silver Spotted Skipper, Box Hill, 20/8/14



Holly Blue eggs, Dollis Valley walk, 8/04



Common Blue female and freshly laid egg, Dollis Valley walk, 10'6'07



Small White egg, Walthamstow Marshes, 27/7/14



Comma Egg, Lea valley Park, 23/7/14



Comma Larvae, Burford meadow – Box Hill, 22/7/14

I vaguely remember this one looking a bit odd and since I recorded it as being seen in October I suspect it could have been dead/parasitized.



Comma Pupae, Dollis Valley walk, 10/01.



Speckled Wood eggs, Walthamstow Marshes, 19/9/14



Small Tortoiseshell Larvae, Finchley, 7/03

Re: Bugboys mission

by Nick Broomer, 10-Feb-15 05:29 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

Nice photos, especially the Speckled Wood ovum.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 10-Feb-15 06:08 AM GMT

Yes, lovely images, Bugboy. Nice to see something different.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Feb-15 06:38 AM GMT

Thanks guys 😊 still not a patch on your early stage pics though Nick!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 10-Feb-15 07:05 AM GMT

Interesting images Buggy 🐛 I'll have to try and get my eyes in for the early stages this year – I find that I either over or under estimate their size 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Feb-15 07:14 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, I got the Comma and Speckled pics because I saw the female laying them.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Feb-15 03:11 AM GMT

A couple of grey cold days in London so not much chance of any butterfly activity at the moment.

I am slowly getting some of my favourite slides from back in the day digitised, with mixed results but here's a couple that came back looking good, Both taken in 2004 along the Dollis Valley walk in North London:

An Orange Tip egg



And a young larvae, 1st instar (thanks Nick for confirming age)



Re: Bugboys mission

by Nick Broomer, 13-Feb-15 05:19 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

your Orange-tip larva is a 1st instar.

All the best Nick.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Feb-15 05:45 AM GMT

Cheers Nick 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Feb-15 12:50 AM GMT

Well today saw my first lepidoptera sighting of the year 😊 finally!

The signs were all good, a beautiful sunny day:



Blackthorn flower buds were swelling:



and the hazel was in full flower with it's tiny punky crimson hairdo:



Then out it popped, I almost trod on my debut lepi 2015!

Ta dah!



A Ruby Tiger (based on the brown fur and black head), don't judge him because he's not grown his wings yet!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 20-Feb-15 07:01 AM GMT

Good to see you've gotten off the mark Bugboy 🍀 I hope the PM is useful 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Feb-15 07:04 AM GMT

Very useful, thanks Wurzel 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Feb-15 03:33 AM GMT

So the cold grey days continue with nothing but the odd tiger moth cat (as far as lepidoptera are concerned) to be seen but thanks to **MikeOxen** I have discovered a good use for these grey skies and am discovering some hidden gems in the process:

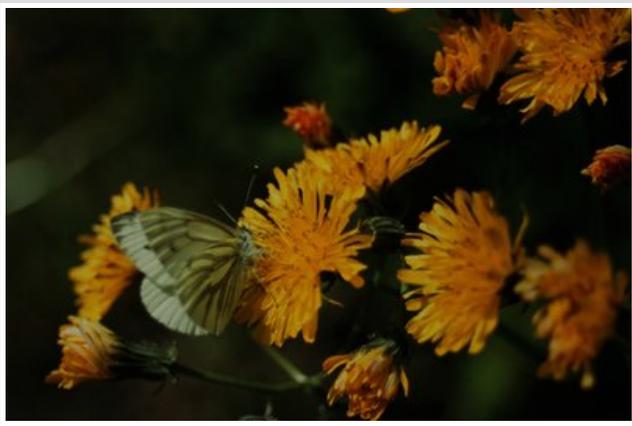
These two are most likely the same individual, Hampstead Heath June 2001



An ovipositing Small Skipper, Finchley July 2003



And some GV Whites from May 2004



I've only gone through my skippers and GV whites properly so far, I have a good many days worth left but it is a very enjoyable way to fill these otherwise dreary days, and cost me nothing too 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Nick Broomer, 23-Feb-15 04:33 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

you are obviously using flash in these photos, and i must say, to great affect. Especially the Large Skipper. Nice to see something different.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Feb-15 05:20 AM GMT

Thanks Nick, I used to use flash all the time in the old days, not 100% sure if the large skipper was a flash pic but the Whites obviously were. It does make photographing these slides somewhat challenging with the extreme contrasts though.

Re: Bugboys mission

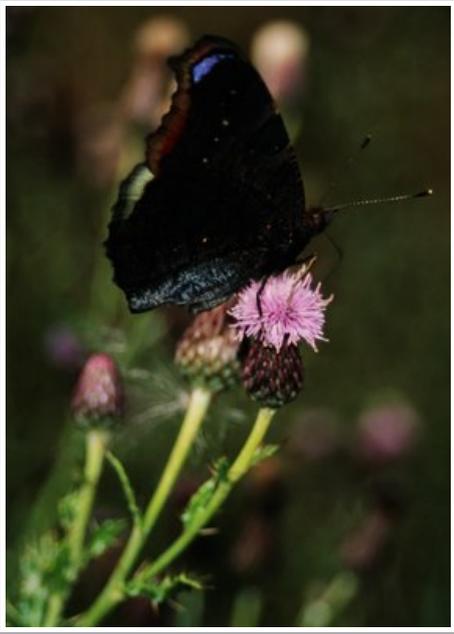
by bugboy, 25-Feb-15 02:36 AM GMT

A few more blasts from the past to quell my withdrawal symptoms:

2002



2003



And this one also from 2002.....spot the butterfly!



Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 25-Feb-15 05:54 AM GMT

I had to maximise that last image to see the Comma, Bugboy.

Nicely concealed. 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 25-Feb-15 06:40 AM GMT

Indeed excellent camo 😊 It hurt my eyes 😞😞

Have a goodun

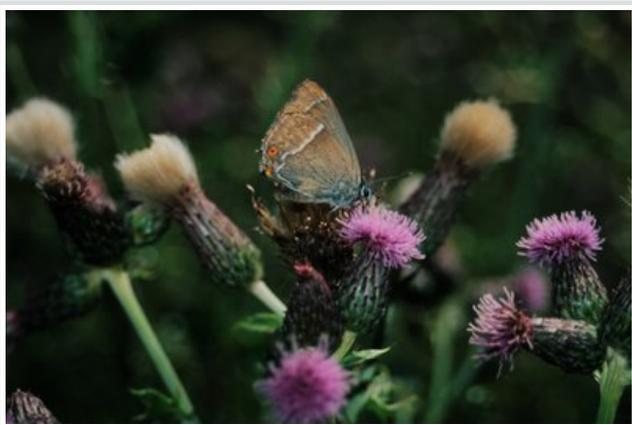
Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 26-Feb-15 05:03 AM GMT

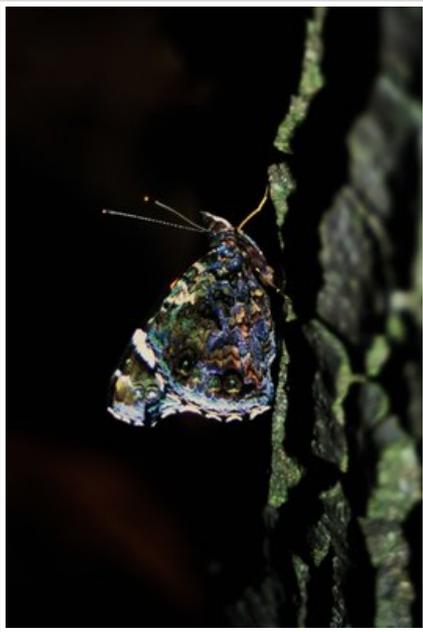
Thanks both, still trawling through my slides at every available opportunity.

A few months ago I posted some pics of Purple hairstreaks and I remember stating somewhere that it was the only one that had ever posed for me, but today I discovered that was a complete and utter lie! Found 3 slides from July 2003 of a tatty one nectaring on Creeping Thistles:



Don't actually remember this encounter, which is rather surprising since it would undoubtedly have been my very first with one!

On the other hand I clearly remember rearing the next individual from a small larvae in the same year specifically to get some nice close ups:



Really like how the flash has accented the blue on the underside.

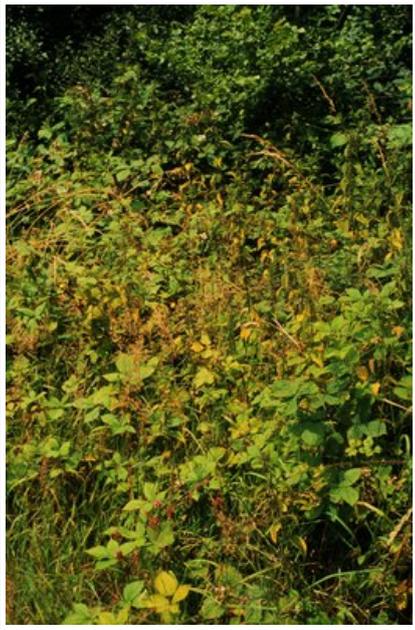
Here's a nice male Gatekeeper with a few extra spots from 2003:



Pretty sure flash was also used to capture this shot on Hampstead Heath!



and to finish another spot the butterfly, bit more difficult than the Comma yesterday but I think she's laying an egg:



Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 26-Feb-15 06:46 AM GMT

Good work, Bugboy. I think that's the first image I've ever seen of a PH nectaring on a flower.

It DOES happen!!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Feb-15 03:52 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

Good work, Bugboy. I think that's the first image I've ever seen of a PH nectaring on a flower.

It DOES happen!!

Well it's happened once anyway..... 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 27-Feb-15 06:36 AM GMT

The colours on that Red Admiral are brilliant Bugboy 🍷 😊, I think I need to have a play with my flash.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Feb-15 06:41 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

The colours on that Red Admiral are brilliant Bugboy 🍷 😊 , I think I need to have a play with my flash.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Thanks Wurzel, I think being a freshly emerged animal helped with the colour intensity.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Feb-15 06:49 AM GMT

A few more 'flashy pics' from 2003:



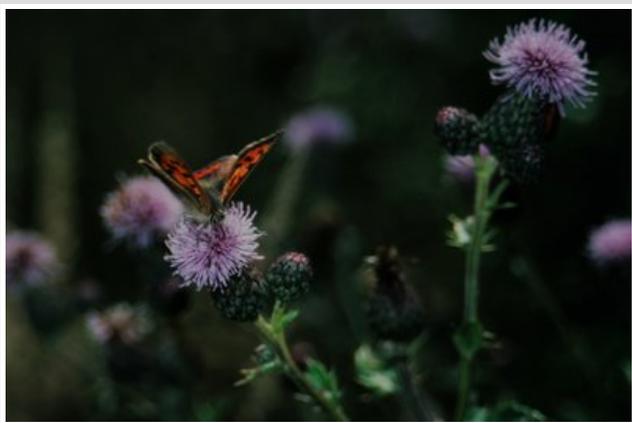


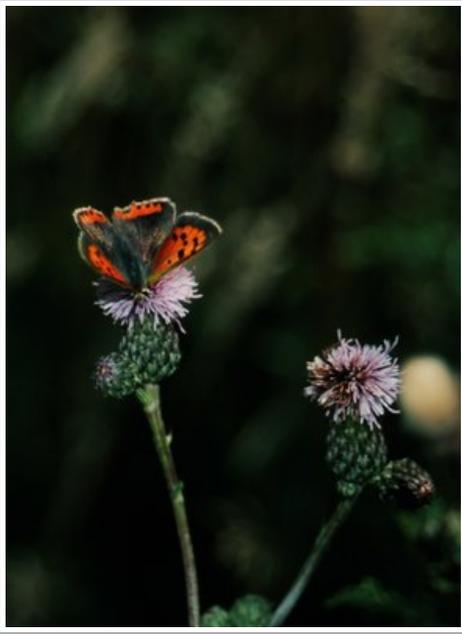
Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Mar-15 06:46 AM GMT

The home processing of my slide collection continues when time allows, normally an hour in the evening after work before light fails. Still waiting for my first real butterfly of 2015 but that should happen very soon now with the promise of double figure temperatures by the weekend, and I'm not working! Hopefully a glut of Tortoiseshells and Peacocks awaits me on Saturday.

As for the slides, it would seem that I am unable to walk past a Small Copper without snapping hundreds of pictures of them. By far the most pictures of any single species is of these pugnacious little blighters!





Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Mar-15 06:18 AM GMT

Well another day looking for that illusive 'first' proved fruitless today. You could feel the warmth when you found a sheltered spot but that wind was still keeping temperatures down. High hopes for the weekend though.

On the plus side I did come across another sign spring has arrived, a couple of water voles playing chase, not sure if it was a turf war between two males or an amorous male checking out a potential lady vole. The chasee settled on the opposite bank of the ditch to where I was standing and allowed me to take 7 pictures before disappearing of into the undergrowth:



The ones here are very bold, not phased at all by my presence, most likely due to the ditches they inhabit are next to one of the main paths through the site.

Anyway, got home with a few hours daylight remaining so I decided to dig out my slides from Slovenia from 2004 and get them on my computer.











Seeing that Scarce Swallowtail was one of the highlights of that holiday for me 😊!

Do need to do a bit of digging in notes and memory to remember exactly where I saw all these, didn't label these slides particularly well it would seem... a job for the next rainy day me thinks!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 08-Mar-15 04:08 AM GMT

Well todays mini mission was to see a butterfly, any butterfly. This weekends fine weather has been forecast for a most of the week so I had been looking forward to today after a long week at work. Leaving relatively early (for me) at about 10.30 to explore my local patch temperatures were still a bit chilly and I saw nothing for nearly 2 hours. Then I disturbed a male Brimstone. Annoyed at not noticing it first as it would have been an ideal spot to get some nice closeups, low down next to the path, I nevertheless aimed my camera at the moving target and managed a fantastic yellow blur!



I followed him around the little sheltered sun trap for a couple of minutes before he settled again, unfortunately not in an ideal spot for pictures this time. Couldn't get any closer than this to him without the risk of disturbing him, as I proved 10 seconds after this pic by trying to get closer and watching as he flew off over the hedge.



I had to wait another hour for something else to appear. But appear it did as I was walking along the river Lea. Unfortunately a rather dashing male Reed bunting had caught my attention and all I heard was something flutter over my head. All I saw was what looked like a Peacock vanishing at high speed around the corner.

Another hour past and walking back along the river a fluorescent orange patch caught my eye, an almost immaculate Small tortoiseshell sun bathing. This one was a good sitter and allowed me to get a few nice pics..



An hour later I nearly trod on another tortoiseshell, slightly more weather worn but still in good nick:



Coming to the end of my 5 hour strole I doubled back to where I had started, and hoping for one last sighting checked out another little sheltered suntrap that normally attracts a few. Again I nearly trod on them, hiding behind a grassy hummock a pair of tortoiseshells. They fluttered off, obviously a pair by the way one was following the other as though it was connected by a piece of invisible string. I followed but sadly they never settled in sight so

I left the two to get on with whatever they were going to be doing and headed home.

Off to a very good start and hopefully a good sign for things to come, and from the looks of things today was a good day for quite a few of us! 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 08-Mar-15 04:39 AM GMT

Nice stuff bugboy, you're off to a great start 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 09-Mar-15 06:16 AM GMT

I was getting a bit envious of your haul but then when I saw that you'd spent five hours working your local patch it became a case of 'fair play' 😊 Mind you five hours out butterflying...I'm starting to get envious again 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Mar-15 06:59 AM GMT

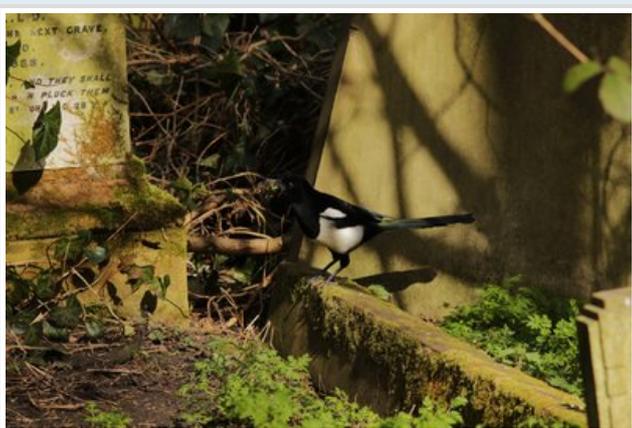
Haha, when I go butterflying I GO butterflying Wurzel! I was actually multitasking, an impressive haul of 49 bird species as well despite all the winter visitors vanishing.

Went out again today, Abney Park for a couple of hours and then a short bus ride up to Tottenham Marshes. Nothing butterfly related to report though. It was a few degrees colder today and clouded over after lunch. I did make a new friend though....



After watching her mate give her a tidbit she hopped down to near where I stood and pecked around, occasionally looking up at me, I think with a look of 'well, can you do any better', sadly the answer was no, I was all out of worms!

Also came across a Magpie collecting moss to line its nest with:



Re: Bugboys mission

by Nick Broomer, 09-Mar-15 07:29 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

I see you got off to a great start to the butterfly season. nice photos, especially the Robin.

The Magpie builds a nest of twigs, then loads of mud to adhere it together, then they cover the mud with rootlets, not moss. Magpies and other birds

often pull moss, leaves up etc., in order to find the goodies within to eat.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Mar-15 07:51 AM GMT

Hey Nick,

thanks for the comments. I watched the magpie for quite a while, it was definately aiming specifically for the patches of moss and finally flew off with a gob full. I suspect it would use it to help bind the mud together in the nest. They do make pretty damn decent nests for crows, seen a few wind blown ones which stay in one piece despite crashing to the ground!

cheers

Buggy 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Hulme, 09-Mar-15 08:03 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

Yes, your Magpie would have been collecting moss for lining its nest. Although they will rip up moss in order to forage for crane fly larvae and other invertebrates, there is only one reason for them to carry off clumps of the stuff.

In replying to a website query, the RSPB replied: "*Magpie nests are quite complicated builds tending to be loose, bulky with an outerlayer which forms a roof making them often appear round in shape. Inside the main part of the nest is mud (ocasionally dung) bow shaped twigs which are then lined with finer twigs and grass and another layer of lining which tends to be made of grass, mosses, hair, feathers, leaves and other soft material. Sometimes they have two door nests as well.*"

BWs, Neil

Re: Bugboys mission

by Nick Broomer, 09-Mar-15 08:33 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

I have studied breeding birds for over forty years, [before i stopped and, i haven't climbed up to a nest for a good many years now] that included nest structure, egg colouring, shape, size etc. Not one of the Magpies nests i climbed up to, had any lining apart from rootlets, how times have changed. Other members of the crow family, like Crows and Rooks have always used feathers, hair, wool etc. for lining their nests, [and i used to climb up to those nests as well] but Magpies, no, never seen the like.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Hulme, 09-Mar-15 09:28 AM GMT

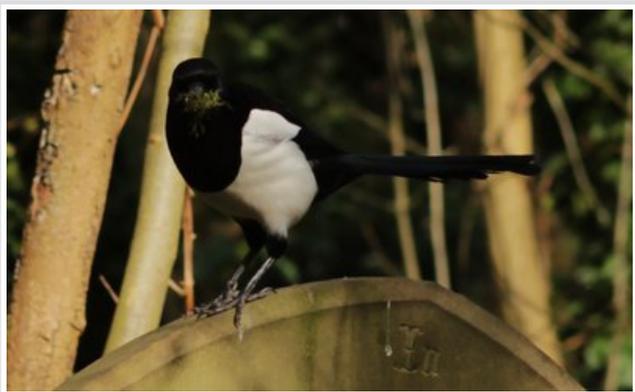
I'm not so sure that times have changed. The Magpie has always been an opportunist – and highly intelligent. In early 1972 I climbed a Magpie's nest (High Salvington, Worthing) which was not only lined with moss, but also sheep's wool and green tinsel, presumably from discarded Christmas decorations!

BWs, Neil

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Mar-15 03:32 AM GMT

Hi, thanks for the comments guys, here's cropped shots of all the pics I got. By the time I was close enough to get anything decent he/she had already been picking up the moss and then returned to the floor to gather some muddy leaf litter as seen in the final pic. If it was just after mud alone the path I was watching from was pretty much made of 99% mud!







Since it was quite cloudy yesterday I delved back into my slide back catalogue when I got home to get a few more boxes digitized. Found some particularly vibrant Small Tortoiseshell pics from 2005:



And then came across this pic which looked oddly familiar:



Couldn't work out why until I was browsing this site last night and with a bit of tweaking realised it has more than a passing resemblance to **Neil Freemans** avatar! 😊



Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Mar-15 05:29 AM GMT

Another quiet day on the butterfly front with this chilly easterly breeze continuing to put a lid on temperatures. Despite that there were a few Small Tortoiseshells about and I saw my first Peacock of the year. Another flyby encounter with a red admiral and a fleeting glance of what could have been a Comma....

All the tortoiseshells were nectaring on the Blackthorn blossom along with the single peacock. Unfortunately the Peacock didn't sit long enough but a tortoiseshell was happy to sit to give me some imagies which for me epitomise early spring:



Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Mar-15 05:28 AM GMT

With the Weathermen/women promising a bit of blue sky this afternoon I traveled across London for a bit of change of scenery to my old local patch, Dollis Valley Walk. The promised blue sky appeared mid afternoon but unfortunately not a single butterfly was seen. Rather quiet on the bird front as well although nice to see the resident Lapwings courting on the farmland, a rare sight these days, and a couple of birds sat close enough to get some

half decent pics of them.



and a female Grey Wagtail having a spruce up:



On the way back I had a casual browse of some Oaks and out popped in front of my eye's a Purple Hairstreak egg! I had looked at these Oaks back in January but found nothing so wasn't expecting anything, always nice when something unexpected like this happens.



With another chilly week ahead I suspect I will have to make do with this for now, still plenty of time for the season to hot up, bring on the Orange Tips!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 23-Mar-15 05:30 AM GMT

Good spot, Bugboy! A Purple Hairstreak egg is surely adequate compensation for the lack of adult butterflies?

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Mar-15 05:43 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

Good spot, Bugboy! A Purple Hairstreak egg is surely adequate compensation for the lack of adult butterflies?

Thanks David, it will definately suffice, those are my first pics of Purple Hairstreak eggs so made up for a lack of adults. I marked the twig so if I get a chance I will return and see if I can follow its progress, worth a shot. If I find it as a caterpillar I shall name it 'Bob'!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 23-Mar-15 06:04 AM GMT

Well, if you've found eggs, you can be sure there will be adults in the vicinity come mid-July. This is a species seldom seen at close quarters so you may have to spend a few hours getting 'Hairstreak neck'.

I'm sure it will be worth it if your search comes up trumps.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Tony Moore, 23-Mar-15 06:08 AM GMT

You were very lucky to find such an exposed egg at this time. Most of the obvious ones have fallen prey to the Blue Tits. I only managed to find two 'spring' eggs this year, where there were many dozens in the Autumn. Both were tucked deeply into a multi-bud and very grubby.

Tony M.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Apr-15 04:26 AM GMT

Works taken over the past week or two, the build up for the easter holidays means all work and no play for bugboy! Having said that it's been a pretty poor start to spring all things considered...or maybe with last year still fresh in mind perhaps I was setting my expectations too high this year. My grand total still sits at 4 species so far, 1 Brimstone, 1 Peacock, 2 Red Admirals and several Small Tortoiseshells. A trip out today added no more butterflies to the tally, the gusty wind felt cold enough to give polar bears frostbite at times, so I settled for some spring flowers to practise my macro eye, still getting used to my 105mm lense. After years of using a 50mm i'm still getting used to not having to get as close to the subject as I used to!

Coltsfoot:



Sweet Violet:



Primrose:



This little fella also popped out in front of me, picking up little morsels of food. Took about 20 pics but they rarely sit still so only 3 were even close to being in focus!



Lets hope the weather calms down a bit this month so we can do some proper butterflying. I have a week booked off in the middle of April and I've planned a few excursions to kick start the season.

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 02-Apr-15 05:41 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:

Having said that it's been a pretty poor start to spring all things considered...or maybe with last year still fresh in mind perhaps I was setting my expectations too high this year. My grand total still sits at 4 species so far, 1 Brimstone, 1 Peacock, 2 Red Admirals and several Small Tortoiseshells.

Agreed, Bugboy.

Although I've seen 5 species in total, collectively my tally is fewer than two dozen individual butterflies.

We need not only a week or two of sunshine, but decent temperatures besides.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 02-Apr-15 06:40 AM GMT

Things do seem to be slow starting this year Bugboy but hopefully that'll mean a sudden shed load of butterflies once the weather does finally settle down and improve. If my memory serves me righth it was like this two years ago – with teh cold lasting into mid April – and that turned out to be a great year with Long-tailed Blues breeding and Clouded Yellows all over the place! Here's hoping...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Apr-15 04:53 AM GMT

Yes indeed David, a good week of good temperatures and the season would certainly get started properly

You're right Wurzel, 2013 was a particularly dismal spring. I remember my local colony of Sand Martins turned up about 6 weeks later than normal and as far as I could tell completely failed to breed!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 06-Apr-15 06:04 AM GMT

Just catching up on your PD Bugboy, that Speckled Wood a few posts back does look a bit familiar 😊 , nice one.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Apr-15 06:07 AM GMT

Had a couple of spare hours today, well I decided to take a break from the spring cleaning anyway, so grabbed my camera and went for a wander. The chilly wind has finally decided to bugged off but it didn't take the clouds with it.... until I got back home, sods law 😞 ! flushed 1 Peacock but that was it butterfly wise, Insect life in general is starting to liven up though:



A 26 Spot ladybird navigating its way through some towering spines!



Queen *Bombus terrestris* waiting for the sun to appear



Female Hoverfly *Syrphus sp.*

Week off work starts next saturday, so weather permitting some mini expeditions planned 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Apr-15 08:20 PM GMT

So all weekend off and mostly cloud as far as the eye can see, back to work today and blue sky as far as the eye can see, oh the injustice!!!! I did see a smallish white butterfly this morning which will be my first non adult hibernater of the year. Hope this dry spell lasts longer than the prediction, itching for a good long day of butterflying!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Apr-15 10:06 PM GMT

Update: That smallish white butterfly is a male Small White!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Apr-15 04:37 AM GMT

Well, browsing the diaries it would seem that everyone has had a thoroughly good Easter Monday, some fantastic pictures to get envious about tonight! Spring has finally arrived after a few false starts 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Apr-15 03:27 AM GMT

Day off today (due to my rota and working weekends I get every wednesday off for those that are in anyway curious) so off I went to Epping Forest for a long wander, turned into a 5 hour strole and very lovely it was too.

The weather here in London was good, a light breeze, bright but hazy sun which clouded over a bit late on but stayed bright and was very warm, regretted taken a jacket very early on! Only 4 species seen: 1 male Brimstone, 2 Small Tortoiseshell, at least 6 Comma (my first of the year!) and at least 20 Peacock. Lots of male Peacocks holding territories along the rides with the occasional Comma thrown in.





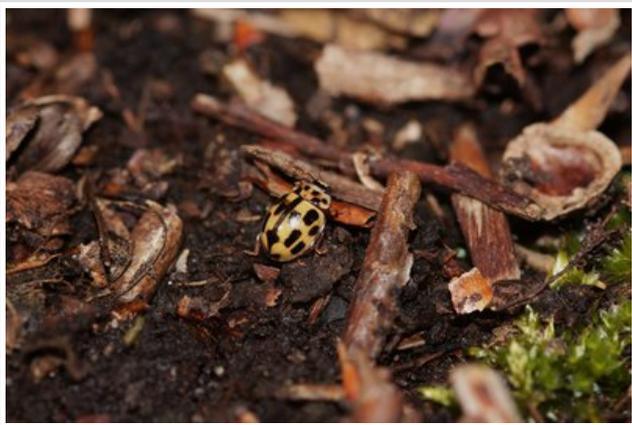


After a while it did feel like I was playing Peek-a-boo with the Peacocks!





and just for a bit of variety here's a 14-spot ladybird and a Bee-fly (I do have a soft spot for Bee-flies 😊)



and this is one of my attempts at trying to get a Bee-fly in flight...



nearly there!

Thanks for browsing 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 09-Apr-15 06:22 AM GMT

Great shots Bugboy 😊 There do seem to be plenty of Peacocks around is year, although they're still outnumbered 4:1 by Small Torts at Five Rivers 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Apr-15 07:08 AM GMT

In my part of the world Peacocks have outnumbered Small Tortoiseshells for a very long time, certainly as far as my personal obs are concerned. In my mind I'd have to go as far back as the mid 80's when Tort's were at the dizzy heights that Peacocks are now. Of course my attention to butterflies has waxed and waned over the intervening years so that may not be very scientifically accurate!

Managed to wangle another day of tomorrow so will have a wander on my local patch, Walthamstow Marshes. As it's name would suggest, its a much more open habitat and I fully expect to find Tortoiseshells holding there own there. Fingers crossed for some Pierids, Specklies and maybe a Copper or Holly Blue too 😊

Here's a couple of context pics from my phone from today:





Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Apr-15 05:30 AM GMT

9th April, Walthamstow Marshes

Well another day and another stroll that turned quite epic in the end, 7 hours on my local patch and came home with well over 300 pics to go through 😊 It started off quietly, looking out the window when I woke up all I saw was grey clouds but a few hours later the sun had burned them off and not a cloud was to be seen. It was about 20 minutes before I saw my first butterfly, rounding a corner I caught a glimpse of something Orange on a Blackthorn, first butterfly of the day:



20 seconds later a peacock appeared and shortly after that a Comma. They mostly stayed high up, any time they were tempted down a dog walker or jogger came past. nevertheless I hung around and was finally rewarded by a nice close encounter with the Comma:



A couple of Small whites also joined the blackthorn party but they too stayed high up so only managed a couple of long distance shots, better than nothing though 😊

I wandered off with more Peacocks and Commas popping out here and there plus Small Whites patrolling, possibly the same two I saw earlier.

A little later I came across a couple of Peacocks nectaring low down on blackthorn and took the opportunity to get some more closeups when my attention was distracted. A couple of Reed Buntings, attracted by a swarm of midges at the top of the bush, were flitting about only 10 or 15 feet away: Rarely have I been luckily enough to see them this close so snapped at them, and also a male chaffinch that joined in the feeding frenzy.



You can clearly see the midge swarm around the Chaffinch (or I really need to clean my lense!)

Back to the butterflies: I saw the familiar lemon yellow of a male Brimstone flitting between a cluster of Dandelions and took my chances at getting some closeups, I was quite shocked that I came away with 20 good pics of not usually the most approachable butterfly 😊



I followed this Brimstone down the field until it stopped off at another patch of Dandelions where it joined a second male plus more Tortoiseshells, a Peacock and another couple of Small Whites. Today really was turning out rather good!

So I'd so far only seen male whites but in the distance I could see 3 white butterflies fluttering in a cluster, obviously a female was about, they never

settled but managed a few in flight shots:



I actually surprised myself how in focus I got with them!

More wandering and more Tortoiseshells and Peacocks plus 1 rather tatty Red Admiral that didn't settle long enough to record on camera:



It was getting on now so making my way back home I turned into a small copse, 4 Peacock were busy fighting and feeding on Sallow catkins when out of the corner of my eye something dark flitted close to the ground:



My first of the year 😊

A little further I heard a male Woodpecker drumming away, he was showing very well on a dead tree so managed some nice shots of him as well:



It wasn't until I got home and went through my pictures properly that I realised I actually had another 2015 first:



As you can see it was a Green Veined White female they were chasing, female Small Whites are obviously very thin on the ground currently and this GWV was probably regretting emerging so early, they really weren't getting the message at all!

Back to work tomorrow but a thoroughly good couple of days enjoying the lovely spring weather 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 10-Apr-15 06:04 AM GMT

A fascinating selection, Buggy. A nifty way to tick off the GWV – not sure I've seen one this year, but that looks like a good way to bring the suspects closer. 😊 Getting the woodpecker before it shuffled round to the back of the tree was good work too – I've never managed it yet!

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-15 07:06 AM GMT

Great stuff Buggy 😊 I'm seriously impressed with how much time you're spending out in the field, I have to take a slightly different tack and cram in what I can.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by peterc, 10-Apr-15 03:50 PM GMT

I admire your enthusiasm, Buggy, and pleased that you were rewarded with your first Speckled Wood and Green-veined White of the year. I've yet to see

a white of any kind or a Speckled Wood – maybe today will be the day.

ATB

Peter

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Apr-15 04:50 AM GMT

Thanks **Millard**, yes the GVW was a little bit of luck. The woodpecker actually made no attempt to hide, I stood and watched him for 5 minutes and have about 15 very similar pictures of him looking in various directions!

Thanks **Wurzel**, I suspect the amount of time I can put into it is primarily due to me being a single man, without the trappings of 2.4 kids etc lol

Thanks **peterc**, it's the enthusiasm on this site that enthuses me 😊 . hope you had some luck spotting some new species today

I forgot to give a final tally of numbers I saw yesterday: between 7 & 10 Small Whites (depending on repeat flybys), 1 GV White, 2 (possibly 3) Brimstones, 1 Speckled Wood, 1 Red Admiral, at least 20 Peacocks, 7 Comma and 10 Small Tortoiseshell.

Also saw this cheeky little illegal immigrant basking on the side of the ditches where I often see the local Water Voles:



Might send this pic to UKIP, see what can be done eh 😊

After I'd packed my camera away and was 10 minutes away from home I saw this on the pavement (phone pic):



hopefully it's owner had done it's deed for it's species before it was sacrificed to nourish another animal. Ever since someone wrote in their PD about faces on peacocks hindwings thats all I can see, rather prophetically this particular face looks decidedly sad/p***ed off!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 11-Apr-15 05:48 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

Oops! Sorry, I think it might be me to blame for the faces on Peacocks hindwings. I had never noticed until the other day when I posted the 'smiley face' Peacock in my diary and now like you I see them all the time.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Apr-15 03:15 AM GMT

Still very blustery today so thought it best to go somewhere with a bit of shelter. I've been waiting a while to see a Butterfly at Abney Park and to see if their claim (last line in the pic below) is true:



Well the initial signs seem to back it up, 3 individual Specklies seen there all allowing photographs:)



Watching the third specklie a Comma appeared then 2 Peacocks, feeding on cherry blossom and basking on tombstones and finally a slightly tattered male Brimstone, :



Tally after an hour was 3 Speckled Wood, 2 Peacock, 2 Comma, 1 Brimstone.

It seems to be becoming a habit now to get a couple of bird pics whenever I go here, this time a female Sparrowhawk flew into a tree above me carrying a twig. There was no sign of a nest of any sort or a male Sparrowhawk so perhaps it was a young female learning the ropes. Anyway she stayed long enough:





Then I started thinking I was better at photography than I actually am.....



I was going for the soft focus look, honest 😬

I left just after noon and since the sun was still out and it was still warming up, out of the wind, I decided a little stroll at Tottenham Marshes would be nice. Despite the wind the Small Tortoiseshells were doing their best to enjoy the sun, mostly females from what I could tell, flitting around sheltered patches of nettles.



In some of the more sheltered patches where Blackthorn created a windbreak several Peacocks could be seen and a few Commas as well. The Whites were also making their presence felt this afternoon, being blown along by the wind. I did try to identify them with long distance pics and zooming in on the results but unlike Thursday, I was mostly unsuccessful with mostly unidentifiable white smudges as the result. I did just manage to identify 1 Small and 1 GV using this technique though.

A little further on I saw another white but this one looked slightly different.... a slight orange tinge 😊. Sadly it was flying in the opposite direction, past a large group of what looked like an eastern European family, and then round the corner. I very quickly decided against pointing my camera in that general direction to attempt a record shot for fear of giving the wrong impression!

On my return route I found the Whites to be MUCH more cooperative and was rewarded with my first decent closeups of both species (no sign of mr Orange Tip sadly):





I'd watched the GVW lay some eggs before she took her refreshment break, she must have been mated before her wings were dry judging by how freshly emerged she looked.

A final tally here was 7 Tortoiseshell, 9 Peacock, 2 Comma, 1 Orange Tip, and several Small/GV Whites (2 confirmed Small, 3 Confirmed GV)

So despite the gusty wind another successful day butterflying and with the Orange Tip, my yearly total now stands at 9 species, not too shabby at all 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 13-Apr-15 06:11 AM GMT

Great report Bugboy and I like the soft focus Sparrowhawk 😊 OTs have been a bit thin on the ground for me too – I've only seen three so far and all have been whilst driving so no chance of a shot – still a while to go quite til things really kick off.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 14-Apr-15 03:07 AM GMT

Lucky you Bugboy, Whites and Speckled Wood I'm Jealous 🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-Apr-15 04:43 AM GMT

I'm sure the wait is only a few days away for you Goldie 😊

A very quiet day on the butterfly front today, cloudy and a bit of a nip in the air. Good birding weather though so spent a couple of hours at barnes Wetland Center. Lots of summer migrants, loads of Willow Warblers singing, couple of Sedge Warblers, Sand & House Martins and a Swallow. Also not just one good view of a Cetti's Warbler but 3 of 3 different individuals! To the non birders out there, a good view of a Cetti's is a bit like coming across a Grayling with it's wings open and allowing you to get close enough to get some macro shots, it doesn't happen every day!

The weather looks like it's on the up again tomorrow, according to the forcast 23 and then 25 on Wednesday.....well down here in the south east anyway. The plan for tomorrow is Orange Tips at Dollis Valley so an early start is in order to get them before they start patrolling. Must go now, Game of Thrones is on in a bit 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Apr-15 04:17 AM GMT

Well I was expecting more butterfly activity than I eventually got today, perhaps the stiff breeze put them off. Peacocks still outnumbered everything else, a few Tortoiseshells and Speckled Wood and a fare smattering of Commas too, including this very fat female!



She needs to stop sunbathing and get on with laying those eggs!

Also saw this one tasting the Nettle with her tongue which I've never seen before. Seen plenty of vassenids pattering nettles with their reduced front feet but never with their tongue 😊



I was after OrangeTips today and did see 2 males, but both in the afternoon and although I did follow one a short way I was quite aware any chance of a photograph was somewhere between zero and not a hope in hell! Ahh well it's still early days.

On the other hand I did tic off Holly Blue today, a nice active male! VERY active male....too bloody active if truth be told. He was doing that usual Holly Blue thing of threatening to land every 5 seconds and when he did actually land it was for only 5 seconds! I only really managed a few distance shots. He did actually land for a long session of mud puddling on the bank of Dollis Brook but in true Holly Blue fashion, on the opposite bank to the one I was on! I got the distinct impression I was being taunted!!!





In other news, Bob the Purple Hairstreak egg has Hatched 😊



I couldn't find any sign of Bob the caterpillar or any evidence of burrowing into the bud though 😊

For a bit of context here is where the egg is located (using my phone camera):





and here you can see just how exposed he was all winter:



I shall keep my eye's peeled for evidence of feeding as the season progresses.
Lots of spring flowers out now, Wood Anemone, Lesser Celandine, Dog Violet....



sadly this is the only Fritillary to be seen near me though



So in total 12 Peacock, 4 Small Tortoiseshell, 8 Comma, 2 Orange Tip, 1 Holly Blue, 1 Brimstone, 5 Speckled Wood, not bad I suppose, it is still only April after all so I shouldn't be greedy 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 15-Apr-15 06:22 AM GMT

Lovely report Bugboy 😊 That's the thing with Holly Blues, unless you're a fully trained HB Whisperer like Dave Miller they do taunt you from afar 😊😂

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 15-Apr-15 05:49 PM GMT

Love the Comma close up Bugboy, lovely colours, I've added Holiy blue to my list now hope fully Orange tips next 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Apr-15 05:17 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, Holly Blues quite literally **demand** patience!

Thanks Goldie, congrats with your Holly, OT's only days away I'm sure, saw two males today 😊

Box Hill/Headley Heath 15/4/15 part 1

Well after yesterdays little leasurely strole todays was the polar opposite, an 8 hour epic! Decided a first trip of the year to Box Hill was in order, enjoyed my visits last summer and wanted to see what spring was like there. Arrived at 8am, bit of a nip in the air but I soon warmed up getting to the top of box hill. Didn't see much for the first hour or so then stepped out into a clearing at the bottom of a slope (same clearing as where I saw my Silver Washed Frits last summer) and found 4 Peacock all having breakfast on something a bit smelly. With it still being cool they were very approachable so I took the opportunity to practice my closeup work (plus I've enough standard Peacock pics already) and I make no apologies for flaunting the results in front of you 😊 (and whats the point in taking them if I can't share them anyway) .







He really didn't seem to mind having a lense thrust up his Palps!

Leaving the Peacocks feasting on their breakfast I wandered off and had a few Brimstone fly bys, 3 or 4 flitting around then back in the woods I got my first female of the year, feeding on Bluebells:



And as luck would have it she gave me my very first open wing shot 😊 :



It was a theme that would continue as the day went on. Walking through Box Hill Woods towards Headley Heath I saw several more Brimstones of both sexes, they could have been the same ones following me but as time wore on and the further I walked I'm pretty sure I was seeing new ones, the woods seemed to be riddled with them. Anyway I shall finish this off tomorrow, got loads more photo's to sort through now...

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Apr-15 04:01 AM GMT

Box Hill/Headley Heath 15/4/15 part 2

Like I said yesterday, there was a bit of a theme developing. Brimstones kept leaping out at me, males patrolling and females searching for Buckthorn. I can honestly say I have never seen so many in one day, easily outnumbered any other species, yes even Peacocks which is a first for me this year! With the lack of anything else flying around I started pointing my camera that any that past by, snapping randomly and hoping some came out in focus:



Getting to Headley Heath shortly after 12 the first butterfly I saw was.....



A couple of Peacocks later a little silvery blue flash darted in front of me and settled on a dried cow pat on the path allowing me to take a short break from yellow and pale lime!



He buggered off after just a few snaps and so off I went.

The reason for the Headley Heath visit was to check out the potential for Dukes but on that front it would seem fruitless, seems we can write that of as a Duke site now sadly. Nevertheless it is a very pleasant site and does seem to have an extremely healthy population of Brimstones! Came across a fair

few females searching out Buckthorn which enabled me to stand and point the camera at them, in the end I had taken about 150 pics of them. The exposure and focus is rather hit and miss and after binning most of them and tweaking the remaining I now possess more photo's of Brimstones in 2015 than all previous years combined. One female was particularly accomidating in being obsessed with a twig that must have tasted a bit like Buckthorn....but not quite:





I'm sure you're all bored of Brimstones now

As I said I was initially after Dukes and I did have a momentary fleeting excuse to get very excited when a smallish orangy brown thing fluttered by. I followed it but quickly decided it's fluttery flight was not how I have read dukes fly and when it landed I saw that it was actually a moth, an Orange Underwing *Archicaris parthenias*. Got just one picture but he took of just as I hit the shutter:



Back to Box Hill and yet more Brimstones. I noticed that the males were now spending quite a bit of time nosing around high up in Ivy, I thought initially looking for roosting spots but as it was still bright and very warm and they were still patrolling I wondered whether females roost earlier in the day and

they were searching for them?



I came tantalisingly close to getting my first Orange Tip picture but he didn't sit quite long enough. There are vast swathes of Cuckoo Flower there so if you want an Orange Tip encounter it's certainly the place to be in a couple of weeks!



So another long day butterflying with a minimum of 20 Brimstones seen, 2 Orange Tip males, 12 Peacocks, 5 Small Tortoiseshells, 1 Holly Blue and 2 Green Veined Whites in total.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 17-Apr-15 04:07 AM GMT

I've only seen two Brimstones so far bugboy so your having a great time down there Goldie 😊🐛

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Apr-15 06:38 PM GMT

I'll post a few up to you Goldie 😊

Hutchinsons Bank/Frith Wood 16th April

Although I booked this week off specifically to get some butterflying in I never actually intended to go out every single day but this weather was just too good to waste and with reports of Green Hairstreaks about I spent a couple of hours searching for them. I pulled a blank for the Hairstreaks but again it was a nice walk. Hutchinsons Bank is a nice slab of chalk scrubland with a promising amount of habitat regeneration going on. Lots of the scrub being cleared and sheep being used to keep it as such.



All that's missing here were some little orange and brown butterflies!

Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells were in abundance a couple of Commas and I at last managed my first Orange Tip picture of the year!



A couple of male Speckled Woods were patrolling and being camera shy



and there were a couple of Brimstones flitting around.

It was quite sunny when I arrived, there was a bit of a breeze but the site is quite sheltered so that didn't have much effect on the inhabitants. After a couple of hours it started to cloud over so with half an hour spare before having to set off I popped over the road to have a look at Frith Wood, just to see what the habitat was like. Lots of Dog Violet along the sides of the path, thick swathes of Bluebells just waiting to burst into bloom but the main thing that caught my eye was the huge amounts of Honeysuckle everywhere. With Padfields White Admiral hibernaculum thread still fresh in my mind I decided to have a go looking for one. Even though it was all now quite well advanced in leaf I figured since they are so well attached I might find something.

There is a thick undergrowth of Bramble so I looked for the closest patch that didn't require severe lower limb laceration to reach and had a quick scan. There he was, literally on the first shoot I looked at, I couldn't quite believe it!



My very first White Admiral at any stage 😊

Due to the light levels and the light breeze I resorted to flash for closeups





So with Green hairstreaks completely forgotten about I left with a very big grin on my face!
Just to finish off heres some pictures for the Bee Fly Appreciation Society!





Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlng, 17-Apr-15 08:21 PM GMT

Buggy,

Nice images of the White Ad larvae. I have found a couple of hibernaculum in my local wood and you have reminded me that I must go and get a progress report.

Regards Kev

Re: Bugboys mission

by Nick Broomer, 18-Apr-15 01:08 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

Congratulations on finding your first White admiral 2nd instar larva, and a lovely first photo depicting the little caterpillar in it's habitat.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 19-Apr-15 07:33 PM GMT

Great white admiral cat shots, Bugboy! They're tiny little things at this time of year, aren't they!! And because they're often in the shade it can be tricky getting pictures.

Guy

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Apr-15 08:43 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments, that little caterpillar really is my highlight of the year so far 😊

A couple of days away so still catching up on everyone's diaries, and getting jealous at all the species out and about that are still on my 'lifetime list to see'.

Had a work related trip to Slimbridge WWT yesterday so stayed with a work mate Friday night to get an early start Saturday morning. A beautiful cloudless sky, slightly spoilt by a rather bracing wind but lots of the sites inhabitants were certainly in the mood for springtime shenanigans:



Greater Flamingos displaying



Greater Flamingos 'flagging'

Friday 17th April

Friday afternoon I managed to cram in a couple of hours on my local patch. I bit chilly and a breezy so wasn't expecting too much: A couple of speckled Woods busy getting buffeted but managed a couple of nice shots in a brief lul from the wind:



There were a few whites flitting around and two which I thought looked different, wasn't sure but was thinking perhaps large Whites. This happens every spring, always end up second guessing myself with the first few Large Whites, especially when seen at A distance. One landed briefly and managed a distant record shot:



I zoomed in on the picture on my camera as it flew off over the hedge and was definitely leaning towards a Large white when a male small White fluttered nonchalantly past, helping me to finally confirm my suspicions, species 11 for the year.

A male Orange Tip was doing his thing plus one Comma feeding on a flowering Cherry. A bit further on, checking out a sheltered spot another white flew towards me, it settled and saw it was a pristine male GV White. Couldn't get close but he wasn't in any hurry to go far so I followed him for a bit when he stumbled across something he liked the smell off:



She did play hard to get for a little while



but he was a persistent little buggar and she relented after only a minute or two



He struggled to fly with her attached and crash landed in the grass (I'm pretty sure every time i've seen mating whites in flight before it's always been the female that does all the work)

Anyway they were now very approachable:





the occasional bit of fluttering around (still the male struggling) giving me the chance to get a nice range of shots:



But when they landed on the Cherry Blossom I couldn't have asked for a better photogenic position (although they were now in the breeze so that was challenging!)





Well after getting lost in time with such an accomidating pair I realised I had to shoot off so I left them to get on with it in private. It was only a short walk and didn't cover the whole site but total was 2 Large White, 1 Comma, 1 Peacock, 2 Small White, 2 Speckled Wood, 2 GV White, 1 or 2 Orange Tips, 1 Small Tortoiseshell and 1 male Holly Blue wasn't too bad

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 22-Apr-15 05:41 AM GMT

Half day at work today and after 2 days of no butterflying I was having withdrawl symptoms. I went to **Tottenham Marshes** and got there about 4 with the sun still quite high in the sky. Speckled Woods are at last starting to become commonplace, not knowingly seen a female yet though. A few aged Tortoiseshells and Peacocks still basking in hot spots and in one particularly sheltered suntrap 3 Commas were having a full on fight. The same suntrap was also attracting a fair few other butterflies as well. 4 GV Whites, 3 Orange Tips including my first sighting of a female this year and a male Holly Blue that didn't settle for a second. Not much settled long enough for more than a few distant shots but had a few goes at capturing flying butterflies again, which is how I managed to I'D most of the Whites:





I decided to wander off for a bit and come back a little later to see if they were less active. It was a good plan on paper, in practice it failed, a young couple had decided to have some 'private time' when I returned so I quickly did an about turn and went home 🙄 The perils of butterflying, wandering around secluded spots of the countryside with camera in hand trying not to look like a peeping tom!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 22-Apr-15 06:15 AM GMT

Lovely shots of the mating couple Buggy, the GVV's that is 😊😄 I'll try and PM on Thursday.

Have a godun
Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 22-Apr-15 06:19 AM GMT

Haha, cheers Wurzel, on both counts 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Apr-15 04:56 AM GMT

Box Hill/Denbies 22/4/15

Well yesterday I had a clear mission. First was to get some decent closeups of Orange-tips and second was to try and get some lifetime firsts over at Denbies.

Getting the OT's meant another early start to catch them snoozing. I got to Box Hill around 9 where most of the Cuckoo Flower was still in the shade of the Hill. I spent some time searching but only managed to come across one sleeping male. To make things interesting he had chosen a spindly flower stalk growing out of the bank of the River Mole. The shade and constant movement in the light breeze forced me to use a rather narrow DoF but I managed a few nice underside closeups:



Now to try and find one awake but not active.....Found one 😊



I chased him around the sunny glade for about half an hour, he let me take a couple of pics every now and again and very happy with the results I was too 😊 :





Part one of the days mission complete!

So after some more wandering around the east side of Box Hill I left for Denbies at around 11, walking along the North Downs Way. It's a particularly lovely walk at this time of year and had to stop a few times just to admire the countryside I was walking through, the Bluebell woods making me go all arty with my camera!



I also found a gorgeous individual of the Scorched Carpet *Ligdia adustata* doing an impressive impression of a bird dropping (thanks for the ID [bailey1409](#))





An hour later I arrived at Denbies and following **Millerds** excellent directions, I made my way down the slope to sort out my next part of the day's mission.

Right on queue and precisely where I was told I might find one, a little green and brown thing fluttered down and landed on a daisy right in front of me, so here I present to you the first Green Hairstreak I have ever seen 😊



and here I present the second one I have ever seen!



They really are little buggers to follow and photograph aren't they!

Anyway I spent a bit of time following them and attempting pictures until they vanished so I followed the directions down the bank to the bottom hedge. The wind was really picking up now, the valley was acting a bit like a wind tunnel so wasn't sure I would see much but then I saw the distinctive flight of a skipper. A black and white blur which landed a little way in front of me, so here I present my very first Grizzled Skipper:



He whizzed off after only a couple of pics so I walked a bit further along the hedge. Nothing else was seen for about 10 minutes and I was beginning to think the wind was going to ruin my hatrick when a brownish skipper flew into sight, my first ever Dingy Skipper:



The Dingys started appearing all over the place after this initial one and by the time I left a couple of hours later I'm pretty sure I was into double figures. The Cherry on the cake though was when I caught sight of a mating pair struggling heroically in the wind and crash landing in the grass



The wind made pictures challenging and in the end coaxed them onto my finger and moved them to a more sheltered position. They soon settled down and allowed me to take pictures from pretty much every conceivable angle.



I took some with flash and created a rainbow on his head!



While I was taking these a nice lady walked past and asked what I had found, turns out she was doing a butterfly transect but sadly she couldn't include this pair as they were just outside it. We didn't exchange names but I would presume some people on here would know her.

Well after a third Hairstreak,



and another Grizzly encounter,



it was time to go. Easily the best days butterflying of the year. Huge thanks to Millerd for his spot on directions at Denbies 😊
hope I'm not boring you lot out there, my entries seem to be getting longer and longer 🙄

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 24-Apr-15 05:04 AM GMT

Far from boring, Bugboy.....I've never seen mating Dingies so you've provided me with a first!!

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 24-Apr-15 06:42 AM GMT

I'm really pleased it all worked for you, Buggy! You saw more than I did in the same spots twenty-four hours earlier! 😊

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by Nick Broomer, 24-Apr-15 07:09 AM GMT

Well done Buggy, i'm really pleased for you, that you have achieved your goals for the trip to Denbies.

All the best Nick.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 24-Apr-15 07:53 AM GMT

Nice one Bugboy, three 'lifers' as I believe they're referred to, and mating Dingies too, excellent 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 24-Apr-15 03:30 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

An excellent range of species for one days work! . I always enjoy the added satisfaction obtained when

I come home with a bag full of species, especially when its those i hadn't expected to find.

All the best,
TREVOR.

Re: Bugboys mission

by CJB, 24-Apr-15 07:13 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy.

That was an epic day for you! Always amazing to get lifers, but 3!!?

I have only ever seen one GHS and find locating any HS tough!

I look forward to reading your next report.

On another note, I trialled my moth trap and lured in 6 species which I will post at some point, as everyone likes an id question on UKB!

Flutter on!

CJB

Re: Bugboys mission

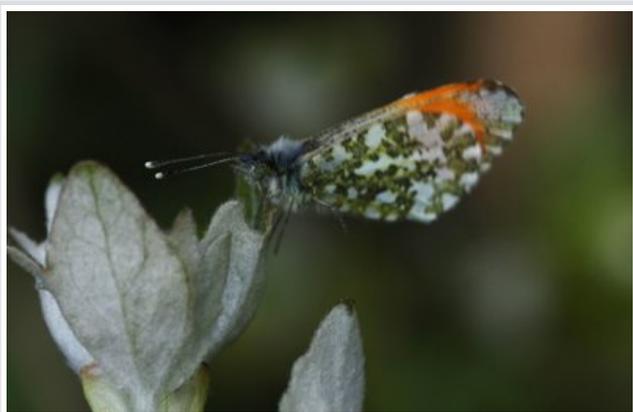
by bugboy, 25-Apr-15 02:06 AM GMT

Thanks for all the comments guys. It really was a good day all round even with a strong wind doing it's best to ruin things for me. Here's a few more pics from the day.

Just coming up to Denbies a couple of Peacocks were feeding and being battered by the wind but managed to get a few shots. One good thing about the wind (the only good thing where macro photography is concerned) is that I think it masks your movements as you approach the butterfly:



On my return to Box Hill I quickly checked for more Orange Tips but just a few males patrolling when I noticed one literally fall from the sky just as a cloud blotted out the sun. He landed on a very spindly Poplar shoot and when I got close enough for pictures he was getting blown all over the place. Also he was tiny, barely larger than a Chalkhill Blue. He obviously didn't get much to eat as a cat! Not one to turn down the opportunity I did sit down and take loads more pics though. A couple of times he nearly got completely blown away



Clinging on by 2 toes!

Clicking away I managed to get a fair few in focus in between the gusts though:



I wanted to get some open wing shots so I kept a close eye on the cloud cover. As I saw the sun about to come out I guessed the exposure, knowing I'd be lucky to have time to get more than one or two pics and snapped as he opened his wings. I had time for one picture and he took flight just as another gust came!



Like I've said a few times, you can never have enough Orange-tip pictures 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 28-Apr-15 06:26 AM GMT

Well another day off, another day searching for lifers. I went to a sheltered patch and I hoped it would be a few degrees warmer than the 13 predicted, it was, felt very warm when the sun was out. I got there late morning and it was mostly sunny with a few clouds but as the day drew on cloud cover increased so not too much out but what I saw was nice. 3 or 4 Dingy Skippers and a solitary Grizzled, none of whom stayed still long enough for piccies. I did get another Orange-tip fix though, a couple of males showed up and one stopped off for a bit of feeding in front of me:



Well it would've been rude not to take a few snaps!

A Male brimstone fluttered into it's roost as I watched a few feet away, demonstrating his amazing camouflage, so I was able to get a fair few snaps of him:



and I at last found a female Speckled Wood!



A few whites fluttered around, probably GV but no positive ID's.

Pick of the day though was Glanville Fritillary larvae 😊 I bumped into a fellow butterflyer who kindly pointed them out for me and pointed out the various spots where adults would most likely be found in a few weeks time whilst giving me a guided tour of the site 😊. I had no idea that there were Glanvilles here, somehow missed them on the monthly updates on here, so that was an added bonus I wasn't expecting when I left this morning!



I'll hopefully see them when they've grown their wings next month if they manage not to get squished, they do have a habit of basking on the paths!

Few other bits and pieces:

A rather handsome Hoverfly *Xanthogramma citrofasciatum* waiting for the sun to appear:



Birch Shieldbug, sitting on Ash.



and lots of baby Bush Crickets of some kind feeding on pollen, this one got photo bombed!



So yet another very good day out butterflying 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 29-Apr-15 12:53 AM GMT

Oh! bugboy are you lucky lately 😊 I'm just catching up on postings and I love your mating Dingy Skippers , it takes me all my time when I see them to get a decent shot so seeing your picks was great 😊 (of course I'm jealous 🍷😂 and what about your Glanville Larvae fantastic 😊 I just wish I lived nearer to some of these places, I've yet to see the Grizzled Skipper and the Glanville B there on my to get list. Lucky you Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 29-Apr-15 01:47 AM GMT

Thanks, Bugboy, I'll take your word for it. Thanks for your input. The gold markings were spectacular, just like gold leaf.

Have a great season,
TREVOR.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-Apr-15 03:10 AM GMT

Thanks **Goldie**, yes I've had a very good few days 😊

No problem **Trever**. Some of those micros are stunning if you look at them properly, it's just finding them in the first place!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-15 06:24 AM GMT

Great stuff Buggy – and great news about the Glanville's – hopefully they come to fruition! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bailey1409, 30-Apr-15 03:09 AM GMT

Hi there

Just seen your Beautiful Carpet image, I hope that you don't mind me saying, but to me it looks like a Scorched Carpet.

Cheers

Maurice

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-Apr-15 06:49 AM GMT

"bailey1409" wrote:

Hi there

Just seen your Beautiful Carpet image, I hope that you don't mind me saying, but to me it looks like a Scorched Carpet.

Cheers

Maurice

Thanks, all comments welcomed Maurice, and I just checked my ID guide (which I should've done properly first time round rather than just flicking through to get the scientific name 🤔) and you're right it is a Scorched Carpet!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-May-15 06:42 AM GMT

Spent a few hours pootling round my local patch to end a wonderful April. Not masses going on, a couple of Peacocks, single Comma and S Tortoiseshell. Lots of whites, mostly GV as far as I could tell, getting whisked along with the brisk wind. One male Small White did settle for me though. A male Holly blue also settled near me and attempted to bask but just as I was about to get my first open winged shot of the year he was literally blown off his feet and vanished over the hedge. The only other species was a single male Orange-tip patrolling.





Here's a few other inhabitants of my local patch today:



Hoverfly (Helophilus pendulus)



Mistle Thrush



Hairy Shieldbug

April has been the month where the butterfly season really kicked off for me, 14 species now ticked off including 3 lifers (and 16 if we include other stages adding 2 more lifers as larvae)

I wonder what May will bring?

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-May-15 06:48 AM GMT

Nice Holly Blue Buggy – it's surprising how many HB's I've seen recently perched on anything but Holly or Ivy 😊 Digging the Shieldbug too!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-May-15 04:42 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel 😊

May has started cloudy and a little chilly but I thought a little trundle around Chobham Common might bring up something interesting (secretly hoping for Green Hairstreaks). The bare sandy ground and sheltered paths running through the Gorze might just be enough to make something active. As it turned out, 4 hours walking around brought just two glimpses of Speckled Woods, not even a wind swept white! Luckily I always pack my binoculars so I filled the lack of butterflies with a bit of twitching. Wood larks, Stonechats, Whitethroats, Blackcaps, Garden Warbler (a lifer for me), various Tits, Goldcrest all showing well and a Red Kite drifted over quite low several times.





Took a whole set of him as he soared past 😊, my favourite UK bird of prey.
some other bits and pieces:



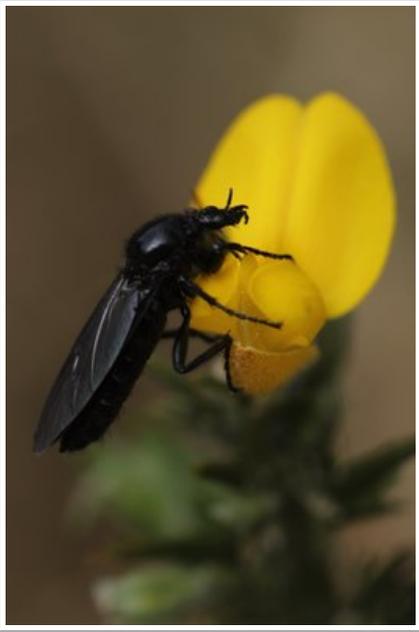
Male Common Heath moth



Female longhorn moth, Adela reaumurella I think.



St. Marks Fly



Orb Spider (Agalenatea redii)

and I few things I can't name, suggestions welcomed from you intelligent bunch 😊



Spider egg sac?



Thought the leaves would make this easy but can't find anything in my books 🤔



Thanks for browsing 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterfysaurus rex, 02-May-15 04:45 AM GMT

Just catching up with your diary Bugboy, I particularly enjoyed your Glanville Fritillary larvae sequence. 😊

Best Wishes

James

Re: Bugboys mission

by peterc, 02-May-15 05:56 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:

Thanks Wurzel 😊

May has started cloudy and a little chilly but I thought a little trundle around Chobham Common might bring up something interesting (secretly hoping for Green Hairstreaks). The bare sandy ground and sheltered paths running through the Gorze might just be enough to make something active. As it turned out, 4 hours walking around brought just two glimpses of Speckled Woods, not even a wind swept white! Luckily I always pack my binoculars so I filled the lack of butterflies with a bit of twitching. Wood larks, Stonechats, Whitethroats, Blackcaps, Garden Warbler (a lifer for me), various Tits, Goldcrest all showing well and a Red Kite drifted over quite low several times.

[attachment=12:2uzcgnqe]Red Kite, Chobham Common #1.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

[attachment=11:2uzcgnqe]Red Kite, Chobham Common #2.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

[attachment=10:2uzcgnqe]Red Kite, Chobham Common #13.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

[attachment=9:2uzcgnqe]Red Kite, Chobham Common #14.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

Took a whole set of him as he soared past 😊, my favourite UK bird of prey.

some other bits and pieces:

[attachment=8:2uzcgnqe]Common Heath male, Chobham Common #3.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

[attachment=7:2uzcgnqe]Longhorn Moth (*Adela reaumurella*) Chobham Common #1.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

[attachment=6:2uzcgnqe]St. Marks Fly, Chobham Common #4.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

[attachment=5:2uzcgnqe]St. Marks Fly, Chobham Common #6.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

[attachment=1:2uzcgnqe]Orb Spider (*Agalenatea redii*), Chobham Common #5.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

and I few things I can't name, suggestions welcomed from you intelligent bunch 😊 [attachment=4:2uzcgnqe]IMG_6372.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

Spider egg sac?

[attachment=3:2uzcgnqe]IMG_6307.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

[attachment=2:2uzcgnqe]IMG_6308.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

Thought the leaves would make this easy but can't find anything in my books 🤔

[attachment=0:2uzcgnqe]IMG_6368.JPG[/attachment:2uzcgnqe]

Thanks for browsing 😊

Buggy, I think the pink flower is Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*. I happened to come across a few of these plants just a mile from home on Wednesday and scarce in Hertfordshire 😊

Peter

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 02-May-15 06:07 AM GMT

Great set of shots of Buggy, I too have seen the first plant that you feature and don't have a clue what it is, so hopefully someone else will be able to help us both out 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-May-15 08:37 PM GMT

"peterc" wrote:

Buggy, I think the pink flower is Lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*. I happened to come across a few of these plants just a mile from home on Wednesday and scarce in Hertfordshire 😊

Peter

Thanks Peter, it does match up in my Guides 😊

Also found out that the funny white lantern thing is indeed a spider egg sac, *Agroeca* sp. Commonly called Fairy-lamp spiders 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-May-15 05:40 AM GMT

In search of Duke's

So May is already wetter than April, not the best start but since I'm getting massively jealous of all the Duke Of Burgundy pictures I took a chance this afternoon when the weather seemed to be clearing up a bit. One of the sites I'd singled out over the winter, near Tring, was my target. It seemed relatively easy to get to. As it turned out it was easier than I thought, half an hour on the train and a 10 minute walk 😊

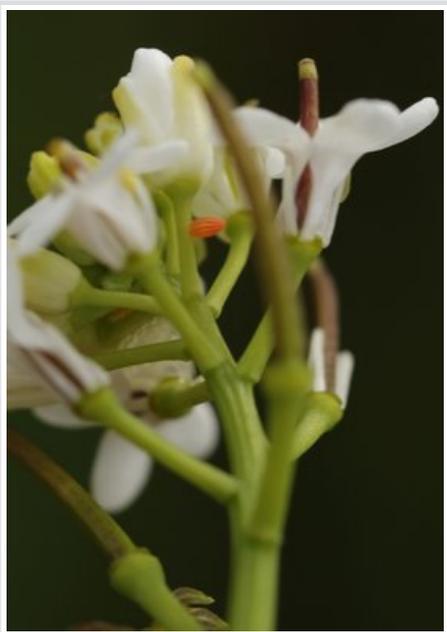
Getting there the weather was still unable to make up it's mind what to do, April and May seem to have swapped this year. Not entirely sure exactly

where the Dukes supposedly hang out here but there is a lot of Cowslip everywhere. A little wandering around as the clouds thickened produced nothing much and then the cloud thickened a lot and for 20 minutes I sheltered under a beech tree as the heavens opened.

Wasn't looking too good but venturing out I did find a female Orange-tip who had taken shelter on some Cowslips, probably not as camouflaged as she was hoping for but it was my first chance this year to get up close to a female and she did look very pretty surrounded by the yellow flowers:) The sun tried to come out a couple of times, each time she was tempted to fly off only for it to vanish again until eventually she took off and vanished half way up a Beech tree!



As it turned out she was the Only butterfly I was to see. I did spend a bit of time looking at cowslip leaves....just in case, but no. Lots and lots of Garlic Mustard around and I did find a fair few Orange-tip eggs though, my first of the year.



So I remain jealous of everyone else's pictures for now. Not entirely sure if it is still an active site for Dukes but to my untrained eye's it looks perfect, a mosaic of sheltered rough chalk grassland, open woodland and riddled with Cowslips.

And to finish here's a couple of other inhabitants:



Cardinal Beetle



Orange Ladybird

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 04-May-15 05:53 AM GMT

I too didn't have any success with Dukes today Buggy but I'm hoping that it's because they haven't emerged over this way yet (no reports in Wiltshire still)

😊 Great shot of the Orange Ladybird – Philzoid was telling me about those today, I'd like to see one 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 04-May-15 02:52 PM GMT

Those Kite shots are great Buggy 🍷 I haven't seen too many Kites so still get excited by them – especially when 3 were above my garden recently for the first time 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by keving, 04-May-15 05:47 PM GMT

Buggy,

Nice find with the Orange tip egg. I'm struggling to see the butterfly itself this spring, let alone an egg 😊

Regards Kev

Re: Bugboys mission

by peterc, 04-May-15 06:34 PM GMT

Buggy,

Sorry you didn't find the Duke yesterday. Was the place you visited Duchie's Piece in Aldbury Nowers NR? Although one of the best butterfly sites in

Hertfordshire the Duke, unfortunately, is no longer found there but I could be wrong 😊

ATB

Peter

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-May-15 04:30 AM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, Orange Ladybirds are quite widespread so you have every chance of stumbling across one in your travels, I see them quite often 😊

Thanks **Pauline**, I don't get Kites near me so whenever I go outside London I always keep an eye out for them. I'm quite chuffed they came out since they were taken with my 105mm Macro lense!

I've been quite lucky with them this year **Kevling**. Try Box hill if you can, lots of Cuckoo Flower there and seen a few there already.

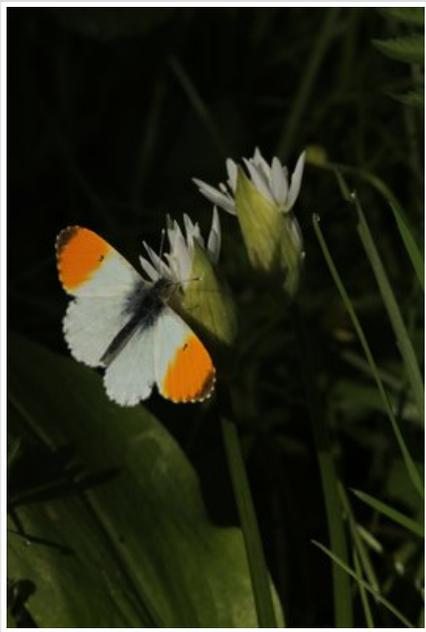
Indeed **Peter**, that was the site. If thats true it's a shame since it's so easy for me to get to and on the face of it it seems perfect for them. The signage there claims 30 species are seen there though so it wont be my last visit.

A good friend in Hemel Hempstead is putting me up over a weekend in a couple of weeks and since he is a keen birder, persuading him to go to the Whipsnade Duke sites didn't take much effort at all, fingers crossed the weather sorts itself out by then and I catch the flight time!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-May-15 05:58 AM GMT

Well today would have been a perfect butterflying day if it wasn't for the wind and rain and clouds....so I ended up doing a spot of DIY instead, bit of painting. So just to brighten up the evening here's some more Orange-tip pics from the past weeks:



Box Hill, 22nd April



Hutchinsons Bank, 28th April



Box Hill, 22nd April



Box Hill, 22nd April

I feel better now 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-May-15 04:48 AM GMT

Well it's been a quite week for me on the butterfly front, work and then rain on my days off. On the plus side I work outside a lot so I do occasionally see bits and pieces flitting around. Holly blues seem to be having a very good spring brood in London and today I managed to stop long enough to snap a female Brimstone on my phone. In the bright sunshine I couldn't tell where the camera was focusing until I looked at it later, as you can see it was focusing on everything except the butterfly, even though it was set to 'macro' mode..... 😞 oh well.



The weather is looking better next week, certainly in the south east anyway, so I may have a few trips and get a few more species ticked off on my 2015 list 😊

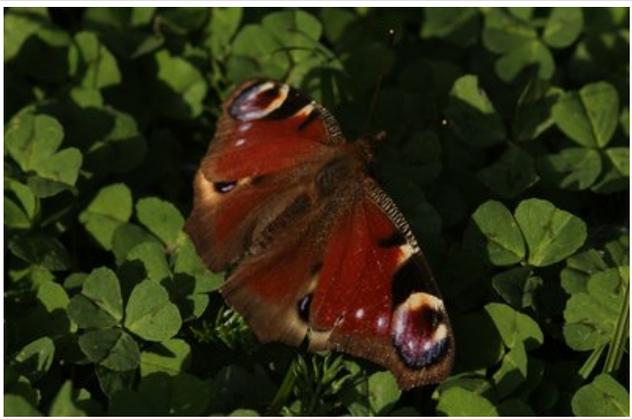
I can see there's been lots going on in other diaries so I may have to put an hour aside later to go through them all. I do try and keep up with everyone even if I don't always comment 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-May-15 04:14 AM GMT

With my search for rarer quarry I've been neglecting my local patch in recent weeks so with an early finish from work today I nipped out in the late afternoon sun to see what was about.

I was hoping to see some early Common Blue, Small Copper or Brown Argus but it was not to be. There were a few butterflies catching some rays before bedtime, a single Peacock and Comma, a few Whites including a male GV who allowed some close attention. The ever present wind made focusing a bit difficult though, don't think I've had a butterflying day this year where the breeze hasn't been a menace to photography!





A Green Shieldbug also soaking up the last rays



Also at work today I watched a female Orange-tip laying eggs on some Garlic Mustard. Hopefully I will start doing a regular transect at work soon, sacrificing one lunchbreak a week is a small price to pay 😊. Just needs sorting out with the bosses.

Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 12-May-15 04:28 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy,
I might go back and try for a Holly Blue hat trick !.

All the best
TREVOR.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-May-15 06:00 AM GMT

Good luck Trevor 😊

I've not really been able to take much more than a cursory glance on here in recent days, work and butterflying taking over. I shall try and catch up soon though.

In search for Dukes, again! 12th May

So with a half day and a sunny afternoon I shot off from work and had another attempt at receiving an audience. Back up to Aldbury Nowers Nature Reserve from where I planned to walk over to Ivinghoe Beacon, what could go wrong? Well the wind made a good effort!

I get to the nature reserve at about 2, the wind blowing a gale so and figure my best chance is along the hedges. Not much shows itself at first and I bump into a couple of other butterflyers who tell me that they seen some Grizzled and Dingy Skippers and Small Heaths and that there was apparently a report of a Duke the previous day. As we chat, a dingy Skipper lands in front of us, just to prove they weren't lying! It quickly flies off and we go of on our separate ways. Within a couple of minutes, flitting around a little sheltered sun trap I get my first 2015 newbie of the day, a pristine Small Copper. She's very active but does sit long enough to get a handful of close-ups (I'm saying 'she' based on the shape of the forewing, didn't see her abdomen so I may be wrong). Whatever sex, she was beautifully marked and positively glowed in the sun!



Crossing into a second field where I was told the Heaths were I was welcomed by a particularly finely marked individual, 2015 newbie #2 for the day.



A few meters further on and I was greeted by 2015 newbie number 3, a Brown Argus. Yet again a pristine animal, there was obviously a mass emergence very recently. As I was stalking it another appeared and they proceeded to tassel in the air and then land right in front of me. From what I could tell both seemed to be trying to mate the other in a dominant 'male like' fashion, perhaps being newly emerged, males get confused and over excited until the females start to appear?



Well anyway after they finally vanished I made the move to get to the Beacon. It was fine until I got to the exposed ridge top walkway where I was getting blown ragged. The walk itself isn't too bad and takes under an hour (as long as you don't get side tracked like I do).

On the outskirts of the Beacon a Mother Shipton landed in front of me (when I say landed I actually mean the wind put it there!)



At the Beacon (my first visit to the site) I now had to find where the Dukes live. It was getting close to 4 now so chances of finding any were dwindling but quite quickly I stumbled across a sheltered scrubby area, infested with Cowslips. Add to that a scattering of people slowly wandering around like they had lost their keys I'm confident I found the site! I may have found the site but after an half an hour there was no sign of anything Duke (or Duchess) like so I made my way back.

I stopped off at the north end of the reserve this time, an area I had yet to explore and was rewarded by a handful of Dingy Skippers, several more stunningly marked pristine Brown Argus a Grizzled Skipper and a few more Small Heath.





It's interesting how differently each Heath is, easily individually identifiable without any effort.



And some other inhabitants 😊



A Bee



Shieldbug Nymphs



Lesser Treble-bar.... I think

So anyway, despite not a sniff of my intended quarry and a pretty intense 'breeze', a damn decent days butterflying was had 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 14-May-15 02:58 PM GMT

That's a great report Buggy accompanied by some smashing shots, especially the Brown Argus 🦋. Interesting observation too re Brown Argus. Your description of the outing left me feeling like I had actually been there – an interesting read 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-May-15 05:20 AM GMT

Thank you **Pauline** for your kind words 😊. I think my pics still have some way to go before they are as good as yours though!

Abbots Wood part 1 13th May

What a difference a day can make, pouring with rain today. Luckily my day off this week fell on the sunniest day.

Pearl Bordered Fritillaries weren't on my 'to see' list this year, I was staying closer to home this year but then everyone started posting their gorgeous pictures and temptation got the better of me. A quick look on google earth to find the closest train station to Abbots Wood, the closest colony to me,

and the trip was planned.

Getting there was a nice easy trip, a pleasant walk from the station to the wood and then.....oh, now where do they hang out? I've never been here before! Best plan I figured was to walk around looking for clearings. I found a clearing after 20 mins and within 30 seconds in front of me I saw something orangy fluttering. It was quite pale but never having seen a PBF before I didn't know any better. Getting closer my initial excitement was dashed, it was a Painted Lady..... I felt guilty about being disappointed, it was after all my first of the year and it had travelled a long way to see me! So a couple of shots and off I went again.



Walking towards me was someone obviously doing some butterfly recording. A pleasant chat and some pointing at his little map of the wood and I was on my way with a rough idea of where I was going. Even if I didn't see any I was having a lovely day so far, English woodlands in May are wonderful places to explore. Several GV Whites and a few large whites later I arrived at what I thought was the site I was directed to. Sure enough there it was, my very first PBF! Another appeared and both tormented me by flitting around but rarely settling for long enough to get a picture and I only managed one long distance shot.



Out of the corner of my eye, something small and brown distracted my attention as it flitted low over the bramble and a beautifully pristine Green Hairstreak landed in front of me. She was a stunner and allowed me some nice close-ups as she looked for somewhere to lay and basked in the rays.





The Fritillaries appeared and vanished but no more than 2 so I was beginning to think I hadn't found the main site after all and I never managed another picture 😞 .

A single Grizzled Skipper made some brief appearances but again I only managed the one distant shot.



Oh well, it was the middle of the day so maybe if I wandered back later they would be more willing to settle. I spent another hour or two exploring the wood, Brimstones and Large whites making regular appearances



and also this little creature somehow caught my eye by the side of the path,



a male Oak Hook-tip. A new species for me!



Upon my return, the Fritillaries were indeed more willing to settle but still vanished more often than not and still only the two, not the masses I'd been lead to believe.



I must have been in the wrong place but where was the right place? Maybe I should have asked some people on here for proper directions..... I couldn't go home with just 3 PBF pics but on the other hand it was a lifer for me and I had seen plenty of other stuff and it was a bloody lovely day for a walk in the woods!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 15-May-15 06:25 AM GMT

Great reports Buggy with some lovely shots - Greenstreaks, BA's and that Brimstone is a cracker - it looks like about to be flung off by the recoiling Bluebell 😊😄 I was at my Marshies site yesterday - bucket loads there were so it's looking good for your visit 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurus rex, 15-May-15 06:31 AM GMT

Well done Buggy, Pearls can be difficult to get close to in the heat of the day. If you would like to know the "right place" send me a PM and I'll give you a grid ref.

All the best

James

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-May-15 06:57 AM GMT

"Butterflysaurus rex" wrote:

Well done Buggy, Pearls can be difficult to get close to in the heat of the day. If you would like to know the "right place" send me a PM and I'll give you a grid ref.

All the best

James

Watch this space James 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-May-15 07:05 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

Great reports Buggy with some lovely shots – Greenstreaks, BA's and that Brimstone is a cracker – it looks like about to be flung off by the recoiling Bluebell 😊😊 I was at my Marshies site yesterday – bucket loads there were so it's looking good for your visit 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Thanks Wurzel and great news about the Marshies, I can't wait for that lifer, just hope the weather is on my side!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-May-15 04:41 AM GMT

Abbots Wood 13th May (part two)

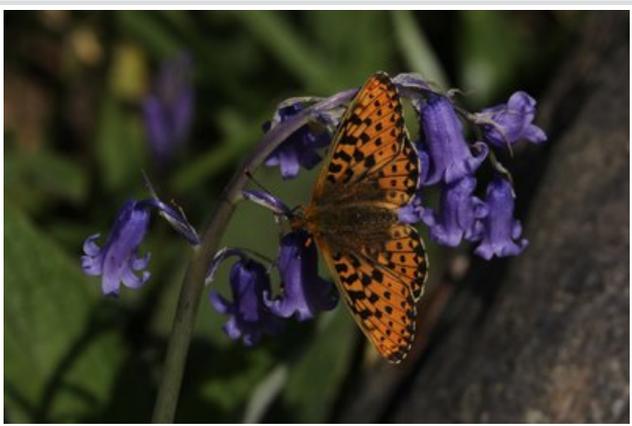
I was still trying to get a decent close up of the Fritillaries when a small party of people turn up about 3pm. The first question I'm asked is, 'how many have you seen'. Obviously there's no need to explain what we are talking about and I answer 'two'. Same as the day before apparently and I ask where the main site is. Turns out I was only a short walk from the original release site and then I'm offered a lift to this year's main site. On the short drive I find out that my host is in fact the guy behind the original release so if anyone knows where they are he should!

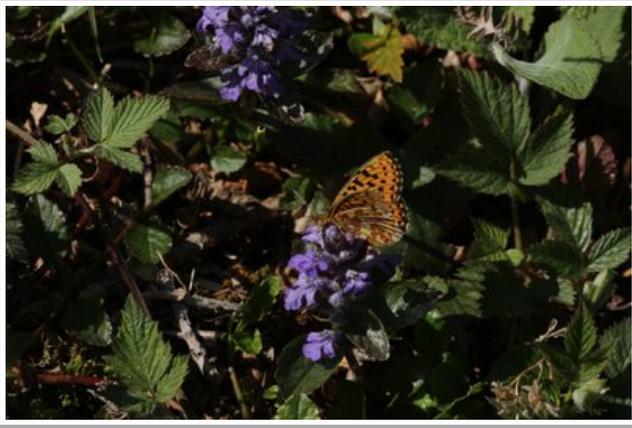
As an aside, aren't all butterflyers very nice people! I've Met a fair few rude birders/twitchers but I've yet to meet a butterflyer without a smile and time for a pleasant chat.

Anyway, a short drive to the north end to the wood and I'm pointed up a path and told to look to the right. Sure enough I walk into a clearing and I'm greeted by several PBF flitting low over the ground. I walk around slowly, observing them, trying to work out the best tactic to get a shot. Quite easy to sex them from the behaviour, lots of egg laying females clambering through the low undergrowth and I quickly work out that you don't really need to stalk them: pick your spot and await their arrival seems to be the best tactic! I then spent a fantastic hour enjoying the delights of a thriving PBF colony, they really are absolutely stunning insects and it was good to see some still looking very fresh.

When the clouds arrived at 4pm, they signal it's time to make a move and head off home so I shall end this post allowing the PBF to speak for themselves with a small(ish) selection of the 50 odd pictures I came home with 😊









Best one I could get of an ovipositing female.

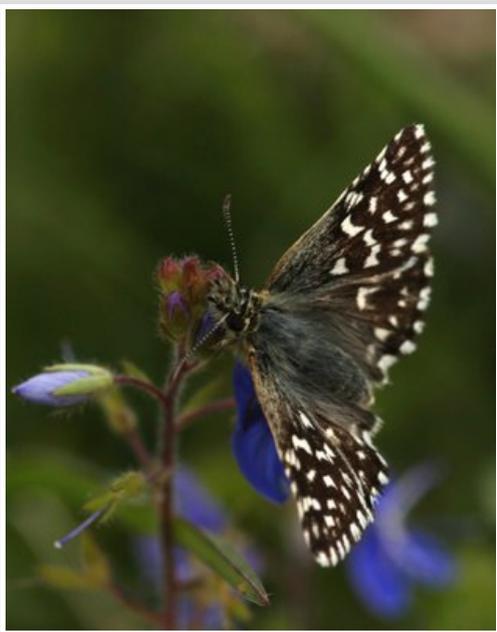
Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-May-15 08:49 PM GMT

In Search of Dukes....3rd time lucky? 16th May Part 1

Dukes were beginning to take on an almost mythological form for me, having already had two failed attempts at finding the little blighters so I got an early start with the plan to get to Ivinghoe Beacon by noon, walking from Tring again. A secondary target today was Grizzled Skippers. I've not managed any decent pics since I saw my lifer on Denbies a few weeks ago.

The promised weather appeared although the wind had decided to pay another visit to one of my butterfly days out! I get to Aldbury Nowers Nature Reserve at around 10.30. Some Dingies were out and about in sheltered spots and so was a single Grizzled. He was intent on feeding on the Silverweed flowers and so was easy to get close to. I spend 10 minutes following him around from flower to flower, getting a nice stack of pictures 😊.



Hopefully the day would continue to be this good.

Walking through the Nature Reserve I disturb several Small Heaths and many more Dingies as well as having several Brimstones flybys, they really are having a fantastic spring. No sign of any Brown argus this morning though, maybe they're having a lay in this morning.

Moving on to the windswept walk to the Beacon I stop off at some sheltered spots covered in Cowslips I'd noticed on my previous trip. More Dingies and Grizzled but no Dukes. A red Kite did a flyby and lots of Yellowhammers calling from the hedges.



I get to The Beacon just after 12 and make my way to the spot I'd found on the previous visit. Not a sign of a Duke. For 20 minutes the only butterflies showing any interest in the Cowslips are Brimstones.

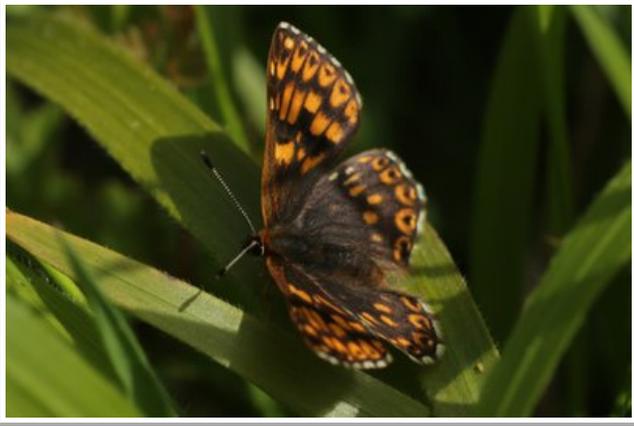


I decided to explore a little further afield, when I notice a small dark thing flutter in front of me, thinking it's another Dingy I watch as it lands in front of me and there it is, breaking my duck, a beautiful little Duchess, freshly emerged (I like to think she emerged specifically for my visit and had been waiting for me all morning 😊).

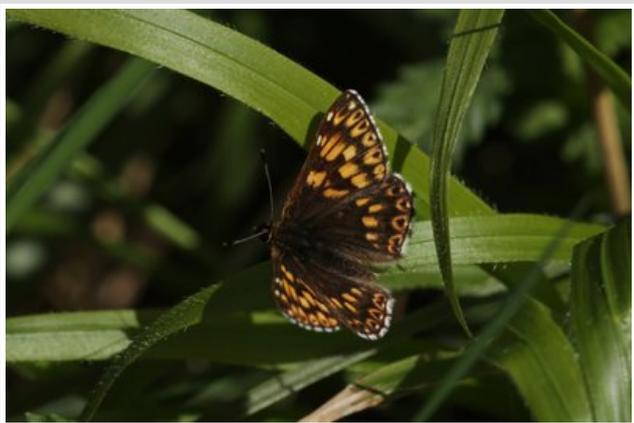


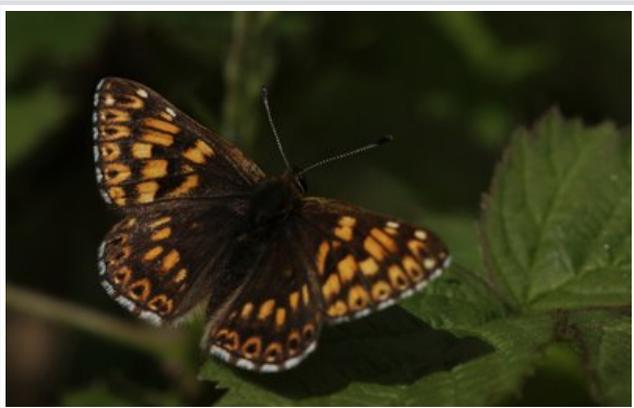
Having no experience of this species I'm very pleased to find they are rather easy to get close to and 5 minutes later I have a camera full of Duchess

pictures 😊😊😊.



She eventually flies off and a very short distance away I put up a Duke holding a territory in a dry ditch. He quickly settles and I settle down for a load more pictures as he basks in the noon sun. I spend about 20 happy minutes in his company





Needless to say I am having a bloody great day so far!

I'll write up the second half of the day later, it would seem the weatherman lied about Sunday being drab and cloudy, all I can see is sun and gorgeous blue sky outside so I'm off to look for Common Blues on my local patch now. Hope you're all having as good a weekend as I'm having so far 😊

Buggy

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 18-May-15 12:33 AM GMT

Not here Buggy, it's a cold wind again, I'm glad you found your Dukes wish I could take off and find the PBF but quite limited at present. Your PBF look great 😊

My eye is better thank you but I've to be careful for the next couple of weeks. Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-May-15 01:24 AM GMT

In Search of Dukes....3rd time lucky! 16th May Part 2

Well no Common Blues out on Walthamstow Marshes yet but Holly Blues are very common now but more of that later, back to Dukes.

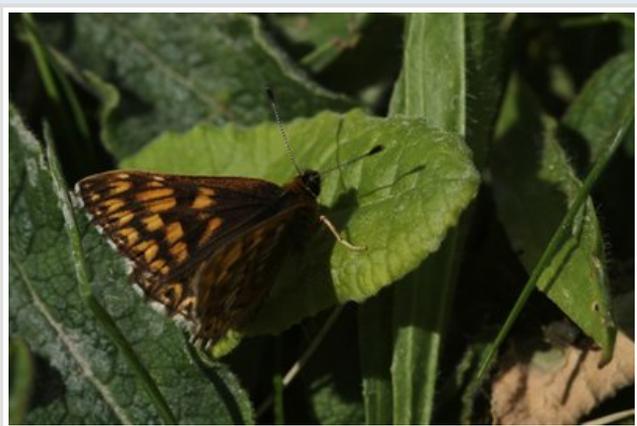
I heard rumours that there was a Butterfly Conservation outing on the Beacon today so I figured if I find them I'll get more Duke action. I happen upon them as they return to the car park and am given directions to the main population. The walk continues to be stunning, the scenery is gorgeous on a day like this! you can just make out Whipsnade Zoos white Lion in the chalk bank in the distance.



I find the site easily enough; I know I'm there because suddenly I'm putting up a new male every few feet along the sheltered pathway, I see probably eight or nine in total, undoubtedly there are more. The first one I see is rather weather worn!



Others are somewhat less...





Also present are 3 female Green hairstreaks, all looking to lay so I get myself another dose of GH action



as well as the now ubiquitous Brimstone!

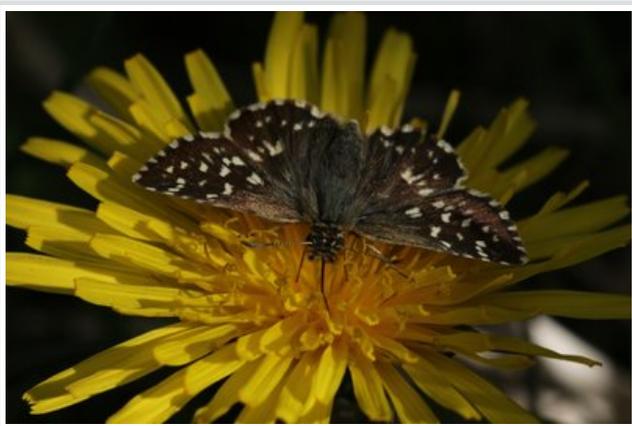
Here I chat to a couple of other butterflyers, one like me getting some pics and another, a national trust employee, recording numbers.

I spend about half an hour here before making my way back to the hill top. I figure one final sortie where my first sightings were is in order and almost immediately I almost trip over another Female, this one with much stronger orange markings. She casually basks whilst I stick my lense in her face and snap away before she flies onto the ground and starts feeding on a damp patch of the path. There's no option left to me, I have to lay flat on the ground now and hope no one trips over me coming round the corner. She spends a fair few minutes spinning on the spot with my camera capturing as much action as possible. It's interesting to note they have rather broad tongues, very reminiscent of Hairstreaks.





When she flies off out of site I notice a Grizzled Skipper feeding on a dandelion next to me, practically asking to be photographed....OK then!



As I take my final wanderings I chat to a mother and daughter couple doing a Duke survey, they record 4 males here. With so many people recording numbers and good habitat management it certainly seems the future for these gorgeous little critters is secure for the time being

As for me, well I left in the morning without ever having seen a Duke of Burgundy, I returned home with (after deleting all the rubbish ones) 95 photographs of them 😊 plus some decent Grizzled Skippers. Today's mission most definitely complete!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-May-15 05:53 AM GMT

Hmmm, 3 entries in one day..... too much? oh well!

So with the weatherman telling porkies about what to expect today I woke up mid morning to a beautiful blue sky. After doing a few bits and pieces I'd set aside for a cloudy day I grabbed my camera and went out to my local patch in search of my first Common Blues of the year. It's still early for my site, don't think I've ever seen them out before the first week of June but you never know.

As it turns out I didn't see any Common Blues but Holly Blues were in abundance, at least 6 individuals present, 3 male and 3 female, seen in a short space of time. The males had staked out territories around Dogwoods which is very plentiful on this site and is almost certainly the primary springtime LHP. They landed frequently to sunbath so I finally got some open winged shots. But in true Holly Blue style never long enough to get very close or up high out of my reach. I watched as an aged female entered a males territory a number of times but his attentions were unwanted and with a quick fluttery wing bashing he certainly got the message!



A male tries his luck!



The same female after getting rid of her unwanted suiter



I found another female, undisturbed by any males, ovipositing on Dogwood further on and she allowed me to get close. Photography was made rather difficult when she was laying though since she was being blown in and out of the shade so I ended up guessing exposure and snapping madly.



Holly Blues were in fact the most numerous butterfly today, others seen were single males Orange Tip & Brimstone, 1 Peacock, 1 Speckled Wood, 2 male GV White, none of whom settled 😊 ,



and a single male Small White who I disturbed as a cloud passed over. I followed him as he dithered looking for another suitable resting spot and

managed a few nice snaps of him before the sun appeared and he vanished on his eternal hunt for a mate!



Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 18-May-15 05:59 AM GMT

Glad you got your Dukes bugboy and loads of nice shots too. Now Holly Blue open wing shots as well, it's all happening 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 18-May-15 06:09 AM GMT

It's not often you can say that Holly Blues were the most numerous species, Bugboy.

I'm glad you got an audience with them. They can be tricky critters, especially in spring.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-May-15 06:18 AM GMT

"Maximus" wrote:

Glad you got your Dukes bugboy and loads of nice shots too. Now Holly Blue open wing shots as well, it's all happening 😊

It's all happening until tomorrow, have you seen the forecast! I suspect they might get it right this time 😞

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 18-May-15 06:22 AM GMT

Dukes certainly are addictive, aren't they, Buggy! I'm pleased you found so many. And that Holly Blue female on the dogwood flower buds is a lovely one. 😊

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-May-15 06:29 AM GMT

"millerd" wrote:

Dukes certainly are addictive, aren't they, Buggy! I'm pleased you found so many. And that Holly Blue female on the dogwood flower buds is a lovely one. 😊

Dave

So addictive! Staying with a mate next weekend so I can go to the Bison hill sites for another audience with them!

Yes that female was a right little poser 😊

"David M" wrote:

It's not often you can say that Holly Blues were the most numerous species, Bugboy.

I'm glad you got an audience with them. They can be tricky critters, especially in spring.

Very tricky but persistence pays off. Hope you get some good weather in your part of the world soon, looks like Thursday might be the start of a short warm spell.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 18-May-15 08:55 PM GMT

Nice Holly Blues Bug Boy, lets hope the weather does get warmer Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 19-May-15 05:11 AM GMT

Very comprehensive reports Buggy – bet your getting the PC equivalent of writers cramp now... 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt – venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-May-15 05:52 AM GMT

"Willrow" wrote:

Very comprehensive reports Buggy – bet your getting the PC equivalent of writers cramp now... 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt – venture out"

I gte a bit carried away sometimes..... 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 19-May-15 06:52 AM GMT

Great that you got the Dukes Buggy and the Holly Blues are great too 🍷 I've visited my Duke site three times with no luck and then my mate visited on Saturday and saw 4 😊 Still at least that I know they're about now 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlng, 20-May-15 03:41 AM GMT

Buggy,

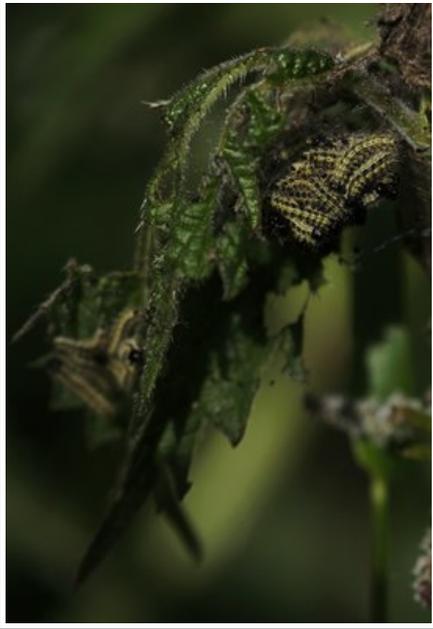
Nice shots of the Dukes. I am hoping to get to Bison Hill & Ivinghoe this weekend if the weather plays ball. Hope it won't be too late for some decent sightings.

Regards Kev

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-May-15 05:09 AM GMT

Popped out for an hour inbetween thunderstorms hoping for a little bit of Holly Blue whispering. No luck, but I did find the next generation of Small Tortoiseshells having an afternoon snack 😊



end of report (is that better **Willrow** 😊😁😄)

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-May-15 06:33 AM GMT

Since we are nearly half way through the year I thought I'd have a quick tally up of species seen so far, in order I've seen them:

- 1 Brimstone
- 2 Small Tortoiseshell
- 3 Red Admiral
- 4 Peacock
- 5 Small White
- 6 Comma
- 7 Green-veined White
- 8 Speckled Wood
- 9 Orange-tip
- 10 Holly Blue
- 11 Large White
- 12 Green Hairstreak (lifer)
- 13 Grizzled Skipper (lifer)
- 14 Dingy Skipper (lifer)
- 15 Small Copper
- 16 Small Heath
- 17 Brown Argus
- 18 Painted Lady
- 19 Pearl-bordered Fritillary (lifer)
- 20 Duke of Burgundy (lifer)

Not too shabby at all, and still a few more lifers lined up 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 20-May-15 06:41 AM GMT

How many lifers have you got left amongst the UK endemics, Bugboy?

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-May-15 07:08 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

How many lifers have you got left amongst the UK endemics, Bugboy?

About 20 or thereabouts. Mostly the regional specialties left now, where my mission starts getting interesting!

Re: Bugboys mission

by peterc, 20-May-15 04:00 PM GMT

Well done, Buggy.

I wouldn't mind betting Glanville is next on your lifers' list 😊. Hutchinson's Bank (I think that's the place) is not too far away

ATB

Peter

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-May-15 06:18 PM GMT

"peterc" wrote:

Well done, Buggy.

I wouldn't mind betting Glanville is next on your lifers' list 😊. Hutchinson's Bank (I think that's the place) is not too far away

ATB

Peter

🙄 Oh you're good! Them and Small Blue are the next ones 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 21-May-15 05:36 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:

end of report (is that better Willow 😊😊😊)

You just enjoy it all Buggy and let us know about your adventures with lots of 'lifers' 😊

Best Wishes,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-May-15 05:43 AM GMT

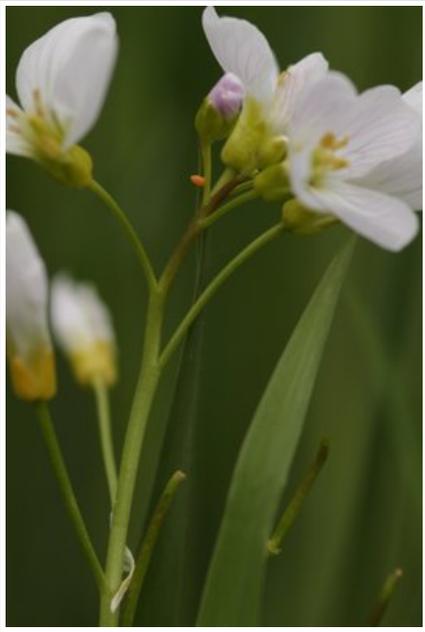
Popped out for a few hours for a wander down Dollis Valley Walk in north London. Mostly cloudy and windy and not expecting much but thought I should pop by and see if there's any sign of 'Bob' the Purple Hairstreak cat. Last time I checked he had hatched but no sign of him and the Oaks buds hadn't broken. Today the tree was in full leaf and although I located the branch easily enough still no sign of him so I will just cross my fingers and hope he's alive.

Whilst wandering I stopped off at various patches of Cuckoo Flower and Garlic Mustard to see how productive the Orange-tips have been, found 21 eggs and 1 1st instar cat without too much hassle (admittedly they are probably the easiest egg to find!)

This particular small patch had 9 eggs and the larvae



On a patch of Cuckoo Flower I discovered another 7 eggs:

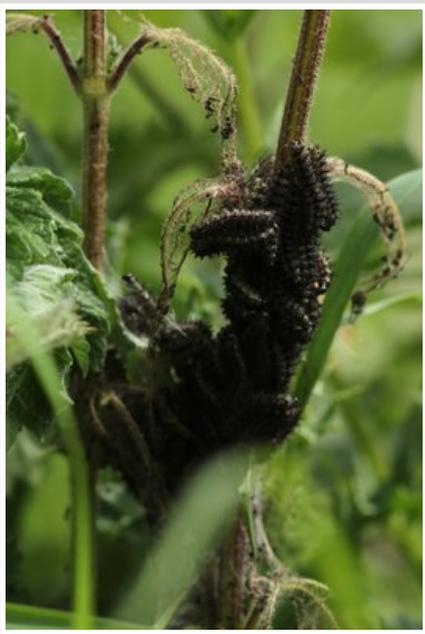


including one with it's own personal body guard!



Grrrrr!

Elswhere I also found 2 Small Tortoiseshell masses on the same nettle patch:





The only adult butterfly was a fleeting glance of a Speckled Wood high up in the trees but there were lots of one of my other favourite insects, Scorpion Flies:



Another relatively pleasant day even if there was no sun or much flying 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 21-May-15 06:01 AM GMT

Some excellent early stage images there, Bugboy. Enough to keep you occupied on a day when adults are more likely to be hunkering down.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-May-15 06:18 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

Some excellent early stage images there, Bugboy. Enough to keep you occupied on a day when adults are more likely to be hunkering down.

Thanks David, unless it's coming down cats & dogs it's always worth a little wander this time of year, there's always something to see if you know where to look 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

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

Totally agree, Bugboy.

What are the next three species in your 'mission'?

I presume you're leaving Chequered Skipper for another time?

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-May-15 06:28 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

Totally agree, Bugboy.

What are the next three species in your 'mission'?

I presume you're leaving Chequered Skipper for another time?

Yes Chequered Skippers await another year 😊 !

Next 3 planned are Glanvilles (the 'secret' site near Croydon is easy for me to get to). Small blues, hopefully find some of them this weekend with another dose of Dukes at Bison Hill and then next weekend off to visit Wurzels Marshies 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 21-May-15 06:54 AM GMT

Buggy,

You might well get to see Small Blues at both the Glanville site in Surrey and the Marshie one in Wiltshire. They were out at both last year.

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 22-May-15 06:11 AM GMT

Stalking the Wall, South Downs Way Eastbourne (this is probably gonna be one of my long reports so hope your settled!)

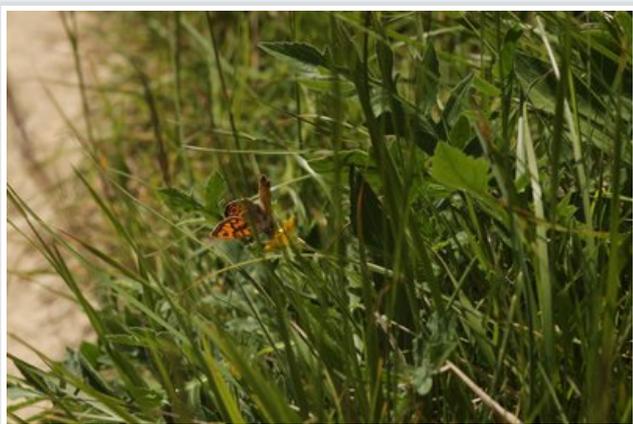
So it's been a over 20 years since I've seen one, before I started taking pictures so although not a lifer it's close to one since I didn't have any pictures of them.

I didn't know if there were any at my chosen site but being coastal with lots (of what looked like on google maps at any rate) sheltered sunny footpaths it seemed like a fair bet. Arriving onto the Downs the usual 2015 wind was blowing a gale and the first butterfly I saw was a windblown male Large White who managed to settle on a Dandelion for refreshments



I think it was the wind that allowed me to get so close, probably masked my movements.

I wandered around for an hour before I found what seemed like suitable habitat, a bare earth path sheltered from the wind on both sides but in full sun and sure enough I started to disturb them as I walked along. I'd forgotten how annoying they are to get close to, the least little thing sets them off and you end up with a domino effect as they all set each other off. To be fair it was between noon and 1pm so they were at their most active. I got lots of distant shots and blurs as my shutter set them off and settled for some sneaky ones as they fed on Buttercups!





I decided to kill a few hours and wander further afield to see what else was about. A couple of Green Hairstreaks were lurking at the edge of the shrubby paths

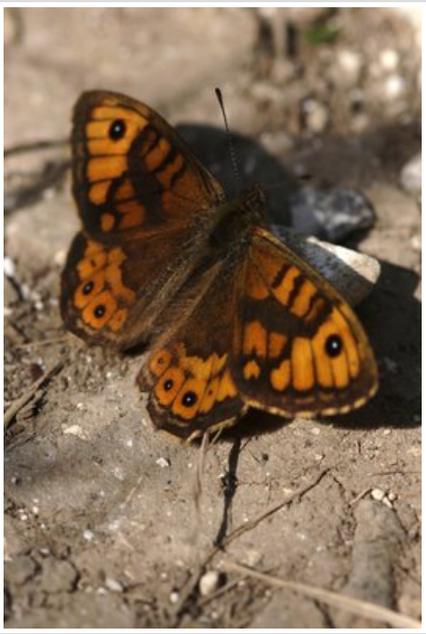
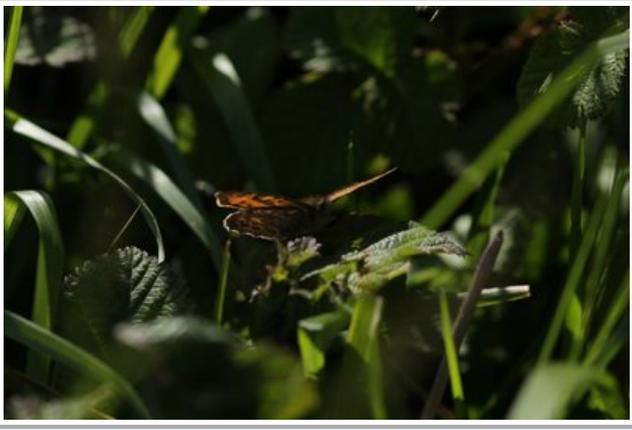


and The Speckled Yellows I'd seen at Abbots Wood last week were more approachable



A couple of Dingy Skippers showed up and one Blue flew at me (could have been a Holly or Adonis) and was gone in a blink.

On returning to the main **Wall** path at about 3 I found them to be a little bit more approachable and I could finally get a few close ups:



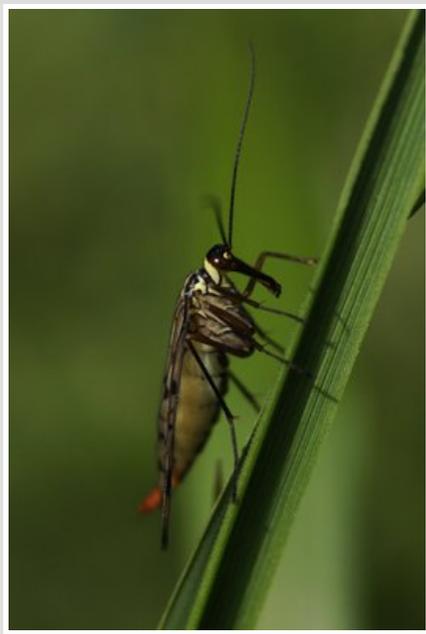


Difficult to do an accurate head count but I would hazard a guess between 10 and 20 individuals with a fair few very fresh animals.

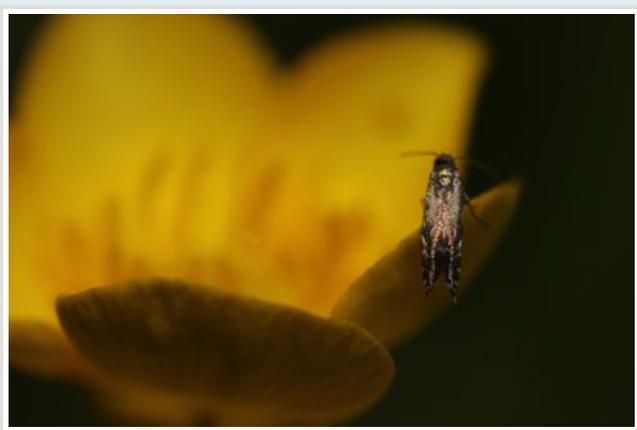
Also seen was this oak Egger caterpillar, fully grown and in the middle of the path waiting to be squished so I popped him in the undergrowth:



a rather fat female Scorpion Fly:



and this tiny, sparkly little micro moth



Another great day out butterflying and lovely seeing Walls again. They took me back years when they were common as muck where I grew up!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 22-May-15 06:50 AM GMT

The Walls favourite place today:



Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 22-May-15 11:49 PM GMT

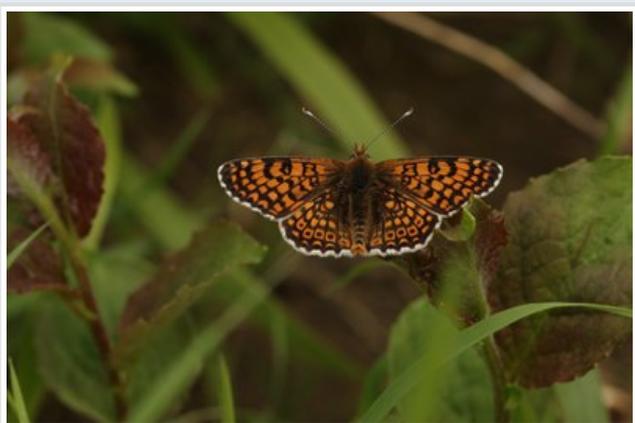
Those Scorpion flies are awesome/gruesome Buggy. I think I might have a photo of one but I didn't know what it was. Great shots of the Walls.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-May-15 11:36 PM GMT

Hutchinsons Bank, 22 May (part 1)

Another day, another lifer or two! Today was all about Glanville Fritillaries and it didn't disappoint. I get to the site at about 11 and with only 3 hours to spare I worry perhaps I'm too early to make the most of it. I needn't have worried, within 10 minutes I disturbed 2 males basking on the path.

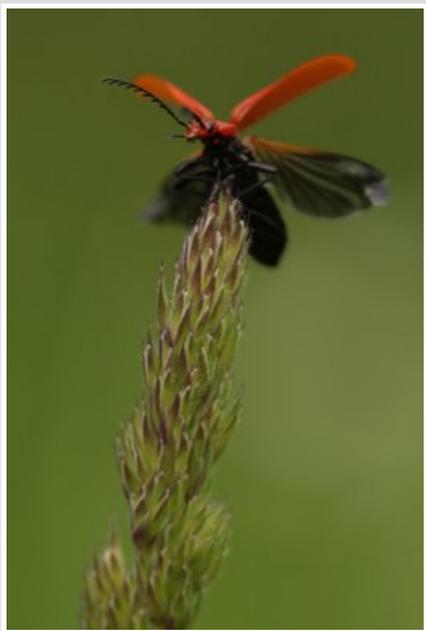


Despite the hazy sun the site is very warm, its micro climate seems to be around 5 degrees warmer than surrounding areas, so they were very active and not easy to approach.

With reports of double figures at the site I move on down towards the main scrape which is even warmer, stopping to take a few snaps of a cardinal Beetle as he dithers about whether to take flight or not:



He finally made his mind up:



Getting to the scrape the first butterflies I notice are several male Common Blues, my first of the year:



No females about as far as I could tell, and like the Brown Argus I saw a few weeks ago, I witnessed 2 males trying to mate each other:



Wrong sex, wrong end, just wrong!

There was also a Brown Argus periodically harrassing the CB's and Dingy Skippers were very active as well. caught this pair as they tumbled in front of me, note both have their proboscis's extended:



But the main focus was the several Glanvilles flying about. The cloud had thinned a bit and they were proving more difficult to approach now. I love how they seem to leap out of the pictures though:





Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 25-May-15 07:51 PM GMT

Delightful Glanville photos from Hutchinsons Bank 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 25-May-15 11:25 PM GMT

I've not seen a Glanville Frit yet Bugboy, you make me very envious with your photos 😊🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 26-May-15 01:04 AM GMT

Thanks both, my first time in the presence of a Glanville. If the weather forecast is as predicted I may go for another dose in the afternoon tomorrow 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 26-May-15 03:05 AM GMT

Hutchinsons Bank, 22 May (part 2)

So as I said before the Glanvilles were the main reason I was here but I was also hoping for another lifer, the Small Blue. **Mrsp0ck** was there (as well as a few other butterflies) and came over to say hello. Almost immediately he pointed out a very fresh male Small Blue 😊

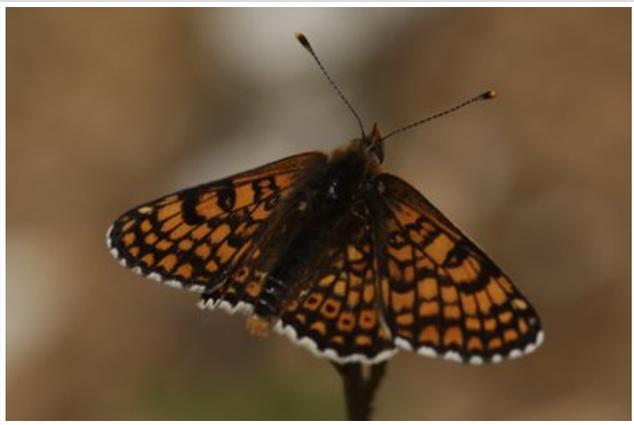


As another couple and I got our fill of him a mating pair suddenly appeared!



The second time this year I've had a mating pair for a lifer 😊

Inbetween all this Small Blue action I still paid attention to the Glanvilles who were flitting around.



Brimstones were also very numerous, at one point I saw 4 males flying together, but this female was very approachable as she fed on the Horseshoe Vetch:





It was interesting to watch her feed from every flower, not missing a single one yet also not going to the same one twice 😊

There were also a few Small Heaths flitting, none very approachable until this remarkable one landing in front of me 🤪.



It wasn't until it landing that I realised anything was wrong. It's flight seemed quite normal by Small Heath standards but from what I can see it is missing the entirety of one forewing and most of the hindwing on one side. I've never seen a butterfly with such extreme wing damage alive, yet alone be able to fly. I was very confused for a few seconds as I tried to work out why it was basking with it's wings open!

After an hour or so I moved off from the main scrape and started to slowly make my way back. I found another Small Blue back where I had seen my first two Glanvilles, another very fresh individual:

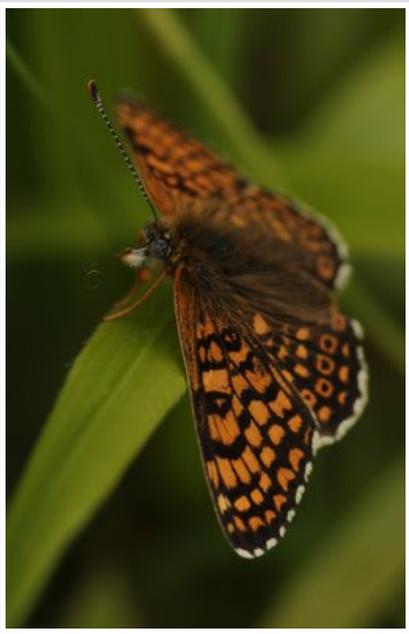
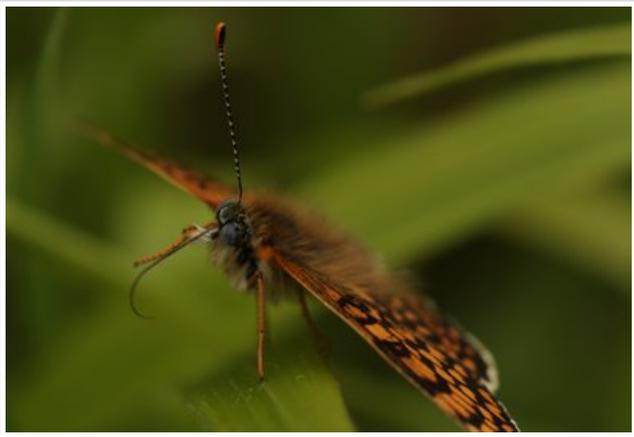


Those two Glanvilles were still there and I noticed one acting oddly, continuously extending its tongue:



When it flew onto some grass I was able to get a better look at what was going on with it. It would seem to have damaged its palps and he was unable to coil up his tongue properly. felt a bit sorry for him, it seemed to be very annoying as he repeatedly coiled and extended his tongue, tried cleaning it with his leg. I was tempted to try and catch him and help him out but feared I would end up doing more harm than good 😞





I left him to his tribulations and found an exhausted looking Painted lady. It didn't fly far from me as I pestered it for a picture and kept probing the damp path for moisture:





As I was leaving the site another Common Blue decided to pose for me, looking very pretty as he fed on Cow Parsley:



Only 3 hours but what a fantastic 3 hours it was, 2 lifers, some interesting behaviour and lots of lovely photographs to take home with me 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by MrSp0ck, 26-May-15 04:03 AM GMT

Glad you enjoyed your visit to Hutchinsons Bank, the weather turned dull on Saturday, so sightings have dropped off again.

A few more Small Blues are starting to appear.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 26-May-15 05:17 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

A great couple of reports from Hutchinsons Bank with some lovely photos 😊

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 26-May-15 05:19 AM GMT

How the hell was that Small Heath able to fly!! 😲

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 26-May-15 06:00 AM GMT

Your mission is certainly progressing well Buggy those Glannies are smashing 🍷😄 Good luck with the Marshies 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 26-May-15 10:21 PM GMT

Nice Painted Lady Bugboy hope they visit here soon Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-May-15 04:03 AM GMT

Thanks **Mrsp0ck**, it was a great few hours 😊

Thanks for the kind words **Neil** 😊

God alone knows **David**, if I hadn't seen it I wouldn't have believed it!

Thanks **Wurzel**, 7 lifers this year so far already with hopefully 2 more still to go this year.....although the current weather forecast for this coming Saturday and the Marshies is looking decidedly iffy 😊

Thanks **Goldie**, I'm sure they are on their way up to you although not this particular animal, it looked pretty much cream cracked!

Saturday 23rd May, Bison Hill

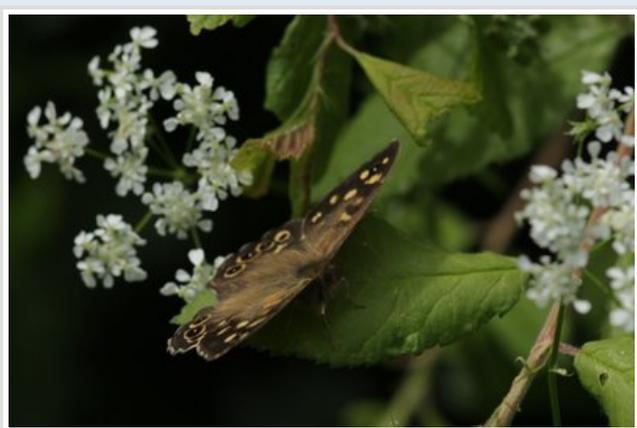
This was a pre-planned trip with a birding friend to get another dose of Dukes. Unfortunately the weather had other plans, low grey cloud and occasional light drizzle all day so no surprise not a single butterfly was seen. We turned it into a birding outing instead but I think I impressed him by walking up to a lone small tree (a Buckthorn) and finding two Brimstone eggs within seconds. By the end of the trip he was pointing out Orange-tip eggs to me!

Sunday 24th May, Walthamstow Marshes

So the next day the sun decided to come out again, laughing at me I'm sure but I managed to squeeze an hours worth of butterflying close to home. First I stopped off at the Small Tortoiseshell cats I'd seen on my last visit, just to see how they were doing. Less than before although they looked as though they were splitting into two groups when I last saw them. These ones are doing well though 😊



I wandered over to where all the Holly Blues were hanging out last time but none were seen here today, there was however a very nice new male Speckled Wood, one of 3 I saw in total:





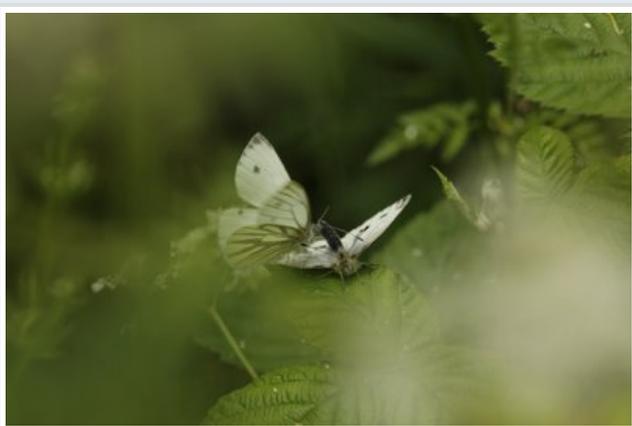
I did see 2 Holly Blues further on, one of each sex and both looking somewhat worse for wear!



Very little else was seen, just a few unidentifiable Whites, when I stumbled across a female CVW feeding and ovipositing



Trying to get some pics (and failing) of her laying eggs a passing male caught a whiff and proceeded to pester her for some time. My camera was already set to quite a fast shutter speed so I took the opportunity to get a few action shots, as best I could down in the undergrowth.





As can be seen she was giving him the 'NO' signal clear as day but he only lost interest when she managed to escape his attentions over the hedge. He stopped of for a quick drink and then went on his merry way looking for a less reluctant female to annoy!

These 24 Spot Ladybirds were getting on much better though 😊



So a much needed antidote to Saturdays butterflyless day 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 27-May-15 11:06 PM GMT

Great to enjoy your **Glanville Fritillary** shots Buggy, I have to get down to the Isle of Wight since we lost our nearest colony at Sand Point (near Weston-super-Mare)...I envy you 🍷

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 28-May-15 03:16 AM GMT

Glad you're enjoying my PD Bill 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-May-15 04:33 AM GMT

Hutchinsons Bank Tuesday 26th May

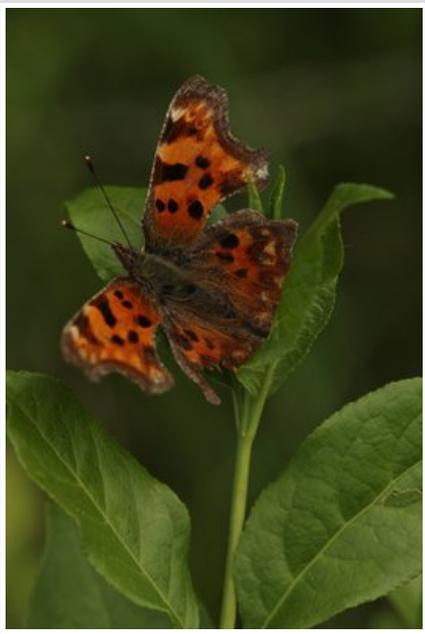
With a half day at work, a half decent weather forecast and nothing else planned another Glanville fix was in order. Lovely sunny weather joined my journey there, only to vanish almost the moment I arrived at around 2. A couple of male Common Blues welcomed me to the site, making the most of what was left of the sun, just an occasional glimpse now!



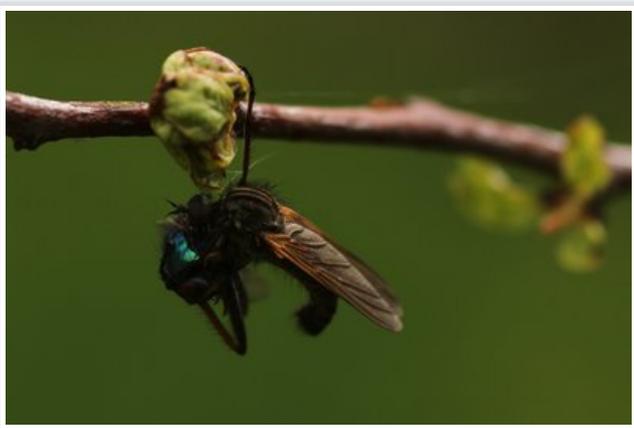
I wandered around the site for nearly two hours with only a fleeting glance of one Glanville. Brimstones were again very numerous, easily into double figures today but none were in the mood to settle. I resigned myself to taking some floral pictures, this patch of Birds-foot Trefoil catching my eye in particular.



At one point I disturbed an orangy butterfly which glided around. For a moment I thought it was one of the Fritillaries but realised its flight was too strong and when it settled some distance from me I saw the first Comma I've seen in over a month. Looking in good nick for a hibernator!



More rummaging in the undergrowth turned up no butterflies but whilst searching the area where I had seen Small Blues on my previous visit, this Robber Fly landed in front of me carrying its freshly killed lunch. Dangling rather gymnastically by just one toe he munched on the Greenbottle for sometime before flying off to find somewhere less obvious to continue his meal.



and with flash...



It was getting close to 4 now but I decided to take one final circuit. In doing so came across a couple obviously photographing something settled halfway up a bank. It turned out to be a roosting Glanville 😊 and I could get a decent shot of the underside at last, something I hadn't managed on my last visit.



The couple had been there since 11 (somehow we'd bypassed each other for the last two hours) and said there were several Glanville's flying around earlier. As we all took turns photographing this sleeping beauty the sun decided to come out for a longer period at last, waking up the Fritillary which flew over a fence shortly after. The sun also woke up several Common Blues, including my first females of the year:



and a tiny female Small Blue:



with the Glanville making brief guest appearances every now and again:



Other butterflies seen were a single Small Heath, a single Peacock a couple of Speckled Woods and a single male Orange-tip.

So all in all a much better ending to the one I was starting to imagine 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by MrSp0ck, 29-May-15 05:28 AM GMT

We were on site earlier Tuesday, With Several BC Surrey visitors, plenty of Glanvilles, well over 30, in the morning, but the numbers do seem to drop after 2pm. A female was spotted yesterday in the cutting at the bottom of the bank, she fed on bird-foot trefoil for a few seconds and vanished as she flew off, something the males don't seem to do as much. I had about 15 on the transect Wednesday, and about 10 today in dull weather.

Glad you enjoyed your quick visit, the Small Blues are only just starting to appear in reasonable numbers.

Hopefully we will find a few larval webs in a months time, when enjoying Dark Green Frits.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 29-May-15 06:47 AM GMT

Enough with the Glannies you're killing me 🍷🍷😄 The Blues aren't to shabby either 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlng, 29-May-15 08:58 PM GMT

Buggie,

Great diary from Hutchinson's Bank. I visited the Glannies last year and had a great day in the company of Mr Spock.

Also liked the GVW sequence and never realised the position of the abdomen meant "not tonight love". I recently took a similar sequence of Orange Tips and now know that the male then was unsuccessful.

Regards Kev

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-May-15 04:52 AM GMT

Hi **kevlng**, yes that posture is used by most the whites as a way of saying 'not tonight love'. The posture makes it virtually impossible for the male to mate, but being males they sometimes don't get the message straight away!

Sorry **Wurzel**, I'll hopefully put up some Marshies instead in a couple of days.... but I may be able to squeeze in one more Glannie day before they are all gone for the year 😊

Aldbury Nowers nature Reserve & Ivinghoe Beacon Wednesday 27th May

After Saturdays Duke fail I wanted to try for another dose before their season ended. I started as usual at Aldbury Nowers with the intention of walking over to the Beacon. Lots of sun today and Common Blues, Brown Argus and an aged Small Copper were all on the wing at the south end of the reserve, flitting over the rough grassy meadows.



I passed another couple of butterflies who had found a Green Hairstreak but they looked quite settled in so I left them to it. At the other end of the reserve where a couple of sheltered steep chalk scrapes catch the sun, Dingy Skippers were common as were the ever present Brimstones.



There was also a swarm of Garden Chafers. These little guys were very comical to watch, blundering around, clambering frantically and randomly over the vegetation and falling off regularly. They don't sit still for a second so most my pictures ended up very blurred!



I've been seeing a few teneral Damselflies for a few weeks now but today I managed to get close enough to take a picture. This male Common Blue Damselfly, just a day or two from colouring up fully, was having a late lunch 😊



I didn't stay long though as I wanted to get to the Duke site whilst the sun was out and it was already past noon. Just as I was leaving I heard a rustling in the undergrowth and with some searching I discovered it was a mole burrowing through the leaf litter. I've never seen a live Mole before but couldn't get a photo, they can move bloody fast when they need to!

On the way to Ivinghoe Beacon I take a slight detour chasing a Small Heath, I'm very glad I did as when it landed it showed me an extra eyespot on its forwing, and an 'almost' spot between the two 😊

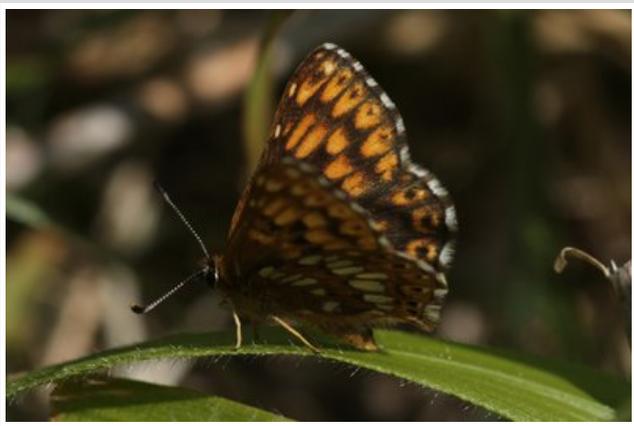
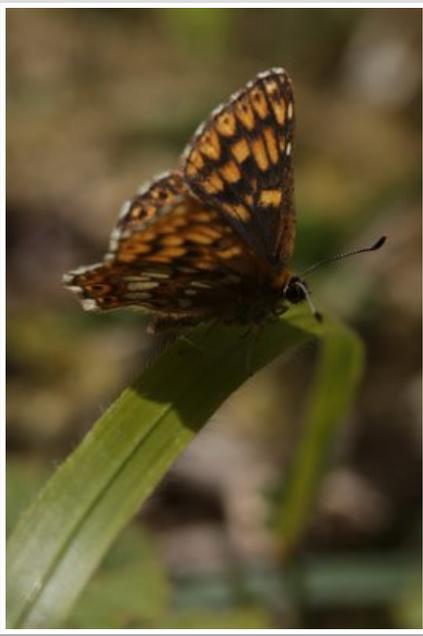


When I crept closer it went all shy and hid the extra spot so in all the other pictures it looks perfectly normal 😊

Half an hour later I arrived with the sun still out and started to look around. Since I've seen lots of pictures of Duke eggs in recent weeks on here I figured I'd have a look for them as well, a few minutes searching and I found one 😊!



A bit further on I caught a glimpse of something dark flitting close to the ground and just like my previous visit my first adult was a Duchess. She was showing all the signs of wanting to lay and I watched as she alternated between basking and flitting from leaf to leaf.



Remarkably she somehow managed to miss every Cowslip leaf in the couple of square feet she searched for about 5 minutes, quite a feat when you consider the amount of Cowslips present! Finally she landed on one (possibly by accident) and got very excited, spinning in tiny circles and tapping it with her front feet. When it came to ovipositing she decided to try and get some privacy and, rather rudely I thought, tried to hide further into the undergrowth. I just about managed to get some pictures of her without disturbing her though.





When she flew off I had a quick peak and there were 3 freshly laid eggs 😊

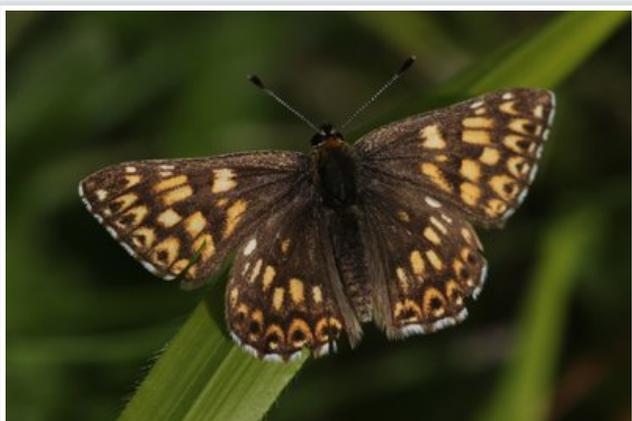


Fingers crossed I shall be seeing some of those flying in a years time!

A little further on I found quite a fresh Duke holding a territory.



More searching threw up no more so I took a wander down to the sheltered path by the side of the road. Here I found 2 older males, still full of beans and chasing anything that had the audacity to fly in their airspace.





This beautiful fresh Small Blue was one of those 'anythings' but she settled a short way off allowing me to get a couple of shots before I lost her over the hawthorn shrubbery!



As I was leaving I noticed something moving through the grass at the side of the path, another mole! 44 years of never seeing a live Mole and then 2 in one day. This one was slower but I would like to point out that no moles were harmed in the obtaining of this picture.



They are very curious animals to see in the flesh. I let him go and he scurried (if thats the right word to use for a mole) into the long grass.

I've been trying to get a picture of a Burnet Campion moth all spring, and failing miserably. Today I managed two shots from a distance which are ok....ish, certainly much better than anything else so far this year!



By now the cloud had arrived and the temperature had noticeably dropped so it was time to move on but mother nature had one last surprise for me, this time an avian lifer, a Corn Bunting! You can just make out the distinctive notched bill in this picture.



Back at Aldbury Nowers there is a huge patch of Garlic Mustard,



Orange-tip heaven!

A quick search along the edge produced several OT eggs and larvae of various instars:



early 1st instar



late 1st instar

A very nice end to a very good day with an ovipositing Duchess as the cherry on the cake. 😊 Next Stop Marshies, the weather had better bloody hold!!!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Nick Broomer, 30-May-15 05:14 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

I see you have been busy, and a lot of lovely lovely photos.

The two photos depicting the Orange-tip larva, are both 1st instars, the 2nd of the two is very close to it's first moult.

All the best, Nick.

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 30-May-15 05:53 AM GMT

Excellent, diverse range of images there, Bugboy.

Your diary is fast becoming a 'must read'.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-May-15 06:03 AM GMT

"Nick Broomer" wrote:

Hi Buggy,

I see you have been busy, and a lot of lovely lovely photos.

The two photos depicting the Orange-tip larva, are both 1st instars, the 2nd of the two is very close to it's first moult.

All the best, Nick.

Thanks Nick, I'd have put money in you being able to confirm or correct my instar guesses! Didn't realise OT's changed colour that much in the first instar!

"David M" wrote:

Excellent, diverse range of images there, Bugboy.

Your diary is fast becoming a 'must read'.

Ummmm 🤔🤔🤔

Thanks David 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 31-May-15 04:08 AM GMT

I definitely agree with David – your diary is informative, interesting and entertaining – oh, and I love that shot of the mole 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 31-May-15 06:09 AM GMT

"Pauline" wrote:

I definitely agree with David – your diary is informative, interesting and entertaining – oh, and I love that shot of the mole 😊

😊 Thank you Pauline 🤔 I'm glad I'm keeping people entertained on here, I enjoy writing my posts. 😊

Tonights is very short, I have a LOT of pictures to sift through after having an extremely enjoyable and productive day at Wurzels Marshie site, but as a taster here's the first Marsh Fritillary I have ever seen, the first of MANY! 😊



More tomorrow hopefully 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 31-May-15 06:13 AM GMT

Find one Marshie and you normally find quite a few.

I'm glad you notched up a lifer, Bugboy. This species is one of the most rewarding when you see it for the first time.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 31-May-15 10:07 PM GMT

Very true David!

'Wurzels Marshie site' 30th May part 1

This is the longest distance I've travelled to see a butterfly so far and as a non driver, had been planned for a couple of months in advance. A friend from work had offered to drive me and so for the past week I'd been keeping a very close eye on the weather forecast which seemed to vary on a daily basis. By the Friday though, it seemed that luck was on my side and Saturday was forecast to be a sunny window in a run of not so good days!

The plan was to get there early, ideally around 10 so I could get a feel for the site. We left at 7.30 am (I have very understanding friends 😊) and got there 2 hours later. I'd been promised a good experience from this site and with reports over the past few weeks seemingly living up to this I got out of the car excitedly only to look at the sky and see an inordinate amount of ominous dark clouds. Still we weren't going to waste a 2 hour drive so we took a walk up the hill, giving my friend my binoculars to be the twitcher for the day.

Following Wurzels directions we walked up the sheltered path to where it opened out and..... felt the bloody cold wind that was blasting across the hillside! Occasional sunny spells didn't make much of a difference to the temperature but did wake up my very first Marsh Fritillary (See previous post) which I found low down in the grass, making the most of what sun there was. As I took a few record shots my friend called out asking if this was one as well. Sure enough she had found another one, still roosting so I took some more shots of that one before moving on.



One thing we did see where a lot of 5 spot Burnet moths with a High proportion having merged spots. Given the time of year these could well be the rarer species, *Zygaena trifolii ssp palustrella*.



As we walked around we did see a few more Marshies when the sun made brief appearances, all low down sheltering from the cold wind, every one photographed just in case this was a good as it was going to get!

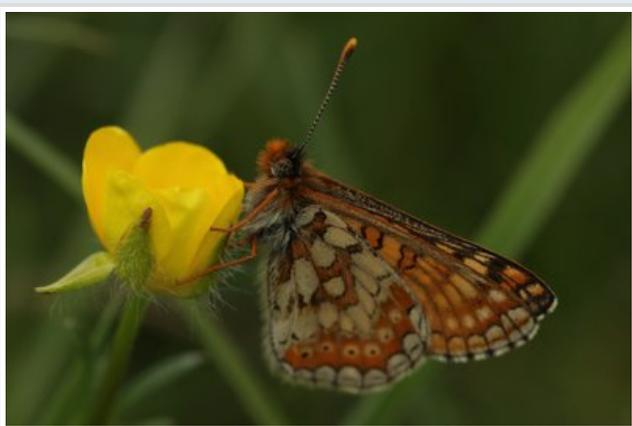


even the ones which had seen better days!



Birdlife was reasonably plentiful with various farmland species you don't see in London, Yellowhammers and Corn Buntings singing and we also flushed up a pair of Grey Partridge, a species I haven't seen since I was a kid.

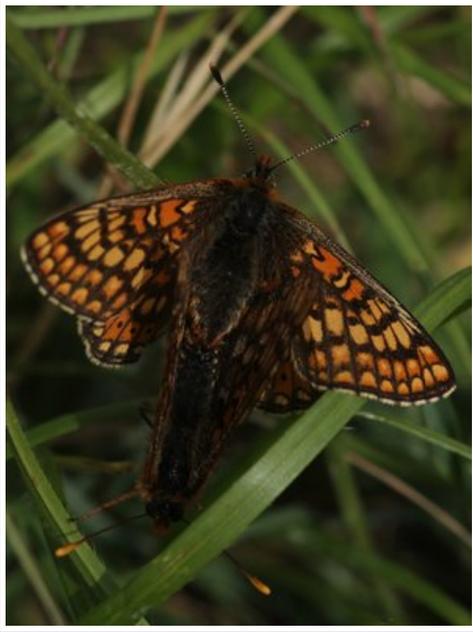
As time went on the sunny spells became longer and with a large blue patch appearing suddenly we started seeing Marshies everywhere, almost erupting from the turf, finally the promised experience. I was know in my element now:



even my friend was getting her own special Marshie experience!

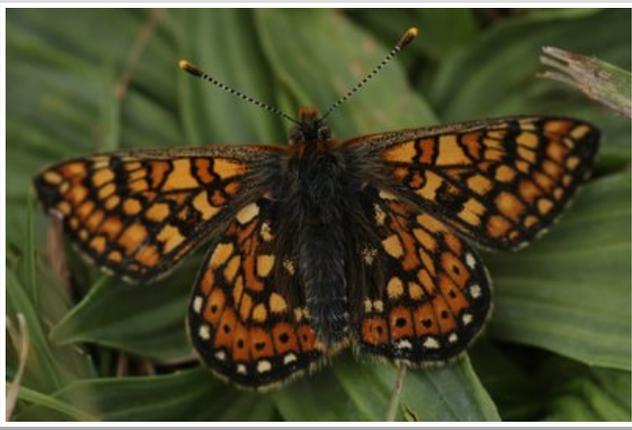


and a mating pair making it a hatrick of lifers this year with a mating sighting 😊



A couple of hours had passed now and since I had also promised my friend a pub lunch we decided to make our way back to the car and have a look around the local town. Now every step was producing more Marshies and we were having to watch where we walked. With so many it's easy to see just how variable they are. Even my friend was noticing the variation between individuals.





About halfway down, as I was photographing a male Common Heath moth



she pointed out a flash of sky blue and a beautiful male Adonis Blue settled next to the path and proceeded to show off for us. He was very accommodating and allowed lots of nice close-ups. He also happened to be my first Adonis for 2015.



And just a little further I found a little Marshie cat trundling casually along the path so it would seem the flight period still has a few more weeks to go!



More to come.... 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 31-May-15 11:32 PM GMT

Don't you just love Marshies now Buggy 😊 I'm delighted your well organised day went well for you 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 01-Jun-15 01:21 AM GMT

I envy you your Marshies Buggy 🍷 I haven't seen them for about 3years now Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

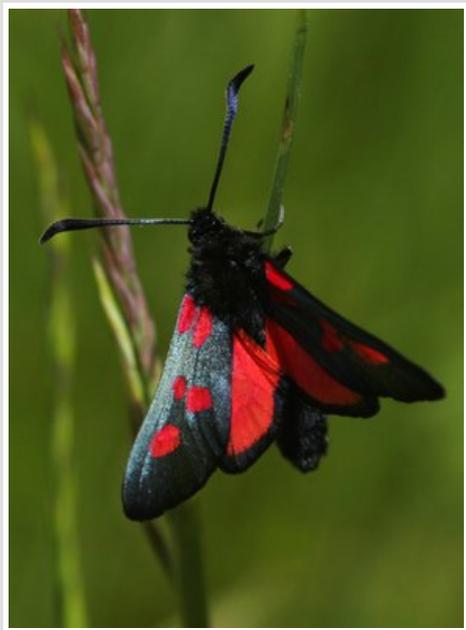
by bugboy, 01-Jun-15 03:42 AM GMT

Thanks Bill 😊

Sorry Goldie..... but here's part 2 of my Marshie trip 😊

'Wurzels Marshie site' 30th may part 2

Being a Londoner it's easy to forget you get more for your money in more rural parts of the country so it was with very full tummies that we returned to the site a few hours later, eager to burn off a few calories! The weather was much improved now, although still blustery, the sun was taking the nip out of it and there were still lots of fresh 5 Spot Burnets around:





The Main attractions were now very active and much more difficult to approach. For such a weak flying, flimsy looking butterfly they seemed to cope well with the wind.



We took a route around the front of the hill this time which seemed a bit more sheltered and we were rewarded with a bounty of species. My friend was doing as good job of spotting them as I was. Marshies were still by far the dominant species but now they were joined by Brown Argus, Adonis Blues, Common Blues, Small Blues, a few very old Dingy Skippers, some Small Heaths and some Green Hairstreaks as well as various whites, a male Orange-tip and a Peacock.

I found a lovely fresh female Adonis and followed her around for a bit.



She was looking to lay, but just like my Duchess a few days ago she vanished into the undergrowth to do the deed leaving me with this rubbish picture!



Oh well.

The male common Blues were all in very good condition,



as were the Small Blues,



and Brown Argus



but the 3 Green hairstreaks varied a little in condition... from



to a little haggard,



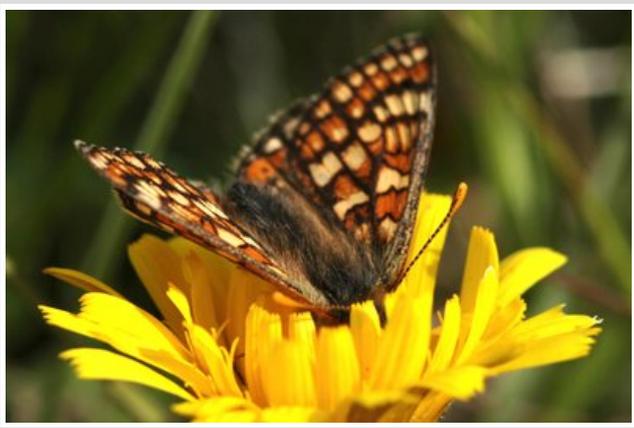
to barely recognisable!



As time wore on we started to think about setting off for the long journey back to London. Making our way back to the path down to where the car was parked I came across another 2015 first, a very fresh male Large Skipper, almost certainly less than 24 hours old.



Thus came the end to another great day out chasing butterflies so I shall end with a few more pictures of the stars of the show 😊







Buggy 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 01-Jun-15 05:16 AM GMT

It's a great site, isn't it, Buggy! I'd say you saw a few more than I did two days earlier, despite Friday's rain and wind in between. Good stuff. 😊

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Jun-15 02:44 AM GMT

After a small accident with boiling hot water and an unprotected foot last night I find myself housebound for a couple of days (phoned in sick today), but having been looking out the window for most the day it doesn't look like I was missing much outside.

Hopefully I shall be properly mobile again in a few days but in the meantime, since we are now half way through the year here's an updated tally of species I've seen so far this year:

- 1 Brimstone
- 2 Small Tortoiseshell
- 3 Red Admiral
- 4 Peacock
- 5 Small White
- 6 Comma
- 7 Green-veined White
- 8 Speckled Wood
- 9 Orange-tip
- 10 Holly Blue
- 11 Large White
- 12 Green Hairstreak (lifer)
- 13 Grizzled Skipper (lifer)
- 14 Dingy Skipper (lifer)
- 15 Small Copper
- 16 Small Heath
- 17 Brown Argus
- 18 Painted Lady
- 19 Pearl-bordered Fritillary (lifer)
- 20 Duke of Burgundy (lifer)
- 21 Wall
- 22 Glanville Fritillary (lifer)
- 23 Common Blue
- 24 Small Blue (lifer)
- 25 Marsh Fritillary (Lifer)
- 26 Adonis Blue
- 27 Large Skipper

It's all going rather well 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 02-Jun-15 05:08 AM GMT

Looks like you're doing very well. That's a great Marsh Fritillary site and you certainly filled your boots with them. I hope your foot heals quickly 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Jun-15 05:56 AM GMT

"Maximus" wrote:

Looks like you're doing very well. That's a great Marsh Fritillary site and you certainly filled your boots with them. I hope your foot heals quickly 😊

Oh it is a fab site and yes I did fill my boots with them. After sifting through and binning all the rubbish I was still left with over 100 pictures of them 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 02-Jun-15 07:46 AM GMT

Great to see another happy customer Buggy! Did you try the Pelican? Geat shots and some really nice variants in there – really like the white spotted one 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 02-Jun-15 10:06 PM GMT

Some great shots Buggy, lots more than me 🍷🍷 lots of lifer's too for you , that's great, Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Paul Harfield, 03-Jun-15 06:48 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy

Just catching up with your diary. Looks like you are having a great season so far (apart from the boiling water incident of course 😬). 8 lifers and a basket full of Marsh Fritillaries, what more could one want. I am very envious 😊😊 Good luck for the rest of the season and hope your foot recovers quickly 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Jun-15 04:34 AM GMT

Hutchinsons Bank 3rd June

I had been planning a long trek down on Box Hill today, having not visited for quite a while, but after my mishap with the hot water and foot I figured a shorter trip closer to home would be a safer bet, so of I went for probably my final fix of Glanvilles for the year. I arrived quite early, around 10.30 and saw nothing for half an hour. The clouds had decided to make their presence felt and only the occasional sunny spell warmed the air for a bit. The odd Dingy Skipper buzzed past and a faded Green Hairstreak made an appearance, briefly settling in front of me:



This one was actually my first one from this site.

Some more wandering revealed not much at all for another half hour or so. An old female Holly Blue made a brief appearance:



and I did disturb this mating pair of Pugs. I've tried identifying them from my books but to be honest I'm still non the wiser as to what species they are, maybe someone else on here will have an idea?



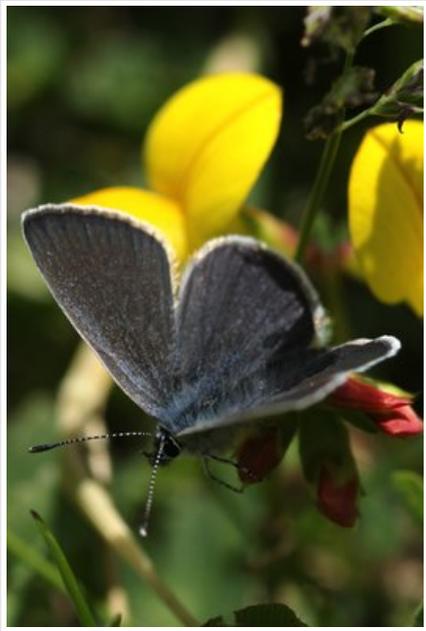
A Green-veined White stopped off for some refreshments:



and a Small Blue settled in front of me, just at the moment the battery in my camera decided to die. He'd bugged off by the time I'd replaced it so, still waiting for the sun to come out properly, I decided to go over to the cutting, one of the sites hot spots.

Just as I arrived the clouds cleared and the temperature soured. A couple of Brimstones were flitting around and I disturbed another nice small blue, this time I got a few shots.





A rather gravid female Cinnabar Moth was flying around, obviously looking for some ragwort on which to lose some weight on!





Still no Glanvilles though so perhaps the short flight season had actually ended. It was nearly noon so I decided to head off and and explore the wood opposite where I found my White Admiral larvae a few months back.

As often happens, just when you decide it's a no show, one appears and one did, a nice fresh male 😊 so just for Wurzel

"Wurzel" wrote:

Enough with the Glannies you're killing me 🙄🙄😞

here's a selection from what will probably be my final encounter this year with an adult Glanville Fritillary.



and as an extra special treat for Wurzel, here's a few attempts at stained glass Glanvilles 😊



The ever present Mrsp0ck made an appearance (he's almost as common as Glanvilles in these parts!) showing another butterfly around and we shared the male for a bit before going our seperate ways.

I still wanted to see if I could find any White Admiral activity in the wood so I spent half an hour wandering around. It's much more overgrown than earlier in the season and I wasn't able to get to most of the honeysuckle without lacarating my legs on the thick Bramble undergrowth. Oh well, I satisfied my curiosity with looking at the other invertebrate life lurking in the undergrowth. There were lots of these funky looking weevils, Hazelnut Weevils I believe.



a Green Shieldbug



and a few Mirid Bugs
this one has a ridiculously long scientific name, *Dryophilocoris flavoquadrimaculatus*



and this one *Rhabdomiris striatellus*, shows it's not just lepidoptera that sometimes have issues expanding their wings



So farewell Glanvilles, look forward to seeing you again next year 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by MrSp0ck, 04-Jun-15 04:55 AM GMT

We had a fresh female glanville later this afternoon, as well as about 4 or 5 fresh males, the female had just emerged [just missed pictures of her expanding her wings] and her first flight was up into a bush. I have put pictures on the June Sightings post.

The Ringlets, Marbled Whites, Dark Green Frits, Meadow Browns are all due out around the 14th so more to add to your list soon

Re: Bugboys mission

by Katrina, 04-Jun-15 05:19 AM GMT

Great Glanville photos too! 😊. I particularly like the first one.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 04-Jun-15 06:34 AM GMT

You can go off people you know Bugboy 🍷 😊 I have come to peace with not seeing Glannies this year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 05-Jun-15 06:02 AM GMT

You've ticked off quite a few lifers thus far in 2015, Bugboy. How many do you have left?

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Jun-15 06:21 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

You've ticked off quite a few lifers thus far in 2015, Bugboy. How many do you have left?

I have 14 left if I stick to the strict 59 UK tally. Next will be the Heath Fritillary and then hopefully White Admiral then that will most probably be it as far as lifers are concerned for this year, it's been a good year so far though 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by MrSp0ck, 05-Jun-15 06:38 AM GMT

You never know a few Pale & Bergers Clouded Yellows and Long Tailed Blue might come over this year. Yellow Legged Torts might also be seen if they have managed to breed or also migrate again this year.

50 Species in the South of the UK is the best i have done in a year.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Jun-15 06:43 AM GMT

Good to know the Glanvilles are still emerging Mrsp0ck, seems like next years generation is secured 😊

Thank you Katrina

hahahaha @ Wurzel. Don't worry, I'm extremely 🍷 at you living close to the WWH (Wurzels Wiltshire Hillside). It was pretty amazing on my day, must be spectacular when you get perfect weather!

Walthamstow Marshes 3rd June

So I got back home quite early and thought I should check out my local patch. Quick check on my Small Tortoiseshell larvae near the entrance revealed they have all dispersed and I could only find one individual. Some others are probably already pupating so only a few weeks to go before I start to see the flash of day glow orange again 😊



Other than that there was buggie all on the butterfly front. I didn't do the whole site, just a meadow which normally has a few Common Blues now. Hopefully this warm spell will wake a few up. Wont be able to have another look until the middle of next week but I live in hope 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 05-Jun-15 06:45 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:

I have 14 left if I stick to the strict 59 UK tally. Next will be the Heath Fritillary and then hopefully White Admiral then that will most probably be it as far as lifers are concerned for this year, it's been a good year so far though

Surely you'll have time for that most venerable late summer species, Brown Hairstreak?

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Jun-15 07:02 AM GMT

Quite possibly. I did see one last year but haven't got a picture of one, therefore it doesn't quite count as a lifer. Although the one I saw was almost certainly a released individual so perhaps the next one I see at a known colony should really count as a lifer..... 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 05-Jun-15 07:04 AM GMT

Irrespective of the provenance of the individual you saw, an audience with this butterfly (particularly the female) is possibly the finest available experience of the UK butterfly enthusiast.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Jun-15 07:21 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

Irrespective of the provenance of the individual you saw, an audience with this butterfly (particularly the female) is possibly the finest available experience of the UK butterfly enthusiast.

As was proved as I gazed at her for over a minute with a fully working, yet completely forgotten, camera hanging round my neck!

Re: Bugboys mission

by keving, 06-Jun-15 04:00 AM GMT

Buggy,

Enjoying your diary, but slightly envious of your list of species seen. I'm floundering behind you at present



Hope to improve by one this weekend with a Swallowtail at Strumpshaw Fen.

Keep em coming

Regards Kev

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Jun-15 05:40 AM GMT

Thanks kev, you might be able to catch me up on a few species over the next few days, working til next wednesday so no time for butterflying, and the weathers taking a massive turn for the better! 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Jun-15 07:09 AM GMT

Box Hill & Denbies

A few days at work and not much time to catch up on here never mind actual butterflying. My few brief visits on here have left me desperate to get back out in th field with lovely imagies of Swallowtails, Heath Fritillaries and 'exotic' Poplar Admirals!

Today had been forcast as improving weatherwise and since I haven't been to Box Hill for a fair few weeks that was the chosen destination. No particular species in mind but I was hoping for perhaps an early Dark Green Fritillary.

It was rather chilly when I got there at around 9, a few chinks of blue in the see of cloud not doing much to raise the temperature but the weather people had promised it would burn off and reach the dizzy heights of 20 degrees. A good 10 minute hike up the side of the hill soon put paid to the chill but it took another hour or so for the first butterfly to show up as the blue chinks in the clouds started to become a little more numerous. As is now becoming pretty much standard for 2015, there was a 'stiff breeze' blowing so it's no surprise my first butterfly was hunkered low down, a worn but still attractive female Common Blue



This was quickly followed up by an equally worn male



and then a second, fresher female



When I stood up I realised I was standing right next to a Buckthorn and a bit of searching amongst the nibbled leaves revealed 3 Brimstone cats of which this one was the largest:



I think I'm right in saying the glistening golden droplets at the tip of each hair are akin to honeydew?

A little further on I came across a beautifully fresh male Large Skipper



After feeding he settled and seemed to have a bit of fluff stuck to his tongue, he kept coiling and extending it. I tried to catch him mid uncoiling and am totally gutted he slipped out of focus as I took this shot, so close yet so far (I blame the wind 😞!)



Moving further along the bank where you can find Silver Spotted Skippers later in the year I felt I was being watched:



I believe I was being judged on my fitness level, and when the pair decided to carry on doing Pheasantry things it would seem they had concluded (quite rightly) that I was too unfit to run up the hill and make a grab for them.... 😞😞

The promised sun still wasn't making much of an impression, indeed the cloud seemed to be thickening. I did see a couple more Common Blue males and 1 Brown Argus so I started to make my way back and head over to Denbies for the afternoon, hoping Susie's little mantra that it never lets you down would rescue the day. I stopped of briefly to check on the Brimstones and the larger one had moved to have a little snack:



The walk to Denbies, as I've mentioned before is a pleasant hour, a couple of Speckled Woods appeared in a brief sunny spell



and there were lots of these little fellas hiding in plain sight on Hogweed leaves, Speckled Bush Cricket nymphs



An hour later I arrived at the promised land with no sign of a change in the weather. As I passed through the gate onto the hillside a couple of photographers were packing up their gear. We chatted for a bit, they had been here since 9 and had hardly seen any butterflies and had instead been 'chasing' Orchids. As they left a large gap in the clouds arrived, I turned to continue my walk and immediately 4 Small Heaths flew up and I saw a female Common Blue looking to lay



Denbies never fails 😊

It was still windy but gradually, very gradually the blue sky became more prominent. In the end I spent 2 hours roaming the Hillside, disturbing lots of Small Heaths and aged Adonis Blues as well as Burnet Campion Moths by the bucket load.



there's something about male Adonis Blues, they still manage to look good even when worn and tired looking! Still, you can't turn down a nice fresh female 😊



A male Clouded Buff moth lead me a merry dance as I tried and failed to get a decent picture, not the most approachable moth at all!



and a lace Border settled low down in the grass giving me a challenge



Despite all this butterfly action the highlight of my day though was floral, I've never seen a Bee Orchid before so I was very happy to see several in full flower 😊



I needed to leave at 3 which was very upsetting since the clouds had mostly vanished and the temperature was easily above 20 now. But I dragged myself off just as a male Meadow Brown appeared, himself being dragged along in the wind. I followed him for a bit in the hope of getting a pic but I couldn't get close enough even for a record shot. Still another 2015 first 😊 .

The walk back was full of Speckled Woods now. Stopping to try and get one posing on some bracken I noticed a chink of red out the corner of my eye, a Red admiral had sneaked in to get some rays. He was a bit lively so didn't manage anything close but judging by his condition he must have been a recent arrival from the continent



I came across another continental visitor a while later in the form of this Silver Y, frantically feeding from Horseshoe Vetch



So a mixed day, not the best days butterflying but far from the worst. Just hope the sun continues to shine since I have 5 days off coming up with a planned trip to see Heath Fritillaries and we all know how much they dislike a cloudy day!

Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlng, 12-Jun-15 03:11 AM GMT

Buggie,

I like the second Adonis photo with it casting it's shadow on the ground below. Nice 😊

Regards Kev

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Jun-15 04:57 AM GMT

Thanks kev,

Took a few shots playing with the shadow, that was my favourite one 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 13-Jun-15 05:58 AM GMT

Cracking proboscis shots on the Large Skipper Bugboy 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Jun-15 07:21 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

Cracking proboscis shots on the Large Skipper Bugboy 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Cracking as long as you don't enlarge it and see how out of focus it is! 😞

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 13-Jun-15 06:27 PM GMT

Although the weather has'nt been at it's kindest this summer your species list is still looking very impressive...enjoy these first species sightings Buggy they will remain with you for ever 😊

Regards,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Jun-15 04:34 AM GMT

Thanks Bill, lots more memories still to be had 😊

Chobham Common

I had intended to browse my local patch over the weekend but the thick grey clouds had put me off saturday and with a birthday celebration at a cocktail bar that evening, sunday was definately not going to happen even if the weather was good so that was spent in a darkened room watching Dinosaurs eat other dinosaurs and people, eating junk food!

Today however, I felt substantially better and I was after Silver-studded Blues (and hopefully a bit of birding as well, primarily after the Dartford warbler). The weather forecast claimed cloudy, then sunny then clouding over again so I figured an early start to get there to catch any sun that appeared. I got there a little after 8 and yes it was rather cloudy and although not too cold, I wasn't expecting to see any butterflies for an hour or two. Birding it was then and so off I went. I had familiarised myself with the Dartfords call the night before and it didn't take me long at all to locate one. After that, as often happens when you know what you're looking for, they were everywhere (or one was stalking me). I only managed one long distant shot, but it's clear enough to be identifiable so I'm happy with it



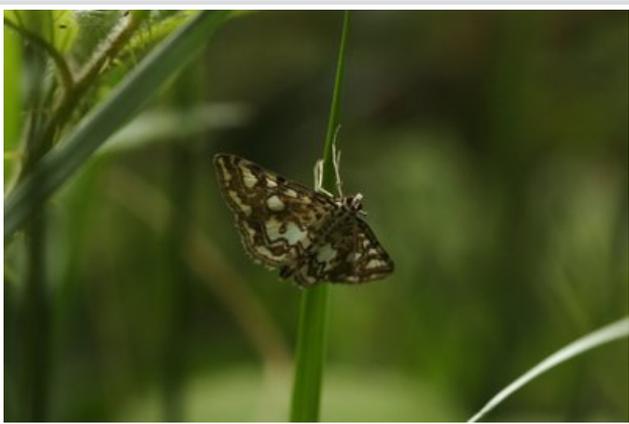
The clouds took a long time to thin, but it was becoming brighter. I wandered around keeping my eye's peeled for any flash of blue but only saw Common Heath Moths for the first few hours, constantly tormenting me in my perepheral vision.



I've no idea what these beetles are but there were lots of them peppered over a young birch tree



A shallow pond drew my attention. Hoping for some Odonata action several small moths flew up as I walked towards the edge. As usual I needed to know what I'd seen so I followed one a short distance and found a lovely Brown China-mark Moth 😊



Also nearby was a male Longhorn moth



Nemophora degeerella

Sometime after this I did finally see my first butterfly of the day, a Small Heath, the first of many. This one giving me a teasing glimpse of upperside



As usual they did that 'Small Heath trick' of finding that one annoying blade of grass to hide behind!



The sun was out properly by 11 but still no blue of any description. Lots of Heaths of every description though, Small, Common and a Latticed. There were also lots of Stonechats. Several times I found myself being scalded by them, obviously having absent mindedly having wandered near a nest.





Shortly after these pictures I did actually see a blue, a male who was on a mission to get somewhere and was in no mood to sit and let me know what it was, I was hoping he had some silvery studs and was the first of many.

Just after noon I finally found a slightly less active Blue and managed a record shot or two (one of which was horridly over exposed and no longer exists!)



Then he was off, quite likely the same one as I had seen before. More wandering around only revealed more Heaths and since I had covered quite a large portion of the site I began to think I was a week or two early for the Silver-studs here 😊. Oh well, it was still a nice day and I had ticked off an avian lifer 😊

I set off on a slow meander back to the train station and stopped at another pool. Now it was sunny there were lots of damselflies, blue ones who never settled close enough to ID (too blue to be anything other than Common Blue or Azure though), and several Large Red including a pair in tandem which I followed and watched as the female attached her abdomen to form the unique Odonata mating posture 😊







A little further on I stumbled across another blue. This one was definitely not in a rush to go anywhere so I figured I had finally got my chance to get some Silver-studded closeups. I watched as he fluttered around some Birds-foot Trefoil, almost female like, presumably looking for one, maybe a female was emerging in the undergrowth as I watched 😊 and then he landed...



It was sometime more before he.....she opened her wings to bask revealing why I had been mistaken



She was obviously looking to lay and although there was quite a large patch of lush Birds-foot Trefoil in full sun she really wasn't happy with it for some reason and finally found some scrappy, trodden on *Medicago* sp. at the side of the path 😊

well after this I continued my walk back stopping off at the first pond I had visited. Loads of Blue Damselflies now, this time I could ID some as Azure Damselflies, this is a young female:



I was also rather pleased to find something I last saw as a kid, a Green Tortoise Beetle 😊 very cute



This tiny micro moth also caught my eye in the grass and when I got the macro lense on it, it really sparkled even in the shade!



Glyphipterix thrasonella

I played a little game of chase with a Green Tiger Beetle, They're tricky little buggers!



and just as I was leaving the site another Blue made an appearance, this one turned out to be a male Common.



So not quite what I was intending but a good day nonetheless....tomorrow Blean Wood and Heath Fritillary and the weather forecast looks perfect!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 16-Jun-15 07:07 AM GMT

Good luck with the Heaths Buggy. I was there on Sunday and they were in good numbers 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 17-Jun-15 09:16 PM GMT

You got your digi-cam on overtime Buggy, its great to see all those critters your capturing!!!

Cheers,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Jun-15 12:57 AM GMT

"Willow" wrote:

You got your digi-cam on overtime Buggy, its great to see all those critters your capturing!!!

Cheers,

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

If it moves but sits still long enough it'll get its picture taken by me! 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 18-Jun-15 01:07 AM GMT

Hi! Bugboy just catching up on postings, interesting photo's of the moths buggy, They seem to have done very well this year so far in spite of the weather Goldie 😊

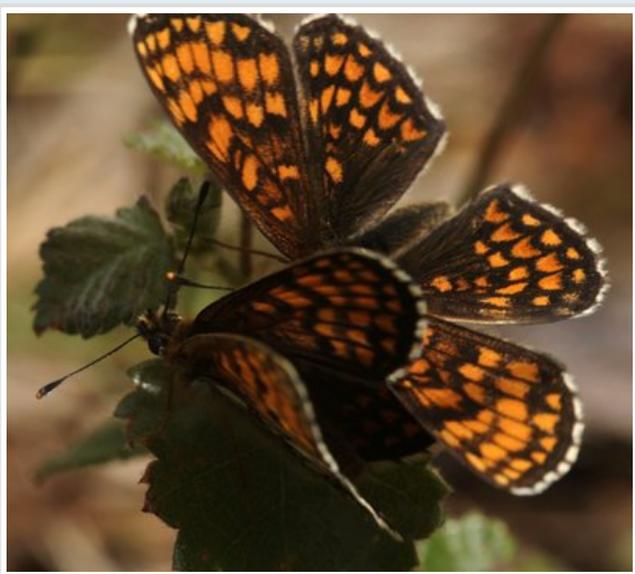
Re: Bugboys mission

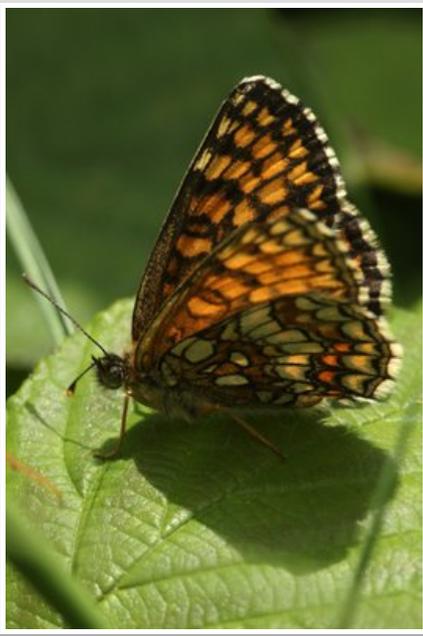
by bugboy, 18-Jun-15 01:29 AM GMT

East Blean Wood, 16th June

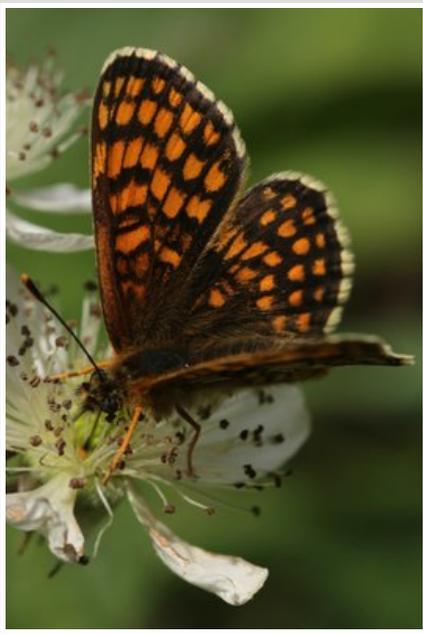
This was another one of my trips organised weeks in advance with the help of another work colleague. She lives in Kent and when she heard I was trying to see and photograph every UK species she asked if I wanted to see 'those butterflies in Blean Wood'. Well I was hardly likely to turn that offer down! Just like the build up to Wurzels Wiltshire Hillside trip I was keeping a close eye on the forecast and when the day arrived I was very pleased to find the weather seemed perfect.

A half hour train ride to my friends home town and then an hour and half drive across Kent got us to the wood at 10.30. Armed with **Kevlings** ...edit **Philzoids** directions, within 5 minutes we found the clearing and I found myself surrounded by pretty little orange and black butterflies. This year they are centred a short walk from the car park in an area of coppiced Sweet Chestnut. The car had told us it was around 19 degrees with the sun flitting in and out of the cloud as much as the butterflies were flitting around me. My first impression of Heath Fritillaries is one of a rather carefree butterfly, not too bothered by your presence and constantly investigating each other. Unlike some species (whites in particular), the males seem to get the message 'NO means NO' from the females rather quickly!





The only nectar source here was Bramble flowers and you only had to stand and focus on a flower for a short time for one or two to appear in frame.



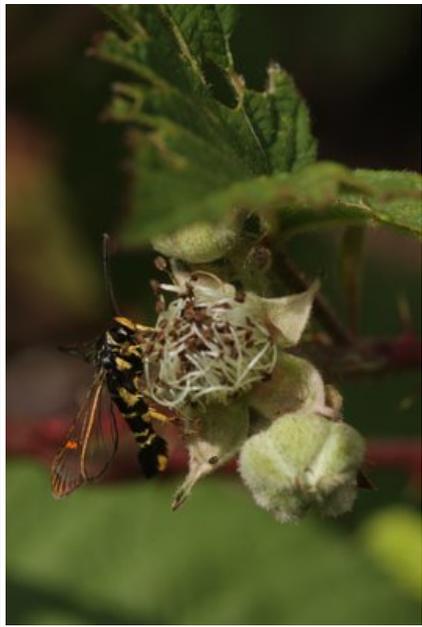


I probably saw similar numbers as **Kevling** edit again.. **Philzoid** and **Wurzel** two days before (unsurprisingly), around 40 or so. Whilst prowling I found the same little Micro Moth **Kevling**... no **Philzoid** saw, I wonder if it was the same individual?



Dasycera oliviella

I also saw a rather spiffing yellow-legged Clearwing moth, both these species are lifers for me.



I did a little bit of research on both when I got home and they are both species which benefit from a managed coppiced woodland which just shows the benefit of focusing on a 'flagship species' such as the Heath Fritillary to maintain a species rich ecosystem.

The floor of the area was alive with Wood Ants but as long as you don't lay down too long or stand on an actual nest they don't bother you too much, I never got bitten.



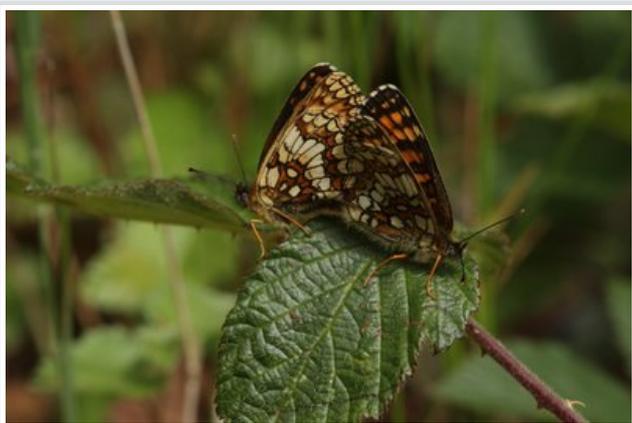
I am curious as to what prevents the Fritillary eggs and larvae from being eaten by the ants, are they distasteful to them?

I stayed in the glade for an hour and half, which literally flew by before taking a break for lunch back at the car park. As we left a couple came by asking for directions to the Heaths so we happily pointed them to the clearing. Whilst eating a female Holly Blue made a brief appearance.



The only other species of Butterfly I saw was a fleeting sighting of a male Meadow Brown.

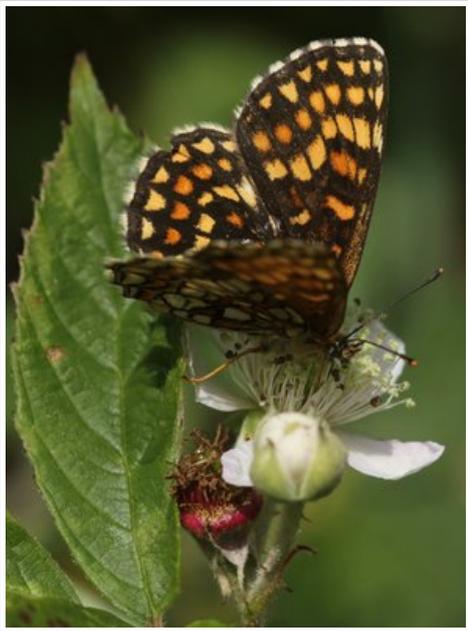
15 minutes later I was back, we had to leave by 1 due to some commitments my friend had, so I was determined to make the most of my time here. The couple were still there and had found a mating pair, the only mating pair I saw, so we all took turns getting some snaps of them.



I carefully moved them onto a rotten log to get some different shots (the butterflies, not the couple). Initially side on to the sun but they quickly turned so they were head on to the sun, probably to avoid overheating whilst in their somewhat compromised situation.

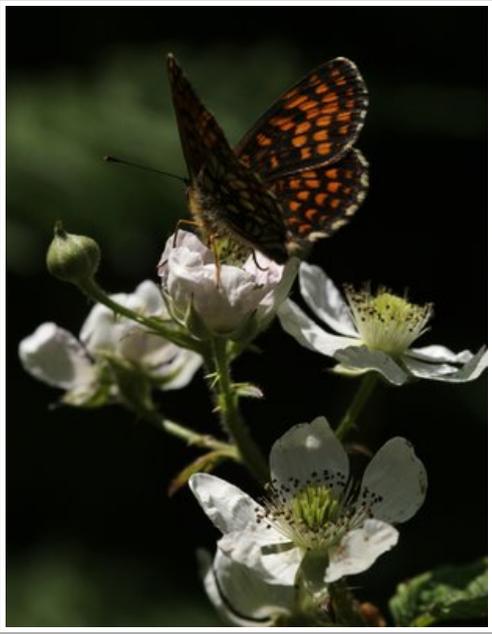


There was quite a variety of markings, some very dark and some very orange and this one doing a pretty good impression of a Marsh Fritillary (I think Neil Freeman found a similar looking one on his Cornish hols).



It was very hard to tear myself away when 1pm approached, it had warmed up considerably and as I walked back to the car park the Fritillaries seemed to be dispersing, several were now flying up and down the paths. So ended yet another wonderful butterflying day 😊





Playing hide and seek :)

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Jun-15 03:09 AM GMT

16th June cont.

Just a little addendum to the day.

Since it was still early my friend dropped me off at Sevenoaks Nature Reserve to kill a few hours before setting off home. The sun had mostly vanished behind clouds now and I only saw one butterfly, a female Speckled Wood but in the few sunny spells there were a lot of Damselflies took to the air, Blue-tailed and Common Blue and a gorgeous Cardinal Beetle sat quietly whilst I shoved my camera into his face! A nice end to a wonderful day 😊







Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Jun-15 07:31 AM GMT

17th June, Walthamstow Marshes

Another warm day predicted and my last day off before a run of 5 days at work so I figured relaxed strole around my local patch was in order. Well it turned out very warm but also very muggy, not as sunny as I was hoping for but on arriving I was pleased to find that the Common Blues had at last appeared, although judging by the condition of some, they have been around for a week or two 🐞





A Blue damselfly caught my eye, it looked different to the normal ones I see (Common Blue and Azure). I managed to get some pics good enough to highlight some distinguishing features and when I got back home it turned out to be a blue form female of the Common Blue Damselfly, never seen that form before.....knowingly at any rate.



A little further on I came across another brownish blue fluttering around, my first instinct was a Small Blue due to it's size but I quickly came to my senses and plumped (correctly) for a rather small female Common Blue. When she settled I could see just how tiny she was, barely larger than an averaged sized Small Blue.





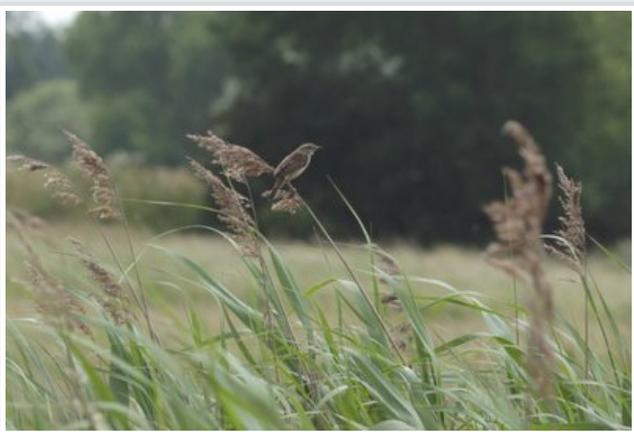
Also buzzing around were a couple of Large Skippers but only managed one long distance snap.



I didn't see anything else for sometime, not even a white or Meadow Brown. Lots of these noisy buggers shouting at the top of their lungs though!



Sedge Warbler



Sedge Warbler

Whilst watching the sedge Warblers a flash of bright orange flew by and settled on the walkway. A very fresh Small Tortoiseshell 🐞. So fresh it was still confused as to what it was to be a butterfly, trying to feed from the dry wood and only landing to bask in the shade.



The only reason I caught it in the sun was because the breeze blew the reeds out the way!



With not much more happening I decided to take the short walk over to Abney Park Cemetary. It was rather quiet here too, an hours walk only throwing up 5 Speckled Wood, none of whome were in the mood to be photographed but I did get my first sighting of a *hutchinsoni* Comma.



Back at the Marshes I had another look at the Blue site and found a few more individuals, at least 7, 5M and 2F.



Just as I was leaving I caught a glimpse of something on some Hogweed. On closer inspection I saw a very pretty little micro moth.



Nemophora fasciella



Nemophora fasciella

Turns out it is a rather localised species. No idea if its been recorded here before but I sent of the pictures to my local BC branch 😊

Fingers crossed the 'June gap' ends soon and things have livened up again next time I find time for a local wander 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 19-Jun-15 03:41 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

Your day at East Blean turned out to be as good as ours a couple of weeks ago They used to fly in the car park, but that area has become overgrown.

You have certainly been busy lately,well done 😊 .

All the best,

TREVOR.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Philzoid, 19-Jun-15 11:27 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy

"bugboy" wrote:

Whilst prowling I found the same little Micro Moth Kevling saw, I wonder if it was the same individual?

Hi Bugboy. Did "Kevling" see the same moth as the one I reported on the June sightings page two days earlier 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Jun-15 12:32 AM GMT

"Philzoid" wrote:

Hi Bugboy

"bugboy" wrote:

Whilst prowling I found the same little Micro Moth Kevling saw, I wonder if it was the same individual?

Hi Bugboy. Did "Kevling" see the same moth as the one I reported on the June sightings page two days earlier 😊

hahahahaha 😂 in my excitement I've gone completely mad! Sorry Phil for not crediting you and ummm sorry Kevling but you get no credit for my trip..... oh this is really awkward now..... 😞😞😞

Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlng, 20-Jun-15 02:00 AM GMT

Buggie,

You at least gave me a few hours of recognition 😊

In the immortal words of poet Brendan Behan "All publicity is good, except an obituary notice" 😊

Regards Kev

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 20-Jun-15 06:54 AM GMT

Cracking Heaths Buggy 😊 Only 8 posts to go and then I'll be posting mine 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 22-Jun-15 01:32 AM GMT

Your leading a hectic life now your into critters big time Buggy... 😊 I'm enjoying your reports.

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-Jun-15 02:13 AM GMT

Thanks Bill, I've always been into my little critters, it's just that grown up things took over in recent years. I'm glad I'm making time to rediscover my long lost childhood passions again and with the added bonus of having this outlet to share my obsessions 😊

Have to say though, this being my first full summer on this site, keeping up with everyone's diaries is a job in itself, I'm way behind most of you but I will make time to sit down and catch up on what everyone's been up to 😊

Anyway, back to me!

Epping Forest, 23rd June.

I've not been here since April when I was after the overwintering adults but today I was after some Browns. I've only had a few fleeting encounters with Meadow Browns and I was also hoping for an early Ringlet or two. The weather seemed questionable but I ventured out anyway.

After running a few errands I hopped on the train and got to the site at around 11.30. It was cloudy but brightening up now which seemed perfect for Browns and 10 minutes of searching I saw my first butterflies centred around a patch of bramble in a clearing. A meadow Brown settled high up but a Speckled Wood and Large Skipper both posed for me.



It was a while before I saw anything else. Heading for a meadow seemed like the best course of action and it proved quite fruitful. The first butterflies I saw where Small Heaths, several individuals all females and all looking very freshly emerged. The bright cloudy light really brought out the colours in them.



So fluffy :)

After chasing these around for a while a couple of male Meadow Browns joined the party. Again these looked very fresh. The supple way the wings bent when they crawled through the grass indicated they were probably less than 24 hours old. They weren't overly approachable, being normal Meadow Browns, but I managed to sneak up a couple of times after they 'flopped' down into the grass. They were obviously still learning how to use their new wings!



There were also quite a few Common Blue Damselflies flitting around (there's a lake not far away).

Leaving them to get on with whatever they were up to I moved on into the wood and in another clearing I found a Large Skipper slowly climbing up a grass stem. It too looked very fresh but before I could get a snap it took flight and landed high up in some Sallow. A long distant snap revealed my first female Large Skipper of the year, almost certainly having just taken her maiden flight.



A short walk over to the nearby lake, Connaught Water, to see what was there revealed blue clouds of Damselflies whenever the clouds parted to allow a chink of sunshine through. They were mostly Common Blue Damselflies. I did flush up a Red Admiral, no chance for a photo though. This area is popular with dog walkers and even on a week day it can be quite busy in good weather so it's not the best place to try for butterfly pictures but I am also partial to dragonflies and damselflies 😊. There was a male Black-tailed Skimmer living up to his name, skimming back and forth over the water. There was also a Common Tern, lazily flying around, very graceful birds. I tried (and failed) to get some shots as he dipped into the water for some morsel of food several times.



So close yet so out of focus!



A little further on a pair of Red Eyed Damselflies in tandem got swept past me in a gust of wind and settled in the grass allowing me plenty of time to get some nice shots.



I moved them onto a tree trunk after so they didn't get squished





Anyway, back to butterflies!

With sun beginning to make brief appearances things were livening up a bit, Large Skippers and Meadow browns popping up often now, usually in the vicinity of bramble. As a bit of variety a gorgeous Small Tortoiseshell also showed up and a bit further on from this a Painted Lady was seen but didn't settle long enough for a photo.



Making the return journey, the blue sky now dominated and the Skippers and Browns were much more common and active.



A rather attractive Hoverfly caught my eye



Chrysotoxum sp.

I found several Emperor Dragonflies hawking over a meadow, a female settled briefly a few times but flew up when I got too close so I only managed a couple of distant shots.



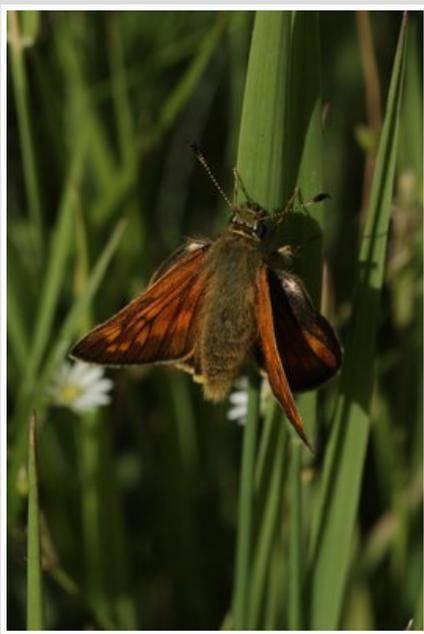
Back at the first meadow I visited, Small Heaths were very common, easily into double figures and I was lucky enough to catch sight of this pair nestled low down in the grass.



They turned out to be very amenable to being moved to a more photogenic location but always moved out of position when I was about to take that 'perfect snap' so I settled with what I had and left them too it.

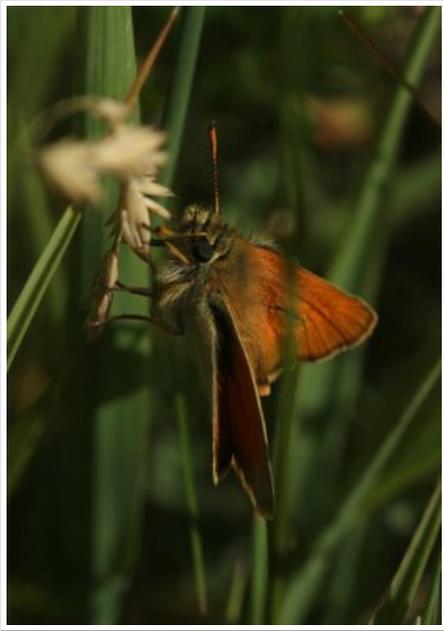


Lots of large Skippers bounded over the grass, including another lovely female.



Then a smaller brighter orange one appeared. I presumed it to be a Small Skipper and tracked it for some time as I waited for it to land. When it did I approached it slowly then quickly took a couple of record snaps before moving in closer to get more. Unfortunately a passing Large Skipper scuppered that plan and it vanished in a blur of orange. Looking at the pics on my camera the tips of the antennae looked very dark, **Essex Skip** dark but then getting home and looking at it properly I was further confused by the scent mark which looked very **Small Skip**. I did manage to convince myself it was

an Essex Skipper but I left it up to the experts on here to have the final say, he was a Small Skipper!



Species #31 for the year 😊

So no Ringlets but I can't really complain, it was still a lovely day and there's always tomorrow 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 25-Jun-15 04:45 AM GMT

Very comprehensive and interesting report Buggy, its incredible how we seem to return to childhood passions, even when other passions interrupt 🤪

BW's

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

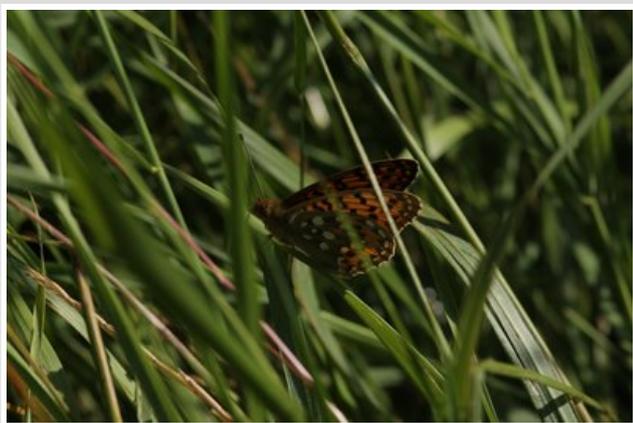
Re: Bugboys mission

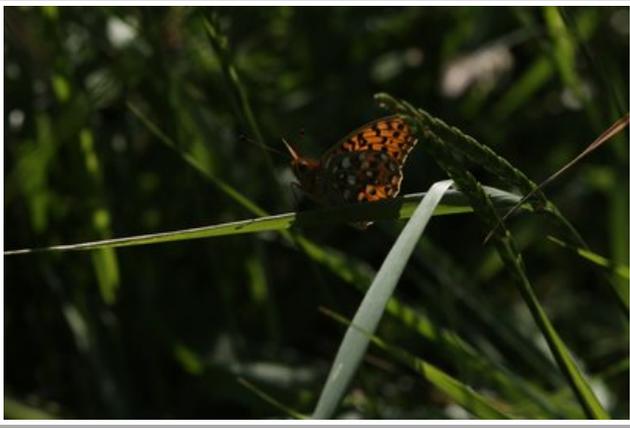
by bugboy, 26-Jun-15 03:58 AM GMT

Isn't it just Bill 😊

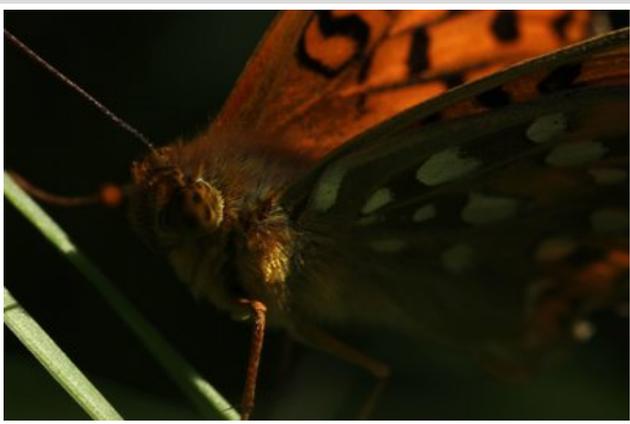
Box Hill, 24th June. (Part 1)

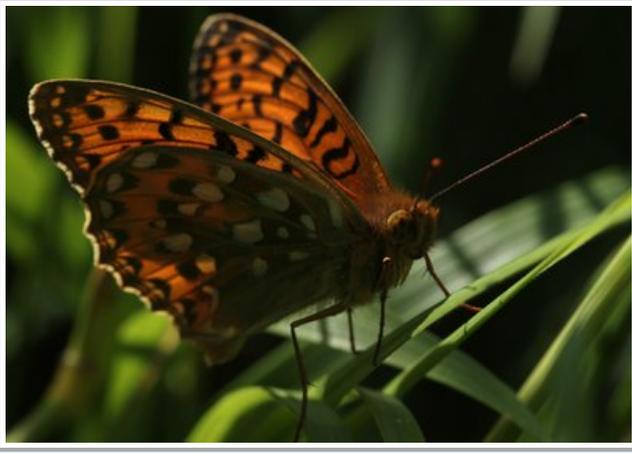
Box Hill had been calling me for a few days and with a good forecast for my day off this week an early start was the order of the day. Hopping on the train to Box Hill I arrived at 9 and followed my usual route by starting at Burford Meadow at the base of the Hill. It didn't take long for one of my target species of the day to welcome me, when I say welcome I mean completely ignore me and sit on the top of a huge bank of bramble having breakfast, well out of reach of even a record shot but a minute or so later another large orange butterfly flew past me. This Dark Green Fritillary did allow a few record shots but refused to allow me to get closer and neither did the next two or three.





A few male Meadow Browns were flitting around but it was the Fritillaries I was after today. The fourth (or maybe it was the fifth) one I saw was a lot more welcoming to me. After a few more distant shots I carefully crept up closer until I was up under his nose. He even allowed me to move those few annoying bits of grass between me and him and after 10 minutes I got shots from nearly every angle before he finally decided to go on his way. This was my first proper view of a fresh DGF and very impressive they are too!





I find it very difficult to walk past a Banded Demoiselle without feeling the need to take a snap....



It was now time for what has become a familiar climb up the side of the Hill. Let's say it's very 'invigorating', it certainly gets the blood pumping that's for sure. It's always worth it though, the view across the downs and over to Dorking on a clear day is wonderful. Welcoming me onto the first steep south facing down was a Marbled White lazily fluttering by, my first of the year and my second target species of the day. As I looked down several more appeared and walking down I noticed they were very attracted to a Privet in full flower. I'm so used to seeing them on thistles and Knapweeds in a grassy setting they looked quite odd settled on it. They were quite approachable though.



Another DGF was racing around like a mad thing and a Small Tortoiseshell very nearly took my head off on its mission to get somewhere yesterday! Meadow Browns were the only other butterflies flying here but they weren't playing.

I moved onto to 'The Whites', the ridge of chalk which is the backbone of Box Hill. More Meadow Browns were the first I saw here, with a sprinkling of Large Skippers and then More Marbled Whites, in a more familiar setting.



Also zooming around were several more DGF, at least 4, all males again. These ones were more flighty than my friend earlier but I managed a few when they settled as a cloud passed over. This one was busy vibrating its wings to stay warm in readiness for a quick getaway.



A quick experiment with flash produced an interesting comparison.



and then he was gone again!

After filling up on these I moved on towards the meadow where the Silver Spotted Skippers will be seen later in the year, next to zigzag road. Stepping out of the hedge and walking down the steps several dark browns were flitting around, initially I took them for more Meadow Browns but very quickly I worked out I was seeing my first Ringlets of the year. I only managed a few pics when they settled as a passing cloud darkened the sky.



More DGF were bombing around like loons. Again four or five males, not a sniff of a female yet and I'm sure if there was one these fellas would have sniffed her out long before I found her! I was luckily enough to have another close encounter, this one obviously been around for a day or two.



So thats the first 2 1/2 hours covered, more later 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 26-Jun-15 05:43 AM GMT

Great DGFs Bugboy 🐛, hopefully I'll be able to pick some up this weekend weather permitting.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 26-Jun-15 06:03 AM GMT

Great shots, Buggy – I wonder why I didn't bump into you yesterday as I covered a fair bit of the same ground during early afternoon. I noticed how the Marbled Whites were going for the privet flowers more than usual too. That didn't stop every knapweed having one perched on it of course!

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 26-Jun-15 06:54 AM GMT

cheears guys, yea we must have only just missed each other Dave.

It must be that the Knapweeds are only just coming into flower so not enough to go around yet.

Anyway

Box Hill, 24th June. (Part 2)

I wandered further down the hill, towards the road, stopping occasionally to admire the relentless DGF's in their ongoing search for an emerging female. I found my first female Meadow Brown of the year, hiding from male attention no doubt!



I thought I'd check on the Brimstone larvae on the Buckthorn and walking over to it a large dark butterfly practically dropped out the sky right in front of me. I managed just a couple of quick shots of the pristine Red Admiral before she took off and vanished with a few flaps of her wings.



At the Buckthorn there were lots of visible eating damage and a few small cats. I had a search for some pupae but no sign, obviously that doesn't mean I wasn't looking at several in plain sight!



Something else caught my eye whilst searching. It looked like a bird dropping but on closer inspection it had a caterpillar's head. The fact it's sitting on a silk pad on the centre rib strongly suggests it used to be a Brimstone. Now it is a pupal case for a parasitic wasp. It's very interesting that the wasp's silk cocoon is patterned to resemble a bird dropping.



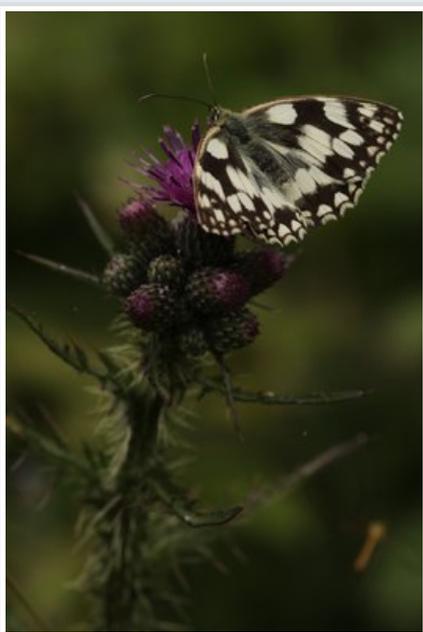
Just a few steps on and a tiny butterfly rose from around my feet. It settled quickly again and saw that it was an aged Small Blue, still clinging onto life.



Two more flitted around, close to the road.

Walking further on a very old male Common Blue appeared and vanished just as quickly, numbers of species were piling up today!

Passing a few more DGF and lots more MW...



...I planned to try my luck and head to the Silver Washed Frit hotspot I found last year.

There were at least three Fritillaries flying around, but to 'flappy' to be SWF and some closer inspection confirmed they too were DGF. A haggard Peacock showed for a time and a couple of Brimstones were still flying. Another Red admiral was feeding on some dry poo!



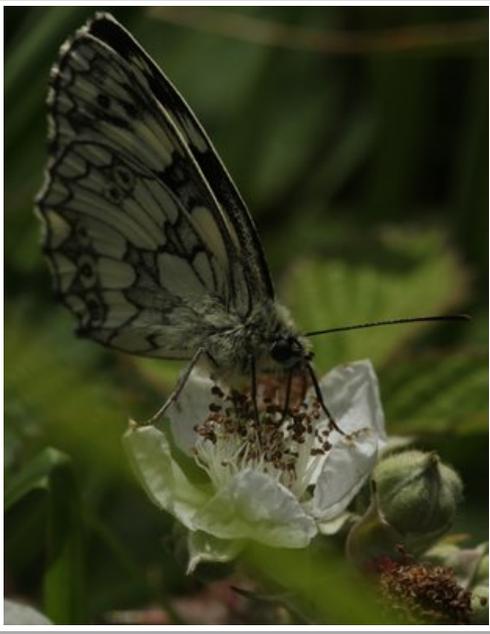
and some Rose Chafers were having a little party on a privet flower head 😊



I made my way back through the woods, hoping for an early White Admiral but no sign, maybe a week or two.

Coming out onto the meadow above zigzag road were more MW feeding on brambles who happily posed and Ringlets who didn't.





Then a pair of Brimstones appeared, the female quite obviously not in the least bit interested in the male's desperate advances.



She even managed to multitask by feeding whilst giving him the cold shoulder 🤨



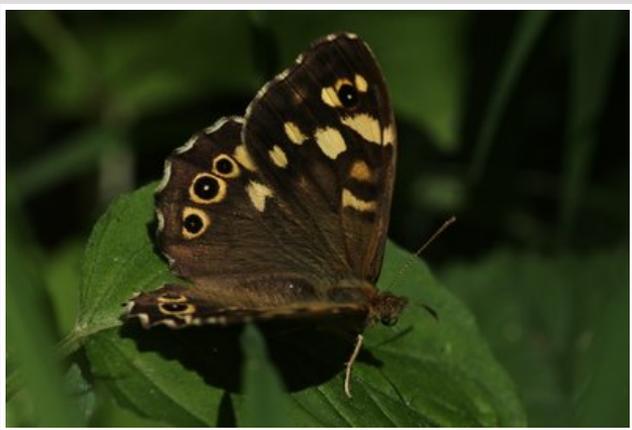
She was obviously well practised at ignoring males!

I left them to it after getting a few in-flight action shots, I got the feeling she was in for a long afternoon!

The DGF were still shooting about, even more active now it was early afternoon and MW, Ringlets and Meadow Browns flitted over the meadow and I found a mating pair who did everything possible to avoid being photographed!



Having had a very good day so far I decided to leave early, hoping to miss the hideousness that is the London rush hour but one last butterfly caught my eye walking up towards the visitor centre, a gorgeously marked female Speckled Wood



12 species in one day, I think we can safely say the June gap has passed!

I'll leave you with my fav pics of DGF and MW 😊



Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 26-Jun-15 07:28 AM GMT

That's a nice female MW to finish, Buggy. I don't think I managed to track a female down all day. 🍷

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 26-Jun-15 07:39 AM GMT

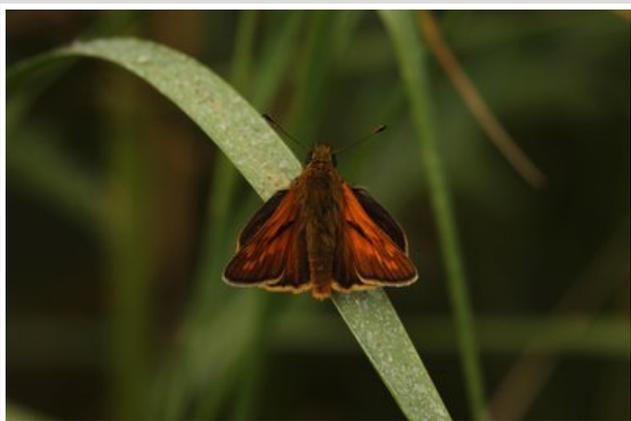
Thanks Dave, yes they were mostly males but I did find a few females lurking. With all the males it's no wonder they were a little reluctant to be more obvious!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Jun-15 04:49 AM GMT

Walthamstow Marshes 26th June

An early finish from work today meant I was able to sneak an hour on my local patch. I turned up at the top meadow, where the Common Blues hang out and was greeted by many small orange things buzzing around. The large Skippers were quite approachable



but the smaller brighter ones weren't playing ball at all. they didn't settle for longer than a few seconds even to feed and when I did manage a photo I couldn't get an angle for a positive ID 😞



Small or Essex?



Small or Essex?

I was pretty sure I was seeing both **Small** and **Essex** not only from the brief glimpses I was getting but also the behaviour. Sometimes when two met they would zoom off as Skippers do, either battling or courting but other times they would briefly circle each other before going their separate ways, presumably these were an **Essex/Small** meeting.

I finally got my chance at a positive ID with a courting pair



Small Skippers

Following another one for sometime it finally landed long enough for another positive ID, confirming my suspicions



male Essex



male Essex

No confusion this time as to what species I was looking at!

I followed this one some more and watched as it briefly met another one before landing again, except I had unknowingly switched Skippers



Female Small

Further confirming my suspicions on the behaviour I was seeing. There's no way on Gods green earth a male skipper would have virtually ignored a female if it were the same species!

So **Essex Skipper**, species #35 for the year 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 28-Jun-15 07:09 AM GMT

Essex Skippers now things are moving along nicely, but it'll be about a week until they turn up over my way. Nice shots by the way 😊📷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-Jun-15 04:30 AM GMT

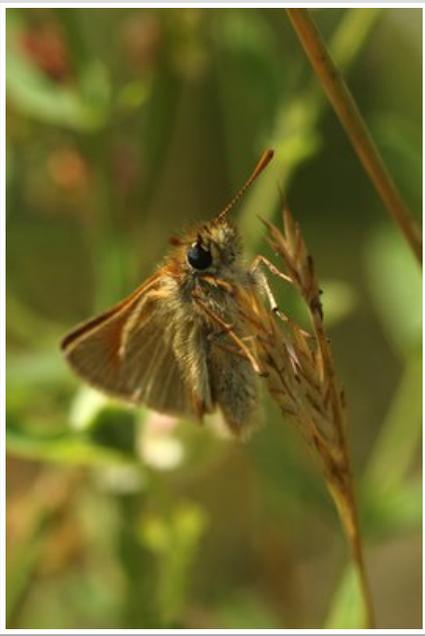
Thanks Wurzel 😊

Chiltons 27th June

Today I planned to go hunting for Duke larvae, and to see what was flying on the way. So a half hour train ride to tring and then a browse around Aldbury Nowers Nature Reserve to see how that had evolved since I last visited. Last time I was here it was alive with Dingy and Grizzled Skippers, Common Blues, Brown Argus and other springtime inhabitants. Now there were clouds of Marbled White and Ringlets, probably over a 100 of each species with plenty of Meadow Brown and a smattering of Skippers.

Having had a bit of a lay in I got here late morning so everything was very much awake and very active making photography a bit difficult, especially for the hyperactive Ringlets and Meadow Browns





Large Skippers and Small Skippers were bounding around in the sun, no Essex were seen though but there were a few fresh Small Heath, the site must be well into it's second brood.



Also 1 DGF was bombing around but he did settle for a quick sup of nectar on a thistle for a short time



And plenty of Common Blue Damselflies



Other things flying here were a few aged Common Blues and my very first Chimney Sweeper moth.



plus a nice female Speckled Wood, taking a short break from looking for somewhere to lay her eggs.



I spent about an hour here before starting a slow wander over to Ivinghoe Beacon. A couple of detours got me sightings of Small Tortoiseshells, a Red Admiral and a Painted Lady... who saw me before I saw it



and a mating pair of Meadow Brown.



Once at Ivinghoe Beacon I was now tasked with the job of locating where I saw the Duchess laying a month ago (didn't realise at the time but it was exactly a month to the day!)

The scrubby area behind the main car park looked very different now, thick carpets of Yellow Rattle, helping to keep the grass under control, was interspersed with colourful spikes of Orchids. I noted 4 species, Common Spotted, Fragrant, Pyramidal and Twayblade.





I wandered over to the general area of where I watched the Duchess lay her 3 eggs, a shallow dry ditch, picking my way through the Orchids and began my search for Cowslip leaves with windows. I found a few but the culprits proved rather elusive, hiding or predated, who knows 😊. Then I found this, a leaf looking somewhat swiss cheese like:



I carefully turned it over but saw nothing, the second leaf was also empty. One more leaf had a few holes and turning this over I found the culprit:



My very first Duke cat 😊
Here's one with my fat thumb for scale

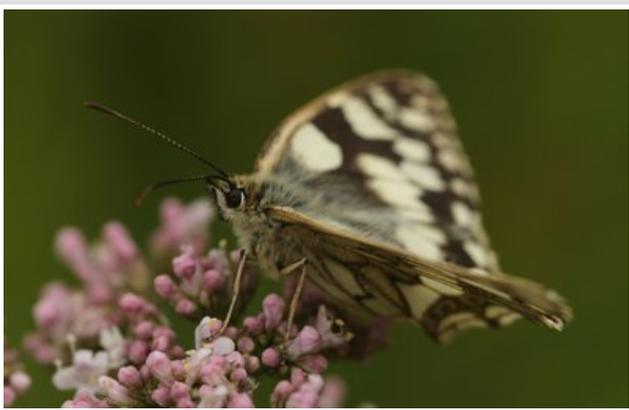


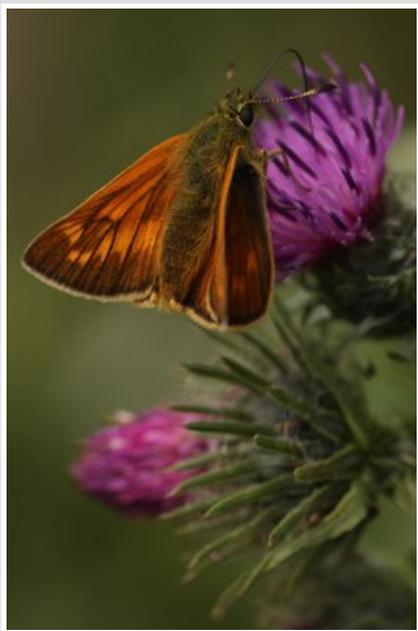
I carefully placed the leaf back how I found it and moved off to look for more. I didn't find anymore but that really didn't matter. Finding one was plenty for me 😊

I left Ivinghoe Beacon to the sound of Skylarks doing their inflight vocal battling. Well mostly, this particular one was taking it easier and shouting at the top of his little lungs from a fence post!



The clouds had begun to shade out the sun on the return trip and with the shadier and slightly cooler conditions the Browns and Skippers were much easier to stalk and capture on my camera. I completely lost track of time, Nearly 3 hours passed in what seemed like 5 minutes, it was 6pm before I realised just how long I had been out! But I used the time wisely 😊









Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-Jul-15 06:00 AM GMT

30th June, Chobham Common

So what does Bugboy do on the hottest day of the year so far, he goes to Heathland with minimal opportunities for shade, thats what!

It wasn't until yesterday afternoon that I realised I had a day off work. I'd forgotten I had booked it off but when it was pointed out I didn't question it, whay would I 😊 So it was off to Chobham Common for another try at seeing Silver-studded Blues. My last attempt a few weeks ago got me a couple of glimpses and just one picture, I was a little early for the sites emergence. I left early and got to the site around 9am. Having no intention on staying the whole day, I'm not THAT mad, I wanted to see the blues and get out before the heat peaked and within 10 minutes I was photographing my first one.



This is my first time seeing this species properly, last year it was a lifer for me but only a couple of individuals at the very end of the season and it was interesting to watch the males flutter low over the heather searching for fresh females. I was surprised how unbothered the males were with each other when they met, offering each other the butterfly equivalent of a very British handshake and carrying on with their search, very different when other species meet where it turns into the butterfly equivalent of a pub brawl!

There were only two males here so I took a stroll over to where I'd seen the male a few weeks ago, which was also the same area as where I saw my lifers last year, hoping this would be a hotspot for them. I wasn't disappointed, probably around 20 males were actively searching for mates along the sides of the paths, some old, some new.....not sure about being borrowed but all Blue! They were quite easy to follow and did settle periodically, just long enough to take a few snaps before setting off again.





I did end up with a fair few unintentional inflight shots 😬



I had yet to find a female so I thought following the males might help me but they were useless 😬! I managed to disturb a female myself who was much more willing to settle and allow herself to be photographed 😊



I kept an eye on her for sometime, hoping to catch some courtship behaviour when one of the males stumbled on her, but like I said earlier, they really

are useless. Several times a male would flitter past as close as 6 inches and not notice her. Finally a male did make contact and there was about a minutes worth of wing quivering whilst both were perched on the tip of a Heather sprig before the male flew off, that was it 😊 I presume she had already been mated.



Well time was getting on and so was the temperature so I started of making my way back but I disturbed another female who was again willing to pose for me 😊



I stopped off at the pond where the Brown China-mark Moths were seen on my previous visit. It was alive with Azure Damselflies today, and lots of mating pairs 😊





A Red Admiral made a fleeting appearance at the pond and in the more grassy areas large Skippers and the occasional Meadow Brown and Ringlet bounced by, no Small Heaths today though.

So finding myself with a whole afternoon still to spare I set off, in the relatively comfortable air conditioned train, to my second planned site of the day, Alexandra Park for White-letter Hairstreak.....

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 02-Jul-15 03:05 AM GMT

Enjoyed your photos Buggy, not seen the SSB yet Hope I get to see them this year Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Jul-15 04:47 AM GMT

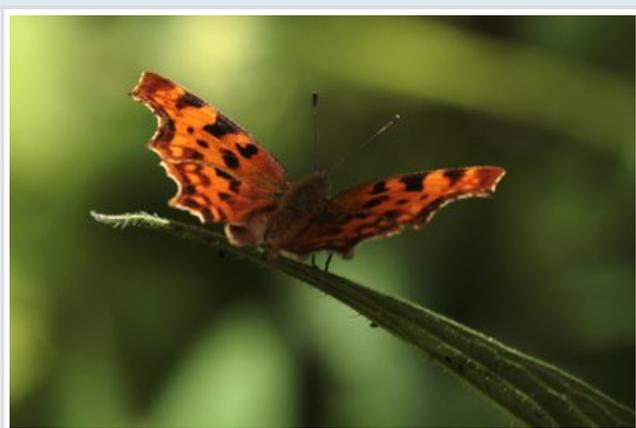
Thanks Goldie, hope you gte to see some before they end. I'm sure you still have a few weeks left before they're gone for another year!

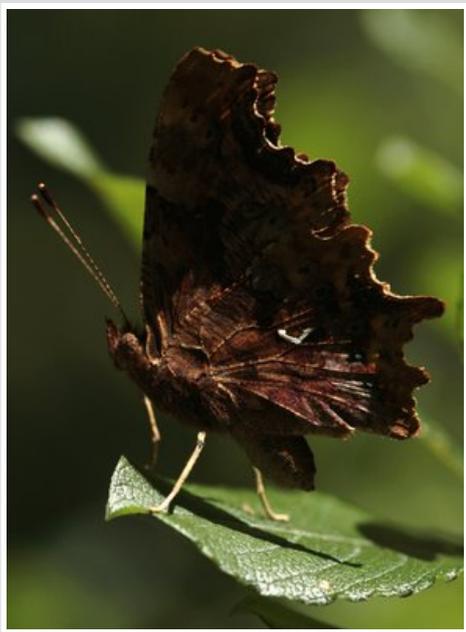
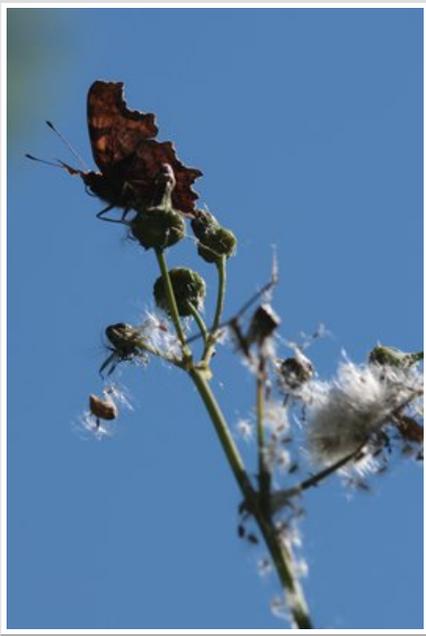
So, **Alexandra Park, 30 June**

If anything is going to scupper my mission to photograph every UK species it's going to be those pesky tree-dwellers! So with temperatures souring I went to the wooded corner of the park where I'd found the Elms back in January to see if any White-letter Hairstreaks would show up. It was decidedly warm even in the shade but I set about scanning every patch of flowering bramble, of which there was quite a lot. Large Skippers taunted me and the occasional Speckled Wood caught my peripheral vision causing many momentary excited glances but my search was proving fruitless so far. Binoculars came out to scan higher up but still nothing.

Suddenly something small and vaguely lycid flittered past and landed halfway up an Oak 😊 but try as I might I couldn't see anything through my binoculars 😞. Several *Hutchinsoni* Commas were busy defending territories (at least 6 for the benefit of BC records, but could easily have been 10 or more). For nearly three hours I wandered round this small corner of the park, looking especially geeky with bins and camera dangling round my neck and probably looking a bit odd, staring intently up in the trees but nothing more was seen of anything remotely lycid 😞 #Hairstreakfail!

In the end I satisfied myself with Comma pictures, mostly underside shots since they too were doing their best to keep cool by facing into the sun with wings firmly closed.





There's worse things I could have gone home with and I did get some nice SSB's in the morning 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 02-Jul-15 06:06 AM GMT

Great SSBs Bugboy 😊 The Hairstreaks are a nightmare, but I might be able to help with a site where they do come down to feed on Brambles, generally a little later in their flight. PM if you want details as then I'll have to respond and that's a better way than me trying to rely on my memory 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Jul-15 06:21 AM GMT

Cheers Wurzel, as a thank you I'll post some 'stained glass window' shots of Some Silver Washed Frits I took today just for you when I get a chance 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 02-Jul-15 02:23 PM GMT

Another great tale that we can all relate to Buggy. I spent 5 hours once under a tree waiting for WLH 😞😞 (with no success!). Chobham Common is not somewhere I have ever been but having read your diary I am tempted. Some nice shots of the SSB there 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Jul-15 05:01 AM GMT

"Pauline" wrote:

Another great tale that we can all relate to Buggy. I spent 5 hours once under a tree waiting for WLH 🙄🙄 (with no success!). Chobham Common is not somewhere I have ever been but having read your diary I am tempted. Some nice shots of the SSB there 😊

I'm sure it won't be the last time I spend a few fruitless hours looking for them **Pauline**. Chobham's worth a visit and easy to get to by train or car. Grayling will be emerging there very soon 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 03-Jul-15 05:08 AM GMT

You are filling your diary with glorious photos of lovely butterflies bugboy 😊 and quite a few are lifers for you. The way you're going it is not going to take anything like five years to see them all 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 03-Jul-15 06:01 AM GMT

Hi bugboy, WLHs are one of those butterflies that you have to be in the right place at the right time to see (mind you, don't they all) and even then are easier seen than photographed. I have seen them a few times around the tree canopy in previous years but just have a handful of distant record shots.

It is 5 years now since I renewed my passion for butterflies and I have still got one UK mainland species to see (Chequered Skipper) and that won't be happening this year.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Jul-15 06:03 AM GMT

Bookham Commons, 1st July

Well I think today is what is technically known as 'scorchio'.....again, so I thought a nice shady woodland outing would be good. I have never been to Bookham before but with **PhilBwright's** recent updates temptation was too much so I set off with another early start, getting there at 8.30. I had hoped it would be reasonably cool this early but it actually felt like a warm summers evening, I was already starting to sweat just from walking from the station to the entrance of the Common. Oh well, maybe I would be a magnet to a few Emperors 😊

Walking through a car park and turning a corner a large orange butterfly swept past and disappeared into the wood, almost certainly a Silver Washed Frit. Well that seemed to bode well. I walked down one of the main paths/vehicle tracks for a while, scanning any suitable bramble flowers but saw nothing more. The more secluded side tracks seemed more tempting for me and I hoped for my targets as well. Walking down one I noticed a patch of Honeysuckle in front of me. As I reached it something black and white glided out from the undergrowth and circled the area a few times, seemingly searching for something. My very first White Admiral 😊 smaller than I had expected although I've no idea why I expected them to be larger. As I watched him I willed him to settle. I checked my camera was on the right settings but I was out of luck and he vanished back into the undergrowth as mysteriously as he had appeared 😊. Still where there was one there should be more.

I carried on down the path, taking note of all the Honeysuckle just in case a fresh emergent decided to take its maiden flight for me. At one point I saw some Honeysuckle that had climbed up the remains of a dead tree, 20 or 30 feet up and as I scanned up something flew overhead between the treetops, my first Purple Emperor of the year and only my second in my life. All three of today's target species now seen but you may have noticed not a single picture, lots of words but no pictures....sorry about that 😊.

Well it was actually 2 hours before I got my first picture of anything, just when I was beginning to think wouldn't get any. I had seen a couple more WA and SWF but non settled until I stumbled across two SWF in a sunny glade.



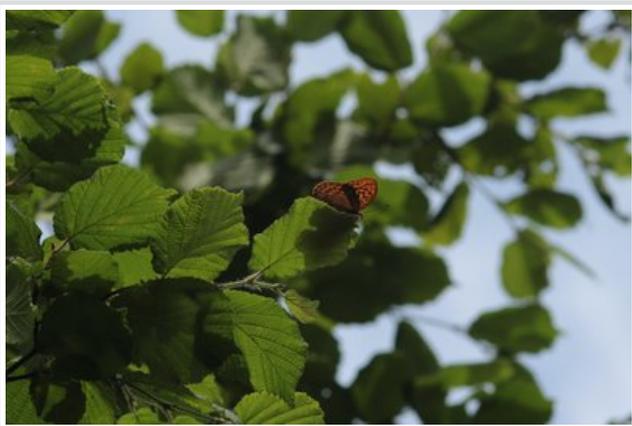
Inbetween aerial combats they did actually settle and feed but only at the back of the bramble patch, I suspect trying to stay out of the harsh sun so I could only get some distant shots, still much better than nothing!

Quite a few Meadow Browns and Large skippers occupied the more grassy clearings, all extremely active but with a few more brief encounters with WA I was starting to think the day wasn't going to pan out as planned plus I was getting peckish. I hadn't intended to spend more than a few hours here simply due to the excessive heat so I had foolishly not packed any food. I got my phone out and had a quick search to see if there was anywhere close to grab a snack. Looking up just to see where I was going something caught my eye to the side.....A feeding WA!!!!!! There was momentary panick as I nearly dropped my phone, grabbed my camera and realised it was on the wrong setting, it had turned cloudy and it was still set on full sun AAAHHHHH!!! Fumbling whilst keeping one eye on the butterfly I guessed the settings and quickly took a run of shots. he fluttered and settled a bit closer to me but then he was gone. Checking my pictures I was relieved to find I hadn't over exposed. Not award winning pictures by any stretch of the imagination but they are my first so I was very happy 😊





10 minutes later I came into another clearing occupied by another SWF. I spent a while watching him swooping and gliding, driving off the occasional interloper and investigating the same dead, brown leaf a number of times. When he did settle it was halfway up a Hazel, posing against the sky as though he thought he was having an audience with **Wurzel**





Well I shall leave it there and continue this tomorrow, I'll try not to write so much lol, I do go on sometimes!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Jul-15 06:09 AM GMT

"Neil Freeman" wrote:

Hi bugboy, WLHs are one of those butterflies that you have to be in the right place at the right time to see

Oh I know, most species with a little bit of research and getting your timing right you can be pretty sure of at least seeing them but these little buggers do really depend on a huge chunk of luck on top of the research. Still it's things like this that make it so interesting. It wouldn't be half as much fun if they all just sat their waiting for you to turn up would it 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-15 06:13 AM GMT

But you 'going on' makes for a great read Bugboy 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 04-Jul-15 01:53 AM GMT

Hi Buggy,

I know exactly what you mean, when something unusual or rare confronts you, fumbling and panic take over. Dare not move might scare it off, camera not ready, it'll be gone if you don't hurry up, to name but a few !. I had exactly that experience this week with a highly unexpected White Letter Hairstreak. I only managed one decent shot.

As Bookham is probably your nearest Purple Emperor site, i expect we will here more from you in the coming weeks!.

Keep up the good work,
TREVOR

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-15 03:17 AM GMT

I'm with you Buggy on WLH, people tell me where they are but when I get there (nothing) I'm going to try again tomorrow at an old railway line they seem to like them Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Jul-15 03:29 AM GMT

Well having been given permission to continue rabbiting on, I shall! 😊

Bookham Commons, 1st July part 2

After giving up on the prospect that the SWF would come low enough for some closeups I moved on some more, another White Admiral taunting me briefly before gliding back into the undergrowth but my grumbling tummy and the ever increasing temperature forced to turn back.....and get a bit lost! I made it as far as where I took the White Admiral pictures but after that it was all new. Oh well, it felt like I was going in roughly the right direction. I had started to see some Ringlets now as well as the Meadow Browns and Large Skippers. It had turned very cloudy now but the temperature kept them

all very active.

There's quite a few bodies of water dotted around the wood and many Blue Damselflies loitered in the sunny glades along with the butterflies. Both Common Blue and Azure but I was interested to find that they never seemed to be found together. each group always seemed to all one or the other species. I suppose it makes sense when you think about it, time is short for these little things so you don't want to waste time flirting with the wrong species!



Male Azure Damselfly

It was whilst watching these that a particularly large and cumbersome looking butterfly flapped past me, it seemed to be struggling and I quickly realised I was looking at two, a female SWF dragging the limp body of her mate behind her. Despite her struggles (and my willing her to go to ground) she managed to gain height and land halfway up an Oak tree 😊. I waited for some time but they seemed to have settled and all I could get were yet more long distant shots.



I carried on, hoping to find a path that looked familiar. A male Black-tailed Skimmer tempted me to take his picture but flew off just as I pressed the shutter leaving me with a beautifully composed picture of the bare path! 'Git' I thought!

Shortly after this I followed another WA around a patch of bramble in a clearing and put up a female Black-tailed Skimmer. The WA had vanished, as they seem to do a lot, but the dragonfly settled a short distance in front of me and on closer inspection I saw she was having her lunch. I carefully crept closer and unlike the male of the species they seem to rely on their camouflage for protection (the males being powder blue don't really blend in too well!), so I was able to take a whole run of shots as the unfortunate victim was gradually consumed over a few minutes. Here's an abridged selection:



Going...



Going...



Going...



nearly gone...



Gone!

She let me get really very close!



and I actually find them more attractive than their gaudy mates



She finally flew off leaving me to continue trying to work out where I was. With the sun starting to come out again the temperatures were rocketing up and I was sweating like the proverbial swine! I found another car park with a map and wandered off in what seemed to be the general direction I needed to go in. More WA showed up occasionally, all too fleetingly though. Walking down an open sunlit path another butterfly was flying towards me at waist height. Powerful flaps and long glides combined with its large size instantly telling me it was an Emperor. As he approached I began to hope the sweaty mass of exposed skin in his path would be too much to resist but alas I was completely ignored and I watched helplessly as he vanished around the bend 😞, if only there had been a nice steaming pile of something unpleasant nearby!

As luck would have it though I also realised I was on familiar ground and set off heading for the car park I'd started at. 10 minutes later I was just about to leave when I noticed another Skimmer watching me, she posed for a shot before a dog walker passed too close.



Behind me, Ignoring everything, was a Small Tortoiseshell. A female getting exceptionally excited over some fresh nettle growth.



After much faffing around she found the perfect leaf to lay on



only to fly off 30 seconds later 🤔. I checked and she'd laid one egg. Thats going to be a very lonely cat when it hatches!

So in the end I saw between 6 and 12 White Admiral (I have no idea how far they wander), 2 Purple Emperor, at least 10 Silver Washed Fritillary, lots of Meadow Browns, Ringlets, Large Skippers, Speckled Woods and 1 Red Admiral

Well it was time to catch the train back to London, which was to my great disappointment not air conditioned...well you could open a window but it's not really the same is it!

The day didn't end there though but I shall leave that to the next entry 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Jul-15 03:33 AM GMT

"trevor" wrote:

Hi Buggy,

I know exactly what you mean, when something unusual or rare confronts you, fumbling and panic take over. Dare not move might scare it off, camera not ready, it'll be gone if you don't hurry up, to name but a few !. I had exactly that experience this week with a highly unexpected White Letter Hairstreak. I only managed one decent shot.

As Bookham is probably your nearest Purple Emperor site, i expect we will here more from you in the coming weeks!.

Keep up the good work,
TREVOR

You did well with that WLH though, that one shot is something I am currently only dreaming about!

Yes I think I will be paying more visits, probably choosing a slightly cooler day 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Jul-15 03:36 AM GMT

"Goldie M" wrote:

I'm with you Buggy on WLH, people tell me where they are but when I get there (nothing) I'm going to try again tomorrow at an old railway line they seem to like them Goldie 😊

Good Luck Goldie, I'm working the weekend but come monday I have a run of 10 days off to concentrate on butterflying. I booked virtually all my annual leave this year around various flight times 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 04-Jul-15 04:49 AM GMT

Looking forward to what happened next Bugboy. 😊 Those Black-tailed Skimmers are mighty attractive 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 04-Jul-15 07:37 PM GMT

Some fine butterflying adventures Buggy 😊 hope your well earned annual hols continue along the same lines...towards **Purple Emperors** among others 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Jul-15 05:25 AM GMT

Thanks guys. Yes Bill, The Purple One will hopefully figure prominently in the coming days 😊

1st July part 3

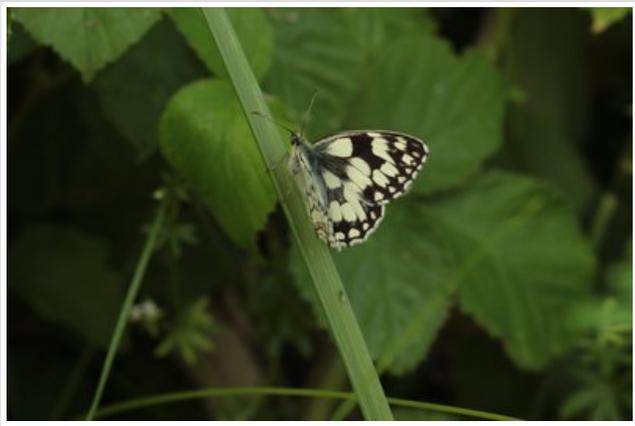
So after returning to London and finally having something to eat and replenishing my liquids I felt refreshed and ready to sneak out for a couple of hours in the afternoon. **Hutchinsons Bank** was the destination, or rather the woodland opposite where I had found my White Admiral cat earlier in the year. I got there around 3.30 and it was still ridiculously hot. The woodland is not, as far as I can tell managed much. No coppicing, or none recently at least and not many sunny glades at all and it felt relatively cool which was nice. Speckled Woods flitted around and so did the odd Meadow Brown.



I was obviously after more WA's, scanning all the brambles but nothing showed itself. Due to the shadyness of the wood I thought perhaps WA's might

be later than other sites so maybe they have yet to appear, the Bramble flowers are certainly a week or two behind other sites with more sun. (I see they are about now from Mrs0cks posting in the July Sightings)

An hours wandering brought about no more species so I crossed the road to have a wander on the Bank. It was still so warm that even the Marbled Whites, those familiar denizens of sun baked south facing grasslands, where hiding in the shade!



basking in the shade!



There were a few ringlets also avoiding the sun and a some Meadow Browns but the Large Skippers were braver although not brave enough to open their wings. A couple of Dark Green Fritillaries were whooshing around, supercharged by the heat and there was also 2 Small Blues flying around a patch of Kidney Vetch. I tried to stay in the shade as much as possible so I didn't catch any of these crazy sun worshippers on my camera.

I stayed here for another hour, scanning the Ribwort Plantain just in case I was lucky enough to stumble across some young Glanville cats... nope.

As I was leaving I saw one of the Dark Green Fritillaries had calmed down a bit and seemed to be looking to roost. It tried several times but each time I got close enough to take a snap a bloody Large Skipper decided to 'ave a go and start a fight with it! It had definately lead quite an eventful life from the look of it though, missing half of one of its forwings and a large chunk of the opposite hindwing. I finally managed a few pictures inbetween his attempts at avoiding Skippers.



Time for home and a deserved rest after 2 extremely hot and exhausting, but enjoyable days out butterflying 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 05-Jul-15 02:58 PM GMT

Love the detail and anecdotes Buggy that we can all relate to and makes for such an interesting read – some fine shots too 😊.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Jul-15 05:54 AM GMT

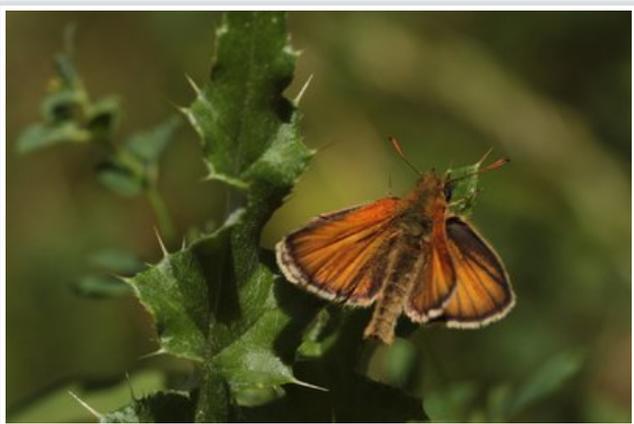
Thank you **Pauline**, always nice to know what I write is enjoyable 😊

I've been doing a transect at work the past few months, a couple of miles from central London so I don't expect anything unusual to turn up. I did it for one season 8 or 9 years back and got 7 species for the entire season, this afternoon I managed to see 8 species in no more than 10 minutes! This was centered around a grassy area that was sown with wildflower seeds some years ago, including Yellow Rattle which has become very dominant in places and certainly keeps the grasses in check. Friday turned out the best and most convenient day to do this weeks one and I was extremely surprised to see something rather dark having a brief battle with a male Meadow Brown. It never settled but I was convinced it was a Ringlet, something I've only ever seen on the outskirts of London.

Yesterday, flying with some large Skippers was a smaller one, it never settled long enough to positively ID but I had my suspicions on it being an Essex so today I remembered to take my camera in to try and get some positive ID's.



Small White Male



Essex Skipper male



Gatekeeper male



Meadow Brown female



Large Skipper male



Ringlet



Gatekeeper male

and Balck Tailed Skimmers seem to be following me everywhere at the moment!



So I got a seasons first for Gatekeeper and confirmed sighting of both my suspicions 😊. The other two species seen were singles of a Comma and Red Admiral which brings this seasons site tally to 15 species when I combine transect and casual records 😊😊😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 06-Jul-15 06:43 AM GMT

That's a very nicely marked Rnglet Bugboy. Good news that the Hedge brownsa are out, time to start counting spots 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 06-Jul-15 09:57 PM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, no Gate Keepers seen here yet or Small Skippers, every seems late here in the North Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Jul-15 07:17 AM GMT

They're only just starting down here **Goldie**, a few more males today but still a week or two off from the plagues I normally get here 😊

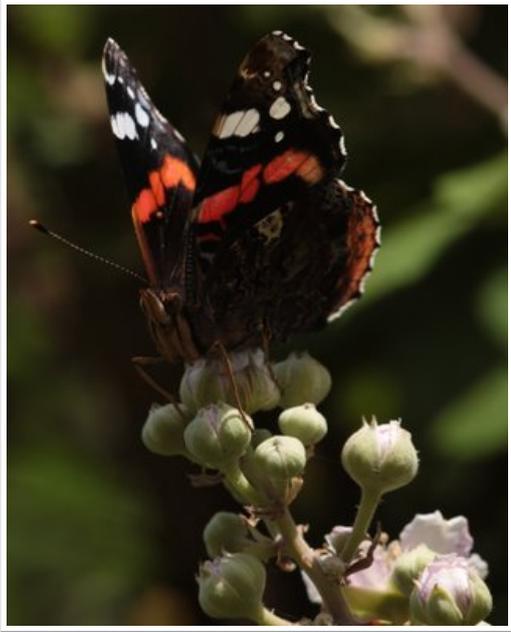
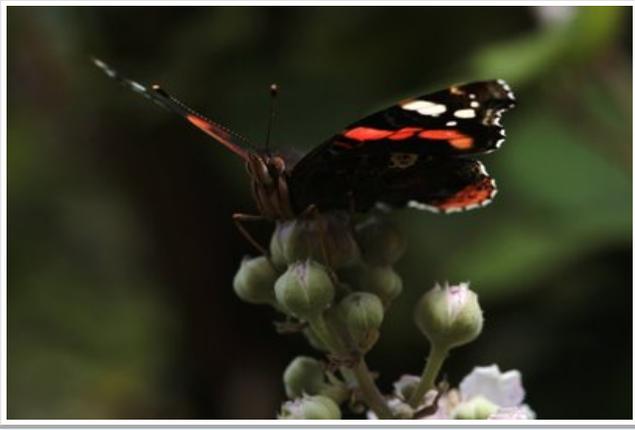
Thanks **Wurzel**, I thought that too, a very handsome specimen 😊

6th July, a White Letter day

Well after todays epic seven and half hour butterfly treck resulting in over 500 pics to sort through I can see me being as far behind as **Wurzel** by the end of my 10 day break from work!

I had planned to have a stay at home day due to the forecast being for rain but when I woke up to blue skys and the weatherlady saying it was going to be warm and sunny that plan was immediately shelved. Taking my queue from **EssexBuzzards** report of hordes of White-letter Hairstreaks over in Essex I hopped on the train to **Hadleigh Country Park**. The train journey started of pleasantly enough, I had the carriage almost to myself but halfway along a large school party, looked like an entire primary school, got on my carriage 😊.

Anyway I got there around 10.30 and quickly worked out where to go having never been here before, basically head towards the ruined castle! Entering the park via a disused service road I immediately saw lots of Elms and lots of flowering Bramble which I eagerly scanned for any sign of things with white 'W' on them, no sign yet but it was still early and from what I could see there's a lots of Elm here. I did however get my first good Red Admiral action of the year



What a handsome devil 😊

I moved on to a meadow and was immediately putting up tiny golden buzzy things with every foot step. On closer inspection Small and Essex Skippers were present in very good numbers 😊



Essex Skipper



Small Skipper

It was nice the oppressive heat of recent days had gone but somewhat disappointing that the stiff breeze had returned, it would seem photography would be very difficult unless I was in a very sheltered place which was found in the form of a nice sunny path along the edge of the meadow. Here all whites were active in very good numbers, it's been a very long time since I've seen this many Large Whites.



Small White female



Green-veined White male



Large White male

The Skippers had reached uncountable numbers along with good numbers of Meadow Browns, Ringlets and a smattering of Marbled White



Both sides of the path were bordered with Elm sucker growth and plenty of brambles and I found myself scanning virtually every flower in the hope of seeing a Hairstreak, all in vain 😞 . some of the skippers were happy to pose though, from my casual observations Essex seemed to outnumber Small 2:1



Small



Commas were also putting on a pretty decent show, patrolling and enjoying the heat and looking particularly gaudy in the sun



So although there was still not a hint of a hairstreak I did get to see some White letters, they were just the wrong letter, a 'C' not a 'W' 😞

Some more exploring found much the same but I was enjoying it nonetheless. It's not often I get to see butterflies at such high densities, even common species, It took me back to when I was a kid 😊 and even common species can throw up the odd surprise; the intensity of this Comma's wings is quite frankly stunning, possibly one of the best looking Comma's I have ever seen!



Well that covers the first 2 hours, more later...

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 07-Jul-15 10:39 PM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, I saw a Comma a few days ago that was quite new and a lovely colour of Orange, glad you saw some Large Whites, there's not too many of them around at present Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 08-Jul-15 06:18 AM GMT

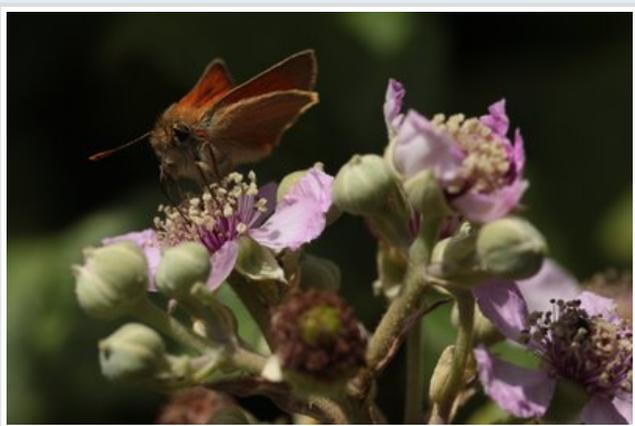
Hi **Goldie**, I'm seeing a LOT of Commas at the moment and they all seem to be looking pretty spectacular, some really intense colours 😊

6th July, a White Letter day part 2

So 2 hours in and still not a sniff of a White-letter Hairstreak. About halfway between my start point and the castle ruin Marbled Whites became more plentiful and Small Heaths started showing up. All the others were still putting on a good show



Essex



Small

Whilst admiring the sight of hundreds of butterflies flitting around, annoying each other and generally being very energetic a small white one fluttered past but way too small to be anything I've seen before. I took it for a small moth but followed it because I wanted to know what it was and its flight pattern seemed familiar. When it landed I did a classic double take and started second guessing myself but it was in fact a Small Heath



I followed the little blighter around for half an hour trying to snag a fluky upperwing shot but I just ended up with a load of shots of grass with the occasional pale blur vanishing out of frame! I even took to poking it with a grass stem whilst focused on him, but all he did was clamber onto the stem in my hand....the one and only time I want a Small Heath to fly when I have it in shot and it does that, if thats not sods law I don't know what is! 😏

Well I finally left him to get on with his life and wandered off to the ruins, they really are ruins, not much left at all



Nice views though 😊

Lots more butterflies around the hedgerows, another Red Admiral, this one playing hide & seek and a rather attractive Small Tortoiseshell showed up, except it had had a rather eventful emergence



Despite it's bent wings it could fly fine

I also saw a few large Skippers, first of the day although they had seen better days



but like the Small Tort, it had no effect on his flight!

There were also a lot of Holly Blues around, all first generation and old looking but managing to hang on to life long after other sites I have visited, quite impressive!



The Commas were all over the place though, I was into double figures with these and the variation in individuals was as striking as the intensity of the colours



The standard version...



The pale version...



and my favourite, the heavily marked one!

I've never seen one that heavily marked before, surely my second ab of the day 😊

I followed another Holly Blue as it got blown into a Bramble thicket and noticed she kept investigating the buds and avoiding the open flowers, the reason quickly becoming obvious



I wonder if this is why the first gen is so late here. Looking back I don't recall seeing any other suitable foodplants and with bramble buds being a bit later than other spring foodplants maybe they've altered their life cycle to fit in with the only choice?

Anyway the journey back still didn't turn up any White-letter 'W's, where were the bloody things? I bet there were thousands looking at me from the elms, waiting for me to leave 😊

I watched a female Small white fending off a particularly amorous male,



and played peek-a-boo with some skippers on Tufted Vetch to pass the time



Small & Essex



Small



Essex



Definitely Essex!

I spent the next couple of hours walking up and down the Elm riddled hedgerow, scanning every single bramble flower. A fresh large skipper showed up and another Holly Blue popped by to say hello



but as much as I was enjoying myself, It was 5pm now and I was knackered so I set off back to the train station to go home, sensing the White-letter Hairstreak was going to become my bogey species in my quest grrrrr 😞😞😞 ! I had had a fantastic day nonetheless, the Commas alone worth the day out 😊





Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 08-Jul-15 06:33 AM GMT

A cracking read Bugboy, love the cheeky Essex and that Small Heath is a corker – is that just wear and tear or a named aberration?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 08-Jul-15 06:36 AM GMT

Pretty sure it's an ab **Wurzel**, notice the vestidual eye spot as well as the pale colour. I've seen plenty of worn Small Heaths, that pale colour is definately what it emerged with 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 08-Jul-15 02:14 PM GMT

Another great post Buggy (always my first read whilst having a coffee). Smashing shot of that Comma – it has to be an ab surely and interesting shot of Holly Blue 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 09-Jul-15 03:32 AM GMT

Great Photos Bugboy, as soon as I saw your SH I thought ab, love the the Hollies, thanks for your posting, I hope I see the PE has well if you don't go looking you'll never find (seek and you shall find) Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Jul-15 03:34 AM GMT

You're very kind **Pauline**, glad I keep you entertained, here's some more 😊

seek and you shall find

wise words Goldie. weather looks better over the next few days so fingers crossed I find some within range of my camera

6th July, a White Letter day part 3 (it was a long day!)

So there it was, over 6 hours of searching, looking at my very first White-letter Hairstreak, on a bank of bramble barely 5 minutes from the train station and where I started the day! I took a run of record shots in case he vanished and then watched as another came down and they spiralled up into the Elms. Moments later one came down again close to me but in the shade so just to make sure i ot something recognisable I used flash



As I got my eye in I soon started seeing more until I realised they were by far the most numerous butterfly here. Everytime I crept up on one, I disturbed another who was even closer 😊 from 6 hours of nothing to almost too many in a matter of minutes. I very soon discovered what little buggers they are when having their picture taken, constantly moving and doing their best to sit in the most awkward position possible. If they weren't sitting in the shade



it was sitting at the wrong angle



or hiding behind whatever was available



or perched high up



I spent nearly an hour taking watching and taking pictures. For the most part they ignored each other. Occasionally a couple would have a brief flurry into the air only to come back down to feed again. At one point, several that were feeding on one of the higher flower spikes all flew up in a mass flurry of wings only to quickly settle down again. It was lovely to see so much activity after searching so long for them. A couple of Commas where here,

actively defending their territories against anything with wings and I couldn't resist snapping them as well



Back to the WLH I persevered and managed to get a some sunlit shots as they posed for me but just to make things interesting only in places where my bare legs got savaged by brambles and nettles





and a few shots where I didn't realise there was more than one, I was concentrating so hard on one I didn't notice the other until I got home!



I did see both these as I was taking the pictures though



I will be going back for another audience before the end of their season, like so many of my 2015 lifers they are full of character 😊. A perfect end to a great day 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 09-Jul-15 04:23 AM GMT

Great White-letter Hairstreaks bugboy 😊 a butterfly i've yet to see at close range 😊👍

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-15 05:04 AM GMT

Great that you got your Whitters Bugboy 😊 What's next on the hitlist?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 09-Jul-15 05:28 AM GMT

Congratulations on the WLHs Buggy, and in numbers too 🍷😊

A species that I usually only see when am out looking for something else and then high up. I did nearly tread on one a few years back though when it was taking minerals up from a path at Oversley Wood in Warwickshire 😞😞

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 09-Jul-15 05:48 AM GMT

Now I know why I struggle to see WLH – not enough patience! Your persistence was well-rewarded, Buggy – great pictures. 😊 One in particular (1326) is an absolute stonker. And likewise the dark Comma from earlier – what a striking butterfly. 🍷🍷

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Jul-15 03:55 AM GMT

Thanks **Maximus**, up until this point I'd never even seen them at a distance, but at this site they seem to come to you 😊
Cheers **Wurzel**. Top of my hitlist at the moment is still The Purple One, need to stake out a freshly laid dog poo I think!

Thanks **Neil**, yes I couldn't believe how many there were, easily 20 or more 😲!

Cheers **Dave**, If it wasn't for all the other butterflies around I would probably have left earlier and missed them, I suspect they come down late afternoon (and perhaps morning) to feed, probably spend the day up in the trees doing Hairstreaky things!

Bookham Common 7th July

Today's weather was somewhat...well British for want of a better word. Even the forecast was confusing, the local one being somewhat different to the national one but I went out anyway, another wander round Bookham Common looking for The Purple One and perhaps the Little Purple One as well. Things seemed to be clearing up late morning and by 12 I was getting off the train. As I walked into one of the car parks a particularly dark cloud blackened the sky and it began to rain. Luckily it only lasted about 5 minutes, the blustery wind was blowing the clouds across the sky at a fair rate of knots. All in all though it didn't seem too promising for what I was looking for.

Still you definitely don't see it if you don't look for it so as soon as the rain stopped I was off. When the sun came out the temperature soured and Small Skippers, Meadow Browns and Ringlets came out to play. A couple of Large Skippers were still active and I caught the occasional glimpse of a Silver Washed Frit and White Admiral searching for mates. I saw what was probably a Purple Hairstreak fluttering across a clearing from one Oak to another but couldn't get a proper view to confirm 😞.

Odonata were also out in force again, a female Darter (Common or Ruddy, I couldn't tell which) flew by and settled high up.



Common and Azure Damselflies were still everywhere and I got close enough to get a few snaps of a male Black-tailed Skimmer this time, showing us how he got his name.



It was some time before I got a butterfly picture though, dodging showers, but I eventually found a couple of SWF feeding on brambles, they were very active in the sun and didn't settle very close but managed some half decent distance shots



Settling a bit closer but under a bracken leaf the dappled light made for an interesting image



I also got another lifer 😊, this time a Beautiful Demoiselle, living up to his name, sparkling beautifully in the sun!



After few more light showers and dark clouds the sun seemed to be coming out for longer periods, a few Blue-tailed Damselflies were out



and I managed to get a few shots of a feeding White Admiral. I would have been able to get closer ones as well had it not been for a Meadow Brown who is now regretting his interference, having been cursed for all eternity 😡! I watched helplessly as went gliding off.



A teneral (freshly emerged) damselfly landed near me, looking very gostly



too fresh to ID but could well have been one of these

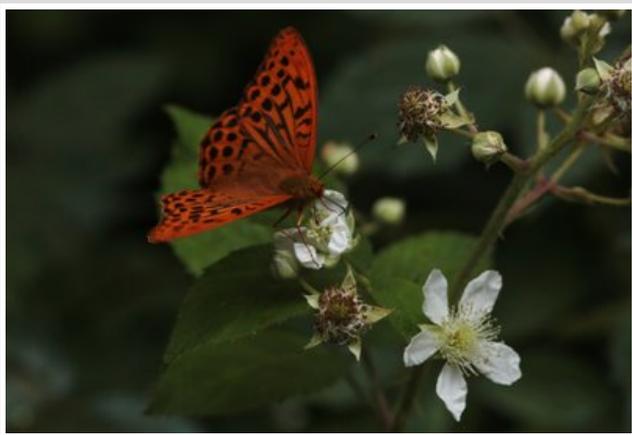


Azure Damselflies

Sometime after this I had another SWF encounter



who only decided to settle near me when the sun went in, forcing me to fiddle with the camera and lose shutter speed and depth of field just when I needed it, oh well.



At another clearing at the side of a path two WA were soaring around and occasionally settling. Again I couldn't get close but at least I'm getting a few more pictures of them now which is better than nothing.



That was unfortunately that as the sun decided to have an early night and clouds took over. Looks like I'll have to make another trip to break my Purple duck, oh well, tough life lol!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Jul-15 06:58 AM GMT

A quick updated tally of my season to date:

- 1 Brimstone
 - 2 Small Tortoiseshell
 - 3 Red Admiral
 - 4 Peacock
 - 5 Small White
 - 6 Comma
 - 7 Green-veined White
 - 8 Speckled Wood
 - 9 Orange-tip
 - 10 Holly Blue
 - 11 Large White
 - 12 Green Hairstreak (lifer)
 - 13 Grizzled Skipper (lifer)
 - 14 Dingy Skipper (lifer)
 - 15 Small Copper
 - 16 Small Heath
 - 17 Brown Argus
 - 18 Painted Lady
 - 19 Pearl-bordered Fritillary (lifer)
 - 20 Duke of Burgundy (lifer)
 - 21 Wall
 - 22 Glanville Fritillary (lifer)
 - 23 Common Blue
 - 24 Small Blue (lifer)
 - 25 Marsh Fritillary (lifer)
 - 26 Adonis Blue
 - 27 Large Skipper
 - 28 Meadow Brown
 - 29 Silver-studded Blue
 - 30 Heath Fritillary (lifer)
 - 31 Small skipper
 - 32 Dark Green Fritillary
 - 33 Ringlet
 - 34 Marbled White
 - 35 Essex Skipper
 - 36 White Admiral (lifer)
 - 37 Purple Emperor
 - 38 Silver Washed Fritillary
 - 39 Gatekeeper
 - 40 White-letter Hairstreak (lifer)
- + 99% sure Purple Hairstreak

10 lifers in one season 😊, that wont happen again in the UK! Think I'll have to spend a fortnight in Switzerland where I can get 50 species in a day 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by MrSp0ck, 11-Jul-15 02:22 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:

A quick updated tally of my season to date:

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11 lifers in one season 😄, that wont happen again in the UK! Think I'll have to spend a fortnight in Switzerland where I can get 50 species in a day 😄

Not many more to come now,

Chalkhill Blue
Silver Spotted Skipper
Brown Hairstreak

and maybe Monarch, Long Tailed Blue, Small Pearl Bordered Frit, Wood White.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Jul-15 03:09 AM GMT

A day of two half's 9th July (part 1)

So today the tube strike forced my hand, somewhere local for the morning and since I've hardly been on my local patch this year, a couple of hours browsing Walthamstow Marshes to see how things are developing seemed in order.

What a difference a couple of weeks makes, when I was last here, Small & Essex Skippers were probably in equal numbers, today I was hard pushed to find a Small Skipper in amongst all the Essex skipping through the air and jostling for nectar on the Creeping Thistles.



The ones I did find looked distinctively more worn.



Meadow Browns were out and about as I would expect



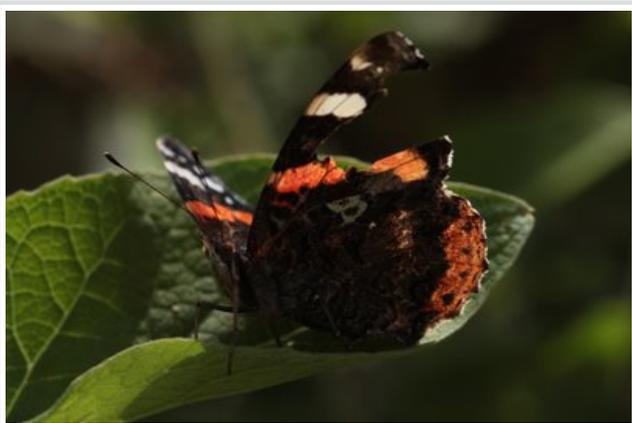
with this male, looking 'fresh out the box' to use a Wurzelism, managing to catch the light just right to show his scent patches, something not often seen



Gatekeeper numbers are starting to build now, nearly all males still but I did find a couple of brave females flying amongst them. Another week or two and they will be the most numerous butterfly here. No extra spotting as yet but it's still early days!



Flying around a bed of nettles I spotted two Red Admirals, both looking to lay but being extremely fussy about it. This one posed for me, showing off what may have been a near miss from a bird attack.



I left them to it, noticing lots of flower heads dotted with these little green shiny beetles, the males showing off their thighs like Sir Chris Hoy on steroids!



Oedemera femorata

A little more wandering and I came across this Small Skipper, taking a lot of interest in some Yorkshire Fog, and she happily settled and went about her business whilst I recorded the moment for posterity 😊.



I spent a bit of time taking pictures of the often forgotten Meadow Brown, several being surprisingly accommodating for me today 😊

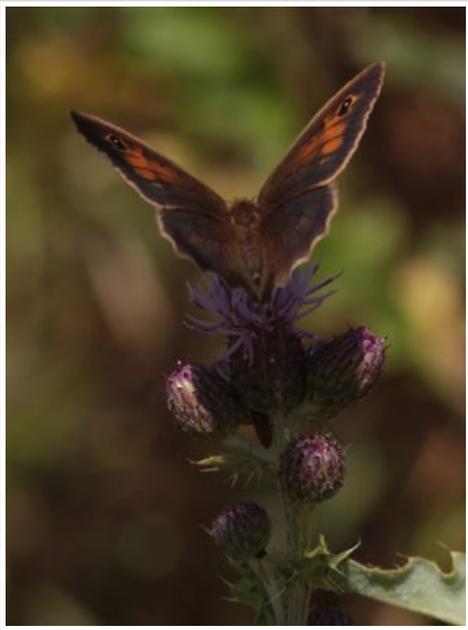


Bloody Skippers everywhere!

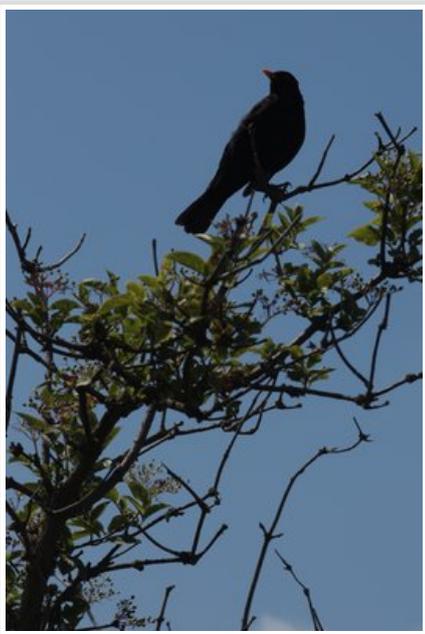


Not many species but what there was were in very good numbers





I left to the sound of a male Blackbird nonchalantly ignoring me as I walked under him 😊



Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Jul-15 03:11 AM GMT

"MrSp0ck" wrote:

"bugboy" wrote:

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Not many more to come now,

Chalkhill Blue
Silver Spotted Skipper
Brown Hairstreak

and maybe Monarch, Long Tailed Blue, Small Pearl Bordered Frit, Wood White.

Oooh you're right, 11 lifers! and as of today I can remove the question mark from the Purple Hairstreak 😄

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Jul-15 05:52 AM GMT

A day of two half's, 9th July (part 2, part 1 got left on page 18 for those who missed it and can't live without reading it!)

So getting back from my morning strole on my local patch at around 12 I ran a few errands, bit of shopping etc, and then set off for the afternoons destination, another audience with the White-letter Hairstreak. I was hoping my first experience wasn't a fluke and they would be willing to show themselves to me and my camera again 😄.

All was quiet on the Hairstreak front when I arrived around 3. Ringlets and Commas were active as were skippers and Meadow Browns. This was earlier than my previous encounter so I hoped i just had my timing a bit wrong, still better to be too early than too late!



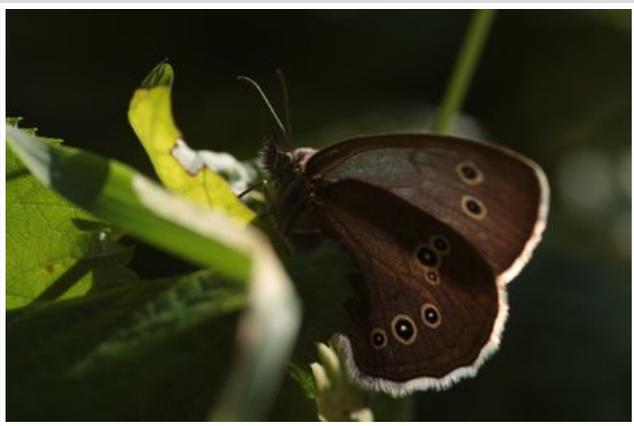
The plan today was to be a bit more choosy as to who to photograph. Last time everything that moved got snapped, this time I was after something with lovely long tails, a crisp fringe to the wings who sat and posed in full sun.

After a few minutes a couple showed themselves and I nearly got my full wish list in one go..... she liked the shade though!



I swear this one is waving at me!

These two weren't too accommodating and spent most the time high up so I killed the time playing with others, keeping a close eye on the hairstreaks all the while.



In the end I decided to go for a wander and come back a little later. Skippers, like last time, were in uncountable numbers. Unlike last time though (and like my local patch this morning) they were mainly Essex Skippers.



Various Whites and more Commas were about and one beautifully fresh Peacock graced me with its presence but turned out to be camera shy. There were a few Gatekeepers out now too.



Large White



Small White

I did find a couple of Small Skippers and saw this one clutching at some Timothy Grass, a de-ja-vue moment from this morning!



Back at the WLH bank I found they were being nice to me now, a few more had appeared and were feeding low down and in the sun, yay 😊 ! Not pristine perfect but she's good enough for me.





I couldn't resist getting a few more pics of the Commas, they were doing such a good job at posing 😊



But I always returned to the Hairstreaks, gorgeous little creatures 😊



What a lovely few days I'm having off work 😊😊😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 12-Jul-15 06:19 AM GMT

I am so envious of your WLH, Buggy... I struggle to see them every year. 🍷

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Jul-15 06:34 AM GMT

"millerd" wrote:

I am so envious of your WLH, Buggy... I struggle to see them every year. 🍷

Dave

😄 If it wasn't for this site I would probably still be searching for them through binoculars!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 12-Jul-15 11:18 PM GMT

Some fine memories stored for the future on your year list Buggy...and 11 'lifers'...nifty 😊

Nice W-I H pics too 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 13-Jul-15 12:14 AM GMT

Nice WLH Buggy and that Small Skipper looks like she is ovi-posting? If you ever decide to check for eggs be very careful as they lie loose inside the stem and roll about very easily (apologies if you already know all that stuff).

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Jul-15 01:34 AM GMT

"Pauline" wrote:

Nice WLH Buggy and that Small Skipper looks like she is ovi-posting? If you ever decide to check for eggs be very careful as they lie loose inside the stem and roll about very easily (apologies if you already know all that stuff).

She was indeed ovipositing **Pauline**. The position of the grass stems meant I couldn't get a better angle. I didn't try looking for the eggs, I was worried about damaging them being so freshly laid. Funny how I photographed almost exactly the same thing that morning as well (that photo is on the previous page on here). 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Jul-15 02:59 AM GMT

Thanks Bill, yes, lots of happy times to jog my age addled memory in future years 😊

Taking a well earned day off from butterflying today (mainly because of the weather!) allowing me to catch up on reports a bit.

Bookham Common, 10th July

So my quest for the Great Purple One continues, he's proved particularly illusive to me, with just two fleeting glances so far. This is my third proper attempt at seeing one this year.

I got there a little later than intended, after 9, but the weather seemed perfect, warm but not too hot and clear blue skies. The Silver washed Fritillaries were out in force already, both males and females feeding on sunlit brambles and unlike my previous visits, they were much more approachable today. There were also several Commas mixed in with them, doing their best Fritillary impressions, but I'm an expert and can't be fooled by such shenanigans!



SWF female



SWF male



SWF male



SWF male & female

It was interesting that the males left the females alone for the most part. When interest was shown the males were quickly given the brush off and they went back to feeding. I actually spent a fair bit of time with these, forgetting I was supposed to be after something else 😊

Whilst chasing these, a beautifully fresh Peacock joined the party, looking resplendant in the morning light 😊 .



I'd been told the best place to see Emperors was the top car park, but I wasn't too sure where this was though (note to self, research 😊!), but I took to wandering along the open bridleways which are littered with nice tasty morsels of horse dung. White Admirals were commonplace, dithering low over the ground and flying up as I stealthily approached



and so was the occasional Comma



"look at me, I'm a Purple Emperor now"

No you're not, go away Comma!

I got very excited at one point as a large dark butterfly with flashes of white flew powerfully around me, but hopes were dashed when I also noticed flashes of red. Nevertheless when she settled I couldn't resist a few pictures. You can't turn your nose up when a Red Admiral as fresh as this one lands at your feet!



As I was getting a few pics I noticed a couple of guys walking carefully but purposefully towards me. The RA flew up and one of the guys pointed at it and looked at me, eye's wide with hopefulness, "Nah, just a Red Admiral" I said, his face dropping immediately. A quick chat revealed they had seen nothing with a purple sheen either. As we chatted a lovely White Admiral flew around us and when they left it settled in front of me, at last I was able to get a few close-up shots



I moved on to explore some secluded paths that were still new to me. I kept coming across glades inhabited by SWF and WA and every time I couldn't resist taking pictures.





A few Odonata to add a bit of variety were also sunning themselves, a female Beautiful Demoiselle



and I'm pretty sure this is a female Common Darter based on the yellow on the legs just about visible.



I stumbled across a pair of Ringlets having some private time, so I took their picture!



I'm pretty sure I did find the 'Top car park' but there was nothing showing and by now it was getting quite late, probably too late. It was looking like my quest for purple things was drawing a blank for a third time. Nevertheless I continued browsing the quieter rides since they were so full of butterflies willing to sit in front of me.



Always keeping one eye on the canopy I noticed a few silvery glints. Binoculars confirmed I was watching Purple Hairstreak, shortly after which, whilst watching some SWF for the umpteenth time a little silvery thing fluttered down and landed on a leaf right in front of me. As happened with my first WA a week before, momentary panic set in, it was sat in partial shade with breeze blowing it in and out of the sun. I risked autofocus (for once it didn't get lost trying to focus on a gnat's eyelash) and I was able to quickly take a few snaps before it fluttered off back into the canopy, something Purple at least.....well grey!



A few more SWF and I decided to make an early start home.



I reckon I'd seen around 50 SWF by now!

Distracting my journey were a couple of female WA, obviously on the lookout for some nice Honeysuckle. This one settled low down in the undergrowth but I couldn't get anything decent without the use of flash.



Tweaked in PP to within an inch of its life!

Unfortunately my 'odd' behaviour (crouching down by the side of the path peering into the undergrowth) had spooked a couple of horses and I figured using flash could end in a bit of a disaster. I stood up and allowed them to pass, both horses giving me the evil eye as they passed with their riders saying thank you whilst I watched as the horses tails swished the WA off into the undergrowth.

Definitely time to go and come back another time 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 13-Jul-15 03:09 AM GMT

In many ways, Bugboy, your report illustrates perfectly just how sought after Purple Emperors are.

Several other glorious species might be flying around, but when in 'Emperor Mode', they are regarded as mere support acts.

I'm sure you will get your well earned audience before much longer.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Jul-15 03:16 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

In many ways, Bugboy, your report illustrates perfectly just how sought after Purple Emperors are.

Several other glorious species might be flying around, but when in 'Emperor Mode', they are regarded as mere support acts.

I'm sure you will get your well earned audience before much longer.

I'm enjoying the challenge though David, it's adventures like this that makes this hobby so interesting. It would get boring if they just sat around waiting for you to turn up! 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Jul-15 09:45 PM GMT

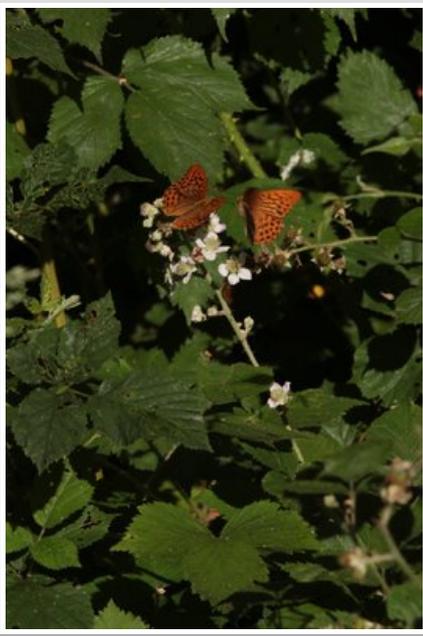
11th July (This will most likely be my last report for a few days (I can hear a collective sigh of relief), weathers gone a bit cr*p and then back to work)

Saturdays initial plan was to visit **Box Hill** and/or **Denbies Hillside** to see if the Chalkhills were about yet but with yesterdays Purple blank I decided to start the day off at **Bookham Common** yet again.

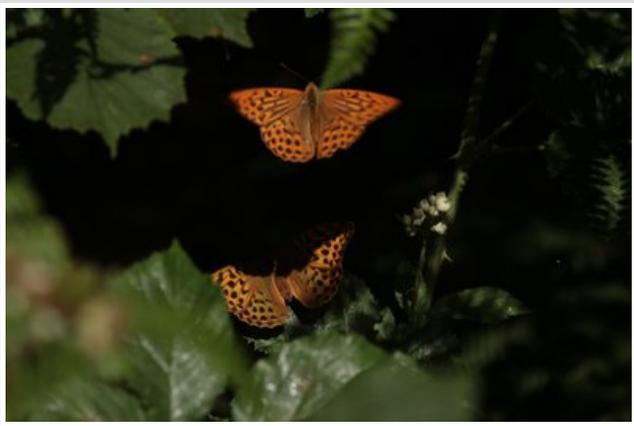
I silly early start saw me getting there at 8, and after doing my homework this time, I knew exactly where to go to find the 'top' car park. I did my best to not be distracted by the other inhabitants, although a White Admiral settling in front of me was too much!



I find the car park easily enough. It was empty apart from two cars and looking around there's no sign of any large butterflies soaring around and showing off. I hung around for a bit, feeling somewhat self conscious staring up into the canopy but decided to go for a bit of a wander along some of the rides. SWF were in all the usual spots and with nectar sources dwindling as the bramble blossom begins to die down the choicest flower spikes were being sought out.



The odd female occasionally drew some unwanted attention but was quickly sent packing



Others were just lazing around, warming up in the morning sun.



Nothing purple was seen though so I returned to the car park to find two slightly dodgy looking men looking up into the canopy....I joined them and together we chatted about the chances of a Purple audience.

We did get one shortly after, a Purple Hairstreak fluttered around and settled halfway up one of the Oaks. In the end there were 7 or 8 of us waiting for something to happen. A red Admiral provided momentary excitement and the Hairstreak decided to hang around to see what we were all waiting for. Occasionally someone would wander off and come back a little later, one guy even coming back with a handful of fresh horse dung (now that's dedication!)

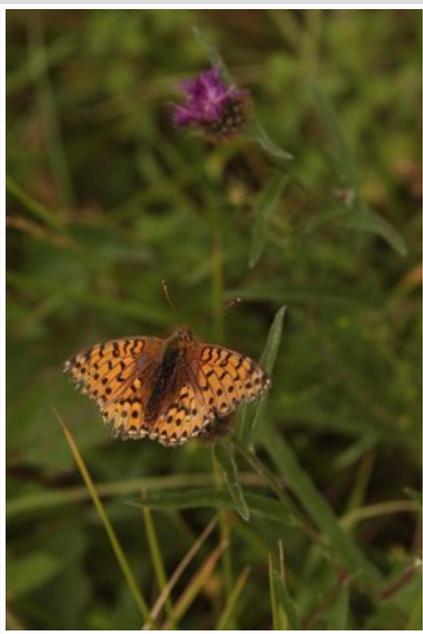
It didn't take long for the fresh dung to send out its unique butterfly attracting properties, a fresh male second gen Holly blue fluttered by and landed on it.



He was pretty much addicted to the stuff and couldn't be scared off. He stayed feeding for probably about 30 minutes.

I went off for another wander around 11, bumping into a few other butterflyers, none of whom, like me, had had a sniff of an Emperor. On returning to the car park and finding out nothing had happened I decided to call it a day and head off to Box Hill. 😊

Box Hill was rather busy and I quickly remembered why I generally come here on a weekday. Butterfly wise there were still Dark Green Fritillaries flying but all somewhat worse for wear now, as were the Marbled Whites.



A lot were now carrying the little red mites, so typical of high summer downland butterflies.



There was though no sign of Chalkhill Blues and bumping into a lady doing a transect it seemed they were yet to appear here, Denbies it was then. An hour later I was looking at the seasons first Chalkhill blue, clinging onto a Knapweed flower for dear life in the blustery wind.



He did try to open his wings for me but everytime he tried he got hit by another gust



There were quite a few battling in the wind, feeding on the Wild Marjoram mostly and visibly avoiding the Pyramidal Orchids....well for the most part.



I remember someone else posting a similar picture with an Orchid Pollinium attached to a butterfly's tongue on here a few weeks ago and it was interesting to see it for myself, although I'm not sure this Chalkhill was finding it interesting



With the wind blasting across the hillside it's actually a miracle anything came out vaguely in focus but at least I got to see one of the two target species for the day.



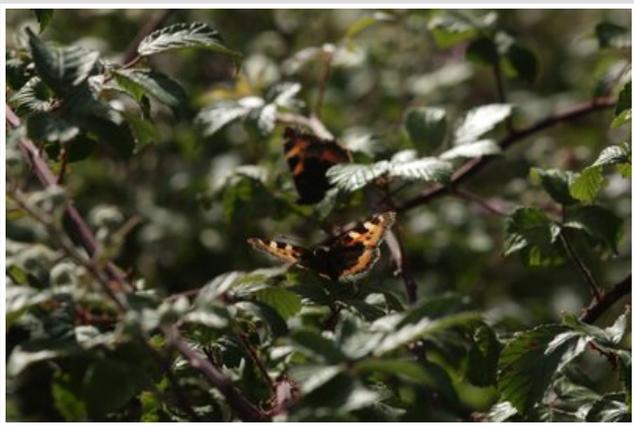


Fluffy bum :)

As I was leaving I saw a painted Lady getting buffeted by the wind, just the one though...whatever happened to that invasion.....



Getting to the train station I found I had nearly an hour to wait for the train home 🤪 Nothing left to do but go for another little wander. Luckily there's enough open spaces around to keep me occupied and I ended up watching 3 Small Tortoiseshell playing in the early evening sun and flirting with each other by the River mole 😊



With the weather taking a turn for the worse and then back to work and a wedding to attend next weekend it looks like I'll have to wait another year for

a Purple emperor experience 😊😞 Oh well, something to look forward to I suppose 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 13-Jul-15 10:11 PM GMT

Caught up with your posts at last Buggy and boy do I envy your WLH 🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 14-Jul-15 06:31 AM GMT

Cracking Chalkhills Bugboy 😊 I always few them with mixed emotions as theri appearance means only another couple of species left to emerge 😊
Sorry you didn't get your audience with Him (it might still be possible?) but think of it as "at least you've saved yourself one lifer for next year" 😊 Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 18-Jul-15 05:09 AM GMT

Keep HIM until next year Buggy, and go to Fermyn Woods at the peak emergence, give you something to look forward to 😊...you can't be too greedy 😊

BW's

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Jul-15 06:06 PM GMT

Thanks guys, yes there's always next year 😊 . Not sure if I can get to Fermyn Woods Bill, may have to earn a few brownie points to pull in another favour from a friend but I have always heard good things about that place where HIM is concerned!

Denbies & Bookham 15 July

(I may have lied a little bit about no reports for a little bit 😞)

On Wednesday I decided to spend an afternoon at **Denbies Hillside** enjoying the Chalkhills. With a run of 11 days without a chance of butterflying I didn't want to miss them at their best and the forecast seemed promising. I then had a brainwave and thought it would be a great idea to spend the morning at **Bookham Commons** as a desperate last gasp chance to catch a Grounded Emperor even though the morning forecast seemed pretty rubbish since it's closeby.

As it turned out the sun did come out for some nice extended periods in the morning, just not warm or long enough to wake up HIM, at least where I was. It did however wake up a few Purple Hairstreak, but they all stayed high up. Interspersed with the sun were a fair few dark clouds and light showers but the warm muggy air was enough to keep plenty of others active. Meadow Browns, Ringlet, Gatekeeper, Silver Washed Fritillary and Holly Blues were all active in small numbers even in the light rain.

I caught this ringlet as it took shelter when the rain turned momentarily heavy, flash was the only option in his hidey hole.



This Holly Blue was obsessed with drinking rain water from a dead leaf, presumably taking in dissolved nutrients



And another one came down whilst waiting for HIM to appear who was about as pristine as you can get!



By 12 it was obvious He wasn't going to appear but although the sunny spells had stopped, the cloud had thinned and light levels were improving which was waking up a few more species. Large, Small and Essex Skippers were appearing as were a few Speckled Wood.





and this beautiful Female SWF sat quietly soaking up as many photons as she could whilst my lense was shoved into her face!



I came across an old tree stump which seemed to be a much sought after place to sit by several Dragonflies, Common Darters and Black-tailed Skimmers both using it as a natural radiator.





It proved a good opportunity to get some nice close up studies as they basked and tried to warm up. As I was going in for a particularly close shot



I caught a glimpse of movement under my chin. Looking down I locked eyes with a little Common Lizard peering up at me, literally 2 inches from my face, flattened against the stump.



Well since he was so brave it would be rude not to snap away at him and he sat there patiently, joined by some particularly large Flesh Flies, watching my every move as I took his picture from every angle, very cute.





Leaving him I now had to dodge the little toadlets which were trying to hop under my feet, I narrowly missed stepping on this little chap!



With the light improving by the minute it was time to make a move to Denbies to catch the Chalkhills. I did my usual route, train to Box Hill and then a walk along the North Downs Way, stopping occasionally to enjoy the local wildlife on the way.



Nettle Leaved Bellflower (I think)





I get to Denbies around 3.30 and the weather is pretty much perfect, the cloudy but bright light, light wind (for a change at Denbies), and muggy warmth making the blues the perfect photographic target. Marbled whites were flitting around, a few Small Heaths were active and there were a couple of Common Blues but the hillside was littered with little silvery jewels basking and most of them were very approachable. Chalkhills are probably my favourite Blue, quite an understated beauty, not the gaudy 'in ya face' of the Adonis, but enough of this, I will just let them speak for themselves 😊









I think thats enough to keep you all occupied until I can next get out with my camera, Grayling, Sliver-spotted Skipper and hopefully Brown Hairstreak still left 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 18-Jul-15 09:09 PM GMT

Nice photos Buggy, have you got High Brown Frit's, Northern Brown Argus or Scotch Argus on your lists? If not you've got to see them, Goldie 😊 PS I've only got 30 species so far this year and only one lifer, so I'm envious 🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 19-Jul-15 05:53 AM GMT

Brill Chalkhills Bugboy - I went looking but no joy this far west yet, another week or less hopefully 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Jul-15 02:18 AM GMT

All of those are on my list Goldie but they will have to wait for another season, some B&B breaks in some beautiful corners of the British countryside me thinks 😊

Thanks Wurzel, looking forward to seeing your Chalkhills, around Halloween perhaps? 😊😊

Sunday 19th

So I managed to squeeze in an hours strole on my local patch in the afternoon. Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers were the dominant species. Singles of Holly Blue, Common Blue and SmEssex Skipper was also seen as well as a few unidentified whites. An unfortunate combination of blustery conditions and a hangover (probably the major contributing factor) from the previous evenings wedding party celebrations meant photographs were a bit thin on

the ground... 🤔



Still, a bit of fresh air (if you can call it fresh in London) helped a tad with the tender head and tummy!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 21-Jul-15 05:03 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:

All of those are on my list Goldie but they will have to wait for another season

You've plenty of time for Scotch Argus, Bugboy. It's the only species yet to be recorded in the UK according to the BC First Sightings page. What's more, they're easily observable at Arnside Knott or Smardale Gill, with many hundreds on the wing.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Jul-15 06:01 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

"bugboy" wrote:

All of those are on my list Goldie but they will have to wait for another season

You've plenty of time for Scotch Argus, Bugboy. It's the only species yet to be recorded in the UK according to the BC First Sightings page. What's more, they're easily observable at Arnside Knott or Smardale Gill, with many hundreds on the wing.

I already have Arnside filed in my mind for future visits but it will need a bit more advance planning on my part! Next year maybe 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 21-Jul-15 08:43 PM GMT

Arnside Knot is great Buggy for Scotch Argus, their so near the car park just through the gate and up the slopes a bit , also there's a great Fish and Chip shop in Arnside if your stuck for lunch 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 22-Jul-15 05:05 AM GMT

Cripes, page 20 on PD already, not even a year old yet!

Arnside Knot is great Buggy for Scotch Argus, their so near the car park just through the gate and up the slopes a bit , also there's a great Fish and Chip shop in Arnside if your stuck for lunch 😊 Goldie 😊

Can you recommend a good place to stay (and cheap)? It's gonna have to be more than just a day trip coming all the way up from London! Dread to think what prices will be at this time of year though 😞

Aldbury Nowers Nature Reserve, 21st July

A half day with the sun shining was way too much for me to resist so I hopped on the train after work for the short trip up to Tring and a couple of hours in the Chilterns. The wind was rather blustery and it was one of those days where the sun can't decide whether to come out or not so I spent half the time changing settings on my camera but there was plenty about. Skippers were bounding around, mainly Small and Essex, with the Essex looking distinctly fresher than the Smalls.



There were still a few tatty looking Marbled Whites lazing around but Gatekeepers have replaced Ringlets as the dominant Satyrids alongside the Meadow Brown, not a single Ringlet today.



I was also very happy to see my third Small Copper of the year, I've never known a year so bereft of them. It's never a species I go out specifically looking for but one or two always turn up in most of my haunts. He'd been around for a few days and didn't open his wings for me but he still looked good 😊



There was also a rather handsome second gen Brown Argus flying near the Copper.



All the Whites were out in force, this female Large White settled at my feet to avoid the attentions of a male who proceeded to flutter off poking his nose at other white objects!



The nature reserve is two open areas (one of chalk meadows and one of chalk scrapes) separated by a stretch of open mixed woodland. In the sunny glades the patches of bramble are coming to the end of their flowering season and the flowers were being fought over by various species. Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns, Whites, Skippers as well as some new Peacocks, Commas and several Silver Washed Fritillaries which I wasn't expecting!





There was even a Common Blue having a light afternoon snack.



On the other side of the woodland where the chalk Scrapes are I was hoping to find some Silver-spotted Skippers. I had noticed on previous visits large swathes of Sheeps Fescue but careful searching proved fruitless for this species. There were a few fresh Large Skippers who had obviously just emerged late with the sole intention to pretend to be Silver-spotted but if the real thing is there, it eluded or has yet to emerge.



I did however see a Small Blue. He didn't settle despite me following him around for a couple of minutes before he vanished but even in flight it was obviously a fresh male so it seems a second brood is happening on the site.

A couple of Dark Green Fritillaries were about as well but the only one I managed to capture on camera was this illusive female who refused to allow me anything more than a few distant shot. Nevertheless they are still the best shots I have of a female.



I was also hoping for Chalkhill Blues here today since there is also plenty of Horseshoe Vetch around. I only saw 2 males though but then this is the first year I have visited this site so I have no idea what to expect as to density. It's quite a small site so I would expect numbers to be relatively low. This male allowed a few close-ups and was in pretty good nick 😊.



A Chalkhill on a chalk hill :)

There were also quite a few fresh Brimstones fattening up for winter as were several second gen Commas.



Not sure about others but in my experience Commas have had a phenomenal summer, I can't remember a year when I've seen so many and the variety in markings has been wonderful to see!

A rather good range of species for for a two and half hour stroll 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 22-Jul-15 06:04 AM GMT

Agreed. Commas seem to be enjoying a particularly good July. I'm not quite sure why this is, as the other Vanessids don't seem to be having such a 'spike' in numbers.

Re: Bugboys mission

by peterc, 22-Jul-15 03:39 PM GMT

"David M" wrote:

Agreed. Commas seem to be enjoying a particularly good July. I'm not quite sure why this is, as the other Vanessids don't seem to be having such a 'spike' in numbers.

I agree and after a poor start to the season as well (at least in Herts)

ATB

Peter

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Jul-15 04:18 AM GMT

22nd July

Today I had two targets, two of the late summer flyers. The plan was **Chobham Common** in the morning for Grayling and then nipping over to **Box hill** for Silver-spotted Skipper in the afternoon.

The morning turned out quite nice, mostly light wind and plenty of sunny spells and when I arrived at Chobham I was welcomed by numerous butterflies having breakfast on a patch of Creeping Thistle.



This female Ringlet didn't put up much of a fight to the faded males attentions. I guess it was a case of this late in the season you just have to take whatever's left on the shelves!



There were lots of skippers around, Small, Large and Essex but I was surprised to see that Large Skippers were by far the most numerous; indeed as it turned out they were probably the most numerous butterfly all morning!



For a single brooded butterfly they really do have a long flight period!

The other dominant butterfly was the Gatekeeper, nothing with extra spots though (I did look **Wurzel**, honest!)



It was an hour before I saw my first Grayling, well it saw my foot close to it then I saw it fly off over the Heather. I returned to the same spot 10 minutes later and he was sitting there. After a few record shots I managed to creep up and lie on my belly to get a closeup before it was all too much for him and he flew off again.



Moving on I came across a couple of aged but still attractive Silver Studded Blues



And a lovely Speckled Wood.



It was obviously very early in the Grayling flight period for the site, last year I was tripping over them but looking back in my records that was on the 30th July. I did however finally find a mini hotspot for them with five or six flying around in a small area, all males and all looking very fresh. I managed lots of very similar shots, typical Grayling poses. But with the sun vanishing behind clouds quite a bit now I was able to get quite close to them. I tried to get some shots showing a bit of eye but you have to be bloody quick, only managed one rubbish shot of one feeding.





Such a variety of poses..... 😊



Also flying with them, and being harassed by them on occasion, was at the time an unidentified Dragonfly. Looking through my guides I strongly suspect it's a female Keeled Skimmer, a lifer for me 😊 I'm sure **Bill (Willrow)** will be able to confirm or correct me. The flight period and habitat certainly match up.



Time to leave but one more butterfly was waiting for me, a lovely male Common Blue



and the clouds parted right on queue.



Two and half hours, and two trains later I was at **Box Hill** and things had deteriorated drastically. Thick dark clouds now blanketed the sky and a rather strong wind had developed. A few brave Gatekeepers were about but even they vanished as the clouds got even darker.



This Gatekeeper had two extra spots on each forewing but could I get a shot to prove it..... Sorry **Wurzel**, you'll just have to take my word for it!



I carried on regardless, hoping in vain the clouds would thin but no such luck. At the Silver-spotted Skipper bank I saw exactly zero butterflies. I took to egg hunting, having found them relatively easy to find last year, on the basis that if there's eggs then there's adults. I didn't find any. Still, it is very early for them.

I moved up to the higher bank and was very surprised to see a Chalkhill Blue flying and even trying to bask in the nonexistent sun. He looked very fresh so maybe he emerged that morning when it was sunny. If he had hands I'm sure it would have been holding his head in them and wishing he was back in his pupae.



Wandering the hillside I flushed up a couple of Meadow Browns and a female Dark Green Fritillary. The fritillary got whipped up in a strong gust and was unceremoniously plopped down somewhere further up the slope next to the hedge line. I walked up not expecting to see any sign of her but remarkably saw her almost straight away, hunkered down and vibrating her wings for a quick getaway. I managed a few record shots through the grass stems before she was off again.



With the weather showing no signs of improving I decided to make my way back.....and then it started to rain. After a quick visit to the visitor centre to make use of the conveniences the rain had stopped, the clouds had thinned and the strong wind had practically vanished, all in the space of 5 minutes. Sometimes British weather is something to behold! I toyed with the idea of going back for the skippers but time was getting on now so after a brief stop to say goodbye to the Gatekeepers I set off home.



I'll be back though, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday off work next week.

To end a little game of the annual 'spot the Grayling', an easy one this time 😊



Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 24-Jul-15 06:05 AM GMT

Found the Grayling! 😊 Great shots Bugboy, but as for the 'excessa' Hedge Brown I'll believe you, thousands wouldn't 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Willow, 24-Jul-15 06:29 PM GMT

Certainly looks as if your dragonfly is a Keeled Skimmer, this particular female is into the final stages of maturity, hard to believe she was a beautiful golden ochre colour just a while back 😊 nice capture Buggy, especially if captured with your 20:20 vision using your phone...the one that you have to hold at arms length 😊😊

Great couple of recent reports, much enjoyed 😊

BW's

Bill 😊

"When in doubt - venture out"

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-Jul-15 05:13 AM GMT

Thanks Bill, I was 99% sure I had the Dragonfly ID right. She did look old, can't really see in the photos but one of her hind wings was pretty much shredded! And no it wasn't captured on my phone 😊 its not that good a phone!!! Canon DSLR all the way with me although I have recently felt the need to fiddle with the dioptic adjustment knob..... 😞

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 25-Jul-15 06:25 AM GMT

Nice Grayling shots, Buggy - I must get down to Chobham which is probably my nearest site for them. Last year I noticed how late the Large Skippers were here - I found a lovely fresh male on 13th July, plus several others. Strange how sites differ like this.

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-Jul-15 05:11 AM GMT

Thanks Dave, It's a good site for Grayling 😊

Walthamstow Marshes, 28th July

A somewhat blustery day spent roaming my local patch. I heard on a weather forecast the other day that 2015 is one of the windiest years on record.....I could have told them that 😞!

The sun did make a few brief appearances but it was mostly cloudy and all in all not the best day for butterflying, nevertheless out I went.

Most of the butterflies were being sensible and taking shelter from the wind either low down in the grass or in a few very sheltered areas. I started off at the 'Common Blue Meadow' which at this time of year should be alive with browns, blues, whites, some coppers and a few skipper hangers on. Today there were just a few Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns, Whites and a single Blue, most of which were disturbed as I walked along.





A sheltered patch further on gave me a few more Gatekeepers and a tiny male Common Blue, no bigger than an average sized Small Blue. This was the same patch I'd found a similar sized female Common Blue a month or two ago.



Still not too much going on elsewhere but I did check out a patch of ground that had been worked over by builders a couple of years previously and now has several Buddleias growing. In years gone by I would have expected it to be covered in Vassenids and whites but these days, certainly in London, that seems to be a distant memory. Today I found a single Peacock and a Red Admiral both clinging on for dear life whilst stuffing their faces with Buddleia nectar. They were both in good nick though and sat well for photos in the brief interludes between gusts.



I had been hoping for some nice Holly Blues today but they were probably all being very sensible and hiding from the wind like most other butterfly life. The wind wasn't all bad though, I came across a pair of Swallows swooping around and flying just a couple of cm's from the ground. They weren't at all bothered by my presence, well except I was perhaps in their way and had to swerve to avoid me several times. It's amazing to watch their effortless grace in the air at such close quarters. I decided to use the same principle as 'give a group of Chimpanzee's an infinite amount of time with typewriters and they'll come up with the complete works of Shakespeare' and put my camera on auto and sport settings, took aim and clicked as the whooshed past me. After 10 minutes I went through my results, lots and lots of blurred shots of nothing, some barely recognisable shots of dark blurs and then remarkably this shot 😊!



Not prize winning but a million times better than anything I was expecting. Maybe those chimps will come up with the goods after all 😊

10 minutes later I found a couple of Holly Blues, both flitting around a patch of late flowering bramble 😊. I could see in flight it was a male and female but both refused to open their wings for some time, too busy feeding. It was interesting that when they encountered each other the male didn't show much interest, maybe he was too fresh and not sexually mature?



Eventually they both settled to bask and opened their wings so I was able to try and get the shots I was after, battling against the sun as it went behind a cloud every couple of seconds!





Nothing much else for half an hour when I saw something small and orange darting around along a sunny hedgerow, it settled and there was a male Small Copper, only my 4th of there year and first on my local patch!



He spent most of his time doing coppery things, darting out and chasing anything that came into his airspace which today was mainly Gatekeepers! Speaking of which here's a 5 spotted female for those who are into that kind of thing....you know who you are 😊



In the same area I also saw my first (and last) Skipper of the day. A Large Skipper of all things. I didn't manage a picture of her but did see her lay so I have my first Large Skipper egg 😊



Another male Common Blue



and a couple more Holly blues a bit further prevented any withdrawal symptoms setting in.



I've seen Jersey Tiger Moths here for quite a few years now but never been able to grab a snap of one so when one fluttered past me and settled virtually at my feet I grabbed the chance 😊😊 . Spectacular looking things, like some kind of gaudy stealth bomber at rest.



I find the underside of moths like these a bit of an enigma though. Why all the colour somewhere that's virtually never seen? I should probably point out that no virtually pressure is needed to restrain moths like these. They don't struggle and rely on being distasteful so play dead until released 😊.

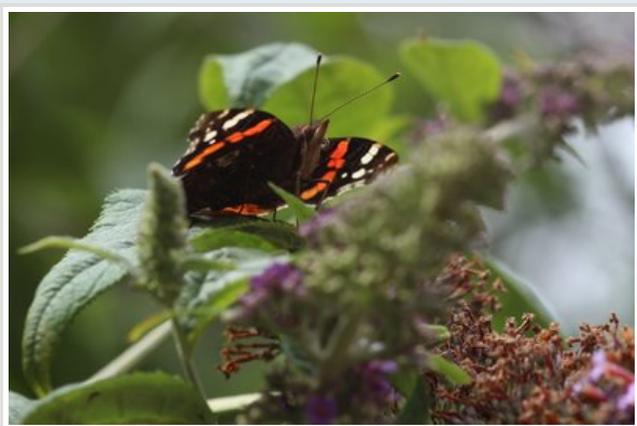
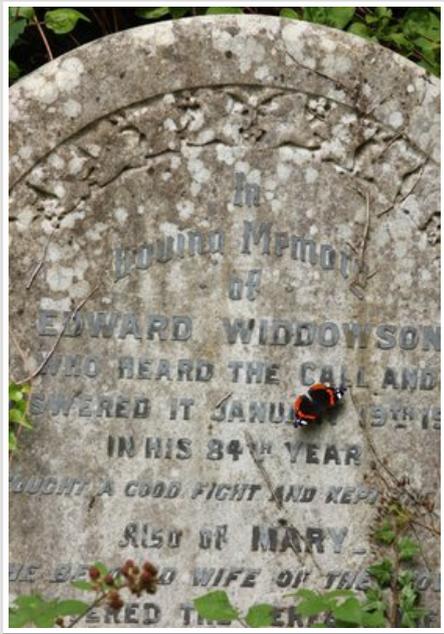
Anyway it was still early afternoon so I made my way over to Abney Park for an hour. The weather wasn't in the mood to change but at least it was mostly sheltered from the wind. Nothing unusual was seen here, some uncooperative Holly Blues, a few whites



Some Gatekeepers



And quite a few Red Admirals in varying conditions



I've had better days on my patch but still worthwhile 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 29-Jul-15 05:52 AM GMT

That heavily marked female Holly Blue made your visit worthwhile all on its own, Bugboy.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 29-Jul-15 06:34 AM GMT

Lovely Holly Blue Bugboy and a great 2 and 5 spot Hedge Brown – see once you start counting those spots you can't stop 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 31-Jul-15 04:31 AM GMT

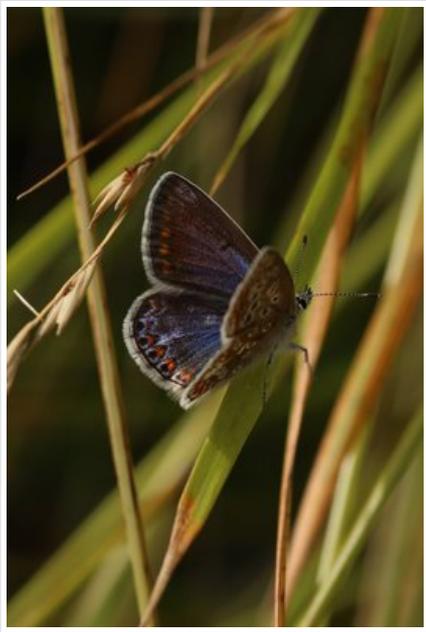
She was a beauty David, just wish the breeze had died back long enough for her to open her wings better 😊

Yes thanks for that Wurzel, another obsession to....obsess about! 😊

29th July (Part 1), Box Hill

Another trip into the depths of Surrey in search of Silver-spotted Skippers. I woke to a clear blue sky and arrived in Box Hill a few hours later under a blanket of cloud, bloody weather! Still there were enough chinks in the clouds to allow the occasional ray through and it was relatively warm and not as windy as my last visit so maybe a bit of luck would shine on me today.

I was welcomed to the hillside by several Gatekeepers, a couple of Meadow Browns and a very pretty little female Common Blue.



I lingered further up the hill around a couple of patches of Wild Marjoram checking out some Gatekeepers and found a couple of spotty ones.





By mid morning there were some decent gaps in the clouds so I made my way over to the Silver-spotted Skipper bank to see what I could find. There were quite a few Gatekeepers in the flowery meadow leading up to the bank, a few Common Blues flitting around, an extremely tatty male Dark Green Fritillary and, unexpected, a relatively fresh female Small Blue. The sun had vanished again by now so she sat for quite some time, absorbing what heat she could and probably wishing she left emerging until next spring!



I slowly walked along the bank and saw nothing but the odd meadow Brown and another female Common Blue



until right near the far end, where it turns up towards the upper meadow. A small bronzed ginger blur landed on the path in front of me just as the sun reappeared. My first Silver-spotted Skipper of the year sat long enough for 3 shots before he vanished as fast as the sun did!



Unfortunately that was the last I saw of the Skipper but I did stumble across this pretty little moth whilst trying to re-locate him.



Pyrausta nigrata

Moving up to the next meadow I was greeted by at least 4 male Chalkhills, a tatty female Dark Green frit (probably the same one from my last visit) and yet another lovely female Common Blue.





I decided to head for the second Silver-spotted Skipper site I know of at Box Hill, Juniper Top. A few Marbled Whites were flopping around lazily and a Holly Blue landed in front of me, struggling to bask as the breeze blew him around. I managed one shot before he gave up and buggered off over the trees.



The breeze picked up and the clouds closed ranks as I climbed up the hill to Juniper top so by the time I got to the top it was very much not Skipper weather! Undaunted I set to looking for roosting skippers and quickly found one, just not the silver-spotted variety.





Such pretty eyelashes :)

10 minutes of searching threw up very little but just when I was about to head back another skipper shot past me and landed a few feet away. Somehow he was managing to stay active enough for me to get only a few more shots before he darted off into the distance.



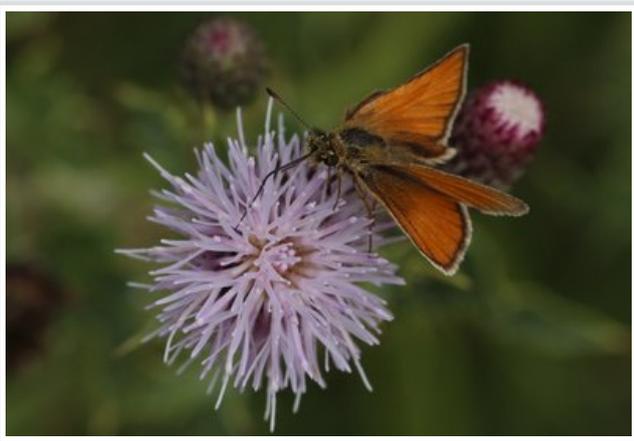
So with only 2 fresh looking males it would seem the main emergence is still a week or two away.

Wandering back down a few fresh Six-spot Burnets were around and I found a roosting male Common Blue peppered with mites.





Due to the 'Law of Sod', by the time I had reached the bottom of Box Hill the cloud had thinned dramatically and I spent half an hour wandering around Burford Meadow in the sun surrounded by butterflies, half of me wishing I had timed the search for Silver-spotted Skippers a bit better. All in all there were around 50+ Gatekeeper, 30+ Meadow Brown, a couple of Brown Argus, several Common Blue, a few whites of all species, singletons of Ringlet, Marbled white and Peacock and 20+ each of Essex and Small Skippers as well as a fair few Banded Demoiselles and a few other bits and bobs.







Great Pied Hoverfly (Volucella pellucens)

With still nearly half the day left I toyed with the idea of trundling over to Denbies for an hour or two. But with the wind now picking up and the sunny spell all but over from the look of the sky I decided to nip over to Bookham Common to try my hand at finding 1st instar White admiral larvae, rumour has it they are quite easy to find when you get your eye in!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 31-Jul-15 05:36 AM GMT

Wow! Surprised you had time to draw breath on that visit, Bugboy.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 31-Jul-15 06:16 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

Wow! Surprised you had time to draw breath on that visit, Bugboy.

haha, that was just between 9am and 1.30! still got the rest of the afternoon to get through yet 😊. I do love a good long day out in the countryside 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-15 06:36 AM GMT

Great stuff Bugboy, looking forward to the afternoon showing 😊😊 I found a few worn looking male Silver Spots at Broughton last weekend as well as some fresh females so they might be peaking sooner than expected.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-Aug-15 03:31 AM GMT

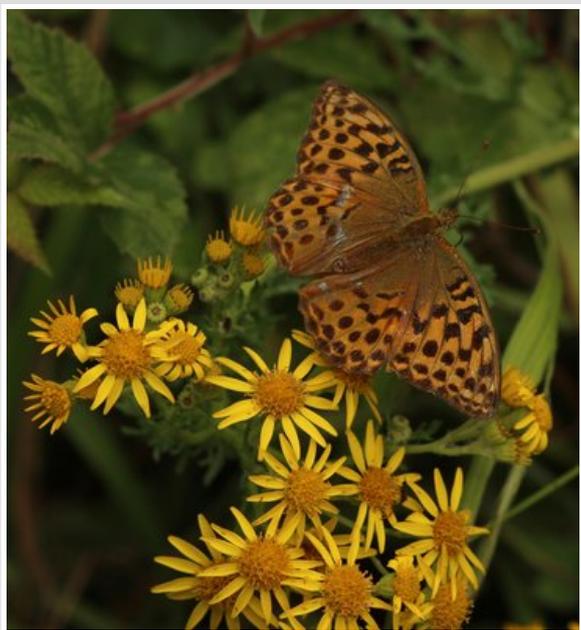
'ere you go then Wurzel!

29th July (Part 2), Bookham Common

So an hour after leaving Box Hill I arrived at Bookham Common. I like this site, it very conveniently backs onto the train station and even has an access point directly from one of the platforms 😊. The cloud was well and truly dominating the sky now but at least I was sheltered from the wind and the air temperature was warm enough to keep a few butterflies active, the first who presented themselves to me was this lovely female Speckled wood.



I carried on searching for this afternoons quarry, looking for what I thought would be suitable Honeysuckle, trying to think like a female White Admiral 'now where would I lay an egg?'. As it turned out the most difficult thing seemed to be finding suitable Honeysuckle that was accessible. There is a lot there but most of it seemed to be halfway up trees or involved wading through thickets of Bramble and when it was within reach it was in full sun (well it would have been had the sun been out). A few other butterflies kept me company, some female Silver Washed Fritillaries, forced to feed from Ragwort now the bramble has pretty much all gone to fruit and a Large Skipper.





Given the condition of her, this skipper stands every chance of making it into August as long as she doesn't get predated.

About half an hour after arriving I finally found some Honeysuckle that I could reach that was also nicely shaded. Scanning the leaves I looked for anything that looked like the images I've seen on this site in recent weeks.....nothing. Then I looked round the back in the darkest, gloomiest area and there, plain as day, sticking out like a sore thumb was my very first encounter with a 1st instar White Admiral larvae. The rumours were true, they really are very easy to find. With the light levels being what they were I resorted to flash to get anything useful, I'd probably need a 5 hour exposure without it!



I didn't find any others on this patch but you see all sorts of other curious beasties when you start looking closely in the undergrowth, a Lacewing Larvae having an afternoon snack, sucking out the contents of an aphid, yummy!



And a young harvestman *Dicranopalpus ramosus*.



Five minutes later I found another patch and I didn't need to spend anytime searching, I saw 3 as I walked towards it (there was a fourth a few feet away).





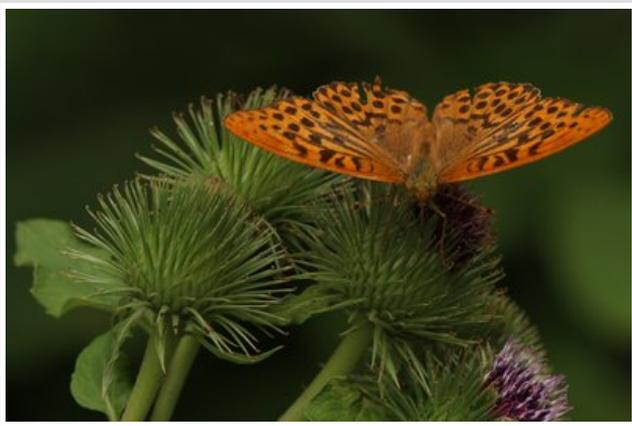
Just hanging around!



Further wandering turned up more critters, this Spear Thistle was rather popular and getting well and truly pollinated!



And nearby a late male Silver washed Fritillary was feeding on Burdock.



Another half hour passed and I found another shaded patch of Honeysuckle with several more Larvae. Some of them were quite high up but still easy to locate.



This one got the munchies as I was watching them :)

Another Silver Washed Frit sat for me patiently absorbing what heat she could from the air.

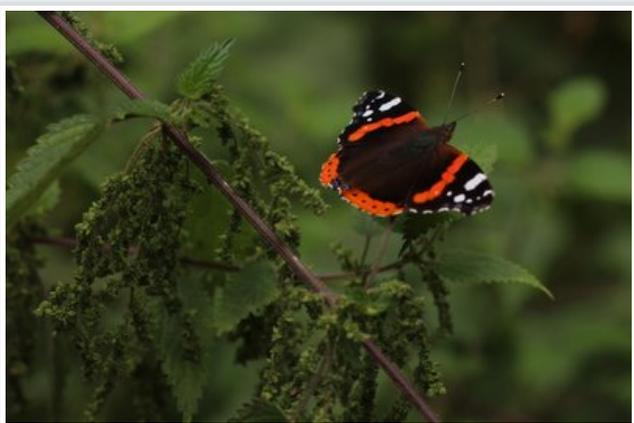


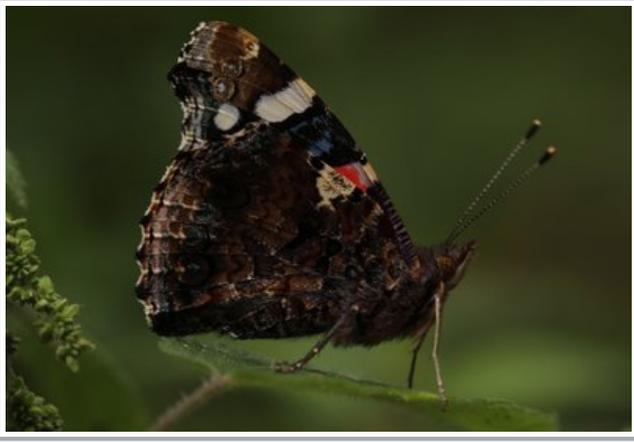
It was approaching 4pm now and time to make a move to try and miss the London rush hour. Striding along, my eye now well and truly in, I saw another Larvae without even looking for it, how do any survive the hungry gaze of a small bird! If I was a hungry Tit (children please), I'd be feasting on these!



This last one took my tally into double figures for the afternoon, not bad at all for my first effort!

One last butterfly showed off to me just before I left, a very beautiful Red Admiral.





So another very good day comes to an end with both targets seen and photographed 😊 2015 is turning into a very good year indeed for me 😊 !

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Aug-15 03:44 AM GMT

Monday 3rd August (part 1)

Nearly all my annual leave this year was booked to coincide with various flight periods so when I booked the first week of August off way back in January, I thought it would be perfect for Grayling, Silver Spotted Skipper, Brown Hairstreak etc. I'd even recently toyed with the idea of a couple of days up at Arnside Knot for Scotch Argus and perhaps a late High Brown Frit or N. Brown Argus so you can imagine my disappointment watching the weekly forecast on Countryfile Sunday night! A nice low weather system smearing its inclement weather across most of the country. With the south east escaping the worst it looks like a stay at home week and hoping for a bit of sun.

Mondays forecast seemed ok locally so I dually left early to visit a few of my favourite Surrey sites. Chobham Common was first for some more Grayling action, hoping to stumble across some courtship and grab some illusive upperside shots. The sun took its time to turn up and whilst I wandered under drab skies I was chided by the local Stonechat population as I often am when visiting this site.



At one point a Dartford Warbler turned up to see what all the fuss was about.



Despite the cloud it was warm enough for Gatekeepers to be about and this lovely marked male posed for me as the sun made its first brief appearance.



Along a ridge getting slightly battered in the blustery wind a blue fluttered low over the heather, too silvery and large to be a Silver Studded and when it landed it was obviously a Holly Blue, a male though so I wasn't going to witness any egg laying on heather. Only the one record shot before he was unceremoniously whisked away by the wind!



I made my way over to the Grayling hotspot I found on my previous visit and was instantly greeted by a Grayling flyby. I searched around hoping to find some mating pairs but no luck so I had to settle for the usual Grayling pose. I did manage a few flashing their eyes at me though 😊





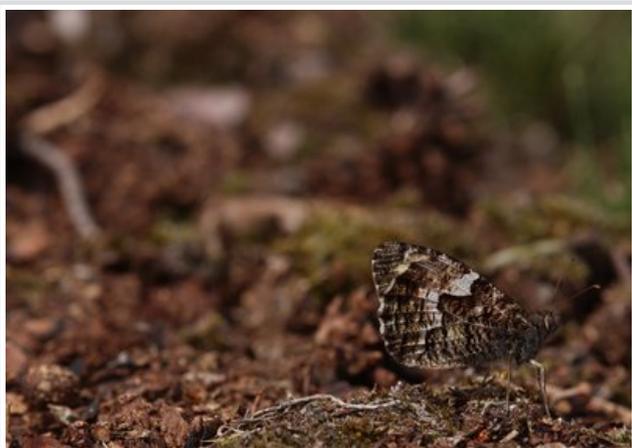
Whilst searching I came across this little digger wasp busy.... digging



And I nicely patterned Harvestman



I made the most of the Grayling pose and played with composition





I was surprised to see some of the large Skippers relatively fresh that look like they may even make it into September!



As I was leaving to head of to my next port of call I noticed I was being followed! I thought it was a large dog when I caught a glimpse out the corner of my eye. I was inspecting some Gatekeepers for extra spots, but it was a Roe Deer casually wandering along the path behind me 😊



Anyway, spot the Grayling time 😊





Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 05-Aug-15 04:13 AM GMT

Got 'em!! (But it took a while... 😊)

Nice Graylings – another spot to pop down to from here – only 20 minutes or so.

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

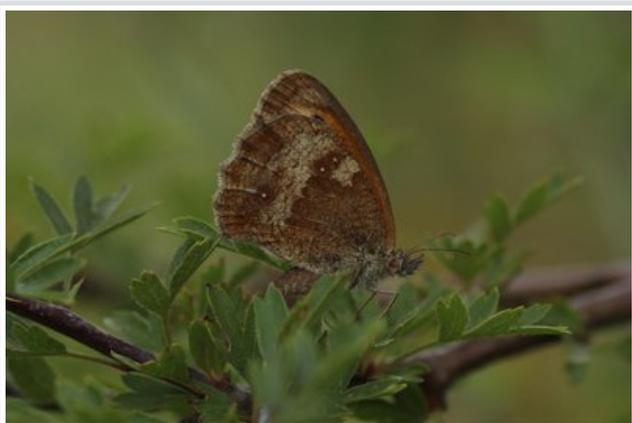
by bugboy, 05-Aug-15 05:12 AM GMT

Well done Dave 😊, yes its well worth a visit if the weather is good. I find the Graylings seem to congregate on the hills.

Monday 3rd August (part 2)

At the next site, **Box Hill** for Silver-spotted Skippers, the weather had decided to get worse, no sun and a thick blanket of foreboding dark clouds welcomed me. The clouds lived up to their foreboding nature and it started to rain a short while later, that fine rain that mums will tell you 'soaks you to the bone'. I took shelter under a Yew tree and munched on a sandwich 🤔😓.

Sometime later it slowed to a point where I ventured out to wander over half heartedly to where the Skippers hang out. There wasn't a hint of the weather improving (apart from it being slightly less rainy) so my chances of finding my target were somewhere between slim and nonexistent. Nevertheless I was determined not to go home with nothing. I found a couple of roosting Butterflies:





and a Chalk Carpet moth lead me a merry dance but refused to play nice. Another moth flew past and in the absence of anything else I followed it. I'm glad I did, it was a Straw Belle, one of Britain's rarest moths. I'd spoke to a guy last year about them when I was getting my lifer experience of Silver Spotted Skippers. He was from BC and was doing a survey for this moth. I never saw any last year but this one proved much more willing to sit and pose than the Chalk Carpet.





Peek-a-boo



amazing antennae 😊



I stayed with him for a while (getting rather damp lying on the grass in the process but well worth it) before wandering up to the higher meadow. A Chalkhill Blue was trying to bask despite the rain starting up again.



The return of the rain was my signal to make it a day, just stopping briefly to pry into the private life of a couple of Six-spot Burnets



Moral of the day: Persistence pays off 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 05-Aug-15 04:45 PM GMT

More interesting reports Buggy. I especially like the Swallow 😊 I think the addition of the odd bird, moth and bug amongst the butterflies (and you've found some smashing ones), paints a more 'rounded' picture of the outing, together with the scenery of course.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Aug-15 06:03 AM GMT

Thank you Pauline 😊

Tuesday 4th August

Up until the last minute I was planning on going down to Eastbourne and wandering along the coastal paths after some Walls but after reading **Trevor's** report from **Malling Down** I decided to go there, slightly cheaper train fare and a place I've never been before, hoping for Silver-spotted Skipper and maybe some Walls. I did what I usually do as to forward planning, a quick look on google earth and off I go. The sun was shining for most the trip until I arrived at Lewes when it started to rain! Luckily it was very light and lasted only a few minutes. I see what Trevor says about the place, a very picturesque little town.

Anyway, now to find my way up to the Downs which I could see looming over Lewes in the distance. I headed in the general direction, getting slightly lost and at one point I'm pretty sure I inadvertently wandered up someone's garden path thinking it was an entrance to the Downs, I beat a hasty retreat before I was noticed...

I found the entrance in the end though and made my way up through some wooded paths which eventually opened out onto the downs. The weather forecast for the day was for sunny periods and a stiff breeze: the first half was mostly correct but I beg to differ about the second half, it felt like I was walking in the actual Jet Stream at times 😊

I figured most butterflies would be seeking shelter from the 'breeze' and I found a nice swathe of Wild Marjoram in the lee of a small ridge. It wasn't exactly sheltered but it was teeming with butterflies every time the sun appeared, Gatekeepers, Essex Skippers, Chalkhill and Common Blues were very numerous but there was also a nice Small Tortoiseshell and I had 2 fleeting glances of a Silver-spotted Skipper.





Further afield I found a nice aberrant Chalkhill



With another one nearby doing the sensible thing and hiding in the turf!



Walking off to find a more sheltered area a Skipper zoomed low over the ground and landed to feed on a Birds-foot Trefoil at my feet. Rather than flying off after feeding I watched as she slowly crawled through the short turf looking for the perfect spot to bask, which as it turned out was right behind a single longer blade of grass! They do this on purpose I'm sure 🤔🤔.



Unfortunately for her she hadn't banked on my ninja-like stealth and I was able to use another stem to wedge the offending blade out the way without disturbing her 😊 .



More wandering and I came across what looks like some old chalk quarrying with a wooded ridge, at last some shelter. Here I needed to put my ninja-like mountain goat skills to use.



I managed to see my first female Chalkhill of the year, a second flew past with 5 males in hot pursuit! I also found a decent looking Small Copper which turned out, by the skin of its teeth, to be a member of the blue badge gang. Silver spotted Skippers flitted around and stopped occasionally for a photograph as did a couple of Walls, who didn't stop for pictures!





Exploring further a couple of Buddleias were proving popular to the local Vanessids, Red Admirals, Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells and Commas all in attendance.



Didn't notice until I got home I also had a Silver-spotted Skipper in this picture as well!

This fly puzzled me for quite some time and took quite a bit of internet searching to ID but I think it's a male Golden Horsefly *Atylotus fulvus*. His huge eye's make him look like he's wearing a crash helmet!

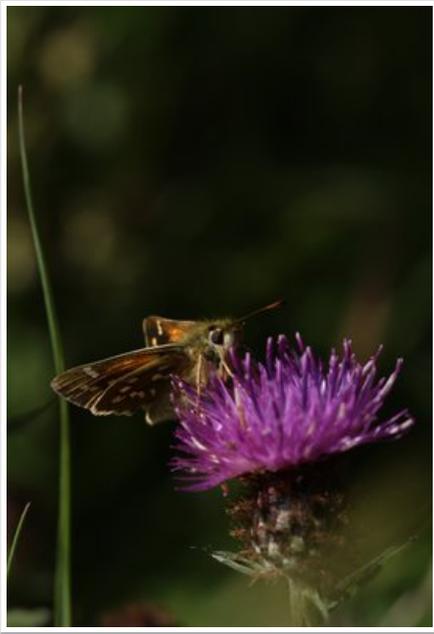


As I explored further, wandering along gullies and ridges, Silver Spotted Skippers kept turning up, they seemed to be everywhere which is not too surprising since there is an awful lot of Sheeps Fescue making up the turf.



Rubbish phone picture but you get the idea





I heard a couple of Linnet and as if to illustrate the strength of the wind, he was quite literally blown of his perch shortly after this picture was taken.



I made my way back to the old quarry and spent a bit of time trying to get a shot of a passing Wall, all I managed was this one spying at me over the turf, my ninja skills failing me on this occasion.



A few more Silver-spotted Skippers and time to head off, despite the wind a rather enjoyable afternoon exploring a brand new site for me 😊



Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 06-Aug-15 06:35 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

Looks like you had a successful visit to Malling Down and went home with a bag full of images. I have found Silver Spotted Skippers on every part of the South Downs visited this year but Malling Down is probably the best site.

All the best,
TREVOR.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Aug-15 07:00 AM GMT

"trevor" wrote:

Hi Bugboy,

Looks like you had a successful visit to Malling Down and went home with a bag full of images. I have found Silver Spotted Skippers on every part of the South Downs visited this year but Malling

Down is probably the best site.

All the best,
TREVOR.

Thanks for the tip in your PD Trevor, been struggling with them this year until yesterday 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-15 07:03 AM GMT

Great report Bugboy, lovely Silver Spots and that Wall shot is a classic 😊😊 Mind you I need to be careful poking fun I don't want to be on the wrong end of the Ninja 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 06-Aug-15 08:48 PM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, love the shot of your SSS skipper, 🍷🍷 I'm still trying to find them around Lydden and Temple Ewell, hope the spider Hasn't got them, your photos also of the Coppers are great Goldie 😊

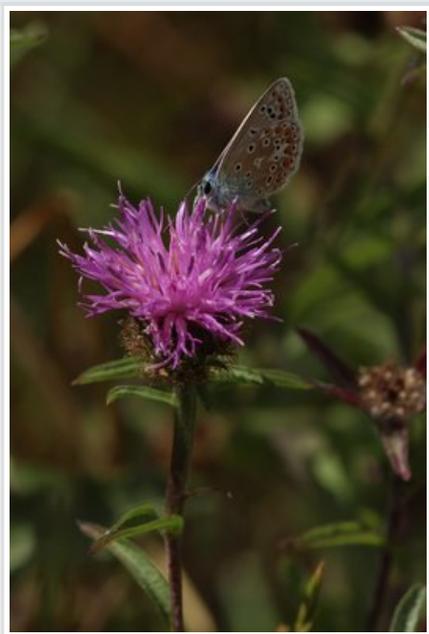
Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Aug-15 06:05 AM GMT

Thank you all and yes **Wurzel**, careful what you say 😊😊

6th August (part 1)

Due to a couple of groups of grown men being unable to sit around a table and have a civilised discussion Londons public transport system was a no go area, so today I had a little afternoon mooch around my local patch on the off chance of finding an Emperor moth caterpillar but also just a general nose around. The morning was dreary with the constant threat of rain but come the afternoon the sun came out and temperatures rocketed! Quite a few Common Blues, a few Meadow Browns and a couple of Gatekeepers, several unspecified species of White, 3 Commas, a couple of Holly Blues and a Painted lady were busy flying around in hyperdrive so there was very little opportunity for photos.





This female could have been mistaken for a male but she stubbornly refused to open her wings for me!

I did come across another Jersey Tiger though



nearly stepped on this female Roesel's Bush Cricket catching some rays and having a wash 😊



and in this picture there are 3 kestrels hovering! Presumably mum, dad and fledgling.



On the way back a brown female Common Blue was having a snack



Admiring the masses of blackberries I decided to come back a little later when things had cooled down a little bit



Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 07-Aug-15 06:50 AM GMT

Blackberries are proving a serious distraction on some of my walks locally too, Buggy. 😊 There are some luscious berries out there and I'm returning home stained to Staines... Those are a good selection of Silver Spots, too! 😊

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Aug-15 05:36 PM GMT

Thanks Dave, it was good to finally see decent amounts of SSS 😊 and those blackberries are some of the nicest I've tasted!

6th August (part 2)

By the early evening things had certainly cooled down and the Blues were busy looking for places to roost, catching a few last rays when the sun peered out from behind a cloud.





Whilst engrossed in getting a few pics of this one I'd accidentally knelt in a Yellow Meadow Ant nest. The frantic brushing off of hundreds of angry ants scaring the Blue away, it's a perilous hobby, this!

Lurking in the undergrowth I found a Wasp Spider *Argiope bruennichi*, first time I've seen one here. Stunning looking animal, or if you're a grasshopper your worst possible nightmare since that's what they specialise in catching.



There were lots of these Crickets . They have the honour of being christened with one of my favourite names for an animal. This particular one is a female Long Winged Conehead, 1 moult off from getting her long wings (there's also a Short winged Conehead!).



Wandering back I checked on the Wasp Spider and found she had got lucky, a grasshopper twice her size had been immobilised for later!



I didn't let the blackberries go to waste either, this was 10 minutes worth picking and I have to say they are some of the most succulent and sweet blackberries I have tasted!



And they found themselves to be major constituent of these yummy muffins!



Think I had the oven too hot, didn't rise as much as I hoped.....but they do taste good I can assure you!

A fruitful day in more than one sense 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 08-Aug-15 12:02 AM GMT

Wow, I'm impressed ... and a bit peckish too now 😊😄 Great shots of the spider 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Katrina, 08-Aug-15 03:06 AM GMT

Ooh those blackberries look good!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 08-Aug-15 04:49 AM GMT

Nice muffins Bugboy can you post one to Kent Please Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Aug-15 06:40 AM GMT

Thanks **Pauline** 😊

They are very good Blackberries **Katrina**, very good indeed 😊

Haha, not sure it would survive the post **Goldie!** 😊

8th August, in search of Brownies

Today was my first proper hunt for a Brown hairstreak and since I've become reasonably familiar with the place this year I chose to go to Bookham Common. I got there early afternoon and stuck to the open scrubby areas which seemed to be the best looking habitat to my untrained eyes. There is certainly tons of Fleabane there to tempt any hungry Hairstreaks down. There were also loads of gatekeepers around so each and every one had to be closely inspected and followed in flight....just in case! All the Gatekeepers inspected turned out to be Gatekeepers.



Definitely NOT a Brown Hairstreak!

There was also quite a few Common Blues around but only one settled long enough for a photo, a particularly nice looking female. Like everything else all the others were on solar powered hyper drive this afternoon.



Whilst taken her picture a small orangy butterfly flew into my field of view, momentary excitement was dashed when it landed, it was obviously too small for today's target but nevertheless it is nice to see another Small Copper this year, I've missed them.



It was actually the first of several I saw today, first time this year I've seen more than just the one! Not quite Dungerness levels but better than the rest of the year so far.



I managed one shot of a Comma before it shot off.



and I managed to get this beast before it got me! Obviously I don't like killing things but when you feel something stab you reactions take over and if something decides to take my blood without asking I'm afraid bad things may happen!



I noticed it was different to the normal Clegs that attack me so took its photo before popping it into the nearest spiders web (waste not want not). *Chrysops relictus* is apparently quite localised to damp heaths, moors and light woodlands and rarely far from water which pretty much perfectly describes Bookham Common!

Anyway, back to Butterflies. There were still some Small Skippers around, it seemed that virtually everything today was orangy coloured! (Well apart from the Blues.....they were blue!)



Still no Brownies though and at this point I didn't even know if it was still an active site for them. That was until I met a couple who were after the same quarry. They lived locally and although they had yet to see some this year have seen them in recent years and were more than happy to point out the favoured spots and also showed me two large Ash used as master trees. Even with their help though, the hairstreaks, if they are out yet, remained very illusive and I ended the day Brown Hairstreakless.

On the return walk I stopped to admire a lovely looking Brimstone, too busy fattening himself up to worry about the strange man shoving a camera in his face!





It was still warm and I had a spare hour or two so I decided to go and have a look at some of the White Admiral cats I'd found on my last visit. I easily found the 3 close together, one of which had moved leaves, his original leaf now looking very dead. There was a fourth one in the vicinity last time but his leaf was empty and no sign of him anywhere else.



This was the state of play on the 29th July



And this is today

I'll name these since I will try and keep an eye on them (not as vigilantly as other forum members but I plan to pop back a few times over the winter) so the top one I shall name 'Brian', the one on the right who has moved leaves will be 'Shifty' and the lower one shall henceforth be known as 'Sid'!

Today Brian seems to be just lazing around, perhaps getting ready for his first moult?



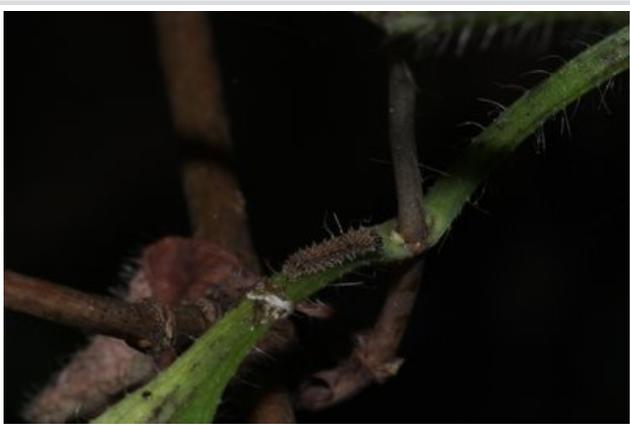
Shifty was just hanging around covered in poo and like Brian, still looks to be 1st instar



Sid on the other hand has moulted and is now a tiny spikey second instar.



The two younger ones didn't move much but whilst inspecting them and seeing if there were any others Sid decided to go for a wander. I thought at first he was peckish but he seemed to be on a mission, perhaps finding a new leaf that wasn't so yellow?



He finally found the stalk where he dithered for some time, seeming confused as to how to pass this new obstacle. I did wonder whether he was planning ahead and laying down some silk line to stop the leaf falling but his movements seemed too random, not the regular too and thro movements I would expect from a cat laying down silk lines.



After dithering though he turned round and returned to his rib.





Whilst all this excitement was going on I found a culprit for some of the other holes in the Honeysuckles leaves, a Sawfly larvae.



Heading back to the train station a comma buzzed me. Upon landing i saw it was the same one I had seen a few hours ago, identifiable by the hindwing damage. he looked beautiful backlit with the evening sun!



Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 09-Aug-15 07:03 AM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, Love the Brimstones Can't say I've seen one of them in Kent yet, off home tomorrow, may be I'll see one there (if it's not raining) Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 09-Aug-15 07:10 AM GMT

There were Brown Hairstreaks down at Bookham last year, Buggy - I managed four (and an egg) on the last day of August. I'm going to leave it a week or so before having a look.

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurus rex, 10-Aug-15 03:34 AM GMT

You may not have seen any Brownies Buggy but it looks like you still had a great day. I love Brimstones and this is the best time to photograph them.

Good luck with the BHS hunt, I'll be looking for some too as soon as I am able.

Best wishes

James

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Aug-15 05:03 AM GMT

Thanks for the tip Dave 😊

I certainly did James, I always try and make the best of my days out, keep your eye's peeled and something always turns up worthwhile even if it's not what you're looking for 😊

9th August, Box Hill & Denbies (part 1)

Last day of my week off so a trip into Surrey was in order. Didn't get to Box Hill to nearly 1pm due to the London Transport system which seems to fall apart every weekend!

Anyway upon arrival I bypassed the masses at the top of Box Hill and headed straight for the Silver-spotted Skippers. On the way I noticed common Blues were living up to their names. Equal numbers of males and females spotted, and a few females were willing to sit for me but the males were mostly in hyperdrive. This was probably the highest numbers of these I've seen all year.



Over at the Skipper bank the first thing I saw (apart from some more Common Blues) was a nice male Small Copper followed by an equally lovely male Small Blue with a very generous dusting of blue scales.



Silver-spotted Skippers started to make their presence felt before I reached the main bank, unlike last year where the main concentration seemed to be at the far end today I was seeing them in numbers all the way along. I was told last year that the grazing regime has changed on the bank and it would seem its being welcomed by the Skippers. A lot of them looked very fresh, possibly only a few hours old but as it was early afternoon, hot and sunny, photo's were hard to come by. There were almost too many, constantly harassing each other and if they weren't chasing each other they were after one of the many six-spot Burnets that were also there.

I did spend a bit of time with a mating pair of Common Blues. I felt sorry for the male, she just would not settled and continuously dragged him round in circles wherever he landed. I think he got sick of it all in the end because they disconnected and went their separate ways 10 minutes after I found them!





A few Chalkhills were around but after much persistence I managed to find some Skippers that were willing to sit still for more than 2 seconds.





"Hands off, this is MY blade of grass!"



Across the road on the higher bank quite a few Chalkhills were about but also several SSS as well, it seems like a particularly good year for them at this site.

On the way back it had clouded over somewhat which had calmed the SSS down a bit and I found a courting pair of Skippers, well courting in as much as the male followed her around like a lost puppy but sat motionlessly behind her when settled, like a 13 year old boy experiencing his first crush and not a clue what to do about it. I watched them for 15 minutes but lost them before anything more exciting happened.





Also seen were some Brown Argus a Speckled Wood, and a few Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns and a single female Brimstone
A quick stop off the grab a well earned Ice cream and it was off to Denbies to see how the Chalkhills were doing over there.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 11-Aug-15 11:48 PM GMT

Great shots of the mating pair Buggy, and I envy you the SSS Goldie 😊

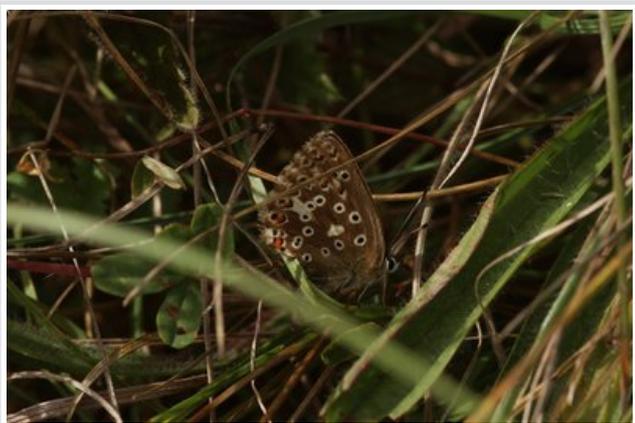
Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Aug-15 03:42 AM GMT

Thnaks **Goldies**, And I envy your Purple Emperor 🍷 😊

9th August, Box Hill & Denbies (part 2)

So after a brisk walk to Denbies, it was nearly 4 by the time got there, I set about looking for some female Chalkhills since I've not had much luck finding them. That changed almost instantly with several flying up from my feet as I walked along. They were mostly clambering around in the undergrowth laying eggs but some were feeding.





In my searching I found another Wasp spider and also there were a few SSS flying around, only a few though.



As I prowled around in the grass a lady who looked vaguely familiar walked past, blonde curly hair. But I wasn't sure and carried on after the butterflies. There were lots of males feeding and starting to roost and females flying up from almost every step



This male was oblivious to the female roosting lower down.



This female obviously thought she was some kind of hairstreak!



Slowly making my way back I saw the blonde lady again, taking pictures. So a blonde curly haired lady taking butterfly pictures at Denbies hillside could obviously only be one person.

We swapped pleasantries and then introduced ourselves in one of the more surreal opening conversations I've had with someone who's to all intents and purposes a stranger.

"Are you Susie?"

"Yes I am 😊, who are you?"

"I'm Bugboy 😊!"

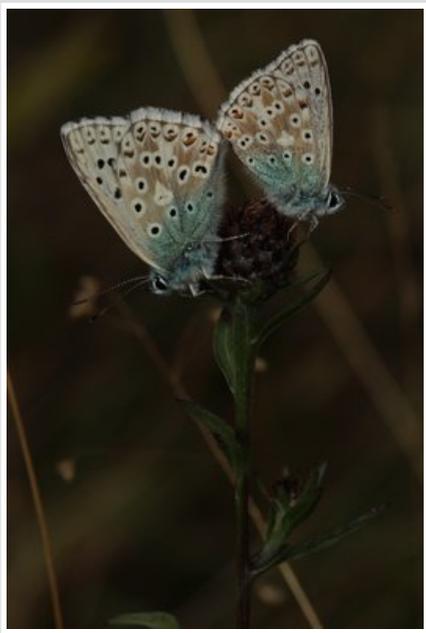
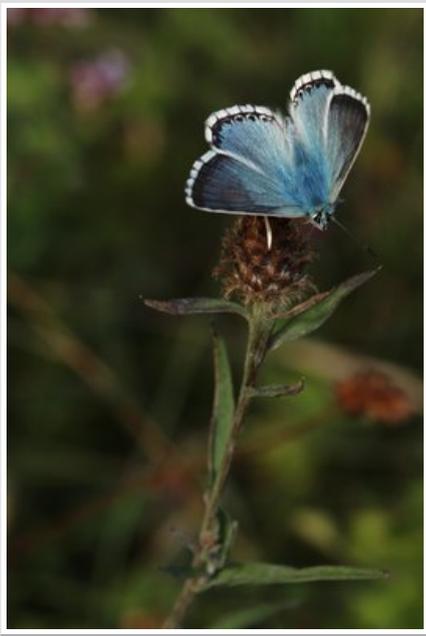
After nearly a year of posting I'd finally met a fellow UKBer 😊!

Susie was after Abs. And quickly pointed one out to me and allowed me to go first. After I got a few pictures both blues decided to bummer off when Susie settled down to take a few. Luckily there were quite a few abs around, mostly of the vestigial spotting kind and with it being early evening most were settling down to roost.



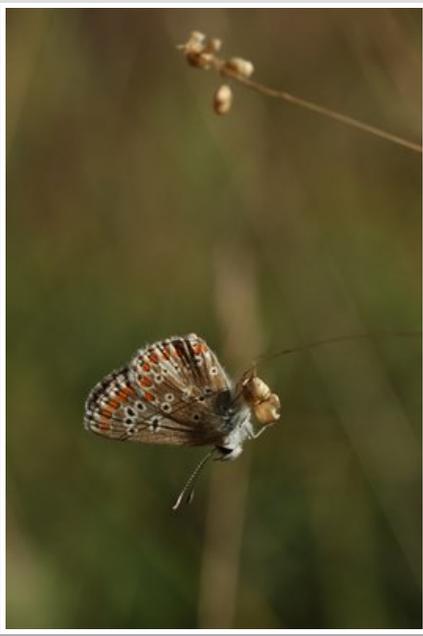
I managed to follow the same one and grab some more shots as well as some more normal Chalkhills





Just friends!

I couldn't resist taking a snap of this roosting Brown Argus



I also found this rather lovely/evil looking crab spider, I wonder how many Blues have ended their days in its fangs.



And I ended the day with this beautiful female Chalkhill 😊





At 5.30 I wasn't looking forward to my trip home, probably not getting back until close to 9 but Susie very kindly offered me a lift to Westthumble station, an hour's walk becoming a 10 minute drive 😊!

So despite a hellish trip to and from London still thoroughly worthwhile afternoon out.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 12-Aug-15 04:17 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

Some great reports recently, entertaining reads with cracking photos 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Aug-15 03:48 AM GMT

Thank you Neil 😊

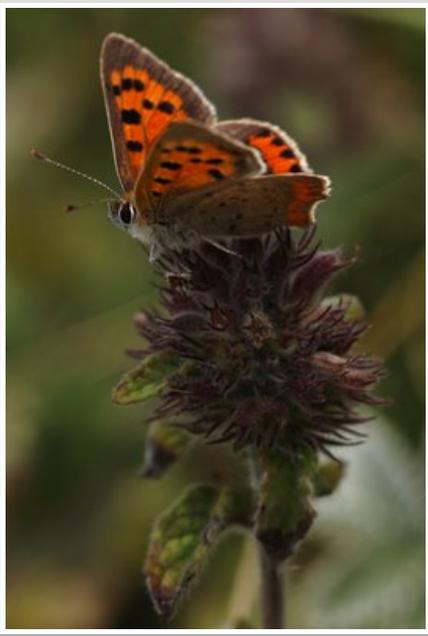
11th August, Aldbury Nowers

Well today I went after Brown Hairstreaks again and despite coming home with just over 60 pictures as opposed to the usual 200 - 300, some of them shall remind me of one of this year's more special butterflying moments, but more of that in the next post.

Yesterday afternoon I went up to the nature reserve near Tring. It was mostly muggy, bright but cloudy weather but still warm enough to keep everything active. There were still a few tired looking Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers around, this female a mere ghost of her former self!



There were also a lot of Green-veined white, all too active for photos but it was the Lycids that ruled the roost. First to show off for my pleasure was a lovely male Small Copper.



The new generation of Small Heaths are also emerging, this one eyeing up my every move as I took his photo!



In the chalk meadow half of the reserve a few Chalkhills were fluttering around and both Brown Argus and Common Blues were present in good numbers, both probably into double figures.



There were quite a few patches of this white flowered Wild Marjoram around.



Another couple of Small Coppers showed up, both gorgeous ladies!



Everything was obsessed with feeding from the Wild Marjoram and it was difficult to decide what to concentrate on, particularly with everything disturbing everything else.....that was until this little lady crawled up from the lower stems!



I really wasn't expecting to find a White-letter Hairstreak to turn up so late in the season. She was very compliant and wasn't bothered about my presence at all and I spent some time watching her clamber from flower head to flower head.

After getting my fill I wandered through the wood to the steep chalk scrapes at the other end of the reserve. Here Brown Argus and Common Blue numbers were uncountable, they were all very active but I would hazard a guess at 30 - 40 of each.



They were joined by several fresh Peacock, an occasional Comma and a couple of Brimstone. There were also some more Small Coppers and a couple of Essex Skippers





Some of the female Common Blues were particularly lovely



With this particular female seeming to be missing her diagnostic spot on her underside forewing.



It was interesting to see that although virtually every species seen was pretty much obsessed with Marjoram flowers, the Brimstone never went near it and instead were obsessed with the Wild Basil



Also seen were a couple of male Small Blues having a tussle but one last surprise awaited me as I was just about to leave the scrapes, a beautiful fresh male Common Blue with some very (*Lysandra*)-esqu hindwing spotting, something I've never seen in the flesh, absolutely stunning!



A fine end to a fabulous afternoon 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 13-Aug-15 04:08 AM GMT

A very productive day out bugboy, lovely shots 😊 especially the White-letter Hairstreak and the final Male Common Blue 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 13-Aug-15 05:34 AM GMT

Each butterfly species has its own nectar preferences. Today I saw Peacocks and Red Admirals galore on buddleia, but the Commas that were about remained steadfastly adhered to the few bramble blooms that were still in flower.

Give it a couple of weeks though, when the bramble has gone over, Commas will be joining the other vanessids on the buddleia and after that, every species going will gorge itself on ivy flowers.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Aug-15 05:54 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

Each butterfly species has its own nectar preferences. Today I saw Peacocks and Red Admirals galore on buddleia, but the Commas that were about remained steadfastly adhered to the few bramble blooms that were still in flower.

Give it a couple of weeks though, when the bramble has gone over, Commas will be joining the other vanessids on the buddleia and after that, every species going will gorge itself on ivy flowers.

Indeed, often due to the length of the proboscis compared to the depth the nectaries are located in the flower. I've also noted how Brimstones seem to always be seen feeding side on as opposed to sitting ontop/upright. When feeding on thistles they nearly always feed on a side flower that's drooping rather than one that's erect. Maybe that's why they preferred Basil to Marjoram?

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-Aug-15 05:37 AM GMT

Thanks for the comment guys, it was extremely productive **Maximus** but the next days trumps it as far as being memorable is concerned.....

12th August, Brown Hairstreak hunt take 2!

Today was my last chance for a week to try and get a peek at a Brown Hairstreak so it was off to **Bookham Commons** again. The weather was decidedly iffy, the south east currently having a rather flirtatious relationship with what is technically known as a 'wobbly front', but things looked to be brightening up by mid morning and I got to the site just after midday. It didn't take long to see a fresh female brown butterfly with a flash of orange on her forewing.....just not the species I was after. Still she did look particularly beautiful and was happy to sit for me.



There were a few more faded meadow Browns and Gatekeepers around as expected and still a couple of Small Skippers but numbers were lower than my last visit.



The clouds were thickening again after some sunny weather on the train journey and I was beginning to think I got the timing wrong when suddenly flying along the hedge towards me fluttered a rather large dark looking *Lycid*. Definitely *Lycid* by its flight and by its size it couldn't be anything other than my target for the day. It flew past me about 7 feet high and then cut across behind me, dipping down as it approached the opposite hedge, but the dip was a false alarm, it suddenly flew up and over the hedge and out of site and it was gone. Still it was a sighting and good to know they were active in this weather.

I moved on towards where I had been reliably informed they are regularly seen, close to some mature Ash trees. Here I prowled slowly around, kicking myself for forgetting my bins, my senses focused on that illusive little butterfly. A few Gatekeepers tormenting me when I caught a sight in my peripheral of something fluttering low down behind me. Looking down I saw a chocolate brown wing with a flash of bright orange peeking out from behind a leaf, and this time there was no eye spot! Unlike last year I didn't forget I had a camera and quickly took a run of shots just in case this was all I was going to see of one.



Once happy I slowly stalked around, taking a picture with every step as more of her was revealed. I don't think I have ever stalked a butterfly so carefully! I needn't have worried though, even when I did disturb her she merely fluttered onto a nearby leaf.



*Brown hairstreak my a***! If I could name it, it would be called the Flame Hairstreak!*



You couldn't wipe the grin off my face after that!!! 😄😄😄😄😄😄

I have a feeling I was witnessing her maiden flight, she didn't seem to be a very strong flyer at all. I had her for nearly 10 minutes before she gained enough confidence (well energy) to fly off over a hedge and she was gone. But what a 10 minutes it was, it will go down as one of my most memorable butterflying experiences, such a gorgeous looking insect. I know I saw one last year but that was almost certainly an unofficial release so as far as I'm concerned THIS experience is my lifer for the Brown Hairstreak.

I spent some time here, trying to track her down again or find another one but nothing else showed itself to me so I decided to check on my White Admiral larvae.....

Well it's all been happening since my last visit, Brians leaf was hanging by a thread and there was no sign of him, Sids leaf was in an equally sorry state and there were 2 cats on Shiftys leaf. I suspect the interloper was Sid since he and Shifty were on the same stalk whereas Brian was on another stalk.

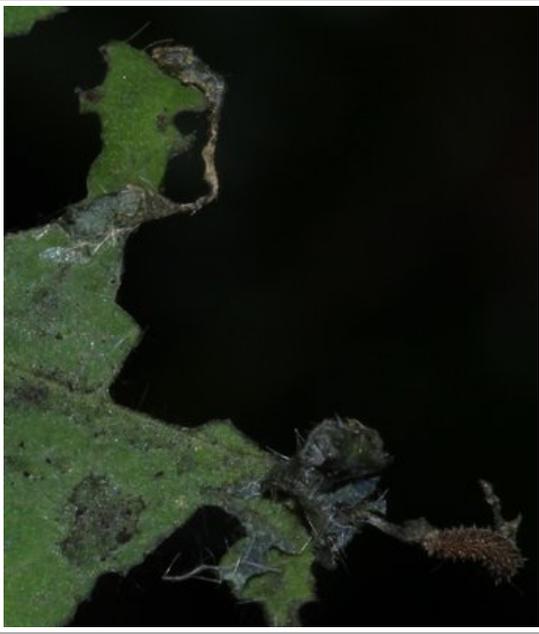


Looking around I then quickly found another 4 I hadn't seen in my previous visits despite much searching. Not sure I will be able to keep track of all these so have yet to name them.





Looking closely Shiftys leaf there seems to be a second stripped rib that had bent back on itself so it would seem these two had been sharing this leaf quite amicably for a few days.



As I watched the one on the centre started moving towards the one at the tip and the one at the tip seemed to become quite agitated upon its arrival, in fact even before it arrived it had turned round to face the intruder. Once nose to nose the one on the tip jerked its head from side to side in that typical agitated caterpillar style and after a minute or so the intruder turned tail and went back to sit on the leaf.





They never actually touched but at their closest they were only 2 or 3 mm apart. I wonder whether Sid ousted Shifty when he moved leaves since on my last visit, out of the 3, he was the only one to have moulted to 2nd instar and what I saw was Shifty trying to get back to his spot? We shall probably never know...

Here's a rubbish context picture from my phone of what seems to be prime White Admiral real estate, much dingier than it looks, my phone got over excited and massivley over exposed!



So A brown Hairstreak lifer, and an absolute stunner of an individual at that, and some very interesting White Admiral behaviour, another great afternoon!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 14-Aug-15 06:05 AM GMT

That's almost the perfect day, Bugboy.

You must feel 10 feet tall after that!!?

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-Aug-15 06:09 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

That's almost the perfect day, Bugboy.

You must feel 10 feet tall after that!!?

I'm still smiling about it. Writing it up brought it all back 😊 fabulous day!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 14-Aug-15 02:34 PM GMT

What a great experience Buggy. Very interesting account of the WA larva and if I was in your shoes I, too, would still be smiling after such a close encounter with the BH. It can be a very illusive butterfly but you have captured it in some lovely poses 🍷🍷. From what I have heard/read I don't think many folk are getting that lucky this year. Well done 😊😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 14-Aug-15 05:07 PM GMT

What chance to be there at the moment the white admiral cats encountered each other! It's a very interesting encounter, as it seems to suggest there is no active avoidance of another caterpillar – just defensive confrontation. As I mentioned in my diary, I have found two living apparently happily on the same leaf, each with its own full platform, and evidence of a third.

My experience is that there is great loss at this time of year, including of caterpillars on isolated leaf sprays – so it is difficult to attribute a particular disappearance to a particular cause. We have had several thunderstorms, which probably doesn't help. I would say roughly 50% of white admiral platforms are now unoccupied in my woods. I'd be interested to know if the rate of loss is similar in yours.

Guy

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 14-Aug-15 10:26 PM GMT

Your very lucky buggy, I'd be over the moon to see a White Lettered Hair Streak, you've done that and taken great pic's of the Brown HS as well as the White 🍷🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Aug-15 09:01 PM GMT

Thank you for the comments everyone, it was a very memorable day filled with lots of luck and being in the right place at the right time 😊

My experience is that there is great loss at this time of year, including of caterpillars on isolated leaf sprays – so it is difficult to attribute a particular disappearance to a particular cause. We have had several thunderstorms, which probably doesn't help. I would say roughly 50% of white admiral platforms are now unoccupied in my woods. I'd be interested to know if the rate of loss is similar in yours.

I am going to try and keep track of these but I won't be able to check on them as often as you can yours Guy. We've had some heavy rain here in the past couple of days as well so like you it will be impossible to attribute any disappearances to any cause unless I witness something first hand.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Aug-15 04:28 AM GMT

Well after taking a bit of a tumble at work, I missed a step and broke my fall with my shin of one leg and thigh of my other, I ended up taking the weekend off work since I could barely walk on Friday. Yesterday I was housebound but today I was significantly more mobile and risked a slow wander sporting a couple of impressive bruises! I could have stayed local but I'm addicted to Brown Hairstreaks now so I hobbled off to Bookham again. It was a gloriously sunny morning but sunday public transport being what it is by the time I arrived it was early afternoon and the clouds had descended. Sadly no Brown Hairstreaks today...well I did see A Hairstreak but it settled high up and at such an angle to make it impossible to confirm what colour it was 😊



Spot the Hairstreak!

I did find a lovely fresh male Speckled Wood



But there wasn't much else on the wing, a few Whites, Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers plus some Common Blues, Small Coppers and Holly Blues.





I decided to see what was going on in White Admiral towers:

The two that were sharing a leaf 4 days ago were now on separate leaves.



One of the newbies from my last visit had vanished and I found another new one who was having issues with the normal White Admiral style of living.



It's possible he's taken over a leaf that's previously been eaten by something else so he has no mid rib to work with and is just making do with what's left.

This one has also deserted his original leaf and moved higher up in the world!



If my maths are correct (which is questionable!) then I have so far recorded 8 individuals from this one patch of honeysuckle, of which 5 are still known to be alive.

There were still a few female Silver Washed Frits flying around and I saw one settle high up on a moss covered Oak bough and as far as I could tell she was ovipositing. I didn't realise they laid eggs at such a height, she was a good 12-15 feet of the ground! I only managed one very poor picture but I'm sure you can see her curling her abdomen to lay.



Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 17-Aug-15 06:02 AM GMT

Just catching up, Buggy. Those Brown Hairstreaks are terrific – such a glorious butterfly. 🍷 I haven't had the chance to get out to see any – yet... And the one in the tree looks a bit Purple to me. I'm used to seeing them from a large distance and at that angle! 😊

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-15 06:20 AM GMT

Lovely maiden Brostreak Buggy 😊 I'd second Dave's judge as a Purple Hairstreak 🍷 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 17-Aug-15 03:06 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

For me there are two main 'moments' in the Butterfly year. First the 'Purple' one then the 'Brownie'.

I think it has to do with building anticipation whilst patiently waiting for that magic appearance.

Most species are fairly easy to find if you are in the right place/ right time, but not the Brownie.

I fully share your excitement of that 'lifer' moment, it came across in spades in your report. 😊

All the best,
TREVOR.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 18-Aug-15 04:31 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy, a great series of Brown Hairstreak photos, lovely images of a beautiful butterfly and your excitement at finding her is well described in your report 😊

Cheers,
Neil.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Aug-15 03:41 AM GMT

Thank you for all the comments, it really was quite exciting, I had to concentrate to stop my hands from shaking 😊

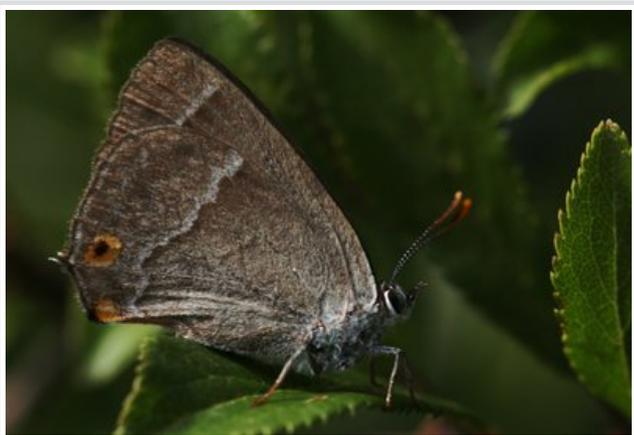
19th August, Hairstreak Heaven!

I've been itching to get back to **Bookham Commons** again to see if I can add to my Brown Hairstreak encounters this year and have avidly been keeping an eye on the forecast. Sunny morning and overcast/rainy afternoon, I'll take that!

I arrived at Bookham at 9 with hazy sun to greet me. A slight autumnal nip in the air but I could feel the site warming up in the sheltered paths. I saw nothing for quite a while as I headed for the place I saw my lifer last week and when I got there I found a couple of Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns having breakfast. I'd remembered my binoculars this time and scanned to Ash's for any sign of life.....nothing, maybe a little early. I did see something large and dull orange feeding on the mint, a female Silver Washed Fritillary who was in no hurry to escape me, just fluttering here and there in a very lazy fashion.



I spent an hour searching the vicinity periodically scanning the Ash. Eventually I saw something small fluttered to a lower bough but it turned out to be a Purple Hairstreak doing pirouettes on the leaf. Shortly after I disturbed a small butterfly that had been feeding on the mint, it didn't fly far and settled within easy reach on some Blackthorn, a Purple Hairstreak trying to do an impression of a Brownie again, quite likely the same one I'd already seen. Still I wasn't going to say no to a Hairstreak if she sat in front of me and basked for my pleasure. I spent some 10 minutes with her and she even let me remove a few leaves so I could get clear shots from various angles. If only they were so willing earlier in their short lives 😊





Still no Brownies though so I decided to wander further afield. The mint seemed to be the flower of choice this morning, I spent some time with a fresh male Specklie breakfasting on the stuff and I came across a trio of male Common Blues enjoying the morning sunshine and having the occasional tussle.

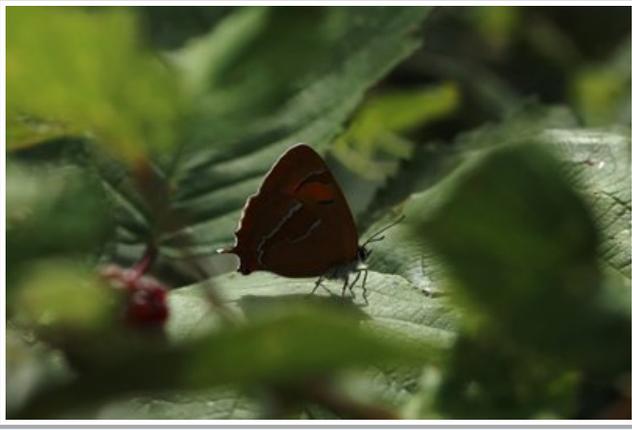




Returning back to my original spot I stood and gave the Ash's another scan but still no sign. Lowering my bins I went to walk on when there right in front of me feeding on a thistle was the reason I left the flat this morning, almost exactly in the same spot as last week, another pristine female. Like last week she didn't fly far when disturbed and this time I was able to get some shots of her glowing in the sun. I followed her as she fluttered from leaf to leaf until eventually I disturbed her once too many times and she vanished round the corner of a hedge. Another day where my grin was ear to ear, two Hairstreak close encounters! 😊😊😊







I love the little stripey socks they wear 😊!

Of course no trip to Bookham is complete without a visit to white admiral towers at the moment and I'm pleased to report all 5 of my little charges are doing well. Sid and shifty are still on their leaves.



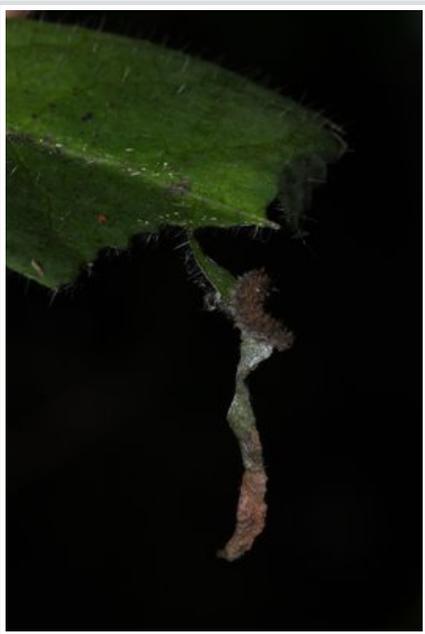
Lofty , as I've named him, is sitting highest, just above (my) head height.



Cyril slightly lower



and down low, about a foot from the ground is Brian II.



Fingers crossed naming them all isn't the kiss of death!

Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 20-Aug-15 04:30 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

Congrats. on your Brown Hairstreaks. The image of the female with wings fully open in your earlier post is exactly what we're all after 🍀🍀. I also think you have found some late BHS ie. newly emerged. They could be in transition from pupae to an Ash tree to join the males. You'll have to be quicker when they come down to lay eggs, as they very often start walking down the stem of Blackthorn as soon as they land. Anyway, thanks for the Bird ID. I was in the company of some Butterfly professionals who are obviously not ornothologists (including me!).

Best wishes,
TREVOR.

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 20-Aug-15 06:19 AM GMT

Eureka!!

That's an exceptional day when you can claim both Brown Hairstreak and open winged Purple Hairstreak!

Your persistence has clearly paid well earned dividends!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 21-Aug-15 06:16 AM GMT

You're having some cracking luck with the Hairstreaks Buggy 😊🐛

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 21-Aug-15 02:06 PM GMT

Wow! Seems like Bookham Common is the place to be 🐛🐛 Never been there but will rectify that next season 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 21-Aug-15 08:31 PM GMT

I'm envious of your Brown hair Streaks Buggy 🐛🐛 Well done , 😊 I bet you were thrilled when you saw the open wings they look great, Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Aug-15 06:00 PM GMT

Thank you for all the comments, I think perhaps I may have some Hairstreak whispering talents **Wurzel** 😊 and after reading your recent report **Pauline** I don't think you need to visit Bookham to find Brown Hairstreaks! It was all very exciting **Goldie** 😊

22nd August (part 1)

Well no prizes for guessing where I went this morning, with a (very) hot day forecast I left bright and early, hoping to catch the odd Brown Hairstreak before things hotted up too much for me....well that was the plan, I got to Victoria station only to reach for my wallet and...s**t s**t s**t! I'd lost it somewhere. Panic instantly set in as I thought of all the fun I was going to have cancelling various cards on a Saturday. A couple of trips to lost property just in case turned up nothing but arriving back home 2 hours after leaving there it was sitting on the bloody floor. It must have fallen out as I was getting dressed!

I didn't get to Bookham until gone 11 and it was now baking hot. There were a fair few Meadow Browns flitting around and some Green-veined Whites had taken to feeding in the dappled shade.



A Purple Hairstreak casually flew past me as I wandered to the spot where I've seen Brownies on previous visits but I watched helplessly as it flew over a hedge. At the master trees there were a couple of Small Coppers doing battle over what was obviously a prime piece of Copper real estate and a few Common Blues but all were on hyper drive so no chance of any pictures. No Brownies turned up despite quartering the area several times so I went for a wander. I had to stop a short distance away on a small bridge over a ditch to administer some first aid, I'd managed to catch the rather juicy scab left over from last week's fall, which had left me housebound for a day or two, and it was weeping. As I rooted around in my bag for some tissues and antiseptic cream a Gatekeeper settled on a stem overhanging the ditch, as a regular visitor it was obviously making sure I was OK! After sorting myself out I glanced up to see if it was still there, it was except it wasn't a Gatekeeper after all 😊!!!



She sat there for a while, trying to open her wings despite the stiff breeze before fluttering off into the undergrowth. I could still see her but could only get some distant shots now. I watched her get very excited upon landing on some blackthorn and judging from the size of her abdomen she has got a lot of eggs to get rid off!



So another trip to Bookham gave me another female Brownie.
Well after that I continued on my wander, finding a female Brimstone,



a couple of male Ruddy Darters



and a mating pair of Common Blues with this old boy having found himself a lovely young lady!

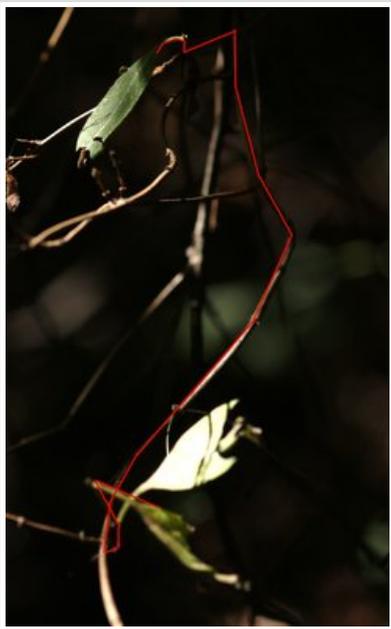


As is now tradition I went to check on my White Admiral larvae, on the way my path was crossed by this little spider hunting wasp dragging its paralysed prey. It was so fast and jittery I had no choice but to use flash to catch anything.



Its larvae will be feasting on that in the months to come...

Well at White Admiral Towers one of my original two (Sid or Shifty) has moved, quite a distance, to find a fresh leaf and judging by the state of his leaf, the remaining one may well be forced to follow suit.



I've plotted the shortest route from his old leaf at the bottom to his new leaf.

It will have a long way to travel though since the next closest leaf will take some serious wandering to find. The same problem I suspect awaits Brian II who has pretty much finished his leaf and there are no leaves on any of the surrounding stems. Cyril is preparing to moult into 3rd instar



And Lofty, who on my last visit was in his pre-moult stance, has successfully shed and looks to be 3rd instar,



so all 5 still alive and well.

Well it was early afternoon now so I thought a trip to Denbies to see if the Adonis were out and about was in order....

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 24-Aug-15 01:09 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

Another entertaining report, glad you found your wallet and everything turned out ok in the end.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Bugboys mission

by MikeOxon, 24-Aug-15 02:00 AM GMT

as someone once said "All's well that ends well". It's particularly pleasing when a Gatekeeper turns out to be a BH – so often, the other way around 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Susie, 24-Aug-15 02:32 AM GMT

Just catching up with your diary, Buggy. Great stuff! So glad you found your flame streaks! 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

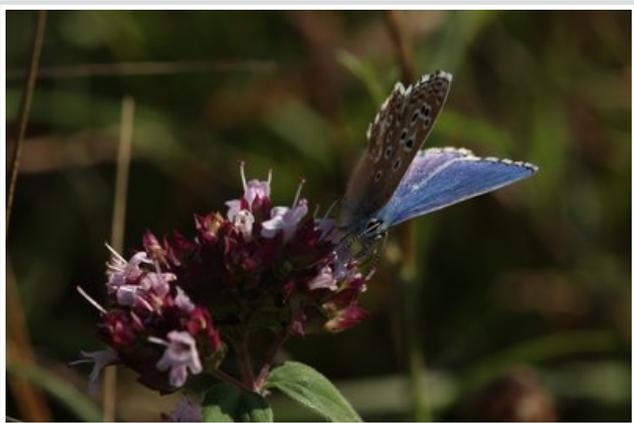
by bugboy, 24-Aug-15 03:25 AM GMT

Thank you everyone, it was a huge relief (if not more than a little annoying a situation to get myself into) to find my wallet and Quickly forgotten when the BH found me 😊

22nd August (part 2)

Arriving at **Denbies**, various blues were flying around. Numbers of Chalkhills have dropped significantly, as would be expected. A few Common Blues were active and, happily, so were enough Adonis to make the trip worthwhile. It was still too hot for much basking to take place so only male Adonis could be positively identified. There were significantly more females around than males but whether I was seeing the odd early female Adonis amongst the Chalkhills is anyone's guess. Combined with the heat was the usual (although today refreshingly welcome) stiff breeze which all made photography

rather difficult 😊





Chalkhill



Chalkhill or Adonis...?



Also active were a few Silver Spotted Skippers



And a pair of Kestrels hung around, quite literally, for the duration of my visit.



I found some Autumn Lady's-tresses Orchid thanks to a couple of friendly ramblers. I would never have noticed them myself since at only a few inches tall they only just poke through the turf and don't really stick out like some Orchids do. They have a curious spiralling flower spike.



I was also on the lookout for a clouded yellow and was told there had been a sighting that morning but the only clouded thing I found was this Clouded Buff.



As time wore on a few Blues began to bask in the weakening sun but as far as females were concerned only a few Chalkhills were identified.





Hopefully on my next visit I'll be able to find some Adonis females.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Sep-15 07:35 AM GMT

2nd September, Bookham Commons

It's been a bit quiet on Bugboys butterfly front recently. Having used up most of my holiday I'm now reliant on good weather on my rostered days off and with August being a superb let down by any standards I've been stuck in watching it tip down!

Anyway, with a promise of a smidgen of sun this afternoon, I was drawn to Bookham on my half day. It's been a while since I've checked on my White Admiral cats and there is still the chance of some more Brown Hairstreak action. I got there around 2 and saw nothing much flying. After an hour I'd managed 1 female Common Blue, 1 male Meadow Brown and 1 female Gatekeeper. No Hairstreaks today. I did do a half hearted casual egg hunt as well but didn't turn up anything.



There were a few other insects around to occupy me, lots of Squash Bugs loitering around



Plenty of dragonflies, mostly Common Darters based on the ones that settled long enough to ID



Female Common Darter

A Mint Moth.....on Mint



And some Groundhoppers, tiny relatives of grasshoppers.



Slender Groundhopper (Tetrix subulata)

After all this excitement it was off to see the WA cats. It's been 11 days since my last visit so anything could have happened, especially with all the heavy rain. Well it took some time to find them today. I Found 'Cyril' first, on what would seem to be his second leaf. The original one being very dead now.





Next to be found was Lofty who had moved leaves three times since my last visit from the look of things



His original leaf plus the opposite one both now useless



Cyril on his fourth leaf, his third in the background

Brian II was the third to be found, on what's left on what I assume is his original leaf (at least the leaf I first discovered him on). I'd looked at it a few times already and it was only when I examined it with my fingers that I realised he was still there!



There are no other leaves anywhere near him as he's low down near the center of the growth, so I wonder whether he's settled down for the long sleep, but all he's got is the stump of his leaf left. I was half tempted to drape a dead leaf near him but I'm a big believer in letting nature take its course.... we'll see anyway.

Last to be found was one of the original 3 and is either 'Shifty' or 'Sid'.



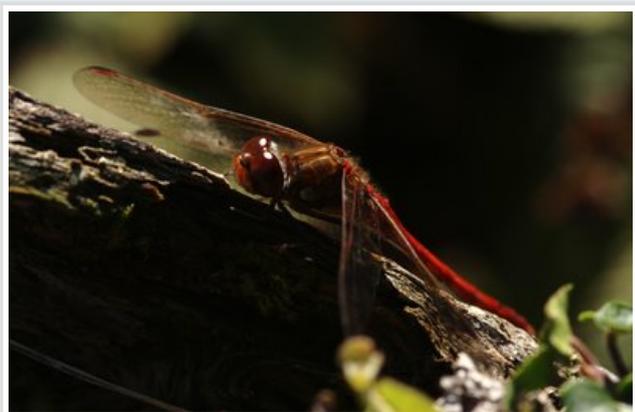
Their original position now only has the very dead remains of their leaves but one of the occupants (the one above) has made an incredible journey to find a new home! The god-awful picture below was taken on my phone but gives an idea of how far this cat has traveled. The lower circle is about waist height and is approx where it was 11 days ago. The top circle is it's current location and is head height. Obviously I can't be 100% sure it is the same one but I'm pretty sure I would have noticed one here on previous visits



It also gives an idea of how sparsly leafed this patch of honeysuckle is.

A bit more searching and I found an abandoned platform (the blue circle in the above picture) which I suspect this is where the other one ended up but there was no sign of an occupant. So I'm down to 4 from the total of 8 I found on this patch.

On the way back the clouds had mostly cleared and the temperature had risen noticeably, waking up a few butterflies. I stopped to admire a basking male Common Darter,





before making my way back to the train station where I was joined by Speckled Woods, Common Blues, Meadow Browns, various Whites one very flighty Small Copper and one much more relaxed Small Heath as I wandered back.





Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 03-Sep-15 12:56 AM GMT

Hi! buggo your better at finding cats than I am, with me they've got to huge 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 03-Sep-15 01:50 AM GMT

Hi Buggy. I'm following your white admiral cats with interest. I do hope you'll be able to keep track of them as autumn and winter progresses.

Guy

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Sep-15 03:05 AM GMT

Hi **Goldie**, White Admirals are rather easy to find simply due to their distinctive feeding pattern which you can spot from several feet away. Look for that and you'll probably find the cat and they don't seem to wander much unless they run out of leaf to eat! Never even seen a White Admiral at any stage until this year so if I can find them this easily anyone can 😊

Yes **Guy** I do plan to try and follow them through the winter, and I shall be following yours closely as well 😊. It will be interesting how closely (or not) they follow each other but I guess different weather conditions will add quite a bit of variables into the mix!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 03-Sep-15 06:16 AM GMT

Great photos and report Bugboy 😊 I might have to try and find some WA cats myself next year, if I've actually caught up my PD by then that is 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Sep-15 06:17 AM GMT

Haha, yes **Wurzel** catch up with your diary first 😊. This is the first time I've attempted keeping track of wild cats and I'm really getting into it, just wish I lived closer to them!

3rd September, Malling Down, Lewes.

Another day off with a slightly iffy forecast but off I went anyway. A nice early start got me to the Downs at 9. You can tell autumn is on its way, a slight nip to the air and thick dew soaked my feet within 10 minutes.... my waterproof footwear obviously not as waterproof as I'd been lead to believe!

Right on queue, shortly after climbing up onto the down, the sun peeked out and I found some Blues just waking up. Targets today were Adonis, Walls and Clouded Yellows. Carefully checking the Blues all I found were Chalkhills and Commons though.



Meadow Browns were quite active as well with many looking remarkably fresh.



As time wore on the sun came out more often and the temperature picked up enough for plenty of activity. Unlike last time there was just a gentle breeze, I've grown used to seeing butterflies getting battered in the wind this year so it was a pleasant change from the norm. Silver-spotted Skippers were still active and I saw several beautiful Common Blues





Small Heaths were also present in good numbers. I carefully looked at as many as I could to check for abs, having already found two this year, but all I got was this one with the hint of a second eye spot.



Still none of my targets appeared though. I had probably missed the Walls, the males were just emerging on my last visit a month ago but there was plenty more action to keep me occupied.
Plenty of fresh looking Chalkhills about



This Brown Argus was trying his luck whilst she was trying to have breakfast, he didn't get anywhere but 9/10 for effort!



And a Small Copper showed up



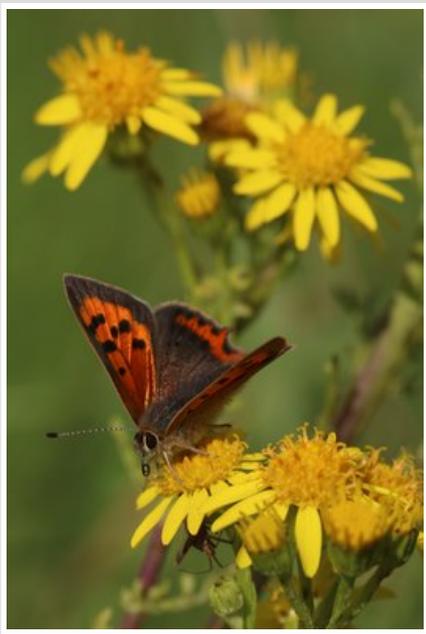
One thing that did catch my eye was the amount of Devil's-bit Scabious, the hillside was literally covered in the stuff in places and it seemed irresistible to the butterflies.





It made me wonder how successful Marsh Fritillaries would be here if introduced, it certainly bears more than a passing resemblance to Wurzels Wiltshire Wonderland I visited earlier in the year.

Watching some old female Gatekeepers another Small Copper appeared and posed for me shortly followed by the third one of the day. 3 Small Coppers in one day, it's almost like being in Dungeness! Disregarding events in Dungeness it looks like after a very poor spring they've had a good resurgence.



Still no targets though. I found a nice female Small White, some more Silver-spotted Skippers including this flirty pair and some more pretty Common

Blues as well as more fresh Chalkhills.



Then shooting past, chasing a female blue was the sky blue of an Adonis. It was close to noon now and he was in a hormone and heat induced hyper drive so there was little hope of a picture. I saw two in the end but they never settled long enough for a picture. They did though look very fresh so it looks like I was a week or so early.

Although it had warmed up, there were some rather ominous dark clouds drifting my way so by 1pm I decided to make my way home, stopping to

watch a couple of Small Heaths not fighting, make friends with what looked like a freshly emerged Silver-spotted Skipper and one last Female Common Blue



A very pleasant morning and well worth the early start

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 04-Sep-15 06:26 AM GMT

Nice range of species there, Bugboy. With the weather set fair for a few days, there may well be a few similarly productive outings on offer before the season winds down.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 05-Sep-15 04:41 AM GMT

Love your first shot Buggy of the two Chalkhill's , also the Small Copper, you got a really good variety of Butterflies Buggy. I also enjoyed your Meadow shots they make a nice change Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Sep-15 05:27 AM GMT

Thanks Goldie, the first shot is actually 1 tatty Common Blue and 1 fresh Chalkhill Blue 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 06-Sep-15 06:23 AM GMT

A fanatastic range of shots Buggy from the Chalkhills through to the scenic landscapes 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Sep-15 07:11 AM GMT

Cheers **Wurzel** 😊 it's a very pictureque part of the world.

5th September, Bookham & Denbies.

Well today's forecast was decidedly more than iffy. I would have preferred to visit these sites on Sunday with a better forecast but with engineering works on the line I use that decision was out of my hands 😞 . So I left under a leaden sky and light drizzle followed me all the way to my first destination.

The forecast had promised slightly brighter weather in the afternoon so I figured a trip to check on my White Admiral cats would occupy my morning. Thankfully the rain had stopped by the time I arrived and I was pleased to find all 4 cats still doing well and 3 of them are still in feeding mode with no sign of hibernaculum construction.

Shifty/Sid seemed to be having a bath:



Cyril is about halfway through his current leaf:



And Lofty is rapidly running out of leaf to eat:



Brian II on the other hand has definitely entered the big sleep and hasn't moved from where he was on my last visit. He's still trying to tuck himself into the stump of his last feeding leaf, which he has attached to the shoot with silk. Despite his bum sticking out he is very well camouflaged and had I not known about his whereabouts I'm pretty sure I would not have found him. It will be a very sharp eyed bird that finds him!





Closeup of silkwork at the join of leaf and stem

So with the weather still looking not so good I decided to wander the woods to see how many other WA cats I could find. Two hours of searching and I only found 1 more, loads have probably ended up feeding all the Tits that are a constant presence but here's the newbie, Stan, sitting about 6 feet of the ground, clearly third instar and looking like he's on at least his second leaf.



Whilst searching for WA cats I did come across an immobile Dragonfly, a beautiful female Southern Hawker





A slightly less beautiful pile of Caddis fly eggs



And this little blood thirsty bugger 🤬, he never had the chance to tap into an artery 🤬!



Two hours later I was at Denbies and remarkably the forecast was right, although still cloudy it was much brighter, good Blue hunting weather. I was after Adonis but there was still quite a few Chalkhills making things tricky



male Chalkhill



female Chalkhill



male Chalkhill ab.

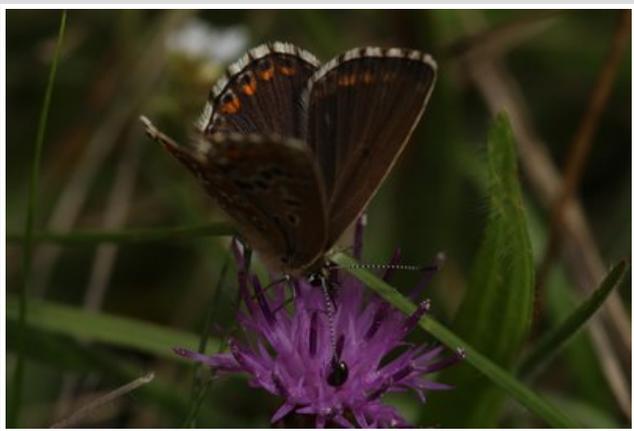


male Adonis

In fact, judging by this good looking chap, Chalkhills are still emerging!



I was after some Adonis females and after much searching I managed to find my first confirmed female of the year. 'Edit' first second gen female of the year!



And then my second, having a small party with a couple of Chalkhill ladies, one of whom had an unusual wing deformity.



In the end I had the hillside to myself for nearly two hours and found a few more Adonis and lots more Chalkhills.



female Adonis



male Chalkhill



female Chalkhill

All the while being carefully observed by the local habitat management crew.



It was while I was keeping a close eye on them as dog walkers passed by, hoping I didn't get caught in the middle of a spooked stampede, that I nearly missed a familiar face, **Susie** was taking her dog for a walk. Nice to catch up with you again Susie, I very nearly walked straight passed you, I was in my own little world 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Susie, 06-Sep-15 05:23 PM GMT

It was good to see you Buggy. What you mean to say is that you nearly missed me among all those old cows 😊
You were right about the butterflies, plenty of freshly emerged ones still about. The sun came out and it was lovely.

Re: Bugboys mission

by ChrisC, 06-Sep-15 06:28 PM GMT

your snails eggs i think could actually be caddisfly eggs. 😊 Chris

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Sep-15 06:33 PM GMT

"ChrisC" wrote:

your snails eggs i think could actually be caddisfly eggs. 😊 Chris

You're right Chris, thanks for that. Not sure of the parenting skills of the mother though, they were no where near any water bodies, unless there are caddisfly larvae that live in damp leaf litter... 🤔

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Sep-15 06:43 PM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

It was good to see you Buggy. What you mean to say is that you nearly missed me among all those old cows 😊

You were right about the butterflies, plenty of freshly emerged ones still about. The sun came out and it was lovely.

oh Susie, those cows didn't look that old at all 😊

Yes I was cursing sods law walking back when the sun came out properly!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Sep-15 02:06 AM GMT

I went for a little strole this afternoon on my local patch, the weather a vast improvement to yesterday....just a shame the butterfly activity didn't follow suit. Small Whites were quite numerous and a couple of Large Whites and Green-veined were enjoying the sunshine but apart from a single Meadow Brown, A Red Admiral, two Speckled Woods and a Small Tortoiseshell fly by that was it. I would rather have been out chasing Adonis and searching for ovipositing Brown Hairstreaks but I made the most of what I had to work with, just a shame the RA didn't settle for me, she was a real beauty!





I did find a very patient and accomidating male Common Darter though



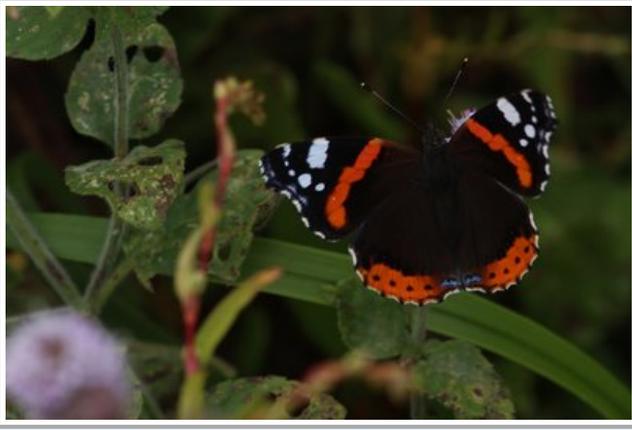


Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Sep-15 04:41 AM GMT

Time to squeeze in another trip to **Bookham Common** this afternoon on my usual half day at work. Tomorrow I plan to go down to the south coast in search of Clouded Yellows and anything else that may get blown across the the Channel, hopefully some Adonis action as well and maybe a late Wall or two. Anyway, work means I wont be able to check on my WA cats for at least a week.

As usual I started off in Brown Hairstreak territory. The weather wasn't great, warmish but mostly cloudy and with a distinctly autumnal nip to the air. Nothing much was flying, singles of faded female Gatekeeper and Common Blue and a couple of female Meadow Browns and the odd Speckled Wood. However, arriving at my Brown Hairstreak spot near their Master trees, I disturbed a rather lovely Red Admiral.



She was a bit flighty and with all the long grass I wasn't able to get very close. It wasn't until I got home and looked at the pictures properly that I realised I had a unusual ab. A series of blue spots along the inside of the hindwing red band.



I've looked in all the usual places but can't find anything like it, gutted that I wasn't able to get better pictures of her!

After she bugged off over a hedge leaving me all alone I decided to look for Hairstreak eggs. On virtually the first piece of oak I looked at I found this:



I don't rate it's chances of getting much past Christmas at the latest, not very well hidden at all! Bad parenting skills 🙄

I didn't find any more Purples so I wandered over to some low growing bushy Blackthorn to try my luck at finding my first ever Brown....BINGO!



Just like the adults, bigger than you expect 😊 and sticking out like that how many make it to hatching god alone knows! They are both low down, 6 or 7 inches of the ground at most which may help them avoid Tits and the like but if a half blind Wren staggers past surely they'll be gonners!



Interestingly, as the above picture shows, they have been laid in an area that was cut back allowing fresh low growth to shoot up over the summer, just what female BH are supposed to prefer 😊

Well, over at the WA Towers I found Shifty/Sid missing, just an abandoned leaf to show where he'd been. There was no sign of any hibernaculum so I have to conclude MIA and most likely eaten 😊



Lofty is still feeding:



Cyril seems to be somewhat confused having eaten most of what could be used to construct a hibernaculum... 🤔



and Brian II is well and truly asleep in the tiniest hibernaculum in the world!



New boy Stan doesn't seem to have moved since Saturday.



After this update I returned to the Hairstreak eggs to make sure I was able to track them down easily again





Found them 😊.... a few more things to keep an eye on over the winter....should they last that long!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 09-Sep-15 04:43 AM GMT

Your detective work is admirable, Bugboy.

I will certainly keep my eyes peeled henceforth for those blue hindwing spots on Red Admirals.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 09-Sep-15 05:04 AM GMT

Not just the blue spots but also the black circles they are embedded in. I've never seen that before and can't see any hints of it in the books. I find it very interesting as I didn't know that pattern was there, even latently, in red admirals.

Guy

EDIT – After looking at loads of photos I see the black markings are normal (just not visible in most of the pristine specimens the books show) but I can't find any with the blue spots.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Susie, 09-Sep-15 05:08 AM GMT

I don't want to appear to be jumping on a band wagon but I am sure I've seen a red admiral like that too lately with the blue. 🤔

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Sep-15 05:14 AM GMT

"Padfield" wrote:

Not just the blue spots but also the black circles they are embedded in. I've never seen that before and can't see any hints of it in the books. I find it very interesting as I didn't know that pattern was there, even latently, in red admirals.

Guy

I can see the black circles in some pictures (below) but mostly much less obvious than today's one. I wonder if she will hang around?



Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Sep-15 05:18 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

I don't want to appear to be jumping on a band wagon but I am sure I've seen a red admiral like that too lately with the blue. 🤔

Dammit, I was hoping I'd discovered a brand new ab. so I could name it, *Vanessa atalanta ab. buggeri*..... maybe not 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Susie, 09-Sep-15 06:23 AM GMT

"bugboy" wrote:

"Susie" wrote:

I don't want to appear to be jumping on a band wagon but I am sure I've seen a red admiral like that too lately with the blue. 🤔

Dammit, I was hoping I'd discovered a brand new ab. so I could name it, *Vanessa atalanta ab. buggeri*..... maybe not 😊

Hey, you got the photo! It's yours. Even if I did have a photo I would destroy it if it meant an ab would be called that 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Sep-15 04:22 AM GMT

"Susie" wrote:

"bugboy" wrote:

"Susie" wrote:

I don't want to appear to be jumping on a band wagon but I am sure I've seen a red admiral like that too lately with the blue. 🤔

Dammit, I was hoping I'd discovered a brand new ab. so I could name it, *Vanessa atalanta ab. buggeri*..... maybe not 😊

Hey, you got the photo! It's yours. Even if I did have a photo I would destroy it if it meant an ab would be called that 😊



9th September, South Downs, Eastbourne.

Clouded Yellows were the aim today. I've been seeing lots of reports recently of sightings along the south coast but they don't seem very eager to come far inland this year so if they won't come to me I'll go to them. It was rather cloudy when I arrived and the sea breeze was, well breezy but the scenery is always pleasant!



It stayed cloudy for the first few hours and not too much was flying. A Painted Lady got blown across and was deposited in the turf at my feet where it sat and shivered for a minute or two before taking flight and being whisked off in the wind again.



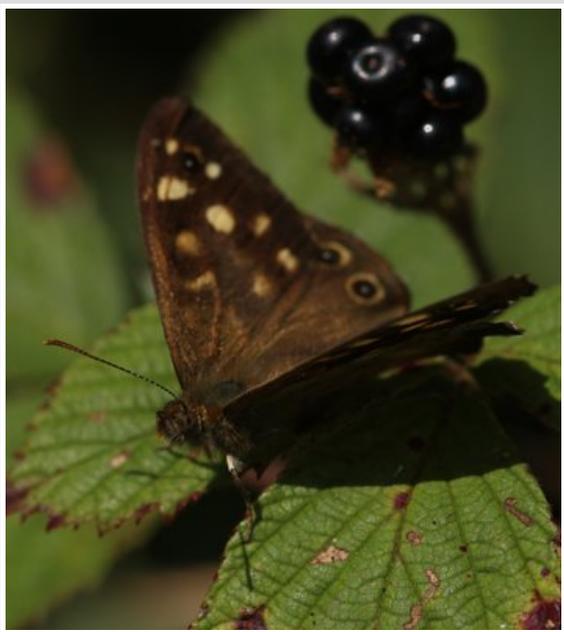
A few meadow Browns were flying and all seemed to be very fresh, this female can't be more than a day or two old!



Eventually the clouds began to clear and by 11 I had a clear blue sky. Small Whites became very numerous now and remained the most numerous butterfly all day. A couple of Large Whites were about as well but they never settled.



A few Speckled Woods were about and a Small tortoiseshell paid a fleeting visit, the first I've seen for quite some time!





I checked out the path I'd found the Walls on in May but I've obviously missed their second brood so I wandered off to find some sheltered sun traps to see what was hiding from the wind. More Small Whites and I nearly trod on this basking Common Blue.



I saw a small brown butterfly fluttering around some Knapweed, probably a female blue and on closer inspection I was right, turned out to be a reasonably fresh female Chalkhill, another species that seems to be having an exceptionally long season.



A little further on I found 4 male Blues all trying to hold the same territory. This involved frequent brief aerial scuffles before they realised 'wrong species, you can stay' except for the two Commons, but even they had to take a breather at some point!



Like the female earlier, the male Chalkhill was very fresh and the Adonis was in pretty good nick as well and both were happy to pose for me in between bouts.







A Small Copper paid a brief visit to the spot before shooting off on his own little mission.



Common Blues turned out to be rather... common. Second only to Small Whites today and much more Common than Clouded Yellows who were very noticeable by their disappointing absence 😞.

The only other butterfly I saw in the end was Small Heaths.



So no target species today (well I was hoping for Adonis 😊) but there was enough around to keep me occupied, 11 species in September's not to shabby at all, and a day at the seaside on a sunny day is never a wasted day 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 10-Sep-15 05:18 AM GMT

Sorry you didn't get your Cloudy but at least you saw some great butterflies 🐛, I'm back at work so trapped inside 😞

Great Small Heath, that's the most spots I've seen on one 🐛

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Sep-15 05:26 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

Sorry you didn't get your Cloudy but at least you saw some great butterflies 🦋, I'm back at work so trapped inside 😞
Great Small Heath, that's the most spots I've seen on one 🦋

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Oh God, you're counting spots on them now as well..... 😊 I have one with an extra forewing eyespot if you're interested 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 10-Sep-15 05:34 AM GMT

Yeah I've got one of those too 😊😊 By the way your proposed Red Admiral ab name is a well used Dorset saying used to denote surprise and shock: "Well bugger I..." so it gets my vote 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Sep-15 03:07 AM GMT

15th September, Bookham.

Well it seems that the weather is deteriorating at a rate of knots. Tuesday was predicted as the best of a pretty dreadful week so I managed to swing a lunchtime finish at work and sneak a couple of hours at my current home from home, Bookham Common. I got a fair bit of sun there, enough to wake up a few Speckled Woods.



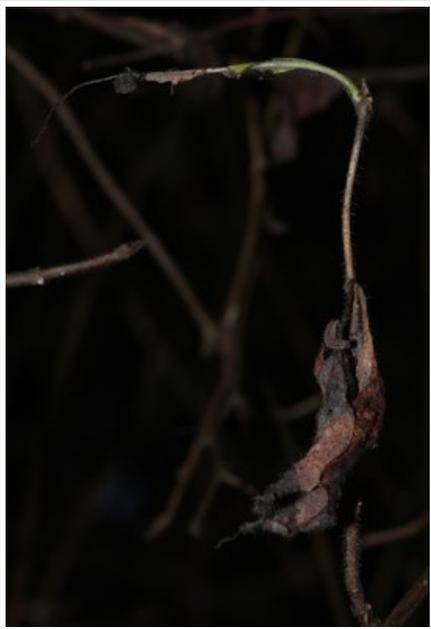
I made my way to my White Admirals to see if any are still visible/alive, there's been a lot of weather since my last visit so it would be anyone's guess as to what I would find.

Brian II is still snoozing. He's actually invisible to me until I take a picture and zoom in (I'm still in denial about needing glasses! 😊)



Unfortunately I couldn't locate any of the others on this patch. That's not to say they have been predated though, there is a fair bit of dead leaf littering the honeysuckle so I could still locate them in further wintery searches or when they awake in the spring.

Over at Stan's pad I suspect he's preparing for winter. There's not a lot of leaf left to eat and he was sitting at the top of some dead leaves below his platform.



Are they silk lines holding these leaves in place or just the hairs compacted down? Compared to Brian II's little bedsit of a hibernaculum this is virtually palacial if it is where he intends to sleep the winter away.



As I watched him he wandered up to have a nibble of what was left of his platform. Hopefully next time I visit he will be tucked away for the winter.





In other news I easily located the Brown and Purple Hairstreak eggs and other than Speckled Woods the only other butterfly I saw were a couple of Meadow Browns.



Re: Bugboys mission

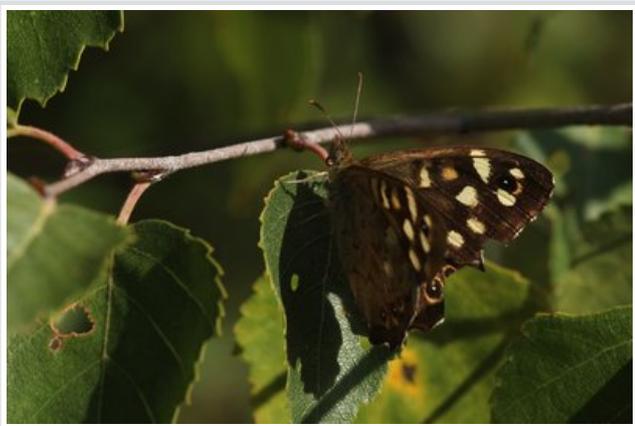
by bugboy, 20-Sep-15 05:45 AM GMT

19th September, Bookham & Denbies. (Part 1)

Well that's a turn up, a large high pressure system floats over just as my weekend off starts 😊! I woke up early and left to make the most of what would turn out to be a glorious early autumn day. Getting up early was a particular struggle this time however, having enjoyed myself at a fancy dress party the previous evening.

The plan was to a quick wander over at Bookham to check on my cats and then an afternoon wandering around Denbies.

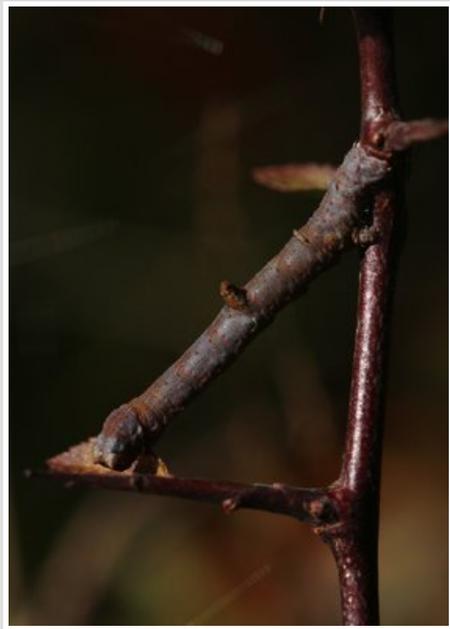
Not much was flying at Bookham apart from several Speckled Wood. A few distant whites passed by and I disturbed a single female Brimstone who drifted up into the top of the nearest oak.



All my hairstreak eggs were still present and correct and whilst looking for more I noticed a small twig looking back at me!



Can you see it yet?



My best guess at its ID is a Brimstone Moth.

I browsed a few Oak trees as I made my way to the White Admiral cats and managed to find two more Purple Haistreak eggs wedged in amongst some buds.



and yes that skin coloured background is my hand!

Other non butterfly inhabitants that caught my eye today include this fly, *Tachina fera*, also known as 'your worst nightmare' if you happen to be a Lepidoptera larvae 😱! It's not too fussy as to which species it lays its eggs on/in apparently!!



Common Darter Dragonflies were very common and this Hoverfly, *Myathropa florea*, was enjoying the morning sun.



At the White Admirals Brian II hadn't moved and still no sign of any of the others I was following. Stan however (who I thought was perhaps looking to hibernate 4 days ago) had moved leaves and was munching away. He was living dangerously though, being very obvious both from above...



and below!



Good luck Stan, there's A LOT of small birds in this wood.

Well with the temperatures soaring (for September) it was time to make a move to see what was happening over at Denbies...

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Sep-15 05:31 AM GMT

19th September, Bookham & Denbies. (Part 2)

A glorious blue sky accompanied me to Denbies and I was also happy to find there was an almost complete lack of wind, a bit of a novelty this year! Walking past the vineyards of Denbies Wine Estate I noticed several very fresh looking Meadow Browns. The males were way too active to sit for me but this female did, whilst ovipositing, looking remarkably fresh for over halfway through September.



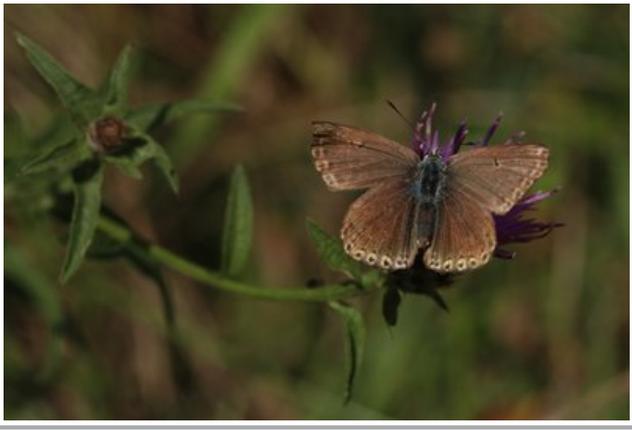
Arriving at Denbies there were a few more meadow Browns and quite a few Small Heath flitting around. I was still hoping for a glimpse of a Clouded Yellow, just a fleeting flyby would do!

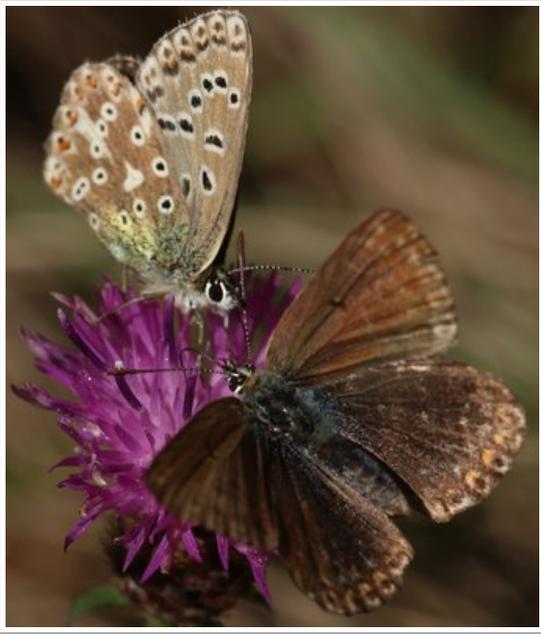


Blues were still active, possibly a couple of female Common but for the most part they seemed to be mainly female Chalkhill. Don't think I saw a single Adonis. The one male Chalkhill I saw also looked incredibly fresh given the time of year. It would seem the Chalkhill brood has outlived the Adonis here! Anyway here's a selection of female Blues, if anyone can spot an Adonis amongst them....(I think the first is a Common Blue, it was noticeably smaller than everything else I saw, the rest I'm going with Chalkhills unless someone says otherwise)



Common Blue?





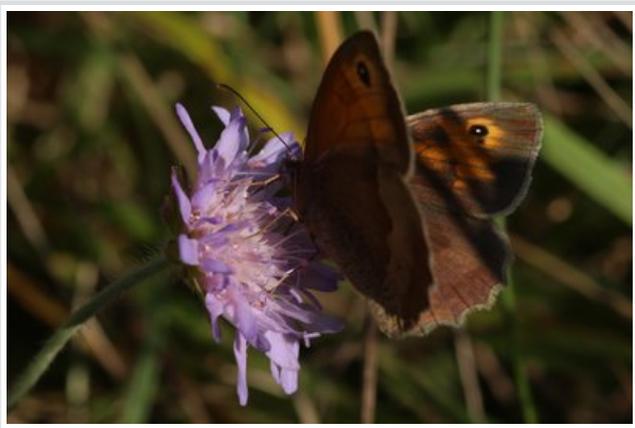


One Small Copper paid me a brief visit and allowed a few pics before whizzing off somewhere in an orangy blur.



Walking along the top path that runs parallel to the woodland I noticed quite a few male Meadow Browns, all looking exceptionally fresh. In the heat they weren't the easiest to capture but it did seem to suggest a second wave of emergent's here. There were also fresh females around but the males seemed to outnumber them, it seemed like early June, not mid September! Is there such a thing as a partial second brood of Meadow Browns?





I had a few vanessid flybys, a peacock harried me briefly and a Small Tortoiseshell whizzed past down the hill. I Also came across a Comma who seemed to have set up a territory around a patch of scrubby Bramble



and closeby a rather old looking Silver Spotted Skipper was feeding on a Scabious



Admiring another fresh Meadow Brown I noticed a pale splotch on the path several feet in front of me.....Yes at last, a Cloudy 😊😊 ! I crept closer, shooting record shots with every step, waiting for it to take to the air and vanish down the hill.



As it turned out though I needn't have worried, this lady was in no hurry to get anywhere fast and merely fluttered and floated from flower to flower to the point where I was easily able to follow her for nearly half an hour without any trouble, taking the best part of 100 pics in the process! Easily my best ever Clouded Yellow encounter, I was able to get a good range of pictures, my favourites being the backlit ones that show off her full depth of colour 😊







She stopped a few times on short patches of turf and noticed she was ovipositing, that would explain why she was in no hurry. When a large cloud blotted out the sun for a bit, it allowed me some nice close-ups of her



Species number 45 for the year ticked off

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 21-Sep-15 06:22 AM GMT

Like you, Bugboy, I too saw my first UK 'Cloudie' recently, so I know just what a thrill it is! I particularly like the in-flight shot. Well done!

Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 21-Sep-15 06:24 AM GMT

Clouded Yellows have been scarce this year, well spotted and nice shots 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 22-Sep-15 06:12 AM GMT

Cracking Cloudy Bugboy 🤩🍷 This species has evaded me this year – it seems in years when I see Cloudies I don't get Wood Whites and vice versa 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 22-Sep-15 06:18 AM GMT

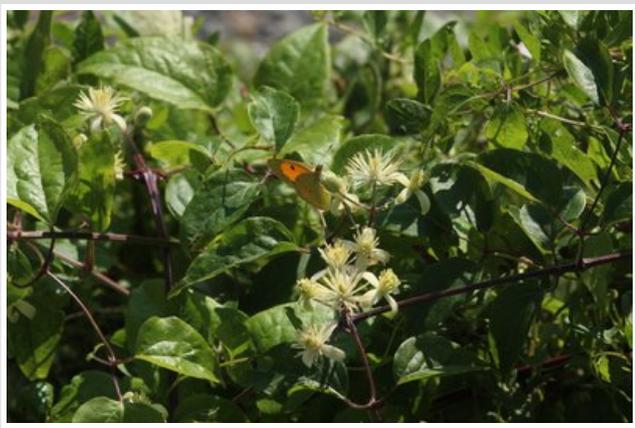
Thanks guys 😊 it was the first time I've ever had a Clouded Yellow that wasn't ridiculously flighty!

20th September, South Downs Way.

Another beautiful day beckoned and with my search to tick off Clouded Yellows for the year I had already planned a trip to the south coast before yesterday's Cloudy experience. With no reason to change my plans I set off for a day at the seaside: Eastbourne and Beachy head, somewhere where I'm reasonably familiar with now. Checking UKB on my phone to kill a bit of time on the train I read **Neil Hulmes** entry about the LTB and noted his location was not very far from my destination. I couldn't help but get just a teeny bit excited at the prospect of stumbling across a LTB on my wanderings 😊.

I arrived at Eastbourne a little before lunch and enjoyed a pleasant walk along the seafront, keeping one eye out for anything small and blueish. Small Whites were literally everywhere, with the odd Large thrown in for a bit of variety.

The first non-white butterfly I saw when I got to the Downs was a lovely deep rich yellow Colour. Unlike yesterday's female however, this male didn't hang about for long and after a quick drink on some Travellers Joy he was off.



A little further on two Cloudies shot past in an aerial tussel (I managed two yellow blurs with my camera) before they separated and one settled for a quick basking session allowing me my third and, as it turned out, final Cloudy picture of the day.





Small Whites were still everywhere and easily outnumbered all other species combined with many readily settling to allow pictures.



There were still a few blues buzzing around in the more sheltered paths. Being rather faded and with LTB still in mind, I followed every single one like a bloodhound until I could be certain of it's ID. All were of the Common variety.



There were several fresh Small Heaths including this fine specimen



And loads of these micro moths, not sure what they are ?



Approaching Beachy Head a Peacock zoomed by and landed on a patch of bare earth, the first one that I've seen settled for quite sometime.



Nearby a couple of Wheatear were calling and looking out over the Channel, no doubt contemplating their oncoming trip to Africa.



On the return route I took the higher path where I'd found my Walls in the spring, 'Wall Brown Alley'! The ever present Small Whites flitting here and there were joined by the occasional faded Speckled Wood but my attention was drawn to a flash of copper glinting in the sun. A little worn around the edge but still stunning.



But it paled when it settled near a fresh female



I followed this second one around for a bit, the weaker late summer sun really doing justice to the autumnal colours.



Carrying on on my travels I found a placid female Large white



Whilst following a few more potential LTB around something larger landed behind me, another summer visitor and one that has been decidedly scarce this year. I can count the number of Painted Ladies I've seen this year on one hand so I was very happy when this one decided to concentrate on feeding in front of me.



The Blues were all still Commons.



So nothing with a hint of a tail for bugboy today, but you can't really complain on a sunny day when the scenery looks this good!



Saying goodbye as I left the downs were a small family of Stonechat



Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 22-Sep-15 06:27 AM GMT

Great Painted Lady shots Bugboy, especially the stained glass image. 😊 Is the moth a Rush Veneer, a migrant?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 22-Sep-15 06:52 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

Great Painted Lady shots Bugboy, especially the stained glass image. 😊 Is the moth a Rush Veneer, a migrant?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Thanks and yes, that seems to be a good ID for the moth 😊. Did you see my stained glass Cloudy efforts in my previous report 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Sep-15 02:52 AM GMT

23rd September, Epping Forest

Only a few hours spare today so I stayed local at Epping Forest, somewhere I've not been for a few months. I got there around lunchtime, after a sunny morning a few clouds were bubbling up but it was still pleasantly warm. Despite this there was very little flying and it turned out to be a *Hoggers/Neil Freeman* type of afternoon, Speckled Woods and a couple of Small Coppers.

First to show was a female SW:

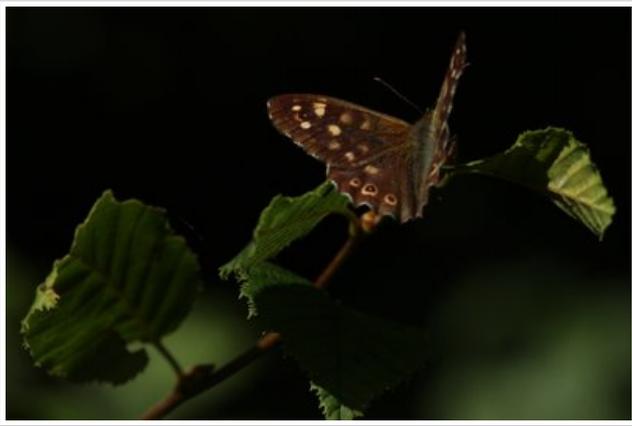




A few minutes later I caught a glimpse of a copper buzzing around a patch of Ragwort, I'm glad they are turning up regularly now on my trips after a dreadful first half of the year!



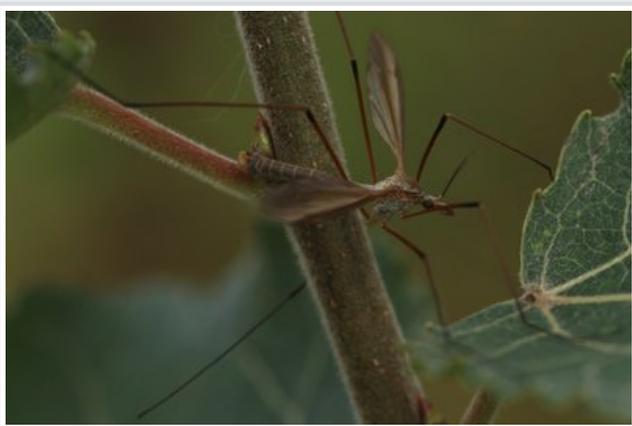
Half an hour passed before another couple of SW's appeared



A little later another SC appeared, again on Ragwort



But I only managed one half decent pic before one of these bungling idiots clattered through sending the SC shooting of over the bramble hedge 😡



I carried on with herds of Daddy-long-legs erupting from the grass with every footstep and found another couple of SW



I noticed the female was ovipositing inbetween basking sessions and finally managed one shot as she layed after several blurred attempts



On the return trip it was decidedly less sunny and I saw no butterflies for about an hour but other inhabitants were making the most of the occasional sunny spells



As a final treat a Green-veined White joined me near the end of my afternoon 😊





A quiet but pleasant few hours

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 25-Sep-15 05:43 PM GMT

Catching up Buggy, 😊 I like your scenery shots and it's good to see the Small Copper's are a round down there because I've not seen any a round here yet, going looking this weekend, the weather is supposed to nice (hope fully) Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 26-Sep-15 05:06 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy... I have a type of afternoon then, I never realised 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Sep-15 03:30 AM GMT

"Goldie M" wrote:

Catching up Buggy, 😊 I like your scenery shots and it's good to see the Small Copper's are a round down there because I've not seen any a round here yet, going looking this weekend, the weather is supposed to nice (hope fully) Goldie 😊

I'm always catching up these days Goldie! Small Coppers are one of those butterflies that just turn up randomly so I'm sure one or two will crop up locally for you 😊 Wish I was off this weekend, tried to book it off but I have to work both days, dawn when I leave for work and dusk when I finish so not even the chance for a sneaky hour or two 😞

"Neil Freeman" wrote:

Hi Bugboy... I have a type of afternoon then, I never realised 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

You do indeed, I've noticed a pattern develop over my first season on this forum 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 27-Sep-15 05:51 AM GMT

I did indeed see the Cloudy you referred to, but as I have still to see one this year (and time is running out) I tried to ignore it 😊😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-Sep-15 05:33 AM GMT

Still Plenty of Time Wurzel 😊

All work and no play makes Bugboy quiet on here so a half day at work provided a chance to pop down to Bookham to see how things are developing. I saw exactly 3 butterflies but it was definitely a case of quality over quantity!

The first was a fresh female Small Copper and probably the best example of the Blu Badge Gang I've seen all year



a little while later I came across an equally fresh individual, I thought in the field it was a male but now I'm not so sure



The third butterfly I saw was a fresh out the box Comma but sadly it was too flighty to get a picture, couldn't get more than 5 or 6 feet before it glided further along the path in front of me, it was a beauty though.

Common Darters were everywhere





All my Hairstreak eggs are present and correct and over at White Admiral Towers Brian II is still tucked away for the winter, he's gonna get a cold arse when winter actually arrives!



I dug out my little old point and shoot camera to get a better shot of this particular patch of honeysuckle



It did have more leaf when I first found the cats but I would never have referred to it as rich in foliage!

Over at Stans pad he's still out and about, drawing attention to himself!



But he's looking a bit more fat and stumpy now, I think he may well be getting close to going to sleep for the winter.



Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 30-Sep-15 06:52 AM GMT

Nice Coppers and White Admiral larvae, bugboy. In your quest for LTB's you may fare better by going to East Kent. We made a brief stop off at Newhaven on our way back from EK and we only found one small patch of (well trampled) BL everlasting pea in the shelter of the North facing bank near the beach. We met another Sussex BC guy there who had found the same small patch. We saw no sign of any LTB's during our brief visit there, nor did he! Also on our way back we also checked out Beeding Cement Works, with similar results. Good Luck.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-Oct-15 04:11 AM GMT

30th September, looking for the LTB.

Thanks for the tip **Maximus**, which I only read this morning on the train. I suspect east Kent is just a little too far for a day trip for me though.

Our rather pleasant Indian summer continues providing me the excuse to go looking for the illusive Long-tailed Blue that is currently lurking in various sites along the south coast. Newhaven was the chosen site, being probably the closest to me and conveniently close to a train station. Within minutes of getting on the site I discovered a huge swathe of Everlasting Pea (**Maximus** you must have been wandering around with your eye's closed 😊😁!)



It was still relatively early so after a good scan I moved on to see how much more Pea I could find. It was also decidedly breezy and blustery. A few Small Whites were flying, which after last night's discussion on here I checked carefully when settled, based on wing shape and markings they were all 100% *rapae*.



I also disturbed a few Small Heaths, very difficult to approach at this time of year with the long shadows cast by the low sun.

Apart from the occasional Red Admiral flyby not much else was seen butterflywise for an hour or two. Birdlife on the other hand was very rich. Large flocks of Meadow Pipit were feeding in the short turf and flocks of Swallows and House martins swooped low over my head. Good numbers of Stonechat, Goldfinch, a kestrel, some Redshank as well as the usual collection of Gulls and Corvids.



Redshank



Stonechat

I did get a very fleeting glance of a largish raptor as it dipped down behind one of the sea defences being mobbed by Swallows. It had vanished by the time I'd clambered to the top of the ridge. It was a very fleeting glance but it did seem to have rather large broad wings and a pale rump and my gut feeling was Harrier. A quick check in my guide suggests female Hen Harrier if my obs. were accurate?

Dragonflies were very numerous, mainly Darters and on closer inspection they were both Ruddy and Common Darters.



Ruddy Darter



Common Darter

After having wandered halfway to Seaford I turned and wandered back. Despite the stiff breeze it had warmed up nicely and a female Small Copper fluttered down in front of me.



She was the first of at least 4 I was to see, all females.



I watched another one flutter around obviously looking to lay. She finally found some Sorrel, pirouetted a few times and then layed a single egg, well I thought she did but upon looking I couldn't see it on the leaf. It was only when I looked at my picture on my computer that I realised she had laid it on the stone next to the leaf, crafty lady!



Nearby I found a Comma feeding on blackberries, making it much less flighty than yesterdays one and also gave me the chance to take some pictures that scream autumn to me



I also had better luck with the Small Heaths since the sun was a little higher in the sky



Back near the huge mass (**Maximus!** 😊) of Everlasting Pea I was taking a picture of a Common Darter when fellow photographer stopped to chat, turned out to be our very own **B'saurus Rex**. He hadn't seen anymore LTB today either but he did take me over to another reasonable sized patch of Everlasting Pea (**Maximus!** 😊), where the LTB photographed by various members a week ago was seen. Still no sign though.

We ended the day chatting to another enthusiast who had also drawn a blank. It would seem Mr Hulme is correct in it being a bit early for the emergence here, damn him and his uber knowledgeable brain! Still if this good weather continues and coincides with another day off I may well give it another shot, it's not every day you get a chance to see a LTB in Britain.

Great to meet and chat with you Rex, hopefully we'll bump into each other again with better LTB luck!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 01-Oct-15 04:39 AM GMT

I shall be following your forthcoming adventures with interest, Bugboy.

I have no doubt that Neil's prognosis will prove correct and that the second week in October will throw up a new emergence.

Let's just hope weather conditions remain similar to those we are currently enjoying.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 01-Oct-15 04:41 AM GMT

Your huge mass of Everlasting pea is puny, **bugboy** 😊 and is exactly what we saw 😊 so what was the reasonable sized patch that B'rex showed you like 😊 😊 Where we saw the two LTB's in Kent there was masses of the stuff, everywhere 😊 BTW I never walk around with my eyes closed, thats why I saw two LTB's in Kent 😊 😊 A nice day out in brilliant weather for you though even though it didn't deliver what you were there for 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-Oct-15 05:37 AM GMT

"Maximus" wrote:

Your huge mass of Everlasting pea is puny, **bugboy** 😊 and is exactly what we saw 😊 so what was the reasonable sized patch that B'rex showed you like 😊 😊 Where we saw the two LTB's in Kent there was masses of the stuff, everywhere 😊 BTW I never walk around with my eyes closed, thats why I saw two LTB's in Kent 😊 😊 A nice day out in brilliant weather for you though even though it didn't deliver what you were there for 😊

Lol

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-Oct-15 05:40 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

I shall be following your forthcoming adventures with interest, Bugboy.

I have no doubt that Neil's prognosis will prove correct and that the second week in October will throw up a new emergence.

Let's just hope weather conditions remain similar to those we are currently enjoying.

It really is all down to sheer luck from now on David, not just in coming across one of the little blighters but also getting the right weather on my day

off work!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 01-Oct-15 05:46 AM GMT

Sometimes, throwing a 'sickie' might just be answer! 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-Oct-15 06:12 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

Sometimes, throwing a 'sickie' might just be answer! 😊

Lol, trouble is my job requires me to have too much of a conscience to do that 😞 tempting though it is.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Oct-15 06:19 AM GMT

Good luck with it Bugboy, if you do throw a sickie make sure no one at your work knows about your activity on this site. I stupidly mentioned it to my line manager and so now there will be no sickes for me ever 😞😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 03-Oct-15 03:24 AM GMT

Hope your luckier with the LTB's than I've been with the Small Copper's Buggy, Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Oct-15 03:32 AM GMT

"Wurzel" wrote:

Good luck with it Bugboy, if you do throw a sickie make sure no one at your work knows about your activity on this site. I stupidly mentioned it to my line manager and so now there will be no sickes for me ever 😞😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

I put a link to my diary on my facebook a few months back..... 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Oct-15 04:57 AM GMT

3rd October, looking for the LTB.....again

So on Saturday I decided to have another shot at getting a sighting of a LTB, down at Newhaven again. Another early start with fog for most of the journey down but arriving at the site, the sun started burning through and the sun came out. Unlike Wednesday there was only the merest whisper of a breeze which meant that it felt decidedly warmer, things seemed very promising 😊. In between checking the two main patches of Everlasting Pea, the 'puny' patch where the LTB were seen mating and the huge swathe which stretches for about 40 meters along a bramble hedge, I did some proper Birdwatching as well, something I've not done since the spring. I've never seen Dunlin before so that was a nice one to tick off,



And there was still a nice flock of Redshank feeding in the channel running along the north side of the site.



There were lots of flocks of small passerines feeding in the scrubby patches, Green & Goldfinch, Meadow Pipits, Skylarks, Linnets to name a few. I also noticed lots of these caterpillar webbings. I think they are young Brown-tail Moth cats unless anyone more knowledgeable says differently.





As the day warmed up a few butterflies began to appear. Like Wednesday Small Whites were the commonest species but I also saw one each of Large and Green-veined, here's a nice one for you David M.



At one stage I missed a few heartbeats when I caught sight in my peripheral vision of something rather large crawling up my arm....



A couple of Small Heath were still flitting around, a Comma made a fleeting appearance and I had a couple of Red Admiral visitations but I only came across the one Small Copper this time. To make up for the lack of numbers she happened to be a lovely fresh animal and posed for me for some time.





Remembering the ovipositing female from Wednesday I decided to see if I could locate the egg she laid on the stone. I surprised myself in finding it quickly despite the stone having rolled down the slope. After a few pics I wedged it up against some Sorrel leaves in the shade. They really are miniature marvels when seen close up.



Still no sign of any LTB's though, until I was slowly walking up and down the large swathe of Peas, something small and lycid like flitted past along the hedge. With the sun behind me it looked pale brown and had a 'jinking' flight pattern. I tried to follow it but it vanished only to reappear a couple of minutes later whereby it flew off across the channel of water.....never to be seen again 😞! Having no experience of LTB's I can't be sure of what I saw, it just looked like what I would expect them to look like, or maybe it was just wishful thinking 😊.

Well a couple of minutes later another small thing fluttered by along the fence line of the scrapyard that borders the site. This time the sun was in my face so I wasn't able to make out any colours or pattern. The little blighter tormented me for some time, flying back and forth until it eventually settled long enough for me to identify a male Vapourer 😞😞. He's lucky I'm not a collector, I might have caught and pinned him out of spite!

I figured my luck was out today but one last consolation prize was this absolute stunner of a Peacock who landed and basked in the hazy sun.



4th October

I woke up Sunday and decided to give it one last shot. What with work and the current weather forecast it was probably going to be my last chance. The journey took longer than planned, the dreaded bus replacement service 😞 (which I wasn't aware of until after I'd bought the tickets) added nearly an hour 😞 so I got there not long before noon, almost immediately bumping into B'rex again who was with a fellow butterflyer. Thankfully for me no LTB's had been seen yet. Unfortunately that remained the state of play for the rest of the day. A very fresh male Clouded yellow was seen but didn't settle long enough to grab a snap. Other than a few Small whites and a couple of Small Heath that was it for the day.

I did however manage to tick off another avian lifer. A pale wader caught my eye and at the time neither Rex or I could ID it, my gut feeling kept saying 'Grey Plover' but it wasn't until I got home that my suspicions were confirmed.



So no LTB's but certainly not a wasted weekend. Overall 32 bird species and 9 Butterfly species seen.



Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 07-Oct-15 03:36 AM GMT

Hi! Buggy, your weekend sounded really interesting , sorry you didn't see the LTB's but there's still time, keep at it 😊
30odd species of birds is good going looks like that's what we'll be taking shots of in a few weeks time Buggy when the Butterflies have gone, so you've made an head start 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 10-Oct-15 05:55 AM GMT

If Neil Hulme's instinct is correct (and it usually is), this weekend should present the premium opportunity to track down any new brood LTBs.

Good luck.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Oct-15 06:02 AM GMT

Well today I had a couple of spare hours in the afternoon so went for a wander on my local patch and saw exactly no butterflies 😞 Not even a single flyby which was a shame given all the Michaelmas Daisy in full bloom!



Just a small sample of whats available if there were any butterflies out!



Oh well, I guess that's what I get for living in London!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 10-Oct-15 06:09 AM GMT

I'm surprised by that, Bugboy, as butterflies are still flying quite conspicuously down here in south Wales.

Perhaps they'd all finished for the day by the time you arrived?

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Oct-15 06:18 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

I'm surprised by that, Bugboy, as butterflies are still flying quite conspicuously down here in south Wales.

Perhaps they'd all finished for the day by the time you arrived?

Possibly, I didn't get out til gone 2pm but it was still warm (shorts and t-shirt weather) with very little wind.... Oh well.

I've managed to get the weekend off so perhaps I'll go further afield tomorrow 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 11-Oct-15 04:18 AM GMT

I'm surprised you drew a blank at that massive patch of nectar rich blooms 😊 Nice Grey Plover, when out French teacher used to take some class mates and I out birding that was his least favourite bird. You see it's call is a high pitched, whine like "Steevve", which also happened to be the first name of our teacher... 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurus rex, 11-Oct-15 06:31 AM GMT

It was really good to meet you at last buggy. 😊 We might not have seen any LTB's but we still had a very interesting chat and saw that Gray Plover you spotted - a first for me too I think. 😊

I hope to see you again out there at some point.

ATB

James

Re: Bugboys mission

by Hoggars, 11-Oct-15 08:35 PM GMT

Hi Buggy, I've been catching up with your diary and the egg-laying Small Copper!

Before this year I'd never seen a Copper lay her egg - It's a very special thing to witness, as you show so well in your report,

Great Stuff!

Best wishes,

Hoggers.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Oct-15 02:44 AM GMT

I was quite surprised too **Wurzel**, I would have expected a couple of whites and Vanessids at least.

I now have visions of flocks of Grey Plovers shouting Steeve at each other in cockney accents, something to look forward to if I ever come across such a thing 😊

Good to meet you too **James**, if there's another LTB invasion next year I'm sure we'll bump into each other again!

Thanks **Hoggers**, I keep a close eye on your diary, love seeing what your lot are up too 😊. It's the first wild ovipositing Small Copper I've ever seen, plus my first wild egg, (I bred them when I was a teenager when I captured a gravid female.)

10th October,

I'd managed to wangle a weekend off and decided to risk another trip down to the south coast on my now desperate hunt for LTB's. As it turned out Saturday ended up being a completely wasted event spent getting progressively more annoyed by delayed and cancelled trains. I'd got up later than planned and having run a couple of errands before setting off it was already late morning but I didn't get to Newhaven until around 2pm 😊.

The weather forecast was also not quite what I was lead to believe either, mostly thick cloud with occasional hazy sun and rather chilly. I decided not to take my camera out of my bag, partly to tempt 'sods law' but mainly because there didn't seem much point. The latter proved to be true 😊. Even the tide was in so not much in the way of waders to watch. I grudgingly walked around for a bit, without even the hint of a butterfly.

By the time I decided to make a move barely an hour later my dark mood was only slightly diluted by an appearance of an actual butterfly, a Comma milking the weak, hazy sun for all it was worth.

So I'd managed to spend nearly £30 to walk around for an hour and get 3 photos of a butterfly I could see 10 minutes from my house 😡😡😡!





11th October

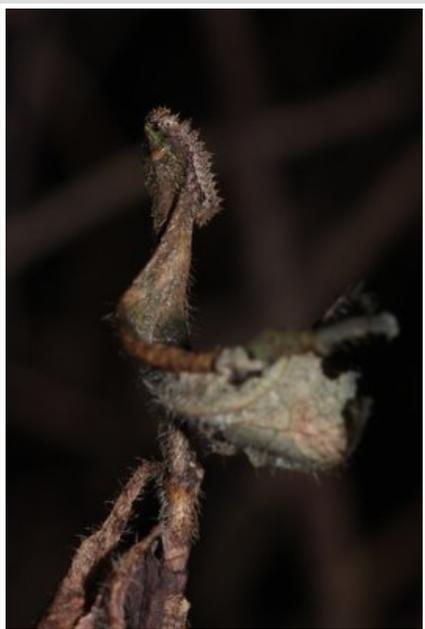
A trip to Bookham was the plan today, a check on the WA cats and a bit of birding. It felt much warmer today with lots of clear blue sky and very little in the way of wind, there were probably huge herds of LTB's out today if the weather was the same down south 😞😞!

Anyway another day without any butterflies flying beckoned. All the hairstreak eggs were still where they should be and for those fans of Brian II, he's still snoozing away, no point boring you with another identical picture of the previous ones of him.

Stan, who I strongly suspected was looking to go to sleep on my last visit nearly 2 weeks ago, was still out and about but definitely hadn't eaten for some time.



It does look like he's planning on sleeping on/in this leaf but whether he's going to be able to make a sleeping bag with it rapidly crisping up is anyone's guess. As I took a few pics he did go for a little wander,



and upon reviewing the pics there does seem to be a certain amount of silk holding the leaf in place.



Bird wise there were lots of small woodland bird flocks and large charms of Goldfinch. Some lovely long views of Nuthatch and Tree Creepers flitting around with various tits, Goldcrest and Chiffchaff.

Best spot for me were some Willow/Marsh Tit. I'm not familiar enough with them to separate them in the field, they rather inconsiderately don't pose like the pictures in the guide books 😊

So with 1 adult butterfly in 3 days it would seem my butterfly season has come to a rather abrupt end. I can't really complain though, it's been a very good season for me 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 12-Oct-15 05:16 AM GMT

I empathise with you, Bugboy, but the first rule is surely that if you're not there at all, then you can be sure you definitely WON'T see any butterflies.

You made the effort, and although you weren't rewarded this time, there will be other occasions such as this that will bear fruit.

Keep perservering!

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Oct-15 03:42 AM GMT

14th October

Because I'm a stubborn git (and I'm not letting my butterfly year end just yet, even if the butterflies are currently playing hard to get with me) I took yet another day trip down to Newhaven, (yes I know I've said I'd already made my last visit there several times 😊).

Out of the wind and when the sun was out it was very pleasantly warm but for the first half hour or so not a butterfly was seen. Obviously I spent a bit of time lurking around Everlasting Peas, just in case. When that drew a blank I went for a wander. Sticking to the sheltered areas out of the wind I finally caught sight of a butterfly, a White of some sort getting battered in the wind every time it ventured too high of in the distance. I finally caught up to it and it turned out to be a Small White but she didn't settle for me so I left her to her eternal battle with the wind.

Shortly after this another butterfly came hurtling past me. I could see the distinctive patterning of a female Clouded Yellow but it wasn't very yellow. The sensible part of my brain came up with "Ooooh *helice*" but there was a little wishful thinking voice suggesting it may be something rarer so of I went. Luckily for once the wind worked to my advantage, keeping it low and close to the sea defence ridge where she settled often on the Dandelion and Oxtongue, only to fly up as I approached, typical Cloudy. I ended up following her for nearly an hour, trying to get as many open wing shots as I could to make sure I could get a firm ID, and yes it was a *helice*. My persistence did pay off in the end and I managed to get some half decent close-ups as well as a few lucky open winged shots of varying degrees of focus.



I love how in order to keep their wings in plane to the sun, they just move their head from side to side to reach all the nectar rather than moving around like most others.



shame about the focus.....







After leaving her to her eternal flying up and down I went back for another look along the Peas (I'm stubborn!), on the way getting a Red Admiral flyby and a lovely blue badge Small Copper but despite having a good patch of blue sky there was still no sign of LTB. Still a Clouded Yellow *helice* is a very nice consolation prize, a first for me. Still life in the season yet 😊!



Re: Bugboys mission

by Mark Colvin, 16-Oct-15 04:03 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

You are determined ...

Well done on the Clouded Yellow. However, it's not the *helice* form of the female. Personally I think you have something better. I believe it to be *Colias croceus* ab. *aubuissoni*, though I'm happy to be corrected.

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pete Eeles, 16-Oct-15 04:04 AM GMT

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

Personally I think you have something better. I believe it to be *Colias croceus* ab. *aubuissoni*, though I'm happy to be corrected.

I completely agree 😊 Nice find!

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Oct-15 04:24 AM GMT

"Pete Eeles" wrote:

"Mark Colvin" wrote:

Personally I think you have something better. I believe it to be *Colias croceus* ab. *aubuissoni*, though I'm happy to be corrected.

I completely agree 😊 Nice find!

Cheers,

- Pete

So what you're both telling me is that I've still never seen a *helice* then 😊! If I'd known it was a rarer ab. I'd have spent all afternoon chasing her! I can't find any pics online to compare it to mine. What makes this *aubuissoni*?

Re: Bugboys mission

by Pete Eeles, 16-Oct-15 04:28 AM GMT

ab. *aubuissoni*: "The ground colour yellowish-orange, intermediate between the type and *helice*. The hindwings dark dusted, with a large orange discoidal."

Here's a superb example from Colin Knight:



Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Oct-15 04:39 AM GMT

Thank you Pete 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 16-Oct-15 04:45 AM GMT

Great find, Bugboy. That's a most interesting specimen.

You got your reward for the previous blanks recently.

Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 16-Oct-15 05:32 AM GMT

Well done Buggy! *Helice* are two-a-penny – if you see enough clouded yellows, anywhere in their range – you're bound to see one. You just have to get over the jinx first one ... But it will be a long time before you photograph another ab. *anbuissoni*.

Guy

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Oct-15 08:11 AM GMT

Thank you everyone, very exciting to find something so rare, especially when I had no idea it was when I was looking at her 😊 that little wishful thinking corner of my brain is feeling very smug right now 😊

Today I had a nice little present to myself arrive in the post:



Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 16-Oct-15 04:18 PM GMT

SUPERB CLOUDY, SAW 2 SAME PLACE FRI. 9 🍀🍀🍀😁

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 16-Oct-15 09:38 PM GMT

Oh! well done Bug boy, I bet you'll go back there again shortly 🍀🍀 Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 17-Oct-15 01:56 AM GMT

What a splendid butterfly, Buggy! Well done indeed. It just shows – expect the unexpected... 😊 and a few 🍀🍀🍀 for good measure.

Dave

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 17-Oct-15 06:28 AM GMT

Fantastic find Buggy, you lucky, lucky bug-ger 🍀🍀🍀

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Oct-15 10:59 PM GMT

Thank you for all the comments and I shall treasure all those green faces 😊. Simply a case of right time, right place 😊. It really was my last visit there this season I think, having now come down with a serious case of manflu. Hopefully I'll pull through and be raring to go for next season though 😊😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 18-Oct-15 06:42 PM GMT

Get well soon Buggy Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Oct-15 05:41 AM GMT

Thanks Goldie, I'm struggling manfully through it!

Musings of a butterfly addict.

Well with my butterfly season drawing to a close it must be time to do an end of term review.

My first full year as a member of this forum was, for me, a year of firsts. I've never really 'twitched' anything before this year but twitching butterflies all over south east England gave me 12 lifers to get my personal challenge off to a flying start and of the 45 species I saw I managed to photograph 44 of them, only that Purple Emperor eluded me.

However that was only a small setback with so many highlights filling the year. Looking back my top five highlights are catching my first sight of a Duke in the Chilton's, which happened to be a fresh Duchess.



A day trip to Wurzels Wiltshire Wonderland to watch hundreds of Marsh Fritillaries materialising as if by magic from the course turf as the day warmed, as well as many other late spring species.



Watching masses of Heath Fritillary flit and glide around a sunlit glade.



Catching sight of my first ever Brown Hairstreak.



And finally, finishing off my season with a rare Clouded Yellow ab. Even if I wasn't aware of it at the time!



2015 was also notable for an ever present wind 😞; I can count the number of days on one hand when there wasn't at least a stiff breeze to annoy me! Despite this and the rather topsy turvy weather I have very little to complain about. Going through my records for the year I find I've amassed over 5,800 photos 🤪 (and that's just butterflies and ignoring all the ones that got binned! 🤪🤪). Most species seemed to appear a week or two late, certainly from June onwards. I suspect the cool May had something to do with that.

At the beginning of the year my list looked like this:

	A	B	C
1	Chaucered Skipper	Northern Brown Argus	Marbled White*
2	Small Skipper*	Common Blue*	Grayling*
3	Essex Skipper*	Chalkhill Blue*	Gatekeeper*
4	Lulworth Skipper	Adonis Blue*	Meadow Brown*
5	Silver Spotted Skipper* (2014)	Holly Blue*	Ringlet*
6	Large Skipper*	Large Blue*	Small Heath*
7	Dingy Skipper	Duke of Burgundy	Large Heath (2011)
8	Grizzled Skipper	White Admiral	38 out of 59 seen
9	Swallowtail (<i>britannicus</i>)	Purple Emperor (2014)	*35 out of 59 photographed
10	Wood White	Red Admiral*	
11	Cryptic Wood White	Painted Lady*	Swallowtail (<i>gorganus</i>)
12	Clouded Yellow*	Small Tortoiseshell*	Black-veined White
13	Brimstone*	Peacock*	Pale Clouded yellow
14	Large White*	Comma*	Berger's Clouded yellow
15	Small White*	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Long-tailed Blue
16	Green-veined White*	Pearl Bordered Fritillary	Short-tailed Blue
17	Orange-tip*	High Brown Fritillary	Large Tortoiseshell
18	Green Hairstreak*	Dark Green Fritillary*	Yellow Legged Tortoiseshell
19	Brown Hairstreak (2014 CB)	Silver Washed Fritillary*	Camberwell Beauty
20	Purple hairstreak*	Marsh Fritillary	Queen Of Spain Fritillary
21	White-letter Hairstreak	Glanville Fritillary	Monarch
22	Black Hairstreak	Heath Fritillary	
23	Small Copper*	Speckled Wood*	
24	Small Blue	Wall*	
25	Silver-studded Blue* (2014)	Mountain Ringlet	
26	Brown Argus*	Scotch Argus	
27			

2015 started off slowly for me and I had to wait until 7th March to see my first butterfly, a Brimstone. Six weeks later in April I had the first of my 2015 lifers, a Green Hairstreak, quickly followed by two more, Dingy and Grizzled Skippers all on the same day.



Despite the below par May weather, I managed 5 more lifers; Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Duke of Burgundy, Glanville Fritillary, Small Blue and that trip to Wurzels Wiltshire Wonderland for his Marshies.



The 'June gap' still gave me the East Blean Wood Heath Fritillary experience.

July arrived with me discovering Bookham Commons in search for a Purple Experience. I only had two fleeting glimpses of HIM but my repeated visits were still rewarded by some excellent Silver Washed Fritillary action, a couple of close encounters with the little purple one and another lifer, the White Admiral.



I discovered a fantastic White-letter hairstreak site, thanks to a tip through this forum, where most of the colony seems to come down to feed on waist height Bramble blossom, and spent two very happy afternoons enjoying the company of that lifer.



Back at Bookham Commons I started to follow some White Admiral larvae and into August my continuing visits there got me the Brown Hairstreak, lifer number 12 for the year.

The end of my year was spent with repeated 'final' visits to Newhaven in search of the illusive LTB. Despite not seeing any I did stumble across a rather lovely Clouded Yellow which unbeknownst to me at the time turned out to be a rather rare ab. A great high to finish off my season

I also had the pleasure to meet fare few fellow butterflyers including 3 UKBers, **Mrsp0ck**, **Susie** and **B'rex**, whilst discovering lots of beautiful places to visit, perfect antidotes to life in the big city even without all the butterfly chasing 😊 !

All this butterfly twitching improved the look of my list no end 😊 !

	A	B	C
1	Chaqueered Skipper	Northern Brown Argus	Marbled White*
2	Small Skipper*	Common Blue*	Grayling*
3	Essex Skipper*	Chalkhill Blue*	Gatekeeper*
4	Lulworth Skipper	Adonis Blue*	Meadow Brown*
5	Silver Spotted Skipper* (2014)	Holly Blue*	Ringlet*
6	Large Skipper*	Large Blue*	Small Heath*
7	Dingy Skipper* (2015)	Duke of Burgundy* (2015)	Large Heath (2011)
8	Grizzled Skipper* (2015)	White Admiral* (2015)	48 out of 59 seen
9	Swallowtail (<i>britannicus</i>)	Purple Emperor (2014)	*46 out of 59 photographed
10	Wood White	Red Admiral*	
11	Cryptic Wood White	Painted Lady*	Swallowtail (<i>gorganus</i>)
12	Clouded Yellow*	Small Tortoiseshell*	Black-veined White
13	Brimstone*	Peacock*	Pale Clouded yellow
14	Large White*	Comma*	Berger's Clouded yellow
15	Small White*	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Long-tailed Blue
16	Green-veined White*	Pearl Bordered Fritillary (2015)*	Short-tailed Blue
17	Orange-tip*	High Brown Fritillary	Large Tortoiseshell
18	Green Hairstreak* (2015)	Dark Green Fritillary*	Yellow Legged Tortoiseshell
19	Brown Hairstreak* (2015)	Silver Washed Fritillary*	Camberwell Beauty
20	Purple hairstreak*	Marsh fritillary* (2015)	Queen Of Spain Fritillary
21	White-letter Hairstreak* (2015)	Glanville Fritillary* (2015)	Monarch
22	Black Hairstreak	Heath fritillary* (2015)	
23	Small Copper*	Speckled Wood*	
24	Small Blue* (2015)	Wall*	
25	Silver-studded Blue* (2014)	Mountain Ringlet	
26	Brown Argus*	Scotch Argus	
27			

Looking back at all my pictures, and there is an awful lot of them 😞 , I'd say my photography has improved over the year.....but then after so many pictures you would hope something would improve! I've actually started using fully manual settings after years of letting my camera do all the work for

me.

Roll on 2016!

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 20-Oct-15 06:19 AM GMT

It's been quite a year for you, Bugboy. It must have been particularly satisfying to stumble upon that immaculate female Brown Hairstreak though?

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 21-Oct-15 12:22 AM GMT

Great year for you Bugboy, I envy your White and Brown Hair Streaks which I've still to encounter, hope fully next year I will (at least it gives some thing to aim for next year,) also like you I want the PE so a vist I put off last year because of the bad weather I hope to put right Next year Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 21-Oct-15 04:17 AM GMT

That's a cracking Clouded Yellow ab. a lovely looking butterfly, almost like something from the tropics 🌴 😊

A great roundup of your season too. I am particularly jealous of your White-letter Hairstreak, a species I don't often see and totally missed out on this year.

Cheers,

Neil

Re: Bugboys mission

by Susie, 21-Oct-15 05:26 AM GMT

I don't post much now but it's been a pleasure reading your diary this year, Bugboy. I'm looking forward to reading it again next year 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 23-Oct-15 01:50 AM GMT

A great round up of the year Bugboy, and a hearty "hear, hear" to 2016 rolling one 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-Oct-15 02:46 AM GMT

Thank you all, it's been a pleasure sharing my escapades on here 😊

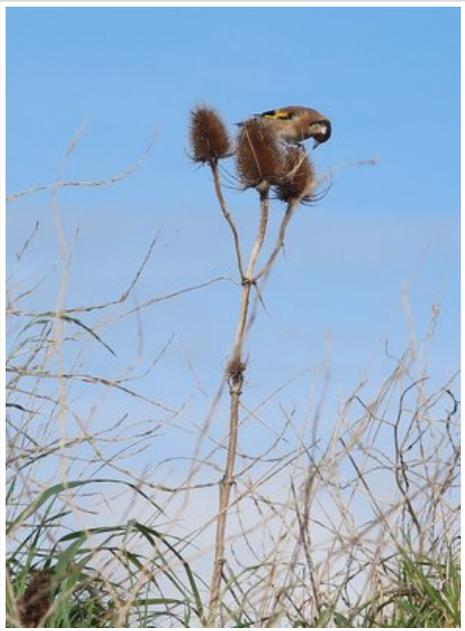
Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-Oct-15 02:53 AM GMT

28th October

After an exhausting 8 day run at work I really needed a relaxing day. I woke up to rain but the forcast seemed promising, particularly on the south coast and so it would be a surprise to absolutely no one that I found myself making another final visit to **Newhaven** in search for you know what 😊! I had good feelings this time, not least due to **Trevor's** pictures from last night which had remarkably familiar background scenery to the point where I could nearly find the grass seed head it was sitting on! I was pleasantly surprised to find the sun came out when I arrived, mid morning, the weather people got it right! Out of the breeze it felt very warm. I spent an hour or so wandering around the Pea plants, trying to catch a glint of blue in the sun..... nothing.

I decided to go for a wander over to where I found my Cloudy ab. a few weeks ago but still not a single butterfly was seen. I was determined not to go home empty handed so I stalked a few birds, the place is crawling with them. Stonechats were bold as ever and a Goldfinch allowed me to get quite close whilst it was engrossed in its Teasel.





There were also large flocks of Greenfinch, Meadow Pipit and Skylarks were singing!

Wandering back to the peas I still hadn't seen a single butterfly but as I was looking a man with a camera wandered over and asked if I'd seen anything. After a brief chat I discovered I was talking to the very man who had taken the previous day's picture, **Trevor**. He was able to show me where he'd seen it the day before and I wasn't far from the mark with my guess. A little while later a lady turned up and I was introduced to another UKBer, **Katrina**. The 3 of us continued searching but still couldn't find anything small and blue. Prompted by Trevor we decided to look for some Cloudies, he'd already seen 3 that morning and it didn't take long for a few males to show up, patrolling and occasionally stopping to bask.







Mostly patrolling!

Of in the distance we saw someone else who may or may not have been **B'Rex**. Even through my bins we couldn't be sure though. We later found that it was B'rex but between the four of us not a single LTB was seen today 😞

I'm beginning to think I'm a LTB jinx, maybe I'm the darkside to everyone else's jedi LTB skills. If you see me at a LTB site probably best to pack your things and go home 😞😞😞😞

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 31-Oct-15 06:02 AM GMT

Sorry you dipped on the LTB Bugboy – it'll just make it all the sweeter when you finally do catch up with the species – this weekend maybe? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 31-Oct-15 08:33 PM GMT

Hi! Buggy, it must have been great to hear that Sky Lark, we've not had them a round here for quite a while. It used to make my day complete when on a lovely Summers day you could see them high in the sky singing, sadly we seem to have lost them.

You didn't see your LTB but at least you heard the Sky Lark sing 🎵 and met some friends Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 31-Oct-15 08:33 PM GMT

Hi! Buggy, it must have been great to hear that Sky Lark, we've not had them a round here for quite a while. It used to make my day complete when on a lovely Summers day you could see them high in the sky singing, sadly we seem to have lost them.

You didn't see your LTB but at least you heard the Sky Lark sing 🎵 and met some friends Goldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Nov-15 03:30 AM GMT

31st October

So Saturdays 'final visit' to **Newhaven** in search for you know what started off rather chilly and grey to the point I didn't even bother taking my camera out my bag and just stuck to a bit of birding whilst waiting for the sun to appear. It was only when I noticed something small feeding with the usual flock of Redshanks. I spent quite a while playing chase with them, trying to get a proper look at the little imposter to work out what it was. Waders aren't my strong point birdy wise so I needed to get a good look. I did manage to get reasonably close but being a small brown bird on mud it really didn't stand out! Having checked with my guides though I'm pretty sure it's a Common Sandpiper.



It took a while for the promised sun to appear but I did find I wasn't alone in my search. I found myself chatting to **Badgerbob** and as the day went on more people turned up, all carefully peering at the patches of Pea but despite all these eyes not a single LTB was seen, at least not as far as I was aware. There were a few Clouded Yellows flying and we had a couple of Red Admiral flybys but despite the warmth, that was it. 😞

A final surprise, whilst waiting for the train, was to have some Black Redstart pointed out to me by a fellow LTB hunter, another lifer for me so not an entire waste of a day 😊

1st November

What a difference a day can make. Today's trip to Bookham Commons was definitely a season opener after yesterdays warm sunny afternoon. Foggy, clearing to a thick mist 🌫️ as the day wore on, letting me know it truly is Autumn and Winter's just around the corner.



I saw my first Redwings of the winter, quite a large flock dispersed in the scrub looking for berries, and a couple of Redpoll. Last winter I didn't see a single Redpoll or Siskin down in my part of the world, and the first Redwings to appear I think were in January so maybe we're in for a hard winter this time?

I found myself admiring the beauty of dew bedecked cobwebs which littered the scrubland and got a bit snap happy with them.

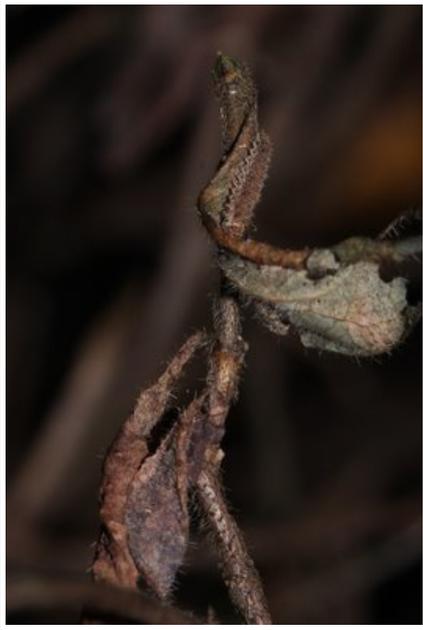




All my Hairstreak eggs were present and correct as was Brian II, still snoozing with his little bum sticking out.



The last time I checked on Stan three weeks ago, my only other surviving WA cat, he was still active but showing signs of sorting out his hibernaculum.



Today it took quite a while to locate him and I only found him after taking a few pics of the most likely places and zooming in on the results. Turns out I was right when I guessed he was preparing his final leaf. He's copied Brian's sleeping posture, bum exposed to the elements!





Somewhat bizarre to think that yesterday I was searching for a butterfly more at home in the mediteranean when today looked like this!



Re: Bugboys mission

by badgerbob, 02-Nov-15 04:52 AM GMT

Great to meet you yesterday Paul. I was really hoping we could hunt a blue out between us to reward you for all your visits. Hope you still manage to get lucky.

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Nov-15 05:52 AM GMT

"badgerbob" wrote:

Great to meet you yesterday Paul. I was really hoping we could hunt a blue out between us to reward you for all your visits. Hope you still manage to get lucky.

One day Badger! 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurus rex, 03-Nov-15 03:43 AM GMT

Despite unfortunately not connecting with an LTB it looks like you've had a really great year Paul. I enjoyed meeting you and having a good chat about our year. I'm certain we'll meet again one day, particularly if you visit Sussex now and again. I think you finding that Clouded Yellow ab made the trip to Tidemills worthwhile.

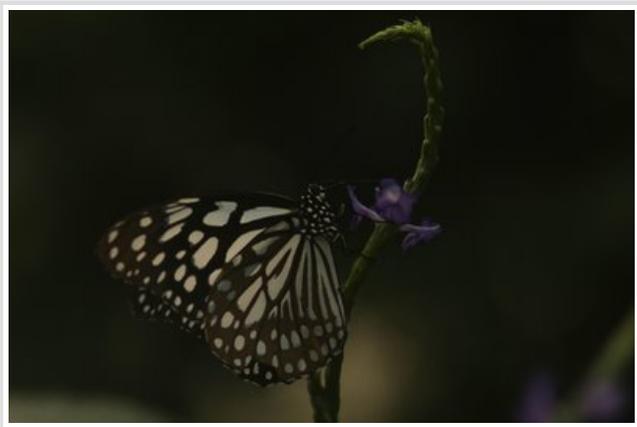
All the best

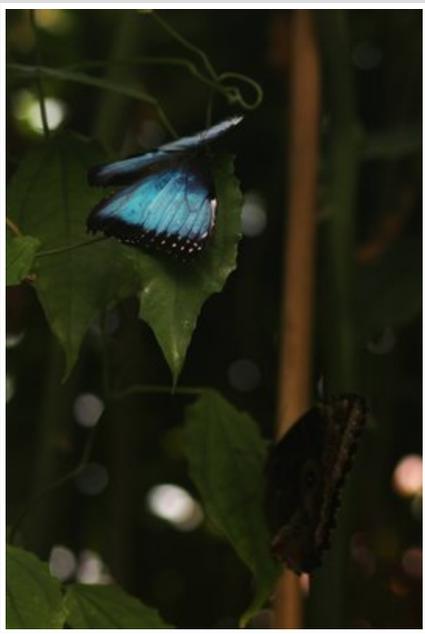
James

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Nov-15 02:12 AM GMT

It seems like an eternity since I've posted anything on here so here's a quickie with some tropical butterflies from today at London Zoo's 'Butterfly Paradise'.







That *Caligo* is a particularly impressive species!



Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 23-Nov-15 05:33 AM GMT

You already suffering withdrawal symptoms, Bugboy? 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Nov-15 06:32 AM GMT

"David M" wrote:

You already suffering withdrawal symptoms, Bugboy? 😊

no comment.....

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 23-Nov-15 06:37 AM GMT

Nice sequence of shots Bugboy 😊 Cheer up – soon be spring 😊

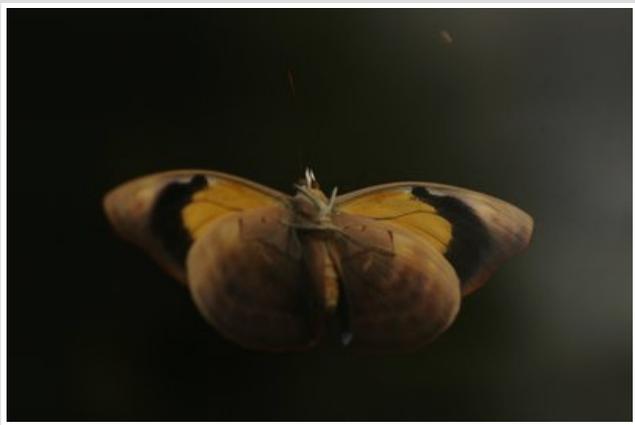
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Dec-15 02:36 AM GMT

A few more tropicals to brighten up a december day (even though it's been unseasonably warm today).



This was freshly emerged and clinging to the glass inside the puparium

Glad these guys have emerged again 😊





Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 02-Dec-15 05:24 AM GMT

That comet moth looks amazing. It must appear huge when in flight?

Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 02-Dec-15 06:18 AM GMT

A stunning looking Moth Bugboy 🤩😄 Very considerate of them to hang around next to the identification sign too, not all denizens of butterfly houses are that 'user friendly' 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Dec-15 06:42 AM GMT

That comet moth looks amazing. It must appear huge when in flight?

I bet they look amazing in flight David, but I've never seen one move. Like most of these large Silkmths they aren't that active during the day, I guess having no mouthparts it pays to conserve your energy for the essentials of female hunting at night!

A stunning looking Moth Bugboy 🤩😄 Very considerate of them to hang around next to the identification sign too, not all denizens of butterfly houses are that 'user friendly' 😊

yes it is rather handy isn't it Wurzel 😊 I suspect it didn't happen by chance 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 03-Dec-15 11:05 PM GMT

Fascinating Bugboy, I've never seen that Moth before in any BF houses around here, it's brightened up another cold and wet dayGoldie 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Dec-15 07:56 PM GMT

9th December

Wednesday was the first day for quite some time when decent weather coincided with a day off where I wasn't otherwise occupied so I spent a few hours out on my local patch. No sign of any butterfly life but 47 bird species wasn't too bad for a casual wander. Best spot of the day was a female Goosander trying to blend in with some snoozing Tufted Duck, they only turn up once in a blue moon. By the time I got my camera out though, she was in the process of making a discreet getaway having realised she'd been rumbled.



The only other bird to get close enough for pictures were some Long-tailed Tits. they are extremely cute, like a cotton bud on a stick!





Its nice to have a few hours peice and quite this time of year 😊

Re: Bugboys mission

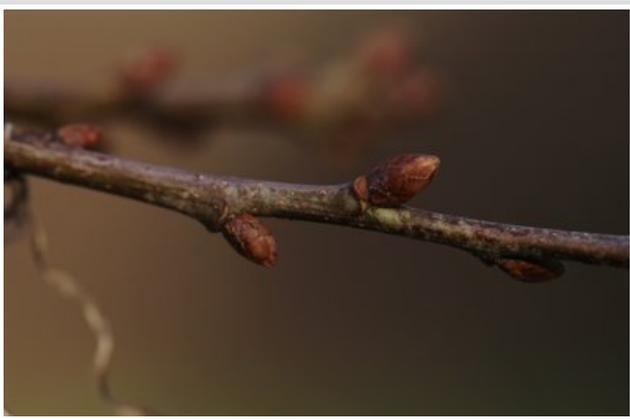
by bugboy, 25-Dec-15 02:56 AM GMT

23rd December, Bookham Commons

A nice sunny day meant I was able to pop down to Bookham for a few hours yesterday to see how things were developing with a few early stages. The single Purple hairstreak egg, as I suspected would happen, has vanished, probably eaten by a hungry tit.



1st November



Gone, never really stood a chance once the leaves had fallen.

Very close by I did find another one that has somehow managed to escape detection so far, not sure how though!



Unlikely to last much longer!

My two Brown Hairstreak eggs are still where they are supposed to be and my other two Purple Hairstreak eggs are still relatively safely wedged into the Oak buds.

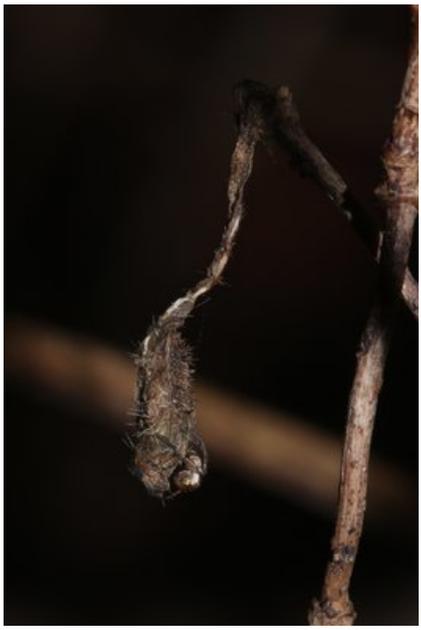


Eagerly Looking for eggs were loads of Tits of various species and I finally managed to get a close enough look to properly identify some Marsh Tits, well I'm pretty convinced they are anyway.

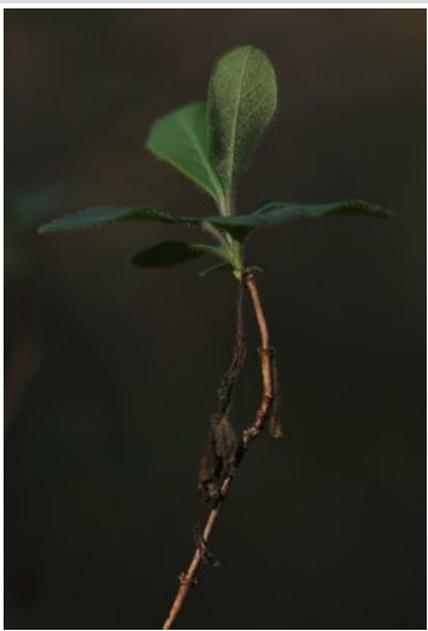




Next stop was to check on the White Admiral cats, hopefully the unseasonably warm weather hadn't woken them up. Brian II was still snoozing although his hibernaculum seems to have swivelled round making him much harder to see. He's also taken in a lodger, a small spider.



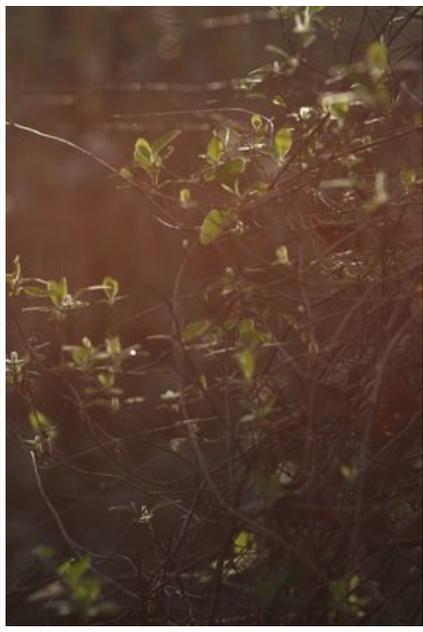
The warm weather may not have woken up the cats but that can't be said about the Honeysuckle he's in, Could easily be fooled into thinking it's April from this picture!



Over at Stan's pad I couldn't see him but it looks like he's tucked away out of sight, hopefully he is anyway, the hibernaculum seems undamaged at any rate.



So from Me, Brian, Stan and my eggs I wish you all a very merry Christmas 😊



Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 25-Dec-15 04:04 AM GMT

Well found, Buggy. You must have superb eyesight !

I'd like to be there when that White Admiral emerges,also my own personal Purple Hairstreak wouldn't go amiss !.

Good to meet you a few weeks back.

Good luck in 2016,
Trevor.

Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 25-Dec-15 04:09 AM GMT

Nice, cathartic visit there, Bugboy. Shame about the PH egg but I'm sure many will ultimately survive.