

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Feb-16 04:07 PM GMT

Thank you all so very much for your amazing comments on my diary last season. I really do appreciate them. It has been a tough winter in more ways than one which has left me keen to get back to this website. As some of you already know I am incredibly sad to have recently lost Chance, leaving my little vixen Saffron entirely on her own. You might remember that in 2014 I lost my cat Stanleigh who was also one of her friends, so we are consoling one another as best we can.



Saffron and Stanleigh

I now have a bit more time on my hands and today I needed to get out for some fresh air and exercise. I was pleased to read recently that there had been lots of BH eggs counted at Noar Hill so I decided to head in that direction but not for the BH. I had the daft idea of trying to find a Duke of Burgundy pupa in the wild. I had found a lot of cats last year and had read that they pupated at the base of the plant so I thought it was worth a 30 minute search in the areas where I had discovered most of the cats! However, when I got to Noar Hill I saw that some of the Blackthorn had once again been cut down. Quite a few bushes were marked with tape, obviously indicators of BH eggs, and thankfully these bushes had been left unscathed. I assumed this must have been well planned to minimise the loss of eggs. However, a 30 minute scan of discarded Blackthorn in just one small area (the Triangle) and I was heading home with 5 eggs – 3 on the one branch. My visit was brief as the rain started so I imagine there will be more to be found. A few shots of the eggs below but I shall be back fairly soon with an update on the immatures of last season.





**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 01-Feb-16 05:38 PM GMT

Good to see you back up and posting again. Looking forward to seeing lots of fantastic early stage images again this year.

Sorry to hear you lost another one of your lovelies 😞 , I'm sure he lives on through lots of memories though 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 01-Feb-16 05:49 PM GMT

Nice to welcome you back, Pauline. Seems like a real long time!

Great early stage images (again).

**Re: Pauline**

by trevor, 01-Feb-16 09:10 PM GMT

Hi Pauline;

Gorgeous animals, it is a shame that their life span is shorter than ours. I've lost a few trusty friends myself, over the years.  
But new life in those BH eggs you found !.

A new season awaits 😊  
Trevor.

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 01-Feb-16 10:43 PM GMT

Good to see you back Pauline – looking forward to the next update 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Feb-16 11:07 AM GMT

Thank you on both accounts Buggy. Not sure what direction this season will take me in - time will tell 😊

Thank you too David for the warm welcome. It HAS been a long time - almost half a year 😊

I appreciate those sentiments Trevor - and I haven't forgotten my promise to show you around Noar Hill this season. It will be good to meet up again but you will have to be going some to exceed your many special sightings and shots of last season 😊

Thank you Wurzel - hopefully you will not have too long to wait but I have a lot of catching up to do 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Feb-16 11:39 AM GMT

**End of last season** - I did continue to actively look for LTB in Hampshire without any success, ending the season as it started, when I failed to see the Scarce Tortoiseshell at Pulborough in April. It was a little frustrating not being able to locate the LTB, especially when viewing Neil's gorgeous images of this butterfly which he seemed to be finding all over the place 🍷. However, having previously seen them in 3 different counties I wasn't in a position to complain. Moreover, my search resulted in visiting places I have never been to before (eg. Selsey where I took shots of the Gulls and Pagham Harbour nature reserve) and eating some great crab and fish dishes in a variety of wonderful country pubs 😊. Having read the interesting history of Tide Mills I felt compelled to visit - no LTB's there either despite previous reports of many eggs, but I reconnected with some great people and was entertained by a couple of Kingfishers. I also found several nests of tiny Brown-tailed moth caterpillars on the bramble.





Brown-tailed moth

In the absence of LTB I could not resist a few shots of lovely fresh Commas enjoying the Blackberries, despite having recently taken hundreds of Comma shots following successfully hand rearing them.



Comma on Blackberries

On my return from Tide Mills, despite having a sat nav I took a wrong turn – (those who know me will not be surprised at this 😊😊). As I made my way through minor roads to get back on track the car in front of me hit a young Wood Pigeon, driving on to leave in spinning round in the road with feathers flying. I pulled over and ran back to find it lying on its back in the gutter. As I gently lifted it its head drooped and its mouth opened. I was sure I was witnessing its last few moments but as I was running late I placed it gently in a carrier in the car. 20 mins later I arrived home and it was still alive. It was not able to feed itself so it joined one of the other 'waifs and strays' in one of the sheds!



Wood Pigeon

(Recently released)

I am going to start wearing blinkers when I venture out looking for butterflies to prevent any similar occurrences! 😊

TBC.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Feb-16 12:03 PM GMT

The large number of Comma photos taken were due to the 11 Comma cats I had been rearing eventually emerging, the last departing on 6 October. I have been surprised at just how long it takes for these butterflies to emerge – not the length of the pupation phase but the actual emergence. Other species I have reared have burst out of their pupa with little warning but the emergence of the Comma is positively leisurely by comparison. Close observation of the Comma pupa however, reveals subtle changes which indicate that the process has started. The very first time this happened I watched for about 40 minutes after which time I became convinced that the butterfly was in some difficulty. I had heard that spraying the pupa with warm water may make it easier for the creature to break out of its brittle case so I went to get the spray. I was gone a couple of minutes and on my return the butterfly was clearly managing perfectly well without any assistance, being now half out of the pupa. I thought perhaps that this was just a ‘one-off’ but having watched half a dozen emerge now, this protracted emergence was repeated, almost as if the butterfly was taking little rest periods in its efforts to break free. This timescale meant that despite the wind I was able to get some reasonable shots:













I was quite astonished by the subtle beauty of the undersides of these insects and also the degree of variation in the colours, ranging from green, turquoise through to a vibrant blue, and even one very pale individual which is considered to be an aberrant – thanks must go to Vince during this period for his advice and guidance.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 02-Feb-16 02:01 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, nice to see you back and glad your out and about 😊 Love the Comma shots and hope you get to see the LTB this Summer, I know it's a BF I want to see as well. I see you mothered another casualty quite successfully 😊 I was sorry to hear about your loss and hope your feeling better now, hope to see you this year Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Feb-16 02:20 PM GMT

Before I continue with further updates on the other species it would be remiss of me not to include a few more shots of the Commas:







It is worth mentioning that the Comma with the pale underside was a result of a markedly pale larva.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Feb-16 02:31 PM GMT

Thank you for your comment and emails Goldie. I am really looking forward to meeting up with you 😊 I have such a lot of catching up and reporting still to do so my next post relates to my first visit to the AES:

3rd October was the day I joined Andy to visit the AES at Kempton Park for the very first time. One of the reasons for the visit was to meet up with Martin who was helping out on the Surrey BC stand and who had a few little gifts for me (It was good to meet you at last Martin and thank you for the goodies – more of them later). Thankfully, Andy, Martin and others had prepared me for what I might find there yet I was still somewhat overwhelmed by the sights that met me from the size of the event to the variety of goods available. I made a beeline for the books – always an attraction for me – and brought home a variety of reading material. Richard Lewington was one of a few authors signing their books and prints and although the latter was very tempting I already have far too many framed pictures on my walls. It is definitely the place to be if it is new equipment that is needed and many of the traders seemed very knowledgeable. The livestock too was fascinating from the bird eating spider on sale from £100 to snails that were almost the size of a small tortoise, centipedes, preying mantis and many, many more! However, I cannot get excited about these creatures and it was incredibly sad to see tray after tray of dead butterflies (and other creatures). Pinned Brown Hairstreak for example, were on sale for as little as £2.00! It is difficult for me to express exactly how I felt about this (collecting aside!) but the paltry sum seemed an insult to such a beautiful creature given how highly I value sightings of them in the wild. Likewise, Monarch pupae were on sale for £2.50 (and very attractive they are too) but a bowl of these dead butterflies

were being sold for £1.50 each! Given my amazing experience last season when I saw them flying around Brighton I found this quite depressing. A gorgeous blue butterfly caught my eye, the metallic blue the most incredible sight – I imagine its beauty could only be surpassed by seeing it fly in a natural environment. As I admired it the trader approached and without thinking I said 'what a shame, such a pity, it must have looked fantastic when it was alive' at which point he quickly turned away and I moved on. Would I go again? Possibly, if I had good reason. It was also nice to meet up with a few UKBers again including Philzoid and Pete – nice to see you both again.

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 02-Feb-16 05:22 PM GMT

Lovely sequence of Comma images, Pauline. I love it when you get a glimpse of that 'verdigris' effect on the undersides.

Regarding your comments about dead specimens, I totally agree. Brown Hairstreaks are so precious when alive it is an insult for them to hawked for £2 when dead. So sad.

### Re: Pauline

by MrSpOck, 02-Feb-16 06:56 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Great pictures of the comma hatching you can see it pulling its tongue and antennae from between the wing cases of the pupa.

It was great to meet you the two times, one on a failed LTB trip. I am at Wisley Butterfly event on Saturday 6th, on the Surrey Branch table, they are there all the week with various volunteers helping out, No dead pinned butterflies at this event, but we may have a few natural dead ones to show people, along with some hatched cocoons and pupae. There is no sign of movement in the mentioned goodies yet, another 3 weeks or so before that. Great to see you rescued some Brown Hairstreak eggs, they tend to go through quicker in captivity even kept wild in gardens and produce adults in mid-July. We have a few eggs at Hutchinsons Bank.

Hopefully it will be another good season this year.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 02-Feb-16 07:17 PM GMT

Pauline, how awful, dead pinned Butterflies how sad and the fact they were selling them, no wonder these people are out with Lunch box's and nets, I've heard everything now, I thought it was bad enough just collecting them but selling them, that's awful. Goldie 🙄

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 02-Feb-16 08:25 PM GMT

Hi Pauline and welcome back. Great to see you posting again, almost as much a sign that the new season is on its way as the lengthening days 😊😊

I love the emerging Comma sequence, great stuff 😊

I have never been to the AES although it does sound like an interesting day. I won't comment on the pinned specimens for sale other than to say that I very much agree with your own comments.

All the best,

Neil.

### Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 02-Feb-16 09:29 PM GMT

It must be spring! The Pauline is out of hibernation! 😊 Amazing sequence of the comma.

Fitzgerald wrote of wine, "I often wonder what the vintners buy, one half so precious as the stuff they sell". The same could be said of brown hairstreaks.

Guy

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Feb-16 05:14 PM GMT

Thank you for the compliment David. The variation in colour in these butterflies was a joy to behold and thankfully all 11 made it to release.

Glad you liked those shots Martin – it seems like a lifetime ago now. As you might imagine I actually took hundreds of photos as I had 11 Commas on the go at once – thanks to Andy and his blackcurrent 😊

Yes Goldie, I'm glad I was warned beforehand what to expect otherwise it would have been an even bigger shock. Nice meeting a few UKBers at the event tho'.

Neil, Guy, thank you both . Your comments made me chuckle – which has been a rare event recently. I'm so pleased you both liked the Comma shots.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Feb-16 05:31 PM GMT

One of the other species I was caring for last season included the Sallow Kitten. It is perhaps worth mentioning that at one point, on 16 September, as I checked it I noticed it was eating its shed skin. Approximately 15 minutes later this was all gone! I am wondering if this is usual with this species? After 2 days of not moving and not eating I thought perhaps it was about to shed its skin again. However, after this prolonged period of inactivity the cat became frantically active, exploring the whole of the Sallow. Following advice from Mr Spock I provided an egg box which it promptly pupated in. The pupa is exactly the same shade as the box and I am wondering if this is purely co-incidence or whether the creature is able to camouflage itself by creating a pupa of different hues which blends into whatever it chooses to pupate on. (I have since been advised by Martin that the Sallow Kitten forms its pupa from the chewed material of whatever it pupates on hence the perfect camouflage). A few shots during the rearing process:



21 Aug 2015



2 Sept 2015



Eating shed skin



15 mins later – all gone



19 Sept 2015



20 Sept 2015



22 Sept 2015



27 Sept 2015



5 Oct 2015

I am hoping that it will emerge safely and will report back as and when.

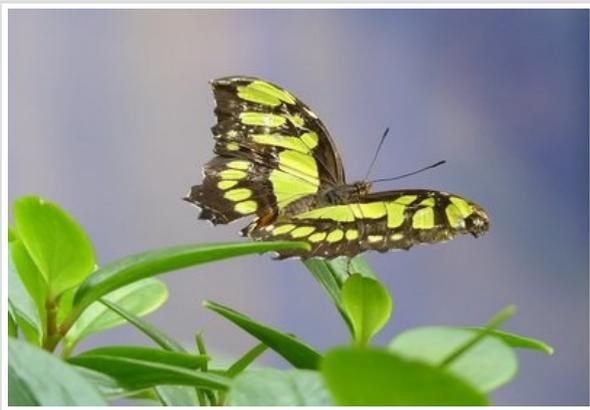
**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 04-Feb-16 02:01 PM GMT

Until I have caught up from last season I intend to mix new and old as time permits. 3rd Feb 2016. Today the weather was better than it had been in a

long time and it was the opportunity I had been waiting for to visit the butterfly display at Wisley. Having been inspired by Mike's postings I realised with some surprise that the last (and only) time I had visited was in 2009!! Given that the journey was only 24 minutes I have resolved not to leave it so long before the next visit as I had forgotten what a great place it is. I arrived early and spent 3 hours there, surprising myself by taking over 700 photos - which were quickly whittled down to about 200, but given that I think I saw about 30 species I shall probably keep the majority of these. I intend to split this posting into 2 parts - the first will record what I found interesting about my visit and the second part will try to identify the species seen.

My first impression was one of pure delight - to be amongst all these exotic butterflies and to be able to watch them at close quarters just lifted my spirits. I could easily have spent the whole 3 hours without moving very far from the entrance. My second impression when looking more closely was a slight disappointment at how tattered many of them were. I heard other visitors express similar sentiments calling them 'dog-eared' and 'ragged'. Some of the damage to their wings was reminiscent of bird damage but clearly that could not be so I assume it must have been from the foliage. This tatty Grecian Shoemaker was the only one I saw but thankfully I got a few decent shots of the gorgeous Green Malachite tho' many specimens were damaged like this one and what I believe is a King Swallowtail:



In addition, many of the butterflies had died. I must have easily spotted a couple of dozen and whilst recognising they have short lives this was a little unexpected given that it is quite early in the display schedule. In some cases it was obvious the butterflies had died but in other instances visitors were taking photos of expired butterflies and were completely unaware, for example this Scarlet Swallowtail(?):



I have been finding it difficult to identify some of the butterflies I saw as the guide I purchased was not very comprehensive and did not distinguish between male and female for example. If I make any mistakes in these couple of posts I would appreciate being corrected. I am not likely to see any butterflies abroad so this is a learning experience for me. In common with UK butterflies these species were masters of camouflage and time and again I saw visitors walk past unaware as even the largest of species hung under leaves or were camouflaged by colour and position, like this Green Malachite:



A couple of butterflies, both Scarlet Swallowtails I think, appeared to be very aggressive, especially when defending the nectar source which had been prepared for them. I saw one of these trample all over a Pale Owl butterfly until I was convinced he was dead as he was completely on his side. However, he eventually righted himself and flew off leaving the aggressor in charge of the fruit.



Despite the frequent signs warning visitors not to touch the butterflies, a Doris Longwing was in danger of being trampled on as he sat on the ground close to the door. I gently lifted him up and placed him safely on some plants. He flew to a sign which indicated he was called Sonny. It is so sweet of Wisley to name the butterflies 😊. I also found Wilma a little later 😊 :





Behaviour that was a joy to see was the courtship and egg-laying and of this I saw plenty. In fact, on looking at my photos I noticed eggs that I hadn't even noticed at the time. As I said last season, my observation skills really need to be honed. Scarlet Peacocks and Postman indulge in courtship behaviour:



Eggs can clearly be seen on this climber/vine. The butterflies did not stop to lay their eggs but seemed just to hover.

I had been trying to drag myself out of the place for ages when I came across a stunning looking butterfly. It has to be my favourite. It took me a while to realise that this was an Indian Leafwing – a butterfly I had been watching earlier but had no idea it would reveal such colour and beauty. I was not the only one to be captivated by this butterfly.



However, what was particularly interesting for me was the fact that this particular individual was vigorously defending a particular leaf. Whenever another butterfly came near, whatever the species, it chased it off and then returned to its perch. I assumed it was just territorial behaviour, but on looking at my shots I can now see that this particular leaf was peppered with at least 3 lots of eggs. Was it protecting the eggs? I have no idea.



A Blue Morph stuck a pose which reminded me of the White Admirals and SWF but this looked more like defending territory rather than eggs:



I eventually managed to drag myself away but I had not gone many steps outside before I saw a butterfly on the ground, presumably accidentally carried out on the back of a visitor. I had had the privilege of several butterflies landing on me during my visit and I imagine it is quite an easy thing to happen. What I could not understand was why so many folk were just walking past it. I gently coaxed it onto my finger and carried it back indoors and placed it on a feeding station. Big Billy?



As I wandered back to the car park I took some time to look at the various butterfly sculptures that were on sale. They were interesting but not to my taste and at price tags of £850 and £1000 not to my pockets liking either. Decide for yourself.



**Re: Pauline**

by MrSpOck, 04-Feb-16 03:12 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

yes the display has its battered butterflies, we often see them in the wild, Bugboys Small Heath at Hutchinsons Bank where it was flying with 2 wings on one side and hardly any on the other side. Im sure i will see some on Saturday, love the Heliconids, eg The Hecale and Postman/Small Postman.

The Butterflies in your post are the following :-

Grecian Shoemaker [Male] the females are differently marked, with White Patches on the Forewings.

Malachite [ I hate glueing the pupae up of these ]

Giant Swallowtail [Papilio crespontes]

Scarlet Swallowtail [Papilio rumanzovia]

Malachite [underside] if only they were P. dido which it mimics

Papilio lowi or memnon [female] [part of the memnon group]

Great EggFly [Female] H. bolina

Heliconius hecale or H. ismenius

Anartia amathea [from Colombia]

Postman Heliconius melpomene [lovely]

Postman Heliconius melpomene [female egg laying on Passiflora Alata] Small Postman feed on the Decaloba section of passiflora, opposite to Postman.

Egg Mimics are also on the P. alata, eggs usually laid on the growing tips and tendrils.

either Indian Leaf or Malayan Leaf.

Morpho [hard to tell from this angle which species]

Great Morman [Papilio memnon] or [Papilio lowi] [Male] Hard to tell these apart.

Hope this helps with the IDs, im a bit rusty now as its sevral years since i worked at a butterfly house.

**Re: Pauline**

by Padfield, 04-Feb-16 09:10 PM GMT

Hi Pauline. Lovely to see the tropical beauties! I have a season ticket for my nearest butterfly house, which is open all year, and have posted a page showing over 100 the species I've seen and identified there. It might help give you pointers for any you have difficulty identifying - there's a common core of species in butterfly houses all over the world.

<http://www.guypadfield.com/butterflyhouse.html>

Guy

**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 05-Feb-16 12:13 PM GMT

Pleased to see that you visited Wisley.

When I was there, earlier, I saw very few dead ones but several were damaged - especially the 'tails' of Swallowtails. Having seen these in the wild, i can confirm that they don't last long there, either. I saw examples, in the wild, where the bright coloured marking on wing tips had clearly done their job by distracting attacks away from vital parts.

At Wisley, I felt that some damage probably occurred in the breeding cages, since several emerged butterflies had their wings against the condensation-covered glass panels, where parts probably got stuck. I thought that these should be recovered more frequently.

Perhaps it was quieter when I was there but I did see staff pursuing butterflies that had escaped from the tropical zone into the rest of the greenhouse. They were also picking up those that had landed in vulnerable positions. Overall, I felt that the display was well-managed - an aspect that has improved over the years.

I thought I had been photographically active, with only about 350 shots - you doubled that 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 05-Feb-16 01:57 PM GMT

Your so lucky Pauline, living so near to Wisley, such lovely Butterflies has well, we've to go to Chester Zoo or Lancaster for the nearest BF house, so looking at your great photos is a real treat, Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 05-Feb-16 02:19 PM GMT

Thank you for your help with the ID's Martin. I hope you have a good day on Saturday.

That is an incredibly useful link you sent me Guy - I was a bit concerned when Mike mentioned that Wisley had some of their ID's incorrect so I have been using your site today. Thank you.

Yes Mike, it was incredibly busy even tho' I was early. I guess everyone was making the most of the weather - there seemed to be lots of kiddies making a disproportionate amount of noise (some had even brought picnics and camped out in the far corner) but it was interesting to see their reactions to the butterflies - some were interested and eager to embrace them whilst others were really scared! I am sure I will visit in the future and will follow your example of going earlier if possible when the livestock is a little fresher. Re number of photos - well, I deleted the majority so what does that tell you 😊

If you can get to Chester zoo quite easily then I envy you Goldie. I have only been there once – a day trip!!! But that's a long story which I shall tell you when we meet up 😊

I am finding it interesting to try to identify these butterflies based on Guy's website and Martin's help as well as Mike's photos. I am putting them together in the form of 'pages' and trying to identify where I can. I have only managed 2 pages so far:



**Re: Pauline**

by MrSpOck, 05-Feb-16 02:47 PM GMT

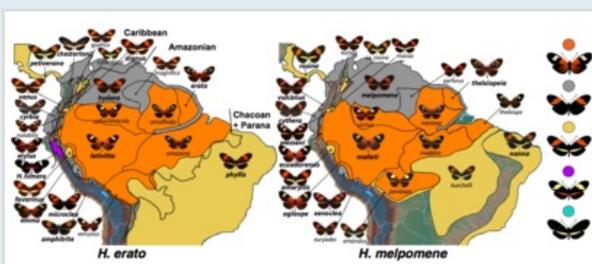
Your pages are good, and correct.

In all the years I havnt seen a Doris actually fly, either in a Butterfly House or a greenhouse here in my garden.

The ismenius can vary a lot in their patterns, and be tiger striped, like the 2 brown ones with yellow, or various other colours.

here is a picture i found yesterday of the distribution patterns of Postman and Small Postman, see how the colourforms match in the 2 partners.

The Zebra is one of the heliconids that doesnt have a mimic partner, and as the partners always have 1 pupa with antlers the others without, eg sapho - cydno, erato - melpomene there would have been a heliconid in the past with the same markings and an no-antler pupa.



**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 05-Feb-16 07:08 PM GMT

[quote="Pauline" As I wondered back to the car park I took some time to look at the various butterfly sculptures that were on sale. They were interesting but not to my taste and at price tags of £850 and £1000 not to my pockets liking either. Decide for yourself.]/quote]

I thought most of them were pretty 'naff' A few green balls with dabs of red and yellow paint to make a 'caterpillar' isn't a 'sculpture' but a kiddie toy (about £1). Those silver metal screens were nicer – did you notice the red 'ladybird' on one of them?

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Feb-16 06:51 AM GMT

Thank you for your comment Martin. That is fascinating detail about the distribution and mimics.

How do folk wear jumpers and coats in those glasshouses Mike!? Without either I was rushing to get to another heat source before I ended up like an escapee butterfly so I didn't look closely at the sculptures. They were on TV tho' last night in the background as the butterflies were shown. More to my taste was this stone sculpture of a bear fishing by the carp lakes:



I have prepared another couple of pages from my little trip – still 2 butterflies to identify – and loads more to wade through!. I imagine they are Heliconids but with few markings I have little to go on:





**Re: Pauline**

by MrSpOck, 06-Feb-16 08:02 AM GMT

The New pictures

The Heliconid in the first picture is most probably a Small Postman [H. erato] and the Top right in the Second is a Numata [H. numata] these are lovely in many colour forms.

Off to Wisley now so more hopefully in my diary later.

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 06-Feb-16 11:25 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, so many varieties, when I went to Chester Zoo, I don't remember seeing many species of Butterfly , just wished I lived nearer to Wisley 😊 My daughter is coming to visit this next weekend, CZ is one of her favourite places, so weather permitting maybe we'll get there, if the weather's like it is today (cold and wet) maybe not. 😞 AH Well! it's nearly Spring Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 07-Feb-16 07:35 AM GMT

Thank you for those ID's Martin – much appreciated. Looks like you had a good day at Wisley despite the weather – great shot of the larva 🍷

Wishing you a good week with your daughter Goldie and a VERY happy birthday.

It is time to return closer to home with an update on the reared Whites. Of the 100 or so Large Whites caterpillars that I removed from my rabbit food, only 86 actually made it through to pupation. I am not sure of the reason for this but I seemed to have lost several at each stage although they did not appear to be parasitized. The egg that I rescued from the Garlic Mustard turned out to be a Small White (thanks Buggy) which also successfully pupated. Given their positions, nose to tail, on the mesh cage it is unlikely that I shall get any interesting shots of them emerging (although I might try the tip you gave me Martin on a couple of them). However, hopefully the garden at some point will look like it is covered with snow in summer 😊







Small White

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 07-Feb-16 10:55 AM GMT

Thanks Pauline, you've certainly got a lot to keep you busy, 😊 That first Cat looks really cute , all wrapped up warm. Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 07-Feb-16 06:00 PM GMT

In this awful weather I think we all need to be wrapped up warm Goldie 😊

Just time for a quick catch-up re the 2 Small Coppers. Some might remember I tried and failed in 2014 so I was a bit hesitant about trying again but given the circumstances I had little choice else they would have perished anyway. I had watched these eggs being laid within minutes of each other and they duly emerged within hours of each other. Just by way of a recap:



18 August 2015



Both emerged on 26 August

I had sourced enough Sorrel to feed several hundred larva which made finding and photographing them a bit of a challenge, especially as they blended in perfectly to their background:



A close-up of the same:



The cats continued to thrive and grow but I was surprised that their appearance was very unlike the 2014 specimens which I assume was attributable to the Sorrel type and its colouring. By way of comparison, these were from 2014:





as opposed to the 2015 cats on 15 and 16 September:



The cats pupated on the side of the mesh on 18 September ( I thought they would have preferred the leaf litter at the base of the plant but having explored this they both decided the mesh was preferable). I was able to gently detach them and put them in a more suitable and hopefully natural position which had the added advantage of me being able to take photos to record any changes. This was taken on 26 September:



I tried to monitor both pupa carefully as my hope was to be able to ultimately photograph the butterfly as it emerged. On 5 October I was convinced that one emergence was imminent so a great deal of time was spent watching and photographing that day:



(taken just after mid-day)



(twenty past three)



(just before 5.00pm)

The waiting and watching went on all day and when there was no light left I brought the pupa indoors. Subsequent shots were poor due to lack of daylight and although I experimented with various light sources the resulting colour and quality were poor. At one point I had to dash out to shut away the poultry and rabbits and on returning found that my cat Jaffa had been playing with the pupa! I noticed the pupa had been split open and in such a way that it did not look natural to me – of course I attributed the damage to her, rather than a sign of natural emergence. As there were no further developments throughout the evening I resigned myself to the fact that she might have seriously injured it. This last shot was taken just before 11.00pm before I headed for bed:



### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 08-Feb-16 12:02 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

Good to see you are out of hibernation 😊 It looks like you have been busy.  
That Sallow Kitten larva is delightful 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Feb-16 10:18 AM GMT

Thank you Paul. Together with the Puss moth they have to be my favourites. Quite odd seeing it eat what looked like a mini version of itself tho'

Well, I couldn't blame Jaffa. It was my own fault. I should never have left the pupa unattended but never dreamed I'd return to find her throwing it in the air and rolling it across the floor. I assumed she must have caught it with her nail. I expect she thought it was something quite special after all the attention I'd been giving it. I still felt bad about it tho'. I got up early the next day as usual and was astonished to find a perfectly formed butterfly waiting for me 😊:



I only had one chance left now to see a Small Copper emerge and given their development had been in parallel I expected the emergence to be imminent. I took up my post and camera again and prepared for another lengthy wait for some action with the 2nd pupa.

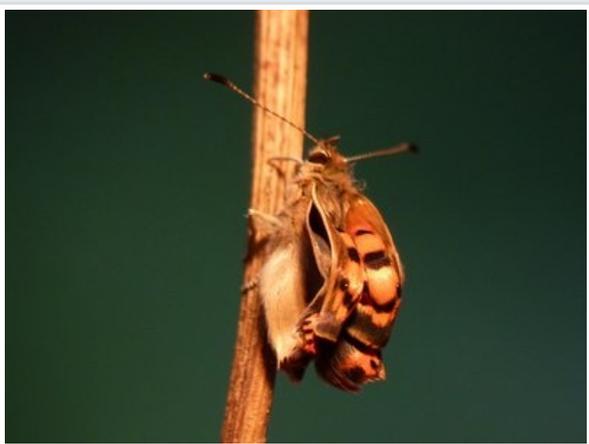


Just after 8.00am



About 11.30am

I seem to recall that the weather over these few days was shocking – dark (even during the day) and heavy rain – which was why the shots were taken indoors and I haven't mastered that technique yet 😊 At 11.47 it all suddenly kicked off:



It took under 2 minutes from start to finish:



So, I was well pleased with another 100% success rate (after the 11 Commas), particularly given the earlier scare. I was able to get a few more shots in dry but windy weather before they were returned to Noar Hill:



Butterfly with its original egg.







**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 08-Feb-16 10:43 AM GMT

Great Shots Pauline, I bet you were really pleased with the results, sounds like your Cat wanted attention as well though 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 08-Feb-16 09:18 PM GMT

Phenomenal. What a privilege that must have been.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 10-Feb-16 07:12 AM GMT

I was absolutely delighted Goldie as I had been expecting the worst with the 1st pupa.

Thank you David. It was amazing to see and worth all the watching and waiting. Trouble is, it is over so quick I just want to press a rewind button and watch it again and again. Perhaps I should try using video 😊

The difficulties created during a 12 hour power cut left me in serious need of a 'butterfly fix' so before I continue with the imatures of last season, a few imatures from here:



As before, the *Heliconius* eggs were peppered across the passiflora and egg-laying was very evident.



Martin had informed me that it only takes 20 days for this species to go from butterfly to butterfly thru 5 instars so I had expected to find cats of all sizes. The only ones I could locate however were really quite small:







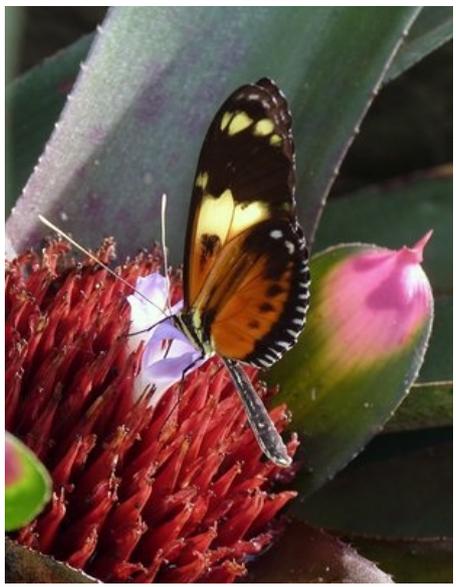
I continued to look for other eggs and found a great many. Some looked only slightly different and were on the same food plant which lead me to presume they were the same species in a later stage of development. Others were clearly different and on different plants but I have no idea what any of them are. Yet again, there was no evidence of any large cats but I did find some that were newly hatched and eating their shells:







It would be remiss of me not to end with a few shots of my favourites:





**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 10-Feb-16 09:10 AM GMT

Lovely shots Pauline and the Small Copper emerging is a fantastic sequence. Those eggs look like *Caligo* sp. If that's banana they are laid on that's what they will be. 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Mike Robinson, 10-Feb-16 09:28 AM GMT

Wow; some super-impressive pictures.

**Re: Pauline**

by MrSpOck, 10-Feb-16 11:06 AM GMT

Nice pictures of the eggs and larvae.

The heavily spotted heliconius larvae are *isemenius*, the non spotted is *hecale* or *numata*.

You have some great shots of Owl eggs which you can see the larvae eating its way out, and still rolled up inside, and eating their eggshell. Owl larvae are nearly always in the center rib of the banana leaves, they do move to stems when they are massive, but take 2-3 months to grow to that size.

**Re: Pauline**

by trevor, 10-Feb-16 03:01 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Some amazing shots from RHS Wisley. Also your sequences of home bred Butterflies emerging are a joy to behold. I don't ever remember seeing a Small Copper emergence captured on 'film'.

Hold on in there, Spring is getting ever closer 😊.

All the best,  
Trevor.

PS. Might see you at BB. for Spring brood Wood Whites.

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 10-Feb-16 10:39 PM GMT

Superb shots Pauline - those Small Copper are to die for, especially for Hoggars 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Paul Harfield, 10-Feb-16 11:34 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

I have to agree with others comments, that Small Copper emergence sequence is superb. I can not ever remember seeing a picture of an adult butterfly next to its own original empty egg, amazing 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Feb-16 10:17 AM GMT

Wow! What an amazing set of comments. Thank you.

You're absolutely right Buggy as usual 😊 Thank you for the ID and comment.

Good to hear from you Mike – I appreciate the compliment.

I am grateful for your on-going help Martin and pleased you liked the shots. I would have loved to see those cats when they get bigger – what a pity the event doesn't carry on longer.

Spring can't come soon enough for me Trevor! I am pleased you like the 'home grown' specimens as I hope to produce a few more this year 😊. May well see you at BB 😊

Thank you so much Wurzel. I was relieved and delighted at the result but it was all over just so quick!

Thank you too Paul – I have to agree as that is one of my favourite shots too.

Another quick update on the Bright line Brown eye – the larva of a moth which I found decimating my tomatoes last season. It comes in 2 colour forms, green and brown, and I decided to rear one of each:



(2nd Sept 2014)



(16 Sept 2014)



(16 Sept 2014)

They both pupated towards the end of September and as of today are both still safe and sound. An unassuming little moth which flies between May and July so I have a while to wait before I see the finished product 😊



**Re: Pauline**

by MrSpOck, 14-Feb-16 05:50 PM GMT

You can play mix the words up with Bright Line Brown Eye and Brown Line Bright Eye , Always are careful when writing down the moth trap records.

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 16-Feb-16 04:06 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline just catching up after a rather hectic weekend 😊 Sat was spent at Penn Flash and Sunday at Chester Zoo, I was disappointed with the Butterfly House though,( not as many Butterflies has I thought) lots of Chrysalis though and some were emerging. Your recent photos are great Pauline, roll on Spring Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Neil Freeman, 16-Feb-16 07:17 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, catching up on some diaries and just saw your Small Copper sequence...superb stuff 😊

All the best,

Neil.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 20-Feb-16 05:57 PM GMT

Thank you guys - I've been out of action due to flu bug for last 8 days so apologies for late response. On the mend now so can't wait to get out and about again 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 21-Feb-16 11:31 AM GMT

Still not 100% but it was such a gorgeous day on Friday that I decided to take a leaf out of Paul's book and search for discarded WLH eggs. I don't know why I have never thought of doing this before as I have foraged both BH and PH eggs from fallen trees/branches and the Hairstreaks are my favourite group. I headed for Cosham and was quite taken aback at the changes there. Following my last visit I commented that there were signs of intrusion - litter and beer cans strewn around for example. Security has clearly been tightened up with a new fence and new signs warning of trespassing and prosecutions:



Whilst this has always been a private site, I was led to believe that IBM actively encourage wildlife and in the past they have been very tolerant of the butterfly folk who wait patiently just inside the boundaries for a glimpse of the WLH and perhaps the opportunity of a photo. However, these new measures have caused me some concern. I was discussing the implications with Paul and I am sure he won't mind me mentioning that he has a contact at IBM through whom he is endeavouring to find out our 'official' position and whether it will curtail our activities this season. I trust that you will update us all through your diary in due course Paul?

There were a lot of Elm branches down due both to the gales and also a fair bit of strimming had been carried out to open up the area. I was not quite sure what I was looking for apart from the image I had in my mind of Paul's WLH egg. After about an hour I came across something that looked like an egg but it seemed the wrong colour – too dark and possibly not in the right position. I decided to 'save' it anyway, whatever it was, and subsequent photos have shown that it is indeed a WLH egg:





Well, this was a first for me as I have never, ever seen one. Having found the first egg, having 'got my eye in' so to speak, subsequent eggs were easier to locate:



Just like the BH that I rescued recently I found a branch with 3 WLH eggs on - not very easy to see as they were largely covered in green moss. Not sure what these other eggs are which were on the same branch:



Before leaving I noticed that on some of the trees the blossom was starting to burst open. I wondered if this was a sign that the eggs might hatch earlier than usual? Coincidentally, 2 of these trees were where I spotted most of the butterflies last season. Perhaps they can sense which position provides the best/earliest food source?



### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 21-Feb-16 12:26 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline , glad you found your WLH eggs and looking forward (if you took some home) in seeing the out come 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Feb-16 06:59 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie. I did indeed take home the eggs I found as they were on twigs on the ground and I believe they would have perished otherwise. Paul has a few too and we have been exchanging notes and sharing advice received from Pete, Martin and others so it will be interesting to keep an eye on his diary too 😊. Naturally I have been keeping a close eye on the eggs which are in different places – not all in one basket, so to speak! I try as far as possible to keep eggs/larva in places I will frequently pass to make it easier to monitor them. This morning I was sweeping the path prior to the arrival of some visitors to try to make the place look a bit tidier – fat chance of that with hens and ducks running around 😊. As I passed the eggs for the umpteenth time I noticed that one of them seemed to be changing in appearance – I always keep a hand lens at the ready for a quick squint at them! Sure enough, a larva was emerging! It was a treat to view this amazing event but frustratingly I could not get the sort of sharp shots I would have liked as the light was poor, and I really believe that this time it was the camera holding me back rather than my own performance, which is usually the case. I have had to crop heavily but would like to share a few shots of this tiny creature:













When the little cat initially emerged it spent some time wondering around the barren top of the twig before heading down. I was a bit concerned when it went down to the bottom, past the open buds, almost to the water. I was about to intervene when it headed North again and this time successfully located a bud which it made a bee-line for. The last I saw of it was the back end as it quickly wriggled in between the petals.

#### Re: Pauline

by David M, 23-Feb-16 10:33 PM GMT

Superb sequence, Pauline. That larva is absolutely minuscule! I hope it survives & prospers.

#### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 24-Feb-16 09:58 AM GMT

Fantastic Pauline, that's the first time I've seen the emergence from an egg 😊 It'll be great to see it develop Goldie 😊

#### Re: Pauline

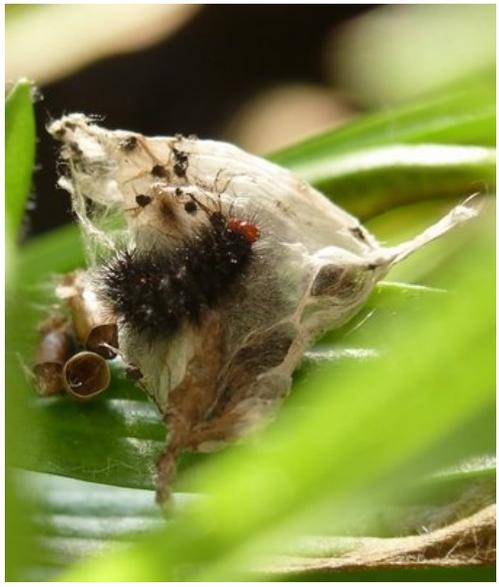
by Pauline, 24-Feb-16 06:45 PM GMT

Thank you so much David. It was amazing to watch and yes, it was really, really tiny. Just hope I see it again at some point as I've ordered a load of Wych Elm 😊

You should give it a try Goldie – it's very rewarding and so interesting.

Well, I've been waiting quite a while for this moment and I could so easily have missed it if it hadn't been for a timely email from Martin alerting me to the fact that his Glanvilles were waking up. He quite rightly anticipated that my ones would be in a similar state. These were the 'goodies' I referred to in an earlier post which Martin so kindly entrusted into my care when we met up at the AES. I was able to watch these cutest of cats emerge from their larval web and begin to explore their plant which had been prepared well in advance. I would be embarrassed to admit how many photos I have already taken but will post only a few here as there will be more to come at a later date for sure.







**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 24-Feb-16 07:43 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, I tried it once not from an egg, my Grandson bought me some Painted Lady Cats and I raised them watching every day and taking notes, they went into the Chrysalis form and I waited patiently for them, when they finally started to emerge I was thrilled I took them down to Kent with me and let my Granddaughter let them out to fly away. I thought Kent had a milder Climate and would give them a better chance than in the North. I must admit although I was thrilled with the experience. I love to see what others do with their Cats 😊

Your Cats are really cute, love the little red head and hairy body 😊 May be if I actually found some eggs and thought them endangered like you did I'd be tempted again, looking forward to seeing them again Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 26-Feb-16 12:32 PM GMT

Well done Goldie! It's such a thrill isn't it? Trouble with 'finding' eggs, you have to scabble about in wet and prickly undergrowth and spend loads of time in the cold scrutinising dead branches .....perhaps not such a great idea unless you are totally mad like me 😊😊

Today it was somewhat of a relief to relocate my 3 day old WLH, and my, how he has grown 😊



**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 26-Feb-16 12:44 PM GMT

That's great news Pauline, looking forward to seeing more of him 😊 As for scrabbling about in undergrowth, I save that for Summer 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 28-Feb-16 07:53 AM GMT

4 days old yesterday but today seems to have gone AWOL so I'm getting a bit concerned. Hopefully just too well camouflaged but still a worry .....





Strangely, no movement yet on the other eggs. Perhaps they are not viable – or just too early.

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 28-Feb-16 03:47 PM GMT

It may be growing but it still seems ridiculously tiny! 🙄😬

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 28-Feb-16 08:59 PM GMT

It seems Okay Pauline, tiny but surviving( hope fully) keep us posted Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

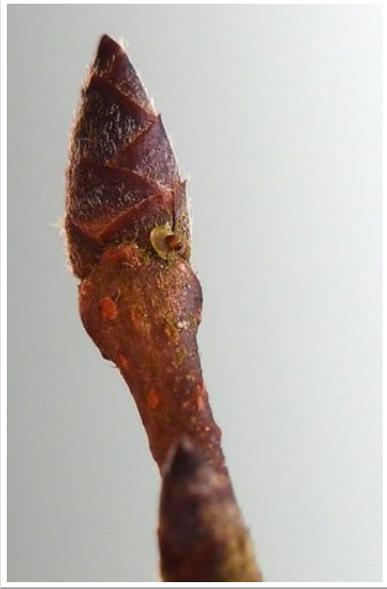
by Pauline, 29-Feb-16 11:59 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel, Goldie – thanks for your comments. You wouldn't believe how tiny this cat is even at almost a week old. I did in fact locate him again yesterday so here he is at 5 days old: (he has since disappeared again!)



My 2nd WLH cat emerged yesterday and again I was able to watch the process. It seems to take some time - between 60 and 90 mins to chew its way out- giving me time to spot the activity and get the camera ready.







**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 29-Feb-16 01:15 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, you are getting some wonderful records of these early stages. They are also a tribute to your technique with the Lumix FZ camera.

Mike

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 29-Feb-16 02:29 PM GMT

Thank you so much Mike - I really appreciate that. I hope by now you have managed to throw off that bug.

I have given the Hairstreaks numbers rather than names. Given that no. 2 only hatched yesterday I wasn't expecting to see him again for a few days. It therefore took me by surprise to catch a glimpse of him today in the centre of a tiny bud, munching away. I didn't have the tripod to hand so these were hand held:





WLH eggs no's 3 and 4 hatched simultaneously today. I could only focus on one of them (what happened to multi-tasking 😊) so I have no idea where one of them is. Well, I have a vague idea that he might have scurried into the nearest bud which was just opening, at least that's what I'm hoping, as I couldn't locate him elsewhere. I shall post another set of shots later, when time permits.

### Re: Pauline

by trevor, 29-Feb-16 03:23 PM GMT

There you are Pauline, Spring has arrived for you. WLH hatching and bursting buds, can't be bad !. Lovely sequence.

Trevor.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 29-Feb-16 03:53 PM GMT

Thank you Trevor. You were right all along about the weather but can you arrange another few days like this for me please? 😊

Now there has been a lot happening on the immature front these last few days and as this diary is very much a record for me there have been more postings than usual, and fairly repetitive they might seem too. I have hardly even mentioned the Glanvilles and yet their numbers continue to grow as they come out of their little web which reminds me of a tardus. The latest count was 14 and they are very active indeed. I have not yet mentioned the BH eggs, the WA larva or the various moth pupa. However, before I turn my attention to them I am posting one more sequence of WLH no. 3 hatching. If I witness others emerging I have decided not to take any more photos as I have come to the conclusion that this is the best I can do – and as usual I wish they were better 😊 but both the camera and myself have our limits 😊. It all kicked off at 10.03am this morning and I took the final shot at 11.20am.













**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 29-Feb-16 08:36 PM GMT

You really are surpassing yourself with these WLH shots Pauline! You're gonna keep Vince very busy with requests for the website stock pictures 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 29-Feb-16 09:46 PM GMT

Don't worry about 'repetition', Pauline. These images are a joy to see.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 01-Mar-16 08:44 PM GMT

Buggy, David – I am truly flattered by both your comments. I am always striving to do better and am rarely satisfied with my own work so comments like these give me a real boost. Thank you.

Mike has worked some magic on the images I posted and I'm sure he won't mind me sharing the result which provides a more comprehensive view of No 3 emerging:



**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 01-Mar-16 09:24 PM GMT

Love it! Great when two fine minds get together.

That larva is absolutely minuscule.

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 01-Mar-16 10:04 PM GMT

Some more cracking images Pauline 😊 I've just seen them on my new laptop with HD screen and they are fabulous 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 02-Mar-16 10:12 AM GMT

That's so clever, love it Pauline, Your photos are great and have given me hope that Spring can't be far a way, ( It's snowing here at present) keep the photos coming they cheer us up. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Mar-16 03:39 PM GMT

It's great, isn't it David? I was delighted when Mike sent it to me and the credit must certainly go to him.

I want one of those Wurzel! I haven't got a laptop and my pc is old and tiny. I'm glad you get a good view of my images 😊

It is really clever, isn't it Goldie. Mike once explained to me how he does it but I could never get the hang of it 😊

Well, storm Jake is now upon us and like you Goldie I have had snow, hail and gales today and I'm bracing myself for the almost inevitable power cut 😊 .Still, gives me a chance to update my diary 😊 . No. 1 had been missing for 3 days and I could resist no longer so yesterday I had a real good look at that flower bud and sure enough he was curled up right in the centre at the base of the bud. I left him undisturbed and checked again this morning – the 4th day since he has been 'missing'. With some careful scrutiny I eventually found him but these cats must be the master of camouflage. I thought the Brown Hairstreaks were good but these take the biscuit! I have ringed his position to give you half a chance:



He eventually started moving which provided an opportunity for some better views:





Now, onto No. 2. – No. 2 emerged on 28th Feb and on 1st March, when he was less than 48 hours old he did a runner!! I was so lucky to spot him as he is still tiny but he was making his way down the clingfilm covering the wine bottle which was holding his branch. Either he was an adventurous little so-and-so or there was something amiss. When it comes to rearing I always think there are 3 main things to consider – keep them safe from predators, keep them at the right temperature and give them the right food. Sounds simple but it really isn't unless you are knowledgeable and experienced. On this occasion I reckoned it was a lack of fresh food causing his restlessness so I set off immediately for Cosham to replenish my supplies. On my return I managed to coax him onto a fresh branch with some buds but he was still reluctant to settle and paced up and down the stem for about 3 hours before he eventually settled on a bud:



I checked him again this morning and was pleased to see he was eating in the centre of the same bud so here is No. 2 at 3 days old:



I have not seen No 3 or No 4 since they emerged but I shall keep checking. No. 5 is yet to hatch.

**Re: Pauline**

by Paul Harfield, 03-Mar-16 12:11 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

It looks like you are having more success than me, great images 😊. Those Elm flowers are spectacularly colourful in close up.

**Re: Pauline**

by peterc, 03-Mar-16 08:46 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I am very impressed with your images of the WLH eggs and larvae. Do you think the larvae have emerged prematurely? The way they are developing makes me think they could become adult butterflies by the end of May 😊😊

ATB

Peter

**Re: Pauline**

by MrSpOck, 03-Mar-16 09:00 AM GMT

Hairstreaks only have 4 instars and can develop very quickly, I have known Brown Hairstreaks go through in May, even in outside conditions, it doesn't make much difference if there are a few of them as they can breed and lay eggs that will overwinter, so the following year will be back in sync. These were rescued eggs, so they wouldn't have gone through at all if they had been left on the ground.

I think in captive outside conditions often netted the larvae feel safer and eat a lot more often, hence they speed up.

White Letter Hairstreaks have a long flight period, from mid-June through to late August, so there is hatching over all over that period, so it seems to be the larvae hatch over 3 months in the Spring. Later hatching larvae must start feeding on leaf buds.

As Elm flower buds are breaking now the eggs have to hatch in sync with those, or when the seeds drop off in a few weeks the larvae will be on the floor, so they need to have moved onto the leaves when they open.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 03-Mar-16 10:06 AM GMT

Thank you for the complement Paul. If you should happen to read this I'd be interested to know what state your local Elms are in currently? Must be a couple of weeks since you asked me to check out one of them and I was able to report that the buds were bursting.

I'm pleased you like the images Peter – it is lovely to hear from you. The Elms at Cosham have been in bud for several weeks now and the leaves are starting to unfurl. Indeed I am finding it a struggle to obtain branches in flower as the flowers seem to be dying back and in desperation I am bringing back branches with leaves. I believe that one of Paul's eggs (from the same venue) hatched a couple of days after my first one – and I believe he kept his in the fridge. Having made this mistake before I am keen to try to get the timing right and I can only stress that I am doing my best with some guidance. Let us hope it all ends well, eh? I appreciate your input.

Thank you too Martin – I have emailed you.

It is good to think about these things and question oneself. It has caused me to remember that my first WLH sighting at Cosham in 2014 was on the 14th June and again on 15th June. I didn't manage to get a photo until 18th June and if my memory serves me right this went down on the record as the earliest sighting in the country so perhaps Cosham is a particularly early site? Last year I did not get to visit until later in June (about 24th I think) and they were already on the wing.

**Re: Pauline**

by Paul Harfield, 03-Mar-16 11:22 PM GMT

**Pauline wrote:**

Thank you for the complement Paul. If you should happen to read this I'd be interested to know what state your local Elms are in currently? Must be a couple of weeks since you asked me to check out one of them and I was able to report that the buds were bursting.

Hi Pauline

As you know I am actively seeking out prospective Elms locally for White Letter Hairstreak. The flowering Elms I have found locally are a mixed bunch at the moment and range from completely covered in open flowers to no open flower buds at all. Unfortunately I have found Elm to be a difficult tree to accurately identify at species level. There are 2 Elms locally (which look to be the same species) that from past experience are always completely covered in seed from top to bottom, at the moment neither of these has any open flower buds. One is in pretty much full sun and the other is much more shaded. A newly found Elm (which looks ideal for White Letter Hairstreak) which is a different Elm to the previous 2, currently looks like it is at the height of flowering and could have finished in a couple of weeks! Another newly found Elm which I examined last Sunday is different species again and looks to be well covered in flowers, it is partly in sun and partly shaded but is very difficult to access. The more familiar Hedgerow Elm where it occurs seems to be only just starting to flower. So it seems that timing varies greatly between different species and location, plenty of scope for study here I think.

**Pauline wrote:**

I'm pleased you like the images Peter – it is lovely to hear from you. The Elms at Cosham have been in bud for several weeks now and the leaves are starting to unfurl. Indeed I am finding it a struggle to obtain branches in flower as the flowers seem to be dying back and in desperation I am bringing back branches with leaves. I believe that one of Paul's eggs (from the same venue) hatched a couple of days after my first one – and I believe he kept his in the fridge. Having made this mistake before I

am keen to try to get the timing right and I can only stress that I am doing my best with some guidance. Let us hope it all ends well, eh? I appreciate your input.

Yes you are quite correct Pauline. Of the four eggs I have all were initially kept in the fridge, one hatched on the 26th Feb in the fridge! They are all now outside unprotected, but the three remaining eggs are unhatched. Interestingly the Elm twig that my larva is on (it put in an appearance late last night) has been in water for 3 weeks and is still viable as food.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 04-Mar-16 06:02 PM GMT

Thank you Paul for that comprehensive assessment. As you say it is not really conclusive and how far the trees are advanced probably depends on many factors, even in the same locality. Most of my branches are not lasting too long and I am wondering if it is because most of them are in Oasis (foam) as opposed to water as I am now afraid I will drown the little cats as 2 of them have taken to wandering. The branches that are lasting are now developing green seed pods (is that the right term? 😊). Today I spent some time checking these branches as I have not seen No 3 or No 4 since they hatched. I am pleased to be able to report that I located all 4 cats. No 2 and No 4 did not seem to want to pose for the camera but I managed to get a few shots of No 3 – the first since he hatched. He is now 5 days old but still extremely tiny and very well camouflaged – in fact he looks like he has been sprinkled with icing sugar:





**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 04-Mar-16 06:11 PM GMT

It is snowing quite heavily as I type this which I expect will slow the cats development down somewhat. I found No 1 who is now 11 days old exploring today and although he ended up back on his bud - still well camouflaged - I don't think it will be too long before he shows more interest in the leaves 🐱





Just wanted to show the 'context' with these last couple of shots and despite the changes in the cat try to demonstrate how well he still fits into his environment.



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-Mar-16 04:53 PM GMT

I shall try not to indulge myself on a daily basis, but then again, I find these cats so interesting it is hard to resist getting the camera out once I have actually found them, so who knows 😊 . No. 3 surprised me today as he seems a different colour from No 1 at the same age. He is very much a brownish colour rather than the pinkish tones of No 1. He is quite active so I am assuming nothing is amiss and perhaps this is just a natural variation or perhaps he is preparing for a moult. I shall have to wait and watch. At 6 days old he is still very tiny (I am sure No 1 was bigger at his age!)







No 1 continues to munch his way thru most of the day and he now seems to be eating seed pods. At least I think that's what they are? I am guessing that this is a transitional phase between the flower petals and the leaves - or perhaps he is just desperate as he hasn't had any fresh branches lately:





**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 06-Mar-16 10:59 AM GMT

Hi! pauline, No 1 looks like he's partly Brown and Green, or, it's my eyes 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 08-Mar-16 01:38 PM GMT

He is now Goldie, but he didn't start off that way. He was quite small to begin with and more of a pinkish/brown colour. Here is No 1 at 4 days old:



I have been quite concerned about all 4 cats over the last few days as they have all been very inactive and not eating. Although No 1 hatched 5 days earlier than No 2, the size discrepancy is quite marked, although they have been treated largely the same. No 3 and No 4 do not appear to be thriving as I would expect and last night I was convinced they were getting smaller, leading me to think that they were about to shrivel up and die 😞. There are no buds left at Cosham (the flowers are all dying off now) so I had to find a source elsewhere – just to prove to myself that I wasn't starving them. Whilst scrutinising their buds I found a caterpillar crawling all over them. It was very fast and gave the appearance of sliding through the foliage rather than crawling but kept returning to the cats. If anyone can identify it I would be very interested:



This is No 2 at 10 days old:





By comparison, this is No 1 today who has now thankfully started to eat again:



No 3 and No 4 have been like this for a couple of days. Their flowers are as good as dead but I can't transfer them to the fresh food supply until they start to move:



I find it strange that they are clearly developing at such different rates despite their similar environment.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 08-Mar-16 02:49 PM GMT

Strange isn't it Pauline, also very interesting, I hope they continue on Okay, keep us posted.

I saw my first Butterfly Yesterday, I say first, I tried to take the photo of two before I finally managed the one a Small Tart, mind you it could have been the same one coming back. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by MrSpOck, 08-Mar-16 03:04 PM GMT

#### Goldie M wrote:

Strange isn't it Pauline, also very interesting, I hope they continue on Okay, keep us posted.

I saw my first Butterfly Yesterday, I say first, I tried to take the photo of two before I finally managed the one a Small Tart, mind you it could have been the same one coming back. Goldie 😊

That's an interesting species a Small Tart, I know her sisters Scarce Tart and Large Tart 😊😊

### Re: Pauline

by Matsukaze, 08-Mar-16 08:15 PM GMT

Excellent baby WLH! I reared the caterpillar last year but not from this early stage – I had not appreciated that the first-instar caterpillar is brown-grey, probably to camouflage it against the elm twigs I would imagine. This butterfly is a true master of disguise in all its stages and the caterpillars mimic the appropriate parts of the plant so well.

The other larva you found on the elm could well be the scarce Dusky-lemon Sallow, or its commoner relative the Brick (which in my limited experience on a different foodplant looks a little different to yours at this point; they change colour as they get older and I believe both end up looking like the Brick larva photographed below). Definitely worth rearing through – if the former your county moth recorder would be most interested. I reared Brick moths from larvae on fallen willow catkins last year, and the larvae are very enjoyable, looking like tiny adders, and to an extent behaving like them too, moving in quite a serpentine way around the catkins.

Moths in this family have a reputation for eating other caterpillars, so it is probably worth rearing it separately to your hairstreak larvae.



### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 08-Mar-16 11:26 PM GMT

Interesting stuff Pauline – looking forward to the 'end results' 😊  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 09-Mar-16 10:17 AM GMT

Hope you get the cats separated in time Pauline Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-Mar-16 08:49 AM GMT

Thank you for your comments Goldie. As you already know I did separate the 'intruder' immediately but seem to have 'lost' him which is a real shame given Matsukaze's comments. Well done, spotting a 'Tart' – not a butterfly I have ever come across 😊😊 Their range must be restricted to the North 😊

Seems like I'm the only one who hasn't seen any 'Tarts' Martin 😊

Thank you Wurzel – I'm fascinated and hope the 'end results' are all I could have hoped for.

Great to hear from you Matsukaze and thank you for your interesting and informative post. Your description of 'serpentine' is spot on. I was going to describe it as 'snake-like' but thought that would sound daft. However, it really seemed to slither rapidly around and in and out of the bud in a way I have not seen before, poking its head through the petals. It was so attracted to the tiny cats that I immediately put it on a different Elm branch outside – foolishly without any protection – and now I can't find it again 😊. Having looked up the Dusky-lemon Sallow and the Brick there seem to be subtle differences between the two and it was definitely more like the Dusky-lemon Sallow. I shall keep looking. I was interested to read that you had reared WLH and again you are spot on when you comment that it is 'a true master of disguise in all its stages'. This caterpillar is almost chameleon-like and

seems to be able to blend in impeccably with any part of the plant. I was thrilled to be able to see several emerge from the egg – photos on previous page. Thank you again for your comments Matsukaze.

Of my 4 WLH cats, 3 are what I would consider to be probably 'normal' size, ie. they are still really tiny. However, the one which emerged about 5 days before the others is massive – about 10 – 12 times larger – and spends all of the time eating. He was very active yesterday so I don't think he has undergone another skin change but overnight the brown colouration seems to have completely disappeared (although this seemed to be gradually fading). He is very active again today but I am wondering if he could have shed his skin overnight? I shall try to post photos later.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-Mar-16 10:29 AM GMT

Looking at my own photos it seems that the head of No 1 is very small in comparison to his body size so I am assuming that a skin change is imminent. Peter's concerns at the rate of development of this cat were clearly valid but I am at a loss to understand why he is developing so fast relative to the other 3 and how I can (safely) slow this down. Here he is this morning:



.... and this is No 2 (No 3 and No 4 are also this diminutive size):



### Re: Pauline

by NickMorgan, 10-Mar-16 02:07 PM GMT

I have really enjoyed catching up with your diary and seeing your caterpillars. It is all really interesting. I haven't had any caterpillars to keep me occupied over the winter. Sadly nothing seemed to lay any eggs in my garden last year. Still, shouldn't be too long before I see my first butterflies!

### Re: Pauline

by Jamie Burston, 10-Mar-16 05:22 PM GMT

This particular caterpillar might be more advanced for a few possible reason, these are my own thoughts – Mustard-oil glycosides dictates Small Whites and Large Whites eating behaviour, which is present in the brassica family, as a type of stimuli it naturally produces the biting responses associated with eating, aiding survival rates, focusing on the plants which contain the appropriate nutrients to aid caterpillar development. This might be the same with Elms and the White-letter Hairstreak, hard to know without the scientific evidence of what the leaves contain. It might be a possibility that the seed pods contain more nutrients than the flowers, if it's eating on this it could be the reason it's developing at a faster rate. The green colouration makes sense for when feeding on the seed pods, as others have expressed they have superb camouflage and change with ease to suit their surroundings. Other than this it could simply be that this individual is going to emerge as an adult before others, their emergence has to be staggered to produce sighting from late June to early August. It will be interesting to see if this one will be a male, females appear to emerge later. Everything I've written are just personal theories. P.S. I've been following your posts on their development very closely, superb documentation and photos, your doing a fab job! Thanks, Jamie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 10-Mar-16 05:56 PM GMT

Pauline, I know why your cat is so big, he's been eating the Tarts 😊😊 Sorry, couldn't help that! 😊 Seriously now 😊 Can't wait to see the next posts, Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 11-Mar-16 03:15 PM GMT

Hi Nick, glad you're enjoying my diary. I am finding the WLH rearing a great learning experience with all the information that is being provided via both my diary and emails. Like you I have seen no butterflies yet, but hey, it won't be long now 😊. Thank you for your comment.

Good to hear from you Jamie. That theory is extremely interesting and even if it doesn't relate to WLH I have learned something new 😊. There are so many factors to consider, aren't there? This cat continues to grow on a daily basis and if he continues to develop like this he'll be a butterfly by the end of the month! 😊 I have been taking photos almost daily apart from the few days he went missing which was around Day 4 and, other than this, I am struggling to identify those times when he went through a skin change as he always seems active, even during the night! Looking at him today I could believe he is now in his final instar? (he is 19 days old today). However, he is still showing no interest in leaves, his preference definitely being seed pods:



By comparison, here is No 4 who is now 12 days old and has been kept in the same conditions:



Thank you Goldie. Hope these are OK 😊😊

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 11-Mar-16 06:11 PM GMT

He's certainly got much larger Pauline and what a lovely colour of Green, did you look again for the Moth cat? Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Jamie Burston, 11-Mar-16 07:58 PM GMT

Great, that is pleasing to hear. I would agree, many factors could be aiding it's speed up development. The changes from one day to the next are amazing, just comparing images to the previous post you can see that the markings have developed and are alot more prominent. What you suggest might be a possibility, I do think looking at the caterpillar that it does have some room to still grow, based on looking at final instars like Pete's photos, this suggest a smaller head to body ratio, I don't think this fully applies to this individual yet. Other than this it looks like it still has alot of colouring up to do. I can believe the trouble of keeping track of the instars. Final instars, from looking at photos look a much darker green then turn a dark brown colour leading into pupation. It will be interesting to see how things play out, I wish you all the best.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Mar-16 07:40 PM GMT

You are quite correct Jamie. It is apparent now that he was in his 3rd instar as the last couple of days he has been motionless, preparing to moult. The others are still tiny and I am even wondering if it could be a genetic abnormality. Is it possible that occurrences such as these happen naturally in the wild but go unnoticed as they are so rare and 'out of time' so to speak. I would naturally blame myself except for the fact that the others seem to be developing naturally? I am at a loss to understand. Anyway, a couple of recent shots as he prepares to shed his skin and the camouflage as usual is amazing:



There is a lot going on here and for various reasons I have not yet managed any shots of my Glanvilles – until today! I am really enjoying watching these cats develop and big thanks must go to Martin for allowing me the opportunity. I only managed a couple of quick shots so just for the record:



**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 14-Mar-16 03:51 PM GMT

I have searched Goldie but I could not find him 😞 . However, I did find another one which is slightly different from the other one in appearance and also moves in a slightly different way. I shall try to rear him thru to see what it is:



This is the 3rd day that No 1 has been motionless but this morning I discovered him eating his shed skin. I was slightly disappointed not to have seen the skin being shed but I have other chances for that. I tried to take shots from various angles but it was a bit tricky as it seemed like most of the skin was underneath him and wedged by a branch:



No 4 is just over 2 weeks old now:



No 2 is a day older than No 4:



No 3 was in an awkward position this morning making photos impossible but he is identical to No 4.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 14-Mar-16 03:58 PM GMT

I could not resist taking a few more shots as he began to do a few twirls, showing off his new outfit, before settling down to eat his seed pod:





I had forgotten how difficult it is to get a shot of green on green that is in focus 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Jamie Burston, 14-Mar-16 07:59 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, that's a fascinating possibility in regards to genetic abnormality. I think your doing an amazing job, especially when you consider that without your intervention these would have all failed. Incredible sequences of the caterpillar eating the moult and the movement around the seedpod. Even now looking at your photos (which are stunning!) I think the caterpillar is still not close to maturity. It's great to see a few members rearing this species with success, hard to find the time to follow everyone. Including myself, I haven't mentioned it but I'm also following the development of White-letter Hairstreak, both as eggs which haven't hatched yet, being in Brighton and the chilling winds off the sea it makes sense that mine are later to emerge. I'll post something of them once (if) they hatch. All the best, Jamie

:

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Mar-16 06:26 PM GMT

Thank you for your very kind words Jamie. I am astonished how much No 1 is eating and the rate at which he is growing on a daily basis. However, he is still ignoring leaves but demolishing whole flowers leaving just the brown outer bits. At this rate he will emerge a butterfly with a 10" wing span!!! Unfortunately, when collecting some fresh branches I inadvertently brought back another cat. Interestingly, he is only slightly smaller than the other 3 I have - once I manage to get a shot of him I shall post a comparison.

It is been a cold, grey day here in Liphook but I took a quick look around the 'immatures' I have here. I have not checked my (86) Large White pupa for ages. Most of them looked like this:



but one of them was much darker (the photo has been lightened quite a bit as it is a very dark brown). I thought perhaps it had died but it seems to be alive and I didn't think they darkened prior to emergence:



On April 1st last year Guy prompted me to check my White Admirals and sure enough they were out and about. Because of other priorities here I haven't checked them either this year. I had expected that with the violent storms, the persistent rain and gales they would have perished. It was just a quick look but this one at least seems to have made it through the worst of the weather:



### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 15-Mar-16 10:48 PM GMT

I hope you don't have too many enthusiastic vegetable gardeners around you, or you'll be in trouble when you release all those Large Whites 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 16-Mar-16 05:42 PM GMT

Great photos Pauline I don't know how you keep up with all the cats, I'm sure I'd for get which was which inspite of colour etc. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-Mar-16 08:41 PM GMT

Never thought about that Mike! Mind, it'll make a change from them complaining about my cockerel 😊😊

Yes, Goldie, plenty to keep me occupied here 😊 Thank you for your kind comment.

I think this Green Giant has been eating a certain brand of vegetables because I can think of no other reason for his size. I have offered him branches with leaves but he climbs over the leaves, his preference being for the flowers and buds which he is now demolishing, leaving the twigs bare 😊



### Re: Pauline

by David M, 17-Mar-16 08:45 PM GMT

That cat has certainly got fat over the past few days, Pauline. Looking forward to seeing how they all develop.

### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 17-Mar-16 10:37 PM GMT

He looks like a monster cat in your pics Pauline!

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 18-Mar-16 11:36 AM GMT

Can't wait Pauline to see that cat has a Butterfly 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-Mar-16 01:18 PM GMT

David, you're absolutely right and I share your anticipation 🙄

Hi Buggy, I measured this cat last night and he was just over 2cm – that was quite stretched out mind. I tried to get a shot next to a tape measure but he just hunched up!

Me too Goldie! I am spending a fair bit of time on the cats just now as the weather here is abysmal and although I have been out and about a bit, it has been really cold and I haven't seen one butterfly yet. So different to last year 😞. I have just been looking thru' last years' shots and at this exact moment to the day and hour, having already seen several species, I was taking this shot (which is one of my favourites simply because I hadn't seen that before and it was a first for me):



### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 19-Mar-16 01:56 PM GMT

Lovely shot Pauline, It's so unusual for you in the South not to have seen many, if any, Butterflies yet. That's usually a trite for the North 😞 I can only hope that with them being so late down there I might just get to see some thing when I come down there in June 😊

If it's any consolation we're back in the cold weather here, the fore cast doesn't look good for us over Easter either, where has Spring gone. 😞

I've just got my permits for Gait Barrow and Roudsea Wood and Mosses Nature Reserve. The last two I've never been to before but they seem to have Silver Washed Frits there as well as Large Heath which is interesting, they're in Cumbria too which makes it much easier for me to get to.

Hope the weather improves for you soon Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-Mar-16 05:21 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie. It really does seem a lot colder than previous recent years – and grey too. Wouldn't be so bad if it was cold and bright. On 15 April last year I was taking photos of Dukes and that's not too far away now so it will be interesting to see how the season pans out this year. In the meantime I have managed to get some shots of my little stow-a-way – the one I call No 6 who was brought in accidentally recently on fresh branches:





I would have liked to get an up to date shot of No 4 (my smallest) by way of comparison, but the best I could do today was a shot of No 2 (my second largest):



**Re: Pauline**

by Padfield, 19-Mar-16 09:33 PM GMT

Absolutely fantastic shots, Pauline. Our elms are nowhere near bursting yet. We have butterflies on the wing but dormant caterpillars – you have dormant butterflies but caterpillars happily munching away. The seasons work very differently in the UK from central Europe!

Guy

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 19-Mar-16 09:45 PM GMT

This entire reportage is simply wonderful, Pauline. It has already become a daily 'must see' for me here in Swansea. These images are worthy of a far wider audience.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pete Eeles, 19-Mar-16 09:48 PM GMT

**Padfield wrote:**

Absolutely fantastic shots, Pauline. Our elms are nowhere near bursting yet. We have butterflies on the wing but dormant caterpillars – you have dormant butterflies but caterpillars happily munching away. The seasons work very differently in the UK from central Europe!

Guy

I have around 15 elms near me, and only 2 have burst into life thus far, although the flower buds are still fairly compact; I think the south coast must

have a very different climate!

Cheers,

- Pete

### Re: Pauline

by MrSp0ck, 19-Mar-16 11:55 PM GMT

Hopefully many people are learning about the early stages from your posts, its good to pass on the lifestages information as its useful for the future conservation of butterflies as we understand more about their needs.

The Glanvilles should be getting near a skin change, mine have now spun a big web over the plantain and hide inside it at night.

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 20-Mar-16 11:17 AM GMT

Fascinating stuff in your recent reports Pauline and accompanied by some superb photos, I look forward to following their further development.

All the best,

Neil.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Mar-16 01:30 PM GMT

Thank you Guy. I very much appreciate the compliment. D'you know, when I started this diary I never dreamed I would get comments like this but I have had a lot of help from other members - and the subject matter is inspiring 😊

What a lovely thing to say - thank you so much David. I am pleased that so many folk seem interested in these WLH as I am finding the cats fascinating (as you can probably tell 😊).

Wish I had 15 Elms near here Pete! Well, One would do as I have a one hour round trip for fresh branches. You probably noticed my shot of the Elm at Cosham on 20 February which was already in full flower 🤪

That is a really good point Martin. I am certainly learning both from the WLH and the Glanvilles and if anyone else is too then that is a bonus 😊

Thank you too Neil. I just can't resist posting more shots of them and yesterday I managed at last to get shots of all 4 (tho' No. 6 has disappeared again 😞)





**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 21-Mar-16 09:54 PM GMT

More lovely shots there. I think their cute 'fuzzy slug' look belies their ravenous appetites!

**Re: Pauline**

by Pete Eeles, 21-Mar-16 10:22 PM GMT

I wonder why the largest larva prefers to feed on the remaining flower buds, rather than the leaves, with which it is perfectly camouflaged. I guess that the leaves don't have the nutrients required, given that they are pretty under-developed, while the larva is pretty over-developed! One can only assume that this asynchronicity doesn't happen in the wild given the "camouflage" exhibited.

There's a long-held belief that WLH larvae require flowering elms to make it through, and your experiences would seem to substantiate this, with even a late-instar larva preferring flowers to leaves. However, I know that WLHs have been reared in captivity on nothing but leaves which would seem to contradict this!

Cheers,

- Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Matsukaze, 22-Mar-16 12:16 AM GMT

I was wondering if the larva might be growing so fast because the flowers and seeds are far more nutritious than the leaves, and the larger it gets, the more it is capable of eating. All other things being equal, trying to go through the larval stage as fast as possible makes sense, as there is less time that the larva can be predated, but this one has got ahead of the foodplant and it would not be camouflaged in the wild, and probably get eaten.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-Mar-16 04:49 PM GMT

Thank you Buggy. It is true that they are now eating huge amounts. Today I knew I would need some fresh branches so decided to check out an Elm in Petersfield that Paul had 'found' for me. Sadly, it was way behind the trees at Cosham and not yet suitable (that's if I was at the right tree Paul 😊 but your directions were clear). I continued on my way to Cosham but on arrival I was dismayed to find the gate permanently locked and a sign indicating that it was to stay that way. Gaps in the hedges had been blocked up - not that I would have thought about squeezing thru 😊! There were other Elms in the vicinity but branches were way out of my reach. There was nothing else for it but to go to reception and after a couple of phone calls and alerting the ground staff I was given permission to cut off some small twigs. The buds there are now well past their best and are dropping off although there were plenty of leaves as these have been unfurling for a couple of weeks now. At least I am assuming these are Elm leaves as they are what I have been offering the cats? I have struggled in the past with Blackthorn and Hawthorn so I'm going to feel pretty stupid if they are not but perhaps that's why they are ignoring them.



It will be interesting to see if the other cats follow the eating habits of No. 1 Pete. I have been offering leaves since the cat turned green (3rd instar) as you advised me, but the leaves have been repeatedly ignored despite my attempts to coax him onto it. His preference seemed to be the green seed pods as they developed (shown in earlier shots) which also provide good camouflage, but before they have had time to develop he has been decimating the buds. It has been suggested to me that cats have a hierarchical preference when it comes to various food sources and whilst it is apparently easy to get them to eat something they prefer, it is a great deal more difficult to get them to eat a food source lower down the hierarchy. I wonder if it is a case of the cats having a natural preference for the (possibly) more nutritious parts of the tree ie. the buds, and only resorting to the leaves because that is all that is available by that stage - especially given today's experience trying to find buds which were anything other than brown.

Your logic makes perfect sense Matsukaze. I would think it very feasible that the buds and seeds are the most nutritious parts of the plant and it seems that in this case at least, camouflage is marginally less important than the need to progress development. They are eating me out of house and home 😊 Thank you for your thoughts and views.

On the subject of development, No 1 is progressing in leaps and bounds and (sadly) not too far away from pupation - Peter was absolutely right! I have taken lots of shots over the last couple of days as he is changing rapidly now. I still find it interesting how the time of day, light conditions, etc can change appearances - he can appear a solid olive colour but sometimes adorned with pink, beige and a variety of other colours. Photos taken over the last couple of days:









**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 22-Mar-16 06:39 PM GMT

.... and a few more from today:







Tonight No. 1 is well and truly into the pupation process as I see he has now firmly attached himself onto the branch. A couple of days ago he buried himself into the oasis – which is what his branches are in – and I wondered whether to 'dig' him out or whether to leave him as I know some of the other Hairstreaks pupate in the earth/leaf litter. I managed to get him out eventually otherwise I would not have been able to water the oasis to keep the branches hydrated. I provided him with some soil and leaf litter but he has chosen this position:





### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Mar-16 05:09 PM GMT

I have been watching the development of my Glanvilles with interest but also with some frustration. They are very active and adventurous, spending quite a bit of time on the inside of the mesh. As a result I have been somewhat reluctant to remove the mesh for photos in case of loss or escape, as they inevitably drop off when disturbed. However, I took a chance today as I recognised that they are growing, shedding their skin, spinning webs and doing all those Glanville things – and I am not getting any shots. They are not an easy cat to photograph because of their colour and because they are so active but as it is over a month now since they came out of hibernation I decided to give it another try.





I believe the 2 above have already shed their skin whereas the little one below has not:



Despite all the years I have lived close to Wrecchlesham and all the visits I have made I never did look for the immature stages so I am aiming to record their environment with some of these images to provide a bit of context. This is one of the webs which is quite in the centre of the plant:





These individuals chose to shed their skins on the mesh:



... and doing what they do best:



**Re: Pauline**

by Matsukaze, 23-Mar-16 07:37 PM GMT

Is the pupating WLH going to be safe from being eaten by the other WLH larvae? I know this can happen with some moth species, but am not sure if it occurs with hairstreak larvae as well.

**Re: Pauline**

by MrSp0ck, 23-Mar-16 07:48 PM GMT

**Matsukaze wrote:**

Is the pupating WLH going to be safe from being eaten by the other WLH larvae? I know this can happen with some moth species, but am not sure if it occurs with hairstreak larvae as well.

Green Hairstreak and White-Letter Hairstreaks will readily eat other larvae after the 1st instar, and pupae are an easy target as they cant escape. Im not sure if the other 3 UK species of Hairstreak will eat other larvae, but i would expect they do too

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 23-Mar-16 11:20 PM GMT

It's great to see the Glanvilles - they're funny looking Cats 😊 Just wondering did they come from HB?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 24-Mar-16 06:58 AM GMT

Thank you Matsukaze and Martin for sharing this and giving me the benefit of your experience. As a result of your comments I have separated out the pupa and I am watching the other larva carefully. They did used to be on separate branches but as they are getting larger they have become more mobile. Better to be safe than sorry.

Hi Wurzel. Martin was aware of my growing interest in rearing and very kindly has allowed me to be guardian of a small number of cats from the webs he has been monitoring. They are fascinating and very different from the Hairstreaks but incredibly difficult to photograph.

### Re: Pauline

by MrSpOck, 24-Mar-16 09:58 AM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

It's great to see the Glanvilles - they're funny looking Cats 😊 Just wondering did they come from HB?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

The 18 or so Glanville larvae were handed over to Pauline at AES last October, to look after overwinter, So the method we use for Fritillary and Dingy Skipper larvae hibernation is more widely known, as we have well over 90% survival of overwintering larvae.

The larvae originate from the HB stock, where since the hard winter of 2012/2013 which ended most Glanville colonies on the mainland, and Autumn 2013 only 13 larval webs were found on IOW, a small number of larvae have been hibernated overwinter using our above method, and returned to HB in the spring.

There was well over 99% survival through the winter, the [3] losses were from wandering escapee larvae after they woke up and tried to eat Passionflowers before they were seen. The photo in my diary shows about 7 webs.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-Mar-16 06:48 PM GMT

A much more comprehensive explanation Martin - clearly some successful strategies going on over there 😊

I have to return to the WLH as I find the pupal stages (of all butterflies) incredible. There have been noticeable changes in this pupa over the last 3 days so the following shots record the changes from 23rd March until a couple of hours ago 😊 :







**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 26-Mar-16 12:39 PM GMT

Fascinating stuff Pauline 😊 I'm just catching up again on postings 😊 Can't wait to see the BF's in their full glory. 😊

I've been over to Hall-Lee-Brook a couple of times since I posted the Comma and the Small Tort, Nothing! which I can't understand because on the days that I went there the weather was lovely 😊 (We didn't see one Butterfly.) I can only think they've gone to the near by gardens, very disappointing. 😞 I just hope that all the grass cutting they did last year hasn't affected them. 😞

Your really into the different stages now with the cats Pauline, I'm learning a lot from your posts and shots and find it very interesting. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Mar-16 02:20 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie - I'm finding it all pretty fascinating myself! On checking the cats this morning I was delighted to see No. 2 eating leaves!!!! I was just soooo pleased, mainly because any decent buds are becoming incredibly hard to find. As the day progressed, No's 3 & 4 also decided they would try the leaves 😊. So, only have to find buds for No. 6 now. The following shots show their development starting with No. 2:





... and this is No. 3:





... and last but not least, No. 4:



### Re: Pauline

by trevor, 26-Mar-16 02:39 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

You are certainly filling some gaps in our knowledge of the early life stages. All your larvae look so healthy. You deserve some stunning images of the adults when they emerge !.

Keep up the good work,  
Trevor.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Mar-16 05:18 PM GMT

You are very kind Trevor 😊 . I also hope you are correct 😊 As you can no doubt tell I am a little bit obsessed with these cats 😊😊 . Their camouflage is amazing and their behaviour equally so. I had expected No. 2 to start pupating today given when he hatched in comparison to No. 1. However, rather than selecting a nice leaf or bud to attach himself to he is mimicking the behaviour of No. 1 by pretending he is a different sort of Hairstreak and trying to pupate on the ground, in a hole or crevice – usually somewhere really inconvenient – so I am trying (so far without much success) to deter him. The weather here today has been shocking with hailstones, heavy rain and gales so these shots were all taken indoors in poor light. However, I hope they give an idea of how well camouflaged these cats can be:







.... and last but not least, No 6 eating his skin after a recent moult. I have so far failed to see any of them actually shed the skin but there is still time:



### Re: Pauline

by Matsukaze, 27-Mar-16 07:14 PM GMT

Lovely photos – you could try coming up to Somerset to get your elm flowers, as here on the Mendips the elm is only just coming into flower.

If you want to grow your own wych elm, there is a guide here <http://treegrowing.tcv.org.uk/grow/tree-recipes/wychelm> which I have been using successfully; I am hoping to start planting out some of the trees in the next couple of weeks.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Mar-16 05:16 PM GMT

Thank you for the compliment Matsukaze. I have only been to Somerset once, a few years ago, but I recall pretty villages and lovely countryside. It would be good to return. I have looked at that link and I'm very tempted to give it a go. Let me know how you get on with your trees.

I think I am suffering with a mild case of OCD. I can't get enough of these cats and I'm very aware that before too much longer it will all be over, so I have to make the most of it. That said, a few more shots, this time of No. 6 as his camouflage is incredible:



In the meantime, No. 3 (below) is turning more of an olive green, and No 2 is persisting in his attempts to pupate in inappropriate places. I have provided him with some damp compost with Elm branches in it and he has promptly buried himself in it – before I could get any sort of decent photo – very much following the trend of No.1.



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 29-Mar-16 04:08 PM GMT

I am really interested in the various transitions that take place during the life cycle, so if I am able to see and record these as I rear a particular species it is a real bonus. The emergence of the butterfly is really magical and the novelty has not yet worn off so having reared the caterpillar I confess that I do spend some time trying to witness this particular event (and get a few shots 😊). I am anticipating a few difficulties trying to capture any WLH emergence on camera as both No. 2 and No. 3 have decided to pupate under the soil 😞 despite my efforts to encourage them to pupate somewhere more accessible. I have looked in various books including Frohawk and Margaret Brooks and they all state that WLH pupate on leaves and buds (but then they also state that WLH have no cannibalistic propensities and I have heard differently from folk on this website!). Anyway, this is No. 3, successfully thwarting my efforts to persuade him to pupate on a branch. I found him this morning 'buried' in the oasis – similar to No's 1& 2:

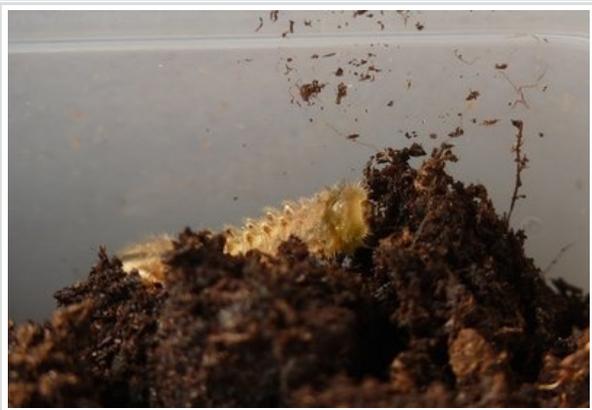


We went through several iterations of me coaxing him onto branch and and him taking some time to humour me, before returning to the compost I had supplied:





It was very interesting watching him dig a hole and move the soil around, a process also repeated several times, as though he was just searching for the right place, before he disappeared completely:



So now I only have No's 4 and 6 available for viewing – here is No 4 looking great as usual. I am going to do my utmost to ensure that he pupates above ground:



### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 29-Mar-16 07:11 PM GMT

Some cracking close up work Pauline 😊 Good luck keeping the little blighters above ground!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 29-Mar-16 11:33 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Great views of the development of these larvae 😊.

At least 2 of mine have survived the stormy weather of Sunday night. It seems quite incredible that mine are still only a couple of millimetres long, about the size of your No1 at the beginning of March, second instar I would say. If development of my larvae continues at the same rate they will be pupating a month after yours 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-Mar-16 12:36 PM GMT

Thank you Wurzel - I think I might have to get a bit resourceful cos they can be quite determined and persistent when they want to do something 😊

Thank you too Paul. I hope your 3rd cat is still around somewhere and that they make it through. I am not surprised they are still very tiny as I don't imagine they have eaten much given the recent weather. However, they are probably much more in line with the wild cats that manage to survive. It will be interesting to make comparisons with the cats Jamie is hoping to monitor as they are 'totally' wild.

Today I decided to transfer my Glanville cats to a fresh plant. The original plant was a bit past its best and it would also give me an opportunity to have a good look at the cats and check their numbers. I had originally counted 17 Glanvilles but I have been reluctant to remove the mesh to verify the number as they are real escape artists. However, over the past week or so I have never been able to count more than about a dozen, mostly on the inside of the mesh. The plant has a dense middle where the cats had made a web and any cats in this area would not be visible so I was not initially unduly concerned. However, as the days went by I became increasingly uneasy as I was only able to count about 8 cats so it was high time to find out what was going on. I should by now have learned to trust my gut instinct. When I fear there may be a problem, (and I do try to monitor them closely but without too much disturbance) there almost always is 😊. The first thing I noticed was what appeared to be shed skins lying on the soil but I am now fairly convinced that these are dead cats:



I removed 9 active cats and placed them in a tub prior to carefully dissecting the plant leaf by leaf. There were no more cats!! 😊 I then started on the soil. As I carefully sifted through the top layer a couple of insects scurried out and I was able to trap one. I have taken a few shots which are not very good as it continued to move very quickly but I hope they are clear enough to enable someone to identify it and confirm it is the culprit.



### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 30-Mar-16 03:42 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, your Cats are doing what comes naturally to them by the sounds of things (burying themselves in compost 😊 you may have a problem there trying to get them not too. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Apr-16 12:55 PM GMT

Thing is Goldie, everything I've read indicates that these cats pupate on buds and leaves, but apart from No. 1 (who initially tried to pupate in the oasis) it looks like all the others want to pupate in soil/leaf litter so it is clearly not a one off. Anyway, you were absolutely right about No. 4 as I have spent most of the morning trying to persuade him to pupate somewhere on a twig - with absolutely no success 😊 !!! He eventually wore me down and I gave in. I tried to tempt him by offering different thickness of branches at different angles, in different states of development (including my potted Elm which

is now in leaf), in different temperatures and he rejected them all 😞 I tried everything I could think of for some hours but it was not what he wanted. As soon as I provided some leaf litter he settled down to pupate. Here are some shots from my futile attempts over the last 2 days:







It is a while since I posted shots of No 6 so an update on his development below starting with yesterday:





... and today:





Thankfully, my White Admiral cat survived storm Katie although he is not as active as my WA cat was at this time last year:



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Apr-16 03:37 PM GMT

I've been out a bit - Bentley Wood, Chiddingfold Forest, Oxenbourne and a few other places and so far I've seen 2 Brimstone!!! Can't remember such a poor start to my season so it was something of a relief to find 36 moths in the trap last night - at last, something with wings! 😊 I didn't have time to photograph and ID all of them so just picked out the ones I liked best. Hopeless at ID's so I hope someone can confirm or otherwise:



Oak Beauty



Early Grey



Common Quaker



Twin-spotted Quaker



Hebrew Character



Hebrew Character



Yellow Horned (like these ones 😊)



Yellow Horned



Common Quaker? (so much colour variation!)



Hebrew Character



Clouded Drab (amazing camouflage)



Clouded Drab





Clouded Drab



Don't Know



Clouded Drab



Can't remember!

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Apr-16 02:07 PM GMT

It has been suggested to me that the creatures I found in the pot with my Glanvilles might have been larva of Leather Jackets. I had always thought these were quite large (aren't these what Badgers dig up lawns for?) but looking at photos on the internet I found some that were remarkably similar to the ones I removed. Since then I have been a little bit paranoid about the well-being of my cats counting them at least hourly 😊😊. Today I can report that there are still 9 but there are a few that definitely don't seem to be thriving and they are causing me some concern. I have been advised that compost (even organic compost) has a systemic insecticide added to it (in line with EU regs!) and I wondered if anyone else has experienced problems when using it to pot plants for rearing. Some months ago, before I was aware of this, I had a conversation with a garden centre about their compost and they assured me that it would definitely not contain any pests or eggs but they did not elaborate. At the time I wondered how they could be so sure but perhaps it is because it has had this added. Anyway, a few long overdue shots of the developing Glanvilles:





This one doesn't look so good to my inexperienced eye:



.... and although this is a dreadful shot it shows the relative difference in size, despite being exposed to identical conditions:





### Re: Pauline

by MrSpOck, 03-Apr-16 02:26 PM GMT

Some of your smaller Glanvilles are still a skin change behind the biggest, I still have some tiny ones amongst mine, but the others have doubled their size in the last 3 days, and some of them are about to change again for the 7th and last instar.

Our Local amenity site has free compost, that croydon residents can take 3 bags a day, as it is safe to use I have been using it for about a year now, the quality is not as good with the odd twig in it, but it can also be mixed with other soil.

The Seed and cutting compost is also safe to use, but its the compost for bigger plants that has been treated.

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 03-Apr-16 05:07 PM GMT

Some cracking Moth shots Pauline it seems that everyone is turning to the dark side 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pete Eeles, 03-Apr-16 07:46 PM GMT

**Pauline wrote:**

I wondered if anyone else has experienced problems when using it to pot plants for rearing.

Nope – never.

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pauline**

by Neil Freeman, 03-Apr-16 08:38 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I'm a bit jealous of your moth catch, particularly the Yellow Horned 🦋 I am still waiting for a decent mothing night here, since I have had my trap it has been either clear skies and cold or when it has clouded over it has been windy and wet. Still, I haven't had a blank night yet when I have run the trap, usually a mixture of Hebrew Characters and Common Quakers with a few Clouded Drabs and a single Oak Beauty so far.

I am just a beginner at this moth identification game and am prepared to be corrected but I reckon that your third photo down is a Clouded Drab and your 'Don't Know' is a Common Quaker. Having these two in my trap recently has had looking at lots of reference photos of these and given me an appreciation of how variable they can be..

All the best,

Neil

**Re: Pauline**

by MrSpOck, 03-Apr-16 08:57 PM GMT

**Pauline wrote:**

I wondered if anyone else has experienced problems when using it to pot plants for rearing.

I have had problems in the past with various compost.

compost from various cheap shops, had been treated with Intercept, so i lost some pupating Death's Head Hawks, this was in 1997 when intercept was first used, various horticulture establishments still mix it into the compost, so plants from those need to be left outside for months. The larvae tend to live fine for a few weeks then die as it builds up as they eat leaves, eggs tend not to hatch if laid on treated plants.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 04-Apr-16 01:31 PM GMT

Thank you Martin and Pete for that information and re-assurance. I will continue to monitor the Glanvilles closely.

Cheers Wurzel – I think there is a little bit of desperation here given the weather and lack of butterflies 😊😊 but it is interesting to learn what is about at night ..... and in a few weeks time it will be almost Summer 😊😊

I appreciate those ID's Neil given that I am very much a beginner too. Those Yellow Horned are smashing aren't they but I see now I only posted profile shots, so a different angle below. I'd really like to get the trap out more often but it can sometimes be quite time consuming:



Probably the final update on the WLH until emergence is imminent. This is No. 6 over his final couple of days as a cat. I have successfully thwarted his persistent attempts to pupate in the compost, eventually managing to divert him to a branch where he now seems to be quite settled, a gorgeous olive green colour:







Meanwhile, because of my concern about the compost and the possible risk to the WLH pupating there, I have carefully extracted them, so this is the current state of No's 1, 2, 3 and 4 in that order:





### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-Apr-16 06:18 PM GMT

Given the recent loss of some of the Glanvilles I have been watching them incredibly closely. Two of the nine have been causing me some concern as they are quite tiny and the size difference between them and some of the bigger cats is quite significant. I was therefore quite shocked this morning when I saw one of the larger cats 'interacting' with the tiniest one whilst it was attempting to eat. It nudged the little cat onto its side and proceeded to climb onto it. I genuinely thought it meant the little cat some serious harm and at one point it looked as if it was trying to eat it. My first instinct was to 'rescue' it but curiosity had gotten the better of me and I wondered if this was how some of the other tiny cats had died. Instead I reached for the camera. Unfortunately all of the shots are actually taken through the mesh so they lack some clarity and sharpness but I hope they give an indication of events. If I had tried to remove the mesh it is likely that at least half a dozen cats would have dropped down and quite probably would have interrupted the behaviour I was so keen to witness.





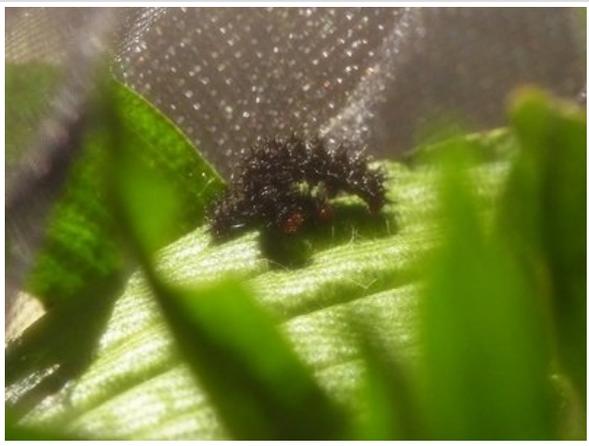
The large cat persisted in climbing around and over the little cat, spending several moments at a time with his head on the little one's back or with both heads touching, frequently nudging him. A couple of times I thought he had killed this little one which remained on its side motionless and it seemed the larger cat was about to depart. However, he never went far, always returning to circle and climb over the little one. As I watched the large cat positioned himself to the side of the little cat and stretched over him to the far side of the leaf, which he touched with his head and then moved his head back over to the near side and touched the leaf. He did this repeatedly and it eventually dawned on me that he was producing some sort of silken thread which he seemed to be using to wrap up the little cat – in the same way that a spider wraps up its prey, or similar to constructing a girdle for support during pupation. I searched for other possible reasons – it was like he was anointing the little cat in some way, or perhaps he was trying to create some sort of web to protect the little cat. Perhaps he was trying to encourage it to shed its skin! 😊







This behaviour went on for some 15 minutes after which the large cat left and the little one remained slightly 'trussed up'. All sorts of thoughts went through my head as I wasn't sure the little cat was alive and even if he was I wasn't sure whether he could move – perhaps the large cat would return later for a meal (although they have no cannibalistic tendencies, apparently). Thankfully, after a few minutes the little cat started to wriggle about and was able to free himself and continue to eat. 10 minutes after this he was sprawled out on his leaf with two of the others so I assume all is well but I have no idea what this behaviour was all about. I hope I have been able to portray it adequately and if anyone has a potential explanation I would be very interested in any theories.





### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 05-Apr-16 06:37 PM GMT

Glanvilles are gregarious and have no cannibalistic tendencies. In fact, quite the opposite; a group can raise their body temperature, collectively, more than a single individual could – and this raise in temperature helps them digest their food. As a collective, they will crawl over each other to get the best position for warming up – just as Marsh Fritillary do. At least, that's my experience. As the larvae grow, they will start to disperse.

In a given web of larvae, there will always be some stragglers, so I wouldn't be overly worried based on size. I would be more worried if you were finding larvae that were diseased.

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by MrSp0ck, 05-Apr-16 07:11 PM GMT

Here is a picture of mine taken at around 7pm, they were spread out all afternoon but have grouped for the night. I have seen larvae knock others off the web so they can take the position, one problem with rolling up and dropping off, they loose their prime spot.



## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-Apr-16 02:44 PM GMT

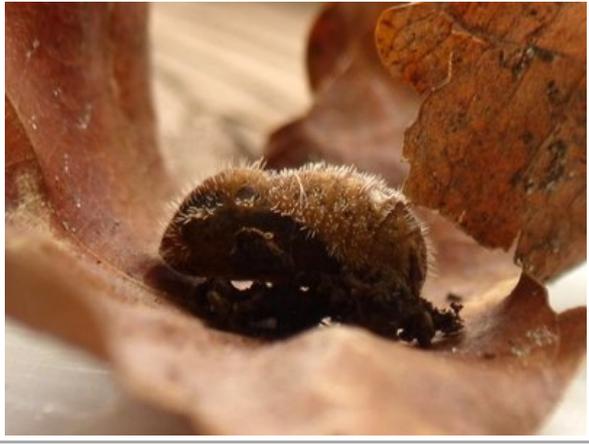
Thank you for this information Pete and for your reassurances – I do appreciate it but I still have some concerns. At the moment I am watching and waiting before I go into more detail and end up looking quite stupid 😊

Great photos Martin. It is interesting to hear about your experiences with the Glanvilles, especially the fact that you have seen them spinning over each other. However, you already know the issues I have some doubts about and I shall obviously keep you informed.

Yesterday, I decided to pay a brief visit to Noar Hill but as I arrived the heavens opened and all the parking areas were either flooded or thick of mud 😞 . I turned around and came home. Going a bit stir crazy with this weather (it is raining again) so altho' I wasn't going to post any more WLH just yet this is an update from today.



No. 1



No. 2



No. 3



No. 4



No. 4 – a different view



No. 6

### Re: Pauline

by andy brown, 07-Apr-16 06:37 PM GMT

Pauline,

Some great stuff here, analysis & pictures. Just wish I had the time, patience and inclination. Keep up the good work and look forward to seeing the reward for your efforts.

Andy

### Re: Pauline

by MrSpOck, 07-Apr-16 08:11 PM GMT

You should have 5 White-Letter Hairstreaks flying by late April, at least they will all be within a few days of each other so can create another generation. You have 2000 replies now to your diary well done.

When WLHs hatch they are in a very lovely condition, i photographed some years ago on Common Spotted Orchids, when we had to return some rescued ones to Chapel Bank Nature Reserve. The Colouration seems to fade quickly in the wild.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Apr-16 02:58 PM GMT

Cheers A. – the cheque's in the post 😊😄

Thank you too Martin – I am looking forward to seeing them newly emerged.

Today I stumbled upon this larva, which looked close to pupation, being attended to by ants which seemed to be plastering soft clay over it. Any ideas what it might be please?





**Re: Pauline**

by MrSpOck, 08-Apr-16 03:58 PM GMT

A Blue, could be Common, its not Chalkhill or Adonis.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 08-Apr-16 05:30 PM GMT

You might be spot on Martin. My initial thought was Green Hairstreak but of course they over-winter as a pupa. It is an area where Green Hairstreaks are readily seen but the same can be said of Common Blue at this venue. It was fascinating to watch as the ants (at least 6) seemed to be putting clay on the larva. A few more shots – just because I found it interesting and the camouflage as usual was fantastic 😊





Despite continual efforts I have failed miserably to get a butterfly photo to post in my diary so far this season (the worst on record for me), having seen only 2 Brimstones so far. Looking through previous photos I was surprised to see I took these (a few years ago) on the 11th April and 3rd August respectively. Hopefully it won't be too long now .....





### Re: Pauline

by Mike Robinson, 08-Apr-16 09:52 PM GMT

Hello: the weather doesn't seem to be improving down here at least but hopefully you will be able to add to your two Brimstones very soon and the poor start will be completely forgotten ...

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Apr-16 03:28 PM GMT

Hi Mike – for an hour this morning on Noar Hill the sun shone, there was only a light breeze, there were bees, beetles and birdsong; in fact, it was lovely except for the fact that I did not see one single butterfly to add to my total of 2 Brimstones – very strange! Nevertheless, I was able to re-find the Common Blue larva – I am sure Martin is correct in suggesting this ID. It had moved about 5cm and was very well disguised, only the continued ant activity giving away its location. I really wish that I understood what was going on here. In the first shot below (which I took yesterday), the ant on the left is carrying a lump of clay which it then sort of patted onto the larva. After watching again today I am really none the wiser but a few shots anyway:





I have heard of ants obtaining secretions from larva but I am confused as to where the chalky soil fits in and a search on Google has revealed nothing 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by MrSpOck, 09-Apr-16 04:15 PM GMT

One reason could be to make the larva look like it has been predated and these are cocoons of the wasp larvae, so their prized blue caterpillar is left alone by wasps and flies. Small Blue larvae are protected by ants, to keep wasps and flies away.

**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 10-Apr-16 07:47 PM GMT

You may only have seen a couple of butterflies this year so far but your certainly made up for it with your WLH cats and this fascinating Common Blue/ant behaviour 😊. There's always something going on as long as you look for it!

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-16 08:10 PM GMT

I noticed that you've seen 'only a few species' so far this year - but if you take the juveniles into consideration you're miles ahead of the rest of us! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 11-Apr-16 12:48 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, back again 😊 After the miserable weather and having company for a few days I'm a bit like you for the Butterflies, my sickness has finally gone now so back to normal hunting the Butterflies. Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 11-Apr-16 05:49 PM GMT

That sounds quite feasible Martin. In fact, when I first spotted it I thought it had been predated until I took a closer look.

You're absolutely right Buggy and that's one of the reasons your diary is one of my favourites, including your interest in behaviour. Would you believe, when I found the Common Blue I was looking for Duke pupa 😊😊 Needles and haystacks spring to mind but as the site is on my doorstep .....

It's a good job I currently have this obsession with immatures Wurzel or I would be feeling quite despondent at chalking up only 2 Brimstones. Honestly, Saturday we had hailstones, last night rain and today thunder!!! Never mind, it'll be summer soon.... 😊😊

Glad you're up and running again Goldie. Fingers crossed, it won't be too long before the weather improves.

I am aware that my Glanvilles are growing and changing and therefore need to be photographed 😊. These cats are quite extraordinary and unlike any other cats I have reared (I surprised myself this morning when I realised I have reared 12 species!!!! Never set out to do that). They are incredibly difficult to photograph for a variety of reasons, not least being that they won't stay still and tend to hang out on the mesh!! I now have a few in their final instar and what fine cats they are - black and furry with red heads and feet - very smart. I hope to get a few more shots before they pupate but in the meantime .....







### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 11-Apr-16 07:10 PM GMT

Pauline I'd love to see your 12 species some of which I've not seen yet on my adventures, your doing great with the rearing, the Glanvilles I think seem very interesting and I can't wait to see the end product. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Apr-16 02:28 PM GMT

Hi Goldie – not all from this year but hopefully there will be some for you to see.

Early today I thought it was about time I checked my WA's again. Last year they were active and eating on 1April but I found them still safely tucked up. It was hard to get any sort of shots as they are right at the back of the cage at an awkward angle so the camera had to be hand held and I was impersonating a contortionist:



Now we might not have had much of a Spring but today Summer arrived. With wall to wall sunshine I decided to check the WA again and managed to catch him as he came out for his first meal this year. He is so tiny and so cute and because I was reluctant to move the plant around this was all I could get:



So, almost 2 weeks later than last year!

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 12-Apr-16 03:20 PM GMT

It's great Pauline how the cats fit in so well on the plants , melting into their back ground amazingly so you've to really look so closely to see them, no wonder with my eyes I don't pick them out. 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 13-Apr-16 03:38 PM GMT

I don't think it's your eyes Goldie - I think we all have difficulty spotting some of these tiny insects when they are so expertly camouflaged - in fact, I have even started to carry a hand lens with me 😊

Despite a chilly night last night I found a fair selection in the moth trap this morning, a few of which I have never seen before. These Brindled Beauties are just as the name says. They are gorgeous and look like golden velvet:



This next one, well, I originally thought it was a Dotted Border but after looking at the book I now believe it is an Early tooth-striped:



A gorgeous charismatic and quite distinctive Hebrew Character was next to be uncovered:



I'm not really sure about this next one, simply because of its colour which seemed very orange. I initially thought Chestnut but I am now veering towards Common Quaker because of the markings:





I am guessing that this last cluster are variations on the theme of Clouded Drab, but how anyone could call them drab is beyond me as the variation is staggering. In fact, I am even wondering if one of these could be a Lead-coloured Drab? Any help welcome.



#### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 13-Apr-16 10:27 PM GMT

Great Moth shots Pauline. Those Glanville Cats are real class too – the punks of the caterpillar world 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

#### Re: Pauline

by David M, 13-Apr-16 11:34 PM GMT

Some great images there, Pauline. You seem to be a full-time butterfly nurturer at the moment. I hope as many of these early stages as possible make it to maturity.

#### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 14-Apr-16 01:20 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, your Moth shots are great, it's strange these early Moths are all similar in colour and they melt into their back ground like the Cat's, nature is a wonderful thing 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Apr-16 02:30 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel – I do find the ID's quite problematical still. As Goldie states, many of them look so similar and I find myself pouring over books until I've got a headache 😊😊 Hopefully I'll improve with more experience – and yes, those Glanville cats are something else 😊

Thank you too David. What a great life that would be if I could spend all day indulging in my hobbies 😊. I'm glad to see that you are now getting more butterflies in your neck of the woods – and some great shots there too, especially the Brimstone. Who would have thought that my first photo of a butterfly would be of a Duke – yes, they're out 😊





As you say Goldie, nature is wonderful. Who would have thought that after all the dreadful weather we have had that it would only take a couple of days of sunshine and things are almost back on track!

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 14-Apr-16 02:44 PM GMT

Wow what a way to start! 🤖🤖🤖

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 14-Apr-16 05:46 PM GMT

Orange Tips, Small Coppers and now Dukes!! Winter is firmly behind us at last!!

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 14-Apr-16 06:28 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel 😊 I'm definitely up for the swap 😊😊

I think you're right there David and given your previous comment I'd like you to be the first to know the latest news on the WLH 😊. I don't know why I was surprised to return to find this, as No 1 has raced through all his stages. I should have anticipated it. It is also slightly frustrating tho' as I did not detect any early warning signs from the state of the pupa and I would very much like to witness an emergence:





Let us hope that the others are not too far behind him and the good weather continues.

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 14-Apr-16 06:30 PM GMT

Simply beautiful, Pauline. This is one species I need to spend more time with.

**Re: Pauline**

by trevor, 14-Apr-16 07:07 PM GMT

He may be very early, but has surely rewarded your patience.  
Hope to have another good session with them this year.

Best wishes,

Trevor.

**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 14-Apr-16 07:41 PM GMT

Well there's not many people who can have a Duke as their first butterfly picture and a White-letter Hairstreak as their second....! 🍷

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 15-Apr-16 08:53 AM GMT

Thank you David – they really are a beautiful butterfly and well worth spending time with 😊.

Thank you too Trevor. You had a great season last year and I have no doubt that with the effort you put in this year will be equally rewarding for you 😊

Your comment made me chuckle Buggy – just goes to show how hopeless I am! Can't find anything in the wild and can't get the timing of the rearing right either 😞😞 I have been out looking for stuff tho' and found some rather interesting beetles which I haven't had time to post yet. Last year I found about 10 WA eggs at the Straits. Earlier this week I decided to check the state of any surviving cats to compare them with the development and size of the ones I have here. Well, I got a bit of a shock 😞 A lot more clearance has taken place there and all of that honeysuckle has now gone along with a great deal more. Quite a few more trees have been taken down and although I am sure it will be of benefit in the longer term I was also surprised to see Sallow cut down around the first watch tower – a favourite place of PE. The cut sallow was still alive and in bud/leaf so I spent as much time as I had searching the buds – just in case. I didn't find anything but it was just a brief search.

A similar scenario met me at Noar Hill yesterday. I reported earlier in the season that a great deal of the Blackthorn had been cut down especially in the triangle. I was pleased that some planning appeared to have gone into this given that those bushes with BH eggs had previously been marked with ribbon and spared. Nevertheless, some eggs had obviously been missed hence the ones I found on discarded branches, but I suppose this was to be expected. What I didn't expect to find yesterday was that the ribbons had been removed and several more blackthorn (which had held eggs) had been completely removed 😞😞 I met someone there who claimed to have been involved with the earlier clearance, assisting the reserve manager, and marking the bushes with eggs. However, he professed to be unaware that further clearance had taken place or indeed who had carried out the work. Such a shame!

Well today it is raining again so for me it is back to the juveniles. Yesterday, I enjoyed watching the Glanvilles in the sun – I imagine they are not far from pupation now. I was amazed at how they sparkled and twinkled in the sun looking like someone had sprinkled them with glitter. I wasn't expecting that. Gorgeous 😊. These photos definitely don't do them justice.





### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 15-Apr-16 09:22 AM GMT

#### Pauline wrote:

I don't know why I was surprised to return to find this, as No 1 has raced through all his stages. I should have anticipated it.

On behalf of the UKB team, I would like to point out, given our tagline of "Building a Community of Responsible Butterfly Enthusiasts", that anyone looking into captive rearing should do so responsibly and would point members to the article I wrote on the subject in 2014 (<http://www.dispar.org/reference.php?id=87>).

If the intention is to release the offspring back into the wild, then it is imperative that you have a full understanding of their requirements, including the ability to rear things through in as natural conditions as possible, otherwise your efforts will result in failure. It is also imperative that relevant

legislation and guidelines, both national and local, are understood before starting out. Offspring that emerge severely out of sync with their wild counterparts have no chance to procreate and cannot, therefore, live the lives they were destined to lead. Activities should always be in the best interests of the butterflies concerned.

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by MrSp0ck, 15-Apr-16 09:44 AM GMT

**Pete Eeles wrote:**

Offspring that emerge severely out of sync with their wild counterparts have no chance to procreate and cannot, therefore, live the lives they was destined to lead. Activities should always be in the best interests of the butterflies concerned.

Cheers,

– Pete

It should be pointed out in this case that the WLHs eggs were found on the pavement after severe winds and wouldn't have made it through if left there, so were never intended to be in captivity, im sure if they could be asked they would prefer to be early than dead [their original life destined for them], and they will have a chance to breed as there are 6 of them, and any resulting eggs will overwinter and return to be in sync next spring.

Guidelines should always be followed, but there is a difference between rescued and taken for enjoyment.

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 15-Apr-16 09:52 AM GMT

**MrSp0ck wrote:**

they will have a chance to breed as there are 6 of them.

My comments start with the sentence "If the intention is to release the offspring back into the wild". If the intention is to keep the adults in captivity (which would need to be the case, since I doubt they'd find each other if released separately) then that is a different scenario, and requires a different set of skills.

**MrSp0ck wrote:**

Guidelines should always be followed, but there is a difference between rescued and taken for enjoyment.

I think the same guidelines should be applied whether rescued or taken (for whatever reason).

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Apr-16 09:57 AM GMT

You have explained Pete that your comment is because person/persons have expressed 'extreme concerns' about my captive rearing activities, in particular the WLH and that these are seen to be putting UKB in a 'bad light'. Naturally I am dismayed and disappointed that these views have not only been expressed but appear to be supported. I thought you were very much aware that I always try my best for these creatures and although I do make some mistakes I am trying hard to learn from them. I am not sure what heinous crime it is thought I have committed or indeed who this person/persons are as I would like to personally reassure them. I would also like to know what other concerns are being expressed given that they appear to extend beyond the WLH? It seems strange that I am receiving this criticism, having scavenged a few eggs from the ground whilst my experience this week has shown many eggs – both WA and BH – have been chopped down without a second thought. I would be interested in other views so this can be aired more openly rather than comments being made anonymously.

Thank you for your input Martin.

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 15-Apr-16 10:18 AM GMT

**Pauline wrote:**

You have explained Pete that your comment is because person/persons have expressed 'extreme concerns' about my captive rearing activities, in particular the WLH and that these are seen to be putting UKB in a 'bad light'.

Yes, I did say this in a **private** message to you. But since you've chosen to make this public ... then the concern is that your photography is being put first, ahead of the welfare of the butterflies you're rearing. Now I'm sure this isn't the case, but the UKB team wants to make sure that anyone reading your diary is fully-informed of the challenges in captive rearing before going down this route themselves (if at all).

**Pauline wrote:**

Naturally I am dismayed and disappointed that these views have not only been expressed but appear to be supported.

I'm not at all surprised that the team shares a concern that White-letter Hairstreaks are emerging 3 months ahead of schedule. And therefore, the team decided that these concerns needed to be addressed, and how they should be addressed. Which was to post something in your diary, as I have done.

**Pauline wrote:**

It seems strange that I am receiving this criticism, having scavenged a few eggs from the ground whilst my experience this week has shown many eggs – both WA and BH – have been chopped down without a second thought.

As I replied to Martin ... the point here is that captive rearing can be a tricky business, and members need to be aware of that, irrespective of where the livestock came from.

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pauline**

by Padfield, 15-Apr-16 01:03 PM GMT

Pauline, no one reading your diary could doubt your commitment to your various charges – not just the butterflies. Personally, I admire you for the work you do with animals – and no, there's no 'but' coming! 😊 I admire you for it.

In this instance – the white-letter hairstreaks – a rescue attempt went wrong, despite your best efforts, because getting hairstreaks in particular to synchronise in captivity with their wild cousins is a specialised task. Pete asked my advice and I agreed we should draw attention to this, to prevent others trying to emulate you without researching all the issues. Your diary is very widely read, for obvious reasons. I'm not competent myself to suggest how else you might have proceeded, as every butterfly I have rescued, at any stage, I have returned to the wild at the earliest opportunity – precisely to guarantee synchronisation. Perhaps that is what I should have suggested here – I don't know. Returning young caterpillars to the wild greatly increases their chances of dying before completing metamorphosis but also increases their chances of contributing to the next wild generation (in single-brooded species that might emerge out of synch). I regret not raising the issue earlier, both because someone who knew might have been able to advise you how to delay development and also, naturally, because I regret any perceived criticism of you in comments at this stage.

Guy

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 15-Apr-16 01:26 PM GMT

Pauline I think you admirable in what you try to do (which is save Butterflies that would other wise perish ) I think you try your best to go by the guide lines but some times things don't always go to plan.

How some one could say you do these things for your Photography is amusing considering the time and effort you put into it, 😊 All the best , I'm looking forward to seeing your Granvilles Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by tim, 15-Apr-16 04:24 PM GMT

Pauline's ex husband here. I can assure everyone that animal welfare comes 1, 2, 3, ...100 on her list of priorities. I know cos I was once at number 101....

If you don't believe me, just ask the little rabbit that has been having early morning medication/injections every day for the last 4 weeks and, thankfully, is now making an almost miraculous recovery from what originally looked to be a lost cause

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 16-Apr-16 08:19 AM GMT

Firstly, I would like to say thank you for the support I have received both publicly and privately.

Pete, you might recall that you initially asked me to contribute to the guidelines you eventually produced. I readily agreed, doing my best based on my limited experience, recognising how important these are. I fully support their content and I am happy for my diary to be used as a vehicle to promote them.

Guy, I very much appreciate your constructive and reasoned comments. Anyone reading my diary would surely be left in no doubt about the difficulties and pitfalls of rearing as I post both failures and successes, in the hope others may learn from my mistakes, as indeed I try to.

I have always invited constructive criticism but it is unhelpful when anonymous allegations are made that I put photography before welfare. Had the concerned person contacted me openly and directly it would have been a simple matter to assure them that this would never be the case, although I certainly use the camera as a tool to monitor and record the development of these insects. Unless UKB advise me otherwise I shall continue my

activities– learning, recording and posting as before.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pete Eeles, 16-Apr-16 10:47 AM GMT

**Pauline wrote:**

Pete, you might recall that you initially asked me to contribute to the guidelines you eventually produced. I readily agreed, doing my best based on my limited experience, recognising how important these are.

You did indeed – and thanks again.

**Pauline wrote:**

I fully support their content and I am happy for my diary to be used as a vehicle to promote them.

Many thanks – it is important that anyone captive rearing understand what they're getting into.

**Pauline wrote:**

Unless UKB advise me otherwise I shall continue my activities– learning, recording and posting as before.

Since you asked, Pauline, I would advise otherwise in obvious cases – those where you don't understand the requirements of the species, where you can't provide the right conditions, where you don't have time to look after any livestock, or where you don't have the food plant or it's difficult to obtain. The Dispar article has many more cases. And, of course, if the species is running way ahead of schedule, as Guy suggests, perhaps any larvae should be placed back in the wild as soon as possible.

It is up to the UKB team to ensure that all activities are carried out responsibly and forum posts, by any member, considered to be against UKB's ethos of "Building a Community of Responsible Butterfly Enthusiasts" will be commented upon and potentially removed.

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 16-Apr-16 03:36 PM GMT

As the anonymous criticism I have received seems to extend beyond the WLH to my other rearing activities I thought perhaps it would be prudent to provide an update on some of the other species I am rearing - tho' I have to admit it is becoming a little tedious having to repeatedly justify my activities when (for me at least) this is about learning and sharing and providing others with the benefit of my experience.

BH - eggs scavenged from discarded blackthorn have not yet hatched and therefore appear to be in line with wild BH.

Large Whites - look to be on the brink of emergence. As they have already been recorded in the wild I assume these also are on track.

WA - Tinier than they were at this time last year. Difficult to make any comparison with those in the wild locally as the honeysuckle I knew to have eggs has been chopped down.

Glanvilles - on track as far as the HB community are concerned.

Small White - emergence looks to be imminent and therefore on time

As for the others, well, perhaps I am done with being open and honest and in line with Pete's advice will not post if I have made mistakes. A shot of a Large White pupa which surely cannot be construed as controversial:



### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 18-Apr-16 10:19 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, the weather here in the North is still cold no chance of seeing LW's here yet, not even seen a Small White, or a Green veined White yet, did see my first Peacock at HLB yesterday though so hope fully with the high supposed to be around for a few days other species will appear. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Mike Robinson, 18-Apr-16 12:45 PM GMT

'A shot of a Large White pupa ...' As someone who often has anxieties when seeing a Large White Butterfly viz. is it a Large or Small White?, I'm in awe!

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-Apr-16 03:49 PM GMT

It's freezing here too Goldie - I know I keep saying it but hopefully it won't be long .....

It's definitely a Large White Mike - one of the 80 odd I saved from the rabbits jaws as they munched their greens 😊 - but one of the paler/greener ones in the collection. This one plus a couple of others were knocked off the mesh in the storms so I hope they'll be OK. Thank you for your comment - a different view of the same pupa below:



I had also taken a shot of the pupa which the WLH emerged from which I still have. If any child would like to see it or if anyone would like it for a display they would be very welcome:



It is back to the immatures today as I have no transport. I was asked if I would post images as the WLH pupa matured so here are a few below:

No. 6:



No. 4:



No. 2:



### Re: Pauline

by Mike Robinson, 18-Apr-16 05:12 PM GMT

Dear Pauline: Whoooops. Do we have a misunderstanding? I don't think so but just in case I certainly wasn't questioning your judgement. Merely noting that I often have trouble distinguishing between Large and Small White Butterflies! I would be mortified that you should think that I was in any way doubting you.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-Apr-16 05:54 PM GMT

Apologies Mike - I'm still a little upset after the last few days and totally mis-read your comment. Thank you for the compliment and for pointing out my error.

### Re: Pauline

by Mike Robinson, 18-Apr-16 06:13 PM GMT

Phew!

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-Apr-16 06:20 PM GMT

You've just made me laugh Mike - thank you 😊 You will have seen from recent posts that I'm certainly no expert and I hope you wouldn't hesitate in the future to draw my attention to stuff I may have gotten wrong 😊 Looking forward to reading more of your diary.

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 18-Apr-16 09:26 PM GMT

Amused about the 'whites'. I've had a few flying through the garden recently but have not reported them because I haven't a clue which they are 😊 One even flew by during a thunderstorm, looking spectacularly white against the black clouds.

Mike

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 19-Apr-16 08:53 AM GMT

I've never seen Whites fly in a thunderstorm Mike but I've watched PE fly in one!

A few interesting insects in the moth trap last night – some moths I've never seen before, including this gorgeous moth which I believe is a Red Chestnut:



Another newbie was this moth which at the moment I have been unable to identify:



The aptly named Oak Beauty showing amazing camouflage which Goldie has commented on in the past. Most of the shots are taken on the same tree but whatever the colours and patterns on the moths they all seem to blend in remarkably well:



An evil looking creature took me a little by surprise as I ferreted amongst the egg cartons. No idea what it is but I took a shot as it scurried away:



Last but not least was another gorgeous moth which I initially thought was a Grey Shouldered-knot but I have now settled on Early Grey as being the most likely candidate for ID. Another beauty even if it does sound like a brand of tea!



**Re: Pauline**

by Mike Robinson, 19-Apr-16 09:38 AM GMT

I think the 'Red Chestnut' Moth to be a lovely looking arrangement ...

**Re: Pauline**

by andy brown, 19-Apr-16 09:51 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Will take a look when home but maybe chestnut the other is caddis fly and early grey stuck in a meeting all day in Bristol

Andy

**Re: Pauline**

by andy brown, 19-Apr-16 05:10 PM GMT

Hi, now I have taken a look on the PC rather than my phone, yep good shout it is Red Chestnut, and your beetle is as far as I can see a black sexton beetle

Cheers

Andy

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 19-Apr-16 06:48 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, I took a photo today of a bird with an insect in it's mouth that looks some thing like your insect, I'm going to post it, I don't know what the bird is, I just saw it fly into the tree and it looked different when I got home and put it on the computer I got a real surprise 😊

I took a shot of a white but I'm not sure what it is either, it was bit away from me. The Chestnut moth makes a nice change from the other paler ones, it suits it's name. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 19-Apr-16 08:49 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Great moth photos 😊

I will second your Early Grey, I have had a few of those in my trap...and the Black Sexton Beetle, had a couple of those as well.

Your Oak Beauty is a Brindled Beauty, similar size and shape but different markings. I had one last week but mine was looking more tired and faded.

All the best,

Neil.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Apr-16 06:40 AM GMT

I can see how folk get hooked on moths Mike cos there are some absolutely stunning ones out there, altho' it is still the macros which get my attention. Thank you for your comment.

You already know what I think Goldie – great shots 📷 Careful– you could well be next to move to the dark side 😊

Thanks for the prompt help with ID's Andy.

Hi Neil – thanks for the compliment but I think your moth shots are a great deal better than mine. They are much better composed and show off the insect to the best advantage. I really must get more imaginative instead of using the same old tree as a background. As others have said your Pine Beauty is fantastic 📷📷 I had been hoping for one of those but no joy yet. Thank you for the ID too. I had originally considered Brindled Beauty but it looked so different to the ones in the trap last week – perhaps it was just faded.

Yesterday was warm (well, warm-ish) but dull and cloudy so I decided to continue my search for Duke pupa 😊 I am paying particular attention to the areas where I monitored the larva last season and also the areas where the early Dukes are emerging. I didn't really expect to see any Dukes but in the event stumbled across 2. It is a pity that I managed to delete the photos from my camera thinking that I had already downloaded them so I shall post a couple more I took last week. At one point I felt I was being watched and looked round to see a large fly observing me – it had the biggest eyes 😊





**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 20-Apr-16 05:59 PM GMT

Lovely Dukes Pauline, don't like the look in that fly's eyes though 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 20-Apr-16 09:02 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie. I don't like flies, full stop, as they usually treat me as a fast food supplier 😞

Before dashing off to the dentist this morning I thought I'd check on the WA cats. They are still very tiny and I have seen no signs of feeding yet. At this time last year my WA cat was active and feeding - and had been from 1 April. Compared to the shots I took just over a week ago they seem to have made little progress. Both in an awkward position on the plant but I have always said I wouldn't disturb a cat for the sake of a photo so this is the best I

could get:



The Glanvilles on the other hand seem to be at different stages of development and their sizes vary greatly. I find this a bit strange as they have all been together and subjected to exactly the same conditions. I am sure some are nearing pupation whereas others are still quite tiny. Six of them are shown below - they fell off the mesh when I removed it to water the plant:





### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 20-Apr-16 09:06 PM GMT

#### Pauline wrote:

The Glanvilles on the other hand seem to be at different stages of development and their sizes vary greatly. I find this a bit strange as they have all been together and subjected to exactly the same conditions. I am sure some are nearing pupation whereas others are still quite tiny. Six of them are shown below – they fell off the mesh when I removed it to water the plant

Thats pretty much the state of play with the ones I saw at HB the other day Pauline, so I wouldn't worry too much about the size difference 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Apr-16 06:39 AM GMT

I appreciate that reassurance Buggy – I think I'm becoming over-anxious about getting stuff wrong 😞 I'd also convinced myself that the WA are too small 😞 so after the dentist I set off for a second visit to the Straits, hoping to find some in the wild to make comparisons. I didn't succeed but had a lovely stroll along the main rides seeing 6 species of butterflies, including 4 Orange Tips!! 😊 This wouldn't normally have gotten me excited but after the Spring we haven't had I was delighted to see them – so delighted in fact that I walked into a ditch full of muddy water which came over the tops of my boots, instead of watching where I was going 😞 . I managed to grab a few shots as I made my way along:





I turned around for a second, distracted by a bird call and when I looked back I thought I could see a Robin among the Honeysuckle. I quickly realised that it wasn't a Robin but a small bird with an Orange Tip in its beak. In the time it took to get the close-up lens off my camera, the bird was challenged by a second bird, whereupon they both spiraled up into the air, the butterfly providing an early lunch for the original bird. I wasn't as fast as Goldie and disappointed not to get the shot – neither did I recognise the birds but they were small – not much bigger than Goldcrests but a more slender shape and I believe the tail was quite short – not much to go on but it was all over so fast!

By now my soggy feet were becoming uncomfortable and the anaesthetic was wearing off my mouth which was starting to throb. I started to make my way back down to the entrance when I was stopped in my tracks by the unmistakable purr of Turtle Doves. I have heard them at Noar Hill and in other localities but I can't remember ever seeing them here. I was removing the close-up lens as I scanned the trees for their whereabouts, hoping to get a photo, any sort of photo, when they flew off over my head, close enough for me to hear that one of them was purring as he flew away. I was delighted to see them but it took me by surprise as it is usually May when they appear in my garden.

So, despite it being brief, a great walk in the sunshine with a smattering of butterflies – and on my return I caught up with Guy's diary and was relieved to see that there are some tiny WA cats out there after all 😊

## Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 21-Apr-16 01:35 PM GMT

Good to see Orange Tips about, though it is unfortunate for them that they emerge just as the Spring migrant birds arrive – Chiffchaffs, Blackcaps, etc – all feeling very hungry after their long migration!

Your interest in moths should sustain you for quite a while, with so many subtly-different species! Don't miss out on some very beautiful **micros** – the

attractive group known as **Pyralids** should be out on the Downs, looking like tiny bright jewels.

Mike

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 21-Apr-16 05:26 PM GMT

Your Orange Tip has a much larger black forewing spot than I'm used to seeing, Pauline, and even extends into a faint 'smudge' along the upper edge.

**Re: Pauline**

by trevor, 21-Apr-16 07:35 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,  
Lovely Orange Tip shots, saw my first one yesterday, a female.

**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 21-Apr-16 07:48 PM GMT

David M beat me too it, might have an OT ab there Pauline 😊

From your description I reckon the bird eating the OT was a chiffchaff or Willow Warbler

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 22-Apr-16 10:04 PM GMT

Cracking OT Pauline - how do you get so close? 🍷 Have you been developing Ninja skills over the winter? 🤪 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 22-Apr-16 10:39 PM GMT

You mean like these ones Mike? 😊





You are very perceptive David – this is certainly not the first time you have commented on an aspect in one of my photos that I haven't even noticed myself – puts me to shame 😊😊 Thank you for pointing it out.

Thanks you for your comment Trevor. You are doing incredibly well on the butterfly front in your neck of the woods 🌿

Thank you too Buggy. I have looked at the list of OT abs and there are quite a lot of them but Vince has suggested which one it may be. You could well be right about the bird too as I am not very good with Warblers. I had something in the garden quite a few years ago which I thought might have been a Warbler – they are poor photos but perhaps you can ID?



Cheers Wurzel – I don't think they expected to be approached by someone paddling along in a ditch and were probably keeping an eye out in the other direction for migrant birds:lol:

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 22-Apr-16 10:58 PM GMT

**Pauline wrote:**

You mean like these ones Mike?

....

I had something in the garden quite a few years ago which I thought might have been a Warbler

Exactly! Aren't they lovely tiny things – very well caught in your photos. I Believe those are *Pyrausta purpuralis* and *P. nigrata*

Your birds are probably Chiffchaffs – best identified by their monotonous call. They are very similar, visually, to Willow Warblers, which have a long trill of descending notes. They are easiest to see in Spring before the leaves are on the trees and are, in fact, some of our commonest birds during the summer but well-hidden in the hedgerows.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 23-Apr-16 10:22 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, you don't do things by half do you, 😊 wading in water 😊 I saw an Orange Tip has well but no way was I wading across a Pond 😊 Your OT does look unusual, great shot as well.

By the way I thought of you yesterday I saw a Large White , they must be out and about around here now. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Apr-16 05:14 PM GMT

Thank you Mike, both for the compliment and the ID 😊

I definitely don't do things by halves Goldie 😊 Always give it 100% 😊 . You are right about the Large Whites – mine seem to be on the brink of emerging. In fact, I could swear the pupal cases are changing shape, seemingly getting longer and broader, more defined. Vince gave me a great tip a couple of years ago which is to take photos of the pupa at regular intervals and then it is possible to compare the shots and detect subtle changes so I do try to use the camera as a tool in this respect. Trouble is, all my Large White are in a cage and access for photos is almost impossible so I am having to rely on memory .....!

6.00 am this morning found me making my way down to the fox compound as usual. As I entered I was startled by a fox running from behind the fencing, for a split second thinking it was one of mine, but of course it was one of the wild visitors. Saffron, my vixen, expects a cuddle each morning so she was keen to jump onto my knee as I perched on an old log from where I have a good view of the garden. It is relatively peaceful at this time of the day apart from the bird song, and today a male Blackcap was sat in the old apple tree, just feet away, singing his heart out. It is a while since I have seen one in the garden. It was a chance to reflect on recent events, not least having stumbled across my mother's obituary on the internet the other day – it was dated 5 years ago but I had not been told. My thoughts were interrupted by some raucous Starlings, squabbling over possession of a few white feathers on the lawn, courtesy of my Mallard who pulls out tail feathers from my flock of white doves if he can catch them. He is very territorial at this time of year and protective of his mate, a Khaki Campbell, who provides me with a delicious breakfast most mornings. It is soon time to settle Saffron in her bed and continue with feeds, medication and cleaning out, hopefully leaving a couple of hours to spend relaxing in the company of a few butterflies. Yesterday the butterflies were Grizzled Skippers (no Green Hairstreaks yet) bringing my total species for the season so far to 9 – not even double figures and it's nearly May!





### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 23-Apr-16 07:15 PM GMT

Thats a fantastic Grizzled Skipper Pauline, of course I'm envious 🍷😄 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 23-Apr-16 11:26 PM GMT

Aah! Khaki Campbells!

We have four of them, Pauline, and they lay prodigious numbers of eggs for a duck!

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Apr-16 10:04 AM GMT

I know you've wanted to see one for some time now Goldie and I'm sure this will be the year 😊

Best sort of eggs you can have David IMO – and a good looking duck too 😊 My last pair lived for 21 years and produced eggs right up to the end 😊

I shall split this update on the WLH into 2 parts but before I begin I would like to start by quoting myself from Page 96 of my diary *'When it comes to rearing I always think there are 3 main things to consider – keep them safe from predators, keep them at the right temperature and give them the right food. Sounds simple but it really isn't unless you are knowledgeable and experienced'*. I bitterly regret the outcome with the WLH and I would urge anyone to consider very carefully before embarking on rearing.

Nevertheless, I have continued to monitor and learn from their development, using the technique with the camera outlined above, to record the pupa as it became apparent emergence was imminent. Changes are subtle (a slight change of colour, a protrusion becoming more prominent, a fracture line developing) but can be detected by close inspection:



Taken at 10.42



Taken at 10.45



Taken at 10.54



Taken at 11.06



Taken at 11.33



Taken at 12.07



Taken at 12.46



Taken at 13.51



Taken at 14.49

Many more photos were taken over this time frame. Watching a pupa for 6 hours is only marginally more interesting than watching paint dry – but the end result is always worth it.

I recorded earlier that all of my WLH cats, without exception, were intent on pupating in the soil. I only managed with some difficulty to get one to pupate on a branch despite this being their location of choice according to various authorities. Rather than allowing them to pupate underground (which with hindsight I should have done) I removed them from the earth and put them in the position I thought they were meant to be in. Clearly another mistake. I am not usually interested in rearing the same species twice as there is so much out there to learn and experience. However, if I were to find discarded WLH eggs next season I would be tempted to repeat the exercise with a view to checking out this particular aspect and also obviously with the aim of a successful conclusion.

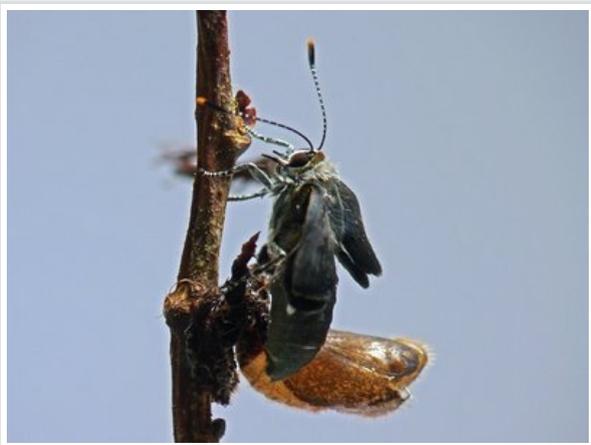
### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Apr-16 06:14 PM GMT

Part 2:







### Re: Pauline

by MrSp0ck, 24-Apr-16 06:46 PM GMT

Great pictures, the last one says found the spot to expand those wings. I bet the expanding was over very quick too.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 24-Apr-16 08:06 PM GMT

Great shots Pauline, did it have some colour flow from it when it was finally out? (Just a little) I'm thinking back to my Painted ladies, when they pupated they'd a slight red colour come from them, I thought this was blood at first and I was a bit bothered, then I realised it was colour, I turned them loose in May, In Kent, I took them to my daughters there. 😊

They certainly enjoyed the mixture of Sugar and water I gave them at first, then I gave them some Banana and Orange slices which I changed each day to keep things clean. I had four in total. I enjoyed every day watching them, I've not done it since but it was great to see nature at work.

What food do your Hair Streaks have Pauline? 🤔

I'm sure You'll give lots of pleasure with your Photos and we all learn from our Mistakes, I've made enough of them myself 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 24-Apr-16 08:15 PM GMT

Sorry Pauline, I missed your Warbler pics earlier. Agreed with Mike, either Willow Warbler or Chiffchaff.

Great shots of the WLH, and you now have uppersides of a live animal! Such a shame the emergence timing went array 😞

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 25-Apr-16 06:48 AM GMT

Thank you Martin. The wing expansion did not take long at all but at this critical point I was distracted, only briefly, as my vixen had started fitting and needed my attention. It wasn't for very long at all but long enough to miss most of the wing expansion. For completion I am enclosing a few shots I managed at the end of the process and the finished result:





Thank you Goldie. I think you are referring to meconium which is excreted as a waste fluid and the colour can vary depending on the species.

I appreciate the comment and ID Buggy and share your regrets.

### Re: Pauline

by MrSp0ck, 25-Apr-16 08:20 AM GMT

I like the egg in the shot too.

### Re: Pauline

by bailey1409, 25-Apr-16 12:42 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Just to say what a pleasure it is to visit your PD. There are lots of super images, whether it is cats., eggs, emerging leps. or butterflies out in the wild that you seem to be able to capture in fantastic close-up. Together with your new interest in moths and not forgetting the news of your patients.

Fascinating behaviour shots, looking forward to the next episodes in their life stories.

Where do you find the time for all of these interests?

Cheers

Maurice

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 25-Apr-16 04:21 PM GMT

I did wonder if different Butterflies had different colours Pauline, you learn some thing every day 😊

I've always been more interested in the Butterfly itself I must admit, although I find the different stages the BF goes through very interesting it's the the beauty of the BF it's self that fascinates me.

The different markings and colours, shapes and sizes, their habits etc, I could go on and on 😊 and the end product like your lovely White Hair Streak Butterfly, what could be better than that. 😊

Incidentally I hope all your animals are well Pauline Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 25-Apr-16 08:04 PM GMT

Lovely WL Hairstreak emergence sequence, Pauline. There's a lot of waiting around in order to capture the moment of emergence, but it's so rewarding.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Apr-16 11:15 AM GMT

That's the actual egg it came out of Martin!

You may recall quite a long while ago Maurice when we met up at MHD and you gave me my first photography lesson, explaining the camera settings and observing me as I took a few shots. I remember how intimidated I felt then with you looking over my shoulder 😊 Both yourself and Mike F have given me a great deal of help since then so I am relieved you are pleased with the results 😊 . I am glad the variety in my diary adds interest too. Thank you for your comment – it is much appreciated.

I know exactly what you mean Goldie as I used to be exactly the same – and then something happened and I started to see beauty and interest in the cats and the pupa. I now find all the stages incredible. I forgot to answer your question about food. I have purchased a product specifically for butterflies called Nektar-Plus. Not cheap but is highly recommended.

Thank you Mike. I know you've been there and I can feel the empathy 😊 . It can be a bit of a juggling act trying to keep an eye on it with so much other stuff going on but occasionally I get lucky. Yesterday was one of those times it didn't work out. One of the many cats around here was after my Doves so I had to desert my post to shut the Doves in the aviary. When I returned I'd missed the start but managed to get these:











It was quite breezy outdoors and the soft flimsy wings were being buffeted about so I brought the butterfly indoors to dry off.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 26-Apr-16 12:55 PM GMT

You've got great patience Pauline that's why you get such great results, 😊 Some thing I lack 😞

Photos again fantastic, if I don't see any WIHS ( tried for three years ) at least I've seen yours 😊 Great sequence of shots.

You've not mentioned the Rabbit for a while, is it alright ? Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Apr-16 01:36 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie - you really shouldn't get me started on the animals here 😊 . At the weekend I stopped Lucky's medication but she seems fine. Took these half an hour ago as she washed herself - see her tongue?





... and another one for you Goldie: this is meconium from a WLH so you can see the pale pink colouration (in the fork of the branch). Interestingly, the same butterfly produced more on an Elm leaf about 10 hours later.



I have had to attend to other priorities and have missed a couple of butterflies emerging recently but Mike has kindly done another animated sequence of an emergence I did witness. This is exactly the same creature that he did the sequence for when it emerged from the egg. Thank you Mike:



Yesterday I guessed another emergence was imminent but after watching the pupa for 2 hours I had to take delivery of an important package – special butterfly food. I guessed that the pupa was only an hour or two away from being a butterfly but I reckoned the sooner the others got some 'proper' food the better. I was only away from my post for 5 mins but when I returned I had missed it – again!!! This was all I got:



**Re: Pauline**

by MrSp0ck, 27-Apr-16 02:51 PM GMT

I hope they have started to use the special food, normally you cant keep them off it once they know the taste.

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 27-Apr-16 03:59 PM GMT

Great animation Mike, glad the Rabbits doing well Pauline, the meconium from the Painted Lady was Red Pauline, that's why I thought it was blood 😊  
It's really interesting they all have different colours but then their all different Butterflies so it's logical they will have 😊  
I hope you see the next one emerge and hope they like the food you've bought. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Apr-16 04:50 PM GMT

At the moment they appear to be taking it Martin but only if they don't have to stand on it 😊. Their preference would appear to be the sugary water that I painted onto a few leaves. It's been so hectic here today I think I'll be trying some of that solution myself tonight 😊 (or perhaps I'll settle for a G&T 😊).

I didn't see the next one emerge Goldie but as it was a Large White (my first) I'm sure I'll have plenty of other opportunities – don't worry, I won't be posting all 86 of them ! 😊





**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 29-Apr-16 11:46 AM GMT

The cabbage gardeners will just love you Pauline 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 29-Apr-16 01:54 PM GMT

Good job I'm in a fairly rural area Goldie surrounded by a lot of army land.

I haven't been out this week for reasons I shall explain in due course so I was in dire need of some exercise and fresh air to blow away the cob-webs. I certainly got that!! I headed out for a brief trip to Noar Hill and despite a thick jumper I was freezing – the wind was cutting. I wasn't expecting to see much but the first thing I came across was this beetle – ugly and attractive at the same time:



Shortly afterwards I was delighted to see this slow worm in the middle of the track:



I was less delighted when, after taking a few shots, I realised that it was dead 😞😞. I could not detect any injuries, and not knowing much about this type of creature, I wondered if it was in a dormant state due to the extreme cold we have had. It was in a very exposed position –easy prey – so I picked it up and put it in my pocket where it stayed for 30 mins as I attempted to warm it up (OK, you can stop laughing now! 😊). Eventually, I had to accept that I couldn't 'save' it and returned it to where I found it, assuming that at least it might provide something with an easy meal.

I continued over the site, seeking out the more sheltered areas and eventually found a couple of Dukes – both showing signs of wear. It is a bit early in the season to be blaming the weather, but it was windy so this was the best I could get:





.... and as I arrived back the hailstones and sleet have started again and continue as I type 🤔🤔

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 29-Apr-16 03:58 PM GMT

I have been trying to make the best of a bad job. I feel incredibly guilty for messing up the natural life-cycle of the WLH, with No. 1 (a male) emerging so early, so my dilemma was - what to do now? I try to take note of those more experienced than me. It had been suggested that if the WLH were released individually it was unlikely that they would find each other. I confess I do not really understand this as they emerge individually in the wild and seem to manage OK. Furthermore, the site they came from only has one Elm tree. However, with this in mind I decided the best course of action was to try to release them as a group so I actively tried to speed up the emergence of the others, rightly or wrongly, by bringing the pupa indoors. One by one they emerged. The first to emerge was a female but on the day I introduced her to No 1 he died! I was gutted. With hindsight I still wonder if there was some genetic problem with this individual which caused his metabolism to speed up. The next to emerge was also a female..... and then another female. With 3 females I was praying that the last (No 6) would be a male. My prayers were answered. They were now all outside in a cage, but the plan to release them as a group was put on hold with the freezing temperatures, sleet and hail. Furthermore, I had been advised that the site from which they came was still quite barren and there was little nectar source. In the mesh cage, which had some protection, they were inactive, would not feed, and looked miserable. This was not how I wanted them to end their days so I took a decision to bring them indoors, get them feeding, and then release them when the weather improved a little. Having them indoors gave me a great opportunity to observe them at close quarters and I have been doing a lot of that over the last 5-6 days. In fact for the first 48 hours I was checking them every 15 mins during daylight hours.

On 27 April, just after mid-day, I witnessed a mating. Great, I thought. Now I could release the group with a slightly easier conscience - but the weather was dreadful. I really didn't think that the female would successfully produce eggs in these conditions - and there were still another 2 females. Despite the weather outside I felt quite comfortable about having the WLH indoors as they seemed to be indulging in normal behaviour and did not appear stressed. I had put one of the parrot's UV lamp over their cage and they seemed to enjoy sunbathing under it in the manner I have seen them in the wild - lying virtually on their side on a leaf directly under it before taking their solution off a leaf.

On 28 April, I witnessed another mating, whilst a different female indulged in a 'pretend' egg-laying session - perhaps a rehearsal for the real thing. In between times, I have seen the male approach a female (side by side) and bend his abdomen round in a u-shape in an attempt to mate, only to be rejected. This pro-active behaviour is very different from the early days when it was the females who repeatedly approached the male.

Today, 29th April, I have witnessed actual egg-laying. I can see 2 but I am not sure how many have been laid or who by. I have frequently wished I could tell the difference between the females (a nick in the wing or whatever) but I cannot. I have not been able to take many photos as I will not disturb them but I have managed to get a couple of shots through the mesh - possibly my worst ever.

I have taken the opportunity to read my Frohawk manuals among others but information in there is limited and I have no idea how long they can be expected to live. He cites examples of Green Hairstreaks living in captivity for 40 days with the same individual egg-laying over a period of weeks. I really am not sure where I go from here and I'm taking each day as it comes, trying to do my best as usual. It was never my intention to 'get into' captive breeding, but because of circumstances, this seems to be the case. The eggs have been laid on a small (potted) Elm tree. At some point I hope that the eggs, or the imago will be returned to the original site in a timely manner.



### Re: Pauline

by andy brown, 29-Apr-16 08:27 PM GMT

Well done with the WLH, you saved them from having no chance through to completing their life cycle. Let's hope they are viable and successful next year.

BW

Andy

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 30-Apr-16 10:46 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, I've just read Jamie's post where he says he's found WLH eggs on an Elm Tree, maybe you could put the eggs being laid back onto the Elm Tree where you found the previous ones. In this way the cycle will be completed, you could always keep the WLH butterflies where they are for now. I don't know too much about these things but it seems logical if there are eggs out there now yours put outside now will come out at the right time in July. What do you think? 🤔 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Jamie Burston, 30-Apr-16 05:55 PM GMT

#### Goldie M wrote:

Hi! Pauline, I've just read Jamie's post where he says he's found WLH eggs on an Elm Tree, maybe you could put the eggs being laid back onto the Elm Tree where you found the previous ones. In this way the cycle will be completed, you could always keep the WLH butterflies where they are for now. I don't know too much about these things but it seems logical if there are eggs out there now yours put outside now will come out at the right time in July. What do you think? 🤔 Goldie 😊

It's true that today I have checked on a White-letter Hairstreak egg which hasn't hatched (if it will is uncertain). The normal scenario is that females will lay eggs in June–August. "The fully-formed caterpillar remains in the egg until the following spring."

I'm not sure if this dormant period during winter is a factor which might help their survival rate, does anyone know?

If it doesn't, as it says the caterpillar is fully-formed within the egg, if you were to put these eggs back into the wild, tied onto the Elm, with the warming temperatures it's likely to trigger hatching. The issue would be around what the situation with the Elm tree is, some species of Elm begin

flowering before others. It would depend (not completely) on whether the destined tree was in flower, seed, opening leaf buds, or in leaf. White-letter Hairstreak caterpillars feed on every stage of the trees cycle. Pauline, it's completely your choice what you do 😊 I'm just following-up on Goldie's suggestion.

What is the current stage that the original tree is in?

Looking forward to future posts.  
All the best, Jamie

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-Apr-16 06:29 PM GMT

I thought I (roughly) understood this process Jamie, but I now feel totally confused and wonder if you could clarify a few things for me so that I can make a more informed decision:

#### Jamie Burston wrote:

if you were to put these eggs back into the wild, tied onto the Elm, with the warming temperatures it's likely to trigger hatching.

Clearly I would not want this to happen Jamie as then the larva really would be way out of sync and unable to survive the winter presumably. However, why would that happen? If hatching is triggered by warm temperatures then surely over the warm period between June and August all eggs laid in the wild would hatch? I am assuming there must surely be a period of some development inside the egg before it reaches a stage where it can hatch. I am also mindful of the egg Paul had which hatched quite early in the fridge and certainly hadn't been subjected to warm temperatures prematurely. I guess what I am really aiming for – one way or another – is to synchronise these eggs so they hatch at the appropriate time in 2017. If anyone has had experience of this and has any advice to offer then please feel free to chip in with this discussion.

### Re: Pauline

by Jamie Burston, 30-Apr-16 06:51 PM GMT

#### Pauline wrote:

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#### Jamie Burston wrote:

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I've now confused myself! I was hoping to help. 😊 It's purely all an assumption as I've never heard of White-letter Hairstreak eggs hatching the same year they have been laid (two broods!). What I meant was that given it's unfamiliar territory it could potentially be the case that as the eggs are going to experience more warmer days (we all hope 😊) that it could allow the caterpillars to make up for the time taken in winter to develop. Proceeding to hatch as they would be developing further in later and warmer spring weather to that they might be subjected to normally.

If this doesn't make sense I wouldn't worry, it's all guess work and we learn along the way by observation.

Your aim to have them hatch in 2017 is a great one, sorry I can't help you with suggestions to achieve this! Premature stages is all very new to me, this year really in fact.

All the best,  
Jamie

### Re: Pauline

by MrSp0ck, 30-Apr-16 09:16 PM GMT

I would leave the eggs on the young elm tree and let them overwinter outside in the garden, then transfer the larvae back into the wild when they start stripping the young elm. They would then be in sync with the 2017 brood. I think the eggs need a winter before they want to hatch.

### Re: Pauline

by Jamie Burston, 30-Apr-16 10:25 PM GMT

Found it!

In the book "Butterfly Watching, Paul Whalley, Seven House Naturalist's Library" (Common Blue on front cover)  
The text from Paul Whalley is dated 1980, some unheard of things mentioned in this book, as your read below –

Going off topic but int the book it says: Large Copper – "introduced into the fens of East Anglia in 1927 still survives."

Under White-letter Hairstreak it says:

**"Life-cycles** Eggs laid singly in forks of twigs of Elm and Lime where they spend the winter, hatching following spring after 8 to 9 months. Caterpillars feed on Elm, Lime and other trees; fully grown after 6 weeks. Chrysalids last 26 days.

**Adult butterfly life** Up to 3 weeks.

**Flight period** July to August."

"Lime and other trees" – What?!?!

## Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 30-Apr-16 11:45 PM GMT

### Jamie Burston wrote:

Found it!

In the book "Butterfly Watching, Paul Whalley, Seven House Naturalist's Library" (Common Blue on front cover)  
The text from Paul Whalley is dated 1980, some unheard of things mentioned in this book, as your read below –

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**Adult butterfly life** Up to 3 weeks.

**Flight period** July to August."

"Lime and other trees" – What?!?!

Not that I didn't believe you but I had to check that in my copy, how odd 🤔. I looked in a few older books I have (1930's/40s) and they all state Wych Elm as a fav and occasionally Common Elm, the only mention of another tree is in 'Larval Foodplants' by P. B. M. Allan which states "has been found on Ash".

Going even further off topic but another curiosity I just read in 'Pocket Book of British Butterflies and Moths' by Charles A. Hall published 1938 (reprint 1950) Duke of Burgundy.... "the larvae feeds on Primrose and Dock, hiding under the plant during the day." and the next entry for the Grizzled Skipper states that it is found in Ireland 🤔

Sorry to hijack your diary Pauline

## Re: Pauline

by trevor, 01-May-16 05:26 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

May I add my two penny worth to the above posting.

Last Summer I found a single White Letter Hairstreak along the old railway in Hailsham ( image in my diary ), and the above information is particularly interesting because I'm pretty certain there are no Elms in the area, Plenty of Ash though, and other tree species.

Many thanks,  
Trevor.

## Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 01-May-16 06:51 PM GMT

### trevor wrote:

Hi Pauline,

May I add my two penny worth to the above posting.

Last Summer I found a single White Letter Hairstreak along the old railway in Hailsham ( image in my diary ), and the above information is particularly interesting because I'm pretty certain there are no Elms in the area, Plenty of Ash though, and other tree species.

Many thanks,  
Trevor.

I'd just like to clarify, I'm not for a second suggesting that WLH feed on anything other than Elms, just commenting on some peculiarities in some books. '...Found on Ash' was more than likely an errant wanderer, perhaps searching for a pupation site. As Pauline shows in this PD they do like to wander! And so do the adults, how else would they find isolated Elms to colonise, your one Trever could well just be inbetween two Elms. I think only Paul Whalley can clear up the oddities in Butterfly Watching... most likely an honest mistake not picked up in the editing process.

### Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 01-May-16 09:25 PM GMT

Lime is a frequently cited foodplant for *w-album*. Higgins and Riley mention it, as does Carter, in the *Caterpillars of Europe*. I only have the French edition of this latter book, but it gives: 'Ormes (*Ulmus glabra*, *Ulmus procera* ...), Tilleuls (*Tilia*), Aulnes (*Alnus*), Chênes (*Quercus*) ...' Often, what this really means is that caterpillars have been persuaded to take these plants in captivity – but perhaps females will also lay on them *in extremis*.

Guy

### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 01-May-16 10:22 PM GMT

#### Padfield wrote:

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Guy

Interesting, Higgind & Riley even listing Lime before Elm, perhaps a case of chinese whispers in the late 70's/early 80's ?

I'll hand this PD back to Pauline now... 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-May-16 08:02 AM GMT

Thank you to all for some very interesting input and discussion. When time permits I shall re-read some of my old books, hopefully from a position of now being better informed. Whilst early naturalists clearly did some remarkable work with their observations and recording, they were not infallible (Gilbert White springs to mind with his speculation that Swallows hibernated in reed beds by lakes) and were sometimes contradictory. When inaccuracies are discovered within a text it is difficult to decide to what extent other details can be relied upon. This highlights the importance of accurate research, keen observation and meticulous recording in current times. It is too easy for assumptions to be widely propagated, becoming fact in the process. One example from my early butterfly days is having been told repeatedly from respected individuals that Brown Hairstreaks do not come down in the afternoon. This is clearly not true as I have seen them in the afternoon and early evening taking nectar from flowers at 3 different sites. This is also the reason I am considering rearing my WLH eggs again – my experience has been very limited to date but I can find no text that states the larva pupate in soil/leaf litter, despite that being the clear preference of the individuals in my care, and in line with other British hairstreaks (with the exception of Black). I would like the opportunity to test this aspect again.

I can now see 5 WLH eggs so I am back to where I started with a second chance to get it right (if I decide to go down that route). I may well decide to keep the tree in the mesh cage to protect the eggs and at an appropriate stage plant the tree on the original site. I shall consider all options carefully before I decide.



I should report that 2 of the WLH have now died. Their lifespan of 12 days falls well short of the 40 days stated by Frohawk for Green Hairstreaks and is even well below the 'up to 3 weeks' suggested by one of the texts above. Despite being in captivity I believe these individuals have indulged in natural behaviour – mating, egg-laying, 'sun-bathing', taking in food, etc. All these activities were conducted in the manner I have witnessed in the wild. Only the sparring of the males has been absent, but with only one male at a time there was obviously no competition. I have no reason to think the butterflies were stressed. The last few days they have been in the garden enjoying the sunshine (which incidentally resulted in an 'explosion' of 26 Whites emerging!)

Thank you for your comment Andy – you, more than most, know how much time, effort, care and money goes into this activity.

## Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 02-May-16 01:16 PM GMT

You are correct to point out that a lot of the literature on animal behaviour is suspect. Too many authors simply repeat what has been written in earlier texts, without testing the information for themselves. Of course, there is also the trap of basing too much on behaviour in captivity. In the 20th century, far too much reliance was placed on observations made in zoos, for example. I think that, in the case of common butterflies, it is not too difficult to provide a good approximation to their natural habitat, especially in the larval stages, and I'm sure that there are plenty of valuable observations to be made by dedicated people such as yourself.

Incidentally, the situation is far worse in the plant world, where the habitat requirements of many plants are based on the information from a single grower – if their plant grew in wet conditions, say, then that is stated as their preference, even though the plant might have been a particularly hardy specimen, which simply put up with completely the wrong conditions!

Mike

**Edited** in response to Peter Eeles comment (below) to clarify that I am referring to common species, without specialised larval requirements

## Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 02-May-16 07:58 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Just catching up on your dairy ,great reports and superb images as always and some interesting discussion. I agree with the comments about 'wisdom' that is repeated in some books. I have read a number of comments in various books about some species only flying in sunshine and then have seen them myself flying in quite dull conditions.

I have also read that some species seem to use a wider range of foodplants on the continent than they do here in the UK and wonder if this is what has led to some of the seemingly conflicting information. The continental race of Swallowtail compared to our British one being one case just off the top of my head.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pete Eeles, 03-May-16 12:12 AM GMT

**Pauline wrote:**

This is also the reason I am considering rearing my WLH eggs again – my experience has been very limited to date but I can find no text that states the larva pupate in soil/leaf litter, despite that being the clear preference of the individuals in my care. I would like the opportunity to test this aspect again.

I have a very strong suspicion that the conditions that your larvae were subjected to were anything but natural (rearing out of season, with few elm leaves present, on elm cuttings) and this is what led to this behaviour.

– Pete

**Re: Pauline**

by Pete Eeles, 03-May-16 12:24 AM GMT

**MikeOxon wrote:**

I think that, in the case of butterflies, it is not too difficult to provide a good approximation to their natural habitat, especially in the larval stages

While this may be true of many species, this isn't true of all species, and certainly not specialist species. Which is why the recommendation for those wanting to captive rear (e.g. schools) is to start with a widespread species that don't have specific requirements – such as Large White or Small Tortoiseshell.

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 03-May-16 02:36 PM GMT

**Pete Eeles wrote:**

I have a very strong suspicion that the conditions that your larvae were subjected to were anything but natural (rearing out of season, with few elm leaves present, on elm cuttings) and this is what led to this behaviour.

You may well be right Pete but to my mind this is all the more reason to check it out by repeating the process, hopefully doing a much better job next time. With that in mind I would be delighted to hear from others who have successfully reared this species in the past, and the methods which were used.

With regard to my Glanville cats I am delighted that they have now started to pupate (within the expected time frame) and what a gorgeous pupa – totally unexpected and my shots don't do them justice:





Likewise, this glorious weather has galvanised my WA into action. Although they still seem tiny I am reassured by the fact that this one can clearly be seen eating:



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 04-May-16 08:12 AM GMT

Moths should obviously be afforded the same care and attention as butterflies (in all their stages). Although this is a butterfly site – and I am sure Guidelines on Moth Trapping are available on moth sites – I came across advice on this site by a respected individual, relating to moth trapping, albeit from many years ago. It was stated that moth traps should not be run in the same area more than once every 2 weeks as it was likely that by doing so the same moth would be trapped, depriving it of the opportunity to feed and breed for more than one night. Furthermore, moths should not be tipped out into foliage or grass as it was very probable that they would not survive the many predators. It was by far preferable to keep them safely and release them at dusk the following evening. Although I already adhere to these principles, as there are many folk on this site who are more knowledgeable than me in this area, I wondered if this was still considered to be best practice or whether there is anything else I should be considering to ensure their safety and well-being? A few moths from last night's trap which included half a dozen each of Brindled Beauty and Hebrew Character and these which I am struggling to identify:



I reckon this is Clouded Drab



Smaller than the Clouded Drab, a very pale moth with some mottling 'playing dead', I think this might be a Powdered Quaker?

The next one didn't excite me but is included as I haven't seen one before – I'm assuming it is a Brindled Pug:



.... and yesterday, out in the field I found this lovely fresh Mother Shipton moth, my first of the year. I love the markings on this moth which always brings back fond memories of my visit to Mother Shipton's grotto:



Still no Pine Beauty 😞 despite having Scots Pine in my garden and around me!

### Re: Pauline

by William, 04-May-16 09:06 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I agree with the Pug, looks like Brindled to me. I'm not too sure about trapping frequencies, I don't think that it is the case that you should trap every 2 weeks, certainly the official Garden Moth Survey operates on a basis of weekly trapping, and most observers trap several times a week – one worth enquiring further about.

Regarding the release of moths, I always put the egg trays (and all the moths) in a trug in a cool, sheltered (but open) shed, with rabbit netting on top (to prevent predators getting at them), so that they can fly off of their own accord in the evening.

BWs,

William

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-May-16 03:08 PM GMT

Thank you William both for the confirmation of ID and the advice. As you know I am relatively new to this. It would seem that the views expressed on this website previously about moth trapping are well out of date. It has been suggested to me that moths are rarely caught more than once – apparently tests were performed whereby trapped moths were marked to determine whether they were subsequently re-caught. However, I thought it was worth asking the questions.

I have been trying to make the most of this glorious weather, making brief visits to local sites. On Noar Hill I have seen a maximum of 12 Dukes on any one visit, all males, in various states of wear and tear:



Rake Bottom was alive with Grizzled and Dingy Skippers but I could only find one Green Hairstreak which was slightly damaged, no doubt due to the brambles he was flying around:



Last but not least was a Holly Blue, about 15ft up in my garden, but very welcome none the less as it is the first I have seen this season bringing my total up to just 13!



**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 05-May-16 05:55 PM GMT

Nice, productive day you had there, Pauline, and that Green Hairstreak is a peach – a lovely line of 'streaks' on the hindwing!

**Re: Pauline**

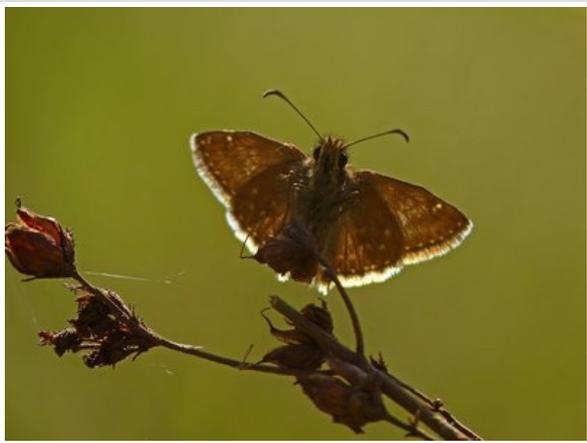
by Pauline, 06-May-16 04:44 PM GMT

Thank you David. Today I saw my first Small Heath bringing the total to 14 – creeping up slowly! On Noar Hill I only counted 7 or 8 Dukes but as I wasn't actually looking for them there were probably loads more. My attention was directed towards those gorgeous green butterflies and I saw more of these than I did Dukes right across the site:





Lots of Dingy Skippers, one of which provided a slightly different view:



### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 06-May-16 05:00 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Lovely Green Hairstreaks 😊. Hopefully I will find some of my own this weekend.

I think Wurzel would be proud of that Dingy Skipper 😊

### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 06-May-16 05:36 PM GMT

Great stuff Pauline, Since I saw my first Greenie last year I couldn't wait for them to appear again! I'm up to 17 species this year now, at last things are moving along nicely 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 06-May-16 07:46 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Beautiful Green Hairstreaks 😊

I have just read your previous comments asking about frequency of moth trapping, as you know I am a beginner at this myself but whenever I get interested in something I read up on everything I can find. I have also joined a couple of moth groups on facebook which have been extremely helpful, especially with IDs. The only thing I have read about trapping every other week was with regard to building up a species list for a location and the recommendation was to trap at least fortnightly and to vary the dates in following seasons in order to build up the most comprehensive list. Most advice I have read about trapping in gardens says not to trap every night unless you can release your moths a little way away from your trapping location. Some apparently trap in the back garden and release in the front and say they seldom catch the same moths again.

If you haven't already seen it, the link below is to a website I have found useful

<http://www.eakringbirds.com/mothstrapping.htm>

Especially this page which is useful for identifying the Quakers and Drabs

<http://www.eakringbirds.com/eakringbirds4/quakermothid.htm>

Lots of clear skies here lately which has kept moth numbers down but tonight looks better with some high level cloud so my trap is out.

All the best,

Neil.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-May-16 06:23 AM GMT

Thank you Paul. I love the way they can change colour depending on the light or background. Some really fresh ones around at the moment. Good luck.

Thank you Buggy. My target is a mating pair 😊😄 I nearly had one today too!

I appreciate you sending those articles Neil. I notice it states that running a moth trap for a couple of hours is more than adequate 'as it has less impact on moth behaviour and breeding'. That's something I didn't think of doing, tending to leave it all night - another lesson learnt. That's a very comprehensive guide Neil but I'm afraid it has left me a little confused and I am now inclined to revise my earlier ID's. Perhaps my Clouded Drab is a Lead-coloured Drab? (I have no shots of the antennae which would have been helpful). I now think my Powdered Quaker is a Small Quaker. What do you reckon?

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-May-16 06:44 AM GMT

One of the reasons for my visit to Noar Hill yesterday was to check the progress of the wild BH eggs as I noted that the eggs I brought back on the discarded twigs in January have hatched (apart from one). I hadn't checked them in quite some time, more than happy to leave them to their own devices but when I noticed tiny signs of feeding damage I was tempted to carefully remove the mesh for a quick look. I didn't disturb them for many moments but I was able to quickly locate 2 tiny larva - right at the top of the plant, although the twigs holding the eggs were attached at a much lower level. I had assumed they would head for the nearest bud but clearly not:





I focused my search on the Triangle as I had a rough idea of where the eggs were. I was pleased to see for the most part the development of the Blackthorn was commensurate with my own although there was some that was still quite bare. I soon located 4 eggs, all of which had hatched, and I noticed feeding damage similar to that on my own plant. One of the eggs looked as though it may have been predated as the hole was wide and jagged as opposed to the neat circle I am used to seeing:



Given that so much has been cut down around the few remaining small Blackthorn in this small area, the eggs/larva here are surely more exposed to birds etc. I will continue to monitor this area as on this occasion I could find no larva. However, given their size (based on the feeding damage) it is more than likely they were tucked away somewhere, hopefully safe and sound.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 07-May-16 10:38 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, Brown Hair Streaks, great look forward to seeing them 😊

Your up to 14 species now that's 5 more than I've got , things are really slow here, when you find them they're just ones are two's so I've been lucky but having to travel to do so with the exception of yesterday when I'd a nice surprise in my garden, a Female OT. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 07-May-16 06:28 PM GMT

#### Pauline wrote:

...I appreciate you sending those articles Neil. I notice it states that running a moth trap for a couple of hours is more than adequate 'as it has less impact on moth behaviour and breeding'. That's something I didn't think of doing, tending to leave it all night – another lesson learnt. That's a very comprehensive guide Neil but I'm afraid it has left me a little confused and I am now inclined to revise my earlier ID's. Perhaps my Clouded Drab is a Lead-coloured Drab? (I have no shots of the antennae which would have been helpful). I now think my Powdered Quaker is a Small Quaker. What do you reckon?

Hi Pauline,

I usually run my trap in the garden all night as well and get up early to see to it before the birds have much chance to get at the moths. This is actually easier for me in the week as I get up just at 05.15 for work anyway. Not so easy at weekends when I tend to get up for the trap if I have run it and then go back to bed for a couple of hours 😊 If you are trapping away from home and don't want to leave a trap unattended then that is obviously another matter. It is also worth remembering that some species don't fly until later in the night, well after midnight in some cases. A good example of this was when we were at the moth night at Ryton the other week. One of the traps was empty when checked just before we all departed just after 01.00am but when the ranger went back later in the morning it had 6 Powdered Quakers in it.

Your first two photos certainly could be Lead-coloured Drab, I reckon I would be about 90% certain of that one. The Powdered/Small Quaker looks like a faded Common Quaker to me. Small Quakers really are smaller in comparison to CQs and Powdered are a little larger. Having now seen SQ and PQ in the flesh at Ryton I am now more confident with these.

All the best,

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 08-May-16 05:12 PM GMT

I saw your lovely OT's Goldie – just shows, often pays to stay close to home 😊 . I'll try to ensure the BH's are on time for you – by doing absolutely nothing except leaving them to their own devices 😊

Some interesting points there Neil and I'm content to go with your ID's even if you are only 90% on the Lead-coloured Drab. Last night I had 5 new moth species but 2 flew before I could get any shots. They were easy to ID tho' being very distinctive – Treble Lines and Scalloped Hook-tip. Another newbie I was pleased to see was the Pine Beauty (even if it was a bit worn). The other 2 were (I think) Lunar Marbled Brown and Nut-tree Tussock, which wouldn't stop quivering before taking flight.





and a lovely Hebrew Character:



**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 08-May-16 05:16 PM GMT

A quick update on the Glanville pupa which is now just over a week old. Shots taken from slightly different angles:





I am sad to report that the last WLH, the male, died yesterday, living a day longer than the females – he's all yours now Jamie – I shall keep him somewhere safe with a female until you are ready for them.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-May-16 06:42 AM GMT

Not usually able to get out at weekends but I managed to 'escape' for a short while yesterday afternoon for a brief visit to Noar Hill, and boy, was it hot! I was not the only one affected by the extreme temperatures. Rather than the manically active butterflies I had anticipated, they, too, seemed to be conserving their energies and were more concerned with finding respite from the intense heat, seeking out shade in hollows, under leaves and in the denser thickets. When perched with wings closed they would face away from the sun, exposing the least amount of their body as possible to the sun's rays – in very much the same way a Grayling positions itself when attempting to cast no shadow which might give away its presence. My first sighting of a Small Heath brought my total up to 16 (having at last seen a Red Admiral in the garden on Saturday).







### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-May-16 02:08 PM GMT

Cast your mind back to July 2015. It seems a long time ago now but that's when my Emperor Moth cats pupated. I have been getting a little anxious recently wondering if they would ever emerge, but today, when I returned home I found a gorgeous male had recently emerged:





This is the same creature when he was a little nipper – yes, it was the one with yellow spots (as opposed to the pink one) and the one which I recorded at the time was the smaller of the 2 cats. As he was the cat which pupated deep in the heather as opposed to on the mesh there can be no mistake:





### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 09-May-16 09:35 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Glad to see you got your Pine Beauty 😊 Strangely enough, since I had mine the other week I have been looking out for local Pine trees and the nearest I have found are a couple of old Scots Pines about half a mile from my house.

Love your Emperor Moth images 😊, I have a few captive bred cocoons waiting to emerge myself. From what I am hearing they are just emerging around here, late like a lot of other things. There is a concerted effort to try and map this species distribution around Warwickshire with volunteers taking caged virgin female out and about to try and assemble males to them. Another snippet of information I recently learned is that they will sometimes take a couple of years to emerge from pupation, particularly in a bad spring. I believe that a number of moth species do this and I am beginning to suspect it sometimes happens with some butterflies as well.

All the best,

Neil

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-May-16 06:00 AM GMT

Thank you Neil. I really enjoyed rearing this species and I spent far too many hours watching the cats. I am hoping it won't be too long before the one with pink spots emerges. It would be great if it was a female. I had heard that it can take 2 years for the moth to emerge but I wasn't sure how true that was. I am intrigued that you suspect it may be the same for some butterflies – I would love to know more of your thinking on that and which species you suspect?

Yesterday I was ferreting about looking for anything interesting when I came across what I believe to be a Ringlet larva. I think it is a Ringlet because exactly a year ago to the day I found a similar cat but in a different location, miles away:





Closer to home my WA continue to do well:



**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 10-May-16 08:32 AM GMT

Lovely shots of moths and Glanville cats Pauline.

The Butterflies have been hiding here from the heat as well but I did get another OT Female in the garden again on Sunday 😊 No Dukes at Gait Barrow yet though. Goldie 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-May-16 12:25 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie – it's kind of you to say so. With the weather being what it is I thought I would take the opportunity to take what may well be the last shot of the Glanvilles before they pupate:



## Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 12-May-16 07:35 PM GMT

### Pauline wrote:

...I had heard that it can take 2 years for the moth to emerge but I wasn't sure how true that was. I am intrigued that you suspect it may be the same for some butterflies – I would love to know more of your thinking on that and which species you suspect?...

Hi Pauline,

I am sure I have heard somewhere that Orange-tips have been known to occasionally emerge after a second winter in the pupal stage. I remember having a conversation with some Warwickshire BC members a couple of years back and this subject was brought up and a few of us had heard of it. I don't for a minute think it happens often, and perhaps just rarely with one or two species but it just seems that it is a viable way of nature hedging her bets and if it happens with some moths then why not occasionally with some butterflies. Nature is full of surprises 😊

All the best,

Neil

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-May-16 04:27 PM GMT

Thank you for that explanation Neil. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if that has been recorded in the past – stranger things have happened!

Well, I just couldn't resist the opportunity of seeing such a beautiful butterfly. I didn't manage to get any shots as beautifully posed as the one's which Dave succeeded in getting. In fact, mine were rather a 'grab the camera, press the shutter' sort of effort 😊. This butterfly never stopped moving except to briefly grab some nectar, the sugar rush leaving it once again super charged! Gorgeous insect tho' 😊



By way of comparison:





I saw a couple of females egg-laying and when they had left the scene I checked out the egg situation. This one is only about one minute old:







Anyone thinking of visiting over the weekend would be well advised to go when there is a chance of some cloud cover or later in the day when they are slowing down a little.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 13-May-16 06:52 PM GMT

You lucky so and so Pauline 🍷🍷😄 lovely Butterfly Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by millerd, 13-May-16 07:37 PM GMT

I'm glad you got to see this butterfly, Pauline – you got some great shots! 😊 I particularly like the first underside and also the oblique view on the bugle flower. It sounds much more animated than it was yesterday morning and still looks pretty new.

Dave

### Re: Pauline

by trevor, 13-May-16 07:52 PM GMT

I'm glad that very unusual Pearl ab was able to be enjoyed by such an appreciative audience. I've read Dave's account, and my serious regret is that I wasn't there! 🍷  
Still, I have plenty of Pearls locally to enjoy.

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 13-May-16 10:27 PM GMT

Great stuff Pauline 😊🍷 I just hope that it's still there tomorrow morning! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-May-16 06:49 PM GMT

I certainly am lucky Goldie – both to have seen that gorgeous butterfly and also to have the flexibility to drop everything and go (even if it was for just a couple of hours!) 😊

It's very kind of you to say so Dave and I appreciate the compliment. I didn't have much time there but if I'd been able to spend several days with it, I doubt I would have got a shot as good as the very first one you posted. I absolutely love it on the leaf which complements its colours beautifully (I should be saying this in your diary 😊). It was definitely much more active than you described and quite wide-ranging, as you stated interacting only minimally with the other Pearls. Thank you.

It certainly seems you have plenty of Pearls locally Trevor – so lucky as I have a fair old trek to see any 😊

I hope you got lucky Wurzel. I was thinking about you and watching the weather which was quite variable, and I hoped that would be in your favour 😊  
Don't keep us waiting too long!

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-May-16 08:27 PM GMT

I managed a couple of hours out this afternoon, just wandering around Noar Hill with no particular target in mind. There were loads of Dukes – I mean loads! – in all states of wear and tear. What amused me was that so many of them seemed to be starving with their heads stuck down a particular yellow

flower (afraid I don't know what it is called but it is a bit like a buttercup 😊):



I was pleased to see my first Common Blues of the year, several of them flying around the area where I recently found the Blue cat with the ants. Whenever I have visited Noar Hill since then, I have made a point of checking that ant's hill to look for a pupa without success. It would be nice to think that one of the butterflies I photographed today was that same cat. The Common Blues also had their heads stuck down the same yellow flower:



It wasn't difficult to locate Duke eggs so I guess all that egg-laying had given them an appetite 😊 . After finding 5 lots I gave up looking:



I made my way over to the triangle where, on my last visit, I had found the BH eggs which had hatched. I was hoping by now that I might detect some signs of feeding as my reared ones are eating well and growing. However, I could find no trace. I did come across this rather interesting moth which I initially thought was a bird dropping 😊



and this horrible looking bug, the likes of which I have never seen:



There were also many of these among the blackthorn along with a variety of other predators – it is a marvel that any of the immature stages survive to produce the next generation:



I strolled further on to the next chalkpit where I spotted a Green Hairstreak ovi-posting. She was really well camouflaged down in the grass.



It was time to make my way back, having only managed to get half way across the site. I turned my attention to some of the birds, wishing I was better at identifying them:



**Re: Pauline**

by jenks, 15-May-16 08:54 PM GMT

Hi,

the bird is a male Yellowhammer, singing its heart out ! And I think the flower is a Meadow Buttercup but I stand to be corrected as I`m no expert on flora.

Lovely photos as always.

Jenks

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 15-May-16 10:21 PM GMT

Great shots of the Pearl ab Pauline, I would have posted before now but was busy finding it myself 😊 I love the final, washed out Duke shot, I bet it still had a lot of fight in it though!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 16-May-16 03:54 PM GMT

Good to hear from you again Jenks and thank you for the ID's. D'you know, I initially thought Yellowhammers but I'm sure the last one I saw (a few years ago) was all brown with just a yellow head. So then I thought perhaps they were youngsters. Now I am wondering if they have different plumage with the seasons or increased age. So much to learn!

Cheers Wurzel – sounds like you had some success? 😊

2 abs in 1 week would have been 2 good to be true! Still, it was good to visit a new site – something I try to do each season – and I thank Martin and Fred for the guided tour and for making the visit both enjoyable and informative. A few shots from HB:







### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 16-May-16 04:03 PM GMT

Lovely photos Pauline 🍷 not much going on here yet and we're back in the cold UGH! Still I'll soon be down there in just a few weeks now, hope there's some thing left to see 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 16-May-16 06:41 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie - not long now 😊

If it hadn't been for the ab. which was seen at HB, today I would have been doing normal 'stuff' which would have included a visit to the bank this afternoon. Because of my trip to Croydon I didn't have time for such mundane activities but I did have to nip out for some animal food. 5 police cars stood outside the bank which was cordoned off and a number of folk were being interviewed. Word in the village is that the bank has been raided and a couple of the customers shot 😊 All I can say is, I hope they have taken my overdraft 😊😊 Thank you Glanvilles. On my return I was very pleased to see this waiting for me. I believe it is a female so Martin, you were quite correct, the pink spotted cat was a girl 😊





**Re: Pauline**

by MrSp0ck, 16-May-16 06:51 PM GMT

The 4th Glanville down is a female, the abdomen doesnt reach the bottom of the wings, and she is a bit pale in colour.

I hope the female Emperor drags in a male tomorrow, if one couldnt get to her today. it looks like she had been calling in the picture.

So it looks like "Pink" girl and "Yellow" boy. in the last instar larva, people should do more this year, to confirm.

**Re: Pauline**

by Susie, 16-May-16 08:06 PM GMT

Super photos as always, Pauline. Thank you for your help today and my thanks to Martin and Fred too. 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Maximus, 16-May-16 08:18 PM GMT

Lovely Glanville photos, Pauline, oh and that ab you saw last week wasn't bad either 😊👍

**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 16-May-16 09:11 PM GMT

Great recent set of posts, just wish I didn't live so far away from Bentley Wood, that ab is spectacular! Looks like you had a good time in South London as well, I'm going there again tomorrow afternoon before a run of 6 days at work 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 17-May-16 04:22 PM GMT

Thank you Martin – you know how long I have spent watching these pupa 😊😊 If mine EVER emerge (and you will be the first to know) I shall know which is which 😊

You're very kind Susie. It was good to see you again and I'm pleased to see you got some really good shots 😊

Thing is Mike, I just couldn't risk being chased by a helicopter again!! 😞😞😞 Yes, it was a smashing ab but my shots weren't a patch on the ones Dave posted 📷 Hope to catch up with you soon 😊

Thank you Buggy. You may have missed out on the Bentley ab but I hope you're keeping your eyes open for the Glanville ab which eluded me sadly.

(ps. I think the moth I saw on the the last visit to Noar Hill was a Plum Tortrix – an interesting looking moth and surprisingly my book has it down as a micro!! Perhaps I'm getting into the micros after all 😊).

Today I have spent even more hours watching paint dry, ie, pupa. Through desperation (and boredom) I now have over 700 shots of a pupa 😊😊 I decided it was time to check on the BH cats. The salvaged eggs were all tied to the same plant and I thought they had all hatched at about the same time (but I could be wrong on that). I found 3 of them quite quickly and what surprised me was the difference in size from really quite small to a fair bit bigger – and something in between. It is a pity I couldn't get a shot of them all lined up together 😊 but here they are individually:



### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 17-May-16 08:15 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, I just love the Glanvilles...and the Dukes...and that superb PBF ab. I am not in the slightest bit jealous 📷📷📷📷

All the best,

Neil.

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-May-16 03:43 PM GMT

Thank you so much Neil, but y'know, I could say exactly the same about your diary! 🙄 You've been getting some smashing moths recently – a lot of the ones I hoped to see, the Muslin Moth for example. I seem to be a couple of weeks behind you so I am keeping my fingers crossed. Last night I had a fair few moths but I shall only post a few shots of my favourites. They are not good photos 😊 I normally take my moth shots quite early or quite late (and can therefore blame the poor light 😊). Given that it has been teeming most of the day I took advantage of a brief sunny spell to record them with the camera. Never again!! 20 seconds later they had all taken off up into the trees – and for those first 20 seconds they sat with quivering wings preparing for take-off! Anyway, I think this first is a Great Prominent which I haven't had before:



I've had both Lesser Swallow Prominent and Swallow Prominent but I'm still not quite sure which this is – the former I think but they are both gorgeous:



... and another couple of those gorgeous Pine Beauties altho' one looked like she had traveled down from your area 😊



Yesterday I returned my female Emperor Moth to the area where I found her as a tiny cat:



Almost immediately she re-positioned herself and I wondered if this odd and uncomfortable posture is associated with 'calling' for a male:



I hung around the area for about 90 minutes amusing myself with the Dingy and Grizzled Skippers, various cats and loads of micro moths. When I returned she was still alone 😞



It was warm and still so I left her but today, given the incessant rain, I became concerned about her and decided I would try to find her and bring her back until the weather abated. I looked for about 30 minutes getting totally drenched in the process but I couldn't find her 😞.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-May-16 04:17 PM GMT

Getting a little impatient waiting for the Glanville pupas to actually do something, so took a brief break to watch Green Hairstreaks egg-laying at Noar Hill. 2 females in the same area along with a female Holly Blue who, although in the distance, also seemed to be alternating egg-laying with sun-bathing – and then of course there was the Dukes who were also egg-laying. The slightly blurred wing might be a result of the strong breeze but more likely because I was a little unsteady on my feet – no, it's not an age thing; one foot was on an ant hill and the other half way down a slippery slope 😞 Can't decide which shots I like best so y'know what, I'm just going to stick them all up:







by Neil Freeman, 20-May-16 08:54 PM GMT

**Pauline wrote:**

Thank you so much Neil, but y'know, I could say exactly the same about your diary! 🍷 You've been getting some smashing moths recently – a lot of the ones I hoped to see, the Muslin Moth for example. I seem to be a couple of weeks behind you so I am keeping my fingers crossed. Last night I had a fair few moths but I shall only post a few shots of my favourites. They are not good photos 😊 I normally take my moth shots quite early or quite late (and can therefore blame the poor light 😊). Given that it has been teeming most of the day I took advantage of a brief sunny spell to record them with the camera. Never again!! 20 seconds later they had all taken off up into the trees – and for those first 20 seconds they sat with quivering wings preparing for take-off! Anyway, I think this first is a Great Prominent which I haven't had before...

...I've had both Lesser Swallow Prominent and Swallow Prominent but I'm still not quite sure which this is – the former I think but they are both gorgeous:

...It was warm and still so I left her but today, given the incessant rain, I became concerned about her and decided I would try to find her and bring her back until the weather abated. I looked for about 30 minutes getting totally drenched in the process but I couldn't find her 😞.

Hi Pauline,

I am not so sure that I am a couple of weeks ahead here, we are very late and things are slow to get going. I think it is more likely to be a case of us having different habitat close by. For example, I have only had one species of prominent so far – an Iron Prominent. I usually take my moth photos in the early evening. I don't have time in the morning before setting off for work, just enough to cover the trap and put it in the garage until I get back.

I would agree with your ID for the Great Prominent but not sure myself on the two 'Swallow' species.

Your female Emperor probably flew off during the night, the males are day flyers but the females are night flyers and during the day just sit around and wait for the males to find them.

Great images of the Green Hairstreaks and Duke 🍷😊

All the best,

Neil

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 20-May-16 10:32 PM GMT

Great shots Pauline 😊 I can't decide on my fave either so just as well you 'chucked' em all on 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 21-May-16 09:25 AM GMT

Thank you Neil – that's reassuring as I was worried that she had become dinner. I shall definitely be looking in this area again soon to see if I can locate any more of these cats.

Thank you too Wurzel – I've decided that my favourite is the second one down 😊 – this is the one that laid the egg in the photo. She laid 3 eggs on the one plant which surprised me having read that the larva are cannibalistic and given the massive amount of food plant available.

Sorting through some photos (as one does on a rainy Saturday morning whilst on a coffee break) I came across one I took of the first GVW I saw this season (bringing my total up to a mere 17). The shot was taken at Bentley Wood so in the excitement of seeing the Pearl ab. it was somewhat overlooked. However, what was noticeable was the size of this female – she was tiny, probably not quite as big as a Common Blue. At first I thought she must have only just emerged and still be pumping up her wings. I don't think this was the case on either count. I managed a dreadful shot of her with a male OT who fancied his chances, which I'm including for size comparison purposes only as this web site states OT and GVW are the same size. I have read that small larva, early pupation, small adults can be the consequence of food shortage but I imagine that is not the case in this location.



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-May-16 07:52 PM GMT

I have spent a great deal of time recently watching my Glanville pupa, keen to see an emergence and compare it to those I have seen in other species. There have been a couple of false alarms, eg on the 11th my first to pupate started to change shape and colour and began to move significantly. Ridiculously early but given my history (😁😁) I was convinced the emergence was imminent and spent 2 days watching it!! I eventually realised it just wasn't going to happen and as days went by I started to think perhaps it had died - there was no movement and no other changes and we are now into the 4th week since it pupated. Nevertheless, I kept watching them all and today in the sunshine several of them were moving so the vigil began yet again. To pass the time I took a few (hundred) more shots of the pupa 😊 :





As evening approached it was time to start preparing the evening feeds but shortly before 7.00pm I realised I had a butterfly 😊. Pity I missed the main event but hopefully I shall have other opportunities:





**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 22-May-16 10:06 PM GMT

Lovely detail in your shots Pauline, I saw a few of those today but not like/doing that 🤩🌍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 23-May-16 02:08 PM GMT

Thank you Wurzel. Nevertheless, I am sure you got some great shots and I shall look forward to seeing them 😊



Little darker than I am used to seeing. Within normal variation?

### Re: Pauline

by MrSpOck, 23-May-16 03:35 PM GMT

it looks like another ab. with extra black on the underside hindwing as well as the upperside. You might have got 2 abs. in a week anyway.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 23-May-16 04:00 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, great shots of the Duke's, hope it's another ab 😊 I'd have needed binocular's with a camera on the end to get a shot so close of my Duke 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-May-16 11:26 AM GMT

Looks like you might be right Martin 😊 but altho' I've perused the ab. list I have no idea which one it might be 😊

Thank you Goldie - I'm pleased you liked them 😊

It seems as if there are some benefits to watching paint dry (aka waiting for butterflies to emerge from pupa 😊). Sat at my post I saw a butterfly drop down from the 60' Leylandii onto some bread I'd thrown out for the birds. It was a race between me, the starlings and the hens as to who got there first - luckily I beat them all to it. I do believe this was a Brown Argus tho happy to be corrected on that. It didn't hang around long due to all the (unwanted) attention. Either way, it brings the garden total up to 21 species 😊. Can't imagine why the bread (sainsbury's basics bought specifically for the birds) was the focus of attention when there is so much nectar in the garden!



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-May-16 04:16 PM GMT

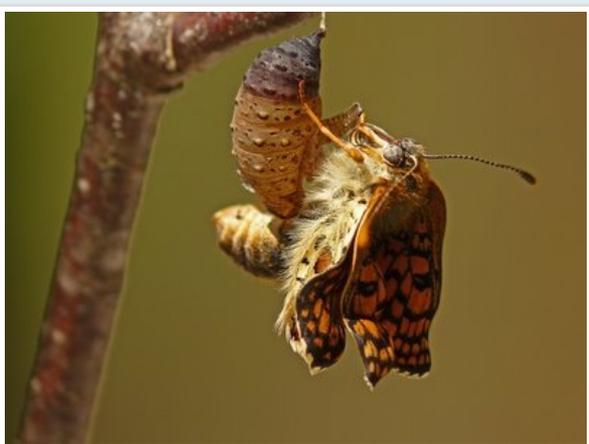
I've spent a fair bit of time lately watching Glanvilles in one form or another. The pupa seem to come in a multitude of shapes, sizes and colours, none of which can be used to reliably indicate when the butterfly is about to emerge. Sometimes they could be mistaken for wasps with their yellow and black markings whilst others range from a purple hue through to black. Some are long and thin whilst others are short and fat. They are frustrating and unpredictable and when the butterfly does actually emerge after days of teasing and tantalising it is like a mini explosion. Very reminiscent of the Dark Green Frillary I reared but on a smaller scale. Very fast indeed with no warning whatsoever. It really is a waiting game. None of mine to date have emerged in the morning, unlike most of Martin's. Having missed a couple actually emerge by a whisker I decided it was time to get serious and try to capture the moment with the camera. I was guessing that the next one to emerge was one I had some concerns over. The pupa appeared to have a deep 'crease' across one of the wings. I half expected that if this individual was able to emerge then it would at the very least be fairly damaged/disabled:

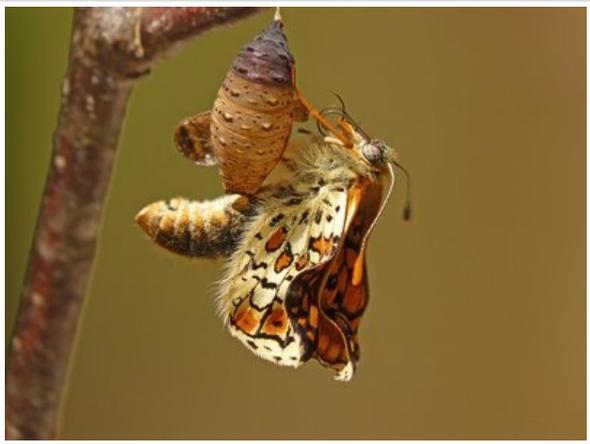


By 2.00pm yesterday I decided it was time for some lunch which I took into the garden with a drink and the crossword to occupy me as I watched the pupa. I have become quite adept at multi-tasking 😊 Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye I detected a sharp movement; plate, food, drink, paper went flying all over the garden as I leapt towards the camera. It didn't help that the breeze had picked up and the fragile creature was being buffeted about but I managed to get some shots in the short time it took for the wings to be inflated. The 'crease' along the left wing was initially very noticeable, as was a kink in the left antennae, but thankfully, as the wings inflated this disappeared leaving a perfect butterfly, albeit one which had a few problems sorting out her tongue:













Although I have now reared 14 species I found the Glanvilles very different from the others and at times quite difficult. For example, it seems that they often pump up one wing before the other – a fact I didn't know and which led to a few panics as I thought the first couple to emerge were destined to be disabled (not so). I am grateful to Martin for being such a good mentor – always on hand to give guidance and advice at every step of the process, keeping in touch on a regular basis to ensure that all was well and 'in step' with those at HB. I also very much appreciate that he gave me the opportunity to experience and learn about this species from their very early stages.

#### Re: Pauline

by MrSp0ck, 25-May-16 05:35 PM GMT

great to see you finally captured the hatching. Very much blink and you will miss it. We found 4 roosting Glanvilles today in the dull conditions.

#### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 26-May-16 08:15 PM GMT

Great shots of the Glanville's Pauline, that's another one I'll have to chalk up another year 😊 Goldie 😊

#### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 26-May-16 09:33 PM GMT

Wonderful sequence of pics, Pauline, and very informative. There's a lot to be learned about how the various events connected with emergence are controlled and timed so precisely.

Mike

#### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-May-16 02:28 PM GMT

Thank you Martin. As you know I must have spent at least 6-7 days attempting to witness that emergence. Thank goodness it's over 😊😊

Cheers Goldie – let us hope they are still around in future years.

I appreciate your comments Mike. I think my focus has changed a little this year from simply taking photographs to trying to learn as much as I can from each experience.

Yesterday I popped over to Botany Bay, the primary reason being to meet up with Jamie. I arrived a little early so whilst I was waiting I amused myself by seeing what I could find around the entrance. The first creature of interest was this Orange Tip cat, the only one I could find despite there being loads of the food plant around:



As usual I didn't have much time to spare and as Jamie was a little late I decided to check out the Wood Whites, confident that we would find each other eventually. Compared to many other species I find that these butterflies are quite easy to photograph and imo are very photogenic. I only counted about 12 individuals but was able to grab a shot almost every few paces.





One of these butterflies was really quite tiny; much, much smaller than the others. Once one butterfly has been located I find it easier just to keep an eye on it as they are much better than me at searching out more of their own kind. This was the case as I followed a female who landed on a stem where there were already 3 individuals which I would have otherwise likely overlooked. Before I could get a photo one decided to depart.



During cloudy periods I was happy to turn my attention to other creatures including this Cardinal Beetle and Common Carpet Moth. There was also a really strange creature which I think might be some kind of Weevil?



My highlight of the hour was discovering what I thought was an amazing looking cat and one which I have never seen before. I have looked at my books and believe it was (or likely to become) a Drinker Moth. Fantastic!



I took a few more shots of Wood Whites before Jamie and Doug appeared in the distance. Really nice to meet you Jamie and interesting to hear about your recent adventures. Nice to see you again too Doug.



**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 27-May-16 06:39 PM GMT

Lovely Photos Pauline, 🍷🍷 I suppose they'll have gone by the time I get down there 😞 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 27-May-16 08:22 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, lovely Wood Whites, hopefully I'll get to see them myself this year 😊.

Your strange 'insect' is a spider of some sort but I don't know what type. I've flicked through my ID guide but can't see anything that looks like it. Many species are highly variable in colour and pattern though. Sorry I can't be more help 😞

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 27-May-16 09:00 PM GMT

Thank you Buggy. You have confirmed what Vince suspected – a spider – and on that basis I have found the ID. Heliophanus Cupreus, the Copper Jumping Spider! Many thanks to you both for pointing me in the right direction 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Hoggers, 27-May-16 09:09 PM GMT

"Copper Jumping Spider", Pauline?

I don't like the sound of that!

Best wishes from a rather worried Hoggers!

**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 27-May-16 09:56 PM GMT

Ahhh, your picture looks like a lot of the google imagies but looks nothing like the picture in my guide.....

**Re: Pauline**

by millerd, 27-May-16 11:29 PM GMT

That sequence of the emerging Glanville is terrific, Pauline. My experience of breeding butterflies is limited to the common Nymphalids and they seem to take their time a bit more. The thing with the tongue – when the butterfly emerges, the proboscis is in two separate sections (you can clearly see this in some chrysalids, almost like a seam). These have to join together to form a tube, and the butterfly sometimes spends some time extending and retracting it until this happens. (Apologies if you already knew this! 😊).

Dave

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 29-May-16 05:07 PM GMT

I totally agree Hoggers! I'm not a great fan of spiders anyway but if I'd known it could jump I definitely wouldn't have got that close – even if it was quite small 😊 I can't even get a bath if there's a spider in there – I have to wait until it goes 😊😊

At least you were in the right ball park Buggy, but Weevil!!!!? 😊😊 Good job we've got folk like yourself and Vince who know what they're talking about 😊

Thank you for the compliment and information Dave – both greatly appreciated.

I managed to escape for an hour or so this afternoon to make a brief visit to Noar Hill. There's still plenty going on there and although some of the Dukes are looking a little faded and worn, there are still plenty which look very fresh. I saw a couple of mating pairs in this short space of time and there was a fair bit of egg-laying going on:





Many of the eggs I discovered earlier have disappeared but there must be a fair few around as they really are not difficult to locate:



Dingy Skippers were plentiful, as were Small Heath and numbers of Common Blue males are building. I was pleased to see my first female Common Blue of the season – very much blue rather than brown – but the shots I managed are not worth posting.

A colourful beetle caught my eye – I believe it is a leaf beetle known as *Chrysolina Hyperici* but I have been unable to identify an odd looking fly (which will probably turn out to be something completely different 😊):





I never tire of watching the Green Hairstreaks and here again there was plenty ovi-posting occurring:



As one might imagine, with so many rare orchids growing on this site, many visitors arrive primarily to see them from quite some distance. One such gentleman kindly showed me 2 forms of the Frog orchid – the normal form and an apparently rare white form (mind you, can't see the likeness myself 😊):



Living so close to this amazing site I do tend to take it for granted but seeing the reaction of visitors today just reminds me how special it is.

*Edit: I have just been reliably informed by Martin (who knows a fair bit about orchids as well as Glanvilles 😊 that the orchids above are in fact Fly orchids and not Frog orchids as I was told earlier. (Don't think they look much like flies either!! 😊 )*

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 29-May-16 05:22 PM GMT

Great shots Pauline, I'm off to GB tomorrow, hope fully the Dukes will still be reasonable to Photograph. 😊

Talking of Spiders jumping, I lived in Haiti for two years and saw lots of Tarantulars, they can jump about six feet when disturbed 😊 We had one behind our gas Cylinder once I don't know who jumped the quickest 😊 ( My Husband was working there) Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 29-May-16 09:59 PM GMT

Great to see the Dukes ensuring a succession 😊 Pretty envious of the Fly Orchids – not seen those myself 😊🇬🇧

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-May-16 06:42 AM GMT

aah, no! I couldn't cope with Tarantulas Goldie 😬 At the AES they were selling bird eating spiders – impressive looking beasts but not for me! Thank you for your comment.

Yes, good to see all that activity Wurzel but y'know, if those orchids weren't rare, I doubt there would be so many folk flocking to see them as to my mind, many of the common wild flowers are more attractive.

This week I was delighted with the number and variety of moths in the trap, quite a few of which I hadn't seen before including this lovely Magpie moth:



Another newbie was what I believe to be Pale Tussock. There were 4 of these that all looked different, one of which I initially thought was a Winter moth, but seeing the variety in this species I now think that is incorrect. Whatever they are, they have become my new favourite moth – they are like little animals with their furry legs and nodding heads 😊 :





A couple of fresh Buff Tip and Pebble Prominent were among the many others:





### Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 30-May-16 07:51 AM GMT

I know what you mean about orchids pulling people just because they're orchids, even though many other flowers are just as lovely. But I have to say, they pull me too! 😊 I think those *Ophrys* species are just amazing. In early Spain in spring there seems to be a different species round every corner and they have the big plus that they are still there when the clouds come over, unlike the butterflies.

Those pale tussocks are pretty amazing too, with their great hairy legs. As I'm sure you know, the magpie is a small magpie – a micro. I don't seem to see those here but I did back in Suffolk, in my garden.

Guy

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 30-May-16 09:09 PM GMT

Lovely Moths Pauline, you sound to be really enjoying your moth trap 😊

Talking about Orchids I was at GB today and saw the Slipper Orchid, beautiful , sadly no Dukes appeared, Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 30-May-16 10:49 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, that green 'fly' from a few posts back is a sawfly *Rhogogaster* sp. 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Jun-16 03:46 PM GMT

I sincerely hope I haven't upset any of those folk who find orchids interesting Guy (including yourself) as that was never the intention. It is just that at the moment I think of them as just another attractive plant, but who knows, this time next year ..... 😊 , after all, if anyone had told me a couple of years ago I would be fascinated by cats and pupa (and moths), I would have laughed at them 😊😊 . Each to his own, eh?! 😊

I confess that I didn't realise that moth was a micro 😊 After all, I don't like micros do I? 😊 If I have to get a hand lens out to see them they are already at a disadvantage but that wasn't the case with this very smart moth – which leaves me to ponder, what characteristics define a micro and differentiate it from a macro, apart from size of course?

Thank you Goldie. I just wish I had more time for it but in between times I am thoroughly enjoying Neil's fabulous photos of the moths he is getting in his trap, especially the Puss moth. Your Slipper orchids look superb by the way and are not one I have ever knowingly seen.

Thanks for that ID Buggy – I did try looking it up without any success.

Well, Summer is here – cold, windy and very wet – so time for a quick update on the little'uns. The WA are not so little any more and must be on the brink of pupating but still eating as of this morning – a few shots:



12 May



22 May



24 May

Last night I brought the BH in for a closer check of how they were doing. I have used a sleeve for the first time and find it a tricky thing to remove to monitor the cats as it gets snagged on those thorns. I could see the leaves were being eaten (perhaps decimated would be a better word). Last time I looked I found 3 cats of different sizes but I quickly located 4 cats (there may be another one as I think all 5 eggs hatched). 3 looked fine but I am a little concerned about the 4th as I haven't seen one in this position before and the colour didn't look quite right:



Healthy cat



Diseased(?) cat

The tiny Ringlet that I found in a friend's garden in Chiddingfold is on vacation in Liphook to enable me to learn about its development. I have had it for 4 weeks now and it seems to be progressing as it should:





I had a slight panic this morning. In trying to keep these cats in an environment as natural as possible, I had given the Ringlet no protection against last night's heavy rain assuming that it would take cover in the (potted) grass where it has been living for the last few weeks. However, I have one of those 'pop-up' cages to protect cats from birds and other predators. They are not well designed and have a covering of plastic across the top or bottom (depending on which way up it is) but ineffective either way. Last night was the night the Ringlet chose to stray from his potted grasses and also the night that water collected in a deep pool on the plastic in the bottom of the cage. At 5.30 am this morning I found a rather lifeless Ringlet floating in the water. I was gutted! In a short nightie that was rapidly getting soaked through I scooped the unfortunate creature out of the water but there was no sign of life 🙄. I remembered an email Martin had sent me a couple of months back – I couldn't remember the context but I remembered him saying that cats can survive being submerged in water for a considerable period of time. I would probably have discarded the cat had it not been for this scrap of information but instead I brought him in, placed him in the warmth on some tissue and went to dry off and get a cup of tea. When I came back to check the cat was walking about!!!! More shots of him on a drier day and I'm afraid his activities (or wanderings) have been curtailed a little.

### Re: Pauline

by Jamie Burston, 01-Jun-16 07:56 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, Some wonderful photos and observations! It was really great meeting you and fantastic to chat and share what we've been upto. On the way back to the car me and Doug saw a female Wood White lay a single egg, we missed the chance to take photos whilst she laid the egg but it was great to observe such behaviour, we did get a photo of the egg afterwards. When I have the time I'll post a few photos on my diary. I love the last photo from that day's session of the Wood White with it's abdomen clearly visible, really nice to see and makes a change from the shots I got. Amazing revival story of the Ringlet cat! At first I thought your Brown Hairstreak cat might just be discarding waste but I realised it's the head end, the tail tapers off. Hope it's ok, all the best 😊 Stunning White Admiral cat photos, colour and detail is amazing! Thanks Jamie.

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 02-Jun-16 09:37 PM GMT

#### Pauline wrote:

...I confess that I didn't realise that moth was a micro 😊 After all, I don't like micros do I? 😊 If I have to get a hand lens out to see them they are already at a disadvantage but that wasn't the case with this very smart moth – which leaves me to ponder, what characteristics define a micro and differentiate it from a macro, apart from size of course?...

... I am thoroughly enjoying Neil's fabulous photos of the moths he is getting in his trap, especially the Puss moth....

Hi Pauline,

From what I understand, the distinction between micro and macro moths is more to do with the family they belong to. There are some micros such as your Small Magpie and the even larger Mother of Pearl Moth that are a decent size and some macros such as most of the Pugs and Least Black Arches for example that could easily be taken for micros.

I was determined that I was not going to get into micros, after all there are so many macros to confuse me. The trouble is once you start getting them in the trap, the temptation is there to try and identify them too.

I am glad you are enjoying my moth photos 😊 ... some of them are little sods to photograph, especially the Geometrids.

Great reports and photos again recently, I am particularly liking those of your moths and the White Admiral cats.

All the best,

Neil

## Re: Pauline

by millerd, 02-Jun-16 10:36 PM GMT

Absolutely fascinating following all your caterpillars as they progress, Pauline – especially the White Admirals as they turn into those wonderful green marvels from the shrivelled brown winter versions. 😊

Dave

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Jun-16 09:40 PM GMT

Thank you Jamie. I am impressed by your dedication and I am looking forward to seeing the sequence of shots you told me about. I shall say no more than that 😊😊 Sadly, that BH was beyond my resuscitation skills.

That's really interesting Neil – I shall stop classifying them as macro/micro and just enjoy the ones I like. I have to say that your shots of the moths are stunning and are far better than some of those I've seen on several web sites and in various publications.

I'm pleased you're interested Dave as it gives me an excuse to post another shot 😊 I really like the WA cats (which is why I've kept a couple 2 years running (and I seem to be pretty successful with them too 😊):



A few years ago the demand for turf dropped so growers cut back on its production. Turf takes 2–3 years to grow under normal circumstances apparently. Now the demand has picked up, the only way suppliers can meet this in the short term is to use a nylon type mesh to grow the turf on. This encourages the root growth and gives some support and structure to the turf so that it can be rolled up earlier than would otherwise be possible. The mesh is supposed to be biodegradable but this takes several years. I have tried using this turf but both the chickens and the rabbits have ended up entangled in this netting. 'What's this got to do with the price of fish?' I hear you ask. Well, B&Q told me over the phone today that they had some turf without the netting. I went straight down there but annoyingly they were wrong and the turf had the nylon mesh incorporated. Every cloud ..... so they say. B&Q is pretty close to Paulsgrove which is how I came to be taking photos of Small Blue at that site this afternoon.

It is obviously a great year for the Small Blue here – they were everywhere. I didn't even have to stray from the path as they seemed to be all over the site. From where I stood – not far from the gate – I could count 14 and I didn't even get as far as the usual 'hot-spots'. Many were quite worn, as is to be expected at this stage, but that didn't stop the males who were still practising their courtship skills. If they didn't get the message when the female closed her wings and moved away she would drop down onto a lower leaf/stem as I have seen other species do.





Most of the females were only interested in egg-laying. I watched a couple of them - this one appeared to lay several eggs on the one flower. I took a quick look and saw a couple of eggs embedded deep in the flower head. I did not probe as I have seen and photographed this before at MHD so just took a record shot.



Whilst doing this I realised I was being watched. I enjoyed the company of this little lizard for a while before I moved on.



The site is looking splendid – and yes, there are lots of orchids.



I also came across this larva which, even tho' I have seen it before, I had to check to make sure it really wasn't a bird dropping!



One of the butterflies seemed to have significant pale patches on both fore and hind wing on one side. Although in a worn condition I am not sure this was simply wear and tear.





There were a few fresh individuals and I enjoyed watching their antics whilst chatting to several locals. By now, my initial irritation about the wasted trip for the turf was completely forgotten. The wonder of butterflies!





### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 03-Jun-16 11:34 PM GMT

#### Pauline wrote:

.....I shall stop classifying them as macro/micro and just enjoy the ones I like.....

Very sensible! According to Capinera's *Encyclopedia of Entomology*, "The moth divisions, Macrolepidoptera and Microlepidoptera ... have no scientific basis but commonly are used as a convenience in grouping the mostly larger macro-moths versus the mostly more primitive and smaller micro-moths (extraordinary exceptions in size are known for each group)"

As I'm sure you know, your orchids are Bee Orchids and I think you'll agree they do have quite a good likeness. The Fly Orchids you showed earlier are rather variable but some forms are good fly mimics too.

Another splendid series of photos and good to see Small Blues doing well.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 04-Jun-16 05:28 PM GMT

Thank you for that explanation Mike and for your lovely comment. I can actually see the likeness to a Bee with these orchids and therefore tend to remember what they are 😊 It's actually becoming quite a 'blue' week but it would be nice to make it a hat trick:





**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 04-Jun-16 10:30 PM GMT

Great Blues Pauline 😊 I was thinking about the Small blue that you saw – isn't a lack of colour on the wings often of a pathological basis?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 05-Jun-16 04:16 PM GMT

Thank you Wurzel – if by 'pathological' you mean the result of physical or mental stress (eg. environmental factors) as opposed to genetic variation, then this is of course a possibility but I don't know how one can tell?

*'Singing the Blues ....'*

Well, they are out! 3 Blues in 3 days 😊. Thought I saw one yesterday but I couldn't be sure. Very brief visit as I was on my way to Sainsbury (Saffron likes rice with her supper and I'd run out 😊)!





When are the Chalkhills due? Chalton's a very early site 😊😓

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 05-Jun-16 08:15 PM GMT

Lovely SSB shots, Pauline 😊 quite stunning to open your diary and see the pics 😊 Lovely Green Hairstreak shots at Noar earlier and beautiful Small Blues at Paulsgrove too. By the way I really enjoyed your Glanville emergence sequence of shots, lovely stuff 😊 Bit of a catch up 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 05-Jun-16 08:27 PM GMT

I agree with Wurzel about the probable cause of the Small Blues aberrant colouration. Possibly some minor damage occurred a day or two from emergence, perhaps a slight knock at a crucial stage of scale development or even a change in light levels, perhaps a leaf that had been shielding the pupae from the sun moved allowing a shaft of strong sunlight to hit one side of the the pupae temporally. Genetic aberrations tend to end up symmetrical (except of course gynandromorphs). I'm sure there's people a lot more knowledgable about how these abs occur on here though 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Jun-16 02:32 PM GMT

Thank you so much Mike - I have never spent so much time watching a pupa as I did to get that Glanville emergence shot 😊! I am still shattered 😊. No wonder I haven't bumped into you when you are visiting exotic places 😊😊

That seems to make a lot of sense Buggy. One thing I was fairly sure of was that it wasn't just 'wear and tear'.

A tiny bit more time than yesterday so popped into Bramshott to find 1 had turned into 6, perhaps 8, but still no females. Quite breezy (which was pleasant in the extreme heat which I haven't become accustomed to yet 😊) and lots of biting insects 😊. A few more shots before I move on:





## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Jun-16 06:33 PM GMT

I was quite overwhelmed by the moths in the trap over the weekend, both quantity and diversity, with many I have not seen before. The plastic thing (baffle?) had 24 moths on it – pug types and carpet types as well as a Pale Tussock but inside was like a treasure trove with half a dozen White Ermine being most prominent. I really don't know how Neil gets such stunning shots of these insects – there is obviously a secret I haven't discovered yet 😊 as I battle with the light and the moths' quivering behaviour and the focus as they blend so well into their background. Just for the record these are a handful with my attempts at identification:



Peppered Moth



White Ermine – such an elegant moth, don't you think?



Flame Shoulder



Rush Veneer????



Scorched Wing



True Lovers Knot



Perhaps a worn Little Thorn?

.... and a strange looking Ladybird which I assume is a Harlequin:



... and another White Ermine because they are gorgeous 😊 :



Some of the others I recognised included Brimstone, Pale Tussock, Marbled Brown, Common Pug, Common Marbled Carpet , Common Swift etc etc etc.....

**Re: Pauline**

by Greenie, 06-Jun-16 07:58 PM GMT

Hi Pauline ,

I think your ladybird could be an Eyed Ladybird – *Anatis ocellata* .

Cheers Greenie

**Re: Pauline**

by millerd, 06-Jun-16 08:08 PM GMT

Lovely to see the silver-studs, Pauline. Hopefully they'll be out in Surrey soon. 😊

Dave

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 06-Jun-16 09:34 PM GMT

Great shots Pauline, I hope to get some of those SSB's shots when I'm down your way next week, have you still got some Glanville's Pauline 🤔 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by trevor, 07-Jun-16 06:57 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Lovely Silver Studded Blues, they are on my list this year as I missed them last year.

AND it will soon be time for the annual gathering at BB 😊 . by far my highlight of the season.

Trevor.

## Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 07-Jun-16 09:26 AM GMT

Greeie is quite right, your ladybird is an Eyed Ladybird. The black and white pattern on the pronotum is quite distinctive. Looks like an ab as well, most of the spots are missing the black centres, although like a lot of ladybirds they are naturally rather variable. Also your 'Rush Veneer' looks like a Caddis Fly to me. 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-Jun-16 02:25 PM GMT

Thank you for that ID Fred – much appreciated and a little relieved it isn't a Harlequin although it was quite large. I did try to look it up but I had no idea there were so many varieties.

I shall make sure you do Goldie 😊😊

This is a very early site Dave But I don't think you'll have too much longer to wait – and you know it'll be worth it 😊 Looking forward to seeing your shots.

Why, thank you you Trevor – that's very kind of you. No doubt when I am sick and tired of walking up and down the Straits you will see me at BB 😊

I don't know about an ab Buggy but it was the lack of the black centres that threw me when I looked up various Ladybirds, trying to identify it so thank you for that. I think you're right about the Caddis Fly too 😊😊

Today I had a specific reason to visit Noar Hill – but more of that later. Apart from that I was open to anything I could find and the first thing was this little cat which I believe is a Brown-tail. The other creature (and I had to look back through Buggy's diary for this ID as I recalled he had posted one earlier 😊) is a Weevil (not a spider 😊😊). I wasn't sure if the cat would end up as a meal but he went on his way unscathed:



The next thing that caught my attention was a Small Blue. It is years since I have seen a Small Blue at Noar Hill but I had received reports from 3 different folk that they had been seen and one of them was a reliable butterfly who wouldn't have made a mistake. When I took the shot of the mating Dukes posted earlier, a couple mentioned to me that they had seen a Small Blue and this one was in the exact same area. I got close enough to see that it was a very fresh male, nectaring on Bird's Foot Trefoil but as I took the shot it flew off. Well, I cursed myself – the second shot I'd missed in a week, the other being a Painted Lady at Paulsgrove. Whilst looking for him, I came across a Common Blue that was just pumping up his wings and whilst I watched he expelled some meconium (brilliant white Goldie 😊😊) which can be seen on the pointed grass at the bottom of the shot:



I did indeed see him again as he flew past me chasing a moth, but again I lost him! 😊 In desperation, I took a shot of this – not something you will find often in my diary but as he was sitting upright ..... and may be appreciated by one or two 😊



The number of Dukes has certainly diminished and it is tempting to say that many of the Dukes are looking worn and tired – worn they may be but still with enough energy to chase and spar. I also witnessed a couple of females egg-laying, one a strikingly beautiful bright orange but in stopping to take a shot of the egg she had just laid I lost her. All of the other eggs I had been monitoring have now disappeared, with no evidence that they have survived.



The Dukes weren't the only ones egg-laying. Green Hairstreak are still egg-laying at this site along with Common Blue. I watched this female then took a shot as she rested, admiring the brown upperside which seems to be becoming increasingly rare here with many females having varying degrees of blue on the upperside.



What I didn't expect to see was the bluest female I have ever encountered. She was stunning and my shots don't do her justice. She was difficult to photograph as she was incredibly active for most of the time and within a couple of minutes flew off. I could see her as she left flying quite high, fast and straight, in a very purposeful manner, until she disappeared:



**Re: Pauline**

by bailey1409, 07-Jun-16 02:36 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Ref your last lot of moths, the Rush Veneer is a Caddis Fly and the Little Thorn is a Bordered White.

Cheers

Maurice

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 07-Jun-16 05:23 PM GMT

I like the up right photo Pauline, it makes a change from the ordinary, quite different 😊

I haven't seen Small Blues for a few years now, I've just enjoyed other peoples 🤔

Your lucky to still be seeing Dukes Pauline, they faded a way here ages ago 😞 Ah! Well!!! always another year Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Jun-16 07:10 AM GMT

Morning Maurice – thank you so much for the id. I have looked it up and it is obvious – once you know 😊 You must be psychic as I was just thinking about you earlier when I was at Noar Hill trying to take a photo of a Lacewing. You might remember that it was the first thing you got me to photograph so I thought I'd try again to see if I had improved over the years. Well, I haven't posted it so you can draw your own conclusions from that! 😊😊

Thank you too Goldie – I do try to vary how I take photos and try different styles from time to time. I've tried to emulate Guy and William but the results were poor.

Just a quick update on a couple of the immatures this morning. A little while back, I noticed there were some Orange Tip eggs on the garlic mustard at the bottom of my lane by the edge of the road. Having reared them before I wasn't too interested in doing it again (so many other new things to do and learn about). However, I thought I would keep my eye on them as I have never found a pupa in the wild and I had hoped to monitor that part of the process. Not long after that the council I assume, cut it all down as it was affecting visibility for cars turning out onto the main road. I managed to find a couple of cats which are now on the plants in my garden. Unusually, there have been no eggs this year on 'my' plants, so I am hoping they will be OK (I am aware they are cannibalistic):



Just shedded its skin.



This week both my WA cats decided to pupate at exactly the same time, despite the fact one was noticeably larger than the other. Like the Emperor moths, I wonder if one will turn out to be male and the other female. I was up during the night checking them as I fear that a slug may have gotten on to the plant somehow. It is quite a large plant now in quite a large cage so finding the culprit is going to be difficult. In the past I have found that slugs are attracted to lettuce - I put some in the cage but no joy. I am tempted to 'prune' the stems holding the pupa and put them somewhere safe. I will need to think about what to do. In the meantime a few shots from recent days leading up to pupation:





### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 08-Jun-16 10:09 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, they say Orange Peel is quite good for slugs, it doesn't kill them but I've heard they don't like crossing it, never tried it myself, I just bury slug Pellets in my pots 😊 The slugs go into the soil during the day so when they do surface at night they get a good dose 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Jun-16 07:21 AM GMT

I might give the orange peel a try Goldie but I'd be reluctant to use slug pellets as hedgehogs come into the garden and I'd hate the thought of them somehow getting hold of a poisoned slug.

Have you ever had one of those days when everything seems to conspire against you? Yesterday was one of those days! Tired of the heavy, thundery weather and being bitten to bits by every insect imaginable (even on my eyebrows and lips and scalp 😞) I decided that my short outing would be more coastal where I hoped it might feel a bit fresher. Driving down the A3 the rain started. Should I turn back before I got too far? Quite often, once past Butser Hill, for some reason the climate can be radically different so I pressed on. Arriving at Thorney Island I set off down the usual track only to find a large metal gate chained shut and a notice stating 'due to family bereavement this gate will remain locked for the foreseeable future'. Great!! The alternative was to squeeze down the track on the outside of the fence but nettles and bare legs!!!! 😞 Still, nearly there and it was some compensation that I got quite close to a wild fox. The rain had stopped but it was still very humid. Nevertheless, I was looking forward to my walk, hoping that perhaps I might see some seals. At the end of the main track there was another large sign stating that the electronic security gate at the end of the track wasn't working so there was no access!! 😞😞 Having got this far I decided I might as well make the most of it and walk as far as I could. Last year there were a lot of butterflies along this track but although it was very warm it was also overcast. I decided to make the best of a bad job and turned my attention to the birds. These shots are all severely cropped as the subjects were quite a distance away:



I wondered whether this would be a male and female or parent and youngster.



I believe this is a Whitethroat. I'd like to say he is singing his heart out but I think it was an alarm call on account of me being there – the place was deserted presumably because all the gates were locked. I have no idea what this bird is – it looked a little like a Dunnock but clearly wasn't and flew into the reeds:



I spotted some sort of web on a Hawthorn. Closer examination showed that it had been inhabited by (presumably) some sort of moth larva as there were shed skins all over and inside it. The material felt more like parchment than web, tough, smooth, and shiny. I thought perhaps they may have been Brown-tails which had dispersed but that was only because I had seen one recently and are one of the (very) few I know of that use nests on Hawthorn 😞



There were a lot of Damselflies about and I took the trouble to try to identify them but I think they are both common varieties:



Common Blue (male)

Beautiful colours and in close up what funny little faces they have 😊



Actually, I only posted the close-up as I couldn't get the whole of the insect in focus 😊 as it was partly obscured by grasses and I was half way up a steep bank – as you can see:



Emerald female (I think).

Beautiful, photogenic swans on their nest completed my walk:



which was to end as disappointingly as it started. I decided to have an early lunch at one of my favourite local pubs but the management/chef has changed along with the quality and my favourite crab appeared as a pureed mess with no way of distinguishing white from brown meat.

There haven't been many occasions when I have been out without seeing one single butterfly. In fact, I believe it has only happened once before. I have seen butterflies in thunderstorms and in some unlikely places but today I couldn't even find a roosting Common Blue. I guess it was just a case of wrong place, wrong time 😞

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 09-Jun-16 09:31 AM GMT

You don't paint a pretty picture for a holiday down your way Pauline 😬 and the midges love my Husband 😬 I have got preparation though( Midge spray) 😊 and I'll bring my Tee Tree Oil with me has well it's great for bites 😬 What a lousy day you had.

About the Slug pellets Pauline, I don't leave them on top of the soil because of the Birds, I cover them in soil so they can't be seen . 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 09-Jun-16 07:28 PM GMT

Never mind Pauline, the way I see it, it's always better than being stuck in watching daytime TV 😊!

Your mystery bird is difficult to ID with that fluff in its beak but it looks like it could be a Linnet and your Emerald Damselfly is in fact a young Blue-tailed Damselfly. It takes a few days for their colour to come through after emerging

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 11-Jun-16 06:24 PM GMT

Hope you'll have changed your mind by the time you return Goldie 😊

Daytime TV Buggy? 😬😬 I didn't even realise there was such a thing 😬 I chose not to have a TV for 15 years and got out of the habit of watching it! Seriously, thanks for those ID's, much appreciated.

A great day today in all respects. Just a few shots from this morning:





**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 12-Jun-16 04:04 PM GMT

I believe I have just found my first ever wild Green Hairstreak larva in the rain:





**Re: Pauline**

by Maximus, 12-Jun-16 07:56 PM GMT

Looks like a very likely candidate, Pauline, what's that it's on? Lovely shots of the Wood Whites by the way 😊 they still look so fresh, thought I'd missed them 😊

Mike

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 13-Jun-16 05:46 PM GMT

Thank you Mike. I think the Wood Whites were a little late this year. I believe that plant is Dogwood. The GH clearly had a very good year as the larva seem to be in abundance at the moment, in a variety of sizes and colours:





### Re: Pauline

by millerd, 13-Jun-16 06:03 PM GMT

Great shots of that larva, Pauline. 😊 I don't think I have the patience (or the eyes!) to spot the tiny ones like that. It did occur to me that this might be a Holly Blue, rather than a Green Hairstreak. They also lay on Dogwood (and all kinds of other things at this time of year), and are very similar to yours in the photos I've seen. Is there any easy distinguishing feature to tell one from t'other?

By the way, I also haven't had a telly since 2002, and haven't regretted it once – it seems I'm in good company! 😊

Dave

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Jun-16 02:21 PM GMT

Thank you Dave. I confess that I often carry a hand lens with me if I am checking out tiny insects 😊. I had assumed that the different sizes and colours of the cats were a result of the different instars given that GH have been egg-laying for quite a while now. I am not sure about distinguishing features but I am sure someone out there will know 😊

Today, the weather has been dreadful – heavy downpours with a great deal of thunder. Days like this always remind me of Summer 2012 when I frequently ventured out in the rain with my camera and learned a lot by doing so. Nothing ventured ..... so I briefly popped over to Bramshott where the SSB were flying, along with some newly emerged Large Skippers. I disturbed a couple of Meadow Brown hunkered down in the grass along with a lot of moths but apart from all the biting insects 😊 not much else.







I'd like to say that the thunder was a distant rumble but as it moved in and the heavens opened again, for the sake of my camera, if not myself, I decided to call it a day.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 16-Jun-16 09:48 AM GMT

Yesterday was largely dominated by my wild rabbit Lucky, found injured on a butterfly outing 2 years ago. She has retained her natural tendency to dig which has to be curbed by sinking in mesh about 1 foot down where possible over her large run (for her own safety). Roots of several large trees prohibit the use of mesh in a few areas including under an up-turned plastic dog bed which she uses as a den when not in her kennel. Yesterday she disappeared and when I checked under the bed I discovered that she had dug down about 3 foot between the tree roots before tunnelling underground for who knows how far 😬 Lying on the ground with my face pressed into the soil and using a long stick I couldn't reach the end. Panicking by now I used my bare hands to scrape away the earth and stones, sawing carefully through tree roots where I could. I was concerned that at any time the tunnel could collapse, effectively burying her. To cut a long story short I eventually found her but today my hands are raw with blisters, bleeding and weeping, and are now bandaged. No need to say there were no butterfly outings yesterday so just a quick update on a few of the little'uns. The Ringlet looks like it is settling down to pupate:



The Orange Tips are now quite large and can't be far away from pupating:



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-Jun-16 06:37 AM GMT

Yesterday I was delighted to see that my Bright-line Brown-eye moth had emerged. I didn't see it and there was no sign that it was about to happen – apart from the fact that we are in the middle of the flight period. To my mind it is an unremarkable little moth but somehow a bit special as it was reared – the caterpillar I removed from my tomatoes last year. I took a couple of shots before release:



This close-up reminds me of a little bull with large horns, head down, stomping his foot before charging 😊 Just needs a little ring thru his nose!



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-Jun-16 07:07 AM GMT

I decided to nip over to Broxhead yesterday between the showers to see how the SSB are faring there. This is a very late site; much later than the other local SSB sites and a more typical habitat. I thought it would be nice to get some shots of this butterfly on heather for a change as opposed to the bracken and bird's foot trefoil, which dominates the site at Bramshott. Initially I struggled to find any butterflies although there were plenty of a variety of moths, looking white in flight although attractively marked close up:





Spiders and grasshoppers were numerous – I avoided getting too close to this large spider in case it could jump but it led me to my first butterfly, to which it was perilously close.



In total I only saw 2 fresh males so clearly emergence is just starting on this site. This butterfly seemed to want to thwart my intentions of a background of heather. It was very active but landed frequently – on anything but heather:



Patience paid off and eventually I got what I wanted:





**Re: Pauline**

by Jenks, 17-Jun-16 12:46 PM GMT

Lovely photos, Pauline (apart from one !) I don't blame you for not getting too close to that spider, if that had been me I'd be the one jumping !

Jenks.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 19-Jun-16 03:05 PM GMT

Hi Jenks, how you doing? Lovely to hear from you and thanks for the comment. As you probably know I am not a fan of spiders 🙄 or slugs 🙄 A busy weekend which included the washing machine flooding the floor and breaking my tooth on some crackling on the roast pork didn't leave a lot of time, except to check round on the immatures. The Orange Tips did indeed attempt to pupate:





Given that these were rescued from the verge at the end of the lane and the fact I have reared Orange Tips before, I didn't give them any protection – just put them on plants in the garden. I know losses occur in nature but sadly a slug got one of them. The other now has added security measures 😊



The WA pupa have not changed a great deal (thankfully, else they would probably be classed as early):



The Ringlet too has now pupated but I am not prepared to disturb any further for a better shot:



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-Jun-16 06:13 PM GMT

I am soooooo frustrated!!!! I just wasn't prepared for it! Well, I never expected it! Moreover, I hadn't even planned on watching it! I had brought the remaining OT indoors (only briefly whilst I tried to work out a safe place for it tonight) and as I was paying some bills online I noticed it was moving – sort of thrashing about. Intrigued, I moved closer, wondering if the slug from last night had somehow done this one harm also. As I watched, it sort of shrugged its head off 😊 and jerked back and forth and up and down, and as it did these gyrations, its skin slid down the body to reveal the start of the pupa. I watched, fascinated, and tried to grab the camera at the same time – the light was poor, the cat was moving quite rapidly really and the camera settings were not what I would have chosen, but I wanted to capture what I could. A few of these images are OK, some not so, but I hope they give an impression of the minor miracle I have just witnessed. One can only guess at the internal changes that were taking place to effect the change of shape and form in such a short space of time. Just amazing!!!!







Better than most things you'd see on the TV I bet Dave? Once rid of the external skin the focus seemed to be to bend into the typical boomerang shape which took some considerable effort and time. Bending and twitching back and forth, stretching the form into the recognisable shape took the best part of an hour, with much bending back and forth like an athlete stretching before an event:







I am so glad I was able to witness this. I can't begin to imagine the massive changes which must have been occurring in this short timescale when the insect shrugged off its skin and manipulated itself into the beginnings of a new form. Utterly fascinating!

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 20-Jun-16 10:02 AM GMT

Yesterday I needed to go to Noar Hill but with largely overcast skies and a fair old breeze I wasn't expecting to see many butterflies. In the event I saw 10 species during my brief visit, both old and new. The first butterflies I stumbled upon were Green Hairstreaks, 4 in total, in various states of wear:





There were still a few Dukes about but these too were showing some serious wear and tear:



Many of the male Common Blues I saw also seemed to have taken their fair share of bird strikes and bad weather looking both ragged and faded..... and then I saw a brand new Dark Green Fritillary. Like the Painted Lady a few weeks ago it was low down and I spooked it. I didn't think it would go far given the weather but it went over a hedge and by the time I got round I couldn't find it. I don't often see them here and certainly not this early but it was good to see. I also saw another Small Blue - in a different spot to the last one - but failed again to get a photo. I spent a little time searching nearby kidney vetch for eggs/larva but without my reading glasses I was always on to a loser.

There were loads of moths, in better shape than many of the butterflies it has to be said, and interesting bugs including these:





A rather impressive male Scorpion fly which was off as soon as he realised I'd seen him and this strange looking colourful creature which seemed quite predatory:



There were quite a few lovely fresh Large Skippers about (all male, no females seen yet), most of which were incredibly active despite the cloud and a single, solitary Marbled White which I couldn't get anywhere close to for love nor money! In the end I decided on a record, long distant shot just as he was the first I've seen this season but it quite possibly qualifies as one of my worst images 😊





Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown and Small Tortoiseshell completed the line up.

### Re: Pauline

by Katrina, 20-Jun-16 08:02 PM GMT

Beautiful colours and light in your last photo. 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Jun-16 02:23 PM GMT

Thank you Katrina – the landscape looks splendid up there right now; just a carpet of colour with orchids being the most striking and plentiful. If I could take shots of scenery like yourself (the sunset?) and Mark and David and a few others, then I would have included a picture, but for some reason I never seem able to compose them in a pleasing fashion.

Having reared all of the British Hairstreaks with the exception of the Green Hairstreak, I decided it was time to put that right. As usual, I went through the correct procedure and obtained permission to remove a few eggs from a local site having explained my intentions and objectives. I spent a considerable amount of time watching the Green Hairstreak this year, including many females egg-laying, so it wasn't too difficult to locate one egg on Dogwood and one egg on Bird's Foot Trefoil by way of comparison. I was surprised to see the egg laid on the leaf of the Dogwood as I had thought they were usually laid within the buds where they are difficult to locate. However, I know that Green Hairstreak will lay on a variety of plants including Gorse and Broom which I witnessed a few years ago. Despite the diversity of potential larval food plants I had always assumed (for some unknown reason) that any one female would select a single plant type and deposit her eggs on them. However, I watched the same individual egg-laying on 3 different types of plant – Dogwood, BFT and unknown – so perhaps she was hedging her bets, not putting all her eggs in one basket, so to speak!

Back to the rearing. I felt that 2 eggs was plenty – my heir and spare, meaning that if something unfortunate were to happen to one then I still have a second chance to monitor, learn from, and yes, photograph the other, without the responsibilities associated with rearing large numbers of larva (e.g. space, food etc).

8 days after the first egg was laid, I was delighted to watch it hatch, and recorded it with the camera as usual.











The next morning I thought I was seeing double as there were 2 tiny larva, side by side on the leaf!! I can only assume that another egg had been laid, unbeknown to me and undetected, in the flower buds. Having read that these larva have cannibalistic tendencies after the first instar I was in a bit of a dilemma. The leaf where the original egg had been laid was quite some distance from the buds meaning that the second tiny larva had travelled some considerable way to be there - and for what purpose? Was it purely co-incidence or was there some significance to that I wondered? Perhaps they weren't cannibalistic after all? Perhaps the butterfly laid more than one egg in close proximity to ensure that at least one of them had access to a good meal? Perhaps laying several eggs together (either by the same or different egg-laying females) was a strategy to compensate for the significant losses due to other predators which undoubtedly occurs (in collecting food plants at a later date I was to see several examples where several larva shared a flower head). All of these questions and more were going through my head but in the event I decided to leave the 2 tiny larva where they were. Unfortunately, the next morning one of them was missing!



I scrutinised the branch without success so naturally I feared the worst and resigned myself that their cannibalistic tendencies did indeed start from an early age. However, later that day he re-appeared next to the other larva leading me to conclude that he had made the long trek back to his bud and hidden inside it so that he was unable to be detected, before making the long trek back again. This time I decided 'safe' was better than 'sorry' and separated the 2, thereby depriving myself of the opportunity of testing out for myself at what point, if any, they become a threat to each other. One thing I found particularly interesting was their eating habits. I had read that the flower buds and small, tender leaves were consumed in preference to the larger, tough leaves but initially I did not find that to be the case. Even the larva who presumably hatched out in the buds and had returned there at least once, spent time on the larger leaves, eating from their surface without actually going right through the leaf, in a wiggly sort of pattern reminiscent of a leaf mining insect or similar.

After 2 days of inactivity, and at 7 days old, I was lucky enough to see them shed their skins for the first time, which they subsequently ate:



However, after the first moult this eating pattern changed, immediately and significantly – the larva started eating huge chunks of these tough leaves, biting right through them and leaving fair sized holes. The leaf below shows both of these feeding patterns:



## Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 21-Jun-16 02:54 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, Noar Hill seems to have a load of species, I've not seen a Small Blue for a few years, also the Dark GF, I think I'm going to head up to GB see if I can see the DGF up there.

You were right about the lack of them at this time of year, I went to HLB this afternoon, all the BF's I saw were Large Skippers no Whites at all. 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-Jun-16 10:41 AM GMT

Noar Hill's a great place Goldie and I'm lucky to be so close.

Given the number of moths coming into my bedroom each night I was a little disappointed with the results from last night's moth trap. Sure, there were dozens of little ones but only a handful of larger ones, most of which I have seen before including the lovely Buff-tip moth which I find so attractive:



Little and Large here, otherwise known as Heart and Dart, and Large Yellow Underwing I believe, were among several similar moths which I find more attractive in flight than in this shot:



I WAS pleased to see another Bright-line Brown-eye meaning that my chap is not out there on his own and has some company 😊, and a lovely Common White Wave which I think may be the moth Goldie saw on her window.

I have made my feelings clear about the micros BUT one of the last ones to fly off really caught my eye as it glinted gold in the weak morning sun (which has rapidly turned to more rain ☹️). Although it was tiny – I mean proper tiny – I decided to try for a shot (could this be the start of something new 😊) but I am struggling to identify it. My first attempt came up with Horse Chestnut leaf-miner which concerned me as it is clearly a pest. The only other one I can find is *Argyresthia Goedartella*. If anyone could put my mind at rest .....



**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 22-Jun-16 02:48 PM GMT

You seem to be finding many good things at Noar Hill. I must try to get there myself for the Orchids as well as the Butterflies. Your first GH shot is on a Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) while your last Large Skipper is on a Common Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*).

Mike

**Re: Pauline**

by andy brown, 22-Jun-16 05:56 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I would go with 20.005 [B&F: 0409a] *Argyresthia trifasciata* for your gold and white micro.

Cheers

Andy

**Re: Pauline**

by Neil Freeman, 22-Jun-16 08:25 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I am catching up on your diary again, some great reports and photos recently 😊

I love that Buff-tip, that is one I have not had in my trap yet.

I was not going to get into micros myself but the trouble is that once one catches your eye you try to identify it and before you know it...well, suffice to say that I have managed to identify 20 different micro species so far in my garden and there are plenty that I have not been able to ID yet.

All the best,

Neil

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 22-Jun-16 10:02 PM GMT

You're certainly making the most of the clear spells in the weather, Pauline.

Nice early stage sequences again. 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 23-Jun-16 04:06 PM GMT

Thank you for the ID's Mike. Perhaps one day I'll see you at Noar Hill 😊

Don't know how I missed that A. It just doesn't look the same in the book but as usual you're right 😊

The Buff-tips are smashing aren't they Neil, but then I could say the same about your gorgeous Buff Arches. I know what you mean about the time thing tho'; there's just never enough of it so at the moment it is the micros that tend to get somewhat disregarded – tho I am sure there are many spectacular ones (at least that's what I'm told 😊). Thank you for taking the time to comment 😊

I'm trying to David but a tick infestation has been causing me quite a bit of misery (over 2 dozen on me!). I'm glad you like the early stages – don't want to bore folk to tears but there's more to come, mostly because I am fascinated by it. I am also grateful to Mike who has again taken the time and trouble to produce an animation of the first Green Hairstreak to emerge:



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Jun-16 04:20 PM GMT

Back to the Green Hairstreaks. About a week later, the egg laid on the BFT hatched. From early in the morning it was clear that something was about to happen as the egg started to change colour. As the day went on it was possible to see the larva moving within the egg which is just about visible in this shot:



However, it was not until evening that the larva decided to put in an appearance. It took its time, eating a hole in the egg, looking out a couple of times, before taking the plunge. All in all it took about 35 mins. Once out it seemed unsure as to what to do and wandered around a bit, returning to take a bite out of the egg, before wandering off again.











So then there were 3!!

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 24-Jun-16 03:41 PM GMT

That's a great animation Mike did for you Pauline 😊 I hope you got rid of all the ticks UGH! GOLDIE 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Jun-16 05:40 PM GMT

I think it's amazing what Mike manages to achieve with my photos Goldie so a big thank you Mike. As far as the ticks go, well I have had a miserable week and I have whinged long and loud to anyone who will listen. In the last few days I have removed about 30 ticks from all parts of my body, including 2 running down my face. They are tiny but the bites they leave are not and I have been unable to sleep for the itch. I believe that they are at the larval stage as opposed to the nymphs given that they have 3 pairs of legs rather than 4, and some appear not yet to have fed as they are flesh coloured, leading me to believe they are hatching out on me 😬😬. What is equally depressing is having to scrutinise my body for long periods of time with a magnifying glass - where did my 20 year old body go?????? 10 minutes ago I felt one running across my eyebrow and found this attached to my eyelid. The squares on the paper are 4mm:



I have not been out all week as a result (mind the weather hasn't helped) but I feel reluctant to go anywhere that will put me at further risk which is why I ended up at the coast today. I had a great couple of hours and saw my first Small Skippers of the season:





I was also able to get closer to the Marbled Whites and saw only my second Red Admiral of the year:





There was a lot going on in this little spot – many Holly Blue but most of them worn but nevertheless charming, a Meadow Brown with 2 white wings (which flew up into the tress before I could get a shot), Speckled Wood egg-laying, Common Blue, Large White (or it could have been a Small), Large Skipper plus others:





I thought I'd practice my scenery shots as it is such a smashing venue:



### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 24-Jun-16 07:10 PM GMT

Hope your better soon Pauline, you must feel awful, I hope you rid yourself of those Ticks they can be quite dangerous to your health so be careful. 😊  
I simply love those marbled Whites, I always seem to get good shots of them 😊 you've got some really nice shots there Pauline, you've more Butterflies there than we've got here at present, hopefully I'll see some Red Admirals before long, Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by jenks, 24-Jun-16 07:52 PM GMT

OMG ! You have my sympathy. The things we suffer from just to pursue an innocent hobby. I hope you `re " tick free" now and feeling better. Take care.

Jenks

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Jun-16 10:38 PM GMT

It was really good to see so many species in such a lovely place Goldie – I am sticking to the coast for a while to avoid any more bites.

Thank you for those kind words Jenks – a bit of sympathy goes a long way. Pleased to report to the best of my knowledge I am now tick-free 😊

On 26 June last year I can remember exactly what I was doing and what the weather was like. I shall not repeat everything from Page 82 of my diary but suffice to say my White Admiral pupa had darkened and I had spent the day watching it hoping to see it emerge. It was a hot day, very windy too but by 6.30pm the sun had gone down and it was starting to get chilly. I didn't really think anything would happen at that point so I left my post to make a hot drink. Whilst indoors I got a call from a friend asking how the WA was doing. I replied that I would check and in that brief 10 minute interval, at 6.45pm the sight that met me was a brand new butterfly – I had missed it! I resolved to rear them again, both because I enjoy watching the WA cats and because I wanted to see one emerge.

This year I have been successful in rearing 2 WA cats. What a surprise it was to find that the first pupa had darkened today – again on 26 June. The weather has been a bit different today – cool, cloudy and with a few showers as well as a bit of a breeze. A few sunny intervals but they did little to raise the temperature and as I spent time outside watching the pupa I had to put on a jumper. Well, it got to 6.30pm – again – and I was cold and had animals to feed. I was utterly convinced that it wouldn't emerge in those conditions given that even the butterfly would have been inactive and roosting for the night. Well, I was wrong again! 15 mins later out of the corner of my eye there was movement. I tried to get a few shots but the light was not good and by the time I had moved it (literally 30 seconds later) it was all over!! Again!!! Frustration doesn't even come close to describing how I felt. Well, I have one more chance as the second pupa has now also darkened – but I have a dental appointment tomorrow to sort out the tooth I recently broke. In the past I have cancelled the electrician to watch a pupa but I am not about to cancel the dentist so I shall just have to keep fingers crossed. In the meantime, the shots I did get are below:















**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 27-Jun-16 07:20 PM GMT

This afternoon the Straits was awash with butterflies including several SWF and WA. Loads of Ringlets and Skippers and lovely Demoiselles:





Trouble was, I couldn't get close to any of them – at least, not without leaving the path and I wasn't about to do that! 😊

### Re: Pauline

by millerd, 27-Jun-16 10:20 PM GMT

Fascinating White Admiral sequence, Pauline. The fresh underside is exquisite. 😊

Dave

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 28-Jun-16 02:44 PM GMT

Lovely White Admiral Pauline, your sequence shots are great. As for not leaving the path I don't blame you, Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Jun-16 04:56 PM GMT

Exquisite is the perfect word to describe these gorgeous butterflies Dave. I am pleased you liked the sequence shots as there are more to come 😊

Thank you for the compliment Goldie – much appreciated. Not sure I'll ever be able to leave the path again 😊😊 Coastal venue again today!

Well, I got back from the dentist and I still had a pupa 😊 Lunchtime I still had a pupa 😊 1.00pm I was beginning to think it was going to be another 6.45pm event. The weather as usual was against me. It started off cloudy, drizzling and quite windy. Once the sun started to show the wind picked up to such an extent I knew I had to do something – anything – as my shots were all blurred. I tried to create a sort wind break out of old sheets of plastic and bubble wrap and some half full feed bins to support it all:



It was not very effective and probably quite dangerous as particularly strong gusts kept causing it to collapse. Still, it was the best I could do! At this point the pupa looked as if it had been shrink wrapped in cling film which seemed to be lifting up. At around 2.00pm part of the pupa started to move. I don't know what they are called 😊 but it was the little bits that protrude and look like little horns. At first I thought it was my imagination, but no, next a 'seam' by the wing area started to bulge and split open. We were off! It was great to see this at last having waited 2 years and watched for more hours than I care to admit to. It wasn't an explosive emergence like the DGF or the Glanvilles, and it wasn't anything like the Hairstreaks. It was quite controlled really but it still happened relatively quickly. I took loads of shots (as you might imagine) but not wishing to repeat the previous sequence I shall try to include a few light-hearted images.







So, the reason why I was up at the Straits was to release these butterflies. I had hoped to get a couple of open winged shots but just like last year, they took one sniff of the brambles and were both off up into the trees. They go with my best wishes.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 28-Jun-16 07:17 PM GMT

It's still a miracle to me Pauline, these beautiful Butterflies starting from an egg, then caterpillar, then discarding the body like an old cardigan to become a Chrysalis and then this lovely Butterfly emerge's, it's one of nature's many miracles and one that fascinates and add's to our curiosity and love of chasing a round to photograph them. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 01-Jul-16 09:50 PM GMT

Looking forward to catching up with these beauties in the wild, great shots of the emergence sequence 😊 Sorry to hear about your Tick problems 😞 I had to remove my first one tonight - it's been bagged in case I feel ill in the next couple of days 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Jul-16 07:34 AM GMT

It certainly is Goldie which is why it is probably so addictive 😊

Thank you Wurzel. Examining my body for the tail end of the tick infestation I noticed many other parasites of a different type, running around on me and adding to the incessant itch 😞😞 Having so many animals it is easy to attribute the source to the wrong one and invariably Saffron gets the blame although she always turns out to be squeaky clean. The next in line was Jaffa, my cat. Was it cat lice? She wasn't scratching but then neither were the rabbits. The vet assured me cat lice was most unlikely and suggested bringing a sample in which I promptly did. It was examined under the microscope and I was informed it was Red Mite - off the poultry!!!! Well, I have had a few chickens (4) for 20 years and of course I have heard of Red Mite but never seen it. That night I went out with a torch that revealed a massive infestation which has spread to all other animal housing. The chickens have had to be moved out and their 8ft shed is being dismantled and treated with specialist products, along with the livestock. It is a massive job (normally undertaken in the dark as that is when the mites are most visible) so consequently I have been unable to get out. However, I am trying to keep an eye on my Ringlet pupa given that many can be seen now in the wild. I am not sure that it is darkening but certain features seem to be becoming more prominent and much better defined so I can't believe it will be too long before emergence. See what you think:

Pupa 19 June:



Pupa 25 June:



Pupa 2 July:



The pupa seems to have moved its position slightly but still blends in perfectly with its surroundings. It is in a fairly precarious position where a mound of earth has created a slope. I don't want to interfere but I do hope it doesn't roll off. Perhaps I might have to try to 'shore it up'. 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Jul-16 08:05 PM GMT

After 3 horrendous days of dismantling, spraying and dusting with still more to do (did you know a Red Mite female can lay 120,000 eggs and they only take 7 days to reach maturity!!!) I needed a break so at 6.30 this evening I went out for an hour – just up the road. Very quickly I saw 10 species but number 11 took my breath away – I have never seen them this early here:







By now it was after 7.00pm and I had to get back to shut the poultry away and start the evening feeds. Sadly I had to say cheerio to my little friend and return him to where I found him 😞

### Re: Pauline

by millerd, 03-Jul-16 08:42 PM GMT

That's a lovely Emperor, Pauline! A splendid surprise at the end of what sounds like an exhausting day. 😊

Dave

### Re: Pauline

by trevor, 03-Jul-16 09:01 PM GMT

Congratulations, Pauline, that's one fine Emperor. Time to make some regular visits to BB I think. Of course the weather will have to play ball !!. Might see you soon.

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 03-Jul-16 09:03 PM GMT

Pauline I'm so envious 🍷🍷 what a fantastic find, wish I was there, hope your all sorted out now what a time you've had, but what a great surprise for you. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-16 10:50 PM GMT

Wow! I spent all weekend shifting everything from upstairs downstairs ready for the floors to be done - I'd have killed for a sighting like that on my break! 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 04-Jul-16 02:02 PM GMT

It really made my day Dave and it was totally unexpected. I'd already seen a couple of WA and I initially thought it was another but then I did a double take 😊. Thank you for your comment.

Cheers Trevor 😊 He certainly looked fine to me and had the added advantage of being close to home 😊 With the added work load BB is looking more and more remote this year 😞

It was just the boost I needed Goldie, and don't worry, you WILL be here soon. It will be lovely to see you both again and I am sure we will find something interesting.

Thank you Wurzel. D'you know, I only went up there to see if the Essex Skippers were out. They weren't and there was only 1 Small Skipper. A while back I went to look for eggs/larva and found all the grass where the colony exists had been mowed short. I wondered at the time if it would have any effect on this small Essex colony - it is always a late site for them but I am a little concerned. Anyway, it would be remiss of me if I didn't include some of the other butterflies seen as well as a very hungry Lacewing:







Oh yeah ..... and this 😊 (pity about that annoying bit of stem by the wing 😞) :



### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 04-Jul-16 07:22 PM GMT

Congratulations on getting double purple wings!

I don't find the stem distracting against the main subject 😊

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 04-Jul-16 07:35 PM GMT

Lovely Emperor Pauline, well done on capturing the double purple. Great series of the White Admirals emerging too, fascinating stuff 😊

Sorry to hear about your tick troubles and your other issues with the mites, hope all is ok now.

All the best,

Neil.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Jul-16 04:37 PM GMT

Thank you Mike. It is not possible to tell from the shots but the butterfly was down a ditch with water at the bottom (full of mozzies 🤢 - and I was in shorts again 😞) so it was incredibly difficult to manoeuvre into the right position for the double purple wing shot as I gradually sank thru the shingle into the water 😞

Thank you too Neil. The mite issue will continue for some time I suspect but I am now only killing dozens on a daily basis as opposed to thousands. However, most of the work has to be done in the dark by torchlight so today it was a choice of sitting in the garden with a Pimms (or 2) or going to see some Purple Hairstreaks whilst the weather held. Well, Can you guess which won?

Many of the Purple Hairstreaks are already looking worn and they haven't been out that long. Whilst they are easy to find they are not so easy to photograph, frequently choosing shade and obscured positions. There were many of them tho' which was some compensation and they were landing in all manner of places – bracken, gravel, other plants. Most small Oaks held at least half a dozen so like the Green Hairstreaks in this area, I believe they are having a good year. A few shots:





Most were keen on a bit of sun bathing and if they had been in a better position open-winged shots would have been a doddle:





Graylings are out tho' I only saw one and no photo. I also saw my first Gatekeeper of the season and even better 3 Small Coppers nectaring on heather. No blue badges and photos not a patch on Hoggers but just for the record:



What I assume is a Sparrow Hawk seemed intent on following me around and keeping an eye on me but wouldn't let me get too close:



Well, my car park was about to run out and it was time to go but the weather was still glorious. Back home, out in the garden for that Pimms. Win-win!  
😄😄

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 06-Jul-16 04:54 PM GMT

Love the open winged shot of the PHS Pauline, you're a lucky so and so 🍷🍷😄 I'm stuck here with so few Butterflies it's really pathetic and if that's not bad enough my 70-300 lens packed in on Monday, the only day we'd a good bit of Sun 😄 Any way I bought A new lens today, I was bothered it was my Camera with coming on holiday again down to Kent and hope fully another visit to Sussex, a new camera would have been an expense, so I was lucky in that regard 😄

Hope you've got those mites on the run now although you might not have got the PE if you'd not been fed up and gone out at 6.30 😄 Goldie 😄

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 06-Jul-16 05:12 PM GMT

Love the 'ghostly' head-on shot of the PH - very unusual 😄

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 06-Jul-16 06:38 PM GMT

Very 🍷 of your Purple Hairstreaks, I only got a few long distant shots today whilst another tormented me by fluttering around at waist height before deciding to go to the canopy. That's a Kestrel perched in the tree btw 😄

### Re: Pauline

by Hoggars, 06-Jul-16 07:16 PM GMT

So there are Small Coppers outside of Dungeness!!

I was beginning to wonder !

Wonderful photos as always, Pauline

Hoggars

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 06-Jul-16 10:05 PM GMT

Great Purps - of both types - Pauline 🍷🍷 Where about's were the Hairstreaks as I don't know of many, if any, sites where they come down that low. All my previous PHs have been lucky flukes 🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Jul-16 10:48 AM GMT

Thank you Goldie – you know Hairstreaks are my favourite. Hope you're getting on OK with the new lens.

Thank you too Buggy – would you believe me if I said I knew it was a Kestrel really?? (Lack of sleep or too much Pimms has clearly addled my brain 😊). Sparrowhawks come into the garden almost daily so I am reasonably familiar with them – I can tell you're not convinced! 😊

As you know Mike most of the Oaks there are stunted so even I can reach most of them 😊. However, this one was just out of reach but I do like the result. Thank you for your comment.

These Coppers were really quite tiny Hoggers so I think they must have slipped under your radar unnoticed and escaped from Dungeness 😊 You'd better do a quick count of the others 😊 Thank you for the compliment.

Hi Wurzel – the site is Browndown, a military site. Unfortunately, it is not open as often as it used to be, the result being that it gets quite crowded now when it is open. There must have been at least another 5 butterfly folk there!!!! In the past it has been quite isolated – apart from the odd nudist but curiously, when they spot the camera they cover up and disappear 😊😊

When I stumbled upon what I believe to be a Puss moth cat (based on the egg) I decided to give rearing this species another go. The last one was obtained at a late stage so I didn't have the opportunity to watch its development and then it was unfortunately predated during pupation. I was surprised at that because I do know that the pupal case is amazingly tough to the point where the moth has to cut its way out using formic acid (if I remember rightly).



In this shot it has clearly just shed its skin which I was disappointed to have missed. I wasn't expecting it to happen again in such a short time frame as it had moulted just before I found it. It is clearly growing fast and already eating loads but what a curious little creature. Its behaviour could easily convince me that it had a unique little character with various moods and likes and dislikes. Fascinatingly, it seems to have various appendages which appear and can then be retracted depending on various circumstances, mainly in response to danger or threats. I have marked these on the next shot but shall try to get a clearer photo soon. The ones which protrude from the tail are deep red, move independently of each other and are very sensitive to touch, curling on occasions, before disappearing again. Having kept tropical fish in the past they reminded me of the tubifex I used to feed them. I shall definitely be watching this one closely.





.... and a little Vapourer cat which I passed by:



**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 08-Jul-16 01:01 PM GMT

Pauline I've not been able to try it out yet the weathers been so bad 😞 I'm still trying to work out the best f numbers for it has well, I think I'll just go Auto 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 08-Jul-16 04:40 PM GMT

The weather is mixed here too Goldie – today has been cloudy, breezy but very warm and humid 😊

Surely this pupa is beginning to change now?? 😊 We're on at LEAST day 19 so things should be happening before too long:



On the subject of pupa, the shot below shows a mixture of Brown and Green Hairstreak pupae. Their story is for another day:



**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 08-Jul-16 05:32 PM GMT

That watch tower should be knocked down!!! 😞 The first one I mean! There must have been so many photo opportunities missed because butterflies want to take resin from the wood rather than come to the ground 😞. Such was the case today when I freed up some time especially to see PE's but would they land anywhere except the tower????????? When I arrived 1 was on the tower and 2 were dog-fighting in the air at around 1.00pm. I spent a hefty chunk of time watching them and the other butterflies, in particular the SWF which were relatively prolific. On the other hand, it is the first time I have ever been there and seen more PE than WA 😞 The whole time I was there I only saw one fairly worn WA. I can't help but wonder if this has anything to do with the fact that so much honeysuckle was hacked down and disposed of with many eggs (knowingly) lost in the process. It is a real shame about that and it appears to show little regard for that gorgeous butterfly.



I decided it was time for a quick check across the road and on the way to the car stopped to watch a Dragonfly hunting. It was a big Dragonfly with yellow rings around the body. Whilst I watched, trying to work out whether it was the Golden ringed Dragonfly mentioned to me recently, a mating pair of SWF drifted towards me and the Dragonfly immediately snatched them 😞 Well, I wasn't fast enough with my camera and to be honest I was transfixed watching the drama unfold. The Dragonfly flew with them for a few yards and after taking a bite out of them dropped the pair in the grass. This time I managed a couple of snatched shots before the pair made off into the tree tops:



Across the road the situation was very much the same with 2 or 3 PE flying around the canopy showing no interest in descending. I decided to check out the Skippers – or should I say check to see if there were any yet!! Since the grass was cut during the egg/larval period I have had concerns about these Skippers and now my hopes are rapidly fading. I have seen only one Small Skipper and no Essex Skippers at all 😞 whereas before there were dozens and dozens of each for as long as I can remember. I would pop up of an evening and just watch them all roost together – I should explain that they seemed to live in a tight colony along just the one stretch of verge. As I was thinking how regrettable this all was I met a very nice lady who just happened to work for the Forestry Commission. She told me that they take bio-diversity very seriously but the person doing this work had only been with them for a matter of months and may have been unaware of this colony. She seemed genuinely disappointed and said she would bring it to the attention of their head office on her next visit in 3-4 weeks.

Well, a few more shots of what I call my 'in-betweeners' i.e. those shots I take whilst I am looking/waiting for the main target species 😊







**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 09-Jul-16 07:30 PM GMT

It is blowing a gale out there so it is back to the baby photos. The 3 tiny Green Hairstreaks continued to eat, and to grow, and as they did so I recorded their development. This set of shots focuses on the development of No. 1 and No. 2 from when they were 5 days old until they were almost 2 weeks old – the period from 2nd June to 9th June.







On the 4th June they both shed their skin for the first time, sitting on top of it and eating it:





By the 6th June they were becoming noticeably larger and photos were getting a tiny bit easier:



The next two shots were taken on the 7th and 9th June respectively when they were beginning to look like proper little Hairstreaks. I had discovered that once Dogwood is cut it really doesn't last very long in water and even less time in oasis so I had to return to Noar Hill for some fresh supplies as their appetites were growing with them:



It was whilst I was doing this that I found my first few larva in the wild which was very helpful as it enabled me to compare the rate of development of the reared cats with the wild larva. Before taking any branches I scrutinised them carefully, primarily for any pests or predators as I did not want to put my precious charges in any jeopardy. The Dogwood was all in bud and despite taking precautions as the buds started to unfurl the following day they revealed 3 more larva 🤩🤩 So then there was 6!!!!!!

### Re: Pauline

by millerd, 09-Jul-16 11:50 PM GMT

Just catching up, Pauline and I think your shots of the Purple Hairstreaks are just amazing. Like Wurzel, I've rarely seen one down close enough to get a decent shot - they are always at neck-cracking height! The undersides are such a lovely shade of lilac-grey and beautifully marked as well. Much envy at this end! 🍷🤩

Dave

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 11-Jul-16 09:34 AM GMT

Thank you Dave. It's a really reliable site for both PH (lots of them) and Grayling. Well worth a visit but I am guessing that Gosport is a bit too far for you (?) otherwise I'd be happy to show you around it.

The last few days have been wet and windy but today, well, it's just downright cold (with the threat of thunderstorms later 😞). I haven't been getting out anyway because of the Red Mite problem. So far I have spent hundreds of pounds on products and days spraying but there are still many thousands which fall on me like rain if I go into one particular shed. They are in my hair now and I found 3 trying to get up my nose this morning!!! 😞 It is a nightmare 🤩🤩 However, I continue to monitor my Ringlet pupa and yesterday, on Day 23, it definitely started to change colour:



Today it darkened even further. It will be such a shame if it emerges into these low temperatures but it is now Day 24 (at least) so I guess it has to happen soon:



This morning I also found my first ever Orange Tip larva in the wild (just up my lane on the verge). Directly below it was the pupa of a Large White (wonder if it's one of my offspring 😊):





Last night I spotted this weird thing on my Nasturtiums (you can see I'm really not getting very far 😊😊). Obviously some sort of fly but I can't begin to imagine what has happened to it:



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Jul-16 05:55 PM GMT

I am becoming a little concerned about my Ringlet pupa. It has been very cold recently and yesterday the torrential rain (drops the size of marbles!) and thunder (accompanied by the usual power cuts) did little to help. Today has seen more of the same and the forecast for the next few days does not look promising. I posted the first shot of the pupa on 19th June although I think the pupa was formed a day or 2 earlier. On that basis it will have been in the

pupal stage for about 25 days. A few sites (including this one) have suggested that this stage should only last a couple of weeks. I am assuming that it is still alive given the recent changes. However, how long can it delay emergence? How will I know if it has died (sooner rather than later)? Should I try to intervene? I confess that tonight I have brought it indoors but I could put it under a UV light? At least once it emerges there is a chance it will survive until better weather enables release. Any views/opinions? This is quite a new problem for me 😊 A couple of shots from yesterday and today:



### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 12-Jul-16 07:26 PM GMT

#### Pauline wrote:

Directly below it was the pupa of a Large White.

Hi Pauline – this is almost certainly a Green-veined White pupa, given that it also feeds on Garlic Mustard.

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 12-Jul-16 07:29 PM GMT

Where are you keeping the pupa? In the wild it would be formed at the based of a grass clump and protected from a) extreme weather (rain) and b) direct sunlight.

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Jul-16 09:25 PM GMT

Hi Pete, thanks for both responses. One reason I assumed it was a Large White pupa was because I had previously seen half a dozen Large Whites feeding on these plants and also because it looked very similar to many of the 80 I recently reared. However, I stand corrected.

Of more importance is the Ringlet. It has been kept exactly as you described with minimal disruption and little intervention. Perhaps this shot of the

larva just prior to pupation gives a better indication:



Any advice you might have on how to deal with the current situation would be appreciated, eg, whether to try to 'speed things up' or should I just leave nature to take its course? The weather here in recent weeks has been poor to say the least and I am assuming (again) that perhaps that is the reason the development has been slow.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Jul-16 03:19 PM GMT

A gorgeous Comma was most accommodating this morning:





### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 13-Jul-16 05:34 PM GMT

It's good to see the Summer brood is out. I like your last pic best, because it shows the proboscis contacting the flower.

### Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 13-Jul-16 08:32 PM GMT

#### Pauline wrote:

or should I just leave nature to take its course?

Yes, this is normally the best course of action.

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Jul-16 03:36 PM GMT

My favourite too Mike 😊. Thank you for your comment.

Cheers Pete – probably good advice. I'd still be interested to learn how long a butterfly can delay emergence from a pupa before it dies (especially in inclement weather). I recall some years ago (another poor summer 😞) being present when someone asked Matthew O. that very question in relation to PE, but I think the answer was uncertain.

Anyway, despite recent awful conditions, PE were putting on a good show at Abbots Wood yesterday, with 3 males circling a Sallow, where a female PE sat undisturbed for the best part of an hour, entertaining a fair few visitors. Sadly, they (understandably) showed no inclination to descend so the only shot I managed was this – those present will know how high up this was:



I had stopped earlier to watch what I thought was a pair of courting GVW but I confess I have confused myself as I thought the females had 2 black spots and as far as I could see these both had one spot (the shots were taken at some distance). However, for 30 mins they went through the ritual – more than once – of gradually getting closer, oh, so, slowly and then with a flutter and a flurry they would separate and be further apart than when they first started – only to repeat the whole process again.... and again....and again!!! After 3 iterations I was even more fed up than the male and carefully moved on. Perhaps it was just a male bonding session – the sharing of minerals 😊







Just about all the mistakes it is possible to make are encapsulated in this sequence – bleached butterflies, blurred images, heavily cropped etc but I found the behaviour interesting.

I was so intent on watching the GVW that I did not notice the Purple Hairstreak on the bracken at the side – until it flew up 😊😊 It is a while since I have done this but here it is in the Oak (if you can't find it I'll tell you soon):



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Jul-16 03:52 PM GMT

My attention today was caught by several stunning Small Tortoiseshells, one of which seemed to have a great deal of blue on it. As I watched she began ovi-positing on a nettle (in not the best of places). I managed a few shots without disturbing her:









At this point, as the pile of eggs grew, I couldn't help but think she looked a bit tired, a bit haggard even. However, it wasn't long before she flew off enabling me to have a closer look at her precious deposits:



Another question I have been pondering is how many eggs do butterflies lay? Does this vary with individual (presumably), species (most likely), temperature (probably), genetics (almost definitely) etc. I have been unable to find any information which gives rough guidelines on a species basis.

**Re: Pauline**

by trevor, 14-Jul-16 05:15 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Lovely couple of reports ( the last two ). How many people have photographed an egg actually being laid ?. Not many.

All the best ,  
Trevor

PS. I am pleased those PE's managed to survive the recent gale and torrential downpours, the last thing they need !!.

### Re: Pauline

by Paul Harfield, 14-Jul-16 11:38 PM GMT

#### Pauline wrote:

Just about all the mistakes it is possible to make are encapsulated in this sequence – bleached butterflies, blurred images, heavily cropped etc but I found the behaviour interesting.

They look fine to me Pauline 😊 . Nice Small Tortoiseshell sequence as well 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Jul-16 03:27 PM GMT

Thank you for your very generous comment Trevor, but actually 2 spring to mind immediately – Neil F. and Vince (and I suspect there are many more). I'm glad you liked them tho' cos I only photograph and post stuff that I am interested in and I have no idea whether it will appeal to a wider audience. 😊

Thank you too Paul – I suspect we are all our own worst critics 😊

Well, after 27 days my gorgeous Ringlet finally emerged. The frustration and disappointment that I felt at missing the emergence by about 7 minutes was quickly overshadowed by a sense of relief that the butterfly was OK. I know I am biased but this just has to be the most beautiful Ringlet I have ever seen (most likely because she was so fresh and looked like velvet). Within 2 hours she was back where she belonged.







I've only got the BH to worry about now – for this year at least!

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 15-Jul-16 03:35 PM GMT

Perhaps I should mention that the Chalkhills are out round here but with the weather being what it is there were no open-winged shots today:





**Re: Pauline**

by Jamie Burston, 15-Jul-16 11:05 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

That is a rather special Ringlet, gorgeous!

Fantastic Purple Hairstreak photos, I found your Purple Hairstreak in the Oak canopy, it took me 3 seconds 😊

All the best,  
Jamie

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 16-Jul-16 07:16 AM GMT

What sharp eyes you have Jamie! To be fair, you've had more practice than most with all the effort you have put in searching Elms for WLH and well done on that – great job. Thank you for your kind comment. Just in case anyone is wondering here is a close-up of the top left hand part of the original shot – should make it easier to spot the Hairstreak:



There have been a few times recently (tho' not many) when it was easy to believe it is mid July:





More often than not tho' the weather has been poor and butterflies have been hunkered down in the grass, more vulnerable to predators, and scenes like this have been more usual:



A variety of spiders seem to be present in large numbers everywhere. I really don't like spiders and only photograph them when there is nothing else around but they do have a certain fascination:



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-Jul-16 05:07 PM GMT

Last night neighbours kindly allowed me to run the moth trap from their garden which backs onto woodland. They also have a couple of large ponds in their large, well-stocked garden so I was hoping to see moths which I might not have seen in my own garden. On checking this morning I don't think there was anything I haven't seen before – although there were probably a couple of hundred little ones so I can't be sure – but the good thing was that they were really interested in the moths 😊 . A few shots with mostly guesses at ID's:



Yellow-tail (or could it be Brown-tail? I can't remember how to tell the difference when the tail isn't visible).



Half a dozen Buff-tips in the trap and this lovely fresh Buff Arches



There were many *Endotricha Flammealis*, a funny little shape but lovely colours – pity they were inclined to fly off before any decent shots. This little one posed quite nicely – probably another long latin name and as there are so many that are similar .....



... but y'see, the little ones are starting to creep in 😊

I really should know this one but it is one of those which are just so variable I am not sure – but I have tried to find out (not just being lazy!)



The strangest thing I suspect was not even a moth; perhaps a nymph of some sort given it was near water???. These shots are dreadful and don't show the true colour which was very much green, but what a queer little creature!





### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 19-Jul-16 08:36 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I am well behind on keeping up with everyone's diaries at the moment and have just seen your Purple Hairstreaks...and the GV White sequence...and the laying Small Tortoiseshell...and your home reared Ringlet...

Great stuff 😊

And the moths, love the Buff, I still haven't had one of those yet although I have had half a dozen Buff Arches now 😊

I think the little one on the grass is *Crambus pascuella* although there are a few similar ones and I can't be sure. I have succumbed to temptation and bought the Sterling & Parsons Field Guide to the Micro Moths of Great Britain and Ireland...no going back now 😊

All the best,

Neil

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-Jul-16 09:56 PM GMT

Thank you for the comment and the ID Neil – much appreciated. I am not getting out too much at the moment – trying to keep on top of stuff here especially the mites 😊 However, whilst cleaning out one of the kennels I saw a white butterfly egg-laying all over the garden but in particular on my wallflowers and aubretia which are peppered with eggs. I am ashamed to say that from a distance I was not sure whether it was Small or Green-veined but I eventually managed to get a few shots of the eggs:





With regards to the pupae I recently found in the wild on Garlic Mustard (in my lane) – the Orange-tips and the other one; well, I was not entirely convinced that it was a GVW rather than a Large White, mostly because of the size. So, I went back to take another shot with a ruler, hoping that would help with a conclusive ID, only to find that the plants had all been cut down. A neighbour told me it had been done only hours before by someone local who had taken the branches and plants away on his truck. I set off in hot pursuit, hoping to be able to rifle through them but as I entered his garden I could smell bonfire smoke – yes, I was just too late again to save them. In fairness he is wildlife friendly and was totally unaware of the presence of the pupae and almost as disappointed as I was 😞

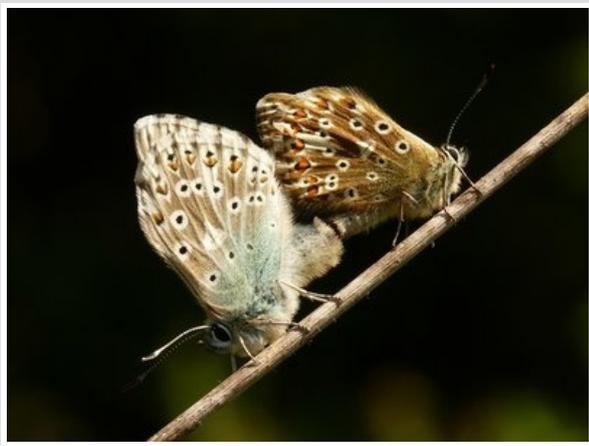
On my way to B&Q today to get some paint I stopped off at Oxenbourne. No SSS yet but a lovely fresh SWF:





Chalkhills are now out en masse but this was the first mating pair I have seen – of anything this season which is a bit unusual. A second male barged in and they took off, landing a short distance away:





Well, off out with my torch and spray to search for more mites now 😬😬

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 20-Jul-16 09:46 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, I must say the shots you took of the Small Tort ovi-positing were great, I didn't realise they laid so many eggs, I was under the impression when reading some posts that one egg was laid which is silly when you think about it. 😊 May be it depends on the Butterfly species .Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Nick Tanner, 20-Jul-16 09:58 PM GMT

I've blown the photo up to maximum and spent 10 minutes going over it with a magnifying glass and I still can't find the PH, maybe you should sell the photo to one of those 5,000 piece jigsaw puzzle makers, you might make a fortune 😊

Nick

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Jul-16 03:07 PM GMT

Now there's an idea Nick! 📍 I could do with a fortune right now (well, any time really 😊). Hope this helps – it was really high up – and thanks for your comment:



This morning I had to go up the road for some food shopping and then it was back home to do some painting but as I was so close to the Straits I decided there was no harm in a quick look before I got stuck into the chores. It was to be my last visit of the year anyway as the Brown Hairstreaks will be out soon and focus will change to Noar Hill.

I had not gone many yards before I spooked a butterfly on the ground but I quickly realised it was a Red Admiral. As I continued on I could see another butterfly some way in the distance, almost on the grass. I assumed it was another RA but as I got closer I realised it was a PE 😊. Well, what followed was the most extraordinary 90 minutes. The butterfly was a little worn but who cares when you are treated – well, like royalty 😊. After about 10 minutes I was joined by Hazel and it was great to share this experience with her. The butterfly continually landed on both of us, flying in a figure of eight between us, landing on our hair, shoes, hands, arms, back and in my case, as Hazel politely put it, my 'lower back'. I imagine she has photos of all of my body parts 😊 – and likewise!!





(Didn't realise I had such hairy arms 😊😊)

After about an hour we thought the butterfly had had enough as he suddenly and for no apparent reason flew up into an Oak tree:



However, as we stood discussing the encounter within a very few minutes he was back – and this time his behaviour had changed, flitting onto various different foliage and then back to us:





I am sure that Hazel will not mind if I include just one of the many times he landed on her:



The second time he took off some 20 minutes later it was clear that this time it was final – he went right up into the canopy. Hazel had said that there was at least one other PE a bit further along – to be fair I hadn't got very far from the entrance – but it was time to get off for that shopping. What a morning; what an experience – it was prolonged and personal and very special and although I took many shots they will only serve as a reminder of an encounter unlikely to be repeated.

### Re: Pauline

by trevor, 21-Jul-16 05:25 PM GMT

A very special encounter, Pauline. And I would have thought a bit late in the season for a grounding. Lovely shots.

Trevor.

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 21-Jul-16 07:26 PM GMT

#### Pauline wrote:

I could do with a fortune right now (well, any time really 😊)

Suggest you sell bottles of your perspiration as a PE attractant. If you dilute it 10,000,000,000 times and sell it as a homeopathic remedy then a little would go a very long way 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-Jul-16 06:56 AM GMT

I had to sit down in a patch of nettles to get those shots Goldie 😊😊 Certainly, some species of butterfly lay only one egg at a time, sometimes on several plants, over a period of time. I cannot find any information on how many eggs are laid in total for these species or over what period – hours or

days? Perhaps someone will enlighten us 😊 .

I can see one immediate problem with that business opportunity Mike – all types of insects are attracted (not just butterflies) including every species of biting bug, ticks, horse flies, mozzies 😬 I would have a queue of customers demanding refunds and compensation 😊

Thank you Trevor. I can only remember one other experience with PE that matches that of yesterday and that was quite a few years ago. That got me looking through old photos and it seems that in Hampshire at least, groundings in late July are not that unusual:

21 July 2012:



25 July 2012:



20 July 2013



.... and the only Empress I have ever photographed:



I am having to remove an increasing number of moths from my bedroom including this one which I believe is an Old Lady – impressive by virtue of its sheer size:



..... and outside the Small Whites continue to lay eggs in quite a frantic fashion on many different plants in the garden including this one:



### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 22-Jul-16 07:37 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, I had the same experience with a Comma in Fermyn Wood, it landed on my hat took off and then came back again a few times 😊 I wasn't has lucky has you with the Emperor 😊 ( No shots ) only when it landed on the ground. 😊  
We must have an attraction for them, 😊 lovely shots by the way Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 22-Jul-16 11:59 AM GMT

What a great experience, Pauline, what a brilliant species the PE is 😊 We found that their interaction with us to be almost magical, although we didn't have quite the same close encounter as you and Hazel! That's also a lovely shot of the Empress too – up off the ground showing her stunning underside



**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 26-Jul-16 08:32 AM GMT

Thank you Goldie and thank you too Mike. It was a truly amazing experience, both because of the intimacy and because it was so prolonged. Hazel has kindly sent me quite a few shots she took of the butterfly on me so I feel it is appropriate to include a few of them here:



Thank you Hazel, they're great 😊😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 26-Jul-16 10:40 AM GMT

There's no way I can match the marvellous photographs of the beautiful exotic species recently displayed by Tony, Mark and Guy so I have been focussing closer to home – on my Brown Hairstreaks. The last one started to pupate on 15 June which seems a long time ago now – and quite early I would have thought:



However, like the Ringlet, they have hung on and are now well into their 6th week in the pupal stage. Last week I was convinced that emergence was imminent as they 'coloured up' and then went slightly 'opaque' looking. I hope they have not been adversely affected by the extreme heat we have experienced in recent days. I have tried to keep them in the shade as I have no wish to desiccate them. In the past I have seen BH at Noar Hill at the end of July so I am assuming that if they are healthy then they are in line with those in the wild.



In the meantime I have paid a second visit to Oxenbourne to look for SSS. I believe I saw one yesterday but failed to get any shots so it looks like a third visit is on the cards despite the ticks at this site. It really has become quite overgrown in places so where I can search is somewhat limited. This is one site where I usually see a Small Copper (or 2) but none of them here this year either. In recent years I have taken photos of SSS here on 17 July so they do seem to be quite late. I have also expressed concerns in the past about the size of this colony which seems to be dwindling in size and contracting in range – I do hope I am proved wrong about that.

The Small Skippers are thriving here though with many females (too many to count) preoccupied with egg-laying and many stalks of grass holding their precious cargo. These eggs are not anchored in any way so if anyone is tempted to look please take considerable care as they are likely to roll out and be lost.





The site is teeming with Chalkhills and a host of other butterflies including Marbled White, Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, a couple of worn DGF, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Whites, gorgeous, vibrant Small Tortoiseshell, fresh RA's amongst others. The wild flowers are looking great too - pity about all the biting things.





Until I find some SSS, and until the BH hopefully emerge I shall post a few more 'inbetweeners', taken at various sites over the last few weeks, including this Funnel Spider:



I have picked up a few ID's from other diaries including this Longhorn moth - *Nemophora metallica* - from Buggy's diary. It was the little orange head which attracted me. There is also a great site for Ladybird larva for anyone interested - [ladybird-survey.org](http://ladybird-survey.org) - so I believe the following are Harlequin larva and 7-spot Ladybird.





### Re: Pauline

by trevor, 26-Jul-16 12:05 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,  
I'll give you 10 points for wearing an Emperor so well.

Regards,  
Trevor.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Jul-16 05:21 PM GMT

Thank you Trevor but another 10 points must go to Hazel for taking the photos 😊. Mind you, your comment does sound a bit like an old Rod Stewart song ... but I'll forgive you for that 😊😊

It seems I was right about that SSS yesterday as there were at least 2 there today – but my word, they are so difficult to get close to this early in the season. The weather could have been better – overcast with a strong breeze and temperatures lower than I would have liked for this butterfly:



Consequently, I could only get record shots although I saw (and lost) the butterfly numerous times:



There were a lot of Silver y moths around which I couldn't ignore, along with the more common (but not less attractive) species, many of which had those red mites attached 😞😞 :





Many Small Skippers still in evidence but mostly nectaring or resting up and a Small Heath which was actually in an upright position and begging for its photo to be taken – how could I refuse, especially as I haven't seen that many of them this season:



**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 26-Jul-16 06:29 PM GMT

Good to see my diary is proving useful for ID's 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Neil Freeman, 26-Jul-16 07:48 PM GMT

**Pauline wrote:**

...The site is teeming with Chalkhills and a host of other butterflies including Marbled White, Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, a couple of worn DGF, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Whites, gorgeous, vibrant Small Tortoiseshell, fresh RA's amongst other things...

Hi Pauline,

Glad to hear that somewhere is teeming with butterflies 😊, numbers of most species are worryingly low around my patch this year.

Silver-spotted Skippers!...the year is passing too quickly.

All the best,

Neil.

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 26-Jul-16 08:52 PM GMT

Pauline your so lucky to live near all those lovely Butterflies, i've only just found a few Gate Keepers around here today 😊 Hope fully we'll get our trip down there again shortly. Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 27-Jul-16 02:46 PM GMT

You know I enjoy reading your diary Buggy. The fact that you are seeing stuff just before I do and putting a name to it is an added bonus 😊

Oxenbourne has no shortage of butterflies Neil as the Chalkhills, Small Skippers, Marbled Whites and even the Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper seem to be doing really well here. Sadly, the same can't be said of the SSS – it will be interesting to see how they fare here this year. Likewise, the Straits is very short of butterflies. I was only saying to Alan T a few weeks ago that it wasn't so long ago when each thistle head held 3-4 SWF all the way along the track. This year I was lucky if my count got into double figures 😊

Make haste slowly Goldie – no point in undoing all the good work. It'll be good to see you both whenever you get here 😊

Yesterday whilst looking for SSS I was enjoying all the other butterflies including 3 or 4 DGF, all in varying states of wear, from almost transparent to really quite fresh. I was still surprised when I came across a lovely female obviously egg-laying.



She was right down in the grass – so far down she was not even visible most of the time and I just had to guess at her activities as I watched for some 15 minutes from only a few feet away. I didn't dare move, hardly even dared to breathe so photos were few and far between. There was no way I was going to risk disturbing her for the sake of what would surely be a poor shot obstructed by foliage.



When she eventually left I had a cursory look for eggs but I couldn't really remember what I was looking for and didn't want to 'trash' the site. When I returned home I checked on this site for the food plant, behaviour etc and despite the drizzle this morning I decided it was worth another look. Within 10 minutes I had found my first egg 😊 .



I have tried to get a bit closer but I think this is the very best I can do despite the egg being surprisingly large. It was very pale coloured and the light kept reflecting off it:



I didn't want to probe further just for the sake of it so I don't know how many she might have laid. However, I shall be returning to monitor this egg. Well, I couldn't find any SSS this morning and I couldn't leave without taking a shot of at least one butterfly. This Small Skipper just happened to be handy 😊



### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 27-Jul-16 10:49 PM GMT

Great to see the Silver spots are out Pauline, something to try for should the weekend weather be favourable 😊😄

Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by millerd, 28-Jul-16 09:01 PM GMT

My thoughts exactly, Wurzel! Nice to see the Silver Spots are out, Pauline, and well done in finding the DGF egg too. 😊

Dave

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 28-Jul-16 10:34 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, all being well we may be down in Kent next week. 😊

I think Pauline all the Butterflies decide to lay eggs just for you, 😊 They see you coming ! 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 29-Jul-16 03:29 PM GMT

That's great news Goldie. I guess with the egg-laying, it's just a case of standing still and watching 😊

Thank you Dave - it meant a lot to me to find that egg. I returned today on the way to buy frog food and as I expected the egg has changed colour. If the weather stays like this I guess it won't be that long before it hatches. A couple of views below:





Thank you too Wurzel. I hope the weather is kind to you all over the weekend. (Think of me spending many hours trying to eradicate mites 😓😓). Being at the SSS site it was hard not to look for them but still only a couple of males seen:



**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 29-Jul-16 06:41 PM GMT

Silver spots already and I've only just finished with 'Spring' species – time runs out too quickly nowadays 😓

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 29-Jul-16 11:12 PM GMT

Have you tried Broughton Down for Silver Spotted Skippers? I was there today in not so brilliant weather and saw at least 12 in a very small area?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 31-Jul-16 05:43 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel – it's not so much that I'm desperate to see and photograph the SSS; more a case of being concerned about their future at this local site. Hope you got some good shots tho at BD 😓

Doesn't it just Mike! There are not enough hours in the day either. With a convulsing fox on my knee who refuses to go to sleep despite a diazepam injection and a lot more mites to find and kill, this will be necessarily brief, especially as typed with one hand 😓. I was pleased and surprised at the variety of moths in the trap on Friday as there were several I have not seen before. Quite a few of these flew off before I could get any shots – what do others do? Put them in the fridge? The escapees included Pebble Hook-tip, Scalloped Oak and Scalloped Hook-tip. The Dingy Footman was also new to me along with the Dot moth:



Along with some old favourites were half a dozen Buff-tips (sorry Neil 😊) and an elegant Yellow-tail (I know it is yellow and not brown as I accidentally knocked it and it showed me its tail 😊):





The highlight of the 'catch' for me was an enormous Poplar hawk moth. I tried all ways to get some shots that would do this impressive insect justice. I was also surprised by how the light at different times of the day completely changed the colour of the moth. Anyway, as these have become my new favourites 😊 a few shots below:



(Taken in the morning)





(Taken early evening when the sun was low in the sky)



(Taken just before dusk and at release time)

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-16 10:26 PM GMT

No worries Pauline, nice Moths although I was expecting a Brostreak to infiltrate the last post 😊😄

Have a goodun  
Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 01-Aug-16 03:58 AM GMT

Me too Wurzel. Seems like an awful long time since 15 June – getting a bit worried about these pupa now as the orange has been visible for almost 2 weeks and now in 7th week of pupation! 😞😞

## Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 01-Aug-16 08:18 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I still haven't had a Buff-tip and you get half a dozen at a time 🐱...I reckon there is some payback going on here involving blue spotted Small Coppers 😊

Love your Poplar Hawk shots and the way you have captured the different colours under different lighting conditions 😊

All the best,

Neil.

## Re: Pauline

by David M, 02-Aug-16 08:56 PM GMT

Great variety of English summer images again, Pauline, even though this 'summer' has been more challenging than ever!

## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Aug-16 06:52 PM GMT

Are you up for a swap Neil? You can have all 6 for 1 Small Copper (even without the blue badge 😊)

Thank you for your kind comment David. Each season seems to bring different challenges but 2016 seems to have combined all of them 😊

Some might have noticed I have been posting at odd times (for me anyway). Well, exactly a year to the day, that I lost Foxy to epilepsy, I have had to say goodbye to Saffron, my beautiful, intelligent, complex vixen, for the same reason. Some wildlife vets believe that epilepsy is genetic and endemic in the wild fox population but as the onset is usually after the age of 5-6 years (and wild foxes usually only survive 2-3 years) it is somewhat difficult to monitor.

Whilst spending a couple of hours each night searching for Red Mites I thought I was keeping Saffron company. Turns out it was her who was keeping me company and I am missing her just so much 😊. Foxes are classified as canids of course but they have many traits and characteristics of felines which makes them quite intriguing. I know there are several folk on this site who have lost faithful companions, whether dogs or other animals, and at times like these I remember this poem by Rudyard Kipling which I find quite poignant:

### The Power of the Dog

THERE is sorrow enough in the natural way  
From men and women to fill our day;  
And when we are certain of sorrow in store,  
Why do we always arrange for more?  
*Brothers and sisters, I bid you beware  
Of giving your heart to a dog to tear.*

Buy a pup and your money will buy  
Love unflinching that cannot lie  
Perfect passion and worship fed  
By a kick in the ribs or a pat on the head.  
*Nevertheless it is hardly fair  
To risk your heart for a dog to tear.*

When the fourteen years which Nature permits  
Are closing in asthma, or tumour, or fits,  
And the vet's unspoken prescription runs  
To lethal chambers or loaded guns,  
*Then you will find - it's your own affair, -  
But ... you've given your heart to a dog to tear.*

When the body that lived at your single will,  
With its whimper of welcome, is stilled (how still!),  
When the spirit that answered your every mood  
Is gone - wherever it goes - for good,  
*You will discover how much you care,  
And will give your heart to a dog to tear!*

We've sorrow enough in the natural way,  
When it comes to burying Christian clay.  
Our loves are not given, but only lent,  
At compound interest of cent per cent,  
Though it is not always the case, I believe,  
That the longer we've kept 'em, the more do we grieve;  
For, when debts are payable, right or wrong,  
A short-time loan is as bad as a long -  
*So why in - Heaven (before we are there)  
Should we give our hearts to a dog to tear?*



### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Aug-16 06:56 PM GMT

OK, back to the butterflies – well, the DGF egg which is now 9 days old. I made a brief visit today and got a few shots from different angles. I also noticed 2 female SSS, which together with the 2 males, increases the population at this site by 100% – the numbers are building nicely as they say 😊😄





**Re: Pauline**

by Katrina, 03-Aug-16 07:24 PM GMT

Sorry to hear about Saffron, it is clear from your posts how much you loved her.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 04-Aug-16 10:10 AM GMT

Thank you Katrina. Losing all 3 of them in a year has been hard 😞

Whilst at Oxenbourne yesterday I took a few snapshots of a few of the many butterflies, both numbers and species, including this lovely female SWF:





.... and a rather gorgeous, ugly beetle which looked as if it was covered in shimmering inky blue armour plates for protection.



Back at home, the BH have now been in the pupal stage for 7 weeks. I believe one is male and one is female. I also think (hope) they are still alive. The eggs came from discarded branches on Noar Hill and I have not seen any reports of BH from there yet:





**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 04-Aug-16 10:24 AM GMT

So sorry Pauline, what else can be said, hope your okay, I know how much you love your animal's. Saffron was so affectionate with you, all the best Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 04-Aug-16 08:05 PM GMT

Sorry for your loss Pauline. One thing with this Hobby of ours, it does encourage us to get out and about which is the healthiest thing to do in situations like this, watching life go on in all its intricate wonder.

**Re: Pauline**

by Padfield, 04-Aug-16 08:23 PM GMT

I too am very sorry for your loss, Pauline. It never gets easier, no matter how many companions you love and lose. Good grieving.

Guy and Minnie

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 05-Aug-16 03:26 PM GMT

Thank you all for your kind comments, both public and private. They are all really appreciated. I am pleased you managed to meet her recently Goldie. I decided to take your advice today Buggy and called in to Noar Hill for a bit of therapy. I was astonished at the number of Red Admirals. It is one thing reading about how plentiful they are and quite another to see hundreds of them. It was not difficult to see 20-30 from one position, repeated across the site. SWF were more numerous here than at the Straits (something I have never known) and in between all these were vibrant Peacocks and the odd Comma, bright Brimstones and a lovely fresh Painted Lady. A few Marbled Whites and various Skippers were noted but only a couple of Common Blue. Large and Small Whites added to the general 'busy' feel of the location and whilst it was very enjoyable being amongst it all, what I had really come to see was how the BH are doing here. I had not heard any reports from this site although I usually see the first ones around the end of July. Well, how I didn't stand on her I don't know as I had walked over that area a couple of times in the last hour and she was well down in the grass. I managed a couple of shots before she flew up but there was always shadows of grass spoiling the shot 😞. I really must learn how to use photoshop to do more than cropping and brightening 😊😊







**Re: Pauline**

by Neil Freeman, 05-Aug-16 07:29 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Sorry to hear about your loss.

No doubt that display of Red Admirals and other species help to take your mind of things. As others have said, there is no better place at such times as out amongst the butterflies.

All the best,

Neil

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 05-Aug-16 09:55 PM GMT

Hopefully the great Brostreak helped to salve you Pauline 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 06-Aug-16 04:38 PM GMT

That Brostreak looks good to me Pauline, hope to see one soon 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 08-Aug-16 04:46 PM GMT

Thank you so much Neil - and you too Wurzel. I appreciate the comments and am trying hard to follow your advice tho' I fear it will take some time this time 😊 .

Goldie, I really hope you manage to see one some time soon.

**Hairstreak Heaven**

I have been struggling a bit to motivate myself recently and I was not at all happy with that shot I took of the fresh female BH as she emerged from the grass. I decided to nip over to Noar Hill to see if I could do any better. Ern was already there with a big grin on his face having just taken a smashing photo of his first ever male BH. Apparently, both male and female had only recently landed on the same leaf, back to back, before both flew off. Ern had also seen a couple of males flying around the canopy. As we stood comparing notes and having a bit of a catch-up the show kicked off.

It would have been hard to miss the male that was flying low down in circles around us, really close, but just in case we didn't spot him he was soon joined by a second male. I half expected a repeat of my recent PE experience and I wouldn't have been in the least bit surprised if one of them had landed on either of us. Their behaviour was quite weird, seemingly quite oblivious to us as they continued flying at waist height and lower in a very small area, touching down on Hazel branches at regular intervals but not for very long. They seemed agitated, excited even and I casually suggested to Ern that perhaps they were aware that another female was about to emerge in the area (I have seen Dukes behave in a similar fashion in the past). No sooner were the words out of my mouth than I spotted her and she was absolutely gorgeous - totally intact and very, very fresh (just look at those beautiful tails with the white tips) 😊 .

The males seemed to be competing for her attention as they swooped in time and again, each time a little closer. In between times we were treated to aerial displays more reminiscent of the PE with 2 and 3 males spiralling in the air before returning to their quarry. A large Dragon Fly zoomed in even closer, eyeing up the Hairstreak. Memories of the BH caught by a spider as she was egg-laying a couple of years ago came to mind, and more recently the mating pair of SWF caught by a Dragon Fly but thankfully all was well. There were at least 5 BH very close – 3 males and 2 females – and we were surprised to realise that we had been entertained for over an hour. Eventually one of the males landed beside the female – and we both missed the shot!!! – before they both flew off over the bushes. I have never had such a close encounter with so many BH at any one time. Marvellous!





**Re: Pauline**

by Katrina, 08-Aug-16 07:45 PM GMT

Wonderful report Pauline, interesting description of butterfly behaviour. 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by essexbuzzard, 08-Aug-16 10:14 PM GMT

Great goings on at Noar, Pauline. I'm pleased for you, you deserve a bit of luck at the moment.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 10-Aug-16 07:38 PM GMT

That means a lot Mark – thank you!

Thank you Katrina. I have honestly never had such an encounter with Hairstreaks. It was great to see and because I am still reliving it a couple more shots from the day:





Yesterday, I dropped into Oxenbourne, late in the day, to monitor 'my' egg which is 2 weeks old now:



I saw only 4 SSS for sure – 3 males and 1 female. However, I was told that Ashley had earlier counted 9 so still not into double figures 😊 . I took a couple of shots and decided to adopt a more natural style with plenty of background and context. I lie! Truth is, I just couldn't get them in any other position 😊😊



Whilst looking at Small Skipper eggs I came across a different type of egg. Probably lots of insects deposit their eggs in this fashion but I have no idea what they are:



**Re: Pauline**

by Maximus, 11-Aug-16 08:06 PM GMT

What a lovely encounter with Brown Hairstreaks and lovely photos too, Pauline 😊 must try to get there soon.

Mike

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 11-Aug-16 08:53 PM GMT

Lovely shots Pauline, 🍷 I do hope I can get over to see some BHS it depends on how Jim fairs over the next week Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 12-Aug-16 02:32 PM GMT

Thank you Mike – it was amazing. More seen today and many of the folk we know and love were there too. You were missed so please try to get there soon.

Thank you too Goldie. I do hope Jim is OK after that unfortunate incident.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Aug-16 08:20 PM GMT

My turf delivery was delayed this morning providing a window of opportunity for a brief visit to Noar Hill. It was great seeing many of the regulars there and newcomers Trevor and Doug (hope you eventually tracked down a male guys). In summary, I saw 4-5 males flying around and landing in the usual Beech tree. 3 females came down in total but not as far down as I would have liked .... and not quite in the right position for the sun. Nevertheless, I'm not complaining and did the best job I could under the circumstances:





... and there really is a male in this tree:



Returning home, more exciting for me was watching my colony of Purple Hairstreaks flying around in my Oak trees although I only saw about 6 and only one came within camera distance which was about 18ft up – even with my stepladder!! 😊 It was very windy and I was surprised to see one of the Hairstreaks tuck his legs under him and almost lie down:



### Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 16-Aug-16 12:52 AM GMT

Nice Brown Hairstreaks, Pauline, especially given the bright conditions 😊 We must have just missed you at Noar Hill on Friday. We saw a male BH at 3pm in the top pit but only got a record shot, it was nectaring on thistle but not stopping for very long. You're very lucky to have Purple Hairstreaks in your Oak but they always seem to sit just out of reach! We also added Clouded Yellow to our 2016 list 😊 no shots though it was much too active 😊 here's hoping that's the first of many.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 16-Aug-16 09:01 PM GMT

Pity I missed you Mike. A male Clouded Yellow was also seen on Sunday pm and late today I spooked a female from the path (near the stone circle) – so that's at least 2. I didn't see any BH today but when I started complaining Hazel told me I'd already seen more than my fair share 😊 Trouble is, I always want more! Should have called me Oliver 😊

I've been spending a fair bit of time recently at Noar Hill as it is nice and close and it reminded me that it is exactly 2 years since I found my injured wild rabbit just outside the reserve as I returned from a BH search. This is Lucky in her run today:



A Speckled Wood continually flew around her but I could not get a shot of the 2 of them together – settled on her kennel is the best I could do:



So I didn't see any Brown Hairstreaks today but there were some lovely butterflies anyway, gorgeous fresh Brimstone and beautiful vibrant Small Tortoiseshell to name a couple:



I didn't realise until I looked at this shot that there is something behind this Brimstone. I do hope it is a dandelion clock and not a spider:







Not sure what this bird is but I would love to know. At first I thought it was injured as it seemed to be leading me away by hopping along the ground:



A few have asked about my little Wood Pigeon which is still a little deformed but almost ready to go:



**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 16-Aug-16 09:32 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, your mystery bird is I think a Song Thrush 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 16-Aug-16 09:51 PM GMT

Easy mistake to make, Pauline. There aren't many Song Thrushes left these days!!! 😞

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 17-Aug-16 08:58 PM GMT

Thank you Buggy and David. I really should have known what it was as I do get them in the garden but it was at quite a distance and at a funny angle -

well, that's my excuse anyway 😊

Painted Ladies and Ladies Tresses were the targets today and Noar Hill delivered on both counts, although the former was quite unapproachable:





**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-16 10:09 PM GMT

The Painted Lady may have been hard to approach but you still got some great shots Pauline. Also good to see the success with the Brostreaks 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 18-Aug-16 08:11 PM GMT

Thank you Wurzel. I've been lucky with the Brown Hairstreaks this year – or so I keep getting told 😊

Today I had a lovely walk in glorious sunshine on Thorney Island. There were dozens and dozens of White butterflies, mostly Small and a fair few very fresh Green-veined, but other than that there was very little on the wing – apart from a few Meadow Browns, 3 male Common Blue and 3 Small Heath. Not a whiff of a Brimstone, not even a glimpse of a Red Admiral; not much to show for 2 hours:





Naturally, my attention turned to the birds, the first to catch my interest being this Heron:



These other little birds are familiar to me as I saw them last year:



I believe the following are Whitethroats as I have seen these before too in various locations (male and female?):



Yesterday I had the pleasure of Mike and Ros' company and Mike was kind enough to explain to me how to identify a Spotted Flycatcher. Based on what he told me about their behaviour I hope I am right in thinking that I saw one (actually quite a few) today?



I think I may also have come across some Angelica too but this is another new one to me 😊



An interesting walk despite the lack of butterfly species:



**Re: Pauline**

by bugboy, 18-Aug-16 09:02 PM GMT

Some nice pictures of the Whites there Pauline 😊 . Regarding your birdie pictures, you have some Wheatears sitting on the sign, you're right about those Whitethroats although not sure about sex, they'll all be looking rather scruffy this time of year as just coming through their moult ready for the long journey to Africa. Your 'Flycatcher' is I believe a Pipit of some sort (Meadow or Wood most likely), note the rather long hind claws typical of Pipits (and also Larks). Spotted Flycatchers look greyer, have shorter black legs and the spotting is less bold. 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 18-Aug-16 09:07 PM GMT

I'm afraid my tuition was inadequate, Pauline! I think your bird is a Meadow Pipit! It's a good time for looking for Spotted Flycatchers, though. I photographed this one at Lough Down a few years ago while searching for Adonis Blues:



Note the upright stance and it's habit of sallying forth to catch a fly and then returning to the same perch.

Mike

### Re: Pauline

by millerd, 18-Aug-16 09:12 PM GMT

Nice photos of the Whites, Pauline. I find they are pretty well the trickiest of all to photograph (excepting Wall Browns... 😊), and you've got some good ones there. 😊

Dave

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 18-Aug-16 10:09 PM GMT

Must admit, Pauline, in spite of this year being largely grim for butterflies, Whites DO seem to be very common right now. Long may this continue.

Thanks for the avian images by the way. Always nice to see a few of our feathered friends in amongst the butterflies.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-Aug-16 05:22 PM GMT

Nothing wrong with your tuition Mike but I fear your pupil has a few problems 😊😊 I was so pleased with myself as I thought I'd found one 😊 In fact, I still think I saw some unless the Meadow Pipit sits on the edge of a branch and dives out for flies, returning to the same place. Trouble was, it was a good way off and by the time I 'found' the bird in the viewfinder ..... well, I think I may have taken a photo of the wrong bird 😊

Cheers Dave – appreciate that, thank you. I haven't actually seen a Wall this season but a male has been spotted in Gosport. Still trying to decide whether to have a look for it.

Glad you like the bird photos David – pity I don't know what so many of them are 😊😊

Thank you for the ID's Buggy and the added information. To save making a fool of myself in the future perhaps I should send the shots direct to you first for confirmation of ID 😊

I haven't posted for a little while but I have been out and about primarily looking for Clouded Yellows. Well, I've seen them at 3 sites now and failed to get any shots. It says something when I end up taking photos of flies!!! I really don't like flies, but this one, well, I just couldn't ignore the vibrant colours:



Lots and lots of Brown Argus at Beacon Hill this morning including this male and female:



A mating pair of Meadow Brown disappeared into thin air as I glanced at the settings on my camera but at least this Small Tortoiseshell stayed just long enough for the one shot. Very windy up there today:



Last week I was passing Oxenbourne so, despite the rain which was getting quite heavy, I decided to pull over and check the DGF egg. It had hatched but that was about as much as I could see as everything was drenched. The female Chalkhill looks like she is bathed in a golden glow from the setting sun, whereas in fact she is hunkered down in dead grass trying to stay dry:



### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 22-Aug-16 07:01 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, hope you have more luck with the Clouded yellow's than I did, I didn't even see one 😊

It's poured with rain again here today tomorrow seems okay though, I'm going to pop over to HLB to see if I can find another Copper, I'd love to see a Peacock I've not seen any this Summer so far. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 22-Aug-16 10:04 PM GMT

Great fly shots Pauline 😊 There are some days when you're thankful for anything that lands in front of your lens - I've had plenty of those this year 😊  
😞 Keep trying with the Cloudies and one will give in eventually 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Aug-16 04:56 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie. Good luck with your sightings and the weather!

I really am trying with the Clouded Yellows Wurzel - another one seen at yet another site today and still no shots! 😞. This is like some long, drawn out kind of torment 😞

I was undecided where to go today. I could have gone to Gosport to look for the Wall that was seen. I could have gone to OWH to see Adonis, SSS and hopefully Clouded Yellow. In the end, because it is just so hot, I decided to head for Hayling Island. The place I had in mind was where I saw my first ever Long-tailed Blue (thanks to Mark). It is a small, scrubby car park but the nectar sources there seem to attract all sorts. I was dismayed when I arrived as just about all the vegetation had been mowed down. I thought I'd take a quick look anyway as it is a sheltered little corner with a variety of bushes bordering it. I was delighted to see a Painted Lady, well camouflaged on the gravel, and although I couldn't get close, it didn't go far. Each time I tried to get close it flew another few yards and so after a few attempts I gave up and looked to see what else was around.



Something small and orange caught my eye - a Small Copper 😊😊 I've only seen 3 this season so I was quite excited, even though it was a bit worn. I took a few shots before being a bit distracted by a Holly Blue, the first of several. I wandered over towards the sailing club and noticed this Little Egret which I initially thought was injured (I never realised they sat like that). However, as I drew closer it was clear that all was well:

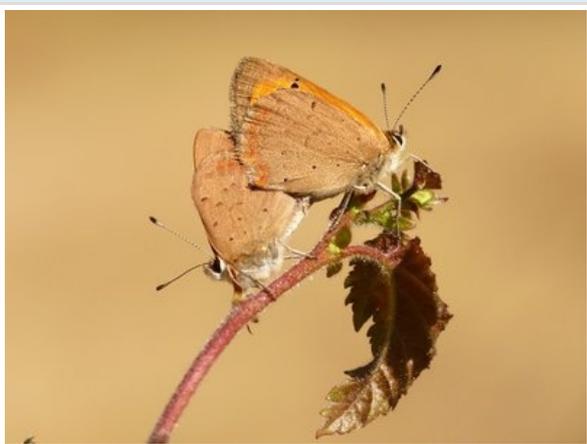




As I walked back towards the car park I saw another Small Copper and she seemed to be looking for somewhere to egg lay but she flew over a hedge and I lost her. Back in the car park – this little scrubby area – more butterflies revealed themselves – Common Blues (carefully checked for tails 😊), Meadow Brown, Small Whites.... but no Clouded Yellow. However, another Small Copper appeared. This one was really fresh and as I kneeled down on the gravel another Small Copper joined her. Before I could even switch on the camera they were mating 😍😍. Not only had I just seen more Small Coppers than I have seen in the whole season but here was something I had never seen before:



I was a bit concerned as they were in a very vulnerable position. Walkers, dogs and even cars come through this area. When a family came through with 4 dogs I decided to move the butterflies to a safer place. I carefully transferred them to a branch and then carried them to the hedge, where I placed them safely behind the fence in the shrubbery (out of the wind too). I wanted to see how long it would be before they went their separate ways but after 55 minutes I had to leave and they were as I left them.

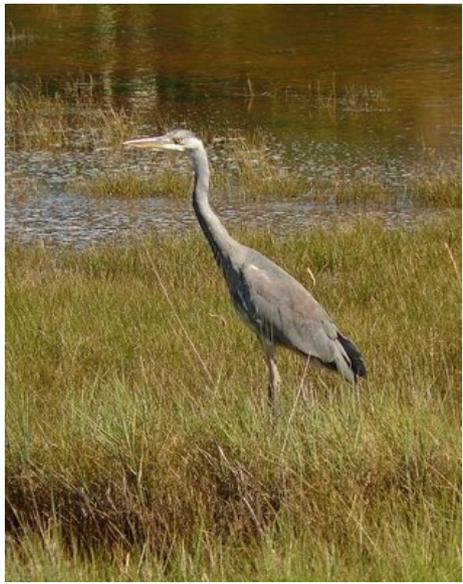




Next stop was the Hayling Billy Line, on the way home. Lots of Whites here, Holly Blues too and even a fair sprinkling of Small Heath:



I had walked all the way up the track and was on my way back when there it was – right in front of me on some Fleabane, a gorgeous Clouded Yellow. I was just about to take the shot when some cyclists came by and it flew off right across the fields. I waited a while but it didn't come back. Just had to console myself with the Heron whilst I was waiting:



I SHALL get that Clouded Yellow shot!!! 😊😁 ... but not sure where I'll try next!

### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 23-Aug-16 07:09 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, just had confirmation about the BH's at Gait Barrow and the news is positive , they are at GB 😊  
Now I've to try and get up there. Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Aug-16 02:20 PM GMT

I can tell that you're just soooooo excited about that news Goldie – and so you should be! Great Painted Lady – I'd be happy with one of them in my garden 😊

I've just had a smashing couple of hours with great folk in ridiculous weather conditions. Scampering up and down steep hills nearly finished me off in these extreme temperatures but at last!!!! OWH delivered the goods with at LEAST half a dozen Clouded Yellows (others were inclined to think more):



Silver Spotted Skippers were numerous on the same bank (well, compared to Oxenbourne) and getting a few shots was a comparative doddle:



Ern was quick to spot a pair of Adonis and called us over:



There were quite a few mating pairs of Chalkhills around and as we made our way back up the steep bank I nearly stood on this pair of Small Heath:



Back at the pub (the only sensible place to be in these temperatures) I sat with a cool drink and watched a Green-veined White engrossed in egg-laying at our feet on violet:



Now, where was that Wall Brown?? 😊

### Re: Pauline

by trevor, 24-Aug-16 04:01 PM GMT

Clouded Yellow conquered at last, Pauline. Lovely shot !  
This weather might bring a lot more over, and extend the season.

Best wishes,  
Trevor.

### Re: Pauline

by David M, 24-Aug-16 06:21 PM GMT

Glad to see you got in on the Clouded Yellow act, Pauline. With any luck, they'll make their way to Wales soon.

### Re: Pauline

by Hoggers, 24-Aug-16 07:16 PM GMT

Hi Pauline : after 55 minutes they were still coupled?!?

That's amazing! The longest I've recorded is 22 minutes.

I guess they liked each other an awful lot !

Best wishes

Hoggers

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 25-Aug-16 01:29 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers

I have checked back at the photos I took of the mating pair. The time from the first shot to the last (when they were still coupled) was 56 mins. Allow a few minutes either side – as I didn't dash off straight away – and I'd say it was over an hour. If I'd known it was perhaps unusual I would have made a point of staying to record the end time. How many pairs have you timed?

**Re: Pauline**

by Hoggers, 25-Aug-16 04:03 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, every pair I've ever come upon I've timed from the moment of finding until separation. I'd say I've seen around 15 to 20 in total and 22 minutes is the longest I've ever recorded, so your pair beat all that I've ever seen!

They're so vulnerable when mating ( I remember once having to chase off a spider that was taking an unhealthy interest in one pair ) that I thought 22 minutes was risky indeed– so an hour is borderline suicidal!

I wonder if any one who has bred Small Coppers has noted how long they remain coupled?

Lovely photos as always, Pauline!

Hoggers

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 25-Aug-16 06:54 PM GMT

Thank you Hoggers, both for the compliment and the details. I am kicking myself! I bet you want to kick me too! What an opportunity lost as I'm unlikely to witness that again. Don't want to labour the point but of the pairs you timed, how many did you see from start to finish? I hope someone who has bred them reads this and provides us with more info. Sorry Hoggers!

**Re: Pauline**

by Hoggers, 25-Aug-16 07:12 PM GMT

It's all part of the fascinating and often baffling World of Small Coppers, Pauline!

I've only seen a few pairs right from the start and they've got the job done in about 15 minutes. If you look at your first photo you'll see the female pushing against the male with her leg – that's something I see all female do and it's usually a sign that she wants to separate .

I hope there's someone who has experience of breeding them that can share their knowledge with us.

But for now I'm putting your record in my notebook!

Hoggers.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 25-Aug-16 09:28 PM GMT

I noticed that kicking right from the start Hoggers as I think I remember you mentioning it before but it seemed to subside after about 30 mins.

Thank you for your comment Trevor. I have sent you pm.

I'm keeping my fingers crossed for you David because they are a lovely butterfly. One of the (local) sites where I had seen one was Noar Hill and I thought I would check today to see if it was still there.

By 2.00 pm today heavy work in the garden was becoming unbearable because of the humidity. I decided to take heed of the health warnings being issued to the elderly to stay cool 😊😓 . I pulled on my shorts, pinned up my hair, put the car roof down and set off for Noar Hill. It was very silent up there. The atmosphere was oppressive – ominous even. It was almost a little bit eerie, the air was so heavy with the promise of a storm to come. I wondered if I would see any butterflies. The sky was quite dark and rain was beginning to fall – a delicious, cool relief as the large drops fell almost in slow motion – the odd clap of thunder in the background. It didn't last long and didn't bring the freshness I'd hoped it might. It did bring the butterflies out tho' and in total I saw 14 species in a short space of time, including a SWF in decent condition. The highlight however, was seeing a male and female Brown Hairstreak within feet of each other. The male was in poor condition but the female was pristine so she initially got my full attention. She seemed nervous, unsettled and wouldn't let me approach too closely so I only got a couple of shots. After a couple of short flights I lost her. Returning to the male, he too had departed.



There seemed to be a fair few eggs about including these – no tripod so hand held only:



Plenty of Whites around and Common Blue. Took a couple of shots as I strolled around the site:



As I left the site I couldn't help but feel sorry for one of the herd as it was being tormented by flies, reminding me of my days with my horses and the lengths we had to go to to give them some relief:



I had to glance at the nettle patch on the way back to my car and I am assuming this is a Red Admiral larva:



### Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 25-Aug-16 10:52 PM GMT

That is a really pristine Broastreak Pauline 🍷 – hopefully they'll be around for a while still 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Pauline

by FISHiEE, 26-Aug-16 10:02 AM GMT

Congratulations on your success in the Hants wildlife trust calendar photo competition Pauline!!

<http://www.hiwwt.org.uk/Photography-competition-winners2016>

2nd from last image. Very nice! 😊😊😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Aug-16 09:15 AM GMT

Let's hope so Wurzel, eh! As a group they are my favourite butterflies.

Thank you John. I have never entered a competition before. I sent in a few shots that met the criteria and totally forgot about it. I thought it was a wind-up when I was notified. Never would have thought I was good enough as the standard is so high. My first love will always be the butterflies tho' and in particular their behaviour.

I think it was the Grayling, with its incredible propensity for camouflage that captured my interest in butterfly behaviour. In the early days of my diary, time and again I posted shots of this amazing butterfly which was almost invisible, regardless of its background. Heather, dried grass, shingle beaches all served the same purpose – to conceal the butterfly:



*Camouflage - taken 2006*



*Camouflage - taken 2007*



*Camouflage 2013*

Over time, I witnessed the courting and mating of several pairs - catching tantalising glimpses of the lovely markings on their upper wings which, like the butterfly, are usually concealed.



*Mating and courtship 2012*



This season however, I had only so far managed the briefest view of a single Grayling very early in the season. I wanted to learn more about this species, especially the egg-laying process. I am lucky as I have a fair few colonies within 5 minutes of where I live - Woolmer, Longmoor, Bramshott for example but with the recent hot weather I was drawn towards the coast. The added benefit was being able to watch a couple of Clouded Yellows along with a smashing sea view.

I thought the time was about right for egg-laying and having reached the colony I didn't have long to wait before seeing a couple of females engaged in this activity. Typically, this seemed to take place in sheltered little nooks and crannies where watching the butterfly's activities involved kneeling/lying on a variety of spiky plants and stones.





*Egg-laying behaviour 2016 searching out appropriate sites*

They didn't always lay on the foodplant and the laying of each egg was over very quickly, after which the butterfly would move on a short distance and repeat the process. I didn't manage to get a shot of the actual egg-laying but afterwards I was pleased to see the eggs which, compared to the size of the butterfly, were really quite tiny.



It was also interesting to note that in a couple of places where this butterfly had deposited an egg, others had been there before and several eggs were visible. My only regret is that my bridge camera, hand-held in the glare of direct sunlight, could not produce a more detailed image:



I left feeling I'd learned quite a bit but still so much left to learn. The distance of this particular colony prevents me from monitoring that site but if time permits I shall visit a few of the local sites with that in mind. In the past I have noticed that the same butterfly behaves differently in different locations/different sites so it will be informative to make comparisons.

### **Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 27-Aug-16 04:17 PM GMT

Well done Pauline with the competition win you deserve it, hope to see you and the BH's next year Goldie 😊 Oh! and I love the shot of the Graylings pairing. 😊 (Jim's not too good again) 😞

### **Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 28-Aug-16 04:12 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie – it came as a complete surprise 😊

With the weather being what it is I decided to put the moth trap out last night – the first time in ages. I was stunned by the sheer numbers in the trap this morning, both quantity and number of species, quite a few of which I hadn't seen before – and some old favourites. I have been wanting to see a Burnished Brass for a long time now and there it was. Resplendent in all its glory, adorned with gold leaf or so it seemed. Even in the early morning light the gold colouration was breathtaking. What a beautiful moth:



I was pleased to see another Poplar-hawk moth which I haven't finished photographing yet as I had an early appointment to get to:



Black Arches I have had before but I have never seen this Chequered Fruit-tree Tortrix – yes, the little'uns are creeping in:



Another newbie was this striking Feathered Gothic:



The Iron Prominent and Dusky Thorn (I think) have both been trapped before but very welcome none the less:





There were many that flew before I had a chance of any shots including the Pebble Hook-tip which looked nice and fresh. I have not seen or photographed this one before, unlike a couple of Brimstone moths which took off up into the trees. There were half a dozen Large Yellow Underwing which were far more co-operative; I believe this is a male (L) and female (R):



Still not sure if this is a Swallow or Lesser Swallow but managed to grab this shot as an aid to ID before it promptly departed:



I have to finish with another shot of the Burnished Brass as this is one special moth 😊 :



**Re: Pauline**

by Katrina, 28-Aug-16 06:00 PM GMT

Splendid colours on the Burnished Brass Pauline, well captured in your photo.

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 30-Aug-16 08:17 PM GMT

Thank you Katrina. It's very kind of you to say so but honestly, I don't think the photos do it justice. It actually gleamed in the early morning light.

I was keen to see more Clouded Yellows so made a return trip to OWH this afternoon. Five seen in total, two of which had some damage/wear. A few shots below:





Got there in the end Alan 😊😄

### Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 30-Aug-16 08:19 PM GMT

Loving the moth photos Pauline, especially that first Burnished Brass image...beautiful 🍷😄

edit; I was just about to post and those Clouded Yellows popped up 🍷🍷😄

All the best,

Neil.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Sep-16 10:56 AM GMT

Thank you Neil. Your photos have given me something to aspire to 😊

A few shots below that somehow got left out of recent posts, starting with Adonis and SSS from OWH:



A local Grayling site produced some worn Blues and only the second deer I have seen this season:



Noar Hill continues to deliver the goods and although many are looking worn now there is still a fair few species around, including this SWF:







Not half as good as Neils shots but there were so many Speckled Wood I had to take a shot at one of them:



Last but not least this Painted Lady. She was not going anywhere due to cloud cover but was tucked so far down in the middle of a patch of nettles that this was as close as I could get, albeit at the wrong angle 😊



### Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 01-Sep-16 04:37 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, your certainly getting to know your Moths, great shots. 😊

Also love the Clouded Yellow shots wish I could have seen at least one this year, not to worry, may be next year. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Sep-16 06:32 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie. I think the Clouded Yellow is a beautiful butterfly and I have made an effort to see some this year. However, I just wasn't satisfied with that last shot of the Painted Lady and thought I'd better make an effort to see more of them too. I saw 3 today at 3 different sites – brief visits as I made my way down the A3 for frog food 😊😊







Thankfully they didn't present quite the same challenges as the Clouded Yellows but lively never the less!

**Re: Pauline**

by Paul Harfield, 01-Sep-16 06:44 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

What would we all do without Painted Ladies and Clouded Yellows at the end of the season to lift the spirits 😊😊 . Lovely shots as usual 😊  
Your most recent moth collection are also pretty good, I am tempted to have a go myself 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-16 09:50 PM GMT

Cracking Cloudies and Ladies Pauline 🍷 There is still a good range of species out there it seems' long may it continue 😊  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 01-Sep-16 10:28 PM GMT

Some great specimens there, Pauline, but my favourite has to be the Feathered Gothic. Never seen this insect before but it's cryptic camouflage is stunning!

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 02-Sep-16 07:32 PM GMT

Nice PL's Pauline, Frog Food, now you've got my mind working over time 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 04-Sep-16 12:35 PM GMT

Thank you Paul. There are some stunning moths out there and once you start to take an interest ..... well, as others have said, it's quite addictive 😊

Thank you too David. I have never seen that moth before either. I think there is another 'version' – the Bordered Gothic which is much rarer. You just never know what you are going to find when you open that box! 😊

I'm glad you like them Goldie. You now know the story of the 60 frogs so I couldn't resist an image of one, all of them the size of my thumb nail:



Cheers Wurzel. There are definitely still a fair few species around (I note Ashley saw 8 BH at Noar Hill the other day 😊). A few September sightings below:





**Re: Pauline**

by Jack Harrison, 04-Sep-16 07:54 PM GMT

[quote][Burnished Brass] Resplendent in all its glory, adorned with gold leaf or so it seemed. I wonder what the environmental advantages / evolutionary reasons are for such a striking brassy effect?

Jack

**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 04-Sep-16 08:56 PM GMT

**Jack Harrison wrote:**

[quote][Burnished Brass] Resplendent in all its glory, adorned with gold leaf or so it seemed.

I wonder what the environmental advantages / evolutionary reasons are for such a striking brassy effect? ..and to think; they were so adorned before humans had discovered how to smelt metals!

**Re: Pauline**

by Pauline, 05-Sep-16 07:15 AM GMT

That's a really interesting question Jack but I'm afraid you're asking the wrong person. I don't even know if the individual is male or female which may have provided a clue (attractive to mate?). As in other species the colouration provides light and shade which breaks up the outline to a degree but as they do not fly during the day is camouflage needed? They remind me of the Purple Emperor which appears to have a dull colouration until viewed at certain angles when that spectacularly vivid blue sheen is evident. With the Burnished Brass the magnificent metal appearance becomes a muted, dull green-brown velvet which I have tried to show (not terribly successfully) in the comparisons below. Perhaps someone more knowledgeable could throw some light on it:





Some great shots of the exotics posted recently mike. Nice to see shots of the immature stages. Seems like it is very well organised. Hope you got to see some fabulous orchids too 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Jack Harrison, 05-Sep-16 09:00 AM GMT

Pauline[quote]I don't even know if the individual is male or female which may have provided a clue (attractive to mate?)Does anyone know if male/female Bold-as-Brass moths (I can't help calling them that) are noticeably different in appearance to humans? (I presume **most** Bold-as-Brasses can tell the difference!)

Jack

### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 05-Sep-16 10:34 AM GMT

'Bold as Brass' moths aren't dimorphic to our eye's Jack, pheromones are probably put to good use!

As to the reasons for such 'eye catching' patterns, it'll be camouflage. Even nocturnal species need to avoid being eaten by diurnal predators and these shiny patches are employed by many insects (including butterfly pupae like our familiar nymphalids). These moths are in the same subfamily as other moths such as the Gold Spots and Silver-y's that have similar spots and spangles that will mimic holes and tears or spots of dew in/on dead leaves 😊. It's all very clever.

Keep an eye out for Abs with future captures as well, there can be quite a bit of variety with the amount of 'brass' on the wings, sometimes the two bars are joined.

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-Sep-16 05:28 PM GMT

Well Jack, that's us told 😊. Thank you Buggy - that was both interesting and informative. It is a pity we did not bump into one another this season - I hope it happens next when perhaps I will be able to get to Bookham 😊. I shall certainly be keeping a close eye on the moth trap as I have also been advised of the likelihood of migrants. Today I was totally unsuccessful looking for immatures, finding instead a couple of frogs!!!(got enough of them thank you), a couple of Speckled Wood and a Shield Bug which I have yet to identify. For me the end of the season is drawing closer very quickly 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-Sep-16 06:11 PM GMT

I think I have now identified the Shield Bug:



I do believe it is a Hawthorn Shield Bug – ACANTHOSOMA HAEMORRHOIDALE – the final instar in fact, as they seem to vary considerably though the various instars. If I am wrong I am going to feel pretty stupid – again! If I am right then I hope you are impressed Buggy 😊😁 Simple stuff to folk like you I'm sure but I still have to look this stuff up 😊

### Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 05-Sep-16 06:20 PM GMT

Looks good for a Hawthorn Shieldbug to me, I use this website when I'm trying to ID true Bugs:

[http://www.britishbugs.org.uk/heteroptera/Acanthosomatidae/a\\_haemorrhoidale.html](http://www.britishbugs.org.uk/heteroptera/Acanthosomatidae/a_haemorrhoidale.html)

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Sep-16 08:08 PM GMT

Cheers Buggy, I'll remember that link.

This morning there was a constant fine drizzle and heavy cloud cover but it was oh so warm so I decided to set off for OWH. I've stopped caring about the weather and I'm clinging on to the last the season has to offer. Despite these conditions there were more Meadow Browns about than I have ever seen in one place. It was hard to avoid standing on them. Several times I was about to put my foot down and you know what it's like when you realise you are about to tread on something special and have to suddenly make that extended step, totally unexpectedly. Every other flower head seemed to have one of these attached to it. I tried to take a shot but half of them flew off. Even so, I can count at least 10 in this one:





Small Heath were also abundant and although I don't often photograph them today they looked so appealing:



I'd really come to see the Adonis but the first blue I saw was a fairly fresh Chalkhill who was persistent but unsuccessful in the attentions he lavished on a female:



There were some nicely marked female Common Blue around and a fair few Whites were on the wing:



I saw a couple of Clouded Yellow flying in the distance but lost them. 20 mins or so later I stumbled upon the male roosting in the inclement conditions.

A few pecks out of the hind wings but so what!



... and then I reached the Adonis. How lovely they are especially when so fresh:



Many of the butterflies seemed to be congregating on the path and looked to be taking in minerals:





It took me a little while to realise that the 2 above were both attracted to the same female (below). I hope I receive as much attention when I am in the same condition!! (Can't be long now 😊😓):



Out of the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of orange, and sure enough a Small Copper had joined us on the path:





In total I saw 12 species including a SSS which I didn't photograph. A lot still going on despite the time of year and weather conditions 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Jack Harrison, 06-Sep-16 08:35 PM GMT

The blue of an Adonis is just staggering. Thanks for the memories Pauline (we don't of course get them up here).

Jack

### Re: Pauline

by Katrina, 06-Sep-16 10:33 PM GMT

Super collection of photos but I particularly like the Small Coppers 😊👍

### Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 06-Sep-16 11:03 PM GMT

Great to see you still finding so many species on the wing – and those Adonis males are splendid. As you know, I've already resorted to tropical houses for my 'fix' 😊

### Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Sep-16 08:17 AM GMT

You're very welcome Jack. I'm pleased you like them and although you might not see them locally you do live in a beautiful part of the country which must be some small compensation 😊

Thank you Katrina – it was a real unexpected treat seeing the Small Copper as I have seen so few this year.

Thank you too Mike. Having been badly bitten again 😞 I might well be resorting to the butterfly house next!

I decided to put the moth trap out last night expecting great things after the last time. However, when I opened the lid I was shocked to see 10 Hornets, 3 wasps, a large spider and ..... very few LIVE moths (about 6). Dead and dismembered bodies littered the floor of the trap including my precious Burnished Brass 🙄🙄. I was gutted!!!! I'll be honest – this has put me off. I shall have to think very hard before I put the trap out again (unsupervised at least).





## Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Sep-16 11:24 AM GMT

At the start of a new season I am never sure where it will take me. This season I had hoped to expand my knowledge and try to maximise new experiences. I wanted to build on my new found interest in the immature stages (including rearing) and moths, and seek out new sites to explore. Unfortunately, animal problems curtailed my activities a little (losing 3 of my foxes in a year was a blow), but without going out of my way, I was surprised to realise I have seen 44 species (to date) and reared 6. It was a little disappointing that I did not get to see the SPB, Wall Brown or Lulworth Skipper as I find all of these very attractive and on sites I enjoy visiting. I had hoped to see at least one butterfly species I haven't seen before but it was not to be. Perhaps next season.

Early in the season I was able to visit Wisley to see some very exotic butterflies, the likes of which I am only ever likely to encounter on a few diaries on this site. Amazing to see them for real.

Naturally I can't just ignore that very disappointing and misplaced anonymous allegation that I consider photography more important than the subject matter - however, the aspect that stays with me is the support and encouragement I received both privately and publicly, both at home and out in the field. Thank you all for that. I can't even begin to imagine who would be so cowardly as to hide behind UKButts, unable to raise the issue with me personally, but I feel sorry for the individual concerned.

I have had a few regrets and challenges this season certainly. Yes, I regret getting the timing wrong with the WLH but to see them mating and egg-laying, for them to be able to contribute to the next generation instead of dying on the ground, was some compensation. The rearing of the Glanvilles wasn't totally trouble free either but Martin was on hand every step of the way with help and advice - a brilliant mentor. Hutchinson's Bank was also the only new site I managed to get to due to the animal problems at home.

As always there are highlights and for me this season 3 or 4 spring to mind. The first was my very personal and prolonged encounter and interaction with the PE which I was delighted to share with Hazel. Perhaps of even more significance was the behaviour displayed recently by 5 Brown Hairstreaks, the likes of which I doubt I shall ever see again, shared with Ern. The Brown Argus that floated down into my garden from nowhere, landing on a slice of bread, will stay in my memory simply because I have never seen them in this area; the mating pair of SWF which somehow, miraculously escaped from the clutches of a Dragonfly, the likes of which I had never seen before. Aberrations are always memorable. I have been lucky enough to see a few of them this season but the one at the forefront of my mind was the stunning PBF seen at Bentley Wood. Observing the Graylings egg-laying was another first for me and there have been discoveries which have raised more questions than they have answered - the Common Blue larva, for example, which was being plastered with chalky soil by the ants, the WLH's which persisted and insisted on pupating in soil, contrary to what is documented, to name a couple.

The Green Hairstreaks which I reared - well it is early days but getting them to the pupal stage was plain sailing and the little Ringlet made it safely through. Most of the Large Whites made it too but surprisingly I had few subsequent sightings. The White Admiral both emerged safely and I was lucky enough to be there at the time having missed their emergence last year.

On the moth front I have viewed some spectacular moths even though the moth trap has not had as much use as I'd hoped due to time constraints. The gorgeous Burnished Brass, the amazing Poplar-hawk moth and the Pale Tussock to name but a few. I've a long way to go with these creatures as the sheer numbers, similarity between species and variations within species, has caused me difficulty in identification. I would like to thank all who have helped me with this aspect and should mention Neil F's cracking photos which have inspired me to try harder.

My summary however, is largely in photographic format. I have compiled shots of my favourite photos and recent activities, either just because I like them, or because of what they remind me of, or because they represent a major activity such as rearing or moths. Each season I am drawn to the Hairstreaks and have come to the conclusion that this is my favourite group. To that end they have a compilation to themselves. I have also included a shot of the Black Hairstreak which I reared a couple of years ago, but is just too attractive a butterfly to leave out and completes the British Hairstreak group.

I am hopeful that my photography is improving over the years and I was delighted to be informed recently that one of my photos had been selected for the HIOWWT calendar. As this was the first competition I have entered I was stunned. Now seems like an appropriate time to call it a day for this season. I shall miss everyone but there are other things to attend to as usual - and of course I shall be back next year.

Woley 2016



Indian Leafwing



Tiger Mantis Grass



Glard Orange Tip



Malachite



Blue Memphis



Malachite



Great Mourner



Fobman



Fobman

Behavior



White-letter Hairstreak (Camouflage)



White-letter Hairstreak (Camouflage)



White-letter Hairstreak (Camouflage)



Caterpillar (SD) soil with mud



Caterpillar (SD) soil with mud



Duke of Burgundy (mating)



Green Hairstreak (arranging from egg)



Green Hairstreak (soil with mud)



Dimpled cell preparing to pupate

Butterfly Rearing



White-letter Hairstreak



Black Hairstreak



White-letter Hairstreak



Glanville Fritillary



White-letter Hairstreak



White Admiral



White Admiral



White Admiral



Small Copper

*Immature Stages*



*White Admiral Larva*



*Glanville Pupa*



*Fawn Moth Larva*



*Glanville Larva*



*White Admiral Pupa*



*Glanville emerging from Pupa*



*Duke of Burgundy Larva*



*Brown Hairstreak Larva*



*Dark Green Fullwing Crane*

*Hairstreaks*



*Green Hairstreak*



*Purple Hairstreak*



*White-letter Hairstreak*



*Brown Hairstreak*



*Brown Hairstreak*



*Green Hairstreak*



*Green Hairstreak*



*Purple Hairstreak*



*White-letter Hairstreak*

*Favourites 1*



*Fawn-bordered Fullwing (sk.)*



*Glanville Fullwing*



*Small Skipper*



*Small White*



*Wood White*



*Green-veined White*



*Purple Emperor*



*Small Tortoiseshell (egg-laying)*



*Purple Emperor*



See you all soon 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by TonyP, 09-Sep-16 12:35 PM GMT

What a beautiful set of pics – a truly incredible & wide-ranging achievement. Very well done & thank you.

**Re: Pauline**

by bailey1409, 09-Sep-16 01:21 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

What a super entry to record your exploits this year.

Your photography has come along in leaps and bounds, well done.  
Congratulations on your success in the photographic competition.

Perhaps you might want to look at your moth pictures, the i.d. of the second one in particular.

Cheers

Maurice

**Re: Pauline**

by peterc, 09-Sep-16 03:31 PM GMT

Pauline,

A fantastic lot of photos – well done on a great year's butterflying and thanks for sharing your experiences with us. The Hairstreaks family is probably my favourite too 😊

ATB

Peter

**Re: Pauline**

by MikeOxon, 09-Sep-16 05:53 PM GMT

Another butterfly year passed already but haven't you made good use of it 😊

You have had a remarkable range of experiences, some of which have been very difficult, but plenty of good ones as well. Now, you have a splendid set of photos, to remember all those good times.

Mike

**Re: Pauline**

by millerd, 09-Sep-16 06:52 PM GMT

That's a great summary of a fascinating year, Pauline. I've thoroughly enjoyed reading your diary as events unfolded, highs and lows, and the photos have been a terrific record of it all. Thank you, and I look forward to next year.

Dave

**Re: Pauline**

by Goldie M, 09-Sep-16 07:04 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, in spite of your upset's and disappointment's you've come through it all pretty good, your photo's are out standing and it was our pleasure to meet up with you this year, hope fully next year we'll meet again until then Pauline all the best and we'll keep in touch. Goldie 😊

**Re: Pauline**

by Jack Harrison, 09-Sep-16 08:45 PM GMT

I have to say Pauline that your photos are up there with the top stars of the premier league of ukb. Quality and imagination are most impressive.

Jack

**Re: Pauline**

by Wurzel, 10-Sep-16 11:03 PM GMT

See you next year Pauline have a good close season and maybe we can tempt you out to the Social 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Pauline**

by David M, 11-Sep-16 09:55 AM GMT

Ten out of ten for presentation, Pauline. There may well still be things to add to 2016's review though. I reckon with all these south-easterlies we could see a few migrants over the coming weeks.

**Re: Pauline**

by Neil Freeman, 12-Sep-16 08:01 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Great round up of your season with some lovely images. Thank you for your comment on my photos but you really are already taking some that I wish I had taken...and I never did get a Buff Tip to my trap this year.

All the best,

Neil.