

## Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 01-Jan-16 10:03 AM GMT

Buggy, I think you've cracked it!

I am very grateful to you for taking the time to puzzle over it and to share your thoughts. Certainly everything you say makes perfect sense to me.

I guess that many of us have seen the males tap dancing their way down grass stems before but have not had the opportunity that I enjoyed in 2015 of putting it into context. Once I saw male after male doing it I realised that it is not random behaviour but purposeful and a definite part of the male Small Copper's daily routine



I have no specialist knowledge: My only qualification is that I love Small Coppers!



You remind me of one male that I watched take over a territory from another male: once the newcomer was in sole possession he performed the stem dance on a number of occasions and I suppose he was advertising his presence, saying "Here I am Ladies, Come and get me!"



As I've said before, I've failed to find any mention of this behaviour in any of the generally available books, so I turned to this forum for help.

So thanks again, Buggy, you've got my New Year off to a fabulous start!



### Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 01-Jan-16 10:21 PM GMT

Cracking Copper shots Hoppers 😊 I reckon Buggy is onto something there – the way you describe it it sounds similar to some of the 'dancing' carried out by birds of Paradise. It would tie in with the ideas of Zahavi (I think that was his name) who came up with the 'handicap theory' – by 'putting themselves at risk' they show how fit they are and so females choose to mate with them.

Happy New Year, have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 15-Jan-16 11:47 AM GMT

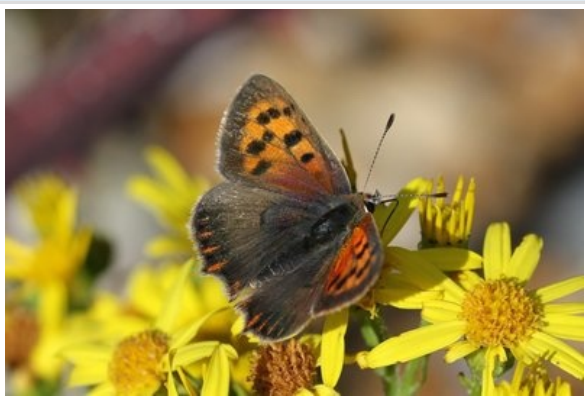
In 2014 I began to look more closely at the Small Coppers of Dungeness. One Copper in particular sticks out in my memory of that year – a beautiful *radiata*



I found him in late August in the Observatory moat



I remember that when he flew he looked darker than a typical Small Copper





In 2015 I spent almost all of my butterflying time at Dungeness watching the Small Coppers. I was interested in their behaviour and so wasn't looking for aberrations but as I'd increased my butterflying hours so I increased my chance of finding something out of the ordinary.

On 9th July 2015 I was wandering about in the Observatory moat when I saw a Copper whizz by that I thought looked darker than usual...



A radiata!

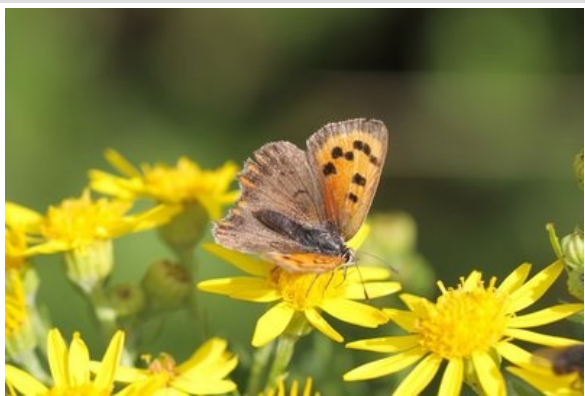
And in the same place as the 2014 individual

I began to think I might be onto something interesting. I went and found David Walker, the Reserve warden and an expert naturalist. We spent some time admiring the radiata



David said that as far as he knew radiata hadn't been reported at Dungeness before.

But it wasn't long before I found another ( and in exactly the same place )





Then to round off the season I came across yet another radiata, in the moat, only this time a female



So it seems that the radiata Small Copper is a scarce but consistent feature of the Dungeness population – and very welcome it is too!

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 17-Jan-16 10:41 AM GMT

That's a beautiful little Butterfly Hogger's, your diligence certainly paid off. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 18-Jan-16 04:06 PM GMT

It's a beauty isn't it?

When you visit Dungeness in the summer Goldie, take a look in the Observatory moat – that's where the radiatas seem to be

Best wishes

Hoggers

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 18-Jan-16 04:55 PM GMT

I certainly will Hogger's, I've made a list of my places to visit when I come down and Dungeness is top of the list. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 19-Jan-16 09:04 PM GMT

Good news, Goldie, I'm sure you'll get lots of photos!

Just one word of caution : over the years quite a bit of broken glass and rusty metal has accumulated in the Observatory moat so keep that in mind ( when you're on the trail of a fine handsome Copper you tend to forget! ) So be careful.

And the rabbit holes can be real ankle breakers!

But these hazards are well worth braving to get up close to the Small Coppers!

Best wishes

Hoggers.

**Re: Hoggers**

by Goldie M, 20-Jan-16 10:15 AM GMT

Thanks for the advice Hogger's, we'll have to leave my daughter's dog at home when we visit Goldie 😊

**Re: Hoggers**

by Hoggers, 06-Feb-16 11:51 AM GMT

Like most of us here I'm constantly on the look out for signs of Spring. Well, last night I heard my first Frog of the year, croaking amorously in the garden pond (almost two weeks earlier than last year.)

And I've still got at least four tadpoles whizzing about in the pond!

**Re: Hoggers**

by Goldie M, 06-Feb-16 11:59 AM GMT

Amazingly Hogger's , in-spite of the cold winds and rain my daffodils are well on their way to opening, usually don't see the Garden daff's until early March, Goldie 😊

**Re: Hoggers**

by Hoggers, 06-Feb-16 04:20 PM GMT

I know, Goldie! And I can't figure out my Tadpoles: they're coming up for being 12 months old!

I found a photo of a 2 spotted Small Heath that I took in 2012 which reminded me of the one you came across



And talking of spots, here's a Brown Argus I saw at Dungeness last Summer



Looks like a Northern Brown Argus on holiday down South!



### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 06-Feb-16 08:30 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers,  
Nice Brown Arg ! Ab: Snelleni , I think I saw two on Wye downs NNR last year , good to find, had a one hour fix of your excellent diary last evening roll on the good weather !!. Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 06-Feb-16 10:15 PM GMT

Interesting aberrants Hoggers and great shots too. Not long to go now 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 07-Feb-16 11:05 AM GMT

So they do exist with two spots Hogger's! Great find, I think those Brown Argus got fed up with the weather up North and decided to move South 😊 I can't wait to see Kent again this Summer 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by David M, 08-Feb-16 03:15 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers. Nice Brown Argus specimen. I occasionally see similarly marked individuals here in south Wales. I'm sure you'd do a double take if you saw one like that near the boundary between the two species.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 13-Feb-16 11:01 AM GMT

Hi Allan, thanks for the identification on that Brown Argus, it certainly caught my eye, and I'm glad you've enjoyed reading through my diary: as Wurzel says, "not long to go now"!

Hi David, I've never seen one of the true white spotted Northern Brown Arguses so when that aberrant form appeared at Dungeness it gave me quite a surprise!

They do indeed exist, Goldie ( well, at Dungeness at least! ) I sometimes wonder if the nuclear power station has anything to do with these oddities ?!

Maybe I should visit there one night to see if any of the butterflies glow in the dark...!

Best wishes,

Hoggers

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 05-Mar-16 11:22 AM GMT

My pond full of croaking frogs produced their first batch of spawn this week



(2nd March)

I've kept a note over the last few years of the first appearance dates



2011 - 16th March

2012 - 29 February

2013 - 10th March

2014 - 26 February

2015 - 9th March



I still have at least four tadpoles from last year. They are slightly larger than the usual tadpole just about to sprout legs. I can only guess that by remaining at the tadpole stage through the winter they will (if they survive) mature to the adult stage ahead of the spring newcomers, be bigger and stronger and thus enjoy an advantage over their fellows. A risky strategy!

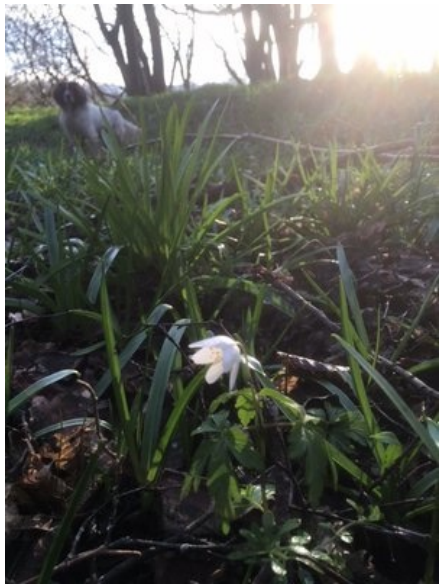
## Re: Hoggers

by Hoggars, 06-Mar-16 09:43 AM GMT

I popped into the wood on my walk with the dog this morning to see if any spring flowers were out. It was rather chilly but many birds were singing including Chaffinches and Wrens ( I also heard a Buzzard mewling, a very mournful sound indeed.)

The first spring flower I came across was this Wood Anemone





(I didn't have my camera with me today, so used my phone)  
There were a couple more in flower but clearly with many hundreds to come later.

I saw a few Primroses and wintery Snowdrops



What I wanted to see was a spring flower and eventually I found a Bluebell



.There's a carpet of Bluebell leaves throughout the wood but this was the only one I found in flower. Still, it won't be long before they're out in their thousands and the wood will be filled with their scent



## Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 06-Mar-16 10:47 AM GMT

Your photos are very encouraging Hoggers, soon be Spring Goldie 😊

## Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 15-Mar-16 07:48 PM GMT

I saw this in the paper yesterday



Let's all get spotting!

Best wishes,

Hoggers.

## Re: Hoggers

by David M, 15-Mar-16 11:02 PM GMT

If anyone is better placed to 'save' Small Coppers than you, Hoggers, I'd be very surprised indeed.

That said, they've been 'patchy' for a few years now so it'd be nice to see fair numbers of them in 2016.

## Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 18-Mar-16 04:41 PM GMT

The warden at Dungeness Nature Reserve seems to be doing rather well where saving Small Coppers is concerned, David!  
I just go along and reap the benefits.

A new sign of Spring appeared in my garden today: the Blue Tits began nest building



they've been popping in now and again over the last month or so to check out the box



But today for the first time they ( I say "they" but I'm not sure if it's just one of the pair as yet ) began bringing in nesting material



Although they are quite fussy and sometimes bring in a piece of straw etc only to remove it moments later



It's good to see them back





### Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 19-Mar-16 02:09 PM GMT

Hi! Hopper's can't wait to see your Small Copper's again 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 23-Mar-16 10:02 PM GMT

I hope I get the chance, Goldie : if you Google " decline in Small Coppers " ( or words to that effect ) you'll see lots of detailed coverage of the trouble they're in.

I hope they have a better 2016

Best wishes

Hoppers

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 25-Mar-16 04:58 PM GMT

Yesterday I saw my first butterfly of 2016, a Peacock fluttering around inside my garden shed.

Today I went for a stroll around Dungeness and came upon a Small Tortoiseshell





Lovely to see them again.

Most excitingly, however, on the drive home I saw a Small White on the Brenzett roundabout! Much earlier than I'd expected.

### Re: Hoggers

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

Glad you got your first BF Hogger's, in spite of the weather yesterday, I didn't see one where I saw them the week before, I think that's strange considering the weather was great. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 26-Mar-16 10:52 PM GMT

Good to see you're off the mark Hoggers – not much longer now until the first Coppers? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 28-Mar-16 05:59 PM GMT

Yes Wurzel, not long now! No more than 2/3 weeks I hope.

Once Storm Katie had blasted her way through I spent the day in the garden. I saw three species of bee on my flowering Lungwort : I haven't identified two of them yet ( one of these was a brilliant black all over ) but I'm fairly sure the third was a Queen Buff-tailed Bumblebee.

As for butterflies today, a Small Tortoiseshell paid me a quick visit on the still high winds.

I heard my first Chiffchaff the other day. Whenever I hear one I always remember Edward Thomas, our great poet of the countryside, who once said that every note of a Chiffchaff's song is a nail in winter's coffin.

Sounds good to me!

Best wishes,

Hoggers.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 03-Apr-16 03:18 PM GMT

We've had a pleasant spell of warm days down here in Kent and I've seen a few Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells enjoying the sunshine. It was so warm here in Ashford this morning that I thought I'd go on my first Dungeness Small Copper Hunt of 2016. It's very early in the season and I didn't really expect to find any Coppers, but that didn't stop me hoping to find one!

When I got to Dungeness it wasn't as warm as inland Ashford, although still bright and sunny.

First off I bumped into the Warden, David, who greeted me with the words "It must be Spring!"

He hadn't seen any Coppers but told me to keep an eye open for Firecrests as they've been passing through Dungeness in large numbers recently.

I walked my usual route. In the Observatory moat I came across two Small Tortoiseshells



Then I saw a pretty little bird sporting a nifty bright flash on its head, so I took a snap (albeit through my macro lens )





And I guess it was one of the many Firecrests on migration.

I also came upon this member of the reptile clan



He was keeping a close eye on me.

Alas, no Small Coppers for me today. But it was good to be out there again.

Anyone visiting the Observatory moat please do look out for broken glass and rusty metal: there's rather a lot of it lying around.

On the drive home a Brimstone crossed the A2070 ahead of me, my first of the year.

### Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 03-Apr-16 05:19 PM GMT

Definitely a Firecrest Hoggers – you can tell by the bold white eye stripe 🍷 😊  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 03-Apr-16 06:40 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Lynne and I were at Dungeness yesterday, half hoping for a really early Copper as well 'but like yourself, had no luck, didn't really expect any if i'm honest, we also saw a couple of cracking little Firecrests, i believe the OBS, had a spring record count of 120 ! on one day, sadly the clouds rolled in and that was that, plenty on the wing now in Orlestone forest,  
Regards Allan.W. ps. Did see one Small Tort; in the moat.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 14-Apr-16 03:16 PM GMT

Knowing I would be finishing work early today and having seen the weather forecast I took my camera with me this morning with a view to going on a Small Copper Expedition at Dungeness.

I got there around 1230. It was warm and sunny with a light breeze. I soon found several Small Tortoiseshells but not a single Copper until about an hour into my search when...





A magnificent female Blue Badger!



Stunning!



After six months' absence you can imagine the joy I felt to see my first Small Copper of 2016



More beautiful than anything else in sight







The Small Copper Season has begun!



### Re: Hoggers

by David M, 14-Apr-16 05:44 PM GMT

What a beauty. Fresh as a daisy.

First of hundreds I guess, Hoggers?

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 14-Apr-16 07:30 PM GMT

Simply beautiful Hogger's, 🍷 your off to a great start. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by bugboy, 14-Apr-16 07:36 PM GMT

She's a real beaut! Good start to the Dungeness Copper season 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Wurzel, 14-Apr-16 07:39 PM GMT

Everything is now on track as Hoggers has started seeing Coppers 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Hoggers

by millerd, 14-Apr-16 08:56 PM GMT

A joy to see – it really is spring! 😊

Dave

### Re: Hoggers

by trevor, 14-Apr-16 09:06 PM GMT

What are the chances of getting a ' blue badge ' Copper as a first sighting. You should do the lottery.

Best wishes,  
Trevor.

### Re: Hoppers

by Butterflysaurus rex, 14-Apr-16 09:35 PM GMT

Great to see the Coppers have begun Hoppers! With the sun heating up all that shingle I expect even more will be along very soon.

ATB

James

### Re: Hoppers

by Neil Freeman, 15-Apr-16 08:24 PM GMT

On a wet and dreary evening after a day of almost constant rain your first Small Copper of the year has cheered me up no end. A lovely example, a blue spotted female no less 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 23-Apr-16 04:10 PM GMT

When I got to Dungeness this morning there was a chilly wind blowing and it felt decidedly cold, especially when cloud got in the way of the sun. I'm usually in shirt sleeves and sun hat when I go Coppering but today it was wooly hat, coat and scarf!

So today it took awhile but I managed to find some Coppers. Two males were sheltering from the wind close by each other



One of which had a pale and damaged right fore-wing



(something I see quite often)

Cold though it was, these are tough little butterflies and I was surprised by how active they were despite the conditions

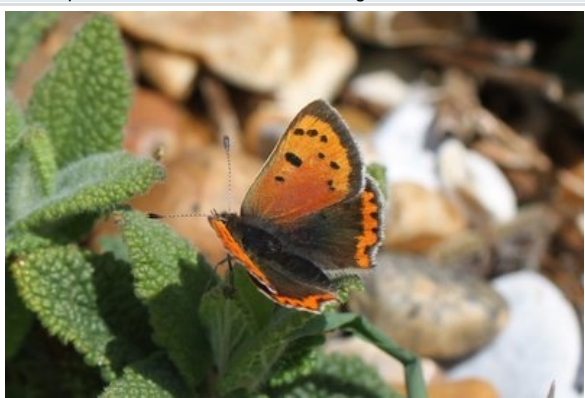




I came upon a female with minimal markings



and even though we were only getting brief periods of warmth from the sun , she was actively looking for a suitable place to lay eggs



and i saw her go through the motions of egg laying.

I'd reached a count of 6 Coppers



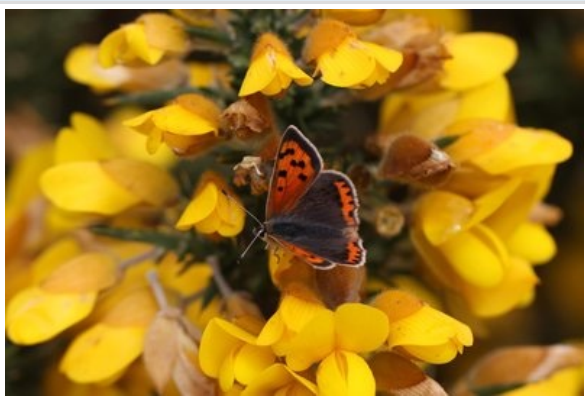


all snatching their moments in the short periods of sunshine



when it grew dark, very cold and looked just about to rain.

I'd set off back to the car when I chanced to find my final Copper of the day – a gorgeous fresh male







He perched on the Gorse flowers for a minute then headed off on the cold wind, doubtless hoping to find a more sheltered spot to set up a territory



### Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 23-Apr-16 04:23 PM GMT

Lovely Coppers Hoppers, to warm up a very cold day, I've been looking forward to your posting, Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoppers

by David M, 23-Apr-16 11:29 PM GMT

Delightful stuff, Hoppers.

Right now, I'd love a Small white to roll by, let alone a Small Copper! 😞

### Re: Hoppers

by bugboy, 24-Apr-16 08:19 PM GMT

Looking at your pics makes me feel like summer has arrived 😊, shame walking out the front door doesn't have the same effect at the moment!

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 30-Apr-16 01:53 PM GMT

The sun was shining when I arrived at Dungeness this morning making it pleasantly warm. Within minutes of leaving the car I began seeing Small Coppers



These two were busy jousting with each other

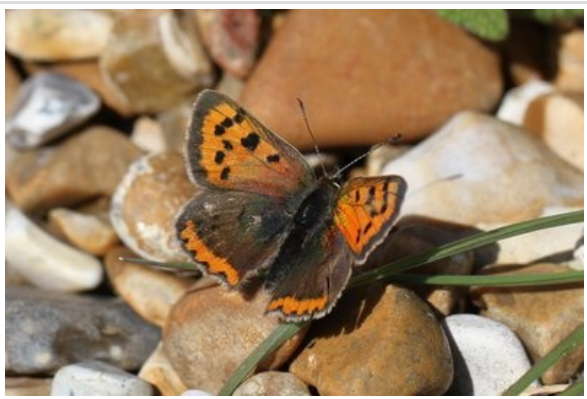


Fresh newly minted Coppers





This was the only slightly faded Copper that I saw



jealously guarding his territory.

Out of the 22 Small Coppers that I counted today three were blue badge holders





A lovely pixelated effect



And I was impressed with this boldly marked (though damaged individual)



There's such a variety of markings amongst these little butterflies, they never ceases to fascinate and delight.

### Re: Hoggers

by David M, 30-Apr-16 02:24 PM GMT

An excellent showing, Hoggers. Still not seen my first *phlaeas* this year, but with warmer weather on the way everywhere, that should be corrected very soon. 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Jamie Burston, 30-Apr-16 05:59 PM GMT

Just caught up with your diary, I'm so pleased you've seen your first Small Coppers, what a joy! I can't wait to see what you discover and find this year 😊

All the best,  
Jamie

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 30-Apr-16 11:13 PM GMT

Hogger's! what can I say you've just made my day, what gorgeous Copper's. 😊

I went to Hall-Lee-Brook today and it was still a bitter cold wind we were glad to get back in the car, where the snow had melted it was just mud, horrible! Nothing was seen but the birds were singing, I'm not sure why because they've had it rather rough lately, any way thanks for your lovely posting. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 01-May-16 04:55 PM GMT

Many thanks for all the kind messages; they are much appreciated.

Today was one of those rare days that Dungeness permits us occasionally when all is warm, calm and gentle. I hope May has come in just as she means to go on!

I wanted to see a male Small Copper perform the exotic and mysterious "Stalk Dance"!

I located this fine looking fellow and watched him for an hour



Here he is in situ



I saw him make frequent patrol flights around his patch. He intercepted a Ladybird and a trespassing male Copper. And amidst these activities he performed three Stalk Dances during the hour I spent with him



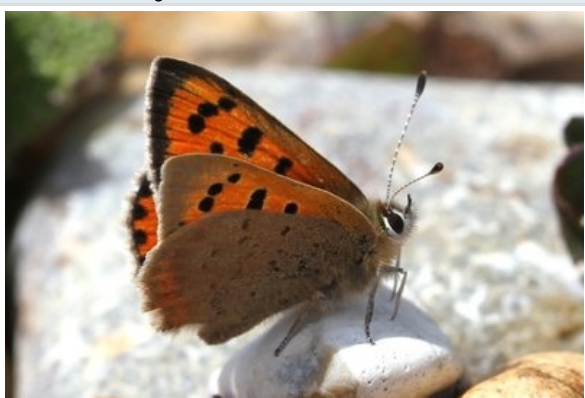
Tap dancing across plants that grow flat to the pebbles



Then up to the tops of grass stalks and a tap dance down, head first



Wonderful to see again!

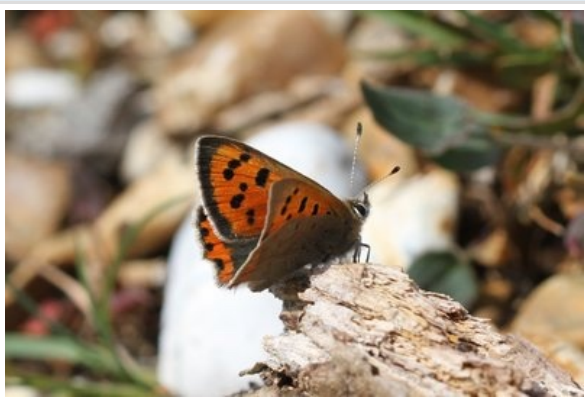


Here are some other Coppers from today's visit









And here are some NCCFO's ( Non Copper Coloured Flying Objects )



Such a contrast between these two Grizzlies but I love the Owl Eyed one!

I also encountered a non-lepidopteran



As a resident of Dungeness just think of the conditions he/she has seen!

But May Day was Copper Day for me!



### Re: Hoggers

by bugboy, 01-May-16 06:33 PM GMT

Nice pictures as per usual, that first Grizzlie looks like an ab. 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Padfield, 01-May-16 09:08 PM GMT

The first grizzly is male and the second female. Fresh males do show a lot of bright scaling like that. I can't say whether yours is within normal variation or not but it is certainly very striking.

I love the young fox too!

Guy

### Re: Hoggers

by Pauline, 02-May-16 06:34 PM GMT

Now you've got my attention Hoggers 😊😊 Great shot of what appears to be a young vixen – probably late cub from last year. Very well caught 📷

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 03-May-16 03:10 PM GMT

Thanks for the ID on the Skipper. As for the fox, Pauline, I kind of sensed that he was a she, if you see what I mean, (something very feminine in the face) but I wondered about her colouring, as she looks rather pale.

Another glorious morning at Dungeness with plenty of Small Coppers ( I counted 33 ) and lots of Coppery activity!





I watched a gladiatorial battle between two rumbustious males



Then a failed courtship between an amorous male and a stunning Lady of the Blue Badge



She went straight into the Turkey Strut and I knew the poor chap had no chance with her

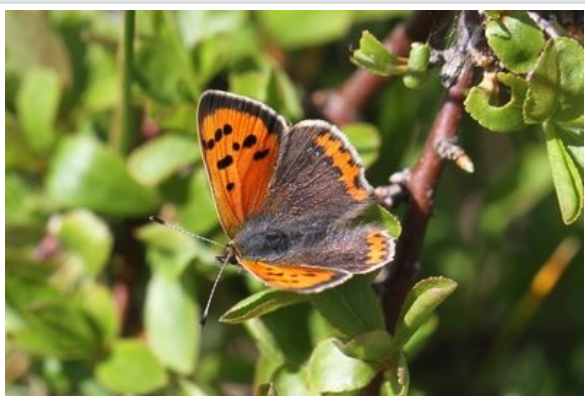


He flew off leaving her in peace

I spent almost an hour watching one male. He performed three Stalk Dances for me, and I was surprised at the number of different plants that he used

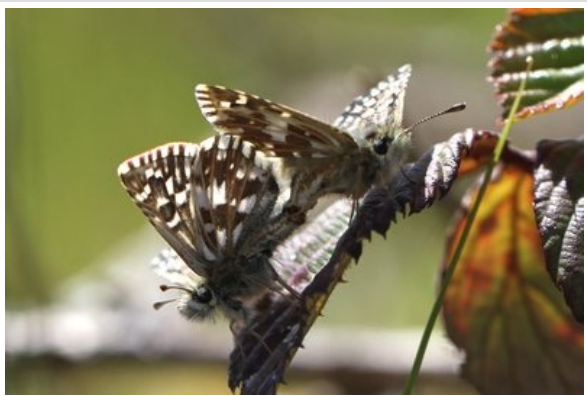
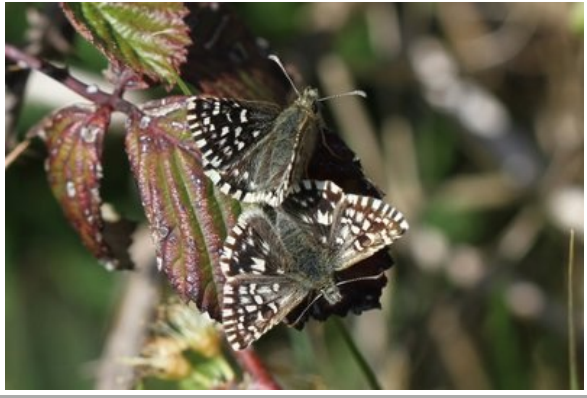


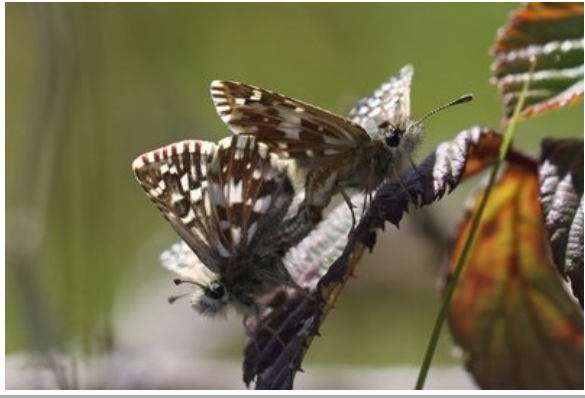




It may look from some of these photos that he's perching but he's not – those little legs of his are dancing away with vim!

I also came upon a mating pair of Grizzlies





Another fascinating day with the Coppers & Co of Dungeness



### Re: Hoggars

by Pauline, 03-May-16 04:16 PM GMT

You're spot on Hoggars! The vixens have a much finer bone structure and narrower heads giving them that 'feminine' look (much the same as in badgers where the boars have really broad heads). The coat looks roan in colour as many do in the spring (bit like chestnut horses at this time of year!) but by the end of the Autumn she will no doubt have her winter coat which will be a more typical rich red colour – and she will have lost that innocent baby expression and will look a lot 'sharper'.

Sorry I don't comment on your diary too often but having searched for a 'blue badge' for about 4 years now there is not much I can say about your lovely images except that your dedication to the species and your observations are impressive 😊

### Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 05-May-16 05:06 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline. The quality of contributions to this priceless website is so high that it's nice to be able to add something others may enjoy.

When I booked this week off back in March I thought I'd be in with a chance of seeing some fresh Coppers.

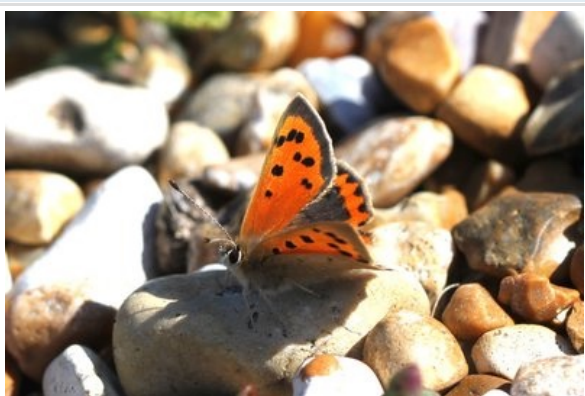
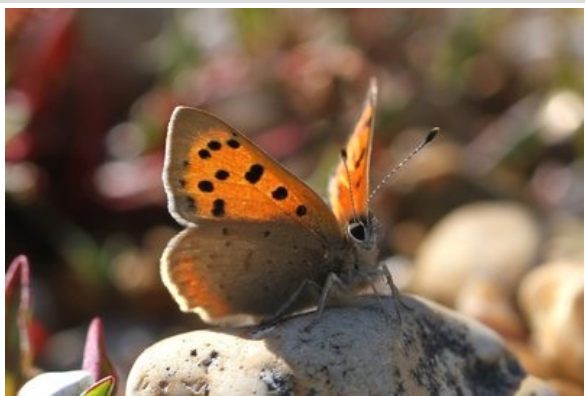
But then along came April which was beastly cold and I feared my holiday would be spent huddled around the fire and butterfly-less!

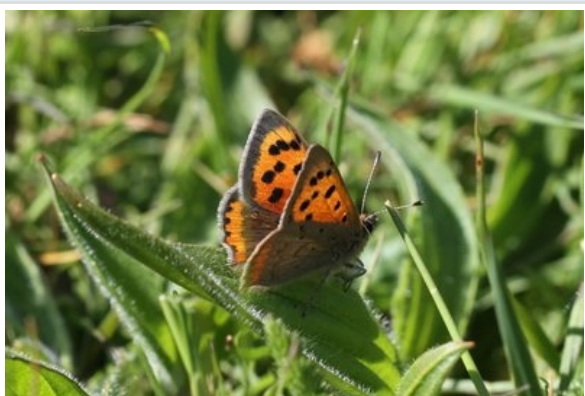
What a stroke of luck that my week off work has been day after day of warm sunshine!

Thank you "Jet Stream" ( whatever you are )!

I think it got to around 16C at Dungeness today.

I did my usual walk. Coppers were easy to come by





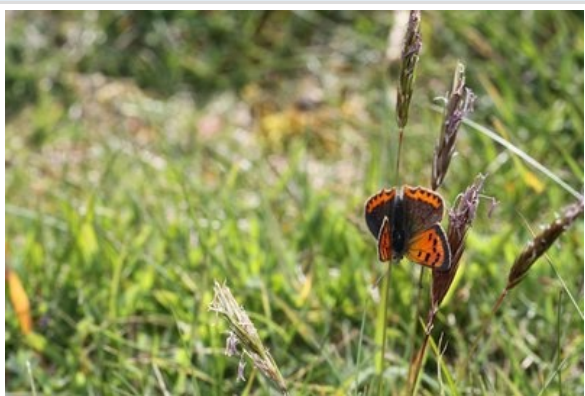
I visited a male who has held the same territory for at least 5 days



A female with a striking hind-wing pattern caught my eye



I saw several males perform the fast-paced foot tapping Stalk Dance



I counted 43 Small Coppers today



Only one tired looking Copper



All the others newly minted



### Re: Hoggars

by David M, 05-May-16 05:59 PM GMT

Surely that female in Image 10 is an ab, Hoggars? I've never seen anything like it.

### Re: Hoggars

by Pauline, 05-May-16 06:06 PM GMT

Me neither! It's quite remarkable - what a great find 😊😊😊

### Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 05-May-16 06:24 PM GMT

Hi guys, strangely enough I have come across this before:

Here's one from 2014



And last year





And here's today's for comparison



Similar, but today's far more pronounced.

All are females.

Curiouser and curiouser!

Hoggers.

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 05-May-16 07:39 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers,

That female Copper is a stunner !! It,s odd isn't it that Dungeness turns up this type of Abberation ,but that one is more extreme than usual,can't find anything in Cockayne that describes anything quite like that,nice find ! , I found one oddity there at the weekend 'with very orange hindwings (Auronitens ??) regards Allan W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Padfield, 05-May-16 09:41 PM GMT

Something about that female small copper seemed familiar but I've looked through all my own pictures and have nothing like it. I have one or two females with a slight hint of the orange dividers but they are nowhere near that extreme. I think it looked familiar because it resembles a large copper!! She's a beauty, whatever her official name might be.

Like Allan, I have found coppers with very orange hindwings – perhaps *auronitens*. I wouldn't normally post pictures in someone else's diary, but as Hoggers is a bit of a small copper specialist (😊), I hope he will forgive me for posting these:



Guy

### Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 06-May-16 08:11 AM GMT

Cheers Allan, now you mention it I have seen one or two Coppers with an orange coloration to the hind wings over the years – certainly something to look out for. As you say, Dungeness does generate these "funnies"!

Guy, it's a great pleasure to host two of your stunning photos in my diary – I've now developed an acute bout of COPPER ENVY but hopefully one day I will make a full recovery...!

Hoggars

### Re: Hoggars

by Goldie M, 06-May-16 08:18 AM GMT

Lovely shots of the Coppers Hoggars and the Grizzled Skipper's 🍷 Looking forward to seeing more Goldie 😊

**Re: Hoggers**

by Hoggers, 06-May-16 04:46 PM GMT

Thanks Goldie, I hope you see lots of Coppers when you visit Dungeness this year!

Gorgeous weather again today..I couldn't help thinking about all the poor people who had to go to work! ( I'll be one of them next week..)

But here I was, on my holiday and spending it with the Small Coppers of Dungeness!





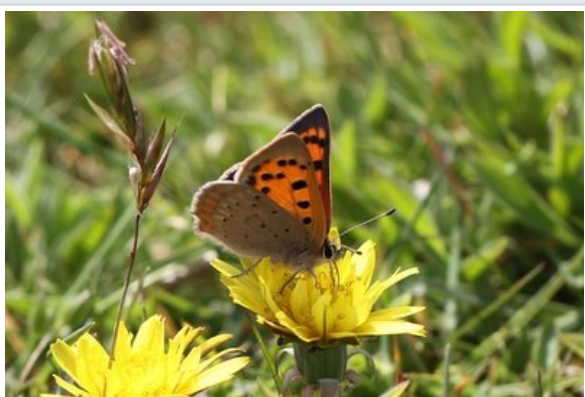


I didn't venture out in to The Desert today and kept to the power station fence and Obs moat



but still saw plenty of Coppers





One female that I accidentally disturbed went in to the Turkey Strut with me!



Perhaps it's my aftershave that set her off?

Lots of Coppers chasing Coppers



And me chasing them!

My favourite today was this lovely burnished individual



Very handsome indeed.

A great day out with the Coppers



**Re: Hoppers**

by Paul Harfield, 06-May-16 05:04 PM GMT

Hi Hoppers

It looks like you have already seen more Small Coppers in 2016 than I have seen in the whole of the last 3 years 😊. Keep 'em coming, they are gorgeous 😊

**Re: Hoppers**

by Hoppers, 07-May-16 03:48 PM GMT

Hi Jack, I'm just lucky to live so close to Dungeness, the Small Copper Capital of the UK!

I counted 48 this morning and some were real crackers







One had an orange tint to the hind wings



But the Star Copper of the Day for me was this gorgeously marked female



What a stunner!



I watched a male Stalk Dance



This behaviour of the male Copper is something I could watch all day, it's fascinating.

So plenty to see today





Also three Grizzlies and my first Red Admiral.

### Re: Hoggars

by David M, 07-May-16 03:51 PM GMT

The variation amongst those Small Coppers is remarkable, Hoggars. I suppose given you're used to seeing three dozen plus in high season that it's more apparent to you than most others, but I shall be taking a much closer look at my own local specimens henceforth (when I finally get to see any that is). 😊

### Re: Hoggars

by Goldie M, 07-May-16 03:55 PM GMT

Beautiful Butterflies Hoggar's, what a lovely Female Copper, you seem to come up with some thing unusual each post, 😊 I never get tired of seeing them and Dungeness is a must for me in August. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 07-May-16 04:16 PM GMT

Hi David and Goldie, thanks for that – the variation is a constant delight and fascination for me.

On another subject, I keep losing my draft entries – I will get part way when it's all lost and I'm asked to Log On as if I hadn't already been Logged On !

I've tried to get round this by quickly posting part way through an entry then if that works I edit it by adding the rest

Any ideas why this is happening and suggestions as to what I can do to avoid this problem?

Cheers

Hoggars

### Re: Hoggars

by Padfield, 07-May-16 04:26 PM GMT

Hi Hoggars. I suspect the problem is at your end – either with an irregular internet connection or with the way your computer deals with cookies. But I'll leave that to Pete to comment decisively on. How to avoid losing drafts? I always highlight and copy (ctrl C) the whole of any post I've made before I click 'preview'. That way, it's always on the clipboard even if I lose it from the site. I've never lost anything while writing – only when strange internet things happen after I click 'preview' (or 'submit').

Guy

### Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 08-May-16 04:56 PM GMT

I fear the problem is my end, Guy. I may have to invest in a new laptop!

An old school friend visited me today. He's from Norfolk and the Orkney Isles ( he gets about! )

What better treat for him than a trip to Dungeness and a session with the Small Coppers?



Boy but it was hot





Tempers were fraying amongst the males





It was too hot for Hoggers



But we confirmed that two males were still holding their territories after 5 and 8 days respectively



We saw 55 Copper today



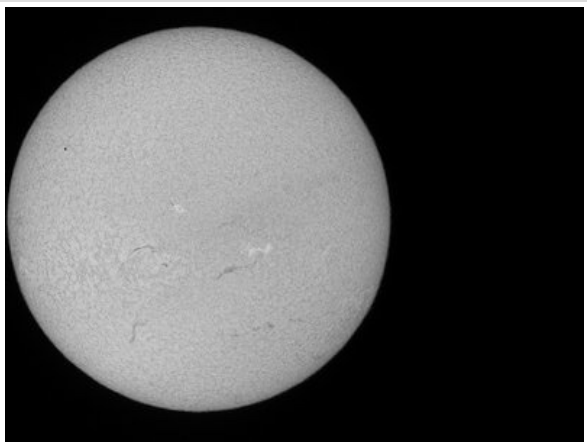


A lovely way to end my holiday!

### Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 09-May-16 04:12 PM GMT

Just home in time to beat the weather and get a photo of Mercury crossing the face of the Sun



(Mercury is the tiny black dot at 10 o'clock )

I've added colour to this image



And here's a close up





Thick cloud and raining now!

Hoggers

### Re: Hoggers

by Padfield, 09-May-16 05:48 PM GMT

Well done, Hoggers! Fantastic pictures.

The only time it was sunny for me today was while I was walking home after school. Very annoying, as I had been standing ten minutes in a queue in a shop and got home about five minutes too late ... When the sun did show through very briefly later I thought I had captured Mercury but it was just that big sunspot (that interestingly shows up less pointy on your pictures). Mercury had left the sun by then.

Guy

EDIT - no, I was wrong, there's still a little time left ...

EDIT EDIT - got it! Thanks for the inspiration!

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 09-May-16 10:02 PM GMT

Excellent Guy, congratulations!

Makes a change from chasing Small Coppers!

Hoggers

### Re: Hoggers

by David M, 09-May-16 10:16 PM GMT

Those are excellent images of the transit, Hoggers. I'm interested to know how you achieved these, as on the rare occasions I have attempted to photograph celestial objects, I always make a complete hash of them.

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 10-May-16 09:03 AM GMT

Once again lovely Coppers Hogger's 🍷🍷 no sign of them here yet. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 10-May-16 12:24 PM GMT

Thanks Goldie, I hope you get some Coppers soon. I'm lucky in having Dungeness close to home. They have a seven month season down here ( although numbers vary month to month ) so plenty of opportunities to see them.

Hi David - I use a Skyris camera ( Google them ) which fits into the eyepiece of my telescope. It records short video footage directly onto my laptop. I then process what I've recorded using a free software program called Registax : it produces a single composite image from the video.

Good luck!

Hoggers

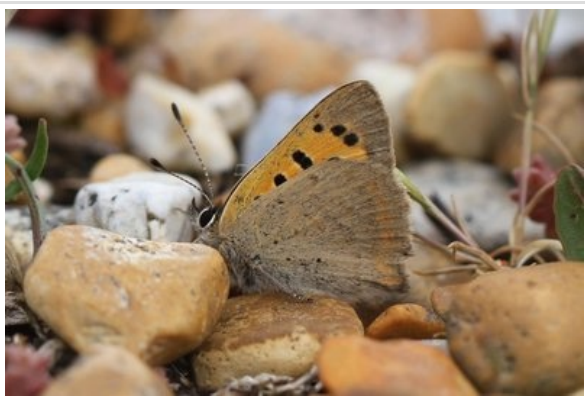
### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 14-May-16 03:54 PM GMT

What a magnificent display the Hawthorns are putting on this year! I've really noticed them, lining the roadsides as I drive to work, or as today, down to Dungeness. Absolutely beautiful. I must get one for my garden!

It was like November at Dungeness when I arrived this morning: thick cloud and a biting cold wind.

I found some very cold Coppers



Now and again there'd be a break in the clouds



Coppers don't need much in the way of sunshine to warm up





I've found an unusually high number of Blue Badgers this year



I've also noticed other Coppers displaying the "ray" pattern to the hindwings





I've seen it only in females



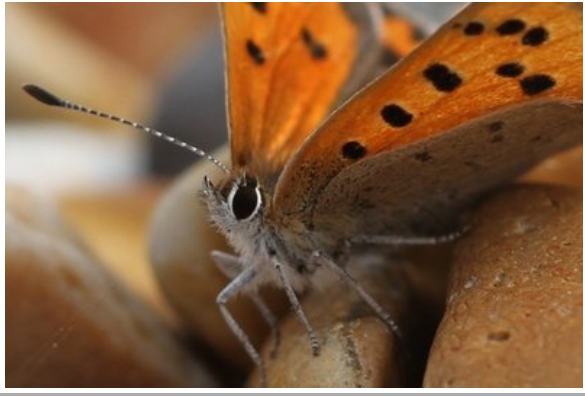
It is certainly a feature of the Dungeness Coppers

If anyone has seen this variation amongst other Copper colonies I'd be interested to hear from them

Some Coppers looking frayed were seen today but most still in beautiful condition



I'm convinced that there's more going on inside the head of a Small Copper than in other butterflies



They size you up



If only it hadn't been so cold today



Thank goodness for the bright spells!



### Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 15-May-16 01:20 PM GMT

Just fantastic Coppers Hogger's, I just missed one yesterday, we're very short on Butterflies here at present. Goldie 😊

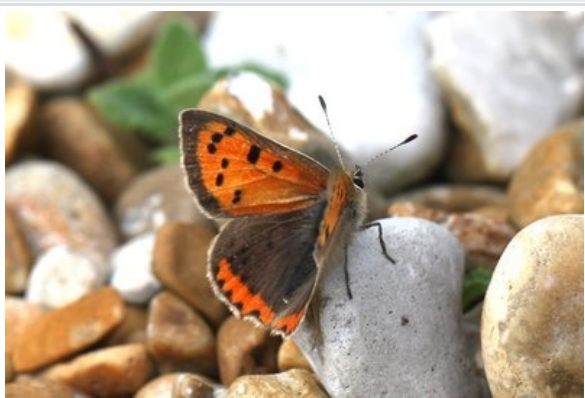
### Re: Hoppers

by Hoggars, 15-May-16 03:43 PM GMT

Hi Goldie, sorry you missed one yesterday! Some Coppers can be very unsociable!

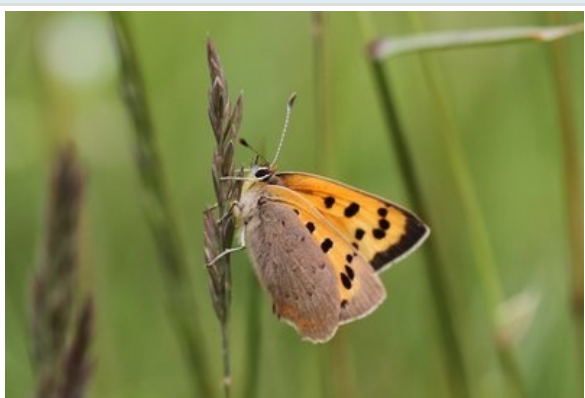
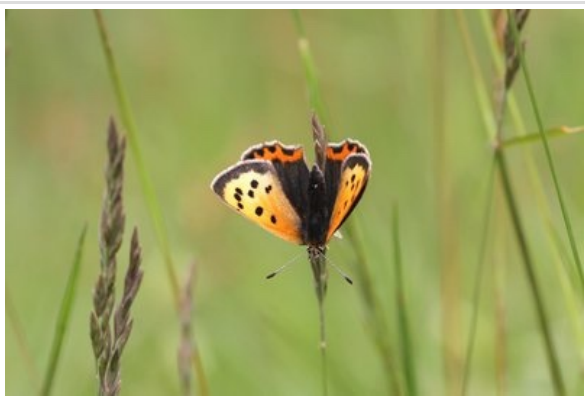
Much better today at Dungeness than yesterday: it was warmer, and I bumped into our own AllanW, who had been on an early morning Copper and rare flower hunt!

I didn't manage to find the unusual Copper that you mentioned, Allan but there were plenty of Coppers about





Including this gorgeous female



You can see she has normal hind-wing colour but her fore-wings are pale





Beautiful!





I also met David Walker, the Reserve Warden

Earlier this week he emailed me photos of a lovely Copper that he found



Almost a radiata, but not quite!

It really pays to look closely at every Copper you find



I counted 53 today.

PS. I also saw several Coppers with the "ray" pattern on the hind-wings and I'm beginning to wonder whether it is a Dungeness speciality!

All the best,

Hoggers.

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 15-May-16 04:08 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Good to have a quick chat this morning ,I managed 41 Coppers this morning,and found the first roosting individuals in the moat at 6.15 am,but didn,t see one on the wing till 7.30.your Radiata type individual appears to be a male,the one I told you about was a female,i'll try to post a shot on May sightings later,also found one of your heavily rayed individuals,and found a male doing the stalk dance ,and watched him for a few minutes,most odd ! + my two "lifer" plants and 3 Grizzlies . well pleased !! Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 15-May-16 05:41 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Some great series of Small Coppers there 😊 I had a look at one of my local spots yesterday to see if any were out yet but no luck. Not surprising really, it is usually mid May before they show up around here in a good year and this year has been a late one around her so far.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 17-May-16 04:44 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments, much appreciated. I hope the Copper season gets started for you soon, Neil!

An unexpected day off work. The sun was shining so I took myself down to Dungeness for a Copper Hunt!

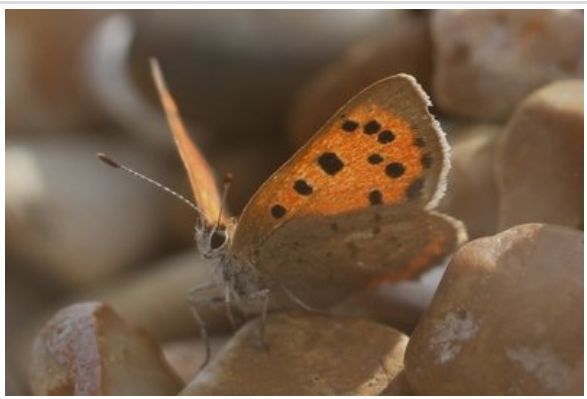


I'm not complaining of course: there are good numbers of Small Coppers to be seen at Dungeness





Today I counted 63



But at this time last year I was easily counting 100+



So numbers this year are, as yet, down on 2015



I met David, the reserve warden, who admitted to showing symptoms of the "Small Copper Bug" ( a highly contagious and incurable condition). He has begun to look at them more closely and is amazed by the degree of variation amongst them

I liked this 6 Spotter



And this dusky chap



I saw a female do the Turkey Strut



And males in aerobatic display





I saw Common Blues for the first time this year



But the day belonged to the Small Coppers



## Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 17-May-16 05:10 PM GMT

As a post script to my last entry - I've just received an email from David Walker - he found a radiata at Dungeness today!

He'll have Small Copperitis for the rest of his life!

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 17-May-16 06:17 PM GMT

And here's the radiata found by David Walker at Dungeness today!



### Re: Hoppers

by David M, 17-May-16 10:17 PM GMT

A glorious specimen, Hoppers! You really **do** have a veritable smorgasbord of unusual forms of *phlaeas* down at Dungeness.

Keep the images coming!

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 21-May-16 04:44 PM GMT

I went down to Dungeness this morning. It was cloudy and spitting rain almost all of the time. On occasions the cloud would lighten enough for the sun to make itself felt but even then it continued to spit, sometimes to rain fairly heavily.

Given the fact that for most of my visit it did not stop raining I was surprised by the number of Small Coppers that were sitting it out with wings open



All of these Coppers were exposed to the falling rain but nonetheless had their wings open to it







I watched one:



he only closed his wings when the spitting rain became heavy



Unlike the other butterflies which were tightly shut up



I disturbed one Copper that had been roosting deep in the nettles: she came out into the spitting rain then sat on an exposed leaf with wings open (rather than seek cover ) I think there was just enough warmth getting through the clouds from the sun to make it worth her while.

Nor did the Coppers seem reluctant to fly through the rain.

But numbers were low until (happily for me) it eventually stopped raining for a time and became very warm. I then witnessed another aspect of Small Copper behaviour: the aerial punch-up!





I noticed how the number of frayed individuals has increased



Those in best condition are nearly all females.

There are fine looking Coppers still to be found

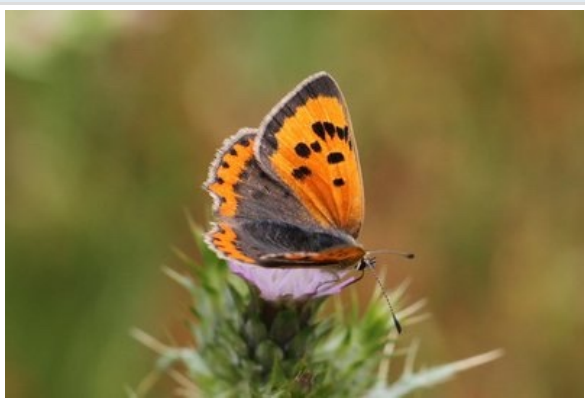


The percentage of Blue Badgers in this year's first brood has been very high



I've no idea why this is so.

My favourite Copper today was this beautifully marked individual



**Re: Hoppers**

by Pete Eeles, 21-May-16 04:54 PM GMT

**Hoppers wrote:**

My favourite Copper today was this beautifully marked individual

Looks like an aberration to me!

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 21-May-16 04:56 PM GMT

Cheers Pete, I agree. Any idea if it has a name?

### Re: Hoggers

by Mark Colvin, 21-May-16 05:09 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers.

I think you'll find your your aberration can be referred to ab. *extensa* (Tutt, 1906).

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 21-May-16 07:55 PM GMT

Great photos Hogger's, lovely ab you found 😊 I'm still looking for my first Copper 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by William, 22-May-16 12:34 PM GMT

That lemony female Small Copper is jaw-dropping, Hoggers – superb stuff 😊

BWs,

William

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 22-May-16 03:22 PM GMT

Thanks for the ID on the ab *extensa*, Mark, much appreciated.

Hi Goldie, I'm keeping everything crossed for you!

She was a real stunner, William, she almost glowed (not that I'm holding the nuclear power station responsible for her condition!)

Anyone who invents a portable gadget that can get rid of clouds will get their first order from me! This morning at Dungeness was grey, dull and cool with spitting rain yet again!

So I spent most of my time cursing the weather. It never really warmed up and I didn't have long before needing to run some family errands. The only butterflies on show were Small Coppers



But as you may know, I'm rather partial to them!



I'd occasionally disturb a Common Blue or Small Heath but given the weather they were mostly inactive.

But Coppers are made of stronger stuff!



They sit with wings open in the rain bright and beautiful



And even visit flowers to nectar when all the other butterflies are hiding away



So I got my daily fill of bright Small Coppers



### Re: Hoppers

by kevlng, 22-May-16 04:56 PM GMT

Hoppers;

Enjoying the photos of the Small Coppers in your previous posts (especially the *ab*).

I can't believe this species is still on my 'to see' list for the year 😊

Regards Kev

### Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 23-May-16 08:07 PM GMT

Mine to Kev, lovely shots Hogger's Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 24-May-16 04:28 PM GMT

Hi guys, I'm lucky to live fairly close to Dungeness where there's a thriving colony of Small Coppers. I don't know of any other location that can match Dungeness for Coppers!

We've had some very butterfly unfriendly weather recently with dull conditions and some torrential rain. My last few visits to Dungeness indicated that the first brood of Coppers was on the wain: after all, they've been going since 14th April and the recent rain fall couldn't have helped.

My visit there today confirmed my impression: the first brood is petering out. Here are some males:



He was in good condition



but others were not so fortunate





Every year I find battered Old Campaigners like this one

I always feel a mixture of emotions when I come across them: sadness that a once beautiful Copper is in such a condition, but also admiration that they nonetheless keep going

This one was highly active – I saw him buzzing about and even doing combat with another male



As is usual with the tail end of a brood, it's the females that are in best condition



The "ray" pattern on the hind wing is especially noticeable amongst these Dungeness Coppers



( If anybody out there has seen it on Coppers from other locations I'd be delighted to hear from them )

Yet again I noticed the high number of Blue Badgers in this year's first brood



I counted 37 Small Coppers today.

I also saw 2 Grizzled Skippers



, 8 male Common Blues and this



Now when I saw this butterfly I had no doubt that it was a female Common Blue



But once I got home and looked at the photos I began to question my identification and wonder if it was in fact my first Brown Argus of the year!



Can anyone help?

I really thought I'd got the hang of distinguishing between them but perhaps it's too early in the season for me to have got my eye in, or ( more likely ) I've spent too much time looking at All Things Copper!

### **Re: Hoggers**

by Padfield, 24-May-16 04:47 PM GMT

Definitely a brown argus, Hoggers. In the field you will have noticed her looking smaller and more silvery in flight than a common blue female. The general appearance of the upperside is distinctive but those fringes, with dark bands extending right to the outer edge in the forewing, are conclusive.

Guy

### **Re: Hoggers**

by Hoggars, 24-May-16 05:00 PM GMT

Thanks Guy, much appreciated

Best wishes

Hoggers

### **Re: Hoggers**

by Hoggars, 26-May-16 03:33 PM GMT

No complaints about the weather today: it was warm, bright and sunny at Dungeness



And it is still a case of "All Things Bright and Coppery"



My patent Copper-O-Meter detected 29 of the little darlings today



So there's still life in the first brood



I can't get over the number of Blue Badge Holders I've come across this Spring



It seems like practically every Copper either has a full set of blue badges



Or at least some sign of them

Up until this year I'd always thought that the BBC's ( Blue Badge Coppers ) made their strongest showing in the third brood.

At this stage of the brood it's the females that are in the best condition. As for the males, they are mostly tired and worn out by work ( as in the Coppery World so in our own .. )



This was the best looking male that I found today



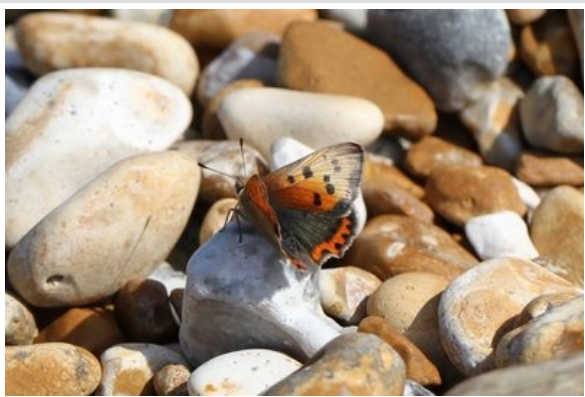
There's definitely a feeling of the changing of the guard: as numbers of Common Blue and Small Heath increase so the Small Coppers dwindle.. for now at any rate: the Coppers will be back in force soon!



I found this mating pair of Heaths



Now and again I will find a Copper with a pale right wing. Here's one, a female, that I chanced upon today



I've yet to find one with just a pale left wing!

My favourite Copper of the Day was this gorgeous female



## Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 27-May-16 03:49 PM GMT

Today I had the opportunity to do a Copper Watch at Dungeness

Most males are battle scarred



But some are still in fine condition







I sat down beside this male



And watched him. It wasn't long before he began performing the mysterious Stalk Dance





When a male Copper behaves this way he will quickly tap his feet over the plant surface

Here's a photo that will I hope give an idea of this tap dancing routine



I left him to it and walked on. I saw good numbers of Small Heath



Then I found another male Copper



I decided to spend an hour in his company. He favoured a pebble perch from which he would launch himself at passing flies and the like. I saw him carry out quick flights around his territory.

On other occasions he would go nectaring. I noticed that his manner of flight when changing from one flower to the next was far more subdued than when, for example, carrying out a reccie of his territory. His way of flying when nectaring was rather like a Small Heath when they fly through long grass, slower than when darting around checking his Patch.

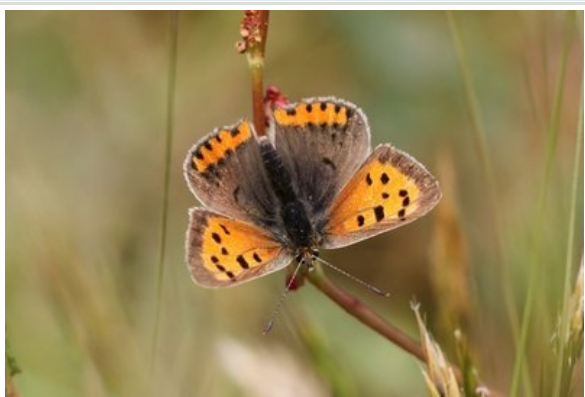
I mention this because after watching him for about 20 minutes he embarked upon the Stalk Dance routine





and I noticed that his manner of flying from one plant to another during the Stalk Dance was just the same as when going from flower to flower nectaring

This is something I confess to having missed in the past and it made me wonder if it gives a clue as to explaining why they perform the Stalk Dance at all. It just seems to me that when they are in need of nectar they are "looking" for suitable flowers and thus fly at a moderate pace. So when flying from plant to plant in order to do the Stalk Dance are they "looking" for a particular plant?



Certainly the foot tapping suggests they are attempting to detect something



I don't know! I'm not a scientist

Great fun to watch whatever they're up to!





The Copper - O -Meter reached 19 today.

Ps. I came across this beautiful grass flower



Can anyone tell me its name?

Hoggers

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 27-May-16 06:08 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Your grass looks like a Quaking grass species to me, quite widespread but mainly on open downland I believe, hoping for a trip to Dungeness myself this weekend, plants mainly, but of course I'll be keeping an eye out for Coppers !! regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 27-May-16 07:15 PM GMT

Hi Allan, thanks for the grass identification - I can't remember ever having seen it before. It's a beautiful species - I must see if I can get some for my garden!

Best wishes,

Hoggers

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 28-May-16 04:24 PM GMT

A Common Rosefinch dropped into Dungeness for a visit today and drew a large crowd of admirers.

I was counting Small Coppers



My Copper-O-Meter reached only 9



So there were more Twitchers than Coppers

(Which is a shame because Coppers are so much better to look at)



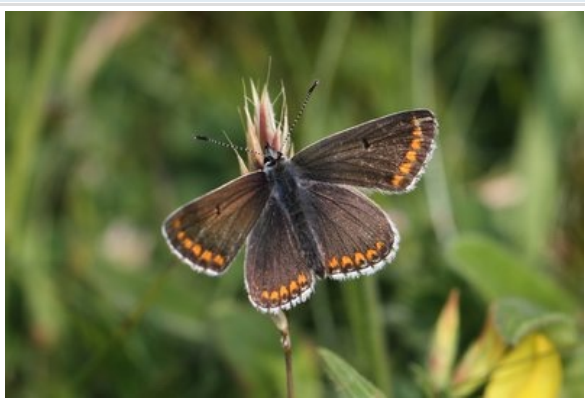
This dwindling of Coppers is well in line with past years



I do not expect their numbers to increase significantly until the third week in June



I saw Small Heaths and Common Blues and two Brown Argus



Attractive though they undoubtedly are, there're not Coppers!

All the Coppers that I saw today were male ( and yesterday, when I counted 19 Coppers, I found only one female)



Two males today were holding very definite territories, frequently returning to the same perch.

Still a precious few to be found!





## Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 29-May-16 04:35 PM GMT

I've been keeping an eye on a few male Small Coppers in the moat at Dungeness all of which have been holding territories for a number of days



One is very prominent. He lives by the Hoary Cress



He's a handsome chap

The other males are generally not so trim



I sat down and watched this male for an hour



I noticed that he spent a great deal of his time nectaring



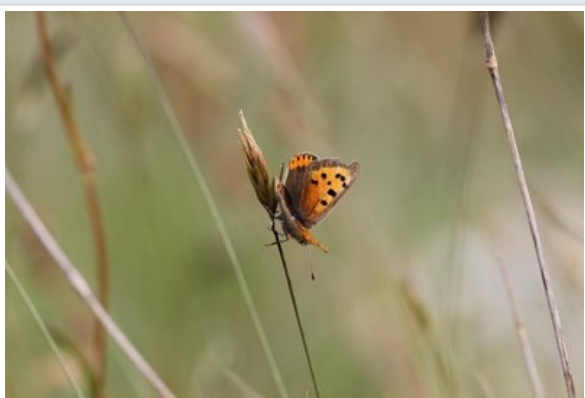
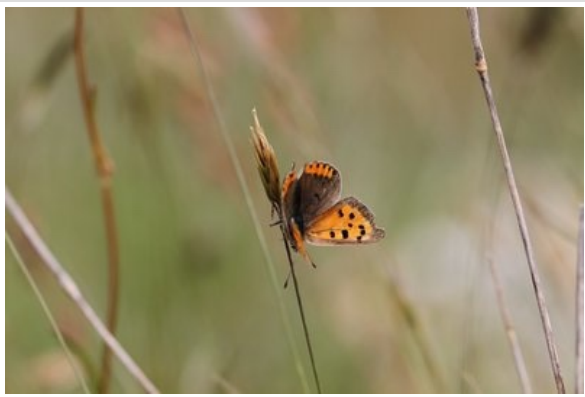
I was able to confirm the impression I formed the other day that the manner of flight when embarked on a Stalk Dance is slower and less urgent than when, for example, doing a check around the territory or when seeing off an intruder



They fly in much the same way as when nectaring



I get the impression that when Stalk Dancing the male Copper is looking for particular plants



I like this out of focus photograph because it illustrates what the male is doing when he tap-dances down the stem of a plant – look at his extended front leg



Classic Stalk Dance Pose:



It's fascinating.

The Copper-O-Meter reached 12 today



And unlike yesterday I found two females. The first was battered. She roosted inside a bramble bush but would come out to nectar before returning into cover



The second female was a stunner: great condition and a fully paid up member of the Small Copper Blue Badge Club



I spent some time with her and I'm glad that I did: after sunning herself she went on a walkabout in the grass



And whilst doing this I watched her lay an egg!

I need glasses for reading (which I'd left at home ). The egg was so small it was at the very edge of my ability to see it – the huge glass-like tube in this photo is in fact my Biro!



But I just managed to line up my camera to get a photo of the egg itself



What a beauty! I was over the moon!

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 29-May-16 05:27 PM GMT

Great shots Hogger's, not seen one up here yet so looking forward to when I come down there, Fantastic shot of the egg by the way. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 01-Jun-16 10:01 AM GMT

The Blue Tit chicks in my nest box look ready to go



Six chicks from eight eggs.

Here's mum squashed up against the side on a visit to her brood



I think they'll be gone any day now.

Hope the weather improves for them!

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 01-Jun-16 10:08 AM GMT

The chicks should be up here Hogger's the weather's been great for once it makes a change for us 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 05-Jun-16 03:53 PM GMT

Hi Goldie, it's good to hear that you've been having some decent weather for a change! Up until today it has been quite the opposite down here: day after day of wind, rain and thick cloud. The Blue Tit chicks left their cosy nest box the very next day and it couldn't have been easy for them.

An old school chum of mine visited me today from Norfolk ( he also spends a lot of time in the Orkney Isles where his partner is the locum GP ). He brought the sunshine with him, the first we've seen in a week!

( By the way, they're off to Hoy for a month soon and have promised to send me photos of any butterflies they see, which I'll post here )

We headed down to Dungeness and right from getting out of the car we began to see Painted Ladies



They looked fresh and we guessed they'd just arrived on the breeze coming in off the sea ( We counted 15 )

AllanW was just finishing his visit to Dungeness but stopped to swap notes with us. It was good to see you again Allan.

Dungeness is in blossom and the scent in the air is gorgeous : they should bottle it!

It was good to see so many Small Heaths



(They were flying up with almost our every step)

And Common Blues





Including some beautiful females



We saw several Brown Argus



And were delighted to find a mating pair



No visit to Dungeness would be complete without mentioning Small Coppers. As I've noted previously, the first brood is on its way out and to be honest after a week of horrid weather I had not expected to find any at all today.

But there's no getting a good Small Copper down





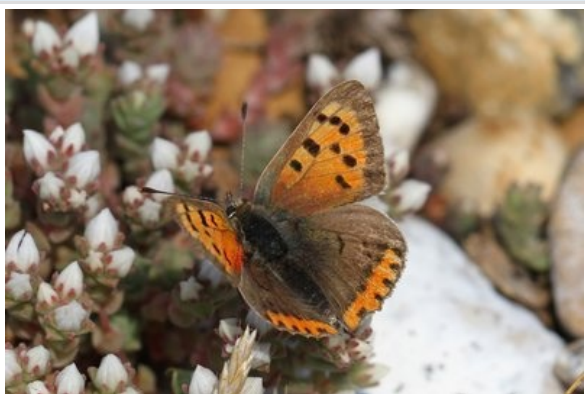
Tired and ragged though they may be these last members of the first brood are hanging on



The Copper-O-Meter reached only 4 but one of these Coppers was very special to me indeed



I first logged him on his patch on 27th May



And he was still there today. Brilliant!

## Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 06-Jun-16 04:04 PM GMT

I was going through my notes today when I realised that the long staying Copper (featured in yesterday's report) had in fact been seen on 24th May, not 27th.

Here he is on 24th May when I first saw him, nectaring on his patch



As to his age, any guesses? 4 or 5 days old?

Now another photo of him but this time taken on 28th May



Still on his patch but looking worn with a dent in his left fore-wing

And finally here he is, on the same patch, when I saw him yesterday



He has held the same territory for at least 13 days, is perhaps 17 or 18 or so days old, and he survived six consecutive days of rotten weather!

### Re: Hoppers

by kevlings, 06-Jun-16 05:31 PM GMT

Hoppers,

Have been enjoying your diary of Small Copper sightings. Although it does constantly remind me that I have yet to see one this year yet 😊 At this rate I'll be waiting for the second brood.

Regards Kev

### Re: Hoppers

by Pauline, 06-Jun-16 06:16 PM GMT

All of that goes for me too – but I also like the chicks and Painted Lady 😊

### Re: Hoppers

by peterc, 06-Jun-16 08:14 PM GMT

Me too – no Small Coppers yet either. At least the second brood is usually more numerous so I think most of us will have to wait for a while 😊

ATB

Peter

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 06-Jun-16 09:19 PM GMT

Hi, Thanks for the messages – I think Dungeness must be one of the premier sites in the UK for Small Coppers and I'm lucky to live fairly close to it.

I expect the second brood there to really get going in about three weeks time

Best wishes

Hoppers

### Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 06-Jun-16 09:39 PM GMT

No Coppers yet Hogger's but I've managed a Painted Lady, 😊 I'll have to wait until I come down there I think Goldie 😊

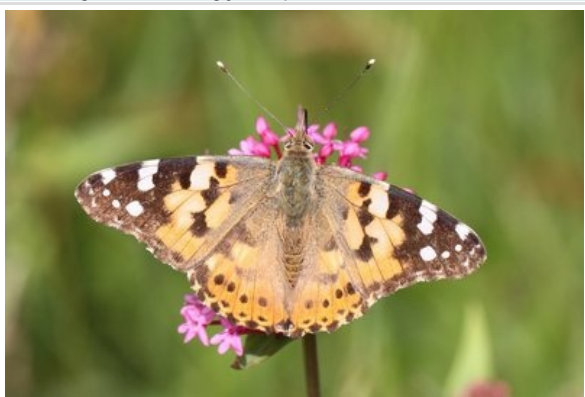
### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 08-Jun-16 02:43 PM GMT

Don't come down for the Coppers just yet, Goldie! I managed to squeeze in a quick visit to Dungeness today where I saw about 12 Painted Ladies



Re-fuelling after their long journey



Small Heaths a-plenty



Two Brown Argus, not as many Common Blues as I'd expected ( it was very hot so I expect they were taking things easy in the shade somewhere ) and the odd Small White drifting about, but as for Coppers..



Just the One

I checked on the long stayer but there was no sign of him. I wonder if the terrific thunderstorms of last night saw him off?

So yes, I managed to find only one Copper , holding a territory all on his tod



But although the adults have gone I noticed how the recent rain has prompted all of the Sorrel into vigorous growth, so I like to think of all those hungry Small Copper caterpillars down there munching away on the luscious leaves and getting nice and fat and ready to produce the next brood!

### Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 08-Jun-16 04:44 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's I won't be down there until August, hope fully I'll get to see the SC and also the ones I missed last year SSSkipper, and if I don't see Adonis next week, hope fully those has well 😊

It looks like the Painted Ladies have arrived in force not seen them like this up here since 2009( Great) Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 11-Jun-16 03:38 PM GMT

I went down to Dungeness this morning to see what butterflies I could find. It was cloudy but very calm, warm and muggy.

There were good numbers of Small Heath and Common Blue



Brown Argus



(I saw 5 )

A clump of Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars



And one adult



A single Painted Lady went zipping past.

The Copper-O-Meter registered 2. First this boldly marked female



She was characteristically docile and retiring



And second, the male I'd seen last wednesday still holding the same territory



I decided to spent some time watching him. He was very active and made several flashing interceptions of passing butterflies. I then noticed that he was taking an unusual interest in a low sprawling Thistle-type plant



For a couple of minutes he slowly investigated almost every inch of the plant. I wasn't close enough to see what he was doing. However, on getting home and looking at the photographs I could see that he had his proboscis extended (you can just see it in this photo )



I hadn't noticed dew as I walked through the grass, but Thistles are the kind of plant that rain water can collect in and remain for some time.

I've seen Coppers drinking juice from ripe Blackberries but If he was taking up water it's the first time I've seen it happen



### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 14-Jun-16 03:59 PM GMT

I managed to fit in an hour's butterflying at Dungeness this morning. Conditions were dull, cloudy, cool and very windy. I wasn't expecting much but wanted to check to see if the male Small Copper I'd noted on 8th June was still there.

Soon after starting my walk I disturbed a Large Skipper (my first of the year) which was very sensibly taking refuge out of the wind



A battered Painted Lady was fighting against the gale then landing on the path for a rest before taking off again



I found a male Common Blue and watched him for awhile



He had selected a small patch of pebbles as a roosting place out of the wind and I saw him launch himself up at a Small Tortoiseshell that flew through, intercept it and then return to the same patch. All in all, he behaved rather like a male Copper!

Talking of Coppers, after a short search I found him



Active despite the unfavourable weather conditions



Showing that lovely coppery glow on his hind-wings





He has held the same territory for at least 7 days, right at the end of the first brood.

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 16-Jun-16 06:10 PM GMT

Small Coppers once again grabbing the headlines ( in my local paper at least ):



### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 19-Jun-16 03:29 PM GMT

The second brood of Small Coppers at Dungeness has started to emerge



I found eight freshly minted Coppers this morning



And what a stroke of luck to find a mating pair



They were already coupled when by pure chance I happened to notice them



In the past I have always taken a note of how long they remain hitched together ( and thus very vulnerable to predation )  
My previous record was 22 minutes ( during which time they make no attempt to hide away ). As I watched I saw the male open his wings



( I was delighted with the colours shown by both – there's nothing can match a freshly emerged Small Copper ! )

But otherwise there was no further movement. But then the female began using her hind leg to prompt him into getting on with the job



(I've noted this behaviour before - anyone interested please have a look at my diary for 18th December 2015 )

This had no effect so she marched him up to the top of the flower head



And after awhile pulled herself free and flew off leaving the male. He seemed quite stunned and for a moment I thought he'd fainted as he remained completely inert! I gently put my finger down to him and he suddenly woke up and flew away.

I saw them coupled together for 18 minutes before they separated



The second brood last year began on 14th June so just a bit later this year



This fine chap had found himself a typical Dungeness Small Copper Perch



I noticed him opening out white hairs or bristles from the tip of his abdomen



I wonder if they are used in mating to clasp the female?

He also treated me to a Stalk Dance



You may be shocked to learn that I do sometimes look at things that aren't Coppery: how about this handsome caterpillar



I'd guess it's a kind of moth? He was chomping away on some bramble

Glad to see the Coppers back!



### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 19-Jun-16 07:16 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers,

Didn't see you today at Dungeness, I had two bites of the cherry today, in the morning from 6.45 till 9.30, and then came back later around lunchtime with Lynne and my son, well done you I never saw a single Copper, loads of Small Heath, and my first Small Skippers of the season, and loads of good plants! Your caterpillar is a Lackey moth, I saw one as well in the moat.

Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M., 20-Jun-16 03:45 PM GMT

Lovely Copper's Hoggers, not long now before I get the chance to see some 😊

With coming down there in August I wondered if there was any chance of seeing Brown Hair Streaks in Kent, I planned on going to Sussex again but it might be too far for us, if you know of any locations I'd be interested in easy reach of Canterbury that would be great. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 20-Jun-16 05:13 PM GMT

Thanks for the caterpillar ID, Allan: I looked it up and it seems that the caterpillar is far more colourful than the adult!

The Coppers just out were thinly spread (but evidently not so far apart as to prevent Boy meeting Girl!)

I met another Copper Enthusiast and pointed him in the right direction so I hope he got to see one at least.

Many more to come later in the brood.

As for BH's in Kent Goldie, I don't think there are any (not anymore at least): as far as I know the nearest colony is in West Sussex (quite a drive).

I'm looking forward to seeing how your Dungeness Copper Hunt goes in August! Any sign of them where you live?

Hoggers

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 25-Jun-16 03:44 PM GMT

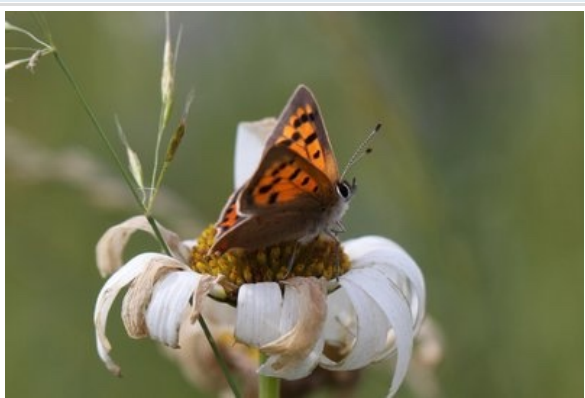
If your garden is anything like mine then you'll have noticed that everything has been growing like mad this summer. We've had just about perfect conditions for it.

What's true for my garden is, I discovered today, also true for Dungeness: not only has the whole estate bloomed like the Chelsea Flower Show but the grass has grown tall and has spread over many areas that up until now were more shingle than turf.

The male Coppers of Dungeness favour a pebble perch



But this year because everything has grown so well they are taking up more elevated vantage points



These dashing young blades are now much in evidence



I watched an affray between 4 male Coppers, a faded Brown Argus, a male Common Blue and a Small Skipper! Quite a sight! (And as for Small Skippers, they're everywhere : The long grass is busy with them )

My Copper-O-Meter registered 27 after this morning's walk ( 26 males and 1 female )



This fast emerging second brood is so far distinguished by the heaviness with which the males are marked and the lack of any blue badges ( unlike in the first brood when I easily came across full Blue Badgers, so far I haven't seen a single Copper with anything more than a scant hint of blue)

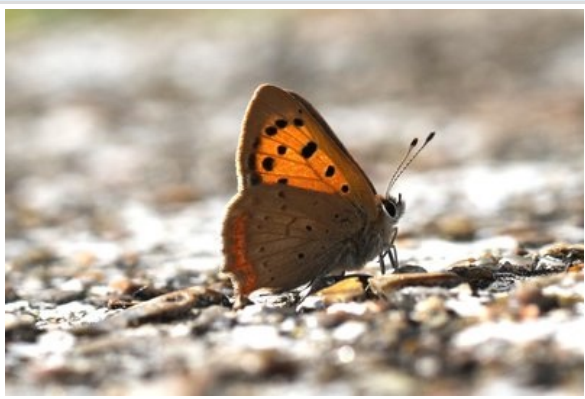


I also saw a Painted Lady, Humming-bird Hawk Moth, Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Large and Small Skipper, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Small Heath and Small Tortoiseshell.

So the second brood of Small Coppers is gathering momentum



I hope the weather stays fair for them



## Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 26-Jun-16 04:12 PM GMT

It was far cloudier and cooler at Dungeness this morning than yesterday and so the Coppers were more subdued





When the sun did get through from time to time, an apparently deserted grassy verge would instantly come to life with a thronging crowd of Meadow Browns and Small Skippers



Then the Coppers would come out to play in the sunshine



I managed to find a male that I've been keeping an eye on. I found him last sunday (when the second brood started to emerge) and he was still there today on the same patch. Here he is last week



and today



Interesting to see how the condition of a Copper changes in such a short time and that he's kept to the same territory for 7 days.

These sunny spells did not last for long and it would soon become dull and cool



Now and again I'd spot a Copper down in the grass almost glowing like a hot coal



I had the distinct feeling that during the warm spells fresh Coppers were emerging around me.

And when it was sunny I got to watch a few males in combat as well as a Stalk Dance. Such a shame these periods were not sustained



(Such a shame also when there's a blade of grass in the middle of your picture! Anyone who comes up with software that will get rid of these unwelcome guests will make a fortune!)



Good to see you again Allan and best of luck with the High Browns in Devon next week before you visit Cornwall.

I look forward to seeing your photos. Maybe you can snap a few Cornish Coppers too? I have a vague memory that Neil Hulme posted sometime ago about Cornish Coppers and he noted that they're bigger than our ones.

So a quieter morning on the Copper front



My Copper-O-Meter reached 22



### Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M., 26-Jun-16 04:27 PM GMT

Lovely Copper's once again Hogger's 🍷 I've not had a glimpse of one yet Hogger's but the weather here has been cool lately but even when the Sun was out there's been very few Butterflies 😞  
Hope fully I'll get to see some Copper's when I come South. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoppers

by Allan.W., 27-Jun-16 05:40 PM GMT

Hi Hoppers,  
Just caught up with your diary ,enjoyed our chat ! I told you that the Blue spot Copper that i'd seen in the moat ,was a female ,looking at my pics, I see that its actually a male,  
glad you found a good number of Coppers. As for your " Copper,with grass shot" I have occasionally used something called "PICASSA" COMPUTER EDITING SOFTWARE ,which would easily remove the offending grass . Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 27-Jun-16 06:54 PM GMT

Hi, thanks for the comments guys and I will look into the software Allan.

Yesterday I counted 22 Small Coppers and had the feeling that they were emerging around me.

Well, today on the same walk the Copper-O-Meter peaked at 59 !



It really is fascinating to watch a colony of butterflies and see the ups and downs of the population.

53 dashing males



And my long-stayer was still present



( Day 8 )

Although there's a new kid on the block



I saw them duel several times. It will be interesting to see if the Old-Timer can hang on to his territory.

I was thrilled to come across a mating pair



Already coupled when I found them they stayed so for 12 minutes before the male simply walked away. The female remained motionless for 3 minutes before she flew away.



Other females were doing the Turkey Strut



I'm not surprised the females are busy with all these lusty males around!



I found a very dark one



But most shine brightly in the sun



Ever alert



For the Copper Lover, going down to Dungeness at this time of the year feels a bit like when you're opening your presents on Christmas Morning!



### Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 28-Jun-16 03:54 PM GMT

I popped down to Dungeness late morning for an hour's Coppering



They have become so numerous as to be unmissable



And all in lovely condition



I came across a nice Blue Badger



I tried to find my long staying male but his patch now seems occupied by a younger male, the new master of all he surveys





I wonder how long he can hold on?



### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 30-Jun-16 03:34 PM GMT

My copy of the latest Butterfly Conservation magazine arrived today and I saw in it a sad little article about the decline of the Small Copper population in the UK



I am very lucky to live so close to the Dungeness Nature Reserve where, even on a day like today when the weather was not butterfly-friendly, I easily came across 67 second brood Coppers



Of the 67, most were males



I've no doubt at all that there are many more Coppers on the estate than the 67 I counted



I saw a female lay an egg and other females doing the Turkey Strut to dissuade saucy males



And as I've remarked in an earlier post, this year the Dungeness Coppers have become less butterflies of the arid and barren pebble desert and more citizens of lush grassland,so strongly has the vegetation grown



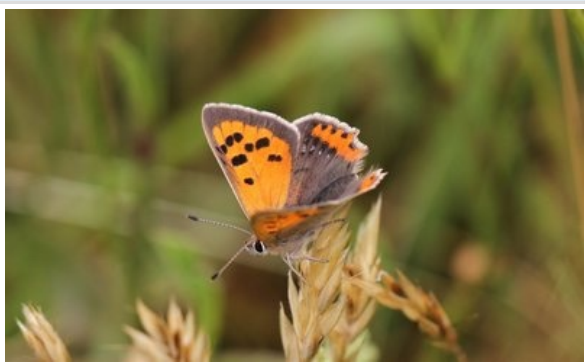
Dull though the weather may have been, the Coppers were glowing in the gloom



Freshly emerged individuals crawling up out of the thick grass



And others making the most of the brief sunny spells



Thank goodness the Small Coppers of Dungeness are safe



## Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 02-Jul-16 03:55 PM GMT

As I write it is absolutely tipping down with rain and very dark. It couldn't be more different to this morning when for a few hours at Dungeness it was Blue Sky Coppering all the way



June had me so accustomed to Coppering in the Rain that to look up and see nothing but blue sky and fair weather cloud was an enormous treat, both for me and for the butterflies



I was delighted to find this beautiful male with a reduced hind-wing orange bar





What a handsome chap



I decided to watch him. I didn't have long to wait before he was having a punch-up with a neighbouring Copper ( I'll call the neighbour "Copper 2 " )



And it was while watching them duke it out that I saw something I've never seen before: when both were grounded, the aberrant male approached Copper 2 as if he were a female



In response to this, Copper 2 began fluttering his wings in exactly the same way as a female Copper when warding off the unwonted attentions of a saucy male ( although he didn't go so far as to adopt the Turkey Strut posture ). And the effect this had on the aberrant male was just the same as if Copper 2 had in fact been an unresponsive female; he stopped and allowed Copper 2 to fly off.

I've never seen a male Copper behave in the way that Copper 2 did today. In the past I've wondered if when a female cold shoulders a male by fluttering her wings she is wafting some kind of chemical "STOP" signal at the male which switches him off. But now that I've seen a male Copper do just the same thing I think I'm safe in concluding that it's probably not a chemical "Stop" signal, but a behavioural one.

So lusty are these young blades that I saw fight after fight, one affray involving three contestants





I also saw something–else that I've never seen before! I saw a female Copper alight at the top of a series of plants and proceed to walk down them, head first, whilst tapping her feet, ie, I saw a female to the Stalk Dance!

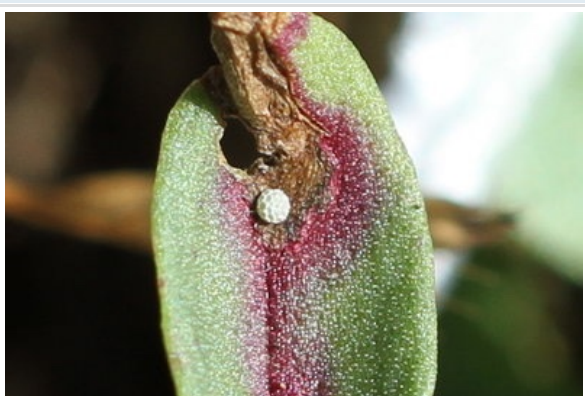


Up until today it has been males and males only that I've watched do this. I've seen female Coppers moving over vegetation with care and attention. I guessed they were sensing what type of plant they were on and I suppose the female I watched today was doing just that.

So am I safe to conclude that the male Copper is doing this too: testing with sensors in his feet just what type of plant is growing on his patch? And does this solve the mystery of the Stalk Dance?

I watch only Dungeness Coppers which live in a barren environment. But this year the conditions have been such as to encourage the desert to flourish with tall grown plants. Maybe that's why I've never seen a female Stalk Dance, there's been no need as the vegetation hasn't been tall.

As for other things, the Copper world is never quiet : I watched a female lay an egg



And my Copper–O–Meter maxed out at 141 !!

So much to admire



So much to learn!



## Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 03-Jul-16 04:01 PM GMT

I'm not sure what the collective term for a congregation of Coppers is:



( a " S.W.A.T Team" ? )

Amongst this lot I found a female with a nice pattern of blue badges





And another male with reduced orange on the hind-wings



Very attractive indeed



As I watched these Coppers the sky clouded and it began to rain lightly.



The Coppers disappeared. I wondered where they had gone so I waited the 20 minutes it took for the rain to clear and for the sun to return. And as soon as it did the Coppers reappeared



I saw that they were flying in from the surrounding long grass: mystery solved!

I paid a visit to my egg



Still safe. I will try to keep an eye on it.

I watched several males perform the stalk dance: see how these two individuals are quickly tapping their front feet against the plant stem



Having yesterday for the first time seen a female do this I am now tending towards the explanation for the stalk dance being that the butterfly is identifying Sorrel. I think a male Copper would be interested in this because if his territory includes Sorrel he's in with an increased chance of finding a female when she's just emerged and thus still a virgin.

Small Coppers never cease to surprise me: today I came across a male acting in a way that I have never seen before. He was flitting around his territory and every time on landing he would completely flatten himself against the pebbles!



I wondered what he was doing. Keeping out of the wind? A light breeze was blowing ( this is Dungeness after all ! ) but just that : a light breeze, nothing more. I have many times watched Coppers in strong wind and they always sit down on the pebbles with their wings closed above them.

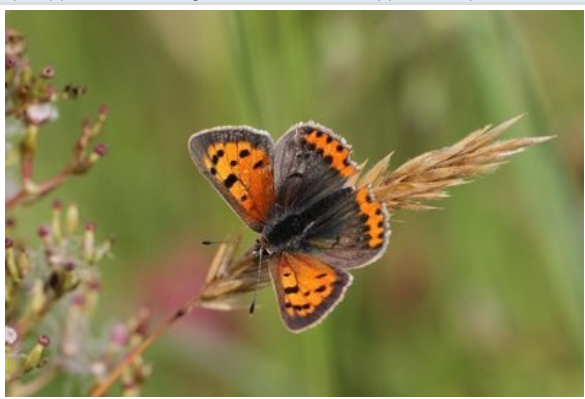
Was he soaking up the sun? But there was no need as it was by this time bright and warm, if anything I'd have expected him to do as other Coppers and fold up his wings to minimise the amount of heat absorbed and thus regulate his temperature.

I can't help thinking he looks rather funny



I wonder if he will start a trend!

My Copper-O-Meter registered 109 Small Coppers today



Most still young (although some of these have been dented )



This was the oldest Copper I found today



And I also came upon this little man all on his own



So all in all another fascinating visit with the Coppers of Dungeness



## Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 04-Jul-16 03:23 PM GMT

I spent some time watching a male Small Copper



At one point he went tearing off after another male which had trespassed onto his patch. I watched them in fast tumbling aerial dispute until they disappeared from sight. I've seen this sort of encounter many times before and noted that when two Coppers get into a fight like this they can chase off and disappear. I waited to see if he would return and after 4 minutes he did. It made me wonder how he was able to find his way back? I can't say how far he went, I'd guess at least 50 metres (until I lost sight of him), which I think is a considerable distance for such a small creature, yet he was able to find his way back.

Male Small Coppers have a homing instinct it seems!



I watched a female: she landed at the top of a Sorrel and made her way down the stem whilst tapping her feet. When she got to the bottom she proceeded to walk over the leaves still tapping her feet then laid an egg before flying away



Still plenty of Small Coppers to be seen and much to discover!



### Re: Hoggars

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-16 05:16 PM GMT

They do seem to have a long life those Copper's at Dungeness Hoggar's, I should be down there end of July beginning of August, hope they're still around. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 04-Jul-16 07:29 PM GMT

Hi Goldie: end of July/ beginning of August, you'll be fine. I usually get counts of 30-40 Coppers during that period.

Best wishes

Hoggars

### Re: Hoggars

by kevling, 04-Jul-16 07:50 PM GMT

Hoggars,

Enjoying your Small Copper diary and great photographs. It's great to see so many differences in appearance. I still cannot believe that this species has passed me by so far this year. I'm determined to track them down.

Regards Kev.

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 05-Jul-16 03:25 PM GMT

Hi Kev, I hope you find some Coppers. I'm sad to say that they've become rather scarce of late ( Dungeness being the exception ).

I was thinking about my "homing" Copper : I guess if Honey Bees can do it so can Small Coppers!

Hoppers

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 09-Jul-16 04:36 PM GMT

I'm careful where I tread when I visit Dungeness



Although their reputation for pugnacity is well deserved there are times when young blades just hang out and chill

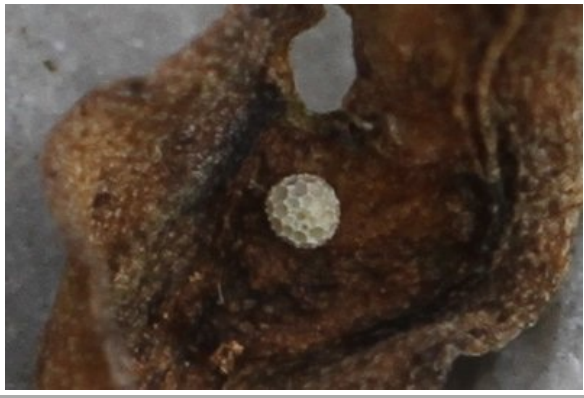


However, I saw a number of brawls today and on two occasions watched a male Copper approach another male on the ground as if approaching a female to mate with: the importuned male fluttered his wings at speed and the misguided male then stopped his advances. So I'm now sure that when a Copper flutters his or her wings at another this is a behavioural response to unwanted attention and is understood by Coppers to mean "Stop. Leave me alone".

I visited the egg laid last Saturday:



I wonder what happens now? The leaf has died. Presumably the egg is ok



and the caterpillar will wriggle across to another leaf? But shouldn't it have hatched by now?

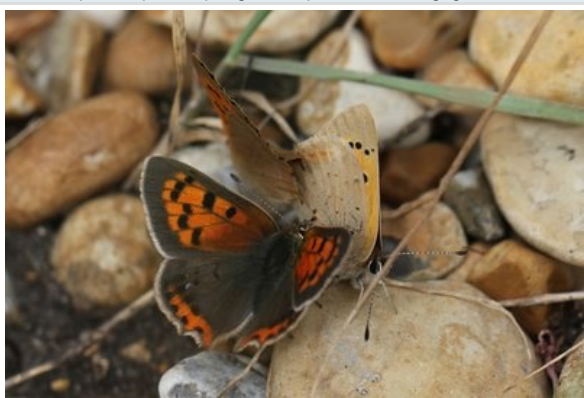
A second egg ( laid last monday ) is doing better



I caught sight of a mating pair being harassed by a lone male



He was repeatedly attempting to couple with the engaged female





The pair flew off eventually and were left in peace



Note how she is pushing and tapping him with her back legs



She then performed an about face



The male pulled away and flew off. I saw them coupled for 12 minutes

While watching them I noticed that I had been troused by a gaudy little fly with disco lights for eyes. I thought little of this until that is I realised that it was biting me!

Four wings: Good





Two wings: Bad



I also saw this Small Tortoiseshell with a lot of white on it



While wandering about in my customary aimless way I glanced down into the grass and saw the most extraordinary Small Copper that I have ever seen



She was soaking up what sunshine there was. Although partially obscured by the grass I took a series of photos for fear of disturbing her if I attempted to do a little "gardening" in order to have a clear shot



I've never seen anything like her before



I'm glad I took the photos when I did because she suddenly zipped off and I lost her in the strong breeze. What a find!

My Copper-O-Meter expired at an amazing 244 today





And as if I hadn't had enough treats today, on my amble back to my car I found this beauty



Almost no orange on the hind wings at all



A first for me.

A day of Copper-Bottomed Butterflying



### Re: Hoggers

by Pauline, 09-Jul-16 06:25 PM GMT

Good Lord Hoggers – I really have no words!!! You have rendered me speechless and that doesn't happen often 😊 What on earth is going on there? I can't wait to see what you're going to turn up next 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 10-Jul-16 04:26 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, it was a very exciting day indeed! I suppose with a Copper population so large it's bound to produce the odd funny one now and again.

Yesterday I also found a Copper with an unusually broad hind-wing band ( something I've seen before ) : so in this second brood I've gone from one extreme



To another



To another



To another!



I still don't know what to make of this one



The wind was blowing so strongly I knew I'd have no chance finding her if she took flight and so had to settle for poor views. And as it turned out she did disappear after breaking cover. I spent nearly an hour trying to re-find her but couldn't.

Still, I've no complaints: I had more than my fair share of good luck yesterday!

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 10-Jul-16 09:04 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Blimey you,ve really turned up some crackers at Dungie,i,ve missed being there myself, Had some good moments in Cornwall,which I,ll tell you about when I see you

but I will say ,not a single Copper,and I did try ! Still your Coppers..... I reckon your" Radiata type" is AB; Obseleta ,and the other is similar to Brunnescens,but I,m not sure on this one,two brilliant finds,the other one with the reduced hind wing bar,i believe you found a similar individual in the first brood,and I found a female (which I posted) as well, these types seem to be turning up more regularly. Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 11-Jul-16 05:50 PM GMT

Hi Allan thanks for the aberration IDs – finding them was just good luck.

I'm looking forward to hearing about your recent trip

See you soon

Hoggers

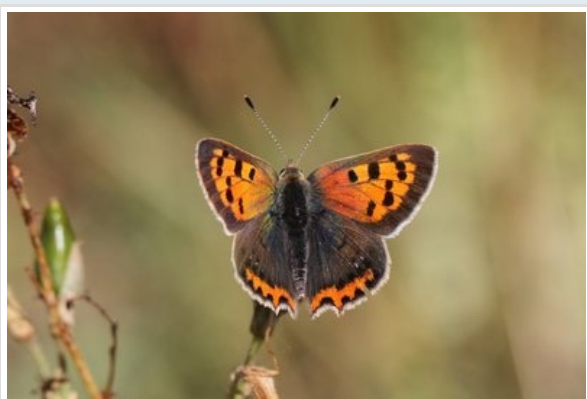
**Re: Hoppers**

by Hoppers, 16-Jul-16 03:45 PM GMT

The second brood of Small Coppers at Dungeness has been running since 19th June



Most are still in fine condition





but I wasn't surprised to find an increasing number that are now very worn and battle-scarred.

I looked in on my egg: I watched it being laid on 4th July, this is what I found today

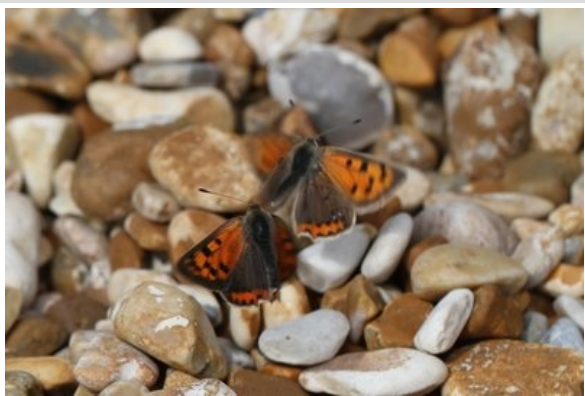


It looks like the caterpillar has eaten its way out of the shell. From all that I've read about Small Copper caterpillars I'd expected to find it close by on the same leaf as the egg but I could see no sign of it.

The males were highly active: on the watch out for trouble



And finding it



I found another sooty individual



It became very warm indeed



My Copper-O-Meter reached a dizzying 291



This is my highest Copper Head Count ever, but it's only a fraction of the true number present and flying at Dungeness!

## Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 17-Jul-16 03:48 PM GMT

Inspired by yesterday's Copper Head Count I returned today and walked a different route, just to get an idea of Small Copper second brood numbers present on the reserve





It was very cloudy but also very warm



This route took me out into "The Desert" ( or as I like to think of it, "The Forbidden Zone"..) and Coppers there were aplenty



Ranging in condition from this



To this

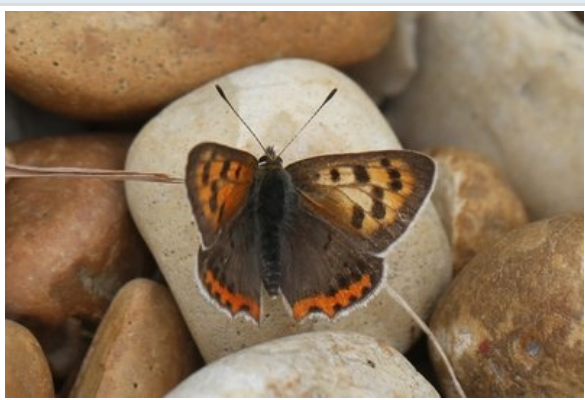
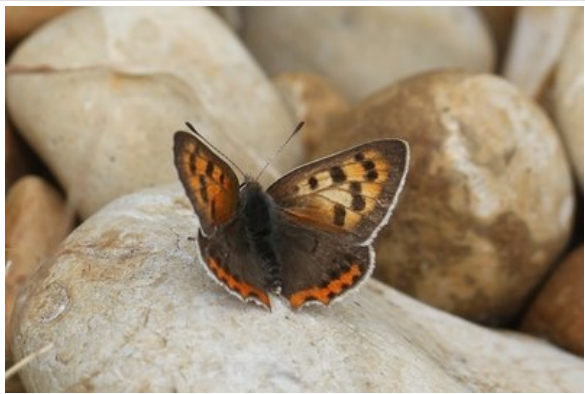


(how he managed to get airborne I've no idea)

I saw females creating a stir



And came upon this chap with a pale right wing



(something I see now and again)

I counted 224 Coppers



( can anyone help me with the name of the flower he's perched on? It's very common at Dungeness and smells of lemon! )

I dropped into the Moat on my way to the car: lots of Coppers including this sooty chap



And in complete contrast to him, while gazing at the brambles I saw what looked like a little white Copper



Closer up I could see he was very pale indeed



Do you think he started off as a much paler than normal and has become even more so through wear and tear, or that he is a typical individual and has lost most of his colour through wear?

I've seen a total of 515 Small Coppers at Dungeness this weekend



Which I'm sure is just a fraction of the total population



### Re: Hoppers

by Allan.W., 18-Jul-16 09:11 PM GMT

Hi Hoppers,

Your plant is wood sage (teucrium scorodonia), as you say, very common at Dungie. regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoppers

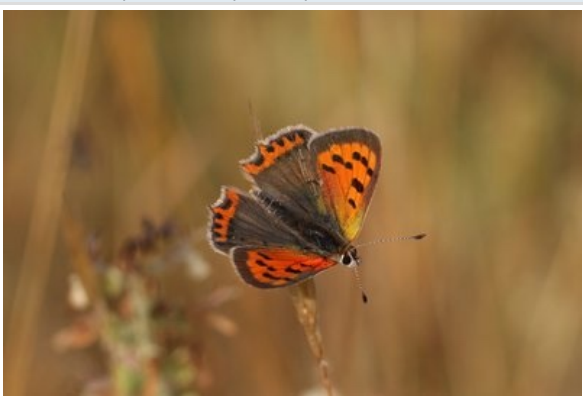
by Hoppers, 24-Jul-16 03:14 PM GMT

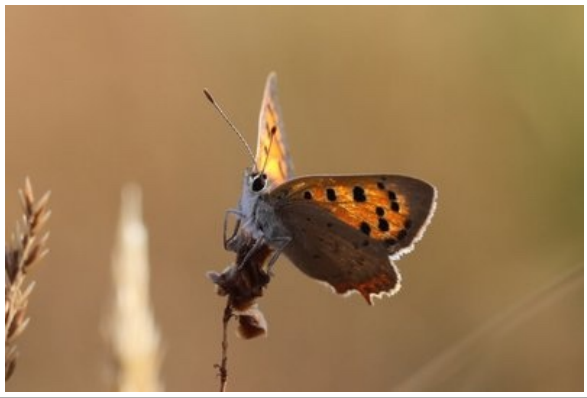
Thanks for the plant ID, Allan. Good to see you today at Small Copper Central (Dungeness)!

These last two weeks have been crazy: I've never seen such high numbers of Small Coppers at Dungeness. Last weekend they were everywhere (I did my best to count them and got to over 500, but without a doubt there were many more)

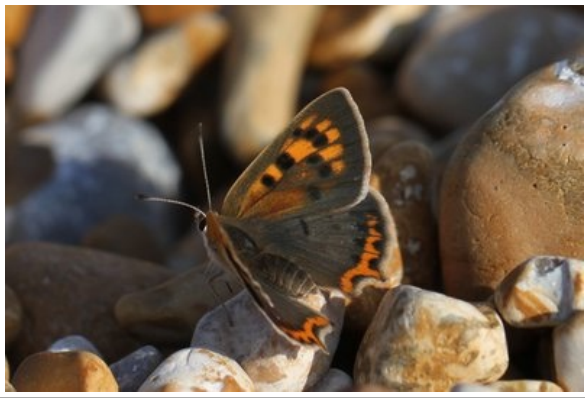
This weekend saw a slight dropping off in numbers from last week's highs but nonetheless they are still plentiful

Here are some photos from yesterday





What do you make of this female?



Looks like the ink has smudged



I counted 135 Coppers



Today I counted 148 Small Coppers



Including this sooty one



I saw this gorgeous extensa blue badge male in the moat



Allan joined me and were able to re-find him



What a stunner!



And here's an "almost" extensa I found later



After a good chat, Allan had to go. I continued searching for Coppers then sat down for breakfast ( marmite and banana sandwiches..!) when Allan came running up with news that he'd just found a pristine female radiata! I duly postponed breakfast and followed Allan to where he'd last seen her being chased by a tatty old male Copper.

No sign of her. Allan couldn't stay any longer but left me with a good idea of where to look and about 30 minutes later there she was!



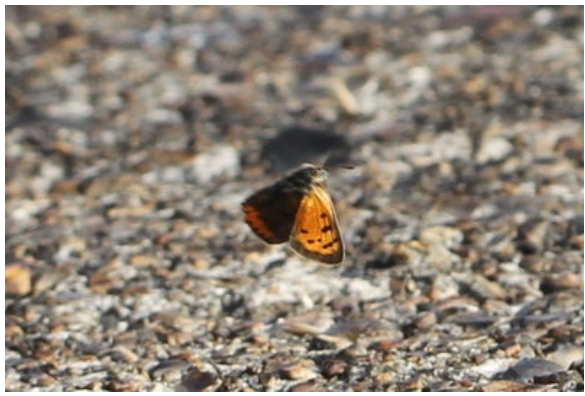
That's the best photo I managed to take of her: she flew up into the gusty breeze, was intercepted by a male and the two of them vanished!

Still, no complaints from me: I'd seen her! Thanks for generously making the effort to come back and find me Allan, much appreciated.

And as for other entertainment, there were plenty of fights going on







A Super-Copper-Lishous Weekend!



### Re: Hoppers

by Allan.W., 25-Jul-16 07:53 PM GMT

Hello Hoppers,

Enjoyed our chat on Sunday, and really pleased that you re-found the "Radiata" type female, actually not quite a "Radiata" but near enough, and still a cracking aberration!

my mistake! That "Extensa" with the blue spots was a beauty, and I did get a glimpse of him as well which was a bit of luck, as you've said, numbers were slightly down on last weekend (I'd be surprised if I ever better it), but still very high numbers, I've only seen one other Copper this season, away from Dungeness, I've yet to visit the Brookland site which generally has a few (as you know), the dusky individual that you posted was also very unusual, even the orange base colour was different to the norm! nice find.

Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 30-Jul-16 02:48 PM GMT

There were lots of butterflies at Dungeness this morning: the Brown Argus are very noticeable



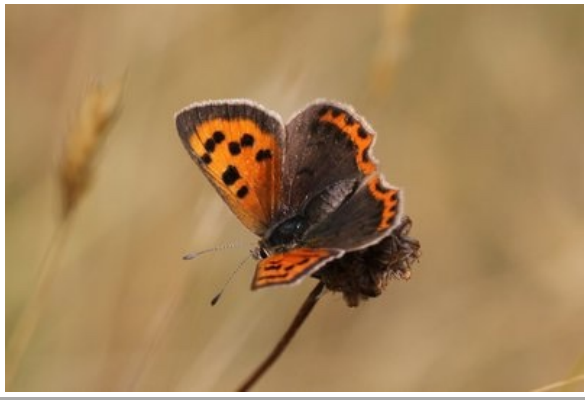
and Common Blue



Marbled Whites, Painted Lady (4), Red Admiral, Peacock, and a profusion of Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper including this lightly coloured one



As for the Coppers, overall they're looking scuffed and dented but still a reasonable number in presentable condition



I watched several females go into their "Turkey Strut" routine when warding off males and I saw a male perform the "Stalk Dance".

I saw a Sooty on the brambles



And this chap reminded me of the "extensa" I saw with Allan last week



My Copper-O-Meter reached 133 today



### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 30-Jul-16 03:59 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's, fantastic ab's you found and i can't believe all those lovely SC's you've counted 😊 especially when we've yet to see one up here 😞 We should have been down your way this week but my Husband's not been too well so we've put the Journey off for a few day's so here's hoping we'll be down there shortly. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Neil Freeman, 31-Jul-16 10:22 AM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

I have only seen one Small Copper so far this year and that was a tired and worn example in Scotland. Last year was also a bad year for them around here and second brood didn't show up until late July so I am hoping to have a look for them next week. Until then I will have to rely on your PD to remind me what a beautiful and characterful little butterfly they are.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 31-Jul-16 04:51 PM GMT

Hi Goldie, I'm sure you'll see plenty: the second brood is looking rather worn now but numbers are high and still some fresh ones to be found.

Hi Neil, good luck finding yourself a local Copper (or two) next week. I visited Dungeness late morning today with a friend of mine, Brian, who has begun to take an interest in Small Coppers. It was rather too hot for my liking but at least we had no trouble finding plenty of butterflies





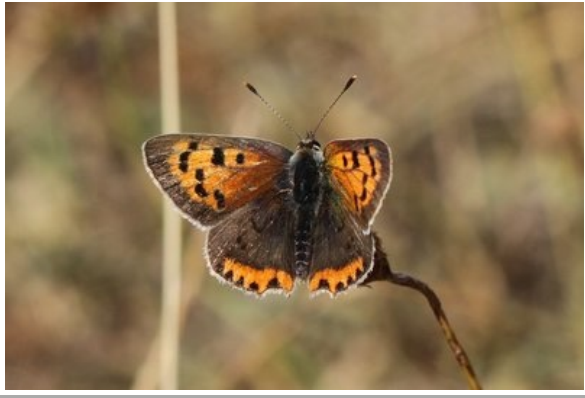
As for Small Coppers, of the 91 that I counted today most showed varying degrees of wear



One male put on a "stalk dance" display for us, much to Brian's amusement



He also got to see a female do the "turkey strut" and I was able to show him a Small Copper egg too ( so rather a crash course in Small Coppers!)



Hoggers.

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 31-Jul-16 07:06 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Had a late visit myself today, fewer Coppers on the wing than in the last couple of weeks, was around the moat /station fence area , for about 45 mins ,and managed around 50, mostly worn specimens but with about 4-5 still in good nick . I did see a very pale individual, very similar to yours, but didn't manage a picture, I think the second brood is definitely on the way down now. Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 04-Aug-16 03:22 PM GMT

Hello Allan, the second brood is definitely on the wane, but what a second brood it was! Numbers reached a staggering high over the weekend of 16/17th July when I counted over 500 Small Coppers. That will take a lot of beating!

I walked my usual route today in sunny and very windy conditions. Small Coppers were easy to come by but it soon became clear that their general condition is poor



Life amongst the Bramble takes its toll!

It sometimes felt a little like early Autumn



Although the Blackberries are not yet ripe.

Some wraith-like individuals still haunting their territories



Plenty of Brown Argus and Common Blues



The Copper-O-Meter reached 65 today. Most were battle-scarred but still a few smart ones to be found





The best Copper I came upon today was this stunner



If past years are any guide we should begin to see the numbers of fresh Coppers begin to rise very soon.

All the best,

Hoggers.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 05-Aug-16 02:59 PM GMT

Coppering conditions at Dungeness were much better today with bags of sunshine and just a polite whiffle of breeze in place of yesterday's rude wind.



Tough survivors of the second brood continue to hang on with great determination



Most are bashed, dented and worn but by no means defeated



Just a few finer individuals amongst the Old Bangers

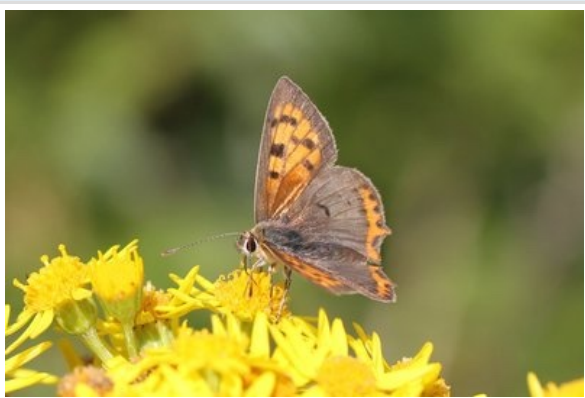




I liked this male, in good condition, whose wing markings border on "extensa"



Others are less glamorous but still delightful





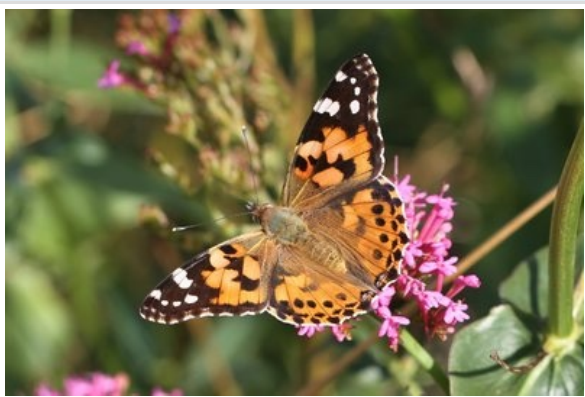
Butterflies were numerous including Brown Argus



Red Admiral, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell



And Painted Lady



My Star Copper of the Day was this gorgeous fully qualified "extensa"



The fourth "extensa" I've seen this year



My Copper-O-Meter reached a very respectable 110 today



### Re: Hoggars

by Allan.W., 05-Aug-16 09:35 PM GMT

Hi Hoggars,

Another cracking ab; nice find,Dungeness is turning up some very unusual specimens this year,i think that's your sixth Extensa (type) this year isn,t it ? I,ve managed three,was hoping for an early morning there this Sunday,but don,t think I,m going to be able to unfortunately.I,m surprised you still managed to see a hundred plus. In the week I found my second Small Copper of the year away from Dungeness ! Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggars

by Wurzel, 05-Aug-16 10:01 PM GMT

Wow the sheer extent of the variation is quite astounding Hoggars - you're building up one hell of a 'collection' it almost rivals the Cockayne! 🤔👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Hoggars

by Goldie M, 06-Aug-16 01:02 PM GMT

Hi! Hoggar's guess what! I finally saw my first Copper yesterday at HLB, I'm so so pleased I think it must be the first because I've been to the same place loads of time and not seen any, you've seen so many and they've had loads of different assets 😊 I think the one I saw has some Blue spots as well so I'm happy with the one 😊

I know what you mean about territory, this one flew about a lot on the flower's but still returned so the same leaf all the time, I remembered what you'd said about them and just waited for it to settle and I got some shots of it. I'm so pleased. Goldie 😊

## Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 06-Aug-16 02:24 PM GMT

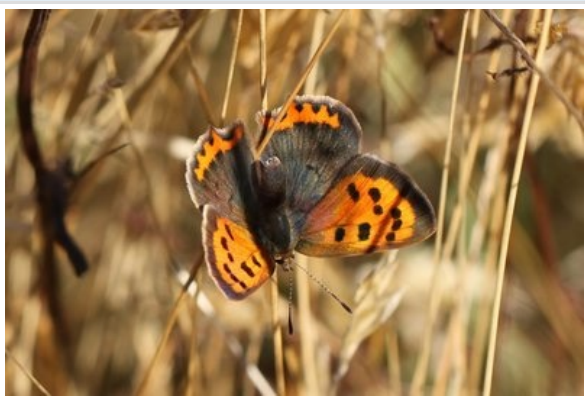
Thanks for the comments Allan and Wurzel, much appreciated.

Delighted to hear your Small Copper season has finally got off the ground, Goldie! I hope you get to visit the Coppers of Dungeness when you come south for your holiday.

I had a look round this morning and there are good numbers of Coppers in fine condition



Including some fresh ones



Sad to see this one had met with a sticky end



Lots of butterflies milling about including 8 Painted Ladies



I was delighted to bump into the "extensa" that I found yesterday



I wasn't her only admirer



The Copper-O-Meter went up to 93 today



### Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 06-Aug-16 04:34 PM GMT

Really great Copper's Hogger's fingers crossed we'll pay a visit to Dungeness next week 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 08-Aug-16 12:33 PM GMT

You've picked a good time to visit Dungeness, Goldie. Although the second brood is in decline, fresh Small Coppers are now appearing in ever increasing numbers.

I've watched the second brood as it passed its height in numbers and also noted how the condition of the butterflies deteriorated.

Since last thursday I've seen the number of fresh Coppers gradually increase. This morning of the 107 that I counted 22 were fresh, so there's a new batch of Small Coppers emerging now (There's a definite gap between the first and the second brood but from then onwards the Small Coppers of Dungeness seem to be continuously brooded)

When you visit Dungeness you'll find a mix of Old Bangers



Coppers in fair nick



Coppers in good condition



And absolute Show Room condition models





These two were stunning: both freshly minted and both Blue Badgers.

I saw plenty of Copper behaviour such as females rebuffing males, stalk dances and males in combat



The newly minted Copper is a wonderful sight





But there's always plenty to enjoy no matter what condition they're in



**Re: Hoppers**

by Hoppers, 10-Aug-16 02:55 PM GMT

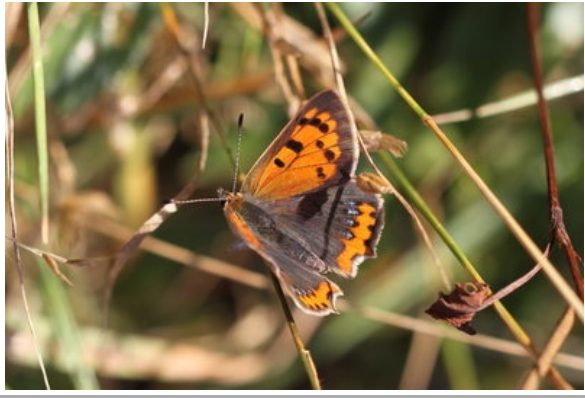
Although there are many second brood Small Coppers still at Dungeness





There's been a definite emergence of fresh ones over the last few days





I did a shortened version of my usual walk this morning



Of the 69 Small Coppers that I saw 13 were fresh



I came across this interesting female



She was worn but also noticeably smaller than a typical female and her forewing pattern with an array of spots close to the wing edge was striking



Good numbers of Gatekeepers, Meadow Brown, Brown Argus, Common Blue and several Painted Ladies too



### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 12-Aug-16 03:22 PM GMT

Dungeness this morning was sunny and very warm



Of the 92 Small Coppers that I saw today I counted 24 fresh ones



This time last year on my usual walk I'd count around 40 of them, so you can see how well the Dungeness Small Coppers have done this season.

Brown Argus and Common Blues are also present in high numbers



One Copper I've been watching has held the same territory for at least 7 days



Whenever I see a group of butterflies, Meadow Browns for example, having an aerial punch-up I am sure to find a Small Copper there in the thick of it!





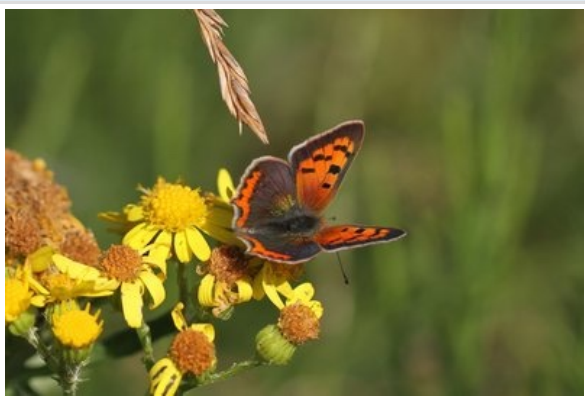
Over the last few days I've seen both Red Admiral and Small Tortoiseshell being biffed by a male Small Copper and moved on to another flower-head



Real scrappers!



Good to see so many fresh ones coming through







**Re: Hoppers**

by Neil Freeman, 12-Aug-16 09:20 PM GMT

Hi Hoppers.

Dungeness really does sound like a different country, almost a different world, to what it is like around here. I must get down there one of the days for a look around.

Cheers,

Neil.

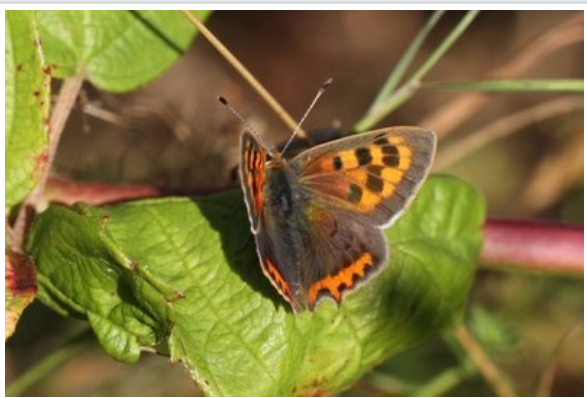
**Re: Hoppers**

by Hoppers, 13-Aug-16 03:32 PM GMT

Do come down and visit, Neil : it's well worth it!

This morning I counted 55 Small Coppers at Dungeness of which 28 were fresh





To me they all seem to be different



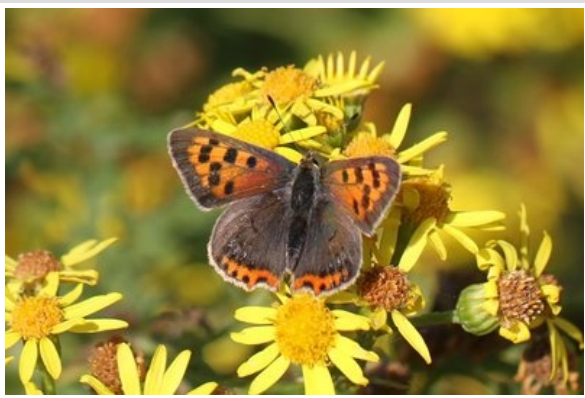
And I never get tired of seeing them



I loved the glossy sheen on this one



The Ragwort is a great attraction



There are high numbers of Common Blue, Brown Argus, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and now I'm seeing encouraging numbers of Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Peacock and Painted Lady too....

Slightly distracted there! I'm no expert on aviation but I think a Lancaster Bomber flanked on each side by Spitfires just flew over my house!

Whatever they were, they're quite a sight! Wow!

And talking of Spitfires, I also found a nice fresh Sooty Copper



### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggars, 13-Aug-16 03:42 PM GMT

The mystery aeroplanes circled back over my house so I grabbed a camera and got this photo from the bedroom window



ID, anyone?!

Hoggers

### Re: Hoggars

by Vince Massimo, 13-Aug-16 06:03 PM GMT

Hi Paul,

That's the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight comprising a Spitfire, Lancaster and Hurricane, presumably associated with the Eastbourne International Airshow this weekend. <http://www.raf.mod.uk/bbmf/theaircraft/>

Vince

### Re: Hoggars

by Hoggars, 16-Aug-16 04:11 PM GMT

Thanks for the ID, Vince : I think just about any question could be asked on this forum and there'd be someone with an answer!

Looking at the Lancaster as it flew away reminded me of this Small Copper



(I haven't noticed the bluish tinge above the body before but it's very attractive.)

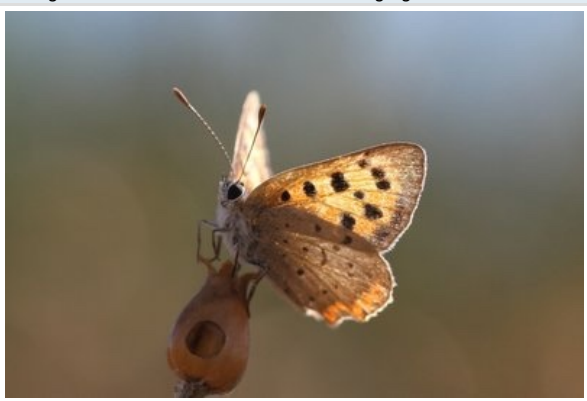
It was glorious at Dungeness today. I counted 58 Coppers on my walk



24 of these were fresh



Still a good number of the second brood hanging on



This male caught my eye: he's clearly worn, but look how thick and dark the wing tips are:



Very striking.

I noticed how the Gatekeepers are in decline but also how numerous the Common Blues and Brown Argus are still, and I also saw 5 Painted Ladies



And three fresh Small Heaths.

But so far as the Small Coppers are concerned, they're numbers are now just about what I'd expect for August



After this year's bumper second brood things have settled down



But there's always plenty going on in the Small Copper World



### Re: Hoppers

by David M, 18-Aug-16 10:15 PM GMT

Can you send a few of these Small Coppers to the rest of us please, Hoppers? I've personally observed fewer than two dozen all year and that probably puts me in the top twenty in the league table! 😞

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 20-Aug-16 02:44 PM GMT

I've seen reports in both local and national newspapers highlighting the decline in our Small Copper population, David: I hope Butterfly Conservation & Co have their experts working on a solution.

It was a case of Extreme Coppering at Dungeness this morning, blowing a gale but nonetheless plenty of sunshine and about 20C.

The Small Coppers of Dungeness have had an exceptionally good year and I'm happy to report that the third brood is now very much under weigh



My Copper-O-Meter detected no less than 86 today





An excellent total for this time of year



And especially heartening given that on windy days I always see far fewer than when it's calm



Of the 86 counted 59 were fresh



So we've reached the point where fresh third brooders significantly out number the tired second brooders



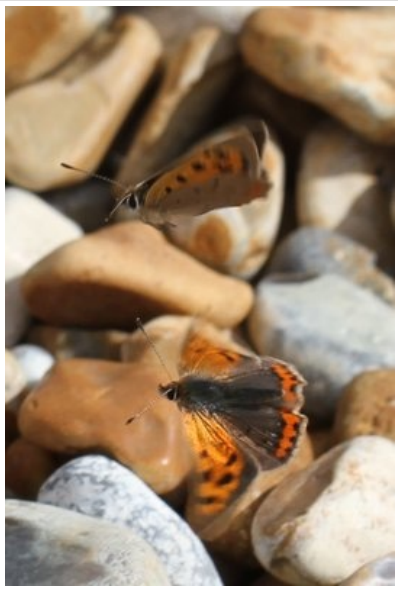
I've mentioned before that I am fascinated by the way Small Coppers behave. A short while ago I watched a male flattening himself to the pebbles



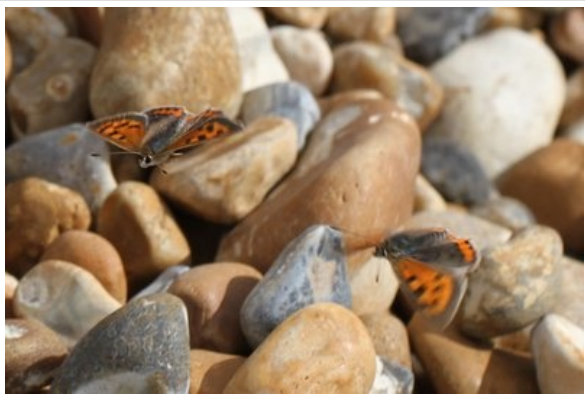
This is something I've never seen before. Conditions on that day were warm with a slight breeze. I could only guess that although the breeze was light he was nonetheless trying to avoid it. I don't know if he continued to behave in this way through the rest of his life but his novel behaviour has not caught on: in today's high wind the Coppers were doing what they usually do, sitting down with wings up and closed or slightly open



I love to watch the males in combat



Slowing down the action by photographing them just makes me appreciate their skill and agility all the more



So now the third brood is in full flow



hopefully there's a lot more to look forward to!



### Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 20-Aug-16 07:47 PM GMT

Beautiful Coppers Hopper's, sorry we didn't get to Dungeness to see them, when my Husband hurt is head the first day here that put traveling too far on it's head so to speak as well, at least I did see a Copper before I left home so I'll have to be satisfied with that, unless I find another when I get home 😊  
Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoppers

by Wurzel, 20-Aug-16 10:15 PM GMT

A stunning array of Coppers Hoppers 🍷🍷 Do you ever calculate the proportion of blue badgers to normal coppers as that form seems quite well represented in your postings?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 21-Aug-16 04:26 PM GMT

Goldie, from all that I've heard recently about the national scarcity of Small Coppers I think tracking down one of your very own is a far greater achievement than seeing them at Dungeness where it's hard not to step on one! It's a shame that you couldn't visit though because I'm sure you'd have loved it here, but a concussed husband takes priority!

I have in the past attempted to record my Blue Badgers, Wurzel, however, I'm a bear of very little brain and I soon ran into trouble with categorisation : no trouble with a Copper in possession of a full set of blue badges, but then I'd find one with just a slight smudge of blue, or the vaguest suggestion of blue badges, and I'd not know whether to include them or not!

I can say that it's the most common form of aberration amongst the Small Coppers here and that it's in the later broods that it appears most often.

Today for example, when the weather for Coppering was far from ideal, I came across a fully paid up member of the Small Copper Blue Badge Club



Then another with less distinct badges



And another with just slight blue badges

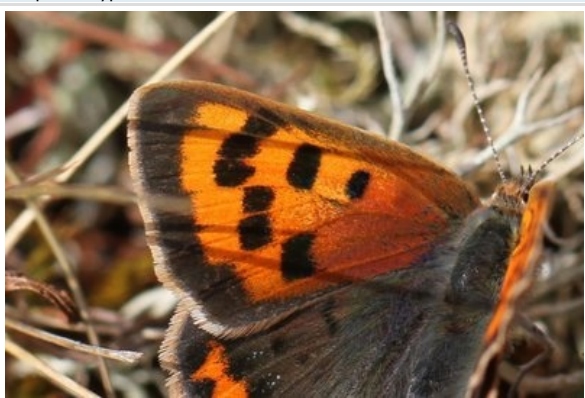


All I can say is that if you visit the second brood onwards at Dungeness you'll all but be certain to find one.

I find the darker models interesting ( I call them "Sooty Coppers" )



Compare a typical individual



with a Sooty



It looks as if the bright copper colour in these butterflies has been over-laid with dark scales.

My Copper-O-Meter scored 85 today



Just 10 were older Coppers

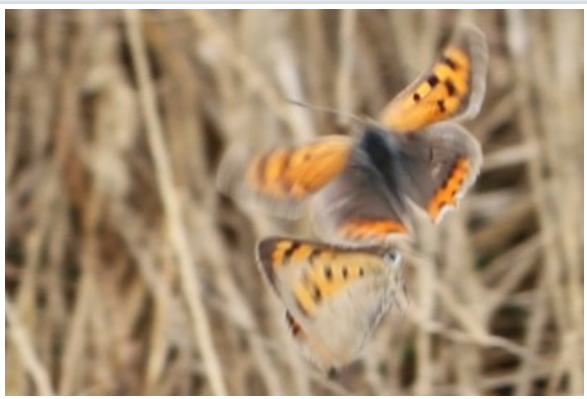


The rest were from the fresh third brood





I indulged in my favourite past-time of watching the males do combat







Great fun!

I bumped into Allan and his family in the moat on a Copper Hunt of their own – Good to see you as always Allan



Another great morning of Coppering



### Re: Hoggars

by David M, 21-Aug-16 09:31 PM GMT

I'm highly envious of you, Hoggars (as, I presume, are most on this forum).

This is supposed to be a common butterfly but it has been doing a very good impression of a scarce one for the last few years.

### Re: Hoggars

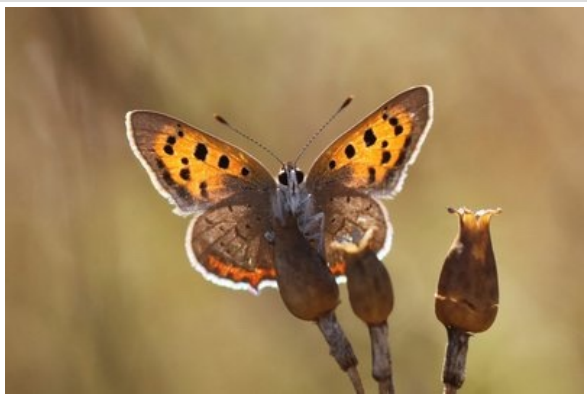
by Hoggars, 23-Aug-16 02:16 PM GMT

At least we know they're safe here, David : they've had the good sense to make their home in a world famous nature reserve!

It was glorious at Dungeness today with wall to wall sunshine and no wind to speak of. We are now seeing the benefit of this year's massive second brood: today I counted 121 Small Coppers



My usual totals for this time of year are around half that number





A few Old Timers



But most are new



I was delighted to come upon a gorgeous female radiata





In addition to being a radiata she also has the merest suggestion of a blue badge too



She was very placid indeed and strongly favoured one particular clump of Ragwort : Even after being pursued by lusty young males she would return to the same flowers to nectar



Beautiful



I was also found the wackiest Small Copper I have ever seen. I first noticed this strange customer because of the left forewing: some kind of damage (presumably caused when emerging from the chrysalis) and also just two spots



But then, to my complete astonishment, I saw as it turned that the right forewing had the usual number of spots



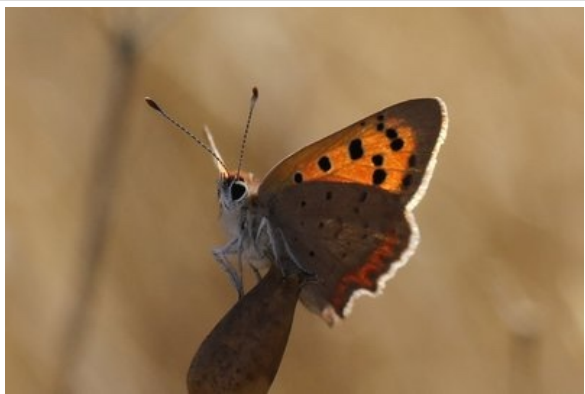
And also that the right hindwing had blue badges!

It looks like someone has stuck the right and left halves of two different Coppers together to make one butterfly!



I can only think that it must be a gynandromorphic Small Copper. I would welcome the help of our experts on this one!

So the Dungeness Small Coppers continue to amaze and astonish



### Re: Hoggers

by Pauline, 23-Aug-16 03:24 PM GMT

Some great finds and photos in that last post Hoggers 😊👍

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 23-Aug-16 07:13 PM GMT

Your right Hogger's but we don't get the lovely specimens and ab's like you do, great photo's 👍 Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Pete Eeles, 23-Aug-16 08:43 PM GMT

#### Hoggers wrote:

I can only think that it must be a gynandromorphic Small Copper. I would welcome the help of our experts on this one!

I wouldn't call myself an expert by any means, but this does look (as you originally suggested) to be damage caused when emerging from the pupa. Having reared more than my fair share of butterflies, I've seen this happen with several individuals.

[Edit] Having said that, the hindwings aren't deformed, and they're also different!

Cheers,

– Pete

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 23-Aug-16 08:52 PM GMT

Another Nice Radiata Hoggers !! Whats that ,six this year. looks like I made the wrong choice this afternoon,went to the Gulleys ,Dengemarsh,for the Common Blues,for a change ,probably a hundred plus on the wing,but they were so intent on nectaring ,they just wouldn,t open their wings ! a few immaculate Coppers as well,a couple of Meadow Browns ,but best of all my first Clouded Yellow of the season ( a female) ,

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 24-Aug-16 07:19 PM GMT

It's a very peculiar Copper indeed – However it was caused!

I took a look at the Cockayne website and gynandromorph came closest.

Certainly I've never seen one before

Hoggers.

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 24-Aug-16 09:36 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers,

When you get a minute, go on the BRITISH BUTTERFLY ABBERATIONS site,( not Cockayne)find Small Coppers ,and take a look at AB; Sinus Peroneural. Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Padfield, 24-Aug-16 11:28 PM GMT

#### Allan.W. wrote:

Hello Hoggers,

When you get a minute, go on the BRITISH BUTTERFLY ABBERATIONS site,( not Cockayne)find Small Coppers ,and take a look at AB; Sinus Peroneural.

Regards Allan.W.

I had no idea this site existed.

Click here <http://www.britishbutterflyaberrations.co.uk/species/lycaena-phlaeas/aberrations> for the small copper aberrations and scroll down to 'sinus-peroneural', as Allan says. It is the spitting image of Hoggers's butterfly, right down to the blue spots on the right hindwing only.

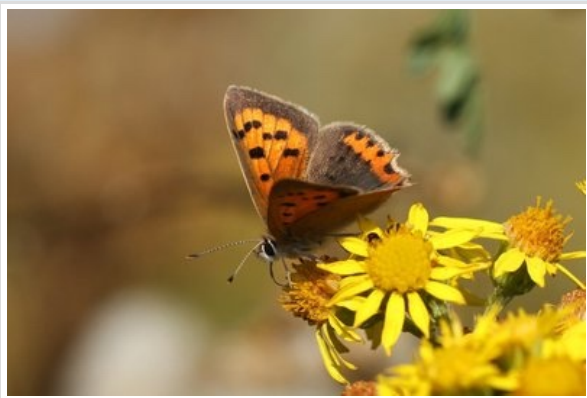
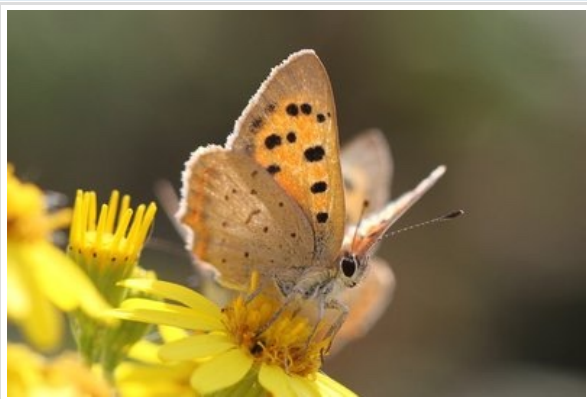
**Re: Hoppers**

by Hoppers, 25-Aug-16 01:37 PM GMT

That's my Copper! Thanks for doing the research, Allan: "sinus peroneural" ! It doesn't exactly trip off the tongue does it?

I think I'll just call him " Odd Bod " ..!

I counted 146 Small Coppers at Dungeness today



Good numbers of Blue Badgers, from those with just a suggestion of blue



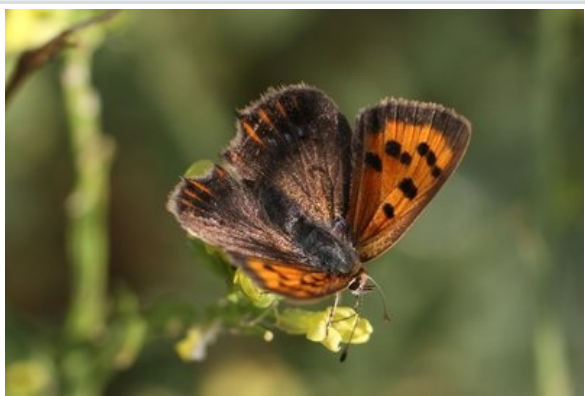
To others with a full set







One of these was very special indeed: a radiata with blue badges



I get the feeling that the combination of very large broods together with a run of hot dry weather has boosted the the number of aberrations in this Small Copper population

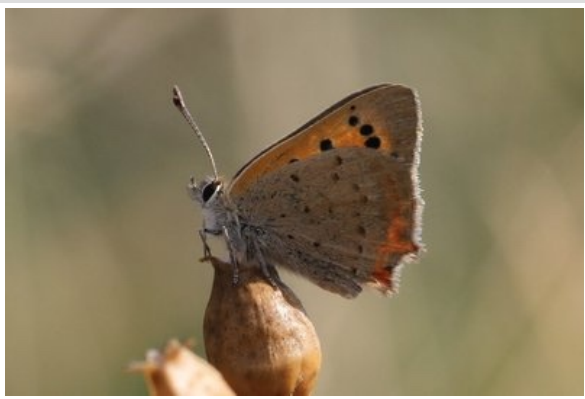


I also saw a Small Copper nectaring on Buddleia



Not something I've ever seen before.

Normally I'd expect to see around 50 Small Coppers on my walk at this time of year, so 146 is quite a treat





## Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 27-Aug-16 02:21 PM GMT

I popped down to Dungeness to have a look at the radiata found yesterday by David Walker



A real beauty



It's interesting how there's been a sudden surge of radiata sightings over the last week



And that all have been females



I counted 74 Small Coppers today



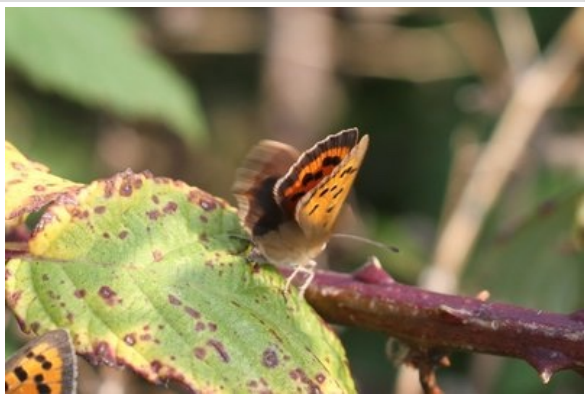
There was a lively breeze blowing which keeps numbers spotted down.

I noticed how some third brood Coppers are beginning to show signs of wear



I didn't see any remnants from the second brood today.

I watched several males in combat and a female doing the Turkey Strut when refusing a hopeful male's proposal



Small Coppers: the Austin Mini Cooper of the Butterfly World



Born Champions!



### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 07-Sep-16 02:41 PM GMT

The third brood of Small Coppers at Dungeness has passed its best



Numbers are still quite high





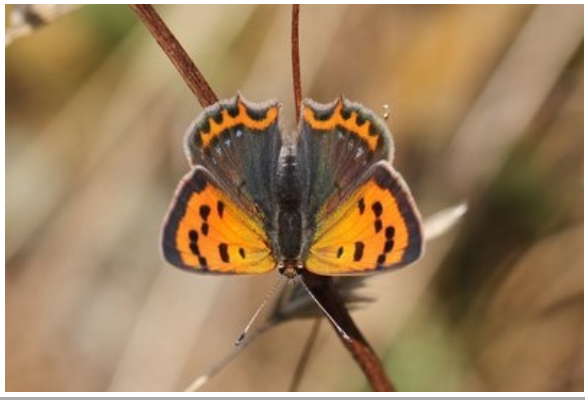
But are nonetheless falling



Just as available sources of nectar too are diminishing



Still much to admire though



And it shouldn't be too long before the fourth brood makes an appearance



So there's still much to look forward to



### Re: Hoggers

by bugboy, 07-Sep-16 03:57 PM GMT

There's rarely a post these days where you don't slip in some sort of spectacular ab. 🍷🍷🍷

### Re: Hoggers

by TonyP, 07-Sep-16 06:57 PM GMT

All these aberrations seen at Dungeness begs the question: are they flying too close to the nuclear facilities close by? "Radiata" assumes a more meaningful addition to its name. I'll watch out for a cheap Geiger-counter on the "For Sale" pages. 😊😊😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 07-Sep-16 07:49 PM GMT

Hello Hoggers,

Lovely "Extensa" (close to Kochi) Hoggers, I think it's the same one you posted a while back, and also posted for Dave Walker. I haven't been able to find that one, more the pity, it's a beauty, don't know if anyone managed to re-find the Radiata I posted the other day, I believe Dave Walker found another a few days after mine, wonder if it was the same one? Found 3 Coppers at Wye Downs this evening, and 6 in Birchett last week.

Regards Allan. W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 08-Sep-16 07:26 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments, guys: I once found a Small Copper there which had a distinctly greenish hue to it and I wondered (but not seriously!) if a Geiger Counter might be called for..

I may pay Dungeness a nocturnal visit to check if the Coppers glow in the dark!

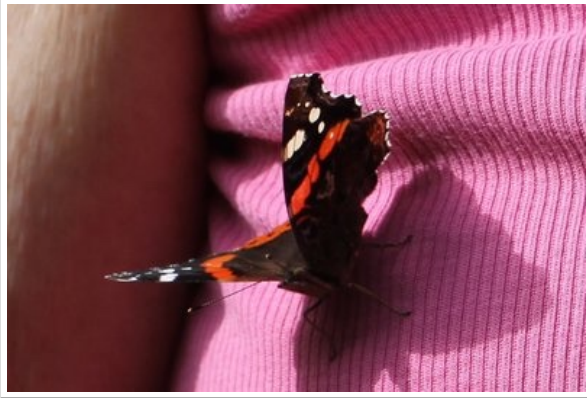
Hoggers

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 09-Sep-16 03:58 PM GMT

My mother was delighted to have a Red Admiral land on her for a rest this afternoon





It was one of six, all slightly tipsy on the juice from rotting plums.

When I looked more closely I saw it was one of the white spotted aberrations – What an honour!

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 09-Sep-16 07:19 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's, it's been a pleasure this year to read your posts and see all the SC ab's you've found , some real beauties 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Butterfysaurus rex, 09-Sep-16 09:38 PM GMT

I agree with Goldie Hoggers, although it's very sad to see the huge decline in coppers around my patch. It's heartening to know that there are some places where they still thrive. Some local spots that used to have Small Coppers have lost them all together over here. Having said that I found one unexpectedly on a roadside verge the other week. It shows how mobile they are and gives me hope they might re colonise these areas if they have a few good years.

ATB

James

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 10-Sep-16 03:33 PM GMT

Hi Goldie, you are very kind : Thank You! It's always marvellous to see an interesting aberration ( I still haven't got over the extraordinary Small Copper I found that looked like the right half of one Copper stuck to the left half of a different one!) But finding them is pure chance and I've just been lucky. Now that more experienced observers like AllanW and David have joined me in keeping an eye on the Dungeness Coppers I think in time we will get a clearer picture of just what kind of aberrations appear amongst this population and their frequency.

Hi B'Saurus, good to hear from you! You make a very good point: Small Coppers are indeed a highly mobile animal. Certainly from what I've seen of them over the last few years it's clear that although the males will hold their territories for some days, nonetheless they do move about a lot and I've often thought of the Dungeness population as being rather like tea leaves swirling about in a tea pot! Sometimes I'll see a Copper come whizzing in, stop for a few seconds and then go shooting off and I'll think "You're on a mission!". I always hope they go off and start a new colony.

Today at Dungeness was breezy and often rather dull but we had good warm sunny spells so Coppers were easy to come by



Although numbers are dwindling



Most noticeable were boldly marked females



And I came upon a nice fresh one



I was happy to see a Holly Blue



And this magnificent Volucella zonaria



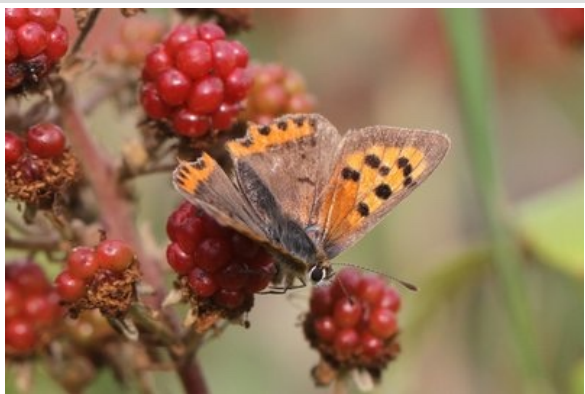
I watched a male perform the Stalk Dance and saw several females decline the advances of lusty male Coppers. During one such failed courtship I saw how the male introduced himself to the female with a brief flutter of his fore wings. It's something I've noticed before and reminds me of those distant more chivalrous days when, out of courtesy, a gentleman would always bow to a lady before speaking to her.

I also watched this Copper



You can see that the proboscis is extended. It was dry underfoot and I can only guess that this Copper had detected a drop or two of dew caught somewhere on this thistle's spiny surface (something I've seen before).

I find the combination of Blackberries and Small Coppers irresistible





They just go perfectly together!

Today's Copper-O-Meter reading : 75



### Re: Hoppers

by Goldie M, 11-Sep-16 10:05 AM GMT

Every time I look at your posts Hoppers, just when I think I've seen lot's of Copper's , you come up with some thing special , your group of Copper's shot is great, especially when most of us are lucky to see one, fantastic 😊  
The Copper's on the red Berries are lovely they look so delicate, some shots I think you can to look back on through the coming Winter 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoppers

by Hoppers, 11-Sep-16 02:52 PM GMT

Thanks Goldie, I know what you mean about stocking up on butterfly images to help get through Winter! I try to cram in as many Small Copper photos as I can!

It was glorious at Dungeness today : unbroken warm sunshine and dead calm. I was delighted to see that the fourth brood of Small Coppers is now beginning to emerge





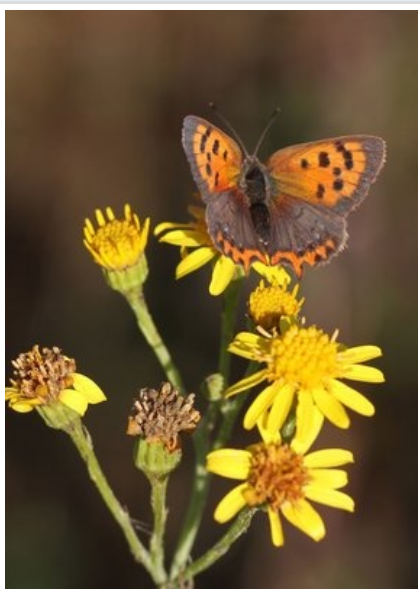
Contrast the third brood Copper on the left with the fresh male on the right



He was the only fresh male that I saw today, all of the other fourth brood members were female (and that's something which may be of interest when I tell you about something else that happened later on in my visit)

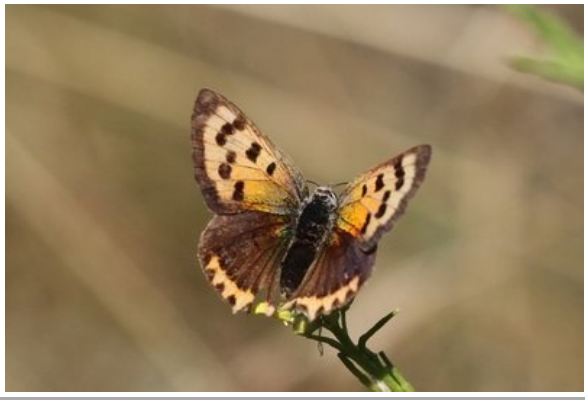
In all I counted 78 Small Coppers





I also saw a very pale Copper that looked white to the eye but which you can see had a faint orange hue





I was lucky to come across a mating pair: a fairly tatty third brood male ( getting on for 21 days old I'd guess ) and a pristine female fourth brood that almost certainly had emerged today. They were being harassed by a male



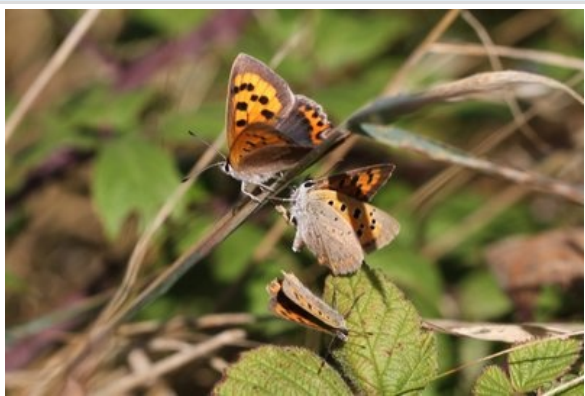
This interloper was clearly younger (judging by his condition ) than the male that had successfully mated. I wonder if the emergence of female Coppers is timed to occur towards the end of the previous brood and thus ensure that it will be the genes of the stronger males (which have survived the longest) that will be passed on?

The interloper made a through nuisance of himself, repeatedly attempting to mate with the already coupled female





When the mated pair eventually parted, the interloper pursued the deflowered female and as I hope you can see from these blurry photos, she immediately reacted to him by going into the "Turkey Strut"







I found the pair after they had coupled but the time that elapsed from that point to when they parted was 24 minutes. Of that time they were harassed by the younger male for 22 minutes!

Mated females are the constant subject of attention. It must be very energy consuming! Here's another female dealing with a male



Look at her posture



No wonder I find the behaviour of these wonderful butterflies so fascinating!



### Re: Hoggers

by Butterflysaurus rex, 11-Sep-16 03:06 PM GMT

Great stuff Hoggers, I don't recall ever seeing a mating pair of Small Coppers at least not with a camera on me. It's always fascinating to observe the courtship behaviour of different species. You make me want to visit Dungeness to see what we used to enjoy here.

ATB

James

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 11-Sep-16 05:50 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Some brilliant observations there Hoggers, as you say it looks like the fourth brood are just starting to emerge, I saw around 20 At Dungie first thing, mis-timed my start

too early at 7 Am, although the sun was up and reasonably warm, it wasn't warm enough! mostly in a warn state with as you say, one or two fresh gems, you may be interested to know, that Birchett and Longrope are now turning up some decent Copper counts, after a second visit to Dungie with Lynne (again 20+), we stopped at the Woolpack, Brookland and counted 5 on that walk (+ a singleton in the pub garden!), I then had an hour in Birchett, and counted 8, (9 yesterday), and half an hour in Longrope, and counted 6, and all of these, bar a couple were fresh. Also had two (min) at Brookland regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 13-Sep-16 04:24 PM GMT

Cheers, Allan - I could watch Small Coppers all day long and never get bored!

With such a good weather forecast, James, I prescribe you a visit to Dungeness!

All the best

Hoggers.

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 13-Sep-16 05:24 PM GMT

Fantastic copper's again Hogger's and very interesting too, the females seem to take no stick from the males once they've mated that seems to be the way most of the females react in the species I've seen so far, I particularly like the way the Speckled Wood Female plays dead 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 13-Sep-16 06:33 PM GMT

Hi Hoggers,

Just re-read my reply to you, bit of gobledgook on my behalf, I said I saw 5 Coppers at Brookland (and one in the pub garden) which we did, and then saw 2 at Brookland!

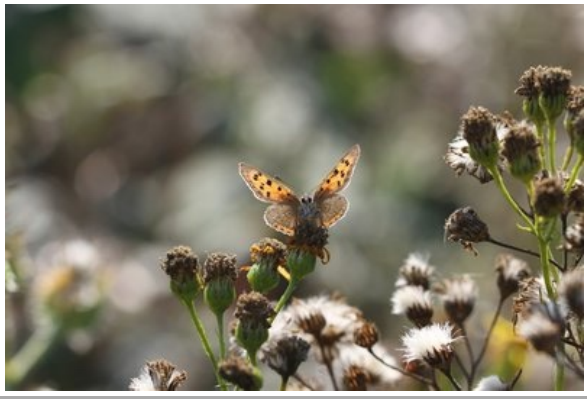
what I meant to say, was 2 (MIN) Clouded Yellows! silly ole ..... Nipped out this late afternoon, and headed to another site In Orlestone, but no go, much too overgrown, passed another site i.d earmarked but that was in full shade + it too looked too overgrown, so ended up at yesterdays spot, the Radiata was still present, in fact it was the only one I saw, until I was actually leaving, and I found another very fresh male, I will try to add some posts as and when I re-visit the sites. regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Hoggers, 21-Sep-16 04:11 PM GMT

It was gloriously warm and sunny at Dungeness. I took my usual walk, accompanied today by my brother. We both felt that the 2016 Small Copper

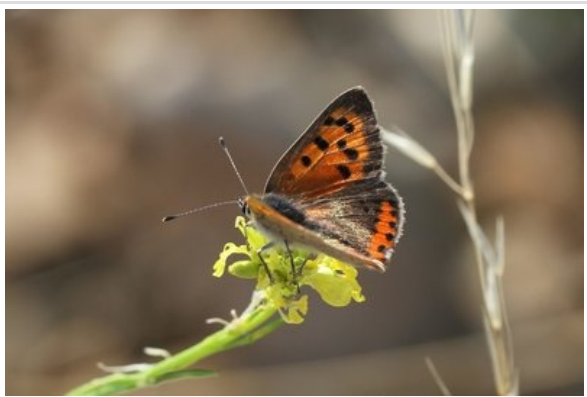
season has moved into its Autumnal stage



Most were tired-looking third brood Coppers with just a few from the fourth brood as yet



Hopefully the number of fresh Coppers will increase soon



It was one of those sleepy kind of days when there seemed to be very little in the way of interaction between the Coppers



They all seemed preoccupied with locating any of the increasingly scarce nectar sources and feeding



I admired this 7-spotted female



And it was fun to watch others enjoying the sunshine



As we walked back to the car we were stopped by two heavily armed Police Officers, both in their manner were very pleasant indeed, but both nonetheless professionally inquisitive as to what we were doing. (I visit Dungeness frequently and often seen police officers on anti-terrorist duties.) They looked like a couple of 25 year olds, but there they were carrying automatic weapons.

"Morning guys" one said, "Lovely day"

I agreed that it was.

"What is it that you're taking such an interest in?" the other asked.

"Don't take this the wrong way" I said " but I'm interested in Small Coppers". They both laughed and I explained what I meant by pointing to a flower with a Small Copper on it

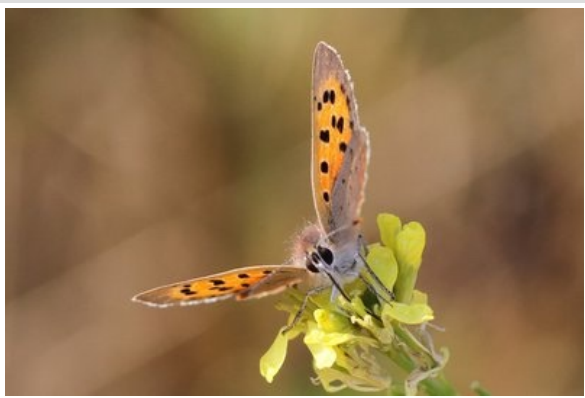
One of the officers was very impressed : "Happy Days!" he said as he looked at the butterfly



I must say it was most strange to see a heavily armed police officer, dressed in an intimidating black combat uniform, on duty, bending down to watch a Small Copper. He was immediately transformed from on first appearances ,a rather unsettling and scary robot, in to a smiling and entranced human being



My Copper count for last thursday was 63 but today only 35



### Re: Hoppers

by David M, 21-Sep-16 08:45 PM GMT

#### Hoppers wrote:

"What is it that you're taking such an interest in?" the other asked.  
"Don't take this the wrong way" I said " but I'm interested in Small Coppers"



Priceless!

Good for you, Hoppers, that you happened upon a 'copper' with a sense of humour!

### Re: Hoppers

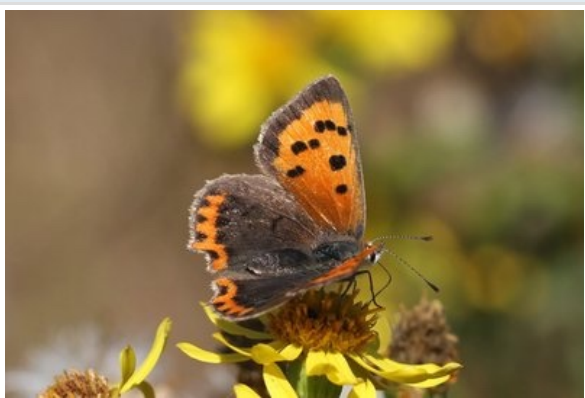
by Hoppers, 23-Sep-16 02:37 PM GMT

Cheers David : both "coppers" were perfectly amiable, so I've no complaints, but I do hope they're presence at Dungeness does not become intrusive ( and I just cannot adjust to seeing live firearms – I find the sight repugnant )

Anyway, on a much lighter note, I returned to Dungeness today to make the most of this wonderful September sunshine



Of the 43 Small Coppers that I came across most were bashed and dented but nonetheless still a respectable few in presentable condition

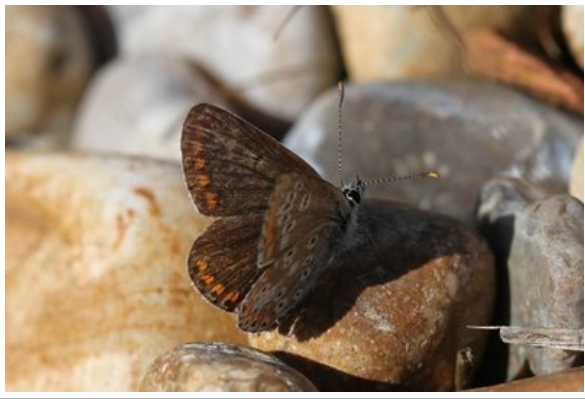




I watched a male perform the Stalk Dance and another try his luck with a female



I saw a Red Admiral, two Painted Ladies, a Large White, several Small Heaths, Common Blues and this Brown Argus



Although the Small Coppers are petering out , Dungeness can still produce the occasional surprise



A gorgeous male radiata



He had clearly established a definite territory for himself



Doubtless taking advantage of near-by sources of nectar



I was able to introduce the reserve warden, David Walker, to this little jewel so if anyone needs help in finding the radiata they just need to ask David



Happy September Days!

## Re: Hoppers

by trevor, 23-Sep-16 03:19 PM GMT

Hi Hoppers,

Good to see the Dungeness Coppers still doing well. I accidentally stumbled upon a large colony at Windover hill, up on the South Downs, whilst looking for Wall Browns this week.

I was aware that this site had Small Coppers, but to see so many was amazing.



Make the most of them, we've a long period of enforced idleness on the way !.  
Trevor.

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 23-Sep-16 08:10 PM GMT

Nice one Hoggers !! how many's that now ? I,d say that one is close to "Oblitera " found an absolutely tiny individual near Littlestone ,with a wingspan no more than 12-15mm,very unusual ,and a Wall Brown in Orlestone,my 1st since 97. Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Allan.W., 23-Sep-16 08:37 PM GMT

Sorry Hogggers !, I meant to say AB;Obseleta. (not Oblitera.) Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Hoggers

by Goldie M, 23-Sep-16 11:26 PM GMT

Hi! Hogger's great your still seeing Copper's, I've not seen any since I saw that one before I left to go on holiday to Kent in August, Still seeing a few Butterflies in my garden though. Goldie 😊

### Re: Hoggers

by David M, 24-Sep-16 09:42 AM GMT

Yet another unusual specimen, Hogggers. It sometimes seems that they outnumber the normal ones.

### Re: Hoggers

by Butterflysaurus rex, 24-Sep-16 06:11 PM GMT

With all of these lovely aberrant Small Coppers you're finding surely it must only be a matter of time before you find yourself an ab.schmidtii Hogggers. They are quite fabulous and an ab I would really love to see... perhaps one day. Until then I shall just have to be content with asking Neil Hulme about the time he saw one.

This is probably the bit where you tell me that you've already seen one (or more) if so please forgive me but I don't remember seeing it in your diary.

Best Wishes

James

### Re: Hoggers

by Hogggers, 29-Sep-16 05:23 PM GMT

Hi guys, thanks for your generous comments, much appreciated.

Looking at this website and all of the diaries it seems that there's been a sudden surge in Coppers - I'ts good to hear that so many are now being seen.

Alas, James, I've never had the pleasure of seeing a schmidtii, The Holy Grail of the Coppers!

Maybe one day...!

All the best

Hoggers

### Re: Hoggers

by Hogggers, 02-Oct-16 04:02 PM GMT

My car dashboard indicated a temperature of 13.5C when I arrived at Dungeness this morning and a lively breeze made it feel that much chillier. But I've been a'Coppering in far less promising conditions and as the morning went on we enjoyed some prolonged sunny spells (it was 19.5C when I left for home)

And anyway,it doesn't take much to get the Coppers going



Just a bit of sunshine will do the trick



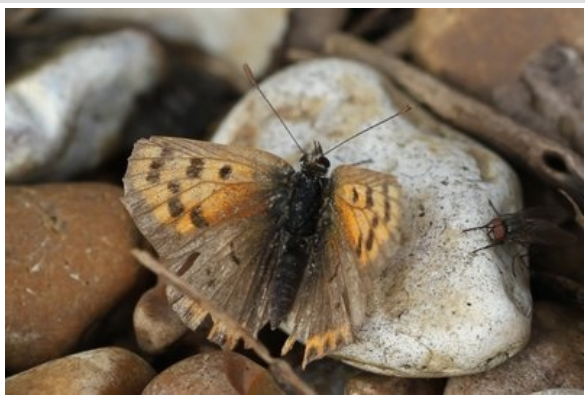
Although they are now rather thin on the ground



I counted only 9 today



And you can judge their condition from the photos



But although we are now approaching the end of the season it is always a delight to see a Small Copper no matter what its condition



And there are still useful observations to be made. I chanced upon two males and when they had a set-to I took some snaps



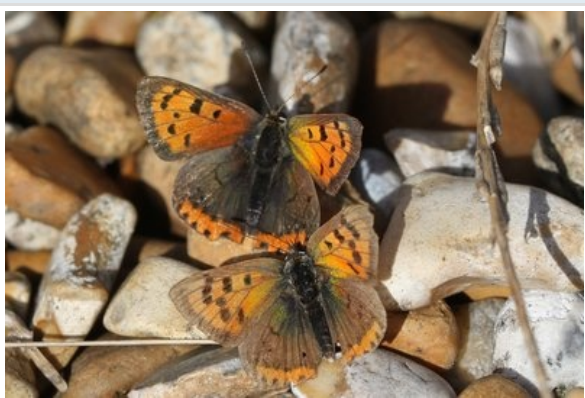
Probably the last duelling Coppers I'll see this year!



But what interested me is what happened when they landed. You can see the paler of the two deliberately crowding the brighter male



He wasn't attempting to mate with the brighter male but he was definitely pushing forward and getting into the other's "personal space"



This is something I've watched before. It's as if the one male is goading the other into taking flight and resuming the duel. But what interested me was the reaction of the other male : he refused to fly and instead he would give the briefest of flutter of his forewings, just a quick shimmy, then walk away from his provoker. It reminded me of the way female Coppers will reject unwanted males (but in the male the behaviour is not nearly so well pronounced).

I think the wing flutter signals "Leave me alone" in Copper semaphore.

Talking of Copper Semaphore: Antennae Down!



I wonder what that means? !

It was good to spend some time at the end of the season with the Coppers of Dungeness

