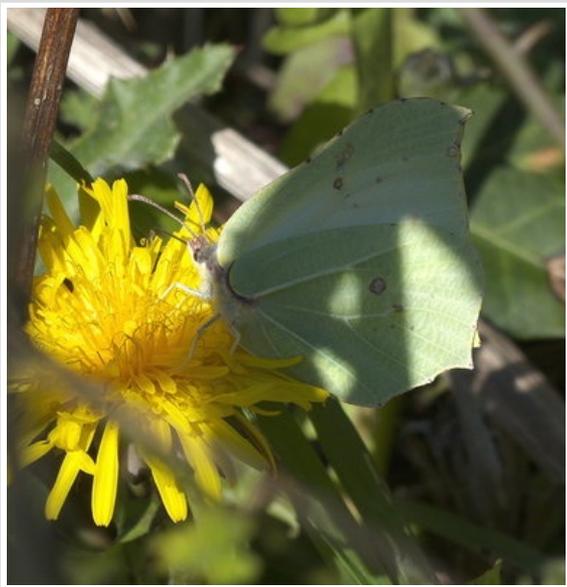


Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 23-Apr-16 09:38 PM GMT

For various reasons it's a bit of a late start for me this year. It was the worst winter ever (in loads of ways), and it's now followed by a spring that has yet to get going properly! Spring butterflies as a result seem to be a bit thin on the ground, at least here in Hampshire. However in spite of this, during the course of several trips the following species were seen.









The Duke of Burgundy took a bit of finding and was the only one seen, and that was at 4pm. The Grizzled Skipper was one of four seen and was the only photographic opportunity, the strong cool wind not to their liking. Also seen but not photographed were Holly Blue and Small White. Red Admiral was the only hibernator not seen.

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 23-Apr-16 10:03 PM GMT

Welcome back Mike – some smashing shots there 😊. No doubt we will run into one another soon.

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 23-Apr-16 10:11 PM GMT

Lovely stuff, hopefully this current cold snap will be the last we'll see of winter for several months and the season can get going properly!

Re: Maximus

by David M, 23-Apr-16 10:48 PM GMT

Good to see you back, Mike, and a nice array of early season images to go with it, especially the Duke.

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 24-Apr-16 06:45 PM GMT

Good to see that you are off the mark, and in style !.
Unfortunately it looks like the weather is going to put Spring on hold, for now.

Looking forward to your new season reports,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 25-Apr-16 07:42 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline 😊 (I'm sure our paths will cross soon), bugboy, David and Trevor. It's good to be back.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 25-Apr-16 10:45 PM GMT

A great array of butterflies Mike, a 'proper' start to the season, none of this dribs and drabs for you 😊🍀

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 10-May-16 03:38 PM GMT

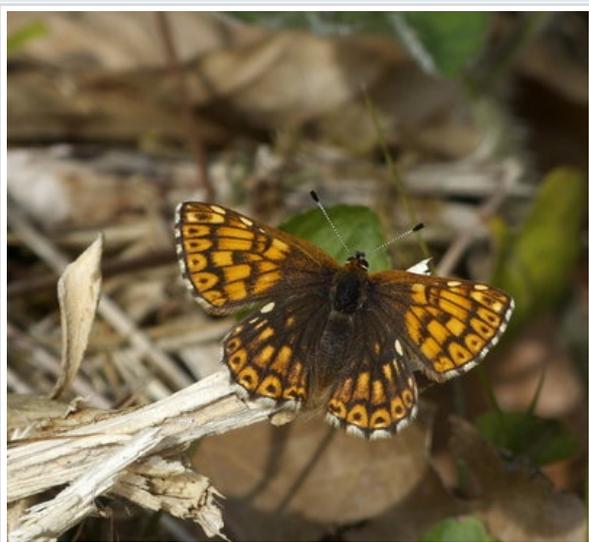
Cheers Wurzel 😊

5th May

After a previous visit to Noar Hill had only afforded us one Duke of Burgundy sighting, we were encouraged by the sudden spell of warm weather to venture out again today to see if any more had emerged there. It was early afternoon by the time we reached the reserve, and with the sun's intense heat and not a cloud in sight we only saw fleeting glances of a couple of passing male Brimstones, clearly intent on finding themselves a mate, and one or two male Orange-tips following suit. Fortunately, when we spotted the first two Dukes they were males defending their territory and were quite content to perch long enough for us to take some pictures.



We were lucky enough to then spot a Duchess settled on a cowslip leaf, but as we approached she took flight and we only just managed to keep her in our sights until she settled again and we were able to take a photo, after which she promptly disappeared. As we continued looking we spotted a second Duchess sat on a blade of grass, and as she seemed fairly settled we were able to take a few pictures before she too flew out of sight.

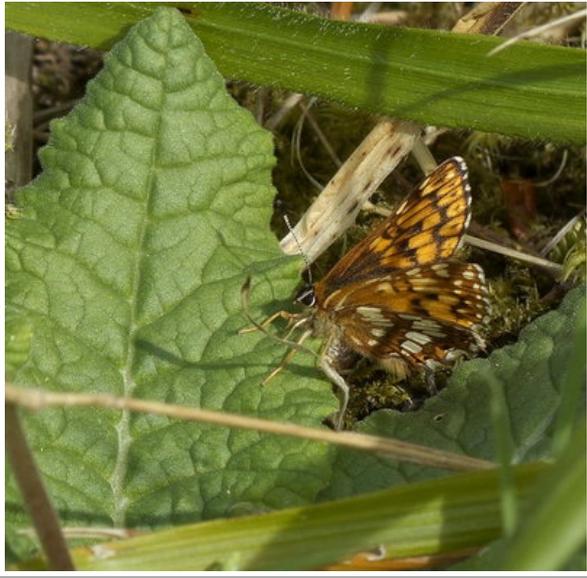




Our third and final Duchess we spotted weaving in and out of the undergrowth with a very persistent male in pursuit. I managed just one shot of them out in the open where the male was clearly trying to mate with her, his abdomen fully curled round towards her. All to no avail, as she rebuffed his advances and took off, leaving the poor Duke staggering around in the grass in search of her.



We watched this same female settle on a cowslip further up the slope and curl her abdomen under a leaf, only then realising why she'd rejected the Duke's advances. When she moved on we took a careful look under the leaf and discovered two shiny white eggs near the edge. A first for us 😊





The Cowslip looked quite ordinary, and was in full sun

In all we saw 12 Dukes throughout the reserve today, 3 of which were females, all looking very fresh.

A little later in the afternoon we stumbled across our first Green Hairstreak of the year posing nicely on a patch of brambles. Although we looked thoroughly it seemed to be a solitary specimen. We also found about half a dozen Dingy Skippers at various spots on our way out of the reserve which finished off our day rather nicely.





Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 10-May-16 05:04 PM GMT

Some great Duke images there with some nice behaviour shots, they all help make the day more memorable 😊

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 10-May-16 05:26 PM GMT

That's what I call a quality day out Mike, with some good finds, and images to match. You did well finding those eggs.

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 10-May-16 08:10 PM GMT

Great Duke shots Mike, wish I'd been as lucky at Gait Barrow, but we had snow last week so things moving slowly up here, the Dingy shot is a great one as well Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 10-May-16 10:10 PM GMT

Beautiful Duchess Mike and great behavioural shots of the egg-laying 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 15-May-16 01:11 PM GMT

Cheers bugboy, it's nice to get different types of shots sometimes.

Cheers Trevor, a quality day at Noar it was and finding the eggs was a bonus.

Thank you Goldie, you'll get them in the end, if the weather improves of course 😊

Thanks Wurzel, just got lucky with the egg-laying 😊

12th May

A visit to Heyshott Escarpment today upped our species total by five, to seventeen.



Red Admiral



Green-veined White



Small Heath



Pearl-bordered Fritillary



Brown Argus

The Cowslips did not appear to be as abundant as they were last year, however we saw about fifteen Dukes, all males, with most showing signs of wear.



Dainty Skippers were quite numerous and we also saw two Grizzled Skippers.



However the beautiful Green Hairstreaks stole the show!



Re: Maximus

by Neil Freeman, 15-May-16 05:45 PM GMT

Hi Mike,

Just catching up on your recent posts, some great reports and superb photos, particularly those Green Hairstreaks 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 15-May-16 05:45 PM GMT

Those Greenies are picture perfect! 🍷

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 15-May-16 06:37 PM GMT

I am green with envy over your Green Hairstreak shots Mike 🍷 -Oh, and the rest of them aren't half bad either 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 15-May-16 10:08 PM GMT

Indeed a mighty collection of which the Greenies top the bill 😊 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 16-May-16 04:47 PM GMT

Fantastic shots of all the Butterflies Max, I'm envious 🍷 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

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

I'm most envious, Maximus. You seem to have had a veritable blitz of species.

Make the most of them, and while you're at it keep looking forward to the next batch of emerges.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 03-Jun-16 11:30 AM GMT

Thanks, Neil, bugboy, Pauline, Wurzel, Goldie and David 😊

We have recently returned from our annual pilgrimage to the Isle of Wight where we spent a few days getting our much needed Glanville Fritillary fix. Luckily, this year the weather was much more obliging during our chosen week than it had been in previous years, although the persistent strong breeze made getting decent photos challenging! Over the past few years we've been fortunate enough to find up to about a dozen Glanvilles, mostly along the sheltered coastline at Wheelers Bay, this year however a walk along this stretch of coastline gave us a count of 41 Glanvilles, far exceeding our expectations!





Wheeler's Bay

Our second day we decided to explore the south-west coast, stopping at various places along the Military Road. In one particular spot where there was an abundance of thrift we counted no less than a hundred Glanvilles. There were probably many more than this, but too many to count..It was a real Glanvillefest! We sometimes observed small groups of them in hot pursuit of each other, often being carried over the cliff edge by the strong breeze, only to reappear seconds later to nectar momentarily on the thrift before repeating the whole process again. Couldn't help but be in awe of their amazing flying abilities in such conditions. We also saw a number of mating pairs and several freshly emerged females being constantly pestered by interested males. It would appear the emergence is ongoing and numbers have not yet reached their peak.



Glanville heaven







A beautiful darkly marked female



And this lovely ab!

The rest of our week to follow in my next post....

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 03-Jun-16 08:18 PM GMT

I've enjoyed the Glanville's at Hutchinson's Bank this season, but there's nothing like seeing them in their natural habitat. A similar AB to yours was seen by some at HB. Great images, Mike.

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Paul Harfield, 04-Jun-16 08:52 AM GMT

Hi Mike
Gorgeous Glanvilles 😊

Re: Maximus

by kevlings, 04-Jun-16 04:48 PM GMT

Maximus,

41 Glanvilles! That's quite a haul, well done. Love the photos and that *ab* looks stunning.

Regards Kev

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 04-Jun-16 05:22 PM GMT

Some great shots there Mike 📷 Actually, you can have another 2 of those 📷 just for being on the Island! Surely that dark female has to be an ab. too??? I love the shot of the Glanville with the scenery in the background – very Padfield-esque 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 04-Jun-16 10:37 PM GMT

That sounds just fantastic Mike – to see so many Glanvilles 📷 😊 Beautiful shots as always too!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 06-Jun-16 12:49 AM GMT

Thanks, Trevor, you got some great shots of Glanvilles at HB, but it is fantastic to see them flying around the crumbling cliffs of the Isle of Wight. That's interesting that a similar ab was seen at HB.

Thanks Paul, they are gorgeous butterflies 😊 we were lucky to see so many.

It was quite a haul, Kev. glad you like the pics, the ab was stunning!

Thanks for the greenies, Pauline 😊 you would have loved it there 😊 I guess she could be an ab?

It was out of this world, Wurzel, surrounded by all those Glanvilles 😊

5th June

Having not seen one of these this year....until now...



...just like buses two arrived in our garden today 😊😊



Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 08-Jun-16 02:47 PM GMT

Continuing with the posting from our Isle of Wight trip.

Small Blues appear to be having a very good year, and on the sites we visited we found them in very good numbers. This year we also found them on sites that we hadn't seen them on last year, some without any apparent Kidney Vetch present!





Adonis Blues did not appear to be present in the numbers we saw last year. Perhaps their main emergence was later this year, but we still saw a couple of fresh ones.



Sharing a perch with a Brown Argus

Common Blue numbers, at least for us, were down on last year too, but those we saw were stunning.



Almost as brightly coloured as an Adonis.

Brown Argus were present in good numbers as always with some lovely marked specimens.



A lousy shot but a brightly marked Brown Argus

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 08-Jun-16 03:18 PM GMT

You're doing well with the abs. this season Mike 🍷 I've just looked at the species page and there is a couple of examples very similar to your Brown Argus under the unspecified aberrations section.

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 08-Jun-16 03:43 PM GMT

Hi Mike,
Your image of the Adonis Blue and Brown Argus sharing a perch is a real gem.
Right place, right moment, to the second !.

Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 08-Jun-16 04:49 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Mike, I second Trevor on that photo it's great. Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-16 10:40 PM GMT

A beautiful set of Blues Mike especially that stunningly marked BA 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 11-Jun-16 02:46 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline, yes I've now seen those on the species page and it's quite similar.

It's pure luck, Trevor, as always, they were fighting again shortly after.

Thanks Goldie 😊

Thanks Wurzel, if only I could have got a better shot but it flew off into the distance, never to be seen again 😊

Final part of our Isle of Wight trip.

We saw our first Large Skipper of the year at Compton Bay and then several more at other locations.



Dingy skippers appeared to be in good numbers in the usual sites along the south coast of the island.



Grizzled Skippers were less common than Dingys but those we saw were in fine condition. Quite a bit of variation in both species.





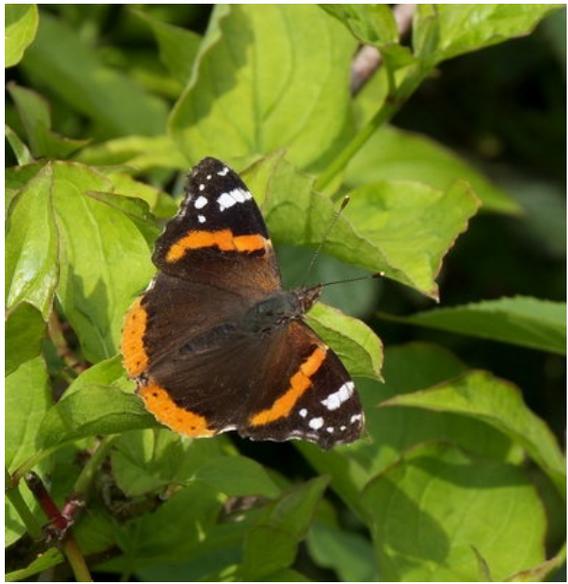
There were not as many Green Hairstreaks as in 2015 and they were showing various states of wear.



During a visit to Brading Down we saw quite a few first brood Holly Blues, three Red Admirals and a single Wall Brown. The Down appeared to have become a bit overgrown since last year, particularly at the bottom of the Down, where we saw most butterflies in 2015.



Holly Blue ovipositing on Dogwood



The best and only shot we could get of this Wall

At one point, while we were watching dogfights between the Small Blues, Common Blues and Brown Argus, a small dark butterfly parted from the melee and landed on an Alkonet plant at my feet. Taking a closer look I saw it was a Small Copper, only it looked a little different from the norm. Looking at the couple of shots I got of it on my camera's LCD screen confirmed that it was an ab!





ab. radiata?

Having only seen three Small Coppers in total during our visit what were the chances of one of those being an ab?

Re: Maximus

by Hoggers, 11-Jun-16 03:40 PM GMT

Hi Maximus, that Copper is just drop dead gorgeous!

Congratulations on a fantastic find!

Best wishes,

Hoggers

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 13-Jun-16 08:30 PM GMT

That's a great looking ab Mike. It's like a much chunkier ab. radiata 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 14-Jun-16 06:06 PM GMT

That's a great looking Copper 🍷 , like Wurzel says, very chunky looking hindwing spots

Re: Maximus

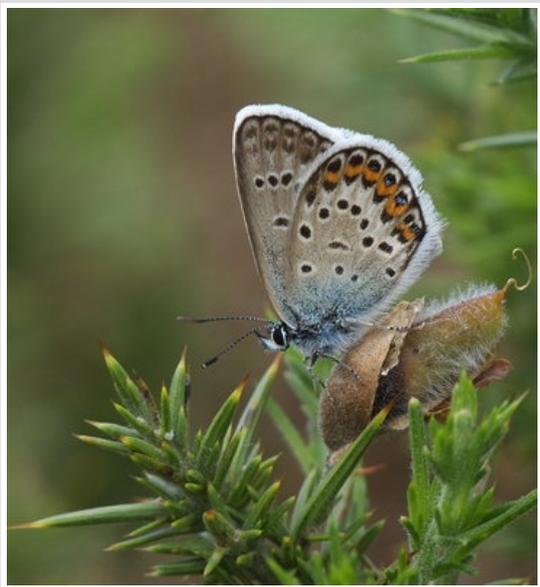
by Maximus, 24-Jun-16 01:14 AM GMT

Thanks Hoggers, glad you liked the Copper, I know you've seen a few 😊 which makes you a very good judge 😊

Thanks Wurzel, a chunky radiata it was 😊 and I was lucky to spot it.

Thanks bugboy, it was a bit unusual and would have looked even better when it was really fresh 😊

We have recently made three trips to our local Silver-studded Blue site, which is a late site for this species. This was borne out during our first visit when we failed to find any SSB's. On our second visit five days later we found about half a dozen males, all appeared to be very freshly emerged. The timing for the third visit on 17th June was spot on and we really hit the jackpot as, not only were there lots more males, but the females had finally emerged too. There was plenty of activity as the males were intent on finding freshly emerged females, and during our visit we found four mating pairs.







The beautiful females showed plenty of variation in their upperwing markings.







Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 24-Jun-16 03:23 PM GMT

Lovely Blues Max, Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

by Neil Freeman, 24-Jun-16 08:00 PM GMT

A beautiful series of Silver-studded Blue images Mike 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 21-Jul-16 01:12 AM GMT

Thank you Goldie and Neil 😊

We've been planning to make the pilgrimage to Fermyn Woods for a few years now, but each year when the time came round we didn't go and so missed our opportunity for another year. Sunday 17th July this year, however, saw us speeding round the M25 (well not actually speeding) with surprisingly light traffic, on our way to that Mecca. I read the report of your trip you made on the same day, Goldie – surprised we didn't bump into you. Nice report and photos BTW 😊 I've also seen the reports and superb PE photos by Trevor, Pauline, Katrina, bugboy and Mike Oxon too, which are enough to spur anyone on! Anyway, we nearly didn't go as Cathy, perhaps more than me, hates crowded sites, and as we have had several bad experiences this year, similar to the reported Bentley Wood fiasco, this has put us right off, hence my lack of posts. Arriving at Fermyn around 11am we headed for Lowick, parked by the church, and set off to walk in from the south end, hopefully avoiding the crowds. We took our time walking up the track which had lots of distractions in the way of various butterflies and birds. We hadn't even reached the wood when I spotted the familiar shark's fin shape of a grounded Emperor. We approached cautiously, but didn't need to as the Emperor was well and truly imbibing on a tasty morsel. We got some closed wing shots, but it wasn't until he flew along the track landing near a puddle that he opened his wings showing us his purple sheen. He wasn't a fresh specimen, but who cares when he shows you that much purple 😊 As we were taking some open wing

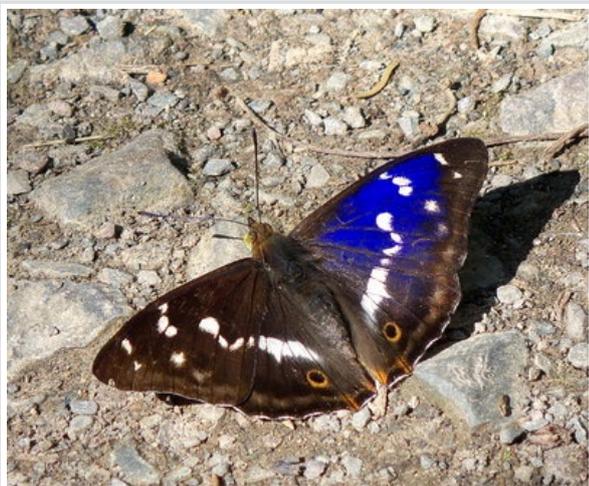
shots we heard some approaching cyclists, but to our amazement they saw us, stopped and asked if we'd finished taking our photos. We told them we'd finished and thanked them for their patience, and as they cycled past the Emperor he flew up and around them before once again landing on the track.



Tatty but still nice

Although we walked along the track to where you cross from Lady Wood to Fermyn we saw no further Emperors and very little else. A few SW Fritillaries and Commas with various Whites being the most abundant species. We also saw very few people, especially for a Sunday! We also heard through the grapevine that only a couple of PEs had been seen on the ground during the day.

We stayed at a hotel nearby on Sunday night, and the following morning drove up the lane by the gliding club only to find loads of parked cars in the layby and along the verge! People were still arriving as we set off up the track, which was still shaded at this time. We had just rounded the first bend in the track when we were buzzed by a PE, it was fantastic to see him gliding around at waist height investigating us. He obviously wasn't bothered by our presence as he then proceeded to land right next to us. What a marvelous experience it was 😊 We waited for him to settle and as we took some shots we were joined by some other photographers. No one rushed or pushed, everyone was chilled and enjoying the experience. Very refreshing. We chatted for a while and then moved on only to find another PE on the ground a bit further down the track. At one point three were being photographed at the same time on the same stretch of track.





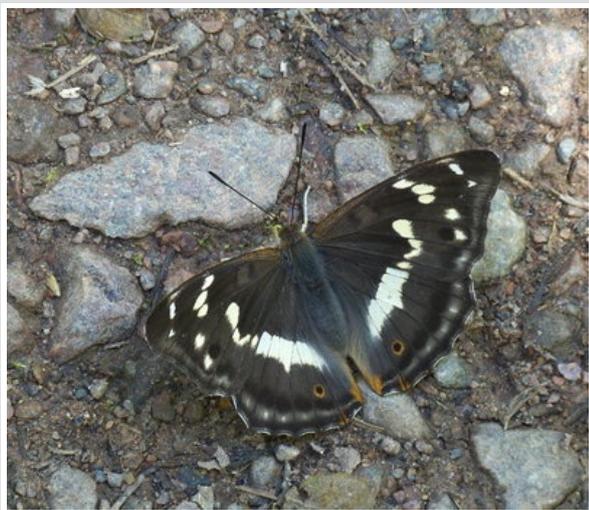
Emperor on the ground just in front of the shadow





Three Emperors on the ground

We carried on along the track seeing two more grounded Emperors and others in flight, until we got to the point in Lady Wood that we had reached the day before. As it was so hot we decided to retrace our route back to the entrance as we had left our water in the car. We hadn't gone very far when an Emperor suddenly appeared and began flying in circles around us before deciding to land on Cathy's shoe. I went to take a shot but was too late as the butterfly took flight and landed nearby on the ground. Once again we allowed it time to settle before slowly approaching, where to our great surprise and joy we found it was an Empress sitting on the ground with her wings open.





This was an amazing first for us and she stayed long enough to allow other photographers to also get some shots. To finish off our trip we made a slight detour into Sudborough to see the house where BB had lived. Perhaps he helped to boost the population of PE's at Fermyn as I believe he reared them in the garden of his home. If Fermyn is below par this year we'd love to visit it when it's at it's best.

Re: Maximus

by Pauline, 21-Jul-16 06:43 AM GMT

Great shots of the Empress Mike. I've only ever seen one before – some might recall she was tempted down by the dead deer at the Straits. Sounds like you both had a smashing time 🍷 and good to see you posting again (don't let a few bad experiences put you off 😊😄)

Re: Maximus

by bugboy, 21-Jul-16 09:15 PM GMT

That sounds (and looks) like an absolute dream trip. I had 4 grounded on my day there last week and like you say if this is a poor year...

Jut going to throw a 🍷 at you for the empress!

Re: Maximus

by Paul Harfield, 21-Jul-16 11:00 PM GMT

Hi Mike

Great 'feel good' post and superb photos 😊. Looks like you had a fantastic couple of days 😊

Re: Maximus

by Neil Freeman, 22-Jul-16 08:29 PM GMT

Hi Mike,

Great report from Fermyn, I have not managed to make it there this year, shameful really as it is only a 90 minute drive for me but I have been a few times in previous years. As you say, Fermyn may be performing below par but it is all relative and I think people were a bit 'spoiled' by the 100+ sightings in a day of 3 years ago.

I am like you in that I try to avoid busy sites but at Fermyn it doesn't seem to matter, everyone I have ever met there has always been most polite and behaved impeccably. If only it was so elsewhere.

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 22-Jul-16 10:38 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Mike 🤔👍 I really am going to have to bite the bullet and make a visit there next year, it looks so easy there! Bentley did produce Emperors for me this year but I missed the grounded ones 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 23-Jul-16 10:49 AM GMT

Hi! Mike, I don't know how we missed you at Ferymn, I was the lady in the Striped hat if you saw me and didn't know 😊

We only stayed one night and went home the following day my Husband enjoys the outings but is not quite the enthusiast that I am 😊 being has I'd got what I went there for we decided to go home because of the heat plus the fact he'd not been too well lately.

When we arrived at Fermyn we went to the part of the Woods facing the the Gliding club, and were lucky to get a spot near the entrance on the grass verge, we didn't go into Lady Wood at all spending all our time at Fermyn because that's where all the activity was 😊

Your photos are great and I've seen the Empress only once a side view in Dean Woods Kent, so you were lucky seeing her and open winged too, wish we'd met you Goldie 😊

Re: Maximus

by trevor, 23-Jul-16 03:34 PM GMT

A fantastic visit to Fermyn, Mike. Lovely shots to take home too.

I had great success with male Emperors this year, but you managed an Empress as well 🤔 .

We had a small gathering of fellow hunters, mostly regulars and all were great company.

Best wishes,

Trevor.

Re: Maximus

by Maximus, 01-Aug-16 02:07 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline, we got lucky with the Empress, I guess it's just right place right time 😊😊

It was magic, bugboy, I saw your report and lovely photos taken during your Fermyn visit and it sounded like you had a dream trip too, and in good company 😊

Thanks Paul, it was a great first visit to Fermyn 😊 you really should try to get up there next year 😊

Thanks Neil, I've seen your past reports and photos from your visits to Fermyn, it's the stuff of dreams 😊 It certainly is all relative and I agree with you, if only it was so elsewhere.

Thanks Wurzel, bite it and get up there next year 😊 it is easy and it's also very relaxed, you'll have a great time 😊

Hi Goldie, I think we missed you because you popped off home in the morning, it was pretty hot! I agree with you that a lot of the action was taking place in Fermyn. Nice Emperor photos BTW 😊

Thanks Trevor, I saw your reports and great photos of your success with Emperors this year, excellent stuff 😊 Glad that the company was good too.

A recent trip to Denbies to look for our first Chalkhill Blues of the year was very productive with plenty of both male and females on the wing in the warm sun. Also seen were Small and Essex Skippers, Marbled Whites, a couple of Common Blue males and a faded Dark Green Fritillary. Although we looked for SS Skippers we only got brief glimpses of a couple and were unable to get any shots of them!



Lovely female Chalkhills



Including this lovely female ab.



Underside



Upperside

Re: Maximus

by millerd, 01-Aug-16 08:29 PM GMT

A nice selection of Chalkhills from Denbies, Mike, especially the fresh females. Always a reliable spot too for aberrant undersides on both sexes. Hopefully, I'll get down there this coming weekend when the bicycles have relinquished their hold on the roads! 😊

Dave

Re: Maximus

by David M, 02-Aug-16 08:53 PM GMT

You've had a productive couple of weeks, Mike, and I've enjoyed your reports.

Great stuff.

Re: Maximus

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-16 11:11 PM GMT

Fantastic Chalkhills Mike 😊🍷 I'm using a special toothpaste that strengthens tooth enamel ready to 'bite it' next year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Maximus

by Goldie M, 03-Aug-16 10:02 AM GMT

Hi! Mike, I love the the photo with the '6 Chalkhill Blues it's great. Goldie 😊