

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Feb-16 06:19 PM GMT

I'm sure we'll meet again **Trever**, especially if there's another LTB invasion!

It was **David**, and here's another one 😊

### 3rd February, Bookham Commons

I've been out and about a few times since my last post but I've been in between lenses and the weather has been mostly grey anyway. Last year I got myself a new (second hand) lense, a sigma 105mm which was the only lense I used all year. This year I decided to get a brand new one, partly prompted by chatting with **B'rex** whilst looking for LTB's last year. So yesterday my new Sigma 105mm lense, the f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM Macro Lens arrived. A quieter lense with all the moving parts being internal, no external zooming in and out, it will hopefully be less scary to the butterflies. As luck would have it, it arrived the day before my day off which also seemed to be less rainy or windy than the rest of the week so I thought I should take it out for a test drive.

I wanted to check on the various eggs and cats at Bookham so off I went mid morning and arrived a little after noon under a grey and dreary looking sky,



I didn't hold out much hope for catching an early hibernator on the wing but I waded over to see if the Hairstreak eggs were still around, stopping to watch a couple of Redpoll feeding. Waded because it was mostly ankle deep mud! I found a third Purple Hairstreak egg



but the new one from my last visit had gone, unsurprisingly. Wandering over to check on the Brown Hairstreak eggs they seem to have gone the same way, no sign of them either 😊. I do find it very odd how they've not evolved a dark coloured egg!

My other two PH eggs were still nestled safely in the oak buds though so it's not all doom and gloom!



Strolling through the woods over to White Admiral towers the sun did attempt to come out occasionally, giving the illusion if warmer times to come when it caught some early flowering Cherry.



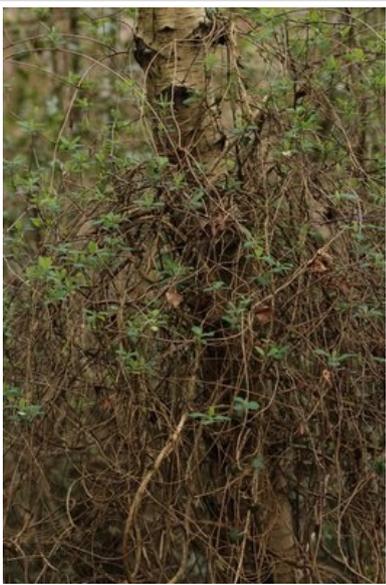
Brian, I'm pleased to say is still snoozing quietly, a few rear end spikes just about visible.



Just to give an idea of how well concealed in plain sight he is here's a more distant shot. The hibernaculum is about 1cm long.



Had to use a narrow depth of field due to the light levels so he's much less obvious in real life in amongst all the swigs and stems. The honeysuckle itself is still in full leaf like my last visit



Over at Stan's place, his hibernaculum is still intact so I can only assume he's still tucked up in there somewhere.



Nearby I found a resting Bronze Shieldbug *Troilus luridus*



That was it for the afternoon, although the sun was starting to come out more I decided to leave early and miss the London rush hour. Only a few more weeks to get through and we'll start seeing a bit of life again on the butterfly front 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 05-Feb-16 03:20 PM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, even seeing some eggs is great, it's getting lighter at night too, won't belong now Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 10-Feb-16 06:32 AM GMT

I'm still trying to catch up Buggy 😊 Some very relevant and current posts thru the Winter. That Comet moth looks particularly impressive and interesting updates from Bookham. I must try to visit there this season inspired by your postings.

### Re: Bugboys mission

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

I'd go for Marsh Tits Buggy - Willow Tits have become very scarce in recent years and that doesn't look 'bullish' enough 😊 Some great pupal and egg shots 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-Mar-16 08:52 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments guys 😊

I've not been out much recently and I'm still waiting to see an adult this year. The last butterfly I saw was back in October!

The weather's only played ball a couple of times on my days off so I've not even been able to do much birding either but here's a few pictures from the past weeks, if only to keep my PD active and so you all know I am still alive!

**11th February, Epping Forest**

a very pleasant stroll on a warm(ish) sunny day and I was quite surprised to find a small flock of Goosander on the lake. The mallard looked rather disgusted at me when I didn't offer it any bread



**24th February, Walthamstow Marshes**

Last week I managed to add to my avian twitching list with a new lifer I've been after for several winters. Every year large flocks of Chaffinch congregate on a local riding schools horse paddock but despite much searching I've never been able to locate any Brambling infiltrating the flock, that was until last Wednesday 😊





If wasn't for some dog walkers and a couple of particularly lively dogs I'd have got much closer 😊

The local winter population of Shelduck seems to grow every year, 15-20 of them lurking on the resevoirs this winter



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Mar-16 10:09 PM GMT

Soon be butterflies Bugboy, we're into March now so hopefully things will start happening... 😊 Nice to see some Brambling 🇩🇪 it's been a couple of years since my last sighting of that species.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Mar-16 09:16 PM GMT

Indeed is is March now Wurzel but I'm still waiting to catch my first sighting. Today was a very sunny day but there was also a rather brisk and chilly northerly wind.

I was actually off sick from work today with a touch on manflu making me feel decidedly lethargic but with the flat upstairs being in the middle of a drastic makeover, there was little chance of a relaxing day lounging around feeling sorry for myself. I decided to get some air and visit a couple of local places.

There was nothing much happening at my local marshes, no sign of the brambling I saw last time so I wandered over to Abney Park. Again no butterflies but at least I was out of the wind. The birds are definately feeling the season though, lots of tits investigating holes for breeding potential and I heard the familiar sound of a woodpecker pecking. He was quite low down and busy with his own hole so I was able to get quite close.





Hope it warms up soon, last years first sighting was on the 7th

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 06-Mar-16 10:28 PM GMT

Great Great Spotted Woody Bugboy 😊 Some butterflies soon would be nice though...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Mar-16 09:25 PM GMT

16th March, Bookham Commons

I've been itching to get out and about with my camera, having had to work all through the recent warm spell. I did hope to finally kick off my season today with a trip to Bookham but cloud cover until mid afternoon combined with an icy north easterly put paid to any hopes of finding a butterfly on the wing. I settled for my usual stop off points checking on cats and eggs whilst keeping tabs on the local birdlife.

My two Purple Hairstreak eggs are still nestled together despite the hoards of Tits that are constantly moving through the canopy.



Next stop off was Brian: Well it would seem the warm weather had awoken him. All I found was an empty sleeping bag! Close inspection reveals a serious amount of silk was used to hold it in place through the winter 🤪. You may notice the dried blade of grass knotted on the stem, this is how I have marked all my eggs and cats over the winter.





I had a good look around to see if I could find him and on the nearest patch of leaves as the crow fly's (or rather as the caterpillar crawls) I did see some freshly nibbled leaves, but despite much careful searching I couldn't locate the culprit. More visits and more careful searches definitely beckon, I've still never seen a White Admiral caterpillar in all its green livery!

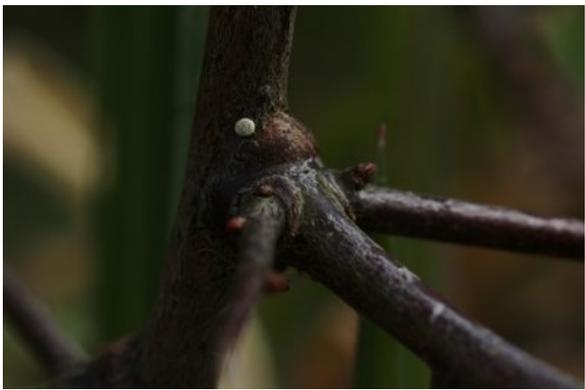
Birdlife was good today, finding 33 species without much effort including a good view of a Firecrest, lots of Marsh Tits and a fleeting glimpse of a couple of Bullfinch. Whilst watching a little Grebe and a couple of Tufted Ducks from a hide a Wren came down for a bath. It saw me move to get it in shot but stayed just long enough for the one snap



I also stumbled across the local Heronry and judging by the remains on the floor (and the noise from up above) we have baby Herons!



There was one last surprise awaiting me, I had another look for Brown Hairstreak eggs and found my original two which I had somehow completely missed on my last visit 😊



I do hope the weather sorts itself out and gives me warm days off soon, it'll be Orange-tip season before I see anything on the wing at this rate! 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 17-Mar-16 08:00 PM GMT

You and me both Buggy but more great shots from Bookham Common, reminding me that a visit there is a must this season 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

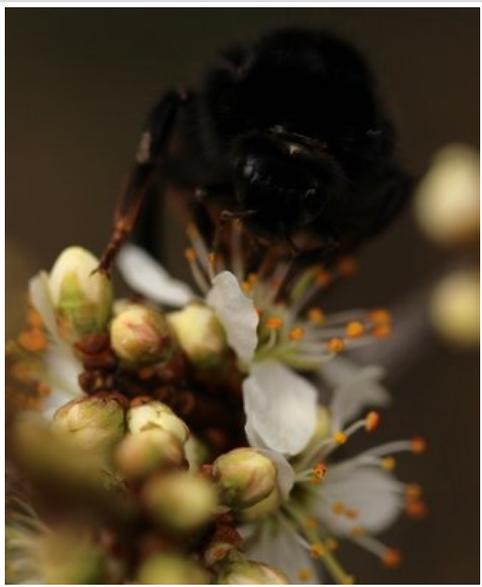
by bugboy, 21-Mar-16 08:24 PM GMT

**21st March, Walthamstow Marshes, the search continues.**

Despite the forecast predicting cloud, cloud and more cloud there was a good amount of blue sky this morning, and not much of a wind giving a rather pleasant springtime feel.



5 hours later I still hadn't seen a butterfly though, the predicted clouds swamping out the blue sky leaving only the occasional glimpse for most of the afternoon. There were plenty of queen Bumblebees buzzing around, giving many fleeting moments of hope and I rescued this lady, frozen in motion, and popped her on some Blackthorn, out of the way from being trodden on where she promptly started to feed.



In contrast to the complete lack of butterflies, there was a lot of birdlife, 49 species sighted today including a Woodcock which I flushed a couple of times. No pictures of him but here's a few others that sat long enough for me for me to sneak up on,



*Goldfinch*



*Meadow Pipit*



*Magpie*



*Mute Swan*



*Fieldfare, listening for worms.*

Whilst watching a Kestrel sat up in a tree, I could see she was focused on something on the ground a short distance in front of me. She dropped down and after some activity out of sight in the undergrowth she flew off with lunch. I managed a few rushed shots as she flew off, good enough to see a Shrew had just prematurely ended its short life...



On one of the reservoirs the local cormorant colony is in full swing, every nest now almost certainly full of very noisy and very hungry chicks.



*Cormorant colony*  
Also buzzing me today, a Chinook



Tomorrow looks slightly more promising, at least in the morning for potential butterfly activity. It's been 145 days since I last saw a native butterfly....not that I'm counting 😊!

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by Pauline, 21-Mar-16 08:36 PM GMT

Fabulous bird shots Buggy – especially the Kestrel and shrew!

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 22-Mar-16 09:49 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline, was just a case of being in the right place at the right time 😊

### 22nd March, Epping forest, still looking

After yesterday's butterfly blank I had real optimism for today, the forecast looked good and leaving the flat under a cloudless sky I could feel the warmth even mid morning. I had good results early last year in Epping Forest with the rides and glades riddled with Peacocks and Commas so I had planned a nice long stroll. I killed the first few hours watching the birds as I waited for temperatures to get up to double figures. There was lots of activity with various species pairing off, investigating potential nest sites and generally getting into the springtime mood.



*Nuthatch*



*Jackdaw clearing out a possible nest site*



*Stock Dove*



*Blue Tit*



*Treecreeper*

By lunchtime I had still not seen anything resembling a butterfly. A couple of angry Blue Tits did add a bit of excitement to proceedings, falling from the Oak I was passing and landing a few feet away from me...I wonder who won, looked like a pretty even match?



Still in search of a butterfly I made my way to a small patch of heath land in the middle of the wood which proved very productive last year. Nothing much showed itself, a few snakes were heard slithering into the Heather as I passed and A Beefly appeared asking for a photo shoot.



It was as I stood from him up that I finally saw a butterfly, a Comma buzzed me briefly and then flew up into a tree, giving me no chance to obtain photographic evidence. A few minutes later I missed a second chance by nearly stepping on one... and so ended the butterfly action for the day!

I spent the rest of the afternoon birdwatching including half an hour stalking a pair of Kingfisher around a small lake



*Mallards*



*Mandarin Ducks*



*Kingfishers*



*A classic view of a Green Woodpecker disappearing up a tree!*

At least I'm finally off the mark now, even if I am yet to get a picture this year!

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by Wurzel, 23-Mar-16 11:00 PM GMT

Great news that you're off the mark Buggy! 😊 Great shots of the Treecreepers and I reckon the Blue Tit on the right won, the other is certainly on the back foot.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 02-Apr-16 08:00 PM GMT

#### **2nd April, Aldbury Nowers... Butterfly photos at last!**

My first day of a week off from work and it seems the weather is on my side for once. During the week a friend from work, who had just bought a new car, asked if I wanted to go somewhere so instantly I provided a list of butterfly friendly locations, complete with suitable attractions to also keep said friend occupied. Tring (with its Natural History museum) was the chosen destination with the nearby Nature Reserve awaiting my first visit of the year.

My first sighting of the day was seen as we drove into Tring, with me excitedly pointing as a yellow butterfly fluttered across the road in front of us, my friend rolling her eyes at me as I did so 😊

Once we'd had a browse round the museum we decided to look for a pub to grab a meal before setting off for the butterfly hunt. Several more Brimstones were fluttering around the town and I also got the year's first sighting of a Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell with a couple of flybys.

After a quiet start at the reserve I saw a Peacock land on a chalk scrape. It was some distance away with a fence between me and it so after a quick record shot I darted along to the stile to get closer..... only to find it had buggered off by the time I relocated the spot 😊 .



Brimstones were either numerous or one male was following us and I managed to grab some shots during one of the closer flybys but nothing more settled long enough for me to get anything better. Still at least I actually have some evidence of seeing something at last and I've finally ticked off all the adult hibernators.



I promise better quality pictures next time 😊😊😊

So in the absence of more butterflies, here's some springtime flowers just to bulk out this post 😊



## Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 03-Apr-16 05:02 PM GMT

Good to see you got of the mark at last Buggy! Love the shot of the Brimstone as it is possibly the typical Spring shot 😊

Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Apr-16 06:55 PM GMT

Indeed it is Wurzel!

3rd April, Walthamstow Marshes

After a long wait my local patch finally came up with the goods today. The first few sightings were ones that saw me first, a couple of Peacocks and a comma vanishing over the Bramble before I finally found a sitter, a Small Tort, who allowed a few shots before he too vanished.



Next came another Comma, a female who was very accommodating...



And so was a second who settled a foot away



Exploring further I was pleased to see several more of all three Vanessids although none settled for me.

I was also pleased to see, fluttering up ahead, a White. It was fairly busy today with joggers, dog walkers and families enjoy a Sunday stroll so I had to wait a while before it settled long enough to get in range and ID it. A Small White living up to his name, being noticeably smaller than normal.



A found another Tort who rather annoyingly would only settle on the wrong side of a fence



then further along I noticed two greenish 'blobs'. A pair of Green Woodpeckers who seemed rather over confident in their mimicry talents.



When the male finally lost his bottle at my steady approach the female slipped down and tried to hide...



Twenty minutes later I found myself in the company of another Comma, gorging himself on Blackthorn nectar, oblivious to me.





To round of a great day I nabbed a few Peacock shots before a nosy dog ran over and scared it off.



Such a relief to actually get off the mark properly!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 03-Apr-16 07:54 PM GMT

You're off at last, Buggy, and a worthwhile haul too.

I was hoping yesterday that the Commas and Peacocks would nectar on Blackthorn, very photogenic, as your images prove.

All the best ,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 04-Apr-16 11:00 AM GMT

Looks like you had a cracking day Bugboy and now that I'm able to get out and see them the weather has gone bad - checking the Apps it seems that this could be it for a fortnight 😞 Let's hope they're wrong (as usual)...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 04-Apr-16 01:06 PM GMT

Lovely Comma shots Buggy - they look really velvety. Best shot for me tho' is the Green Woodpeckers - fantastic!! I could not even tell you the number of years I have tried to get a shot (any sort of shot 😊) of just one of those birds 🐦🐦 Excellent!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Apr-16 08:15 PM GMT

Thanks Trevor, it's good to finally get off the mark, even if the rest of my week off is looking like a washout 😞 (tomorrow excepted)

Yes it was a good day thanks Wurzel and yes lets hope the're wrong... but they rarely get it wrong this way round, only when sun is predicted and you

leave the house without a coat... 😊

Thanks **Pauline**. I wasn't expecting to get that close to those Woodpeckers, normally such nervy birds but they did seem to think they were invisible extensions to the posts!

**4th April**

With a typical April 'pic 'n' mix' weather forecast for the day I stayed local and had another little wander round my local patch. Just an hour and I managed to miss the showers. I heard my first Willow Warblers of the year and the Blackcaps have re-appeared in full voice. Unlike the over wintering Chiffchaff's, which I see and hear chiffchaffing all winter, the Blackcaps seem to just vanish even though I know they must be lurking somewhere in the undergrowth.

As for butterflies I only flushed a couple of Peacocks this time, of which only one was willing to settle. He'd been putting his eye spots to good use!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 04-Apr-16 09:22 PM GMT

Steady there Buggy, your Butterfly sightings are starting to get regular ! 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurus rex, 05-Apr-16 06:34 PM GMT

Hi Buggy,

Good to see you've found plenty of Commas, I've only seen 2 down here so far, as I recall I struggled to find some last spring as well. Perhaps the conditions locally are not favouring them. It's puzzling because they used to be quite numerous here. These things can be cyclical, maybe I'm seeing the low point before the rebound.

It's easy to take these 'common' species for granted but when they are absent you quickly miss them.

Hope to see you out & about again this season.

ATB

James

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Apr-16 06:57 PM GMT

{quote}Steady there Buggy, your Butterfly sightings are starting to get regular ! 😊 That's the plan Trevor 😊

**Butterflysaurus rex wrote:**

Hi Buggy,

Good to see you've found plenty of Commas, I've only seen 2 down here so far, as I recall I struggled to find some last spring as well. Perhaps the conditions locally are not favouring them. It's puzzling because they used to be quite numerous here. These things can be cyclical, maybe I'm seeing the low point before the rebound.

It's easy to take these 'common' species for granted but when they are absent you quickly miss them.

Hope to see you out & about again this season.

ATB

James

Hopefully they'll rebound near you. Last year was a good for them near me and this year is looking just as good, I had another good dose of Comma action today 😊

I know what you mean about absent common species, Small Coppers and Common Blues were unusually hard to come by on my local patch last year, worryingly so 😞

I'm quite sure we'll bump into each other again once all the spring species start emerging en force in a few weeks time 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Apr-16 12:12 PM GMT

### 5th April part 1, Bookham Commons

The plan for the day was a morning at Bookham followed by an afternoon over at Box Hill, making the most of what is probably the last decent day for a while. The usual stop off points at Bookham to find my Hairstreak eggs (all present and correct) and to see if I could re-locate the White Admiral cats (no luck) whilst seeing if I could find anything on the wing. It was still early but the sun was warming the air nicely and there were a few flying around, Peacocks from what I could tell but nothing settled for an hour or so until I managed to tic of species 6 of the year, a Red Admiral. He settled just long enough to grab one long distant, over exposed shot before vanishing as I fiddled with my camera settings.



I did hang around for a while since this was the same area I'd seen my blue spotted ab. late last year and I wondered whether it was the same one. Sadly it never re-appeared but I did find a Comma who was camera shy and get a Brimstone flyby.

I didn't see anything else until I was leaving, a couple of male Brimstones were having a brief tussle by one of the car parks and as a cloud passed over one fell to the ground. I took my chance and managed to get a few photos before the sun re-appeared and he flew off up into a Sallow laden with catkins.



As I watched him I realised there were at least 6 Brimstones feeding from it, mostly high up but occasionally one would flutter down close enough for a picture 😊.



Next stop Box Hill... at least that was the plan until my train got cancelled 🙄. They run only once an hour and with some dark clouds making it seem decidedly chilly I decided to call it a day, Box Hill will have to wait 😞

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 06-Apr-16 10:07 PM GMT

Lovely Brimstone Buggy – I can but sit and enjoy the butterflies through you 🇩🇪 as Mrs Wurzel has arranged for someone to lift, relay and sand our floor tomorrow 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Apr-16 08:31 PM GMT

Never mind Wurzel, just think of all those brownie points you'll be racking up for later in the season 😊

#### 5th April part 2, Tottenham Marshes

I arrived back in London after my abortive day in Surrey to find the sun was back so I stopped off on my journey home for a couple of hours at Tottenham Marshes. There's several sheltered sun traps here where you can pretty much guarantee butterfly activity and the first one didn't disappoint, a Peacock, a Comma and 2 Small White all active. The Whites weren't going to settle for anything other than a female White but both Vanessids did. They were a little worn and also a bit flighty so to avoid my shadow scaring them off I decided to take a few pics from different angles, some rather pleasing backlit shots.





After 20 minutes with them I wandered off to find a couple more Small White males exploring a field. One crash landed near me when the sun went in, allowing me to sneak up on him before the cloud passed.

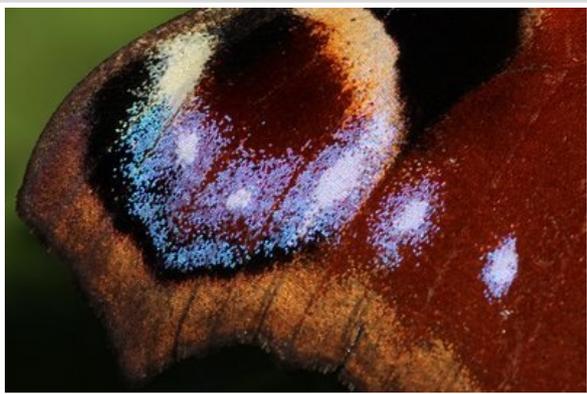


I had quite a few Peacock flybys as I wandered around before stumbling on another basking. This one was in better nick than the previous one.





After some more wandering and several more Vanessa flybys I returned to the first sun trap to find there were now 2 Commas and 2 Peacocks flying around, the new arrivals both being in much better condition. The sun was getting quite low now meaning they were both less flighty as they absorbed what rays they could before roosting. Since I already have hundreds of standard pictures of both species I took the opportunity to see just how close they would let me get to them.....quite close as it turns out





I love the intensity of colours and the iridescence on those blue scales.



### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 08-Apr-16 10:27 PM GMT

**8th April, staying local**

After 2 days spent mostly spring cleaning my flat, I had a well deserved local wander to see if anything was about on a mostly cloudy afternoon.

Over the years I'm sure I've unknowingly walked past many Brimstones in plain sight but not today. This one I saw from quite some distance, for once its camouflage failing it.





Apart from flushing a Peacock he was the only butterfly I found on the Marshes so I wandered over to Abney Park. I was hoping to find a Speckled Wood today, I'm overdue that season first, but just as I was leaving I heard some screeching high up. A Pair of Peregrines had been keeping an eye on me



Over at Abney Park I wandered around for some time, waiting for a gap in the clouds to appear, but even when they did finally let the sun through there was still no sign of a butterfly of any description, so I settled for some birds. This young male Sparrowhawk was having an argument with a Magpie.



*A Silent Song Thrush*



*A noisy Wren*

Back to work tomorrow but it was a good week off in the end, plenty of encounters to kick start my season 😊

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by Pauline, 09-Apr-16 03:31 PM GMT

You certainly made the most of your week off Buggy and got some great photos to boot. You're way ahead of me in the butterfly stakes – but then just about everybody is 😊

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-16 08:04 PM GMT

Great close-up work Buggy 😊 I wish my time off had been as productive as yours 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by David M, 11-Apr-16 12:33 AM GMT

Cracking Brimstone image, Bugboy. How I wish they'd pose like that for me!

## Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 11-Apr-16 03:49 PM GMT

Just catching up on postings Buggy, you've got some great shots there and what a lot of Butterflies you've seen, ( fantastic ) Goldie 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Apr-16 08:56 PM GMT

Thank you everyone, I've been very lucky with the weather these past few weeks 😊

### 12th April, Looking for the Specklies

The sun was shining on my half day so it was straight over to the my local Marshes after work, a couple of hours looking to chalk up a few new species for the year, in particular Speckled woods but also hoping for some GVW and perhaps a Holly Blue, although I suspect the latter will be thin on the ground this season after the bumper crop last year.

The first thing I found was a Small White patrolling who helpfully flushed up a Comma, I'm having a good start with these this year. This female sat patiently for me.



It was mid afternoon and when the sun was out most butterflies were less accommodating, several Peacocks and Small tortoiseshells fleeing my approach over impenetrable thickets. The closest I got was this Peacock. It did look pretty tip-toeing through the Daisies though.



I found a few more Tortoiseshells, mostly flirting pairs, all of whom stubbornly refused to be photographed and a couple more Commas who were more than happy to sit in the sun for me.



On the return trip I finally managed to creep up on a Peacock or two and a another Comma had replaced the Peacock tip-toeing amongst the daisies





Keeping my eyes peeled along the shadier hedgerows I finally came across a Speckled Wood only to watch it shoot off as a cyclist shot past! Although not my first of the year, having seen one at work over the weekend, it was my first chance to actually get a picture... After searching around I figured I'd have to wait another day for a Specklie picture so I wandered off, flushing up yet another pair of Tortoiseshells, that's another species I need to put a bit more work into recording this year!

On the plus side, species number 8 of the year was waiting for me, a male Green-veined White, looking very fresh.



Being the stubborn butterfly twitcher I am, before setting off home I decided to go and see if I could re-locate that Specklie. 5 minutes later I was looking at the little blighter and without a cyclist in sight, I crept up on him and managed a nice selection of close-ups, his speckles looking very orangy.





Mid April and it's still only the adult hibernators showing up with any regularity, I can't help but feel the seasons trundling along very slowly for me this year 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 13-Apr-16 10:34 PM GMT

Lovely shots Buggy 😊 I know what you mean about the slow onset of the season – I'm still only on 5 species for the year and usually by now I've got almost the full complement of Whites, Speckle and Holly Blue – I'd be out looking for Greenstreaks and Grizzlies. Still a slow start could mean a sensational climax to the end of spring when all of a sudden everything is out and on the wing at once! Here's hoping! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 13-Apr-16 11:29 PM GMT

Good stuff, Bugboy.

This is a good time of year in that we still have the adult overwinterers with us, but they have been joined by the half dozen or so 'common' species that can be expected to emerge in early to mid-April.

The next couple of weeks should see a few more emerge – Grizzled Skippers, Green Hairstreaks, Small Coppers and PBFs.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 14-Apr-16 01:36 PM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, Great shots, I've only got four species so far so your very lucky with your weather down there, it was a lovely day yesterday but we're back in the rain and cloud today. Good luck, hope you get more first's 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-Apr-16 10:10 PM GMT

Thanks guys, yes lets hope this slow start erupts into a splendid bounty of springtime species very soon 😊

#### 13th April, Box Hill & Denbies

Lady luck was shining on me this week. Wednesday, my normal weekday off work was also predicted to be the best of the week with dizzy heights of 18 degrees predicted. Hence it was off to Surrey for my first trundle round a couple of my favourite sites for the year. Targets today were Orange-tips, Small Tortoiseshells, Green Hairstreak and Grizzled Skippers.

First stop was Burford Meadow at the base of Box Hill, where there was lots of fresh nettle growth and the Cuckoo flower is just coming into bloom. Not

a single butterfly was seen for about half an hour. I finally flushed up a Peacock who was busy breakfasting on Lesser Celandine.



It was still cool and early enough to find a roosting Orange-tip so I carefully checked all the Cuckoo Flowers and Ramsons that littered the floor here for a little snoozing mottled green butterfly... nothing! I was just about to move on after another half hour when I flushed what turned out to be an unapproachable g\*t of a Red Admiral. After several failed stalking attempts he decided he'd had enough of me and vanished at high speed across the field. I wandered off in his general direction only to have a Small Tortoiseshell zoom past me and settle in the grass. It was looking like a repeat performance with several failed stalking attempts until finally it found a patch it was happy with.



After a few head on shots I took a wide path round and crept up to get some decent uppersides at last.





*My favourite part of a Small Tortoiseshell wing, the blue lunules*

Happy at bagging something I was actually after I set off up Box Hill to see if there was anything else about, surely the Speckled Woods would be out here but all I got were a few Brimstone flybys.

I did however get rather close to a Green Tiger Beetle, something I've never managed before, just a shame the sun was hiding at the time... although that's also quite possibly the reason I was allowed so close in the first place.



Back to where I'd started the day I had another look to see if there were any Orange-tips on the wing but still a no show, I did find a Comma though



With it being early afternoon it was time to wander over to see what was flying over at Denbies, the walk nearly always throwing up several Specklies, nearly always but not today. The scenery was, nonetheless a complete joy to walk through.





Approaching Denbies Brimstones started appearing and coming to a patch of sunlit Bluebells I found 4 flitting from flower to flower crying out to be photographed.





I took several dozen since none were in any hurry and I'm glad I did, amongst all my snaps I managed what is to date my all time favourite Brimstone picture, I'm very chuffed with myself with this one!



So what was waiting for me at Denbies then.... well Butterfly wise, two hours of wandering gave me 1 Brimstone and 1 Peacock. If it wasn't for the spectacular avian encounter I had, I would have left a little despondent.

Since I'd been looking closely for Hairstreaks and Skippers I hadn't been paying much attention to the sky until a shadow passed over me, a low flying Red Kite. Now as any regular reader will know I do like Red Kites so he immediately grabbed my attention, especially since as he glided up the hillside he wasn't gaining height until he was floating just inches from the ground. It was then that I noticed he wasn't alone and as I looked around I realised there were 8 in total, 3 of which were coming very low to the ground. This was (by miles) the closest I've ever been to a Red Kite, I could see then scanning the ground as the floated past. I simply stood and watched in awe for about half an hour, snapping away when one came close.







I may not have seen what I was after but watching these made the trip more than worthwhile!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 14-Apr-16 10:18 PM GMT

Glorious array of images there, Bugboy. The range of colours is spectacular.

I agree, your open-winged Brimstone is going to be hard to eclipse.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 14-Apr-16 10:45 PM GMT

That really is a terrific Brimstone, Buggy. Any butterfly in that pose with the bluebell would be good, but with a Brimstone... Amazing. 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 14-Apr-16 11:04 PM GMT

10 points for those Kite shots.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Katrina, 14-Apr-16 11:20 PM GMT

And another 10 points for the open wing Brimstone shot.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 15-Apr-16 06:44 AM GMT

I would have commented on your great Brimstone image Buggy but the Kites' shots have taken my breath away. Why do you think they were coming in so close and in such numbers? Food source? If they are to become regulars at Denbies I'll be straight over there 🍷🍷🍷🍷

### Re: Bugboys mission

by MrSpOck, 15-Apr-16 09:32 AM GMT

That is a lovely shot of a male brimstone opened winged, most of the open winged Brimstone shots are normally a female repelling a male, i do have one shot of both male and female opened winged, in such a case.

it wont be long until your Glanville fixes again.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Apr-16 12:38 PM GMT

Thank you **David M, Dave, Trevor and Katrina** 😊

**Pauline**, I can only speculate as to the Kites but with it being rather warm (I was in shorts and t-shirt at this stage) I suspect the hillside was producing some good thermals but also they were obviously looking for food. There were several Magpies hopping around and picking through the turf so it's possible there was some sort of carrion recently, there is a very healthy rabbit warren there. Until then I'd only ever seen the odd one drift across high up

**MrspOck**, it certainly doesn't seem like nearly a whole year since I was photographing Glanvilles, definately overdue a visit to HB this year

## Re: Bugboys mission

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

I agree with everybody Bugboy , your photo of the opened winged Brimstone is fantastic and the Red Kites, what a great experience you had. 😊 Goldie 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Apr-16 10:19 PM GMT

Thanks **Goldie**, definately a case of quality over quantity 😊

### 17th April, Hutchinson's Bank

With a sunny but chilly day predicted I needed somewhere with a bit of shelter, so hoping the warm micro climate might work to my advantage I headed down to Hutchinsons bank for my first visit of the year. It really does enjoy temperatures a good few degrees above what is predicted, you can feel the rise almost as you enter the reserve.



I got there quite early, hoping to catch as much sun as possible before the clouds inevitably arrived and after wandering around for half an hour I found a butterfly, a Small Tortoiseshell enjoying the Dandelions. There were a couple of these early risers flitting from flower to flower.



At this point I noticed the Banks resident butterflyer heading my way, Mrsp0ck. We had a chat about Glanvilles, looks like its going to be a bumper year for them and the lack of anything other than adult hibernators so far seen here, not even a White as yet. He pointed out a couple of Glanville larval webs, a good range of sizes so the emergence may well be quite extended this year, with the largest looking very close to pupation.



The Small Tortoiseshells were increasing in numbers as the morning continued to warm but nothing else was showing itself for a while until I disturbed a little silvery thing which fluttered around my feet. He settled and I found myself looking at species number 9 of the season, a very fresh looking Grizzled Skipper who was very happy to pose for me for quite some time, he was well worth kneeling down in damp grass and mud for 😊 .

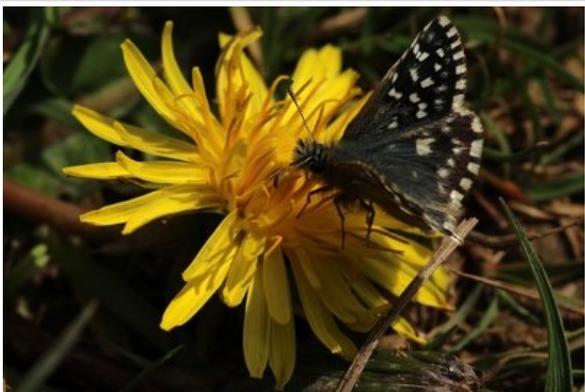




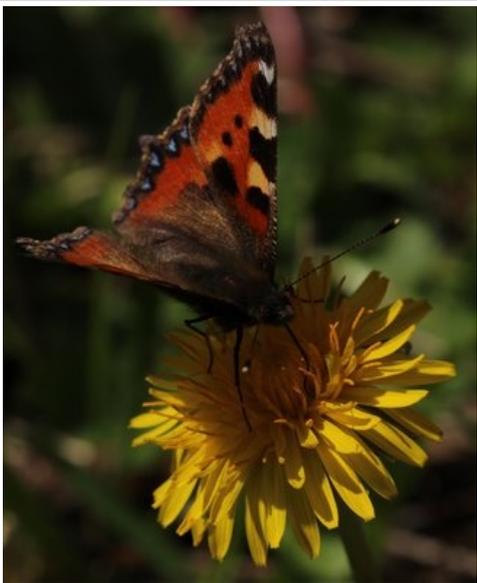
So after spending the winter in a pupa, what does a fresh Grizzlie want to be the first thing it tastes upon emerging on a sunny spring day.....



Thankfully he did eventually find something a bit sweeter (and much more photogenic) to feed from



The Tortoiseshells were everywhere by lunchtime, easily into double figures by now and joining them were a few of the only other species I saw here today, Peacocks. I was rather surprised I didn't see any Brimstones today.





Before leaving I took a little wander into the wood opposite, where I'd found my very first White Admiral cat last year. There was a fair bit of nibbling on the honeysuckle but the only culprit I could find was this rather attractive geometrid cat, not sure what species it is though so if anyone has an idea feel free to comment.



When I got back home it was still quite warm and I had a few hours of sun left so I took a chance to see if there was anything on the wing on my Marshes... just the one Comma but this Chiffchaff came very close



And I flushed a fox, here's his arse vanishing off into the undergrowth...



### Re: Bugboys mission

by MrSp0ck, 18-Apr-16 12:18 AM GMT

It would be interesting to know which sites the Grizzled are out, and how much warmer HB is. This may be the first Surrey record.

I didnt see any non-hibernating butterflies at HB today, but hope to get a Grizzled on the Transect when i walk it.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 18-Apr-16 09:53 AM GMT

Your having a great time Bugboy and I love the Grizzled Skipper shots, 🍷 we don't have them round here but I'd love to see them. Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 18-Apr-16 10:38 PM GMT

Cracking find of the Grizzlie Buggy – it seems that the East is, as usual, ahead of the West possibly by a week or more 🍷 Still all the more to look forward too! Cheers for the Glannie heads up – I'll be over your way shortly! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Apr-16 06:15 PM GMT

Thank you **Goldie**, I'm sure you'll catch some in your travels 😊

Thanks **Wurzel**, this Grizzlie may well have been the county first 😊. Counting the days until the Glannies start appearing 😊

### 19th April, staying local

With a good weather forecast I decided a whistle stop tour of a few local patches to try and notch up a few more species. The plan was to spend the morning wandering around Walthamstow Marshes, lunch at Abney Park and then an afternoon stroll on Tottenham Marshes.

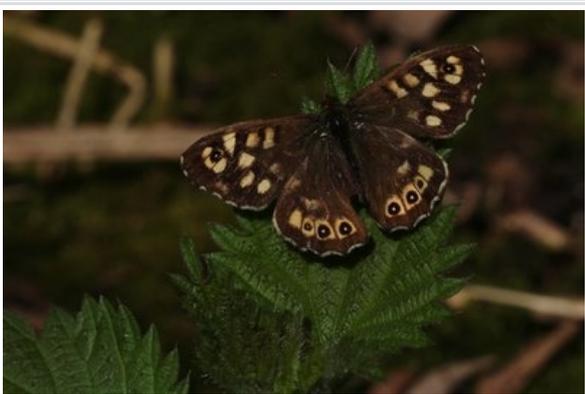
Things started of reasonably well with a Small White and Small Tortoiseshell on the wing as soon as I got to the site with a Peacock appearing shortly after. None of them were in the mood for a photo shoot though so I moved on to my Holly Blue hotspot, a Dogwood hedge. Nothing appeared except a couple of those fluffy pink, black & white things we call Long-tailed Tits.



The air was full of the sound of spring with Greenfinches, Robins, Dunnocks, Blue & Great Tits and various Warblers all singing away in the hedgerows. It wasn't until nearly lunchtime when I finally found a butterfly willing to sit within range, a Peacock feeding on blossom.



On the whole inactive butterflies proved hard to come by, the day had certainly warmed up but my persistence paid off when I came across a couple of Speckled Woods who sat in-between aerial dogfights.



I'd had several UWF (unidentified White Flybys) but the next one I saw wasn't as white, spring has finally sprung for me!



He did stop briefly but not in a particularly convenient spot so just a couple of record shots today, hopefully lots of better ones in the weeks to come though.



The wander continued with more UWF and all three hibernating vanessids taunting me. I did manage a few close-ups though. I used these to practise using fill-in flash after the recent thread with varying results



*no flash*



*Flash*



*Flash*

Time to wander over to Abney Park. It was lovely and warm now but despite the weather there was little in the way of butterfly activity. I had a fleeting glance of a Small white and a Brimstone and a better look at a Speckled Wood who tempted me to chase him. I was glad I did since it was he who disturbed species number 11 for the year, a very fresh male Holly Blue who was quite happy to sit in the sun for me, gorgeous!



As far as butterflies were concerned that was it but I was lucky enough observe a courting pair of Goldcrest. Very cute to watch, both singing to each other with him raising up and showing off his golden headdress whilst she whirred her wings at him, always keeping a little ahead of him, such a tease!





Next stop, Tottenham Marshes

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 20-Apr-16 06:23 PM GMT

Lovely Holly Blue Bugboy and Speckie, I've seen both but can't pin them down for a photo. Glad you got an Orange Tip 🍷 hope I see one soon Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 20-Apr-16 06:43 PM GMT

Hi Buggy - hope you don't mind me asking you this. I have Goldcrests in the garden almost daily but I have never seen a Firecrest. Is it possible your shot could be a Firecrest or is it the light as the colours seem quite striking. I am sure I am wrong as you would probably know from their vocals etc but thought perhaps you might be kind enough to explain. A shot I took some years ago as I have just about given up trying to get decent photos of the birds:



I would really love to see a Firecrest but although I've had 63 species in the garden, that has never been one of them 😞

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Apr-16 07:23 PM GMT

**Pauline wrote:**

Hi Buggy – hope you don't mind me asking you this. I have Goldcrests in the garden almost daily but I have never seen a Firecrest. Is it possible your shot could be a Firecrest or is it the light as the colours seem quite striking. I am sure I am wrong as you would probably know from their vocals etc but thought perhaps you might be kind enough to explain. A shot I took some years ago as I have just about given up trying to get decent photos of the birds:

[attachment=0]DSC03000ad.jpg[/attachment]

I would really love to see a Firecrest but although I've had 63 species in the garden, that has never been one of them 😊

Hi Pauline, they are definately Goldcrest 😊, I've only seen a Firecrest twice but as long as you see the head it's unmistakable. The black and white pattern on the face is very distinctive on a Firecrest. The bright orange on the one displaying is how you can sex a Goldcrest, the females, like the one in your picture, have just yellow feathers whereas the males have a generous dash of orange as well. Not sure about how different they are vocally though.. there's probably not much between them 🤔

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by Pauline, 20-Apr-16 07:32 PM GMT

Thanks for that explanation Buggy. I shall pay a lot more attention to the Goldcrests in the garden so that at least I'll be able to recognise male from female 😊😊

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 21-Apr-16 09:01 PM GMT

**19th April, staying local (cont)**

It was 3.30 by the time I got to Tottenham Marshes and I had an almost cloudless blue sky to accompany me. Within minutes I was watching a female Comma look for that perfect nettle leaf on which to deposit an egg whilst above me the Sand Martins were announcing their arrival from Africa as a Goldfinch sang away at the top of a nearby Elder.





It seems to be good news in the Ladybird world is that I've yet to see one of the invasive Harlequins this year, loads of 7 spots around so perhaps after the initial invasion balance has been restored?

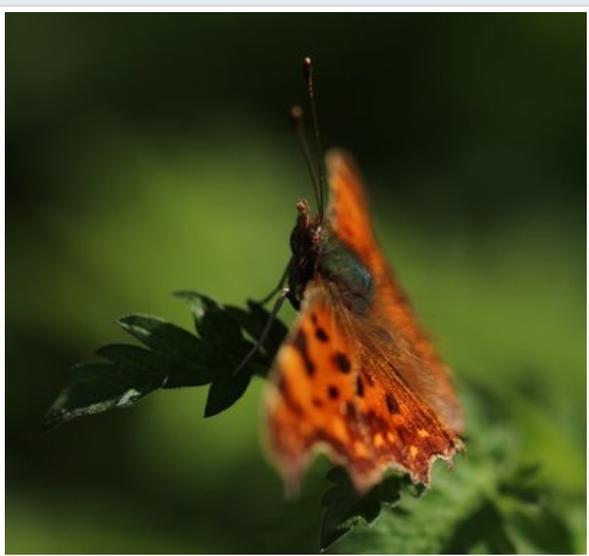
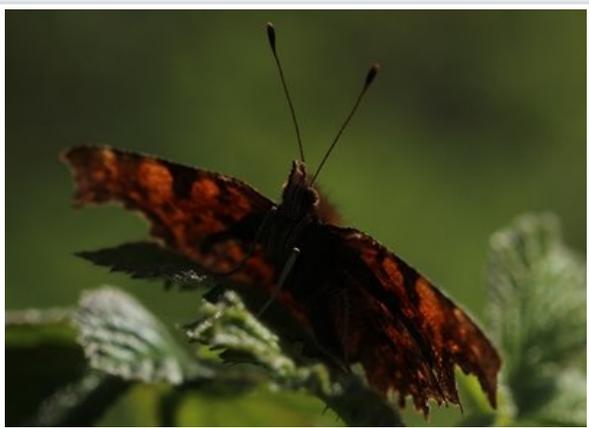


I found an Alderfly clutching a dead stem, probably hoping to remain invisible to any foraging birds.



At my favourite suntrap the usual suspects were active, Commas and Peacocks with a female Speckled Wood making several guest appearances. Since they were pretty much captive targets, mostly holding territories, I decided to experiment with fill in flash again... more practise needed to stop them looking a bit flat I think.







In between practicing on these 'captives' I wandered off, catching a couple of distant glimpses of orange-tips amongst the several UWF and I found a small group of Specklies whom I spent a bit of time with as well



I very enjoyable end to a good day out

Here's a Hairy Shieldbug to end on 😊



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 22-Apr-16 10:06 PM GMT

A great set of Speckies Buggy 🐛 Any chance you could send some over this way – they (and most species) have been pretty thin on the ground this far West 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 23-Apr-16 04:17 PM GMT

I second Wurzel on your Speckies Bugboy, It's one Butterfly I've yet to photograph which is unusual a round here, it's usually one of the first out after the Small Tort's and Peacock's. Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Apr-16 10:08 PM GMT

Thanks **Goldie & Wurzel** its been a pretty slow start over here as well, it's still a bit of work to get a Specklie in these parts too...and now we've regressed back into winter 😊

#### 20th April, Hadleigh Country Park

It wasn't until I was on the train, deep into Essex, that I realised I may have made a mistake in choosing to visit this site today, it's coastal and there was a brisk easterly blowing in along the Thames estuary... 😊 Oh well, too late to change plans.

The reason I chose to visit was that I was curious to see what the butterfly activity was like in the spring after finding it teaming with various species last summer whilst hunting for White-letter Hairstreak. Unfortunately my early fears were validated with only the one Peacock seen shooting off into the distance in the first hours searching. Had the wind been coming from another direction I probably would have seen a bit more but since most the paths run east to west they were mostly acting as wind tunnels today.

My luck however changed after the first fruitless hour. Clinging to a blade of grass and swaying precariously in the wind I saw my top target for the day, an Orange-tip 😊. Being nestled down in the grass on a windy day meant it wasn't the easiest photographic target.



After a while he decided to risk taking to the air where he struggled heroically for a time against the wind before seemingly giving up and was whisked off into the distance, only stopping when he collided with one of the few hedgerows that don't run east west. He put the sudden break from the wind to good use and sat well for me this time.



That encounter cheered me up no end and after he fluttered off over the hedge I wandered up and down this sheltered path. A few Small Whites and Speckled Woods were flitting up and down but nothing wanted its picture taken.

The next butterfly that was good enough to sit for me was a rather windswept Small White trying to feed.



Getting close to noon it had started to feel quite warm in the rare spots out of the wind and I found a friendly Speckled Wood enjoying one of these sun traps. This male seemed to enjoy having his photo taken especially when he perched on a daisy for me!





A little further on I found a hungry Comma and then a very pretty female GVW.



Peacocks and Commas were turning up regularly now and the Speckled Woods seen earlier were now far more willing to be approached.



All of these were unceremoniously ignored though when another Orange-tip appeared and flew past. He settled regularly to feed and rest from the wind. The wind actually working in my favour this time, he could only manage a slow walking pace flying into it so every time he rested I was close enough to get a few snaps before he took to the air again.





I ended up following him for about 10 minutes before I finally lost him.

I went back to play with the Specklies again and whilst getting a few shots of it sat on the ground I noticed a little red velvet mite scuttling nearby. This is probably a *Trombidium* sp. The little mites who's larvae are so obvious on butterflies during the summer.



*a Blackthorn flower petal for scale*



A couple more orange-tip and Comma encounters and it was time to make a move.



A good result after an iffy start 😊



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 23-Apr-16 11:11 PM GMT

You did well with the Orange Tips, Buggy. 😊🍀 I'm really struggling to get a settled male at the moment.

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 25-Apr-16 10:34 PM GMT

I agree with Dave Buggy – OTs are being more of a pain than normal for me this year 🍀😊 Good to see someone is gradually upping the species count – stuck on 6 here still 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 26-Apr-16 06:30 AM GMT

Those Red Velvet mites are aptly named Buggy – never seen one before but your images clearly show the 'velvet'. Very nice OT's too 😊 capturing all the detail and shading.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 26-Apr-16 10:27 AM GMT

Very nice Orange Tip photos Buggy and I love the Speckie on the Daisy, the wind seems to be causing the coldness every where, out of it in the Sun it's really warm, you did really well in the circumstances 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Apr-16 05:04 PM GMT

Thank you everyone, every picture this year does seem to be hard won but I'm very pleased with my Orange-tips. I may be up to 11 species this year but only 5 of those are into double figures as far as individuals are concerned and of those 4 hibernate as adults. I've only seen the 1 of each of Holly Blue and Grizzlie, 4 or 5 OT's, maybe half a dozen GVW 7 or 8 Specklies and a couple of Red Admirals. The only non adult hibernator thats around in any numbers so far is the Small White.

I think all my pictures probably give a false impression of whats actually about currently just like these pictures taken at Hadleigh Country Park give a false impression of the current weather!





*Spot the Green Woodpecker!*

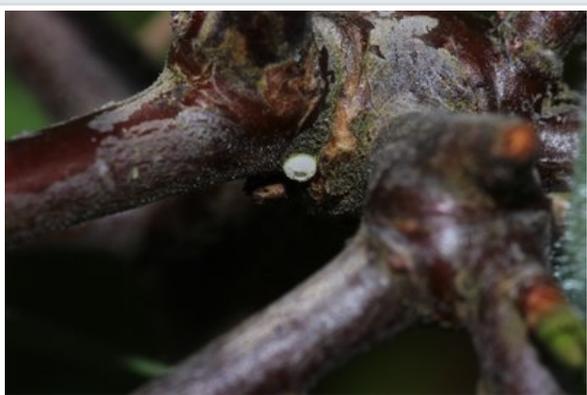
### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 27-Apr-16 09:55 PM GMT

**27th April**

It was a trip to Bookham this morning to check on a few eggs and stuff. Out of the wind it was relatively warm but an hour and half wandering, rather disappointingly, turned up no adult butterflies 😞.

My two Brown Hairstreak eggs seem to have hatched, no sign of any caterpillars but they are likely tucked up out of sight in the unfurling buds. Hopefully I will be able to locate one after they moult when they are a little bit (relatively speaking) easier to see.



One of my Purple Hairstreak eggs has also hatched but the buds on this particular Oak are yet to break, fingers crossed the little cat is tucked up inside one of them.



I had another good search for White Admirals but I could neither find any caterpillars or fresh leaf nibbling 😞.

By now, noon, it had started to spit rain and with all sorts of apocalyptic weather forecast for the afternoon I decided to catch the train back to London.

.....

2 hours later it was feeling very spring like in the sun so I risked a trip to my local Marshes, determined to see at least one butterfly today. I had a (probable) Peacock flyby and a few Whites were active, mostly Small Whites but the only butterfly who sat still for me was a pretty female Green-veined White.





There were lots of birds active in the hedgerows, Dunnocks, Robins, Warblers and Linnets to name a few, all no doubt nest building whilst wondering where Spring went!



Linnet

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 29-Apr-16 11:42 AM GMT

I've noticed that Buggy, no Butterflies to speak of but loads of birds, hope they're not enjoying the Cat's too much. Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-16 10:17 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the GVW Buggy 😊 I managed to find my first today – struggling to get anywhere in the single figure temperatures 😊 Still no PBFs but I'm keeping my eyes peeled 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Jamie Burston, 29-Apr-16 11:53 PM GMT

The photo of the Speckled Wood (open wing female) taken on the 19th April is superb! 😊 All the best,  
Jamie

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-Apr-16 11:08 PM GMT

~~[quote]~~I've noticed that Buggy, no Butterflies to speak of but loads of birds, hope they're not enjoying the Cat's too much. Goldie 😊 Hi Goldie, I suspect the mild wet winter we just had has done more harm to our overwintering cats than the birds could do, it might even mean there's less food around for the chicks, it's not just butterflies that are thin on the ground at the moment, I've seen very little in the way of insect life in general on my travels.

~~[quote]~~Lovely shots of the GVW Buggy 😊 I managed to find my first today – struggling to get anywhere in the single figure temperatures 😊 Still no PBFs but I'm keeping my eyes peeled 😊 Thanks Wurzel, I reckon we have a couple of weeks to go before the Pearls start appearing, this April will have

slowed the caterpillars and pupae down a bit. Fingers crossed it doesn't have too bad an effect on numbers.

[quote]The photo of the Speckled Wood (open wing female) taken on the 19th April is superb! 😊 All the best, Jamie Thanks Jamie, you're very kind 😊

So today I decided to see if any Dukes had emerged at my closest site in the Chiltons, Ivinghoe Beacon. A fresh and chilly start to the day, probably still too cold to have any activity and for the first few hours wandering through Aldbury Nowers Nature reserve and over to the Beacon I did indeed see absolutely nothing in the way of butterflies. There were plenty of Kites and Buzzards and I'm pretty sure this was a Peregrine flying with the Kite here:



No close encounters like the other week though.

The hedgerows seemed alive with Willow Warblers today and air was full of the sound of Skylarks.

I left the Beacon around 12:30, having still not seen a single butterfly, with some rather dark clouds brewing in the distance but heading in my general direction. Having said that the weather does seem to be turning a corner, the sun does seem to be winning the battle against the cold wind now.

Back at Adlbury Nowers I at last saw a few butterflies, singles of Orange-tip, Small Tort, Peacock and Brimstone all toyed with me but rudely avoided all attempts at getting even a record shot. I did manage a few shots of a Crane-fly who settled at my feet though so you'll just have to make do!



Two weeks off now with the plan to fit in as much butterflying as possible... I just hope May is as good as April was rubbish, got a few more lifers to tick off in the coming weeks!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 30-Apr-16 11:28 PM GMT

Good luck Buggy, hope you see loads of Butterflies in your 2 weeks off, looking forward to seeing lots of photos. Goldie 😊

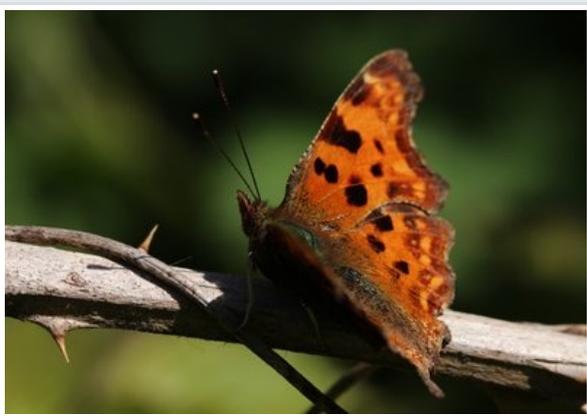
### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-May-16 08:40 PM GMT

1st May

If I'd paid closer attention to the weather forecast I might have left my visit to Ivinghoe Beacon to today. It was certainly a much nicer day, sunnier and although still a bit windy it was coming from a much warmer direction.

After getting a few chores out of the way I went for a wander on the Marshes, first Walthamstow and then along the canal to Tottenham Marshes. Since it was past noon and sunny not much was settling but it was good to see several Orange-tip patrolling up and down. A few Peacock, Comma and Brimstone were in the usual spots, Comma's allowing a few pictures,



but the most numerous butterfly was the Small White (it's possible a few were GVW but all that could be ID were Small). Again most of them were patrolling but I did come across an ovipositing female and this male with quite severely bent wings. They didn't seem to have any effect on his flight though.





Over at Tottenham it was pretty much the same, all lurking in the usual sun traps.



There was also a Ruby Tiger Moth, something I've not seen for a fair few years.



The final species I saw today was a single Small Tortoiseshell bringing today's total to just 6 species, both Speckled Wood and Holly Blues being very obvious in their complete absence today.



## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-May-16 07:06 PM GMT

3rd May, Abbots Wood

I wasn't expecting to find huge flocks of Pearl Bordered Fritillaries here today but since I'd only been here the once, almost exactly 12 months ago, I thought it would be a good idea to reacquaint myself with the place before they emerge properly and hopefully tick off a few more species for the year whilst doing so.

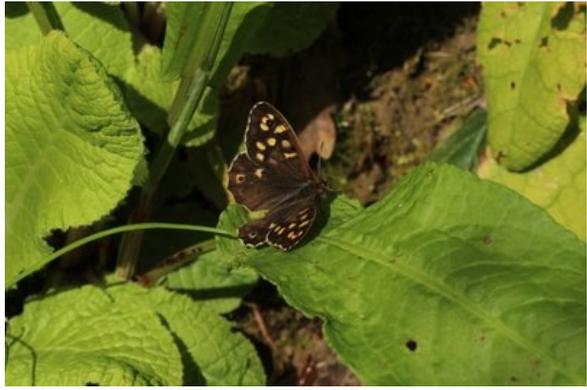
The plan was to spend the whole day wandering around getting lost and generally enjoying the sights and sounds of an English woodland, which is pretty much what happened, although butterflies were still relatively thin on the ground compared to what I saw last year.

The first one I saw was also species number 12 for the year, a male Large White having a Bluebell breakfast





A little while later I came across some Speckled Wood, three in total and the only three I was to see all day!



*Reduced hindwing spotting, ab.?*

Green Tiger Beetles were everywhere and I spent quite a bit of time sneaking up on them, getting a fair few nice close-ups for a change.





*Lurking in the undergrowth!*

I narrowly missed getting an early snap of a Pearl, bumping into **Trevar** who had only minutes before snagged a nice closeup of one before it flew over the undergrowth. After a little chat we parted ways and I continued along paths, some of which looked vaguely familiar, searching for last year's Pearl hotspot. I eventually found it but no Pearl to go with it and to be honest it looks decidedly more overgrown than last year so I'm not sure if it's still suitable for them...

Whilst wandering around here I did manage a few aerial shots of a Female Large White fending off a particularly determined male



I had several Orange-tip flybys but none were to land for me, leaving me with just a couple of snatched in flight shots.



By the afternoon Peacocks were starting to turn up with a certain regularity, normally sneaking up behind me and whizzing past causing many second glances. I thought this one looked rather forlorn in the way it held its wings upon landing, like life had just gotten too much to hold its wings out properly.



I got my first ever sighting of a Nightingale, having heard loads here last year as well as today. No chance of a photo though, he saw me lining up a shot and scarpered! 😞

At the large clearing that's smothered in Bluebells there were a couple of Pearls flitting around. The best thing to do was wait for one to appear, which it did just not long enough to get close so just a few distant shots for species number 13 of the year. Still its early days for them.



I had several more Tiger Beetle encounters, a Longhorn moth and a male Brimstone landed near me allowing me to sneak up on him.





*Adela reaumurella*





This peacock was in particularly good nick considering how late in their spring season it is and he did look more 'happy' with himself than the previous one!



No Kites today but there were a lot of Buzzards



And I really didn't mind getting a bit lost on occasion when this was the scenery!





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 04-May-16 09:03 PM GMT

Great report and photos...that looks like a great place to get lost in 😊

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 04-May-16 10:22 PM GMT

Yes, interesting report from somewhere I did indeed get temporarily lost in a few years back! Good to see those PBFs out.

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-May-16 06:23 PM GMT

#### 4th May, birds do it, bees do it and so do butterflies!

I spent most the morning and early afternoon getting all those things I needed to do this week to free up as much time for butterflying as possible, which still left a few hours to wander on my local patch. I expected everything to be very active now that the weather seems to have bypassed spring and gone straight into summer but I still managed a fair bit.

The first thing I found, basking on the kissing gate at the entrance, was a jumping spider having lunch



Can't help but think there's some sort of intelligence behind those eyes!

Next were a few Whites and a few in flight snatched pictures identified both Small and GV active.



As I followed this one he stopped off at a Cow Parsley flower head and got very excited, he'd found himself a lady to bother.



He obviously used his best chat up lines because within 30 seconds he flew off with her attached. As he looked for somewhere private to go a male Small White flew over to see what was happening but quickly lost interest.





I followed them around for a while grabbing shots here and there before leaving them alone.



A minute or so later just past a large Horse Chestnut I found a couple of male Large White flying up and down relentlessly and having the occasional tussle and a couple of Peacocks, one of whom was a great advert for the usefulness of eyespots.



A Small White stopped momentarily to bask



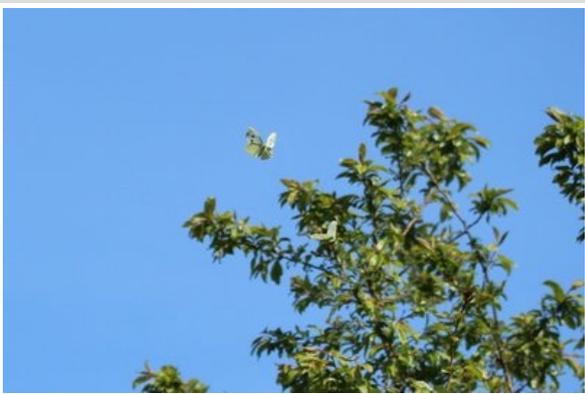
As I was taking his picture the mating pair of CV flew past again, they must have been following me, I'd obviously not given them enough attention before! It wasn't until I got home that I realised it was a different pair, this male lacking the central forewing spot. They posed very well for me and I spent a few minutes getting various angles of the pairing.



Moving on, hoping to find some Specklies this little chap sat above me, Chiffchaffing away to his heart's content. No Specklies though.



On the return trip, slowly retracing my steps, more (or more likely the same) Whites flew past, a few male Orange-tips mixed in for variety and then back where the first pair of GV were seen I watched a male Large White stumble upon a female. Just like the pair at Abbots Wood the previous day they flew up into the air but unlike then after only about 30 seconds she succumbed to his advances and landed high up on some bramble. I could just make out some frantic fluttering and then watch him take flight with his prize. They stayed up high so no close-ups this time.





Three matings in under an hour, they really were making up for lost time today!  
No Orange-tip close-ups today either, wrong time of day but I always attempt a few in-flight shots when they come close enough.





It may just have been a few common species but it's always good to witness interesting behaviour.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 06-May-16 06:30 PM GMT

Some great action shots there, Bugboy. I'm almost breathless looking at them. It's comical at this time of year how testosterone-riddled Pierids patrol up and down, squabbling and scrapping with one another over available females – it's like throwing-out time after last orders on a Friday! 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 06-May-16 06:31 PM GMT

Great action shots, Buggy. 😊 I don't think I've ever seen Large Whites mating – maybe they have a preference for the trees as you observed.

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 07-May-16 11:53 AM GMT

Great shots Buggy, it's great to see them soaring high in the sky like that 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-May-16 06:48 PM GMT

#### 5th May, Denbies

After seeing **Susies** report that Green Hairstreaks were in double figures at Denbies the night before I got up early with the intention of getting there as they were warming up. Unfortunately public transport had other ideas, track side fires leading to overcrowded and evacuated stations meaning I didn't get there until gone noon!

Not in the best of moods after this nightmare journey the sight of a Brimstone settling on a bluebell and a female Speckled Wood helped to lift my spirits somewhat but it wasn't until I got to Denbies to find several pristine Green Hairstreaks dancing around a Hawthorn that all memory was completely erased of it! I spent the best part of an hour here, watching them, creeping up when they landed only to watch another fly past and see them both dart off in a twirling dance. Despite all this disturbance from each other I did manage plenty of images of these little green jewels.







I really wanted to improve on what I managed last year and I think I succeeded! Various other butterflies tried to distract me, Brimstones, Orange-tips (including my first female of the year), a Grizzlie and species number 15 of the year, a Dingy Skipper.

Finally tearing myself away, species number 16 appeared, a Small Heath fluttered by and purposely made me work for a decent photo.



It finally decided it had had enough of my company so I moved on to bump into **Millerd** who had also seen Susies post and was here for the same targets. After chatting for a bit I moved further down the bank where its somewhat more sheltered from the wind. Dingies were appearing all over the place now joined by a generous smattering of Grizzlies but being mid afternoon, they were all playing hard to get.



*This amorous male was left wanting...*



Along the bottom of the hillside a few more Green Hairstreak looked stunning as they basked



and at the far end of the hillside I found a Brimstone laying eggs as if her life depended on it. The scrappy old Buckthorn was littered with them!







The return walk was much the same, Dingies and Grizzlies darting up and at least one more Small Heath. The Greenies however had all vanished.



It wasn't quite over for the day, walking back to the train station a bright orange butterfly darted past and settled on the hedge next to me, species number 17 of the year. Unfortunately the auto focus failed to focus on the Small Copper who only settled long enough for a couple of record shots



Today however belonged to Green Hairstreaks 😊





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurus rex, 07-May-16 06:56 PM GMT

Looks like you had a very productive day at Denbies Buggy! Some nice Green Hairstreak photos there, not to mention the sequence of the female Brimstone laying eggs.

Great to have some warm weather at last. 😊

ATB

James

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 07-May-16 07:33 PM GMT

I agree with James on all counts, you've had some very rewarding trips out recently, great posts and photos. You've certainly taken the right two weeks off 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 07-May-16 09:55 PM GMT

Cracking Greenstreak shots Buggy 📷. Keep persisting with the OTs I always find that each time I encounter one I manage to get a little closer until eventually they're almost nectaring out of my hand 😊 Still no Bentley Pearls – starting to get a bit worried now 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 08-May-16 05:21 PM GMT

Lovely shots of the GH Buggy, especially that one where you have caught the bluish sheen. They are such attractive insects. Good sequence of Brimstone egg-laying too. I've always found it takes a great deal of skill to capture behaviour such as that and I have never managed to do it quite as well as you have.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 08-May-16 07:08 PM GMT

Thanks **B'rex** & **Maximus**, I had a great time with those Hairstreaks and I've certainly falling on my feet with my holiday, can't believe a week ago we had snow, British weather at its crazy best!

Thanks **Wurzel**, I'm sure your Pearls will be out soon, looking forward to visiting your neck of the woods when the Small Pearls start to appear, I have the first week of June cleared and ready for them 😊. Hope that fits in with their normal emergence time there.

Thanks **Pauline**, more luck than skill in the case of the Brimstone. Just happened to be in the right place at the right time. It seems when they're in egg laying mode very little disturbs them so its just a case of point, shoot and hope for the best. The fact that she just hung around for several minutes meant I was able to check the first few snaps and adjust settings accordingly 😊

#### 6th May, Hadleigh Country Park

Another day off, another day out chasing butterflies, this week is getting quite exhausting. Who'd have thought being a butterfly twitcher doubled up as a way of keeping fit! The main target today was Orange-tips and hopefully a female having had only the one fleeting glimpse of one so far. With no icy arctic wind whistling off the North Sea like last week I figured I'd see a bit more OT action and I wasn't wrong either. It took about 10 minutes to see my first and then appearances grew until it was pretty nonstop OT action! I was early enough to catch them still having breakfast and staking out a small patch of Bluebell it wasn't long before a passing diner stopped off and sat whilst I clicked away.



Little did I know my behaviour had attracted some attention whilst lurking and awaiting my quarry....



It warmed up pretty quickly after that which inevitably meant normal Orange-tip behaviour resumed and for the rest of the day it was constant fly bys. Green-veined Whites were also about in equal numbers and were somewhat easier to approach, especially the females who for obvious reasons, spend the day skulking around avoiding unnecessary attention.





Both Small and Large Whites were about in smaller numbers and I found just the one Speckle where there were several last week.



Since everything was rather active I decided to explore further afield, coming across a Small Tortoiseshell, a few flighty Peacock as well as several more GWV and OT.



A male kestrel seemed to be following me around. At one point I rounded a corner to find him grounded, apparently with lunch but when he flew off his talons were empty, perhaps it was small enough to eat there and then, I couldn't find anything after he'd gone.



Small Whites were more numerous in the open fields where a cultivated crucifer had self-seeded and was blanketing the ground, only one stopped to have a break from the relentless search for a mate.



Back at the Orange-tip hotspot, they were still as active as ever, all males and checking the Garlic Mustard I found no eggs, looks like the females have yet to start emerging here. Whilst walking the paths, hoping in vein that one would stop conveniently for my benefit a small Blue butterfly flew up from my feet. He settled down quickly, obviously intoxicated by something less than pleasant to our sensibility's, but being in the grass I only managed a few record snaps.



Moving on after he vanished over the hedge I immediately put up yet another pair of mating Green-veined Whites, based on my personal experiences they are going to be at plague proportions in a few months' time!



A second Speckled Wood turned up, this time an egg laying female and after some chasing I just about managed a picture of her doing the deed.



Another very successful day. To finish here's a closeup of a well behaved GVW and Bee Fly



## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-May-16 02:20 PM GMT

7th May, Aldbury Nowers/Ivinghoe Beacon.

I'm Getting a bit behind in my reports recently but now the weather has deteriorated somewhat I can give my legs a rest and catch up on things, including everyone else's diaries.

Anyway so last Saturday I decided to see if the Dukes had started to emerge at my closest site in the Chilton's, they hadn't as far as I could tell but there was plenty to point my camera at nevertheless.

Orange-tips were very numerous when I arrived at Aldbury Nowers, all males busy patrolling. I was probably in double figures within 10 minutes. You only have to see the large swathes of Garlic Mustard to understand why there's such a healthy population here.



I only managed the one distant shot of a male feeding though, I was a little late to catch them waking up.



In the meadows Grizzled Skippers were starting to emerge with a few fresh animals buzzing around. Last year I never managed any proper underside shots so I was rather happy when this one posed for me 😊





And just as happy when another posed on some Wild Strawberry, I like it when I get a butterfly posing with the LHP.



Close by I saw what I thought was an Oxslip, but I think it is most likely a False Oxslip, the Primrose/Cowslip hybrid. An attractive looking plant nonetheless.



On the chalk scrapes at the other end of the reserve several Brimstones were doing their thing and a few Dingy Skippers were enjoying the morning sun.





I'm not sure why the Green-veined White decided to get involved in the Brimstone courtship flight but he stayed with them for as long as they stayed in sight.

On the way to Ivinghoe Beacon I enjoyed the familiar sound of Skylarks overhead, one of whom fluttered quite low above me, they are very loud at close range!



Reaching the Beacon Brimstones were again commonplace and another pair of courting Brimstones fluttered past before flying up high.





Although all the Duke hotspots I'd discovered last year turned up none of my target, I did flush up a very fresh but flighty Red Admiral. It looked to have been a very recent emergent.



An hour later I was back at the nature reserve where Dingy Skipper numbers had increased noticeably and I watched one escape the fangs of death by the skin of its teeth! I didn't notice at the time but you can just make out the legs of the Crab Spider as it sneaked up under the Skipper in the first picture.



It was also starting to cloud over a bit which meant that I had a better chance of snagging an Orange-tip, so I wandered the paths to see if I could find a settled one. Several were still on the wing but one eventually settled right in front of me, the problem now was that the wind had picked up so I was left to point and click away, hoping something would be in focus, luckily the photography Gods were on my side and I came away with a handful.



I was still after a female to photograph this year, having had just the one fly by so far and again the Gods looked kindly on me, a freshly emerged female flew by 10 minutes later and settled long enough for a few snaps rounding of a pleasant day.



I think the females here are only just starting to emerge since I only found 1 egg despite much searching both in the morning and afternoon, give it a week though and I'm sure the Garlic Mustard will be alive with eggs and newly hatched cats!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 10-May-16 05:34 PM GMT

Great airborne sequence, Bugboy. Seems quite a few of us on here are starting to experiment with this kind of shot and you've got a couple of pretty sharp images of those Brimstones.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-May-16 05:45 PM GMT

#### David M wrote:

Great airborne sequence, Bugboy. Seems quite a few of us on here are starting to experiment with this kind of shot and you've got a couple of pretty sharp images of those Brimstones.

Thanks David. I find it helps if they are against the sky otherwise the auto focus struggles to work out what its supposed to be looking at, unless they are really close and filling the frame but I think that would take a whole new level of skill...

### Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlng, 10-May-16 07:22 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

I love those aerial shots of the Brimstones and GVW, nice work.

Had it not been for a family emergency, I would have been at Ivinghoe beacon & Dunstable Downs myself over the weekend on the look out for Dukes. They are obviously not peaking yet.

Regards Kev

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-May-16 07:50 PM GMT

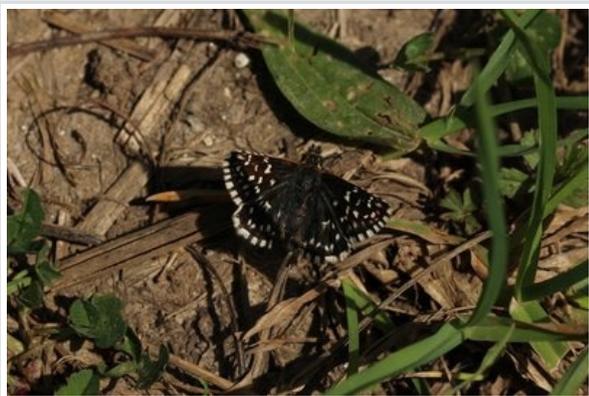
Thanks Kev. Hope everything is well with the family.

Weather's looking to improve again a bit by the end of the week so I may well try again for the Dukes next weekend, that would tie in with my first sighting there last year (16th)

### 8th May, Hutchinsons Bank.

It's good to see everyone else seems to have made the best of our summer before it ended 😊 (I hear its still summer up north!)

So after spending the week out chasing butterflies it was time to do a little bit of housework and award myself some brownie points, but I still managed an afternoon trip to south London. Unfortunately, due to the rather extreme (for the time of year) temperatures most things seemed to be hiding away, the few butterflies I did see were super charged on solar power and only three species sat long enough in front of me to be recorded. Dingy and Grizzled Skippers were both zooming around and a few Peacocks were active. Three Commas seemed to be having a constant battle over a patch of hedgerow and three Small Heath were busy fighting nearby. Along one of the shadier paths a Holly Blue tormented me by following me up and down, settling briefly here and there and occasionally threatening to bask on a leaf...an empty threat each time!





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 10-May-16 07:58 PM GMT

Weather's looking to improve again a bit by the end of the week so I may well try again for the Dukes next weekend, that would tie in with my first sighting there last year (16th)

That's just what I'm going to do if possible weather permitting Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 10-May-16 10:09 PM GMT

A Holly Blue is the worst tease of the butterfly world Bugboy 😊 Hope the weather reporters get it right again this weekend as I've been racking up the Brownie points ready!

Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-May-16 06:56 PM GMT

**9th May, Abbots Wood.**

With pictures of Pearl Bordered Fritillaries flying out of Abbots Wood at a rate of knots over the previous few days It was time to get myself some action, and with the weather deteriorating, also at a rate of knots, sooner rather than later would be wise so it was another early start down into Sussex.

It was a brighter start than I was expecting, and warmer too so my hopes were high that I'd find plenty on the wing. I wandered along the sunlit dappled paths, having regular Orange-tip fly bys. I find it quite comical how they have to stop and investigate anything pale, just in case it is a female. I followed one on his quest and as he stopped off to investigate a white leaf it fluttered back at him. She wasn't interested and for once he got the message, leaving her where she sat long enough for me to grab a few shots. She hung around for a feed before vanishing off into the wood.

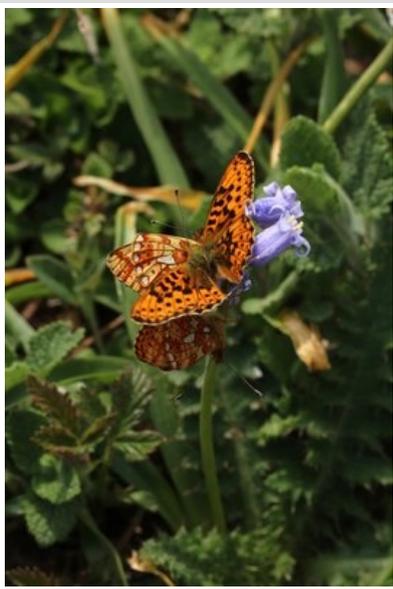


With more OT passing to and fro I set off to the Pearl hot spots, having a good idea of where I was going, when coming out of a side path I saw a familiar hat. I'd seen it the night before with a Peacock perched on top of it. Underneath the hat **Katrina**, along with her sister, was also looking for the Pearls so off we went, getting slightly lost in the process as we chatted and missed the turning.

When we did arrive **Trevor** was already there with two other chaps and as we walked over to say hello, male Pearls flitting low over the ground, he pointed to a mating pair perched on some Bluebells. They weren't in the perfect position but I'm not that fussy, I've never seen a mating pair before anyway.



As I took some pictures another male stopped by to see if he could lend a hand to proceedings, it took a while for him to realise he was actually a spare part!



After a bit I decided to wander off to the previous year's main spot so said my goodbyes and picked my way through the Bluebells back to the path. There wasn't a whole lot going on there when I arrived, I wandered around for a bit and staked out a good patch of Bugle. Two males were active and I disturbed a female who did settle often for me but it wasn't teaming with them like it was last year. Nevertheless, I made the most of what I had and came away with plenty of pictures, the hazy sun helping to enhance the colours. The female and one of the males were quite heavily marked, possibly abs. which I suspect was most likely due to the cold April they would have had to endure as mature caterpillars or pupae.



*female*



*female*



*male*



*male*



*male*



*female*



*female*



*female*



female



female



female



female

enough pictures yet....I got a bit carried away... 😊

As the day wore on clouds thickened but the temperatures remained high enough to keep the males active.

Other life disturbed in my ramblings included this little Common Lizard, I called him 'Stumpy' since he had lost his tail which was only starting to grow back



And a rather handsome Ichneumon.



It was only when it started spitting that I finally decided to go home, stopping occasionally to look for Orange-tip eggs, I only found the one, a freshly laid one.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 11-May-16 10:14 PM GMT

Another superb day by the look of things, Bugboy.

That's a most unusually marked PBF by the way.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 11-May-16 10:23 PM GMT

Melanism in *Boloria* spp. is quite common. Early broods of *Boloria dia* often show extensive blackening and I've seen similar in high altitude *euphrosyne*. I was actually looking out for it this year, as we had snow while the pearlies should have been laying down their pigment in the pupa, but I haven't seen any so far. Those are definitely melanistic individuals, Buggy. It wouldn't surprise me if, as you say, the chilly end to April was responsible.

Guy

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-May-16 10:30 PM GMT

Thanks for the comments. I was actually wondering whether the cold April would produce more abs. than normal with our early emergers and single generation species this year.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-May-16 10:03 AM GMT

12th May, part 1 Abbots Wood.

Whilst Millard was elsewhere finding a Pearl Bordered Fritillary ab. to end all abs. I went back to Abbots Wood to have one final browse of the slightly melanisitic ones there. I wanted to try and get there early enough to find them still a bit drowsy from the night and not bombing around like loons, not easy when I'm relying on public transport but today the weather helped. It was a warm but overcast morning and getting to the main clearing around 10.30 I found them lazily flopping around and trying to bask in the non-existent sun. By the time I left around lunch time the cloud was thickening and they had started to roost again. The non-existent sun also meant I struggled with light levels all morning leading to having to use narrow DoF on most my pictures, oh well.

The first thing that settled in front of me was a very attractive Grizzled Skipper with a generous dusting of pale scales at the base of the forewings...ab?



Other than that a passing male Large White was the only non PBF that was seen all morning, so here's a selection of what was about, some beginning to look a bit aged now but plenty of fresh insects still emerging from the looks of things.







One moth appeared, I think it was a Lesser Treble-bar



As I was leaving I checked some of the Garlic Mustard flower heads and where I only found the one egg two days previously, today virtually every one had an Orange-tip egg which bodes well for next year. There was very little invertebrate life around in general but lurking in amongst the Yellow Archangel I did find a little bush cricket nymph



Next stop the south coast in search of Walls...

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-May-16 08:41 PM GMT

12th May part 2, South Downs Way, Eastbourne

The plan was to move on to another site for the afternoon, looking for Walls down near Eastbourne, so hoping the sun would appear I left Abbots Wood and got the seaside at around 2 under a very warm hazy sun, a complete change from the morning.

There were quite a few Dingy Skippers skipping around, some extremely dark. I've decided after watching them this year that they are 'skippiest' of the Skippers!



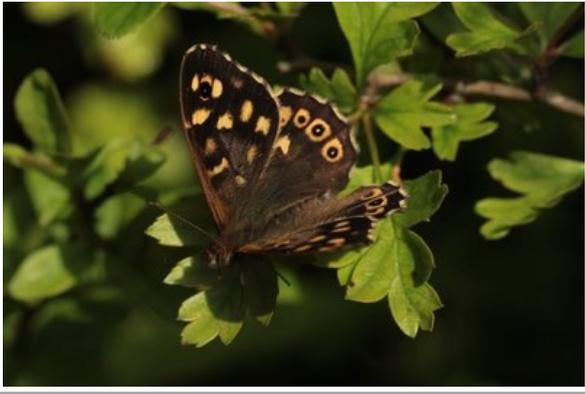
A few Small Heath were also active



And after some searching I finally found some Walls lurking along the same path I'd found them on last year, a few infuriatingly annoying hyperactive males. It's my own fault really, I was attempting to get close to them mid-afternoon on a warm day.



A Speckled Wood made an appearance whilst I was killing time, waiting for the Walls to calm down and showed them how to behave when you have a camera pointing at you...



The Walls paid no attention though... 😊



As the shadows grew longer, Wall Brown Alley began to get shaded out so I followed them as they moved down the slope, discovering an Orchid, Early Purple Orchid I think, and a small colony of Small Copper in the process.



*Early Purple Orchid?*



Now any other time I would have been very happy to have 5 or 6 Small Copper to choose from but I was after the one male Wall that was trying to defend his new bit of territory against anything orange that flew near..... there were a few Small Heath around as well, to further infuriate the Wall, and so by default me!





As 5pm approached I decided I should make a move to get home with a long train journey ahead of me but there was still plenty to see, a male Stonechat singing away in plain view of me across the path



Another Wall doing what they do best...



A female Orange-tip, another Small Copper





and finally a funky looking Bloody-nose Beetle. They move like wind up toys 😄!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 14-May-16 09:14 PM GMT

I'm glad it's not just me who struggles to get near to a Wall... 😊 They are the most frustrating species of all I think. 😞 Those two Dingies shown how variable they are – shades of grey to delicate pinks. Nice shots, Buggy. 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-May-16 10:59 AM GMT

No I think its universal Dave, they're just little gits in general I think!

#### 13th May part 1, Dukes

Today I had two target species, one in the Chilton's and then another down in south London. Itended up being quality rather than quantity and it wasn't until I got to south London late afternoon that I actually broke into double figures.

So first off it was Ivinghoe Beacon for some Duke of Burgundy. The weathermen had promised the cloud would burn off before lunch, but the weather itself had other ideas with a very overcast and windy morning. Nothing whatsoever was flying as I walked through Aldbury Nowers nature reserve and I thought I was going to have a completely butterflyless morning until I noticed a snoozing Orange-tip by the side of the path. I stayed with her for a little while since she was definitely not going anywhere, what a little beauty. I brief chink of sun tempted her to wake up briefly but it was gone before she knew it.



So on to the Beacon. Still no sun and not overly warm meant not a single butterfly was seen. I searched around near the car park for half an hour before wandering down to the sheltered path where again I found....nothing.

For ten minutes I peered closely at the shrubs and turf, hoping to spy a snoozing duke when just as I was leaving a small brown butterfly fluttered past and landed in the grass near my feet. Just like last year my first Duke was a Duchess. She was almost certainly on her maiden flight, her flight was rather weak and as she crash landed in the grass her wings were still very supple.





Every time she tried to flutter to a new spot she seemed to find an even windier perch and struggled to sit in the gale that was whistling along the path. She readily crawled onto my finger so I was able to move her to a more sheltered position where she could relax a bit and bask in what was now thinning clouds.



When I left it had clouded over again so I popped her carefully into the undergrowth, hopefully out of sight from hungry birds. Walking back to the car park I nearly trod on another Bloody-nose Beetle



On my return I easily relocated the Orange-tip. She had moved onto another flower head, presumably during one of the sunny spells that were now occurring. I didn't notice until later there was an egg underneath her.



She instantly came to life when a large gap in the clouds appeared and she fluttered off to feed and bask allowing me a nice variety of shots



So two butterflies in 3 and a half hours! Next stop Hutchinsons Bank

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 15-May-16 12:15 PM GMT

Lovely shots of all the Butterflies Buggy , your so lucky down there, up here we're still waiting for most of them to appear 😊 I went to Brockholes yesterday because Copper's had been seen there, I got a fleeting glance of one, so may be things will get better, I don't think the weather will though over the next week. Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 15-May-16 12:28 PM GMT

You certainly made the most of the PBF's, good stuff. I've also found Wall Browns difficult to approach when it's sunny, they're a bit of a nightmare. Lovely Duchess and female Orange-tip, very hard won by the sound of it!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-May-16 05:26 PM GMT

Thanks **Goldie** 😊 . Things will keep getting better from now on, just have to keep getting out and about

Thanks **Maximus** they did feel hard won but like I said, quality over quantity so still worth the effort. As for Walls, exasperating.... makes it all the more rewarding when you finally do manage to bag a good shot though 😊

#### 13th May part 2, Hutchinsons Bank

So a train/tube/train/tram ride later I arrived at Hutchinsons Bank close to 4, thinking it was too late and I'd tried to fit in too much in one day. On the plus side it was much warmer since the clouds had decided to clear. Checking out all the usual Glanville Fritillary hotspots seemed to confirm my fears, although there was enough butterfly activity to stop me getting to bored: Dingy Skippers and Brimstones were abundant and adding a bit of variety were various Whites, orange-tips, a Grizzlie and a Peacock.



I decided one more walk along the cutting before calling it a day and there it was, my first Glanville of the year, looking as gorgeous as I remember from last year. It was a good little poser in the evening sun and I only lost it when it disturbed a second and I lost sight of them as they tussled off into the distance





A successful day with both targets seen but on balance I'll probably do just one or the other next time!

#### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 15-May-16 06:41 PM GMT

Sounds like a great encounter with the Glanvilles Buggy – I haven't been there before but a visit very soon is quite likely 😊

#### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 15-May-16 08:58 PM GMT

That is what I call a fun packed, well spent day Buggy !  
Lots of species, in difficult conditions just adds to the satisfaction.  
The Glanvilles are on my list, given suitable weather.  
Thanks for the Moth ID.

#### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 15-May-16 10:24 PM GMT

Fantastic set of shots Bugboy 😊 Two trips is always worth it of the experience but a bit of a head ache when it comes to the sorting later! That's one of my excuses anyway 😊😊 Lovely Glannies, I just hope the weather is good next weekend 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

#### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 16-May-16 04:44 PM GMT

Great collection there Buggy, weather's really gone worse here , cold today had to put some heating on 😞 Goldie 😊

#### Re: Bugboys mission

by Susie, 16-May-16 08:02 PM GMT

Your duchess on the cowslips photo is superb! It's been great catching up with your diary. 😊

#### Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 16-May-16 08:29 PM GMT

Beautiful Glanville 😊 without having to catch the ferry 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-May-16 10:47 PM GMT

Thanks everyone, glad I'm providing some entertainment 😊. The funny thing is **Maximus** I used to holiday every year on the loW as a kid but never once when the Glanvilles were on the wing!

### 14th May, Bookham Commons

I was overdue a visit to Bookham and with the end of my fortnight break from work quickly approaching, off I trotted to see if I could find any caterpillars and see if anything was flying. It was a good choice with the chilly wind being cancelled out by the wood allowing the heat from the sun to warm the air nicely. All was quiet as I headed over to the Hairstreak eggs/caterpillars, just a couple of Orange-tip fly bys. Orange-tip eggs littered the Cuckoo Flower but interestingly I found non on the Garlic Mustard which grows alongside it



The empty Brown Hairstreak eggs are still attached, but now the grass is starting to grow up through the small Blackthorn sucker, its near impossible to look for caterpillars without risking dislodging them so for now it's a case of leave well alone. Nearby I found a Soldier Beetle enjoying the sun.



*Cantharis livida*

Also nearby was this Winter-cress *Barbarea vulgaris* on which I found several Orange-tip eggs.



Next I wandered over to where my Purple Hairstreak eggs were. Last time I was here the buds had yet to break, today there was a good 3 or 4 inches' growth. Unfortunately, the blade of grass that I'd tied to note the twig which had survived all winter was now missing. I was unable to locate where they were 😞.

I'd been here well over an hour before I saw my first (and last) Speckled Wood of the day, what a dismal spring they're having!



Next stop, White Admirals: I spent some time searching for caterpillars but all I could find was circumstantial evidence. Plenty of leave nibbling and in the picture below you can clearly see frass on the leaf underneath the eaten shoots. Try as I might though, I just couldn't locate any culprits.



In the absence of anything else I spent some time watching Bee Flies feeding on a large patch of Bugle, managing some half decent in flight shots and also finding a couple of white Bugle flower spikes.





The next thing that made me stop were a couple of female Broad-bodied Chaser Dragonflies



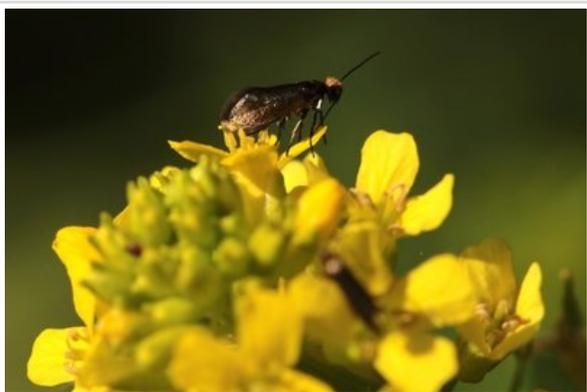
The afternoon continued to warm and Orange-tip numbers increased noticeable becoming the most numerous species seen all day by quite some margin, often taking breaks to feed for my pleasure 😊 .



Rounding a corner, I nearly trod on a Red Admiral which then proceeded to play hide and seek as revenge for my clumsiness!



Back at the Winter-cress I noticed it was covered in these tiny Micro moths *Micropterix calthelia*. A primitive Lep that still has biting mouthparts and feeds on pollen.



One more day to go before work beckons... 🍷

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-May-16 09:18 PM GMT

15th May, Walthamstow Marshes

My last day of freedom before normality returns and being a Sunday I had a well-deserved lie in. Had I got up early I would probably have gone out after Dukes but staying local was the only option for any butterflying. There was a bit of a stiff wind blowing but get out of that and it was pleasantly warm so a few hours wandering my local spot was a nice way to end my hectic fortnight chasing butterflies all over south east England! There was plenty of White activity, Small, Large, GV, Orange-tips and Brimstones all actively patrolling. A male GVW did stop off long enough to record though.



Most excitingly for me though was what has almost become the Holy Grail on my patch this year, my first sightings of Holly Blues here. 3 in total were flying around the Dogwood where they can normally be guaranteed to be found. Only one settled high up feeding on Hawthorn Blossom, better than nothing though!



The Red Campion is coming into flower now, a sure sign that spring will soon be coming to an end and Summer's just around the corner. I very nearly managed a female Orange-tip feeding on it but she just didn't sit long enough.



A Small White settled near me when there was a brief interlude from sunshine and I managed to nab a couple of shots of a male Orange-tip when he was tempted by some flowering Rape.



Returning to the Dogwood, one of the Holly Blues was now fluttering low down and settled to bask regularly and lay the occasional egg, a beautiful female. At last some open winged views, the first all year 😊, but she made it very difficult for me, staying in the windiest patch right next to a main path 😊. So battling against the wind, the usual busy Sunday traffic of walkers and cyclists (with me feeling particularly self-conscious kneeling down taking close-up pictures of a hedge 😊) it's a miracle anything came out.





The wind finally got the better of her and I lost her in the hedge only to see another Orange-tip stop by to feed just long enough for one snap.



To finish a rather satisfying day a somewhat tatty Peacock allowed a couple of pictures.



Only a few hours but my patch certainly came up trumps for me 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 17-May-16 11:04 PM GMT

Definitely trumps that Holly Blue shot is lush 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-May-16 12:39 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, I was very happy to finally get a Holly Blue here 😊.

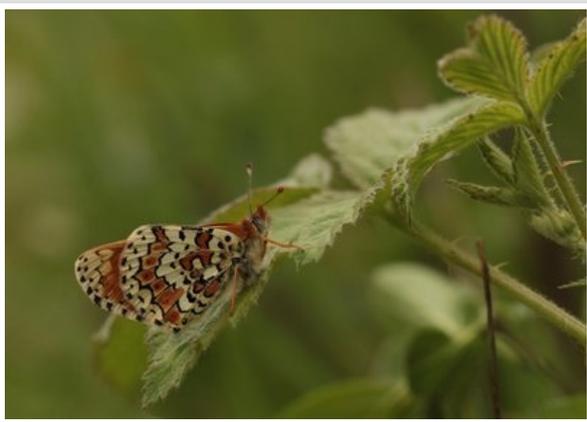
### 17th May, Hutchinsons Bank

Normality resumes in Bugboys world which means a half day on Tuesday and if the sun is shining an afternoons butterflying. All morning at work the sun was out and I had already planned another trip to see the Glanvilles with around 50 reportedly on the wing the previous day. By lunchtime however the sun seemed to be vanishing rapidly and by the time I arrived at the site the sky was various shades of grey as far as the eye could see. The weather forecast had failed me completely!

Well I was here now anyway so I made my way to the cutting where they are currently all emerging to find a couple of people with a single roosting Glanville, one of whom turned out to be our very own Vince.



The Glanville did try to bask when the cloud thinned occasionally but for the most part he sat quietly and I was able to get some shots of the stunning underside.



All was quiet so I decided to go for a little wander, hoping something would appear. I disturbed one more Fritillary which flew off out of sight, was buzzed by a Dingy Skipper and a couple of Brimstone were active but little else was seen so after half an hour I made my way back to find Mr Sp0ck with another butterfly standing over a Glanville. It could have been the same one as before and it did occasionally open its wings, more out of desperation than any real attempt to soak up the non existant sun.



Over a period of an hour we managed to locate 2 more roosting Glanvilles along the cutting so we were able to get plenty of underside pictures.





and some rather cute head on shots





It wasn't until gone 4 that we were spoilt with a whole 10 minutes of blue sky. The temperature noticeably rose and as if by magic the Fritillaries suddenly came to life with 6 or so flying around within a couple of minutes.





So after 3 hours, not quite the Glanville experience I had hoped for but at least I didn't leave empty handed. With the potential for hundreds emerging in the coming days though, we really do need the weather to improve so they can get on with the business making more Fritillaries for 2017!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by MrSpOck, 18-May-16 01:06 PM GMT

The sun came out a few times later on, and there was a bit of flying until 5.30pm when they vanished to roost for the next few days by the look of it. We have noticed before that they often shelter under bramble leaves etc in rain, a very good umbrella.

It was good to see so many UK Butterfly people as well.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 18-May-16 03:17 PM GMT

I actually think the weather was in your favour Buggy as you managed to get some really interesting shots from unusual angles, which I think you would have been hard pushed to achieve if it had been totally sunny and they had all been zooming around. Even, though it was quite cloudy when I visited I really struggled to get an underside shot, which in my opinion is more attractive than the upperside so well done.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-May-16 07:30 PM GMT

Yea I was walking up to the tram stop when it got sunny again and I was half tempted to turn around and go back but was getting on, oh well next time 😊

I agree the weather was on my side to get the shots I got in the end **Pauline** but what I was really after for the afternoon was to be able to stand and watch as several dozen flew around me. I would have been just as happy with fewer pictures had I got that but its churlish to complain too much when dealing with British weather 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Susie, 19-May-16 09:09 PM GMT

You'll have to go back, Bugboy, weather permitting!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 20-May-16 10:26 PM GMT

An excellent set of shots Bugboy 🤩👍 – when the weather has been as changeable as it has recently you have to be thankful for any butterflies 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-May-16 12:59 PM GMT

Yes I will won't I Susie, tough life innit 😊

Thanks Wurzel, looking forward to seeing your report of your morning here, you certainly lucked out with the weather if it was anything like it was in north London (where I was working 😊😊)

### 24th May part 1, Hutchinsons Bank

A whole week since my last outing chasing butterflies so today was all about catching up on a few species I hadn't yet ticked of this year. Happily this meant I was able to spend a few hours in the morning playing with the Glanvilles again. I got there before they were up, indeed before most things were up, just a few Dingies enjoying the early morning sun.

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One of my Targets today was the Small Blue so I checked out a few places I'd seen them last year and low and behold a female fluttered down in front of me, species #21 of the year. It seemed too early to bask so she just sat there with her wings closed.

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The second one I found did half-heartedly attempt to open its wings but it seemed to decide it was still too early in the day despite the cloudless blue sky.

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Elsewhere I found other inhabitants warming up for the day's exhortations or just hanging around waiting for breakfast to deliver itself!

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[http://s1178.photobucket.com/user/Paul\\_Atkin/media/IMG\\_2757\\_zpsyipfug5.jpg.html](http://s1178.photobucket.com/user/Paul_Atkin/media/IMG_2757_zpsyipfug5.jpg.html)

Returning to the cutting I found a Grizzled warming up

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Followed by MrsPock and then the Fritillaries started appearing. This is the first time I've been here early enough to catch them waking up and as you would expect they are much easier to get close to. I spent the following hour with them and several other butterflies

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[http://s1178.photobucket.com/user/Paul\\_Atkin/media/IMG\\_2843\\_zpsbn5nzhis.jpg.html](http://s1178.photobucket.com/user/Paul_Atkin/media/IMG_2843_zpsbn5nzhis.jpg.html)

When you know where to look, they're quite easy to sex, below is a female with a rather swollen, egg filled abdomen

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and here we have a male with a slenderer, longer abdomen tipped off with some orange tufts

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[http://s1178.photobucket.com/user/Paul\\_Atkin/media/IMG\\_2867\\_zpsn9kixdti.jpg.html](http://s1178.photobucket.com/user/Paul_Atkin/media/IMG_2867_zpsn9kixdti.jpg.html)

[http://s1178.photobucket.com/user/Paul\\_Atkin/media/IMG\\_2869\\_zpsmwgsedmq.jpg.html](http://s1178.photobucket.com/user/Paul_Atkin/media/IMG_2869_zpsmwgsedmq.jpg.html)

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I went for another wander, looking for more Small Blues mainly, but although a few were around I never saw any more myself. I did find a very well posed Brimstone though

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And my second 2016 newbie of the day, a male Common Blue #22

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[http://s1178.photobucket.com/user/Paul\\_Atkin/media/IMG\\_2983\\_zpsiovjtkvk.jpg.html](http://s1178.photobucket.com/user/Paul_Atkin/media/IMG_2983_zpsiovjtkvk.jpg.html)

I also found the first Glanville to have emerged in the main scrape at the far end of the site so this time next week there should be a good number whizzing around here

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I left at lunchtime for my next destination of the day with clouds now beginning to muster overhead.

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## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-May-16 07:26 PM GMT

### 24th May part 2

So next I was off to Denbies. After Seeing Millerds post last week with Adonis I wanted to go see them myself. The clouds had most definitely mustered by the time I arrived. Barely a cloud could be seen when I arrived at HB in the morning, now I was hard pushed to find a chink of blue sky 😊.

There did seem to be a fair bit of activity but none of it was butterflies at first, in fact I'm pretty sure there were more day flying moths than butterflies.

5-spot Burnets were about in numbers



I found a Treehopper, *Centrotus cornutus*, Something I've never seen before. Very difficult to photograph since it constantly crawls round the twig to hide from you once it knows it's been spotted.



I found this wasp (I presume of a parasitoid type) lurking in a nettle bed whilst searching for Peacock/Small Tort caterpillars who had been feeding here. Any surviving ones it would seem had gone off to pupate.



Nearby was this tiny little micro running around like a mad thing on a nettle leaf. It's probably *Stigmella aurella* but there are apparently many similar species.



It was 10 minutes before I saw a butterfly, a male Adonis attempting to absorb some warmth and as I got my eye in they started popping out here and there, although not in huge numbers, some basking whilst others were roosting. In the occasional sunny spell 3 or 4 would take to the air, the odd

female looking for somewhere to lay.





As I walked along the odd Small Heath would flutter by with no intent of stopping but the Adonis seemed intent on trying to bask whenever there was the merest hint of sun.



As I said moths were numerous with several species remaining unidentified. Other more familiar ones were doing their best butterfly impressions as usual, Burnet Companions and Mother Shiptons among them.



*Mother Shipton*



*Small Purple-barred*

Much searching finally got me my final target for the day, #24 the Brown Argus. Just the one was found and rather annoyingly my battery run out just as it settled in front of me. It was a particularly fine looking insect so after frantically swapping batteries I managed a couple of shots before he flew off over the hedge.



I eventually found a few Small Heaths who were willing to allow photos, mainly because they were roosting!



Some otherwise occupied 5-spot Burnets



And as I was leaving this poor thing crawled out of the undergrowth by the path. Its wings too badly deformed for it to fly 😞



Happily he was in the minority with most looking in tip top condition 😊



### Re: Bugboys mission

by kevlng, 25-May-16 07:44 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

Love the Adonis Blue shots from Denbies, especially image 3. But my favorite is the 5 spot burnet.  
Just a couple of days from getting my butterflying year going in earnest. Everyone's photos are making me chomp at the bit.

Regards Kev

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 25-May-16 10:02 PM GMT

Great sequence of Adonis Bugboy, I've still to see them (an blooming BAs) this year. Particularly like the more distant shots placing the butterfly in the habitat 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 25-May-16 11:04 PM GMT

Lovely Adonis, the lack of sun probably did you a favour.  
Adonis are very quick when they are warmed up. I've still to find my first one.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 26-May-16 08:23 PM GMT

Love the Adonis Bugboy, you've really caught their beautiful colour, I also like your photo of the Dingy skipper great! Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 27-May-16 11:44 PM GMT

Yes, lovely Adonis, Buggy - I see one of your females was fairly blue like the ones I saw. Another trip to Denbies may have to be fitted in somewhere soon... 😊

Dave

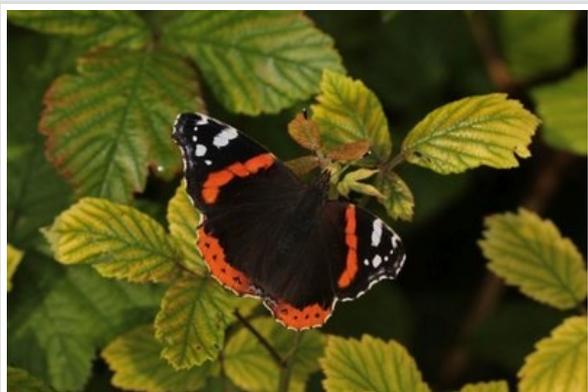
### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-May-16 10:10 PM GMT

Thank you all 😊

#### 28th May part 1

A last minute decision saw me visiting Malling Down in Sussex, in search of Walls and hopefully some more Adonis. It was mostly cloudy but the forecast had promised a bit of sun.... the weather itself however decided to ignore the forecast for the morning. Small Heaths were relatively common and not put off by the lack of sun and neither did what seems to be a fresh emergence of home bred Red Admirals, one of whom sat long enough for a few pictures.



The only other species active were a few flighty Dingy Skippers

Due to the lack of butterflies there now follows a brief interlude showcasing other species that were enjoying life lurking in the hedgerows.



*Burnet Companion*



*Leaf Beetle Cryptocephalus sp.*



*female Scorpionfly*





*male Scorpionfly*

There were probably 2 species of Scorpionfly about today, the ones above most likely being the commonest species *Panorpa communis* whereas the one below is most likely *Panorpa cognata*, noticeably smaller with less heavy spotting on the wings.



*Pill Woodlouse (Armadillidium vulgare)*



*Sawfly (Rhodogaster sp.)*



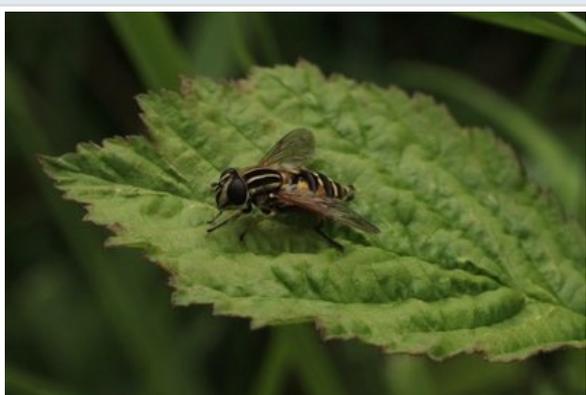
*Hoverfly (Xanthogramma pedissequum)*



*Hoverfly (Xanthogramma pedissequum)*



*Green lacewing*



*Hoverfly (Helophilus pendulus)*



*Cardinal Beetle (Pyrochroa serraticornis)*

Breaking up the monotony of greyness the sun appeared for 5 minutes, waking up a few Common Blues a Green Hairstreak and a Brown Argus along with several Cinnabar Moths





After that it decided to rain and just for good measure a little rumble of thunder was thrown in for fun! So much for dry with sunny intervals.

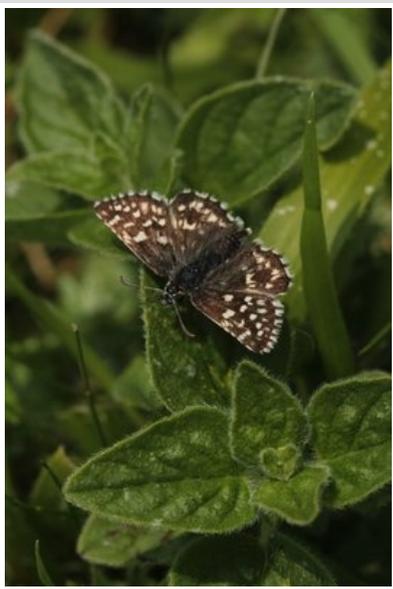
Rather than go home though I decided to risk a trip down to the coast and see if the Walls were still active along 'Wall Brown Alley'... apparently it was sunny down in Eastbourne... according to the same forecast that made no mention of the thunder storm currently above me!

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 31-May-16 07:04 PM GMT

**28th May** part 2

So down in Eastbourne the sun was indeed out, hazy sun but not a proper cloud in sight. On the downs Small Heaths and Dingy Skippers were very active and I also disturbed a Grizzled Skipper.



The Small Heaths were far too active to get close to but the Dingies were a little more willing to pose and I found this little stunner, proving they are anything but 'dingy'!



There were a fair few aerial scraps and I did attempt a few action shots, not as easy to capture as Brimstones, but you can just make out the extended proboscis of the one on the right.



A few more very fresh Red Admirals were on the wing here but all seemed intent on playing hide and seek in dense Nettle beds. Wearing shorts, I decided not to join in the game!

A female Common Blue fluttered past and settled for me shortly followed by a rather battle worn Small Heath.



A few minutes later a target species finally showed up. A female Wall going about the business of laying eggs in between basking. I managed several pictures but every one was varying degrees of blurred due to the shutter spooking her every time, this is the least blurred I managed!



I heading towards 'Wall Brown Alley', up a slope carpeted in Horseshoe Vetch where several Blues were enjoying the flowers, not a single Adonis amongst the Commons though.



I made my way over to the spot where last time I found several Small Coppers. Today there was just a single one but my attention was quickly drawn to a larger orange butterfly that landed close to me. This Wall was surprisingly unfazed by my attentions, even when I used flash to try and mask the grass shadows, he just sat quietly and fluttered off in his own time 😊.



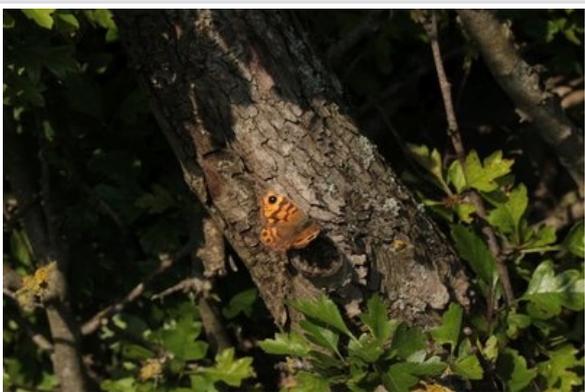
I decided to make this Mother Shipton an honorary butterfly for the day on account of its perfect condition.



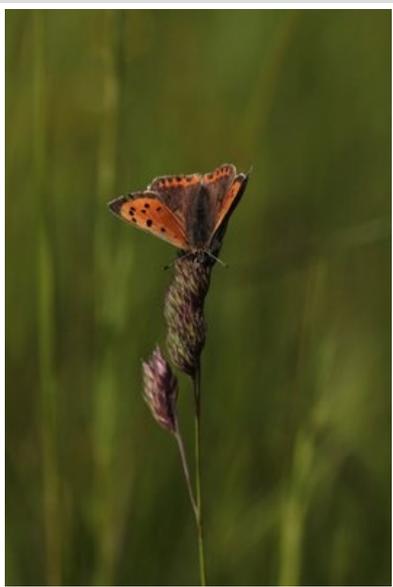
But up on the 'Alley' normality resumed, with the resident Walls as flighty as usual. I spent about half an hour failing miserably to get close, not helped by all the weekend strollers and hikers.



I decided to relocate the Copper and was pleased to get another chance at grabbing a few shots of another female Wall (or should that be a 'Tree'), this one looking somewhat more worse for wear than the first one.



The Copper was still about and posed long enough for me to experiment with a variety of camera settings.



Walking back to the station a large dark butterfly flew around my head, I thought another Red Admiral until it settled. Not a bad looking Peacock considering it's probably close to 10 months old now.

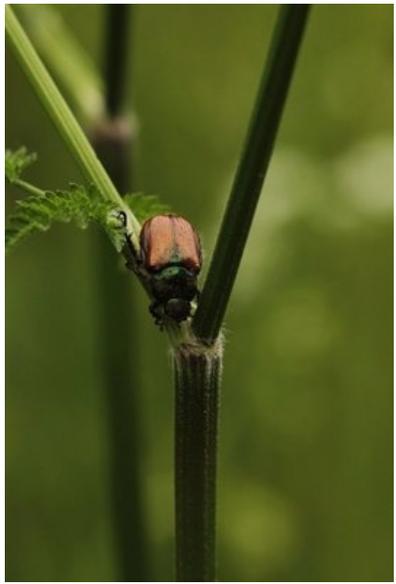


## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 01-Jun-16 06:25 PM GMT

29th May part 1

Another day which started out a bit average but ended up a bit epic, 8 hours in the field. With the previous days questionable forecast fresh in my mind I packed a coat and left for the Chiltons in search of some Dukes, having only seen the one individual so far this year. Arriving at 10 under a blanket of grey clouds with a stiff chilly wind whistling along I checked my phone for when the sun was due to arrive. I was promised sunny spells in an hour and from noon clear blue skies. I took another look at the sky, put my coat on and wandered along a bridleway at Aldbury Nowers seeing how the Orange-tip breeding was going. Lots of eggs and early stage cats littered the Garlic Mustard and as I got my eye in various other inhabitants started to show themselves.



*Garden Chafer (Phyllopertha horticola)*



*Longhorn Moth (Cautas rufimitrella I think)*



*A Sawfly of some description (Nematus sp.?)*



*2nd instar I think*



*1st instar preparing to moult*

Hoping the sun would appear and wake up some Blues and Skippers I took my time here, no point rushing to the Duke site under the blanket of clouds. 11 o'clock passed without a hint of blue sky and checking my phone it had been put back an hour. More inhabitants were found lurking in the undergrowth but still nothing flying



*24 spot Ladybird (Subcoccinella vigintiquatuorpunktata)*



*Longhorn Moth (Nematopogon swammerdamella)*



*Rock Rose was in full flower everywhere*



*Some friendly weevils (Phyllobius sp.)*



*Jumping Spider*

Close to noon (and yes still not a hint of sun), I caught a glimpse of something silvery in the grass and closer inspection revealed a perfect tiny Small Blue. I spent a bit of time with her, she wasn't going anywhere after all.





Leaving her I took one step and found my second butterfly, a male Common Blue roosting. A couple of snaps of him later I noticed sat in between the two Blues a third butterfly, a Brown Argus also roosting. Now I'm not one for moving butterflies to 'manufacture' the perfect picture, much preferring making do with what I'm given but occasionally I make an exception...



After a few of these two I thought what the hell, might as well make it a hatrick. They were all very well behaved and all settled down to continue roosting when I'd finished with them.



A quick check of my phone discovered what I already suspected, the promised sun was again put back another hour. Fingers crossed it would be a little brighter than when I arrived at Ivinghoe Beacon....

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-16 10:47 PM GMT

A great sequence of comparative shots Buggy 😊 Looking forward to seeing the next installment. Nice to know I'm not the only one still posting about May in June 😊😂

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Jun-16 09:20 PM GMT

Only Just Wurzel, only just 😊 anyway, here's the next instalment 😊

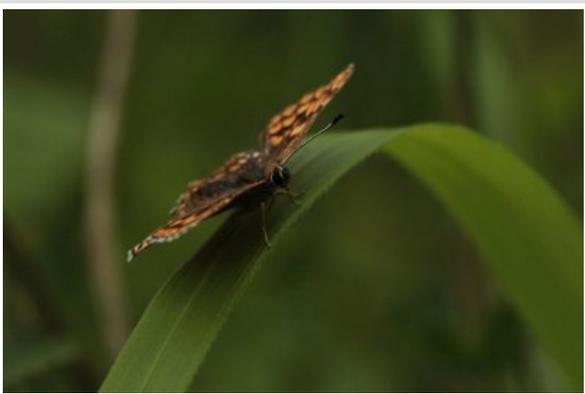
29th May part 2

It was gone 1 by the time I got to the Duke site and still no sun. My phone app was suggesting I may catch a glimpse of it at 2 but it had given up all hope of clear blue skies now.

I wandered around the car park area at Ivinghoe Beacon but found nothing so I moved on to the gully. I'd all but given up when a battered male fluttered past and basked under the grey sky.

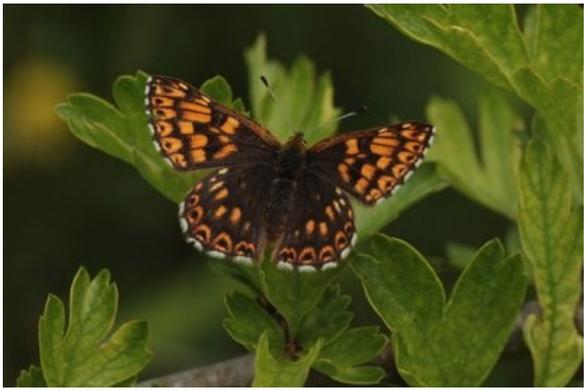


I did a quick search on the cowslips and discovered 3 eggs and then a female appeared as well.





Remarkably the cloud seemed to be thinning at this point and a further two, both fresher, made appearances and posed nicely for me.



It was now 2.30 and at last I had a few small patches of blue sky which had the desired effect. I moved on to the next patch of scrub where Dukes hang out and was finally getting the experience I had left the flat for. Double figures were now flitting around as well as a few other species and I spent about an hour and half chasing and watching these characterful little butterflies go about their business. For the second year I also found a fresh female taking in mineral salts.

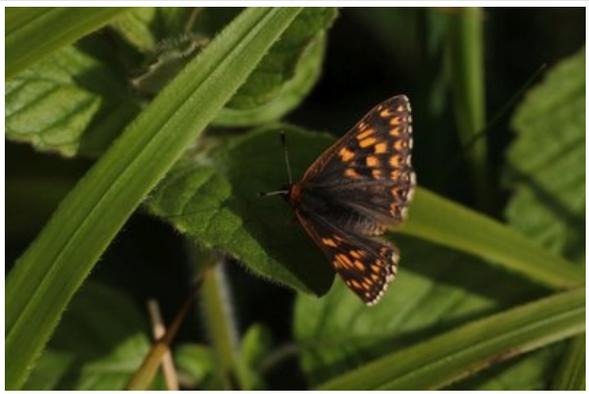
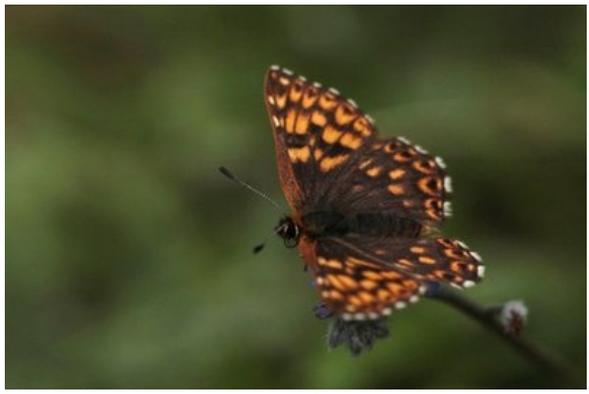
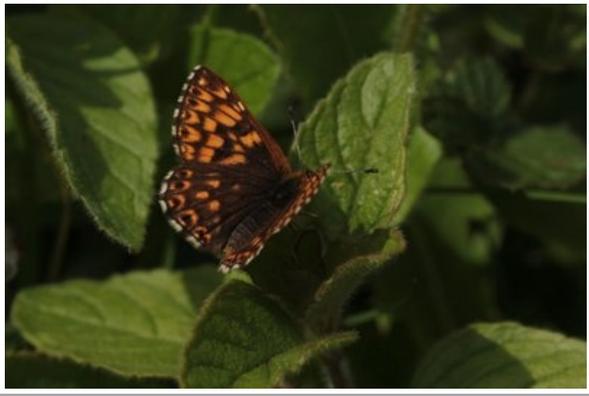


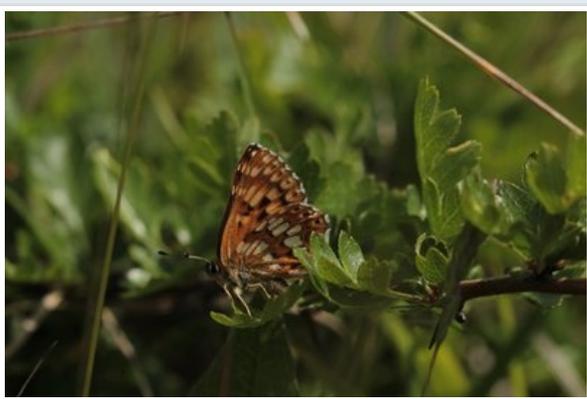


*The only static Green Hairstreak I saw helpfully landed in the middle of a bramble thicket!*



*Mud-puddling female*





Only the walk back to the train station to go now...

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 02-Jun-16 10:46 PM GMT

It's quite a trek from Tring station to Ivinghoe if that's what you did, Buggy – but it really seems to have been worth it for the variety you saw. 😊  
There's much more about than when I was there a few weeks ago.

Dave

## Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 02-Jun-16 10:55 PM GMT

### millerd wrote:

It's quite a trek from Tring station to Ivinghoe if that's what you did, Buggy –

A walk I did many times, back in the 80s and 90s. Well, once a year, anyway, to enjoy the Dukes and little blues. But I'm pretty sure I didn't see grizzled skippers there in those days. I went to Aston Rowant and Whitecross Green for those – and came across them occasionally in bits of Bernwood Forest. Either the grizzlies have spread or I wasn't so good at spotting them back then.

I used to see a few sporadic Dukes on the walk itself, between Ivinghoe Beacon and Tring.

Guy

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Jun-16 10:59 PM GMT

### millerd wrote:

It's quite a trek from Tring station to Ivinghoe if that's what you did, Buggy – but it really seems to have been worth it for the variety you saw. 😊

There's much more about than when I was there a few weeks ago.

Dave

It is indeed Dave, a trek I've done many times now. at a stiff hiking pace it's about an hour but I do tend to dawdle and wander so anything from 2 to 4 hours but it's always worth it. If nothing else you get some great views 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Jun-16 11:05 PM GMT

### Padfield wrote:

#### millerd wrote:

It's quite a trek from Tring station to Ivinghoe if that's what you did, Buggy –

A walk I did many times, back in the 80s and 90s. Well, once a year, anyway, to enjoy the Dukes and little blues. But I'm pretty sure I didn't see grizzled skippers there in those days. I went to Aston Rowant and Whitecross Green for those – and came across them occasionally in bits of Bernwood Forest. Either the grizzlies have spread or I wasn't so good at spotting them back then.

I used to see a few sporadic Dukes on the walk itself, between Ivinghoe Beacon and Tring.

Guy

There are a few sheltered pockets of what to my eye's look like good Duke habitat along the route, riddled with Cowslip and well sheltered from the wind but despite much searching I've seen no sign of them, Grizzlies on the other hand are present in these spots, if in very small numbers. Dukes used to occur at Aldbury Nowers Nature Reserve as well (10 minute walk from Tring station) but sadly not anymore.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Jun-16 06:07 PM GMT

29th May part 3

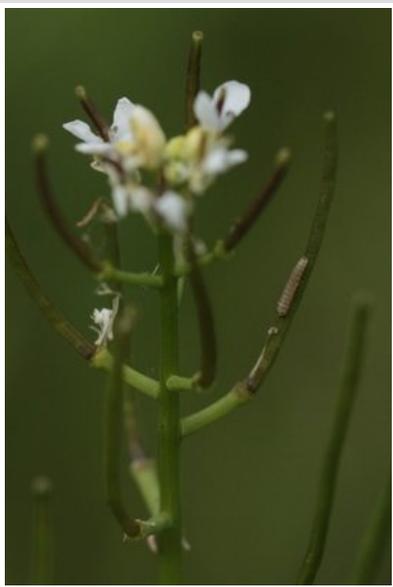
So after getting a good dose of Duke (and Duchess) action it was time to make a move. Now that the sun was out I was hoping I'd find some active Blues on my return although it was getting a bit late. En-route I did find a single Brown Argus and I watched a male Common Blue work his magic on a female (it took about 10 seconds for her to fall under his spell) but arriving at the spot where I'd found the 3 Lycids that morning there wasn't a sniff of anything resembling a butterfly. The only invertebrate to catch my eye was a Snail-eating Beetle casually wandering along.



On my back to the station I stopped off to check on the Orange-tip caterpillar that was poised to moult that morning (see part 1) and found him now sitting happily in his new skin.



As I walked along Orange-tip eggs and caterpillars were popping out before my eyes, at least twenty of each before I stopped counting. All the caterpillars were either 1st or 2nd instar.



Adults are still active here, this male was looking for a roosting spot but the sun kept waking him up when it peeked out from behind a cloud and whilst getting some shots of him I found myself another 6 legged lifer, a very handsome Wasp Beetle.





Despite the weathers best attempt at ruining my trip, it turned out to be rather a good day in the end 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 04-Jun-16 10:33 PM GMT

It looks like you had a cracking day Bugboy with some beautifully marked Dukes – especially in the penultimate Duke shot 😊 That's what I'll remember most about the spring of 2016 – having to cram as much as possible in when you can!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Jun-16 09:51 AM GMT

Yes it does to have been a very condensed spring doesn't it 😊

#### 6/6/16 Bentley Wood

An almost painfully early start (leaving the flat at 6am and I'm not a morning person) saw me heading deep into Wurzel country in search of the season's first lifer, the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary. The weather was again on my side with the lead up to this week off being a bit pants and then suddenly hot and sunny again.

I managed to get to the famous eastern clearing just after 10, after getting somewhat lost with various footpaths determined to lead me the wrong way but once I was on the main track through the centre of the wood it was easy. A couple of butterflyers were already there but nothing had been seen despite it already being very warm. I wandered around for a little while, seeing the occasional orangey butterfly flitting off in the distance (I suspected they were Pearls as they looked rather washed out) and was pleased to see, for the first time this year, what I would say were usual numbers of Speckled

Woods rather than the odd one here and there.



I finally managed to catch up on one of those orangey butterflies I'd seen and indeed it was an aged PBF. It was engrossed in feeding so I took advantage whilst waiting for its smaller cousins to appear.



A little while later I heard a shout and was waved over as I approached the two butterflies. They had found a freshly emerged female who was being very well behaved so here's my very first SPBF.





When she did fly it was obvious her wings hadn't fully hardened, she was very floppy.

After getting my fill of my first SPBF I wandered off again and found a surprisingly well behaved Speckled Yellow and another PBF

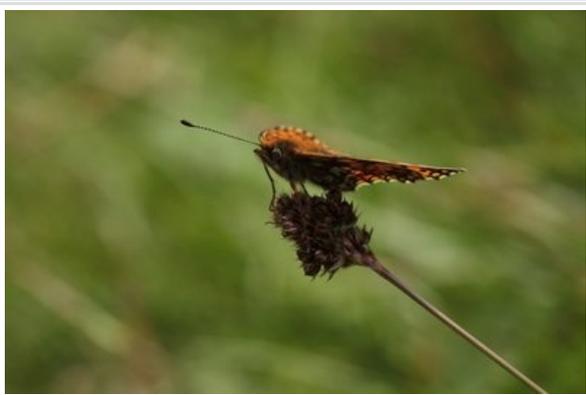


I found a wasp doing something with a blob (it didn't seem to be trying to harm it and I wondered whether it was moving it's larvae for some reason, seems unlikely but I couldn't come up with any other theory) and a Mullein Moth Caterpillar.





SPBF were now quite active with perhaps half a dozen flitting around, all looking very fresh when I noticed a female sat quietly, whofting pheromones around. She looked very fresh again and was probably now older than a few hours. I filled my boots with her from all angles and as I was allowing another photographer a go, out of the bushes popped none other than Neil 'the butterfly whisperer' Hulme. I waved him over and (this probably doesn't happen very often) pointed out a Fritillary to him.





As we chatted a couple of males flitted by, oblivious to the female's presence but with the Butterfly Whisperer standing next to me I had high hopes we would get some action very soon. We did, the third fly by saw the male zone in immediately on the female, and with virtually no courtship, baby SPBF were being made before us.





The place was now filling up with butterflies and word soon spread that a mating pair were displaying well. It was rather amusing how an orderly queue began to form for their attention, only in Britain!

If anything, by the afternoon it was probably too hot for them and any that were flying were supercharged so I decided it was time to make a move. I did find a rather lovely Carpet Moth, not sure what species it is but I'm leaning towards the Wood Carpet *Epirrhoe rivata*?



A great day, well worth the stupid O'clock early start and not even ruined by tripping over on the walk back to the station into a bed of nettles!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 07-Jun-16 01:47 PM GMT

That kind of early start isn't quite so painful when the sun is shining – and when you get to see Small Pearls for the first time. Lovely shots, especially the pair. Things like that do seem to happen with Neil around. 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 07-Jun-16 08:16 PM GMT

Great shots Bugboy 😊 – sorry the other bit of info didn't pay off – Alan Thornbury mentions it on his Blog 😞

I read a report from the same day at Bentley on the Hampshire sightings page and it seems that the 'organised' queuing didn't last long and someone even tried to move it to get a better shot 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Jun-16 08:37 PM GMT

**Wurzel wrote:**

Great shots Bugboy 😊 – sorry the other bit of info didn't pay off – Alan Thornbury mentions it on his Blog 😞

I read a report from the same day at Bentley on the Hampshire sightings page and it seems that the 'organised' queuing didn't last long and someone even tried to move it to get a better shot 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

I just looked it up and had a read. That's really p\*\*\*\*\* me off, they caused the pair to split up just to get a better picture, morons 😞

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Jun-16 09:53 PM GMT

7/6/16 Walthamstow Marshes

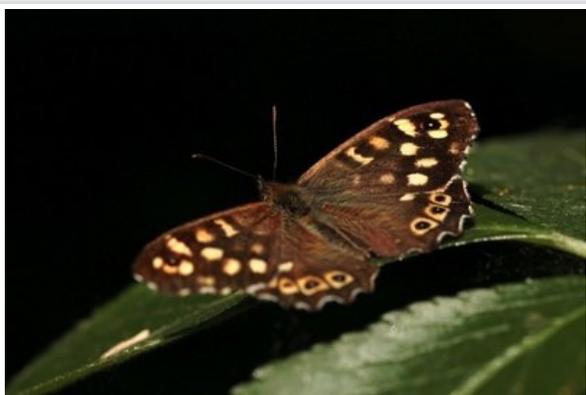
After yesterday's long day I took a well-earned lay in and went for an afternoon stroll on my much-neglected local patch, hoping to notch up a few of the commoner species for the year, top of the list was the Large Skipper. Things started off quietly with just a Small White lazily fluttering around. I did find a nest of caterpillars on some nettles, given the time of year I'm guessing they're Peacock but I can confirm what Aglais they are in a week or two.



Not long after this a pale orangey butterfly caught my eye feeding in some Dogwood and once I got a clear view I found I was looking at my first Painted Lady of the year. It never came down but I managed a few decent record shots.



I found a Speckle holding a territory in a usual spot and a few Holly Blues were flitting along the hedgerows.



Next I found another (or perhaps the same) Painted Lady, this time obsessed with feeding up on Bramble blossom nectar. She was a little flighty but never flew too far away although she did insist on staying near the centre of the thicket for most the time. I could tell it was a female by the almost spherical abdomen!



At least 3 Holly Blues were active here, things seemed to be looking up after a very slow start for this species on my local patch. This was further proved when I came across half a dozen or so flitting not far away. 2 of them were actively ovipositing females on an unknown legume. I'm pretty sure I've identified it in the past but can't for the life of me remember, although Goat's-rue *Galega officinalis* does ring a bell. I'm sure I can work it out when it flowers.



Every now and again a male would stumble on one of the females but he was quickly sent packing.



It was starting to cloud over but it stayed very warm and muggy and I was pleased to find a few male Common Blues active with a Latticed Heath nearby.



Crossing the river Lea onto Hackney Marshes I wandered through a few patches of set aside grassland, thick with Oxe-eye Daisies and Birds-foot Trefoil. Here several very fresh Common Blues were active as well as a couple of older Brown Argus.



One of the Common Blues had unfortunately come a cropper but it was interesting to note how it's presence attracted the attention of the others, several times they would come over and feed after getting no reaction from the now deceased Blue.



A few Damselflies were about, this one being of the Blue-tailed variety *Ishnura elegans*



But the most exciting moment came shortly before I decided to make a move at the distant rumble of thunder. This is the first Small Heath I've seen here in the 7 years it's been my local patch, let's hope it's the first of many!



A pleasant and relaxing afternoon although rather surprising not to have seen any Large Skippers.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 07-Jun-16 10:00 PM GMT

Your trip out was not unlike mine, Buggy – no Large Skippers here either! Good to see those Holly Blues active still as well, and laying on all sorts of things. I like those action shots, and you managed to track down the egg as well. 😊

Dave

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Jun-16 10:03 PM GMT

### millerd wrote:

Your trip out was not unlike mine, Buggy – no Large Skippers here either! Good to see those Holly Blues active still as well, and laying on all sorts of things. I like those action shots, and you managed to track down the egg as well. 😊

Dave

It wasn't too hard to track down Dave, it was the egg being laid in the previous picture 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 09-Jun-16 06:48 PM GMT

8/6/16 one site too many

Today was another attempt at getting a few more of the commoner species on my yearly tally so I went off to Surrey. My first stop was Bookham. It was quite cloudy but in the occasional sunny interval Speckled Woods were active.



The Blackthorn sucker my Brown Hairstreaks spent the winter on is now swamped in grass but I did find the Winter-cress which was laden in Orange-tip eggs on my last visit, today it was laden in Orange-tip caterpillars, 6 easily found



On my way to White Admiral Towers I found a nice Hoverfly



*Leucozona lucorum*

But my quest to find a post hibernation WA cat still draws a blank. I'm sure they are there laughing at me, there was still lots of freshly nibbled leaves but I couldn't find a single culprit, Admiral or otherwise.

To prove that my eye's do work though, on my way back I saw this little fella, approx. 2mm in length, perched on top of some Nettle flowers.



*Micropterix aruncella*

Next stop was Box Hill, only my second visit this year. Common Blues were living up to their name, being rather common (and being all males, rather blue). Sadly they weren't stopping for man nor beast, the sun had come out and it had gone from very pleasant to very sweaty in a matter of seconds. I was taking a few orchid snaps to pass the time when a target species flopped by. It's not often I see my first Meadow Brown before my first Large Skipper.





Small Heaths were as uncooperative as the blues and the one snap I did get was about to be binned when I noticed it was an ab. a partial double eyespot, shame I didn't notice earlier or I would have been a bit more persistent!



A holly Blue and a few more Speckled Woods later and I come down to Zigzag Road where the Silver-spotted Skippers hang out. I was hoping to find some Small Blues here since I've only seen 3 or 4 so far this year but the first thing to catch my eye was a tiny golden orange missile. My first Large Skipper gave me the run-around and I only managed a handful of record shots.



Next I found myself the centre of attention and made myself a new BFF. The mud from Bookham seemed especially tasty



As did my sweat



And even my camera, I just couldn't get rid of him and he even sat on my hand when I went off after another Large Skipper. I finally left him in the sun



And found myself a remarkable well behaved Small Heath



Some slightly less active Common Blues (he didn't get anywhere)



An aged Brown Argus



And Twyblades being pollinated.



Final stop of the day was Denbies and I was glad of the shade as I walked along the North Downs Way. I was also pleased to see Speckled woods in numbers, I've missed seeing sparring males swirling up into the canopy



A few more Meadow Browns were learning how to fly in the sun



And then I arrived at Denbies at almost exactly the same time as a huge thunder cloud. The sun disappeared, rumbles were heard, I weighed up the possibilities of it passing against the risk of me wandering across a hillside with a metallic thing draped around my neck, I put on my rain coat and arrived at Box Hill train station an hour later somewhat wet, oh well 😊.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-16 10:47 PM GMT

That Small Heath is remarkably well behaved all the ones I'm finding are gone soon as look at them, they're working their way back to 'most annoying butterfly' status in my book! 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 09-Jun-16 11:29 PM GMT

Some excellent images there, Bugboy. I like the different 'slant' you incorporate – a little more context, a little less butterfly!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 10-Jun-16 06:43 AM GMT

Great accounts of your findings in your recent posts Buggy (as usual 😊). Your diary is always such an interesting and informative read. Re WA cats, I suspect many are (or are preparing to be) pupa by now. I have found many WA cats in the wild over the last few years but I have never found a WA pupa. It was thought at one time that they pupate only on Honeysuckle but I am not so sure about that now. I have started to search a little more widely,

including on the Hawthorn which is so often entangled with the Honeysuckle.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Sonam Dorji, 10-Jun-16 10:36 AM GMT

Hi Bugboy,

The speckled Wood butterfly seems similar to Small Tawny Wall from Bhutan. The color looks different but the shape and maybe the size is same as well. Anyways, great info and am going through your past posts. Get to learn a lot.

rgds,  
Sonam

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Jun-16 09:58 PM GMT

Hi **Wurzel**, I think Small Heaths still have some way to go before the beat Walls as the most annoying butterfly 😊!

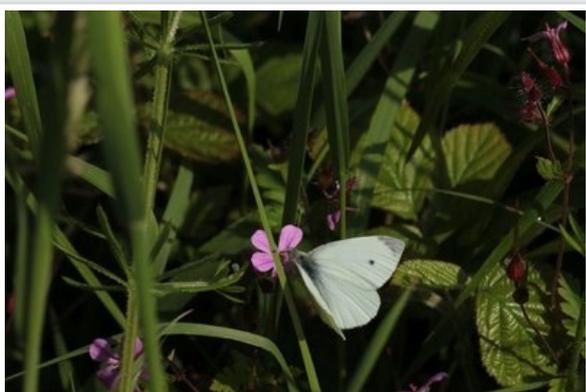
Thanks **David & Pauline**, I'm glad I'm still keeping peoples attention after all this time 😊

Thanks **Sonam**, I'm very much enjoying your posts as well, nice to have something different to look at 😊

#### 9/6/16 Chiltons

I wanted to see if there were any Dukes still hanging on at my usual site. The forecast promised sunny intervals to start with but as usual they got it wrong, on the plus side it was a different wrong this time, wall to wall blue sky from the moment I got off the train.

Aldbury Nowers Nature Reserve seems to be having a severe case of 'june gap' at the moment with, apart from Speckled Woods, singles of Common Blue, Brown Argus, Small White, Small Copper and Small Blue.





*Not sure what this little micro is*

I spent a bit of time on my knees looking through Kidney Vetch flowers for Small Blue eggs, something I tried and failed to find last year. Today I was successful and found 6 on 3 flower heads. The eggs of Britain's smallest butterfly, probably the smallest thing I've tried to photograph.



There was also a Large Skipper who was much more well behaved than yesterday's one!



Moving onto the hillsides that separate the nature reserve from Ivinghoe beacon, butterflies became more plentiful, in particular, Brown Argus seem to have had a recent mass emergence with many looking quite stunning! It's not too surprising at the amount of them since the entire slope is carpeted in flowering Rock-rose

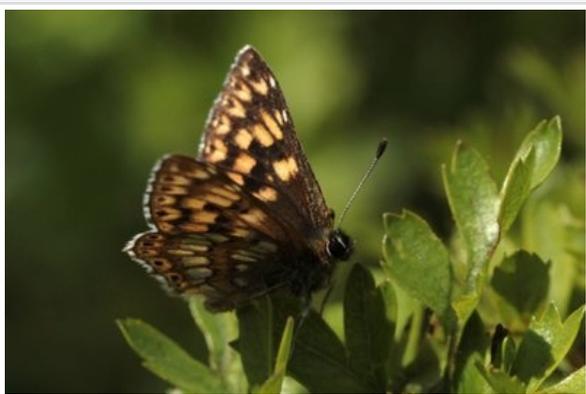




Common Blues were also out in numbers as were Small Heath



An hour later I arrived at the Beacon and set about seeing if any Dukes were still active. I found one male behind the car park who looked to be in reasonable condition but more searching proved fruitless.



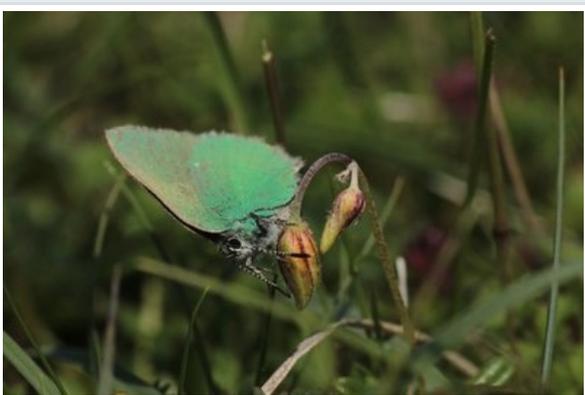
Oh, in case anyone is curious as to why I go out at every available opportunity, you don't get scenery like this in London!



Moving on to the gully I was surprised to have an Orange-tip flyby. A male who settled deep in a Bramble thicket but as far as I could tell he looked really very fresh. At the gully there were no Dukes but there was a very fresh and very beautiful male Small Blue who unfortunately refused to bask properly for me. He was a decent size and did look very blue in flight, blue enough for me to think it was a female Common Blue until he landed.



Further on I spent some time watching a female Green Hairstreak be extremely picky about where to leave an egg. Birds-foot Trefoil seemed to be her plant of choice (Rock-rose was also investigated) but nothing seemed to be good enough for her precious load.



I looked for more Dukes but where I saw doubles figures 11 days ago there were now none. Trundling back, I was quite surprised to see what I first thought was a small Dog bounding along towards me.



Before today the only view I'd ever had of a Hare was of a fluffy bum vanishing across a field.



This one really didn't seem phased by me, I'd ducked down to hide my shape and he just sat there, had a bit of spit and polish of his face and then wandered about a bit before casually sauntering back along the path and off into the grass out of sight.



I'd had a few standard Brimstone encounters already but I found this female tangled up in a spiderweb. A passing male gallantly decided to come to 'rescue' her 😊. When she did escape after a bit of flapping, rather amusingly, the male, in attempting to follow her, then became temporarily caught up in the web himself, allowing her to escape his attentions. I think that's called 'butterfly karma' 😊.



The return journey produced very much similar numbers of Brown Argus, Small Heath and Common Blues and I found another, very patient Green Hairstreak.



Back at Aldbury Nowers I had a good search for Orange-tip caterpillars and found much less than a week before. Many may well have gone off to pupate but I did find this recently moulted 4th instar. The dark mark near his bum is a bit of old skin that hasn't sloughed off properly. I did find a couple of newly hatched caterpillars as well and it seemed quite feasible that every stage was present today ie: egg, larvae 1st - 4th instar, pupae and adult.



Finally, lurking in the undergrowth I also found this longhorn beetle *Stenocorus meridianus*.



According to the forecast this was the last decent day for a while.... Just in time for my weekend trip to find Swallowtails... 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 13-Jun-16 06:29 AM GMT

You describe your excursions in such a way that I feel as if I have been there – now I wish I had been!! 😊 Great shots of the hare 🐰🐰

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-Jun-16 04:57 PM GMT

Thanks Pauline 😊

#### Norfolk day 1 10/6/16

Well there was only really one reason I was going to Norfolk at this time of the year, probably the British Butterfly I've wanted to see more than any other since I was very small. I'd arranged a short weekend break with a friend from work with accommodation booked on the north coast, so it was easy to make a slight detour on the journey up to check out their most famous haunt, Strumpshaw Fen.

Although the week leading up had been sunny if rather muggy, all week the predictions had been for it to break down into all kinds of nasty Swallowtail unfriendly weather by the Friday and so it was that we left London mid-morning under a dreary grey sky.

The weather changed very little and by the time we arrived at the Fen at around 1pm I was somewhat disheartened to learn that although several Swallowtails had been active the previous day, none had been sighted so far today. This detail hadn't stopped a few photographers from staking out the hot spots though.

We spent about 3 hours here in the end and didn't see a single butterfly of any description, occasionally the cloud would seem to thin slightly but it was all just to taunt us with false hope. To occupy me there was plenty of other invertebrate life was active, including several of Norfolk's other famous resident, the Norfolk Hawker dragonfly, although they were very unwilling to come close for a photoshoot.



*Hairy Hawker dragonfly female (lifer)*



*One of the Marsh Orchids, Dactylorhiza?*



*Wasp Beetle. Since I saw my first a couple of weeks ago these are popping out all over the place!*



*Hoverflies, Heliophilus pundulus*



*Scarce Chaser dragonfly female (lifer)*



*Tertragnatha sp.*



*Black-tailed Skimmer dragonfly female*



*Norfolk Hawker dragonfly (lifer)*

Avian highlights included watching Marsh Harriers displaying and floating around like they do, a nice lifer for me, with plenty of Warblers and Reed Buntings playing hide and seek in the reeds and hedgerows. Waterfowl on the other hand was very obvious by its absence, just Mallards, Coots and a few Gadwall.

All fingers and toes were firmly crossed that day 2 would be more successful!

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 15-Jun-16 07:37 PM GMT

### Norfolk day 2 11/6/16, the main course (part 1)

So day two on my short quest for a Swallowtail. After the previous day, surely things could only get better. We awoke early and took a wander into town to find a nice place to have brekkie, a nice full English to keep us fuelled until lunch.

The weather seemed much the same as the previous day but the forecast hinted that we may get a glimpse of some sun in the afternoon and so it was decided (mainly by me to be honest) that we would go back to Strumpshaw first and then visit another recommendation, How Hill, in the afternoon.

It being a Saturday, Strumpshaw was decidedly busier than the previous day with a fair few photographers already awaiting the appearance of at least one large black and yellow butterfly. My own hopes were slightly higher as although still cloudy it did feel a little warmer than Friday and seemed a little brighter.

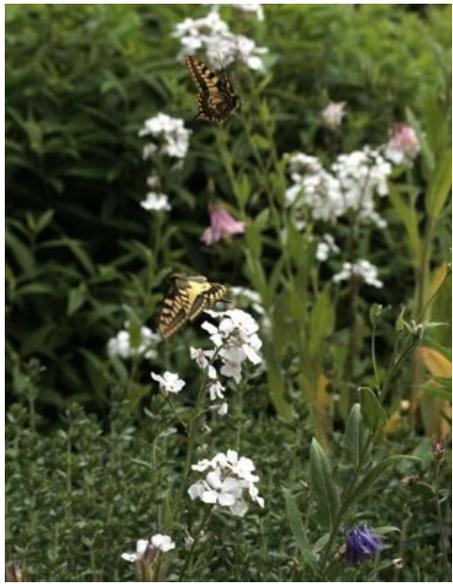
I decided that I was going to stay at the hotspots today and left my friend to go for another wander around the site.

The first thing to appear was a nicely marked female GW who lazily fluttered over to the spot by the visitor centre. Her appearance alone made it an improvement on the previous day! She stayed for a fair old time and gave a few photographers something to keep us occupied whilst waiting for the main course.



I stayed here for about 10 minutes before deciding to wander down to the Doctors Garden, bumping into a warden doing a transect who said a couple had been seen earlier. Nothing was here presently though so I took a short wander down to a meadow before returning to find not one but two rather large butterflies flitting around, at last! It felt almost dreamlike finally seeing these wonderfully exotic looking creatures flying around, I could feel my hands shaking as I took my first pictures of a Swallowtail 😊😊😊!



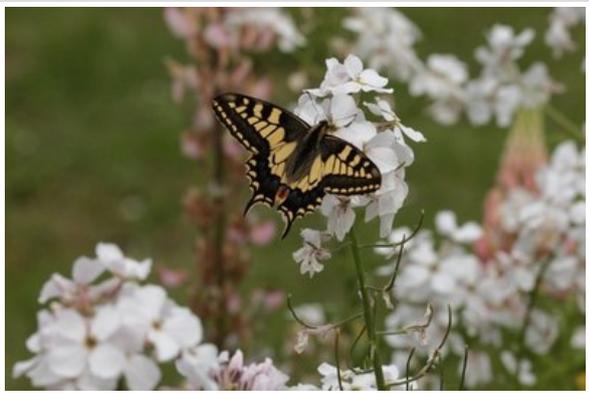


The female was quite obviously not in the least bit interested in his attentions and after a minute or so she left with him in hot pursuit. So now the question was should I hang around here or go back to the visitor centre? My question was answered two minutes later when another one appeared and stayed for what seemed like ages 😊 (according to the photo data it was only four minutes). The nic out the tip of the left forewing showed that this was the third one of the day.



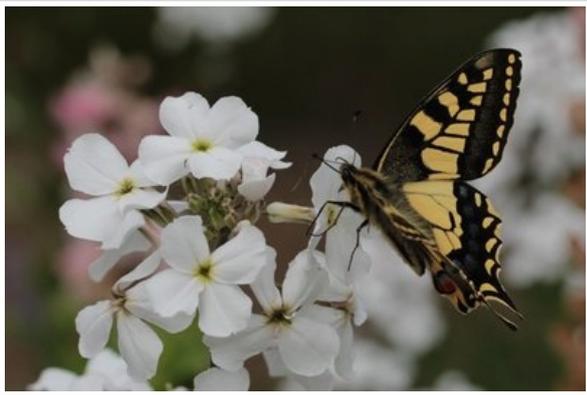
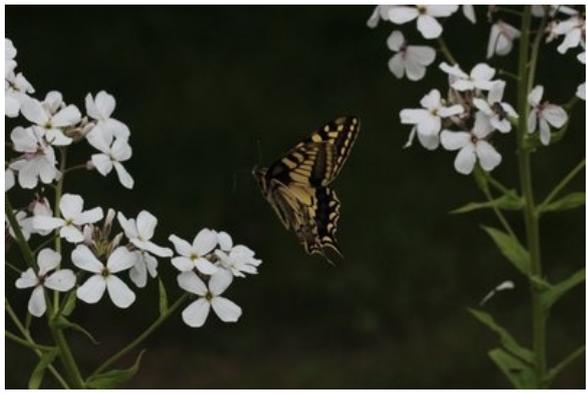


It was intent on feeding and didn't stop moving for a second so it was a case of point and shoot. Luckily for me there was only about 5 other people here of which only one had a camera so there was no argy bargy to deal with either, almost a perfect encounter.





4 minutes later I had over 100 pictures bagged and one of the best butterfly memories yet. Species #28 and lifer #2 for the year



You have no idea how difficult it was to whittle it down to just 15 pictures!

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by keving, 15-Jun-16 07:55 PM GMT

Bugboy; Some great aerial shots of the Swallowtail, well done. I was at Strumpshaw last year and when you finally encounter your first one it is a truly magical moment.

Regards Kev

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by Katrina, 15-Jun-16 08:30 PM GMT

Brilliant photos. That garden is a very special place. I particularly like the second from last photo. 😊

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by millerd, 15-Jun-16 08:34 PM GMT

Those are terrific motion shots of the Swallowtails, Buggy. Off the scale on the envyometer... 🍷 😊

Dave

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by Jack Harrison, 15-Jun-16 08:44 PM GMT

Sadly Dr.Martin George died on 5th June 2016 aged 86. Tribute:

[http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/tributes\\_are\\_paid\\_to\\_a\\_champion\\_of\\_norfolk\\_broads\\_conservation\\_1\\_4577947](http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/tributes_are_paid_to_a_champion_of_norfolk_broads_conservation_1_4577947)

A decent enough innings but who will take over the garden now he has gone?

Jack

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Maximus, 15-Jun-16 09:04 PM GMT

Nice stuff, bugboy, beautiful Swallowtails 😊 The in flight shot (#11) is my fav – looks like an F-15. When we went to Strumpshaw in 2013 and saw our first ever britannicus, as it was a weekend there was plenty of argy bargy going on, so I got my shots and we cleared off. It was still great though, lovely to see them.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 15-Jun-16 10:12 PM GMT

Loving it, Bugboy! There's nothing like a *britannicus* Swallowtail to get the Aurelian heart pulsing! 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 16-Jun-16 09:18 AM GMT

Fantastic in-flight images of a butterfly I long to see 🇹🇹

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Jun-16 10:35 PM GMT

Thank you everyone, it really was a dream come true to see this magnificent insect 😊

Very sad to learn about Dr Martin Georges untimely passing, lets hope his legacy lives on for many years to come in the fens. Quite a few ancient cultures believed a butterfly to represent the soul of the dead, a particularly poignant belief in this case 😞

### Norfolk day 2, 11/6/16 (part 2)

So where do I go after that, for me it probably wasn't going to get any better. Back at the visitor centre there was just a Red Admiral was dining,

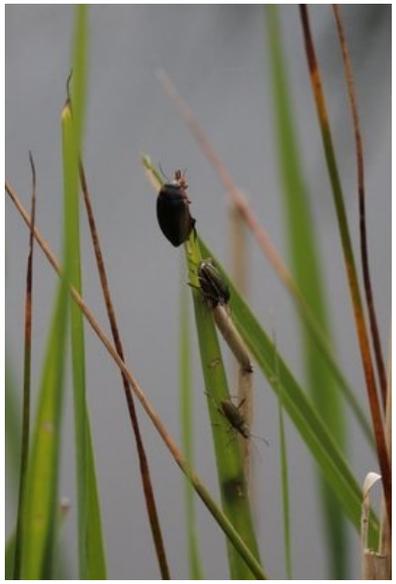


So I wandered over to the meadow. A few Swallowtails were lazily fluttering and floating around, occasionally stopping to feed on the Ragged Robin, of which there was a lot in flower, but I only got a few fly by's this time, they never stopped close by but I enjoyed watching them through binoculars 😊.

A Pheasant wandered by, something catching its eye in the sky.



And some beetles were having a bit of a party on the edge of one of the ditches.



I met up with my friend again and suggested one more wander to the hotspots would be a fantastic idea! On the way I found a Buckthorn riddled with Brimstone caterpillars, and the odd egg



And a perfect male Speckled Wood



But no more Swallowtails appeared so we decided to move on to How Hill

The sun was actually peeking on occasion out now and I found a couple of Shieldbugs lurking on a fence post and a female Black-tailed Skimmer basked nearby.



Walking across a car park my friend grabbed me and excitedly pointed off to my right, a Swallowtail was basking on the gravel. It was quite flighty and I only managed the one shot before it flew off over the trees. Unfortunately, this was to be my last sighting of a Swallowtail 😞 .



We spent a couple of hours wandering the site, which as Mark Tutton promised, was much quieter than Strumpshaw.

A couple of other lifers here included this Froghopper



*Cercopis vulnerata*

And a Four-spotted Chaser dragonfly.



Even without Swallowtails it's definitely worth a visit, very peaceful 😊



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 17-Jun-16 10:33 PM GMT

A brilliant sequence of shots Bugboy 🐞🦋 I saw my first Swallowtail last August in Czech and it is a memory etched into my brain, they seem so exotic they look out of place 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Jun-16 08:41 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel, a week later and I'm still buzzing from finally seeing them 😊

Norfolk day 3, 12/6/16

My last day in Norfolk and having well and truly used up all brownie points from my friend (plus taken a few in lieu) it was time for a slight change of scenery. I did half-heartedly suggest that perhaps an hour at Strumpshaw could be fitted in a few times but this was always met with a definite "NO"! In truth I probably wouldn't have seen any as the cloud was definitely thicker today with the occasional light shower.

My friend was set on seeing some wild Avocets so we drove along the coast to Cley Marshies where we spent a few hours watching waders and listening to Warblers. Avocets, Lapwing, Redshank, Shelduck and Sedge Warblers were the commonest birds.



Some of Avocet were sitting on nests, the first clutch seemingly long gone and running around on one of the mud flats we could just make out a pair of Little Ringed Plovers. There was also a very stroppy mother Shelduck, with nearly 20 chicks (I suspect they weren't all hers) harassing a poor Avocet who was just trying to return to its mate sitting on the nest.





All in all a great 3 days watching nature in a beautiful part of England and I got to see Swallowtails after nearly 40 years of just looking admiringly at pictures of them 😊😊😊!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 19-Jun-16 09:50 AM GMT

Lovely photos Bugboy, I was at Hickling Broad last year and the Swallow Tails were along the path we walked along because huge Thistles and many other flowers were growing there, all we had to do was to wait for them to arrive which they did all the time. 😊 We visited How Hill with out success, so it's great you got to them and photograph them Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Jun-16 08:50 PM GMT

15 June, Silver Studs.

I was planning a quiet day in but a last minute change of heart (and what seemed like a reasonably nice day, relatively speaking) had me taking an afternoon trip into Surrey. I thought I'd check out **Millerds** SSB site on Fairmile Common. My usual SSB's aren't normally on the wing for another week or two so it would be nice to extend their flight period.

With absolutely impeccable timing, the moment I got off the train the sun went in and light drizzle began to fall and didn't stop for the next hour or so as I walked across the Common to the spot noted in Millerds PD, stopping here and there at the occasional pool to photograph any Damselflies or Dragonflies that I could find.

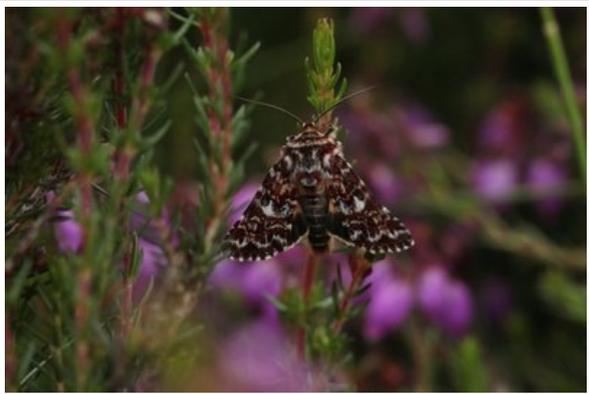


It was still raining when I got to the site but despite this it was warm enough for a couple of disturbed SSB's to readily take flight. As I wandered around this small corner of Heathland and got my eye in I started noticing them before they saw me and in the end probably found around a dozen, all males and all photographed. Like the ones on Chobham Common I noticed that the 'studds' seemed to be an optional extra with some barely having a single scale to show. Occasionally the cloud would thin slightly and the odd wishful thinking one would open its wings





Also disturbed were a couple of these gorgeous moths, Beautiful Yellow Underwing *Anarta myrtilli*



Exploring further afield I walked across the road to the main part of Fairmile Common. Here I found nothing except more rain, the perma-drizzle became somewhat torrential and for 20 minutes I sheltered under some Oaks before deciding to make a move back to the train station, the rain really didn't seem to be stopping anytime soon. A couple of minutes later it had slowed to a drizzle again and the cloud began to thin so out came the camera again and continued my search for a female.

I'm glad I stayed a bit longer since I found a male who was very near the front of the queue when 'studs' were being handed out, probably one of the most well studded I've ever seen in fact and very fresh looking to boot 😊.



The cloud continued to thin until for the first time all afternoon the sun actually appeared. Within only a few minutes the SSB's all woke up and the heathland was alive with them. I would hazard a guess at over 20 were seen in the end.



Whilst stalking them I also came across this gloriously evil looking Robberfly, I think this is *Eutolmus rufibarbis*.



The sun also woke up a few females, I found 3 individuals in the end, one of whom was also finely studded



It looked set for a pleasantly sunny evening but sadly I had to make a move but just as I was leaving the Common I noticed a Ladybird that looked a bit different, turns out I'd found a Scarce 7-spot Ladybird *Coccinella magnifica*, a species with a strong association with Wood Ants of which several were crawling around nearby. Another 6 legged lifer for me 😊



A great little spot for SSB's and a bit closer (therefore cheaper to get to) than Chobham Common, thanks for the tip Millerd 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 20-Jun-16 10:40 PM GMT

Great shots of the Silver-studs Bugboy – I need to try and find me some of those 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 20-Jun-16 10:54 PM GMT

Yes indeed, Buggy – lovely shots of the Silver-studs, especially the females, which have eluded me so far this year. It's a great little spot at Fairmile, isn't it. 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 20-Jun-16 11:12 PM GMT

In spite of the conditions, you've done pretty well lately, Bugboy.

Not long to go before the Emperor season begins!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Jun-16 10:22 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, just wait for a bit of light drizzle and they just sit around waiting for you 😊

Yes indeed **Millerd**, it wont be my last visit I'm sure 😊

Thanks **David**, I think a lot of it goes down to dogged determination and a luck 😊! Yes HIM season, hopefully they wont elude me like they did last year!

#### 21st June, Walthamstow Marshes

Just a little wander around my local patch this afternoon. A pleasantly sunny morning at work promised much but in the end a rather overcast afternoon delivered relatively little.

First to appear was a rather tatty Holly Blue, looking down at me from up high.



I was hoping there would be a few Large Skippers about (I'd found 10 on my transect at work at lunchtime) but I only managed one sleepy male.



And unlike my last visit, I only found the one Common Blue, a lovely looking female though.



Today's wanderings resolved a couple of unanswered questions from my previous visit. Firstly I confirmed that the unknown legume the Holly Blues were obsessing over and ovipositing on is indeed Goat's-rue *Galega officinalis* and that the young vanessid caterpillars I found on the nettle are as I suspected Peacocks.



A few other bits and pieces were active despite the rather cloudy conditions. A Robberfly *Leptogaster cylindrica*



The moth near it was this which I suspect is *Sitochroa verticalis*



And this Bumblebee mimicking Hoverfly *Volucella bombylans*



A small patch of blue sky awoke my first Small Skipper of the year, who I followed around for a bit.





On the way back I nearly trod on a rather placid Red Admiral basking in the middle of the path. After a few standard shots I moved in for a some close-ups. The head on shot I thought was rather amusing, the positioning of her vestigial front legs looks like she has her arms folded and is glaring at me, "Leave me alone!"



Apart from a single GVW that was it today.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 21-Jun-16 11:48 PM GMT

That is a lovely looking female Blue – I still haven't seen a female this year but then actually I've hardly seen any butterfly species in numbers 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 22-Jun-16 09:27 AM GMT

Love the Small Skipper on the flower Buggy 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 22-Jun-16 08:48 PM GMT

Just catching up on your Norfolk trip. Superb series of Swallowtail photos, different to the usual poses and so much more interesting 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 22-Jun-16 10:56 PM GMT

That is a lovely blue female Common Blue, Buggy. When fresh like that they look like little jewels in the grass. 😊 And I haven't seen a Small Skipper yet... 🍀

Dave

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Jun-16 05:33 PM GMT

Hi **Wurzel**, I'm starting to put 2016 down as a bit of a non event washout as far as butterflies are concerned. I'm doing ok with my yearly tally but as far as individual numbers are concerned it's a very worrying low, especially noticeable with the 'common' species 😞!

Thanks **Goldie**, I followed him around for quite a bit through long grass to get a few clear shots of him 😊

Thanks **Neil**, I think when we get to the end of the year that one encounter will remain my highlight. It will take something pretty spectacular to top it that's for sure!

Thanks **Millerd**, I'm sure as soon as our monsoon season ends they'll be out... hopefully!

23/6/16 a failed day...

Today started off not good and really didn't improve much. I woke up with a leaky ceiling. Turned out some blocked guttering was to blame and water was coming into the flat above. A man with a long ladder resolved the issue but having already called in to work I was now left with a surprise day off.

Black Hairstreaks are on my hit list this year and with their short flight period I threw caution to the wind and set off to see how easy/hard it is to get to Monks Wood by public transport! Easier than I thought it turns out. It was a grey muggy day but I was hoping the temperature would be enough to wake the odd one up. On the outskirts of the wood I saw my first Ringlet of the year and a few speckled Woods were active. What I didn't bargain on was the levels of blood suckers I would have to deal with. Stand still for a nanosecond and you're instantly surrounded by packs of Mosquito's (at Monks Wood I can confirm they definitely hunt in packs), with many of them riding in on Horseflies!

I ended up walking to the main path they are said to inhabit, following **Rosalyns** advice, and without stopping walking back. At least I know the way now, the wood is very well sign posted. It stayed dull and grey and very muggy and I suspect the recent monsoon season the south east is currently experiencing has a lot to do with mozzie numbers. Basically if you're planning a visit in the coming days, invest in some decent repellent, I shall be bathing in it before my next visit!

Just the one picture today, before the first wave of mozzies arrived to feast on me I found a Magpie Moth caterpillar. Are they unique in having the same colour scheme as the adult moth?



## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-Jun-16 10:18 PM GMT

### 24th June, Work

I took my camera into work today to record some of what I'm seeing on my transects to fluff out my end of year report I do for the bosses. I'm actually doing two this year, the main site and an extra one walking round our car park (only a 10 minute stroll), the borders of which in recent years has been deliberately left to grow wild. Since the border to the car park is in itself surrounded on three sides by main roads I wasn't expecting to find much here.

Up until a couple weeks ago a few Speckled Woods, Holly Blues, Whites and Orange-tips have turned up but the last two transects Large Skippers seem to have had an explosive emergence with twenty seen on my most recent one. Now if I was in the middle of the countryside I wouldn't bat an eyelid at this but in the centre of London on a patch of grass in spitting distance of several main roads I think it's worth noting. They have all been freshly emerged and with their naturally long flight period we would seem to have a rather healthy population here.



Time will tell whether other grassland species have settled in although Meadow Browns have also started to emerge here, one of which had a very reduced forewing ocelli, couldn't get the best angle to show this and he never opened his wings but it's clearly just a black dot.



The final pleasant surprise was a patch of nettle littered with fully grown Peacock larvae.



## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 26-Jun-16 05:50 PM GMT

### 25th June, Daneway Bank (part 1)

My last weekend off, two weeks ago, I was lurking in the eastern part of the country after Swallowtails, today I took a day trip out west searching for a butterfly I've only seen once before, about fifteen years ago.

Logistically, Daneway Bank was the only Large Blue site I could get to under my own steam, a train a bus and a short walk and I found myself at a new site for me. Again logistically I wasn't able to get there until about 1pm and with the weather forecast promising a good old mixture I was taking a bit of a punt! But it was either today or next year for them and waiting for good weather to fall on my day off this year seems like fantasy land at the moment.

My eyes were glued to the sky all the way and the forecast seemed to be spot on but I got lucky on arrival with a good patch of sun. I arrived at the same time as a couple who told me they had been here several times in previous years looking for the Blues and had never seen one, 5 minutes later I was able to point one out to them as a female flew past and settled on some Thyme.





It was having a few issues and was probably regretting an addiction to Orchid nectar!



I came across a second one a little while later, it seemed quite fresh from the way it was flying and when it opened its wings it would seem I had an ab on my hands, the reduced blue on the forewings certainly didn't seem to be due to wear and tear.





I spent some time with this one as the sun flirted with clouds whilst off in the distance thunder rumbled

Large skippers and Marbled Whites, my first of the year of the latter, were both out in numbers with a healthy smattering of Meadow Browns, Ringlet and Small Heath also on the wing and the grassland has a healthy Orchid population with lots of Spotted and Pyramidal dotted around.





They've also done some impressive work to rest the weary traveller, this bench engraved with the complete lifecycle of the Large Blue 😊 .



As the rumbling sky grew louder and a particularly dark cloud drifted closer I decided it would be a good idea to check out The Daneway Pub, stopping briefly when I disturbed a lovely fresh Small Tortoiseshell.



If only other sites could be as civilised as to have this kind of accommodation to save us from the British weather. I sampled the hospitality and wares for over an hour as the weather alternated between torrential and biblical downpours... thankfully I still had a few hours before I needed to make a move to catch my train home.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 26-Jun-16 07:35 PM GMT

Hi Buggy,  
Great report from Daneway, those Large Blues are too tempting, but I fear that a visit this year may not be possible. Still you had a great day and a pint! 🍷.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 26-Jun-16 10:11 PM GMT

Great shots Bugboy 😊 I think I encountered the ab today but had it down as wear or rain damage?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Jun-16 08:45 PM GMT

Thanks Trevor, but the day wasn't finished yet... and got even better 😊

Thanks Wurzel, it will be interesting to see your possible ab. when can we expect your report, you don't seem too far behind this year 😊

#### 25th June, Daneway Bank (part 2)

After an hour or so the monsoon seemed to be easing and still with 3 hours to kill it was obvious another stroll across the meadows would be a good use of my time. This time I explored further afield. It was still overcast and nothing much was flying but something caught my eye off to the side of the path. There was nothing for it but to wade through waist high wet grass, putting up several Marbled White with every footfall. The thing I had seen from a distance turned out to be exactly what I hoped it was, a roosting Large Blue, a little more worn around the edges than the last two but its churlish to complain about that!



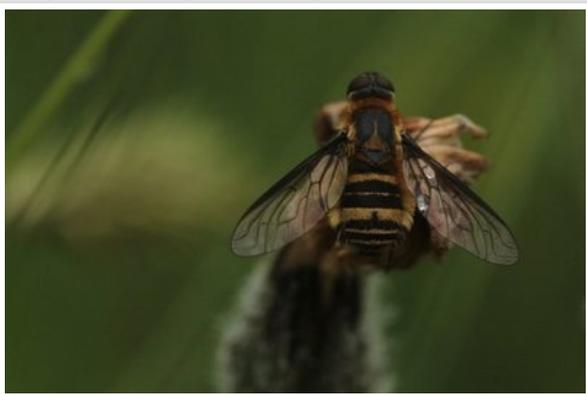


Soaked from the waist down but happy to have bagged a third I explored further up the bank which opened up to what I later found was the main hotspot for them. Despite the occasional bout of drizzle two people were here, a warden wardening (apparently a man with a net had been seen a day or so previously) and another photographer who was on his third visit of the year and still waiting to find his first Blue.

A roosting common Blue provided momentary excitement before I found another Large one. Unfortunately, it flew off before the other photographer got to it and for love nor money we couldn't re-locate it.



It stayed grey and damp but with 2 pairs of eyes working the site I hoped we would find more, especially since 58 had been counted in a survey earlier in the day! Whilst searching I kept noticing these little flies, looking like a cross between a Hoverfly and a Bee Fly. Turns out they are a type of Bee Fly, *Villa* sp. Whose larvae parasitize caterpillars.



Back to the Blues, our hard work paid off and we found a perfect freshly minted one and she did look HUGE, easily the largest Large Blue I'd seen so far.



We stood over her as a large area of blue sky inched painfully slowly our way, hoping the sun would still be warm enough to wake her up, I had a feeling this one would be a right stunner if she opened her wings..... she was and also quite possibly my second ab of the day with what looks to me much reduced forewing spotting.



We followed her around for quite some time as she fed and went through the motions of ovipositing although no eggs were actually laid as far as I could tell. We were both delighted when she decided to feed on a Common Spotted Orchid.



Finally we left her alone and a while later we found another one, or rather one that had been seen earlier, the little nick out of the forewing showing it was the one that had given us the slip earlier.



I'd actually ended up staying much longer than intended, my last bus long gone but my new companion had offered me a lift back to Stroud train station and as we left he pointed out a Butterfly Orchid to me, a new species for me. I can see myself getting a bit addicted to Orchid spotting....



I'm very glad I went after originally being in two minds whether to go, what with the current lack of summer and the risk of a long expensive trip to walk around a very wet empty field!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 27-Jun-16 09:28 PM GMT

Splendid Large Blues, Buggy! 😊 The ones down at Collard Hill on Friday were all very standard – no abs amongst them... Your shots of the one with reduced spotting are excellent. 🍷

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 28-Jun-16 02:54 PM GMT

Great Large Blues Buggy, 🍷 I've yet to see them Goldie 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 28-Jun-16 03:17 PM GMT

Hi Buggy. As you probably know, melanism is the norm for large blues in mountain areas, occurring independently (presumably) in the Alps and the Pyrenees. On average, the darkest individuals occur at the highest altitudes, though it is not a straightforward relationship. Perhaps your individual shows that the propensity is always there, though it isn't selected for at low altitudes.

The most completely melanistic large blue I've found was this one:



Guy

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 28-Jun-16 07:58 PM GMT

Thanks **Millerd** and **Goldie**. Only 5 seen and two of them were abs, not a bad day at all 😊

That's an impressive melanistic one Guy, had I photographed it I would have needed help with identifying it! I presume the high altitude melanism is nature's way of coping with colder conditions? Whilst the wings are in themselves unable to transfer the heat to the body directly they will heat up faster and create a 'bubble' of warm air around the butterfly giving it a boost to kick start it in the morning or after a cloudy spell. Perhaps our current British stock has a tendency towards melanism due to it being of Swedish decent?

Merely speculation of course but I wonder if mine pupated closer to the surface of the ant nest than others, exposing it to our cool spring and triggering a melanistic reaction 🤔 It's fascinating how these creatures are plastic enough to react in such ways to adapt to climatic variables 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by Padfield, 28-Jun-16 08:47 PM GMT

### bugboy wrote:

That's an impressive melanistic one Guy, had I photographed it I would have needed help with identifying it! I presume the high altitude melanism is nature's way of coping with colder conditions? Whilst the wings are in themselves unable to transfer the heat to the body directly they will heat up faster and create a 'bubble' of warm air around the butterfly giving it a boost to kick start it in the morning or after a cloudy spell.

Hi Buggy. Speaking as a physicist, I think it makes more sense for the heating effect to be due to direct conduction. Black surfaces in the kind of radiant heat we get at the top of mountains get very hot very quickly. This is especially true when they have a high surface area to mass ratio – they get hot almost instantly. The heat is needed in the thoracic muscles, which, of course, are located precisely at the point of attachment of the wings. Using re-radiated heat to create a local hotspot and then absorbing this heat by conduction from the air would seem to me to be a much less reliable mode of energy transfer, especially given the windy conditions that often prevail at altitude.

I have no data to back up this supposition so I may be quite wrong. Theory is often confounded by reality!

Guy

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 28-Jun-16 08:48 PM GMT

26th June, A Dark Green day (part 1)

After having fun with Large Blues the previous day I decided to stay a bit closer to home. Last year I found freshly emerged Dark Green Fritillaries flying on the 24th at Box Hill and I thought it would be interesting to see how close this year's emergence was.

I had a few things to do but managed to get there a little before lunch under a rather chilly grey sky. A few Meadow Browns were flitting around and I disturbed the occasional Banded Domoiselle as I walked through Burford Meadow. I had to wait a while for the sun to appear but when it did suddenly the meadow seemed to come alive. Almost as one clouds of Demoiselles ascended from the grass. In the absence of any fritillaries I chased a few of these but only managed to get a shot of one female



I did get close to a deceased male who was currently being scavenged by a Scorpionfly.



It was shortly after this that a flash of bright orange shot past me across the field. I followed in its general direction and came across a patch of Red Clover with two intensely orange fritillaries gorging themselves on them. They were so intent on feeding that I didn't have to stalk them much at all. From the way they were feeding so avidly I think the last time they fed they were caterpillars! I stayed with them for half an hour, snapping away before moving off to see what else was flying









More to come 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-Jun-16 11:14 AM GMT

26th June, A Dark Green day (part 2)

Walking up the side of Box Hill Marbled Whites were everywhere, mostly freshly emerged. It would seem they are about to have a very good year. They were mostly rather active and not very approachable but the odd one allowed closer inspection.



Along the wooded edges Ringlets flopped along, again mostly freshly emerged.



I checked all I could and did find one with the beginnings of an extra ringlet



Down at the usual spot by Zigzag road were several aged Small Blues and I stumbled across a mating pair of Marbled White.



As I was taking their picture I noticed a frenzy of orange out of the corner of my eye further along the path. It took a while to work out how many I was looking at but two males had found a mating pair and were trying to muscle in creating a writhing mass of twisted abdomens and orange blurred wings.





Eventually the unattached males went off to find something else to turn their testosterone fuelled attentions to, leaving me with the happy couple.



A few Small Heath were doing their thing but Marbled Whites remained the commonest butterfly of the day, mostly but not all looking fresh,





This one far from looking fresh, I'm not even sure how it was still alive but it seemed to be doing its best to pretend nothing was wrong despite missing nearly 50% of his entire being 😬!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-Jun-16 06:30 PM GMT

26th June, A Dark Green day (part 3)

So whilst not one of my epic day trips my few hours on Box Hill certainly provided a fair bit of action. On the down side, other species I would have expected to see were worryingly absent, just one aged Brown Argus and a couple of Common Blues were seen, hopefully my visit was just between broods.

Anyway on my way back to the station I stopped off at the Red Clover patch to find there were now 3 DGF all still gorging themselves with a single Small Skipper popping by to try and steal the limelight!





Dark Green Fritillary, species #34 well and truly ticked off for the year!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Jul-16 09:53 PM GMT

Great Dark Greens Bugboy 😊 I reckon my Large Blue report might be out by about August time – so I'm flying ahead compared to previous years which is quite a shock to the system 😬😬

Have a goodun

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Jul-16 09:51 PM GMT

I think its a shock to everyone Wurzel 😊

### 28th June, Monks Wood (again)

A second attempt at finding a Black Hairstreak before their short flight period ends for another year started off badly and didn't improve much. This journey requires a bit more careful planning than most of my trips, making sure I time the train to coincide with the bus I need to get at the other end. Today my train decided to invent its own time table and trundled along without a care that I was going to miss the bus which only runs once an hour. All the way the weather looked ok, lots of cloud but no rain and enough sunny spells to keep things active.

To kill time, I did a bit of window shopping whilst muttering away to myself about the state of our public transport system, all the while sunny spells grew rarer and by the time I eventually got to Monks Wood, blue sky was but a distant memory.

It was still relatively warm and there were at least some butterflies active.



In the end I spent about 3 hours wandering up and down the main hotspot, noting a large patch of freshly trampled grass to one side. I staked this area out for some time and was finally 'rewarded' by the occasional glimpse of a small dark butterfly flitting along the top of the Blackthorns. This was to remain my only glimpse of one but at least I've actually seen one (I presume at any rate).

There was a fair bit else active, lurking in the subdued light, the Hogweeds were always a hive of activity



*I think this is a male Gasteruption sp.*



*I grew up calling these Strangalia maculata but they are now Rutpela maculata  
As were the brambles*



*A female Hoverfly, Volucella pellucens*



*Here's a Hoverfly doing what they do best*



*Episiphus balteatus*

And as I was leaving I found this cute little micro moth with palps like tusks running round in circles



*Synocopaema sp.*



Just to rub a good handful of salt in my wound, my train home arrived 10 minutes early 😬😬

I might just be able to squeeze in a final third visit...if this appalling summer sorts itself out in the next few days... I won't be holding my breath though 😬😬!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 02-Jul-16 09:58 PM GMT

Keep plugging away, Buggy – you may be surprised. I certainly hope so...

Your great shots of the DGF and Marbled Whites from Box Hill inspired me to head that way today. You were right, there were hundreds of Marbled Whites everywhere. 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Jul-16 10:14 PM GMT

I think I have time for one more trip Dave, third time lucky 😊?

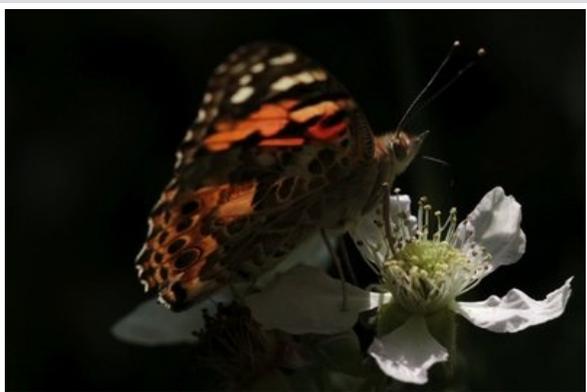
#### 2nd & 3rd July

Well I'd much rather have been out chasing Black Hairstreak or Purple Emperors this weekend but sadly I was at work so had satisfied my urges by taking my camera to work and sneaking out at lunch to take a few snaps.

On Saturday I wandered over to the car park to see how many Large Skippers were about but another visitor stole the show. I don't often see butterflies feeding on Bindweed flowers but this Painted lady was really giving it a good go, almost vanishing into the flower.



It did later turn its attentions to a more usual nectar source.





Today there were a fair few Small and GV Whites active.





The ringlets are starting to emerge in numbers now too



Looks like the weather may start to improve a bit by the end of next week, everyone keep your fingers crossed!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-16 11:06 PM GMT

Great action shots Bugboy – let's hope the weather gets better for next weekend and Him, he's been sighted in several places already! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Jul-16 08:48 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, yes and if the weather forecast is to be believed (🙄😄) we might just all be lucky in the coming days!

#### 4th July Monks Wood

A third and final last ditch attempt to try and tick off Black Hairstreak for the season. I got there earlier this time and for once I had plenty of sun and blue sky to encourage some activity. The rides were alive with Speckled Woods and Ringlets today and I stopped off at every patch of bramble blossom in the hope of finding something hairstreaky. Some Whites were about and the summer generation of Small Tortoiseshells were busy fuelling up but no Hairstreak's showed themselves.





*Large White male*



Wandering down to the main ride I bumped into **PhiliB** doing his transect. He hadn't seen any yet but gave me some pointers to give me the best chance of finding one. I carried on walking up and down the ride, Large Skippers whizzing up and down and Ringlets doing their best Hairstreak impressions flying along the Blackthorn hedges.





My first Silver Washed Fritillary of the year showed up and was very active, bombing around at warp factor 9 after being warmed up at gas mark 10 from the looks of it, he never settled long enough for a picture.

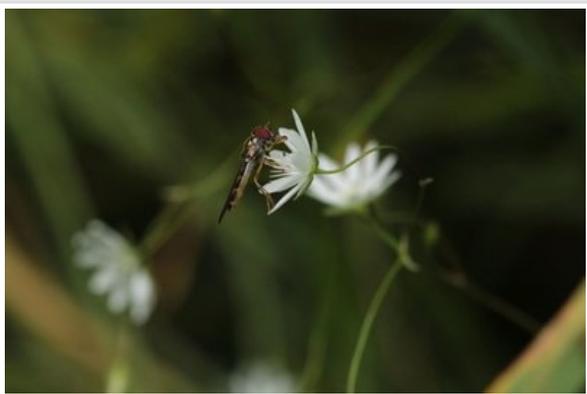
This Hairstreak did stay still for long enough for a few pictures. Had I been here a few hours earlier I may even have found her alive! So close yet so far 😞.

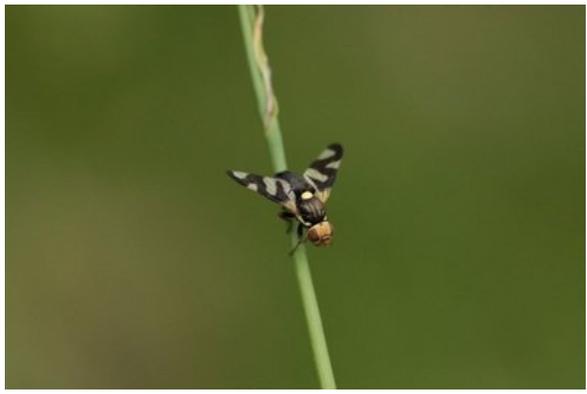




Not sure if I can tick Purple Hairstreak off for the year with this one though... 😊

I spent a bit of time with some Hoverflies and found a cute little Picture Winged Fly.





But by 2 it had clouded over and activity had slowed down so I took that as my queue to make my way back home.

Oh yea, almost forgot, I got one 😊😂😂. I was just lining up a shot of a Meadow Brown of all things shortly after bumping into Phil when she plopped down a couple of feet away from me causing me to miss a heartbeat. I carefully crept to within range but only managed a few record shots before she was off and I lost her as she flew back down the ride. I suspect it was the bumping into Phil that did the trick though, great to meet and have a chat with you.



She won't win any prizes in a Black Hairstreak beauty pageant but she's my first so she's special to me 😊. Next year hopefully the weather will be better behaved.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 04-Jul-16 09:45 PM GMT

Well done, Buggy! that thrill of seeing the first of anything can't be beat. 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by PhilB, 05-Jul-16 10:35 AM GMT

Well done Paul, your perseverance paid off in the end. It was a real pleasure to meet up and have a chat.



*Bugboy's deceased Purple Hairstreak*  
Hopefully I will see you again fairly soon.  
All the best.  
Phil

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 05-Jul-16 04:04 PM GMT

Surely a deceased Purple Hairstreak is worth at least 5 out of 10.  
Finding a live one within reach, affording a decent shot is 10 out of 10.  
Your Black Hairstreak is worth 10 just for finding it! 🍷

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Jul-16 08:31 PM GMT

Thanks **Millerd**, it was very exciting, the day was more hope than expectation!

You did a very good job there **Phil** getting all that webbing off her, you'd be forgiven for thinking she was still alive in your picture!

I would have much rather have found her a few hours earlier when she was still alive **Trevor**. Shame she didn't live long enough to at least lay a few eggs 😞

#### 5th July

I had to stay in this morning for a plumber to confirm that I don't have leaky plumbing so as much as I wanted to leave early and go Emperor hunting it wasn't to be. Instead I spent a couple of hours on my local patch to see if the Essex Skippers were out with a plan to go into deepest Essex in the afternoon to go White-letter Hairstreak hunting.

A mostly cloudy morning didn't help but I managed to find a couple of Essex Skippers along with a few Smalls although oddly no Large Skippers. In general, it was a rather empty morning with just 2 Essex Skippers, 2 or 3 Smalls



*Female Essex*



*Female Essex*



*Male Small*



*Male Small*



*Male Essex*



*Female Small*

a GVW and a couple of unidentified whites, a single Speckled Wood and a beautiful Comma who couldn't for love nor money be disturbed from a fresh poo!



Getting up close to the female Essex Skipper wasn't pain free, I managed to lean on a Bumble Bee who stung me on the wrist before flying off. I've not been stung by one of them since I trod on one as a toddler (and apparently screamed the house down). I can confirm they still hurt like buggery!

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 06-Jul-16 06:28 PM GMT

#### **5th July Essex in Essex**

So after having a bite to eat I set off again to see if the White-letter Hairstreaks were out. A day shy of a year ago they were a lifer for me but it wasn't

just the Hairstreaks that impressed me, Hadleigh Country Park near Leigh-on-sea was pretty much chock full of butterflies this time last year. Whites, Commas, Smessex and Large Skippers and Satyrids were all in uncountable numbers early last July.

By contrast this year it seemed relatively barren. I arrived at around 3 and had a quick scan for Hairstreaks, none around but I wasn't too worried, last year they didn't come down to feed until after 4, so I wandered off to see what else was about. Essex Skippers were about in reasonable numbers with only a smattering of Smalls mixed in as far as I could tell.



*Small*



*Essex*



*Essex*



*Essex playing (he didn't get anywhere!)*



Essex

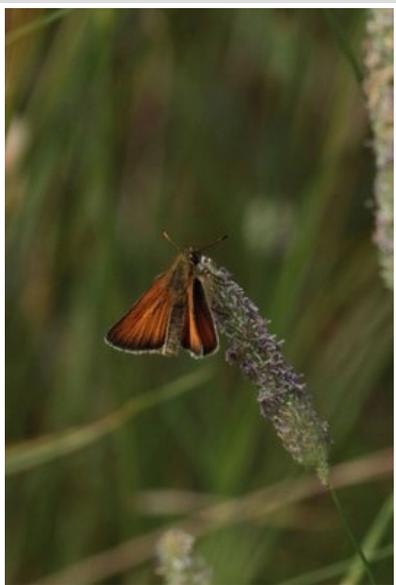


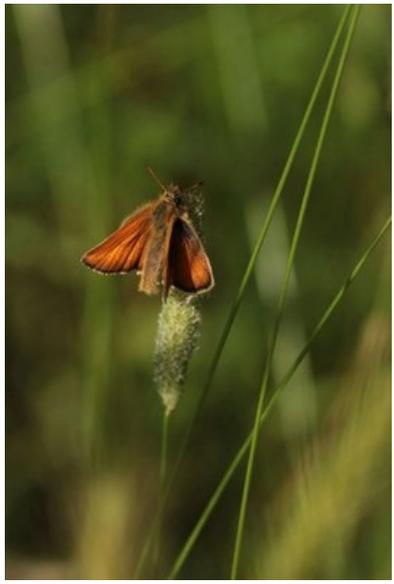
Small

This Essex had a noticeably broader dark border to the wings, ab?



compare to a similar posed 'normal' Essex.





All three whites were seen with GVW being the most numerous although only the one Large appeared.



Ringlets were the commonest Satyrid but a few Meadow Browns and Marbled Whites were mixed in for good measure.





And just the one Comma showed up.



During my travels I also found lots of these little brightly coloured Fungus Gnats, *Sciara hemerobioides*



This stunning Hoverfly, *Chrysotoxum festivum*



And a female Common Darter



Getting close to 5, I returned to the Hairstreak hedge and had a good look around. Nothing much showed itself, a few Ringlets flitted and flopped around when something on a bramble blossom high up caught my eye. I couldn't make it out so took a quick pic and zoomed in. It was head on but definitely looked like the afternoons primary quarry...

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Katrina, 06-Jul-16 08:39 PM GMT

So pleased you saw a Black Hairstreak 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Jul-16 09:01 PM GMT

Me too Katrina, it was a very lucky spot though!

#### 5th July White Letters

...I hung around a while longer and finally started to see some action, all high up but definitely Hairstreaks. A couple came down a bit lower and I was able to start getting some recognisable shots. Not the close ups I was managing last year but judging by the numbers I was seeing, perhaps four at most, they've only just started to emerge. Like most butterflies this year they're running a bit late.





*Synchronised Hairstreaks!*



I left after an hour chasing them, hopefully they'll be coming down lower in a week or two.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 06-Jul-16 10:11 PM GMT

Some great stuff recently Bugboy - I've had difficulty in keeping up with all you've been seeing - three different Hairstreaks (including Black 🐛🐛) and much more besides 😊🐛

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Jul-16 06:41 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, I've had a few hectic days recently but the rewards speak for themselves, just the Brown Hairstreak to go for all five in one season 😊 (I've just jinxed it haven't I 😊)

6th July Bookham

And so begins my annual summer residency at Bookham Commons. I got there at 9 under a very pleasant blue sky. Ringlets, Meadow Browns and Skippers were already awake as I made my way to the top car park. There was already a couple of Emperor hunters there and a large dark butterfly was zooming and swooping around but it didn't take long to see it was too small for an Emperor, still it got its picture taken when it settled.



I wandered off after a while, I'm not one for standing around for long periods of time, to see what else had woken up. A few Silver Washed Fritillaries were now swooping around and rounding a corner I saw a White Admiral feeding. It was engrossed in the blossom and allowed me a series of shots better than any I managed last year.



I stopped and chatted to a few fellow enthusiasts, one of whom had been coming here during Emperor season for ten years so he had plenty of tips for the best chance of finding one here.

As we chatted a Purple Hairstreak flew by, landing halfway up a Hazel. Only a few long distant record shots but at least it was alive this time!

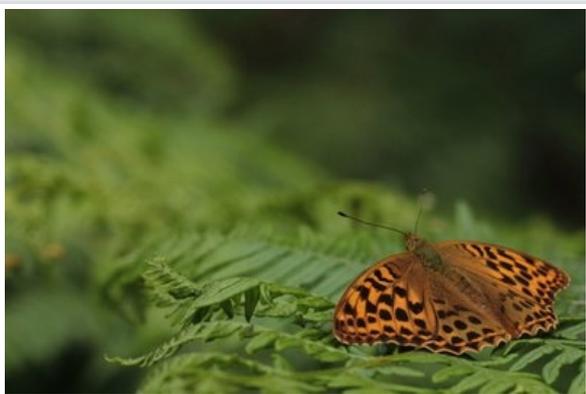


Several male Silver Washed Fritillaries were bombing around occasionally settling to allow me my first pictures of the year.



One of the highlights of the day was watching a Silver Washed conga: it started off with two males chasing a female but as they flew around male after male joined in until she had about eight of them on her tail. She was a proper little tease, making no attempt to escape their attentions, just stringing them along up into the canopy. I guess it's one way of sorting the wheat from the chaff!

As clouds began to appear the butterflies started to quieten down a bit and this female Silver Washed was very relaxed in my company.



So after close to 6 hours I saw three butterflies supping minerals from the ground, not one with a hint of purple! 😊



Result so far 'HIM' 1 - Bugboy 0

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 07-Jul-16 11:03 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Bugboy, I can't get over all those Hair Streaks you've seen 🍷🍷 My count after 6 years is two 😊 Well done! Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Sonam Dorji, 08-Jul-16 08:37 AM GMT

Hi,

Saw you cool pictures on Hairstreak. I got one pic similar to yours long time back but not a great one. Someone told me it is Mackwood's hairstreak. I will post it soon as I have to go through my past files. I have two hairstreaks from Bhutan, Dull Green Hairstreak ( *Esakiozephyrus icana*) and Indian Purple Hairstreak (*Esakiozephyrus mandara dohertyi*) . Am posting it for your reference. They are commonly found in Thimphu at this time of year.

rgds,  
Sonam



*Dull Green Hairstreak*



*Indian Purple Hairstreak*

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 08-Jul-16 10:15 AM GMT

Wow!! Nearly gave me a heart attack!!! Started at the bottom of your diary Buggy and thought you'd seen that Hairstreak locally. What an insect 🍷🍷  
Well done on the Black Hairstreak btw – way better than my attempt some years ago.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 08-Jul-16 09:46 PM GMT

Thanks Sonam, those Hairstreaks of yours are cute little stunners 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Jul-16 10:15 PM GMT

#### 10th July Walthamstow Marshes

A weekend of camping meant very little time for butterflying (primarily due to alcohol and being on cooking duties.... (a combination that luckily resulted in no fatalities!)

But I did manage a few hours strolling locally upon my return home. The rather strong wind made photography near impossible in places but there were a few spots which were at least partially sheltered and despite conditions I managed a fair few pictures of a few of species. It seemed to be an afternoon of winners and losers, the winners being only two species, Essex Skipper and Commas. Essex Skippers were by far the commonest species today, popping up in most of the set aside grassy meadow areas with just a smattering (as far as I could tell) of Smalls and just a single Large skipper seen 🤪





The summer brood of Comma's were also all over the place, close to a dozen probably seen.





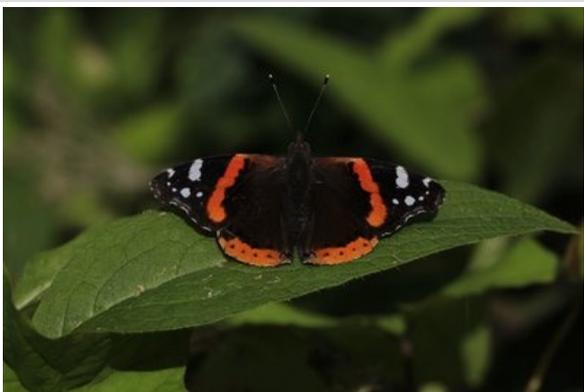
On the downside, in places where I should have been disturbing four or five Meadow Browns with every footfall they were next to absent, I don't think I made it into double figures despite being out for a good few hours. The ones I did see were either getting blown ragged on flowers or hunkered down out of the wind. A very poor showing for a sunny afternoon in mid July 😞



This Ringlet is the first one I've ever seen on my local patch, hopefully more to come in the future 😊.



Others seen today were a single male Red Admiral vigorously defending a territory against all comers, Pigeons seemed to be his personal nemesis today! 😊



I found a single Small Tortoiseshell feeding on buddleja who popped down low for a nice photo shoot.



All three whites were about in small numbers



And the final species of the day were my first Gatekeepers of the year, three males seen. I wonder how their numbers will grow this year, I have a feeling we'll see lots of abs with them this year with the wacky weather they've had to endure as youngsters.



## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 11-Jul-16 09:02 PM GMT

11th July

Another morning, in conditions that was marginally better than useless, at Bookham looking for an audience with HIM. Windy, mostly cloudy weather meant there wasn't much active for most of the morning, Ringlets and Meadow Browns the only ones that appeared in any numbers.



As the morning wore on the occasional sunny patch would wake up a few Large Skippers and I came across another Gatekeeper



It wasn't until close to lunch when longer sunny spells began to appear and I began to hope something interesting might just happen. A few Silver Washed Frits woke up along with some White Admirals, both soaring around the patches of sunlit brambles, occasionally settling just long enough to get in range but not long enough to get a picture.

A freshly emerged male Holly blue fluttered along the path and did a bit of puddling before doing the nicest thing any Holly Blue could do for a butterfly. He sat on a leaf at waist height within reach, opened his wings and waited patiently whilst I took his picture 🤩.



Red Admirals have started to emerge in numbers now, 3 or four seen including an egg laying female



And this very fresh individual, still sporting the pinkish blush on the red bands.



It was whilst taking her picture that I finally got my Purple Emperor season of and running, he did a couple of laps of the clearing and then buggered off 😞. No pictures still but at least I know myself they are about here and active in less than ideal conditions. Maybe I should run a few laps of the place next time, get a sweat on to make myself a more tempting target for the next encounter! 😊

Here's a nicely posed Small Skipper to finish



Results 'HIM' 2 – Bugboy 0 (only a picture will count as a point to me!)

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 11-Jul-16 09:31 PM GMT

Nice to see that Holly Blue, Buggy. 🍷 Just waiting for them to appear properly here. 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-Jul-16 08:23 PM GMT

#### 13th July Fermyn Wood (part 1)

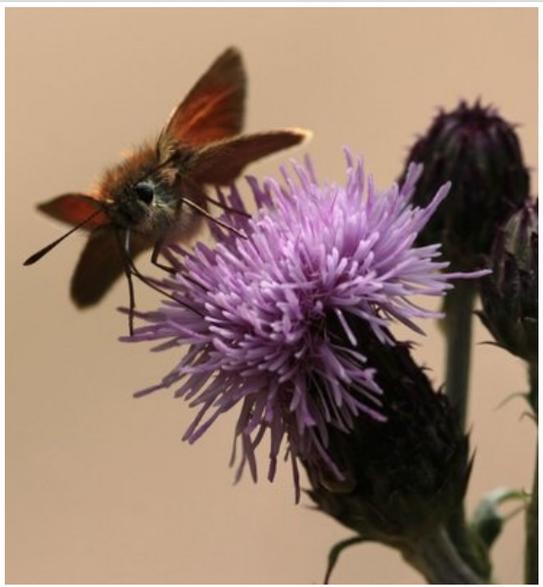
Bumping into **Philib** in Monks Wood last week proved fortuitous in more than just getting to see a Black Hairstreak, I was also very kindly offered a lift to Fermyn when the weather was suitable on one of my days off. Unfortunately, good weather on one of my days off this season is proving hard to come by so the best of an average run of days seemed to be Wednesday. As you can imagine, I was very much looking forward to finally seeing a grounded Emperor but with recent reports, as with most species this year, seeming to suggest numbers were a long way down from a normal year, a day at Fermyn was probably going to be my best shot what with a poor day at Fermyn is better than most good days at other Emperor Woods.

So I don't peek too soon, I'll start off with the also rans of which there were a few, although not in the numbers they should have been at this time of year!

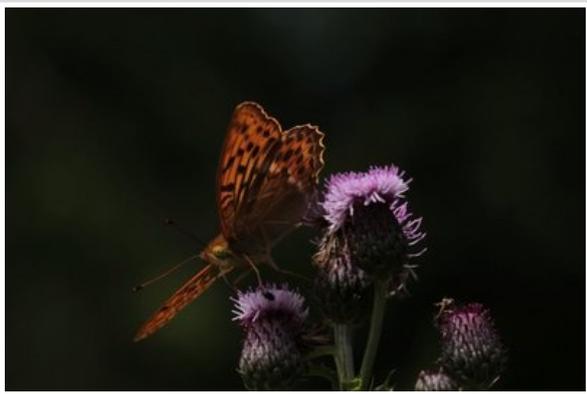
Ringlets whilst not exactly abounding were plentiful in a '2016' way, with just a very few Meadow Browns mixed in.

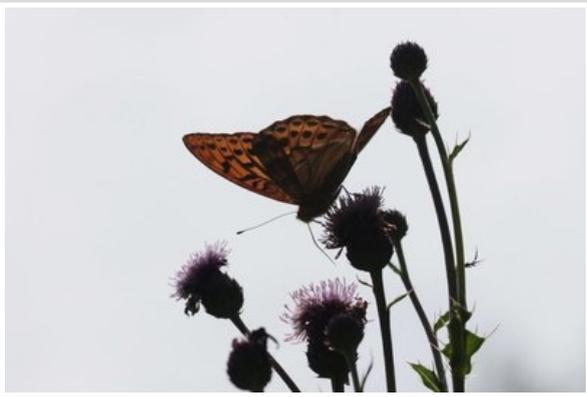


I saw a fair few Large Skippers but just one solitary Small



As the day warmed other inhabitants showed themselves, Silver-washed fritillaries providing plenty of entertainment whilst awaiting an audience with you know who.





Even better, a *Valezina* showed up, although she never came close so we were left with long distant shots. Even so we could see she was a fresh individual and she was another lifer for me.



A single Purple Hairstreak also showed up but stayed too high for even a record shot

White Admirals were depressingly hard to come by, perhaps three at most and only one settled for us but only long enough for a single shot.



Late on in the day we wandered in another part of the complex and here we found several freshly emerged *Hutchinsoni* Commas and a few Small Tortoiseshells.



And a well behaved Large White even attracted my attention



Don't worry, Purple Emperors next time... that's if I saw any 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Jul-16 05:50 PM GMT

13th July Fermyn Wood (part 2)

'ere we go then, the real reason for a trip up to Fermyn. We got there a little after 9 and was guided along the paths by **Phil**, passing the occasional Emperor hunter. 'Word on the street' was that only one had so far been seen on the ground. It was still a little cool but there did seem to be enough sunny patches to hopefully make the trip worthwhile. After an hour we caught up with **Roselyn**, who had taken the shorter route to one of the favoured

paths, and at the far end of the path we could see a small group of men looking longingly up into the Oaks. It turned out there were a couple of Emperors playing and possibly toying with the idea of coming down.

We staked out this path but had to wait for nearly an hour before I heard a call from Phil that one had deigned to treat us to an audience. I hurried my way over, taking a bit of care in case one had come down unseen and at last my very first grounded Purple Emperor, a little worn around the edges but nonetheless still looking very regal.



He had a small audience of very happy subjects, and stayed down for about 10 minutes. Another one also came down at the same time a little way off but he was apparently a little more worn so he was all but ignored in favour of this one.



*"You looking at me?"*



*4 wing purple, just!*



Over an hour later another, slightly better conditioned one glided down and entertained me for a few more minutes



I was braver with this one and went in for several close ups...





try as I might his right forewing stayed slightly out of line from the other three so I couldn't get that all important four wing purple with this one,



An hour and half later I got one more, this one landing in a puddle. Unfortunately, he got spooked after just the one picture but from what I could see he was in near pristine condition.



And so ends another big butterfly scalp ticked off. Huge thanks to Phil for offering to help me out. 😊

It was also good to bump into a few familiar faces again, **Neil Hulme** and **Mark Tutton** also enjoying a day out with HIM and it was nice to finally meet Roselyn as well 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 15-Jul-16 07:41 PM GMT

Nice Purple, Buggy.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Rosalyn, 16-Jul-16 10:17 AM GMT

It was a pleasure to meet you. I'm glad you enjoyed the day with HIM, the Valezina was the highlight of the day for me. Phil tells me we shall be having a day out at Regents Park, may well bump into you there 😊 thank you.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Jul-16 08:45 PM GMT

Thanks Trevor 😊

Thanks Rosalyn, I think the Purple and the Valesina were equal highlights for me. Yes indeed, drop me a message when you've decided on a day and I'll let you know if I'm around 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Jul-16 10:09 PM GMT

Not wanting to waste any good weather this year I had my camera at work this weekend and took it with me when I did my transects at lunchtime. Nothing out of the ordinary but a couple of new species for the year as far as the transect is concerned, Essex Skipper and Gatekeeper. Easily the best couple of days for my transects this year, I was nearly into double figures as far as species were concerned!

This Gatekeeper sported signs of a very close shave



A typical Essex pose



and Large Skippers are still doing well



## Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-16 10:39 PM GMT

Glad you got your Purp Bugboy 🐛🍷 – just catching up after the week away. Unless there are still a few Purps hanging around Bentley next weekend I might have missed the audience with Him this year 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

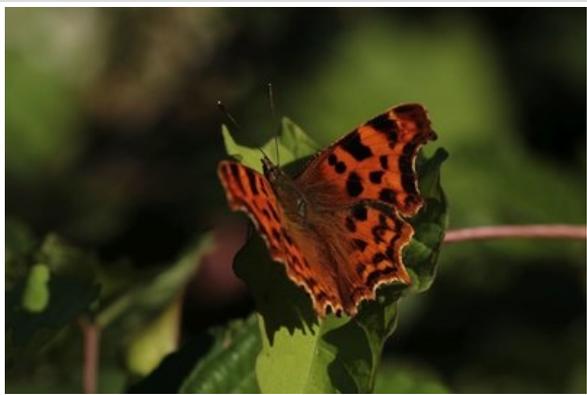
## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Jul-16 10:40 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, you never know you might get lucky but if Bentley is like the other HIM sites numbers are way down from what is considered 'normal' 😞

### 18th July White-letters again

I finished work at 4 on Monday and since we are in the middle of a mini heat wave I figured I'd have time to nip down to Essex for some more Hairstreak action. I made good time and arrived at 5.30 under a clear blue sky and a very warm evening. I couldn't see any Hairstreaks at first but three or four Comma's and a couple of very fresh Red Admirals were enjoying themselves.



After a while I noticed a couple of Hairstreaks flitting around at the back of the Bramble patch and willing them to come closer a very fresh female, with tails like streamers, settled on a leaf right in front of me. Sadly it was only for a few seconds and all I got was a blurred shot of her leaping off to a nearby flower, a flower that was wedged firmly under a leaf meaning any more photographs of her weren't really possible



The good thing with these guys is when they find a flower they like near you, you generally have all the time in the world. The bad thing is that when they find a flower they like that's not close, patience becomes a true art form! I did spend a fair amount of time pacing up and down and looking longingly as they flitted around high up and out of reach

This particular flower head was very popular all evening, three are visible on it here.



Not everyone was in tip top condition, this one had been around the block a few times!



I never saw more than four at any one time and in total I reckon I only had about six. Looks like they are having a poor year like so many others this year. This time last year I was easily seeing double figures at this colony.



A couple of Essex Skippers were also active and looking down on me was this Darter dragonfly





Might be able to fit in one more trip before they're gone for another year.

#### 19th July, Chiltons

Today I finished at 12 and decided I should visit Aldbury Nowers. A silly idea really in this heat! This time last year I was finding Common Blues, Brown Argus, Marbled White, Meadow Browns and summer Skippers all in uncountable numbers. What a difference a year makes, no blues and the browns and skipper numbers drastically down from twelve months ago. Even taking into account the heat and the fact that some were probably hiding away in the shade it was a somewhat depressing sight. The ones that were on show were mostly far to active, with only a few snatched shots to show for myself.



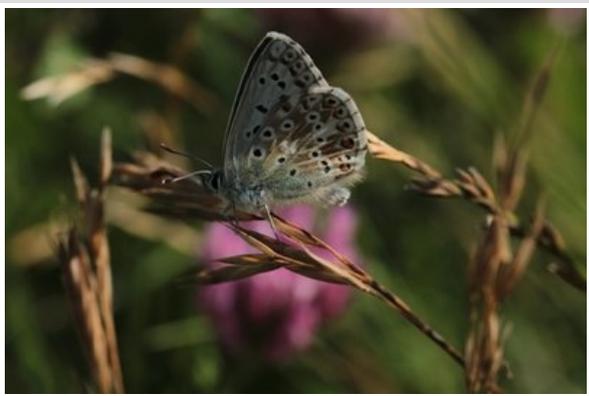
Another reason for my afternoon visit was to check on some Duke Eggs I'd marked in the spring over at Ivinghoe Beacon. Obviously something had gone very wrong, they were still there and not looking very well at all.



Zooming in you can see holes in them so either they were parasitized or predated.



Here I also found my first Chalkhills of the year, a few males trying not to overheat



Walking back things were no better late in the day, I just hope this is a blip and things bounce back next year.



**Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 21-Jul-16 08:42 PM GMT

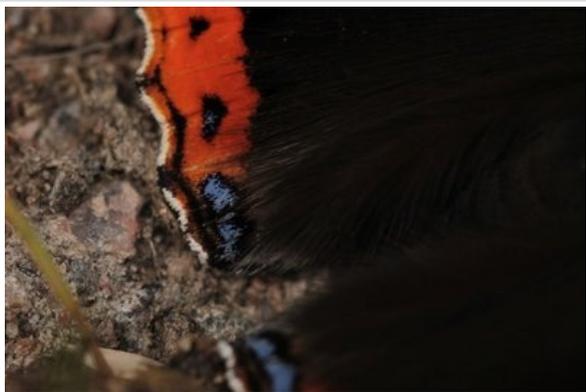
### 20th July

Well I made a right pigs-ear of my butterflying day off. I had two places in mind, Bookham to see what was about and Denbies to get a nice Chalkhill fix. Unfortunately, my planning left a lot to be desired: I spent the morning at Bookham wandering around under a dreary grey sky thinking the Chalkhills would be looking perfect in this light and then by the time I got to Denbies in the afternoon under a blazing hot sun I was wishing I had some nice shady woodland to stroll around!

There wasn't a great deal happening at Bookham, Ringlets and Meadow browns were frolicking in the open glades along with various Skippers and a few Gatekeepers but I only saw the one White Admiral and a couple of Silver-washed Fritillary.



On the other hand, Red Admirals seemed to be everywhere, approaching double figures and all looking very fresh and particularly resplendent in the dull light.

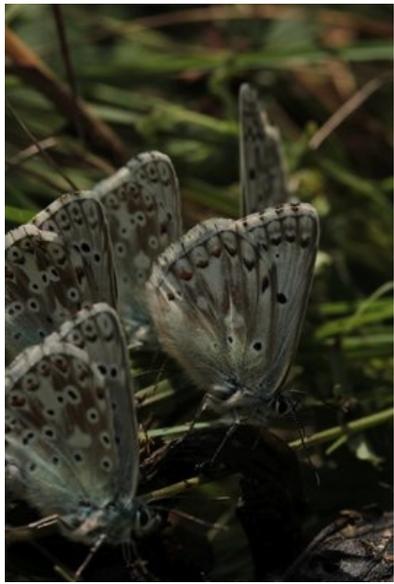


There was also a male holly Blue doing a bit of mud puddling and as I was waiting for my train to go to Denbies I watched a Comma lay on an Elm sucker.



At Denbies there wasn't much hope of getting any open winged shots, it was probably over 30 degrees and to cap it all I'd forgotten my sun block as well! I decided I'd have a browse for abs. but every Blue was super charged in the heat and nothing was settling for me 😊, until I found what I presume was a fox scat, covered in male Chalkhills. In fact it looked like Foxy had wiped his bum all over the place as the more I looked the more Blues I saw crawling around in the grass, there was probably somewhere in the region of thirty in total. In amongst all the normals I found a very nice ab. and so trying not to take too many deep breaths I spent a bit of time sat down next to a fox poo 😊

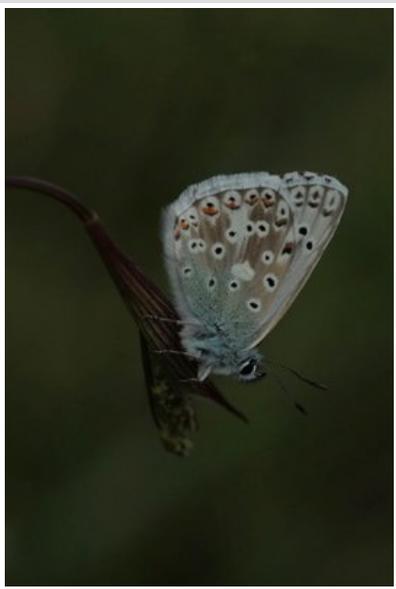
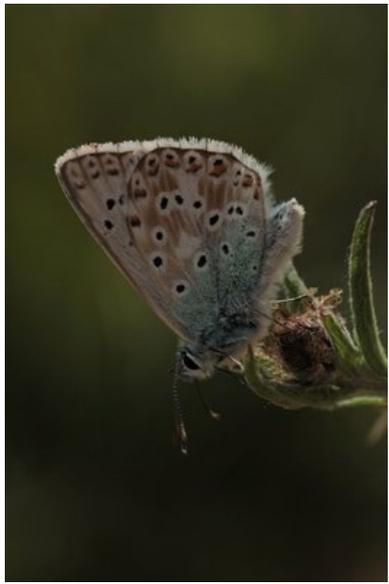




My sweat was also rather tasty apparently



After an hour or so the heat got the better of me and I left them to their feasting, next time I'll try and plan my day with a little more thought!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Jul-16 08:21 PM GMT

23rd July

I spent an hour or so wandering my local patch. I planned to get out early to find some butterflies waking up but I couldn't get there until 11 and by then it was really rather warm so very little was settling for me. Meadow Brown numbers have increased but are still well below what they should be, I'm quite sure I could do a pretty accurate head count relatively easily!

One thing I've noticed this year is the boldness in the markings of the females, they all seem to be relatively pale with particularly bold, large ocelli.





Gatekeeper numbers are also growing but again, still not in the numbers I would expect this far into their season. I did also find my first females of the year and a passing cloud encouraged one to settle nicely for me.



I also found a male *Excessa* who gave me a fleeting glimpse of his extra spots.



This is a corner of one of the meadows where there should be at this time of year be hundreds of Skippers, Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers 😊 (Phone picture)



All three Whites were about but again mostly too active to photograph, but I did manage a sneaky GVW one before she saw me watching 😊 .



Watching a couple of Speckled Wood fighting over a patch of sun I noticed some fresh nibbling on a nettle leaf, and on investigation, curled up in a typical pose was a young Comma caterpillar





In the afternoon I wanted to go and see the White-letters down in Essex for one last time this year. Again one thing lead to another and I got there later than planned, gone 5, but they should still be feeding if previous experience was anything to go by. Sadly for me though, it seems they have already finished for the year. Not a sniff of one, even flitting around up high, so I went for a wander for an hour to see what else was around. Most of what I saw seemed to be looking for somewhere sheltered to roost so weren't very photogenic, Skippers, Browns and Whites all about but the Vanessids were still active and did settle, soaking up the dying rays of the sun. The new edition of Peacocks now joining the Commas which always seem to be here in good numbers.



## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-Jul-16 06:53 PM GMT

24th July, Denbies and Bookham (part 1)

I got it right this time but the weather wasn't really playing ball today. There was a rather stiff, constant breeze on Denbies and although the light was showing the Chalkhills off rather well they were mostly forced to bask low down in the grass out of the wind or on the paths so I wasn't able to get the shots I had planned to. Nevertheless, there were a fair few about with the occasional sunny spell causing a flurry of silvery blue activity, mostly fresh emergent so it looks like they haven't peeked just yet which is good. They don't seem to have been as badly hit by whatever's caused many other species poor numbers this year.



There were a few other butterflies about, a couple of Whites and Skippers, Meadow Browns, Marbled Whites and Small Heaths but the Blues largely outnumbered all other species combined.



I was also lucky enough to poke my nose into the private life of two mating pairs plus a pair of six-spot Burnets, whose numbers are also building.





I found a few females other than the two otherwise engaged, one of whom could possibly be very slightly gynandromorphic (can you be 'slightly' gynandromorphic?) with a spot of blue scales on one wing.





And a male with some rather sparse underside markings.



On the way back to the station I found a Longhorn moth, *Nemophora metallica*, sitting on top of its larval foodplant.



Next off to Bookham for the afternoon... 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-Jul-16 10:01 PM GMT

24th July, Denbies and Bookham (part 2)

So at Bookham Commons Ringlets are still plentiful, along with various Whites, mostly GVW, but the first thing to sit for me was a male Brimstone, looking to sit out the cloudy weather.



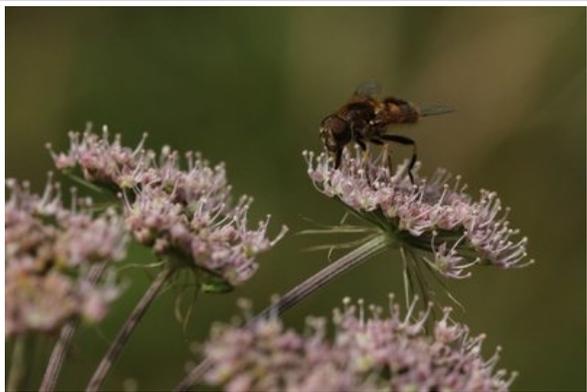
A few skippers were active, Smalls were the only ones that sat for me although I had the second one here as an Essex until I saw the picture on my laptop.



I've noticed Large White numbers picking up in recent weeks, like some other multivoltine species they seem to be recovering in numbers.



Walking along the rides the Hogweeds now in full flower are alive with insects, here a Dronefly and a wonderfully bizarre looking parasitic wasp, *Gasteruption* sp.





Once into the Woods proper the Vanessids took over as the dominant butterfly species. Red Admirals popping up regularly. Here a female ovipositing with a broken forewing red band.



A courting pair of Silver-washed Fritillary and a very fresh Peacock





It was interesting to see the female Fritillaries flight to change from a flirtatious fluttering to the more normal graceful gliding when she realised the male had lost interest, the little floozy 😊!

A little further on a couple of White Admirals flew around and settled halfway up a tree and then another ovipositing Red Admiral, again with a broken red band similar to the previous one, sisters perhaps?



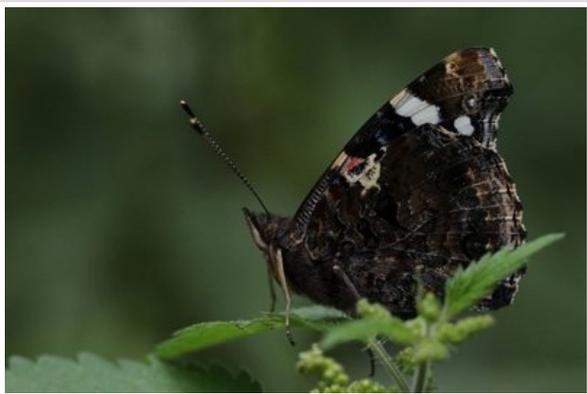
I had another browse at White Admiral Towers, where most of last years babies were found but again it was fruitless so I wandered over to Stans pad. Immediately I saw one 1st instar quickly followed by four more. I've decided to go for female names this year.



This is a close up of Edith, putting her poo to good use!



I'd forgotten to check train times for a Sunday, they are hourly and just as I was approaching the station I heard my one pulling out. Oh well, there's worse places to have to kill an hour on a warm summers evening. I pulled my camera out again and searched out a few evening posers 😊



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 25-Jul-16 11:05 PM GMT

Woah you've been cramming it in Bugboy 🤩🌱 Great shots of a whole range of species. 🤩🌱 isn't your 'first female Hedge Brown' and excessa too?

Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 26-Jul-16 09:40 PM GMT

I have indeed **Wurzel**, as you have said yourself though, it seems you have to work hard this year for every species 🤩

#### 26th July, Chobham Common (part 1)

Today I went in search of species #45 for the year, 45 🤩! That was my end of year tally for last year, which was by far and away my best year to date. It looks like paradoxically, 2016 will become my best butterflying year as far as number of species are concerned, despite it looking like one of the worst years on record for overall numbers in general.

Anyway, time for the annual '*spot the Grayling before it spots you*' game. I got there early and only planned to stay for the morning due to the predicted rain for the afternoon and also the small detail of needing to pack for my little break to Arnside.

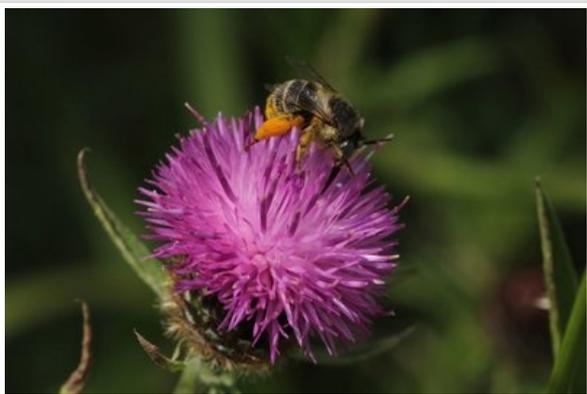
There was very little on the wing when I arrived despite it being relatively warm under a pleasant hazy blue sky. A couple of Whites and Ringlets and the odd Large Skipper. I did find another fresh Peacock basking on the path, they do look absolutely gorgeous at this time of the year!



In the absence of butterflies my attention was drawn to the various flies, Hoverflies, Bees and Wasps on the flowers.



*A couple of Conopid flies having fun, (probably Sicus sp.)*



*an unknown Bee*

As the morning went on Gatekeepers started to appear



and as I approached my usual lightly wooded hill where Graylings are guaranteed, one shot past in its usual erratic manner. I couldn't see where this one went so bided my time with a rather tatty Small Heath for company



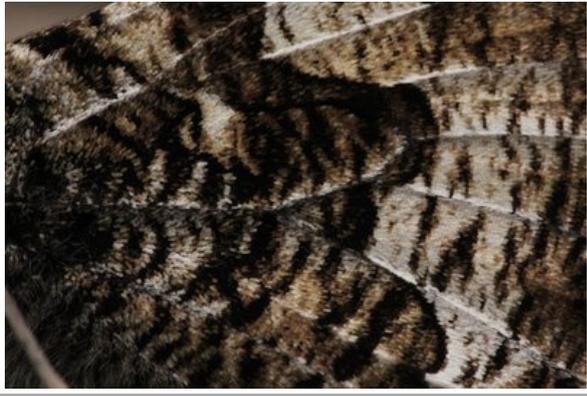
He soon returned but I'm a little rusty on my Grayling stalking and I spooked him as I went in for a close up.



15 minutes later I spooked another one but luckily it had clouded over somewhat by now meaning it was much more approachable.



In all I probably found three or four hill topping around, and all ended up getting their close ups taken.



Surprisingly I hadn't seen any Silver Studded Blues yet. Previous early Grayling hunts here have always thrown up a few decrepit males at what I presume is a relatively late site for them, so having had my fill of Graylings for the time being I decided to go searching for some.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 27-Jul-16 08:18 AM GMT

26th July, Chobham Common (part 2)

So were there any Silver-studded Blues around? After a bit of searching the answer presented itself in the form of three or four old males, probably merely hours away from being classed as decrepit but still active enough for what I assumed was a pointless mission, the continuing search for virgin females.





Pointless until this little lady appeared 🤪 .



I really wasn't expecting to find one so fresh at the end of July!

It was past lunchtime now so I decided to start my journey back, stopping when I re-found my first Grayling of the day, with his recognisable nick from his hindwings



There were several Common Darters around and this little Ruby-tailed Wasp was running around on the path.



The final butterfly to catch my eye of the day was this Essex Skipper with a very obvious broad dark border to his wings, this is the second of this particular ab. I've found this year. He sat and fed politely as I took his photo.





Finally, I couldn't help but get distracted by these little Digger Wasps vanishing down into their little nests



And here's one peering out at me 😊



A pretty good few hours even if I had to do a fair bit of searching to track down my targets 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 27-Jul-16 10:47 PM GMT

Graylings are great aren't they, the games they play 😊 If that was species number 46 then it is a good year, mind you every single species is hard fought this year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 28-Jul-16 09:08 PM GMT

Looking back, I see you had a typically breezy (but productive) Denbies day last weekend. 😊 I'd be there this weekend if it wasn't for the cyclists. 😊 I like the Graylings, too and especially your skill at tracking down the baby White Admirals! 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 28-Jul-16 09:36 PM GMT

Thanks **Wurzel**, the Grayling was species 45 but yesterday I notched up 46, the Scotch Argus. There were a few High Browns up here as well but I arrived too late in the day to find them. Weather was dreadful for butterflying today so didn't bother but its better tomorrow so hopefully I'll nab #47 tomorrow although talking to some of the wardens doing transects the high browns look to be having a bad year on Arnside at least, and given the way 2016 is going probably elsewhere as well.

Yes it was rather breezy at Denbies **Millerd** but at least warm enough for the Chalkhills to be out. To be honest once you know what you're looking for its not too hard to find a hatchling WA cat. Short of fluorescing they reay couldn't make themselves more obvious 😊 ! Finding post hibernation one on the other hand has so far eluded my observation skills!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 28-Jul-16 10:20 PM GMT

Hi! Buggy, hope you get your High Brown tomorrow, I saw some when I was up there a week ago but they didn't land for shots, they were through the first Gate in the car park down the slope where all the tall ferns are,( good hunting) I've not had the chance to go back to Arnside this week so I look forward to seeing your shots 😊 Goldie 😊 PS I would miss the White Letter wouldn't I ( Typical ) 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Aug-16 10:14 PM GMT

Well I'm not sure when I'm going to find time to catch up on everyone else's diaries but since I've been gone for a week I have a lot of catching up to do, with my own as well as with everyone else's! Anyway here goes.

#### Arnside Knott part 1

So my trip up north was aimed at trying to get a few more lifers, Scotch Argus (apparently a dead cert), High Brown Fritillary (a good chance) and the Northern Brown Argus (a rather long shot). In the end I managed to tick of a total of 19 species over the 6 days and at least another two were seen by other butterflyers during my stay. It wasn't all out butterflying though, Thursday the 28th was a complete washout so I went into Lancaster for a spot of touristy sightseeing and on the weekend I had a friend's wedding to go to in Crewe (although I did manage a little bit before my train out on the Saturday and upon my return on Sunday afternoon 😊 )

I'll split the reports up into the various species I came across rather than a day by day report to stop it being repetitive and will start the ball rolling with the first target species.

#### Scotch Argus:

##### 27th July

So I arrived at Arnside at lunchtime and with the sun shining I decided to get my bearings, find my home for the next few nights and head on up to the Knott. The weather forecast for the next few days looked a bit hit and miss so I didn't want to waste any time. I discovered that it was a short 10-minute walk from where I was staying and entered the site through a gate on one of the lower slopes. There were a fair few Satyrids active here but not dark enough for me and I did get my first Fritillary action here (more of that later). After a bit of wandering, and discovering the rumours about the tick population were very true, I found out from another butterflyer that the Scotch Argus had just started to emerge at the top of the hill. An hour later, after some meandering wandering I made it to the top of the Knott where indeed a few very dark Satyrids were flopping around in the rather brisk breeze that was blowing. There was perhaps a dozen or so, at least in the patch I explored, all very difficult to approach and I only managed a few record shots but I was happy.



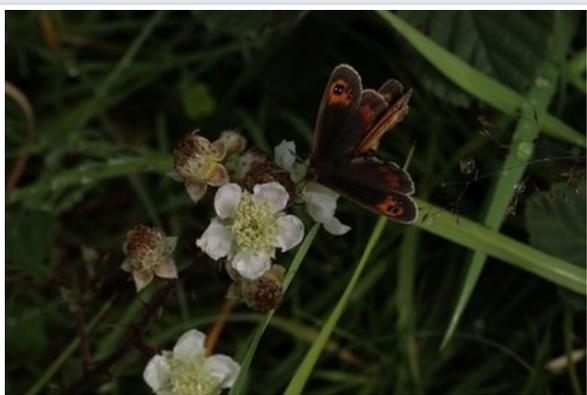


29th July

After the previous day's torrential rain, I was pleased to find it looked like staying dry with sunny spells, perfect for catching a few sleepy butterflies and today's pictures were much improved. I ended up spending the entire day exploring the Knott, finding both male and female Scotch Argus and managed some good shots of them going about their daily activities 😊 .



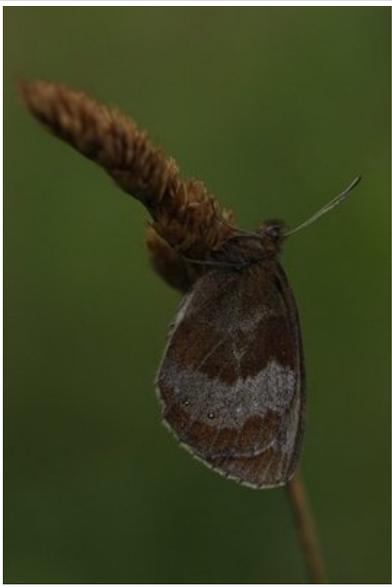
*This female spent a few minutes fending off an a very amorous and extremely persistent Gatekeeper!*



*But didn't stop feeding whilst being harassed*



*He even joined her for a bit of sun bathing!*



*I found another female perched unusually high up during a cloudy spell*



*She opened her eyes (all 16 of them) when the cloud passed though!*



30th and 31st July, Although these days were mostly spent in Crewe for a friend's wedding, I still managed to get out early on the Saturday morning and late afternoon on the Sunday 😊



*31st July*

So that's species number 46 for the year 😊. On my last full day, 1st August, I spent the day exploring Gaits Barrow but there are no Scotch Argus there!

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by millerd, 03-Aug-16 10:36 PM GMT

Congratulations on the Scotch Argus, Buggy! They are a lovely butterfly with a deep chocolate shade like no other. And Arnside is a great place all round for species. 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 03-Aug-16 10:41 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Bugboy a species I've yet to see 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 04-Aug-16 06:25 AM GMT

I can feel some mrgreens coming on ! 🍷 🍷 🍷 .

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 04-Aug-16 06:41 AM GMT

Smashing shots of the Scotch Argus Buggy –your efforts to see some of the more far flung species are certainly paying off.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 04-Aug-16 10:34 AM GMT

Hi! Buggy glad you got the Scotch Argus and looking forward to seeing the rest of your report 😊 The weather here this week has been awful so very glad you got some Sunshine whilst up here. Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Aug-16 07:52 PM GMT

Thanks **Dave**, it is indeed a subtly beautiful butterfly, particularly the velvety fresh ones!

Thanks **Wurzel**, definately worth making the effort to see them, and such a beautiful part of the world as well 😊 !

maybe **Trevor**, you'll just have to be patient, lots of photo's to trawl through 😊

Thanks **Pauline**, I do feel like I've travelled to the four corners on England this year... 🤔 😊

Thanks **Goldie** 😊 . Looking at the Weather since I've left I think I got very lucky to get a bit of sun on my visit up there

**Arnside Knott** part 2

#### Grayling:

Other than Scotch Argus there were 4 other Browns flying, Meadow Browns, Speckled Woods, Gatekeepers (they'll get an entry to themselves later) and Grayling. The Meadow Browns weren't in numbers I'd have expected, but on a par with everywhere else I've been this year and I saw most of them whilst chasing Scotch Argus so I didn't really pay them much attention.

The Speckled Wood, as you would expect were enjoying the shadier areas of the Knott and were mostly in quite good condition

The Graylings on the other hand did catch my eye. They weren't actually on my radar until I saw my first on my first afternoon, walking down a slope with two other butterflyers who were taking me to where they'd seen a High Brown Fritillary earlier in the day.

As we walked down the scree slope a pale butterfly settled nearby and I was struck by just how pale my first 'northern' Grayling was. The day before I had been on Chobham Common getting my seasons first Grayling so these dark 'southerners' were very fresh in my mind.



27th July

I didn't see many over the few days, perhaps half a dozen at most but I managed a few close-ups to compare to those taken on Chobham



*27th July*



*29th July*



*29th July*



*29th July*



29th July



29th July

I also noticed they seemed smaller than their southern cousins although perhaps I was seeing all males up here and all females down south 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Aug-16 08:40 PM GMT

Arnside Knott part 3

### Gatekeeper:

This butterfly caught my attention for a couple of reasons, firstly they were out in numbers I've not seen anywhere since last season, they seem to be doing rather well on the northern limit of their UK range. Interestingly I found out from a local that they weren't even here 10 years ago, they're certainly making up for lost time. The other thing that caught my attention was the percentage of *Excessa* I found, at a rough estimate I'd say 30 or 40% were varying degrees of extra spottage and I probably paid as much attention to these as to the Scotch Argus!

A selection of the 'extra spotted' I came across:



27th July



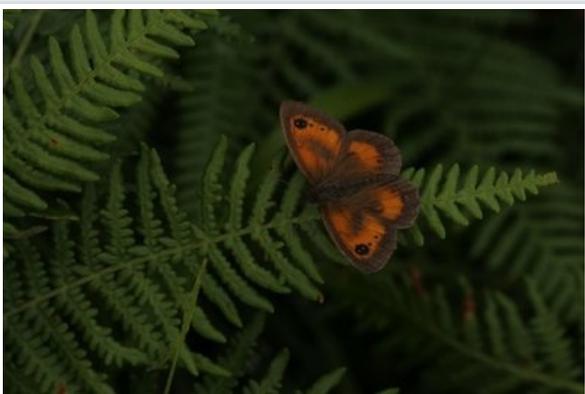
27th July



29th July



29th July



29th July



*The female here was excessa as well as having some elongated under hindwing spots. The male never revealed himself to me!*



*29th July*



*31st July*



*31st July*



*1st August*

This male caused me a double take, he never settled nicely for me long enough but he looked more like a dwarf female Meadow Brown than a Gatekeeper.



*29th July*



And this female I suspect is an ab with an enlarged forewing ocelli.



*29th July*

Why they should have a higher proportion of excessa and related abs up here is anyone's guess but perhaps being on the northern limit of their range, and presumably a bit cooler they need to spend more time basking to keep body temperatures up, so extra spots help with survival against predators? Alternatively, again due to being in the cooler north, the ones with extra spots, and therefore overall darker wings, warm up just that little bit faster and so this gene gets passed down more often than down south? Anyway it's all fascinating stuff to ruminare upon 😊

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by millerd, 04-Aug-16 08:53 PM GMT

That male Gatekeeper is very unusual, Buggy. Much less orange than normal. It is interesting to think that this species is a recent arrival here, as I've seen significant numbers most times I've visited.

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 04-Aug-16 10:54 PM GMT

Fantastic selection of Hedge Browns abs Bugboy - I'd have been there for another week at least just looking at them! The relatively high numbers of excessa could just be that the starting stock that migrated/redistributed North had a higher proportion of excessa genes in the local gene pool. I've noticed something similar when I visit my Outlaws in Wales - the hedgerows near to their house have a much higher proportion of excessa than back home.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by peterc, 05-Aug-16 08:46 AM GMT

Bugboy, your reasoning behind the extra spotting on Gatekeepers in the cooler regions is spot on 😊.

An article in the Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation 2012 (4) relates to the extra spotting of Gatekeepers (i.e. ab *excessa*). The cloudier regions in the north and west (including West Devon and Cornwall) have a much higher proportion of *excessa* Gatekeepers because the extra spots on the upperside could be a response to increased risk to attacks by birds since the butterflies bask for longer in these areas as you pointed out.

ATB

Peter

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 05-Aug-16 09:20 AM GMT

Hi! Buggy, you've certainly seen a great variety of Butterflies at Arnside, some times we even get Clouded Yellow up there, can't wait to see your Fritillaries Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by peterc, 05-Aug-16 09:31 AM GMT

Yes, Mr Bugboy is keeping us in suspense for too long. I don't want to spoil the fun but I think he has seen the special one 😊

ATB

Peter

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 05-Aug-16 07:24 PM GMT

Hi bugboy,

Just returned earlier today from a few days at Arnside so got some catching up to do myself. You were right about the weather turning, at least I got enough windows to see some butterflies 😊

Glad to see you got your Scotch Argus. It is a beautiful part of the world and one I keep returning to.

Regarding the Gatekeepers, I also see plenty of *excessa* around here in the midlands, so much so that I now tend to regard differences in 'spottiness' of this species as normal variation. The thing that stood out for me with the Arnside Gatekeepers (as it has on previous visits) is the size, with some males in particular being tiny.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Aug-16 10:09 PM GMT

Thank you all. With regard to your comment about Gatekeeper spottiness **Wurzel**, it would make complete sense, and fits with my theories, about the starting stock having this gene, since the starting stock will always be at the previous northern limit of their range 😊. I would wager a bet that environmental conditions in Wales are closer to those of Cumbria than they are down here in the south, hence the greater *Excessa* numbers.

And thank you **Peter** for mentioning the article that adds a lot of fuel to my theory 😊 (Not sure what you could possibly mean by the special one though... 😊)

I had a great time **Goldie** even if the weather wasn't always perfect 😊

Hi **Neil**, it really is very beautiful and a perfect antidote to London life, I wish I could of stayed longer to be honest, if only for the fantastic fish & chips 🍷.

It does seem to me that abs like *Excessa* are all part of the natural variation of the Gatekeeper, taking into account the article mentioned by Peter.

#### **Arnside Knott part 4**

An addendum to a previous post, a fifth Brown was also on the wing, the Ringlet, but they were very much on their last legs here!

#### **Skippers:**

There was just the one species about for me, the Small Skipper but like the Gatekeeper, in numbers I've not seen since last season anywhere down south. Also like the Gatekeeper, I was told these are also relative newcomers to this part of the world. I did, partly out of habit, check as many as I could for black tipped antennae. I wasn't seriously expecting to find any Essex but stranger things have happened!



27th July



27th July



29th July

#### **Whites:**

There were plenty of Large White around. This was quite common around town as well as up on the Knott. I don't think I saw any Small's at Arnside, it

wasn't until my last full day that I found Smalls, GVW and Brimstone, all at Gaits Barrow.



29th July



29th July

**Lycids:**

Well my 'least likely to find' target species didn't show up in the end so I still have the Northern Brown Argus on my 'to see' list. To be honest I'd rather tick that one off over the border anyway, where they actually look a bit different to their southern cousin.

A White-letter Hairstreak was reportedly seen feeding on the morning of my arrival, long gone by the time I arrived and Purple Hairstreak were also seen by others but the only Lycid I actually saw was the (not so) Common Blue. I saw my first one on the lower slopes on my first day but he didn't settle, it was blowing a bit of a gale anyway so the chances of a good shot weren't good even if he did.

I had to wait a couple of days before I saw my next one, on the morning of the 30th. Killing a bit of time before my train down to Crewe I disturbed this male under grey skies. Those lunules look rather pale to me, ab?



30th July



30th July

Returning on the Sunday afternoon I found another (or perhaps the same one) a short distance away, this time much more active in the sun.



31st July



## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Aug-16 09:38 PM GMT

Arnside Knott part 5

### The Aristocrats:

All expected members of this group were present and correct during my stay. The first to appear to me was a Small Tortoiseshell. It was the only one I was to see and found it on the lower slopes shortly after arriving on my first day, getting blown about on a Ragwort flower head.



An hour later I was up on the top of the Knott, staking out a large patch of Hemp Agrimony and Spear Thistle in the hope of some Fritillary action with some other butterflies. Whilst waiting I passed the time with some fresh Red Admirals and a Peacock. Even up here RA seem to be having an excellent summer after being virtually non-existent in the spring.



On the Friday the same patch of Agrimony gave me a Comma along with the resident Admirals



and finally, returning from the Wedding on Sunday afternoon, another browse of the Agrimony revealed a Painted Lady had joined the group.



Nearly there guys, only a couple more Arnside posts to go! 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 06-Aug-16 10:06 PM GMT

Hoping for some Fritillaries, Buggy! keep posting... 😊

Dave

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Aug-16 11:22 AM GMT

'ere you go then Dave 😊

### Arnside Knott part 6

#### The Fritillaries:

Well, the other big reason for this trip was to find the last UK Fritillary on my list and probably our most endangered butterfly. I'll post pictures of every individual Fritillary I managed to capture and if I happen to misidentified anything Dark Green when it is High Brown, please do feel free to point it out, if it's the other way around... feel free to leave me in my own little world 😊!

Apart from Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns the first butterfly I saw was a rather faded Fritillary. It was flying around a clearing in the Bracken on the lower slopes, feeding periodically. It was whilst walking through the bracken after this, what turned out to be a Dark Green, that I discovered the tick population here really cannot be exaggerated!



*Dark Green Fritillary male*

Whilst wandering up to the top I had a couple of flybys but not a hope of knowing what species they were.

At the top I chatted to some other Fritillary hunters and found that a female had been seen ovipositing earlier but none had been seen for some time. I also found out that at least two High Browns had been photographed earlier at the bottom on the other side of the car park along with a few Dark Greens. Sadly, when I went down to look around there wasn't a Fritillary in sight 😊. This was made all the more galling when I checked my facebook that evening to find some Arnside Knott High Brown pictures from that very morning had been posted in one of the butterfly groups and were flaunting themselves on my newsfeed 😊!

So with Thursday a washout and the weekend mostly at a wedding it seemed I was having to pin a lot of hope on the Friday. I got there mid morning and spent my time between the Agrimony at the top and the patch at the bottom where they'd been seen two days previously, but it wasn't until gone 1pm that another appeared, an egg laying female who just wouldn't settle long enough for me to ID. Eventually, after much chasing I managed to grab a couple of record shots clear enough to see she was Dark Green.



*Dark Green Fritillary female*

Thankfully I didn't have to wait too long for another to appear, this time a rather tatty specimen feeding on a knapweed. I couldn't get as close as I'd liked so I just crouched down and clicked away hoping I'd get enough underside for a positive ID, pretty sure I was looking at my very first High Brown Fritillary...



*High Brown Fritillary #1*

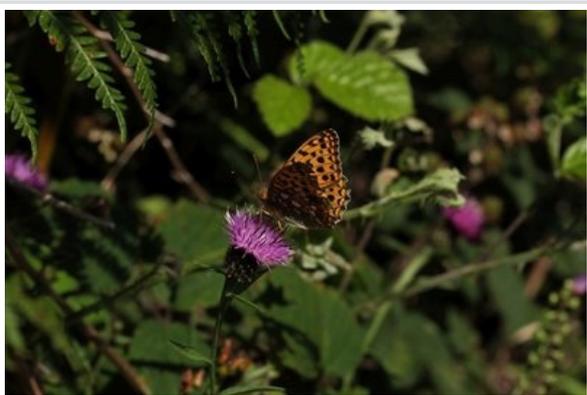


After he vanished I walked a short distance and saw what looked like a much fresher Fritillary feeding. I immediately had a good feeling about this one and started to take a run of pictures as I crept closer.



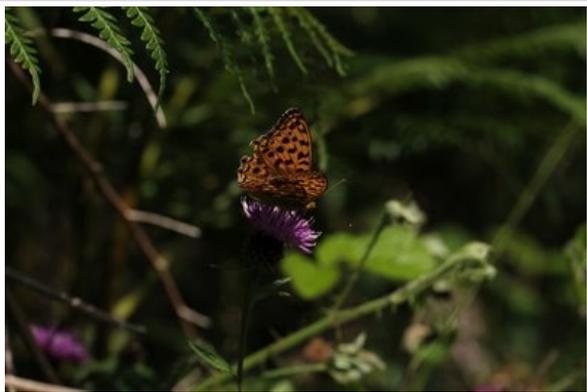
*High Brown Fritillary #2*

This one turned out to be much more approachable, completely engrossed in feeding, opening and closing its wings as it slowly pirouetted on the flower. And there, the perfect underside picture giving me absolutely no doubt to its identity! Apart from a few nicks this was a really good conditioned individual.





To be honest once I'd seen the pictures on my laptop I didn't need underside for confirmation, the upper spotting pattern is classic High Brown as well.



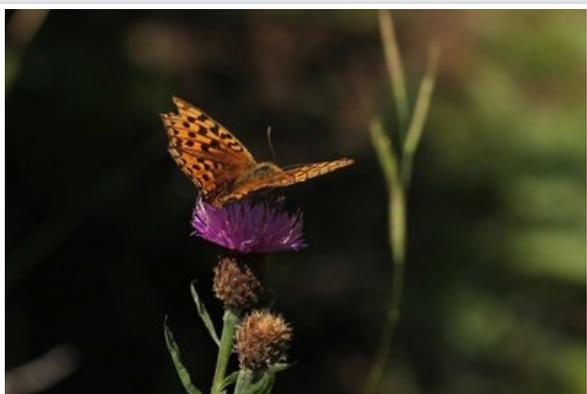


*A perfectly posed High Brown Fritillary :)*

I stayed working this patch for some time, and pretty much had it all to myself as well which was a pleasant bonus, and during this time I managed a third tatty High Brown plus another unidentified egg laying female.



*High Brown Fritillary #3*



I didn't see any more Fritillaries after that day but I was very happy with my haul, although tinged with sadness at having to travel so far and search so hard for a species that only 50 years ago I could have found much closer to home. I chatted to a couple of BC peeps doing transects and was told, despite all the management they are still on a downward spiral even here at one of their supposed strongholds, really rather sobering. Hopefully a couple of proper winters will give the population a boot up their proverbial bum.

While I was there they were actually doing some bracken cutting and it was interesting to note that all egg laying, I witnessed was being down in amongst these cleared areas



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Andy Wilson, 07-Aug-16 11:44 AM GMT

Very jealous about the High Browns. It seems that the weather and family commitments have led me to fail in my mission to see all resident UK fritillary species this year. In fact, I haven't even managed to get a record shot of a Dark Green, although I have seen some on the South Downs at a distance 😞

Still, there's always next year!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by peterc, 07-Aug-16 12:28 PM GMT

Well, Bugboy, so you did see the Special One 😊 . Well done – you deserve it with all the travelling you've done.

ATB

Peter

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 07-Aug-16 04:08 PM GMT

You must be thrilled with those HB shots Buggy, and rightly so! The one entitled 'perfectly posed' is exactly that – great photo!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 07-Aug-16 08:33 PM GMT

Brilliant, Buggy – well worth the trip up there. 😊 That HBF really did pose perfectly for you – no question of the ID.

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 07-Aug-16 10:46 PM GMT

Cracking HBF Bugboy – you're racking them up this year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 08-Aug-16 10:13 PM GMT

Great work, Bugboy.

I'm not going to get up there this year, sadly, but thanks to your commentary I almost feel like I've been!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Aug-16 09:35 PM GMT

Thank you all for the comments, it was a great trip and despite the weathers best attempts at times I managed to see most of what I was after 😊

**1st August, A day at Gaits Barrow**

For my final full day up north I decided to have a change of scenery, now that I'd got my targets under my belt, and visited Gaits Barrow. After seeing it mentioned so often in Goldies diary (and also the chance for more Fritillaries) I was eager to see the place for myself.

After a little bit of research courtesy of google maps I decided a one stop train ride to Silverdale and walk from there would be a good idea, taking in Trowbarrow Quarry Nature Reserve en-route. The day started off rather gloomy and I didn't see much at all although the scenery was nice, it felt like I was lost in Middle Earth for a while...



*Trowbarrow Nature Reserve*

The first butterflies I saw didn't show themselves until around 11, a few fresh Speckled Woods were warmed up enough to bask in the thinning cloud at Gaits Barrow.



I continued exploring and eventually came across some cleared areas where there seemed to be some coppicing done in recent years, the area was currently over run with Ragwort and a few Browns and a single Small White were present here and I figured if any Fritillaries were around they would be here. Sadly it wasn't to be, as the clouds finally cleared I worked the area carefully, noticing Violets poking out of the sparse undergrowth, but nothing more than Whites and Browns made an appearance.



With blue sky as far as the eye could see now, I wandered off to explore further and discovered a large expanse of Hemp Agrimony. In days yonder this would have been heaving with all sorts of insects and although butterflies were there, the numbers reflected what has become a dreadful year them. In total there were a couple of Comma, two or three Brimstones, a few ringlets and Meadow Browns and singles of Painted Lady, Peacock and Red Admiral. They all posed for me though, a selection:





One thing that were out in numbers here were Common Darter dragonflies, presumably having aquatic larval stages, they do rather well with a run of wet summers.



Trowbarrow looked completely different on the return walk, now in full sun with a flock of Swallows enjoying the sun and here too Dragonflies were numerous. Mixed in with the Common Darters was a new species for me, the Black Darter, our smallest dragonfly.





The only Butterfly that settled long enough was the only Green-veined White I saw on the whole trip. A fresh female.



I'll end this with a few other none butterflies I came across on my northern adventure 😊



*Not sure what moth this is...?*



*A sleepy Rabbit that jumped about six feet in the air when it realised I was standing not far away watching it!*



*A curious Cow*



*I saw more Bullfinch up here than all combined sightings over the past 20 years!*



*Antler Moth*



*Longhorn Beetle, *Leptura quadrifasciata**



*Had a staring match with this hind (I won obviously!)*



*When she wandered off a little bambi hopped out of the undergrowth and followed her.*

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by Maximus, 11-Aug-16 08:03 PM GMT

Some great adventures 'up North' and some great butterflies seen and photographed, great Scotch Argus shots 🍷 Our planned trip to see the Scotch Argus is now off until next year unfortunately 😞😞 but like others here I feel like I have been there just reading your diary 😊

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 11-Aug-16 11:07 PM GMT

Thanks Maximus 😊 I had a great time. Sorry you couldn't make it up this year but glad I could help slightly with withdrawal symptoms 😊

#### **3rd August, return to normality... Bookham, Box hill and Denbies!**

So after detailing my Arnside trek I am now over about a week behind. I still had five days left from my fortnight off work and with the weather still behaving itself (relatively speaking) it was off to some of my regular haunts to see if I could get lucky with any Brownies, Silver-spotted Skippers and anything else that decided to show itself to me.

Bookham was first, I was lucky with a few early morning Brownies last year but there were none in sight today. All the other late summer usual suspects were present though, Whites, Browns and Skippers loitering around and warming up.





Essex



Moving into the wood late season Silver-washed Fritillaries were active in every clearing I came to, pretty much ignoring each other, and a freshly emerged Peacock gave me an irresistible target, they never look better than at this time of year.





Obviously I also needed to check on this year's batch of White Admiral larvae: two, I discovered were MIA, presumed predated. Ethel and Evelyn are no more but here's Eloise, Edith and Edna all still first instar from the looks of things.





After this I returned back to where the Brownies showed up last year, still nothing of them but I was welcomed by another orange and Brown butterfly that doesn't show up as often as it should. He posed well and did a bit of stem dancing, not that there seemed to be any females around to watch him strut his stuff.



A couple of minutes later another one showed up, even fresher looking and he too posed exceedingly well for me!



To finish my morning off I had a common Blue and a gorgeous Red Admiral



Next to Box Hill to see if the Silver-spotted Skippers are out

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Aug-16 08:32 PM GMT

### 3rd August, return to normality... Bookham, Box hill and Denbies! Part 2

Out of the shelter of Bookham woods there was a stupidly gusty wind and I wasn't too sure I'd be getting any pictures on the open slopes of Box Hill and Denbies. The slopes of Box Hill I found to be depressingly quiet, possibly the wind was keeping everything in the long grass but I would have expected to have disturbed more than the odd Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper.

Crossing over to the meadows around Zigzag road and the relative shelter of the hedge I found several Brimstones fattening up for winter, no Small Blues today though.



Then it was time to go out into the wind again and see if the Skippers were out yet. It took some searching but at the far end I caught a few fleeting glances of something small and golden being whisked along with the wind that looked distinctly Skippery. It took some persistence and a huge deal of patience and luck but I did end up with a few pictures of my target. There were only a few out as far as I could tell, they're hard enough to follow on a good day but with a tail wind like today I didn't stand a chance so the only ones confirmed were the few that landed in front of me as I wandered the hillside.





I was in two minds as to whether to head over to Denbies since even on a still day it seems to manufacture its own wind but in the end I decided to chance it.

Just before I got to the hillside, over the road from the car park I found a Painted Lady quietly licking a stone and seemingly oblivious to all around, each to their own I suppose, it must have been covered in lovely minerals!



As I suspected it was blowing an absolute gale on the hillside and the Blues I found were for the most part buried down in the turf. On the path I found one of 2016's rarities, a Brown Argus.



I ended up spending just an hour here in the end, mostly watching Chalkhills getting blown ragged but in the odd brief quiet spell I did manage a few half decent shots.



Re: Bugboys mission

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

Hi Bugboy...just catching up with your trip up north, great reports 😊

I recognise most of the backgrounds and scenery in your photos from my own visits up there over the years although Trowbarrow is one place I have not got around to visiting yet.

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 13-Aug-16 10:41 PM GMT

### 5th August Malling Down and Eastbourne Downs

Friday was another nice looking day with a decent forecast (apart from the still unseasonably strong winds) so I decided to go down to the south coast to see if I could catch the second brood Walls, stopping off at Malling Down for some Silver-spotted Skipper action.

I arrived at Lewes just after 10 and made my way up to the Down, the first thing to catch my eye was a Buddleja covered in butterflies, just like I remember how things used to be at the bottom of my garden when I was a kid. Today there were about 7 Peacock, 3 Red Admiral, 1 Small Tortoiseshell, a Painted Lady, a couple of Brimstones, and various Whites and Browns. I sent a bit of time with these (and also stopped off before leaving), before moving onto the nearby Marjoram and the Chalkhills which were enjoying themselves there.



The Meadow Browns seem to be having a second surge of emergence, most of what I were seeing were very fresh and as I watched two pair up in front of me.



Several pairs of Chalkhills were also hanging around, one pair in a rather literal sense!



Silver-spotted Skippers were around but not in numbers I was expecting, just the occasional one here and there. I remembered Trevor posting some SSS a day or two before my Arnside trip so I would have expected them to be in full flow by now.

Also drawing my attention was a lovely female Common Blue and a Brown Argus looking very attractive on a sprig of Lady's Bedstraw.





After a few hours of wandering here I made my way back, getting a few more shots of the Painted Lady on the Buddleja, and noticed a female SSS quietly sitting on a bramble thicket, closer inspection revealed she had a male attached. I've never seen this species in cop so I settled down and got some snaps of them.



They disengaged after a few minutes and whilst the male departed, looking for his next conquest no doubt, the female sat around for some time and proceeded to stick her tongue out at me, mind you I did have my lens stuck right u her palpi!





There was one other unexpected flyby that morning...



Next off to play with some Walls on the south coast and maybe even a Clouded Yellow or two.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 14-Aug-16 09:29 PM GMT

#### 5th August Malling Down and Eastbourne Downs part 2

At Eastbourne I got lucky much sooner than expected. Walking along the sea front, joining the various Whites which are always here, an orangey butterfly was flitting around in one of the planted areas, looking as though she was going to lay and quite remarkably she sat for me 😊. Of course had it been a male the results would have been a few orange blurs at best.



Presumably she's found her way down to the sea front due to the recent few days of high winds, there was also a female Chalkhill blue flying along the path, a mile or so from any Down land.

Up on the Downs I found the usual suspects, a few aged Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns flitted here and there. A Red Admiral had taken ownership of a patch of nettles and Hemp Agrimony but what caught my attention was a secondary target for the day, some Common Blues. A couple of males and females were present on the lower slopes, flying with a few Chalkhills with the occasional Small Copper..



It was still quite early in the afternoon and up on Wall Brown Alley I found the males to be as infuriating as ever. Another Painted Lady was here as well, they do seem to be turning up rather regularly now, I've probably now seen more than I did last year.

As time wore on and the shadows grew longer the Walls were forced to bask in ever smaller sunny patches and I was able to sit and wait for them at the choicest spots.





By 5 I was at last able to get close to them, particularly one male. Any other species that grass shadow would annoy me but not for him, it was a hard fought for snap which I'm very happy with 😊!



## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Aug-16 09:46 PM GMT

### 6th August Looking for Lulworths

Another day, another lifer. I'm rapidly running out of lifers, only 6 to go after I bag this one 🤪!

Originally I had planned to see the Lulworth Skipper at Lulworth, it just seemed the right thing to do, but I was caught out by not realising just how early they emerge there. A couple of emails to a man in the know (thanks Wurzel) quickly got me back on track and a trip to Durlston near Swanage was

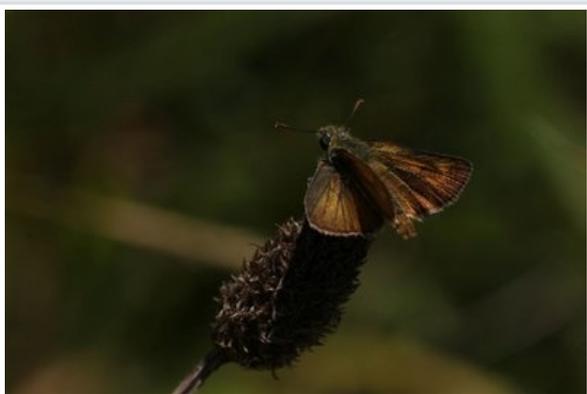
organised for the day. The downside was that it meant an early start, leaving at 5.30am isn't my idea of fun but to make the trip worthwhile it had to be done!

Anyway a train, bus and walk got me there by 11.30 and I quickly set about looking for the coastal path, luckily they're generally quite easy to find, being quite close to the coast and after a little wandering, with a few Walls tormenting me, a small dark Skipper settled nearby. A close inspecting revealed it didn't look like anything I've seen before so here's my first Lulworth Skipper 😊



I can't help but think the antennae look like a negative version of an Essex.

As often happens, once you see one they start popping out all over the place, with males and females appearing as I slowly walked along the path in varying stages of life.





Here's a male trying his luck (it wasn't his lucky day)



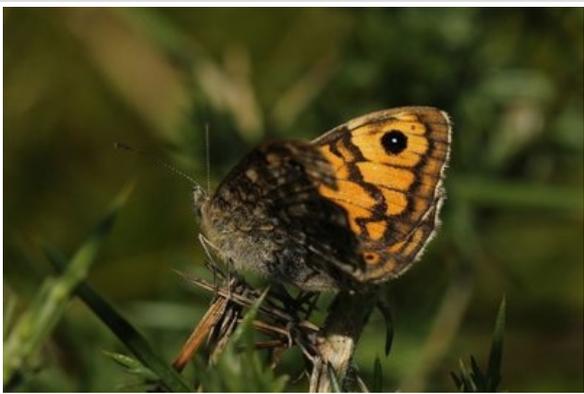
I noticed one female obviously looking to lay, so following her I got to see some nice behaviour 🤪



And here's the result, 6 pearly eggs tightly tucked into a dead blade.



Another pleasant surprise was another well behaved Wall, I seem to be on a role with this species! I couldn't quite get her in plane with my camera, the Gorze she was perched on was threatening to prickle me in places I'd rather not be pricked in!



I also found a single Small Blue but the only Skipper I saw here were Lulworth's, making ID very easy for me!



The Bus ride went past Corfe Castle so I decided to leave a bit early and stop off there to see if I could locate any here. Unfortunately, the only skippers I saw here were SmEssex, I'm not sure exactly where they hang out here or whether its and early emerging site but it's a Ruined Castle so what's not to like, and there were some Common Blues to keep me occupied!



*Corfe Castle*

Another good day in another beautiful part of the country.



*Durlston Coastal Path*

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by millerd, 15-Aug-16 10:47 PM GMT

Well done on the Lulworths, Buggy, and a terrific spot to see them too. When the weather's like that on the Dorset coast, who needs to go abroad? The egg-laying shot (and the eggs spotted afterwards) is amazing too. 😊👍

Dave

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 16-Aug-16 10:45 PM GMT

Thanks **Millerd** I was pretty chuffed to grab ovipositing and eggs with my first Lulworths, plus a well behaved Wall as a bonus 😊

#### **10th August**

A repeat performance from a week ago, Bookham in the morning and then Denbies for the afternoon. It started off quite a bit more grey and dreary than predicted and there wasn't a huge amount flying, just a few Browns and Whites, most of which were disturbed as I walked along. I spent a few hours wandering around, hoping the cloud would thin but very little happened, definitely no sign of a Brownie! I did however manage one six-legged lifer, a Short-winged Conehead.



After deciding it was a no show from the Brownies I went to check on this year's lot of White Admirals. Last time two were MIA, today another two were gone, only Edith remains. She's moulted into second instar since last week and has also moved, her original leaf well and truly dead now.

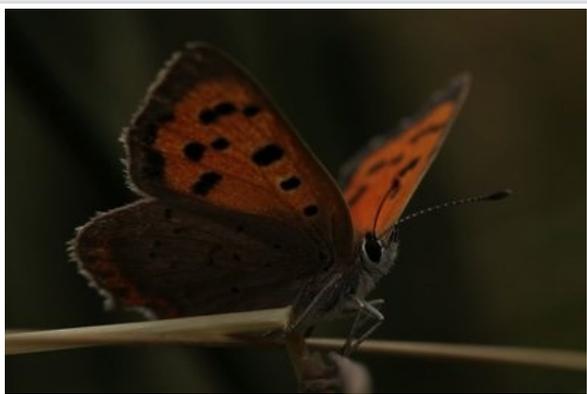
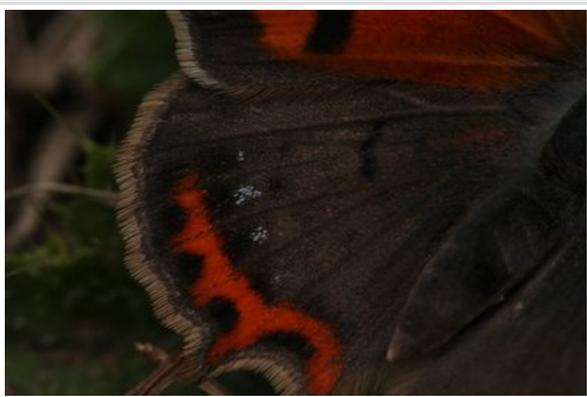


On the return walk I was quite surprised to be joined by a world weary adult. It was still overcast but slightly warmer now and with barely a flap it just gracefully floated around like a tattered piece of tissue.

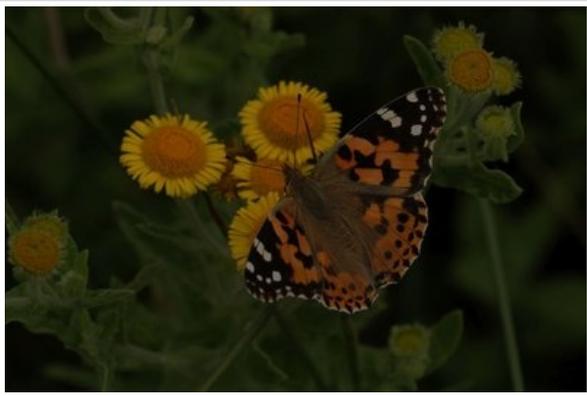




Things were starting to liven up by the time I returned to the open scrub, the cloud had thinned and butterflies were actually showing themselves. Last week two male Small Coppers showed up for me, today I had the pleasure of two females.



A few butterflies were now feeding on the blankets of Fleabane, most notably a couple of Common Blues, a Comma and yet another Painted Lady, no trip out is complete without one of these beauties showing up lately!



A few hours later it had brightened up noticeably on Denbies. Chalkhill Blues were mostly looking a bit past their best now but there was the odd fresh one lurking.





A few Silver-spotted Skippers were active, mainly around the rabbit warren where the Marjoram grows thickly and mixed in with them I found a Large Skipper.



A single tatty Marbled White floated up and down the slope but most notably here were the numbers of fresh Meadow Browns.





The last butterfly to be photographed was at the other end of the spectrum, I wasn't even sure what it was until it landed, a male Large White who looked like he'd had a close encounter with a strimmer. He was gallantly carrying on with life though!



Maybe third time lucky for a Brownie this year 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 17-Aug-16 09:05 PM GMT

### 15th August Brownie search take 3

Those pesky Brown Hairstreaks are proving reluctant to show for me this year, but luckily I had an ace up my sleeve this year. On my trip to Fermyn, **Philib** had offered to take me to Shipton Berlinger when the time was right. A few emails and a last minute request for a day off work and it was arranged... another silly early 5.30 start to my day.

3 ½ hours later I was looking at my first Brownie of the year, a female lurking in some nettle spotted by **Roselyn** (I'd walked straight past her!)



Also here was **Willow** and between the four of us we managed at least four Hairstreaks. There was some discussion as to what they were up to down in the grass this early but zooming on a few of my pics they seemed to be feeding, perhaps obtaining moisture for the day's events?



*Heavily cropped*

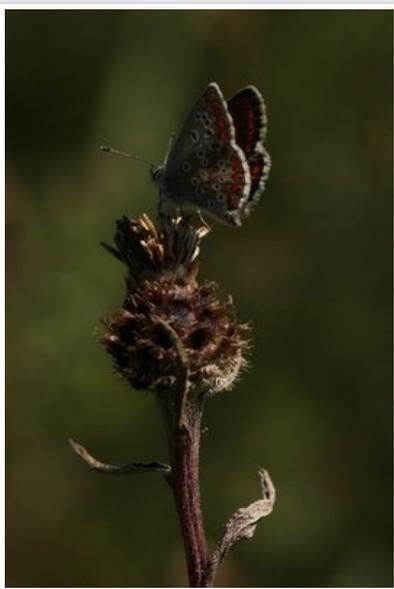
Amongst the gorgeousness was this rather drab, nondescript individual... 😊



We wandered around when they all vanished late morning, taking in the other inhabitants of the site, Common Blues, Brown Argus and Brimstones all catching my eye.



*Looked like he was trying to lay an egg...?*



*Brownies could be seen flitting around the occasional Ash tree...*



...but then in the early afternoon the real action started, a couple of females came down to feed on some Bramble blossom. Nectar sources were few and far between here so they didn't go far and behaved impeccably for a small group of Brownie worshippers. They were both in tip top condition bar some missing tails on one. It was this one, 'Stumpy', who sat in front of us first, 'Tails' sat further back basking and feeding. Phil kindly leant me his 210mm lens so I could get that little bit closer.



A whole half an hour went by until Tails decided to flaunt herself in front of us, to a flurry of snapping cameras.



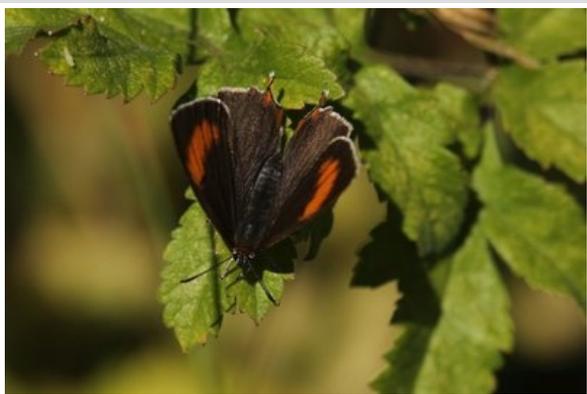
Then Stumpy came back and for a couple of seconds they sat together before a little boxing match sent Stumpy off to find another flower



I finally left her when I looked at my camera to see I had about two hundred pics all looking rather similar!



Wandering along the hedge a little later with Phil, he noticed one flutter down. She sat basking out of reach for a while before coming further down for some more basking whilst looking for somewhere to lay. I don't think she actually laid anything, just going through the motions and being a typical fussy female.





A fantastic day and all told we probably saw about 10 or so individuals. Big thanks again to **PhilB** and **Roselyn** for the lift and great to meet another UKBer, **[b]Willow[/b] 😊**

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-16 10:14 PM GMT

Great Brostreaks Buggy 😊 Also glad that the info about the Lulworths paid off and that Corfe Castle was to your liking (mind you as it featured in Bedknobs and Broomsticks what's not to like?) 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 18-Aug-16 08:06 PM GMT

A brilliant set of Hairstreaks, Buggy. Shipton B is on my list of places to go before the summer runs out. That almost unmarked male looks really unusual - they almost always have some kind of buff marking. No doubt it was a nice pale gold underneath! 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Aug-16 08:48 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, and much thanks for the tip for the Lulworths too, twas a great day out 😊

Thanks **Millerd**, the male may just be due to his age, virtually lost his fringe, definitely been around for a few days

#### 17th August, could've gone better

Today's Brownie hunt was the polar opposite of Mondays. **Trevor** had given me directions to get to Steyning shooting range and with another glorious late summer day forecast I decided to go exploring another new site. Things started off well, no need for a silly early start and I made good time, shockingly Southern Railways were on time! It was when I arrived at Shoreham-by-sea that things started to go pear shaped. I'd checked the internet the night before to discover buses run to Steyning every 20 mins. Unfortunately, Google in this case is a big fat liar! Hourly they run and it took me a while to find a bus stop that was going the right way, only to find I'd just missed the bus 😞. I spent the best part of 2 hours stuck in Shoreham with my destination only a 15-minute bus ride away.

Things proceeded to go downhill when I finally arrived at Steyning around 1.30. My phone, which I had used to navigate Shoreham had now died and so I couldn't get to Trevor's directions of the site so I then spent an hour aimlessly wandering around seeing very little bar a nice (and fast becoming obligatory on my outings) Painted Lady, some Common Blues and a few others.





An hour later I decided to leave, I didn't know how long it was going to take to get home, and who should I bump into but Trevor who had been there all day and had seen four Brownies... 🍪🍪🍪

Just to round off the day fate decided to cause some points failures in front of my Overground train when I got back to London so I was left to wander off and look for the closest Tube station to finally get home, somewhat annoyed at wasting what should have been a rather nice day!

To cheer myself up here's some more Brownie pictures from Shipton Bellinger!





### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 18-Aug-16 09:00 PM GMT

That must have been really frustrating for you Buggy but you have some really lovely shots of BH (and the Painted Lady) which must be some consolation – second from last is my favourite 🍷

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Paul Harfield, 18-Aug-16 10:53 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy

Looks like I missed you and the best of the Brown Hairstreak action on Monday at Shipton Bellinger. I guess you were one of the guys in the field next to the main track in the morning.

I had used up all my 'brownie points' (no pun intended 😊) on the Saturday so only had a couple of hours on Monday. The Hairstreaks all came down after I left by the look of it. You got some pretty nice shots there 😊😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 18-Aug-16 10:56 PM GMT

That sounds like a nightmare Buggy 😞 Still at least you got loads of Brostreaks from good old Shipton the day before – little beauties they were 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 18-Aug-16 11:23 PM GMT

That's a great sight to see two Brown Hairstreaks in such close proximity, Bugboy.

There's clearly life in the season yet!!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Aug-16 10:12 PM GMT

It was indeed David, just a shame they didn't quite sit right to catch the sun but you can't have everything 😊

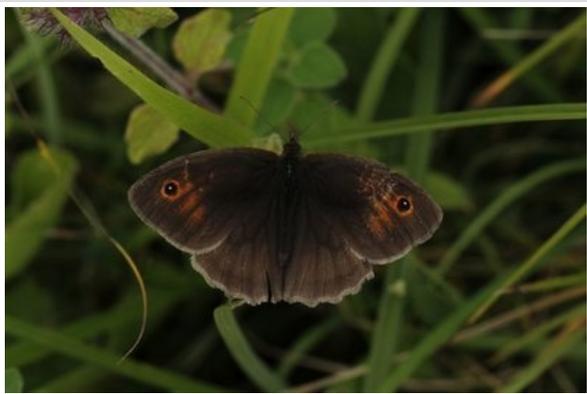
21st August, Denbies & Bookham

Well that wasn't very nice, a big windy storm thing arriving just in time for my weekend off! Thankfully today was significantly better than Saturday and since I have yet to find a second brood Adonis, I set off early to catch them (hopefully) waking up on Denbies. A fair bit of sun on the way promised much but a thick blanket of cloud arrived upon my arrival...

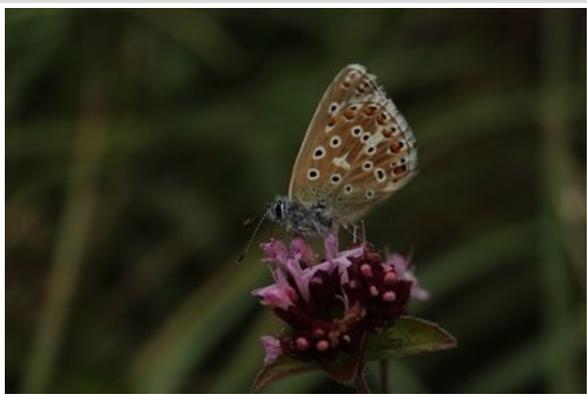
A couple of Brown Argus were active one of which made it into my first photograph of the day.



Meadow Browns were relatively plentiful, most of them looking very fresh. I'm convinced there are two distinct emergences of these, not double brooded but more something along the lines of what Speckled Woods do. Chalkhills were also about, all though looking rather faded and well past it. I seem to remember last year they outlived the Adonis second brood, doesn't look like a repeat performance this year.



Next to be on the receiving end of my camera was a male Adonis. It was still too cloudy for basking but not for feeding.



Another lycid was next, a female Common Blue this time... still no basking though.



Small Heaths were also enjoying a third brood, lots of fresh individuals being disturbed by my footfall.



With thinning clouds and patches of blue sky my second Adonis did feel it was bright enough to open his wings and posed perfectly for me, perching on a sprig of Eyebright for some time 😊 .





A few Silver-spotted Skippers were about, looking a bit worn like the Chalkhills.



Approaching lunchtime a few more Adonis began to appear, encouraged out by the larger gaps in the clouds, although not many by any stretch of the imagination. By the time I left around noon I had probably only seen seven or eight, all males



A very pretty Common Blue was the last butterfly to be captured for posterity before leaving for an afternoon at Bookham.



An hour later I found myself wandering around the open scrub at Bookham Commons under some decent blue sky. I found, unfortunately, no Brown Hairstreaks though (although they were there as Millerds diary proves! 🐛)

A fresh Small Tortoiseshell gave me the run-around and only allowed the one record shot



And moving into the woods I found a Silver-washed Fritillary who had certainly lived his life to the full. There was still life in him, a passing female grabbed his attention for a while although she was able to lose him with relative ease 😊.



My White Admirals caterpillars this year have been vanishing at a rate of knots, with just one out of five still alive on my last visit. Today there were none. I searched around some other areas but all I found was one more abandoned platform. I think WA had a terrible year this year, they certainly seemed much less numerous than last year here and I heard similar comments when I visited Fermyn.

Returning to Brown Hairstreak territory for one last prowl before home, a few Common Blues were active and so were some Small Coppers, three in total although one escaped my camera.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 21-Aug-16 10:18 PM GMT

I'm glad you caught up with the Adonis even if the second trip remained lacking in Hairstreaks, Buggy. I certainly didn't see any Fritillaries down at Bookham, mind, even worn ones! 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Aug-16 10:28 PM GMT

Yes I wasn't expecting to see any Fritillaries today!

I did see one other butterfly today which is something of a landmark for me. As I was leaving a male Clouded Yellow was manically flying around some Fleabane. He never settled, hormones obviously ruling his mind, but his presence means I've seen 50 species this year! I never set out to see that many this year. Not bad for a nutter that gets everywhere using public transport (and the odd lift from fellow butterfly nuts)! 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 22-Aug-16 10:38 AM GMT

Well done Buggy, I envy you the Adonis and 50 species is great 🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 22-Aug-16 10:00 PM GMT

That's great going Bugboy congrats on an great tally:D

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 25-Aug-16 10:14 PM GMT

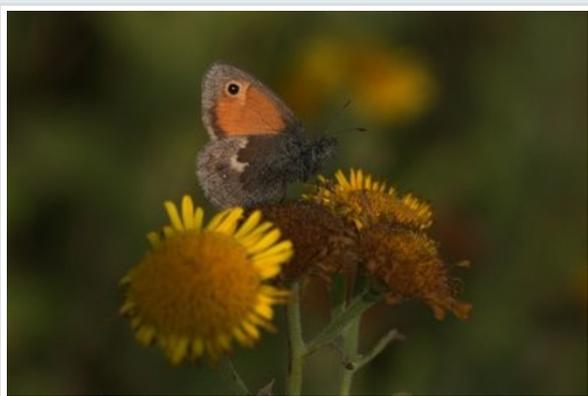
#### 24th August

So where to go on the hottest day of the year so far? I had two species in mind, some more Brown Hairstreaks and Clouded Yellows, both of which had been seen very recently at my home from home, Bookham Commons but I decided to give Steyning another go and then go to the coast, where it would hopefully be a few degrees cooler, for the Yellows.

Armed with the knowledge that google lies occasionally, getting to Steyning was a relative breeze this time and walking up to the hotspot who should I fine camped out in the shade of a tree, **Trevor**. It was around 10.30 and for the next 2 hours we stalked up and down the hedge, taking the occasional break from the almost unbearable heat under the tree, but not a single Hairstreak was seen. At best we had a couple of possible flybys. I could see what Neil Hulme was saying about all the nibbled Blackthorn, hopefully this is easily rectified. Not much else was active but what was flying wasn't going to settle, including a male Clouded Yellow going at the usual warp factor 9.

By 12.30 I decided to call it a day here, possibly it was just too hot for them, it was certainly getting too hot for me!

My next destination was Tide Mills, a familiar spot for me and easy enough to get to and according to Trevor, good numbers of Cloudies again this year. I took my time getting there, no point in trying for pictures mid-afternoon and arrived around 4. Small Whites were very numerous, particularly around the Everlasting Peas. Small Heaths were also numerous on the rabbit cropped grass and Common Blues were, well verging on common!





My first Cloudie was a female who seemed to be stuck between looking for somewhere to roost and a bit of last minute basking but she was most inconsiderate to settling suitably for me, dithering here and there before buggering off over a hill.



I found another one, a male this time who was obsessed with a patch of Red Valerian, almost perfect except it was on a very steep slope leading down into the water! Still it's not often you can find a male who's not going at a hundred miles an hour so I stuck with him and got myself a few shots, just a shame about all the bloody grass stems.





After another male appeared and they both went their separate ways after a small tussle I wandered off to find a very excited Common Blue, he'd found a female and was doing his level best to impress, I was impressed at his attempts! They remained attempts though, he didn't get anywhere with her.





The only thing I was surprised to be absent were Small Coppers, there were a fair few here last year?

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 25-Aug-16 10:41 PM GMT

Good to see you had success at Tide Mills, Paul. Your camera catches the odd glimpse of that lovely Clouded Yellow upperside very well. I went straight home after Steyning, and melted in the garden.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 25-Aug-16 11:00 PM GMT

Great stuff there Bugboy 😊 If 2015 was the 'year of the annoying wind' I think 2016 is the 'year of the grass stem' 🙄🙄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 27-Aug-16 09:35 PM GMT

Nice to see you found more Clouded Yellows, Buggy. 😊 Pretty well my last target for the year, though I have seen one relatively briefly. Congratulations

on the 50 for the year too – not easy by public transport, so extra points there definitely. 😊

Dave

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 30-Aug-16 05:52 PM GMT

Yup **Trevor**, a little consolation prize to the complete lack of Brown Hairstreaks that morning 😊

Grass stems, **Wurzel**..... 😊

Thanks **Millerd**, been a pretty good year for me 😊

### 30th August

I've not been on my local patch for a good few weeks now, so I thought I'd have a wander there this afternoon on my half day from work was long overdue. It's been pretty barren as far as butterflies are concerned on previous outings and I was disappointed to find things hadn't really improved. Whites were reasonably commonplace, not settling for me though in the heat of the afternoon but apart from them butterflies were rather hard to come by. In the course of about 2 hours I disturbed a single Comma who vanished into a bramble thicket, about half a dozen Meadow Browns, a single male Common Blue and a Small Copper. The Copper was the only one that was willing to be photographed although it was trying to stay cool for the most part, so today's post is mostly in the style of **Hoggers** 😊



*Staying cool*



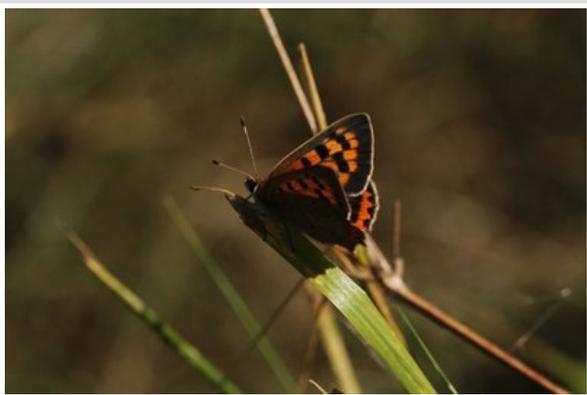
*still staying cool*



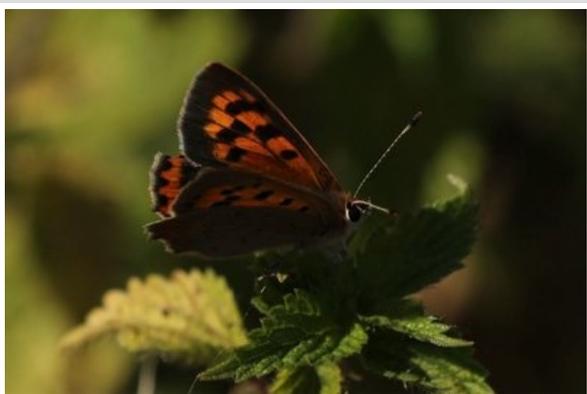
*staying cool and living dangerously with a toe in a spiders web*



*staying cool and looking good!*



*time to catch a few rays*



*Turns out he was a rather attractive, strongly marked animal!*

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 31-Aug-16 10:02 PM GMT

**31st August, Bookham Commons**

The forecast today was for sunny morning and clouding over by lunchtime so I decided to kill a few hours at Bookham today, not after anything in particular (although a late season Brown Hairstreak would be nice!)

First to fly into view was a faded Small Copper, followed 10 minutes later by a rather fresher boy.



The biggest surprise of the day was a web of Peacock larvae, looking to be about to leave their penultimate instar, a second generation perhaps? Certainly very late for a first batch!



A few meadow Browns were still about in varying states of wear and tear, and a nice fresh female Speckled Wood posed for me.





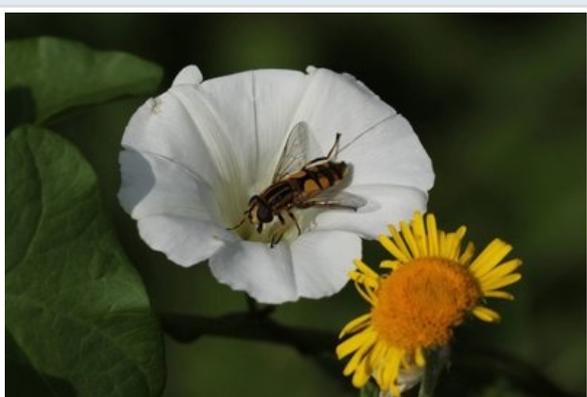
It didn't brighten up as much as I was lead to believe and there weren't too many butterflies to catch my eye so I turned my attentions to the various Hoverflies I was seeing.



*Sphaerophoria scripta* male



*Eupeodes latifasciatus*



*Helophilus pendulus*



*Syrphus sp.*



*Eristalis arbustorum*



*Platycyberus scutatus*

As it was getting close to lunch things began to get brighter, a few whites started showing up, a couple more Coppers and a Common Blue caught my attention





and then a proper little stunner of a Painted Lady appeared. She initially whizzed by but a few minutes later I found her feeding, and to use a Wurzelism, she was 'fresh out of the box'! A gorgeous deep, rich orange with that lush pink blush of a fresh animal.





I had planned other things for the supposedly cloudy afternoon but, rather annoyingly, if anything it seemed to brighten up on my trip back into London. Oh well, weekend off, hopefully it will stay warm for a few more days at least!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 31-Aug-16 10:13 PM GMT

They must be second brood Peacocks, Buggy. Far too late to be anything else. With luck, the weather will hold long enough for them to become adults and feed up enough to hibernate. I found some a few years back, but slightly earlier and the butterflies emerged in the first week of September. Maybe the warm dry and sunny August (in the south at least) has caused this.

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 01-Sep-16 05:09 PM GMT

Hi! Buggy, I hope you see those Peacocks flying 😊

I'm just catching up on posts and I must say those Adonis Blues you posted ( August 21st really caught their lovely Blue colour,) Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-16 09:40 PM GMT

A 'Wurzelism'...I like that 😊😄 That Painted Lady is a cracker 🍪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Sep-16 06:44 PM GMT

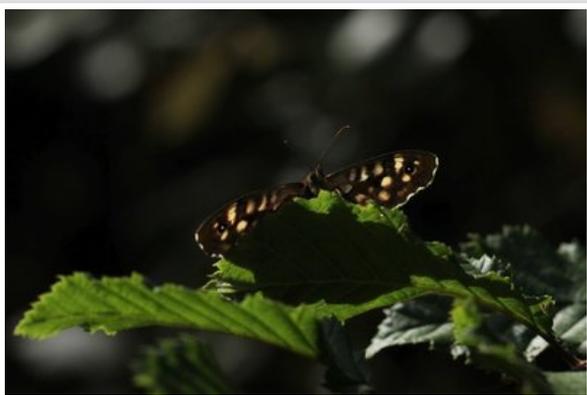
Yea, you're almost certainly right **Millerd**, I can't see how any Peacocks could have survived that long to lay! They need to hurry up **Goldie**, there's plenty of Fleabane to fatten up on at the moment but that wont last much longer and there's precious little else to feed on at this time of year.

Thanks **Wurzel**, there's a few Wurzelism's in my vocabulary now 😊😄

### 3rd September, Coppers and Specklies

Up until this morning, today had seemed to be a bit of a washout, but then this morning's forecast said the rain wouldn't get to my part of the world until quite late in the day. My well-deserved lay in meant that staying local was the only option and since I haven't been to Epping forest since the spring, that was the destination of choice. I can remember a day last September made up primarily of Speckled Woods and Small Coppers here and I fully expected today would be of similar lepidopteran fare.

It didn't take long for the first Specklie to show up, a fresh female quickly followed by a few males battling over a sunny glade.



They continued to turn up quite regularly as I made my way to the meadow where I found the Coppers last year. Again it didn't take long for my target to turn up, a little glittering Copper getting buffeted as he tried to bask and feed in the blustery breeze.



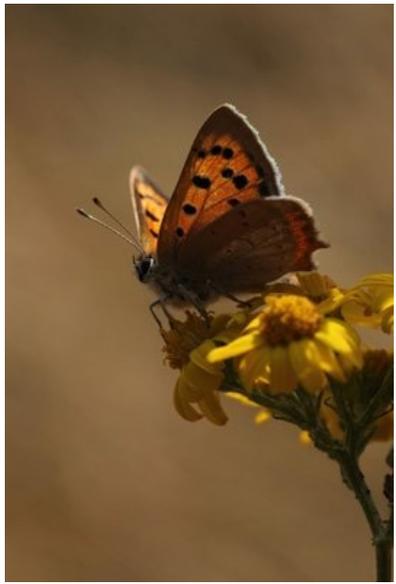


A stones throw from him I found another two feeding. As I approached, hoping to get them both in frame one flew up, quickly attracting the attention of the other and I watched as they alighted and started to flirt. I wasn't able to get a clear shot since the female was leading him a dance through the Ragwort flower head. Although she didn't seem to be giving him the heave-ho, I was quite surprised when he lost interest after only a short while leaving me with her.



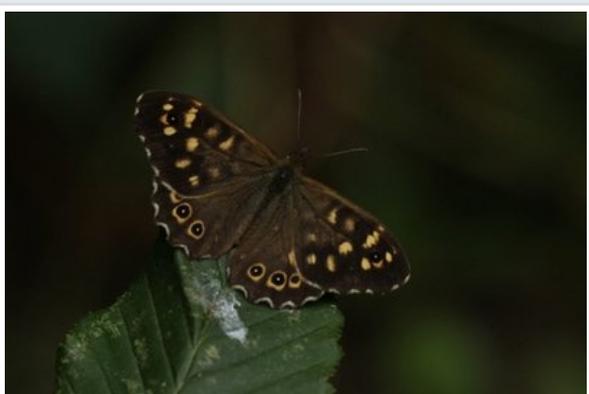
He hadn't gone far though and I disturbed him a short while later, looking very dashing sporting his fine set of blue badges in the sun!





3 Small Coppers seen in one place outside Dungeness, almost unheard of these days! 😊

Back into the wood more Specklies showed up, it's good to find they have recovered well after their disastrous spring round here.



The only other species seen were a few female Meadow Browns and a Red Admiral flyby.

Only an hour out today (it clouded over by 1pm) but satisfying nonetheless.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Katrina, 03-Sep-16 06:58 PM GMT

Great work with the Coppers, I have been missing them this year. Love the first Copper shot, it looks like a movie ending where it is about to fly off into the sunset.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Sep-16 07:31 PM GMT

Thanks Katrina, I've not seen many this year but like last year they seem to have picked up a bit late in the season in some of my regular haunts. When I do find one though I tend to make the most of them!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Paul Harfield, 03-Sep-16 10:26 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy

Nice to see you have found some Small Copper action 😊. Like you I have not seen many this year, but I have actually tripled my Small Copper count for the year in the last 5 days 😊😊. Nice selection of Hoverflies as well 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 04-Sep-16 10:04 PM GMT

Three Small Coppers 😊 You'll be giving Hoggers a run for his money at this rate 😊😊 Lovely series of shots – especially the final Blue Badger 🇩🇪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 04-Sep-16 11:10 PM GMT

Good late season images there, Bugboy. Coppers on ragwort and Specklies on blackberries are a sure sign we're approaching the tail end of the season.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Sep-16 11:24 AM GMT

Thanks Paul, I'll always try and find something to point my camera at when the butterflies fail me!

Three Coppers in one day **Wurzel** is pretty good going for me although I'd have to wait a few years to see the same amount that Hoggers gets in one day 😊

Indeed **David**, the season may be coming to a close but we've still got a few weeks left before it all ends for another year.

#### 4th September, Coppers, Blues and Heaths

I fancied going to find some more Adonis before they vanish for another year and with Denbies not available for me today (no trains to Box Hill for some reason) I plumped for Malling Down in Sussex. The weather wasn't particularly good, lots and lots of cloud was predicted and proved to be true, as did the rather strong breeze, the occasional break in the clouds also predicted proving less true! However, it was still quite warm so I figured if I stuck to the sheltered gullies on the Down I might get lucky with some roosting Adonis. Sadly, it wasn't to be, not a single Adonis was located in the few hours I spent there.

Small Heath and the occasional Meadow Brown flew up as I walked along, vanishing back into the turf when not caught in the wind and I had a brief game of chase with a Painted Lady who for love nor money refused to even have a record shot taken.

After a bit more wandering I spied, from a distance, a speck of orange perched on some Ragwort. Carefully scampering down a slope my suspicions were confirmed and he flew up just as I focused on him. He settled a short distance away, forcing me to carefully pick my way through shin deep Brambles for some shots, worth it though.



Although no Adonis were seen, I did come across several, to the point where you could refer to them as (I hope you're sitting down) common, Common Blues. More females than males were active, giving evidence to the theory of their darker colouration gives them a head start over the males on cooler days. I made the most of a species that's been anything but Common for a few years now!



*Not sure what this female thought she was sitting on...*





*Female top, male below*





The only butterfly more numerous than the Blues today were the Small Heaths and a few did allow some photographs.



Two more days off before back to work, which coincidentally seems to be when the weather looks to improve... sods law strikes again 😡

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Sep-16 08:55 PM GMT

### 6th September, Blue's and Yellow's (and Browns and Copper's and White's), Denbies. (Part 1)

My last day of freedom before a run of 6 days of work. I'd already made my mind up to go to Denbies to see if the Adonis were still out and perhaps catch up with a Cloudie or two. As I'm sure most of you with eye's saw, today was a bit on the cloudy side (well it was down here at any rate) but still very warm so there should have been some activity.

Approaching Denbies along the North Downs Way Meadow Browns started to appear, and a Small White stopped off for breakfast



The first thing to appear on Denbies was one of several Brown Argus I was to see. A female showed up shortly after





As I wandered further down the hillside Small Heath and Meadow Browns started to appear in reasonable numbers



Then a rather magnificent Hoverfly caught my attention, just as the sun broke through with what was to become the one and only break all morning. It was a *Chrysotoxum* sp. and one of the best wasp mimics around!



The brief glimpse of sun woke up a couple of Adonis and just as I was about to snap a few, a Clouded Yellow arose from the path in front of me and floated down the slope. So began (probably not unlike Millerds a few days ago), what would have probably looked like to a casual observer, a rather comical chase up and down the slope. The overcast weather certainly worked to my advantage, he didn't want to fly too far so it was a case of chase/stalk/'snap', chase/stalk/'snap', Adonis Blue's fleeing my feet, until I finally wore him down and I was able to get some of the best Cloudie pictures I've ever taken. I crop most of my pictures but these ones didn't need any cropping. He sat extremely well in the end, allowing me to 'garden' around him and get shots from both sides!



*Some lovely pink edging!*



*I can't help but think he looks really angry in this picture!*



Near the end of my chase I noticed a Small Copper and in my vain end of season mission to keep up with the Copper Machine that is Hoggers, I stopped briefly to record him.



I'll end this post with a couple of Cloudie upper side shots, almost in focus!



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Pauline, 06-Sep-16 09:07 PM GMT

You must be over the moon Buggy! Great Clouded Yellow shots and the open-winged images are the best I've seen in a long time 😊 . Denbies – another place I didn't get to this year 😞

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 06-Sep-16 10:11 PM GMT

Those Clouded Yellows are just amazing, Buggy. Warm cloudy and bright conditions are the best for getting close to this species in my experience, and you made 100% of the opportunity. That male looks really new – I wonder if it hatched locally. The benefit of those upperside shots (for which incidentally it is impossible to award too many 🍷 ) is that you can see how unblemished the butterfly is. Brilliant – I think I'd hang my butterflying boots up for the year after that kind of day... 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Katrina, 06-Sep-16 10:38 PM GMT

Wonderful Cloudie photos 😊 🍷

### Re: Bugboys mission

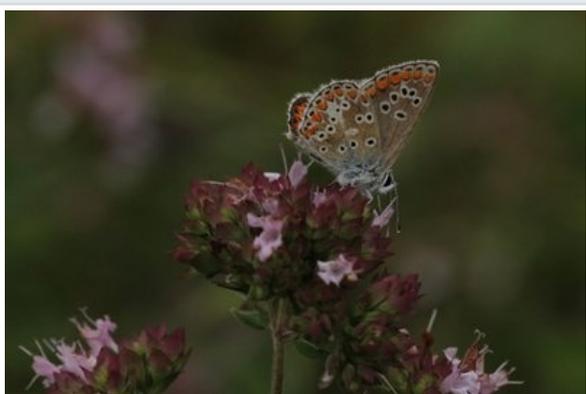
by bugboy, 07-Sep-16 08:15 PM GMT

Thank you all, I am really chuffed with those pictures

I certainly did make 100% of the opportunity **Millerd**, on the downside, the local tick population took 100% advantage of me laying in the grass. I only found one on me when I got home but it looks like they had a party on me!

**6th September, Blue's and Yellow's (and Browns and Copper's and White's), Denbies. (Part 2)**

So once I'd left the Clouded Yellow alone I turned my attentions to the Adonis Blue's, which seemed to be relatively plentiful. This time last year I was still coming across freshly emerged Chalkhills here, making female identification a little tricky but today it was virtually all Adonis and number wise I'd hazard a guess that they are on a par with last year. Most seemed to be in reasonable condition and scattered amongst them were some quite fresh individuals. The hotspot for the best activity was the area around the rabbit warren in the centre of the hillside. Mixed in with the Adonis were lots of Meadow Browns and Small Heath, also mostly at the fresh end of the spectrum, as well as a few more Brown Argus and a female Small White.







In amongst all these fresh butterflies I saw a couple of oldies, a barely recognisable Chalkhill and a Silver-spotted Skipper.





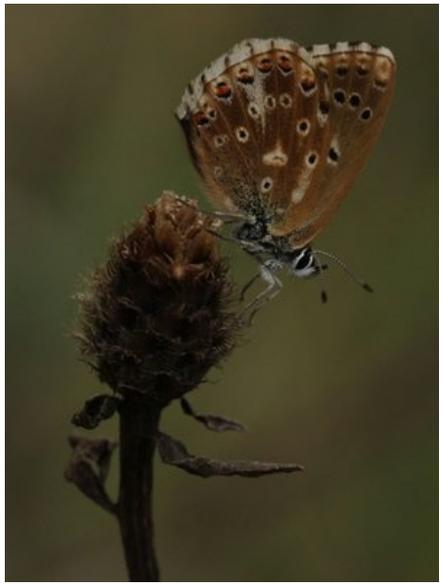
The muggy warm air was keeping everything active but not crazy active so it was easy to follow individuals. One female Blue Looked very nice and worthy of a few snaps but as I turned to follow her my foot found a hidden rabbit hole and my leg vanished up to the knee. 😊 Thankfully my blushes were saved in that I had the place to myself, so nobody was there to witness my 'graceful, elegant' collapse, except perhaps a confused family of rabbits.... All I left was my bum print in the turf!

Further afield I stumbled across a second Small Copper and then I noticed another (or perhaps the same) Cloudie feeding. A couple of snaps was all I took this time as another female Adonis caught my attention, very fresh and with a very generous dusting of blue scales, a stunning looking lady!



I had initially planned to head off to Bookham for a few hours in the afternoon but chasing Clouded Yellows up and down steep slopes in what felt almost tropical humidity had taken it out of me, that and also ending up with about 600 pictures to sift through.

As I was leaving one last butterfly caught my attention, an aberrant female Adonis, which upon closer inspection was even more unusual, one side of her wings was noticeably more spotted than the other, very odd!



A pretty decent haul for 3 hours on a cloudy morning at the end of the season! 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 09-Sep-16 07:47 PM GMT

Just catching up Bugboy, lovely Clouded Yellow's 🍷 and it's great your still finding Butterflies, they've become few and far between here now. Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 10-Sep-16 10:57 PM GMT

Cracking Cloudy shots Bugboy 🍷🍷 Interesting Adonis abs too 🍷 Hopefully we might be able to squeeze a little more out of the season yet...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 11-Sep-16 09:55 PM GMT

Another great selection, Buggy. I didn't find any decent Adonis females at Denbies a few days later, and certainly not any marked like that one! 🍷 The blue female is a nice one too. 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 12-Sep-16 08:03 PM GMT

I'm Catching up again Buggy...great Clouded Yellow photos 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurus rex, 12-Sep-16 08:18 PM GMT

Great to see you're still going strong buggy, it's nice to have some Clouded Yellows to chase around this year. If the weather stays good they could last us until early November like they did in 2009.

Perhaps I'll see you out & about somewhere in 2017.

Cheers

James

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 15-Sep-16 08:23 PM GMT

Thanks all 😊

#### Butterflysaurus rex wrote:

Great to see you're still going strong buggy, it's nice to have some Clouded Yellows to chase around this year. If the weather stays good they could last us until early November like they did in 2009.

Perhaps I'll see you out & about somewhere in 2017.

Cheers

James

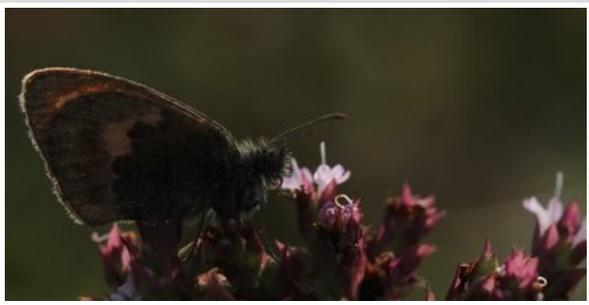
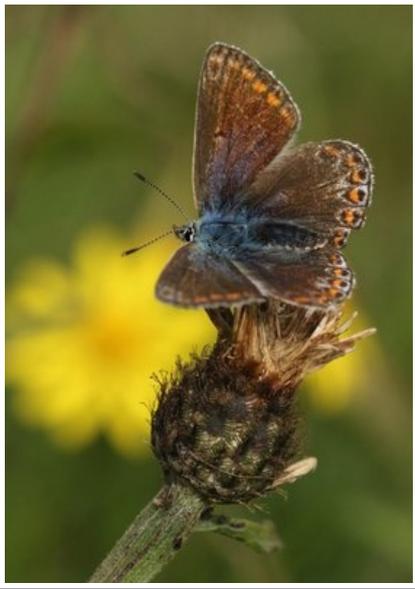
Maybe sooner than that James if these LTB hang around!

#### 14th September

So whilst others were out photographing Long-tailed Blues at Newhaven Tide Mills 🌿 I was a few miles down the coast on the Downs overlooking Eastbourne!

I'd initially thought to go to Denbies again but with the ridiculously hot weather I decided I might want a sea breeze to keep me going. I stopped off at Lewes and Malling Downs first, just in time for a large dark cloud to roll in and for an hour all I saw were a couple of Red Admirals which I'd disturbed and a Speckled Wood. Eventually the clouds dissipated and a few other butterflies came out to play, like last time Common Blues were active again, a few Small Heath and Meadow Browns were about but the star of the show was a beautiful fresh Comma who posed briefly for me.







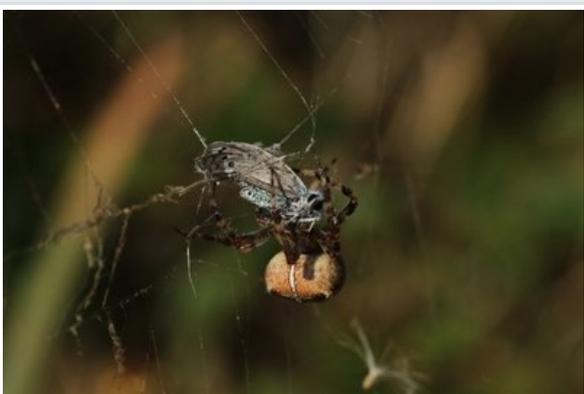
As I was leaving I couldn't resist a few backlit shots of a Small White on Devil's-bit Scabious.



have to say, Malling Down has been a bit disappointing for me this year, numbers of Silver-spotted Skipper and Chalkhills both way down on what I saw last year and not a sniff of either Walls or Adonis for me here 😞

By the time I got the Downs overlooking Eastbourne it was significantly warmer and everything was going full steam ahead, Common Blues, Small Coppers, Small Heath and a male Clouded Yellow all tormenting me with flybys

Eventually I found a Blue that wasn't quite so manic and I watched it flying around, trying to decide what Ragwort to land on. Unfortunately that was probably it's last thought, it flew into a rather large spiders web and was immediately wrapped up for later by the owner, its fate sealed by a rather large female *Araneus diadematus*. Oh well, such is life (and death). Given his condition (like all the others I'd seen so far), there's little doubt he'd already done his deed for his species.





Next up was a Brown Argus and then some more Coppers who were somewhat more accommodating.





The scrubby area these were hanging out, which consisted largely of Nettles and Brambles was also home to several Comma, Red Admiral and Peacocks. All of which looked very fresh but were very uncooperative, with only some long distant Comma shots achieved. The presence of the fresh Peacocks perhaps suggestive of a second brood occurring here.



As I was trying for some Vanessa pics (and failing) I had a little avian observer, I wasn't sure at first but after a couple of snaps and closer inspection I able to confirm I had a Spotted Flycatcher watching me! I've only ever seen these from a distance before so that was nice.



One of the reasons I chose this site was to see if any third gen. Walls had emerged after Trevor's recent post. I'm happy to say I found none, hopefully it will remain this way since most evidence currently suggests this often leads to local extinctions 😊.

The rest of the afternoon was mainly taken up with Small Coppers, who were turning up pretty regularly, in a variety of conditions...plus a rather surreal moment with a grown man dressed in a full Spiderman costume filming himself with a selfie stick...







I easily made it into double figures with them today 😊!

The last species for the day took me by surprise, a rather late Small Skipper.



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurus rex, 15-Sep-16 09:23 PM GMT

"a grown man dressed in a full Spider-Man costume filming himself with a selfie stick" **WELCOME TO SUSSEX** 🤖 you'll soon get used to our little ways and customs. 😊

I had another look for LTB's today hoping the southerly breeze had blown a few more across the channel. Unfortunately none were seen by me or the 3 other hopefuls I met there today. Unless the numbers being seen start to increase it's likely to be a risky trip for you.

Given that they've reached UK soil 3 times over the past 4 years I think it's probably safe to say that the trend will continue. If we see another influx like the one in 2013 your chances of finding an LTB would be many times greater. On the other hand you could come down here on the off chance next week and get lucky, this is the way these things seem to work out sometimes.

It's great to see you found some small Coppers, they've really been struggling around here and numbers appear to be on the up. I saw a fresh one myself today.

All the best.

James

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 17-Sep-16 07:14 PM GMT

Nice to see so many Small Coppers outside of Dungeness Bugboy 😊 Good luck with the LTB, give us a holler if you get lucky with them 😊 Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 18-Sep-16 08:11 PM GMT

Thanks James and Wurzel, Don't worry if I track down a LTB I shan't be keeping quiet about it!

#### 18th September, Newhaven Tide Mills

With the only sun forecast today on the south coast, (within reach for a day trip at any rate) there was only one destination for me... I could almost hear the LTB's calling my name from afar!

Thankfully the weather people got it right and I had mostly unbroken hazy blue sky for the first few hours. Other than good numbers of Whites, mostly Small's as far as I could tell, not much was about though to start with. I flushed a Red Admiral as I arrived, a camera shy Small Copper made a brief appearance and a few Small Heath were flitting around. As the temperature crept up a few more butterflies began to show themselves, a male Cloudy doing his thing and a few Common Blues were busy having arguments in a small sheltered patch. Since the butterflies were all being too active I turned my attention to the Common Darters, of which there were quite a few.



Birdlife as usual was also plentiful, and snapping a few Stonechats just in case there was a Whinchat amongst them (a bird I've never seen), I inadvertently caught this female just as she had a poo... 😊



For obvious reasons I spent most of my time lurking around the various patches of Everlasting Pea, hopeful that the poor weather of the previous few days and today's brisk northerly breeze had kept Wednesday's male LTB here. There was no sign of him or any others though 😞. 2 hours into my rambling I heard some voices and saw a couple of silhouettes waving over at me which turned out to be **Trevor** and **Katrina**, it was no real surprise to come across these two after Wednesday's excitement here! Together we wandered around but even so, between the three of us our quarry still eluded us 😞.

We did stop every time a Blue appeared but they all turned out to be Commons and after an hour they said their goodbyes leaving me to continue the search with Katrina saying that one should appear within 5 minutes for me!

Well Katrina, you were nearly right, I did get a lifer not 10 minutes you two left, just not the target species. As I was enjoying the sight of a backlit Small Heath a Clouded Yellow flew past who wasn't yellow. Last year Tide Mills got me the very rare intermediate *abuissoni* Cloudy ab. Today I had the far commoner (but still a lifer for me) *helice* form. Luckily it had begun to cloud over making my stalking that much easier so I was able to get some shots good enough to rule out any rarer *Colias* sp. An almost in focus upper side confirming beyond all doubt this was definitely not *hyale* or *alfacariensis*. (I'm quite happy if someone out there wants to tell me I'm completely wrong with my ID of course 😊)





After she went on her way I returned to the Common Blues who were still squabbling between sunbathing.



Joining them now was a tatty old Small Copper and nearby a female Speckled Wood posed nicely.





After 4 ½ hours I decided to leave, stopping briefly as a nicely marked GVV landed in front of me.



No LTB's again but still a worthwhile trip and good to catch up with a couple of butterfly friends too. Including everything mentioned already I ended the day with 11 species, with a couple of Peacocks, a Comma, a Painted Lady also seen 😊 .

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Allan.W., 18-Sep-16 08:54 PM GMT

Hello Bugboy,

Brilliant Cloudie open winged shots Bugboy, and also finding and getting a partial open winged shot of the "Helice", nice one, seen a few Cloudies down here in Kent, but haven't managed any shots that approach yours!! Funnily enough, of the four Abberant Adonis Blues I managed this year, one of mine showed completely different markings on each underside, glad to see that your finding a few Coppers out and about as well, I checked another couple of areas this afternoon, and managed 5, at one, 11 at another and 2 (in poor weather conditions) at the third. (and 13, at Dungie!) Regards Allan.W.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurus rex, 18-Sep-16 09:34 PM GMT

A shame there weren't any LTB's around for you today Buggy, but I'd say that Helice made the trip worthwhile. I saw one there on Friday but I think yours might be in better condition. That makes three different Helice CY's seen at Tide mills so far – well at least to my knowledge anyway.

ATB

James

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 18-Sep-16 09:48 PM GMT

That's a magnificent Helice, Paul. That one certainly laid low while Katrina and myself were there! 🍷 .

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 18-Sep-16 10:31 PM GMT

Nice shots of that helice, Buggy. 😊 I haven't seen one for a few years now. 🍷

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Katrina, 18-Sep-16 10:44 PM GMT

Hi Buggy, lovely to see you today. Glad you saw a helice and thanks for the plant ids. 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 19-Sep-16 01:06 PM GMT

I second that Bugboy and I've never seen one yet so well done 🍷 Goldie 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Sep-16 08:42 PM GMT

Thanks everyone, despite the lack of LTB's it was still a good day 😊

### 21st September, Newhaven Tide Mills

Yes, I was there again today! A glorious sunny, warm early autumn day welcomed me to another LTB hunt. The wind was coming from a more southerly direction today so perhaps a few more would have been tempted across the channel...

Like Sunday, Small Whites were everywhere, a mating pair attracting my attention but were rather camera shy and a Speckled Wood gave me a nice autumnal pose.



There were some new Common Blues on the block today, looking only hours' old and in the absence of anything with a tail I spent some time with them.





A couple of female Coppers also turned up, both looking for Sorrel, so didn't really settle for me but a Migrant Hawker dragonfly (possibly the same one Trevor saw on Sunday) posed perfectly.



I also had Comma, Peacock and Cloudie flyby's but yet again no LTB were located.

On the other hand, I did have a rather exciting birdie encounter. What I at first glance I took for a rather plump looking Warbler turned out to be a juvenile Red-backed Shrike. It turned up not long after I'd arrived, hanging around a patch of Everlasting Pea, and after getting a few distant shots I found that it was quite bold and I was able to get to within 10 feet of it. For the Non-birders, Red-Backed Shrikes are all but extinct in the UK as a breeding bird and are now only found on the east and south coasts on their spring and Autumn migrations from and to Africa. This particular bird is my first Shrike of any species I've ever seen.

Over the course of a few hours it didn't go far and was easy to relocate when I wandered off and came back.





By 2 I decided to call it a day, wanting to avoid the rush hour, but just as I was leaving I bumped into **B'rex** and **Badgerbob** who were both rather excited when I mentioned the Shrike. Again it wasn't too difficult to locate and behaved impeccably for its two newest fans. I've no experience with Shrikes so I didn't know whether this individual's boldness was normal for the species but the big grins of disbelief on James and Bobs faces told me it was ridiculously tame. All three of us watched as it pretty much ignored us and continued hunting, skilfully catching bees in mid-air or plucking them from flowers. After a quick call Bobs son arrived to join the Shrikes growing fan club and kindly lent me his lens so I could finish my day with some nice close shots.





An hour later than planned I finally left, hoping and praying that no LTB's turned up in my absence...

### Re: Bugboys mission

by badgerbob, 21-Sep-16 10:17 PM GMT

Hi Paul. That was a heck of a find. I was still there at 5pm filling my boots with pictures of this fabulous bird. Glad Matt turned up and was able to let you use his lens. It was too good a chance to let go. Needless to say the LTBs were keeping their heads down with this bird around!!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 21-Sep-16 10:58 PM GMT

#### badgerbob wrote:

Hi Paul. That was a heck of a find. I was still there at 5pm filling my boots with pictures of this fabulous bird. Glad Matt turned up and was able to let you use his lens. It was too good a chance to let go. Needless to say the LTBs were keeping their heads down with this bird around!!

Ha I was struggling through the living hell that is the London rush hour by then! Yes huge thanks to your Matt. Great to catch up with you again and glad you had a good few hours with that gorgeous bird 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Paul Harfield, 21-Sep-16 10:59 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy

Love your superb recent Clouded Yellow shots, especially that *helice* 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 23-Sep-16 06:45 PM GMT

Thanks jack432r, I've had a bit of luck with Cloudies this year 😊

#### 23rd September, Walthamstow Marshes

I quick browse of my (rather neglected this year) local patch after work today only turned up one solitary butterfly. I didn't have long with the sun vanishing behind buildings and trees but he was worthy of 10 minutes of my time 😊



I happened to notice the other day on the UKBMS that there is a active transect at Walthamstow Marshes. If the person who's doing this transect is reading this I'd love to hear what's been seen to see how close it matches up to my casual browsing 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 23-Sep-16 08:10 PM GMT

You've had an interesting week, Buggy! That Shrike seems to be the bird equivalent of an LTB at the very least... 😊 That's a nice Painted Lady, too.

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-16 10:39 PM GMT

The RBS is a great bird to find Bugboy I haven't seen one for a number of years now 🍷 Hopefully the LTBs will put in more of a show later this year and of not definitely next 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 23-Sep-16 10:46 PM GMT

Lovely Bird shots Buggy, you've certainly seen some great things this year , its been interesting reading your posts and seeing your photos 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 23-Sep-16 11:42 PM GMT

Lots of excitement on your diary lately, Bugboy. I think you're having a better autumn than most!

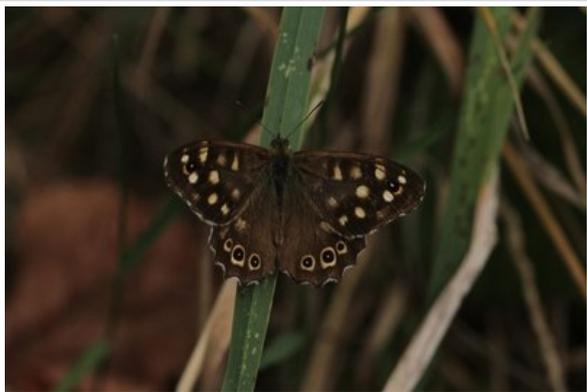
### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 24-Sep-16 09:14 PM GMT

Thanks guys, yes I've been having an eventful few weeks of late.

I took my camera into work today and took a few snaps during one of my transects. Small Whites and Speckled Woods are pretty much the mainstay here at this time of year, with just the occasional Vanessid flyby, (a Small Tortoiseshell nearly took my head off today!)

Speckled Wood numbers have really picked up in the latter half of the season here to become the most numerous butterfly recorded by quite some margin!





### Re: Bugboys mission

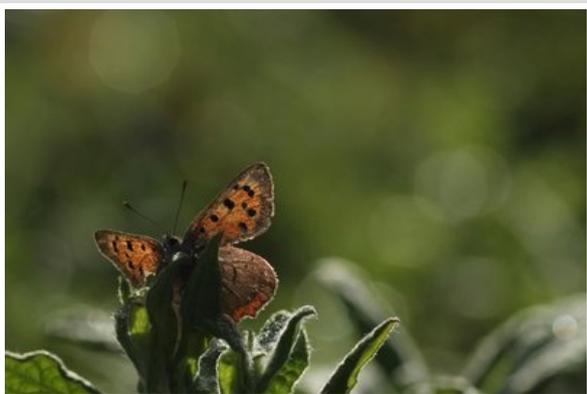
by bugboy, 28-Sep-16 09:25 PM GMT

#### 28th September, Bookham Commons

I've not been here for a little while, what with failed LTB hunts and rare birds to find for the Sussex twitchers, so I was eager to see what life I could find here. Small Coppers was what I found, by the bucket load!

The forecast had predicted cloudy with sunny spells leading to wall to wall blue sky by lunchtime. I got there at 9 under mostly blue sky which by lunchtime had clouded over leading to wall to wall cloud in the afternoon... 😊

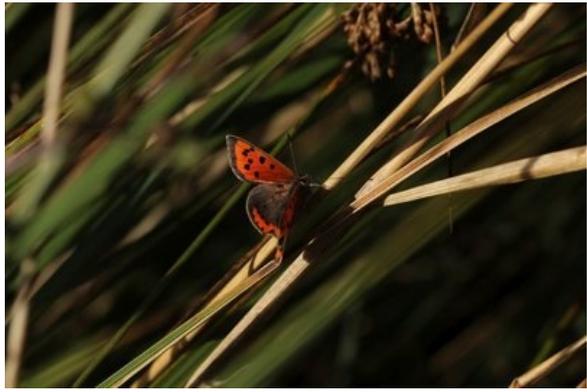
I had a Red Admiral flyby, heading south to start with followed quickly by the first, second, third and fourth Coppers for the day, all feeding on a large patch of Fleabane that still had enough flowers to keep them occupied.



Meandering along the open scrubby areas Coppers kept appearing, the females in general looking much fresher than the males. I suspect these two males with sparse spotting, trying to occupy the same territory, had the same mother!



I found a particularly fresh female, probably only hours old, who gave me the slip when a female Migrant Hawker caught my eye.



After a couple of minutes with the Dragonfly I turned and disturbed a mating pair of coppers (the first time I've ever seen Coppers in cop 🤩), and close inspection revealed a male Copper had snuck in whilst my back was turned and taken the same female I was admiring just 5 minutes previously!



On my last visit here I found a batch of second brood Peacock cats and it was quite easy to find the remains of said batch. They were all in pre-moult mode in their penultimate instar and the evidence suggests they successfully made it through.



Into the woods there was little going on, a few Red Admirals at polar ends of wear and tear and the occasional Speckled Wood fluttered by.





I kept my eye's peeled for White Admirals since a few second brood adults have been seen this year and also checked any Honeysuckle I could reach but I found no evidence of second brood here.

Back into the open the Coppers still ruled the roost, some fresh individuals looking absolutely stunning in the overcast light.





A third Red Admiral was found and out of the corner of my eye a larger patch of orange was decorating a Bramble thicket, I'd hoped I'd come across some Comma's today, as it turned out this was to be the one and only.



Making my way back to the train station the Copper count continued to rise, with individuals still in varying states of wear, eventually ending up somewhere between 30 and 40, easily doubling this year's tally and probably the most I've ever seen in one day!





I had one last surprise shortly before leaving for home. A slightly larger orange and brown butterfly appeared and proceeded to taunt me for a couple of minutes, occasionally landing for a couple of seconds, once threatening to land on me before deciding the perfect place to sit was halfway up a Blackthorn bush. I wasn't expecting to find a Brown Hairstreak this close to October and she looked to be in remarkably good condition all things considered.





A thoroughly good day, now I know what Hoggers feels like when he's out 😊

One last thing, if any birders are able to ID this flock of Geese that flew over I'd be very grateful, I'm not too good on my geese and I don't know if there's enough detail in my picture 😊



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 28-Sep-16 11:02 PM GMT

You're definitely giving Hoggers a run for his money Bugboy 😊 Great Copper shots and a Brostreak as well 🍷 The geese are difficult but judging by the time of year I'd go for Greylags 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by badgerbob, 29-Sep-16 11:29 AM GMT

You might, and should be interested in the attached Paul!!

<http://www.birdguides.com/webzine/article.asp?a=5943>

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Mark Colvin, 29-Sep-16 01:14 PM GMT

Hi Paul.

#### bugboy wrote:

One last thing, if any birders are able to ID this flock of Geese that flew over I'd be very grateful, I'm not too good on my geese and I don't know if there's enough detail in my picture?

#### Wurzel wrote:

The geese are difficult but judging by the time of year I'd go for Greylags.

I agree with Richard. I think there's just enough detail in the image including, as Wurzel says, the time of year, to make this a skein of Greylag Geese.

Nice work with the Shrike ...

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

## Re: Bugboys mission

by Hoggers, 29-Sep-16 05:16 PM GMT

Great Coppers, Buggy! I especially like the one perched on a blade of grass- lovely photo.

It's interesting how after a very quiet ( or non-existent ) start to the Copper season for many, the Coppers have surged forward!

Best wishes

Hoggers

## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 29-Sep-16 08:27 PM GMT

### Mark Colvin wrote:

Hi Paul.

### bugboy wrote:

One last thing, if any birders are able to ID this flock of Geese that flew over I'd be very grateful, I'm not too good on my geese and I don't know if there's enough detail in my picture?

### Wurzel wrote:

The geese are difficult but judging by the time of year I'd go for Greylags.

I agree with Richard. I think there's just enough detail in the image including, as Wurzel says, the time of year, to make this a skein of Greylag Geese.

Nice work with the Shrike ...

Good hunting.

Kind regards. Mark

Thanks both, I did have them down tentatively as Greylags but wasn't 100% sure.

Ps. I see you've been down to see the Shrike too Mark, nice pictures 😊

### badgerbob wrote:

You might, and should be interested in the attached Paul!!

<http://www.birdguides.com/webzine/article.asp?a=5943>

Hahaha, that's brilliant. Good to know so many people enjoy Sid the Shrike, yes I've named it now 😊

### Hoggers wrote:

Great Coppers, Buggy! I especially like the one perched on a blade of grass- lovely photo.

It's interesting how after a very quiet ( or non-existent ) start to the Copper season for many, the Coppers have surged forward!

Best wishes

Hoggers

Thanks Hoggers, yes it's great to see how their population has exploded these past few months after the best part of two years in the doldrums 😊

## Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 30-Sep-16 09:55 AM GMT

I wish your luck rubbed out on me Bugboy , 😊 a Brown Hair Streak , 🍀🍀 I've yet to see one 😊

Goldie 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 01-Oct-16 09:06 AM GMT

Hi Paul,

Very much enjoyed ' your Bird ' yesterday. The surprise being it's continued presence at Tide Mills. I fear for the Bee population there, I saw it consume three Bumble Bees. Someone else said it had also caught a Lizard. It does seem to enjoy posing for the photographers.

Well found, I am sure your discovery has given pleasure to many people.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurus rex, 02-Oct-16 06:46 PM GMT

Good to see you again today Buggy, we tried to find you and say farewell but you were nowhere to be seen.

Best Wishes

James

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 02-Oct-16 08:36 PM GMT

#### Butterflysaurus rex wrote:

Good to see you again today Buggy, we tried to find you and say farewell but you were nowhere to be seen.

Best Wishes

James

Haha, sorry, I was wandering far and wide and left around 4ish in the end, no LTB's for me either though 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 03-Oct-16 08:03 PM GMT

#### 2nd October, Tide Mills

Another trip down south on what turned out to be a very pleasant day (despite the nightmarish journey to and from courtesy of Southern Railways).

Within a couple of minutes of arriving I heard a couple of voices calling my name, B'rex and Badgerbob pointing out a grounded Clouded Yellow which I promptly spooked 😊. I made up for it though by quickly finding Bobs lost glasses 😊.

Butterfly life in general was rather thin on the ground, an occasional White fluttered by but in the distance I could see a lot of activity, Sid the Shrike was still doing his thing and being a complete tart in front of his adorning public! Amongst today's set of fans I was introduced to Mark Colving.



Between all of us though no LTB's were to be found. Several Red Admiral flew by, mostly southwards although the odd one was flying north for reasons best known to itself! After saying my goodbyes to Mark (and losing track of the other two) my wanderings found a female Cloudie feeding whilst a flock of Curlew flew over, heading in the general direction of Brighton.



I had to wait another half hour before I found another settled butterfly, this time a rather lovely female Comma who was very reticent to fly.





My wanderings always took me back to Sid and his fans. I chatted to a few and some had come a fair distance for him. I did find it a little amusing how some were wearing full on camouflage gear and were sporting some impressively huge lenses and there was me with my puny macro in 'normal clothes' getting pictures like this of him. He'd decided to perch on this shrub as I walked past it and barely acknowledged my presence as I got to within 5 feet. This picture is uncropped!



The only reason I couldn't get closer to him because the shrub he was perched on was in the way 😊

Sid is actually still in his Juvenile plumage and so in theory we're not able to tell what sex he is just yet but my gut feeling is that he is a 'he'. He has been seen to be singing on occasion (or at least trying to) and some of the more distant shots I've seen there does seem to be a hint of greyish head about him. Off course I could be completely wrong about him/her but he will always be Sid to me 😊 . It was good to see him again, not realising at the time that this was his last day here, kind of poetic to have enjoyed his company on his first and last days here 😊

To end the day another Cloudie, this one a different male from the one I spooked at the beginning of my day, settled near me when a cloud passed over the sun and a very fresh Red Admiral perched nearby, perhaps waiting for tomorrow to start the journey south.



The season may be winding down but it's not quite over yet!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by trevor, 03-Oct-16 08:17 PM GMT

Went over to Tide Mills today. The Shrike has departed. Lot's of Birder's on site, but no one saw anything. Pleased you saw some Clouded Yellows yesterday.

Trevor.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterfysaurus rex, 03-Oct-16 08:35 PM GMT

A nice report of an enjoyable day Buggy, I hope your journey home was a lot less troublesome. No problem at all spooking the Cloudy, we'd already moved on from him to embark on a glasses hunt. Well spotted by you, I'm just glad we didn't tread on them whilst searching!

Even though the LTB's have been elusive your discovery of the Shrike made Tidemills the place to be for many a wildlife enthusiast. I'm glad that your first sighting of a Long-tailed Blue wasn't in the beak of this very hungry carnivorous bird!!

Best wishes

James

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 03-Oct-16 09:26 PM GMT

More nice Clouded Yellows, Buggy. 😊 They are the one thing missing from round here at the moment – maybe one more expedition beckons... 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 03-Oct-16 10:20 PM GMT

Great Cloudy shots Bugboy and of 'Sid' – a name that works for both genders (Sidney(m) or Sidonie (f)) 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 03-Oct-16 11:00 PM GMT

Shame about the LTB's, Bugboy, but Clouded Yellows are decent compensation.

Looks like you are having a better end of season than most.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 04-Oct-16 05:31 PM GMT

I've enjoyed following Sids escapades on here and various other websites James. Since he found it such a good hunting ground I wonder if it will be a regular stopping off point for him in future years?

I think you might have time to fit in one or two more expeditions before the weather closes in for the winter Dave 😊

Thanks Wurzel and David, gotta squeeze in what you can at this time of year, maybe one more day for me what with a run of six days at work from Thursday 😊

#### 4th October, Tottenham Marshes

A little afternoon jaunt to one of my local spots that I haven't been to since April. With temperatures beginning to wane as the season comes to a close I wasn't expecting too much but when you got out of the stiff breeze the sun felt really rather warm. Despite this the Nymphalids seem to all have vanished, just one brief flyby of what was probably a Red Admiral.

There were however still several Whites flitting here and there, mostly unidentified but one male Small and a female GVW settled close enough so I didn't go home with nothing to show.



Dragonflies were out in force, Common Darters looking rather faded but still full of life



and several Migrant Hawkers hawking. I spent quite a while attempting some in-flight shots of the Hawkers which mostly turned out to be blurred blobs but the odd one came out ok-ish, certainly better than anything else I've managed in the past. I like the second one here since although it slipped out of focus (auto focus really struggles to keep up with these things) it does show how they keep their heads parallel to the horizon when turning



## Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 05-Oct-16 07:12 PM GMT

5th October, Bookham

Another sunny Autumn day beckoned me out the house today and off to Bookham to see how the Coppers are doing. In fact I saw my first butterfly of the day within 20 mins of leaving the house, a Red Admiral fluttering around Hackney train station at 7am with the sun just poking over the horizon. I did briefly consider whipping out my camera but there's a time and a place for this sort of thing, and a busy rush hour platform isn't really it... 😊

There was a heavy dew at Bookham and still a distinct chill in the air but a few hardy Coppers were already on the wing, presumably having chosen roosting spots that caught the morning sun, and were warm enough to require careful stalking to get close.



Slow wandering along the hedges produced another one every so often, not as many as seven days ago but still enough to make it the second best Small Copper count for a fair few years, by the time I left around 2pm I'd probably got up to around twenty individuals, still with some fresh jewels amongst the faded, aged insects.





By 12 the temperature had got very pleasant, especially when out of the brisk wind, and these last two hours was when I found the majority of them, mostly staking out patches of south facing Blackthorn hedges to make the most of the low sun.



It was whilst watching this pair of males fighting over a small patch of choice hedge I spotted a female skulking around nearby, getting very excited about a small Sorrel leaf which already had an egg on it.



Closer inspection of this leaf when she fluttered off found it to be peppered with eggs on the underside. A little searching and two further leaves were found to be as equally as popular as well as eggs found on twigs and grass stems close to the leaves. In the end I found more eggs than adults!



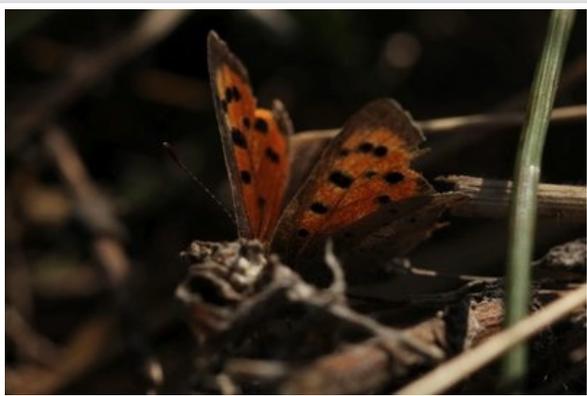


I did see other butterflies, three or four Red Admirals saw me long before I saw them and vanished along with a single Comma and a couple of Speckled Woods were flitting in sunny glades in the woods, but it was the Coppers day again.

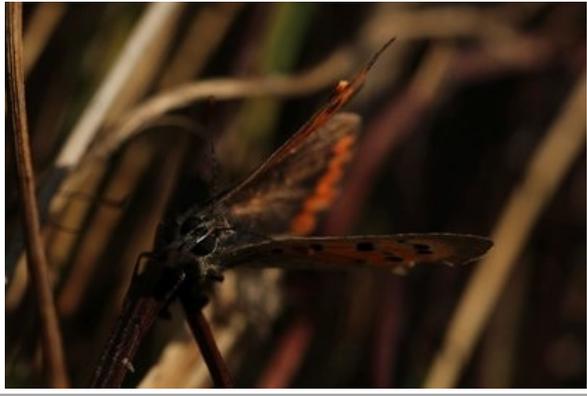




Not bad for the first week of October.



*Hide and seek!*



watching me watching you!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 05-Oct-16 09:18 PM GMT

Great Coppers Bugboy 😊 - that was quite a haul of eggs I wonder what the success/conversion rate is like?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Paul Harfield, 05-Oct-16 10:21 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy

I have to agree with Wurzel, that is a magnificent haul of Small Copper eggs 😊. I have yet to see one. Is that a typical number of eggs per leaf? Small Coppers seem to be putting on an unusually good show this Autumn though they were a bit elusive around here last weekend. Glad you are still finding plenty 😊.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Oct-16 09:58 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

Great Coppers Bugboy 😊 - that was quite a haul of eggs I wonder what the success/conversion rate is like?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

I'm not sure what the success rate would be in this case, they will most likely go into hibernation shortly after hatching if what I read is true so I'm not sure how easy it would be to keep track of any. Maybe worth a few visits to see if I can find any signs of activity in the spring though.

#### jackz432r wrote:

Hi Bugboy

I have to agree with Wurzel, that is a magnificent haul of Small Copper eggs 😊. I have yet to see one. Is that a typical number of eggs per leaf? Small Coppers seem to be putting on an unusually good show this Autumn though they were a bit elusive around here last weekend. Glad you are still finding plenty 😊.

They really are amazing to see, proper little marvels of nature 😊.

To quote Thomas/Lewington page 106: *Later Broods almost invariably choose small, sprouting sorrels that are growing in warm, exposed positions, often selecting plants with no more than two or three little leaves... there is no doubt that small, fresh sorrels can be peppered with Small Copper eggs after a good summer. Frohawk describes finding an extreme example with 'over 300 eggs and many young larvae upon very small plants of sorrel growing on a dry bank in a space of 15 or 20 yards'*

No quite as extreme in numbers and no larvae but other than that small detail it pretty much perfectly describes what I found 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 12-Oct-16 07:31 PM GMT

12th October, Bookham

Another few hours at my home from home today. It wasn't as sunny as the last few days but in the few sunny patches that did appear I was graced with the presence of a couple of Coppers. Just two males seen today but I'm sure more were lurking in the pastures and scrub.



The main reason for today's visit though was to see how the eggs I found last week were doing (hopefully not munched on by the cows currently working away here) and to see if any had hatched. It didn't take long to relocate the patch, with Sorrel leaves still peppered on both sides with eggs and turning over the largest leaf I found my very first wild Small Copper larvae 😊. With my naked eye it just looked like a tiny pale green smudge and it wasn't until I looked at the pictures on my camera that I could see the bizarre hairs down its back, like it's wearing some false eyelashes 😂!





It took a little wander, probably due to my attentions, and ended up posing next to an unhatched egg. (I checked on it before leaving a few hours later and it had settled down again along the midrib of the leaf).



*How many eggs can you see? (clue, double figures)*

I did spend a bit of time looking for Brown Hairstreak eggs as well but most of the Blackthorn is still in leaf so perhaps in a few weeks' time I'll have better luck. I did come across this Dark Bush-cricket *Pholidoptera griseoaptera*, serenading a couple of females who were lurking nearby in the undergrowth.



It was as I was preparing to leave that a tiny white speck caught my eye on a leafless stunted Blackthorn sucker. A Brown Hairstreak egg in the same spot I saw the female fluttering around two weeks previously.



A rather productive few hours in the middle of October 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Butterflysaurs rex, 13-Oct-16 07:04 PM GMT

Your Copper cat is a great find! I hope most of them survive, we're long overdue a good Small Copper year. Especially round these parts.

BW's

James

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Katrina, 13-Oct-16 08:24 PM GMT

Great photos, very interesting 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 15-Oct-16 09:56 PM GMT

Great find here Bugboy 😊 Great description of the false eyelashes 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 16-Oct-16 11:46 AM GMT

Tremendous find, BB, particularly given how minuscule it is.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Oct-16 06:06 PM GMT

Thanks All 😊 had I not noticed the female ovipositing the previous week it's highly unlikely I'd have noticed the eggs, never mind the little larvae!

For those who are interested here's that picture again with all 21 eggs labelled, admittedly some are mere out of focus smudges tucked away behind stems but they are there, honest 😊



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Chris Jackson, 16-Oct-16 07:17 PM GMT

Nice images Bugsie, you've really got your nose to the ground.  
I wish I could do the same.  
Chris

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 19-Oct-16 06:43 PM GMT

Thanks Chris, here's some more 'nose to the ground' shots 😊

#### 19th October, Bookham again

My weekly trip to Bookham was somewhat cloudier than the forecast suggested. There was a little bit of sun in the morning but after lunch, despite my phone apps insistence to the contrary, only the merest hint of blue sky was seen. I did however have quite a productive few hours.

After stopping off to re-locate my Brown Hairstreak egg from last week I made my way over to the Small Copper egg site. I couldn't find the little larvae from last week, but feeding evidence would suggest he's still around somewhere, lots of little windows 😊



Since I'd easily managed to re-locate my Brown Hairstreak egg, and it didn't look like I was going to see anything flying I decided to look for more. I'm rather pleased with myself in bagging 9 in total including my first ever double 😊. (I did desperately search long and hard for just one more to get into double figures but it wasn't to be)





I also managed one Purple Hairstreak egg



Back at the Small Copper eggs I found the little larvae had made a reappearance.



I did a proper count this time and on just two small Sorrel plants there's 46 eggs. Interestingly when I compared the leaf with the larvae on to pictures from last week, there's new eggs on it. Had the sun been out I may well have still been seeing adults!



*last week*

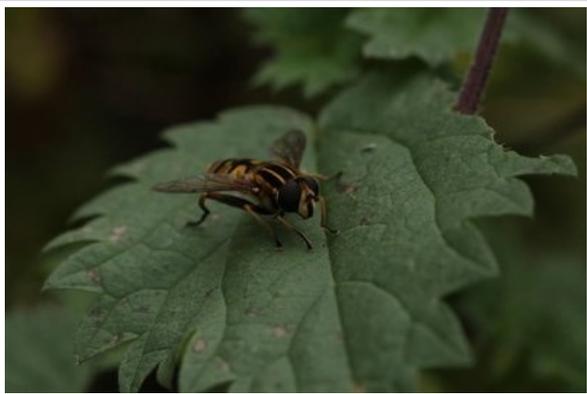


today

There were a few other inhabitants seen whilst egg searching, a Heather Ladybird, *Chilocorus bipunctulatus* a few Hoverflies *Helophilus pendulus*, and this unknown species of Beetle.



Heather Ladybird



Hoverfly



Unk. Beetle

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 19-Oct-16 10:45 PM GMT

Amazing egg count, Buggy. And three different species, too. 😊🌿 How low down was the PH egg - I've rarely thought of looking on lower oak branches as I spend so much time looking up (and more up) at the butterflies... I think I have a blind spot locating sorrel for the coppers, too. I haven't

seen anything that looks like that in my local mini hotspot.

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by peterc, 20-Oct-16 07:36 AM GMT

Well done on finding all those eggs, bugboy.

Where about roughly did you find the BH eggs at the common? I am just curious if any of those you found were at the northern end, in Banks Common.

ATB

Peter

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 20-Oct-16 07:33 PM GMT

#### millerd wrote:

Amazing egg count, Buggy. And three different species, too. 😊👍 How low down was the PH egg – I've rarely thought of looking on lower oak branches as I spend so much time looking up (and more up) at the butterflies... I think I have a blind spot locating sorrel for the coppers, too. I haven't seen anything that looks like that in my local mini hotspot.

Dave

Hi Dave, thanks for the comment 😊. The Purple Hairstreak egg was about chest height, four or five feet off the ground. It's on the same tree that I found a few in last year. With these guys the height isn't the crucial aspect for the female, what she's looking for is Oak that catches a lot of sun. This particular tree is positioned on the north east side of one of the main paths so it's south side catches the sun all the way down to ground level. Like their Brown cousins, egg laying takes place in the afternoon ensuring that when she finds sunlit branches, it is catching the sun at warmest part of the day so the resulting springtime larvae have the best chance to get to the right temperature for feeding, it's all very clever!

As for the Copper eggs, I got lucky in catching the female in egg laying mode a couple of weeks back but also, as I'm sure you're aware from your own visits, this part of the Commons is grazed by cattle so the Sorrel, which at this time of year is just a rosette of leaves at ground level, is quite visible. If it was ungrazed the Sorrel would be well hidden down in the turf.

#### peterc wrote:

Well done on finding all those eggs, bugboy.

Where about roughly did you find the BH eggs at the common? I am just curious if any of those you found were at the northern end, in Banks Common.

ATB

Peter

Thanks Peter. Not far from Banks Common, a little bit to the south, with a single one found near Bookham train station 😊

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 26-Oct-16 08:10 PM GMT

#### 26th October, Tide Mills

With Trevor's recent posts and a good forecast predicted I decided on a trip to Newhaven to see what was still active there. It was pleasantly warm when the sun came out but it took an hour before I saw a butterfly, or rather two. A couple of male Cloudies appeared almost simultaneously either side of me. Neither was willing to sit still and both vanished as quickly as they had appeared but at least I now knew they are still about.

Not too long later I stumbled across one basking and when it took flight I could see I had my third for the day, a female, and noticeably rather small, no bigger than an orange-tip at best. She didn't go far though and settled a foot or two further on where she began ovipositing on some Birds-foot Trefoil. This mild weather obviously fooling her into thinking there's time for another brood (and perhaps there may be if it's anything like last winter!)



After bothering her for some close-ups I moved off to find a Dartford Warbler being scolded by the local Robins. I followed him, hoping for some shots but they have the annoying talent of being bold as brass yet staying well hidden. Just managed a few shots that are just about identifiable.



As I finally lost him in a bramble thicket I noticed something scurrying along to my side on the path and a little Weasel stopped to see what was going on, given me the once over before slipping off into the undergrowth (I think it was wondering whether it could take me down and stash me away for the winter!)



I stopped off for a little while to watch a flock of about 40 Redshank with a few Dunlin sneaking around amongst them and inspect some Sawfly larvae which were all over some of the Hedge Mustard.



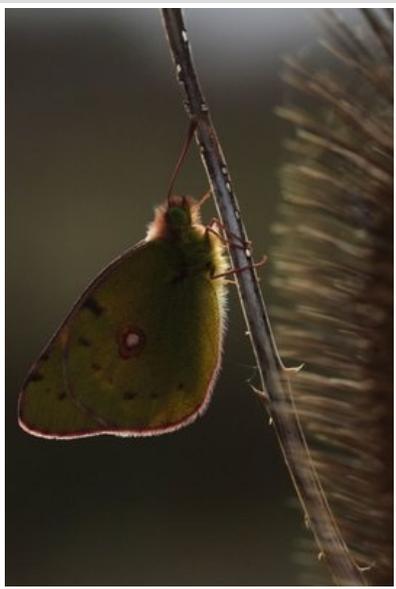
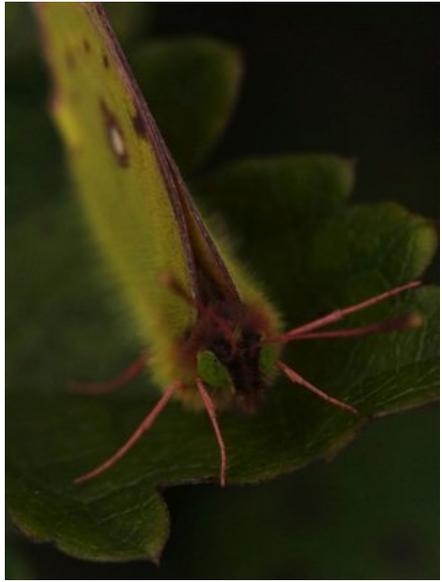
*Spot the Dunlin!*



*Unk. sp. Sawfly larvae*

The male Clouded Yellows continued to appear randomly whenever the sun decided to come out and just as I was thinking about making a move one of them found my final photographic target for the day, a very freshly emerged and like the earlier female, rather small male Cloudie. At this point the sun had gone into hiding, and being still a little dopey and amenable to being handled I was able to coax him gently onto my finger and get a few aesthetically pleasing snaps before returning him back to his leaf and leaving him to finish hardening his wings off.





Only the one species seen today, but they don't seem to think summers over just yet!

### **Re: Bugboys mission**

by Wurzel, 01-Nov-16 10:53 PM GMT

More cracking Cloudies Bugboy 😊🍷 Somehow work curtailed my activities this season and therefore I'm glad to be so far behind with my PD 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Bugboys mission

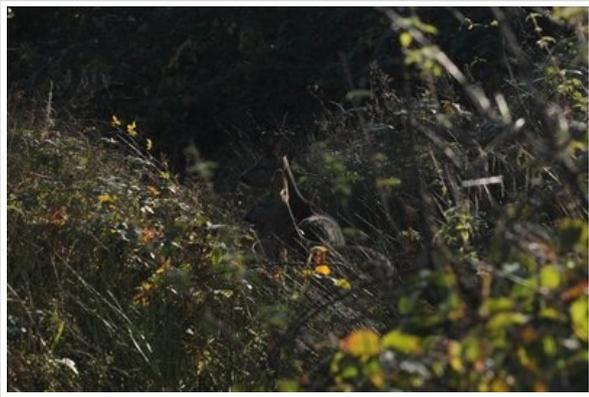
by bugboy, 02-Nov-16 09:04 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel 😊 never mind, there's always next year and hopefully we'll have a cold winter and warm spring this time to give the numbers a good boost!

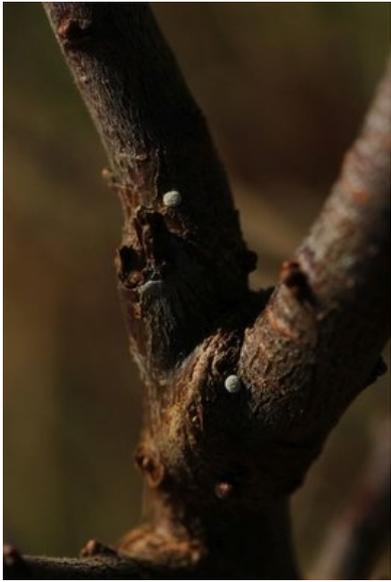
### 2nd November, Bookham

I wasn't original planning on going out today but then I woke up to wall to wall blue sky. A quick check of the forecast said this would continue all day so I quickly changed plans and headed out to see if I could extend my butterfly season into November.

It really did feel surprisingly warm at Bookham and turned out to be a glorious afternoon. Shortly after arriving I disturbing a pair of Roe Deer close to the station, who didn't seem that fussed by my presence, and then a Peacock flew past and settled on a fence post.



Taking a slow meandering wander to the Small Copper nursery I stumbled across another two Brown Hairstreak eggs, they really are popping out before my eyes this year!



On the Sorrel leaves, there'd been a lot of hatching going on although there are still some unhatched, perhaps the cool weather is slowing down the development inside them?



Although the leaf that had all the action on my last visit was all quiet, with the larvae presumably all nestled down in the turf snoozing away until next spring, on a nearby leaf I found two larvae busy making windows.

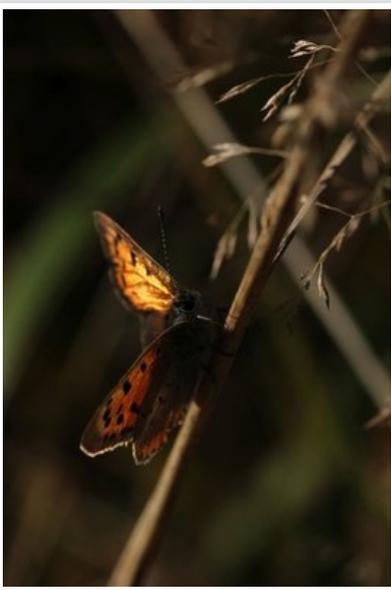


Leaving these little ones to carry on fattening up for winter I went over to Banks Common to see if I could find any more Hairstreak eggs. Whilst wandering along the rear hedge line I disturbed a small fluttery thing which could have been a Copper but it as it flew off into the low sun. In the end I only managed the one Brown Hairstreak egg here.



On the return the same fluttery thing appeared again, only this time it didn't vanish into the sun and I found myself in the company of possibly the last

of his kind still on the wing this year! His flight suggested he was coming to the end of his days, more like a small moth than the usual darting erratic flight and he was very easy to follow. Despite this when his wings caught the sun they still had that iridescent golden sheen we all love.



Heading back to the station, passing the Small Copper nursery I realised they were at the base of a small stunted Blackthorn and sure enough, a cursory browse threw up another Brown Hairstreak egg that had been under my nose for weeks now, bringing this year's total to 13.



Throughout the afternoon I disturbed several Darter Dragonflies but the only one who settled for me decided my arm was a good place to bask. It was too an awkward place to get a picture but when he moved onto a fence he let me get nice and close, I love how the light picks out each separate facet of

those huge compound eyes.



I pretty good day since it's less than a month to the winter social meet up... and of course, only 52 days til you know what!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by millerd, 02-Nov-16 11:02 PM GMT

It just shows how a bit of sunshine can keep the butterflies flying. Good to see a Small Copper amongst them (and all the baby Coppers as well...) 😊

I wonder if it'll be like 2014 when I saw two butterflies in Otterbourne just before the social itself and nine the following day at home (the last day of the month). We can but hope... 😊

Dave

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 04-Nov-16 10:53 PM GMT

Great glinting Copper shot 😊 Looks like the cold weather is on the way – that's if the Met get it right for once...remember all those 'Bar-BQ summers'? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by David M, 05-Nov-16 09:09 PM GMT

Great effort to make those observations at this time of year, Bugboy.

There can't be many people that get to see a November Peacock!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 10-Nov-16 07:08 PM GMT

Thanks David, it may well have been from a second generation brood. I found a larval web here at the end of August about to moult into their final instar which would have meant adults emerging late September!

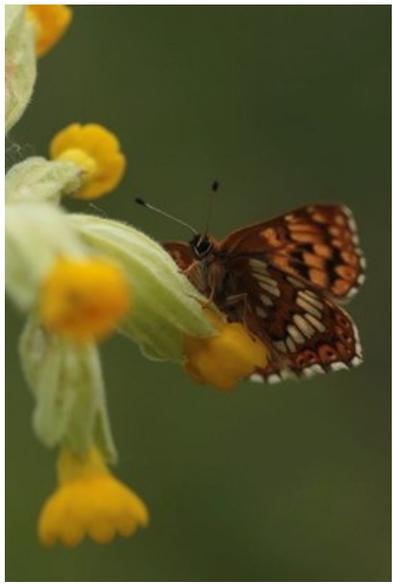
Now winter looks like it's arrived I guess now would be a good time for a brief review of my 2016 Butterfly year.

Well this year's season kicked off with a Comma, seen (but not photographed) on the 22nd March and by the 3rd of April all hibernators were ticked off. Obviously, I had a few specific targets for the year, a few more lifers to tick off and trying to improve on my lifer snaps from last year. The first of these I had the chance to address was the Green Hairstreak and I was very pleased with the resulting photos, a massive improvement on any I got last year.



At this point I had already ticked off 17 species.

I made several visits to the Chilton's again to get as much Duke of Burgundy action as possible. I fell in love with these wonderful little characters last year and I think a season without these from now on will be few and far between for me!



With the rest of the usual southern spring emergent's in the bag (bar the Wood White) by the end of May,



*An Orange-tip for other reason than it's an Orange-tip!*

species number 25 was my first 2016 lifer. What was also my first long distance outing of the year, deep into **Wurzel** country on the Hampshire/Wiltshire borderlands of Bentley Wood, the 6th June saw me hopping on a train after the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. After a slow start to the day one was finally located and by the end of the day I had filled my camera with various shots and had the rare privilege of finding one for a certain **Mr. Hulme**. We were able to stand and watch this pair meet and mate 😊



On the downside, it would seem this population is barely hanging on and I was also to find that the local population of Marsh Fritillaries had all but gone extinct, certainly if any were around they weren't seen by either Neil or I.

Five days later came not just my highlight of the year but probably the Highlight of my butterfly life. A trip to Norfolk to see the wonderful Swallowtail. It was touch and go weather-wise but on day two of the trip it was just warm enough for a few to become active and I fulfilled a lifetimes ambition to see a wild Swallowtail, an unforgettable experience!



Two weeks later, after much debating as to whether it was worth the trip due to the mess of the summer weather, I took the plunge and went across to the other side of England for an almost lifer. Gloucestershire for the Large Blue. I'd seen this once before many years ago but all I have left are 10 undated slide scans. Thankfully, despite the weathers best attempts at ruining my day with a huge hour long thunderstorm (thank god for The Daneway Pub) I had a successful trip with several individuals including a couple of melanisitic abs. 😊



By the end of June, I'd latched on stubbornly to another lifer, the Black Hairstreak, but it was a battle against the weather. Two damp grey days got me nowhere but on the third trip to Monks Wood on the 4th July, I was finally blessed with enough sun for one female to show up long enough to grab a few snaps. She was a little worn around the edges but at this stage I really didn't care one bit!



I also met **Philib** here, who kindly offered to help me break my purple duck with HIM with a trip to Fermyn Wood a week later. Being deep into HIM flight season there were quite a few fellow butterflyers around and it was nice to meet **Roselyn** here and bump into **Neil Hulme** again and **Mark Tutton**. It was another day where the weather was a bit hit and miss, and like many species this year, numbers were much lower than is normal, but I finally got my audience with the Emperor who was also species 43 for the year. I really was racking them up this year, I ended last year with 45 species!



Having done the east and the west of the country so far (swallowtail and Large Blue respectively), the end of July found me up north in the land of **Goldie**, Arnside Knott where I spent a splendid few days and managed to find two more lifers, the Scotch Argus and the jewel in the local crown, the High Brown Fritillary.



A week later I was chasing the final lifer for 2016, this time down on the beautiful Dorset coast. The Lulworth Skipper taking my years total to 49.



I met up with **PhiliB** and **Roselyn** again later in August for a trip to Shipton Bellinger to get a decent dose of Brown Hairstreaks. I made it into double figures here with the highlight being two stunning females on one flowerhead! And also meeting another new face, **Willrow**



For some weeks now I've been rather smugly bragging that I'd seen 50 species this year. In fact, somewhere along the way I'd miss counted, the Clouded yellow a week later actually making it 51!

Like last year my season ended with several trips to Newhaven Tide Mills where Clouded Yellows were quite plentiful as were the familiar faces of **Trever**, **Butterflysaurus Rex**, **Katrina** and **Badgerbob** and a new face in the form of **Mark Colvin**. I also found my very first Helice here.



I also stumbled across a rather rare bird. An amazingly tame juvenile Red-backed Shrike, Sid, who quickly became something of a local celebrity during his 11 day stay here, chomping his way through the local invertebrate and lizard life.



2016 will go down as a poor year for butterflies in general, many common species suffering significant population crashes nationwide but hopefully things will improve next year. It's still early but we do seem to be having a proper winter this year and if we get a warm spring with a bit of luck they will bounce back. Here's hoping that 2017 will be full of butterflies and for those who are curious I have only 6 left to get to complete my mission: Chequered Skipper, both Wood Whites, Northern Brown Argus, Mountain Ringlet and Large Heath. I've yet to work out how I'm gonna get to them though...

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Goldie M, 11-Nov-16 12:47 PM GMT

Hi! Bugboy, what a fantastic year you've had, I'm just catching up to every bodies posts having had trouble not this time with the eye's but infection in my tooth which has kept me indoors out of the cold winds for a while UGH! so it's great to see all your Butterflies. Glad you enjoyed your trip North this Summer lovely shots of the HB and the SA, I missed both this year 🍷

Goldie 😊

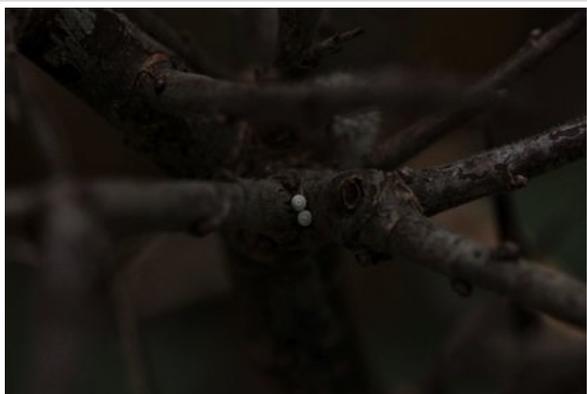
### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 16-Nov-16 06:17 PM GMT

**16th November, Bookham Commons**

It's been a couple of weeks since I've managed to venture out and with a break in the otherwise rather drab and rainy days recently I popped out to Bookham to see how my youngsters were doing.

In my ramblings I discovered another three Brown Hairstreak eggs which I think brings this season's total up to 16 or thereabouts, including another double about two feet from the first double I found a few weeks back.



I relocated the Purple hairstreak egg and with all the leaves now falling I found another two on nearby buds on the same tree. This is the same tree as last year so perhaps it might be worth staking it out one sunny afternoon next summer to see if I can catch a female ovipositing.



At the Small Copper nursery I found a total of 5 Larvae on three leaves. Here you can see some rather typical feeding damage from above.



Underneath the greener of these two leaves is where I found this pair



although rather embarrassingly I didn't even notice the smaller one until I was flicking through the pictures later. Also, visible next to the smaller cat on the leaves midrib, is what looks like the remains of a shed skin, just the 'eyelash' like hairs remaining. I'm assuming the skin was eaten by its owner.

I wasn't expecting anything flying but it's interesting to see that all five Copper larvae were actively feeding this late in the year.

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 18-Nov-16 08:31 PM GMT

You certainly had a cracking year Bugboy 🍷🍷 Let's hope 2017 is even more fruitful! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 06-Dec-16 09:27 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, lets hope so eh 😊

Well its been a few weeks since I posted anything on here, but to while away a few evenings recently I've been playing around with some of my photos to create a pictorial representation of the past three years in my butterfly odyssey 😊



2014, Just over half seen.



One year later and lots of those spaces filled, around three quarters now ticked off



End of play this year and nearly a full house, but now it's mostly the tricky ones left. Tricky in that they're mostly found a long way away and in rather remote areas!

### Re: Bugboys mission

by bugboy, 07-Dec-16 06:25 PM GMT

A dry, warm(ish) day on my day off tempted me out for a few hours at Bookham. I did wonder whether the sudden increase in temperatures over the past day or so may have woken up the odd hibernator but it stayed resolutely cloudy so nothing was seen on the wing. One Small Copper caterpillar was however active and nibbling, and I discovered another 12 Brown Hairstreak eggs not seen on previous trips which takes the season total so far to around 30. I recently got a phone upgrade so I decided to test out the camera function on these little ones, I'm quite impressed with what it can do so lets play spot the Hairstreak egg!





I also had a search for some White Admirals and I think I've found two. I couldn't see if they were occupied but there does seem to be some silk holding them in place and a withered feeding leaf nearby proves that they were here once at least.



*Withered feeding leaf*



A friendly Blackbird to finish 😊



### Re: Bugboys mission

by Wurzel, 08-Dec-16 10:02 PM GMT

Nice set of annual 'snapshots' Buggy – not many to go til you have the complete set 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Bugboys mission

by Neil Freeman, 14-Dec-16 09:21 PM GMT

Hi Bugboy, nice round up of your 'mission' so far.

I managed to complete my 'mainland set' this year with Chequered Skipper. During this trip which also took in overnight stays in Arnside/Silverdale on the way up to Scotland and on the way back, I also managed to see Northern Brown Argus *salmacis*, Large Heath and Mountain Ringlet. On a previous trip to Arnside a couple of years ago I had also managed to see the latter three species by including a run up to Irton Fell for Mountain Ringlet. I mention this to show that with a bit of planning (and luck) you could potentially get some of these in one round trip.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: Bugboys mission**

by bugboy, 17-Dec-16 07:24 PM GMT

Thanks Neil, yes I have looked at the flight periods to see if I can get them all in one season but the main stumbling blocks are whether I'll get the time off work and then the rather awkward issue of being a non driver. I've managed to persuade a couple of friends to join me on a couple of long distant trips over the past couple of years but I'm not sure about a driving holiday up north, I may have to earn a fair few brownie points before breaking that one on them! 😊