

## Re: David M

by David M, 28-Feb-16 01:47 PM GMT

Dates of first UK sightings 2016:

1. **Painted Lady** – 28 February, Limeslade Bay, Gower, Swansea
2. **Small Tortoiseshell** – 11 March, Swansea Vale
3. **Comma** – 16 March, Parkmill, Gower, Swansea
4. **Peacock** – 16 March, Parkmill, Gower, Swansea
5. **Brimstone** – 18 March, Swansea Vale
6. **Speckled Wood** – 13 April, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
7. **Holly Blue** – 13 April, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
8. **Large White** – 13 April, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
9. **Orange Tip** – 16 April, Nicholaston Woods, Gower, Swansea
10. **Green Veined White** – 17 April, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
11. **Small White** – 17 April, Kilvey Hill, Swansea
12. **Green Hairstreak** – 8 May, Rodborough Common, nr. Stroud
13. **Dingy Skipper** – 8 May, Rodborough Common, nr. Stroud
14. **Duke of Burgundy** – 8 May, Rodborough Common, nr. Stroud
15. **Pearl Bordered Fritillary** – 8 May, Ewyas Harold Common, nr. Pontrilas
16. **Wall Brown** – 22 May, Dan-y-Graig Cemetery, Swansea
17. **Common Blue** – 22 May, Dan-y-Graig Cemetery, Swansea
18. **Small Heath** – 22 May, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
19. **Small Blue** – 22 May, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
20. **Small Copper** – 22 May, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
21. **Red Admiral** – 22 May, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
22. **Marsh Fritillary** – 3 June, Fairwood Common, Gower, Swansea
23. **Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary** – 3 June, Fairwood Common, Gower, Swansea
24. **Meadow Brown** – 5 June, Langrove Country Club, Gower, Swansea
25. **Large Skipper** – 8 June, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
26. **Brown Argus** – 8 June, Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea
27. **Dark Green Fritillary** – 9 June, Alun Valley, nr. Bridgend, Glamorgan
28. **Ringlet** – 13 July, Cors Caron, nr. Tregaron
29. **Small Skipper** – 19 July, Bishopston, Swansea
30. **Hedge Brown** – 23 July, Old Castle Down, nr. Ewenny, Glamorgan
31. **Silver Washed Fritillary** – 23 July, Old Castle Down, nr. Ewenny, Glamorgan
32. **High Brown Fritillary** – 23 July, Old Castle Down, nr. Ewenny, Glamorgan
33. **Purple Hairstreak** – 23 July, Old Castle Down, nr. Ewenny, Glamorgan
34. **Grayling** – 30 July, Whiteford Burrows, Gower, Swansea
35. **Marbled White** – 30 July, Whiteford Burrows, Gower, Swansea
36. **Brown Hairstreak** – 13 August, West Williamston, Pembrokeshire

UK species seen in France but NOT seen in Britain in 2016:

37. **(Southern) Grizzled Skipper** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
38. **Lulworth Skipper** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
39. **Swallowtail** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
40. **Wood White** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
41. **Clouded Yellow** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
42. **Adonis Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
43. **Glanville Fritillary** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
44. **Heath Fritillary** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
45. **Essex Skipper** – French Alps
46. **Silver Studded Blue** – French Alps
47. **(Mountain) Northern Brown Argus** – French Alps
48. **Large Blue** – French Alps
49. **Chalkhill Blue** – French Alps
50. **White Admiral** – French Alps
51. **Mountain Ringlet** – French Alps

Non UK species seen in France in 2016:

1. **Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper** – Pyrenees Orientales
2. **Provence Orange Tip** – Pyrenees Orientales
3. **False Ilex Hairstreak** – Pyrenees Orientales
4. **Violet Copper** – Pyrenees Orientales
5. **Short Tailed Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales
6. **Provençal Short Tailed Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales
7. **Camberwell Beauty** – Pyrenees Orientales
8. **Large Tortoiseshell** – Pyrenees Orientales
9. **Spanish Gatekeeper** – Pyrenees Orientales
10. **De Prunner's Ringlet** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
11. **Western Marbled White** – Pyrenees Orientales
12. **Safflower Skipper** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
13. **Red Underwing Skipper** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
14. **Marbled Skipper** – French Alps
15. **Tufted Marbled Skipper** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
16. **Mallow Skipper** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
17. **Alpine Grizzled Skipper** – French Alps
18. **Large Grizzled Skipper** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
19. **Olive Skipper** – French Alps
20. **Carline Skipper** – French Alps
21. **Sooty Copper** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps

22. **Purple-Edged Copper** – French Alps
23. **Purple-Shot Copper** – French Alps
24. **Grison's Fritillary** – French Alps
25. **Scarce Copper** – French Alps
26. **Blue Spot Hairstreak** – French Alps
27. **Ilex Hairstreak** – French Alps
28. **Green Hairstreak** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
29. **Sloe Hairstreak** – French Alps
30. **Mazarine Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
31. **Escher's Blue** – French Alps
32. **Eros Blue** – French Alps
33. **Amanda's Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
34. **Geranium Argus** – French Alps
35. **Glandon Blue** – French Alps
36. **Idas Blue** – French Alps
37. **Mountain Alcon Blue** – French Alps
38. **Baton Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
39. **Turquoise Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
40. **Chapman's Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
41. **Alpine Blue** – French Alps
43. **Osiris Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
44. **Chequered Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
45. **Geranium Bronze** – French Alps
46. **Silvery Argus** – French Alps
47. **Green Underside Blue** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
48. **Lang's Short Tailed Blue** – French Alps
49. **Damon Blue** – French Alps
50. **Furry Blue** – French Alps
51. **Black Veined White** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
52. **Berger's Clouded Yellow** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
53. **Mountain Green Veined White** – French Alps
54. **Mountain Clouded Yellow** – French Alps
55. **Cleopatra** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
56. **Bath White** – French Alps
57. **Peak White** – French Alps
58. **Mountain Dappled White** – French Alps
59. **Southern White Admiral** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
60. **Southern Comma** – French Alps
61. **Lesser Purple Emperor** – French Alps
62. **Pearly Heath** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
63. **Darwin's Heath** – French Alps
65. **Chestnut Heath** – French Alps
66. **Dusky Heath** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
67. **Almond-Eyed Ringlet** – French Alps
68. **Common Brassy Ringlet** – French Alps
69. **False Mnestra Ringlet** – French Alps
70. **Sooty Ringlet** – French Alps
71. **Mountain Ringlet** – French Alps
72. **Large Ringlet** – French Alps
73. **Piedmont Ringlet** – French Alps
74. **Large Wall Brown** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
75. **Great Banded Grayling** – French Alps
76. **Great Sooty Satyr** – French Alps
77. **Woodland Grayling** – French Alps
78. **Dusky Meadow Brown** – French Alps
79. **Shepherd's Fritillary** – French Alps
80. **Mountain Fritillary** – French Alps
81. **False Heath Fritillary** – French Alps
82. **Cynthia's Fritillary** – French Alps
83. **Spotted Fritillary** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
84. **Knapweed Fritillary** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
85. **Titania's Fritillary** – French Alps
86. **Weaver's Fritillary** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
87. **Niobe Fritillary** – French Alps
88. **Marbled Fritillary** – French Alps
89. **Queen of Spain Fritillary** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
90. **Lesser Marbled Fritillary** – French Alps
91. **Meadow Fritillary** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps
92. **Provençal Fritillary** – Pyrenees Orientales and French Alps

Total species seen in 2016 – **143**

Last butterfly sighting – **Red Admiral** – 13th November 2016, Byefield Lane Car Park, Abergavenny

## Re: David M

by David M, 28-Feb-16 05:49 PM GMT

**Sunday 28th February – Wasn't expecting this.....**

At last! A sunny day coinciding with a weekend. The last time this happened in the Swansea area was early November, so this morning's clear skies were especially welcome.

At 10.35, I made my way down to Mumbles Head to check out the hebe flowers at Bracelet Bay. However, although it was 7c (which has proved warm

enough in the past to facilitate butterfly activity), there was a fair wind blowing which took the edge off the temperature.

There were very few hebe blooms left, and in spite of seeing my first bumblebee of the year (always a sign that butterflies aren't far off), I decided to take a walk round to the more sheltered Limeslade Bay a few hundred metres away:



I noticed last autumn that there was another expanse of hebe growing to the left of the blue apartments in the above picture, but as I got there I clocked a 15 metre stretch of bergenia – always a magnet for early butterflies.

Sure enough, just after 11am I spotted a pale coloured butterfly low to the ground:



Although I half anticipated a Tortoiseshell or Red Admiral, I certainly wasn't expecting a Painted Lady to be my first butterfly sighting of 2016:





The area to the left of the roadside was where it was seen, and I watched it for a good 10 minutes until someone's dog decided to sniff around the verge, causing the butterfly to take to the air and head upwards towards the houses:



### Re: David M

by trevor, 28-Feb-16 06:14 PM GMT

Hi David,

You've broken the mould, not only one of the first Butterflies of 2016, also not a species one would expect for a first sighting !. We also managed a temperature of only 7c today, plenty of sun, with a bitter wind.

Well found ! 🍷

All the best for the coming season,  
Trevor.

### Re: David M

by Chris Jackson, 29-Feb-16 01:00 PM GMT

You can't complain for a windy 7°C. I'm sure things will be getting progressively better for you.

Tomorrow is March – hooray 😊 .

Chris

### Re: David M

by David M, 11-Mar-16 08:59 PM GMT

**Friday 11th March 2015 – Welsh Torties are out.....**

I took an hour and a half lunch at work today given the 10c temperatures and sunny skies, and I was rewarded with definitely one Small Tortoiseshell, and maybe two, if the second one I saw was a different individual to the first.

The environs of my workplace are damp, lightly wooded areas, and in years gone by have proved to be rich hunting grounds for early butterflies. This image gives an overview of the sheltered, south-facing stretch of terrain where today's Tortoiseshell was seen:



Here is the butterfly in question, which was flying from one dandelion to the next:



### Re: David M

by trevor, 12-Mar-16 08:32 PM GMT

Wales must be the UK's Butterfly hotspot so far this year.

A Painted Lady and a Small Tortoiseshell, that's two more than I've seen here in Sussex 🇬🇧.

We've had frosts and cold winds here, and quite a lot of rain.

Still there's high pressure forecast for next week, so maybe my luck will change !.

Wishing you a great season,  
Trevor.

### Re: David M

by David M, 16-Mar-16 09:22 PM GMT

**Wednesday 16th March 2016 - Looking in the right places.....**

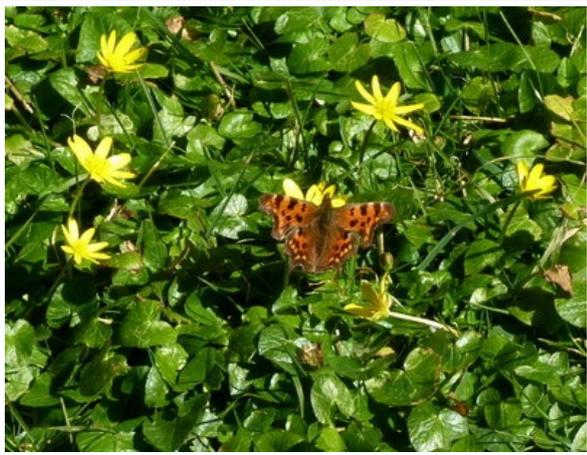
Day off today to have my car MOT'd, and by noon the cloud cover had almost entirely vanished, so with temperatures reaching 11c I felt it my duty to pay a visit to the woodland track behind the Gower Inn, Parkmill, which is about 2 miles from my house.

I was concerned that, in spite of the warmth of the sun in this sheltered location, I had seen no butterflies at all in the 45 minutes I spent walking around the two main clearings.

Having returned to the car park, I took time out to check this carpet of celandines growing on a nearby bank:



There were two butterflies nectaring in this area, and one of them was my first Comma of 2016:



The other butterfly was this Small Tortoiseshell, which was being carefully observed by a Robin:



I wasn't able to get close to the Comma, because it flew off over the fence at the back of the pub:



Now, Commas are creatures of habit, so when it didn't return I wondered what it was behind this fence that had caused it to stay there. I walked over and began to understand. This was a very sheltered, south-facing spot, but more importantly, it had huge numbers of dandelions in bloom there. I couldn't locate the Comma but I **did** see another butterfly here – my first Peacock of the year. I couldn't take a photo above the level of the fence because it was too high, but fortunately there was one piece of wood missing, allowing me to obtain this (admittedly poor quality) image by using my zoom through the gap:



## Re: David M

by David M, 19-Mar-16 12:52 PM GMT

### Friday 18th March – Brimstone hunt....

I don't think it's really spring until I see a Brimstone, and having encountered all the other endemic adult over-winterers I resolved to put that right during my lunch hour.

There are two spots where I always fancy the chances of meeting up with one, and I'm pleased to say I didn't have long to wait as I arrived at my first location just prior to midday. After two minutes observation, I saw a familiar yellow blotch flying by the riverbank and my camera went into 'sport mode' in an attempt to capture the critter:



Thankfully, he was heading towards me so I got another opportunity:



...and cropped:



In spite of the benign conditions and sunny skies, the only other butterfly I saw was this Comma:



**Re: David M**

by Goldie M, 19-Mar-16 01:59 PM GMT

Hi! David, at least you saw a Brimstone 🦋 I'm still hoping to see one. Goldie 😊

**Re: David M**

by Neil Freeman, 20-Mar-16 11:53 AM GMT

Hi David, well done on seeing the full set of adult hibernators 🦋 😊 ...I haven't managed to get out to see one yet. From these and previous reports it certainly seems that your part of south wales is one of the more benign areas of the county weather wise at this time of year.

Cheers,

Neil

**Re: David M**

by Pauline, 21-Mar-16 07:00 PM GMT

What a great start you've made to the season David to have clocked up 5 species already when many of us are still struggling to get off the mark, especially when your first was a Painted Lady 🦋😊. Love the scenery shots too – it's interesting to see where the butterflies have been found 😊.

**Re: David M**

by David M, 11-Apr-16 12:46 AM GMT

**Saturday/Sunday 9th/10th April – Will spring ever start?**

Castle Meadows in Abergavenny is a top spot for Orange Tips, especially once the Cuckoo Flower has been out for a week or so.

Sadly, one requires suitable weather conditions to see them and on both days this weekend, despite promising forecasts, on each occasion the cloud outweighed the sunshine several-fold. 😞

We're almost halfway through spring now, yet it feels like we're stuck in the first week of March, with temperatures stubbornly refusing to reach the teens Celsius.

Small Tortoiseshells were the only species I saw (just 8 of them in two days), which is a real shame, as in this location at this time of year they can number well over 50 if conditions are optimal. Here's one desperately clinging to the earth to try to inject some warmth into it:



With few butterflies to see, I spent time watching all the bird life, with Nuthatches, Thrushes and this Heron all making an appearance:



I'm sure I'm not the only one praying for temperatures to rise soon. We all need a break (particularly the butterflies).

**Re: David M**

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

Well you've already seen more Small Torts than me, they do seem to be much more numerous over on the west side of the country with both you and Wurzel doing better than me. 50 in one day though, thats something I could only dream about over here!

Wednesdays looking quite good currently, 17 degrees predicted... I wonder if that will come to fruition. Hope so, my day off work 😊

**Re: David M**

by Chris Jackson, 12-Apr-16 08:02 AM GMT

Sorry to hear your Spring hasn't started yet, when it could quite be the opposite. I feel guilty about posting my own sightings down here. Let's hope your weather brightens up soon.  
Chris

**Re: David M**

by Roger Gibbons, 12-Apr-16 08:21 AM GMT

There seems to be quite a difference between the UK and French seasons so far. Yesterday I went to the site you know as "T", David, (apologies to all for mentioning location in encrypted form) and saw 22 species including at least 20 Provence Hairstreaks, about half of which were females egg-laying on just about every low-lying plant available.

Here's hoping the UK season is just a slow-starter.

Roger

**Re: David M**

by David M, 13-Apr-16 11:46 PM GMT

**Roger Gibbons wrote:**

...saw 22 species including at least 20 Provence Hairstreaks, about half of which were females egg-laying on just about every low-lying plant available.

Good job I had an uplifting day today, Roger, otherwise I'd have been on a plane to a location not far from you...

**Wednesday 13th April 2016 – Redemption....**

After my prolonged period of suffering lately due to poor weather conditions, it was ironic that redemption was obtained during a visit to a graveyard!

Given the promising forecast, I arranged a day off work at short notice and headed to Dan-y-Graig Cemetery on the eastern outskirts of Swansea, as this location has traditionally come up trumps for early Speckled Woods and Holly Blues.

Having walked up the first slope that leads to the summit of Kilvey Hill, most of my 'demons' were vaporised within the space of a few seconds. I had just located my first Speckled Wood of 2016 and had my camera at the ready when I was distracted by a shadow above me. This turned out to be two warring male Holly Blues and I watched them for half a minute until the battle came to an end and both went their separate ways.

This is the stretch of terrain where all this happened:



In all, I saw about a dozen Specklies, including these two adversaries who climbed high into the air to settle their differences:



The winner came down to rest on last year's bracken:



Moving into the cemetery, I was transfixed by a male Brimstone nectaring from a patch of bluebells. He'd flit from one flower to the next, then he'd fly off a short distance before turning round to return:



I took multiple images, including this accidental one where I hit the shutter just as he launched into flight:



A Peacock was sighted on the pathway immediately above the cemetery, and I soon arrived back at the track that leads down to the entrance:



Here I stayed for a joyous 20 minutes or so, as further Speckled Woods and another Holly Blue flitted about. Suddenly, I spotted three whitish butterflies 20m or so down the path. I jogged down and watched another male Brimstone chase two male Large Whites in and out of the shrubbery. Fortunately, one of the Large Whites decided to hang around for a bit:





So, whilst not a perfect day, many 'cobwebs' were blown off during this two hour visit.

Totals seen were:

Speckled Wood 10-15, Brimstone 3, Holly Blue 3, Large White 2, Peacock 1.

Orange Tips are next on the menu! 😊

### Re: David M

by Neil Freeman, 15-Apr-16 08:17 PM GMT

Great stuff David 😊 ...it seems that everyone is beating me to Specklies this year 😊

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: David M

by David M, 17-Apr-16 05:54 PM GMT

**Sunday 17th April - Still slow going...**

A cool but largely sunny day today, so I headed over to the base of Kilvey Hill again, figuring that this sheltered spot would be better than some of the more exposed ones local to me.

The first butterfly I saw was a male Green Veined White, my first of the year, although he didn't hang around to be photographed.

No vanessids today, and the commonest species was easily Speckled Wood, with approximately two dozen seen. A couple more Holly Blues made an appearance, but as is often the case, they remained frustratingly out of range - at least this long distance 'effort' shows that it's a male:



Soon after, my first Small White of the year turned up:



I then spotted a beautifully marked female Green Veined White:



This poor female barely got a moment's peace, as there were several Small and Large White males in the vicinity, and every time they passed they would chase the poor lady round the track. In this image, the male Small White is hot on the tail of her, with a male Large White in pursuit!



No Brimstones today, and in spite of seeing my first Orange Tip in a different location yesterday, they too were absent in spite of plenty of cuckoo flower growing in the cemetery below Kilvey Hill.

**Re: David M**

by Neil Freeman, 19-Apr-16 08:58 PM GMT

Hi David,

Beautiful female GVW 😊

I also love the action shot of the whites.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: David M**

by David M, 02-May-16 07:24 PM GMT

**Monday 2nd May 2016 – Eight day drought over....**

Yep. Not one butterfly seen from mid-afternoon on Sunday 24th April to approx 2.30pm today. The weather really **has** been that bad!!

I only ventured down to Castle Meadows in Abergavenny this afternoon because the rain had stopped and it suddenly felt a lot warmer.

I felt sure I had a half-decent chance of at least locating a roosting Orange Tip among the copious Cuckoo Flower blooms at this damp location and decided I'd start this search where the growth is particularly robust, just outside the entrance:



Sure enough, within a couple of minutes I spotted this male clinging on in the wind to this flower head:



As the sky became a little brighter, he started to get more active:



..and when, eventually, the sun broke through, he was off on his travels, only to alight again when the cloud rolled back in:



Hopefully, along with the rest of us, he'll have a much more enjoyable time of things over the coming week as temperatures rise considerably.

**Re: David M**

by Neil Freeman, 02-May-16 09:52 PM GMT

Hi David, lovely Orange-tip images 🦋😊, still not seen one myself...maybe this week with the forecast upturn in the weather.

Cheers,

Neil

**Re: David M**

by David M, 04-May-16 10:28 PM GMT

**Wednesday 4th May 2016 - That's more like it.....**

I was confined to my workplace today (such a shame this weather descended immediately AFTER the Bank Holiday), but I escaped for just under an hour and what a joy it was to see butterflies aplenty, doing what nature intended them to do - fly around in numbers, looking for mates, nectar sources, etc.

I spent just over half an hour in a 200m spot close to my work building, and in that brief time saw 7 Orange Tips, several Whites (both Small and Green Veined positively identified), a Speckled Wood and a Small Tortoiseshell.

The most pleasing moment was when I stumbled upon my first female Orange Tip of 2016, who was, as usual, far more accommodating than the males normally are:



### Re: David M

by Pauline, 05-May-16 06:07 AM GMT

That's a lovely image of the OT female David. The exposure is just right showing every level of detail and very nice composition too. I have yet to see a female myself 🍷

### Re: David M

by bugboy, 06-May-16 05:51 PM GMT

Very 🍷 with your female OT, all I've had is one fly past me the other day, loads of males about now though so they must be hiding somewhere!

### Re: David M

by Goldie M, 07-May-16 11:58 AM GMT

Love your Female OT David, glad I saw one in my garden or I'd be really jealous. Goldie 😊

### Re: David M

by Jack Harrison, 07-May-16 12:29 PM GMT

I have often thought that female Orange Tips are under-rated. That exquisite under wing pattern would be more appreciated if she were not so "outshone" by her male who shares the pattern but has that gorgeous splash of colour.

Jack

### Re: David M

by David M, 09-May-16 07:42 PM GMT

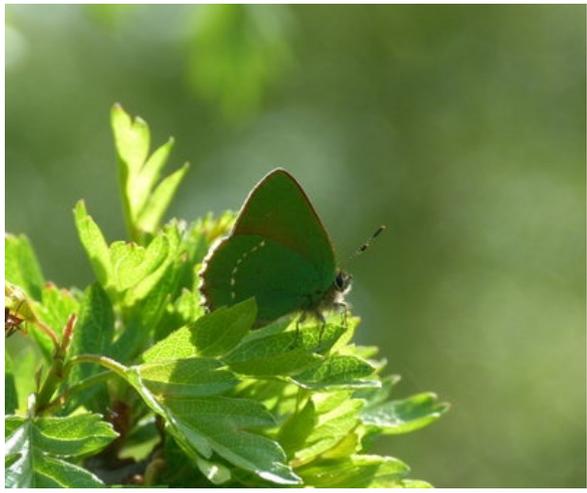
Thanks for the comments, all.

#### Sunday 8th May 2015 – Shock to the system....

After being cold for seemingly forever, a sudden day of sunshine and 24c temperatures could mean only one thing – many hours out in the field!

I started at Rodborough Common just after 9am, at which time it was raining. However, by 10 o'clock skies had cleared although butterfly activity took a while to lift off.

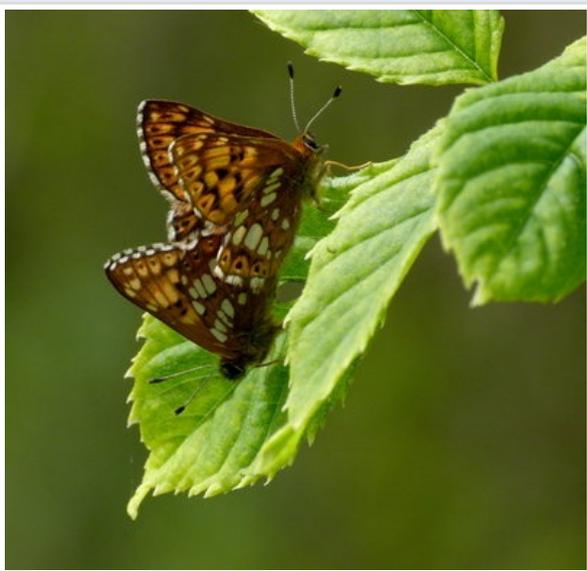
My first Green Hairstreaks of the year were seen; this one being extremely frustrating as it insisted upon landing at the top of a hawthorn bush with the sun directly behind it. Shame really, as it was a fresh specimen with a nice set of white 'streaks':



Dingy Skippers were about too, probably a couple of dozen of them:



All was worryingly quiet in the 'Duke' hotspot on this site at first, but compensation arrived via the sighting of a mating pair:



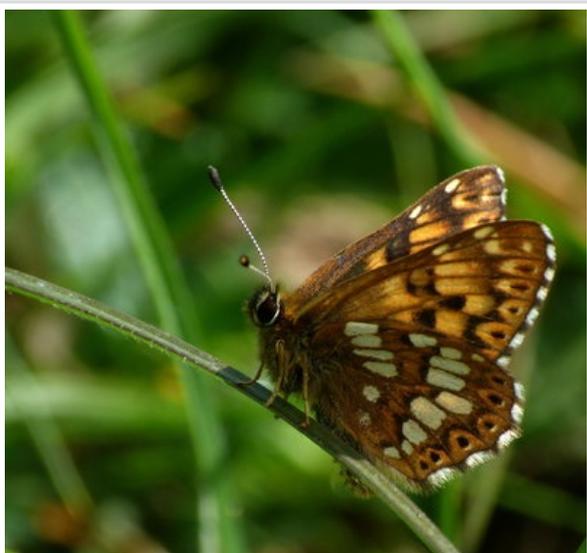
After about ten minutes, the male detached himself and moved to the tip of the leaf:



He then flew straight back down into the main 'lek' area, whilst the female, abdomen bulging, basked for a couple of minutes:



I was interested to see what she did following pairing, and unlike the male, she headed up the slope in 4 bursts of about 10 metres, briefly resting in between. Her fifth flight took her right over the top of the slope and well away from the half dozen or so males in the 'lek' area. These males continued to joust with one another, periodically alighting for a rest:



With it now being midday, I decided to head back to the car and catch up with Pearl Bordered Fritillaries in Herefordshire, stopping briefly to take a panoramic of this beautiful site:



I detoured through the country lanes around Skenfrith where my car temperature gauge hit 25c!!! Hard to believe that a week earlier I was sitting in my friend's conservatory in nearby Abergavenny with the wood fire lit! 😊

Arriving at Ewys Harold just before 2pm, I was unsurprised to see **Willrow's** VW in the car park, and even less of a surprise was to find him in the PBF hotspot a couple of hundred metres into the site.

Males were whizzing around like bullets but eventually I spotted a much more docile female who was content to flutter about only a little and take time out basking:



All told, I reckon I saw roughly two dozen, but given I'll be in Abergavenny next weekend, I will probably head back (weather permitting) to see if things improve.

### Re: David M

by Neil Freeman, 09-May-16 09:01 PM GMT

Hi David,

Rodborough Common is looking great, I have not been there for a couple of years now, I really must make the effort to drive down there again.

Great photos of the DoBs, I really like the one of the pair together on the leaf after separation 🍷 😊

Cheers,

Neil

**Re: David M**

by Padfield, 09-May-16 09:04 PM GMT

If anything could make me pine to come home, David, it would be shots like these. Lovely.

Guy

**Re: David M**

by essexbuzzard, 09-May-16 09:57 PM GMT

Agreed. Great dukes ,never been to that site before but it looks worth a visit. I also like the picture of the two adults just separated.

**Re: David M**

by Goldie M, 10-May-16 09:52 AM GMT

Fantastic Shots Dave, I envy you your Dukes and Pearls 🍷🍷 I went to Gait Barrow yesterday and the rope barrier hadn't been put up yet, next week the Ranger said, so, no sightings, no Pearls either, I hope I'm not going to have another Pearl less year ,I'll try again next week Goldie 🙄

**Re: David M**

by David M, 10-May-16 05:07 PM GMT

Thanks all. Still early days for the Dukes at this location. I'd recommend a visit in a fortnight's time as not only will there be many more of them, but Small Heaths, Brown Argus, Common & Adonis Blues should also be out in decent numbers.

**Re: David M**

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

Your female Pearl is a beautifully marked specimen, well found David.  
Hope your trip goes well.

**Re: David M**

by David M, 11-May-16 05:40 PM GMT

**Wurzel wrote:**

The underside shots of the Pearls have been in very short supply due to the sudden increase of heat so you did really well to capture it!

Females are much more prone to settle than males, Wurzel. I knew I stood virtually nil chance of getting a close approach to the testosterone-fuelled males, but sooner or later (just like Orange Tips), you see one that is behaving very differently and you know you've caught up with a member of the fairer sex. Then you can get your close lens out! 😊

**Re: David M**

by David M, 15-May-16 09:47 PM GMT

**Sunday 15th May 2016 - Waiting for the next batch of emergees....**

Here in south Wales, we're still seemingly awaiting the emergence in numbers of the likes of Small Heath, Common Blue, Brown Argus & Small Blue. Given that I only arrived back home from Abergavenny at 2pm, I thought I'd stay very local and visit Kittle Quarry a mile down the road where I have seen both Common Blues and Brown Argus several times before.

Not a sniff, sadly. In fact, during the first 20 minutes the only butterfly I saw was this basking Peacock, who probably only has a few days left:



The quarry itself had copious quantities of flowering bird's foot trefoil – here's a view from the highest point a human can safely reach:



There were, however, several of the other species that uses this LHP – Dingy Skippers:



The only other butterflies seen were a couple of Small Whites and a male Orange Tip.

**Re: David M**

by Goldie M, 16-May-16 04:39 PM GMT

Hi! David, you sound like your having the same problem down there has we are here, nothing much yet, 😞 Goldie 😊

**Re: David M**

by David M, 22-May-16 04:53 PM GMT

**Sunday 22nd May 2016 – Last chance.....**

With my first French trip of 2016 looming, today presented one last chance to catch up on a few home-grown species I'd not yet seen so far this year.

I nipped over to Dan-y-Graig Cemetery near the docks this morning and was delighted that the first butterfly to greet me was a male Wall Brown:



The uppermost section of the cemetery is quite steep, meaning that the authorities struggle to cut the grassy slopes. This is heaven for Wall Browns, and probably explains why they are to be reliably found in this spot:



I expected Common Blues to be about too, and I wasn't disappointed, although I only saw three:





Other species seen were Large, Small & Green Veined Whites, a male Orange Tip and a faded female Holly Blue.

**Re: David M**

by keving, 22-May-16 04:58 PM GMT

David, Nice Wall brown you have there. It's nice to have a reliable site to hand. In Suffolk, they are becoming rarer as each year passes.

Regards Kev

**Re: David M**

by jenks, 22-May-16 08:58 PM GMT

Hi David,

wish I`d known it was butterfly weather in Swansea. I was just the other side of Swansea, on the Loughor estuary, searching for a Gull billed Tern. Frequent heavy showers and a strong wind meant no self respecting butterflies were seen.....and no Gull billed Tern either ! Who was it who sang "Why does it always rain on me " ?

Jenks.

**Re: David M**

by David M, 22-May-16 11:54 PM GMT

**jenks wrote:**

wish I`d known it was butterfly weather in Swansea. I was just the other side of Swansea, on the Loughor estuary, searching for a Gull billed Tern. Frequent heavy showers and a strong wind meant no self respecting butterflies were seen

It wasn't all plain sailing, Jenks. I got caught in a hail storm just as I arrived at my second destination!

**Sunday 22nd May 2016 - Last chance (Part 2).....**

After leaving Dan-y-Graig Cemetery, I made the short journey down to Crymlyn Burrows on the sea-front.

It wasn't long before I saw my first Small Heath:



Small Blues were about too:



In between frequent cloudy periods, the grassy dunes came to life, with plenty of Orange Tips, a few Large Whites, the odd Green Veined/Small White and half a dozen or so Common Blues. Eventually, I located a Small Copper. This place is normally nailed on for them, but this faded individual was the only one seen in 90 minutes spent here:



A couple of Speckled Woods were seen, along with a female Brimstone. However, I didn't spot any Brown Argus, but given that Common Blues have only just emerged, perhaps that's not too much of a surprise.

To finish off, whilst walking back to my car, I encountered my first Red Admiral of 2016. It was basking on a bramble leaf but zoomed off before I could get my camera out. 😊

**Re: David M**

by Pauline, 23-May-16 06:18 AM GMT

Well done on finding the mating pair of Small Blue David. I've only seen that once before and you've managed to get a great shot there 📷

**Re: David M**

by Goldie M, 23-May-16 09:19 AM GMT

Lovely Mating pair of Blues David Goldie 😊

**Re: David M**

by David M, 03-Jun-16 06:42 PM GMT

Thanks folks.

**Friday 3rd June 2016 - Quick local recce.....**

Having just returned from 11 days in the French Pyrenees, I was in no mood to drive anywhere today (1500+ miles covered in the last fortnight), so I simply stepped out of my cottage at 1pm and strolled over to Fairwood Common near the airport to check what was about.

I found 7 Marsh Fritillaries:



...and 4 Small Pearl Bordereds:

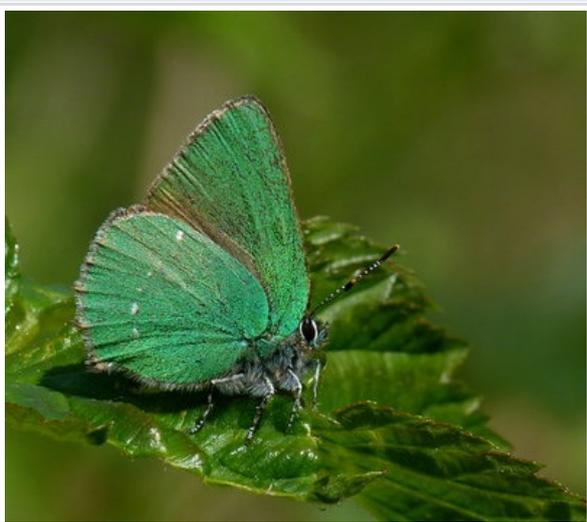




Here's an overview of the habitat:



It was a bit of a shock to see so few butterflies, and a reminder of how much of a paucity of species Britain has compared to our continental neighbours. The only other species seen were Green Hairstreak (2), Small Copper (1), Common Blue (1) and Green Veined White (1). One of the Green Hairstreaks happily posed on a leaf:



**Re: David M**

by bugboy, 03-Jun-16 07:44 PM GMT

Welcome back David, looking forward to seeing what you came across in the Pyrenees. I've been there once way back in the late 90's, absolutely stunning scenery 😊

**Re: David M**

by trevor, 03-Jun-16 08:01 PM GMT

Treasure on your doorstep, David. I have to travel miles for Marsh and Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary. I'm going on a Butterfly holiday to the South of France this month, we'll have to compare notes !.

All the best,  
Trevor.

**Re: David M**

by kevlings, 05-Jun-16 09:47 AM GMT

David, that's a beautiful shot of the Green Hairstreak.  
Will look forward to hearing about your trip to the Pyrenees too.

Regards Kev

**Re: David M**

by David M, 08-Jun-16 08:34 PM GMT

Thanks, all.

**Wednesday 8th June 2016 - Simple pleasures....**

With it being the last of the forecast sunny days, I decided to spend a couple of hours at Crymlyn Burrows on the Swansea coast. Immediately prior to leaving, the Painted Lady that has spent 3 days now on my estate was eagerly nectaring on my Bowles Mauve:



Arriving at the coast at 10.30am, Small Blues were into the dozens, with Small Heaths and Common Blues not far behind.

I also managed to see my first Large Skipper of 2016:



I was equally delighted to see my first UK Brown Argus of the year (though it was far too scruffy to photograph), but compensation was soon provided with this immaculately behaved Small Copper:



A Speckled Wood also posed nicely with wings shut:



Species seen were: Small Blue, Small Heath, Common Blue, Large Skipper, Orange Tip, Speckled Wood, Large White, Small Copper, Painted Lady & Dingy Skipper.

## Re: David M

by David M, 09-Jun-16 11:37 PM GMT

**Thursday 9th June 2016 - Last warm, sunny day for a while....**

With cloud set to descend tomorrow and temperatures forecast to fall back to the mid sixties Fahrenheit, I resolved to spend most of today out in the field.

First stop was the other Marsh Fritillary hotspot I know about on Fairwood Common. This one is a 10 minute drive from me at the back of the airport, and is tough going, with pockets of bottomless marsh ready to swallow your boots if you're not careful!

In just less than an hour, I counted 19 Marsh Frits, 8 Small Pearl Bordereds, 2 Small Heaths and 2 Meadow Browns.

I found three Marshie females. This one was the most interesting:



I then took a 50 minute drive to Old Castle Down, which forms part of the High Brown Fritillary site here in south Wales. Before I'd got to the top of the entry slope, I'd already exceeded Fairwood's SPBF tally by racking up NINE:



Here's the bracken-covered slope in question:



After 50 minutes, I descended into the Alun Valley itself having racked up 27 SPBFs, as well as many Small Heaths, including this mating pair:



Whilst in the valley, the Fritillary-Fest continued, with a handful more SPBFs, along with half a dozen or so large Fritillaries, one of which looked suspiciously like a High Brown given its darker ground colour. All bar one were airborne though, and the only individual that nectared even for a moment was unambiguously a Dark Green Fritillary:



Other species seen at this latter site were: Speckled Wood, Large Skipper, Meadow Brown, Small Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady & Green Veined White. No Common Blues or Brown Argus, which was surprising.

**Re: David M**

by David M, 12-Jun-16 09:16 PM GMT

**Jack Harrison wrote:**  
A Brexit fan David?

Not especially, Jack, although I think the whole institution is beginning to unravel irrespective of how the UK votes later this month. All I will say is that I earnestly hope that if we DO opt to remain, then the majority in favour is quite small, otherwise they will treat us with even greater disrespect than before.

**Sunday 12th June 2016 - Quick local visit....**

Do you know what, there is a patch of terrain not far from me which has strong potential for both Large Heath AND Silver Studded Blue. Sadly, neither species will ever get here because the nearest colonies of either are more than 50 miles away!!! Such a shame.

The boggy heathland I checked out today is somewhere that I have 'clocked' every time I drive past it (which is almost daily). I spent 90 minutes there this afternoon after the sun eventually emerged, and the only common butterfly I found was Small Heath, with upwards of 30 seen. Meadow Browns just scraped into double figures and will probably become abundant within the next fortnight.

I don't usually take images of early males with their wings closed but the fact that this specimen was nectaring on a rather lovely orchid persuaded me to change my default instincts:



Talking of lovely orchids, take a look at this fine bunch of white ones I came across:



The only other butterflies that made an appearance were Green Hairstreak (2), Large White (1) and Painted Lady (1).

### Re: David M

by essexbuzzard, 12-Jun-16 09:42 PM GMT

Heath spotted orchids there Dave. Wow,I've never seen them in a clump like that. Great work!

### Re: David M

by David M, 23-Jul-16 11:51 PM GMT

**Saturday 23rd July 2016 - Back to the grim reality.....**

Aaah. The 'joys' of butterflying in the UK!

I've been back from France for a fortnight now and today was the first weekend day that was even remotely suitable for a trip out. There have been some gorgeous days midweek but all my annual leave has now been used so I just had to bite my lip and accept things. That said, I had seen precious little during my lunch breaks and in the early evenings, to the point where I'm almost forced to state that this summer has been the worst for butterfly numbers since my interest was re-awakened back in 2008.

A three hour trip to the Alun Valley site near Bridgend did little to change that assessment. Sure, there were a few late High Brown Frits about but general numbers were staggeringly low.

Female High Browns tend to find the northern side of this site very attractive for egg laying. Perhaps the violets here are more robust?

I saw a handful in the dips and hollows near the shrub line on the Down. Here is one basking after a bout of ovi-posturing:



I also saw my first Hedge Browns of 2016 (shows how bad things have been lately):



To my surprise, most of the Ringlets still looked quite fresh:



A handful of Silver Washed Fritillaries were observed too (again, my first of the year in the UK):



As is often the case, there were a few bonus 'cameos' to be had. This male Holly Blue spent a decent while nectaring on the brambles in a sheltered corner:



...and this Red Admiral paid a visit to the same location (I think this is only the fourth or fifth I've seen thus far in the UK in 2016):



A Purple Hairstreak spent a couple of minutes teasing me at the top of an ash tree, but I was able to grab an image of one of the three or four faded female Dark Green Frits that were still hanging on to their last vestiges of life:



Other species seen in low numbers were Meadow Brown, Green Veined White, Large White, Small Skipper, Speckled Wood, Small Heath & Common Blue.

## Re: David M

by David M, 30-Jul-16 08:57 PM GMT

Saturday 30th July 2016 - The Gower coast....

I wasn't prepared to travel far today given the mixed weather forecast. So, at 11am I drove the relatively short distance down to Whiteford Burrows which is at the north west corner of the Gower Peninsula.

The first hour was predominantly cloudy, but the next two saw decent breaks allowing the butterflies to become active and visible.

Meadow Browns were about in almost silly numbers. I'd estimate at least 400 and they ranged from tattered to very fresh indeed. The cloudy conditions meant that many of them were posing with wings open, and I managed to capture this impressively marked female:



Hedge Browns were about too, although they were absent from the more exposed areas:



Suddenly, after a relative paucity thus far in 2016, Red Admirals were about in good numbers:



A dozen or so Peacocks were also a most welcome sight:



Out on the dunes I was pleased to see 20 or so Common Blues, a species that has not had a good year in 2016:



Second brood Small Blues were about in similar numbers:



I was particularly delighted to see Brown Argus here. They've had a shocking year so this pristine specimen (one of three seen) was especially pleasing:



Pierids were about too. Only one definite Green Veined White seen, but Large and Small Whites both hit double figures:



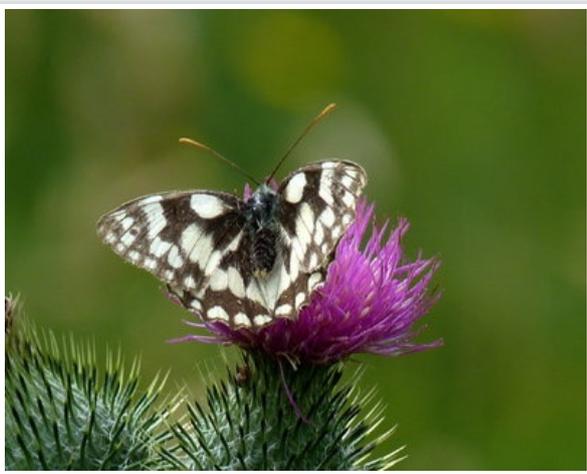
Here's an overview of the dunes looking west:



I also had two first UK sightings for 2016. I anticipated seeing quite a few Graylings but in the event I only saw one:



I also managed to see a solitary Marbled White, a species I had all but given up on this year having been out of the country during its peak flight period:



Small Skipper was the most notable absentee, whilst I had hoped that the odd Tortoiseshell, Small Copper and Comma would pop up too. However, there were three Speckled Woods in the scrubby area on my way back to the car at 2.30pm:



So, 16 species on a mediocre late summer's day isn't to be sniffed at, given how shocking this year has been thus far. Here are the butterflies seen:

Meadow Brown 400+  
Red Admiral 30-50  
Common Blue 20-30  
Small Blue 20-30  
Hedge Brown 10-20  
Large White 10-20  
Small White 10-20  
Peacock 10-15  
Ringlet 5-10  
Brown Argus 3  
Speckled Wood 3  
Silver Washed Fritillary 1  
Grayling 1  
Dark Green Fritillary 1  
Green Veined White 1  
Marbled White 1

## Re: David M

by David M, 07-Aug-16 05:27 PM GMT

### 5th & 6th August 2016 - Odds and ends.....

My annual visit to the Isle of Man coincided with pleasant conditions this year, giving me time to hunt down a few Graylings at the Ayres Nature Reserve at the northern tip of the island.

I saw 20 or so in total, including this female:



Soon after spotting her, this male homed in on her:



It's during moments like these that both sexes will open their wings:



Several Painted Ladies were encountered, including this fresh looking specimen:



Common Blues were disappointingly scarce, but I did see this wonderfully well-marked female:



A nice *caeruleopunctata* Small Copper popped up too:



Lovely red chevrons on the hindwing...shame about the missing antenna though!



Saturday was glorious, although I spent much of it in the car! 😊 On my way from Liverpool to Abergavenny though, I briefly stopped at Prees Heath which is en route. Silver Studded Blues have finished for 2016 unsurprisingly, but I did encounter something I've never seen before – a female Holly Blue nectaring on the heather right in the middle of SSB country:



**Re: David M**

by David M, 13-Aug-16 09:39 PM GMT

**Saturday 13th August 2016 - My favourite site....**

My neighbour and I spent a wonderful 5 hours at the West Williamston site in Pembrokeshire today to catch up with this year's Brown Hairstreaks.

They didn't disappoint, with 4 males and 3 females seen, along with plenty of other species.

For the first time ever here, I saw a grounded male *betulae*, but he was off before I could get an image. Instead, I got my usual 'tree-top' record shot:



The first female was seen at 11.20am on the foreshore. She looks to have had a hard time in her short life so far:



Still, she gave us the distinction of being the first visitors to record an egg being laid this year:



Female number 2 was in much better condition:



Having first spotted her at 1305hrs, we tracked her all the way across the top field and out over the perimeter fence for nearly half an hour, seeing her lay 6 eggs in total, including two 'doubles'. Here's one of them:



At 1410hrs a third female was seen. This image sees her about to embark on an ovipositing sortie:



...and here's one of her just resting:



Another Hairstreak popped up too. Even though there are very few oaks at this site, for the last three years Purple Hairstreaks have been sighted. As ever, this one was up in an ash tree, but a long range record shot proves that it's *quercus*:



It was good to see a healthy variety of species, 16 in all. About 10 Silver Washed Fritillaries were about:



Half a dozen Small Coppers put in an appearance:



This female Common Blue was a brief but welcome distraction:



Several Painted Ladies were seen in the more open areas:



Peacocks and Red Admirals could be found on the prime nectar sources in decent numbers:



The other species seen were Large White, Small White, Green Veined White, Small Tortoiseshell, Holly Blue, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown & Hedge Brown.

### Re: David M

by Pauline, 14-Aug-16 07:11 AM GMT

Beautiful images of the BH's David, especially that last female 🍷

### Re: David M

by Chris Jackson, 14-Aug-16 06:53 PM GMT

There are many marvelous butterflies to see in France, David, but my chances of seeing Brown Hairstreak and getting photos like yours are close to zero where I live. 🍷

Chris

### Re: David M

by trevor, 14-Aug-16 08:39 PM GMT

Lovely Brown Hairstreak sequence David. Hope to get some images like that next week.

Best wishes,  
Trevor.

### Re: David M

by bugboy, 14-Aug-16 10:25 PM GMT

Not seen any Brownies yet this year, I'm almost salivating at that final underside picture... 🍷

### Re: David M

by David M, 25-Aug-16 09:13 PM GMT

**Thursday 25th August 2016 - Making the best of a bad draw.....**

I'd have loved to have been off on Tuesday or even Friday of this week, as both these days were forecast almost perfect.

However, due to work restrictions I had to make do with today, a cloudy day, but I headed down to West Williamston anyway in order to undertake a Brown Hairstreak egg count.

Arriving at 10.30am, I devoted a full hour to the first field by the car park and had unearthed a healthy tally of 34 ova, including this triplet:



7 more eggs were found in the middle field, before 10 were located in the last field before the foreshore, including a personal record of NINE on a single blackthorn sucker, six of which are visible in this image:



Skies cleared around 12.15pm, and I was fortunate enough to witness a rare spectacle – a male Brown Hairstreak pursuing a female. Sadly, the male lost interest and the female disappeared over the shrub line so I was unable to get any images. However, there were plenty of other butterflies around – at least two dozen Speckled Woods, of which this one was the most attractive:



A dozen or so Red Admirals were around:



Painted Ladies were the most common vanessid, with at least 20 seen. Although this image is a poor one, it does contain an unlikely pairing – *cardui* along with one of two Silver Washed Fritillaries encountered:



This lovely female Large White was nectaring on buddleia:



Four Small Tortoiseshells were seen:



....along with this single male Common Blue:



Other species seen were: Hedge Brown (4), Meadow Brown (2), Green Veined White (2), Small White (1), Comma (1) and Peacock (1).

## Re: David M

by David M, 08-Sep-16 10:22 PM GMT

**Sunday 4th September 2016 - Plas Pilipala...**

A mainly cloudy day here in south Wales saw me opt for a visit to the National Botanic Gardens of Wales just west of Cross Hands.

The principal reason was that they have recently opened a new butterfly house and I wanted to see what was there.

The three month experiment from 1st July has already been extended to a 6 month one, and I hope there is sufficient interest to keep it going into the new year, as it will provide a much needed 'fix' during the long off-season.

Blue Morpho was, unsurprisingly, one of the star species (this one taking quite a liking to my shirt sleeve):



Here's an underside:



The bulk of the specimens were from the Longwing family. This group loves flying around in the shady, lower areas of the canopy and is thus much favoured as the butterflies stay away from the windows and spend long periods basking on leaves or on the feeding stations:





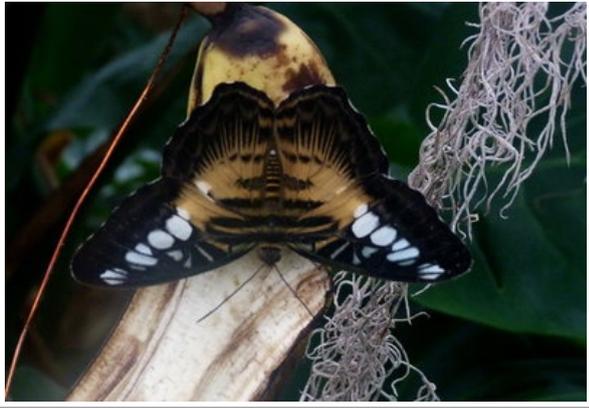
Glasswings were out in force too:



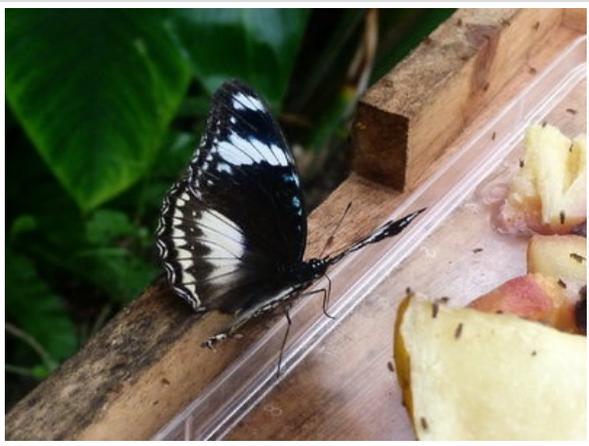
There were a few Banded King Shoemakers, but they were mainly perched up near the ceiling or on the window sills. A few were feeding on the fruit laid out by the staff but sadly they kept their wings closed:



Like the above, Brown Clippers were favouring the brighter areas by the windows, but this one couldn't resist a ripe banana:



There were a few species I couldn't identify:



This is a view of the glass house, and outside of it is a walled garden where there are plenty of brassica plants. In spite of the gloomy conditions, several Large & Small Whites were seen along with a solitary female Green Veined White. The only other butterflies active were Red Admiral and Small Tortoiseshell.



### Re: David M

by Pauline, 09-Sep-16 06:39 AM GMT

Morning David

Great photos from the butterfly house. The ones which you can't identify I saw on a visit to Wisley earlier in the year. I THINK the first and third are both Great Mormon and the middle one may be Great Eggfly – a most unattractive name for such a lovely butterfly!

### Re: David M

by David M, 18-Sep-16 09:12 PM GMT

**Sunday 18th September 2016 – Small White renaissance.....**

Having spent a week looking after my friend's guest house in Abergavenny whilst she was on holiday, I was eager to get out again on the butterfly trail today. Although the weather wasn't perfect, it was mainly sunny with temperatures around 17 degrees, so I spent the best part of two hours at Port Eynon on the Gower coast in an attempt to reconnect.

The most notable statistic was the sheer numbers of Small Whites. This species didn't have the best of first broods round here, but they have clearly responded to the warm conditions of late, as I reckon I saw 100+ of them in and around the dunes between 10.45 and 12.30 today. This patch of wild cabbages next to the car park took me into double figures straight away:



The valerian on the coastline was well frequented by several species, including a dozen or so Large Whites:



Here's a view towards the headland looking south west:



I didn't see a single Green Veined White, but there were 4 Small Tortoiseshells, 3 Painted Ladies, 3 Speckled Woods, a Red Admiral and what will probably be my last Common Blue of 2016 as well as my last Meadow Brown:



## Re: David M

by David M, 02-Oct-16 08:50 PM GMT

### Sunday 2nd October 2016 - Winding down.....

Two weeks ago I visited Port Eynon on the Gower coast. I did the same today but a lot had happened in between.

A fortnight ago, Small Whites were numerous – this time, there were 10 at best, and all the ones I saw settled were worn.

In fact, very little was flying in the dunes, in spite of lovely conditions – 16c, and almost unobstructed blue skies.

A Painted Lady and a couple of Red Admirals were the only other butterflies seen until I moved on to the woodland path that leads to the trig point on the hill overlooking the bay, from where I took these images:

This one is out towards the sea, with the plumes of industrial smoke just visible in the background from the Tata Steel plant at Port Talbot:



This one shows the village of Port Eynon:



Within the more sheltered confines of the woodland path, it seemed that almost every patch of flowering ivy had several Red Admirals nectaring on it. I probably saw almost 50 in various spots along this path:



I saw a couple of Commas amongst the numerous Red Admirals, which was nice as I've seen precious few of this species over the past couple of months:



I won't be able to get out again for another couple of weeks, at which point I daresay only the adult hibernators will be about. Things are definitely on the wane here now and I'm already yearning for next spring!

### Re: David M

by David M, 23-Oct-16 09:00 AM GMT

**Saturday 22nd October 2016 - In need of a fix.....**

On 10th October, I spotted a Small White in the grounds of Swansea University. Since then, only Red Admirals have been about and it looks like the season is all but over. So, once again I took myself to the National Botanic Gardens of Wales to pay a visit to the tropical butterfly house.





Sadly, because this building was constructed for plants rather than butterflies, it doesn't have as much natural light coming into it as would be ideal. As a consequence, many species can be better seen from **outside** the windows resting on the glass. There were quite a few Indian Leafwings in there, but none were flying about the interior – they were all perched on the window sills!!!

The gardens had that late autumn look to them, although it is still a lovely place to visit as it is always well manicured:



Just one native species seen; unsurprisingly, a Red Admiral on the flowering ivy behind the walled gardens. However, another sighting of interest was this semi-tame pheasant, which practically resides in the garden centre at the site as it is regularly fed:



## Re: David M

by David M, 01-Nov-16 08:42 PM GMT

**Monday 31st October 2016 – Unseasonably warm yet again....**

What is it about this time of year lately?

31 October 2014 was the hottest ever Hallowe'en in the UK and last year saw temperatures hit 17c on 1st November in Swansea.

Fast forward 12 months and yet again we have had freakish conditions at this precise time of year.

The weather forecast merely predicted mild conditions of 15c or so, which meant that I paid a visit to Linda Vista Gardens in Abergavenny once the mist had cleared at about 10.30am. Sadly, there were no butterflies about but the autumn leaves looked resplendent:

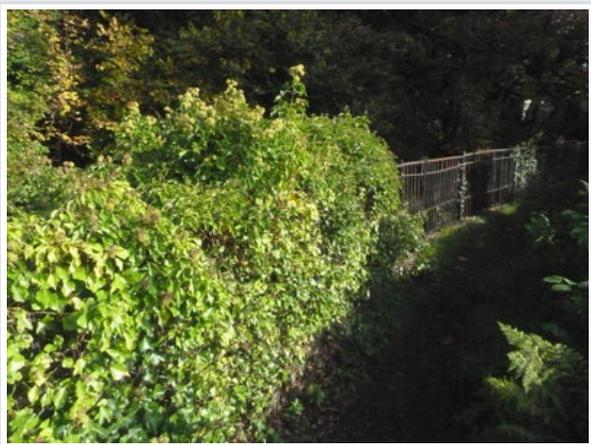


On my way back from Abergavenny to Swansea though, I noticed that my car's temperature gauge had hit 17c even at high altitude!! By the time I got to Neath, it was saying 20c!

I decided to take a last minute detour to a former late season haunt at Cwm Clydach, where flowering ivy abounds in sheltered conditions facing south:



The sun had already started to dip down as I only arrived at 1.40pm, but on my walk back the last cut of ivy growth was right in the warmth:



Unlike some favoured spots on the English south coast, there were no Clouded Yellows, Common Blues or Speckled Woods. The butterfly gorging itself on nectar here was a straightforward Red Admiral, however, I suspect that it will be the last I see in 2016, which makes it just as special:



Watching the news later that evening, I wasn't at all surprised to see west Wales break Hallowe'en records with a daytime high of 22.2c! At best I reckon Swansea hit 21.

Won't see those figures for a long while. 😞

### Re: David M

by David M, 05-Nov-16 09:44 PM GMT

#### Bonfire Night butterflies

I always like to chase down a November butterfly or two, so with bright, sunny, blue skies this morning, I ignored the earlier mild frost (as well as the chilly 10c with a brisk northerly wind) and headed down to Bracelet Bay on the Gower Coast to check out the hebe blooms by the coastguard's hut.

Two Red Admirals were duly seen, though only this tatty one was photographed:



The microclimate to the left beyond the building felt positively balmy when I reached it, which is why this spot tends to attract these unseasonal butterflies:



Amazingly, whilst driving back into the complex where I live, another Red Admiral fluttered lazily across my path. With a few night-time frosts to come I

reckon this will be it unless there is a freak mild period later this month.

Right now March seems a long way away.