

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Mar-17 04:43 PM GMT

Thank you all so much for your amazing comments. I really do appreciate them so much and they keep me going over the long Winter months which I have come to dread. Before I get on to the butterfly posts I hope you will allow me to explain the late(ish) start to my diary. Some might recall that a few years ago I picked up a dreadfully injured wild rabbit just by Noar Hill on my return from looking at BH. She took 3 months to recover and by that time was too tame to be returned so she was installed in a large kennel and run and a companion was provided for her. Lucky was a lovely rabbit. To me she was special and unique and it was interesting to compare her behaviour with her domestic companion, Magnet. Just after Xmas I took them both to the vet for their annual jabs and he unfortunately detected 2 large lumps in Lucky's abdomen. She had been spayed so we hoped that ruled out at least one form of cancer. She was booked in for x-rays and scans and it was such a relief to be told that the lumps were in fact abscesses rather than any form of tumour. Nevertheless, they had to be removed so she was booked in for her op. and put on medication in the meantime. I don't think you can imagine how shocked I was when I found her dead the night before her op. I was gutted. I didn't feel like getting a replacement but my little buck became withdrawn and stopped eating. He was missing her even more than I was. I eventually found a suitable replacement. A 3 year old female who had been discarded after being used for breeding. When I had her spayed it was clear there was a problem – the results came back from the lab that the uterus was cancerous and by now she had developed rabbit syphilis, a legacy from the many bucks used on her. Well, to cut a long story shorter, things are much more settled now and I am able to get on with butterflying. I shall just conclude with a few shots of Lucky in happier days.



Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 26-Mar-17 05:03 PM GMT

Good to hear from you again Pauline even though your post is a sad one, hope fully the sight of Butterflies will cheer you up, looking forward to your posts Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 26-Mar-17 06:04 PM GMT

Hi Pauline and welcome back to a new season. Sorry to hear about Lucky, lets hope that a few spring butterflies will manage to lift your spirits,

All the best,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by David M, 26-Mar-17 07:46 PM GMT

Hi Pauline and welcome back.

Sad to hear about your woes with certain of your pets. I hope this year is a more positive and fortunate one for you.

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 26-Mar-17 09:52 PM GMT

Welcome back Pauline 😊 Hopefully 2017 from now forwards will bring you more butterflies and joy than 2016 seemed to.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 26-Mar-17 09:52 PM GMT

Butterflies active, check.

Birds nest building, check.

Primroses in flower, check.

Bee Flies out, Check.

Pauline's back, Spring has most definitely sprung 😊

Sorry to hear about your bunny's. Hopefully the springtime butterflies will lift your spirits.

Re: Pauline

by trevor, 26-Mar-17 10:23 PM GMT

The Butterflies beat you out of hibernation this year 😊 .

It is a sure sign that the new season is upon us when Pauline starts posting again !.

There is always new life to replace that which has passed.

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 26-Mar-17 11:48 PM GMT

Good to see you posting again Pauline although sorry to hear about your winter problems.

What a splendid weekend - I saw my first Orange Tip today (will write up in my diary tomorrow) so the season is really under way 😊

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Mar-17 07:30 AM GMT

Thank you all for your very warm welcome. It is great to be back but I have a lot of catching up to do and I do so enjoy reading what others have been up to.

It is always hard to close my diary for the winter but it is inevitable as so many chores beckon. However, although my outings are considerably reduced, it is certainly possible to lure me out and reports of a LTB sighting at Warnham nature reserve did just that. I had not been to that venue before but I

remembered it was close to where Goldie stayed on one of her visits down south.

Seems it is only 45 mins away and the weather was good so off I set. To cut a long story short, I did not find the LTB – just Vince (nice to see you Vince) and a couple of Kingfishers, but it is an interesting reserve and I passed the time taking some shots of a couple of Small Coppers, given that they had been such a rarity on home turf. I decided to call it a day and made my way to the exit but just before I got there I saw what I thought was another Small Copper, posing nicely on a dead flower head. As I got closer I realised it was way too big for a Small Copper. As I watched it flitted from the grass to various stalks, not staying in any one place for more than a couple of seconds, but totally ignoring me, until it landed on my shorts and opened its wings. Yes, I was watching a female Brown Hairstreak but only managed a couple of record shots, my surprise was that great – the last thing I was expecting to see on 14 September – and something of a rarity at that site I was told.



Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Mar-17 03:59 PM GMT

Mid September I received an email from a friend to tell me that he had seen 86 Small Coppers on 3 sites very close to me. Well, that got me REALLY excited. So, my next trip out was to Broxhead Common on 18 September, less than 10 minutes away, where 29 Small Coppers had been seen a few

days previously. As there had since been a severe thunderstorm I was unsure what, if anything, I might find. I was not disappointed however as I counted about 2 dozen Coppers in a very small area, many looking very fresh and several females egg-laying. I truly felt as though I had somehow been transported to Dungeness and had a glimpse of the world Hoggers lives in. Needless to say I took many, many photos so only a small selection in this post.... and the blue badge variety which I have never before photographed was in abundance - about one in three!





Egg-laying on Sorrel

Apart from the Small Coppers there was a small colony of Brown Argus (I wonder if this is where 'my' Brown Argus came from?), a couple of which were very fresh, as well as some lovely Commas, Speckled Wood, Red Admirals and a single Common Blue – but the Coppers were the stars in my eyes!

Re: Pauline

by Vince Massimo, 27-Mar-17 07:34 PM GMT

Welcome back, Pauline, but sorry to hear of your winter losses.

Fancy bumping into you at Warnham. I had only popped in because I was passing and did not even have a camera or binoculars with me at the time. I also had a brief sighting of a Brown Hairstreak by the cafe on that date.

Vince

Re: Pauline

by David M, 27-Mar-17 10:58 PM GMT

Lovely start to your 2017 postings, Pauline, even though they are redolent with the signature of last autumn!

I'm sure you have much more to share and look forward to catching up!

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Mar-17 06:51 AM GMT

Thank you Vince. Would have been good to chat but being in the hide at the time I wasn't sure of the protocol.

Thank you too David. For completeness I shall try to rush through Autumn activities as I can't wait to post more recent events. As a brief interlude I shall mention the birds nesting in my garden. I have a number of boxes throughout but every year the same 2 boxes are chosen by Nuthatches, even though they are designed for the many Woodpeckers around here. For over a week I have watched the male plaster up the large entrance and now that he is satisfied with his work he constantly sticks out his head and calls for a mate. Yesterday I heard a female calling back to him. They are quite noisy but once he has been successful in persuading a lady back to his abode they are both silent so as not to reveal their whereabouts whilst rearing their family:



Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 28-Mar-17 09:10 AM GMT

At Last Pauline you got a Blue Badge, 🙄 It looks like I should have timed my holiday for later in the year Pauline then I could have seen the Brown Hair Streak !!!!!

Lovely shots by the way , I just love to see Butterflies on flowers but so for the ones I've seen are just basking in the Sun, looking forward to your next shots Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Mar-17 06:07 PM GMT

How many years have I been looking for a Blue Badge Goldie????? I was beginning to think they didn't exist and folk were just having a laugh with photoshop 😊😊 Well, I've gone from seeing Coppers I could count on one hand to dozens and dozens in a tiny area but what I don't know yet is whether they are there year after year. The spot is a sea of Sorrel so I'm hoping so.

Being on my doorstep, I felt compelled to return to this site to monitor a couple of eggs I had seen being laid. Sadly, there was no sign of one and although the other had obviously hatched and clear signs of early feeding from the leaf noted, the sorrel leaf was now detached from the main plant and there was no sign of the larva. There could have been a host of reasons apart from the usual predators. This particular spot is right on the edge of a path where folk walk their dogs, but the main site (which is just a carpet of Sorrel) is also home to an active badger set. Sticks and markers I had placed to mark the eggs had been knocked and trampled and I feel sure the badgers are the culprits. Although this made tracking the eggs somewhat difficult, the number of Small Coppers in such a small area provided both photo opportunities and the chance to study their behaviour. By now I was well and truly hooked and spent a great deal of time without moving, simply watching and recording. The following are some of the very many shots taken:







Re: Pauline

by millerd, 28-Mar-17 07:02 PM GMT

Welcome back, Pauline. Wow, those Small Copper shots are amazing. The second to last one on the acorn especially. 😊🍴

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 28-Mar-17 08:15 PM GMT

Yay!...You got your Blue-spotted Coppers 😊...I can stop feeling guilty 😊

Great photos as well, especially the last selection of poses 😊

All the best,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by Art Frames, 28-Mar-17 08:24 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Thank you for your welcome on my diary. I replied that I had looked at your diary earlier and loved the small coppers. Never seen anything like that many. I would have left a comment but we had not been introduced at that stage. I shall now feel less inhibited. 😊

So I thought I'd add it here too. 😊

kind regards

Peter (Art Frames)

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 29-Mar-17 10:15 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, you'll have to go back to that site in April and check the Small Coppers out again 😊
Beautiful shots on the Berries and Acorn, get some more shots of them on the flowers, Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Apr-17 03:33 PM GMT

Thank you for the compliment Dave – that one is actually my favourite too.

I expect you're not the only one who is relieved that I bagged a Blue Badge Neil – I can stop moaning now 😊

Great to hear from you Peter and thank you but please don't feel inhibited with me – I'm sure no-one else does 😊😊

I'll definitely be back Goldie and just for you I shall post a couple on flowers – and also a couple of eggs, including the one I referred to that had

become detached No, I didn't 'rescue' it! 😊







Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Apr-17 07:55 PM GMT

Notes from October

October 5th - I am realising that my local knowledge is shocking. Today I was introduced to 2 new local sites by Ern who has now reached a count of 144 3rd brood Small Coppers locally, being meticulous not to double count. (I still have not managed to persuade him to start a diary of his own so I feel it incumbent upon me to mention this record here). Today I was only able to see half a dozen Small Copper at each site - but hey! 12 Small Coppers in a couple of hours in October. Never had that before! Not only Small Coppers but Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admirals and a lovely Comma. It is getting quite Autumnal out there now. The temperatures are really starting to fall, especially over night and I am not sure how long these gloriously sunny days can continue. In the garden I have a 'plague' of Large Yellow Underwing larva at all stages of their development. They are decimating many plants including my fruit trees - lemon, lime, orange - that are now back in the garden room after their spell outdoors over the Summer.

October 11 - today I met up with Hazel as she was keen to see if there were still any Small Coppers around locally. We checked out one of the sites that Ern had recently introduced me to and although we were not there very long managed to notch up a few Coppers as well as a Small Tortoiseshell and a Red Admiral.





Before returning home I popped over to Broxhead and Bingo!! Another 10 Small Coppers, some in remarkably good condition, including one which I believe is the ab. Extensa?. Attempts at courtship by a couple of worn males proved futile but several females continued to egg lay. There seemed to be a preference for the small sorrel overhanging entrances to the badger sets but not exclusively so. One of the adults appeared to be taking minerals from just inside the entrance but without going head over heels to join her I couldn't get in the right position to avoid the shadow. Many of the eggs I had marked previously had now completely disappeared without trace and as there was no sign of feeding damage I can only conclude that a vast amount must get predated. It will be interesting to see what the Spring brings at this site.



Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 01-Apr-17 10:15 PM GMT

First up – congrats on getting a Blue Badger 😊 More lovely copper shots Pauline and that final one is very well marked – is that an ab I wonder? 😊🇮🇪
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 01-Apr-17 10:44 PM GMT

All those Coppers take me back to my autumn at Bookham where their population exploded in their third gen, my last sighting of one was early November!

Re: Pauline

by David M, 01-Apr-17 11:32 PM GMT

Those autumn images are almost sepia, Pauline!! 😊

Won't be long now before we see the spring generation of Small Coppers, hopefully with another few blue-badgers down your way.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Apr-17 02:54 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel. I THINK it's an ab. but I'm only guessing and would appreciate confirmation. As for blue '*badgers*', well I haven't had that variety round here, just the white ones in the garden 😊😞



I think the Coppers looked great on the bracken David – thank you. I shall certainly be checking back at these sites soon.

Yes, I was keeping in touch with your diary Buggy and making mental comparisons (sorry, I really didn't have time to comment then). I noticed you spotted several eggs on a single sorrel which I never found. I can only conclude that it was because of the amount of sorrel – vast amounts at these sites so plenty of choice for the butterflies. My last sighting was early November too – late October I was seeing eggs, egg-laying, larva and butterflies. I shall try to conclude the saga of the Coppers soon and move on but it was quite overwhelming, not having seen anything like these numbers ever.

Re: Pauline

by Art Frames, 02-Apr-17 04:29 PM GMT

Please tell us more about the 'albino' badger – I am guessing that it is a real one – but would be very interested in it's story. And I am impressed that your garden looks such a haven for wildlife. Apologies if you have fully covered badgers and gardens in the past but I'm still catching up... 😊

Re: Pauline

by David M, 03-Apr-17 06:54 AM GMT

You kept that quiet, Pauline. How long has that beauty been visiting you?

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Apr-17 09:49 AM GMT

Morning Peter

I actively encourage wild life to my garden and have badgers, foxes and hedgehogs almost every night:



I have also had 63 species of birds, including a pair of Turtle Doves which have been coming annually:



I have been rearing 6 Autumn juveniles (hedgehogs) that I picked up in the garden during October, one of which weighed only 180 gms instead of the 450–600gms required to survive hibernation. They are all in aviaries on the brink of release now. Naturally, looking after so many 'waifs and strays' as they have been called, carries constraints – My (fairly frequent) butterfly outings tend to be short and rushed and I have not had a holiday since I was 21 (of course I'm only 25 now 😊 😊!). However, I find it incredibly interesting and rewarding and there is always something new to learn.

Thank you for your kind comment David. That shot was taken a few years ago but there have been several round here. Sadly most of them end up dead on the roads but that one was a frequent visitor and I could get within stroking distance of it which made me wonder if it was deaf – but then they do have an amazing sense of smell! I once collected a dead albino which was eagerly received by one of the badger groups who had it stuffed and mounted for educational purposes – so not entirely wasted!

Now back to the butterflies and the last post for now regarding Small Coppers as there is so much more to post. First though, a few shots that got missed from a previous post, including the gorgeous Comma, the Large Yellow Underwing cats and one of several migrant moths seen at this site (Vestral).





Eager to monitor the progress of the local Coppers I returned to the site but my focus was on the immature stages. Eggs were easy to find - both hatched and unhatched - widely spread across the carpet of Sorrel. I had been keeping an eye on Buggy's diary and I couldn't match his total of eggs on one leaf - the maximum I could find on one leaf was 2 eggs, with clusters of about 6-8 in a small patch. There was more signs of feeding than when I last looked but at this point I still failed to find a wild larva (well done Buggy). I have reared this species twice- one second brood and one third brood. Both times the larva whilst quite small stayed on their leaf. I am assuming they have either decided to hibernate or have been predated. It will be interesting in the Spring.



The end of October found me returning to Broxhead and the Small Coppers. After the heavy rains and chilly nights I was not sure what I would find but in a very small area I saw at least 5, possibly 6 butterflies, one of which was egg-laying!! I noted at least 2 of the butterflies were in excellent condition as I watched them busying themselves at the nectar sources and sun-bathing on dead leaves. They are remarkably well camouflaged among the autumnal colours. The variance in condition assisted in identification and head count and I wondered if it were possible that some of these were the

result of a 4th brood as they looked very fresh?. There were large numbers of eggs still unhatched; I assume if these are laid too late in the season they will just perish. Several larva were also visible. At this site the butterflies seem to spend a considerable amount of time in the Oak trees. Not for the first time I watched one fly up into the branches and as I watched him settle I noticed another 2 fluttering around before also settling, just out of reach.





So, in one day at the end of October, eggs, egg-laying, larva and butterflies 🤪



Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 03-Apr-17 07:47 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, love the complimentary colours of those those Small Coppers on the bracken 😊

I have been having a few foxes visiting the garden over the winter but never had a badger.

All the best,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 04-Apr-17 02:55 PM GMT

Hi Neil

Thank you for taking the time to comment. I used to have a (cheap) camera running all night, connected to the PC. It is astonishing what goes on that you might never imagine. Here are a few 'stills' taken from the videos (sorry for the poor quality).



November notes

12 November - was uncharacteristically mild but the persistent rain put paid to any outings. Thankfully the following day was dry (albeit grey) and with a return to the recent low temperatures I had now all but given up looking for anything lep. related. Having seen reports recently of a Great Grey Shrike on Thursley Common, whilst not having quite the same status as the Red Shrike found by Buggy, it nevertheless sounded interesting enough to tempt me out. Apart from the Roller I came across accidentally a few years ago, and a few Waxwings even further back, I have never been out looking for birds, so I was a little surprised at the number of folk looking for the Shrike, mostly unsuccessfully. After about 30 mins the Shrike was spotted at the top of a dead tree - a long, long way off. With my camera on full zoom I could just about make out the bird which was only there for about 15 seconds. I only had time to click the shutter once before it was off but I got a record shot. It didn't return whilst I was there but several Dartford Warblers kept us all entertained. On the return journey I did in fact spot a dragonfly - this impressive structure which apparently was erected after the dreadful fire some years ago



Have I got the bug? Time will tell, but I have wanted to see a Snow Bunting for several years now, so the next day it was down to Southsea where a male and female were showing well for a prolonged period (getting the jargon too y'see?!). They were a delight to watch and brightened up another grey, cold, damp and drizzly day and good to bump into Mark too.

Snow Buntings - Southsea 2016



These cracking little birds come all the way from the Arctic. When in breeding condition their plumage is white with black tips (not the result of a moult but of an erosion of the feathers) which I imagine blends well with their snowy environment, but even now, whilst searching for small seeds and insects, they were remarkably well camouflaged. It was great to see the two of them together and be able to record (photographically) their behaviour, how they related to each other, found food etc. I took full advantage of their proximity to take as many photos as possible, believing I might never see them again, but surprised myself to realise I had taken over 500 shots ! Kindly birders pointed out to me other subjects of interest including a couple of Purple Sandpipers and some Rock Pipits.



Well, I have never seen an owl in the wild so next on the list it was back down the A3 to Farlington Marshes where 3 Short-eared Owls had been reported. I do not think my camera is up to this new type of photography even allowing for its good zoom and the lack of binoculars was certainly a hindrance but that would be something else to carry! I wasn't sure if I would be able to find and photograph the owls but based on my recent experience I was sure that there would be others looking for them and hoped they would be as helpful as the Southsea birders.

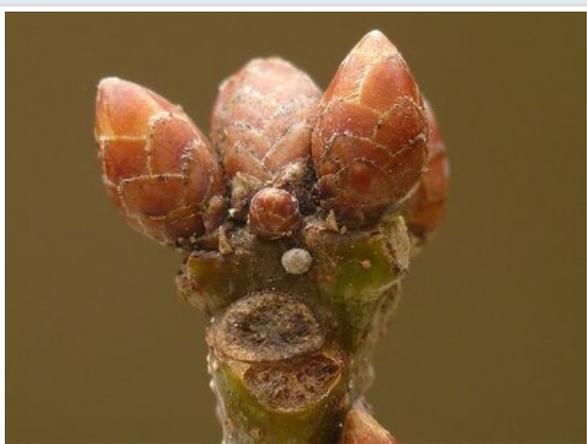
In the event I was the only person around but it really wasn't difficult to spot these magnificent birds. I was over the moon just to be able to stand and watch them. They were much more active than I had anticipated and naively I had imagined they would be found in trees whereas the ground and low bushes seemed to be favoured in between swooping and gliding low over the marshes. My camera definitely couldn't cope with the distance and speed of the birds but I managed a couple of record shots along with a nice image of a Kestrel.





Well, what a week - Great Grey Shrike, Dartford Warbler, Short-eared Owl, Purple Sandpiper, Rock Pipits to name a few. It was a great interlude between searching for larva and the few butterflies still on the wing.

The poor weather continued and with strong winds a fair few branches were blown down from my Oaks. I have a colony of Purple Hairstreaks in these trees so I thought it was worth checking as I swept them up and sure enough I found several eggs:



I've reared these before, found on twigs blown down in the Straits, and hadn't intended to do it again but in the circumstances

Re: Pauline

by Allan.W., 04-Apr-17 07:26 PM GMT

Hello Pauline,

An Albino badger, that really is something! Some years ago, one was resident on Romney Marsh (Kent), sadly never saw it myself, and it ended up like so many in Kent, i.e. under the wheels of a car!.....pity. Some brilliant Small Coppers there (in all stages), and Vestal was a nice find, as was the Extensa Copper, nice one, Regards Allan.W.

Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 04-Apr-17 08:30 PM GMT

I just couldn't help seeing a fish in this one 😊 :



Apologies for adding graffiti to your photo.

Your November report shows some super bird photos. SEOs are never easy and you've really caught their 'character'. Snow Buntings are always delightful to see. The North Norfolk coast is a great place for them and they swarm around the car-parks like sparrows, on cold Winter's days.

Like you, I've left a night camera running in our garden but usually I only get neighbours' cats 😞 I did capture an Owl once, swooping through, presumably looking for mice.

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 04-Apr-17 10:22 PM GMT

bird shots there Pauline, Purple Sandpipers are great subjects as they often roost close in 😊 The Albino Badger looked stunning 🤩

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 05-Apr-17 07:01 AM GMT

That's a highly intriguing set of black and white images from your garden, Pauline. I can see badgers and very likely a fox, but is there also a hedgehog or is it a young badger?

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-Apr-17 05:19 PM GMT

Hi Allan

Great to hear from you. Yes, Albino's are pretty special – such a shame you didn't get to see it. What I have noticed is that they always seem to be singletons and never part of a family group. Perhaps they're rejected because of their differences. Thank you for the confirmation on the Ab. and your very nice comment on my photos.

That's very irreverent Mike!!! 😊😂😂 I love it – you might have started a trend there. Now y'see, if it was me (if I could use photoshop like you) I would have turned it round so the tail was ears, the egg was the nose and drew a little mouth and whiskers – a little bunny 😊😂 Thank you for your kind comments on my bird shots but I have to say an Owl is not a bad catch on camera – I've not managed that yet.

Thank you Wurzel – hope we manage to catch up this year (perhaps if you go to Browndown?)

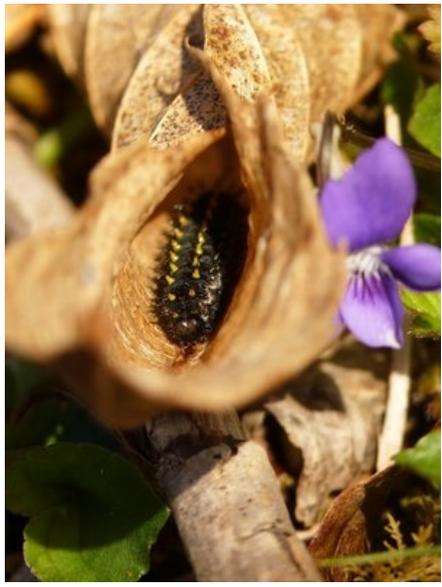
The camera ran for about 5 years David. It was a shame it was such poor quality but I couldn't afford more at the time. If you click on the image to enlarge I am sure you will be able to see that there is as many as 3 hedgehogs in one shot along with the badgers. Folk say that badgers eat hedgehogs but I have never witnessed that on my patch – probably because a supply of food is always available. There are no cubs in that shot but they are great fun to watch and the parents are really strict with them.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-Apr-17 05:37 PM GMT

D'you know what? There is so much going on at the moment that I am going to mix it up a bit and jump to a few more recent events. At the weekend I saw my first female Orange Tip and female Brimstone, plus my first Speckled Wood bringing my total to 9. I also picked up my first 3 ticks of the year whilst looking for adders in bracken!!! 🤢🤢 Really hope I'm not going to have a repeat of last year – already I'm itching all over 🤢. Today, in the space of about 30 minutes, which is all the time I had to spare, I managed a few shots of what I believe to be PBF final instar cats – one eating as though his life depended on it (guess it did) and the other tucked away in a curled up leaf. Many Peacocks and Bee Flies in the area:







Re: Pauline

by Allan.W., 05-Apr-17 05:52 PM GMT

Hello again Pauline,

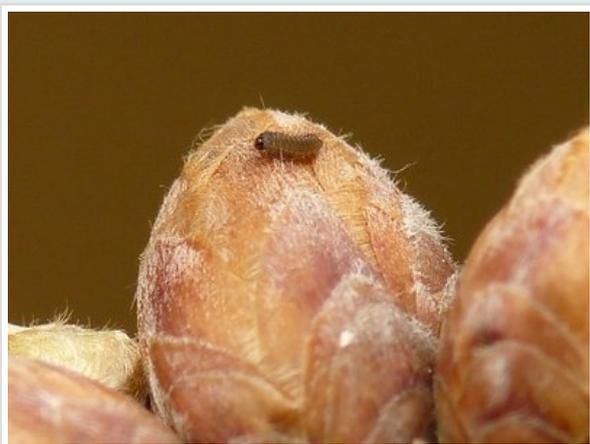
Just remembered, straight after posting to you last night, that back in March 2016, one of our local wildlife men (Bernard Boothroyd) posted a short video clip on his twitter account of a Leucistic Badger that had been visiting his garden, near Hamstreet, Kent. (29-3-16). Thought you may be interested. Regards Allan.W.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Apr-17 04:40 PM GMT

Thanks for that Allan. Haven't had a chance to look yet but I definitely will.

My Purple Hairstreak eggs have now hatched. It is very frustrating trying to get shots of them as they do so, as most often it happens over night. I assume this is a survival mechanism to avoid unwanted attention by a hungry Blue Tit. Even when it is apparent that they are about to emerge during the morning, they hang on in there until darkness descends, the whole process taking hours and hours, unlike any of the other Hairstreaks I have reared. I have attained some shots of the larva emerging from the egg in the past so I was not too concerned. The following shots show the process at various stages and a few of the larva at just a couple of hours old.







Re: Pauline

by andy brown, 07-Apr-17 08:24 AM GMT

H Pauline,

Love the PBF Cats and will hopefully get out today/weekend to try and find some myself before its to late, which it may be already, I also like the sequence of the Purple Hairstreaks and next year when I'm retired I may try to do some rearing myself anyway will let you know how I get on for the PBF's.

Cheers

Andy

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-Apr-17 02:02 PM GMT

Thanks Andy

Perhaps you'll be lucky enough to find a PBF pupa! 😞😞 'Fraid I didn't have much luck at North Stoke 😞

I visited North Stoke for the first time yesterday, tempted by reports of Large Tortoiseshell. A fair few folk had similar ideas and it was nice to see some familiar faces (we'll have to stop meeting like this Vince 😊😊). It is a pity that the LT chose to remain hidden as a couple of gents had come all the way from Nottingham on the off chance they might see one! 🤪 However, it is an attractive site and with 9 other species of butterflies active there was plenty to maintain interest including these:





Re: Pauline

by PhilBJohnson, 07-Apr-17 08:02 PM GMT

Some really nice pictures Pauline despite not seeing "The Big One" . I am hoping to see an Orange Tip in Lincolnshire this weekend as there are several around now.

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 07-Apr-17 09:39 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, you could be right about my Purple Hairstreak egg, I didn't spend too much time looking at it, just quickly taking a picture to see if it had hatched or not (I couldn't tell by naked eye 😊). Looking at yours its possible it was still chewing its way out as I took the picture. Some nice pictures from North stoke as well, you may not have seen any LT but you certainly did better with other species than me!

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-17 10:21 PM GMT

Great set of shots Pauline, especially that lovely marked Holly Blue, it seems to have a slightly unusual arrangement of spots 😊 Sorry you didn't get the LT but then you have to leave something for tomorrow 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 07-Apr-17 10:56 PM GMT

Lovely images, Pauline, especially your first one of the Green Veined White.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Apr-17 11:37 AM GMT

Thank you for your comment Phil. Given the lovely weather I feel sure you will get lucky 😊

Hi Buggy – thank you for your kind words. Tell you what tho', if you're ever near that PH egg again it would be good to take another shot so we could compare with your original shot.

Thank you too David. GVW are so common they are often overlooked but I think they are very photogenic.

Cheers Wurzel – you really are so observant, a skill I need to hone. My sighting this morning made up for lack of LT (well, took the edge off the pain 😊)

At about 10.00am this morning I saw what may have been the first Duke this season at Noar Hill. Just a quick record shot at a distance before he disappeared but by the time I left about 10.45am several others were looking. Hopefully some better shots to follow when time allows:



Re: Pauline

by trevor, 08-Apr-17 05:10 PM GMT

Great early Duke sighting. Personally I've never known March/ April to be as good as this year. You've got off to a great start.

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 08-Apr-17 06:30 PM GMT

That's a really early Duke sighting, Pauline 😊 brilliant.

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 08-Apr-17 11:41 PM GMT

That's an excellent find Pauline – and very early 🤩👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 09-Apr-17 12:02 AM GMT

I wondered how long it would be before Dukes emerged....now I know! 😊

Let's hope that, unlike in 2012 when we had equally benign conditions in late March/early April, the weather doesn't deteriorate during the latter half of April.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Apr-17 06:20 AM GMT

Thank you all for your comments. Noar Hill tends to be an early site for Dukes but even so this was earlier than last year when I was taking shots of them on the 14th April. Only one shot to post today:



Re: Pauline

by FISHIEE, 09-Apr-17 07:21 AM GMT

Stunning green hairstreak Pauline!!

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 09-Apr-17 07:44 AM GMT

I agree with Fishiee – cracking shot 🤩👍 Was that from Noar Hill as well?
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 09-Apr-17 04:07 PM GMT

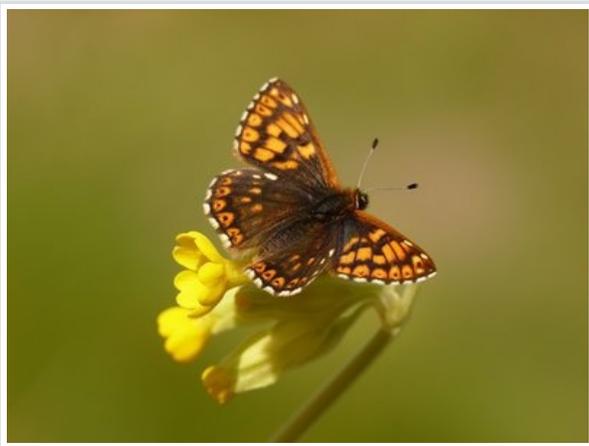
Pauline, I'm just finding Speckies and your coming up with Duke's, 😊 that's a lovely Green Hair Streak shot 📷 my green face will match it 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-Apr-17 02:44 PM GMT

Cheers John – good to hear from you. Hope you found your target at the weekend.

Thank you too Wurzel and M. Sandwiched between a doctor's appointment and another meeting I managed to squeeze in another trip to Noar Hill. Just because it is on my door step I should never take it for granted as it is a truly wonderful place that folk travel for miles to visit. I saw only a couple of Dukes today but many butterflies were active including a Holly Blue taking minerals and an egg-laying Comma and a couple of Green Hairstreaks.





Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 10-Apr-17 08:15 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Beautiful Green Hairstreak and Duke images there 😊

All the best,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by David M, 10-Apr-17 10:14 PM GMT

You're enjoying a precious little spell here, Pauline. Thanks for the images which remind us all just how early this spring season is in 2017!

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Apr-17 05:04 PM GMT

Thank you Neil - I value your opinion.

For sure David - let's hope it long continues.

I was planning a very different post today but having seen Pete's news about Colin Baker - well, it has thrown me for six. Colin was always there, since I started getting interested in butterflies. He was a true gentleman with a massive amount of knowledge and because he was local we bumped into each other often. He had eagle eyes and was always ready to share his findings. He will be a great miss. So, just a couple of shots of a PH cat - the first I have seen of them since the eggs hatched:



Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 12-Apr-17 06:33 PM GMT

More lovely Dukes Pauline 🥰🌱 I hope they're doing okay now the weather is breaking, i went for a walk this afternoon and the wind made it cold enough for a coat 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Apr-17 08:20 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel. Your comment cheered me as my day didn't get any better. Looked out of the window to see one of the local Sparrowhawks had brought down one of my favourite Doves, which was already beyond help. Nature can certainly be cruel:





Re: Pauline

by trevor, 12-Apr-17 09:23 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

A couple of years ago I found a pile of feathers in the garden, when I went to investigate I disturbed an injured Sparrow Hawk. The Cat had caught the Hawk which had caught the pigeon !. The bedraggled Hawk did manage to fly off. That's nature I suppose .

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by David M, 12-Apr-17 09:38 PM GMT

That's pretty gruesome, Pauline, and I'm glad I saw it after rather than before my tea!

Sparrowhawks are beautiful birds, but they are ruthless killers, for sure.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Apr-17 08:41 AM GMT

Thanks for your comment Trevor. You are absolutely right of course and in nature nothing is wasted. Last night one of the badgers had the remains as part of his supper and this morning the Starlings and Blackbirds are hoovering up the feathers for soft warm nests:



It distresses me that they take so long to actually kill their prey David – trouble is if you don't get there fast the bird dies of shock rather than injury. It is hard when it is a bird you know and which related to you 😞

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Apr-17 09:15 AM GMT

I am determined to catch up so I am trying to race through those dormant winter months. December and most of January were miserable months given the rabbit losses mentioned previously and subsequent efforts to find a companion for my little buck Magnet (below)



The companion came in the form of Hope, a sweet little doe:



With both rabbits settled it was time to turn my attention back to butterflies. It felt long overdue and so at the end of January, Hazel and myself set off for Wisley. It was a smashing few hours in great company. The weather outside was glorious too and I saw my first 2 British butterflies, a Brimstone and a Small Tortoiseshell. Below are some of the shots from that day which include a selection of eggs and larva, although I have no idea what they are. I was surprised that I could find only very small larva given that eggs were plentiful (even watched some being laid on the fruit and food stations). The mystery was solved when I engaged a 'keeper' in conversation and he explained that the larva are collected up every couple of weeks and returned from

whence they came. The butterfly names will be added at a later date when I have had time to look them up from last year.









Re: Pauline

by MrSp0ck, 13-Apr-17 12:53 PM GMT

The Photos from Wisley are, top to bottom

Great Egg Fly - *H. bolina*

Morpho

Owl Butterfly eggs - *Caligo* sp.

Owl Butterfly eggs - *Caligo* Sp. forming up.

Julia - *D. Julia* male.

Morpho

Papilio eggs probably *P. lowii*

Morpho

Small Postman - *H. erato*

Greta oto

Greta oto - larva on *Cestrum*

Owl Butterfly larva mid instars

Heliconius Doris on *Pentas*

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Apr-17 06:31 AM GMT

Thank you so much for that Martin – it will save me quite a bit of time 😊

On my travels yesterday I found 2 things of interest but know not what either of them are. The first is this larva – not even sure if it is a butterfly or moth?



The other was this rare fungus on Noar Hill, pointed out to me by a Director of Environmental Studies who has written a paper on it which he has promised to email to me. Apparently, the orange parts only appear for 3 days; consequently very few photos of it exist. Wish mine was a bit better. I would return for a second attempt except it is unlikely to be there now – just the swollen branch left behind:



Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 14-Apr-17 10:34 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, we get Sparrow Hawks a lot in our garden because my Husband feeds the Birds but to loose one of your Doves is very sad. Nature is very cruel but take comfort in the fact the other animals have benefited from your loss.

That Fungus is really interesting I hope you get the e-mail from the man, let us know . Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Apr-17 04:12 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie - appreciate that. I will certainly keep you informed if I learn anything else about this rare fungus on the Junipers at Noar Hill as I don't yet know whether it is a threat to the trees or the insects. I am hoping not.

I only had one other significant outing in late January and that was to see the Waxwings which had arrived locally:





Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 14-Apr-17 04:31 PM GMT

How well groomed your local Waxwings look – those crests are very splendid. Your photos have brought out all the key features very well, including those red sealing-wax tips 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Apr-17 05:44 PM GMT

Thanks Mike. I'm trying to improve my bird photography but to be honest, it's a bit hit and miss 😊 Nevertheless, I was quite pleased with these as it is only the second time I have seen Waxwings, so too good an opportunity to miss.

Now, back to the present – at least temporarily. Yesterday dawned grey and cold so I was surprised to see a Holly Blue fly across the garden at 8.30am and land on a bush:



With plans for a final visit to North Stoke the forecast was disappointing but we decided to press on, with precious few expectations of seeing anything at all. When we arrived there was no-one to be seen other than a single solitary dog walker but undeterred we began to scan foliage. The Red Admiral larva discovered by Vince earlier had disappeared, their leaves broken and black, so hopefully they had pupated but a GVW accidentally disturbed was unsurprisingly co-operative given the low temperatures:



Peacocks seemed to be the first to wake up and several of these were spotted early on together with a single Red Admiral which was cruising around and settled quite some distance away and fairly high up. However, it is only one of very few I have seen this season so I could not resist a shot:

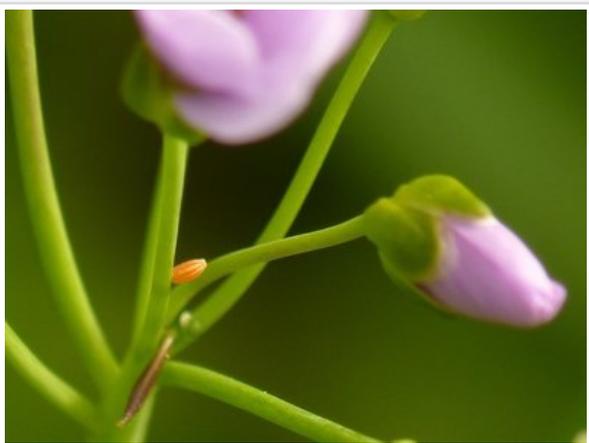


By now it was warming up nicely to the point where we both had to strip off our top layers. Orange Tips and GVW were now plentiful and it was a delight to see and photograph a mating pair which was a first for me:





By now the wind had picked up considerably so attention turned to looking for OT eggs. Surprisingly, there did not seem to be many on the Cuckoo Flower but both orange and newly laid white eggs were eventually found:





Several Holly Blues patrolled the area intent on a mission which didn't include stopping for a photo shoot but at the end of the track several Speckled Wood were more amenable, all in nice condition, but however hard I try, my shots do not show it them as well as Neil's:



As lunchtime approached it was time to make tracks but just before we left a couple of Small Coppers were spotted, one particularly brightly coloured. Wurzel and others with sharp eyes will notice something sinister lurking in the background but I can assure viewers that no butterflies were harmed during the taking of these photos 😊





The only sign of a Tortoiseshell we saw was a couple of very worn Small varieties:



Although we saw a total of 10 species which exceeded my expectations, the Brimstone was noticeable by its absence, not a single one having been seen in 2-3 hours.

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 15-Apr-17 10:31 PM GMT

Undoubtedly the same Coppers Vince and I were watching on Tuesday, I recognise that piece of wood that one is perched on 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-17 08:21 AM GMT

Cracking Small Copper Pauline, I'm glad it evaded predation 😊 Those Waxwings from a couple of posts back were also mighty fine 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 16-Apr-17 08:49 AM GMT

A nice selection of spring species there, Pauline, but for once butterflies are eclipsed by those glorious waxwing images. What a stunning bird!

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 16-Apr-17 10:46 AM GMT

I love that Holly Blue photo Pauline it's so cute and unusual, Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 16-Apr-17 07:04 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Some more great images in your recent posts. I like the Waxwings, never actually seen these myself, but for me the stand out photo is that Holly Blue on

the red berry...very unusual shot 😊

Oh yes, thanks for the comment on my Speckled Wood photos but I do get a lot of practice with these 😊

All the best,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-Apr-17 06:59 AM GMT

Morning Buggy, I am amazed that you can recognise not just the butterflies but also a piece of wood 😊😊 I was only able to locate the RA larval tent because I was with Vince when he found the first one and I quickly spotted another 2 close by. As it was such an exciting find I enclose a shot which actually seems quite boring unless you knew the significance – that it contained a 5th instar larva indicating that this species can overwinter as larva as well as adult:



Hi Wurzel – there were actually 2 spiders on that bit of wood and they seemed more interested in each other than the butterfly which was quick off the mark each time a spider approached.

Thank you David – they are truly spectacular aren't they. They turned up at a local shopping mall of all places and were only yards from the shop fronts as shoppers went to and fro. I had to make 2 trips as by the time I got there on the first visit it was tipping down with rain. Every cloud has a silver lining I took shelter in a nearby shop and came home with a gorgeous pair of boots!! 😊

Thank you Goldie. I'm afraid I had to move that Holly Blue to a safer location (away from the hens) so I put him in a quiet sheltered corner on some apple blossom. When I checked later in the day he had flown off 😊

Thank you for your generous comment Neil. If you ever get the chance to see Waxwings just go for it as they are amazing.

More recently I persuaded Andy that it would be a good idea to take some shots of Purple Hairstreak eggs at Browndown. I had 'my' PH eggs from the branches blown from my Oaks (pictured earlier) but the only shots I had were from scavenged twigs rather than whilst they were still on the tree. Given the large number of butterflies I had seen there in the summer and the egg-laying taking place I had imagined this would be an easy task but that was far from the case. We also found a few empty eggs indicating that they had already started to hatch. In the end, we found a total of 4 eggs, the 'score' being 3-1 but I shall not be revealing which way round that was 😊 The images below might seem familiar being similar to those in Andy's diary but as is usual the quality of his shots are superior.





Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-Apr-17 07:03 AM GMT

Purple Hairstreak at exactly 3 weeks old looking remarkably like one of the brackets on the Oak:



Re: Pauline

by David M, 18-Apr-17 11:49 AM GMT

I had some difficulty locating that larva, Pauline. It's superb camouflage for sure!

Re: Pauline

by Art Frames, 18-Apr-17 05:12 PM GMT

Just catching up Pauline. A lovely set of pictures. I saw Waxwings for the first time this year and had some great times taking pictures but yours are so nice because of the sense of calmness. I suppose the frantic feeding is done and they will be returning homewards. Such a beautiful creature.

The purple hairstreak larva is wonderful and I'm glad you shared it as it would have escaped my increasingly poor eyesight. Thank you. Peter

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-Apr-17 01:46 PM GMT

You probably know by now David that camouflage like that is one of the things that fascinates me. Thank you for your comment.

I'm really pleased you like some of my shots Peter. Your comment is much appreciated.

In coolish, changeable conditions this morning I was only able to locate 4 Dukes at Noar Hill - far short of the 17 reported yesterday along with several mating pairs! Perhaps more showed themselves after I left. I hope you like my 'stained glass' shot Wurzel which was taken just for you and I dread to think how many ticks might be on me now 😊😊



I also came across this little moth which I don't think I have ever seen in this location:



The best sighting of the day however was when I returned home. The Green Hairstreaks which I reared last year have begun to emerge – and I feel like doing cartwheels 😄😄😄. I am so used to getting things through early I had convinced myself they had all died! 😞



Re: Pauline

by Allan.W., 19-Apr-17 05:43 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Reckon your moth is "Small purple barred" phytometra viridaria, and flying quite early ! regards Allan.W.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 19-Apr-17 07:06 PM GMT

Lovely shots pauline I hope the Dukes will still be there when I come South Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Apr-17 06:26 PM GMT

Thanks for that Allen – I was going to look it up but you've saved me the bother 😊😊

Thank you Goldie – I am sure they will be.

The weather this morning didn't look great for going out so I decided to paint a little bistro table and 2 chairs which live by the back door. They were white (old paint), black (rust) and green (mould) so I decided to paint them pink! Although it was early on (about 7.00am) I was keeping half an eye on the Green Hairstreak pupa when possible but with the chilly temperatures I thought any emergence was unlikely. About 9.00am I saw a movement out of the corner of my eye. You could have knocked me down with a feather when I realised one had emerged.



As I grabbed my camera and started taking shots I wondered why he was just sitting on the moss and had not climbed up the branch I had left for him. That was when I realised another had already emerged and was on the branch 🤔 . Well, I didn't know where to point the camera and tried to alternate between the two.





Looking at the youngest of the two it seemed that he was taking a great deal of time to inflate his wings in comparison with the other one:





After several minutes I thought that perhaps I should grab another twig and place it beside him but just as I picked one up his wings started to inflate:



The depth of field which I have had so much trouble with in the past, combined with a sudden breeze which came from nowhere did nothing to help my subsequent shots so just the one to post although it was fascinating to watch:



.... and the final result for both individuals:



And the painting well, that got done too 😊



Re: Pauline

by millerd, 20-Apr-17 08:23 PM GMT

What lovely creatures those fresh Green Hairstreaks are, Pauline. The caramel wing borders around the leaf green are a delightfully subtle contrast. A wonderful sequence of shots. 😊👍

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 20-Apr-17 08:52 PM GMT

Lovely Hair Streaks Pauline, you've certainly got the garden for Butterflies and the know how , I think the Hair Streaks or so cute and you've captured that 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Apr-17 01:57 PM GMT

They're gorgeous aren't they Dave. Thank you for the compliment. I missed the initial emergence but still have a few chances!

Thank you too Goldie – my favourite group.

After a long, a very long, dental appointment this morning I didn't expect to feel like doing much. However, after an hour or so, I decided that some fresh air was exactly what I needed, and despite the cool cloudy conditions, I pulled on a thick jumper with a hood and set off for a walk around Noar Hill. I hoped I wouldn't meet anyone that I would need to talk to as half my face was still paralysed and I felt a little self-conscious. Unsurprisingly there weren't many butterflies (or people) around so I headed for one of my favourite Duke hot spots. Just as I approached a little bit of sun appeared and temperatures warmed up so I was able to stand and watch 4 Dukes, one of which was clearly a fresh female. As I watched she approached one of the males who immediately pursued her. The rest is history 😊



Re: Pauline

by David M, 21-Apr-17 05:03 PM GMT

Impressive sequence, Pauline. You can't see a fresher specimen than that. It's absolutely mint!

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 21-Apr-17 07:30 PM GMT

Cracking emergence sequence Pauline, it must be nice to get some shots of the fore wings which not a lot of people get to see 😊 You stained glass Duke was simply stunning 🍷🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Apr-17 02:17 PM GMT

So glad you liked my stained glass effort Wurzel – made all the ticks worthwhile 😊😊 I'm still amazed at that Green Hairstreak sequence myself 😊 Just wish I'd managed to get the emergence shot – but there's still time.

Thank you so much David. Now here's the thing – 2 weeks ago those pupa 'coloured up' and in certain light became the most amazing green, just like a shimmering green velvet; truly gorgeous, but try as I might I could not capture it and ended up with many shots like this:



They were also moving, indicating that they were very much alive, despite the fact that I almost drowned them over the winter when the container they were in flooded and I found them floating the next day 😊 (won't make that mistake again!). Anyway, that day, confident that they were about to emerge, I watched them for 12 hours 😊. The next day I watched them for only 6 hours 😊 Then it all went quiet 😊 The pupa stopped moving, much of the green disappeared and a few of them started to look a little black and shrivelled. That's when I began to think I'd killed them and I agonised about what I might have done wrong – perhaps they had been kept in too much shade, perhaps they had been exposed to too much sun..... and so it went on. This period coincided with a spell of chilly weather and I recalled something that MO had told me some years ago. We were in the Straits and following a period of prolonged poor weather there were few PE's around. Matthew suggested that if the weather was poor then butterflies which were about to emerge could 'hang on' until the weather improved – but only for a certain time after which they would perish in the pupa. I wondered if this was the case with the Green Hairstreaks and so I considered bringing them into the warmth with a view to getting them to emerge. They could then be held until the weather improved. In the event, that wasn't necessary but it did take me by surprise when 4 emerged within 2 hours. Six butterflies have now been released on Noar Hill and today the release was shared with Maurice, Roger, Hazel and Nick – great to see you all again and a few shots from this morning, once the butterflies were free and before they flew off:







I saw my first Dingy Skippers of the year but having seen the one just posted by Brex – well, all I can say is there is no comparison 😊 (Note to self: TRY HARDER!)



Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 23-Apr-17 07:27 PM GMT

Great Greenstreaks Pauline 😊 Dingies can be right pains – they're just the wrong size, they need to be bigger to make them easier to photograph 😊😊

Have a goodun
Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 23-Apr-17 10:37 PM GMT

Nice to see you got an early audience with Dingy Skipper, Pauline. I expect I'm at least a week away from doing likewise.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 24-Apr-17 03:30 PM GMT

It's great to see Hair Streaks on flowers Pauline, unusual too, great shots. Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Apr-17 04:25 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel – not only do they need to be bigger but they need to land higher up! Their saving grace is that each one has slightly different markings making each one unique.

Ah, but you got a Grizzlie David and if the forecast is right for once it might be a while before I do 😊🇬🇧

Thank you Goldie – not doing so bad yourself with the lovely Speckled Wood shots.

The other night I put the moth trap out for the first time since last year. TBH I was a bit disappointed with my 'haul' of a couple of dozen moths, half of which were made up of Brindled Beauties:



Several Great Prominent, a Nut-tree Tussock, Bright-line Brown-eye and a couple of Clouded Drab made up most of the remainder (apologies if I have remembered any of these wrongly Maurice)



Great Prominent



Nut-tree Tussock



B-l B-e?

Oh yeah, and this little Hebrew Character that needed a little help getting more comfortable:



Re: Pauline

by bailey1409, 24-Apr-17 06:20 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

The last moth, one we didn't see, looks like a Scarce Prominent moth.

Cheers

Maurice

Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 24-Apr-17 07:20 PM GMT

Amazing pics of the GH drying their wings and on Bluebells as well! Now, you are completely losing me with all those moths 😊

Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 24-Apr-17 07:37 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Superb sequences of the Green Hairstreaks...great stuff 😊

Pauline wrote:

...The other night I put the moth trap out for the first time since last year. TBH I was a bit disappointed with my 'haul' of a couple of dozen moths, half of which were made up of Brindled Beauties...

I would have been very happy with your haul of moths, things have been very slow here lately with cold breezy nights. I haven't seen a Brindled Beauty yet this year and am not likely to see a Great Prominent in my garden, they are very local here in Warwickshire.

I believe Maurice is correct with his ID of Scarce Prominent although this is a species not found in Warwickshire and I have never seen one in the flesh.

All the best,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-Apr-17 04:17 PM GMT

😊😊 Good job there's folk keeping me on the right track 😊 Thank you M.

Thank you Mike. I think those shots of the GH just emerged are pretty special too –everything seems to be happening at once now!

I appreciate your comment on the GH Neil and confirmation of ID. I guess because there are so many varieties of moths flying right now I just assumed there would be more – and more variety. Never satisfied eh?! 😊😊

It has been a wee while since I found the PBF cats looking ready to pupate so I figured it was about time for them to emerge at that site. Today was perfect conditions for taking shots of this butterfly – a total of 4 seen:





Showing the pearls very nicely



.... and last but not least, this lovely little moth, Adela something or other, I believe:



Re: Pauline

by trevor, 25-Apr-17 06:18 PM GMT

Good to see that you saw some Pearls as well today.

We must be the only two people daft enough to go out in that biting wind looking for Butterflies. I'm not at all expert when it comes to Moths, but I think yours is a Green Longhorn.

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 25-Apr-17 08:01 PM GMT

Adela reaumurella Pauline 😊, and no Trevor, I was out as well chasing butterflies 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Apr-17 01:13 PM GMT

You've known me long enough now Trevor to know the weather rarely keeps me in 😊 Glad we all got lucky – some nice shots too 😊

Cheers Buggy – couldn't quite remember the last bit 😊

No car today so report from a bit closer to home. I've reared Comma in the past but not entirely successfully as one was parasitised. In addition, the larva have been fairly well developed when they came into my care but I was keen to see this species emerge from the egg. Sadly, that was not to be – despite careful watching this appears to be another species that prefers the cover of darkness before hatching. Below, the egg developing at various stages and the larva just a couple of hours old (makes you wonder how they ever survive!).





The differences in the larva between various instars appear to be quite marked. Below is 1st, 2nd and 3rd instar, including skin which has just been shed:



(1st instar)





(2nd instar)



(Having just shed skin)



(3rd instar)

Re: Pauline

by David M, 26-Apr-17 05:30 PM GMT

Lovely sequence, Pauline. Like you, I often wonder how the newly hatched larvae survive. They're barely ant-sized and very vulnerable. Nice to see the variances between the instars. I look forward to seeing images of the pupa, which is very attractive in this species.

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 26-Apr-17 08:26 PM GMT

Smashing sequence, Pauline! 😊 I've only ever encountered newly laid eggs and mature caterpillars, so it's great to see them in between. I had no idea the big white splodge on a full-grown larva starts out as a series of stripes when it's younger. I do know they are hard to find under the leaves and more than once I've inadvertently brought one home with the food for growing Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells.

You have tremendous patience, something I envy you. 🍵 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 27-Apr-17 11:07 AM GMT

Great sequence Pauline , I've seen Comma Caterpillars at HLB but when I went back with my lens changed ready for shots they'd disappeared, the shots I took with my other lens won't too good. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 27-Apr-17 06:34 PM GMT

Interesting sequence Pauline, great to see the scale of the instars 😊 I suppose the level of 'threat' of predation remains the same, it's just the (scale of the) predators themselves that change 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 27-Apr-17 08:09 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, lovely shots of the Green Hairstreak emergence sequence, I understand just how difficult it is to get the actual moment of emergence on camera! It always seems to happen when you have a quick break from watching 😊😊

The shot of the Green Hairstreak on the Bluebell during the Noar Hill release is simply stunning as are the Pearls that you photographed recently 😊

I agree with the comments already made regarding the shots of the Comma Cats in their various instars, a fascinating sequence 😊

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Apr-17 04:03 PM GMT

I really hope I don't disappoint you David. I'll do my very best to ensure a successful conclusion.

Thank you for your lovely comment Dave, but 'patience'???? I'm not sure it's that – more a real desire to see these amazing transformations with my own eyes and some determination to give myself the best chance..... but it can take up a great deal of time and at times it can be worse than watching paint dry!!! 😊

Thank you too Goldie – that was a pity but I am sure there will be other opportunities.

I am sure you are absolutely right Wurzel. It amazes me that any of them make it through to adults and the more I learn the more questions I have.

Thank you so much for your very generous comments Mike. I am still hoping that the other GH will emerge safely and if that is the case you and Cath will be very welcome to join me on NH for their release, should you so wish 😊.

I think this recent spell of freezing weather has taken its toll as the last few days there has been little butterfly activity round here and I have had to resort to taking photos of moths – micro moths!!!! 😊 I know!!!!!! 😊 I had to look this one up but I am fairly confident it is Ancylis Badiana:



I stopped to take shots of a few larva and I have tried to identify them but I am not at all confident. The first I think is Mottled Umber. I checked out the moth and what a strange little creature the wingless female is:



I am even less sure of this one – just guessing at Scalloped Hazel as there are so many that look similar:



There were a lot of bugs about including male and female Scorpion fly, what I believe were Grasshopper nymphs and these couple below which although small and colourful looked quite predatory. No idea what they are:



Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-Apr-17 03:19 PM GMT

The day started ordinarily enough – quite chilly as I attended to the outside critters, so I was a bit surprised when a GVW fluttered weakly across the garden and landed on the pear tree. As the sun emerged any increase in temperature was hardly discernible but the butterfly took advantage, nectaring from any source he could find in his vicinity. A few snapshots:





Anyway, that got me thinking that last year on 21 April I was taking shots of Wood Whites. I had assumed that the recent cold snap (I mean freezing nights and bitterly cold days) had set them back a bit but I decided to take a chance and go check them out. When I arrived there were a few butterflies on the wing - half a dozen Brimstones, including one female (the most I have seen for a while) and a few Peacocks, including this one which seems to confirm that the defence mechanism of the 'eyes' does actually work:



I saw Speckled Wood, Small White, Green veined White but no Wood White. Whilst I was looking I came across a couple of WA cats. I was probably more excited about this than it warranted but after the dreadful season they had last year I do hope this is an indication they are bouncing back:



As I searched I had a couple of false alerts – a couple of white moths:



Quite a few of those Scorpion Flies – not sure if there are more of them or whether I am just noticing them more:



and an odd little bug with an orange cap:



Just as I'd decided to call it a day, right by the entrance where I'd left my car, I came across 3 Wood Whites – perfect ending 😊



Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 30-Apr-17 06:47 PM GMT

What beautiful Wood White portraits, Pauline. You know how to get the best from your 'old' FZ38 😊

Mike

Re: Pauline

by trevor, 30-Apr-17 07:41 PM GMT

Well done with the Wood Whites, particularly like the Primrose in use as a perch. Hopefully numbers will increase as time goes on.

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 30-Apr-17 10:17 PM GMT

Great to see the Wood Whites out, Pauline. They do pose beautifully on the flower heads. 😊 I must pay them a visit soon. Nice White Admiral

caterpillars too – I can never find them, however hard I llok.

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-May-17 03:16 PM GMT

I think I just got lucky Mike and I don't know what I'll do when this camera packs up as I can't take photos with anything else!! 😊

Cheers Trevor. Perhaps I'll see you there as I will be back at some point. I have never seen a Wood White settle on Primrose before, but I swear I didn't set it up even tho it would have been easy due to the temperature – just in case anyone is interested.

Thank you too Dave – they are a bit later than last year but good to see them. I was very excited to find the WA cats – last year I failed to find any at 3 sites!!!!

I am hoping the service provider has sorted all problems now but just in case I'll keep this one short.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-May-17 03:40 PM GMT

Well, all seems to be in working order so I'll risk another post. A cool, damp start to the grey day provided the opportunity to look for roosting butterflies or immatures (as the garden centres were not yet open 😊) so I headed out for Oxenbourne, a good site for Grizzlies and Dingies. I was also keen to take a quick look at the area I saw the DGF egg-laying last year. There was evidence of feeding damage and on nearby Sorrel signs of Small Copper feeding too but no larva to be seen. I had a quick walk around areas where I had found roosting butterflies in the past but with the gathering storm clouds it was looking unlikely I would find anything. Just as I was about to leave I stumbled across 2 very fresh looking Grizzled Skippers. They weren't on the seed heads I had been examining and were sitting close, face to face.



Closer inspection revealed one male and one female (I think!), based on their relative size and shape of abdomen:



Female?



Male?

I am assuming that perhaps this couple mated yesterday during one of the sunny interludes and were caught out when the clouds quickly moved in and temperatures dropped. It was tempting to wait for the sky to brighten for an open wing shot but the heavens suddenly opened sending me scurrying for the car and the garden centre 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-May-17 06:16 AM GMT

Until I read Buggy's diary this morning I felt fairly confident that the moth I saw at Chiddingfold was a Small White Wave. I knew it wasn't a Common White Wave as I took a photo of both of them. Now I'm confused. Looking at the description of the Cream Wave it would seem that the background colour is very variable. The one I saw was very white but could it have been a Cream Wave? The sizes also seem to overlap and the larval food plants were all present. How can I tell the difference?

All sorts of domestic problems meant another day in so it was time to catch up with the immatures. I hope folk are able to see the fairly well developed Purple Hairstreak larva in the following shot as it is extremely well camouflaged. I would have highlighted it with Photoshop if I could have remembered how to! 😊😊 It looks like a large bracket on the right hand side just above the bottom few leaves.



This was the first egg to hatch but given that all the eggs hatched within a few days and have since been kept in identical conditions, its rapid development has been a surprise. The second largest larva can be seen below:



Likewise, the Green Hairstreaks which were reared last year, pupated within days of each other. However, the timespan between the first emergence and

the last is getting longer and longer, no doubt linked to the weather. One of the remaining pupa taken yesterday, very much alive:



... and just to finish – a couple of the Green Hairstreak shots I think I omitted from earlier posts:



Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 03-May-17 08:25 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

some more beautiful images lately, difficult to pick out which I like best, they all have something that I like about them 😊

I would agree that your moth from Chiddingfold is a Small White Wave, I had a few of these in my garden trap last year and that was my immediate thought when I saw your photo. I have also looked in a couple of my books and the pattern of the markings/wavy lines fit that best. The Cream Wave is also somewhat larger in it's normal forms.

All the best,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 03-May-17 08:34 PM GMT

Fantastic Wood Whites from a while back Pauline...I'm tempted to make the trip for them but then I've still got to find Dukes, and the Pearls are flying, and I could do with a few more Dingies...it's all too much 😊 Nothing for weeks and then 'Bam' 😊 Brill!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 03-May-17 09:00 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Pauline, the Wood White's are lovely they remind me of my first sighting of them last year. See you soon Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by essexbuzzard, 03-May-17 09:03 PM GMT

Those green hairstreak pictures are among the finest I have seen. Your white admiral caterpillars were a cracking find, too. And beautifully captured by you and your camera.

Re: Pauline

by Gary.N, 04-May-17 08:54 PM GMT

You do take some fantastic photo Pauline. I love your Wood White, Green Hairstreak and Grizzled skipper Shots. 😊
Gary

Re: Pauline

by David M, 05-May-17 12:26 PM GMT

essexbuzzard wrote:

Those green hairstreak pictures are among the finest I have seen...

Yes. You've got the lighting just right to generate that beautiful emerald sheen.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 05-May-17 05:29 PM GMT

Thank you for confirmation of moth ID Neil – kind of you to take the trouble 😊

Neil Freeman wrote:

some more beautiful images lately, difficult to pick out which I like best, they all have something that I like about them 😊

Neil, I could say exactly the same thing to you but thank you so much 😊

Cheers Wurzel – it's great isn't it, having so much choice 😊 Head for the Pearls would be my advice – after all, Wood Whites have a second brood and Dukes may have a second brood too; in fact anything could happen in these crazy times 😊😊

That was a great day, wasn't it Goldie? Fingers crossed for this year 😊

Wow! Mark, your comment has just blown me away – thank you. Just wish I could take landscapes and bird images as good as yours 🍀

Great to hear from you Gary and I really appreciate the compliment – thank you.

Thank you David. Not quite sure how I managed it – but I do seem to get a lot of practice, sometimes in challenging conditions. Today was one of those times. At last I had the chance to nip up to Broxhead to check out what was happening there with the Small Coppers. Trouble was the gale. It is still bending the trees almost double as I type and it was whipping my hair around, tying it in knots and obscuring my vision 😊😊 As I arrived I saw Ern's car. He clearly had the same idea as me and as he discovered the 30+ butterflies here late in the Autumn I hoped he was having some success. I quickly caught up with him and was disappointed that he had only seen 2 Small Coppers. In the short time we were there I spotted 4, possibly 5, different Coppers – a long way short of the Autumn total. However, for the most part they looked newly emerged and as this is a late site I am hopeful there is more to come yet. As might be expected, the butterflies preferred to stay low, out of the worst of the weather, so a few snapshots below:



Note damaged antennae



Re: Pauline

by David M, 05-May-17 10:36 PM GMT

Nice to see Small Coppers are alive and well elsewhere in the UK!! This is the most notable absentee from my 2017 list so far this year, and I am becoming increasingly concerned for them round my way.

If only I had a 'Dungeness' type site to visit.

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 05-May-17 10:52 PM GMT

Yes, very nice Coppers, Pauline. 😊 I particularly like the first underside shot (with the wonky antenna). And like David, I've yet to see one local to me or indeed anywhere else. 😞

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-May-17 11:48 AM GMT

Glad to see you found some David but those Wall Brown images, a couple in particular, are really special 🍷

Thank you too Dave – I'll keep my fingers crossed for you 😊

I've spent an insane amount of time recently watching Green Hairstreak pupa and I've come to the conclusion that it is just not possible to determine when the emergence of the butterfly is imminent. It is irrelevant if the pupa moves. When it is possible to see a 'flutter' of the wing beneath the casing, when the whole body jerks or twitches, when the colour of the butterfly is visible, when the shape changes and certain parts become more defined – don't be fooled. None of these are reliable indicators and emergence can still be a couple of weeks off. Even taking into account weather conditions and temperature this has got to be one of the most difficult butterflies to predict. If you add to that the fact that I also have a multitude of other jobs that HAVE to be done, trying to see and capture the actual emergence on camera becomes almost impossible. Take yesterday for example – I was cleaning out the rabbits whilst trying to watch the pupa. We're not talking little rabbit hutch here. Oh no! They live in a 12' kennel, attached to a 12' run attached to an 8' shed so it is not possible to stay in one spot. Nevertheless, I kept glancing at the pupa, and yes, I missed the actual emergence AGAIN by about 10 seconds!!!! 😞😞 The first thing I noticed was that the position of the pupa had changed and then I saw this little creature sitting on the moss:





(see pupal case in the background)



This little lady seemed quite content to sit on the moss whilst her wings inflated, ignoring the twig which was available - I had checked that there definitely wasn't another butterfly already on it 😊 As I watched, her hind wings inflated before her fore wings which I seem to recall was not the case with the previous ones. Furthermore, the rear wings seemed to have a bit of a kink in them. It is at this point that I usually have a little panic, imagining that the butterfly is going to be deformed. Not sure why cos it has always been alright in the past. Anyway, in the circumstances I thought that getting the butterfly up a twig might help so I moved the twig right in front of her:







I was still battling with the wind and despite the fact that the butterfly was low down in a sheltered position the wings were being buffeted about somewhat:





Eventually I was able to place her in the holding cage prior to release:



Re: Pauline

by andy brown, 07-May-17 11:55 AM GMT

Not much else I can say Pauline except Quality!

Nice Job

Andy

Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 07-May-17 12:30 PM GMT

Stunning fresh Green Hairstreak, stunning photo, Pauline 😊

Mike

Re: Pauline

by kevlng, 07-May-17 04:19 PM GMT

Pauline,

That is a lovely sequence of GH photos. The last shot in particular.

Regards Kev

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 07-May-17 08:09 PM GMT

amazing pictures Pauline 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 07-May-17 10:52 PM GMT

Stunning sequence Pauline 🤩🍴
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-May-17 06:14 AM GMT

Morning Guys – thank you for your very generous comments but y'know, it has been a real privilege to witness these 'mini miracles' and well worth the wait (just wish it wasn't over so fast). I have now been lucky enough to rear all the British Hairstreaks but not frequently enough, and not in sufficient numbers, to know whether the behaviour I have noted is typical. However, the Green Hairstreaks seem quite different from the other British Hairstreaks – the best way I can describe it is a 'laid back' approach. I have watched the butterflies using a variety of different plants on which to egg-lay – Gorse, Broom, Bird's Foot Trefoil and a couple of others whose names escape me right now. The larva are quite unfussy and will eat any or all of these plants, seemingly unconcerned if they are transferred onto a different food source, unlike some species I have reared. They have not been problematic to rear (perhaps I'm just getting better at it 😊) although that didn't stop me from worrying about them at times! 😊 Very noticeable was the difference on emergence. Other Hairstreaks have scurried across to their twigs in a frantic rush, looking a bit like a demented spider. The Green Hairstreaks emerged and just sat looking cute, waiting for their wings to inflate – unless the twig was very close by (lazy or what!!! 😊). Perhaps the differences are linked to the fact that these Hairstreaks are the only British Hairstreaks to over winter as a pupa, which, together with their catholic approach to larval food plants must surely aid their survival. Anyway, just because I think the species is amazing, a few more pre release shots as the butterfly takes nectar and 'sun bathes' in the style of the other Hairstreaks – so some similarities too.



(note the meconium on the twig)





(soaking up the precious sun's rays 😊)

I now have only one chance left this year to get that actual 'emergence' shot but with an incredibly busy week ahead that is now looking less and less likely. Won't stop me from trying tho! 😊

Re: Pauline

by peterc, 08-May-17 08:51 AM GMT

Some fantastic images, Pauline. Patience is paying off 😊

I suspect some foodplants are more successful than others in terms of fecundity. As you probably know, according to Thomas and Lewington's book, Dyer's Greenweed *Genista tinctoria* is the preferred choice where it grows for females to lay eggs.

ATB

Peter

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-May-17 10:40 AM GMT

I must have an old copy of that book Peter – perhaps it has now been updated as I seem to recall it stating that the female GH has a preference for tender shoots when egg-laying as opposed to any particular plant. Matthew Oates has been more specific regarding their food plant requirements stating that 'Dyer's Greenweed is used *occasionally*' but then that relates specifically to Hampshire. Last year was a particularly good one for GH in my neck of the woods and I watched many females egg-laying on Dogwood which seemed to be a clear favourite at that time, closely followed by Bird's Foot Trefoil. Of course it is important to be aware of what the experts have recorded and concluded (Frowhawk cites an example of a single GH living in captivity for 39 days which seems an awfully long time to me?) but I think that personal experience and observation and questioning are important too. New things are being discovered all the time which is apparent from a perusal of this site. In recent years I have found that butterfly behaviour can vary greatly depending on location. As a result I think it is important also not to make too many assumptions, just because a particular trait has been recorded at a specific venue or witnessed a couple of times. Anyway, that's just a few of my thoughts. Thank you for your very kind comment. Given your recent enquiry regarding the lens I use I thought you might be interested to know that the camera was hand held – on this occasion mainly held with one hand as the other was holding open the flap of the cage! 😊

Another overcast freezing cold day – not far off June and I'm wearing 2 jumpers!!!! 😞 : – so another update on the immatures. A few days ago I went to check the PH larva and on the top of their cage I saw what looked like a pile of rabbit droppings 😞 . Talk about making assumptions!!!! 😞 Closer inspection revealed that they were indeed frass but what a size and where – or what – did it come from. Something pretty big for sure 😞 . I looked up at the neglected hanging basket above. It hadn't been watered for weeks but still held a few violets and loads of ivy. The long strands of ivy had been stripped so I lifted the basket down for a closer look. Quite gingerly I ferreted about in the leaf litter and found this extremely large larva which I now believe to be an Old Lady. (Note size of frass).



Anyway, all the PH larva were found to be present and hopefully at the correct stage of development:



Re: Pauline

by peterc, 09-May-17 11:41 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I couldn't agree more with your comments relating to GH female preferences for larval foodplants. Other factors come into play too like micro-climate.

Thank you for telling me you used your camera hand-held for your super photos. I had a go using a tripod while trying taking shots of Orange-tip eggs – didn't make the slightest bit of difference but I am sure I am missing something 😊. Nice shot of the PH larva by the way.

ATB

Peter

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 09-May-17 08:12 PM GMT

Love those Green Hair Streak shots Pauline , see you soon Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by David M, 09-May-17 10:24 PM GMT

There's no such thing as perfection, Pauline, but you've come pretty close with those Green Hairstreak images.

A wonderful sequence.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-May-17 01:02 PM GMT

It's been great 'chatting' to you Peter. Thank you for your kind words and I'll reply to your PM shortly 😊

I'm looking forward to seeing you both again Goldie but just in case the weather isn't what we would hope for (esp Sunday) we have another pair of eyes to help – very knowledgeable about butterflies, generous with his knowledge and time, very sharp-eyed and he's got a smashing dog 😊

Gosh David, when I started taking shots of butterflies I never imagined I would ever get such a compliment. Thank you ever so much. I have to say tho' that a newly emerged Hairstreak is quite inspirational and much closer to perfection than my shots ever could be 😊

Yesterday Andy was about 15 mile away up a hill in a t-shirt 'sweating' and seeing a good range of butterflies, whilst I was wearing 2 jumpers yet still shivering in my garden with nothing flying (or emerging!). By lunchtime I'd had enough and decided to take a quick look at local sites, not expecting too much. At the first site I saw quite a few moths and larva. Whilst crawling around on the grass I looked up and was quite alarmed to see this:



It wasn't the size or proximity that concerned me. Oh no! It was the fact that he was losing his winter coat in chunks and kept stopping to scratch at it. All I could think about was all those ticks he was probably shedding and wondering how many were on me 😬😬

The next site was the Small Copper site which was looking distinctly parched and badly scratched up by badgers and rabbits. The number of Small Coppers hadn't increased from the previous visit but I did see my first Common Blue.



It was now 2.30pm and suddenly the sun broke through. I turned straight for home as I had not yet released my little female GH due to the continued cold weather. I don't like keeping them longer than necessary and I had wanted to return her sooner but she had been very lethargic as a result of the low temperatures. I thought if I returned her to NH and placed her on a branch or flower she was at risk of predation. However, now she was quite active and it wasn't long before she was back in the exact spot where the egg was laid. The Hill was covered in butterflies, several egg-laying including this Green Hairstreak (wonder if she was one of 'mine' as it was just where I released the other females? 😊)



This Holly Blue also looked as though she might have been egg-laying but I couldn't find one:



Whilst chatting to a very nice gentleman, a trustee from the HIWWT, a large orange/brown butterfly flew past and we both said 'what was that - it's too big for a Small Heath'. However, Small Heath it was and the biggest either of us had ever seen:



It was time to leave but before I did I stopped to take a few shots of the Dukes which seem to be everywhere now:



Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 11-May-17 03:13 PM GMT

Lovely Shots Pauline, sorry I'm going to miss so much my shots of the GHS not too good, what can I say, barriers for the Duke, I would have got some great shots with you of the Duke, not to worry, must have got my bug yesterday 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 11-May-17 04:40 PM GMT

Please don't worry Goldie – just get well soon. There will be another time and Mark (Tutts) and Hazel fully understand.

I was long overdue a visit to a friend in Chiddingfold and I was sort of hoping I could kill 2 birds with one stone and take a look at the Wood Whites as well. My first surprise when I arrived at her lovely, unique home in the woods was to be shown the local magazine with one of my photos in it 😊. I was totally unaware – quite a compliment really – but I do wish they had selected a better shot. Anyway Philip, if you should happen to be reading this good luck with the talk next month. I might even attend 😊



By the time we had had a good old chin wag and a cup of coffee and I had 'inspected' the numerous improvements which had recently been carried out, time was getting on. I needed to get a move on as I had to be home by lunch time. My first stop was to check out the WA cats but disappointingly I could not find them – just a lizard and loads of spiders! However, a bit further on I spotted another cat which was slightly smaller I believe than those I saw previously:



My aim today was not to take pretty pictures but to observe and photographically record behaviour so it was great to see 3 or 4 females egg-laying:





One of the females I was watching took frequent rests between egg-laying and dandelion clocks seemed to be a favourite place:





I stopped to watch that curious little ritual between male and female where he strokes her with his proboscis and then wacks her with his antennae. I am struggling to make sense of it as a courtship ritual as I had previously been watching the female egg-laying and I imagine her rejection would have been swifter. I can't remember if any conclusion was drawn from previous debates but it is fascinating to watch:





Whilst ferreting around in the foliage I came across a very predatory looking beetle which I have not seen before:



A few more shots of the Wood Whites and then it would be time to go – getting on for mid-day now and I needed to get back:





As I made my way back to the car I spotted a mating pair and stopped to take a few shots..... but then a strange thing happened. 😬 A whole load of wet stuff was poured out of the sky, soaking my camera and myself 😊 I took a quick record shot and left them to it as I scurried back to the car:



Re: Pauline

by Padfield, 11-May-17 04:49 PM GMT

Hi Pauline. Your predatory creature is a snakefly – very weird-looking insects!

Pauline wrote:

..... but then a strange thing happened. 😬 A whole load of wet stuff was poured out of the sky, soaking my camera and myself 😊 I took a quick record shot and left them to it as I scurried back to the car...

Things certainly have changed if rain in the UK is counted a strange thing !! 😊

Guy

PS – brilliant images and observations, I should add – but yours always are.

Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 11-May-17 07:57 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Sorry to hear Goldie is poorly – Flossie (my spaniel) and I were looking forward to meeting up with you all – but there will be another time – get well soon 😊😊😊

Kind Regards

Mark

Re: Pauline

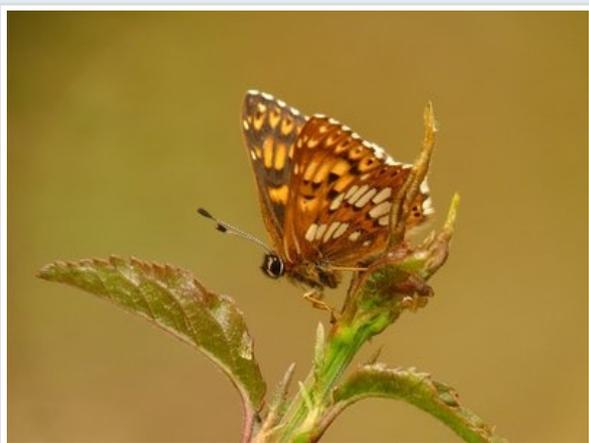
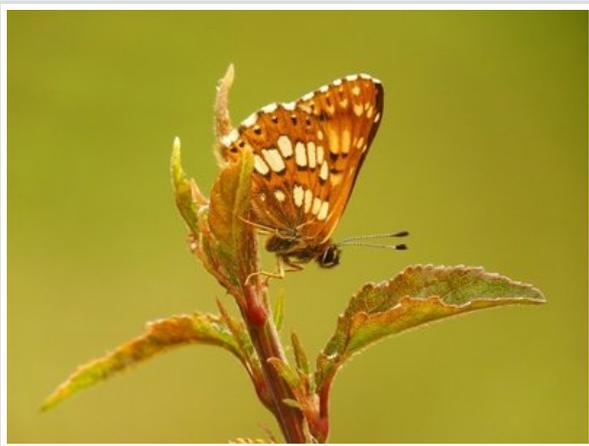
by Goldie M, 11-May-17 08:07 PM GMT

Thanks Mark, I hope to meet you some time in the future and Flossie of course. Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-May-17 04:21 PM GMT

I am glad you liked the Wood Whites Guy. I appreciate your kind comment and the ID of the Snakefly. Today I went out briefly just to see what was about really as it was very warm although overcast and wet. In summary I saw 2 fresh Dukes, 3 quarrelsome Small Heath, a Dingy Skipper and 2 people:





I was not too troubled by the weather as I was looking for immature stages and found a couple of clusters of Duke eggs:



Moths and larva were plentiful along with other bugs – and ticks 🐱





However, my highlight of the trip was what I believe to be a Glow Worm larva – something I have never seen before and have wanted to see for a long time. I hadn't realised they were so large!





Re: Pauline

by Art Frames, 12-May-17 04:55 PM GMT

Pauline,

You have solved a mystery for me too. I took some pictures of the same odd larva a week ago. Couldn't ID it and didn't keep them. So if I ever see a glow worm larva again I will perhaps remember. I might also stop deleting pictures quite so quickly.... 😊

but thanks for the insight.

Peter

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 12-May-17 06:02 PM GMT

Cracking set of Wood whites and Dukes Pauline 😊 although I'm most envious of the Snake Fly 🐍 as I've always wanted to see when of those, oh well just keep looking 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 12-May-17 10:35 PM GMT

I found my first ever Glow Worm larvae at hutchinsons bank the other day, my pictures weren't as good as your's and since I had already split that trip into two entries decided not to post it. Lovely Dukes as well. I love this time of year, so much going on 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-May-17 04:49 PM GMT

Hi Peter, if you are quick to delete photos then I need you round here as I have thousands which I should have deleted but can't seem to bring myself to 😊😊 Thank you for your comment.

Cheers Wurzel (I liked them too 😊). I'm sure you will find a Snakefly one of these days but whilst you're looking I expect you'll find loads of other interesting things 😊. Thanks for the directions btw 😊

I'm still excited about seeing that Glow Worm larva Paul! – not much hope for me, is there? 😊 Thank you for your comment – would be good to bump into you one of these seasons!

My last Green Hairstreak pupa has not yet produced a butterfly. It doesn't look like it has died but how is it possible to tell? It has been kept in exactly the same conditions as the others. I shall continue to look after it but have given up constantly watching and have turned my attention to the Purple Hairstreaks. Again, despite the eggs hatching within days of each other and being kept in the same conditions, some seem to be developing faster than others. We shall see. In the meantime a few shots:





Today I found myself surrounded by Dingies and the odd Grizzlie. I had a crazy idea to photograph all the Dingies to highlight their uniqueness but I quickly gave up on that mad idea as it was too windy. There were probably even more Burnet Companions – at least I think that's what they all were as the variations in them were also marked. A couple below:



Is it possible to get abs in moths? or perhaps this is just a gender thing? or age difference? I really don't know.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 16-May-17 05:22 PM GMT

Every cloud has a silver lining I'd been looking forward to spending time with Goldie at the weekend but as that was not to be I decided to get on and remove the 15' fig tree that had died at the side of the house. Having cleared all the weeds, sawed it down, dug out the roots, cleared the ground, laid some paving, put down some decorative stone, potted some plants, dragged an old seat out of the garage – 3 days later I have myself (yet another) little seating area. Pity I never get a chance to sit down 😞



I wasn't sure I had any energy left to get up Noar Hill but I needed the break. By the time I arrived (about 3.00pm) it was getting cooler and cloudier. I saw a lovely fresh Red Admiral that didn't want to be photographed, a couple of Dukes, a single Small Heath, but by now it was getting on for 4.00pm. By far the most observed butterflies were the Dingies, many of which were already roosting for the night and the remainder looking for suitable places:





Re: Pauline

by David M, 16-May-17 08:55 PM GMT

Those Dingies are fabulously camouflaged when resting like that, Pauline. Good observations.

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 16-May-17 10:49 PM GMT

David M wrote:

Those Dingies are fabulously camouflaged when resting like that, Pauline. Good observations.

It's like they're wearing Harry Potters Invisibility Cloak 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-May-17 05:27 PM GMT

Aren't they just, David! Best time to see them imo 😊

I could do with a bit of magic myself Buggy 😊 After 8 hours with the plumbers yesterday I just had to get out – anywhere! I hadn't been to Paulsgrove for quite some time. Initially I was wary of this site having had a couple of bad experiences here but I love it now. I thought I'd check out the Small Blues and I was very pleasantly surprised. There were clouds of them all over the place – I would go so far as to say I have never seen so many at this site before. A fair bit of egg-laying going on and the Kidney Vetch was peppered with their eggs:





Can't remember the name of these beetles but if no-one shouts I'll look them up again - they were very prolific anyway:



Whenever I meet Roy on site good things happen. I'm thinking of adopting him as my lucky mascot 😊😄 Today I stumbled across a lovely fresh Painted Lady – she looked stunning. How can these insects, as flamboyant as they are, manage to stay so well camouflaged? I guess it is that striking underside which blends with the grass just a little too well:





Common Blues were plentiful and it seems I arrived at lunchtime as all the butterflies I saw were totally focused on nectaring. This female, worn as she was, made me smile with her enthusiasm, burying herself almost fully in the flower:



The sky had started to cloud over and Roy said he could feel the first spots of rain so we headed back to the cars. The butterflies sensed the change in the weather too and had settled down to roost:



Just before we reached the entrance I spotted a mating pair – why does this always happen as I am on my way back and the rain is starting?



Anyway, a good couple of hours which has energised me for the turf laying that is on tomorrow's agenda 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 18-May-17 10:21 PM GMT

Great Small Blues Pauline 😊, the second looks like a female as I can't see any blue scales 😞 That Painted Lady was a welcome addition I bet 😊🇮🇪

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 19-May-17 05:26 PM GMT

Top quality Small Blue shots, Pauline, and you certainly gained your due reward with that Painted Lady!

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 19-May-17 06:02 PM GMT

Lovely shots Pauline, when you think how far the Painted Ladies Fly when coming here to Britain, it's always amazing to see them, Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 19-May-17 07:48 PM GMT

"...Clouds of them...", that's something I would love to experience! Great shots as always Pauline 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-May-17 05:09 PM GMT

First off, I do believe the name of those green beetles is CRYPTOCEPHALUS AUREOLUS. How I couldn't manage to remember that I really don't know as it just trips off the tongue 😊😊

Cheers Wurzel – that Painted Lady really made my day. Just hope it's the first of many. If you're reading this Paul H. better get checking the Burdock! 😊

Thank you so much David. It was a real delight just to stand and watch so many Small Blues and the perfect weather for it 😊

They're such beautiful butterflies, aren't they Goldie. Hope you get to see some this season.

Thank you for the compliment Buggy – have sent you pm.

Now, amidst a barrage of domestic issues I think it is time for an update on the Commas at the very least – or they'll be butterflies before I know it!



Another skin change



4th



Final instar



Preparing to pupate



Pupa



Another pupa

I have been keeping an eye on my little Wych Elm tree – y'know, the one that the WLH laid eggs on (dare I even mention that 😊) To my knowledge they didn't hatch but they are so well camouflaged I have been watching for signs of feeding damage – and something had definitely been eating it. Turns out it was another 5 tiny Comma cats and so the cycle starts again!



Re: Pauline

by millerd, 22-May-17 09:30 PM GMT

Nice shots of the Comma caterpillars, Pauline. It brings it all back: one of the first caterpillars I ever found in the wild, at the bottom of the garden when I was small. A bit of a rarity then in a London suburb. 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by David M, 22-May-17 10:15 PM GMT

Lovely selection of early stage images again, Pauline.

Here's hoping you manage to observe at least one of the Commas emerging from the pupa.

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 22-May-17 10:24 PM GMT

Great sequence Pauline, really interesting to see that on the pupa you can just make out the eyes and palps that look like the imago, I'd not noticed that before 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-May-17 12:23 PM GMT

Thank you Dave. Your comment caused me to cast my mind back to the (very) few butterflies I saw when growing up in a very industrial area of shipbuilding and mining. By far the most common was the Large White, followed by Small Tortoiseshell and Red Admiral.

How did you know I'd be trying to do that David? 😊😌 I'm hoping it will be slightly easier/more predictable than the Green Hairstreaks as I spent a total of 60 hours watching them 😊😌 Thank you for your kind remark.

I know I've said it before but you really are observant Wurzel – and with a great imagination 😊😌

This morning the moth trap provided a lot of interest – much more so than last time, despite the 18 Cockchafers inside. For me I think the star of the show had to be this gorgeous Puss moth. I'm not sure if it is male or female but I shall be checking all my Willow 😊



The next moth to greet me was this stunning Poplar Hawk-moth:



A couple of smaller moths attracted my attention, not just because I had never seen them before, but because their markings were quite incredible. I'm afraid these shots really do not do them justice. The first one I now know is a Red Green Carpet moth. I took the photos inside the trap as I thought it might fly if moved which it later did indeed do:



Similarly this Green Pug looked almost metallic in the trap, but once it had flown and landed on the Plum tree, it almost 'disappeared':



I have seen the White Ermine before but that doesn't lessen my appreciation of this lovely insect:



I think this cute little moth is a Heart and Dart but I have no idea what the following one is – given its position and 'hairiness' perhaps some sort of (worn) Tussock? It was a big moth mind!



Well, there were lots more. Some I recognised, some I didn't. Some flew away, some of the little ones I couldn't be bothered with (sorry! 😊). Anyway, it was a very interesting couple of hours and one of the most varied 'haul' I have yet achieved.

Re: Pauline

by bailey1409, 23-May-17 12:58 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

The penultimate moth is a Shuttle-shaped Dart and the last one is a Pale Tussock.

I had my trap out last night and had my best total so far this year. Just send the Puss moth my way, please.

Cheers

Maurice

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-May-17 08:03 AM GMT

Morning Maurice

Thank you for the ID's - much appreciated. I did look at one of my books but I am sat here with a fractured tooth waiting for a dental appointment later today and finding concentration difficult! Anyway, when I released her about 9.30pm last night, I pointed her in your direction and whispered your address to her 😊😊



As you can see, taking shots in the dark is something else I can't do 😊 so my favourite shot has to be:



The first Purple Hairstreak has now started to pupate so before the others follow suit a few recent shots:





Re: Pauline

by bailey1409, 24-May-17 08:20 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

The Puss moth is a beauty. I had one, and my only one, ten years ago. I'll let you know when the next one arrives.

Cheers

Maurice

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 24-May-17 12:26 PM GMT

I'll have to go and try and re-find my wild Purple Hairstreak cat next weekend.

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 24-May-17 09:36 PM GMT

The camouflage of those Purple Hairstreak caterpillars when they are on the buds is phenomenal. Is it right that they drop to the ground to pupate? I've tried to imagine walking beneath a large oak tree at the right moment and being showered by little fat caterpillars... I imagine it happens at night. 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-May-17 06:30 PM GMT

Given the size, markings and colouration, it certainly is an impressive insect Maurice and I was delighted to find it in the trap. If it's likely to be another 10 years before you get another one I sincerely hope you'll be in touch again before then! 😊 😊

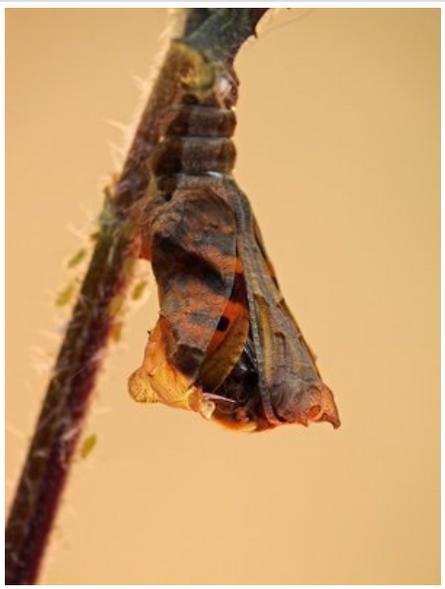
You may well be too late Buggy!

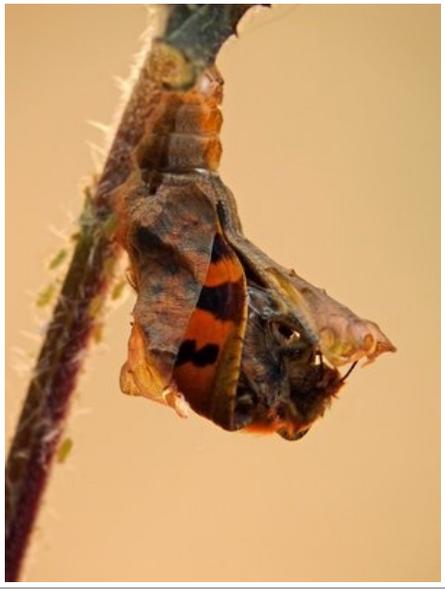
What a sight that would be Dave 😊. I have reared PH twice now and to the best of my knowledge ie what I have witnessed, is the larva climbing down the branch to pupate in soil/leaf litter. However, is it possible that they do drop from the tree? Some of those Oaks are very tall and it is a long way to climb down, but then it is also a long way to fall and risk injury. They have a remarkable ability, as you have noted, to blend in with the background so presumably that is an advantage if they do make the long trip down the trunk where they would be quite exposed and vulnerable otherwise.

When I got back from the dentist yesterday this was the sight that met me:



I was neither surprised nor disappointed. I had expected the butterfly to emerge any time soon (they are much easier to predict than the Hairstreaks!); I have also reared this species before and managed some shots of it emerging previously. Nevertheless, I could see that the second butterfly was about to emerge so I slightly delayed my plans for today hoping to see the emergence and get a few shots. I didn't have long to wait:









If you should happen to read this Downland Boy it was good to meet you today and I very much enjoyed chatting to you both. 😊

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 25-May-17 10:16 PM GMT

Beautiful shots of the emerging Commas, Pauline. The question is: are they *hutchinsoni* or the normal form? 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 25-May-17 10:27 PM GMT

Fantastic sequence Pauline 😊 It's interesting to see that they emerge with their proboscis extended I suppose that way it fits into the pupal case easier.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-May-17 12:41 PM GMT

Blimey Dave! You don't half ask me some difficult questions 😊😓 Seriously, it's good to have a little think about these things. I'd always thought that Hutchinsoni were the Spring version which by definition go on to produce the summer brood. I know they are supposed to be paler whereas these recent individuals looked very vibrant - which I initially put down to being quite fresh. Nevertheless, I looked back at some I had reared 15 months ago in September and they were all very pale. Below is an example - it's not the palest by any means but Vince thought the palest one was an ab.



By comparison, here are a few more shots of the recent ones before they flew off:







Yeah, that's interesting isn't it Wurzel. I noticed it in 2015 (below) – your reasoning seems pretty sound to me 😊



Now, is it just me Wurzel or can you see a mask in this pupa? 😊



Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 26-May-17 07:46 PM GMT

Another series of fantastic shots Pauline, I'm still taking it easy here, hope I see some thing I havant got this year like the BHS and WHS 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 26-May-17 11:21 PM GMT

No question in my mind that you have a *hutchinsoni* there 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-May-17 07:25 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie. You're very wise to take it easy especially in this heat.

Cheers for the confirmation Buggy 😊

Having worked my socks off for 13 hours at 5.00pm I decided it was time for a break. The breeze was quite strong but that didn't matter as I was setting off to monitor my Duke eggs which should have hatched by now. Sadly, there was no sign of them. No empty eggs, no feeding damage, so eaten I expect. I found several more eggs with ease but all singletons:



The second one I found was rather more interesting because, if I'm not mistaken, it is possible to see the larva inside:



Eventually, I found what I was looking for – a first instar Duke:



Just to give some size perspective this is a more distant shot of the small leaf he was on:



Despite my remarks last year I am not totally uninterested in orchids 😊 (how could I be with this site on my doorstep) so I stopped to take a shot of the Fly orchid and its paler form:



and then I came across a second instar Duke larva:



During the search I saw several of these but not sure what they are:



.... and also this Musk orchid:



Having reared Green Hairstreaks over the last year I was keen to see how they were faring in the wild this year. After some searching I was delighted to spot this little creature. Going by my shots of them last year this little fella can't be much more than 24 hours old. His egg was close by but couldn't get them both in the same shot. Pity!





Re: Pauline

by MrSpOck, 27-May-17 08:14 PM GMT

The larva is a burnet moth larva, expect it to be six-spot, as i think 5 spots are on the wing now.

Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 27-May-17 10:05 PM GMT

I always enjoy your emergence sequences and am also pleased to see your orchid photos. That pale form of the Fly Orchid is very unusual and a variant that I have not seen - I think it is the form known as *luteomarginata*. I know how difficult is to spot those tiny Musk Orchids and think you have done a good job of photographing them down amongst the grasses 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-May-17 03:19 PM GMT

Thanks for that Martin - I'll try to remember for the future 😊

Hi Mike, I would like to say that you'd better get down here pronto but there would be little point - the orchids have been largely eaten by snail or slugs and the only parts which were still intact (perhaps no longer 😞) are the bits in my photo. I paid the price for those photos with yet more ticks 😞 I have now taken to wearing disposable gloves when I go there 😞😞 Thank you for your kind comment.

The weather forecast today was dull/showers/thunder/heavy rain with perhaps some bright interludes. On the spur of the moment I decided that this would be perfect weather to get some shots of SPBF. My best shots in the past have nearly always been in the rain, especially 2012! I arrived before 9.00am and was surprised to see a couple of guys already there as it still seemed a little cloudy for butterflies. Nevertheless, they informed me that they had seen a really fresh SPBF at the other end of the sight. I set off in that direction but for some reason I turned around to see one of the guys collecting something in a cardboard tube. He seemed really pleased and after ensuring the lid was secure he put it in his bag. They had no nets. I was very curious but didn't pursue it. It was already warm and as the sun (???) broke through the clouds several worn PBF flew past.

There seemed to be loads of moths including this Pale Tussock which I have never seen during the day and what I believe is a Straw Dot, but no Argent and Sable:





By now there were quite a few more folk on site including a walk led by Ashley (nice to see you again) but really not many butterflies. I had seen both male and female Grizzled Skipper, Speckled Wood, Dingy Skipper but very few SPBF:



There were lots of Dragon Flies including these which I think are male and female Broad-bodied Chasers but what stunning colours:





I was remembering the first time I ever saw a SPBF which was at this site, incredibly as I now know, on the exact same date. It was a while back; before I even started this diary and before Adrian Hoskins started his tours for butterflies abroad. We had driven up full of anticipation and were met by loads of both PBF and SPBF. I listened carefully as he explained the difference to me. How different it was today. In the 2 hours I was there, in high temperatures and much sun, I must have seen 4 different individuals – perhaps 5. I didn't get the underwing shots which I wanted and had to rely a lot on the butterflies nectaring on the Ragged Robin – that's about all there was for them 😞







It may be some time before I return.

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 28-May-17 06:47 PM GMT

Nice shots of the Small Pearls, Pauline. I haven't tried to see them yet this year - I might miss out at this rate. As ever, the shots of the various larvae are most impressive considering how minute they are. 😊🌿

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 28-May-17 09:03 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, just catching up on a few diaries after spending most of my evenings recently trying to ID various moths from my trap.

Jealous of your Puss Moth, I haven't seen one yet this year although I had one last year. Beautiful moths in the flesh and surprisingly large.

Great sequence of Comma images too 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 29-May-17 11:09 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, love the shots of the Pearls and the Comma's, hope fully I'll get to see the SBF if the weather changes this week. Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 29-May-17 10:01 PM GMT

That's still a very good under wing of the SPBF Pauline, I'd have that one in my collection 😊🌿 Were these Small Pearls at Bentley Wood?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-May-17 03:28 PM GMT

You might miss out big time Dave as I get the impression that the SPBF are hanging on by a thread in Hants. Thank you for the compliments especially re larva as they can be tricky! 😊

Thank you too Neil - I am glad you liked the Comma. No need to be jealous tho' - that was the first Puss moth I had ever seen so you are already ahead of me, again! 😊😊

I'll keep my fingers crossed for you Goldie - thank you for your comment.

That's really kind of you to say so Wurzel. It's not bad I suppose - just not the shot I wanted - and yeah, Eastern Clearing. I know some folk have seen double the number of SPBF I saw but that's still not many 😊

Well, SSB now out on my patch (just a few males) - It's an 'early' site and last year were out 4 June but don't think I've seen them in May before. A few images on the way back from Sainsbury's this morning:





Re: Pauline

by trevor, 30-May-17 04:32 PM GMT

Lovely SSB shots, as you say they are early !.
Rumour has it that something big and purple is going to be early too !.

Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 30-May-17 09:38 PM GMT

Wow, SSB already! Lovely shots, too, Pauline. 😊 I'd better start looking at the various Surrey sites to see if anything is happening!

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 30-May-17 10:14 PM GMT

Cracking set of Silver stud shots Pauline 🍀 – if memory serves me correctly they seem to emerge at your site about 3 weeks earlier than Slop Bog, so I'll note the date in my calendar 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 31-May-17 06:06 PM GMT

Thank you Trevor. See you at BB in a couple of weeks then 😊😊

Cheers Dave – not a very modest thing to say but I'm actually quite pleased with those shots myself as I really didn't have very long there.

You'd better bring that date forward Wurzel cos things are cracking on apace here – females already out! 😊. You're going to have to give me a few lessons on how to get my outings down to 5 mins 😊😊 My butterfly time is under serious threat as I am rearing these little Hoglets and as they are only 30 gms they need 2 hourly feeds:



Their nest was dug up by a dog. There were originally 6 but 2 have died of their injuries. Added to that I had another long dental appointment today (he has managed to save the tooth by pinning it together) so I really didn't have much time but the sun came out and the temperatures soared so I had to call in briefly to Bramshott. I was pleased I did. There are a lot of males out now spread all over the common and females are starting to emerge as witnessed by 2 mating pairs:



A lovely fresh Painted Lady flew past without stopping and I nearly got a shot of a couple of Green Hairstreaks. One of them was pristine but I couldn't get near her and I didn't have time to wait until she got bored with teasing and tormenting me. I did manage a shot of this Small Copper and several Common Blues have started to emerge now (strange as they are usually a bit tatty by the time the SSB emerge)



Loads of moths as per usual including this one which I haven't looked up yet:



As I was leaving I stopped to watch several Green Tiger Beetles. Can't imagine why I have never seen them before as they are quite common by all accounts but what strange creatures – and accomplished hunters!



Re: Pauline

by David M, 31-May-17 10:07 PM GMT

Good luck with those infant hedgehogs, Pauline. I'm sure you'll do everything you can to help them.

Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 01-Jun-17 12:23 AM GMT

Those baby Hedgehogs are so cute, Pauline, but a lot of hard work too, I guess? Amazing that Silver-studded Blues are out already – the year is really moving along 😊

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Jun-17 05:27 PM GMT

Thank you David. Can you believe they each have their own little personality at only 10 days old! 😊

Aren't they just Mike 😊. They only get 1ml of specially prepared milk at each feed but then there's the 'toileting'. The mother would naturally lick them to stimulate but I'm afraid I won't go quite that far! 😊

I THINK the moth from the previous post is CELYPHA LACUNANA

With time constraints I thought I would start in the garden as I could see these moths just outside the window which I believe might be NEMOPHORA DEGEERELLA:



After that it was down the lane and then on to a local site. I have tried to ID some of the critters spotted recently but please shout if I'm wrong. First up is what I think is a Soldier Beetle, CANTHARIS RUSTICA – what I like about this fella is his black heart on the red background:





Yellow-tail



The Vapourer



Common Swift



Another Yellow-tail



No idea



I've never seen moths mating before but I think these might be *COLEOPHORA CAESPITIPELLA* (such easy names to remember 😊)



Speckled Yellow



Sallow Kitten (or similar)



Don't know

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-17 09:42 PM GMT

A cracking selection of moths and cats Pauline 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Jun-17 05:57 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel - appreciate that 😊

A couple more shots of SSB's in a different style:



Yesterday I stopped off at Wreclesham to check on the state of play re Glanvilles. Although a couple were seen last year none were visible from outside of the fence yesterday. I felt quite sad looking at what had been a smashing wildlife site such a short time ago. This is where the lake used to be:



The only wildlife seen were several Demoiselles:



Re: Pauline

by Katrina, 03-Jun-17 09:25 AM GMT

Just catching up with your diary – gorgeous SSB shots. Well done for looking after the hoglets! 😊

Re: Pauline

by downland boy, 03-Jun-17 12:02 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Your 'no idea' larva posted on 1/6 is a species of sawfly. They can be very similar to moth larvae but they show more than 4 pairs of prolegs and the black dot on the eye is also a sawfly feature.

All the best, Nigel

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 03-Jun-17 07:49 PM GMT

Your last post was a bit of roller coaster Pauline. 😊

Silver-studs 🤗🤗

Wrecclesham 🤗🤗

Beautiful Demioselle 🤗🤗

At least you ended on a high 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 04-Jun-17 04:39 PM GMT

That's very kind of you Katrina. I am very pleased to be able to tell you that after a couple of days the mother returned looking for her babies and was caught. They are now re-united and she is such a good Mum. Not able to be returned because of the dog so she'll stay with me until they can all be released. Would love to take lots of shots but won't risk disturbing them. Managed to grab this quick one tho' as I was cleaning them out:



Thanks for that Nigel - no wonder I couldn't find it in my book!

My whole life seems a bit of a roller coaster at the minute Wurzel 😊 One of my parrots had to be admitted to the vet yesterday for x-rays, blood tests, barium meal, anaesthetics etc, etc. He won't be coming back for a few days yet and there is some doubt as to whether he will be coming back at all. His pals are all subdued as they are missing Merlin too but he's a little fighter with bags of attitude so fingers crossed - a shot of him in the plum tree:



Having been told he had survived the night and the first day of treatment I needed some 'escapism' - badly. I didn't want to go far and I had heard that a couple of days ago a couple of Clouded Yellow had been seen not far from Alton. Alton is only a stone's throw from Noar Hill so that's where I headed. I started off by checking 'my' larva. Sadly, there was no sign of any of the Duke larva or the eggs but the tiny Green Hairstreak I had found on 27 May was still there:



My next sighting was that of a Speckled Wood egg-laying. My attempts at trying to catch her in the act were laughable – loads of respect for Neil F. who took that smashing shot a couple of years back. I did manage to get a shot of the egg tho'



I also spotted my first Meadow Brown of the season tucked down into the foliage with no intention of showing off those lovely autumnal colours (Am I allowed to say that when we're just into Summer? 😊)



There were a surprising number of butterflies around including Common Blue and I spotted a female which is fairly similar to the one Buggy photographed - very blue with those wide black margins:



I watched another, more conventionally coloured, egg-laying:



By way of comparison I am including a shot of a male Common Blue I took the other day but didn't think it good enough to post as half of it is out of focus 😊



...and again by way of comparison a SSB from long ago:



My next sighting was another surprise – a female Small Blue. I see singletons most years so hopefully all that Kidney Vetch that is fenced off will encourage a larger colony:



I had been out now for almost 2 hours and thought it was time to wend my way back and try to cheer up my subdued parrots when I almost stepped on this lovely Painted Lady, one of several I have seen this year:





....and just as I was leaving I spotted another first for the season, the Large Skipper:



No Clouded Yellows tho! 😞

Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 05-Jun-17 08:04 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

A great selection of subjects in your recent posts and super photos 😊

Thanks for your comment about my egg laying Specklie shot from the other year...you have got a better shot of the egg itself than I have managed so far though.

All the best,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by David M, 05-Jun-17 11:22 PM GMT

You do go through the wringer with all your pets, Pauline. I sincerely hope your parrot makes it through its treatment and the hedgehogs continue to thrive.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Jun-17 10:22 AM GMT



Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 06-Jun-17 12:29 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, it's great that the baby Hedgehogs have been re-united with their mum 😊 and it also relieves you of the toileting duties 😊
Shame about Wrecclisham, it looks like the landfilling is moving along at quite a pace 😞
I hope that all will be well for Merlin.

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 06-Jun-17 10:02 PM GMT

That's a very blue female blue Pauline 🍷 Really lush Painted Lady as well, in really good nick she is 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 07-Jun-17 07:29 PM GMT

Nice blues and the Lady, Pauline – there certainly are a lot of very blue females around this year. 😊 It's such a shame to see that view of Wrecclisham. Aside from the Glanvilles it was a good site generally, and my abiding memory of the place is wandering around the lake accompanied by a loud chorus of marsh frogs. All gone now I would imagine. 😞
Dave

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Jun-17 05:42 PM GMT

Thank you guys for your kind comments and compliments and for keeping me in the loop during this difficult time. The normality of your posts has been reassuring. It has been a hard week. I lost Merlin. X-rays showed enlarged mass in the abdomen, either liver or gizzard. Blood tests showed severe anaemia, liver enzyme raised, high white blood cell count, chronic bleeding into the GI tract. PM confirmed liver enlarged, pale and mottled and pale intestines. Samples have been sent to lab for further info. Merlin's mate April has been to the vet today too. She is subdued and missing him but previous x-rays showed bone deformity and with increasing age this may be causing her problems. You are spot on David. Trouble is, I have had them for decades and they are all getting old at the same time – bit like me 😊

Thank you for your very kind comment Neil but at the end of the day it is your shot of the egg-laying that will be remembered rather than my egg – and rightly so 😊

Hi Mike, good to hear from you. Real shame about Wrecclisham. I bet there are Glanvilles still in there (Hazel saw a couple in the meadow last year) but I wasn't about to risk the helicopter a second time 😞😞

The Painted Lady was a real stunner Wurzel. Re Blue female, I was looking through my shots from last year and in the same place on the same date there was a female at least as blue if not more so.

Thank you Dave. I believe the frogs were collected up along with slow worms and some other stuff. Perhaps we'll meet at Chiddingfold this year.

Well, as you might imagine I've not been out much but here's a few shots from just before this all kicked off. The first is a Red Admiral egg that I watched being laid whilst looking for larva at Abbots Wood (Hants):



The woods there are full of foxgloves and try as I might I couldn't do them justice:



A couple of larva which I haven't had time to ID



and a small vapourer moth:



Closer to home I recently planted a Mullein plant and I noticed today that it seems to have larva on it of the Mullein moth:



Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 09-Jun-17 12:20 AM GMT

So sorry to hear that you lost Merlin, Pauline, Cathy and I know how hard that will be for you.

Take care,

Mike.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Jun-17 03:37 PM GMT

Cheers Mike – appreciate that. I've lost so many long term animals in the last 18 months my diary is starting to look like an obituary! 😞 Things don't seem a whole lot better on the moth front. The little Sallow (?) Kitten that I posted a short while back – well, I decided to rear it. I have tried to take such good care of it especially during the storms we have had, making sure the little Sallow tree (in the cage outside) is safe and has some shelter, checking that it is eating enough (I know!!! 😞), etc. I was horrified when I checked it this morning to find it writhing about on the bottom of the cage. I have only seen that behaviour once before when a Comma I was rearing, almost ready to pupate, burst open to reveal a large egg or larval sac of some parasite. I carefully started to examine the cat and to cut a long story short I have been watching it on and off all day with a sort of weird fascination as some parasite (lots of them actually) is erupting from several places along its back. I have been tempted to put it out of its misery (it is still alive) but not sure I could do it and it did occur to me that perhaps once the parasites have left the host perhaps it might recover? Anyway, just to try to give a sense of scale, the little cat is about 0.5cm. The little things emerging from it – well, I can barely see them with the naked eye but I have tried to show what is going on with these shots:



'Things' erupting from the back – I think there might be one on the face also.



Parasite marked with red ring



As close up as I can get.

PS Is it too early to look for potential Large Tortoiseshells at North Stoke?

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 10-Jun-17 11:36 AM GMT

Just catching up on my posts Pauline, so sorry you lost Merlin, we enjoyed seeing your parrots whilst visiting you last year, one was very quiet then, was that Merlin.? Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-Jun-17 02:54 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie. The quiet one was April who has also just been to the vet 😊. Merlin was the noisy one, strutting his stuff, flashing his eyes and showing off his tail feathers. He is a great miss. I've not been able to get out much recently but I have had the opportunity to rear a single Holly Blue

this season so a few shots of development so far below:



Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 10-Jun-17 09:56 PM GMT

Great life cycle sequence Pauline 😊 Also the parasite images are fascinating and gruesome in equal measure – it must have been like watching a real time version of Aliens 🤩😬

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 10-Jun-17 10:44 PM GMT

Lovely early stage images again, Pauline.

So sorry to hear about Merlin.

Re: Pauline

by Allan.W., 11-Jun-17 10:46 AM GMT

Hello Pauline,

Found something unusual this morning ,you may be interested in .Was out on an early morning plant hunt near Hythe (Kent), coming off the motorway (M20) and heading in towards Westenhanger ,passed , an unusual looking road casualty ,didn,t look quite right for a Brock ,but couldn't resist nipping back for a look, when I found it , soon apparent that it was a Badger ,a very white one ! not a complete albino ,but close ,with just one grey bar on its back ,very sad ,and unusual ps; it also had pink eyes ! Regards Allan.W.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 11-Jun-17 01:36 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, I do hope April is okay, it's a worry for you when all these things seem to happen at once 😞 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 11-Jun-17 01:58 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel – it is all in a sealed container now so if they develop into something identifiable I'll report back.

Thank you on both counts David.

Hi Goldie – she's in the garden at the moment soaking up the sun with Heidi (an Amazon). The medication seems to be kicking in – shall I send you some up? 😊😊 Seriously, take it easy!

Hi Allan – I appreciate you thinking of me and yes, of course I am interested. Did I ever tell you I found a dead one on the road once and picked it up. Organisations were fighting over it! It was subsequently stuffed and used for educational purposes but they seem to be in great demand generally by taxidermists. Before I started this post I looked on Ebay and there is a stuffed albino badger going for £275.00. Perhaps you should have put it in your boot! Just in case anyone is wondering, I would do anything for a live animal but I am not (usually) overly sentimental about them once they are dead. Thank you again for taking the trouble to post about it.

Following a 'tip off' this morning I made a return visit to Wrecclesham and I'm pleased to be able to report that the Glanvilles seem to be hanging on there. I saw 3, possibly 4 in the hour or so I was there along with other fresh butterflies – Small Tortoiseshell (a couple), handful of fresh Large Skippers, loads of Meadow Browns and half a dozen Common Blue, including an egg-laying female. I tried hard but couldn't get in the best position for a shot of her down in the grass – even tho' she gave me 3 chances!!!! Quite a few Ladybird larva – I think they may be Harlequin and some lovely Demoiselles. A few shots from earlier:







Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 11-Jun-17 10:04 PM GMT

Great shots Pauline – though they do seem to be not exactly pristine 😊🌿 It would be good there are some Glannies still there as it's a bit closer than Hutchinson's Bank and the Isle of Black – so better in terms of carbon emissions 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Jun-17 07:35 AM GMT

Morning Wurzel – yeah, with the exception of one which I couldn't get close to, they were worn and battled scarred.... but then they have been out at least 12 days here and the credit must go to Hazel who initially spotted them, both this year and last. I THINK all those I saw were male(?) so I am hoping that some females are yet to emerge.

Now I have long wanted to rear a Puss moth. I had the opportunity a couple of years ago when a friend passed a final instar larva over to me but I only had it a couple of days before it pupated. Despite the hard casing and protective cage, at some point over the winter it was predated 😞 I really wanted to rear them from young so when I came across this I was quite hopeful that I was looking at a Puss moth early instar:



One of the reasons for my optimism is that I spotted this close by:



The little cat was secured by silken threads so I wondered if it was about to shed its skin and that was exactly what happened a few hours later. A few shots before it consumed the waste product. Presumably this is to avoid attracting predators but I wonder if it also contains important nutrients?





... and another rather splendid larva was also seen:



Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 12-Jun-17 08:33 AM GMT

Just catching up on your diary/life Pauline. Sorry to hear about Merlin 😞 .

A few posts back you posted a picture of a couple of beetles mating, they were Click Beetles.

Interesting that the Glanvilles are hanging on at Wrecclesham, from what I've heard about Hutchinson's bank it seems they have crashed there with only 2 or 3 seen this season 😊

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 12-Jun-17 09:45 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline , glad April has found the Sun, that's what I need a good dose of Sun and an injection of Energy! 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Jun-17 07:32 AM GMT

Don't we all Goldie! At the moment I seem to be surviving on sugary drinks 😊

Thanks for the ID Buggy. How I wish my life was made up of butterflies and animals. Trust me Buggy, you really wouldn't want to know about the rest of the cr*p! Yesterday I lost a tortoise. I couldn't see how he had got out of the garden. I crawled through next door's hedge, trawled the pond, asked the neighbours, spent 3 hrs searching – and found him in the garden!!! As a result it looked like I might have to forego what seems to have become an almost daily outing (albeit mostly short). However, at 6.45pm the weather was better than it had been all day so I decided to pop up to Bramshott for 30 mins. Between 7.00pm and 7.30pm I saw dozens and dozens of SSB in a small area, watched egg-laying and saw 3 different mating pairs. At this time of year I would guess the number of SSB's are easily into 3 figures. I thought catching them roosting would aid a count of them but they were still too active. As they started to settle I counted 13 from where I was standing and tried to take a photo. If anyone has the patience to enlarge it and count then good luck 😊



... and a bit closer up:





Male lacking scales





Little fat female that was egg-laying. The sun was so bright it was hard to avoid shadows.





Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 13-Jun-17 09:18 AM GMT

More lush Silver-studs Pauline 😊🍴 I better get a wriggle on as some of those males are starting to look a little tired 🙄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 13-Jun-17 12:09 PM GMT

Must be an incredible sight seeing all those SSBs roosting communally, Pauline.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Jun-17 06:01 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel – Bramshot is a great site for them and one of the earliest, so you still have plenty of time elsewhere. I'm not even sure they are out at Broxhead yet which is a very late site for them (and more typical with loads of heather). I saw the males back in May so yes, some are looking worn but there were plenty of fresh ones too. Seems the ladies prefer the older more experienced males tho' 😊🙄

Thing was David, not many were actually roosting. As I walked across the Common the majority were still on the wing and going about their business. It was still very warm and sunny tho'.

It won't come as any surprise to learn that today I have been scrutinising honeysuckle as time is running out. It is surprisingly wet and muddy near Camilla Corner and as I approached a patch that was impassable, I decided that rather than go back I would take a chance, put one foot lightly in the middle and sprang across. Well, the foot I put down lightly on the mud immediately sank in and as I sprang I left my boot behind in the mud, landing in yet more mud in just my sock. 😊😞 I almost took a shot of my shoe but by then my sense of humour had deserted me. Anyway, the first creature of interest is below. I would be very grateful if ANYBODY (Buggy?) can throw any light on what it is as I have never seen the likes before. I initially thought it was a pupa but closer investigation showed it to be more like a caterpillar:



It wasn't a bad trip out with 4 new species being seen, all difficult to get close to – SWF, WA, Marbled White, Ringlet – snapshots below:





The Large Skippers were amusing to watch, defending their territory and searching for females:



Across the road there weren't too many butterflies but this young larva – pretty little thing (a couple of sallows seem to have been blown down since my last visit):



My biggest surprise tho' was to have a large bird take off from the ground only about 8 ft away from me. I couldn't see it because of the long grass and it didn't go far. I realised it was a Buzzard but as I took off the close up lens that 'squeaking' noise it makes spooked the bird and as it flew past me this was the best I could do:



Re: Pauline

by trevor, 13-Jun-17 07:22 PM GMT

You've had a great few days recently. Sort of good news about the Glanvilles (I understand the site has been trashed) and good to see Marbled Whites. Went to BB today, the whole place was deathly quiet. Did see my first Silver Washed though.

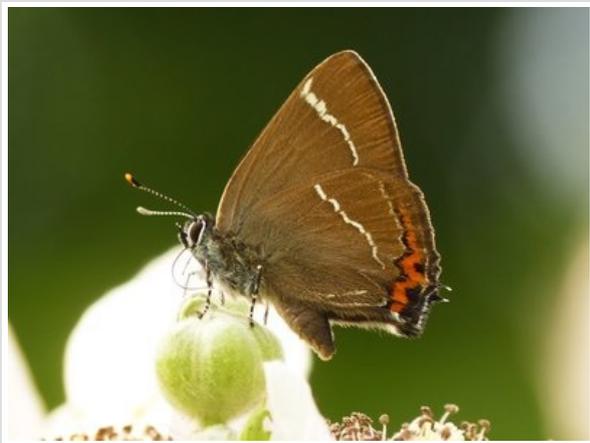
Keep well, bound to see you soon,
Trevor.

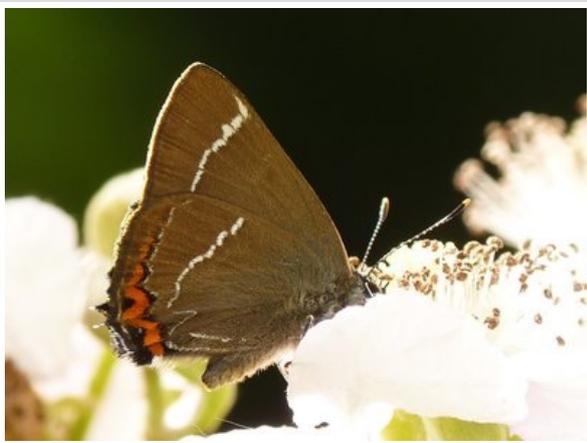
Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Jun-17 11:52 AM GMT

Thanks Trevor. Don't think you'll miss muchand I'll probably see you next week 😊

And a BIG thank you to Paul. 5 seen between 9.00 and 10.30. Quality of the images not great. They were either miles away and heavily cropped, shooting into the sun most of the time (no choice) and one hand holding camera as quite high up. I think another visit might be on the cards:





Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 14-Jun-17 09:10 PM GMT

Very nice Glanville Frits, Pauline 😊 superb WLH too 🍷 one that I've struggled to get close to 😊

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Jun-17 09:29 PM GMT

Thank you Mike. I would agree that they're not an easy butterfly to photograph and I still struggle with exposure with dark butterflies against white flowers. However, by 10.30 it was already too hot to hang around for better shots. I should have mentioned that whilst I was waiting I believe I saw my first Essex Skipper of the season but happy to be corrected. Too early surely:



Re: Pauline

by David M, 14-Jun-17 10:46 PM GMT

Wow! Essex Skippers before mid-June. The season really is early!

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 14-Jun-17 10:50 PM GMT

Most definitely Essex, Pauline – I must check my local colony pronto! And great WLH as well – I struggle to find them, let alone photograph them! 🍷 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Jun-17 12:47 PM GMT

I was pretty sure it was Essex David (sex brand, antennae) but it was the timing that threw me and caused me to doubt myself.

Cheers for the confirmation Dave and the compliment. Much appreciated.

Thank you too Phil for recent information and ID of the Lackey moth larva which I should really know but it had just slipped my mind. Given your comments I thought you might like an update on the Glanville situation at Wrecchlesham. Since the initial shots I have been hankering after a closed wing shot and decided the only way that was going to happen was if I went as they were roosting. I arrived about 5.30pm yesterday evening to be greeted by Nick who was already there but hadn't seen any (good to see you again Nick.) Within a couple of minutes we spotted 2 Glanvilles, one very worn male and another with more colour on it. During the next 90 minutes we watched a variety of butterflies, all still quite manic in the heat of the evening, not really settling or providing many photo opportunities. We didn't see the 'freshest' Glanville again – just the worn one. However, looking at my photos it is apparent that there were 2 worn ones bringing the total again to 3. It was clear I wasn't going to get that closed wing shot in the scorching heat and a cold drink was waiting for me back home so we decided to call it a day. I shall let you know Phil if any fresh ones appear but otherwise next year might be better.



Banded Demoiselle (male)





Re: Pauline

by David M, 15-Jun-17 09:33 PM GMT

Interesting that Glanvilles seem to be holding on in Wrecclesham, particularly in light of the fact that they seem to be struggling at Hutchinson's Bank, where the introduction was made far more recently.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 16-Jun-17 06:21 AM GMT

Perhaps it's precisely because the colony at Wrecclesham has been so well established for years that it is able to hang on David but I guess time will tell.

I couldn't resist another look at the WLH before the PE season gets into full swing so a few shots from yesterday:







Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 16-Jun-17 09:13 AM GMT

Pauline, cracking shots of the WLH, 🇮🇪🇮🇪 I've still yet to find it round here, that's not for the want of trying! It doesn't seem to surface here until July and although I've traveled to where it's been seen, no luck so far! I want to go back to F Wood again this year, I know they're there.

Your shots of the SSB reminded me of the great day we had last year, 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 16-Jun-17 08:29 PM GMT

Waah cracking shots Pauline 😊🇮🇪🇮🇪 Are those from a site neat Portsmouth, near a computer giants workplace? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 16-Jun-17 09:03 PM GMT

It's at times like this when people talk about getting a White Letter Hairstreak fix prior to Purple Emperor season that I wished I lived 100 miles further east!!! 🇮🇪

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-Jun-17 02:19 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie – that was a smashing day, wasn't it?

Cheers Wurzel – it's a butterfly that I think is much under-recorded, but how many folk have time to stand and stare up at Elm trees in the PE season??!!!! (Actually, I know a couple 😊😊).

... and at times David, when I hear folk planning exotic, foreign trips to see butterflies that I never will, I turn a strange shade of green 😊😊

I'm afraid I haven't seen much recently as I'm pretty much grounded again! Remember those cute little hoglets? Well, here they are now at 150gms, a long way from the 25–30gms where they started:



Should mean I have more time but in a déjà-vu situation, another Jack Russel dug up another nest of 4 (weighing only 30 gms), only this time the Mum hasn't been located so it's back to the 2 hourly feeds for a few weeks. Still, there's always the moth trap to fall back on and last night I was delighted at the number and variety of moths. For me the star was undoubtedly a magnificent Lobster moth (below with a few others):





How can such an exotic looking moth be so well camouflaged??!!



Buff-Tip



Green silver lines



Flame???



Peppered moth



Don't know and not a great shot but green is my favourite colour 😊

... and another, also a poor shot, snatched whilst it was on the outside of the box, before it flew. I believe it is a Blotched Emerald:



Now my little Mullein larva I posted 10 days ago have grown into striking caterpillars:



Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 19-Jun-17 10:31 PM GMT

Desperately trying to stay awake for another feed and managing somehow on 5hrs sleep a few shots from recently:





Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Jun-17 03:08 PM GMT



It seems ages ago now when I expressed some concern to Pete that my PH might emerge too early. 2 of the pupa had darkened to almost black and I assumed emergence was imminent. Not so! Like the Green Hairstreaks before them, they hung on, proving Pete right when he predicted they would be spot on time. This morning, although I missed the actual emergence of No 1, I managed the following shots:







After about an hour he took off and landed briefly in the lilac tree which he used as a stepping stone to get 20' up the Leylandii. This is the last I saw of him enjoying the early morning sun before he went higher still:



Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 20-Jun-17 03:13 PM GMT

Great sequence again Pauline, is my imagination are is every thing early this year? GOLDIE 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 21-Jun-17 06:20 PM GMT

Great sequence Pauline – it seems that's the way to get shots of Purple Hairstreaks 😊👍 You were bang on with the second green ID, but the first was a Common Emerald 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 21-Jun-17 11:12 PM GMT

Shame few of us get to see Purple Hairstreaks at such close quarters and so fresh, as they are truly beautiful.

Thanks for sharing that sequence, Pauline.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-Jun-17 09:54 AM GMT

No, I don't think it's your imagination Goldie – some species seem to be ridiculously early. Thank you for the compliment.

Cheers Wurzel, appreciate the ID (need all the help I can get with moths!). There's always Browndown y'know which is where I would be under different circumstances – and you've been threatening to visit for a while now (They are out there, nice and fresh and in easy reach 😊).

Thank you David. I've probably said this before but Hairstreaks are my favourite group. If I had to choose a favourite within the group I'd be hard pushed as they are all gorgeous. I would love to see some of the non-native Hairstreaks as photos on this site show some stunning examples.

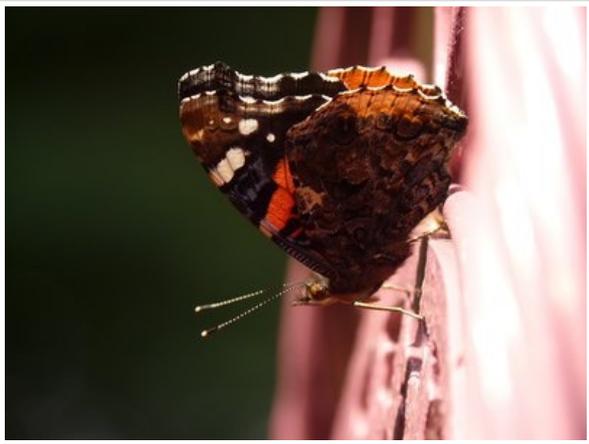
Yesterday evening I saw my first PE at the Straits. It touched down briefly on the first watch tower before circling round and back up into the canopy. Although early evening the butterflies were still manic – apart from the ones taking minerals from the path (including Skippers). I saw 3 pairs of mating Meadow Browns but somehow I don't think this will attract the attention of the mating pair of PE that fell out of a tree in Oxford I think (alho I remember it happening once before in Botany Bay years ago). Few photos taken but I had been hankering after a nice shot of WA with wings closed and I almost achieved that – if it wasn't for the background:



Earlier in the day I'd been watching a selection of butterflies in the garden including several Red Admirals who were all acting in a strange manner – hanging upside down under leaves and plants whilst opening and closing their wings – they almost looked as if they were panting 😊 but perhaps the fanning action was to help cool down?



Making good use of the Valerian kindly supplied by Martin



Liking the colour I painted the garden furniture 😊

Incidentally, a RA was flying around the garden at 9.15pm a couple of nights ago and I had my first SWF in the garden too.

Checking on the PH the colours on this pupa seem to indicate that the next one is due to emerge very soon – surely!



Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 22-Jun-17 11:47 AM GMT

Cheers for the reminder Pauline – any idea how yo can find out if it's open to the public as I thought it was MOD owned? Great set of shots as per the norm 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 22-Jun-17 11:07 PM GMT

That PH certainly looks as though it's about to burst forth, Pauline.

Be prepared (I'm sure you will).

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Jun-17 09:29 AM GMT

Thanks Wurzel. If you look at Alan Thornbury's web site, a description of Browdown can be found under Hampshire sites and on there is a link to the Lee-on-solent residents web site which includes a chart of opening times. That's what I look at anyway.

I've never seen one quite so blue David and with such a clear indication that emergence was imminent I was determined to spend some time watching yesterday morning to get those emergence shots. In the event, I didn't have that time due to the needs of other critters so missed that opportunity. When I checked it at 10.00am it was fully 'fledged' and raring to go. The first surface it touched on was the window of the garden room where I grabbed a single shot before it flew off over the roof top in the direction of the Oaks – a female:



Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Jun-17 04:15 PM GMT

Seems it's not just the outside butterflies I'm missing out on, but the home variety too. This morning I found 2 more of my Commas ready to go (from eggs on my little Elm) and if things carry on like this much longer, chances are I shall also miss my Holly Blue emerging – the pupa looks like a skull (or is it lack of sleep causing me to hallucinate 😊😊)





Still, it'll all be worth it if these little mites make it thru!



Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 23-Jun-17 06:23 PM GMT

Lovely shot of the Hedge Hog Pauline, I'd one in the back garden a couple of day's ago, I put some food out but there were no takers, I got a shot of it, it was quite cute. Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 23-Jun-17 06:53 PM GMT

I saw your photo Goldie – great! Keep putting out the food. It has just occurred to me that some folk might think I am feeding them with milk – NEVER do that. This is a special formula. Cat and dog food (meat, not fish), is good and they seem to enjoy the dried cat food – cheaper than standard hedgehog mixes or you could make your own (grated apple, grated carrot, bit of grated cheese, a crumbled weetabix and a bit of mince or cat food all mixed up).

Re: Pauline

by David M, 24-Jun-17 12:03 AM GMT

That young hedgehog is positively adorable, Pauline. I **do** hope they all pull through.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 24-Jun-17 08:46 AM GMT

Yes Pauline, keep us updated and thanks for the advice. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Jun-17 01:25 PM GMT

Fingers crossed David!

I'll be in touch about the Hoglets by email Goldie – thanks for your interest.

A 3rd PH emerged today but not a cat in hell's chance of seeing that happening. Only just managed to grab a few shots before she took off – yes, a second female to join the original male:



Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 24-Jun-17 05:45 PM GMT

Absolutely fantastic shots Pauline 📷📷 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-Jun-17 05:23 PM GMT

Thank you so much Goldie. I'm afraid all my recent shots have been very rushed. I have managed to stretch the 2-hourly feeds out to 2.5 hours. Might not sound like much but that extra 30 mins gives me a lot more flexibility in where I can get to and today I opted for another visit to the WLH. There are some who will be interested in details - I was there for about 90 mins between 1.00pm and 2.30pm. There were about 6 different individuals seen, all down nectaring on bramble or creeping thistle (nearly got 3 in one shot!). One even landed on my arm so I carefully transferred him back to a thistle. A few shots below:





A couple were quite worn:





Thought I'd try a different sort of shot instead of 'same old, same old' but must get that dof sorted out 😊



Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 25-Jun-17 06:06 PM GMT

You're certainly having a good Hairstreak year Pauline 😊

Re: Pauline

by trevor, 25-Jun-17 07:20 PM GMT

I like that last WLH image in particular, the angle to the light shows the wing texture nicely. As with the Brown Hairstreak the underside is surprisingly coarse.

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 25-Jun-17 09:58 PM GMT

Fantastic Hairstreaks Pauline 🍷🍷🍷 Were the Whitters at Cosham?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 25-Jun-17 11:40 PM GMT

Most of those images are exceptional, Pauline, but that fresh female Purple Hairstreak is to die for.

Thanks for sharing.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 28-Jun-17 09:27 AM GMT

Pauline, 🍷🍷🍷 What else I can I say 😊 I've found out where some of WLH reside so hope fully I'll get to see them, (if it stops raining) . Your doing okay with the species considering your feeding the Hogs on 2 hr feeds, It must be great having all the species so close to you in the area so you can pop out and take shots 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Art Frames, 28-Jun-17 12:56 PM GMT

Pauline, Your pictures of hairstreaks are beautiful. It is lovely to see a butterfly I have only ever seen in single specimens in number and perfect condition. 😊😊 This is a lovely place as it helps to ease some of the negative feelings about the loss of numbers of butterflies in the UK. Clearly, there are still some good places. Just fewer of them where I live.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 30-Jun-17 09:36 PM GMT

Thank you all so much for your amazing comments. You have taken the time and trouble to look and appraise so I feel it is only courteous to reply individually but I hope on this occasion you will forgive me if I don't. I have a lot of catching up to do. It has been a challenging week. Not only have I felt a bit cut off as my PC was in for repair but due to an infection I have also missed out on the butterflies. However, I'm almost finished the 2nd course of antibiotics so I thought it was time to get out and about. The hedgehog feeds are now 3-4 hourly so today I made a beeline for Browndown. I didn't find what I was looking for and I didn't find any Graylings either but there were plenty of Purple Hairstreak - mostly worn. The 4 I was watching in one tree consisted of a male and 3 females (I think). 2 of the females seemed to be egg-laying - something I have not seen before but couldn't get it on camera.





Gatekeepers were also out in force but quite active:



Lots of Silver-y moths around:



... and a really strange fly/wasp? which spent an awful long time just 'displaying', running back and forth and twirling round with wings open. The best I could do:



Overall, a lot of butterflies in a short time including Small Coppers, Skippers and quite a few gorgeous Red Admirals, including this one which seemed intent on getting sap:



Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 30-Jun-17 09:50 PM GMT

More great Purple Hairstreaks Pauline 😊🇬🇧 Thanks for the info about Browdown, it's on my to do list, which unfortunately is getting longer by the day 😞😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 01-Jul-17 08:24 PM GMT

Wonderful Hairstreak shots, Pauline. I see plenty of Purples, but never near the ground, and every year I struggle to find White-letters. I look at your photos and drool... 🤤 (figuratively anyway! 😊)

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Jul-17 07:05 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel. Better get a wriggle on – before you know it we'll be looking for Brown ones! 😊

Thank you too Dave. I guess I'm lucky being fairly close to a venue where they're guaranteed to be at eye level. I wasn't so lucky today tho'. As I walked into my front garden I was met with this:



Thousands of them have gone under the wood into the fabric of the house 😬 Can't say there isn't any variety in life as each day seems to bring a fresh problem 😞😞

I decided to escape as I very much wanted to see a few female WLH's – just love those long tails 😊 I didn't get lucky there either seeing only 3 males, 2 of which were really very worn:



Great colony of Essex Skippers there to keep me amused whilst I waited and watched. A few shots below together with a strange sort of fly. I don't usually like flies but this one seemed harmless enough, and dare I say, quite attractive. I expect someone will now tell me it has THE most ferocious

bite! 😬



Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 02-Jul-17 07:43 PM GMT

You're safe with that fly, just a harmless hoverfly. One of the diagnostic features to separate them from other flies is clearly captured in your picture. It's the 'false wing margin' where the veins don't reach the edge of the wing and just run parallel to it. In other fly families the veins run right to the edge.

Those Honey bees were probably just swarming to set up a new hive. They normally take a pit stop when leaving the old hive before buggering off to make a new one. It's always worth contacting a local beekeeper who can safely deal with it. 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 02-Jul-17 10:00 PM GMT

Lovely set of shots again Pauline 😊 I took your advice Pauline and got wriggling and I managed to bag a Bentley Whitter myself today – my first ever from this reserve 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 02-Jul-17 10:36 PM GMT

That last Skipper image made me smile, Pauline. Well done for capturing it.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Jul-17 06:00 AM GMT

Thanks for the ID and re-assurance Buggy. I tried about a dozen bee-keepers but none able to help as the swarm are in the cavities behind the wood. They did however, provide me with the number of someone who might be able to remove them. Apparently I have a couple of weeks before they settle down and start chewing things and building things! Perhaps I should take up bee-keeping!

That's great Wurzel – I looked there once (by a bench or monument) without success. I expect to see your shots about September 😊😊 Great Marbled White shots btw.

Thank you David. I think the Skippers are such cute, photogenic creatures but my favourite has to be the SSS. Looking forward to seeing them this year.

Yesterday, whilst watching the bees, I spent some time monitoring my Holly Blue pupa. I have no idea when to expect the butterfly to emerge and will probably miss the emergence as a result. However, I find the subtle and changing colours of the pupa to be very appealing, and it certainly seemed to darken as the day progressed. Just because I shall probably never see another one I am including a variety of shots from different angles:





Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 03-Jul-17 11:01 AM GMT

I know very little about bees but, if they're honey bees, I'd have thought they are a valuable asset! I'm sure you would enjoy bee-keeping, to fill up all your spare time 😊

That's an interesting series of photos of Holly Blue pupae.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Jul-17 08:18 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 You know what it's like here! I can miss out on food but I need my 7 hours kip 😊😊 Bee-keeping will have to wait even tho it's going to cost £65.00+ to have them removed!!!!

A bit of a sad day today as I made the 3rd round trip to collect Merlin's ashes but I did manage to spend some time watching the Holly Blue pupa before I left. I was surprised at the subsequent changes in appearance over about 2.5 hours. First the pupa darkened some more and the blue became almost electric before fading to a very pale cream:



Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 03-Jul-17 09:07 PM GMT

Interesting development in the Holly Blue. Looks like it's going to be a girl though 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 04-Jul-17 03:19 PM GMT

I would have been having a little panic by now Buggy, thinking I'd killed it, if it hadn't been for something Martin told me a while back, warning me that this happens in some species. I have subsequently found it to be true. Prior to emergence the butterfly seems to 'detach' from the casing and move down the 'canal'. In some species it is evident only by becoming translucent, as though a cling film coating is lifting from the pupa.

First off, thank you to Vince for the ID of my last strange creature – a picture-winged fly. I didn't have much time this morning (and I was determined to fit in a pub lunch 😊) so it had to be quite local. I can confirm that Chalkhills are out at Chalton:





It wasn't just Chalkhills I wanted to see. I wanted to see DGF and there were 5 or 6 in various states of wear, including and egg-laying female





Of course there weren't just Chalkhills and DGF. There were Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Gatekeeper, 3 Skipper species, Marbled White, a single Small Copper, Brown Argus (my first of the year!), Common Blue (singleton) and a Red Admiral fly by - all this accompanied to the purr of Turtle Doves but try as I might I couldn't spot them:



Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-17 07:32 PM GMT

Great shots Pauline, you've given me hope I'll get to see some CH's in Kent next week and hope fully the Marble's won't have disappeared, no sign of the Gatekeepers yet up here.

Sorry to hear you've been sick hope you're much better now. Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 04-Jul-17 09:13 PM GMT

Looking forward to your new Holly Blue, Pauline – one of my favorites as you know. Lovely Chalkhills – and new broods of all those others too! I feel a trip to Denbies coming on... 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

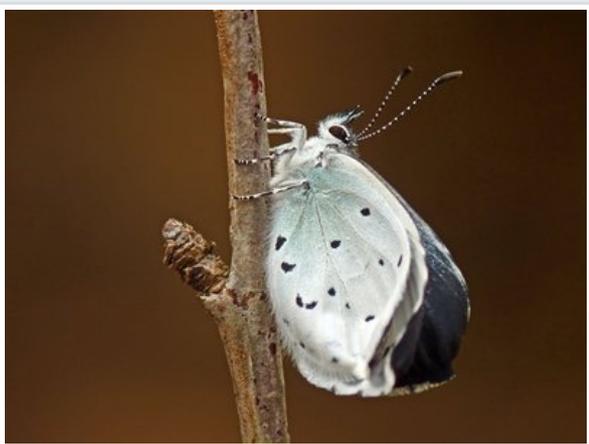
by Pauline, 05-Jul-17 05:51 AM GMT

Thank you Goldie – I'll keep my fingers crossed for the Chalkhills 😊

Thank you too Dave. You've produced some amazing images of Holly Blue this year – a result of great observation and field craft. I won't keep you waiting any longer but I'm afraid my photos of the adult are not a patch on yours. She didn't even have the grace to open her wings for me after all the care and attention I lavished on her 😊😊 However, I did get some shots of the actual emergence which show more detail than my usual efforts. She emerged about 90 seconds after I took the last image of the pupa (so you were right again Vince 😊). Looks like someone crawling out of a sleeping bag 😊 :









She was keen to depart. After 15 mins I turned my back momentarily, assuming wrongly that I probably had about an hour to get some decent shots. Not a chance. As I turned back I watched her take off up into the trees – the quickest drying wings I have experienced to date!

Re: Pauline

by Art Frames, 05-Jul-17 08:50 AM GMT

Pauline

I was entranced by the earlier pictures of the Holly Blue pupa but that emergence set is wonderful 😊😊

What a shame she flew away so quickly. But what you have is a fantastic story already. Very impressed and would have loved to have seen it. 😊

best wishes

Peter

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Jul-17 06:04 AM GMT

I'm so pleased you liked them Peter but I would be embarrassed to tell you how many hours I have spent watching various pupa over the last couple of years to get such shots. In comparison this one was relatively easy because of the very apparent changes which signaled emergence was imminent.

Reading a forecast for heavy thunderstorms I thought I would have a crack at the moth trap, hoping I might find one of those large, impressive Hawk moths or similar which I like so much. I did not get a hawk moth but I was not disappointed as I found my first ever Scarlet Tiger moth. I had no idea they were so big – or so docile:





I am always pleased to see the Buff-tip and on this occasion there were several:



This little Festoon is one I hadn't seen before and although I have seen Black Arches I hadn't realised what a colourful abdomen they have:



There were many, many others including Snout, Common Footman, Rosy Footman, Beautiful Hook-tip, Clouded Border but I only had time to photograph a few more – the gorgeous Buff Ermine:



what I think is a September Thorn?:



and a couple of others which I have as yet failed to identify but wonderful camouflage on this one:



It is good to know there is such quantity and variety around the garden which may well be due to the fact that I am surrounded by a variety of different types of habitat.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 06-Jul-17 07:27 PM GMT

Lovely Moth shots Pauline, Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by bailey1409, 06-Jul-17 08:36 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

First moth is a Garden Tiger.
The other two are Poplar Grey, I think, and a Dun-bar.

Cheers

Maurice

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 06-Jul-17 09:58 PM GMT

Maurice beat me to it Pauline, I've still to photograph one of those 🦋 Lovely Chalkhills as well, just when I thought I'd caught up 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 06-Jul-17 10:38 PM GMT

Delightful Holly Blue sequence, Pauline. The undersides are a beautiful, clean white that I suppose wears off by the time most people get to observe the butterfly in the wild.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-Jul-17 06:46 PM GMT

Thank you Maurice, Wurzel, Trevor, Martin and Andy for correcting my Garden Tiger moth ID. Don't know what I'd do without your help and guidance. Take that Dun-bar for example that Maurice and Andy kindly identified. I looked it up and there is such a huge amount of variation in the colours and tones it seems, I'm not sure how it is possible to get a handle on these creatures – but I shall keep trying if you keep helping me 😊😊

It was an absolute joy to watch that Holly Blue emerge David. I'm so glad you liked the bits I was able to catch on camera.

Thank you Goldie – there are just so many it is quite overwhelming. I think that's why I don't put the moth trap out too often.

Thanks for the compliment Wurzel – those Chalkhills are stunning when they're fresh 😊

Today I found myself watching several female Essex Skippers egg-laying and it occurred to me that I have not seen that before. I've seen loads of Small Skippers ovi-posting but the Essex seemed to be a bit more secretive – which made it harder to get shots of them without disturbance. I had read that the ovipositor is specially designed/shaped to probe and unfurl the sheath of the grass to deposit the eggs inside (same as the Small Skipper) but I had never managed to capture it on camera before:



A closer view:





It looked to me as if these eggs are more oval shaped than those of the Small Skipper but perhaps that was just the angle I was looking from. I know I have said this before but if anyone is tempted to take a look at the eggs of these Skippers please do remember that they are not anchored to the plant in any way – they are loose, they roll about and could be lost if great care is not taken:



Small Skipper eggs below by way of comparison:



Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 07-Jul-17 07:40 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Just been catching up on your diary, I am really behind on keeping up with what everyone else has been up to this year, the time is absolutely flying by.

Some amazing images in your recent reports...the Hairstreaks, Fritillaries, Chalkhills, that Holly Blue emergence sequence to mention just a few. That final Holly Blue underside is amazing, I never realised they were looked like that when freshly emerged, all the ones I have seen have had the pale silvery underside.

Great moth photos too 😊. I love the Garden Tiger, brings back memories of finding 'Woolly Bears' when I a nipper and keeping them to rear through. Sadly, they have become somewhat of a rarity around here these days. Ironically, Scarlet Tigers used to be a rare here but they have been spreading in recent years and there have been sightings all all over the place in Warwickshire this year (although not in my garden yet), my son Chris had 14 in his garden trap in Stratford-upon-Avon last week, a trap I hasten to add that he has borrowed off me so I could claim them as mine 😊

Maurice is right with the Poplar Grey. They can be confused with Knot Grass, I have had a few of both and when you see them together you can see the difference.

Had a few Dun-bars too and no two have them have looked the same...the wonderful world of moth variation eh!

All the best,

Neil.

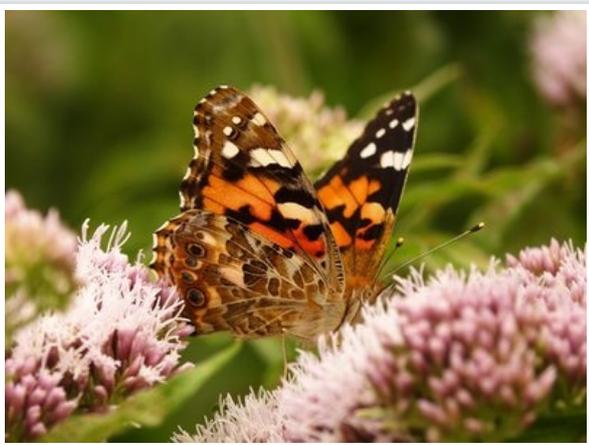
Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 08-Jul-17 07:25 PM GMT

You really do say some of the nicest things about my diary Neil 😊 Please do feel free to comment any time, as much as you like 😊😊 Seriously, I'm glad it's not just me that can find these moth variations a bit confusing. I'm tempted to put the trap out again tonight but the bee-keeper is coming in the morning to try for a second time to get these bees out of the house! The Old Lady I have been caring for emerged yesterday and flew off without so much as a 'by your leave' but co-incidentally, there was one in the house today (not for the first time) and I managed a quick shot of that one 😊

Today I had a quick look round Noar Hill. The Hemp Agrimony is fully out and alive with butterflies but I couldn't spot a Brown Hairstreak – fresh Red Admirals, SWF, Peacock, Painted Lady, lots of Skippers, Large Whites etc etc









Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 08-Jul-17 09:00 PM GMT

Lovely Large Whites and Painted Lady, both species that have been short thrift this year. I'm very surprised we haven't seen more PL what with all the warm weather that we keep getting from the continent 🤔

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 09-Jul-17 02:57 PM GMT

Cheers Buggy. Never mind PL, I'd love to see a few Clouded Yellow this year 😊

Yesterday I quickly checked out Oxenbourne for SSS. I have previously expressed concerns about this tiny colony which seems to be getting smaller each year. No sightings yet but it's still early days so I won't get too pessimistic just yet! Lots of Skippers, moths and a few Chalkhills:





What I'd really like to know is what is this bird? I hope the photo is good enough for ID (it was quite some distance). It looked a bit Dunnock coloured but what I found strange was that it seemed to have a bit of a crest. An immature?



Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 09-Jul-17 03:30 PM GMT

Hi Pauline, looks like it could be an immature Yellowhammer.

Nice shots of the Holly Blue emerging and lovely shots from Noar, especially the Silver-washed Frits 😊

Mike

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 09-Jul-17 04:07 PM GMT

I'd go for Dunnock Pauline for your bird. The beak is all wrong for a yellowhammer, too fine. It looks a bit moth eaten so perhaps in the middle of a moult.

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-17 11:01 PM GMT

More lovely photos Pauline – especially the Painted Lady and the Chalkhill Blue on Hawthorn 🤔🌿

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-Jul-17 06:06 AM GMT

I can see exactly where you're coming from Mike – that was my first thought too. However, I think Buggy is right (thanks Paul) as having looked online at some photos of juvenile Dunnocks there is one almost exactly the same, right down to that little 'crest'.

Cheers Wurzel, and thanks for taking the time to comment.

Well, the bees have finally gone – all 6,000 of them!!! And it cost me much more than initially quoted 😞 The reason for that was the job turned into an 'evacuation' as during their 8 day residency they had already produced masses of honeycomb (the white stuff in the photo). I am now left with some house repairs as many panels had to be removed to Hoover out the bees:



The last few days outings have been brief or non-existent due to this tiny Goldfinch brought by a neighbour late one evening – it is such a sweet little thing but more hand-feeding and extra work:



So concentrating on the garden wasn't all bad – I watched Whites egg-laying and a Comma circled round looking for 'her' Elm tree which she has been visiting daily for some days – unfortunately, as it is potted, I had moved it into an aviary for the Goldfinch (having first checked that there weren't yet more larva on it). A couple of Holly Blues were behaving a bit strangely taking a liking to my strawberry plants and clearly after moisture, repeatedly returning to one of the bird baths. At one point I feared for the male's safety as he followed the ducks around the garden. I tried to stay between them to prevent him ending up as a small snack:



The last shot seems to show the butterfly standing on its tip-toes in the extreme heat, something that was mentioned recently by Dave I believe and not something I had ever noticed before until he commented on it. Being at home also gave me the chance to reflect on the Commas I recently reared. The last one emerged a couple of days ago giving me a 100% success rate with this little lot which all came from the aforementioned Elm tree. I have resisted posting shots as each individual emerged but have selected a few in summary (a couple even had the good grace to open wings for me before departing):





Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 10-Jul-17 10:06 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, see you've got hourly feeds again 😊 lovely little bird 😊
I've been busy with the Comma's too,(love your Comma shots,) there seems to be loads of them this year at HLB near where I live,
I've not seen Holly Blues yet , it's great to know they're out and about again 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Jenks, 10-Jul-17 01:13 PM GMT

You`re certainly kept busy with all these waifs and strays ! I originally read your message quickly (too quickly as it turns out) as "Well, the beeRs have finally gone – all 6,000 of them!!!" and thought " Crikey, that was one hell of a weekend " !. Then I re-read your message. That`ll teach me to speed-read.

Best of luck with hand feeding your latest arrival.

Jenks

Re: Pauline

by Art Frames, 10-Jul-17 06:28 PM GMT

Hi Pauline thanks for commenting on my pics, much appreciated. I like reading your diary but it does make me feel exhausted... 😊

You do pack a lot in. Some clearly not as welcome as others. We just had our facias and soffits replaced. We repatriated about six bin liners of starling nests, a few solitary bee homes and one ex wasp nest. Luckily the guys thought that normal and all part of the job! 😊

I have to say your Holly Blues are very attractive, I've never noticed how white the u/s is before. And Commas are definitely on my list of my most favourite butterfly, but so are lots of species.... 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Jul-17 01:14 PM GMT

Thank you Goldie. I hope you see many butterflies this week in Kent – the forecast is saying 30 degrees!! 😊

Good to hear from you Jenks. Now, that is the sort of weekend I SHOULD be having 😊

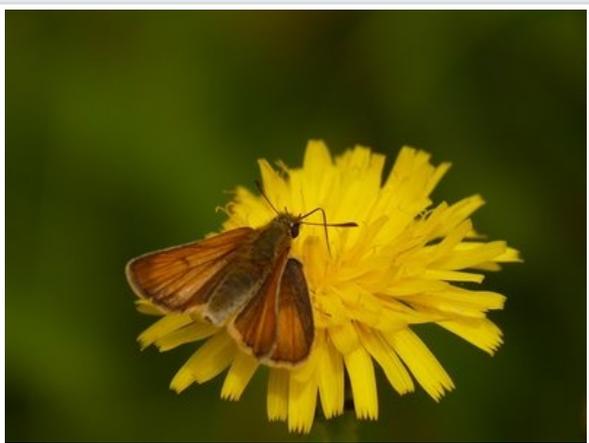
Thank you too Peter. I thought I'd better take a quick break so you could catch your breath and recover 😊 Trouble is, there's now a fair bit of catching up to do. I think I'll just start by throwing it all in together so here are a few shots from my last couple of local outings:



A lovely fresh Painted Lady at Noar Hill gave me the run-around. I'm not sure if it's the same one as I saw a couple of days earlier – I thought it looked a bit smaller and I'm not sure of the gender of either. It landed on some of the most gorgeous flowers (for about 2 seconds) and if I could have got those shots I would have been well pleased. However, I had to start with a distant shot but eventually got closer:



There were numerous Skippers – only to be expected at this time of year:





A stunningly fresh Peacock was cruising around but I only managed a snatched shot. Likewise, there were several very fresh Red Admirals but the only

one I could catch up with was showing his age (bit like me 😊😓)



A couple of moths. I was going to try to ID these before posting but just taking a break from painting the living room so time is short:





I am puzzled by the proboscis on this Ringlet as I can't work out what that appendage is? Part of the insect? A bit of plant?





Lovely female SWF 😊



oops! How did that sneak in here 😊

Nice to bump into Mr T too – enjoyed our little catch-up 😊

Re: Pauline

by bailey1409, 14-Jul-17 01:39 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Try Pretty Chalk Carpet and Common Carpet.

Cheers

Maurice

Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 14-Jul-17 03:54 PM GMT

I suspect that your Ringlet has picked up some orchid pollinia on its proboscis. Many orchids carry their pollen in a little 'package' on a sticky stalk that attaches itself to a visiting insect and so gets carried to fertilise another flower. These may be Common Spotted Orchid pollinia. There's a description <http://firwoodcottage.blogspot.co.uk/2011/07/> (look down towards the end of the page) of finding 20 pollinia on the proboscis of a trapped moth!

Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 14-Jul-17 07:10 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Great spot of the two sets of pollina on the Ringlet and as David says they could be common spotted as they are described as being 'pale brownish pink to purple' in Harrap but it may be a little late for this species?

Noar Hill is probably one of the best sites in the country for orchids, as well as butterflies, and does have at least 13 species to choose from! I know Frog occurs here, is a purple colour and is flowering about now so this may also be a possibility?

The butterfly will need to find another orchid to shed them or find a bit of Mr.Muscle 😊

Kind Regards

Mark

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Jul-17 06:51 PM GMT

Cheers Maurice - I appreciate that; saved me some precious time 😊

Fascinating Mike! 😊 I have read that link and shall be checking moths now as well as butterflies 😊 There is just so much collective knowledge on this site I am frequently astounded 😊 Having said that, if anyone knows what this creature is, found as I was scrutinising Thistles I would be very interested to know:



I think I am getting a bit obsessed Mark! 😊 I spotted this GVV today. I think I shall be looking at them all much more closely! BTW, loved your Florida butterflies especially that Red banded Hairstreak which was really something special. I am guessing you might have had problems getting that shot?



Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 15-Jul-17 07:37 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

More pollina!

I will post a trip report on Florida when I get time next week - need to sort the photos - Red banded hairstreak was probably the commonest lycaenid I came across and a very pretty butterfly.

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 15-Jul-17 07:56 PM GMT

Your mystery bug looks like a Thistle Tortoise Beetle larvae, *Cassida rubiginosa* 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 15-Jul-17 10:03 PM GMT

Interesting set of shots Pauline with the pollina (perhaps you need to change your Username to Paullina 😊) looking at the two sets they seem to be quite similar in appearance so possibly from the same species? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 17-Jul-17 12:41 PM GMT

Looking forward to reading that Mark 😊

I don't know how you know all this stuff Buggy but thank you! 😊

You do make me laugh Wurzel 😊 I've been called a lot of things but never that!! 😊 And yes, they do look similar, don't they?

Well, this morning I spent some time briefly on Noar Hill trying to catch up with a Clouded Yellow which I know has been there for a few days (thanks Nick). I'm sorry to say I failed to spot it, but whilst searching for Brown Hairstreaks I came across this!!!! At NOAR HILL!!!! Are there any Elms here???? Funny thing is, one evening last week I was chatting to an elderly couple there and the gentleman told me that a couple of years ago he had seen a WLH here and the report was published by BC. Unfortunately I didn't get any details of who the couple were but I assume BC has a record. At first I thought my eyes were deceiving me:





Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-17 12:44 PM GMT

Cracking find there Pauline 😊🍷 It seems that Whitters and other Hairstreaks often turn up where they're least expected – possibly because they're there but not seen?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 17-Jul-17 05:22 PM GMT

Nice to catch up on your diary after my long absence, Pauline. Love the juvenile Goldfinch and the hedgehog and well done with that White Letter Hairstreak. This is a species I wish I could find a reliable site for near to where I live where they can be observed at close quarters as you did with yours.

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 17-Jul-17 10:59 PM GMT

That's a nice WLH find, Pauline. I forget how lovely Noar Hill is at other times, not just for the Duke. Clouded Yellows seem to seek it out as well! 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-Jul-17 06:33 AM GMT

Cheers Wurzel. I am absolutely certain in the case of WLH that they are under-recorded as it can take a great deal of time and effort (and luck) to search out colonies not previously recorded (I am sure Paul H would agree). Some years ago there used to be Black Hairstreaks in Surrey. I was given details of location and Susie did a lot of legwork to try to establish if they were still in existence there (sadly without success, but who knows?). I have just been informed that there have been a couple of other sightings of WLH in recent years in the area where I spotted it so once I have some 'proper' time I will have a look round for Elm.

Thank you David. I am assuming there are no Elms on your patch? Incidentally, I have noticed on a few sites I have visited recently (in different counties) that a fair few Ash seem to be dying off. Hope they aren't going the same way as the Elm as I seem to remember reading they are being attacked by a fungus?

Thank you too Dave. Noar Hill is truly glorious at the moment. The colours of the flowers are just amazing, only surpassed by those of the butterflies. I should mention some of the other species I saw there yesterday as well as the WLH – 4 species of Whites and 3 of Skippers, Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper; gorgeous velvety Peacocks, Red Admiral, SWF, and DGF, Small Heath (of course) Common Blue, a single Small Blue, fleeting glimpse of Brown Hairstreak, vibrant Small Tortoiseshell and quarrelsome Commas and Brimstone. I didn't see the Clouded Yellow but I saw my second Hummingbird-hawk moth of the season (no photo obviously 😊!):







Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-Jul-17 08:59 PM GMT

I was a little surprised today to see a Red Admiral egg-laying on nettle – not on the leaf which I had assumed was the norm, but choosing to lay on the seed heads or flowers (whatever they are 😊😊). Great camouflage though 😊



Whilst scrutinising the nettle patch for anything else of interest I came across this egg which is clearly more developed but I'm not sure whether it is Red Admiral, Comma or something else:



Noar Hill is always changing and today the Marbled Whites seemed to have been replaced by a myriad of Brimstones:





I watched a lovely blue female Common Blue egg-laying but these eggs are really so small this was the best I could do in the glaring sun:



Before leaving I watched a considerable amount of Small Blue activity, both male and female. They were all quite frantic and to get at least one shot I had to beat this individual into submission with an old twig as evidenced by the marks on the wings 😊



Re: Pauline

by Janet Turnbull, 18-Jul-17 10:37 PM GMT

Poor little Blue! I watched a female Silver-spotted Blue laying eggs but try as I might, I could not find them, they were either so tiny or very well concealed. I'm still not sure which is the Red Admiral egg on the nettle flower – as you say, well camouflaged!
Janet

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 19-Jul-17 10:16 PM GMT

Great set of shots Pauline especially the double Brimstone 🤩 not something I've seen before 🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 19-Jul-17 11:00 PM GMT

Nice Brimstone shots, Pauline. Regarding your comments about local elms – we DO have a few here and there, but the problem is that the WLHs seem reluctant to leave the upper reaches of the trees round these parts. This is why I'm always very envious of those who can get up close and personal with this fascinating species.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Jul-17 05:34 PM GMT

Hi Janet, just like the Common Blue eggs, SSB eggs are tiny and can be very difficult to locate. Sometimes I even carry a hand lens with me! As for the

Red Admiral eggs which were not laid on the leaf, I have circled the egg so that it is more obvious:



Thanks Wurzel – there were loads of them but I do like that shot 😊

Thank you too David. I can understand that it must be very frustrating if you know they are there and they just won't come down 😡 A tall ladder or a chain saw perhaps?? 😊😂

Today in very blustery conditions which were not conducive to photography I was pleased to see 2 male SSS even if they were down in the grass – possibly the first recorded in Hampshire.



There was plenty of other butterfly activity including what I assume is a second brood Dingy Skipper:



I watched a couple of female DGF, both egg-laying:



....and several Common Blue engaged in the same activity:



A single Small Copper and several Brown Argus were also noted.

Re: Pauline

by David M, 20-Jul-17 06:39 PM GMT

Wow! A second brood Dingy! I've only ever seen that on one occasion.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 21-Jul-17 11:59 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, just catching up on some posts, love the Brimstone shots also the SS Skipper ones, I looked for them yesterday but no luck, been very busy here, hope your feeling better now, let me know Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Jul-17 05:22 PM GMT

Come to think of it David, I don't think I've EVER seen one! Wow! 😊 I have been keeping my eyes open for 2nd brood Dukes but I'll be surprised if that happens given the extent of the predation of eggs and larva this year 😞

Thank you Goldie. I'll email you soon but it has been a bit manic here 😊

I would have liked to have spent a bit more time on the moth trap this morning but there just wasn't any to spare given unforeseen circumstances. Amongst all the moths I noticed Black Arches, Bright-line Brown-eye, Brimstone, various Footman (or should that be Footmen!). An old favourite, the Poplar Hawk-moth was present and what I believe is a Yellow-tail (as opposed to Brown-tail). I think one of the others was a Pebble Prominent – but I've been caught out with that before as I think there is another similar one which escapes me right now. A pretty little thing I have identified as *LOZOTAENIODES FORMOSANA* caught my attention but the star today was the Pine Hawk-moth – another splendid specimen which I have never before encountered:





Re: Pauline

by bailey1409, 21-Jul-17 07:24 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

Your moths, Yellow-tail and Lesser Swallow Prominent. Similar to Swallow Prominent (not a Pebble Prominent).

Cheers

Maurice

Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 21-Jul-17 08:31 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

I love the Pine Hawk...one I have yet to see 🍷🍷

I could be wrong but I think your micro is *Rhyacionia buoliana* or possibly the very similar *R. pinicolana* rather than *L. formosana*...very similar but I have had *formosana* and it has a slightly different 'look' to it.

All the best,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by bailey1409, 21-Jul-17 08:55 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

I agree with Neil in so much that it isn't *R. formosana*. Having had a closer look at the micro I think that it is *R. pinicolana*, but I'm not an expert on these micros.

Cheers

Maurice

Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 21-Jul-17 09:06 PM GMT

Some very nice sightings there, Pauline – especially the 2nd brood Dingy! I trust you'll send these into the appropriate BC branch; I suspect that, over the long term, there's a trend toward an increasing number of 2nd broods for usually-univoltine species! 😊 Can't wait for the White Admiral 2nd brood ;-)

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 22-Jul-17 08:29 PM GMT

Cheers Pete! I tend to agree 😊

Thank you Maurice and Neil for help with ID's. Yesterday was a difficult day and with so little sleep I could hardly string a sentence together, let alone ID moths 😊😊

With the weather being as it is (chucking it down here with some thunder!! 😊) it seems a good opportunity for an update on the Puss Moth so below are a selection of shots from the many which I took whilst recording their development through the various stages:







Perhaps even more interesting to me was to observe the start of the pupation process. The colour of the larva darkened extremely quickly over a couple of hours and it started to search the various bits of bark I had provided looking for a place to pupate, exploring each nook and cranny. I watched as it chewed the wood to create its protective casing but at that point I had to leave it for an hour. When I returned it was a case of job done. It had abandoned the earlier attempt and had created an almost invisible casing, unfortunately spanning 2 separate bits of wood:







Re: Pauline

by Janet Turnbull, 23-Jul-17 04:26 PM GMT

Pauline wrote:

Hi Janet, just like the Common Blue eggs, SSB eggs are tiny and can be very difficult to locate. Sometimes I even carry a hand lens with me! As for the Red Admiral eggs which were not laid on the leaf, I have circled the egg so that it is more obvious:

P2080780bd.jpg

Hi Pauline, sorry for the delay, I've just seen your reply – thanks for showing me where to look. Seems an odd place to lay the egg if the flower will be finished before the egg hatches – she must have been in a rush! 😊

Re: Pauline

by David M, 23-Jul-17 06:03 PM GMT

What a transformation! The varying colours are quite remarkable in that sequence, Pauline. Nature at its best. 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 23-Jul-17 08:46 PM GMT

A fantastic sequence of shots Pauline and a second brood Dingy as well – I'll be running out of Mr Greens 😊😊😊🍷🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Jul-17 06:35 PM GMT

I'd marked the spot Janet and went to check on it this afternoon but it looks like it has been flattened by a tractor 😞

I couldn't agree more David – don't think I'll ever get bored of these mini miracles 😊

Cheers Wurzel. Don't think I deserve the Mr Greens tho as I reckon I just got lucky 😊

Having been sent some smashing shots of BH at Noar Hill there was nothing for it but to jump in the car and head for the Hill. After about an hour searching I was elated when I saw one but I was looking into the sun and was at an angle. I took a record shot anyway which was just as well because just as I moved into position for a perfectly posed butterfly a Gatekeeper sent it soaring off into the tree canopy:



A couple of moths disturbed during my search. After recent poor efforts I am reluctant to try to identify them but if pushed I'd say one was a Shaded Broad-bar and the other some sort of Footman, possibly Dingy, but definitely the same as the one that was in my bedroom the other night:



I don't think it's Scarce or Common, but hey, probably not even a Footman 😊😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 24-Jul-17 07:10 PM GMT

Great that you got the Borstreak Pauline 🤗🇮🇪 but I'm slightly disappointed that you didn't go to Shipton for it, I rely on your posts to let me know when they're flying there 😊😊 Is you moth a Buff Footman – it is a footman of some description 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 26-Jul-17 06:44 AM GMT

I'll be there soon enough Wurzel 😊 but you should know that Mike G reported 5 males at SB on 18th and some smashing shots of male and females

from Alan T yesterday. Get there pronto! 😄😄

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 26-Jul-17 12:48 PM GMT

Well done with BH Pauline, I think it will be a search a Gait Barrow for me though 🍷 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by bailey1409, 26-Jul-17 01:52 PM GMT

Hi Pauline

I would go with Dinky Footman for the moth.

Cheers

Maurice

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 26-Jul-17 04:51 PM GMT

Fantastic run of shots for that Puss Moth, like David says, Nature at its best! 😊

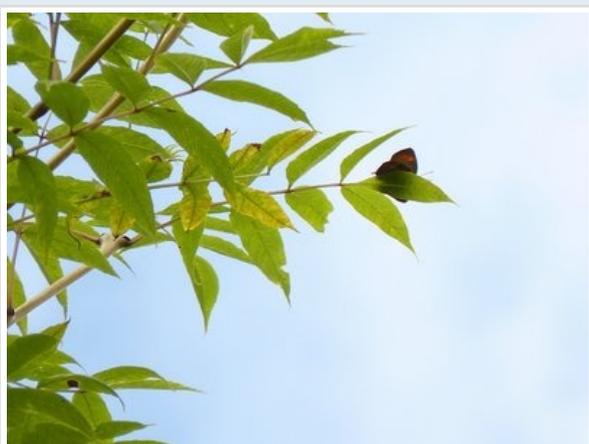
Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Jul-17 04:00 PM GMT

Thanks Maurice. I didn't dare disgrace myself a second time by guessing 😊😊 Still missing out on shuteye – this time it was the cat who caught a little Wood Mouse as it ran in my bedroom window at 2.00am and subsequently dropped it on the bed. I can tell you they are the very devil to catch up, especially given all the stuff stashed away under my bed! Eventually it was safely released at 3.30am!!!!

Cheers Buggy. I admit I was disappointed to miss the end of the process but I never imagined it would happen quite so quickly 😊 Next year eh?

Thank you Goldie but I think you are seeing far more than me at the moment. Today, in blustery changeable conditions I visited Noar Hill again. We watched a female Hairstreak 30' up a tree for 1.5 hours and whilst we were ever so briefly distracted, she disappeared!!!!!! 😊 This was quite a bit more than my camera can comfortably handle so this was the best I came away with:





I was pleased to see my 3rd Hummingbird Hawk moth of the season and although the photo is dreadful it is the best I have ever taken of this insect. I really do need to learn how to take shots of things that move 😊



Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 27-Jul-17 05:38 PM GMT

Pauline wrote:

..... I really do need to learn how to take shots of things that move

Were you, perhaps, looking in my direction when you wrote that? 😊

Clearly, what you need is a fast shutter speed but what's the best way to achieve that? If you use Shutter priority and set, say 1/1000s, it can simply be a recipe for under-exposure, unless you check a few other things. The light must be bright enough and your ISO setting must be high enough. With a Lumix FZ, however, it's unwise to go much above ISO400, if you want reasonable image quality.

My method would be to set the lens wide open (smallest aperture number – e.g. f/2.8) and then set Aperture Priority (A on the dial). This will make the camera select the highest possible speed for correct exposure. You should set either ISO400 or ISO Auto, with an upper limit of, perhaps ISO800. Another option is to set 'Sport mode' on the camera, which ought to do most of this for you.

by MikeOxon, 27-Jul-17 05:38 PM GMT

Deleted duplicate post

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 27-Jul-17 06:42 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, at least you've got some nice shots any way of the BH, even a distant photo would please me 😊 I was wondering if there's any BH's near us in Canterbury but no one has put shots up , I Havant seen any yet any way. Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 27-Jul-17 09:18 PM GMT

I appreciate that advice and explanation Mike. I shall certainly give it a try and let you know how it goes (you might well end up regretting this 😊😄).

Thanks Goldie. I believe you might have asked that question last year and I **think** that either Allen or Hoggers might have replied that there were no BH in Kent. However, I could be wrong and perhaps one of them might clarify.

I am hoping that there is still plenty of action yet to come on the butterfly front but my last couple of outings have had a very distinct end of season feel to them (even tho' it's only July!). Although many of the butterflies were suffering some wear and tear I can't complain about the sheer numbers and it was a pleasure just to stand and watch, or stroll among them. Below are a few shots taken without any consideration for their condition and with little care for composition of the photo. I was just enjoying the moment and their diversity, including the gorgeous subtle olive green sheen of the female SWF which I find so attractive in comparison to the brash orange of the male:









Re: Pauline

by David M, 27-Jul-17 09:37 PM GMT

In spite of the 'end of season' feel, Pauline, you're still seeing Large Skippers!!!

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 27-Jul-17 10:07 PM GMT

The nicked and worn butterflies are often the best ones – they have a story to tell 😊 I know what you mean about the autumnal feel though hopefully the forecast weather will slow things down a little and there will be some butterflies left by mid August 🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 28-Jul-17 06:57 AM GMT

Yes, I'm seeing an abundance of butterflies David 😊 (apart from Clouded Yellow which I can't seem to catch up with!). I think it is the plants that have much to do with the 'autumnal feel' – the ripe blackberries and some leaves changing colour. It certainly has been a strange season.

A bit like me then Wurzel 😊😊 It will certainly be interesting to see how things pan out on the butterfly front. An influx of migrants would be a fitting end 😊

Re: Pauline

by Art Frames, 28-Jul-17 08:47 AM GMT

Lovely autumn colours and feel to all of the pictures Pauline. I love the Holly Blue shot. I always feel privileged when one stops for me to take a picture of. Mostly they seem too busy and bustle onwards. Hope your season goes on for much much longer. 😊

Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 28-Jul-17 02:55 PM GMT

All this talk of Autumn – but it's only July and the schools only broke up quite recently 🤔

Re: Pauline

by trevor, 28-Jul-17 03:14 PM GMT

Reminds me of last year when Doug and myself met you at Noar Hill. Only one Brown Hairstreak was seen, but other Butterflies were everywhere. As for the Autumnal feel, the large, ripe, juicy Blackberries I found this morning did it for me.

Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 28-Jul-17 06:41 PM GMT

Yup, Autumn does feel like it's arrived early this year, SWF and WA all but gone. even the current weather has an autumnal feel to it, windy, rainy. I have a feeling there may be still a few surprises left for us yet though as long as it warms up again next month 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 29-Jul-17 04:48 PM GMT

Thank you Peter. I, too, hope the season continues as long as possible. BTW my favourite from your last post was that Skipper surrounded by all that spikey stuff 😊

D'you know Mike, it freaks me out a bit. Up North, many, many moons ago we used to go Blackberry picking in the middle of October 😊

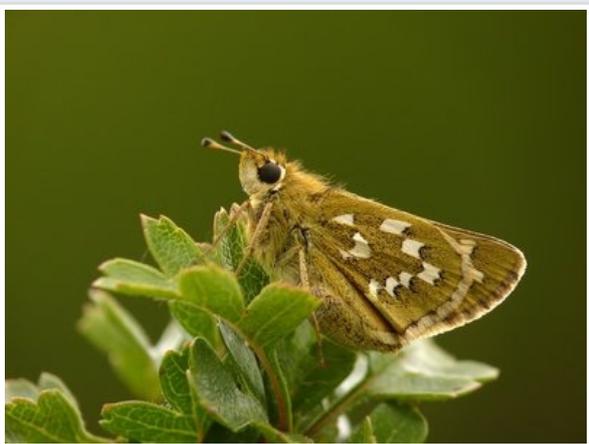
I think that's the last time we met up Trevor and you were the first one to spot that BH – a female. Most of us would have been pleased with a female but I know you wanted the male and at least now you have some splendid images of them so I can stop feeling guilty 😊 (Say hello to Doug for me!)

I hope you're right about the surprises Buggy. The showers today reminded me of 2012 so they didn't keep me in and as usual in warm wet weather the butterflies were active. I only saw a handful of SSS at Oxenbourne but several of them were newly emerged as evidenced by the meconium dripping from them:



I was pleased to see a couple of newly emerged females too but my hopes of seeing a mating pair did not come to fruition;





There were lots of other butterflies on the wing. Loads of Chalkhills – fresh, worn and this one which was clearly dead:



Some nice Small Blues and a few Small Coppers which didn't seem to mind the rain at all:



Re: Pauline

by millerd, 29-Jul-17 05:43 PM GMT

Lovely Silver-spots, Pauline. 😊 They are such a delightful subject to photograph. I've been picking blackberries since the beginning of the month this year: they are routinely appearing in mid-July these days. My memory is of doing this on the last day of the school holidays, so they are much earlier than 50 years ago certainly.

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 31-Jul-17 07:00 PM GMT

Thank you Dave - my favourite Skipper too. In view of your recent posts perhaps you ought to look away now 😊 Male, female, worn, fresh, wings open, wings closed - had the lot today but not the mating pair I was looking for 😊😊







Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 31-Jul-17 07:53 PM GMT

That is a fine set of images Pauline, they really are putting on an excellant show this year aren't they 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-17 10:53 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Pauline 😊🇬🇧 – are those from Shipton? I still haven't gotten there and now I'm in Wales until the weekend so hopefully they'll last 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 31-Jul-17 11:01 PM GMT

Delightful late summer images, Pauline! If only I could get out and see a few butterflies for myself! I'm highly envious.

Re: Pauline

by Mark Tutton, 01-Aug-17 09:08 AM GMT

Hi Pauline

just to say I have found some Frog Orchids in flower at Noar Hill and you can see the pollina which do look similar to the ones on the Ringlet. The flowers are very small on some of them though – sorry for posting photos on your diary but thought you might be interested?

kind regards

Mark



Frog orchid Showing pollina



Tiny Frog Orchid

Re: Pauline

by trevor, 01-Aug-17 10:59 AM GMT

I have just seen your Brown Hairstreaks, you certainly did get the lot !. Lovely shots.

When this season is over, and 2017 is analysed, I think it will go down as an exceptional Hairstreak year.

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 01-Aug-17 09:21 PM GMT

Thank you Paul. I find I am never disappointed at Shipton.

Knowing of your success at Shipton in the past Wurzel I am sure there will be several hanging on for you 😊 Have a smashing time in Wales 😊

Thank you David. I hope you get the opportunity before the season ends – else you will have to immerse yourself in the immatures 😊

It was very kind and thoughtful of you Mark to bring this to my attention – much appreciated. I certainly am interested and I think you are right – they are very similar to those on the Ringlet. I'd be interested to know where you found those orchids?

Cheers Trevor – it was an enjoyable 90 mins and very typical of Shipton from past experience.

I only have one very poor shot to post today. It was incredibly windy and butterflies in this area were scarce. However, this female Common Blue stood out – an ab surely? She wanted to open her wings but the wind was too strong. I only managed to grab this shot before she was blown away, never to be seen again 😞



Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 01-Aug-17 10:17 PM GMT

Fingers crossed Pauline 😊 Your female blue looks really blue, could be a named aberrant but I couldn't see a similar looking one in the Cockayne Collection 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 01-Aug-17 11:01 PM GMT

Shame your female Common Blue wasn't more accommodating, Pauline. She looks very unusual – powdery blue rather than the darker shade one normally sees.

Re: Pauline

by kevling, 02-Aug-17 07:55 AM GMT

Lovely set of images of the Brown Hairstreaks Pauline. They look in great shape down your neck of the woods.

Regards Kev

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Aug-17 04:17 PM GMT

It's good of you to go to so much trouble Wurzel – I only mentioned it because Iain Leach has some lovely shots in the ab. section which look just like it.

Believe me David I tried! I tried even harder to find her with no luck 😞 I guess it's just one of those frustrating incidents that we have all experienced 😞

Thank you for the compliment Kev – yes, it was really great to see them and even more satisfying to have found them soon after arrival 😊

I've been getting a bit weary of the weather dictating my activities so I decided to go out anyway to see what was about. I wasn't worried about the rain but that wind was **strong**!!!!!! I was wearing a loose t-shirt which was almost ripped off me several times and most of the butterflies were hunkered down for some protection (felt like joining them!). So, no pretty poses today but there was a lot going on – lovely fresh (and not so fresh Chalkhills), Common Blue, Brown Argus (no photo as I fell down a Badger hole pursuing it!) but no Adonis seen. A couple of Silver-y moths spotted together which I've not seen before. I scrutinised the Mullein plants for any sign of larva but no success there either, just loads of Shield bugs. Still, it certainly blew the cobwebs away 😊



I'm thinking this might be an ab. as it seems devoid of most markings?







Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-17 09:38 PM GMT

No worries Pauline 😊 That Chalkhill looks good for an ab, I think it was called a. *obscura* 😊 Your open winged female also looks unusual with those two white spots on the hind wing 😊 It's great to get out when you've been stuck in, I did manage a quick trip to Shipton – 2 males and 2 female Brostreaks and a 2nd Brood Dingy Skipper – sot hey're still going strong if you can get over there 😊

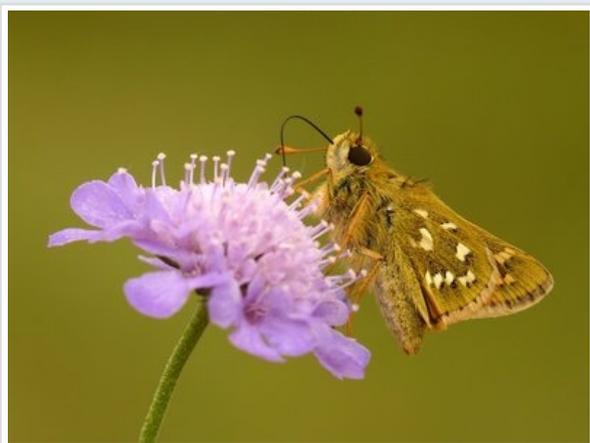
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 06-Aug-17 10:04 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel – for various reasons I shall probably be stuck in for a few days now so seeing as my internet access has just been restored (problems at local telephone exchange apparently) I'd better post these shots of SSS from Oxenbourne. I was pleased to see 3 females and 5-6 males – the most I have recorded for a few years now and unexpectedly one of the females was in the middle of the track not far from the gate (for those familiar with the site):





Re: Pauline

by Katrina, 06-Aug-17 10:23 PM GMT

Great photos Pauline, I particularly like the two on the same flower shot. Tricky to get the both in focus but you aced it!

Re: Pauline

by David M, 07-Aug-17 12:43 AM GMT

Agreed. The image of those two Silver Spotted Skippers facing off against one another is a cracker. Well done.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 07-Aug-17 10:39 AM GMT

Lovely Skipper's Pauline, I second everyone about the pair eyeing one another. Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 07-Aug-17 12:42 PM GMT

Thank you Katrina. I had to get down and dirty for those shots so I expect in a couple of days I shall be finding dozens of ticks on me 😞😓

Thank you too David although I think it was more luck than anything. There was a strong breeze blowing so I just took loads of shots hoping one would be in focus - and luckily it was 😊

I appreciate that Goldie - you've recently been posting shots of impressive species I'll probably never see but I do like your Brimstone feeding. I think capturing the butterfly engaged in some sort of activity really adds something to the shot.

Apart from the Skippers at Oxenbourne one of the other things that caught my attention was a Small Copper egg-laying. I've seen this before of course but nothing like this. This worn little lady crawled round and round the plant each time depositing an egg in the same place until I unwittingly disturbed her. Undeterred, she returned and did the same thing round the back of the plant, resting by her eggs before starting the same process about 18" away on another plant. Unfortunately, I could not stay to see her finish the job. I could have collected them all up easily but resisted as I have reared these before and I think it will be more interesting to monitor how they fare in the wild:



A few more shots from the same brief outing below:



I find it hard to believe that this is the first coupling for the female as both butterflies looked really quite worn.





Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 07-Aug-17 05:30 PM GMT

Great shots Pauline, as usual. Those two Skippers look like they're holding hands 😊

Re: Pauline

by Art Frames, 08-Aug-17 10:58 AM GMT

Some more lovely shots Pauline. Do you post them bigger anywhere? I'd love to be able to look at them if you do. 😊

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 08-Aug-17 03:37 PM GMT

Hi! Pauline, I love the shot of the Chalkhill, very nice, When I got home from taking those shots I found I'd been bitten but it was worth a few bites 😊 I hope your okay these days Pauline you sound to be rather grounded at times 🤔 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-17 09:50 PM GMT

Fantastic set of shots recently Pauline 😊👍, as usual I'm playing catch-up but the two Skipper shot is a cracker 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 09-Aug-17 07:45 AM GMT

I don't think I've ever seen such a tatty female 'in cop'. Perhaps it IS a second pairing for her...I fail to see how she could escape the attention of all the males for such a length of time for it to be her first.

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 09-Aug-17 03:43 PM GMT

Your Silver-spotted shots are lovely, Pauline. It's hard enough persuading one to sit still, let alone two at a time... 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-Aug-17 11:11 AM GMT

Thank you all so much for your lovely, much appreciated comments 😊

I agree David, I am convinced it is not the first time.

I have never seen 2 females so close together Dave – one looked quite fresh, but like the fresh female I watched the previous week, no males came close and I saw no egg-laying 😊 .

I could definitely do with a guided tour round Bookham Paul when things settle down here (hint, hint).

Thank you for your concern Goldie but you've seen what it's like here – just one thing after the other 😞😞 I'm fine but have window fitters in – next week it will surely be BAU????

Cheers Wurzel – I was quite chuffed with that myself 😊 .

Having seen your shots Peter I shall take that as a massive compliment but I'm afraid I don't post them elsewhere – I started my diary primarily as a record of my adventures, hoping I could learn from the wealth of knowledge on this site both about photography and butterflies and I am still doing so 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 10-Aug-17 07:51 PM GMT

Somehow in all the chaos that is going on here I seem to have missed recording a few recent outings to local sites so I shall summarise briefly. At Noar Hill I was pleased to see a great number of butterflies albeit a mixture of both old and new:



A great deal of egg-laying was going on – Common Blue, Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper. I watched this Meadow Brown lay several eggs which I have in the past photographed



but it was the Gatekeeper which drew my attention. I have never seen a Gatekeeper egg before so once the adult had moved on I moved in to search and was pleased to see this egg:



Quite a few Small Blues are still around at Paulsgrove, many quite worn now but looking at the kidney vetch it was possible to find a fair few eggs which haven't yet hatched:





Hopefully next week I shall be free to move further afield.

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 10-Aug-17 10:04 PM GMT

That first Small Blue should be done under the trades description act, yes it's small but it's not blue! 😊 Will those eggs still hatch or is that their lot? 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 11-Aug-17 03:47 PM GMT

That's an interesting question Wurzel. I don't think Small Blues are known for a 3rd brood and I am assuming these eggs are the produce of the currently worn 2nd brood (rather than eggs which haven't hatched from the 1st brood). I posed a similar question last season relating to the many eggs laid by the 3rd brood Small Coppers. Perhaps someone reading this might have an answer for us.

At last I was able to escape briefly today and OWH did not disappoint delivering at least 3 Clouded Yellows – I know this for a fact as I could see one in the distance whilst another couple were circling each other in front of me. The brief close up views I got showed that the butterflies had probably suffered from the recent downpours as they certainly weren't pristine. Perhaps just as well that I couldn't get close for photos relying instead on the zoom and heavy cropping. Still, good to see them:





I was pleased to see a couple of (worn) Painted Ladies gliding around. Again I had to rely on zoom. Perhaps it is the old hamstring injury stopping me sprinting up the hill or perhaps the newly diagnosed Tennis Elbow 😊😂 I'm sure if I try hard enough I can find something to blame apart from my lack of skill and field craft for these shots 😊😂



There were some lovely fresh Small Tortoiseshells (and some not so fresh) as well as a couple of velvety Peacocks. I shall not apologise for the lack of symmetry in these images as I just grabbed some shots as I passed. It was a joy just to watch so many butterflies. If I saw one mating pair of Chalkhills I must have seen 2 dozen at least with dozens more displaying courtship behaviour. It was a similar story with the Small Blues although not quite so many and I wasn't able to spot a single Adonis:



Re: Pauline

by Pete Eeles, 11-Aug-17 04:39 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

That first Small Blue should be done under the trades description act, yes it's small but it's not blue! 😊 Will those eggs still hatch or is that their lot? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Small Blue overwinter as fully-grown final instar larvae and pupate in the spring without feeding further. These eggs should, therefore, hatch and the

larvae feed up to get to that point.

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pauline

by MrSp0ck, 11-Aug-17 07:19 PM GMT

Small Blue larvae would not have any food in the Spring, so make sure they, like the Dingy Skipper are ready to pupate in March/April, and produce early butterflies. Any fully grown 2nd Brood SB larvae would only pupate in Oct/Nov if it was very warm and Sunny [like July] and day length is not a factor, and would be the end of them as hatching in late November/December would not suit them at all. At Hutchinsons Bank we have had Small Blues every week for the last 16 weeks, and now there are only about 10 or so Kidney Vetch flowers on the whole site. Luckily our 2nd Brood is in small numbers so there is just about enough flowerheads for them to get through to fully grown before the end of the season and boost the Spring Brood next May.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 12-Aug-17 10:10 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, glad you got some Clouded Yellows, I think your lucky if you can get close to them they're so quick and never seem to stay any where for very long, I depend on my longer lens all the time, you know me, I get down, I can't always get up. 😊 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 12-Aug-17 02:05 PM GMT

On behalf of Wurzel and myself, thank you to Pete and Martin for your responses to our query - I am sure others will find that very informative too.

Thank you Goldie - I shall keep trying for those close-up shots. I am doing my prescribed exercises and hopefully my leg will soon improve.

This morning at Noar Hill I noticed the Autumn Ladies Tresses were just coming into flower bringing back fond memories of an outing with Mike and Ros, but without their sharp eyes I was able to spot very few:



Spurred on by this, and recent shots posted by Tuts, I went in search of more orchids! What is happening to me 😞 No-one told me how difficult it would be to photograph them in the darkest part of the woods, under a dense canopy, with little natural light and a stiff breeze. I tried. I really tried - just about every setting I could think of, banging up the ISO until it was so grainy it was unrecognisable. I got bitten by horse flies, scratched by holly leaves and still I didn't get an acceptable image. No good trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear as they say so I post these images for ID purposes only as I have no idea at the moment what they are:



I had intended to post a couple of shots of stunning fresh Peacocks but for a whole selection of glorious images look no further than Millerds diary 😊

Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 12-Aug-17 04:37 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Nice to see that the Autumn Lady's Tresses are flowering; it was a memorable visit with you, last year, although I should point out that it is Ros's sharp eyes that find things – I simply take the photos 😊

I think your woodland flowers are Violet Helleborines (*Epipactis purpurata*). The stems look to have the violet colour and the plant also has the 'lanky' look of this species. They certainly are difficult to photograph, since they choose the "dark caverns of Southern Beechwoods", as I describe in <http://home.btconnect.com/mike.flemming/orchids2.htm>. One seems to have suffered an accident to its stem, which has twisted back on itself – the photos puzzled me at first.

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 12-Aug-17 08:12 PM GMT

Cracking Cloudies Pauline 😊👍 Hope I get some soon 😊

Also a thank you to Pete and MrSpock from me as well, more info to try and store away in the brain, it will be so much easier when Pete's Project Frohawk is completed 😊😁

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by David M, 12-Aug-17 08:39 PM GMT

I see you are now turning your hand to rare flowers, Pauline?

Nice shots of these as well, of course, as those Clouded Yellows which I hope will eventually find their way into south Wales!

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 13-Aug-17 05:26 PM GMT

Thank you for that ID Mike. It surprised me as I thought it was 2 different types of plants – they seemed very different. The first one had grown in that twisted manner (it wasn't broken at all) and the flowers seemed different but hey, what do I know about orchids 😊

They're being seen all over Wurzel so I expect by now you have already seen a couple?

I surprised myself David! Well, who would have thought I'd have developed an interest in immature stages or moths????????? So, I guess it might be possible. Those orchids were definitely attractive, elegant little plants, screaming out that they were something a bit special 😊

I had a fabulous morning at Noar Hill today meeting up with Nick. Between us we spotted a total of 6 female BH, all egg-laying and ranging from pristine to quite ragged. To be fair, Nick spotted most of them yet generously allowed me the first shots, probably because I was just so excited at seeing so many at once at close quarters. They all seemed to be down at once and we just didn't know which way to turn. What a great problem to have! I could write pages giving a step by step account but instead I'll just post a few images:







Several other visitors had recorded at least another 5 different BH between them, 4 F and 1M.

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 13-Aug-17 05:33 PM GMT

My turn to admire *your* Brown Hairstreak shots, Pauline. Lovely butterflies all of them! 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by David M, 13-Aug-17 07:45 PM GMT

Yes. Always a joy to see Brown Hairstreak images. This butterfly is a godsend at this time of year as we lose the bulk of our single brooded summer species.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Aug-17 06:18 AM GMT

Thank you Dave. It is rare imo to see so many down at any one time egg-laying. It reminded me of when I found all those female SWF a couple of years back, all egg-laying around the same 2 trees for just one day. Perhaps it's just a coincidence, perhaps it's just because conditions were perfect, or perhaps there's an advantage to survival in having so many laid/hatch at the same time? Either way, it made for a fantastic morning 😊

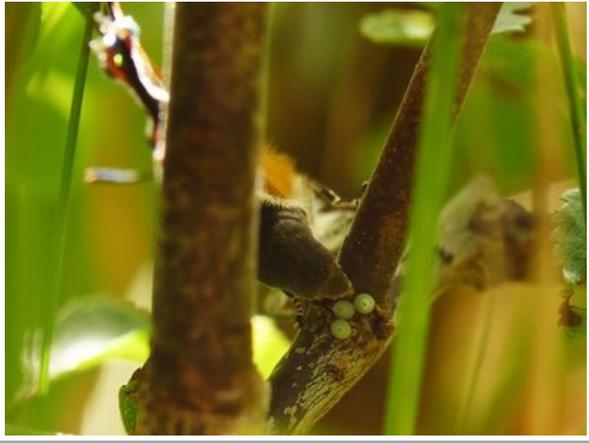
Looks like it all came together for you too David with BH AND Clouded Yellow – although I think I can trump your 3 eggs 😊😊 It wasn't just seeing the butterflies that was so interesting. It was watching (or trying to watch) the egg-laying process. This is always difficult as the females are secretive and tend to crawl into the thickest part of the Blackthorn – quite often disappearing entirely from sight. I have long wanted to get some shots of the process but it has never been possible before without risking disturbing the egg-laying female which I would never do. I have always had to wait until she had moved on before inspecting the branches, which is exactly what I did with these below. I had watched this female disappear into the blackthorn at least 3 times and eventually discovered these having carefully 'marked' by eye which branch she was on:



For a 4th time she crawled into the Blackthorn and although Nick was calling to me that he'd found another 2 females I stayed with the female I had found and tried to record the process. I was astonished to watch her lay yet another 4 eggs before pausing again for a rest:







When coming across multiple eggs in the past I had always wondered whether they had been laid by different females. Well, in this case at least, I now know the answer.



Re: Pauline

by trevor, 14-Aug-17 07:28 AM GMT

What a lovely sequence of the Brown Hairstreak.
Both this year's adults, and the next generation.
If the weather holds, I'm going on a BH hunt today.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 14-Aug-17 04:56 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor - hope you got lucky where ever you ended up 😊 Today I saw for the very first time what I believe are Rufous Grasshoppers. Having read a bit about them I am looking forward to seeing their courtship display:



Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 14-Aug-17 06:10 PM GMT

🤖 That is an amazing set of images Pauline!

Re: Pauline

by David M, 14-Aug-17 08:54 PM GMT

That's another fantastic Brown Hairstreak sequence, Pauline, and yes, you have trumped my 3 eggs being laid simultaneously with that amazing batch of four! I wonder whether anyone has ever seen 5 being laid like this?

Re: Pauline

by kevling, 14-Aug-17 09:32 PM GMT

Pauline, Some great Hairstreak photos recently and those egg laying shots are really cool. You have a knack of getting some great images.

Regards Kev

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 14-Aug-17 10:41 PM GMT

Fantastic sequence Pauline, hopefully I can see something similar tomorrow 🍀 Still no Cloudy though 😊 🍀

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 15-Aug-17 10:29 AM GMT

Great shots recently Pauline especially the Hair Streaks and the egg laying, 🍀 🍀
I returned your e-mail did you receive it. 🤔 Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 15-Aug-17 02:23 PM GMT

Thanks Paul. I was really excited to witness that but as you might imagine I couldn't move anything – not that bit of grass, not the camera, in fact I hardly dared breathe! I am pleased with some of those shots – but a few could have been better.

Thank you so much David. It would be interesting to know from those that do annual egg counts what is the maximum number in a group that they have encountered – but of course, without witnessing the ovi-posting there is no guarantee it was the same female. Still be interesting to know tho'.

I appreciate that compliment Kev – thank you. It is the first time I have had any success recording egg-laying – at least with BH. I think the last time might have been with the Map in Dorset a few years ago – that really was incredible 😊

Cheers Wurzel. I've got everything crossed that you've found all you wanted today – I guess you'll let us know round about Xmas time 😊 😊

Thank you Goldie – I certainly did. At least you now know a mating pair of BH was seen at GB which has to bode well for the future 😊

Just like last year the huge number of insect bites that have been inflicted on me this season have become infected which warranted a trip to the GP yesterday for more penicillin 😊 😊. It was an early appointment but nevertheless I managed to squeeze in an early local walk first – an outing which was interesting because of what I did not see! I have not been here for 10 months and I have never been here at this time of year. It was glorious. The heather looked fantastic as far as the eye could see, dotted here and there with Gatekeepers soaking up the early warmth. Not another sole was present. The only sound was the bird song and the wonderful scent of all the wild honeysuckle hung heavy on the air. I thought of Buzzard and a few others who post some great scenery/landscape shots. I am not much good at them but it was so lovely I just had to give it another try:



A young, very thin fox was right out in the open sniffing around but by the time I had eased this squeaky lens from the camera he was gone. What was also gone was all the Small Coppers that had been so successful in their 3rd brood last Autumn 😞 I am not sure why that should be – reading other diaries they seem to appear with some regularity season after season. There was no sign of immature stages that I could see. It is not a huge area but it is carpeted with Sorrel – I am not sure what type it is but it doesn't grow much more than this:



The small colony of Brown Argus was still around although most individuals looked quite worn:



It was time to make my way back. I noticed that there were several different types of fungus under the trees but only had time to snap this one – a sure sign of Autumn activity:



Back home I was pleased to see:



and concealed under one of the shrubs, a very well-disguised brimstone:



Re: Pauline

by Art Frames, 15-Aug-17 05:46 PM GMT

Pauline, I know I'm late (as always) but your Brown Hairstreak story and set of action pictures is marvellous. I am envious of everyone's BH pictures this year. But yours are my favourites. Cracking set.

Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 15-Aug-17 07:43 PM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Just caught up with your Brown Hairstreak egg laying sequence myself too...great images and such a privilege to catch her in action like that 😊

All the best,

Neil.

Re: Pauline

by essexbuzzard, 15-Aug-17 09:43 PM GMT

Super Brown Hairstreak sequence, Pauline. I'm almost resigned to not seeing any again this year, though there may still be time for me 😊

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 16-Aug-17 08:15 AM GMT

Lovely landscape shots Pauline and a cracking painted Lady, with blue markings in the black circles 😊🍷 Still no Cloudy – maybe next week in Devon 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by PhilBJohnson, 16-Aug-17 10:04 AM GMT

Hi Pauline,

Hope you are feeling better.

Generally, I recommend consulting a doctor about Antihistamines taken in tablet form before one comes into contact with a substance one might be allergic to if one is working in such environments where there are many biting and stinging insects.

Or (as most people know), they can reduce the severity of symptoms if taken afterwards.

Concentration

"It's when I almost have that perfect shot and a biting insect lands on my hand as I try and steady the camera"

or:

"after standing in the hot sun sweating, my arm itches when i think i need to stand still"

"For some who might not know, and are going out towards that well used picnic table, wasp nests towards the end of the summer are generally larger before service to their queen is done"

Kind Regards,

Philip

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 16-Aug-17 07:03 PM GMT

Peter, Neil, Mark – thank you all so much for your very generous comments on the BH images. I appreciate you taking the time to look and comment regardless of whether it is complimentary – you must know by now that I also welcome constructive criticism. I shall try to follow the fortunes of those eggs and report back in due course.

It is a pity you didn't see a CY Wurzel but there is still plenty of time – and I am dying to know what else you saw there tho:D

Wurzel wrote:

Lovely landscape shots Pauline

– thank you for that Wurzel; I shall keep trying with the landscape images.

That's sensible advice Phil and next season I shall try to remember to follow it 😊

It's been a long time – too long – since I laughed 'til I cried but that's exactly what happened when looking for WA larva this afternoon with Andy. It wouldn't sound at all funny if I tried to explain but in brief we strayed far from the path in our search for Honeysuckle and found ourselves surrounded by dense, almost impenetrable brambles, blackthorn, Hawthorn etc. A passing dog walker, hearing us crashing about in the undergrowth in an endeavour to 'escape' kindly began shouting helpful directions back to one of the main tracks and I'm afraid that's all it took 😊😊 The upshot was, we both spent a couple of hours scrutinising what little Honeysuckle there was – there wasn't much and much of what was there looked in a pretty poor state, perhaps diseased? Only one larva was eventually spotted but in an area with little natural light:



Re: Pauline

by David M, 16-Aug-17 07:42 PM GMT

You sure do suffer for your art sometimes, Pauline! 😊

Thank heavens there was one larva in there to compensate for the effort involved.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 16-Aug-17 08:08 PM GMT

Well done Pauline you got your larva after a struggle 😊
I hope !!

When I lived in the West Indies Pauline we got loads of Bites and we found Vinegar was the best remedy, we still dab it on after visits to GB etc, try it, it's the cheapest and best way, the acid in it takes the sting out. Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 16-Aug-17 08:58 PM GMT

I too have just caught up with the Brown Hairstreak egg-laying shots. Completely amazing – they are obviously happy to lay in multiples if the site is right. Making the most of the sunshine I imagine! 😊

I'm not sure what the insect world has against you – sending battalions of biting things out when all you ever do is your best to help them. I hope you are recovering! 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 17-Aug-17 10:08 AM GMT

Laughing until you cry and a White Admiral cat – two very good reasons to call that trip out a success 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 17-Aug-17 12:31 PM GMT

Oh the things we do 😊 I can sympathise, I've ended up in similar situations although without help from friendly strangers! Looks like you found a third instar there too, keep an eye out for second brood WA in that wood 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 18-Aug-17 08:26 PM GMT

I'm a little concerned about the state of the Honeysuckle David and how difficult it was to find any larva (just like last year when after 3 or 4 visits I couldn't locate any). Numbers of WA have definitely been down the last few years at the Straits 😊

Thanks Goldie – I've tried just about everything else so I'll definitely give the vinegar a shot – even if I end up smelling like a fish shop 😊

That's really kind of you Dave. On a more serious note I am getting quite weary of all these insect bites – I have just taken another 4 ticks off me 😞

Definitely a success Wurzel 😊😊

I know you've been in similar situations Buggy so I hope your sympathy will extend to today when I was caught up on OWH in thunder, lightening, torrential rain and hail so big and fast it hurt! I was at the bottom of the hill with no cover when the wind suddenly increased, it got really cold and the sky went black:



It happened quite quickly. In fact the butterflies noticed before I did, diving for cover and hiding away. I looked up to see this:



I started to make my way up the hill but it was a waste of time – I was soaked to the skin long before I got there. After 20 mins the sun was back out so I made my way down again. Earlier I had found an Adonis which looked like it had been stood on before it had time to properly inflate it's wings. It had still been alive when I laid a flower beside it but on my return it was well and truly dead. How sad 😞



There were also 3 SSS at the bottom of the hill – 2 males and 1 female:



Whilst looking for Adonis I noticed 3 Clouded Yellow flying around again and got a really poor shot of the biggest Hummingbird-hawk moth I have ever seen. I also noticed some Autumn Lady's tresses which I haven't spotted before:



At last I found a few Adonis but with such variable weather conditions they were reluctant to open their wings:



The sky darkened again and as the rain started for a second time I decided it was time to call it a day. It had been a struggle from start to end. On the way there I had to turn back and make a large detour as a tree had come down across the road and police were turning traffic away. On the way back a kind motorist stopped to warn me that another tree was down on a different route back!!! I should have stayed in and continued painting the walls 😊

Re: Pauline

by David M, 18-Aug-17 10:27 PM GMT

Sounds like a pretty stormy day for you, Pauline. You're doing it tough at the moment, but if the weather forecast is to be believed, things should perk up a bit next week (not before time).

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 19-Aug-17 10:24 AM GMT

Having spent most of the summer painting walls, ceilings and skirting boards 😊 I can attest to the fact that getting struck by lightning or having your flesh rendered from the bone by hail is preferable to painting given even the slimmest of chances of finding a butterfly 😊 You did pretty well considering the weather 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 20-Aug-17 12:57 PM GMT

Let us hope so David – it has been a pretty dismal August here so far.

Mmmmmmm..... not sure about that Wurzel 😊 On balance I think I'd have been better off sticking with the painting when I look at the quality of the shots 😊

I swear there is no-one (that I know of) buried under the patio so I was a little alarmed to find out that several of the beetles I found in the moth trap are attracted to corpses and can allegedly smell them up to a mile away 😊😊 Not for me those cute little Canary-shouldered Thorn moths 🐛 Oh no, I had to get 'burying beetles' which I must say are quite distinctive in their appearance. One of them had dozens of little mites crawling all over it:





I did get a Thorn which I believe is a September Thorn but overall the 'haul' was somewhat disappointing – a large number of moths but very few species including Flame Shouldered, Black Arches, Setaceous Hebrew Character and what I THINK is a Lesser Swallow Prominent (I'm going to be a tiny bit embarrassed if I have that wrong!!!):





Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Aug-17 07:48 PM GMT

I was pleased to see a Hummingbird Hawk moth in the garden yesterday. I didn't have time to get outside – just grabbed the camera and took a few record shots through glass:





Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 21-Aug-17 08:13 PM GMT

Today, in between showers, I decided to check on all those Small Copper eggs I saw being laid on 6 August. I must have watched at least a dozen eggs being laid in total but sadly could only find 2 larva:



I am not sure whether that is a discarded skin or a half eaten larva beside the Small Copper



It was clear a couple of the eggs had not hatched but I assume the remainder had been predated.

Re: Pauline

by trevor, 21-Aug-17 09:38 PM GMT

Love the shots of that Humming Bird Hawk Moth nectaring on Phlox.

It would seem that quite a few of us on here have had a soaking recently, so you're in good company. 😊

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by David M, 21-Aug-17 10:06 PM GMT

Casualties will be high at this vulnerable stage of the caterpillars' lives, Pauline. I'm sure some will go on to complete their cycle....otherwise we would never see adult Small Coppers!

Well done with the Humming Bird Hawk Moth by the way. I hope tomorrow's southerly winds might tempt a few more to cross the Channel.

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 22-Aug-17 10:09 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, nice shots recently , I was at GB Sunday , no BHS I'm afraid so we'll be down South looking next year. Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

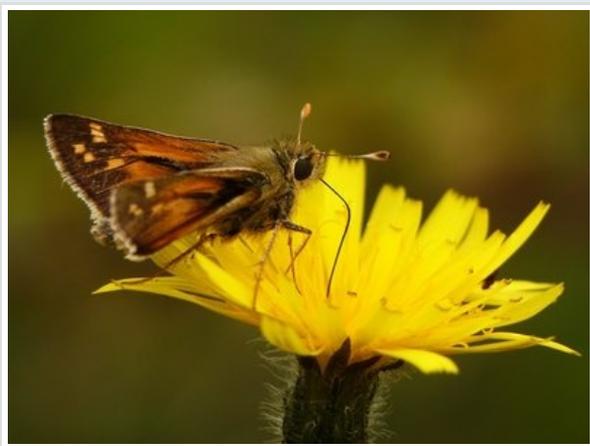
by Pauline, 22-Aug-17 01:26 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor – when I'm out with butterfly folk I'm always in good company 😊

Thank you David – it would certainly be good to see a few more migrants.

Looking at some diaries Goldie it might seem like they're really easy to find but there are never any guarantees and repeat visits are sometimes necessary. Perhaps next season we might meet up again 😊

Whilst at Oxenbourne I took the opportunity to monitor the small population of SSS which are inhabiting an increasingly shrinking area year on year at this site. For several seasons now I have been expressing concern about the viability of this small colony which is effectively just hanging on by a thread, the habitat becoming increasing unsuitable. I saw 4 females egg-laying. Initially I was heartened by this as it more than I usually see but is it enough to sustain this colony???? 4 or 5 males were active around the area but being such a tiny area it is difficult to avoid double counting. I have tried to err on the side of caution but I doubt there were more than a dozen individuals on that site yesterday. I spent some time just enjoying watching their activities – nectaring, resting after egg-laying, attempts by the males to mate. A few shots below:









Common Blues and Brown Argus were also busy egg-laying. I was able to grab a few shots without disturbing them:



Brown Argus egg:



Common Blue ovi-posting:



Despite having watched several DGH egg-laying earlier and seeing some signs of feeding on the food plant, try as I might I couldn't discover any larva.

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 22-Aug-17 08:42 PM GMT

Nice SSS pictures but I do hope something is done about the habitat there. It's not that difficult to get it right, a bit of controlled grazing 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 24-Aug-17 03:01 PM GMT

Cheers Buggy. Now I know you didn't say this explicitly but I've been moaning about this situation for 3 years now so I thought it was time I got up off my backside and found out what was happening. Well, I didn't get off my backside as such but I did make a few phone calls to try to establish ownership/responsibility etc and finally spoke to someone who outlined their management plans for the site for this Autumn and the future. Apparently there will be a 3-pronged approach – a tractor will be brought in and flailing carried out, volunteers are coming in to clear some scrub, and contractors are also being brought in. There have been attempts to bring in a 'flying flock' of sheep but because of the isolation of the site and time involved in checking the livestock there have been difficulties in this area. However, it is hoped that this will happen next year. It was encouraging to hear a positive approach being outlined but not being an expert on land management and conservation I was unsure as to whether this would have the desired effect. Today I discussed with Ashley W. (Hants conservation committee) and he has kindly agreed to follow up on my initial approach and report back. Interestingly, during the discussion a view was expressed that the current SSS at this site are in fact a result of natural colonisation and not the original introduction in the 90's which it was thought failed to flourish due to several bad seasons.

Today I decided that I would pay a second visit to those Rufus Grasshoppers on Noar Hill and hopefully see BH. The first thing I saw was Ashley who had had no success so far. We wandered along to the Grasshoppers – I was keen to see the courtship I had read about. Under cloudy skies we saw about 6 of these insects, all male except for one female who had a following of 2 males. I glimpsed how interesting their courtship is as the male waved his head from side to side before butting the female. She was not receptive and moved away. I will be back to see more of these mahogany-coloured insects.



Ashley and I went our separate ways but met up again across the site as he was eating his lunch. I meandered through the hemp agrimony only to hear Ashley shout 'got one' (Well done that man!). It was a female in remarkable condition for the time of year. She posed nicely before setting off to lay a few eggs.





Back home I was amused to see one of my tortoises roaming around the garden with a moth on his shell – this is Houdini as he is always escaping:



... and a Brimstone on my Strawberries:



Re: Pauline

by David M, 24-Aug-17 11:17 PM GMT

Some divine butterfly companions there, Pauline (especially the Brown Hairstreaks), but a late summer Brimstone is a particular delight, especially when you can catch it with the sun rays shining through the wings like you have done. 😊

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 25-Aug-17 09:37 PM GMT

Thank you David but much credit to Ashley for finding such a lovely specimen. I should have mentioned that I took the opportunity to check up on many of the BH eggs I watched being laid previously. Many of them have already been predated including the 4 laid together by the same female 😞

Today I only managed a quick stop off to check up on the WA cat – thankfully it was still there, sun-bathing on a leaf but made a bee-line for the stem when I accidentally touched the honeysuckle. Worryingly, the honeysuckle stem seemed connected to a spider's web but another larva (presumably moth of some sort?) was on a nearby stem:



Re: Pauline

by millerd, 25-Aug-17 10:00 PM GMT

That's nice Brown Hairstreak, Pauline, just as whole as the one I saw last weekend (not the same one though!). The shots of the WA caterpillar are terrific as well. 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 25-Aug-17 10:25 PM GMT

Beautiful Brostreak Pauline, she is in great nick for this time of the season 🤗🍀 Fingers crossed for some positive feedback on the SSS 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

ps - I think your Tortoiseshell hitch-hiking moth is a Grass moth, a Crambus species...

Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 26-Aug-17 06:37 PM GMT

I'm glad that there are now some positives on the horizon for Oxenborne, Pauline 😊 You've posted some nice shots of SSS recently, the shot of the two together (at Oxenborne) is stunning 😊 and I agree, that Brown Hairstreak is in very good nick 😊

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 29-Aug-17 12:43 PM GMT

Thank you for the compliments Dave – very much appreciated. I need some cheering up right now.

Cheers Wurzel for the comment and ID. With Ashley on board I am confident that the right actions will be carried out at Oxenbourne – the big question is, will it be in time???????

Thank you Mike – for one reason or another getting out this season has been a real struggle so it is good to get a few reasonable shots 😊

Some might remember Merlin – my cheeky little Pionus parrot whom I sadly lost earlier this season due to Mycobacterium. His mate April was befriended by one of my Amazons (Heidi, altho he is male) who had lost his mate a couple of years ago.



April with her guardian Heidi – he is devoted to her, feeding and grooming her and generally being very protective.

Sadly, April has now also become very ill, hence my lack of outings and postings. The outlook is looking bleak. Whilst waiting for lab results she is receiving hourly supportive care and at 50 years of age Heidi will be devastated at losing a second mate.

Last night at around 5.00pm I managed to get out for an hour for a break and headed to OWH where I spent most of the time just enjoying the sight of the many butterflies which were still very active. Chalkhills, Meadow Brown, Gatekeepers and SSS were all seen egg-laying. It was wonderful to watch the electric blue of a couple of dozen Adonis Blue as they searched for females who were also evident. A single Clouded Yellow patrolled the slopes and those butterflies too old and worn to worry about the opposite sex were just feeding up and enjoying the sunshine. By 6.00pm it was still incredibly hot – the butterflies showed no sign of roosting and I was still unable to get a wings open shot of the Adonis – this time due to the heat!!!! So, I'll just post a few of the shots I did take:





On arriving at the site I made my way down the car park slope. A family had clearly enjoyed the bank holiday but the rubbish they had left strewn behind was shocking. It is not possible to see it all in this shot, but as well as many discarded cans and sweet packets, empty toy boxes, plastic bags and even a toddlers soiled trousers had been left behind. To say I was shocked and angry is an understatement. I collected up 2 full carrier bags of

rubbish and ended up taking them home and putting them in my own bin!!!! Words fail me 😞😞



Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 29-Aug-17 06:50 PM GMT

Sorry to hear about your Parrot Pauline hope her results are not too bad. Goldie 😞

Re: Pauline

by David M, 29-Aug-17 10:31 PM GMT

With pets aplenty, I hate it when you post sad tales such as this, Pauline.

Parrots are particularly precious, given their longevity (we have three African Greys) and it's particularly traumatic when things go awry.

I sincerely hope that April makes a full recovery, but I'm pragmatic enough to know that once birds show signs of sickness, they're far less likely to make it through than mammals.

Fingers (and toes) crossed!

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 30-Aug-17 12:55 PM GMT

All the best to April Pauline 😞 At least you managed to get some consolation from a trip out...before it was ruined by inconsiderate litter louts 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 30-Aug-17 04:15 PM GMT

So sorry to hear about April, Pauline. I also sincerely hope that she pulls through.

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 31-Aug-17 08:42 AM GMT

Thank you Goldie. I have emailed you with fuller explanation.

You are absolutely right of course David. Being a prey animal they are masters when it comes to hiding any early signs of illness – even from observant owners. She is still with us albeit very weak – some sort of blockage came away on Tuesday night along with a lot of blood. I really need those lab results.

Thank you Wurzel. I really can't understand the mentality of folk who clearly think it is fine to allow others to clean up all their mess. I just wish I'd seen them leave!

Cheers Mike. As you would expect I'm doing my very best – everything else is on hold as she is getting all my attention. Under the circumstances I hope folk will forgive the following indulgence. It has been great reading all the diaries about the reports of the QoS in Sussex, bringing back memories from 8 years ago when a pair turned up at Chichester. I still remember well the excitement, especially seeing a mating pair. I have said this elsewhere but I shall be forever grateful to Richard Roebuck for supplying me with a battery for my camera when mine expired. I believe I also met Patrick Barkham that day. Anyway, a few shots below although I sincerely hope my photography has improved since then 😊





I believe a couple of years earlier a QoS was photographed on OWH in Hants and if I remember rightly Pete's comment was 'Holy Moly!' I knew then that it must be something exciting but these were my early butterfly years and I didn't even know where OWH was in those days 😊😊

Re: Pauline

by trevor, 31-Aug-17 02:06 PM GMT

You obviously had your Queen of Spain fix, back then, near Chichester.

Great shots too, and a lot more activity to observe, than we had this time. 🍷

I only learned of the Chichester find after the event (didn't have a laptop then).

Best Wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 31-Aug-17 03:40 PM GMT

There was nothing wrong with your photography back in the day, Pauline 😊 lovely shots 😊

There is a chapter in Patrick Barkham's book, 'The Butterfly Isles', about the Chichester Qos sighting(s), amazing that you were there, Pauline 🤔🤔

Mike

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 31-Aug-17 08:18 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Pauline 😊👍 That was the year that I was getting in to butterflies, fingers crossed it won't be so long until the next time 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: QoS

by jenks, 31-Aug-17 08:24 PM GMT

Anyone know if the Queens of Spain are still present ? A long trip might be on the cards on Saturday. And I agree with the comments re the photos. I'd be happy to have taken them !

Jenks.

Re: Pauline

by essexbuzzard, 31-Aug-17 09:08 PM GMT

Me too. Even to see . Nowt wrong with those images, either. Don't be so hard on yourself, Pauline. I also sincerely hope April pulls through.

Re: Pauline

by David M, 31-Aug-17 11:34 PM GMT

Maximus wrote:

There is a chapter in Patrick Barkham's book, 'The Butterfly Isles', about the Chichester Qos sighting(s), amazing that you were there

That immediately struck a chord with me too. I have this book and it's one of the sequences I remember best. In fact, the author talked of how blessed he felt to be witnessing such an uncommon event.

Seems there were more witnesses than first reported!

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 01-Sep-17 10:26 PM GMT

I missed seeing the Chichester Queens, Pauline, but your images of them are excellent. 😊 Having just come back from seeing the current ones today, I have to say it is actually quite difficult to take in how rare this sort of event is. 😊

All the best to April as well – she looks quite a character.

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 02-Sep-17 10:13 AM GMT

Thank you all so much for your very kind and generous comments, and your support regarding April has been much appreciated. As David intimated, once signs of illness are detected in birds it is generally too late to take any meaningful action. The fact that April is still here one week later is encouraging but I am wary of being hopeful without knowing the cause. She is still weak and has lost a lot of weight. I am still struggling to get her to eat and I am still waiting for those lab reports. Still, it could be a lot worse..... the upshot is that the following shots were all taken in the garden. I hadn't bothered to mention that some time back, whilst in the local garden centre, I noticed that a lot of butterfly eggs and larva that had been laid on vegetables were being disposed of. One tray of purple sprouting broccoli had been reduced to £2.00 as a result – it was well chewed and still contained many eggs. As a bonus (and to help them out of course 😊) I went round the other vegetables and discreetly removed any tiny leaves containing more eggs which were then tucked into the broccoli which was subsequently purchased. I must have ended up with several hundred eggs and larva in a cage. It has been a little disappointing as it became apparent that many of these had already been parasitised:



But the 40-50 that eventually made it through are now starting to emerge:



This prompted me to check on my own salad vegetables and I found several Small White eggs:



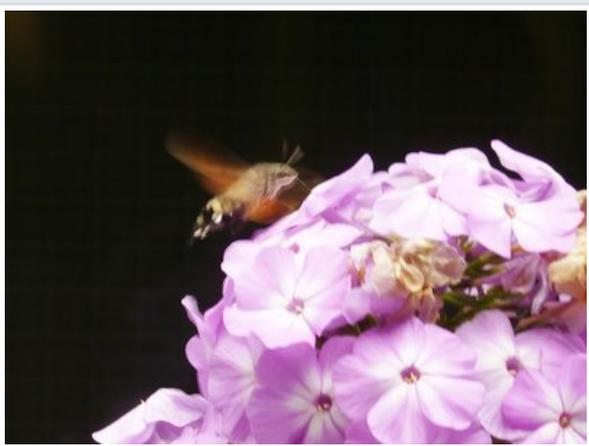
and also these eggs. I am not sure what they are. They look like little pearls and seem similar to Speckled Wood eggs. There have been Speckled Wood in the garden but I am not sure if they lay on salad crops?



I believe these eggs may be Meadow Brown?:



Last but not least that lovely Hummingbird Hawk-moth has been visiting for at least the last 4 days (I assume it is the same one but not sure):



Re: Pauline

by David M, 02-Sep-17 10:26 PM GMT

Thanks for the update on April, Pauline. I trust you will keep us informed prior to your usual 'sabbatical' from the forum during the winter period?

Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Sep-17 07:24 AM GMT

Is that a gentle hint David? 😊😏

A few more images from home. There have been some lovely Commas visiting and the first of the Small White eggs hatched yesterday. Having seen Pete's jaw-dropping images I am almost embarrassed to post these but they are the best I could achieve:





Re: Pauline

by Pauline, 03-Sep-17 01:30 PM GMT

Well, it is that time of the year again and it is with much regret that I must say my goodbyes until next season 😞. I'd like to thank everyone who has taken an interest in my diary, whether this has been just to enjoy the images or perhaps taking the time to comment or give advice. It has been a difficult season in more ways than one - health issues, essential house maintenance and too many animal problems, all of which have resulted in a very fragmented season for me. However, the enforced 'down time' has given me the opportunity to reflect on the last few months, the challenges and achievements, the exciting times, various findings, learning opportunities and the inevitable battles with the British climate. I have enjoyed meeting new enthusiasts and seeing new places, not least Bookham Common, unfortunately seen on a cold, cloudy day, thankfully with Martin as my guide.

I was a little disappointed to effectively 'miss' the Purple Emperor season but it was my choice to take on the rearing of those tiny hedgehogs (all of which have recently been successfully released), which I found to be a very rewarding and educational experience. However, as a result, I only saw a handful of PE in flight and no photos or close-up views. Likewise, with the Small PBF - domestic issues kept me grounded. Nevertheless, I was fortunate enough to discover a 2nd brood Dingy Skipper which was a first for me. Other 'firsts' included watching a Gatekeeper and Brown Argus ovi-posting and managing to get images of that Brown Hairstreak laying an amazing 4 eggs!

On the rearing front I was surprised to realise that I have reared 5 butterfly species and a few moths. This is an aspect that I find more interesting year on year although once I have reared any particular species I find that I subsequently prefer to attempt to monitor them in the wild in an endeavour to make comparisons. In the case of the Small Copper, Brown Hairstreak and White Admiral this has demonstrated to me just how many of the immature stages are 'lost'. I have surprised myself at how my interest in the immature stages has expanded, happily spending a great deal of time just watching – perhaps it is an age thing! 😊

I have not made as much progress on the moth front as I hoped. A lack of time coupled with their sheer numbers and the fact that I often struggle with identification leaves me feeling a bit overwhelmed. I appreciate the help I have received in this area and continue to be inspired by Neil's wonderful images. Hoping to encourage more moths I was very pleased to find that only weeks after planting a Mullein plant in the garden the Mullein moth had laid eggs on it. For 3 consecutive years now I have had Hummingbird Hawk-moths nectaring at my Phlox so the next mini project is to plant some Bedstraws around it.

It has become something of a tradition to end my season with a summary of images so without more ado but with some brief explanation

I have been puzzled and quite disappointed by the apparent total disappearance of all those dozens of Small Copper discovered very late last season on a small site carpeted with Sorrel. As I posted their images earlier this year I decided to compile a summary of the shots I took as a reminder of some remarkable sights:



Over the Winter months there were some opportunities to see birds I have not seen before so I have tried to summarise a few of these. It is clear that my bird photography needs some work but with the advice I have received from Mike and others I hope I can improve on this over the winter and into next season:



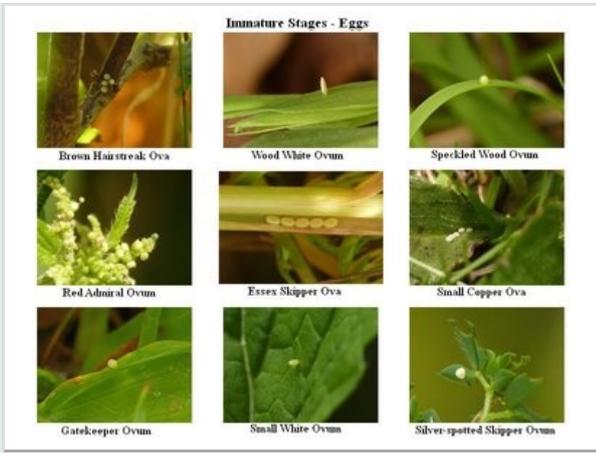
Hairstreaks remain my favourite group so it goes without saying that they have to have their own category:



At random I pulled out a few of my favourite butterfly shots of the season. They may not be the best images technically but have been selected on the basis of the memories they evoke:



The time I spend on the immature stages, both at home and in the wild seems to increase year on year and to that end I have included 2 compilations which I hope reflects that. My camera is not the best to take shots of tiny subjects so I hope the images are clear enough - they will never be in the same league as the jaw-dropping images Pete has recently posted:



Likewise, butterfly behaviour continues to fascinate me so my summary would not be complete without a few shots relating to this aspect. I suspect this is why I enjoy rearing a few species each season – I do spend a lot of time just watching them whenever possible and so I am including 2 of the species reared this year (Holly Blue and Comma):



Holly Blue emerging 2017



Comma emerging from pupa



On the moth front I think the most exciting moth in the trap this season for me was the Lobster moth, closely followed by the Puss moth, although I only put it out 4-5 times. In the garden it has to be the Hummingbird Hawk-moth. Whenever I see it, I just have to stop and watch:

Moths 2017



I can't deny a developing interest in all things insect related even though I find some of them distasteful - not those gorgeous Demoiselles though or the Glowworm larva which I have never seen before. To that end I have included a new 'category' to reflect this:



It really is time to go now. As well as all the usual outside maintenance I have plans to learn some new skills this winter and re-upholster all my dining room chairs which Jaffa has torn to shreds. If I am successful, perhaps I'll post a shot in the Spring. In the words of Wurzel 'have a goodun'!! 😊😊

Re: Pauline

by millerd, 03-Sep-17 07:19 PM GMT

Thank you for sharing all those wonderful images, Pauline. Have a good autumn and winter and we'll see you again in the spring! 😊

Dave

Re: Pauline

by Wurzel, 03-Sep-17 10:37 PM GMT

A fantastic array of images Pauline 😊 Hopefully there will be a Social this year and you'll be able to come along but if not take care and have a good 'down season' 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pauline

by Goldie M, 04-Sep-17 10:57 AM GMT

Hi! Pauline, I'll miss your shots but will keep in touch by e-mail Goldie 😊

Re: Pauline

by MikeOxon, 04-Sep-17 11:30 AM GMT

What a stunning series of images! 📷; a collection to enjoy, as we all look forward to a good season next year.

All the best, Mike

Re: Pauline

by trevor, 04-Sep-17 01:50 PM GMT

You may have missed the Emperor this year, but you managed some lovely images of the Purple Hairstreak. A privilege afforded to many of us in this unusual year for Hairstreaks.

Best wishes,
Trevor.

Re: Pauline

by Maximus, 04-Sep-17 05:54 PM GMT

A beautiful set of butterfly/moth images, Pauline 😊 I recently said to Cathy, 'it's only seven months until spring' 😊 see you then.

Mike

Re: Pauline

by bugboy, 04-Sep-17 06:26 PM GMT

You still managed to cram in a lot of butterfly action in. I hope winter is kind to you and look forward to seeing you reappear with the Orange-tips 😊

Re: Pauline

by David M, 05-Sep-17 10:33 PM GMT

That's a wonderful, reflective résumé of your year, Pauline, with a superbly presented array of images to support it.

Here's hoping all will be well for you during your absence and we hope to welcome you back again next year.

All the best.

Re: Pauline

by Neil Freeman, 19-Sep-17 08:08 PM GMT

It is amazing how quickly another season has flown by and it is time for your winter break from these forums already. An interesting round up of your season Pauline...and thanks for the comment on my moth photos 😊 I take plenty of not so good ones as well 😊

Hope you have a good winter and looking forward to welcoming you back again next spring.

All the best,

Neil.

p.s. I think we took an evolutionary wrong turn in not hibernating like some other mammals...if it's good enough for bears, hedgehogs and dormice, then it's good enough for me 😊

Re: Pauline

by David M, 21-Sep-17 11:00 PM GMT

Neil Freeman wrote:

..p.s. I think we took an evolutionary wrong turn in not hibernating like some other mammals...if it's good enough for bears, hedgehogs and dormice, then it's good enough for me

I quite agree, Neil. Imagine not having to go through that late autumn depression (not to mention colds and flu) and to emerge in February three stone lighter with just a week or two to wait for your first butterfly of the New Year!

Heaven.

Re: Pauline

by David M, 08-Oct-17 11:54 PM GMT

Pauline wrote:

The time I spend on the immature stages, both at home and in the wild seems to increase year on year and to that end I have included 2 compilations which I hope reflects that. My camera is not the best to take shots of tiny subjects so I hope the images are clear enough - they will never be in the same league as the jaw-dropping images Pete has recently posted

Maybe not, but your observations are of great interest to many of us, Pauline, and I hope you will update us on developments when you return in the new year.