

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 16-Feb-17 05:39 PM GMT

Pamber Forest

I have, at last, managed to get out in the field – something I've been yearning for since coming back from a work trip to Madrid and contracting man flu, followed by shingles 😞 Anyway ...

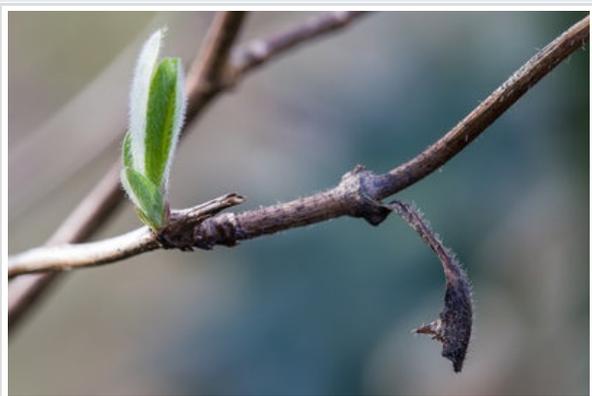
Of the 19 White Admiral larvae I've been monitoring, there are now a total of 11 remaining. All are still in their hibernacula, apart from those where the leaf has dried in such a way that there is a significant opening (there were lots of larval bums on display) or where the leaf has been largely lost (one larva was out in the open ... when it shouldn't have been!). Some photos below.



Larva #2 – Just visible at the bottom of its leaf



Larva #4 – With the 1st instar leaf (with "pier") at the top left



Larva #8 – Fresh Honeysuckle growth has started to appear



Larva #9 - In context



Larva #9 - Close up - bum on display



Larva #15



Larva #18 - In context



Larva #18 - Close up

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by trevor, 16-Feb-17 06:50 PM GMT

Man flu and shingles, not nice !.

Hope the White Admiral has a better year in 2017. I had very few sightings of them last year, though Chiddingfold forest held a reasonable population.

Keep well,
Trevor.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 16-Feb-17 11:25 PM GMT

Shingles - Ouch! 😞 At least you're better now and after the pupal fix probably feeling even better 😊 I too hope the White Admirals have a better year this year, 2016 was dire for them from my personal perspective 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 17-Feb-17 10:58 PM GMT

Great images, Pete. Anyone suffering from shingles deserves a bit of good fortune so with any luck you'll get to follow a few of these to maturity.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Goldie M, 18-Feb-17 08:42 AM GMT

Shingles Pete can be dangerous, I got them not long since in my neck and head and they caused paralysis in my face, it was awful! luckily for me I've slowly recovered and now nearly back to normal but it was no joke. 😞 Goldie 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 18-Feb-17 04:15 PM GMT

Thanks Trevor, Wurzel, David, Goldie! I think I'm definitely over the worst, but it's a very strange feeling like I've been kicked in the side with no bruising to show for it! The odd pain killer here and there is helping me get through it, as well as butterflying, of course!

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 07-Apr-17 07:55 PM GMT

It's been quite some time since I last posted and, as usual, it's because there's been lots going on "behind the scenes"! Specifically, while not travelling with work, I've been spending every spare moment filling in gaps in our photos (and collective understanding) of larval instars - which Vince and I launched as "Project Frohawk" quite some time ago. I must admit that I think I've overdone things - since I'm rearing (or observing in the wild) every Satyrid with the exception of the *Erebia* (which I'll be monitoring in the wild, starting this year) and a few others besides. The welfare of these creatures comes first and my personal diary has suffered as a result while I spend time ensuring that their needs are met. The good news is that I've only lost 2 individuals in captivity - 2 Speckled Wood larvae that were pupating, but were found by a colony of black ants that decided to set up home in one of the wooden barrels I'm using to rear them through 😞

Below is a selection of somewhat-random photos, but that are hopefully of some interest - selected on the basis that not many members will have had the opportunity to experience these (every instar has been photographed of those species shown). I should also say that I'm mightily impressed with some recent contributions from UKB members, even if I've not been in a position to personally reply! Especially mating pairs of *Vanessids*!



4th (penultimate) instar *Gatekeeper* larva



3rd instar Grayling larva



Final (5th) instar Small Heath larva



4th (penultimate) instar Ringlet larva



2nd instar Marbled White larva



Final instar Speckled Wood larva



Speckled Wood pupa

As well as these lovely examples, I've also had a Wall larva form a very unusual pupa, in that it is almost black. I was absolutely gobsmacked when I first saw it!



Very unusual black form of a Wall pupa

And some others:



Black Hairstreak ova



1st instar Black Hairstreak larva getting stuck in!



2nd instar White-letter Hairstreak larvae



Brown Hairstreak ova

And, finally, I received some news from the BMNH (Natural History Museum) that some parasitic (*Cotesia*) wasps I found emerging from a Chequered Skipper larva in the spring of last year are new to science 😊 This is still going through the validation process, and specimens of the wasp are currently with a team in Canada to correlate with their Arctic wasp collection (apparently!) before they are formally described as a new species. It just goes to show that there is still much to learn and that we can all contribute.

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by millerd, 07-Apr-17 08:06 PM GMT

A brilliant set of images, Pete. The patience you have is amazing. 😊

And congratulations on the wasp! That's a fantastic achievement. Do you get to name it?

Dave

Re: Pete Eeles

by bugboy, 07-Apr-17 08:13 PM GMT

My you have been a busy boy... or should that be dad 😊

Does this news mean that there will be a tiny parasitic wasp going by the name *eeles* soon?

Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 07-Apr-17 08:14 PM GMT

Quite staggering sequences. You're in a class of your own, Pete!

How about *Cotesia eelesi*? Pete won't be able to name it himself, but if the authors did choose to recognise him in perpetuity I think it would be a very well deserved honour.

Guy

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 07-Apr-17 08:47 PM GMT

Thanks David, Paul, Guy!

If I have any say, the wasp won't be named after me! I'd much rather that any moniker were in recognition of my inspiration for the Chequered Skipper study – so perhaps *Cotesia ravenscroftii* 😊 Anyway – if it is a new species – the chaps at the BMNH will name it and describe it; I suspect that a formal paper will be written announcing the new species, where I may get a mention!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Mark Tutton, 07-Apr-17 09:20 PM GMT

Well Pete not only have you been busy but your contribution is fantastic and worth the significant gap in your diary. It just shows that citizen science is alive and well and with a bit (well quite a lot actually) of effort there is still a lot to be discovered by simple but detailed observation. I await the wasp naming and description with interest.

Kind Regards

Mark

Re: Pete Eeles

by Vince Massimo, 07-Apr-17 09:48 PM GMT

Brilliant work, as ever, Pete 😊. I am struggling to observe and document just one species at the moment. When you go quiet, it's usually a sign that some special photos will soon appear or a new discovery is announced. In this case, it's both.

I look forward to seeing the full set of images when you make your customary download into the Species Albums.

Vince

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-17 10:35 PM GMT

Congrats on your find Pete, do you get royalties from that 😊 A stunning sequence of 'development' shots, my personal fave was the Gatekeeper (still feels weird not calling it Hedge Brown) with a nice set of stripes rather than spots 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 07-Apr-17 10:54 PM GMT

Good effort, Pete. Your hard work studying the 'lesser lights' of the lifecycle is paying off in a tangible way.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 11-Apr-17 02:38 PM GMT

Thanks Mark, Vince, Wurzel, David!

Pamber Forest

It's been a while since I checked up on the White Admiral larvae I'm monitoring at Pamber Forest, but am so glad I did! We have quite a spectrum of progress, ranging from 2 that are still in their hibernacula (3rd instar), 3 out of their hibernacula and now feeding (3rd instar) and a very early 4th instar larva!



3rd instar larva still in hibernaculum



3rd instar larva - out of feeding



4th instar larva

I also found quite a few Orange-tip and Brimstone eggs – the Spring has been amazing!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 29-Apr-17 08:06 PM GMT

Not much of an update – just some random photos of relatively-interesting items taken over the last few weeks since my last update!

First off, a trip to the Isle of Wight allowed me to find numerous final instar Glanville larvae – some "chines" were very productive!



A disused larval web

I also managed to get a closeup of a Comma egg a couple of weeks back:



And, today, I saw my first ever Small Heath pupa – quite exquisite for a "little brown job" 😊



And, finally, the first photo of an adult butterfly I've taken this year (although I've taken over 600 photos of immature stages so far this year)! A newly-emerged male Grizzled Skipper at Greenham Common:



Male Grizzled Skipper

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-17 08:25 PM GMT

Sounds like positive news from the Isle of Black Pete, hopefully there will be bucketfuls of Glannies this year 😊 The Small Heath pupa really is beautifully marked 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 29-Apr-17 08:26 PM GMT

That comma egg is exquisite, Pete, and as for the small heath pupa ...

Fantastic pictures.

Guy

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 30-Apr-17 12:04 AM GMT

That Small Heath pupa is beyond 'exquisite', Pete. I never realised they were so beautiful.

I really AM going to have to concentrate more on these early stages. I'm sure there are jewels out there just waiting to be discovered.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 08-Jun-17 10:28 PM GMT

Thanks all! I've not posted for a while; a combination of work, and ensuring that all livestock is well cared for. I thought I'd post some "highlights" since I'm sure they'll be of interest to most UKB members. My proudest moments, however, are when I release this lot back from whence they came (unless they are from captive-reared stock). All of the images and associated information (I'm learning one heck of a lot, despite it being exhausting!) will feed into "Project Frohawk", of course.



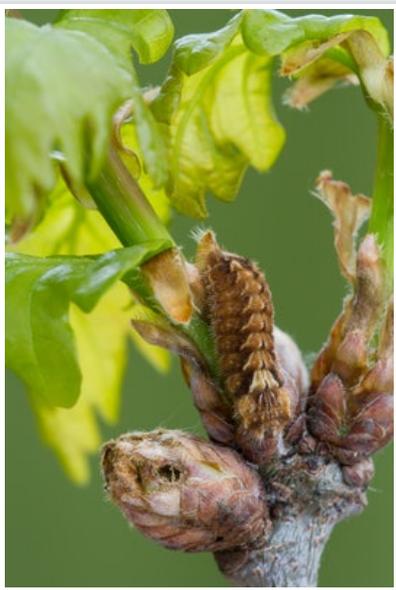
Grizzled Skipper egg with head of larva showing



The amazing camouflage of a final-instar White-letter Hairstreak larva



A final instar Black Hairstreak larva. Note the white head. Just moulted, with incredible colours!



Final instar Purple Hairstreak larva



Final instar Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary larva



Final instar Grayling larva - taken at night!



Wall pupa - it's a girl!



A rarely-seen Gatekeeper pupa - very different from other "Satyrids"



2nd or 3rd instar Small Blue larva – inside a floret of Kidney Vetch

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 08-Jun-17 10:34 PM GMT

Frohawk is looking down on you and smiling, Pete. His work is being continued.

Guy

Re: Pete Eeles

by Neil Hulme, 09-Jun-17 07:36 AM GMT

Hi Pete

These are all amazing, but the Black Hairstreak caterpillar and Wall pupa are amongst the best (which include your Chequered Skipper pupa) and most fascinating images ever to appear on UKB.

A book focusing entirely on the early stages of British butterflies may at first sound rather limited in appeal, but you are systematically showing that these are things of real beauty, and surely worthy of a lavish publication. In years to come, once even more ground has been covered, I hope you might consider this.

BWs, Neil

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pauline, 09-Jun-17 08:34 AM GMT

Smashing images of the early stages Pete. When do you expect your WLH and PH to emerge?

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 09-Jun-17 06:39 PM GMT

Neil Hulme wrote:

Hi Pete

These are all amazing, but the Black Hairstreak caterpillar and Wall pupa are amongst the best (which include your Chequered Skipper pupa) and most fascinating images ever to appear on UKB.

A book focusing entirely on the early stages of British butterflies may at first sound rather limited in appeal, but you are systematically showing that these are things of real beauty, and surely worthy of a lavish publication. In years to come, once even more ground has been covered, I hope you might consider this.

BWs, Neil

Thanks for the kind words, Neil! Funny you should mention a book ... although it's a couple of years away yet since there are still quite a few gaps to be filled. But I have bounced the idea off a publisher that you might know and he liked it 😊 If it weren't for our very own Andy Brown then I may not even have thought of bringing Frohawk up to date.

The Black Hairstreak larvae were amazing. I've reared them before in captivity but, this time, didn't use any "sleeve" to protect them from predation (including from Great Tits that were nesting in our nest box about 20 feet away) and learned one heck of a lot as a result. Despite the appearance of the larva in the photo, I didn't realise just how camouflaged these larvae are when sitting at the tip of a recently-unfurled Blackthorn sprig, the only leaves that they consumed (despite a whole bush being available).

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 09-Jun-17 06:46 PM GMT

Pauline wrote:

Smashing images of the early stages Pete. When do you expect your WLH and PH to emerge?

Thanks Pauline! Unfortunately, the White-letters are my first casualty since, like yours, they emerged at least 3 weeks before they should have, so I consider this a failure, despite the eggs being kept in the coldest place in our garage. The majority of final instar larvae (a dozen or so) were released, together, on a local elm (we seem to have quite a few round here – the more I look, the more I find!). One observation on that front is that trees that don't push out flowers come into leaf much earlier (and I'm talking 2 or 3 weeks earlier) than their counterparts that do (and will send relevant information to Jamie Burston in Sussex BC next year on this phenomenon as part of his studies). I think this is significant. If it weren't for the non-flowering elms, then I wouldn't have found the leaves the larvae needed but, more importantly, I think this might have implications for the conservation of this species.

The Purple Hairstreak (raised from a single egg) is almost in sync with those in the wild, but also ahead to some degree. The final instar larva was also released a while ago, so I didn't get to see the adult.

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Matsukaze, 09-Jun-17 07:03 PM GMT

Completely amazing. Lovely images.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pauline, 09-Jun-17 07:06 PM GMT

Thanks for your comprehensive reply Pete. I'm just a little bit paranoid that my PH are going to emerge a bit too early as they pupated a little while ago and are starting to darken. I'm kind of hoping that if the PE is early this year (as predicted) then perhaps the PH will also be early. Really just want to get it right but what can you do? Like your WLH they have been outside the whole time 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 09-Jun-17 07:32 PM GMT

Padfield wrote:

Frohawk is looking down on you and smiling, Pete. His work is being continued.

Guy

Thanks Guy!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 09-Jun-17 07:39 PM GMT

Pauline wrote:

Thanks for your comprehensive reply Pete. I'm just a little bit paranoid that my PH are going to emerge a bit too early as they pupated a little while ago and are starting to darken. I'm kind of hoping that if the PE is early this year (as predicted) then perhaps the PH will also be early. Really just want to get it right but what can you do? Like your WLH they have been outside the whole time 😊

Sounds like perfect timing – PH must be imminent! Silver-washed are out in some parts of the country and (in my head at least) these two species emerge together 😊

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by essexbuzzard, 09-Jun-17 08:58 PM GMT

Wow, that small Heath chrysalis image is stunning. The wall and gatekeeper pupa are impressive, too. As your excellent pictures show, the immature stages, in many cases, are quite as beautiful as the adult. Perhaps more of us would do well to focus a little bit closer on these stages.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 10-Jun-17 09:45 PM GMT

Fantastic stuff Pete, especially the pupa of my favourite species, Gatekeepers just keep getting better and better, that pupa is a beaut 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 10-Jun-17 10:37 PM GMT

Those early stage images are wonderful, Pete. You are putting a lot of effort into this and we all appreciate seeing the results.

Re: Pete Eeles

by bugboy, 11-Jun-17 10:37 PM GMT

Some spectacular images Pete, definitely a book in the making there 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 02-Jul-17 08:14 PM GMT

Thanks all – the comments are much appreciated, even if I don't reply in a timely manner! Work has been brutal this year, especially the travel which just chews up time. Anyway – a few updates. As I've already mentioned, my focus for this year and next is observing the immature stages, so here are a few more snippets! I have over 2,000 images to process in the winter and many more to come, I'm sure!



Small Blue 1st instar larva – Magdalen Hill Down. Just emerged from the egg!



A very messy Glanville Fritillary egg batch, Isle of Wight



Glanville Fritillary egg batch, Isle of Wight, close up



Brown Argus 1st instar larva feeding damage, Magdalen Hill Down



The culprit, on the underside of the leaf!



A Grayling pupa, buried 2cm beneath the surface - reared in captivity from an egg



Gatekeeper pupa, male, 2 hours before emergence, just for Wurzel :)



Small Blue 3rd (penultimate) instar, Magdalen Hill Down



Small Skipper pupa - formed in a cocoon that is the prototype for the string vest



Brown argus 3rd instar larva - very colourful!



Dingy Skipper 4th instar larva



Grizzled Skipper 4th instar larval abode



Grizzled Skipper 4th instar larva

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by bugboy, 02-Jul-17 08:35 PM GMT

I don't know how you do it Pete, I've basically had a 6 week holiday and I'm exhausted just from the butterflying, never mind doing the job on top of it!

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 05-Jul-17 05:20 PM GMT

Thanks Paul!

It is exhausting ... very exhausting ... but the results and observations (which are a pleasure to share) are well worth it!

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 19-Jul-17 06:36 PM GMT

More random photos - I currently have 2032 images to sort out over the winter ... but here are some I like 😊 All instars (where relevant) have been photographed and I can't wait to get to processing things! There will also be an exciting update regarding the descriptions of all of the immature stages soon - watch this space 😊



Silver-washed Fritillary egg - Pamber Forest



Dark Green Fritillary egg, coloured up



Dark Green Fritillary 1st instar larvae - ready for the winter



Common Blue final instar larva



Brown Argus final instar larva - with attendant ant



Small Blue final instar larva



Adonis Blue final instar larva



Essex Skipper ova in a sheath of Cock's-foot grass

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 19-Jul-17 10:22 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Pete - your images make the once considered 'boring' bit of the life cycle much more interesting 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 19-Jul-17 10:54 PM GMT

Pete, this is (yet again) really good stuff. I shudder to think what you will compile once you retire if you can conjure up stuff like this in between 'brutal' periods of work!

Roll on retirement (or semi-retirement even).

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 01-Aug-17 05:10 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, David!

White Admiral larval survey

Today I conducted my first survey for White Admiral larvae in Pamber Forest and found 16 in just over an hour, together with 7 absentees (based on the typical larval feeding damage and "pier"; I assume predated). Based on previous years, this is a pretty good "hit rate" and it would appear, based on this limited data, that White Admiral has had a relatively-good year. Most larvae are in their 2nd instar, with some still in their 1st instar. None are in their 3rd instar, so I don't hold out much hope for a second brood; the recent weather seems to have calmed things down considerably. I also found a final instar larva (I assume that overwintered in 2016/2017) that has been parasitised, presumably by *Cotesia sibyllarum* - the usual culprit when it comes to White Admiral. Amazingly, this larva is still feeding as per normal, despite grubs having emerged from it, where they have built cocoons, pupated, and a few emerged.



Other Stuff

As with all updates of late, here's a random set of images that will contribute to "Project Frohawk" – the last (Adonis Blue) seems to have gotten quite a bit of interest on Twitter and Facebook, although I can never predict how people react to such things!



Large Skipper – newly-emerged larva



Essex Skipper ova – with larvae fully-formed within the egg



Grizzled Skipper - final instar larva



A male Adonis Blue, 12 hours before emergence - the iridescent blue even shows from within the pupa!

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by bugboy, 01-Aug-17 06:36 PM GMT

Interesting you haven't found any third instar White Admirals Pete. I'm pretty sure I found at least one at Bookham last week (pictures in my pd) and think I found another one today which will be posted in due course.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 01-Aug-17 06:54 PM GMT

Hi Paul - you did indeed find a 3rd instar! If the head capsule is brown, then it's 3rd instar: <http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/phpBB/viewtopic.php?f=29&t=3977&start=940#p112980>

I'll take a closer look if I get a chance to revisit this week!

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Padfield, 01-Aug-17 07:47 PM GMT

Staggering pictures, Pete! Brilliant in every way - subject matter, timing and execution.

Guy

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 01-Aug-17 10:02 PM GMT

I concur with Guy Pete, staggering photos especially the Essex Skippers in the egg, looking a little like Frog Spawn 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 01-Aug-17 11:06 PM GMT

Amazing macro images, Pete. You are opening my eyes to the less commonly seen aspect of the butterfly life cycle.

The Adonis inside the pupal case is especially striking.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Vince Massimo, 02-Aug-17 10:35 AM GMT

I love the Adonis pupa, Pete.

Keep 'em coming. 😊

Vince

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 07-Aug-17 07:15 PM GMT

Thanks Guy, Wurzel, David, Vince! Things are definitely slowing down on the immature stages front, thank goodness! In the meantime, here are some updates:



Small Skipper 1st instar larvae that have hatched and formed cocoons, ready for the winter, Thatcham



Silver-washed Fritillary 1st instar larva, Pamber Forest, Hants - the larva has created a silk pad among the moss on which I saw the egg laid



Silver-spotted Skipper egg, Broughton Down, Hants

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-17 09:29 PM GMT

Great shot of the Pudding egg Pete 😊 Broughton is a great little site – how are the Silver-spots looking over there? I visited a fortnight ago and they were only just emerging...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by Tony Moore, 09-Aug-17 12:53 PM GMT

Did you watch a female SSS ovipositing or search in a suitable 'rabbit-hole' site? It took me 15 mins to find a suitable site at Aston Rowant (from Jeremy Thomas's description), and there were three eggs within a sq. ft. 🍷

Tony M.

Re: Pete Eeles

by kevlng, 09-Aug-17 01:29 PM GMT

Pete,

Thoroughly enjoying your early stage photographs of so many species. This is an area I am slowly gathering knowledge of and your reports are most educating. I particularly like the Essex Skipper eggs in the Cock's Foot Grass. They look like peas in pod. I could do with your presence on my surveys, you have a great knack of finding things.

Regards Kev

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 09-Aug-17 07:44 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

Great shot of the Pudding egg Pete 😊 Broughton is a great little site – how are the Silver-spots looking over there? I visited a fortnight ago and they were only just emerging...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Thanks Wurzel! The SSS are doing really well; I must have seen 30 or so – nice to see them in such good numbers!

Tony Moore wrote:

Did you watch a female SSS ovipositing or search in a suitable 'rabbit-hole' site? It took me 15 mins to find a suitable site at Aston Rowant (from Jeremy Thomas's description), and there were three eggs within a sq. ft. 🍷

Tony M.

Hi Tony – although I did see a female ovipositing in quite an unusual place (nowhere near any bare earth!), I did find a few more by simply looking in the right places!

And thanks, Kevin!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 28-Aug-17 08:07 PM GMT

Update

Another somewhat-random update of various bits and bobs. This year has just been so busy on the butterfly front, especially if you're interested in immature stages! Photos below.



Grizzled Skipper pupa formed within a chamber of silked-together Agrimony leaves



Comma pupa

I've come across quite a few Red Admiral larvae in the last couple of weeks (over 100 while on holiday in Devon last week!), and have a few in my garden. As an experiment, I took what I knew to be a full-grown larva and placed it on a fresh nettle patch. The first thing it did was head up the plant where it (to my astonishment!), severed the main sprig by eating through it (in essence, felling it) before silking together adjacent leaves. I can report that it has now pupated in the resulting "tent". This is the classic construction as described in Thomas and Lewington.



Red Admiral pupal tent

I was also amazed at the amount of orange spotting on this particular Red Admiral larva – I don't recall having seen anything similar, ever, and would be interested to know if others have.



Red Admiral larva – black form

And, finally – I have a few Scotch Argus in captivity, and below is a series of shots that I hope are of interest. I really enjoyed watching this particular larva emerge – it felt like a privilege, if that makes any sense!



Scotch Argus "fully coloured-up" egg



Scotch Argus larva creating its "escape hatch"



Scotch Argus larva pushing its way out of the egg



Scotch Argus larva emerging from egg



Scotch Argus larva eating its egg shell



Scotch Argus larva

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Neil Hulme, 28-Aug-17 08:18 PM GMT

Fantastic images, Pete.

I've never seen a similar (or such a beautiful) Red Admiral larva before.

The Scotch Argus egg is exquisite; Faberge eggs can't compete with the real deal.
BWs, Neil

Re: Pete Eeles

by bugboy, 28-Aug-17 08:38 PM GMT

As always, marvellous stuff Pete. Your posts may be intermittent but they are always worth a browse, always fascinating 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 28-Aug-17 09:33 PM GMT

Incredible details in those images, Pete. You must surely now have enough for a book on early stages?

Re: Pete Eeles

by millerd, 28-Aug-17 09:37 PM GMT

That egg is beautiful and the sequence of shots is breathtaking. 😊

Dave

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 28-Aug-17 10:08 PM GMT

Amazing images Pete, it puts them into a whole new light 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by Vince Massimo, 28-Aug-17 10:41 PM GMT

Amazing Scotch Argus larval sequence, Pete 😊

I have just got back from a week on the Sussex coast and was also surprised as to the number of Red Admiral larval tents to be found on fresh nettle growth. I think this species will have a good end to the season.

I have reared or monitored many Red Admiral larvae this year and witnessed a great variation in the colouration of the final instar. Of these, two were of the dark form with the prominent red spots. Interestingly, both were without spotting when they first moulted into their respective 5th instars. I am sending some images through to you to show this.

Like you, I have lots of images to process and load at the end of the season.

Vince

Re: Pete Eeles

by Maximus, 29-Aug-17 12:05 AM GMT

Eye opening images, Pete, amazing detail.

Mike

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pauline, 29-Aug-17 08:47 AM GMT

I've just seen your images on the egg hatching Pete. The detail is stunning. I really don't think you can improve on that!

Re: Pete Eeles

by Goldie M, 29-Aug-17 10:24 AM GMT

Fantastic shots of the Scotch Argus Egg hatching Pete, I know now why they call it Scotch Argus, the first thing I saw when seeing the egg was a resemblance to a Klit 😊 Seriously, first time I've seen anything in such a good sequence. Goldie 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 29-Aug-17 06:40 PM GMT

Thanks for the kind comments Neil, Paul, David, Dave, Wurzel, Vince, Mike, Pauline and Goldie!

David M wrote:

Incredible details in those images, Pete. You must surely now have enough for a book on early stages?

Not quite; there are still several gaps that will take a year or two to fill and I think that such an undertaking should be done properly given the inevitable time investment – but I'll make it worth the wait 😊 I'm meeting with a potential publisher tomorrow, and visiting the OUMNH to do more research before committing! But I strongly suspect that a book is a “go” on all fronts 😊

Vince Massimo wrote:

I have reared or monitored many Red Admiral larvae this year and witnessed a great variation in the colouration of the final instar. Of these, two were of the dark form with the prominent red spots. Interestingly, both were without spotting when they first moulted into their respective 5th instars. I am sending some images through to you to show this.

Thanks Vince!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 29-Aug-17 06:54 PM GMT

Pete Eeles wrote:

...there are still several gaps that will take a year or two to fill and I think that such an undertaking should be done properly given the inevitable time investment – but I'll make it worth the wait 😊 I'm meeting with a potential publisher tomorrow, and visiting the OUMNH to do more research before committing! But I strongly suspect that a book is a “go” on all fronts

Pleased to hear it, Pete. There's definitely a 'gap' in the market for such a publication and I very much doubt there are better images of these early stages you've been following for the last year or three!

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 17-Sep-17 10:32 PM GMT

Thanks David!

A few updates based on recent events ...

Lots of Red Admiral larvae and pupae about at the moment!



Red Admiral pupa, showing the gold flecks that give early lepidopterists, "Aurelians", their name

A few Comma that I've reared through have been parasitised by *Sturmia bella* 😞



Sturmia bella pupa



Sturmia bella

A day trip to the Isle of Wight allowed me to spend a good amount of time surveying various "chines" on the south west coast. This trip was primarily to locate Glanville Fritillary larval nests, although I also came across an ovipositing Small Copper that laid on a very grubby Sorrel leaf! Finding the larval nests was quite an effort, but I hope to see the larvae in the spring ... this should make for quite a spectacle when they do re-emerge!



Isle of Wight



Small Copper ovum (bottom left)



Glanville Fritillary 5th instar larval nest

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 17-Sep-17 10:58 PM GMT

Cracking stuff Pete 😊 Can I pre-pre-order a copy of your tome? 😊
Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by trevor, 18-Sep-17 08:41 AM GMT

Lovely view of Compton bay, right at the junction of the sticky, gooey and very unstable clay

and the chalk downland. When we went to the IOW for the Glanville, we found more than we could handle at Wheelers bay, but none at all at Compton. But then Bonchurch is quite sheltered, and Compton is on an exposed cliff top.

Great stuff, as always.
Trevor.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 18-Sep-17 07:58 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

Cracking stuff Pete 😊 Can I pre-pre-order a copy of your tome? :D!

Thanks Wurzel! Yes, in time. I want to "do this properly" and there are several gaps to close that will take a season (or two) to sort out. But the outline and first species description is complete – 58 or so to go 😊

trevor wrote:

When we went to the IOW for the Glanville, we found more than we could handle at Wheelers bay, but none at all at Compton. But then Bonchurch is quite sheltered, and Compton is on an exposed cliff top.

Thanks Trevor. Some chimes are definitely more productive than others, for sure, but it depends if you're looking for adults or immature stages, and the two do not correlate! I suspect that the different sites become less or more suitable with each passing year, depending on the amount of land slip and resulting growth of their larval foodplant as a result.

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 19-Sep-17 09:20 PM GMT

Pete Eeles wrote:

I want to "do this properly" and there are several gaps to close that will take a season (or two) to sort out.

You seem to have covered so much in the last two or three years, Pete. Which are the species you haven't yet covered satisfactorily?

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 19-Sep-17 09:59 PM GMT

David M wrote:

Pete Eeles wrote:

I want to "do this properly" and there are several gaps to close that will take a season (or two) to sort out.

You seem to have covered so much in the last two or three years, Pete. Which are the species you haven't yet covered satisfactorily?

Cryptic Wood White, Heath Fritillary, Mountain Ringlet, Painted Lady (!), Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Wood White.

Most of these are "simply" planning and effort. However, Mountain Ringlet and Painted Lady will, I think, be the most problematic since they're unpredictable. I know from personal experience just how challenging the former is, and the latter depends on the 2018 migration year. Also, this isn't just about sourcing images – it's about personal observations and photos that we often forget to take (at least I do!) of nectar sources, larval food plants and habitat.

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by bugboy, 19-Sep-17 10:06 PM GMT

Pete Eeles wrote:

David M wrote:

Pete Eeles wrote:

I want to "do this properly" and there are several gaps to close that will take a season (or two) to sort out.

You seem to have covered so much in the last two or three years, Pete. Which are the species you haven't yet covered satisfactorily?

Cryptic Wood White, Heath Fritillary, Mountain Ringlet, Painted Lady (!), Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Wood White....

- Pete

Alphabetical order, that's what I like to see, a man with a plan! 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 19-Sep-17 10:07 PM GMT

bugboy wrote:

Alphabetical order, that's what I like to see, a man with a plan! 😊

😄 And spreadsheets galore 😊

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 20-Sep-17 05:30 PM GMT

Pete Eeles wrote:

Cryptic Wood White, Heath Fritillary, Mountain Ringlet, Painted Lady (!), Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Wood White.

Thanks, Pete. I was surprised to see Painted Lady in your list but upon reflection can see why. I guess you're right about Mountain Ringlet being the trickiest to document though. Good luck with that one!

Re: Pete Eeles

by Butterfysaurus rex, 20-Sep-17 08:35 PM GMT

I would love to see these amazing early stages published in a reference book Pete. Your photography is first class and gives such a fascinating insight into the life cycle of our resident butterflies. If it ever happens I'll be one of the first in line to purchase a copy. It's wonderful to see this here but I've always loved leafing through beautifully illustrated reference books.

Re: Pete Eeles

by Katrina, 21-Sep-17 08:35 PM GMT

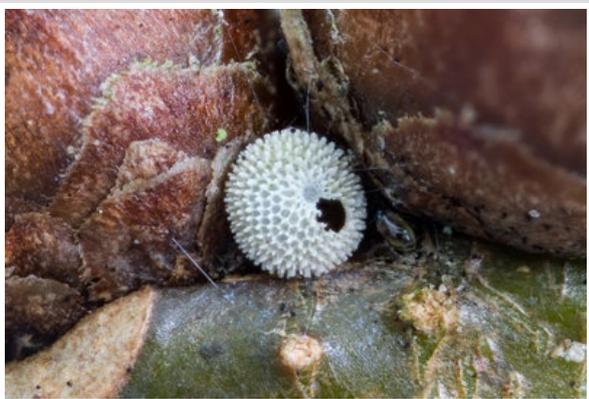
The Red Admiral pupa photo is beautiful, I must look out for those in the future!

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 06-Dec-17 05:11 PM GMT

Thanks David / James / Katrina - and apologies for not acknowledging your replies sooner!

My PD is getting rather dusty but, as ever, there's always a lot going on behind the scenes (mainly writing a book!). Anyway, I managed to get to Pamber Forest today and found 6 Purple Hairstreak ova on a favoured tree, 2 of which were predated / parasitised. Some photos below. Now is probably the best time to look for PH ova since they'll still be relatively-white; with the passage of time, if they're not lost, they can become quite discoloured with all of the debris that flies through the air during a windy spell! If you know of a colony, then just look on branches of an oak at the edge of the woodland, that is south-facing, and that has plump oak buds.



Predated / parasitised

Cheers,

- Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by Wurzel, 07-Dec-17 02:20 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Pete - even better when viewed enlarged 😲😄 In the 'parasitised' shot is the small object to the right of shot next to the egg the parasite/pradator - it looks vaguely like a bee/wasp or am I seeing things? 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Pete Eeles

by Pete Eeles, 07-Dec-17 02:31 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel!

I'm not sure what that critter to the right of the egg is. It was crawling around, and didn't emerge from the egg. Nature is just brilliant – always so much to learn!

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Pete Eeles

by bugboy, 07-Dec-17 08:39 PM GMT

Pete Eeles wrote:

Thanks Wurzel!

I'm not sure what that critter to the right of the egg is. It was crawling around, and didn't emerge from the egg. Nature is just brilliant – always so much to learn!

Cheers,

– Pete

Could be a Psyllid Bug, they're normally found lurking and creeping around in nooks and crannies 😊

Re: Pete Eeles

by trevor, 08-Dec-17 08:46 AM GMT

It was the Purple Hairstreak that allowed many of us the rare opportunity of close up views and photo's of what is normally a very elusive Butterfly. Finding them basking at ground level was one of the real highlights of 2017.

All the best,
Trevor.

Re: Pete Eeles

by David M, 09-Dec-17 12:32 PM GMT

Beautiful, detailed, close-up images there, Pete. There is so much stunning and intricate design in that part of nature that we can't properly see with the naked eye. Pictures like yours really bring it to life.