

## Re: philm63

by philm63, 05-Feb-18 02:58 PM GMT

So far we have been lucky enough locally to miss most of the bad weather. Just three snow falls and none lasted more than 24 hours on the ground. The day light is extending and I actually see some light when finishing work, briefly admittedly, but it is a start. So any observing is limited to the weekends, when I can see what is going on around my feeders. Besides the usual Blackbirds, Robins, Dunnocks and assorted tits, the main users are the finches. I love finches, they really do add a splash of colour to the feeders in a similar way to the tits. I am lucky in that I seem to get a good cross-section of the main British finches in the year, except for Brambling and Linnet which are yet to show in the garden, at least when I am looking that is. I have collected together below some of my better images of finches to illustrate how attractive they can be

### Chaffinch

Usually a pair in residence and seen almost daily when I am looking. The numbers do occasionally go up but not much. The male is a nice bird, especially in spring



*Male Chaffinch*



*Female Chaffinch*

### Greenfinch

Nearly a year round bird, there are occasional periods when I see none for a few days. They occur in greater numbers than the Chaffinch and on some days I will see 6 or more, usually with Goldfinches. The male is quite gaudy and the female more subdued. When seen alongside Chaffinch it is obviously a more chunky bird, with the yellow in the wings fairly obvious



*Male Greenfinch*



*Pair of Greenfinches with a Goldfinch*

**Goldfinch**

Probably the one finch I can see any day and sometimes in good numbers of 12 or more, but more usually 6 - 8. The flocks often drag in with them the occasional Siskin or Greenfinch. Sexually they look the same but this is a very attractive bird with some subtle hues



*Goldfinch*

**Bullfinch**

A noticeably bigger bird with a large bill and some beautiful colouration. The female just a bit less so as she lacks the rosy tinge to the undersides. Normally a pair is quite frequent for months then will vanish for a period of weeks, to return again later.



*Male Bullfinch*



*Female Bullfinch*

**Siskin**

A favourite of mine and a bird that seems to show some variation, some males are almost canaryish in colouration others more subdued, the females are duller but some can appear quite bright at times. I can go months without any then a small group will appear, sometimes in decent numbers; I once had 30 in the garden



*Male Siskin*



*Female Siskin*

**Lesser Redpoll**

Now back as a species since the BOU adopted the new British List in January, based on the IOC list

A much duller bird showing similarities to the Siskin in size and behaviour. it is not regular in my garden, with only a handful of appearances over the years



*Lesser Redpoll*

Phil

**Re: philm63**

by Wurzel, 05-Feb-18 10:32 PM GMT

Great set of images Phil – especially the female Bullfinch – to get a shot of a male is difficult but the females are even harder work 😊🇩🇪 I still don't understand why we can't call the Lesser Redpoll Common as it is the British species and the Common Redpoll a Mealy as it far less common 😊 Just one of the reasons I moved from birds to butterflies 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: philm63**

by David M, 06-Feb-18 07:19 AM GMT

Beautiful selection of garden birds there, Phil. Bullfinches are a favourite of mine and the Swansea area is pretty good for them. However, I haven't seen Siskins for years and I don't think I've ever seen a Lesser Redpoll so hats off for those!

**Re: philm63**

by philm63, 06-Feb-18 07:18 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel, David

There seems to be an on-going issue over the naming of species. Admittedly the Lesser Redpoll is commoner in the UK, but is restricted to here across to Central Europe, whereas the Common Redpoll has a wider distribution, including North America, so is the commoner Redpoll. I usually record it as Redpoll myself (and also continue using Wheatear, Robin, Wren etc etc) which is of course not politically correct. Then you get into such ditties as Kentish Plover, Bath White, Camberwell Beauty, Common Gull, Essex Skipper

The good thing from the BOU decision to adopt the IOC list is it starts what hopefully will become the norm across most national bird organisations leading to a standardized classification. It may spread to other areas of agreement in different branches of Natural History

The new list has some interesting changes in order of species, some lumping and some splitting

Although it happened before the adoption of the IOC list, the most unusual thing now is seeing the Falcons split away from the other birds of prey and now being sandwiched between Woodpeckers and Shrikes

Phil

**Re: philm63**

by Neil Freeman, 06-Feb-18 08:46 PM GMT

Great selection of garden finches Phil 😊

I am particularly jealous of the Siskins – only ever seen one in my garden – and the Lesser Redpoll, never seen one of these at all.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: philm63**

by philm63, 04-Jul-18 09:47 AM GMT

6 May 2018

Bradup – Afternoon

After a dull wet and cold spring it was my first time out for a while, with some decent weather. I headed up to Bradup on the edge of Ilkley Moor, here

the terrain changes from well-grazed pasture to rough pasture then to heather moorland. I was hoping the Stonechats would be back on territory but I was a bit too early, however I heard my first Cuckoo of the year which was a nice bonus. The first butterflies were also in evidence with a few Large Whites and Green-veined Whites patrolling the verges and a single Peacock seen. Meadow Pipit numbers were still low so most had not moved up to the higher ground yet, even the Lapwings seemed to be in lower numbers than usual for this time of year. There was some compensation in a Red-legged Partridge showing nicely, a passing Buzzard and a male Reed Bunting showing well. Overall though it was much quieter than expected and I decided to head down into the valley



*Meadow Pipit*





#### Bingley Bog North – Afternoon

Arrived at Bingley Bog North, a patch of open water and boggy ground right at the edge of the town, a feeder stream from the higher ground passes under the Leeds to Liverpool canal and runs into the fields here before finally entering the River Aire. Hundreds of people walk along the nearby canal but few side-track onto the public paths in the bog area, so it is usually quiet. I picked up three warbler year firsts, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff and Blackcap and three more butterfly year firsts in Orange Tip, Small White and Comma. No real numbers yet but nice to see them returning for another year. Another Peacock was seen which landed on my main camera so had to whip out my second one to take the shots. After walking up to the top of the area I returned and picked up two nice female Roe Deer out in the field which was an added bonus





## Re: philm63

by philm63, 05-Jul-18 09:19 AM GMT

13 May 2018

My local patch - Afternoon

I went over the field to the copse, then down the bridleway to Eldwick Reservoir, re-traced my steps back to Heights Lane then along here to Walsh Lane and home. A mixture of fields and rough pasture a mile or so from the moors proper

Saw my first Swifts of the year today; numbers seem to dwindle here as each year passes. The copse added Garden Warbler to the year list, with Chiffchaff and Blackcap also present, but only Large Whites were seen. This was the site of last year's White-letter Hairstreak so hoping to see another this year

Walking down the bridleway I added Small Tortoiseshell to the year list even though it was a battered specimen, and picked up a patrolling male Orange Tip

The reservoir was a bit livelier with two large Whites, eight Orange Tips (all males except one) two Green-veined Whites and a Small Tortoiseshell. Oystercatcher, Snipe, Curlew and Lapwing were in the area adding to the atmosphere

Returning up the bridleway I added another Green-veined White

Much the same range of species seen on the rest of the walk with another Large White and a Small White added to the day list plus a Little Owl

Later in the day a male Orange Tip passed through the garden





### Re: philm63

by Wurzel, 05-Jul-18 10:24 PM GMT

Great to see you back on UKB Phil, and what a great way to kick it off – with a cracking shot of a Meadow Pipit 😊 Great Small Torts and Peacocks 😊 Also I know it's a moorland breeder but I always associate Oystercatchers with the coast so to see one on a Limestone pavement is somewhat incongruous 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: philm63

by philm63, 06-Jul-18 08:04 AM GMT

Cheers Wurzel. The absence was not intentional, personal circumstances were not good late winter into spring

By the way I came across the World of Wurzel lately, great site, give yourself a big pat on the back I am really impressed, will be keeping an eye on it Glad you liked the Mipit, a few more below

I have ended up being realistic about this being the Pennines and not Dorset, so most my posts will be generalistic in nature but I hope still worth looking at. I recently hit 20 butterfly species seen this year, probably a milestone for me and I can realistically add another as I have yet to see a Red Admiral this year

We continue to have one or both our great-grandsons at the end of every week so I have to accept the enjoyment of that, which means there are some weekends I will not get out at all

So these first posts will continue to be less butterfly orientated than the ones soon to follow

23 May 20118

Glovershaw – Morning

I parked up on Pennithorn Hill. There is a golf course here, on Baildon Moor, with public access. The paths drops down the other side with Golcar fields to the left, a racehorse training area to the front (owned by ex-Showjumper Harvey Smith, if you can remember him) and a path on the right over towards Sconce. The whole area is a delight to walk but spoilt at times by the number of people around Lapwings, Curlew, Redshank and Snipe all nest around here, it has also held Grasshopper Warbler the last few years. On passage Wheatear are frequent and the occasional Whinchat drops in. The butterflies are mixed with a colony of Green Hairstreak, and all the usual species Walking down past the golf greens there were Meadow Pipits all over and Skylarks feeding on the greens. The air reverberated to the calls of displaying Curlew and Lapwing, and at least five Reed Buntings were singing and showing. Heading down the edge of the hill towards Golcar fields the green at the foot of the hill had two largish birds at a distance, these proved to be Golden Plover; and I would run into these twice more before the number of golfers made them move on. Over by Golcar fields I picked up my first Whitethroat of the year. The grazed fields here hold a healthy population of breeding Lapwings, with the rougher fields nearby holding Snipe and Curlew, also the occasional Redshank that the Lapwings haven't scared away. Could see at least two Lapwing chicks out in the fields and the occasional Red Kite flew over. Walked along the path towards Sconce and then back and

actually saw a Cuckoo I had been hearing in the area, also added Stonechat to the year list. Not one butterfly seen all morning





*Meadow Pipit approaching the nest*



*Female Reed Bunting*

#### Bradup and Whetstone Gate – Afternoon

As there seemed to be more about today I headed up to Bradup for a short visit. I drove past my usual parking spot up to the top of the road at Whetstone Gate. Here is a relay transmitter which is why the road exists at all. This is roughly halfway out onto Ilkley Moor, from the car park you can head on foot either across to Ilkley via the Cow and Calf rocks, back towards Bingley or across to the big moorland conifer plantation at Rivock Edge heading towards Keighley. I usually come here because off the Bingley path are a few areas of Bilberry and heather that support Green Hairstreaks, about 6–800 yards out from the car park, so I headed in that direction, only managed to see two though and only one, poor record shot obtained. The ever present go-back calls of Red Grouse accompanied me on the walk. Back to the car and drove halfway back down the hill to my favourite Stonechat spot, and I was not disappointed as a pair were now in residence. There is an area very close which I hope will later give me a Small Heath or two. Dropped down further to my usual parking spot, here I could still not see any young Lapwings showing; but I was pestered by two Curlew who were very agitated and I suspected they had young in the rough pasture over the walls. Time to head home and then collect the wife from work.





**Re: philm63**

by philm63, 09-Jul-18 08:38 AM GMT

24 May 2018

Strid Woods - mid morning to early afternoon

I have visited here once a year, usually in May, for a fair number of years. It is situated in the Dales and a few miles upstream, on the River Wharfe, from Bolton Abbey. It is part of the Bolton Abbey estates owned by the Duke of Devonshire. The valley is surrounded here by the estates moorland and farm holdings. The main reason I visit is because it is probably the best site locally to add a few specialist summer visitors - Redstart, Pied Flycatcher, Wood Warbler and Common Sandpiper. In addition Spotted Flycatcher and Dipper can be added to the list, and Mandarin Duck also breed here. The site is a glorious walk through a deep-sided wooded valley overlooking the river before the terrain opens out around the abbey itself. On a sunny day it is just marvellous as can be seen by the number of visitors, I was probably passed by 60 or more people in a few miles walking. I usually start at the Strid car park and drop down to the river, along to the northern bridge and cross over then head down the other side of the valley to Cavendish Pavilion, cross over again and then head up that side back to the car park. This year I stopped at the covered shelter high in the woods and then re-traced my steps missing out the Cavendish Pavilion stretch

Heading down from the car park along the Cumberland Trail, I was surrounded by bird song with the occasional Nuthatch and Treecreeper showing. Arrived at the river where there is a good spot and it did not disappoint as I logged Grey Wagtail and Common Sandpiper, then headed upstream in the Barden direction. Here the woods open out as you approach a bridge, I crossed the river and continued upstream. The river is now on the left with its occasional shingle banks, and open fields are on the right. It is a good spot for hirundines, and I saw my first Sand Martins of the year (there is a

nesting colony further upstream) and an Oystercatcher in the fields. A Dipper then put in an appearance; they have already bred this year. This stretch also had the only butterflies of the day with around a dozen patrolling Green-veined Whites  
Then back to the bridge and on into the woods proper, checking all the visible nest boxes. It was not long before I had my first Pied Flycatcher, the males are just stunning birds to see. Soon after that I saw my first Spotted Flycatcher of the year. Up to the highest shelter where a male Mandarin Duck was perched in a tree then re-traced my footsteps back to the car. Saw more of the same on the return journey with just Goosander as an added bonus. Missed the Redstart this year and no Wood Warbler seen, but that is quite scarce, so no surprises there. All together a delightful day



28 May 2018

Bingley Bog North - Afternoon

I spent two hours down at the bog this afternoon. The hot and sunny weather continues so I was hoping for some good sightings  
Followed the main path along to the area by the by-pass, checked there for browns and skippers then back towards the town and finally into the fields before heading back to the car  
A dozen or so Large Whites were around, nine male Orange Tips were patrolling. Near the trees I had my first Speckled Wood of the year, two Small Tortoiseshells were seen but it was too early for the browns and skippers here  
Had an encounter with a male Blackcap and also came across a family of Long-tailed Tits that had fledged already. A Grey Heron briefly stopped off and then saw a few dragonflies, studied through the bins they were Broad-bodied Chasers, but no chance of any photos at that distance. Willow Warblers were singing away and it appeared that Moorhen, Canada Goose and Mallard were all breeding at the site



3 June 2018

Local patch - Afternoon

Another chance to trot round my local patch, I followed my usual route of across the fields to the copse, down to Eldwick reservoir via the bridleway, back up the bridleway to Heights Lane, along to Walsh Lane and home  
The copse had two Green-veined White and two Large White, also Willow Warbler, Garden Warbler and Blackcap. A passing Red Kite was being mobbed by a Lapwing  
Crossed Heights Lane and onto the bridleway along here (both down and back) I had Green-veined White, two unidentified passing nymphalids and my first Wall of the year  
At Eldwick Reservoir were three male Orange Tips (still very restless), four Large Whites, three Green-veined Whites, another Wall and a Peacock. The star, though, was a glorious male Brimstone, a real pity I got no chance to take a photo as I could not relocate it after going over the gate to the reservoir itself. It is not a butterfly seen very often where I live  
Also in attendance were Willow Warbler, Grey Wagtail and Curlew and Lapwing in the fields or overhead. An Oystercatcher also put in an appearance  
Heights Lane was pretty quiet with a road casualty Mole being unusual, but Walsh Lane was a bit better with a Weasel and a nice close Curlew. As I got to the bottom of the lane I could hear a commotion in Greenhill Woods here, on investigation I could see the culprit which was a Tawny Owl upsetting all the resident birds, including a very noisy Great Spotted Woodpecker



**Re: philm63**

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-18 02:04 PM GMT

Lovely set of reports Phil with cracking photos 😊 Love the Tawny Owl, it seems a bit irked to have been disturbed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: philm63**

by philm63, 10-Jul-18 08:29 AM GMT

Cheers Wurzel

24 June 2018

Bingley Bog North - Afternoon

This was my first chance to get out after a few weeks of family and work commitments, so I decided to go down to the bog for browns and skippers. Followed my usual path of around the path to the by-pass area then back to the entrance with a diversion into the bog fields at that end Ringlet was picked up very early with at least thirteen seen, followed by Meadow Brown with about ten. In addition I had three Large Whites and my first Large Skippers of the year, with four seen. In the fields I also had a Small Heath in the fields which was a year first and a first for the site for me. With a Small Tortoiseshell as well it was a good haul

At the picnic area a female Blackcap was feeding two young in the trees and a few Bullfinches were around. Both Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff were singing and a Buzzard passed over

In the fields I could still see Broad-bodied Chasers were about over the open water and managed one distant shot, also a few damselflies were seen. I found an area in the fields where there were thistles in bloom and here I got most of my shots of Large Skipper and browns, it was also here I saw the Small Heath

Picked up a Blue-tailed Damselfly on my way back to the car as it sat on a lily pad in the canal







*Unidentified teneral damselfly*

**Re: philm63**

by David M, 11-Jul-18 06:56 AM GMT

That's a fabulous shot of the tawny owl peeking through the foliage, Phil. No wonder the smaller birds had palpitations.

**Re: philm63**

by ernie f, 11-Jul-18 07:43 AM GMT

I love the way you interleave your butterfly pics with bird pics, Phil. The shot of the owl peering at you peering at it, is great. 😊

**Re: philm63**

by philm63, 11-Jul-18 08:09 AM GMT

David and Ernie, glad you enjoyed it. I have an owl that haunts the area close to the house and that I hear most evenings or early mornings; but I have only seen it infrequently. I used to see lots more when I was out walking, especially as you can usually locate them roosting due to the commotion the other birds make; just follow the noise and then it's a case of finding the thing. I don't seem to do as many woodland walks since I moved to where I live

now, my old area was much more wooded; so I see a lot less Tawnys now. On the other hand I have several Little Owls as compensation here

27 June 2018

Legoland, Windsor

We spent a few days down at Legoland with our eldest great-grandson. Not a nature trip but I was on the lookout for anything interesting as we walked around the site. It was extremely hot and of course, busy  
However I had a real surprise when I found a White Admiral in a small shady wooded spot, this was a life species for me. I also had my first Gatekeeper of the year. Regrettably no photos of either but a good memory

29 June 2018

Myrtle Park, Bingley

My first Holly Blue of the year flew over the play area as we pushed the great-grandson on the swings

30 June 2018

Local patch - Evening

As we had taken the great-grandson home today I had time to pop out in the evening

Crossed the field to the copse then skipped the bridleway and reservoir, instead headed along Heights Lane and then Walsh Lane and home  
Initially there was very little showing as the butterflies seemed to be hiding. Along Height Lane is a lay-by and nearby a grassy verge with good vegetation. Looking at it you could see nothing, but on moving in a bit it became apparent most butterflies were starting to roost for the day. A couple of Ringlets and Meadow Browns took flight and a bracken patch had my first Small Skipper of the year

Continuing along I came to Walsh Lane, there is a thin tree-line that runs along the end of Heights Lane (before the junction) and then down onto the top part of Walsh Lane. On the Walsh Lane side it faces the setting sun so was basked in sunlight and proved a good spot. Two Large Skippers were basking on leaves at a good height, soon after I found a Comma doing much the same. Further down as the tree-line stops it is more bushy and here was a Ringlet basking

As I walked along I could see a Little Owl on the telegraph poles along the roadside, and further down a Small Tortoiseshell was using the walls to bask in the sun. Approaching the bottom of the lane Swallows were feeding, with two juveniles on the telegraph wires being fed by the adults  
A nice end to the day







**Re: philm63**

by Wurzel, 11-Jul-18 10:37 PM GMT

Legoland is a great place for surprising butterflies Phil, on my first visit there I found a Purple Hairstreak on the deck under the huge water bucket at Splash Towers and then on the way home a Clouded Yellow did a fly-by 😊 Great Little Owl looking as malevolent as ever 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: philm63**

by philm63, 12-Jul-18 07:46 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Now a close up Purple Hairstreak would have been an added bonus, and a Clouded Yellow, the stuff of dreams. I do think the trip down (despite 6 hours on the M1, M25, M4) has confirmed I need to plan a holiday for myself down south next year. just have to decide when and where. There are still lots of species I have to see in the UK yet (I won't embarrass myself by listing them). Will settle down in the winter and plan a trip, probably Dorset or Wiltshire

Phil

1 July 2018

Bingley Bog North - Afternoon

With the shopping done and time available to go out I decided to try the bog again and see if I could relocate the Small Heath. I followed my usual route, but instead of entering the fields near the entrance I went in at the lay-by end and walked the full length of the path in there. The site was looking good today with 14 Large White, 37+ Ringlet, 15+ Meadow Brown, and 5 Small Tortoiseshell. Most of the action was in the field in the spot I had the Small Heath, here as well as the other species already mentioned I clocked a Small Skipper, two or more Large Skippers and my first Small Copper of the year; but no Small Heath. In addition, the first Cinnabar Moth caterpillars were showing on the small Ragwort that were about, and Six-spot Burnet Moths were also on the wing. Also spotted a Moorhen nest with two adults and two well grown juveniles. Heading over to the open water area the Broad-bodied Chasers were still there and still eluding the good shot I wanted. So calling it a day I headed for the exit, near the gate is a tree and some bushes and as I approached a female Broad-bodied Chaser came and landed directly in front of me, was this an apology of sorts for causing me such anguish over the previous two visits. Highly satisfied I headed back to the car







**Re: philm63**

by David M, 12-Jul-18 10:08 PM GMT

Your second Ringlet is quite unusual, Phil, in that it has abnormally large ocelli.

**Re: philm63**

by Wurzel, 12-Jul-18 10:23 PM GMT

Those are big eyes on the Ringlet Phil 😊👍 If you need any pointers about where to go in Dorset or Wiltshire then don't hesitate to ask 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: philm63**

by philm63, 13-Jul-18 09:37 AM GMT

Dave, Wurzel. Thanks for the Ringlet pointer, will have to back-check my Ringlet folder at some point and see if it is an isolated instance

Wurzel. I will probably take you up on the offer. A list of worthy sites would save a lot of time and heartache

Local patch – Late afternoon

Got back into Bingley after dropping the great-grandsons off at home and managed to get the wife to let me out for an hour or two. I was torn between going down to the bog or just doing my local patch but decided on the latter. It was too hot by far, especially carrying two cameras, bins and a tripod but set off anyway. Going over the fields to the rear of the old college I picked up the occasional Ringlet and Small Tortoiseshell but no real signs it was going to be anything special. I arrived at the copse and then it all began. Going through the gate I almost immediately picked up two Gatekeepers, followed by whites and browns in profusion. I walked back and forth along the short path (the whole copse is no more than about 40m x 50m), there are extensive belts of blooming thistles and some large bramble patches. What a delight, but surprisingly few photo opportunities, it was like all the butterflies were on steroids. Crossed Heights Lane and did 100m of the bridleway before turning back. The bridleway is a dirt track with a grass verge on either side then a wall, with fields beyond on both sides. In the verges are patches of thistle, ragwort and bramble with other vegetation; I was only concentrating on the grass verges and walls but it was spectacular. Ringlets and Meadow Browns everywhere, as one passed two more would fly up at it then settle back down to drifting along between the grasses and the other plants. One section of wall about 10 yards long had seven Small Tortoiseshells chasing each other if they strayed to the left or right, but even they were not settling for long. I cannot remember seeing as many butterflies in such a small section since a visit to Filey years ago, when the headland of the Naze was covered in thistles and there were nymphalids everywhere

I had eventually to give it up and go home, but what a day. Initial intentions to count everything today went out the window but I estimated the following:

Small Tortoiseshell 40+  
White sp 50+  
Large White 50+  
Meadow Brown 40+  
Ringlet 130+  
Comma 3  
Speckled Wood 3  
Green-veined white 10+  
Gatekeeper 4

And to round off the day in the evening I had a Comma on the garden shed

Phil







**Re: philm63**

by Pauline, 13-Jul-18 04:24 PM GMT

Hi Phil

I am enjoying your bird photography. I have had 63 species in the garden (I kept a daily spreadsheet for about 10 years!) but apart from the ones that visit I am woefully ignorant of others. That one from May where you have captured that wonderful oily sheen – is it a Lapwing, or am I about to embarrass myself yet again? 😊 That shot of the Tawny is just great 😊

### Re: philm63

by Wurzel, 14-Jul-18 07:50 AM GMT

That's a great count of Small Torts Phil 😊 Great Comma too 😊 Let me know nearer the time and I'll root around in my noggin to get you a list of sites 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: philm63

by David M, 14-Jul-18 01:35 PM GMT

Sounds like carnage, Phil. If only things could be like that every year!

### Re: philm63

by philm63, 14-Jul-18 08:23 PM GMT

Pauline. That is a very good garden count, I'm envious. The bird you referred to is a Lapwing, I'm sure that is the picture you are on about. I will endeavour to caption any future ones. Glad you enjoy the bird pics, only wish I could do as well with the butterflies. I'm stretching my camera with macro work

Wurzel, thanks. I will keep you to your word at a later date

David. It was, and so much so I went back for a second dose. Part two is below. It has been an exceptional year in some respects, and the spring up here was so poor, it was the end of April before I even saw a butterfly, and as the weather then deteriorated I saw very little else till well into May

8 July 2018

Local patch – Afternoon

Snapped a couple of Large Whites and a Meadow Brown in the garden during the morning

After yesterday's show I wanted some more of that, so headed off to cover much the same area with some added bits. Not quite as hot and more overcast, so more comfortable to walk but it did mean I saw less but photographed more than yesterday

Headed out through Prince of Wales Park as I wanted to photograph some Speckled Woods, found a few but all seemed well-worn, so no second brood as yet, also added Large White, Small white, Ringlet and Meadow Brown here

Moved onto Heights Lane from the Eldwick end and headed up to the copse, more of the same plus Gatekeeper, Small Skipper and Comma. I have seen more Gatekeepers in the past two days than in the previous five years

The bridleway was still busy but quieter in the overcast conditions with around 50+ Ringlet and Meadow Brown, lots of whites, a few Small Skippers, one Peacock seen briefly and Small Tortoiseshells

Carried on to Eldwick Reservoir where I had Large White, Ringlet, Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Small Tortoiseshell, Small White, Meadow Brown, Green-veined White, Comma, another Gatekeeper and a number of White sp. I also picked up a small family group of Oystercatchers. Managed to follow the Gatekeeper for 10 minutes till it settled, deep in some vegetation and got a few shots. Re-traced my steps and back up to the copse. There is a small clearing here which is very difficult to penetrate because of the thistles and brambles, I spent 10 minutes or so checking the more distant bramble and thistle through the bins for a White-letter Hairstreak but to no avail

I arrived home well pleased with the day. Less showing today due to the overcast conditions but still a lot about and it didn't seem quite as frantic as yesterday in the direct hot sunlight

Phil















**Re: philm63**

by Wurzel, 15-Jul-18 05:56 PM GMT

Lovely set of shots Phil 😊 Especially like the Meadow Brown with it's semi-curved porboscis 🤔🌿

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: philm63**

by David M, 15-Jul-18 10:07 PM GMT

It's a funny time of year, Phil, as many species look to be on their last legs whilst others are just emerging and look pristine.

Whichever way you look at things, in a month's time all will begin to look a bit stale so best that we make the most of it while we can.

**Re: philm63**

by philm63, 17-Jul-18 08:33 AM GMT

Cheers Wurzel and David

The weather finally broke here yesterday and we had some rain, torrential over the York area I believe

There appear to be whites everywhere at the moment. Just driving back and forth to work, or around the house, you can see whites floating by almost continuously

There is also a Holly Blue frequenting the bottom of the cul-de-sac where I live. I have now seen it patrolling the tree-line on three occasions in the past week. Have yet to spot it in the back garden, though. Hoping it will stop at some moment when I am in the vicinity

15 July 2018

Glovershaw – Afternoon

It was my first chance to get out since last weekend. There were a number of options available as to where, but I chose Glovershaw for an ulterior motive that will become apparent as I go on. I do not usually come to this site between June and August  
Parked up on Pennithorn Hill and set off to crest the hill and drop down to Golcar fields via the southern golf greens. It was hot but there was some cloud that gave respite at times, and the wind was fresh. I was surprised that the area was very quiet, few golfers or walkers (World Cup and Wimbledon finals???)

In the first 15 minutes I was regretting my decision. The odd white was blown across, as was the occasional Ringlet. I only had a few Meadow Pipits popping up and down in the bracken. Once down from the hill, the wind eased and things improved a little, heading to Golcar fields I came across more whites and Ringlets, but little else. These fields reverberated to the sight and sound of breeding waders a few weeks ago, now the grass is longer and there was very little to see as the birds have finished breeding and moved on. This area is good for passage migrants but it will be a few weeks before that begins, when the greens will regularly hold Wheatears and locally the occasional Whinchat, Redstart and flycatcher can be seen, in addition warblers fatten up in the bracken patches ready for the journey south

I cut across to the wall at the bottom of the hill, next to the horse training area, and headed towards Sconce. Not a single thing on the wall and very little else around. Coming to the first corner the path then does a 90 degree turn by a small private plantation, the slope down to the plantation is a mass of bracken. A smaller footpath cuts down that way to the gate (there is no entry allowed into the plantation itself), with the tall bracken making it seem like you are walking through a rain forest at times. There were Ringlets and Meadow Browns weaving away through the bracken. Near the gate I had an unidentified Hawker that would not land. Coming back up to the main path on a separate footpath, the bracken was still seemingly alive with browns and the occasional Reed Bunting

Back on the main path I continued towards Sconce, the path then passes a small collection of "holiday homes". Some very basic cabins, but they have some trees around which provide good cover. Along here are patches of bramble and other bushes between the path and the wall, on the other side a more extensive open area with the occasional golf green and lots of moorland vegetation. These bramble patches were being well-used by groups of Ringlets, some fresher looking than others; and also small groups of Small Skippers. Soon after I started seeing Small Heaths at the side of the path or settling on it, in the end I saw 20+ of these, so this is the best area locally that I have yet discovered. The path then turns at right-angles again and drops down the slope before angling east again. Two big bramble patches down here held lots of browns and more Small Skippers

As the path angles east there is a big bracken patch between here and the wall at the bottom of the slope, this was the reason I had chosen Glovershaw today – my first indication I was in luck was a sound that was similar to a fishing reel being used or a very noisy cricket. Not long after I got my first glimpse – a Grasshopper Warbler. In 15 minutes I saw it twice more as it popped up then disappeared again, but no photos

Soon after I set off back to the car, and the hard tiring climb back up Pennithorn Hill to the car park

Today, from the path alone I must have seen 300+ Ringlets, so the population here must number in the thousands. Also seen today – Comma, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and all three common whites

Back home I went to sit in the back garden and review my photos of the day, when a fresh Red Admiral landed on the developing buddleia blooms, a year first, and that was joined by a fresh Comma; a sign of things to come hopefully

Phil

This is the view from the far side of Pennithorn Hill looking north. In the far distance is Ilkley (Rombalds) Moor. In the middle-distance is the wall I walk along, beyond that is the horse-training area. The Golcar fields area is to the left where the wall does a right angle, the golf green at the left bottom of the hill is a favourite with Wheatears and Sconce is to the right along the wall but not in the photo









Re: philm63

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-18 02:19 PM GMT

The minute you said 'fishing reel' I knew what your ulterior motive was 😊📹 I was lucky enough to visit Poland a fair few years ago where there were River Warblers that sing like a sowing machine 😊😄 With that there was also a Grasshopper and a Savi's (which sounds like a tape recorder rewinding) so it was a right cacophony 😊😄 Great set of shots of the Butterflies.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: philm63

by David M, 17-Jul-18 10:09 PM GMT

#### philm63 wrote:

..The weather finally broke here yesterday and we had some rain, torrential over the York area I believe...

To be honest, Phil, I don't think that's a bad thing. This morning in Swansea there were black rain clouds over the hills and I was wishing that they would gravitate towards the Gower....no such luck, but 10 miles inland there was serious rain which will have been very welcome.

### Re: philm63

by philm63, 23-Jul-18 09:16 AM GMT

Cheers Wurzel

I agree David, we have had another spell of rain, but not anything major. The vegetation is showing this lack of rain now

21 July

Late morning

I had the day off and was looking after the two great grandsons. Initially took them up to the play area at St Ives. Behind the swings was a patch of bramble and as I pushed the boys I kept an eye open - Large White, Small white, Green-veined White, a fresh Peacock, Meadow Brown and the highlight a Small Copper. Managed to get a few shots

Once they had had their fill of the play area we popped to the nearby garden centre in Harden for the ice cream parlour - inside flitting amongst the blooms were two more fresh Peacocks and a Comma

Then down into Bingley for a haircut and the obligatory comics for the boys, and here a Holly Blue was patrolling the river-line next to the market car park

As has been the case of late there were whites flitting about all day and all over the area





22 July

Local patch – Afternoon

My garden is seeing up to 7 whites at a time but as yet not many aristos, and the (a) Holly Blue is still around and avoiding my camera. All my jobs done by early afternoon so could pop out. Decided to do my local patch again, have not been around it since the good weekend on the 7 – 8 July. It was still very warm but mainly overcast, with the odd sunny spell, there was a steady breeze which was strong at times (and made some photography difficult as the vegetation swung from side to side)

There were still whites moving about the area but not as many as previously, also saw two Peacocks and a Small Tortoiseshell. No Ringlets at all, and that was a foretaste of the entire walk

Arriving at the copse this was a bit quieter than previous weeks, and nearly all the bramble blooms have gone, but still some decent stands of thistle and ragwort. The obligatory whites were about, a Holly Blue was patrolling, two Speckled Woods were in aerial combat and two Small Coppers were surveying their territory close to the path flying up at passing butterflies, so I presume both were males. Looking at the images I think both are showing a bit of blue on the hindwings. Still no Ringlets and oddly no Meadow Browns either, and no sign of the Gatekeepers

Started off down the bridleway and here saw my first Meadow Browns today, but only a few and added a Comma and a Peacock in addition to all three commoner whites. It appears to be still a bit early for Wall up here as none were showing as this is a prime site for them, again no Ringlets

Turned down to do the Eldwick Reservoir area and this was probably the best part today, of course the obligatory whites; plus Peacock, a few Meadow Browns, around five Small Coppers, a single battered Ringlet, a few Small Tortoiseshells, at least two Gatekeepers, Comma and a single Small Skipper – surprised as that was the only Skipper seen today

The male Gatekeeper was a pugnacious little devil patrolling the vegetation alongside the track above the reservoir and attacking anything and everything he passed, managed to get a shot on one of his brief pauses, another one I photographed nectaring was much larger and I suspect it was a female

Returned home the same route in reverse and added nothing new, did get a chance to take shots of a fresher Small Copper in the copse

As mentioned in other diaries, a lot of the butterflies are perching with wings closed all the time, is this due to the heat as they have no need to warm up

Considering this walk was heaving with butterflies two weeks ago, it was a lot different today

Phil



*Little Owl patrolling the fields*





*The small copse from the Heights Lane entrance*



*A Kestrel preening after a hunt*









**Re: philm63**

by ernie f, 23-Jul-18 01:46 PM GMT

Some nice Copper shots recently, Phil - but that Little Owl stands out as special.

**Re: philm63**

by Wurzel, 23-Jul-18 10:14 PM GMT

That Little Owl is a cracker as is the Kestrel shot, it looks like there's something just out of shot that it's not best pleased to see 😊😄 Your Small Coppers are blue bedecked/blue badgers 🍷🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: philm63**

by David M, 23-Jul-18 11:03 PM GMT

Fabulous sequence, Phil, especially with the inclusion of the birds of prey.

Whilst the landscape looks grim vegetation-wise, the butterflies keep on giving.

At this late stage of summer though, there's nothing to be gained by a continuation of such hot, dry conditions. Right now, I'm praying for a short cool, wet spell otherwise I fear that 2019 may turn into an *annus horribilis* for our winged friends. 😞

## Re: philm63

by philm63, 06-Aug-18 10:42 AM GMT

Cheers Ernie and Wurzel

I agree David, we had a good drenching last weekend, but another hot week has dried it all up again. I am noticing a lack of some species at the moment. Must admit I selfishly hope it lasts till at least next week as I have some time off work and I have some plans afoot

On the 27 July I was over in Heckmondwike. My granddaughter has a sunken back garden and up on the slope above one of the walls is a substantial growth of ivy, I was surprised when I went out there as it had three Holly Blues on it. No camera though, I was back there the following day with my camera but that was one of the wet ones, and I only briefly saw a single Holly Blue

On the 3 August I was leaving work in the afternoon and as I came out the back of the building to go to the car a Gatekeeper landed on the grass slope there

Despite the area around and in the city having masses of buddleia in bloom there is nothing showing on them at all except the occasional white, where are all the aristos?

Two to three weeks ago Small Tortois were reasonably common and Peacocks were beginning to show, but in the last week literally nothing. Even on the buddleias in the garden I am only seeing the ever-present Whites

Sunday 5 August

Local patch – afternoon

Today was my first chance to get out for two weeks. Last weekend we had heavy rain over both days, which has made the grass a bit greener but little else it appears. I decided to do the local patch and see how it had changed over two weeks; and if the Walls were out yet. It was sunny and hot but with increasing cloud cover, so it was a case of butterflies appearing and disappearing depending on the light, with a fresh SW it could feel cool when the sun was behind the clouds

I decided to do the full circuit today so that meant heading out to Prince of Wales Park first. This section of the walk was accompanied by many whites with at least 25 Large Whites and a larger number not assigned to species, also a patrolling Holly Blue. Coming up the slope to the bit of heath the slope there was cleared of bracken to hopefully promote some plant growth, not too successful yet but there were a few heather plants and these were holding at least two Small Coppers. I then went round the heath along the tree-line and that added around 7 Speckled Woods





Up the road and got onto Heights Lane at the Eldwick end. From here to the copse I saw a few whites but little else except a close meeting with a hen Pheasant that decided to try and hide instead of running



The copse is now a lot quieter as all the thistles are gone to seed with only a few blooms left. The commoner whites were around, plus four Speckled Woods and there were still a few Small Coppers showing



Down onto the bridleway and that was quiet, besides whites I saw two speckled Woods and a Holly Blue investigating the ivy on one of the houses. It seemed the Walls were not out and still no aristos

Along the path to Eldwick Reservoir, still no Walls and no aristos either. The usual whites and a solitary battered Meadow Brown. I went over the gate and along the path at the edge of the reservoir, more whites. On the way back I had a sunny spell and that brought out a few Speckled Woods and a Holly Blue went by. Heading back to the bridleway saw a Little Owl watching me from a patch of wood



Back up the bridleway and at last a single brief view of a Wall as it went over a wall, waited but it did not return. Back up onto Heights Lane and up to the Heights. Coming onto the open stretch that follows I saw another Wall at the road edge, got a few shots and some strange looks from passing cars; that was followed by a passing Small Tortoiseshell. Further on by the tank field I began seeing more Walls, in total about 5 or more. They were hugging the other, non-sun side of the wall in the fields on that side, a Small Copper was also seen



Turned into Walsh Lane and saw more whites, a Speckled Wood and another Wall that went over into a field. A Red Kite was duelling with a Kestrel in the sky nearby

So the last few hundred yards home along Lady Lane and I was winding down. Got to the College Road junction about 50 yards from home and saw a large butterfly land on the verge. It was a stunning Painted Lady, looking very fresh. So ignoring the passers-by and traffic I was down on the grass shooting a good few images. It then moved onto a buddleia-like bush nearby





Feeling a happy-chappy I headed home, as I approached the porch a Holly Blue went by without stopping. This is the best year I have had for sightings of this blue, but it still eludes my camera

Phil

**Re: philm63**

by millerd, 06-Aug-18 04:42 PM GMT

Good to see some more inland Wall Browns, and that's a great-looking Painted Lady, Phil. Locally grown by the fresh appearance. 😊

Dave

### Re: philm63

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-18 08:24 PM GMT

That is a cracking Painted Lady Phil 🤔👍 As Dave says good to see an in-land Wall, something of a rarity these days 😊 If you're after Holly Blue shots then 'millerd' is your man, he might pass on some of Holly Blue Whispering tips 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: philm63

by David M, 07-Aug-18 06:11 PM GMT

Just love your Little Owl, Phil, and the Painted Lady is a beautiful salmon-like shade. I also like the Small Copper in your earlier post, which is so ragged that it could almost pass as a Comma!

### Re: philm63

by philm63, 08-Aug-18 08:22 AM GMT

Cheers Dave - It didn't occur to me till you mentioned it that the Painted Lady is probably too fresh a specimen to be a migrant. We are well-inland and quite northerly here and it would have had to be very lucky to get to that point in that condition. It most likely was, as you say, the next generation from a pair that bred locally earlier in the spring / summer, although it was my first for 2018

Walls seem to be doing well here, I usually see them on the bridleway / reservoir section. Along the bridleway the walls are quite high and it forms a sheltered corridor of sorts, last year I had 8 in about half-a mile, then additional odd ones on the rest of my circuit, but the areas are all inter-connected by fields. This year, so far, the majority are on another side of that general field area where I normally only see the occasional one. It is a lovely butterfly and, with its habit of perching on the sides of walls, normally quite obliging to being photographed

Cheers Wurzel. As can be seen below I got my shots in the end

Cheers David. I am very luck with Little Owls. A pair hold territory a 10 minute walk from my house, and perch on a wall there frequently ( I had 3 on the wall one day). Another family (possibly two) have a territory on Heights Lane not that far away, and another family have a territory near Eldwick Reservoir, so it is a poor walk on my patch when I do not see at least one. A quick glance at my Little Owl folder shows I have nearly 350 saved images in there, compared to only 20 for Tawny

Tuesday 7 August

Heckmondwike - early evening

Both Mon and Tues afternoon I was over at my granddaughter's in Heckmondwike. She is preparing to move house and I was dropping things off and collecting others, before shooting back to work to collect the wife. As a result I had no time to pop into her back garden and wait for the Holly Blues to appear that I had seen earlier. Yesterday I came out with a load and put it in the boot and as I looked up, twenty yards away I could see two Holly Blues along a short stretch of ivy on the wall in front of me. Well I was chuffed as there in the boot was my camera. One of them landed, and I approached begging it not to fly; and it obliged. So got a few male Holly Blue shots before it moved away

Thinking about it later it raised a question which I hope someone can answer. It concerns the one that keeps eluding me at home. Looking at my records I first saw a Holly Blue in the garden area on the 12 July, the last sighting was on the 5 August, that is 24 days between the dates. It always seems to follow a general route doing a circuit around the 5 gardens at the bottom of the cul-de-sac, and I never saw more than one. I had presumed it was the same butterfly but thinking about it I believe that most butterfly individuals would not live that length of time (with the exception of the hibernating species of course). Is it possible that this is the same Holly Blue or have I more likely been seeing more than one individual patrolling the same area

Phil





### Re: philm63

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-18 02:30 PM GMT

Glad you got the Holly Blue shots in the end Phil 😊 I had a quick google but it didn't turn up anything much about how long Holly Blues live. I know that Black Haistreaks can hang around for only a week or so so perhaps there were at least two individuals. Nature is generally efficient so a new butterfly in an area would pretty quickly work out the most effective route which could explain why they showed the same behaviour? This is just conjecture while avoiding a trawl round Ikea mind 😊 so I'm such someone in a more conducive environ will come up with a more detailed explanation 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: philm63

by David M, 08-Aug-18 10:34 PM GMT

After a good spring, Holly Blues have been rather infrequent during their second brood, so thanks for sharing those images, Phil. At least I now know that they are thriving somewhere!

### Re: philm63

by philm63, 15-Aug-18 08:14 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel and Dave

I have seen the Holly Blue around the garden area once more since, but not in the last few days. I am of the opinion now that the butterflies seen equate to more than one individual

Mon 13 August - Bingley

Not at work this week, but Monday was lost to moving my grand-daughter. The wife had gone round their new place early, and I was watching the oldest great grandson till we also went around after a collection from our place  
In the morning whilst in the room I spotted a number of whites out in the garden and popped out, whilst stood looking a small butterfly landed on the shrubs over the back garden fence, it was a Small Copper, a first for my garden. Luckily enough I had the camera in my hand  
The rest of the day was a washout as heavy rain started falling in the afternoon



The weather forecast for the week was nothing like I had hoped for when I booked my week off, predominantly overcast and cooler with increasing winds, so I adapted my plans accordingly

Tues 14 August – Fairburn Ings RSPB Reserve, near Castleford

The RSPB Reserve at Fairburn is a delight at the right time, but I would be arriving early to avoid the M62 at peak. It was due to be an overcast day and that would limit things on the butterfly front, as of late I noticed most now start appearing mid to late morning. I did have two brightish spells but in the main, the skies did not promise a butterfly full day

I parked up at Lin Dyke and left the car there, deciding to cover as much ground as I felt capable of. Initially walked along the road to the Flashes. The main flash was awkward as the light was shining from the wrong side for photography. It was fruitful though with two Spoonbill (second year of breeding here), a handful of Black-tailed Godwits and a Common Sandpiper all showing well, a few Common Terns were fishing over the water, and there were grebes and ducks to pan through. There are also a few Little Egrets in attendance on the reserve and one was visible along here, with Cormorants passing back and forth. Just a single white seen

Walked back down the road and onto Lin Dyke, after it opens out to the next bunch of flashes it was obvious the low water levels would make viewing difficult as everything was well away from the screens and hide. Much the same seen with a few whites, a Gatekeeper and a Meadow Brown Followed Lin Dyke round to Hickson's and very little new, then across onto the embankment running along the riverline. Lots and lots of suitable plants but no Common Blues, but another worn Meadow Brown. Further along the whole area widens and there are a few lakes – Bittern, Bearded Tit and Black-necked Grebe all breed here, but none seen today I think, however, I photographed some juvenile grebes I have yet to look over Dropped down to the reserve centre the pond here was totally devoid of water, but the bushes and area produced a few more whites and a Speckled Wood

Returned to the car the same route in reverse, it was getting warmer by now but not brighter. By now a few hawkers were flying around and a few damselflies were showing, going back up Lin Dyke I started clocking Speckled Woods with ten seen, and a Small Copper was also showing A lot of miles walked, and some good birds, but none of the hoped for butterflies; and very disappointing for dragonflies at what is usually a reliable site. You cannot control the weather, I really should have made the trip here two or three weeks ago

Phil



*Spoonbill*



*Black-tailed Godwit*



*Common Sandpiper*



*Male Common Blue Damselfly*



**Re: philm63**

by ernie f, 15-Aug-18 10:33 PM GMT

Great bird pics, Phil. I haven't seen a Spoonbill for a good few years now.

**Re: philm63**

by David M, 17-Aug-18 09:22 PM GMT

Agreed. Wonderful bird images, Phil. When the butterflies are starting to reduce in number and begin to look a bit 'tired' then it's always handy to have something else of interest to photograph.

**Re: philm63**

by philm63, 18-Aug-18 08:40 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie. It was the first Spoonbill I have seen since a couple at Titchwell a few years ago  
Cheers Dave. It certainly is, although this year things seem to be starting later than I am used to locally, and that is limiting some photo opportunities

Wed 15 August - Glovershaw area

After a trip to Fairburn I fancied doing something a bit different locally. The weather continued to be overcast and decidedly cooler so it would be hit and miss whether the trip would be worthwhile

Given that this would be dual purpose I was still going to set off quite early

The best chance to pick up passage Wheatears on the golf greens is before the golfers really get going, and I also wanted to see if a similar habitat to my local one' but elsewhere, would also be good for Walls

Arrived at the car park on Pennithorn Hill around 0835 and set off over the top in the direction of Golcar, a few Skylarks and Meadow Pipits in the bracken and heather, and Swallows hunting overhead, no Wheatears though down on the greens. Turned down at the wall and headed towards Sconce

At the small plantation I had my first butterfly with a Speckled Wood, also saw a hawk again patrolling the face of the wood

Continued towards Sconce and still nothing of particular interest, passed the bracken patch where I recently had the Grasshopper Warbler (but not today) and came to the beck. I intended to cross here but initially carried on the path. Soon the path was going up and down as it crossed gullies draining the moors above down to the beck. Here I found a patch of flowers next to a boardwalk that was full of trefoil and another plant I did not know, it shows in the photos below and hopefully someone can identify it for me. It looked as if it could be fruitful and so I planned on calling back here later

Turned round and back to the beck where I crossed it and passed through the Scout Outdoor Centre and onto Birch Close Lane. This was the area I hoped would be worth the visit, initially this up-market bridleway is very narrow, but improves after a hundred metres or so. The first building is here and also a few field entry points. Soon after a wood on the right with some cabin homes (or holiday homes). Beyond that are the fields of Faweather Grange, now an equestrian centre. Here I had a mixed flock of Greenfinch, Goldfinch and Linnets feeding in a paddock, and a party of juvenile Pied Wagtails. Turning a bend there are a few cottages and then Birch Close Lane bends to the left and eventually terminates by a row of cottages at the top of the horse training area, I instead carried on and the bridleway soon also bends to the left and climbs towards the high corner embankments of a reservoir; at this point we are quite close to the moor circular road and across that Ilkley Moor

It was now shortly after 10 and I started to see butterflies. Had my first Wall, a male, on a thistle patch above the wall and embankment here, followed soon after by a female in lovely condition. Reaching the reservoir I turned left and came back to Birch Close Lane, again turned left and returned to where I had originally left the bridleway then set off back the way I had come. Going back down the Lane saw more Walls, and managed to shoot a Small Copper on a grass stem 5m away in a field. The first whites of the day also started to show

Back over the beck and onto the trefoil patch found earlier, now there were two or more Walls, two or more Small Coppers, a few whites, a Meadow Brown and a faded but not badly worn male Small Skipper, that was a nice find I have not seen one for a good while

Started off back to the car, still mainly overcast but the wind was becoming very noticeable, actually painful in the last few hundred metres

Still continuing to turn up the occasional Wall, and a Small Heath blew by (not a mistype), a second soon after got wedged behind a grass stem so I got a shot of that

Near the plantation I found a nice Small Tortoiseshell

Still no Wheatears, coming back to climb to the car park my last Wall was actually hiding in the grass from the wind, and another Small Heath was sheltering in the lee of a scrape formed around a horse print on the path

In all I had 13 Walls today, and given the weather was not ideal a count I was quite pleased with. If the weather had been consistent I would probably have done better today. This type of habitat abounds all around the outside of the moor circular, with lots of rough pasture separated by dry stone walling as the land drops down to the various valleys (Aire to the south and west, Wharfe to the north and east). This would lead me to suspect there is a very healthy, and seemingly increasing, population of Walls locally. I wonder why they are doing well here in what is not a very hospitable environment, but decreasing inland further south

Phil



*The lower narrow section of Birch Close Lane, I still had a Wall along this section on the return journey*



*Juvenile Goldfinches at Faweather Grange*



*The first Wall today*



*The Small Copper on a grass stem at a distance of about 5 metres*





*This is the plant I do not know with a Wall*



*The patch of trefoil and the other plant*





*Wall hiding from the wind*





*The last Small Heath hiding in a horse print scarpe*

## Re: philm63

by peterc, 18-Aug-18 09:27 PM GMT

### philm63 wrote:

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Still continuing to turn up the occasional Wall, and a Small Heath blew by (not a mistype), a second soon after got wedged behind a grass stem so I got a shot of that

Near the plantation I found a nice Small Tortoiseshell

Still no Wheatears, coming back to climb to the car park my last Wall was actually hiding in the grass from the wind, and another Small Heath was sheltering in the lee of a scrape formed around a horse print on the path

In all I had 13 Walls today, and given the weather was not ideal a count I was quite pleased with. If the weather had been consistent I would probably have done better today. This type of habitat abounds all around the outside of the moor circular, with lots of rough pasture separated by dry stone walling as the land drops down to the various valleys (Aire to the south and

west, Wharfe to the north and east). This would lead me to suspect there is a very healthy, and seemingly increasing, population of Walls locally. I wonder why they are doing well here in what is not a very hospitable environment, but decreasing inland further south

Phil

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IMG\_1281.JPG

Nice set of pictures you have there, Phil.

The plant on which a Wall was feeding is probably Water Mint – others, I am sure, will correct me if I am wrong 😊

ATB  
Peter

### Re: philm63

by philm63, 20-Aug-18 09:56 AM GMT

Cheers Peter. That seems to be right, I googled Water Mint and it looks like what I saw, thanks for that

Thu 16 August

Local patch – late morning to early afternoon

The weather continues unsettled, predominantly overcast and windy, some spells of rain but luckily not when I wanted to get out. It was cooler today so I delayed setting off till I had seen at least one butterfly pass through the garden. Even so, today some sections were excellent when the wind dropped, others were barren when the wind made it feel much cooler

Decided to do the whole circuit today but I may as well have skipped the first bit as I saw nothing at all in Prince of Wales Park. The first real interesting bit was a party of 5 Magpies harassing a low-altitude Buzzard as I approached The Copse. Here I had the occasional white and a Small Copper. These were starting to look a bit faded now. From there I went down onto The Bridleway. Started clocking up Walls down here, and in the dip at the bottom added Speckled Wood. Continued to Eldwick Reservoir adding more Walls to the count, plus a few more Speckled Woods, a Small Copper and the odd white

Above the reservoir a male Blackcap was scolding a perched Little Owl that decided it might as well move somewhere quieter

Retraced my steps back to Heights Lane, adding the odd photo

Then along Heights Lane more Walls, another Small Copper and the odd white

Down Walsh Lane and back towards home, by now most sections were devoid of butterflies as the weather had deteriorated and they had gone to ground

Considering about a third of the walk was unproductive due to the weather, I was very pleased with an end count of 19 Walls, a new day record for my patch. Some were showing wear and others damage, but always a delight to see

No outing at the weekend due to commitments, so the next time I get out looking will be next weekend, I expect things will be a lot different by then. Already the plethora of whites has gone, and more like what I would have expected this time of year with this weather. And worryingly still no sign of numbers of Peacock and Small Tortoiseshells, in fact no Peacocks at all since mid-July and only the odd Small Tort in the past two weeks.

Last year late summer was bad for these two locally, but Red admiral numbers compensated for them. This year I have only seen one Red Admiral also back in mid-July. I am hoping things will improve, for all three, before the end of the season

Phil







**Re: philm63**

by ernie f, 20-Aug-18 10:31 AM GMT

Great sequence of pics of the Wall butterfly, Phil.

Plus - regarding owls. I opened the window to the bedroom last night and heard what I think was four Little Owls calling to each other. I stood looking out because at least two of them seemed loud enough to be in the trees right next to our house but they did not fly - so I did not see them. Its quite a change for us because its usually Tawnies we hear from our house.

**Re: philm63**

by David M, 21-Aug-18 09:48 PM GMT

Great to see a few Wall Brown images, Phil.

How we used to take them for granted!

Not any more.