

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 16-Jan-18 02:35 PM GMT

Female White-letter Hairstreaks, clearly have a strong preference of laying their eggs at the base of leaf buds, at the tips of branches. Based on photographic documentation by many individuals. On Huntingdon elm, there is a more general preference to lay their eggs on the "scar band", though I have recorded 4 or 5 other egg laying locations that they will use aswell, on this particular variety of elm, however I haven't seen them laying on the leaf buds, like on Wych elm. I'm finding that there is probably more variation in the White-letter Hairstreaks life-cycle/ behaviour / appearance, primarily in the immature stages, than any other UK butterfly species.

Pete, thank you for: "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."

I look forward to receiving your findings! Indeed I have also noted that non-flowering (immature) elms come into leaf before mature elm trees do. I'm following up such a case this spring, as a non-flowering elm tree did seem to support White-letter Hairstreaks, luckily not hard to follow-up on as the trees are around a 12 minute walk from my house.

Below a photo that I took of 1 of 3 White-letter Hairstreak eggs/ovum found back on 10/01/17, laid at a height of 4' on Huntingdon elm:



If your confident in identifying elm at this time of year and would like to find your first White-letter Hairstreak eggs, I give my advice and tips, here: <https://www.sussex-butterflies.org.uk/species/white-letter-hairstreak.php>

Re: Jamie Burston

by David M, 17-Jan-18 05:22 PM GMT

Fascinating information again, Jamie. I only wish I could find colonies near me to study! It's a job finding elms on the Gower, let alone WLHs. 😞

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 21-Jan-18 12:20 PM GMT

David M wrote:

Fascinating information again, Jamie. I only wish I could find colonies near me to study! It's a job finding elms on the Gower, let alone WLHs. 😞

Thank you, David! I've got two Elm contacts, I'll ask them when I have more time if they are aware of any elms in your area. Fingers-crossed!

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 21-Jan-18 12:29 PM GMT

Direct copy of what I've posted onto the Butterfly Conservation – Sussex Branch, Sightings Page:

Following my guided walk "Keep the Ridge Green" last summer, at Green Ridge in Brighton & Hove, I was convinced that the Blackthorn hedgerow should host Brown Hairstreaks. The location almost halfway between two known Brown Hairstreak sites, one in Patcham and the other Benfield Valley in Hove. The problem was that Brown Hairstreak had not been recorded on Green Ridge. As a result I collaborated with members of the volunteer group 'Keep the Ridge Green' who manage the site and Neil Doyle, Brighton and Hove City Council, Cityparks Ranger and his group of volunteers to arrange a conservation work party. To find out more about Green Ridge, visit: <http://www.keeperidgegreen.com>

Yesterday 19th January, we all meet to carry out the work to manage the Blackthorn hedgerow, in our first year of the management cycle, we cut down a portion of it's length to encourage new re-growth, of which female Brown Hairstreaks have a preference to lay their eggs on.



Before the work started as I was walking along Green Ridge towards the meeting point, I happened to pay more attention to the second Blackthorn plant I looked at, I lent in, and lo and behold, I was looking at a Brown Hairstreak egg! I broke the news to the group that the butterfly we were trying to attract, was indeed already present, this provided the ideal opportunity to show them the egg. During our time on site I managed to locate a second egg. We left a plentiful amount of Blackthorn untouched, in the hope of minimising the overall loss of any eggs. Brighton has gained another Brown Hairstreak site, 2018 just got even more exciting! Thank you to everyone who attended, your time and support is greatly appreciated!



1st Brown Hairstreak egg



2nd Brown Hairstreak egg

It's my belief that Brown Hairstreak is far more widespread around Brighton and Hove, probably occurring in small discrete colonies like that found at Patcham, where smaller hedgerows can be found. Based on the discovery at Green Ridge, this strongly suggests that they are in nearby Waterhall.

On 18th January I went to Wild Park, Brighton, where I located two Purple Hairstreak eggs on a master Oak tree. One of the eggs does appear to have been from last year, having likely hatched last spring. Sadly no photos this time.

Re: Jamie Burston

by bugboy, 21-Jan-18 02:41 PM GMT

Hi Jamie, I've recently found a WLH egg on a patch of Elm suckers at work in central London. The horticultural dept are keen to promote and encourage native wildlife to the site (my end of year in-house report covering the transects I do being the highlight of their team leaders year 😊) and I was hoping to pick your brains about what DED resistant strains of Elm they could use around the site that the Hairstreaks will use.

Thanks in advance, Paul 😊

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 21-Jan-18 04:59 PM GMT

bugboy wrote:

Hi Jamie, I've recently found a WLH egg on a patch of Elm suckers at work in central London. The horticultural dept are keen to promote and encourage native wildlife to the site (my end of year in-house report covering the transects I do being the highlight of their team leaders year 😊) and I was hoping to pick your brains about what DED resistant strains of Elm they could use around the site that the Hairstreaks will use.
Thanks in advance, Paul 😊

Hi Paul, Happy to help. I need more information on the location to suggest the best DED-resistant cultivars, I'll send you a PM to discuss it further.
All the best, Jamie 😊

Re: Jamie Burston

by David M, 22-Jan-18 06:53 AM GMT

Jamie Burston wrote:

I've got two Elm contacts, I'll ask them when I have more time if they are aware of any elms in your area. Fingers-crossed!

Many thanks for the offer, Jamie! I only know of one extensive patch of elms in nearby Loughor and there is indeed a WLH colony there. I'm sure there must be others in the vicinity.

Well done finding the Brown Hairstreak ova by the way. Let's hope the adults turn up later in the year.

Re: Jamie Burston

by peterc, 22-Jan-18 07:03 AM GMT

bugboy wrote:

Hi Jamie, I've recently found a WLH egg on a patch of Elm suckers at work in central London. The horticultural dept are keen to promote and encourage native wildlife to the site (my end of year in-house report covering the transects I do being the highlight of their team leaders year 😊) and I was hoping to pick your brains about what DED resistant strains of Elm they could use around the site that the Hairstreaks will use.

Thanks in advance, Paul 😊

Hi Paul,

Liz Goodyear from the Herts and Middx branch would be interested to hear of the plans to encourage colonisation of WHs in central London. I will send you a PM.

ATB

Peter

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 24-Jan-18 01:15 PM GMT

David M wrote:

Many thanks for the offer, Jamie! I only know of one extensive patch of elms in nearby Loughor and there is indeed a WLH colony there. I'm sure there must be others in the vicinity.

Well done finding the Brown Hairstreak ova by the way. Let's hope the adults turn up later in the year.

More than happy to investigate for you. Great to hear that White-letter Hairstreaks occur in Loughor! The butterfly is very mobile when they want to be, I would imagine especially so for females wanting to establish new colonies, if healthy elms are in the surrounding area, they should be present.

Thank you very much, David! It's not bad when you find 2 of only 3 known sites in Brighton and Hove for the Brown Hairstreak! More searching to be done. 😊 Yes, I can't wait for the chance to look for the adults around August time.

Re: Jamie Burston

by David M, 26-Jan-18 07:53 PM GMT

Jamie Burston wrote:

More than happy to investigate for you. Great to hear that White-letter Hairstreaks occur in Loughor! The butterfly is very mobile when they want to be, I would imagine especially so for females wanting to establish new colonies, if healthy elms are in the surrounding area, they should be present.

Thanks, Jamie. Any helpful information would be gratefully received.

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 29-Jan-18 09:03 PM GMT

Copied from my post on Butterfly Conservation – Sussex Branches, Sightings page:

Back on Saturday 27th January, I surveyed Roedale Valley Allotments in Hollingbury, Brighton, to address where five disease-resistant elm trees could be planted, then yesterday, Sunday 28th, I visited Lower Roedale Allotments in Hollingdean, Brighton for the same reason. This time for three disease-resistant elms. After leaving Lower Roedale Allotments, on the spur of the moment, I searched nearby at the edge of Hollingdean, on the southern boundary of Wild Park LNR, looking at the Blackthorn/Prunus species I had noted in previous years. Bearing in mind what I previously posted "It's my belief that Brown Hairstreak is far more widespread around Brighton and Hove, probably occurring in small discrete colonies like that found at Patcham, where smaller hedgerows can be found."

My search in this area produced a single sighting of a Brown Hairstreak egg, a first I believe for the Hollingdean area of Brighton!



After, I headed north to the dew pond of Wild Park, where I visited the master oak tree to check on the Purple Hairstreak eggs I had previously found. I then continued north heading towards the edge of Ditchling Road, right on the northern boundary of Wild Park LNR by Hollingbury. Here I also searched the Blackthorn, having taken note of the location four years ago, each year failing to spot the adult Brown Hairstreaks, during their flight period, and last year looking for their eggs. My perseverance paid off, I was finally rewarded soon after my arrival, I lifted a downwards facing Blackthorn branch to find two Brown Hairstreak eggs laid at the base of neighbouring forks.



Searching the same plant I also found a third egg.



Walking a little further on, there was a tangle of Blackthorn that had been torn out of the ground by a tractor, to my amazement I found my last and very lucky egg, on the first Blackthorn plant that had gone unscathed by the edge of the tractors activities.



Nearby I joined Friends of Woodbourne Meadow volunteer group back on 24th January, where I coppiced a small section of Prunus, the site now looks to be within reaching distance for the butterfly, to deposit eggs on the new re-growth later this year. Walking home after only intending to visit the allotment, having turned into a five hour walk, I went to check on my White-letter Hairstreak eggs, noting that the development of the elm flowers, look even more advanced than last year, if it stays mild I could see the White-letter Hairstreak caterpillars emerge in around three weeks time! I certainly enjoyed my early Easter egg hunt, though it's done nothing for my hand modelling career!

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 31-Jan-18 04:41 PM GMT

Copied from my post on Butterfly Conservation – Sussex Branches, Sightings page:

Playing catch-up. Back on the 7th January I joined around 25 members of Friends of Hollingbury and Burstead Woods, volunteer group and Brighton and Hove City Council, Cityparks Ranger, Will Furze. I joined the group to continue the work of previous years, to manage the scalloped bays at the edge of the wood, near the playground of Hollingbury Park in Brighton. We cut the vegetation down to the ground to give the developing Creeping Thistle (the White-letter Hairstreaks primary nectar source for the site), the best opportunity to thrive, un-managed, the plant is out competed by Cleavers, hindering their growth. We will return in April/May to complete the management for the year, cutting down any vigorous growth that surrounds the Thistles as their growth starts to take off. The management of the bays, for the Creeping Thistle, was perfected last year, the result of the work having multiplied the amount of flowering Thistle, as pictured, providing more nectar for the White-letter Hairstreaks and a range of insects.



'Friends of Hollingbury and Burstead Woods', working on scalloped bays.



'Friends of Hollingbury and Burstead Woods', working on scalloped bays.



Flourishing Creeping Thistle, Summer 2017 result.

Once we cleared the bays, we headed to the very top of Hollingbury Park, by the recycling point. Friends of Hollingbury and Burstead Woods, volunteer group purchased two 'Ademuz', a disease-resistant Spanish Field elm cultivar, having purchased them alongside our Branch order. I approached the group, as part of my role as White-letter Hairstreak Species Champion, with the suggestion of planting disease-resistant elms back in 2017, the group well ahead of me, having already planned to fill a newly opened space with elm, it all came together perfectly! These will prove a great addition to the park, with Dutch elm disease frequently sighted in the woods within the past few years, they will serve as a future back-up for the butterfly. I also believe that these two 'Ademuz' are the first of their kind to be planted within Brighton and Hove, directly adding to the National Elm Collection. Ranger, Will, is pictured with me at the moment of planting the two elms, thanks to Gill Taylor for the photos. My thanks again go to all the volunteers of Friends of Hollingbury and Burstead Woods and Will, Citypark Ranger, for supporting such habitat conservation.



Planting first *Ulmus minor* 'Ademuz' whip, disease-resistant Spanish Field elm.



Planting second *Ulmus minor* 'Ademuz' whip, disease-resistant Spanish Field elm.

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 25-Feb-18 11:25 AM GMT

My method of finding Elm

I have used a particular method for finding suitable butterfly habitat, for various Sussex species, without the need to leave my house, helpful when you have limited transportation. This method has helped me to find new Brown Hairstreak, Green Hairstreak and White-letter Hairstreak sites in the past.

Yesterday evening I used this method again, I used Google Maps on Satellite and Street View to pin-point suitable habitat, in this case, to look for mature Elm trees.

As part of my White-letter Hairstreak Species Champion role for Butterfly Conservation – Sussex Branch, I will be posting the locations of various Elms that I have noted around Sussex, from the past two years, that look suitable to be hosting the butterfly. Asking members to survey the trees/locations for the White-letter Hairstreak, but also to assess the health of the Elm trees in the area, to be reported back. This will help to provide new data on their distribution, as the majority of records tend to come from the same locations, each year.

Below is a screenshot of the latest Elm I've located, at Southwick Green, Southwick, West Sussex. Grid Reference: TQ24140524



Mature Elm, during peak seed production, Elms produced vast quantities of seed during 2017, unlike any other year I've observed. Image taken April 2017, Google Maps.

All the best,
Jamie

Re: Jamie Burston

by Paul Harfield, 25-Feb-18 05:39 PM GMT

Hi Jamie

I am curious Jamie as to how exactly you use Google maps to find Elm Trees, could you give a bit more detail please.

I have my own methods of finding them, observation mostly as I am driving. I do a lot of driving in my job all over the south east and always in different places. So I have learned over the years how to spot them. I also I get a feel for certain places where there may not be any Elms immediately visible but the area looks good for them. These come up trumps most of the time. I normally use Google maps/earth afterwards to look at the surrounding area.

With regards to publishing the locations of Elms for others to investigate I was thinking along the same lines. My area of interest is Hampshire but my travelling goes way beyond the county border. I often cant help but notice promising Elms elsewhere which I would never have the time to investigate.

I have sent you a PM

Re: Jamie Burston

by David M, 25-Feb-18 08:59 PM GMT

Thanks for giving us an insight into your *modus operandum*, Jamie, but I suspect the majority of us (including me) can only identify an elm when it is in full leaf during the late spring/summer.

At risk of being seen as a rank amateur, can you give any tips on identifying elms in the winter/early spring?

Re: Jamie Burston

by IAC, 25-Feb-18 09:11 PM GMT

[quote]At risk of being seen as a rank amateur, can you give any tips on identifying elms in the winter/early spring?

That, David, is the very line I would have written just 3, maybe 4 weeks ago. I did not have a clue. I have since been enlightened 😊 The absolute necessity required now to identify Elm in the landscape now that we have WLH up here, has, given me a good shake and really opened my eyes. I can assure you that Elm is so distinctive and obvious once you are able to identify it that you will wonder what you have been doing with your life. 😊

How I laughed when I read Jamie's method of finding Elm re Google street maps. I found myself doing this the other night...and thought to myself...I wonder if anyone else has thought about doing this....or is this just too far...haha. So thank the good lord its not just me. You can really see those seeding Elms quite clearly!!

Iain.

Re: Jamie Burston

by Matsukaze, 25-Feb-18 09:25 PM GMT

Hi David,

In a couple of weeks the trees will come into flower and will look like this:



The flower looks like this - the caterpillars may be inside there somewhere, though this is probably the most difficult stage of their entire lifecycle to find them. The trees take on a reddish hint if viewed from the right angle.



In a couple of months, the yellow-green seeds stand out against the emerging foliage elsewhere.



Re: Jamie Burston

by Wurzel, 17-Mar-18 07:16 PM GMT

A fantastic use of Google Maps Jamie. possibly the best I've witnessed 😊 I might even have a go for myself 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: Jamie Burston

by Pete Eeles, 22-Mar-18 11:52 PM GMT

Paul Harfield wrote:

Hi Jamie

I am curious Jamie as to how exactly you use Google maps to find Elm Trees, could you give a bit more detail please.

Me too! Are you able to somehow select a time of year for the imagery that Google Maps uses?

Cheers,

– Pete

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 24-Apr-18 07:36 PM GMT

Could I be called a Conservation Artist? –

Check out my art prints and originals (my job), by making a purchase you will be supporting the conservation of the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly, a percentage from each sale will go towards disease-resistant elm trees. Visit my shop here: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/JamieBurstonArt>



White-letter Hairstreak 'Thistle Feast'

Re: Jamie Burston

by David M, 25-Apr-18 05:58 PM GMT

Impressive. You have many strings to your bow, Jamie.

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 29-Apr-18 01:25 PM GMT

David M wrote:

Impressive. You have many strings to your bow, Jamie.

Thank you David. I do own a violin 😊

I'm waiting to hear back from a contact, then I will share what information I have collected for you, regarding elm locations in Wales, here in my diary. Their replies unfortunately haven't been very specific, but should hopefully give you a couple of options.

All the best,
Jamie

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 29-Apr-18 01:49 PM GMT

Back on 22nd April, I observed that the Brown Hairstreak eggs within Brighton, had now started to hatch.



Following this, I was amazed to actually locate one of the caterpillars nearby, a first for me. The length of the caterpillar was hovering around 1mm. I described to my friend Dave (David) Cook: "The Caterpillar was sitting on a yet expanded leaf, so the form of the leaf was tubular, with the caterpillar resting on the underside – as expected."



Returning to the same site yesterday (28th April), I was pleased to locate a second Brown Hairstreak caterpillar, pictured below – there are four hatched eggs on this same plant, plus another un-hatched egg, in this case, Wild Damson has been used. The two caterpillars now measuring 2mm in length. There is evident feeding damage to the leaves in my photo. Given their size, they were fairly active, moving about 2" in the short time I was there, occasionally taking up rather exposed locations.



For those that are worried 😊 that I have turned my back on the White-letter Hairstreak life-cycle, don't worry, though due to unfortunate circumstances my study site of two years is no longer suitable for undertaking detailed observations. I have located two White-letter Hairstreak caterpillars so far this year, at two different sites, one of which rightfully being Hollingbury Park.



White-letter Hairstreak, hatched egg, Hollingbury Park, 14th April.



White-letter Hairstreak, caterpillar, 9mm in length, Brighton, 28th April.



Purple Hairstreak, hatched egg, Brighton, 19th April.

Purple Hairstreak caterpillar photo, hopefully to follow soon!
UPDATE: Purple Hairstreak, 3.5mm caterpillar, Brighton, 1st May.



Back on 22nd April I saw my first Green Hairstreak of the year, though this was my only view 😊 :



I really want to photograph a Green Hairstreak egg this year, I just need to observe an egg-laying female at a local site, wish me luck!

Brown Hairstreak, hatched egg on Wild Damson, Hollingbury Hill Fort, Brighton, 1st May.



Interesting fact, this egg and another I found higher on another branch, were laid just above an elevation of 584 feet (178 m) above sea level.

Re: Jamie Burston

by David M, 02-May-18 07:12 AM GMT

Nice early stages, Jamie. Many thanks too for the offer of information regarding elms. I shall look forward to that.

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 09-May-18 07:07 PM GMT

Brighton Trio: Hair raising observations!

The following photos were all taken today: 9th May 2018



White-letter Hairstreak, caterpillar, on Wheatley elm.



Purple Hairstreak, caterpillar, on English/ Pendunculate oak.



Brown Hairstreak, caterpillar, on Wild Damson.

Thanks for looking.

Re: Jamie Burston

by Butterflysaurus rex, 09-May-18 08:12 PM GMT

Great work Jamie, I don't suppose many people have observed these three in the wild. Nice photos too, tiny caterpillars are not easy to photograph!

James

Re: Jamie Burston

by Jamie Burston, 09-May-18 08:25 PM GMT

Butterflysaurus rex wrote:

Great work Jamie, I don't suppose many people have observed these three in the wild. Nice photos too, tiny caterpillars are not easy to photograph!

James

Thank you James, much appreciated! Perhaps not, it's a real joy to see the caterpillars interact with their natural surroundings, being of small size, they sure do shift when they want to. Purple Hairstreak caterpillars are the most challenging to photograph based on the fact that they love to stay amongst the cluttered debris of flowers, buds and leaves. It was tricky today, especially with the wind, you have to wait for some subsidence, otherwise it's too risky to approach the caterpillars, you don't want to knock them off! Stunning photos in the May forum page you posted, the Green Hairstreak shots were obviously appealing to me! 😊😄

Re: Jamie Burston

by Butterflysaurus rex, 09-May-18 09:34 PM GMT

Jamie Burston wrote:

Stunning photos in the May forum page you posted, the Green Hairstreak shots were obviously appealing to me! 😊😄

Very kind of you Jamie, I know we're both big Hairstreak fans - but then again who isn't!?

Re: Jamie Burston

by Andrew555, 10-May-18 09:25 AM GMT

Terrific shots Jamie, very interesting. 😊

Re: Jamie Burston

by David M, 10-May-18 08:26 PM GMT

Great larval images again, Jamie, clearly showing the difference between the species.

You seem to have got this to a fine art!