

Is it really a year already?

by SimonC69, 26-Jun-18 08:55 AM GMT

so it's just over a year since my last entry on here. What a year!

Back in April 2017, Mrs C was diagnosed with breast cancer and she spent the summer going through Chemo & surgery and two weeks either side of Christmas, including boxing day, having intensive radiotherapy. She's on the mend, and as far as we can be sure, the treatment seems to have done the trick so things are getting back to (a different kind of) normal. To her eternal credit, she never once let the treatment get the better of her (evidenced in the fact she was with me for all but two of my 8 butterfly lifers last year!)

This spring the fatigue caused by the treatment finally caught up with her, but she didn't let it last too long, and has recently started a new job, working in a special needs secondary school! The woman is a superhero in my eyes.

Anyway, what has that got to do with this forum I hear you ask? well, nothing really, except that I have been trying (without much success) to keep her from overdoing things, which means curtailing the Butterflying (me)/Walks (Mrs C and the kids) a bit.

Suffice to say my original 50/50 quest is no longer attainable as this is the last summer before I turn 50 and I've got 12 species to go, so I've changed it to 55/55. Yes, I'm aware that will be even harder but fun trying!

"Wait a minute", I hear nobody asking, "you said 12 species to go? didn't you end last summer with 13 species left to go?"

Oh yeah, that's right, this weekend just gone, I failed to stop Mrs C overdoing it again and we ended up walking around Sharpenhoe Clappers on Sunday morning (before the football) and I added species number 38 to my photo list:



These were the only butterflies I got anywhere near that morning. Preoccupied, obviously



If this photo doesn't scream "summer" I don't know what would!

So there we are; I'm still butterflying (just not as much), My quest has changed but is still ongoing, Life still throws us challenges, it's up to us to deal with them as best we can.

Oh, and my BLACK SABBATH T SHIRT STILL WORKS!! ;)

Re: SimonC69

by trevor, 26-Jun-18 03:50 PM GMT

Amazing shots of mating Dark Greens, Simon.
It's great when an opportunity like that presents itself,
and you're there to take advantage of it !.

And all the best to your good Lady 😊 .

Trevor.

Re: SimonC69

by Pauline, 26-Jun-18 03:56 PM GMT

55/55 is a good target! Great shots of the mating pair and all the best to Mrs C.

Re: SimonC69

by Wurzel, 26-Jun-18 11:02 PM GMT

Cracking shot Simon! 🤔👍

Glad to hear the Black Sabbath shirt is still working 😊

I'm sure in the circumstances you could write off last year so 50/50 is still a possibility? 😊

All the best to Mrs C 🤔

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: SimonC69

by David M, 28-Jun-18 06:59 PM GMT

To record Dark Green Fritillaries mating is an achievement but to do so when both sexes have their wings open is exceptional.

Thanks for posting that, Simon.

Re: SimonC69

by bugboy, 29-Jun-18 07:34 AM GMT

Good to hear Mrs C is on the mend. If you want to add White-letter Hairstreak to your tally they are out in the Essex site I mentioned last year..... the one with the castle ruins for Mrs C. They've been out for a couple of weeks now but there should still be the odd fresh one worthy of attention. Drop me a PM if you need more details 😊

Re: SimonC69

by Andrew555, 29-Jun-18 01:28 PM GMT

What a fantastic sighting Simon, with wings open too, well done. 🤔👍

All the best to Mrs C.

Re: SimonC69

by SimonC69, 29-Jun-18 03:33 PM GMT

Thanks for the well wishes everyone, appreciated. I didn't realise my DGF shot was quite that rare!? nice one.

Re: SimonC69

by Neil Freeman, 29-Jun-18 06:59 PM GMT

Hi Simon,

Wishing all the best to Mrs C.

Stonking images of the mating DGFs, something I have never seen 🤔👍

Cheers,

Neil.

Just a quick update.....

by SimonC69, 12-Aug-18 12:26 PM GMT

A quick update, more to keep this ticking over for myself than anything 😊

I've got three new species since the DGFs so I'm up to 41 species photographed.

#39 was a total surprise while on holiday in Cornwall. We visited Lizard Point on 31st July and after we'd done the obligatory walk down to the old lifeboat station we went back up to the coast path and headed west (I'm lucky in that my youngest two kids - 13 and 8 - are quite keen on a bit of a hike!)

Not far along we came to a kind of damp meadow (it did have a name but I can't remember it!) and there were butterflies aplenty flitting around mainly Common blue and Gatekeeper so I started stalking the Blues as I'm still searching for "the" shot of them. I got close to getting it, but still room for improvement.



Common Blue, Getting towards my ideal shot...

This one is my favourite so far...



This has become my favourite so far but I'll always try for better...

While I was chasing the blues my attention was drawn to a tiny, bright orange speck darting around. Skipper? not flying right and I've never seen a "golden" skipper this orange. It was then joined by a second and they spiralled upwards in a bit of a "dogfight" I mentally went through everything it could've been, and wondered if it could be a Small Pearl-bordered? As I was dismissing that thought and laughing at myself for making a schoolboy error it landed....



This made my pulse race a bit....

Oh. Well that's a surprise then!
a bit of stalking later and I'd got a couple more shots. Not brilliant as it was *very* jumpy and I had trouble getting the sun at my back, but these will do for now:



We later went for a longer walk, a bit further east along the coast and I found two more, whilst I didn't have my macro lens on.



This is taken with my 18-55 lens. Not bad if the 'flies are docile and allow a close approach

So, A day out, not really "butterflying" saw me get one of my most wanted species. (which is a hell of a lot smaller than I'd expected!)

Oh, did I mention what T-Shirt I happened to pull on that morning? Yep! SABBATH STRIKES AGAIN 😊😊

So, What about #40 & #41?

Those were found yesterday, 11th August at Aston Rowant.

After finally finding my way through the wooded bit onto the slopes (yes, I went down the steps and went quite a way down that enclosed lane before I decided to turn back!) the first butterfly that caught my eye - that wasn't a white or a Meadow Brown was such a surprising shade of blue it couldn't have been anything else!

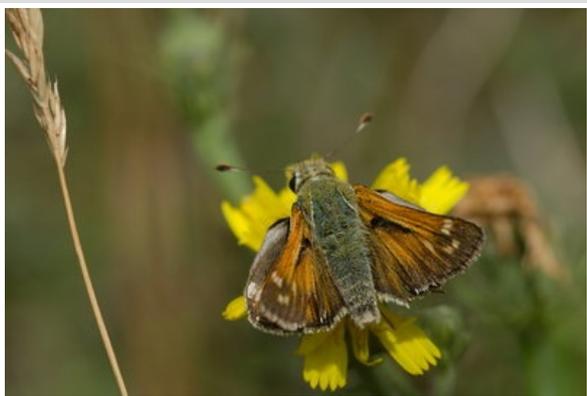


Nothing could've prepared me for just how blue the Adonis is! and a photo will always struggle to do it justice!

#40 under my belt, the search for my real target for the day began. It didn't take long!



These were extremely flighty, getting close to them was very challenging



Most shots needed a bit of cropping to get something useable...



Unless they were otherwise engaged and allowed a closer approach!

Once I'd got my eye in there were a lot of Silver-spotted Skippers on the slopes, along with the most Common and Chalkhill blues I've ever seen in one place (I was constantly worried I was going to step on them!)

At the bottom of the slope, in the "sunken" path and the edge of the meadow, every clump of Wild Marjoram (?) had at least three species of blue on it! One small plant I found had four male Adonis, three Male Common and a Male Chalkhill blues on, plus as many females of probably all three species! Such a contrast to my first visit here, last year, when I saw two chalkhill blue, one Small Skipper and a Brown Argus. We did get caught in a

thunderstorm that day though. 😊

So, the quest reaches 41 species.

And yes, of course I wore the Sabbath T-shirt!

Re: SimonC69

by Janet Turnbull, 12-Aug-18 03:58 PM GMT

Those Adonis are really hard to do justice to, aren't they, Simon. The DGF photos are incredible – 🌿🌿!

Best wishes to Mrs C – and good luck with your quest. Maybe 51/51 would be a midway target!

Re: SimonC69

by ernie f, 12-Aug-18 05:24 PM GMT

I agree – the DGF pics are brilliant.

Re: SimonC69

by Wurzel, 12-Aug-18 05:48 PM GMT

Congrats Simon 😊 Cracking set of shots as well 😊🌿 Look after that T-shirt! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Re: SimonC69

by David M, 13-Aug-18 06:45 AM GMT

It's a lovely feeling when something totally unexpected suddenly turns up isn't it, Simon?

Re: SimonC69

by bugboy, 13-Aug-18 12:42 PM GMT

You never forget your first Adonis, nothing can prepare you for that intensity of blue on a living creature 😊!