

## Steve L

by Steve L, 04-Jul-18 10:35 AM GMT

My name is Steve Lane and I live in North Hertfordshire.

My local patch is Great Ashby District Park, which is close to my home. I have recorded 27 species of butterfly there over the last 14 years – from hundreds of Meadow Browns, to a small colony of White-Letter Hairstreaks and Small Heaths. Some eruption years produced 105 Painted Lady and 15 Clouded Yellow. Over the last few years, single Silver-washed Fritillary have put in an appearance, but the park has lost Brown Argus. Its now under a more wildlife sympathetic management, which I have play a small part in.

I try to encourage butterflies into my garden with the addition of various plants, currently looking for a buckthorn if any one can help. Love to take photos of butterflies I find (a bit obsessive really) and post many of them on my flickr page.

1st & 2nd July I had a White-Letter Hairstreak in my garden, which posed beautifully, and even stopped for a drink on my garden pond.





**Re: Steve L**

by Vince Massimo, 04-Jul-18 01:12 PM GMT

Hi Steve and welcome (although I see that you are a longstanding member).

I think your penultimate image is exceptional and merits comment.



I have never seen an image of any Hairstreak viewed directly from above. Yours shows just how effective the tails and lower wing flares are in mimicking the head of the butterfly, thereby confusing and hopefully misdirecting birds into attacking the wrong end of the insect.

I have taken the liberty of adding the image to the Species-Specific Album on your behalf as I think it merits inclusion.

If you are looking for a Buckthorn, then, unless you intend to grow it in a pot, you need to be aware of your soil conditions before selecting the particular plant. Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) is found on calcareous soils and Alder Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) prefers acid soils.

Vince

**Re: Steve L**

by Pete Eeles, 04-Jul-18 01:49 PM GMT

I agree – that is one unusual and amazing image. As well as the tails providing the appearance of the head and antennae, I just love that shadow!

Cheers,

– Pete

**Re: Steve L**

by bugboy, 04-Jul-18 03:22 PM GMT

Now that's how you make an entrance! 😊

**Re: Steve L**

by Steve L, 04-Jul-18 04:10 PM GMT

Thank you for your kind comments, if you would like a larger/higher res image, I am happy to supply one.

Cheers

Steve

**Re: Steve L**

by Pauline, 04-Jul-18 04:16 PM GMT

Welcome from me too Steve. How wonderful to have WLH in the garden - lovely images btw 😊

**Re: Steve L**

by Neil Freeman, 04-Jul-18 07:00 PM GMT

Hi and welcome from me too. A cracking start to your diary with some great images of the WLH...and in your garden as well 🍷 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: Steve L**

by Andrew555, 05-Jul-18 10:11 AM GMT

Welcome Steve, great stuff, particularly the top view. 😊

**Re: Steve L**

by peterc, 05-Jul-18 11:41 AM GMT

When I saw those wonderful images of the White-letters I knew immediately who you were/are 😊 .

Anyway, welcome to the forum. As you may gather I live in Stevenage, only a couple of miles away.

Regarding the buckthorn, I bought a Purging Buckthorn sapling from an online website (Beechwood Nurseries I think) about 4-5 years ago. I planted it in an open position in my south-facing back garden. In 2016, it contained 20 Brimstone eggs possibly laid by a single female but no success since. It is probably pot luck.

Look forward to receiving more of your messages.

ATB

Peter

**Re: Steve L**

by Steve L, 05-Jul-18 01:36 PM GMT

Hi

Thanks all.

PeterC I think we have met a couple of times, Watery Grove foe SWF, but I missed the PE. Thanks for the Buckthorn info.

**Re: Steve L**

by Steve L, 05-Jul-18 02:47 PM GMT

Hi

Thank you all for your kind comment and welcome.

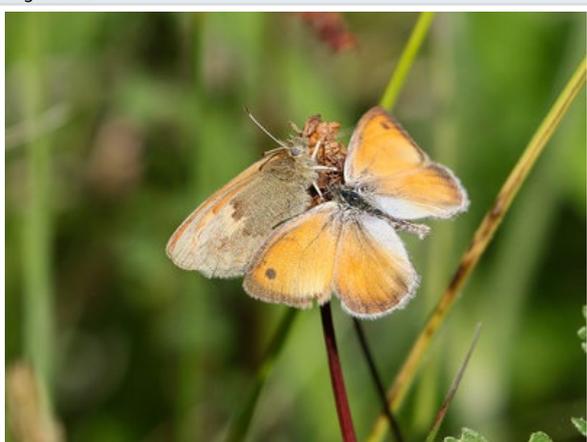
Another local site, (which is in the site guide), I try to visit 4 or 5 times a year is Hexton Chalk Pit HMWT Reserve. Its quite challenging for me at the moment, but well worth the effort.

First visit this year was on 22nd May. I was amazed to see so many Dingy Skippers, a life times worth in one day, hundreds! Backed up with Common Blues, Small Heaths and a very shy single Green Hairstreak. After about an hour I returned home via Hillbrow, Letchworth a new site for me, for Small Blue. I saw 15+, a single Brown Argos being the highlights. Great little site, just one football pitch size field, with mature hedges, backed by farmland.





My second visit on 2nd July, equally as rewarding, with large numbers of Dark Green Fritillary, Marbled White (one of my favourites), Small Heath and Chalkhill Blue. The first part of the walk, now the vegetation has grown, a little difficult. Lots of Meadow Browns there. The plateau was alive with life butterflies, bees, grasshoppers and spiders all making the most of the morning sun. The butterflies were making to much use of it, rarely settling. But I did manage to get a lifetime ambition shot, open winged Small Heath! The male was trying to mate with an unresponsive female, he kept circling her and bumping her. So I set a fast ISO, closed my f stop down abit to get a shutter speed of 1600. Sounds technical, but I'm sure it was more luck than judgement.



I'm still learning when it comes to spiders, so if anyone could help with the ID of this brute, I'd be grateful. The Chalkhill Blue was fine, didn't get

trapped.



And a few other photos from the day.





**Re: Steve L**

by Wurzel, 05-Jul-18 11:17 PM GMT

Lush set sequence of shots Steve especially the open winged Small Heath 😊 I would have welcomed you sooner but I was having some problems with the website 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Steve L**

by CallumMac, 06-Jul-18 09:27 AM GMT

Hi Steve, welcome from one relative newbie to another! Cracking start to your PD and I look forward to more to come...

**Re: Steve L**

by kevlng, 06-Jul-18 09:41 AM GMT

Hi Steve, nice to have a new diary to look at. What a start with those cracking WLH too. It's also the first photograph I've seen of an open wing Small Heath, nice one 😊

Kind Regards  
Kev

**Re: Steve L**

by Steve L, 06-Jul-18 01:02 PM GMT

Thanks all

**Re: Steve L**

by Steve L, 08-Jul-18 12:34 PM GMT

I had a Holly Blue laying eggs on the Purple Loosestrife beside my garden pond, even though there was Ivy and Holly, which I thought were the preferred plants, just a few yards away.



I'm quite lucky to have woodland on 2 sides of my garden, so do manage to get a lot of wildlife in my garden.



Anyone point the direction of some good sites in the New Forest, I'm spending a week there at the end of the month.

Cheers

Steve

### Re: Steve L

by jonhd, 08-Jul-18 08:49 PM GMT

Hi Steve, highly recommend that you check Alan Thornbury's website – he provides excellent coverage of some of the New Forest Inclosures, heathland, etc. See <http://www.purple-emperor.co.uk/home> – you're probably most interested in:

<http://www.purple-emperor.co.uk/flight-periods>

<http://www.purple-emperor.co.uk/sites>

And the Blog is worth a read.

Also check <http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/news.php> (sightings 'diary', covers the entire Hants & IOW area).

Good Luck, Jon

### Re: Steve L

by Steve L, 08-Jul-18 10:00 PM GMT

Thanks Johnd

Excellent site and blog. Hopefully Brown Hairstreak site which is on my route will get me a much needed photo. So hopefully catch up with some butterflies, dragonflies and birds, also a trip to Ringwood brewery to celebrate.

Cheers

Steve

### Re: Steve L

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-18 12:40 PM GMT

Cracking Comma Steve 😊

Godshill near Fordingbridge is a great site for Garayling and Dragonflies.

If you're able to venture slightly further North try Shipton Bellinger for Brown Hairstreak 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Steve L**

by David M, 10-Jul-18 09:34 PM GMT

That's a great start to a personal diary, Steve. Like others I too have been struck by the remarkable mirror image provided by the hairstreak tails when viewed from above.

I look forward to reading much more on these pages.

**Re: Steve L**

by Old Wolf, 10-Jul-18 09:40 PM GMT

Hello Steve, I am new as well.

I am loving your photographs, so perfectly clear. I look forward to seeing many more.

Stay Hydrated.

Old Wolf.

**Re: Steve L**

by Steve L, 15-Jul-18 09:58 AM GMT

Hi

Thanks to everyone for their kind comments and info on the New Forest.

Wurzel, thanks both sites are close to where we will be staying.

Not had much time for anything this last week, having to work 5 nights due to staff training and I'll have even less time this coming week having to work 5 days. My normal week is 3 night shifts.

So butterflies have all been garden visitors, loads of Large and Small Whites, Brimstones (females only!), Large Skippers, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Gatekeeper (on Bramble patch over the fence) and Comma, which always brightens things up.

Hoping for some more species this week, with the Buddleia, Hemp Agrimony, Lavender and Purple Loosestrife all coming into flower.

Female Brimstones 3 or 4 a day, this one was finding it hot, so kept taking shade in the bramble over the fence.



A nice fresh Meadow Brown enjoying the Lavender.



Comma finding a sunny spot.



Large White on Hemp Agrimony.



Showing the defensive, big face flash.



Large Skipper doing elephant impression



Small White even came inside to save me going out.



**Re: Steve L**

by Andrew555, 15-Jul-18 03:23 PM GMT

Nice selection Steve, I do like a female Meadow Brown. 😊

**Re: Steve L**

by Wurzel, 15-Jul-18 06:36 PM GMT

If only all butterflies were as accommodating as that Small White Steve 🤗🇧🇪 our Meadow Brown is a great find, almost a double spotter 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Steve L**

by David M, 16-Jul-18 11:13 AM GMT

I like the intruder in your Meadow Brown image, Steve. 😊

I daresay your garden plants will be receiving plenty of visitors over the next week or two.

**Re: Steve L**

by Steve L, 23-Jul-18 11:59 AM GMT

Hi All

Hope everyone had a good weekend and an enjoyable Big Butterfly Count.

I couldn't make my mind up at what time to start, so I waited until something more interesting than a White turned up.

Small Skipper arrived, so off I went, Brimstone, Comma, Small, Large and Green-veined Whites and finally a Meadow Brown.

Later in the day Gatekeeper, fleeting glimpses of Purple Hairstreak and Large Skipper.

Lots more Whites over the past week and male Brimstones have replaced the females of the previous week, also Peacock.



Small Skipper to start my BBC



This morning 2 Purple Hairstreaks came to visit the Buddleia and stayed awhile.



I tried to photograph Silver Y's feeding at night using an LED video light, given it up now!



Getting loads of Purple and Gold Moths at the moment.



I hope everyone is enjoying the sun and you all have a good week.

Cheers

Steve

**Re: Steve L**

by Wurzel, 23-Jul-18 10:07 PM GMT

Great shot of the Brimstone Steve, captured the curled proboscis really well 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Steve L**

by David M, 23-Jul-18 10:11 PM GMT

Your Small Skippers are looking relatively fresh, Steve. Ours in south Wales are looking decidedly battle-weary. I'm not at all sure why this is.

**Re: Steve L**

by Steve L, 24-Jul-18 08:30 PM GMT

Hi All

Waiting in the garden for the heating engineer 😊

I had my first, all but brief, visit from a Silver-washed Fritillary today, managed a couple of photos before it went after a Large White. It disappeared in the direction of Great Ashby District Park entrance. At least 2 Purple Hairbreaks again today, 4th day running. Again should be visible in the Oaks at the entrance to the park. My first Hummingbird Hawkmoth put in an appearance for a few minutes.

The only thing that didn't put in an appearance was the heating engineer I had waited all day for! 😊



I'm saving this one for the heating engineer 😊



### Re: Steve L

by Old Wolf, 24-Jul-18 09:05 PM GMT

That is a brilliant selection of visitors you get in your garden and some great shots of them.

Your day seemed very productive even if the engineer failed to materialise 😊

### Re: Steve L

by Wurzel, 24-Jul-18 10:57 PM GMT

To be fair Steve I'd have been chuffed that the Engineer was a no show what with Silver-washed and Purple Hairstreak to keep me amused 😊🍷 That shot of the Purp having a drink 'down at the water hole' is brill 😊🍷

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Steve L

by David M, 26-Jul-18 06:25 PM GMT

Great post, Steve...made me laugh! 😊

Nice choice of gift for the tardy engineer, but quite honestly I wouldn't have wanted to miss those thirsty Purple Hairstreaks.

### Re: Steve L

by Steve L, 05-Aug-18 11:30 AM GMT

Hi All

Just returned from a relaxing week away in the northern, quieter, part of the New Forest. I missed one of targets from both my butterfly and dragonfly wish lists. The Forest in general was not at its best, due to the extreme weather we are having. Most of its wildlife seems to be finding life difficult at the moment, many of the streams reduced to puddles, with no water movement and the boggy areas have dried out.

We visited Ogdens, Ashley Walk, Telegraph Hill and Pipers Wait areas in the north and Bolderwood, Hatchet Pond and Crockford Stream in the south. Most sites had Grayling, one of my targets and Silver-studded Blue only seen in the north, but no photo 😞.

Ogdens can be a very long walk, too long for me at the moment, so I was disappointed that I couldn't find a Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly in the bit I did manage. One target down, but I have seen it there before.

I also wanted to visit Shipton Bellinger, which is north of the New Forest, for Brown Hairstreak a species I've never photographed before. But due to 2 days of rain and wind, I just ran out of time. My other missed target.

A high point was Crockford Stream. I have been there several times, but not in recent years and I had read a negative article, that they had removed a lot of the bushes from around the stream to open it up. I needn't have worried, they have improved the area, with lots more dragonflies seen than on previous visits. Good numbers of Southern and Small Red Damselflies, plus several Golden-ringed Dragonflies. 😊



Daily views from the grounds of our holiday cottage.



Seen most days.

Nice moth – Bordered Grey





A garden visitor from just before my holiday 😊

Dragonfly photo will be on my Flickr page over the next few days: - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/stevelane56/>

Cheers

Steve Lane

**Re: Steve L**

by Wurzel, 05-Aug-18 11:46 PM GMT

Great set of Grayling shots Steve 😊 Sorry that you weren't able to get to Shipton Bellinger - mind you the Brostreaks are playing hard to get at the moment 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Steve L**

by David M, 06-Aug-18 12:25 AM GMT

Nice to see a few Graylings, Steve.

They're becoming increasingly rare inland in the UK so we need to cherish them while we've still got them.

**Re: Steve L**

by Steve L, 02-Sep-18 03:08 PM GMT

Hi All

This week has seen an upturn in species visiting my Great Ashby, Stevenage garden, after a couple of weeks of Whites, with the odd Holly Blue, to watch. Several Red Admirals have come to visit the buddleia, also Comma has shown well. Hummingbird Hawkmoths have been buzzing around, one did pose well for some photos. A nice fresh male Brimstone, looking quite green on the underwing compared to earlier in the season. Also a couple of fresh Speckled Woods are gracing the Vine and Virginia Creeper.

Cheers

Steve Lane



**Re: Steve L**

by trevor, 02-Sep-18 06:15 PM GMT

Great Humming Bird Hawk Moth shot. Your camera has ' frozen ' the action well. Also catching them in one spot is difficult enough as they dart from flower to flower.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

**Re: Steve L**

by Old Wolf, 02-Sep-18 08:59 PM GMT

Hello Steve,

Sorry to hear you missed out on your targets in the New Forest. On the positive side you now have even more of a reason to return 😊

You really get a great selection visiting your garden. I have had precious few this year.

I've got to agree with Trevor, your HBHM shots are amazing.

**Re: Steve L**

by peterc, 02-Sep-18 09:33 PM GMT

Lovely photos, Steve.

Butterflies seem to prefer the white buddleia rather than the blue and the mauve varieties which I also have in the garden.

ATB

Peter

**Re: Steve L**

by Wurzel, 02-Sep-18 10:00 PM GMT

Cracking set of images Steve 😊 Love the shot of the hiding Brimstone Steve – really shows off their (or should that be doesn't show off?) their camouflage to great effect 😊👍

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Steve L**

by David M, 03-Sep-18 09:06 PM GMT

Good to see a late season Brimstone, Steve, and even better to record a Humming Bird Hawk Moth! 😊😊

I saw one myself the other day (only the second I've ever seen in Wales) so with luck there should be a few more around.

**Re: Steve L**

by Andrew555, 07-Sep-18 02:42 PM GMT

Some great shots there Steve. You've caught that Hummingbird Hawk Moth very well indeed. 😊

**Re: Steve L**

by Goldie M, 08-Sep-18 12:03 PM GMT

Hi! Steve, I seem to be late welcoming you to UKB 😊 I think I must have been away on Holiday when you first posted but wow! what an entrance you made, looking over your great shots has been a pleasure 😊 Goldie 😊