

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 01-Jan-18 10:47 PM GMT

And a Happy New Year to you too! 😊

Those Wiltshire Walls were very nice as well, Wurzel. It's good to see them somewhere away from the coast – a reminder of when they were more widespread.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 02-Jan-18 08:12 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

With so little Butterfly activity at this time of year, I have not browsed these diaries seriously for a while. So I only discovered the report on your expedition to St. Peter's church this morning. I am delighted the visit was worthwhile and you went home with some great shots.

We will have to pay the first brood a visit this spring. If there is a Spring brood at least it will prove that there were some Ladies present in the church yard, but like you I didn't find any.

Wishing all at Wurzel Towers a Happy New Year, 😊  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Jan-18 02:28 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I do have to remind myself at times that this wasn't always a coastal species 😊 Still they're holding on in Wiltshire 😊  
Cheers Trevor 😊 Thanks for the 'tip-off', it made having to go and collect the GCSE results more than bareable 😊 Definitely need to check out the site for this species this spring – even if they breed elsewhere I reckon a few 'incomers' could still set up territory here 😊

Have a goodun

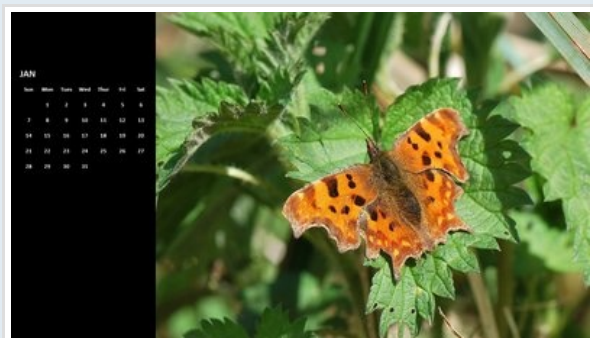
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Jan-18 12:47 PM GMT

January 2018

Finally got round to start work on the calendar...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 05-Jan-18 08:55 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

... I do have to remind myself at times that this wasn't always a coastal species... Wurzel

Indeed, I remember back in the 1970s when I was but a nipper, they could be found all over the place around my mom & dads house here in the midlands...sadly no longer. The other side of that coin is that Speckled Wood was a rarity around here then and now they are everywhere.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 05-Jan-18 10:22 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

January 2018

Finally got round to start work on the calendar...

I

Now you just need to finish your 2017 reports 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Jan-18 09:45 AM GMT

Happy New Year to you too Wurzel! 😊 love to see your Calendars and look forward to your Spring one 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 10-Jan-18 08:08 AM GMT

Happy New Year Wurzel! 😊 Great shots and reports as always.

My favorite's, from Mottisfont the Painted Lady and especially the Large White on that white flower, love that shot.

And the close up of the Wall with it's wings half open from St. Peter's, head perfectly in focus, good stuff. 😊

Cheers

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Jan-18 11:48 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 I can remember them flying around my Grans rockery when I was about 7 or 8 and then when I got into butterflies seriously 7 years ago they were (and still are in most places) decidedly uncommon 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Indeed – but if I wasn't behind with my PD then people might think I'd been kidnapped and replaced by an imposter 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Yep I can't wait for the Spring ones either 😊, though I can't wait for it'll mean many more butterflies 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I was chuffed with the Painted Lady and I don't know how the White came out so well as that was one of my usual 'grab' shots 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Jan-18 11:20 PM GMT

The Devenish 16-09-2017

With the kids back at school and my sister back in Oz things were settling down and we were getting back into our usual rhythm. That being said I managed to fit in an afternoon at The Devenish between the weekend chores. The weather was settled and so for once I wasn't racing the clouds. Upon my arrival I made my way, crunching up the path, over the gate and into the tiny paddock. I scanned around the tall stand of trees/Ivy to my left where a second gate led through a tunnel of trees to the Orchid Meadow. Almost straight away I saw what I'd expected to find – Red Admirals.



It was hard to get an accurate count of them as the September sun was keeping them pretty active and they regularly took flight for no apparent reason; often setting off a neighbouring butterfly in the process. Most were higher up the vertiginous tree but luckily one or two stayed lower taking advantage of the fence posts with one even coming down to the deck. In amongst the Red Admirals were a few Comma, the odd White fluttered by (Brimstones and Large) and a single Peacock. All told there were probably 3 Commas and 10+ Red Admirals though, again, it was difficult to be sure. There were also a few Specklies hanging about around the gate and fluttering at mid to low levels amongst the dappled shade. One individual in particular stood out as he gave the impression of being quite fresh, almost glittering golden when the light caught him just right.





At the top of the Paddock there's a large dead tree which is covered in Ivy. In turn it was covered in butterflies and again it was nigh on impossible to get an accurate count as they would keep moving from nectar source to nectar source or would disturb/jostle/hassle a neighbour. I made my way through the right hand gate, past this tree and headed up the hill through the large Paddock towards the Down. As I wended my way upwards I stopped only twice, the first time for a Small Tort that didn't return the compliment and the second for a Small Copper that did.





On the Down proper there were still butterflies flying but capturing them on film was proving tricky although I did manage a couple more shots; Large White, Green-veined White and also a pair of Commas feeding side by side-ish from the same flower head of a Blackberry.



I then entered the last part of the circular walk the Orchid Meadow. This is usually the most productive part of the site at any other time of year but in Autumn it can be bereft of butterflies and so it appeared today. I only managed singles of Green-veined and Specklies which stopped long enough for photos whilst Red Admirals and various other whites flew rapidly over this field seeking richer feeding grounds.



I was almost back at the 'Tree Tunnel' when an orange blur flashed past out of the corner of my eye. I turned and was able to follow it and watch it land and so I cautiously approached it. My stealth wasn't necessary though as it was very contentedly bumbling around the furry flower feeding. Another, brighter Copper hove into view and this one was much flightier and didn't hang around for very long. So I went back to the aged one who was still patiently feeding.



I came away relaxed and happy; what a cracking quick trip out; with double digits for species and some of those into double digits number wise to boot! There was me thinking the season was over...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 12-Jan-18 08:40 AM GMT

At least, around here, the season still has a while to go after mid September, but of course the best is over ( apart from some fresh Cloudies ! ). 😊  
Your Large White is for me the pick of the bunch, in perfect condition and displaying well.  
Is it just me, or do the final flush of Large Whites look much larger than earlier broods.

Keep well,

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 12-Jan-18 09:35 AM GMT

What a great afternoon Wurzel. 😊

Lovely selection, that Large White and Copper. 😊  
Cheers

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 12-Jan-18 01:36 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, great shots of the LW and Copper but I like the Comma on the Blackberry best, I just love to see Butterflies on fruit in September 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 12-Jan-18 05:06 PM GMT

Wonderful Autumnal selection, that Comma in particular looks so crisp I can almost pluck from my screen 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 12-Jan-18 09:46 PM GMT

A great autumn selection, Wurzel. It was a good one, so hopefully you have a few more posts to go to take us into the new season! 😊 I also like that perfect Large White – they are certainly more obliging at the tag end of the summer.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Jan-18 06:18 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Yep they do seem larger later in the year although whether they actually are or not I'm not sure?

Cheers Andrew 😊 That Large White was pretty stand out for me 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Those Commas were feeding up well, I reckon the juice was starting to ferment 😊😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 The light was just right on that one 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I reckon they're all sh\$\$\$ed out by then Dave 😊😊 Biological imperative met they can just chill out 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Jan-18 01:03 PM GMT

Larkhill 19-09-2017

As I was due to stop off at Teddy's Vets for his meat (the excellent Ronnieth the poo no less!) I made sure my camera was ready as I'd also be able to sneak in about 10 minutes at Larkhill...

I started at the main Car Park and made my way down the Eastbound path but it was very quiet – not even a White flying by. I'd worked to about half way along the path before I found my first butterfly, a Meadow Brown still looking in very good nick and certainly not decrepit as it easily escaped my lens. Further on I was stopped dead in my tracks by a glorious female blue, she was a first rate stunner and practically glowed amongst the fading green. I spent some time with her enjoying her company as she fluttered about like a fading sapphire.



I realised I'd used all of my time and so scurried back up the path. As I beetled on a pair of Blues took off from the middle of the path and proceeded to start scraping. When they landed they did so in tandem contrary to how they'd just been behaving. It wasn't a friendly stop though, they were just sizing each other up before they started at one another again. The victor (I assume) landed back relatively close to where they'd originally appeared from.



Once again I started scurrying car-wards and once again I was brought to a shuddering stop but this time by a Common Lizard. It was stretched out on the base of the 'Do not Enter Live Ordinance' sign as if contemplating whether to risk it or not?



Finally I made it back to the car and from there to the Vets and home without my subterfuge being detected...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 15-Jan-18 01:38 PM GMT

Lovely unusual Blue Wurzel, last year there seems to have been more than usual, a real treat, 😊 Snow forecast for here tomorrow I hope this cold



weather as been helpful to this years Butterflies.Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 16-Jan-18 07:54 AM GMT

Beautiful Blue Wurzel. 😊 Sometimes even a short scout around an area can reap fine rewards. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Jan-18 01:02 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 There seems to have been a noticable shift towards Common Blues being more blue than brown over recent years – it would be interesting to find out if it is an actual shift or whether it's an artefact of people being more attracted to the blue females and so taking more photos of that form?

Cheers Andrew 😊 The 5-10 minute' stop-off is a practice I've been developing over the last couple of years – so far I've gotten away with it 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

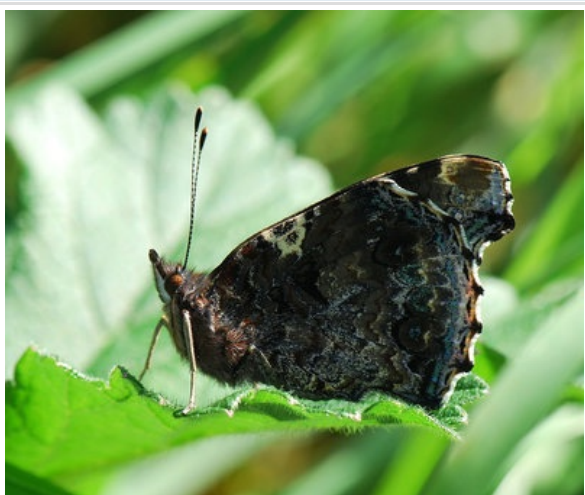
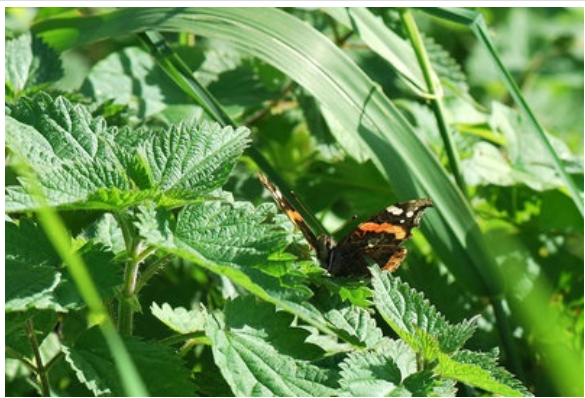
### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Jan-18 11:58 PM GMT

Middle Street 23-09-2017

When I look back on this trip it is with fondness. It was one of those serendipitous days where you don't set out to do anything but things fall into your lap. The weather was warm and sunny and it being the weekend and not knowing how long it would last all the family headed out. We didn't really know where we were going to end up but somehow our feet pointed us in the direction of the Town Path which cuts across Harnham Meadows. It was glorious to see the still lush green grass and poking out amongst the trees, well more like towering out, was the spire of the Cathedral. On round the Mill we went with the autumnal sun warming our backs and then rather than turning left and completing a circuit which would take us back into town via the Cathedral and The Close we went right and onto Middle Street.

I'd brought my camera, the girls had a jam jar and bright pink fishing net and my wife had a blanket and a good book so we were totally sorted. Once on site my wife found a warm spot to settle back in, the girls headed to the jetty to fish for Minnows and I checked out the dried up pond – a rich source of butterflies early in the season. Today however it was really quiet and it wasn't until I started round the pond that I located my first butterfly, a tired looking Red Admiral. There was a second flightier one as well but it stayed out of reach, fluttering and landing high on the birch trees rather than down where I could reach it with my lens. I didn't mind I was feeling lackadaisical and so I mooched back to check in with my wife. I would then make little sorties out to see if the Red Admirals were ready to have their photos taken or to help the girls identify something that had come out of their net. On one such sorties the Red Admirals were ready to grant me an audience and so I finally got some shots which were all the better for the patient wait.



Back at camp the girls were ready to try another jetty and so we moved slightly further along. While they dipped in their new locale I checked out the

benches as these seemed quite attractive to the Common Darters. Happy that everyone else was happy I took myself off for a slightly longer foray wandering upstream along the river and cutting down into the Meadow that's not mown as harshly as the football pitch. It was all quiet it here with only a fly-by UFW, possibly a Small...



Unperturbed I made my way back to camp and then stopped as a little orange jewel bumbled across worn turf. I approached wondering why this Small Copper appeared so orange and when I got up close I could see straight away that it was very lightly spotted. It was hard work keeping up with it as it fed frenziedly at a flower before sprinting to the next source of nectar. I'd just get into position, focus and then maybe if I was quick enough get a shot or two before it was off again. It felt like I'd wound down too soon, I should have kept myself sharp! In the end I found it easier to follow it and then look further ahead in the direction it had been taking and then station myself and wait by any of the few remaining flowers. This paid off and I correctly predicted its movements 3 times out of four and after the fourth I let it go on its way and headed back to collect the girls.



We packed up and somewhat reluctantly started for home, the peace ceased and we came out of the happy little bubble that we'd been in all afternoon. A Comma put in a final goodbye on one of the walls of the houses along the road and then we were back into normality. But what a fantastic afternoon spent with family and butterflies, they don't come much better than that! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Jan-18 01:58 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, your afternoon out sounded Ideal, obviously one to remember and with another ab to record as well 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 19-Jan-18 07:26 PM GMT

More great reports and photos Wurzel, helps to remind me what better days look like during these cold and dark recent times 😊.

**Wurzel wrote:**

... There seems to have been a noticeable shift towards Common Blues being more blue than brown over recent years – it would be interesting to find out if it is an actual shift or whether it's an artefact of people being more attracted to the blue females and so taking more photos of that form...

During my wanderings up and down the country over the past few years I have noticed the bluest females mostly further south, those up around Arnside for instance are predominately browner forms. That is very much a generalisation but possibly indicating climate change may have something to do with it.

cheers,

Neil.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Andrew555, 21-Jan-18 12:41 PM GMT

Very nice Wurzel, as the sleet falls outside this reminds me of warm great days past, and to come. 😊  
Excellent close up's, especially of the Darter. 😊

Cheers

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 21-Jan-18 10:47 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I had a quite a few family/butterfly orientated trips to remember from 2017 – it was a vintage year for me 😊  
Cheers Neil 😊 Indeed Neil – but the new season could be only 4 weeks away if like last year I manage to get a Small Tort in early February! 😊 WRT the blue female Common Blues – it would be interesting to see if that pattern holds out – it would make sense bearing in mind darker colours absorb heat more effectively and it's generally cooler in the North...Sounds like a good thesis for an Undergrad this.  
Cheers Andrew 😊 Not long now, it'll soon be shorts and T-shirt weather 😊

Have a goodun

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 26-Jan-18 12:39 PM GMT

Larkhill 26-09-2017

This was likely to be my final visit to this site in 2017; what with the nights starting to draw in, the weather starting to cool and also term time now in full swing, so I was hoping to end with a final flourish.

I started in the area round the Car Park but the patch of Golden Rod was looking all mined out and only a distant Small White lingered here amongst the Nettles. I remembered that there was a large patch of late flowering plants about half way along the Northbound path and so that was the route that I took. A few steps into my journey and a Comma appeared trying to blend in with the yellowing leaves as they started to turn to copper.



A few more steps along and a black and white flash announced the arrival of a Red Admiral, a lovely female showing the white spotting and making her a 'bialbata'. She seemed disinclined to go anywhere so I took plenty of photos before carrying on my way. Strangely she waited for me to pass by and carry on my way before she left her spot – flying over my head and then up and over the hedge. And that was it for 2017...



When I look back on the year here I'm drawn to the conclusion that it was a 'reasonable one' when reflecting on the fact that I wasn't able, for a multitude of reasons, to stop off here as much as in previous years. However when considering the species seen it was actually a pretty great year - with Greenstreak, Small blue and Dark Green Fritillary again on the year list with the excellent addition of Marsh Fritillary!





Next year a Duke or Duchess would be nice...and actually not that unthinkable...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 27-Jan-18 12:14 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, It's quite a while since I saw Marsh fritillary but at least I saw/ and have shots of them, it would be nice to see them again though. May be this year 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 27-Jan-18 05:21 PM GMT

I love seeing Commas in the spring and then the bright *Hutchinsoni* in the summer but I've always seen Commas as an autumn butterfly and I think they always look their best when perched on autumn foliage or fatten up on ripe blackberries which is why that first image is definitely the pick of the bunch

for me!

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 29-Jan-18 12:54 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 They seem to have done quite well on calcerous grass over the last couple of years, if you're down this way when they're flying I know some cracking sites for them. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 30-Jan-18 10:37 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I totally agree with you Bugboy I reckon they're at their best come September/October, they appear more vivid to my eye in an autumnal glow 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 30-Jan-18 07:04 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

Another vote for autumn Commas...I love the colour combination in your photo 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 31-Jan-18 09:12 AM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 I'd love to take credit for the colour but Nature did all the hard work 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Andrew555, 31-Jan-18 09:38 AM GMT

Great Comma shot Wurzel, beautiful colours. 😊 I also love the Marshie, a butterfly I have not yet seen, maybe this year. 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 01-Feb-18 09:48 AM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 If you take a trip back to Dorset at the right time there are some really 'easy' sites for Marshies, the 'Sites' section on this website has got some great info but if you need anymore then just PM me 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 02-Feb-18 12:05 AM GMT

February 2018

Just missed it...late as usual 😊 Hopefully not too long to wait for some of these beauties 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Feb-18 05:21 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I'm looking forward to your march calendar 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Feb-18 11:39 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Me too I can barely wait, I keep seeing a leaf caught in the wind and thinking it's a Red Admiral 😊 Hopefully this cold snap will be the last and the Small Torts will be out soon 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 06-Feb-18 08:52 AM GMT

The image on your calendar is a familiar one. My part time job is on farm premises, and at the end of March the Small Tortoiseshells emerge en-masse from the roof spaces of the out buildings, on a warm day.

Many are seen in the 'nose to tail' position as in your image, others are make for the Dandelions, the only source of nectar in the area at that time of year.

Remember last year, when we found our first Small Torts. by that rubbish heap ?.

Not long now !  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Feb-18 11:13 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Unfortunately they never seem to want to go to the next 'base' 😊😊 I do indeed remember the Small Torts from the rubbish heap – one of those made it as my 'Favourite' selection 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Feb-18 09:41 AM GMT

Stourhead 08-10-2017

After what felt like an age since my last trip out, at little over two weeks in fact 😊, we were finally on the road; picnic lunch packed, National Trust membership cards to hand and camera fully charged and ready to go. Despite a slight detour we soon arrived and bundled out of the car and through the gates. I was in a bit of a rush as the weather was quite decent for the time of year (so there was a reasonable chance of finding some butterflies) but was set to turn more cloudy throughout the course of the day and so chances of finding butterflies would diminish with the sun's warmth waning.

My wife suggested that we took the top path which then dives down through the woods coming out near the feeder pond. I was all for this as it would mean walking through the kitchen garden with its late flowers offering nectar and the walls keeping out any chilling breezes. Things weren't too good during the first part as a sneaky little bit of cloud was giving us a taste of things to come. But it finally moved off just as we were about to leave the garden and walk through. As we walked through the gate a bright orange flag looked out of place against the violet colouration of the flowers, a beautiful looking Comma. I doubted whether I would get any shots as I let K take some on her phone for her Insta-feed (whatever that is?) but luckily it seemed intent on gorging itself and after a good few minutes with it I wandered off whilst still it fed!



The wall on which the gate was hung was half way along the back wall of the stable yard buildings and extended along the rest of the length was a small border containing all manner of flowers. In spring it's a real riot of colour but now it mainly features pink and violet. Mid way along the border a small arched doorway takes you through and into the stable yard. K and I spent a while here just wandering up and down the length of the border as it was a veritable butterfly haven. As well as the Comma a Large White fed in amongst a couple of Peacocks and 11 Red Admirals (lowest count so there could have been more).







From here was carried on across the 'back garden' of the House where we found a warm bench and had lunch. Then it was on along the Avenue and cutting down through the wood until we came out by the feeder pond. While the girls played Pooh sticks at the overflow I tried to follow some of the many Dragonflies. There was what looked like a Chaser and a long bodied blue one which might have been an Emperor but these were there one second and gone the next. Even with Sports mode I didn't have much luck because not only were they fast but they also kept well back so they were distant as well, not conditions conducive to great shots - too fast and too distant. Luckily a pin-wheeling pairing of Common Darters almost fell into my lap, well landed relatively close to me, so I was rewarded for my patience.



I caught the girls up and despite a few more fly-by Red Admirals and the odd white that seemed to be it for the day and as we started back up the hill the cloud came in from the west.



As we drove for home we broke out from the cloud and all was sunny and warm again so when we pitched up at my Sister in-laws I took my camera in and we spent some time looking round not only their new house but also their new garden 😊. Up on the and now their old veggie patch was a Small White clinging to a yellow flower and looking like it was going to plummet to its doom any moment. Up at eh back was a huge patch of Ivy and on it at least four Red Admirals one of which was showing an unusual patterning on one fore wing which I think may have been caused by water damage?





After about 15 minutes I turned to make my way back to the house to be sociable only to realise that the cloud had reached us and with a shiver I headed in and so ended yet another great family/butterfly day out.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 09-Feb-18 09:36 AM GMT

Great set of shots Wurzel, that Comma is particularly nice. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Feb-18 01:45 PM GMT

WoW! Wurzel, that Comma hurts the eyes 😊 I'm not used to the Sun 😊 Lovely to see it, not long now before we see some more. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Feb-18 03:49 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 I was really lucky with that one as it chose to land on such a contrasting coloured flower 😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 and also sorry for hurting your eyes :oops: I might have to go back and edit that post to put a warning label on it 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 14-Feb-18 11:00 PM GMT

I don't think I've ever seen a Comma of red valerian like that. But, as the autumn progresses, I suppose they can't be fussy!

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 16-Feb-18 07:13 PM GMT

A great selection of autumn butterflies Wurzel, cracking shots especially the Commas 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Feb-18 08:48 PM GMT

Cheers Essex 😊 No indeed it's a bit like me at the end of a Christmas party, I'll even drink Cinzano by that stage 😊😊😊  
Cheers Neil 😊 They just sort of fell into my lap as it were 😊 I can't wait to see my first Comma of the year now 😊

Have a goodun

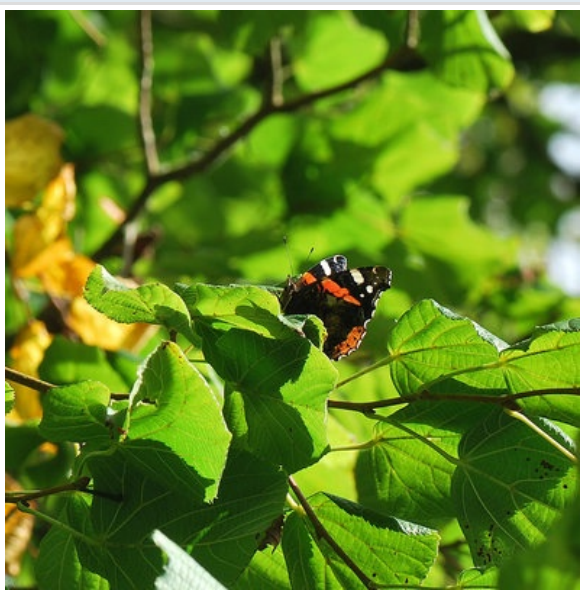
## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Feb-18 03:28 PM GMT

Stourhead 22-10-2017

We are now entering the period of the year when any butterfly sighting should be cherished as if it is the last of the season because it could well be. So it was great to see a Red Admiral on Saturday 21st bravely battling before blustery Brian (storm) outside Waitrose. As my sister in-law was down to visit on Sunday we headed to Stourhead and I took my camera though I was pretty sure that the storm would have out paid to any final butterflies. As we wandered through the damp and cool it was as if someone had decided to just turn the heating off; bang we're in Autumn proper although the occasional bursts of sun lit up the autumnal leaves and momentarily warmed my back. Another warming moment was when I spied a Red Admiral flying alongside the feeder pond: "Was that to be my last?" I wondered.

We carried on winding our way round, through the Grotto pausing outside the Fairy-tale Cottage before settling down at the Pantheon for lunch. A few Darters and an Emperor buzzed around the bank leading down to the lake and another Red Admiral did a few circuits coming tantalisingly close while I munched lunch. It even stopped awhile half way up a tree so I was able to get a few distant record shots.



Further round we went, the weak sun continuing to occasionally light up the trees but all too soon we were wending our way through the gate and making up the hill towards the Spread Eagle and beyond to the car park. I'd wandered slightly ahead and something buzzed by me and landed on the side of the steep bank. I edged in between a parked car and the bank and leant up for a few shots but I didn't climb up the bank for fear of clattering down and denting the car.

As if reading my mind the Red Admiral took off, had a bit of a fly about before settling down further along the bank and well away from the parked car. I scrambled up, held on to some weeds with one hand and clicked away with the other. Could this one be my last?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Feb-18 12:42 PM GMT

Good to see Butterflies Wurzel Autumn or Summer, makes a change from courting Birds 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 19-Feb-18 02:52 PM GMT

Lovely RA in the sun Wurzel. 😊 'Could this one be my last?' I'm guessing no. 😊

Cheers

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Feb-18 11:00 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I don't mind the bird counting...it's just that Mrs Wurzel manages to find plenty of other things for me to do 😊  
Cheers Andrew 😊 You could be right...I couldn't possibly comment...yet 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Feb-18 10:05 AM GMT

Five Rivers 25-10-2017

Making the most of the half term break I took a quick jaunt while the girls were in the pool. I started off along the Riverpath deciding to wend my way along with the slight meanders and then cut up and across to the top of the Banks. There were still leaves on the trees but they were definitely on the turn and despite this there were still sizeable patches of nettles filling in the gaps. As I examined one such patch I was delighted to find a Red Admiral hiding away, the angle of its posture making it cryptically patterned despite the glaring red epaulets.



As I watched it a second flew into view and both took off and there then ensued a multitude of frenzied attacks. One would settle just long enough for a cautious approach and a few shots before the other buzzed back in and they would fly quickly forward and back, round in a circuit before spiralling seemingly ever upwards and disappearing from view. Moments later one would alight close by and the process repeated itself. During all of this a smaller, browner butterfly also appeared. At first I thought I was seeing things and that it was just a dead leaf come to its final resting place down on the deck but I shouldn't have been quite as nonchalant as it turned out to be a Speckle which promptly took off. Luckily for me it didn't go far and I was able to get a couple of shots of this old timer before heading back to the duellists.

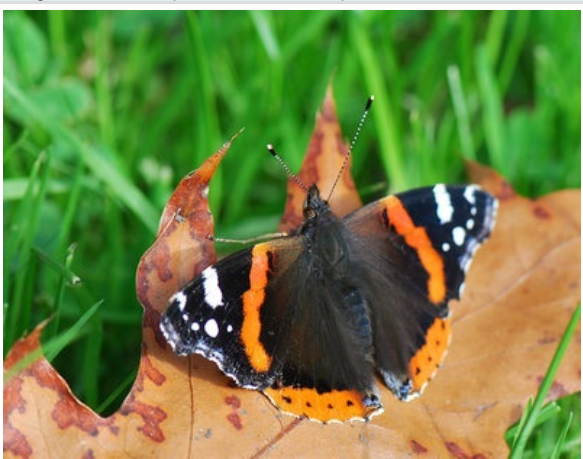




Leaving the Red Admirals squabbling I made my way over to the banks proper - with another, different pair of Red Admirals playing on the slope leading up to the Banks. It seemed that it was going to be a bit of a Red Admiral fest and the theme continued on the second Bank with a singleton and a Common Darter. I moved across to the other side of this Bank fully expecting yet more Red Admirals but instead of the now familiar dark blur a vivid lemon butterfly hove into view. It landed and I lost it from view mystified how some so bright and vivid one moment could simply disappear the minute that it closed its wings. I knew roughly where it had landed to a scanned across checking every leaf; too green, brown, wrong shape etc until I found it and crept in. I must have been out of practice because it flew again but this time laded at a lower level and in a much more obvious and convenient position amongst the foliage.



I turned to leave and on cue another Red Admiral made a pass. There was another at the turning point and that was it Red Admiral wise until I had completed my circuit and ended up back at the nettle patch where it had all begun. There was a White flying along the top of the Banks while I was walking back along the lower path - I immediately thought Large White but I put it down as 'UFW' in the end I my gut can sometimes call it incorrectly. Back at the where it had all started there were two Red Admirals still at it, though whether they were the original pairing I'm not sure but I'd like to think that they were. I was running out of time and had to get back to help with the hair-washing and drying so I was only able to grab a few shots before racing back to load up with towels, shampoo, conditioner etc.



It had been a cracking hour out in the autumnal air and as we left the car park a Specklie flew across as if to wish us farewell.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 20-Feb-18 11:09 AM GMT

A quick glance at your latest posting had me thinking you had done rather well in the recent fine weather, then I saw the Specklie and the date! 😊 . Never mind!, the hibernators will show themselves soon. At least my Butterfly withdrawal symptoms were partially cured last week. 😊

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Feb-18 10:42 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 If only that was my haul from my first day butterflying 😊 Only one more 2017 post to go and then on to the Tally 🙄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Feb-18 12:19 PM GMT

The final sightings...up to 29-10-2017

The final run-in, although I didn't know it at the time started on the Thursday of half term (26-10). We were heading off to the marvellous Riverford Farm, not the one in Devon but the Hampshire one. It was time to pick our Pumpkins, and also sample a few of the wares from all of the stalls. Whilst there I kept my eyes open, hoping for a Red Admiral to hove into view or a butterfly to be hanging out in the warmth of the Poly tunnels while we carved our carefully selected pumpkin. However this didn't come to fruition as it was surprisingly cold outside and near tropical in the Poly tunnels - any sheltering butterfly would have been cooked in its own exoskeleton! I still had a nurdle around but there wasn't much about.



We drove to another local farm where you could walk up down the rows to not just pick (select) but pick (harvest) a pumpkin. On the journey I saw at least four Red Admirals and a Comma, all good views as we slowly drove the twisting lanes but no photos unfortunately.

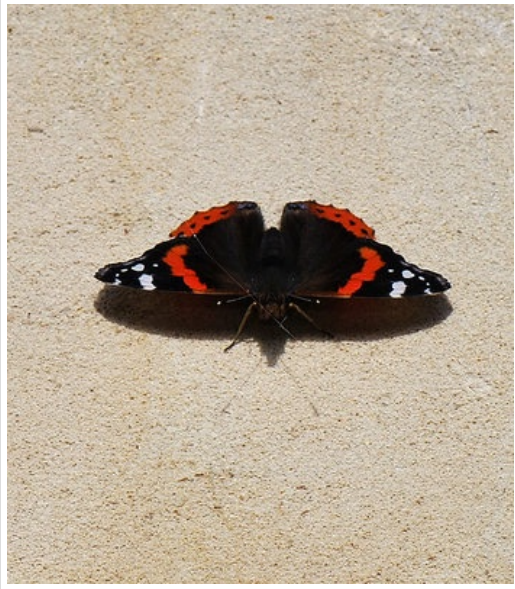
A couple of days later (28-10) we headed up to my sister in-laws and while the girls played and the rest of the family gossiped I nipped out into the garden. I headed straight to the top and the old Ivy bush but stopped before I got there as a Red Admiral was basking on the fence sticking out like a sore thumb as it contrasted heavily with the pale, old wood. It was a fat bodied/abdomen-ed female possibly looking for a final feast or somewhere to snuggle down?





The following day we took the girls on our circular walk that starts out along the Town Path, brings around and back through the Close and past the Cathedral and then home through the city. The start of the walk was pretty quiet and even the gulls were not as raucous as usual. It wasn't until we'd reached the half way point having gone through what I would have pegged as prime habitat (meadows, sheltered ivy clad walls, park land and fences at the end of huge gardens) that I saw any butterflies. I went from none to 4 or 5 in a matter of driveways. Three were pretty distant, flying close by and then bombing off once I'd worked out what they were to flit about at the bottom of the drive. The other two were slightly more accommodating. The first needed a quick 'stumble from the path' which meant that I 'accidentally' ended up on someone's driveway and hence while I was there took an additional couple of steps to 'right' myself, stretched out my camera and took a few shots. The second was even more accommodating landing in a tree in the local church's graveyard.





We completed the walk and even found time to stop of for some old fashioned sweets and so ended my butterflying for 2017. Try as I might I didn't see any more Red Admirals but I was content that I finished the year with the same species that had started it.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-Feb-18 02:31 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I only managed until the 31st Of Oct to see my last butterfly and that was in my neighbour's garden not mine, that also was a RA 😊 I usually see the Small Tortoiseshell first, my best was the 5th of March ,I don't think it'll be so early this year with the forecast for bitter cold weather although the Sun is shining lovely today, not long now though 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Feb-18 08:44 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 It's either Small Tort or Red Admiral for me, this year it was Small Tort 😊 If the forecast weather is correct then we should be in for a bumper butterfly year, fingers crossed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 24-Feb-18 04:04 PM GMT

I knew it! 😊 Very nice Wurzel.

' The first needed a quick 'stumble from the path' which meant that I 'accidentally' ended up on someone's driveway and hence while I was there took an additional couple of steps to 'right' myself, stretched out my camera and took a few shots '

Sounds perfectly reasonable. 😊👍

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Feb-18 01:22 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 There have to be some benefits to getting older and getting a bit dodery 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 25-Feb-18 05:59 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

A great round up of your years doings as always 😊. You always manage to recount your retro postings as if they happened yesterday. Thanks for brightening up those dingy winter days for the rest of us. Hopefully you wont have to wait too long until you make that first entry in your 2018 notebook. It probably wont be this coming week though, looking at the forecast 😞

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Feb-18 10:30 AM GMT

Cheers Paul 😊 I'm still working on 2017 - three more 'Tally' posts to write...and then I can think about opening 2018. I'm treating the retrospective post writing as a mental work out so I reckon this year I've 'mentally' ran several marathons 😊😊😊 I'm hoping the forecast snow/freezing cold weather will mean a bumper crop of butterflies in 2018 as a lot of species could really do with a 'good year' 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Feb-18 11:31 AM GMT

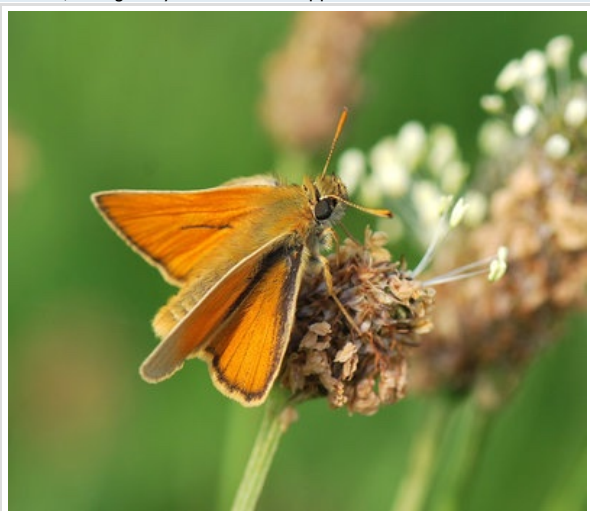
End of Year Tally 2017

It was a funny old year for me and one which the weather really played havoc with. There were cold snaps when you didn't want it just as things were getting going and baking hot days when you broiled in the sun. It felt that every time I was looking to have some time butterflying the weather was terrible; Easter in Wales - freezing and wet, May half term in Dorset - the high pressure broke and we had rain and grey for the four days we were there, August in Wales - windy and wet and not one good 'sunny all day' day the entire week and finally August in Devon - nowhere near as good as hoped for. Still you plug away at it and takes rough with the smooth, it would be nice though if there was slightly more smooth in 2018 to make up for all the rough in 2017?

The Skippers

1 Small Skipper, 17-06-2018 Wrecclesham

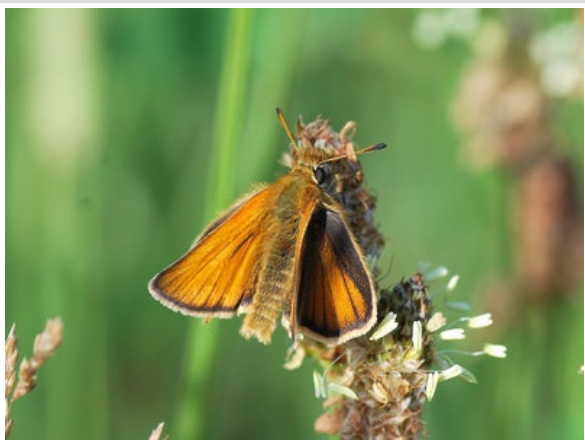
My first Small Skipper came 11 days earlier this year and was quite a surprise, at the time, finding it as I did at Wrecclesham whilst making a hopeful search for Glanvilles. However this earlier sighting is probably accounted for more by my travelling so far East. I've noticed over the years that butterflies emerge between a week and a fortnight earlier on the eastern side of the country and so this earlier sighting isn't actually that surprising and factoring this in their emergence was therefore about the same time. I was slightly worried last year as they seemed to be down in numbers but they appear to have bounced back with good numbers at all of my usual sites and Larkhill in particular was almost crawling with them and their Essex cousins; so a good year for Small Skipper.





2 Essex Skipper, 21-06-2017 Larkhill

After a later start in 2016 this year it seems like the alarm clocks were turned back to 'early' as my first Essex, from Larkhill as in 2016, came a fortnight earlier. I was even more worried about this Skipper last year than its 'Small' cousin so it was great to see clouds of them enjoying the long grasses at Larkhill. There were so many it felt like a new county, Smessex, had been formed! As well as doing well on home territory I also discovered them further afield in Dorset during a notable trip which accounted for all four golden skippers in one afternoon.





3 Lulworth Skipper, 08-07-2017 Corfe Castle

Judging whether early or late for this species is really difficult due to their protracted emergence and also because I have to travel to see it, I can't just encounter it on my way to work like I can Smessex. So even though recorded a month later this was because that was the first time I could get back to Dorset. I'd visited at the end of May but the weather then was terrible so butterflying was minimal and most species spent a week hunkered down and so I had to wait until July before taking the road trip to see them. It was worth the wait as I was handed my easiest year tick; literally spotting it as I got out of the car, four or five steps across the car park and then 'click, click'. There were probably about 10 or so on the very steep banks of the Corfe Castle car park and most were quite old so they must have been out a good while here. Later that same day at Durlston they were all over the place, in the little picnic area, along the coastal path and in amongst the tor grasses and short cropped turf. It was great to see so many and some still in excellent condition. Because of this I reckon they had a better year this year than last but might not be out of the woods yet...



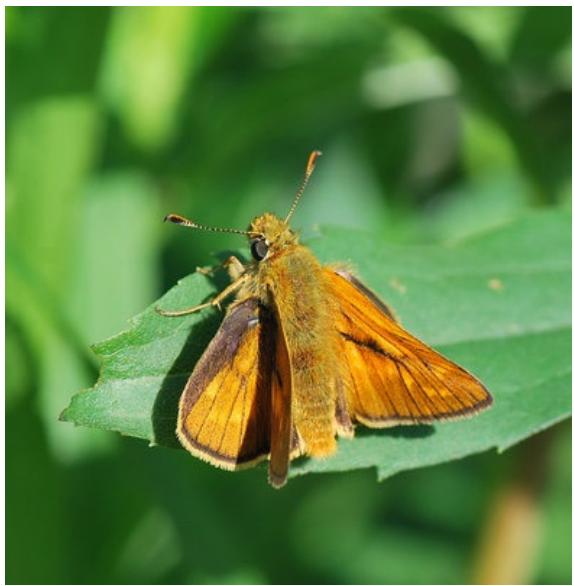
4 Silver Spotted Skipper, 24-07-2017 Broughton Down

I found this species 5 days earlier this year than last at the ever reliable Broughton Down. However this earlier visit meant that they weren't as numerous as last year which I hope was down to them not reaching their peak rather than a decline in numbers? The highlight for me with this species came after my annual visit to Broughton Down. I was checking out Shipton for the second time hoping to find some more Brostreaks and I was checking out the area near the hotspot hedge. In amongst a few blues there was something flying faster and more erratically, veering off at acute angles and disappearing momentarily from view. Eventually I managed to track it down thinking it might some type of moth but it was actually a Silver-spot, a species I not encountered or expected to encounter here before. So something to check up on next year - was this a one off last wanderer or is there a colony here or near-about?



5 Large Skipper, 31-05-2017 Middle Street

Only two days later this year than last and from a different site. So a similar start for this species in 2017 and unfortunately the similarity continued when considering the actual numbers. There were many fewer than I can recall from various sites over the last few years apart from last year when I noticed a decline. This year there were probably a few fewer still actually though I don't know how they fared nationally? It comes to something when I only saw two females all year - one at Durlston and one in Oxford. Where were they? Did the stop-start and fitful spring mess up their emergence? Fingers crossed that 2018 us a bounce back year like 2017 was for the Smessex.





6 Dingy Skipper, 22-04-2017 Duke Site

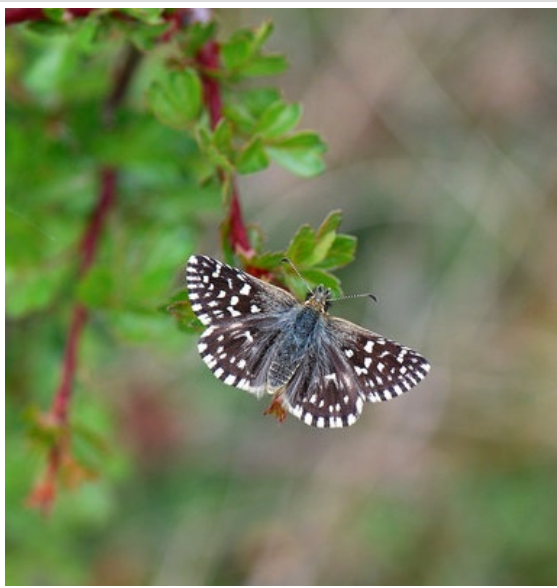
A whole eight days earlier this year and also seen on the same day as my first Grizzlie at my Duke site. Both sightings might actually have been a first for the county. Number wise despite not seeing them at either Bentley Wood or Larkhill they seemed to have fared a little better this year as the places where I did find them they certainly put in a better showing. I also managed to get to Martin Down properly this year and they were showing really well along the Dyke. There were a few highlights with this species; my first mating pair, one stealing my coffee at The Hill but the one that topped the lot was finding a second brood Dingy at Shipton in August whilst searching for Brostreaks. All the other enthusiasts present strangely didn't seem that interested, they didn't even break from their fourth rotation of photographing the same female Brostreak to see this, in my mind, star attraction...





7 Grizzled Skipper, 22-04-2017 Duke Site

As mentioned above I saw my first Grizzlie on the same day as m first Dingy just like last year however the Grizzlie came first...by 23 minutes! I found it interesting that they seemed to prefer slightly different habitat at this site - with the Grizzlie on the shorter turf that bedecked the slopes of the Iron Age fort whilst the Dingy preferred the rockier slopes where the vegetation is patchier and alternates between really short springy turf and tussocks of Cooch grass. Over the season the Grizzlie seemed to hold its own compared to last year so hopefully that will continue into 2018 though it would be nice to see it across a greater range of sites next year.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-Feb-18 01:30 PM GMT



Lovely shots of all the Skipper's Wurzel, I really envy your Grizzled Skipper though 🍷🍷 I've not seen it yet or the Lulworth Skipper, I really would like, this year, to find both and the Glanville Frit, also the Large Blue, it would be great if I could find the right time of year to combine all four not having seen any of them. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Feb-18 10:39 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Getting all four could be tricky...three could be doable the Grizzlie would be the biggest stumbling block though you might be able to get one and an early Lulworth (best bet for early Lulworths is Lulworth Cove itself, Durlston is later). You could try the Isle of Wight for a late Glanville, then drive onto Lulworth Cove for Lulworths before finishing up at either Collard Hill or Daneways for Large Blue...difficult but doable! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Mar-18 09:07 AM GMT

March 2018

Wouldn't have thought I'd be posting this whilst wrapped up in a duvet with snow and polar winds blowing outside 😬 Oh well it'll come right 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 01-Mar-18 02:43 PM GMT

I also have to say that those two Grizzled Skipper images are superb. They can be tricky little devils, never been able to keep track of one in the air. The Tilshead site is excellent for them ( and Dingy's ).

Your turn to shiver tonight ! 😬

Take care,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 01-Mar-18 06:52 PM GMT

Great Skipper images, Wurzel, just right to warm the cockles. I do particularly like that last Grizzly as well.

Keep warm!

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Mar-18 09:44 AM GMT

At last Wurzel, the calendar I've been waiting for 😊 pity the weather doesn't agree. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 02-Mar-18 10:45 AM GMT

An interesting read Wurzel, and some great shots. 😊 I like the Small Skips particularly. 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 02-Mar-18 07:21 PM GMT

Great round up of the skippers and some interesting comments, looking forward to the next installment 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Mar-18 05:45 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I was pretty chuffed with those Grizzlies 😊 They can be a nightmare to follow as all of a sudden they'll pull a veering 180 😊 The Snow was quite a few extra days off 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 That was one of my Faves as well, glad the photos came in useful during this cold snap, I hope your cockles are toasty 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Fingers crossed the weather will rapidly catch-up 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 It was a good year for them so picking the shots was tricky 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Next installment (Whites) is written and will be posted soon... 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

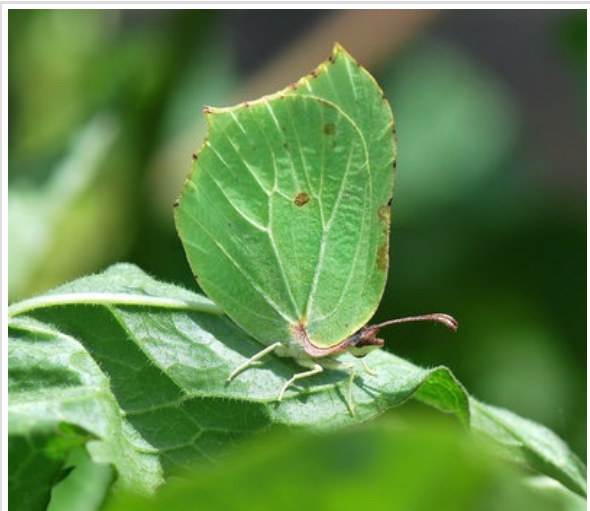
by Wurzel, 09-Mar-18 08:26 AM GMT

### The Whites



8 Brimstone, 09-03-2017 Pewsey Vale

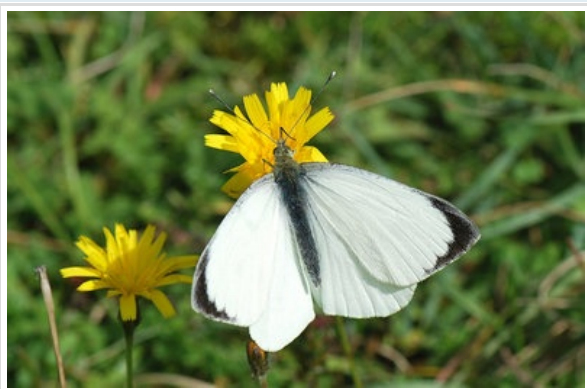
I saw my first Brimstone 2 days earlier this year. The first one of the season is always a joy to behold because it is generally in the first 'real' sun of the year when the butterflies glow vividly, burning into your retina at the gloom and grey of winters end. I often struggle when considering this species as they are so ubiquitous and widespread turning up in almost all of the sites and habitats that I visit. In fact they often 'save the day' as it were, turning up in places where I wouldn't have expected butterflies to be or when I've not seen anything much. Always they add a bit of colour so often making up for the lack of other butterflies, a case of quality rather than quantity. The same struggle occurred for me this year and so going with my gut feeling I reckon no more, no less...One thing I was able to notice was that I saw plenty of them with little streaks/dashes regularly placed on the hind wing underside - a named aberration? Whether this was because of genetic drift or just because I was subconsciously looking out for this aberration/patterning I'm not sure?





9 Large White, 02-04-2017 Kingston Lacey

The problem with doing this tally is that I often forget what happened the year before so spotting trends means trawling back through old posts either on UKB or on a hard drive. And so it was for this species. From my retrospective research I found that 2016 had been a good year which meant that they'd fared slightly worse this year. There were fewer for definite in the first brood but over subsequent broods they picked up and on occasion they could be considered 'numerous', for example the flower bed at Kingston Lacey in August held more Large Whites than Brimstones with four feeding from one large flower at once. I was still seeing them right through to the end of October so perhaps others concerns about their numbers were an artefact of their spread emergence? Oh and they were 18 days earlier so was this a factor in their success?



10 Small White, 25-03-2017 Middle Street

"Where were they?" This is the one thing I can recall really clearly about the Small White in 2017. I did see my first 3 weeks earlier than last year over at Middle Street but across Spring I saw only a few (maybe 4?) others and it didn't get much better with the later broods. I'd be driving home and they just weren't flopping all over the place like they have in previous years. The hedgerows seemed strangely quiet and bereft of activity due to their absence. I'm hoping that this was just a blip, a bust year which will then be followed by a boom and recovery like it's larger cousin - fingers crossed.



11 Green-veined White, 06-04-2017 Enford

A massive 23 days earlier this year! What climatic factors caused this I wonder and also did it account for why the first brood also seemed down numbers wise? Was the gradual, protracted emergence the cause for me seeing the odd one or two at a time early in the season? Things did pick up later in the year, perhaps because their emergences were more aligned but I never thought 'wow what a lot of Green-veined Whites!' One thing I did notice was that the females in the first part of the season were particularly heavily marked; much more than I've encountered before. In fact they could almost have been 'Green-veined Greys'.



12 Orange-tip, 01-04-2017 Five Rivers

Over two weeks earlier this year than in 2016 with my first coming from Five Rivers and it was unexpectedly a female. Also they lasted really well; my last photographed OT came from a trip to my Marshie site on 21st May and a fly-by on 2nd June was my final sighting giving them a flight period of at least 8 weeks and that's not even taking into consideration the fact that I was still a few weeks behind sites further East with my first sighting.

I reckon that 2017 was even better for Orange-tips than 2016 as I encountered them at almost every site I visited and this seemed to be echoed nationally. There were some really memorable moments from this season; that first unexpected female and then the bright, vivid orange of my first males wing tips being such a delight to see after the drabness of winter, watching the interplay between several males at Vera Jones Mill and the failed courtship that I witnessed in Wales. Mind you they're still on the hit list for an 'in cop' shot, maybe next year...Part of the reason I think was that despite conditions generally being dry and bright through April the temperatures seemed to be below average and so the Orange-tips would fly but they weren't quite as solar charged as usual and an close approach was possible more times than in 'normal' years.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 09-Mar-18 12:21 PM GMT

At a first glance, I thought 'Wow, things are starting early around you'. Still, it's a good reminder of what we should be seeing quite soon. I also visited your 'World of Wurzel' site – splendid photos on there, too 😊

I trust that recent events in Salisbury have not affected you too much. Let's hope a fuller picture emerges soon and that those directly affected manage to pull through.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Mar-18 02:16 PM GMT

Lovely Butterflies Wurzel, unlike you we had loads of Small and Large Whites last year, they started in March and seemed to carry on through the year, I saw quite a lot in the Dunes at Southport which I thought unusual at the time because of the the cold breezes that often arrive there, ( Southport is noted for being windy) What we didn't see a lot of in Spring was Small Tort's, they made up for that in September though 😊  
It's just like Spring today , the Snow's gone, it's much milder, all systems go now 😊 I second Mike in hoping every thing 's alright in your part of the world, take care. Goldie 🙏

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 09-Mar-18 05:20 PM GMT

It's always interesting to compare your yearly assessments with my own memories and photographic 'notes'. My 2017 for Large and Small Whites is pretty much visa versa to what you saw with Large Whites practically non existent all season whereas Small Whites were relatively numerous (although by no means as plentiful as other seasons.)

My first OT was also a female, seen on the 3rd of April (my last sighting was a male on the 3rd of June, although that was in the west of Ireland where I imagine the flight period would naturally be a little later than south east England)

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Mar-18 03:47 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 The website is a bit of a work in progress and there's still some things to do but it's "happy work" 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Perhaps the Small Whites ave moved East and North Goldie? If they have I hope they're replaced by Southern Small Whites and Bath Whites 😊😊

With regards to recent developments Mike and Goldie it's been mildly annoying and interesting round here recently. I don't know which is worse – nerve agent being used on foreign nationals seeking asylum or my access to the library and Tescos for Trooper (Iron Maiden) Ale being restricted 😊😊  
Hopefully those affected will recover. 🙏

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Perhaps it's a West/East thing – there do seem to be some regional differences for example Dave Miller always seems to be between a week and a half or two weeks ahead of my sightings once things get going proper 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 11-Mar-18 08:41 PM GMT

At least ' the hill ' is a safe distance from Salisbury !.

Also the ale situation does sound serious.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 12-Mar-18 04:48 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, has regards to the Grizzled Skipper we posted about, i'll be down in Kent over Easter and may be we'll be down for a couple of weeks leading into April, may be this is too soon for the Grizzled Skipper, what do think 🤔 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 13-Mar-18 04:24 PM GMT

Lovely Whites Wurzel. 😊 You do get some great shots of butterflies on flowers. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Mar-18 12:26 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Tell me about it I haven't been able to get a bottle of Trooper all week 🙄 Fingers crossed it'll get sorted soon or I might have to drink another type of beer 🙄😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 My earliest record for Grizzlies is 17th April but they do seem to emerge slightly earlier in the East of the country so you might be lucky. Check the local branch website before you go plus you might be able to contact one of the county team who could give you a heads up 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Mar-18 09:22 AM GMT

Sorry Andrew somehow missed your reply – I had a lot of catching up to do and it was getting pretty late when I was 😊

Cheers though, there isn't really a trick to photographing butterflies on 'showy flowers' it's just luck and always taking my camera out on family trips to National Trust gardens and the like 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 15-Mar-18 12:20 PM GMT

Thanks Wurzel, I'll take my lap top with me and see what's happening when I get to Kent 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Mar-18 01:23 PM GMT

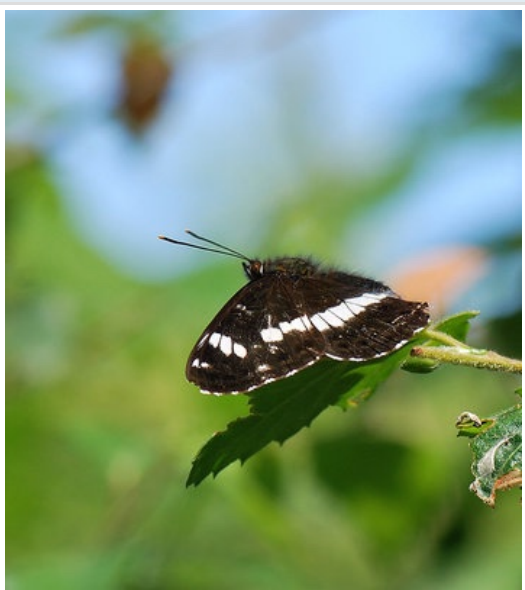
Cheers Goldie 😊 Fingers crossed...if we can finally get to spring then hopefully things will happen rapidly so you'll have a better chance of spying your quarry. 😊

The "Aristocrats"



13 White Admiral, 17-06-2018 East Blean

I found my first White Admirals at East Blean this year while seeking out Heath Frits. They were 15 days earlier here compared to last year but I reckon that that would have been because I'd travelled East where most species are regularly out a week to a fortnight earlier anyway. They were certainly not in short supply at East Blean and I reckon Philzoid and I came across at least 5 'territories'. It seemed that each cleared section had its own White Admiral sentry present. This was great news for me as I could fill me boots photographing a species which was very elusive last year. I also found them at Bentley Wood and they were in better numbers there so a good White Admiral year from my standpoint, which makes a nice change.



14 Purple Emperor, 02-07-2018 Bentley Wood

This was the second year of my usual three year cycle and so I wasn't surprised when I wasn't able to get any photos of this species - next year however it'll be a different story. I was further unsurprised as the Emperors were out very early this year, so early in fact that I almost missed them. My first came 15 days earlier and even then they'd been around for a while as the one I saw was a fussy female intent on checking out Sallows rather than a salt taking grounded male. Their early arrival was probably due to the mini-heatwave we experienced at the end of June and into July and it made it even trickier for me to see them as there was so much going on at work and with various other species emerged or emerging. As I only saw the one it's difficult to comment on numbers but I have a suspicion that most sites (barring Kneppworth Estate) didn't live up to their former glory, Fermyn for



instance seemed quite quiet this year?

#### 15 Red Admiral, 07-02-2017 Work

A whole 3 months and 8 days earlier this year, my first butterfly of the year and possibly the first for the county. I'm never sure if my records are county firsts until the annual report comes out as some people like to hold onto their reports and post their sightings my later in the year - shocking behaviour I know! WINK So a great start for me with this species. Then they started playing really hard to get. I'd see them regularly but I wasn't able to get a shot of one until almost the end of April. Right from the start they seemed to be doing really well and I saw them all over the place, in good numbers right the way through until my final sighting at the end of October. Hopefully this will bode well for sightings next year if the multitudes can either migrate south to breed or hibernate undisturbed here.



#### 16 Painted Lady, 31-05-2017 Middle Street

My first Painted Lady came 3 days earlier this year and from Middle Street. It flew from one side of the reserve to the other, flowing the watercourse as if it was a motorway. My second came from Bentley Wood for the second time over my records. This one was a little beaten, the odd tear in the wing, the colours faded so it was probably the vanguard of the invasion. The invasion itself was actually more of a raiding party and I saw only 2 more over the rest of the season. Both of these were brighter, bolder and busy feeding frenetically possibly ready for a return journey (as these were probably 'home grown'), well not really a return journey but you get my gist.

So not exactly a vintage year for the Painted ones. The highlight for me came with the third individual I saw as it bore a few blue spots in the submarginal band.



17 Small Tortoiseshell, 17-02-2017 Pewsey Vale

My first came during a break from my holiday revision class and I like to think of it as compensation for having to work on my Birthday. It was almost a month early and a possible county first? During the rest of the spring the Small Tort populations at Five Rivers, Middle Street and the small path behind the school were burgeoning as ever with boundless Small Torts, with 14 seen in a brief 10 minute break.

Later in the season they seemed to dwindle and whilst I saw reasonable numbers at Larkhill they were fewer and further between at my 'later' sites. I'm hoping this doesn't bode ill for the start of this season and it was just down to not paying them much attention rather than a continuation of their decline?



18 Peacock, 13-03-2017 Pewsey Vale

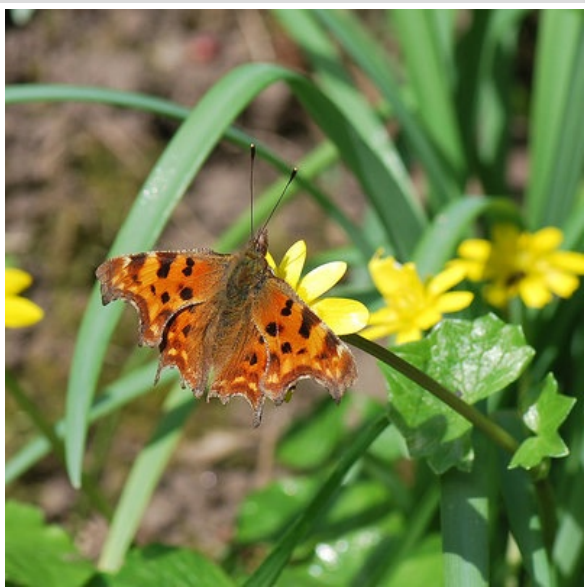
Not quite as early as other Aristos but still a respectable 8 days more prompt. There's not an awful lot to say really about this species. Once it arrived it did so in good numbers, not quite as good as the Small Torts but possibly catching them up (though the Small Torts were still dominate at work, on the small path behind the school). It also mirrored the Small Tort pattern in that after a large spring surge later sightings dropped off, though less noticeably than the Small Torts.





19 Comma, 11-03-2017 Five Rivers

It was almost a Comma spring as there were reports coming in thick and fast and my first was 10 days early this year. They were very numerous in their first brood in particular and I went from seeing one or two at Five Rivers and Middle Street to four or five instead. This good showing carried on right through the year including into the autumn, when I feel that they look their best. It was interesting to see this species increase its numbers so strongly whilst the Small Tort saw a drop - is this due to the natural cycle of parasitic attack affecting on so it goes into a 'bust' year while the Comma was 'booming' or own to something climatic and a continuation of the Commas rise?





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-Mar-18 10:32 AM GMT

Lovely Butterflies Wurzel, makes you long to see them again, maybe in another week or so.Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 16-Mar-18 04:47 PM GMT

No problem m8. 😊 A beautiful selection, love the Lady. 😊  
Zero luck so far for me with Emperors, just the odd high flyer. 😊 Maybe this year. 😊

Cheers

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 16-Mar-18 09:02 PM GMT

Another great roundup from your season last year Wurzel 😊

Interesting to note the similarities and differences compared to my patch.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Mar-18 07:46 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I have started my 2018 Tally now, I'm on Small Tort 1 seen, Peacock 2 both photographed 😊 Whilst this is great it's also really

frustrating as normally I'm on about 5-6 species by now 😞

Cheers Andrew 😊 Hopefully you'll have better luck than me as I seem to be able to see them every year but I'm stuck in this three year cycle when it comes to getting shots 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Mar-18 02:58 PM GMT

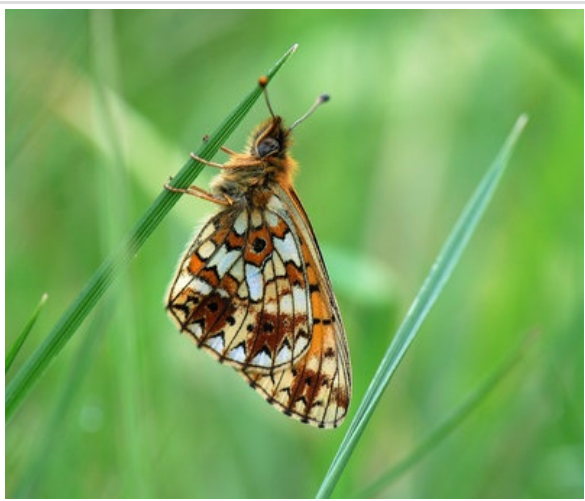
Cheers Neil 😊 Time is slipping by so I better get on and catch-up, only more rapidly 😊😊

### Fritillaries



20 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 21-05-2017 Bentley Wood

A trip to Bentley Wood earlier than last year saw me getting onto my first Small Pearl of the year. It was a beauty; first hanging from the moor grass like a chequered flag, then opening up for a topside view before piratically orientating itself to bask meaning I could get a brill double page spread of a shot. It stayed like this for an age, even long enough for Philzoid to arrive, set up and get some similar shots. Brill! Or was it? Despite the stunning butterfly it was a one man show...A visit a fortnight later and there were more but they were still thin on the ground with a maximum count of 5. This is better than my singleton last from 2016 but is still down on what I used to see. It's slightly frustrating that in other parts of the country they're being re-introduced whilst here, with an extant population seemingly they're left to dwindle to nothing. I only hope they don't go the same way as the Bentley Wood High Browns... 😞





21 Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 23-04-2017 Bentley Wood

In 2017 the Pearl-bordered Fritillary lived up to its old name of April Fritillary. My first was just over a fortnight earlier this year though as I was onto a joint second for the county (and first record from the Eastern Clearing) this 'early emergence' was probably about a week earlier in actual fact. Again there was divide between the East and the West with the Pearls from Sussex coming out about a week/week and half earlier than those over here in Wiltshire/Hampshire.

Compared to last year they seemed to hold their own. Initially I was slightly concerned as I only found one but it was my first visit and the first and joint second records all came from different parts of the wood. This one was a real cracker but unfortunately it didn't show any tendencies towards melanism. In fact none of the Pearls I saw seemed 'darker', hopefully the genes are recessive and they're still sloshing about somewhere in the gene pool just waiting for the right coupling so they can be expressed.

There were reasonable numbers on my second visit with probably about 6 to 7 in the Eastern Clearing and also still a couple knocking around 5-6 weeks later when looking for their smaller cousins. So despite the poor state of repair of the 'Clearing' the Pearls seemed to have a reasonable year. Hopefully though something can be done about the 'Clearing', like actually coppicing/clearing it, for the sake of both of the Pearls.





22 Dark Green Fritillary, 02-07-2018 Bentley Wood

From woe and concern to better news – that's the way it seems for DGFs. They, unlike a lot of their kin, had a bit of a lie-in with my first coming 6 days later this year. What got me thinking to the fact that they did okay was that my first came from Bentley Wood, something I don't always see. I also saw them again at Larkhill and it seems that I've found their preferred spot as they were in the best numbers that I've seen them at here (Stop Press – the MOD have now blocked access to the little stop-off point). Both things point to them doing well as well as previously and the final pint in support of this viewpoint was that I saw them in a wide range of sites; Bentley, Larkhill, Martin Down, Durlston and they were still going strong at Broughton Down later in their flight.







23 Silver-washed Fritillary, 02-07-2018 Bentley Wood

The same trip that saw my first PE, PH, WLH, DGF also yielded my first Silver-washed of the year. I'd walked the girls about 30 metres along the path from the car park to the cross roads only to be stopped in my tracks by a valesina. What a cracking way to start the SWF tally! As I continued around Bentley they felt slightly more numerous than last year although it's difficult to totally convinced as I only made the one visit. They weren't buzzing around bothering each other every 30 steps or so as in days of yore (well 5-6 years ago) but neither was it a struggle to see them as in 2016. So I would give them a tentative thumbs up. I also saw them in some unusual places; the flower border at Kingston Lacey, in one of the small picnic fields at Durlston and also on Buddleia at Pennywell Farm in Devon well into late August. All good signs that things are looking more positive for the SWF.



24 Marsh Fritillary, 10-05-2017 Larkhill

I had a really good season with this species with three definite highlights the first of which was the fact that my first sighting came from Larkhill. My first came five days earlier than last year but they'd been mentioned on the Website from the weekend previous. I decided I needed a break from work and also I wanted to salve my feelings of envy as I knew that on the same day various UKBers were visiting the Hill in near perfect weather conditions. I couldn't believe it though when my five minutes stop-off produced my first Marshie of the year as well as my first for this site! Highlight number two was the seeing them all the way along Bokerley Dyke at Martin Down. A few years back the local Branch didn't want them recorded from here and if they were mentioned at all it was from 'a Hampshire site', very cloak and dagger. It seems to have worked though as on a visit I started by seeing my 'second' of the year, then my third etc etc until in the end I lost count. So now I have two decent sites for this species about thirty minutes from home.

The final highlight was the fact that the increase in numbers was also noticeable at the Hill suggesting that Marshies had a good year this year, perhaps last year was a slight 'Bust' and now we're back on track for a 'Boom'? It started a bit disconcertingly with 5 seen but then a few days later despite many pairs of eyes on site only one was found. It didn't seem to get much better as there weren't any more records on the Branch sightings board. I then

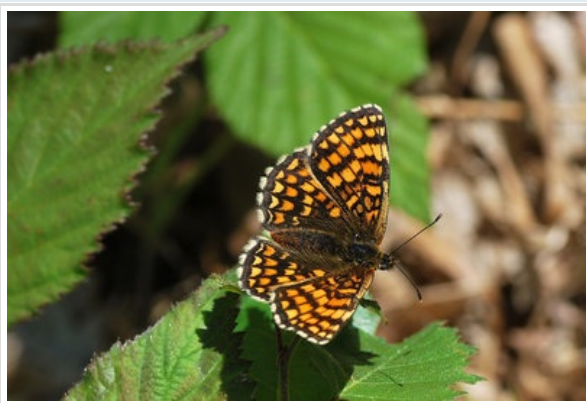
discovered the Facebook page and the sightings from there seemed slightly better so when Philzoid and I went they were all over the Hill. They were back on track for definite after a slight blip last year. There were also good numbers recorded from sites all along the valley and across the Plain as well to further back this feeling up.



25 Heath Frit, 17-06-2018 East Blean

It seems that I am destined not to see Heaths and Glanvilles in the same year and so after Glanvilles in 2016, 2017 was the year for Heaths! My first visit fell 3 days later than in 2015 but as this was only the second time I'd seen this species I'm not confident enough to comment on any emergence

patterns. However one thing that was very clear = they were certainly more numerous and much wider ranging. When I saw last there were the odd one or two in the scallop near the car park and then good numbers in one small cleared patch and that was it. This time there were more in the car park and again the first scallop which had been cleared more extensively along with various other cleared areas. Always less numerous than when I saw them the first time but when added together producing a much bigger total. This time getting the underwing was a bit of a bugger as it was so warm that not only were they more active but they always seemed to land wings open. But that was fine by me as I'm so unused to seeing them each one was novel.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Mar-18 08:31 PM GMT

Fantastic Fritillaries Wurzel 🍷🍷 and you've started your count already , lucky so and so 😊 No chance here, ice and bitter cold winds here, too cold for walks or any thing, even the birds are hiding. UGH! We just finished repairing the fence when the second lot arrived. any way I'm not too bothered I'm looking forward to seeing them eventually, I'm just wondering if this severe weather will affect them in some way. May be I'll see Butterflies in Blean Woods in a weeks time ( hope fully ) Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 20-Mar-18 09:13 AM GMT

Brilliant images in your Fritillary roundup.

I have found that 20th May is the magic date for the Marsh Fritillary. As I was local to ' the hill ' last year I went looking on several days prior to the 20th, and found only one.

As for East Blean, we were a little late for pristine Heaths, but a disappointing day turned into a brilliant one when a Purple Hairstreak displayed for us.

And for Pearls, it is hard to believe that they should be on the wing in about four weeks time, as we battle arctic winds, and, for some, deep snow.

Hopefully Spring has been delayed, not cancelled !.  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 20-Mar-18 11:36 AM GMT

Some beautiful images Wurzel, really lovely. 🍷

I'd heard of Bentley wood but wasn't aware of it's exact location. Now I see it's not far from Salisbury, a visit is defiantly possible this spring, any tips you could offer would be much appreciated. 😊

Cheers

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Mar-18 11:57 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully the Beast from the East mk3 will be a damp squib like most later sequels or even better doesn't turn up at all 😊 Hope you get into the butterflies soon 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 That's when I usually start looking but this year who knows? 😊 Hopefully when/if spring arrives we'll be knee deep in butterflies 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I'll try and send you. PM over the weekend but in the meantime check out Alan Thornbury's website as the site guide is really good 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Mar-18 03:29 PM GMT

The website you want Andrew is:

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

The best area for Fritillaries is the Eastern Clearing...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Andrew555, 22-Mar-18 05:07 PM GMT

Much appreciated Wurzel. 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 23-Mar-18 12:02 PM GMT

Browns



This is when things get difficult as the majority of these species are very numerous and so estimating/counting/commenting on their numbers is often down to a hunch or gut feeling unless there is a drastic change in their circumstances.

26 Speckled Wood, 01-04-2017 Five Rivers

The Speckle I saw first was a whole month early this year and it came from Fie Rivers where it was flying around the outskirts of the copse (so more of a Speckled Spinney...) that follows the water course. Overall I felt they did quite well this year though the patchy weather meant that I noticed gaps when they were absent. Normally once I've seen one I see them throughout but not so this year. Their final showing was probably when they were strongest and they were my penultimate species of 2017, my final Speckle being seen in late October. Hopefully they will be one of the big beneficiaries of the 'Beast from the East'...



27 Wall, 21-05-2017 Marshie Site

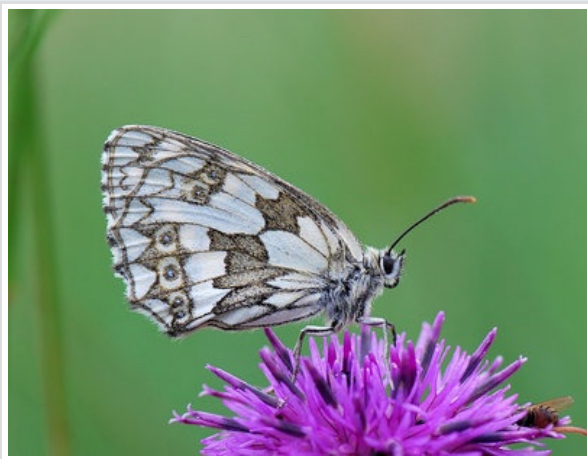
Two. That's the number I'll associate with Wall Browns in 2017. Two was the number of weeks that they were early. Two was the number of sites that I saw them at. Two is the minimum number I saw at both sites. For me this wasn't exactly a vintage year but it was certainly better than 2016. I even managed shots of most, if not all of the individuals seen, including some real close ups from the excellent site Trevor 'discovered'. Others too seemed to be finding them in good numbers particularly the later brood. Even though I couldn't match their plethora of Walls I was still chuffed with my meagre haul as both sites are 'non-coastal' which is something of an oddity nowadays.

NB. Having written this and being happy with the prose I suddenly remembered that I saw one at Durlston - so my whole two thing and non-coastal goes out of the window - that's the problem with writing off the cuff from memory 😊 better start making notes next year...



28 Marbled White, 15-06-2017 Larkhill

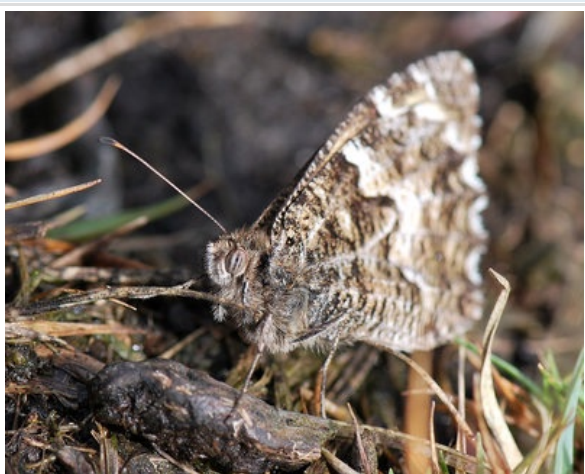
This is one of those unfortunate species. I eagerly await them each year but then with a few shots in the bag I start to concentrate on other species. This is because when they emerge so to do a whole host of other species at roughly the same time in rapid succession - Ringlets and Meadow Browns, Hedgies and woodland specialists aren't far behind and then there are the golden skippers and Large Blues as well etc. That being said it felt a bit 'blink and you'll miss them' this year and three weeks into their flight, after arriving 6 days earlier, I stopped noticing them. Whilst they were still on my radar they were still about at the usual range of sites but I had a feeling that they were slightly down on last year.

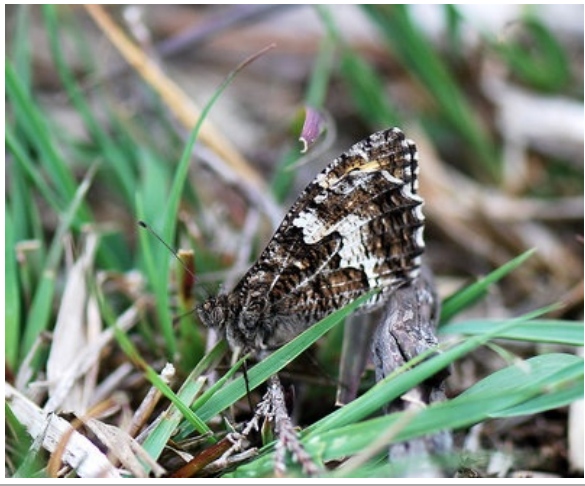


29 Grayling, 23-07-2017 Godshill

I finally saw my Grayling at the ever reliable Godshill on exactly the same day as last year. As is oft the way as I set off across the car park it was sunny but by the time I'd reached the 'triangle' hotspot the sun had all but disappeared to be replaced with intermittent rain and drizzle. Yet still the Grayling showed and they put in a reasonable showing despite the weather which made me think that they were actually having a good year here as I was seeing similar numbers to last year even though there would have been plenty of others sitting out the rain.

In previous years I've seen them in a range of tones from creams to browns, greys to jet black. This year I saw them I saw my first two toner hunkering down in the heather within the triangle. I was only able to get back to Dorset once during their flight and missed them at Durlston but I reckon a 5 minute stop on the Heaths during the return journey would have yielded some. Also I wonder if they're about in West Wales? Something to investigate next season.





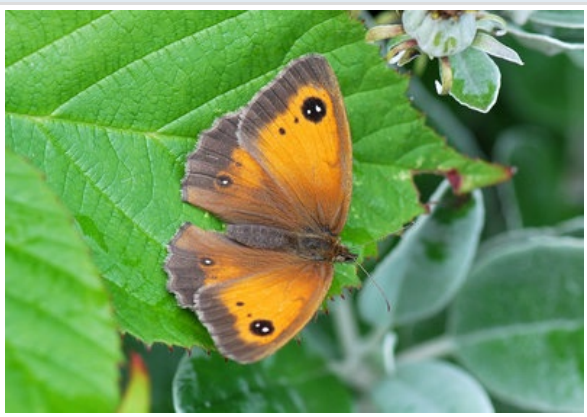
30 Hedge Brown/Gatekeeper, 02-07-2017 Bentley Wood

Hedge Browns had a variable year I feel. They were 10 days earlier this year, my first sighting coming from Bentley Wood, but they didn't seem to be abounding. I'd go to Larkhill and they'd be up on previous years but at Bentley and The Devenish they were down. Then I visited 'The Lane' in Wales and they were doing well. Back at Shipton and they were down before a final visit to Devon where there was a good smattering. Averaging this out they probably had a reasonable year. I just wish they'd had a great one.

The Lane again threw up a fantastic range of variation; male and female excessa, a male with only one pupil in the fore wing 'eye' and a striking individual with white streaks rather than spots on its underwing. It looked like the paint had run when it came out of the chrysalis.





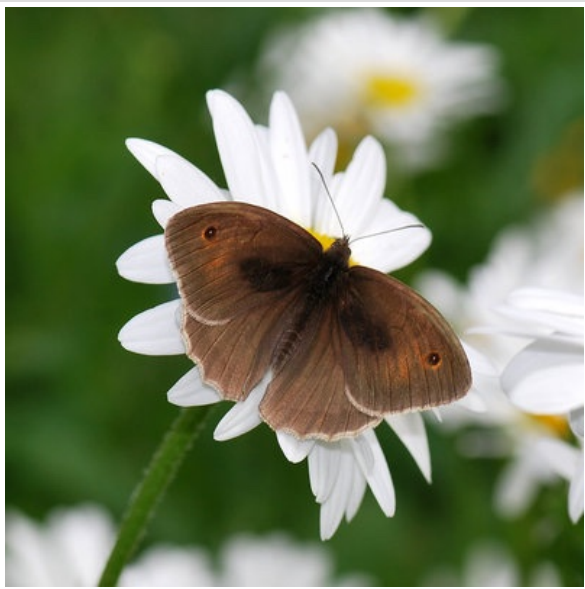


31 Meadow Brown, 28-05-2017 Swanage.

The great run of weather that we enjoyed in early May finally broke the very evening we pitched up down at Downshay. This may have accounted for why the Meadow Browns were 10 days later - perhaps the too hot weather had kept them in their cocoons? Or it could have been that by normal

standards they were early but last year they were even earlier?

They came quickly and their numbers build rapidly appearing to do better than in 2016. But then they seemed to disappear even more quickly than how they'd arrived. I did see a few stragglers into September but nowhere near similar to what I've encountered before.





32 Small Heath, 02-05-2017 Duke Site

Normally people offer 'good news' to counter bad news but I don't think I can so let's get this over with... Twelve days earlier. Seen in usual sites. Even fewer in number 😞 . Moving on...



33 Ringlet, 13-06-2017 Larkhill

This species was 8 days earlier this year and again put in a very good showing so had a good year (perhaps this is the good news to counter the bad Small Heath news?). That being said there's not much else to comment on - apart from the unusually high numbers of 'arete/blind Ringlet' records that I saw posted on UK Butterflies. I myself saw 2 this year and a lot of other enthusiasts also featured them in their posts and in the 'Favourite Photo of...' thread. This could just be down to human nature; that collector desire in us that covets the unusual above the ordinary BUT in order for us to focus our efforts on the oddities they have to actually be there...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-Mar-18 05:05 PM GMT

Cracking shots of the Wall Wurzel especially the close up shot 📷 I love the Marble White on the purple flower has well, lovely shot, milder here but still a cold wind. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 23-Mar-18 07:43 PM GMT

Great stuff, Wurzel. I am hoping to be at the Bell in time for the Spring brood Walls. I will of course tip you off if i'm lucky.

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 23-Mar-18 08:02 PM GMT

Some more great roundups Wurzel 😊 fascinating reading about your impressions of how the various species fared. Your Specklie first sighting date stands out particularly to me, early April would be about average for my first of these, usually in my garden.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Mar-18 09:26 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I was chuffed with those ones too, seems like ages until we'll be seeing these species again 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Looking forward to the tip off and some 'easy' Walls 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Sometimes the difference comes down to where I'm visiting. The strange thing is that this time last year there were a whole range of species flying – this has been a dire spring by comparison as all other years I've seen 5 species by now 😞

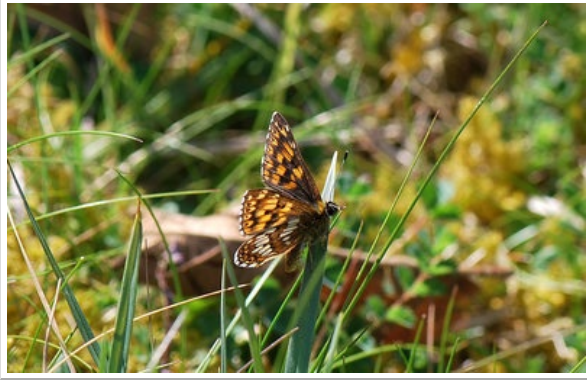
Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Mar-18 10:09 AM GMT

### The Metalmarks

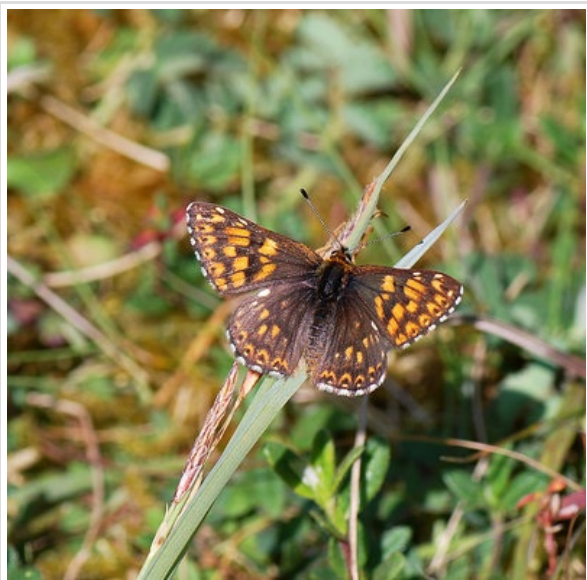


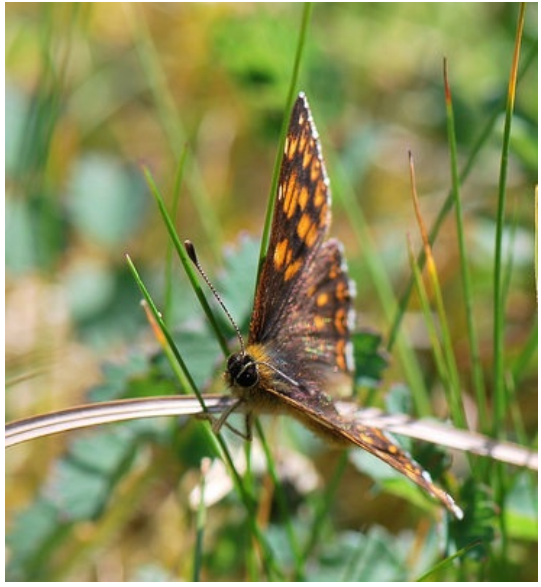
34 Duke of Burgundy, 07-05-2017 Duke Site

Only a day earlier than last year and it took advantage of the reasonable spell of weather we had just prior to its emergence. However I'm still really concerned about this species at this site as once again I only saw a singleton. That being said the same thing happened in the previous year and yet this year there was one again so fingers crossed the species will continue here. If it does then I really need to check back here later in the species flight as I'm sure this is a 'late' site and I only ever seem to catch the very first one. The one I found was again in the usual spot and this has now become my 'go to' area when looking for them. My idea last year was perhaps they were working their way up the hill but that doesn't seem to be the case as this little corner of the field, sheltered and catching the sun early until late afternoon, seems ideal for Dukes

Reports from other areas in the county were actually reasonably favourable with one being found at my Marshie site again being the stand out record. If they do colonise this site that would be really handy and it certainly seems feasible with strong colonies and good numbers at other sites local to this one (25 on one visit). I also heard about their presence at a site close to my work which could work out quite well although to be honest I'd much rather they continue at my current site.

Perhaps there are reasons to celebrate in Wiltshire as although one was recorded at Martin Down nationally it seems that they perhaps had a slightly disappointing year overall? The record from Martin Down took me back to my very first proper season when a small brown and orange butterfly landed just long enough to make a mental note of the markings. It was my very first Duke but as I was so new I didn't realise what it was nor the importance of that particular sighting.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Andrew555, 26-Mar-18 11:37 AM GMT

An interesting read and great pics again Wurzel. 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 27-Mar-18 01:00 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 I need to get (even more of) a wriggle on now as I've started seeing butterflies in 2018 🤩🤩

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by millerd, 27-Mar-18 01:23 PM GMT

The year wouldn't be the same if you weren't just a little bit behind, Wurzel... 😊😊

That said, I've been very much enjoying your review of 2017 – here's to a great 2018 butterfly year. 😊

Dave

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 27-Mar-18 05:20 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I'll have to wait until I get home to look for the Duke, last year there wasn't too many Dukes at Gait Barrow although I did see a mating pair, I'm just wondering how it will be this year up there, they've had a really bad Winter up there. Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 27-Mar-18 11:20 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Let's hope it's a cracker of a year 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hopefully the winter will have done them some good, knock their parasites on the head etc and maybe a delayed spring will mean they'll all emerge at once so there'll be plenty about, finger crossed 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 30-Mar-18 08:41 PM GMT

## The Hairstreaks



35 Green Hairstreak, 09-04-2017 Martin Down

I had an exceedingly good year with the Greenstreak as they had an exceedingly good year. I found my first one very early indeed in 2017, a one day shy of a whole month earlier in fact. As my first came from a different site and one which was slightly further south whether this explains the early sighting or not I can't be sure although they'd been seen before even my early date so it seems like the dry and warm spell worked out well for them.

After this initial single sighting I struggled to get out again for a while what with work and a visit to my Outlaws getting in the way but when I finally managed to get out proper my Duke Site was crawling with them. There weren't any at the usual Cypress tree as the small Hawthorns had been hacked down over the winter but from base of the hill fort they were in great numbers. In fact I gave up counting in the end there were so many. This must have been their peak at this site but there were still good numbers here on successive visits. I also found them again at Martin Down and on into almost June at my Marshie site, although by then they were looking slightly tired. So numbers wise a very. Very good year and something of a success story.

I suppose it was because there were so many of them but this year I really started noticing the variation. My first was a one spot, then I got a two spotter at my Duke site. Here the punctata form was quite common and there were also a few inferopunctatas. However the best aberration/form that I saw was one which was almost brown in certain lights or olive in others which could be an ab. Brunnea?







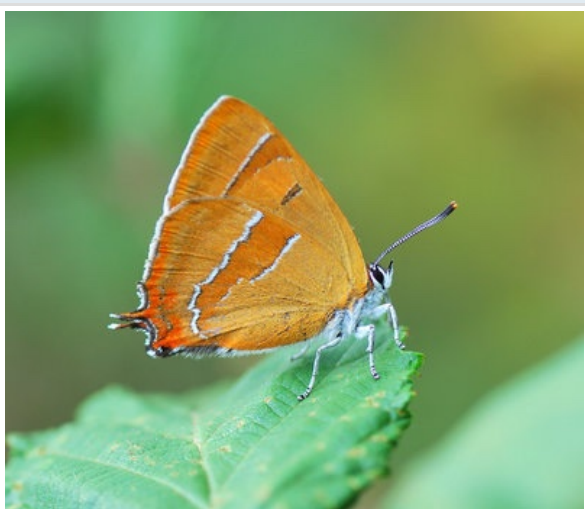
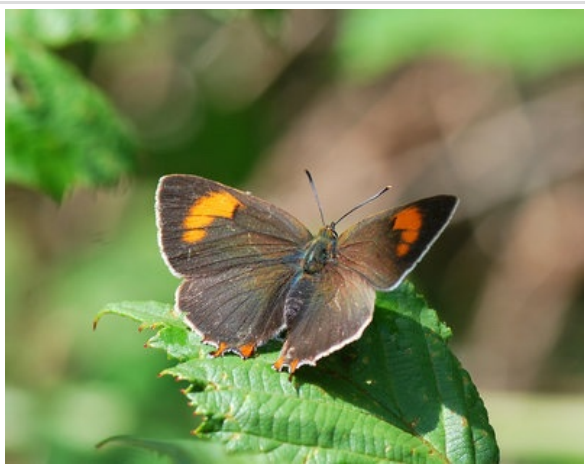


36 Brown Hairstreak, 05-08-2017

There's good news and bad news. So first the bad news - the hedgerows from the car park to the Master tree and the field are still replete of Brostreaks. From two visits I encountered only a single male on one occasion in this area. It seems that it is still suffering the effects of the Japanese collector...

Now to the good news. The Hedge Hotspot is back on form, 2 trips and two males and two females on both occasions, easily found and all at the edge of the hedge and low enough down for photos. They were two days earlier this year but due to a band of dodgy weather that settled over the West of the country they were well behind the Brostreaks emerging in the East which is a common occurrence really and something you have to get used to living on this side of the country.

The one disadvantage of the Hedge Hotspot being back on form is that on one visit I had to queue for shot! It was all very civilised and less of a punch-up than a birding twitch but having previously visited this site and had the place to myself it was strangely disconcerting. I'm used to the enjoying the peace and solitude these visits normally offer. Even more galling was when over enthusiasm to get 'the perfect shot' by one person led to spooking of a glorious female. Oh well maybe next year I'll get a quiet day and it'll be just me and the Brostreaks?





37 Purple Hairstreak, 02-07-2017 Bentley Wood

It was a good year for Purple Hairstreaks. I saw my first on the same day and at the same place as last year and although I saw them at only this site and made only one visit they were showing well. They'd flit from one Oak to another across the Switchback and other Rides putting in regular appearances. Others were doing well with them as well and one of my memories of 2017 will be the sheer number of shots people were getting; not the usual 'here's a tree and just left of the third leaf you can see a wing tip' variety but real juicy close-ups that suggested at a hitherto unknown exhibitionist nature. I also managed to see them relatively grounded. As with all of my 'low altitude' shots they were on Bracken. Why they chose to come down this year I'm not sure but I have suspicions that it's related to heat as we were baking in a mini-heatwave during the start of their flight period. Perhaps the Honeydew at the top of the trees has dried up or evaporated first so they had to come down lower into the shade to refuel?



38 White-letter Hairstreak, 02-07-2017

Again the same day and same site. This species provided me with a first this year, my first ever shots of Bentley Wood Whiter. After seeing them here every year for several years it was grand to finally capture one on film. Unfortunately my joy was quickly stifled on the walk home; the Wytch Elm sucker is looking in a really bad way and I saw only 2 individuals from the 'colony'. Hopefully the colony cans shift to the next set of suckers so that this won't become their last hurrah...





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Mar-18 08:27 AM GMT

#### The Blues Part 1

Ironically only one of the four species covered here is actually blue...



39 Small Copper, 22-04-2017 Duke Site

My first came in spectacular fashion 13 days earlier and from my Duke site. I'd sent the first part of the trip on the lower reaches searching for Dukes (nu luck) and Greenstreaks (crawling with em!) and then set out to walk up and round the ramparts of the Hill Fort. Having worked my way up and round I then cut back across the top of the hill and there glowing vividly like a spot light was shining on it was my first Small Copper of the year. After this brill start I saw them at many sites and in much better numbers than I can recall. Each site that I visited which had them had them in multiples whereas I'm used to finding only the odd one here or there. The Devenish and Duke site were particularly good (ONLY UKB this bit - and at times I felt it had all gone a bit Hoggers) with 5 or 6 whizzing about. They lasted right through with my final singleton on 23rd of September and I even had a garden 'tick' with one turning up amongst the Hedge Browns during our family holiday to Devon. The only downside was that I didn't find a Welsh Copper this year but this was probably because of the terrible weather the first time and the fact that the 'field' is now blocked.





40 Small Blue, 14-05-2017 Martin Down

It's great to think back and write about Small Blues as for once the memories are cheerful and positive as round my way they seemed to have a good year. My first came 15 days earlier and from Martin Down where there were a couple around. I wasn't too worried by their only being a couple as it was still early in their flight. I then found them at my Marshie site where they had a propensity of hanging around the bottom of the hill amongst the scrubby bits which the Wall Browns also seem to favour. To bolster my positive vibes further I rediscovered them at Larkhill. All in all a great year for Small Blues.



41 Silver-studded Blue, 13-06-2017 Slop Bog

A tricky one this as unlike in previous years I only saw them at one site, Slop Bog and I saw them 6 days earlier. This could be because they're a bit further than some of the other species so I have to 'make a plan' to see them. However I usually wait for them to emerge further East before venturing out. So if I saw them early it's quite likely that they were early elsewhere. In terms of numbers I feel they did quite well as I probably saw more of them

at Slop Bog than last year and also they were more widespread across the Bog and not just restricted to the aptly named 'Silver Stud Field'.





42 Brown Argus, 02-05-2017 Duke Site

Last year I described Brown Argus as 'patchy' but this year they just seemed to be down. I'd look back on the sightings and I'd be seeing them but the odd one rather than a handful, almost the exact opposite of Small Coppers to be honest. I found very few at Larkhill and other sites weren't much better. However it might not be all doom and gloom as I did see hem 26 days earlier, almost an entire lunar month and so what could have been happening was that they were around in their usual numbers but not as time compressed, more temporally spaced. Also I probably missed their final flourish as I didn't get out as much as I'd like to have during September. So this could have accounted for my gut feeling that they were down, here's hoping this is the case.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 31-Mar-18 10:19 AM GMT

Fantastic shots Wurzel, how do you manage all these fabulous shots and go to work as well 🍷🍷😄 I love the Green Hairstreaks, especially the one on the Blue Bell. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Mar-18 10:31 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie you're too kind 😊😄 I'm lucky in that my daughters don't mind accompanying me out butterflying (though for how much longer I don't know 😊) so I can get out at weekends and then before and/or after work 😊 The trick is to get a really good lens 😊  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Apr-18 10:22 AM GMT

Do you mean len's or eyes 😊 What ever your using it certainly works, 😊 Guess what, the Sun's trying it's best to come out here, hope it does we'll be out and about. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 01-Apr-18 07:01 PM GMT

You have several mrgreens coming your way, one for all the Hairstreak images 🍷, and two more for that vivid Green Hairstreak, and the one with a complete complement of white spots 🍷🍷.  
I thought last year was exceptional for Hairstreaks in general.

Hopr this year will be as good,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

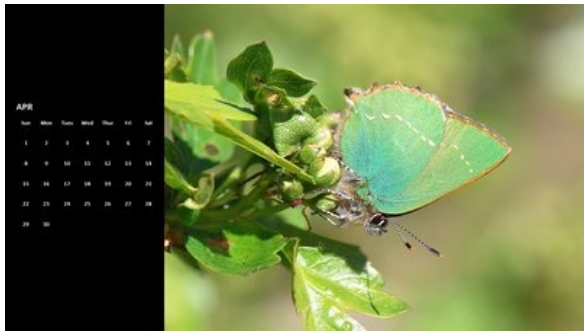
by Wurzel, 01-Apr-18 11:55 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 A good lens makes photos easy, it just becomes a matter of point and shoot 😊😄 They seem to think that the weather will be getting better by the weekend so fingers crossed 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 It was a very good year for Hairstreaks last year, the weather seemed to fall just right for them 😊 Fingers crossed that this year is as good 😊 Even though it'll probably start a lot later...

April 2018

It feels like it'll be a long time til we see one of these...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 03-Apr-18 01:49 PM GMT

Brilliant selection Wurzel, really makes the mouth water. 😊  
Love the Greenstreaks, especially the fully spotted one, and your SSB set. 🍷🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 03-Apr-18 07:30 PM GMT

Cracking set of Hairstreaks Wurzel 😊

In fact have a 🍷 as well as I only managed to see Green and Purple last year and the Purples were all too high up for photos unlike many that were seen further south.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Apr-18 10:38 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 They're getting ever closer now 😊 I find evening times are best for Silver-studs then you can get the oily sheen on the females 😊  
Cheers Neil 😊 I've had seasons like that with Purple Hairstreaks, even this year I managed only 6 photographs of the same individual. I reckon certain sites should have tree top walkways constructed so that you can photograph them up in the canopy 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Apr-18 07:41 AM GMT

Blues Part 2





43 Common Blue, 14-05-2017 Martin Down

Martin Down yielded my first Common Blue of the year 18 days earlier than last and once I'd seen one I saw them at most sites including back in Wales and one even strayed onto my Devon list. Seeing them all over the shop was great and they seemed to have a reasonable year. Not a vintage one but still nowhere near the dire wasted years. The main thing I noticed this year was a complete dearth of brown females. Time was, when I was just starting out in this game, that a large female Brown Argus was tricky to separate from a small female Common Blue. If the cell spot was hidden and the hindwing underside was obstructed you'd be left staring at the wings hoping to find blue scales...I and others have remarked over the last couple of years that the females have been getting bluer so identifying against a Brown Argus has almost become a doodle. In fact I can't recall a single female this year that wasn't an obvious blue.



44 Chalkhill Blue, 16-07-2017 The Devenish

Despite finding my first Chalkhill 6 days early at the Devenish I was slightly concerned for the species here as they seemed down compared to previous years. There were only a couple the first time around and on my second visit only a single male was found. I didn't get back after this until later in the year but still they were down. Despite worries from one site I still feel that they had an okay year as they were around at Martin Down and I even saw there or four at Broughton Down. Really for a fair assessment I need to get to somewhere like Stockbridge or Laverstock Down - both places where I've seen them in reasonable numbers before.



45 Adonis Blue, 14-05-2017 Martin Down

My first brood Adonis came from Martin Down this year whilst I was nurdling along the Dyke looking for anything but Adonis Blues. They were 2 weeks early the first time round compared to last year but I'm wondering if in this case it was because of their more Eastern location? It would certainly tie in with my own pet theory. After this I encountered them at my Marshie site where they were a bit sparser. The second brood however was much better and as usual seemed even more electric blue than the first. They lasted well as well, still turning up on visits to both Larkhill and Martin Down into September.





46 Holly Blue, 05-04-2017 Enford

I saw my first Holly Blue at one of my early sites - the Enford pull-in, a tiny lay-by big enough for a couple of cars on the 'scenic' route home. I was looking for Orange-tips and other Whites when a tiny blue butterfly flew by and I managed possibly one of the worst shots I've ever gotten of this species LOL! As it was a month and a day earlier than in 2016 I took it to be a good omen of things to come. In fact things did turn out well for this species this year as I saw them at a great range of sites - from Enford to Bentley Wood, on a one holly tree in the middle of the Down leading to Bentley, at Durlston and I even had one trying to steal my coffee (not as successful as the Dingy Skipper) at my Marshie site. The best site for them was without doubt Shipton and the Hedge Hotspot at the back of the site again held good numbers of them and they were settling long enough for photos.





47 Large Blue, 18-06-2018 Daneways

This was my second visit to Daneways and whilst the butterflies were easier to latch onto here than at Collard getting an accurate judgement or even a gut feeling was difficult. I made my visit 8 days earlier but that's not to say that they emerged any earlier, it was just that was when I was able to make my visit. But the timing of the visit is the reason why making a call on how well they fared tricky. You see I went during the mini heatwave that we had, with temperatures getting up to 30 degrees. I got there early in the morning before it got really hot but the butterflies were still really active and most of my shots were either 'grab' shots or distant in flight ones. I'd read somewhere that the females are more active at the end of the day when they will fly to find suitable places to lay their eggs but I saw this happening at 11 in the morning and by midday they were either almost impossible to follow or were hidden away sitting out the broiling sun. Because of this I felt like I saw fewer butterflies thought they probably were on a par? I again found a very dark female, one which appeared almost black when in flight so it will be interesting to see if a third visit throws up a similar variant but the highlight was the mating pair.





## The 2017 Season

And so ends the 2017 Tally. It was a funny old year really with the vagaries of the weather playing havoc with some trips and so I feel lucky to have managed 47 species.

### Lows

1. I was slightly disappointed after the early start that things didn't pan out so I could get to the magic 50. I was often playing catch-up as the weather would be un conducive for a butterflying when I was in the right place, then when I was elsewhere the weather would be great etc.
2. No Clouded Yellows; despite going to the right places at the right times I just wasn't able to latch onto one. It wasn't exactly a Clouded Yellow year so maybe 2018 will be a biggy?
3. The MOD blocking off the lay-by at my Larkhill stop-off.
4. I still didn't get it together to get another British tick - I just can't seem to justify the travelling to myself...

### Highs

1. Revisiting East Blean for my second taste of Heath Frits
2. Any trip I made with Philzoid as invariably these trips produced the goods either in terms of 'firsts for the year', the range of species seen or some fantastic butterfly memories.
3. Greenstreaks by the bucket load at my Duke site

## Looking forward to 2018:

1. With a family trip to the Dordogne in August I'll hopefully pick up a few foreign lifers including Scarce Swallowtail.
2. Finally get the nerve to go for a British tick - High Brown (British) or Black Hairstreak (lifer) though I'll probably bottle it.
3. This year I'm going to try for 45 species from Wiltshire, Hampshire and Dorset only.
4. Get some decent shots of Chalkhills, more shots of Marbled Whites and check out more areas for Pearls/Small Pearls at Bentley Wood.

So now I've finished with 2017 I better start sorting out my 2018 posts (at the time of writing there are 5 to do already 😊 😊). I hope everyone out there has a cracking season!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 05-Apr-18 04:17 PM GMT

And a cracking good season to you too.  
Yes, Larkhill was a pain, caused me quite a diversion !.  
As for Clouded Yellows you were in the wrong place. You could have dumped the Ladies in a department store in Bournemouth, and gone and found some. Sussex performed well for them too.  
The Black Hairstreak is on my list, but I need to go with someone who knows their hideout.

Hopefully catch up with you soon.  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 05-Apr-18 05:21 PM GMT

Lovely Female Adonis Wurzel, I've not seen one for ages, may be this year I'll hit the jack pot. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 05-Apr-18 06:09 PM GMT

I've only just seen your Large Blues. No mrgreens for the mating pair.  
( I found two at Collard hill), but an open wing shot eluded me,  
so several mrgreens for your fine shot! 🍷🍷🍷.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 06-Apr-18 03:22 PM GMT

Brilliant shots Wurzel. The Adonis are fantastic, and I love the Large Blues. 🍷🍷

Cheers and a cracking season for all of us! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Gary.N, 06-Apr-18 06:53 PM GMT

Great shot of the female Adonis, Wurzel. 😊 And the last Holly Blue shot. I always miss that one good shot of a Holly.

Gary

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 06-Apr-18 07:18 PM GMT

Great final round up of your 2017 season Wurzel with some great photos to go with it 😊

That male Adonis Blue really jumps out of the screen 🍷 😊

Plus some more 🍷🍷 for the Large Blues, I must try and catch up with them again sometime.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 06-Apr-18 11:26 PM GMT

A splendid round-up of 2017, Wurzel. 😊 Some lovely images there amongst the Blues and Hairstreaks in particular. Looking forward to 2018 and following you as you undertake your plan of action. 😊😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Apr-18 08:26 PM GMT

Cheers Gary 😊 Holly Blues with open wings have evaded me for a few years now and then I followed the teachings of the Master Holly Blue Whisper Dave Miller 😊😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I'm dead chuffed with that shot 😊 If you're after Large Blues then I recommend Daneways as it's an easier site to work than Collard 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I only hope that I don't bottle it like I did last year 😊😞😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Apr-18 10:45 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 The Blackstreak is the one that I need the most help with as well Trevor plus they they've such a short flight you could almost blink and miss them 😊 Unfortunately I'd used all my Brownie points up when it came to Cloudy searching 😞

Cheers Goldie 😊 I hope you can latch onto some this year 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I'd felt like I'd neglected Adonis (or at least taken them for granted) so hopefully I've made up for that this year 😊

Also sorry all for missing your comments, I thought my previous post had finished the page off and it's was only when I was doing some backing up that I saw your kind comments 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-18 06:13 PM GMT

## February 2018

Less than two months behind now! Yay! 😊😞😞

### Five Rivers 16-02-2018

This is normally the month when I start seeing butterflies, often with a trip out to Five Rivers. So having gotten back from Wales and my Outlaws and with some reasonable weather I took Little L out with me to see if I could break the 2018 Duck.

Once we were on site we headed straight for Comma Corner and then onwards to the Banks. The Stinging Nettles were barely showing and all around the avifauna suggested winter more than spring as there were still a few Redwing around in amongst the other three resident Thrushes. The fact that I could see a pair of Bullfinches in between the branches further alluded to it being a tiny bit too early.



Still we pressed on any way working our way along the Banks and searching the usual nooks and crannies which the butterflies seem to prefer early in the season. As usual the cloud covered the sun each time we got to a likely looking place and once we moved on it came back out again. Still it was good to stroll and talk with Little L and just feel the wind on my face and the weak sun warming my back ever so slightly. On the Bench at the far end of the Banks lay a dead Shrew. It was an incongruous sight and we couldn't work out how it had gotten there?



After completing a circuit and several laps forward and back along the Banks we decided to head back and pick the others up before swinging by my Sister In-laws for a cadged cuppa. As we slowed to a stop in traffic a small dark shape fluttered across the road. At the midway point in its trajectory it crossed the line from shade into the sun and as it did so my first butterfly of 2018 became a **Small Tortoiseshell**. Happy with that! 😊

### Mottisfont 24-02-2018

A week later we made a brief visit to Mottisfont. I was hopeful again that as the temperature was just nudging towards double figures and there was a blue sky. However it wasn't to be and even the Walled Garden was bereft of butterflies. I reasoned that this would be the most likely place to see them, sheltered from the biting breeze, trapping the sun, nectar sources and plenty of nooks and crannies for butterflies to roost in. No such luck but there was some consolation in a lovely Nuthatch.



"Surely it can't be much longer now?" I thought...and then the Snow arrived... 🤔 🌨️

Have a goodun

Wurzel



**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 10-Apr-18 08:30 PM GMT

Poor little Shrew Wurzel, I bet it'd frozen to death, better weather to come next week. 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 10-Apr-18 11:31 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 If the cold hadn't got it then it would have done a week or two later when the Beast struck 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 11-Apr-18 12:13 PM GMT

I think shrews are distasteful so it could be been a young kestrel learning the difference between yummy voles and not so yummy shrews that left it there 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Maximus, 11-Apr-18 03:12 PM GMT

I think he was just resting or pining for the fjords 😊

Seriously though, the round-up of your 2017 season with the beautiful accompanying images was a very good read 😊

Mike

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 12-Apr-18 07:33 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I think you're being a bit harsh about the Shrew 😊 unpalatable sounds a bit better 😊 There was a Kestrel around so you could be on to something there 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 He had definitely gone to meet his maker, he was not more, he'd shuffled off his mortal coil and was pushing up the daisies...in short he was an ex-Shrew 😊 Thanks for the kind comments about the Yearly Tally, Patrick Barkham eat your heart out 😊😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 12-Apr-18 11:30 PM GMT

March 2018

Having seen my first butterfly and Small Tortoiseshell of the year and it being a day earlier than in 2017 I was hoping for more of the same...and then the snow hit. It was great for the first couple of days - two days off work, strolling back in the dark through the snow, beered up and listening to Iron Maiden (quite a surreal experience), sledging and waling everywhere. But then by the third day it hit me 'it's March, I should be seeing the hibernators emerge at Five Rivers and Middle Street about now!'. So the very next time it was fine and the temperatures almost reached double figures I was off out...

10-03-2018 Five Rivers

The first available trip out came on the 10th when I again took Little L over to Five Rivers for a quick afternoon blast round the site. As is usually the way the sun hid from the clouds almost as soon as our feet left the tarmac and gravel often car park and hit the mud of the trail. As we covered the Banks there was no sign of anything stirring. Likely looking dead leaves failed to transform into Commas, dark shapes drifting and gliding by were just leaves and apart from a pair of Bullfinch it was eerily quiet until the weird gurgling screech of a Little Grebe ripped the silence asunder. Giving up I let Little L loose with my camera.

Getting home I warily looked through the images and was quite proud of her efforts; a sombre Crow illustrated the feel of the site, 9 Magpies in a row (the rhyme only goes up to 7 doesn't it? In which case is this back round to 'Joy'?) and a picture of what Little L described as an old codge...wait a minute...



13-03-2018 Work

The weather improved through the week every so slowly so that by the Tuesday a trip outside without a coat was doable. So as soon as the pupils left the room for lunch I grabbed my camera and was out of there. I walked across the playing fields, down the path behind the housing estate checking every likely looking leaf on the way. Finally at the half way point along the path just to the right of the concrete steps a pair of blue eyes starred out of the detritus at me, warning me off.



After the initial record shot which was taken purely due to muscle memory/instinct I stood rooted to the spot just drinking in the moment, savouring that fantastic feeling that 'this was it, it's started'. The butterfly took off which jolted me back from my meditative state and I watched it circle round,

out across the field and back again. If it had started at 1 o'clock it had now landed at 11 so a wheeled round 180 degrees and cautiously approached surprised at how out of practice I was. Luckily the sun was in so I managed to get several shots by the 'click, three steps, click...' method finally getting in reasonably close before the sun came out of hiding and the butterfly headed off across the field to be lost from sight. Still butterfly number two - **Peacock** - in the bag.



A cracking lunchtime...  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 13-Apr-18 11:17 AM GMT

A bit of spotting at work ? Very nice Wurzel. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Apr-18 12:04 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 As the best weather is usually during the working week 😊 getting out at lunchtime is often the only way for me to get some butterflying done 😊 ...I do have a few other tricks up my sleeve as well though 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 13-Apr-18 01:53 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, glad your in the mix 😊 Next week , even tomorrow looks good in the South, hope it is up here 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Apr-18 05:44 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 As usual the good weather is set to arrive as soon as I'm back at work, looks like I'll have to make the most of my lunch breaks 😊

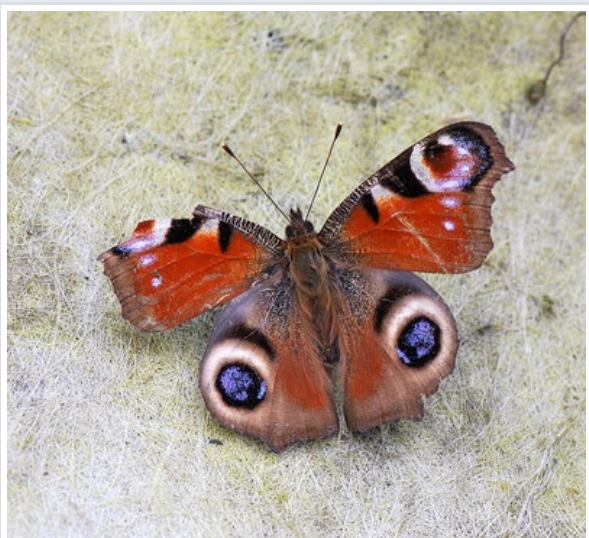
Have a goodun

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 14-Apr-18 10:11 PM GMT

**Work 16-03-2018**

The reasonable weather seemed to be holding and so as it was a Friday I took this lunchtime off as well. Again I headed straight out across the playing fields and down the back path. As usual I was scanning ahead looking for movement, flashes of colour that shouldn't be there and the blindingly obvious butterfly out in the open. I worked right the way to the end of the path and had started on the return journey before striking it lucky. There nestled on an old, dumped carpet was a dark black triangle. It hadn't been there two minutes previously so it must have been forced to land as the sun went in and the temperature dropped ever so slightly. It seemed quite happy to let me approach it from various angles and so I made the most of the next couple of minutes. Ever so slowly it opened up and so that's how I left it, basking and trying for all it was worth to capture the slightest bit of extra warmth. Hopefully it'll pack that in and find somewhere sheltered as the weather report for the weekend suggest that the 'Beast from the East' is back for a rematch...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 15-Apr-18 10:42 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel ,I think my Brimstone was doing the same, only it had company! 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 15-Apr-18 08:25 PM GMT

Yup, that definitely looks like some old codger to me (I'm allowed to say this being nearly 50 myself 😊). I hope this weekend came up trumps for you 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 15-Apr-18 10:28 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I haven't reconnected with that particular Peacock since Goldie, I only hope that it escaped the ensuing snow 😊  
Cheers Bugboy 😊 I think 😊😊 Half the weekend was cracking 😊 the other half was dire 😊 That's 2018 really, up and down 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 15-Apr-18 10:45 PM GMT

I had an ok afternoon over this side of the country, nowhere near as good as yesterday but no washout by any means, and half day tomorrow and off Tuesday means I wont completely miss out on this warm spell, things are looking up a bit for me at least 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by millerd, 15-Apr-18 10:48 PM GMT

Looks like a mere youngster to me (speaking from the realms of true old codgerdom)... 😊

I hope you can fit in some of those brilliant side trips you manage to squeeze in during the sunshine this week, Wurzel – and even next weekend looks fine as well. How long before Bentley Wood comes alive do you think? 😊

Dave

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-18 10:27 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It's getting to that time of the year when I'm wishing for good weekend weather, I can be quite nerve racking at times 😊  
Cheers Dave 😊 I'll be doing my best with the side trips and maybe if the weather holds until the weekend maybe my second 'proper' trip of the season. Things are quite quiet over this way but I reckon maybe a fortnight until Bentley comes alive...normally about a week after Abbots/Rewell 😊 I'll keep you posted 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Andrew555, 16-Apr-18 10:37 AM GMT

I'm curious Wurzel, do any of your pupils or colleagues know of your interest ? And if so what do they make of it ? 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 16-Apr-18 02:27 PM GMT

The members of my Department definitely know about my past time 😊😊 and I guess other members of staff have a general idea. As for the pupils they also know about my pastime – as I'm a Zoologist by trade most just view it as an extension of this, as if it was my specialist subject at Uni 😊 and I also have one or two other things on my CV that negate any negative views of 'butterflying' 😊😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Apr-18 08:53 PM GMT

### Work 21-03-2018

Three days ago there had been snow, two days ago there had been ice, so much in fact that work had been closed. Yet here I was on a Wednesday lunchtime back out with my camera! This has got to have been the oddest Spring for a good few years. Still one thing I've learnt is to always take advantage of any reasonable weather and get out whenever possible! Again I forewent the coat which is another thing I've learnt – warm and dry enough to not need a coat means an increased likelihood of seeing butterflies. And so it was today as I hadn't even left the playing fields before I came across my first butterfly. I was scanning around looking for movement etc. and this time one of the gliding leaves was actually a butterfly. There is a small hedge bordering the local primary school which is still holding last year's dead and orange leaves. One of these listlessly dropped down to the ground and I watched it as it fell. It looked slightly more orange and jagged than the others so I moved towards it. Brill! It was my first 2018 **Comma** down on the deck and doing its best to blend in with its surroundings.



Chuffed from here I decided to take a slightly different route reasoning that any recently activated butterflies would probably be looking for a source of nectar and so would head to the gardens of the local residents hence I cut through the local estate. As I followed the footpath round the first bend something caught my eye fluttering around beneath the front window of one of the houses. I walked up the path and knocked on the front door to ask for permission all the while watching the butterfly out of the corner of my eye. It took off and landed on the recycling bin back at the gate. No-one answered so I walked back up the path and took a few shots when the owner appeared. He didn't mind me hanging around on his garden path once I'd pointed out the Small Tort to him but it did remind me of my youth reading Bill Oddie and his story of "Oi get off my land!". 😊😊



I carried on and made it to the path at the back of the estate without seeing any other butterflies but once here the Small Torts seemed to be emerging all at once. As I re-joined the path there were a couple of Small Torts almost immediately along with another at the very end. In order to not double count I reset my mental counter and walked the length of the path back towards the playing fields and then on to work. If a butterfly was spooked I watched to see which way it headed again to try and avoid double counting. There was one and then a pair tussling and spiralling upwards. I quickly moved on from these so that when they finally broke apart one couldn't overtake me. It went quiet as I walked past the concrete steps but about three quarters along I noticed a pair in mid courtship just into the field and my final Small Tort was in the penultimate garden.



So a total of 1 Comma and 7 Small Torts none too shabby but not exactly the double digits that some sites have logged recently. Mind you this is only one thin strip of path so six Small Torts along here isn't too bad, doubly so when you consider their drop off in numbers at the end of last season.

When I got home it felt like Spring and so my wife and I took a quick stroll across the Town path and back to enjoy the golden late afternoon light.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 17-Apr-18 09:30 PM GMT

Some lovely Small Torts there, still only seen the odd one on my travels this year 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Apr-18 11:52 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Small Torts seem to be doing okay over this way, I'm sure you'll get onto more than a few soon 😊, especially as the Eastern side of the country always seems to have better weather 🍀

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Apr-18 02:17 PM GMT

#### Working Lunch 26-03-2018

Having endured more bad weather and with the long range forecast looking pretty bleak (and they're always really accurate when it comes to dire weather) I took the opportunity to get out at lunchtime and do a quick patrol.

I took my usual route round the edges of the playing fields and spooked a Small Tort when half way across. Normally I wouldn't have been concerned by this but things have been so dire this year I felt a slight pang of anxiety that one had got away. What if it was the only one? I carried on regardless and rounded the corner and took the path behind the gardens. About 10 gardens in I breathed a sigh of relief as there was another Small Tort flitting about up against the fence. To get a shot I had to get in close to the chicken wire fence and focus through the diamonds. When it worked it produced a nice vignette effect (which will probably be lost in the crop); when it didn't the butterfly was blurry in places.



The next garden along held a Comma but it was too far away a shot. Nevertheless I was buoyed up by butterflies so I pressed on to the half way stage of the path when it intersects with various 'in-roads' to the estate; a grassed area like a valley in miniature and a stepped footpath. Here a couple of Small Torts were having a tussle, one chasing the other out across the field before both spiralled upwards and dived down disappearing. At the far end of the path a final Small Tort tried to disguise itself in amongst the dross before I reached the turn-back point. So far a maximum of 5 Small Torts and a Comma.





On the return journey a Peacock landed momentarily on the path and promptly took off again. I didn't mind though as I had a few distant shots and time was fast ticking (one of the drawbacks to the change in the timing of the school day). Along the path there were two Small Torts and at the start of the playing fields a final, and possibly the first (?), Small Tort posed nicely. So nicely in fact that I spent a bit of time with it and so had to sprint back in time for afternoon lessons.





Who knows when I'll be able to get out next?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-Apr-18 04:31 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, you saw your small Torts much sooner in the South, having said that I was down South and didn't see any until I got back home, my first on the 9th April 😊 Since then each time I've visited HLB I've seen them, today although the weather here in the afternoon was great they were the only Butterfly to appear, disappointing when you think the Sun will usually bring others out, hope fully tomorrow will. 😊

Hope you get more in your lunch breaks 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 18-Apr-18 06:53 PM GMT

Excellent use of your lunch break, and productive too.

As for the weather it's good to be back home, where the season is beginning to pick up. Hopefully the weather will be kind when the Marsh Frits. are due to show.

Keep well,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Apr-18 01:45 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I'm glad you got your Small Tort, things should be starting to pick right up now, fingers crossed you'll be up to your armpits in butterflies soon 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 It's picked up during my working lunches but whilst the numbers are on the rise the species count is stuck at 3. Hopefully I'll pick up an OT or Small White soon 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Apr-18 08:17 AM GMT

#### Waitrose 05-04-2018

I woke to beautiful blue skies with a slight chill in the air which I felt sure would disappear quickly enough. In fact once I'd gotten back from Little L's holiday class it was almost warm enough for wearing my coat unzipped.

As we were looking after my nieces for the day we decided to take advantage of the beautiful sunny weather and took a stroll to Waitrose to pick up some bread for lunch and the usual 'free' coffee. I took my camera thinking that I might cross paths with a least one butterfly. We'd only gotten as far as St Pauls when a flash of bright yellow announced my first **Brimstone** of 2018. This was quickly followed by a Small Tort which perched itself on the wall. I got a few shots and it flew along landing slightly further ahead and this process was repeated twice more.



After one underpass the second was flooded so my wife and the girls doubled back to take the alternative route. I however climbed over the fence for a second Small Tort. As I climbed the bank after successfully getting some shots to cut back across the petrol station to re-join the others a Brimstone took flight. It flew off and I thought I'd missed any chance of a photo but eventually it returned and landed about 2 metres away from its original resting place. A few shots and it would take off seeming to disappear before pulling a 'U-y' and landing a very short distance away from where it had landed before. After a couple more shots in this way I left the Brimstone and caught up with the others and we picked up our bits before heading home for lunch. As I munched I thought to myself "I really need to get out to make the most of this weather"...





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 20-Apr-18 03:01 PM GMT

👍 Cheers Wurzel, nice one. 😊

A great read as always, and great pics. Sadly I still remain 'Tort-less' so far this year. 😞😞

Cheers

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 20-Apr-18 07:40 PM GMT

Great reports and photos from your recent(...ish 😊) adventures Wurzel.

I love that shot of the - Egret I think? - in the evening light...very atmospheric 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 20-Apr-18 08:47 PM GMT

Some great Tortoiseshell photos there, Wurzel. I love your ability to conjure a butterfly out of a visit to the shops... 😊 And what's this? That was only a fortnight ago! 😊😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 20-Apr-18 10:28 PM GMT

Wurzel

Your post made me sit up and think. It seems everyone is posting shots of Small Torts and recording them in some numbers. Is it like this every year at the start of the season or do you think it is a better start for them than usual?

Cheers

Ern

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Apr-18 04:25 PM GMT

Lovely shots Wurzel, I bet you regularly volunteer to go to the shops don't you 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 21-Apr-18 09:59 PM GMT

I'm glad you are seeing Torts, Wurzel. Yes, they seem to be having a good start to the season, having hibernated well.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Apr-18 08:42 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 Hopefully you'll pick one up soon, if not there's always the later brood that is one of the good things about Small Torts 😊 I'll have a word with some of the ones at work and send them your way 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 Spot on with the small heron ID 😊 At least of posting within the same month now 😊 though how much longer that lasts I don't know 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I know I'm posting about April in April 😊 I need a lie down 😊😊 The problem is that just as I come close to catching-up I go out again – it's a lovely problem to have 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Apr-18 11:31 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 Over this way there generally are good numbers of Small Torts at this time of the year. Saying that this year has been particularly good 😊, not the best but a lot better than last year. Most years I record my first Small Torts in February, as this year and by March their numbers have built. The Beast from the East knocked them on the head for a while and so what we could be seeing is the usual build to a peak compressed into a much shorter time. It could also be an artefact caused by butterfly deprivation over the winter, we take every opportunity to see butterflies at the beginning of the season 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I think my volunteering to visit the shops will wane in the winter, doubly so when Waitrose get rid of their free coffee 😊😊

Cheers Essex 😊 I was able to get onto even more on some other trips out...got to write them up first though 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Apr-18 02:32 PM GMT

#### Middle Street 05-04-2018

Suitably refreshed after a Waitrose coffee we strolled back and had lunch. Then I loaded my camera into the car and I was away on my first proper trip of the season. As Small Tort and a Brimstone waved me off. Once at Middle Street I made my way directly to the 'hotspot' taking in the water filled hollows and furrows on the way. I was therefore still disappointed but not surprised to see it filled with water too. So I carried on round the 'lake', past the fishing platforms to make my way to the far end of the site. And then the butterflies appeared with four Brimstones, one of which was female and four Small Torts. The Brimstones were patrolling past me whilst the Small Torts would be interspersed along the path, nestled in the dried reeds and sticks as if they were holding specific territories.





At the end of the site I turned, reset my internal counter to zero and made my way back towards the 'once hotspot'. This time I took the higher path so that I could look down into the drainage areas and scan their banks at the same time. I immediately started picking up Small Torts including a pair in courtship. Well the male was doing his best but the female didn't seem that interested.

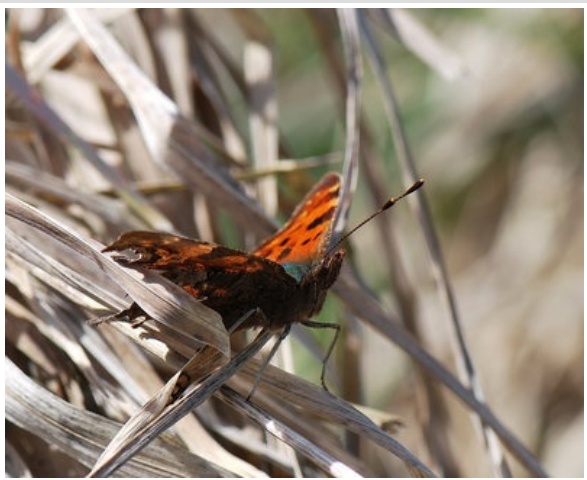




As I reached the crossroads of paths I scanned across the largest of the drainage fields and something golden orange caught my eye. As I started towards it a larger, dark butterfly took off and flew back the way I'd come at a tremendous pace. It didn't seem black enough to be a Peacock and there was a pinky flash as it passed me – a **Red Admiral**. Chuffed I turned my attentions back to the orange butterfly which became a Comma. I carried on and scanning around the edges of the large Bramble bush a pair of vivid blue eyes flashed out at me from a lovely Peacock. As it flew it looked totally black and bat-like in contrast to the Red Admiral I'd seen only moments before.



After this I walked around the Lake racking up more Small Torts and Brimstones as well as Cetti's Warbler (with its "one, one-two, one-two-three-four-one-two" song). Back near the Bramble clump there was a Comma which might have been a different individual and it posed readily.



So Middle Street had thrown up all five of the expected early species, a cracking start. On the drive back I stopped on the corner of Upper and Middle Street near the sluice gate for only a few moments but in that short time I managed to pick up a further 3 Small Torts and 4 Brimstones!







Anyway onwards and upwards!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 23-Apr-18 04:07 PM GMT

Cheers Wurzel, that would be excellent. 😊

Until then I'll continue to appreciate them through yours and others great shots. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-Apr-18 04:23 PM GMT

That was a great start for you Wurzel, it's cold here at present, we can't seem to get rid of the cold wind, Saturday it rained here and yesterday cloud nearly all day, today cloudy, Sunny, cold wind again, the Butterflies have gone into hiding 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 23-Apr-18 05:51 PM GMT

Absolutely beautiful colours in your pictures wurzel. Especially liking the tortoiseshells.

Are Waitrose getting rid of coffee? I must go and check. Hopefully, not in my store. 😊 They seem to be pulling back on a number of things...bring back Mark Price....

Off to check....

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 23-Apr-18 09:42 PM GMT

They've actually closed my local Waitrose – appalling! 😊 Lovely vibrant Tortoiseshells, Wurzel. In the couple of weeks since you saw all those, they have all but disappeared from my neck of the woods (hopefully having covered the nettles with eggs of course!). How quickly the season moves on. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Apr-18 09:09 AM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 I've had a word so let's see if it pays off 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 We too experienced the bad weather...and still are really. After this day there was only one more decent day in a fortnight of holiday 😊

Cheers Peter 😊 They're stopping the all free coffees from the big cafe's – so you can only get the 'standard' coffee from the self service dispenser – no more soya Mochas for me 😊 Still it'll mean more time actually out butterflying as I won't be queuing for 15 minutes before each butterfly trip 😊 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Closed Waitrose where do you get your free Lalle's from? 😊 😊 As I'm a little bit behind and as the West is about a week behind back then the numbers were still building so there's more to come 😊 ...eventually 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Apr-18 08:31 PM GMT

Five Rivers 05-04-2018

After the success at Middle Street I thought that I'd better see how things were over at Five Rivers so with Iron Maiden blaring I cut across town. I saw the odd Brimstone on my travels and before I knew it I was drawing to a stop amid a satisfying crunch of gravel. 😊

I cut down through the woodland path noting two non-stop Brimstones on the way and then I reached Comma Corner. Whilst here I checked the scallop at the entrance to the Spinney. On one side sat a Comma and on the other a Small Tort. The Comma was adopting an aggressive looking pose; alert, upright with wings held like the sides of a tent. It obviously didn't like the presence of the Small Tort and as I expected a fight ensued. Unsurprisingly the smaller but much more aggressive Comma won out settling itself smugly back down in its favoured spot once the furore was over. Whilst in the neighbourhood I also checked out the scallop on the opposite side of the Spinney scanning the bank on the way and turning up a second Small Tort.



After this little sojourn I got back to my usual route, from Comma Corner along the Lower Banks and back again. My first run threw up a Comma almost immediately swiftly followed by another and then a Peacock and numerous Small Torts. To top it off two more fly-by Brimstone made a pass.



So as to not double count on the return leg I reset my mental counter and this time notched up at least 5 Small Torts, the 2 Comma and a Peacock. Looking at the photo at the time I suspected that this Peacock was a different individual (which I was able to confirm later). So a minimum count of 4 Brimstone, 2 Peacocks, 3 Commas and 8 Small Torts. Not bad going on a single trip although in previous years I might have added Whites, Specklies and possibly even a Holly Blue by now.



I then mooched around just enjoying the show - a Peacock side walking, crabwise to find the optimum basking spot, a squabble involving a Peacock, a Comma and 2 Small Torts during which all three of the smaller relatives ganging up and having a pop at the single, larger Peacock and best of all stopping every 10-15 steps as another butterfly hove into view or materialised from the foliage. I didn't even mind the nettles stinging my knees through my jeans. A fantastic spring day...at last!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 24-Apr-18 08:32 PM GMT

So much intense colour, winter is already just a distant memory 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Apr-18 11:36 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It was a very short lived experience of Spring as two days later we were back to cool and cloud, more cool and cloud with a side order to cool and cloud 😊 Oh well things will have to eventually get better...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Apr-18 08:50 PM GMT

Just a small post more for the sake of completeness...really it's because I can't get used to be so up to date 😊 I need it to be May already as then I'll still be 'a month behind' 😊

### Five Rivers 07-04-2018

One of the great things about Five Rivers is that it offers free swimming for children during the holidays. So once the girls were in the pool and my work was done I nipped off for 30 minutes. I grabbed my camera from the boot and headed straight over to the Banks. The two Scallops were quiet but at Comma Corner a Comma took-off and I spied a second down on the deck in the middle of the track.

After a few shots I carried on but the sun which had been out oh so fleetingly now hid away behind the clouds and butterflies now became thin on the ground. Near the small Bramble patch near the bench a Peacock resided briefly. I Watched it come down and try to settle before it felt the need to find somewhere more sheltered. I didn't have much more luck with the two Small Torts which flew in together from the top of the Banks. As they tumbled to the ground I again watched and waited giving them time to settle or maybe move a little closer towards me. Just as I decided that they'd had long enough and was about to make my move a bloody great dog thundered past me and the Small Torts scattered. Oh well some days are like this and as I'd busked this trip anyway I couldn't grumble.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Apr-18 08:27 AM GMT

### Mottisfont 14-04-2018

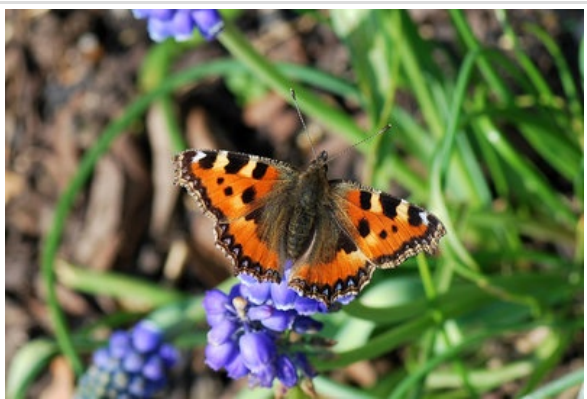
So an entire week after my last trip out finally the weather had improved enough to head back out. The cloud had lifted, the temperatures were rising and the sun was actually shining rather than just hanging limpid and lacklustre. Mottisfont seemed to be the best bet and so with snacks packed we set off. On the journey I could almost feel the serotonin forming as we drove along and there would be a little surge every time a butterfly hove into view. By the time we pulled into the car park two Small Torts and eleven Brimstone so I was feeling pretty elated.

We entered the grounds and there was another Brimstone, a male a bit too far away for my lens to capture but a lovely sight to see. From here we wended our way along the streamside path making our way to the walled garden though we were frequently distracted as after a week of grey dismal cloud to finally see colour and feel the warmth of the sun was brilliant so we'd stop time and again. On one such stop to admire the daffs one of the leaves detached itself but instead of falling down it fluttered off and I realised that it was a female Brimstone. I watched as she flew by and then landed just ahead of me before momentarily disappearing from view again. I realised she was taking nectar and was camouflaged.



Once in the Walled Garden my wife sat and read, the girls disappeared off to play hide and seek (I'd see one of them occasionally hiding behind the bench or climbing up a tree) so I just pottered about drifting through the squares of lawn from one to the next and wandering seemingly aimlessly but all the time scanning for any sign of movement. First butterfly was a Small Tort and then there were a multitude of Brimstone. The males all proved a pain as they would feed frenetically and mostly on the flowers which were in the middle of beds. They were always that little bit too far away for all but the most cropped shots or holding themselves at an unusual angle. Occasionally I'd manage to orientate myself to get a few shots but it was hard going. The females on the other hand were much more accommodating. My meanderings around saw me encountering another Small Tort and possibly 4 Brimstone, though this is a very conservative guess. There was also a Peacock which dropped in momentarily only to be sent packing by a female Brimstone, so it seems that they're not always well behaved!







Sun-soaked and happy we then walked across the grounds and ventured out further across the fields to link up with the riverside walk. On the way Brimstones would fly by and by the Ha-Ha there was another Peacock but I was just happy watching and drinking it all in. The girls ran on ahead laughing and joking or held hands and talked incessantly all the way cross the fields, along the river path and over the bridge. All too soon the circuit was complete and we walking up the raised walkway to the exit. As we did I glanced across to my right and there was a white feather amongst the foliage. Only it wasn't a feather - my first **Green-veined White**. The girls went on and I hung back and hung off the walkway camera in one hand to try for a few shots. It was tricky but eventually I managed to lie almost flat along the walkway, hold the support with my left hand and the camera in my right and fire off a few shots.



As I was starting to get a few funny looks I wrapped things up, un-contorted myself and re-joined the others. All in all a fantastic family day out!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**



by Goldie M, 27-Apr-18 09:58 AM GMT

Lovely shots of the Brimstone Wurzel and the Green Veined Whites, the latter has not been seen here yet, early days I know but the weather's awful here. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Trevor, 27-Apr-18 11:08 AM GMT

Nearly an open wing Brimstone there, Wurzel. 😊 The females are so much easier than males. Hope things pick up over your way for my next visit in May.

Can you believe sleet is forecast !!! 😞  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 27-Apr-18 11:55 AM GMT

Good job with the GVW shot Wurzel, well worth a few funny looks. 😊  
Lovely colourful shots, love the Brimstone getting stuck into the Daff. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Janet Turnbull, 27-Apr-18 01:41 PM GMT

Sounds like an idyllic day out, Wurzel! Like Andrew, I love that shot of the Brimstone in the daffodil. I don't think I've ever seen any butterfly on daffs. I've been told there are GVWs round this way but I haven't seen one yet – will just have to wait for the weather to pick up again.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Apr-18 11:47 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Unfortunately it looks like being bad for a while yet, fingers (and toes and legs and arms and eyes) crossed that things improve drastically soon 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I too hope things pick up weather wise it's been a fitful start to the season 😊 As for sleet, anything goes this year it seems 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I swear I could hear slurping 😊 It reminded me of me on a hot summers eve on the first pint of Fursty Ferret 😊

Cheers Janet 😊 I was chuffed with that shot as I thought it nicely showed off the surprising camouflage 😊 Here's hoping things improve weather wise in your area 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Apr-18 10:41 AM GMT

## Work 16-04-2018

So as I returned to work the weather looked set to improve greatly...what...a...surprise! Still it is the same every year and you just have to grin and bear it and keep plugging away. So it was today. Despite the lovely start to the day by lunchtime the cloud had returned and as I strode purposefully (more to keep myself warm than because of any sense of purpose) across the field the cloud was accompanied by a strong breeze. A Small Tort was startled by some workman up ahead and flew by at a great rate of knots, wind assisted.

On the path things weren't much easier as the wind direction was such that the breeze cut straight across the field and hit the path full in the face. During the briefest of lulls in the breeze and when I was about half way along I saw two Small Torts take off and plop down in a furrow in the field. So no photo opportunities there. Luckily further along my scanning of the piles of dross and the little 'clearings' among the dead grasses yielded a fourth Small Tort. It was as flat to the ground as it could be and was quivering it's wings trying for all it was worth to keep its temperature up.





I walked to the end of the track and then started my return journey. Another Small Tort was basking. It then started crawling across the dead foliage taking shelter underneath some stinging nettles. And a good job too as the temperature continued to drop, the wind continued to blow and there was also some drops of rain carried by the breeze. Considering rolling my shirt sleeves back down I headed back to work.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

Ps Within an hour the wind had dropped and the sun 😊☹️

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 29-Apr-18 02:42 PM GMT

That last post sounds like my season so far in a nutshell 😊!

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Apr-18 02:11 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It feels like we've had Spring and Summer (that was those three epic days the other week) and now we'll be stuck in Autumn until around Christmas time ☹️

### Work 18-04-2018

Things are starting to get a little better. Today was warmer with sunny intervals and walking round without a jumper was actually doable. I planned to do the usual route but got distracted right at the outset as I recalled Dave's/a friend from UKB's luck with Dandelions and so I diverted to investigate the overgrown area where the jump pits used to be. I bumped into a Small Tort almost immediately and this was swiftly followed by a pair. They seemed to be locked into courtship with the small male patiently waiting behind the female. I was sure that they would have copulated but unfortunately I didn't have enough time to wait and watch.



Instead I cut back across the field and, with time pressing, dove down through the housing estate to get to the 'path'. I made a brief stop on the way as a Small Tort hung upside down tantalisingly from a Muscorum offering a cracking composition from both front and back.



Once on the path it was business as usual with a total of eight Small Torts, two of which also seemed to be a courting. Time was ticking by and so I forewent walking to the very end of the path so I'll never know if there would have been my first Specklie waiting for me. I made my way back along the path this time seeing six Small Torts and a Peacock which was down on the deck mudpuddling. I wondered while I watched it if this would become a more common sight this year after the recent deluges?





With 15 seconds to spare I stepped back into my classroom...that was a close run thing!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by ernie f, 30-Apr-18 02:45 PM GMT

Wurzel

I love the shot of the Small Tort from underneath with the muscorum centre stage. Brilliant!

**Re: Wurzel**

by Andrew555, 30-Apr-18 03:27 PM GMT

Look at you Wurzel, swimming in Torts and I still haven't seen one! 😊😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 30-Apr-18 08:00 PM GMT

Lovely Tort's Wurzel, 😊 your seeing loads of Tort's and I was up to my eye's in OT's today. 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 01-May-18 06:01 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I like to try for the 'stained glass' shot and Muscorum offers an ideal perch, though they're getting harder to get now as my hips are starting to wear 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 Have they not got to you yet? Lazy little blighters! 😊 Just a heads up my next post will have my largest number of Small Torts so you might want to skip it...

Cheers Goldie 😊 That's the thing with this season; one minute there's loads of butterflies the next there's none, then there's loads again – you've just got to pick your day (or in my case hope that the weekend is decent weather wise 😊😊)

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 01-May-18 10:48 PM GMT

May 2018

Now things will hopefully get proper started!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by essexbuzzard, 01-May-18 11:03 PM GMT

Yay! Spring is not allowed to be held up any longer.

**Re: Wurzel**

by millerd, 01-May-18 11:05 PM GMT

From the end of the week, things look decidedly good. How long before the subject of your calendar photo will be out on the Hill do you think, Wurzel?

😊😊

Dave

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 02-May-18 08:40 AM GMT

Cheers Essex 😊 I totally agree hopefully the pay back for all this terrible butterfly weather will be a fantastic late spring and summer! 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I reckon about a fortnight for them to really get going – I saw my first at Larkhill on 10th May last year but things have slowed this year...I'll keep checking the Wiltshire website but we haven't had reports of Grizzlies yet 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 02-May-18 09:36 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel. next week looks good, hope fully I'll try my luck in Wales and at GB then. Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 02-May-18 11:23 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Definitely worth a look even if the weather is half as good as they reckon, fingers crossed it comes off for you! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

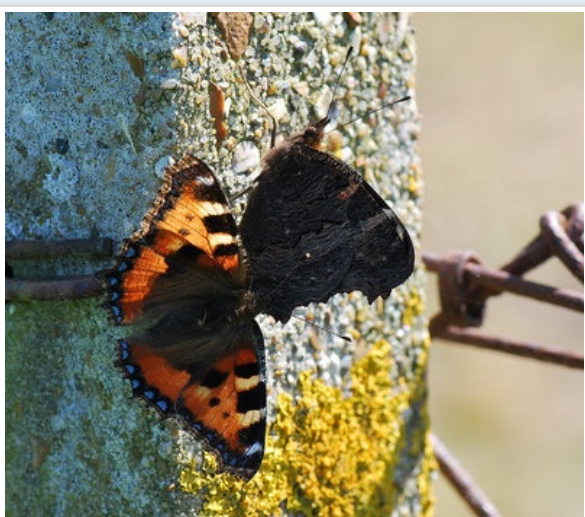
**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 03-May-18 02:22 PM GMT

## Work 19-04-2018

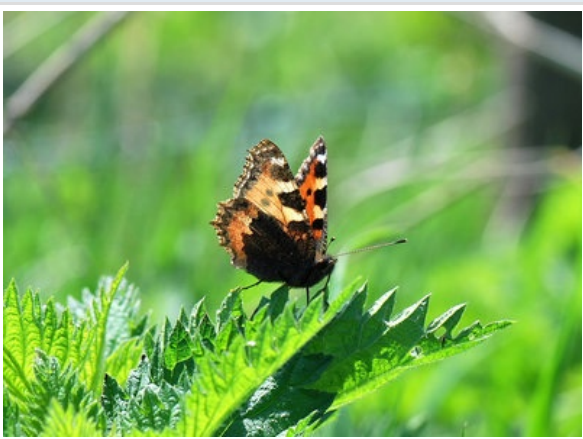
After the improvement in the weather continued I stepped out at lunch again today and again I went slightly off piste as it were as I again went to check out the old jump pits. Unlike yesterday however it only threw up the one butterfly – a Small Tort. I carried onto the hedge and made to walk through the small line of trees which separated the pits from the pitches. When a Peacock flew through the same gap I followed it as it wove along the boundary hedge only to disappear over the top and to the fields beyond. As I found myself on the opposite side of the field from what I was sued to I carried on anyway. After a while, almost three quarters along the length of the hedge I was regretting not taking this walk before as I was racking up the Small Torts, the tally was going over double figures. I'd also had a Comma drop in for a bit, it rummaged around in the bushes and then shot off after a Small tort.

I carried on following the field around to the left finding another Small Tort, then another (number 12) and then a Peacock. It took off, hassled by a Small Tort (number 13) which harassed it for a bit before both landed on a concrete fence post and the Small Tort made what seemed to be courtship advances? I left them to it as I was limited for time. How come I can't find these things when I've got hours to kill and so I'm able to wait and watch? Finding Small Tort number 14 about 2 metres away from the back path I set off on my usual route and so reset the mental counter to zero as it was going to be business as usual along the narrow and familiar track.





After the plethora of butterflies from before it came as a bit of a shock when I realised that I was fast approaching the half way mark and I'd not seen anymore. However I needn't have worried as a Peacock saw of a Small Tort before taking up position on top of a fence post. After this it was indeed back to business as usual and I added another 5 Small Torts and another Peacock to the lunch time tally.



All told there was a Comma, 4 Peacocks and 20 Small Torts. What a cracking half hour!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 03-May-18 02:59 PM GMT

Skip a Wurzel post ?! Never! 😊 No matter how many Torts.. 🍷



Great stuff. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-May-18 08:21 AM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 You're safe now – the Small Torts have quietened down I think that was their peak 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 04-May-18 08:51 AM GMT

Pretty good for half an hour, Wurzel. 😊 Peacocks and Torties do seem to suffer identity problems – I've seen such "courtship" several times, usually male Tortoiseshells pestering female Peacocks.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 04-May-18 07:42 PM GMT

I like that Peacock on top of the fence post 😊

I notice a number of species seem to get a bit 'confused'...I have seen Small Torts try it on with Peacocks, Orange-tips with GV and Small Whites...and the whites with female Orange-tips. It seems that anything with a similar colour scheme will often trigger the behaviour.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 04-May-18 10:32 PM GMT

20 Small Torts, that IS a cracking lunchtime ramble, I'm lucky to get half that in a day in most of my haunts! 🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-May-18 09:32 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 So it was in this case but unfortunately I couldn't hang around to see if his advances came to fruition, that's the one drawback to the change of timings of the day 😊 On the other hand we do finish a lot earlier...more of that in the next post 😊 Once I've written it 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I liked that one too – it was acting like the Black Knight – "None shall pass!" 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I think that was the peak Bugboy but it was still great to see, I'll have to do a few 'lunchtimes' later in the year to see how successful they were 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 05-May-18 08:33 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I saw one ST today at Southport but it didn't stop, infact nothing did for very long 😊 It's still great just to out in the Sun though isn't 😊  
Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

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

It is great isn't Goldie 😊 I was enjoying the sun and my first Greenstreak of the year today but I got called away by my daughters as they were worried about a stranded sheep and they wanted me to sort it out 😊 It's a long story for a post at a later date...but then aren't all of my posts 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

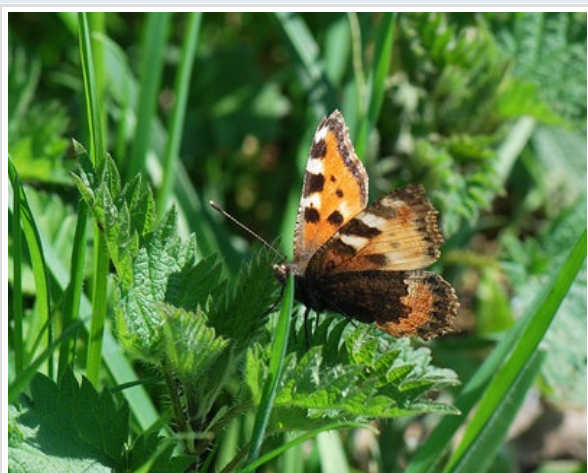
### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-May-18 07:59 AM GMT

## Vera Jone's Mill 19-04-2018

After my success with the Nymphalids at lunch I started wondering where the Whites were? I reasoned that perhaps the habitat offered by the back path wasn't the best and so I hatched a plan. As I had a parents evening I would be experiencing the joys of 'trapped time'. This is where there isn't enough time to travel home and back and so usually I catch up on work or play cards with the Maths Department et al. However this time I decided I'd nip out to Vera Jones's Mill to hopefully connect with some Whites.

It was mighty W when I arrived and as I walked through the gate a Small Tort buzzed me in greeting. Slightly further along another Small Tort took off from an invisible resting place among the grass. Over another gate, down the hill and through the next gate and I was in the noticeably cooler dappled shade of the small wood which encroaches on the fen. Taking to the boardwalk I scanned around hoping for a Specklie though none appeared. Instead at the end of the boardwalk I surprised two male Orange-tips who broke apart from their sparring and shot away at height. Annoyed that my first sighting had been so brief I carried on across the raised path which bisects the fen noting a Peacock further out where I'd have sunk up to me knees in bog. I walked up and down glimpsing an Orange-tip on either side of the path (the two originals?) both of which kept disappearing from view as they flew low along the ditches. Another White butterfly appeared as if from nowhere and it didn't have the cream tangerine appearance of a distant OT, instead it seemed more lemony so I watched it fly into the opposite field, followed it and managed to predict roughly where it would land. When it dropped and started to take nectar I was there ready to get some shots of my first Small White. Chuffed I made my way back to the fen, stopping briefly for a Small Tort before once again enjoying the clomping sound of my feet on the wooden pathway.



I took the path to the right which cut across the fen and dove down into the more wooded area. There to greet me was another Orange-tip bombing along at breakneck speed. I got annoyed with myself as after weeks of bemoaning the dull, cool and wet weather now I found myself moaning that it was too hot! Another OT flew by past me half way through the wood and then as the path takes a left turn I saw my fifth. None stopped, all persistently

patrolled and the only shots I could manage were grabbed, blurry distant in flight shots. Maybe a trip next week if it's 5 or so degrees cooler will see me actually latch onto some OT's?



At this turn in the path straight ahead is another field demarcated by a wire fence. Clinging to this was a Comma. As I cautiously approached a Peacock flew by and the Comma was off like a shot to see off the intruder. I made my way round the entire circuit a second time but despite the usual early season grab shots of OT's there was no change in the cast enacting the Act 2. It still felt hot as I strode up the hill and I started sweating for the first time this year!  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 06-May-18 08:10 AM GMT

I am amazed by your O Tip distance shot. If I tried to take a picture like that it would never focus properly on the butterfly. The auto-focus would decide for itself that a twig some way behind is what I really wanted to see. You have it bang on.

Cheers

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-May-18 04:35 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I don't know the appropriate settings as J just used the Sports Mode which is two clicks round from my 'normal' setting 😊

Have a goodun

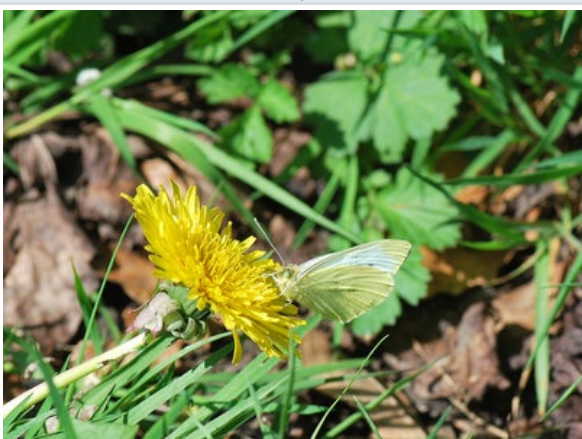
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-May-18 07:45 AM GMT

#### Working Lunch 20-04-2018

After the highs of yesterday I set out at lunch hoping for more of the same. It started well enough with a Small White. Well I didn't know it was a Small until I'd tracked it down and it briefly settled in the Wildlife Area.



From here I got back on track and cut across to the 'Pits' and from there worked my way along the boundary hedge. In the glorious weather there were

very few butterflies. In fact I found only 3 Small Tortois by the time I'd started on the Back path, a decline of 81.25% from yesterday! Perhaps there had been an emergence event and since then they had dispersed?

Along the path it was even worse and I didn't see a single butterfly until I reached the half way point when I was buzzed by a Peacock. I carried on along the path scanning the usual little 'clearings' among the dead grasses and detritus. By the time I'd reached the end point I'd notched up a single Small Tort. Just as I was about to dejectedly turn back a small blue butterfly detached itself from wherever it had been perched some distance away. It rose up and up a Holly tree eventually disappearing over the top - my first Holly Blue.

A quick run and I was back at work with just enough time to wolf down my Hommus sandwich.  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 07-May-18 08:18 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, my plans have been put on hold for a while, my Husbands not too well, we seem to get to places eventually though, 😊 I hope you've had a good week-end , I see even in your lunch breaks your seeing the Butterflies 😊  
Pearl BF Have been seen in the Lakes over the week-end, hope fully I'll get up there some time in May 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-May-18 08:52 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck with the PBF's Philzoid and I tried at Bentley but they hadn't emerged yet - so I went elsewhere and got some Dukes instead 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 08-May-18 09:21 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I've just checked the Lanc's Butterfly site and no Dukes seen there yet or Pearls , I thought they'd be a bit late because they'd some really bad weather this Winter, so like you I'll have to go back later, let's hope the weather picks up again, rain forecast here for the rest of the week 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-May-18 12:46 PM GMT

That's been the story this year, stuff just gets going then there's a spell of terrible weather, then it gets going again, then more bad weather etc 😊 Then when you finally do get great weather everything's been held back so it takes a while for the butterflies to catch-up, or so it seems 😊 Oh well at least PBFs only need the slightest glimpse of the sun to fly, fingers crossed for a break at the weekend 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 08-May-18 07:24 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

That's been the story this year, stuff just gets going then there's a spell of terrible weather, then it gets going again, then more bad weather etc 😊 Then when you finally do get great weather everything's been held back so it takes a while for the butterflies to catch-up, or so it seems Wurzel

The problem this year is that it keeps going from one extreme to another, oh for some good old fashioned spring weather of regular mixed cloud/rain/sun with temperatures in the mid to high teens. I don't think our spring butterflies are used to the recent heat, either charging around in turbo mode or hiding away in the shade.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-May-18 11:35 AM GMT

Hear, hear Neil I'm with you on this 😊 But perhaps with climate change continuing then extremes will become the normal 😊

Have a goodun

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-May-18 02:10 PM GMT

### Stourhead 21-04-2018

Finally the weekend arrived and the weather held. I couldn't believe it. After the usual Saturday mornings doings we bundled the girls in the car and it the highway to Stourhead. As usual the clouds followed us and we even had a brief shower as we made to turn off the A303 but once we were parked the clouds had lifted and we were able to walk around uncoated with short sleeves up.

We followed the usual route; over the bridge, up through the terraced gardens, on through the stables and following the woodland path. Unfortunately the area I'd been looking forward to visiting most was closed so there would be no sightings of Whites or Specklies fluttering from one side of the avenue to the other. In fact it was very quiet and by the time we'd reached half way round I'd seen only a single Brimstone and that hadn't stopped to boot!



As the path came down the hill by shallow, wide steps and broke out from the trees an OT flew by. I watched as it patrolled this way and that and it seemed to be following a circuit. However despite this I just couldn't get a clear photo as it would stop fleetingly, just long enough for me to get into position before setting off on the same patrol but always stopping at a different place. Another OT briefly ventured onto the original territory and a skirmish ensued before the intruder was sent packing. We carried on and by the time we'd reached the caves leading up to Apollo's Temple I'd notched up 3 Brimstone, 3 Small White and 3 OT's. Up at the Temple there were a few fleeting views of a Holly Blue to add to the tally but it wasn't playing ball either. It was a little frustrating though as everything was bombing about. However my frustration was tempered by spending time with the family in beautiful settings.

Later while I was packing the boot K asked after her sweatshirt...she'd left it up at the Apollo Temple. Cursing under my breath and possibly slightly louder we walked-ran all the way back. It was still there and so out of breath we made our second return journey. We did make one important pitstop - a Holly Blue was fluttering down on the path looking like it was trying to find somewhere to mud puddle. The traipsing tourists that surrounded it made it instead settle on a low growing plant.





Ever cloud has a silver lining it seems. In this case more of a silvery Holly Blue but there we go...

Have a godun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-May-18 04:00 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, that was on the 21st of April WoW!!!! the HB's have only just come out here, you got yours nice and early 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-May-18 07:17 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 It still felt like ages to wait for them 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 10-May-18 10:39 AM GMT

Great stuff Wurzel, I really like your 2nd Small White shot from VJ's Mill. 😊

And good news, I have now seen a Small Tort, so thanks for putting a word in. 😊  
Hopefully you've seen a Speckled by now, I shall watch your incoming reports.

Cheers

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-May-18 07:49 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 I'm glad the Small Torts finally got a wriggle on and made it over your way – next time I'll ask them to move a little faster 😊 I have finally seen Specklie and much more besides 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-May-18 11:58 PM GMT

#### Duke Site 22-04-2018

Having spent the afternoon yesterday visiting somewhere the family wanted to go today it was my turn to pick the picnic location. I plumped for my Duke Site, vaguely hoping for an early Grizzlie which might have awoken in the glorious sun or maybe a Greenstreak. Plus it had the advantage of soft, mossy areas of dappled shade in the clearing.

Things looked great as we arrived, a Brimstone flying by and showing up vividly against almost uniform kakhi green background which was occasionally sprinkled with bright yellow Cowslips. However it was decidedly quiet by the time we'd reached the big Cypress tree between the track and the clearing. We carried on up the track seeing a Small Tort on the way before turning left and heading to the far corner of the clearing to a mossy area favoured by

Dukes. I was then free to roam and set out on a couple of forays whilst the girls (all three) relaxed in the sun. I checked out the little valley, the stony bank behind the clearing and the clearing itself first but it was proving hard work. A couple of Brimstone, an OT and a Peacock later and I was back before embarking on my second foray. This time I worked down the clearing and followed the track round to the right. I wouldn't normally go this way but I was being led by an un-obliging OT. It just wouldn't stop!



I eventually lost sight of it as it sparred with another white. It went up and over the Hawthorns and the other went low and further into the beech wood. I followed and it settled a few times and just long enough to ID it as a GVW and also get a few shots. A Small White nearby didn't stop long enough for a photo and soon both whites were bickering away so I left them to it and headed back to the family for lunch, passing another Peacock on the way.



I kept an eye out during lunch and my munching was briefly disturbed by a Brimstone and then another male OT. This one I watched and it was behaving slightly differing than the others I'd seen. It seemed to be completing a circuit flying along the track on two sides of the clearing before zig-zagging across the clearing to its original start point; flying in a jagged tooted triangle. It was also stopping more regularly and for slightly longer. So lunch done I set off to intersect it. A couple of times I was able to get it in the viewfinder, the next few I managed the odd record shot before finally things fell into place - right plant, right orientation, close enough and autofocus running fast enough. Hopefully things will get easier as the season progresses as the butterflies do seem to chill out after an initial surge.



As the newspaper and books had been read, the coffee drunk and the lunch eaten we bade farewell to my Duke Site. I'll be back soon though...

Have a goodun

Wurzel How long will it be?

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-May-18 09:44 AM GMT

Tutor Time 23-04-2018

Once a week I take my younger daughter across town so that she can spend an hour with her 11+ Tutor. During the winter I would sit in their front room and get some marking or planning down. It was a very productive hour. However now the winter is almost over I have started making the odd foray out either up the Down or down to the local church yard. So far these occasional visits have produced zero butterflies, not even fly-by's but tonight I was determined to make the most of one of the few sunny afternoons.



So I thought I'd try my luck around the meadows. Through the church yard I went with no Green-veined or Small Whites, down through the Yew and Holly bushes with no Specklies or Holly Blues. Along the river I went seeing Cuckoo Flower but without finding an Orange-tip nor any Small Torts bedding down among the nettles. I climbed up and over the bridge and walked along the path where there was a distinct absence of any Peacocks on the blossom and then through the fields and past the huge dung heap where there were zero Red Admirals. In fact I didn't see a single butterfly in any of the haunts that I'd visited in the past. I was walking on new territory and getting near to having to turn back when a white something or other drifted down a settled in the Stinging Nettles. At first I thought the stand out white object was just a feather so delicately had it drifted to its resting place. But as I go closer it turned out to be a female Green-veined White.

Chuffed with my first '2018 Tutor Session Butterfly' I beat a hasty retreat so as to collect little L. The return journey was just as butterfly-less as the outward journey. Things have got to get going properly soon surely?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 11-May-18 09:30 PM GMT

Waiting with bated breath for the May sunshine to hit you Wurzel! 😊 A nice delicate GVW there...

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 12-May-18 08:52 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I'm looking forward to your May Lunch Time Breaks 😊 also your Bank Holiday shots 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-May-18 10:49 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I'm trying to get up to date but I keep making more trips out 😊 What a terrible situation to be in 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 A few more lunchtime shots thought with the GCSEs starting tomorrow they may slow down for a week or two...

Better get on with writing some posts...

Have a goodun

Wurzel s

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-May-18 12:00 AM GMT

### Work 26-04-2018

I hadn't been able to get out for a while as the weather was playing silly buggers and was destined to do the same thing over the weekend but all of that was going to change today. So in blazing sun I made my way out and along the usual route making for the back path. On the way I saw only a single Small Tort but it was really well positioned/posed like it had taken 'the Dandelion stairway to heaven'.



Along the path things were really quiet past the gardens. So quiet in fact that I stopped about a quarter of the way along to take a few shots of a female Oil Beetle as a back-up just in case I couldn't add anything to the tally. I needn't have worried as I fell into a purple patch just past the half way point. The path widens here and there is a small but steep bank reaching up to the residents' back garden fences. As it's wider more vegetation can grow here and around and about there was another Small Tort along with a Green-veined and a Small White. It's strange how butterflies seem to congregate in the same spots, I suppose they often have similar needs so the same spot can meet those needs for more than a single individual? Anyway it was great being able to click away to my left and right and straight ahead and get three species without having to take a step.







After this I strolled to the end of the path and saw my first Large White of 2018 et it didn't stop unfortunately and directly after identifying it took flight. So I strolled back the way I'd come and at the Purple Patch the Small White was still sitting maybe recovering still from the bird strike which had deprived it of the tops of its fore wings? A second flew in, there was a brief scuffle and it was gone to be replaced by a fly-by Peacock. I could have stayed all afternoon but in the end I forced myself back to work. The day got even better when the staff meeting was postponed so I was looking forward to an extra hour at t'Vera...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

Hot of the press, but not for long as a certain someone is lurking

As expected...8 minutes.

**Re: Wurzel**

by ernie f, 14-May-18 07:16 AM GMT

Love the dandelion stairway to heaven, Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 14-May-18 07:11 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, love your stairway to heaven 😊 I've only manage to catch one shot of a Small White this year and none have arrived in the Garden this year which seems strange, I wonder if there going to be scarce a round here. Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Andrew555, 14-May-18 09:05 PM GMT

Excellent GVV's and OT's there Wurzel. 😊  
Stairway to Heaven.. 🍷🍷

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 15-May-18 11:10 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew, Goldie and Ernie 😊 I was mighty chuffed with that shot not least because it gave me the perfect opportunity to use another song title in one of my posts, I try and weave them in now and again 😊 Better go and get the next one written as I'm still in April 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

I wonder how long it will be tonight?

8

**Re: Wurzel**

by ernie f, 16-May-18 08:43 AM GMT

Wurzel: You mentioned in answer to someone else's post that the PBF's are out at Stockbridge Down. Its a long hike for me to get to Bentley Wood from Alton but Stockbridge is just about do-able. Can you point me roughly to where they might be on the Down? Thanks.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 17-May-18 01:58 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I was mentioned on the Hampshire Butterfly Group on Facebook but not on the main Butterfly Conservation latest sightings page unfortunately. Also unfortunately they didn't give any details about where it was on the site but I reckon it will be in the little wooded area at the eastern most tip of the reserve where I believe there is a second, smaller car park. I seem to recall hearing this a few years back...Your best bet though is Bentley and if you cut through Broughton and West Tytherley it's only another 10-15 minutes on from Stockbridge Down. Good luck whichever way you

venture! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-May-18 11:56 PM GMT

### Vera Jones's Mill 26-04-2018

After a lunchtime of whites an extra hour out butterflying was a very welcome bonus. Check me out butterflying on a school night what a rebel 😊 There was really only one place to go and that was Vera Jones's Mill. So after a 4 minute drive I was parked up, booted and raring to go. As if sensing my anticipation a Small Tort greeted me as soon as I entered the site but knowing that I was here for OTs it did a number so I didn't waste any time stalking it, all the more for OT finding. It was slightly cooler than on my previous visit a week ago but even so as I walked along the hedge, down the hill and over the gate I didn't see a single butterfly. It carried on this way right the way down the hill through the gate and as I followed the board walk round to the right. Nothing, nada, zilch? 😊

As the path left the wood to head out across the fen I spied two male OTs off to my right. I watched them for a while and they didn't venture far, always returning to roughly the same spot until they felt the need to go and hassle the other, or were hassled themselves. It seemed like this was going to be a really good spot as it was right on the edge of the fen on a muddy track so no trampling to concern myself with, there was a good scattering of both Garlic Mustard and Cuckoo flower, nice big dock leaves and other foliage for them to sun bathe on and the dappled shade offered shelter from the wind and calmed them down. All in all a pretty nice little set up and so I settled down to wait for them to come to me, which they did.



I then made my way out onto the central path and took the boardwalk to the left right the way across the fen. For a while I stood in the sun and watched the whites flying around me. I could make out the more obvious male Orange-tips, of which there were two and a Green-veined White which flew close enough and settled for just long enough for me to make out the markings but there were two other whites that I couldn't identify. I carried on through the more wooded area to the recently mown field where there were another two male OT's but all were still in full-on patrol mode seeming to fly incessantly so I retraced my steps back the way I'd come making for the initial spot. On the way a Roe Deer gave me more of a shock than I gave it as it launched itself away. As I caught my breath a Green-veined White stopped for me.



Back at my initial stopping point there were still male OTs flying this way and that. I clocked 4 males and a female at one point, found a nicely marked male which instead of the usual black forewing spots seemed have little eyes and a second male with slightly less obvious 'eyes'. Occasionally now the sun would go in for a few moments and then they would slow down and eventually stop. During one of the longer shady spells one male shut up shop as it were on a Cuckoo Flower whilst another was lower down in the vegetation. It was interesting to see it open up, its antennae still pointing directly forward as one unit.





Eventually my time came to an end and not wanting to get home too late I said my goodbyes and departed. Through the first gate at the end of the boardwalk I passed, a Peacock waving me off, before a Green-veined White also wished me adieu on my way up the hill.





All too soon I was back at the car but what a thoroughly cracking hour!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 18-May-18 05:32 AM GMT

Great Orange Tips, soon be time to say goodbye for another year.  
Only one female for me this year.  
I'm going to my Daughters late next week to give them time to get going.

Fingers crossed,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 18-May-18 08:01 AM GMT

Wurzel, What a lovely story. I really appreciate all of the details and atmosphere you put into your diary. I know it all takes time and you are busy enough anyway. But heres a genuine thank you for the joy you bring. Thank you. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 18-May-18 06:13 PM GMT

#### Art Frames wrote:

... I really appreciate all of the details and atmosphere you put into your diary...

Seconded, it really makes your reports a joy to read 😊

Cracking Orange-tip photos too 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 18-May-18 06:26 PM GMT

I can only repeat what has already been said Wurzel – smashing OT shots 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-May-18 11:11 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I was at the Hill today and the numbers are building nicely – there was also Adonis, Small and Common Blues, Wall, Greenstreaks and a giant Orange-tip 😊

Cheers Peter, Neil and Pauline I'm a little lost for words now 😊 so thank you for your very kind comments 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 19-May-18 11:29 PM GMT

Great Orange-tip shots, Wurzel 😊 and like others I always look forward to reading your reports 😊 It's also nice to know that numbers are building on the hill 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 19-May-18 11:41 PM GMT

A great little selection of sunny Orange Tips, Wurzel! 😊 Good to see them on cuckoo flower, as there is so little of it round here and all my shots are on garlic mustard.

It was a terrific day up on the Hill today – I've whittled the photos down substantially but there are still loads. 😊 Did anyone lay a camera on the mega-Orange Tip? It was the largest I've ever seen. Great to see you, and Phil and Lee – almost exactly six months on from the Social. Time flies – should be planning for the next one... 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 20-May-18 05:34 PM GMT

Thoroughly good stuff Wurzel, great shots. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-May-18 09:31 AM GMT

Lovely shots of the Orange Tips Wurzel, it's always great to see them, they're the heralds of Spring for me 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-May-18 08:57 PM GMT

Cheers Mike for you kind comment 😊 The numbers are building but two hills over at Battlesbury which started producing earlier the numbers are booming – they're all over it apparently which is good news for the Hill 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I remember a few years back you giving me some tips for photographing OT's number one of which was find a good roosting site – advice which I took on board 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I was glad to get a proper OT fix 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Me too, but by the time I get round to posting they're more like the Heralds of Summer 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-May-18 02:18 PM GMT

## Work 01-05-2018

After the highs of last week and the scorching weather normal service was resumed over the weekend with rain and wind in abundance and the showers continued on into the start of the next week. It was cool and damp still when I set out on Tuesday lunchtime but having been cooped up for what felt like an age I really needed to get out. So reasoning that the back path would offer the quickest 'fix' I made my way through the housing estate straight there.

Things didn't look good and all the usual little haunts and hollows along the bank were bereft of butterflies. At the end of the path a White took off from a Dandelion before I could get a proper look at it and then I made my back to banks. Once here I scanned a bit deeper searching for butterflies lower down among the grasses seeking shelter from the breeze. As I did this I noticed a dead leaf that seemed out of place so I looked a little more closely. My first Speckle of the year.



After a few shots I watched it try to fly but the sun had gone in again and it could only manage a tiny flutter. I offered it my finger and it climbed on board to warm up a bit and cupping my palm sheltered it from the strengthening breeze. Shortly it opened up and seeing that it was alright I placed on a grass stem at the edge of the path. As the sun came out off it went.





Finally a Specklie! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 22-May-18 08:39 PM GMT

Cracking series of Specklie shots Wurzel 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 22-May-18 09:27 PM GMT

A lovely new specimen, Wurzel, with that hint of purple at the edge of the hindwing. Good to see it went on its way rejoicing after your helping hand! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 22-May-18 09:37 PM GMT

That's great Wurzel. 😊 What a lovely Speckled, great pics. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-May-18 08:22 AM GMT

Lovely shots of the Speckie Wurzel, I love to watch them defending their territory, chasing off any thing that flies near it 😊 That's great until one lands

near that you want a shot of only to be chased off 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-May-18 08:26 AM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 I thought you might like the last post 😊 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I noticed that purplish banding as well, I've not seen it often I wonder if it's a 'fresh' thing? 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I got there in the end 😊 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 It's always the way and sometimes they just suddenly appear out of the blue and hassle your current photography subject. Mind you Small Heath are even worse for it 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-May-18 11:07 PM GMT

#### Enford Stop-off 02-05-2018

After a day stuck in work with the weather such that a lunchtime trip out was off the cards it was with some relief that when it came to go home the sun was out. Unfortunately no-one turned up for the afterschool revision session and so I set off for home taking the back route. As I drove along through the winding lanes I spied the odd Brimstone but it was as I approached my usual stop off pint before Enford that I saw a smaller White, I pulled in and strolled back up the road to where I'd seen the white. It was still in roughly the same place so I was able to get a few shots of a lovely Green-veined White.





I pulled in a second time at my more usual pull in and a 2 minutes stroll back up the road produced another GVW and a pair of sparring Specklies. Things are definitely starting to move as I saw 4 butterflies in as many minutes soon they'll be all over the place...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 24-May-18 11:13 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

#### Enford Stop-off 02-05-2018

...but it was as I approached my usual stop off pint before Enford...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

A Freudian slip, Wurzel? 😊😊

A lovely GVW too - the males are stunningly white when fresh. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 25-May-18 02:02 PM GMT

I second that Wurzel lovely Butterflies Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 26-May-18 08:22 PM GMT

Good to hear Wurzel, lovely shots. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-May-18 11:29 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 More a case of wishful thinking, a pint at the end of the day would be balm to the soul 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 They do brush up nice 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 Things have really gone on a pace now, they're motoring along 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-May-18 08:40 AM GMT

## Star Wars Day at Work 04-05-2018

03-05-2018 Work

As the week progressed I got a little frustrated with the slow rate of change in the weather but Thursday lunch was bright enough and warm enough mostly for there to be some butterflies. However I hadn't anticipated the breeze which was really blustery at times. Cutting through the housing estate and heading to the half way point of the back path yielded nothing even though I kept my eyes peeled. After the usual walk to the end of the path and back I'd seen one definite Large White and four other unidentified whites and not one of them stopped.

04-05-2018 Work

Finally Friday had arrived and not a moment too soon. As the pupils left my room at lunchtime I grabbed my camera and headed out to see what I could see and maybe even photograph - although if it was anything like yesterday all I'd be doing was looking.

I took my secondary route, up through the pits. As I reached the unmown area just prior to the pits a Small White flew towards and then past me. "Here we go again" I thought. Still I carried on wandering round the pits and then a Specklie took off from under my feet and flew into the adjacent field owned by the Primary School. I'd not expected to see a Specklie over this way but I stepped more carefully from then on. A good job that I did as there was a second Specklie. This one didn't fly off not to be seen again but flew only a few metres away landing at a decent height in the hedge so I was able to get my shots.



After this I walked the length of the hedge and back but didn't see any other butterflies though there were a few St Marks flies around and I also found a pair in mid cop. On my return the Specklie was still in roughly the same area so I wished it farewell and headed back in to get the job finished. Stroll on the Bank Holiday!





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-May-18 08:56 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, nice Speckies, it's about the only Butterfly I see at present in great numbers when I go to Hall-Lee-Brook, last week when I went the Tractor was out again cutting the Grass 😊 It's a good job they keep to the Tree's, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-May-18 07:04 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Specklies are one of the 'safe bet' butterflies 😊 Mind you hopefully the next set of butterflies will start emerging up your way soon and then you'll be onto NBAs etc 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-May-18 11:08 PM GMT

#### Coombe Bisset Down 05-05-2018

As my wife was booked onto an aromatherapy course in one of the little villages on the outskirts near Salisbury I was given the dual duty of chauffeur and childminder for the afternoon. So with part one of duty completed I loaded the girls back into the car and we set off along the high hedged windy lanes. Nearby was a site that I'd only visited once before some years back - Coombe Bissett Down and so with 'Iron Maiden - Two Minutes to Midnight' (their choice not mine though I heartedly approved 😊) blaring from the open windows turned off up the hill towards the site. Only it wasn't the correct turning. Instead I was following a route that I'd last taken almost 30 years towards Great Yews a Scout camp. I'd love to have carried on and inspected the old camp but my memory isn't that good and it certainly isn't the chalk downland I wanted to visit. So we pulled a U-ey and started back down the hill but very slowly as here, away from all the hustle and bustle down a largely ignored road there seemed to be butterflies everywhere. I inched the car along with the windows open and pointed out butterflies to the girls as we went past as if we were on a safari. A male OT went past, a Green-veined White rose almost vertically up the side of the hedge, a pair of male Brimstone started a scrap right in front of us and I stopped for fear of them colliding with the windscreen. Then a Holly Blue jinked by and in my rear view mirror I could see a/the male OT returning whilst ahead another male flew towards on a collision course. They met and spiralled upwards. The loser shot off over the hedge the victor settled down for a victory drink whilst just further on a female OT nectared - the reason for all the strife? The girls were enthralled by this greener, lusher and miniature Serengeti but all too soon the spell was broken as another car came up the hill and passed us by.





We got back on the main road and took the next left turn which was the right one this time (if you follow me) and then we stumbled across the next memory related problem. I remembered reading that there was a particular hotspot right at the far end of the reserve which was particularly resplendent in wildflowers and therefore butterflies too So we sailed up the hill past the car park looking to our right down across the down for said field. Only it wasn't there anymore and neither was there anywhere sensible to park or anywhere to get over the barbed wire reserve boundary. So noting another Holly Blue we pulled another U-ey and drove back to the car park. 😊

By now I'd wasted a good amount of my allotted child caring time and it would soon be back to Duty 1 and the pick up so we made haste down the Down starting along the largest and widest terraced ramp. It was really well grazed by sheep from the look of the height of the sward so we climbed back up the steep bank to look for one of the more roughly grazed terraces. This proved better straight away as a Peacock and Brimstone other did a fly-by. In the surprisingly hot sun I was worried about the girls getting burnt and so I found them a shady little nook under a large Hawthorn and they set up camp so that I could investigate further.

It was hard going with the heat making everything solar charged and OTs , GVWs and anther Peacock all flew by without stopping. The Peacock itself did a U-ey and circled me a couple of times before landing wings closed – too hot possibly? I took a few shots and gave it a wide berth and it stayed put while I carried on towards the bottom of the hill. Something caught my attention out of the corner of my eye a familiar and welcome green flashed at me from amongst the foliage – my first Green Hairstreak of 2018. I fired of a few shots as it flew this way and that but none came out so I waited for it to settle so I could make an approach. It was very jittery but eventually I managed to get in close enough for a few shots I was happy with.





It was all going so well and then I heard "Wurzel" being screamed across the valley and so in a flash I was sprinting back to the girls. Normally the call of 'Wurzel' just means the battery has gone flat on the iPod, they want to know where the chocolates are or one of them needs the loo but this time there was real fear and anguish in the call. I was actually a little bit scared. 😊

"What's up, why's K crying, why are you crying?" I asked a blubbing little L.

"K's really upset there's a lost lamb and it's crying for it's mum"



I'd been called away from my commune with nature, my meditation to play Shepherd! On the next terrace down there was a gate, on one side was a Ewe with one Lamb and on the other was another Lamb bleating mournfully. It seems someone had opened and closed the gate behind them properly but the sneaky/stupid Lamb and snuck through and not couldn't get back. So I managed to herd it down and towards the gate, corral it in the triangle of a kissing gate while I opened up the main gate for it to gambol through. Job down, tears stopped, mother and baby reunited. But I'd lost all of the remaining time and so we had to make our way back up the hill on the hurry up! Hopefully there will be other meetings with the Green One.



We arrived back a little early for the pick up and so I checked out the meadow on the other side of the road. It was a sight to see and I scanned across from left to right counting 57 Whites in the single continuous gaze. Judging by the tiered vegetation that is probably less than half of the number actually present in this one little bit of field. Stunning 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-May-18 08:34 PM GMT

### Noar Hill 06-05-2018

Possibly like the butterflies I was caught out by the unseasonably warm weather. This particular weekend date wise is usually when Philzoid and I make our first trip to Bentley Wood looking for Pearls. This time however there was nothing in the book and wandering into the clearing to meet Philzoid things seemed a little quiet...too quiet. We checked all the usual likely spots; the bottom of the clearing which threw up a Peacock, the damper area in the middle of the clearing on the other side of the brook and also the far side but despite notching up an OT, GVWs and Brimstones, a couple of Specklies and another Peacock there wasn't a Pearl in sight. 😞

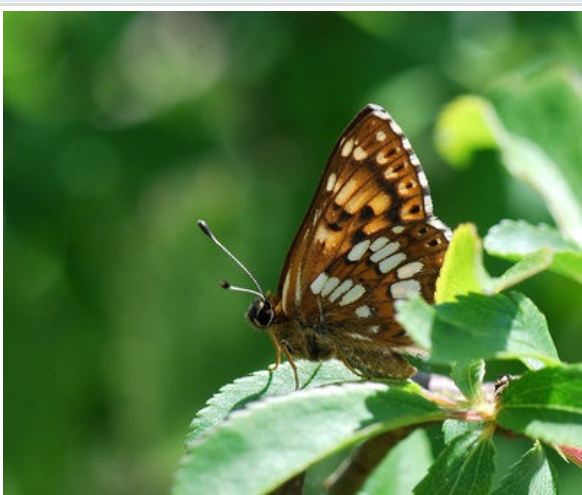
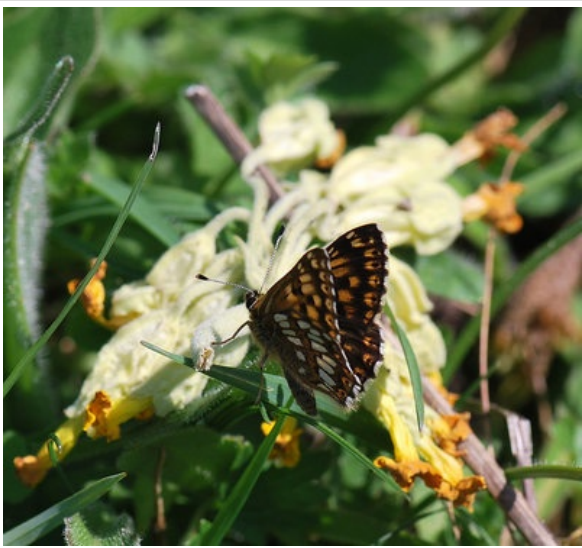


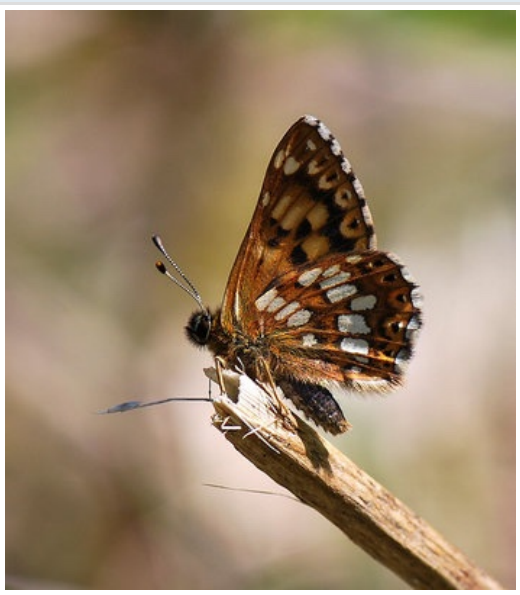


I tried some of the (un)usual tricks; spotting a Tiger Beetle, Speckle and Tree Pipit all good omens usually, wandering past aimlessly and suddenly staring at a patch of leaves, pouring a coffee but nothing coerced a Pearl to emerge for us. It seems that the cold snap had knocked back their emergence. Even my final trick of announcing loudly "right we're off let's make a move to the next place" didn't produce the goods. So where next? We could try my Duke site which is a late one and so possibly wouldn't be that productive or we could go rally cross and see what all the fuss was about at Noar Hill? Noar Hill it was and so off we set.

We did it in quite good time despite being taken through Winchester city centre, a few horses en route and a Mobility Scooter 🙄🙄 in the middle of the a single track road in the middle of nowhere!? Philzoid took the lead for the final furlong and before we knew it we were parked and walking up the hill, a male OT coming down to greet us. 😊

Not having visited here before I didn't know what to expect and it felt quite strange having reached the top of the hill to suddenly be heading down into a dip. We met someone else looking for Dukes in this first large hollow who communed that they'd all be hiding away from the lunchtime sun. Within 30 seconds we'd located our first and second Duke, one a piece. Our thoughts of doom and gloom and wasted journies were evaporated by this cracking little butterfly. After a little bit here we'd counted at least 5 Dukes three of which took part in some aerial argy bargy and proving what vicious little critters they can be. Another enthusiast appeared overhead at the top of the hollow as the Greenstreak that had been giving him the run around dove down towards us. It was a real flighty blighter but I managed a few record shots.





We then started working through the hollows alternatively clambering up the steep sides, enjoying the cooling breeze at the top before trying not to fall down into the next hollow. The second one we visited held a beauty of a Duke which kept its own little territory, a hollow within a hollow. He posed brilliantly but in the heat open wing shots were at a premium.



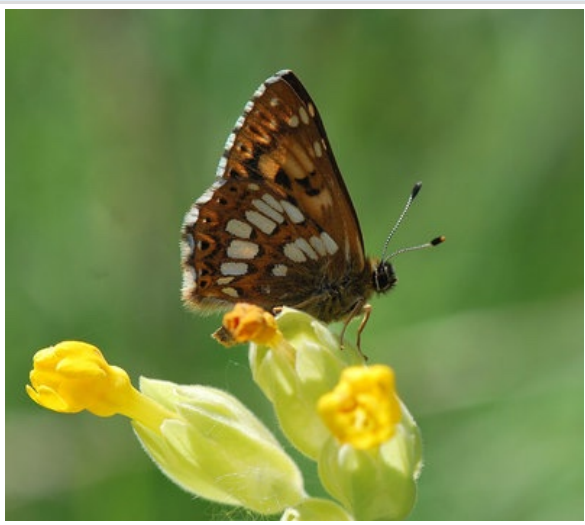
The next hollow held two more Dukes and then we ended up wandering along a fairly level track at the top of this one noting a few GVWs, a Peacock and an OT on the way. A Holly Blue flew up around a tree which was covered in little golden moths that had antennae three times the length of their bodies. (A.metallica! 🤩🤩)





What felt like the furthest hollow held another two Dukes and not much else so we started to work our way back. The final hollow that we intentionally visited held 5 Dukes and someone with a super-slow-mo camera. Unlike us he was dead chuffed when the Dukes would take off as that was exactly what he was after. It worked quite well. He'd get a lock on, we'd get our shots and should we inadvertently disturb the butterfly or it decided it fancied a change he'd get his shot. Our second Greenstreak of the day also put in an appearance here.





I was thoroughly enjoying myself in this Duke Haven and I now understood the hype. However we soon encountered the darker side of Noar Hill when we came to leave. It is a very disorientating place with hollow after hollow appearing to be the 'one we visited first'. On the way we saw a further three Dukes but actually I was more interested in actually finding the way out. Eventually we tagged along with another couple who were going back to their car and we came out about 100metres further along the road from where we'd taken the track up to the site. I was very tight for time so thanking Philzoid and wishing him luck I set off homewards - making it back with three minutes to spare and knocking 6 minutes off of the SATNAV's e.t.a!

What a cracking day...might need to return here next year and I'll bring a bloody big ball of string a la Theseus! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 30-May-18 09:34 PM GMT

Lovely Dukes from Noar Hill, Wurzel. 😊 The lack of topside shots is more than made up for by the cracking undersides. Have you ever noticed that the underside of the abdomen clearly shows a remnant from its days as a caterpillar - a set of projections that would have been the "false" legs of the caterpillar - at least that's what it looks like.

Thoroughly worth a visit, and yes it's a maze to the uninitiated! If you ever discover a particularly good pit and decide you must revisit it next year, you'll never find it again... 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 30-May-18 09:47 PM GMT

Smashing post Wurzel - just what I needed to cheer me up. Great shots too. Glad you enjoyed 'my' hill but if you ever get that close again please drop in for a cuppa! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 30-May-18 11:31 PM GMT

Great Duke shots from the Noar Hill triangle, Wurzel 😊😊 When it's that hot undersides are par for the course, but Duke undersides are stunning in any case 😊



Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 31-May-18 05:01 PM GMT

Great shots Wurzel, 📷📷 even if I'd seen them at GB I couldn't have got so close. So I can enjoy yours 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 31-May-18 09:38 PM GMT

Great report from Noar Hill, almost felt like I was there myself.  
When I was there, several years ago, I was glad to have Pauline as a guide.

Hope you get to see the Great Cheverell Walls.  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 01-Jun-18 12:54 PM GMT

Cracking Duke shots Wurzel. 😊 I too experienced some 'navigational issues' at Noar Hill. 😊😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Jun-18 01:17 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I'd noticed the underside looked a little 'bumpy' but now you mention it it does look like the back end of a caterpillar, almost as if they didn't quite finish metamorphosing 😊😊 On my next visit as well as a ball of string I'm also taking a few 'corner flags' to plant in particularly good hollows ready for my third visit 😊

Cheers Pauline 😊 Will do as coffee/tea is my main fuel 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 The Noar Hill Triangle has a good ring to ti, I think they definitely need to change the name 😊 I agree their undersides are subtly beautiful 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 You can return the compliment when you get onto NBAs 😊📷

Cheers Trevor 😊 I think a guide is definitely the way to go at this site 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I was thinking about leaving a breadcrumb trail the next time I visit but the birds would have them hence Theseus seemed a better option though hopefully there isn't a Minotaur roaming about the various hollows 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 01-Jun-18 10:02 PM GMT

Smashing report Wurzel 😊. For me that cross-country route via Winchester added a whole new dimension of going to Noar Hill.

#### Wurzel wrote:

I think a guide is definitely the way to go at this site

As someone who has visited Noar Hill half a dozen times over the years, getting us around should've been a doddle. It's fair to say I was a little ring-rusty 😊😊

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Jun-18 11:22 PM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 It did get a bit Rally Cross at one point but you know me; I don;t see the point in hanging around 😊 No worries about being rusty I reckon it changes every year just to catch people out 😊😊

June 2018

Almost missed this but what's one day late when you're almost a month behind on the PD?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Jun-18 06:29 PM GMT

### Bank Holiday at Lulworth and after...07-05-2018

"What's the weatherperson just said – the Bank Holiday is going to be hot and sunny?" 🤔 😊  
"Now they're just taking the piss!" 😏

But indeed the weather was hot and sunny so no urine had been extracted. 😊 Having been out the previous two days (albeit one of those was childminding) it would have been bad form to have suggested another butterflying trip. Luckily my wife suggested a trip to the coast, to Lulworth Cove and as a back-up I had to take Little L to her tutoring in the evening so I could also nip up the Down. So with things warming up nicely we set off early so as to beat the traffic.

Once there we made to use the facilities and I noticed that the wildlife area has been flattened and all life grubbed out. From here we carried on our way to our usual little spot in the far right hand corner of the Cove. My wife and I took it in turns to paddle and find sea glass and after a quick rock climb with L I watched the bags while L and my wife paddled almost the whole way round the Cove and back. I was biding my time see and when they got back I vamoosed up the small track to my usual spot. It was disappointingly quiet with not even a Skipper to greet me. I've seen 6 species here in the past but it was far too early for three of them though I was hopeful of my first Dingy or Grizzlie. No such luck. In fact after wandering the paths several times I was bereft of butterflies. Surprisingly I wasn't that bothered by the lack of butterflies as a lizard had clambered out like a Dinosaur on the Jurassic coast and there was the stunning Lulworth Crumple to see as well as erosion taking place before my very eyes at the caves at Stair Hole. I know that being from Dorset I may be considered slightly biased but it is a simply stunning place. Eventually I saw a few butterflies; a distant White and the incongruous sight of an OT set against a turquoise backdrop as it patrolled along the surf line. On the way home I caught a fleeting glimpse of what could have been a Peacock or more likely a Red Admiral though I wouldn't like to have called it. Sun-soaked we made our way back home revelling in the stunning sights, sounds and smells we'd sensed.





*Yellow-legged Gull?*

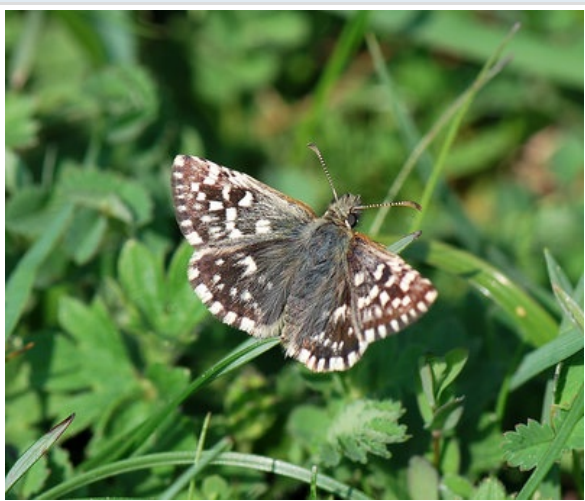
And that would normally be where I'd leave it. But it being a Monday I had to take Little L to her tutoring and so once I'd dropped her off I hared up the dusty tracks to Laverstock Down. As I approached the lower slopes of the Down a male OT flew by and this put up a Peacock not exactly looking brilliant but still impressive in stature when compared to the roving OT. It settled back down after clearing its airspace and so I managed a couple of shots.



Leaving the senior citizen in peace I carried on feeling the path start to head upwards. Just at the point where it really starts becoming a Down (i.e. steeply rising) a small block of scrub causes the path to fork. To the left it cuts across the Down diagonally taking longer to reach the top but at a more gentle gradient. I opted for the right hand path where it just goes up and as I made to mentally shift my pace to a lower gear two brown blurs diverted me and stopped me in my tracks. I was pretty sure that one would turn out to be a Dingy but the other was smaller and really moving so I wasn't really sure if it was a brown blur, it was just 'a blur'. I watched and waited and eventually one had enough, they separated and both settled. By almost going cross-eyed I managed to note where one had landed but and then set about to investigate. It was a Dingy, my first for 2018 and one of the species that I'd hoped to find albeit much earlier today.

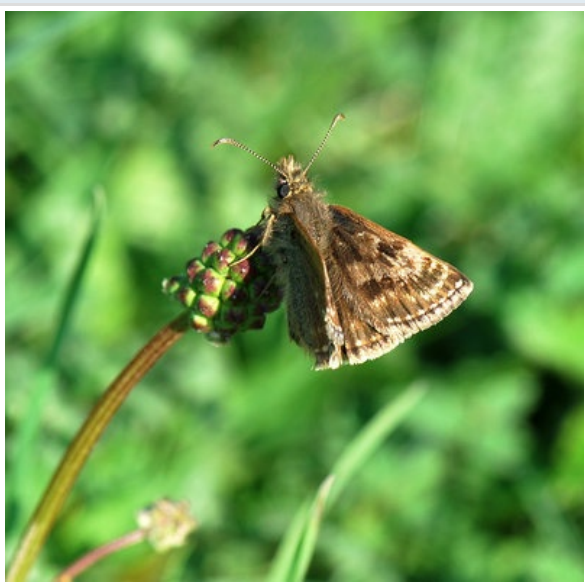


I started up the tracks again but didn't get far as another small blur caught my eye. As it was so small I was convinced that this one was a Grizzlie. It landed and I approached managing to confirm my ID and get a couple of record shots before it was off hassling the nearby Dingy (again?). I watched the ensuing battle and then somehow managed to follow the smaller Grizzlie once it broke away landing just a short way from where it had originally come from.



I hung around here for a bit and the behaviour that I'd witnessed continued with a second Dingy also getting into the mix. I'd watch one settle, move in and get a few shots and then it would be off either because another Skipper was hassling it or it wanted to hassle another Skipper. I was a joyous sight to behold and it made me feel a little like a Grandad - the grandkids were enjoying some rough and tumble and then at the end of the day I could pass them back to the parents and let them sort them out LOL





All too soon the hour was almost up and I was hightailing it back to pick Little L up. Finally I'd gotten my Skippers! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 03-Jun-18 06:44 PM GMT

I've only been to Dorset a handful of times Wurzel but I don't think you're at all biased – smashing place with some stunning areas. Love the shots of the lizard 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 04-Jun-18 10:05 AM GMT

Agreed about Lulworth Wurzel. 🍷

Nice Skipper's. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Jun-18 11:25 AM GMT

We went to Dorset about three years ago and I've wanted to go back ever since, we had a Caravan then and stayed near Lulworth Cove, we had a fantastic time Wurzel and we saw loads of Butterflies this was towards the end of May, unfortunately I didn't see a Grizzled Skipper. 😊 lovely shots of both Skippers 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 04-Jun-18 07:54 PM GMT

Wurzel,

Lovely photos of the skippers at Lulworth. Shouldn't be long before the Lulworth Skipper joins the party there. I visited there in May a couple of years ago, but didn't have the best of weather. Would like to return next year, if I can swing it with Mrs L 😊

Kind Regards  
Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Jun-18 08:43 AM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 I was chuffed with the way it emerged like a dinosaur from one of those old movies "The Land That Time Forgot!" 😊😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 Finally got them but it took a while 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 If you're ever down this way again give us a shout and I'll see what I can drum up for you 😊

Cheers Kev 😊 Yep it won't be long, a couple of years ago and they were already out by this stage, things seem to have slowed down this year 😊 Start your campaign of persuasion now and drip feed the idea of a visit – that's my tip 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 05-Jun-18 09:04 AM GMT

Love your Jurassic Coast "Dinosaur" pics Wurzel.

By the way did you know there is a fossilized forest on the far side of the cove along the coast?

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 05-Jun-18 12:13 PM GMT

My favourite bit of coastline in the world too, Wurzel. A nice Skipper selection even without the one that belongs there! 😊 I think they are out now – you can't have missed them by many days...

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Jun-18 12:08 AM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I didn't know that I'll have to have a look on my Jurassic Coast app, is it East or West from the Cove? 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Looks like a return visit then – oh well someone has to I suppose... 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel ↵

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Jun-18 08:30 AM GMT

#### Work 09-05-2018

Back at work not much happened on Tuesday but on Wednesday one of the younger pupils after break came strolling up to me armed with a cardboard cup. I thought this was a little usual until he showed me what was inside – my first ever Muslin Moth, what a cracking looking Moff! I took a few shots whilst the next class was filing in.





At lunch I grabbed the camera and headed out. It seems that the rewilding of the school field is not going down too well with some people namely certain local residents that see fit to use the school's private property as a dog walk come toilet or as a recreation ground for their toddlers. Hopefully they won't do too much trampling damage as things are really paying off butterfly wise. Up at the 'Pits' a Small White and OT mooched about, the white occasionally stopped providing me with an opportunity of a photo but unsurprisingly the OT didn't.

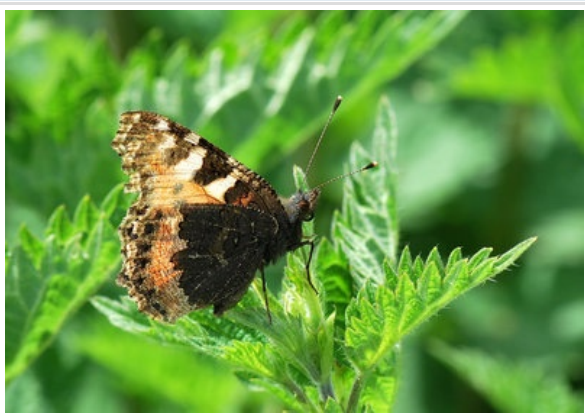


At the end of this little section where the tree line makes a right angle and follows along the hedge I again found a couple of Specklies but was gutted when a Holly Blue took off from low down. I needn't have minded as slightly further along the hedge another floated down to sit nicely on a Dock leaf. I didn't want to spook it so took a few record shots from distance and then gave it a wide berth as I continued on down the hedge.



It all went a little quiet after this until I'd almost completed the length of the hedge and then I was buzzed by something which erupted out from a large patch of nettles. It dove back in and I was able to find it easily as it stick out like a sore thumb; a Small Tort. The fading of the cream spots to white gave a hint at its age but apart from that it wasn't in too bad a shape for this late in the season with most of its wing margins still present and no noticeable tears in its wings.





As I was in danger of being late again I cut straight across the field – not too shabby a tally today. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Jun-18 09:29 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I bet that Moth was a nice surprise for you and very nice of your pupil to bring it to you has well 😊

Hall-Lee-Brook my little CP has been over taken with Brier's and whilst we were there a huge tractor arrived and cut the grass in the field where I'd seen the Large Heath, and Meadow Brown, we left having seen no Butterflies, we did see plenty of people with Dogs who don't pick up the Dog poo, it was every where, I hope your school property does okay but look out for the Dog poo 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Jun-18 12:20 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I do let me gaze stray floorward every now and again when I'm out there Goldie, just in case 😊 I shouldn't have to really as it's private property 😊 You should have read some of the nonsense and fuss made by some of the locals – they were concerned about their dogs getting bit by Adders and their toddlers tripping over in the long grasses – all the while missing the point that they shouldn't be on the field anyway 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 07-Jun-18 08:14 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I must have had Large Heath on the brain last time I posted you 😊 I should have said Large Skippers 😊 😊

I've since seen the LH today at Foulshaw Moss 😊 they were too busy looking for mates and when they did land it was so hot they quickly flew off again always landing in the shade. Still at least I saw them 😊

I don't go to Hall-Lee-Brook too often now, it just annoys me what 's happened there, the place has gone from having 15 or 16 species to a walk round and nothing being sighted and the people don't pick the dog dirt, any way luckily we don't live too far from places full of Butterflies, if we get to Dorset again I'll let you know Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 07-Jun-18 10:32 PM GMT

cheers Goldie 😊 After your recent report having Large Heath on the brain is totally understandable 🍷 😊

**Work 10-05-2018**

After the joys of the previous day I made my way back out starting again at the Pits area. This time the two whites flying around here were both Smalls and the Specklie was in the usual haunt by the break through the trees.



The sun was a fair bit weaker today and much more intermittent so I was expecting to see less. As it was the Holly Blues were a no show but further along the hedge a watch another Small White enjoying having one of the unown sections to itself. With the number of buttercups etc. growing so profusely here I'm really looking forward to checking these sections out in a few weeks' time to see if we can tempt in some Common Blues, Brown Argus and maybe a few Golden Skippers? Definitely something to look forward too! After this little forward planning moment I refocused back on the present and carried on wandering along the hedge. Down at the bottom the Small Tort was in the same place as yesterday but on another of the unown sections a beautifully marked Green-veined White was making the most of both the nectar feast and also the sun which had momentarily poked its head out from behind the cloud.





On the return journey things were pretty much the same but with one Small White fewer.  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 08-Jun-18 08:40 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel

I do despair at some peoples attitude to a bit of long grass. You can tell it's summer, the local council are mowing and strimming every bit of grass verge in sight along all the roads around here and devastating some nice displays of wildflowers in the process 😞

On a more cheery note, that is a lovely female Green-veined White 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Jun-18 12:07 PM GMT

Lovely GVW Wurzel, unfortunately has Neil's mentioned the grass cutting at this time of year seems stupid and a lost of lots of Butterfly eggs I think. I blame the loss of BF's at HLB my local haunt on just that .Goldie 😊😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-18 09:10 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 I know what you mean. I drive past verges on m way to work and think "they're starting to look really good" and the next day they've been levelled 😞😞

Cheers Goldie 😊 I've never understood why, I mean I get that some has to be cut back to improve visibility but the whole verge? And in unused fields why? 😞 Anyway on a positive note the school 'Meadow' is looking pretty good about now – though it might take a while for the Blues etc to actually find it. I got the first 5 Spot Burnet there the other day 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Janet Turnbull, 09-Jun-18 10:42 PM GMT

It's great if the school is 'rewilding' the meadow, Wurzel – but surely nobody should be exercising their dogs on school land 😞

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Jun-18 10:56 PM GMT

Unfortunately they don't see it that way Janet 😞 . Mind you we've had worse, one block turned up with a kite surfing set up! 😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

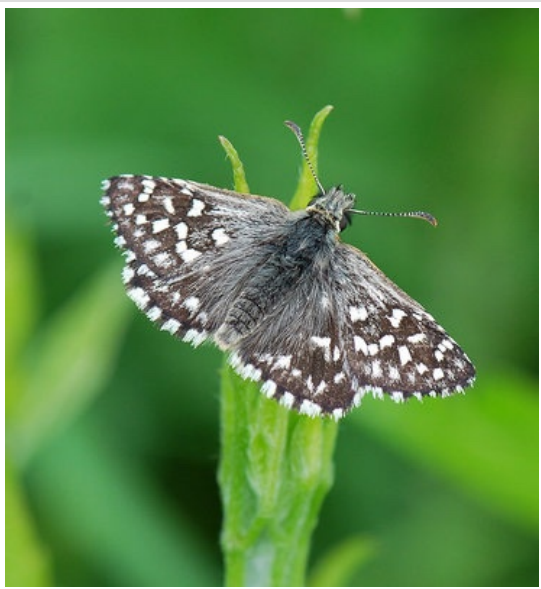
## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Jun-18 12:07 AM GMT

### Martin Down 12-05-2018

I'd been checking the weather app for most of the week and it was looking like Saturday after lunch was going to be the best weather across the weekend. So I suggested taking the girls for a run to Martin Down. 😊 Come Saturday morning it was set to become fair from 11am onwards over at Martin. 😊 So I did a few jobs and checked again - now it was showing the improvement beginning at 12 😊. Oh well still okay. After returning from some errands in town the app now showed 1pm as the time when the sun would come out 😊. After dropping Lottie at Dance it became 2pm 😊. It seemed that every time I updated it the improvement came later and later. The final time I checked the improvement would definitely occur at 3pm, honest guv, me tell you no lies, it's totally Pukka... 😊😊

So we went and walked through the mizzle from Sillen's Lane along the hedge to the hotspot at the hollow. Once there the girls set up the picnic blanket in the middle of the path and I wove my way along the small tracks criss-crossing the bank on the side of the Dyke. But still nothing and no sign of the cloud breaking either. Eventually my persistence (or stubbornness or cursing?) paid off and I found a single Grizzlie hunkered down sitting out the drear.





Slightly further along was a second also keeping a low profile. The one upside to the less than balmy weather was that I was able to get some nice underside shots which are next to impossible when the sun shines. The Downside? Despite a Herculean amount of searching I couldn't locate another butterfly.



Coffee drunk, books read and mahs sheets completed we gave it up and headed home. I checked the app and now Sunday, instead of black cloud and rain as it had shown all week now showed blue skies and sunshine. AAAHHHHH!!!! 😄  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 10-Jun-18 12:11 AM GMT

That is a very nice little skipper for all that effort, Wurzel, especially the underside shot. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 10-Jun-18 06:05 AM GMT

Yes ,very nice Grizzled Skipper shots.  
You can thank the cloudy conditions for that, had the sun been out,  
you wouldn't have seen them for dust.  
I am a recent convert to the late setting Sun for relaxed Skippers and Blues.

Any sign of the Walls ?  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 10-Jun-18 09:01 AM GMT

I feel your pain, Wurzel! That's exactly what happened to us at Denge Wood on the 16th- every time we checked the forecast they kept putting the improvement back and, guess what, the sun never came.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 10-Jun-18 09:11 AM GMT

What can I say Wurzel!!!! 🍷🍷🍷🍷 yet another year without a Grizzled Skipper for me 😞 love your shots 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 10-Jun-18 01:29 PM GMT

Wurzel,

Nice photos of the Grizzlie. Persistence pays off. I've been too cautious with weather forecasts before, only to find plenty of sightings on social media that evening. You've gotta go for it. My one and only visit to Martin Downs was in similar conditions and you saw one more Butterfly than I did that time 😊

Kind Regards  
Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Jun-18 10:33 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 That was one of the few upsides of a thoroughly frustrating afternoon 😊  
Cheers Trevor 😊 True Trevor, every cloud has a silver lining, cloud being the operative word 😊😊 I haven't been able to get over to the Churchyard and it's not looking good as we're in exam season at the moment 😊  
Cheers Essex 😊 To make it even worse the next day, which had been forecast to be terrible, was a blinder of a day 😊 ...see later when I've written it up 😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 Sorry to rub it in 😊 Mind you you have got Large Heaths and NBAs up your way 🍷🍷 😊  
Cheers Kev 😊 Yep I'm coming round to the idea that for my weather forecast look out of the window when I'm deciding where to go 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 12-Jun-18 11:58 AM GMT

Sorry Wurzel. 😊 Nice Grizzly though, and previous Whites. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Jun-18 11:23 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 It was made all the more frustrating by the rapid improvement in the weather the following day... 😊

### Martin Down 13-05-2018

My skulking round the house and muttering hadn't gone unnoticed hence why I was now motoring back towards Martin Down. What a difference a day makes indeed as today I was driving with windows down, sunglasses perched on my nose, right arm tanning as it rested on the window with the now obligatory Iron Maiden pumping out of the stereo! I had a feeling that today was going to be one of those golden spells where I would be surrounded by butterflies...

I started at Sillen's Lane end and there was still dew on the grass looking like little beads of glass but already the butterflies were flying along the hedge

with a couple of Brimstone patrolling by and a third still roosting, hanging from a twig within the hedge. One of the Brimstone stopped for a while on the path and angled its wings towards the sun, still a little bit cool? A Greenstreak stopped on the furthest branch out over the path just as I was about to enter the 'tunnel' so it would have been rude not to have taken a shot or two. Then it was onwards down through the 'tunnel' which is really sheltered and also is where the majority of my Martin Down Specklies originate from.



Once in the tunnel there were a few more Greenstreaks thought they were hanging around up high and scrapping. There was also a lovely fresh Dingy looking very like a snugly carpet, I love their subtle markings. My first 'pair' Specklies turned up a short way down the tunnel, well I say 'pair' but I don't think that they were really together. They flew into view tumbling around and spiralling around each other in what I took to be courtship and then one of them just dropped like a stone onto the deck. The other flew round it a few times and then flew off. I took a few shots as it lay there 'dead' on the floor and then all of a sudden it resurrected and flew off. That's one hell of a rebuff! There were also a few Specklies, each time I saw them they were in pairs apart from the very final one right at the far end which was looking forlornly out across the open grasslands.





From the tunnel I broke out onto the grasslands at the edge of the hillfort and so took the path skirting round and made towards the Hotspot, the little hollow at the Dyke. Along the way there were more Dingies, Brimstones, a single Greenstreak and also the first few Grizzlies of the day. Over at the hotspot there were even more of the Skippers along with a Large and a Small White. I poured a coffee and set about enjoying the show as one species would fly in take nectar and then another butterfly would fly in, have a bit of a tussle and possibly replace the first. It was great to watch so many butterflies flying at once.





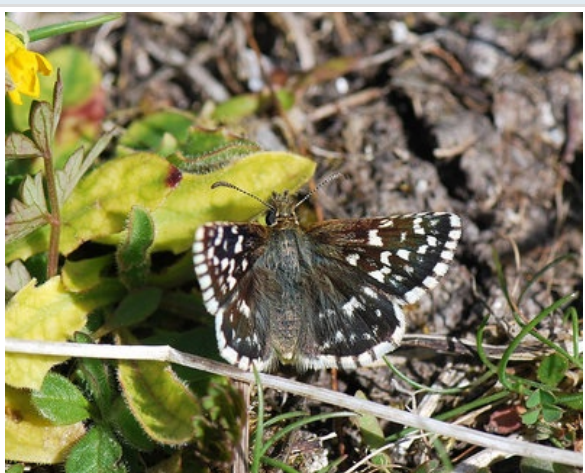


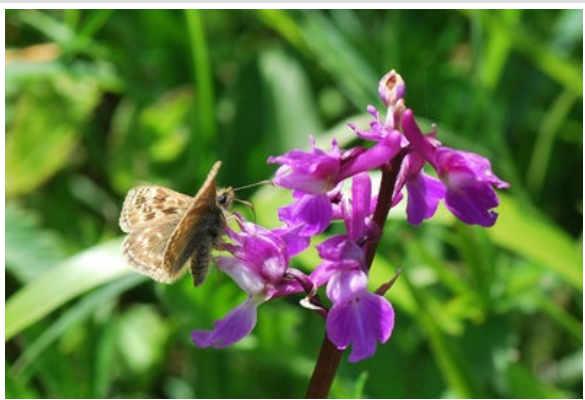
Cheered immensely I moved on up the Dyke towards the halfway spot where another footpath crosses the Dyke. I strode up along the Dyke looking down along the length and watching even more Skippers and adding an Orange-tip to an ever growing day list. At the half way point I carried on a little further and here was another Greenstreak down on the deck and another on the end of the bushes. I paused a while back at the half way spot a watched what flew along the bisecting track, a bit like a smaller version of the tunnel. A male Brimstone was sitting minding its own business so I took a few shots and then a large fly came and sat on his wings, he didn't budge even a fraction, just sat there motionless. I suppose this is a survival strategy shown by 'cryptically marked' animals; remain still no matter what else the camo doesn't work.





I started to make my way back stopping every now and again for notable sightings, a gloriously marked Dingy, velveteen Grizzlie, a Small Tort, a Peacock and a Dingy feeding from an Orchid. As if in a dream I bumbled from one butterfly to the next and seemed to spend equal amounts of time staring down the viewfinder or staring into my notebook tallying up the sightings!





I was almost back at the car my head spinning as I tried to remember salient facts from the day ready to write my PD when I was distracted by a Holly Blue. As it flew along the hedge I chanced to look down and there was a miniscule dark butterfly in amongst the taller grasses at the foot of the hedge. My first Small Blue of the year. In between taking shots of this I noticed a second Peacock, another Greenstreak and a few more whites; what a monster of a morning!



After getting home I added up all of my sightings and no wonder I was buzzing:  
B 26, LW 1, SW 7, GVW 6, OT 4, DS 15, GS 22, GH 21, SB 1, HB 1, ST 1, P 2, SpW 8 😊  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 12-Jun-18 11:36 PM GMT

Great shots and great numbers at Martin Down, Wurzel 😊 a site that I've yet to visit 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 13-Jun-18 07:20 AM GMT

Wurzel. Don't laugh. I am reading your last entry on the 13th June. I marvelled at the numbers of butterflies you saw on Martin Down. I too like Maximus have never been there but want to one day. I read right to the end of your post before it dawned on me that the butterflies were all a bit Springtime. I didn't twig sooner because only the other day I saw a Greenstreak and a couple of Dingies myself. Then I saw the date of your visit. the 13th of MAY!!! I feel pretty foolish I must say.

Also - Iron Maiden and Butterflies, eh? You are a complex creature, Wurzel. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 13-Jun-18 10:37 AM GMT

Great selection on that day Wurzel for you. 😊 I'd a fly on my Brimstone shot in May it must be a thing with the fly's , ( Free Ride) 😊 Lovely Green hair Streaks has well, it's a shame their relatives aren't spread out country wise like they are 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Jun-18 07:13 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 It's a great site, PM when you plan a visit I can let you know where the hotspots are 😊  
Cheers Ernie 😊 No worries Ernie I'm always a bit behind with my posting, it comes from too much work 😊 You can't beat a bit of Maiden 😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 I hear that having seen all the Blackstreaks from Sussex 😊 🇬🇧 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Jun-18 01:25 PM GMT

#### Laverstock 14-05-2018

Another Monday and another tutor session. As the weather was being kind again I did the usual drop off and legged it up the Down. On the first stretch I counted a singles of Brimstone, Small White and Green-veined White with four other whites that were too quick to ID. As I started the ascent I found two Dingies who broke apart from tussling to greet me.



From here I carried on up the steep slope of the Down with the intention of checking out the far side. As I carried on up the path narrowed, hemmed in on both side by Bramble and Hawthorn with the occasional scallop. A male OT flew in one of these and a Large White was in another. I wondered what I would find in the final one and it turned out to be a pair of Green-veined Whites which unfortunately were too high and at the wrong angle to get any decent shots. As I broke through out onto the top of the Down on the other side another Green-veined White was taking nectar with it's wings held down at an unusual angle.



After this I made across the top of the top and then down the gully but it was very quiet. Somehow I made it to the bottom without breaking my neck. In my haste I'd not changed into my boots and I was just wearing my Converse and on this terrain I may as well have been wearing slippers for all the traction and grip I had. Still I reached the bottom of the gully and the reward for my daredevil Slalom sliding was a Grizzlie and Dingy with another Green-veined White right at the very bottom where the Dark Greens hang out later in the season.



After this I felt like I was in need of a hurry up as the hour was almost up. So I motored on round the lower fringes of the Down. This area always seems less impressive than other areas of the site, possibly because I'm always hurrying through to either get back or get to the gully or it could be because this is where the Down is steepest so less easy to access? However there are some nice little respite areas where the Hawthorn has grouped together where the slope is slightly less steep. These are often worth checking out and so it proved today with another Grizzlie and Dingy hanging around and three Greenstreaks. One stayed high up in the Hawthorn whilst two more were lower down on the Brambles. However I couldn't get any shots of these two as each time one would perch the other would attack it. I tried several times to capture them in flight using Sports Mode but they were moving so quickly/erratically that I either got the foreground or far distance in focus whilst the Greenstreaks remaining green or brown blurs. In the end I accepted that the apparently easier subjects weren't going to be easy at all and set about trying for the Greenstreak that still remained aloof. It meant standing on tip toes and stretching out the camera as much as possible but I was happy-ish with the results.





After this I really did get a wriggle on and did my best to ignore any distractions. It was all going so well, I'd made it off the Down and right the way along the PROW at the edge of the field and was just walking down the short stretch of path before the final straight when a Specklie landed right in front of me. As I leant down to take its photograph it turned its head on one side and opened its palps up looking like it was trying to have a chat. I leant in a bit further and bent my knees and off it went allowing me to make my way back to pick up Little L with moments to spare.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Jun-18 01:21 PM GMT

### Pewsey Downs 17-05-2018

Oh the joys of trapped time! I'm sure I've mentioned this before but again rather than just using it to play cards I decided to try out a new site - Pewsey Downs. It was a relatively short drive from work of only about 10 minutes and meant driving out along the Alton Road. When I was about half way along I looked out to me right and there were the Downs I was planning to visit with their undulations looking like the body of a woman. I carried on and pulled into the dusty car park and immediately headed the wrong way. Well it possibly wasn't the wrong way but it was the least productive way as after a couple of whites in the car park the only butterfly I saw on the walk to the down top and back was a Small Tort. Instead I tried for a few shots of some Linnets.

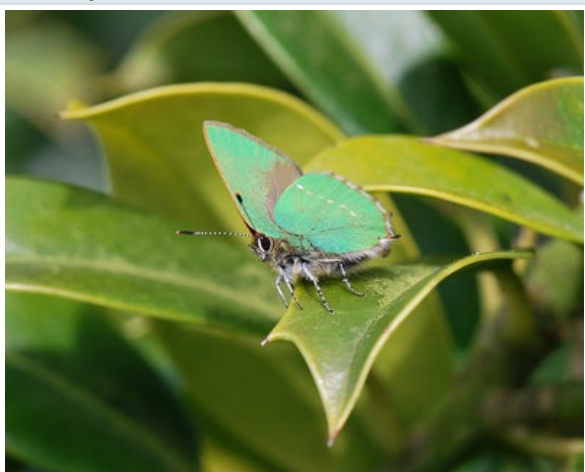


So it was back to the car park and through, across the road and then things seemed to pick up with 2 Small Torts in a nettle bed just inside the reserve and a Gen-veined White leading my on across the field like a tiny tour guide. So far so like a typical grazed field. Then I climbed over a style and the vegetation was still close cropped and grazed (by some nearby cows) but there was different feel to the place but still no butterflies. So on past cows round back the hill top before spiralling round up to the top to the 'nipple' as I believe it's referred to locally (hence the previous analogy of the naked

woman). It was gloriously sunny now but the wind was quite strong, at times whipping up and round the hill. I found a little hollow that offered the tiniest bit of respite from the breeze and here I stumbled onto a Greenstreak. It was well out of place being at the top of the hill and not the bottom, in grass and nowhere near a Hawthorn. I tried for a shot but it obviously knew it was in the wrong place and so took off to find a more salubrious dwelling. In leaving however it did put up a Wall which I was able to follow and get a few shots of as it clung to the side of the Down. Interestingly it would sit in little patches of dead grass rather than the much more available green turf - presumably to be better camouflaged?



I carried on round and down other side and then walked along the bottom fence line which was covered by Hawthorns. Along the route two more Greenstreaks put in an appearance. Ordinarily they would have been out of reach of my lens but luckily the path was at the top of a ridge running parallel with the hedge/road and so I was at the same height as my quarry. Mind you it was bit precarious leaning over the drop to get the lens just close enough for a shot.



Near the bottom of the track I reached the really good looking part of the site. It was a series of hollows and dips carved into the chalk and overgrown. As I left the path make my way into the network of dips and mounds a further two Greenstreaks played in the sun and after a quick wander round I'd bagged a brace of Dingies.





It was almost time for me to start back so I retraced my steps up along the ridge. I was almost back to the edge of the reserve and contemplating how I would get past the cows that had converged around the stile when a glorious golden butterfly hove into view. It landed up ahead but started to close up before I could get close enough. Luckily I could see just enough of the hind wing to see that not only was it my first Small Copper but that it was also a *caeruleopunctata*, a blue badger. I stayed for as long as I could but it didn't open up any more so I shuffled backwards and then walked round giving it a wide berth so as not to disturb it.



Then it was back past cows and through nettle bed spooking an aged Small Tortoiseshell, across the road and jump in the car. I got back just in time to enjoy the feast of beige that is the food option prior to any late events and so back to work...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 15-Jun-18 10:53 PM GMT

That's not a bad haul for 10 minutes down the road from work, Wurzel! 😊 It just shows its worth making the most of those so-called captive time slots.

Incidentally, try as I might, I just can't see the naked woman in that photo... 😊😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Jun-18 08:27 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 She's just behind the second Linnet... 😊 I only became aware of the shape of the Downs when I walked it a few years ago with the pupils and then all referred to 'going up to the nipple' 😊😊 Next time I go by I'll try and get a picture, well it'll have to be several photos joined together to get it all in.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Jun-18 11:40 PM GMT

#### First stop Bentley Wood 19-05-2018

Having given the Pearls of Bentley a fortnight to catch up with the rest of the country and finally emerged I arranged to meet Philzoid there bright and early. I got there just after 9 and set about wandering the Eastern Clearing looking for ginger butterflies. It didn't take long and by the information board a tried looking PBF landed briefly. It seemed that perhaps the previous weekend would have been early enough...



I carried on over the bridge into the middle section of the clearing and here there were another couple of Pearls milling around, generally not stopping long enough or in an 'easy' spot for any shots. So I carried on down to the bottom end where an old log provided the perfect perch for one of a pair of Pearls that were patrolling.



Pleased to have my open wing shot in the bag I worked my way back to the middle section and Philzoid arrived. After catching up and noting a few Brimstones, a Large White and Green-veined White we started our search for the Pearls in earnest. Up to now with our combined total of 6 things seemed to be okay though some were looking a bit 'lived in'. We made our way across to the other of the clearing through the moor grass to the track. In a little square cut cleared area between two blocks of conifers were four more Pearls bombing around low to the ground, grabbing the slightest of sips of nectar occasionally. Further up the track was a 5th bringing the running total to 11.

Almost back by the main part of the clearing we found a little patch on the wrong side of the fence where there were two more Pearls flying along with a Grizzlie. One of these perched long enough for a quick closed wing shot but both were becoming increasingly active. Also all the new fencing was proving a hassle. Before you could use a deer track and hop over the ditch. Now when a Pearl would fly to the other side of the fence you'd have to run all the way round. It felt like they knew this as they'd zig-zag through the fence from one side to another while you didn't know whether to stick or twist! Finally, after checking out the bottom end (2 Pearls and a Peacock) and returning one female made it easy for us as she started ovi-posturing which gave me enough time to get into position, semi-crouch and get a few shots.







After spending some time with the Pearls in the main part of the clearing we made our way to one of the more recently cleared areas, primarily because an Argent and Sable had led us there as part of its merry dance. Whilst Philzoid concentrated on this and a Tree Pipit which held a territory here I flipped my camera to Sports mode and sent some time with a courting pair of Brimstone.



So Pearls seen and photographed for another year (hopefully not the last from this site) we set off to a totally different type of habitat for some totally different butterfly species...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 17-Jun-18 12:04 AM GMT

A good selection of Pearls there, Wurzel – the shots and angles and frustrations are all too familiar! 😊 That new fence is a real nuisance in the way it follows the ditch which the butterflies have always enjoyed meandering down and along. No doubt it is important in managing the grazing regime. One thing I've noticed before is that there seem to be very few flowers here these days – the bugle (always a favourite with both PBF and SPBF) is very scarce.

I can guess what's coming now... 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 17-Jun-18 10:28 AM GMT

Just catching up on your diary again Wurzel, some great reports as always with your entertaining personal touch to them 😊

#### ernie f wrote:

... Iron Maiden and Butterflies, eh? You are a complex creature, Wurzel. 😊....

Quiet partial to a bit of Iron Maiden myself although my preferred tastes tend to be from the previous decade.

And do you remember these?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIVe-rZBcm4>

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-Jun-18 10:55 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, glad you were lucky with the Pearl's, nice opened winged shots as well, I tried to see them this year but no luck, I'd to be happy with the SPBF, which I am 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Jun-18 11:42 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 That fence 😊😊 As for what comes next...I better get on and write it up 😊😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I wasn't aware of them but I can hear a bit of Deep Purple and even a tiny bit of Metallica in there 😊 One for the play list cheers 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Things were a bit odd timing wise this year, good luck next 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 18-Jun-18 03:37 PM GMT

Nice Pearl report Wurzel, great open wing shots. 😊 You've also captured those Brimstones very well. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by kevlng, 18-Jun-18 07:23 PM GMT

Playing catch up with diaries Wurzel. A great selection from you recently. Starting with the Green Hairstreak with the bright blue sky behind...very nice. Also enjoyed the Pearls at Bentley Wood. The winner though is the courting Brimstones. That must have been a high shutter speed 😊

Kind Regards  
Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Gary.N, 18-Jun-18 07:42 PM GMT

Nice series of Pearls you have there. I know how hard it is to get a good shot of one. Love the Shot of the one on the Log. 😊 Also the Wall in your previous post is lovely.

Gary

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 18-Jun-18 09:50 PM GMT

Having been away for a long weekend, i'm a bit behind with the diaries.

Love the Pearl on the log, and the Brimstones in flight is a belter !! 🍻

Far from the June gap, It's turning out to be the most manic month so far !.

All the best,  
Trevor.

Oh ! how about some Cold Play, Tears for Frears and later OMD !.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 19-Jun-18 09:26 AM GMT

I agree with Trevor, no June gap this year. Still playing catchup with everyone's diary but it's a good way to pass the time whilst sat on the train to my next destination 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Jun-18 11:18 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 I was happy with both those shots, though possibly the Brimstones more as I've been after those behaviour shots for a while now 😊



Cheers Kev 😊 I turned the dial from Flower to Running Man for those Brimstone shots, that puts the camera into Sports Mode 😊😊  
Cheers Gary 😊 Pearls are funny butterflies, most of the time they fly ceaselessly and then all of a sudden for no apparent reason they just sit there for you 😊  
Cheers Trevor 😊 Things have been late and other species have been early, it's been a funny old year 😊 Cold Play is a bit 'easy listening' for me 😊  
Cheers Bugboy 😊 I'm wondering where you're off to next as I type this and then prepare for work tomorrow 🇮🇪

Have a goodun

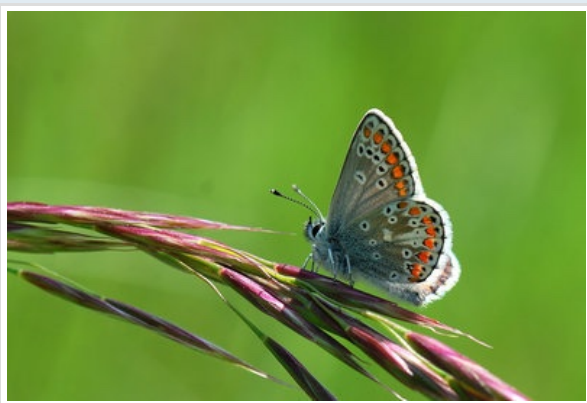
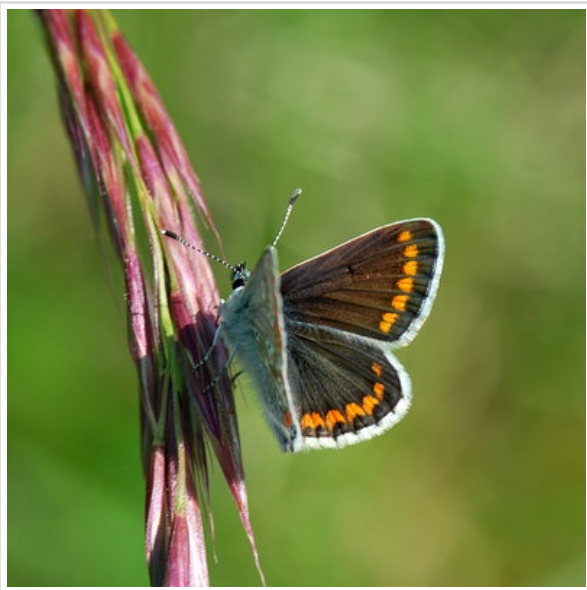
Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Jun-18 08:19 AM GMT

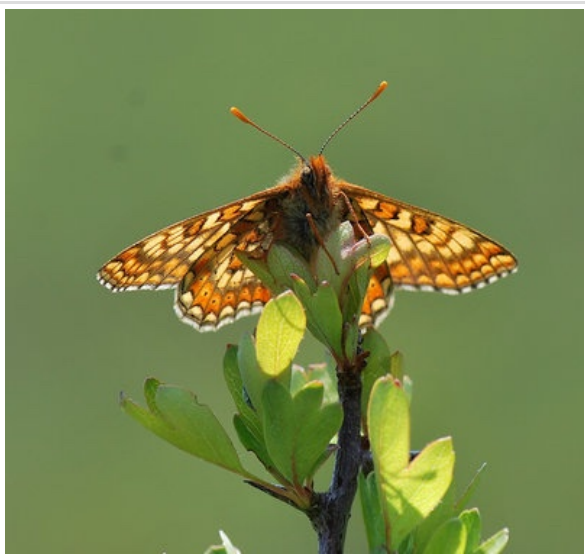
### Marshie Site 19-05-2018 Part 2a

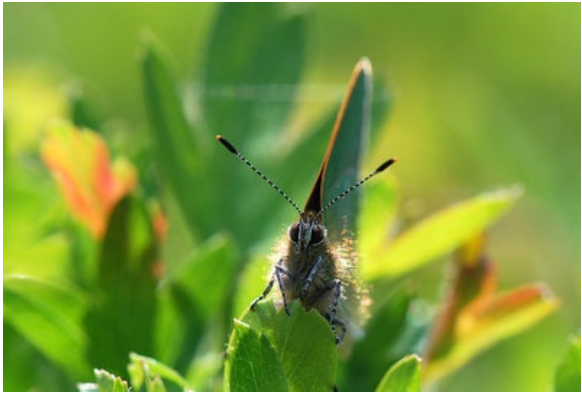
After a quick drive back to Salisbury Philzoid parked up and jumped in my car and we were off to my Marshie site chatting along the way. There were a few cars parked up in the lay-by cum car park one of which seemed familiar...Philzoid and I made our way up the track expecting butterflies on the way and not seeing much apart from an OT and then the gradient eased off and the narrow track opened out and we started working our way along the hollow. A few Dingies and the odd Grizzlie flew about here but not the hoped for Marshie. Instead there was a fresh Common Blue which was spooked by a really fresh Brown Argus. As Philzoid took a turn at getting some shots I looked ahead and up the hill were a couple of other enthusiasts one of which looked remarkably like Dave Miller! We carried on stopping for another really fresh Brown Argus and then climbed out of the hollow where we met up with Dave and Lee Hurrell.



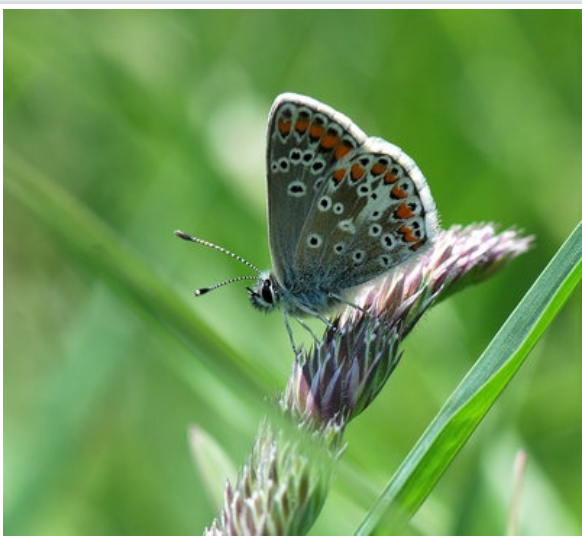


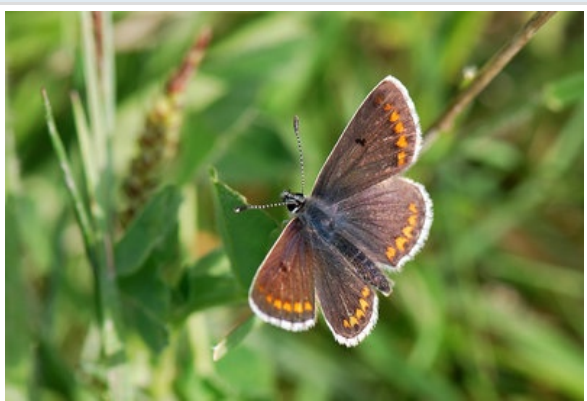
We slowly made our way round to the amphitheatre noting the odd white and my first Marshie and Small Heaths on the way. At the Amphitheatre there were a few more Marshies kicking about in amongst the now ubiquitous Brown Argus and the odd Skipper. A Small heath would take off and upset a Grizzlie which would upset a Dinky which would have a pop at a Marshie and so on in a merry go round fuelled by testosterone (or the lepidopteran equivalent). It seemed that the best and possibly only way to get any shots would be to walk up the hill and try and find a butterfly perched up and trying to mind its own business before it got roped into the tussling and brawling which was happening on the lower slopes. This technique worked for Lee and I as we managed to turn up a couple of Marshies this way as well as a cracking little Greenstreak.





We then strolled on round a bit further and a male Adonis caught our eye but he refused to open up and so while we waited we paused a while, a Greenstreak flew past as did the biggest OT I'd ever seen it looked bigger than a Brimstone! One the majority of my coffee had been drunk and a lot of fat had been chewed our quartet became a trio as Dave started for home. We carried on round finding the miniature amphitheatre. Everything we'd seen so far was also found in this little hollow with the added bonus that you didn't have to go far for the butterfly you wanted to get a shot of, it was merely a sidestep or a step forwards etc.







That's a lot so far, more to come sooner rather than later...  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 20-Jun-18 08:29 AM GMT

Love your Marshie underwing shots, Wurzel. I only have pics of them from above so far.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 20-Jun-18 08:55 AM GMT

From your description of your visit to ' the hill ' I could almost re-trace your steps.  
It's amazing how you can identify Dave Miller at a 1,000 paces !.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Jun-18 11:43 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I'm trying to get as many of those as I can while my knees hold out 😊  
Cheers Trevor 😊 The trick to spotting Dave Miller is to follow the Holly Blues 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Jun-18 08:22 AM GMT

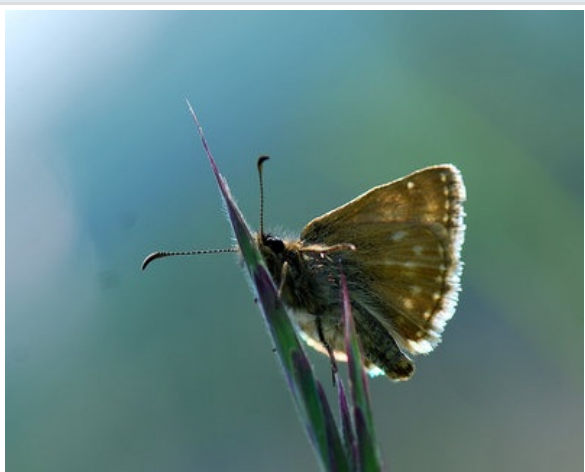
#### Marshie Site 19-05-2018 Part 2b

Round even further we went stopping occasionally and bending down to get a few shots; generally it would be a Brown Argus as they seemed to be everywhere, until the nearby hillfort came into view. Then we knew it was time to turn round and start making our way back. We took the bottom path hoping it would provide a Small Blue. It didn't but a fly-by Wall, the odd Greenstreak or Marshie and even more Brown Argus were still nice to see.





Back at the mini amphitheatre it seems that the Adonis had finally gotten of his perch as it was locked together with a female making sure that there would be some more Adonis to see here later in the year.





Time was fast running out and so not wanting to be late Philzoid and I said our goodbyes and started back round from the amphitheatre. We got a little delayed in the hollow with a stunning Common Blue that had a cracking set of wing margins. They ran from blue to a thick black line and a blinding white trim.



Right we really must be getting on. And then a Wall landed on the path up ahead of us. With some careful creeping we managed to get close enough for a few shots though the angle it was sitting at was less than ideal.



Okay we're getting dangerously close to leaving late...But there finally was a Small Blue. It was flying up against the steep side of the hill on one side of the path in roughly the same place as we've encountered them before.



And so somehow we finally managed to leave the reserve and with a bit of careful driving still got back in time. A thoroughly cracking day, it was great catching up with Philzoid and Dave and meeting Lee for the first time as well being surrounded but butterflies and getting 5 FFY to boot!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 21-Jun-18 08:29 AM GMT

What a great place that is Wurzel. Marshies, Walls and mating Adonis (not to mention the others you saw). The variety is amazing.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 21-Jun-18 09:42 AM GMT

That was indeed a good day on the hill – I had no idea that when I took my shot of you and Phil arriving you were sneakily getting one of me and Lee already in place! 😊 Some great photos there, Wurzel. I particularly like the underside of the Dingy – how much grovelling did you have to do to get underneath that one? 😊 The Wall looks familiar – he seemed to be guarding the path down to the layby and he had delayed my eventual departure earlier on. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 21-Jun-18 02:11 PM GMT

Love your emerald green ,Green Hairstreak.  
They do vary greatly in colour, partly the Butterfly, part light refraction, I should think.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

PS. That Wall Brown was guarding the path when I was there !.

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 21-Jun-18 11:18 PM GMT

Great shots from your Marshie site, Wurzel 😊 and that's a couple of right dodgy looking geezers on the hillside 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-Jun-18 07:08 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, just catching up on posts, great Marshie shots 📷 not seen them for a while, I love their colours , they remind me of the Heath frit's , I'm going to Kent beginning of July I'm hoping some Heath Frit's may still be a round, you never know 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Jun-18 11:34 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 If you fancy a visit next year then send me a PM and I can pass on the directions etc 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 It was a brill day indeed with people taking pictures of people taking pictures (which I believe is a Jack Johnson song?), great company



and bucket loads of butterflies 😊 I didn't have to do any grovelling for the Dingy I just hit the deck and took the shots before it knew what was happening 😊😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 Dave also encountered him on the way out, he was all Black Knight "None shall pass" right up until you tired to get a better view and then he was off 😊😊

Cheers Mike 😊 I know what you mean about the dodgy geezers, you get all sorts turning up in Wiltshire, we might need to build a Wall 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Being a bit partial to looking for variation Marshies are almost my ideal species Goldie 😊 Good luck in Kent 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 24-Jun-18 07:25 PM GMT

Just catching up Wurzel. Very nice shots of the MF recently and I do like those first 2 shots of the BA 😊. As you know I like to visit at least 1 new venue each season – next season that is definitely going to be my new venue! You're definitely spoilt for choice there.

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 26-Jun-18 03:46 PM GMT

Cracking stuff from the Hill Wurzel. 😊 You found some lovely examples there. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Jun-18 11:30 PM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 The great thing about the Hill is that you can visit it after Bentley Wood so you can already have Pearl and Small Pearl on the day list 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 It was harder work than it appeared as they were just getting going but in peak its a doodle 😊

### Laverstock 21-05-2018

After my initial encounter with the Common Blues at my Marshie site I was eager to get up the Down at Laverstock to see if I could connect with a few more. The weather wasn't brilliant but actually the cloud might work have worked in my favour. So after catching up with L's tutor it was away and up the Down. The usual route didn't hold any butterflies and I was almost at the start of the Down before I saw my first, a Peacock bombing by. As I started the ascent a Dingy greeted me, still looking in good nick and like a vision in Brown.



On the side of the Down up y the first hollow a couple of Small Heath played 'it', one would land the other would fly figure of eights closing in on its target. The other would erupt from the grass, they would spiral and tousele and then one would drop to the grass and the cycle would repeat. I turned my attentions to the Blues, scanning round looking for little flags flying from the grass tops. I had one of those moments where I swear I'd swept a certain patch of grasses with my gaze multiple times and now on the umpteenth scan there was a little flag – a Common Blue. There was another and another and another etc. From nought to 9 Common Blues in the blink of an eye!

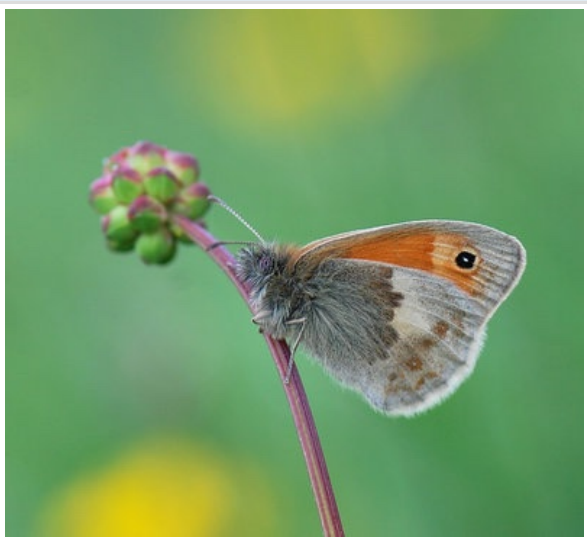


Having spent some time with them and getting quite a few 'butterfly on a stick' shots I started the return journey round and down the other side stopping for a Brown Argus. After the huge numbers from the weekend I was surprised to see only this singleton but beggars can't be choosers.



I realised that I'd made exceedingly good time and so it was back to the roost to try for a few more...





Have a goodun  
Wurzel

PS Looking back over the shots I was surprised by one individual. It had a more washed out look with the lunules looking very pale orange and none of the usual vibrancy of its counterparts. This could be due age/wear but it can only have been around for a day or two? Also the margins and fringes are all still intact suggesting that it is relatively fresh?



### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 26-Jun-18 11:46 PM GMT

Lovely Common Blue shots, Wurzel. 😊 Individuals with pale yellow lunules instead of the red-orange appear regularly near me – they tend to have the same "grainy" look your one does, and you think it's worn but a look at the fringes and lack of tears and a shiny upperside tell you otherwise. I think they are called ab. *fulvescens* or something similar.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Jun-18 11:52 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 That was the one I was thinking of and I remember seeing it in your PD last year or the year before 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 28-Jun-18 07:24 AM GMT

Some lush dreamy shots in your most recent post 😊. Also good to see how far behind you are, at least I'm only around 10 days in arrears 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 28-Jun-18 08:09 AM GMT

Lovely shots Wurzel, the Blues especially 😊 I like the Small Heath though, it looks tucked in there and comfortable 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 28-Jun-18 08:32 AM GMT

Wurzel – I'm getting used to your "historic" posts now! 😊

Being a month or so behind makes a refreshing change. While we are all pursuing Purple Emperors you are showing us how wonderful Common Blues and Green Hairstreaks are!

Cheers,

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Jun-18 11:58 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I know just as I'm catching up I make another three or four trips, it's a truly brilliant/horrible situation to be in 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 That was one of the better behaved Small Heaths 😊

Cheers Ernie 😊 That's certainly a nice way to look at my tardiness 😊😊 I long for the day I can retire, still 26 years to go 😊

### Larkhill 23-05-2018

The quickest of quick stop-offs on the way home. I pulled into the lay-by and took my life into my hands to cross over to the Larkhill paths. The sun shone and burnt through my shirt so all the butterflies I saw were pretty active so instead on a concerted effort to capture a particular species or shot I just wandered, counted the species and took photos of whatever presented itself...



Things would take off from an unseen launch pad amongst the grasses and I would follow them to check their ID and see if they landed. Doing this I racked up all the usual suspects for this time of year including both the spring Skippers, but it was 200m along the track that I saw the star butterfly, a Small Copper. It was great to know this species was still present here after its absence last year.



I did a recount on the way back but to prevent double counting I used the higher figure of the two totals. This produced a tally of 14 Small Heath, 2 Brown Argus, 2 Grizzlies, 6 Dingies, 2 Common Blues and of course that cracking Small Copper. Not bad for 10 minutes or so!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 30-Jun-18 08:42 AM GMT

Wurzel – I love it. Now you are reporting on Spring brood Coppers just as the Summer ones are getting going! At this rate you will be reporting your sightings of Brown Hairstreaks when everyone else is doing Orange Tips! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 30-Jun-18 06:27 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, great shots again 😊 I've not see a Small Copper this year yet, hope to do so in Kent 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Jun-18 11:54 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 The problem is I get near to catching up and then I make a load of trips out so I'm behind again 😊 I will have caught up by Christmas I promise 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck with your search for a Copper. We had shed loads here in Salisbury for a while but they were about 6ft tall 😊😊

## July 2018

The one post that I am on time with... 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Jul-18 10:28 AM GMT

Lovely Butterfly calendar Wurzel, I'm hoping one of those could still be around in EB Woods. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Jul-18 11:25 PM GMT

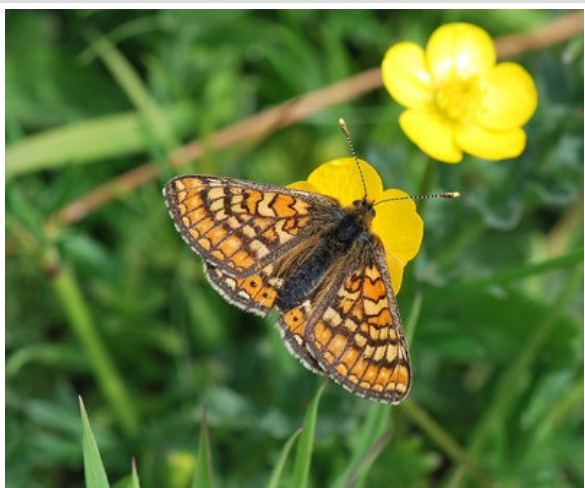
Cheers Goldie 😊 I've got my fingers crossed for you 😊

## Martin Down 26-05-2018

The last time I was at Martin Down it was a cracking morning after the preceding dismal afternoon. I was on my way back to see how things had moved on and hopefully to pick up a few more Marshies as they were only just getting going on my visit to the Hill. As I drove along the Blandford Road I scanned ahead and saw a large body of cloud. So I switched from radio to iPod (Iron Maiden of course, Killers natch) and put the pedal to the metal to race the cloud. Pulling up in the car park I was like a machine; boots on with one hand, camera out with the other and then I walked-ran across the car park and down and across the hollow to start my way along the Dyke. Almost immediately I saw two Frits. One seemed orange cream and the other more red.



Phew! A few shots in the bag and now it was time to relax and enjoy the butterflies before the cloud covered the sun and spoilt things. I switched myself from 'Sports Mode' to 'wander' and set off. My progress along the Dyke was faltering as there was so much to see with butterflies all around. The Dingies and Grizzlies from before were joined by Brown Argus, Common Blues and Small Blues. Occasionally a White would add tone to the colour palette and then the finished product would a hove into view...another Marshie looking like a paint it by numbers masterpiece.









After the Butts I was shocked to see all the scrub had been cleared so now the sheltered scallops were gone and with them the butterflies. It seems they'd all moved to the Dyke as this was where I saw almost all of the butterflies. As I came to the little half way island where another path crosses the Dyke I found some cracking Burnt tip Orchids and an avid Botanist was raving about a pretty unassuming yellow flower. Apparently it was a '3 star species'; a Field Fleawort. I suppose to a botanist it's a bit like the cache of seeing the little brown job that is the Mountain Ringlet?



There were now a few patches of cloud cover which would lead to a slight temperature drop when they came over though nothing like the forecast. Good job I'd ignored it again. This bit of Dyke looked like it had been recently cut back and the bare patches of earth made great landing spots for an Adonis Blue.



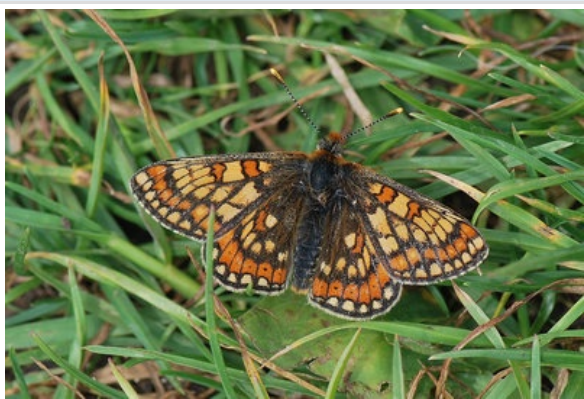
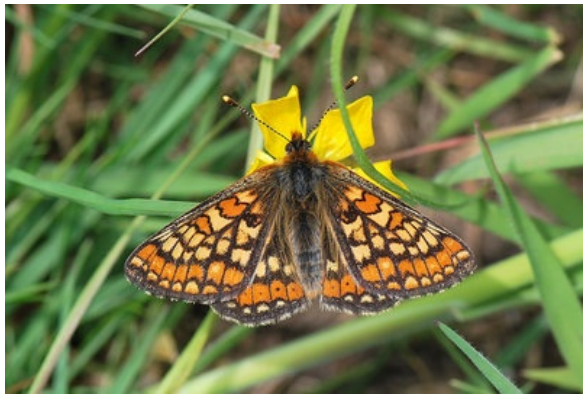
So time eking away I made my way back along the Dyke stopping for anything that sat still long enough to get my lens on it. This meant that my progress was possibly even slower than on the outwards journey. It was great! I could literally feel my blood pressure and heart rate dropping, stress evaporating from my shoulders. I carried on delightedly seeing Small Blues, Brown Argus and even more Marshies showing lots of variation.





Eventually I looked up beyond the path and its margins and I was almost back at the car park! So I put my head back down and sought out the species that I'd come to see to make sure I had my fill before I went for home.





Another cracking visit! I've fallen back in love with Martin Down, even if it is in Hampshire 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 02-Jul-18 06:11 AM GMT

Excellent Marshie shots, Wurzel. In Butterfly terms it seems an age ago since they were out, now that the high Summer species are with us.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Jul-18 08:11 AM GMT

Lovely Marshies Wurzel, it's quite a while since I saw them and I treasure the shots I've got of them 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Jul-18 02:16 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 And yet it was only 5 weeks ago 😊 Mind you this season has possibly been the most frenetic that I can recall – I only hope that come August–September there are still some butterflies about 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 If I didn't have a thing about the Hedge Brown then I think this species would satisfy my penchant for variation 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 02-Jul-18 02:50 PM GMT

Wurzel – Great Marsh Frits. And there it is – the orchid mentioned about a month ago – the Burnt Tip Orchid. Fantastic.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Jul-18 11:35 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I'm slowly getting there 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

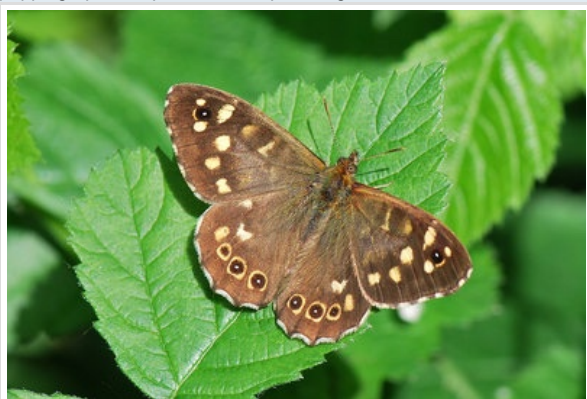
### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Jul-18 11:54 PM GMT

#### Bentley Wood 27-05-2018

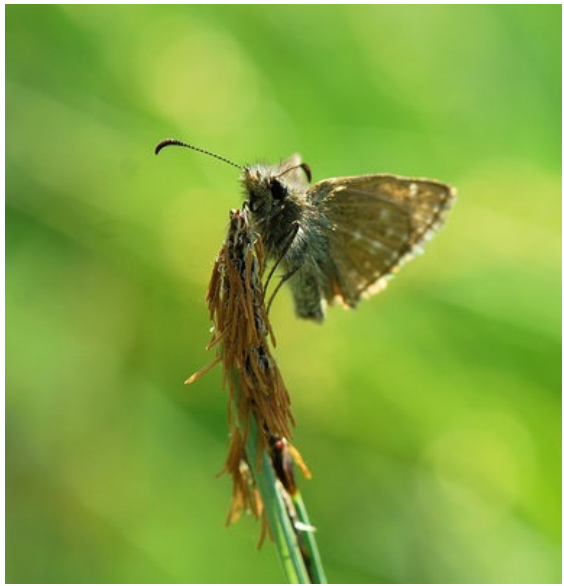
Many hours in Ikea is not exactly my ideal Sunday but sometimes you just have to grin and bear it, put your head down and think about the Brownie points you're accruing when it gets really bad (generally as you enter 'Market Hall'). So it was today but my Brownie points were due to be cashed in almost immediately because as a reward for my patience we were stopping at Bentley Wood on the way home...

There were only a few cars in the car park and the book told the usual tale – the odd Skippers and Pearls so onwards we went with a couple of Specklies popping up on way in and a busy looking Pearl.

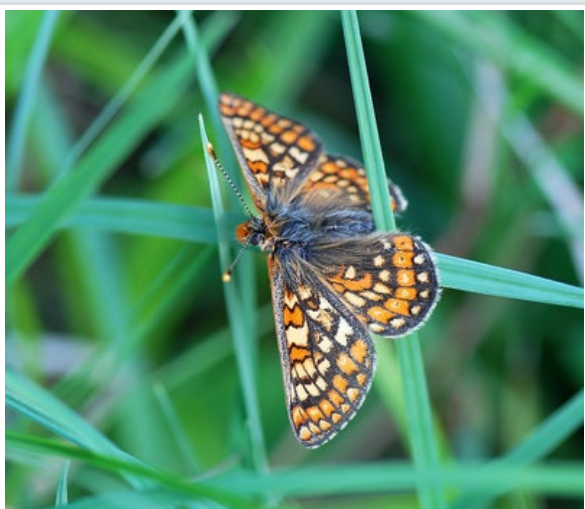
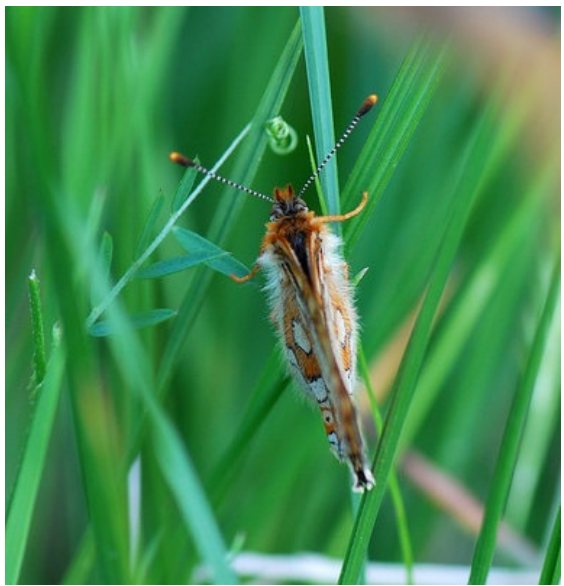


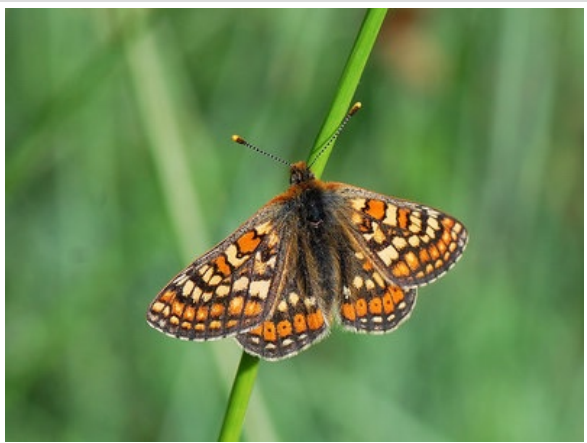
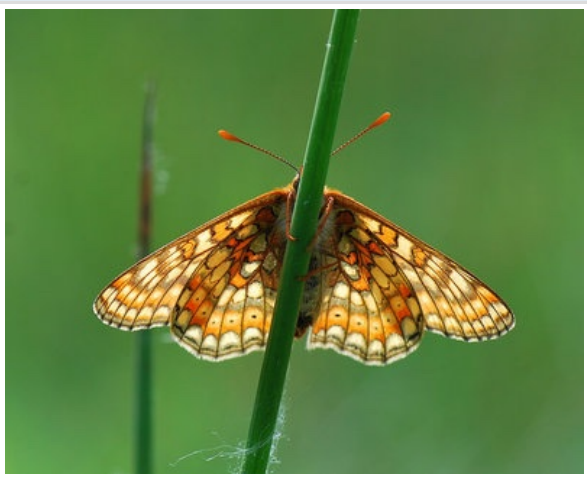
The girls set up their camp in the idle of the clearing by the bench under the tree showing their mum how to do it. With everyone settled I set off for a bit of a wander. The first butterfly I found was a bit dark for a Pearl I thought and was also sticking to the Bugle in amongst the reedy looking grass. I tried for a few shots and looking through the viewfinder as I took them I thought 'Small Pearl'. A flash of underside and I was convinced but the images were pretty dire; mainly grass with a little bit of butterfly. It bombed away and so I started off round the rest of the Clearing to see what I could find. There were a few Pearls about some not looking too bad and down round the bottom quarter I found a Dingy.





It was while I was here that I stumbled across a Marshie, and then another joined it as it fancied a little bit of the other. I couldn't believe it! I'd seen my second set of Marshies in a secret location that was all a bit Secret Squirrels in Bentley Wood. Yet here were two nonchalantly hanging around in the Eastern Clearing. I spent some time with them as the sun went in and out of the clouds picking up a nice range of shots. And then I pointed them out to another enthusiast and made my way back to the camp for a bit to eat before setting out on round two.





This time I spent most of my time close to camp in the main section of the Clearing following round a couple of Pearls and trying for the underwing shot that proved so illusive the a fortnight previously. It was while I was doing this that I came across a second Small Pearl which put in the most fleeting of appearances. It was there one moment feeding nicely on some Bugle offered up a closed wing shot from a couple of different angles and then was gone almost as quickly as it had arrived.



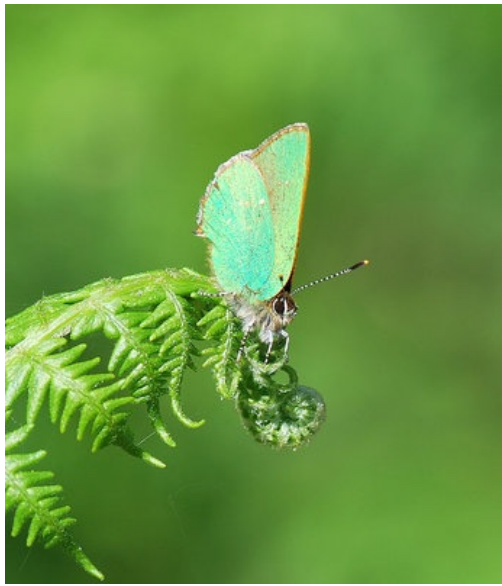




Chuffed to have gotten the Small Pearl in the bag (top and underside shot) I mooched around in the area that the Marshies had been hanging around at. After a bit of time with them I was drawn back towards the middle of the Clearing again as the Small Pearl was back. This time it settled out in the open, God bless Bracken, and so I was able to see that it had the smallest of nicks in the left fore wing and so was a second individual. I took many shots of this butterfly but it didn't move at all so almost all of my shots look the same.



Once more back at camp I took the girls for a quick wander to point out the three Frits on show and then we packed up and headed for home. We crossed the little wooden bridge (well three logs parallel) and made our way along the path that runs past the notice board. A small green moth zipped out from the Bracken and perched like a Greenstreak would at the tip of a branch only at the tip of a frond of Bracken. I focused in on the butterfly and couldn't believe that what I was seeing was actually a Greenstreak, here in the middle of a clearing in the largest contiguous woodland in Wiltshire! I know that there are surrounding downs but they're a fair way away.



Surprised and happy we finished the journey home. And there was me thinking that this would be a routine stop-off and possibly a waste of precious Brownie points; my first Small Pearl of 2018, three Marshies and a Greenstreak, the later looking very out of place. I wouldn't have believed the report if I'd have read it in the book!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 04-Jul-18 07:27 AM GMT

I was as surprised as you about the Marshies in the eastern clearing. I was lucky enough to be there when they were flying too.

But you got some shots that I did not. I particularly like the backlit individual. I am a sucker for these stained-glass window shots.

And the Greenstreak... How odd that it was there too.

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 04-Jul-18 07:50 AM GMT

Never seen Marshies. 🍷🍷🍷 And the thought of seeing so many is very tempting. I tried to jolly a friend into taking a long trip this year but it failed. So I am going to plan it, probably a solo trip, next year. I know where to aim. 😊

I struggle to keep my own diary anything like up to date, so you remain a great comfort to me. In many ways it is nicer to be seeing a few weeks after the event – thanks for the lead you show.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Jul-18 09:22 AM GMT

Lovely Butterflies Wurzel and Greens for those Pearls 🍷🍷 I missed out on Pearls this year and last and just got the SPBF by the skin of my teeth 😊  
Never heard of Marshies in the woods before, I always imaged them in fields etc.  
When I saw them it was in North Devon a place called Knowstone , I love that one of the Marshie ( your sixth shot) I've never seen the under side of a Marshie before. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 04-Jul-18 09:40 AM GMT

Great reports Wurzel, and you managed some fantastic shots of those Marshies! 🍷😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Jul-18 11:36 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I was surprised by the Marshies but even more so by the Greenstreak, it seemed totally out of place 🤪😊

Cheers Peter 😊 My tardiness is a side affect of still working, but when the girls have left home and I retire I plan to post my exploits the very same day, it'll be something of a culture shock 😊 If you are planning a visit down this way for Marshies then let me know and I can provide the details of some great sites and also where to go in those sites 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I was chuffed with that one as it fitted nicely into my 'stained glass' collection 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 They weren't too bad as I was a bit battle scarred after spending several hours in Ikea 🤪😊

## Mottisfont 28-05-2018

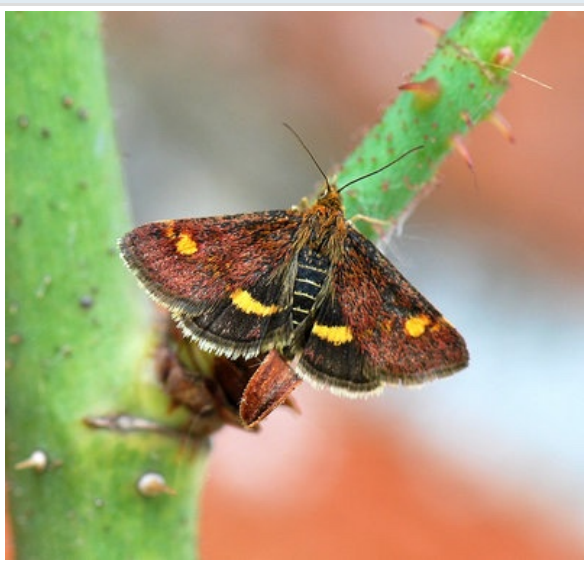
So 13 years ago today my older daughter K was born, turning my world upside down but for the best! Today as part of an elongated Birthday celebration we headed over to Mottisfont for a picnic before a meal out in the evening and Splash Down and vegan Pizza the following day. The app said it was going to be cloudy with heavy rain showers and thunder from 2pm onwards. Again this was total bollocks and when we arrived it was delightfully warm and breezy and the sun was rapidly eating through the light cloud.

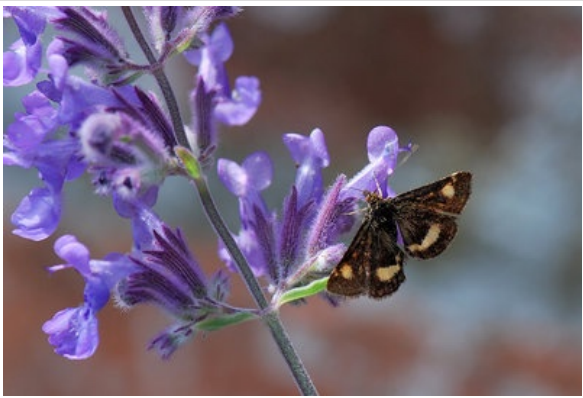
We set up on the lawn near the Ho-Ho (or Ha-Ha or Hi-Hi or whatever) and after various savoury munching tried to light all 13 candles on the cake. We'd get to 10 or 11 and the breeze would pick up blowing the whole lot out. So in the end we settled for just the one. Birthday wish made the girls both went off to explore, my wife had a catnap and I went off for a quick mooch of the bank on the opposite side of the Ho-Ho. It was looking mighty fine with tall grasses and Ox-eye Daisies. Flitting and around was a male Common Blue looking sky blue one moment and as the light changed it turned to turquoise. I also spotted a Bee Orchid hidden down amongst the high sward. As we left a poignant scene unfolded before us. There on the pristine bank were small children ripping up flowers while their parents filmed them presumably for 'Insta' whilst mothers trampled through to sit and hold their children for yet more 'Insta' shots while the vegetation below their posteriors was slowly crushed to oblivion 😞😞.





Slightly depressed we made our way up to the Walled Garden where the roses were in bloom, their fragrance trapped by the brick facades. The warmth and scent, plus the fact that trampling wouldn't be an issue here as all stuck to the gravel paths lifted my spirits again. The girls went and did their thing while I wended this way and that. There were a few whites about, all the ones I saw that settled long enough were Smalls though there was a definite Large mooching and throwing its weight about. A Holly Blue kept jinking around leading me into a false sense of security and my second Red Admiral of the year cut across the garden to get to the woodland beyond. There were also several Mint Moths hanging about. It was all going really well until I got called back by K as my wife was feeling the heat.





We packed up and sought refuge in the shade and before cooling down even more by taking the streamside path back towards the exit. What a fantastic day which was going to get even better as we were heading out later for a meal so no cooking or washing up!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by keving, 06-Jul-18 09:37 AM GMT

Wurzel, nice Mint Moth shots. I get these tiny little delights in my garden and they always brighten my day,

Kind Regards  
Kev

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 06-Jul-18 08:54 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel,

That first Mint Moth photo is a cracker 🍪 😊, they can be difficult little things to photograph in the daytime.

Cheers,

Neil

### Re: Wurzel

by Old Wolf, 06-Jul-18 09:14 PM GMT

Wurzel, your pictures are amazing.

Sounds like you had a great day and all had lots of fun, especially you by the looks of the pics 😊

Stay Hydrated.

Old Wolf.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Jul-18 08:50 AM GMT

Cheers Kev 😊 They're great when seen with the naked eye, and just get better when magnified 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 They were right pains in the behind to be frank, I had to settle down on the path and get garb shots 😊😊

Cheers Old Wolf 😊 Thanks for your very kind comment 😊 I always try and make the most of family days, my mantra is 'always take your camera' 😊

[size=150]Laverstock 31-05-2018

[/size]

I'd missed my usual visit to the Tutors on Monday as it was a Bank Holiday however today I would possibly get two cracks of the whip as Little L had two classes - Maths first and English last thing. As we set off at 8:10 it was cloudy but still bright with the odd patches of blue sky showing through the haze. It had been raining earlier and the pavements were still wet but it still felt warm, muggy really. Having walked Little L in I carried on out through the French windows, hopped over the fence and I was away up the down scanning every tall grass in the sward for a little white flag. On the way a Green-veined White woke from its night time slumbers, Whitethroats churred, a Buzzard took off from the one the boundary trees and started slowly circling a rising on the barest of thermals and a pair of Bullfinch whistled mournfully.

It wasn't until I was about half way up that I started seeing butterflies in roughly the same place that I'd found them a week or so previously. I started scanning and counting but had to keep starting as I would happen to look back at a grass stem and there would be a butterfly on it that hadn't been there before. In the end I left it as a best count of 19 male and 7 female Common Blues but I scribbled this out in my notebook and just wrote 'shed loads'! There were Common Blues all over the place. At one point I watched 9 on the wing at once in the same view. It was almost joyful if tempered slightly by a distinct lack of Biodiversity; where were all the other species? Perhaps it was too late here for Grizzillies and Dingies, too dull and the wrong sort of habitat in this area for Greenstreaks or damp for Small Heath or too early in the morning for Brown Argus?





After a while I'd worked through the longer grasses and on the shorter turf I stumbled across a stunning female Adonis so the reserve suddenly became twice as biodiverse! She was a real beauty, fresh out of the box and I managed to move round and down the slope slightly so I could get an underside view as well. After this I checked out the next section of taller grass on the other side of one of the main paths. This too held good numbers of Common Blues including another tiny female which at first I thought was a Brown Argus. She seemed to be missing a section of one of her hind wings although I'm not sure if this wasn't a deformity as the remaining part seemed to make an unusual angled shape?





Along this part of the track the sward was much lower and there was a sea of buttercup and clover. An electric blue flash heralded the arrival of a male Adonis and a second one also did a fly-by- It was difficult to know which one to go for so in the end I settled for just watching the first and it moved from the shorter grasses to the even shorter grasses and clover on the main body of the track. This was great news for me as I could approach it easily, get some nice unobstructed shots and then move away without disturbing the butterfly. As I was doing this the sun crept though ever so slightly and lit the butterfly up. Right before my eyes it went from a pastel/powder blue to a vivid electric blue.







After this I followed the path across the side of the down for a short way just seeing what I could find. Still no Brown Argus but Common Blues all over the place with a couple at least in every patch of yellow flowers. I also found a Yellow Shell and 5 Spot Burnet Moth and a Fragrant Orchid (I got wet knees from kneeling down to check the ID and it did indeed smell beautiful).





Then my time was almost up so I beat a hasty retreat back to the Tutor's. Hopefully the weather will hold out and there might be a Part 2 today...  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 08-Jul-18 11:11 AM GMT

Love how you've captured that electric sheen on the Adonis Wurzel 😊. For a second you had me all excited, thinking the 2nd brood was out, .....and then I realised 😞😞

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Jul-18 02:13 PM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 You've sussed out my cunning plan (wait for the 2nd brood so my photos of the 1st don't seem out of place) but I was a bit too early executing it 😊 At least I was early for something 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 09-Jul-18 03:30 PM GMT

Brilliant selection of Blues Wurzel. 😊 I like the variety you get with the females. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Jul-18 11:23 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 Female Common Blues are always value for money, you never know what you're going to get 😊

## Laverstock Down 31-05-2018 Part 2

After my early morning walk up the Down while the butterflies were waking up I headed home and spent the rest of the day getting jobs done so that when the time came for L's next holiday class I could wander the slopes in a relaxed fashion. Throughout the course of the day the weather improved so much so that I was hoping for plenty of open wing shots rather than the closed wing ones I was getting in the morning.

On the walk up the slope this time it was a Specklie that greeted me and from there onto the Down proper. Straight away the butterflies were around and about with 2 Dingies mobbing a Common Blue. This is how it went pretty much wherever I walked with Blues everywhere, a few steps and then there would be a couple more, a few more steps and then a couple more and so on. There were also good numbers of Dingies but for the whole of the first part of this walk I saw only three species.



I carried on right round the side of the Down reaching the gully on the far side adding Small Heath to the tally. As I walked down the gully there were four Dingies, three of which were involved in a mass brawl, two more Small Heath as well as a couple of Common Blues and several male Adonis. I also stumbled across a mating pair of Adonis and watched as another male tried to muscle in to no avail.





It was all going better than expected. I was hoping to see a few Blues but nowhere near the numbers that I was seeing. To put it into perspective it felt like the blues were almost as common and ubiquitous as Meadow Browns are later in the season. Round the foot of the next hill were another pairing of Adonis and more males besides as well as Common Blues, 2 Dingies and a Small Heath or three. A late but not yet an ex-male OT also put in an appearance.





I checked the time and I had 15 minutes to get back so I steeled myself to make the walk back and not get distracted. On the walk back I purposefully took the path at the bottom of the Down as it was in shade and so therefore I reasoned there would be fewer butterflies but despite this I still noted a few more Dingies, Adonis, a Small White and a couple of male Brimstones as well as the Common Blues all over the place. It seems that using the shade was actually a bad idea as an OT was also quite relaxed and approachable down here out of the sun so I lost another couple of minutes watching it nip from flower to flower taking nectar. It still seemed in good nick though slightly short in the wing margin department.



Right at the very edge of the reserve a Common Blue wished me farewell until the next time...possibly tomorrow morning as it's verbal reasoning or failing that Monday when it's back to business as usual.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 10-Jul-18 11:39 PM GMT

Your male OT is very late on the scene, and whilst not fresh, is still in good condition. Perhaps still optimistically looking for Ladies ?. My last OT sighting seems like a lifetime ago.

Hope you have six weeks of Butterfly heaven coming up !.  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 11-Jul-18 07:55 AM GMT

Great images of Adonis Blues, Wurzel – and that new species you uncovered – the Three-winged Blue! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 11-Jul-18 10:21 PM GMT

Just catching up with things, Wurzel, and going back in time to May and your Marshie shots from Martin Down is just amazing, plus the three-Frit festival at Bentley Wood and then the Adonis. And an Orange Tip to... A staggering set of images – I think I'm going to look through them all again! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Jul-18 12:06 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 It was a bit late but he still had a fair bit of vim Trevor 😊

Cheers Ernie 😊 I was a bit unsure about posting that image as I thought it might be censored 😊😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I hope they were still as good the second time, there's some more coming up sooner rather than later 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Jul-18 11:43 PM GMT

#### Bentley Wood 02-06-2018

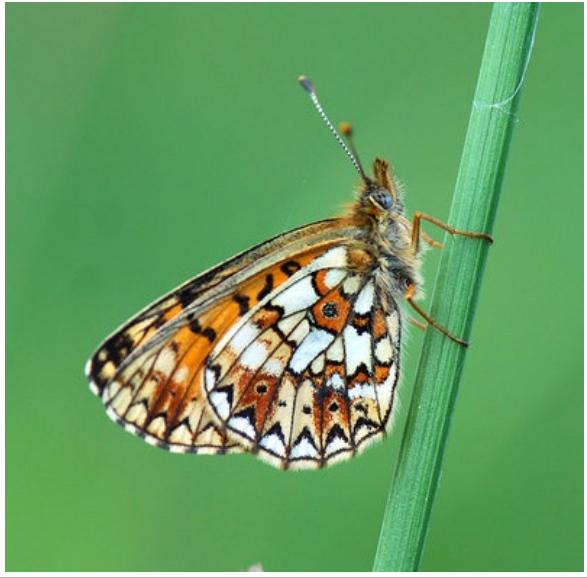
After the surprise visit last week I knew that the Small Pearls were out at Bentley and so it was that I was bombing over there first thing in the morning to get a few ready and on a plate for Philzoid when he arrived.

As last time there was a Speckled Wood to greet me on the way in but this time it was a Small Pearl rather than a Pearl that bombed by and back the way I'd come as I came up to the Visitor sign. I set to wandering around the top part of the Clearing and the little area just over the 'bridge'. It threw up a few Pearls and a lovely Small Pearl which landed on a fence post showing off its livery to the best advantage. Fling around in the same place as a week

ago there were also a couple of Marshies. So far things were looking good for when Philzoid arrived and the weather was lending a hand as well with the sun intermittently hiding away behind the clouds a grounding the otherwise incessant butterflies long enough for some shots.



As I was shooting away at the Marshies another enthusiast came up and pointed at a small butterfly hanging about in the reeds and asked if it was a Small Pearl. Yep it was indeed, and it had shut up shot beautifully positioned with wings tightly closed revealing the stupendous underwing markings. As we moved towards it his dog got a bit keen and off it went, luckily not too far as the sun was having one of its breaks and so we were soon taking it in turns to click away from a variety of angles. Come on Philzoid you need to get in on this!



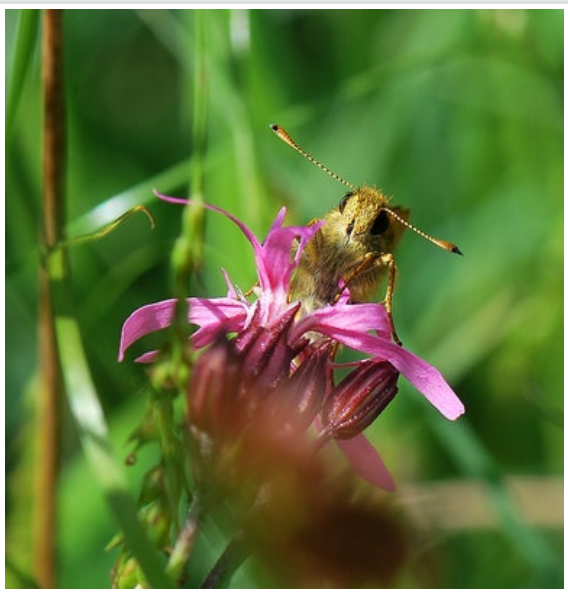




A third enthusiast arrives and with him the sun and so the Small Pearl was offski. We talked and watched the Marshies and a Honey Buzzard flew overhead and as I looked back to ground there was Philzoid arriving from the car park. Once we'd seen a few Marshies we set off checking out the various other parts of the site though not really seeing much before ending up back in the centre of the of the Clearing. Once here we started watching and waiting and a few Pearls were seen before Philzoid finally got onto a Small Pearl. We also found something of an unusual species for Bentley Wood, a ridiculously blue female Common Blue.

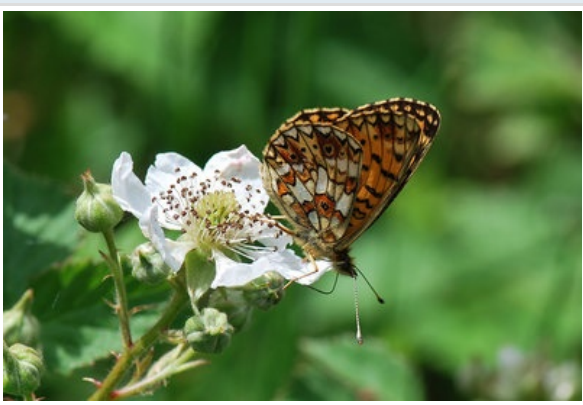


We then decided to settle down and really try to get one of the Small Pearls that kept buzzing around on film. It was a great idea in principle but we kept getting side tracked, or at least I did as a Specklie would pop up, a Marshie would sit nicely or a Pearl would land on a passer-by's trouser and to top it all off a golden blur announced my first Large Skipper of 2018.





Eventually one of the Small Pearls settled down long enough for us to get a few shots even if it was partially obscured by various reed stems. The trick was to move around until the majority of the reeds were out of shot. Having had success earlier in the morning I let the others that had gathered get their shots. Luckily another one was about and this one was playing much nicer, taking nectar here and there and most importantly it was taking its time. At one point it really endeared itself to me as it landed on a Spotted Orchid!





As we were leaving a very fresh Grizzlie appeared to delay our exit and two Argent and Sable gave us a bit of a run around before we eventually managed to tear ourselves away and make for the next site...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 13-Jul-18 12:21 AM GMT

The backlit underside SPBF shots are 100% brilliant Wurzel... and the others aren't half bad either! 😊 Brilliant. 😊

Dave

**Re: Wurzel**

by philm63, 13-Jul-18 09:26 AM GMT

Interesting and well illustrated as always Wurzel, some lovely shots – Phil

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 13-Jul-18 04:50 PM GMT

Some lovely Blues recently Wurzel and I love those backlit Small Pearls 🍷 😊

Cheers,

Neil

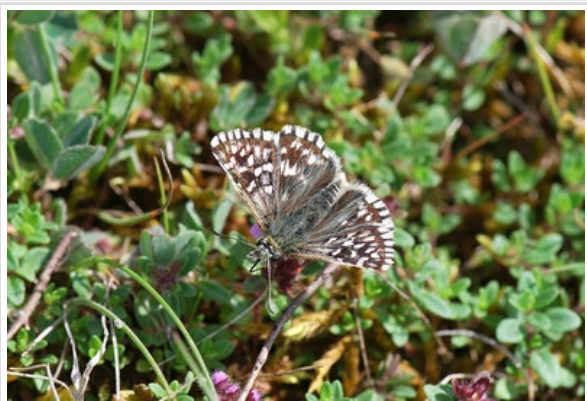
**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 14-Jul-18 08:31 AM GMT

Cheers all! 😊 I was happy with those shots on such a cracking day 😊

**Onto the Duke Site 02-06-2018**

After Bentley it was a quick cross country run to my Duke site with my first Painted Lady as a fly-by at a roundabout on the way. We drove up the tank tracks and parked letting the dust settle for a moment before we were both out and raring to go. The first area was the small triangle of short turf and bare earth to the left of the cars. I've checked this area out a few times before and it generally produces the goods as he butterflies seem to like to drop in here to bask and feed away from the rustle and bustle of the long grasses and the arid, dusty tracks. So it was today with Adonis and Common Blues, Brown Argus and the odd Dingy, Small Heath and Grizzlie.





There is also a little stand of trees towards the bottom of the hill here which offers respite from the wind that can cut across the open fields or shade when the sun burns down. I've found Small Blues here before and again so it was again today. The tired looking little butterfly put in an appearance contrasting nicely with the garish Adonis Blues. They were out in force here with a mating pair, chocolatey females and some electric blue males including one which was adopting an unusual pose. It sat on a flower top with wings open wide, so wide.



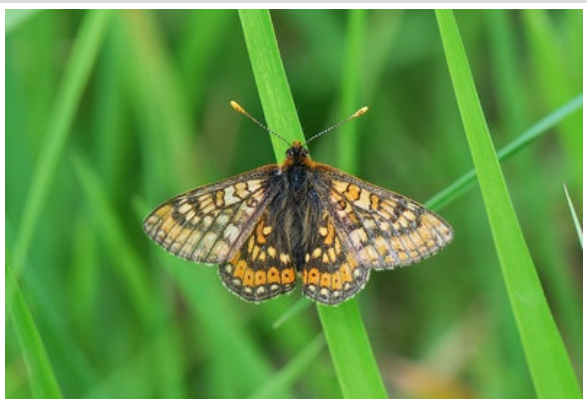
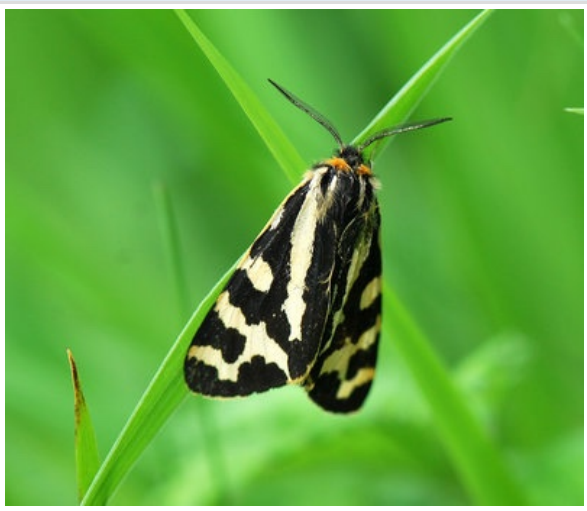


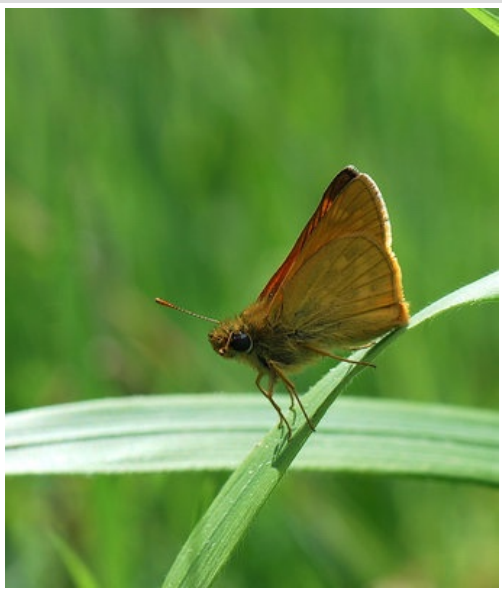
We tore ourselves away remembering that there was a whole site to visit and not just a corner somewhere in a field in Hampshire (well technically Wiltshire but that wouldn't fit the song lyric). So we followed the tank tracks and the animal tracks heading gently uphill towards the Cypress tree, the short turf and the miniature valley. We stopped occasionally for such delights as a group Adonis Blues clambering over unidentified scat, an aged Grizzlie and an even larger group of Burnet Moths hanging onto a Skyscraper of a plant. Among them was the most confluent Burnet that I've seen.

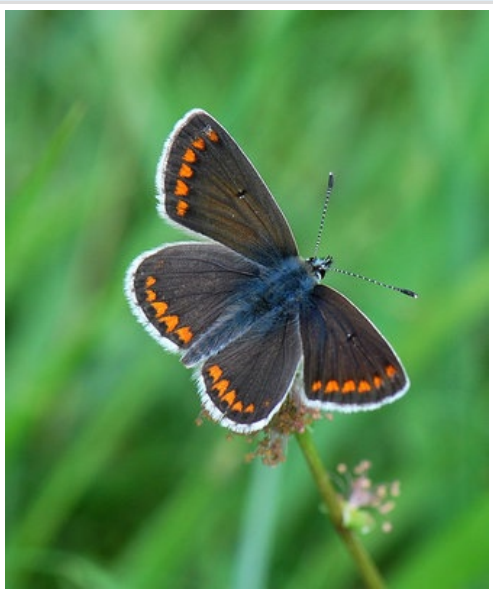


We followed the track up to the corner where there were once Dukes a plenty and paused a while longer here. There were all the usual suspects from Common Blues to Brown Argus as well as such delights as a Wood Tiger and the now ubiquitous Marshies. Onwards and upwards we went criss-crossing the field with the odd Large Skipper already holding territory before diving into the Beech woodland to seek shade and also a couple of Orchids - White Hellborine and Bird's Nest - both of which species we easily located. The miniature valley held a different range of species from the last time I'd been here and now there were blues and Brown Argus and a cracking looking Small Copper.











The walk back to the car was jovial and we chewed the fat spotting and photographing butterflies in a much more relaxed fashion. Pootling about with another Small Copper, another tried looking Marshie before walking through Adonis Blue heaven where we were accosted by male and female Adonis. All too soon goodbyes had been wished and I was in my car heading home with memory card full.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 14-Jul-18 09:35 AM GMT

Great Butterfly shots Wurzel, 😊 I'm hoping the Adonis could come out sooner here before I go home ( we've another two weeks yet) 😊 Still not seen a Copper yet this year. Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 14-Jul-18 09:36 AM GMT

It's quite difficult to pick a favourite image from such a spectacular array but that towering Viper's Bugloss covered in Burnets is quite an sight! 🍷

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 14-Jul-18 10:58 AM GMT

I'm with Paul on that one, a Burnet for almost every flower, what an opportunity/shot !.  
Your Brown Argus is also mrgreen worthy, and an extra mrgreen for that Forester Moth. 🍷🍷 .

Enjoy your imminent Summer break !,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 14-Jul-18 11:36 PM GMT

Yep, I'm with Bugboy on this one too – the Burnet Tree is a terrific shot. They really do seem to be hatching from every flower on the Echium (posh name for Vipers' Bugloss 😊) – a very close relative of those you see in the Canary Isles that grow fifteen feet tall. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 15-Jul-18 03:43 PM GMT

Those are fantastic Small Pearls Wurzel. 🍷😊 And a cracking selection from your Duke sight, love the Burnet's. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Jul-18 08:29 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Those ones were still from the first brood as I'm so behind, but fingers crossed you'll pick up an early Adonis before you go 😊  
Cheers Bugboy 😊 That was only one of several Burnet high rises, it was a veritable high rise complex 🍷😊  
Cheers Trevor 😊 Only 7.5 days to go 😊 and so only 7 more decent butterfly weather days 😊😞, make the most of it...  
Cheers Dave 😊 Can you imagine what a sight to behold that would be if the same thing happened on the Echium in the Canary Isles 🍷🍷🍷  
Cheers Andrew 😊 I hope that they can hang on at Bentley Wood as they are generally very well behaved at this site 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 16-Jul-18 07:02 AM GMT

I'm with the others on your pic of Burnets on the Vipers Bugloss, Wurzel – fantastic. The Adonis with its wings open really wide is unusual too. But there is also that Birdsnest Orchid close-up, and the Small Copper showing off the yellow patches on its forewings, and the Marshies...

Cheers,

### Re: Wurzel

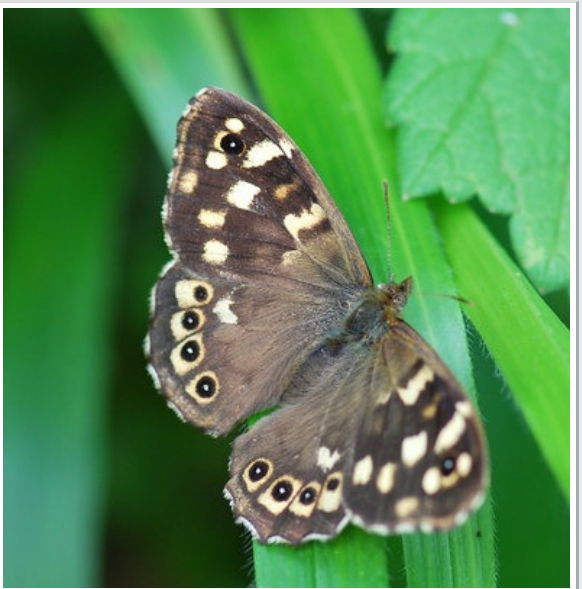
by Wurzel, 16-Jul-18 11:53 PM GMT

## Kingston Lacey 03-5-2018

After such a cracking day yesterday I fancied a bit of a quiet one so once the chores had been done and the girls had finally done their homework we packed up a lunch and headed out to Kingston Lacey. Once there we swept up the drive with the tall grass on one side swaying and looking faintly purple whilst on the other the field was blindingly white from a multitude of Ox-eye Daisies. The place looked fantastic. After we ate the girls read their books and my wife read the paper so I checked out the little bank on the side of the Ho-Ho. A single male Common Blue caught my eye and so I popped down and watched it fly up the ditch and back before it settled almost in front of me.



After I'd returned the lunch things to the car we set out on our walk which was a new one that had only just been completed. We cut across to the woodland area but instead of turning left and making back towards the various gardens we took a right and the path dove down through the wood plunging us into its green depths. Every now and again it felt like we broke to the surface and light streamed through the gaps in the canopy like a forest clearing in miniature. Each time this happened Specklies would appear. First there were two tussling together and vying for the airspace. The second time one flew in whilst a second was perched in what must have been its favoured spot. I surmised this because the perched butterfly took off and attacked the incomer almost as soon as it had drifted into view. I let out a chuckle because as soon as this pair were slugging it out for the prized territory a third Specklie nipped in and stole the perch. After a further wander the path snaked round a view times and then there were 2 Specklies but the trees were thinning out now so final as the path opened out onto the fields a final Specklie wished us well by the gate.



The path then took us past the field of Ox-eye Daisies that we'd seen on the drive in and there right on the edge was a dark brown butterfly. I pointed the camera at it a looked through the viewfinder and as it came into focus I'd bagged my first Meadow Brown of 2018. Slightly further in was as a second and so I kicked off my sandals and 'snake footed' my way a little further into the field so I could get a few closer shots without trampling the background to my photos. It paid off in both respects.



We crossed over the drive and then the path dove once more into woodland and so we were back to seeing Specklies in the small sunlit spots where a cleared or fallen tree had opened up the canopy. From here the path once more broke out from the trees this time onto a boardwalk and shortly we were walking through Rhododendrons eventually ending up in a most familiar part of the estate. From here it was a short walk to the Kitchen Garden. While the girls sought shade I checked out the flower beds and the small pond. There were a few Small Whites around and a Brimstone made a pass and down at the pond there were 2 broad-bodied Chasers, a Large Red Damselfly and a gaggle of Azure Damselflies.





On the final stomp back to the car (I really mean stomp as little L had had enough!) I paused in the Pacific Garden where there was another distant Meadow Brown and a Small White that was actually sitting still for more than 3 seconds!





Another Stairway...



All in all a very restful and relaxing afternoon.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

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

Those Speckled Woods look reasonably fresh Wurzel, are you into another brood down there - Phil

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 17-Jul-18 09:41 AM GMT

Love that stairway Wurzel, 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 17-Jul-18 08:00 PM GMT

Just seen that shot of the Burnet tree Wurzel...what a fantastic image 🍷 😊

That (Cistus?) Forester and Wood Tiger are a couple of cracking shots too, both species that have a habit of settling down in the grass.

Cheers,

Neil.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Old Wolf, 17-Jul-18 08:22 PM GMT

Lovely pictures with the Burnet tree being quite something.

That is a lot of different species. I am always amazed at the amount of great shots of different species that I see on here 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 17-Jul-18 11:34 PM GMT

Cheers Phil 😊 I'm so far behind on my PD Phil that those could have been late first brooders 🙄🙄

Cheers Goldie 😊 My second Stairway to Heaven this year 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I wouldn't like to hazard which Forester it is though round here I think the Cistus is commoner 😊 I was dead chuffed with the Wood Tiger as it just sat there 😊

Cheers Old Wolf 😊 I'm really lucky that there are some butterfly packed and diverse sites near to me. I'm like a kid in a sweet shop sometimes 😊

## Laverstock Down 04-06-2018

Monday is Tutor Day! There are some real advantages to this regular Monday evening Tutor session. Firstly during the winter months or if the weather is dire I get loads of work done, second I get to chat to the Tutor which is always entertaining and finally when the weather plays fair I get to shot up the Down. So today once we'd dealt with various foibles of the Education system with its ridiculous 'marking to the curve' 😡 I was off checking the mats at the top of the garden on the way - a record breaking 12 Slow Worms tonight! 😊

I took the more usual route up the across the field, hang a left and then down the gentle ridge to the bottom of the Down. I'd just hung the left when a golden orange blur shot across the path. I followed it while it had a bit of a tussle with a Common Blue and watched as it landed, a lovely looking Small Copper which was a first from this site this year. A great way to begin!



From here I carried on down before the Down rose steeply ahead of me. Along the way there were a couple of Common Blues and a Specklie was again down near the trees which the cows like to shelter under. And then I was climbing up the Down. A Dinky was having a go at any Common Blue that dared enter its airspace and when it wasn't being feisty it was supping nectar for all it was worth. Slightly further up I could make out 14 Common Blues sitting or roosting amongst the tall grasses. There was also my first Wiltshire Meadow Brown sitting out the ever so slightly cooler period while the sun was behind a cloud. As I continued up I would stop every other step as another butterfly hove into view and by the time I reached the top most section I'd seen couple of Dingies, a Brimstone, Meadow Brown, 9 Small Heath, 4 Adonis and a 15th Common Blue which I know wasn't a recount as it was my first female of the visit.





At the top the path is encroached upon by Bramble and Hawthorn on both sides with the occasional scallop cut out. In one of these I found a Large Skipper which sat up and begged to have its photo taken. I left it and carried on fighting my way through the 'path' making it out the other side and being greeted by another Large Skipper. I would have tried for a few shots of this one but I was approaching half time and I wanted to get to the gully.



Things seemed quieter on this side possibly because the wind had picked up and was quite blowy at times. So instead of butterflies every few steps I had to walk a whole 4 metres at a time before seeing another butterfly SHOCK FACE! Luckily it was only a quick hop over to the gully and soon I was zig zagging my down the gully to the bottom of the Down. I got about three quarters of the way down and the sun came out and with it the butterflies. The first was an aged Grizzlie but it was quickly joined by Common Blues along with the occasional Small Heath. Further down I went with the taller grasses here seeming to be favoured by the Common Blues. There were a further 2 Grizzlies and some more Small Heath and Dingy. The turf became much shorter here and here there were more Adonis Blues flying though none stopped.



I checked the time and realised I had 15 minutes to make the trip back so it became a case of head down and route march back - whilst this meant not stopping for butterflies a long most of the return stretch at least I got my Government recommended 10 minutes of brisk walking. I did stop twice more the first time for a miniscule Brown Argus and the second for my third Large Skipper.





I arrived back with a minute to spare and so slipping through the French windows I took my place with the other pick-up parents.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 17-Jul-18 11:45 PM GMT

Interesting to see what I imagine must have been fresh first brood Common Blues and Brown Argus only five or six weeks ago, when the second brood has been out round here for nearly a fortnight. There hasn't been much of a gap between them at all. And a Dingy Skipper too – there are second brood Dingies out too now on certain southern slopes I'm reliably informed. What a curious year it is. After all that, it's the Large Skippers I like most out of those last shots – brand new ones are beautifully marked. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Jul-18 02:39 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I know what you mean about it being a funny old year. I spent most of the first part waiting for it to get going which it didn't and now I find myself wanting it to slow down and pace itself; hopefully the butterflies won't burn out and there will still be something to see come September 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Jul-18 03:11 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, the Butterflies I've seen here so far in Kent have not had the chance to get weathered which is good, I just wish they'd slow down a bit. Saw more Cloudies today but none stopped, I did manage one shot (in my post) the one that got a way 😊 I'm looking for Adonis next 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 19-Jul-18 04:50 PM GMT

Nice to see fresh Large Skips, Wurzel. Being 6 weeks behind will really start to get us confused when someone posts about Silver-spotted Skippers! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Jul-18 11:41 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I too wish the butterflies would slow down they're almost turbo charged at the moment 😊😊

Cheers Ernie 😊 I'll make sure to keep the date nice and large 😊 Someone already made that mistake last week on the Wiltshire Branch sightings 😊

## Work and Larkhill 06-06-2018

As the weather had decidedly cheered up by lunchtime I wandered out to check out the meadow. The grasses are really coming along and there seemed to be about 4 or 5 different species as well as some nice patches of mixed flowers. It still feels like very early days and I wasn't expecting to find many blues around as they've got to find the field first and then settle down and lay some eggs before they'll become a regular sight; we can but dream. Instead of the butterflies there were plenty of Moths around, generally the Crambid grass moths and up to 17 Silver Y's but the stars of the show were a Cinnabar and a 5 Spot Burnett.



After work I was delayed whilst waiting to see if any year 11's would attend a revision session. They didn't and as I knew that I'd be back in Salisbury too late to pick my wife and Little L up from the school run I stopped off for 5 minutes or so at Larkhill. As I reached the main track which runs parallel with the road I noticed a Small Heath and then I took a right turn following the track down to the little hollow and then turning round and coming back. This put me onto 2 Large Skippers another Small Heath and 2 Common Blues. The Blues were shining like Sapphires in amongst a sea of green. They stood out so easily because the wind had flattened some of the longer grasses around them and they were perched here each in their own auditorium.



I then followed the track Eastwards a little way though I didn't get far as a Small Blue caught my attention. She was hanging around some Kidney Vetch but was quite tricky to capture on film as she would constantly be turning and taking nectar here and there before moving to the next flower head.





I strolled up the track, the long grasses brushing past my trouser legs and polishing my shoes and things all got a little hectic. First came a male and then a female Adonis. The male was better behaved than the female, posing nicely whereas the female kept hanging out too low down in the grass so an unobstructed photo was impossible. Further on another pair of Adonis took off from in front of me; I mean if you don't want to be disturbed don't sit right here in the middle of the track. Then there was a Small Heath, fly-bys from 3 Brimstone, 4 Common Blue and a Small White and another pair of Large Skipper. It left me feeling a little stunned as I didn't know here to point the camera first and all this in 3 minutes.



Sensing that my time was almost up I made my way back and there was the Small Blue still in the same patch of Kidney Vetch. I watched as she shuffled around from one flower head to another and then she made motions with her abdomen reminiscent of ovi-positing. I couldn't make out if she actually laid any eggs and I didn't want to disturb her and have a closer look so I made a mental note and hopefully I'll be able to check this out on another visit, if I remember that is.



Have a goodun

Wurzel



### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 19-Jul-18 11:52 PM GMT

A rather nice set of Blues, There, Wurzel. I especially like the female Adonis. Fresh examples like that can't be beaten. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Jul-18 08:52 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I totally agree with you they have a certain lustre about them 😊 Soon be seeing the second brood 🤪 hopefully by the my posts won't still be featuring the 1st brood 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 20-Jul-18 10:25 PM GMT

Second brood should start in a couple of weeks on the warmest sites, it will be interesting to see if the dry weather has had any negative impact. Like the Grizzled Skippers Wurzel, it already seems such a long time ago...

### Re: Wurzel



by Wurzel, 21-Jul-18 10:49 AM GMT

Cheers Essex 😊 I know what you mean this season seemed to take an age to start and us now flying by with all species emerged already 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Jul-18 11:01 AM GMT

Great shots again Wurzel, you captured just what I'm looking for 🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

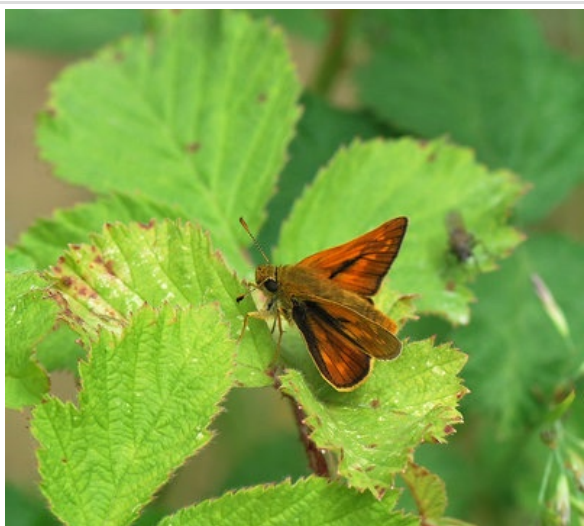
by Wurzel, 22-Jul-18 08:30 AM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 They're still from the first brood, mind you the way things are going with this crazy year you might get onto the early second brood, fingers crossed 😊

### Work 08-06-2018

Just a quick lunchtime check round to see how things were progressing and they were going well despite the dull conditions. I didn't see many butterflies, only 5 in total, but a couple of them that I did see were pretty special...

I started off checking out the pits but only got as far as the large Bramble bush before I was stopped. I noticed a Large Skipper sitting there on a leaf not doing an awful lot. I was just about to take a photo and shifted my position to see if could get a bit closer and a better angle and there right in front of me were a mating pair of Large Skipper. I was dead chuffed as this was the first pair of Larges that I'd seen and a welcome addition to the 'Butterflies in Cop' book that is slowing getting completed. All the while that these two were joined the third wheel, the original male that had caught my attention looked on.





After this I took a quick stroll along the main hedge finding a Speckle just through the trees and an unknown White further along the hedge. Giving it up I made my way back and the couple were still locked together and in the same spot though the other male had finally realised that he was too late.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 22-Jul-18 08:47 AM GMT

Mating Large Skippers. I must have seen hundreds of Large Skips over the years but I have never seen this. You are very lucky.



### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 22-Jul-18 10:26 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel that goes for me too, never seen them mating but certainly seen loads of others butterflies mating since being down here in the South 😊  
Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 22-Jul-18 03:58 PM GMT

  for the mating large skips. Still need to add that species to my in cop collection.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 22-Jul-18 06:42 PM GMT

Great mating Large Skippers, Wurzel. But I'm afraid there are no mrgreens, as I found a pair when the Sussex Black Hairstreaks were about. 😞

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Jul-18 10:44 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 These were my first ever pair in cop – I just need Lulworth and then I've completed my Skipper in cop collections (I'm not counting Chequered as they're far to far away 😊)

Cheers Goldie 😊 I did say there was something in the water down here 😊😞

Cheers Bugboy 😊 They're trickier to find than in cop than I thought, when I started 'collecting' in cop I thought Silver-spotted would be the tough species, but no it was the larger, more obvious and slower Large Skipper 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 No worries though I might have another 'in cop' that should be worthy of a 🐛 Mind you you'll probably need to wait until October before I post about it 😊😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 23-Jul-18 11:01 PM GMT

A very nice pair of Large Skippers, Wurzel – beautifully golden underneath, which none of the others can match! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Lee Hurrell, 24-Jul-18 09:41 AM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

A thoroughly cracking day, it was great catching up with Philzoid and Dave and meeting Lee for the first time as well being surrounded but butterflies and getting 5 FFY to boot!

It was wonderful to meet you Wurzel and to catch up with Dave and Phil.  
Some lovely photos there! You'll see mine in a year or so 😊

Best wishes,  
Lee

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Jul-18 11:55 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 They really are the 'Golden Skipper' 😊

Cheers Lee 😊 Those images will be all the sweeter to see after a bit of a wait 😊

### Laverstock 11-06-2018

My younger daughter and I both like Monday afternoons. She because she gets to visit her tutors house and me because I get to wander Laverstock Down for an hour immersing myself in the current species. Today a Painted Lady flew out of a drive way as we pulled up and I wondered what sort of omen this was? Did it portend to surprises and different species or was it to be that everything I saw would fly away before I could get a photo? Still musing on this conundrum I started up the Down and on the first stretch of path proper on the reserve a Large Skipper greeted me and then a couple of blues. The both fell into the 'fly away subset' and were joined slightly further down were a few Meadow Browns and a couple of other blues as well as a Large White and Speckled up near the wood. Nothing seemed to be stopping that was until I spied a tiny grey blob on a drying cow pat – a worn and tired Grizzlie but one I was glad to see here taking salts from poo as it was a welcome addition to my 'butterflies on poo' collection.



After this I decided to give up counting and just concentrate on the butterflies and trying to get shots of the Browns. Each year I write about how I must spend more time on this species or that etc. and the Browns are often well represented in my good intentions. However now I remembered why I don't; they can be damn frustrating! They erupt from nowhere, take off just as you focus, and land deep in foliage when they eventually do settle! They can be a nightmare!

As I wandered round the Down I did my best to ignore the Blues flying and focused and persevered on the Browns. Slowly I started to build up the number of shots I had, the chances started coming, the grab shots paid off and I managed to start getting into the right places at the right times. So I got some Meadow Brown and Small Heath shots. The Small Heath were acting slightly unusually in that that weren't all resting wings tightly shut but with one wing slightly leading the other so I could get a glimpse of the forewings ground colour. This was even more pronounced in one individual whose forewings curved out from each other.







I started to enjoy myself and then that's when I realised that it was time to start back. But I didn't mind as I'd spent some time with and out effort into the Small Heath, I'd kept a promise that I'd made to myself.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Jul-18 11:51 PM GMT

### Larkhill and onto Work 12-06-2018

The blocking off of the car park come lay-by at Larkhill has proved to be a bit a pain for me as now I can't stop as easily. Also I can't complete the route that I'm used to and it feels like I miss out some of the best habitat? Anyway I risked getting a car in my boot today making a quick stop-off before work.

I walked back up the hill heading West noting how the grass was growing across the path and was almost above my knees. There were a few Small Heath flying here and there and every now and again a blue gem would take off from where it had been hanging as a flag a flutter just out of reach. At least 2 of these gems were the shocking electric blue of the Adonis. There were also good numbers of Large Skipper and as I almost completed the walk

'there' before starting the 'back again' section, they were the second most numerous species.



As I turned to make my way back a small brown butterfly flew from one side of the path and alighted almost before on the other. It was a Brown Argus looking slightly tired with its margins worn but still sporting some huge lunules on the wings. I still reckon the combination of bright orange and chocolate brown can't be beaten.



The quick saunter back to the car didn't throw up anything new and with the highest totals noted down I got back in the car and headed on to work... At work the day passed me by as I got my head down and got on with it and then lunchtime arrived and offered some respite which I gleefully took. So with camera in hand I was off to the Pits. I was accosted on the way to the Bramble bush by a Meadow Brown looking ever so dark in the gloom though it did give me a flash of colour from its forewing.



At the Bramble a Large Skipper put in an appearance but before I could latch onto it properly a flash of Scarlet distracted me. It was a Cinnabar Moth but as usual it didn't hang around long enough for a photo. My distracted wandering in the vain attempt of getting a shot had brought me to the large nettle bed and as consolation a Specklie was nicely posed on the pile dried grass cuttings.



As I turned the warning bell sounded and so it was back to the Chalkface.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 27-Jul-18 12:05 PM GMT

Great reports Wurzel, I like your Skipper pairing and that flashing Meadow Brown. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Jul-18 11:47 PM GMT

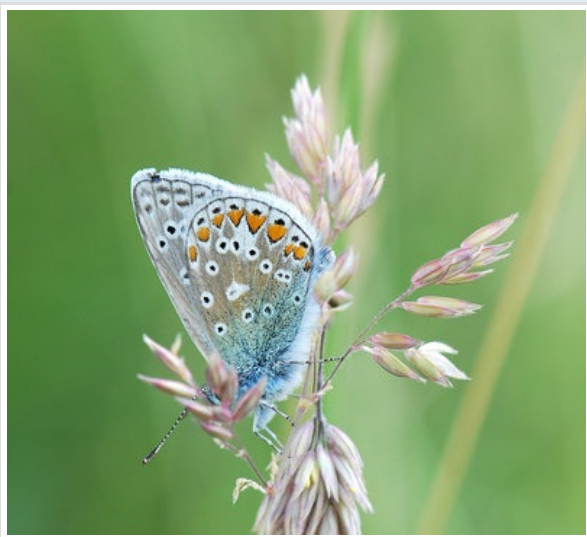
Cheers Andrew 😊 The Large Skipper pair was a first for me, but I've seen a few more since then, always the way 😊😊

Way Home 13-06-2018



The very shortest of stop-offs on the way home merely because I felt cheated as I had been unable to stop in the morning because I had to run a breakfast Booster session for the Chemistry exam. Then it was blue skies and sun. Now it was grey and sticky with a gusty breeze. I pulled up at the half way point and scurried across the road entering the relative calm of the Larkhill paths. As I started up the slight incline heading west a Small Heath was my first butterfly of the stop. It was quickly joined by a second and as I paused for an attempt at a shot a whistled "wet-my-lips" call rang out from the brush, a Quail, and my first British one to boot, though it didn't show itself.

I carried on adding butterflies to the tally; a Common Blue, Large Skipper, a few more Small Heath, Adonis Blue, Meadow Brown etc etc. A few steps and another butterfly would erupt from its hiding place within the longer grasses, Again "wet my lips" rang out even closer this time. Again it remained hidden but I didn't mind. Just knowing it was there was a pleasure, something finally after many years to tick off my British Life list. I almost converted back to birding...well almost 😊



*If I can't see you then you can't see me!*

I was in danger of my stop-off breaking my 10 minute limit so back I headed seeing different individuals of the same species and then it was the mad dash across the road and homeward bound.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Old Wolf, 28-Jul-18 08:31 PM GMT

Great shots Wurzel especially the upside down Adonis.

Why are the Blues always upside down? 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Jul-18 09:50 AM GMT

Cheers Old Wolf 😊 I reckon it's so they can do. Quick getaway, they just drop, open their wings and they're out of there 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 29-Jul-18 01:56 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, looks like I'm going home tomorrow without my Adonis 😊 can't grumble i've got loads of shots this time of lots of Butterflies, maybe next year fingers crossed 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Jul-18 09:53 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 You may not have got the Adonis but at least you went for it, I chickened out on all three of my target species for 2018 😊 Fingers crossed for 2019 😊

### Work 15-06-2018

A couple of days later I managed to get out again to see how things were moving along. The Pits seemed to be the main area of activity with a couple of whites flying about but not stopping as well as a few Meadow Browns. From there I followed the barely visible path through the long grasses, round past the large Bramble bush, through the line of trees and out to the field proper. The 'usual' Specklie was hanging around by the break through the line of trees but I was more interested at what was happening down by the Meadow.

It was looking mighty fine with different shades and hues of grasses reaching to almost waist height. Again it was strangely hypnotic to stand and watch as the breeze caught the grass tops, playing with some and leaving others, constantly changing and shifting the shading and tones visible. Along the hedge the odd Meadow Brown took nectar from the freshly opened Bramble flowers as if they were Hedge Browns and not the Meadow variety. On the return leg a smaller, more orange butterfly stopped me in my tracks. It was actually only a Small Heath but was a first for the school fields and was a species I'd hoped to see as it would indicate that things with the Meadow were going well. It was ridiculously jumpy but I tried for a few shots in any case as I wanted a record shot as it was a site first.





On my return back the Brambles slowed me down and almost made me late. I didn't get physically entangled but metaphorically as there was a really well behaved and posed female Large Skipper.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Jul-18 10:13 PM GMT

### Daneways 17-06-2018

All week Philzoid and I had been planning our trip to Daneways. All week I'd been monitoring the BBC Weather app and the MET app as well. All week it had been showing Sunday as the best day of the week with the drear lifting and sunny intervals with the lightest of breezes. All week things were looking great as with the sunny intervals the Large Blues should have been throwing both open and closed wing poses. I went to bed and things were still looking great and then I awoke on the Sunday and things had drastically changed though the rain and dark cloud was expected to lift by the early afternoon. So fingers crossed and reasoning that we only need about 15 minutes of sun break to spy our quarry we set off North.

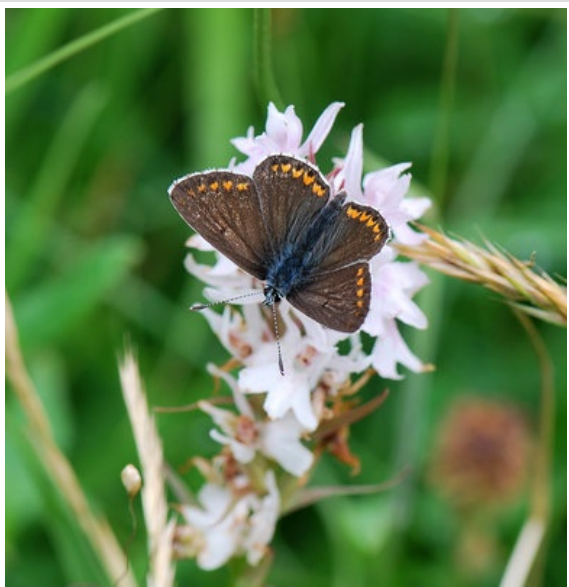
When we arrived it was still dark and dingy and so we set off into the drear. Once on site we set about trying to locate the Large Blues but to be honest we were happy to just find a butterfly! Nonetheless we starting searching, slowly moving along the banks from one end to the other and then stepping up to the next layer and repeating the manoeuvre. Along the banks there were Meadow Browns, the odd Small Heath a Blue but a female Common but not a Large and my first Ringlet of 2018.





We ended up at the top of the site working our way along towards the small pond but it was quiet here too with only a Large Skipper, Small Heath and a male Common Blue which was grimly hanging onto the grassheads. After a chat with the Warden we headed back down the steep slope to wander back towards the entrance. On the way we were accosted by a pair of Marbled Whites, our first of 2018. Back along the journey were a few more Browns; a Meadow Brown, a Small Heath and a Ringlet. Back near the start we did have a little Purple Patch with a male and female Common Blue and a Brown Argus, hardly an astounding highlight but judging by the weather and the dearth of butterflies appreciated none the less. We decided to give it a rest and head down and have a drink before coming back for the hoped for improvement in the weather.





After lunch we headed back up the hill ready to fill our boots in Large Blues once the blue sky showed and the sun burnt the cloud back. However the only blue skies encountered were the blue sky thinking in regards to the improvement in the weather. It stayed dull and dire but in terms of weather and butterflies for the rest of the day. Another complete circuit around saw only 6 butterflies according to my notes. There were probably more as I didn't record any Meadow Browns but I still think that we'd have difficulty in getting into double figures. A male Common Blue greeted us as we walked/trudged despondently up the hill and as well as 2 Marbled Whites, a Large Skipper and the male Common Blue still clutching the grassheads at the top of the reserve. We also came across an unusual looking Ringlet. It was a bit two-tone with one wing almost bleached white.





With that we headed home stopping on the way so that Philzoid could see and photograph Corn Bunting at Larkhill and still it was grey and dull and the wind had picked up. It was third time unlucky I guess and it had to happen eventually, you can't keep going out on every trip and things always fall into place. Still acceptance aside it was a bloody long way to go for my first Ringlets and Marbled Whites of 2018!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 30-Jul-18 10:30 PM GMT

Considering the incredible weather there has been since early May this year, Wurzel, you were incredibly unlucky to strike out on Large Blues on 17th June. As you say, a long way to go to see Marbled Whites and Ringlets... Even unusual ones! 😞 Still, we all get frustratingly blank days sometimes, which of course gives us something to promise ourselves for next time. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Janet Turnbull, 30-Jul-18 10:35 PM GMT

Nevertheless, your Ringlets are particularly rich and clean looking, Wurzel! Sod's law though, after all that glorious weather, to choose the cloudy weekend. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 30-Jul-18 10:41 PM GMT

I seem to remember you telling me you got Large Blues wing-rolling this year – so you must have gone back at some point between then and now and struck lucky?

Plus – Corn Bunting. You don't see those every day of the week. Every cloud has a silver lining so they say. 😊 Or does that pun not go down too well, sorry.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 31-Jul-18 08:39 AM GMT

Unlucky Wurzel, we can all sympathise with those kind of days, I had one of them just yesterday. I reckon I know exactly when your next visit there was though 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-18 08:49 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I think there was a period of two or three days when the Large Blues didn't fly at Daneways and this was one of them 😊 Like you say something to appreciate next time 😊

Cheers Janet 😊 The really frustrating thing was that that was supposed to be the best day and then the forecast changed over the 7 hours I was getting some kip 😊 Still when I retire (currently in 26 years, though I'm sure they'll change that 😊) I can have the pick of the days so things like this won't happen 😊

Cheers Ernie 😊 I might have wangled a return trip Ernie 😊 The Corn Buntings were seen on a stretch of road which I take to work so I see Corn Buntings most mornings and in the spring/summer if I wind the window down I can hear them as well which is much better than hearing blooming Humphreys 😊 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 You may be privy to privileged information indeed Bugboy 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 31-Jul-18 09:43 PM GMT

### The Living Rainforest

This year my department and the Geography Department ran a joint trip to The Living Rainforest at Newbury for all the year 7's. Whilst we were there to encourage the pupils to learn outside of the classroom and experience something different than what Pewsey has to offer I also took my camera along in case there was anything extra interesting. As we walked round the two large glasshouses we saw Java Finches, Toucans, Ringed Teal and various other critters in amongst a surprising eclectic collection of Flora. At the end of the guided tour we headed into the Mangrove Room where the butterfly collection was housed. I've visited a few butterfly houses over the years but this was more of a room as it only housed 7 butterflies. However strangely there were 6 different species represented. As expected there was a Blue Morpho, a Malachite and a Heliconius species.



The others were new to me so rather than rush whilst being shown round I decided to wait and come back later when the pupils (and therefore me) had some free time. We carried on round on the tour and the star of the show was the Armadillo which was snuffling about in its enclosure.





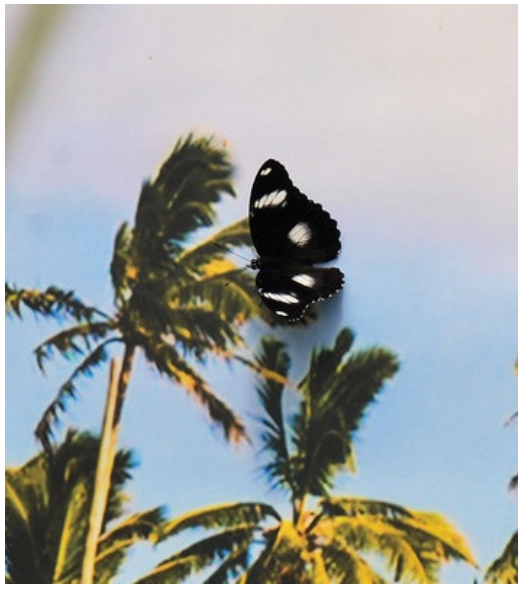


We had lunch outside and while the pupils sat and munched and completed their workbooks I munched and mooched around near the flower bed. A Red Kite soared overhead as a Meadow Brown flew from the top of one shrub to another. A Large White fluttered down from a tree and worked from one leaf to another coming ever closer. I crossed my fingers and waited for him to come into range suspecting that he would play silly buggers and tease me by looking like he would land close by and then zooming off but he behaved himself. So I was able to get my first recognisable Large White shot, at least I think it was my first shot?



After lunch 'free time' ensued until the coach arrived so I headed back in and strolled round before finding myself back in the Mangrove. There of the 'new' species were present and so I set to tracking them down. One was very accommodating showing both open and closed wings, another was very flighty appearing black and white in flight but electric blue in places in the right light and the final was shut up under a large palm leaf. The first was a Rusty-tipped Page (*Siproeta epaphus*) and I think the second was a Blue Moon butterfly but I don't know about the third (it could even be the same as the second just the under wing showing).





A quick walk round to make sure there were no pupils hiding with the Sloth or had set up camp in the play park, count them on and we were whisked off back to school to arrive in time for the buses. An interesting day though next time I might suggest a morning safari to Daneway Banks at this time of year...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 01-Aug-18 07:52 AM GMT

Great report as usual. It's the sheer size of some of those tropical species, very impressive.

### Re: Wurzel

by jenks, 01-Aug-18 02:34 PM GMT

I agree great report. And "a quick walk round to make sure there were no pupils hiding with the Sloth or had set up camp in the play park" Now that `s teachers cynicism ! "An interesting day though next time I might suggest a morning safari to Daneway Banks at this time of year" Hmm, you might not get away with that Wurzel.

Reminds me of a school trip in the 1980`s to the Penscynor Wild life park in the Neath valley. One of the teachers went to investigate laughter and merriment at the back of the bus just before the return journey started and found some of the pupils had "kidnapped" a young penguin and brought it onto the bus. It was promptly returned to the park ! Apocryphal story ? I can `t verify it but it was certainly in the local press and in the Western Mail at the time. School kids eh ? The wildlife park has long since ceased to exist. All Penguins were safely re-housed.

Jenks.

### Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 01-Aug-18 06:00 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel. Lots of mimicry in the tropics! Your first 'Heliconid' is in fact an Ithomiid – *Tithorea tarricina* – a Heliconid lookalike. Your first *Hypolimnas* (which I think you have called 'blue moon butterfly' – a name I've not come across) looks like a male *Hypolimnas misippus*, whose female mimics the plain tiger. The next one is *Hypolimnas bolina* – whose female mimics the genus *Euploea*. Sadly, all my tropical books are packed for sending, so I can't look up the subspecies and details.

Guy

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 01-Aug-18 06:36 PM GMT

#### Padfield wrote:

Hi Wurzel. Lots of mimicry in the tropics! Your first 'Heliconid' is in fact an Ithomiid – *Tithorea tarricina* – a Heliconid lookalike. Your first *Hypolimnas* (which I think you have called 'blue moon butterfly' – a name I've not come across) looks like a male *Hypolimnas misippus*, whose female mimics the plain tiger. The next one is *Hypolimnas bolina* – whose female mimics the genus *Euploea*. Sadly, all my tropical books are packed for sending, so I can't look up the subspecies and details.

Guy

The trouble with common names....

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypolimnas\\_bolina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypolimnas_bolina)

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Aug-18 09:12 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Some of them are huge but it's also the combination of colours 😊😊

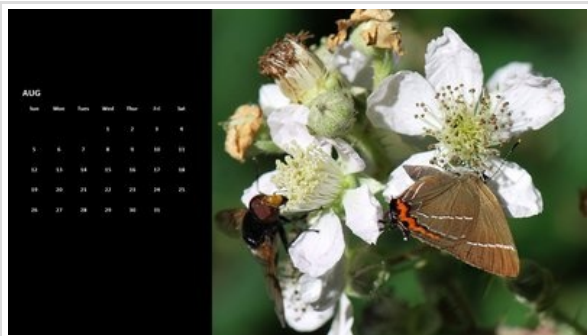
Cheers Jenks 😊 Apocryphal or not it's a brilliant story and had me laughing out loud 😊 I got some funny looks from my girls but when I told them they appreciated it too 😊, Little L did go away afterwards with a very thoughtful face... 😊😊

Cheers Guy 😊 Thanks for all the ID tips, I used the very limited information from 'The Living Rainforest' website for a few of the IDs but it only had 5 species detailed, of which only two were actually present on the day 😊😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 That's the wonder of synonyms for you 😊😊

### August 2018

Is it still summer? In Wales it feels and looks like Autumn! 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 01-Aug-18 09:44 PM GMT

Definitely still summer round here, Wurzel – 27 to 32 degrees forecast for the next seven days at least... 😊😊

Dave

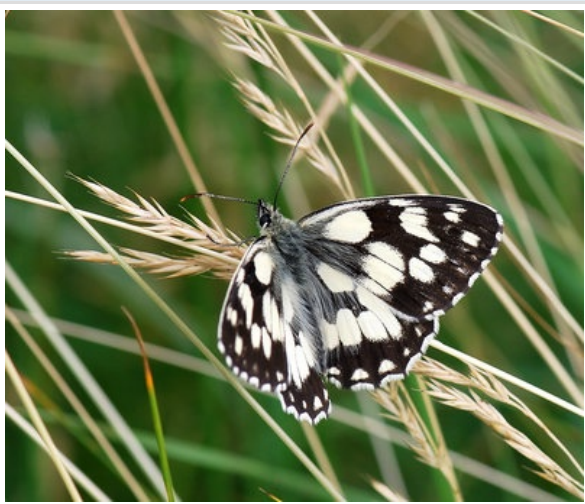
### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Aug-18 10:27 PM GMT

I experienced the typical 'Welcome to Wales' Dave, a mass of grey cloud waiting on the other side of the Bridge and gloom and drear for most of the time here 😊 Oh well back home tomorrow and back to 30 plus temperatures and the butterflies hiding away or acting manically 😊 Just can't win 😊😊

Laverstock 18-06-2018

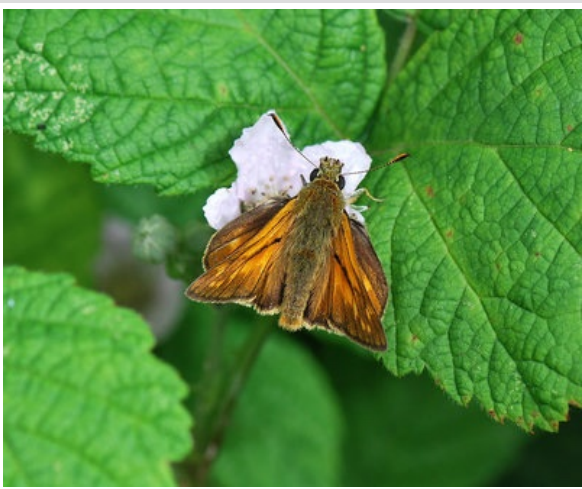
Having seen my first Ringlets and Marbled Whites at Daneways the day before as well as not seeing any Large Blues because of the weather it was no surprise that today when I had but an hour up the Down the weather was vastly improved. True the sun wasn't shining brightly and it did spend most of its time hidden behind the clouds but it did reveal itself at times and the clouds were thin and light also it was both dry and warmer than yesterday. So muttering "typical" and bemoaning the Law of Sod I started working my way up the Down along the first part of the track. A Common Blue flew by, well more of a Ghost of Common Blue past really. Then I started clocking the Browns. They were much more active than usual and so I dispensed with trying to follow them or watching and then pouncing and instead turned the Playbook Method Number three - catch them unawares. I'd round a Bramble camera ready and as soon as I'd see a butterfly I'd lean in focus and click away. Sometimes they saw me coming, other times I'd get a few shots off and more rarely they'd be so stunned they'd sit still.



One such butterfly that I 'caught out' was a quite attractive looking individual. Not because it was nicely marked or glistening and oil sheened as they can be when fresh but because the hind wings were ghostly pale. Another 'Pathological' deformity?



After this I stayed on the main side of the Down only venturing as far as the first scallop before the track wound its way to the hilltop and the other side of the Down. Here and about a few Small Heath flew as well as a several Marbled Whites and an additional pair of Large Skippers.



It was a restful and almost restorative hour spent up on the Down. I say almost because the Large Blue, or rather lack of, is still nagging at me; what to

do about that I wonder?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 03-Aug-18 07:39 AM GMT

I love that "sneaky" way of getting butterfly pics, Wurzel and it seems to work a treat.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 03-Aug-18 10:13 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, love the calendar, hope to capture the same Butterfly soon, 😊 When I saw those exotic photos before I read your post I thought you'd gone abroad 😊 Great shots! Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Aug-18 07:39 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 It's one of many techniques that I use though my personal favourite it to loudly announce "Buffer this for a game of soldiers!" sit down, and pour myself a coffee. You'd be surprised at the butterflies that suddenly appear when I start this routine 😊😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 No abroad...yet 😊

I better to get back to writing up past posts to post later before it gets too late...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 03-Aug-18 07:58 PM GMT

Yes, Wurzel – pouring yourself a drink works like a charm. As soon as your hands are full, along comes something interesting and stops tantalisingly close by. By the time you have carefully set everything down so it doesn't spill, and found what you did with the camera, the butterfly has finished nectaring, basking, or having a chuckle at your contortionism and takes to the air again. 😊 Those are splendid Marbled Whites, by the way. 😊 They seem to have had a really short season this year unfortunately.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 03-Aug-18 08:15 PM GMT

Cracking Marbled Whites Wurzel, that last one really stands out 😊

I agree with Dave, they seemed to have been and gone before I realised they were here this year.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Aug-18 08:13 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I tried it again today and it only just worked. I'd poured the coffee and it was almost cold but then a male Brostroke appeared and briefly opened up 😊😊😊

Cheers Neil 😊 I know what you mean about the Marbled Whites, blink and you'd missed them 😊 I reckon it was the long period of dry weather that we had in the main part of their flight which meant that they didn't have the odd day off as they do in some years when we get the odd days, sometimes a week, of wet weather. They just kept on flying from sunrise to sunset so used up their allotted time more quickly; "better to burn out than fade away" 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Aug-18 08:15 AM GMT

## Larkhill 20-06-2018

Somehow I managed to fit in a quick stop-off but as the Law of Sod dictates I was able to squeeze this in the weather was decidedly iffy. Anyway I needed a little mental break so I pulled in and risked the road crossing to see how things were at Larkhill. The main track heading West towards the old car park was quite quiet and I couldn't fathom whether this was because species were on the wane or whether it was the weather almost literally putting a damper on things? It was a bit cloudy and possibly threatening to rain, in fact I'm sure I felt a few drops? I say threatening and doubt myself about the rain as writing this now in July, in the middle of a heatwave only matched by the 1976 one, this may be a mental mirage.

A few Blues still flew looking a shadow of their former selves and Meadow Browns were on the ascendency. As I strolled the Nettle bed there were 3 or 4 fresh Small Tortoiseshells which seemed slightly shocked by the weather as well, trembling and shaking their wings possibly in an attempt to meet flight temperature? From here I cut across the field to the hill top where there were some nice looking clumps of Knapweed. This little spot has produced DGFs in previous years and so I carefully checked every Meadow Brown that looked slightly orange just in case. I was wasting my time doing this as when a DGF did appear it was so different looking as to be untrue. It was very fast moving, cutting powerfully through the air and glowing bright orange in the dinge. Whilst I was chuffed to have added it to the year list I was gutted that I couldn't get a shot. I'd follow it with my eyes, note where it appeared to go down but by the time I got anywhere near it was off again a right rate of knots. Perhaps there was a second which would take off and give the first a chance for a breather before they swapped again etc?







Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 05-Aug-18 11:23 AM GMT

Those DGF are energetic little so-and-sos when first out, aren't they? And they really do seem to glow in low light levels...I hope you managed some shots later on... 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-18 12:03 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 They're almost rocket propelled when fresh 🤪 Luckily I managed to find some early in the morning whil they were stilll having breakfast 😊

### Work 21-06-2018

I didn't have long at work today and so I only managed to check out the Pits where the Meadow Browns are now hanging out mainly on the Bramble which is serving like an oasis in the middle of what is fast becoming a desert. A slight over exaggeration but when you scan across the predominant colour is sand yellow/pale beige and the ground is either rock hard or dust. I checked around the far side but that was devoid of butterflies being in the shade and so it was to the sides and the front that I devoted what little time I had to it. I'd hang back pick my quarry and then swoop in, click a few times and swoop back out again before the butterfly had t time to register that I was there. This technique paid off and I was able to get a few shots of the ever flighty Meadow Browns. Normally they calm down a little bit as the season progresses but not this year. The heat seems to have them firing on all cylinders at all times and they're off as soon as you even glance at them! It also seemed to work for the Large Skippers and I was able to get onto a male and a slightly less mature but still not in the first flush of youth female.





The Meadow and this area have been a revelation this year and I'm hoping that a few more butterflies will be here next year, the progeny of the pioneers.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Aug-18 10:06 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, it's great to look back at your photos and see the Butterflies so fresh , sadly a lot or now fading, at Gait Barrow yesterday although hot, it felt more like September with a lot of Bracken just brown and crisp. 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-18 08:44 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I know what you mean Goldie, there is a definite autumnal feel to the air despite the heat and the fact that we've only just started August 😊 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Aug-18 10:51 PM GMT

#### Duke Site but not for Dukes...22-06-2018

As the weather hadn't been great for a few days and work had been hectic I realised that I'd gotten behind with several species - DGFs were flying, Lulworths were out, Silver-studs were in danger of finishing before I'd get to see them...So I planned things out as my wife told me she wanted to visit Lulworth at the weekend.

Hence today I was leaving for work at the usual time but instead of the usual hurried stop-off at Larkhill it was much more leisurely and when I couldn't locate the DGFs I carried on to my Duke Site. We had a late starting TD day and it served as a sneak peek into what retirement could look like; rising early and pottering around looking for butterflies without the constant ticking of time passing gnawing at your brain. If this tiniest of glimpses is anything to go by then I can't wait. When I was able to pull into the tiny lay-by at Larkhill I started by checking out the large nettle patch that runs at ninety degrees to the road and parallel to the gully bottom. It was quiet with only the odd Meadow Brown and Marbled White showing. I cut across the fields ignoring the Red flag flying to where the DGFs fly and where I saw my first the other day but I had no luck here and again there was just a thin smattering of the various Browns. Discontent I headed back towards the car and the bushes that fence in the path from the road. Sure enough as

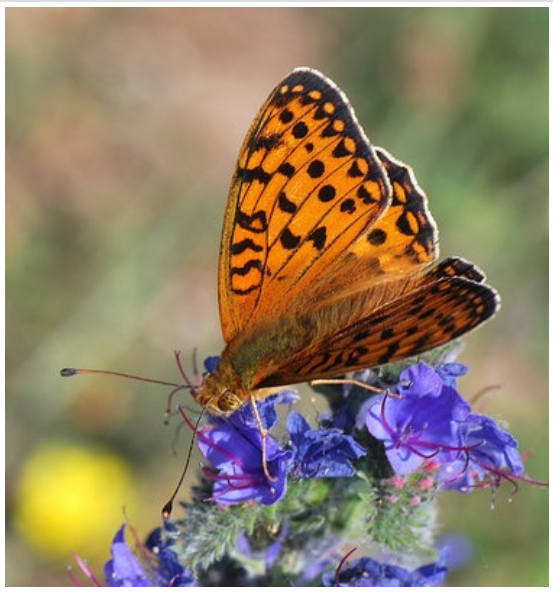
expected there were a few Ringlets but nowhere near the covering I've seen here before. So Larkhill was a bit of a disappointment – too early in the day possibly?



Larkhill as I said was quiet but by contrast my Duke site was filled with butterflies. The blues to a large extent had gone although ghostly looking common blues were still around in places but they'd been replaced by the Browns – Ringlets, Marbs, Meadow Browns and Small Heath abounded and then out of the blue came a big ginger beastie – a DGF. I followed it for a while and then got onto several more in amongst the grasses.



Record shots in the bag I set out towards the Cypress tree but stopped on the way for first one and then a second close encounter of the DGF kind. The light was perfect and they were so new that the black margins reflected back the colour of the plant they were feeding on so when it was Vipers Bugloss they had an electric blue sheen to their margins. Further up there was another at the top of the path as well a Common Blue and my first Small Skipper of the year. And up at the edge of the woodland a DGF flew about leading me this way and that round and round the Blackberry bush. Eventually checking my watch, I realised that I needed to make my way back and so I apologised for leaving the game and wished the DGF well.



It had been a cracking stop-off and the DGfs just seemed to keep on coming. I'd look around and about and there would be a ginger beastie cutting through the air and scything the tops of the long grasses. When I stopped back near the car in one view I could see 9 DGfs, it wasn't so much tricky to get my shot as tricky to work out which one to try for! "Brilliant and part one of catch-up weekend complete, on to phase 2!" I thought to myself as Motty waxed lyrical about Red, Red Robin on Desert Island discs.



I got to work still 25 minutes early and so was first in the queue for fresh coffee and muffins that were still warm. Then it was time for a quick chat with my colleagues before my preview of retirement ended and it was back to work.  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 06-Aug-18 10:57 PM GMT

Glorious DGF's wurzel 🍷🍷🍷

**Re: Wurzel**

by Paul Harfield, 06-Aug-18 10:58 PM GMT

Lovely Dark Greens Wurzel 😊 . Looks like you caught them just right

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Aug-18 08:05 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Thy were looking in tip top condish 😊😊

Cheers Paul 😊 I think that I got there when they'd only been out a day or two – when they're fresh they can be almost blindingly ginger 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 07-Aug-18 08:54 AM GMT

Yep, some lovely DGF there – wonderful when fresh like that and I could watch them for hours. 😊 Great shots, Wurzel.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 07-Aug-18 02:23 PM GMT

Really nice DGF's there Wurzel. The Marbled Whites caught my eye as well. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Aug-18 08:27 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 If hadn't had to go on to work I might possibly have stayed there all day. They're just so appealing when glowingly fresh 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 That Marb did catch the light nicely, they can appear almost inky blue and white sometimes.

Better get on with the next set...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Aug-18 11:16 PM GMT

## Slop Bog 23-06-2018

With DGFs in the bag I set off with the girls in tow to continue with operation catch-up procedure – part 2. Hopefully this sequel wouldn't be like others and would be as good as the original; hopefully it would be an Empire Strikes Back rather than a Ghostbusters 2...

It was the girls' music choice on the way and so it was Taylor Swift hence I kept the windows up and my head down in case I was recognised. It got very hot very quickly so again I was concerned that it was too hot for the butterflies as it was certainly getting too hot for me, I was even considering trimming my beard (shaving would be a bit drastic) but I again I needn't have worried as having already seen a couple of Specklies in the shade when we started off on the boardwalk little blue butterflies seemed to be covering the heather. "Brill part 2 completed, now for some shots..." I thought as we leant on the rails and watched the little gems frolicking in the Ling. I was itching to get off the boardwalk and onto the heather, to hear the unique scratchy rustle that it makes against your trouser legs that always reminds me of the hours I spent on similar heaths while I was growing up. 😊 Almost as soon as I was off the boardwalk I had my first shot and so job done proper.



After this things became a bit of a dreamy blur down to a mixture of the heat, heather smells and reminiscence but slowly, possibly too slowly for the

girls, we made our way from one side of the heath/bog to the other. I was aiming for the little pine spinney on the far side as here it was shady for the girls and there were picnic benches which could act as a base for further forays but I kept getting waylaid as yet another group of blues would pop up and pose. I was surprised at how few females there were about and also how worn some of the individuals were already, that comes from living in this coarse, rough habitat I suppose? 660

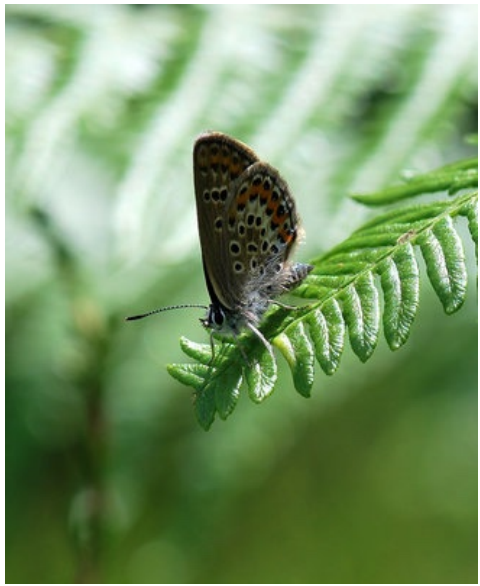


I also started seeing a behaviour I'd not seen before; a failed courtship. The male would slowly sidle round atop a heather plant whilst the female would protest violently against his advances, flapping her wings in flurry of fury. He would carry on encircling in a patient fashion and then eventually with a scream of "You just don't get it do you?" she'd bugger off to another Heather. Sometimes he'd follow if he was quick enough but occasionally he'd remain morose and feeling misunderstood.



We'd reached the Pines and in between bites of sandwich I wandered around in ever increasing circles snapping away at what I found. Another couple of females in amongst the very many males, a female Clouded Buff...sorry Jam and Custard that evaded my camera, a male on Bramble which seemed incongruous for a Heather specialist and a lovely female that started to open out. This being the middle of the day and very warm I wasn't expecting too many open wing shots especially from the females so this was a real bonus. Buoyed by my success I went and finished my lunch actually sitting down to eat for once.







Wing roll...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 08-Aug-18 07:53 AM GMT

Love your description of the female rejecting the advances of a male SSB, Wurzel. And those pics of DG Frits are amazing. Two on the same flower head - now you are just showing-off! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-18 02:42 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I was just calling it as I saw it 😊 Sorry about the DGfs twofer, I wasn't intending to show off 😊, I'll try to stick to one per shot from now on 😊 That is unless they're 'at it' 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Aug-18 10:54 PM GMT

### Slop Bog cont'd...

After lunch was eaten I ventured forth again and worked my way into what was, in previous years, the bog part of the reserve. This year it was almost as

dry as the main 'Silver-studded Heath' part (this is its' actually name I've not named it this) and even when kneeling I didn't get the expected wet patch. The problem I had on this visit was actually knowing what to focus on as there were so many Silver-studs, the heather was crawling with them. They were also quite flighty in the sun and so I switched from patient stalk to smash and grab. I'd find an animal track through the heather, follow it and swing my camera left and right and then click away at whatever befell my lens. There were some nicely marked males and one or two females which had a surprising amount of blue on their uppers.



I also found another pair of Large Skippers which were better placed and in better light than the pair I found at work. Seeing this pair made me think how good it would be to find a mating pair of Silver-studs and so I started scanning for a twosome. It started slowly with lots of singletons that kept bugging off before I could focus on them. Then a male played nicely and then I spied a courtship in process. At first I was tempted to hang around but things didn't seem to be going well for the male and so I wished him luck and moved on. 😊



Then I had one of those moments. I was scanning across the heather tops looking for the little flags that were in actual fact butterflies and there was a large white blob, dismissing it at first as a tuft of cotton grass I started to turn my head and as I did the breeze caught the 'fluff' and it flashed blue. I looked at it more closely and it resolved itself into a mating pair like one of those optical illusion magic tricks; now you don't see it now you do! Chuffed I moved in and crouched down to get a better angle and as I did so I noticed another pairing a short distance away! Fantastic another addition to the 'in cop' collection! 😊



After this I headed back to the girls and we put it to a vote as to whether to stay or not, unfortunately as all the food had been eaten I was outvoted 2 to 1 and so we packed up and cleared off. The return journey was almost as slow as the incoming one as I stopped every few steps occasionally to take a photo but mainly to just observe and breath it all in. As we were just about to step up onto the boardwalk a male opened up just off the path, it was the freshest I'd seen all day, a first rate stunner. 😊



On the way back it was still their music choice but this time a selection from Iron Maiden, The Beatles and the Arctic Monkeys. We even had a little taster of Metallica! 🤘 So two out of three done, ticked off, cards marked, the doubles done on for the treble tomorrow!!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 08-Aug-18 11:11 PM GMT

Splendid butterflies, aren't they Wurzel! The blue dusted females are particularly attractive – is this a normal feature of the population here? And the studs on the female in the pairing are large and just a glorious shade of turquoise. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Janet Turnbull, 08-Aug-18 11:41 PM GMT

Those silver studs are gorgeous, Wurzel. Are they a second brood? I thought they were finished!

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Aug-18 08:38 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 This is the first time in 8 years worth of visits that I've seen the blue scaling on females Silver-studs 🤪 I was wondering if the Silver-studs could go the same way as Common Blues? 😊

Cheers Janet 😊 Sorry I didn't mean to catch you out but that post was from the end of June, I'm that far behind 😊 but I'm doing my best to catch up 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Aug-18 10:50 PM GMT

#### Lulworth Cove 24-06-2018

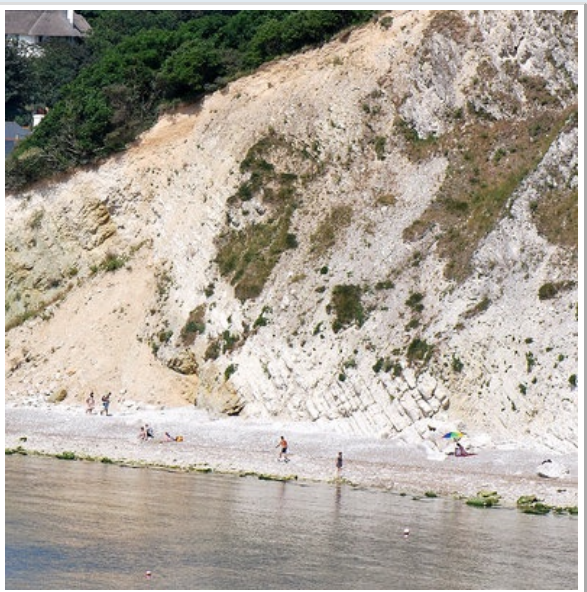
Things were going well with my weekend of catching up. I was on two out of three target species so far; DGFs in the bag, Silver-studs done and dusted with the added bonus on another addition to my in-cop collection and now could I make it 'three for three' with my favourite species?

The sun shone strongly and so we packed up and hit the road before 9 to hopefully arrive before all the grockles. The only concern I had was that should I find any Lulworths they'd be solar turbo charged? On the walk down to the Cove a DGF briefly landed on a small patch of scrub on the way down and it seemed to confirm my fears as it was practically bombing along. When we got down to the beach we headed to the left instead of the usual right-hand side, wandered about 100m along and then set up the new parasol. While the girls sorted themselves out ready to paddle I did my little magic trick and poured myself a coffee. I had barely put the cup down before a tiny, olive skipper flew by, landed briefly and then carried on along the beach. A Lulworth, job done, three for three and all thanks to the 'pour a coffee and they will come' trick. Once everyone was set to doing their appropriate beach activities I set mine and set off to the other end of the beach noting a Small Skipper taking salts down at the tideline and a Marbled Whites looking very out of place as it flew over the briny. During the walk I kept stopping each time I found a source of nectar and the butterflies seemed to home in on these little oases in the desert of stones and sea. Along the way I found a few more Lulworths with a smattering of other species.



A cliff slip further on was better and here there was a blue amongst the browns which started a couple of Meadow Browns off. There were also 5-6 Marbled Whites and 7-8 Ringlet amongst the many, many Skippers; mainly the much smaller, slower flying Lulworths. I reached the end of the beach and headed up the stairs, well more a ladder laid almost flat then what I would think of as a staircase. At the top of the stairs I found a courting couple of Lulworths but the female was having none of it! So I'd got my hat-trick but not the 'in-cop' shots that would fit nicely into my collection. As I carried on up the path narrowed and every now and again it would open out with views over the cliff and there were flat grassed areas behind you. I checked out two of these and the Lulworths were proving difficult so I worked back and at the first one I tried again. I had much better luck here as I watched a male fly towards a female, they did a little buzz around and I thought I would see a failed courtship but no after about 10 seconds they were joined together at the top of a grass blade - ace another one for the book! A dog disturbed them slightly and so they moved slightly further away and slightly lower down. I headed back stopping at the slipped cliff and noting at least three DGFs or possibly four which just served as the icing on the cake.











I got back to the rest of the family and discovered that I needn't have gone searching for Lulworths as there was one in the shade of our parasol; joining us for lunch!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Pauline, 10-Aug-18 06:40 AM GMT

Some enviable images of the Lulworth Wurzel especially the mating pair 🍷 The last time I was there was 2014 when the best I managed was the failed courtship 😞

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 10-Aug-18 08:02 AM GMT

Looks like I should have gone much earlier than I did this year. My trip down that part of the world was decidedly tired looking, those Lulworths all look fresh as daisies! And a 🍷 for the in-cop pair!

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 10-Aug-18 10:48 AM GMT

A couple of mrgreens for the mating Lulworths, and one for those Dark Greens ! 🍷 🍷 & 🍷 .  
One is a species I've never seen, and the other I missed out on this year.

Try and get to St. Peters church ASAP. The Walls are quite advanced now.

All the best,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 10-Aug-18 01:41 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, looks like late June is good for quite a few species at Lulworth, 🍷🍷 I've never seen a Lulworth Skipper so hope fully (next Year) 😊 Great shot of the mating pair 🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Aug-18 07:58 PM GMT

Cheers Pauline 😊 I was most pleased with the in cop as that completes my 'Skippers I've seen' section of my 'in cop' collection 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Even on my visit there were some that looked to be on their last legs 😊 I think that they 'age' very quickly possibly due to be so exposed? 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 You may have missed out on DGFs but Black Hairstreaks balance that out 😊🍷

Cheers Goldie 😊 Good luck next year Goldie. If you're on the Isle of Purbeck then the Corfe Castle car park is often where they first emerge, then Lulworth and they seem to arrive later at Durlston Country Park (this has it's own website with daily updates) so depending on when you come you should be able to tick this species 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 10-Aug-18 08:23 PM GMT

Great shots of the SSBs Wurzel 🍷😊, curiously, as with Graylings which I mentioned in Bugboys PD, I have to travel to see these and have usually caught up with them in different habitats to a lot of others on here, e.g. the dunes of north Cornwall, the quarries of Portland or even the endemic ssp. on the Great Orme. Apart from one visit to Prees Heath a few years ago I have not seen them on Heathland. Makes me realise how different some of our experiences and expectations are with some species.

Great report and shots from Lulworth Cove too 🍷😊. It has been a while since I have been there earlier in the year, my visit in recent years usually been late August/early September...hmm! maybe next year 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 10-Aug-18 08:25 PM GMT

Great to see a Lulworth pairing, Wurzel – like Pauline I've only ever seen them get quite close (but no cigar, so to speak... 😊).

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Aug-18 11:46 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 Definitely get your Visa sorted ready for a trip to Dorset next season Neil 😊😊 Next year I need to get down to Portland to broaden my horizons when it comes to Silver-studs 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 Doesn't the cigar come after... 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

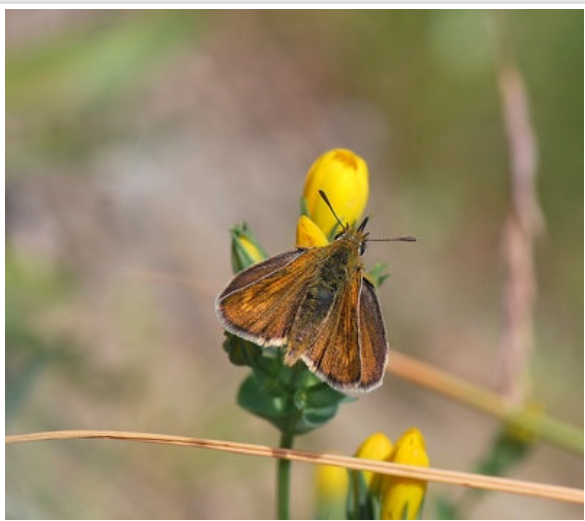
### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Aug-18 11:27 AM GMT

#### Lulworth Cont'd

Suitably refreshed and more coffee drunk I headed out a second time but this time I made my way the other way round the beach and tried out my 'old' hotspot. Despite my successes on the other side here it was quite quiet with only a couple of pairs of Lulworths, a Smessex and two Common Blue, the female of which had some interesting spots on the underside. I even got round as far as Stair Hole adding only a couple more Lulworths and a Large Skipper.





I was able to take a third trip out and number three was back along the first path. In amongst the Lulworths on the way I added more of the same species also noting a few taking salts on the wet clay where the spring springs or down on some of the ridges of exposed chalk in the tideline. I also risked climbing up the cliff slip in search of DGFs which off course liked to feed on the nectar from the plants that hung over the edge of the cliff! No slips or falls later and I walked up the cliff path again and this time I got as far as the third little 'clearing'. A medium sized brownish–orangish butterfly caught my eye – my first Hedge Brown of 2018! Chuffed I made my way back stopping on the way for another courting couple. I wished the male well but despite sitting patiently and then making the smallest of gestures the female wasn't interested in the slightest, poor chap.





Once everyone was sun soaked and salt entrusted we decided to head for home. We walked back up the original hotspot cliff and round past Stair Hole before heading home hot and happy! The girls because they'd had a fun packed or relaxing day at the beach and me because I'd done the treble and bagged my third 'in-cop' shot. To top it off when I got back and anxiously checked the scores England had put 6 past Panama!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 12-Aug-18 11:19 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, more fantastic shots 📷📷 many thanks for the info, I'm definately on for next year for Lulworth 😊  
Love your fifth shot down 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 12-Aug-18 04:45 PM GMT

Crumbs, what a lot of fine Lulworth Skips you got there - particularly the close-up of a mating pair and love the one lunching with you under your parasol. It doesn't get better than that.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Aug-18 06:14 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 If you PM before you come I can pass on even more detailed information 😊  
Cheers Ernie 😊 It was almost perfect Ernie, the only thing missing was an ice cold beer while I was photographing a la Padfield 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Aug-18 11:40 PM GMT

Laverstock 25-06-2018



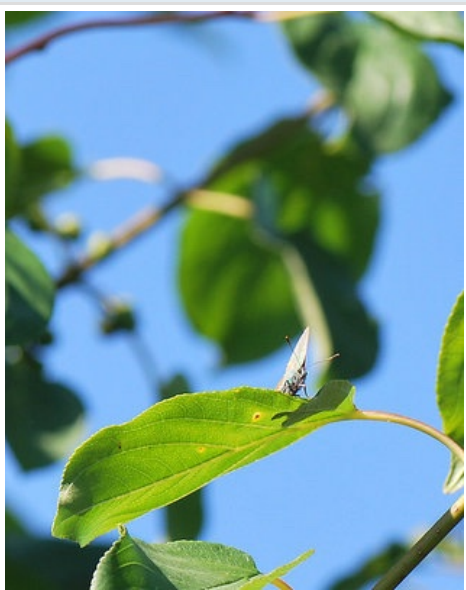
So having almost caught up (Large Blues –aahhhh) it was back to the usual business of a Monday afternoon so Tutor time for Little L and away up Laverstock Down for me. I took the usual route along the track and to the main path up towards the Down but it was surprisingly hot still, who'd have thought that we could get more than a few days good weather in the UK? Still I saw all the usual suspects on the way up to the Down with all four of the Browns represented in double digits and a single solitary Speckle at the break in the hedge which the cows enter and exit the reserve. Once up on the first little bit of Down I saw a few Common Blues and a couple of Adonis to boot but the surprise came in what I at first took to be a Brown Argus. It was small and brown and lacked the cell spot which would make it a BA. However the spots were massive in comparison with those you'd expect to find on a BA. I took a few shots and watched it for a while and then realised that I'd seen this species only two days previously. I became convinced that it was a female Silver-studded Blue 😊. But as I was out on the exposed Down in the glaring sun checking back the images on the camera proved to be next to impossible and I couldn't try and find a shaded nook to have a confirmatory look as I didn't want to lose sight of it in case it was a Silver-stud. It carried on walking round amongst the grasses occasionally ovi-posturing but then as quickly as it had appeared it was gone again.



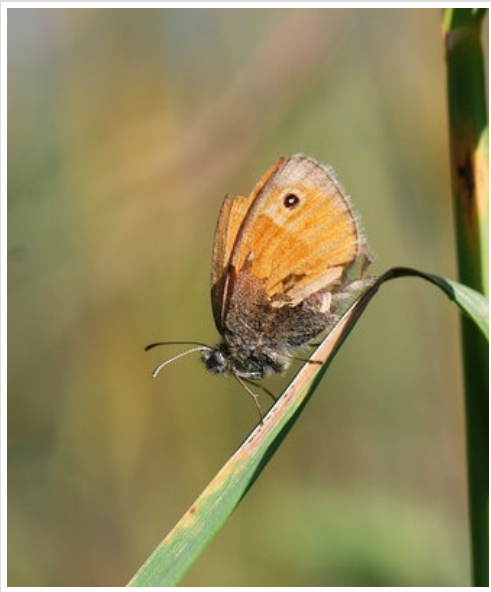




I carried on round and found my way to the lower path that follows the foot of the Down round to the gully. The path and its Bramble and Hawthorn thickets acted like service stations for butterflies which were moving through the endless sea of grass. Here I found a couple of Large Whites, a Comma, Large Skippers and a definite Small amongst the Smessex and at thicket number 2 the second surprise of the afternoon. Up high on a Hawthorn was a butterfly with a familiar looking profile. It thought it was up high but I found that by climbing up the slope it more readily appeared in view. It was a late Greenstreak and possibly the last of the season.



I needed to get back to pick up Little L but also to check the possible Silver-stud images and so wished the Greenstreak well and then slinging my camera over my shoulder I set to racing back. I was stopped momentarily though by a what I initially thought was a Small Heath with open wings but three surprises in one day would have been too much and the look of open winged-ness was actually because it had lost most of its hind wing leaving the inside lower surface of the fore wing exposed...if you get my meaning.



Once back in the cool shade of the tutor's I looked through the shots of the possible Silver-stud. I don't know why I doubted myself as the spotting pattern was spot on for Silver-studs but to make it even more evident there, towards the rear of the wing was a definite blue spot, the Silver-stud. What it was doing here I don't know? The nearest colonies are in the New Forest, in fact Landford is the only Wiltshire site and that is a fair way away for a butterfly not known for making a large journey and one which might be considered almost sedentary. That's butterflies for you, they're always doing the unexpected! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 13-Aug-18 12:20 AM GMT

That's most definitely a female Silver-studded Blue, Wurzel. The glimpse of the upperside with the zig-zag marginal markings, as well as all the other things make that certain in my book. Where on earth did she come from? As you mentioned she can't have flown far, as they aren't really capable of it. She must have hitched a lift from somewhere! 😊

What a great find, though... 😊 🍷

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Aug-18 10:21 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I think the problems I was having with the ID is that it shouldn't have been there, it just wouldn't register 🤔 😊

### Westmill Wind Farm and Daneways 26-06-2018

Another week and another trip co-run with the Geography Department. This time we were heading north with all of year 10 to the Westmill Co-operative Windfarm. It was scorching when we arrived at 10 in the morning and having gotten into groups we set off along the stone tracks to complete various activities. A Small Tort brightened up what was otherwise a drab field where we considering soil type and the under laying geology of the site. A little further on we all looked at the biodiversity using bug catchers and Pooters. There were Ringlets, Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns and Hedge Brown as well as a smattering of whites.



After lunch we moved on to look at the Turbines and take wind speed measurements. There was a surprising difference in the wind speed even over two metres, a point which I'll bear in mind on future butterfly visits. After this we quickly checked out the solar panel field and in between the panels were grassed areas jam packed with butterflies including a lovely fresh looking Red Admiral.



Once back at work and with the pupils queuing for their respective buses I nipped off and got changed into my butterfly trousers and boots and then I was away. It felt quite strange to be heading North and I had to fight my instincts and follow my usual route home. Instead I was off to Daneways for a few hours as I was over half way there from my home already. I made good time missing the main rush hour traffic and before I knew it I was already heading down the narrow roads and trying to work out where to park. I thought I'd risk it and carry on to see if there were any spaces in the little pull-in/car park opposite the main gate. Shock horror there were and so I didn't have the uphill hike to face. Things were looking good. Out of the car the bubble was slightly deflated as the heat hit me full on in the face. It was like stepping into an oven. I hoped that the butterflies would still be flying but reckoned that open wing shots would be off the cards. Through the gate and staring at the banks a medium grey blue butterfly flew, landed and started taking nectar. Job done!



I then set out to see if I could find any more and so started slowly traversing the banks following the tiny animal tracks. I didn't turn up any more Large Blues. There were a few butterflies still flying but nowhere near the number I was hoping for and I guessed that they were all hiding in the shade. I twigged that finding more of my quarry was going to be hard graft and so decided to remain focused on Large Blues. If it wasn't a Large Blue I'd note it but not follow nor try to photograph it. As I moved across the site I wondered if this was a good move as there still no more Large Blues but then I hit a little hotspot as the track climbed up and carried on towards the little wood to the top field. Here a couple of Blues flew very occasionally stooping to take nectar of investigate pockets of Thyme.





After this all this walking back and forth and following Large Blues up and down the site I sought some shade to cool down and so wandered ever so slowly up the wooded path to the top field. Slightly cooler I stepped back in the swelter and worked my way across the top field. It was so quiet here that I broke my 'only a Large Blue' rule and spent a few moments with a large Dragonfly, a Broad-bodied Chaser. Now I was at the top of the site I needed to get back down and so I walked to the other end of the field and started the vertiginous descent back to the base of the hill. Here, where it was obviously most difficult to follow them, were a couple of Large Blues and after much slipping and sliding, near fatal falls and ankle wrenching chases I reached the bottom with a meagre supply of additional photos. Walking back round to the hotspot I spied a few more Blues and so spent a little more time here just making sure that I had at least a few shots to show for my exertions and troubles.









After this I decided to head for home and a nice, ice cold beer little knowing that a certain someone was sitting in the pub below contemplating the very same search operation that I had just completed. The after work trip had paid off, just but I reckon next year I'll try when the weather isn't too hot and isn't too wet.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by MikeOxon, 13-Aug-18 10:51 AM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

I took a few shots and watched it for a while and then realised that I'd seen this species only two days previously. I became convinced that it was a female Silver-studded Blue

I recall there was a similarly unusual sighting of an S-s Blue at Lough Down, Streatley, a year or so back. I went to have a look for myself but didn't find it. Either someone is spreading these around or the species has some talents of which we are unaware 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Mikhail, 13-Aug-18 12:36 PM GMT

I spotted a fresh male Silver-studded at a Bournemouth cliff-top site by Boscombe Chine on 1st July, well away from any known colonies. I gather there have been several sightings in West Dorset this summer outside its normal range.

M.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 13-Aug-18 12:53 PM GMT

I remember that day very well Wurzel, the heat was insane. Even early evening it was ridiculous so you did really well to get anything. We must have literally missed each other by minutes. I definitely needed those few hours in the cool Inn though!

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 13-Aug-18 05:48 PM GMT

Your trip to the wind turbines could almost have been contrived !.  
If your pupils were educated, and you got your Butterflies, then it was win win !.  
Well done chasing Large Blues on a steep hillside in blistering heat, great hard won images.  
Paul had the right idea, patronising the local licensed hostelry.

Entertaining report,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Aug-18 09:15 PM GMT



Cheers all I'll reply properly when I get back from the Dordogne (unless I get more Wifi access / currently standing outside someone's house 😊)...seen some great stuff and it's only been two days 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 15-Aug-18 10:28 PM GMT

Aha – so this was the trip to Daneway Banks where you got the Large Blue. Brill pics, especially the egg-laying. I didn't get this when I went this year. Are my eyes deceiving me or does she drop her antennae forward to counterbalance when curling her bottom round?

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 15-Aug-18 10:32 PM GMT

Interesting to see the Large Blues laying on marjoram rather than thyme as they generally do at Collard Hill. It obviously works fine for them. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 16-Aug-18 05:39 AM GMT

Have a great holiday, looking forward to the results !.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by CallumMac, 17-Aug-18 10:17 AM GMT

Glad you got your Large Blues Wurzel, nice shots of them egg-laying!

Regarding the rogue SSB, I have suspected for a while now that the Blues in general are much better at dispersing than we tend to give them credit for. This isn't the first SSB to turn up somewhere unexpectedly, even this year: [https://twitter.com/tom\\_m\\_breton/status/1011959100991836161](https://twitter.com/tom_m_breton/status/1011959100991836161). Small Blues have been reported to colonise new habitat patches very quickly, even at some distance from known colonies (the example of the Weymouth Relief Road springs to mind). And look at how Adonis Blue has swept throughout most of the Cotswolds in the matter of 15 years since it was first detected in the southernmost sites – this from a species that, supposedly, hardly ever moves between sites separated by only 100 m of unsuitable habitat!

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 17-Aug-18 11:01 AM GMT

Great SSB selection Wurzel, and I love your Lulworths and DGF's. 😊 Well done with those Large Blues. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-Aug-18 03:08 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, lovely shot of the SSB, Perhaps the hot weather as made them more versatile 😊 Your Large Blue is also one I've yet to see maybe Both, Large Blue and the Lulworth Skipper Next Year, 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Aug-18 08:44 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 I wonder if the phantom butterfly spreader, the one that was featured on the Butterfly program a year or so back, has been down to this neck of the woods? 😊

Cheers Mikhail 😊 I wonder why they're moving this year in particular?

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I had to wait until I got home for some relief from the heat having spent all day in a field surrounded by year 10's 😊 Those shots were indeed extremely hard won 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 The trip I'm going to surreptitiously suggest to the Geography teacher is The Algarve in the second week of June 😊

Cheers Ernie 😊 Nope you're dead right I've also seen Green Hairstreaks do this when egg laying as well 😊 I've got a few more species to add to the wing rolling list 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 They do generally do alright at this site Dave, though on both visits that I made this year the weather was less than conducive :roll:I wonder is the Marjoram was cooler as it was higher of the ground? 😊

Cheers Trevor take 2 😊 It was a very relaxed trip, apart from driving on rural French roads and I did okay with over a dozen lifers. Posting ready in time for Christmas hopefully 😊

Cheers Callum 😊 I don't know how far their estimated distribution distance is – but the nearest known site is just over 11 miles away :shock: Mind you that could easily be covered in a series of generation jumps; breed imagos emerge distribute further, breed etc etc. 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I was well chuffed with doing the Treble 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Go for it – they're at quite well known sites so should be relatively easy to find and there are also good Pubs nearby as well for apres

Papillon 😊

And now to start catching up...I need a holiday to recover from the holiday 🤔😓 Here's a little something to keep you going...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 23-Aug-18 07:55 AM GMT

On the basis of that one image I'm going to have to do a preemptive strike 🇹🇲🇹🇲🇹🇲🇹🇲

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 23-Aug-18 09:35 AM GMT

Southern White Admiral ?. I'm looking forward to the 12+ lifers. As you have been to that large land mass over the channel before, those lifers could be quite exciting !.

Trevor.

PS. Back to Wilts on Saturday, for Cheverell Soap Box Derby on Sunday.

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 23-Aug-18 10:15 AM GMT

Wow! Looking forward to more. 🇹🇲 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 23-Aug-18 12:57 PM GMT

I shall be looking forward to sharing the trip too. I went to the Dordogne last year, with similar timing, so I am building my expectation list. 🇹🇲

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 23-Aug-18 06:31 PM GMT

You've been rather busy of late, Wurzel. From the great encounter and shots of the mating Lulworths. The rogue Silver-studded Blue you found at Laverstock and the ovipositing Large Blues at Daneway 😊  
Then there's your Dordogne trip with all it's promise, a place that we visited for a few days on our way back up through France. I know what you mean about rural French roads or rather the French drivers coming the other way on rural roads 😊  
Nice teaser pic of the Southern White Admiral, a taste of things to come 😊😓

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Aug-18 07:53 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 The one thing about the holiday is that now I'm even further behind with my posts 😓

Cheers Trevor 😊 They were impressive to me as that was the first time I've visited France so it was a chance to catch up with some of the species that I missed in the Czech Republic 😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 It could be a while – if I don't go out butterflying from today on I've still got 25 posts to do 😬😬

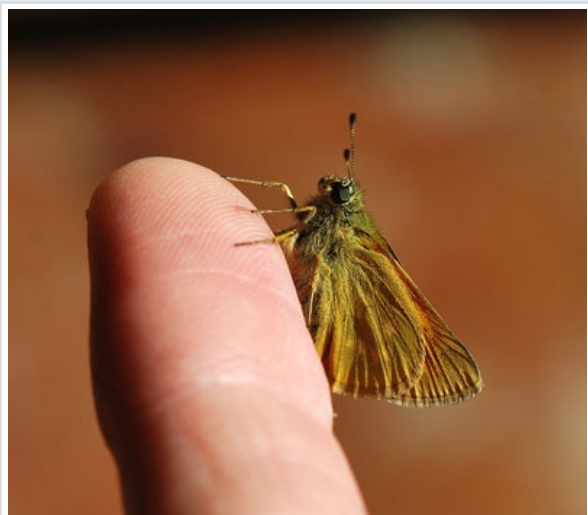
Cheers Peter 😊 I probably saw slightly less than you as the heat was extreme and I was restricted to within walking distance of the site we were staying at.

Cheers Mike 😊 I reckon it'll be forgotten by the time I actually get round to posting – due Christmas 2019 at the rate I'm going 😬😬

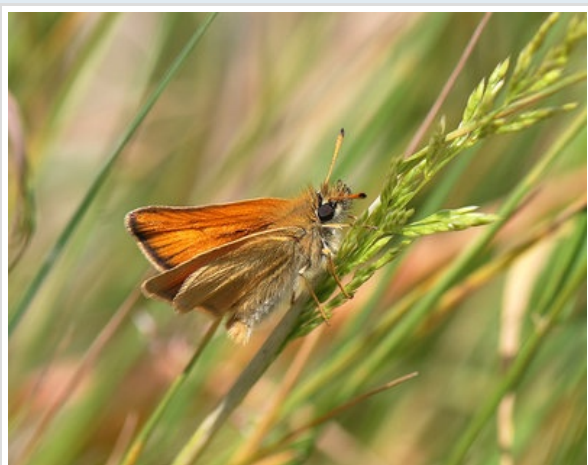
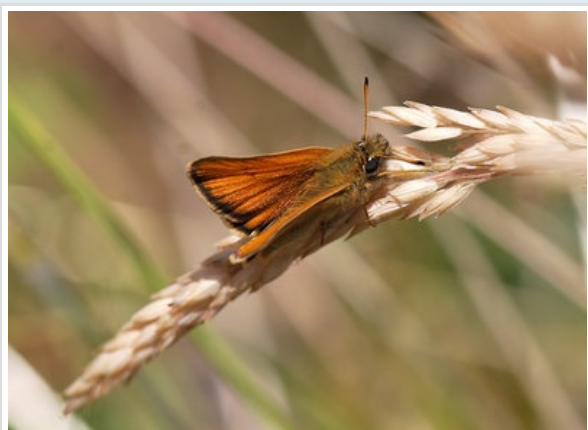
So better start trying to catch up...after the Southern White Admiral back to the more mundane...

## Work over the next few days...27-06-2018

After the exertions of the previous day; a Science/Geography fieldtrip followed by searching for Large Blues in the oven that was Daneways, I had a fair amount of work to catch up on and lots of photos to sort through so on Wednesday I didn't make any stop-offs or head out at lunch. However it seems that if I won't get to the butterflies then they'll come to me. When I entered into the chaotic miasma that is my Lab after a day of being covered my attention was drawn immediately to the top left hand window. There fluttering around bedazzled by the early morning sun streaming through the pane was a Large Skipper. He must have gotten in during the previous day as all the windows are closed at the end of the day. Standing on a stool I reached up and quickly cupped my hand over him. After about 15 seconds he stopped buzzing and then I was able to offer him my finger tip which he crawled onto. A couple of shots for my 'in the hand' collection later and he was back outside and off he zoomed to continue with his business.



The next day I'd managed to catch up with all the marking and answered all the emails that a day off timetable causes and so I treated myself to a quick trip out to the field at lunchtime. The grasses that had been lush green have taken on a lighter hue and in places have turned creamy or traditional straw coloured. As I moved across towards the large Bramble patch at the Pits the usual Meadow Browns were about as were a couple of errant Large Skippers. As I rounded the Bramble a smaller, brighter Skipper shot past me and then alighted a few feet away. It looked less 'orange' and so I reckoned it was an Essex which I was able to confirm when I saw the short, fine and straight sex brand. There were a couple zipping about but this one was the best behaved.





I took a further stroll through the trees and down along the border hedge where Meadow Browns had been warmed to near manic hood and so were impossible to approach. A few whites also fluttered about but never settled for long enough to get anything on them. One must have thought that it was far enough away to be safe and escape my lens and so stopped to take some nectar. Wrong and gotcha!



After this it was back to the Bramble and a while with the Skippers. They seemed to have warmed up in the 10 minutes or so that I'd been down the Hedge and so getting shots was proving to be nigh on impossible so I resorted to the tried and tested measure of just sitting and waiting by a likely looking nectar source. It worked!



Then it was back into work...until the next time.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 23-Aug-18 10:35 PM GMT

Very attractive skipper shots, Wurzel - that all seems an age away now, when they were all bright and fresh... 😊 Oh and that SWA deserves all those 🍷 Bugboy bestowed on you! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Aug-18 11:52 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 So much can change in two months 😊 even for someone like me that lives in the past 😊

Have a goodun

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Aug-18 10:34 PM GMT

### Larkhill and on to work...29-06-2018

With the summer fast progressing and rushing away from me today I took a little time to catch up with some of the Browns again. With the heat and arid conditions set to stay I felt that things were going to be tricky with Marbled White in particular as they're proper Rock n Roll butterflies; life fast die young. Today when I pulled in at Larkhill in the hope of catching up with them it was pretty quiet despite (or because of?) the heat, it felt like midday rather than before 8 of the clock.

I checked out the start of the Westbound path and among the erratic skippers and Small Heath a few Ringlets hung around looking a little tired already and I only saw my first three days ago! Perhaps I'd been a little tardy in looking for them this year but then things seem to be all over the place with some of the spring species emerging late whilst the summer ones have had barely a catnap in the cocoon.

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Down towards the strip of nettles on the main field a few Marbled Whites flew which I was surprised by. I expected Marbled Whites but nowhere near as few as I saw. It was also quiet on the Skipper front. This little area last year was heaving with Smessex so much so that I didn't know where to point my lens first. This year they seem well down by comparison and also much more alert. So whilst it was easier to select a target the approach was all the more difficult. In the end I managed to find a Marb that was so intent on nectaring that I think a coach load of enthusiasts could have arrived and it still wouldn't have budged.

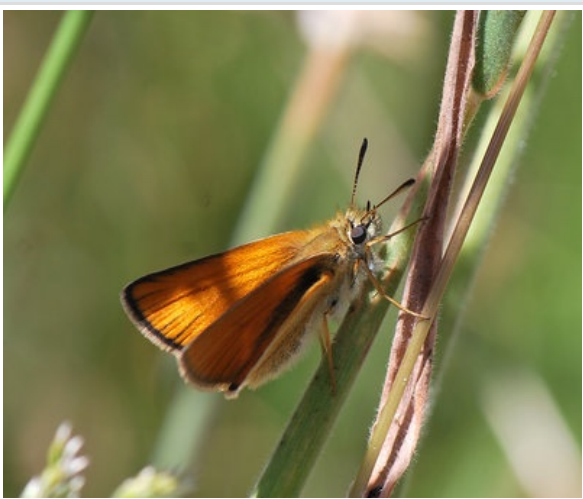


After such a dismal return for all much concerted efforts I retired to the car stopping first of all at the corner of the hedge. Finally some easy to photograph butterflies as they'd been in the shade so were cooler. It seemed that this was the place for the Browns to hang out as there were Ringlets on almost every branch. Occasionally a Ringlet would open up and sun itself and it would phosphoresce almost in purple and green tones as it refracted the early morning sunlight wildly. There was also the odd Meadow Brown so usurping a Ringlet's sunbathing spot.





Having worked through the morning I headed out to the Pits for lunch and drawing near to the Bramble bush I just stood and watched and enjoyed the show out on by the Essex Skippers, almost forgetting to take any photos, so swept up in their bustling and jostling. Well I almost forgot...





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 25-Aug-18 11:27 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, just when I think you've got some cracking shots you come up with one even better 😊 That Admiral shot is really some thing 🍷🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Aug-18 07:59 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie you're too kind 😊😊 I promised myself that I wouldn't go posting any shots from my holiday in France but I couldn't resist that one 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Old Wolf, 25-Aug-18 08:24 PM GMT

Great shots as always Wurzel. There's that 'Oily' look in the ringlet wings 😊 From your comments on the refracted sunlight I am now wondering if the female Adonis shot Trevor took was refracted light or actual colouration. I would welcome your opinion as I do not know enough about it to be sure.

I have got to ask, seeing as you are posting based on much earlier dates, do you take notes or have a really super good memory?

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 26-Aug-18 09:24 AM GMT

Looking forward to your holiday shots Wurzel, if the Admiral's anything to go by they should be great 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Aug-18 09:29 AM GMT

Cheers Old Wolf 😊 That 'oily' sheen I've always put down to light refraction, you can also see it on other female blues, Silver-studs in particular 😊 I'd guessed this but your question got me thinking and a quick google search suggested that it seems to be a combination of pigment and structure that causes the iridescence.

<http://www.webexhibits.org/causesofcolor/15A.html>

As for writing about the past it too is a combination. Some reports I can't wait to write up and so I write them up as soon as I get back, I'm often composing these in my head as I drive home. Others are from memory either fully or using a tally of species. I open a beer (Badger or St Austell breweries are best) close my eyes and take a moment and then I'm away. It's my plan to stave off dementia.

Cheers Goldie 😊 I hope the expectations haven't been built too high 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 26-Aug-18 03:37 PM GMT

Wurzel wrote:

...It's my plan to stave off dementia...  
Wurzel

I hate to say it, Wurzel, but I'm not sure it's working... Maybe more beer? 😊😞  
I find the application of the products of the Surrey Hills Brewery works a treat. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Aug-18 04:26 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I'll definitely keep doing this and see if the application of more beer has any beneficial effect, any excuse...ahem I mean 'medical reason'...for the application of more beer is always very welcome 😊😞

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Old Wolf, 26-Aug-18 08:38 PM GMT

Thanks for the link. An interesting read that has shed some light on this for me 😊

I am impressed at your memory skills. As to the Beer approach, it tends to have the reverse effect on me as it makes me forget loads 😊

### Re: Wurzel

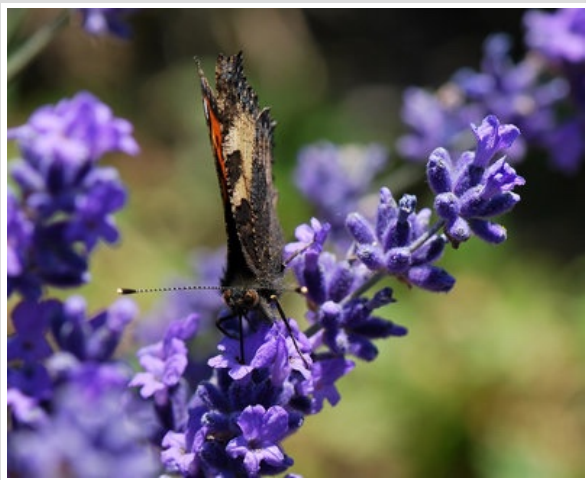
by Wurzel, 27-Aug-18 12:04 AM GMT

Cheers Old Wolf 😊 I find that you have to get the dose just right - too much and yes the memory doesn't work as well as it should 😊😞

### Lavender Farm 24-06-2018

It was the right time of year for the Lavender Farm visit as by now the florets would be bursting and you would be able to practically see the oil evaporating of the flower tops. Plus we had a reason/excuse to visit for a Cream Tea; I still can't find a vegan Clotted Cream. So off we headed and true to form the weather was a bit iffy when we arrived with thin clouds and drizzle. Never mind we sat under cover and munched and slurped and devoured while the Sparrows that were sheltering with us jostled round our feet hoping for, but not receiving any crumbs. As the last mouthful was finished and plates were pushed to the middle of the table emptied of their contents I looked out across the gardens and a Meadow Brown moved in line with my gaze. The cloud had depleted and turned from ominous grey to white and little patches of sky had coloured themselves back in blue. Smiling I picked up my camera and suggested that we should take out walk through the gardens.

We set off to the Lavender field first, the girls walked up the row tentatively trailing their hands along the flower tops and then breathing the heady scent deeply. I followed them up the rows but looked out for any butterflies that they spooked. Normally it would be the other way round but today I was feeling the relaxing effect. It wasn't just the sun starting to warm my back (as the sky was now replete of cloud) nor the hypnotic vapours but I found the colour of the flowers very restful on my eyes even in the brightening conditions. The occasional Meadow Brown would flutter lazily across the rows still surprisingly camouflaged. Then a butterfly 'popped' out and promptly disappeared again. It was a Small Tort that had briefly opened its wings.





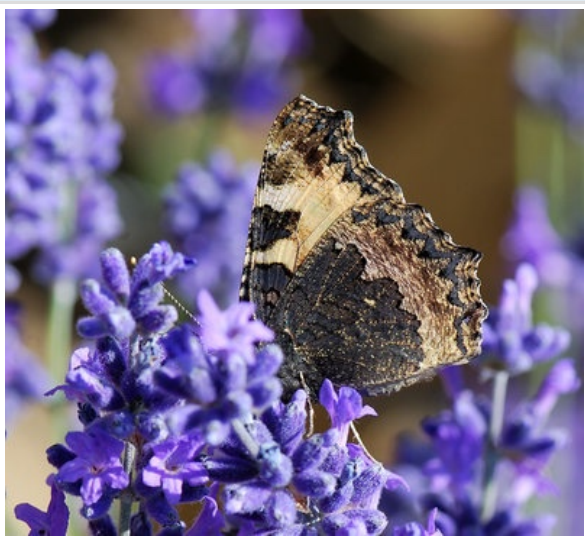


We carried on wandering up and down the rows circling back and just completing circuits. Along the way a few Whites of various guises flew by, the odd Hedge Brown and Meadow Brown. At the top of the final row something smaller zipped by. It was acting far too manically for this site but eventually even this frenetic butterfly calmed down, a lovely Small Skipper.



We carried on round the gardens at the top of the field and things became a little hazy as we moved around almost slumbering on our feet due to the combined narcotic effects of warm sun, full belly and Lavender scent. I started looking out for the Whites and spent a bit of time with them. There were a few Brimstone about though they seemed to keep their distance and spent much of their time nectaring in the parts of the field that were closed off. There were also a couple of Small Tortoiseshells that held territory at the top of the wild flower patch where. I just kept bimbling along watching a butterfly feed and then remembering to take a photo or two.







Eventually we tore ourselves away and headed home. "The girls will sleep well tonight" I thought; and they did and so did I.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by CallumMac, 27-Aug-18 06:31 PM GMT

Nice shots from the lavender farm, Wurzel. I love that last Skipper on the tip of the flower!

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 27-Aug-18 07:12 PM GMT

Lovely shots Wurzel, Lavender is good for relaxing it also keeps Mosquitoes at bay, pity we didn't take some with us to Gait Barrow 😊 Your bringing some great memories back with your cream tea 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

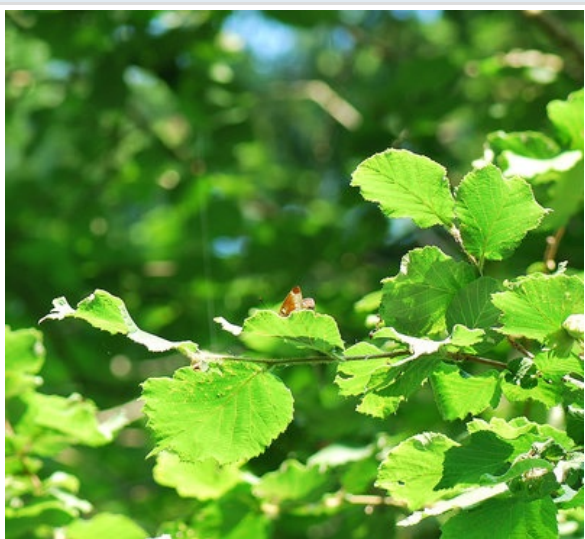
by Wurzel, 27-Aug-18 08:49 PM GMT

Cheers Callum 😊 That Skipper was practically sitting up and begging to have it's photo taken so of course I had to oblige 😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 I didn't know that about Lavender Goldie, if I had I would have made myself a Lavender shirt specifically for butterflying 😊 😊

I apologise in advance this one was a bit of a biggy for me so there may be a few more photos than usual...

### Bentley Wood 01-07-2018

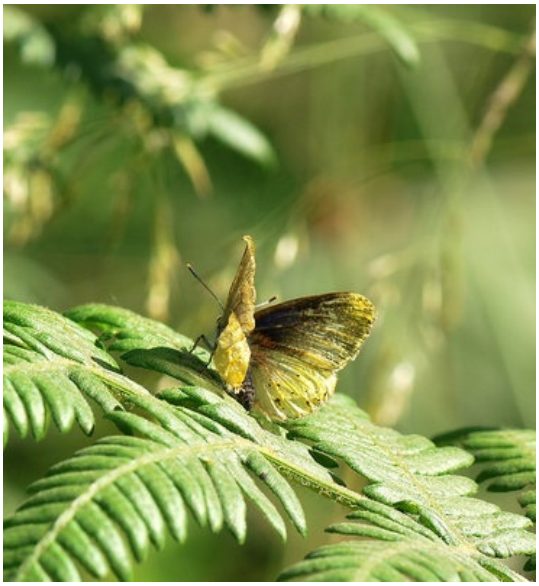
This looked set to be a cracker even though I was pretty convinced that I was still a year away from my 3 year cycle of grounded shots. Because of the heat I got there early and pulled into a surprisingly empty car park. As I got my camera out of the boot a SWF flew lazily around the car park, 3 Purple Hairstreaks bickered above me and a Purple Emperor landed in a tree directly above my car. So three of my target species seen and I'm not even ready to leave the car!



I start down the path and a Red Admiral raises my pulse for a fraction of a second as it's settled on the main track. There are shed loads of Ringlets

along the path and I find a couple of Hedgies in among them. About half way along the main track which I know is a good spot I stopped and waited and chatted to another enthusiast who'd arrived at the same point from the opposite direction. A couple more arrived and bait was put down which was promptly accepted by a Red Admiral. Also around and about here were loads of Purple Hairstreaks. I don't really recall having seen so many here before. A few came down to the Bracken low down but most don't hang around for long. One did and I can see why; he's particularly shot, with hind wings devoid of any scales whatsoever. I was surprised that he could still fly!





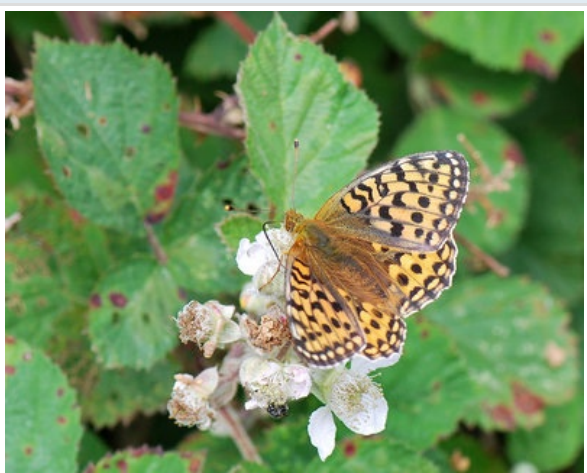
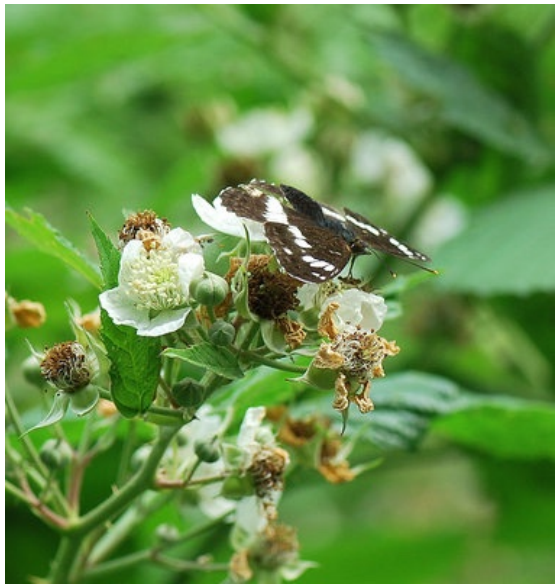
Then a Purple Emperor did a couple of fly-by's and so it looked like it was going to be a matter of waiting and seeing. One of the blokes has to risk a run to the car for his water and after a little while we get a call as in a little scallop 12 paces from the car park there's a Purple Emperor down on the deck. We race over and then slow our pace as we draw near to let it settle. It's found something icky in the foliage so we wait some more for it to really settle. As we do another couple appear from the car park and he plonks himself right at the front of the group, in the perfect position and right in the way. I manage a few shots from different angles but the Johnny-come-lately hogs the prime quadruple purple position. Eventually it decides to have a look slightly further along the path and I think "great I might get onto a decent angle this time". But no now another late arrival gets too keen and doesn't give it any time to settle so it's off. We all wait a while to see if it will come back but it appears to be spooked for good. Annoyingly it transpires that the Johnny-come-lately-prime-position-hogger isn't even a true butterfly enthusiast he's actually a birder that makes Purple Emperors his one exception! 🙄😞





Grinding my teeth and soundly a lot like a coarser version of Muttley I carry on my route, with some of my shots showing blue dampening my rage. Back at the half way point a PE is doing a fly-by and as well there's a distant White Admiral (year tick number 4). At the Switchback I take a right and head up to the memorial seeing more SWFs. I pause briefly on my mission for a White Admiral that is almost within reach of my lens. I notice a glowing H.Comma out of the corner of my eye to my left and then I'm back focusing on the Admiral. When I finally get to the memorial, or rather the Wytch Elms just past them it seems that the sucker they were using last year is succumbing to DED fast. I manage to add Whitter to the year list with the sighting of a singleton so hopefully the suckers slightly further along the track may offer hope for the species here. Feeling slightly down and wondering where I'll find a new Whitter site in Wiltshire I head back stopping on the way for this and that; a SWF here, a DGF there, another female SWF etc.

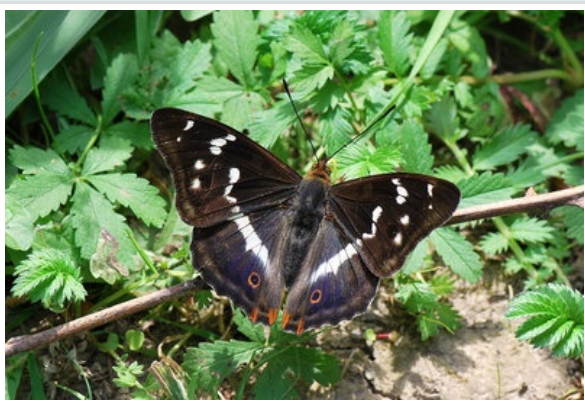
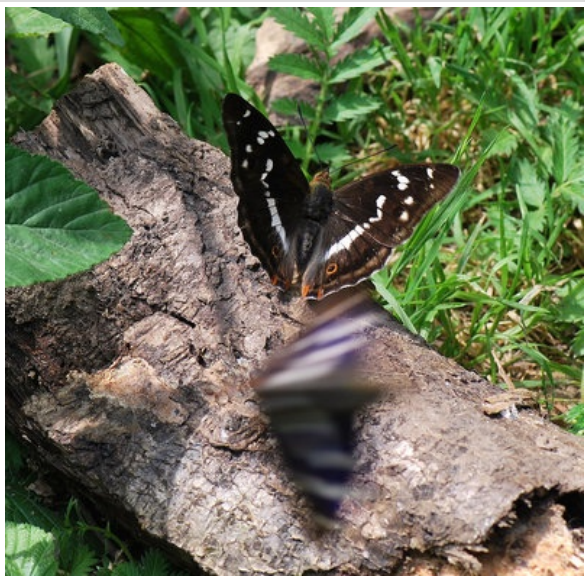






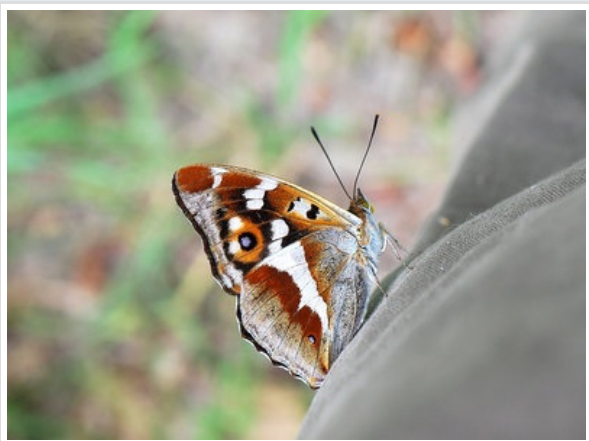
As I walked this final stretch I replayed various parts of the trip through my mind; "5 year ticks isn't too bad" I muse to myself "if only I'd had more luck with the Emperor". I decide that as I'm almost back at the car park earlier than anticipated I may as well check out the 'Purple Patch' again. Something big and stripy flies round me and then lands back on the nasty stuff. It's a PE and I have it all to myself. Just in case I call out "Emperor down!" but no-one comes. It moves from the ickyness to a log which is unfortunately in the shade. As I'm surreptitiously sidling round to see if I can get a flash of blue a second comes in and busses the first!. Looks like Karmic pay back after the Johnny-come-lately incident earlier.





After this one lands down on the deck and I get a few shots. Then a 4 x 4 appears, oohhhh nooo! But instead of ploughing on by the driver pulls up

and waits as the Emperor flits about on the path posing here and there. I even get troused. After wait felt like too short an audience but which was probably a good 10 minutes the Emperor moves off further down the track. I thank the driver profusely and he smiles "An Emperor was it? No problem". What a dude.





Blissed out after my first ever private audience I stumble into the car park where I have the unfortunate task of having to answer the dreaded question "Have you seen any Emperors down as we haven't yet?" Bashfully I mention that they just missed one. They set off hurriedly thanking me, I so hope they got an audience too...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 27-Aug-18 09:25 PM GMT

Evocative memories from the lavender farm in your previous post, Wurzel. And nice to see you got some grounded PE shots, I only got fly-by's this year.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 27-Aug-18 09:46 PM GMT

That really takes me back to the heady and hot days of midsummer and the joys of persistently pursuing Purple... Terrific shots, Wurzel, with some brilliant purple. 🍷 😊

Dave

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 28-Aug-18 06:28 PM GMT

Cheers Essex 😊 I was dead chuffed as I broke the three year cycle year cycle this year with those grounded Emperors 😊  
Cheers Dave 😊 Those heady days seemed to last a lot longer this year and we had a good run with the heatwave 😊 It wasn't the only Emperor I got this year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Maximus, 28-Aug-18 07:11 PM GMT

Fantastic sequence of shots of the grounded Emperors at Bentley, Wurzel 😊👍 you've waited a long, long time for those 😊

Mike

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 28-Aug-18 08:09 PM GMT

Super shots Wurzel, 🍷🍷🍷 I got none this year, Sob! Sob! 😊 Goldie 😊 Always another year. 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by bugboy, 28-Aug-18 10:53 PM GMT

wonderful Emperor shots 😊. Also I'm glad you knew what that Purple Hairstreak was because I wouldn't have the faintest idea based on your picture! 🤔

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 29-Aug-18 08:22 AM GMT

One advantage of your retrospective reports is that we get to see Purple Emperors at the end of August !.  
Great images from the best part of the season. I agree with Bugboy, you did well identifying that tatty specimen as a Purple Hairstreak

Hope you had a goodun yesterday,  
Trevor.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 29-Aug-18 07:14 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 I was dead chuffed to have broken the cycle got some decent grounded Emperor shots 😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 Keep saying the mantra "Next year.." and it will happen 😊 Mine only took 6 years 😊  
Cheers Bugboy 😊 I'm guessing that is was a Purple Hairstreak but to be honest I'm not really sure myself – it could be a species new to Science, the Is-it-isn't-it Hairstreak 😊😊  
Cheers Trevor 😊 Finally I got the Emperors 😊 The best thing was the private audience 😊 It great meeting up yesterday – what a cracking little site 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Neil Freeman, 29-Aug-18 09:40 PM GMT

Great report and photos from Bentley Wurzel, glad to see you had your private moment with The Purple One 😊.

**Wurzel wrote:**

...Annoyingly it transpires that the Johnny-come-lately-prime-position-hogger isn't even a true butterfly enthusiast he's actually a birder that makes Purple Emperors his one exception! 🤔😊 ...

I seem to be bumping into increasing numbers of birders over the past couple of years who are turning to butterflies during the summer. No problem

with that in itself but I have to say I have seen a few who haven't got a clue about how to move around butterflies.

Cheers,

Neil

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 29-Aug-18 11:09 PM GMT

### Laverstock Down 02-07-2018

There are only a couple more of these afternoon tutor sessions left before the summer break so I needed to make the most of the remaining times and try and hurry up and catch up with the remaining few species. So far things were looking pretty good and I'd also had a bonus in the form of the unexpected Silver-stud. However I still needed to pick up a couple of species; DGF, Chalkhill and Painted Lady, and even though there would be opportunities to visit during the 'holiday classes' I was slightly concerned that vagaries of the weather would play havoc with my plans. The summer holidays are generally pretty poor weather wise.

Today I intended to follow the tried and route of along the path behind the gardens, turn right through the kissing gate, carry on straight up and then turn left onto the site and follow the track down the gentle slope and then up the Down. On path behind the gardens there were Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns and at least 3 Smessex. As I manoeuvred through the kissing gate 2 H.Commas played in the dappled shade alternatively landing and then being harried by the other.



Up on track that gently slopes down to the foot of the Down before it rises like a behemoth I observed a Holly Blue fluttering around the Brambles patches. Meadow Browns played hide and seek with me amongst the grasses, Smessex zipped here and there the fresher ones flashing and had a little glitter to proceedings whilst the Marbled Whites still played hard to get. It must be the heat as I can't recall any other year when they have been so twitchy. I remember getting right up in their grill during some summers but during most outings this year a few paces away is as close as I can get.



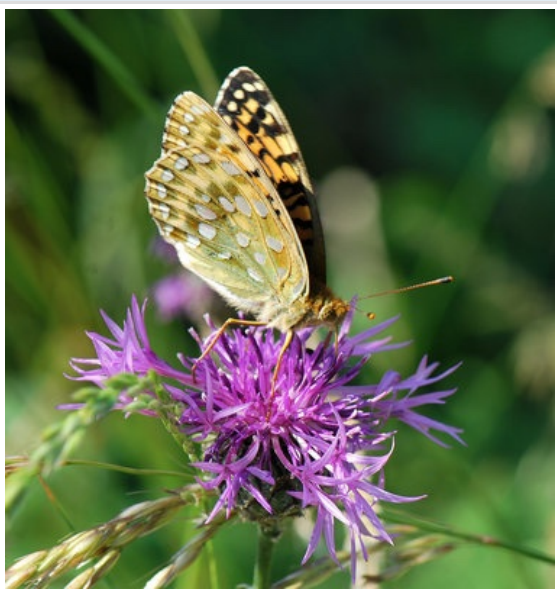
Around the foot of the Down were more Smessex and another Holly Blue (or was it the same one?). There was also another H.Comma holding a territory and now the grass spread further I started seeing a few more Blues with two Common and a Brown Argus. I strode ever upwards, which despite the practice doesn't seem to be getting any easier and Small Heath scattered before me. A larger, slightly paler looking Comma glided across the Down and settled on a ginormous Thistle. Something didn't compute about its colour, shape or jizz and so I cautiously approached it. Boom a DGF! I got a record shot and then ever so carefully stalked closer but then an H.Comma hassled it away. Whilst I was slightly grateful for the comparative view I was at the same time annoyed that the feisty little bugger had spooked my quarry!



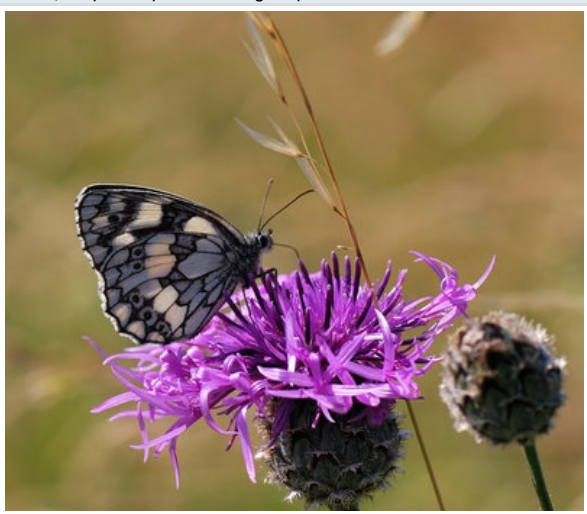
As I carried on up the path the DGF dropped in momentarily again but this time I didn't even get a record shot fired off before the H.Comma was again on the scene. Perhaps he was confused and thought that the DGF was a competitor? I carried on upwards through the overgrown path which has become really dense and overgrown where a Comma was holding territory. Eventually I broke through the dense vegetation and into the sunshine again at the very top of the Down before carrying on along to the top of the gully. Over 10 minutes or so I'd gone from jungle explorer to fell walker and no to downhill skier as I slalomed down the Down. I was surprised to see only a couple of Blues and the odd Small Heath so I carried on with the walk back scanning about and looking for DGFs along the way. As I worked through the shrub tunnels, dipping between sunlight and shade I stumbled upon a DGF on the way in one of the breaks eagerly taking nectar. A little further on there was a second right at the bottom on the periphery of the Down. It got spooked by a Marbled White of all things and promptly nipped over the hedge to glide over the wheat and disappear from view.







Not too shabby for a wander round the Down and to top it all another DGF flew along the path behind the tutors house! So another one ticked and off the list, only a couple more to go! Species that is not tutor sessions.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 29-Aug-18 11:29 PM GMT

You can have a mrgreen for that DGF 🍀  
Foolishly, I completely missed them this year.  
As they emerge in the midst of the silly season, you can't be everywhere at once.

Glad you had a goodun,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 30-Aug-18 09:58 AM GMT

Great report from Bentley Wurzel, your own private audience! 🤖🍀  
Excellent shots, especially the trousered one's. 🍀 Nice Silver-washed as well. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Aug-18 12:04 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 You'd think that the birders moonlighting on the side of butterflying would be able to stay well back with all those telescopic lenses they need for birding 😊 I think someone should write an article for the birding magazines on the Etiquette of Butterflying. In short stay well back, keep your elbows in and don't crowd people out 😊  
Cheers Trevor 😊 That was the thing this year - everything happened all at once 😊 There was a point in the later stages of July where I was in danger of missing out on 9 species that I normally see 😊 Hopefully next year will be as productive but a little less manic... 😊  
Cheers Andrew 😊 I've had to wait 8-9 years for that - and then this year He just decided on a whim that I was worthy 😊 The problem with the trousered shots was that He was almost too close 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

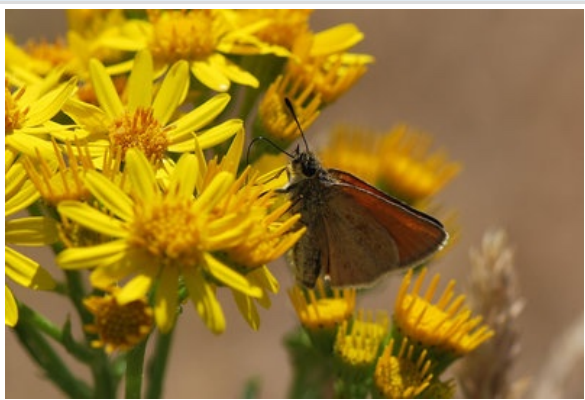
by Wurzel, 31-Aug-18 06:05 PM GMT

#### Work 06-07-2018

I finally managed to get out and have a look about today, I was tempted having seen a Holly Blue flitting about outside my window and a Comma almost came into join my year 8 class. It was so hot I didn't make it down to the far end of the field but from what I could see it was a summer scene; golden and straw coloured grasses swayed in the gentle breeze, the susurrant providing a break from the noise of everything slowly cooking. In the broiling heat some of the grasses had collapsed so walking through the pits was much easier. On the way I watched a Large Skipper flying this way and that occasionally upsetting a Ringlet or Meadow Brown and then I was at the Brambles Patch where a beautiful lemon Small White was looking resplendent while it took nectar.



I moved on round the other side and watched as various Smessex Skippers zipped around. I manage to follow one for what felt like an age and then it would do the kind of aerial turn that would leave a jet plane tumbling out of the sky in 6 or 6 pieces and it would be lost from sight. To try for shots I instead took to checking out all the Thistle tops and Ragwort. If I saw a little orange triangle I'd cautiously approach and try for a few shots before the butterfly caught on and did a runner. In this way I managed to catch up with a definite Essex as well as an aged Small.



All too soon I could feel my head starting to melt and so I made my way back to the relative cool of the shade of my lab. I'd only been outside for 20 minutes but that was all I could manage. This heat is getting a bit extreme now!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 31-Aug-18 06:53 PM GMT

Great White shot. I particularly like light and shadow images that show wing structure and texture to advantage.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 31-Aug-18 07:58 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel catching up again 😊 I missed the Dark Green Frit this year but I was pleased to get the Heath Frits so I'm not moaning 😊 I love that shot of the three Marble white and the shot below that is a Wow! 🤩 Goldie 🤩

**Re: Wurzel**

by millerd, 31-Aug-18 09:06 PM GMT

It really did get too hot to go out comfortably – and all the butterflies were hiding anyway. Nice Small White shot – they are so difficult to get decent images of, especially in bright sun. 😊

Dave

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 31-Aug-18 10:20 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I got lucky with that one, as I didn't need to bend my knees to line myself up it didn't hear me and fly away 😊😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 I was chuffed with that Skipper shot – glancing at it you wouldn't have thought it was a butterfly...mind you I don;t know what you might have thought it was 😊😊😊  
Cheers Dave 😊 The heat was a bit trying at times – especially at work where all the pupils were wearing PE kit and the female members were in summer dresses while male staff...were allowed to take off their ties 😊 Hold the phone 😊

Have a goodun

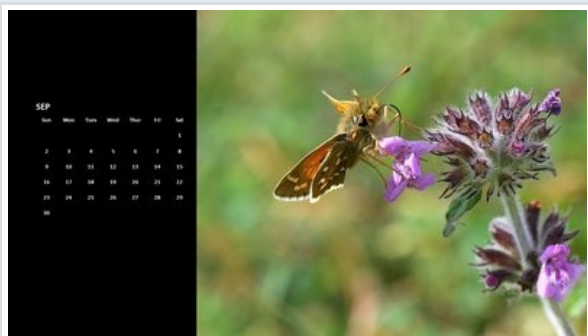
Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-18 08:36 AM GMT

**September 2018**

Let's hope it turns into an Indian Summer, fingers crossed 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by ernie f, 01-Sep-18 08:37 AM GMT

Wurzel – I have been remiss. I have not looked at your diary for awhile. Going back through your pages was like reliving Summer, thank you.

How on earth did you get a shot of a Purple Emperor with is hind-wings purple but its forewings black?!? Absolutely amazing.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 01-Sep-18 03:42 PM GMT

Another great Calendar Wurzel, I look forward to them but I'm not sure about the November/December ones 😊 lets hope we get more pic's of Butterflies before then 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Sep-18 05:55 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I have no idea – when it came to photographing the Emperor threw all the shapes and poses and I just pointed and clicked 😊😊  
Cheers Goldie 😊 Fingers crossed that they'll take care of themselves 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Sep-18 09:59 AM GMT

#### Godshill 07-07-2018

So it's reached that time of the year again albeit seemingly a fair bit earlier this year? Time for Garylings and so Godshill it was. The heat was still on as I wandered across the Cricket pitch and down the path. The stream is now not even a trickle, more a collection of tiny ponds and so after walking on dusty, sandy paths I now walked over a 'hardcore' road for a few paces. After this I went round the triangle (try doing the maths on that!) without any luck. There was the odd Silver-Studded Blue, Large Skipper and the usual Meadow Browns and Hedgies aplenty as well as a fly-by Red Admiral but no Grayling. As I came back to the initial tip of the triangle I finally caught sight of a Grayling; slightly larger than the Meadow Browns and with little periods of glide when in flight. I headed in the general direction in which it had gone and away from my preferred 'triangle' patch but I couldn't relocate it. With the job half done I carried on my course reasoning (incorrectly as it turned out) that the Grayling could be over in a new part of the heath.





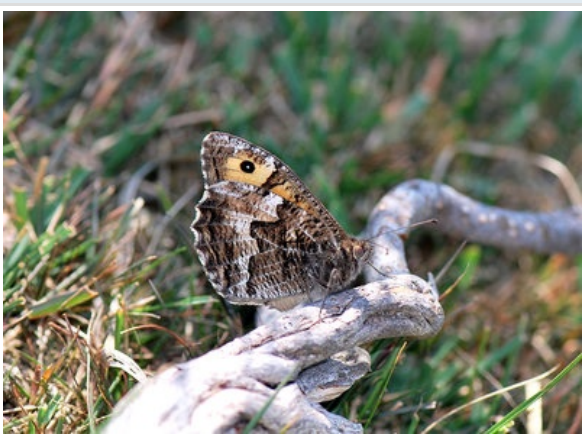
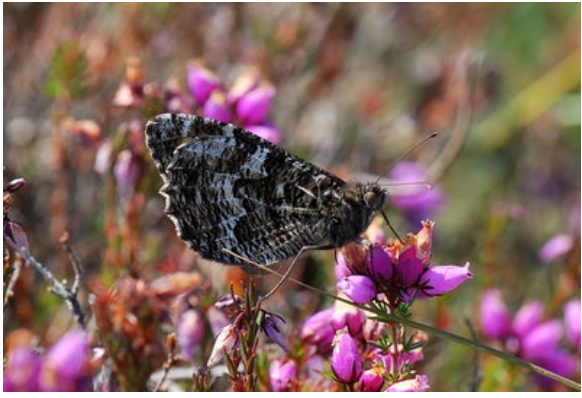
I ended up following the partially dried up streambed seeing good numbers of Silver-Studs along the way and most were looking like they were not long for this world and would soon set off to meet their maker. I got distracted for a while watching mud-puddling Green-veined Whites and by the time I'd realised that I'd not taken any shots most of them had had their fill and left. Never mind as round the next bend a Holly Blue graciously landed and spent what felt like an age engaged in salt taking.





I made my way back round the triangle and up the brook in the opposite direction seeing and photographing some cracking Dragonflies but this wasn't getting me the Grayling I'd come for so it was back to where I'd seen my first one. There was one again in roughly the same place and after that I stumbled onto a couple more and set to raking up the shots; on poo, on heather, forewing exposed, clear shot, in grass, "where's the Grayling?" etc.





In the midst of all this I worked out how they manage sometimes to totally disappear. A Grayling would take flight, zig and zag, veer this way and that. Then it would fly directly at me and at the last second veer away in a sharp circle round my head. I'd turn and look round behind me and it would be

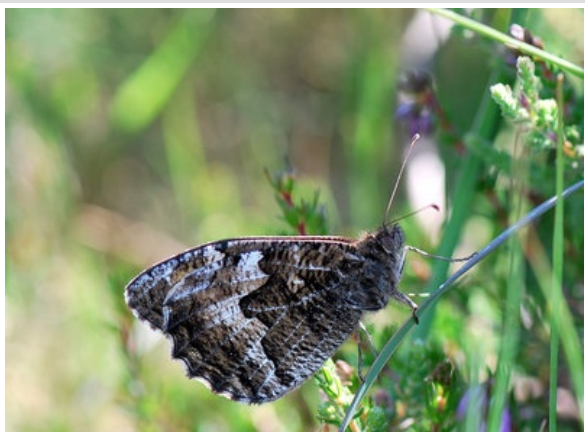
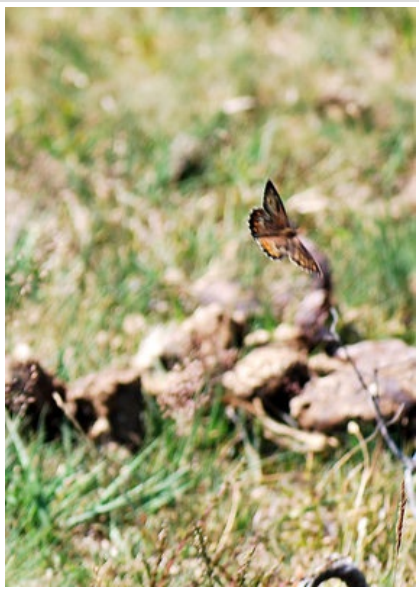


gone. This happened a couple of times but on the last occasion I happened to look at the floor and there was the Grayling. Ordinarily I'd be scanning metres away, staring into the distance trying to spot the errant Grayling above the heather tops. So it seems that after the kamikaze run and the sharp turn the butterfly stalls and drops to the deck. The next time a Grayling spooked the same thing happened but I was ready for it. It flew towards me and instead of turning and staring ahead I turned and looked directly down and there it was. Cheeky little blighters! 😏😏



I carried on enjoying my time with the Graylings picking up a range of shots again and also adding a Trousering to the list. I reckon this was the Grayling making up for their cheeky behaviour...





After this I checked out the Brook again for some more Dragonflies and then I made my way back up the hill. Grayling ticked off but also plenty of SSBs, Large Skipper and Smessex. The oddest sight of the day though had to be a Marbled White flying over heather with not a scrap of grassland in sight.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 02-Sep-18 01:51 PM GMT

Your description of Grayling behaviour is spot on, Wurzel! 😊 They come straight at you then dive to the ground immediately behind you (or on the back of your legs) where you can't see them land. I experienced this only a couple of days ago at Dawneys Hill where they are still going strong nearly ten weeks after I saw the first ones. Another fascinating species.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Old Wolf, 02-Sep-18 10:02 PM GMT

Great shots Wurzel and congrats on your private audience with the Emperor 😊

I like the first Dragonfly from Godshill. It looks like it is 'unsuccessfully' trying to hide from you.

And you bagged an 'oily' too 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Sep-18 11:02 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Grayling are the masters of deception it seems 😊 tough I have seen them confused by decking or walls when they stick out like a sore them 😊

Cheers Old Wolf 😊 That Dragonfly was acting a bit shady 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 03-Sep-18 09:08 AM GMT

Great Grayling shots, and on Heather, which makes for a more pleasing image than those local to me, on chalk. Still, for me Graylings on Heather 70 miles, on chalk 5 miles !.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Sep-18 08:39 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 That's sound use of carbon footprint consideration, mine are more like 12 miles away but that still ain't too bad 😊 Mind you even down here they're hard to get showing nicely on Heather as they often choose quite grotty places to sit 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Sep-18 11:20 PM GMT

{size=150}Laverstock - Twice in two days!

09-07-2018[/size]

When I arrived for tutoring there was a distinct absence of the Tutor - trapped on her way back from Wales on the M4. Instead one of her sons ran the session but with the offer of a 'freebie' later in the week. I secretly thought great - another trip out but it was down to little L so I'd check with her to see what she wanted to do later.

The Down itself was quiet and the light cloud and the quite strong breeze didn't really help matters. I followed the same tried and tested 'new' route - across the field and along the foot of the Down heading towards the gully. Whilst there were butterflies about they didn't hang around and whereas normally I could watch them land and then stalk close enough for a few shots today the minute they got about 20 cm in the air the wind would catch them and they were gone! It seemed that the best idea was to seek the sheltered spots on the leeward side of the taller scrub patches. This worked well and soon I was finding good numbers of sheltering butterflies. Whilst it was good to find them it presented me with a dilemma. As the butterflies were seeking refuge from the wind the last thing I wanted to do was stalk them and spook them. So if I saw a butterfly land I would try a few shots before they realised that I was there and then back off and leave them to it. This meant that I only picked up a couple of Hedge Browns and a Comma, all three of which stayed where they were once I'd gotten my photos.





I got back in time for the first time in an age slightly disappointed with the trip out but little L had decided that she wanted to take the offer of the Freebie session so I'll be back up there tomorrow.

10-07-2018

Same week, different day and again driving to the Tutors...and the weather was much better behaved, the wind was gone, the temperatures were back up and the sun was out. Today I took the 'old' route as I decided to give the gully a chance to 're-butterfly'. It's been reasonably quiet there recently; soon it will have Chalkhills and more blues than you can shake a stick at but today I was going to concentrate on the part of the Down that I concentrated on during the Spring.

On the path down I stopped for this and that the first species being a Marbled White. Some have gotten to the point now where the black has turned to more of a grey or dark brown. The golden Skippers are still looking good, the females in particular and they are still as entertaining as ever. As I reach the gently sloping foot of the Down before it gets going proper Whites start appearing more. One flies in briefly for nectar and as I focus on it takes off. I don't think anymore of it until I get back and check through the photos and there is one of those 'if I tried for that I'd never have gotten it' shots with the White freeze framed in mid take off.





I carry on up the steep side of the Down pausing about half way up where the blues like to fly. This is a good vantage point as you can scan down below you and see the blues either flashing azure or lilac amid the green background or as little white flags fixed rigid as the grass stems sway in the slightest of breeze. There are a fair few about today and the main problem is choosing which one to go for. I make my choice but as I make my approach another Blue tempts me either by being closer, in better condition or in a better position.



I stay on this side of the Down and nearer the top in one of the little scallops a DGF drops in briefly for a quick feed. It's not there for very long because a Comma (one that holds a territory here?) dive bombs it. I managed a couple of shots before this happened but despite the DGF coming back a further three times I didn't add any others as the scenario is repeated each time the DGF puts a Tarsi onto a thistle. Whilst waiting for the DGF to return I take advantage of the thistle heads which prove a delight to various passing Whites and the surrounding Bramble which encases the scallop is popular with a/the marauding Comma.





All too soon time has ticked away and I taking the hard and dusty track across the field back to pick up little L. Mind you this was a great little bonus trip and more than made up for the dire situation yesterday!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 04-Sep-18 08:25 AM GMT

I have just seen your post on the Grayling. I was fascinated by your description of how they fly around you and then land directly behind you. Next year when this happens I too will look on the ground behind me.

That pic of one in flight is fantastic. I clicked twice on it to enlarge it twice. OK, so its a bit blurred when you do this but you can pick out the upper wing markings quite well. Quite a rarity to be able to do this. Thanks.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Sep-18 08:08 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 There are some even better ones on some other peoples PDs where they've caught them during courtship and mating and they've got their wings wide open, I think millerd as got some great shots of this. I've been trying to find this for a few years now but no joy yet hence I've resorted to setting the camera to Sports mode and trying for in flight shots.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 04-Sep-18 09:33 PM GMT

Nice shots of the Hedgies, Wurzel. 😊 They seemed to be only around for five minutes this year, and I didn't get to see that many at all.

Those Grayling photos you mention were back in 2015 - I've sent Ernie a PM about them.

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Sep-18 11:16 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I know where did they got to? Another 'blink and you missed them' species 🤔😞 As for the Grayling shots it's either that my dementia staving regime is working or (more likely) they were exceedingly memorable shots 😊😞

### Larkhill 12-07-2018

I feel like I've kinda neglected this site slightly this year but it's become a lot harder to visit. Not only do we have an earlier start but also the earlier finish (which should have been handy for stop-offs) has meant that I'm able to pick my wife and little L up from their school run and so after work stop-offs as a practice has almost been consigned to the history books. Also continued road work by Wiltshire Council and the massive building work that's taking place at the Camp have meant that stopping off for 10 minutes isn't an option because if I do then I could end up being late for work because who knows what delights and diversion, route changes and road closures face me later in my journey? 😊 To top it all the lay-by which has served as the car park is now blocked off with massive white concrete blocks. I'll try and keep stopping here but I really need to find another stop-off point to invest my cheeky 10 minutes on.



So this was possibly the last Larkhill stop-off of the season and after all the brilliant moments here and a very impressive species tally it felt like a bit of an anti-climax. A quick wander round threw up the usual suspects brown wise with the odd Common Blue still hanging on in there but unlike last year I wasn't knee deep in Smessex Skippers. True they were around and were the most numerous species but there wasn't the same margin as last year. Musing on their decrease I set too finding a few that were willing to pose.



All too soon (about 6 minutes later) I was back in the car and facing a queue through the camp and only one diversion because of a road closure...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 05-Sep-18 08:17 AM GMT

Larkhill is my preferred route to avoid the Stonehenge queues on the A303. I was at a loss when it was closed as a through route, last year, and found myself heading for Upavon.

I have always thought that the habitat in the area looks great for Butterflies, but like you I can't find anywhere suitable to pull over. I am sure Marsh Frits. are in that area. Still you now have Tilshead to explore !.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 05-Sep-18 07:25 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I got my first Marshie for 2017 at Larkhill so there are plenty about though probably quite widely dispersed. I also heard of Dukes at Larkhill but never saw them as I didn't know the exact location and didn't fancy coming up against men with machine guns or a Tank 😱😱 I need to work out a route home that encompasses Tilshead 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 06-Sep-18 11:46 AM GMT

Very nice nectaring Small White and Skippers from work Wurzel. Love the Holly Blue and Dragonflies from Godshill, and of course the Graylings. Great shots, well done. 📷😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Sep-18 11:17 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 I was chuffed with the Grayling shots as I wasn't expecting to find anything much 😊

### Laverstock 16-07-2018

What with the Chalkhills being mentioned on numerous PDs and recording websites for some time now I was hoping that today would be the day when I would finally get to see a ghostly blue apparition floating across the grass tops. So I dropped little L off and high-tailed up the Down noting a Peacock on a neighbours Buddleia as I nipped over the Tutor's fence.

After that I put my head down and motored across the field only slowing when my feet felt the soft spongy turf of the foot of the down through the soles of my shoes. The first little area I stopped at was within 10 metres or so of the entrance to the Down where the path widens on either side to become a larger patch of shorter turf. I stopped here as the hoped for ghostly sky blue butterfly had appeared stopping just long enough for a rapid approach and time for me to fire off a few shots. As I did so the sun came out really lighting up the subtle orange lunules on the underside. Also here were a couple of Common Blues looking surprisingly vivid in comparison to the spectral Chalky as well as a smattering of Meadow and Hedge Browns and Large and Small Whites.



I took the path that runs hugging the base of the Down and occasionally it would go through a short tunnel or arch of Hawthorn. When I emerged blinking on the other side I found that I'd caught the butterflies unawares. At one stretch I was able to find 4 Common Blues and 2 Chalkhills among the

numerous Meadow and Hedge Browns as well as a late-ish Marbled White. The only problem was that the more observant Hedgies would set off the Meadow Browns that seemed to fly about a la Corporal Jones; "Don't panic! Don't panic!" which would set everything else off before I got a chance to get any photos.



I made it round to the Gully and the butterflies seemed a little more relaxed here. Scanning around I saw a couple of Common Blues, a Large White fussed about and there were a brace of Comma on the large Bramble bush at the end of the gully where it opens out. There were also a couple or three of Chalkhills here, all males, including one which was very chilled out even doing a little wing rolling for me. He posed brilliantly with the afternoon sun casting just the hint of shadow on the veins of his wing. This was what I'd come for. This species isn't found in massive numbers here, possibly the sward isn't quite right for them to build their population to the epic heights of other sites but such a close site isn't to be sniffed at.



After this I climbed the gully and worked my way through the narrow corridor right at the top of the Down coming out to the side where I spent most of my time during spring. The area here is more scrubby with islands of Hawthorn and small trees with a mixture of grasses of different heights. Because of this habitat make up it was no surprise that I saw so many Hedgies but there were also some good whites about with representatives of three species. The highlight of this area though came just as I was starting to make my way back down the Down. A Tangerine Cream butterfly buzzed past me and alighted atop a Thistle head. A Painted Lady. It was terribly twitchy so I had to keep my distance but I did manage a few record shots before it was off hectically searching out more nectar.



Chuffed to have the Chalkhills on the yearly tally and a lovely Painted Lady image I made my way back to collect little L.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 07-Sep-18 10:32 AM GMT

A rather good Painted Lady there, Wurzel – they've been generally a bit thin on the ground this year along with the other migrants.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Sep-18 11:19 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 From the looks of things they've shot through and all ended up in Wales 🤔😄

Well I've been itching to start sorting though my holiday shots and this evening I finally succumbed so here is part 1, although I don't know when I'll get round to part 2...

## The Dordogne 2018

After a couple of previous family holidays abroad this year we went closer to home than the Czech Republic and much less urban/more rural than Lisbon. So this summer it was off to France to the Dordogne about a 40 minute drive from Bergerac. The place we were staying at featured on the Canopy and Stars website, a place called Terre et Toi at Elvensong. Elvensong was a earth and straw house with a fantastic circular sky window, outside kitchen, private hammock and wood fired hot tub. Down a small woodland path there was the swing seat from where you could look out over the lake and watch the children clamber from the jetty into the boat. Elvensong was a very appropriate name for in our bliss it felt like we'd been transported by Iluvatar himself to Valinor.

## Day 1 – The arrival 14-08

It wasn't too long a drive from Bordeaux airport to Terre et Toi although it did feel like it. The roads whilst brilliantly surfaced and smooth got smaller and smaller, the white lines disappeared and we were forced to play Chicken a few times 😊. The scenery at the same time just got better and better and we drove through some stunning looking habitat. I saw Frits flying along the verges but apart from the obvious, massive Silver-washed I could only

guess at what they were. There were also copious amounts of small white butterflies, which I would later find out were Wood Whites, but we weren't stopping and I had to keep my eyes on the road. On our arrival I swore that I saw a South White Admiral but again I was busy watching the road and trying not to knock down any of our hosts dogs that came running out to greet us.



Once we'd parked up Sara showed us around the main house and then took us up through the woodland path to Elvensong. I had to go back to the car to collect our food so I first unpacked my camera natch, and headed back. There were many, many Hedgies and Meadow Browns fluttering about trying to catch my glance and a Specklie landed momentarily on the path. Slightly further down a tiny bit of 'meadow' held all sorts and I spent a good five minutes or so here with a Sooty Copper, Broad Bordered Bee Hawk Moth, faded Common Blue , a few aged Skippers and lots of the small looking whites that I'd seen on the journey which turned out to be Wood Whites. A Frit dropped in as well and at the time I thought it was a Heath though now I'm thinking possibly Meadow Frit due to the 'white band'? On the way back the Specklie was a bit more approachable.

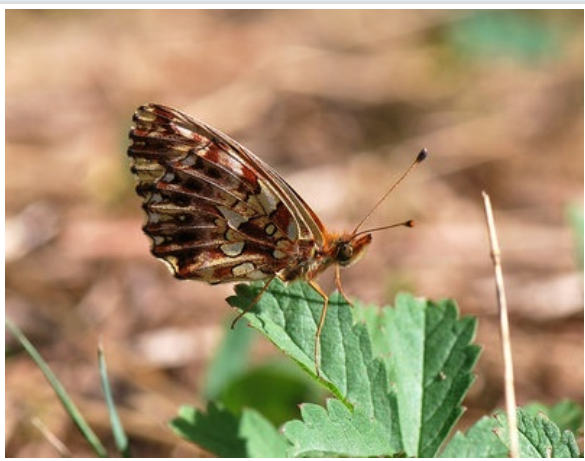




After a bit of settling in I headed back to the car for all the water bottle I'd left previously 😊. I spent a bit longer this time in the little Meadow and found the worn Skippers, Dingies though and not the hoped for Mallows. I tried for a few Wood Whites which were fluttering around in place of Small and Green-veined Whites it seemed. The moth this time was a Hummingbird Hawk Moth. And again there were Blues, Sooty Copper as well as a few Brown Argus. Round near the car the land sloped down through an open woodland to a pond and which unfortunately wasn't part of where we were staying but just on the edge of our part I saw more Sooty's, a normal Copper as well as a Weavers Fritillary.







The next trip out turned into a slightly longer sojourn this time round the house and from there onto the field. There was the Sooty on the way as well as a Jersey Tiger moth up near the house. Along the banks on the road side there were loads of Browns including some odd looking Gatekeepers but there were no more Frits. On into the field which didn't look too promising until the sun came out and then things really kicked off with a gorgeous female Sooty starting the ball rolling. When she opened up she was even more peachy catching the sun and glistening a rainbow of colours. I've seen this species before but nowhere near as fresh looking as this.







Things started appearing there weren't just Meadow Browns; a Grizzlie, Common Blues and Dingies and over near the fence to the road there were four or five Sooty Coppers. A crazy tiny blue caught my eye. I took a grab shot which was terrible but it was enough to confirm my only definite lifer of the day, a Short-tailed Blue. I started to make my way towards it but it was spooked by a Common Blue and it flew over the hedge and over the road. I started back along the road, heading homewards when I saw a/the STB fluttering in the alleyways among the Poplars. I nipped through the hedge and followed it. Just as it settled another blue flew in; "Damn it!" I thought. Only the blue was a larger male and with not even a please or thank you it swung it's abdomen round and locked on. This meant I was able to get some proper shots.



After the evening meal I popped out again. This time though I headed left at the bottom of the path and worked my way round the lake from the other side. There were butterflies all over the place as I think they were starting to settle down to roost for the night and so seemed to be congregating together.



And so back to Elvensong to sit on the veranda and drink cheap beer (39 cents) and remember all that went on. What a cracking afternoon a great haul for basically unpacking and having a couple of strolls round the site. 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 07-Sep-18 11:50 PM GMT

Wonderful stuff, Wurzel – and as you say, without really trying! 😊 If there is a standout butterfly, I think it has to be that female Copper with its amazing sheen... 😊🍷

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 08-Sep-18 10:45 AM GMT

Sounds like a great start to your holiday Wurzel, can't wait for the next episode 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 08-Sep-18 03:41 PM GMT

Lovely stuff, and why I enjoy France so much. Just as you start looking at something and make a step forward then your eye gets drawn by something else. And they are all good..

Lovely Sooty Copper and Short-tailed Blue shots. Looking forward to the unfolding story... 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 08-Sep-18 04:19 PM GMT

A brilliant start to your Dordogne trip, Wurzel, the Female Sooty Copper is stunning 🥰🇫🇷 as is the Weaver's Fritillary underside 🥰🇫🇷

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 08-Sep-18 05:20 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel, I haven't yet succumbed to continental butterflying but if I do it will be because of butterflies such as Sooty Coppers...beautiful 🥰

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Sep-18 11:11 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 🥰 She was a beaut, the best one I saw all week 🥰 Mind you there were one or two other nice things 🥰

Cheers Goldie 🥰 There was just the warm up I went out properly the next day 🥰 Mind out it'll be a while til I get round to sorting out the next set of photos 🥰

Cheers Peter 🥰 It was possibly the most relaxed butterflying I've ever done and was just as you describe it 🥰

Cheers Mike 🥰 I most chuffed with the Short-tailed Blue as it was not only a lifer but could also go in the 'butterflies in cop collection' a cracking twofer 🥰🥰

Cheers Neil 🥰 Foreign butterflying is a brilliant experience Neil you see so much and the butterflies are in such greater numbers it's intoxicating 🥰 . The only drawback is having to come back to much reduced fare 🥰

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 09-Sep-18 09:09 AM GMT

Fantastic start to the holiday. If that's what you saw inbetween unpacking I can't wait to see what you found when you did some proper butterflying! 🥰

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 09-Sep-18 10:06 AM GMT

Loving your holiday pics, Wurzel.

I went there once but it was before I got into butterflies. Fantastic shots of the ones you found.

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 09-Sep-18 08:12 PM GMT

What a session you had with that Sooty Copper !. Great shots.

Whenever I visit France, in similar habitat to that in the UK, I can never comprehend that half of the species found could never naturalise over here. Such a shame.

And yes, it's amazing how many single Wood Whites can be seen over there, where as they are in a concentrated area in Chiddingfold forest.

Looking forward to more,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Sep-18 08:57 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 🥰 Most, if not all, of my butterflying was done within walking distance of where we were staying but I still managed 47-48 species in a week 🥰

Cheers Ernie 🥰 I had a similar experience in that I went to Poland on a birding holiday and there were Fritillaries all around us - but I was a birder so they were just orange butterflies that happen to be called Fritillaries 🥰🥰🥰🥰

Cheers Trevor 🥰 What feels so strange is when you're walking in an area which to all intents and purposes could be the UK but the butterfly species that you find are all different 🥰🥰 I've got another 7 posts to sort from The Dordogne but if I'm going to stand a chance of catching up with my PD before next season I need to do a bit more work on that so it may be back to Blighty...for a while 🥰

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Sep-18 11:21 PM GMT

### Garston Stop-off 20-07-2018

I don't know where to begin explain how and why I was able to make this the shortest of stop-offs at Garston Wood. I was basically on my way home from a funeral and having held myself together throughout that and the wake and the journey home with my parents I needed a moment to get my head together before I got home to my family.

I pulled into the car park, collected my camera and wandered up the main track. A SWF landed on the deck I leant in to get a few shots and realised that the camera battery was dead! At first I was annoyed at myself but then a wry smile passed over my face and a chuckle emerged from my throat as I imagined the person's whose funeral I'd attended laughing and saying "nice one Bert". Loaded up with a fully functional battery I retraced my steps but the SWF was gone so I kept on walking further up the hill scanning the brambles and tall thistles that lined the path. Another female SWF landed nearby and as I was getting a few shots a male dove in and hassled her. He didn't get anywhere despite his smoothest selection of chat-up lines and at one point he sat dejectedly on the same leaf as the object of his affection possibly trying to hypnotise her into submission. That didn't work either and so he buggered off. When I spied another couple going through the courtship dance a few moments later I wondered if he was trying again - so fickle these butterflies that are trying to meet their biological imperatives!





These shenanigans helped boost my mood and the moments when I was focusing on focusing I was away; on Brownsea Island, camping on the Purbeck, sitting in the works van, standing watching a Ring-necked Duck at Poole Park, having a beer in the Haymoor on my 18th etc. all places I'd been and all things I'd done with Bill; nos da, ow cothman Bill.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 11-Sep-18 09:38 AM GMT

A great way to get your head together in such sad circumstances, Wurzel.

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 11-Sep-18 02:27 PM GMT

Lovely pictures from France, Wurzel – especially that mating pair of short-tailed blues. Really good shots.

It's not at all easy to tell heath from meadow fritillary from the underside alone, as both are very variable. A clear view of the underside forewing helps if you can see far down enough – but here you can't.

Guy

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Sep-18 11:23 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 It definitely did the trick 😊

Cheers Guy 😊 I wasn't sure about that ID though the field guides always seem to make it more obvious than it is as they produce an image of the species 'type' and also don't allow for different light levels, wear and tear, regional variations etc 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 12-Sep-18 09:58 AM GMT

Sorry to hear of your loss Wurzel, Butterflies really do take some blues a way though don't they 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Sep-18 11:12 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 They certainly do 😊

At this point I need to thank everyone who's read and commented on my PD as today I reached an important milestone. I was hoping to reach 176000 views by the end of the year, as I was born in '76, and today I got there and a couple of months early 😊 So again thank you one and all 😊 Anyway back to business...

### Broughton Down 22-07-2018

What was supposed to be an entire day butterflying had turned into a trip with L and my wife to Mottisfont with a stop off at Broughton on the way back. This further metamorphosed into a few hours at Broughton and so I set off as soon as I was able reasoning that I needed to get there either

before the forecast cloud covered the reserve (so Silver-spots wouldn't fly) or the un-forecast sun got too strong (and Silver-spots would fly rather too well 😊).

I got out of the car at the lane and as I was putting my boots on scanned across the hedge. A Holly Blue out in an appearance along with the usual smattering of whites and browns; the odd Brimstone adding a bit of va-va-voom to the proceedings. From there it was away up the steep hill which doesn't get any easier and in fact seems to get longer and steeper each time I visit. Up near the turning I met a couple that seemed a little lost and so I showed them the way that I go to get into the reserve. I second guessed myself in the end as it seemed a little unfamiliar but in the end we got to the middle gate and broke through from the gloom of the Beech trees into the air at the top of the down mid-way along the reserve. I wished them well and said I'd give them a holler if I found any Silver-spots and then set to walking slowly along the main path and the thinner animal tracks. It didn't take long until I was calling out that there was a Silver-spot. 😊



After a few more shots were taken we split up again and I set to investigating the trackways again. There was the odd Silver-spot, a few really small Common Blues and even tinier Brown Argus in amongst the ghosts of DGFs-past. I set to making for the shorter turf to the right of where I'd come in. This part of the down sweeps down to the left to the bottom of the site with small ditches on either side a bit like a grass motorway. Here there was more of the same and a Silver-spot would zip here and there occasionally put up by an annoying Blue or Meadow Brown and a DGF would ghost across the short turf now and again. Some of these DGFs still had their orange colour whilst some were so faded they appeared almost grey, hence my spectral allusions.



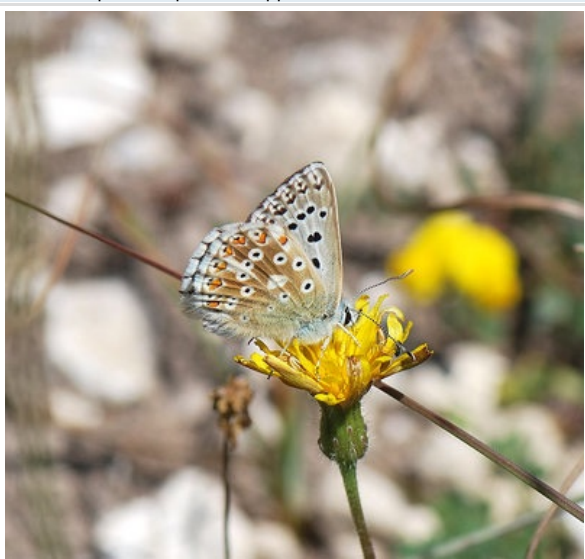




I worked my way back to where I'd started and settled down near a near circular scar in the turf where I suppose a Bramble had been recently grubbed out. I poured a coffee and started to enjoy my extra hot Lime Chilli Pickle sandwich when a Small Heath put up a Silver-spot that had been sitting almost right next to me. My earlier wanderings on the short turf area had let me warm up as it were and so somehow I was able to follow it with my eyes and mentally marked where it alighted. So with camera in one hand, sandwich in the other and the contents of my first bite nicely burning the inside of my cheeks I set forth. It had landed in the fold of a leaf on a small shrub and from my first position it looked like it was all snuggled up in its sleeping bag! It moved forward a little and stood on tip-toes while I got a few more shots and then it was gone.

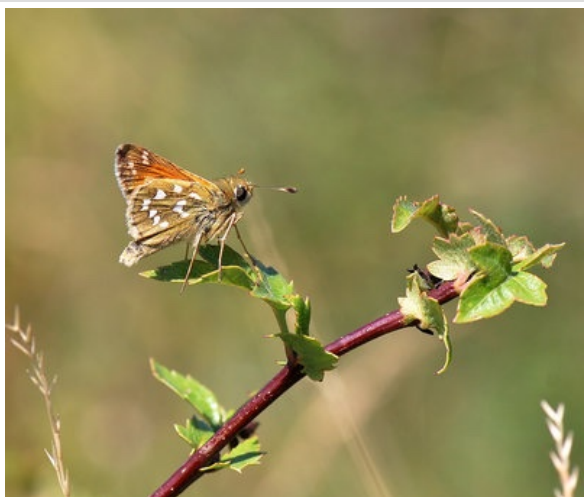


Having reacquainted myself with my coffee and lunch eaten I gathered my things and set off further along the track towards the hump and the small field at the extreme west of the reserve. There were more blues around here and if I'd had more time I would have remained here and set up shot next to the clumps of Hemp Agrimony. Over a very short period I had four species of Whites, Hedge and Meadow Browns, DGF and SWF and Common Blue and Brown Argus visiting just the one stand. I carried on and as I got closer to the small field the Common Blues seemed to be phased out and the Chalkhills phased in. It was down the steep bank and straight up the next side and then the field levelled out. The Chalkhills didn't stop for love nor money after my first encounter so I tried my luck with the DGFs and they were slightly more obliging. They kept fluttering slowly round in circuits seeming to hone in on a particular point and then they settled down in amongst the grass stems. In amongst all these species flitting about a Smessex and Silver-spot both put in an appearance as well as a Red Admiral.





After this I slowly made my way back the way I'd come stopping occasionally; the first time to watch as a Marbled White flew by, the second time to watch a Holly Blue and finally to nail a SWF that had escaped my lens earlier. I met another enthusiast who was yet to see and photograph a Silver-spot and so I showed him the best area and then a Silver-spot too. I found another for him and once he'd gotten his shot I took a look around and realised that everything was flying rapidly, I felt really hot and so it seems that the un-forecast had come to fruition. The sun was shining strongly and the butterflies had gone manic. I ever so slowly made my way back towards the gate, a few steps and stop, a few steps and stop etc. It's always hard leaving a site and this is the best way I've found of achieving it; do a really slow exit and before you realise it you're on your way back to the car. So it was today and I was in the cool shade under the Beech without it being a wrench or feeling that I'd been robbed of butterflying opportunities.



But the butterflies didn't stop there. On the final stretch down the hill it seemed that there was a Speckle at every open patch in the tree tunnel and as I was changing my boots a Small Copper landed at the bottom of the hedge but got 'moved on' by a passing Common Blue. Fingers crossed Brown Hairstreak next...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 13-Sep-18 06:24 PM GMT

Great Silver Spotted Skippers, particularly the last image ( on the maroon leaf ). I wonder if there any SSS at Tilshead, all other Skippers are found there.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Sep-18 11:50 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 The species isn't that widespread in Wiltshire and most sightings seem to come from the very edges when some individuals have crept across the border from Dorset and Hampshire. There is a population at Porton apparently but access there is restricted and you have to get permission 6 months in advance 😊 Mind you with butterflies you never know...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 14-Sep-18 09:51 AM GMT

Ah, good to see the cutest of skippers again, Wurzel. 😊 Great shots as ever, and I'd go along with Trevor on the favourite. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Sep-18 10:09 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 They were only just getting started at this site when I visited, I made a later visit (still to come, probably around November time 😊😊 ) and they were all over the place; a veritable shed load 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

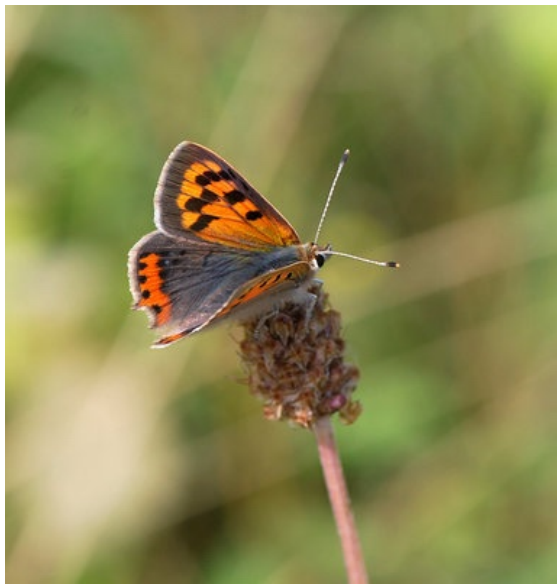
by Wurzel, 15-Sep-18 10:46 PM GMT

#### Shipton Bellinger 25-07-2018

And so the end of the year finally arrived, somehow I'd made it and survived. As we had a half day I decided to take the back way home and use the time to my advantage to try and tick off Brostreak. It may have ended up as just a recce as I'd heard that the Brostreaks weren't following their usual rule book and the heatwave had them running for the shade and therefore disappearing well before the usual end of the Golden Time at 3:00. Just to be on the safe side I'd also arranged a visit the following day so I wouldn't be too worried if I didn't find my quarry and I could at least get the lay of the land and start the change of gears into Holiday Mode.

I pulled off the Bulford/Tidworth road and parked behind the Hotspot Hedge. As soon as I got out of the car I was into the butterflies with various

Whites flying by as well as a faded DGF in amongst some blues. I was quite surprised as I thought everything would be hiding away out of the heat. As I rounded the corner and looked down the hedge there was plenty of activity low down with more Whites and Meadow Browns the odd blue and Small Heath as well as a gorgeous fresh Small Copper.



I carried on further along the hedge seeing more Brimstone and Meadow Browns low down and the occasional Holly Blue up high and while I was scanning along I spied another enthusiast near the other end of the hedge. He was standing stock still with a large lens positioned a few feet away from the bushes. "I reckon I know what he's onto" I thought and so I made my way over. As I got closer I recognised him from a few trips before (Daneways and here) and so re-introducing myself he kindly pointed out a male Brostreak which he'd been watching in the same spot for almost an hour. I got my shots and we chatted and I went back for a few more but my head connected with a Bramble and the butterfly flew back over the large mound of Bramble. I apologised profusely but Tommy (I think it was, I'm useless with names) said not to mind as he'd be back.





So after about 5 minutes the male was indeed back. We stood back and let him settle for a good while and in the meantime while we chatted we watched various other butterflies pass by. A Comma, Holly Blue, Red Admiral all joined the ranks of Meadow and Hedge Browns and various Whites. The Brostroke was still in the same place so we went in for a few more shots and then stood back again to give him some space and Tommy said his goodbyes and headed for home. I stayed for a bit and while I watched the Brostroke moved a little further back into the vegetation and into the shade so I left him in peace and had a quick walk around the small scallops on the other side of the main track.



There were plenty of Blues around as well as a Smessex and a few Specklies in the more shaded overhung parts of the trackways. On the final walk back along the hedge the Brostroke was gone but I walked through a cloud of 20 or so Blues; mainly Common Blue males though here were a few Brown Argus and at least on Holly in the mix. It was quite a novel experience to be surrounded at head height by so many fluttering insects, I was just glad they were butterflies and not Horseflies! I also briefly checked out the other side of the hedge and this meant that I was able to add Small Tort and Peacock to the visit tally.



Hopefully I'll find a few more tomorrow but actually a pretty fine haul for the time of day and in the incessant heat. It's nice to know that the job, barring an unusual migrant/ Cloudy, is done and now I can relax and enjoy all the butterflies I find, though there might not be that many as they might have all burnt out. Hopefully I'll be wrong about this...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 16-Sep-18 07:06 AM GMT

Well done with the male Brown Hairstreak, great images.  
No males for me this year, I had a lifetimes worth last year !.

Looking forward to your Tilshead report,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-Sep-18 01:47 PM GMT

Lovely shots Wurzel, 🍷🍷 I think Wurzel that the only way I'm going to find a Brown Hair Streak is if it's pointed out to me 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 16-Sep-18 06:59 PM GMT

Good to see a male Brown Hairstreak, Wurzel, and nice shots too. 😊 None for me this year, though the females are still around.

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 16-Sep-18 07:34 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Shipton does do well for males. At the rate I'm going now that I'm back at work the Tilshead report might have to be a Christmas present Trevor 🍷🍷

Cheers Goldie 😊 When I saw my first I almost missed it so despite their vivid colours at times they can still be mighty hard to find at times 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 This year the males appeared at roughly the same time as the heatwave which meant they seemed to start behaving unexpectedly and also oddly 😊. Luckily by the time the females arrived things were a little more normal climate wise 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 17-Sep-18 10:39 AM GMT

Great Brostreaks and SSSkips, Wurzel. It seems to me you must be "catching-up". It seems like only a couple of weeks ago I was chasing SSSkips over Old Winch Hill.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Sep-18 10:51 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I've still got 19 posts to do (not including my weekend in Surrey, Welsh holiday and the rest of French holiday) so I better get busy 😊

## Laverstock 26-07-2018 Part 1

This was to be part 1 of a full day of butterflying! I'd been waiting for this moment for almost a year, the first day of the summer when I'd finally be free to day all of the butterflying that I wanted...just a pity that the season is almost over and that the holiday is now only 5 weeks long, oh and I'd have lots of chores to do and some work and there would also be family outings...Whatever the plans had been laid, recces done and things were moving along nicely so I was going to try and enjoy this day. So first up Holiday Tutor class which may be a pleasant chore for Little L but for me meant the opportunity to get up the Down and start ticking off butterflies.

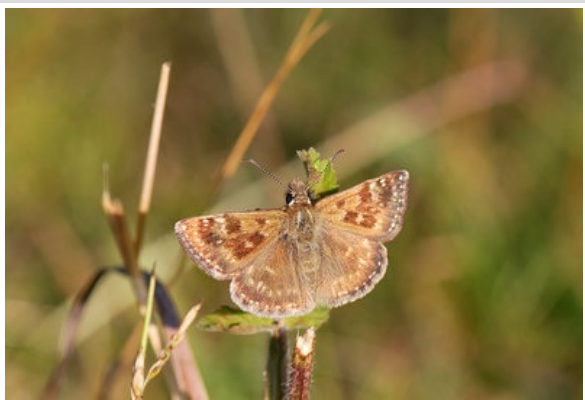
And so it began with a few Browns on the path along the at the back of the Tutors and then a Holly Blue on the Ivy at the start of the track across the farmers field. From there I worked my way along the bottom of the Down making towards the gully. Hedge Browns and Meadow Browns posed open wings sucking up the early morning sun as they sucked up nectar and through the sea of long grasses the occasional Blue roosted, still closed wing perhaps waiting for the temperature to increase just a degree more. A Marbled White in very poor repair flew around one of the islands of Bramble which was a notable sighting as it could be the last of this species that I see this year. The islands of Bramble seem to work their way down the Down and about half way along the track they merge with the hedge running along bottom length of the track forming short tunnels. You have two choices here, either climb up and round and then re-join the track on the other side or stick to the track and duck and dive threw to the other side. Today I chose the latter option as it's a good way to catch the butterflies unawares. It paid off as in the exposed patches of Down between these tunnels I found a nice selection of Blues just waking up, including a Small Copper.







As the path wound on with the hedge on one side and the Down towering on the other it levels out at it reaches the gully. Here I noticed a little brown job. It's erratic, fast and jinking flight surprised me. I first thought Skipper and not a small Brown but the brown colour stumped me momentarily. Perhaps a very worn Smessex? It landed close by and I crept up remembering as I did that last year I'd seen a second brood Dingy - fast, zig-zagging flight, little brown job, that must be what it was. And indeed it was.



After this I made my way to the gully which wasn't exactly overflowing with Chalkhills but was still holding reasonable numbers for this site and it did have a second Small Copper in amongst the Common Blues which were almost as numerous as the Meadow Browns. I kept on moving climbing up one side of the gully and making my way back to the entrance but this time from the top and along the side of the Down. I'd look down and laid out before me was a butterfly display of wonder as separate butterflies would take off and bumble into others disturbing them and so on in a chaotic and poor

choreographed Mexican Wave. Occasionally I'd stop and admire one particular butterfly or just breathe deeply and take in the whole scene.





All too soon I was back in the cool of the Tutors house checking through my photos. What a cracking hour, possibly the best start to the holidays ever?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 17-Sep-18 11:25 PM GMT

Nice to see the male Brown Hairstreaks in your recent post, Wurzel 😊 I've not seen them for some years 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 17-Sep-18 11:40 PM GMT

That sounds like a splendid day out, Wurzel, and a great record of it. 😊 A second brood Dingy too – I haven't seen one for some years now: that's a nice find. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 18-Sep-18 09:28 AM GMT

Love the Gate Keeper and the Common Blue Wurzel, they bring back some lovely Summer Memories 😊 Your second shot of the Common Blue in particular with the sharp blue colouring really checks out the early morning dew for me 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Sep-18 11:14 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 Shipton Bellinger is a really good for male Brostreaks, in fact I've possibly seen more males than females at this site over the years 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 This was only the 'Starter' I quickly headed out for the Main Course 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 The light on that morning was spot on and made most things 'ping' out of the grasses 😊

## Shipton Bellinger (Part 2 of the all dayer) 26-07-2018

Having done Tutor Session 1 I had the rest of the day until 3ish free; so where to go? Well at this time of year where else but Shipton? I already had my Brostreak so now it was time to go for some more...

To save time I cut straight to the chase and parked behind the hotspot/border hedge in the shade. Two gents, one later remembered as Maurice, say there is nowt about which got me wondering if the Brostreaks were returning back to their usual habits and putting in a decent shift in the golden hours between 11 and 3? So I wandered along the hedge checking for any little orange triangles and paying particular attention to any areas where the grass looked trampled. I didn't see any Brostreaks though on this first sweep through but there were good numbers of Holly Blue, Hedge & Meadow Browns along with the occasional Large White and Brown Argus in amongst the grasses bordering the hedge. Towards the end there was a mass congregation of Blues, mainly Common, feeding on a bit of dog poo. They took off now and again in a reverse cascade of blue.



...and then there were two.



I completed my 'transect' and then ended up back where I'd started and also where I'd seen the male Brostreak the day before. And there it was, possibly even the very same male. I called out that I'd gotten one and spied Paul who was onto his own. I looked back as Maurice and his mate arrived and there was a second. Three males all within 5 metres of each other. We all hung around here for a while and were joined by a SWF, Red Admiral and a Smessex while the three males became two when Pauls pushed off. Then the second left leaving the remaining one which had a real penchant for one particular Thistle Head. After a while various people appeared and all the while the Brostreak hung around the one flower. One bloke arrived (John - I'm so bad with names) and got straight onto the male. Then there was a semi-anxious wait while he had to wait for his mate to arrive. Mind you he needn't have worried as this male wasn't going anywhere.





After a while people drifted off and so I did as well. I sauntered round to the other side of the hedge and started up the hill. I cut through into a partial clearing and bumped into Andy (who regularly does the transect here) and Paul. A Wall Brown flies by landing just long enough to make an ID and so I decide to check this area out. We meander our way along the track, ducking under Hawthorn occasionally and emerging in tiny, sheltered clearings. We find a Brostreak or two in the first of these and by the time we've done a complete walk round and made our way back we've added even more bringing the tally to 2 males and 2 females. A second brood Dingy also out in an appearance but was too quick for my lens. I did note that the females don't seem to be acting in their usual fashion - possibly the heat is getting to them? Normally they're the first down to the nectar, showing up the honey coloured or tatty males with their pristine, glowing livery. Yet today both females were up high (about head height) and were skulking in the shade. Still a grand total of 6 males and 2 females isn't to be sniffed at this year when the Brostreak Rule Book has been virtually burnt and discarded.







Cheerfully I loaded up the car and set off for home...there's another tutor session for little L still to go so another chance for me to get up the Down. Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 19-Sep-18 10:20 AM GMT

Excellent set of Hairstreaks there, Wurzel! 😊 You're right about them throwing away the rulebook, but my suspicion is that they haven't really got one... 😊 There is no such thing as a typical season weatherwise, so you can expect anything. Still if it was all 100% predictable, I think we'd all get bored! 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 19-Sep-18 02:04 PM GMT

Great shots from France Wurzel, love that female Sooty. 🍷 And an extra 🍷 for your Tolkien lore! 😊

The SSS's and Laverstock selection are great. But what sights you got of the Brostreak! Those are some fantastic images you captured. Love it. 🍷 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 19-Sep-18 02:56 PM GMT

I felt I could be a little restrained with the mrgreens having seen so many male Brown Hairstreaks last year. But it then occurred to me that I have never seen both sexes together on the same day, at one location.

Damn it ! 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Trevor.

## Re: Wurzel

by CallumMac, 19-Sep-18 10:19 PM GMT

Fabulous set of brostreaks, Wurzel! 🍷 I thought we would have the timing just about right when we headed to SB a month after your visit but now I can see why we only found one tatty male! 😞

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 20-Sep-18 10:45 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 You're right there butterflies always find some way of catching us out 😊😊

Cheers Andrew 😊 I didn't think anyone would have recognised that 😊 Despite the Brostreaks not playing fair this season I did all right for them in the end 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I reckon you might need to give Shipton a whirl next year 😊😊

Cheers Callum 😊 I reckon you might have missed them by a day or so 😊 Still there's always next year 😊😊

After a interesting Starter and a sumptuous Main on to the dessert...

## Laverstock Down Part 3 26-07-2018

SOOOO it had already been a cracker of a day with two 2nd brood Dingies from two different sites, Wall Brown and probably 8 Brostreaks. Now I was back at Laverstock for the afternoon holiday class. It started well enough with a Comma on some Buddleia on the first stretch of path. But as I cut across the field and started up the side of the Down it became quite quiet. Really quiet actually right up to the point when a tangerine cream butterfly hove into view - a fantastic Painted Lady looking really fresh and brimming with vitality. I spent some time with the Lady and she was quite coquettish pretending to be shocked by my advances but not really moving on that far each time.





After a while I bade her adieu and carried on round the Down. Sticking to the high path and looking down the hill onto the butterflies below. There were all the usual species on show and round by the gully a reasonable showing (for this site) of six Chalkhills.



As I watched a butterfly flew in and out of the corner of my eye I saw that it didn't fit the expected 'species'. It was a Cloudy! I got a few grab shots before it was off like a rocket and I tried my best to follow it for a few in flight shots. This meant that I covered most of the ground back to the end of the Down focusing solely on this particular butterfly. It just didn't stop, it was like a perpetual motion machine.





What a fantastic finale to a most awesome day! I don't think I've ever had a better start to the holiday what with 23 species in one day including some oddities.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 20-Sep-18 10:55 PM GMT

Good you got yourself a Cloudie, Wurzel – and you didn't have to wait till September either! 😊 That Painted Lady is a nice individual too – it looks home-grown. 😊 Both those immigrant species have been very few and far between this year, so both in the same spot scores double I reckon. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 21-Sep-18 10:24 AM GMT

Glad you got a Cloudie Wurzel, your Brown Hair Streaks shots are superb and I'm 🍷🍷🍷🍷 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 21-Sep-18 11:11 AM GMT

The mention of holidays has instantly got my attention....how many sleeps do we still have to wait till we get back to the France trip. Not that I'm not enjoying the build up...but you did give us some teasers...and the tension is building 😊😊😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 21-Sep-18 07:14 PM GMT

Pleased to see your Clouded Yellow, and it saved a trip to Bournemouth !.  
If that Meadow Brown, in your last shot, is chasing that Cloudie, that must be a first !.  
I've never seen a Meadow Brown chase anything.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 21-Sep-18 07:30 PM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

...It just didn't stop, it was like a perpetual motion machine...

I saw 3 Cloudies down in Dorset a couple of weeks ago and all three were like that, frustrating but still great to see them flying, the only ones I have seen this year.

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Sep-18 11:22 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I'll take the double 😊 The best thing about the Cloudy which I didn't realise until the other day was that it meant that I'd now seen all of the species that had previously been recorded here 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 You'll get yours next year I'm sure, perhaps a trip down South slightly later than usual is on the cards? 😊

Cheers Peter 😊 Hopefully I'll be able to get the next installment sorted over the weekend now that Open Evening at work is over 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 I don't know if it's chasing the Cloudy or whether it was sitting there and saw the Cloudy go by and thought "hang on a minute, flying past butterflies and spooking them is my job, I better get out there or I'll be out of work! 😊"

Cheers Neil 😊 They're great to watch as they zip around the place, even more so if you've managed a few shots before hand 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 22-Sep-18 11:24 PM GMT

#### The Dordogne: Wednesday 15-08 Part 1 - The First Day Proper...

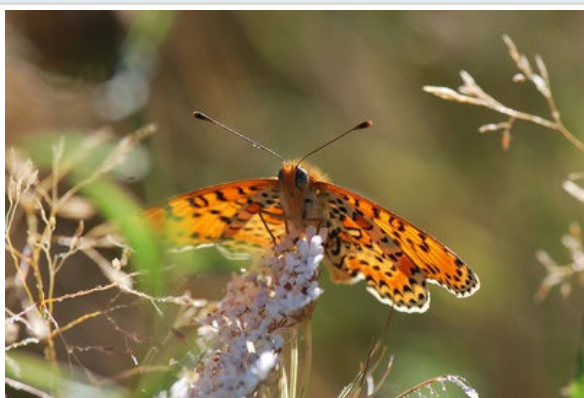
The first day proper and so it turned out! Another cracker with some fantastic butterflies, a handful of lifers and one very good reason not to use the wood fired Hot Tub...but I'm getting a head of myself. 😊

First thing it was jobs for me after breakfast; make the beds, wash up, empty the loo etc. While I was doing this the girls were already on the lake which meant that chores complete I was able to get away for an hour and so this time I headed along the track and turned left. At the top of the hill a huge track way (for pylons?) had been cleared and it looked promising but nothing much was flying so I carried on further over the breast of the hill. On my right was a large, green field so I wandered the margins and started seeing butterflies. Obviously there were Sooty Coppers and also a few smaller Frits with a Meadow in the hand and a Glanville showing nicely as well as a few Heaths and a Weavers put in an appearance as I was leaving.



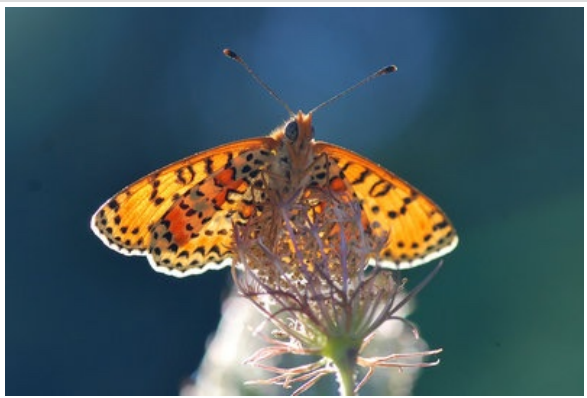


On the way back down the hill I started seeing a few more butterflies as I got nearer to the Clearing including a glancing shot of a Small Heath. "No wait a moment" I thought to myself "why did it have a grey ground colour and a clear white line? A Pearly Heath but unfortunately only a grab shot. Then another butterfly practically glowed in the grass; an unmistakable male Spotted Fritillary. What a stunner! There were more of the smaller Frits as well and I managed to reconnect with the Pearly Heath. I hadn't expected this species as the information I'd seen suggested that they'd be over by now. Even better I bumped into the Spotty again and managed a few Stained Glass shots.











When I got back, stills lightly mesmerised by the Spotty, I realised I needed to swap the ice packs and so I set off to the house taking my camera with me. I added a few Wood White and Weaver's shots to the collection before being called back by Sara for the Moth of the Day - a Buff Tip caught by one of the other guests. When I got back my wife called me over as there was a gorgeous frog perched on the edge of the Hot Tub. Looks like we won't be lighting the back stove for a soak anytime soon!





A great start to the day which left me wondering what après midi would bring?  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 23-Sep-18 10:30 AM GMT

Well worth the wait 😊😊😊

Your story brings back the same feelings I always get in France and I get to appreciate them second hand. I get – the fear of missing something whilst you try and follow something else; the confusion of seeing so many different frits in one spot and the need to try and observe quickly each and every one and make sure. But the overwhelming pleasure of being 'in nature as it should be' and often its (just) a spare piece of rough land left alone and untreated ...wonderful.

I look forward to the afternoon delights. 😊😊😊

And it made me remember my first tree frog plopping down onto a leaf from nowhere, unexpected, jewel like and posing for its new fan. Fantastic

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 23-Sep-18 10:35 AM GMT

I think the shots you got of the pearly heath are wonderful. Its makes a change to see a different version of the small heath.

The "legless" frog" is amazing too. (There is a joke in there somewhere but I don't think its politically correct). 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 23-Sep-18 03:45 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Wurzel 😊 can't wait to see more 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Sep-18 11:28 PM GMT

Cheers Peter 😊 That was the thing that got me too, you'd be driving along a wooded road and here would be Wood Whites and Silver-washed all over the place and then when you park up there's always something different 😊😊

Cheers Ernie 😊 I fell a little bit in love with that species while I was here, I love the metallic flecks along the margins 😊 As for the Frog...well I didn't want to go there either, but all I will say is that beer and wine is much more reasonably priced 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 There'll be a few more from back in Blighty but then I'll return to France 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 24-Sep-18 08:05 AM GMT

I can only echo Peter's sentiments concerning the ' French ' experience.

As for the Pearly Heath, we found an area where many Small Heaths were present, with an occasional Pearly among them, it was good fun trying to single out the Pearly's to photograph.

Your excellent shots of them bring back memories of our trip to the Cevennes, as do your Frits.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 24-Sep-18 01:48 PM GMT

Just caught up with your diary and France posting (haven't been in UKB for a while and am just beginning to get my own holiday story together) 😊 . Seems like you didn't have to try too hard for that amazing first day haul. Love the short-tailed blues and the female Sooty with its myriad of colours wow 😊! Lots of the smaller frits too .. "spotty" is a stunner as is that tree-Frog 🐸 .

France was an amazing place for me too but you've surpassed my 40 total which includes species seen in Andorra 🇦🇩 .

Looking forward with anticipation to the next round of butterfly and wildlife delights 😊

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Sep-18 11:31 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I played a similar game with the Heaths 😊😊

Cheers Philzoid 😊 Looking forward to seeing how Germany was 😊

Back to reality and Blighty...

## Laverstock 27-07-2018

After such a successful day yesterday I suspected that this mornings' visit would be quieter. There was also a palpable feeling of change in the air. I was still wearing sunglasses at 8:30 in the morning but today I was constantly taking them off and putting them back on again as the sun was hidden by the clouds. There was also a noticeable change in the temperature. With the sun out it was scorching and when the sun went in there was finally some blessed relief from the incessant heat of the past month.

As I walked down the path and started at the by-way along the edge of the field the small Ivy clump had a Common Blue on it and that was how things continued when I started bisecting and traversing the Down. I'd look back down the slope and there would be a multitude of white flags and little sapphires blinking in the slightest of breeze against the sandy coloured background. In amongst the Browns (both Meadow and Hedge as well as Small Heaths) there were also the occasional Whites and not all of the Blues were Common, some were much paler showing them to be Chalkhills.



Eventually through my wanderings in reverie I ended up at the far side of the Down at the bottom of the gully. As I followed the course of the bramble filled demarcation hedge a little brown job detached itself from the ground and zipped off, jinking left and right but still heading ultimately in the same direction. Having encountered one only the day before I immediately guessed that it was a second brood Dingy. As I watched it another little brown job took off and set after it. There then ensued lots of argy bargy, chasing back and forth and flying round like a miniature cyclone a la Taz. I took a few Sports Mode shots and then one of the pair settled. So two second brood Dingies hopefully a female will also emerge and then the second brood will continue.



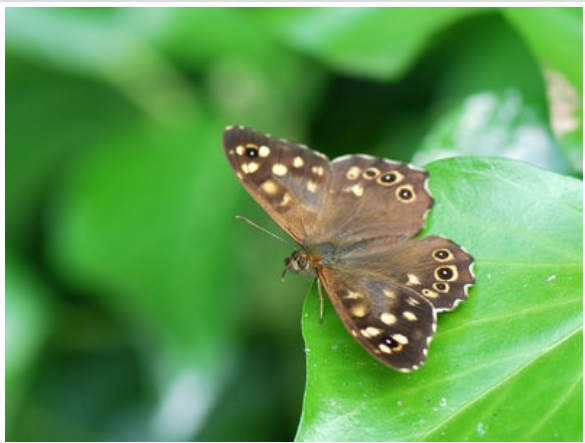


After this I checked out the scallops and worked my way along the line of Knapweed and further up the gully. I got very annoyed with the Meadow Browns and Blue was not just the colour of the butterfly I was trying to get a shot of but also the air! I watched a pristine Chalkhill settle and start to open up its wings, a Meadow Brown bumbled over like an overfriendly puppy wanting to say hello and the Chalkhill was off to another flower. I'd follow it and watch it settle, stalk in closer and just get into position, start focusing and then a Meadow Brown did the same thing! This kept on happening so in the end cursing Meadow Browns I started to work back along the side of the Down and back towards the Tutor session.





A female Common Blue was present at the side of the field on my return leg and I paused for a moment or two to take in the wonderfully fresh Specklie which was at the junction of the path up to the Down and the path to the Tutors' house.



No earth shattering sightings but still nice to see none the less and with a trip to Wales imminent and a change in the weather this could be the last butterflying trip for a good few days...

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 26-Sep-18 08:36 AM GMT

Wurzel - I have never seen a second brood Dingy and we have a lot of locations round my way that Dingies like. I must go out and try and find some next year. I'll add it to my 2019 plan!

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 26-Sep-18 08:50 AM GMT

I'm so far behind everyone's post at the moment! Well done with your Cloudie and I know what you mean about meadow Brown's ruining a good shot, they can be a right pest sometimes. Loved the French post too, those Spotted Frits are lush, can't wait for the next post 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 26-Sep-18 04:32 PM GMT

Love the colour you've brought out in those Common Blues Wurzel, stunning! 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 26-Sep-18 06:06 PM GMT

That's a good selection from the Dordogne, pour le matin, Wurzel 😊

We didn't see Meadow Fritillary and that's a very fresh looking Glanville 😊 Pearly Heaths have nice underside markings which you've captured well.

Your Laverstock male Common Blues show off that shade of blue that I think is the equal of Adonis, especially when fresh 😊



## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 26-Sep-18 11:24 PM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 I only saw my first second brood Dingy two years ago, 2017 didn't throw any up but then this year I saw a smattering, must have been the heat 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I think the Meadow Brown was being a little Englander and bemoaning "these foreigners coming over here and stealing our jobs!" 😊  
😊😊 SO much to do but the next French post is the making of... 😊

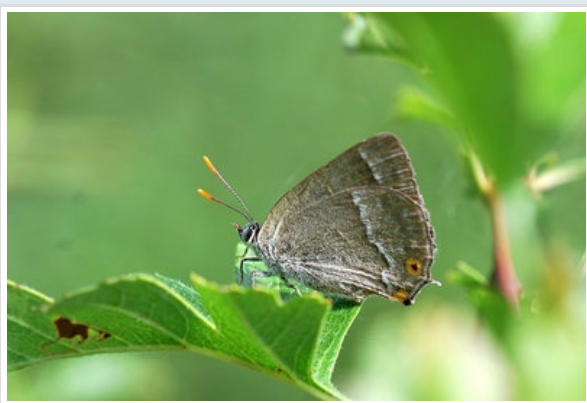
Cheers Goldie 😊 I got real lucky with both the light and the timing 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 There's a bit more to come from France 😊 Though for the more travelled butterflies I expect they'll be considered common fare 😊

## Shipton Bellinger 04-08-2018

Another day and another trip to Shipton Bellinger to see if a few more female Brostreaks had finally emerged. I took the girls with me as they like Shipton and I can accrue a few extra Brownie points this way. The only down side is that K is now old enough to sit in the front and so has taken charge of the music. Actually I needn't have worried she picked a cracking selection with Donovan, The Cure, The Beatles and my all-time favourite Queen song; "It's Late". The highlight though was windows down, volume up 'Two Minutes to Midnight'; you know that you've succeeded as a parent when your children can sing along to Iron Maiden. 😊

We went in the back way and parked in the shadows of the wood and the girls set up camp here whilst I strode out into the sun, eyes peeled for any jinking little orange jobs. Something immediately caught my eye with the aforementioned jinking flight but it appeared more grey/brown than orange. Luckily it landed on a small piece of Blackthorn and as I moved closer in I could make out white lines on the wings so I knew it was a Hairstreak but which one. Even closer and it became a Purple Hairstreak. Shipton throws a curve ball again! I looked along the hedge and the treeline and I could make out only one or two Oaks anywhere near the vicinity so where this errant traveller had hailed from I couldn't say. Still a Purple Hairstreak as first species for the day can't be bad. Well actually a Speckle and Hedge Brown were the first but this is a better narrative and I didn't get any shots of them...Another couple of enthusiasts arrived and I put them onto the Purp and while they were getting their shots I spent a little time with a Holly Blue. When I returned to the Purp it had moved to an even better position; not at an angle, not partially obscured by the leaves and perfectly lit.





Few other sets of people arrived and we all stood around looking at the Hedge and trying to second guess how the Brostreaks would behave. Would they play by the rules and start coming down at around 11am or as it was getting warm would they come down earlier and then disappear when they got too hot? Even worse would they not come down at all? Who could say but it's a far way away from what I'm used to, I used to be able to set my watch by the arrival of the Brostreaks down low. I poured a coffee and it started going cold and as usual things started to happen. There were orange things blurring by possibly Vapourers or possibly Brostreaks I didn't know. Then Jonathon (?) who'd I'd met on my second Shipton visit arrived with his wife (I'm sorry but I am hopeless as remembering names) who was anxious to get a Brostreak as having already seen a Clouded Yellow was going for 50 species in a year. As luck would have it while we're talking I spy a little shark fin...male Brostreak and it opens up ever so briefly!



It does a runner further back into the hedge as I call the others over and then we settle back for a bit more Hedge watching. We start creeping along the length of the Hedge and back again all the time eyes straining and checking every leaf, every Thistle head, every Blackberry just hoping to catch a glimpse of something orange. Small Meadow Browns and Hedge Browns do their annoying impressions and Holly Blue, which are all over the Hedge, try and distract us as much as possible. Even a Brown Argus tries muscle in by hopping up onto a Bramble desperately seeking some attention. Eventually I spy a male but again it's gone up high before the others can get onto it. I try further along the hedge and get onto another male and then an even closer one down nice and low on a stunted Bramble. While I've got this one the others have located one as well so we do a swap though I think I got the bum deal as mine was much more pristine 😊😁. It was also showing the preference behaviour I'd seen on my last two visits. If it got spooked by a Meadow Brown it would go up higher into the hedge but then about 5 minutes later it would return to the same Bramble flower. It did this several times before Jonathon and his wife returned and then carried on in a similar fashion for a while. I mentioned that I'd seen a Wall here the last time and that was on their '50' list so we ever so slowly started towards the track that ran parallel up the hill to the various little clearings. On the way we sighted a fifth male and a possible fly-by female along with a Red Admiral and two girls who insisted on surreptitiously placing burrs on their dads back!





As we reached the top of the hill and the first clearing the girls disappeared off to set up camp number 2 and a Wall appeared on cue to go on the '50' list. It seemed like a bigger marmalade version of a Meadow Brown but as it momentarily stopped and closed its wings I was able to confirm it's ID. Mind you it's constantly patrolling behaviour was probably enough to make the ID.

We three carried on slowly working through the various small clearings hoping to catch the Wall at rest but also adding a further two male Brostreaks and a third on the other side of the hedge on our return. The girls called "Wurzel" so I knew that my time was almost up and when I got back to their camp I said my goodbyes, wished them well with the Wall and the having gone a few steps on the other side of the scrub called them back as the Wall was down on the deck. It was just playing silly buggers though and was off again. Leaving for real this time we left them chasing the Wall and headed back down the hill adding Peacock and Comma to the days tally.





After their patience and reasonable behaviour (I'm still finding burrs now!) later in the afternoon I took the girls to a quiet stretch of the river so I could cool down and they could really run amok! What a cracking day! But where are the females??

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 27-Sep-18 09:40 AM GMT

Very nice set of Brown Hairstreaks and a delightful Holly Blue. And such a happy story. Always a pleasure to read your diary and life stories. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 27-Sep-18 09:52 AM GMT

Great read as usual Wurzel, I'm sure we'll see some females from your next visit 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 27-Sep-18 10:02 AM GMT

Some great shots of those male Brown Hairstreaks, Wurzel. 🇮🇪 Finding an inland Wall is an achievement too. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Sep-18 11:21 PM GMT

Cheers Peter for your very kind comment 😊😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Maybe in the next or maybe the one after that... 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I was most chuffed with the open wing shots as they were at a premium this year what with the heat 😊

## Broughton Down 06-08-2018

It was going to be hot so I went as early as I could and arrived at 9:15, not exceedingly early but there's a lot to do in the mornings at the moments despite it being the holiday 11+ Test to do, breakfast, washing up, beds to make etc.) Once there I cut up through the wood ignoring the Specklies that

tried to distract me every few paces as I was after more Silver Spots. As I broke through into the sun from the shade of the Beech trees I realised that I was the only one there and so just made my way along the track relishing the peace and tranquillity. There was a Silver Spot almost as soon as my feet hit the main trackway across the hill and then another and another and again almost ad infinitum. They were all over the place and seemed to prefer the longer scrub on the left hand side at the top of the hill to the usual tussocks with the thin scrapes where I normally found them.



I carried on through gate and checked out the Hemp Agriony and the little field by the Hump and they were even flying here (which is a first) in amongst the various whites and Small Heaths. Up to this point I'd seen all males; smaller and more worn, their upper sides showing hairs loss on the abdomen and scutum. Their margins were a little frayed and they'd gone from a lovely lime colour to looking a bit grey on the underside. In amongst these mid-life crises and geriatrics a beautiful fresh female flew into view. I could tell she was a female even before I got a proper look as she was noticeably larger than all of the Silver Spots I'd seen she so far and when I did get in close enough I was able to confirm.



I carried on strolling along the same trackway eventual ending up at the triangular field at the back of the reserve having first slipped down and scrambled up the steep gully which bisects this part from the main reserve. Once here I carry on working my way all the way down and then back up the field stopping only occasionally to marvel at another little gem of a butterfly including some deliciously fresh 2nd brood Adonis. I hear a 'wet yer lips' announcing that somewhere in an adjacent field there's at least one Quail. I reached the end of the track, the tip of the triangle and I realised that I'd just been ambling along and looking but not taking any photos! So on return I set to actually getting some photos. First up was a really small Common Blue female, she was tiny, even smaller than a Brown Argus. Next to catch my eye as a dusky Common Blue. It was a fantastic looking butterfly the margins were brown not white, the ground colour was a glistening slate blue and it had hardly any orange lunules.



"Onwards and upwards" as Eric Robson would say and indeed so it was with a blinding male Adonis Blue and then the Chalkhills show up. As I'm flitting between Adonis and Chalkhill, hoping to catch at least one with its wings open, which in the heat was never going to be likely, something tiny hove into view. It was pretty active at first so I didn't see it settle and the dark blue, almost brownish blue through me at first before finally it came to rest. It was a Small Blue and not a species that I've encountered here before.







I checked around the scrapes before the gully and here there were more Chalkhills and Adonis scattered in amongst the Silver Spots. Pleased with the little sojourn into an area which is usually a bit quiet I started back to the main part of the reserve, the Down itself. As I worked my way back I paused at the little hillock adding Small Heath and in the large patch of Hemp Agrimony a divine Painted Lady. I also noticed a Small Heath which kept flicking its wings open every now and again but try as I might I just couldn't capture it with its wings open. Instead I had 40 or so blurred shots of something orange on a fuzzy pinky background. I turned my attentions back to the Painted Lady but there was also a multitude of Whites and Blues taking advantage of the nectar here as well as a Silver Spot.







Back on side of the Down I wind through the animal trails to the more open side of the down. It looks a bit like a green motorway and here there were even more Silver Spots. And I mean MORE. To be honest I don't think I've ever seen as many as this! I sat down and poured a coffee and did my best to count them. It was virtually impossible as they zipped around maniacally, veering off in a suicidal fashion and disappearing from view. There were so many off them and they even came to me while I sipped coffee and vainly tried to count, taunting me it felt like! I persevered with trying to count reaching the highest tally of 26 but sometimes I'd only get to five before I'd get confused by their antics. As I drained my coffee I set about to a bit more wandering and stooping and took a few more shots before finally needing a break from the sun and the heat and so I turned by feet homewards.





The Specklies put on a good show on the way back but it was also great to walk in the cool shade under the Beeches. What a brilliant morning, I don't think that there are any more pleasurable impossible tasks than trying to count active and numerous Silver Spots!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 29-Sep-18 08:01 AM GMT

That's a great haul, Wurzel, especially on a hot day.  
Great Silver Spots, and Small Blue.  
Tilshead is good for Small Blues in the Spring, well worth a look.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 29-Sep-18 02:02 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, you seem to have got in those two posts what I've missed this year 🍷🍷😄 what a great time you've had with your girls as well 😊 lovely shots of the SPS, love the one on the flower 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 29-Sep-18 04:07 PM GMT

Wurzel – Great encounter you had with all those SS Skips. I am happy to see a couple of them on any trip out and you got at least 26 while having a cuppa!

I know what you mean about counting butterflies when there are so many. I find its a good idea to get them to form an orderly queue and then point at each one with a stick as I count. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Sep-18 09:37 AM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 That was the first time I'd seen a Small Blue there 😊 I'll have to try to get to Tilshead next year, the calendar is rapidly filling up 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I've been training the Padawans for a while now but they're still a way away from becoming Knights 😊 Mind you they've become fantastically accurate Bur throwers 😊😊

Cheers Ernie 😊 Pouring a coffee is one of my standard butterflying manoeuvres, I've not tried getting them to line up but I'll give it a whirl next year 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Sep-18 11:04 PM GMT

I thought that I'd be early for once 😊😊

October 2018

The butterflies are started to become thin on the ground but there's still some out there 😊



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 01-Oct-18 06:16 PM GMT

What a brilliant trip to Broughton Down you had, Wurzel 😊 and that's a great count of Silver-spotted Skippers. I find SSS a difficult one to count without 'double' counting as they're a very mobile little butterfly and can cover quite some distance if disturbed 😊

We used to visit Broughton quite regularly at one time, the walk up never got any easier 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 01-Oct-18 07:37 PM GMT

Broughton Down sounds amazing, Wurzel – a really wide array of species. There can't be many spots with Small Blues and Silver-spots co-inhabiting the hillsides. 😊 I appreciate the difficulty in estimating SSS numbers, having tried up at Aston Rowant once or twice. I end up counting what I see along the line of my walk, even if that means a bit of double-counting, as I reckon it's made up for by the ones you miss sniggering behind your back as you move along... 😊 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Oct-18 08:14 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 Broughton is a cracking site 😊 The thing I'm finding most annoying about the walk up is that having almost reached the top there will be a car parked – how the hell did they get up there? 😊 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 It's a brilliant site and perfect for late summer as it's smaller and more manageable than nearby Stockbridge Down 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 01-Oct-18 10:07 PM GMT

I've just worked out where it is – just a couple of miles or so as the Purple Emperor flies from Bentley Wood. Quite doable from here... 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 02-Oct-18 09:26 AM GMT

Love that Calendar Wurzel, 📅 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Oct-18 11:08 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 It is pretty close to Bentley and could well be a stop-off on the way home from visiting there. I've not been there in Spring but it's a definite 'summer must'. Alan Thornbury has a site guide on his website which I found pretty useful the time I went there 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 Only another couple to go and then I better start making the next one 😊😊

## Mottisfont 07-08-2018

As it was a nice day and we owed a childminding day to my sister in-law we roped in my mum so we could transport both our girls and my nieces to Mottisfont. The house was exhibiting the artwork of Judith Kerr, she of 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea' fame 😊.

We started off with a picnic on the lawn and after this and the obligatory post lunch walk back to the car laden with blankets, bottles and empty flasks and lunchboxes I was able to grab a quick look at the strip of Lavender that demarcates the main lawn and the terrace. There were two Common Blues, 3 Meadow Browns and loads of Whites although a Cloudy wasn't, alas, among them unlike on one previous memorable occasion.

After this we wandered up to the Walled Garden and I was able to slope off for a little wander. A Comma fed on the Buddleia in the exact middle so it was unreachable either from the grass or the path. In the second section two Common Blues were around. One was pristine and so was sitting aloof high up and far away on a Rose so only a record shot was possible. The second was tatty and much more down to earth. A Red Admiral went over and there were non-stop Whites in both parts of the garden and these led to a strangely autumnal feel despite the heat. So to escape said mentioned heat we went into the exhibition.





The final activities of the day were supposed to involve the muddy climbing area – okay and then the stream damming bit – but this was closed. So instead we sat while the girls rampaged. Well I say ‘we sat’ but I didn’t as I’d seen a Holly Blue which evaded me but 2 Commas which I was able to get onto once they’d stopped having a bundle. One had been peacefully resting on a leaf when the other came marauding by. A little later I caught up with the second piratical Comma as it was down on the deck. Seeing these two again made it feel autumnal. Whites continued to flutter about and a Meadow Brown sat down for dinner on a picnic table.







Too soon it was time to go and a tumbling menage a trois of Specklies waved us off as we left.



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 03-Oct-18 10:48 AM GMT

Stunning Spotted Fritillary and Pearly Heath from France Wurzel. 🐸🐸 Love the frog too! 😊  
And a great selection from your other visits. Very nice Blues, Painted Lady and SSS's. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 04-Oct-18 07:34 AM GMT

Can't believe you are in August already...still soon be more of France...Seriously, I have begun to appreciate the 'slow dance' diary approach myself. Life is so much nicer at a steadier pace. Thank you for helping me to see it. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Oct-18 10:45 AM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 There's a few more still to come but as you'll see the butterflies generally will start to show signs of their age 😊 Apart from some of

the French species, there are a few more stunners left in the tank there 😊

Cheers Peter 😊 There was a lot going on in August as I was on holiday so I could get out and about like all the retirees/part timers on UKB hence there are quite few posts to come 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 06-Oct-18 01:29 PM GMT

That's a good Meadow Brown shot Wurzel, I usually ended up chasing them through the grass this year 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Oct-18 06:05 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 I can never work out how best to capture Meadow Browns on film – either you end up chasing fresh and vigorous ones around early in their flight which is tiring and often you end up with only a handful of distant or blurred images OR you wait until the tail end of the season when they're less prone to fly but they're looking a bit torn and tired 😊😊 I probably end up doing both and taking as many shots as possible and cut away huge swathes of chaff from the wheat 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 07-Oct-18 10:24 PM GMT

Great to read of your visit to Southbourne, it will be interesting to see how it compares to Southwick. It is reputed that Cloudies can survive our Winter at Southbourne, I have a hunch that this could also be true of Southwick.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 07-Oct-18 11:16 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I only saw the one but I was there from 9 until 10:30 and the temperature had only just gotten to about 9 degrees and I'd only just regained the feeling in my thawing finger-tips 😊 I reckon an afternoon visit would be preferable 😊

### Laverstock 09-08-2018

These Tutor holiday classes are a great substitute for the Monday afternoon sessions. Especially when there are two in one day; but not today. During the morning it was cool and cloudy. Luckily it brightened up by the afternoon session and so I was away up the Down.

I headed straight up the old track and then worked my way along the other Bramble lined path reaching the foot of the Down. On the way there were Hedgies and Meadow Browns a few Blues, Brimstone and many Whites. As I reached the foot of the Down a female Adonis appeared and about half way up it was joined by a second brood Dinky. It was a delight to see because the leading edges of the wings appeared to glow a peachy copper colour when they caught the light. I carried on and walked across the Down heading towards the Gully trying for a few in flight shots of Small Heaths on the way.





Down in the Gully there were a multitude of the 5 species of blue flying; 3 Adonis, 4 Chalkhills, 3 Brown Argus, too many Common Blues to count and a single Small Copper. I had a busy old time following them around and trying to get them in a reasonably composed position. So much so that I almost ran out of time and had to do a bit of Fell Running (can you do that on Downland?) to be back in time to collect Little L.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 08-Oct-18 01:54 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel nice shots of the Dingy, that's another species I find hard to get shots of, this year my good lens packed in so I'd to use the smaller one and not being very versatile couldn't get as close as I wanted 😞 Nice shot of that Female Adonis too, I took a shot of what I thought was a Female Adonis at Temple Ewell, still not convinced it wasn't 😊 (wishful thinking)!!! 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 09-Oct-18 11:36 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Hope you can get a lens sorted for ready for Dingies next season 😊

### Laverstock and on to Shipton... 10-08-018

I just bloody knew it! After days of insane temperatures with almost constant blue sky today was when it all changed and it was also the day when Philzoid and I had arranged to meet up for the annual pilgrimage to Shipton. As I walked down the path from the Tutor's house and started across the field there was only a Hornet Hoverfly and a single Blue. I carried on diagonally across the Down making my way towards the Gully. I saw all the Blues and Browns that I'm now used to seeing here but it's still really hard going being cloudy, blustery and cool. As I'm trying my luck on the slopes and generally making my way back I bump into the Tutor's daughters and we head back together a different way. There's lots of Blackthorn on this route and I'm left wondering if this could be a potential Brostreak site?



After this I rush back and out again to meet up with Philzoid and as we catch up and race over to Shipton the weather gets a bit worse...When we arrive we head straight out and check the main hedge. It feels like we need about 30 minutes of sun but it doesn't look like we're going to get it. Along the main hedge there are Meadow and Hedge Browns but not much else, not even a Holly Blue up high or a Common Blue down low. I make a quick check in on the girls and then we move on up the main track up the hill to the area I'd visited previously. As we carry on the weather improves somewhat drying up and the odd sunny patch with it's accompanying spike in temperature.

Walking our way through the clearings we find little groups of Specklies but never the individuals I'm used to seeing but generally 4 or 5 packed on one bush or Bramble. There were loads of Meadow Browns, most looking very small, almost Hedge Brown in size and only a few of the latter species. This was quite good as they're very capable of flying by, catching your eye and allowing you to mistake them for a Brostreak; they're the original False Hairstreak! In the more open clearings and on the exposed side of the hedge there were plenty of Blues with Small Heath and Brown Argus intermingled. But despite plenty of hedge gazing, neck crunching and intense scrutiny not one single Brostreak revealed itself. I thought that we were going to have a Bugboy and our spirits dampened even more and also quite literally as the heavens opened after a particularly prolonged sunny and warm period when we were just 25 m away from the main Hedge! The sky fell on our heads!







We ran and dove back into the car and sat it out steaming ever so slightly. Due to where we were parked and the wind direction I could check the mirror and see what weather was heading our way. There looked to be a break and a slither of blue sky so out we tumbled and were ready and waiting at the hedge when the cloud cracked. But the blue sky came and went before the butterflies had a chance to come out and as a heavier, more persistent rain set in we once again took refuge in the car.

We still had time, approximately another 3 hours in the Golden Zone and so we made to sit out the rain and had lunch. It gave Philzoid a chance to show off his holiday snaps; possible Moorland Cloudy 🦋, Large Wall 🦋, Mazarine Blue 🦋 - I couldn't wait to get out of the car 🦋 😊 Once lunch was done and we chatted about this and that I checked the mirror again and I could see a bigger, lighter patch on the horizon and heading our way. We were out and waiting at the hedge when it hit. This time the girls accompanied us so we had an extra 4 eyes for scanning. We started at the spot which has been so good this year and a Painted Lady dropped in. As it flew off we started seeing more activity on the Brambles with Meadow Browns and Holly Blues seemingly coming out of the woodwork. Then, as if just popping spontaneously into existence, there was a male Brostroke. Having found it we have to watch as it flies off! A Sliver-washed bundles into view trying to distract us and the Brostroke has gone.

We carry along the hedge a short way and manage to relocate it. It seems to like one patch in particular, returning when hassled by a Meadow Brown, he just does a slow circle round an adjacent bush and then plops back down two branches away from where it started. He outs on a little show for us; taking moisture from the leaves left by the showers and generally bimbaling about amongst the blackberries. He even opens up for a bit basking, or at least attempting to bask, in what little sun is showing.

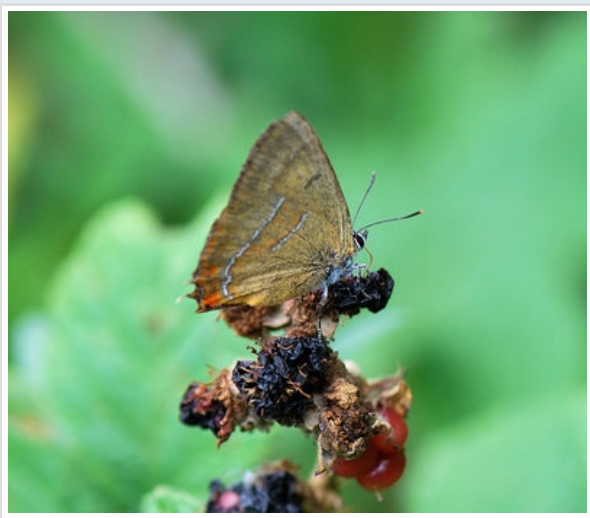




We carry on to the end of the Hedge which always looks promising for females with the thorn whippings and various things turn up; Holly Blues, Common Blues etc. but no more Brostreaks. On our return the male is still in the same place so after a little re-acquainting we leave him in peace and call it a day. None too soon as the cloud layers up and the temperature starts to drop. As the rain starts again we're already driving down the track homewards. Everyone's happy, Philzoid and I got the Brostreak and the girls got lunchboxes filled to brimming with Blackberries!







Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 10-Oct-18 05:49 PM GMT

Great report Wurzel and that male Brostreak behaviour summed up perfectly ... I got some great shots of him 😊  
Despite all the cloud watching Shipton was just the tonic to beat the after holiday blues 😊👏.

Talking of blues I dropped into Stockbridge Down on the way home and picked up some Chalkhills The site was 'obliterated' by grazing but I managed to find a little sheltered pocket up the hill where they were hanging out along with a few Common Blues too 😊.

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 10-Oct-18 06:29 PM GMT

Oooh I'm an adjective now, should I be flattered 😊😄

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 12-Oct-18 10:13 PM GMT

Cheers Philzoid 😊 For me it was the opposite – as I was soon heading off to the Dordogne 😊 You do wonder sometimes about which species they're trying to encourage when they introduce a specific grazing regime 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 This was written back when you the Brostreaks weren't playing ball for you 😊 But it all came good soon enough 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 13-Oct-18 11:45 AM GMT

Interesting report from Shipton again – I didn't make it down there again this year, and missed male Brown Hairstreaks as a consequence. There is obviously more to see as well, even if the weather is a bit iffy. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Paul Harfield, 13-Oct-18 11:57 AM GMT

Hi Wurzel

Just catching up with your diary. I have been out of touch for a few weeks so only just seen your post from Shipton Bellinger 26th July 😊. What a memorable day that was. I think your shots turned out much better than mine 🙄. I will get round to posting mine at some point, at the moment it looks like I am further behind with my diary than you for a change.

Plenty of other highlights as always 😊.

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 14-Oct-18 10:14 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, sadly last Tuesday I lost my Husband to an illness he had for quite some time but always he wanted to be out in the Sun with me looking for the Butterflies. Your posts brought back some of those days, THANKS! Goldie.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 14-Oct-18 11:12 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 What Shipton lack in numbers it makes up for in spectacle, it's a very good site for males coming own low 😊

Cheers Paul 😊 I look forward to your post so that I can compare, it's always interesting to see shots from the same time but from a different angle 😊 Goldie I'm glad my posts may have helped in some small way...

### Laverstock 23-08-2018

This was going to be a weird one – the first trip out after holiday outings generally are. You're walking along in habitat you've become unaccustomed to, feeling cooler than you've become used to and looking for species that you've gotten used to seeing which aren't actually there. So it was this time and as I set out to walk Laverstock there was a strong breeze whipping along the path, the sky wasn't entirely blue and there wasn't a Fritillary in sight! A Speckle waited for me on the corner but looked cold in its chocolate and cream livery rather than the more Marmalade appearance of the continental form. Then I had to wait until I was across the field and way up the down before I saw my next butterfly, a brace of male Adonis which took off from my footfall.



As I carried on round the butterflies started coming. There were still Meadow Browns hanging about, some looking fresh, reasonable numbers of common Blue and slightly more Adonis. The most numerous butterfly by far was the Small Heath which was great news after worrying about their decline over the last few years. Almost at the Gully I was able to add a zipping Brown Argus as well as Chalkhill to the daily tally.



After this I looked in on the thistle area but whilst I could come up with a faded Common Blue I couldn't relocate any Dingies. I carried on zig-zagging across this lower side of the Gully not following any particular search pattern but all the little cut through had grown over so the area has now become a Labyrinth. Saying that it did hold a couple of Specklies and the odd Blue as well the ubiquitous Small Heath.





As I carried on round to the Gully proper the number of Adonis started to pick up and then I found what I was looking for. A Sapphire gleaming amid the grasses; a fresh male Adonis basking with wings open wide and settled in a rabbit scraping; its own personal sun deck. It was nice seeing such a vibrant looking butterfly and the colour was really brought out by the contrast with the chalky background.



After this the autumnal chill got to me and so I made my way back to try and warm up. I'm not used to this 20 degree cold anymore WINK. I stopped here and there on the way but didn't lift my camera again until I found a pair of Meadow Browns enjoying a bit of 'how's yer father?'



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 15-Oct-18 09:07 AM GMT

You have put very well that 'hollow' feeling after the holiday. In many ways that makes me wonder about the whole holiday thing. Whether it is really sensible to travel to wonderful, sunny and bright butterfly sanctuaries with dozens of different and exciting new species, staggering numbers – sometimes of species we consider to be exotic or rare ....only to return after a fortnight to a damp, depressing sameness.

But each year I quickly realise that the sunlit uplands only look like that as a consequence of the dark foothills we live in. But a fortnight isn't enough – so I may try two trips in 2019 to check out the theory.

And having had a sneaky peak at your website and some of your French pictures to come I am looking forward to going to virtual France again soon. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 15-Oct-18 11:30 AM GMT

You must take a full 10 points for that Southern White Admiral underside shot in your blog, anyone would have a job to better that !. 🍷

I can say I've seen one, and it was very close by in a roadside tree, obscured by a leaf. Unfortunately, there was a sheer drop between tree and road !.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Oct-18 12:04 AM GMT

Cheers Peter 😊 I'm still plugging away with writing it up and sorting photos but work keeps getting in the way 😞 Two holidays in a year sounds like a plan – even better would be to travel for about five weeks across Europe stopping here and there and wherever looks good 😊 Unfortunately I haven't been able to sell that idea to my wife...yet 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 That find was one of my favourites of the trip and it was much better behaved than it's northern cousin 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 17-Oct-18 12:28 AM GMT

Five weeks travelling across Europe stopping wherever it looks good, sounds positively idyllic, Wurzel 😊 I don't think I'd have to do much selling to my wife 😊😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 17-Oct-18 09:23 AM GMT

#### Wurzel wrote:

Two holidays in a year sounds like a plan – even better would be to travel for about five weeks across Europe stopping here and there and wherever looks good

I agree with Mike's comment 😊. Thank you, that's a great idea and I will start the discussions going. Unfortunately, it won't be until we both retire but it sounds good. 😊

Don't worry about the time it takes to work on your story. It will be a pleasure to come, whenever you get some free time. I think one of the problems for me with self publishing on the internet, together with so many people looking on mobile devices which present everything in a linear fashion, that everything gets focussed on updates and the last thing that was uploaded. The systems all perpetuate that.

That puts too much pressure on making 'new' stuff when to be honest I could happily look at the existing material (just like books). It would still give me great pleasure. Unfortunately you have to work in the way that the system didn't intend.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Oct-18 12:06 AM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 Unfortunately I'd have the girls with me and with it an endless barrage of "are we nearly there yet?" or "I'm bored" 😞 This is why I can't sell it too my wife 😊

Cheers Peter 😊 It's my retirement plan too, that is if I make it – by the time I get to retire they'll have probably raised the age to 79 😞😞 Hopefully have the next French post for Friday...as for now here's a Blue Peter job 😊

### Shipton Bellinger – The Final Visit 25-08-2018

For my last trip to Shipton for the year I was hoping for a last 'Hurrah'! However things didn't start well, things didn't really go to plan. The BBC weather people reckoned that the sun would shine uninterrupted right up until about 2pm before it would cloud over. However as I left the house there was no sign of the sun and there was a reasonable breeze. Then when I arrived I found the dog sled meet was in full swing, I thought that they had already been and gone but no there were the tape barricades and caravans drawn right up against the hedge. Muttering various curses and hexes under my breath I gave the Hotspot Hedge a miss and made my way up the hill towards the various little clearings as I hoped that I might escape the whining and barking and howling. On the way a Comma momentarily distracted me from my inner moaning. Something about it struck me as odd and then I realised what it was; it was it had little silver-grey 'studs' along the margins of the wings.



I carried on up the hill and upon reaching the first of the little clearings I settled down to wait for the sun to break through the cloud. A couple of coffees later and I realised that the sun had been a long time coming. When it finally did break through it didn't hang around long and so I moved from one clearing onto the next and repeated the procedure (minus coffee). Each time the sun came out a little more quickly and lasted a little longer but despite this it never really got strong enough to encourage any Brostreaks to come out from their hidey-holes. To keep me company there were Specklies a plenty some looking really fresh as well a smattering of other various representatives of the Browns, a few blues and a lovely looking Brown Argus.





From here I moved on to check out the old hedges and after a bit of a walk I bump into two other enthusiasts and we chat and bemoan the Dog Sled meet before I carry on my way eyes peeled over the full range from the trees tops to down on the deck. It's still cloudy at times and I manage to walk the entire length of the double hedge seeing only three butterflies. On the return journey there are Specklies everywhere making it appear as if there had been a mass emergence though they showed all stages of wear and tear.







On my journey back I'm stopped by a couple of locals out walking with their families. Seeing me staring into the bushes they ask me what I'm looking for and so I say 'Brown Hairstreak butterflies'. Normally people only really hear the butterfly part but round Shipton word has spread about the Brown Hairstreak and so I'm quizzed about all kind of aspects of the Brostreaks lifecycle. They wish me luck in the quest and I start on my way back to the Hotspot Hedge. As I'm almost there, having avoided several sets of Huskies on route along with the stares from various owners I spy the same pair of enthusiasts from earlier. They're standing looking up into a small tree and as I stroll up and ask "Any joy?" I'm already pretty sure that I'll get an affirmative. So is the case and there at the top of the sapling is a female Brostreak (one of two that the others have seen) staring down at us. I stretched my arms out to try for a shot and was happy with what I got even if she wasn't exactly pristine.



After this we spend the next 15 minutes or so chatting in between getting photos of various female Brostreaks that seem to have suddenly appeared. At one point we three were all photographing different individuals only a metre or so away from each other. This little triangle has proved good for Brstreaks before and seemed to be so popular as there were still a good selection of nectar sources around as well as lots of the Blackthorn whippings that the females like to lay on. Occasionally one of the Brostreaks we were photographing individually or en masse would take off, flutter round in a few circles and would then land somewhere else. It was hard work following them with their zippy, jinking flight and I got the impression that they knew when we were watching them as their flight became even more erratic. Sometimes they would disappear from view but then another would appear and off we would go again.





One of the gents (I need to take a note book specifically for names as I'm so useless at remembering them) headed for home but we, the remaining two, carried on. The Hotspot Hedge was calling me and so we both braved the braying Huskies and evil glares and stepped over the barricades so that we could examine the Hedge. Well when I say barricades I really mean the thin strip of red and white tape that was strung at less than knee height between a few sticks...Our audacity paid off almost immediately as there was a female sitting nicely on a Bramble leaf. She moved about a fair bit and was very restless but we didn't mind as it gave us the opportunity to get a greater range of shots. These culminated with the reason for her fidgeting, she was looking for an appropriate place to lay. Job done she came back out into the sun and had a little tidy up of her antennae before flying up high and out of sight.





Looking near to where I'd seen my first Brostreak of the season I spotted another female (smaller chunks taken from her hind wing) and this one was eventually more inclined to bask opening up her forewings and trying to orientate her to capture the maximum amount of sun. I love the contrast between the chocolate ground colour and the bright orange markings.





So it seems that the luck wished to me earlier in my visit came to fruition and I said my goodbyes and headed back homewards happy that what had started as going wrong had eventually turned out nice again.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 18-Oct-18 07:21 AM GMT

It's a great pity that the BH season always coincides with that Dog show at Shipton. Great report, but it's your Small Heath shot that does it for me.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 18-Oct-18 06:49 PM GMT

Glad you got the result even if you had to run the gauntlet. People just don't understand how perilous this hobby of ours can be sometimes!

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Oct-18 11:32 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 To be fair it's only over three days but generally the days that I can get there which coincide with the main egg-laying activity it seems. 😊 Oh well if it was easy it wouldn't be worth doing 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Indeed when I started photographing butterflies I was not aware of how dangerous it would be 😊 When I was a birder the main dangers were a farmer shouting "Oi get off my land!" and possibly a puddle that was slightly deeper than expected. With butterflying there are rabid dogs to face down, venomous snakes to circumvent and horrible wee beasties that feast on yer blood 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 19-Oct-18 07:22 AM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 Indeed when I started photographing butterflies I was not aware of how dangerous it would be 😊 When I was a birder the main dangers were a farmer shouting "Oi get off my land!" and possibly a puddle that was slightly deeper than expected. With butterflying there are rabid dogs to face down, venomous snakes to circumvent and horrible wee beasties that feast on yer blood 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel[/quote]

And of course the hazard of what Doggies leave behind, and their owners fail to pick up !. 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 19-Oct-18 09:43 PM GMT

What a great selection of Brown Hairstreaks, Wurzel! 😊 Obtained at risk to life and limb too by the sound of it. 😊

I have to say that dogs (or rather their owners) have spoiled more butterfly outings for me than any other single thing, including ticks. I could go on... 😊

Cheers,

**Re: Wurzel**

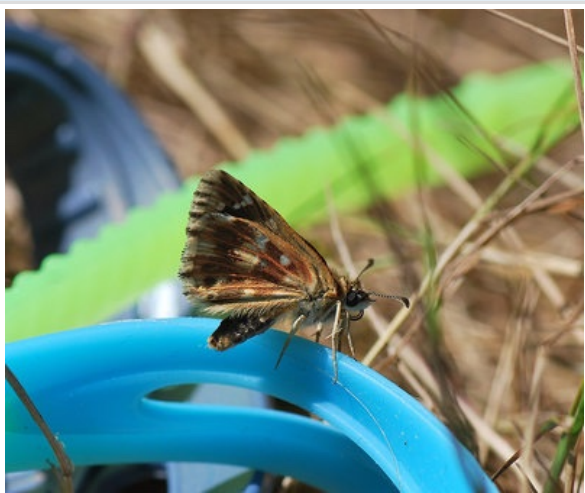
by Wurzel, 19-Oct-18 11:03 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 On the plus side those little forgotten packages often house a host of butterflies en mass 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I've been quite lucky in that my negative encounters have been few and far between. The main problem at Shipton is not teh dogs but actually the owners as thy block access to the Hedge 😊😊

**Dordogne – Wednesday 15-08 Part 2 – The First Day Proper...**

After lunch I cleared up and tidied round while the girls went and had a swim. I didn't mind as on the way day to join them I was distracted by a tiny moth/butterfly flitting around the 'garden'. It looked like some form of Grizzlie which at first I thought was a red-underwing Skipper due to the greatly reduced markings on the fore wings and the ground colour on the underwings but now I'm not so sure what it could be. Either way it was a cracking little butterfly and it contrasted nicely with its perch; discarded swimming goggles. There were more distractions down near the lake with a miniscule Blue which I put down as a Short-tailed but then all thoughts of butterflies were put to one side for at least half an hour as I went for a row with the girls.





After this a quick walk round the lake to the car produced a nice Glannie and a Green-veined white though both were too quick and didn't stop long enough and neither did a Geranium Bronze at St Marie de Garud where we'd headed out too to visit a Boulangerie. In the local churchyard a large Buddleia hosted at least 6 Hummingbird Hawk Moths but they were all too high up to get any shots off. When we got back I nipped off for half an hour to the Clearing. This time I worked slightly further down and didn't just hang around the 'entrance' at the side of the road. This really is proving to be a cracking little area with Glannies, Small Heath, Heath Frits and Silver-washed Fritillaries in among the Blues, Wood Whites and Browns. Joining the party this afternoon were 2 High Brown Frits. I did try and turn them into Niobes but the required black spot and veins didn't materialise despite a concerted effort. All too soon my allotted time was up so I walked back and drank tea by the lake while the girls splashed around. I was joined by a miniscule mud-puddling Blue.









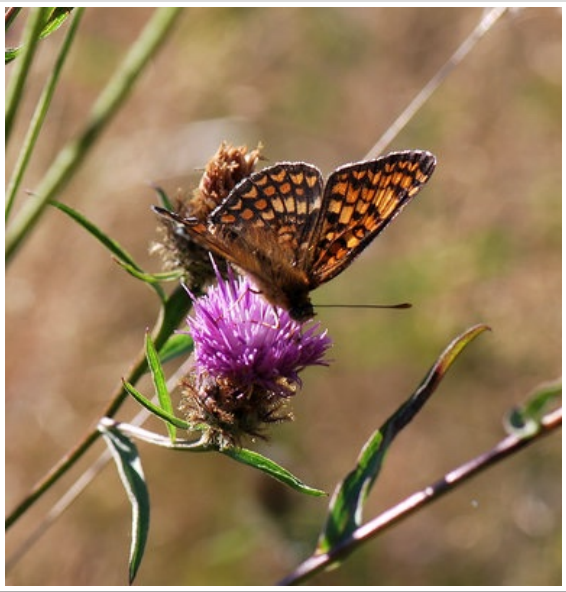
After tea the girls were back in the lake again made so I made off back to the Cutting. Again a Small Heath greeted me and there were Sooty Coppers, Common Blues, Wood Whites, various Browns and the odd Silver Washed doing fly-bys. On arrival the stand out butterfly was a female Spotted Fritillary – she was a first rate stunner. I then took in some of the Heaths, Knapweed and Glannies and started to get my eye in for distinguishing the Knapweeds; on the top side the fore wing looked concave and one of the markings on the margin (about three from the bottom) is really exaggerated and displaced; the underside looks a little like a cross between a Glanville and a Heath Frit.

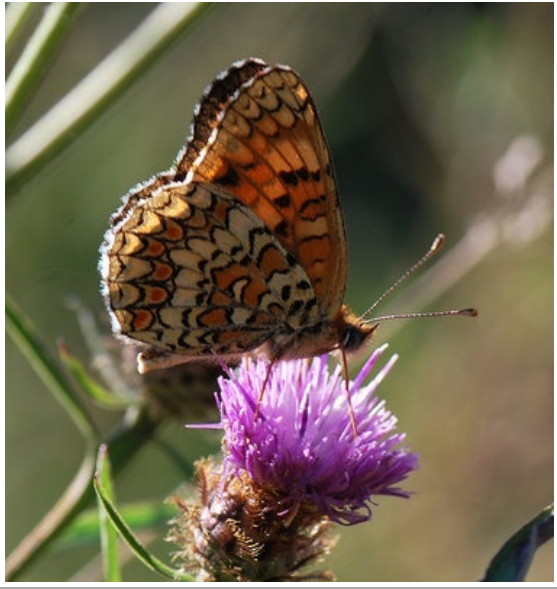




Having made my study a Cloudy dropped in but as is often the way it didn't hang around long enough for a photo but it was still good to add it to the holiday tally. As I gazed around taking in the fantastic site of so many butterflies fluttering about I didn't quite know where to look next and so I sort of stumbled and lurched about like a camera wielding zombie. Finally I settled on a butterfly and came back from my undead like state. It was a crackling blue on some Birds-foot Trefoil. After this I settled back to my study of the Fritillaries. I just couldn't get over how butterfly filled this place was and I had to keep pinching myself; it felt like a dream and I have expected to wake up back home with the rain clattering down.









As I strolled back down the road homewards and blissed out I reminisced about the day; and what a day with new species and sheer numbers. As I later nipped off to try and find some WiFi to nick the Froglet was still perched on the Hot Tub – so won't be using that for a while then!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 20-Oct-18 08:46 AM GMT

A wonderful selection of Fritillaries, Wurzel.

I will award you a mrgreen 🍀 for that High Brown, but of course it is sometimes not difficult to find what would be a rare species over here, quite easily in France. I remember finding an almost vertical bank, rich in wild flowers, which was host to many Large Blues.

Great stuff,  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 20-Oct-18 11:10 AM GMT

Brilliant brilliant brilliant 😄. Those fritillaries take me back to my time in France ... the zombie stagger as you don't know where to lurch to next 😄. Cracking photos of the Spotted Fritillary in fact all the fritillaries ..and the Short-tailed Blue 🐞🐞.

Your Skipper may be a Pyrgus malvoides Southern Grizzled Skipper 🤔 formerly a sub-species of malvae but now a species in its own right.

As for the European tree-frog .. so good to have nature like that literally on your doorstep 😄🐸. Were the girls tempted to take him home?

Phil

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 20-Oct-18 04:58 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, fantastic Butterflies to cheer me up 😄 I love the Fritillaries , It' great to see other kinds for a change 😄 Goldie 😄

### Re: Wurzel

by Art Frames, 21-Oct-18 10:01 AM GMT

A great story and some nice pictures. You didn't specifically mention the provençal short-tailed blue, but it is a nice fresh one. Usually I see more of those and less of the short-tailed, good to see them together, it adds to the confusion about where to stagger next.

I must confess I have been really tempted to smuggle a tree-frog as an adult, they are gorgeous. As a small boy there would have been no contest 😄

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 21-Oct-18 12:44 PM GMT

Great report and shots from the Dordogne, Wurzel 😄 Especially that female Spotted Fritillary 😄

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Oct-18 11:13 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😄 That was my over-riding memory of France, from now on in my mind France=Fritillaries - I saw 10 species whilst there 😄

Cheers Philzoid 😄 Little L was indeed tempted, I think she missed our cat Teddy and so went round naming everything that shared our area - the 2 Robins, three lizards and of course the Frog 😄😄 As for the Skipper I was erring towards S.G.S but hoping maybe for Oberthurs at a push 😄

Cheers Goldie 😄 Glad the shots served a good purpose apart from making me suffer from holiday sickness (the reverse of homesickness) 😄

Cheers Peter 😄 I was a little unsure about that one and so didn't like to mention it, I did once but I think I got away with it 😄 I did do a check of Little L's bag before we left for the airport, just in case she'd smuggled the frog in and as I looked up she was checking my bag as well 😄😄

Cheers Mike 😄 She was a beauty and one of those species that even though you can watch them moving still don't seem real - they look like they've been painted by a heavy handed toddler, one that likes really, really bright orange 😄😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 22-Oct-18 10:12 AM GMT

Great shots of those lush Fritillaries Wurzel. 🐞😄 And your Adonis from Laverstock is a cracker.

Cheers

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Oct-18 08:06 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😄 The Dordogne was really Fritillary Central, they were all over the place, it was a joy to behold! 😄

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 23-Oct-18 10:01 PM GMT

A splendid array of Fritillaries, Wurzel, and the female Spotted is my favourite too. 😄 I've seen males in Greece, but never a female.

Cheers,

Dave

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 24-Oct-18 11:49 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊

### Tilshead 28-08-2018

I had arranged to meet Trevor for some Walls at about 9:30 but today some things didn't go to plan. Our winter wood supply took a bit longer to sort out with logs not only filling the wood store but also having bags of them secreted in numerous places round the house. Hence I didn't get to the Churchyard until about 10:30. At that point the weather wasn't showing any inclination of unclouding or at least not for long enough to bring the Walls out. So we cut our losses and I followed Trevor over to his Tilshead site.

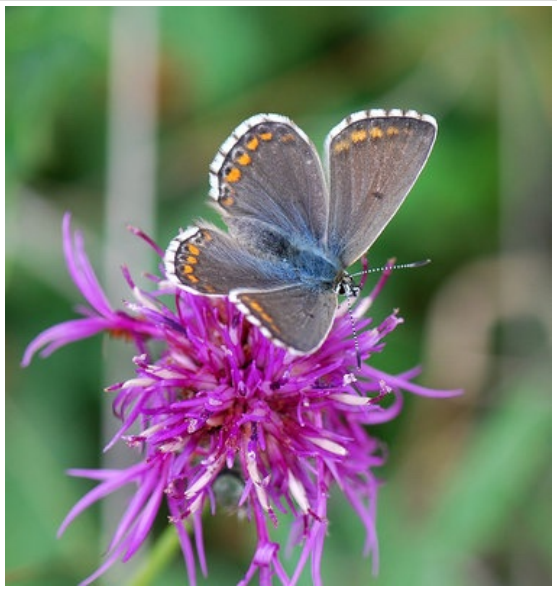
It proved to be a cracking site right from the get go with a spacious Tarmac car park and Adonis Blues all over the place within 10 paces or so from the car. The field is pretty level which makes a nice change from traversing Downland after this species and I could stand back and scan ahead with little sapphires glinting out from the straw coloured background wherever I gazed. Trevor and I set to calling out every now and again when we found a particularly nice specimen - which when it came to female Adonis was quite often. Some of the males were looking a bit jaded, as were their smaller cousins but the females were looking fabulous. They were all chocolate and slate coloured with showy chequered margins.





There were other members making a supporting cast, a few Meadow Browns, Small Heath, Whites and the other Blues but for me the female Adonis were the real stars of though they didn't glitter confetti like in the grasses as the showy males did when you found one looking 'clean' and lush they were a joy to behold.







All too soon our time was up so thanking Trevor for letting me in on what is a real gem of a site I headed back to the aftermath and chaos of 'Wood Day'.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 25-Oct-18 08:37 AM GMT

That morning at Tilshead was certainly one to remember. I first discovered the rich pickings there, on my way back from ' the hill ' in the Spring of 2017. There is much similar grassland all over the Plain but very few places to pull off the road. It was because of that ' car park ', that I took the opportunity to pop in and have a look.

That morning I found plentiful Adonis, Common, Small Blue and Brown Argus. Also Grizzled and Dingy Skippers. Green Hairstreaks were plentiful in the shrubbery bordering the site.

Your lovely images sum up that August morning very well, but just wait until next Spring !. Well worth a detour for one of your ' stop offs '.

Trevor.

## Re: Wurzel

by Matsukaze, 25-Oct-18 09:42 PM GMT

I see you found more fritillaries when you were in Dordogne than we did in late June (just Silver-washed and Weaver's). It was still good for butterflies though and we had 20+ species in the garden including Wood White, Swallowtail and Lesser Purple Emperor, and more HBHMs than I have ever seen in one place before.

I had a wander round your patch a couple of weeks ago - Hexagon Wood near Larkhill is full of huge elms, a number of which had fallen down, and I did look them over for WLH eggs without success - surely the butterfly must be there though.

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 27-Oct-18 03:25 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 Definitely going to look at how a can factor a few stop-offs here; I might have a few extra 'late meetings' next year 😊  
Cheers Matsukaze 😊 There has been some concern about the White-letter Hairstreak in Wiltshire so I'm not surprised that you drew a blank 😊 Mind you nearby there is a small colony of Dukes 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 27-Oct-18 07:18 PM GMT

Nice collection of Adonis Blues, Wurzel, especially the females. Your Fritillaries from the Dordogne are none too shabby either. On my first trips to Europe, I was often surprised to see how common species are, that are rare or extinct in Britain. Black-veined White for example, and HBF.

## Re: Wurzel

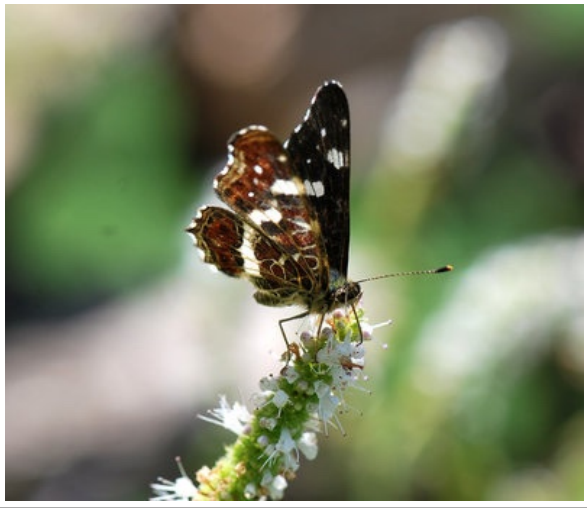
by Wurzel, 27-Oct-18 11:49 PM GMT

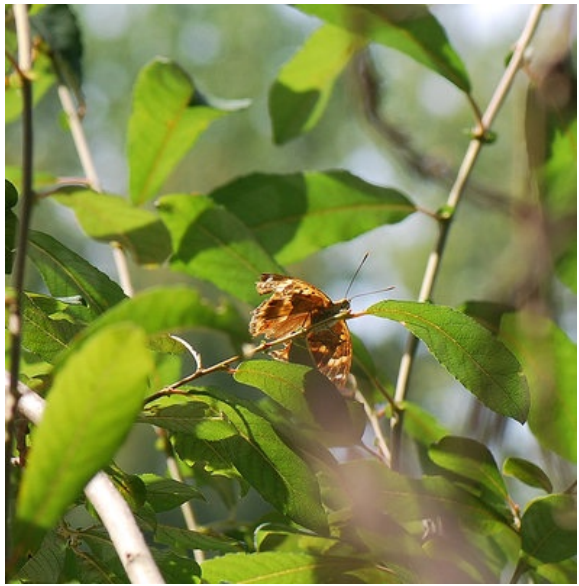
Cheers Essex 😊 I know what you mean, the biggest surprise for me were the Wood Whites they were everywhere, flying on every verge and piece of waste land in the place of the Small and Green-veined White 😊😊

## Things are getting good...16-08-2018 Part 1

We took our life into our hands again today and ventured forth on the French roads 😊. Now most of the roads are very decent - smooth, well marked and signed, no potholes etc. but the smaller roads are a bit of a nightmare. They're only just wide enough for just under two cars so every time you're faced with oncoming traffic you have to veer onto the verge, when there is one, more usually it's a ditch and occasionally an exceedingly high kerb that rips the hubcaps off. Still we got to the Hypermarche at Montpon and back again with only a few hair-raising moments. As we were unpacking I wondered where the Maps were (not the OS variety by the small White Admiral mimic)? In the Czech Republic they were everywhere. As I was thinking this a Map did a fly-by and landed on a small patch of 'stuff' -brill! I wondered if I would have the same luck with a Lesser Purple Emperor as I carried on back to Elvensong with the shopping. Something large took off from the path and landed high up in an Oak. I zoomed in on the shots I'd taken and the orangey colouration on the underside suggested that it could indeed be a Lesser Purple Emperor, albeit a tatty looking one at that. Still if just 'wondering' about a species meant it turned up then I spent the rest of the walk back and subsequent trips to and from the car thinking intensely about Mallow Skippers and Scarce Swallowtails unfortunately I wasn't able to 'think them' into existence...







I went back and unpacked and we had lunch and then I was let off the leash for an hour or so. I'd already used up one battery so I swapped to a fresh one and decided to set the first one to charge over at the house on the way out towards the Cutting. So there I was charger in one hand, camera in the other. As I approached the house a massive 'white' butterfly landed practically in front of me. It was a Scarce Swallowtail and I managed only 5 shots before it was off again, all with one hand as I was still holding the charger in my other hand. Another great find from just strolling around the grounds.



After this I carried on directly to the Cutting seeing a surprisingly fresh Large Skipper on route making a nice addition to the usual crowd. I decided that it was worth checking slightly further afield at the Cutting today and so I forewent the various the various sets of Frits and crossed the road. There were rows of Bracken taking up most of the cutting on one side so I stuck to the sandy path on the other. On the tall stands of Hemp Agrimony there were loads of Silver Washed Frits, the odd Sooty Copper and the ubiquitous Meadow Browns - none of which materialised into a Grayling of any description. There was also a White Admiral perched briefly before it cut across the Cutting, gliding expertly millimetres above the highest Bracken fronds. As it turned on a sixpence something about it didn't look right so I made a mental note to check it later and carried on up the hill. (When I did check it later that night after writing this and with some more excellent and very cheap French beer it was indeed a Southern White Admiral)





Almost at the top I began to regret my decision as there wasn't much about - right up to the point when a massive, dark brown butterfly took off from in front of me and landed a short distance away. It was huge compared to the Meadow Browns and much darker. As I approached it I realised that it was one of my target species - a Dryad. I watched it for a while as a Silver Washed or Meadow Brown would spook it and it would fly quickly into cover and disappear deep down into the Bracken. A short while later it would emerge and then off it would go again.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 28-Oct-18 02:40 PM GMT

A nice selection of butterflies in your latest post from your Dordogne trip, Wurzel 😊 We didn't see any Map's as we were there between spring/summer broods 😞

What an unusual but fascinating species the Dryad is, nice shots of the male you found 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 28-Oct-18 06:49 PM GMT

A good range of species there Wurzel but my 🇫🇷🇫🇷 are reserved for the Dryad, a species I've always wanted to see since I saw it's picture when I was a kid 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 30-Oct-18 12:26 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, I've been enjoying your photo's from France, what a great holiday you had so many fantastic Butterflies 🇫🇷🇫🇷 😊

Still up to the neck in paper work here and planning some holidays with my Sister-in-Law for next year, she's not too keen on my love of Butterflies if it means trailing about though 😊 We'll have to compromise I think!!!Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Oct-18 05:34 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 I was dead chuffed to find the Dryad as it was one of those species that I was hoping to see 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 It is a cracking, and large butterfly Bugboy but it still doesn't quite live up to it's namesake; I can't see Apollo becoming enamoured with this species of Dryad 😊😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 I recommend going to somewhere on the Med an then you Sister In-law can laze by the pool and you can nip off for an hour or so and find some cracking butterflies 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 30-Oct-18 09:54 PM GMT

Interesting to see the Maps and Scarce Swallowtail, Wurzel. You couldn't conjure some into existence over here, could you? 😊 I'm sure they'd both be very happy in Southern England – we've no shortage of either nettles or blackthorn after all. (I know it isn't quite as simple as that... 😊) I've seen Scarce Swallowtails many times in Greece, but never come across a Map anywhere. 🇬🇷

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 01-Nov-18 01:17 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 Having made two previous trips to the continent it was good to finally catch up with a Scarce Swallowtail 😊 If things carry on the way they are it won't be long until we do have both those species over here though whether that's a good thing I'm not sure 😊

November 2018

Fingers crossed there may still be one or two butterflies flying...



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by essexbuzzard, 01-Nov-18 09:50 PM GMT

Never seen a Dryad, so you get a 🇬🇷 from me!

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 01-Nov-18 11:21 PM GMT

A little more 'cheap French beer' and your Southern White Admiral could have been confused for a Poplar Admiral!. If only.

A mrgreen 🇬🇷 for your Map, I've only seen one from a distance.

You chose a great location for your hols.

Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 04-Nov-18 09:49 AM GMT

Cheers Essex 😊 When I read through your foreign expeditions and look at your shots my envy knows no bounds 😊

Cheers Trevor 😊 The choice was my wife's and luckily this was a better choice than downtown Lisbon where we last went 😊 Fingers crossed for next year – The Algarve, Southern Spain and SE France are all in the running 😊

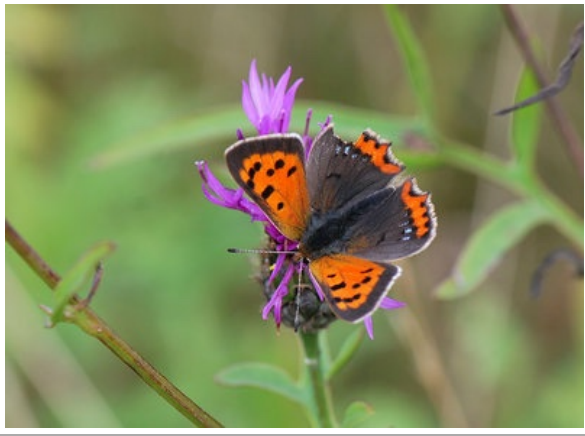
### Laverstock 30-08-2018

I hadn't ventured up the Down during the morning Tutor session as it still felt cool, it was a little cloudy and I had loads of trip reports to start writing up. However a day of doing chores saw me fairly chomping at the bit to get up there during the afternoon session.

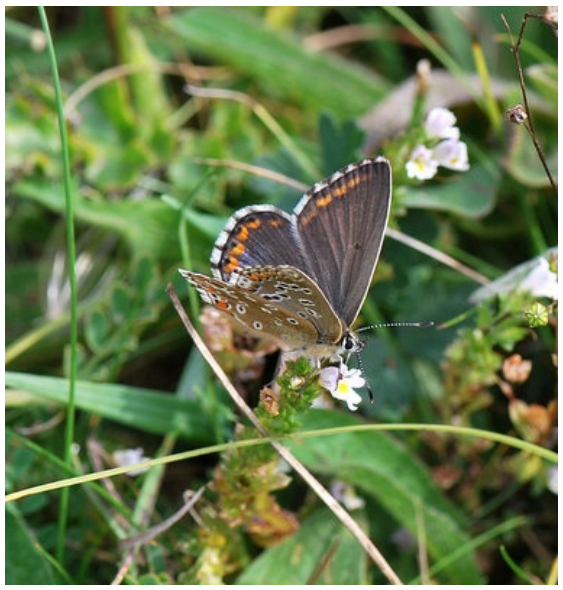
When I set out the sun was a little hazy but it felt reasonably warm, still warm enough for a T-shirt (Metallica today 😊) but only just and as I stepped foot onto the Down an electric blue bullet shot out of the sward to greet me. A great start to the walk. Further along there was another, then a Common Blue and a brace of Small Heath. All very nice but also all very active and difficult to approach. Then something different appeared. It was a stunning Small Copper. I say stunning not just because of the big blue badges but because of the contrast between the orange and the background brown. It was



stunning because the background was so dark, almost as dark as the black fore wing marks and it wasn't dark and dusky there was a clear contrast between the forewing and its margins cracking!

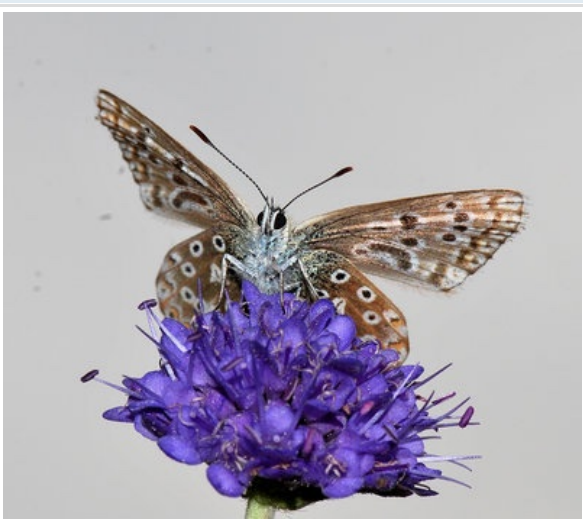


After this things quietened down a little as I followed the foot of the Down along the bottom track. The odd Small Heath would appear occasionally along with the odd blue or white. At one point a Peacock flew at me and I don't know who was more startled me or it. As I wandered I noticed that I was starting to squint and my shadow was projected before me. It felt slightly warmer as the sun started to come out and this meant that the butterflies might be more active still. I didn't mind and worked up to the far side of the Gully and into a real purple patch. On the far side at the bottom the grass is short and therefore the nectar sources are obvious as they stick out of the air. There were a couple of male Adonis here along a few Common Blues, Small Heath and the ever present (at least it feels like) Meadow Brown. A slatey dark butterfly caught my eye and I watched as it landed and then approached - it was a female Adonis. This little beauty was quickly followed by a really small Small Copper.





After this I checked the tiny path that cuts across the side of the Down and again there were a few blues in amongst the browns and also a Small White and then the next 10 minutes or so passed in a blur of butterflies. It started with a female Chalkhill which was posing nicely and not going anywhere. As I looked away and across the grass male Adonis and Common Blues seemingly popped into view. One minute they weren't there and then as they opened their wings to bask 'boom shanka' there they were. I then scanned around and spotted a white flag amongst a stand of taller grass. As I approached a Small Copper shot off and I could make out a Small Heath as well as 2 Brown Argus and three Common Blues all congregated in this one little patch.







As I started back I had to cross the gully and here there were good numbers of male Adonis on view, glinting out from the side of the hill when my movement meant the light caught them right. This happened all the way back with the odd Adonis seeming to blink into existence. A cracking evening, hopefully the weather is okay tomorrow morning and I'll be able to catch the same set of butterflies waking up.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 04-Nov-18 10:55 AM GMT

A very nice selection of summertime blues there, Wurzel, and it's good to go back and see fresh Coppers – I've been so used to looking at individuals at the other end of their lives. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Nov-18 12:24 AM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 That's one of the benefits of living in the past 😊 The other is that the music is infinitely better and the beer tastes nicer 😊😊

## The Dordogne Day 2 16-08-2018 Part 2

...I left it (the Dryad) in peace and headed back down the track, crossed the road and then worked my way 50m down the track from the start of 'normal' side of the Cutting. On the way I passed all the usual Frits but they seemed solar charged now and were tearing around at breakneck speed. I spotted a couple of White Admirals having a bit of argy-bargy and so I waded through the grass (having sensibly worn jeans and shoes this time) and waited for one to settle. When it did I wasn't disappointed. The black had a bluish tinge and there were tiny blue spots on the hind wing margins. When it closed its wings it was wonderfully red in places. It would land for a while before taking off on a little sortie to bring an errant Silver Washed Upstart into line. At one point there were two having a bit of a crap and another time a Meadow Brown felt the Admirals wrath. Sortie complete it would fly back and forth there or four times before landing pretty close to where it had previously lifted off from.





After a while I snapped out of the trance that it had lulled me into and then I headed back home. There were the usual Frits on the way back – all super solar charged but I carried on back triumphantly...

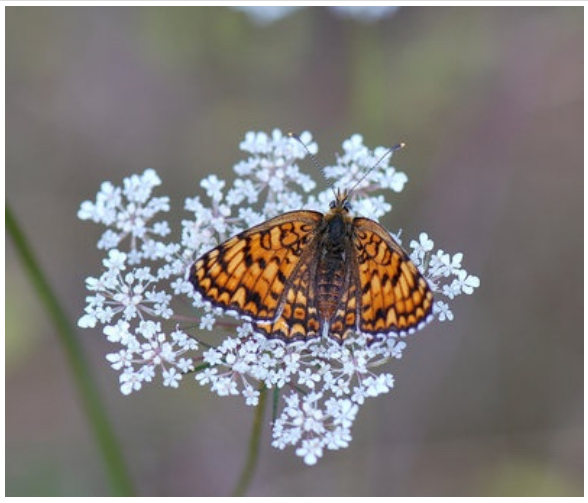
So after tea I set out on the search for a Mallow Skipper to try and complete my target list. Once at the Cutting I realised I'd come a bit too late as despite it still being early the trees lignin the Cutting were shading out huge swathes of the grasses. A Glanville flew here and there amid the odd Meadow Brown and Small Heath. A smaller blue caught my eye when it posed nicely, head down on a blade of grass. It didn't have any orange lunules but seemed too big for a Small/Little Blue. When it flew to a new perch it was really blue and not slatey grey on the upper side of its wings as a Small Blue would be. It did a few wing rolls and I managed to get a couple of shots as it opened its wings ever so slightly. I could see dark, almost black lines diving down across the wings towards the thorax and abdomen. A Mazarine Blue; another unexpected find and a very good reason for me to check all blues very carefully from now on.

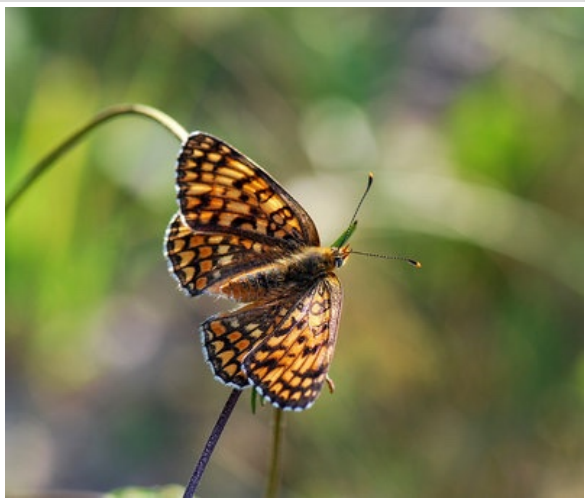


*One for Ernie*

Chuffed I carried on down the Cutting to where another road cut across it. All the way I was accompanied by a murderous band of hangers on - my own horrible entourage of Mozzies and Horseflies. These little critters made the journey down pretty unbearable and with only singletons of Glanville, Knapweed, Small Pearl and a White Admiral (both of which are considered Scarce here) it felt like a wasted trip. On the way back I saw a few Blues but they were all Common and there was a large Brown - another Dryad maybe? But I was glad to get back to the Cutting proper and once there I watched a failed Knapweed courtship and then headed home noting an aberrant Glanville in passing.







Tomorrow we were planning to check out a few of the local villages so hopefully I'll be able to add Mallow Skipper to the list...I can't work out why I've seen the Pearly Heath which should have finished by now and Small Pearls which are scarce yet not the 'abundant/common' Mallow Skipper? Oh well fingers crossed...



*Not sure what this is...*  
Have a goodun

Wurzel

### **Re: Wurzel**

by trevor, 08-Nov-18 09:58 AM GMT

Another great report from the Dordogne.  
As for the images, the prize has to go to your underside shots.  
The Southern White Admiral and Mazarine Blue in particular.

As for choice of location next year, I can heartily recommend the Cevennes. Black Veined Whites everywhere we went, and lots of confusing Blues, and Frits.

All the best,  
Trevor.



*Our first Butterfly of the Cevennes trip.*

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 09-Nov-18 07:47 PM GMT

Just catching up on your more recent reports Wurzel. I must admit, I am a bit clueless when it comes to European butterflies with all those similar looking blues, skippers and fritillaries...but they are good to see.

And I really like that blue badge Small Copper in the earlier report, especially the last shot where the angle somewhat disguises the damage to the hind wing 😊

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Nov-18 03:26 PM GMT

Cheers Trevor 😊 I put the Cevennes into Google and it looks looks brill – now to somehow get my wife to think that she's found this amazing place to go on holiday next year 😊

Cheers Neil 😊 You sussed out why I went for that angle shot with the Small Copper 😊😊 I think that the main difference in France was just the sheer number of butterflies (of different species) available compared to similar habitat back home. I would just try and get several shots of everything and now I have the additional pleasure of trying to identify the butterflies that I took photos off 😊 It keeps me off the streets 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 11-Nov-18 06:43 PM GMT

That's another two species we need to import, Wurzel – Knapweed Fritillary and Southern White Admiral. Some great shots of both there. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 11-Nov-18 11:55 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 They would certainly be welcome additions to our flora 😊

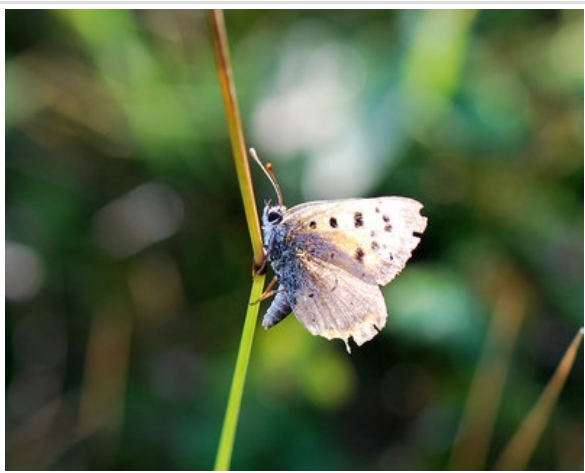
### Laverstock 31-08-2018

I took the plunge and headed up the Down first thing, cutting up the 'old way' and reaching the foot of the Down in good time. The only problem was that despite the warmth a lot of the Down was still in shadow as the sun hadn't quite risen high enough yet.

To compensate for this I carried on taking the mid-level path round the Down to the Gully. On the way I saw many, many Small Heath with one taking off every 5 or 6 footfalls and also a single female Adonis Blue. I paused when almost at the Gully as here as a positive sign that Autumn is knocking on the door of Summer and wanting to come in; a tiny cluster of 4 or 5 fungal fruiting bodies. I can't recall having seen this species before. It reminded me of a Stinkhorn but rather than the body disintegrating it seemed like it was crumbling and around the base was a little pile of bits that had already fallen off.



Moving on I reached the bottom of the Gully. My plan had been to see if I could relocate the roosting blues from yesterday but a small, dark orange blur distracted me. It was a tired looking Small Copper that kept hovering about and hassling the Small Heath. It seemed to be a different individual from the three that I saw yesterday so this is a good showing of Small Copper for this site.



I carried on and started seeing Adonis glittering among the grasses but even this early (8:45) they were still really active particularly on the lower slope where the grass is really quite short; possibly because it heats up quicker here plus there's less cover when creeping up on the butterflies. When I reached the 'roosting' point the same clump held 2 male and a female Adonis, a Small Heath, a male Common Blue and a Brown Argus. I started to stalk in but another unseen Small Heath put all the Adonis up when I was just getting into position. Still I got some shots of those that remained.



After this I started back taking a slightly lower track that runs parallel with the mid track. As I looked down the slope I could see more and more Adonis twinkling out from the grasses. A few Meadow Browns and a Small White added themselves to the day list, it seems that they're late risers! I tarried slightly with the Adonis before making my way back.





And so the final holiday class has passed, and now there are only a few more Tutor sessions left. I've gotten into the habit of a weekly visit, I think it's something I'll need to reinstate next year.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by ernie f, 12-Nov-18 08:33 AM GMT

Hi, Wurzel

Saw your mushroom pic. I have not seen this species before but it looked like an Inkcap to me so I looked it up. I think you'll find its a Snowy Inkcap – *Coprinopsis nivea* or *Coprinus niveus*. My book says it grows out of dung and that its white scales fall off (just like you described).

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 13-Nov-18 09:02 AM GMT

Cheers Ernie 😊 Thanks for the ID – there are a few more coming up in some future posts so your continued ID assistance would be greatly appreciated 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 15-Nov-18 07:19 PM GMT

Nice to catch up on your continuing Dordogne adventure, Wurzel 😊 Nice shots of the SWA, Mazarine Blue and that Glanville ab. 😊 I only knew we'd seen a Mazarine Blue in the Dordogne, when checking the photos later 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 17-Nov-18 01:30 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, still enjoying your shots from France, the colours of the different Butterflies has well, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 17-Nov-18 03:56 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 I got lucky with that Mazarine as I almost didn't bother to follow it 😊 I've been wondering about that Galnville ab as the forewings look really like a Knapweed but with the 'black dots in the boxes' on the rear wing margin of a Glanville 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 There should be another one hot of the press later – just got to do a bit of tidying up (house) and another bit of tidying up (of the prose) 😊 first.

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 17-Nov-18 04:19 PM GMT

Taking a closer look, you're right, it's Knapweed, Wurzel 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Padfield, 17-Nov-18 04:57 PM GMT

Hi Wurzel. I too have been enjoying your French shots – but things always kept happening just as I was about to post a reply and say so!

I'm sure Ernie is right about the *Coprinus*. I've never come across that species on my wanderings, though I've eaten hundreds of their cousins, the shaggy inkcap. And yes – knapweed. This is an incredibly variable butterfly. Females especially, but males too, often have 'Glanville' spots on the hindwings.

Keep 'em coming!

Guy

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 18-Nov-18 11:33 PM GMT

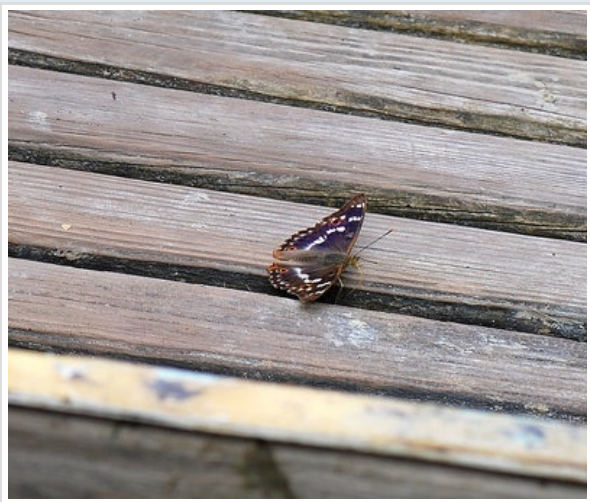
Cheers for the confirmation Mike 😊

Cheers Guy 😊 That one did throw me for a bit as in the UK those particular marks are diagnostic...then I remembered that this was taken in the UK 😊  
It certainly is a variable butterfly – I saw them in all shades and colour combos but always with that exaggerated marking on the forewing 😊

### A Cloudy Day!? 🤔 17-08-2018 Part 1

It was cloudy when I awoke and so I didn't take my usual morning constitutional. Instead we again ventured forth on the tiny country roads this time Bergerac bound. As we drove despite my wife's fears I couldn't shake a certain 80's theme tune from my head (do, do, do, doody do do) 😊. It was a slightly surreal morning; the parking was fine though it felt like we were more abandoning it than parking, we saw a mannequin with a Moose Head and a statue of ol'big nose himself 😊 and when I used a public lav the toilet disappeared into the wall and all the lights went out leaving me mid flow with literally nowhere to go! 😊

Once back home things got a bit more back to the proper routine and so I went down to the lake to watch the girl splash about and also to do a bit of rowing. On the way down a Sooty Copper became the latest addition to the 'garden' list and down on the Jetty a Lesser Purple Emperor came down on the path twice. I couldn't get close enough to get any shots off and I was always at the wrong angle. It then took off for a third time and this time laded on the jetty and then in the boat. I was able to creep up slightly more but only for a few distant shots. I was still happy though as any shots of a new species are great and the ones I got picked up the blue and the extra set of eyes/rings on the wings that can be used to differentiate Lesser from (Greater?) Purple Emperor. It made a few subsequent landings on the boat, however these were when the girls were out on the water. They did manage to row back to the bank but after splashing, the movement, the girls changing seats etc. it only took the slightest of nudges as the boat grounded to set the LPE.

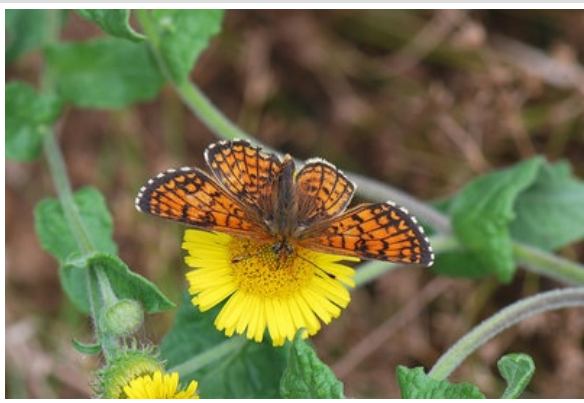




I was eventually 'released' and so took my now usual route to the Cutting. I was hoping to track down the Mazarine again and so I went to the left hand side. It was quite busy this afternoon with a nice and fresh male Sooty Copper and a Weaver's which got the ball rolling. Other Fritillaries started appearing including a pair in cop which I couldn't ID at the time and now back home with all the guide books I'm still struggling with. I'd hazard a guess at Heath Fritillary as that the more 'common' species but it could be Meadow.









I wandered along the taller Cooch grass and the Blues starting appearing which was what I was hoping for. If they had orange spots on the underside I'd check for the cell spot and hope that it was missing and if it was then I'd look more closely. Unfortunately I only found one cell-spotless Blue and that wasn't anything new; it was a Short-tailed Blue. By keeping a close eye on the small to middling butterflies I managed to get onto a dusky looking Small Copper and I also was able to add a Long-tailed Blue to the trip list. Even more of a bonus it stopped for long enough to enable me to actually get some shots unlike in Lisbon two years previously.





Slightly further on a Spotted Fritillary shone out among the straw background colour. These butterflies are so bright and gaudy that they seem out of focus; they look like someone's planted a fake model butterfly to catch out the unsuspecting Lepidopterist. As I was revelling in the glorious unctuousness of the Spot Frit a Swallowtail bombed by and distracted me. I followed it for a bit but it was very flighty so I managed only a few record shots and I couldn't relocate the Spot Frit so made my way back to the entrance to the Cutting...





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 19-Nov-18 12:29 AM GMT

Great shots again from the Dordogne, Wurzel 😊 lovely to see the LPE and the Sooty Copper. Weavers is one we missed as we did the Long-tailed Blue, you did well to get those 😊 Spotted Fritillaries are one of my favourites too. Like you I'm not sure if the pair in cop are Heath or Meadow as they appear so alike, sorry I'm no help 😊

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 19-Nov-18 06:35 PM GMT

Lovely Butterflies Wurzel, I'm really enjoying your shots 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Nov-18 11:53 PM GMT

Cheers Mike 😊 No worries about the ID the mystery just adds to my enjoyment of them 😊 - especially as I have already seen both of the species that it could be 😊

Cheers Goldie 😊 It's great looking back and reminiscing 😊 Anyway back to the UK...

### The Devenish 01-09-2018

I had about an hour and half free on this afternoon but with a pick-up in Salisbury which meant not enough time to get to anywhere like Martin Down or Shipton...so "where to go?" was the conundrum. It was still a bit early in the season for Five Rivers, there were at least a couple more outings to Laverstock on the cards and so The Devenish seemed the best option; with maybe a sneaky Small Copper?

On arrival there were no cars in the car park and when I stopped and listened I couldn't hear anything so I was the only one around. I started off by checking the small Paddock even though it seemed it was too early for hibernators and I was proved right with only 2 Specklies seen. While I waited and watched at the gate, I felt a weird crawly sensation on my shins; something pushing their way through my leg hairs. Looking down I found that it was a bloody Tick but luckily it was still climbing upwards towards the hem of my shorts and wasn't clamped on so I can gingerly picked it up and squashed it. I wouldn't normally go out of my way to harm another creature, normally I'm all for live and let live but in this case it was definitely Live and Let Die; I felt like I was meting out a little justice for those people that I know that have been bitten and suffered as a consequence.

Next it was on to the Orchid Meadow and almost immediately a male Adonis catches my eye. So I just watch to see where it goes as each time it lands it seems to upset a butterfly that's already there throwing up two male Common Blues, a Brown Argus and Green-veined White. This was a useful tactic as I might have missed most of these butterflies as they nectared low down in among the twisted tussle of tendrils.

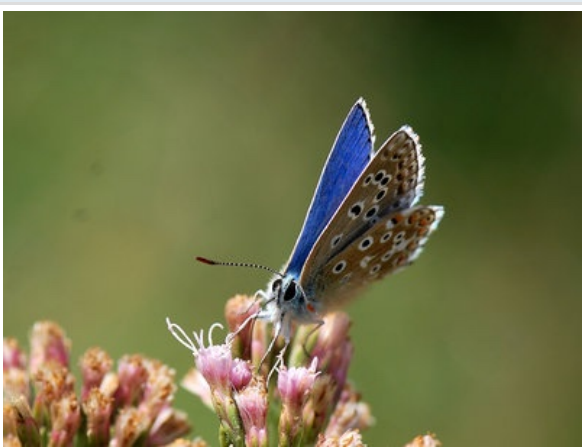


I carry on my usual Devenish route and next it's up the hill through the narrow path hemmed in on both sides by tall shrubs and a large Bramble bush. At this wall of Bramble a Red Admiral swoops by almost taking my head off as it does so. Round the corner a solitary Comma feeds, bumbling around on the Bramble and probing its proboscis into between the drupelets of the Blackberries. About half way up the steep steps cut into the Down a couple of female Adonis flutter about but apart from this all is quiet and very little else seems to be flying. The grass is really long and dried to a golden straw colour which highlights the ripples as a breeze plays up and along the side of the Down leaving nothing but a memory of susurration. I work along top of the Down and then back down and along the lower slopes where the tree line starts to make its stand against the grasses but I see only a few whites. All the hemp Agrimony which provided perching posts for the Small Coppers in the past have been cleared and the habitat looks all wrong of them here.





I hopped over the half way fence and this side looks much more promising as its been grazed by the sheep and so the sward is much lower and there are various wildflowers speckling the green Down with colour. On a good clump of Hemp Agrimony I watch a GVW, Small White, male Adonis and two Brown Argus for a while and then move round to the lower slopes on this side of the fence. Here there's a Small Copper. It seems slightly battle hardened with a chunk here and there taken from tis wing. As I 'm watching it wishing t was a bit more intact it gets buzzed by a second Small Copper and this one is in much better nick and with the traces of three blue badges. I spend quite a bit of time here as every time I get close to getting a good shot the other appears and annoys the first.









Back at the Hemp there was a gorgeous Brown Argus along with the more tired looking one but as I'm getting my shots I feel that familiar creeping sensation on my lower leg, back of my calf this time. Looking down I find a second Tick which gets short shrift and I decide to start for home what with time starting to past too quickly. I stop briefly in the Orchid Meadow for another 'Staircase shot' this time featuring a Common Blue but this is spoilt as I have to remove and dispatch yet another Tick before it latches on grrrrrr! I wonder how many would have been successful if I'd been wearing my usual long trousers and not my shorts?



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 22-Nov-18 11:06 AM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, love the shots of the Comma on the Blackberries 😊 When i've been up in the lakes it's mostly been the Horse Flies that have bitten us, Jim in particular was their favourite fruit 😊 Those Ticks are horrible, they make me cringe just reading what you've written UGH!! Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 23-Nov-18 09:30 AM GMT

That Lesser Purple Emperor must have been a real treat, it would have made my Holiday!. Pity you couldn't have got closer, it looks like a real beauty. Also, your Spotted Fritillary is a dazzler, so bright. In the Cevennes they were frequently seen.

Lovely shots.  
Trevor.

PS. Enjoy the social, send everyone my regards.

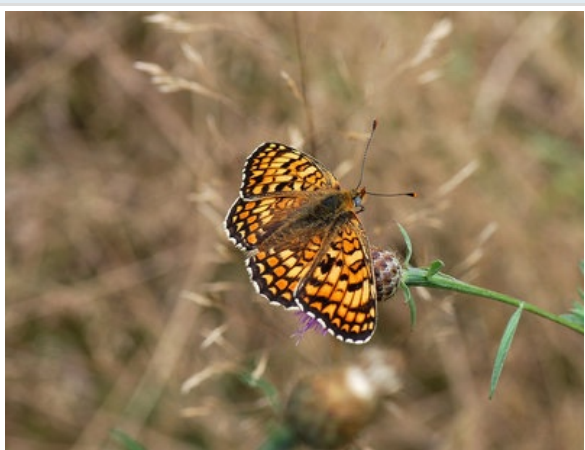
## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 23-Nov-18 11:45 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 Bloody Horse Flies 🤢 Luckily none of the Ticks latched on – the things we have to put up with for our hobby 😊  
Cheers Trevor 😊 Spotted Frits are vying for the exalted position of my favourite butterfly. Will pass on your regards tomorrow 😊

## A Cloudy Day!? 17-08-2018 Part 2

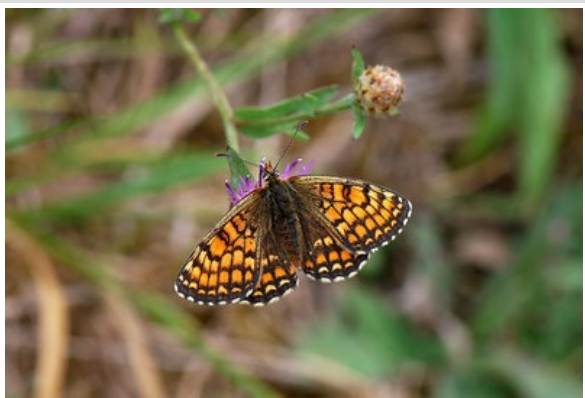
Once back at the start a Pearly Heath cheered me up amid a Glannie, Knappies and a lovely female Spot Frit. The Glannie was hanging out with a Meadow whereas the poor female Spot Frit was hassled endlessly by a Knappie. It really wanted to move the Spot Frit on but she stood her ground. It almost looks like a slightly confused mating attempt – and who can blame it they're hard enough for us to make an identification with our stereotypic binocular vision and enhanced pattern finding function. Imagine seeing the kaleidoscope of colours/tones that a Spot Frit would appear as when viewed with compound eyes 😊.







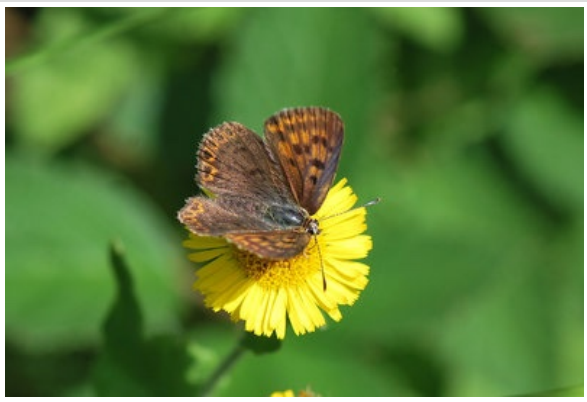
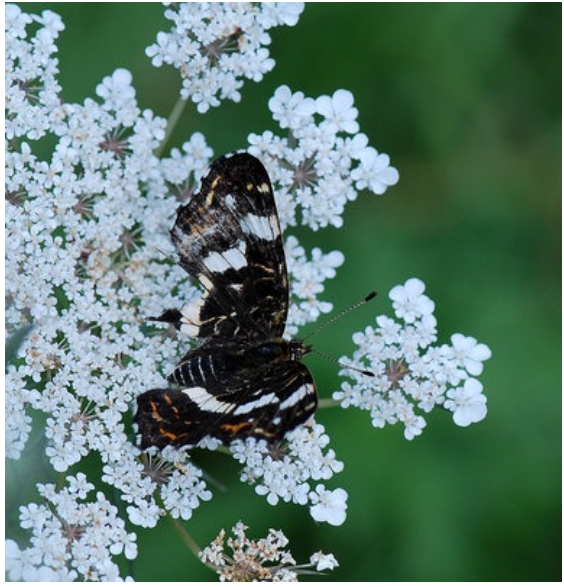
I took myself on along the road to the top of the hill and mooched around in the field that I visited on my first morning. A Blue landed close by on the walk up, a Short-tailed again and once in the field proper there were various Browns, Common Blues an errant Swallowtail and four species of Fritillary. The Swallowtail raced up to me and then flew away again even more quickly than it appeared but I refused to give chase and instead headed back to catch up with the family - more rowing and swimming.

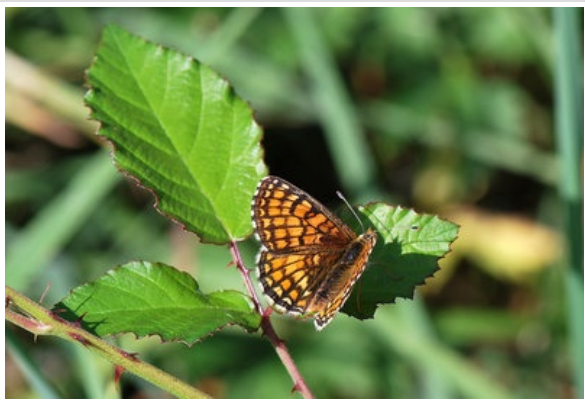
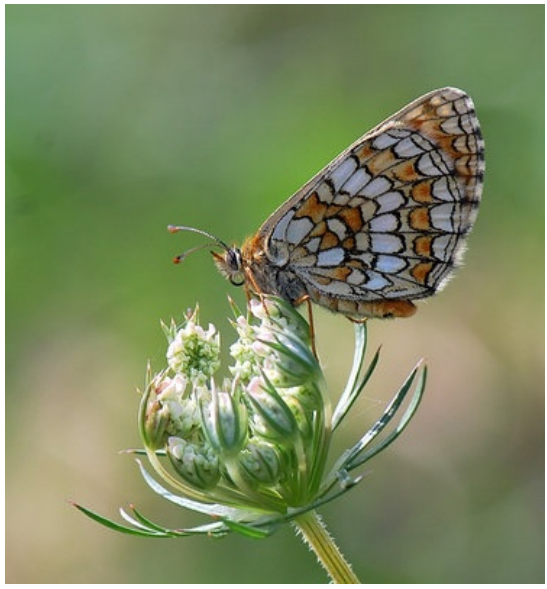




A while later I was able to take a bit of a break and so I set to checking the various areas on the other side of the lake round by Sara's house. The little bit of 'Meadow' held Dingy Skippers and a Brown Argus, I found a fantastic female Sooty near the wood store as well as half a Map. Then a massive ethereal Scarce Swallowtail buzzed by me. It wouldn't stop for love nor money and so I had to resort to in flight shots a la Sports Mode. I pressed on finding a Heath and a Grizzlie and eventually ended up in the Paddock among the odd Glannie and a multitude of Browns. The Hedgies here seem unusual with the underside looking more like a Meadow Brown and also they're huge compared back to those back home.







Upon my return I had to remove a squatter which Little L had named Monty...He did leave of his own accord and I'm sure he'll be back, coming and going as he/she pleases.



Again I sat up by solar powered light and wrote up my diary and thought back over the day. I'm surprised at how quickly we've all fallen into the rhythm and also how calm and at peace we all feel but also how I don't think I'll get used to the butterflying. I mean today didn't throw up any lifers but it was just great to experience such quality AND quality in such a small area and with so little effort. A stroll to the neighbours throws up a Scarce Swallowtail, taking the girls swimming produces a Lesser Purple Emperor and a 10 minute walk sees me finding 20 odd species. Each evening I sit and wonder about what will turn up tomorrow...knowing full well that it'll be something good!

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 24-Nov-18 04:24 PM GMT

Fantastic shots Wurzel, it would be great if we could see some of those lovely Butterflies over here, 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 24-Nov-18 05:00 PM GMT

Nice shots from the Dordogne again, Wurzel 😊 continental Speckled Woods are much brighter than ours and those female Sooty Coppers are stunners 😊

Mike.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Nov-18 06:20 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 It would be great and I still can't fathom why we don't see a few more species...if only they could get here, I think we need to start chartering a cross channel ferry specifically for butterflies 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 I love the Sooty Coppers - they seem to have really sharp markings when really fresh 😊😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Andrew555, 29-Nov-18 02:35 PM GMT

Agree with Goldie! 😊 That sounds so nice Wurzel, great shots of those lovely butterflies. 🍷 😊

Cheers

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 30-Nov-18 11:55 PM GMT

Cheers Andrew 😊 I reckon Knapweed Fritillaries should be first off the boat 😊

I might need some help from Ernie for this one...

## Garston Wood 02-09-2018

Today was the last day of the holiday and so rather than sitting inside coped up and fretting about what horrors faced me on my return to work on the morrow I decided that we would head out to Garston Wood. The weather reporters (I don't like to call them forecasters anymore as that would suggest a modicum of accuracy) had again got it totally 'a' about 'f' with a thick blanket of cloud instead of the promised sun. So instead of butterflies I took my camera to try for some shots on an impromptu fungus foray. There were some real beauties about; dark maroon clusters, sulphurous yellow ones, mini puff balls and one which at first I thought was a bit of discarded grey plastic wrapper.







Almost back at the car park and the sun started to eat its way through the clouds and the sky started to brighten. With the coming of the sun the butterflies started venturing forth and the girls spooked a couple of Specklies as we left the 'butterfly' enclosure. Then I spied a pair of Whites up ahead meandering along and occasionally into each other on the edge of the path. One looked noticeably bigger than the other and when I caught up to them at the top of the rise it became obvious why - one was a miniscule Green-veined White and the other a Large White. By now they'd worked their way not only up the hill but also further into the vegetation along the side of the path and I didn't want to trample in a try for a shot so I let them be and caught up with the others. We paused at the junction to at the main path to listen to the mass of bird song and then started for the car...

It was along this main path that suddenly the dearth of butterflies became no more; there were Specklies everywhere. It started slowly with one Specklie seemingly all on its tod which got attacked by a second which flew out of the foliage. Then there was a third which attacked the second before being attacked itself by a fourth and fifth. These last two interfered with all those around them and then locked into a death spiral ascending for upwards for what felt like forever and then suddenly they shot off in different directions. Each little scrubby area along the path between the trees seemed to hold masses of Specklies; there was easily a total of 20 along this small stretch of path. I felt sorry for the single Green-veined White which was easily outnumbered.





The final butterfly of the trip was a Specklie. It had to be really didn't it? Well when I say Specklie I mean half a Specklie as it was cleaved neatly down the middle...At first I thought it was just playing dead but a prod revealed that it was indeed bisected. With this morbid image running through my mind I drove home hoping that it wasn't a portent for the next day when the GCSE results would be revealed...

Have a goodun

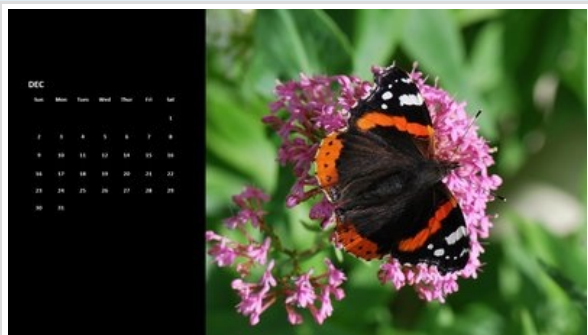
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 02-Dec-18 06:05 PM GMT

December 2018

Happy Advent! Looks like I need to start the 2019 Calendar now then!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 02-Dec-18 06:22 PM GMT

That's quite a fungal selection, Wurzel - I really wouldn't fancy eating any of that little lot, though no doubt there's at least one in there that is some

kind of delicacy for those in the know... 😊

Your semi-Speckled Wood has those green spots that elderly members of the species seem to acquire. I wonder what causes this? It almost looks like mould. 😊

Cheers,

Dave

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 03-Dec-18 11:42 PM GMT

Cheers Dave 😊 I know what you mean about the greenish tinged spots, they don't age well do they? 😊

## A trip to the Marche....18-08-2018

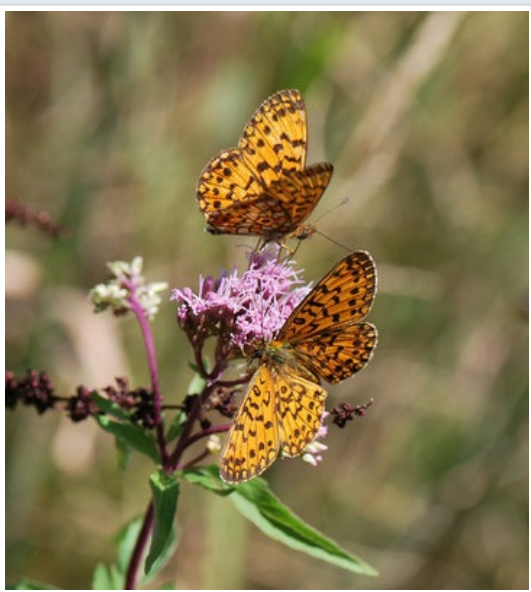
During the morning we strolled the market of Ste-de-Foy-Grande and checked the local Intermarche where I discovered that KS3 French is enough to get by with. We munched our patisseries overlooking the Dordogne River and I swear that I saw a Large Copper but I wasn't able to pursue it as the girls were eager to get back and get back out on the boat.

Once back after a while it was my turn for the hour off and so I tried my luck where the host suggested hoping the grassy pasture might throw up a Mallow Skipper. Unfortunately it was a bust with the usual representatives but in much lower numbers. So I made my way back up the hill to the cutting and set about checking the out the grasses and Fleabane which were set in further away from the road. In amongst the smaller Frits there was a Fritillary that was slightly smaller than the marauding Silver-washed and slightly larger than the Knapweed...I cautiously approached and it became apparent what it was when it turned and gleamed silver upon catching the sun. A Queen of Spain. It didn't have so much of the grey/silver scaling near the body so I'm wondering if it's a male?





I noodled around some more with the Queenie and in my noodling ended up looking at some of the other Frits that were hanging about in this neck of the cutting briefly seeing a SWA in the process. It was a stunning sight as it glided across the grass tops and seemed to hang motionless in the air for a fraction of a second before it turned on a sixpence and cut along in a different direction. Sublime. I turned my attentions back to Queenie but a pair of smaller Frits landed between us. They weren't heavily marked enough to be a Weavers which meant that I was looking at what is considered a scarce butterfly in this area, a Small Pearl, and not just one but a pair. It felt slightly odd to consider that Spotted Frit is common and Small Pearl is scarce 😊. Back to Queenie once again but thanks to a bit of an unproductive jaunt at the start which used up almost half my allowed time I needed to start making my way back. I did stop when a Cloudy bombed pass and landed ever so briefly. I managed two shots before it was off again and when it paused a second time I managed a third before it was well and truly gone.

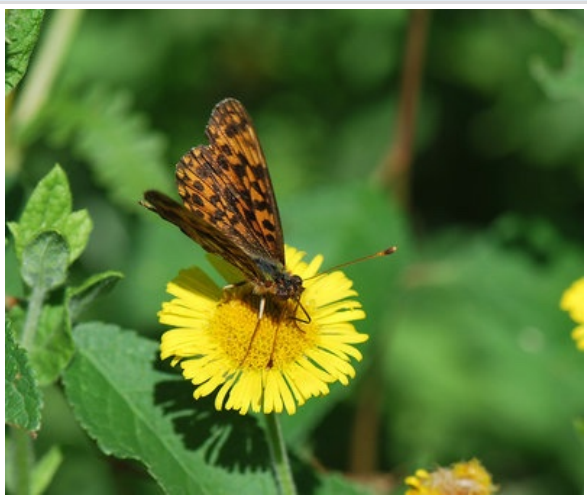




A little later while sitting in the sun watching the girls a small blue butterfly lands at my feet and starts mud-puddling. As I get a few shots I wonder what it could be. The colour was too blue for a Holly yet it has some chequers on the wing margins yet the underwings were mostly white with many of the black spots missing.



Still puzzling over this anomaly I set out for take 2 thought this time I headed straight towards the cutting in order to make the most of my time but I didn't venture in I just stuck to the verge and carried on up the hill. I'd stop now and again for various things such as a Short-tailed Blue, Weavers and Wood Whites. Carrying on further up the hill there were Common Blues, Sooties and the odd smaller Frit by the time I'd reached the top of the hill and the field that I'd visited on my first morning.

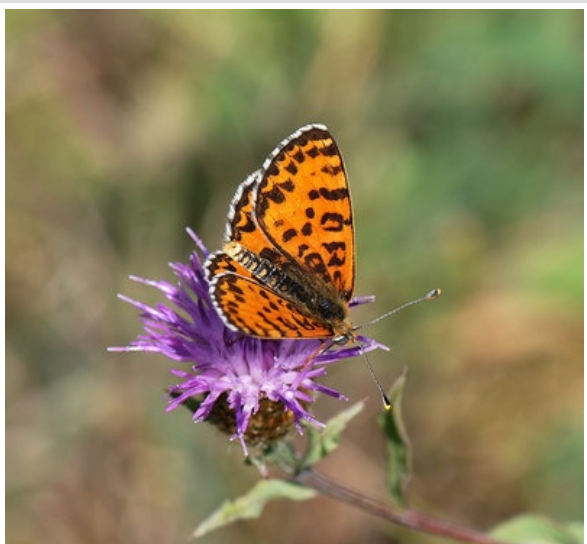


The next field on also looked promising and as I crossed the road a massive dark butterfly took off from the grass. It dwarfed the Meadow Browns it spooked and when it flew in a series of bounds and glides it didn't show any of the orange that you get with a Meadow Brown. After following it with my eyes I watched as it landed and settled so I was able to get in close for a few more shots of a Dryad for my collection. I just couldn't get over how huge it was!



I strolled back across the first field again stopping occasionally. A Painted Lady was the one new and different thing amongst all the usual suspects. It did stop for the briefest of times unlike the Swallowtail which almost pleaded with me to follow it but I wasn't playing that game this evening! The breeze had picked up and on the exposed field this was a little troublesome as the butterflies would alight on top of the taller flower heads and then rock violently back and forth as if on one of those kiddies playground toys.





A little later I did get a 'first'...Little L and I were bringing back some ice blocks by torchlight and when we stopped to watch the Bats skating across the top of the water a rustling started near to my foot. Little L and I were both stunned and delighted as a mole crawled from one side of the path to the other! 🐹🐹

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Katrina, 04-Dec-18 07:20 AM GMT

Gorgeous Queen of Spain amongst others and a live mole! Mr Greens all round !

### Re: Wurzel

by trevor, 04-Dec-18 07:57 AM GMT

I will also issue some mrgreens for your QoS. images 🍃🍃.  
Lovely and sharp, and well composed

Great report  
Trevor.

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 04-Dec-18 02:37 PM GMT

Those Queens are lovely, Wurzel. Another one you should have brought back with you that I'm sure would be happy here! 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 04-Dec-18 04:19 PM GMT

Hi! Wurzel, your photos remind me of my Idea of what Fairy land must look like,( Fantastic) 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 06-Dec-18 11:15 PM GMT

Cheers Katrina 😊 I only wish that it wasn't so dark as then I might have had my camera to get some shots of the Mole. 😊  
Cheers Trevor 😊 I got lucky with some of those shots as it was very mobile whilst feeding – it was a matter of clicking away and hoping something, anything, would come out right 😊😊  
Cheers Dave 😊 If only we could get some of those over here...mind you some people have seen them on UK soil 😊🍃  
Cheers Goldie 😊 It was certainly a magical trip and one which will live long in my memory 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Neil Freeman, 07-Dec-18 07:23 PM GMT

For one reason or another I have fallen behind a bit lately and have just caught up with your diary Wurzel, some great reports and photos from both sides of the channel. Hard to pick any favourites but the Spotted Fritillaries and QoS stand out for me 😊🍃

Cheers,

Neil.

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 08-Dec-18 04:21 PM GMT

Cheers Neil 😊 I'm sure I've said it before and I'm sure I'll say it again but the Spotted Fritillaries were the highlight of the trip for me, they seem almost artificial, as if they've been painted by someone very, very heavy handed 😊😊

## Laverstock 10-09-2018

There are only a few more Tutor time opportunities left and each time I time I dropped Little L and ran up the Down it could have been the last. Whilst it's been great seeing how the butterflies have waxed and waned over the season it's a bit of a shame that with the end in sight the species count is in the middle of the inevitable decline. It felt like my visits would finish with a whimper rather than a bang...

Today's visit took the usual pattern. Mad rush home, mad rush round home doing as many chores as possible, mad rush round the house collecting all

the 11+ materials, mad rush to the car with said materials, mad rush back to the house to the house to actually get Little L...So the mad rushing continued until I enter the Tutors house and Little L takes her place at the long table and then I step through the back door. It's like I've dove into a swimming pool of serenity, the waves of tranquillity pass over me and for the first time over the day I feel like I'm actually able to breathe, I feel alert and awake, alive again. I carry on in this peaceful state across the field and along the edge of the Down, my awakened eyes bright and searching for any movement. The only thing I see on the whole journey is a Small Heath.



I carry on further round the bottom of the Down making towards the Gully and things are slightly better here with a grand total of 4 butterflies of three species; a nice looking female Adonis Blue, a male Common Blue that doesn't hang around at all and a brace of Small Heath who are experts at hide and seek. Most of this area is now a shadow of its former self and there is a field of skeletons waiting for a nice strong gush of wind to flatten then before they arise slowly resurrecting next spring.



Up at the Gully proper things are better still with the species count now reaching 5 but with more individuals. In among three Small Heath there are a couple of aged Meadow Browns, a couple of Common Blues and a smattering of Adonis (2 females and 4 males) but the real stars of the show are the Fuzz; four Small Coppers. My fears of going out with a whimper are dispelled by these little packets of party and I spent much of the remaining time with them - in fact almost too long and I end up having to leg it back to the Tutors to collect Little L. So at the end as at the beginning - rush and bloody tear!







Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 09-Dec-18 01:08 PM GMT

Looks like it was worth the journey though with those lovely Copper shots Wurzel 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 09-Dec-18 10:18 PM GMT

Those Coppers (especially the second one) were worth the trip I'd say, Wurzel. The two Adonis are none too shabby either – pretty fresh for mid-September. 😊

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by Maximus, 09-Dec-18 11:11 PM GMT

Just seen the wonderful Queen of Spain Fritillary shots in your 18th August diary post, Wurzel 😊 Such a lovely fritillary, which has loads of u/s bling 😊  
Another one that we didn't see during our time in France 🙄

Mike

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 10-Dec-18 11:33 PM GMT

Cheers 😊 They definitely made the journey worthwhile 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I was quite surprised at how well the Adonis were looking 😊

Cheers Mike 😊 That one nicely rounded off the haul of French Fritillaries 😊

## A Quiet Sunday Part 1 19-08-2018

The weather here is a bit lacsidasical. It gets hot – into the 30's – but generally by the end of the afternoon into the early evening yet in the morning it's only in the mid-teens so the butterflies don't seem to be up and about until 9:30ish. So my ideas of getting up really early and cramming in an hour of butterflying hasn't really come to fruition (though next year in Portugal I think that might be the way to go). Today however I was up and out traipsing back up the road to the cutting.

The first notable butterfly of the morning was a Holly Blue hiding on the underside of the mint. After that it was Frit City with Glannies, Heaths (possibly a Meadow as well) and Knapweeds as usual being joined by the occasional Weavers and Small Pearl. The odd Common Blue, Small Heath and ubiquitous Sooty helped to make up the supporting cast. A Purple Hairstreak closely followed by a second almost as if they were vying for the starring role. Whilst it was true that they were a nice addition to the trip list they weren't the hoped for Mallow Skipper – supposedly common but where the bloody hell are they?







As I trudged up the road bemoaning little butterflies a huge bugger appeared and glided zig-zag style down the road towards me. Its flight was more fappy and brown like but the colour and size reminded me of an inverted and washed up Emperor. It landed a couple of times but I was only able to get the briefest of record shots each time. On my last attempt I was lined up perfectly, it seemed happy to let me approach, there weren't any blades of grass in the way and then a car had to choose that particular moment to drive by! It was enough to startle the butterfly and it was off, vamoose never to return. Still I'd seen another new species, a Great Banded Grayling and another one that had been on researched 'hit list'. The undoubted star of the morning and another huge butterfly.



After this I strolled up to the field seeing this and that on the way; Wood Whites, Blues, Frits by the bucket load and another Purple Hairstreak this time down on the deck. In fact it behaved a lot more like a blue than a Hairstreak. This one was inn even better condish than the other two but its appearance came too late, the starring role had already been cast. On the way back the Frits again put on a good show and I caught up with another Pearly Heath. All in all a cracking morning visit.







Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 11-Dec-18 10:43 AM GMT

Wurzel, it looks like your holiday is planned already for next year 😊 Lovely shots of the Frits , Goldie 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Benjamin, 11-Dec-18 10:56 AM GMT

I'm not sure if it's intentional, or the inevitable result of a busy schedule, but having your trip report drip fed to us through the winter months is the perfect way of softening the end of season withdrawal symptoms all too familiar to the hopeless addict! Ok so it's no substitute for the real thing, but I'll take what I can get right now!

And good to know I'll have Portugal to get me through winter 2019! 😊

But seriously – great reports and great pics – looks like a fantastic trip – 😊🇵🇹

## Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 12-Dec-18 05:12 PM GMT

Great Report Wurzel and more surprises with every posting 😊

The frustration from the Great banded Grayling episode is palpable. If it's not a car then a dog walker; or rambler or jogger, or horse rider or cyclist or motocross biker ... or Brown Argus 🐛.... guaranteed to turn up at precisely the wrong moment. We all feel this pain: – standard in the life of a butterflyer 😊😞.

You still managed a pretty decent shot though 😊🇵🇹

Phil

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 15-Dec-18 06:03 PM GMT

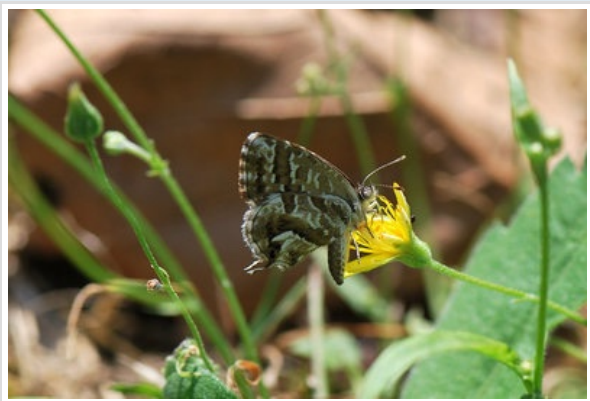
Cheers Goldie 😊 Oh yes my wife likes to be very organised when it comes to booking the holiday 😊 – so flights already paid for and deposit down on the accommodation – fingers crossed Brexit doesn't put a spanner in the works 😊

Cheers Ben 😊 I would love to say that the drip feed was intentional Ben but unfortunately it's down to needing a 25th, 26th and sometimes 27th hour in the day 😊 Glad it's helping to beat 'the lack of Butterfly blues' 😊 There might also be a previously unpublished Portugal report to follow 😊😞

Cheers Philzoid 😊 I'm glad to know that I'm not the only one suffering when I'm out there in the field – it seems that there's only one Law when it comes to butterflying – the Law of Sod 😊😞 Hopefully GBG is a species I can catch up with another time 😊

## A Quiet Sunday Part 2 19-08-2018

After lunch we went for a drive and called in at St Marcead Gurcon seeing a Cattle Egret in amid the cattle on the way (well where else?). Unfortunately when we got there the Boulongerie had been closed for 10 minutes so we took a quick stroll to the church again and once again I found a Geranium Bronze and this one didn't evade my lens – perhaps a small compensation for missing out on patisseries? The rest of the day was spent swimming and boating with some more swimming on top as the temperature steadily rose to 34.



After tea it started to feel a little cooler so back to the cutting I went. Again the Frits put on a good display but they were being very hard work still, even at gone 7pm. The Short-tailed Blues were a little better behaved and there seemed to be a couple hanging around.



*Another one for Ernie...*



Up at the field it was even harder going as the Frits had a whole field to lose me in! I also noted that there now seemed to be more Small Heaths flying amongst the larger Browns and they were up to their old tricks of flushing easily and then spooking every other butterfly within a 5 metre radius. Still I persevered here for a while but with little to show for it apart from a few Frits catching the evening glow nicely.





I called in briefly at the Cutting on the way back and a small blue caught my eye. I thought at first that it was something totally different as the orange lunules were very large and had fused together to make a single band along the wing margins. I had visions of winter evenings spent pouring over Tolman and researching various websites to finally come to the conclusion that it was...Damn it there was the cell spot that made it a Common Blue 😊, still it was a nice looking one. I then noodled around a little more at the cutting with the usual crowd. I'm seeing the same species time after time now but it's still not getting boring. Only a day to go - I don't want to go home!







Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 16-Dec-18 09:15 AM GMT

Amazing shots Wurzel, it still surprises me that Common Blues and Small Heath are so common here and over there, yet we don't see the other Butterflies like the Short Tailed Blues for example too much over here.

This Summer was so hot I felt sure lots of Butterflies would come over from France but I didn't read of this happening, I don't blame you for not wanting to come home, your holiday was great 😊 Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by millerd, 16-Dec-18 11:07 AM GMT

Another nice set of shots, Wurzel. I don't think I would ever get tired of taking photos of fritillaries... 😊

Cheers,

Dave

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 16-Dec-18 07:44 PM GMT

Loving your meandering account of your French trip, I'll be as sorry to see it end as I'm sure you were when you had to leave! 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Dec-18 06:23 PM GMT

Cheers Goldie 😊 They possibly don't like the dampness that we get in the UK 😊 Hopefully Brexit won't put an end to my foreign travels, fingers crossed 😊

Cheers Dave 😊 I now what you mean Dave as I definitely didn't – it was such a culture shock to come back and a much reduced range of species 😊

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I found the local wine was very conducive to writing 😊 There may be a bonus report from Lisbon 2015 in the offing as well – although that one is more Urban Butterflying 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 19-Dec-18 11:53 PM GMT

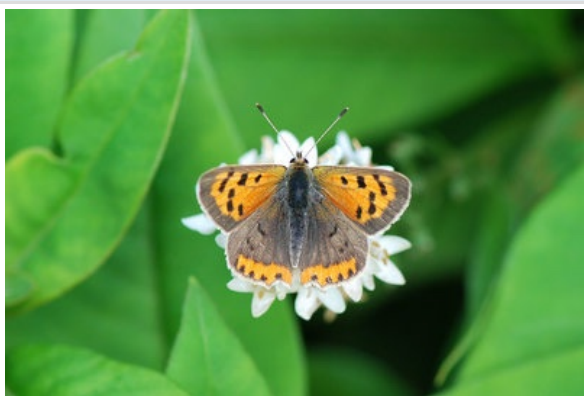
#### Kingston Lacey 16-09-2018

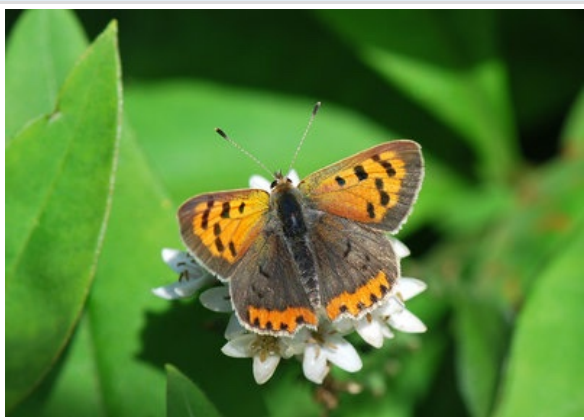
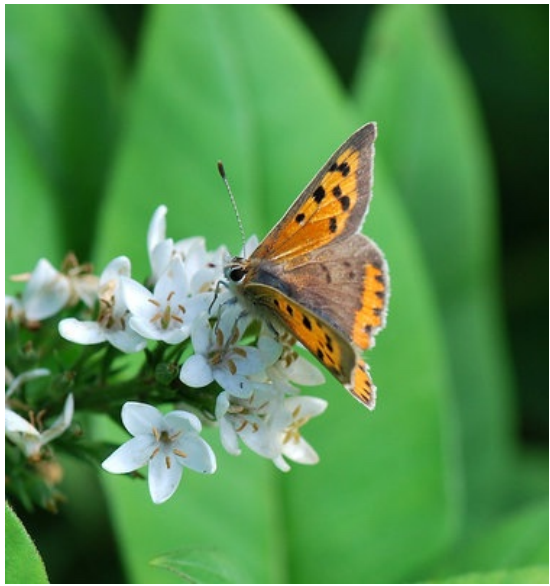
We needed to blow the cobwebs away after a busy week for all of us; back to work X2, back to school X2 and back to 11+ prep. As the autumn colour isn't quite with us yet we decided to leave Stourhead for a few more weeks and instead headed to Kingston Lacey. The BBC reckoned that it would be 20+ temps and sunny intervals. Knowing their accuracy recently I packed the rain coats and fleeces and off we sped, stopping briefly on the way at my parents to raid their greenhouse!

After lunch and the obligatory visit from the House cat we set off on the walk round our usual circuit. It would have to be a brief one today as we'd booked to have a look round the house itself which is a bit of a rarity. As we walked across the lawn things looked decidedly quiet but finally when we reached the first set of floral borders the butterflies appeared. The first was a Comma which put in the most fleeting of visits, stopping for all of about 2 seconds, just long enough to work out what it was before it was gone. A Small White behaved more placidly but after a few shots we were away again. It seemed that the others were on a mission!



On we drove diving down through the Avenue with only a single white to accompany us and again things started to look a little disappointing. Luckily the next stage of our whistle stop tour was the Kitchen Garden with its veggie and flower patches and the pond. As we walked through the gate I could already see whites, Large and Small clustered round the Cabbages not surprisingly. There were possibly even more in the flower patch on the other side of the garden buildings but these were quite fidgety. They would erupt from out of nowhere and then when they landed they only did so for a few seconds at a time before moving to another leaf and repeating the procedure. I was getting a little fed up with this and so took a stroll along the border hedge when I did get a surprise as there was a Small Copper looking a little out of place. It was reasonable nick and so I knelt down and for once my knees didn't set the butterfly flying off, another surprise!





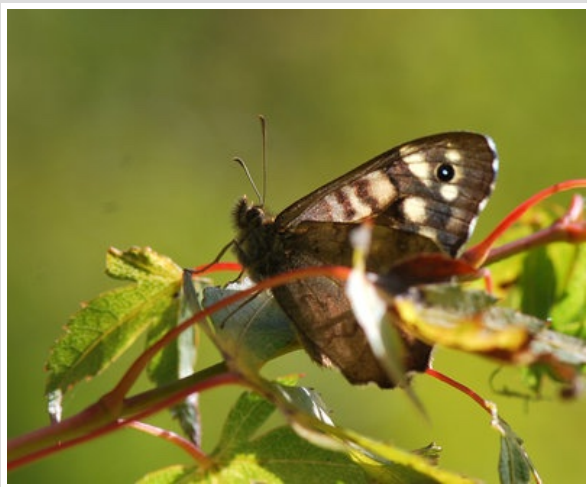
The girls headed off to the Pacific Garden whilst I headed off towards the pond with the promise of catching the others up shortly. I checked around the pond which was almost totally dried up and there a single Specklie flew and 2 large Dragonflies (Emperors?). I tried a few Sports mode shots but the autofocus just wasn't quick enough or intelligent enough - it kept focusing behind the insect. So instead of frittering my time away on blurred shots for the bin I checked out a few Buddleias on one of the allotments. It turned out to be a bit of a Vanessid heaven. As I could see 2 Peacocks, a Red Admiral and a Comma on two of the bushes. The Peacocks detached themselves and one settled nicely on a pile of pots and slabs. The Comma in particular was really vibrant but the Red Admiral played hard to get, always sticking to the 'wrong' side of the bush where I couldn't tread. I realised that I better make good on my promise and so I started back towards the Pacific Garden pausing on the way for the occasional white.







The Pacific Garden was a bit of a disappointment as the grass and wild flowers had been cut and so the butterflies didn't visit as it was a bit of a green desert. The girls were off in the Bamboo somewhere and so my wife and I strolled back serenely along the path heading for the house. We were making good time and so I was able to stop for a Specklie on the way and we even fitted in a quick coffee before it was time to enter the House and out the camera away.



Have a goodun

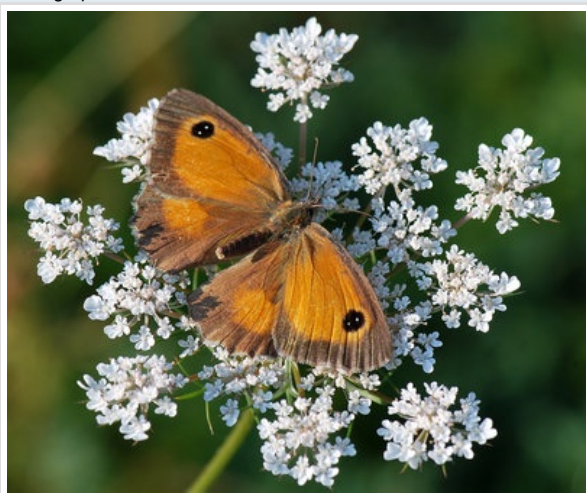
Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 21-Dec-18 11:48 PM GMT

#### Home tomorrow 20-08-2018 Part 1

Home tomorrow unfortunately - well they say that all good things must come to an end. Still there's one more day still to fill and it started with a quick trip to Ste-Foy-le-Grande and the Intermarche a real godsend of a place this has become. So I head down to the car early and load it up with water bottles ready. As I'm there and I just happen to have my camera I have a little mooch while waiting for the others to arrive. As it's still relatively early there isn't an awful lot flying; two Small Heath a few Meadow Browns and a couple of Hedgies. I was hoping for a few Wood Whites but even though the Browns are all pretty twitchy the Whites are all tucked up in bed still. One Hedgie perches very nicely for me, wings akimbo and held totally horizontally soaking up as much of the sun as she can.





I don't get out again with my camera until after lunch when I head to, yep you've guessed it, the Cutting. On the way I stop for this and that; a Holly Blue first, I check all the Brimstones on the Hemp Agrimony just in case one happens to be a Cleopatra and a Small White looks so close to being a Southern Small White but upon examination later I can just make out 'the vein' that means it's not. Eventually I enter the Cutting proper and the butterflies by now are pretty active. The usual gang are all out; Frits, Short-tails, Small Heaths and Sooty Copper all over the place.







I cross the road to try the more 'heath' like habitat at the top of the hill but first I have to work through the Hemp Agrimony and Cooch Grasses. As I'm marvelling at the number of Meadow Browns and Silver-washed Frits taking nectar a Southern White Admiral appears almost out of nowhere and approaches from my left. It continues drifting listlessly left and then back slightly further right before it lands up high. I try for a record shot and get one before it's off again. Before I can get bothered a massive white butterfly scythes through the air and lands just ahead of me. Despite the heat (up to 30 by now) it behaves impeccably. So much so in fact that for a couple of shots I realise that I have to stand back else I won't get the whole butterfly in frame! I sneak around t the side of it for a few underside shots as well. After all the flighty individuals that I'd encountered so far this one was a joy to behold as it posed for photo after photo.





As if taking its cue from the Scarce Swallowtail the Southern White Admiral returned and started acting in a much more amenable fashion. I reckon it's something to do with the Hemp Agrimony – it's a butterfly sedative.





I carried on right to the top of the hill and started down the other side when a massive butterfly did a fly-by. It was a Great Banded Grayling but it didn't stop. Instead it would fly up the path and circle once or twice as if it was going to land and then move off again. All the while I stayed still hoping it would eventually land if I thought that wasn't a threat but it just got further and further away. I turned to head back as the path now was not turning up much and I was starting to bake what with the full sun bouncing off the reflective sands and rock. On the way back a Wall Brown added itself to the Trip Tally as did a Peacock and I knowingly saw my first Praying Mantis.





Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by bugboy, 23-Dec-18 09:12 PM GMT

Great stuff Wurzel, love the final shot. A patch of ground like that over here would be lucky to host a handful of species these days. From what I can gather I could happily spend a week there and not get bored!

### Re: Wurzel

by Goldie M, 24-Dec-18 12:16 PM GMT

Love that Scarce Swallow Tail Wurzel really majestic looking, Goldie 😊

### Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 25-Dec-18 01:09 PM GMT

Cheers Bugboy 😊 I almost did Bugboy 😊 I think the butterflies saw more of me than my family 😊 Oh to have somewhere like as a local patch 🇩🇪  
Cheers Goldie 😊 It was spectacular to see and beat the Swallowtail hands down for looks in my book 😊

Have a fantastic Christmas everyone 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Wurzel

by Philzoid, 28-Dec-18 09:55 AM GMT

Another great report Wurzel with wonderful butterfly shots 😊 . That Scarce Swallowtail reminded me of my own boomerang Swallowtail (*P. machaon*) in Spain allowing you to get in close .... such exciting rare moments 😊 .



I'd hate to guess how many species you saw locally in that one week but it's blown my 2015 France + Andorra total of 40, into the weeds 🤖 . Plus, you've got a whole host of species that would be lifers for me. If only our next year's holiday to France was a bit further south 😊 .

I expect the surprises haven't ended here 🤔 Looking forward to your next (final?) and total list 😊

## Re: Wurzel

by Wurzel, 28-Dec-18 07:36 PM GMT

Cheers Phizloid 😊 I've still got two posts to go from The Dordogne – that was it for lifers and new species to the Tally but I haven't worked out the total yet though I suspect I might have seen as many species in a week as I did in the whole year in the UK 🤔😊 Northern France will still hold some great species – Large Chequered Skipper, Large Copper etc 😊😊

## Home tomorrow 20-08-2018 Part 2

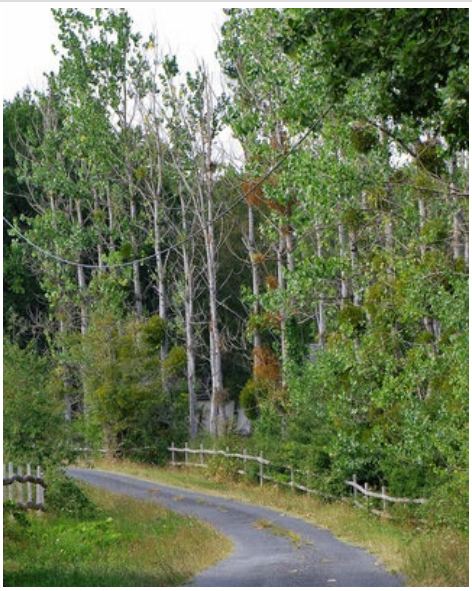
I headed out again later in between swims and just before tea. I didn't fancy the death run through the Horseflies on the left hand side of the lake so instead meandered my way along on the right hand side past the little patch of meadow that I visited at the start of the holiday. There were all the usual suspects, most looking a little worn or tattered.



I was aiming to get to the Cutting for a final look but I only got as far as the track on the other side of the Lake when a Great Banded Grayling flies up from the road and I stand rooted to the spot as it glides this way and that, always looking like it's about to land only it seldom does and on the rare occasions that it does it stays down for only a fraction of a second before deciding that there is somewhere better elsewhere. Finally it plops itself down on the fence and I can now attempt a stalk. I sneak up , take a shot, take a step, take a shot, take a step, shot, step, shot, step and then it's gone again. It looks like it landed in the alley between the Poplars closest to the fence so I hop over but can't relocate it. I then spend 10 minutes picking painful burrs off my feet and legs! I make my way back over the fence and there is the GBG I line myself up as it lands in the foliage on the other side of the road and I find I've got a cracking shot lined up. There it is framed by the grass but as I click away the camera won't focus on the butterfly – it wants to focus on the grass instead. Oh well you've got to leave something for next time, thinking of which – Mallow Skipper – where were those 'common' butterflies?



I mooched along the path hoping for a Mallow Skipper to pop up but one didn't and so I took a few record shots of the various parts of the site and also any butterflies that posed nicely for me including a resplendent Knapweed that shone out like a jewel amid all the tried looking butterflies.



*The Driveway*



*Across the Lake towards Elvensong*



*The 'secret' path to Elvensong*

I head back round to Elvensong and once back I drop the camera off, get changed and set myself back to 'Dad' mode and there's time for one more bout of swimming and boating before starting the horrible task of packing...I wonder what downtown Bordeaux will bring?

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## **Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 30-Dec-18 06:23 PM GMT

### **Heading Home 21-08-2018**

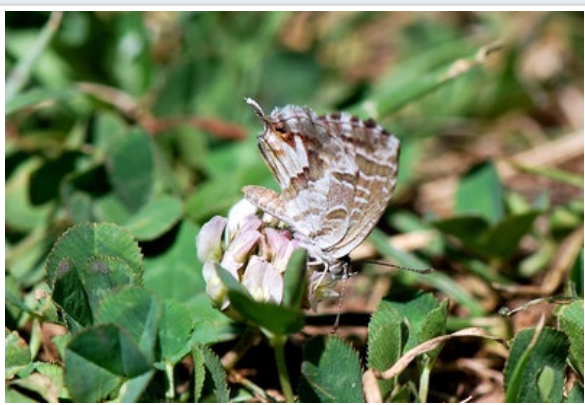
So the day had finally arrived. It was the day that I'd been dreading all week - today we were leaving Elvensong and heading back home. True there was the drive back and wandering round Bordeaux still to come but I didn't hold out any hope for adding to the tally and so I dejectedly packed my camera and begrudgingly packed the car all the while trying secretly hoping for a Mallow Skipper to pop up on the numerous trips to the car with the baggage. Then there was the drive back and the roads got progressively wider and it took more time to travel through the villages and then town until eventually we were on the Motorway. Long gone were the trees and fleeting views of Wood Whites and Frits to be replaced with signs for large commercial Vineyards and then burger joints in the rests stops and garages.

Driving into Bordeaux was a nightmare and only slightly less worrying as the Sat Nav was keeping up with the ever changing roads and streets. After a week in the hire car I was desperate not to get a scratch or ding on the final stretch but I didn't fancy my chances as now not only did I have to contend with city traffic but also silent running Trams that just appeared from nowhere. We managed to park and with some relief I exited the vehicle.

After strolling round seeing various sights (the wine museum in the distance the Cathedral, the old city gates, various squares) and finally finding a Boulangerie we also found a small park situated in the middle of a round about where we could rest up for a while in the shade. I had a little look around and it reminded me of butterflying in Lisbon (see a few posts later WINK) as back then we'd wander through the urban jungle seeking small parks which served as oases amid the stifling heat and grey buildings. It also reminded me of Lisbon because of the butterflies that I saw. Very few in fact. There was a very flighty Specklie, a fly-by White and finally a Geranium Bronze which unusually was the best behaved of the three species seen.



*I can now see why it's a 'Bronze'*



The holiday also ended with a Bang! Not hypothetically but literally! At the airport we had to queue to return the car to the Hire Car car park. We couldn't do the vehicle check and armed police in battle fatigues and brandishing Machine guns told us to stay inside the Europcar reception area. About 30 minutes later and we were still in there watching many more armed people moving this way and that. Then there was a massive "BANG!". It seems that someone had left a suitcase unattended and so it had been disposed of! Many hours later as we boarded the plane I had a sneaky look half expecting to still see a few pairs of pants and maybe the odd shoe on the run way but alas it was all clear. And so ended a truly epic excursion. What more can I say? Well adding up the total for the trip I saw more butterflies in a week than I ever have even in the best year. True the total of 50 species which I am truly chuffed with may seem like small beer for some foreign adventurers but then I was in a single locale, on a family holiday and without any expert guides leading me to the very best spots for the rarest of the rare and also with a greatly reduced timescale. It was more like I'd swapped my local patch. To me now though France will always equal Fritillaries and I am counting down the days until my next foreign foray! 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Wurzel, 31-Dec-18 09:01 AM GMT

Coming to a reality near you soon! For 365 days only!



Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Wurzel**

by Goldie M, 31-Dec-18 10:34 AM GMT

Really enjoyed your Holiday trip Wurzel and love the Calendar, all the best for the New Year and your next Holiday 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Wurzel**

by Maximus, 31-Dec-18 04:36 PM GMT

A nice end to your Dordogne trip with the Geranium Bronze, Wurzel 😊 Your write up clearly shows what's on offer in the depths of France 😊

Mike.