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Notes and Views, Issue 3 - January to April 2015

Vince Massimo and Peter Eeles

Abstract: This edition of Notes and Views provides a summary of interesting items posted on UK Butterflies and other media between 1st January and 30th April 2015.

Inter-species courtship

24 April 2015 ([Source](#))

A photo by Helen Hyre was posted on the website of the Upper Thames branch of Butterfly Conservation, which appears to show inter-species courtship between a male Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) and a female Peacock (*Aglais io*). A similar sight was captured by Vince Massimo in Crawley, Sussex, on 6th April 2015, although this was a male Peacock (*A. io*) and a female Small Tortoiseshell (*A. urticae*).



Inter-species courtship
Photo © Helen Hyre



Inter-species courtship
Photo © Vince Massimo

Large Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis polychloros*) in Sussex

06 April 2015 ([Source](#))

With many enthusiasts on the lookout for Scarce Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis xanthomelas*), it was somewhat surprising to see that a Large Tortoiseshell (*N. polychloros*) was sighted at Lullington Heath near Eastbourne, East Sussex on 6th April by Gary Norman.



Large Tortoiseshell (library pic)
Photo © Peter Eeles

Scarce Tortoiseshell (*N. xanthomelas*) overwinters

12 March 2015 ([Source](#))

Surely one of the main events of the year when a Scarce Tortoiseshell (*N. xanthomelas*) was seen on 12th March at Holt Country Park, Norfolk. Reported on [BugAlert](#). This proved to be the first of several such sightings as adults from 2014's influx came out of hibernation.



Scarce Tortoiseshell (library pic)
Photo © Derek Longhurst

Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) survives into the New Year

08 February 2015 ([Source](#))

Vince Massimo was able to confirm that a Red Admiral (*V. atalanta*) has (so far) successfully survived at a known overwintering site in Crawley, Sussex. An individual photographed at the site on 8th February 2015 was previously photographed at the same site on 6th December 2014.



Red Admiral
Photo © Vince Massimo



Red Admiral
Photo © Vince Massimo

Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) larva in January

11 January 2015 ([Source](#))

Rob Partridge found a Large White (*P. brassicae*) larva in his garden in Mepal, Cambridgeshire on 11th January 2015, despite this species typically overwintering as a pupa.



Large White larva
Photo © Rob Partridge

Red Admiral (*V. atalanta*) sightings continue into the New Year

08 January 2015 ([Source](#))

Sightings of Red Admiral (*V. atalanta*) carried on through December 2014 and into the New Year, which is not unusual for this species. In fact 2015 is the 7th Year in the last 11 where an adult has been sighted on 1st January (including one by William Langdon on 1st January 2015 at Exeter St. David's Railway Station).

What is more significant is that winter sightings of immature stages are also becoming common. The website of the Sussex Branch of Butterfly Conservation carried a report from Dave Harris on 7th January of "good numbers of both first instar caterpillars and unhatched eggs" in Newhaven, East Sussex. An update posted on 23rd January advised that "the last of the Red Admiral eggs laid on 29th November (2014) hatched today (exactly eight weeks as an ova), having endured winds, snow and frost to minus 3.5 degrees last night. The recent gales and cold seems to have done considerable damage to the nettles, however, and it was not possible to find evidence of any earlier hatchings, although hopefully they may be somewhere in the new growth just appearing at the dead stem bases."

A Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) on Christmas Day

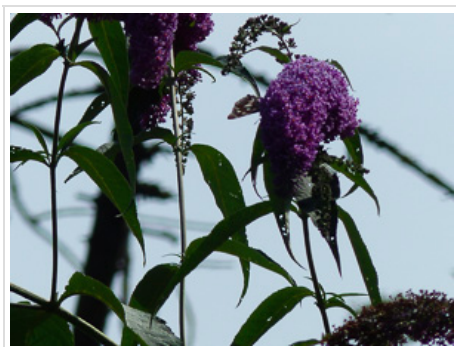
25 December 2014 ([Source](#))

A Speckled Wood (*P. aegeria*) was sighted on 25th December 2014 in Hampshire as reported at www.havantnature.net.

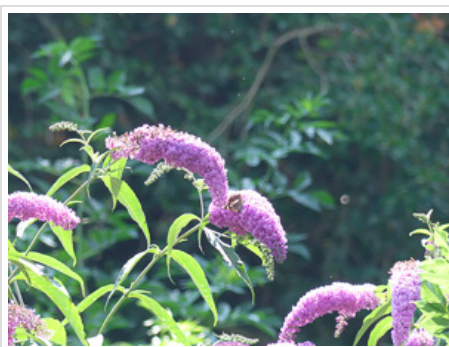
Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*) female on Buddleia

25 July 2014 ([Source](#))

An old sighting but worth a mention. Tim Norriss reports "On 25 July I walked around my local nature reserve at Rooksbury Mill, Andover, North Hampshire, primarily to look for moths attracted to the A303 underpass lights which are left on 24/7. On my way round I noticed a large butterfly on a buddleia about 20m from the path. On raising binoculars I could see that it was a Purple Emperor that appeared to be nectaring on the flowers. I only had a bridge camera with me at the time with which I took some shots to confirm the id as it wasn't possible to get closer. At that distance I couldn't see the proboscis though in the 15 minutes or so that I was there the butterfly did move around as if it was drinking and even flew to another flower head. And there were 15 moth species at the underpass lights on that occasion - 182 species noted in 4 years."



Purple Emperor female
Photo © Tim Norriss



Purple Emperor female
Photo © Tim Norriss

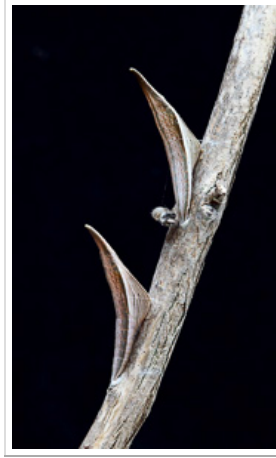
Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*) rearing notes

31 May 2014 ([Source](#))

Observations and images from Mike Skittrall dating back to May 2014 relating to Orange-tip (*A. cardamines*) larvae which were being reared. Photos show two larvae tolerating each other by pupating on the same twig. All cannibalistic tendencies seem to have been set aside by this point, possibly because their digestive systems have already shut down in preparation for pupation. Such an encounter would possibly be less likely in the wild.



Orange-tip larvae
Photo © Mike Skittrall



Orange-tip pupae
Photo © Mike Skittrall