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Notes and Views, Issue 5 - September to December 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 September and December 31st 2015.

December Oddities

31 December 2015 ([Source](#))

Several species (and their immature stages) have been noted out of season, in December, which was unusually wet and warm.

- 30th December: Small White (*Pieris rapae*) larvae were seen on cabbages at Four Marks, East Hampshire.
- 29th December: A Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) was seen flying at a garden centre in Chiswell Green by Richard Geary.
- 27th December: A freshly emerged Small White (*Pieris rapae*) was seen in Par, Cornwall as reported on Twitter by Andrew Cooper.
- Week leading up to 24th December: 6 Large Whites (*Pieris brassicae*) were reported as having emerged in a garden in Fulham by John Wolstenholm.
- 23rd December: A Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) was photographed at Halnaker Hill (near Chichester), West Sussex by a County Council countryside ranger. Another was also seen on the Essex Coast.
- 23rd December: A Speckled Wood (*Pararge aegeria*) was seen flying on the South Downs near Alciston, East Sussex by John Kerby.
- 21st/22nd December: A Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) larva was observed as having pupated on 21st December by Dave Harris in his garden in Newhaven, East Sussex. Another larva was seen still feeding on Brussel Sprouts on 22nd December in an Isle of Wight garden.
- 21st December: Dave Harris reported that Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) larvae of 3-5mm in length were feeding in his garden in Newhaven, East Sussex.
- 20th December: Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) larvae were seen feeding in Warbstow, Cornwall as reported on twitter via Andrew Cooper.
- 19th December: A Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) larva of 7mm was also being monitored by Vince Massimo in Crawley, West Sussex. It was last seen constructing a new shelter on 19th December.



Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

Photo © Vince Massimo

Overwintering Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) Larvae

21 November 2015 ([Source](#))

An excellent and interesting detailed report of overwintering Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) larvae as observed by Paul Harfield during the winter of 2014/2015.



Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*)

Photo © Paul Harfield

Sexing Hairstreaks based on Ratio of Head Size to Wing Length

15 November 2015 ([Source](#))

A fascinating way to sex hairstreaks is outlined by Jamie Burston using the size ratio of the head size compared to the length of the leading edge of the forewing. Apparently, males have relatively-large heads!

A 2013 Scarce Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis xanthomelas*) Record

08 November 2015 ([Source](#))

A photograph of a Scarce Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis xanthomelas*) taken at Beckley Woods, East Sussex, by Stuart Cooper, was found in the Sussex BC sightings archive, having been labelled incorrectly as a Large Tortoiseshell. The significant factor is that this sighting, on 12th March 2014, implies that the butterfly overwintered here and must have arrived in the UK during the summer of 2013. This pre-dates the observed main influx of this species into Britain in 2015. With credit to Michael Blencowe for making the connection.



Scarce Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis xanthomelas*)

Photo © Stuart Cooper

Late Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*)

31 October 2015 ([Source](#))

Theresa Lux recorded a late male Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) at Newhaven, Sussex.

Late Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*)

28 October 2015 ([Source](#))

Peter Farrant recorded a very late sighting of a female Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*) at Beeding cement works, West Sussex.

Potential Third Brood Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*)

18 October 2015 ([Source](#))

Andrew Cooper recorded a very late Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*), which could indicate a third brood of this normally double-brooded species.

Purple Hairstreak (*Favonius quercus*) Behaviour

13 October 2015 ([Source](#))

The report of possible Purple Hairstreak (*Favonius quercus*) courtship behaviour in [Issue 4 of Notes and Views](#) from an Italian source has prompted some interesting additional observations. The first comes from Jamie Burston, [who suggests that it may be aggressive behaviour](#), while Neil Freeman reminds us that he documented similar (aggressive) behaviour [in a series of photos](#) posted in his personal diary in 2014.



Purple Hairstreak (*Favonius quercus*)

Photo © Neil Hulme

Long-tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*) Emergence

08 October 2015 ([Source](#))

Sightings of newly-emerged Long-tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*) continued into October, but only small numbers were reported as the weather had declined since September:

- 8th October: A fresh male was photographed at Beeding Cement Works, Sussex by Neil Hulme.
- 25th October: Two more fresh individuals (a male and a female) were seen by many at Beeding Cement Works, but the female had been there since 23rd. Neil Hulme found two more fresh females near Lancing Railway Station, one of which was aberrant.
- 26th October: Mark Colvin located a male at Newhaven, Sussex which was still there the following day.
- 27th October: Mark Colvin found a male and a (probable) female at Brighton Racecourse.
- 28th October: Neil Hulme located a freshly emerged male with very short tails at Southwick, Shoreham.
- 31st October: Neil Hulme located a fresh female at Brighton Racecourse.
- 1st November: Mark Colvin found a fresh male at Brighton Racecourse. This is the first Sussex record of a sighting in November. Later that day Neil Hulme found a male at Lancing Station.
- 11th November: A male Long-tailed Blue was seen by Neil Hulme at Brighton Racecourse.



Long-tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*) aberration
Photo © Neil Hulme

Late Dark Green Fritillaries (*Aglais aglaja*)

03 October 2015 ([Source](#))

Very late Dark Green Fritillaries (*Aglais aglaja*) were seen at Birling Gap, East Sussex, by UKB member "John C".

Late Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*)

02 October 2015 ([Source](#))

A very late Small Skipper (*Thymelicus sylvestris*) was recorded in Derbyshire.

Second Brood Map (*Araschnia levana*) Sighted in Norfolk

28 September 2015 ([Source](#))

UKB Member "HarassedDad" reports a sighting of a second-brood Map in Norfolk. It was seen at the entrance to Pentney Park caravan site (TF742141). The observer inquired at the park and a Dutch family in a camper van confirmed that they had found a black and white butterfly flying around their van the previous evening and had released it.

Possible Essex Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola*) Range Expansion

07 September 2015 ([Source](#))

Paul Simmons sighted an Essex Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola*) at Brockdale Nature Reserve in South Yorkshire (Magnesian Limestone grassland). This may extend the northern limit of its range in the British Isles.

Long-tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*) Sightings

01 September 2015 ([Source](#))

A series of Long-tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*) sightings were made in early September:

- 1st September: Dave Brown noted that a Long-tailed Blue was seen and photographed at Dungeness near the gorse about 20 metres West of the Old Lighthouse.
- 2nd September: Dave Brown reported that more were seen at an undisclosed site in Kent.
- 5th September: Another sighting of a male in Bognor Regis, Sussex, was made by Joseph and Duncan Reavey. This was reported on the [Sussex BC website](#) and includes photos. Another (possibly the same individual) was seen the following day very nearby.
- 8th September: A mating pair was photographed at an undisclosed site in Sussex by Neil Hulme and UKB Member "Butterflysaurs rex".
- 11th September: Two males were photographed at Brighton racecourse in Sussex By Neil Hulme, who provided [a comprehensive analysis](#).
- 19th September: Two fresh females (one photographed) were seen at a site near Newhaven, Sussex by Neil Hulme and others, signalling the anticipated emergence of a new brood (as predicted).
- 20th September: Long-tailed Blues started to emerge at other sites along the southern coast. A fresh male was seen by Steve Maskell in Dorset on 20th September. Reported on BC Dorset twitter feed and [a Flickr site](#).
- 23rd September: Two Long-tailed Blues were seen in Kent, as reported by UKB member "Maximus".
- 26th September: Another butterfly was seen by Neil Hulme at Lancing.



Long-tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*), 19th September, from a site near Newhaven, Sussex
Photo © Neil Hulme