

Country Notes for September 2021

The beginning of September has seen the return of some reasonable summer weather after a rather dismal August. It has not been a particularly special year for most butterflies but when my buddleia and lavender were in flower my garden was crowded with them. There were lots of red admirals and peacocks. There were also small tortoiseshells, panted lady, holly blue, brimstone, meadow brown, gatekeeper, large white, small white and green veined white. The special guest however was a rather ragged silver washed fritillary on my buddleia which was not only a first in my garden for the year, but a first ever!

Silver washed fritillaries, and white admirals, may be seen on the Hucking Estate on the right day and in the right place, but imagine my surprise when I was driving my car along the road to Hucking when a silver washed fritillary flew in through the window! It had no intention of leaving and as it was fluttering around on the screen in front of me I was forced to pull over and help it escape! They really are beautiful butterflies. They are quite large and have a fairly floppy flight. The males are a vivid orange with black spots and dashes and the females are slightly more brown. It is always very exciting to see a silver washed fritillary and I felt honoured that it had joined me for a brief part of my journey!

One butterfly which has left its appearance until fairly late this year is the speckled wood, with its brown colouring and cream spots. They tend to waft rather than fly and particularly like woodland glades. I saw my first ones for this year in Hucking Woods a few days into September and one on Hollingbourne Meadows a few days later.

Let's hope that the weather remains reasonable for what is left of summer, and that as summer drifts into autumn later this month, we can report more interesting butterfly sightings.

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