

## Country Notes for June 2026

As I write this in the first part of May the weather has suddenly turned a lot colder with showers and even a recent frost. On the whole, however, spring this far has been very warm and very dry and this has been good for our butterflies. There have been encouraging numbers of orange tips and the wonderful yellow brimstones, holly blues have appeared in good numbers and there have been plenty of peacocks, red admirals and whites. Commas and small tortoiseshells however have been noticeably down on last year. The butterfly of the spring so far though has been the painted lady.

Painted ladys are about the size of a red admiral and are strong fliers; they need to be as they travel here from North Africa and Southern Spain! They are a pinky orange colour with white, black and grey markings and are about the same size and shape as a red admiral. At this time of the year they favour lilacs, although later on in the season they may often be seen on buddlejas. At this time of year the ones we see will most probably have migrated here, although a few may manage to overwinter. Later on in the season they will have bred here, their caterpillars having fed on nettles and thistles.

This is the month when later on spring turns to summer and it is exciting to think what butterflies we may see in the months to come, both in our gardens and the wonderful countryside surrounding our villages.

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