

Butterflies Adventures by Elliott Staley

When I was six years old (I am now 11 years old) I was given a digital Camera for Christmas. In the summer my Mum and Dad took me out, however, I couldn't take photos of Birds, as my camera's zoom wasn't big enough; therefore, I started to take photos of Butterflies. Soon I found I could take photographs as good as my Dad!

The first butterfly I remember seeing was a Green Veined White probably (just a white butterfly to me and I thought nothing more about it). At the age of two my parents took me to see Large Blue (which obviously I don't remember seeing...). Some of my friends told me they have seen Cabbage white and wondered why I have never seen this butterfly! I have never seen one because there is no such Butterfly, it was just a white butterfly people have seen (Green Veined, Large or Small White)



Small Tortoiseshell at Hilton, Derbyshire

Three years ago my Dad finally saw his last Butterfly he needed to see in Great Britain, Glanville Fritillary in Dorset. Later on in the same year my Mum also saw her last butterfly: Swallowtail, in Norfolk. This made me even more determined to see all of the British butterflies. That year as well as going to see Birds we travelled to see butterflies I can't remember which ones but at the end of that year, I hadn't realised this, but I now only needed to see about five more butterflies for my UK list.

In 2008 we travelled to see as many butterflies as possible. Although we saw three out of the five butterflies I needed, which were: Pearl-bordered Fritillary at Wyre Forest, Large Blue at Collard Hill and Chequered Skipper near Fort William in Scotland. I now needed to see two more butterflies Heath Fritillary and Duke of Burgundy. I did well considering that some of the butterflies were around at the same time and the weather wasn't very good!

I kept a list of all the Butterflies I had seen in a small book published by DK. Then we travelled to see one of my favourites Purple Emperor, and also Adonis Blue, Wood White, Dingy and Grizzled Skippers and lots more.

This year I only need to see two more butterflies until I had completed my mission to see all the British Butterflies. I travelled all the way to Dunstable to see my penultimate Butterfly: Duke of Burgundy, after a bit of walking we eventually found where they were, however, it took us about 5 minutes to find it in that area. I was ecstatic when I first saw it and photographed it. Finally we travelled for two and a half hours to Southend-on-Sea. We parked in a small village and after a two minute walk we arrived at the site we had been told about. The next thing I knew was that they were everywhere about 400 Heath Fritillaries and that was a spectacular end to my mission of seeing all the British butterflies! We found an aberrant Heath Fritillary which was very unusual and my photograph of it was on the Butterfly conservation website for the area.



Heath Fritillaries at Starvelarks Wood, Essex

Now I continue to go to sites to try and get better photographs of them. Additionally I am doing drawings of them.

Finally this mission has led to another to see more Moths as there are a lots more of them to see and this year I have discovered that dragonflies are also very interesting. If you would like to see some more of my butterfly photographs I will be at the DANES insect show at Broomfield College on 7th November, where I will also be selling bookmarks and calendars with my photographs on. All profits from these sales will go to Butterfly Conservation. Last year these sales raised over £30 for Butterfly Conservation at Prees Heath where Silver-studded Blues are found at their only site in the Midlands.



Purple Emperor at Fermyn Woods, Northants

