

## Country Notes for July 2024

What a glorious time of year July is! This is the first full month of summer and everything seems to be growing apace. The grass in the fields seems to have shot up in the last few weeks and is looking wonderful with its flowers and seed heads on the top of its long stems. Nestling among the grasses are the beautiful flowers of the ox eye daisies, with their white petals and orange centres. At the time of writing in mid June the hedgerows are full of the flowers of the dog rose, a name which belies the splendour of their single white and pink flowers. The fact that they have little scent is more than compensated for by the beauty of their flowers.

At the beginning of July the first meadow brown butterflies have started to appear, with their rather floppy flight, as they move from grass stem to grass stem laying their eggs. These essentially brown butterflies are easily confused with gatekeepers. However gatekeepers appear a few weeks after meadow browns and are a little smaller. Their undersides are much the same but when their wings are open the male meadow browns are essentially brown all over with a small orange and brown eye of the forewings. The females also have an orange patch on their forewings but are essentially all brown, like the males, on their lower wings. Gatekeepers on the other hand, in addition to being smaller, have orange on all four wings plus a small brown eye on their forewings.

Both meadow browns and gatekeepers did well last year, so let's hope that the same happens this year.

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