

## Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 05-Jun-14 05:19 PM GMT

If I have gotten this right, this will be a Diary of my Butterfly watching activities.

Having spent approaching four years in search of Birds I feel I need a change.

Most of my birding activities take place locally beside the (tidal) Thames at Crossness and on the nearby Erith Marshes (formerly NW Kent now SE London).

So here I am; in search of both Birds and Butterflies. Not that I really know much about either of 'em although I'm old enough now not to let that bother me too much! As long as I can enjoy myself, that's all that really matters.

I have set myself a target of twenty-five Butterfly species for the year; reasonable I think/hope.

Especially since today I reached seventeen \* with a Meadow Brown tucked away on the Erith Marshes.

I also managed to spot a Large Skipper; my second of the year. Why they are called Large Skippers is however a mystery since they seem so teeny!

\* the seventeen species seen so far this year (the majority on the Erith Marshes) are as follows:

Brimstone  
Comma  
Common Blue  
Green Hairstreak  
Green-Veined White  
Holly Blue  
Large Skipper  
Large White  
Meadow Brown  
Orange Tip  
Painted Lady  
Peacock  
Red Admiral  
Small Heath  
Small Tortoiseshell  
Small White  
Speckled Wood

Mike .....

## Re: Mike Robinson

by Neil Freeman, 05-Jun-14 06:51 PM GMT

Hi Mike,

Good start to your diary, looking forward to see your further posts.

Cheers,

Neil.

## Re: Mike Robinson

by Wurzel, 06-Jun-14 11:50 AM GMT

Good start Mike 😊 Looking forward to reading further posts – I reckon you should easily be able to reach your target, especially if yo can get out onto some Downland in the coming weeks 😊 When you see a Smessex (Small or Essex) or Grizzled Skipper you'll soon understand why they're called Large Skipper 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

## Re: Mike Robinson

by Willrow, 07-Jun-14 04:07 PM GMT

Yes, good luck with your target Mike, and I reckon you can surpass 25 species this year comfortably 😊

Bill 😊

"When in doubt...venture out"

## Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 08-Jun-14 07:51 PM GMT

Gentlemen: many thanks for the kind words of encouragement.

## Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 08-Jun-14 08:09 PM GMT

We decided to venture further afield today (Sunday 8 June); and made our way down the A2/M2 to the Queendown Warren Nature Reserve. Not too easy a place to find.

We saw a few Butterflies; and quite a few Dogs!

Truth to tell, we didn't see too many Butterflies but we managed to spot a Green Hairstreak, a few Small Tortoiseshells, a few Common Blues and possibly a couple of Brown Arguses viz. see one below:



I have determined this to be a Brown Argus Butterfly due to the seeming lack of a forewing spot and the black line around the edge of the wing.

On looking at some pictures after arriving home I wondered if we had managed to spot a Small Blue Butterfly; see below:



The tentative identification is based on the pattern of the spots on the outside of the wing.

We were restricted by time so had to rather rush round.

## Re: Mike Robinson

by MikeOxon, 08-Jun-14 08:11 PM GMT

As Wurzel wrote - you have to understand 'Large' in the context of the Small Skipper.

Perhaps I should warn you that, if you go looking for Large Blue, DO NOT expect something like a Blue Morpho or you will be severely disappointed 😊

Mike

## Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 08-Jun-14 08:15 PM GMT

Mike: Thanks; I'm coming to terms with the 'Large' Skipper now.

Kind regards ~ Mike .....

## Re: Mike Robinson

by Wurzel, 08-Jun-14 11:51 PM GMT

That looks like a Brown Argus to me Mike, you're correct to use the lack of the spot on the fore wing to help ID but they don't always show you that part 😊 I'm not too sure about the Small Blue – they tend to end up looking brownly/purple when worn rather than blue as those scales quickly rub off the males. 😊 Anyway a few more species to get you towards your tally target 😊

Have a godun

Wurzel

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 09-Jun-14 08:13 AM GMT

Dear Wurzel:

Thanks. I'm relaxed with the Brown Argus (this and other characters). However, I was 'hoping' rather than 'thinking' that the other Butterfly was a Small Blue Butterfly; not really the right way to look at it. I think that I shall continue to seek my first Small Blue Butterfly.

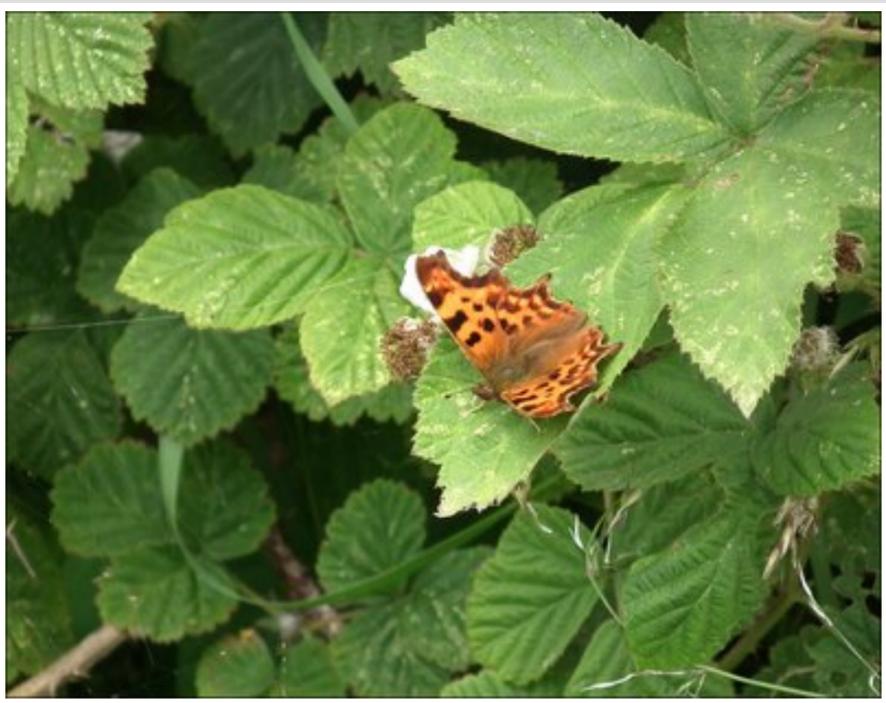
Kind regards ~ Mike .....

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 09-Jun-14 04:23 PM GMT

Back down to the Erith Marshes today before it rained early-afternoon. Except that it didn't rain at all!

The usual characters were present including the first Comma Butterfly I had seen there for a few weeks:



I noticed a very faded Peacock Butterfly; however I spotted a couple of hundred or Caterpillars so we should have some nice new Butterflies fairly soon:



I always seem to manage a few Large Skipper Butterflies:



Hopefully some Small Skipper Butterflies and Essex Skipper Butterflies will make their presence known fairly soon. I imagine I shall have some awkward moments trying to identify them though!

There are quite a few very fresh looking Small Tortoiseshell Butterflies whooshing around; also a few Common Blue Butterflies:



Additionally, a few Small White Butterflies were busying themselves. I know less about Moths than I do about Butterflies (which ain't very much!); but I managed to spot and identify a couple of Cinnabar Moths and a (rather handsome to my mind) Burnet Companion Moth:



So rather a good outing; by my standards at least. Plus I also spotted six Lapwings on the Marsh; occasional visitors during the Summer. And six Teals on the nearby Thames.

**Re: Mike Robinson**

by David M, 09-Jun-14 07:03 PM GMT

**"Mike Robinson" wrote:**

The usual characters were present including the first Comma Butterfly I had seen there for a few weeks

Great stuff! Personally I've not seen a Comma since April and was beginning to worry about them.

**Re: Mike Robinson**

by Mike Robinson, 10-Jun-14 01:30 AM GMT

Thanks for noticing this &c. ....

**Re: Mike Robinson**

by Wurzel, 10-Jun-14 09:31 AM GMT

Great shots Mike, they put the butterflies nicely in context 😊 I too haven't seen a Comma since the spring – so the one you have there is the summer form hutchinsoni – it looks more golden and 'two tone' than the spring/late summer adults – very nice find, I'll start keeping my eyes open for my own now 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Mike Robinson**

by Mike Robinson, 11-Jun-14 02:53 PM GMT

Thanks ....

## Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 13-Jun-14 04:38 PM GMT

A few visits down to the local Erith Marshes and the nearby Thames during the past few days. However, with it being sunny and warm I'm turning red!

That being said, I have been lucky and managed to see a variety of Butterfly species viz.:

Brimstone

Comma:



Common Blue:



Large Skipper:



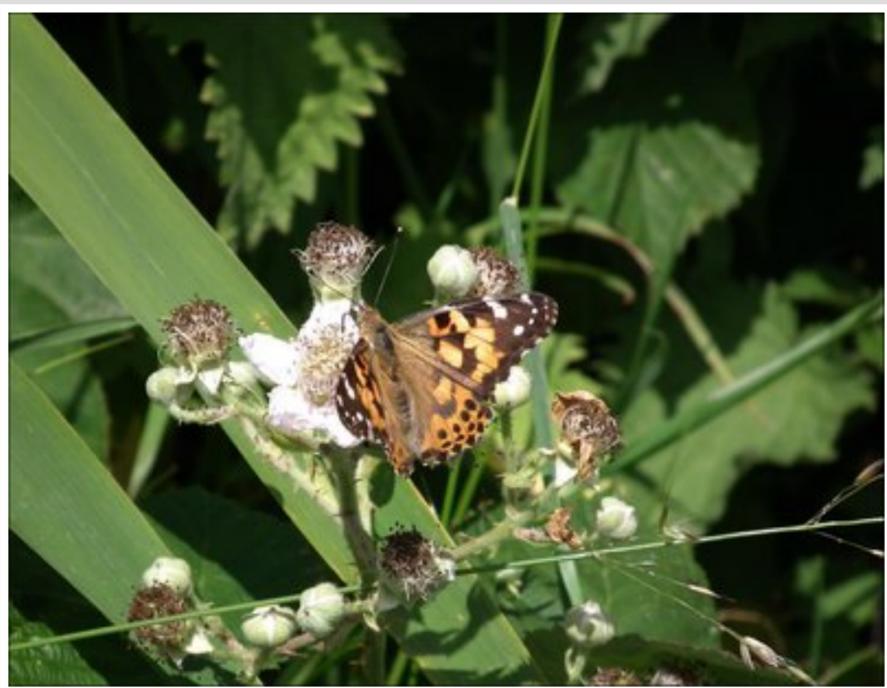
Large White  
Green-Veined White:



Meadow Brown:



Painted Lady:



Peacock (which landed on my foot)  
Red Admiral:



Small Skipper:



Small Tortoiseshell:



Small White  
Speckled Wood

I'm now thinking it might be possible to see at least twenty Butterfly species here on the Marshes and the surrounding area. I know we shouldn't really think numerically (just enjoy what we have) but I think I would find that very pleasing.

It is fairly quiet in terms of birds although the Reed Warblers, Cetti's Warblers, Sedge Warblers &c. have been noisy. However, I managed to snap a Common Tern whooshing and swooshing above the Outfall of the Crossness Sewage Works:



**Re: Mike Robinson**

by Hoggers, 13-Jun-14 04:59 PM GMT

Hi Mike I've really enjoyed reading your diary and you've identified a moth for me – the Burnet Companion Moth.

I've seen a few on my patch, mistaking them for butterflies, and I never knew their name until I read your diary!

Cheers

Hoggers

**Re: Mike Robinson**

by Mike Robinson, 13-Jun-14 05:07 PM GMT

You are very kind. Thanks.

I think Burnet Companions are very handsome arrangements.

**Re: Mike Robinson**

by Pauline, 13-Jun-14 07:00 PM GMT

Great shot of the Large Skipper, Mike and well done for spotting a Small Skipper 😊 . I was looking for them today but no joy 😞

**Re: Mike Robinson**

by Mike Robinson, 14-Jun-14 12:27 PM GMT

You are very kind; thank you .....

**Re: Mike Robinson**

by Goldie M, 14-Jun-14 03:53 PM GMT

Love the Skipper inside the flower Mike 😊 Goldie 😊

**Re: Mike Robinson**

by Wurzel, 14-Jun-14 08:19 PM GMT

love that Large Skipper shot Mike – it's mining for gold 😊 The Tern shot is pretty cracking too 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

**Re: Mike Robinson**

by Mike Robinson, 17-Jun-14 06:35 PM GMT

Back down to the Erith Marshes &c. after a weekend break. It is very quiet bird-wise so it looks like I made the right decision to focus on Butterflies &c. I'm certainly enjoying it.

There seem to be a few more Green-Veined White Butterflies about again although perhaps I just haven't noticed them recently.

There are lots of Small Tortoiseshell and Large Skipper Butterflies.

A few more Meadow Brown Butterflies are appearing and hopefully the first Gatekeeper Butterfly will be with us very soon.

And it's always nice to see the Common Blue Butterflies.

Other Butterflies seen include Speckled Woods and Commas.

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 17-Jun-14 06:37 PM GMT

Goldie M & Wurzel:

I have just noticed I didn't thank you for the kind comments on the commentary dated Friday 13 June. So Sorry and Thank You.

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 11-Jul-14 12:25 AM GMT

Proving to myself that I don't need to travel far to see Butterflies, recent local sightings have included:

[i] Gatekeepers viz.:



[ii] (first ever) Ringlets viz.:



and [iii] (first-ever) Small Coppers viz.:



So now; twenty-three species for the year in pursuit of my target of twenty-five.

But that doesn't seem to matter anymore since I have really enjoyed my recent Butterflying, Butterfly-Watching, Butterfly-Spotting (call it what you will) activities with some species knowingly seen for the first time viz. Ringlets and Small Coppers.

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Wurzel, 12-Jul-14 07:45 AM GMT

Love the Small Copper shot Mike. 😊 If you can get to some good Down Land in the next few weeks you should be able to pick off the last couple of species to meet your target easily – what are you planning for next year 😊

Have a goodun  
Wurzel

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 13-Jul-14 08:50 AM GMT

Dear Wurzel: thanks.

A crocked knee has restricted my travel recently but I'm hoping to get out and about more soon so that should help me reach the twenty-five and probably beyond.

Next year? To enjoy myself as much as I have over the past couple of months! With Birds, Butterflies and Wild Plants (not that I know much about any of them) there will always be something unexpected, new &c.

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 16-Jul-14 08:30 PM GMT

A first ever trip yesterday to Fackenham Down (in Kent); the slopes are very, very steep. Thankfully it's all downhill on the way back to the car!

Butterflies seen included: Chalk Hill Blue (first ever ~ see below), Marbled White (first ever ~ see below), Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Brimstone, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell (see below), Comma &c.





And tomorrow; probably back down to the local Marshes &c.

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Wurzel, 16-Jul-14 10:01 PM GMT

Lovely smoky winged Chalk Hill Mike 😊 I like teh way that your shots capture the butterflies in their element. 😊 That's the one thing with my macro lens – it's close up pretty much all the way 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 18-Jul-14 08:14 AM GMT

Dear Wurzel; Thanks very much.  
I very much like your pictures too .....

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 22-Jul-14 06:44 PM GMT

A very pleasant if albeit warm day on the Erith Marshes; thankfully I had a large bottle of Lemon Barley Drink with me.

And very satisfactory, by my undemanding standards at least, in terms of Butterflies &c. seen.

These included:

Lots of Gatekeeper Butterflies; see one below on Common Ragwort in company with a Cinnabar Moth Caterpillar:



Quite a few Meadow Brown Butterflies (see two below):



A Holly Blue Butterfly (see below):



And one of many Small White Butterflies (see below):



Other Butterflies seen: Green-Veined Whites, Speckled Woods, Common Blues, Small/Essex Skippers (unsure of actual individual identities) and two Red Admirals.

And in addition to the Butterflies, I came across a Jersey Tiger Moth. I first saw one yesterday; I had never heard of them before! And now; another one today (in flight, they put me in mind of Red Admirals).



### Re: Mike Robinson

by Wurzel, 23-Jul-14 10:19 AM GMT

That Jersey Tiger is great Mike – I don't think I've ever seen one 🍷 😊

Have a goodun

Wurzel

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 23-Jul-14 07:16 PM GMT

Wurzel: thanks ....

### Re: Mike Robinson

by Mike Robinson, 25-Aug-14 01:30 PM GMT

Probably a last update for the year with my attention increasingly focused on Birds again; bringing once again the seemingly ever-present anxieties &c. concerning identification.

But with regard to Butterflies; during a trip to Rainham Marshes yesterday we spotted a Clouded Yellow Butterfly, a (female) Common Blue Butterfly and a Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly (see below):



I have thoroughly enjoyed my time Butterfly Watching this year and have managed twenty-nine different species (twenty-two locally); including many new ones for me.

I'm looking forward to seeing a similar number next year; and, if this year has been anything to go by, thoroughly enjoying myself again!

PS ... we also saw the Spotted Crake currently residing on Rainham Marshes; if albeit at a tidy distance ...

### **Re: Mike Robinson**

by Pauline, 26-Aug-14 01:18 PM GMT

Just catching up Mike and yes, great jersey Tiger 🇯🇲 (I have never seen one either). It has been a great season hasn't it 😊 . Enjoy your birding but be sure to come back 😊