



During lockdown I regularly walked in Scrubs on Old Oak Common and Little Scrubs near my home in West London with my daughter and her dog.

Both spaces are unusual for an inner city in so far as they each have wild areas of woodland, meadow grassland and scrub that can feel like you are in the countryside. With good ground cover for nesting birds and resting places for those in transit. We see foxes throughout the year and in the summer a fair number of butterflies flitting among the wild flowers and tall grasses. There are playing fields, model aeroplaners, footpaths, joggers and walkers. Last year HS2 construction took over a chunk of the common, destroying a large area of brambles and I know there are lots of other pressures facing these natural habitats for wildlife.

Reconnecting with nature I am photographing butterflies again - Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns, Small, Large and Essex Skippers, Small Heaths, Ringlets and a rare Black Hairstreak. Perhaps I will see Small Blues and Brown Hairstreaks in the Scrubs next summer. In the meantime I have Amalia and Digby to thank for getting me out and about exploring the countryside again.

Lockdown



Out at the crack of dawn as my light source appears above the rising skyline of skyscrapers to the East of Wormwood Scrubs. Winter has dragged on, the arrival of spring slow, an unsettled summer and autumn brings it's golden leaves, fungi and falling temperatures. During the course of the year I have reconnected with nature in the heart of London photographing butterflies on the common, two species of which I had not seen before.

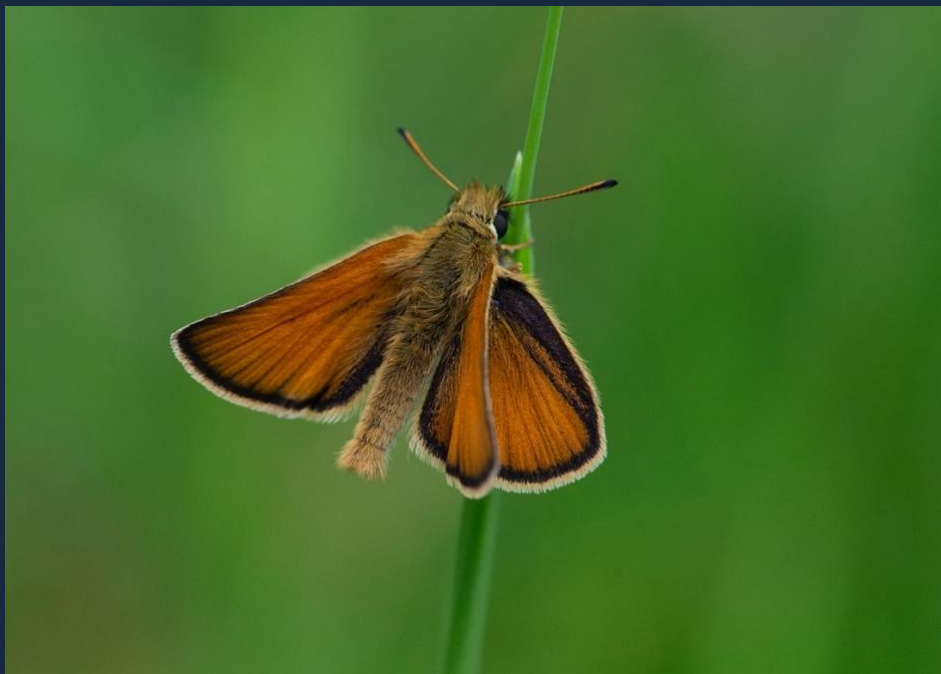
Lockdown

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Black Hairstreak (*Satyrium pruni*) in silhouette. July '21.

Apparently the first recording in history of a
Black Hairstreak in Middlesex and Hertfordshire



Essex Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola*) male. June '21

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