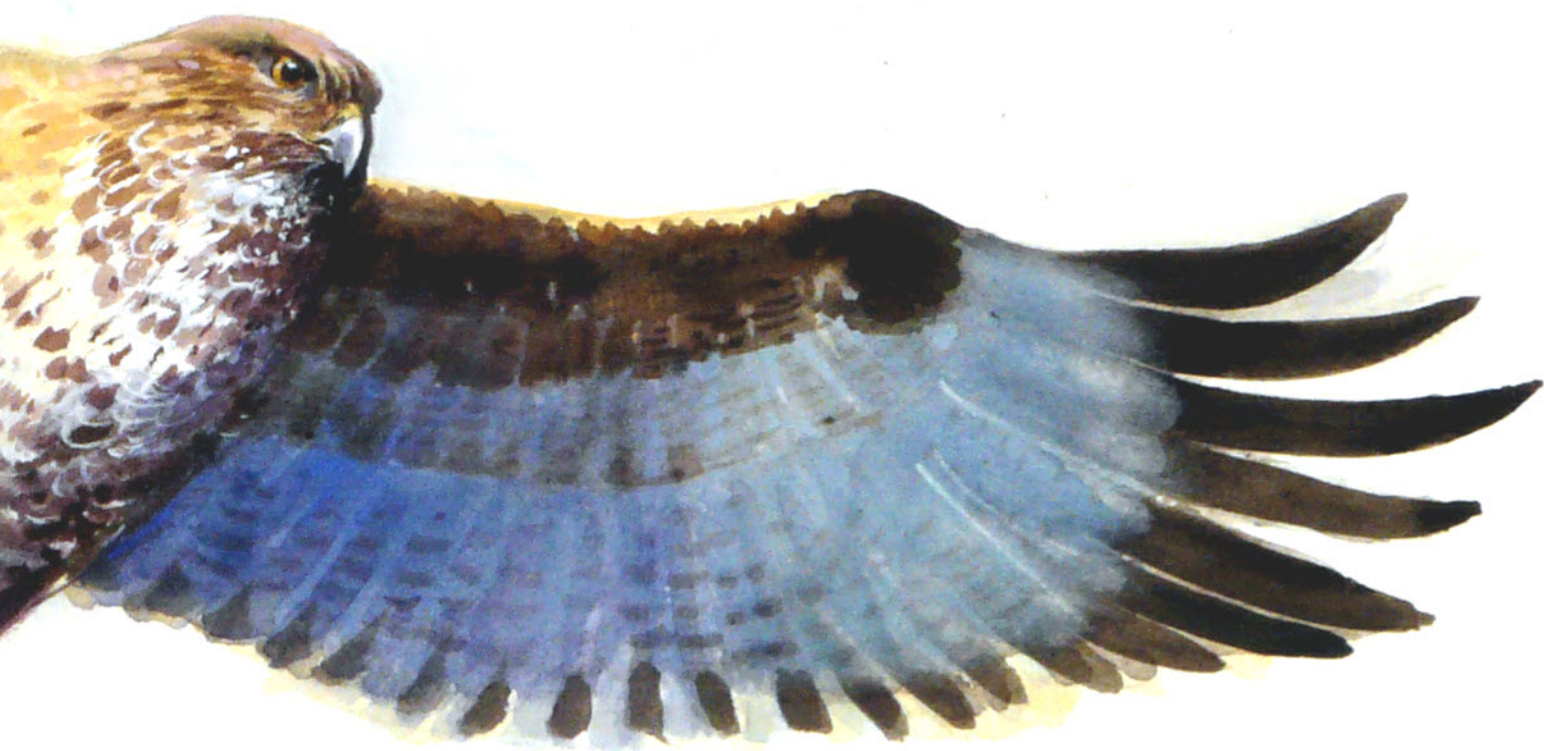


*The track winds up between the scars, used by farmers and shooters and enjoyed by walkers. The soil on the next plateau is thinly spread; short-cropped grass is scattered with tormentil, bedstraw, wild thyme, buttercups and eyebright. The crinkle-skinned puffballs remind me of how we used to stamp on them as children, to watch the spores burst out and be carried off in the wind to find the next perfect place to grow. Resisting the temptation, I sit on a limestone outcrop to catch my breath and admire the expanded view, whilst a massive buzzard circles above. I can hear a shoot in progress over the far side.*

*The last haul up to the final gate takes me over boggy peatland, constantly eroded by rivulets of water streaming over and draining down, wandering off to the next level, joining with others, getting wider and gaining momentum. Some of the loose rocks here are gritstone embedded with a variety of pebbles, looking like concrete but actually a natural and ancient conglomerate.*

*Reaching the moor gate I pass through it into a rocky heathland - true moor. Goodbye to walls and welcome to wide horizons. Much of the heather has 'gone over', no longer purple but a series of salmon pinks, pale umber and tawny cream. Striding on past the boundary markers, on top of the world, I remember the saying:*



*'you can feel the soul of the countryside through the soles of your feet.'*

*Sitting to draw - boots off, my bare feet in direct contact with the turf, I realise that the midges are out in plenty. Looking first at the horizons, where one line takes over from another, I become aware that there is complete silence. I search now for features in what appears to be a featureless landscape, and a buzzing hoverfly settles on my pencil. With the sun in the right direction I can see that the heather is all wrapped about with a crisscrossing of shining silken threads. As my eyes explore the landscape before me a tickle on my skin distracts me, a tiny peacock-green beetle is exploring the landscape of my arm.*

*An occasional white moth and several bees sip the last of the heather nectar...*