

Re: M_galathea

by m_galathea, 01-May-11 07:10 PM GMT

30th April 2011:

Back in my home county of Sussex for a rather decent butterfly watching session today. A short stop at Kithurst hill revealed an unexpected 12 species, including a **Duke, Dingy Skippers** (nectaring on Bugle) and some lovely fresh **Green Hairstreaks**. *Adela reaumurella* was in abundance too.

Next was Houghton Forest where 10 species were noted. A single **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** was present and also a handful of **Grizzled Skippers** (nectaring on Germander Speedwell) and **Small Coppers** in a felled area.

The ground flora was characteristic of felled woodland and included Sanicle, Sweet Woodruff, Wood Spurge etc. Interestingly there was lots of the pink form of Bugle which is also present in the nearby Rewell Wood. A location I previously lived near to in Devon with a very large PBF colony had the white form of Bugle – obviously these fritillaries and Bugle diversity go hand in hand!

I walked to another excellent woodland in which Kipper/BC have done an excellent job on – at least three key species have expanded their range here as hoped. I also had a chat with Martin – a pleasure to meet you.



A fresh **Green Hairstreak** at Kithurst Hill.



Male **Common Blue** at Kithurst Hill.



Male Common Blue at Kithurst Hill.



Brown Argus at Kithurst Hill.



Male Pearl-bordered Fritillary at Houghton Forest.



Grizzled Skipper at Houghton Forest.



Female Duke of Burgundy near Arundel.

Re: M_galathea

by m_galathea, 17-May-11 04:09 AM GMT

14th May 2011:

Today I went for a walk with a friend to Strawberry Banks in Gloucestershire. This is a small nature reserve that proved to be good for butterflies. There were a few **Dingy Skippers** and **Small Blues** on the wing, and unlike other places I've seen Small Blue, the Kidney Vetch was obvious.

Marsh Fritillaries were the most numerous species seen, with many fights going on. The males were chasing off **Common Blues** in particular which were also fairly numerous. Most of the Marsh Fritillaries were found around the bottom of the bank where it is most sheltered. Other species seen included a single **Green Hairstreak**, **Large White** and **Speckled Wood**.

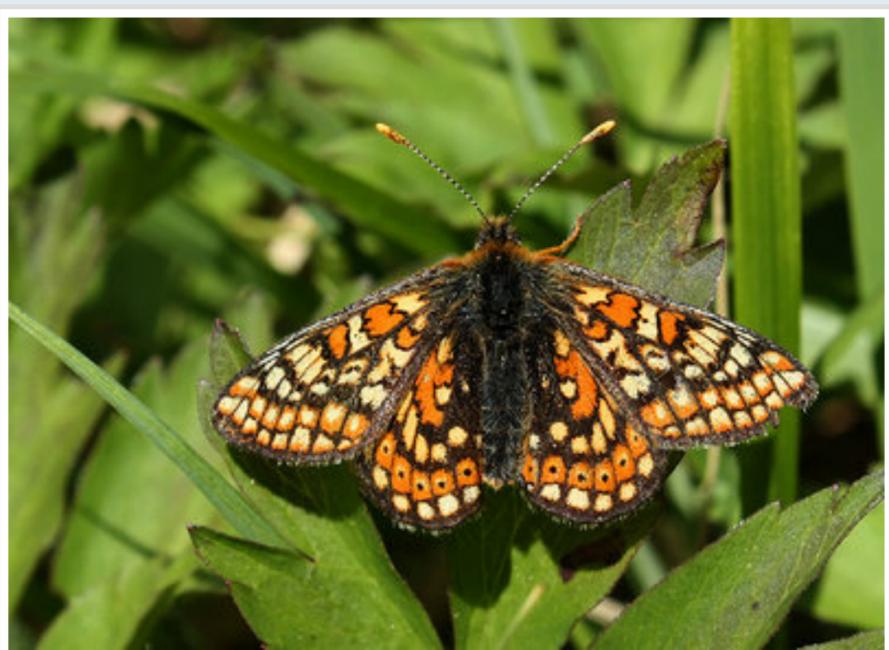
The plant life here was interesting too with some species I would usually associate with woodland such as Aquilegia. Other notable species were Early-purple, Common-spotted and Lesser Butterfly Orchids, Spurge Laurel in the woods and Sainfoin.



Common Blues, mating.



Lesser Butterfly Orchid



Marsh Fritillary



Marsh Fritillary



Sainfoin

Re: M_galathea

by m_galathea, 18-May-11 06:05 AM GMT

14th May 2011:

In the afternoon I went for a quick stroll around Rodborough Common. The conditions were far below that of earlier in the day and so there were not many butterflies flying. A handful of **Small Heaths** were about, and on the more sheltered eastern side single male **Common** and **Adonis Blues** showed briefly.

The woodland edges were interesting for their orchid flora. White helleborines must have numbered over 200 in one area including 40 which I counted growing under Hazel in deep shade. Common Twayblade was common here too. The habitat looked good for Fly Orchids, and despite searching I did not find any.

At the most northern point of the common were a number of patches of Star-of-Bethlehem which I presume is introduced in this location.



Adonis Blue



Star of Bethlehem



White Helleborine

Re: *M_galathea*

15th May 2011:

Woolhope Dome, Herefordshire.

The Woolhope Dome is a rich area which contains a mosaic of woodland and limestone grassland. Despite the weather I had a good time with a few butterflies seen.

Haugh Wood is at the centre of the dome and is a decent example of how woodland management can support some of our rarer species despite past abuse including spraying with DDT etc.

Wood Whites were flying in the light drizzle – in total 5 were seen along a wide ride which was similar to their habitat in the Wyre Forest being on the side of the hill.

The only other butterfly seen was a **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** which flew briefly when the rain eased. Flora included Greater Butterfly Orchid.

The Crown Inn served good ale.



Wood White



Wood White habitat in Haugh Wood.



Wood White habitat in the Wyre Forest, May 2010.

Back from an excellent week-long stay in Scotland. The wildlife was fantastic; the highlights included: Golden Eagle, Ptarmigan, Snow Bunting and many highland wild flowers that were new me.

In terms of butterflies, the highlight for a southern observer was the **Chequered Skipper** as one might expect. My first encounter was on **30th May** of a fast-flying, bouncing butterfly just two minutes walk from the cottage we stayed in at Stronaba. I caught up with this rather good looking skipper soon after for a closer look. The habitat was a wet heath on the edge of a plantation dominated by Spagnum mosses, Sweet Gale and Bracken. This is not a location shown on the map published by Glasgow and SW Scotland BC. Scotland has an abundance of wild places and so get out there and find them!

My next encounter was again on the edge of a plantation (**30th May** – afternoon), this time on a steep south facing bracken slope, close to Glenfinnan. Had I spent more time in the glens and not up mountains every time the sun shone I'm sure I would have seen more! My friend found a moth here which I haven't been able to identify yet.

On the 31st May I went for a long walk up over the Grey Corries, a most excellent ridge. The way down followed a grassy moor which was rich in flowers. I found a moth here, resting on Moss Campion – again I'm not sure of its identity, although I suspect it may be a Brocade.



Chequered Skipper, Stronaba.



Chequered Skipper, Fraoch Bheinn.



Unknown moth – any ideas?



Possibly a Brocade of some sort?

Re: M_galathea

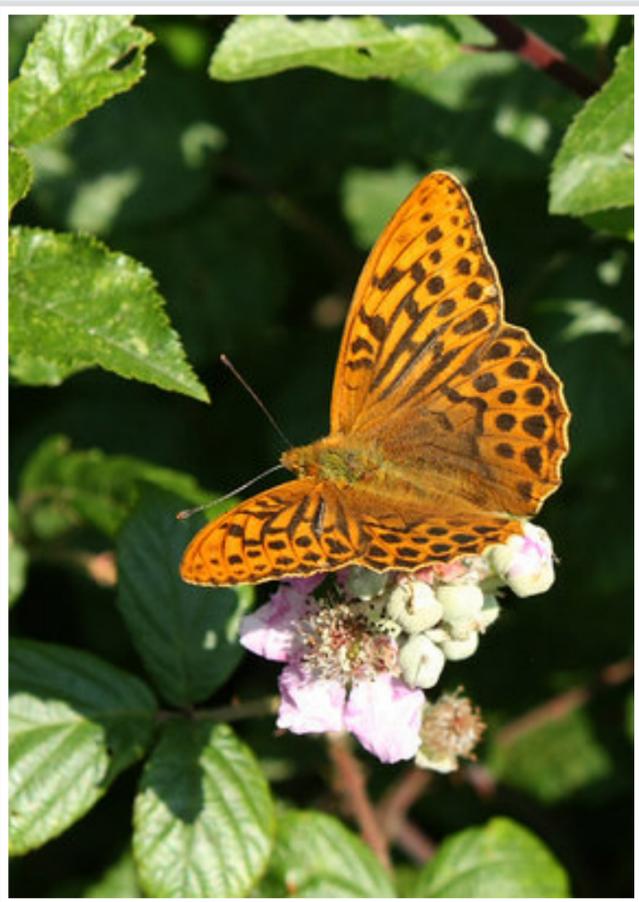
by m_galathea, 15-Jul-11 05:41 AM GMT

3rd July 2011:

Woodlands of West Sussex:

I spent the day butterfly watching in the lovely and hot woods of Sussex today. Despite getting through lots of bait, no Purple Emperors turned up, although there were good numbers of **Purple Hairstreaks** in the Oaks. In a small woodland clearing a pair of **White Admirals** made an appearance, in a location where I am sure the Emperor lives too, but is not having a good year.

Silver-washed Fritillaries were another highlight of the day, with a variety of wing variations on display.





Re: M_galathea

by m_galathea, 15-Jul-11 06:01 AM GMT

14th July 2011:

North Hill, Malvern, Worcestershire:

A superb evening walk, with some of the most feisty butterfly fighting I have seen. Two **Graylings** put in an appearance, although the stars were the Nymphalids.

Each rocky outcrop along the east side of the hill had its own attendant males, each trying its best to keep the lookouts to itself. An outcrop at the middle of the hill had four **Small Tortiseshells**, a **Red Admiral** and a particularly aggressive **Painted Lady** claiming it as their own. This is the downwind side of the hill, although they still had a fair breeze to push against.

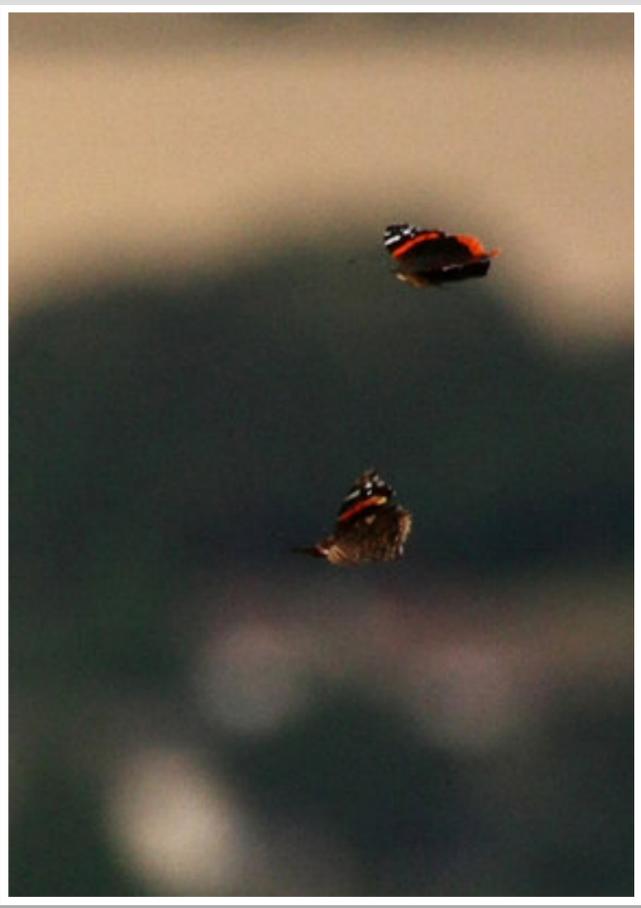
On the NE facing side an outcrop had a pair of **Red Admirals** and another **Painted Lady**. The fighting here was prolonged and intense with neither party giving in. An excellent show indeed and unexpected too.



Red Admiral – keeping an eye out...



Aerial battle – Red Admiral and Painted Lady



Male Red Admirals fighting

Re: M_galathea

by ChrisC, 15-Jul-11 06:08 AM GMT

tawny barred angle for the first moth and one i'm not familiar with, possibly Glaucous Shears for the 2nd Chris

Re: M_galathea

by David M, 15-Jul-11 07:07 AM GMT

Love those aerial pics.

Just HOW do you get them so sharp?

Re: M_galathea

by m_galathea, 16-Jul-11 04:15 AM GMT

Thank you Chris and thanks David.

The reason I met with moderate success this time was that the conditions were perfect. The light coming down down the hill was soft and even and the butterflies are defending a very small territory (see photo) so they keep coming back to the same area. The wind also helped as they were flying against it.

The settings were: Red Admirals: 1/3200s F10 ISO 800 and the Painted Lady one is at 1/1600s. Results with a prime lens would be better than this – I used a Sigma 70–300mm.



Red Admiral and Painted Lady disputed territory.

Re: M_galathea

by m_galathea, 25-Jul-11 02:04 AM GMT

24th July 2011: Sutton Park

A short walk around my local national nature reserve revealed a number of common butterflies and an impressive moth – **the Drinker**. This is the female and is around 45mm long – pretty obvious in the middle of a marsh, despite the criptic line across the wings!

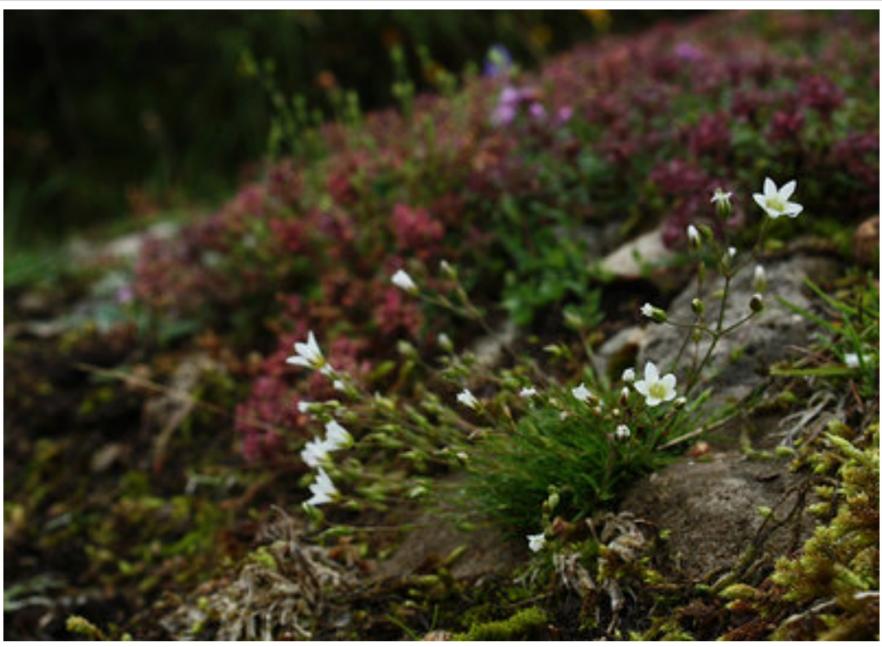


Re: M_galathea

by m_galathea, 09-Aug-11 05:56 AM GMT

6th August 2011: Arnside Knott:

Having spent the last week at work in the North West, I decided to spend the weekend in Arnside. The weather today was pretty grim and it began to rain as I got off the train. There was no sign of any lepidoptera on the Knott, save for a few micros and cinnabar larvae. I stayed until 4pm, and used the opportunity to take a look at the area's flowers. There are lots of interesting plants here which you would easily miss given a nice summer's day! Highlights were *Lancaster Whitebeam*, *Spring Sandwort*, *Broad-leaved Helleborine* and *Autumn Lady's Tresses*.



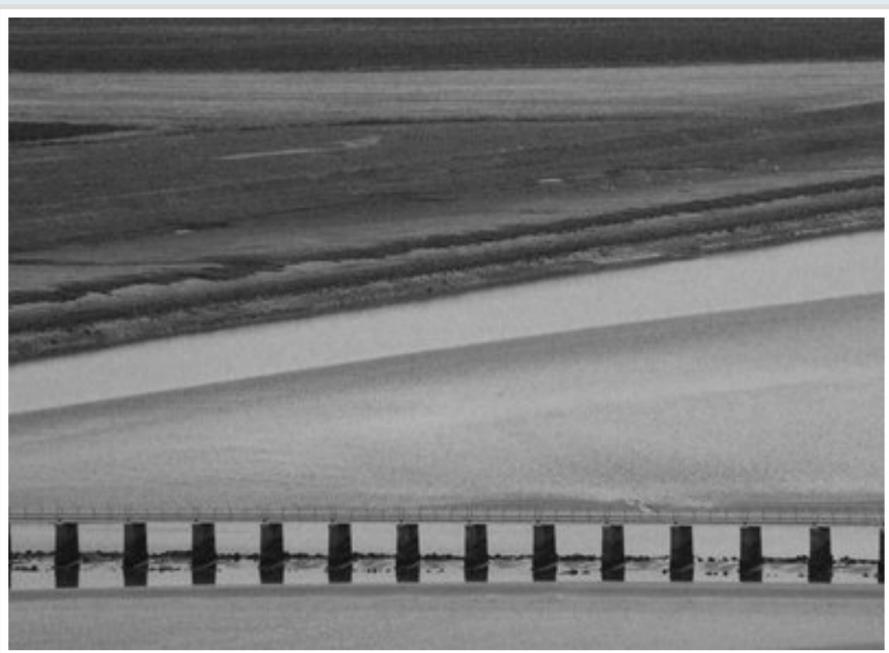
Spring Sandwort



Broad-leaved Helleborine – I'm quite pleased with how this came out, especially given that it was taken in the rain in deep shade under a beach tree.



Autumn Lady's Tresses



River Kent

Re: *M_galathea*

7th August 2011: Arnside Knott:

Got onto the Knott at 10am in sunshine. Climbing up I firstly saw a *Meadow Brown* at Heathwaite which was sign that today would be much better than yesterday! Towards the top I came across a small clearing which contained lots of *Scotch Argus*. This was a new species for me, and I was pleased that they were fairly approachable at this time.

They were nectaring here on Wild Marjoram. As the day went on I saw a great many more (all within the upper knott enclosure) which progressively became more flighty. A variety of nectar sources were utilised including: Bramble, Ling, Ragwort and Common Tormentil. By mid-afternoon the weather had closed in again and the Scotch Arguses sheltered deeper and deeper in the grasses. They were flushed when walking past however – they could fly in the rain as they already warmed up which didn't happen the day before.

Other butterflies seen were: *Gatekeeper*, *Common Blue*, *Red Admiral*, *Small Skipper*, *Speckled Wood*, *Grayling* and a Fritillary which was either Dark Green or High Brown and was very worn. This was seen on the steep rocky slope on the SE side of the Knott, a habitat shared with the Graylings. The Graylings were fairly active on this sheltered side of the hill, although on the rocky areas to the NW they were difficult to see as the wind was strong and they spent time sheltering.



Sheltering Grayling.



Scotch Argus nectaring on Marjoram.

Re: M_galatea

by m_galatea, 25-Aug-11 06:10 AM GMT

21st August 2011: Astwood Bank, Worcestershire:

Went out to look for *Brown Hairstreaks*. At SP030610 I found an assembly ash which was occupied by by a number of butterflies, both male and female. This tree is towards the north of this 100m square. At the extreme southern end of this square was another ash which also held a few Brown Hairstreaks. The primary ash is directly above the footbridge over a stream. The butterflies high in the tree sometimes disturbed *Purple Hairstreaks* which was surprising this being an ash tree. I made the observations between 13:00 and 13:30 in hot sunshine.

There is very little blackthorn in the vicinity – some is located in the hedge here which looks very much like it has been planted by a wildlife lover as it contains many species in equal amounts – eg hawthorn, guelder rose and dogwood.

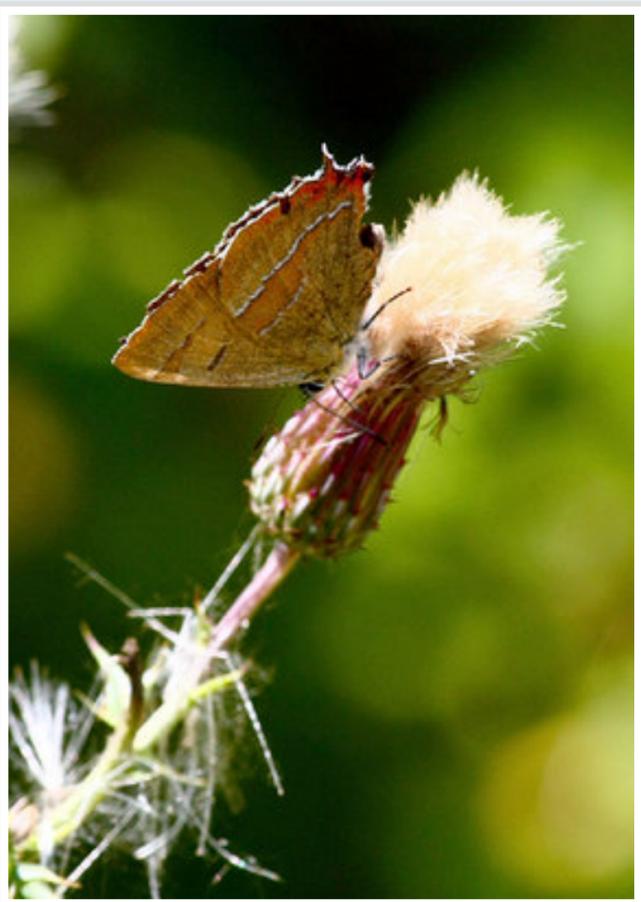
Other species in this field were: *Small White*, *Large White*, *Common Blue*, *Brown Argus*, *Small Copper*, *Gatekeeper*, *Meadow Brown*. Nearby were a few *Small Tortoiseshells*, and a *Brimstone* was spotted in the village too.



Small Copper – not my usual style of photography, but included anyway.



Speckled Wood



Male Brown Hairstreak



Master tree

Re: M_galatea

by m_galatea, 27-Aug-11 10:02 PM GMT

27th August 2011: Broadmark Beach, Rustington:

I had a look for *Clouded Yellows* in a spot where I have found them before... as I was about to leave I got lucky and found this individual nectaring on Red Valerian and resting on the shingle.



Clouded Yellow on coastal flowers



Down low on vegetated shingle.