



THE IRIS

Issue No. 81 Winter 2001

MAGAZINE OF THE NATURE GROUP OF THE RPS



RPS 

THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



Photo by Norman Prue FRPS from his 1st Place set in the 'Five Slide' Competition
"Singing Bush Lark"

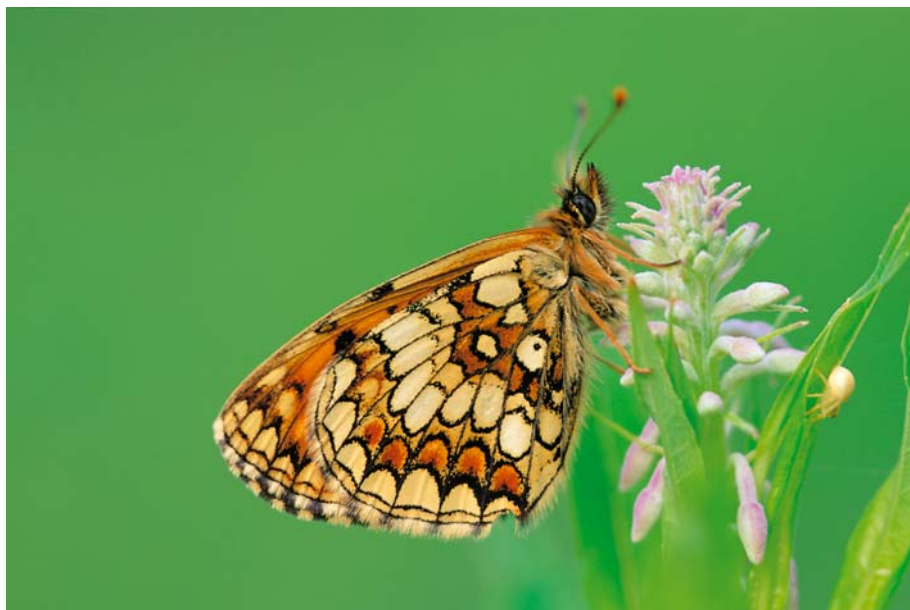


Photo by Norman Prue FRPS from his 1st Place set in the 'Five Slide' Competition
"False Heath Fritillary"

NATURE GROUP COMMITTEE

OFFICERS

Chairman:- *Ms. Dawn Osborn ARPS*
5, Crompton Close, Little Haywood, Stafford,
ST18 0YS. Tel:- 01889-881928.

Vice Chairman (also Programme Co-ordinator):-
Roy Place FRPS 38, Sherifoot Lane, Four Oaks,
Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B75 5DT.
Tel:- 0121 308 4162.

Secretary:- *Robert Hawkesworth FRPS*
5, Ravensdale Drive, Wollaton, Nottingham,
NG8 2SL. Tel:- 0115 928 1050.

Treasurer:- *Trevor Hyman LRPS* 3, Northcourt
Lane, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1QA. Tel:-
01235 - 524909. e-mail:- trevor.hyman@lineone.net

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sue Goody LRPS 28, Malvern Road, Hornchurch,
Essex, RM11 1BQ. Tel:- Work 01268 733331.
e-mail:- focalimages.photography@virgin.net

Nick Jarvis ARPS Hive Cottage, 5 Milton Road,
Willen, Milton Keynes, MK15 9AB. Tel 01908
607257. e-mail:- Nickjjarvis@aol.com

Miss Barbara Lawton FRPS - 78, Leybourne
Crescent, The Brindleys, Pendeford,
Wolverhampton, WV9 5QG. Tel:- 01902-787811.

Tony Wharton FRPS 2, Ashfield Grove, Halesowen,
West Midlands, B63 4LH. Tel:- 0121-550-3326.

N/G Rep to Advisory Panel - *John Bebbington FRPS*
Please mark post '*Private*' Juniper Hall Field
Centre, Old London Road, Mickleham, Dorking,
Surrey, RH5 6DA. Tel:- Daytime 0845 4583507
e-mail:- fsc.juniper@ukonline.co.uk

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Immediate Past Chairman - *Martin Withers FRPS*
93, Cross lane, Mountsorrel, Loughborough,
Leicestershire, LE12 7BX. Tel:- 0116 229 6080.

Editor of The Iris:- *John Myring ARPS*
39, Barnetts Close, Kidderminster, Worcestershire,
DY10 3DG. Tel:- 01562 824356.
e-mail:- EdTheIris@aol.com

**Exhibition Secretary (also 2001 Travelling
Exhibition):-** *Peter Jones ARPS* 3, Curlew Close,
Mountsorrel, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE12 7ED.
Tel:-01509-412286. e-mail:- PWJonesARPS@BTconnect.com

The Royal Photographic Society's President;
Secretary General; Hon.Treasurer and Finance
Officer are also ex-officio members, as is the
Chairman of the A & F Nature Distinctions Panel.

For Archival Exhibition Slides contact:-

Mrs. Kath Bull ARPS - "Segsbury", St. John's Road,
Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1RT. Tel:- 01892 663751

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reviews on relevant books.& equip-
ment. Copy can be accepted on flop-
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accompanied by printed copy. As an
E-mail (**please not as an attach-
ment**) or simply typed, double
spaced, on one side of the paper only.
Please send submissions to The
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Front Cover Photo by Norman Prue FRPS - “Quiver Trees - Namibia”
One of his set which won First Place in the ‘Five Slide’ Competition.

Back Cover Photo by Les Borg ARPS - “Capercaillie in Pine Forest”
One of the set he entered for the ‘Five Slide’ Competition.

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EDITORIAL

Yet another change to the front page! “Why!?” I suspect some of you are thinking. Well, partly due to various comments I have received during my editorship. Then, over the last few months, three items in particular. The demand from Bath detailing the way the

RPS logo should appear on our magazine. The feedback from my impromptu mini survey of members at our AGM. Finally, a constructive letter from a member leading to an equally constructive telephone discussion.

The objectives are that the simpler design of the front cover will allow use of either a vertical or horizontal photograph with minimal layout changes. It also leaves the identity of the magazine in no doubt whilst not detracting from the photograph. New section headings for regular items such as ‘Editorial’ etc., will draw the attention and be easier to read.

Matters relating to computers, Internet and the Web.

Let me preface this section by saying that my knowledge of the above is limited; it is only sufficient for me to undertake the usage (sometimes minimal) of just a few of the multitude of facilities available. Personally I prefer reading a magazine or book to looking at web pages and regard e-mail as a chore. At the same time I appreciate how much easier the computer makes it for me to produce this magazine and certainly would not sacrifice Adobe Photoshop to return to the darkroom.

I know that similar attitudes are held by some of our members whilst others of us embrace the new technology wholeheartedly; also that there are those who will, for perfectly valid and acceptable reasons, have nothing to do with it.

Even now though *possible* future members include an ever increasing majority who will be using this technology to the full. Digital cameras; computer processing of images which are transmitted over the Internet and stored on CD-ROM; ‘slide’ shows given on digital projectors; e-books etc., etc., Generally affordable digital SLR cameras using existing interchangeable lens systems will be with us within two years, or sooner.

I say *possible* members because if, as a group, we do not clearly and powerfully demonstrate *now* that we are ready to accommodate these new members and their technology (or, heaven forfend, indicate they are not welcome) they will not be joining. Then, one day, the Nature Group will be as extinct as the Dodo. It is a sobering thought that the majority of our membership is probably at the wrong end of the age scale.

In our Jubilee Issue Heather Angel Hon. FRPS wrote in her article ‘25 Years Onward’ of the Nature Group ‘evolving’. We need to manage this evolution as a smooth transition that ensures our ‘traditional’ orientated members are fully catered for whilst accommodating those who use the latest technology.

For these reasons I am persevering with the production of ‘The Iris on CD-ROM’; welcome the opportunity for us to expand the Nature Group page on the RPS web site and thank Nick Jarvis for instituting the ‘Notice Board’ on the Internet. Small beginnings perhaps, but at least a start. (See pages 14, 15 and 29 respectively.)

In the last issue Michael Shirley differentiated between Naturalists who use a camera and photographers who take natural history subjects. However the RPS is a photographic society and ours is a catholic Nature Group. To my mind the essential requirement for membership is a respect for, and an enjoyment of, Nature irrespective of the type of camera we use to record and portray it ❀

FROM THE CHAIR

DAWN OSBORN ARPS

As I write this, we are all reeling from the shock of the terrorist attacks on the cities of New York and Washington. It seems inconceivable that any individual or organisation should desire to wreak such devastation and loss of life on innocent and ordinary people, families and communities. I am sure that all group members, like myself, have been totally appalled by the sequence of events, and moved to tears by the scenes of chaos and the accounts retold by the survivors and witnesses of this tragedy. I know that our thoughts and prayers are with the people who have suffered, and are suffering still, from this appalling act.

One thing is certain – security for both internal and international and intercontinental flights will be enhanced dramatically. This is likely to have consequences for photographers, nature photographers in particular. Many of you will have first hand experience of how difficult some airlines have become regarding carry-on/hand luggage. Of course, as photographers, we want our camera bag and its valuable cargo to be with us at all times. Airlines would like to reduce the weight which passengers carry on to planes and frequently they find that our camera bags, be they conventional or backpack types, are too heavy, too big, or both! Up to now, the simple answer has been to hang a camera with lens around the neck and stuff lenses into jacket pockets to get the weight of the bag and contents down under 5 kg. However, due to the recent events in the US many airlines have introduced measures which effectively prohibit hand luggage completely. The exceptions are a lady's purse, a camera, binoculars, a laptop computer. Absolutely prohibited are sharp metal objects, i.e. knives, metal nail files, scissors, etc. Airlines will, undoubtedly, arrive with a new set of guidelines once things have settled down somewhat. My advice would be to keep cameras and lenses to a minimum, have a photographers vest handy in the event that you are told that your camera bag has to go in the hold and pack any unbreakable kit plus the Swiss army/leatherman in your suitcase. If the nature of your trip is such that you need to take large/heavy lenses, I would advise that you contact the airline or your tour operator several weeks before you travel. You could also contact the airport from which you are departing, since it has been my experience that the same rules do not necessarily apply at all airports.

On home turf, foot & mouth disease rampaged across the countryside causing great trauma to those living and working in rural areas. As a result it seems that few members were able to do much nature photography until the restrictions were lifted in June. Unfortunately, recurrences of the disease in several areas will no doubt mean a return of restrictions in those areas for the remainder of the season. It is indeed a sad thing that so many grazing animals have been destroyed. The loss of these grazing animals from the landscape could have severe implications for some species of plants, insects and birds. It is to be hoped that the disease can be eradicated in the very near future and that normality can return to all areas of the countryside soon.

On a happier note, I can report that the 25th Anniversary Convention was a great success. This is in no small part due to the efforts of Past Chairman, Martin Withers, who orchestrated the whole event with much aplomb and much thanks are owed to him. Thanks also to all those who shared their pictures and enjoyment of photography with others – we were entertained with some excellent slide presentations. The Convention was enthusiastically supported and enjoyed by everyone able to attend. There have been many requests that we try to hold a similar event again and the Committee will certainly be considering this.

By the time you receive this issue of the Iris, the best of the fungi season will have

passed us by – soon it will be Christmas, then New Year's Eve. I sincerely wish you all the very best Christmas and pray that we will all enjoy a more productive year of photography together with peace in the world for 2002 ❀

RESULTS of ASSOCIATE & FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS

The Associateship and Fellowship Nature Panel met on Tuesday September 11th 2001. The Panel comprised:- Colin Smith FRPS (Chairman), David Hosking FRPS, Chris Mattison FRPS, Sandy Clelland FRPS, Margaret Hodge FRPS, and Dr. Anne Owen FRPS.

The results of the assessment are detailed below:-

Fellowship Prints - 5 submissions, 2 successful.

Che Siew Hii - Malaysia - Pitcher Plants.
Constantinos Petrinos - Greece - Underwater.

Fellowship Slides - 2 submissions, none successful.

Associateship Prints - 6 submissions, 4 successful.

Michael Chapman - Solihull - Birds & Mammals
Damian Debski - Swindon - Wild Flowers & Insects.
Kwong Kit Hui - Hong Kong - Birds.
Soon Shian Jong - Sarawak - Fungi.

Associateship Slides - 12 submissions, 5 successful.

Michael Martin - York - Birds.
Philip Mugridge - Gloucestershire - Birds & Mammals.
Jill Pakenham - Oxford - Macro Moths.
Ronald Price - Nottinghamshire - Fungi, Wild Flowers & Birds.
Nicholas Reuss - Herefordshire - Mixed wildlife of hedgerows & woods.

FREE BACK COPIES OF THE IRIS

FROM ROBERT HAWKESWORTH FRPS

I have a number of back copies of The Iris, which I am quite happy to send out to any of you who would like them, perhaps to complete your collection, or simply for interest.

Issue 41 - Summer 1988 - 1 copy.	Issue 46 - Spring 1990 - 3 copies.
Issue 47 - Summer 1990 - 4 copies	Issue 48 - Winter 1990 - 3 copies.
Issue 49 - Spring 1991 - 3 copies.	Issue 50 - Summer 1991 - 3 copies.
Issue 51 - Winter 1991 - 2 copies.	Issue 52 - Spring 1992 - 9 copies.
Issue 53 - Summer 1992 - 3 copies.	Issue 54 - Winter 1992 - 4 copies.
Issue 56 - Summer 1993 - 9 copies.	Issue 60 - Winter 1994 - 32 copies.
Issue 61 - Spring 1995 - 8 copies.	Issue 63 - Winter 1995 - 8 copies.
Issue 64 - Spring 1996 - the first colour issue, 3 copies.	
Issue 75 - Winter 1999 - 2 copies.	Issue 76 - Spring 2000 - 13 copies.
Issue 77 - Summer 2000 - 9 copies.	

Anyone interested should write to me listing the issues they would like and supplying postage to cover as follows:- One copy 33p; two copies 54p; three copies 66p; four copies 87p; five copies £1.14p.

PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE LEMBAH STRAIT,
SULAWESI, INDONESIA
BY ANNE OWEN FRPS

No-one can say for sure why the Lembah Strait boasts such a miraculous species-count. One theory is that the area is heavily populated and overfished, meaning that the rate of predation lower down the food chain is less than it might otherwise be, so that many unusual species survive in greater abundance than might otherwise be the case. Another theory is that the long narrow strait with its small tidal range prevents the planktonic larvae being widely dispersed, so that they mature and settle out in a greater density than elsewhere. Whatever the reason, this area is very special for its diversity of highly adapted and often strange-looking fauna.

The underwater topography in Lembah is challenging, both to the creatures that live here and to the photographer. Most dives take place on 'muck', a gently shelving bottom of black volcanic sand and fine silt. There is very little coral and the visibility is usually low. Many creatures rely on elaborate camouflage to avoid becoming prey themselves, which of course makes them hard to find and photograph. Without the expert help of the local dive guides, you would be forgiven for thinking the area entirely barren. Many other creatures are nocturnal in habit, so this means that night-diving is essential to fully appreciate what is here. The fine silt is also a major problem. The merest touch of a hand or a fin and you (and more importantly, your subject) can be instantly enveloped in an evil black cloud. More to the point, the merest touch of *someone else's* fin can have the same effect, which can be a problem if inexperienced fellow divers 'crowd in' on your subject to see what you are doing.

Nevertheless, Lembah is an extremely rich and rewarding location for portrait and macro-photography. For example, there are over 200 species of Opisthobranchs (sea-slugs) recorded here, many of them with jewel-like colours and some playing host to equally striking Emperor Shrimp. I found many species of Cowrie, with their beautiful shiny shells hidden behind their extended mantles. The closely related Allied Cowries feed mostly on soft coral and are beautifully adapted to mimic their hosts.

Crustaceans are very common, in a bewildering array of guises. Hermit Crabs are always great subjects, especially those that decorate their shells by attaching living Sea Anemones. Carrier Crabs have specially adapted rear legs that enable them to pick up and carry items as disguise. Most remarkably, I saw one holding aloft an entire, live Fire-urchin. Many crabs have evolved the shape and colouring of their shells to mimic the soft corals and weeds that they inhabit and can be very hard to see. Cleaner Shrimp, on the other hand, have to advertise their presence to attract fish to come to their cleaner stations and often have long white antennae that they vibrate to attract attention. Mantis Shrimp and Harlequin Shrimp are spectacularly coloured and make no obvious attempt at stealth.

A real Lembah treat are the numerous species of frogfish. Frogfish are ambush predators, and are highly adapted to this life-style. Most mimic sponge, even down to the surface pores. Being sedentary, frogfish have no swim bladder and their pectoral fins have developed to look very much like legs, which they use to haul themselves around on the bottom when they have to move. To attract prey, frogfish have a lure on a spine above the mouth and when something swims close enough, they extend their mouths and simply suck in the unfortunate creature.

The striking Bangay Cardinalfish, endemic to Bangay Island has recently been introduced



Photo by Anne Owen FRPS - "*Luniceps*"



Photo by Anne Owen FRPS - "*Wonderpus*"



Photo by Anne Owen FRPS - "*Emperor Shrimp*"



Photo by Anne Owen FRPS - "*Harlequin Shrimp*"

to Lembah, probably by a collector. It appears to be adapting well to this new environment and almost every month is found in a new location in the strait. What is not clear is whether it is displacing some other species or simply occupying a formerly vacant niche.

Octopus and cuttlefish are amongst my personal favourites, and there are several species here in Lembah, including the dramatically coloured Flamboyant Cuttlefish, which we were lucky enough to observe laying her eggs beneath a coconut shell and the outrageous 'Wonderpus'.

What I have described is only a tiny fraction of what I saw and photographed in two all-too short visits. I am sure I will be visiting Lembah again in the not-too distant future! ❀

MEMBERS' LETTERS

The views expressed by correspondents are not necessarily those of the Editor, nor the Nature Group Committee, nor the RPS.

Dear John

Through The Iris I would like to express my thanks to all those who helped organise the highly successful weekend many members enjoyed at Brooksby College. Those thanks are due mainly I believe to Martin Withers and Robert Hawkesworth who undertook the bulk of the organisation, but I am sure that many others contributed to making it such a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

Those of us who do not often meet many other members of the Nature Group I am sure gained much from such a sociable event. I am also sure that everyone, from the greatly experienced photographers to the comparative novice, was inspired by the superb collection of work shown to us. Such a breadth of work was remarkable.

In his closing remarks Martin quipped that he hoped to see us all in another 25 years. I sincerely hope that the event can be repeated much sooner than that. Perhaps we could consider making it, say, a biennial event? My thanks again to all those involved.

Yours sincerely, Pete Downing ARPS (e-mail)

Dear John,

Need your Benbo repairing?

Many members of the Nature Group must have been concerned to hear that the parent company of 'Impress', distributor of Benbos was in receivership.

My search for parts for two Trekkers led to a source which I would never have guessed at the outset. Following a tip-off from a nice man at Speed Graphic I rang Uni-Loc Products. I spoke to the very helpful Angelo who confirmed that the necessary parts were in stock and at a very modest cost. I put a cheque in the post and received the bits by return.

I suspect that there are many derelict Benbos in the Nature Group. If you have one I can thoroughly recommend that you contact Uni-Loc Products on 01525-372030. The engineering of Benbos is very simple but if you feel unable to do the work yourself they will carry out repairs for you. If my experience is anything to go by you will receive helpful and efficient service; and the cost will be much less than a new Benbo!

Kind regards, Tony Bond FRPS (Leigh, Lancs.,)

THE TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE of 2001

by PETER GINN ARPS.

Let me say at the outset that things happened so fast during the period immediately before, during & just after totality I was unable to record and recall all I witnessed!

On Tuesday we arrived at Mana early enough to set up a lovely camp site on the water's edge overlooking the Zambezi before the 1500 briefing. This was both interesting and thorough. We were concentrating on the birds but would look out for any mammal behaviour as well. I was convinced that the most obvious bird activity would be up or down river as birds headed for a roost.

The evening flights tended to be down river. The Cattle Egrets were the most obvious as there were many small flocks moving along the channel below our camp. However, there were also smaller groups of cormorants and darters and many small flocks of weaver type birds. The morning flights were similar, but it was conspicuous that the weaver birds were much later rising - while egrets started moving upriver long before sunrise the weavers only moved out of the grass where they were roosting once the sun had risen. They usually flew onto a grass stem when they sat in the sun warming up after the cold of the night.

Wednesday at 1330 found us doing a control for the time of the eclipse. We recorded all the bird and animal activity between 1330 and 1630 in an effort to see whether there were differences during the eclipse itself. Unfortunately nobody thought to ask the people in charge of the release of water from Kariba to keep the flow the same and they shut off the water so that during Wednesday night and into Thursday morning the river dropped about one to two metres! As a result all the observations of birds bathing and feeding along the edge of the river on Wednesday were useless as the water was no longer near the grass on Thursday!

WEZ (Wildlife & Environment Zimbabwe) had arranged a series of lectures on animals, vultures and the eclipse which enhanced our visit. The lecture by Dr Paul Murdin, an astronomer from the UK was most interesting and particularly important as it gave us some idea of what to expect during the actual eclipse. He explained that we would find that it would suddenly get dark at about 15 minutes before totality. We would see phenomena such as Bailey's beads (bright spots of light around the edge), a diamond ring (very bright white light at the start and finish of totality) and solar flares and of course the corona itself.

Thursday dawned bright and clear although the atmosphere was definitely polluted by smoke blown in on the previous days SE winds. It looked like being a perfect day for viewing an eclipse and so it turned out. 1330 found us waiting expectantly on the bank of the river, clipboards in hand and solar glasses ready. And sure enough looking through our special glasses the moon started to move in front of the sun at about 1350. The light appeared to be a mix of sunlight and moonlight which was a beautiful silvery gold.

It was interesting that the light intensity did not change much until the moon had covered more than half the sun and photography of the surroundings was practical up to about 15 minutes before totality when it suddenly got darker very quickly. The temperature dropped slowly and by 1440 we felt we needed a light jacket - in actual fact the temperature dropped by about 5 C, with the lowest temperature being recorded some time after the end of totality as heat continued to radiate from the earth until the incoming heat became stronger.

There seemed to be very little reaction among the birds we could see during the partial phase until the light started to fade rapidly. The first reaction came from a flock of Red-

billed Oxpeckers - calling noisily they rose off the hippo in the river and flew rapidly inland. The Hadedah Ibis were the next to react - they rose with loud alarm calls and headed inland to their roost near a pool some distance from the river.

Almost immediately after the Hadedahs the Long-tailed Starling which were feeding on the island in front of us rose one after the other and landed in a large tree nearby. They were obviously disturbed by the change in light but did not know what to do next! These birds roost in trees on a ridge well inland and there was no way they would have been able to get there before it got dark. The White-fronted Bee-eaters which had been calling fell silent and stopped feeding.

At the same time flocks of weavers and small groups of egrets started flying downstream at maximum speed. There was clearly an urgency to their movements. We were indeed fortunate that one group of egrets with a single Glossy Ibis flew past us as totality ended, with quite the most intense white light I think I have ever seen (the diamond ring effect). They continued to fly down-river for about 150 metres as the light brightened and then did a U-turn and proceeded to fly back upstream to their feeding grounds! Other birds, such as bulbul and babblers disappeared into thick trees - presumably going to roost.

It was noticeable that during the period of totality it was rather like a moonlight night, although the colour was not quite the same. I do not think I heard a single bird call during this period, but I could be wrong. As I said, so much was happening and I was also trying to take some photographs of the actual eclipse.

The first thing I noticed after the end of totality was that the doves all started calling - a real chorus. The Black-eyed, Terrestrial and Yellow-bellied Bulbuls all joined the chorus as did some Red-billed Hoopoes. As the light strengthened the White-crowned Plovers started calling and flying around. The Long-tailed Starlings started to move back from the trees to feed on the grass on the island. The Hadedah Ibis came back from inland calling as they flew out onto the mud flats exposed by the falling water.

About 15-20 minutes after totality I noticed large numbers of swallows starting to gather over the water downstream from us - there were clearly a large number of small insects hatching from the water and the Grey-rumped & Wire-tailed Swallows and the Brown-throated Martins were gathering for the feast. Were the insects affected by the eclipse? - I cannot be certain but suspect the hatch was caused by the dark period as one often gets a hatch at sunset.

The last bit of activity we could really attribute to the eclipse was the crowing of the Swainson's Francolin - this we had noted each morning and it was conspicuous that several males were calling once the light intensity was more or less back to normal about 15 minutes after the end of totality.

What did not react? The Buffalo grazing out on the island in front of us did not even raise their heads! I suppose that as they graze at night as well as during the day they were not concerned as it got dark. The departure of the Cattle Egrets feeding with them would have been normal at dusk!

I have to say that the eclipse was one of the most amazing things I have ever seen. I certainly cannot put into words the changes in light and colour, the diamond ring, the corona, the solar flares and all the other strange phenomena we experienced. It would have been better if we had had 30 minutes to observe the various changes instead of just over 3 minutes! ❀

CONCERNING COMPUTERS ETC.,



ONLINE NOTICE BOARD - THE NATURE GROUP ON THE WEB BY NICK JARVIS ARPS

Many of you will already be aware that the group now has an electronic Notice Board facility on the Internet. It is accessible only to Nature Group members, and unlike a traditional web site the general public cannot see it. To gain access, you must first write (i.e. snail mail) to Robert Hawkesworth FRPS including your e-mail address. You will then be sent further instructions by e-mail.

A few of you have been sent invitations that have since expired. I understand that this may be due to lack of time and/or technical difficulties. If this is the case, you may request a new one by e-mailing me at nickjarvis@aol.com - it is not necessary to involve Robert in these circumstances.

Happy surfing! ❀

THE NATURE GROUP PAGE ON THE RPS WEB SITE

Our Secretary, Robert Hawkesworth, reported to the recent committee meeting that the RPS were undergoing a review of their web site and had asked if we could supply more material for the Nature Group page.

This was regarded as an extremely helpful move by the RPS. It would enable us to put material onto the web for general accessibility to promote the Group whilst retaining the privacy of the Notice Board developed by Nick Jarvis for internal communications restricted to members. It was agreed that your Editor should act as liaison officer with the RPS and be the sole channel for supplying material to be placed on the site.

Initially this would consist of 'The Nature Photographers' Code of Practice' which we would ask to remain permanently on the page. Also a limited selection of material and photographs from recent issues of The Iris to encourage interest. To this would be added other items as and when suitable.

Although the RPS will consider suggestions we will have no control over the page layout and at the time of writing the precise frequency of updates is not known although we are assured it will be done regularly. Watch the site for developments ❀

THE IRIS 2001 ON CD-ROM BY YOUR EDITOR

Enquiries to trade organisations have proved that for this to be commercially produced, and sold at anything approaching a price acceptable to members, we need to place an order for a minimum of 100 disks to be burnt at one time. That would involve our Group in wasteful capital outlay as, to date, interest has been minimal. Nevertheless the project will proceed with any disks ordered being written on my own computer.

A trial disk containing this year's first two issues was sent to committee members and points raised in their feedback and also from members' e-mail have been considered. The main one centred around security/unauthorised copying of pictures. For this reason the Acrobat files will be produced using security encryption in the latest version of Adobe Acrobat set to allow only low resolution printing of pages. It also should prevent 'extraction' of individual pictures/material. However those of you wishing to see more detail in the pictures will still be able to enlarge sections on your monitor by approximately 400% before 'pixilation' occurs. (Note - for those interested the CD sent to the printers for one issue has a total file size of over 200 Mb. The e-book file for the same issue compressed in Adobe Acrobat is around 2 Mb.)

The CD-ROM will contain all three issues of this years' magazine in Acrobat 5.0 format together with a short slide show of all the colour photographs appearing in them. It will include the software (for both PC and MAC) to run the slide show. Also required the new version 5.0 of Acrobat Reader *but for PC only*. Those of you who run a MAC will need to obtain the free software for Acrobat Reader 5.0 - possibly by downloading it from the Adobe Website. Earlier versions of Acrobat Reader will not be able to open the file because of improved security.

Another issue that arose was the 'stick-on' CD label. I have received a report from one person that when he personally used this home system a label came adrift whilst revolving in the drive; I understand the consequence was expensive. For this reason the CD will not have a label attached. An insert in the case will give details.

The CD-ROM should be available end of November / early December at a cost of £5 to include VAT packing and postage (in a flexible 'non-breakable' storage case). Please order by post from the Editor enclosing a cheque payable to 'The RPS Nature Group' and quoting your membership number. Allow approximately two weeks for delivery.

**Find it difficult to read the magazine?
Would you like large print.**

Any member who is finding difficulty in reading the 10 pt font used in this magazine will be able to print out pages enlarged to A4 size with a corresponding increase in font size from the Acrobat files on the CD. Guidance notes will be enclosed.

Obviously this only applies if you have a computer. For those who don't but would like to try the scheme I will print a set of A4 pages (*text pages only*) on receipt of a s.a.e. with 33p postage. Initially, as I have no idea what sort of demand there will be, the pages will be free of charge. Dependant upon response a modest charge may have to be made to cover material costs ☘



"Concerning Computers" is continued on page 29.

THE IRIS 'FIVE SLIDE' COMPETITION 2001

WINNERS:-

FIRST PLACE -

NORMAN PRUE FRPS

SECOND PLACE -

TONY WHARTON FRPS

THIRD PLACE -

KAY REEVE ARPS

The Selectors, Colin Smith FRPS, Tony Bond FRPS and Clifford Heyes ARPS offered the following comments:-

'There were many images of a high standard from the 30 entrants, but in this kind of competition consistency of quality across the full range of the chosen subjects can be difficult to maintain unless the photographer is an 'all rounder' and not a one or two subject specialist.

The judges enjoyed seeing the wide variety of picture styles and subjects selected by the entrants and we hope you enjoy some of the results printed in the Iris.

Our thanks are due to every one who submitted slides for this 'fun' competition.

Editor:- My, and the Group's, thanks to the selectors for volunteering to administer this competition as well as make the selection.

A selection of photographs from both the winning entries and some of those who were not quite so successful appear in this issue on the outer and inner cover pages, also pages 17 - 20 inclusive and page 28. Please note this selection was made to show a variety of subject matter both from the winning and other entries.

ADVANCE NOTICE - NATURE GROUP EVENTS IN 2002

NATURE - ASSOCIATESHIP & FELLOWSHIP

DISTINCTIONS WORKSHOP - SUNDAY 3RD FEBRUARY 2002.

John Bebbington FRPS and Tony Wharton FRPS both currently on the Distinctions Panel will offer advice and guidance for both print and slide. **Limited Places!**

NATURE GROUP FIELD WEEKEND

FRIDAY 31ST MAY TO TUESDAY 4TH JUNE 2002

PLEASE NOTE THIS TAKES THE PLACE OF THE 'BURTON BRADSTOCK' WEEKEND.

Venue for both the above events is Juniper Hall Field Centre Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6DA.

Please contact John Bebbington FRPS at the above address or tel:- 0845-458-3507.

Fax:- 0845-458-9219. e-mail:- fsc.juniper@ukonline.co.uk

Early booking for both events is advised.

Photo opposite one of Richard Revels FRPS set for The Iris 'Five Slide' Competition
"Earth Star Fungus showing Spore Dispersal"





Photo by John Jones from the set he entered into the 'Five Slide' Competition
"Cave Spider with exoskeleton during moulting phase"



Photo by Mike Martin ARPS from the set he entered into the 'Five Slide' Competition
"Red Squirrel - Scotland"



Photo by Tony Wharton FRPS from his 2nd Place set in the 'Five Slide' Competition
"Yellow Meadow Ants moving Larvae"



Photo by Kay Reeve ARPS from her 3rd Place set in the 'Five Slide' Competition
"Morchella rotunda"



Photo by Tony Wharton FRPS from his 2nd Place set in the 'Five Slide' Competition
*"Gentoo Penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*) sparring"*



Photo by Tony Wharton FRPS from his 2nd Place set in the 'Five Slide' Competition
*"Ripe Fruits of Ivory-fruited Hartwort (*Tordylium apulum*)"*

BOOK REVIEW

“REALM OF THE PYGMY SEAHORSE”

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY CONSTANTINOS PETRINOS FRPS

SUBTITLE - ‘AN UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY ADVENTURE’

Scientific Editor: David W. Behrens. ISBN: 960-87016-0-0. Publisher - Starfish Press. Hardcover with 256 pages and 280 colour photos (many full page plus double-page spreads). Size: 24cm x 31cm. Printed on high quality Zanders 150 gr paper Ikonofix Gloss. The printing process includes a Hi-Coat Gloss Emulsion. Available in the UK through www.aquapress.co.uk and selected stores PRICE UK: £39.

This is an outstanding book, which will appeal to non-diving coral reef admirers, as well as to divers and underwater photographers. I read it at a single sitting, then went back to feast some more on the beautiful images. Constantinos set out to document the immensely rich eco-system in the Lembah Strait in Northern Sulawesi, Indonesia and in the course of 5 months, he completed 320 dives and took 25,000 slides, of which 180 are beautifully reproduced in the book.

Lembah Strait is in many ways far removed from the traditional idea of an ideal underwater photographer's dream destination. There is little coral, visibility is often low and most dive sites are fondly described as ‘muck dives’, that is, the bottom is merely an unpromising slope of fine, black volcanic sand. However, Constantinos is able to reveal a complex community of surprising creatures with myriad highly specialized life-styles and a stunning variety of coloration, variously designed to aid concealment, warn would-be predators or attract potential mates.

He starts his book by putting Lembah Strait into the context of the huge and populous country of Indonesia and explaining how this otherwise obscure corner of the planet came to be so highly valued by underwater photographers and marine enthusiasts. Throughout, he is generous in acknowledging the assistance offered him by the people of the area, especially the staff of Kungkungan Bay.

Arranged into chapters each one of which focuses on a different topic, the text and images work closely together to explain a number of aspects of the ecology of the area. Constantinos' writing is brim-full of nuggets of behavioural observations, such as how clownfishes become immune to the poisonous tentacles of their host anemones, or how species from cuttlefish to frogfish change and use their colour. This could be rather dry, but his style is immensely readable and conveys strongly his personal passion for the natural world, as well as the great depth of research that he has done. He tells many anecdotes of missed photo - opportunities, flooded cameras and other disasters, but this cannot detract from his craftsmanship and the professionalism that he brings to his work.

The photography is not only technically superb, but often highly creative too. Unsurprisingly, there are few wide-angle images in this book, which is just one of many features that differentiates it from many other ‘coffee table’ offerings from underwater photographers. Portraits of fish and other animals in their natural environment make up most of the images, enhanced by a thoughtful layout and informative captions. Personal favourites of mine include a rare image of two male Mandarin fish engaged in a fight on

the reef at dusk, a tiny octopus making its home in a cockle shell and a breathtaking close up of the eyes of a smasher mantis shrimp.

In his introduction, Constantinos tells us of The Lembah Straits Preservation Society efforts to achieve Marine Park status for the Lembah Straits and expresses his wish that this book will provide a valuable resource to help them in that task. I am sure that everyone who reads this book will join him in that wish. **Review by Anne Owen, FRPS** ❀

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

3RD JUNE - OXWICH FIELD TRIP - LEADER MARGARET HODGE FRPS

Yet another fine sunny day at Oxwich has been enjoyed. A possible dodgy weather forecast plus Foot and Mouth causing possible restricted access may have been the reason for a drop in numbers. However 12 hopefuls had a productive search, one travelling from Biggleswade, others from Hereford, Avon, Newport, Llanelli etc.

We went straight down to the bottom of the tide, low water being at 11.15, to search for life on the sea shore. Quickly rewarded by finding an impressively large Spiny Spider Crab (*Maia squinado*), also *Corystes cassivelaunus*, the Masked crab. A very aggressive Velvet Swimming crab (*Macrobipus puber*) in typical stance, front claws held stiff and vertical body upturned. Some bewildered holiday makers came to investigate when I called out 'does anyone want to see a Chiton?' A few Broad-clawed Porcelain Crabs (*Porcellana platycheles*), tiny edible crabs, a mating pair of Shore Crabs (*Carcinus maenas*) also a female Shore Crab with a very large egg mass. Colourful Common Starfish (*Asterias rubens*) were a popular subject for photography, as were Dog Whelks (*Nucella lapillus*) with fresh eggs. Beadlet Anemones (*Actinia equina*), Orange Sponge (*Hymeniacidon*) also a variety of *Tunicates* coated the rock edges but an incoming tide prevented lengthy observation. Two Moon Jellyfish (*Aurelia aurita*) and the Sand Masons (*Lanice conchilega*) were soon under water.

As the tide came swiftly in, and after a busy morning it was back to the cars for a hasty lunch. There were very few other cars in the car park, as the Nature Reserve had only been opened the week before. Unlike previous years when returning for lunch it seemed almost impossible to park another car.

After lunch the Bloody Cranesbill was a joy to see, as ever, as were the Burnett Roses. Swathes of Yellow Rattle were just starting to bloom, rather later than in other years. Large patches of yellow Common Rock Rose, yellow Biting Stonecrop (*Sedum acre*), Salad Burnet, Dovesfoot Cranesbill (*Geranium vulgare*), large clumps of the Spearhead Rush (*Juncus acutus*). Orchids were looking robust and fresh, in superb condition, especially the Southern Marsh. Seen too were a few Bee Orchids, the Twayblades (*Listera ovata*) were plentiful. Pyramidal were just showing, also Common Spotted. Here too were large patches of Large Wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia*).

At the far end of the reserve the wooded and grassy habitat joins the beach, Beautiful fine white sand is an excellent place to find dune flowers. Sea Holly had leaves only but there was plenty of Portland and Sand Spurge, Sea Sandwort (*Honkenya peploides*), Rugosa Roses, Sea Stock (*Matthiola sinuata*). A dune toadstool surprised many. There were far too many flowers to list, certainly sixty or more at least.

The butterflies seen were the Small Copper, Speckled Wood, Common Blue, Small Blue, Small Heath, Small White, Brimstone, Orange Tip, Dingy Skipper, Peacock. Then there were Common Blue Damselfly, Common Ischnura, Large Red Damselfly; and finally, a Toad.

I think and hope that a good day was enjoyed by all. In 2002 the Field Trip will be a week later, Sunday June 9th ☘

24TH JUNE - NOB END, FARNWORTH, NR. BOLTON - LEADER TONY BOND FRPS

Ten members from as far afield as Leeds, the Fylde and Nottingham gathered round a picnic table at the start of the outing. The glorious weather was in marked contrast to that for the recce on the previous Sunday when it was cold, grey and windy. The very cool June had resulted in the orchids being behind schedule but it was hoped that the warmer weather would have brought them on.

The Country Park was once the scene of considerable industrial activity. Nature is now softening the scars and a pleasant walk through woodland brought us to the open area which is Nob End. The kissing gate proved to be a formidable obstacle to those of us with backpacks but as soon as we had overcome it we were among the orchids.

Nob End was once a site for the manufacture of washing soda from rock salt and limestone. The latter probably came from God's Own Country - Derbyshire and with it some orchid seeds. Soon shutters were clicking as we photographed Early Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*), Northern Marsh Orchid (*D. purpurella*) and Common Spotted Orchid (*D. fuchsii*). There were also many hybrids, some more obvious than others. In addition to the orchids there were the pretty blue flowers of Blue-eyed Grass, (*Sisyrinchium bermudiana*). The orchid area is extensive and the flowers scattered so we were able to get our shots without being in each other's way. Eventually we started to make our way back to the car park, although some members were distracted by some Meadow Cranesbill (*Geranium pratense*) en route.

Judging from the remarks made before we went our separate ways and later everyone had enjoyed their visit to sunny Farnworth. In this year of Foot and Mouth there are advantages in holding outings in largely urban areas! ☘

7TH JULY - MILLERS DALE, DERBYSHIRE - LEADER DAWN OSBORN ARPS

Until almost the end of June much of the Derbyshire Dales remained closed due to the tragic foot and mouth disease outbreak. The restrictions were lifted however, and the Millers Dale meeting escaped cancellation. More than a dozen members met at the Old Railway Station and, with leader Dawn Osborn ARPS, headed off for the upper quarry. Shortly after their departure, the group was forced to take shelter due to a sudden heavy shower – the first rain experienced in this area of Derbyshire for over 6 weeks. Fortunately, although heavy, the shower was short, and soon the group was heading up the final slope. The lack of rain in the previous six weeks had set the flora back by several weeks, normally anticipated Fragrant Orchids were only just emerging, however, Common Spotted Orchids in prime condition were abundant as were Common Twayblade. The weather, at first humid and overcast, improved to soft sunshine, and all members of the group found themselves plenty of subjects for their cameras.

After a pleasant couple of hours, the group returned to the Station for a picnic lunch. Following discussion about techniques, equipment, vacation destinations, etc. the group headed off along the old rail track to the Station Quarry. Normally at this time of year, one would expect to find a profusion of both Fragrant and Bee Orchids – unfortunately, neither

were found, although some members found other worthy subjects around the walls of the quarry. An examination of the area around the Station platforms proved worthwhile and good specimens of Meadow Cranesbill, Jacob's Ladder, Dyer's Greenweed and Knapweed were photographed.

The day, although not too productive in terms of subject matter, was appreciated by all and proved to be an enjoyable day out in the countryside amid very amiable company. Thank you to all who supported the day ☘

8TH JULY - MONKWOOD NATURE RESERVE, WORCESTERSHIRE **LEADER TONY WHARTON FRPS**

Through the good offices of Paddy Harrison, the reserve manager, fourteen Nature Group members met in Monkwood car park shortly before 10.00 am on Sunday, 8th. July. The wood is a Worcestershire Wildlife Trust reserve and enjoys an excellent reputation for providing a wide variety of subjects for nature photography, especially plants and insects, but had only very recently opened up again after a lengthy closure because of foot and mouth disease. Some of those who attended had travelled from places as far away as York, Wiltshire, Hereford, Leamington Spa, Wolverhampton and Cannock.

Dr Chris Betts, a professional ecologist, and his wife Cecelia, whose lovely house and garden are adjacent to the reserve, made us all very welcome with coffee and biscuits. Chris had, as he usually does, set up his moth trap overnight to provide us with some early morning subjects to photograph.

The warm, humid conditions had been ideal, and Chris had quite an impressive catch, consisting of 161 moths of 44 different species, including 31 Heart and Dart moths, 12 Minor Shoulder-Knot, 9 Buff Arches, 8 each of The Drinker, the Large Yellow Underwing and the Rustic. It was, however, the Elephant and Poplar Hawkmoths, the Peppered Moths, the Leopard Moths, the Rosy Footman, the Ruby Tiger and the Pale and Pebble Prominents which attracted most attention from the assembled happy snappers.

After 90 minutes of moth photography, and regaled by the refreshments so thoughtfully provided, we took our leave of Chris and Cecelia and filed off into the wood, which was more than usually overgrown this year, due to the lack of access. Mating Ringlet butterflies, White Admirals, Large Skippers, and Two-banded Longhorn beetles, all provided potential subjects in the wood, as did Emperor and Four-spotted Libellula dragonflies, and one or two late Wood White butterflies, although not all of these were captured successfully on film, I suspect. A buzzard's nest, with at least one well-grown chick, also attracted attention, but was not really in a good enough position for successful photography. Fortunately the weather was kind to us, and everyone left in what seemed to me to be a fairly cheerful frame of mind. At least I hope that was the case! ☘

THE 25th ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION WEEKEND **REPORT BY ROBERT HAWKESWORTH FRPS**

On Friday 10th August 73 members and guests arrived at Brooksby College to celebrate our Twenty-fifth Anniversary. Throughout the afternoon Martin Withers and I were kept busy registering arrivals and welcoming them with tea and biscuits, eventually all were gathered in and after a splendid evening meal we met in the theatre for our evening's entertainment. Harold Grenfell FRPS set the ball rolling with an absolutely fascinating illustrated account of 'A Short History of Black and White Bird Photography', witty, amusing and beautifully photographed it was a perfect way to start. Gordon Langsbury FRPS then took us 'High on the Hardangervidda', my goodness what a difficult place to practice

nature photography but we saw some lovely atmospheric images and of course some splendid birds. The talk was the result of many visits and it was easy to appreciate just why it required them. The first session on Saturday was given over to 'Advice on the Distinctions', Martin Withers FRPS, Tony Wharton FRPS, Colin Smith FRPS and Chris Mattison FRPS were on hand to view panels of slides and prints submitted by members for both A & F consideration. It proved almost too popular and we ran out of time so that one or two people were disappointed, obviously if we were to offer this facility again, and I am sure that we shall, then more time must be allowed. I know that panel members are very happy to give what help they can to prospective applicants. After coffee the President of the RPS Prof. Raymond Clark ASIS FRPS presented some distinctions and then gave a brief address on the recent developments of the Society. Two shorter presentations followed, the first mine, 'In Praise of Plants', a broad look at plants in the widest sense including patterns and designs as well as some multiple exposures. Our Chairman, Dawn Osborn ARPS, then 'Focused on Flowers' and showed us some lovely photographs, especially of orchids. The afternoon began with a quite magnificent show from Chris Mattison FRPS, 'Patterns of Nature'; this was a complete eye-opener with a very personal look at the natural world, patterns, designs, composition, colour, movement, it really did provide us all with a great deal of food for thought. After tea there were two further shorter presentations from Kath Bull ARPS and Peter Basterfield ARPS on Insects and Birds respectively. Kath's macro work was really beautiful and showed just how wonderful and how diverse is this huge group of organisms. Peter astounded us with his breadth of bird photography, travelling world wide in search of his beloved birds he had some remarkable pictures to show us. After a silver service dinner Colin Smith FRPS gave us an unforgettable audio-visual presentation 'A Celebration of Nature'. Beautiful, stunning images blended with lovely music and informative commentary to produce a super show.

Tony Wharton FRPS began the Sunday morning with 'Faces of Nature' a wide-ranging presentation from one of the country's masters of nature photography. Some cracking, bitingly sharp and beautiful pictures, keeping the attention by going quickly from subject to subject, a flower to a bird to a reptile to a moth and yet the images blended with no harsh jumps, a lesson for many. After coffee the members gathered to chat or look at prints or items of equipment, 'gizmos', but all too soon we gathered for the final lunch and the inevitable goodbyes.

Judging from the number of favourable comments which Martin and I received it will have to be sooner than twenty-five years before we repeat the exercise, watch this space ☘

NATURE GROUP ANNUAL EXHIBITION 2002

Entries are invited for our Group's Annual Exhibition.
Please see the enclosed entry form for full details.

Remember this is a travelling exhibition with top quality duplicates of all accepted entries being sent to an ever increasing number of venues around the country.

The catalogue may not be as glamorous as some but your work could be seen by more people!

“TROPICAL RAINFOREST - NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER’S TREASURES”

BY JOHN ARIFIN ARPS

The Tropical Rainforest:- The vast greenery of the forest intertwined with various emergent trees, climbers, strangling figs, lianas & undergrowth, is nothing but a lump of vegetation to some. To a trained eye though, it is a way of life where many different species of plants live harmoniously for millions of years. In one hectare of rain forest, there are as many as 200 species of trees alone whereas in the same area of the richest temperate forest there might be at best about 25 species. At the top of the rain forest, trees together form the vast green canopy, the forest giants, the emergent, some of them as tall as a 10 story building.

Way below the tall trees are shrubs and climbers, the understory. On the shady floor are minute algae and delicate fungi. With such an abundant plant life, the tropical rainforest is truly a natural history treasure dating back to as far as 60 million years ago. Therefore, walking in the forest is like going back in time in a living museum.

The Fungi on the forest floor:- On the forest floor, only 5% of the sunlight manages to filter through the dense canopy. You would easily need an exposure of a 10 to 20 seconds on f/16 for an ASA 100 film when photographing fungi: During which time it continues to break down dead plants and animal into nutrient. The appearance of fungi is not well understood. The most exciting thing in finding fungi is discovering them in places where you never expect them. Fungi usually appear days after a very heavy and continuous rain in the forest. The species of fungi of Southeast Asia are possibly the most spectacular of any found throughout the world, they remain amongst the least known. Most of the soft fungi are very short-lived, some only for a few hours, and this adds to the thrill of discovering and photographing them. Some of the species that you see today may not have been seen for years. The short-lived phenomenal and magical overnight appearance will give you the thrill of discovering it even on the same path you have walked the day before. You will be pleasantly surprised and thrilled by the beautiful and magical kingdom of fungi.

The Photographic Challenges:- The use of flash & sturdy tripod is a must. It is especially useful in photographing stationary subjects on the forest floor such as fungi, algae, floor dwelling plants such as ginger, palm fruits and sometimes even insects. In order to make the flash look natural (without dark background), synchronizing the flash with ambient light is necessary.

In the case of lively insects, a single flash mounted on the camera without tripod will be more flexible. Some insects are so well camouflaged that you would easily be fooled by it. Blending with the environment and staying motionless is one of the survival skills in the insect kingdom. I normally use one TTL flash with a diffuser. This method will be easier and faster to set up as compared with using two flash guns. In situations where the insect is rather stationary, I use multiple flash exposure of 5 to 10 flashes (coming from the same flash) with the Pentax LX camera (IDM light metering system) set on automatic. The actual exposure time can be about 10 to 20 seconds or more while I expose the 5 to 10 flashes manually using the “strobing” technique. The effect of the “strobing” gives me a very uniform shadowless lighting using just one flash gun without worrying too much on reciprocity effect and the exposure compensation .

Mammals in the rainforest are the most challenging subjects to photograph. First, they are rather elusive, you rarely see them. Many mammals are also nocturnal and shy therefore



Photo by John Arifin ARPS
"Nicolaia solaris"



Photo by John Arifin ARPS
"Zingiber spectabile"



Photo by Kay Reeve ARPS from her 2nd Place in the
'Five Slide' Comp. "*Nemoptera bipennis*"



Photo by Norman Prue FRPS from his 1st Place set in
the 'Five Slide' Comp. "*Mountain Houseleek*"

they are captured more frequently on film in the wild using a remote trigger near the salt licks. The pictures captured by the remote camera have revealed some of the secrets of the lives of those mammals that are rarely visible to humans.

Bird photography is another area that requires patience, knowledge, skills and a lot of luck. A fill-in flash technique is a must to master especially under very dimmed light and making sure there is a "catch eye". With lens wide open at f/5.6, it is a luxury to get a speed of 1/60 second with ASA 100 film pushed to 200. Very often you have to shoot at 1/8 seconds at dawn and at dusk. Knowing the subjects, such as feeding and nesting behaviour, will increase the chance of capturing a better image. Most birds nest around March and April which coincides with the start of a drying season and the start of flowering fruit trees.

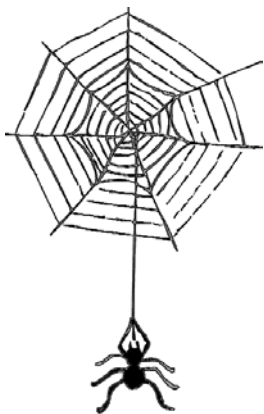
The tropical rain forest is the richest place on earth. Many subjects have possibly not been captured on film before. Therefore you may be able to approach the picture from a totally different and fresh angle. From the uniqueness of the species, it is sometime so bizarre you have never seen them elsewhere. As for my personal challenge, there is a tremendous joy in capturing unique images, precious & rare moments on film. It also gives me a better understanding and appreciation of nature. Through the photographs, I do hope to generate awareness and appreciation for conservation of the rainforest all around the world ☸

John Arifin ARPS is organizing on behalf of the RPS Nature Group a nature distinctions workshop in Singapore in March 2002. There will be a photography trip to the tropical rain forest of west Malaysia with Tony Wharton FRPS and John Arifin ARPS for a group size 8 to 12 people with local naturalist guide.

For more information, please visit the www.natureatwork.net. John Arifin can be contacted via e-mail: john_natureatwork@lycosasia.com

'Concerning Computers' continued from page 15.

MEMBERS WEB ADDRESSES



The following is a list of addresses that have been brought to my attention. Other members undoubtedly have sites and if you would like your address mentioned in The Iris please send details. At present only new addresses will be shown in each issue but, space permitting a full list will be published in each Spring issue commencing in 2003.

Heather Angel Hon. FRPS	www.naturalvisions.co.uk
Jack Jackson FRPS	www.jackjackson.co.uk
Mike Lane FRPS	www.nature-photography.co.uk
*Cyril Mazansky ARPS	www.cyrilmazansky.com
Stephen Street LRPS	www.wildsight.bigstep.com

* Cyril Mazansky has specifically requested that I mention the invaluable assistance given to him in building his site by Stephen Street. In fairness to Stephen please don't interpret this as meaning he has sufficient time to act as advisor to all of us! ☸

“I DO LIKE YOUR STICK” BY REX HAGGETT ARPS

I have lost count of the number of times that has been said to me. “But what is so special about a stick?”; you may well ask. It is a long story so I had better start at the beginning.

Many years ago, possibly twenty, I attended several courses on Wildlife Photography run by Mike Wilkes. One of the things I learnt from them was that the flexibility of a monopod is often preferable to a tripod when photographing wildlife. Later, on a course being run by Mike with Martin Withers I noticed Martin was carrying a rather natty walking stick and I wondered why a fit and healthy looking person needed such an aid. I soon found out. We were flat on our stomachs photographing wild orchids when I noticed that Martin was holding his camera securely against his walking stick. He was using it as a monopod.

Some months later, whilst holidaying in Cornwall I saw a sturdy thumb stick for sale in a tobacconist's shop in Truro. Thinking of Martin and his stick, I bought it. In the succeeding years it has been my constant companion in the field and I have used it on many occasions at ground level to photograph wild flowers.

For many years, apart from fitting a rubber non slip shoe over it's base, my stick remained unaltered. Then my wife and I went for a holiday to the Isles of Scilly, crossing over from Penzance by helicopter. I wanted to take my indispensable stick with me but I realised that due to the low headroom in the helicopter I would not be allowed to do so. Instead I took my telescopic photography monopod. On the island I found that although it performed it's duty as a camera support, I could not use it as a walking stick because it collapsed if I put any weight on it. Oh how I missed my thumb stick.

As a result of that experience I decided to try and find a solution to the problem. I considered cutting it in half for transportation purposes and then rejoining it when I reached my destination, but how to make the join was the problem. I thought about drain rods and a sweep's brushes and how they screw together. I put the problem to my son who put me in touch with a company that supplies fittings for making your own jointed walking stick. The brass screw fittings in the pack proved ideal for the job I had in mind.

Another change to my stick came about because I discovered that when photographing angled upwards towards the tree canopy with a longish lens (cones for examples) the stick was not tall enough to support the camera comfortably. A piece of broom handle with screw fittings at either end inserted into the middle now raises the stick sufficiently. The length of this segment was dictated by the depth of my rucksack, in which I carry my camera and ancillary equipment. I must admit that the extra length obtained by the insertion of the additional segment does evoke some humorous comments from the general public. Last year whilst on a conifer identification course in the Lake District a chap asked me if I was looking to pick a fight with Little John.

In 1999 I attended a Field Studies tree identification course in Pembrokeshire and found that the able bodied lady instructor carried a conventional walking stick with her to hook down branches of trees, which were just out of reach, so that various diagnostic features could be explained. When I got home after the course the first thing I did was cut down an old walking stick and fit a screw fitting to it. The length being decided by the depth of my haversack. An ancillary use of this latest attachment is that I find it ideal for blackberrying and with it I can pick those juicy large berries which are normally just out of reach.

That then is the story of my stick and how it has evolved over a period of time. Nowadays it has additional use, for with advancing years I am making increasing use of it as a thumb stick to support my aching limbs ❀

MEMBERS' LECTURES

A selection of venues and lectures. Information is as provided by the Lecturer prior to printing and members are advised to check for any variation.

Slide Presentations by Dawn Osborn ARPS until Spring 2002.

Mountains and Meadows of Slovenia. (Landscapes & Flora) **23/10/01 at 19.30 hours.** Stafford Photographic Society at The Gatehouse Theatre, Eastgate Street, Stafford.

Colours of Crete. (Landscapes & Flora) **27/10/01 at 20.00 hours.** Wolverhampton Photographic Society at Merry Hill Public House, Trysull Road, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton, West Midlands.

Colours of Crete. (Landscapes & Flora) **18/01/02 at 19.30 hours** Staffordshire Wildlife Trust at the Church Hall, Eccleshall, Staffs.

The Falkland Islands - A Personal View. (Wildlife, Flora and Landscapes) **21/01/02 at 19.30 hours.** Walsall Photographic Society at the Lecture Theatre, Central Teaching Tower, Walsall Campus, University of Wolverhampton, Gorway Road, Walsall, West Midlands.

The Falkland Islands - A Personal View. **26/02/02 at 19.30 hours.** Cheadle Camera Club at the Methodist Church, Chapel Street, Cheadle, North Staffs.

Slide Presentations by Mike Lane FRPS

6th February 2002 at 1930 hours. 'Modern Wildlife Photography'. Northern Ireland Ornithologists' Club - Belfast. Tel: 02890 424745.

11th February 2002 at 1930 hours. 'A Lane through Bharatpur' (Indian wildlife). Forest of Dean Camera Club - Lydney. Tel: 01291 624269.

12th February 2002 at 1930 hours. 'A Country Lane' (British wildlife). Peterborough Photographic Society - The Mallard Suite at Peterborough Sports and Social Club, Maskew Avenue, Bourges Boulevard Retail Park, Peterborough. Tel: 01733 210993.

13th February 2002 at 1930 hours. 'A Lane in a Polish Marsh' (Polish wildlife). Worcs and Malvern RSPB Group. - Powick Village Hall, A449 Worcester to Malvern Road, Worcestershire. Tel: 01684 893711.

14th February 2002 at 1930 hours. 'A Country Lane Returns Again' (British wildlife). Warwickshire Wildlife Trust - Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Lichfield Road, Sutton Coldfield. Tel: 02476 302912.

15th February 2002 at 1930 hours. 'A Country Lane Returns' (British wildlife). Leicester RSPB - Adult College of Education, Wellington Street, Leicester. Tel: 01554 859861.

22nd February 2002 at 1930 hours. 'A Lane in a Polish Marsh' (Polish wildlife). Coventry & Warwickshire RSPB Group. Arts Centre, Warwick University. Tel: 01926 428365.

11th March 2002 at 2000 hours. 'A Lane in Spain' (Spanish wildlife). Sileby Photographic Society - Village Institute, Free Trade Public House, Cossington Rd, Sileby, Leicestershire.

ADVERTISEMENTS

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For brochures and detailed itineraries contact:-
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***COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND PHOTO TOURS
BY TONY WHARTON FRPS IN 2002***

25th March to 4th April - Cyprus - *"The Wild Orchids of Cyprus"*. Guided by a resident orchid expert, we shall visit many of the best orchid sites to find. We shall, however, take care not to neglect the many other natural history subjects to be found on the island. Details from:- Photo Travellers, P0 Box 58, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 2SE Tel:- (01483) 425448.

3rd to 6th May - Preston Montford Field Centre, Shropshire *"Nature Photography in Spring"*. Details from:- Centre Director, Preston Montford Field Centre, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY4 1DX. Tel:- (01743) 850380.

20th May to 3rd June - The Galapagos Islands and Ecuador. Details from:- Photo Travellers, as above.

My apologies but all places on this trip were taken immediately, even before I could send out this programme. It is intended to organise a similar tour in 2003

14th to 18th June - Orielson Field Centre, Pembrokeshire - *"Nature Photography in Early Summer"*. Details from:- Centre Director, Orielson Field Centre, Pembroke, Pembrokeshire, SA71 5EZ. Tel:- (01646) 661225.

26th July to 2nd August - Flatford Mill Field Centre, Suffolk - *"The Seeing Eye"*. A general colour photography course which encourages participants to look adventurously and creatively at the world about us. Details from:- Centre Director, Flatford Mill Field Centre, East Bergholt, Colchester, Essex, C07 6UL. Tel:- (01206) 298283.

25th to 29th October - Preston Montford Field Centre, Shropshire - *"Autumn Nature Photography"*. Details from:- Centre Director, Preston Montford Field Centre, as above.

***BARRIE TAYLOR FRPS IN CONJUNCTION WITH
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TANZANIA 13th to 28th January 2002

INDIA 16th February to 2nd March 2002

COSTA RICA 23rd March to 6th April 2002

VENEZUELA April 2002

BRAZIL (including Pantanal) 24th August to 6th September 2002

CHURCHILL FOR POLAR BEARS 20th to 28th October 2002

GALAPAGOS 15th to 29th November 2002

CONTACT

BARRIE TAYLOR FRPS. ON 0121 308 8726

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PHOTOGRAPHY COURSES AND EVENTS 2002 FIELD STUDIES COUNCIL AT JUNIPER HALL FIELD CENTRE

COURSES LED BY JOHN BEBBINGTON FRPS

Photographing the Patterns of Nature: Friday 19th – Sunday 21st April 2002
Close-up and Macro Flash in the Field; Friday 24th – Sunday 26th May 2002
Photographing Wild Flowers: Friday 14th – Sunday 16th June 2002
Insect Photography Week: Friday 23rd – Friday 30th August 2002
Autumn Nature Photography: Friday 18th – Friday 25th October 2002

RPS EVENTS

Associateship and Fellowship Nature Distinctions Workshop

Sunday 3rd February 2002:

Panel members will be Tony Wharton FRPS and John Bebbington FRPS

Nature Group Field Weekend - Friday 31st May – Tuesday 4th June 2002

For details of these and all other Field Studies Council Courses in 2002 look in the Field Studies Council web site:- www.field-studies-council.org

For availability of places and further information contact John Bebbington FRPS
at Juniper Hall Field Centre, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6DA.

Tel 0845 458 3507, fax 0845 458 9219. email:- fsc.juniper@ukonline.co.uk

Photo opposite by Frank Millington ARPS "*Male Common Newt in Breeding Colours*" (C)
one of the set he entered into The Iris 'Five Slide' Competition



